new international reader's version

Precious Princess BIBLE





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New International Reader’s Version



NIrV Precious Princess Bible

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A Word About the New International Reader's Version

God has always spoken so people would know what he meant. When God first gave the Bible to his people, he used their languages. They could understand what they read. God wants us to understand the Bible today too. So we have worked hard to make the *New International Reader's Version* easy to read and understand.

What Is the New International Reader's Version?

The *New International Reader's Version* (NIrV) is a new Bible translation based on the *New International Version* (NIV). The NIV Committee on Bible Translation (CBT) didn't produce the NIrV. But several members of CBT worked hard to make the NIrV possible. The NIV is easy to understand and very clear. More people read the NIV than any other English Bible. We made the NIrV even easier to read and understand. We used the words of the NIV when we could. Sometimes we used shorter words. We explained words that might be hard to understand. We made the sentences shorter.

We also did some other things to make the NIrV a helpful Bible version for you. For example, sometimes a Bible verse quotes from another place in the Bible. When that happens, we put the other Bible book's name, chapter and verse right after the verse that quotes another place.

We separated each chapter into shorter sections. We gave a title to almost every chapter. Sometimes we even gave a title to the shorter sections. That will help you understand what each chapter or section is all about.

Sometimes the writers of the Bible used more than one name for the same person or place. For example, in the New Testament the Sea of Galilee is also called the Sea of Gennesaret and the Sea of Tiberias. But in the NIrV we decided to call it the Sea of Galilee everywhere it appears in the New Testament. We did it because that is its most familiar name.

We also wanted to help our readers learn the names of people and places even in verses where those names don't actually appear. For example, when we

knew that “the River” meant “the Euphrates River,” we used those words even in verses where only the words “the River” are found. When we knew that the name of “Pharaoh” in a certain verse was “Hophra,” we wrote his name in that verse. We did all of those things because we wanted to make the NIrV as clear as possible.

Who Will Enjoy Reading the New International Reader’s Version?

We made sure that people who are just starting to read could understand and enjoy the NIrV. Children will be able to read it and understand it. So will older people who are learning how to read or those who are reading the Bible for the first time. So will people who have a hard time understanding what they read. And so will people who use English as their second language. We hope this Bible will be just right for you.

Is the NIrV an Accurate Bible?

At the time the Bible was written, God’s people used the Hebrew and Greek languages. So the first writers of the Bible used those languages. We wanted the NIrV to say just what the first writers of the Bible said. So we kept checking what the Hebrew and Greek said.

We used the best and oldest copies of the Hebrew and Greek. Some of the first English Bibles could not use those copies because they had not yet been found. But today we can check copies that are closer in time to the ones the first Bible writers wrote. We wanted to make sure we were giving you the actual Word of God.

There are two places in the NIrV where some verses are marked with long lines. We don’t know whether the first writers of the Bible wrote those verses. They may have been added later on. You will find the long lines at Mark 16:9–20 and John 7:53–8:11.

What Is Our Prayer for You?

The Lord has blessed the *New International Verison* in a wonderful way. He has used it to help millions of its readers. Many have put their faith in Jesus after reading it. Many others have become stronger believers because they have read it.

We hope and pray that the *New International Reader's Version* will help you in the same way. If that happens, we will give God all of the glory.

Verses That Were Not Found in the Earliest Greek New Testaments

Later copies of the Greek New Testament added several verses that the earlier ones don't have. An example is Mark 9:44. That verse is not in the oldest Greek New Testaments. So we put the number 43/44 right before Mark 9:43. The verse for Mark 9:44 is listed below.

Matthew 17:21	But that kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.
Matthew 18:11	The Son of Man came to save what was lost.
Matthew 23:14	How terrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees! You pretenders! You take over the houses of widows. You say long prayers to show off. So God will punish you much more.
Mark 7:16	Everyone who has ears to ear should listen.
Mark 9:44	In hell,/ "The worms do not die./ The fire is not put out."
Mark 9:46	In hell,/ "The worms do not die./ The fire is not put out."
Mark 11:26	But if you do not forgive, your Father who is in heaven will not forgive your sins either.
Mark 15:28	Scripture came true. It says, "He was counted among those who disobey the law."
Luke 17:36	Two men will be in the field. One will be taken and the other left.
Luke 23:17	It was Pilate's duty to let one prisoner go free for them at the Feast.
John 5:4	From time to time an angel of the Lord would come down. The angel would stir up the waters. The first disabled person to go into the pool after it was stirred would be

	healed.
Acts 8:37	Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you can.” The official answered, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”
Acts 15:34	But Silas decided to remain there.
Acts 24:7	But Lysias, the commander, came. By using a lot of force, he took Paul from our hands.
Acts 28:29	After he said that, the Jews left. They were arguing strongly among themselves.
Romans 16:24	May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you. Amen.

The ABCs of Salvation

A

All people are sinners.

Romans 3:23

> *Everyone has sinned. No one measures up to God's glory.*

B

The ***Bible*** is God's word of love and salvation.

John 20:31

> *But these are written down so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. If you believe this, you will have life because you belong to him.*

C

The ***condition*** of sinners is serious.

2 Thessalonians 2:12

> *Many will not believe the truth. They will take pleasure in evil. They will be judged.*

D

Christ ***died*** to save sinners.

Romans 5:8

> *While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

E

Everyone who believes will have ***eternal*** life.

John 3:16

> *Anyone who believes in [Jesus] will not die but will have eternal life.*

F

You are saved through ***faith.***

Romans 1:17

> *The good news shows how God makes people right with himself. From beginning to end, becoming right with God depends on a person's faith.*

G

Good works will not save you.

Ephesians 2:8–9

> *God's grace has saved you because of your faith in Christ. Your salvation doesn't come from anything you do. It is God's gift. It is not based on anything you have done.*

H

Hell and punishment are waiting for those who don’t believe.

2 Thessalonians 1:8–9

> *He will punish those who don’t know God. He will punish those who don’t obey the good news about our Lord Jesus. They will be destroyed forever. They will be shut out of heaven. They will never see the glory of the Lord’s power.*

I

Nothing is ***impossible*** for God.

Luke 1:37

> *Nothing is impossible with God.*

J

There is ***joy*** in heaven over one sinner who repents.

Luke 15:10

> *There is joy in heaven over one sinner who turns away from sin.*

K

If you trust God, he will ***keep*** you from sin.

Jude 24

> *Give praise to the One who is able to keep you from falling into sin.*

L

God ***loves*** sinners and wants to save them.

John 3:16

> *God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life.*

M

God has ***mercy*** on unbelievers.

Romans 11:32

> *God has found everyone guilty of not obeying him. So now he can have mercy on everyone.*

N

Jesus is the only ***name*** by which you can be saved.

Acts 4:12

> *You can't be saved by believing in anyone else. God has given us no other name under heaven that will save us.*

O

You show God you love him by ***obeying*** his commandments.

1 John 5:3

Here is what it means to love God. It means that we obey his commands. And his commands are not hard to obey.

P

God is ***patient*** with unbelievers.

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slow to keep his promise. He is not slow in the way some people understand it. He is patient with you. He doesn't want anyone to be destroyed. Instead, he wants all people to turn away from their sins.

Q

Those who don't believe should ***quickly*** decide to follow Jesus.

2 Corinthians 6:2

I tell you, now is the time God shows his favor. Now is the day he saves.

R

Christians have a reason to ***rejoice.***

Luke 10:20

Be glad that your names are written in heaven.

S

The Bible, the ***Scriptures,*** can teach you how to be saved.

2 Timothy 3:15

> *You have known the Holy Scriptures ever since you were a little child. They are able to teach you how to be saved by believing in Christ Jesus.*

T

You should give ***thanks*** to God for the wonderful gift of salvation.

2 Corinthians 9:15

> *Let us give thanks to God for his gift. It is so great that no one can tell how wonderful it really is!*

U

The Holy Spirit helps us ***understand*** God's Word.

1 Corinthians 2:12

> *We have not received the spirit of the world. We have received the Spirit who is from God. The Spirit helps us understand what God has freely given us.*

V

Jesus has gained ***victory*** over death for you.

1 Corinthians 15:54

> *What does not last will be dressed with what lasts forever. What dies will be dressed with what does not die. Then what is written will come true. It says, "Death has been swallowed up. It has lost the battle."*

W

Whoever calls on Jesus will be saved.

Acts 2:21

> *Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*

Y

God loves ***you*** so much he calls you his child.

1 John 3:1

> *How great is the love the Father has given us so freely! Now we can be called children of God. And that's what we really are!*

5 Ways to Read the Bible

Why should you read the Bible?

A man builds a big boat to get away from a flood. A slave becomes a ruler. Angels visit common people. A man walks on the water. A blind person sees again. A man chooses to die for his people. All of these stories are in the Bible. The Bible also tells us about Adam and Eve and how the world began. You can read about Abraham and Isaac and God's words to them. You will find out about Peter and Paul and how the church began. All these things are in this book.

The Bible is more than just a big book of stories, however. The Bible tells you how to live as God's child. The Bible tells you God's words of love. You will get to know God better as you read the Bible. As you get to know him better, you will see how much God loves you. Your love for him will grow too.

How should you begin?

Take some time every day. Make it the same time every day, if you can. Find a quiet and comfortable place.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you as you read. He knows that you want to read the Bible. He knows that you want to learn.

Don't worry if you don't understand everything you read the first time. You may have to read the same verse many times. You may find words you do not know. In the back of the Bible is a dictionary. It will tell you what the words mean.

Use a small notebook. Write down what you learn from your reading. The reading plans in this Bible give some ideas about what to write in your notebook.

Make sure you have a plan. A plan will help you as you read. The next few pages give five ways to read the Bible. Pick the reading plan that seems best to you. As you finish that plan then you can try another one. You will see many

different parts of the Bible if you follow these plans. Your study time will be interesting and helpful.

1. READ A STORY AT A TIME.

You can read the Bible story by story. When you read a story from the Bible, ask yourself these questions:

- *Who are the main people in the story?*
- *What are the main things that happen in the story?*
- *What is this story talking about?*
- *What can I learn from this story?*

Use your notebook. Write down the name of the story. Write down your answers to the questions. Here are some Bible stories you may want to read.

STORY	WHERE TO FIND IT
The World Begins	Genesis 1:1—2:3
God Creates People	Genesis 2:4–25
A Flood Destroys the World	Genesis 6:9—9:17
People Build a Tower	Genesis 11:1–9
God Calls Abraham	Genesis 12:1–9; 17:1–8
God Destroys Two Cities	Genesis 19:1–29
God Tests Abraham	Genesis 22:1–19
Isaac Marries Rebekah	Genesis 24–29
Jacob Has a Dream	Genesis 28:10–22
Jacob Marries Two Wives	Genesis 29:14–30
Joseph Goes to Egypt	Genesis 37:12–36
Pharaoh Has a Dream	Genesis 41
Joseph’s Brothers Go to Egypt	Genesis 42—45
Moses Is Born	Exodus 1:8—2:10
God Calls Moses	Exodus 3:1–15
God Sends Ten Plagues	Exodus 7:14—11:10
The Israelites Celebrate Passover	Exodus 12
The Israelites Cross the Sea	Exodus 13:17—14:31
God Gives Water	Exodus 15:22–27; 17:1–7

God Gives Food	Exodus 16
God Gives His Laws to Moses	Exodus 19:1—20:21
The People Worship a Golden Calf	Exodus 32
Spies Explore the Promised Land	Numbers 13:1—14:12
Jericho’s Walls Fall Down	Joshua 5:13—6:27
Gideon Wins the War	Judges 7
Samson Finds Delilah	Judges 16
God Blesses Ruth	Ruth 1—4
The Lord Calls Samuel	1 Samuel 3
David Fights Goliath	1 Samuel 17
David and Jonathan Are Friends	1 Samuel 20
Solomon Is a Wise Ruler	1 Kings 3:16–28
Elijah Worships God	1 Kings 18:16–46
Elijah Goes to Heaven	2 Kings 2:1–12
God Protects Three Men in a Fire	Daniel 3
Daniel Is Safe From the Lions	Daniel 6
A Fish Swallows Jonah	Jonah 1—4
Jesus Is Born	Luke 2:1–7
The Shepherds Worship Jesus	Luke 2:8–20
The Wise Men Visit Jesus	Matthew 2:1–12
The Boy Jesus Visits the Temple	Luke 2:41–52
Jesus Is Baptized	John 1:29–34
Satan Tempts Jesus	Luke 4:1–13
Jesus Calls His Disciples	John 1:35–51
A Man Comes Through the Roof	Luke 5:17–26
Jesus Teaches Nicodemus	John 3:1–21
Jesus Talks to a Woman at a Well	John 4:4–42
Jesus Calms a Storm	Mark 4:35–41
Jesus Feeds Five Thousand People	Mark 6:30–44
Jesus Walks on Water	Mark 6:45–56
Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind	John 9:1–34
The Good Samaritan Helps	Luke 10:25–37
Do Not Worry	Luke 12:22–34

A Son Runs Away	Luke 15:11–32
Jesus Heals Ten Men	Luke 17:11–19
Jesus Raises Lazarus	John 11:1–46
Jesus Blesses the Children	Mark 10:13–16
Zacchaeus Climbs a Tree	Luke 19:1–10
Jesus Enters Jerusalem	Luke 19:28–44
Jesus Eats the Last Supper	Matthew 26:17–30
Jesus Prays in the Garden	Matthew 26:36–56
Peter Denies Jesus	Matthew 26:69–75
Jesus Dies on the Cross	Matthew 27:31–56
Jesus Is Buried	Matthew 27:57–66
Jesus Comes Back to Life	Luke 24:1–12
Jesus Appears to His Disciples	Luke 24:36–53
Jesus Goes to Heaven	Acts 1:4–11
The Holy Spirit Comes	Acts 2:1–47
Saul Begins to Follow Jesus	Acts 9:1–19
Peter Escapes From Prison	Acts 12:1–17
Paul and Silas Sing in Prison	Acts 16:16–40
The Lamb Is Worshiped	Revelation 5
The New Jerusalem Comes	Revelation 21:1—22:6
Jesus Is Coming Again	Revelation 22:7–21

2. READ A SUBJECT AT A TIME.

You can read the Bible subject by subject. Read about a subject. Write down in your notebook what you think about the subject. Look the word up in a Bible dictionary to learn more. Here are some subjects you may want to read about.

SUBJECT	WHERE TO FIND IT
Ambition	1 Kings 3:5–12
	Matthew 16:21–27
	Mark 9:33–37
	Philippians 2:1–4

Anger	Genesis 4:1–12
	Psalm 4:4
	Proverbs 16:32
	Ephesians 4:22—5:2
	James 1:19–27
Baptism	Matthew 3:1–12
	Matthew 28:16–20
	Romans 6:1–5
Becoming a New Person	2 Corinthians 7:1
	1 Thessalonians 5:23
	2 Peter 1:3–11
Becoming Friends With God	Exodus 33:1–11
	John 15:1–17
	2 Corinthians 5:11—6:2
	Ephesians 2:11–22
Being Right With God	Genesis 15:1–6
	Romans 3:21–31
	Romans 4:1–5:11
	Galatians 2:15–21
Being Sorry for Your Sins	Deuteronomy 4:29–31
	Matthew 4:12–17
	Luke 18:9–14
	Acts 2:37–41
Bible Reading	Nehemiah 8:1–6
	Psalm 1
	2 Timothy 3:14–17
	James 1:19–27
Blood of Christ	Matthew 26:27–29
	Hebrews 9:11–28
Children	Psalm 78:1–7
	Psalm 127
	Psalm 128
	Matthew 18:1–6

Correction	Proverbs 3:11–12
	1 Corinthians 11:27–32
	Hebrews 12:1–13
Creation	Genesis 1—2
	Psalm 8
	Psalm 104
	Romans 1:18–23
	Romans 8:18–27
Cross	Mark 8:31—9:1
	Luke 23:26–49
Death	Psalm 116:15–16
	Isaiah 57:1–2
	John 12:23–26
	Romans 6:1–23
	1 Corinthians 15
Divorce	Deuteronomy 24:1–4
	Malachi 2:13–16
	Mark 10:2–12
	1 Corinthians 7:10–16
Eternal Life	Job 19:25–27
	Matthew 19:16–30
	John 3:1–21
	Romans 6:15–23
Faith	Genesis 15:1–6
	Psalm 119:65–72
	Matthew 6:25–34
	Romans 5:1–11
	1 Corinthians 9:24–27
	Hebrews 11
Following Jesus	Luke 14:25–34
	John 15:1–17
	John 21:15–19
Freedom	John 8:31–41

	Romans 8:1–17
	Galatians 4:21—5:26
Friendship	Proverbs 17:17
	Ecclesiastes 4:9–12
	Colossians 3:12–17
	1 John 1:1–7
Getting Even	Deuteronomy 32:34–35
	Psalm 94:1
	Proverbs 25:21–22
	1 Thessalonians 5:12–15
	1 Peter 3:8–14
Giving	Deuteronomy 15:7–11
	Proverbs 3:9
	Malachi 3:10–12
	Matthew 6:1–4
Grace	Psalm 86
	Micah 7:18–20
	Luke 15:11–31
	Romans 5
	Ephesians 2
Greed	1 Kings 21:1–22
	Proverbs 15:27
	Luke 12:13–21
	1 Timothy 6:3–10
Happiness	Psalm 33
	Matthew 5:1–12
	John 13:1–17
	Philippians 4:4–9
Heaven	1 Kings 8:23–30
	Isaiah 65:17–25
	Matthew 6:19–24
	Matthew 25:31–46
	Philippians 3:12—4:1

Holy Spirit	Isaiah 61:1–3
	Joel 2:28–32
	John 14:15–31
	Acts 2
	Romans 8:1–17
Homosexuality	Leviticus 18:22
	Leviticus 20:13
	1 Corinthians 6:9–11
	1 Timothy 1:9–11
Hope	Psalm 42
	Psalm 130
	Romans 5:1–11
	Colossians 1:3–27
	1 Peter 1:3–9
Jesus Paid for Your Sins	Isaiah 53:1–12
	Romans 3:21–26
	2 Corinthians 5:14–21
	1 Peter 2:22–25
Jesus’ Second Coming	Matthew 24
	John 14:1–4
	1 Corinthians 15:12–28
	1 Thessalonians 4:13—5:11
Joy	Isaiah 12
	Isaiah 52:7–10
	Luke 15
	James 1:2–18
	1 Peter 4:12–19
Kindness	Psalm 103:8–12
	Psalm 116:5–6
	Micah 6:8
	2 Corinthians 1:3–7
	1 John 3:11–24

Living as a Single Person	Psalm 68:6 Matthew 19:4–12 1 Corinthians 7:32–40 1 Timothy 4:1–5
Living What You Believe	1 Samuel 12:1–23 Zechariah 7:2–14 Matthew 6:1–24 James 1:22–27
Loneliness	1 Kings 19:1–18 Psalm 41 Matthew 26:36–46 2 Timothy 4:16–18
Lord’s Supper	Luke 22:7–23 John 13 1 Corinthians 11:17–34
Love	Leviticus 19:18, 34 Deuteronomy 6:1–5 Song of Songs 8:6–7 1 Corinthians 13 1 John 4:7–21
Marriage	Genesis 2:19–25 Ecclesiastes 9:7–10 Matthew 19:1–12 1 Corinthians 7 Ephesians 5:22–33
Peace	Psalm 122 Isaiah 9:2–7 John 14:25–27 Romans 5:1–11
Poor	Amos 5:11–15 Matthew 25:31–46 Luke 1:39–56 James 2:1–13

Reward	Psalm 19:1–11 Isaiah 61:8–11 Matthew 5:3–12 1 Corinthians 3:10–15
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Salvation	Exodus 15:1–18 Psalm 62 Isaiah 59:15–20 Luke 19:1–10 Acts 16:16–34 Ephesians 2:1–10
Sex Outside of Marriage	Exodus 20:14 Matthew 5:27–32 Galatians 5:13–26 Ephesians 4:17—5:3
Sharing Your Home With Others	Genesis 18:1–8 Luke 14:12–14 Romans 12:13 1 Peter 4:9
Swearing	Exodus 20:7 Proverbs 30:10–14 Ephesians 4:29–32 James 3:1–12
Suffering	Deuteronomy 8:1–5 Job 1—2 Psalm 77 Romans 8:12–17 1 Peter 3:8–22 1 Peter 4:12–19

Taking Care of God's Gifts	1 Chronicles 29:1–9
	Matthew 25:14–30
	Luke 12:35–48
Worry	Psalm 94:17–19
	Ecclesiastes 2:22–25
	Luke 12:22–34
	Philippians 4:4–9
	Hebrews 13:5–6

3. READ ABOUT A PERSON AT A TIME.

You can read the Bible by reading about its people. In your notebook, write down the name of the person you want to read about. Read the story about that person. Write down one thing you learned about that person's life. Here is a list of people from the Bible. Get to know them as you read about them.

PERSON(S)	**WHERE TO FIND THEM**
Aaron	Exodus 4:14–17, 27–31
	Exodus 32:1–24
	Leviticus 8:1–36
	Numbers 20:1–12
Abraham	Genesis 11:26–29
	Genesis 12:10–20
	Genesis 18:1–33
	Genesis 21:1–3
	Genesis 22:1–18
Adam and Eve	Genesis 2:21—3:19
Amos	Amos 1—9
Ananias and Sapphira	Acts 5:1–10
Andrew	John 1:40–42
Anna	Luke 2:36–38
Balaam	Numbers 22:4–35
Bathsheba	2 Samuel 11:3—12:24

Barnabas	Acts 13:1–3
Benjamin	Genesis 42:4
	Genesis 43:1—44:34
Boaz	Ruth 2—4
Cain and Abel	Genesis 4
Caleb	Numbers 13:1—14:32
Cornelius	Acts 10
Daniel	Daniel 1—6
David	1 Samuel 16—17
	2 Samuel 1—6
	2 Samuel 11—12
	1 Kings 1:28—2:12
Deborah	Judges 4
Elijah	1 Kings 18:16—19:18
	2 Kings 2:11–12
Elisha	2 Kings 4:1–7
Elizabeth	Luke 1:5–25, 57–66
Esau	Genesis 25:29–34
Esther	Esther 5—8
Ezekiel	Ezekiel 2:9—3:3
Gideon	Judges 6—7
Goliath	1 Samuel 17:4–51
Hannah	1 Samuel 1:1—2:21
Herod	Matthew 2:3–16
Hezekiah	2 Kings 20:1–21
Hosea	Hosea 1; 3
Isaac	Genesis 24—27
Isaiah	2 Kings 19—20
Jacob	Genesis 27—33
James	Matthew 13:55
	John 7:2–5
	James
Jeremiah	Jeremiah 26

	Jeremiah 32
	Jeremiah 36:1—40:6
Job	Job 1:1—2:13
	Job 42:7–17
John	John 19:26–27
	Acts 4:1–31
	Revelation 1
John the Baptist	Matthew 3
	Matthew 14:1–12
Jonah	Jonah 1—4
Jonathan	1 Samuel 20
Joseph	Genesis 39—50
Joseph	Matthew 1:18–25
Joshua	Numbers 13—14
	Joshua 1—6
Judas Iscariot	Matthew 26:14–25, 47–50
Lazarus	John 11:1–44
Lot	Genesis 19:1–29
Lydia	Acts 16:11–15
Mark	Acts 15:37–39
Mary	Luke 1:26—2:52
Mary and Martha	Luke 10:38–42
Mary Magdalene	John 20:1–18
Matthew	Mark 2:13–14
Moses	Exodus 2—4
	Exodus 12
Naomi	Ruth 1—4
Nebuchadnezzar	2 Kings 25:1–17
	Daniel 1—5
Nicodemus	John 3:1–21
Noah	Genesis 6:9—9:17
Paul (Saul)	Acts 9:1–19
	Acts 21—27

Peter	Matthew 14:22–33
	Acts 3:1–10
Philip	Acts 8:4–7, 26–40
Pontius Pilate	Matthew 27:11–26
Priscilla and Aquila	Acts 18:1–4
Rachel	Genesis 29—31
Ruth	Ruth 1—4
Samson	Judges 13—16
Samuel	1 Samuel 1—3
Sarah	Genesis 12—23
Saul	1 Samuel 15
Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego	Daniel 3:1–30
Solomon	1 Kings 2:1—3:28
	1 Kings 4:20–34
	1 Kings 10
Stephen	Acts 6:5—7:60
Thomas	John 20:24–29
Timothy	Acts 16:1
	Acts 17:14–15
Zacchaeus	Luke 19:2–8

4. READ A BOOK AT A TIME.

You can read the Bible by reading through one book at a time. Read the introduction that comes before each book. Then read one section of the text at a time. Ask yourself these questions:

- *What are the main things that happen in the story?*
- *What are the main words in the story?*
- *What is this story talking about?*
- *What can I learn from this Bible story?*

Use your notebook. Write down what you have read. Write down what you learned. Use a dictionary to look up hard words. You will find one in the back of this Bible. The list below shows all the books of the Bible. Put a mark next to each book as you finish it.

BOOK

___ Genesis
___ Exodus
___ Leviticus
___ Numbers
___ Deuteronomy
___ Joshua
___ Judges
___ Ruth
___ 1 Samuel
___ 2 Samuel
___ 1 Kings
___ 2 Kings
___ 1 Chronicles
___ 2 Chronicles
___ Ezra
___ Nehemiah
___ Esther
___ Job
___ Psalms
___ Proverbs
___ Ecclesiastes
___ Song of Songs
___ Isaiah
___ Jeremiah
___ Lamentations
___ Ezekiel
___ Daniel
___ Hosea
___ Joel
___ Amos
___ Obadiah
___ Jonah

___ Micah
___ Nahum
___ Habakkuk
___ Zephaniah
___ Haggai
___ Zechariah
___ Malachi
___ Matthew
___ Mark
___ Luke
___ John
___ Acts
___ Romans
___ 1 Corinthians
___ 2 Corinthians
___ Galatians
___ Ephesians
___ Philippians
___ Colossians
___ 1 Thessalonians
___ 2 Thessalonians
___ 1 Timothy
___ 2 Timothy
___ Titus
___ Philemon
___ Hebrews
___ James
___ 1 Peter
___ 2 Peter
___ 1 John
___ 2 John
___ 3 John
___ Jude

___ Revelation

5. READ THE ENTIRE BIBLE.

The list below is a special reading plan. It will help you read the whole Bible in three years. Some plans tell you to read three chapters each day. Some people find this very hard to do. This plan asks you to read only one chapter each day. Some days you will read two short chapters. It will take you three years to finish this plan. Be sure to use your notebook. Write down the things that you learn as you read.

GENESIS

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 ___ 8 ___ 9 ___ 10—11 ___ 12
___ 13 ___ 14 ___ 15 ___ 16 ___ 17 ___ 18 ___ 19 ___ 20 ___ 21 ___ 22
___ 23 ___ 24 ___ 25 ___ 26 ___ 27 ___ 28 ___ 29 ___ 30 ___ 31 ___ 32
___ 33 ___ 34 ___ 35 ___ 36 ___ 37 ___ 38 ___ 39 ___ 40 ___ 41 ___ 42
___ 43 ___ 44 ___ 45 ___ 46 ___ 47 ___ 48 ___ 49 ___ 50

MATTHEW 1—9

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 ___ 8 ___ 9

EXODUS

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 ___ 8 ___ 9 ___ 10—11 ___ 12
___ 13 ___ 14 ___ 15 ___ 16 ___ 17 ___ 18 ___ 19 ___ 20 ___ 21 ___ 22
___ 23 ___ 24 ___ 25 ___ 26 ___ 27 ___ 28 ___ 29 ___ 30 ___ 31 ___ 32
___ 33 ___ 34 ___ 35 ___ 36 ___ 37 ___ 38 ___ 39 ___ 40

MATTHEW 10—20

___ 10 ___ 11 ___ 12 ___ 13 ___ 14 ___ 15 ___ 16 ___ 17 ___ 18 ___ 19
___ 20

LEVITICUS 1—14

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 ___ 8 ___ 9 ___ 10 ___ 11—12
___ 13 ___ 14

MATTHEW 21—28

___ 21 ___ 22 ___ 23 ___ 24 ___ 25 ___ 26 ___ 27 ___ 28

LEVITICUS 15—27

___ 15 ___ 16 ___ 17 ___ 18 ___ 19 ___ 20 ___ 21 ___ 22 ___ 23 ___ 24
___ 25 ___ 26 ___ 27

MARK 1—8

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 ___ 8

NUMBERS

___ 1—2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 ___ 8 ___ 9 ___ 10 ___ 11 ___ 12
___ 13 ___ 14 ___ 15 ___ 16 ___ 17 ___ 18 ___ 19 ___ 20 ___ 21 ___ 22
___ 23 ___ 24 ___ 25 ___ 26 ___ 27 ___ 28 ___ 29 ___ 30 ___ 31 ___ 32
___ 33 ___ 34 ___ 35 ___ 36

MARK 9—16

___ 9 ___ 10 ___ 11 ___ 12 ___ 13 ___ 14 ___ 15—16

DEUTERONOMY 1—17

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 ___ 8 ___ 9 ___ 10 ___ 11 ___ 12
___ 13 ___ 14 ___ 15 ___ 16 ___ 17

LUKE 1—8

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 ___ 8

DEUTERONOMY 18—34

___ 18 ___ 19 ___ 20 ___ 21 ___ 22 ___ 23 ___ 24 ___ 25 ___ 26 ___ 27
___ 28 ___ 29 ___ 30 ___ 31 ___ 32 ___ 33 ___ 34

LUKE 9—16

___ 9 ___ 10 ___ 11 ___ 12 ___ 13 ___ 14 ___ 15 ___ 16

JOSHUA

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 ___ 8 ___ 9 ___ 10 ___ 11 ___ 12
—13 ___ 14—15 ___ 16—17 ___ 18 ___ 19 ___ 20 ___ 21 ___ 22 ___ 23
___ 24

LUKE 17—24

___ 17 ___ 18 ___ 19 ___ 20 ___ 21 ___ 22 ___ 23 ___ 24

JUDGES

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 ___ 8 ___ 9 ___ 10 ___ 11 ___ 12
___ 13 ___ 14 ___ 15 ___ 16 ___ 17 ___ 18 ___ 19 ___ 20 ___ 21

JOHN 1—7

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7

RUTH

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4

1 SAMUEL 1—15

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 ___ 8 ___ 9 ___ 10 ___ 11 ___ 12
___ 13 ___ 14 ___ 15

JOHN 8—14

___ 8 ___ 9 ___ 10 ___ 11 ___ 12 ___ 13 ___ 14

1 SAMUEL 16—31

___ 16 ___ 17 ___ 18 ___ 19 ___ 20 ___ 21 ___ 22 ___ 23 ___ 24 ___ 25
___ 26 ___ 27 ___ 28 ___ 29 ___ 30 ___ 31

JOHN 15—21

___ 15 ___ 16 ___ 17 ___ 18 ___ 19 ___ 20 ___ 21

2 SAMUEL

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 ___ 8 ___ 9 ___ 10 ___ 11 ___ 12
___ 13 ___ 14 ___ 15 ___ 16 ___ 17 ___ 18 ___ 19 ___ 20 ___ 21 ___ 22
___ 23 ___ 24

ACTS 1—7

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7

1 KINGS 1—11

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4—5 ___ 6 ___ 7 ___ 8 ___ 9 ___ 10 ___ 11

ACTS 8—14

___ 8 ___ 9 ___ 10 ___ 11 ___ 12 ___ 13 ___ 14

1 KINGS 12—22

___ 12 ___ 13 ___ 14 ___ 15 ___ 16 ___ 17 ___ 18 ___ 19 ___ 20 ___ 21 ___ 22

ACTS 15—21

___ 15 ___ 16 ___ 17 ___ 18 ___ 19 ___ 20 ___ 21

2 KINGS

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 ___ 8 ___ 9 ___ 10 ___ 11 ___ 12 ___ 13 ___ 14 ___ 15 ___ 16 ___ 17 ___ 18 ___ 19 ___ 20 ___ 21 ___ 22 ___ 23 ___ 24 ___ 25

ACTS 22—28

___ 22 ___ 23 ___ 24 ___ 25 ___ 26 ___ 27 ___ 28

1 CHRONICLES 1—14

___ 1—9 ___ 10 ___ 11 ___ 12 ___ 13 ___ 14

ROMANS 1—8

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 ___ 8

1 CHRONICLES 15—29

___ 15 ___ 16 ___ 17 ___ 18 ___ 19 ___ 20 ___ 21 ___ 22 ___ 23—27 ___ 28 ___ 29

ROMANS 9—16

___ 9 ___ 10 ___ 11 ___ 12—13 ___ 14 ___ 15—16

2 CHRONICLES 1—18

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 ___ 8 ___ 9 ___ 10 ___ 11 ___ 12 ___ 13 ___ 14 ___ 15 ___ 16—17 ___ 18

1 CORINTHIANS 1—9

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4—5 ___ 6 ___ 7 ___ 8—9

2 CHRONICLES 19—36

___ 19 ___ 20 ___ 21 ___ 22 ___ 23 ___ 24 ___ 25 ___ 26—27 ___ 28 ___ 29
___ 30 ___ 31 ___ 32 ___ 33 ___ 34 ___ 35 ___ 36

1 CORINTHIANS 10—16

___ 10 ___ 11 ___ 12 ___ 13 ___ 14 ___ 15 ___ 16

EZRA

___ 1—2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 ___ 8 ___ 9 ___ 10

NEHEMIAH

___ 1 ___ 2—3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 ___ 8 ___ 9 ___ 10 ___ 11 ___ 12
___ 13

2 CORINTHIANS

___ 1 ___ 2—3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 ___ 8—9 ___ 10 ___ 11 ___ 12—13

ESTHER

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6—7 ___ 8 ___ 9—10

JOB 1—21

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 ___ 8 ___ 9 ___ 10 ___ 11 ___ 12
___ 13 ___ 14 ___ 15 ___ 16 ___ 17 ___ 18 ___ 19 ___ 20 ___ 21

GALATIANS

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5—6

JOB 22—42

___ 22 ___ 23 ___ 24 ___ 25—26 ___ 27 ___ 28 ___ 29 ___ 30 ___ 31 ___ 32
___ 33 ___ 34 ___ 35 ___ 36 ___ 37 ___ 38 ___ 39 ___ 40 ___ 41 ___ 42

EPHESIANS

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6

PSALMS 1—40

___ 1—2 ___ 3—4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 ___ 8 ___ 9 ___ 10 ___ 11—12 ___ 13
—14 ___ 15—16 ___ 17 ___ 18 ___ 19 ___ 20—21 ___ 22 ___ 23—24
___ 25 ___ 26 ___ 27 ___ 28—29 ___ 30 ___ 31 ___ 32 ___ 33 ___ 34 ___ 35

___ 36 ___ 37 ___ 38 ___ 39 ___ 40

PHILIPPIANS

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4

PSALMS 41—80

___ 41 ___ 42—43 ___ 44 ___ 45 ___ 46—47 ___ 48 ___ 49 ___ 50 ___ 51
___ 52 ___ 53—54 ___ 55 ___ 56 ___ 57 ___ 58 ___ 59 ___ 60—61 ___ 62
___ 63—64 ___ 65 ___ 66 ___ 67 ___ 68 ___ 69 ___ 70 ___ 71 ___ 72 ___ 73
___ 74 ___ 75 ___ 76 ___ 77 ___ 78 ___ 79 ___ 80

COLOSSIANS

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4

PSALMS 81—121

___ 81 ___ 82 ___ 83 ___ 84 ___ 85 ___ 86 ___ 87 ___ 88 ___ 89 ___ 90
___ 91 ___ 92—93 ___ 94 ___ 95 ___ 96 ___ 97 ___ 98—99 ___ 100—101
___ 102 ___ 103 ___ 104 ___ 105 ___ 106 ___ 107 ___ 108 ___ 109 ___ 110
—111 ___ 112 ___ 113 ___ 114 ___ 115 ___ 116—117 ___ 118 ___ 119:1—48
___ 119:49—96 ___ 119:97—144 ___ 119:145—176 ___ 120—121

1 THESSALONIANS

___ 1—2 ___ 3—4 ___ 5

2 THESSALONIANS

___ 1—2 ___ 3

PSALMS 122—150

___ 122—123 ___ 124—125 ___ 126—128 ___ 129—130 ___ 131—132
___ 133—134 ___ 135 ___ 136 ___ 137—138 ___ 139 ___ 140 ___ 141—142
___ 143 ___ 144 ___ 145 ___ 146 ___ 147 ___ 148 ___ 149—150

PROVERBS

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 ___ 8 ___ 9 ___ 10 ___ 11 ___ 12
___ 13 ___ 14 ___ 15 ___ 16 ___ 17 ___ 18 ___ 19 ___ 20 ___ 21 ___ 22
___ 23 ___ 24 ___ 25 ___ 26 ___ 27 ___ 28 ___ 29 ___ 30 ___ 31

1 TIMOTHY

___ 1—2 ___ 3—4 ___ 5 ___ 6

ECCLESIASTES

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 ___ 8 ___ 9 ___ 10 ___ 11 ___ 12

SONG OF SONGS

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 ___ 8

2 TIMOTHY

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4

ISAIAH 1—36

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4—5 ___ 6 ___ 7 ___ 8 ___ 9 ___ 10 ___ 11 ___ 12
___ 13 ___ 14 ___ 15 ___ 16 ___ 17 ___ 18 ___ 19—20 ___ 21 ___ 22 ___ 23
___ 24 ___ 25 ___ 26 ___ 27 ___ 28 ___ 29 ___ 30 ___ 31 ___ 32 ___ 33
___ 34 ___ 35 ___ 36

TITUS

___ 1 ___ 2—3

ISAIAH 37—66

___ 37 ___ 38—39 ___ 40 ___ 41 ___ 42 ___ 43 ___ 44 ___ 45 ___ 46 ___ 47
___ 48 ___ 49 ___ 50 ___ 51 ___ 52 ___ 53 ___ 54 ___ 55 ___ 56 ___ 57
___ 58 ___ 59 ___ 60 ___ 61 ___ 62 ___ 63 ___ 64 ___ 65 ___ 66

PHILEMON

___ Philemon

JEREMIAH 1—26

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 ___ 8 ___ 9 ___ 10 ___ 11 ___ 12
___ 13 ___ 14 ___ 15 ___ 16 ___ 17 ___ 18 ___ 19 ___ 20 ___ 21 ___ 22
___ 23 ___ 24 ___ 25 ___ 26

HEBREWS 1—7

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3—4 ___ 5—6 ___ 7

JEREMIAH 27—52

___ 27 ___ 28 ___ 29 ___ 30 ___ 31 ___ 32 ___ 33 ___ 34 ___ 35 ___ 36
___ 37 ___ 38 ___ 39 ___ 40 ___ 41 ___ 42 ___ 43 ___ 44—45 ___ 46 ___ 47
___ 48 ___ 49 ___ 50 ___ 51 ___ 52

HEBREWS 8—13

___ 8 ___ 9 ___ 10 ___ 11 ___ 12 ___ 13

LAMENTATIONS

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5

EZEKIEL 1—24

___ 1 ___ 2—3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 ___ 8 ___ 9 ___ 10 ___ 11 ___ 12
___ 13 ___ 14 ___ 15 ___ 16 ___ 17 ___ 18 ___ 19 ___ 20 ___ 21 ___ 22
___ 23 ___ 24

JAMES

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3—4 ___ 5

EZEKIEL 25—48

___ 25 ___ 26 ___ 27 ___ 28 ___ 29 ___ 30 ___ 31 ___ 32 ___ 33 ___ 34
___ 35 ___ 36 ___ 37 ___ 38 ___ 39 ___ 40 ___ 41 ___ 42 ___ 43 ___ 44
___ 45 ___ 46 ___ 47 ___ 48

1 PETER

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4—5

DANIEL

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 ___ 8 ___ 9 ___ 10 ___ 11 ___ 12

2 PETER

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3

HOSEA

___ 1 ___ 2—3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6—7 ___ 8 ___ 9 ___ 10 ___ 11—12 ___ 13
—14

1 JOHN

___ 1—2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5

JOEL

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3

AMOS

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 ___ 8 ___ 9

OBADIAH

___ Obadiah

JONAH

___ 1—2 ___ 3—4

2 and 3 JOHN

___ 2 John ___ 3 John

MICAH

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7

NAHUM

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3

JUDE

___ Jude

HABAKKUK

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3

ZEPHANIAH

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3

REVELATION 1—7

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4—5 ___ 6 ___ 7

HAGGAI

___ 1 ___ 2

REVELATION 8—14

___ 8 ___ 9 ___ 10—11 ___ 12 ___ 13 ___ 14

ZECHARIAH

___ 1 ___ 2—3 ___ 4—5 ___ 6 ___ 7 ___ 8 ___ 9 ___ 10 ___ 11 ___ 12—13 ___ 14

MALACHI

___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3—4

REVELATION 15—22

___ 15—16 ___ 17 ___ 18 ___ 19 ___ 20 ___ 21 ___ 22

Life in New Testament Times

Many years ago there were trails that came into the land of Israel. They came from the east and from the north. Other trails came from Egypt in the south.

Traders used these trails to travel from one place to another. They traveled mostly by camel. They bought and sold goods along the way. The trails went *through* Israel. But they also *met* in Israel. It was almost like Israel was the center of the world.

In a way, Israel *was* the center of the world. Jesus was born there. All of the things that happened in Bible times seemed to say, "Israel is a special land."

Places of Worship

The beautiful temple stood in the city of Jerusalem. It was the center of worship for the Jews. Herod rebuilt the temple not long before Jesus was born. The temple was on a hill. Its shining white marble walls could be seen all over the city. Large stone gates opened on all four sides. Jesus called this temple his Father's house (John 2:16).

Each Jewish town also had a smaller meeting place. These were called "synagogues." The leader of the synogogue studied the Old Testament and the Jewish laws. He then could teach the people.

On the inside synagogues looked much like some of our churches. The people sat on benches. The leader stood on a stage. A special box held the scrolls of the books of the Bible.

On the Sabbath day the people came to the synagogue to worship. The leader read a verse to call the people to worship. Then there were readings of thanksgiving and praise. Someone would lead in prayer. After that, the leader might ask someone to read from the Bible. Any member who was able to teach could give the sermon. The service was closed with a blessing.

The Laws of God

God gave the Jews the Ten Commandments and many other laws at Mount Sinai. Many Jews thought that trying to keep the law was the only way to please God. They began to add many of their own laws to God's laws. They began to see themselves as very good people.

Jesus told the Jews that they were going in the wrong direction. They were so busy doing many little things that they were forgetting big things that were more important. They were forgetting to love others. They were forgetting to take care of the poor. They were forgetting to love God.

The Sabbath Day

God gave the people of Israel the Sabbath as a day of rest. On the seventh day of every week they rested from their work. They offered special sacrifices.

The scribes and Pharisees later added hundreds of laws about how people should keep the Sabbath day holy. Then the people forgot that God gave the Sabbath day to be a special day. Instead they just worried about obeying all the rules.

On the Sabbath day people could not travel very far. They could not carry anything from one place to another. They were not supposed to spit on the ground. If they did they might be plowing a little row in the dirt. And that would be work! If a hen laid an egg on the Sabbath, they were not supposed to eat that egg. The hen had worked on the Sabbath to lay it.

When Jesus and his disciples picked some grain and ate it on the Sabbath, the Pharisees said they were working. When Jesus healed sick people on the Sabbath, the Pharisees said he was breaking the law. They got angry and wanted to kill him.

Religious Groups

The most important religious groups in New Testament times were the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Sadducees were rich and powerful men. The high priest, the chief priests and rich businessmen all belonged to the Sadducees. The Sadducees were against any new group that tried to change Jewish life. That's why they were against Jesus and his disciples. The Sadducees also turned away from many of the teachings of the Pharisees. They

did not believe that people would rise from the dead. They did not believe in angels or demons. They did not keep all the laws of the Pharisees. They only kept the law of Moses.

The Pharisees added hundreds of laws to the law God gave Moses. They were mostly interested in keeping all these laws. Many of the Pharisees forgot God's other laws. They were proud of how good they were, but they did not love other people. However, there were also Pharisees who truly loved God and others and tried to do what was right.

Seventy of the most important Pharisees and Sadducees made up the Jewish high court. This court was called the Sanhedrin. The high priest led the court. The Romans let this court decide what to do when someone had broken a Jewish law. But this court did not have the power to put anyone to death. If the Sanhedrin thought someone should die, they had to bring the person to the Roman courts.

The Roman Empire

Rome had begun to grow larger and stronger before Christ was born. Wars were fought and many new lands were added to the Roman Empire. This empire was very large. It included Spain and Germany, North Africa, Asia Minor, Syria and Israel.

Many good things happened because of Roman rule. There was peace among all of the different countries in the empire. The Romans also set up good government everywhere. They built roads for safe and easy travel. Many of the people were able to speak and understand the same language–Greek.

The Romans did not know that all these things would make it easier for the gospel to spread to many lands. They did not know that God had prepared the way for Jesus and the spread of the good news. Later Jesus' disciples traveled more easily to far-away lands because there was peace and because there were good roads. They could bring the gospel in the Greek language to many people in many areas.

Tax Collectors

The Jews hated the Romans. They believed the Romans had no right to rule

over them. They believed the Romans had no right to take their money for taxes. They didn't like the soldiers who lived in their country. The Jews also hated the Romans because they tried to change the Jewish way of life. The Romans wanted everyone to act like Romans. The Jews were looking for the Messiah. They thought he would become their king and would free them from the Romans.

The Jews hated tax collectors even more than Romans. Many tax collectors were Jews who were working for Rome. Many tax collectors were not honest. They took more money than they were supposed to take. They were cheating their own people to help the enemy.

Jesus often talked and ate with tax collectors. Matthew was a tax collector. So was Zacchaeus. Both became followers of Jesus.

Everyday Life

Life in New Testament times was much different from life today. It was a simple life. Most people did not have any extras. In fact, they often had just enough to live. The people worked hard, and children had to share in the work.

The people built their houses of mud bricks that were hardened by laying them out in the sun. Sometimes the front part of the house had no roof over it. This part was like a small yard. Behind it was a living room with small bedrooms at the back. The floor of the house was of hard and smooth clay. Builders made the roof of heavy wooden beams with boards laid across them. They covered the boards with a mixture of mud and straw. This flat roof was a good place to work or to sit. Sometimes people slept on the roof on hot nights. Usually a ladder or sometimes steps led up to the roof.

Most people had very little furniture–just some wooden stools, a low wooden table and some sleeping mats. There was a place for fire and sometimes a small clay oven for baking bread. There was no chimney, so the smoke had to find its way out of the small, high window openings. Some houses had wooden doors. Others had doorways covered with grass mats or cloth.

Food

The people ate foods like milk and cheese, grapes, figs, olives, honey and

barley cakes, eggs, chicken, fish, goat meat, beans, cucumbers and onions.

The first meal of the day was usually bread and cheese. Sometimes a family would eat a light meal at noon. Again, bread was the main part. The people had their large meal of the day in the evening. They usually ate bread and fish, fruit and vegetables. The common people often ate meat only on very special days.

Clothing

The clothing of New Testament times was simple. Besides underclothing, the people wore robes with a belt tied around the waist. Over the robe they often wore a cape. Children usually had shorter, knee-length clothing. They sometimes wore a kind of pull-over shirt. Women decorated their clothing with brightly colored weaving and sewing.

The people wore sandals without socks. Their feet were often dusty from walking on their dirt streets and roads. They washed their feet often.

Work

The people did many different kinds of work. Some were farmers and builders and makers of pottery. Others were bakers and doctors and teachers. There were watchmen who guarded the cities. There were workers in leather and workers in metal. Jesus' father was a carpenter. Jesus also knew about herding sheep. Peter and James and John were fishermen. Matthew was a tax collector. There were scribes who wrote letters and copied the laws and the books of the Bible.

Women had to work hard in their homes. The first thing they would do in the morning was make the bread for the day. They would grind the grain into flour, then make dough into loaves of bread and bake them. The women also had to carry water from the well and get wood for the fire. They made all the clothes for the family, spinning and weaving their own cloth out of flax and wool.

Parents expected their children to help with the work. Girls helped their mothers with all the household work. Boys helped their fathers in their work and were expected to follow the same trade as their fathers.

Schools

Parents taught their children Bible verses when they were still very young. They learned verses from the law and stories from the Old Testament.

When boys were five or six years old, they went to school. The leader of the synagogue taught them. For the first four years, they studied mostly the first five books of the Bible. By then they knew the laws of God very well. They also learned how to read and write Hebrew. For the next several years they studied other books of the Bible and other Jewish writings.

When a Jewish boy reached the age of twelve or thirteen, he was considered to be a man. The boy and his family and friends celebrated with a special ceremony and often a party. Most boys left school at this age.

Conclusion

The time of the New Testament was the best time for Jesus to come. The people were looking and waiting for him. The safe roads made it much easier for early Christians to travel to spread the good news of the Savior. The common language made it much easier for them to tell others about Jesus. People were eager to hear about him. God had everything planned and ready.

DICTIONARY

A

Abyss

The deep pit where Satan and evil spirits will be held in chains.

adultery

1. Having sex with someone who is not the person's husband or wife. 2. Not being faithful or true to God.

altar

A table or raised place where a sacrifice was offered to God.

Amen

A Hebrew word that means *it is true* or *let it be true*.

angel

A spirit who is God's helper and tells people God's words. See also *cherubim.*

anoint

To pour olive oil on people's heads so God will heal them.

anointed

To be set apart as God's special servant.

apostle

1. One of the twelve men who were with Jesus and who later taught others about him. 2. Someone who teaches others about God.

Aramaic

The language many people spoke in Jesus' time.

ark of the covenant

A large gold chest in which the tablets of the covenant were kept.

armor

Special clothing people wore to help keep them safe in battle.

Asherah poles

Sacred wooden poles used to worship the Canaanite mother-goddess and the goddess of the sea.

B

Baal

The name of the main Canaanite god.

Babel

A place where people tried to build a tower up to God.

Babylon

1. The capital city of Babylonia. 2. A word that stands for any powerful, sinful city.

baptize

To sprinkle, pour on or cover a person with water as a sign that sin is washed away.

Beelzebub

Another name for Satan.

blessed

1. Made happy. 2. Helped by God.

C

cast lots

Something done to find out what God wants. It is like drawing straws to see who will go first.

chariot

A two-wheeled cart pulled by war horses.

cherubim

Heavenly creatures who serve God. See also *angel.*

chief priest

See *priest*.

Christ

A Greek word that means the Anointed One. It means the same thing as the Hebrew word Messiah. See also Jesus.

circumcision

Cutting off the loose fold of skin at the end of the male sex organ.

city of refuge

A place of safety for someone who had killed another person by accident.

“clean”

Something that God accepts.

clean animals

Animals that God said were good to eat or give as offerings.

commandment

A law that God gives.

concubine

A woman who belonged to a man but was not his wife under the law.

Council

The most important Jewish court of law in Jesus’ time.

covenant

A treaty between two persons or groups in which promises are made.

crucify

To put people to death by nailing them to crosses.

cud

Food that is brought up from an animal's stomach to its mouth so it can be chewed again.

curse

A prayer or spoken command for evil or harm to come on someone.

D

deacons

Leaders of the church who serve other people.

demon

An evil spirit.

devil

See *Satan*.

disciples

Followers who believe and do what their teacher says.

divorce

The way for a man and woman by law to put an end to their marriage.

dysentery

A sickness that produces watery bowel movements.

E

Eden

The place where God planted a beautiful garden for Adam and Eve.

elders

The leaders who make decisions for a church, town or nation.

eternal

Forever. Without beginning or end.

eunuch

An important royal helper. A man whose sex organs have been altered so he can’t have children.

evil spirit

One of the devil’s helpers.

F

famine

A time when there is not enough food to eat.

fast

To go for a time without eating, sometimes also without drinking.

Feast of Booths

A feast when the Israelites celebrated the harvest of their crops. They lived in tents for eight days.

Feast of Dedication

See *Feast of Hanukkah*.

Feast of Hanukkah

A feast when the Jews celebrated the time when the temple was made pure and set apart for God again.

Feast of Harvest

A day at the end of the grain harvest when Israel gave thanks to God.

Feast of Passover

See *Passover*.

Feast of Unleavened Bread

A time to remember when God set the Israelites free from Egypt. It was celebrated along with the Feast of Passover.

fig

A sweet fruit that grows on trees in warm countries near the sea.

G

glorify

To give praise to. To honor. To worship.

glory

Praise. Honor. Greatness.

God

The Creator and Ruler of the world. The One who saves his people.

grace

God’s kindness to human beings. It is given without being earned.

H

hallelujah

A Hebrew word that means *praise the Lord.*

Hanukkah

See *Feast of Hanukkah.*

harvest

Gathering a crop when it is ready.

heaven

1. God’s home. 2. The sky.

Hebrew

1. Another name for a person in the family line of Abraham. 2. The language spoken by the people of Israel.

Herod

The first name of five men who ruled over Israel for the Roman emperor.

high places

Places where people worshiped other gods.

high priest

The one in charge of everything and everybody at the holy tent and the temple.

holy

Set apart for God. Clean. Pure.

Holy Bread

Twelve loaves of bread placed in the Holy Room in the holy tent each week as an offering.

Holy Spirit

God's Spirit who lives in the hearts of believers and works in their lives.

holy tent

The place the people of Israel used for worship when they were wandering in the desert after leaving Egypt. Years later Solomon built the first temple for worship.

homosexual

Someone who has sex with another person of the same sex.

hosanna

A Hebrew word that means *please save us now.* Later came to be used in praising God.

hymn

A song of praise to God.

hyssop

A plant that was used to sprinkle water or blood to make something clean and pure.

I

incense

Spices that give a pleasing smell when they are burned.

Israel

1. The new name God gave to Jacob. 2. The nation that came from the family line of Jacob. 3. The northern tribes that separated from Judah to serve their own king.

J

Jesus

The Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua, which means *the Lord saves*. See also *Christ.*

Jews

What the people of Israel were called beginning late in the 6th century B.C.

Jubilee

A special year that was celebrated every 50 years in Israel. No crops could be

planted. Any money that was owed was forgiven. Slaves were set free. Property was given back to its first owner.

judge

1. To decide if something is good or bad. 2. A person who decides what is right and wrong in matters of law.

K

kingdom

An area or group of people ruled by a king.

L

law

Rules about what is right and wrong.

Law, the

The first five books of the Bible.

Levites

Men from the tribe of Levi who took care of the holy tent or the temple.

locust

A type of grasshopper that eats and destroys crops.

Lord

A title for God or Christ that shows respect.

lots

See *cast lots*.

M

manger

A food box for animals.

manna

Special food from heaven that God gave to the people of Israel in the desert.

mercy

More kindness and forgiveness than people are worthy to receive.

millstone

A heavy rock used to crush grain to make flour.

miracle

Something very special and wonderful that only God can do.

miraculous signs

Things that are very wonderful and special that only God can do and that point us to him.

N

Nazirites

People who were set apart to God and promised to do something special for him.

O

oath

A special promise made in the sight of God.

offering

Something people give to God as a part of worship.

oxen

Large cattle that are used on the farm because of their size and great strength.

P

Passover

A feast that was celebrated every year to remember the time when God set the people of Israel free from Egypt. God “passed over” their homes if they were marked with blood on the doorways.

pasture

Grasslands for cattle.

Pentecost

A feast that was celebrated 50 days after Passover. On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came to live in Christians.

Pharaoh

The title of any ruler of early Egypt.

Pharisees

A group of Jews who were very careful to follow God's laws and their own rules about God's laws.

Philistines

Powerful enemies of the Israelites during Saul and David's time.

pillar

A tall, upright post that was used to help hold up a building.

pierce

To poke through with a sharp instrument.

pillar of cloud

A cloud the Lord used to lead the people of Israel by day when they were in the desert.

pillar of fire

A column of fire the Lord used to lead the people of Israel by night when they were in the desert.

plague

1. Any sickness that kills many people. 2. Anything that causes a lot of suffering or loss.

plumb line

A string that has a weight tied to the end of it. It is used to tell whether a wall is straight.

pomegranate

A round fruit that has a tough skin, many seeds and a juicy red center.

pregnant

Carrying a baby inside a woman’s body until the baby is born.

Preparation Day

The day before the Sabbath day. People spent this day getting ready for the Sabbath.

priest

A person who served in the holy tent or the temple. He gave his own as well as other people’s offerings and prayers to God.

prophecy

A message God gives to his people through a messenger.

prophesy

1. To give a message from God. 2. To tell what the future will be.

prophet

A person who receives messages from God and tells them to other people.

prostitutes

People who get paid to let others have sex with them.

proverbs

Wise sayings.

psalms

Poems or songs of praise or prayer.

purification

Making clean or pure.

Purim

A feast that celebrated a time when God helped Queen Esther keep the Jews from being killed.

R

Rabbi

A teacher of Jewish law.

Raca

An insult that means someone is foolish.

Redeemer

The One who paid the price to set people free from sin. See also *Jesus.*

resurrection

Coming back to life after being dead.

right hand

The place of honor, power and authority.

S

Sabbath

The seventh day of the week. The day of rest and worship.

sacred

Set apart for God. Holy.

sacrifice

1. To give something to God as an offering. 2. Something that is given to God as an offering.

Sadducees

A group of Jewish leaders who followed only the first five books of the Bible. They did not believe anyone could come back from the dead.

salvation

Being set free from the guilt of sin. Being saved from the power of evil.

Sanhedrin

The most important Jewish court of law in Jesus' time.

Satan

God's most powerful enemy. Also called the devil.

saved

Set free from danger or sin.

Savior

The One who sets us free from our sins. See also *Jesus.*

Scripture

God’s written Word. Also called the Bible.

scroll

A long sheet of paper or animal skin for writing. It was rolled up on two sticks for storage.

seal

1. An object like a ring with a drawing or a pattern cut into it. 2. A mark made by pressing this object into clay, wax or paper.

seer

Another word for a prophet.

shepherd

A person who takes care of sheep.

sinner

A person who does things God does not like.

Son of Man

A name Jesus gave to himself to show he is God’s anointed prophet, priest and king.

soul

A person’s entire spiritual being.

spiritual

Having to do with matters that are connected with God and the Bible.

staff

A stick a shepherd uses to lean on and to take care of sheep.

synagogue

A Jewish place of worship and teaching.

T

tambourine

A hand-held drum with metal pieces around the edge. It rattles when shaken or tapped.

tassels

Hanging groups of thread that are tied together at one end. Usually sewn to the edge of a rug or piece of clothing.

temple

A building where people worship.

tempt

To try to get someone to do something wrong.

threshing floor

The place where heads of grain are beaten or stepped on to separate the grain from the stem.

tomb

A place to bury dead bodies. It was usually a cave with a big stone door.

treason

Being unfaithful to one's country by helping the enemy.

Twelve, the

The men Jesus chose as his first disciples. See also *disciples*.

U

"unclean"

Something that God does not accept.

unleavened bread

A flat bread made without yeast.

Urim and Thummin

Objects that were put into the chest cloth of the high priest. He used them to make decisions for the people of Israel.

V

vineyard

A place where grapes grow.

virgin

A woman who has never had sex with a man.

vision

Something that God puts in a person’s mind. Something like a dream, but the person is usually awake.

W

wafer

A thin cracker.

widow

A woman whose husband has died.

winepress

A place where juice is pressed out of grapes.

wisdom

Understanding that comes from God. Wise thinking.

Y

yeast

Something added to dough to make bread rise.

yoke

A wooden board that fits over the necks of two animals, usually oxen. It holds them together.

Z

Zealot

A Jewish person who wanted to fight and get rid of the Roman rulers.

Zion

1. The city of Jerusalem. 2. The hill on which King David’s house and the temple once stood.

Who's Who in the Bible

Aaron

Aaron was the brother of Moses. He was the first high priest of Israel.

You can read about Aaron in Exodus 4:14–17 and Exodus 28:1—29:46.

Abraham

God told Abraham to move away from his home to a new land. It was hard, but Abraham did what God said.

You can read about Abraham in Genesis 12—23 and 25:1–11.

Adam

Adam was the first person. God made him from the dust of the earth.

You can read about Adam in Genesis 2:4—3:24.

Agrippa

Agrippa was a Roman ruler who wanted to hear for himself what the famous prisoner Paul had to say.

You can read about Agrippa in Acts 25:22—26:3.

Amos

Amos was a shepherd who spoke God's words. The Jews did not do what God said. Amos told the Jews that God would punish them.

You can read the book that Amos wrote to find out more about him.

Ananias and Sapphira

Ananias and Sapphira lied to Peter about land they had sold.

You can read about Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1–10.

Andrew

Andrew took his brother Simon Peter to see Jesus. Andrew became a disciple of Jesus.

You can read about Andrew in John 1:40–42.

Anna

Anna was a prophetess who had waited a long time for Jesus to come. She was there when Jesus was presented at the temple as a baby.

You can read about Anna in Luke 2:36–38.

Balaam

God told Balaam to stay home. Balaam did not listen to God. God had to stop him with an angel and a donkey.

You can learn more about Balaam in Numbers 22:1–35.

Barnabas

Barnabas was a great missionary in the early church. He traveled with Paul on his first missionary journey.

You can read about Barnabas in Acts 13:1–3.

Benjamin

Jacob had twelve sons. Benjamin was his youngest son. Jacob loved him more than his brothers.

You can learn more about Benjamin in Genesis 43.

Caiaphas

Caiaphas was the high priest when Jesus was arrested, tried and killed.

You can read about Caiaphas in John 18:12–14.

Cain and Abel

Cain and Abel were the sons of Adam and Eve. They were the first children ever born.

You can read about Cain and Abel in Genesis 4.

Cornelius

Cornelius was the first Gentile to whom Peter brought the message of Jesus' love.

The story of Cornelius can be found in Acts 10.

Daniel

Daniel was a Jew who lived in Babylon. He was put in a den of lions because he loved God.

You can read a story about Daniel in Daniel 6:1–28.

David

David was a good king of Israel. He loved God and followed God all his life.

You can read a story about David in 2 Samuel 5.

Deborah

Deborah was a judge who helped lead Israel. She was very wise and brave.

You can read about Deborah in Judges 4.

Eli

Eli worked in God's house. He took care of Samuel too.

You can read more about Eli in 1 Samuel 3.

Elijah

Elijah was a man who spoke for God. His words made the king and queen angry. God took care of Elijah and kept him safe.

You can read a story about Elijah in 1 Kings 18:16—19:9.

Elisha

Elisha followed Elijah and helped him. When Elijah was taken to heaven, Elisha spoke for God.

You can read a story about Elisha in 2 Kings 2.

Elizabeth

Elizabeth was an old woman when she had a son, John the Baptist. He told the people that Jesus was coming.

You can read about Elizabeth in Luke 1:5–25, 57–66.

Esther

Esther was the wife of a king. She risked her life to save her people.

You can read about Esther's life in the book of Esther.

Eve

God made Eve from one of Adam's ribs. She was the second person God made. Eve lived in the Garden of Eden with Adam.

You can read about Eve in Genesis 2:18—3:24.

Ezekiel

Ezekiel spoke God's words to the Jews who lived in Babylon. He also wrote about his strange dreams.

You can read a story about Ezekiel in Ezekiel 2:9—3:3.

Gideon

Gideon was a judge who ruled Israel. He won a war with only three hundred soldiers.

You can read about Gideon in Judges 6—7.

Goliath

Goliath was a very tall man. He was an enemy soldier. God sent David to fight Goliath.

You can read about Goliath in 1 Samuel 17.

Haggai and Zechariah

These men spoke for God. They wrote God's words in books while the temple was being rebuilt.

You can read about Haggai and Zechariah in Ezra 5:1—6:14.

Hannah

People made fun of Hannah. She did not have any children. Hannah prayed for a son. God gave her a baby. She named him Samuel.

You can read about Hannah in 1 Samuel 1:1—2:21.

Herod

Several Herods ruled over Israel for the Roman emperor. One Herod tried to kill the baby Jesus and another beheaded John the Baptist.

You can read about these rulers in Matthew 2:3–16 and Matthew 14:1–12.

Hezekiah

Hezekiah was a king of Judah. When he was sick, he prayed to God. God promised to make him well.

You can read about Hezekiah in 2 Kings 18—20.

Hosea

Hosea wrote God's words to the people. He said the Jews left God just like Hosea's wife left him.

You can read a story about Hosea in Hosea 1—3.

Isaac

Isaac was the son of Abraham and Sarah. Sometimes he is called "Israel." Isaac married Rebekah. They had twin sons, Jacob and Esau.

You can read about Isaac in Genesis 24—27.

Isaiah

Isaiah was a man who spoke for God. He lived in the land of Judah. His book tells about the Savior who would come.

You can read a story about Isaiah in 2 Kings 19—20.

Ishmael

Ishmael was the son of Hagar and Abraham. Sarah did not like Ishmael and Hagar. They were sent into the desert.

You can read more about Ishmael in Genesis 16:2–16.

Jacob

Jacob cheated his twin brother and took all of his blessings. His brother was angry. Jacob had to move far away for many years.

You can read about Jacob in Genesis 27—33.

JAMES

James was a half–brother of Jesus and was a leader in the early church. He wrote the book of James.

You can read about James in Acts 21:17–19 and in the book of James.

JAMES AND JOHN

These men were brothers. They were the sons of Zebedee and disciples of Jesus.

You can read a story about James and John in Matthew 20:20–28.

JEREMIAH

Jeremiah was a man who spoke for God. His words made many people angry. He spoke and wrote before the fall of Judah.

You can read a story about Jeremiah in 2 Chronicles 36:10–23.

JESUS

Jesus is the main character of the New Testament. He lived and died in order to bring salvation to the people of the world.

You can read the story of Jesus' birth in Luke 2:1–20.

You can read the story of Jesus' baptism in Matthew 3:13–17.

You can read the story of Jesus' death in Mark 15:33–41.

You can read the story of Jesus' resurrection in Matthew 28.

JEZEBEL

Jezebel was the king's wife. She did not do what God wanted. Jezebel was very bad. She killed the men who spoke for God.

You can read about Jezebel in 1 Kings 21:1–29.

Job

Job was a man who trusted God even when things went wrong.

You can read about Job's life in the book of Job.

John

John, the brother of James, was known as the disciple whom Jesus loved. John wrote the book of John, the three letters of John and the book of Revelation.

You can read a story about John in Acts 4.

John the Baptist

John the Baptist was sent by God to tell the people that Jesus the Savior was coming.

You can read about John the Baptist in Luke 3:1–20.

Jonah

God wanted Jonah to go and tell people to be good, but Jonah ran away.

You can learn more about Jonah in his book. Jonah is also mentioned in Matthew 12:39–41.

Jonathan

Saul's oldest son was named Jonathan. He was also David's best friend.

You can learn more about Jonathan in 1 Samuel 20.

Josiah

Josiah was a little boy who became a king of Judah. He was a good king. He helped turn the people back to God.

You can learn more about Josiah in 2 Kings 23:1–23.

Joseph

Joseph's father loved him, but his brothers hated him. They sold him as a slave. But God made him a ruler who saved many people.

You can read about Joseph in Genesis 39—50.

Joseph

Joseph married Mary, Jesus' mother, after he was visited by an angel messenger from God.

You can read about Joseph in Matthew 1:18–25.

Joseph of Arimathea

Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for Jesus' body. Joseph buried Jesus in a new tomb.

You can read about Joseph of Arimathea in John 19:38–42.

Joshua

Joshua was a spy who later became a leader of Israel.

You can read a story about Joshua in Numbers 13—14.

Judas Iscariot

Judas was one of Jesus' twelve disciples. He handed Jesus over to be crucified for thirty pieces of silver.

You can read about Judas in Matthew 26:14–16, 47–54.

Lazarus

Lazarus was the brother of Mary and Martha. When Lazarus got sick and died, Jesus raised him back to life.

You can read about this event in John 11:1–44.

Lot

Lot lived in Sodom. He was not wise. Lot did not do what God said. He lost all his riches when the city was destroyed.

You can read a story about Lot in Genesis 19:1–29.

Luke

Luke was a physician who traveled with Paul. He talked to many people about Jesus and wrote down what they said in the book of Luke. He also wrote the book of Acts.

Luke is mentioned by Paul in Colossians 4:14.

Mark

Mark, also called John, went along with Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary trip. He wrote the book of Mark, telling in simple language the story of Jesus' ministry.

You can read about Mark in Acts 13:4–5.

Mary

An angel came to tell Mary that she had been chosen by God to be the mother of Jesus.

You can read about Mary in Luke 1:26–38.

Mary and Martha

Mary and Martha opened their home to Jesus whenever he came to Bethany. Their brother was Lazarus.

You can read about Mary and Martha in Luke 10:38–42.

Mary Magdalene

Mary Magdalene was the first of Jesus' followers to learn of his resurrection.

You can read about Mary Magdalene in John 20:10–18.

Matthew

Matthew, also called Levi, was a tax collector. Jesus called him to be a disciple.

You can read about Matthew in Mark 2:13–14.

Moses

Moses was born to a slave family. But he was raised in the Pharaoh's house. God chose Moses to lead the Israelites to freedom.

You can read a story about Moses in Exodus 2.

Naomi

Naomi moved to a new land with her family. Her family died there. Naomi came back to Israel with her son's wife Ruth.

You can read about Naomi in the book of Ruth.

Nicodemus

Nicodemus came at night to talk with Jesus. Jesus told him how he could be born again.

You can read about Nicodemus in John 3:1–21.

Noah

Noah loved God even when no one else did. God saved Noah and his family from a big flood.

You can read about Noah in Genesis 6:9—9:17.

Paul

Paul, who was earlier called Saul, was persecuting the followers of Jesus. Jesus spoke to him on the road to Damascus. Paul became a great missionary. He wrote many of the books of the New Testament.

You can read about Paul in Acts 9:1–18.

Peter

Peter was one of Jesus' disciples. His name had been Simon, but Jesus called him Peter, which means the "Rock." Peter is mentioned often in all the gospels and in Acts. He wrote the books of 1 and 2Peter.

You can read a story about Peter in Matthew 14:22–33.

Pharaoh

All of the kings in Egypt were called Pharaoh. There are many Pharaohs named in the Bible.

You can read about one of the Pharaohs in Genesis 12.

Philemon

Paul wrote to ask Philemon to take back a runaway slave, Onesimus.

You can read about Philemon in the book of Philemon.

Pontius Pilate

Pontius Pilate did not want to be responsible for Jesus' death. He let a mob take Jesus away to be killed.

You can read about Pontius Pilate in Matthew 27:11–26.

Priscilla and Aquila

Priscilla and Aquila were tentmakers with whom Paul worked and lived while he was in Corinth.

You can read about Priscilla and Aquila in Acts 18:1–4.

Rachel

Rachel was Jacob's wife. He worked for her father for seven years to marry her.

You can read about Rachel in Genesis 29—31.

Rahab

Rahab helped two spies from Israel. She was not killed because she had been kind to the men.

You can read about Rahab in Joshua 2 and 6.

Rebekah

Rebekah left her home and family. She went to a new land to marry a man she had never seen before.

You can read about Rebekah in Genesis 24—27.

Ruth

Ruth's family died. She went back to Israel with her husband's mother. There she married Boaz.

You can learn more about Ruth in the book of Ruth.

Samson

Samson was a judge who ruled Israel. He was the strongest man who ever lived. But he was not very wise.

You can read about Samson in Judges 13—16.

Samuel

Samuel spoke God’s words and worked in God’s house. He ruled over Israel for many years.

You can read a story about Samuel in 1 Samuel 1—3.

Sarah

Sarah was Abraham’s wife. She had a baby when she was very old. She named him Isaac.

You can read about Sarah in Genesis 12—23.

Saul

Saul was the first king of Israel. He let his power take him away from God.

You can read a story about Saul in 1 Samuel 15.

Silas

Silas traveled with Paul and helped him on some of his missionary journeys.

You can read about Silas in Acts 15:22, 36–41.

Simeon

Simeon was a very old man who had waited a long time for Jesus to be born. When Jesus was brought to the temple as a baby, Simeon held him and praised God.

You can read about Simeon in Luke 2:25–32.

Solomon

Solomon was the wisest man that ever lived. He was the third king of Israel.

You can read a story about Solomon in 1 Kings 3:3–28.

Stephen

Stephen would not deny his belief in Jesus. He was the first believer to be killed for his faith in Jesus.

You can read about Stephen in Acts 7:54–60.

Thomas

Thomas was a disciple of Jesus. He would not believe at first that Jesus had risen from the dead.

You can read about Thomas in John 20:24–29.

Timothy

Timothy was a young but mature leader in the early church. He often went with the apostle Paul on trips.

You can read about Timothy in 1 and 2Timothy.

Titus

Titus was a friend and helper of Paul.

You can read about Titus in the book of Titus.

Zacchaeus

Zacchaeus was a very short man. He climbed a tree in order to see Jesus in a

crowd. Jesus stopped and spoke to him.

You can read about Zacchaeus in Luke 19:1–10.

Zechariah

Zechariah could not speak after he was told he was to be the father of John the Baptist.

You can read his story in Luke 1:5–25.

Zephaniah

Zephaniah spoke for God. He told King Josiah and the people to do what God said.

You can learn more about Zephaniah in the book of Zephaniah.

Precious Princess: Characteristics of a Princess

You Are God's Precious Princess.
A princess has inner beauty.
A princess is gentle and patient.
A princess is pure.
A princess is strong and brave.
A princess loves.
A princess obeys.
A princess shows respect.
A princess tells the truth.
Princesses and Queens of the Bible

The Old Testament

Genesis

Genesis 1
Genesis 2
Genesis 3
Genesis 4
Genesis 5
Genesis 6
Genesis 7
Genesis 8
Genesis 9
Genesis 10
Genesis 11
Genesis 12
Genesis 13
Genesis 14
Genesis 15
Genesis 16
Genesis 17
Genesis 18
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Genesis 37
Genesis 38
Genesis 39
Genesis 40
Genesis 41
Genesis 42
Genesis 43
Genesis 44
Genesis 45
Genesis 46
Genesis 47
Genesis 48
Genesis 49
Genesis 50

The Beginning

Genesis 1

1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth didn't
have any shape. And it was empty. Darkness was over the surface of the ocean.
At that time, the ocean covered the earth. The Spirit of God was hovering over
the waters.

3 God said, "Let there be light." And there was light. 4 God saw that the
light was good. He separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the
light "day." He called the darkness "night." There was evening, and
there was morning. It was day one.

6 God said, "Let there be a huge space between the waters. Let it separate
water from water." 7 And that's exactly what happened. God made the
huge space between the waters. He separated the water that was under
the space from the water that was above it. 8 God called the huge space
"sky." There was evening, and there was morning. It was day two.

9 God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered into one place. Let dry
ground appear." And that's exactly what happened. 10 God called the dry
ground "land." He called the waters that were gathered together
"oceans." And God saw that it was good.

11 Then God said, "Let the land produce plants. Let them bear their
own seeds. And let there be trees on the land that bear fruit with seeds in
it. Let each kind of plant or tree have its own kind of seeds." And that's
exactly what happened.

12 The land produced plants. Each kind of plant had its own kind of
seeds. The land produced trees that bore fruit with seeds in it. Each kind
of tree had its own kind of seeds.

God saw that it was good. 13 And there was evening, and there was
morning. It was day three.

14 God said, "Let there be lights in the huge space of the sky. Let them

separate the day from the night. Let them serve as signs to mark off the seasons and the days and the years. 15Let them serve as lights in the huge space of the sky to give light on the earth." And that's exactly what happened.

16God made two great lights. He made the larger light to rule over the day. He made the smaller light to rule over the night. He also made the stars.

17God put the lights in the huge space of the sky to give light on the earth. 18He put them there to rule over the day and the night. He put them there to separate light from darkness.

God saw that it was good. 19And there was evening, and there was morning. It was day four.

20God said, "Let the waters be filled with living things. Let birds fly above the earth across the huge space of the sky." 21So God created the great creatures of the ocean. He created every living and moving thing that fills the waters. He created all kinds of them. He created every kind of bird that flies. And God saw that it was good.

22God blessed them. He said, "Have little ones and increase your numbers. Fill the water in the oceans. Let there be more and more birds on the earth."

23There was evening, and there was morning. It was day five.

24God said, "Let the land produce all kinds of living creatures. Let there be livestock, and creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals. Let there be all kinds of them." And that's exactly what happened.

25God made all kinds of wild animals. He made all kinds of livestock. He made all kinds of creatures that move along the ground. And God saw that it was good.

26Then God said, "Let us make man in our likeness. Let them rule over the fish in the waters and the birds of the air. Let them rule over the livestock and over the whole earth. Let them rule over all of the creatures that move along the ground."

27So God created man in his own likeness.
He created him in the likeness of God.
He created them as male and female.

[28]God blessed them. He said to them, “Have children and increase your numbers. Fill the earth and bring it under your control. Rule over the fish in the waters and the birds of the air. Rule over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

[29]Then God said, “I am giving you every plant on the face of the whole earth that bears its own seeds. I am giving you every tree that has fruit with seeds in it. All of them will be given to you for food.

[30]“I am giving every green plant to all of the land animals and the birds of the air for food. I am also giving the plants to all of the creatures that move on the ground. I am giving them to every living thing that breathes.” And that’s exactly what happened.

[31]God saw everything he had made. And it was very good. There was evening, and there was morning. It was day six.

Genesis 2

[1]So the heavens and the earth and everything in them were completed.

[2]By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing. So on the seventh day he rested from all of his work. [3]God blessed the seventh day and made it holy. He rested on it. After he had created everything, he rested from all of the work he had done.

Adam and Eve

[4]Here is the story of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

The LORD God made the earth and the heavens. [5]At that time, bushes had not appeared on the earth. Plants had not come up in the fields. The LORD God had not sent rain on the earth. And there wasn't any man to work the ground. [6]But streams came up from the earth. They watered the whole surface of the ground.

[7]Then the LORD God formed a man. He made him out of the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into him. And the man became a living person.

[8]The LORD God had planted a garden in the east. It was in Eden. There he put the man he had formed. [9]The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground. Their fruit was pleasing to look at and good to eat.

The tree that gives life forever was in the middle of the garden. The tree that gives the ability to tell the difference between good and evil was also there.

[10]A river watered the garden. It flowed from Eden. From there it separated into four other rivers.

[11]The name of the first river is the Pishon. It winds through the whole land of Havilah. Gold is found there. [12]The gold of that land is good. Onyx and sweet-smelling resin are also found there.

[13]The name of the second river is the Gihon. It winds through the whole land

of Cush. 14The name of the third river is the Tigris. It runs along the east side of Asshur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

15The LORD God put the man in the Garden of Eden. He put him there to work its ground and to take care of it.

16The LORD God gave the man a command. He said, “You can eat the fruit of any tree that is in the garden. 17But you must not eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you do, you can be sure that you will die.”

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

19The LORD God had formed all of the wild animals. He had also formed all of the birds of the air. He had made all of them out of the ground. He brought them to the man to see what names he would give them. And the name the man gave each living creature became its name.

20So the man gave names to all of the livestock. He gave names to all of the birds of the air. And he gave names to all of the wild animals.

But Adam didn’t find a helper that was right for him. 21So the LORD God caused him to fall into a deep sleep. While the man was sleeping, the LORD God took out one of his ribs. He closed up the opening that was in his side.

22Then the LORD God made a woman. He made her from the rib he had taken out of the man. And he brought her to him.

23The man said,

> “Her bones have come from my bones.
> Her body has come from my body.
> She will be named ‘woman,’
> because she was taken out of a man.”

24That’s why a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife. The two of them will become one.

25The man and his wife were both naked. They didn’t feel any shame.

Adam and Eve Fall Into Sin

Genesis 3

1 The serpent was more clever than any of the wild animals the LORD God had
made. The serpent said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat
the fruit of any tree that is in the garden’?”

2 The woman said to the serpent, “We can eat the fruit of the trees that are in
the garden. 3 But God did say, ‘You must not eat the fruit of the tree that is in
the middle of the garden. Do not even touch it. If you do, you will die.’ ”

4 “You can be sure that you won’t die,” the serpent said to the woman. 5 “God
knows that when you eat the fruit of that tree, you will know things you have
never known before. You will be able to tell the difference between good and
evil. You will be like God.”

6 The woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good to eat. It was also
pleasing to look at. And it would make a person 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 both of them knew things they had never known before. They realized
they were naked. So they sewed fig leaves together and made clothes for
themselves.

8 Then the man and his wife heard the LORD God walking in the garden. It was
the coolest time of the day. They hid from the LORD God among the trees of the
garden.

9 But the LORD God called out to the man. “Where are you?” he asked.

10 “I heard you in the garden,” the man answered. “I was afraid. I was naked,
so I hid.”

11 The LORD God said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten
the fruit of the tree I commanded you not to eat?”

12 The man said, “It was the woman you put here with me. She gave me some
fruit from the tree. And I ate it.”

13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What have you done?”

The woman said, “The serpent tricked me. That’s why I ate the fruit.”

14 So the LORD God spoke to the serpent. He said, “Because you have done this,

“I am putting a curse on you.
You are cursed more than all of the livestock
and all of the wild animals.
You will crawl on the ground.
You will eat dust
all of the days of your life.
15 I will put hatred
between you and the woman.
Your children and her children will be enemies.
Her son will crush your head.
And you will crush his heel.”

16 The LORD God said to the woman,

“I will greatly increase your pain when you give birth.
You will be in pain when you have children.
You will long for your husband.
And he will rule over you.”

17 The LORD God said to Adam, “You listened to your wife. You ate the fruit of the tree that I commanded you about. I said, ‘You must not eat its fruit.’

“So I am putting a curse on the ground because of what you did.
All the days of your life you will have to work hard
to get food from the ground.
18 You will eat the plants of the field,
even though the ground produces thorns and thistles.
19 You will have to work hard and sweat a lot
to produce the food you eat.
You were made out of the ground.
And you will return to it.
You are dust.
So you will return to it.”

[20]Adam named his wife Eve. She would become the mother of every living person.

[21]The LORD God made clothes out of animal skins for Adam and his wife to wear. [22]The LORD God said, “The man has become like one of us. He can now tell the difference between good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and pick fruit from the tree of life and eat it. If he does, he will live forever.”

[23]So the LORD God drove the man out of the Garden of Eden to work the ground he had been made out of. [24]The LORD God drove him out and then placed cherubim on the east side of the Garden of Eden. He also placed a flaming sword there. It flashed back and forth. The cherubim and the sword guarded the way to the tree of life.

Cain and Abel

Genesis 4

[1]Adam made love to his wife Eve. She became pregnant and gave birth to
Cain. She said, “With the LORD’s help I have had a baby boy.” [2]Later she gave
birth to his brother Abel.

Abel took care of sheep. Cain worked the ground. [3]After some time, Cain
gathered some of the things he had grown. He brought them as an offering to
the LORD.

[4]But Abel brought the fattest parts of some of the lambs from his flock. They
were the male animals that were born first to their mothers.

The LORD was pleased with Abel and his offering. [5]But he wasn’t pleased
with Cain and his offering. So Cain became very angry. His face was sad.

[6]Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why are you looking so
sad? [7]Do what is right. Then you will be accepted. If you don’t do what is
right, sin is waiting at your door to grab you. It longs to have you. But you
must rule over it.”

[8]Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.” So they went out.
There Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

[9]Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?”

“I don’t know,” he replied. “Am I supposed to look after my brother?”

[10]The LORD said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood is
crying out to me from the ground.

[11]“So I am putting a curse on you. I am driving you away from the ground. It
has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. [12]When
you work the ground, it will not produce its crops for you anymore. You will
be a restless person who wanders around on the earth.”

[13]Cain said to the LORD, “You are punishing me more than I can take. [14]Today
you are driving me away from the land. I will be hidden from you. I’ll be a
restless person who wanders around on the earth. Anyone who finds me will

kill me.”

15But the LORD said to him, “No. Anyone who kills you will be paid back seven times.” The LORD put a mark on Cain. Then anyone who found him wouldn’t kill him.

16So Cain went away from the LORD. He lived in the land of Nod. It was east of Eden.

17Cain made love to his wife. She became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. At that time Cain was building a city. He named it after his son Enoch.

18Enoch had a son named Irad. Irad was the father of Mehujael. Mehujael was the father of Methushael. And Methushael was the father of Lamech.

19Lamech married two women. One was named Adah, and the other was named Zillah. 20Adah gave birth to Jabal. He was the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock. 21His brother’s name was Jubal. He was the father of everyone who plays the harp and flute.

22Zillah also had a son. His name was Tubal-Cain. He made all kinds of tools out of bronze and iron. Tubal-Cain’s sister was Naamah.

23Lamech said to his wives,

“Adah and Zillah, listen to me.
You wives of Lamech, hear my words.
I have killed a man because he wounded me.
I have killed a young man because he hurt me.
24Anyone who would have killed Cain would have been paid back seven times.
But anyone who hurts me will be paid back 77 times.”

25Adam made love to his wife again. She gave birth to a son and named him Seth. She said, “God has given me another child. The child will take the place of Abel, because Cain killed him.”

26Seth also had a son. He named him Enosh.

At that time people began to worship the LORD.

The Family Line of Adam

Genesis 5

1 Here is the written story of Adam's family line.

When God created man, he made him in his own likeness. 2 He created them as male and female. He blessed them. And he called them "man" when they were created.

3 When Adam was 130 years old, he had a son in his own likeness. He named him Seth. 4 Adam lived 800 years after Seth was born. He also had other sons and daughters. 5 Adam lived a total of 930 years. Then he died.

6 Seth lived 105 years. Then he became the father of Enosh. 7 Seth lived 807 years after Enosh was born. He also had other sons and daughters. 8 Seth lived a total of 912 years. Then he died.

9 Enosh lived 90 years. Then he became the father of Kenan. 10 Enosh lived 815 years after Kenan was born. He also had other sons and daughters. 11 Enosh lived a total of 905 years. Then he died.

12 Kenan lived 70 years. Then he became the father of Mahalalel. 13 Kenan lived 840 years after Mahalalel was born. He also had other sons and daughters. 14 Kenan lived a total of 910 years. Then he died.

15 Mahalalel lived 65 years. Then he became the father of Jared. 16 Mahalalel lived 830 years after Jared was born. He also had other sons and daughters. 17 Mahalalel lived a total of 895 years. Then he died.

18 Jared lived 162 years. Then he became the father of Enoch. 19 Jared lived 800 years after Enoch was born. He also had other sons and daughters. 20 Jared lived a total of 962 years. Then he died.

21 Enoch lived 65 years. Then he became the father of Methuselah. 22 Enoch walked with God 300 years after Methuselah was born. He also had other sons and daughters. 23 Enoch lived a total of 365 years.

24 Enoch walked with God. Then he couldn't be found, because God took him

from this life.

25 Methuselah lived 187 years. Then he became the father of Lamech.
26 Methuselah lived 782 years after Lamech was born. He also had other sons
and daughters. 27 Methuselah lived a total of 969 years. Then he died.

28 Lamech lived 182 years. Then he had a son. 29 He named him Noah.
Lamech said, “He will comfort us when we are working. He’ll comfort us
when our hands work so hard they hurt. We have to work hard. That’s because
the LORD has put a curse on the ground.”

30 Lamech lived 595 years after Noah was born. He also had other sons and
daughters. 31 Lamech lived a total of 777 years. Then he died.

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

The Flood

Genesis 6

[1]Men began to increase their numbers on the earth, and daughters were born
to them. [2]The sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful. So
they married any of them they chose.

[3]Then the LORD said, “My Spirit will not struggle with man forever. He will
die. He will have only 120 years to live until I judge him.”

[4]The Nephilim were on the earth in those days. That was when the sons of
God went to the daughters of men and had children by them. The Nephilim
were the heroes of long ago. They were famous men. Nephilim were also on
the earth later on.

[5]The LORD saw how bad the sins of man had become on the earth. All of the
thoughts in his heart were always directed only toward what was evil. [6]The
LORD was very sad that he had made man on the earth. His heart was filled with
pain. [7]So the LORD said, “I created man on the earth. But I will wipe them out. I
will destroy people and animals alike. I will also destroy the creatures that
move along the ground and the birds of the air. I am very sad that I have made
man.”

[8]But the LORD was pleased with Noah.

[9]Here is the story of Noah.

Noah was a godly man. He was without blame among the people of his time.
He walked with God. [10]Noah had three sons. Their names were Shem, Ham
and Japheth.

[11]The earth was very sinful in God’s eyes. It was full of mean and harmful
acts. [12]God saw how sinful the earth had become. All of the people on earth
were leading very sinful lives.

[13]So God said to Noah, “I am going to put an end to all people. They have

filled the earth with their harmful acts. You can be sure that I am going to destroy both them and the earth.

14“So make yourself an ark out of cypress wood. Make rooms in it. Cover it with tar inside and out. 15Here is how I want you to build it. The ark has to be 450 feet long. It has to be 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. 16Make a roof for it. Leave the sides of the ark open a foot and a half from the top. Put a door in one side of the ark. Make lower, middle and upper decks.

17“I am going to bring a flood on the earth. It will destroy all life under the sky. It will destroy every living creature that breathes. Everything on earth will die.

18“But I will make my covenant with you. You will enter the ark. Your sons and your wife and your sons’ wives will enter it with you.

19“Bring two of every living thing into the ark. Bring male and female of them into it. They will be kept alive with you. 20Two of every kind of bird will come to you. Two of every kind of animal will come to you. And two of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you. All of them will be kept alive with you.

21“Take every kind of food that you will need. Store it away. It will be food for you and for them.”

22Noah did everything exactly as God commanded him.

Genesis 7

[1]Then the LORD said to Noah, “Go into the ark with your whole family. I know that you are a godly man among the people of today.

[2]“Take seven of every kind of ‘clean’ animal with you. Take male and female of them. Take two of every kind of animal that is not ‘clean.’ Take male and female of them. [3]Also take seven of every kind of bird. Take male and female of them. That will keep every kind alive. Then they can spread out again over the whole earth.

[4]“Seven days from now I will send rain on the earth. It will rain for 40 days and 40 nights. I will destroy from the face of the earth every living thing I have made.”

[5]Noah did everything the LORD commanded him to do.

[6]Noah was 600 years old when the flood came on the earth. [7]He and his sons entered the ark. His wife and his sons’ wives went with them. They entered the ark to escape the waters of the flood.

[8]Pairs of “clean” animals and pairs of animals that were not “clean” came to Noah. So did pairs of birds and pairs of all of the creatures that move along the ground. [9]Male and female of all of them came to Noah and entered the ark.

Everything happened exactly as God had commanded Noah. [10]After seven days the flood came on the earth.

[11]Noah was 600 years old. It was the 17th day of the second month of the year. On that day all of the springs at the bottom of the oceans burst open. God opened the windows of the skies. [12]Rain fell on the earth for 40 days and 40 nights.

[13]On that same day Noah entered the ark together with Shem, Ham and Japheth. Noah’s wife and the wives of his three sons also entered it.

[14]They had every kind of wild animal with them. They had every kind of livestock. They had every kind of creature that moves along the ground. And they had every kind of bird that flies. [15]Pairs of all living creatures that breathe came to Noah and entered the ark. [16]The animals going in were male and female of every living thing.

Everything happened exactly as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD shut him in.

17For 40 days the flood kept coming on the earth. As the waters rose higher, they lifted the ark high above the earth. 18The waters rose higher and higher on the earth. And the ark floated on the water.

19The waters rose on the earth until all of the high mountains under the entire sky were covered. 20The waters continued to rise until they covered the mountains by more than 20 feet.

21Every living thing that moved on the earth died. The birds, the livestock and the wild animals died. All of the creatures that fill the earth also died. And so did every human being. 22Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in it died. 23Every living thing on the earth was wiped out. People and animals were destroyed. The creatures that move along the ground and the birds of the air were wiped out.

Everything was destroyed from the earth. Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark were left.

24The waters flooded the earth for 150 days.

Genesis 8

[1]But God showed concern for Noah. He also showed concern for all of the wild animals and livestock that were with Noah in the ark.

So God sent a wind over the earth. And the waters began to go down. [2]The springs at the bottom of the oceans had been closed. The windows of the skies had been closed. And the rain had stopped falling from the sky.

[3]The water continued to go down from the earth. At the end of the 150 days the water had gone down. [4]On the 17th day of the seventh month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. [5]The waters continued to go down until the tenth month. On the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains could be seen.

[6]After 40 days Noah opened the window he had made in the ark. [7]He sent a raven out. It kept flying back and forth until the water had dried up from the earth.

[8]Then Noah sent a dove out. He wanted to see if the water had gone down from the surface of the ground. [9]But the dove couldn't find any place to put its feet down. There was still water over the whole surface of the earth. So the dove returned to Noah in the ark. Noah reached out his hand and took the dove in. He brought it back to himself in the ark.

[10]He waited seven more days. Then he sent the dove out from the ark again. [11]In the evening the dove returned to him. There in its beak was a freshly picked olive leaf! So Noah knew that the water on the earth had gone down.

[12]He waited seven more days. Then he sent the dove out again. But that time it didn't return to him.

[13]It was the first day of the first month of Noah's 601st year. The water had dried up from the earth. Then Noah removed the covering from the ark. He saw that the surface of the ground was dry. [14]By the 27th day of the second month the earth was completely dry.

[15]Then God said to Noah, [16]"Come out of the ark. Bring your wife and your sons and their wives with you.

[17]"Bring out every kind of living thing that is with you. Bring the birds, the

animals, and all of the creatures that move along the ground. Then they can multiply on the earth. They can have little ones and increase their numbers.”

18So Noah came out of the ark. His sons and his wife and his sons’ wives were with him. 19All of the animals came out of the ark. The creatures that move along the ground also came out. So did all of the birds. Everything that moves on the earth came out of the ark. One kind after another came out.

20Then Noah built an altar to honor the LORD. He took some of all of the “clean” animals and birds. He sacrificed burnt offerings to the LORD on the altar.

21Their smell was pleasant to the LORD. He said to himself, “I will never put a curse on the ground again because of man. I will not do it even though his heart is always directed toward what is evil. His thoughts are evil from the time he is young. I will never destroy all living things again, as I have just done.

22“As long as the earth lasts,
there will always be a time to plant
and a time to gather the crops.
As long as the earth lasts,
there will always be cold and heat.
There will always be summer and winter,
day and night.”

God Makes a Covenant With Noah

Genesis 9

1 Then God gave his blessing to Noah and his sons. He said to them, “Have
children and increase your numbers. Fill the earth.

2 “All of the land animals will be afraid of you. All of the birds of the air will
fear you. Every creature that moves along the ground will fear you. Every fish
in the oceans will also be afraid of you. Every living thing is put under your
control.

3 “Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. I have already given
you the green plants for food. Now I am giving you everything.

4 “But you must not eat meat that still has blood in it. 5 You can be sure that I
will hold someone accountable if you are murdered. I will even hold animals
accountable if they kill you. I will also hold anyone accountable who murders
another person.

6 “Anyone who murders man
will be killed by man.
That is because I have made man
in my own likeness.

7 “Have children and increase your numbers. Multiply on the earth and
increase your numbers on it.”

8 Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons who were with him. He said, 9 “I
am now making my covenant with you and with all of your children who will
be born after you. 10 I am making it also with every living thing that was with
you in the ark. I am making my covenant with the birds, the livestock and all of
the wild animals. I am making it with all of the creatures that came out of the
ark with you. I am making it with every living thing on earth.

11 “Here is my covenant that I am making with you. The waters of a flood will
never destroy all life again. A flood will never destroy the earth again.”

12 God continued, “My covenant is between me and you and every living
thing with you. It is a covenant for all time to come.

“Here is the sign of the covenant I am making. 13 I have put my rainbow in
the clouds. It will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth.
14 Sometimes when I bring clouds over the earth, a rainbow will appear in
them. 15 Then I will remember my covenant between me and you and every
kind of living thing. The waters will never become a flood to destroy all life
again.

16 “When the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it. I will remember that
my covenant will last forever. It is a covenant between me and every kind of
living thing on earth.”

17 So God said to Noah, “The rainbow is the sign of my covenant. I have
made my covenant between me and all life on earth.”

The Sons of Noah

18 The sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham and Japheth.
Ham was the father of Canaan. 19 The people who were scattered over the earth
came from Noah’s three sons.

20 Noah was a man who worked the ground. He decided to plant a vineyard.
21 He drank some of its wine. It made him drunk. Then he lay down inside his
tent without any clothes on. 22 Ham saw his father’s naked body. Ham was the
father of Canaan. Ham went outside and told his two brothers.

23 But Shem and Japheth took a piece of clothing. They laid it across their
shoulders. Then they walked backward into the tent. They covered their
father’s body. They turned their faces away. They didn’t want to see their
father’s naked body.

24 Then Noah woke up from his sleep that was caused by the wine. He found
out what his youngest son had done to him. 25 He said,

> “May a curse be put on Canaan.
> He will be the lowest of slaves to his brothers.”

[26]Noah also said,

"May the LORD, the God of Shem, be blessed.
May Canaan be the slave of Shem.
[27]May God add land to Japheth's territory.
May Japheth live in the tents of Shem.
And may Canaan be their slave."

[28]After the flood Noah lived 350 years. [29]Noah lived a total of 950 years. Then he died.

A List of Nations

Genesis 10

1 Here is the story of Shem, Ham and Japheth. They were Noah's sons. After
the flood, they too had sons.

The Sons of Japheth

2 The sons of Japheth were

Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech and Tiras.

3 The sons of Gomer were

Ashkenaz, Riphath and Togarmah.

4 The sons of Javan were

Elishah, Tarshish, the Kittim and the Rodanites. 5 The people who lived
by the sea came from all of them. Their tribes and nations spread out
into their own territories. Each tribe and nation had its own language.

The Sons of Ham

6 The sons of Ham were

Cush, Egypt, Put and Canaan.

7 The sons of Cush were

Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah and Sabteca.

The sons of Raamah were

Sheba and Dedan.

8 Cush was the father of Nimrod. Nimrod grew up to be a mighty hero on the
earth. 9 He was a mighty hunter in the LORD's eyes. That's why people
sometimes compare others with Nimrod. They say, "They are like Nimrod,
who is a mighty hunter in the LORD's eyes."

10 At first Nimrod's kingdom was made up of Babylon, Erech, Akkad and

Calneh. Those cities were in the land of Babylonia.

[11]From that land he went to Assyria. There he built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir and Calah. [12]He also built Resen. It is between Nineveh and Calah. Nineveh is the great city.

[13]Egypt was the father of

the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites and Naphtuhites. [14]He was also the father of the Pathrusites, Casluhites and Caphtorites. The Philistines came from the Casluhites.

[15]Canaan was the father of

Sidon. Sidon was his oldest son. Canaan was also the father of the Hittites, [16]Jebusites, Amorites and Girgashites. [17]And he was the father of the Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, [18]Arvadites, Zemarites and Hamathites.

Later the Canaanite tribes scattered. [19]The borders of Canaan went from Sidon toward Gerar all the way to Gaza. Then they went toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim all the way to Lasha.

[20]Those are the sons of Ham. They are listed by their tribes and languages in their territories and nations.

The Sons of Shem

[21]Sons were also born to Shem. Shem was Japheth's younger brother. All of the sons of Eber came from Shem.

[22]The sons of Shem were

Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud and Aram.

[23]The sons of Aram were

Uz, Hul, Gether and Meshech.

[24]Arphaxad was the father of Shelah.

Shelah was the father of Eber.

[25]Eber was the father of two sons.

One was named Peleg. That’s because the earth was divided up in his time. His brother was named Joktan.

[26]Joktan was the father of

Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth and Jerah. [27]He was also the father of Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, [28]Obal, Abimael, Sheba, [29]Ophir, Havilah and Jobab. All of them were sons of Joktan.

[30]The area where they lived stretched from Mesha toward Sephar. It was in the eastern hill country.

[31]Those are the sons of Shem. They are listed by their tribes and languages in their territories and nations.

[32]Those are the tribes of Noah’s sons. They are listed by their family lines within their nations. From them the nations spread out over the earth after the flood.

The Tower of Babel

Genesis 11

[1]The whole world had only one language. All people spoke it. [2]They moved to the east and found a broad valley in Babylonia. There they settled down.

[3]They said to each other, “Come. Let’s make bricks and bake them well.” They used bricks instead of stones. They used tar to hold the bricks together.

[4]Then they said, “Come. Let’s build a city for ourselves. Let’s build a tower that reaches to the sky. We’ll make a name for ourselves. Then we won’t be scattered over the face of the whole earth.”

[5]But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. [6]The LORD said, “They are one people. And all of them speak the same language. That is why they can do this. Now they will be able to do anything they plan to. [7]Come. Let us go down and mix up their language. Then they will not understand each other.”

[8]So the LORD scattered them from there over the whole earth. And they stopped building the city. [9]The LORD mixed up the language of the whole world there. That’s why the city was named Babel. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

The Family Line of Shem

[10]Here is the story of Shem.

It was two years after the flood. When Shem was 100 years old, he became the father of Arphaxad. [11]After Arphaxad was born, Shem lived 500 years. And he had other sons and daughters.

[12]When Arphaxad had lived 35 years, he became the father of Shelah. [13]After Shelah was born, Arphaxad lived 403 years. And he had other sons and daughters.

[14]When Shelah had lived 30 years, he became the father of Eber. [15]After Eber was born, Shelah lived 403 years. And he had other sons and daughters.

[16]When Eber had lived 34 years, he became the father of Peleg. [17]After Peleg was born, Eber lived 430 years. And he had other sons and daughters.

[18]When Peleg had lived 30 years, he became the father of Reu. [19]After Reu was born, Peleg lived 209 years. And he had other sons and daughters.

[20]When Reu had lived 32 years, he became the father of Serug. [21]After Serug was born, Reu lived 207 years. And he had other sons and daughters.

[22]When Serug had lived 30 years, he became the father of Nahor. [23]After Nahor was born, Serug lived 200 years. And he had other sons and daughters.

[24]When Nahor had lived 29 years, he became the father of Terah. [25]After Terah was born, Nahor lived 119 years. And he had other sons and daughters.

[26]Terah lived for 70 years. Then he became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran.

[27]Here is the story of Terah.

Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran. And Haran became the father of Lot. [28]Haran died in Ur in Babylonia. That was the land where he had been born. Haran died while his father Terah was still alive.

[29]Abram and Nahor both got married. The name of Abram’s wife was Sarai. The name of Nahor’s wife was Milcah. She was the daughter of Haran. Haran was the father of Milcah and Iscah. [30]But Sarai wasn’t able to have children.

[31]Terah started out from Ur in Babylonia. He took his son Abram with him. He also took his grandson Lot. Lot was the son of Haran. And Terah took his daughter-in-law Sarai. She was the wife of his son Abram.

All of them left together to go to Canaan. But when they came to Haran, they settled down.

[32]Terah lived for 205 years. He died in Haran.

God Chooses Abram

Genesis 12

1 The LORD had said to Abram, “Leave your country and your people. Leave
your father’s family. Go to the land I will show you.

2 “I will make you into a great nation.
I will bless you.
I will make your name great.
You will be a blessing to others.
3 I will bless those who bless you.
I will put a curse on anyone who calls down a curse on you.
All nations on earth
will be blessed because of you.”

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

5 He took his wife Sarai and his nephew Lot. They took all of the things they
had gotten in Haran. They also took the workers they had gotten there.

They set out for the land of Canaan. And they arrived there.

6 Abram traveled through the land. He went as far as the large tree of Moreh
at Shechem. At that time the people of Canaan were living in the land.

7 The LORD appeared to Abram at Shechem. He said, “I will give this land to
your children after you.” So Abram built an altar there to honor the LORD, who
had appeared to him.

8 From there, Abram went on toward the hills east of Bethel. He set up his tent
there. Bethel was to the west, and Ai was to the east.

Abram built an altar there and worshiped the LORD. 9 Then Abram left and
continued toward the Negev Desert.

Abram Goes to Egypt

10 At that time there wasn't enough food in the land. So Abram went down to
Egypt to live there for a while.

11 As he was about to enter Egypt, he spoke to his wife Sarai. He said, "I
know what a beautiful woman you are. 12 The people of Egypt will see you.
They will say, 'This is his wife.' And they will kill me. But they will let you
live. 13 Say you are my sister. Then I'll be treated well because of you. My life
will be spared because of you."

14 Abram arrived in Egypt. The people of Egypt saw that Sarai was a very
beautiful woman. 15 When Pharaoh's officials saw her, they bragged to Pharaoh
about her. Sarai was taken into his palace.

16 Pharaoh treated Abram well because of her. So Abram gained more sheep
and cattle. He also got more male and female donkeys. And he gained more
male and female servants and some camels.

17 But the LORD sent terrible sicknesses on Pharaoh and everyone in his
palace. He did it because of Abram's wife Sarai.

18 So Pharaoh sent for Abram. "What have you done to me?" he said. "Why
didn't you tell me she was your wife? 19 Why did you say, 'She's my sister'?
That's why I took her to be my wife. Now then, here's your wife. Take her and
go!"

20 Then Pharaoh gave orders about Abram to his men. They sent him on his
way. He left with his wife and everything he had.

Abram and Lot Separate

Genesis 13

1 Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev Desert. He took his wife and
everything he had. Lot went with him. 2 Abram had become very rich. He had a
lot of livestock and silver and gold.

3 From the Negev Desert, he went from place to place until he came to Bethel.
He came to a place between Bethel and Ai. That's where his tent had been
earlier. 4 He had also built an altar there. He worshiped the LORD there.

5 Lot was moving around with Abram. Lot also had flocks and herds and
tents.

6 But the land didn't have enough food for both of them. They had large herds
and many servants. So they weren't able to stay together. 7 The people who
took care of Abram's herds and those who took care of Lot's herds began to
argue.

The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time.

8 So Abram said to Lot, "Let's not argue with each other. The people who take
care of your herds and those who take care of mine shouldn't argue with one
another. After all, we're part of the same family.

9 "Isn't the whole land in front of you? Let's separate. If you go to the left, I'll
go to the right. If you go to the right, I'll go to the left."

10 Lot looked up. He saw that the whole Jordan River valley had plenty of
water. It was like the garden of the LORD. It was like the land of Egypt near
Zoar. That was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.

11 So Lot chose the whole Jordan River valley for himself. Then he started out
toward the east.

The two men separated. 12 Abram lived in the land of Canaan. Lot lived
among the cities of the Jordan River valley. He set up his tents near Sodom.

13 The men of Sodom were evil. They were sinning greatly against the LORD.

14 The LORD spoke to Abram after Lot had left him. He said, "Look up from

where you are. Look north and south. Look east and west. [15]I will give you all of the land that you see. I will give it to you and your children after you forever.

[16]“I will make your children like the dust of the earth. Can dust be counted? If it can, then your children can be counted. [17]Go. Walk through the land. See how long and wide it is. I am giving it to you.”

[18]So Abram moved his tents. He went to live near the large trees of Mamre at Hebron. There he built an altar to honor the LORD.

Abram Saves Lot

Genesis 14

[1]At that time Amraphel was the king of Babylonia. Arioch was the king of Ellasar. Kedorlaomer was the king of Elam. And Tidal was the king of Goiim.

[2]They went to war against five kings. The kings were Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela. Bela was also called Zoar.

[3]Those five kings all gathered their armies together in the Valley of Siddim. It was the valley of the Dead Sea. [4]For 12 years they had been under the rule of Kedorlaomer. But in the 13th year they opposed him.

[5]In the 14th year, Kedorlaomer and the kings who helped him went to war. They won the battle against the Rephaites in Ashteroth Karnaim. They also won the battle against the Zuzites in Ham and the Emites in Shaveh Kiriathaim. [6]They did the same thing to the Horites in the hill country of Seir. They marched all the way to El Paran near the desert.

[7]Then they turned back. They went to En Mishpat. En Mishpat was also called Kadesh. They took over the whole territory of the Amalekites. They also won the battle against the Amorites who were living in Hazazon Tamar.

[8]Then the king of Sodom and the king of Gomorrah marched out. The kings of Admah, Zeboiim and Bela went with them. Bela was also called Zoar.

They lined up their armies for battle in the Valley of Siddim. [9]They got ready to fight against Kedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of Goiim, Amraphel king of Babylonia, and Arioch king of Ellasar. There were four kings against five.

[10]The Valley of Siddim was full of tar pits. The kings of Sodom and Gomorrah ran away from the battle. Some of their men fell into the pits. The rest escaped to the hills.

[11]The four kings took all of the things that belonged to Sodom and Gomorrah. They also took all of their food. Then they went away.

[12]They carried away Lot, Abram’s nephew, and the things he owned. Lot was

living in Sodom at that time.

13One man escaped. He came and reported everything to Abram. Abram was a Hebrew. He was living near the large trees of Mamre the Amorite. Mamre was a brother of Eshcol and Aner. All of them helped Abram.

14Abram heard that Lot had been captured. So he called out his 318 trained men. All of them were sons of his servants. They chased the enemy as far as Dan. 15During the night Abram separated his men into groups. They attacked the enemy and drove them away. They chased them north of Damascus as far as Hobah.

16Abram took back all of the things the kings had taken. He brought back his nephew Lot and the things Lot owned. He also brought back the women and the other people.

17After Abram won the battle over Kedorlaomer and the kings who helped him, he returned. The king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh. The Valley of Shaveh was also called the King's Valley.

18Melchizedek was the king of Jerusalem. He brought out bread and wine. He was the priest of God Most High. 19He gave a blessing to Abram. He said,

"May God Most High bless Abram.
May the Creator of heaven and earth bless him.
20Give praise to God Most High.
He gave your enemies into your hand."

Then Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of everything.

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

22But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to the LORD. He is God Most High. He is the Creator of heaven and earth. I have taken an oath. 23I have said that I won't accept anything that belongs to you. I won't take even a thread or the strap of a sandal. You will never be able to say, 'I made Abram rich.'

24"I'll accept only what my men have eaten and what belongs to Aner, Eshcol and Mamre. Those three men went with me. Let them have their share."

God Makes a Covenant With Abram

Genesis 15

1 Some time later, Abram had a vision. The LORD said to him,

> "Abram, do not be afraid.
> I am like a shield to you.
> I am your very great reward."

2 But Abram said, "LORD and King, what can you give me? I still don't have
any children. My servant Eliezer comes from Damascus. When I die, he will
get everything I own." 3 Abram continued, "You haven't given me any children.
So a servant in my house will get everything I own."

4 Then a message came to Abram from the LORD. He said, "This man will not
get what belongs to you. A son will come from your own body. He will get
everything you own."

5 The LORD took Abram outside and said, "Look up at the sky. Count the stars,
if you can." Then he said to him, "That is how many children you will have."

6 Abram believed the LORD. The LORD accepted Abram because he believed.
So his faith made him right with the LORD.

7 He also said to Abram, "I am the LORD. I brought you out of Ur in
Babylonia. I wanted to give you this land to take as your very own."

8 But Abram said, "LORD and King, how can I know I will take this land as my
own?"

9 So the LORD said to him, "Bring me a young cow. Also bring a goat and a
ram. All of them must be three years old. Bring a dove and a young pigeon
along with them."

10 Abram brought all of them to the LORD. Abram cut them in two. He placed
the halves opposite each other. But he didn't cut the birds in half. 11 Then large
birds came down to eat the dead bodies of the animals and birds. But Abram
chased the large birds away.

12 As the sun was going down, Abram fell into a deep sleep. A thick and
terrible darkness covered him.

13 Then the LORD said to him, “You can be sure of what I am about to tell you.
Your children who live after you will be strangers in a country that does not
belong to them. They will become slaves. They will be treated badly for 400
years. 14 But I will punish the nation that makes them slaves. After that, they
will leave with all kinds of valuable things.

15 “But you will die in peace. You will join the members of your family who
have already died. You will be buried when you are very old.

16 “Your children’s grandchildren will come back here. That is because the sin
of the Amorites has not yet reached the point where I must judge them.”

17 The sun set and darkness fell. Then a burning torch and a fire pot filled with
smoke appeared. They passed between the pieces of the animals.

18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram. He said, “I am giving
this land to your children after you. It reaches from the river of Egypt to the
great river Euphrates. 19 It includes the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites,
Kadmonites, 20 Hittites, Perizzites and Rephaites. 21 The Amorites, Canaanites,
Girgashites and Jebusites also live there.”

Hagar and Ishmael

Genesis 16

[1]Abram's wife Sarai had never had any children by him. But she had a female servant from Egypt named Hagar. [2]So she said to Abram, "The LORD has kept me from having children. Go and make love to my servant. Maybe I can have a family through her."

Abram agreed to what Sarai had said. [3]After he had been living in Canaan for ten years, his wife Sarai gave him her servant Hagar to be his wife. [4]He made love to Hagar. And she became pregnant.

When Hagar knew she was pregnant, she began to look down on the woman who owned her.

[5]Then Sarai said to Abram, "It's your fault that I'm suffering like this. I put my servant in your arms. Now that she knows she's pregnant, she looks down on me. May the LORD judge between you and me. May he decide which of us is right."

[6]"Your servant belongs to you," Abram said. "Do with her what you think is best." Then Sarai treated Hagar badly. So Hagar ran away from her.

[7]The angel of the LORD found Hagar near a spring of water in the desert. The spring was beside the road to Shur. [8]He said, "Hagar, you are the servant of Sarai. Where have you come from? Where are you going?"

"I'm running away from my owner Sarai," she answered.

[9]Then the angel of the LORD told her, "Go back to the woman who owns you. Obey her." [10]The angel continued, "I will greatly increase the number of your children after you. You will have more of them than anyone can count."

[11]The angel of the LORD also said to her,

"You are now pregnant.
  You will have a son.
You will name him Ishmael.
  That is because the LORD has heard about your suffering.

12 He will be like a wild donkey.
He will use his power against everyone.
And everyone will be against him.
He will not be friendly
toward any of his relatives.”

13 She gave a name to the LORD who spoke to her. She called him “You are the God who sees me.” That’s because she said, “I have now seen the One who sees me.”

14 That’s why the well was named Beer Lahai Roi. It’s still there, between Kadesh and Bered.

15 So Hagar had a son by Abram. And Abram gave the name Ishmael to the son she had by him. 16 Abram was 86 years old when Hagar had Ishmael by him.

The Covenant of Circumcision

Genesis 17

1When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD appeared to him. He said, “I am the
Mighty God. Walk with me and live without any blame. 2I will now put into
practice my covenant between me and you. I will greatly increase your
numbers.”

3Abram fell with his face to the ground. God said to him, 4“As for me, this is
my covenant with you. You will be the father of many nations.

5“You will not be called Abram anymore. Your name will be Abraham,
because I have made you a father of many nations. 6I will give you many
children. Nations will come from you. And kings will come from you.

7“I will make my covenant with you. It will last forever. It will be between
me and you and your children after you for all time to come. I will be your
God. And I will be the God of all of your family after you.

8“You are now living in Canaan as an outsider. But I will give you the whole
land of Canaan. You will own it forever. So will your children after you. And I
will be their God.”

9Then God said to Abraham, “As for you, you must keep my covenant. You
and your children after you for all time to come must keep it.

10“Here is my covenant that you and your children after you must keep.
Every male among you must be circumcised. 11You must be circumcised. That
will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. 12It must be done for all
time to come.

“Every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised. That
includes those who are born in your house. It also includes those who are
bought with money from a stranger. Even those who are not your own children
must be included. 13Any male who is born in your house or bought with your
money must be circumcised.

“My covenant will last forever. Your body will have the mark of my covenant
on it.

14“Any male who has not been circumcised will be cut off from his people.
He has broken my covenant.”

15God also said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, do not call her Sarai
anymore. Her name will be Sarah. 16I will give her my blessing. You can be
sure that I will give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the
mother of nations. Kings of nations will come from her.”

17Abraham fell with his face to the ground. He laughed and said to himself,
“Will a son be born to a man who is 100 years old? Will Sarah have a child at
the age of 90?”

18Abraham said to God, “I wish Ishmael could receive your blessing!”

19Then God said, “I will bless Ishmael. But your wife Sarah will have a son
by you. And you will name him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him. It
will be a covenant that lasts forever. It will be for Isaac and for his family after
him.

20“As for Ishmael, I have heard you. You can be sure that I will bless him. I
will give him children. I will greatly increase his numbers. He will be the
father of 12 rulers. And I will make him into a great nation.

21“But I will establish my covenant with Isaac. By this time next year, Sarah
will have a son by you.”

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

23On that very day Abraham circumcised his son Ishmael. He also
circumcised every male who was born in his house or bought with his money.
He did exactly as God had told him. 24Abraham was 99 years old when he was
circumcised. 25His son Ishmael was 13.

26Abraham and his son Ishmael were both circumcised on that same day.
27And every male in Abraham’s house was circumcised along with him. That
included those who were born in his house or bought from a stranger.

Three Men Visit Abraham

Genesis 18

1 The LORD appeared to Abraham near the large trees of Mamre. Abraham was
sitting at the entrance to his tent. It was the hottest time of the day.

2 Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. He quickly left the
entrance to his tent to meet them. He bowed low to the ground.

3 He said, “My lord, if you are pleased with me, don’t pass me by. 4 Let a little
water be brought. All of you can wash your feet and rest under this tree.

5 “Let me get you something to eat to give you strength. Then you can go on
your way. I want to do this for you now that you have come to me.”

“All right,” they answered. “Go ahead and do it.”

6 So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah. “Quick!” he said. “Get about half
a bushel of fine flour. Mix it and bake some bread.”

7 Then he ran to the herd. He picked out a choice, tender calf. He gave it to a
servant, who hurried to prepare it. 8 Then he brought some butter and milk and
the calf that had been prepared. He served them to the three men.

While they ate, he stood near them under a tree.

9 “Where is your wife Sarah?” they asked him.

“Over there, in the tent,” he said.

10 Then the LORD said, “You can be sure that I will return to you about this
time next year. Your wife Sarah will have a son.”

Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent behind him. 11 Abraham and
Sarah were already very old. Sarah was too old to have a baby. 12 So she
laughed to herself. She thought, “I’m worn out, and my husband is old. Can I
really know the joy of having a baby?”

13 Then the LORD said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh? Why did she say,
‘Will I really have a baby, now that I am old?’ 14 Is anything too hard for me? I
will return to you at the appointed time next year. Sarah will have a son.”

15 Sarah was afraid. So she lied and said, “I didn’t laugh.”

But the LORD said, “Yes, you did.”

Abraham Makes an Appeal for Sodom

16 The men got up to leave. They looked down toward Sodom. Abraham walked along with them to see them on their way.

17 Then the LORD said, “Should I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? 18 He will certainly become a great and powerful nation. All nations on earth will be blessed because of him.

19 “I have chosen him. He must direct his children. He must see that the members of his family after him live the way I want them to. So he must direct them to do what is right and fair. Then I, the LORD, will do for Abraham what I have promised him.”

20 The LORD said, “The cries against Sodom and Gomorrah are very great. Their sin is so bad 21 that I will go down and see for myself. I want to see if what they have done is as bad as the cries that have reached me. If it is not, then I will know.”

22 The men turned away. They went toward Sodom. But Abraham remained standing in front of the LORD.

23 Then Abraham came up to him. He said, “Will you sweep away godly people along with those who are evil? 24 What if there are 50 godly people in the city? Will you really sweep it away? Won’t you spare the place because of the 50 godly people in it?

25 “You would never kill godly people along with those who are evil, would you? You wouldn’t treat godly and evil people alike. You would never do anything like that! Won’t the Judge of the whole earth do what is right?”

26 The LORD said, “If I find 50 godly people in the city of Sodom, I will save it. I will spare the whole place because of them.”

27 Then Abraham spoke up again. He said, “I have been very bold to speak to the Lord. After all, I’m only dust and ashes. 28 What if the number of godly people is five less than 50? Will you destroy the whole city because of five people?”

“If I find 45 there,” he said, “I will not destroy it.”

29Once again Abraham spoke to him. He asked, “What if only 40 are found there?”

He said, “If there are 40, I will not do it.”

30Then Abraham said, “Lord, don’t let your anger burn against me. Let me speak. What if only 30 can be found there?”

He answered, “If there are 30, I will not do it.”

31Abraham said, “I have been very bold to speak to the Lord. What if only 20 are found there?”

He said, “If there are 20, I will not destroy it.”

32Then he said, “Lord, don’t let your anger burn against me. Let me speak just one more time. What if only ten are found there?”

He answered, “If there are ten, I will not destroy it.”

33When the LORD had finished speaking with Abraham, he left. And Abraham returned home.

The LORD Destroys Sodom and Gomorrah

Genesis 19

1 The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening. Lot was sitting near the
gate of the city.

When Lot saw them, he got up to meet them. He bowed down with his face
to the ground. 2 "My lords," he said, "please come to my house. You can wash
your feet and spend the night here. Then you can go on your way early in the
morning."

"No," they answered. "We'll spend the night in the street."

3 But Lot wouldn't give up. So they went with him and entered his house. He
prepared a meal for them. He baked bread without using yeast. And they ate.

4 Before Lot and his guests had gone to bed, all of the men came from every
part of the city of Sodom. Young and old men alike surrounded the house.
5 They called out to Lot. They said, "Where are the men who came to you
tonight? Bring them out to us. We want to have sex with them."

6 Lot went outside to meet them. He shut the door behind him. 7 He said, "No,
my friends. Don't do such an evil thing. 8 Look, I have two daughters. No man
has ever made love to them. I'll bring them out to you now. Then do to them
what you want to. But don't do anything to these men. I've brought them
inside so they can be safe."

9 "Get out of our way!" the men of Sodom replied. They said, "This fellow
came here as an outsider. Now he wants to act like a judge! We'll treat you
worse than them." They kept trying to force Lot to open the door. Then they
moved forward to break it down.

10 But the men inside reached out and pulled Lot back into the house. They
shut the door. 11 Then they made the men who were at the door of the house
blind. They blinded young and old men alike. So the men couldn't find the
door.

12 The two men said to Lot, "Do you have anyone else here? Do you have
sons-in-law, sons or daughters? Does anyone else in the city belong to you?

Get them out of here. [13]We are going to destroy this place. There has been a great cry to the LORD against the people of this city. So he has sent us to destroy it."

[14]Then Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law. They had promised to get married to his daughters. He said, "Hurry up! Get out of this place! The LORD is about to destroy the city!" But his sons-in-law thought he was joking.

[15]The sun was coming up. So the angels tried to get Lot to leave. They said, "Hurry up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here. Get out! If you don't, you will be swept away when the city is punished."

[16]Lot didn't move right away. So the men grabbed him by the hand. They also took hold of the hands of his wife and two daughters. They led all of them safely out of the city. The LORD had mercy on them.

[17]As soon as the angels had brought them out, one of them spoke. He said, "Run for your lives! Don't look back! Don't stop anywhere in the valley! Run to the mountains! If you don't, you will be swept away!"

[18]But Lot said to them, "No, my lords! Please! [19]You have done me a big favor. You have been very kind to me by sparing my life. But I can't run to the mountains. This horrible thing that's going to happen will catch up with me. And then I'll die.

[20]"Look, here's a town near enough to run to. It's small. Let me run to it. It's very small, isn't it? Then my life will be spared."

[21]The LORD said to Lot, "All right. I will also give you what you are asking for. I will not destroy the town you are talking about. [22]But run there quickly. I can't do anything until you reach it."

The town was named Zoar. Zoar means "small."

[23]By the time Lot reached Zoar, the sun had risen over the land. [24]Then the LORD sent down burning sulfur. It came down like rain on Sodom and Gomorrah. It came from the LORD out of the sky. [25]He destroyed those cities and the whole valley. All of the people who were living in the cities were wiped out. So were the plants in the land.

[26]But Lot's wife looked back. When she did, she became a pillar made out of salt.

[27]Early the next morning Abraham got up. He returned to the place where he had stood in front of the LORD. [28]He looked down toward Sodom and

Gomorrah and the whole valley. He saw thick smoke rising from the land. It looked like smoke from a furnace.

29So when God destroyed the cities of the valley, he showed concern for Abraham. He brought Lot out safely when he destroyed the cities where Lot had lived.

Lot and His Daughters

30Lot and his two daughters left Zoar. They went to settle down in the mountains. Lot was afraid to stay in Zoar. So he and his daughters lived in a cave.

31One day the older daughter spoke to the younger one. She said, “Our father is old. There aren’t any other men around here to make love to, as people all over the earth do. 32So let’s get our father to drink wine. Then we can make love to him. We can use our father to continue our family line.”

33That night they got their father to drink wine. Then the older daughter went in and made love to him. He didn’t know when she lay down or when she got up.

34The next day the older daughter spoke to the younger one again. She said, “Last night I made love to my father. Let’s get him to drink wine again tonight. Then you go in and make love to him. In that way, we can use our father to continue our family line.”

35So they got their father to drink wine that night also. Then the younger daughter went and made love to him. Again he didn’t know when she lay down or when she got up.

36So both of Lot’s daughters became pregnant by their father. 37The older daughter had a son. She named him Moab. He’s the father of the Moabites of today. 38The younger daughter also had a son. She named him Ben-Ammi. He’s the father of the Ammonites of today.

Abraham and Abimelech

Genesis 20

1 Abraham moved away from there into the Negev Desert. He lived between
Kadesh and Shur. For a while he stayed in Gerar.

2 There Abraham said about his wife Sarah, “She’s my sister.” Then
Abimelech sent for Sarah and took her. He was the king of Gerar.

3 God came to Abimelech in a dream one night. He said to him, “You are as
good as dead because of the woman you have taken. She is already married.”

4 But Abimelech hadn’t gone near her. So he said, “Lord, will you destroy a
nation that hasn’t done anything wrong? 5 Didn’t Abraham say to me, ‘She’s
my sister’? And didn’t she also say, ‘He’s my brother’? I had no idea I was
doing anything wrong. I’m not guilty.”

6 Then God spoke to him in the dream. He said, “Yes, I know you had no idea
you were doing anything wrong. So I have kept you from sinning against me.
That is why I did not let you touch her.

7 “Now return the man’s wife to him. He is a prophet. He will pray for you,
and you will live. But what if you do not return her? Then you can be sure that
you and all of your people will die.”

8 Early the next morning Abimelech sent for all of his officials. He told them
everything that had happened. They were really afraid.

9 Then Abimelech called Abraham in. He said, “What have you done to us?
Have I done something wrong to you? Why have you brought so much guilt on
me and my kingdom? You have done things to me that shouldn’t be done.”

10 Abimelech also asked Abraham, “Why did you do this?”

11 Abraham replied, “I thought, ‘There isn’t any respect for God in this place
at all. They will kill me because of my wife.’ 12 Besides, she really is my sister.
She’s the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother. And she
became my wife.

13 “God had me wander away from my father’s house. So I said to her, ‘Here

is how you can show your love to me. Everywhere we go, say about me, “He’s my brother.” ’ ”

14Then Abimelech gave Abraham sheep and cattle and male and female slaves. He also returned his wife Sarah to him. 15Abimelech said, “Here is my land. Live anywhere you want to.”

16He said to Sarah, “I’m giving your brother 25 pounds of silver. It will take care of the problem we caused you. And all those who are with you will know that you aren’t guilty of doing anything wrong.”

17Then Abraham prayed to God. And God healed Abimelech. He also healed his wife and his female slaves so they could have children again. 18The LORD had kept the women in Abimelech’s house from having children. He had done it because of Abraham’s wife Sarah.

Isaac Is Born

Genesis 21

1 The LORD was gracious to Sarah, just as he had said he would be. He did for
Sarah what he had promised to do. 2 Sarah became pregnant. She had a son by
Abraham when he was old. He was born at the exact time God had promised
him.

3 Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah had by him. 4 When his son
Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him. He did it exactly as God
had commanded him. 5 Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was
born to him.

6 Sarah said, “God has given laughter to me. Everyone who hears about this
will laugh with me.”

7 She continued, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse
children? But I’ve had a son by him when he is old.”

Abraham Sends Hagar and Ishmael Away

8 Isaac grew. The time came for his mother to stop nursing him. On that day
Abraham had a big dinner prepared.

9 But Sarah saw Ishmael making fun of Isaac. Ishmael was the son Hagar had
by Abraham. Hagar was Sarah’s servant from Egypt.

10 Sarah said to Abraham, “Get rid of that slave woman. Get rid of her son.
The slave woman’s son will never have a share of the family’s property with
my son Isaac.”

11 What Sarah said upset Abraham very much. After all, Ishmael was his son.

12 But God said to him, “Do not be so upset about the boy and your servant
Hagar. Listen to what Sarah tells you, because your family line will continue
through Isaac. 13 I will make the son of your servant into a nation also. I will do
it because he is your child.”

14 Early the next morning Abraham got some food and a bottle of water. The bottle was made out of animal skin. He gave the food and water to Hagar. He placed them on her shoulders. Then he sent her away with the boy. She went on her way and wandered in the desert of Beersheba.

15 When the water in the bottle was gone, she put the boy under a bush. 16 Then she went off and sat down nearby. She was about as far away as a person can shoot an arrow. She thought, “I can’t stand to watch the boy die.” As she sat nearby, she began to sob.

17 God heard the boy crying. Then the angel of God called out to Hagar from heaven. He said to her, “What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid. God has heard the boy crying as he lies there. 18 Lift the boy up. Take him by the hand. I will make him into a great nation.”

19 Then God opened Hagar’s eyes. She saw a well of water. So she went and filled the bottle with water. And she gave the boy a drink.

20 God was with the boy as he grew up. He lived in the desert and learned to shoot with a bow. 21 While he was living in the Desert of Paran, his mother got him a wife from Egypt.

The Peace Treaty at Beersheba

22 At that time Abimelech and Phicol spoke to Abraham. Phicol was the commander of Abimelech’s army. They said, “God is with you in everything you do. 23 Now make a promise to me here while God is watching. Take an oath that you will treat me fairly. Promise that you will treat my children and their children the same way.

“I’ve been kind to you. Now you be kind to me. And be kind to the country where you are living as an outsider.”

24 Abraham said, “I promise with an oath that I’ll do it.”

25 Then Abraham objected to Abimelech about what Abimelech’s servants had done. They had taken over a well of water.

26 But Abimelech said, “I don’t know who has done this. You didn’t tell me. Today is the first time I heard about it.”

27 So Abraham gave Abimelech sheep and cattle. The two men made a peace

treaty. [28]Then Abraham took out seven female lambs from his flock.

[29]Abimelech asked Abraham, “What’s the meaning of these seven female lambs? Why have you taken them out and put them by themselves?”

[30]Abraham replied, “Accept the seven lambs from me. They will be a witness that I dug this well.”

[31]That place was named Beersheba. That’s because there the two men made a promise with an oath.

[32]After the peace treaty had been made at Beersheba, Abimelech went back to the land of the Philistines. His army commander Phicol went with him.

[33]Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba. There he worshiped the LORD, the God who lives forever. [34]Abraham stayed in the land of the Philistines for a long time.

God Puts Abraham to the Test

Genesis 22

[1]Some time later God put Abraham to the test. He said to him, “Abraham!”

“Here I am,” Abraham replied.

[2]Then God said, “Take your son, your only son. He is the one you love. Take Isaac. Go to Moriah. Give him to me there as a burnt offering. Sacrifice him on one of the mountains I will tell you about.”

[3]Early the next morning Abraham got up. He put a saddle on his donkey. He took two of his servants and his son Isaac with him. He cut enough wood for the burnt offering. Then he started out for the place God had told him about.

[4]On the third day Abraham looked up. He saw the place a long way off. [5]He said to his servants, “Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will go over there and worship. Then we’ll come back to you.”

[6]Abraham put the wood for the burnt offering on his son Isaac. He himself carried the fire and the knife. The two of them walked on together.

[7]Then Isaac spoke up. He said to his father Abraham, “Father?”

“Yes, my son?” Abraham replied.

“The fire and wood are here,” Isaac said. “But where is the lamb for the burnt offering?”

[8]Abraham answered, “God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” The two of them walked on together.

[9]They reached the place God had told Abraham about. There Abraham built an altar. He arranged the wood on it. He tied up his son Isaac. He placed him on the altar, on top of the wood. [10]Then he reached out his hand. He took the knife to kill his son.

[11]But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven. He said, “Abraham! Abraham!”

“Here I am,” Abraham replied.

[12]“Do not lay a hand on the boy,” he said. “Do not do anything to him. Now I

know that you have respect for God. You have not held back from me your son, your only son."

13Abraham looked up. There in a bush he saw a ram. It was caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram. He sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son.

14So Abraham named that place The LORD Will Provide. To this day people say, "It will be provided on the mountain of the LORD."

15The angel of the LORD called out to Abraham from heaven a second time. 16He said, "I am taking an oath in my own name. I will bless you because of what you have done," announces the LORD. "You have not held back your son, your only son.

17"So I will certainly bless you. I will make your children after you as many as the stars in the sky. I will make them as many as the grains of sand on the seashore. Your children will take over the cities of their enemies. 18All nations on earth will be blessed because of your children. All of that will happen because you have obeyed me."

19Then Abraham returned to his servants. They started out together for Beersheba. And Abraham stayed in Beersheba.

Nahor's Sons

20Some time later Abraham was told, "Milcah has become a mother. She has had sons by your brother Nahor. 21Uz was born first. Then came his brother Buz. Next came Kemuel, the father of Aram. 22The other sons are Kesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph and Bethuel." 23Bethuel became the father of Rebekah. Milcah had the eight sons by Abraham's brother Nahor. 24Nahor had a concubine named Reumah. She also had sons. They were Tebah, Gaham, Tahash and Maacah.

Sarah Dies

Genesis 23

1Sarah lived to be 127 years old. 2She died at Kiriath Arba. Kiriath Arba is
also called Hebron. It's in the land of Canaan.

Sarah's death filled Abraham with sorrow. He went to the place where her
body was lying. There he sobbed over her.

3Then Abraham got up from beside his dead wife. He spoke to the Hittites.
He said, 4"I'm an outsider. I'm a stranger among you. Sell me some property
here as a place for a family tomb. Then I can bury my wife's body."

5The Hittites replied to Abraham, 6"Sir, listen to us. You are a mighty prince
among us. Bury your dead wife in the best of our tombs. None of us will refuse
to sell you his tomb for burying her."

7Then Abraham bowed down in front of the Hittites, the people of the land.
8He said to them, "If you are willing to let me bury my dead wife, then listen to
me. Speak to Zohar's son Ephron for me. 9Ask him to sell me the cave of
Machpelah. It belongs to him and is at the end of his field. Ask him to sell it to
me for the full price. I want it as a place to bury my dead wife among you."

10Ephron the Hittite was sitting there among his people. He replied to
Abraham. All of the Hittites who had come to the gate of his city heard him.
11"No, sir," Ephron said. "Listen to me. I will sell you the field. I'll also sell
you the cave that's in the field. I will sell it to you in front of my people. Bury
your wife."

12Again Abraham bowed down in front of the people of the land. 13He spoke
to Ephron so they could hear him. He said, "Please listen to me. I'll pay the
price of the field. Accept it from me. Then I can bury my dead wife there."

14Ephron answered Abraham, 15"Sir, listen to me. The land is worth ten
pounds of silver. But what is that between you and me? Bury your wife."

16Abraham agreed to Ephron's offer. He weighed out for him the price he had
named. The Hittites there had heard it. The price was ten pounds of silver.
Abraham measured it by the weights that were used by those who bought and

sold.

17So Ephron sold his field in Machpelah near Mamre to Abraham. He bought the field and the cave that was in it. He also bought all of the trees that were inside the borders of the field. Everything was sold 18to Abraham as his property. He bought it in front of all of the Hittites who had come to the gate of the city.

19Then Abraham buried the body of his wife Sarah. He buried her in the cave in the field of Machpelah near Mamre in the land of Canaan. Mamre is at Hebron. 20So the field and the cave that was in it were sold to Abraham by the Hittites. The property became a place for his family tomb.

Abraham's Servant Finds a Wife for Isaac

Genesis 24

1By that time Abraham was very old. The LORD had blessed him in every
way. 2The best servant in his house was in charge of everything he had.

Abraham said to him, "Put your hand under my thigh. 3The LORD is the God
of heaven and the God of earth. I want you to make a promise with an oath in
his name.

"I'm living among the people of Canaan. But I want you to promise me that
you won't get a wife for my son from their daughters. 4Instead, promise me
that you will go to my country and to my own relatives. Get a wife for my son
Isaac from there."

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

6"Make sure you don't take my son back there," Abraham said. 7"The LORD,
the God of heaven, took me away from my father's family. He brought me out
of my own land. And he made me a promise with an oath. He said, 'I will give
this land to your family after you.' The LORD will send his angel ahead of you.
So you will be able to get a wife for my son from there.

8"The woman may not want to come back with you. If she doesn't, you will
be free from your oath. But don't take my son back there."

9So the servant put his hand under Abraham's thigh. He promised with an
oath to do what his master wanted.

10The servant took ten of his master's camels and left. He took with him all
kinds of good things from his master. He started out for Aram Naharaim. He
made his way to the town of Nahor.

11He stopped near the well outside the town. There he made the camels get
down on their knees. It was almost evening. It was the time when women go
out to get water.

12Then he prayed, "LORD, you are the God of my master Abraham. Give me

success today. Be kind to my master Abraham. 13I'm standing beside this spring. The daughters of the people who live in the town are coming out here to get water.

14"I will speak to a young woman. I'll say, 'Please lower your jar so I can have a drink.' Suppose she says, 'Have a drink of water. And I'll get some for your camels too.' Then let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac. That's how I'll know you have been kind to my master."

15Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out. She had a jar on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah. Milcah was the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor. 16The young woman was very beautiful. She was a virgin. No man had made love to her. She went down to the spring. She filled her jar and came up again.

17The servant hurried to meet her. He said, "Please give me a little water from your jar."

18"Have a drink, sir," she said. She quickly lowered the jar to her hands. And she gave him a drink.

19After she had given him a drink, she said, "I'll get water for your camels too. I'll keep doing it until they finish drinking." 20So she quickly emptied her jar into the stone tub. Then she ran back to the well to get more water. She got enough for all of his camels.

21The man didn't say a word. He watched her closely. He wanted to learn whether the LORD had given him success on the journey he had made.

22The camels finished drinking. Then the man took out a gold nose ring. It weighed a fifth of an ounce. He also took out two gold bracelets. They weighed four ounces.

23Then he asked, "Whose daughter are you? And please tell me something else. Is there room in your father's house for us? Can we spend the night there?"

24She answered, "I'm the daughter of Bethuel. He's the son Milcah had by Nahor." 25She continued, "We have plenty of straw and feed for your camels. We also have room for you to spend the night."

26Then the man bowed down and worshiped the LORD. 27He said, "I praise the LORD, the God of my master Abraham. He hasn't stopped being kind and faithful to my master. The LORD has led me on this journey. He has brought me

to the house of my master's relatives."

[28]The young woman ran home. She told her mother's family what had happened.

[29]Rebekah had a brother named Laban. He hurried out to the spring to meet the man. [30]Laban had seen the nose ring. He had seen the bracelets on his sister's arms. And he had heard Rebekah tell what the man had said to her. So he went out to the man. He found him standing by the camels near the spring. [31]"The LORD has given you his blessing," he said. "So come. Why are you standing out here? I've prepared my house for you. I also have a place for the camels."

[32]So the man went to the house. The camels were unloaded. Straw and feed were brought for the camels. And water was brought for him and his men to wash their feet.

[33]Then food was placed in front of him. But he said, "I won't eat until I've told you what I have to say."

"Then tell us," Laban said.

[34]So he said, "I am Abraham's servant. [35]The LORD has blessed my master greatly. He has become wealthy. The LORD has given him sheep and cattle. He has given him silver and gold. He has also given him male and female servants, and camels and donkeys.

[36]"My master's wife Sarah had a son by him when she was old. He has given that son everything he owns. [37]My master made me take an oath. He said, 'I'm living in the land of the people of Canaan. But promise me that you won't get a wife for my son from their daughters. [38]Instead, go to my father's family and to my own relatives. Get a wife for my son there.'

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

[40]"He replied, 'I have walked with the LORD. He will send his angel with you. He will give you success on your journey. So you will be able to get a wife for my son. You will get her from my own relatives and from my father's family.

[41]" 'When you go to my relatives, suppose they refuse to give her to you. Then you will be free from your oath.'

[42]"Today I came to the spring. I said, 'LORD, you are the God of my master Abraham. Please give me success on this journey I've made.

[43]" 'I'm standing beside this spring. A young woman will come out to get

water. I will speak to her. I'll say, "Please let me drink a little water from your jar." [44]Suppose she says, "Have a drink of water. And I'll get some for your camels too." Then let her be the one the LORD has chosen for my master's son.'

[45]"Before I finished praying in my heart, Rebekah came out. She had a jar on her shoulder. She went down to the spring and got water. I said to her, 'Please give me a drink.'

[46]"She quickly lowered her jar from her shoulder. She said, 'Have a drink. And I'll get water for your camels too.' So I drank. She also got water for the camels.

[47]"I asked her, 'Whose daughter are you?'

"She said, 'The daughter of Bethuel. He's the son Milcah had by Nahor.'

"Then I put the ring in her nose. I put the bracelets on her arms. [48]And I bowed down and worshiped the LORD. I praised the LORD, the God of my master Abraham. He had led me on the right road. He had led me to get for my master's son the granddaughter of my master's brother.

[49]"Now will you be kind and faithful to my master? If you will, tell me. And if you won't, tell me. Then I'll know which way to turn."

[50]Laban and Bethuel answered, "The LORD has done all of this. We can't say anything to you one way or the other. [51]Here is Rebekah. Take her and go. Let her become the wife of your master's son, just as the LORD has said."

[52]Abraham's servant heard what they said. So he bowed down to the LORD with his face to the ground. [53]He brought out gold and silver jewelry. He brought out articles of clothing. He gave all of it to Rebekah. He also gave expensive gifts to her brother and her mother.

[54]Then Abraham's servant and the men who were with him ate and drank. They spent the night there.

They got up the next morning. Abraham's servant said, "Send me back to my master."

[55]But her brother and her mother replied, "Let the young woman stay with us ten days or so. Then you can go."

[56]But he said to them, "Don't make me wait. The LORD has given me success on my journey. Send me on my way so I can go to my master."

[57]Then they said, "Let's get Rebekah. We'll ask her about it." [58]So they sent

for her. They asked her, “Will you go with this man?”

“Yes,” she said.

59So they sent their sister Rebekah on her way with Abraham’s servant and his men. They also sent Rebekah’s attendant with her. 60And they gave Rebekah their blessing. They said to her,

> “Dear sister, may your family grow
> by thousands and thousands.
> May your children after you take over
> the cities of their enemies.”

61Then Rebekah and her female servants got ready. They got on their camels to go with the man. So the servant took Rebekah and left.

62By that time Isaac had come from Beer Lahai Roi. He was living in the Negev Desert.

63One evening he went out to the field. He wanted to spend some time thinking. When he looked up, he saw camels approaching.

64Rebekah also looked up and saw Isaac. She got down from her camel. 65She asked the servant, “Who is that man in the field coming to meet us?”

“He’s my master,” the servant answered. So she took her veil and covered her face.

66Then the servant told Isaac everything he had done.

67Isaac brought Rebekah into the tent that had belonged to his mother Sarah. And he married Rebekah. She became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother died.

Abraham Dies

Genesis 25

[1]Abraham married another woman. Her name was Keturah. [2]She had Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah by Abraham. [3]Jokshan was the father of Sheba and Dedan. The children of Dedan were the Asshurites, the Letushites and the Leummites. [4]The sons of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida and Eldaah. All of them came from Keturah.

[5]Abraham left everything he owned to Isaac. [6]But while he was still living, he gave gifts to the sons of his concubines. Then he sent them away from his son Isaac. He sent them to the land of the east.

[7]Abraham lived a total of 175 years. [8]He took his last breath and died when he was very old. He had lived a very long time. Then he joined the members of his family who had already died.

[9]Abraham's sons Isaac and Ishmael buried his body. They put it in the cave of Machpelah near Mamre. It was in the field of Ephron, the son of Zohar the Hittite. [10]Abraham had bought it from the Hittites. He was buried there with his wife Sarah.

[11]After Abraham died, God blessed his son Isaac. At that time Isaac lived near Beer Lahai Roi.

The Sons of Ishmael

[12]Here is the story of Abraham's son Ishmael. Hagar had Ishmael by Abraham. She was Sarah's servant from Egypt.

[13]Here are the names of the sons of Ishmael. They are listed in the order they were born. Nebaioth was Ishmael's oldest son. Then came Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, [14]Mishma, Dumah, Massa, [15]Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish and Kedemah. [16]All of them were Ishmael's sons. They were rulers of 12 tribes.

They all lived in their own settlements and camps.

17 Ishmael lived a total of 137 years. Then he took his last breath and died. He joined the members of his family who had already died. 18 His children settled in the area between Havilah and Shur. It was near the eastern border of Egypt, as you go toward Asshur.

Ishmael's children weren't friendly toward any of the tribes that were related to them.

Jacob and Esau

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

Abraham was the father of Isaac. 20 Isaac was 40 years old when he married Rebekah. She was the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan Aram. She was also the sister of Laban the Aramean.

21 Rebekah couldn't have children. So Isaac prayed to the LORD for her. And the LORD answered his prayer. His wife Rebekah became pregnant.

22 The babies struggled with each other inside her. She said, "Why is this happening to me?" So she went to ask the LORD what she should do.

23 The LORD said to her,

> "Two nations are in your body.
> Two tribes that are now inside you will be separated.
> One nation will be stronger than the other.
> The older son will serve the younger one."

24 The time came for Rebekah to have her babies. There were twin boys in her body. 25 The first one to come out was red. His whole body was covered with hair. So they named him Esau.

26 Then his brother came out. His hand was holding onto Esau's heel. So he was named Jacob. Isaac was 60 years old when Rebekah had them.

27 The boys grew up. Esau became a skillful hunter. He was a man who liked the open country. But Jacob was a quiet man. He stayed at home among the

tents. [28]Isaac liked the meat of wild animals. So Esau was his favorite son. But Rebekah’s favorite was Jacob.

[29]One day Jacob was cooking some stew. Esau came in from the open country. He was very hungry. [30]He said to Jacob, “Quick! Let me have some of that red stew! I’m very hungry!” That’s why he was also named Edom.

[31]Jacob replied, “First sell me the rights that belong to you as the oldest son in the family.”

[32]“Look, I’m dying of hunger,” Esau said. “What good are those rights to me?”

[33]But Jacob said, “First promise me with an oath that you are selling me your rights.” So Esau promised to do it. He sold Jacob all of the rights that belonged to him as the oldest son.

[34]Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. Esau ate and drank. Then he got up and left.

So Esau didn’t care anything at all about the rights that belonged to him as the oldest son.

Isaac and Abimelech

Genesis 26

1There was very little food in the land. The same thing had been true earlier,
in Abraham's time. Isaac went to Abimelech in Gerar. Abimelech was the king
of the Philistines.

2The LORD appeared to Isaac. He said, "Do not go down to Egypt. Live in the
land where I tell you to live. 3Stay here for a while. I will be with you and give
you my blessing. I will give all of these lands to you and your children after
you. And I will keep the promise I made with an oath to your father Abraham.
4I will make your children after you as many as the stars in the sky. And I will
give them all these lands. All nations on earth will be blessed because of your
children.

5"I will do all of those things because Abraham obeyed me. He did what I
required. He kept my commands, my rules and my laws." 6So Isaac stayed in
Gerar.

7The men of that place asked him about his wife. He said, "She's my sister."
He was afraid to say, "She's my wife." He thought, "The men of this place
might kill me because of Rebekah. She's a beautiful woman."

8Isaac had been there a long time. One day Abimelech, the king of the
Philistines, looked down from a window. He saw Isaac hugging and kissing his
wife Rebekah.

9So Abimelech sent for Isaac. He said, "She's really your wife, isn't she?
Why did you say, 'She's my sister'?"

Isaac answered him, "I thought I might lose my life because of her."

10Then Abimelech said, "What have you done to us? What if one of the men
had sex with your wife? Then you would have made us guilty."

11So Abimelech gave orders to all of the people. He said, "You can be sure
that anyone who harms this man or his wife will be put to death."

12Isaac planted crops in that land. That same year he gathered 100 times more
than he planted. That was because the LORD blessed him.

13 Isaac became rich. His wealth continued to grow until he became very rich.
14 He had many flocks and herds and servants.

Isaac had so much that the Philistines became jealous of him. 15 So they stopped up all of the wells the servants of his father Abraham had dug. They filled them with dirt.

16 Then Abimelech said to Isaac, “Move away from us. You have become too powerful for us.”

17 So Isaac moved away from there. He camped in the Valley of Gerar and settled there. 18 Isaac opened up the wells again. They had been dug in the time of his father Abraham. The Philistines had stopped them up after Abraham died. Isaac gave the wells the same names his father had given them.

19 Isaac’s servants dug for wells in the valley. There they discovered a well of fresh water. 20 But the people of Gerar who took care of their herds argued with the people who took care of Isaac’s herds. “The water is ours!” the people of Gerar said. So Isaac named the well Esek. That’s because they argued with him.

21 Then Isaac’s servants dug another well. They argued about that one too. So he named it Sitnah.

22 He moved on from there and dug another well. But no one argued about that one. So he named it Rehoboth. He said, “Now the LORD has given us room. Now we will do well in the land.”

23 From there Isaac went up to Beersheba. 24 That night the LORD appeared to him. He said, “I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid. I am with you. I will bless you. I will increase the number of your children because of my servant Abraham.”

25 Isaac built an altar there and worshiped the LORD. There he set up his tent. And there his servants dug a well.

26 During that time, Abimelech had come to him from Gerar. Ahuzzath had come with him. So had Phicol, Abimelech’s army commander. Ahuzzath was Abimelech’s personal adviser.

27 Isaac asked them, “Why have you come to me? You were angry with me and sent me away.”

28 They answered, “We saw clearly that the LORD was with you. So we said, ‘We should make an agreement by taking an oath.’ The agreement should be

between us and you. We want to make a peace treaty with you. [29]Promise that you won’t harm us. We didn’t harm you. We always treated you well. We sent you away in peace. Now the LORD has blessed you.”

[30]Then Isaac had a big dinner prepared for them. They ate and drank. [31]Early the next morning the men made an agreement with an oath. Then Isaac sent the men of Gerar on their way. And they left in peace.

[32]That day Isaac’s servants came to him. They told him about the well they had dug. They said, “We’ve found water!” [33]So he named it Shibah. To this day the name of the town has been Beersheba.

[34]When Esau was 40 years old, he got married to Judith. She was the daughter of Beeri the Hittite. He also married Basemath. She was the daughter of Elon the Hittite. [35]Isaac and Rebekah became very upset because Esau had married Hittite women.

Isaac Gives Jacob His Blessing

Genesis 27

1 Isaac had become old. His eyes were so weak he couldn't see anymore. One
day he called for his older son Esau. He said to him, "My son."

"Here I am," he answered.

2 Isaac said, "I'm an old man now. And I don't know when I'll die. 3 Now
then, get your weapons. Get your bow and arrows. Go out to the open country.
Hunt some wild animals for me. 4 Prepare for me the kind of tasty food I like.
Bring it to me to eat. Then I'll give you my blessing before I die."

5 Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to his son Esau. Esau left for the
open country. He went to hunt for a wild animal and bring it back.

6 Then Rebekah said to her son Jacob, "Look, I heard your father speaking to
your brother Esau. 7 He said, 'Bring me a wild animal. Prepare some tasty food
for me to eat. Then I'll give you my blessing before I die. The LORD will be my
witness.' "

8 Rebekah continued, "My son, listen carefully. Do what I tell you. 9 Go out to
the flock. Bring me two of the finest young goats. I will prepare tasty food for
your father. I'll make it just the way he likes it. 10 I want you to take it to your
father to eat. Then he'll give you his blessing before he dies."

11 Jacob said to his mother Rebekah, "My brother Esau's body is covered with
hair. But my skin is smooth. 12 What if my father touches me? He would know I
was trying to trick him. That would bring a curse down on me instead of a
blessing."

13 His mother said to him, "My son, let the curse fall on me. Just do what I
say. Go and get the goats for me."

14 So he went and got the goats. He brought them to his mother. And she
prepared some tasty food. She made it just the way his father liked it.

15 The clothes of her older son Esau were in her house. She took the best of
them and put them on her younger son Jacob. 16 She covered his hands with the

skins of the goats. She also covered the smooth part of his neck with them.

17Then she handed to her son Jacob the tasty food and the bread she had made.

18He went to his father and said, “My father.”

“Yes, my son,” Isaac answered. “Who is it?”

19Jacob said to his father, “I’m your oldest son Esau. I’ve done as you told me. Please sit up. Eat some of my wild meat. Then give me your blessing.”

20Isaac asked his son, “How did you find it so quickly, my son?”

“The LORD your God gave me success,” he replied.

21Then Isaac said to Jacob, “Come near so I can touch you, my son. I want to know whether you really are my son Esau.”

22Jacob went close to his father. Isaac touched him and said, “The voice is the voice of Jacob. But the hands are the hands of Esau.”

23Isaac didn’t recognize him. His hands were covered with hair like those of his brother Esau. So Isaac blessed him. 24“Are you really my son Esau?” he asked.

“I am,” Jacob replied.

25Isaac said, “My son, bring me some of your wild meat to eat. Then I’ll give you my blessing.”

Jacob brought it to him. So Isaac ate. Jacob also brought some wine. And Isaac drank. 26Then Jacob’s father Isaac said to him, “Come here, my son. Kiss me.”

27So Jacob went to him and kissed him. When Isaac smelled the clothes, he gave Jacob his blessing. He said,

“It really is the smell of my son.
It’s like the smell of a field
that the LORD has blessed.
28May God give you dew from heaven.
May he give you the richness of the earth.
May he give you plenty of grain and fresh wine.
29May nations serve you.
May they bow down to you.
Rule over your brothers.

May the sons of your mother bow down to you.
May those who call down curses on you be cursed.
And may those who bless you be blessed.”

30When Isaac finished blessing him, Jacob left his father. Just then his brother Esau came in from hunting. 31He too prepared some tasty food. He brought it to his father. Then Esau said to him, “My father, sit up. Eat some of my wild meat. Then give me your blessing.”

32His father Isaac asked him, “Who are you?”

“I’m your son,” he answered. “I’m your oldest son. I’m Esau.”

33Isaac was shaking all over. He said, “Then who was it that hunted a wild animal and brought it to me? I ate it just before you came. I gave him my blessing. And he will certainly be blessed!”

34Esau heard his father’s words. Then he began crying loudly and bitterly. He said to his father, “Bless me! Bless me too, my father!”

35But Isaac said, “Your brother came and tricked me. He took your blessing.”

36Esau said, “Isn’t Jacob just the right name for him? He has cheated me two times. First, he took my rights as the oldest son. And now he’s taken my blessing!” Then Esau asked, “Haven’t you saved any blessing for me?”

37Isaac answered Esau, “I’ve made him ruler over you. I’ve made all of his relatives serve him. And I’ve provided him with grain and fresh wine. So what can I possibly do for you, my son?”

38Esau said to his father, “Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me too, my father!” Then Esau sobbed loudly.

39His father Isaac answered him,

“You will live far away from the richness of the earth.
You will live far away from the dew of heaven above.
40You will live by the sword.
And you will serve your brother.
But you will grow restless.
Then you will throw off the heavy load
he put on your shoulders.”

Jacob Runs Away to Laban

41 Esau was angry with Jacob. He was angry because of the blessing his father
had given to Jacob. He said to himself, “My father will soon die. The days of
sorrow over him are near. Then I’ll kill my brother Jacob.”

42 Rebekah was told what her older son Esau had said. So she sent for her
younger son Jacob. She said to him, “Your brother Esau is comforting himself
with the thought of killing you.

43 “Now then, my son, do what I say. Go at once to my brother Laban in
Haran. 44 Stay with him until your brother’s anger calms down. 45 Stay until
your brother isn’t angry with you anymore. When he forgets what you did to
him, I’ll let you know. Then you can come back from there. Why should I lose
both of you in one day?”

46 Then Rebekah spoke to Isaac. She said, “I’m sick of living because of
Esau’s Hittite wives. Suppose Jacob also marries a Hittite woman. If he does,
my life won’t be worth living.”

Genesis 28

[1]So Isaac called for Jacob and blessed him. He commanded him, “Don’t get married to a woman from Canaan. [2]Go at once to Paddan Aram. Go to the house of your mother’s father Bethuel. Find a wife for yourself there. Take her from among the daughters of your mother’s brother Laban.

[3]“May the Mighty God bless you. May he give you children. May he increase your numbers until you become a community of nations. [4]May he give you and your children after you the blessing he gave to Abraham. Then you can take over the land where you now live as an outsider. It’s the land God gave to Abraham.”

[5]Isaac sent Jacob on his way. Jacob went to Paddan Aram. He went to Laban, the son of Bethuel the Aramean. Laban was the brother of Rebekah. And Rebekah was the mother of Jacob and Esau.

[6]Esau found out that Isaac had blessed Jacob and had sent him to Paddan Aram. Isaac wanted him to get a wife from there. Esau heard that when Isaac blessed Jacob, he commanded him, “Don’t get married to a woman from Canaan.” [7]Esau also learned that Jacob had obeyed his father and mother and had gone to Paddan Aram.

[8]Then Esau realized how much his father Isaac disliked the women of Canaan. [9]So he went to Ishmael and married Mahalath. She was the sister of Nebaioth and the daughter of Abraham’s son Ishmael. Esau added her to the wives he already had.

Jacob Has a Dream at Bethel

[10]Jacob left Beersheba and started out for Haran. [11]He reached a certain place and stopped for the night. The sun had already set. He took one of the stones there and placed it under his head. Then he lay down to sleep.

[12]In a dream he saw a stairway standing on the earth. Its top reached to heaven. The angels of God were going up and coming down on it.

[13]The LORD stood above the stairway. He said, “I am the LORD. I am the God

of your grandfather Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your children after you the land on which you are lying. 14They will be like the dust of the earth that can't be counted. They will spread out to the west and to the east. They will spread out to the north and to the south. All nations on earth will be blessed because of you and your children after you.

15"I am with you. I will watch over you everywhere you go. And I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

16Jacob woke up from his sleep. Then he thought, "The LORD is certainly in this place. And I didn't even know it."

17Jacob was afraid. He said, "How holy this place is! This must be the house of God. This is the gate of heaven."

18Early the next morning Jacob took the stone he had placed under his head. He set it up as a pillar. And he poured oil on top of it. 19He named that place Bethel. But the city used to be called Luz.

20Then Jacob made a promise. He said, "May God be with me. May he watch over me on this journey I'm taking. May he give me food to eat and clothes to wear. 21May he do as he has promised so that I can return safely to my father's home. Then you, LORD, will be my God. 22This stone I've set up as a pillar will be God's house. And I'll give you a tenth of everything you give me."

Jacob Arrives in Paddan Aram

Genesis 29

1 Then Jacob continued on his journey. He came to the land where the eastern
tribes lived.

2 There he saw a well in the field. Three flocks of sheep were lying near it.
The flocks were given water from the well. The stone over the opening of the
well was large. 3 All of the flocks would gather there. The shepherds would roll
the stone away from the well's opening. They would give water to the sheep.
Then they would put the stone back in its place over the opening of the well.

4 Jacob asked the shepherds, "My friends, where are you from?"

"We're from Haran," they replied.

5 He said to them, "Do you know Nahor's grandson Laban?"

"Yes, we know him," they answered.

6 Then Jacob asked them, "How is he?"

"He's fine," they said. "Here comes his daughter Rachel with the sheep now."

7 "Look," he said, "the sun is still high in the sky. It's not time for the flocks to
be brought together. Give water to the sheep and take them back to the
grasslands."

8 "We can't," they replied. "We have to wait until all of the flocks are brought
together. The stone has to be rolled away from the opening of the well. Then
we'll give water to the sheep."

9 He was still talking with them when Rachel came with her father's sheep. It
was her job to take care of the flock. 10 Rachel was the daughter of Laban. He
was the brother of Jacob's mother.

When Jacob saw Rachel with Laban's sheep, he went over to the well. He
rolled the stone away from the opening. He gave water to his uncle's sheep.

11 Jacob kissed Rachel. Then he began to sob loudly. 12 He had told Rachel he
was a relative of her father. He had also said he was Rebekah's son. Rachel ran
and told her father what Jacob had said.

13 As soon as Laban heard the news about his sister's son Jacob, he hurried to
meet him. Laban hugged Jacob and kissed him. Then he brought him to his
home. There Jacob told him everything. 14 Then Laban said to him, "You are
my own flesh and blood."

Jacob Gets Married to Leah and Rachel

Jacob stayed with Laban for a whole month. 15 Then Laban said to him, "You
are one of my relatives. But is that any reason for you to work for me for
nothing? Tell me what your pay 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 weak eyes. But Rachel was
beautiful. She had a nice figure.

18 Jacob was in love with Rachel. He said to Laban, "I'll work for you for
seven years to get your younger daughter Rachel."

19 Laban said, "It's better for me to give her to you than to some other man.
Stay here with me."

20 So Jacob worked for seven years to get Rachel. But they seemed like only a
few days to him because he loved her so much.

21 Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife. I've completed my time. I
want to make love to her."

22 So Laban brought all of the people of the place together and had a big
dinner prepared. 23 But when evening came, he gave his daughter Leah to
Jacob. And Jacob made love to her. 24 Laban gave his female servant Zilpah to
his daughter as her servant.

25 When Jacob woke up the next morning, there was Leah next to him! So he
said to Laban, "What have you done to me? I worked for you to get Rachel,
didn't I? Why did you trick me?"

26 Laban replied, "It isn't our practice here to give the younger daughter to be
married before the older one. 27 Complete this daughter's wedding week. Then
we'll give you the younger one also. But you will have to work for another
seven years."

28 So Jacob did it. He completed the week with Leah. Then Laban gave him

his daughter Rachel to be his wife. [29]Laban gave his female servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her servant. [30]Jacob made love to Rachel also. He loved Rachel more than he loved Leah. And he worked for Laban for another seven years.

Jacob Becomes the Father of Many Children

[31]The LORD saw that Jacob didn't love Leah as much as he loved Rachel. So he let Leah have children. But Rachel wasn't able to have children. [32]Leah became pregnant. She had a son. She named him Reuben. She said, "The LORD has seen me suffer. Certainly my husband will love me now."

[33]She became pregnant again. She had a son. Then she said, "The LORD heard that Jacob doesn't love me very much. That's why the LORD gave me this one too." So she named him Simeon.

[34]She became pregnant again. She had a son. Then she said, "Now at last my husband will want me. I have had three sons by him." So the boy was named Levi.

[35]She became pregnant again. She had a son. Then she said, "This time I'll praise the LORD." So she named him Judah. Then she stopped having children.

Genesis 30

[1]Rachel saw that she couldn’t have any children by Jacob. So she became jealous of her sister. She said to Jacob, “Give me children, or I’ll die!”

[2]Jacob became angry with her. He said, “Do you think I’m God? He’s the one who has kept you from having children.”

[3]Then she said, “Here’s my servant Bilhah. Make love to her so that she can have children for me. Then I too can have a family through her.”

[4]So she gave him her servant Bilhah as a wife. Jacob made love to her. [5]And Bilhah became pregnant. She had a son by him. [6]Then Rachel said, “God has stood up for my rights. He has listened to my prayer and given me a son.” So she named him Dan.

[7]Rachel’s servant Bilhah became pregnant again. She had a second son by Jacob. [8]Then Rachel said, “I’ve had a great struggle with my sister. Now I’ve won.” So she named him Naphtali.

[9]Leah saw that she had stopped having children. So she gave her servant Zilpah to Jacob as a wife. [10]Leah’s servant Zilpah had a son by Jacob. [11]Then Leah said, “What good fortune!” So she named him Gad.

[12]Leah’s servant Zilpah had a second son by Jacob. [13]Then Leah said, “I’m so happy! The women will call me happy.” So she named him Asher.

[14]While the wheat harvest was being gathered, Reuben went out into the fields. He found some mandrake plants. He brought them to his mother Leah. Rachel said to Leah, “Please give me some of your son’s mandrakes.”

[15]But Leah said to her, “Isn’t it enough that you took my husband away? Are you going to take my son’s mandrakes too?”

Rachel said, “All right. Jacob can make love to you tonight if you give me your son’s mandrakes.”

[16]Jacob came in from the fields that evening. Leah went out to meet him. “You have to sleep with me tonight,” she said. “I’ve bought you with my son’s mandrakes.” So he made love to her that night.

[17]God listened to Leah. She became pregnant and had a fifth son by Jacob. [18]Then Leah said, “God has rewarded me because I gave my female servant to

my husband.” So she named the boy Issachar.

19Leah became pregnant again. She had a sixth son by Jacob. 20Then Leah said, “God has given me a priceless gift. This time my husband will treat me with honor. I’ve had six sons by him.” So she named the boy Zebulun.

21Some time later she had a daughter. She named her Dinah.

22Then God listened to Rachel. He showed concern for her. He made it possible for her to have children. 23She became pregnant. She had a son. She said, “God has taken my shame away.” 24She continued, “May the LORD give me another son.” So she named him Joseph.

Jacob’s Flocks Increase Their Numbers

25After Rachel had Joseph, Jacob spoke to Laban. He said, “Send me on my way. I want to go back to my own home and country. 26Give me my wives and children. I worked for you to get them. So I’ll be on my way. You know how much work I’ve done for you.”

27But Laban said to him, “If you are pleased with me, stay here. I’ve discovered that the LORD has blessed me because of you.” 28He continued, “Name your pay. I’ll give it to you.”

29Jacob said to him, “You know how hard I’ve worked for you. You know that your livestock has done better under my care. 30You had only a little before I came. But that little has become a lot. The LORD has blessed you everywhere I’ve been. But when can I do something for my own family?”

31“What should I give you?” Laban asked.

“Don’t give me anything,” Jacob replied. “Just do one thing for me. Then I’ll go on taking care of your flocks and watching over them.

32“Let me go through all of your flocks today. Let me remove every sheep that has speckles or spots on it. Let me remove every dark-colored lamb. Let me remove every goat that has spots or speckles on it. They will be my pay.

33“My honesty will give witness about me in days to come. It will give witness every time you check on what you have paid me. Suppose I have a goat that doesn’t have speckles or spots. Or suppose I have a lamb that isn’t dark-colored. Then it will be considered stolen.”

34“I agree,” said Laban. “Let’s do what you have said.”

35That same day Laban removed all of the male goats that had stripes or spots. He removed all of the female goats that had speckles or spots. They were the ones that had white on them. He also removed all of the dark-colored lambs. He had his sons take care of them.

36Then he put a journey of three days between himself and Jacob. But Jacob continued to take care of the rest of Laban’s flocks.

37Jacob took branches that were freshly cut from poplar, almond and plane trees. He made white stripes on them by peeling off the bark. He uncovered the white wood inside the branches.

38Then he placed the peeled branches in all of the stone tubs where the animals drank water. He placed them so they would be right in front of the flocks when they came to drink. The flocks were ready to mate when they came to drink. 39So they mated in front of the branches. And they had little ones that were striped or speckled or spotted. 40Jacob put the little ones of the flock to one side by themselves. But he made the older ones face the striped and dark-colored animals that belonged to Laban. In that way, he made separate flocks for himself. He didn’t put them with Laban’s animals.

41Every time the stronger females were ready to mate, Jacob would place the branches in the stone tubs. He would place them in front of the animals so they would mate near the branches.

42But if the animals were weak, he wouldn’t place the branches there. So the weak animals went to Laban. And the strong ones went to Jacob.

43In this way, Jacob became very rich. He became the owner of large flocks. He also had many male and female servants. And he had many camels and donkeys.

Jacob Runs Away From Laban

Genesis 31

1 Jacob heard what Laban's sons were saying. "Jacob has taken everything our
father owned," they said. "He has gained all of this wealth from what belonged
to our father."

2 Jacob noticed that Laban's feelings toward him had changed.

3 Then the LORD spoke to Jacob. He said, "Go back to your father's land and
to your relatives. I will be with you."

4 So Jacob sent word to Rachel and Leah. He told them to come out to the
fields where his flocks were.

5 He said to them, "I see that your father's feelings toward me have changed.
But the God of my father has been with me. 6 You know that I've worked for
your father with all of my strength.

7 "But your father has cheated me. He has changed my pay ten times. In spite
of everything that's happened, God hasn't let him harm me. 8 Sometimes Laban
would say, 'The speckled ones will be your pay.' Then all the flocks had little
ones with speckles. At other times he would say, 'The striped ones will be your
pay.' Then all the flocks had little ones with stripes. 9 So God has taken away
your father's livestock and given it to me.

10 "Once during the mating season I had a dream. In my dream I looked up
and saw male goats mating with the flock. The goats had stripes, speckles or
spots.

11 "The angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob.' I answered, 'Here I
am.' 12 He said, 'Look up. See the male goats mating with the flock. All of them
have stripes, speckles or spots. That is because I have seen everything that
Laban has been doing to you.

13 " 'I am the God of Bethel. That is where you poured oil on a pillar. There
you made a promise to me. Now leave this land. Go back to your own land.' "

14 Rachel and Leah replied, "Do we still have any share in our father's

property? [15]Doesn’t our father think of us as strangers? First he sold us. Now he has used up what he was paid for us. [16]All of the wealth God took away from our father really belongs to us and our children. So do what God has told you to do.”

[17]Then Jacob put his children and wives on camels. [18]He drove all of his livestock ahead of him. He also took with him everything he had gotten in Paddan Aram. He left to go to his father Isaac in the land of Canaan.

[19]Laban had gone to clip the wool from his sheep. While he was gone, Rachel stole the statues of family gods that belonged to her father. [20]And that’s not all. Jacob tricked Laban the Aramean. He didn’t tell him he was running away.

[21]So Jacob ran off with everything he had. He crossed the Euphrates River. And he headed for the hill country of Gilead.

Laban Chases Jacob

[22]On the third day Laban was told that Jacob had run away. [23]He took his relatives with him and went after Jacob. Seven days later he caught up with him in the hill country of Gilead.

[24]Then God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream at night. He said to him, “Be careful. Do not say anything to Jacob, whether it is good or bad.”

[25]Jacob had set up his tent in the hill country of Gilead. That’s where Laban caught up with him. Laban and his relatives camped there too.

[26]Laban said to Jacob, “What have you done? You have tricked me. You have taken my daughters away like prisoners of war. [27]Why did you run away in secret and trick me? Why didn’t you tell me? Then I could have sent you away happily. We could have sung to the music of tambourines and harps. [28]You didn’t even let me kiss my grandchildren and my daughters good-by. You have done a foolish thing.

[29]“I have the power to harm you. But last night the God of your father spoke to me. He said, ‘Be careful. Do not say anything to Jacob, whether it is good or bad.’

[30]“Now you have run away. You longed to go back to your father’s home. But why did you have to steal my gods?”

[31]Jacob answered Laban, “I was afraid. I thought you would take your daughters away from me by force.

[32]“But if you find anyone who has your gods, he will not remain alive. While our relatives are watching, look for yourself. See if there’s anything of yours here with me. If you find anything belonging to you, take it.” But Jacob didn’t know that Rachel had stolen the gods.

[33]So Laban went into Jacob’s tent and Leah’s tent. He went into the tent of their two female servants. But he didn’t find anything.

After he came out of Leah’s tent, he entered Rachel’s tent. [34]Rachel was the one who had taken his family gods. She had put them inside her camel’s saddle. She was sitting on them. Laban searched the whole tent. But he didn’t find anything.

[35]Rachel said to her father, “I’m sorry, sir. I can’t get up for you right now. But don’t be angry with me. I’m having my monthly period.” So he searched everywhere but couldn’t find his family gods.

[36]Jacob was very angry with Laban. “What have I done wrong?” he asked. “What sin have I committed to make you hunt me down like this? [37]You have searched through all of my things. What have you found that belongs to your family? Put it here in front of your relatives and mine. Let them decide between the two of us.

[38]“I’ve been with you for 20 years now. The little ones of your sheep and goats were not dead when they were born. I haven’t eaten rams from your flocks. [39]I didn’t bring you animals that were torn apart by wild beasts. I made up for the loss myself. Also, you made me pay for anything that was stolen by day or night.

[40]“And what was my life like? The heat burned me in the daytime. And it was so cold at night that I froze. I couldn’t sleep. [41]That’s what it was like for the 20 years I was living with you.

“I worked for 14 years to get your two daughters. I worked for six years to get my share of your flocks. You changed my pay ten times.

[42]“But the God of my father was with me. He is the God of Abraham and the God Isaac worshiped. If he hadn’t been with me, you would certainly have sent me away without anything to show for all of my work. But God has seen my hard times. He has seen all of the work my hands have done. So last night he warned you.”

43 Laban answered Jacob, “The women are my daughters. The children are
my children. The flocks are my flocks. Everything you see is mine. But what
can I do today about these daughters of mine? What can I do about the children
they’ve had?

44 “Come now. Let’s make a covenant, you and I. Let it be a witness between
us.”

45 So Jacob took a stone. He set it up as a pillar. 46 He said to his relatives,
“Get some stones.” So they took stones and put them in a pile. And they ate
there by it.

47 Laban named the pile of stones Jegar Sahadutha. Jacob named it Galeed.

48 Laban said, “This pile of stones is a witness between you and me today.”
That’s why it was named Galeed. 49 It was also called Mizpah. That’s because
Laban said, “May the LORD keep watch between you and me when we are away
from each other. 50 Don’t treat my daughters badly. Don’t get married to any
women besides my daughters. There isn’t anyone here to see what we’re doing.
But remember that God is a witness between you and me.”

51 Laban also said to Jacob, “Here is this pile of stones. And here is this pillar.
I’ve set them up between you and me. 52 This pile is a witness. And this pillar is
a witness. They give witness that I won’t go past this pile to harm you. And
they give witness that you won’t go past this pile and pillar to harm me.

53 “The God of Abraham and Nahor is also the God of their father. May their
God decide which of us is right.”

So Jacob took an oath in the name of the God his father Isaac worshiped.
54 He offered a sacrifice there in the hill country. And he invited his relatives to
a meal. After they had eaten, they spent the night there.

55 Early the next morning Laban kissed his grandchildren and his daughters.
He gave them his blessing. Then he left and returned home.

Jacob Gets Ready to Meet Esau

Genesis 32

1Jacob also went on his way. The angels of God met him. 2Jacob saw them.
He said, “This is the army of God!” So he named that place Mahanaim.

3Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau. Esau lived in the
land of Seir. It was also called the country of Edom.

4Jacob told the messengers what to do. He said, “Here’s what you must tell
my master Esau. ‘Your servant Jacob says, “I’ve been staying with Laban. I’ve
remained there until now. 5I have cattle and donkeys and sheep and goats. I
also have male and female servants. Now I’m sending this message to you. I
hope I can please you.” ’ ”

6The messengers came back to Jacob. They said, “We went to your brother
Esau. He’s coming now to meet you. He has 400 men with him.”

7Jacob was very worried and afraid. So he separated the people who were
with him into two groups. He also separated the flocks and herds and camels.
8He thought, “Esau may come and attack one group. If he does, the group
that’s left can escape.”

9Then Jacob prayed, “You are the God of my grandfather Abraham. You are
the God of my father Isaac.

“LORD, you are the one who said to me, ‘Go back to your country and your
relatives. Then I will give you success.’ 10You have been very kind and faithful
to me. But I’m not worthy of any of this. When I crossed this Jordan River, all
I had was my walking stick. But now I’ve become two groups.

11“Please save me from the hand of my brother Esau. I’m afraid he’ll come
and attack me and the mothers with their children. 12But you have said, ‘I will
certainly give you success. I will make your children as many as the grains of
sand on the seashore. People will not be able to count them.’ ”

13Jacob spent the night there. He chose a gift for his brother Esau from what
he had with him. 14He chose 200 female goats and 20 male goats. He chose
200 female sheep and 20 male sheep. 15He chose 30 female camels with their

little ones. He chose 40 cows and ten bulls. And he chose 20 female donkeys and ten male donkeys. [16]He put each herd by itself.

Then he put his servants in charge of them. He said to his servants, “Go on ahead of me. Keep some space between the herds.”

[17]Jacob spoke to his servant who was leading the way. He said, “My brother Esau will meet you. He’ll ask, ‘Who is your master? Where are you going? And who owns all of these animals in front of you?’

[18]“Then say to Esau, ‘They belong to your servant Jacob. They are a gift to you from him. And he is coming behind us.’ ”

[19]He also spoke to the second and third servants. He told them and all of the others who followed the herds what to do. He said, “Say the same thing to Esau when you meet him. [20]Make sure you say, ‘Your servant Jacob is coming behind us.’ ” Jacob was thinking, “I’ll make peace with him with these gifts I’m sending on ahead. When I see him later, maybe he’ll welcome me.”

[21]So Jacob’s gifts went on ahead of him. But he himself spent the night in the camp.

Jacob Struggles With God

[22]That night Jacob got up. He took his two wives, his two female servants and his 11 sons and sent them across the Jabbok River. [23]After they had crossed the stream, he sent over everything he owned.

[24]So Jacob was left alone. A man struggled with him until morning. [25]The man saw that he couldn’t win. So he touched the inside of Jacob’s hip. As Jacob struggled with the man, Jacob’s hip was twisted. [26]Then the man said, “Let me go. It is morning.”

But Jacob replied, “I won’t let you go unless you bless me.”

[27]The man asked him, “What is your name?”

“Jacob,” he answered.

[28]Then the man said, “Your name will not be Jacob anymore. Instead, it will be Israel. You have struggled with God and with men. And you have won.”

[29]Jacob said, “Please tell me your name.”

But he replied, “Why do you want to know my name?” Then he blessed

Jacob there.

30So Jacob named the place Peniel. He said, “I saw God face to face. But I’m still alive!”

31The sun rose above Jacob as he passed by Peniel. He was limping because of his hip. 32That’s why the people of Israel don’t eat the meat attached to the inside of the hip. They don’t eat it to this very day. It’s because the inside of Jacob’s hip was touched.

Jacob Meets Esau

Genesis 33

[1]Jacob looked up. And there was Esau, coming with his 400 men! So Jacob separated the children. He put them with Leah, Rachel and the two female servants. [2]He put the servants and their children in front. He put Leah and her children next. And he put Rachel and Joseph last.

[3]He himself went on ahead. As he came near his brother, he bowed down to the ground seven times.

[4]But Esau ran to meet Jacob. He hugged him and threw his arms around his neck. He kissed him, and they cried. [5]Then Esau looked up and saw the women and children. “Who are these people with you?” he asked.

Jacob answered, “They are the children God has so kindly given to me.”

[6]Then the female servants and their children came near and bowed down. [7]Next, Leah and her children came and bowed down. Last of all came Joseph and Rachel. They bowed down too.

[8]Esau asked, “Why did you send all of those herds I saw?”

“I hoped I could do something to please you,” Jacob replied.

[9]But Esau said, “I already have plenty, my brother. Keep what you have for yourself.”

[10]“No, please!” said Jacob. “If I’ve pleased you, accept this gift from me. Seeing your face is like seeing the face of God. You have welcomed me so kindly. [11]Please accept the present that was brought to you. God has been gracious to me. I have everything I need.” Jacob wouldn’t give in. So Esau accepted it.

[12]Then Esau said, “Let’s be on our way. I’ll go with you.”

[13]But Jacob said to him, “You know that the children are young. You also know that I have to take care of the cows and female sheep that are nursing their little ones. If the animals are driven hard for just one day, all of them will die.

[14]“So you go on ahead of me. I’ll move along only as fast as the herds and the children can go. I’ll go slowly 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 just hope I’ve pleased you.”

[16]So that day Esau started on his way back to Seir. [17]But Jacob went to Succoth. There he built a place for himself. He also made shelters for his livestock. That’s why the place is named Succoth.

[18]After Jacob came from Paddan Aram, he arrived safely at the city of Shechem in Canaan. He camped where he could see the city. [19]For 100 pieces of silver he bought a piece of land. He got it from the sons of Hamor. Hamor was the father of Shechem. Jacob set up his tent on that piece of land. [20]He also set up an altar there. He named it El Elohe Israel.

Simeon and Levi Kill the Men of Shechem

Genesis 34

1 Dinah was the daughter Leah had by Jacob. Dinah went out to visit the
women of the land.

2 Hamor the Hivite was the ruler of that area. When his son Shechem saw
Dinah, he took her and raped her. 3 Then his heart longed for Jacob's daughter
Dinah. He fell in love with her and spoke tenderly to her.

4 Shechem said to his father Hamor, "Get me that woman. I want her to be my
wife."

5 Jacob heard that his daughter Dinah had been made "unclean." His sons
were in the fields with his livestock. So he kept quiet about it until they came
home.

6 Then Shechem's father Hamor went out to talk with Jacob. 7 Jacob's sons
had come in from the fields. They came as soon as they heard what had
happened. They were filled with sadness and anger.

Shechem had done a very terrible thing. He had forced Jacob's daughter to
have sex with him. He had done something that should never be done in Israel.

8 But Hamor said to them, "My son Shechem wants your daughter. Please
give her to him to be his wife.

9 "Let your people and ours get married to each other. Give us your daughters
as our wives. You can have our daughters as your wives. 10 You can settle
among us. Here is the land. Live in it. Trade in it. Buy property in it."

11 Then Shechem spoke to Dinah's father and brothers. He said, "I want to
please you. I'll give you anything you ask. 12 Make the price for the bride as
high as you want to. I'll pay anything you ask me. Just give me the woman. I
want to get married to her."

13 Their sister Dinah had been made "unclean." So Jacob's sons lied to
Shechem and his father Hamor. 14 They said to them, "We can't do it. We can't
give our sister to a man who isn't circumcised. That would bring shame on us.

15We'll agree, but only on one condition. You will have to become like us. You will have to circumcise all of your males.

16"Then we'll give you our daughters as your wives. And we'll take your daughters as our wives. We'll settle among you and become one people with you. 17But if you won't agree to it, then we'll take our sister and go."

18Their offer seemed good to Hamor and his son Shechem. 19The young man was the most honored of all of the men in his father's family. He didn't lose any time in doing what they said, because he was delighted with Jacob's daughter.

20Hamor and his son Shechem went to the city gate. They spoke to the other men in town. 21"These men are friendly toward us," they said. "Let them live in our land. Let them trade in it. The land has plenty of room for them. We can get married to their daughters. And they can marry ours.

22"But they will agree to live with us as one people only on one condition. All of our males must be circumcised, just as they are.

23"Won't their livestock and their property belong to us? Won't all of their animals become ours? So let's say yes to them. Then they'll settle among us."

24All of the men who went out through the city gate agreed with Hamor and his son Shechem. So every male in the city was circumcised.

25Three days later, all of them were still in pain. Then Simeon and Levi took their swords. They were Jacob's sons and Dinah's brothers. They attacked the city when the people didn't expect it. They killed every male. 26They also killed Hamor and his son Shechem with their swords. Then they took Dinah from Shechem's house and left.

27Jacob's other sons found the dead bodies. They robbed the city where their sister had been made "unclean." 28They took the flocks and herds and donkeys. They took everything that was in the city and out in the fields. 29They carried everything away. And they took all of the women and children. They took away everything that was in the houses.

30Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have brought trouble on me. Now I'm like a very bad smell to the Canaanites and Perizzites who live in this land. There aren't many of us. They may join together against me and attack me. Then I and my family will be destroyed."

31But they replied, "Should he have treated our sister like a prostitute?"

Jacob Returns to Bethel

Genesis 35

[1]Then God said to Jacob, “Go up to Bethel and settle there. Build an altar there to honor me. That’s where I appeared to you when you were running away from your brother Esau.”

[2]So Jacob spoke to his family and to everyone who was with him. He said, “Get rid of the strange gods you have with you. Make yourselves pure, and change your clothes. [3]Come, let’s go up to Bethel. There I’ll build an altar to honor God. He answered me when I was in trouble. He’s been with me everywhere I’ve gone.”

[4]So they gave Jacob all of the strange gods they had. They also gave him their earrings. Jacob buried them under the oak tree at Shechem.

[5]Then Jacob and everyone who was with him started out. The terror of God fell on the towns all around them. So no one chased them.

[6]Jacob and all of the people who were with him came to Luz. Luz is also called Bethel. It’s in the land of Canaan. [7]Jacob built an altar at Luz. He named the place El Bethel. There God made himself known to Jacob when he was running away from his brother.

[8]Rebekah’s attendant Deborah died. They buried her body under the oak tree below Bethel. So it was called Allon Bacuth.

[9]After Jacob returned from Paddan Aram, God appeared to him again. And God blessed him. [10]God said to him, “Your name is Jacob. But you will not be called Jacob anymore. Your name will be Israel.” So he named him Israel.

[11]God said to him, “I am the Mighty God. Have children and increase your numbers. A nation and a community of nations will come from you. Kings will come from your body. [12]I am giving you the land I gave to Abraham and Isaac. I will also give it to your children after you.”

[13]Then God left him at the place where he had talked with him.

[14]Jacob set up a stone pillar at the place where God had talked with him. He

poured out a drink offering on it. He also poured oil on it. [15]Jacob named the place Bethel. That's where God had talked with him.

Rachel and Isaac Die

[16]They moved on from Bethel. Ephrath wasn't very far away when Rachel began to have a baby. She was having a very hard time of it.

[17]The woman who helped her saw that she was having problems. So she said to her, "Don't be afraid. You have another son."

[18]But Rachel was dying. As she took her last breath, she named her son Ben-Oni. But his father named him Benjamin.

[19]So Rachel died. Her body was buried beside the road to Ephrath. Ephrath was also called Bethlehem. [20]Jacob set up a pillar over her tomb. The pillar marks the place of Rachel's tomb to this very day.

[21]Israel moved on again. He set up his tent beyond Migdal Eder.

[22]While Israel was living in that area, Reuben went in and made love to Bilhah. She was the concubine of Reuben's father. And Israel heard about it.

Here are the 12 sons Jacob had.

[23]Leah was the mother of
Reuben, Jacob's oldest son.
Her other sons were
Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun.

[24]The sons of Rachel were
Joseph and Benjamin.

[25]The sons of Rachel's female servant Bilhah were
Dan and Naphtali.

[26]The sons of Leah's female servant Zilpah were
Gad and Asher.

Those were Jacob's sons. They were born in Paddan Aram.

[27]Jacob came home to his father Isaac in Mamre. Mamre is near Kiriath Arba,
where Abraham and Isaac had stayed. The place is also called Hebron.

[28]Isaac lived 180 years. [29]Then he took his last breath and died. He was very
old when he joined the members of his family who had already died. His sons
Esau and Jacob buried his body.

The Family Line of Esau

Genesis 36

[1]Here is the story of Esau. Esau was also called Edom.

[2]Esau got his wives from among the women of Canaan. He married Adah, the daughter of Elon the Hittite. He also married Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah and the granddaughter of Zibeon the Hivite. [3]And he married Basemath, the daughter of Ishmael and the sister of Nebaioth.

[4]Adah had Eliphaz by Esau. Basemath had Reuel. [5]Oholibamah had Jeush, Jalam and Korah. All of them were Esau's sons. They were born in Canaan.

[6]Esau moved to a land far away from his brother Jacob. He took with him his wives, his sons and daughters, and all of the people who lived with him. He also took his livestock and all of his other animals. He took everything he had gotten in Canaan.

[7]Jacob and Esau owned so much that they couldn't remain together. There wasn't enough land for both of them. They had too much livestock. [8]So Esau settled in the hill country of Seir. Esau was also called Edom.

[9]Here is the story of Esau. He's the father of the people of Edom. They live in the hill country of Seir.

[10]Here are the names of Esau's sons.

They are Eliphaz, the son of Esau's wife Adah, and Reuel, the son of Esau's wife Basemath.

[11]The sons of Eliphaz were

Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam and Kenaz.

[12]Esau's son Eliphaz also had a concubine named Timna. She had Amalek by Eliphaz. They were grandsons of Esau's wife Adah.

[13]The sons of Reuel were

Nahath, Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah. They were grandsons of Esau's wife Basemath.

14 Esau's wife Oholibamah was the daughter of Anah and the granddaughter of Zibeon. She had Jeush, Jalam and Korah by Esau.

15 Here are the chiefs who were among Esau's sons.

Eliphaz was Esau's oldest son. The sons of Eliphaz were

Chiefs Teman, Omar, Zepho, Kenaz, 16 Korah, Gatam and Amalek. They were the chiefs in Edom who were sons of Eliphaz. They were Adah's grandsons.

17 The sons of Esau's son Reuel were

Chiefs Nahath, Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah. They were the chiefs in Edom who were sons of Reuel. They were grandsons of Esau's wife Basemath.

18 The sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah were

Chiefs Jeush, Jalam and Korah. They were the chiefs who were sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah. She was Anah's daughter.

19 That was the family line of Esau. And those were the chiefs. Esau was also called Edom.

20 Seir the Horite had sons living in the same area.

They were Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, 21 Dishon, Ezer and Dishan. The sons of Seir in Edom were Horite chiefs.

22 The sons of Lotan were

Hori and Homam. Timna was Lotan's sister.

23 The sons of Shobal were

Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho and Onam.

24 The sons of Zibeon were

Aiah and Anah. He was the Anah who discovered the hot springs of water in the desert. He found them while he was taking care of the donkeys that belonged to his father Zibeon.

25 The children of Anah were

Dishon and Oholibamah. Oholibamah was the daughter of Anah.

[26]The sons of Dishon were

Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran and Keran.

[27]The sons of Ezer were

Bilhan, Zaavan and Akan.

[28]The sons of Dishan were

Uz and Aran.

[29]The Horite chiefs were

Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, [30]Dishon, Ezer and Dishan. They were the Horite chiefs in the land of Seir. They are listed tribe by tribe.

The Rulers of Edom

[31]Before Israel had a king, there were kings who ruled in Edom.

[32]Bela became the king of Edom. Bela was the son of Beor. Bela's city was called Dinhabah.

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

[34]When Jobab died, Husham became the next king. Husham was from the land of the Temanites.

[35]When Husham died, Hadad became the next king. Hadad was the son of Bedad. Hadad had won the battle over Midian in the country of Moab. Hadad's city was called Avith.

[36]When Hadad died, Samlah became the next king. Samlah was from Masrekah.

[37]When Samlah died, Shaul became the next king. Shaul was from Rehoboth on the river.

[38]When Shaul died, Baal-Hanan became the next king. Baal-Hanan was the son of Acbor.

[39]When Baal-Hanan died, Hadad became the next king. Hadad's city was

called Pau. His wife's name was Mehetabel. She was the daughter of Matred. Matred was the daughter of Me-Zahab.

[40]Here are the chiefs who were in the family line of Esau. They are listed by name as chiefs in charge of their tribes and territories. They are

Timna, Alvah, Jetheth, [41]Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon, [42]Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar, [43]Magdiel and Iram. They were the chiefs of Edom. They ruled over their settlements in the land where they lived.

That's the end of the story of Esau. He was the father of the people of Edom.

Joseph Has Two Dreams

Genesis 37

[1]Jacob lived in the land of Canaan. It's the land where his father had stayed.

[2]Here is the story of Jacob.

Joseph was a young man. He was 17 years old. He was taking care of the flocks with some of his brothers. They were the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives. Joseph brought their father a bad report about them.

[3]Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons. Joseph had been born to him when he was old. Israel made him a beautiful robe.

[4]Joseph's brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them. So they hated Joseph. They couldn't even speak one kind word to him.

[5]Joseph had a dream. When he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. [6]He said to them, "Listen to the dream I had. [7]We were tying up bundles of grain out in the field. Suddenly my bundle rose and stood up straight. Your bundles gathered around my bundle and bowed down to it."

[8]His brothers said to him, "Do you plan to be king over us? Will you really rule over us?" So they hated him even more because of his dream. They didn't like what he had said.

[9]Then Joseph had another dream. He told it to his brothers. "Listen," he said. "I had another dream. This time the sun and moon and 11 stars were bowing down to me."

[10]He told his father as well as his brothers. Then his father objected. He said, "What about this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers really do that? Will we really come and bow down to the ground in front of you?"

[11]His brothers were jealous of him. But his father kept the matter in mind.

Joseph Is Sold by His Brothers

12 Joseph's brothers had gone to take care of their father's flocks near
Shechem. 13 Israel said to Joseph, "As you know, your brothers are taking care
of the flocks near Shechem. Come. I'm going to send you to them."

"All right," Joseph replied.

14 So Israel said to him, "Go to your brothers. See how they are doing. Also
see how the flocks are doing. Then come back and tell me." So he sent him
away from the Hebron Valley.

Joseph arrived at Shechem. 15 A man found him wandering around in the
fields. He asked Joseph, "What are you looking for?"

16 He replied, "I'm looking for my brothers. Can you tell me where they are
taking care of their flocks?"

17 "They've moved on from here," the man answered. "I heard them say,
'Let's go to Dothan.' "

So Joseph went to look for his brothers. He found them near Dothan. 18 But
they saw him a long way off. Before he reached them, they made plans to kill
him.

19 "Here comes that dreamer!" they said to one another. 20 "Come. Let's kill
him. Let's throw him into one of these empty wells. Let's say that a wild
animal ate him up. Then we'll see whether his dreams will come true."

21 Reuben heard them. He tried to save Joseph from them. "Let's not take his
life," he said. 22 "Let's not spill any blood. Throw him into this empty well here
in the desert. But don't harm him yourselves."

Reuben said that to save Joseph from them. He was hoping he could take him
back to his father.

23 When Joseph came to his brothers, he was wearing his beautiful robe. They
took it away from him. 24 And they threw him into the well. The well was
empty. There wasn't any water in it.

25 Then they sat down to eat their meal. As they did, they saw some
Ishmaelite traders coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with spices,
lotion and myrrh. They were on their way to take them down to Egypt.

26 Judah said to his brothers, "What will we gain if we kill our brother and try

to cover up what we've done? [27]Come. Let's sell him to these traders. Let's not harm him ourselves. After all, he's our brother. He's our own flesh and blood." Judah's brothers agreed with him.

[28]The traders from Midian came by. Joseph's brothers pulled him up out of the well. They sold him to the Ishmaelite traders for eight ounces of silver. Then the traders took him to Egypt.

[29]Later, Reuben came back to the empty well. He saw that Joseph wasn't there. He was so upset that he tore his clothes. [30]He went back to his brothers and said, "The boy isn't there! Now what should I do?"

[31]Then they got Joseph's beautiful robe. They killed a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. [32]They took it back to their father. They said, "We found this. Take a look at it. See if it's your son's robe."

[33]Jacob recognized it. He said, "It's my son's robe! A wild animal has eaten him up. Joseph must have been torn to pieces."

[34]Jacob tore his clothes. He put on black clothes. Then he sobbed over his son for many days.

[35]All of Jacob's other sons and daughters came to comfort him. But they weren't able to. He said, "I'll be full of sorrow when I go down into the grave to be with my son." So Joseph's father sobbed over him.

[36]But the traders from Midian sold Joseph to Potiphar in Egypt. Potiphar was one of Pharaoh's officials. He was the captain of the palace guard.

JUDAH AND TAMAR

Genesis 38

[1]At that time, Judah left his brothers. He went down to stay with a man named Hirah. Hirah was from the town of Adullam.

[2]There Judah met the daughter of a man from Canaan. His name was Shua. Judah married her and made love to her. [3]She became pregnant. She had a son. They named him Er. [4]She became pregnant again and had another son. She named him Onan. [5]She had still another son. She named him Shelah. He was born at Kezib.

[6]Judah got a wife for his oldest son Er. Her name was Tamar. [7]But Judah's oldest son Er was evil in the LORD's eyes. So the LORD put him to death.

[8]Then Judah said to Onan, "Make love to your brother's wife. After all, you are her brother-in-law. So carry out your duty to her. Produce children for your brother."

[9]But Onan knew that the children wouldn't belong to him. So every time he made love to his brother's wife, he spilled his semen on the ground. He did it so he wouldn't produce children for his brother.

[10]What he did was evil in the LORD's eyes. So the LORD put him to death also.

[11]Then Judah spoke to his daughter-in-law Tamar. He said, "Live as a widow in your father's home. Wait there until my son Shelah grows up."

Judah was thinking, "Shelah might die too, just like his brothers." So Tamar went to live in her father's home.

[12]After a long time Judah's wife died. She was the daughter of Shua. When Judah got over his sadness, he went up to Timnah. His friend Hirah from Adullam went with him. Men were clipping the wool from Judah's sheep at Timnah.

[13]Tamar was told, "Your father-in-law is on his way to Timnah to clip the wool from his sheep." [14]So she took off her widow's clothes. She covered her face with a veil so people wouldn't know who she was. Then she sat down at

the entrance to Enaim. Enaim is on the road to Timnah. Tamar knew that Shelah had grown up. But she hadn't been given to him as his wife.

15Judah saw her. He thought she was a prostitute because she had covered her face with a veil. 16He didn't realize that she was his daughter-in-law. He went over to her by the side of the road. He said, "Come. Let me make love to you."

"What will you give me to make love to you?" she asked.

17"I'll send you a young goat from my flock," he said.

"Will you give me something that belongs to you?" she asked. "I'll keep it until you send the goat."

18He said, "What should I give you?"

"Give me your seal and its string," she answered. "And give me your walking stick."

So he gave them to her. Then he had sex with her. And she became pregnant by him. 19After she left, she took off her veil. She put on her widow's clothes again.

20Judah sent his friend Hirah with the young goat he had promised. He wanted to get back what he had given to the woman.

But his friend Hirah couldn't find her. 21He asked the men who lived at Enaim, "Where's the temple prostitute? She used to sit beside the road here."

"There hasn't been any temple prostitute here," they said.

22So Hirah went back to Judah. He said, "I couldn't find her. Besides, the men who lived there didn't know anything about her. They said, 'There hasn't been any temple prostitute here.' "

23Then Judah said, "Let her keep what she has. I don't want people making fun of us. After all, I did send her this young goat. We can't help it if you couldn't find her."

24About three months later people brought word to Judah. They said, "Your daughter-in-law Tamar is guilty of being a prostitute. Now she's pregnant."

Judah said, "Bring her out! Have her burned to death!"

25As Tamar was being brought out, she sent a message to her father-in-law. She said, "I am pregnant by the man who owns these." She continued, "Do you recognize this seal and string and walking stick? Do you know who they belong to?"

[26]Judah recognized them. He said, “She’s a better person than I am. I should have given her to my son Shelah, but I didn’t.” Judah never had sex with Tamar again.

[27]The time came for Tamar to have her baby. There were twin boys inside her.

[28]As the babies were being born, one of them stuck out his hand. So the woman who was helping Tamar took a bright red thread. The woman tied it on the baby’s wrist. She said, “This one came out first.”

[29]But he pulled his hand back, and his brother came out first instead. She said, “Just look at how you have broken out!” So he was called Perez.

[30]Then his brother, who had the red thread on his wrist, came out. So he was named Zerah.

Joseph and Potiphar's Wife

Genesis 39

1 Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. An Egyptian named Potiphar had
bought him from the Ishmaelite traders who had taken him there. Potiphar was
one of Pharaoh's officials. He was the captain of the palace guard.

2 The LORD was with Joseph. He gave him great success. Joseph lived in
Potiphar's house.

3 Joseph's master saw that the LORD was with him. He saw that the LORD gave
Joseph success in everything he did. 4 So Potiphar was pleased with Joseph. He
made him his attendant. He put Joseph in charge of his house. He told Joseph
to take good care of everything he owned.

5 From that time on, the LORD blessed Potiphar's family and servants because
of Joseph. He blessed everything Potiphar had in his house and field.

6 So Potiphar told Joseph to take good care of everything he owned. With
Joseph in charge, he didn't have to worry about anything except the food he
ate.

Joseph was strong and handsome. 7 After a while, his master's wife noticed
Joseph. She said to him, "Make love to me!"

8 But he said no. "My master has put me in charge," he told her. "Now he
doesn't have to worry about anything in the house. He trusts me to take care of
everything he owns.

9 "No one in this house is in a higher position than I am. My master hasn't
held anything back from me, except you. You are his wife. So how could I do
an evil thing like that? How could I sin against God?"

10 She spoke to Joseph day after day. But he told her he wouldn't make love to
her. He didn't even want to be with her.

11 One day Joseph went into the house to take care of his duties. None of the
family servants was inside.

12 Potiphar's wife grabbed hold of him by his coat. "Make love to me!" she

said. But he left his coat in her hand. And he ran out of the house.

[13]She saw that he had left his coat in her hand and had run out of the house.
[14]So she called her servants. “Look,” she said to them, “this Hebrew slave has
been brought here to make fun of us! He came in here to force me to have sex
with him. But I screamed for help. [15]He heard my scream. So he left his coat
beside me and ran out of the house.”

[16]She kept Joseph’s coat with her until Potiphar came home. [17]Then she told
him her story. She said, “That Hebrew slave you brought us came to me to rape
me. [18]But I screamed for help. So he left his coat beside me and ran out of the
house.”

[19]Potiphar’s wife told him, “That’s how your slave treated me.” When
Joseph’s master heard her story, he became very angry. [20]So he put Joseph in
prison. It was the place where the king’s prisoners were kept.

While Joseph was there in the prison, [21]the LORD was with him. He was kind
to him.

So the man who was running the prison was pleased with Joseph. [22]He put
Joseph in charge of all of the prisoners. He made him accountable for
everything that was done there. [23]The man who ran the prison didn’t pay
attention to anything that was in Joseph’s care.

The LORD was with Joseph. He gave Joseph success in everything he did.

The Wine Taster and the Baker

Genesis 40

[1]Some time later, the Egyptian king's baker and wine taster did something
their master didn't like.

[2]So Pharaoh became angry with his two officials, the chief wine taster and
the chief baker. [3]He put them in prison in the house of the captain of the palace
guard. It was the same prison where Joseph was kept.

[4]The captain put Joseph in charge of those men. So Joseph took care of them.

Some time passed while they were in prison. [5]Then each of the two men had
a dream. The men were the Egyptian king's baker and wine taster. They were
being held in prison. Both of them had dreams the same night. Each of their
dreams had its own meaning.

[6]Joseph came to them the next morning. He saw that they were sad. [7]They
were Pharaoh's officials, and they were in prison with Joseph in his master's
house. So he asked them, "Why do you look so sad today?"

[8]"We both had dreams," they answered. "But no one can tell us what they
mean."

Then Joseph said to them, "Only God knows what dreams mean. Tell me
your dreams."

[9]So the chief wine taster told Joseph his dream. He said to him, "In my dream
I saw a vine in front of me. [10]There were three branches on the vine. As soon
as it budded, it flowered. And bunches of ripe grapes grew on it.

[11]"Pharaoh's cup was in my hand. I took the grapes. I squeezed them into
Pharaoh's cup. Then I put the cup in his hand."

[12]"Here's what your dream means," Joseph said to him. "The three branches
are three days. [13]In three days Pharaoh will let you out of prison. He'll give
your position back to you. And you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand. That's
what you used to do when you were his wine taster.

[14]"But when everything is going well with you, remember me. Do me a

favor. Speak to Pharaoh about me. Get me out of this prison. [15]I was taken away from the land of the Hebrews by force. Even here I haven't done anything to be put in prison for."

[16]The chief baker saw that Joseph had given a positive meaning to the wine taster's dream. So he said to Joseph, "I had a dream too. There were three baskets of bread on my head. [17]All kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh were in the top basket. But the birds were eating them out of the basket that was on my head."

[18]"Here's what your dream means," Joseph said. "The three baskets are three days. [19]In three days Pharaoh will cut your head off. Then he will stick a pole through your body and set the pole up. The birds will eat up your body."

[20]The third day was Pharaoh's birthday. He had a big dinner prepared for all of his officials. He brought the chief wine taster and the chief baker out of prison. He did it in front of his officials. [21]He gave the chief wine taster's position back to him. Once again the wine taster put the cup into Pharaoh's hand.

[22]But Pharaoh had a pole stuck through the chief baker's body. Then he had the pole set up.

Everything happened exactly as Joseph had told them when he explained their dreams.

[23]But the chief wine taster didn't remember Joseph. In fact, he forgot all about him.

Pharaoh Has Two Dreams

Genesis 41

[1]When two full years had passed, Pharaoh had a dream. In his dream, he was
standing by the Nile River. [2]Seven cows came up out of the river. They looked
healthy and fat. They were eating some of the tall grass that was growing along
the river.

[3]After them, seven other cows came up out of the Nile. They looked ugly and
skinny. They were standing beside the other cows on the riverbank.

[4]The ugly, skinny cows ate up the seven cows that looked healthy and fat.
Then Pharaoh woke up.

[5]He fell asleep again and had a second dream. In that dream, seven heads of
grain were growing on one stem. They were healthy and good.

[6]After them, seven other heads of grain came up. They were thin and dried up
by the east wind.

[7]The thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven healthy, full heads. Then
Pharaoh woke up. It had been a dream.

[8]In the morning he was worried. So he sent for all of 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 wine taster spoke up. He said to Pharaoh, “Now I remember
that I’ve done something wrong. [10]Pharaoh was once angry with his servants.
He put me and the chief baker in prison. We were in the house of the captain of
the palace guard. [11]Each of us had a dream the same night. Each dream had its
own meaning.

[12]“A young Hebrew servant was there with us. He was a servant of the
captain of the guard. We told him our dreams. And he explained them to us. He
told each of us the meaning of our dreams. [13]Things turned out exactly as he
said they would. I was given back my position. The other man had a pole stuck
through his body.”

14So Pharaoh sent for Joseph. He was quickly brought out of the prison. Joseph shaved himself and changed his clothes. Then he came to Pharaoh.

15Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I had a dream. No one can tell me what it means. But I’ve heard that when you hear a dream you can explain it.”

16“I can’t do it,” Joseph replied to Pharaoh. “But God will give Pharaoh the answer he wants.”

17Then Pharaoh told Joseph what he had dreamed. He said, “I was standing on the bank of the Nile River. 18Seven cows came up out of the river. They were fat and good-looking. They were eating the tall grass that was growing along the river.

19“After them, seven other cows came up. They were bony and very ugly and thin. I had never seen such ugly cows in the whole land of Egypt.

20“The thin, ugly cows ate up the seven fat cows that came up first. 21But even after the thin cows ate up the fat ones, no one could tell that they had eaten them. They looked just as ugly as before. Then I woke up.

22“In my dreams I also saw seven heads of grain. They were full and good. They were all growing on one stem.

23“After them, seven other heads of grain came up. They were weak and thin and dried up by the east wind.

24“The thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven good heads. I told my dreams to the magicians. But none of them could explain them to me.”

25Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, “Both of Pharaoh’s dreams have the same meaning. God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do. 26The seven good cows are seven years. And the seven good heads of grain are seven years. Both dreams mean the same thing.

27“The seven thin, ugly cows that came up later are seven years. So are the seven worthless heads of grain that were dried up by the east wind. They are seven years when there won’t be enough food.

28“It’s exactly as I said to Pharaoh. God has shown Pharaoh what he’s about to do. 29Seven years with plenty of food are coming to the whole land of Egypt.

30“But seven years when there won’t be enough food will follow them. Then everyone will forget about all of the food Egypt had. Terrible hunger will

destroy the land. [31]There won't be anything left to remind people of the years when there was plenty of food in the land. That's how bad the hunger that follows will be.

[32]"God gave the dream to Pharaoh in two forms. That's because the matter has been firmly decided by God. And it's because God will do it soon.

[33]"So Pharaoh should look for a wise and understanding man. He should put him in charge of the land of Egypt.

[34]"Pharaoh should appoint officials to be in charge of the land. They should take a fifth of the harvest in Egypt during the seven years when there's plenty of food. [35]They should collect all of the extra food of the good years that are coming. Pharaoh should give them authority to store up the grain. They should keep it in the cities for food.

[36]"The grain should be stored up for the country to use later. It will be needed during the seven years when there isn't enough food in Egypt. Then the country won't be destroyed just because it doesn't have enough food."

[37]The plan seemed good to Pharaoh and all of his officials. [38]So Pharaoh said to them, "The spirit of God is in this man. We can't find anyone else like him, can we?"

[39]Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "God has made all of this known to you. No one is as wise and understanding as you are. [40]You will be in charge of my palace. All of my people must obey your orders. I will be greater than you only because I'm the one who sits on the throne."

Joseph Is Put in Charge of Egypt

[41]So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I'm putting you in charge of the whole land of Egypt."

[42]Then Pharaoh took his ring off his finger. It was the ring he used to stamp all of the official papers. He put it on Joseph's finger. He dressed him in robes that were made out of fine linen. He put a gold chain around his neck.

[43]He also had him ride in a chariot. Joseph was now next in command after Pharaoh. People went in front of him and shouted, "Get down on your knees!"

By doing all of those things, Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of the whole land

of Egypt.

44Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I am Pharaoh. But without your word, no
one will do anything in the whole land of Egypt.”

45Pharaoh gave Joseph the name Zaphenath-Paneah. He gave him a wife. She
was Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera. Potiphera was the priest of On.

Joseph traveled all over the land of Egypt.

46Joseph was 30 years old when he began serving Pharaoh, the king of Egypt.
He left Pharaoh’s palace and traveled all over Egypt.

47During the seven years when there was plenty of food, the land produced
more than the people needed.

48Joseph collected all of the extra food produced in those seven years in
Egypt. He stored it in the cities. In each city he stored up the food that was
grown in the fields around it. 49Joseph stored up huge amounts of grain. It was
like the sand of the sea. There was so much grain it couldn’t be measured. So
Joseph stopped keeping records of it.

50Before the years when there wasn’t enough food, two sons were born to
Joseph. He had them by Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera. Potiphera was the
priest of On.

51Joseph named his first son Manasseh. That’s because he said, “God has
made me forget all of my trouble and my father’s whole family.”

52He named the second son Ephraim. That’s because he said, “God has given
me children in the land where I’ve suffered so much.”

53The seven years when there was plenty of food in Egypt came to an end.
54Then the seven years when there wasn’t enough food began. It happened
exactly as Joseph had said it would. There wasn’t enough food in any of the
other lands. But in the whole land of Egypt there was food.

55When all of the people of Egypt began to get hungry, they cried out to
Pharaoh for food. He told all of the Egyptians, “Go to Joseph. Do what he tells
you.”

56There wasn’t enough food anywhere in the country. So Joseph opened the
storerooms. He sold grain to the Egyptians because people were very hungry
all over Egypt.

57People from all of the other countries came to Egypt. They came to buy

grain from Joseph. That’s because people were very hungry all over the world.

Joseph's Brothers Go Down to Egypt

Genesis 42

1 Jacob found out that there was grain in Egypt. So he said to his sons, "Why
do you just keep looking at each other?" 2 He continued, "I've heard there's
grain in Egypt. Go down there. Buy some for us. Then we'll live and not die."

3 So ten of Joseph's brothers went down to Egypt to buy grain there. 4 But
Jacob didn't send Joseph's brother Benjamin with them. He was afraid
Benjamin might be harmed.

5 Israel's sons were among the people who went to buy grain. There wasn't
enough food in the land of Canaan.

6 Joseph was the governor of the land. He was the one who sold grain to all of
its people. When Joseph's brothers arrived, they bowed down to him with their
faces to the ground.

7 As soon as Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them. But he pretended to
be a stranger. He spoke to them in a mean way. "Where do you come from?"
he asked.

"From the land of Canaan," they replied. "We've come to buy food."

8 Joseph recognized his brothers, but they didn't recognize him. 9 Then Joseph
remembered his dreams about them. So he said to them, "You are spies! You
have come to see the places where our land isn't guarded very well."

10 "No, sir," they answered. "We've come to buy food. 11 All of us are the sons
of one man. We're honest men. We aren't spies."

12 "No!" he said to them. "You have come to see the places where our land
isn't guarded very well."

13 But they replied, "We were 12 brothers. All of us were the sons of one man.
He lives in the land of Canaan. Our youngest brother is now with our father.
And one brother is gone."

14 Joseph said to them, "I still say you are spies! 15 So I'm going to put you to
the test. You can be sure that Pharaoh lives. And you can be just as sure that

you won’t leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here. I promise with an oath that you won’t leave here. [16]Send one of you back to get your brother. The rest of you will be kept in prison.

“I’ll put your words to the test. Then we’ll find out whether you are telling the truth. You can be sure that Pharaoh lives. And you can be just as sure that if you aren’t telling the truth, we’ll know that you are spies!”

[17]So Joseph kept all of them under guard for three days.

[18]On the third day, Joseph spoke to them again. He said, “Do what I say. Then you will live, because I have respect for God. [19]If you are honest men, let one of your brothers stay here in prison. The rest of you may go and take grain back to your hungry families.

[20]“But you must bring your youngest brother to me. That will prove that your words are true. Then you won’t die.” So they did what he said.

[21]They said to one another, “God is certainly punishing us because of our brother. We saw how troubled he was when he begged us to let him live. But we wouldn’t listen. That’s why all of this trouble has come to us.”

[22]Reuben replied, “Didn’t I tell you not to sin against the boy? But you wouldn’t listen! Now we’re being held accountable for killing him.”

[23]They didn’t realize that Joseph could understand what they were saying. He was using someone else to explain their words to him in the Egyptian language.

[24]Joseph turned away from them and began to sob. Then he turned around and spoke to them again. He had Simeon taken and tied up right there in front of them.

[25]Joseph gave orders to have their bags filled with grain. He had each man’s money put back into his sack. He also made sure they were given food for their journey.

[26]Then the brothers loaded their grain on their donkeys and left.

[27]When night came, they stopped. One of them opened his sack to get feed for his donkey. He saw his money in the top of his sack. [28]“My money has been given back,” he said to his brothers. “Here it is in my sack.”

They had a sinking feeling in their hearts. They began to tremble. They turned to each other and said, “What has God done to us?”

[29]They came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan. They told him everything that had happened to them.

They said, [30]“The man who is the governor of the land spoke to us in a mean way. He treated us as if we were spying on the land. [31]But we said to him, ‘We’re honest men. We aren’t spies. [32]We were 12 brothers. All of us were the sons of one father. But now one brother is gone. And our youngest brother is with our father in Canaan.’

[33]“Then the man who is the governor of the land spoke to us. He said, ‘Here’s how I will know whether you are honest men. Leave one of your brothers here with me. Take food for your hungry families and go.

[34]“ ‘But bring your youngest brother to me. Then I’ll know that you are honest men and not spies. I’ll give your brother back to you. And you will be free to trade in the land.’ ”

[35]They began emptying their sacks. There in each man’s sack was his bag of money! When they and their father saw the money bags, they were afraid.

[36]Their father Jacob said to them, “You have taken my children away from me. Joseph is gone. Simeon is gone. Now you want to take Benjamin. Everything is going against me!”

[37]Then Reuben spoke to his father. He said, “You can put both of my sons to death if I don’t bring Benjamin back to you. Place him in my care. I’ll bring him back.”

[38]But Jacob said, “My son will not go down there with you. His brother is dead. He’s the only one left here with me. Suppose he’s harmed on the journey you are taking. Then I would die as a sad old man. I would go down into the grave full of sorrow.”

Joseph's Brothers Go Down to Egypt Again

Genesis 43

[1]There still wasn't enough food anywhere in the land. [2]After a while Jacob's family had eaten all of the grain the brothers had brought from Egypt.

So their father said to them, "Go back. Buy us a little more food."

[3]But Judah said to him, "The man gave us a strong warning. He said, 'You won't see my face again unless your brother comes with you.' [4]So send our brother along with us. Then we'll go down and buy food for you.

[5]"If you won't send him, we won't go down. The man said to us, 'You won't see my face again unless your brother comes with you.' "

[6]Israel asked, "Why did you bring this trouble to me? Why did you tell the man you had another brother?"

[7]They replied, "The man questioned us closely about ourselves and our family. 'Is your father still living?' he asked us. 'Do you have another brother?'

"We just answered his questions. How could we possibly know he would say, 'Bring your brother down here'?"

[8]Judah spoke to Israel his father. "Send the boy along with me," he said. "We'll go at once. Then we and you and our children will live and not die.

[9]"I myself promise to keep him safe. You can hold me accountable for him. I'll bring him back to you. I'll set him right here in front of you. If I don't, you can put the blame on me for the rest of my life.

[10]"As it is, we've already waited too long. We could have gone to Egypt and back twice by now."

[11]Then their father Israel spoke to them. He said, "If that's the way it has to be, then do what I tell you. Put some of the best things from our land in your bags. Take them down to the man as a gift. Take some lotion and a little honey. Take some spices and myrrh. Take some pistachio nuts and almonds. [12]Take twice the amount of money with you. You have to give back the money that was put in your sacks. Maybe it was a mistake.

13“Also take your brother. Go back to the man at once. 14May the Mighty
God cause him to show you mercy. May the man let your other brother and
Benjamin come back with you. And if I lose my sons, I lose them.”

15So the men took the gifts. They took twice the amount of money. They also
took Benjamin. They hurried down to Egypt and went to Joseph.

16When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he spoke to the manager of his
house. “Take these men to my house,” he said. “Kill an animal and prepare
dinner. I want them to eat with me at noon.”

17The manager did what Joseph told him to do. He took the men to Joseph’s
house.

18They were afraid when they were taken to Joseph’s house. They thought,
“We were brought here because of the money that was put back in our sacks
the first time. He wants to attack us and overpower us. Then he can hold us as
slaves and take our donkeys.”

19So they went up to Joseph’s manager. They spoke to him at the entrance to
the house. 20“Please, sir,” they said. “We came down here the first time to buy
food. 21We opened our sacks at the place where we stopped for the night. Each
of us found in our sacks the money we had paid. So we’ve brought it back with
us. 22We’ve also brought more money with us to buy food. We don’t know who
put our money in our sacks.”

23“It’s all right,” the manager said. “Don’t be afraid. Your God, the God of
your father, has given you riches in your sacks. I received your money.” Then
he brought Simeon out to them.

24The manager took the men into Joseph’s house. He gave them water to
wash their feet. He provided feed for their donkeys. 25They prepared their gifts
for Joseph. He was planning to arrive at noon. They had heard that they were
going to eat there.

26When Joseph came home, they gave him the gifts they had brought into the
house. They bowed down to the ground in front of him.

27He asked them how they were. Then he said, “How is your old father you
told me about? Is he still living?”

28They replied, “Your servant our father is still alive and well.” And they
bowed low to show him honor.

29Joseph looked around. Then he saw his brother Benjamin, his own mother’s

son. He asked, “Is this your youngest brother? Is he the one you told me about?” He continued, “May God be gracious to you, my son.”

30It moved him deeply to see his brother. So Joseph hurried out and looked for a place to cry. He went into his own room and cried there.

31Then he washed his face and came out. He calmed down and said, “Serve the food.”

32They served Joseph by himself. They served the brothers by themselves. They also served the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves. Because of their beliefs, Egyptians couldn’t eat with Hebrews.

33The brothers had been given places in front of Joseph. They had been seated in the order of their ages, from the oldest to the youngest. That made them look at each other in great surprise.

34While they were eating, some food was brought to them from Joseph’s table. Benjamin was given five times as much as anyone else. So all of Joseph’s brothers ate and drank a lot with him.

A Silver Cup in a Sack

Genesis 44

1 Joseph told the manager of his house what to do. “Fill the men’s sacks with
as much food as they can carry,” he said. “Put each man’s money in his sack.

2 “Then put my silver cup in the youngest one’s sack. Put it there along with
the money he paid for his grain.” So the manager did what Joseph told him to
do.

3 When morning came, the men were sent on their way with their donkeys.

4 They hadn’t gone very far from the city when Joseph spoke to his manager.
“Go after those men at once,” he said. “Catch up with them. Say to them, ‘My
master was good to you. Why have you paid him back by doing evil? 5 Isn’t this
the cup my master drinks from? Doesn’t he also use it to figure things out? You
have done an evil thing.’ ”

6 When the manager caught up with them, he told them what Joseph had said.

7 But they said to him, “Why do you say these things? We would never do
anything like that! 8 We even brought back to you from Canaan the money we
found in our sacks. So why would we steal silver or gold from your master’s
house?

9 “If you find out that any of us has the cup, he will die. And the rest of us will
become your slaves.”

10 “All right, then,” he said. “As you wish. The one who is found to have the
cup will become my slave. But the rest of you will be free from blame.”

11 Each of them quickly put his sack down on the ground and opened it.

12 Then the manager started to search. He began with the oldest and ended
with the youngest. The cup was found in Benjamin’s sack.

13 When that happened, they were so upset they tore their clothes. Then all of
them loaded their donkeys and went back to the city.

14 Joseph was still in the house when Judah and his brothers came in. They
threw themselves down on the ground in front of him.

15 Joseph said to them, “What have you done? Don’t you know that a man like
me has ways to figure things out?”

16 “What can we say to you?” Judah replied. “What can we say? How can we
prove we haven’t done anything wrong? God has shown you that we are guilty.
We are now your slaves. All of us are, including the one who was found to
have the cup.”

17 But Joseph said, “I would never do anything like that! Only the man who
was found to have the cup will become my slave. The rest of you may go back
to your father in peace.”

18 Then Judah went up to him. He said, “Please, sir. Let me speak a word to
you. Don’t be angry with me, even though you are equal to Pharaoh himself.
19 You asked us, ‘Do you have a father or a brother?’ 20 We answered, ‘We have
an old father. A young son was born to him when he was old. His brother is
dead. He’s the only one of his mother’s sons left. And his father loves him.’

21 “Then you said to us, ‘Bring him down to me. I want to see him for
myself.’

22 “We said to you, ‘The boy can’t leave his father. If he does, his father will
die.’

23 “But you told us, ‘Your youngest brother must come down here with you. If
he doesn’t, you won’t see my face again.’ 24 So we went back to my father. We
told him what you had said.

25 “Then our father said, ‘Go back. Buy a little more food.’

26 “But we said, ‘We can’t go down. We’ll only go if our youngest brother
goes there with us. We can’t even see the man’s face unless our youngest
brother goes with us.’

27 “Your servant my father said to us, ‘You know that my wife had two sons
by me. 28 One of them went away from me. And I said, “He must have been
torn to pieces.” I haven’t seen him since. 29 What if you take this one from me
too and he is harmed? Then you would cause me to die as a sad old man. I
would go down into the grave full of pain and suffering.’

30 “So now, what will happen if the boy isn’t with us when I go back to my
father? His life is closely tied up with the boy’s life. 31 When he sees that the
boy isn’t with us, he’ll die as a sad old man. Because of us, he’ll go down into
the grave full of sorrow.

[32]“I promised my father I would keep the boy safe. I said, ‘Father, I’ll bring
him back to you. If I don’t, you can put the blame on me for the rest of my
life.’
[33]“Now then, please let me stay here. Let me be your slave in place of the
boy. Let the boy return with his brothers. [34]How can I go back to my father if
the boy isn’t with me? Don’t let me see the pain and suffering that would come
to my father.”

Joseph Tells His Brothers Who He Is

Genesis 45

1 Joseph couldn't control himself anymore in front of all of his attendants. He
cried out, "Have everyone leave me!"

So there wasn't anyone with Joseph when he told his brothers who he was.
2 He sobbed so loudly that the Egyptians heard him. Everyone in Pharaoh's
house heard about it.

3 Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?"

But his brothers weren't able to answer him. They were too afraid of him.

4 Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me." So they did.

Then he said, "I am your brother Joseph. I'm the one you sold into Egypt.
5 But don't be upset. And don't be angry with yourselves because you sold me
here. God sent me ahead of you to save many lives.

6 "For two years now, there hasn't been enough food in the land. And for the
next five years, people won't be plowing or gathering crops. 7 But God sent me
ahead of you to keep some of you alive on earth. He sent me here to save your
lives by an act of mighty power.

8 "So then, it wasn't you who sent me here. It was God. He made me like a
father to Pharaoh. He made me master of Pharaoh's whole house. He made me
ruler of the whole land of Egypt.

9 "Now hurry back to my father. Say to him, 'Your son Joseph says, "God has
made me master of the whole land of Egypt. Come down to me. Don't waste
any time. 10 You will live in the area of Goshen. You, your children and
grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and everything you have will be near me.
11 There I will provide everything you need.

" ' "Five years without enough food are still coming. If you don't come down
here, you and your family and everyone who belongs to you will lose
everything." '

12 "Brothers, you can see for yourselves that it's really I, Joseph, speaking to

you. My brother Benjamin can see it too.

13“Tell my father about all of the honor that has been given to me in Egypt.
Tell him about everything you have seen. And bring my father down here
quickly.”

14Then Joseph threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and sobbed.
Benjamin also hugged him and sobbed. 15Joseph kissed all of his brothers and
sobbed over them. After that, his brothers talked with him.

16The news reached Pharaoh’s palace that Joseph’s brothers had come.
Pharaoh and all of his officials were pleased.

17Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Here’s what I want you to tell your brothers. Say
to them, ‘Load your animals. Return to the land of Canaan. 18Bring your father
and your families back to me. I’ll give you the best land in Egypt. You can
enjoy all of the good things in the land.’

19“And here’s something else I want you to tell them. Say to them, ‘Take
some carts from Egypt. Your children and your wives can use them. Get your
father and come back. 20Don’t worry about the things you have back there. The
best of everything in Egypt will belong to you.’ ”

21So the sons of Israel did it. Joseph gave them carts, as Pharaoh had
commanded. He also gave them supplies for their journey. 22He gave new
clothes to each of them.

But he gave more than seven pounds of silver to Benjamin. He also gave him
five sets of clothes.

23He sent his father ten donkeys loaded with the best things from Egypt. He
also sent ten female donkeys loaded with grain and bread and other supplies for
his journey.

24Then Joseph sent his brothers away. As they were leaving he said to them,
“Don’t argue on the way!”

25So they went up out of Egypt. They came to their father Jacob in the land of
Canaan. 26They told him, “Joseph is still alive! In fact, he is ruler of the whole
land of Egypt.”

Jacob was shocked. He didn’t believe them. 27So they told him everything
Joseph had said to them.

Jacob saw the carts Joseph had sent to carry him back. That gave new life to

their father Jacob. [28]Israel said, “I believe it now! My son Joseph is still alive. I’ll go and see him before I die.”

Jacob Goes Down to Egypt

Genesis 46

1So Israel started out with everything that belonged to him. When he reached
Beersheba, he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.

2God spoke to Israel in a vision at night. “Jacob! Jacob!” he said.

“Here I am,” Jacob replied.

3“I am God. I am the God of your father,” he said. “Do not be afraid to go
down to Egypt. There I will make you into a great nation. 4I will go down to
Egypt with you. You can be sure that I will bring you back again. And when
you die, Joseph will close your eyes with his own hand.”

5Then Jacob left Beersheba. Israel’s sons put their father Jacob and their
families in the carts that Pharaoh had sent to carry them.

6So Jacob and his whole family went to Egypt. They took their livestock with
them. And they took everything they had gotten in Canaan. 7Jacob took his
sons and grandsons with him to Egypt. He also took his daughters and
granddaughters. He took all of his children and grandchildren with him.

8Here are the names of Israel’s children and grandchildren who went to
Egypt. Jacob and all of his children and grandchildren are included.

Reuben was Jacob’s oldest son.

9The sons of Reuben were
Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron and Carmi.

10The sons of Simeon were
Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jakin, Zohar and Shaul. Shaul was the son of a woman
from Canaan.

11The sons of Levi were
Gershon, Kohath and Merari.

12 The sons of Judah were
Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez and Zerah. But Er and Onan had died in the land of Canaan. The sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul.

13 The sons of Issachar were
Tola, Puah, Jashub and Shimron.

14 The sons of Zebulun were
Sered, Elon and Jahleel.

15 Those were the sons and grandsons who were born to Jacob and Leah in Paddan Aram. Leah also had a daughter by Jacob. Her name was Dinah. The total number of people in the family line of Jacob and Leah was 33.

16 The sons of Gad were
Zephon, 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 Malkiel.

18 Those were the children and grandchildren who were born to Jacob and Zilpah. Laban had given Zilpah to his daughter Leah. The total number of people in the family line of Jacob and Zilpah was 16.

19 The sons of Jacob's wife Rachel were
Joseph and Benjamin. 20 In Egypt, Asenath had Manasseh and Ephraim by Joseph. Asenath was the daughter of Potiphera. Potiphera was the priest of On.

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

22 Those were the sons and grandsons who were born to Jacob and Rachel. The total number of people in the family line of Jacob and Rachel was 14.

23 The son of Dan was
Hushim.

[24]The sons of Naphtali were
Jahziel, Guni, Jezer and Shillem.

[25]Those were the sons and grandsons who were born to Jacob and Bilhah. Laban had given Bilhah to his daughter Rachel. The total number of people in the family line of Jacob and Bilhah was seven.

[26]The total number of those who went to Egypt with Jacob was 66. That number includes only his own children and grandchildren. It doesn't include his sons' wives or his grandsons' wives.

[27]The total number of the members of Jacob's family who went to Egypt was 70. That includes the two sons who had been born to Joseph in Egypt.

[28]Jacob sent Judah ahead of him to Joseph. He sent him to get directions to Goshen. And so they arrived in the area of Goshen.

[29]Then Joseph had his servants get his chariot ready. He went to Goshen to meet his father Israel. As soon as he came to his father, Joseph threw his arms around him. Then Joseph sobbed for a long time.

[30]Israel said to Joseph, "I have seen for myself that you are still alive. Now I'm ready to die."

[31]Then Joseph spoke to his brothers and to the rest of his father's family. He said, "I will go up and speak to Pharaoh. I'll say to him, 'My brothers and the rest of my father's family have come to me. They were living in the land of Canaan. [32]The men are shepherds. They take care of livestock. They've brought along their flocks and herds and everything they own.'

[33]"Pharaoh will send for you. He'll ask, 'What do you do for a living?' [34]You should answer, 'We've taken care of livestock from the time we were boys. We've done just as our fathers did.' It's the practice of the people of Egypt not to mix with shepherds.

"So Pharaoh will let you settle in the area of Goshen."

Genesis 47

[1]Joseph went to Pharaoh. He told him, “My father and brothers have come
from the land of Canaan. They’ve brought along their flocks and herds and
everything they own. They are now in Goshen.”

[2]Joseph had chosen five of his brothers to meet with Pharaoh.

[3]Pharaoh asked the brothers, “What do you do for a living?”

“We’re shepherds,” they replied to Pharaoh. “And that’s what our fathers
were.” [4]They also said to him, “We’ve come to live in Egypt for a while. There
isn’t enough food anywhere in Canaan. There isn’t any grass for our flocks. So
please let us settle in Goshen.”

[5]Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Your father and your brothers have come to you.
[6]The land of Egypt is open to you. Settle your father and brothers in the best
part of the land. Let them live in Goshen. Do any of them have special skills?
If they do, put them in charge of my own livestock.”

[7]Then Joseph brought his father Jacob in. He brought him in to meet Pharaoh.
Jacob gave Pharaoh his blessing. [8]Then Pharaoh asked him, “How old are
you?”

[9]Jacob said to Pharaoh, “The years of my journey through life are 130. My
years have been few and hard. They aren’t as many as the years of my fathers
before me.”

[10]Jacob gave Pharaoh his blessing. Then he left him.

[11]So Joseph settled his father and his brothers in Egypt. He gave them
property in the best part of the land, just as Pharaoh had directed him to do.
That part was known as the territory of Rameses.

[12]Joseph also provided food for his father and brothers. He provided for them
and the rest of his father’s family. He gave them enough for all of their
children.

Joseph Saves Many Lives

13But there wasn’t any food in the whole area. In fact, there wasn’t enough
food anywhere. Both Egypt and Canaan lost their strength because there wasn’t
enough food to go around.

14Joseph collected all of the money that was in Egypt and Canaan. People
paid it to him for the grain they were buying. And Joseph brought it to
Pharaoh’s palace.

15When the money of the people of Egypt and Canaan was gone, all of the
Egyptians came to Joseph. They said, “Give us food. Why should we die right
in front of your eyes? Our money is all gone.”

16“Then bring your livestock,” said Joseph. “You say your money is gone. So
I’ll trade you food for your livestock.”

17They brought their livestock to Joseph. He traded them food for their
animals. They gave him their horses, sheep, goats, cattle and donkeys. He
brought the people through that year by trading them food for all of their
livestock.

18When that year was over, they came to him the next year. They said, “We
can’t hide the truth from you. Our money is gone. Our livestock belongs to
you. We don’t have anything left to give you except our bodies and our land.

19“Why should we die right in front of your eyes? Why should our land be
destroyed as well? Trade us food for ourselves and our land. Then we and our
land will belong to Pharaoh. Give us some seeds so we can live and not die. We
don’t want the land to become a desert.”

20So Joseph bought all of the land in Egypt for Pharaoh. All of the people of
Egypt sold their fields. They did that because there wasn’t enough food
anywhere. In that way, the land became Pharaoh’s. 21Joseph made the people
slaves from one end of Egypt to the other.

22But he didn’t buy the land that belonged to the priests. They received a
regular share of food from Pharaoh. They had enough food from what Pharaoh
gave them. That’s why they didn’t have to sell their land.

23Joseph said to the people, “I’ve bought you and your land today for
Pharaoh. So here are some seeds for you to plant in the ground. 24But when the
crop comes in, give a fifth of it to Pharaoh. Keep the other four-fifths for
yourselves. They will be seeds for the fields. And they will be food for
yourselves, your children, and the other people who live with you.”

25“You have saved our lives,” they said. “If you are pleased with us, we will
be slaves to Pharaoh.”

26So Joseph made a law about land in Egypt. It’s still the law today. A fifth of
the produce belongs to Pharaoh. Only the land belonging to the priests didn’t
become Pharaoh’s.

27The people of Israel settled in Egypt in the area of Goshen. They received
property there. They had children and greatly increased their numbers.

28Jacob lived 17 years in Egypt. He lived a total of 147 years.

29The time came near for Israel to die. So he sent for his son Joseph. He said
to him, “If you are pleased with me, put your hand under my thigh. Promise me
that you will be kind and faithful to me. Don’t bury me in Egypt. 30When I join
the members of my family who have already died, carry me out of Egypt. Bury
me where they are buried.”

“I’ll do exactly as you say,” Joseph said.

31“Promise me with an oath that you will do it,” Jacob said. So Joseph
promised him. And Israel worshiped God as he leaned on the top of his
wooden staff.

Ephraim and Manasseh

Genesis 48

1 Some time later Joseph was told, “Your father is sick.” So he took his two
sons Manasseh and Ephraim along with him. 2 Jacob was told, “Your son
Joseph has come to you.” So Israel became stronger and sat up in bed.

3 Jacob said to Joseph, “The Mighty God appeared to me at Luz in the land of
Canaan. He blessed me there. 4 He said to me, ‘I am going to give you children.
I will increase your numbers. I will make you a community of nations. And I
will give this land to your children after you. It will belong to them forever.’

5 “Now then, two sons were born to you in Egypt. It happened before I came
to you here. They will be counted as my own sons. Ephraim and Manasseh will
belong to me, in the same way that Reuben and Simeon belong to me.

6 “Any children who are born to you after them will belong to you. Any
territory they receive will come from the land that is given to Ephraim and
Manasseh.

7 “As I was returning from Paddan, Rachel died. It made me very sad. She
died in the land of Canaan while we were still on the way. We weren’t very far
away from Ephrath. So I buried her body there beside the road to Ephrath.”
Ephrath was also called Bethlehem.

8 Israel saw Joseph’s sons. He asked, “Who are they?”

9 “They are the sons God has given me here,” Joseph said to his father.

Then Israel said, “Bring them to me. I want to give them my blessing.”

10 Israel’s eyes were weak because he was old. He couldn’t see very well. So
Joseph brought his sons close to him. His father kissed them and hugged them.

11 Israel said to Joseph, “I never thought I’d see your face again. But now God
has let me see your children too.”

12 Then Joseph took his sons away from Israel’s knees. He bowed down with
his face to the ground.

13 Joseph placed Ephraim on his right, toward Israel’s left hand. He placed

Manasseh on his left, toward Israel's right hand. Then he brought them close to Jacob.

14But Israel reached out his right hand and put it on Ephraim's head. He did it even though Ephraim was the younger son. He crossed his arms and put his left hand on Manasseh's head. He did it even though Manasseh was the older son.

15Then Israel gave Joseph his blessing. He said,

"May God bless these boys.
He is the God of my grandfather Abraham and my father Isaac.
They walked with him.
He is the God who has been my shepherd
all of my life to this very day.
16He is the Angel who has saved me from all harm.
May he bless these boys.
May they be called by my name.
May they also be called by the names of my grandfather Abraham and my father Isaac.
And may they greatly increase their numbers
on the earth."

17Joseph saw his father putting his right hand on Ephraim's head. And Joseph didn't like it. So he took hold of his father's hand to move it over to Manasseh's head. 18Joseph said to him, "No, my father. Here's my older son. Put your right hand on his head."

19But his father wouldn't do it. He said, "I know, my son. I know. He too will become a nation. He too will become great. But his younger brother will be greater than he is. His children after him will become a group of nations."

20On that day, Jacob gave them his blessing. He said,

"In the land of Israel, people will bless others in your names.
They will say, 'May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.' "

So he put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh.

21Then Israel said to Joseph, "I'm about to die. But God will be with all of you. He'll take you back to the land of your fathers. 22But you, Joseph, are

over your brothers. So I’m giving you the range of hills I took from the Amorites. I took it with my sword and bow.”

Jacob Gives Blessings to His Sons

Genesis 49

[1]Then Jacob sent for his sons. He said, “Gather around me so I can tell you
what will happen to you in days to come.

[2]“Sons of Jacob, come together and listen.
Listen to your father Israel.

[3]“Reuben, you are my oldest son.
You were my first child. You were the first sign of my strength.
You were first in honor. You were first in power.
[4]But you are as unsteady as water. So you won’t be first anymore.
You had sex with your father’s concubine in his bed.
You lay on his couch and made it ‘unclean.’

[5]“Simeon and Levi are brothers.
Their swords have killed a lot of people.
[6]I won’t share in their plans.
I won’t have anything to do with them.
They became angry and killed people.
They cut the legs of oxen just for the fun of it.
[7]May the LORD put a curse on them
because of their terrible anger.
I will scatter them in Jacob’s land.
I will spread them around in Israel.

[8]“Judah, your brothers will praise you.
Your enemies will be brought under your control.
Your father’s sons will bow down to you.
[9]Judah, you are like a lion’s cub.
You return from hunting, my son.
Like a lion, you lie down and sleep.
You are like a mother lion. Who dares to wake you up?
[10]The right to rule will not leave Judah.
The ruler’s rod will not be taken from between his feet.

It will be his until the king it belongs to comes.
It will be his until the nations obey him.
[11]He will tie his donkey to a vine.
He will tie his colt to the very best branch.
He will wash his clothes in wine.
He will wash his robes in the red juice of grapes.
[12]His eyes will be darker than wine.
His teeth will be whiter than milk.

[13]"Zebulun will live by the seashore.
He will become a safe harbor for ships.
His border will go out toward Sidon.

[14]"Issachar is like a donkey
lying down between two saddlebags.
[15]He sees how good his resting place is.
He sees that his land is pleasant.
So he'll carry a heavy load on his back.
He will obey when he's forced to work.

[16]"Dan will do what is fair for his people.
He will do it as one of the tribes of Israel.
[17]Dan will be a serpent by the side of the road.
He will be a poisonous snake along the path.
It bites the horse's heels
so that the rider falls off backward.

[18]"LORD, I look to you to save me.

[19]"Gad will be attacked by a group of robbers.
But he'll attack them as they run away.

[20]"Asher's food will be rich and sweet.
He will provide food that even a king would enjoy.

[21]"Naphtali is a female deer that is set free
and gives birth to beautiful fawns.

[22]"Joseph is a vine that grows a lot of fruit.
It grows close by a spring.
Its branches climb over a wall.

[23]Mean people shot arrows at him.
They shot at him because they were angry.
[24]But his bow remained steady.
His strong arms moved freely.
The hand of the Mighty One of Jacob was with him.
The Shepherd, the Rock of Israel, stood by him.
[25]Your father's God helps you.
The Mighty One blesses you.
He gives you blessings from the highest heavens.
He gives you blessings from the deepest oceans.
He blesses you with children and with a mother's milk.
[26]Your father's blessings are great.
They are greater than the blessings from the age-old mountains.
They are greater than the gifts from the ancient hills.
Let all of those blessings rest on the head of Joseph.
Let them rest on the head of the one who is prince among his brothers.

[27]"Benjamin is a hungry wolf.
In the morning he eats what he has killed.
In the evening he shares what he has stolen."

[28]All of those are the 12 tribes of Israel. That's what their father said to them when he blessed them. He gave each one the blessing that was just right for him.

JACOB DIES

[29]Then Jacob gave directions to his sons. He said, "I'm about to join the members of my family who have already died. Bury me with them in the cave in the field of Ephron the Hittite.

[30]"The cave is in the field of Machpelah near Mamre in Canaan. Abraham had bought it as a place where he could bury his wife's body. He had bought the cave from Ephron the Hittite, along with the field.

[31]"The bodies of Abraham and his wife Sarah were buried there. So were the bodies of Isaac and his wife Rebekah. I also buried Leah's body there. [32]Abraham bought the field and the cave from the Hittites."

[33]When Jacob had finished telling his sons what to do, he pulled his feet up into his bed. Then he took his last breath and joined the members of his family who had already died.

Genesis 50

[1]Joseph threw himself on his father's body. He sobbed over him and kissed him.

[2]Then Joseph talked to the doctors who served him. He told them to prepare the body of his father Israel to be buried. So the doctors prepared it. [3]They took 40 days to do it. They needed that much time to prepare a body in the right way. The Egyptians sobbed over Jacob for 70 days.

[4]After the days of sorrow had passed, Joseph went to Pharaoh's officials. He said to them, "If you are pleased with me, speak to Pharaoh for me. Tell him, [5]'My father made me take an oath and make a promise to him. He said, "I'm about to die. Bury me in the tomb I dug for myself in the land of Canaan." So let me go up and bury my father. Then I'll come back.' "

[6]Pharaoh said, "Go up and bury your father. Do what he made you promise to do."

[7]So Joseph went up to bury his father. All of Pharaoh's officials went with him. They were the important people of his court and all of the leaders of Egypt.

[8]All of Joseph's family also went. His brothers and all of the rest of his father's family went too. Only their children and their flocks and herds were left in Goshen.

[9]Chariots and horsemen also went up with him. It was a very large group.

[10]They came to the threshing floor of Atad. It was near the Jordan River. There they sobbed loudly and bitterly. Joseph set apart seven days of sadness to honor his father's memory.

[11]The people of Canaan who were living there saw how sad all of them were at the threshing floor of Atad. They said, "The Egyptians are having a very special service for the dead." That's why that place near the Jordan River is called Abel of the Egyptians.

[12]So Jacob's sons did exactly as he had commanded them. [13]They carried his body to the land of Canaan. They buried it in the cave in the field of Machpelah near Mamre. Abraham had bought the cave as a place where he could bury his wife's body. He had bought it from Ephron the Hittite, along

with the field.

14After Joseph buried his father, he went back to Egypt. His brothers and all of the others who had gone to help him bury his father went back with him.

Joseph Sets His Brothers Free From Their Fears

15Now that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers were worried. They said, "Remember all of the bad things we did to Joseph? What if he decides to hold those things against us? What if he pays us back for them?"

16So they sent a message to Joseph. They said, "Your father gave us directions before he died. 17He said, 'Here's what you must say to Joseph. Tell him, "I'm asking you to forgive your brothers. Forgive the terrible things they did to you. Forgive them for treating you so badly." ' Now then, please forgive our sins. We serve the God of your father."

When their message came to Joseph, he sobbed.

18Then his brothers came and threw themselves down in front of him. "We are your slaves," they said.

19But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Do you think I'm God? 20You planned to harm me. But God planned it for good. He planned to do what is now being done. He wanted to save many lives.

21"So then, don't be afraid. I'll provide for you and your children." He set them free from their fears. And he spoke in a kind way to them.

Joseph Dies

22Joseph stayed in Egypt, along with all of his father's family. He lived 110 years. 23He lived long enough to see Ephraim's children and grandchildren. When the children of Makir were born, they were placed on Joseph's knees and counted as his own children. Makir was the son of Manasseh.

24Joseph said to his brothers, "I'm about to die. But I'm sure that God will come to help you. He'll take you up out of this land. He'll bring you to the land he promised with an oath to give to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

25Joseph made the sons of Israel take an oath and make a promise to him. He

said, “I’m sure that God will come to help you. Then you must carry my bones up from this place.”

[26]So Joseph died at the age of 110. They prepared his body to be buried. Then he was placed in a casket in Egypt.

Exodus

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Exodus 40

The People of Israel Are Slaves in Egypt

Exodus 1

1 Here are the names of Israel's children who went to Egypt with Jacob. Each
one went with his family.

2 Jacob's sons were Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, 3 Issachar, Zebulun,
Benjamin, 4 Dan, Naphtali, Gad and Asher. 5 The total number of Jacob's
children and grandchildren was 70. Joseph was already in Egypt.

6 Joseph and all of his brothers died. So did all of their children.

7 The people of Israel had many children. They greatly increased their
numbers. There were so many of them that they filled the land.

8 Then a new king came to power in Egypt. He didn't know anything about
Joseph.

9 "Look," he said to his people. "The Israelites are far too many for us.
10 Come. We must deal with them carefully. If we don't, they will increase their
numbers even more. Then if war breaks out, they'll join our enemies. They'll
fight against us and leave the country."

11 So the Egyptians put slave drivers over the people of Israel. The slave
drivers beat them down and made them work hard. The Israelites built the
cities of Pithom and Rameses so Pharaoh could store things there.

12 But the more the slave drivers beat them down, the more the Israelites
increased their numbers and spread out. So the Egyptians became afraid of
them. 13 They made them work hard. They didn't show them any pity. 14 They
made them suffer with hard labor. They forced them to work with bricks and
mud. And they made them do all kinds of work in the fields. The Egyptians
didn't show them any pity at all. They made them work very hard.

15 There were two Hebrew women named Shiphrah and Puah. They helped
other women who were having babies. The king of Egypt spoke to them. He
said, 16 "You are the ones who help the other Hebrew women. Watch them
when they get into a sitting position to have their babies. Kill the boys. Let the
girls live."

[17]But Shiphrah and Puah had respect for God. They didn’t do what the king of Egypt had told them to do. They let the boys live.

[18]Then the king of Egypt sent for the women. He asked them, “Why have you done this? Why have you let the boys live?”

[19]The women answered Pharaoh, “Hebrew women are not like the women of Egypt. They are strong. They have their babies before we get there.”

[20]So God was kind to Shiphrah and Puah. And the people of Israel increased their numbers more and more. [21]Shiphrah and Puah had respect for God. So he gave them families of their own.

[22]Then Pharaoh gave an order to all of his people. He said, “You must throw every baby boy into the Nile River. But let every baby girl live.”

Princesses and Queens of the Bible

Princess of Egypt

The daughter of the King of Egypt found a basket floating in the Nile River. Baby Moses was inside. She felt sorry for the baby and pulled him out of the water and raised him as her own son.

Exodus 2

Princess Michal

The daughter of King Saul of Israel. She married David and loved him very much. She helped David escape when the king tried to kill him.

1 Samuel 19

Princess Maacah

The daughter of King Talmai of Geshur. She was a wife of David and the mother of Absalom.

2 Samuel 3

Princess Jehosheba

The daughter of King Jehoram of Judah. She rescued Prince Joash from wicked Queen Athaliah of Israel.

1 Kings 2:11

Queen Bathsheba

A wife of King David and the mother of Solomon. She boldly told the king that he had taken an oath before God and had promised the throne to her son Solomon.

1 Kings 1

Queen of Sheba

This queen did not believe that Solomon was as wise and wealthy as everyone said, so she visited him herself. She brought lavish gifts to Solomon and was amazed at how wise and rich he really was.

1 Kings 10

Queen Esther

The wife of King Xerxes of Persia. She was beautiful and highly favored by the king. She was brave enough to ask the king to save the Jewish people from destruction.

Esther 2—8

Queen of Babylon

The wife of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. She advised Belshazzar to call Daniel to help read the mysterious handwriting on the wall of the dining hall.

Daniel 5



Moses Is Born

Exodus 2

1A man and a woman from the tribe of Levi got married. 2She became
pregnant and had a son by him. She saw that her baby was a fine child. So she
hid him for three months.

3After that, she couldn't hide him any longer. So she got a basket that was
made out of the stems of tall grass. She coated it with tar. Then she placed the
child in it. She put the basket in the tall grass that grew along the bank of the
Nile River. 4The child's sister wasn't very far away. She wanted to see what
would happen to him.

5Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile River to take a bath. Her
attendants were walking along the bank of the river. She saw the basket in the
tall grass. So she sent her female slave to get it.

6When she opened it, she saw the baby. He was crying. She felt sorry for him.
"This is one of the Hebrew babies," she said.

7Then his sister spoke to Pharaoh's daughter. She asked, "Do you want me to
go and get one of the Hebrew women? She could nurse the baby for you."

8"Yes. Go," she answered. So the girl went and got the baby's mother.

9Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this baby. Nurse him for me. I'll pay
you." So the woman took the baby and nursed him.

10When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter. And he
became her son. She named him Moses. She said, "I pulled him out of the
water."

Moses Escapes to Midian

11Moses grew up. One day, he went out to where his own people were. He
watched them while they were hard at work. He saw an Egyptian hitting a
Hebrew man. The man was one of Moses' own people. 12Moses looked around

and didn’t see anyone. So he killed the Egyptian. Then he hid his body in the sand.

13The next day Moses went out again. He saw two Hebrew men fighting. He asked the one who had started the fight a question. He said, “Why are you hitting another Hebrew man?”

14The man said, “Who made you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking about killing me as you killed the Egyptian?”

Then Moses became afraid. He thought, “People must have heard about what I did.”

15When Pharaoh heard about what had happened, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses escaped from Pharaoh and went to live in Midian. There he sat down by a well.

16A priest of Midian had seven daughters. They came to fill the stone tubs with water. They wanted to give water to their father’s flock. 17Some shepherds came along and drove the women away. But Moses got up and helped them. Then he gave water to their flock.

18The young women returned to their father Reuel. He asked them, “Why have you returned so early today?”

19They answered, “An Egyptian saved us from the shepherds. He even got water for us and gave it to the flock.”

20“Where is he?” he asked his daughters. “Why did you leave him? Invite him to have something to eat.”

21Moses agreed to stay with the man. And the man gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses to be his wife. 22Zipporah had a son by him. Moses named him Gershom. Moses said, “I’m an outsider in a strange land.”

23After a long time, the king of Egypt died. The people of Israel groaned because they were slaves. They also cried out to God. Their cry for help went up to him. 24God heard their groans. He remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. 25So God looked on the Israelites with favor. He was concerned about them.

The LORD Sends Moses to Save His People

Exodus 3

1 Moses was taking care of the flock of his father-in-law Jethro. Jethro was the
priest of Midian. Moses led the flock to the western side of the desert. He came
to Horeb. It was the mountain of God.

2 There the angel of the LORD appeared to him from inside a burning bush.
Moses saw that the bush was on fire. But it didn't burn up. 3 So Moses thought,
"I'll go over and see this strange sight. Why doesn't the bush burn up?"

4 The LORD saw that Moses had gone over to look. So God spoke to him from
inside the bush. He called out, "Moses! Moses!"

"Here I am," Moses said.

5 "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals. The place you
are standing on is holy ground." 6 He continued, "I am the God of your father. I
am the God of Abraham. I am the God of Isaac. And I am the God of Jacob."

When Moses heard that, he turned his face away. He was afraid to look at
God.

7 The LORD said, "I have seen my people suffer in Egypt. I have heard them
cry out because of their slave drivers. I am concerned about their suffering.

8 "So I have come down to save them from the Egyptians. I will bring them up
out of that land. I will bring them into a good land. It has a lot of room. It is a
land that has plenty of milk and honey. It is the home of the Canaanites,
Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites.

9 "And now Israel's cry for help has reached me. I have seen the way the
Egyptians are beating them down. 10 So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh.
I want you to bring the Israelites out of Egypt. They are my people."

11 But Moses spoke to God. "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?" he said.
"Who am I that I should bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"

12 God said, "I will be with you. I will give you a miraculous sign. It will
prove that I have sent you. When you have brought the people out of Egypt, all

of you will worship me on this mountain.”

13Moses said to God, “Suppose I go to the people of Israel. Suppose I say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you.’ Suppose they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what should I tell them?”

14God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. Here is what you must say to the Israelites. Tell them, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’ ”

15God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The LORD is the God of your fathers. He has sent me to you. He is the God of Abraham. He is the God of Isaac. And he is the God of Jacob.’ My name will always be The LORD. Remember me by that name for all time to come.

16“Go. Gather the elders of Israel together. Say to them, ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, appeared to me. He is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

“ ‘He said, “I have watched over you. I have seen what the Egyptians have done to you. 17I have promised to bring you up out of Egypt where you are suffering. I will bring you into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. It is a land that has plenty of milk and honey.” ’

18“The elders of Israel will listen to you. Then you and the elders must go to the king of Egypt. You must say to him, ‘The LORD has met with us. He is the God of the Hebrews. Let us take a journey that lasts about three days. We want to go into the desert to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God.’

19“But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you and your people go. Only a mighty hand could make him do that. 20So I will reach my hand out. I will strike the Egyptians with all kinds of miracles. After that, he will let you go.

21“I will cause the Egyptians to treat you in a kind way. Then when you leave, you will not go out with your hands empty. 22Every woman should ask her neighbor and any woman living in her house for articles made out of silver and gold. Ask them for clothes too. Put them on your children. In that way, you will take the wealth of Egypt along with you.”

Miraculous Signs for Moses to Do

Exodus 4

[1]Moses answered, “What if the elders of Israel won’t believe me? What if they won’t listen to me? Suppose they say, ‘The LORD didn’t appear to you.’ Then what should I do?”

[2]The LORD said to him, “What do you have in your hand?”

“A wooden staff,” he said.

[3]The LORD said, “Throw it on the ground.”

So Moses threw it on the ground. It turned into a snake. He ran away from it. [4]Then the LORD said to Moses, “Reach your hand out. Take the snake by the tail.” So he reached out and grabbed hold of the snake. It turned back into a staff in his hand.

[5]The LORD said, “When they see this miraculous sign, they will believe that I appeared to you. I am the God of their fathers. I am the God of Abraham. I am the God of Isaac. And I am the God of Jacob.”

[6]Then the LORD said, “Put your hand inside your coat.” So Moses put his hand inside his coat. When he took it out, it was as white as snow. It was covered with a skin disease.

[7]“Now put it back into your coat,” the LORD said. So Moses put his hand back into his coat. When he took it out, the skin was healthy again. His hand was like the rest of his skin.

[8]Then the LORD said, “Suppose they do not believe you or pay attention to the first miracle. Then maybe they will believe the second one.

[9]“But suppose they do not believe either miracle. Suppose they will not listen to you. Then get some water from the Nile River. Pour it on the dry ground. The water you take from the river will turn to blood on the ground.”

[10]Moses spoke to the LORD. He said, “Lord, I’ve never been a good speaker. And I haven’t gotten any better since you spoke to me. I don’t speak very well at all.”

[11]The LORD said to him, “Who makes a man able to talk? Who makes him unable to hear or speak? Who makes him able to see? Who makes him blind? It is I, the LORD. [12]Now go. I will help you speak. I will teach you what to say.”

[13]But Moses said, “Lord, please send someone else to do it.”

[14]Then the LORD’s anger burned against Moses. He said, “What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak well. He is already on his way to meet you. He will be glad to see you. [15]Speak to him. Put your words in his mouth. Tell him what to say. I will help both of you speak. I will teach you what to do. [16]He will speak to the people for you. He will be like your mouth. And you will be like God to him.

[17]“But take this wooden staff in your hand. You will be able to do miraculous signs with it.”

Moses Returns to Egypt

[18]Then Moses went back to his father-in-law Jethro. He said to him, “Let me go back to my own people in Egypt. I want to see if any of them are still alive.”

Jethro said, “Go. I hope everything goes well with you.”

[19]The LORD had said to Moses in Midian, “Go back to Egypt. All of the men who wanted to kill you are dead.”

[20]So Moses got his wife and sons. He put them on a donkey. Together they started back to Egypt. And he took the wooden staff in his hand. It was the staff God would use in a powerful way.

[21]The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, “When you return to Egypt, do all of the miracles I have given you the power to do. Do them in the sight of Pharaoh. But I will make his heart stubborn. He will not let the people go.

[22]“Then say to Pharaoh, ‘The LORD says, “Israel is like an oldest son to me. [23]I told you, ‘Let my son go. Then he will be able to worship me.’ But you refused to let him go. So I will kill your oldest son.” ’ ”

[24]On the way to Egypt, Moses stopped for the night. There the LORD met him and was about to kill him.

[25]But Zipporah got a knife that was made out of hard stone. She circumcised her son with it. Then she touched Moses’ feet with the skin she had cut off.

“You are a husband who has forced me to spill my son’s blood,” she said. [26]So the LORD didn’t kill Moses. When she said “husband who has forced me to spill my son’s blood,” she was talking about circumcision.

[27]The LORD said to Aaron, “Go into the desert to see Moses.” So he greeted Moses at the mountain of God and kissed him.

[28]Then Moses told Aaron everything the LORD had sent him to say. He also told him about all of the miraculous signs he had commanded him to do.

[29]Moses and Aaron gathered all of the elders of Israel together. [30]Aaron told them everything the LORD had said to Moses. He also did the miracles in the sight of the people.

[31]And they believed. They heard that the LORD was concerned about them. He had seen their suffering. So they bowed down and worshiped him.

Pharaoh Makes the Israelites Work Even Harder

Exodus 5

[1]Later on, Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh. They said, “The LORD is the God of Israel. He says, ‘Let my people go. Then they will be able to hold a feast in my honor in the desert.’ ”

[2]Pharaoh said, “Who is the LORD? Why should I obey him? Why should I let Israel go? I don’t even know the LORD. And I won’t let Israel go.”

[3]Then Moses and Aaron said, “The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Now let us take a journey that lasts about three days. We want to go into the desert to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God. If we don’t, he might strike us with plagues. Or he might let us be killed with swords.”

[4]But the king of Egypt said, “Moses and Aaron, why are you taking the people away from their work? Get back to work!” [5]Pharaoh continued, “There are large numbers of your people in the land. But you are stopping them from working.”

[6]That same day Pharaoh gave orders to the slave drivers and the others who were in charge of the people. [7]He said, “Don’t give the people any more straw to make bricks. Let them go and get their own straw. [8]But require them to make the same number of bricks as before. Don’t lower the number they have to make. They don’t want to work. That’s why they are crying out, ‘Let us go. We want to offer sacrifices to our God.’ [9]Make them work harder. Then they will be too busy to pay attention to lies.”

[10]The slave drivers and the others who were in charge left. They said to the people, “Pharaoh says, ‘I won’t give you any more straw. [11]Go and get your own straw anywhere you can find it. But you still have to make the same number of bricks.’ ”

[12]So the people scattered all over Egypt. They went to gather any pieces of straw that were left in the fields.

[13]The slave drivers kept making the people work hard. They said, “Finish the work you are required to do each day. Make the same number of bricks you

made when you had straw.” [14]They whipped the Israelites who were in charge of the people. Those Israelites had been appointed by Pharaoh’s slave drivers. The slave drivers asked, “Why didn’t you make the same number of bricks yesterday or today, just as before?”

[15]Then the Israelites who were in charge of the people made their appeal to Pharaoh. They asked, “Why have you treated us like this? [16]You didn’t give us any straw. But you told us, ‘Make bricks!’ We are being whipped. But it’s the fault of your own people.”

[17]Pharaoh said, “You just don’t want to work! That’s why you keep saying, ‘Let us go. We want to offer sacrifices to the LORD.’ [18]Now get to work. We won’t give you any straw. But you still have to make the same number of bricks.”

[19]The Israelites who were in charge of the people realized they were in trouble. They knew it when they were told, “Don’t lower the number of bricks you are required to make each day.”

[20]When they left Pharaoh, they found Moses and Aaron waiting to meet them. [21]They said to Moses and Aaron, “We want the LORD to look at what you have done! We want him to judge you for it! We are like a very bad smell to Pharaoh and his officials. You have given them an excuse to kill us with their swords.”

The LORD Promises to Save the Israelites

[22]Moses returned to the LORD. He said to him, “Lord, why have you brought trouble on these people? Is this why you sent me? [23]I went to Pharaoh to speak to him in your name. Ever since then, he has brought nothing but trouble on these people. And you haven’t saved your people at all.”

Exodus 6

[1]Then the LORD spoke to Moses. He said, “Now you will see what I will do to
Pharaoh. Because of my powerful hand, he will let the people of Israel go.
Because of my mighty hand, he will drive them out of his country.”

[2]God continued, “I am the LORD. [3]I appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as
the Mighty God. But I did not show them the full meaning of my name, The
LORD.

[4]“I also made my covenant with them. I promised to give them the land of
Canaan. That is where they lived as outsiders. [5]Also, I have heard the groans of
the Israelites. The Egyptians are keeping them as slaves. But I have
remembered my covenant.

[6]“So tell the people of Israel, ‘I am the LORD. I will throw off the heavy load
the Egyptians have put on your shoulders. I will set you free from being slaves
to them. I will reach out my arm and save you with mighty acts when I judge
Egypt.

[7]“ ‘I will take you to be my own people. I will be your God. You will know
that I am the LORD your God when I throw off the load the Egyptians have put
on your shoulders.

[8]“ ‘I will bring you to the land I promised with an oath to give to Abraham,
Isaac and Jacob. I lifted up my hand and promised it to them. The land will
belong to you. I am the LORD.’ ”

[9]Moses reported those things to the Israelites. But they didn’t listen to him.
That’s because they had lost all hope and had to work very hard.

[10]Then the LORD said to Moses, [11]“Go. Tell Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, to let
the people of Israel leave his country.”

[12]But Moses spoke to the LORD. “The people won’t listen to me,” he said. “So
why would Pharaoh listen to me? After all, I don’t speak very well.”

The Family Line of Moses and Aaron

[13]The LORD had spoken to Moses and Aaron. He had talked with them about

the Israelites and about Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. He had commanded Moses and Aaron to bring the people of Israel out of Egypt.

14Here were the leaders of the family groups of Reuben, Simeon and Levi.

Reuben was the oldest son of Israel. His sons were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron and Carmi. Those were the family groups of Reuben.

15The sons of Simeon were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jakin, Zohar and Shaul. Shaul was the son of a woman from Canaan. Those were the family groups of Simeon.

16Here were the names of the sons of Levi that were recorded in their family history. They were Gershon, Kohath and Merari. Levi lived for 137 years.

17The sons of Gershon, by their family groups, were Libni and Shimei.

18The sons of Kohath were Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel. Kohath lived for 133 years.

19The sons of Merari were Mahli and Mushi.

Those were the family groups of Levi that were recorded in their family history.

20Amram got married to his father’s sister Jochebed. Aaron and Moses were born in Amram’s family line. Amram lived for 137 years.

21The sons of Izhar were Korah, Nepheg and Zicri.

22The sons of Uzziel were Mishael, Elzaphan and Sithri.

23Aaron married Elisheba. She was the daughter of Amminadab and the sister of Nahshon. She had Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar by Aaron.

24The sons of Korah were Assir, Elkanah and Abiasaph. Those were the family groups of Korah.

25Eleazar, the son of Aaron, married one of the daughters of Putiel. She had Phinehas by Eleazar.

Those were the leaders of the families of Levi that were recorded by their groups.

[26]The LORD had spoken to that same Aaron and Moses. He had told them, “Bring the Israelites out of Egypt like an army on the march.” [27]They spoke to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, about bringing the people of Israel out of Egypt. They were that same Moses and Aaron.

Aaron Speaks for Moses

[28]The LORD had spoken to Moses in Egypt. [29]He had told him, “I am the LORD. Tell Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, everything I tell you.”

[30]But Moses said to the LORD, “I don’t speak very well. So why would Pharaoh listen to me?”

Exodus 7

[1]Then the LORD said to Moses, “I have made you like God to Pharaoh. And your brother Aaron will be like a prophet to you. [2]You must say everything I command you to say. Then your brother Aaron must tell Pharaoh to let the people of Israel leave his country.

[3]“But I will make Pharaoh’s heart stubborn. I will multiply my miraculous signs and wonders in Egypt. [4]In spite of that, he will not listen to you. So I will use my powerful hand against Egypt. When I judge them with mighty acts, I will bring my people Israel out like an army on the march.

[5]“Then the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD. I will reach out my powerful hand against Egypt. I will bring the people of Israel out of it.”

[6]Moses and Aaron did exactly as the LORD had commanded them. [7]Moses was 80 years old and Aaron was 83 when they spoke to Pharaoh.

Aaron’s Wooden Staff Becomes a Snake

[8]The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron. [9]He said, “Pharaoh will say to you, ‘Do a miracle.’ When he does, speak to Aaron. Tell him, ‘Take your wooden staff and throw it down in front of Pharaoh.’ It will turn into a snake.”

[10]So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh. They did exactly as the LORD had commanded them. Aaron threw his staff down in front of Pharaoh and his officials. It turned into a snake.

[11]Then Pharaoh sent for wise men and those who do evil magic. By doing their magic tricks, the Egyptian magicians did the same things Aaron had done. [12]Each one threw his staff down. Each staff turned into a snake. But Aaron’s staff swallowed theirs up.

[13]In spite of that, Pharaoh’s heart became stubborn. He wouldn’t listen to them, just as the LORD had said.

The Nile River Turns Into Blood

14Then the LORD said to Moses, “Pharaoh’s heart is very stubborn. He refuses
to let the people go. 15In the morning Pharaoh will go down to the water. Go
and wait on the bank of the Nile River to meet him. Take in your hand the
wooden staff that turned into a snake.

16“Say to Pharaoh, ‘The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has sent me to you.
He says, “Let my people go. Then they will be able to worship me in the
desert. But up to now you have not listened.”

17“ ‘The LORD says, “Here is how you will know that I am the LORD. I will
strike the water of the Nile River with the staff that is in my hand. The river
will turn into blood. 18The fish in the river will die. The river will stink. The
Egyptians will not be able to drink its water.” ’ ”

19The LORD said to Moses, “Tell Aaron, ‘Get your staff. Reach your hand out
over the waters of Egypt. The streams, waterways, ponds and all of the lakes
will turn into blood. There will be blood everywhere in Egypt. It will even be
in the wooden buckets and stone jars.’ ”

20Moses and Aaron did exactly as the LORD had commanded them. Aaron
held out his staff in front of Pharaoh and his officials. He struck the water of
the Nile River. And all of the water turned into blood.

21The fish in the Nile died. The river smelled so bad the Egyptians couldn’t
drink its water. There was blood everywhere in Egypt.

22But the Egyptian magicians did the same things by doing their magic tricks.
So Pharaoh’s heart became stubborn. He wouldn’t listen to Moses and Aaron,
just as the LORD had said. 23Even that miracle didn’t change Pharaoh’s mind. In
fact, he turned around and went into his palace.

24All of the Egyptians dug holes near the Nile River to get drinking water.
They couldn’t drink water from the river.

The Plague of Frogs

25Seven days passed after the LORD struck the Nile River.

Exodus 8

[1]Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh. Tell him, ‘The LORD says,
“Let my people go. Then they will be able to worship me.

[2]“ ‘ “If you refuse to let them go, I will plague your whole country with frogs.
[3]The Nile River will be full of frogs. They will come up into your palace. You
will have frogs in your bedroom and on your bed. They will be in the homes of
your officials and your people. They will be in your ovens and in your bread
pans. [4]The frogs will be on you, your people and all of your officials.” ’ ”

[5]Then the LORD spoke to Moses. He said, “Tell Aaron, ‘Reach your hand out.
Hold your staff over the streams, waterways and ponds. Make frogs come up
on the land of Egypt.’ ”

[6]So Aaron reached his hand out over the waters of Egypt. The frogs came up
and covered the land. [7]But the magicians did the same things by doing their
magic tricks. They also made frogs come up on the land of Egypt.

[8]Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron. He said to them, “Pray to the LORD to
take the frogs away from me and my people. Then I’ll let your people go to
offer sacrifices to the LORD.”

[9]Moses said to Pharaoh, “You can have the honor of setting the time for me
to pray. I will pray for you, your officials and your people. I’ll pray that the
frogs will leave you and your homes. The only frogs left will be the ones in the
Nile River.”

[10]“Tomorrow,” Pharaoh said.

Moses replied, “It will happen just as you say. Then you will know that there
is no one like the LORD our God. [11]The frogs will leave you and your houses.
They will leave your officials and your people. They will remain only in the
Nile River.”

[12]Moses and Aaron left Pharaoh. Then Moses cried out to the LORD about the
frogs he had brought on Pharaoh. [13]And the LORD did what Moses asked. The
frogs died in the houses, courtyards and fields. [14]The Egyptians piled them up.
The land smelled very bad because of them.

[15]But when Pharaoh saw that the frogs were dead, his heart became stubborn.

He wouldn’t listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had said.

The Plague of Gnats

16Then the LORD spoke to Moses. He said, “Tell Aaron, ‘Reach your wooden
staff out. Strike the dust on the ground with it.’ Then all over the land of Egypt
the dust will turn into gnats.”

17So they did it. Aaron reached out the staff that was in his hand. He struck
the dust on the ground with it. The dust all over the land of Egypt turned into
gnats. They landed on people and animals alike.

18The magicians tried to produce gnats by doing their magic tricks. But they
couldn’t. The gnats stayed on people and animals alike.

19The magicians said to Pharaoh, “God’s powerful finger has done this.” But
Pharaoh’s heart was stubborn. He wouldn’t listen, just as the LORD had said.

The Plague of Flies

20Then the LORD spoke to Moses. He said, “Get up early in the morning. Talk
to Pharaoh as he goes down to the river. Say to him, ‘The LORD says, “Let my
people go. Then they will be able to worship me. 21If you do not let my people
go, I will send large numbers of flies. I will send them on you and your
officials. I will send them on your people and into your homes. The houses of
the Egyptians will be full of flies. Even the area where they live will be full of
flies.

22“ ‘ “But on that day I will treat the area of Goshen differently from yours.
That is where my people live. There will not be large numbers of flies in
Goshen. Then you will know that I, the LORD, am in this land. 23I will treat my
people differently from yours. The miraculous sign will take place
tomorrow.” ’ ”

24So the LORD did it. Huge numbers of flies poured into Pharaoh’s palace.
They came into the homes of his officials. All over Egypt the flies destroyed
the land.

25Then Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron. He said to them, “Go. Offer

sacrifices to your God here in the land.”

[26]But Moses said, “That wouldn’t be right. The sacrifices we offer to the LORD our God wouldn’t be accepted by the Egyptians because of their beliefs. Suppose we offered sacrifices they couldn’t accept. Then they would throw stones at us and try to kill us. [27]We have to take a journey that lasts about three days. We want to go into the desert to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God, exactly as he commands us.”

[28]Pharaoh said, “I will let you and your people go to offer sacrifices. You can offer them to the LORD your God in the desert. But you must not go very far. And pray for me.”

[29]Moses replied, “As soon as I leave you, I will pray to the LORD. Tomorrow the flies will leave you. They will also leave your officials and your people. Just be sure you don’t try to trick us again. Let the people go to offer sacrifices to the LORD.”

[30]Then Moses left Pharaoh and prayed to the LORD. [31]And the LORD did what Moses asked. The flies left Pharaoh, his officials and his people. Not one fly remained. [32]But Pharaoh’s heart became stubborn that time also. He wouldn’t let the people go.

The Plague on Livestock

Exodus 9

[1]Then the LORD spoke to Moses. He said, “Go to Pharaoh. Tell him, ‘The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says, “Let my people go. Then they will be able to worship me. [2]Do not refuse to let them go. Do not keep holding them back.

[3]“ ‘ “If you refuse, my powerful hand will bring a terrible plague on you. I will strike your livestock in the fields. I will strike your horses, donkeys, camels, cattle, sheep and goats. [4]But I will treat Israel’s livestock differently from yours. No animal that belongs to the people of Israel will die.” ’ ”

[5]The LORD set a time for the plague. He said, “Tomorrow I will send it on the land.” [6]So the next day the LORD sent it. All of the livestock of the Egyptians died. But not one animal that belonged to the Israelites died.

[7]Pharaoh sent people to find out what had happened. They discovered that not even one animal that belonged to the Israelites had died. But his heart was still very stubborn. He wouldn’t let the people go.

The Plague of Boils

[8]Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron. He said, “Take handfuls of ashes from a furnace. Have Moses toss them into the air in front of Pharaoh. [9]The ashes will turn into fine dust all over the whole land of Egypt. Then boils will break out on people and animals all over the land. Their bodies will be covered with them.”

[10]So Moses and Aaron took ashes from a furnace and stood in front of Pharaoh. Moses tossed them into the air. Then boils broke out on people and animals alike. [11]The bodies of all of the Egyptians were covered with boils. The magicians couldn’t stand in front of Moses because of the boils that were all over them.

[12]But the LORD made Pharaoh’s heart stubborn. Pharaoh wouldn’t listen to

Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had said to Moses.

The Plague of Hail

13Then the LORD spoke to Moses. He said, “Get up early in the morning. Go
to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says, “Let my
people go. Then they will be able to worship me.

14“ ‘ “If you do not let them go, I will send the full force of my plagues
against you this time. They will strike your officials and your people. Then you
will know that there is no one like me in the whole earth.

15“ ‘ “By now I could have reached out my hand. I could have struck you and
your people with a plague that would have wiped you off the earth. 16But I had
a special reason for making you king. I decided to show you my power. I
wanted my name to become known everywhere on earth.

17“ ‘ “But you are still against my people. You will not let them go. 18So at
this time tomorrow I will send the worst hailstorm ever to fall on Egypt in its
entire history.

19“ ‘ “Give an order now to bring your livestock inside to a safe place. Bring
in everything that is outside. The hail will fall on all of the people and animals
that are left outside. They will die.” ’ ”

20The officials of Pharaoh who had respect for what the LORD had said
obeyed him. They hurried to bring their slaves and their livestock inside.

21But others didn’t pay attention to what the LORD had said. They left their
slaves and livestock outside.

22Then the LORD spoke to Moses. He said, “Reach your hand out toward the
sky. Then hail will fall all over Egypt. It will beat down on people and animals
alike. It will strike everything that is growing in the fields of Egypt.”

23Moses reached his wooden staff out toward the sky. Then the LORD sent
thunder and hail. Lightning flashed down to the ground. The LORD rained hail
on the land of Egypt. 24Hail fell and lightning flashed back and forth. It was the
worst storm in Egypt’s entire history.

25All over Egypt hail struck everything in the fields. It fell on people and
animals alike. It beat down everything that was growing in the fields. It tore all

of the leaves off the trees.

26The only place it didn’t hail was in the area of Goshen. That’s where the people of Israel were.

27Then Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron. “This time I’ve sinned,” he said to them. “The LORD has done what is right. I and my people have done what is wrong. 28Pray to the LORD, because we’ve had enough thunder and hail. I’ll let you and your people go. You don’t have to stay here any longer.”

29Moses replied, “When I’ve left the city, I’ll lift up my hands and pray to the LORD. The thunder will stop. There won’t be any more hail. Then you will know that the earth belongs to the LORD. 30But I know that you and your officials still don’t have any respect for the LORD God.”

31The barley was ripe. The flax was blooming. So they were both destroyed. 32But the wheat and spelt weren’t destroyed. That’s because they ripen later.

33Then Moses left Pharaoh and went out of the city. He lifted up his hands and prayed to the LORD. The thunder and hail stopped. The rain didn’t pour down on the land any longer.

34Pharaoh saw that the rain, hail and thunder had stopped. So he sinned again. He and his officials made their hearts stubborn. 35So Pharaoh’s heart was stubborn. He wouldn’t let the people of Israel go, just as the LORD had said through Moses.

The Plague of Locusts

Exodus 10

1Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh. I have made his heart
stubborn. I have also made the hearts of his officials stubborn so I can do my
miraculous signs among them. 2Then you will be able to tell your children and
grandchildren how hard I was on the Egyptians. You can tell them I did great
miracles among the people of Egypt. And all of you will know that I am the
LORD.”

3So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh. They said to him, “The LORD, the God
of the Hebrews, says, ‘How long will you refuse to obey me? Let my people
go. Then they will be able to worship me.

4“ ‘If you refuse to let them go, I will bring locusts into your country
tomorrow. 5They will cover the ground so that it can’t be seen. They will eat
what little you have left after the hail. That includes every tree that is growing
in your fields. 6They will fill your houses. They will be in the homes of all of
your officials and your people. Your parents and your people before them have
never seen anything like it as long as they have lived here.’ ” Then Moses
turned around and left Pharaoh.

7Pharaoh’s officials said to him, “How long will this man be a trap for us? Let
the people go. Then they’ll be able to worship the LORD their God. After
everything that’s happened, don’t you realize that Egypt is destroyed?”

8Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh. “Go. Worship the LORD
your God,” he said. “But just who will be going?”

9Moses answered, “We’ll go with our young people and old people. We’ll go
with our sons and daughters. We’ll take our flocks and herds. We are supposed
to hold a feast in the LORD’s honor.”

10Pharaoh said, “The LORD will really be with all of you if I ever let you go,
along with your women and children! Clearly you are planning to do
something bad. 11No! I’ll only allow the men to go. Then all of you can
worship the LORD. After all, that’s what you have been asking for.”

Then Pharaoh drove Moses and Aaron out of his sight.

12The LORD said to Moses, “Reach out your hand over Egypt. Locusts will
cover the land. They will eat up everything that is growing in the fields. They
will eat up everything that was left by the hail.”

13So Moses reached his wooden staff out over Egypt. Then the LORD made an
east wind blow across the land. It blew all that day and all that night. By
morning the wind had brought the locusts. 14They came into every part of
Egypt. They settled down in every area of the country in large numbers. There
had never been a plague of locusts like it before. And there will never be one
like it again.

15The locusts covered the ground until it was black. They ate up everything
that was left after the hail. They ate up everything that was growing in the
fields. They ate up the fruit on the trees. There was nothing green left on any
tree or plant in the whole land of Egypt.

16Pharaoh quickly sent for Moses and Aaron. He said, “I have sinned against
the LORD your God. I’ve also sinned against you. 17Now forgive my sin one
more time. Pray to the LORD your God to take this deadly plague away from
me.”

18After Moses left Pharaoh, he prayed to the LORD. 19The LORD changed the
wind to a very strong west wind. The wind picked up the locusts. It blew them
into the Red Sea. Not even one locust was left anywhere in Egypt.

20But the LORD made Pharaoh’s heart stubborn. And Pharaoh wouldn’t let the
people of Israel go.

The Plague of Darkness

21The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, “Reach out your hand toward the sky.
Darkness will spread over Egypt. It will be so dark that people can feel it.”

22So Moses reached out his hand toward the sky. Then complete darkness
covered Egypt for three days. 23No one could see anyone else or go anywhere
for three days. But all of the people of Israel had light where they lived.

24Then Pharaoh sent for Moses. He said to him, “Go. Worship the LORD. Even
your women and children can go with you. Just leave your flocks and herds
behind.”

25But Moses said, “You must allow us to take animals to offer as sacrifices
and burnt offerings to the LORD our God. 26Our livestock must also go with us.
We have to use some of them to worship the LORD our God. We can’t leave
even one animal behind. Until we get there, we won’t know what we are
supposed to use to worship the LORD.”

27But the LORD made Pharaoh’s heart stubborn. So he wouldn’t let the people
go.

28Pharaoh said to Moses, “Get out of my sight! Make sure you don’t come to
see me again! If you do, you will die.”

29“I’ll do just as you say,” Moses replied. “I will never come to see you
again.”

The LORD Announces the Tenth Plague

Exodus 11

1The LORD had spoken to Moses. He had said, “I will bring one more plague
on Pharaoh and on Egypt. After that, he will let you and your people go. When
he does, he will drive you completely away. 2Tell the men and women alike to
ask their neighbors for articles made out of silver and gold.”

3The LORD caused the Egyptians to treat the Israelites in a kind way.
Pharaoh’s officials and the people had great respect for Moses.

4Moses said, “The LORD says, ‘About midnight I will go through every part of
Egypt. 5Every oldest son in Egypt will die. The oldest son of Pharaoh, who sits
on the throne, will die. The oldest son of the female slave, who works at her
hand mill, will die. All of the male animals that were born first to their mothers
among the cattle will also die. 6There will be loud crying all over Egypt. It will
be worse than it’s ever been before. And nothing like it will ever be heard
again.

7“ ‘But among the people of Israel not even one dog will bark at any man or
animal.’ Then you will know that the LORD treats Egypt differently from us.

8“All of your officials will come and bow down to me. They will say, ‘Go,
you and all of the people who follow you!’ After that, I will leave.”

Moses burned with anger when he left Pharaoh.

9The LORD had spoken to Moses. He had said, “Pharaoh will refuse to listen
to you. So I will multiply my miracles in Egypt.”

10Moses and Aaron did all of those miracles in the sight of Pharaoh. But the
LORD made Pharaoh’s heart stubborn. He wouldn’t let the people of Israel go
out of his country.

The First Passover Sacrifice

Exodus 12

1The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in Egypt. 2He said, “From now on, this
month will be your first month. Each of your years will begin with it.

3“Speak to the whole community of Israel. Tell them that on the tenth day of
this month each man must get a lamb from his flock. A lamb should be chosen
for each family and home.

4“Suppose there are not enough people in your family to eat a whole lamb.
Then you must share some of it with your nearest neighbor. You must add up
the total number of people there are. You must decide how much lamb is
needed for each person.

5“The animals you choose must be males that are a year old. They must not
have any flaws. You may choose either sheep or goats. 6Take care of them until
the 14th day of the month. Then the whole community of Israel must kill them
when the sun goes down. 7Take some of the blood. Put it on the sides and tops
of the doorframes of the houses where you eat the lambs.

8“That same night eat the meat cooked over the fire. Also eat bitter plants.
And eat bread that is made without yeast. 9Do not eat the meat raw or boiled in
water. Instead, cook it over the fire. Cook the head, legs and inside parts. 10Do
not leave any of it until morning. If some is left over until morning, burn it.

11“Eat the meat while your coat is tucked into your belt. Put your sandals on
your feet. Take your walking stick in your hand. Eat the food quickly. It is the
LORD’s Passover.

12“That same night I will pass through Egypt. I will strike down every oldest
son. I will also kill all of the male animals that were born first to their mothers.
And I will judge all of the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD.

13“The blood on your houses will be a sign for you. When I see the blood, I
will pass over you. No deadly plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.

14“Always remember this day. For all time to come, you and your children
after you must celebrate this day as a feast in honor of the LORD. It is a law that

will last forever.

15“Eat bread made without yeast for seven days. On the first day remove the yeast from your homes. For the next seven days, anyone who eats anything that has yeast in it must be cut off from Israel.

16“On the first and seventh days, come together for a special service. Do not work at all on those days. All you are allowed to do is prepare food for everyone to eat.

17“Celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread. I brought you out of Egypt on this very day like an army on the march. It is a law that will last for all time to come. 18In the first month eat bread that is made without yeast. Eat it from the evening of the 14th day until the evening of the 21st day.

19“For seven days do not let any yeast be found in your homes. Anyone who eats anything that has yeast in it must be cut off from the community of Israel. That applies to outsiders and Israelites alike. 20Do not eat anything that is made with yeast. No matter where you live, eat bread that is made without yeast.”

21Then Moses sent for all of the elders of Israel. He said to them, “Go at once. Choose the animals for your families. Each family must kill a Passover lamb. 22Get a branch of a hyssop plant. Dip it into the blood in the bowl. Put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe. None of you can go out the door of your house until morning.

23“The LORD will go through the land to strike the Egyptians down. He’ll see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe. He will pass over that house. He won’t let the destroying angel enter your homes to kill you.

24“Obey all of these directions. It’s a law for you and your children after you for all time to come. 25The LORD will give you the land, just as he promised. When you enter it, keep this holy day.

26“Your children will ask you, ‘What does this holy day mean to you?’ 27Tell them, ‘It’s the Passover sacrifice in honor of the LORD. He passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt. He spared our homes when he struck the Egyptians down.’ ”

Then the people of Israel bowed down and worshiped. 28They did just what the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron.

29At midnight the LORD struck down every oldest son in Egypt. He killed the oldest son of Pharaoh, who sat on the throne. He killed all of the oldest sons of

prisoners, who were in prison. He also killed all of the male animals that were born first to their mothers among the livestock.

30Pharaoh and all of his officials got up during the night. So did all of the Egyptians. There was loud crying in Egypt because someone had died in every home.

The People of Israel Leave Egypt

31During the night, Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron. He said to them, “Get out of here! You and the Israelites, leave my people! Go. Worship the LORD, just as you have asked. 32Go. Take your flocks and herds, just as you have said. And also give me your blessing.”

33The Egyptians begged the people of Israel to hurry up and leave the country. “If you don’t,” they said, “we’ll all die!”

34So the people took their dough before the yeast was added to it. They carried it on their shoulders in bread pans that were wrapped in clothes.

35They did just as Moses had directed them. They asked the Egyptians for articles that were made out of silver and gold. They also asked them for clothes. 36The LORD had caused the Egyptians to treat the people of Israel in a kind way. So they gave them what they asked for. The people of Israel took many expensive things that belonged to the Egyptians.

37The Israelites traveled from Rameses to Succoth. There were about 600,000 men who were old enough to go into battle. The women and children went with them. 38So did many other people. The Israelites also took large flocks and herds with them.

39They brought dough from Egypt. With it they baked bread without yeast. The dough didn’t have any yeast in it. That’s because the people had been driven out of Egypt before they had time to prepare their food.

40The people of Israel lived in Egypt for 430 years. 41At the end of the 430 years, to the very day, all of the LORD’s people marched out of Egypt like an army.

42The LORD kept watch that night to bring them out of Egypt. So on that same night every year all of the Israelites must keep watch. They must do it to honor the LORD for all time to come.

Rules for the Passover

43 The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron. He said, “Here are the rules for the
Passover.

“No one from another country is allowed to eat the Passover meal. 44 Any
slave you have bought is allowed to eat it after you have circumcised him.
45 But a hired worker or someone who lives with you for a while is not allowed
to eat it.

46 “It must be eaten inside a house. Do not take any of the meat outside. Do
not break any of the bones. 47 The whole community of Israel must celebrate
the Passover.

48 “Suppose an outsider who is living among you wants to celebrate the
LORD’s Passover. Then all of the males in that home must be circumcised. After
that, the person can take part, just like an Israelite. Only males who are
circumcised can eat it.

49 “The same law applies to Israelites and to outsiders who are living among
you.”

50 All of the people of Israel did just what the LORD had commanded Moses
and Aaron. 51 On that very day the LORD brought the Israelites out of Egypt like
an army on the march.

Setting Apart the Oldest Sons

Exodus 13

1The LORD said to Moses, 2"Set apart for me the first boy born in every
family. The oldest son of every Israelite mother belongs to me. Every male
animal that is born first to its mother also belongs to me."

3Then Moses said to the people, "Remember this day. It's the day you came
out of Egypt. That's the land where you were slaves. The LORD used his mighty
hand to bring you out of Egypt. Don't eat anything that has yeast in it. 4You are
leaving today. It's the month of Abib.

5"The LORD will bring you into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites,
Hivites and Jebusites. He took an oath and promised your people of long ago
that he would give that land to you. It's a land that has plenty of milk and
honey. When you get there, keep this holy day in this month.

6"For seven days eat bread that is made without yeast. On the seventh day
hold a feast in the LORD's honor. 7Eat bread that is made without yeast during
those seven days. Nothing that has yeast in it should be found among you. No
yeast should be seen anywhere inside your borders.

8"On that day talk to your son. Tell him, 'I'm doing this because of what the
LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.'

9"When you celebrate this day, it will be like a mark on your hand. It will be
like a reminder on your forehead. The law of the LORD must be on your lips.
The LORD used his mighty hand to bring you out of Egypt. 10Obey this law at
the appointed time year after year.

11"The LORD will bring you into the land of Canaan. He will give it to you,
just as he promised he would. He even took an oath when he made the promise
to you and your people of long ago.

12"After you arrive there, give to the LORD the oldest son of every mother.
Every male animal that is born first to its mother among your livestock belongs
to the LORD. 13By sacrificing a lamb, buy back every male donkey that is born
first to its mother. But if you don't buy the donkey back, break its neck. Buy

back every oldest son.

14“In days to come, your son will ask you, ‘What does this mean?’

“When he does, say to him, ‘The LORD used his mighty hand to bring us out of Egypt. That’s the land where we were slaves. 15Pharaoh was stubborn. He refused to let us go. So the LORD killed every oldest son in Egypt. He also killed every male animal that was born first to its mother. That’s why I sacrifice to the LORD every male animal that was born first. And that’s why I buy back each oldest son for him.’

16“This day will be like a mark on your hand. It will be like a sign on your forehead. It will remind you that the LORD used his mighty hand to bring us out of Egypt.”

Israel Goes Through the Red Sea

17Pharaoh let the people go. The shortest road from Goshen to Canaan went through the Philistine country. But God didn’t lead them that way. God said, “If they have to go into battle, they might change their minds. They might return to Egypt.”

18So God led the people toward the Red Sea by taking them on a road through the desert. The Israelites were prepared for battle when they went up out of Egypt.

19Moses took the bones of Joseph along with him. Joseph had made the sons of Israel take an oath and make a promise. He had said, “I’m sure that God will come to help you. When he does, you must carry my bones up from this place with you.”(Genesis 50:25)

20The people left Succoth. They camped at Etham on the edge of the desert.

21By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud. It guided them on their way. At night he led them with a pillar of fire. It gave them light. So they could travel by day or at night. 22The pillar of cloud didn’t leave its place in front of the people during the day. And the pillar of fire didn’t leave its place at night.

Exodus 14

1Then the LORD spoke to Moses. 2He said, “Tell the people of Israel to turn
back. Have them camp near Pi Hahiroth between Migdol and the Red Sea.
They must camp by the sea, right across from Baal Zephon. 3Pharaoh will
think, ‘The people of Israel are wandering around the land. They don’t know
which way to go. The desert is all around them.’

4“I will make Pharaoh’s heart stubborn. He will chase them. But I will gain
glory for myself because of what will happen to Pharaoh and his whole army.
And the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD.” So the Israelites camped by
the Red Sea.

5The king of Egypt was told that the people had gotten away. Then Pharaoh
and his officials changed their minds about them. They said, “What have we
done? We’ve let the people of Israel go! We’ve lost our slaves and all of the
work they used to do for us!”

6So he had his chariot made ready. He took his army with him. 7He took 600
of the best chariots in Egypt. He also took along all of the other chariots.
Officers were in charge of all of them.

8The LORD made the heart of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, stubborn. So he
chased the Israelites, who were marching out boldly. 9The Egyptians went after
the Israelites. All of Pharaoh’s horses and chariots and horsemen and troops
went after them. They caught up with them as they camped by the sea. The
Israelites were near Pi Hahiroth, across from Baal Zephon.

10As Pharaoh approached, the people of Israel looked up. There were the
Egyptians marching after them! The Israelites were terrified. They cried out to
the LORD.

11They said to Moses, “Why did you bring us to the desert to die? Weren’t
there any graves in Egypt? What have you done to us by bringing us out of
Egypt? 12We told you in Egypt, ‘Leave us alone. Let us serve the Egyptians.’ It
would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die here in the
desert!”

13Moses answered the people. He said, “Don’t be afraid. Stand firm. You will
see how the LORD will save you today. Do you see those Egyptians? You will

never see them again. [14]The LORD will fight for you. Just be still."

[15]Then the LORD spoke to Moses. He said, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the people of Israel to move on. [16]Hold your wooden staff out. Reach your hand out over the Red Sea to part the water. Then the people can go through the sea on dry ground.

[17]"I will make the hearts of the Egyptians stubborn. They will go in after the Israelites. I will gain glory for myself because of what will happen to Pharaoh, his whole army, his chariots and his horsemen.

[18]"The Egyptians will know that I am the LORD. I will gain glory because of what will happen to all of them."

[19]The angel of God had been traveling in front of Israel's army. Now he moved back and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved away from in front of them. Now it stood behind them. [20]It came between the armies of Egypt and Israel. All through the night the cloud brought darkness to one side and light to the other. Neither army went near the other all night long.

[21]Then Moses reached his hand out over the Red Sea. All that night the LORD pushed the sea back with a strong east wind. He turned the sea into dry land. The waters were parted. [22]The people of Israel went through the sea on dry ground. There was a wall of water on their right side and on their left.

[23]The Egyptians chased them. All of Pharaoh's horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea.

[24]Near the end of the night the LORD looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud. He saw the Egyptian army and threw it into a panic. [25]He kept their chariot wheels from turning freely. That made the chariots hard to drive.

The Egyptians said, "Let's get away from the Israelites! The LORD is fighting for Israel against Egypt."

[26]Then the LORD spoke to Moses. He said, "Reach your hand out over the sea. The waters will flow back over the Egyptians and their chariots and horsemen." [27]So Moses reached his hand out over the sea. At sunrise the sea went back to its place. The Egyptians tried to run away from the sea. But the LORD swept them into it. [28]The water flowed back and covered the chariots and horsemen. It covered the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed the people of Israel into the sea. Not one of the Egyptians was left.

[29]But the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground. There was a wall of

water on their right side and on their left. [30]That day the LORD saved Israel from the power of Egypt. Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore. [31]The Israelites saw the great power the LORD showed against the Egyptians. So they had respect for the LORD. They put their trust in him and in his servant Moses.

The Song of Moses and Miriam

Exodus 15

[1]Here is the song that Moses and the people of Israel sang to the LORD. They said,

"I will sing to the LORD.
He is greatly honored.
He has thrown Pharaoh's horses and their riders
into the Red Sea.
[2]The LORD gives me strength. I sing about him.
He has saved me.
He is my God. I will praise him.
He is my father's God. I will honor him.
[3]The LORD goes into battle.
The LORD is his name.
[4]He has thrown Pharaoh's chariots and army
into the Red Sea.
Pharaoh's best officers
drowned in the sea.
[5]The deep waters covered them.
They sank to the bottom like a stone.

[6]"LORD, your right hand
was majestic and powerful.
LORD, your right hand
destroyed your enemies.
[7]Because of your great majesty,
you threw down those who opposed you.
Your burning anger blazed out.
It burned them up like straw.
[8]The powerful blast from your nose
piled up the waters.
The rushing waters stood firm like a wall.
The deep waters stood up in the middle of the sea.

9 “Your enemies bragged,
‘We will chase Israel. We will catch them.
We’ll divide up what we take from them.
We’ll eat them alive.
We’ll pull our swords out.
Our powerful hands will destroy them.’
10 But you blew with your breath.
The Red Sea covered your enemies.
They sank like lead
in the mighty waters.

11 “LORD, who among the gods is like you?
Who is like you?
You are majestic and holy.
Your glory fills me with wonder.
You do wonderful miracles.
12 You reached out your right hand.
The earth swallowed up the Egyptians.

13 “Because your love is faithful,
you will lead the people you have set free.
Because you are so strong,
you will guide them to the holy place where you live.
14 The nations will hear about it and tremble.
Pain and suffering will take hold of the Philistines.
15 The chiefs of Edom will be terrified.
The leaders of Moab will tremble with fear.
The people of Canaan will melt away.
16 Fear and terror will fall on them.
Your powerful arm
will make them as still as a stone.
Then your people will pass by, LORD.
Then the people you created will pass by.
17 You will bring them in.
You will plant them on the mountain you gave them.
LORD, you have made that place your home.
Lord, your hands have made your holy place secure.

18 “The LORD will rule
for ever and ever.”

[19]Pharaoh's horses, chariots and horsemen went into the Red Sea. The LORD brought the waters of the sea back over them. But the people of Israel walked through the sea on dry ground.

[20]Aaron's sister Miriam was a prophet. She took a tambourine in her hand. All the women followed her. They played tambourines and danced. [21]Miriam sang to them,

"Sing to the LORD.
He is greatly honored.
He has thrown Pharaoh's horses and their riders
into the Red Sea."

At the Waters of Marah and Elim

[22]Then Moses led Israel away from the Red Sea. They went into the Desert of Shur. For three days they traveled in the desert. They didn't find any water there. [23]When they came to Marah, they couldn't drink its water. It was bitter. That's why the place is named Marah. [24]The people told Moses they weren't happy with him. They said, "What are we supposed to drink?"

[25]Then Moses cried out to the LORD. The LORD showed him a stick. Moses threw it into the water. The water became sweet.

There the LORD made a rule and a law for the people. And there he put them to the test. [26]He said, "I am the LORD your God. Listen carefully to my voice. Do what is right in my eyes. Pay attention to my commands. Obey all of my rules. If you do, I will not send on you any of the sicknesses I sent on the Egyptians. I am the LORD who heals you."

[27]The people came to Elim. It had 12 springs and 70 palm trees. They camped there near the water.

The LORD Gives Israel Food Every Day

Exodus 16

1 The whole community of Israel started out from Elim. They came to the
Desert of Sin. It was between Elim and Sinai. They arrived there on the 15th
day of the second month after they had come out of Egypt.

2 In the desert the whole community told Moses and Aaron they weren't
happy with them. 3 The Israelites said to them, "We wish the LORD had put us to
death in Egypt. There we sat around pots of meat. We ate all of the food we
wanted. But you have brought us out into this desert. You must want this entire
community to die of hunger."

4 Then the LORD spoke to Moses. He said, "I will rain down bread from
heaven for you. The people must go out each day. Have them gather enough
bread for that day. Here is how I will put them to the test. I will see if they will
follow my directions.

5 "On the sixth day they must prepare what they bring in. On that day they
must gather twice as much as on the other days."

6 So Moses and Aaron spoke to all of the people of Israel. They said, "In the
evening you will know that the LORD brought you out of Egypt. 7 And in the
morning you will see the glory of the LORD. He has heard you say you aren't
happy with him. Who are we? Why are you telling us you aren't happy with
us?"

8 Moses also said, "You will know that the LORD has heard you speak against
him. He will give you meat to eat in the evening. He'll give you all of the bread
you want in the morning. But who are we? You aren't speaking against us. You
are speaking against the LORD."

9 Then Moses told Aaron, "Talk to the whole community of Israel. Say to
them, 'Come to the LORD. He has heard you speak against him.' "

10 While Aaron was talking to the whole community of Israel, they looked
toward the desert. There was the glory of the LORD appearing in the cloud!

11 The LORD said to Moses, 12 "I have heard the people of Israel talking about

how unhappy they are. Tell them, ‘When the sun goes down, you will eat meat. In the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God.’ ”

13That evening quail came and covered the camp. In the morning the ground around the camp was covered with dew. 14When the dew was gone, thin flakes appeared on the desert floor. They looked like frost on the ground. 15The people of Israel saw the flakes. They asked each other, “What’s that?” They didn’t know what it was.

Moses said to them, “It’s the bread the LORD has given you to eat. 16Here is what the LORD has commanded. He has said, ‘Each one of you should gather as much as you need. Take two quarts for each person who lives in your tent.’ ”

17The people of Israel did as they were told. Some gathered a lot, and some gathered a little. 18When they measured it out, those who gathered a lot didn’t have too much. And those who gathered a little had enough. All of them gathered only what they needed.

19Then Moses said to them, “Don’t keep any of it until morning.”

20Some of them didn’t pay any attention to Moses. They kept part of it until morning. But it was full of maggots and began to stink. So Moses became angry with them.

21Each morning all of them gathered as much as they needed. But by the hottest time of the day, the thin flakes had melted away.

22On the sixth day, the people gathered twice as much. It amounted to four quarts for each person. The leaders of the community came and reported that to Moses. 23He said to them, “Here is what the LORD commanded. He said, ‘Tomorrow will be a day of rest. It will be a holy Sabbath day. It will be set apart for the LORD. So bake what you want to bake. Boil what you want to boil. Save what is left. Keep it until morning.’ ”

24So they saved it until morning, just as Moses commanded. It didn’t stink or get maggots in it.

25“Eat it today,” Moses said. “Today is a Sabbath day in the LORD’s honor. You won’t find any flakes on the ground today. 26Gather them for six days. But on the seventh day there won’t be any. It’s the Sabbath.”

27In spite of what Moses said, some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather the flakes. But they didn’t find any.

[28]Then the LORD spoke to Moses. He said, “How long will all of you refuse to obey my commands and my teachings? [29]Keep in mind that I have given you the Sabbath day. That is why on the sixth day I give you bread for two days. All of you must stay where you are on the seventh day. No one can go out.” [30]So the people rested on the seventh day.

[31]The people of Israel called the bread manna. It was white like coriander seeds. It tasted like wafers that were made with honey.

[32]Moses said, “Here is what the LORD has commanded. He has said, ‘Get two quarts of manna. Keep it for all time to come. Then those who live after you will see the bread I gave you to eat in the desert. I gave it to you when I brought you out of Egypt.’ ”

[33]So Moses said to Aaron, “Get a jar. Put two quarts of manna in it. Then place it in front of the LORD. Keep it there for all time to come.”

[34]Aaron did exactly as the LORD had commanded Moses. He put the manna in front of the tablets of the covenant. He put it there so it would be kept for all time to come.

[35]The people of Israel ate manna for 40 years. They ate it until they came to a land that was settled. They ate it until they reached the border of Canaan.

[36]The jar had an omer of manna in it. An omer was two quarts.

The LORD Gives Israel Water Out of the Rock

Exodus 17

1 The whole community of Israel started out from the Desert of Sin. They
traveled from place to place, just as the LORD commanded.

They camped at Rephidim. But there wasn't any water for the people to
drink. 2 So they argued with Moses. They said, "Give us water to drink."

Moses replied, "Why are you arguing with me? Why are you putting the
LORD to the test?"

3 But the people were thirsty for water there. So they told Moses they weren't
happy with him. They said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt? Did you
want us, our children and our livestock to die of thirst?"

4 Then Moses cried out to the LORD. He said, "What am I going to do with
these people? They are almost ready to kill me by throwing stones at me."

5 The LORD answered Moses. He said, "Walk on ahead of the people. Take
some of the elders of Israel along with you. Take in your hand the wooden staff
you used when you struck the Nile River. Go. 6 I will stand there in front of you
by the rock at Mount Horeb. Hit the rock. Then water will come out of it for
the people to drink." So Moses hit the rock in the sight of the elders of Israel.

7 Moses called the place Massah and Meribah. That's because the people of
Israel argued with him there. They also put the LORD to the test. They asked, "Is
the LORD among us or not?"

Joshua Wins the Battle Over the Amalekites

8 The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim. 9 Moses said
to Joshua, "Choose some of our men. Then go out and fight against the
Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill. I'll stand there with the
staff of God in my hands."

10 So Joshua fought against the Amalekites, just as Moses had ordered.

Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. 11As long as Moses held his hands up, the Israelites were winning. But every time he lowered his hands, the Amalekites began to win.

12When Moses' arms got tired, Aaron and Hur got a stone and put it under him. Then he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up. Aaron was on one side, and Hur was on the other. Moses' hands remained steady until sunset.

13So Joshua destroyed the Amalekite army with swords.

14Then the LORD said to Moses, "That is something to be remembered. So write it on a scroll. Make sure Joshua knows you have done it. I will completely erase the memory of the Amalekites from the earth."

15Then Moses built an altar. He called it The LORD Is My Banner. 16He said, "I raised my hands toward the throne of the LORD. The LORD will fight against the Amalekites for all time to come."

Jethro Visits Moses

Exodus 18

1 Moses' father-in-law Jethro was the priest of Midian. He heard about
everything God had done for Moses and for his people Israel. He heard how
the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt.

2 Moses had sent his wife Zipporah to his father-in-law. So Jethro welcomed
her 3 and her two sons. One son was named Gershom. That's because Moses
had said, "I'm an outsider in a strange land." 4 The other was named Eliezer.
That's because Moses had said, "My father's God helped me. He saved me
from Pharaoh's sword."

5 Moses' father-in-law Jethro came to Moses in the desert. Moses' sons and
wife came with Jethro. Moses was camped near the mountain of God. 6 Jethro
had sent a message to him. It said, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to
you. I'm bringing your wife and her two sons."

7 So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law. Moses bowed down and kissed
him. They greeted each other. Then they went into the tent.

8 Moses told his father-in-law about everything the LORD had done to Pharaoh
and the Egyptians because of how much he loved Israel. He told him about all
of their hard times along the way. He told him about how the LORD had saved
them.

9 Jethro was delighted to hear about all of the good things the LORD had done
for Israel. He heard about how God had saved them from the power of Egypt.
10 He said, "I praise the LORD. He saved you and your people from the power of
Pharaoh and Egypt. 11 Now I know that the LORD is greater than all other gods.
See what he did to those who looked down on Israel."

12 Then Moses' father-in-law Jethro brought a burnt offering and other
sacrifices to God. Aaron came with all of the elders of Israel. They ate with
Moses' father-in-law in the sight of God.

13 The next day Moses took his seat to serve the people as their judge. They
stood around him from morning until evening. 14 His father-in-law saw

everything Moses was doing for the people. So he said, “Aren’t you trying to do too much for the people? You are the only judge. And all of these people are standing around you from morning until evening.”

15Moses answered him. He said, “The people come to me to find out what God wants them to do. 16Anytime they don’t agree, they come to me. I decide between them. I tell them about God’s rules and laws.”

17Moses’ father-in-law replied, “What you are doing isn’t good. 18You will just get worn out. And so will these people who come to you. There’s too much work for you. You can’t possibly handle it by yourself.

19“Listen to me. I’ll give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must speak to God for the people. Take their problems to him. 20Teach them the rules and laws. Show them how to live and what to do.

21“But choose men of ability from all of the people. They must have respect for God. You must be able to trust them. They must not try to get money by cheating others. Appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. 22Let them serve the people as judges. But have them bring every hard case to you. They can decide the easy ones themselves. That will make your load lighter. They will share it with you.

23“If this is what God wants and if you do it, then you will be able to carry the load. And all of these people will go home satisfied.”

24Moses listened to his father-in-law. He did everything Jethro said. 25He chose men of ability from the whole community of Israel. He made them leaders of the people. They became officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. 26They judged the people at all times. They brought the hard cases to Moses. But they decided the easy ones themselves.

27Moses sent his father-in-law on his way. So Jethro returned to his own country.

Israel Comes to Mount Sinai

Exodus 19

1Exactly three months after the people of Israel left Egypt, they came to the
Desert of Sinai. 2After they started out from Rephidim, they entered the Desert
of Sinai. They camped there in the desert in front of the mountain.

3Then Moses went up to God. The LORD called out to him from the mountain.
He said, “Here is what I want you to say to my people, who came from Jacob’s
family. Tell the Israelites, 4‘You have seen for yourselves what I did to Egypt.
You saw how I carried you on the wings of eagles and brought you to myself.

5“ ‘Now obey me completely. Keep my covenant. If you do, then out of all of
the nations you will be my special treasure. The whole earth is mine. 6But you
will be a kingdom of priests to serve me. You will be my holy nation.’ That is
what you must tell the Israelites.”

7So Moses went back. He sent for the elders of the people. He explained to
them everything the LORD had commanded him to say. 8All of the people
answered together. They said, “We will do everything the LORD has said.”

So Moses brought their answer back to the LORD.

9The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, “I am going to come to you in a thick
cloud. The people will hear me speaking with you. They will always put their
trust in you.” Then Moses told the LORD what the people had said.

10The LORD said to Moses, “Go to the people. Today and tomorrow set them
apart for me. Have them wash their clothes. 11Have the people ready by the
third day. On that day I will come down on Mount Sinai. Everyone will see it.

12“Put limits for the people around the mountain. Tell them, ‘Be careful that
you do not go up the mountain. Do not even touch the foot of it. You can be
sure that all who touch the mountain will be put to death. 13Do not lay a hand
on any of them. Kill them with stones or shoot them with arrows. Whether they
are people or animals, do not let them live.’ They may go up to the mountain
only when the ram’s horn gives out a long blast.”

14Moses went down the mountain to the people. After he set them apart for

the LORD, they washed their clothes. 15Then he spoke to the people. He said, “Get ready for the third day. Don’t make love.”

16On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning. A thick cloud covered the mountain. A trumpet gave out a very loud blast. Everyone in the camp trembled with fear.

17Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God. They stood at the foot of the mountain.

18Smoke covered Mount Sinai, because the LORD came down on it in fire. The smoke rose up from it like smoke from a furnace. The whole mountain trembled and shook. 19The sound of the trumpet got louder and louder. Then Moses spoke. And the voice of God answered him.

20The LORD came down to the top of Mount Sinai. He told Moses to come to the top of the mountain. So Moses went up.

21The LORD said to him, “Go down and warn the people. They must not force their way through to see me. If they do, many of them will die. 22The priests approach me when they serve me. But even they must set themselves apart for me. If they do not, my anger will break out against them.”

23Moses said to the LORD, “The people can’t come up Mount Sinai. You yourself warned us. You said, ‘Put limits around the mountain. Set it apart as holy.’ ”

24The LORD replied, “Go down. Bring Aaron up with you. But the priests and the people must not force their way through. They must not come up to me. If they do, my anger will break out against them.”

25So Moses went down to the people and told them.

God Gives His People the Ten Commandments

Exodus 20

1 Here are all of the words God spoke. He said,

2 "I am the LORD your God. I brought you out of Egypt. That is the land
where you were slaves.

3 "Do not put any other gods in place of me.

4 "Do not make statues of gods that look like anything in the sky or
on the earth or in the waters. 5 Do not bow down to them or
worship them. I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God. I punish
the children for the sin of their parents. I punish the grandchildren
and great-grandchildren of those who hate me. 6 But for all time to
come I show love to all those who love me and keep my
commandments.

7 "Do not misuse the name of the LORD your God. The LORD will find
guilty anyone who misuses his name.

8 "Remember to keep the Sabbath day holy. 9 Do all of your work in
six days. 10 But the seventh day is a Sabbath in honor of the LORD
your God. Do not do any work on that day. The same command
applies to your sons and daughters, your male and female
servants, and your animals. It also applies to any outsiders who
live in your cities. 11 In six days I made the heavens and the earth.
I made the oceans and everything in them. But I rested on the
seventh day. So I blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

12 "Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long time in
the land the LORD your God is giving you.

13 "Do not commit murder.

14 "Do not commit adultery.

15 "Do not steal.

16“Do not give false witness against your neighbor.

17“Do not long for anything that belongs to your neighbor. Do not long for your neighbor’s house, wife, male or female servant, ox or donkey.”

18The people saw the thunder and lightning. They heard the trumpet. They saw the mountain covered with smoke. They trembled with fear and stayed a long way off.

19They said to Moses, “Speak to us yourself. Then we’ll listen. But don’t let God speak to us. If he does, we’ll die.”

20Moses said to the people, “Don’t be afraid. God has come to put you to the test. He wants you to have respect for him. That will keep you from sinning.”

21Moses approached the thick darkness where God was. But the people remained a long way off.

Worshiping the LORD

22Then the LORD said to Moses, “Here is what you must tell the people of Israel. Say to them, ‘You have seen for yourselves what I said to you from heaven. 23Do not put any other gods in place of me. Do not make silver or gold statues of them for yourselves.

24“ ‘Make an altar out of dirt for me. Sacrifice your burnt offerings and friendship offerings on it. Sacrifice your sheep, goats and cattle on it. I will come to you and bless you everywhere I cause my name to be honored.

25“ ‘If you make an altar out of stones in honor of me, do not build it with blocks of stone. You will make it “unclean” if you use a tool on it.

26“ ‘Do not walk up steps to my altar. If you do, someone might see your naked body under your robes.’

Exodus 21

[1]“Here are the laws you must explain to the people of Israel.

Set Your Hebrew Servants Free

[2]“Suppose you buy a Hebrew servant. He must serve you for six years. But in the seventh year, you must set him free. He does not have to pay anything.

[3]“If he does not have a wife when he comes, he must go free alone. But if he has a wife when he comes, she must go with him. [4]Suppose his master gives him a wife. And suppose she has sons or daughters by him. Then only the man will go free. The woman and her children will belong to her master.

[5]“But suppose the servant says, ‘I love my master and my wife and children. I don’t want to go free.’ [6]Then his master must take him to the judges. He must be taken to the door or doorpost of his master’s house. His master must poke a hole through his ear lobe into the doorpost. Then he will become his servant for life.

[7]“Suppose a man sells his daughter as a servant. Then she can’t go free as male servants do.

[8]“But what if the master who has chosen her does not like her? Then he must let the man buy her back. He has no right to sell her to strangers. He has broken his promise to her.

[9]“What if he chooses her to get married to his son? Then he must grant her the rights of a daughter.

[10]“What if he marries another woman? He must still give the first one her food and clothes and make love to her. [11]If he does not provide her with those three things, she can go free. She does not have to pay anything.

Laws About Harming Others

[12]“You can be sure that if anyone hits and kills someone else, he will be put

to death. [13]Suppose he did not do it on purpose. Suppose I let it happen. Then he can escape to a place I will choose. [14]But suppose he kills someone on purpose. Then take him away from my altar and put him to death.

[15]“If anyone attacks his father or mother, he will be put to death.

[16]“If anyone kidnaps and sells another person, he will be put to death. If he still has the person with him when he is caught, he will be put to death.

[17]“If anyone calls down a curse on his father or mother, he will be put to death.

[18]“Suppose two men get into a fight and argue with each other. One hits the other with a stone or his fist. He does not die but has to stay in bed. [19]And later he gets up and walks around outside with his walking stick. Then the man who hit him will not be held accountable. But he must pay the one who was hurt for the time he spent in bed. He must be sure that the person is completely healed.

[20]“Suppose a man beats his male or female slave to death with a club. Then he must be punished. [21]But he will not be punished if the slave gets up after a day or two. After all, the slave is his property.

[22]“Suppose some men are fighting and one of them hits a pregnant woman. And suppose she has her baby early but is not badly hurt. Then the man who hurt her must pay a fine. He must pay what the woman’s husband asks for and the court allows.

[23]“But if someone is badly hurt, a life must be taken for a life. [24]An eye must be put out for an eye. A tooth must be knocked out for a tooth. A hand must be cut off for a hand and a foot for a foot. [25]A burn must be given for a burn, a wound for a wound, and a bruise for a bruise.

[26]“Suppose a man hits his male or female servant in the eye and destroys it. Then he must let the servant go free to pay for the eye.

[27]“Suppose he knocks out the tooth of a male or female servant. Then he must let the servant go free to pay for the tooth.

[28]“Suppose a bull kills a man or woman with its horns. Then you must kill the bull by throwing stones at it. Its meat must not be eaten. The owner of the bull will not be held accountable.

[29]“But suppose the bull has had the habit of attacking people. And suppose the owner has been warned but has not kept it fenced in. Then if it kills a man or woman, you must kill it with stones. The owner must also be put to death.

30 “But suppose payment is required of him instead. Then he can save his life
by paying what is required.

31 “The same law applies if the bull wounds a son or daughter with its horns.

32 “Suppose the bull wounds a male or female slave. Then the owner must pay
the slave’s master 12 ounces of silver. You must kill the bull with stones.

33 “Suppose a man uncovers a pit or digs one and does not cover it. And
suppose an ox or donkey falls into it. 34 Then the owner of the pit must pay the
animal’s owner for the loss. The dead animal will belong to the owner of the
pit.

35 “Suppose a man’s bull wounds a neighbor’s bull and it dies. Then they must
sell the live one. And they must share the money and the dead animal equally.

36 “But suppose people knew that the bull had the habit of attacking. And
suppose the owner did not keep it fenced in. Then he must give another animal
to pay for the dead animal. The dead animal will belong to him.

Laws About Keeping Property Safe

Exodus 22

[1]"Suppose a man steals an ox or a sheep. And suppose he kills it or sells it. Then he must pay back five head of cattle for the ox. Or he must pay back four sheep or goats for the sheep.

[2]"Suppose you catch a thief breaking into your house. And suppose you hit the thief and kill him. Then you are not guilty of murder. [3]But suppose it happens after the sun has come up. Then you are guilty of murder.

"A thief must pay for what he has stolen. But suppose he does not have anything. Then he must be sold to pay for what he has stolen.

[4]"What if the stolen ox, donkey or sheep is found alive with him? Then the thief must pay back twice as much as he stole.

[5]"Suppose a man lets his livestock eat grass in someone else's field or vineyard. Then he must pay that person back from the best crops of his own field or vineyard.

[6]"Suppose a fire breaks out and spreads into bushes. It burns grain that has been cut and stacked. Or it burns grain that is still growing. Or it burns the whole field. Then the one who started the fire must pay for the loss.

[7]"Suppose a man gives his neighbor silver or other things to keep safe. And suppose they are stolen from the neighbor's house. If the thief is caught, he must pay back twice as much as he stole.

[8]"But suppose the thief is not found. Then the neighbor must go to the judges. They will decide whether the neighbor has stolen the other person's property.

[9]"Suppose you have an ox, donkey, sheep or clothing that does not belong to you. Or you have other property that was lost by someone else. And suppose someone says, 'That belongs to me.' Then both people must bring their case to the judges. The one the judges decide is guilty must pay back twice as much to the other person.

[10]"Suppose a man asks his neighbor to take care of a donkey, ox, sheep or any other animal. And suppose the animal dies or gets hurt. Or suppose it is

stolen while no one is looking. 11Then the problem will be settled by taking an oath and promising the LORD to tell the truth.

"Suppose the neighbor takes an oath and says, 'I didn't steal your property.' Then the owner must accept what the neighbor says. No payment is required.

12"But suppose the animal really was stolen. Then the neighbor must pay the owner back.

13"Or suppose it was torn to pieces by a wild animal. Then the neighbor must bring in what is left as proof. No payment is required.

14"Suppose a man borrows an animal from his neighbor. And it gets hurt or dies while the owner is not there. Then the man must pay for it.

15"But suppose the owner is with the animal. Then the man will not have to pay. If he hired the animal, the money he paid to hire it covers the loss.

Laws About Social Problems

16"Suppose a man meets a virgin who is not engaged. And he talks her into having sex with him. Then he must pay her father the price for a bride. And he must get married to her.

17"But suppose her father absolutely refuses to give her to him. Then he must still pay the price for getting married to a virgin.

18"Do not let a woman who does evil magic stay alive. Put her to death.

19"Anyone who has sex with an animal must be put to death.

20"Anyone who sacrifices to any god other than me must be destroyed.

21"Do not treat outsiders badly. Do not beat them down. Remember, you were outsiders in Egypt.

22"Do not take advantage of widows. Do not take advantage of children whose fathers have died.

23"If you do, they might cry out to me. Then I will certainly hear them. 24And I will get angry. I will kill you with a sword. Your wives will become widows. Your children's fathers will die.

25"Suppose you lend money to one of my people among you who is in need. Then do not be like those who lend money and charge interest. Do not charge

any interest.

[26]“Suppose your neighbor owes you money and gives you a coat as a promise to pay it back. Then return it to him by sunset. [27]That coat is the only thing he owns to wear or sleep in. When he cries out to me, I will listen, because I am loving and kind.

[28]“Do not speak evil things against me. Do not call down a curse on the ruler of your people.

[29]“Do not hold back your grain offerings or wine offerings.

“You must give me the oldest of your sons. [30]Do the same with your cattle and sheep. Let them stay with their mothers for seven days. But give them to me on the eighth day.

[31]“I want you to be my holy people. So do not eat the meat of any animal that has been torn by wild animals. Throw it to the dogs.

Laws About Mercy and Fairness

Exodus 23

1 “Do not spread reports that are false. Do not help an evil person by telling
lies in court.

2 “Do not follow the crowd when they do what is wrong. When you are a
witness in court, do not turn what is right into wrong. Do not go along with the
crowd. 3 Do not show favor to a poor person in court.

4 “Suppose you come across your enemy’s ox or donkey wandering away.
Then be sure to take it back to him.

5 “Suppose you see that the donkey of someone who hates you has fallen
down under its load. Then do not leave it there. Be sure you help him with it.

6 “Be fair to your poor people in their court cases. 7 Do not have anything to
do with a charge that is false. Do not put to death those who are not guilty of
doing anything wrong. I will not let those who are guilty go free.

8 “Do not take money from people who want special favors. It makes you
blind to the truth. It twists the words of godly people.

9 “Do not beat an outsider down. You yourselves know how it feels to be
outsiders. Remember, you were outsiders in Egypt.

Laws About Sabbaths

10 “For six years plant your fields and gather your crops. 11 But during the
seventh year do not plow your land or use it. Then the poor people who are
among you can get food from it. The wild animals can eat what is left over. Do
the same thing with your vineyards and your groves of olive trees.

12 “Do all of your work in six days. But do not do any work on the seventh
day. Then your oxen and donkeys can rest. The slaves who are born in your
house can be renewed. And so can the outsiders.

13 “Be careful to do everything I have said to you. Do not use the names of

other gods. Do not even let them be heard on your lips.

Laws About Celebrating the Main Feasts

14“Three times a year you must celebrate a feast in my honor.

15“Celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Eat bread that is made without yeast for seven days, just as I commanded you. Do it at the appointed time in the month of Abib. You came out of Egypt in that month.

“You must not come to worship me with your hands empty.

16“Celebrate the Feast of Weeks. Bring the first share of your crops from your field.

“Celebrate the Feast of Booths. Hold it in the fall when you gather in your crops from the field.

17“Three times a year all of your men must come to worship me. I am your LORD and King.

18“Do not include anything that is made with yeast when you offer me the blood of a sacrifice.

“Suppose the fat from sacrifices is left over from my feasts. Then do not keep it until morning.

19“Bring the best of the first share of your crops to my house. I am the LORD your God.

“Do not cook a young goat in its mother’s milk.

God’s Angel Will Prepare the Way

20“I am sending an angel ahead of you. He will guard you along the way. He will bring you to the place I have prepared. 21Pay attention to him. Listen to what he says. Do not refuse to obey him. He will not forgive you if you turn against him. My very Name is in him. 22Listen carefully to what he says. Do everything I say. Then I will be an enemy to your enemies. I will fight against those who fight against you.

23“My angel will go ahead of you. He will bring you into the land of the

Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hivites and Jebusites. I will wipe them out.

24“Do not do what they do. Do not bow down to their gods or worship them. You must destroy the statues of their gods. You must break their sacred stones to pieces.

25“I am the LORD your God. Worship me. Then I will bless your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you. 26In your land no woman will give birth to a dead baby. Every woman will be able to have children. I will give you a long life.

27“I will send my terror ahead of you. I will throw every nation you meet into a panic. I will make all of your enemies turn their backs and run away. 28I will send hornets ahead of you. They will drive the Hivites, Canaanites and Hittites out of your way.

29“But I will not drive them out in just one year. If I did, the land would be deserted. There would be too many wild animals for you. 30I will drive them out ahead of you little by little. I will do it until your numbers have increased enough for you to take control of the land.

31“I will make your borders secure from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea. They will go from the desert to the Euphrates River.

“I will hand over to you the people who live in the land. You will drive them out to make room for you. 32Do not make a covenant with them or with their gods. 33Do not let them live in your land. If you do, they will cause you to sin against me. If you worship their gods, that will certainly be a trap for you.”

The Blood of the Covenant

Exodus 24

[1]The LORD said to Moses, “You and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and 70 of the elders of Israel must come up to me. Do not come close when you worship. [2]Only Moses can come close to me. The others must not come near. And the people may not go up with him.”

[3]Moses went and told the people all of the LORD’s words and laws. They answered with one voice. They said, “We will do everything the LORD has told us to do.” [4]Then Moses wrote down everything the LORD had said.

Moses got up early the next morning. He built an altar at the foot of the mountain. He set up 12 stone pillars. They stood for the 12 tribes of Israel.

[5]Then he sent young Israelite men to offer burnt offerings. They also sacrificed young bulls as friendship offerings to the LORD. [6]Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls. He sprinkled the other half on the altar.

[7]Then he took the Scroll of the Covenant and read it to the people.

They answered, “We will do everything the LORD has told us to do. We will obey him.”

[8]Then Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people. He said, “This is the blood that puts the covenant into effect. The LORD has made this covenant with you in keeping with all of these words.”

[9]Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the 70 elders of Israel went up. [10]They saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a street made out of sapphire. It was as clear as the sky itself. [11]But God didn’t raise his hand against those leaders of the people of Israel. They saw God. And they ate and drank.

[12]The LORD said to Moses, “Come up to me on the mountain. Stay here. I will give you the stone tablets. They contain the law and commands I have written to teach the people.”

[13]Then Moses and Joshua, his helper, started out. Moses went up on the

mountain of God. [14]He said to the elders, “Wait for us here until we come back to you. Aaron and Hur are with you. Anyone who has a problem can go to them.”

[15]Moses went up on the mountain. Then the cloud covered it. [16]The glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai. The cloud covered the mountain for six days.

On the seventh day the LORD called out to Moses from inside the cloud. [17]The people of Israel saw the glory of the LORD. It looked like a fire burning on top of the mountain. [18]Moses entered the cloud as he went on up the mountain. He stayed on the mountain for 40 days and 40 nights.

Offerings for the Holy Tent

Exodus 25

1 The LORD said to Moses, 2 “Tell the people of Israel to bring me an offering.
You must receive the offering for me from all whose hearts move them to give.
3 “Here are the offerings you must receive from them.

“gold, silver and bronze
4 blue, purple and bright red yarn and fine linen
goat hair
5 ram skins that are dyed red
the hides of sea cows
acacia wood
6 olive oil for the lights
spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet-smelling incense
7 onyx stones and other jewels for the linen apron and chest cloth

8 “Have them make a sacred tent for me. I will live among them. 9 Make the holy tent and everything that belongs to it. Make them exactly like the pattern I will show you.

The Ark of the Covenant

10 “Have them make a chest out of acacia wood. Make it three feet nine inches long and two feet three inches wide and high. 11 Cover it inside and outside with pure gold. Put a strip of gold around it.

12 “Make four gold rings for it. Join them to its four bottom corners. Put two rings on one side and two rings on the other.

13 “Then make poles out of acacia wood. Cover them with gold. 14 Put the

poles through the rings on the sides of the chest to carry it. [15]The poles must remain in the rings of the chest. Do not remove them. [16]I will give you the tablets of the covenant. When I do, put them into the chest.

[17]"Make its cover out of pure gold. The cover is the place where sin will be paid for. Make it three feet nine inches long and two feet three inches wide.

[18]"Make two cherubim out of hammered gold at the ends of the cover. [19]Put one cherub on each end of it. Make the cherubim as part of the cover itself. [20]The cherubim must have their wings spread up over the cover. The cherubim must face each other and look toward the cover.

[21]"Place the cover on top of the chest. I will give you the tablets of the covenant. Put them into the chest.

[22]"The chest is the ark where the tablets of the covenant are kept. I will meet with you above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the ark. There I will give you all of my commands for the people of Israel.

The Table for the Holy Bread

[23]"Make a table out of acacia wood. Make it three feet long, one foot six inches wide and two feet three inches high. [24]Cover it with pure gold. Put a strip of gold around it. [25]Also make a rim around it that is three inches wide. Put a strip of gold around the rim.

[26]"Make four gold rings for the table. Join them to the four corners, where the four legs are. [27]The rings must be close to the rim. They must hold the poles that will be used to carry the table.

[28]"Make the poles out of acacia wood. Cover them with gold. Use them to carry the table.

[29]"Make its plates and dishes out of pure gold. Also make its pitchers and bowls out of pure gold. Use the pitchers and bowls to pour out drink offerings.

[30]"Put the holy bread on the table. It must be near my holy throne on the ark of the covenant at all times.

The Gold Lampstand

31 “Make a lampstand out of pure gold. Hammer out its base and stem. Its
buds, blooms and cups must branch out from it.

32 “Six branches must come out from the sides of the lampstand. Make three
on one side and three on the other. 33 On one branch make three cups that are
shaped like almond flowers with buds and blooms. Then put three on the next
branch. Do the same with all six branches that come out from the lampstand.

34 “On the lampstand there must be four cups that are shaped like almond
flowers with buds and blooms. 35 One bud must be under the first pair of
branches that come out from the lampstand. Put a second bud under the second
pair. And put a third bud under the third pair. Make a total of six branches.
36 The buds and branches must come out from the lampstand.

“The whole lampstand must be one piece that is hammered out of pure gold.

37 “Then make its seven lamps. Set them up on it so that they light the space
in front of it. 38 The trays and wick cutters must be made out of pure gold.
39 Use 75 pounds of pure gold to make the lampstand and everything that is
used with it.

40 “Be sure to make everything just like the pattern I showed you on the
mountain.

The Holy Tent

Exodus 26

[1]"Make ten curtains out of finely twisted linen for the holy tent. Make them
with blue, purple and bright red yarn. Have a skilled worker sew cherubim into
the pattern. [2]Make all of the curtains the same size. They must be 42 feet long
and six feet wide.

[3]"Join five of the curtains together. Do the same thing with the other five.
[4]Make loops out of blue strips of cloth along the edge of the end curtain in one
set. Do the same thing with the end curtain in the other set. [5]Make 50 loops on
the end curtain of the one set. Do the same thing on the end curtain of the other
set. Put the loops across from each other. [6]Make 50 gold hooks. Use them to
join the curtains together so that the holy tent is all one piece.

[7]"Make a total of 11 curtains out of goat hair to put over the holy tent. [8]Make
all 11 curtains the same size. They must be 45 feet long and six feet wide.

[9]"Join five of the curtains together into one set. Do the same thing with the
other six. Fold the sixth curtain in half at the front of the tent. [10]Make 50 loops
along the edge of the end curtain in the one set. Do the same thing with the
other set. [11]Then make 50 bronze hooks. Put them in the loops to join the tent
together all in one piece.

[12]"Let the extra half curtain hang down at the rear of the holy tent. [13]The tent
curtains will be one foot six inches longer on both sides. What is left over will
hang over the sides of the holy tent and cover it.

[14]"Make a covering for the tent. Make it out of ram skins that are dyed red.
Put a covering of the hides of sea cows over that.

[15]"Make frames out of acacia wood for the holy tent. [16]Make each frame 15
feet long and two feet three inches wide. [17]Add two small wooden pins to each
frame. Make the pins stick out so that they are even with each other. Make all
of the frames for the holy tent in the same way.

[18]"Make 20 frames for the south side of the holy tent. [19]And make 40 silver
bases to go under them. Make two bases for each frame. Put one under each

pin that sticks out.

[20]“For the north side of the holy tent make 20 frames [21]and 40 silver bases.
Put two bases under each frame.

[22]“Make six frames for the west end of the holy tent. [23]Make two frames for
the corners at the far end. [24]At those two corners the frames must be double
from top to bottom. They must be fitted into a single ring. Make both of them
the same. [25]There will be eight frames and 16 silver bases. There will be two
bases under each frame.

[26]“Also make crossbars out of acacia wood. Make five for the frames on one
side of the holy tent. [27]Make five for the frames on the other side. And make
five for the frames on the west, at the far end of the holy tent. [28]The center
crossbar must reach from end to end at the middle of the frames.

[29]“Cover the frames with gold. Make gold rings to hold the crossbars. Also
cover the crossbars with gold.

[30]“Set up the holy tent in keeping with the plan I showed you on the
mountain.

[31]“Make a curtain out of blue, purple and bright red yarn and finely twisted
linen. Have a skilled worker sew cherubim into the pattern. [32]Hang the curtain
with gold hooks on four posts that are made out of acacia wood. Cover the
posts with gold. Stand them on four silver bases. [33]Hang the curtain from the
hooks.

“Place the ark of the covenant behind the curtain. The curtain will separate
the Holy Room from the Most Holy Room. [34]Put the cover on the ark of the
covenant in the Most Holy Room. The cover will be the place where sin is paid
for.

[35]“Place the table outside the curtain on the north side of the holy tent. And
put the lampstand across from it on the south side.

[36]“For the entrance to the tent make a curtain out of blue, purple and bright
red yarn and finely twisted linen. Have a person who sews skillfully make it.
[37]Make gold hooks for the curtain. Make five posts out of acacia wood. Cover
them with gold. And make five bronze bases for them.

The Altar for Burnt Offerings

Exodus 27

[1]"Build an altar out of acacia wood. It must be four feet six inches high and seven feet six inches square. [2]Make a horn stick out from each of its upper four corners. Cover the altar with bronze.

[3]"Make all of its tools out of bronze. Make its pots to remove the ashes. Make its shovels, sprinkling bowls, meat forks, and pans for carrying ashes.

[4]"Make a bronze grate for the altar. Make a bronze ring for each of the four corners of the grate. [5]Put the grate halfway up the altar on the inside.

[6]"Make poles out of acacia wood for the altar. Cover them with bronze. [7]Put the poles through the rings. They will be on two sides of the altar for carrying it.

[8]"Make the altar out of boards. Make it hollow. You must make it just as I showed you on the mountain.

The Courtyard

[9]"Make a courtyard for the holy tent. The south side must be 150 feet long. It must have curtains that are made out of finely twisted linen. [10]The curtains must be hung on 20 posts and 20 bronze bases. The posts must have silver hooks and bands on them.

[11]"The north side must also be 150 feet long. It must have curtains with 20 posts and 20 bronze bases. The posts must have silver hooks and bands on them.

[12]"The west end of the courtyard must be 75 feet wide. It must have curtains with ten posts and ten bases.

[13]"The east end of the courtyard, toward the sunrise, must also be 75 feet wide. [14]On one side of the entrance you must put curtains that are 22 feet six inches long. Hang them on three posts. Each post must have a base. [15]On the

other side you must also put curtains that are 22 feet six inches long. Hang them on three posts. Each post must have a base.

16“For the entrance to the courtyard, provide a curtain that is 30 feet long. Make it out of blue, purple and bright red yarn and finely twisted linen. Have someone who sews skillfully make it. Hang it on four posts. Each post must have a base.

17“All of the posts that are around the courtyard must have silver bands and hooks. They must also have bronze bases. 18The courtyard must be 150 feet long and 75 feet wide. It must have curtains that are made out of finely twisted linen. They must be seven feet six inches high. The posts must have bronze bases.

19“Make all of the other articles used for any purpose in the holy tent out of bronze. That includes all of the tent stakes for the tent and the courtyard.

Oil for the Lampstand

20“Command the people of Israel to bring you clear oil that is made from pressed olives. Use it to keep the lamps burning and giving light.

21“Aaron and his sons must keep the lamps burning in the Tent of Meeting. The lamps will be outside the curtain that is in front of the tablets of the covenant. The lamps must be kept burning in my sight from evening until morning. That is a law for the people of Israel that will last for all time to come.

Clothes for the Priests

Exodus 28

1 “Have your brother Aaron brought to you from among the people of Israel.
His sons Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar must also be brought. They will
serve me as priests.

2 “Make sacred clothes for your brother Aaron. When he is wearing them,
people will honor him. They will have respect for him.

3 “Speak to all of the skilled workers. I have given them the skill to do this
kind of work. Tell them to make clothes for Aaron. He will wear them when he
is set apart to serve me as priest. 4 They must make a chest cloth, a linen apron,
an outer robe, an inner robe, a turban and a belt. They must make sacred
clothes for your brother Aaron and his sons. Then they will serve me as priests.
5 Have them use fine gold wire, and blue, purple and bright red yarn, and fine
linen.

The Linen Apron

6 “Make the linen apron out of fine gold wire, and out of blue, purple and
bright red yarn, and out of finely twisted linen. Have a skilled worker make it.
7 It must have two shoulder straps joined to two of its corners.

8 “Its skillfully made waistband must be like it. The waistband must be part of
the apron itself. Make the waistband out of fine gold wire, and out of blue,
purple and bright red yarn, and out of finely twisted linen.

9 “Get two onyx stones. Carve the names of the sons of Israel on them.
10 Arrange them in the order of their birth. Carve six names on one stone and
six on the other. 11 Carve the names of the sons of Israel on the two stones the
way a jewel cutter carves a seal.

“Then put the stones in fancy gold settings. 12 Connect them to the shoulder
straps of the linen apron. The stones will stand for the sons of Israel. Aaron

must carry the names on his shoulders as a reminder while he is serving me.
13 Make fancy gold settings. 14 Make two braided chains out of pure gold. Make
them like ropes. Join the chains to the settings.

The Chest Cloth

15 "Make a chest cloth that will be used for making decisions. Have a skilled
worker make it. Make it like the linen apron. Use fine gold wire, and blue,
purple and bright red yarn, and finely twisted linen. 16 Make it nine inches
square. Fold it in half.

17 "Put four rows of valuable jewels on it. Put a ruby, a topaz and a beryl in
the first row. 18 Put a turquoise, a sapphire and an emerald in the second row.
19 Put a jacinth, an agate and an amethyst in the third row. 20 And put a
chrysolite, an onyx and a jasper in the fourth row. Put them in fancy gold
settings.

21 "Use a total of 12 stones. Use one for each of the names of the sons of
Israel. Each stone must be carved like a seal with the name of one of the 12
tribes.

22 "Make braided chains out of pure gold for the chest cloth. Make them like
ropes. 23 Make two gold rings for the chest cloth. Connect them to two corners
of it. 24 Join the two gold chains to the rings at the corners of the chest cloth.
25 Join the other ends of the chains to the two settings. Join them to the shoulder
straps on the front of the linen apron.

26 "Make two gold rings. Connect them to the other two corners of the chest
cloth. Put them on the inside edge next to the apron. 27 Make two more gold
rings. Connect them to the bottom of the shoulder straps on the front of the
apron. Put them close to the seam. Put them right above the waistband of the
apron. 28 The rings of the chest cloth must be tied to the rings of the apron. Tie
them to the waistband with blue cord. Then the chest cloth will not swing out
from the linen apron.

29 "When Aaron enters the Holy Room, he will carry the names of the sons of
Israel over his heart. Their names will be on the chest cloth of decision. They
will be a continuing reminder while he is serving me.

30 "Also put the Urim and Thummim into the chest cloth. Then they will be

over Aaron’s heart when he comes to serve me. In that way, Aaron will always have what he needs to make decisions for the people of Israel. He will carry the Urim and Thummim over his heart while he is serving me.

More Clothes for the Priests

31“Make the outer robe of the linen apron completely from blue cloth. 32In the center of the robe, make an opening for the head of the priest. Make an edge like a collar around the opening. Then it will not tear.

33“Make pomegranates out of blue, purple and bright red yarn. Sew them around the hem of the robe. Sew gold bells between them. 34Sew a gold bell between every two pomegranates all around the hem of the robe.

35“Aaron must wear the robe when he serves. The bells will jingle when he enters the Holy Room while he is serving me. And they will jingle when he goes out. Then he will not die.

36“Make a plate out of pure gold. Carve words on it as if it were a seal. Carve the words SET APART FOR THE LORD. 37Tie the plate to the front of the turban with a blue cord.

38“Aaron must wear it on his forehead all the time. He will be held accountable for all of the sacred gifts the Israelites set apart. Then I will accept the gifts.

39“Make the inner robe out of fine linen. And make the turban out of fine linen. Have the belt made by a person who sews skillfully.

40“Make inner robes, belts and headbands for Aaron’s sons. When they are wearing them, people will honor them. They will also have respect for them.

41“Put all of the clothes on your brother Aaron and his sons. Then pour olive oil on them and prepare them to serve me. Set them apart to serve me as priests.

42“Make linen underwear that reaches from the waist to the thigh. 43Aaron and the priests who are in his family line must wear it when they enter the Tent of Meeting. They must wear it when they approach the altar to serve in the Holy Room. Then they will not be found guilty and die.

“For all time to come, that will be a law for Aaron and the priests who are in his family line.

Directions for Setting the Priests Apart

Exodus 29

[1]"Here is what you must do to set Aaron and his sons apart to serve me as priests.

"Get a young bull and two rams. They must not have any flaws. [2]Get fine wheat flour that does not have yeast in it. Use the flour to make bread, flat cakes that are mixed with olive oil, and wafers that are spread with oil. [3]Put everything in a basket. Offer them along with the bull and the two rams.

[4]"Then bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. Wash them with water.

[5]"Take the inner robe, the outer robe of the linen apron, the apron itself and the chest cloth. Dress Aaron in them. Take the skillfully made waistband and tie the apron on him with it. [6]Put the turban on his head. Connect the sacred crown to the turban. [7]Take the anointing oil and pour it on his head.

[8]"Bring his sons and dress them in their inner robes. [9]Put headbands on them. Tie belts on Aaron and his sons. The work of the priests belongs to them. This is my law that will last for all time to come.

"And that is how you must prepare Aaron and his sons to serve me.

[10]"Bring the bull to the front of the Tent of Meeting. Have Aaron and his sons place their hands on its head. [11]Kill it in my sight at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.

[12]"Dip your finger into some of the bull's blood. Put it on the horns that stick out from the upper four corners of the altar. Pour the rest of it out at the base of the altar.

[13]"Then take all of the fat around the inside parts. Take the covering of the liver. Take both kidneys with the fat on them. And burn all of it on the altar.

[14]"But burn the bull's meat, hide and guts outside the camp. It is a sin offering.

[15]"Get one of the rams. Have Aaron and his sons place their hands on its

head. [16]Kill it. Take the blood and sprinkle it against every side of the altar.

[17]“Cut the ram into pieces. Wash the inside parts and the legs. Put them with the head and the other pieces. [18]Then burn the whole ram on the altar. It is a burnt offering to me. It has a pleasant smell. It is an offering that is made to me with fire.

[19]“Get the other ram. Have Aaron and his sons place their hands on its head. [20]Kill it. Put some of its blood on the right ear lobes of Aaron and his sons. Put some on the thumbs of their right hands. Also put some on the big toes of their right feet. Then sprinkle blood against every side of the altar.

[21]“Get some of the blood from the altar. Also get some of the anointing oil. Sprinkle both of them on Aaron and his clothes and his sons and their clothes. Then he and his sons and their clothes will be set apart to serve me.

[22]“Here is what you must take from the second ram. Take the fat, the fat tail, the fat around the inside parts, the covering of the liver, both kidneys with the fat on them, and the right thigh. It is the ram you must use when you prepare the priests to serve me. [23]Get a loaf, a flat cake that is made with oil, and a wafer. Take them from the basket of bread that was made without yeast. It is the one that is in front of me.

[24]“Put everything in the hands of Aaron and his sons. Tell them to lift it up and wave it in front of me as a wave offering. [25]Then take it from their hands. Burn it on the altar along with the burnt offering. It gives a smell that is pleasant to me. It is an offering that is made to me with fire.

[26]“Get the breast of the ram that is used when you prepare Aaron to serve me. Wave it in front of me as a wave offering. It will be your share of the meat.

[27]“Here are the parts of the second ram that belong to Aaron and his sons. You must set apart the breast that was waved and the thigh that was offered. [28]It will always be the regular share from the people of Israel for Aaron and his sons. The people must give it to me from their friendship offerings.

[29]“Aaron’s sacred clothes will belong to his sons who will come after him. Then they can wear them when you anoint them and prepare them to serve me. [30]The son who comes after him as priest must wear them seven days. He will come and serve in the Holy Room in the Tent of Meeting.

[31]“Get the ram that is sacrificed when you prepare Aaron and his sons to serve me. Cook the meat in a sacred place.

[32]“Aaron and his sons must eat the ram’s meat. And they must eat the bread that is in the basket. They must eat all of it at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. [33]Those are the offerings to pay for their sins. They must eat them. The offerings must be made when Aaron and his sons are set apart and prepared to serve me. No one else can eat them. They are sacred.

[34]“And if any parts of the ram or bread that are sacrificed when you prepare Aaron and his sons to serve me are left until morning, burn them up. They must not be eaten. They are sacred.

[35]“Do everything I have commanded you to do for Aaron and his sons. Take seven days when you prepare them to serve me. [36]Sacrifice a bull each day. It is a sin offering to pay for their sins.

“Make the altar pure. Pour olive oil on it to set it apart. [37]Take seven days to make the altar pure. Set it apart. Then the altar will be a very holy place. Anything that touches it will be holy.

[38]“Every day offer on the altar two lambs that are a year old. [39]Offer one in the morning. Offer the other one when the sun goes down. [40]Along with the first lamb, offer eight cups of fine flour. Mix it with a quart of oil that is made from pressed olives. Along with that, offer a quart of wine as a drink offering.

[41]“Sacrifice the other lamb when the sun goes down. Sacrifice it along with the same grain offering and its drink offering as you do in the morning. It has a pleasant smell. It is an offering that is made to me with fire.

[42]“For all time to come, the burnt offering must be sacrificed regularly. Sacrifice it at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting in my sight. There I will meet you and speak to you. [43]There I will also meet with the people of Israel. My glory will make the place holy.

[44]“So I will set the Tent of Meeting and the altar apart. And I will set Aaron and his sons apart to serve me as priests.

[45]“Then I will live among the people of Israel. And I will be their God. [46]They will know that I am the LORD their God. They will know that I brought them out of Egypt so I could live among them. I am the LORD their God.

The Altar for Burning Incense

Exodus 30

1 "Make an altar for burning incense. Make it out of acacia wood. 2 It must be
one foot six inches square and three feet high. Make a horn stick out from each
of its upper four corners. 3 Cover the top, sides and horns with pure gold. Put a
strip of gold around it.

4 "Make two gold rings for the altar below the strip. Put the rings across from
each other. They will hold the poles that are used to carry it. 5 Make the poles
out of acacia wood. Cover them with gold.

6 "Put the altar in front of the curtain that hangs in front of the ark where the
tablets of the covenant are kept. The ark will have a cover. It will be the place
where sin is paid for. There I will meet with you.

7 "Aaron must burn sweet-smelling incense on the altar. He must do it every
morning when he takes care of the lamps. 8 He must burn incense again when
he lights the lamps at sunset. Incense must be burned regularly to me. Do it for
all time to come.

9 "Do not burn any other incense on the altar. Do not use the altar for burnt
offerings or grain offerings. Do not pour drink offerings on it.

10 "Once a year Aaron must put the blood of a sin offering on its horns to
make it pure. He must do it on the day Israel's sin is paid for. Do it for all time
to come. The altar is a very holy place to me."

Money to Pay for the People's Lives

11 Then the LORD spoke to Moses. He said, 12 "When you make a list of the
people of Israel and count them, they must pay me for their lives at the time
they are counted. Then a plague will not come on them when you count them.

13 "Each one who is counted must pay a fifth of an ounce of silver. It must be
weighed out in keeping with the standard weights that are used in the sacred

tent. The payment is an offering to me. [14]Each one who is counted must be 20 years old or more. He must give an offering to me.

[15]"When you make the offering, rich people must not give more than a fifth of an ounce of silver. And poor people must not give less. The offering you give to me will pay for your lives.

[16]"Receive the money from the people of Israel. Use it for any purpose in the Tent of Meeting. It will remind the people that they are paying me for their lives."

The Large Bowl for Washing

[17]Then the LORD spoke to Moses. He said, [18]"Make a large bronze bowl for washing. Make a bronze stand to put it on. Place the bowl between the Tent of Meeting and the altar. Put water in it.

[19]"Aaron and his sons must wash their hands and feet with water from it. [20]When they enter the Tent of Meeting, they must wash with water so that they will not die. They will come to the altar to serve me. They will bring an offering that is made to me with fire. [21]When they do, they must wash their hands and feet so that they will not die. For all time to come, that will be a law for Aaron and the priests who are in his family line."

Anointing Oil

[22]Then the LORD spoke to Moses. [23]He said, "Get some fine spices. Get 12 pounds eight ounces of liquid myrrh. Get six pounds four ounces of sweet-smelling cinnamon and the same amount of sweet-smelling cane. [24]Also get 12 pounds eight ounces of cassia. All of the spices must be weighed out in keeping with the standard weights that are used in the sacred tent. Get four quarts of olive oil.

[25]"Have a person who makes perfume mix everything into a sacred anointing oil. It will smell sweet.

[26]"Then anoint the Tent of Meeting and the ark where the tablets of the covenant are kept. [27]Anoint the table for the holy bread and all of its articles.

Anoint the lampstand and the things that are used with it. Anoint the altar for burning incense. [28]Anoint the altar for burnt offerings and all of its tools. And anoint the large bowl together with its stand. [29]You must set them apart so that they will be very holy. Anything that touches them will be holy.

[30]“Anoint Aaron and his sons. Set them apart so that they can serve me as priests.

[31]“Say to the people of Israel, ‘This will be my sacred anointing oil for all time to come. [32]Do not pour it on the bodies of any other men. Do not make any other oil in the same way. It is sacred. So you must think of it as sacred. [33]Anyone who makes perfume in the same way and puts it on someone who is not a priest must be cut off from his people.’ ”

Incense

[34]Then the LORD spoke to Moses. He said, “Get some sweet-smelling spices. Get some gum resin, onycha and galbanum. Also get some pure frankincense. Make sure everything is in equal amounts.

[35]“Have a person who makes perfume mix it all up into a sweet-smelling incense. It must have salt in it. It will be pure and sacred. [36]Grind some of it into powder. Place it in front of the tablets of the covenant in the Tent of Meeting. There I will meet with you. The incense will be very holy to you.

[37]“Do not make any incense for yourselves in the same way. Think of it as holy to me. [38]Anyone who makes incense in the same way to enjoy its sweet smell must be cut off from his people.”

Bezalel and Oholiab

Exodus 31

[1]Then the LORD spoke to Moses. [2]He said, “I have chosen Bezalel, the son of Uri. Uri is the son of Hur. Bezalel is from the tribe of Judah. [3]I have filled him with the Spirit of God. I have filled him with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts. [4]He can make beautiful patterns in gold, silver and bronze. [5]He can cut and set stones. He can work with wood. In fact, he can work in all kinds of crafts.

[6]“I have also appointed Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, to help him. Oholiab is from the tribe of Dan.

“I have given ability to all of the skilled workers. They can make everything I have commanded you to make. Here is the complete list.

[7]“the Tent of Meeting
the ark where the tablets of the covenant are kept
the cover for the ark
[8]the table for the holy bread and its articles
the pure gold lampstand and everything that is used with it
the altar for burning incense
[9]the altar for burnt offerings and all of its tools
the large bowl with its stand
[10]the sacred clothes for Aaron the priest
the clothes for his sons when they serve as priests
[11]the anointing oil
the sweet-smelling incense for the Holy Room

“The skilled workers must make them just as I commanded you.”

The Sabbath Day

12Then the LORD spoke to Moses. 13He said, “Tell the people of Israel, ‘You must always keep my Sabbath days. That will be the sign of the covenant I have made between me and you for all time to come. Then you will know that I am the LORD. I make you holy.

14“ ‘Keep the Sabbath day. It is holy to you. Those who misuse it must be put to death. Those who do any work on that day must be cut off from their people. 15Do your work in six days. But the seventh day is a Sabbath. You must rest on it. It is set apart for me. Those who work on the Sabbath day must be put to death.

16“ ‘The people of Israel must keep the Sabbath. They must celebrate it for all time to come. It will be a covenant that lasts forever. 17It will be the sign of the covenant I have made between me and the people of Israel forever.

“ ‘I made the heavens and the earth in six days. But on the seventh day I did not work. I rested.’ ”

18The LORD finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai. Then he gave him the two tablets of the covenant. They were made out of stone. The words on them were written by the finger of God.

Israel Worships a Golden Calf

Exodus 32

[1]The people saw that Moses took a long time to come down from the mountain. So they gathered around Aaron. They said to him, “Come. Make us a god that will lead us. This fellow Moses brought us up out of Egypt. But we don’t know what has happened to him.”

[2]Aaron answered them, “Take the gold earrings off your wives, your sons and your daughters. Bring the earrings to me.”

[3]So all of the people took off their earrings. They brought them to Aaron. [4]He took what they gave him and made it into a metal statue of a god. It looked like a calf. He shaped it with a tool.

Then the people said, “Israel, here is your god who brought you up out of Egypt.”

[5]When Aaron saw it, he built an altar in front of the calf. He said, “Tomorrow will be a feast day in the LORD’s honor.”

[6]So the next day the people got up early. They sacrificed burnt offerings and brought friendship offerings. They sat down to eat and drink. Then they got up to dance wildly in front of their god.

[7]The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, “Go down. Your people you brought up out of Egypt have become very sinful. [8]They have quickly turned away from what I commanded them. They have made themselves a statue of a god that looks like a calf. They have bowed down and sacrificed to it. And they have said, ‘Israel, here is your god who brought you up out of Egypt.’

[9]“I have seen those people,” the LORD said to Moses. “They are stubborn. [10]Now leave me alone. My anger will burn against them. I will destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation.”

[11]But Moses asked the LORD his God to show favor to the people. “LORD,” he said, “why should your anger burn against your people? You used your great power and mighty hand to bring them out of Egypt. [12]Why should the Egyptians say, ‘He brought them out to hurt them. He wanted to kill them in

the mountains. He wanted to wipe them off the face of the earth’? Turn away from your burning anger. Please take pity on your people. Don’t destroy them!

13“Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel. You made a promise. You took an oath in your name. You said, ‘I will make your children after you as many as the stars in the sky. I will give them all of this land I promised them. It will belong to them forever.’ ”

14Then the LORD took pity on his people. He didn’t destroy them as he had said he would.

15Moses turned and went down the mountain. He had the two tablets of the covenant in his hands. Words were written on both sides of the tablets, front and back. 16The tablets were the work of God. The words had been written by God. They had been carved on the tablets.

17Joshua heard the noise of the people shouting. So he said to Moses, “It sounds like war in the camp.”

18Moses replied,

> “It’s not the sound of winning.
> It’s not the sound of losing.
> It’s the sound of singing that I hear.”

19As Moses approached the camp, he saw the calf. He also saw the people dancing. So he burned with anger. He threw the tablets out of his hands. They broke into pieces at the foot of the mountain.

20He took the calf the people had made. He burned it in the fire. Then he ground it into powder. He scattered it on the water. And he made the people of Israel drink it.

21He said to Aaron, “What did these people do to you? How did they make you lead them into such terrible sin?”

22“Please don’t be angry,” Aaron answered. “You know how these people like to do what is evil. 23They said to me, ‘Make us a god that will lead us. This fellow Moses brought us up out of Egypt. But we don’t know what has happened to him.’

24“So I told them, ‘Anyone who has any gold jewelry, take it off.’ They gave me the gold. I threw it into the fire. And out came this calf!”

25 Moses saw that the people were running wild. Aaron had let them get out of
control. The people had become a joke to their enemies.

26 Moses stood at the entrance to the camp. He said, “Anyone who is on the
LORD’s side, come to me.” All of the Levites joined him.

27 Then he spoke to them. He said, “The LORD, the God of Israel, says, ‘Each
man must put on his sword. Then he must go back and forth through the camp
from one end to the other. Each man must kill his brother, friend and
neighbor.’ ” 28 The Levites did as Moses commanded. About 3,000 of the
people died that day. 29 Then Moses said to the Levites, “You have been set
apart for the LORD today. You stood against your own sons and brothers. And
he has blessed you this day.”

30 The next day Moses said to the people, “You have committed a terrible sin.
But now I will go up to the LORD. Maybe if I pray to him, he will forgive your
sin.”

31 So Moses went back to the LORD. He said, “These people have committed a
terrible sin. They have made a god out of gold for themselves. 32 Now please
forgive their sin. But if you won’t, then erase my name from the scroll you
have written.”

33 The LORD replied to Moses, “I will erase from my scroll only the names of
those who have sinned against me. 34 Now go. Lead the people to the place I
spoke about. My angel will go ahead of you. But when the time comes for me
to punish, I will punish them for their sin.”

35 The LORD struck the people with a plague. That’s because of what they did
with the calf Aaron had made.

Exodus 33

[1]Then the LORD spoke to Moses. He said, “Leave this place. You and the
people you brought up out of Egypt must leave it. Go up to the land I promised
with an oath to give to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I said to them, ‘I will give it
to your children after you.’ [2]I will send an angel ahead of you. I will drive out
the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites.

[3]“Go up to the land that has plenty of milk and honey. But I will not go with
you. You are stubborn. I might destroy you on the way.”

[4]When the people heard those painful words, they became sad and began to
sob. No one put on any jewelry.

[5]The LORD had said to Moses, “Tell the people of Israel, ‘You are stubborn. If
I went with you even for a moment, I might destroy you. Now take off your
jewelry. Then I will decide what to do with you.’ ” [6]So the people took off their
jewelry at Mount Horeb.

The Tent of Meeting

[7]Moses used to take a tent and set it up far outside the camp. He called it the
“tent of meeting.” Anyone who wanted to ask the LORD a question would go to
the tent of meeting that was outside the camp. [8]When Moses would go out to
the tent, all of the people would get up and stand at the entrances to their tents.
They would watch Moses until he entered the tent.

[9]As Moses would go into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down. It
would stay at the entrance while the LORD spoke with Moses. [10]The people
would see the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance to the tent. Then all of
them would stand and worship at the entrances to their tents.

[11]The LORD would speak to Moses face to face. It was like a man speaking to
his friend. Then Moses would return to the camp.

But Joshua, his young helper, didn’t leave the tent. Joshua was the son of
Nun.

The LORD Shows Moses His Glory

12 Moses said to the LORD, “You have been telling me, ‘Lead these people.’
But you haven’t let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, ‘I
know your name. I know all about you. And I am pleased with you.’ 13 If you
are pleased with me, teach me more about yourself. Then I can know you. And
I can continue to please you. Remember that this nation is your people.”

14 The LORD replied, “I will go with you. And I will give you rest.”

15 Then Moses said to him, “If you don’t go with us, don’t send us up from
here. 16 How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and your people?
You must go with us. How else will we be different from all of the other people
on the face of the earth?”

17 The LORD said to Moses, “I will do exactly what you have asked. I am
pleased with you. And I know your name. I know all about you.”

18 Then Moses said, “Now show me your glory.”

19 The LORD said, “I will make all of my goodness pass in front of you. And I
will announce my name, The LORD, in front of you. I will have mercy on whom
I have mercy. And I will show love to those I love. 20 But you can’t see my
face,” he said. “No one can see me and stay alive.”

21 The LORD continued, “There is a place near me where you can stand on a
rock. 22 When my glory passes by, I will put you in an opening in the rock. I
will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. 23 Then I will remove my
hand. You will see my back. But my face must not be seen.”

The New Stone Tablets

Exodus 34

1 The LORD said to Moses, “Cut out two stone tablets that are just like the first
ones. I will write on them the words that were on the first tablets, which you
broke.

2 “Be ready in the morning. Then come up on Mount Sinai. Meet with me
there on top of the mountain. 3 No one must come with you. No one must be
seen anywhere on the mountain. Not even the flocks and herds must be
allowed to eat grass in front of the mountain.”

4 So Moses carved out two stone tablets that were just like the first ones. Early
in the morning he went up Mount Sinai. He carried the two tablets in his hands.
He did as the LORD had commanded him to do.

5 Then the LORD came down in the cloud. He stood there with Moses and
announced his name, The LORD.

6 As he passed in front of Moses, he called out. He said, “I am the LORD, the
LORD. I am a God who is tender and kind. I am gracious. I am slow to get
angry. I am faithful and full of love. 7 I continue to show my love to thousands
of people. I forgive those who do evil. I forgive those who refuse to obey. And
I forgive those who sin. But I do not let guilty people go without punishing
them. I punish the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren for the sin
of their parents.”

8 Moses bowed down to the ground at once and worshiped. 9 “Lord,” he said,
“if you are pleased with me, then go with us. Even though these people are
stubborn, forgive the evil things we have done. Forgive our sin. And accept us
as your people.”

10 Then the LORD said, “I am making a covenant with you. I will do wonderful
things in front of all of your people. I will do miracles that have never been
done before in any nation in the whole world. The people you live among will
see the things that I, the LORD, will do for you. And they will see how
wonderful those things really are.

11“Obey what I command you today. I will drive out the Amorites, Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites to make room for you.

12“Be careful. Do not make a peace treaty with those who live in the land where you are going. They will be a trap to you. 13Tear down their altars. Smash their sacred stones. Cut down the poles they use to worship the goddess Asherah. 14Do not worship any other god. I am a jealous God. In fact, my name is Jealous.

15“Be careful not to make a peace treaty with those who live in the land. They commit sin by offering sacrifices to their gods. They will invite you to eat their sacrifices. 16You will choose some of their daughters as wives for your sons. And those daughters will commit sin by worshiping their gods. Then they will lead your sons to do the same thing.

17“Do not make statues of gods.

18“Celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread. For seven days eat bread that is made without yeast, just as I commanded you. Do it at the appointed time in the month of Abib. You came out of Egypt in that month.

19“Every male animal that is born first to its mother belongs to me. That includes your livestock. It includes herds and flocks alike. 20Sacrifice a lamb to buy back every male donkey that is born first to its mother. But if you do not buy the donkey back, break its neck. Buy back every oldest son.

“You must not come to worship me with your hands empty.

21“Do your work in six days. But you must rest on the seventh day. Even when you are plowing your land or gathering your crops, you must rest on the seventh day.

22“Celebrate the Feast of Weeks. Bring the first share of your wheat crop.

“Celebrate the Feast of Booths. Hold it in the fall.

23“Three times a year all of your men must come to worship me. I am your LORD and King, the God of Israel. 24I will drive out nations ahead of you. I will increase your territory. Go up three times a year to worship me. While you are doing that, I will keep others from wanting to take any of your land for themselves. I am the LORD your God.

25“Do not include anything that is made with yeast when you offer me the blood of a sacrifice. You must not keep any of the meat from the sacrifice of the Passover Feast until morning.

[26]“Bring the best of the first share of your crops to my house. I am the LORD your God.

“Do not cook a young goat in its mother’s milk.”

[27]Then the LORD said to Moses, “Write down the words I have spoken. I have made a covenant with you and with Israel in keeping with those words.”

[28]Moses was there with the LORD for 40 days and 40 nights. He didn’t eat any food or drink any water. The LORD wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant. Those words are the Ten Commandments.

The Face of Moses Shines

[29]Moses came down from Mount Sinai. He had the two tablets of the covenant in his hands. His face was shining because he had spoken with the LORD. But he didn’t realize it. [30]Aaron and all of the people of Israel saw Moses. His face was shining. So they were afraid to come near him.

[31]But Moses called out to them. So Aaron and all of the leaders of the community came to him. And Moses spoke to them. [32]After that, all of the people came near him. And he gave them all of the commands the LORD had given him on Mount Sinai.

[33]Moses finished speaking to them. Then he put a veil over his face. [34]But when he would go to speak with the LORD, he would remove the veil. He would keep it off until he came out. Then he would tell the people what the LORD had commanded. [35]They would see that his face was shining. So Moses would put the veil back over his face. He would keep it on until he went in again to speak with the LORD.

Rules for the Sabbath Day

Exodus 35

1 Moses gathered the whole community of Israel together. He said to them,
"Here are the things the LORD has commanded you to do. 2 You must do your
work in six days. But the seventh day will be your holy day. It will be a
Sabbath in the LORD's honor. You must rest on it. Anyone who does any work
on it must be put to death. 3 Do not even light a fire in any of your homes on the
Sabbath day."

Supplies for the Holy Tent

4 Moses spoke to the whole community of Israel. He said, "Here is what the
LORD has commanded. 5 Take an offering for the LORD from what you have.
Those who want to can bring an offering to the LORD. Here is what they can
bring.

"gold, silver and bronze
6 blue, purple and bright red yarn and fine linen
goat hair
7 ram skins that are dyed red
the hides of sea cows
acacia wood
8 olive oil for the lights
spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet-smelling incense
9 onyx stones and other jewels for the linen apron and the chest cloth

10 "All of the skilled workers among you must come. They must make
everything the LORD has commanded 11 for the holy tent and its covering. Here
is what they must make.

“hooks
frames
crossbars
posts
bases

12 the ark of the covenant

the poles and cover for the ark
the curtain that screens the ark

13 the table for the holy bread

the poles and all of the articles for the table
the holy bread

14 the lampstand for light and everything that is used with it

the lamps and the olive oil that gives light

15 the altar for burning incense

the poles for the altar
the anointing oil
the sweet-smelling incense
the curtain for the entrance to the holy tent

16 the altar for burnt offerings with its bronze grate

its poles and all of its tools
the large bronze bowl with its stand

17 the curtains of the courtyard with their posts and bases

the curtain for the entrance to the courtyard

18 the ropes and tent stakes for the holy tent and for the courtyard

19 the sacred clothes for Aaron the priest

the clothes for his sons when they serve as priests”

20 Then the whole community of Israel left Moses. 21 Everyone who wanted to give offerings to the LORD brought them to him. The offerings were for the work on the Tent of Meeting, for the sacred clothes, and for any other purpose there.

22 Every man and woman who wanted to give came. They brought gold jewelry of all kinds. They brought pins, earrings, rings and other jewelry. All of them gave their gold as a wave offering to the LORD.

[23]People brought what they had. They brought blue, purple or bright red yarn or fine linen. They brought goat hair, ram skins that were dyed red, or the hides of sea cows. [24]Some brought silver or bronze as an offering to the LORD. Others brought acacia wood for any part of the work.

[25]All of the skilled women spun yarn with their hands. They brought blue, purple or bright red yarn or fine linen. [26]All of the skilled women who wanted to spin the goat hair did so.

[27]The leaders brought onyx stones and other jewels for the linen apron and the chest cloth. [28]They also brought spices and olive oil. They brought them for the light, for the anointing oil, and for the sweet-smelling incense.

[29]All of the men and women of Israel who wanted to bring offerings to the LORD brought them to him. The offerings were for all of the work the LORD had commanded Moses to tell them to do.

Bezalel and Oholiab

[30]Then Moses spoke to the people of Israel. He said, “The LORD has chosen Bezalel, the son of Uri. Uri is the son of Hur. Bezalel is from the tribe of Judah. [31]The LORD has filled him with the Spirit of God. He has filled him with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts. [32]He can make beautiful patterns in gold, silver and bronze. [33]He can cut and set stones. He can work with wood. In fact, he can work in all kinds of arts and crafts.

[34]“And the LORD has given both him and Oholiab the ability to teach others. Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, is from the tribe of Dan.

[35]“The LORD has filled them with skill to do all kinds of work. They carve things and make patterns. They sew skillfully with blue, purple and bright red yarn and on fine linen. They use thread to make beautiful cloth. They have the skill to work in all kinds of crafts.

Exodus 36

[1]Bezalel and Oholiab must do the work just as the LORD has commanded. So must every skilled worker to whom the LORD has given skill and ability. They must know how to do all of the work for every purpose connected with the sacred tent. And that includes setting it up.”

[2]Then Moses sent for Bezalel and Oholiab. He sent for every skilled worker to whom the LORD had given ability and who wanted to come and do the work.

[3]They received from Moses all of the offerings the people of Israel had brought. They had brought the offerings for all of the work for every purpose connected with the holy tent. That included setting it up. The people kept bringing the offerings they chose to give. They brought them morning after morning.

[4]So all of the skilled workers who were working on the holy tent stopped what they were doing. [5]They said to Moses, “The people are bringing more than enough for doing the work the LORD commanded us to do.”

[6]Then Moses gave an order. A message was sent through the whole camp. It said, “No man or woman should make anything else and offer it for the holy tent.” And so the people were kept from bringing more offerings. [7]There was already more than enough to do all of the work.

The Holy Tent

[8]All of the skilled workers made the holy tent. They made ten curtains out of finely twisted linen. They made them with blue, purple and bright red yarn. A skilled worker sewed cherubim into the pattern. [9]All of the curtains were the same size. They were 42 feet long and six feet wide.

[10]The workers joined five of the curtains together. They did the same thing with the other five. [11]Then they made loops out of blue strips of cloth along the edge of the end curtain in one set. They did the same thing with the end curtain in the other set. [12]They also made 50 loops on the end curtain of the one set. They did the same thing on the end curtain of the other set. They put the loops

across from each other. [13]Then they made 50 gold hooks. They used them to join curtains together so that the holy tent was all one piece.

[14]The workers made a total of 11 curtains out of goat hair to put over the holy tent. [15]All 11 curtains were the same size. They were 45 feet long and six feet wide.

[16]The workers joined five of the curtains together into one set. They did the same thing with the other six. [17]Then they made 50 loops along the edge of the end curtain in the one set. They did the same thing with the other set. [18]They made 50 bronze hooks. They used them to join the tent together all in one piece. [19]They made a covering for the tent. They made it out of ram skins that were dyed red. They put a covering of the hides of sea cows over that.

[20]The workers made frames out of acacia wood for the holy tent. [21]Each frame was 15 feet long and two feet three inches wide. [22]The workers added two small wooden pins to each frame. The pins stuck out so that they were even with each other. The workers made all of the frames of the holy tent in the same way.

[23]They made 20 frames for the south side of the holy tent. [24]And they made 40 silver bases to go under them. They made two bases for each frame. They put one under each pin that stuck out.

[25]For the north side of the holy tent they made 20 frames [26]and 40 silver bases. They put two bases under each frame.

[27]The workers made six frames for the west end of the holy tent. [28]They made two frames for the corners of the holy tent at the far end. [29]At those two corners the frames were double from top to bottom. They were fitted into a single ring. The workers made both of them the same. [30]So there were eight frames and 16 silver bases. There were two bases under each frame.

[31]The workers also made crossbars out of acacia wood. They made five for the frames on one side of the holy tent. [32]They made five for the frames on the other side. And they made five for the frames on the west, at the far end of the holy tent. [33]The center crossbar reached from end to end at the middle of the frames.

[34]They covered the frames with gold. They made gold rings to hold the crossbars. They also covered the crossbars with gold.

[35]They made the curtain out of blue, purple and bright red yarn and finely

twisted linen. A skilled worker sewed cherubim into the pattern. [36]The workers made four posts out of acacia wood for the curtain. They covered the posts with gold. They made gold hooks and four silver bases for the posts.

[37]For the entrance to the tent the workers made a curtain out of blue, purple and bright red yarn and finely twisted linen. A person who sewed skillfully made it. [38]The workers made five posts with hooks for the curtains. They covered the tops of the posts and their bands with gold. And they made five bronze bases for them.

The Ark of the Covenant

Exodus 37

[1]Bezalel made the ark of the covenant out of acacia wood. It was three feet
nine inches long and two feet three inches wide and high. [2]He covered it inside
and outside with pure gold. He put a strip of gold around it.

[3]He made four gold rings for it. He joined them to its four bottom corners. He
put two rings on one side and two rings on the other.

[4]Then he made poles out of acacia wood. He covered them with gold. [5]He put
the poles through the rings on the sides of the ark to carry it.

[6]He made its cover out of pure gold. It was three feet nine inches long and
two feet three inches wide. The cover is the place where sin is paid for.

[7]He made two cherubim out of hammered gold at the ends of the cover. [8]He
put one cherub on each end of it. [9]He made the cherubim as part of the cover
itself. The cherubim's wings spread up over the cover. The cherubim faced
each other and looked toward the cover.

The Table for the Holy Bread

[10]The workers made the table out of acacia wood. It was three feet long, one
foot six inches wide and two feet three inches high. [11]They covered it with pure
gold. They put a strip of gold around it. [12]They also made a rim three inches
wide around it. They put a strip of gold around the rim.

[13]They made four gold rings for the table. They joined them to the four
corners, where the four legs were. [14]The rings were close to the rim. They held
the poles that were used to carry the table.

[15]The workers made the poles out of acacia wood. They covered them with
gold.

[16]They made plates, dishes and bowls out of pure gold for the table. They
also made pure gold pitchers to pour out drink offerings.

The Gold Lampstand

17The workers made the lampstand out of pure gold. They hammered out its
base and stem. Its buds, blooms and cups branched out from it.

18Six branches came out from the sides of the lampstand. There were three on
one side and three on the other. 19On one branch there were three cups that
were shaped like almond flowers with buds and blooms. There were three on
the next branch. There were three on all six branches that came out from the
lampstand.

20On the lampstand there were four cups that were shaped like almond
flowers with buds and blooms. 21One bud was under the first pair of branches
that came out from the lampstand. A second bud was under the second pair.
And a third bud was under the third pair. There was a total of six branches.
22The buds and branches came out from the lampstand.

The whole lampstand was one piece that was hammered out of pure gold.

23The workers made its seven lamps out of pure gold. They also made its
trays and wick cutters out of pure gold. 24They used 75 pounds of pure gold to
make the lampstand and everything that was used with it.

The Altar for Burning Incense

25The workers made an altar for burning incense. They made it out of acacia
wood. It was one foot six inches square and three feet high. A horn stuck out
from each of its upper four corners. 26The workers covered the top, sides and
horns with pure gold. They put a strip of gold around it.

27They made two gold rings below the strip. They put the rings across from
each other. The rings held the poles that were used to carry it. 28The workers
made the poles out of acacia wood. They covered them with gold.

29They also made the sacred anointing oil and the pure, sweet-smelling
incense. A person who makes perfume made them.

The Altar for Burnt Offerings

Exodus 38

[1]The workers made the altar for burnt offerings out of acacia wood. It was four feet six inches high and seven feet six inches square. [2]They made a horn stick out from each of its four upper corners. They covered the altar with bronze.

[3]They made all of its tools out of bronze. They made its pots, shovels, sprinkling bowls, meat forks, and pans for carrying ashes.

[4]They made a bronze grate for the altar. They put the grate halfway up the altar on the inside. [5]They made a bronze ring for each of the four corners of the grate.

[6]They made poles out of acacia wood. They covered them with bronze. [7]They put the poles through the rings. The poles were on two sides of the altar for carrying it.

The workers made the altar out of boards. They made it hollow.

The Large Bowl for Washing

[8]The workers made the large bronze bowl and its bronze stand. They made them out of the bronze mirrors that belonged to the women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.

The Courtyard

[9]Next, the workers made the courtyard. The south side was 150 feet long. It had curtains that were made out of finely twisted linen. [10]The curtains had 20 posts and 20 bronze bases. The posts had silver hooks and bands on them.

[11]The north side was also 150 feet long. Its curtains had 20 posts and 20

bronze bases. The posts had silver hooks and bands on them.

12The west end was 75 feet wide. It had curtains with ten posts and ten bases. The posts had silver hooks and bands on them.

13The east end, toward the sunrise, was also 75 feet wide. 14Curtains that were 22 feet six inches long were on one side of the entrance. They were hung on three posts. Each post had a base. 15Curtains that were 22 feet six inches long were also on the other side of the entrance to the courtyard. They were hung on three posts. Each post had a base.

16All of the curtains that were around the courtyard were made out of finely twisted linen. 17The bases for the posts were made out of bronze. The hooks and bands that were on the posts were made out of silver. Their tops were covered with silver. So all of the posts of the courtyard had silver bands.

18The curtain for the entrance to the courtyard was made out of blue, purple and bright red yarn and finely twisted linen. A person who sewed skillfully made it. It was 30 feet long. Like the curtains of the courtyard, it was seven feet six inches high. 19It had four posts and four bronze bases. Their hooks and bands were made out of silver. Their tops were covered with silver.

20All of the tent stakes of the holy tent were made out of bronze. So were all of the stakes of the courtyard that was around it.

The Amounts of the Metals Used

21Here are the amounts of the metals that were used for the holy tent, where the tablets of the covenant were kept. Moses commanded the Levites to record the amounts. The Levites did the work under the direction of Ithamar. Ithamar was the son of the priest Aaron.

22Bezalel, the son of Uri, made everything the LORD had commanded Moses. Uri was the son of Hur. Bezalel was from the tribe of Judah. 23Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, helped Bezalel. Oholiab was from the tribe of Dan. He could carve things and make patterns. And he could sew skillfully with blue, purple and bright red yarn and on fine linen.

24The total weight of the gold from the wave offering was more than a ton. It was weighed out in keeping with the standard weights that are used in the sacred tent. The gold was used for all of the work that was done in connection

with the sacred tent.

[25]The silver that was received from the men in the community who were listed and counted weighed four tons. It was weighed out in keeping with the weights used in the sacred tent. [26]It amounted to a fifth of an ounce for each person. It was weighed out in keeping with the weights used in the sacred tent. The silver was received from the men who had been listed and counted. All of them were 20 years old or more. Their total number was 603,550.

[27]The four tons of silver were used to make the bases for the holy tent and for the curtain. The 100 bases were made from the four tons. Each base used more than 75 pounds of silver. [28]The workers used 45 pounds to make the hooks for the posts, to cover the tops of the posts, and to make their bands.

[29]The bronze from the wave offering weighed two and a half tons. [30]The workers used some of it to make the bases for the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. They used some for the bronze altar for burnt offerings and its bronze grate and all of its tools. [31]They used some for the bases for the courtyard that was around the holy tent. They used some for the bases for the courtyard entrance. And they used the rest to make all of the tent stakes for the holy tent and the courtyard that was around it.

The Clothes for the Priests

Exodus 39

[1]The workers made clothes from the blue, purple and bright red yarn. The clothes were worn by those who served in the holy tent. The workers also made sacred clothes for Aaron. They made them just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

The Linen Apron

[2]The workers made the linen apron out of fine gold wire, and out of blue, purple and bright red yarn, and out of finely twisted linen. [3]They hammered out thin sheets of gold. They cut it into fine wire. They sewed it into the blue, purple and bright red yarn and fine linen. A skilled worker made it. [4]The workers made shoulder straps for the apron. The straps were joined to two of its corners.

[5]Its skillfully made waistband was made like it. The waistband was part of the apron itself. It was made out of fine gold wire, and out of blue, purple and bright red yarn, and out of finely twisted linen. The workers made it just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

[6]They put the onyx stones in fancy gold settings. They carved the names of the sons of Israel on them. They did it the way a person carves a seal. [7]Then they connected them to the shoulder straps of the linen apron. The stones stood for the sons of Israel and were a reminder for them. The workers did those things just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

The Chest Cloth

[8]Skilled workers made the chest cloth. They made it like the linen apron. They used fine gold wire, and blue, purple and bright red yarn, and finely

twisted linen. [9]The chest cloth was nine inches square. It was folded in half.

[10]They put four rows of valuable jewels on it. A ruby, a topaz and a beryl were in the first row. [11]A turquoise, a sapphire and an emerald were in the second row. [12]A jacinth, an agate and an amethyst were in the third row. [13]And a chrysolite, an onyx and a jasper were in the fourth row. The workers put them in fancy gold settings.

[14]They used a total of 12 stones. There was one stone for each of the names of the sons of Israel. Each stone was carved like a seal with the name of one of the 12 tribes.

[15]The workers made braided chains out of pure gold for the chest cloth. They made them like ropes. [16]They made two fancy gold settings and two gold rings. They connected them to two corners of the chest cloth. [17]They joined the two gold chains to the rings at the corners of the chest cloth. [18]They joined the other ends of the chains to the two settings. They joined them to the shoulder straps on the front of the linen apron.

[19]The workers made two gold rings. They connected them to the other two corners of the chest cloth. They put them on the inside edge next to the apron. [20]They made two more gold rings. They connected them to the bottom of the shoulder straps on the front of the apron. They put them close to the seam right above the waistband of the apron. [21]They tied the rings of the chest cloth to the rings of the apron with blue cord. That connected it to the waistband. Then the chest cloth would not swing out from the linen apron. The workers did those things just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

More Clothes for the Priests

[22]The workers made the outer robe of the linen apron completely from blue cloth. The cloth was made by a skillful person. [23]The workers made an opening like a collar in the center of the robe. They made an edge around the opening. Then it couldn’t tear.

[24]They made pomegranates out of blue, purple and bright red yarn and finely twisted linen. They sewed them around the hem of the robe.

[25]They made bells out of pure gold. They sewed them around the hem between the pomegranates. [26]They sewed a bell between every two

pomegranates all around the hem of the robe. Aaron had to wear the robe when he served as priest. That's what the LORD commanded Moses.

27The workers made inner robes out of fine linen for Aaron and his sons. The linen cloth was made by a skillful person. 28The workers also made the turban out of fine linen. And they made the headbands and the underwear out of finely twisted linen. 29The belt was made out of finely twisted linen and blue, purple and bright red yarn. A person who sewed skillfully made it. The workers did those things just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

30They made the plate out of pure gold. It was a sacred crown. They carved words on it as if it were a seal. They carved the words SET APART FOR THE LORD. 31Then they tied the plate to the turban with a blue cord. They did those things just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

The Holy Tent Is Completed

32So all of the work on the holy tent, the Tent of Meeting, was completed. The people of Israel did everything just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

33Then they brought the holy tent to Moses along with everything that belonged to it. Here are the things they brought.

hooks
frames
crossbars
posts
bases

34the covering of ram skins that were dyed red
the covering of the hides of sea cows
the curtain that screens the ark

35the ark where the tablets of the covenant are kept
the poles and cover for the ark

36the table for the holy bread with all of its articles
the holy bread

37the pure gold lampstand with its row of lamps and everything that is used with it

the olive oil that gives light

38 the gold altar for burning incense

the anointing oil
the sweet-smelling incense
the curtain for the entrance to the tent

39 the bronze altar for burnt offerings with its bronze grate

its poles and all of its tools
the large bowl with its stand

40 the curtains of the courtyard with their posts and bases

the curtain for the entrance to the courtyard
the ropes and tent stakes for the courtyard

41 the sacred clothes for the priest Aaron

the clothes for his sons when they serve as priests

42 The people of Israel had done all of the work just as the LORD had commanded Moses. 43 Moses looked over the work carefully. He saw that the workers had done it just as the LORD had commanded. So Moses gave them his blessing.

Moses Sets Up the Holy Tent

Exodus 40

[1]Then the LORD said to Moses, [2]“Set up the holy tent, the Tent of Meeting. Set it up on the first day of the first month.

[3]“Place in it the ark where the tablets of the covenant are kept. Screen the ark with the curtain. [4]Bring in the table for the holy bread. Arrange the loaves of bread on it. Then bring in the lampstand. Set up its lamps. [5]Place the gold altar for burning incense in front of the ark where the tablets of the covenant are kept. Put up the curtain at the entrance to the holy tent.

[6]“Place the altar for burnt offerings in front of the entrance to the holy tent, the Tent of Meeting. [7]Place the large bowl between the Tent of Meeting and the altar. Put water in the bowl.

[8]“Set up the courtyard around the holy tent. Put the curtain at the entrance to the courtyard.

[9]“Get the anointing oil. Anoint the holy tent and everything that is in it. Set apart the holy tent and everything that belongs to it. Then it will be holy. [10]Anoint the altar for burnt offerings and all of its tools. Set the altar apart. Then it will be a very holy place. [11]Anoint the large bowl and its stand. Set them apart.

[12]“Bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. Wash them with water. [13]Dress Aaron in the sacred clothes. Anoint him and set him apart. Then he will be able to serve me as priest.

[14]“Bring his sons and dress them in their inner robes. [15]Anoint them just as you anointed their father. Then they will be able to serve me as priests. They will be anointed to do the work of priests. That work will last for all time to come.”

[16]Moses did everything just as the LORD had commanded him.

[17]So the holy tent was set up. It was the first day of the first month in the second year. [18]Moses set up the holy tent. He put the bases in place. He put the

frames in them. He put in the crossbars. He set up the posts. [19]He spread the holy tent over the frames. Then he put the coverings over the tent. Moses did it as the LORD had commanded him.

[20]He got the tablets of the covenant. He placed them in the ark. He put the poles through its rings. And he put the cover on it. The cover was the place where sin is paid for. [21]Moses brought the ark into the holy tent. He hung the curtain to screen the ark where the tablets of the covenant are kept. Moses did it as the LORD had commanded him.

[22]He placed the table for the holy bread in the Tent of Meeting. It was on the north side of the holy tent outside the curtain. [23]He arranged the loaves of bread on it in the sight of the LORD. Moses did it as the LORD had commanded him.

[24]He placed the lampstand in the Tent of Meeting. It stood across from the table on the south side of the holy tent. [25]He set up the lamps in the sight of the LORD. Moses did it as the LORD had commanded him.

[26]He placed the gold altar for burning incense in the Tent of Meeting. He placed it in front of the curtain. [27]He burned sweet-smelling incense on it. Moses did it as the LORD had commanded him.

[28]Then he put up the curtain at the entrance to the holy tent.

[29]He set the altar for burnt offerings near the entrance to the holy tent, the Tent of Meeting. He sacrificed burnt offerings and grain offerings on it. Moses did it as the LORD had commanded him.

[30]He placed the large bowl between the Tent of Meeting and the altar. He put water in the bowl for washing. [31]Moses and Aaron and his sons used it to wash their hands and feet. [32]They washed when they entered the Tent of Meeting or approached the altar. They did it as the LORD had commanded Moses.

[33]Then Moses set up the courtyard around the holy tent and altar. He put up the curtain at the entrance to the courtyard. And so Moses completed the work.

The Glory of the LORD

[34]Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting. The glory of the LORD filled the holy tent. [35]Moses couldn’t enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud

had settled on it. The glory of the LORD filled the holy tent.

[36]The people of Israel continued their travels. When the cloud lifted from above the holy tent, they started out. [37]But if the cloud didn’t lift, they did not start out. They stayed until the day it lifted.

[38]So the cloud of the LORD was above the holy tent during the day. Fire was in the cloud at night. The whole community of Israel could see the cloud during all of their travels.

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Rules for Burnt Offerings

Leviticus 1

1The LORD called out to Moses. He spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting.
He said, 2"Speak to the people of Israel. Tell them, 'Suppose any one of you
brings an offering to the LORD. You must bring an animal from your herd or
flock.

3" 'If a man brings a burnt offering from the herd, he must offer a male
animal. It must not have any flaws. He must bring it to the entrance to the Tent
of Meeting. Then the LORD will accept it.

4" 'The man must place his hand on the head of the burnt offering. Then the
LORD will accept it in place of him. It will pay for his sin. 5The young bull must
be killed there in the sight of the LORD.

" 'Then the priests who are in Aaron's family line must bring its blood to the
altar. They must sprinkle it against every side of the altar. The altar stands at
the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.

6" 'The skin must be removed from the animal that is brought for the burnt
offering. Then the animal must be cut into pieces.

7" 'The priests who are in Aaron's family line must build a fire on the altar.
They must place wood on the fire. 8Then they must place the pieces of the
animal on the burning wood on the altar. The pieces include the head and the
fat.

9" 'The inside parts of the animal must be washed with water. The legs must
also be washed. The priest must burn all of it on the altar.

" 'It is a burnt offering. It is an offering that is made with fire. It gives a smell
that is pleasant to the LORD.

10" 'If the offering is a burnt offering from the flock, it must be a male
animal. It can be a sheep or a goat. It must not have any flaws.

11" 'It must be killed at the north side of the altar in the sight of the LORD. The
priests who are in Aaron's family line must sprinkle its blood against every
side of the altar.

12“ ‘The animal must be cut into pieces. The priest must place them on the burning wood on the altar. The pieces include the head and the fat.

13“ ‘The inside parts must be washed with water. The legs must also be washed. The priest must bring all of it to the altar. He must burn it there.

“ ‘It is a burnt offering. It is an offering that is made with fire. It gives a smell that is pleasant to the LORD.

14“ ‘If the offering to the LORD is a burnt offering of birds, it must be a dove or a young pigeon.

15“ ‘The priest must bring it to the altar. He must twist its head off. Then he must burn the rest of the bird on the altar. Its blood must be emptied out on the side of the altar.

16“ ‘The priest must remove the small bag inside the bird’s throat. He must also remove what is in the bag. Then he must throw all of it to the east side of the altar. That is where the ashes are. 17He must take hold of the wings of the bird and tear it open. But he must not tear it in two. Then the priest will burn it on the wood that is on the fire on the altar.

“ ‘It is a burnt offering. It is an offering that is made with fire. It gives a smell that is pleasant to the LORD.

Rules for Grain Offerings

Leviticus 2

1“ ‘Suppose someone brings a grain offering to the LORD. Then his offering
must be made out of fine flour. He must pour olive oil on it. He must also put
incense on it.

2“ ‘He must take it to the priests who are in Aaron’s family line. A priest must
take a handful of the fine flour and oil. He must mix it with all of the incense.
Then he must burn that part on the altar. It will be a reminder that all good
things come from the LORD. It is an offering that is made with fire. It gives a
smell that is pleasant to the LORD.

3“ ‘The rest of the grain offering belongs to Aaron and to the priests who are
in his family line. It is a very holy part of the offerings that are made to the
LORD with fire.

4“ ‘If you bring a grain offering that is baked in an oven, make it out of fine
flour. It can be flat cakes that are made without yeast. Mix them with olive oil.
Or it can be wafers that are made without yeast. Spread oil on them. 5If your
grain offering is grilled on a metal plate, make it out of fine flour. Mix it with
oil. Make it without yeast. 6Break it into pieces. Pour oil on it. It is a grain
offering. 7If your grain offering is cooked in a pan, make it out of fine flour and
oil.

8“ ‘Bring to the LORD your grain offering that is made out of all of those
things. Give it to the priest. He must take it to the altar. 9He must take out the
part of the grain offering that reminds you that all good things come from the
LORD. He must burn it on the altar. It is an offering that is made with fire. It
gives a smell that is pleasant to the LORD.

10“ ‘The rest of the grain offering belongs to Aaron and the priests who are in
his family line. It is a very holy part of the offerings that are made to the LORD
with fire.

11“ ‘Every grain offering you bring to the LORD must be made without yeast.
You must not burn any yeast or honey in an offering that is made to the LORD
with fire.

12“ ‘You can bring them to the LORD as an offering of the first share of the
food you gather or produce. But they must not be offered on the altar as a
pleasant smell.

13“ ‘Put salt on all of your grain offerings. Salt stands for the lasting covenant
between you and your God. So do not leave it out of your grain offerings. Add
it to all of your offerings.

14“ ‘Suppose you bring to the LORD a grain offering of the first share of your
food. Then offer crushed heads of your first grain that have been cooked in
fire. 15Put olive oil and incense on it. It is a grain offering.

16“ ‘The priest must burn part of the crushed grain and the oil. It will remind
you that all good things come from the LORD. The priest must burn it together
with all of the incense. It is an offering that is made to the LORD with fire.

Rules for Friendship Offerings

Leviticus 3

1“ ‘Suppose someone brings a friendship offering. If he offers an animal from
the herd, it can be either male or female. It must not have any flaws. He must
offer it in the sight of the LORD.
2“ ‘The man must place his hand on the animal’s head. It must be killed at the
entrance to the Tent of Meeting. Then the priests who are in Aaron’s family
line must sprinkle the blood against every side of the altar.
3“ ‘Part of the friendship offering must be given to the LORD as an offering
that is made with fire. It must include all of the fat that covers the inside parts
or is connected to them. 4It must include both kidneys with the fat on them
next to the lower back muscles. It must also include the covering of the liver.
All of it must be removed together with the kidneys.
5“ ‘Then the priests who are in Aaron’s family line must burn it on the altar.
They must burn it on top of the burnt offering on the burning wood.
“ ‘It is an offering that is made with fire. It gives a smell that is pleasant to
the LORD.
6“ ‘If a man brings an animal from the flock as a friendship offering to the
LORD, it can be either male or female. It must not have any flaws. 7If he brings
a lamb, he must offer it in the sight of the LORD. 8The man must place his hand
on the lamb’s head. It must be killed there in front of the Tent of Meeting. Then
the priests who are in Aaron’s family line must sprinkle its blood against every
side of the altar. 9Part of the offering must be brought as a sacrifice that is
made to the LORD with fire. It must include the lamb’s fat and the entire fat tail
cut off close to the backbone. It must include all of the fat that covers the inside
parts or is connected to them. 10It must include both kidneys with the fat on
them next to the lower back muscles. It must also include the covering of the
liver. All of it must be removed together with the kidneys.
11“ ‘Then the priest must burn it on the altar as food. It is an offering that is
made to the LORD with fire.

12“ ‘If a man brings a goat, he must offer it in the sight of the LORD. 13The
man must place his hand on its head. It must be killed there in front of the Tent
of Meeting. Then the priests who are in Aaron’s family line must sprinkle its
blood against every side of the altar.

14“ ‘Part of the offering must be brought as an offering that is made to the
LORD with fire. It must include all of the fat that covers the inside parts or is
connected to them. 15It must include both kidneys with the fat on them next to
the lower back muscles. It must also include the covering of the liver. All of it
must be removed together with the kidneys.

16“ ‘Then the priest must burn it on the altar as food. It is an offering that is
made with fire. It has a pleasant smell. All of the fat belongs to the LORD.

17“ ‘You must not eat any fat or any blood. That is a law that will last for all
time to come. It applies no matter where you live.’ ”

Rules for Sin Offerings

Leviticus 4

1The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, 2"Speak to the people of Israel. Tell them, 'Suppose someone sins without meaning to. And that person does something the LORD commands us not to do.

3" 'Suppose it is the anointed priest who sins. And suppose he brings guilt on the people. Then he must bring a young bull to the LORD. It must not have any flaws. He must bring it as a sin offering for the sin he has committed. 4He must bring the bull to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting in the sight of the LORD. He must place his hand on its head. He must kill it there in the sight of the LORD.

5" 'Then the priest must take some of the bull's blood. He must carry it into the Tent of Meeting. 6He must dip his finger into the blood. He must sprinkle some of it seven times in the sight of the LORD. He must do it in front of the curtain of the Most Holy Room.

7" 'Then the priest must put some of the blood on the horns that stick out from the upper four corners of the altar for burning incense. The incense has a sweet smell. The altar stands in front of the LORD in the Tent of Meeting. The priest must pour out the rest of the bull's blood at the bottom of the altar for burnt offerings. That altar stands at the entrance to the tent.

8" 'He must remove all of the fat from the bull for the sin offering. It includes the fat that covers the inside parts or is connected to them. 9It includes both kidneys with the fat on them next to the lower back muscles. It also includes the covering of the liver. He must remove all of it together with the kidneys. 10He must remove it in the same way the fat is removed from an ox that is sacrificed as a friendship offering. Then the priest must burn all of it on the altar for burnt offerings.

11" 'But the bull's hide must be taken away. So must all of its meat. So must its head and legs. And so must its inside parts and guts. 12In other words, all of the rest of the bull must be taken away. The priest must take it outside the camp. He must take it to a place that is "clean." He must take it to the place

where the ashes are thrown. There he must burn it in a wood fire on a pile of ashes.

13“ ‘Or suppose the whole community of Israel sins without meaning to. They do something the LORD commands us not to do. Even if they are not aware of what they have done, they are guilty.

14“ ‘But suppose they become aware of the sin they have committed. Then they must bring a young bull as a sin offering. They must offer it in front of the Tent of Meeting. 15The elders of the community must place their hands on the bull’s head in the sight of the LORD. The bull must be killed in the sight of the LORD.

16“ ‘Then the anointed priest must take some of the bull’s blood into the Tent of Meeting. 17He must dip his finger into the blood. He must sprinkle it seven times in the sight of the LORD. He must do it in front of the curtain. 18He must put some of the blood on the horns that stick out from the upper four corners of the altar. The altar stands in front of the LORD in the Tent of Meeting. The priest must pour out the rest of the blood at the bottom of the altar for burnt offerings. That altar stands at the entrance to the tent.

19“ ‘He must remove all of the fat from the bull. He must burn it on the altar. 20He must do the same thing with that bull as he did with the bull for the sin offering. When he does, he will pay for the sin of the people. And they will be forgiven.

21“ ‘Then he must take the bull outside the camp. He must burn it just as he burned the first bull. It is the sin offering for the whole community.

22“ ‘Or suppose a leader sins without meaning to. If he disobeys any of the commands of the LORD his God, he is guilty.

23“ ‘But suppose he is made aware of the sin he has committed. Then he must bring an offering. It must be a male goat. It must not have any flaws. 24He must place his hand on the goat’s head. He must kill it. He must do it at the place where the animals for burnt offerings are killed in the sight of the LORD. His offering is a sin offering.

25“ ‘Then the priest must dip his finger into some of the blood of the sin offering. He must put it on the horns that stick out from the upper four corners of the altar for burnt offerings. He must pour out the rest of the blood at the

bottom of the altar.

26“ ‘He must burn all of the fat on the altar. He must burn it in the same way
he burned the fat of the friendship offering. When he does, he will pay for the
sin of the leader. And the leader will be forgiven.

27“ ‘Or suppose someone in the community sins without meaning to. If he
disobeys any of the LORD’s commands, he is guilty.

28“ ‘But suppose he is made aware of the sin he has committed. Then he must
bring an offering for the sin he has committed. It must be a female goat. It must
not have any flaws. 29He must place his hand on the head of the animal for the
sin offering. It must be killed at the place where the animals for burnt offerings
are killed.

30“ ‘Then the priest must dip his finger into some of the blood. He must put it
on the horns that stick out from the upper four corners of the altar for burnt
offerings. He must pour out the rest of the blood at the bottom of the altar.

31“ ‘He must remove all of the fat in the same way the fat is removed from
the friendship offering. He must burn it on the altar. It gives a smell that is
pleasant to the LORD. When the priest burns the offering, he will pay for the sin
of that person. And he will be forgiven.

32“ ‘Suppose he brings a lamb as his sin offering. Then he must bring a
female animal. It must not have any flaws. 33He must place his hand on its
head. He must kill it as a sin offering. He must do it at the place where the
animals for burnt offerings are killed.

34“ ‘Then the priest must dip his finger into some of the blood of the sin
offering. He must put it on the horns that stick out from the upper four corners
of the altar for burnt offerings. He must pour out the rest of the blood at the
bottom of the altar.

35“ ‘He must remove all of the fat in the same way the fat is removed from
the lamb for the friendship offering. He must burn it on the altar on top of the
offerings that are made to the LORD with fire. When he does, he will pay for the
sin that person has committed. And he will be forgiven.

Leviticus 5

1“ ‘Suppose a person has been called as a witness to something he has seen or learned about. Then if he does not tell what he knows, he has sinned. And he will be held accountable for it.

2“ ‘Or suppose a person touches something that is not “clean.” It could be the dead bodies of wild animals or of livestock. Or it could be the dead bodies of creatures that move along the ground. Even though he is not aware that he touched them, he has become “unclean.” And he is guilty.

3“ ‘Or suppose he touches something “unclean” that comes from a human being. It could be anything that would make him “unclean.” Suppose he is not aware that he touched it. When he finds out about it, he will be guilty.

4“ ‘Or suppose a person takes an oath and makes a promise to do something without thinking it through. It does not matter what he promised. It does not matter whether he took the oath without thinking about it carefully. And suppose he is not aware that he did not think it through. When he finds out about it, he will be guilty.

5“ ‘When someone is guilty in any of those ways, he must admit he has sinned. 6He must bring a sin offering to pay for the sin he has committed. He must bring to the LORD a female lamb or goat from the flock. The priest will sacrifice the animal. That will pay for the person’s sin.

7“ ‘Suppose he can’t afford a lamb. Then he must get two doves or two young pigeons. He must bring them to the LORD to pay for his sin. One of them is for a sin offering. The other is for a burnt offering.

8“ ‘He must bring them to the priest. The priest will offer the one for the sin offering first. He must twist its head. But he must not twist it off completely.

9“ ‘Then he must sprinkle some of the blood of the sin offering against the side of the altar. He must empty out the rest of the blood at the bottom of the altar. It is a sin offering.

10“ ‘Then the priest will offer the other bird as a burnt offering. He must do it in the way the law requires. That will pay for the sin the person has committed. And he will be forgiven.

11“ ‘But suppose he can’t afford two doves or two young pigeons. Then he

must bring eight cups of fine flour as an offering for his sin. It is a sin offering. He must not put olive oil or incense on it. That is because it is a sin offering.

12“ ‘He must bring it to the priest. The priest must take a handful of it. He must burn that part on the altar. It will be a reminder that all good things come from the LORD. The priest must burn it on top of the offerings that are made to the LORD with fire. It is a sin offering.

13“ ‘In that way the priest will pay for any of the sins the person has committed. And he will be forgiven. The rest of the offering will belong to the priest. It is the same as in the case of the grain offering.’ ”

Rules for Guilt Offerings

14The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, 15“Suppose a person sins by breaking the law. And he does it without meaning to. He sins against me or my priests by refusing to give them one of the holy things that are set apart for them.

“Then he must bring me a ram from the flock. It must not have any flaws. It must be worth the required amount of silver. It must be weighed out in keeping with the standard weights that are used in the sacred tent. It is a guilt offering. It will pay for his sin.

16“He must also pay for the holy thing he refused to give. He must add a fifth of its value to it. He must give all of it to the priest. The priest will pay for the person’s sin with the ram. It is a guilt offering. And he will be forgiven.

17“Suppose a person sins by doing something I command him not to do. Even though he does not know it, he is guilty. He will be held accountable for it.

18“He must bring to the priest a ram from the flock as a guilt offering. It must not have any flaws. And it must be worth the required amount of money.

“The priest will sacrifice the animal. That will pay for what the person has done wrong without meaning to. And he will be forgiven. 19It is a guilt offering. He has been guilty of doing wrong against me.”

Leviticus 6

[1]The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, [2]"Suppose a person sins by not being faithful to me. He does it by tricking his neighbors. He tricks them in connection with something they have placed in his care. He steals from them. Or he cheats them. [3]Or he finds something they have lost and then tells a lie about it. Or he goes to court. He takes an oath and tells a lie when he witnesses about it. Or he commits any other sin like those sins.

[4]"When he sins in any of those ways, he becomes guilty. He must return what he stole. He must give back what he took by cheating his neighbors. He must return what they placed in his care. He must return the lost property he found. [5]He must return anything he told a lie about when he witnessed in court. He must pay back everything in full. He must add a fifth of its value to it. He must give all of it to the owner on the day he brings his guilt offering.

[6]"He must bring his guilt offering to the priest to pay for his sin. It is an offering to me. He must bring a ram from the flock. It must not have any flaws. It must be worth the required amount of money.

[7]"The priest will sacrifice the ram to pay for the person's sin. He will do it in my sight. And the person will be forgiven for any of the things he did that made him guilty."

More Rules for Burnt Offerings

[8]The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, [9]"Give Aaron and the priests who are in his family line a command. Tell them, 'Here are some more rules for burnt offerings. The burnt offering must remain on the altar through the whole night. The fire on the altar must be kept burning until morning.

[10]" 'The priest must put on his linen clothes. He must put on linen underwear next to his body. He must remove the ashes of the burnt offering that the fire has burned up on the altar. He must place them beside the altar. [11]Then he must take his clothes off and put others on. He must carry the ashes outside the camp to a place that is "clean."

[12]" 'The fire on the altar must be kept burning. It must not go out. Every

morning the priest must add more wood to the fire. He must place the burnt offering on the fire. He must burn the fat of the friendship offerings on it. [13]The fire must be kept burning on the altar all the time. It must not go out.

More Rules for Grain Offerings

[14]“ ‘Here are some more rules for grain offerings. The priests who are in Aaron’s family line must bring the grain offering to the LORD in front of the altar.

[15]“ ‘The priest must take a handful of fine flour and olive oil. He must add to it all of the incense that is on the grain offering. He must burn that part on the altar. It will remind him that all good things come from the LORD. It gives a smell that is pleasant to the LORD.

[16]“ ‘Aaron and the priests who are in his family line will eat the rest of it. But they must eat it without yeast in a holy place. They must eat it in the courtyard of the Tent of Meeting. [17]It must not be baked with yeast. The LORD has given it to the priests as their share of the offerings that are made to him with fire. It is very holy, just like the sin offering and the guilt offering.

[18]“ ‘Any priests who are in Aaron’s family line can eat it. It is their regular share of the offerings that are made to the LORD with fire. It is their share for all time to come. Anyone who touches those offerings will become holy.’ ”

[19]The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, [20]“On the day each high priest who is in Aaron’s family line is anointed, he must bring an offering to me. He must bring eight cups of fine flour as a regular grain offering. He must bring half of it in the morning. He must bring the other half in the evening. [21]Mix it with olive oil. Grill it on a metal plate. Break it in pieces. Bring it as a grain offering. It gives a smell that is pleasant to me.

[22]“The son of Aaron who will become the next high priest after him will prepare the grain offering. It is my regular share. It must be completely burned up. [23]Every grain offering a high priest offers must be completely burned up. It must not be eaten.”

More Rules for Sin Offerings

[24]The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, [25]“Speak to Aaron and the priests who are in his family line. Tell them, ‘Here are some more rules for sin offerings. You must kill the animal for the sin offering in the sight of the LORD. Kill it in the place where the burnt offering is killed. It is very holy. [26]The priest who offers it will eat it. He must eat it in a holy place. He must eat it in the courtyard of the Tent of Meeting.

[27]“ ‘Anyone who touches any of its meat will become holy. Suppose some of the blood is spilled on someone’s clothes. Then you must wash them in a holy place. [28]Break the clay pot the meat is cooked in. But suppose you cook it in a bronze pot. Then you must scrub the pot and rinse it with water.

[29]“ ‘Any male in a priest’s family can eat the meat. It is very holy.

[30]“ ‘But suppose some of the blood of a sin offering is brought into the Tent of Meeting. And that blood is brought into the Holy Room to pay for sin. Then that sin offering must not be eaten. It must be burned.

More Rules for Guilt Offerings

Leviticus 7

1“ ‘Here are some more rules for guilt offerings. The guilt offering is very
holy. 2You must kill the animal for the guilt offering in the same place where
you kill the animal for the burnt offering. Sprinkle its blood against every side
of the altar.

3“ ‘Offer all of its fat. It must include the fat tail and the fat that covers the
inside parts. 4It must include both kidneys with the fat on them next to the
lower back muscles. It must also include the covering of the liver. Remove all
of it together with the kidneys. 5The priest must burn all of it on the altar. It is
an offering that is made to the LORD with fire. It is a guilt offering.

6“ ‘Any male in a priest’s family can eat it. But he must eat it in a holy place.
It is very holy.

7“ ‘The same law applies to the sin offering and the guilt offering. Both of
them belong to the priest who offers them to pay for sin. 8The priest who offers
a burnt offering for anyone can keep its hide for himself.

9“ ‘Every grain offering that is baked in an oven belongs to the priest who
offers it. So does every grain offering that is cooked in a pan or grilled on a
metal plate. 10Every grain offering belongs equally to all of the priests who are
in Aaron’s family line. That is true whether it is mixed with olive oil or it is
dry.

More Rules for Friendship Offerings

11“ ‘Here are some more rules for friendship offerings a person may bring to
the LORD.

12“ ‘Suppose he offers a friendship offering to show he is thankful. Then
together with the thank offering he must offer flat cakes of bread. He must
make them without yeast. He must mix them with olive oil. Or he must offer

wafers that are made without yeast. He must spread oil on them. Or he must offer flat cakes that are made out of fine flour. He must add oil to it. He must work the flour and mix it well.

13“ ‘He must bring another friendship offering along with his thank offering. It should be flat cakes of bread that are made with yeast. 14He must bring one of each kind of bread as an offering. One kind is made with yeast. The other is not. Both of them are a gift to the LORD. They belong to the priest who sprinkles the blood of the friendship offerings.

15“ ‘The person must eat the meat from his thank offering on the day he offers it. He must not leave any of it until morning.

16“ ‘But suppose he brings a friendship offering to keep a promise he has made. Or suppose he brings an offering he chooses to give. Then he must eat the sacrifice on the day he offers it. But if anything is left over, he may eat it the next day.

17“ ‘He must burn up any meat from the sacrifice that is left over until the third day. 18Suppose he eats any meat from the friendship offering on the third day. Then the LORD will not accept the offering. He will not accept it as a gift from that person. It is not pure. If the person eats any of it, he will be held accountable for it.

19“ ‘He must not eat meat that touches anything that is “unclean.” He must burn it up. Anyone who is “clean” may eat any other meat.

20“ ‘But suppose a person is not “clean” and eats any meat from the friendship offering that belongs to the LORD. Then that person will be cut off from his people.

21“ ‘Suppose a person touches something that is not “clean.” It does not matter whether it comes from a human being who is not “clean.” It does not matter whether it comes from an animal that is not “clean.” It does not matter whether it comes from something that is hated and is not “clean.” And suppose the person eats any of the meat from the friendship offering that belongs to the LORD. Then that person will be cut off from his people.’ ”

Israel Must Not Eat Fat or Blood

22The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, 23“Speak to the people of Israel. Tell

them, ‘Do not eat any of the fat of cattle, sheep or goats. 24Do not eat the fat of any animal that is found dead. Do not eat the fat of an animal that wild animals have torn apart. But you can use the fat for any other purpose.

25“ ‘Suppose an animal has been sacrificed as an offering that is made to the LORD with fire. No one may eat its fat. If he does, he will be cut off from his people.

26“ ‘No matter where you live, do not eat the blood of any bird or animal. 27If anyone does, he will be cut off from his people.’ ”

The Share That Belongs to the Priests

28The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, 29“Speak to the people of Israel. Tell them, ‘Suppose a person brings a friendship offering to the LORD. Then he must bring part of it as his special gift to the LORD. 30He must bring it with his own hands. It is an offering that is made to the LORD with fire. He must bring the fat together with the breast. He must lift the breast up and wave it in front of the LORD as a wave offering. 31The priest will burn the fat on the altar.

“ ‘But the breast belongs to Aaron and the priests who are in his family line. 32Give the right thigh from your friendship offerings to the priest as a gift. 33The priest who offers the blood and fat from the friendship offering must be given the right thigh. It is his share.

34“ ‘I, the LORD, have taken the breast that is waved and the thigh that is given. I have taken them from the friendship offerings of the people of Israel. And I have given them to the priest Aaron and the priests who are in his family line. The offerings are their regular share from the people of Israel.’ ”

35That is the part of the offerings that are made to the LORD with fire and given to Aaron and the priests who are in his family line. It was given to Aaron and his sons on the day they were set apart to serve the LORD as priests. 36On the day they were anointed, the LORD commanded the people of Israel to give that part to them. For all time to come, it will be the regular share of Aaron and the priests who are in his family line.

37Those are the rules for burnt offerings, grain offerings, sin offerings, guilt offerings and friendship offerings. They are also the rules for the offerings that

are given when priests are being prepared to serve the LORD. [38]They are the rules the LORD gave Moses on Mount Sinai. He gave them on the day he commanded the people of Israel to bring their offerings to the LORD. That took place in the Sinai Desert.

Preparing the Priests to Serve the LORD

Leviticus 8

[1]The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, [2]“Bring Aaron and his sons to the
entrance to the Tent of Meeting. Bring their clothes and the anointing oil. Bring
the bull for the sin offering. Also bring two rams. And bring the basket with the
bread that is made without yeast. [3]Then gather the whole community at the
entrance to the Tent of Meeting.”

[4]Moses did just as the LORD had commanded him. All of the people gathered
together at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.

[5]Moses said to the people, “Here is what the LORD has commanded us to do.”

[6]Then Moses brought Aaron and his sons to the people. He washed Aaron
and his sons with water. [7]He put the inner robe on Aaron. He tied the belt
around him. He dressed him in the outer robe. He put the linen apron on him.
He took the skillfully made waistband and tied the apron on him with it. He
wanted to make sure it was securely tied to him.

[8]Moses placed the chest cloth on Aaron. He put the Urim and Thummim in
the chest cloth. [9]Then he placed the turban on Aaron’s head. On the front of the
turban he put the gold plate. It was a sacred crown. Moses did everything just
as the LORD had commanded him.

[10]Then Moses took the anointing oil and poured it on the holy tent. He also
poured it on everything that was in it. That’s how he set those things apart for
the LORD. [11]He sprinkled some of the oil on the altar seven times. He poured oil
on the altar and all of its tools. He poured it on the large bowl and its stand. He
did it to set them apart.

[12]He poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron’s head. He anointed him to
set him apart to serve the LORD. [13]Then Moses brought Aaron’s sons to the
people. He put the inner robes on them. He tied belts around them. He put
headbands on them. He did everything just as the LORD had commanded him.

[14]Then he brought the bull for the sin offering. Aaron and his sons placed
their hands on its head. [15]Moses killed the bull. He dipped his finger into some

of the blood. He put it on all of the horns that stick out from the upper four corners of the altar. He did it to make the altar pure. He poured out the rest of the blood at the bottom of the altar. So he set it apart to make it pure.

16Moses also removed all of the fat that was around the inside parts of the bull. He removed the covering of the liver. He took both kidneys and their fat. Then he burned all of it on the altar.

17But he burned the rest of the bull outside the camp. He burned up its hide, its meat and its guts. He did it just as the LORD had commanded him.

18Then Moses brought the ram for the burnt offering. Aaron and his sons placed their hands on its head. 19Moses killed the ram. He sprinkled the blood against every side of the altar.

20He cut the ram into pieces. He burned the head, the other pieces and the fat. 21He washed the inside parts and the legs with water. He burned the whole ram on the altar as a burnt offering. It had a pleasant smell. It was an offering that was made to the LORD with fire. Moses did everything just as the LORD had commanded him.

22Then he brought the other ram. It was sacrificed to prepare the priests for serving the LORD. Aaron and his sons placed their hands on its head.

23Moses killed the ram. He put some of its blood on Aaron's right ear lobe. He put some on the thumb of Aaron's right hand. He also put some on the big toe of Aaron's right foot. 24Then Moses brought Aaron's sons to the people. He put some of the blood on their right ear lobes. He put some on the thumbs of their right hands. He also put some on the big toes of their right feet. Then he sprinkled the rest of the blood against every side of the altar.

25He removed the fat, the fat tail and all of the fat around the inside parts. He removed the covering of the liver. He removed both kidneys and their fat. And he removed the right thigh. 26Then he took a flat cake of bread from the basket of bread that was made without yeast. The basket was in front of the LORD. Moses took a cake of bread that was made with olive oil. He also took a wafer. He put all of it on the fat parts of the ram and on its right thigh.

27He put everything in the hands of Aaron and his sons. He told them to lift it up and wave it in front of the LORD as a wave offering.

28Then Moses took it from their hands. He burned it on the altar on top of the burnt offering. It was the offering that was sacrificed to prepare the priests for serving the LORD. It had a pleasant smell. It was an offering that was made to

the LORD with fire.

29Moses also lifted the ram's breast up and waved it in front of the LORD as a wave offering. The breast was Moses' share of the ram that was sacrificed to prepare the priests for serving the LORD. Moses did everything just as the LORD had commanded him.

30Then Moses took some of the anointing oil. He also took some of the blood from the altar. He sprinkled some of the oil and blood on Aaron and his clothes. He also sprinkled some on Aaron's sons and their clothes. That's how he set apart Aaron and his clothes. And that's how he set apart Aaron's sons and their clothes.

31Then Moses spoke to Aaron and his sons. He said, "Cook the meat at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. Eat it there along with the bread from the basket of the offerings that are brought to prepare the priests for serving the LORD. Do it just as I commanded you. I said, 'Aaron and his sons must eat it.' 32Then burn up the rest of the meat and the bread.

33"Don't leave the entrance to the Tent of Meeting for seven days. Don't leave until the days that are required to prepare you for serving the LORD have been completed. Stay here for the full seven days. 34The LORD commanded what has been done here today. It was done to pay for your sin. 35Stay at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting for seven days. Stay here day and night. Do what the LORD requires. Then you won't die. That's the command the LORD gave me."

36So Aaron and his sons did everything just as the LORD had commanded through Moses.

The Priests Offer Sacrifices

Leviticus 9

[1]On the eighth day Moses sent for Aaron, his sons and the elders of Israel.
[2]He said to Aaron, “Bring a bull calf for your sin offering. Bring a ram for your
burnt offering. They must not have any flaws. Offer them to the LORD.

[3]“Then speak to the people of Israel. Tell them, ‘Bring a male goat for a sin
offering. Bring a calf and a lamb for a burnt offering. Both of them must be a
year old. They must not have any flaws. [4]Bring an ox and a ram for a
friendship offering. Sacrifice all of them to the LORD. Also bring a grain
offering. Mix it with olive oil. Today the LORD will appear to you.’ ”

[5]The people got the things Moses commanded them to get. They took them to
the front of the Tent of Meeting. The whole community came up close to the
tent. They stood there in front of the LORD.

[6]Then Moses said, “You have done what the LORD has commanded. So the
glory of the LORD will appear to you.”

[7]Moses said to Aaron, “Come to the altar. Sacrifice your sin offering and your
burnt offering. Pay for your sin and the sin of the people. Sacrifice the people’s
offering. Pay for their sin. Do just as the LORD has commanded.”

[8]So Aaron came to the altar. He killed the calf as a sin offering for himself.
[9]His sons brought its blood to him. He dipped his finger into the blood. He put
some on the horns that stick out from the upper four corners of the altar. He
poured out the rest at the bottom of the altar.

[10]He burned the fat and the kidneys on the altar. He also burned the covering
of the liver. All of those parts were from the sin offering. Aaron did just as the
LORD had commanded Moses. [11]He burned up the meat and the hide outside the
camp.

[12]Then he killed the animal for the burnt offering. His sons handed him its
blood. He sprinkled it against every side of the altar. [13]They handed him the
burnt offering piece by piece. It included the animal’s head. Aaron burned
everything on the altar. [14]He washed the inside parts and the legs. He burned

them on top of the burnt offering on the altar.

15Then Aaron brought the people's offering. He took the goat for their sin offering and killed it. He offered it for a sin offering. He did just as he had done with his own sin offering.

16He brought the animal for the burnt offering. He offered it in the way the law requires. 17He also brought the grain offering. He took a handful of it and burned it on the altar. It was in addition to that morning's burnt offering.

18Aaron killed the ox and the ram as the friendship offering for the people. His sons handed him the blood. He sprinkled it against every side of the altar.

19His sons also brought the fat parts of the ox and the ram. They included the fat tail and the layer of fat. They also included the kidneys and the covering of the liver. 20Aaron's sons placed everything on the breasts of the animals.

Aaron burned the fat on the altar. 21He lifted up the breasts and the right thigh and waved them in front of the LORD as a wave offering. He did it just as Moses had commanded.

22Then Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people. He gave them a blessing. He had already sacrificed the sin offering, the burnt offering and the friendship offering. So he stepped down from the altar.

23Moses and Aaron went into the Tent of Meeting. When they came out, they gave the people a blessing. The glory of the LORD appeared to all of the people. 24The LORD sent fire on the altar. It burned up the burnt offering and the fat parts that were on it. All of the people saw it. Then they shouted for joy. They fell with their faces to the ground.

The LORD Kills Nadab and Abihu

Leviticus 10

1Nadab and Abihu were two of Aaron's sons. They got their shallow cups for
burning incense. They put fire in them. They added incense to it. They made an
offering to the LORD by using fire that wasn't allowed. They did it against his
command. 2So the LORD sent fire on them. It burned them up. They died in
front of the LORD.

3Then Moses spoke to Aaron. He said, "That's what the LORD was talking
about when he said,

> " 'Among those who approach me
> I will show that I am holy.
> In the sight of all of the people
> I will be honored.' "

So Aaron remained silent.

4Moses sent for Mishael and Elzaphan. They were sons of Aaron's uncle
Uzziel. Moses said to them, "Come here. Carry the bodies of your cousins
outside the camp. Take them away from in front of the Holy Room." 5So they
came and carried them outside the camp. It was just as Moses had ordered. The
bodies of Nadab and Abihu still had their inner robes on them.

6Moses spoke to Aaron and to Eleazar and Ithamar. They were Aaron's sons.
Moses said, "Don't let your hair hang loose. Don't tear your clothes. If you do,
you will die. And the LORD will be angry with the whole community.

"But all of the people of Israel are allowed to show they are sad. They are
your relatives. They can sob over those the LORD has destroyed with fire.

7"Don't leave the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. If you do, you will die.
That's because the LORD's anointing oil has made you holy." So they did what
Moses told them to do.

8Then the LORD spoke to Aaron. He said, 9"You and your sons must not drink

any kind of wine when you go into the Tent of Meeting. If you do, you will die. That is a law that will last for all time to come.

10"You must be able to tell the difference between what is holy and what is not. You must be able to tell the difference between what is 'clean' and what is not. 11You must teach the people of Israel all of the rules I have given them through Moses."

12Moses spoke to Aaron and to Eleazar and Ithamar. They were Aaron's two remaining sons. Moses said, "Take the grain offering that is left over from the offerings that are made to the LORD with fire. It is very holy. Make bread without yeast from it. Eat it beside the altar. 13Eat it in a holy place. It's your share and your sons' share of the offerings that are made to the LORD with fire. Those rules are in keeping with the command the LORD gave me.

14"But you and your sons and your daughters can eat the breast that was waved. You can also eat the thigh that was offered. Eat them in a place that is 'clean.' They have been given to you and your children. They are your share of the friendship offerings the people of Israel bring.

15"The thigh that was offered must be brought together with the fat parts of the offerings that are made with fire. The breast that was waved must be brought in the same way. All of it must be lifted up and waved in front of the LORD as a wave offering. It will be the regular share for you and your children. That's what the LORD has commanded."

16Moses asked about the goat that was brought as the sin offering. He found out that it had been burned up. So he became angry with Eleazar and Ithamar. They were Aaron's two remaining sons.

Moses asked them, 17"Why didn't you eat the sin offering in a place that is near the Holy Room? The offering is very holy. It was given to you to take the people's guilt away. It paid for their sin in the sight of the LORD. 18The blood of the offering wasn't taken into the Holy Room. So you should have eaten the goat in a place that is near the Holy Room. That's what I commanded."

19Aaron replied to Moses, "Today the people sacrificed their sin offering to the LORD. They also sacrificed their burnt offerings to him. But a terrible thing has happened to me. Two of my sons have died. Would the LORD have been pleased if I had eaten the sin offering today?" 20When Moses heard that, he was satisfied.

Food That Is "Clean" and Food That Is Not

Leviticus 11

1The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron. He said to them, 2"Speak to the people
of Israel. Tell them, 'Many animals live on land. Here are the only ones you
can eat. 3You can eat any animal that has hoofs that are separated completely in
two. But it must also chew the cud.

4" 'Some animals only chew the cud. Some only have hoofs that are
separated in two. You must not eat those animals.

" 'Camels chew the cud. But their hoofs are not separated in two. So they are
not "clean" for you.

5" 'Rock badgers chew the cud. But their hoofs are not separated in two. So
they are not "clean" for you.

6" 'Rabbits chew the cud. But their hoofs are not separated in two. So they
are not "clean" for you.

7" 'Pigs have hoofs that are separated completely in two. But they do not
chew the cud. So they are not "clean" for you.

8" 'You must not eat the meat of those animals. You must not even touch their
dead bodies. They are not "clean" for you.

9" 'Many creatures live in the water of the oceans and streams. You can eat
all of those that have fins and scales.

10" 'But be sure to avoid all of the creatures in the oceans or streams that do
not have fins and scales. That includes all of those that move together in groups
and all of those that do not. 11Be sure to avoid them. Do not eat their meat. Do
not even touch their dead bodies. 12Be sure to avoid everything that lives in the
water that does not have fins and scales.

13" 'Here are the birds you must be sure to avoid. Do not eat them. Be sure to
avoid them.

" 'They include eagles, vultures and black vultures. 14They include red kites
and all kinds of black kites. 15They include all kinds of ravens. 16They include

horned owls, screech owls, gulls and all kinds of hawks.

17“ ‘They include little owls, cormorants and great owls. 18They include white owls, desert owls and ospreys. 19They also include storks, hoopoes, bats and all kinds of herons.

20“ ‘Be sure to avoid every flying insect that walks on all fours. 21But you can eat some creatures that have wings and walk on all fours. Their legs have joints so they can hop on the ground.

22“ ‘Here are the insects you can eat. You can eat all kinds of locusts, katydids, crickets and grasshoppers. 23But be sure to avoid every other creature that has wings and four legs.

24“ ‘You will make yourselves “unclean” if you eat those things. If you touch their dead bodies, you will be “unclean” until evening. 25If a person picks up one of their dead bodies, he must wash his clothes. He will be “unclean” until evening.

26“ ‘Suppose an animal has hoofs that are not separated completely in two. Or suppose an animal does not chew the cud. Then those animals are not “clean” for you. If you touch the dead body of any of them, you will not be “clean.”

27“ ‘Many animals walk on all fours. But those that walk on their paws are not “clean” for you. Anyone who touches their dead bodies will be “unclean” until evening. 28If he picks up their dead bodies, he must wash his clothes. He will be “unclean” until evening. They are not “clean” for him.

29“ ‘Many animals move around on the ground. Here are the ones that are not “clean” for you. They include weasels, rats and all kinds of large lizards. 30They also include geckos, monitor lizards, wall lizards, skinks and chameleons. 31Those are the animals that move around on the ground that are not “clean” for you. If you touch their dead bodies, you will be “unclean” until evening.

32“ ‘Suppose one of them dies and falls on something. Then that article will not be “clean.” It does not matter what it is used for. It does not matter whether it is made out of wood, cloth, hide or black cloth. Put it in water. It will be “unclean” until evening. After that, it will be “clean.”

33“ ‘Suppose one of those animals falls into a clay pot. Then everything that is in the pot will be “unclean.” You must break the pot. 34Any food that could be eaten but has water on it that came from that pot is not “clean.” And any

liquid that could be drunk from it is not “clean.”

35“ ‘Anything that the dead body of one of those animals falls on becomes “unclean.” If it is an oven or cooking pot, break it. It is “unclean.” And you must consider it “unclean.”

36“ ‘But a spring or a well for collecting water remains “clean.” That is true even if the dead body of one of those animals falls into it. But anyone who touches the dead body is not “clean.”

37“ ‘If the dead body falls on any seeds that have not been planted yet, the seeds remain “clean.” 38But suppose water has already been put on the seeds. And suppose the dead body falls on them. Then they are not “clean” for you.

39“ ‘Suppose an animal you are allowed to eat dies. If anyone touches its dead body, he will be “unclean” until evening. 40If he eats part of the dead body, he must wash his clothes. He will be “unclean” until evening. If he picks up the dead body, he must wash his clothes. He will be “unclean” until evening.

41“ ‘Be sure to avoid every creature that moves around on the ground. Do not eat it. 42Do not eat any of those creatures. It does not matter whether they move on their bellies. It does not matter whether they walk on all fours or on many feet. Be sure to avoid them. 43Do not make yourselves “unclean” by eating any of those animals. Do not make yourselves “unclean” because of them. Do not let them make you “unclean.”

44“ ‘I am the LORD your God. Set yourselves apart. Be holy, because I am holy. Do not make yourselves “unclean” by eating any creatures that move around on the ground. 45I am the LORD. I brought you up out of Egypt to be your God. So be holy, because I am holy.

46“ ‘Those are the rules about animals and birds. Those are the rules about every living thing that moves in the water. And those are the rules about every creature that moves around on the ground. 47You must be able to tell the difference between what is “clean” and what is not. You must also be able to tell the difference between the living creatures that can be eaten and those that can’t.’ ”

Becoming "Clean" After Having a Baby

Leviticus 12

[1]The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, [2]"Speak to the people of Israel. Tell them, 'Suppose a woman becomes pregnant and has a baby boy. Then she will be "unclean" for seven days. It is the same as when she is "unclean" during her monthly period. [3]On the eighth day the boy must be circumcised.

[4]" 'After that, the woman must wait for 33 days to be made pure from her bleeding. She must not touch anything that is sacred until the 33 days are over. During that time she must not go to the sacred tent.

[5]" 'But suppose she has a baby girl. Then she will be "unclean" for two weeks. It is the same as during her period. After the two weeks, she must wait for 66 days to be made pure from her bleeding.

[6]" 'After she has waited the required number of days to be made pure, she must bring two offerings. She must take them to the priest at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. She must bring a lamb that is a year old for a burnt offering. She must also bring a young pigeon or a dove for a sin offering. [7]The priest must offer them to the LORD. They will pay for her sin. Then she will be "clean" from her bleeding.

" 'Those are the rules for a woman who has a baby boy or girl.

[8]" 'But suppose she can't afford a lamb. Then she must bring two doves or two young pigeons. One is for a burnt offering. The other is for a sin offering. The priest will sacrifice those offerings. That will pay for her sin. And she will be "clean." ' "

Rules About Skin Diseases

Leviticus 13

1The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron. He told them to say to the people,
2"Suppose someone's skin has a swelling or a rash or a bright spot. And
suppose it could become a skin disease. Then he must be brought to the priest
Aaron. Or he must be brought to a priest who is in Aaron's family line.

3"The priest must look carefully at the sore on the person's skin. He must see
whether the hair in the sore has turned white. He must also see whether the
sore seems to be under the skin. If the sore is white and is under the skin, it is a
skin disease. When the priest looks that person over carefully, he must
announce that the person is 'unclean.'

4"Suppose the spot on the skin is white but does not seem to be under the
skin. And suppose the hair in the spot has not turned white. Then the priest
must make the person stay away from everyone else for seven days. 5On the
seventh day the priest must look carefully at the sore again. Suppose it has not
changed and has not spread in the skin. Then the priest must make the person
stay away from everyone else for another seven days. 6On the seventh day the
priest must look carefully at the sore again. If it has faded and has not spread,
he must announce that the person is 'clean.' It is only a rash. He must wash his
clothes. He will be 'clean.'

7"But suppose the rash spreads in the skin after he has shown himself to the
priest a second time. Then he must appear in front of the priest again. 8The
priest must look carefully at the sore. If the rash has spread, he must announce
that the person is 'unclean.' He has a skin disease.

9"When anyone has a skin disease, he must be brought to the priest. 10The
priest must look him over carefully. Suppose there is a white swelling in the
skin. Suppose it has turned the hair white. And suppose there are open sores in
the swelling. 11Then the person has a skin disease that will never go away. The
priest must announce that he is 'unclean.' The priest must not make the person
stay away from everyone else. He is already 'unclean.'

12"Suppose the disease breaks out all over his skin. And suppose it covers

him from head to foot, as far as the priest can tell. [13]Then the priest must look him over carefully. If the disease has covered his whole body, the priest must announce that he is ‘clean.’ All of his skin has turned white. So he is ‘clean.’

[14]“But when open sores appear on his skin, he will not be ‘clean.’ [15]When the priest sees the open sores, he must announce that he is ‘unclean.’ The open sores are not ‘clean.’ He has a skin disease.

[16]“But if the open sores change and turn white, he must go to the priest. [17]The priest must look him over carefully. If the sores have turned white, the priest must announce that the person is ‘clean.’ Then he will be ‘clean.’

[18]“Suppose someone has a boil on his skin and it heals. [19]And suppose a white swelling or shiny pink spot appears where the boil was. Then he must show himself to the priest.

[20]“The priest must look at the boil carefully. Suppose it seems to be under the skin. And suppose the hair in it has turned white. Then the priest must announce that the person is ‘unclean.’ A skin disease has broken out where the boil was.

[21]“But suppose that when the priest looks at the boil carefully, there is no white hair in it. The boil is not under the skin. And it has faded. Then the priest must make the person stay away from everyone else for seven days. [22]If the boil is spreading in the skin, the priest must announce that the person is ‘unclean.’ He has a skin disease.

[23]“But suppose the spot has not changed. And suppose it has not spread. Then it is only a scar from the boil. And the priest must announce that the person is ‘clean.’

[24]“Suppose someone has a burn on his skin. And suppose a white or shiny pink spot shows up in the open sores of the burn. [25]Then the priest must look at the spot carefully. Suppose the hair in it has turned white. And suppose the spot seems to be under the skin. Then the person has a skin disease. It has broken out where he was burned. The priest must announce that the person is ‘unclean.’ He has a skin disease.

[26]“But suppose the priest looks at the spot carefully. Suppose there is no white hair in it. Suppose the spot is not under the skin. And suppose it has faded. Then the priest must make the person stay away from everyone else for seven days. [27]On the seventh day the priest must look him over carefully. If the spot is spreading in the skin, the priest must announce that the person is

‘unclean.’ He has a skin disease.

28“But suppose the spot has not changed. It has not spread in the skin. And it has faded. Then the burn has caused it to swell. The priest must announce that the person is ‘clean.’ It is only a scar from the burn.

29“Suppose a man or woman has a sore on the head or chin. 30Then the priest must look at the sore carefully. Suppose it seems to be under the skin. And suppose the hair in the sore is yellow and thin. Then the priest must announce that the person is ‘unclean.’ The sore is an itch. It is a skin disease on the head or chin.

31“But suppose the priest looks carefully at that kind of sore. It does not seem to be under the skin. And there is no black hair in it. Then the priest must make the person stay away from everyone else for seven days.

32“On the seventh day the priest must look at the sore carefully. Suppose the itch has not spread in the skin. It does not have any yellow hair in it. And it does not seem to be under the skin. 33Then the person must shave his head. But he must not shave the area where the disease is. And the priest must make him stay away from everyone else for another seven days.

34“On the seventh day the priest must look at the itch carefully. Suppose it has not spread in the skin. And suppose it does not seem to be under the skin. Then the priest must announce that the person is ‘clean.’ He must wash his clothes. He will be ‘clean.’

35“But suppose the itch spreads in the skin after the priest announces that the person is ‘clean.’ 36Then the priest must look him over carefully. Suppose the itch has spread. Then the priest does not have to look for yellow hair. The person is not ‘clean.’

37“But suppose the itch has been stopped and black hair has grown in it, as far as the priest can tell. Then the itch is healed. The person is ‘clean.’ The priest must announce that he is ‘clean.’

38“Suppose a man or woman has white spots on the skin. 39Then the priest must look at them carefully. Suppose he sees that the spots are dull white. Then a harmless rash has broken out on the skin. That person is ‘clean.’

40“Suppose a man loses all of the hair on his head. Then he is ‘clean.’ 41Suppose he loses only the hair on the front of his head. Then he is ‘clean.’

42“But suppose he has a shiny pink sore on his head where his hair was. Then

he has a skin disease. It is breaking out on his whole head or on the front of his head.

43“The priest must look him over carefully. Suppose the swollen sore on his head or on the front of it is pink and shiny. And suppose it looks like a skin disease. 44Then he has a skin disease. He is not ‘clean.’ The priest must announce that the man is ‘unclean.’ That is because he has a sore on his head.

45“Suppose someone has a skin disease that makes him ‘unclean.’ Then he must wear torn clothes. He must let his hair hang loose. He must cover the lower part of his face. He must cry out, ‘Unclean! Unclean!’ 46As long as he has the disease, he remains ‘unclean.’ He must live alone. He must live outside the camp.

Rules About Mold

47“Suppose some clothes have mold on them. The clothes could be made out of wool or linen. 48Or there could be cloth that is woven or knitted out of linen or wool. There could be pieces of leather. Or there could be articles that are made out of leather. 49And suppose the mold that is on the clothes or on the woven or knitted cloth looks green or red. Or suppose the green or red mold is on the pieces of leather or the leather articles. Then it is mold that spreads. It must be shown to the priest.

50“The priest must look at it carefully. He must keep the article with the mold on it away from everything else for seven days. 51On the seventh day he must look at it carefully. Suppose the mold has spread in the clothes or in the woven or knitted cloth. Or suppose it has spread on the pieces of leather or on the leather articles. Then it is mold that destroys. The article is not ‘clean.’

52“The priest must burn up everything that has the mold in it. He must burn up the clothes or the woven or knitted cloth that is made out of wool or linen. He must burn up the leather articles. The mold destroys. So everything must be burned up.

53“But suppose the priest looks at the article carefully. The mold has not spread in the clothes. And it has not spread in the woven or knitted cloth or in the leather articles. 54Then he will order someone to wash the article that has the mold on it. After that, the priest must keep the articles away from

everything else for another seven days.

55“After the article that has the mold on it has been washed, the priest must look at it carefully. Suppose the way the mold looks has not changed. Then even though the mold has not spread, it is not ‘clean.’ Burn it up. It does not matter which side of the article the mold is on.

56“But suppose the priest looks at it carefully. And suppose the mold has faded after the article has been washed. Then the priest must tear out the part that has mold on it. He must tear it out of the clothes or leather. He must tear it out of the woven or knitted cloth.

57“But suppose it shows up again in the clothes. Or suppose it shows up again in the woven or knitted cloth or in the leather articles. Then it is spreading. Everything that has the mold on it must be burned up.

58“The clothes that have been washed and do not have any more mold on them must be washed again. So must the woven or knitted cloth or the leather articles. Then they will be ‘clean.’ ”

59Those are the rules about what to do with anything that has mold on it. They apply to clothes that are made out of wool or linen. They apply to woven and knitted cloth and to leather articles. They give a priest directions about when to announce whether something is “clean” or not.

Making People "Clean" From Skin Diseases

Leviticus 14

[1]The LORD spoke to Moses. He told him to say to the people, [2]"Here are the rules for making someone 'clean' if he has had a skin disease. They apply when he is brought to the priest.

[3]"The priest must go outside the camp. He must look the person over carefully. Suppose he has been healed of his skin disease. [4]Then the priest will order someone to bring him two live 'clean' birds. He will also order someone to bring him some cedar wood, bright red yarn and branches of a hyssop plant. All of those things will be used to make the person 'clean.'

[5]"The priest will order someone to kill one of the birds. It must be killed over fresh water in a clay pot. [6]Then the priest must take the live bird. He must dip it into the blood of the bird that was killed over the fresh water. He must dip it into the blood together with the cedar wood, the bright red yarn and the hyssop plant.

[7]"The priest will sprinkle the blood on the person who had the skin disease. That will make him 'clean.' The priest must sprinkle him seven times. Then the priest must announce that he is 'clean.' After that, the priest must let the live bird go free in the open fields.

[8]"The person must also wash his clothes to be made 'clean.' He must shave off all of his hair. He must take a bath. Then he will be 'clean.' After that, he may come into the camp. But he must stay outside his tent for seven days.

[9]"On the seventh day he must shave off all of his hair. He must shave his head. He must shave off his beard. He must also shave off his eyebrows and the rest of his hair. He must wash his clothes. He must take a bath. Then he will be 'clean.'

[10]"On the eighth day he must bring two male lambs and one female lamb as an offering. The female must be a year old. The lambs must not have any flaws. He must also bring 24 cups of fine flour as a grain offering. He must mix it with olive oil. He must also bring five ounces of oil. [11]The priest who announces that the person is 'clean' must bring him and his offerings to me. He

must do it at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.

12“Then the priest must take one of the male lambs. He must offer it as a guilt offering. He must offer it along with five ounces of oil. He must lift all of it up and wave it in front of me as a wave offering.

13“He must kill the lamb in the holy place where sin offerings and burnt offerings are killed. The guilt offering belongs to the priest, just as the sin offering does. The guilt offering is very holy.

14“The priest must take some of the blood from the guilt offering and put it on the person’s right ear lobe. He must put some on the thumb of his right hand. He must also put some on the big toe of his right foot.

15“Then the priest must take some of the oil and pour it into his own left hand. 16He must dip his right forefinger into the oil that is in his hand. He must use his finger to sprinkle some of the oil in front of me seven times.

17“The priest must put some of the oil that is in his hand on the same places he put the blood of the guilt offering. He must put some on the person’s right ear lobe. He must put some on the thumb of his right hand. He must put some on the big toe of his right foot. 18He must put on his head the rest of the oil that is in his hand. It will pay for the person’s sin in my sight.

19“Then the priest must sacrifice the sin offering. It will pay for the person’s sin. He will be made ‘clean’ after being ‘unclean.’ After that, the priest will kill the burnt offering. 20He will offer it on the altar. He will offer it together with the grain offering. It will pay for the person’s sin. Then he will be ‘clean.’

21“But suppose he is poor. Suppose he can’t afford all of those offerings. Then he must bring one male lamb as a guilt offering. It must be lifted up and waved in front of me to pay for his sin. He must also bring eight cups of fine flour along with the lamb. He must mix the flour with olive oil. It is a grain offering. He must offer it along with five ounces of oil. 22He must also bring two doves or two young pigeons that he can afford. One is for a sin offering. The other is for a burnt offering.

23“On the eighth day he must bring them to the priest so he can be made ‘clean.’ He must bring them to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. He must do it in my sight.

24“The priest must take the lamb for the guilt offering. He must take it together with the five ounces of oil. He must lift all of it up and wave it in front

of me as a wave offering. [25]He must kill the lamb for the guilt offering. He must take some of its blood and put it on the person's right ear lobe. He must put some on the thumb of his right hand. He must also put some on the big toe of his right foot.

[26]"The priest must pour some of the oil into his own left hand. [27]He must dip his right forefinger into the oil that is in his hand. He must use his finger to sprinkle some of it seven times in front of me.

[28]"He must put some of the oil that is in his hand on the same places he put the blood of the guilt offering. He must put some on the person's right ear lobe. He must put some on the thumb of his right hand. He must also put some on the big toe of his right foot. [29]He must put on his head the rest of the oil that is in his hand. It will pay for the person's sin in my sight.

[30]"The priest will sacrifice the doves or the young pigeons that the person can afford. [31]One is for a sin offering. The other is for a burnt offering. The priest must offer them together with the grain offering. In that way he will pay for the person's sin in my sight. He will do it to make him 'clean.' "

[32]Those are the rules for anyone who has a skin disease. They are for people who can't afford the regular offerings that are required to make them "clean."

Making Things "Clean" From Mold

[33]The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron. He told them to say to the people, [34]"You will enter the land of Canaan. I am giving it to you as your own. When you enter it, suppose I put mold in one of your houses. And suppose the mold spreads. [35]Then the owner of that house must go and speak to the priest. He must say, 'I've seen something that looks like mold in my house.'

[36]"The priest must order everything to be taken out of the house. It must be done before he goes in to look carefully at the mold. If it is not done, the priest must announce that everything in the house is 'unclean.'

"After the house is empty the priest must go in and check it. [37]He must look carefully at the mold that is on the walls. Suppose it looks as if it has green or red dents in it. And suppose the dents look as if they are behind the surface of the wall. [38]Then the priest must go out the door. He must close the house up for seven days.

39“On the seventh day the priest will return to check the house. Suppose the
mold that is on the walls has spread. 40Then he must order someone to tear out
the stones that have mold on them. He must have them thrown into an
‘unclean’ place outside the town. 41He must have all of the inside walls of the
house scraped. Everything that is scraped off must be dumped into an ‘unclean’
place outside the town.

42“Then other stones must be put in the place of the stones that had mold on
them. The inside walls of the house must be coated with new clay.

43“Suppose the stones have been torn out. The house has been scraped. And
the walls have been coated with new clay. But the mold appears again.

44“Then the priest must go and look things over carefully. Suppose the mold
has spread in the house. Then it is the kind of mold that destroys things. The
house is not ‘clean.’

45“It must be torn down. The stones, the wood and all of the clay coating
must be torn out. All of it must be taken out of the town to an ‘unclean’ place.

46“Suppose someone goes into the house while it is closed up. Then he will
be ‘unclean’ until evening. 47If he sleeps or eats in the house, he must wash his
clothes.

48“But suppose the priest comes to look things over carefully. And suppose
the mold has not spread after the walls had been coated with new clay. Then he
will announce that the house is ‘clean.’ The mold is gone.

49“To make the house pure, the priest must get two birds. He must also get
some cedar wood, bright red yarn and branches of a hyssop plant. 50He must
kill one of the birds over fresh water in a clay pot.

51“Then he must take the cedar wood, the hyssop plant, the bright red yarn
and the live bird. He must dip all of them into the blood of the dead bird. He
must also dip them into the fresh water. He must sprinkle the house seven
times.

52“The priest will use the blood and the water to make the house pure. He
will use the live bird to make it pure. He will also use the cedar wood, the
hyssop plant and the bright red yarn to make it pure.

53“Then he must let the live bird go free in the open fields outside the town.
In that way he will make the house pure. It will be ‘clean.’ ”

54Those are the rules for skin diseases. They apply to itches. 55They apply to

mold in clothes or in houses. [56]They also apply to swellings, rashes or bright red spots on the skin. [57]Use those rules to decide whether something is “clean” or not.

Those are the rules for skin diseases and for mold.

Rules About Liquid Body Wastes

Leviticus 15

1The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron. He said, 2“Speak to the people of
Israel. Tell them, ‘Suppose liquid waste is flowing out of a man’s body. That
liquid is not “clean.” 3It does not matter whether it continues to flow out of his
body or is blocked. It will make him “unclean.” Here is how his liquid body
waste will make him “unclean.”

4“ ‘Any bed the man who has the flow of liquid body waste lies on will not
be “clean.” Anything he sits on will not be “clean.”

5“ ‘If any of you touches the man’s bed, you must wash your clothes. You
must take a bath. You will be “unclean” until evening. 6Suppose you sit on
anything the man sat on. Then you must wash your clothes. You must take a
bath. You will be “unclean” until evening.

7“ ‘Suppose you touch the man who has the flow of liquid body waste. Then
you must wash your clothes. You must take a bath. You will be “unclean” until
evening.

8“ ‘Suppose you are “clean.” And suppose the man who has the flow of liquid
waste spits on you. Then you must wash your clothes. You must take a bath.
You will be “unclean” until evening.

9“ ‘Everything the man sits on when he is riding will be “unclean.” 10Suppose
you touch any of the things that were under him. Then you will be “unclean”
until evening. Even if you pick up those things, you must wash your clothes.
You must take a bath. You will be “unclean” until evening.

11“ ‘Suppose the man who has the liquid flow touches you. And suppose he
does it without rinsing his hands with water. Then you must wash your clothes.
You must take a bath. You will be “unclean” until evening.

12“ ‘Suppose the man touches a clay pot. Then that pot must be broken. Any
wooden article he touches must be rinsed with water.

13“ ‘Suppose the man has been healed from his liquid flow. Then he must
wait seven days. He must wash his clothes. He must take a bath in fresh water.

After that, he will be “clean.”

14“ ‘On the eighth day he must get two doves or two young pigeons. He must
come to the LORD at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. There he must give
the birds to the priest. 15The priest must sacrifice them. One is for a sin
offering. The other is for a burnt offering. In that way the priest will pay for the
man’s sin in the sight of the LORD. He will do it because the man had a liquid
flow.

16“ ‘Suppose semen flows from a man’s body. Then he must wash his whole
body with water. He will be “unclean” until evening.

17“ ‘Suppose clothes or leather have semen on them. Then they must be
washed with water. They will be “unclean” until evening.

18“ ‘Suppose a man makes love to a woman. And suppose semen flows from
his body and touches both of them. Then they must take a bath. They will be
“unclean” until evening.

19“ ‘Suppose a woman is having her regular period. Then for seven days she
will not be pure. Anyone who touches her will be “unclean” until evening.

20“ ‘Anything she lies on during her period will be “unclean.” Anything she
sits on will be “unclean.”

21“ ‘If anyone touches her bed, he must wash his clothes. He must take a
bath. He will be “unclean” until evening. 22If anyone touches anything she sits
on, he must wash his clothes. He must take a bath. He will be “unclean” until
evening.

23“ ‘It does not matter whether it was her bed or anything she was sitting on.
If anyone touches it, he will be “unclean” until evening.

24“ ‘Suppose a man makes love to that woman. And suppose blood from her
monthly period touches him. Then he will be “unclean” for seven days. Any
bed he lies on will be “unclean.”

25“ ‘Suppose blood flows from a woman’s body for many days. And it
happens at a time other than her monthly period. Or blood keeps flowing after
her period is over. Then she will be “unclean” as long as the blood continues to
flow. She will be “unclean,” just as she is during the days of her period.

26“ ‘Any bed she lies on while her blood continues to flow will be “unclean.”
It is the same as it is when she is having her period. Anything she sits on will
be “unclean.” It is the same as it is when she is having her period.

27“ ‘If anyone touches those things, he will not be “clean.” He must wash his clothes. He must take a bath. He will be “unclean” until evening.

28“ ‘Suppose the woman has been healed from her flow of blood. Then she must wait seven days. After that, she will be “clean.” 29On the eighth day she must get two doves or two young pigeons. She must bring them to the priest at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.

30“ ‘The priest must sacrifice them. One is for a sin offering. The other is for a burnt offering. In that way he will pay for her sin in the sight of the LORD. He will do it because her flow of blood made her “unclean.”

31“ ‘You must keep the people of Israel away from things that make them “unclean.” Then they will not die for being “unclean.” And they will not die for making the place where the LORD lives “unclean.” It is in the middle of the camp.’ ”

32Those are the rules for a man who has liquid waste flowing out of his body. They apply to a man who is made “unclean” by semen that flows from his body. 33They apply to a woman who is having her monthly period. They apply to a man or woman who has a liquid flow. And they apply to a man who makes love to a woman who is not “clean.”

The Day When Sin Is Paid For

Leviticus 16

1The LORD spoke to Moses after two of Aaron's sons had died. They were the
sons who died when they came near the LORD. 2The LORD said to Moses,
"Speak to your brother Aaron. Tell him not to come into the Most Holy Room
just anytime he wants to. Tell him not to come behind the curtain that is in
front of the cover of the ark. The cover is the place where sin is paid for. If he
comes behind the curtain, he will die. That is because I appear in the cloud
over the cover.

3"Aaron must not enter the area of the sacred tent without bringing a
sacrifice. He must bring a young bull for a sin offering. He must also bring a
ram for a burnt offering.

4"He must put on the sacred inner robe that is made out of linen. He must
wear linen underwear next to his body. He must tie the linen belt around him.
And he must put on the linen turban. Those are sacred clothes. So he must take
a bath before he puts them on.

5"The community of Israel must give him two male goats and a ram. The
goats are for a sin offering. The ram is for a burnt offering.

6"Aaron must offer the bull for his own sin offering. It will pay for his own
sin and the sin of his whole family.

7"Then he must take the two goats and bring them to me at the entrance to the
Tent of Meeting. 8He must cast lots for the two goats. One lot is for me. The
other is for the goat that carries the people's sins away. 9Aaron must bring the
goat that is chosen for me by lot. He must sacrifice it for a sin offering.

10"But the goat that is chosen by the other lot must remain alive. First it must
be brought in to me to pay for the people's sin. Then it must be sent into the
desert as a goat that carries the people's sins away.

11"Aaron must bring the bull for his own sin offering. It will pay for his own
sin and the sin of his whole family. He must kill the bull for his own sin
offering.

12“He must take a shallow cup full of burning coals from the altar in my
sight. He must get two handfuls of incense that is completely ground up. The
incense must smell sweet. He must take the cup and the incense behind the
curtain. 13He must put the incense on the fire in my sight. The smoke from the
incense will hide the cover of the ark where the tablets of the covenant are
kept. The cover is the place where sin is paid for. Aaron must burn the incense
so that he will not die.

14“He must dip his finger in the bull’s blood. He must sprinkle it on the front
of the cover of the ark. He must sprinkle some in front of the cover. He must do
it seven times.

15“Then Aaron must kill the goat for the sin offering for the people. He must
take its blood behind the curtain. There he must do the same thing with it as he
did with the bull’s blood. He must sprinkle it on the cover of the ark. He must
also sprinkle some in front of it.

16“That is how he will make the Most Holy Room pure. He must do it
because the people of Israel are not ‘clean.’ They have not obeyed me. They
have also committed other sins. Aaron must do the same for the Tent of
Meeting because it stands in the middle of the camp. And the camp is not
‘clean.’

17“No one can be in the Tent of Meeting when Aaron goes into the Most Holy
Room to pay for the people’s sin. No one can enter the tent until Aaron comes
out. He will not come out until he has paid for his own sin and the sin of his
whole family. He will not come out until he has also paid for the sin of the
whole community of Israel.

18“Then he will come out to the altar for burnt offerings. It is in front of the
tent where the ark of the LORD is. He will make the altar pure and clean. He
will take some of the bull’s blood and some of the goat’s blood. Then he will
put the blood on all of the horns that stick out from the upper four corners of
the altar. 19He will sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times.
He will do it to make the altar pure. He will do it to set it apart from the people
of Israel. They are not ‘clean.’

20“Aaron will finish making the Most Holy Room pure and clean. He will
finish making the Tent of Meeting and the altar pure.

“Then he will bring the live goat out. 21He must place both of his hands on its
head. While he does that, he must tell me about all of the sins the people of
Israel have committed. He must tell me about all of their evil acts and the times

they did not obey me. In that way he puts their sins on the goat's head.

"Then he will send the goat away into the desert. The goat will be led away by a man who was appointed to do it. [22]The goat will carry all of their sins on itself to a place where there are no people. And the man will set the goat free in the desert.

[23]"Then Aaron must go into the Tent of Meeting. He must take off the linen clothes he put on before he entered the Most Holy Room. He must leave them there. [24]He must take a bath in a holy place. And he must put on his regular clothes.

"Then he will come out and sacrifice the burnt offering for himself. He will also sacrifice the burnt offering for the people. That will pay for his own sin and the people's sin. [25]He will also burn the fat of the sin offering on the altar.

[26]"The man who sets free the goat that carries the people's sins away must wash his clothes. He must take a bath. After that, he can come back into the camp.

[27]"The bull and the goat for the sin offerings must be taken outside the camp. Their blood was brought into the Most Holy Room. It paid for sin. The hides, meat and guts must be burned up.

[28]"The man who burns them must wash his clothes. He must take a bath. After that, he can come back into the camp.

[29]"Here is a law for you that will last for all time to come. On the tenth day of the seventh month you must not eat anything. You must not do any work. It does not matter whether you are Israelites or outsiders.

[30]"On that day your sin will be paid for. You will be made pure and clean. You will be clean from all of your sins in my sight. [31]That day is a sabbath for you. You must rest on it. You must not eat anything on that day. That is a law that will last for all time to come.

[32]"The high priest must pay for sin. He must make everything pure and clean. He has been anointed and prepared to become the next high priest after his father. He must put on the sacred clothes that are made out of linen. [33]He must make the Most Holy Room, the Tent of Meeting and the altar pure. And he must pay for the sin of the priests and all of the people in the whole community.

[34]"Here is a law for you that will last for all time to come. Once a year you

must pay for all of the sin of the people of Israel.”

So it was done, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

Do Not Eat Meat That Has Blood in It

Leviticus 17

1The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, 2"Speak to Aaron and his sons. Speak to
all of the people of Israel. Tell them, 'Here is what the LORD has commanded.
He has said, 3"Suppose someone sacrifices an ox, a lamb or a goat. He
sacrifices it in the camp or outside of it. 4He does it instead of bringing the
animal to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. He sacrifices it instead of giving
it as an offering to me in front of my holy tent. Then he will be thought of as
guilty of spilling blood. Because he has done that, he must be cut off from his
people.

5" ' "The people of Israel are now making sacrifices in the open fields. But
they must bring their sacrifices to the priest. They must bring them to me at the
entrance to the Tent of Meeting. There they must sacrifice them as friendship
offerings. 6The priest must sprinkle the blood against my altar. It is the altar at
the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. He must burn the fat. It will give a
pleasant smell to me.

7" ' "Israel must stop offering any of their sacrifices to statues of gods that
look like goats. When they offer sacrifices to those statues, they are not faithful
to me. That is a law for them that will last for all time to come." '

8"Tell them, 'Suppose someone offers a burnt offering or sacrifice. It does not
matter whether he is an Israelite or an outsider. 9And suppose he does not bring
it to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting to sacrifice it to me. Then he must be
cut off from his people.

10" 'Suppose someone eats meat that still has blood in it. It does not matter
whether he is an Israelite or an outsider. I will turn against him if he eats it. I
will cut him off from his people.

11" 'The life of each creature is in its blood. So I have given you the blood of
animals to pay for your sin on the altar. Blood is life. That is why blood pays
for your sin.

12" 'So I say to the people of Israel, "You must not eat meat that still has
blood in it. And an outsider who lives among you must not eat it either."

13“ ‘Suppose any of you hunts any animal or bird that can be eaten. It does not matter whether you are an Israelite or an outsider. You must let the blood flow out of the animal or bird. You must cover the blood with dirt.

14“ ‘That is because every creature’s life is its blood. And that is why I have said to the people of Israel, “You must not eat any creature’s meat that still has blood in it. Every creature’s life is its blood. Anyone who eats that kind of meat must be cut off.”

15“ ‘Suppose someone eats anything that is found dead or is torn apart by wild animals. It does not matter whether he is an Israelite or an outsider. He must wash his clothes. He must take a bath. He will be “unclean” until evening. After that, he will be “clean.”

16“ ‘But suppose he does not wash his clothes. And suppose he does not take a bath. Then he will be held accountable for what he has done.’ ”

Do Not Commit Sexual Sins

Leviticus 18

1The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, 2“Speak to the people of Israel. Tell
them, ‘I am the LORD your God. 3You must not do what the people of Egypt do.
You used to live there. And you must not do what the people of Canaan do. I
am bringing you into their land. Do not follow their practices.

4“ ‘You must obey my laws. You must be careful to follow my rules. I am the
LORD your God. 5Keep my rules and laws. The one who obeys them will live
by them. I am the LORD.

6“ ‘Do not have sex with any of your close relatives. I am the LORD.

7“ ‘Do not bring shame on your father by having sex with your mother. Do
not have sex with her. She is your mother.

8“ ‘Do not have sex with any other wife of your father. That would bring
shame on your father.

9“ ‘Do not have sex with your sister. It does not matter whether she is your
father’s daughter or your mother’s daughter. It does not matter whether she was
born in the same home as you were or somewhere else.

10“ ‘Do not have sex with your son’s daughter or your daughter’s daughter.
That would bring shame on you.

11“ ‘Do not have sex with the daughter of your father’s wife. She was born to
your father. She is your sister.

12“ ‘Do not have sex with your father’s sister. She is a close relative on your
father’s side.

13“ ‘Do not have sex with your mother’s sister. She is a close relative on your
mother’s side.

14“ ‘Do not bring shame on your father’s brother by having sex with his wife.
She is your aunt.

15“ ‘Do not have sex with your daughter-in-law. She is your son’s wife. Do
not have sex with her.

16“ ‘Do not have sex with your brother’s wife. That would bring shame on your brother.

17“ ‘Do not have sex with both a woman and her daughter. Do not have sex with either her son’s daughter or her daughter’s daughter. They are close relatives on her side. Having sex with them is an evil thing.

18“ ‘Do not take your wife’s sister as another wife and have sex with her. Do not do it while your wife is still living.

19“ ‘Do not make love to a woman during her monthly period. She is not “clean” at that time.

20“ ‘Do not have sex with your neighbor’s wife. That would make you “unclean.”

21“ ‘Do not hand over any of your children to be sacrificed to the god Molech. That would be treating my name as if it were not holy. I am the LORD your God.

22“ ‘Do not have sex with a man as you would have sex with a woman. I hate that.

23“ ‘Do not have sex with an animal. Do not make yourself “unclean” by doing that. A woman must not offer herself to an animal to have sex with it. That is a twisted use of sex.

24“ ‘Do not make yourselves “unclean” in any of those ways. That is how other nations became “unclean.” So I am going to drive those nations out of the land to make room for you. 25Even their land was not “clean.” So I punished it because of its sin. The land itself threw out the people who lived there.

26“ ‘But you must keep my rules and my laws. You must not do any of the things I hate. It does not matter whether you are Israelites or outsiders.

27“ ‘All of those things were done by the people who lived in the land before you. That is how the land became “unclean.” 28If you make the land “unclean,” it will throw you out. It will get rid of you just as it got rid of the nations that were there before you.

29“ ‘Suppose you do any of the things I hate. Then you must be cut off from your people.

30“ ‘Do exactly what I require. When you arrive in Canaan, do not follow any of the practices of its people. I hate the things they do. Do not make yourselves “unclean” by doing them. I am the LORD your God.’ ”

Other Laws

Leviticus 19

[1]The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, [2]"Speak to the whole community of
Israel. Tell them, 'Be holy, because I am holy. I am the LORD your God.

[3]" 'All of you must have respect for your mother and father. You must always
keep my Sabbath days. I am the LORD your God.

[4]" 'Do not turn away from me to worship statues of gods. Do not make gods
out of metal for yourselves. I am the LORD your God.

[5]" 'Suppose you sacrifice a friendship offering to me. Then do it in the right
way. And I will accept it from you. [6]You must eat it on the same day you
sacrifice it or on the next day. Anything that is left over until the third day must
be burned up.

[7]" 'If you eat any of it on the third day, it is not pure. I will not accept it. [8]If
you eat it, you will be held accountable. You have misused what is holy to me.
You will be cut off from your people.

[9]" 'Suppose you are harvesting your crops. Then do not harvest all the way to
the edges of your field. And do not pick up the grain you missed. [10]Do not go
over your vineyard a second time. Do not pick up the grapes that have fallen to
the ground. Leave them for poor people and outsiders. I am the LORD your God.

[11]" 'Do not steal.

" 'Do not tell lies.

" 'Do not cheat one another.

[12]" 'Do not take an oath and give false witness in my name. That would be
treating it as if it were not holy. I am the LORD your God.

[13]" 'Do not cheat your neighbor. Do not rob him.

" 'Do not hold back the pay of a hired worker until morning.

[14]" 'Do not call a curse down on deaf people. Do not put anything in front of
blind people that will make them trip. Instead, have respect for me. I am the
LORD your God.

15“ ‘Do not make something that is wrong appear to be right. Treat poor
people and rich people in the same way. Do not favor one person over another.
Instead, judge everyone fairly.

16“ ‘Do not go around spreading lies among your people.

“ ‘Do not do anything that puts your neighbor’s life in danger. I am the LORD.

17“ ‘Do not hate your brother in your heart. Correct your neighbor boldly
when he does something wrong. Then you will not share his guilt.

18“ ‘Do not try to get even. Do not hold anything against one of your people.
Instead, love your neighbor as you love yourself. I am the LORD.

19“ ‘Obey my rules.

“ ‘Do not let different kinds of animals mate with each other.

“ ‘Do not mix two kinds of seeds and then plant them in your field.

“ ‘Do not wear clothes that are made out of two kinds of cloth.

20“ ‘Suppose a man has sex with a female slave. But she and another man
have promised to get married to each other. And her freedom has not yet been
paid for or given to her. Then she and the man who had sex with her must be
punished. But they must not be put to death, because she had not been set free.

21“ ‘The man must bring a ram to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. It is for
a guilt offering to me. 22The priest must take the ram for the guilt offering. He
must sacrifice it to pay for the man’s sin in my sight. Then his sin will be
forgiven.

23“ ‘When you enter the land, suppose you plant a fruit tree. Then do not eat
its fruit for the first three years. The fruit is not “clean.” 24In the fourth year all
of the fruit will be holy. Offer it as a way of showing praise to me. 25But in the
fifth year you can eat the fruit. Then you will gather more and more fruit. I am
the LORD your God.

26“ ‘Do not eat any meat that still has blood in it.

“ ‘Do not practice any kind of evil magic at all.

27“ ‘Do not cut the hair on the sides of your head. Do not clip off the edges of
your beard.

28“ ‘Do not make cuts on your bodies when someone dies. Do not put marks
on your skin. I am the LORD.

29“ ‘Do not dishonor your daughter’s body by making a prostitute out of her.

If you do, the people of Israel will start using prostitutes. The land will be filled with evil.

30“ ‘You must always keep my Sabbath days. Have respect for my sacred tent. I am the LORD.

31“ ‘Do not look for advice from people who get messages from those who have died. Do not go to people who talk to the spirits of the dead. If you do, they will make you “unclean.” I am the LORD your God.

32“ ‘Stand up in order to show your respect for old people. Also have respect for me. I am the LORD your God.

33“ ‘Suppose an outsider lives with you in your land. Then do not treat him badly. 34Treat him as if he were one of your own people. Love him as you love yourself. Remember that all of you were outsiders in Egypt. I am the LORD your God.

35“ ‘Be honest when you measure lengths, weights or amounts. 36Use honest scales and honest weights. Use honest dry measures. And use honest liquid measures. I am the LORD your God. I brought you out of Egypt.

37“ ‘Obey all of my rules and laws. Follow them. I am the LORD.’ ”

Israel Will Be Punished for Their Sins

Leviticus 20

[1]The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, [2]“Say to the people of Israel, ‘Suppose a person sacrifices one of his children to the god Molech. It does not matter whether that person is an Israelite or an outsider who lives in Israel. He must be put to death. The people of the community must kill him by throwing stones at him. [3]I will turn against that man. I will cut him off from his people. That is because he sacrificed his child to Molech. He has made my sacred tent “unclean.” He has treated my name as if it were not holy.

[4]“ ‘Suppose the people of the community close their eyes to the fact that the man sacrificed his child to Molech. And suppose they fail to put him to death. [5]Then I will turn against that man and his family. I will cut him off from his people. I will also cut off all those who follow him by joining themselves to Molech. They are not faithful to me.

[6]“ ‘Suppose someone looks for advice from people who get messages from those who have died. Or he goes to people who talk to the spirits of the dead. And he follows their advice. Then he has not been faithful to me. So I will turn against him. I will cut him off from his people.

[7]“ ‘Set yourselves apart for me. Be holy, because I am the LORD your God. [8]Obey my rules. Follow them. I am the LORD. I make you holy.

[9]“ ‘If anyone calls down a curse on his father or mother, he will be put to death. He has cursed his father or mother. Anything that happens to him will be his own fault.

[10]“ ‘Suppose a man commits adultery with his neighbor’s wife. Then the man and the woman must be put to death.

[11]“ ‘Suppose a man has sex with his father’s wife. Then he has brought shame on his father. The man and the woman must be put to death. Anything that happens to them will be their own fault.

[12]“ ‘Suppose a man has sex with his daughter-in-law. Then they must be put to death. They have used sex in a twisted way. Anything that happens to them

will be their own fault.

13“ ‘Suppose a man has sex with another man as he would have sex with a woman. I hate what they have done. They must be put to death. Anything that happens to them will be their own fault.

14“ ‘Suppose a man gets married to both a woman and her mother. That is evil. All of them must be burned to death. Then there will not be any evil among you.

15“ ‘Suppose a man has sex with an animal. Then he must be put to death. You must also kill the animal.

16“ ‘Suppose a woman has sex with an animal. Then kill the woman and the animal. They must be put to death. Anything that happens to them will be their own fault.

17“ ‘Suppose a man gets married to his sister and has sex with her. That is a shameful thing to do. It does not matter whether she is the daughter of his father or of his mother. They must be cut off right in front of their own people. That man has brought shame on his sister. He will be held accountable for what he has done.

18“ ‘Suppose a man makes love to a woman during her monthly period. He has uncovered the place where her bleeding was coming from. And she has let him do it. So they must be cut off from their people.

19“ ‘Do not have sex with the sister of either your mother or your father. That would bring shame on a close relative. Both of you would be held accountable for what you have done.

20“ ‘Suppose a man has sex with his aunt. Then he has brought shame on his uncle. Both of them will be held accountable for what they have done. They will die without having any children.

21“ ‘Suppose a man gets married to his brother’s wife. That is something that should never be done. He has brought shame on his brother. Neither of them will have any children.

22“ ‘Obey all of my rules and laws. Follow them. Then the land where I am bringing you to live will not throw you out. 23To make room for you, I am going to drive out the nations that are in the land. You must not follow the practices of those nations. I hated those nations because they did all of those things.

24“ ‘But I said to you, “You will take over their land as your own. I will give
it to you. It will belong to you. It is a land that has plenty of milk and honey.” I
am the LORD your God. I have set you apart from the other nations.

25“ ‘So you must be able to tell the difference between animals that are
“clean” and those that are not. You must know which birds are “clean” and
which are not. Do not make yourselves “unclean” by eating any animal or bird
that is not “clean.” Do not make yourselves “unclean” by eating anything that
moves along the ground. I have set all of them apart. They are “unclean” for
you.

26“ ‘You must be holy. You must be set apart to me. I am the LORD. I am holy.
I have set you apart from the other nations to be my own people.

27“ ‘Suppose a man or woman gets messages from those who have died. Or
suppose a man or woman talks to the spirits of the dead. Then you must put
that man or woman to death. You must kill them by throwing stones at them.
Anything that happens to them will be their own fault.’ ”

Rules for Priests

Leviticus 21

1The LORD said to Moses, “Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron. Tell them,
‘A priest must not make himself “unclean” by going near the dead body of any
of his people. 2But he can go near the body of a close relative. It could be his
mother, father, son, daughter or brother. 3He can also go near a sister who is
not married. She would have depended on him because she did not have a
husband. The priest can make himself “unclean” by going near her body. 4But
he must not make himself “unclean” by going near the bodies of people who
were only related to him by marriage. Going near them would make him
“unclean.”

5“ ‘Priests must not shave any part of their heads. They must not shave off the
edges of their beards. They must not make cuts on their bodies when someone
dies.

6“ ‘Priests must be holy. They must be set apart for me. I am their God. They
must not treat my name as if it were not holy. They must be holy because they
bring offerings that are made to me with fire. That is my food.

7“ ‘They must not get married to women who are “unclean” because they are
prostitutes. They must not marry women who are divorced from their
husbands. That is because priests are holy. They are set apart for me. I am their
God. 8Consider them as holy, because they offer up food to me. Consider them
as holy, because I am holy. I am the LORD. I make you holy.

9“ ‘Suppose a priest’s daughter makes herself “unclean” by becoming a
prostitute. Then she brings shame on her father. She must be burned to death.

10“ ‘The high priest is the one among his brothers whose head has been
anointed with olive oil. He has been appointed to wear the priest’s clothes.

“ ‘When someone dies, the high priest must not let his hair hang loose. He
must not tear his clothes to show how sad he is. 11He must not enter a place
where there is a dead body. He must not make himself “unclean,” even if his
father or mother dies. 12He must not leave my sacred tent to take part in

burying a body. That would bring shame on the tent. My anointing oil has set the high priest apart. I am the LORD.

13“ ‘The woman the high priest gets married to must be a virgin. 14He must not marry a widow or a woman who is divorced. He must not marry a woman who is “unclean” because she is a prostitute. He must only get married to a virgin. She must come from his own people. 15If he marries a virgin, he makes the children he has by her “clean.” I am the LORD. I make him holy.’ ”

16The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, 17“Speak to Aaron. Tell him, ‘For all time to come, no man in your family line who has any flaws can come near to offer food to me.

18“ ‘No man who has any flaws can come near. No man who is blind or disabled can come. No man whose body is scarred or twisted can come. 19No man whose foot or hand is disabled can come. 20No man whose back is bent can come. No man who is too short can come. No man who has anything wrong with his eyes can come. No man who has boils or running sores can come. No man whose sex glands are crushed can come.

21“ ‘No man in the family line of the priest Aaron who has any flaws can come near me. He can’t come to bring the offerings that are made to me with fire. If he has any flaws, he must not come near to offer food to me. 22He can eat the holy food. He can also eat my very holy food. 23But because he has a flaw, he must not go near the curtain or approach the altar. If he does, he will make my sacred tent “unclean.” I am the LORD. I make everything holy.’ ”

24So Moses told all of those things to Aaron and his sons. He also told them to all of the people of Israel.

Leviticus 22

1The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, 2“Here is what I want you to tell Aaron
and his sons. Tell them to treat the sacred offerings with respect. They are the
offerings the people of Israel set apart to honor me. So Aaron and his sons
must never treat my name as if it were not holy. I am the LORD.

3“Say to them, ‘Suppose a man in your family line is “unclean.” And suppose
he comes near the sacred offerings. They are the offerings the people of Israel
set apart to honor me. That man must be cut off from serving me as a priest.
That applies for all time to come. I am the LORD.

4“ ‘Suppose a man in Aaron’s family line has a skin disease. Or suppose
liquid waste is flowing out of his body. Then he can’t eat the sacred offerings
until he is made pure and clean.

“ ‘Suppose he touches something that has been made “unclean” by coming
near a dead body. Or suppose he touches someone who has semen flowing
from his body. Then he will not be “clean.” 5Or suppose he touches any
crawling thing that makes him “unclean.” Or suppose he touches any person
who makes him “unclean.” It does not matter what he touches that is
“unclean.” It will make him “unclean.”

6“ ‘The one who touches anything of that kind will be “unclean” until
evening. He must not eat any of the sacred offerings unless he has taken a bath.
7When the sun goes down, he will be “clean.” After that, he can eat the sacred
offerings. They are his food.

8“ ‘He must not eat anything that is found dead or torn apart by wild animals.
If he does, it will make him “unclean.” I am the LORD.

9“ ‘The priests must do what I require. But suppose they make fun of what I
require. Then they will become guilty and die. I am the LORD. I make them
holy.

10“ ‘Only a member of a priest’s family can eat the sacred offering. The guest
of a priest can’t eat it. A priest’s hired worker can’t eat it either.

11“ ‘But suppose a priest buys a slave with money. Or suppose a slave is born
in his house. Then that slave can eat the sacred food.

12“ ‘Suppose a priest’s daughter gets married to someone who is not a priest.

Then she can't eat any of the food that is brought as a sacred gift. [13]But suppose the priest's daughter becomes a widow or is divorced. She does not have any children. And she returns to live in her father's house, where she lived when she was young. Then she can eat her father's food. But a person who does not belong to a priest's family can't eat any of it.

[14]" 'Suppose someone eats a sacred offering by mistake. Then he must pay back the priest for the offering. He must also add a fifth of its value to it.

[15]" 'The priests must not allow the sacred offerings to become "unclean." They are the offerings the people of Israel bring to me. [16]The priests must not allow the offerings to become "unclean" by letting the people eat them. If they do, they will bring guilt on the people. They will have to pay for what they have done. I am the LORD. I make them holy.' "

Sacrifices the LORD Does Not Accept

[17]The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, [18]"Speak to Aaron and his sons. Speak to all of the people of Israel. Tell them, 'Suppose any of you brings a gift for a burnt offering to the LORD. It does not matter whether you are an Israelite or an outsider who lives in Israel. It does not matter whether you bring the offering to keep a promise or because you choose to give it. [19]You must bring a male animal that does not have any flaws if you want the LORD to accept it from you. It does not matter whether it is from your cattle, sheep or goats. [20]Do not bring an animal that has any flaws. If you do, the LORD will not accept it from you.

[21]" 'Suppose any of you brings an animal for a friendship offering to the LORD. Then it must not have any flaws at all. If it does, the LORD will not accept it. It does not matter whether the animal is from your herd or flock. It does not matter whether you bring it to keep a promise or because you choose to give it. [22]Do not offer a blind animal to the LORD. Do not bring an animal that is hurt or wounded. And do not offer one that has warts or boils or running sores. Do not place any of them on the altar as an offering that is made to the LORD with fire.

[23]" 'But suppose you bring an offering you choose to give. Then you can bring an ox or a sheep whose body is twisted or too small. But the LORD will not accept it if you offer it to keep a promise.

[24]" 'You must not offer the LORD a male animal whose sex glands have been hurt. The glands also must not be crushed, torn or cut. You must not offer that

kind of animal in your own land. [25]And you must not accept that kind of animal from someone who comes from another land. You must not offer it as food for your God. He will not accept it from you. Its body is twisted and has flaws.' "

[26]The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, [27]"When a calf, lamb or goat is born, it must remain with its mother for seven days. From the eighth day on, I will accept it as an offering that is made to me with fire. [28]Do not kill a cow and its calf on the same day. Do not kill a female sheep and its lamb on the same day.

[29]"Sacrifice a thank offering to me in the right way. Then I will accept it from you. [30]You must eat it that same day. Do not leave any of it until morning. I am the LORD.

[31]"Obey my commands. Follow them. I am the LORD. [32]Do not treat my name as if it were not holy. The people of Israel must recognize me as the holy God. I am the LORD. I make you holy. [33]I brought you out of Egypt to be your God. I am the LORD."

Leviticus 23

[1]The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, [2]“Speak to the people of Israel. Tell them, ‘Here are my appointed feast days. They are the appointed feast days of the LORD. Tell the people that they must come together for these sacred feasts.

The Sabbath Day

[3]“ ‘There are six days when you can work. But the seventh day is a Sabbath. You must rest on it. Come together on that sacred day. You must not do any work on it. No matter where you live, it is a Sabbath day in my honor.

Passover and Unleavened Bread

[4]“ ‘Here are my appointed feasts. Tell the people that they must come together for these sacred feasts at their appointed times. [5]My Passover begins when the sun goes down on the 14th day of the first month.

[6]“ ‘My Feast of Unleavened Bread begins on the 15th day of that month. For seven days you must eat bread that is made without yeast. [7]On the first day you must come together for a special service. Do not do any regular work on that day. [8]On each of the seven days bring an offering that is made to me with fire. On the seventh day come together for a special service. Do not do any regular work on that day.’ ”

The First Share of Israel’s Crops Belongs to the LORD

[9]The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, [10]“Speak to the people of Israel. Tell them, ‘When you enter the land I am going to give you, bring an offering to me. Gather your crops. Bring the first bundle of grain to the priest. [11]He must lift the grain up and wave it in front of me. Then I will accept it from you. The priest must wave it on the day after the Sabbath.

12“ ‘On the day he waves the grain for you, you must sacrifice a burnt offering to me. It must be a lamb that does not have any flaws. It must be a year old. 13You must bring it together with its grain offering. The grain offering must be 16 cups of fine flour. Mix it with olive oil. It is an offering that is made to me with fire. It has a pleasant smell. You must offer a drink offering along with the burnt offering. It must be a quart of wine.

14“ ‘You must not eat any bread until the very day you bring your offering to me. You must not eat any grain that has been cooked or any of your first grain until that time. That is a law that will last for all time to come. It applies no matter where you live.

The Feast of Weeks

15“ ‘The day you brought the grain for the wave offering was the day after the Sabbath. Count off seven full weeks from that day. 16Count off 50 days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath. On that day bring me an offering of your first grain. 17Bring two loaves of bread that are made with 16 cups of fine flour. They must be baked with yeast. Bring them to me as a wave offering from the first share of your crops. That applies no matter where you live.

18“ ‘Together with the bread, bring seven male lambs. Each lamb must be a year old. It must not have any flaws. Also bring one young bull and two rams. They will be a burnt offering to me. They will be offered together with their grain offerings and drink offerings. They are an offering that is made with fire. They give a pleasant smell to me.

19“ ‘Then sacrifice one male goat for a sin offering. Also sacrifice two lambs for a friendship offering. Each of the lambs must be a year old. 20The priest must lift the two lambs up and wave them in front of me as a wave offering. He must offer them together with the bread that is made out of the first share of your crops. They are a sacred offering to me. They will be given to the priest.

21“ ‘On that same day tell the people that they must come together for a special service. They must not do any regular work. That is a law that will last for all time to come. It applies no matter where you live.

22“ ‘Suppose you are gathering your crops. Then do not harvest all the way to the edges of your field. And do not pick up the grain you missed. Leave some for poor people and outsiders. I am the LORD your God.’ ”

The Feast of Trumpets

23 The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, 24 "Say to the people of Israel, 'On the
first day of the seventh month you must have a day of rest. It must be a special
service that is announced with trumpet blasts. 25 Do not do any regular work on
that day. Instead, bring an offering that is made to me with fire.' "

The Day When Sin Is Paid For

26 The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, 27 "The tenth day of the seventh month
is the day when sin is paid for. Come together for a special service. Do not eat
any food. Bring an offering that is made to me with fire. 28 Do not do any work
on that day. It is the day when sin is paid for. On that day your sin will be paid
for in my sight. I am the LORD your God.

29 "Suppose you do eat food on that day. Then you will be cut off from your
people. 30 I will destroy anyone among your people who does any work on that
day. 31 You must not do any work at all. That is a law that will last for all time
to come. It applies no matter where you live.

32 "That day is a sabbath for you. You must rest on it. You must not eat
anything on that day. You must keep your sabbath from the evening of the
ninth day of the month until the following evening."

The Feast of Booths

33 The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, 34 "Say to the people of Israel, 'On the
15th day of the seventh month my Feast of Booths begins. It lasts for seven
days.

35 " 'On the first day you must come together for a special service. Do not do
any regular work on that day. 36 On each of the seven days bring an offering
that is made to me with fire. On the eighth day come together for a special
service. Bring an offering that is made to me with fire. That special service is
the closing service. Do not do any regular work on that day.

37 " 'Those are my appointed feasts. Tell the people that they must come

together for those sacred feasts. During those times, the people must bring offerings that are made to me with fire. They are burnt offerings and grain offerings. They are sacrifices and drink offerings. Each offering must be brought at its required time.

38“ ‘The feasts are in addition to my Sabbath days. The offerings are in addition to your gifts and anything you have promised. They are also in addition to all of the offerings you choose to give me.

39“ ‘Begin with the 15th day of the seventh month. That is after you have gathered your crops. On that day celebrate my Feast of Booths for seven days. The first day is a day of rest. The eighth day is also a day of rest. 40On the first day you must get the best fruit from the trees. You must also get palm leaves, leafy branches and poplar branches. You must be filled with joy in my sight for seven days. I am the LORD your God.

41“ ‘Celebrate my Feast of Booths for seven days each year. That is a law that will last for all time to come. Celebrate the feast in the seventh month. 42Live in booths for seven days. All of the people of Israel must live in booths. 43Then your children after you will know that I made the people of Israel live in booths. I made them do it after I brought them out of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.’ ”

44So Moses announced to the people of Israel the appointed feasts of the LORD.

Olive Oil, Bread and Incense

Leviticus 24

[1]The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, [2]"Command the people of Israel to bring you clear oil that is made from pressed olives. Use it to keep the lamps burning and giving light all the time.

[3]"Aaron must take care of the lamps in my sight from evening until morning all the time. That is a law that will last for all time to come. The lamps are outside the curtain that is in front of the tablets of the covenant in the Tent of Meeting. [4]The lamps are on the pure gold lampstand in front of me. They must be taken care of all the time.

[5]"Get fine flour and bake 12 loaves of bread. Use 16 cups of flour for each loaf. [6]Place them in two rows. Put six loaves in each row on the table that is made out of pure gold. The table stands in front of me.

[7]"Along each row put some pure incense. It will remind you that all good things come from me. Burn the incense in place of the bread. The incense is an offering that is made to me with fire.

[8]"The bread must be set out in front of me regularly. Do it every Sabbath day. It will be Israel's duty to provide it for all time to come.

[9]"The bread belongs to Aaron and his sons. They must eat it in a holy place. It is a very holy part of their regular share of the offerings that are made to me with fire."

A Person Who Speaks Evil Is Put to Death

[10]There was a man who had an Israelite mother. His father was born in Egypt. The man went out among the people of Israel. A fight broke out in the camp between him and an Israelite. [11]The son of the Israelite woman spoke evil things against the LORD by using a curse. So the people brought him to Moses. The name of the man's mother was Shelomith. She was the daughter of Dibri.

Dibri was from the tribe of Dan. [12]The people kept her son under guard until they could find out what the LORD wanted them to do.

[13]Then the LORD spoke to Moses. He said, [14]"Get the man who spoke evil things against me. Take him outside the camp. All those who heard him say those things must place their hands on his head. Then the whole community must kill him by throwing stones at him.

[15]"Say to the people of Israel, 'If anyone calls down a curse on me, he will be held accountable. [16]If anyone speaks evil things against my Name, he must be put to death. The whole community must kill him by throwing stones at him. It does not matter whether he is an outsider or an Israelite. When he speaks evil things against my Name, he must be put to death.

[17]" 'If anyone kills another human being, he must be put to death. [18]If anyone kills someone's animal, he must pay its owner. A life must be taken for a life.

[19]" 'Suppose someone hurts his neighbor. Then what he has done must be done to him. [20]A bone must be broken for a bone. An eye must be put out for an eye. A tooth must be knocked out for a tooth. He must be hurt in the same way he hurt someone else.

[21]" 'If anyone kills an animal, he must pay its owner. But if he kills a human being, he must be put to death. [22]The same law applies whether he is an outsider or an Israelite. I am the LORD your God.' "

[23]Then Moses spoke to the people of Israel. They got the man who had spoken evil things against the LORD. They took him outside the camp. There they killed him by throwing stones at him. The people of Israel did just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

The Sabbath Year

Leviticus 25

1The LORD spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai. He said, 2"Speak to the people of
Israel. Tell them, 'You will enter the land I am going to give you. When you
do, you must honor me every seventh year by not farming the land that year.

3" 'For six years plant your fields. Trim the branches in your vineyards and
gather your crops.

4" 'But the seventh year must be a sabbath for the land. The land must rest
during it. It is a sabbath year in my honor. Do not plant your fields. Do not trim
the branches in your vineyards. 5Do not gather what grows without being
planted. And do not gather the grapes from the vines you have not taken care
of. The land must have a year of rest.

6" 'Anything the land produces during the sabbath year will be food for you.
It will be for you and your male and female servants. Your hired workers will
eat it. So will people who live with you for a while. 7And so will your livestock
and the wild animals that are in your land. Anything the land produces can be
eaten.

The Year of Jubilee

8" 'Count off seven sabbaths of years. Count off seven times seven years. The
seven sabbaths of years add up to a total of 49 years. 9The tenth day of the
seventh month is the day when sin is paid for. On that day blow the trumpet all
through your land.

10" 'Set the 50th year apart. Announce freedom all over the land to everyone
who lives there. The 50th year will be a Year of Jubilee for you. Each of you
must return to your own family property. And each of you must return to your
own tribe.

11" 'The 50th year will be a Year of Jubilee for you. Do not plant anything.
Do not gather what grows without being planted. And do not gather the grapes

from the vines you have not taken care of. 12It is a Year of Jubilee. It will be holy for you. Eat only what the fields produce.

13“ ‘In the Year of Jubilee all of you must return to your own property.

14“ ‘Suppose you sell land to one of your own people. Or you buy land from him. Then do not take advantage of each other. 15The price you pay must be based on the number of years since the last Year of Jubilee. And the price you charge must be based on the number of years left for gathering crops before the next Year of Jubilee.

16“ ‘When there are many years left, you must raise the price. When there are only a few years left, you must lower the price. That is because what the man is really selling you is the number of crops the land will produce. 17Do not take advantage of each other. Instead, have respect for me. I am the LORD your God.

18“ ‘Follow my rules. Be careful to obey my laws. Then you will live safely in the land. 19The land will produce its fruit. You will eat as much as you want. And you will live there in safety.

20“ ‘Suppose you say, “In the seventh year we will not plant anything or gather our crops. So what will we eat?” 21I will send you a great blessing in the sixth year. The land will produce enough for three years. 22While you plant during the eighth year, you will eat food from the old crop. You will continue to eat food from it until the crops from the ninth year are gathered.

23“ ‘The land must not be sold without a way of getting it back. That is because it belongs to me. You are only outsiders who rent my land. 24You must make sure that you can buy the land back. That applies to all of the land that belongs to you.

25“ ‘Suppose one of your own people becomes poor. And suppose he has to sell some of his land. Then his nearest relative must come and buy back what he has sold.

26“ ‘But suppose he does not have anyone to buy it back for him. And suppose things go well for him and he earns enough money to buy it back himself. 27Then he must decide how much the crops have become worth since the time he sold the land. He must take that amount off the price the land was sold for. He must give the man who is selling it back to him the money that is left. Then he can go back to his own property.

28“ ‘But suppose he has not earned enough money to pay the man back. Then

the buyer he sold the land to will keep it until the Year of Jubilee. At that time it will be returned to him. Then he can go back to his property.

29“ ‘Suppose a man sells a house in a city that has a wall around it. Then for a full year after he sells it he has the right to buy it back.

30“ ‘But suppose he does not buy it back before the full year has passed. Then the house in the walled city will continue to belong to the buyer and his children after him. It will not be returned to the seller in the Year of Jubilee.

31“ ‘But houses in villages that do not have walls around them must be treated like property outside walled cities. Those houses can be bought back at any time. And they must be returned in the Year of Jubilee.

32“ ‘The Levites always have the right to buy back their houses in the towns that belong to them. 33So their property among the people of Israel can be bought back. That applies to a house that is sold in any of their towns. Any house that is sold must be returned to its original owner in the Year of Jubilee. That is because the houses of the Levites will always belong to them.

34“ ‘But the grasslands around their towns must never be sold. They will belong to them for all time to come.

35“ ‘Suppose one of your own people becomes poor. And suppose he can’t take care of himself. Then help him just as you would help an outsider or someone who is living among you for a while. In that way, the man who is poor can continue to live among you.

36“ ‘Do not charge him interest of any kind. Instead, have respect for me. Then the man who has become poor can continue to live among you. 37If you lend him money, you must not charge him interest. And you must not sell him food for more than it cost you.

38“ ‘I am the LORD your God. I brought you out of Egypt. I did it to give you the land of Canaan. I wanted to be your God.

39“ ‘Suppose one of your own people becomes poor. And suppose he sells himself to you. Then do not make him work as a slave. 40You must treat him like a hired worker. Or you must treat him like someone who is living among you for a while.

“ ‘He must work for you until the Year of Jubilee. 41Then he and his children must be set free. He will go back to his own tribe. He will go back to the property his people have always owned.

42“ ‘The people of Israel are my servants. I brought them out of Egypt. So
they must not be sold as slaves. 43Show them pity when you rule over them.
Have respect for me.

44“ ‘You must get your male and female slaves from the nations that are
around you. You can buy slaves from them. 45You can buy as slaves some of
the people who are living among you for a while. You can also buy members of
their families who were born among you. They will become your property.
46You can leave them to your children as their share of your property. You can
make them slaves for life. But when you rule over your own people, you must
be kind to them.

47“ ‘Suppose an outsider or someone who is living among you for a while
becomes rich. Then suppose one of your own people becomes poor. He sells
himself to the outsider who is living among you. Or he sells himself to a
member of the outsider’s family. 48Then he keeps the right to buy himself back
after he has sold himself. One of his relatives can buy him back. 49An uncle or
a cousin can buy himself back after he has sold himself. In fact, any relative in
his tribe can do it. Or suppose things go well for him. Then he can buy himself
back.

50“ ‘He and his buyer must count the number of years from the time of the
sale up to the Year of Jubilee. The price for his freedom must be based on the
amount that is paid to a hired man for that number of years.

51“ ‘Suppose there are many years until the Year of Jubilee. Then for his
freedom he must pay a larger share of the price that was paid for him. 52But
suppose there are only a few years left until the Year of Jubilee. Then he must
count the number of years that are left. The payment for his freedom must be
based on that number.

53“ ‘He must be treated as if he had been hired from year to year. You must
make sure that his owner is kind to him when he rules over him.

54“ ‘Suppose he is not bought back in any of those ways. Then he and his
children must still be set free in the Year of Jubilee. 55That is because the
people of Israel belong to me. They are my servants. I brought them out of
Egypt. I am the LORD their God.

Rewards for Obeying the LORD

Leviticus 26

1“ ‘Do not make statues of gods for yourselves. Do not set up a likeness of a
god or a sacred stone for yourselves. Do not place a carved stone in your land
and bow down in front of it. I am the LORD your God.

2“ ‘You must always keep my Sabbath days. Have respect for my sacred tent.
I am the LORD.

3“ ‘Follow my rules. Be careful to obey my commands. 4Then I will send you
rain at the right time. The ground will produce its crops. The trees of the field
will bear their fruit. 5You will continue to thresh your grain until you gather
your grapes. You will continue to gather your grapes until you plant your
crops. You will have all you want to eat. And you will live in safety in your
land.

6“ ‘I will give you peace in the land. You will sleep, and no one will make
you afraid. I will remove wild animals from the land. There will not be any war
in your country. 7You will hunt down your enemies. You will kill them with
your swords. 8Five of you will chase 100. And 100 of you will chase 10,000.
You will kill your enemies with your swords.

9“ ‘I will look with favor on you. I will give you many children and increase
your numbers. And I will keep my covenant with you. 10You will still be eating
last year’s crops when you have to move them out to make room for new
crops.

11“ ‘I will live among you. I will not turn away from you. 12I will walk
among you. I will be your God. And you will be my people. 13I am the LORD
your God. I brought you out of Egypt. I did not want you to be slaves in Egypt
anymore. I threw off your heavy load. I helped you walk with your heads held
high.

Punishment for Not Obeying the LORD

14“ ‘But suppose you will not listen to me. You will not carry out all of my
commands. 15You will say no to my rules and turn away from my laws. And
you will break my covenant by failing to carry out all of my commands.
16Then here is what I will do to you. All at once I will bring terror on you. I
will send sicknesses that will make you weak. I will send fever that will
destroy your sight. It will slowly take your life away. When you plant seeds, it
will not do you any good. Instead, your enemies will eat what you have
planted. 17I will turn against you. Then your enemies will win the battle over
you. Those who hate you will rule over you. You will run away even when no
one is chasing you.

18“ ‘After all of that, suppose you still will not listen to me. Then I will
punish you for your sins seven times. 19I will break down your stubborn pride.
I will make the sky above you like iron, and it will not rain. I will make the
ground under you like bronze, and you will not be able to farm it. 20You will
work with all of your strength, but it will not do you any good. That is because
your soil will not produce any crops. The trees of the land will not bear any
fruit.

21“ ‘Suppose you continue to be my enemy. And suppose you still refuse to
listen to me. Then I will multiply your troubles many times because of your
sins. 22I will send wild animals against you. They will kill your children. They
will destroy your cattle. There will be so few of you left that your roads will be
deserted.

23“ ‘After all of those things, suppose you still do not accept my warnings.
And suppose you continue to be my enemy. 24Then I myself will be your
enemy. I will make you suffer for your sins again and again. 25I will send war
against you to punish you for breaking my covenant. When you go back into
your cities, I will send a plague among you. You will be handed over to your
enemies. 26I will cut off your supply of bread. Ten women will need only one
oven to bake your bread. They will weigh out the bread piece by piece. Even
when you eat all of it, it will not be enough to satisfy you.

27“ ‘After all of that, suppose you still do not listen to me. And suppose you
continue to be my enemy. 28Then I will be angry with you. I will be your
enemy. I myself will again punish you for your sins over and over. 29You will
eat the dead bodies of your sons. You will also eat the dead bodies of your
daughters.

30“ ‘I will destroy the high places where you worship other gods. I will pull
down your incense altars. I will pile up your dead bodies on the lifeless statues
of your gods. And I will turn away from you. 31I will completely destroy your
cities. I will destroy your places of worship. The pleasant smell of your
offerings will not give me any delight.

32“ ‘I will destroy your land so completely that your enemies who live there
will be shocked. 33I will scatter you among the nations. I will pull out my
sword and hunt you down. Your land and your cities will be completely
destroyed.

34“ ‘Then the deserted land will enjoy its sabbath years. It will rest. It will not
be farmed. It will enjoy its sabbaths. But you will become prisoners in the
country of your enemies. 35The land will rest the whole time it is deserted. It
was not able to rest during the sabbaths you lived in it.

36“ ‘Some of you will be left in the lands of your enemies. I will fill your
hearts with fear. The sound of a leaf that is blown by the wind will scare you
away. You will run as if you were escaping from swords. You will fall down,
even though no one is chasing you. 37You will trip over one another as if you
were running away from the battle. You will run away, even though no one is
chasing you. You will not be able to stand and fight against your enemies.

38“ ‘While you are still scattered among the nations, you will die. The lands
of your enemies will destroy you. 39You who are left in those lands will
become weaker and weaker. You will die because of your sins and the sins of
your parents.

40“ ‘But suppose you admit that you and your parents have sinned. You admit
the evil and dishonest things you have done against me. And you admit you
have become my enemy. 41What you did made me become your enemy. I let
your enemies take you into their land. But suppose you stop being stubborn.
You stop being proud. And you pay for your sin. 42Then I will remember my
covenant with Jacob. I will remember my covenant with Isaac. I will remember
my covenant with Abraham. I will remember what I said to them about the
land.

43“ ‘You will leave the land. It will enjoy its sabbaths while it lies deserted
because you are not there. You will pay for your sins because you said no to
my laws. You turned away from my rules.

44“ ‘But even after all of that, I will not say no to you or turn away from you.

I will not destroy you completely in the land of your enemies. I will not break my covenant with you. I am the LORD your God. 45Because of you, I will remember the covenant I made with the people of Israel who lived before you. I brought them out of Egypt to be their God. The nations saw me do it. I am the LORD.' "

46Those are the orders, the laws and the rules of the covenant the LORD made on Mount Sinai. He made it between himself and the people of Israel through Moses.

Keep Your Promises to the LORD

Leviticus 27

1The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, 2"Speak to the people of Israel. Tell
them, 'Suppose someone makes a special promise to set a person apart to serve
me. Here is how much it will cost to set that person free from the promise to
serve.

3" 'The cost for a male between the ages of 20 and 60 is 20 ounces of silver.
It must be weighed out in keeping with the standard weights that are used in
the sacred tent. 4The cost for a female of the same age is 12 ounces of silver.

5" 'The cost for a male between the ages of five and 20 is eight ounces of
silver. The cost for a female of the same age is four ounces of silver.

6" 'The cost for a male between the ages of one month and five years is two
ounces of silver. The cost for a female of the same age is one and a fourth
ounces of silver.

7" 'The cost for a male who is 60 years old or more is six ounces of silver.
The cost for a female of the same age is four ounces of silver.

8" 'But suppose the one who makes the special promise is too poor to pay the
required amount. Then he must bring to the priest the person who will be set
free. The priest will decide the right value for that person. It will be based on
how much the one who makes the promise can afford.

9" 'Suppose what he promised is an animal that I will accept as an offering.
Then the animal that is given to me becomes holy. 10The one who makes the
promise must not trade it. He must not trade a good animal for a bad one. And
he must not trade a bad animal for a good one. Suppose he chooses one animal
instead of another. Then both animals become holy.

11" 'Suppose the animal he promised is not "clean." Suppose I will not accept
it as an offering. Then the animal must be brought to the priest. 12He will
decide whether it is good or bad. Its value will be what he decides it will be.
13Suppose the owner wants to buy the animal back. Then he must add a fifth to
its cost.

14“ ‘Suppose a man sets his house apart as something that is holy to me. Then the priest will decide whether it is good or bad. Its value will remain what he decides it will be. 15Suppose the man sets his house apart. And suppose later he wants to buy it back. Then he must add a fifth to its value. The house will belong to him again.

16“ ‘Suppose a man sets apart a piece of his family’s land to me. Then its value must be decided based on the number of seeds that are required to grow a full crop on it. That value will be 20 ounces of silver for every six bushels of barley seeds.

17“ ‘Suppose he sets his field apart during the Year of Jubilee. Then the value that has been decided will not be changed. 18But suppose he sets his field apart after the Year of Jubilee. Then the priest will decide its value based on the number of years that are left until the next Year of Jubilee. The value that was decided will be reduced.

19“ ‘Suppose the man who sets his field apart wants to buy it back. Then he must add a fifth to its value. The field will belong to him again. 20But suppose he does not buy the field back. Instead, suppose he sells it to someone else. Then he can never buy it back.

21“ ‘When the field is set free in the Year of Jubilee, it will become holy. It will be like a field that is set apart to me. It will become the property of the priests.

22“ ‘Suppose a man sets apart to me a field he has bought. And suppose it is not part of his family’s land. 23Then the priest will decide its value based on the number of years that are left until the Year of Jubilee. The man must pay that value on the day it is decided. The money is holy. It is set apart for me.

24“ ‘In the Year of Jubilee the field will go back to the person the man bought it from. That person is the one who had owned the land before.

25“ ‘Every amount of money must be weighed out in keeping with the standard weights that are used in the sacred tent.

26“ ‘But no one can set apart the first male animal that is born to its mother. That animal already belongs to me. It does not matter whether it is an ox or a sheep. It belongs to me.

27“ ‘Suppose it is an animal that is not “clean.” Then the owner may buy it back at the value that has been decided. And he must add a fifth to its value.

But suppose he does not buy it back. Then it must be sold at the value that has been decided.

28“ ‘But nothing a man owns and sets apart to me can be sold or bought back. It does not matter whether it is a person or an animal or a family’s land. Everything that is set apart to me is very holy to me.

29“ ‘No one who is set apart in a special way to be destroyed can be bought back. He must be put to death.

30“ ‘A tenth of everything the land produces belongs to me. That includes grain from the soil and fruit from the trees. It is holy. It is set apart for me. 31Suppose a man buys back some of his tenth. Then he must add a fifth of the cost to it.

32“ ‘The whole tenth of his herds and flocks will be holy. They will be set apart for me. That includes every tenth animal that its shepherd marks with his wooden staff. 33The owner must not pick out the good animals from the bad. He must not choose one animal instead of another. But if he does, both animals become holy. They can’t be bought back.’ ”

34The LORD gave Moses all of those commands on Mount Sinai for the people of Israel.

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The Men of Israel Are Counted

Numbers 1

1 The LORD spoke to Moses in the Tent of Meeting. It happened in the Desert
of Sinai. The LORD spoke to him on the first day of the second month. It was
the second year after the people of Israel came out of Egypt.

The LORD said, 2 "Count all of the men of Israel. Make a list of them by their
tribes and families. List every man by name. List them one by one. 3 Count all
of the men who are able to serve in the army. They must be 20 years old or
more. I want you and Aaron to make a list of them company by company. 4 One
man from each tribe must help you. Those who help must be the heads of their
families.

5 "Here are the names of the men who must help you.

"From the tribe of Reuben will come Elizur, the son of Shedeur.
6 From the tribe of Simeon will come Shelumiel, the son of Zurishaddai.
7 From the tribe of Judah will come Nahshon, the son of Amminadab.
8 From the tribe of Issachar will come Nethanel, the son of Zuar.
9 From the tribe of Zebulun will come Eliab, the son of Helon.
10 From the tribe of Ephraim will come Elishama, the son of Ammihud.
From the tribe of Manasseh will come Gamaliel, the son of Pedahzur.
Ephraim and Manasseh were Joseph's two sons.
11 From the tribe of Benjamin will come Abidan, the son of Gideoni.
12 From the tribe of Dan will come Ahiezer, the son of Ammishaddai.
13 From the tribe of Asher will come Pagiel, the son of Ocran.
14 From the tribe of Gad will come Eliasaph, the son of Deuel.
15 From the tribe of Naphtali will come Ahira, the son of Enan."

16 Those were the men who were appointed from the community. They were
the leaders of the tribes of their people. They were the heads of the major
families in Israel.

17 Moses and Aaron went and got the men whose names had been given to
them. 18 Then Moses and Aaron gathered all of the men of Israel together. It
was the first day of the second month. The men announced the tribe and family
they belonged to. Those who were 20 years old or more were listed by name.
They were listed one by one.

19 Everything was done just as the LORD had commanded Moses. So Moses
counted them in the Desert of Sinai.

20 Here is the number of men from the tribe of Reuben, Israel's oldest son.

All of the men who were able to serve in the army were counted. They
were 20 years old or more. They were listed by name. They were
listed one by one. They were listed in keeping with the records of
their tribes and families. 21 The number from the tribe of Reuben was
46,500.

22 Here is the number of men from the tribe of Simeon.

All of the men who were able to serve in the army were counted. They
were 20 years old or more. They were listed by name. They were
listed one by one. They were listed in keeping with the records of
their tribes and families. 23 The number from the tribe of Simeon was
59,300.

24 Here is the number of men from the tribe of Gad.

All of the men who were able to serve in the army were counted. They
were 20 years old or more. They were listed by name. They were
listed in keeping with the records of their tribes and families. 25 The
number from the tribe of Gad was 45,650.

[26]Here is the number of men from the tribe of Judah.

All of the men who were able to serve in the army were counted. They were 20 years old or more. They were listed by name. They were listed in keeping with the records of their tribes and families. [27]The number from the tribe of Judah was 74,600.

[28]Here is the number of men from the tribe of Issachar.

All of the men who were able to serve in the army were counted. They were 20 years old or more. They were listed by name. They were listed in keeping with the records of their tribes and families. [29]The number from the tribe of Issachar was 54,400.

[30]Here is the number of men from the tribe of Zebulun.

All of the men who were able to serve in the army were counted. They were 20 years old or more. They were listed by name. They were listed in keeping with the records of their tribes and families. [31]The number from the tribe of Zebulun was 57,400.

[32]Here is the number of men from the tribe of Ephraim, the son of Joseph.

All of the men who were able to serve in the army were counted. They were 20 years old or more. They were listed by name. They were listed in keeping with the records of their tribes and families. [33]The number from the tribe of Ephraim was 40,500.

[34]Here is the number of men from the tribe of Manasseh, the son of Joseph.

All of the men who were able to serve in the army were counted. They were 20 years old or more. They were listed by name. They were listed in keeping with the records of their tribes and families. [35]The number from the tribe of Manasseh was 32,200.

[36]Here is the number of men from the tribe of Benjamin.

All of the men who were able to serve in the army were counted. They were 20 years old or more. They were listed by name. They were listed in keeping with the records of their tribes and families. [37]The number from the tribe of Benjamin was 35,400.

[38]Here is the number of men from the tribe of Dan.

All of the men who were able to serve in the army were counted. They were 20 years old or more. They were listed by name. They were listed in keeping with the records of their tribes and families. [39]The number from the tribe of Dan was 62,700.

[40]Here is the number of men from the tribe of Asher.

All of the men who were able to serve in the army were counted. They were 20 years old or more. They were listed by name. They were listed in keeping with the records of their tribes and families. [41]The number from the tribe of Asher was 41,500.

[42]Here is the number of men from the tribe of Naphtali.

All of the men who were able to serve in the army were counted. They were 20 years old or more. They were listed by name. They were listed in keeping with the records of their tribes and families. [43]The number from the tribe of Naphtali was 53,400.

[44]Those were the men Moses and Aaron counted. The 12 leaders of Israel helped them. There was one leader from each tribe. [45]The men who were counted were able to serve in Israel's army. All of them were 20 years old or more. They were counted family by family. [46]The total number was 603,550.

[47]But the families of the tribe of Levi were not counted along with the others. [48]The LORD had spoken to Moses. He had said, [49]"You must not count the men from the tribe of Levi. Do not include them when you list the other men of

Israel.

50“Instead, put the Levites in charge of the holy tent. That is where the tablets of the covenant are kept. The Levites will be in charge of everything that belongs to the holy tent. They must carry the tent and everything that belongs to it. They must take care of it. They must set up camp around it.

51“When the holy tent must be moved, the Levites must take it down. And when the tent must be set up, the Levites must do it. Anyone else who goes near it will be put to death.

52“The people of Israel must set up their tents by companies. All of them must be in their own camps under their own flags.

53“But the Levites must set up their tents around the holy tent where the tablets of the covenant are kept. Then my anger will not fall on the community of Israel. The Levites will be held accountable for taking care of the tent.”

54The people of Israel did everything just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

The Tribes Camp Around the Tent of Meeting

Numbers 2

1 The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron. He said, 2 “The people of Israel must
camp around the Tent of Meeting. But they must not camp too close to it. All
of them must camp under their flags and under the banners of their families.”

3 The companies of the camp of Judah must be on the east side. They must set
up camp toward the sunrise. They must camp under their flag. The leader of
the tribe of Judah is Nahshon, the son of Amminadab. 4 There are 74,600 men
in his company.

5 The tribe of Issachar will camp next to them. The leader of the tribe of
Issachar is Nethanel, the son of Zuar. 6 There are 54,400 men in his company.

7 The tribe of Zebulun will be next. The leader of the tribe of Zebulun is
Eliab, the son of Helon. 8 There are 57,400 men in his company.

9 So a total of 186,400 men will be set apart for the camp of Judah. They will
be arranged company by company. They will start out first.

10 The companies of the camp of Reuben will be on the south side. They will
be under their flag. The leader of the tribe of Reuben is Elizur, the son of
Shedeur. 11 There are 46,500 men in his company.

12 The tribe of Simeon will camp next to them. The leader of the tribe of
Simeon is Shelumiel, the son of Zurishaddai. 13 There are 59,300 men in his
company.

14 The tribe of Gad will be next. The leader of the tribe of Gad is Eliasaph, the
son of Deuel. 15 There are 45,650 men in his company.

16 So a total of 151,450 men will be set apart for the camp of Reuben. They
will be arranged company by company. They will start out second.

17 Then the camp of the Levites will start out. The Tent of Meeting will go
with them. They will march in the middle of the other camps. They will start

out in the same order as they do when they set up camp. Each one will be in his own place under his flag.

18 The companies of the camp of Ephraim will be on the west side. They will be under their flag. The leader of the tribe of Ephraim is Elishama, the son of Ammihud. 19 There are 40,500 men in his company.

20 The tribe of Manasseh will be next to them. The leader of the tribe of Manasseh is Gamaliel, the son of Pedahzur. 21 There are 32,200 men in his company.

22 The tribe of Benjamin will be next. The leader of the tribe of Benjamin is Abidan, the son of Gideoni. 23 There are 35,400 men in his company.

24 So a total of 108,100 men will be set apart for the camp of Ephraim. They will be arranged company by company. They will start out third.

25 The companies of the camp of Dan will be on the north side. They will be under their flag. The leader of the tribe of Dan is Ahiezer, the son of Ammishaddai. 26 There are 62,700 men in his company.

27 The tribe of Asher will camp next to them. The leader of the tribe of Asher is Pagiel, the son of Ocran. 28 There are 41,500 men in his company.

29 The tribe of Naphtali will be next. The leader of the tribe of Naphtali is Ahira, the son of Enan. 30 There are 53,400 men in his company.

31 So a total of 157,600 men will be set apart for the camp of Dan. They will start out last. They will march under their flags.

32 Those are the men of Israel. They were counted in keeping with their families. The total number of all of the men who were in the camps is 603,550, company by company. 33 But the Levites weren't counted along with the other men of Israel. That's what the LORD had commanded Moses.

34 So the people of Israel did everything the LORD had commanded Moses. That's the way they set up camp under their flags. And that's the way they started out. Each man marched out with his own tribe and family.

The Levites

Numbers 3

[1]Here is the story of the family of Aaron and Moses. It belongs to the time when the LORD talked with Moses on Mount Sinai.

[2]Aaron's oldest son was Nadab. His other sons were Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. [3]Those were the names of Aaron's sons. They were the anointed priests. They were prepared to serve the LORD as priests. [4]But Nadab and Abihu made an offering to the LORD by using fire that wasn't allowed. So they fell dead in front of him. That happened in the Desert of Sinai. They didn't have any sons. Only Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests while their father Aaron was living.

[5]The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, [6]"Bring the men of the tribe of Levi to the priest Aaron. They will help him. [7]They must work at the Tent of Meeting for Aaron and for the whole community. They must do what needs to be done at the holy tent. [8]They must take care of everything that is connected with the Tent of Meeting. When they do, they are acting for all of the people of Israel. [9]Give the Levites to Aaron and his sons. They are the men of Israel who must be given completely to him.

[10]"Appoint Aaron and his sons to serve as priests. Anyone else who approaches the sacred tent must be put to death."

[11]The LORD also said to Moses, [12]"I have taken the Levites from among the people of Israel. I have taken them in place of the oldest son who is born to each woman in Israel. The Levites belong to me. [13]That is because every male that is born first to a mother is mine. In Egypt I struck down all of the males that were born first. I did it when I set apart for myself every male that is born first to a mother in Israel. That is true for men and animals alike. They belong to me. I am the LORD."

[14]The LORD spoke to Moses in the Desert of Sinai. He said, [15]"Count the Levites by their family groups. Count every male who is a month old or more." [16]So Moses counted them. He did just as the word of the LORD had commanded him.

[17]The sons of Levi were
Gershon, Kohath and Merari.
[18]The major families from Gershon were
Libni and Shimei.
[19]The major families from Kohath were
Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel.
[20]The major families from Merari were
Mahli and Mushi.
Those were the major families of the Levites.

[21]The families of Libni and Shimei belonged to the family of Gershon. [22]All of the males who were a month old or more were counted. There were 7,500 of them. [23]The families of Gershon had to camp on the west side. They had to camp behind the holy tent. [24]The leader of the families of Gershon was Eliasaph, the son of Lael.

[25]Here are the duties of the families of Gershon at the Tent of Meeting. They were held accountable for taking care of the holy tent and its coverings. They took care of the curtain at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. [26]They took care of the curtains of the courtyard. They took care of the curtain at the entrance to the courtyard. The courtyard was all around the holy tent and altar. They also took care of the ropes. In fact, they had to take care of everything that was connected with the use of all of those things.

[27]The families of Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel belonged to the family of Kohath. [28]All of the males who were a month old or more were counted. There were 8,600 of them. The families of Kohath were held accountable for taking care of the sacred tent. [29]They had to camp on the south side of the holy tent. [30]The leader of the families of Kohath was Elizaphan, the son of Uzziel.

[31]They were held accountable for taking care of the ark of the covenant. They took care of the table for the holy bread. They took care of the lampstand and

the two altars. They took care of the articles that were used for serving in the sacred tent. They also took care of the inner curtain. In fact, they had to take care of everything that was connected with the use of all of those things.

32The chief leader of the Levites was Eleazar. He was the son of the priest Aaron. Eleazar was appointed over those who were held accountable for taking care of the sacred tent.

33The families of Mahli and Mushi belonged to the family of Merari. 34All of the males who were a month old or more were counted. There were 6,200 of them. 35The leader of the families of Merari was Zuriel, the son of Abihail. They had to camp on the north side of the holy tent.

36They were appointed to take care of the frames of the tent. They took care of its crossbars, posts and bases. They took care of all of its supplies. In fact, they had to take care of everything that was connected with the use of all of those things. 37They also took care of the posts of the courtyard that was around the holy tent. And they took care of the bases, tent stakes and ropes.

38Moses, Aaron and Aaron's sons had to camp to the east of the holy tent. They had to camp toward the sunrise in front of the Tent of Meeting. They were held accountable for taking care of the sacred tent. They had to do it for the people of Israel. Anyone else who approached the tent would be put to death.

39The total number of the Levites was 22,000. They were counted family by family. Every male who was a month old or more was counted. Moses and Aaron counted them, just as the LORD had commanded.

40The LORD said to Moses, "Count the males among the people of Israel who were the oldest sons born in their families. Count all those who are a month old or more. Make a list of their names. 41Take the Levites for me in their place. And take the livestock of the Levites in place of all of the male animals in

Israel that were born first to their mothers. I am the LORD.”

42So Moses counted all of the oldest sons in Israel. He did just as the LORD had commanded him. 43There were 22,273 of those sons who were a month old or more. They were listed by name.

44The LORD also said to Moses, 45“Take the Levites in place of all the males who were born first in Israel. Also take the livestock of the Levites in place of the livestock of Israel. The Levites belong to me. I am the LORD.

46“But there are 273 more males who were born first in Israel than there are male Levites. 47Collect two ounces of silver for each of them. Weigh it out in keeping with the standard weights that are used in the sacred tent. 48Give the silver to Aaron and his sons. It will buy the freedom of the additional sons in Israel.”

49So Moses collected the silver from the additional sons in Israel to buy their freedom. The Levites took the place of all of the others. 50Moses collected 35 pounds of silver. It was weighed out in keeping with the weights that are used in the sacred tent. Moses collected it from the oldest sons in Israel. 51He gave the silver to Aaron and his sons. He did just as the LORD had commanded him.

The Kohath Families

Numbers 4

1The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron. He said, 2"Count the Kohath families
of the Levites. Make a list of them family by family. 3Count all of the men who
are from 30 to 50 years old. Those are the men who must come and serve at the
Tent of Meeting.

4"Here is the work the men of Kohath must do at the Tent of Meeting. They
must take care of the things that are very holy.

5"When the camp is ready to move, Aaron and his sons must go into the tent.
They must take down the curtain that screens the ark where the tablets of the
covenant are kept. They must cover the ark with the curtain. 6Then they must
cover that with the hides of sea cows. They must spread a solid blue cloth over
the hides. And they must put the poles in place.

7"They must spread a blue cloth over the table for the holy bread. They must
put the plates, dishes and bowls on the cloth. They must also put the jars for
drink offerings on it. The bread that is always kept there must remain on it.
8They must spread a bright red cloth over everything. Then they must cover
that with the hides of sea cows. And they must put the poles of the table in
place.

9"They must get a blue cloth. With it they must cover the lampstand that
gives light. They must also cover its lamps, trays and wick cutters. And they
must cover all of its jars. The jars are for the olive oil that is used in the
lampstand. 10Then Aaron and his sons must wrap the lampstand and all of the
things that are used with it. They must cover it with the hides of sea cows. And
they must put it on a frame to carry it.

11"They must spread a blue cloth over the gold altar for burning incense.
They must cover that with the hides of sea cows. And they must put the poles
of the altar in place.

12"They must get all of the articles that are used for serving in the sacred tent.
They must wrap them in a blue cloth. They must cover that with the hides of
sea cows. Then they must put the articles on a frame to carry them.

13“They must remove the ashes from the bronze altar for burnt offerings.
They must spread a purple cloth over it. 14Then they must place all of the tools
on it. The tools are used for serving at the altar. They include the pans for
carrying ashes. They also include the meat forks, shovels and sprinkling bowls.
Aaron and his sons must cover the altar with the hides of sea cows. And they
must put its poles in place.

15“Aaron and his sons must cover all of the holy articles that belong to the
holy tent. Then the men of Kohath must get ready to carry everything. They
must do it when the camp is ready to move. But they must not touch the holy
things. If they do, they will die. The men of Kohath must carry everything that
is in the Tent of Meeting.

16“The priest Eleazar will be in charge of the olive oil for the light. He is the
son of Aaron. Eleazar will be in charge of the sweet-smelling incense. He will
be in charge of the regular grain offering and the anointing oil. He will be in
charge of the entire holy tent. He will also be in charge of everything that is in
it. That includes all of the articles that belong to the tent.”

17The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron. He said, 18“Make sure that the
Kohath families are not cut off from the Levites. 19I want them to live and not
die when they come near the very holy things. So here is what you must do for
them. Aaron and his sons must go into the sacred tent and tell each man what
to do. They must tell each man what to carry. 20But the men of Kohath must
not go in and look at the holy things. They must not look at them even for a
moment. If they do, they will die.”

The Gershon Families

21The LORD said to Moses, 22“Count the Gershon families. Make a list of
them family by family. 23Count all of the men who are from 30 to 50 years old.
Those are the men who must come and serve at the Tent of Meeting.

24“Here is how the Gershon families must serve. They must carry things.
25They must carry the curtains of the holy Tent of Meeting. They must carry its
covering and the outside covering of the hides of sea cows. They must carry
the curtains that cover the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. 26They must carry
the curtains of the courtyard. The courtyard is all around the holy tent and altar.

They must carry the curtain for the entrance. They must carry the ropes. They must also carry all of the supplies that are used for any purpose in the tent. The men of Gershon must do everything that needs to be done with those things.

27"All of their work must be done under the direction of Aaron and his sons. That includes carrying and everything else they do. Aaron and his sons must tell them what to carry. And that will be their work. 28It is what the Gershon families must do at the Tent of Meeting. They must work under the direction of the priest Ithamar. He is the son of Aaron.

The Merari Families

29"Count the Merari families. Count them family by family. 30Count all of the men who are from 30 to 50 years old. Those are the men who must come and serve at the Tent of Meeting.

31"Here is the work they must do at the Tent of Meeting. They must carry the frames of the holy tent. They must carry its crossbars, posts and bases. 32They must also carry the posts of the courtyard. The courtyard is all around the holy tent. And they must carry the bases for the posts as well as their tent stakes and ropes. They must also carry all of the supplies and everything that is connected with their use. Tell each man exactly what to carry. 33That is the work the Merari families must do at the Tent of Meeting. They must work under the direction of the priest Ithamar. He is the son of Aaron."

Counting the Families of the Levites

34Moses, Aaron and the leaders of the community counted the men of Kohath. They counted them family by family. 35They counted all of the men who were from 30 to 50 years old. Those were the men who came and served at the Tent of Meeting. 36There were 2,750 men. They were counted family by family. 37That was the total of all of the men in the Kohath families who served at the Tent of Meeting. Moses and Aaron counted them. They did just as the LORD had commanded through Moses.

38The men of Gershon were counted family by family. 39All of the men who were from 30 to 50 years old were counted. They were the men who came and

served at the Tent of Meeting. [40]There were 2,630 men. They were counted family by family. [41]That was the total of the men in the Gershon families who served at the Tent of Meeting. Moses and Aaron counted them. They did just as the LORD had commanded.

[42]The men of Merari were counted family by family. [43]All of the men who were from 30 to 50 years old were counted. They were the men who came and served at the Tent of Meeting. [44]There were 3,200 men. They were counted family by family. [45]That was the total of the men in the Merari families. Moses and Aaron counted them. They did just as the LORD had commanded through Moses.

[46]So Moses and Aaron counted all of the Levites. The leaders of Israel helped them. They counted the Levites family by family. [47]All of the men who were from 30 to 50 years old were counted. They were the men who came and served at the Tent of Meeting. They were also supposed to carry it. [48]The total number of men was 8,580. [49]Everything was done as the LORD had commanded through Moses. Each man was given his work. And each one was told what to carry.

So they were counted, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Making the Camp Pure

Numbers 5

1The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, 2"Tell the Israelites that certain people
must be sent away from the camp. Command them to send away anyone who
has a skin disease. They must send away all those who have a liquid waste
coming from their bodies. And they must send away those who are not 'clean'
because they have touched a dead body. 3That applies to men and women alike.
Send them out of the camp. They must not make their camp 'unclean.' That is
where I live among them."

4So the people of Israel did what the LORD commanded. They sent those who
were not "clean" out of the camp. They did just as the LORD had directed
Moses.

Sins Against Others Must Be Paid For

5The LORD said to Moses, 6"Speak to the people of Israel. Say to them,
'Suppose a man or woman does something wrong to someone else. Then that
person is not being faithful to the LORD. People like that are guilty.

7" 'They must admit they have committed a sin. They must pay in full for
what they did wrong. And they must add a fifth to it. Then they must give all of
it to the person they have sinned against.

8" 'But suppose the person has died. And suppose there is not a close relative
who can be paid for the sin that was committed. Then what is paid belongs to
the LORD. It must be given to the priest. A ram must be given along with it. The
ram must be sacrificed to the LORD to pay for the sin.

9" 'All of the sacred gifts the people of Israel bring to a priest will belong to
him. 10Sacred gifts belong to the man who gives them. But what he gives to a
priest will belong to the priest.' "

The Test for a Wife Who Is Not Faithful

11Then the LORD spoke to Moses again. He said, 12"Speak to the people of
Israel. Say to them, 'Suppose a man's wife goes down the wrong path. And
suppose she is not faithful to him. 13She has sex with another man. And
suppose what she has done is hidden from her husband. No one knows she is
not "clean." So there is no witness against her. And she has not been caught in
the act.

14" 'Suppose her husband becomes jealous. He does not trust his wife, and
she is really not "clean." Or suppose he does not trust her even though she is
"clean." 15Then he must take his wife to the priest.

" 'He must also bring an offering. It must be eight cups of barley flour. The
offering is for his wife. He must not pour olive oil on it. And he must not put
incense on it. It is a grain offering for being jealous. It calls attention to a
person's guilt.

16" 'The priest must have her stand in front of the LORD. 17He must pour some
holy water into a clay jar. He must get some dust from the floor of the holy
tent. And he must put it into the water. 18The priest must have the woman stand
in front of the LORD. Then he must untie her hair. He must place in her hands
the offering that calls attention to a person's guilt. It is the grain offering for
being jealous. The priest must keep the bitter water with him. It is the water
that brings a curse.

19" 'Then the priest must have the woman take an oath. He must say to her,
"Suppose no other man has had sex with you. And suppose you haven't gone
down the wrong path. You have kept yourself pure while you are married to
your husband. Then may the bitter water that brings a curse not harm you.
20But suppose you have gone down the wrong path while you are married to
your husband. You have made yourself 'unclean.' You have had sex with a man
who isn't your husband."

21" 'At that point the priest must put the woman under the curse of the oath.
He must say, "May the LORD cause your people to call a curse down on you.
May he cause them to speak against you. May they do it when the LORD makes
your body unable to have children. 22May this water that brings a curse enter
your body. May it make your body unable to have children."

" 'Then the woman must say, "Amen. Let it happen."

[23]“ ‘The priest must write the curses on a scroll. He must wash them off in the bitter water. [24]It is the water he will have the woman drink. It is bitter water that brings a curse. It will enter her body. And it will cause her to suffer bitterly.

[25]“ ‘The priest must take from her hands the grain offering for being jealous. He must lift it up and wave it in front of the LORD. He must bring it to the altar. [26]Then the priest must take a handful of the grain offering. It is the offering that calls attention to a person’s guilt. He must burn it on the altar. After that, he must have the woman drink the water.

[27]“ ‘Suppose she has made herself “unclean.” She has not been faithful to her husband. And she has drunk the water that brings a curse. Then it will go into her body. It will cause her to suffer bitterly. It will make her body unable to have children. Her people will call a curse down on her.

[28]“ ‘But suppose the woman has not made herself “unclean.” And suppose she is free from anything that is not “clean.” Then she will be free of guilt. And she will be able to have children.

[29]“ ‘That is the law about being jealous. It applies to a woman who has gone down the wrong path. She has made herself “unclean” while she is married to her husband. [30]And it applies to a man who becomes jealous. He has doubts about his wife. The priest must have her stand in front of the LORD. He must apply the entire law to her. [31]The husband will not be guilty of doing anything wrong. But the woman will be punished for her sin.’ ”

Becoming a Nazirite

Numbers 6

1The LORD said to Moses, 2“Speak to the people of Israel. Say to them,
‘Suppose a man or woman wants to make a special promise. They want to set
themselves apart to the LORD for a certain period of time. They want to be
Nazirites.

3“ ‘Then they must not drink any kind of wine. They must not drink vinegar
that is made out of wine of any kind. They must not drink grape juice. They
must not eat grapes or raisins. 4As long as they are Nazirites, they must not eat
anything grapevines produce. They must not even eat the seeds or skins of
grapes.

5“ ‘They must not use razors on their heads. They must not cut their hair
during the whole time they have set themselves apart to the LORD. They must
be holy until that time is over. They must let the hair on their heads grow long.
6And they must not go near a dead body during that whole time.

7“ ‘But what if their father or mother dies? Or what if their brother or sister
dies? Then they must not make themselves “unclean” because of them. The
hair on their heads shows they are set apart for God. 8During the whole time
they are set apart they are holy to the LORD.

9“ ‘Suppose someone dies suddenly in front of them. That makes the hair
they have set apart to the LORD “unclean.” So they must shave their heads on
the day they will be made “clean.” That is the seventh day.

10“ ‘Then on the eighth day they must bring two doves. Or they can bring two
young pigeons. They must bring them to the priest. He will be at the entrance
to the Tent of Meeting. 11The priest must offer one of the birds as a sin
offering. And he must offer the other as a burnt offering. The sacrifices will
pay for the sin of the Nazirite man or woman. They sinned by being near a
dead body. That same day they must set their heads apart as holy.

12“ ‘They must set themselves apart to the LORD again. They must do it for
the same period of time they had agreed to at first. And they must bring a male
lamb that is a year old as a guilt offering. The days before that day do not

count. That is because they became “unclean” during the time they were set apart.

13“ ‘The time when the Nazirites are set apart will come to an end. Here is the law that applies to them at that time. They must be brought to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.

14“ ‘There they must sacrifice their offerings to the LORD. They must bring a male lamb that is a year old. It must not have any flaws. It is for a burnt offering. Then they must bring a female lamb that is a year old. It must not have any flaws. It is for a sin offering. And they must bring a ram that does not have any flaws. It is for a friendship offering.

15“ ‘They must sacrifice the offerings together with their grain offerings and drink offerings. And they must also bring a basket of bread that is made without yeast. The offering must include flat cakes that are made out of fine flour mixed with olive oil. And it must include wafers that are spread with oil.

16“ ‘The priest must bring all of those things to the LORD. He must sacrifice the sin offering and the burnt offering. 17He must bring the basket of bread that is made without yeast. And he must sacrifice the ram. It will be a friendship offering to the LORD. The priest must bring it together with its grain offering and drink offering.

18“ ‘Then the Nazirites must shave off the hair they had set apart to the Lord. They must do it at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. And they must put the hair in the fire that burns the sacrifice of the friendship offering.

19“ ‘After the Nazirites have shaved off their hair, the priest must take a boiled shoulder of the ram. He must remove a cake and a wafer from the basket. They must be made without yeast. And he must place the shoulder and the bread in the hands of the Nazirites.

20“ ‘Then he must lift up the shoulder and bread and wave them in front of the LORD. They are a wave offering. They are holy. They belong to the priest. The breast that was waved belongs to him. The thigh that was offered belongs to him too. After the offering is waved, the Nazirites can drink wine.

21“ ‘That is the law of the Nazirites. They promise to sacrifice offerings to the LORD. They do it when they set themselves apart. And they should bring anything else they can afford. They must carry out the promises they have made. They must do it in keeping with the law of the Nazirites.’ ”

How the Priests Bless the People

22 The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, 23 “Tell Aaron and his sons, ‘Here is
how I want you to bless the people of Israel. Say to them,

24 “ ‘ “May the LORD bless you
and take good care of you.
25 May the LORD smile on you
and be gracious to you.
26 May the LORD look on you with favor
and give you his peace.” ’

27 “In that way they will put the blessing of my name on the people of Israel.
And I will bless them.”

Israel's Leaders Bring Offerings for the Holy Tent

Numbers 7

[1]Moses finished setting up the holy tent. Then he anointed it with olive oil. He set it apart to the LORD. He did the same thing with everything that belonged to it. He also anointed the altar. And he set apart to the LORD the altar and all of its tools.

[2]Then the leaders of Israel brought their offerings. The leaders were the heads of the families. They were the leaders of the tribes. They were in charge of the men who had been counted. [3]They brought gifts to the LORD. They brought six covered carts and 12 oxen. Each leader gave an ox. And every two leaders gave a cart. They put their gifts in front of the holy tent.

[4]The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, [5]"Accept the gifts from the leaders. I want their gifts to be used in the work at the Tent of Meeting. Give them to the Levites. They need them to do their work."

[6]So Moses gave the carts and the oxen to the Levites. [7]He gave two carts and four oxen to the men from the family of Gershon. They needed them to do their work. [8]He gave four carts and eight oxen to the men from the family of Merari. They needed them to do their work. All of those men were under the direction of the priest Ithamar, the son of Aaron.

[9]But Moses didn't give any carts or oxen to the men from the family of Kohath. They had to carry the holy things on their shoulders. They were accountable for the holy things.

[10]When the altar was anointed, the leaders brought their offerings. They placed them in front of the altar. They brought their offerings to set the altar apart. [11]The LORD had spoken to Moses. He had said, "Each day one leader must bring his offering. He must bring it to set the altar apart."

[12]On the first day Nahshon, the son of Amminadab, brought his offering. Nahshon was from the tribe of Judah.

[13]He brought one silver plate and one silver sprinkling bowl. The plate weighed three pounds four ounces. The sprinkling bowl weighed one pound 12 ounces. They were weighed in keeping with the standard weights that are used in the sacred tent. Each plate and bowl was filled with fine flour that was mixed with olive oil. It was a grain offering. [14]He brought one gold dish. It weighed four ounces. It was filled with incense.

[15]Nahshon brought one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb that was a year old. They would be sacrificed as a burnt offering. [16]He brought one male goat to be sacrificed as a sin offering. [17]He brought two oxen, five rams and five male goats. He also brought five male lambs that were a year old. All of them would be sacrificed as a friendship offering.

That was everything that Nahshon, the son of Amminadab, brought as his offering.

[18]On the second day Nethanel, the son of Zuar, brought his offering. Nethanel was the leader of the tribe of Issachar.

[19]He brought one silver plate and one silver sprinkling bowl. The silver plate weighed three pounds four ounces. The sprinkling bowl weighed one pound 12 ounces. Both were weighed in keeping with the standard weights that are used in the sacred tent. Each plate and bowl was filled with fine flour that was mixed with olive oil. It was a grain offering. [20]He brought one gold dish. It weighed four ounces. It was filled with incense.

[21]Nethanel brought one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb that was a year old. They would be sacrificed as a burnt offering. [22]He brought one male goat to be sacrificed as a sin offering. [23]He brought two oxen, five rams and five male goats. He also brought five male lambs that were a year old. All of them would be sacrificed as a friendship offering.

That was everything that Nethanel, the son of Zuar, brought as his offering.

[24]On the third day Eliab, the son of Helon, brought his offering. Eliab was the leader of the people of Zebulun.

[25]He brought one silver plate and one silver sprinkling bowl. The plate weighed three pounds four ounces. The sprinkling bowl weighed one pound 12

ounces. They were weighed in keeping with the standard weights that are used in the sacred tent. Each plate and bowl was filled with fine flour that was mixed with olive oil. It was a grain offering. [26]He brought one gold dish. It weighed four ounces. It was filled with incense.

[27]Eliab brought one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb that was a year old. They would be sacrificed as a burnt offering. [28]He brought one male goat to be sacrificed as a sin offering. [29]He brought two oxen, five rams and five male goats. He also brought five male lambs that were a year old. All of them would be sacrificed as a friendship offering.

That was everything that Eliab, the son of Helon, brought as his offering.

[30]On the fourth day Elizur, the son of Shedeur, brought his offering. Elizur was the leader of the people of Reuben.

[31]He brought one silver plate and one silver sprinkling bowl. The plate weighed three pounds four ounces. The sprinkling bowl weighed one pound 12 ounces. They were weighed in keeping with the standard weights that are used in the sacred tent. Each plate and bowl was filled with fine flour that was mixed with olive oil. It was a grain offering. [32]He brought one gold dish. It weighed four ounces. It was filled with incense.

[33]Elizur brought one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb that was a year old. They would be sacrificed as a burnt offering. [34]He brought one male goat to be sacrificed as a sin offering. [35]He brought two oxen, five rams and five male goats. He also brought five male lambs that were a year old. All of them would be sacrificed as a friendship offering.

That was everything that Elizur, the son of Shedeur, brought as his offering.

[36]On the fifth day Shelumiel, the son of Zurishaddai, brought his offering. Shelumiel was the leader of the people of Simeon.

[37]He brought one silver plate and one silver sprinkling bowl. The plate weighed three pounds four ounces. The sprinkling bowl weighed one pound 12 ounces. They were weighed in keeping with the standard weights that are used in the sacred tent. Each plate and bowl were filled with fine flour that was mixed with olive oil. It was a grain offering. [38]He brought one gold dish. It

weighed four ounces. It was filled with incense.

[39]Shelumiel brought one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb that was a year old. They would be sacrificed as a burnt offering. [40]He brought one male goat to be sacrificed as a sin offering. [41]He brought two oxen, five rams and five male goats. He also brought five male lambs that were a year old. All of them would be sacrificed as a friendship offering.

That was everything that Shelumiel, the son of Zurishaddai, brought as his offering.

[42]On the sixth day Eliasaph, the son of Deuel, brought his offering. Eliasaph was the leader of the people of Gad.

[43]He brought one silver plate and one silver sprinkling bowl. The plate weighed three pounds four ounces. The sprinkling bowl weighed one pound 12 ounces. They were weighed in keeping with the standard weights that are used in the sacred tent. Each plate and bowl was filled with fine flour that was mixed with olive oil. It was a grain offering. [44]He brought one gold dish. It weighed four ounces. It was filled with incense.

[45]Eliasaph brought one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb that was a year old. They would be sacrificed as a burnt offering. [46]He brought one male goat to be sacrificed as a sin offering. [47]He brought two oxen, five rams and five male goats. He also brought five male lambs that were a year old. All of them would be sacrificed as a friendship offering.

That was everything that Eliasaph, the son of Deuel, brought as his offering.

[48]On the seventh day Elishama, the son of Ammihud, brought his offering. Elishama was the leader of the people of Ephraim.

[49]He brought one silver plate and one silver sprinkling bowl. The plate weighed three pounds four ounces. The sprinkling bowl weighed one pound 12 ounces. They were weighed in keeping with the standard weights that are used in the sacred tent. Each plate and bowl was filled with fine flour that was mixed with olive oil. It was a grain offering. [50]He brought one gold dish. It weighed four ounces. It was filled with incense.

[51]Elishama brought one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb that was a year old. They would be sacrificed as a burnt offering. [52]He brought one male goat to be sacrificed as a sin offering. [53]He brought two oxen, five rams and five male goats. He also brought five male lambs that were a year old. All of them would be sacrificed as a friendship offering.

That was everything that Elishama, the son of Ammihud, brought as his offering.

[54]On the eighth day Gamaliel, the son of Pedahzur, brought his offering. Gamaliel was the leader of the people of Manasseh.

[55]He brought one silver plate and one silver sprinkling bowl. The plate weighed three pounds four ounces. The sprinkling bowl weighed one pound 12 ounces. They were weighed in keeping with the standard weights that are used in the sacred tent. Each plate and bowl was filled with fine flour that was mixed with olive oil. It was a grain offering. [56]He also brought one gold dish. It weighed four ounces. It was filled with incense.

[57]Gamaliel brought one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb that was a year old. They would be sacrificed as a burnt offering. [58]He brought one male goat to be sacrificed as a sin offering. [59]He brought two oxen, five rams and five male goats. He also brought five male lambs that were a year old. All of them would be sacrificed as a friendship offering.

That was everything that Gamaliel, the son of Pedahzur, brought as his offering.

[60]On the ninth day Abidan, the son of Gideoni, brought his offering. Abidan was the leader of the people of Benjamin.

[61]He brought one silver plate and one silver sprinkling bowl. The plate weighed three pounds four ounces. The sprinkling bowl weighed one pound 12 ounces. They were weighed in keeping with the standard weights that are used in the sacred tent. Each plate and bowl was filled with fine flour that was mixed with olive oil. It was a grain offering. [62]He brought one gold dish. It weighed four ounces. It was filled with incense.

[63]Abidan brought one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb that was a

year old. They would be sacrificed as a burnt offering. [64]He brought one male goat to be sacrificed as a sin offering. [65]He brought two oxen, five rams and five male goats. He also brought five male lambs that were a year old. All of them would be sacrificed as a friendship offering.

That was everything that Abidan, the son of Gideoni, brought as his offering.

[66]On the tenth day Ahiezer, the son of Ammishaddai, brought his offering. Ahiezer was the leader of the people of Dan.

[67]He brought one silver plate and one silver sprinkling bowl. The plate weighed three pounds four ounces. The sprinkling bowl weighed one pound 12 ounces. They were weighed in keeping with the standard weights that are used in the sacred tent. Each plate and bowl was filled with fine flour that was mixed with olive oil. It was a grain offering. [68]He brought one gold dish. It weighed four ounces. It was filled with incense.

[69]Ahiezer brought one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb that was a year old. They would be sacrificed as a burnt offering. [70]He brought one male goat to be sacrificed as a sin offering. [71]He brought two oxen, five rams and five male goats. He also brought five male lambs that were a year old. All of them would be sacrificed as a friendship offering.

That was everything that Ahiezer, the son of Ammishaddai, brought as his offering.

[72]On the eleventh day Pagiel, the son of Ocran, brought his offering. Pagiel was the leader of the people of Asher.

[73]He brought one silver plate and one silver sprinkling bowl. The plate weighed three pounds four ounces. The sprinkling bowl weighed one pound 12 ounces. They were weighed in keeping with the standard weights that are used in the sacred tent. Each plate and bowl was filled with fine flour that was mixed with olive oil. It was a grain offering. [74]He brought one gold dish. It weighed four ounces. It was filled with incense.

[75]Pagiel brought one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb that was a year old. They would be sacrificed as a burnt offering. [76]He brought one male goat

to be sacrificed as a sin offering. [77]He brought two oxen, five rams and five male goats. He also brought five male lambs that were a year old. All of them would be sacrificed as a friendship offering.

That was everything that Pagiel, the son of Ocran, brought as his offering.

[78]On the twelfth day Ahira, the son of Enan, brought his offering. Ahira was the leader of the people of Naphtali.

[79]He brought one silver plate and one silver sprinkling bowl. The plate weighed three pounds four ounces. The sprinkling bowl weighed one pound 12 ounces. They were weighed in keeping with the standard weights that are used in the sacred tent. Each plate and bowl was filled with fine flour that was mixed with olive oil. It was a grain offering. [80]He brought one gold dish. It weighed four ounces. It was filled with incense.

[81]Ahira brought one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb that was a year old. They would be sacrificed as a burnt offering. [82]He brought one male goat to be sacrificed as a sin offering. [83]He brought two oxen, five rams and five male goats. He also brought five male lambs that were a year old. All of them would be sacrificed as a friendship offering.

That was everything that Ahira, the son of Enan, brought as his offering.

[84]Those were the offerings the leaders of the people of Israel brought. They gave them to set the altar apart when it was anointed with olive oil. They gave 12 silver plates, 12 silver sprinkling bowls and 12 gold dishes. [85]Each silver plate weighed three pounds four ounces. Each sprinkling bowl weighed one pound 12 ounces. The total weight of the silver dishes was 60 pounds. Everything was weighed in keeping with the standard weights that are used in the sacred tent.

[86]Each of the 12 gold dishes weighed four ounces. They were filled with incense. They were weighed in keeping with the weights used in the sacred tent. The total weight of the gold dishes was three pounds.

[87]The leaders brought 12 young bulls, 12 rams and 12 male lambs that were a year old. That was the total number of animals they gave for the burnt offering. They gave them together with the grain offering. They brought 12 male goats for the sin offering.

[88]The leaders brought 24 oxen, 60 rams, 60 male goats and 60 male lambs that were a year old. That was the total number of animals that were sacrificed as the friendship offering.

Those were the offerings they brought to set the altar apart. The leaders brought them after the altar was anointed with oil.

[89]Moses entered the Tent of Meeting. He wanted to speak with the LORD. There Moses heard the LORD talking to him. The LORD's voice was speaking to him from between the two cherubim. The cherubim were over the place where sin is paid for. It was the cover on the ark where the tablets of the covenant were kept. The LORD spoke with Moses there.

Aaron Sets Up the Lamps

Numbers 8

1The LORD said to Moses, 2"Speak to Aaron. Say to him, 'Set up the seven
lamps. They will give light to the area that is in front of the lampstand.' "

3So Aaron did it. He set up the lamps so that they faced forward on the
lampstand. He did just as the LORD had commanded Moses. 4The lampstand
was made out of hammered gold. From its base to its blooms it was made out
of hammered gold. The lampstand was made exactly like the pattern the LORD
had shown Moses.

Moses Sets the Levites Apart

5The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, 6"Take the Levites from among the other
men of Israel. Make them 'clean' in the usual way. 7Here is how to make them
pure. Sprinkle the special water on them. Then have them shave their whole
bodies. Also have them wash their clothes. That is how they will make
themselves pure.

8"Have them get a young bull along with its grain offering. The offering must
be made out of fine flour mixed with olive oil. Then you must get a second
young bull. You must sacrifice it as a sin offering.

9"Bring the Levites to the front of the Tent of Meeting. Gather the whole
community of Israel together. 10You must bring the Levites to me. The men of
Israel must place their hands on them. 11Aaron must bring the Levites to me.
They are a wave offering from the people of Israel. That is how they will be set
apart to do my work.

12"I want the Levites to place their hands on the heads of the bulls. Then they
must sacrifice one bull as a sin offering to me. And they must sacrifice the
other as a burnt offering. The blood of the bulls will pay for the sin of the
Levites.

13“Have the Levites stand in front of Aaron and his sons. Then give them as a
wave offering to me. 14That is how I want you to set the Levites apart from the
other men of Israel. The Levites will belong to me.

15“Make the Levites pure. Give them to me as a wave offering. Then they
must come to do their work at the Tent of Meeting. 16They are the men of
Israel who will be given to me completely. I have taken them to be my own. I
have taken them in place of every son who is born first in his family in Israel.

17“Every male that is born first in Israel belongs to me. That is true whether it
is a man or an animal. I struck down all of the males that were born first to a
mother in Egypt. Then I set apart for myself all of the males that were born
first in Israel. 18And I have taken the Levites in place of all of the sons who are
born first in Israel.

19“I have given the Levites as gifts to Aaron and his sons. I have taken them
from all of the men of Israel. I have appointed them to do the work at the Tent
of Meeting. They will do it in place of the men of Israel.

“That is how they will keep the men of Israel from being guilty when they go
near the sacred tent. Then no plague will strike the people of Israel when they
go near the tent.”

20So Moses and Aaron and the whole community of Israel did with the
Levites just as the LORD had commanded Moses. 21The Levites made
themselves pure. They washed their clothes. Then Aaron gave them to the
LORD as a wave offering. That’s how he paid for their sin to make them pure.

22After that, the Levites came to do their work at the Tent of Meeting. They
worked under the direction of Aaron and his sons. And so Moses and Aaron
and the whole community of Israel did with the Levites just as the LORD had
commanded Moses.

23The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, 24“Here is what the Levites must do.
Men who are 25 years old or more must come and take part in the work at the
Tent of Meeting.

25“But when they reach the age of 50, they must not work any longer. They
must stop doing their regular work. 26They can help their brothers with their
duties at the Tent of Meeting. But they themselves should not do the work.
That is how you must direct the Levites to do their work.”

Israel Celebrates the Passover Feast

Numbers 9

1The LORD spoke to Moses in the Desert of Sinai. It was the first month of the
second year after the people came out of Egypt. He said, 2"Tell the people of
Israel to celebrate the Passover Feast. Have them do it at the appointed time.
3Celebrate it when the sun goes down on the 14th day of this month. Obey all
of its rules and laws."

4So Moses told the people of Israel to celebrate the Passover Feast. 5They did
it in the Desert of Sinai. They celebrated it when the sun went down on the
14th day of the first month. The people of Israel did everything just as the LORD
had commanded Moses.

6But some of them couldn't celebrate the Passover Feast on that day. That's
because they weren't "clean." They had gone near a dead body. So they came
to Moses and Aaron that same day. 7They said to Moses, "We went near a dead
body. So we aren't 'clean.' But why should we be kept from bringing the
LORD's offering at the appointed time? Why shouldn't we bring it along with
the other people of Israel?"

8Moses answered them, "Wait until I find out what the LORD wants you to
do."

9Then the LORD spoke to Moses. He said, 10"Tell the people of Israel,
'Suppose any of you or your children are not "clean" because you have gone
near a dead body. Or suppose you are away on a journey. You can still
celebrate the LORD's Passover.

11" 'I want you to celebrate it on the 14th day of the second month. You have
to do it when the sun goes down. You have to eat the lamb together with bread
that is made without yeast. Eat it with bitter plants. 12Do not leave any of it
until morning. Do not break any of its bones. When you celebrate the Passover
Feast, follow all of the rules.

13" 'But suppose a man is "clean." He is not on a journey. And he fails to
celebrate the Passover Feast. Then he must be cut off from the community of
Israel. He did not bring the LORD's offering at the appointed time. He will be

punished for his sin.

14“ ‘What if there is an outsider living among you? And what if he wants to celebrate the LORD’s Passover? Then he must obey its rules and laws. You must have the same laws for outsiders as you do for the people of Israel.’ ”

The Cloud Covers the Holy Tent

15The holy tent was set up. It was the tent where the tablets of the covenant were kept. On the day it was set up, the cloud covered it. From evening until morning the cloud that was above the tent looked like fire. 16That’s what continued to happen. The cloud covered the tent. At night the cloud looked like fire.

17When the cloud lifted from its place above the tent, the people of Israel started out. Where the cloud settled, the people of Israel camped. 18When the LORD gave the command, the people of Israel started out. And when he gave the command, they camped. As long as the cloud stayed above the holy tent, they remained in camp.

19Sometimes the cloud remained above the tent for a long time. Then the people of Israel obeyed the LORD’s order. They didn’t start out. 20Sometimes the cloud was above the tent for only a few days. When the LORD would give the command, they would camp. Then when he would give the command, they would start out.

21Sometimes the cloud stayed only from evening until morning. When it lifted in the morning, they started out. It didn’t matter whether it was day or night. When the cloud lifted, the people started out. 22It didn’t matter whether the cloud stayed above the holy tent for two days or a month or a year. The people of Israel would remain in camp. They wouldn’t start out. But when the cloud lifted, they would start out.

23When the LORD gave the command, they camped. And when he gave the command, they started out. They obeyed the LORD’s order. They obeyed him, just as he had commanded them through Moses.

The Silver Trumpets

Numbers 10

1The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, 2"Make two trumpets out of hammered
silver. Blow them when you want the community to gather together. And blow
them when you want the camps to start out. 3When both trumpets are blown,
the whole community must gather in front of you. They must come to the
entrance to the Tent of Meeting. 4Suppose only one trumpet is blown. Then the
leaders must gather in front of you. They are the heads of the tribes of Israel.
5When a trumpet blast is blown, the tribes that are camped on the east side
must start out. 6When the second blast is blown, the camps on the south side
must start out. The blast will tell them when to start. 7Blow the trumpets to
gather the people together. But do not use the same kind of blast.

8"The sons of Aaron, the priests, must blow the trumpets. That is a law for
you and your children after you for all time to come. 9Suppose you go into
battle in your own land. And suppose it is against an enemy who is beating you
down. Then blow a blast on the trumpets. If you do, I will remember you. I will
save you from your enemies. I am the LORD your God. 10You must also blow
the trumpets when you are happy. Blow them at your appointed feasts. Blow
them at your New Moon Feasts. Blow them when you sacrifice your burnt
offerings. Blow them when you sacrifice your friendship offerings. They will
remind me of you. I am the LORD your God."

The People of Israel Leave the Sinai Desert

11It was the 20th day of the second month of the second year. On that day the
cloud began to move. It went up from above the holy tent where the tablets of
the covenant were kept.

12Then the people of Israel started out from the Desert of Sinai. They traveled
from place to place. They kept going until the cloud came to rest in the Desert
of Paran. 13The first time they started out, the LORD commanded Moses to tell

them to do it. And they did it.

14The companies of the camp of Judah went first. They went out under their flag. Nahshon was their commander. He was the son of Amminadab. 15Nethanel was over the company of the tribe of Issachar. Nethanel was the son of Zuar. 16Eliab was over the company of the tribe of Zebulun. Eliab was the son of Helon.

17The holy tent was taken down. The men of Gershon and Merari started out. They carried the tent.

18The companies of the camp of Reuben went next. They went out under their flag. Elizur was their commander. He was the son of Shedeur. 19Shelumiel was over the company of the tribe of Simeon. Shelumiel was the son of Zurishaddai. 20Eliasaph was over the company of the tribe of Gad. Eliasaph was the son of Deuel.

21The men of Kohath started out. They carried the holy things. The holy tent had to be set up before they arrived.

22The companies of the camp of Ephraim went next. They went out under their flag. Elishama was their commander. He was the son of Ammihud. 23Gamaliel was over the company of the tribe of Manasseh. Gamaliel was the son of Pedahzur. 24Abidan was over the company of the tribe of Benjamin. Abidan was the son of Gideoni.

25Finally, the companies of the camp of Dan started out. They marched out under their flag. They followed behind all of the other companies and guarded them. Ahiezer was their commander. He was the son of Ammishaddai. 26Pagiel was over the company of the tribe of Asher. Pagiel was the son of Ocran. 27Ahira was over the company of the tribe of Naphtali. Ahira was the son of Enan.

28As the companies of Israel started out, that was the order they marched in.

29Moses spoke to Hobab, the son of Reuel. Reuel was Moses' father-in-law. Reuel was from Midian. Moses said to Hobab, "We're starting out for the place the LORD promised to us. He said to us, 'I will give it to you.' So come with us. We'll treat you well. The LORD has promised to give good things to Israel."

30Hobab answered, "No. I can't go. I'm going back to my own land. I'm returning to my own people."

31But Moses said, "Please don't leave us. You know where we should camp

in the desert. You can be our guide. [32]So come with us. The LORD will give us good things. We'll share them with you."

[33]So they started out from the mountain of the LORD. They traveled for three days. The ark of the covenant of the LORD went in front of them during those three days. It went ahead of them to find a place for them to rest. [34]They started out from the camp by day. And the cloud of the LORD was above them.

[35]When the ark started out, Moses said,

"LORD, rise up!
Let your enemies be scattered.
Let them run away from you."

[36]When the ark came to rest, Moses said,

"LORD, return.
Return to the many thousands of people in Israel."

The LORD Sends Fire Among the People

Numbers 11

[1]The people weren't happy about the hard times they were having. The LORD heard what they were saying. It made him burn with anger. Then the LORD sent fire on them. It blazed out among the people. It burned up some of the outer edges of the camp.

[2]The people cried out to Moses. Then he prayed to the LORD. And the fire died down.

[3]So that place was named Taberah. That's because fire from the LORD had blazed out among them there.

The LORD Sends Meat for the People

[4]Some people who were with them began to long for other food. Again the people of Israel began to cry out. They said, "We wish we had meat to eat. [5]We remember the fish we ate in Egypt. It didn't cost us anything. We also remember the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. [6]But now we've lost all interest in eating. We never see anything but this manna!"

[7]The manna was like coriander seeds. It looked like sap from a tree. [8]The people went around gathering it. Then they ground it in a small mill they held in their hands. Or they crushed it in a stone bowl. They cooked it in a pot. Or they made cakes out of it. It tasted like something made with olive oil. [9]When the dew came down on the camp at night, the manna also came down.

[10]Moses heard people from every family crying. They were sobbing at the entrances to their tents.

The LORD burned with hot anger. So Moses became troubled. [11]He asked the LORD, "Why have you brought this trouble on me? Why aren't you pleased with me? Why have you loaded me down with the troubles of all of these people?

[12]"Am I like a mother to them? Are they my children? Why do you tell me to

carry them in my arms? Do I have to carry them the way a nurse carries a baby? Do I have to carry them to the land you promised? You took an oath and promised the land to their people of long ago.

13“Where can I get meat for all of these people? They keep crying out to me. They say, ‘Give us meat to eat!’ 14I can’t carry all of these people by myself. The load is too heavy for me.

15“Is this how you are going to treat me? If you are pleased with me, just put me to death right now. Don’t let me live if I have to see myself destroyed anyway.”

16The LORD said to Moses, “Bring me 70 of Israel’s elders. Bring men that you know are leaders and officials among the people. Have them come to the Tent of Meeting. I want them to stand there with you. 17I will come down. I will speak with you there. I will take some of my Spirit that is on you. And I will put the Spirit on them. They will help you carry the people’s load. Then you will not have to carry it alone.

18“Tell the people, ‘Set yourselves apart for tomorrow. At that time you will eat meat. The LORD heard you when you cried out. You said, “We wish we had meat to eat. We were better off in Egypt.”

“ ‘Now the LORD will give you meat. And you will eat it. 19You will not eat it for just one or two days. You will not eat it for just five, ten or 20 days. 20Instead, you will eat it for a whole month. You will eat it until it comes out of your nose. You will eat it until you hate it.

“ ‘The LORD is among you. But you have turned your back on him. You have cried out while he was listening. You have said, “Why did we ever leave Egypt?” ’ ”

21But Moses said, “Here I am among 600,000 men on the march. And you say, ‘I will give them meat to eat for a whole month’! 22Would they have enough if flocks and herds were killed for them? Would they have enough even if all of the fish in the ocean were caught for them?”

23The LORD answered Moses, “Am I not strong enough? Now you will see whether what I say will come true for you.”

24So Moses went out. He told the people what the LORD had said. He gathered 70 of their elders together. He had them stand around the Tent of Meeting.

25Then the LORD came down in the cloud. He spoke with Moses. He took

some of his Spirit that was on Moses. And he put the Spirit on the 70 elders. When the Spirit came on them, they prophesied. But they didn't do it again.

[26]Two men had remained in the camp. Their names were Eldad and Medad. They were listed among the elders. But they didn't go out to the Tent of Meeting. In spite of that, the Spirit came on them too. So they prophesied in the camp.

[27]A young man ran up to Moses. He said, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp."

[28]Joshua spoke up. He was the son of Nun. Joshua had been Moses' helper from the time he was young. He said, "Moses! Please stop them!"

[29]But Moses replied, "Are you jealous for me? I wish that all of the LORD's people were prophets. And I wish that the LORD would put his Spirit on them." [30]Then Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp.

[31]The LORD sent out a wind. It drove quail in from the Red Sea. It brought them down all around the camp. They were about three feet above the ground. They could be seen in every direction as far as a person could walk in a day.

[32]The people went out all day and gathered quail. They gathered them all night and all the next day. No one gathered less than 60 bushels. Then they spread the quail out all around the camp.

[33]But while the meat was still in their mouths, the LORD acted. Before the people could swallow it, his anger burned against them. He struck them with a terrible plague.

[34]So the place was named Kibroth Hattaavah. That's where the bodies of the people who had longed for other food were buried.

[35]From Kibroth Hattaavah the people traveled to Hazeroth. And they stayed there.

Miriam and Aaron Speak Against Moses

Numbers 12

1Miriam and Aaron began to say bad things about Moses. That's because
Moses had married a woman from Cush. 2"Has the LORD spoken only through
Moses?" they asked. "Hasn't he also spoken through us?" The LORD heard
what they said.

3Moses wasn't very proud at all. In fact, he had less pride than anyone else on
the face of the earth.

4The LORD spoke to Moses, Aaron and Miriam. He said, "All three of you,
come out to the Tent of Meeting." So they did. 5Then the LORD came down in a
pillar of cloud. He stood at the entrance to the tent. And he told Aaron and
Miriam to come to him. Both of them stepped forward.

6Then the LORD said, "Listen to my words.

"Suppose one of my prophets is among you.
I make myself known to him in visions.
I speak to him in dreams.
7But that is not true of my servant Moses.
He is faithful in everything he does in my house.
8With Moses I speak face to face.
I speak with him clearly. I do not speak in riddles.
I let him see something of what I look like.
So why were you not afraid
to speak against my servant Moses?"

9The anger of the LORD burned against them. And he left them.

10When the cloud went up from above the tent, there stood Miriam. She had a
disease that made her skin as white as snow.

Aaron turned toward her. He saw that she had a skin disease. 11So he said to
Moses, "We have committed a very foolish sin. Please don't hold it against us.
12Don't let Miriam be like a baby that was born dead. Don't let her look like a

dead baby whose body is half eaten away.”

13So Moses cried out to the LORD. He said, “God, please heal her!”

14The LORD answered Moses. He said, “Suppose her father had spit in her face. Then she would have been put to shame for seven days. So keep her outside the camp for seven days. After that, you can bring her back.”

15So Miriam was kept outside the camp for seven days. The people didn’t move on until she was brought back.

16After that, the people left Hazeroth. They camped in the Desert of Paran.

Some Men Check Out the Land of Canaan

Numbers 13

1The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, 2"Send some men to check out the land
of Canaan. I am giving it to the people of Israel. Send one leader from each of
Israel's tribes."

3So Moses sent them out from the Desert of Paran. He sent them as the LORD
had commanded. All of them were leaders of the people of Israel.

4Here are their names.

There was Shammua from the tribe of Reuben. Shammua was the son of
Zaccur.

5There was Shaphat from the tribe of Simeon. Shaphat was the son of Hori.

6There was Caleb from the tribe of Judah. Caleb was the son of Jephunneh.

7There was Igal from the tribe of Issachar. Igal was the son of Joseph.

8There was Hoshea from the tribe of Ephraim. Hoshea was the son of Nun.

9There was Palti from the tribe of Benjamin. Palti was the son of Raphu.

10There was Gaddiel from the tribe of Zebulun. Gaddiel was the son of
Sodi.

11There was Gaddi from the tribe of Manasseh. Gaddi was the son of Susi.
Manasseh was a tribe of Joseph.

12There was Ammiel from the tribe of Dan. Ammiel was the son of
Gemalli.

13There was Sethur from the tribe of Asher. Sethur was the son of Michael.

14There was Nahbi from the tribe of Naphtali. Nahbi was the son of
Vophsi.

15There was Geuel from the tribe of Gad. Geuel was the son of Maki.

16Those are the men Moses sent to check out the land. He gave the name Joshua to Hoshea, the son of Nun.

17Moses sent them to check out Canaan. He said, “Go up through the Negev Desert. Go on into the central hill country. 18See what the land is like. See whether the people who live there are strong or weak. See whether they are few or many.

19“What kind of land do they live in? Is it good or bad? What kind of towns do they live in? Do the towns have high walls around them or not? 20How is the soil? Is it rich land or poor land? Are there trees on it or not? Do your best to bring back some of the fruit of the land.” It was the season for the first ripe grapes.

21So the men went up and checked out the land. They went from the Desert of Zin as far as Rehob. It was in the direction of Lebo Hamath. 22They went up through the Negev Desert and came to Hebron. That’s where Ahiman, Sheshai and Talmai lived. They belonged to the family line of Anak. Hebron had been built seven years before Zoan. Zoan was a city in Egypt.

23The men came to the Valley of Eshcol. There they cut off a branch that had a single bunch of grapes on it. Two of them carried it on a pole between them. They carried some pomegranates and figs along with it. 24That place was called the Valley of Eshcol. That’s because the men of Israel cut off a bunch of grapes there.

25At the end of 40 days, the men returned from checking out the land.

The Men Report on What They Found

26The men came back to Moses, Aaron and the whole community of Israel. The people were at Kadesh in the Desert of Paran. There the men reported to Moses and Aaron and all of the people. They showed them the fruit of the land.

27They gave Moses their report. They said, “We went into the land you sent us to. It really does have plenty of milk and honey! Here’s some fruit from the land.

28“But the people who live there are powerful. Their cities have high walls around them and are very large. We even saw members of the family line of Anak there. 29The Amalekites live in the Negev Desert. The Hittites, Jebusites

and Amorites live in the central hill country. The Canaanites live near the Mediterranean Sea. They also live along the Jordan River.”

30Then Caleb interrupted the men who were speaking to Moses. He said, “We should go up and take the land. We can certainly do it.”

31But the men who had gone up with him spoke. They said, “We can’t attack those people. They are stronger than we are.” 32The men spread a bad report about the land among the people of Israel. They said, “The land we checked out destroys those who live in it. All of the people we saw there are very big and tall. 33We saw the Nephilim there. We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes. And that’s also how we seemed to them.” The children of Anak came from the Nephilim.

The People Refuse to Obey the LORD

Numbers 14

1That night all of the people in the community raised their voices. They
sobbed out loud.

2The people of Israel spoke against Moses and Aaron. The whole community
said to them, “We wish we had died in Egypt or even in this desert. 3Why is the
LORD bringing us to this land? We’re going to be killed with swords. Our
enemies will capture our wives and children. Wouldn’t it be better for us to go
back to Egypt?”

4They said to one another, “We should choose another leader. We should go
back to Egypt.”

5Then Moses and Aaron fell with their faces to the ground. They did it in
front of the whole community of Israel that was gathered there.

6Joshua, the son of Nun, tore his clothes. So did Caleb, the son of Jephunneh.
Joshua and Caleb were two of the men who had checked out the land. 7They
spoke to the whole community of Israel. They said, “We passed through the
land and checked it out. It’s very good. 8If the LORD is pleased with us, he’ll
lead us into that land. It’s a land that has plenty of milk and honey. He’ll give it
to us.

9“But don’t refuse to obey him. And don’t be afraid of the people of the land.
We will swallow them up. The LORD is with us. So nothing can save them.
Don’t be afraid of them.”

10But all of the people talked about killing Joshua and Caleb by throwing
stones at them.

Then the glory of the LORD appeared at the Tent of Meeting. All of the people
of Israel saw it. 11The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, “How long will these
people make fun of me? How long will they refuse to believe in me? They
refuse even though I have done many miraculous signs among them. 12So I
will strike them down with a plague. I will destroy them. But I will make you
into a greater and stronger nation than they are.”

13 Moses said to the LORD, “Then the Egyptians will hear about it. You used
your power to bring these people up from among them.

14 “And the Egyptians will tell the people who live in Canaan about it. LORD,
they have already heard a lot about you. They’ve heard that you are with these
people. They’ve heard that you have been seen face to face. They’ve been told
that your cloud stays over them. They’ve heard that you go in front of them in
a pillar of cloud by day. They’ve been told that you go in front of them in a
pillar of fire at night.

15 “Suppose you put these people to death all at one time. Then the nations
who have heard those things about you will talk. They’ll say, 16 ‘The LORD took
an oath. He promised to give these people the land of Canaan. But he wasn’t
able to bring them into it. So he killed them in the desert.’

17 “Now, Lord, show your strength. You have said, 18 ‘I am the LORD. I am
slow to get angry. I am full of love. I forgive those who sin. I forgive those who
refuse to obey. But I do not let guilty people go without punishing them. I
punish the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren for the sin of their
parents.’

19 “LORD, your love is great. So forgive the sin of these people. Forgive them
just as you have done from the time they left Egypt until now.”

20 The LORD replied, “I have forgiven them, just as you asked. 21 You can be
sure that I live. You can be sure that my glory fills the whole earth.

22 “And you can be just as sure that these men will not see the land I promised
to give them. They have seen my glory. They have seen the miraculous signs I
did in Egypt. And they have seen what I did in the desert. But they did not
obey me. And they have put me to the test ten times. 23 So not even one of them
will ever see the land I promised with an oath to give to their people of long
ago. No one who has made fun of me will ever see it.

24 “But my servant Caleb has a different spirit. He follows me with his whole
heart. So I will bring him into the land he went to. And his children after him
will receive land there.

25 “The Amalekites and Canaanites are living in the valleys. So turn back
tomorrow. Start out toward the desert. Go along the way that leads to the Red
Sea.”

26 The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron. He said, 27 “How long will this evil
community speak against me? I have heard these Israelites talk about how

unhappy they are. [28]So tell them, ‘Here is what I, the LORD, am announcing. You can be sure that I live. And you can be just as sure that I will do to you the very things that I heard you say.

[29]“ ‘You will die in this desert. Every one of you who is 20 years old or more will die. Every one of you who was counted in the list of the people will die. Every one of you who has spoken out against me will be wiped out. [30]I lifted up my hand and promised with an oath to make this land your home. But now not all of you will enter the land. Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, will enter it. So will Joshua, the son of Nun. They are the only ones who will enter the land.

[31]“ ‘You have said that your enemies would capture your children. But I will bring your children in to enjoy the land you have turned your backs on. [32]As for you, you will die in the desert. [33]Your children will be shepherds here for 40 years. They will suffer because you were not faithful. They will suffer until the last of your bodies lies here in the desert. [34]For 40 years you will suffer for your sins. That is one year for each of the 40 days you checked out the land. You will know what it is like to have me against you.’

[35]“I, the LORD, have spoken. You can be sure that I will do those things to this whole evil community. They have joined together against me. They will meet their end in this desert. They will die here.”

[36]So the LORD struck down the men Moses had sent to check out the land. They had returned and had spread a bad report about the land. And that had made the whole community speak out against Moses. [37]Those men were to blame for spreading the bad report. So the LORD struck them down. They died of a plague.

[38]Only two of the men who went to check out the land remained alive. One of them was Joshua, the son of Nun. The other was Caleb, the son of Jephunneh.

[39]Moses reported to all of the people of Israel what the LORD had said. And they became very sad. [40]Early the next morning they went up toward the high hill country. “We have sinned,” they said. “We will go up to the place the LORD promised to give us.”

[41]But Moses said, “Why aren’t you obeying the LORD’s command? You won’t succeed. [42]So don’t go up. The LORD isn’t with you. Your enemies will win the battle over you. [43]The Amalekites and Canaanites will meet you on the field of battle. You have turned away from the LORD. So he won’t be with you. And you will be killed with swords.”

44But they wouldn’t listen. They still went up toward the high hill country. They went up even though Moses didn’t move from the camp. They went even though the ark of the LORD’s covenant didn’t move from the camp.

45Then the Amalekites and Canaanites who lived in that hill country came down. They attacked the people of Israel. They won the battle over them. They chased them all the way to Hormah.

Other Offerings

Numbers 15

1The LORD said to Moses, 2"Speak to the people of Israel. Say to them, 'You
are going to enter the land I am giving you as a home. 3When you do, you will
give offerings that are made to the LORD with fire. The animals must come
from your herd or flock. The offerings will give a smell that is pleasant to the
LORD. They can be either burnt offerings or sacrifices. They can be either for
special promises or for feast offerings. Or they can be for offerings you choose
to give.

4" 'With each of the offerings, the one who brings it must give the LORD a
grain offering. It must be eight cups of fine flour. It must be mixed with a quart
of olive oil. 5Also prepare a quart of wine as a drink offering. You must give it
with each lamb that you bring for the burnt offering or the sacrifice.

6" 'With a ram prepare a grain offering. It must be 16 cups of fine flour. It
must be mixed with two and a half pints of olive oil. 7You must bring two and
a half pints of wine as a drink offering. Offer everything as a smell that is
pleasant to the LORD.

8" 'Suppose you prepare a young bull as a burnt offering or sacrifice. You
prepare it to keep a special promise to the LORD. Or you prepare it to give as a
friendship offering. 9Then bring a grain offering with the bull. The grain
offering must be 24 cups of fine flour. It must be mixed with two quarts of
olive oil. 10Also bring two quarts of wine as a drink offering. It will be an
offering that is made with fire. It will give a smell that is pleasant to the LORD.

11" 'Each bull or ram must be prepared in the same way. Each lamb or young
goat must also be prepared in that way. 12Do it for each animal. Do it for as
many animals as you prepare.

13" 'Everyone in Israel must do those things in that way. He must do them
when he brings an offering that is made with fire. Offerings like that give a
smell that is pleasant to the LORD.

14" 'Everyone must always do what the law requires. It does not matter

whether he is an outsider or someone else who is living among you. He must do exactly as you do when he brings an offering that is made with fire. Offerings like that give a smell that is pleasant to the LORD.

15“ ‘The community must have the same rules for you and for the outsider who is living among you. That law will last for all time to come. In the sight of the LORD, the law applies to you and the outsider alike. 16The same laws and rules will apply to you and to the outsider who is living among you.’ ”

17The LORD said to Moses, 18“Speak to the people of Israel. Say to them, ‘You are going to enter the land I am taking you to. 19You will eat its food. When you do, bring part of it as an offering to the LORD. 20Bring a loaf that is made from the first flour you grind. Give it as an offering from the threshing floor. 21You must bring the offering to the LORD. You must give it from the first grain you grind. You must do it for all time to come.

Offerings for Sins That Aren’t Committed on Purpose

22“ ‘Suppose you fail to keep any of the commands the LORD gave Moses. And suppose you do it without meaning to. 23That applies to any of the commands the LORD told Moses to give you. And they are in effect from the day the LORD gave them and for all time to come. 24Suppose the community sins without meaning to. And suppose they do not know they have sinned. Then the whole community must offer a young bull. They must offer it for a burnt offering. It will give a smell that is pleasant to the LORD. Along with it, they must offer its required grain offering and drink offering. They must also offer a male goat for a sin offering.

25“ ‘With it the priest will pay for the sin of the whole community of Israel. Then they will be forgiven. They did not mean to commit that sin. And they have brought to the LORD an offering that is made with fire for the wrong thing they did. They have brought a sin offering with it.

26“ ‘The LORD will forgive the whole community of Israel and the outsiders living among them. All of the people had a part in the sin, even though they did not mean to do it.

27“ ‘But suppose just one person sins without meaning to. Then he must bring a female goat for a sin offering. It must be a year old. 28With it the priest will

pay for the person's sin in the sight of the LORD. He will do it for the one who did wrong by sinning without meaning to. When the sin is paid for, that person will be forgiven.

29" 'The same law applies to everyone who sins without meaning to. It does not matter whether he is an Israelite or an outsider.

30" 'But suppose someone sins on purpose. It does not matter whether he is an Israelite or an outsider. He speaks evil things against the LORD. He must be cut off from his people. 31He has made fun of what the LORD has said. He has broken the LORD's commands. He must certainly be cut off. He is still guilty.' "

A Man Breaks the Sabbath Day

32The people of Israel were in the desert. One Sabbath day, people saw a man gathering wood. 33They brought him to Moses and Aaron and the whole community. 34They kept him under guard. It wasn't clear what should be done to him.

35Then the LORD said to Moses, "The man must die. The whole community must kill him by throwing stones at him. They must do it outside the camp."

36So the people took the man outside the camp. There they killed him by throwing stones at him. They did just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Tassels on Clothes

37The LORD said to Moses, 38"Speak to the people of Israel. Say to them, 'You must make tassels on the corners of your clothes. A blue cord must be on each tassel. You must do it for all time to come. 39You will have the tassels to look at. They will remind you to obey all of the LORD's commands. Then you will be faithful to him. You will not go after what your own hearts and eyes long for.

40" 'You will remember to obey all of my commands. And you will be set apart for your God. 41I am the LORD your God. I brought you out of Egypt to be your God. I am the LORD your God.' "

Korah, Dathan and Abiram

Numbers 16

1 Korah was the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath. Kohath was the son of Levi.
Korah and certain men from the tribe of Reuben turned against Moses. The
men from Reuben were Dathan, Abiram and On. Dathan and Abiram were the
sons of Eliab. On was the son of Peleth. 2 All of those men rose up against
Moses. And 250 men of Israel joined them. All of them were known as leaders
in the community. They had been appointed as members of the ruling body.

3 They came as a group to oppose Moses and Aaron. They said to Moses and
Aaron, "You have gone too far! The whole community is holy. Every one in it
is holy. And the LORD is with them. So why do you put yourselves above the
LORD's people?"

4 When Moses heard what they said, he fell with his face to the ground. 5 Then
he spoke to Korah and all of his followers. He said, "In the morning the LORD
will show who belongs to him. He will show who is holy. He'll bring that
person near him. He'll bring the man he chooses near him.

6 "Korah, here's what you and all of your followers must do. Get some
shallow cups for burning incense. 7 Tomorrow put fire and incense in them.
Offer it to the LORD. The man the LORD chooses will be the one who is holy.
You Levites have gone too far!"

8 Moses also said to Korah, "Listen, you Levites! 9 The God of Israel has
separated you from the rest of the community of Israel. He has brought you
near him to work at the LORD's holy tent. He has given you to the people so that
you can serve them. Isn't all of that enough for you? 10 He has already brought
you and all of the other Levites near him. But now you want to be priests too.
11 You and all of your followers have joined together against the LORD. Why are
you telling Aaron you aren't happy with him?"

12 Then Moses sent for Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab. But they said,
"We won't come! 13 You have brought us up out of a land that has plenty of
milk and honey. You have brought us here to kill us in this desert. Isn't that
enough? Now do you also want to act as if you were ruling over us?

14“Besides, you haven’t brought us into a land that has plenty of milk and
honey. You haven’t given us fields and vineyards of our own. Are you going to
poke out the eyes of these men? No! We won’t come!”

15Then Moses became very angry. He said to the LORD, “Don’t accept their
offering. I haven’t taken even a donkey from them. In fact, I haven’t done
anything wrong to any of them.”

16Moses said to Korah, “You and all of your followers must stand in front of
the LORD tomorrow. You must appear there along with Aaron. 17Each man must
get his shallow cup. He must put incense in it. There will be a total of 250
incense cups. Each man must bring his cup to the LORD. You and Aaron must
also bring your cups.”

18So each man got his cup. He put fire and incense in it. All of the men came
with Moses and Aaron. They stood at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.
19Korah gathered all of his followers together at the entrance to the tent. They
opposed Moses and Aaron.

Then the glory of the LORD appeared to the whole community. 20The LORD
spoke to Moses and Aaron. He said, 21“Separate yourselves from these people.
Then I can put an end to all of them at once.”

22But Moses and Aaron fell with their faces to the ground. They cried out,
“God, you are the God who creates the spirits of all people. Will you be angry
with the whole community when only one man sins?”

23Then the LORD spoke to Moses. He said, 24“Tell the community, ‘Move
away from the tents of Korah, Dathan and Abiram.’ ”

25Moses got up. He went to Dathan and Abiram. The elders of Israel
followed him. 26Moses warned the community. He said, “Move away from the
tents of those evil men! Don’t touch anything that belongs to them. If you do,
the LORD will sweep you away because of all of their sins.”

27So they moved away from the tents of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. Dathan
and Abiram had already come out. They were standing at the entrances to their
tents. Their wives, children and little ones were standing there with them.

28Then Moses said, “What is about to happen wasn’t my idea. The LORD has
sent me to do everything I’m doing. Here is how you will know I’m telling you
the truth. 29Those men won’t die a natural death. Something will happen to
them that doesn’t usually happen to people. If what I’m telling you isn’t true,

then you will know that the LORD hasn't sent me.

30"But the LORD will make something totally new happen. The ground will open its mouth and swallow them up. It will swallow up everything that belongs to them. They will go down into the grave alive. When that happens, you will know that those men have made fun of the LORD."

31As soon as Moses finished speaking all of those words, what he had said came true. The ground under them broke open. 32It opened its mouth. It swallowed up those men. In fact, it swallowed up everyone who lived in their houses. It swallowed all of Korah's men. And it swallowed up everything they owned. 33They went down into the grave alive. Everything they owned went down with them. The ground closed over them. They died. And so they disappeared from the community.

34All of the people of Israel who were around them heard their cries. They ran away from them. They shouted, "The ground is going to swallow us up too!"

35Then the LORD sent down fire. It burned up the 250 men who were offering the incense.

36The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, 37"Speak to the priest Eleazar. He is the son of Aaron. Remind him that the shallow cups are holy. He must take them out of the fire. He must scatter the burning coals away from there. 38The men who sinned used those cups. And it cost them their lives. Hammer the cups into bronze sheets that will cover the altar. The cups were offered to the LORD. They have become holy. Let them serve as a warning to the people of Israel."

39So the priest Eleazar collected the bronze incense cups. They had been brought by the men who had been burned up. He had them hammered out to cover the altar. 40He did just as the LORD had directed Moses to tell him to do. The covering would be a reminder to the people of Israel. It would remind them that no one except a son of Aaron should come and burn incense to the LORD. If people other than priests did that, they would become like Korah and his followers.

41The next day the whole community of Israel told Moses and Aaron they weren't happy with them. "You have killed the LORD's people," they said.

42The community gathered together to oppose Moses and Aaron. The people walked toward the Tent of Meeting. Suddenly the cloud covered it. The glory of the LORD appeared. 43Then Moses and Aaron went to the front of the Tent of

Meeting. [44]The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, [45]“Get away from these people. Then I can put an end to all of them at once.” And Moses and Aaron fell with their faces to the ground.

[46]Moses said to Aaron, “Take your incense cup. Put incense in it. And put fire from the altar in it. Then hurry to the people and pay for their sin. The LORD has sent his anger. The plague has started.”

[47]So Aaron did as Moses said. He ran in among the people. The plague had already started among them. But Aaron offered the incense and paid for their sin. [48]He stood between those who were alive and those who were dead. And the plague stopped. [49]But 14,700 people died from the plague. That doesn’t include those who had died because of what Korah did. [50]Then Aaron returned to Moses at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. The plague had stopped.

Aaron's Wooden Staff Produces Buds

Numbers 17

[1]The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, [2]"Speak to the people of Israel. Get 12 wooden staffs from them. Get one from the leader of each of Israel's tribes. Write the name of each man on his staff. [3]Write Aaron's name on the staff of Levi. There must be one staff for the head of each of Israel's tribes.

[4]"Put the staffs in the Tent of Meeting. Place them in front of the ark where the tablets of the covenant are kept. That is where I meet with you. [5]The staff that belongs to the man I choose will begin to grow new shoots. The people of Israel are never happy with what you do. I will put an end to what they are saying."

[6]So Moses spoke to the people of Israel. Their leaders gave him 12 wooden staffs. They gave one for the leader of each of Israel's tribes. Aaron's staff was among them. [7]Moses put the staffs in front of the LORD in the tent where the tablets of the covenant were kept.

[8]The next day Moses entered the tent. He looked at Aaron's staff. It stood for the tribe of Levi. Moses saw that it had not only begun to grow new shoots. It had also produced buds and flowers and almonds.

[9]Then Moses brought out all of the staffs from in front of the LORD. He brought them to all of the people of Israel. They looked at them. And each man took his own staff.

[10]The LORD said to Moses, "Put Aaron's staff back in front of the ark where the tablets of the covenant are kept. The staff will be kept there as a warning to those who refuse to obey. They are never happy with what I do. Aaron's staff will put an end to what they are saying. Then they will not die." [11]Moses did just as the LORD commanded him.

[12]The people of Israel said to Moses, "We'll die! We are lost! All of us are lost! [13]Anyone who even comes near the LORD's holy tent will die. Are all of us going to die?"

Duties of Priests and Levites

Numbers 18

1 The LORD spoke to Aaron. He said, “You, your sons and your father’s family
are in charge of the sacred tent. You will be held accountable for sins that are
committed against it. And you and your sons will be held accountable for sins
that are committed against the office of priest.

2 “Bring the Levites from your tribe to join you. They will help you when you
and your sons serve at the tent where the tablets of the covenant are kept.
3 They will work for you. They must do everything that needs to be done at the
tent. But they must not go near anything that belongs to the sacred tent. And
they must not go near the altar. If they do, they and you will die. 4 They will
help you take care of the Tent of Meeting. They will join you in all of the work
at the tent. No one else can come near you there.

5 “You will be held accountable for taking care of the sacred tent and the altar.
Then my anger will not fall on the people of Israel again. 6 I myself have
chosen the Levites. I have chosen them from among the people of Israel. They
are a gift to you. I have set them apart to do the work at the Tent of Meeting.

7 “But only you and your sons can serve as priests. Only you and your sons
can work with everything at the altar and inside the curtain. I am letting you
serve as priests. It is a gift from me. Anyone else who comes near the sacred
tent must be put to death.”

Offerings for Priests and Levites

8 Then the LORD spoke to Aaron. He said, “I have put you in charge of the
offerings that are brought to me. The people of Israel will give me holy
offerings. I will give all of their offerings to you and your sons. They are the
part that belongs to you. They are your regular share.

9 “You will have a part of the very holy offerings. It is the part that is not
burned in the fire. That part belongs to you and your sons. You will have a part

of all of the gifts the people bring me as very holy offerings. It does not matter whether they are grain offerings or sin offerings or guilt offerings. [10]Eat your part as something that is very holy. Every male will eat it. You must consider it holy.

[11]“Part of the gifts the people of Israel bring as wave offerings will be set to one side. That part will also belong to you. I will give it to you and your sons and daughters. It is your regular share. Everyone in your home who is ‘clean’ can eat it.

[12]“I will give you all of the finest olive oil and grain the people give me. And I will give you all of the finest fresh wine they give me. They give all of those things as the first share of their harvest. [13]All of the first shares of the harvest they bring me will belong to you. Everyone in your home who is ‘clean’ can eat it.

[14]“Everything in Israel that is set apart to me belongs to you. [15]Offer to me every male that is born first to its mother. It belongs to you. That is true for men and animals alike. But you must buy back every oldest son. Suppose certain animals are not ‘clean.’ Then you must buy back every male that is born first to its mother. [16]When they are a month old, you must buy them back. You must pay the price to buy them back. The price is set at two ounces of silver. It must be weighed out in keeping with the standard weights that are used in the sacred tent.

[17]“But you must not buy back any male calf that is born first. And you must not buy back any male sheep or goat that is born first. They are holy. Sprinkle their blood on the altar. And burn their fat as an offering that is made with fire. It gives a smell that is pleasant to me.

[18]“The meat will belong to you. It is just like the breast and the right thigh of the wave offering. Those parts belong to you. [19]Part of the holy offerings the people of Israel bring to me will be set to one side. No matter what it is, I will give it to you and your sons and daughters. It is your regular share. It is a covenant of salt from me. The salt means that the covenant will last for all time to come for you and your children.”

[20]The LORD spoke to Aaron. He said, “You will not receive any part of the land I am giving to Israel. You will not have any share among them. I am your share. I am what you will receive among the people of Israel.

[21]“The people of Israel will give me a tenth of everything they produce. And

I will give it to the Levites. They serve at the Tent of Meeting. I will give them the tenth for the work they do there. 22From now on the people of Israel must not go near the Tent of Meeting. If they do, they will be punished for their sin. They will die.

23"The Levites will do the work at the Tent of Meeting. They will be held accountable for sins that are committed against it. That is a law that will last for all time to come. The Levites will not receive any share among the people of Israel. 24Instead, I will give the Levites the tenth as their share. It is the tenth that the people of Israel bring me as an offering. That is why I said the Levites would not have any share of land among the people of Israel."

25The LORD said to Moses, 26"Speak to the Levites. Say to them, 'You will receive the tenth from the people of Israel. I will give it to you as your share. When I do, you must give a tenth of that tenth as an offering to the LORD. 27Your offering will be considered as if you gave grain from a threshing floor. It will be considered as juice from a winepress.

28" 'In that way, you also will bring an offering to the LORD. You will bring it from the tenth you receive from the people of Israel. You must give the LORD's part to the priest Aaron. You must bring it from the tenth you receive. 29You must bring to the LORD a part of everything that is given to you. It must be the best and holiest part.'

30"Say to the Levites, 'You must bring the best part. Then it will be considered as if you gave grain from a threshing floor. It will be considered as juice from a winepress. 31You and your families can eat the rest of it anywhere. It is your pay for your work at the Tent of Meeting. 32Bring the best part of what you receive. Then you will not be guilty of holding anything back. You will not make the holy offerings of the people of Israel "unclean." You will not die.' "

The Special Water That Makes People "Clean"

Numbers 19

1The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron. He said, 2"Here is what the law I have
commanded requires. Tell the people of Israel to bring you a young red cow. It
must not have any flaws at all. It must never have pulled a load.

3"Give it to the priest Eleazar. It must be taken outside the camp and killed in
front of him. 4Then the priest Eleazar must put some of its blood on his finger.
He must sprinkle the blood toward the front of the Tent of Meeting. He must
do it seven times.

5"While he watches, the young cow must be burned. Its hide, meat, blood and
guts must be burned. 6The priest must get some cedar wood, branches of a
hyssop plant, and bright red wool. He must throw them on the young cow as it
burns.

7"After that, the priest must wash his clothes. He must also take a bath. Then
he can come into the camp. But he will be 'unclean' until evening.

8"The man who burns the young cow must wash his clothes. He must also
take a bath. He too will be 'unclean' until evening.

9"A man who is 'clean' will gather up the ashes of the young cow. He must
put them in a place that is 'clean.' The place must be outside the camp. The
ashes will be kept by the community of Israel. They will be added to the
special water. The water will be used to make people pure from their sin.

10"The man who gathers up the ashes of the young cow must wash his
clothes. He too will be 'unclean' until evening. That law is for the people of
Israel. It is also for the outsiders who are living among them. The law will last
for all time to come.

11"Anyone who touches a dead person's body will be 'unclean' for seven
days. 12He must make himself pure and clean with the special water. He must
do it on the third day. He must also do it on the seventh day. Then he will be
'clean.'

"But suppose he does not make himself pure and clean on the third and

seventh days. Then he will not be ‘clean.’ [13]Anyone who touches a dead person’s body and does not make himself pure and clean makes my holy tent ‘unclean.’ He must be cut off from Israel. The special water has not been sprinkled on him. So he is ‘unclean.’ And he remains ‘unclean.’

[14]“Here is the law that applies when a person dies in a tent. Anyone who enters the tent will be ‘unclean’ for seven days. Anyone who is in the tent will also be ‘unclean’ for seven days. [15]And anything in it that is open and has no lid will be ‘unclean.’

[16]“Suppose someone is out in the country. And suppose he touches someone who has been killed with a sword. Or he touches someone who has died a natural death. Or he touches a human bone or a grave. Then anyone who touches any of those things will be ‘unclean’ for seven days.

[17]“Here is what I want you to do for someone who is not ‘clean.’ Put some ashes from the burned young cow into a jar. Pour fresh water on the ashes. [18]Then a man who is ‘clean’ must dip branches of a hyssop plant in the water. He must sprinkle the tent with it. Everything that belongs to the tent must be sprinkled with it. The people who were in the tent must also be sprinkled. Anyone who has touched a human bone or a grave must be sprinkled. So must anyone who has touched someone who has been killed. So must anyone who has touched someone who has died a natural death.

[19]“The man who is ‘clean’ must sprinkle the person who is not. That must be done on the third and seventh days. On the seventh day the person who is not ‘clean’ must be made pure and clean. The one who is being made ‘clean’ must wash his clothes. He must take a bath. Then that evening he will be ‘clean.’

[20]“But what if a person who is ‘unclean’ does not make himself pure and clean? Then he must be cut off from the community. He has made my holy tent ‘unclean.’ The special water has not been sprinkled on him. He is not ‘clean.’ [21]That law will apply to all of those people for all time to come.

“The man who sprinkles the special water must also wash his clothes. Anyone who touches the water will be ‘unclean’ until evening. [22]Anything that an ‘unclean’ person touches becomes ‘unclean.’ And anyone who touches it becomes ‘unclean’ until evening.”

The LORD Gives Israel Water Out of the Rock

Numbers 20

1In the first month the whole community of Israel arrived at the Desert of
Zin. They stayed at Kadesh. Miriam died there. Her body was also buried
there.

2The people didn't have any water. So they gathered together to oppose
Moses and Aaron. 3They argued with Moses. They said, "We wish we had died
when our people fell dead in front of the LORD.

4"Why did you bring the LORD's people into this desert? We and our livestock
will die here. 5Why did you bring us up out of Egypt? Why did you bring us to
this terrible place? It doesn't have any grain or figs. It doesn't have any grapes
or pomegranates. There isn't even any water for us to drink!"

6Moses and Aaron left the people. They went to the entrance to the Tent of
Meeting. There they fell with their faces to the ground.

Then the glory of the LORD appeared to them. 7The LORD spoke to Moses. He
said, 8"Get your wooden staff. You and your brother Aaron gather the people
together. Then speak to that rock while everyone is watching. It will pour out
its water. You will bring water out of the rock for the community. Then they
and their livestock can drink it."

9So Moses took the wooden staff from the tent. He did just as the LORD had
commanded him. 10He and Aaron gathered the people together in front of the
rock. Moses said to them, "Listen, you who refuse to obey! Do we have to
bring water out of this rock for you?"

11Then Moses raised his arm. He hit the rock twice with his staff. Water
poured out. And the people and their livestock drank it.

12But the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron. He said, "You did not trust in me
enough to honor me. You did not honor me as the holy God in front of the
people of Israel. So you will not bring this community into the land I am giving
them."

13Those were the waters of Meribah. That's where the people of Israel argued

with the LORD. And that's where he showed them he is holy.

Edom Doesn't Let Israel Pass Through Its Territory

14 Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom. The messengers said,

"The nation of Israel is your brother. They say, 'You know about all of the hard times we've had. 15 Long ago our people went down into Egypt. We lived there for many years. The Egyptians treated us and our people badly. 16 But we cried out to the LORD. He heard our cry. He sent an angel and brought us out of Egypt.

" 'Now here we are at the town of Kadesh. It's on the edge of your territory. 17 Please let us pass through your country. We won't go through any field or vineyard. We won't drink water from any well. We'll travel along the king's highway. We won't turn to the right or the left. We'll just go straight through your territory.' "

18 But the people of Edom answered,

"You can't pass through here. If you try to, we'll march out against you. We'll attack you with our swords."

19 The people of Israel replied,

"We'll go along the main road. We and our livestock won't drink any of your water. If we do, we'll pay for it. We only want to walk through your country. That's all we ask."

20 Again the people of Edom answered,

"You can't pass through here."

Then the people of Edom came out against them. They came with a large and powerful army. 21 Edom refused to let Israel go through their territory. So Israel turned away from them.

Aaron Dies

22 The whole community of Israel started out from Kadesh. They arrived at
Mount Hor. 23 It was near the border of Edom. There the LORD spoke to Moses
and Aaron. He said, 24 "Aaron will join the members of his family who have
already died. He will not enter the land I am giving to the people of Israel.
Both of you refused to obey my command. You did it at the waters of Meribah.

25 "So get Aaron and his son Eleazar. Take them up Mount Hor. 26 Take
Aaron's official robes off him. Put them on his son Eleazar. Aaron will die on
Mount Hor. He will join the members of his family who have already died."

27 Moses did just as the LORD had commanded. The three men went up Mount
Hor while the whole community was watching. 28 Moses took Aaron's official
robes off him. He put them on Aaron's son Eleazar. And Aaron died there on
top of the mountain. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain.

29 The whole community found out that Aaron had died. So the entire nation
of Israel sobbed over him for 30 days.

Israel Destroys Arad

Numbers 21

[1]The Canaanite king of the city of Arad lived in the Negev Desert. He heard that Israel was coming along the road to Atharim. So he attacked the people of Israel. He captured some of them.

[2]Then Israel made a promise to the LORD. They said, “Hand these people over to us. If you do, we will set their cities apart to you in a special way to be destroyed.”

[3]The LORD gave Israel what they asked for. He handed the Canaanites over to them. Israel completely destroyed them. They also destroyed their towns. So that place was named Hormah.

Moses Makes a Bronze Snake

[4]The people of Israel traveled from Mount Hor along the way to the Red Sea. They wanted to go around Edom. But they grew tired on the way. [5]So they spoke against God. They also spoke against Moses. They said to them, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt? Do you want us to die here in the desert? We don’t have any bread! We don’t have any water! And we hate this awful food!”

[6]Then the LORD sent poisonous snakes among the people of Israel. The snakes bit them. Many of the people died. [7]The others came to Moses. They said, “We sinned when we spoke against the LORD and against you. Pray that the LORD will take the snakes away from us.” So Moses prayed for the people.

[8]The LORD said to Moses, “Make a snake. Put it up on a pole. Then anyone who is bitten can look at it and remain alive.” [9]So Moses made a bronze snake. He put it up on a pole. Then anyone who was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake remained alive.

The People Continue On to Moab

10 The people of Israel moved on. They camped at Oboth. 11 Then they started
out from Oboth. They camped in Iye Abarim. It's in the desert on the eastern
border of Moab. 12 From there they moved on. They camped in the Zered
Valley. 13 They started out from there and camped by the Arnon River. It's in
the desert that spreads out into the territory of the Amorites. The Arnon is the
border of Moab. It's between Moab and the Amorites.

14 Here is what the Book of the Wars of the LORD says about it. It says,

"Sing about Waheb in Suphah and the valleys.
Sing about the Arnon 15 and the slopes of the valleys.
They lead to the place called Ar.
They lie along the border of Moab."

16 From there the people of Israel continued on to Beer. That was the well
where the LORD spoke to Moses. He said, "Gather the people together. I will
give them water to drink."

17 Then Israel sang a song. They said,

"Spring up, you well!
Sing about it.
18 Sing about the well the princes dug.
Sing about the well the nobles of the people dug.
All of their rulers were holding their rods and staffs."

Then the people of Israel went from the desert to Mattanah. 19 They went
from Mattanah to Nahaliel. They went from Nahaliel to Bamoth. 20 And they
went from Bamoth to a valley in Moab. It's the valley where the highest slopes
of Pisgah look out over a dry and empty land.

Israel Wins the Battle Over Sihon and Og

21 The people of Israel sent messengers to speak to Sihon. He was the king of

the Amorites. The messengers said to him,

22“Let us pass through your country. We won’t go off the road into any field
or vineyard. We won’t drink water from any well. We’ll travel along the king’s
highway. We’ll just go straight through your territory.”

23But Sihon wouldn’t let Israel pass through his territory. He gathered his
whole army together. Then he marched out into the desert against Israel. When
he reached Jahaz, he fought against Israel.

24But Israel put him to death with their swords. They took over his land. They
took everything from the Arnon River to the Jabbok River. But they didn’t take
over any of the land of the Ammonites. That’s because the Ammonites had
built strong forts along their border. 25The people of Israel captured all of the
cities of the Amorites. Then they settled down in them. They captured the city
of Heshbon. They also captured all of the settlements that were around it.

26Sihon, the king of the Amorites, ruled in Heshbon. He had fought against
an earlier king of Moab. Sihon had taken from him all of his land all the way to
the Arnon River.

27That’s why the poets say,

“Come to Heshbon. Let it be built again.
Let Sihon’s city be made as good as new.

28“Fire went out from Heshbon.
A blaze went out from the city of Sihon.
It burned up Ar in Moab.
It burned up the citizens who lived on Arnon’s hills.
29Moab, how terrible it is for you!
People of Chemosh, you are destroyed!
Chemosh has deserted his sons and daughters.
His sons have run away from the battle.
His daughters have become prisoners.
He has handed all of them over to Sihon,
the king of the Amorites.

30“But we have taken them over.
Heshbon is destroyed all the way to Dibon.
We have destroyed them as far as Nophah.

Nophah goes all the way to Medeba.”

31So Israel settled in the land of the Amorites.

32Moses sent spies to the city of Jazer. The people of Israel captured the settlements that were around it. They drove out the Amorites who were there. 33Then they turned and went up along the road toward Bashan. Og was the king of Bashan. He and his whole army marched out. They went to fight against Israel at Edrei.

34The LORD said to Moses, “Do not be afraid of Og. I have handed him over to you. I have given you his whole army. I have also given you his land. Do to him what you did to Sihon, the king of the Amorites. He ruled in Heshbon.”

35So the people of Israel struck Og down. They struck his sons down. And they wiped out his whole army. They didn’t leave anyone alive. They took over his land for themselves.

Balak Sends For Balaam

Numbers 22

1Then the people of Israel traveled to the flatlands of Moab. They camped
along the Jordan River across from Jericho.

2Balak saw everything that Israel had done to the Amorites. Balak was the
son of Zippor. 3The people of Moab were terrified because there were so many
Israelites. In fact, Moab was filled with panic because of the people of Israel.

4The Moabites spoke to the elders of Midian. They said, “This huge mob is
going to lick up everything around us. They’ll lick it up as an ox licks up all of
the grass in the fields.”

Balak, the son of Zippor, was the king of Moab at that time. 5He sent
messengers to get Balaam. Balaam was the son of Beor. Balaam was at the city
of Pethor near the Euphrates River. Pethor was in the land where Balaam had
been born. Balak told the messengers to say to Balaam,

“A nation has come out of Egypt. They are covering the face of the land.
They’ve settled down next to me. 6So come and put a curse on those people.
They are too powerful for me. Maybe I’ll be able to win the battle over them.
Maybe I’ll be able to drive them out of the country. I know that those you bless
will be blessed. And I know that those you put a curse on will be cursed.”

7The elders of Moab and Midian left. They took with them the money they
knew Balaam would ask for. They wanted him to use magic and figure things
out for them. They came to where Balaam was. And they told him what Balak
had said.

8“Spend the night here,” Balaam said to them. “I’ll bring you back the answer
the LORD gives me.” So the princes of Moab stayed with him.

9God came to Balaam. He asked, “Who are these men who are with you?”

10Balaam said to God, “Balak king of Moab, the son of Zippor, sent me a
message. 11He said, ‘A nation has come out of Egypt. They are covering the
whole surface of the land. So come. Put a curse on them for me. Maybe I’ll be

able to fight them. Maybe I'll be able to drive them away.' "

12But God said to Balaam, "Do not go with them. You must not put a curse on those people. I have blessed them."

13The next morning Balaam got up. He said to Balak's princes, "Go back to your own country. The LORD won't let me go with you."

14So the princes of Moab returned to Balak. They said, "Balaam wouldn't come with us."

15Then Balak sent other princes. They were more important than the first ones. And there were more of them. 16They came to Balaam. They said,

"Balak, the son of Zippor, says, 'Don't let anything keep you from coming to me. 17I'll make you very rich. I'll do anything you say. Come. Put a curse on those people for me.' "

18But Balaam gave them his answer. He said, "Balak could give me his palace filled with silver and gold. Even then, I still couldn't do anything at all that goes beyond what the LORD my God commands. 19Stay here tonight, just as the others did. I'll find out what else the LORD will tell me."

20That night God came to Balaam. He said, "These men have come to get you. So go with them. But do only what I tell you to do."

Balaam's Donkey

21Balaam got up in the morning. He put a saddle on his donkey. Then he went with the princes of Moab.

22But God was very angry when Balaam went. So the angel of the LORD stood in the road to oppose him. Balaam was riding on his donkey. His two servants were with him. 23The donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road. The angel was holding a sword. He was ready for battle. So the donkey left the road and went into a field. Balaam hit the donkey. He wanted to get it back on the road.

24Then the angel of the LORD stood in a narrow path. The path went between two vineyards. There were walls on both sides. 25The donkey saw the angel of the LORD. So it moved close to the wall. It crushed Balaam's foot against the

wall. He hit the donkey again.

[26]Then the angel of the LORD moved on ahead. He stood in a narrow place. There was no room to turn, either right or left. [27]The donkey saw the angel of the LORD. So it lay down under Balaam. That made him angry. He hit the donkey with his walking stick.

[28]Then the LORD opened the donkey's mouth. It said to Balaam, "What have I done to you? Why did you hit me those three times?"

[29]Balaam answered the donkey. He said, "You have made me look foolish! I wish I had a sword in my hand. If I did, I'd kill you right now."

[30]The donkey said to Balaam, "I'm your own donkey. I'm the one you have always ridden. Haven't you been riding me to this very day? Have I ever made you look foolish before?"

"No," he said.

[31]Then the LORD opened Balaam's eyes. He saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road. He saw that the angel was holding a sword. The angel was ready for battle. So Balaam bowed down. He fell with his face to the ground.

[32]The angel of the LORD spoke to him. He asked him, "Why have you hit your donkey three times? I have come here to oppose you. What you are doing is foolish. [33]The donkey saw me. It turned away from me three times. Suppose it had not turned away. Then I would certainly have killed you by now. But I would have spared the donkey."

[34]Balaam spoke to the angel of the LORD. He said, "I have sinned. I didn't realize you were standing in the road to oppose me. Tell me whether you are pleased with me. If you aren't, I'll go back."

[35]The angel of the LORD spoke to Balaam. He said, "Go with the men. But say only what I tell you to say." So Balaam went with the princes of Balak.

[36]Balak heard that Balaam was coming. So he went out to meet him. They met at a Moabite town near the Arnon River. The town was on the border of Balak's territory. [37]Balak spoke to Balaam. He said, "Didn't I send messengers to you? I wanted you to come quickly. So why didn't you come? I can make you very rich."

[38]"Well, I've come to you now," Balaam replied. "But I can't say just anything. I can only speak the words God puts in my mouth."

[39]Then Balaam went with Balak to Kiriath Huzoth. [40]Balak sacrificed cattle

and sheep. He gave some to Balaam. He also gave some to the princes who were with him.

41The next morning Balak took Balaam up to Bamoth Baal. From there he saw part of the people of Israel.

Balaam's First Message From God

Numbers 23

1 Balaam said to Balak, "Build me seven altars here. Prepare seven bulls and
seven rams for me to sacrifice." 2 Balak did just as Balaam said. The two of
them offered a bull and a ram on each altar.

3 Then Balaam said to Balak, "Stay here beside your offering. I'll go and try
to find out what the LORD wants me to do. Maybe he'll come and meet with
me. Then I'll tell you what he says to me." So Balaam went off to a bare
hilltop.

4 God met with him there. Balaam said, "I've prepared seven altars. On each
altar I've offered a bull and a ram."

5 The LORD put a message in Balaam's mouth. The LORD said, "Go back to
Balak. Give him my message."

6 So Balaam went back to him. He found Balak standing beside his offering.
All of the princes of Moab were with him.

7 Then Balaam spoke the message he had received from God. He said,

"Balak brought me from the land of Aram.
The king of Moab sent for me from the mountains in the east.
'Come,' he said. 'Put a curse on Jacob's people for me.
Come. Speak against Israel.'
8 But how can I put a curse on
people God hasn't cursed?
How can I speak against
people the LORD hasn't spoken against?
9 I see them from the rocky peaks.
I view them from the hills.
I see a group of people who live by themselves.
They don't consider themselves to be one of the nations.
10 Jacob's people are like the dust of the earth.
Can dust be counted?
Who can count even a fourth of the people of Israel?

Let me die as godly people die.
Let my death be like theirs!”

11Balak said to Balaam, “What have you done to me? I brought you here to put a curse on my enemies! But all you have done is give them a blessing!”

12He answered, “I have to speak only the words the LORD puts in my mouth.”

Balaam’s Second Message From God

13Then Balak said to Balaam, “Come with me to another place. You can see the people of Israel from there. You will see only some of them. You won’t see all of them. From there, put a curse on them for me.”

14So Balak took Balaam to the field of Zophim. It was on the highest slopes of Pisgah. There he built seven altars. He offered a bull and a ram on each altar.

15Balaam said to Balak, “Stay here beside your offering. I’ll meet with the LORD over there.”

16The LORD met with Balaam. He put a message in Balaam’s mouth. The LORD said, “Go back to Balak. Give him my message.”

17So he went to him. He found him standing beside his offering. The princes of Moab were with him. Balak asked him, “What did the LORD say?”

18Then Balaam spoke the message he had received from God. He said,

“Balak, rise up and listen.
Son of Zippor, hear me.
19God isn’t a mere man. He can’t lie.
He isn’t a human being. He doesn’t change his mind.
He speaks, and then he acts.
He makes a promise, and then he keeps it.
20He has commanded me to bless Israel.
He has given them his blessing. And I can’t change it.

21“I don’t see any trouble coming on the people of Jacob.
I don’t see any suffering in Israel.
The LORD their God is with them.
The shout of the King is among them.

[22]God brought them out of Egypt.
They are as strong as a wild ox.
[23]There isn't any magic that can hurt the people of Jacob.
No one can use magic words to harm Israel.
Here is what will be said about the people of Jacob.
Here is what will be said about Israel.
People will say, 'See what God has done!'
[24]The people of Israel are going to wake up like a female lion.
They are going to get up like a male lion.
They are like a lion that won't rest
until it eats what it has caught.
They are like a lion that won't rest
until it drinks the blood of what it has killed."

[25]Then Balak said to Balaam, "Don't put a curse on them at all! And don't give them a blessing at all!"

[26]Balaam answered, "Didn't I tell you that I have to do only what the LORD says?"

Balaam's Third Message From God

[27]Then Balak said to Balaam, "Come. Let me take you to another place. Perhaps God will be pleased to let you put a curse on them for me from there." [28]Balak took Balaam to the top of Mount Peor. It looks out over a dry and empty land.

[29]Balaam said, "Build me seven altars here. Prepare seven bulls and seven rams for me to sacrifice." [30]Balak did just as Balaam said. He offered a bull and a ram on each altar.

Numbers 24

[1]Balaam saw that the LORD was pleased to give his blessing to Israel. So he
didn't try to use evil magic as he had done at other times. Instead, he turned
and looked toward the desert. [2]He looked out and saw Israel. They had set up
their camps tribe by tribe. The Spirit of God came on him.

[3]Balaam spoke the message he had received from God. He said,

"Here is the message God gave Balaam, the son of Beor.
It's the message God gave to the one who sees clearly.
[4]It's the message God gave to the one who hears the words of God.
He sees a vision from the Mighty One.
He falls down flat with his face toward the ground.
His eyes have been opened by the LORD.

[5]"People of Jacob, your tents are very beautiful.
Israel, the places where you live are very beautiful.

[6]"They spread out like valleys.
They are like gardens beside a river.
They are like aloes the LORD has planted.
They are like cedar trees beside a stream.
[7]Their water buckets will run over.
Their seeds will have plenty of water.

"Their king will be greater than King Agag.
Their kingdom will be honored.

[8]"God brought them out of Egypt.
They are as strong as a wild ox.
They eat up nations that are at war with them.
They break their bones in pieces.
They wound them with their arrows.
[9]Like a male lion they lie down and sleep.
They are like a female lion.
Who dares to wake them up?

May those who bless you be blessed!

May those who call down a curse on you be cursed!”

10Then Balak’s anger burned against Balaam. He slapped his hands together.
He said to Balaam, “I sent for you to put a curse on my enemies. But you have
given them a blessing three times. 11Get out of here right away! Go home! I
said I’d make you very rich. But the LORD has kept you from getting rich.”

12Balaam answered Balak, “Here is what I told the messengers you sent me.
13I said, ‘Balak could give me his palace filled with silver and gold. Even if I
wanted to, I still couldn’t do anything at all that goes beyond what the LORD
commands. I have to say only what the LORD tells me to say.’

14“Now I’m going back to my people. But come. Let me warn you about
what these people will do to your people in days to come.”

Balaam’s Fourth Message From God

15Then Balaam spoke the message he had received from God. He said,

“Here is the message God gave Balaam, the son of Beor.
It’s the message God gave to the one who sees clearly.
16It’s the message God gave to the one who hears the words of God.
The Most High God has given him knowledge.
He sees a vision from the Mighty One.
He falls down flat with his face toward the ground.
His eyes have been opened by the LORD.

17“I see him, but I don’t see him now.
I view him, but he isn’t near.
A star will come from among the people of Jacob.
A king will rise up out of Israel.
He’ll crush the foreheads of the people of Moab.
He’ll crush the skulls of all of the sons of Sheth.
18He’ll win the battle over Edom.
He’ll win the battle over his enemy Seir.
But Israel will grow strong.
19A ruler will come from among the people of Jacob.
He’ll destroy those from the city who are still alive.”

Balaam's Fifth Message From God

20 Then Balaam saw the people of Amalek. He spoke the message he had
received from God. He said,

"Amalek was the first nation to attack Israel.
But they will finally be destroyed."

Balaam's Sixth Message From God

21 Then he saw the Kenites. He spoke the message he had received from God.
He said,

"The place where you live is safe.
Your nest is on a high cliff.
22 But you Kenites will be destroyed.
Assyria will take you as prisoners."

Balaam's Seventh Message From God

23 Then he spoke the message he had received from God. He said,

"Who can live when God does this?
24 Ships will come from the shores of Kittim.
They will bring Assyria and Eber under their control.
But they themselves will also be destroyed."

25 Then Balaam got up and returned home. And Balak went on his way.

Moab Leads Israel Down the Wrong Path

Numbers 25

[1]Israel was staying in Shittim. The men of Israel began to commit sexual sins
with the women of Moab. [2]The women invited the men to feasts and sacrifices
in honor of their gods. The people ate and bowed down in front of the statues
of those gods.

[3]So Israel joined in worshiping the god Baal that was worshiped at Peor. The
LORD's anger burned against Israel.

[4]The LORD said to Moses, "Take all of the leaders of these people. Kill them.
Put their dead bodies out in the open. I want to see you do it in the middle of
the day. Then my anger will not burn against Israel."

[5]So Moses spoke to Israel's judges. He said, "Some of your men have joined
in worshiping the god Baal that is worshiped at Peor. Each of you must kill the
men in your tribe who have done that."

[6]Then a man of Israel brought a woman of Midian to his family. He did it
right in front of the eyes of Moses and the whole community of Israel. They
were sobbing at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.

[7]Phinehas was a priest. He was the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron. When
Phinehas saw what had happened, he left the people. He took a spear in his
hand. [8]He followed the man into a tent. Phinehas stuck the spear through both
the man and the woman.

Then the LORD stopped the plague against the people of Israel. [9]But the
plague had already killed 24,000 of them.

[10]The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, [11]"Phinehas is a priest. He is the son of
Eleazar, the son of Aaron. Phinehas has turned my anger away from the people
of Israel. I am committed to making sure I am honored among them. And he is
as committed as I am. Even though I was angry with them, I did not put an end
to them.

[12]"So tell Phinehas I am making my covenant with him. It promises to give
him peace. [13]He and his sons after him will have a covenant to be priests

forever. That is because he was committed to making sure that I, his God, was honored. In that way he paid for the sin of the people of Israel.”

14The name of the man of Israel who was killed was Zimri. He was the son of Salu. Zimri was killed along with the woman of Midian. Salu was a family leader in the tribe of Simeon. 15The name of the woman of Midian who was killed was Cozbi. She was the daughter of Zur. Zur was the chief of a family in Midian.

16The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, 17“Treat the people of Midian just as you would treat enemies. Kill them. 18After all, they treated you like enemies. They tricked you into worshiping the god Baal that is worshiped at Peor. They also tricked you because of what Cozbi did. She was the woman who was killed when the plague that was connected with Peor came. Cozbi was the daughter of a leader of Midian.”

The Men of Israel Are Counted a Second Time

Numbers 26

1 After the plague the LORD spoke to Moses and the priest Eleazar. Eleazar
was the son of Aaron. The LORD said, 2 "Count all of the men of Israel. Make a
list of them by their families. Count all of the men who are able to serve in
Israel's army. They must be 20 years old or more."

3 At that time the people of Israel were on the flatlands of Moab. They were
by the Jordan River across from Jericho. Moses and the priest Eleazar spoke
with them. They said, 4 "Count all of the men who are 20 years old or more. Do
it just as the LORD commanded Moses."

Here are the men of Israel who came out of Egypt.

5 Reuben was Israel's oldest son. Here are the names of his sons.

The Hanochite family came from Hanoch.
The Palluite family came from Pallu.
6 The Hezronite family came from Hezron.
The Carmite family came from Carmi.

7 Those were the families of Reuben. The number of men was 43,730.

8 Eliab was the son of Pallu. 9 Eliab's sons were Nemuel, Dathan and Abiram.
Dathan and Abiram were the same community officials who refused to obey
Moses and Aaron. They were among the followers of Korah who refused to
obey the LORD. 10 The ground opened its mouth. It swallowed them up along
with Korah. The followers of Korah died when fire burned up 250 men. Their
deaths were a warning to the rest of Israel. 11 But the family line of Korah
didn't die out completely.

[12]Here are the names of Simeon's sons. They are listed by their families.

The Nemuelite family came from Nemuel.
The Jaminite family came from Jamin.
The Jakinite family came from Jakin.

[13]The Zerahite family came from Zerah.

The Shaulite family came from Shaul.

[14]Those were the families of Simeon. The number of the men was 22,200.

[15]Here are the names of Gad's sons. They are listed by their families.

The Zephonite family came from Zephon.
The Haggite family came from Haggi.
The Shunite family came from Shuni.

[16]The Oznite family came from Ozni.

The Erite family came from Eri.

[17]The Arodite family came from Arodi.

The Arelite family came from Areli.

[18]Those were the families of Gad. The number of the men was 40,500.

[19]Er and Onan were sons of Judah. But they died in Canaan.

[20]Here are the names of Judah's sons. They are listed by their families.

The Shelanite family came from Shelah.
The Perezite family came from Perez.
The Zerahite family came from Zerah.

[21]Here are the names of the sons of Perez.

The Hezronite family came from Hezron.

The Hamulite family came from Hamul.

[22]Those were the families of Judah. The number of the men was 76,500.

[23]Here are the names of Issachar's sons. They are listed by their families.

The Tolaite family came from Tola.
The Puite family came from Puah.

[24]The Jashubite family came from Jashub.

The Shimronite family came from Shimron.

[25]Those were the families of Issachar. The number of the men was 64,300.

[26]Here are the names of Zebulun's sons. They are listed by their families.

The Seredite family came from Sered.
The Elonite family came from Elon.
The Jahleelite family came from Jahleel.

[27]Those were the families of Zebulun. The number of the men was 60,500.

[28]Here are the names of Joseph's sons. They are listed by their families. The families came from Manasseh and Ephraim, the sons of Joseph.

[29]Here are the names of Manasseh's sons.

The Makirite family came from Makir. Makir was the father of Gilead.
The Gileadite family came from Gilead.

[30]Here are the names of Gilead's sons.

The Iezerite family came from Iezer.

The Helekite family came from Helek.

[31]The Asrielite family came from Asriel.

The Shechemite family came from Shechem.

[32]The Shemidaite family came from Shemida.

The Hepherite family came from Hepher.

[33]Zelophehad was the son of Hepher. Zelophehad didn't have any sons. All he had was daughters. Their names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah,

Milcah and Tirzah.

[34]Those were the families of Manasseh. The number of the men was 52,700.

[35]Here are the names of Ephraim's sons. They are listed by their families.

The Shuthelahite family came from Shuthelah.
The Bekerite family came from Beker.
The Tahanite family came from Tahan.

[36]The sons of Shuthelah were the Eranite family.

They came from Eran.

[37]Those were the families of Ephraim. The number of the men was 32,500.

Those were the sons of Joseph. They are listed by their families.

[38]Here are the names of Benjamin's sons. They are listed by their families.

The Belaite family came from Bela.
The Ashbelite family came from Ashbel.
The Ahiramite family came from Ahiram.

[39]The Shuphamite family came from Shupham.

The Huphamite family came from Hupham.

[40]Bela's sons came from Ard and Naaman.

The Ardite family came from Ard.

The Naamite family came from Naaman.

[41]Those were the families of Benjamin. The number of the men was 45,600.

[42]Here is the name of Dan's son. He is listed by his family.

The Shuhamite family came from Shuham.

That was the family of Dan. [43]All of the men in Dan's family were Shuhamites.
The number of the men was 64,400.

[44]Here are the names of Asher's sons. They are listed by their families.

The Imnite family came from Imnah.
The Ishvite family came from Ishvi.
The Beriite family came from Beriah.

[45]Here are the names of the families that came from Beriah's sons.

The Heberite family came from Heber.

The Malkielite family came from Malkiel.

[46]Asher also had a daughter named Serah.

[47]Those were the families of Asher. The number of the men was 53,400.

[48]Here are the names of Naphtali's sons. They are listed by their families.

The Jahzeelite family came from Jahzeel.
The Gunite family came from Guni.

[49]The Jezerite family came from Jezer.

The Shillemite family came from Shillem.

[50]Those were the families of Naphtali. The number of the men was 45,400.

[51]The total number of the men of Israel was 601,730.

[52]The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, [53]"I will give the land to them. The amount of land each family receives will be based on the number of its men. [54]Give a larger share to a larger family. Give a smaller share to a smaller family. Each family will receive its share based on the number of men who are listed in it.

55“Be sure that you use lots when you give out the land. What each family
receives will be based on the number of men listed in its tribe. 56Use lots when
you give out each share. Use lots for the larger and smaller families alike.”

57Here are the names of the Levites. They are listed by their families.

The Gershonite family came from Gershon.
The Kohathite family came from Kohath.
The Merarite family came from Merari.

58Here are the names of the other Levite families. They are

the Libnite family,
the Hebronite family,
the Mahlite family,
the Mushite family,
the Korahite family.

Amram came from the Kohathite family.

59The name of Amram’s wife was Jochebed. She was from the family line of
Levi. She was born to the Levites in Egypt. Aaron, Moses and their sister
Miriam were born in the family line of Amram and Jochebed.

60Aaron was the father of Nadab and Abihu. He was also the father of Eleazar
and Ithamar. 61But Nadab and Abihu made an offering to the LORD by using
fire that wasn’t allowed. So they died.

62The number of male Levites who were a month old or more was 23,000.
They weren’t listed along with the other men of Israel. That’s because they
didn’t receive a share among them.

63Those are the men who were counted by Moses and the priest Eleazar. At
that time the people of Israel were on the flatlands of Moab. They were by the
Jordan River across from Jericho.

64The men of Israel had been counted before in the Sinai Desert by Moses
and the priest Aaron. But not one of them was among the men who were
counted this time. 65The LORD had told the people of Israel at Kadesh Barnea

that they would certainly die in the desert. Not one of them was left alive except Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua, the son of Nun.

Zelophehad's Daughters

Numbers 27

[1]The daughters of Zelophehad belonged to the family groups of Manasseh. Zelophehad was the son of Hepher. Hepher was the son of Gilead. Gilead was the son of Makir. Makir was the son of Manasseh. And Manasseh was the son of Joseph. The names of Zelophehad's daughters were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah. They approached [2]the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. There they stood in front of Moses and the priest Eleazar. The leaders and the whole community were there too.

Zelophehad's daughters said, [3]"Our father died in the Sinai Desert. But he wasn't one of the men who followed Korah. He wasn't one of those who joined together against the LORD. Our father died because of his own sin. He didn't leave any sons.

[4]"Why should our father's name disappear from his family just because he didn't have a son? Give us property among our father's relatives."

[5]So Moses brought their case to the LORD. [6]The LORD spoke to him. He said, [7]"What Zelophehad's daughters are saying is right. You must certainly give them property. Give them a share among their father's relatives. Turn their father's property over to them.

[8]"Say to the people of Israel, 'Suppose a man dies who doesn't have a son. Then turn his property over to his daughter. [9]Suppose the man doesn't have a daughter. Then give his property to his brothers. [10]Suppose the man doesn't have any brothers. Then give his property to his father's brothers. [11]Suppose his father doesn't have any brothers. Then give his property to the nearest male relative in his family group. It will belong to him. That is what the law will require of the people of Israel. It is just as the LORD commanded me.' "

Joshua Becomes Israel's New Leader

[12]Then the LORD spoke to Moses. He said, "Go up this mountain in the

Abarim range. See the land I have given the people of Israel. 13After you have seen it, you too will join the members of your family who have already died. You will die, just as your brother Aaron did.

14"The community refused to obey me at the waters of Meribah Kadesh. At that time, you and Aaron did not obey my command. You did not honor me in front of them as the holy God." Meribah Kadesh is in the Desert of Zin.

15Moses spoke to the LORD. He said, 16"LORD, you are the God who creates the spirits of all people. Please appoint a man to lead this community. 17Put him in charge of them. Tell him to take care of them. Then your people won't be like sheep that don't have a shepherd."

18So the LORD said to Moses, "Joshua, the son of Nun, has the ability to be a wise leader. Get him and place your hand on him. 19Have him stand in front of the priest Eleazar and the whole community. Put him in charge while everyone is watching. 20Give him some of your authority. Then the whole community of Israel will obey him.

21"Joshua will stand in front of the priest Eleazar. Eleazar will help him make decisions. Eleazar will get help from me by using the Urim. Joshua and the whole community of Israel must not make any move at all unless I command them to."

22Moses did just as the LORD commanded him. He got Joshua and had him stand in front of the priest Eleazar and the whole community. 23Then Moses placed his hands on Joshua. And he put him in charge of the people. He did just as the LORD had directed through Moses.

Offerings That Israel Must Bring Each Day

Numbers 28

1The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, 2"Here is a command I want you to give
the people of Israel. Tell them, 'Be sure to bring to the LORD the food for the
offerings that are made to him with fire. Do it at the appointed time. It will give
a smell that is pleasant to him.'

3"Tell them, 'Here is the offering you must bring to the LORD. It should be
made with fire. Bring him two lambs that are a year old. They must not have
any flaws. Bring them as a regular burnt offering each day.

4" 'Prepare one lamb in the morning. Prepare the other when the sun goes
down. 5Bring a grain offering along with them. It must have eight cups of fine
flour. Mix it with a quart of oil that is made from pressed olives. 6It is the
regular burnt offering. The LORD established it at Mount Sinai. It has a pleasant
smell. It is an offering that is made to him with fire. 7Along with that, offer a
quart of wine as a drink offering. It must be given along with each lamb. Pour
out the drink offering to the LORD at the sacred tent.

8" 'Prepare the second lamb when the sun goes down. Sacrifice it along with
the same kind of grain offering and drink offering that you prepare in the
morning. It is an offering that is made with fire. It gives a smell that is pleasant
to the LORD.

Offerings That Israel Must Bring on the Sabbath Day

9" 'On the Sabbath day, bring an offering of two lambs. They must be a year
old. They must not have any flaws. Offer them along with their drink offering.
Offer them along with a grain offering of 16 cups of fine flour. Mix it with
olive oil. 10It is the burnt offering for every Sabbath day. It is in addition to the
regular burnt offering and its drink offering.

Offerings That Israel Must Bring Every Month

11“ ‘On the first day of every month, bring to the LORD a burnt offering. Bring
two young bulls and one ram. Also bring seven male lambs that are a year old.
They must not have any flaws.

12“ ‘Bring a grain offering along with each bull. It must have 24 cups of fine
flour. Mix it with olive oil. Bring a grain offering along with the ram. It must
have 16 cups of fine flour. Mix it with oil. 13Bring a grain offering along with
each lamb. It must have eight cups of fine flour. Mix it with oil. It is for a burnt
offering. It has a pleasant smell. It is an offering that is made to the LORD with
fire.

14“ ‘Bring a drink offering along with each bull. It must have two quarts of
wine. Offer two and a half pints along with the ram. And offer one quart along
with each lamb.

“ ‘It is the burnt offering for each month. It must be made on the day of each
New Moon Feast during the year.

15“ ‘One male goat must be brought to the LORD as a sin offering. It is in
addition to the regular burnt offering and its drink offering.

The Passover Feast

16“ ‘The LORD’s Passover Feast must be held on the 14th day of the first
month. 17On the 15th day of the month there must be a feast. For seven days
eat bread that is made without yeast. 18On the first day come together for a
special service. Do not do any regular work.

19“ ‘Bring to the LORD an offering that is made with fire. Bring a burnt
offering of two young bulls and one ram. Also bring seven male lambs that are
a year old. They must not have any flaws.

20“ ‘Prepare a grain offering along with each bull. The offering must have 24
cups of fine flour. Mix it with olive oil. Offer 16 cups along with the ram.
21Offer eight cups along with each of the seven lambs.

22“ ‘Include a male goat as a sin offering. It will pay for your sin.

23“Prepare everything in addition to the regular morning burnt offering.

24 Prepare the food in that way for the offering that is made with fire. Do it
every day for seven days. The offering will give a smell that is pleasant to the
LORD. You must prepare the offering in addition to the regular burnt offering
and its drink offering.

25 “ ‘On the seventh day come together for a special service. Do not do any
regular work.

The Feast of Weeks

26 “ ‘On the day you gather the first share of your crops, bring to the LORD an
offering of your first grain. Do it during the Feast of Weeks. Come together for
a special service. Do not do any regular work.

27 “ ‘Bring a burnt offering of two young bulls and one ram. Also bring seven
male lambs that are a year old. The offering will give a smell that is pleasant to
the LORD.

28 “ ‘Bring a grain offering along with each bull. It must have 24 cups of fine
flour. Mix it with olive oil. Offer 16 cups along with the ram. 29 Offer eight
cups along with each of the seven lambs.

30 “ ‘Include a male goat to pay for your sin.

31 “ ‘Prepare everything along with the drink offerings. Do it in addition to the
regular burnt offering and its grain offering. Be sure the animals do not have
any flaws.

The Feast of Trumpets

Numbers 29

1“ ‘On the first day of the seventh month, come together for a special service.
Do not do any regular work. Blow the trumpets on that day.

2“ ‘Prepare a burnt offering. It will give a smell that is pleasant to the LORD.
Prepare one young bull and one ram. Also prepare seven male lambs that are a
year old. They must not have any flaws.

3“ ‘Prepare a grain offering along with the bull. It must have 24 cups of fine
flour. Mix it with olive oil. Offer 16 cups along with the ram. 4Offer eight cups
along with each of the seven lambs.

5“ ‘Include a male goat as a sin offering. It will pay for your sin.

6“ ‘Each month and each day you must bring burnt offerings. Bring them
along with their grain offerings and drink offerings as they are required.

“ ‘The offerings for the Feast of Trumpets are in addition to them. They are
offerings that are made to the LORD with fire. They have a pleasant smell.

The Day When Sin Is Paid For

7“ ‘On the tenth day of the seventh month, come together for a special
service. You must not eat anything on that day. You must not do any work on
it.

8“ ‘Bring a burnt offering. It will give a smell that is pleasant to the LORD.
Bring one young bull and one ram. Also bring seven male lambs that are a year
old. They must not have any flaws.

9“ ‘Prepare a grain offering along with the bull. It must have 24 cups of fine
flour. Mix it with olive oil. Offer 16 cups along with the ram. 10Offer eight
cups along with each of the seven lambs.

11“ ‘Include a male goat as a sin offering. It is in addition to the offering that
pays for sin. It is in addition to the regular burnt offering along with its grain

offering. It is also in addition to their drink offerings.

The Feast of Booths

12“ ‘On the 15th day of the seventh month, come together for a special
service. Do not do any regular work. Celebrate the Feast of Booths in honor of
the LORD for seven days.

13“ ‘Bring an offering that is made with fire. It will give a smell that is
pleasant to the LORD. Bring a burnt offering of 13 young bulls and two rams.
Also bring 14 male lambs that are a year old. They must not have any flaws.

14“ ‘Prepare a grain offering along with each of the 13 bulls. It must have 24
cups of fine flour. Mix it with olive oil. Offer 16 cups along with each of the
two rams. 15Offer eight cups along with each of the 14 lambs.

16“ ‘Include a male goat as a sin offering. It is in addition to the regular burnt
offering. It is also in addition to its grain offering and drink offering.

17“ ‘On the second day prepare 12 young bulls and two rams. Also prepare 14
male lambs that are a year old. They must not have any flaws.

18“ ‘Prepare their grain offerings and drink offerings. Prepare them along
with the bulls, rams and lambs. Prepare them in keeping with the required
number.

19“ ‘Include a male goat as a sin offering. It is in addition to the regular burnt
offering along with its grain offering. It is also in addition to their drink
offerings.

20“ ‘On the third day prepare 11 bulls and two rams. Also prepare 14 male
lambs that are a year old. They must not have any flaws.

21“ ‘Prepare their grain offerings and drink offerings. Prepare them along
with the bulls, rams and lambs. Prepare them in keeping with the required
number.

22“ ‘Include a male goat as a sin offering. It is in addition to the regular burnt
offering. It is also in addition to its grain offering and drink offering.

23“ ‘On the fourth day prepare ten bulls and two rams. Also prepare 14 male
lambs that are a year old. They must not have any flaws.

24“ ‘Prepare their grain offerings and drink offerings. Prepare them along

with the bulls, rams and lambs. Prepare them in keeping with the required number.

25“ ‘Include a male goat as a sin offering. It is in addition to the regular burnt offering. It is also in addition to its grain offering and drink offering.

26“ ‘On the fifth day prepare nine bulls and two rams. Also prepare 14 male lambs that are a year old. They must not have any flaws.

27“ ‘Prepare their grain offerings and drink offerings. Prepare them along with the bulls, rams and lambs. Prepare them in keeping with the required number.

28“ ‘Include a male goat as a sin offering. It is in addition to the regular burnt offering. It is also in addition to its grain offering and drink offering.

29“ ‘On the sixth day prepare eight bulls and two rams. Also prepare 14 male lambs that are a year old. They must not have any flaws.

30“ ‘Prepare their grain offerings and drink offerings. Prepare them along with the bulls, rams and lambs. Prepare them in keeping with the required number.

31“ ‘Include a male goat as a sin offering. It is in addition to the regular burnt offering. It is also in addition to its grain offering and drink offering.

32“ ‘On the seventh day prepare seven bulls and two rams. Also prepare 14 male lambs that are a year old. They must not have any flaws.

33“ ‘Prepare their grain offerings and drink offerings. Prepare them along with the bulls, rams and lambs. Prepare them in keeping with the required number.

34“ ‘Include a male goat as a sin offering. It is in addition to the regular burnt offering. It is also in addition to its grain offering and drink offering.

35“ ‘On the eighth day come together for a sacred service. Do not do any regular work.

36“ ‘Bring an offering that is made with fire. It will give a smell that is pleasant to the LORD. Bring a burnt offering of one bull and one ram. Also bring seven male lambs that are a year old. They must not have any flaws.

37“ ‘Prepare their grain offerings and drink offerings. Prepare them along with the bull, the ram and the lambs. Prepare them in keeping with the required number.

38“ ‘Include a male goat as a sin offering. It is in addition to the regular burnt offering. It is also in addition to the grain offering and drink offering.

39“ ‘Here are the offerings you must prepare for the LORD at your appointed feasts. They are burnt offerings, grain offerings, drink offerings and friendship offerings. They are in addition to the offerings you bring to keep a special promise you make to the LORD. They are also in addition to the offerings you choose to give.’ ”

40Moses told the people of Israel everything the LORD had commanded him.

Oaths and Special Promises

Numbers 30

1 Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes of Israel. He said, “Here is what the
LORD commands. 2 Suppose a man makes a special promise to the LORD. Or
suppose he takes an oath and agrees to do something. Then he must keep his
promise. He must do everything he said he would do.

3 “Suppose a young woman is still living in her father’s house. She makes a
special promise to the LORD. Or she takes an oath and agrees to do something.

4 “Suppose her father hears about her promise or oath. And he doesn’t say
anything to her about it. Then she must keep her promise. She must do what
she agreed to do.

5 “But suppose her father doesn’t allow her to keep her promises when he
hears about them. Then she doesn’t have to do what she promised or agreed to
do. The LORD will set her free. He’ll do it because her father hasn’t allowed her
to keep her promises.

6 “Suppose she gets married after she makes a special promise. Or she gets
married after agreeing to do something without thinking it through. 7 Suppose
her husband hears about what she did. And he doesn’t say anything to her
about it. Then she must keep her promise. She must do what she agreed to do.

8 “But suppose her husband doesn’t allow her to keep her promises when he
hears about them. Then she doesn’t have to do what she promised. She doesn’t
have to do what she agreed to do without thinking it through. The LORD will set
her free.

9 “Suppose a widow makes a special promise. Or suppose she takes an oath
and agrees to do something. Then she must keep her promise. She must do
what she agreed to do. The same rules apply to a woman who has been
divorced.

10 “Suppose a woman who is living with her husband makes a special
promise. Or she takes an oath and agrees to do something. 11 Suppose her
husband hears about what she did. He doesn’t say anything to her about it. And

he doesn’t try to stop her from keeping her promises. Then she must keep her promise. She must do what she agreed to do.

12“But suppose her husband doesn’t allow her to keep her promises when he hears about them. Then she doesn’t have to do what she promised. She doesn’t have to do what she agreed to do. Her husband has kept her from doing what she said she would do. The LORD will set her free.

13“Her husband can let her keep any special promise she makes. Or he can refuse to let her keep it.

“Suppose she takes an oath and agrees not to eat anything. Then her husband can let her keep her promise. Or he can refuse to let her keep it.

14“But suppose day after day her husband doesn’t say anything to her about what she did. Then he lets her keep all of her promises. He lets her do everything she agreed to do. That’s because he didn’t say anything to her when he heard about what she had done.

15“But suppose some time after he hears about her promises he doesn’t let her keep them. Then she will be guilty. But he will be held accountable for it.”

16Those are the rules the LORD gave Moses about a man and his wife. And those are the rules the LORD gave about a father and his young daughter who is still living in his house.

The LORD Punishes the People of Midian

Numbers 31

[1]The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, [2]"Pay the people of Midian back for what they did to the Israelites. After that, you will join the members of your family who have already died."

[3]So Moses said to the people, "Prepare some of your men for battle. They must go to war against Midian. They will carry out the LORD's plan to punish Midian. [4]Send 1,000 men from each of the tribes of Israel into battle." [5]So Moses prepared 12,000 men for battle. There were 1,000 from each tribe. They came from the families of Israel.

[6]Moses sent them into battle. He sent 1,000 from each tribe. The priest Phinehas went along with them. Phinehas was the son of Eleazar. Phinehas took some articles from the sacred tent with him. He also took the trumpets. The trumpet blasts would tell the people what to do and when to do it.

[7]They fought against Midian, just as the LORD had commanded Moses. They killed every man. [8]Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur and Reba were among the men they killed. Those men were the five kings of Midian. The people of Israel also killed Balaam, the son of Beor, with a sword.

[9]They captured the women and children of Midian. They took for themselves all of the herds, flocks and goods.

[10]They burned up all of the towns where the people of Midian had settled. They also burned up all of their camps.

[11]They carried off everything they had taken. That included the people and the animals. [12]They brought back to Israel's camp the prisoners and everything else they had taken. They took them to Moses and to the priest Eleazar. They brought them to the whole community. Israel was camped on the flatlands of Moab. They were by the Jordan River across from Jericho.

[13]Moses and the priest Eleazar went to meet them outside the camp. So did all of the leaders of the community. [14]Moses was angry with the officers of the army who had returned from the battle. Some of them were the commanders of

thousands of men. Others were the commanders of hundreds.

15“Have you let all of the women remain alive?” Moses asked them. 16“The women followed Balaam’s advice. They caused the people of Israel to turn away from the LORD. The people worshiped the god Baal that was worshiped at Peor. So a plague struck them. 17Kill all of the boys. And kill every woman who has made love to a man. 18But save for yourselves every woman who has never made love to a man.

19“All of you who have killed anyone must stay outside the camp for seven days. And all of you who have touched anyone who was killed must do the same thing. On the third and seventh days you must make yourselves pure. You must also make your prisoners pure. 20Make all of your clothes pure and clean. Everything that is made out of leather, goat hair or wood must be made pure.”

21Then the priest Eleazar spoke to the soldiers who had gone into battle. He said, “Here is what the law the LORD gave Moses requires. 22All of your gold, silver, bronze, iron, tin and lead 23must be put through fire. So must everything else that doesn’t burn up. Then those things will be ‘clean.’ But they must also be made pure with the special water. In fact, everything that won’t burn up must be put through that water. 24On the seventh day wash your clothes. And you will be ‘clean.’ Then you can come into the camp.”

The People Divide Up What They Had Taken

25The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, 26“Here is what you and the priest Eleazar and the family heads of the community must do. You must count all of the people and animals you took. 27Divide up some of what you took with the soldiers who fought in the battle. Divide up the rest with the others in the community.

28“Set apart a gift for me. Take something from the soldiers who fought in the battle. Set apart one out of every 500 people, cattle, donkeys, sheep and goats. 29Take my gift from the soldiers’ half. Give it to the priest Eleazar. It is my share.

30“Also take something from the half that belongs to the people of Israel. Choose one out of every 50 people, cattle, donkeys, sheep, goats or other animals. Give them to the Levites. They are accountable for taking care of my

holy tent.”

31So Moses and the priest Eleazar did just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

32What the soldiers took included 675,000 sheep. 33There were also 72,000 cattle 34and 61,000 donkeys. 35And there were 32,000 women who had never made love to a man.

36Here is the half that belonged to those who had fought in the battle.

There were 337,500 sheep. 37From among them, the LORD’s gift was 675.

38There were 36,000 cattle. From among them, the LORD’s gift was 72.

39There were 30,500 donkeys. From among them, the LORD’s gift was 61.

40There were 16,000 women. From among them, the LORD’s gift was 32.

41Moses gave the gift to the priest Eleazar. It was the LORD’s share. Moses did just as the LORD had commanded him.

42The other half belonged to the people of Israel. Moses set it apart from what belonged to the fighting men. 43The community’s half was 337,500 sheep, 446,000 cattle, 450,500 donkeys 46and 16,000 women. 47Moses chose one out of every 50 people and animals. He gave them to the Levites. They were accountable for taking care of the LORD’s holy tent. Moses did just as the LORD had commanded him.

48Then the army officers went to Moses. Some of them were the commanders of thousands of men. Others were the commanders of hundreds. 49All of them said to Moses, “We have counted the soldiers under our command. Not a single one is missing.

50“So we’ve brought an offering to the LORD. We’ve brought the gold articles each of us took in the battle. We’ve also brought armbands, bracelets, rings, earrings and necklaces. We’ve brought them to pay for our sin in the sight of the LORD.”

51Moses and the priest Eleazar accepted the beautiful gold articles from the army officers. 52The gold that was received from the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds weighed 420 pounds. Moses and Eleazar offered

all of it as a gift to the LORD. 53Each soldier had taken things from the battle for himself. 54Moses and the priest Eleazar accepted the gold from all of the commanders. They brought it into the Tent of Meeting. It reminded the LORD of the people of Israel.

The Tribes on the East Side of the Jordan River

Numbers 32

1 The tribes of Reuben and Gad had very large herds and flocks. They looked
at the lands of Jazer and Gilead. They saw that those lands were just right for
livestock.

2 So they came to Moses and the priest Eleazar. They also came to the leaders
of the community. They said, 3 "We have seen the cities of Ataroth, Dibon,
Jazer, Nimrah and Heshbon. We've seen Elealeh, Sebam, Nebo and Beon. 4 All
of them are in the land the LORD has brought under Israel's control. This land is
just right for livestock. And we have livestock.

5 "We hope you are pleased with us," they continued. "If you are, please give
us this land. Then it will belong to us. But don't make us go across the Jordan
River."

6 Moses spoke to the people of Gad and Reuben. He said, "Should the rest of
us go to war while you stay here? 7 The LORD has given the land of Canaan to
the people of Israel. So why would you want to keep them from going over
into it?

8 "That's what your fathers did. I sent them from Kadesh Barnea to check out
the land. 9 They went up to the Valley of Eshcol and looked at the land. Then
they talked the people of Israel out of entering the land the LORD had given
them.

10 "The LORD's anger was stirred up that day. So he took an oath and made a
promise. He said, 11 'Not one of the men who is 20 years old or more who came
up out of Egypt will see the land. They have not followed me with their whole
heart. I took an oath and promised to give the land to Abraham, Isaac and
Jacob.

12 " 'But not one of these men will see it except Caleb and Joshua. Caleb is
the son of Jephunneh, the Kenizzite. And Joshua is the son of Nun. They will
see the land. They followed me with their whole heart.'

13 "The LORD's anger burned against Israel. He made them wander around in

the desert for 40 years. They wandered until all of the people who had done evil in his sight had died.

14“Now here you are, you bunch of sinners! You have taken the place of your fathers. And you are making the LORD even more angry with Israel. 15What if you turn away from following him? Then he’ll leave all of these people in the desert again. And it will be your fault when they are destroyed.”

16Then they came up to Moses. They said, “We would like to build pens here for our livestock. We would also like to build cities for our women and children.

17“But we’re ready to prepare ourselves for battle. We’re even ready to go ahead of the people of Israel. We’ll go with them until we’ve brought them to their place. While we’re gone, our women and children will live in cities that have high walls around them. That will keep them safe from the people who are living in this land.

18“We won’t return to our homes until all of the people of Israel have received their share of the land.

19“We won’t receive any share with them on the west side of the Jordan River. We’ve already received our share here on the east side.”

20Then Moses said to them, “Do what you have promised to do. Prepare yourselves to fight for the LORD. 21Prepare yourselves and go across the Jordan River. Fight for the LORD until he has driven out his enemies in front of him.

22“When the land is under the LORD’s control, you can come back here. Your duty to the LORD and Israel will be over. Then the LORD will give you this land as your own.

23“But what if you fail to do your duty? Then you will be sinning against the LORD. And you can be sure that your sin will be discovered. It will be brought out into the open.

24“So build up cities for your women and children. Make sheep pens for your flocks. But do what you have promised to do.”

25The people of Gad and Reuben spoke to Moses. They said, “We will do just as you command. 26Our children and wives will remain here in the cities of Gilead. So will our flocks and herds. 27But we will prepare ourselves for battle. We’ll go across the Jordan River and fight for the LORD. We will do just as you have said.”

[28]Then Moses gave orders about them to the priest Eleazar. He gave the same orders to Joshua, the son of Nun. He also spoke to the family heads of the tribes of Israel.

[29]He said, “The men of Gad and Reuben must prepare themselves for battle. They must go across the Jordan River with you. They must help you fight for the LORD. They must stay with you until the land has been brought under your control. If they do, give them the land of Gilead as their own.

[30]“But what if they don’t get ready for battle? What if they don’t go across the Jordan with you? Then they must accept a share with you in Canaan.”

[31]The people of Gad and Reuben gave their answer. They said, “We will do what the LORD has said. [32]We’ll get ready for battle. We’ll go across the Jordan into Canaan. We’ll fight for the LORD there. But the property we receive will be on this side of the Jordan River.”

[33]Then Moses gave their land to them. He gave it to the tribes of Gad and Reuben and half of the tribe of Manasseh. Manasseh was Joseph’s son. One part of that land had belonged to the kingdom of Sihon, the king of the Amorites. The other part had belonged to the kingdom of Og, the king of Bashan. Moses gave that whole land to those two and a half tribes. It included its cities and the territory around them.

[34]The people of Gad built up the cities of Dibon, Ataroth and Aroer. [35]They built up Atroth Shophan, Jazer, Jogbehah, [36]Beth Nimrah and Beth Haran. They built a high wall around each of those cities. They also built sheep pens for their flocks.

[37]The people of Reuben built up Heshbon, Elealeh and Kiriathaim. [38]They also built up Nebo, Baal Meon and Sibmah. They gave new names to the cities they had built up.

[39]The people of Makir, the son of Manasseh, went to the land of Gilead. They captured it. They drove out the Amorites who were living there. [40]So Moses gave Gilead to the people of Makir, the son of Manasseh. And they settled there. [41]Jair was a man in the family line of Manasseh. Jair captured Gilead’s settlements. He called them Havvoth Jair. [42]Nobah captured Kenath and the settlements that were around it. He named it after himself.

The Places Where Israel Stopped During Their Journey

Numbers 33

[1]Here are the places where the people of Israel stopped during their journey. When they came out of Egypt, they marched in companies like an army. Moses and Aaron led them. [2]The LORD commanded Moses to record their journey. Here are the places where they stopped.

[3]The people of Israel started out from Rameses. It was the 15th day of the first month. It was the day after the Passover Feast. They marched out boldly in plain sight of all of the Egyptians. [4]The Egyptians were burying all of their oldest sons. The LORD had struck them down. He had done it when he punished their gods.

[5]The people of Israel left Rameses and camped at Succoth.

[6]They left Succoth and camped at Etham. Etham was on the edge of the desert.

[7]They left Etham and turned back to Pi Hahiroth. It was east of Baal Zephon. They camped near Migdol.

[8]They left Pi Hahiroth. Then they passed through the Red Sea into the desert. They traveled for three days in the Desert of Etham. Then they camped at Marah.

[9]They left Marah and went to Elim. Twelve springs and 70 palm trees were there. So they camped at Elim.

[10]They left Elim and camped by the Red Sea.

[11]They left the Red Sea and camped in the Desert of Sin.

[12]They left the Desert of Sin and camped at Dophkah.

[13]They left Dophkah and camped at Alush.

[14]They left Alush and camped at Rephidim. But there was no water there for the people to drink.

[15]They left Rephidim and camped in the Desert of Sinai.

16They left the Desert of Sinai and camped at Kibroth Hattaavah.

17They left Kibroth Hattaavah and camped at Hazeroth.

18They left Hazeroth and camped at Rithmah.

19They left Rithmah and camped at Rimmon Perez.

20They left Rimmon Perez and camped at Libnah.

21They left Libnah and camped at Rissah.

22They left Rissah and camped at Kehelathah.

23They left Kehelathah and camped at Mount Shepher.

24They left Mount Shepher and camped at Haradah.

25They left Haradah and camped at Makheloth.

26They left Makheloth and camped at Tahath.

27They left Tahath and camped at Terah.

28They left Terah and camped at Mithcah.

29They left Mithcah and camped at Hashmonah.

30They left Hashmonah and camped at Moseroth.

31They left Moseroth and camped at Bene Jaakan.

32They left Bene Jaakan and camped at Hor Haggidgad.

33They left Hor Haggidgad and camped at Jotbathah.

34They left Jotbathah and camped at Abronah.

35They left Abronah and camped at Ezion Geber.

36They left Ezion Geber and camped at Kadesh. Kadesh was in the Desert of Zin.

37They left Kadesh and camped at Mount Hor. It was on the border of Edom.

38The priest Aaron went up Mount Hor when the LORD commanded him to. That's where he died. It happened on the first day of the fifth month. It was the 40th year after the people of Israel came out of Egypt. 39Aaron was 123 years old when he died on Mount Hor.

40The Canaanite king of Arad lived in the Negev Desert in Canaan. He heard that the people of Israel were coming.

41They left Mount Hor and camped at Zalmonah.

42They left Zalmonah and camped at Punon.

43They left Punon and camped at Oboth.

44They left Oboth and camped at Iye Abarim. It was on the border of Moab.

45They left Iyim and camped at Dibon Gad.

46They left Dibon Gad and camped at Almon Diblathaim.

47They left Almon Diblathaim and camped in the mountain range of Abarim near Nebo.

48They left the mountain range of Abarim and camped on the flatlands of Moab. They were by the Jordan River across from Jericho. 49They camped there along the Jordan River from Beth Jeshimoth to Abel Shittim.

50On the flatlands of Moab the LORD spoke to Moses. He spoke to him by the Jordan River across from Jericho. The LORD said, 51"Speak to the people of Israel. Tell them, 'Go across the Jordan River into Canaan. 52Drive out all those who are living in the land. The statues of their gods are made out of stone and metal. Destroy all of those statues. And destroy all of the high places where they are worshiped.

53" 'Take the land as your own. Settle down in it. I have given it to you. 54Use lots when you give out the land. Do it based on the number of men who are in each tribe and family. Give a larger share to a larger group. And give a smaller group a smaller share. The share they receive by using lots will belong to them. Give out the shares based on the number of men in Israel's tribes.

55" 'But suppose you do not drive out the people who are living in the land. Then those you allow to remain there will become like needles in your eyes. They will become like thorns in your sides. They will give you trouble in the land where you will live. 56Then I will do to you what I plan to do to them.' "

Israel Arrives at the Borders of Canaan

Numbers 34

1The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, 2“Give the people of Israel a command. Tell them, ‘You are going to enter Canaan. The land will be given to you as your own. Here are the borders it will have.

3“ ‘Your southern border will include some of the Desert of Zin. It will be along the border of Edom. On the east, your southern border will start from the end of the Dead Sea. 4It will cross south of Scorpion Pass. It will continue on to Zin. From there it will go south of Kadesh Barnea. Then it will go to Hazar Addar and over to Azmon. 5There it will turn and join the Wadi of Egypt. It will come to an end at the Mediterranean Sea.

6“ ‘Your western border will be the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. That will be your border on the west.

7“ ‘For your northern border, run a line from the Mediterranean Sea to Mount Hor. 8Continue it from Mount Hor to Lebo Hamath. Then the border will go to Zedad. 9It will continue to Ziphron. It will come to an end at Hazar Enan. That will be your border on the north.

10“ ‘For your eastern border, run a line from Hazar Enan to Shepham. 11The border will go down from Shepham to Riblah. Riblah is on the east side of Ain. From there the border will continue along the slopes east of the Sea of Galilee. 12Then the border will go down along the Jordan River. It will come to an end at the Dead Sea.

“ ‘That will be your land. And those will be its borders on every side.’ ”

13Moses gave the people of Israel a command. He said, “Use lots when you give out the land. Each tribe will have its own share. The LORD has ordered it to be given to the nine and a half tribes.

14“The families of the tribes of Reuben and Gad have already received their shares. The families of half of the tribe of Manasseh have also received their share. 15Those two and a half tribes have received their shares east of the

Jordan River. It flows near Jericho. Their land is toward the sunrise.”

16The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, 17“Here are the names of the men who
will give out the shares of the land to your people. They are the priest Eleazar
and Joshua, the son of Nun. 18Also appoint one leader from each tribe to help
give out the land. 19Here are their names.

“Caleb, the son of Jephunneh,
is from the tribe of Judah.
20Shemuel, the son of Ammihud,
is from the tribe of Simeon.
21Elidad, the son of Kislon,
is from the tribe of Benjamin.
22Bukki, the son of Jogli,
is the leader from the tribe of Dan.
23Hanniel, the son of Ephod,
is the leader from the tribe of Manasseh. Manasseh was the son of Joseph.
24Kemuel, the son of Shiphtan,
is the leader from the tribe of Ephraim. Ephraim was the son of Joseph.
25Elizaphan, the son of Parnach,
is the leader from the tribe of Zebulun.
26Paltiel, the son of Azzan,
is the leader from the tribe of Issachar.
27Ahihud, the son of Shelomi,
is the leader from the tribe of Asher.
28Pedahel, the son of Ammihud,
is the leader from the tribe of Naphtali.”

29Those are the men the LORD commanded to give out the shares of the land.
They were commanded to give them to Israel in the land of Canaan.

The Levites Receive Their Towns

Numbers 35

1 On the flatlands of Moab, the LORD spoke to Moses. It was by the Jordan
River across from Jericho. The LORD said, 2 "Command the people of Israel to
give the Levites towns to live in. The towns must come from the shares of land
the people will have as their own. Also give the Levites the grasslands that are
around the towns. 3 Then the Levites will have towns to live in. They will also
have grasslands that are for their cattle, flocks and all of their other livestock.

4 "The grasslands that are around each town you give them will go out to
1,500 feet from the town wall. 5 Outside each town, the east side will measure
3,000 feet. The south side will measure 3,000 feet. The west side will measure
3,000 feet. And the north side will measure 3,000 feet. The town must be in the
center. The Levites will have the area around it as grasslands.

Cities to Go to for Safety

6 "Six of the towns you give the Levites will be cities to go to for safety. A
person who has killed someone can run to one of them. Also give the Levites
42 other towns. 7 You must give the Levites a total of 48 towns. Also give them
the grasslands that are around the towns.

8 "The towns you give the Levites must come from the land the people of
Israel have as their own. So the number you give from each tribe will depend
on the size of that tribe's share. Take many towns from a tribe that has many.
But take only a few towns from a tribe that has only a few."

9 Then the LORD spoke to Moses. He said, 10 "Speak to the people of Israel.
Tell them, 'You will soon go across the Jordan River. You will enter Canaan.
11 When you do, choose the cities to go to for safety. People who have killed
someone by accident can run to one of those cities. 12 They will be places of
safety for them. People will be safe there from those who want to kill them.
Then those who are charged with murder will not die before their case has been

brought to the community court.

13“ ‘Six towns will be the cities you can go to for safety. 14Three will be east of the Jordan River. The other three will be in Canaan.

15“ ‘Those six towns will be places where the people of Israel can go for safety. Outsiders and any other people living in Israel can also go to them for safety. So anyone who has killed another person by accident can run there.

16“ ‘Suppose a person uses an iron object to hit and kill someone. Then he is a murderer. He must be put to death. 17Or suppose a person is holding a stone that could kill. And he uses it to hit and kill someone. Then he is a murderer. He must be put to death. 18Or suppose a person is holding a wooden object that could kill. And he uses it to hit and kill someone. Then he is a murderer. He must be put to death.

19“ ‘The dead person’s nearest male relative should kill the murderer. When he meets him, he should kill him.

20“ ‘What if a person makes evil plans against someone else? And what if that person pushes him so that he dies? Or what if that person throws something at him so that he dies? 21Or what if that person hits the other person with a fist so that the other dies? Then the person who does any of those things must be put to death. He is a murderer.

“ ‘The dead person’s nearest male relative should kill the murderer. When he meets him, he should kill him.

22“ ‘But what if a person suddenly pushes someone else without being angry? Or what if that person throws something at him without meaning to? 23Or what if that person does not see him and drops a stone on him that kills him? He was not the dead person’s enemy. He did not mean to harm him.

24“ ‘Then the court must decide between the person who did the act and the nearest male relative of the one who was killed. Here are the rules the court must follow.

25“ ‘The court must provide a safe place for the person who is charged with murder. It must keep him safe from those who want to kill him. The court must send him back to the city he ran to for safety. He must stay there until the high priest dies. The priest is the one who has been anointed with the holy oil.

26“ ‘But suppose the one who has been charged with murder goes outside that city. 27And suppose the dead person’s nearest male relative finds that one

outside the city. Then the relative can kill the one who has been charged. The relative will not be guilty of murder.

28“ ‘The one who has been charged must stay in that city until the high priest dies. Only then can the one who has been charged return home.

29“ ‘That is what the law requires of you for all time to come. It will apply to you no matter where you live.

30“ ‘Suppose a person kills someone. That person must be put to death as a murderer. But do it only when there are witnesses who can tell what happened. Do not put anyone to death if only one witness tells what happened.

31“ ‘Do not accept payment for a murderer’s life. He should die. He must certainly be put to death.

32“ ‘Do not accept payment for anyone who has run to a city for safety. Do not let him buy his freedom to return home. He must not go back and live on his own land before the high priest dies.

33“ ‘Do not pollute the land where you are. Murder pollutes the land. Only one thing can pay to remove the pollution in the land where murder has been committed. The blood of the one who spilled another’s blood must be spilled. 34So do not make the land where you live “unclean.” I live there too. I live among the people of Israel. I am the LORD.’ ”

The Property Zelophehad's Daughters Will Receive

Numbers 36

[1]The heads of the families of Gilead came to Moses. Gilead was the son of Makir. The family heads were from the tribe of Manasseh. So they were in the family line of Joseph. They spoke to Moses in front of the leaders of the families of Israel.

[2]They said, "The LORD commanded you to give shares of the land to the people of Israel. He told you to use lots when you do it. At that time the LORD ordered you to give our brother Zelophehad's share to his daughters.

[3]"Suppose they get married to men who are from other tribes in Israel. Then their share will be taken away from our family's land. It will be added to the land of the tribe they marry into. So a part of the share that was given to us will be taken away. [4]The Year of Jubilee for the people of Israel will come. Then their share will be added to the land of the tribe they marry into. Their land will be taken away from the share that was given to our tribe."

[5]Then the LORD gave a command to Moses. He told Moses to give an order to the people of Israel. Moses said, "What the tribe in the family line of Joseph is saying is right.

[6]"Here is what the LORD commands for Zelophehad's daughters. They can get married to anyone they want to. But they have to get married to someone in their own family's tribe.

[7]"Property in Israel must not pass from one tribe to another. Everyone in Israel must keep his family's share of his tribe's land.

[8]"Suppose a daughter in any tribe of Israel receives land from her parents. Then she must get married to someone in her father's family and tribe. In that way, every family's share will remain in its family line in Israel.

[9]"Property can't pass from one tribe to another. Each tribe of Israel must keep the land it receives."

[10]So Zelophehad's daughters did just as the LORD commanded Moses. [11]The names of the daughters were Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah and Noah. All of

them got married to their cousins on their father's side. [12]They married men who were in the family line of Manasseh, the son of Joseph. So the land they received remained in their father's family and tribe.

[13]Those are the commands and rules the LORD gave through Moses. He gave them to the people of Israel on the flatlands of Moab. They were by the Jordan River across from Jericho.

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The LORD Commands Israel to Leave Mount Horeb

Deuteronomy 1

[1]These are the words Moses spoke to all of the people of Israel. At that time, they were in the desert east of the Jordan River. It's in the Arabah Valley across from Suph. They were between Paran and Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth and Dizahab. [2]It takes 11 days to go from Mount Horeb to Kadesh Barnea if you travel on the Mount Seir road.

[3]It was now the 40th year since the people of Israel had left Egypt. On the first day of the 11th month, Moses spoke to them. He told them everything the LORD had commanded him to tell them. [4]They had already won the battle over Sihon. Sihon was the king of the Amorites. He had ruled in Heshbon. Israel had also won the battle over Og at Edrei. Og was the king of Bashan. He had ruled in Ashtaroth.

[5]The people were east of the Jordan River in the territory of Moab. There Moses began to explain the law. Here is what he said.

[6]The LORD our God spoke to us at Mount Horeb. He said, "You have stayed long enough at this mountain. [7]Take your tents down. Go into the hill country of the Amorites. Go to all of the people who are their neighbors. Go to the people who live in the Arabah Valley. Travel to the mountains and the western hills. Go to the people in the Negev Desert and along the coast. Travel to the land of Canaan and to Lebanon. Go as far as the great Euphrates River.

[8]"I have given you all of that land. Go in and take it as your own. I took an oath. I promised I would give the land to your fathers. I promised it to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I also said I would give it to their children after them."

Some Officials Help Moses

[9]At that time I spoke to you. I said, "You are too heavy a load for me to carry

alone. [10]The LORD your God has increased your numbers. Today you are as many as the stars in the sky. [11]The LORD is the God of your people. May he increase your numbers a thousand times. May he bless you, just as he promised he would. [12]But I can't handle your problems and troubles all by myself. I can't settle your arguments.

[13]"So choose some wise men from each of your tribes. They must understand how to give good advice. The people must have respect for them. I will appoint those men to have authority over you."

[14]You answered me, "Your suggestion is good."

[15]So I took the leading men of your tribes who were wise and respected. I appointed them to have authority over you. I made them commanders of thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. I appointed them to be officials over the tribes.

[16]Here is what I commanded your judges at that time. I said, "Listen to your people's cases when they argue with one another. Judge them fairly. It doesn't matter whether the case is between fellow Israelites or between an Israelite and an outsider. [17]When you judge them, treat everyone the same. Listen to those who are important and those who are not. Don't be afraid of any man. God is the highest judge. Bring me any case that is too hard for you. I'll listen to it." [18]At that time I told you everything you should do.

Twelve Men Check Out the Land of Canaan

[19]The LORD our God commanded us to start out from Mount Horeb. So we did. We went toward the hill country of the Amorites. We traveled all through the huge and terrible desert you saw. Finally, we reached Kadesh Barnea.

[20]Then I said to you, "You have reached the hill country of the Amorites. The LORD our God is giving it to us. [21]The LORD your God has given you the land. Go up and take it. Do what the LORD says. He's the God of your people. Don't be afraid. Don't lose hope."

[22]Then all of you came to me. You said, "Let's send some men ahead of us. They can check out the land for us and bring back a report. They can suggest to us which way to go. They can tell us about the towns we'll come to."

[23]That seemed like a good idea to me. So I chose 12 of you. I picked one man

from each tribe. [24]They left and went up into the hill country. There they came to the Valley of Eshcol. They checked it out. [25]They got some of the fruit of that land. They brought it down to us and gave us their report. They said, “The LORD our God is giving us a good land.”

Israel Refuses to Obey the LORD

[26]But you wouldn’t go up. You refused to obey the command of the LORD your God. [27]You spoke against him in your tents. You said, “The LORD hates us. That’s why he brought us out of Egypt to hand us over to the Amorites. He wanted to destroy us. [28]Where can we go? The men who checked out the land have made us lose hope. They say, ‘The people are stronger and taller than we are. The cities are large. They have walls that reach up to the sky. We even saw the Anakites there.’ ”

[29]Then I said to you, “Don’t be terrified. Don’t be afraid of them. [30]The LORD your God will go ahead of you. He will fight for you. With your own eyes you saw how he fought for you in Egypt.

[31]“You also saw how the LORD your God brought you through the desert. He carried you everywhere you went, just as a father carries his son. And now you have arrived here.”

[32]In spite of that, you didn’t trust in the LORD your God. [33]He went ahead of you on your journey. He was in the fire at night and in the cloud during the day. He found places for you to camp. He showed you the way you should go.

[34]The LORD heard what you said. So he became angry. He took an oath and made a promise. He said, [35]“I promised to give this good land to your people long ago. But not one of you evil men who are alive today will see it.

[36]“Only Caleb will see the land. He is the son of Jephunneh. I will give him and his children after him the land he walked on. He followed me with his whole heart.”

[37]Because of you, the LORD became angry with me also. He said, “You will not enter the land either. [38]But Joshua, the son of Nun, is your helper. Joshua will enter the land. Help him to be brave. Give him hope. He will lead Israel to take the land as their own.

[39]“You said your little ones would be taken prisoner. But they will enter the

land. They do not know right from wrong yet. But I will give them the land. They will take it as their own. 40As for you, turn around. Start out toward the desert. Go along the road that leads to the Red Sea.”

41Then you replied, “We have sinned against the LORD. We will go up and fight. We’ll do just as the LORD our God has commanded us.” So all of you got your swords and put them on. You thought it would be easy to go up into the hill country.

42But the LORD spoke to me. He said, “Tell them, ‘Do not go up and fight. I will not be with you. Your enemies will win the battle over you.’ ”

43So I told you what the LORD said. But you wouldn’t listen. You refused to obey his command. You were so filled with pride that you marched up into the hill country. 44The Amorites who lived in those hills came out and attacked you. Like large numbers of bees they chased you. They beat you down from Seir all the way to Hormah.

45You came back and sobbed in front of the LORD. But he didn’t pay any attention to your sobs. He wouldn’t listen to you. 46So you stayed in Kadesh for many years. You spent a long time in that area.

Israel Wanders in the Desert

Deuteronomy 2

[1]We turned back and started out toward the desert. We went along the road that leads to the Red Sea. That's how the LORD had directed me. For a long time we made our way around the hill country of Seir.

[2]Then the LORD spoke to me. He said, [3]"You have made your way around this hill country long enough. So now turn north.

[4]"Here are the orders I want you to give the people. Tell them, 'You are about to pass through the territory of your relatives. They are from the family line of Esau. They live in Seir. They will be afraid of you. But be very careful. [5]Do not make them angry. If you do, they will go to war against you. I will not give you any of their land. You will not have even enough to put your foot on. I have given Esau the hill country of Seir as his own. [6]Pay them with silver for the food you eat and the water you drink.' "

[7]The LORD your God has blessed you in everything your hands have done. He watched over you when you traveled through that huge desert. For these 40 years the LORD your God has been with you. So you have had everything you need.

[8]We went on past our relatives. They are from the family line of Esau. They live in Seir. We turned away from the Arabah Valley road. It comes up from Elath and Ezion Geber. We traveled along the desert road of Moab.

[9]Then the LORD said to me, "Do not attack the Moabites. Do not even make them angry. If you do, they will go to war against you. I will not give you any part of their land. I have given Moab to the people in the family line of Lot. I have given it to them as their own."

[10]The Emites used to live there. They were strong people. There were large numbers of them. They were as tall as the Anakites. [11]Like the Anakites, they too were thought of as Rephaites. But the Moabites called them Emites.

[12]The Horites used to live in Seir. But the people of Esau drove them out. They destroyed the Horites to make room for themselves. Then they settled in

their territory. They did just as Israel has done in the land the LORD gave them as their own.

13The LORD said, “Now get up. Go across the Zered Valley.” So we went across it.

14Between the time we left Kadesh Barnea and the time we went across the Zered Valley, 38 years passed. By then, all of the fighting men who had been in our camp from the beginning had died. The LORD had warned them with an oath that it would happen. 15He used his power against them until he had gotten rid of all of them. Not one was left in the camp.

16Finally, the last of the fighting men among the people died.

17Then the LORD spoke to me. He said, 18“Today you must pass near the border of Moab. Moab is also called Ar.

19“When you come to the Ammonites, do not attack them. Do not make them angry. If you do, they will go to war against you. I will not give you any of their land as your own. I have given it to the people in the family line of Lot. I have given it to them as their own.”

20That land was also thought of as a land of the Rephaites. They used to live there. But the Ammonites called them Zamzummites. 21The Rephaites were strong people. There were large numbers of them. They were as tall as the Anakites. The LORD destroyed the Rephaites to make room for the Ammonites. So the Ammonites drove them out. Then they settled in the territory of the Rephaites.

22The LORD had done the same thing for the people of Esau. They lived in Seir. He destroyed the Horites to make room for them. They drove the Horites out. So the people of Esau have lived in Seir in the territory of the Horites to this very day.

23The Avvites lived in villages as far away as Gaza. But people came from Crete. They destroyed the Avvites. Then they settled in the territory of the Avvites.

Israel Wins the Battle Over Sihon

24The LORD said, “Start out and go across the valley of the Arnon River. I have handed Sihon over to you. He is the Amorite king of Heshbon. I have also

given you his country. Begin to take it as your own. Go to war against him.

25“This very day I will bring fear and terror on all of the nations because of you. They will hear about you. They will tremble with fear. Pain and suffering will take hold of them because of you.”

26I sent messengers from the Desert of Kedemoth. I told them to go to Sihon, the king of Heshbon. They offered him peace. They said, 27“Let us pass through your country. We’ll stay on the main road. We won’t turn off it to one side or the other. 28We’ll pay you the right amount of silver for food to eat and water to drink. Just let us walk through your country. 29The people of Esau, who live in Seir, allowed us to do that. The people of Moab, who live in Ar, also allowed us to do it. So let us walk through until we go across the Jordan River. Then we’ll be able to go into the land the LORD our God is giving us.”

30But Sihon, the king of Heshbon, refused to let us walk through. The LORD your God had made his heart and spirit stubborn. The LORD wanted to hand him over to you. And that’s exactly what he has done.

31The LORD said to me, “I have begun to hand Sihon and his country over to you. So begin the battle to take his land as your own.”

32Sihon and his whole army came out to fight against us at Jahaz. 33But the LORD our God handed him over to us. We struck him down together with his sons and his whole army. 34At that time we took all of his towns. We completely destroyed them. We killed all of the men, women and children. We didn’t leave any of them alive. 35But we took for ourselves the livestock and everything else from the towns we had captured.

36Not a single town was too strong for us. That includes all of the towns from Aroer on the rim of the Arnon River valley all the way to Gilead. It also includes the town in the valley. The LORD our God gave us all of them.

37And you obeyed the LORD’s command. You didn’t go near any part of the land of the Ammonites. That includes the land along the Jabbok River. It also includes the land around the towns that are in the hills.

Israel Wins the Battle Over Og

Deuteronomy 3

[1]Next, we turned and went up along the road toward Bashan. Og, the king of Bashan, marched out with his whole army. They fought against us at Edrei.

[2]The LORD said to me, “Do not be afraid of Og. I have handed him over to you. I have also handed over his whole army and his land. Do to him what you did to Sihon. Sihon was the Amorite king who ruled in Heshbon.”

[3]So the LORD our God also handed Og, the king of Bashan, and his whole army over to us. We struck them down. We didn’t leave any of them alive. [4]At that time we took all of his cities. There were 60 of them. We took the whole area of Argob. That was Og’s kingdom in Bashan.

[5]All of those cities had high walls around them. The city gates were made secure with heavy metal bars. There were also large numbers of villages that didn’t have walls. [6]We completely destroyed them. We did to them just as we had done to Sihon, the king of Heshbon. We destroyed all of their cities. We destroyed the men, women and children. [7]But we kept for ourselves the livestock and everything else we took from their cities.

[8]So at that time we took the territory east of the Jordan River. We captured it from those two Amorite kings. The territory goes all the way from the Arnon River valley to Mount Hermon. [9]Hermon is called Sirion by the people of Sidon. The Amorites call it Senir.

[10]We captured all of the towns on the high flatlands. We took the whole land of Gilead. And we captured the whole land of Bashan as far away as Salecah and Edrei. Those were towns that belonged to Og’s kingdom in Bashan.

[11]Og, the king of Bashan, was the only Rephaite left. His bed was made out of iron. It was more than 13 feet long and six feet wide. It is still in the Ammonite city of Rabbah.

Moses Divides Up the Land

12I divided up the land we took over at that time. I gave the tribes of Reuben
and Gad the territory north of Aroer by the Arnon River valley. It includes half
of the hill country of Gilead together with its towns.

13I gave the rest of Gilead to half of the tribe of Manasseh. I also gave them
the whole land of Bashan, the kingdom of Og. The whole area of Argob in
Bashan used to be known as a land of the Rephaites.

14Jair took the whole area of Argob. He was from the family line of
Manasseh. Argob goes all the way to the border of the people of Geshur and
Maacah. It was named after Jair. So Bashan is called Havvoth Jair to this very
day. 15I gave Gilead to Makir.

16But I gave to the tribes of Reuben and Gad the territory that reaches from
Gilead down to the Arnon River valley. It reaches all the way to the Jabbok
River. The Jabbok is the northern border of Ammon. The middle of the Arnon
River valley is its southern border.

17The western border of Reuben and Gad is the Jordan River in the Arabah
Valley. It reaches from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea. It runs below the
slopes of Pisgah.

18Here is the command I gave at that time to the tribes of Reuben and Gad
and half of the tribe of Manasseh. I said, "The LORD your God has given you
this land as your very own. But all of your strong men must be prepared for
battle. They must cross over ahead of the rest of your fellow Israelites.

19"But your wives and children can stay in the towns I've given you. You can
keep your livestock there too. I know you have a lot of livestock. 20Let your
families and livestock stay in those towns until the LORD gives peace and rest to
the other tribes, just as he has given you peace and rest. And let them stay until
the other tribes have taken over the land the LORD your God is giving them.
That land is across the Jordan River. After that, each of you may go back to the
land I've given you as your very own."

The LORD Will Not Allow Moses to Cross the Jordan River

21At that time I gave Joshua a command. I said, "Your own eyes have seen
everything the LORD your God has done to Sihon and Og. He will do the same
thing to all of the kingdoms in the land where you are going. 22Don't be afraid

of them. The LORD your God himself will fight for you.”

23At that time I made my appeal to the LORD. I said, 24“LORD and King, you have begun to show me how great you are. You have shown me how strong your hand is. You do great works and mighty acts. There isn’t any god in heaven or on earth that can do what you do. 25Let me go across the Jordan River. Let me see the good land that is beyond it. I want to see that fine hill country and Lebanon.”

26But the LORD was angry with me because of what you did. He wouldn’t listen to me. “That is enough!” the LORD said. “Do not speak to me anymore about this matter. 27Go up to the highest slopes of Pisgah. Look west and north and south and east. Look at the land with your own eyes. But you are not going to go across that Jordan River.

28“So appoint Joshua as the new leader. Help him to be brave. Give him hope and strength. He will take these people across the Jordan. You will see the land. But he will lead them into it to take it as their own.” 29So we stayed in the valley near Beth Peor.

Obey the LORD

Deuteronomy 4

[1]Israel, listen to the rules and laws I'm going to teach you. Follow them. Then you will live. You will go in and take over the land. The LORD was the God of your people long ago. He's giving you the land. [2]Don't add to what I'm commanding you. Don't subtract from it either. Instead, obey the commands of the LORD your God that I'm giving you.

[3]Your own eyes saw what the LORD your God did at Baal Peor. He destroyed every one of your people who followed the Baal that was worshiped at Peor. [4]But all of you who remained true to the LORD your God are still alive today.

[5]I have taught you rules and laws, just as the LORD my God commanded me. Follow them in the land you are entering to take as your very own. [6]Be careful to keep them. That will show the nations how wise and understanding you are. They will hear about all of those rules. They'll say, "That great nation certainly has wise and understanding people."

[7]The LORD our God is near us every time we pray to him. What other nation is great enough to have its gods that close to them? [8]I'm giving you the laws of the LORD today. What other nation is great enough to have rules and laws that are as fair as these?

[9]Don't be careless. Instead, be very careful. Don't forget the things your eyes have seen. As long as you live, don't let them slip from your mind. Teach them to your children and their children after them. [10]Remember the day you stood at Mount Horeb. The LORD your God was there. He said to me, "Bring the people to me to hear my words. I want them to learn to have respect for me as long as they live in the land. I want them to teach my words to their children."

[11]You came near and stood at the foot of the mountain. It blazed with fire that reached as high as the very heavens. There were black clouds and deep darkness.

[12]Then the LORD spoke to you out of the fire. You heard the sound of his words. But you didn't see any shape or form. You only heard a voice. [13]He

announced his covenant to you. That covenant is the Ten Commandments. He commanded you to follow them. Then he wrote them down on two stone tablets.

14At that time the LORD directed me to teach you his rules and laws. You must follow them in the land you are crossing the Jordan River to take as your own.

Don't Make or Worship Statues of Gods

15The LORD spoke to you at Mount Horeb out of the fire. But you didn't see any shape or form that day. So be very careful.

16Make sure you don't commit a horrible sin. Don't make for yourselves a statue of a god. Don't make a god that looks like a man or woman or anything else. 17Don't make one that looks like any animal on earth or any bird that flies in the sky. 18Don't make a statue that looks like any creature that moves along the ground or any fish that swims in the water.

19When you look up at the heavens, you will see the sun and moon. And you will see huge numbers of stars. Don't let anyone tempt you to bow down to the sun, moon or stars. Don't worship things the LORD your God has provided for all of the nations on earth.

20Egypt was like a furnace that melts iron down and makes it pure. But the LORD took you and brought you out of Egypt. He wanted you to be his very own people. And that's exactly what you are.

21The LORD was angry with me because of what you did. He took an oath that he would never let me go across the Jordan River. He promised that I would never enter that good land. It's the land the LORD your God is giving you as your own. 22I'll die here in this land. I won't go across the Jordan. But you are about to cross over it. And you are about to take that good land as your own.

23Be careful. Don't forget the covenant the LORD your God made with you. Don't make for yourselves a statue of any god at all. He has told you not to. So don't do it.

24The LORD your God is like a fire that burns everything up. He's a jealous God.

25You will have children and grandchildren. And you will live in the land a long time.

But don’t commit a horrible sin. Don’t make a statue of a god. If you do, that will be an evil thing in the sight of the LORD your God. You will make him angry. 26I’m calling out to heaven and earth to be witnesses against you this very day. If you do those things, you will quickly die in the land you are going across the Jordan River to take over. You won’t live there very long. You will certainly be destroyed. 27The LORD will drive you out of your land. He will scatter you among the nations. Only a few of you will remain alive there. 28There you will worship gods that men have made out of wood and stone. Those gods can’t see, hear, eat or smell.

29Perhaps while you are there, you will look to the LORD your God. You will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul.

30All of the things I’ve told you about might happen to you. And you will be in trouble. But later you will return to the LORD your God. You will obey him. 31The LORD your God is tender and loving. He won’t leave you or destroy you. He won’t forget the covenant he made with your people long ago. He took an oath when he made it.

THE LORD IS GOD

32Ask now about the days of long ago. Learn what happened long before your time. Ask about what has happened since the time God created man on the earth. Ask from one end of the world to the other. Has anything as great as this ever happened? Has anything like it ever been heard of? 33You heard the voice of God speaking out of fire. And you lived! Has that happened to any other people?

34Has any god ever tried to take one nation out of another to be his own? Has any god done it by putting his people to the test? Has any god done it with miraculous signs and wonders or with a war? Has any god reached out his mighty hand and powerful arm? Or has any god shown his people his great and wonderful acts?

The LORD your God did all of those things for you in Egypt. With your very own eyes you saw him do them.

35The LORD showed you those things so that you might know he is God. There is no other God except him. 36From heaven he made you hear his voice. He wanted to teach you. On earth he showed you his great fire. You heard his

words coming out of the fire.

37He loved your people long ago. He chose their children after them. So he brought you out of Egypt. He used his great strength to do it. 38He drove out nations to make room for you. They were greater and stronger than you are. He will bring you into their land. He wants to give it to you as your very own. The whole land is as good as yours right now.

39The LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth below. Today you must agree with that and take it to heart. There is no other God.

40I'm giving you his rules and commands today. Obey them. Then things will go well with you and your children after you. You will live a long time in the land. The LORD your God is giving you the land for all time to come.

Cities to Go to for Safety

41I set apart three cities east of the Jordan River. 42Anyone who killed a person he didn't hate and without meaning to do it could run to one of those cities. He could go there and stay alive.

43Here are the names of the cities. Bezer was for the people of Reuben. It was in the high flatlands in the desert. Ramoth was for the people of Gad. It was in Gilead. Golan was for the people of Manasseh. It was in Bashan.

Moses Gives the Law to Israel

44Here is the law I gave the people of Israel. 45Here are its terms, rules and laws. I gave them to the people when they came out of Egypt.

46They were now east of the Jordan River in the valley near Beth Peor. They were in the land of Sihon, the king of the Amorites. He ruled in Heshbon. But the people of Israel and I won the battle over him after we came out of Egypt. 47We captured his land and made it our own. We also took the land of Og, the king of Bashan. Sihon and Og were the two Amorite kings east of the Jordan River.

48Their land reached from Aroer on the rim of the Arnon River valley to Mount Hermon. 49It included the whole Arabah Valley east of the Jordan. It

included land all the way to the Dead Sea below the slopes of Pisgah.

The Ten Commandments

Deuteronomy 5

1 I sent for all of the people of Israel. Here is what I said to them.

Israel, listen to me. Here are the rules and laws I'm announcing to you today.
Learn them well. Be sure to follow them.

2 The LORD our God made a covenant with us at Mount Horeb. 3 He didn't
make it only with our parents. He also made it with us. In fact, he made it with
all of us who are alive here today. 4 The LORD spoke to you face to face. His
voice came out of the fire on the mountain.

5 At that time I stood between the LORD and you. I announced to you the
LORD's message. I did it because you were afraid of the fire. You didn't go up
the mountain.

The LORD said,

> 6 "I am the LORD your God. I brought you out of Egypt. That is the land
> where you were slaves.
>
> > 7 "Do not put any other gods in place of me.
> >
> > 8 "Do not make statues of gods that look like anything in the sky or
> > on the earth or in the waters. 9 Do not bow down to them or
> > worship them. I am the LORD your God. I am a jealous God. I
> > punish the children for the sin of their parents. I judge the
> > grandchildren and great-grandchildren of those who hate me.
> > 10 But for all time to come I show love to all those who love me
> > and keep my commandments.
> >
> > 11 "Do not misuse the name of the LORD your God. The LORD will
> > find guilty anyone who misuses his name.
> >
> > 12 "Observe the Sabbath day. Keep it holy, just as the LORD your God
> > commanded you. 13 Do all of your work in six days. 14 But the

seventh day is a Sabbath in honor of the LORD your God. Do not do any work on that day. The same command applies to your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your oxen, your donkeys and your other animals. It also applies to any outsiders who live in your cities. I want your male and female servants to rest, just as you do. 15Remember that you were slaves in Egypt. The LORD your God reached out his mighty hand and powerful arm and brought you out of there. So he has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.

16"Honor your father and mother, just as the LORD your God commanded you. Then you will live a long time in the land he is giving you. And things will go well with you there.

17"Do not commit murder.

18"Do not commit adultery.

19"Do not steal.

20"Do not give false witness against your neighbor.

21"Do not long for your neighbor's wife. Do not long to have anything that belongs to your neighbor. Do not long to have your neighbor's house or land, male or female servant, ox or donkey."

22Those are the commandments the LORD announced in a loud voice to your whole community. He gave them to you there on the mountain. He spoke out of the fire, cloud and deep darkness. He didn't add anything else. Then he wrote the commandments on two stone tablets. And he gave them to me.

23The mountain was blazing with fire. You heard the voice coming out of the darkness. So your elders and all of the leaders of your tribes came to me.

24You said, "The LORD our God has shown us his glory and majesty. We have heard his voice coming out of the fire. Today we have seen that a man can still stay alive even if God speaks with him. 25But why should we die? This great fire will burn us up. We'll die if we hear the voice of the LORD our God again.

26"We have heard the voice of the living God. We've heard him speaking out of the fire. Has any other human being ever heard him speak like that and stayed alive? 27Go near and listen to everything the LORD our God says. Then tell us what he tells you. We will listen and obey."

[28]The LORD heard you when you spoke to me. He said to me, “I have heard what these people said to you. Everything they said was good. [29]But I wish they would always have respect for me in their hearts. I wish they would always obey all of my commands. Then things would go well with them and their children forever.

[30]“Go and tell them to return to their tents. [31]But you stay here with me. Then I will give you all of my commands, rules and laws. You must teach the people to follow them in the land I am giving them as their very own.”

[32]So be careful to do what the LORD your God has commanded you. Don’t turn away from his commands to the right or the left. [33]Live exactly as the LORD your God has commanded you to live. Then you will enjoy life in the land you will soon own. Things will go well with you there. You will live there for a long time.

Love the LORD Your God

Deuteronomy 6

[1]The LORD your God has directed me to teach you his commands, rules and
laws. Obey them in the land you will take over when you go across the Jordan
River. [2]Then you, your children and their children after them will have respect
for the LORD your God as long as you live. Keep all of his rules and commands
I'm giving you. If you do, you will enjoy long life.

[3]Israel, listen to me. Make sure you obey me. Then things will go well with
you. Your numbers will increase greatly in a land that has plenty of milk and
honey. That's what the LORD, the God of your parents, promised you.

[4]Israel, listen to me. The LORD is our God. The LORD is the one and only God.
[5]Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Love him
with all your strength.

[6]The commandments I give you today must be in your hearts. [7]Make sure
your children learn them. Talk about them when you are at home. Talk about
them when you walk along the road. Speak about them when you go to bed.
And speak about them when you get up. [8]Write them down and tie them on
your hands as a reminder. Also tie them on your foreheads. [9]Write them on the
doorframes of your houses. Also write them on your gates.

[10]The LORD your God will bring you into the land of Canaan. He took an
oath. He promised he would give the land to your fathers. He promised it to
Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The land has large, wealthy cities you didn't build. [11]It has houses that are
filled with all kinds of good things you didn't provide. It has wells you didn't
dig. And it has vineyards and groves of olive trees you didn't plant. You will
have plenty to eat.

[12]But be careful that you don't forget the LORD. Remember that he brought
you out of Egypt. That's the land where you were slaves.

[13]Worship the LORD your God. He is the only one you should serve. When
you make promises, take your oaths in his name. [14]Don't follow other gods.

Don’t worship the gods of the nations that are around you.

15The LORD your God is among you. He is a jealous God. If you worship other gods, his anger will burn against you. And he will destroy you from the face of the land. 16Don’t put the LORD your God to the test as you did at Massah.

17Be sure to obey the LORD’s commands. Follow the terms and rules he has given you. 18Do what is right and good in the LORD’s eyes. Then things will go well with you. You will go in and take over the land. It’s the good land the LORD promised with an oath to your people long ago. 19You will drive out all of your enemies to make room for you. That’s what the LORD said would happen.

20Later on, your son might ask you, “What is the meaning of the terms, rules and laws the LORD our God has commanded you to obey?”

21If he does, tell him, “We were Pharaoh’s slaves in Egypt. But the LORD used his mighty hand to bring us out of Egypt. 22With our own eyes we saw the LORD send miraculous signs and wonders. They were great and terrible. He sent them on Egypt and Pharaoh and everyone in his house.

23“But the LORD brought us out of Egypt. He planned to bring us into the land of Canaan and give it to us. It’s the land he promised with an oath to our people long ago.

24“The LORD our God commanded us to obey all of his rules. He commanded us to have respect for him. If we do, we will always succeed and be kept alive. That’s what is happening today. 25We must make sure we obey the whole law in the sight of the LORD our God. That’s what he has commanded us to do. If we obey his law, we’ll be doing what he requires of us.”

The LORD Will Drive Many Nations Out

Deuteronomy 7

[1]The LORD your God will bring you into the land. You are going to enter it
and take it as your own. He'll drive many nations out to make room for you.
He'll drive out the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites,
Hivites and Jebusites. Those seven nations are larger and stronger than you are.

[2]The LORD your God will hand them over to you. You will win the battle over
them. You must completely destroy them. Don't make a peace treaty with
them. Don't show them any mercy. [3]Don't get married to any of them. Don't
give your daughters to their sons. And don't take their daughters for your sons.
[4]If you do, those people will turn your children away from following the LORD.
Then your children will serve other gods. The LORD's anger will burn against
you. It will quickly destroy you.

[5]So here is what you must do to those people. Break down their altars. Smash
their sacred stones. Cut down the poles they use to worship the goddess
Asherah. Burn the statues of their gods in the fire.

[6]You are a holy nation. The LORD your God has set you apart for himself. He
has chosen you to be his special treasure. He chose you out of all of the nations
on the face of the earth to be his people.

[7]The LORD chose you because he loved you very much. He didn't choose you
because you had more people than other nations. In fact, you had the smallest
number of all.

[8]The LORD chose you because he loved you. He wanted to keep the promise
he had made with an oath to your people long ago. That's why he brought you
out of Egypt with a mighty hand. He bought you back from the land where you
were slaves. He set you free from the power of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt.

[9]So I want you to realize that the LORD your God is God. He is the faithful
God. He keeps his covenant for all time to come. He keeps it with those who
love him and obey his commands. He shows them his love. [10]But he will pay
back those who hate him. He'll destroy them. He'll quickly pay back those
who hate him. [11]So be careful to follow the commands, rules and laws I'm

giving you today.

12Pay attention to the laws of the LORD your God. Be careful to obey them. Then he will keep his covenant of love with you. That's what he promised with an oath to your people long ago.

13The LORD will love you and bless you. He'll increase your numbers. He'll give you many children. He'll bless the crops of your land. He'll give you plenty of grain, olive oil and fresh wine. He'll bless your herds with many calves. He'll give your flocks many lambs. He'll do all of those things for you in the land of Canaan. It's the land he promised your people long ago that he would give you. 14He will bless you more than any other nation. All of your men and women will have children. All of your livestock will have little ones.

15The LORD will keep you from getting sick. He won't send on you any of the horrible sicknesses you saw all around you in Egypt. But he'll send them on everyone who hates you.

16You must destroy all of the nations the LORD your God hands over to you. Don't feel sorry for them. Don't serve their gods. If you do, they will be a trap for you.

17You might say to yourselves, "These nations are stronger than we are. How can we drive them out?" 18But don't be afraid of them.

Be sure to remember what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and all of the Egyptians. 19With your own eyes you saw what the LORD did to them. You saw his miraculous signs and wonders. He reached out his mighty hand and powerful arm. The LORD your God used all of those things to bring you out. He will do the same things to all of the nations you are now afraid of.

20The LORD your God will also send hornets among them. Some of the people who are left alive will hide from you. But even they will die. 21So don't be terrified by them. The LORD your God is with you. He is a great and wonderful God.

22The LORD your God will drive out those nations to make room for you. But he will do it little by little. You won't be allowed to get rid of them all at once. If you did, wild animals would multiply all around you.

23But the LORD your God will hand those nations over to you. He will throw them into a panic until they are destroyed. 24He will hand their kings over to you. You will wipe out their names from the earth. No one will be able to stand up against you. You will destroy them.

[25]Burn the statues of their gods in the fire. Don’t long for the silver and gold that is on those statues. Don’t take it for yourselves. If you do, it will be a trap for you. The LORD your God hates it. [26]Don’t bring anything he hates into your house. If you do, you will be completely destroyed along with it. So hate it with all your heart. It is set apart to be destroyed.

Remember What the LORD Has Done

Deuteronomy 8

[1]Make sure you follow every command I'm giving you today. Then you will live. You will increase your numbers. You will enter the land and take it as your own. It's the land the LORD promised with an oath to your people long ago.

[2]Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way. He guided you in the desert for these 40 years. He wanted to take your pride away. He wanted to put you to the test and know what was in your hearts. He wanted to see whether you would obey his commands.

[3]He took your pride away. He let you go hungry. Then he gave you manna to eat. You and your parents had never even known anything about manna before. He tested you to teach you that man doesn't live only on bread. He also lives on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. [4]Your clothes didn't wear out during these 40 years. Your feet didn't swell.

[5]Here is what I want you to know in your hearts. The LORD your God trains you, just as parents train their children.

[6]Obey the commands of the LORD your God. Live as he wants you to live. Have respect for him.

[7]The LORD your God is bringing you into a good land. It has streams and pools of water. Springs flow in its valleys and hills. [8]It has wheat, barley, vines, fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey. [9]There is plenty of food in that land. You will have everything you need. Its rocks have iron in them. And you can dig copper out of its hills.

[10]When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God. Praise him for the good land he has given you. [11]Make sure you don't forget the LORD your God. Don't fail to obey his commands, laws and rules. I'm giving them to you today.

[12]But suppose you don't obey his commands. And suppose you have plenty to eat. You build fine houses and settle down in them. [13]Your herds and flocks

increase their numbers. You also get more and more silver and gold. And everything you have multiplies. [14]Then your hearts will become proud. And you will forget the LORD your God.

The LORD brought you out of Egypt. That's the land where you were slaves. [15]He led you through that huge and terrible desert. It was a dry land. It didn't have any water. It had poisonous snakes and scorpions. The LORD gave you water out of solid rock. [16]He gave you manna to eat in the desert. Your parents had never even known anything about manna before.

The LORD took your pride away. He put you to the test. He did it so that things would go well with you in the end. [17]You might say to yourselves, "Our power and our strong hands have made us rich."

[18]But remember the LORD your God. He gives you the ability to produce wealth. That shows he stands by the terms of his covenant. He promised it with an oath to your people long ago. And he's still faithful to his covenant today.

[19]Don't forget the LORD your God. Don't follow other gods. Don't worship them and bow down to them. I give witness against you today that if you do, you will certainly be destroyed. [20]You will be destroyed just like the nations the LORD your God is destroying to make room for you. That's what will happen if you don't obey him.

Why the LORD Gave Canaan to Israel

Deuteronomy 9

[1]Israel, listen to me. You are now about to go across the Jordan. You will take over the land of the nations that live there.

Those nations are greater and stronger than you are. Their large cities have walls that reach up to the sky. [2]The people who live there are Anakites. They are strong and tall. You know all about them. You have heard people say, “Who can stand up against the Anakites?”

[3]But today you can be sure the LORD your God will go over there ahead of you. He is like a fire that will burn them up. He’ll destroy them. He’ll bring them under your control. You will drive them out. You will put an end to them quickly, just as the LORD has promised you.

[4]The LORD your God will drive them out to make room for you. When he does, don’t say to yourselves, “The LORD has done it because we are godly. That’s why he brought us here to take over this land.” That isn’t true. The LORD is going to drive out those nations to make room for you because they are very evil.

[5]You are not going in to take over their land because you have done what is right or honest. It’s because those nations are so evil. That’s why the LORD your God will drive them out ahead of you. He will do what he said he would do. He took an oath and made a promise to your fathers. He made it to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

[6]The LORD your God is giving you this good land to take as your own. But you must understand that it isn’t because you are a godly nation. In fact, you are stubborn.

Israel Worshiped the Golden Calf

[7]Here is something you must remember. Never forget it. You made the LORD your God angry in the desert. You refused to obey him from the day you left

Egypt until you arrived here.

[8]At Mount Horeb you made the LORD angry enough to destroy you. [9]I went up the mountain. I went there to receive the tablets of the covenant. They were made out of stone. It was the covenant the LORD had made with you. I stayed on the mountain for 40 days and 40 nights. I didn't eat any food or drink any water.

[10]The LORD gave me two stone tablets. The words on them were written by the finger of God. All of the commandments the LORD gave you were written on the tablets. He announced them to you out of the fire on the mountain. He wrote them on the day you gathered together there.

[11]The 40 days and 40 nights came to an end. Then the LORD gave me the two stone tablets. They were the tablets of the covenant. [12]The LORD told me, "Go down from here right away. The people you brought out of Egypt have become very sinful. They have quickly turned away from what I commanded them. They have made a metal statue of a god for themselves."

[13]The LORD said to me, "I have seen these people. They are so stubborn! [14]Do not try to stop me. I am going to destroy them. I will wipe them out from the earth. Then I will make you into a great nation. Your people will be stronger than they were. There will be more of you than there were of them."

[15]So I turned and went down the mountain. It was blazing with fire. I was carrying the two tablets of the covenant.

[16]When I looked, I saw that you had sinned against the LORD your God. You had made for yourselves a metal statue of a god. It looked like a calf. You had quickly turned away from the path the LORD had commanded you to follow.

[17]So I threw the two tablets out of my hands. You watched them break into pieces.

[18]Then once again I fell down flat in front of the LORD with my face toward the ground. I lay there for 40 days and 40 nights. I didn't eat any food or drink any water. You had committed a terrible sin. You had done an evil thing in the LORD's sight. You had made him angry.

[19]I was afraid of the LORD's burning anger. He was so angry with you he wanted to destroy you. But the LORD listened to me again. [20]And he was so angry with Aaron he wanted to destroy him too. But at that time I prayed for Aaron.

[21]I also got that sinful calf you had made. I burned it in the fire. I crushed it and ground it into fine powder. Then I threw the powder into a stream that was flowing down the mountain.

[22]You also made the LORD angry at Taberah, Massah and Kibroth Hattaavah.

[23]The LORD sent you out from Kadesh Barnea. He said, “Go up and take over the land I have given you.” But you refused to do what the LORD your God had commanded you to do. You didn’t trust him or obey him. [24]You have been refusing to obey the LORD as long as I’ve known you.

[25]I lay down in front of the LORD with my face toward the ground for 40 days and 40 nights. I did it because the LORD had said he would destroy you.

[26]I prayed to him. “LORD and King,” I said, “don’t destroy your people. They belong to you. You set them free by your great power. You used your mighty hand to bring them out of Egypt. [27]Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Forgive the people of Israel for being so stubborn. Don’t judge them for the evil and sinful things they’ve done.

[28]“If you do, the Egyptians will say, ‘The LORD wasn’t able to take them into the land he had promised to give them. He hated them. So he brought them out of Egypt to put them to death in the desert.’ [29]But they are your people. They belong to you. You used your great power to bring them out of Egypt. You reached out your mighty arm and saved them.”

The New Stone Tablets

Deuteronomy 10

[1]At that time the LORD spoke to me. He said, “Carve out two stone tablets, just like the first ones. Then come up to me on the mountain. Also make a wooden chest. [2]I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke. Then you must put the tablets in the chest.”

[3]So I made the ark out of acacia wood. I carved out two stone tablets that were just like the first ones. I went up the mountain. I carried the two tablets in my hands.

[4]The LORD wrote on the tablets what he had written before. It was the Ten Commandments. He had announced them to you out of the fire on the mountain. It was on the day you had gathered together there. So the LORD gave the tablets to me.

[5]Then I came back down the mountain. I put the tablets in the ark I had made, just as the LORD had commanded me. And that’s where they are now.

[6]Remember how the people of Israel traveled from the wells of Bene Jaakan to Moserah. That’s where Aaron died. And his body was buried there. His son Eleazar became the next priest after him. [7]From Moserah the people traveled to Gudgodah. Then they went on to Jotbathah. That land has streams of water.

[8]At that time the LORD set the tribe of Levi apart. He appointed them to carry the ark of the covenant of the LORD. He wanted them to serve him. He told them to bless the people in his name. And they still do it today. [9]That’s why the Levites don’t have any part of the land the LORD gave the other tribes in Israel. They don’t have any share among them. The LORD himself is their share. That’s what the LORD your God told them.

[10]I had stayed on the mountain for 40 days and nights, just as I did the first time. The LORD listened to me that time also. He didn’t want to destroy you.

[11]“Go,” the LORD said to me. “Lead the people on their way. Then they can enter the land and take it over. I have taken an oath. I promised I would give the land to their fathers. I promised it to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”

Have Respect for the LORD

12 And now, Israel, what is the LORD your God asking you to do? Have respect
for him. Live exactly as he wants you to live. Love him. Serve him with all
your heart and with all your soul. 13 Obey the LORD's commands and rules. I'm
giving them to you today for your own good.

14 The heavens belong to the LORD your God. Even the highest heavens belong
to him. He owns the earth and everything in it.

15 But the LORD loved your people very much long ago. You are their children.
And he chose you above all of the other nations. His love and his promise
remain with you to this very day. 16 So don't let your hearts be stubborn
anymore. Obey the LORD.

17 The LORD your God is the greatest God of all. He is the greatest Lord of all.
He is the great God. He is mighty and wonderful. He treats everyone the same.
He doesn't accept any money from those who want special favors. 18 He stands
up for widows and for children whose fathers have died. He loves outsiders. He
gives them food and clothes. 19 So you also must love outsiders. Remember that
you yourselves were outsiders in Egypt.

20 Have respect for the LORD your God. Serve him. Remain true to him. When
you make promises, take your oaths in his name. 21 He is the one you should
praise. He's your God. With your own eyes you saw the great and wonderful
miracles he did for you.

22 Long ago, your people went down into Egypt. The total number of them
was 70. And now the LORD your God has made you as many as the stars in the
sky.

Love and Obey the LORD

Deuteronomy 11

[1]Love the LORD your God. Do what he requires. Always obey his rules, laws and commands.

[2]Remember today that your children weren't the ones the LORD your God taught and trained. They didn't see his majesty. They weren't in Egypt when he reached out his mighty hand and powerful arm. [3]They didn't see the miraculous signs and the other things he did in Egypt. They didn't see what he did to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and to his whole country. [4]They weren't there when he destroyed the army of Egypt and its horses and chariots. The LORD swept the waters of the Red Sea over the Egyptians while they were chasing you. He wiped them out forever.

[5]Your children didn't see what he did for you in the desert before you arrived here. [6]They didn't see what he did to Dathan and Abiram, who were the sons of Eliab. Eliab was from the tribe of Reuben. The earth opened its mouth right in the middle of the Israelite camp. It swallowed up Dathan and Abiram. It swallowed them up together with their families, tents and every living thing that belonged to them.

[7]But with your own eyes you saw all of the great things the LORD has done.

[8]So obey all of the commands I'm giving you today. Then you will be strong enough to go in and take over the land. You will go across the Jordan River and take it as your own.

[9]You will live in the land for a long time. It's the land the LORD promised to give to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their children after them. He took an oath when he made that promise. It's a land that has plenty of milk and honey. [10]You will enter it and take it over.

It isn't like the land of Egypt. That's where you came from. You planted your seeds there. You had to water them, just as you have to water a vegetable garden.

[11]But you will soon go across the Jordan River. The land you are going to

take over has mountains and valleys in it. It drinks rain from heaven. [12]It's a land the LORD your God takes care of. His eyes always look on it with favor. He watches over it from the beginning of the year to its end.

[13]So be faithful. Obey the commands the LORD your God is giving you today. Love him. Serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.

[14]Then the LORD will send rain on your land at the right time. He'll send rain in the fall and in the spring. You will be able to gather your grain. You will also be able to make olive oil and fresh wine. [15]He'll provide grass in the fields for your cattle. You will have plenty to eat.

[16]But be careful. Don't let anyone tempt you to do something wrong. Don't turn away and worship other gods. Don't bow down to them. [17]If you do, the LORD's anger will burn against you. He'll close up the sky. It won't rain. The ground won't produce its crops. Soon you will die. You won't live to enjoy the good land the LORD is giving you.

[18]So keep my words in your hearts and minds. Write them down and tie them on your hands as a reminder. Also tie them on your foreheads. [19]Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you are at home. Talk about them when you walk along the road. Speak about them when you go to bed. And speak about them when you get up. [20]Write them on the doorframes of your houses. Also write them on your gates.

[21]Then you and your children will live for a long time in the land. The LORD took an oath and promised to give the land to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Your family line will continue as long as the heavens remain above the earth.

[22]So be careful. Obey all of the commands I'm giving you to follow. Love the LORD your God. Live exactly as he wants you to live. Remain true to him. [23]Then the LORD will drive out all of the nations to make room for you. They are larger and stronger than you are. But you will take their land.

[24]Every place you walk on will belong to you. Your territory will go all the way from the desert to Lebanon. It will go from the Euphrates River to the Mediterranean Sea.

[25]No man will be able to stand up against you. The LORD your God will throw the whole land into a panic because of you. He'll do it everywhere you go, just as he promised you.

[26]Listen to me. I'm setting a blessing and a curse in front of you today. [27]I'm

giving you the commands of the LORD your God today. You will be blessed if you obey them. [28]But you will be cursed if you don’t obey them. So don’t turn away from the path I’m now commanding you to take. Don’t worship other gods. You haven’t known anything about them before.

[29]The LORD your God will bring you into the land to take it over. When he does, you must announce the blessings from Mount Gerizim. You must announce the curses from Mount Ebal. [30]As you know, those mountains are across the Jordan River. They are beyond the road that runs along the west side of the Jordan. They are near the large trees of Moreh. The mountains are in the territory of the Canaanites, who live in the Arabah Valley near Gilgal.

[31]You are about to go across the Jordan River. You will enter the land and take it over. The LORD your God is giving it to you. You will take it over and live there. [32]When you do, make sure you obey all of the rules and laws I’m giving you today.

Worship Only Where the LORD Wants You To

Deuteronomy 12

[1]Here are the rules and laws you must obey. Be careful to follow them in the land the LORD has given you to take as your own. He's the God of your people who lived long ago. Obey these rules and laws as long as you live in the land.

[2]You will soon drive the nations out of it. Completely destroy all of the places where they worship their gods. Destroy them on the high mountains, on the hills, and under every green tree. [3]Break down their altars. Smash their sacred stones. Burn up the poles they use to worship the goddess Asherah. Cut down the statues of their gods. Wipe out the names of their gods from those places.

[4]You must not worship the LORD your God the way those nations worship their gods. [5]Instead, go to the special place he will choose from among all of your tribes. He will put his Name there. That's where you must go.

[6]Take your burnt offerings and sacrifices to that place. Bring your special gifts and a tenth of everything you produce. Take with you what you have promised to give. Bring any other offerings you choose to give. And bring the male animals among your livestock that were born first to their mothers.

[7]You and your families will eat at the place the LORD your God will choose. He will be with you there. You will find joy in everything you have done. That's because he has blessed you.

[8]You must not do as we're doing here today. All of us are doing only what we think is right. [9]That's because you haven't yet reached the place the LORD is giving you. Your God will give you peace and rest there.

[10]But first you will go across the Jordan River. You will settle in the land he's giving you. It will belong to you as your share. He will give you peace and rest from all of your enemies around you. You will live in safety.

[11]The LORD your God will choose a special place. He will put his Name there. That's where you must bring everything I command you to bring. That includes your burnt offerings and sacrifices. It includes your special gifts and a tenth of everything you produce. It also includes all of the things of value that you

promised to give to the LORD.

12Be filled with joy there in the sight of the LORD your God. Your children should also be joyful. So should your male and female servants. And so should the Levites from your towns. The Levites won't receive any part of the land as their share.

13Be careful not to sacrifice your burnt offerings anywhere you want to. 14Offer them only at the place the LORD will choose in one of your tribes. There obey everything I command you.

15But you can kill your animals in any of your towns. You can eat as much of the meat as you want to. You can eat it as if it were antelope or deer meat. That's in keeping with the blessing the LORD your God is giving you. Those who are "clean" and those who are not can eat it.

16But you must not eat meat that still has blood in it. Pour the blood out on the ground like water.

17Here are the things you must not eat in your own towns. You must not eat the tenth part of your grain, olive oil and fresh wine. It belongs to the LORD. You must not eat the male animals among your livestock that were born first to their mothers. Don't eat anything you have promised to give. Don't eat any offerings you have chosen to give. And you must not eat any of your special gifts.

18Instead, you must eat all of those things in the sight of the LORD your God. Do it at the place he will choose. You, your children, your male and female servants and the Levites from your towns can eat them.

Be filled with joy in the sight of the LORD your God. Be joyful in everything you do.

19Don't forget to take care of the Levites as long as you live in your land.

20The LORD your God will increase your territory, just as he has promised you. When he does, you might get hungry for meat. You might say, "I'd really like some meat." Then you can eat as much of it as you want to.

21The LORD your God will choose a special place. He will put his Name there. But suppose it's too far away for you to go to it. Then you can kill animals from the herds and flocks the LORD has given you. Do it just as I have commanded you. In your own towns you can eat as much of the meat as you want to. 22Eat it as you would eat antelope or deer meat. Those who are "clean" and those who are not can eat it.

[23]But be sure you don’t eat meat that still has blood in it. The blood is the animal’s life. So you must not eat the life along with the meat. [24]You must not eat the blood. Pour it out on the ground like water. [25]Don’t eat it. Then things will go well with you and your children after you. You will be doing what is right in the eyes of the LORD.

[26]But go to the place the LORD will choose. Take with you the things you have set apart for him. Bring what you have promised to give him. [27]Sacrifice your burnt offerings on the altar of the LORD your God. Offer the meat and the blood there. The blood of your sacrifices must be poured out beside his altar. But you can eat the meat.

[28]Make sure you obey all of the rules I’m giving you. Then things will always go well with you and your children after you. That’s because you will be doing what is good and right in the eyes of the LORD your God.

[29]You are about to attack the land and take it over as your own. When you do, the LORD your God will cut off the nations who live there. He will do it to make room for you. You will drive them out. You will settle in their land. [30]They will be destroyed to make room for you. But when they are, be careful.

Don’t be trapped. Don’t ask questions about their gods. Don’t say, “How do these nations serve their gods? We’ll do it in the same way.” [31]You must not worship the LORD your God the way they worship their gods. When they worship, they do all kinds of evil things the LORD hates. They even burn up their children in the fire as sacrifices to their gods.

[32]Be sure you do everything I’m commanding you to do. Don’t add anything to my commands. And don’t take anything away from them.



You must follow God. You must have respect for him. Keep his commands. Obey him. Serve him. Remain true to him.

Deuteronomy 13:4

Don't Worship Other Gods

Deuteronomy 13

[1]Suppose a prophet appears among you. Or someone comes who uses dreams
to tell what's going to happen. He tells you that a miraculous sign or wonder is
going to take place. [2]The sign or wonder he has spoken about might really take
place. And he might say, "Let's follow other gods. Let's worship them." But
you haven't known anything about those gods before. [3]So you must not listen
to what that prophet or dreamer has said.

The LORD your God is putting you to the test. He wants to know whether you
love him with all your heart and with all your soul. [4]You must follow him. You
must have respect for him. Keep his commands. Obey him. Serve him. Remain
true to him.

[5]That prophet or dreamer must be put to death. He told you not to obey the
LORD your God. The LORD brought you out of Egypt. He set you free from the
land where you were slaves. He commanded you to live the way he wants you
to. But that prophet or dreamer has tried to make you turn away from it. Get rid
of that evil person.

[6]Suppose your very own brother or sister secretly tempts you to do something
wrong. Or your child or the wife you love tempts you. Or your closest friend
does it. Suppose one of them says, "Let's go and worship other gods." But you
and your people long ago hadn't known anything about those gods before.
[7]They are the gods of the nations that are around you. Those nations might be
near or far away. In fact, they might reach from one end of the land to the
other. [8]Don't give in to those who are tempting you. Don't listen to them.
Don't feel sorry for them. Don't spare them or save them.

[9]You must certainly put them to death. You must be the first to throw stones
at them. Then all of the people must do the same thing. [10]Put them to death by
throwing stones at them. They tried to turn you away from the LORD your God.
He brought you out of Egypt. That's the land where you were slaves.

[11]After you kill those who tempted you, all of the people of Israel will hear
about it. And they will be too scared to do an evil thing like that again.

[12]The LORD your God is giving you towns to live in. But suppose you hear something bad about one of those towns. [13]You hear that evil men have appeared among you. They've tried to get the people of their town to do something wrong. They've said, "Let's go and worship other gods." But you haven't known anything about those gods before. [14]So you must question people. You must check the matter out carefully.

If it's true, an evil thing has really happened among you. It's something the LORD hates. [15]Then you must certainly kill with your swords everyone who lives in that town. Destroy it completely. Wipe out its people and livestock. [16]Gather all of the goods of that town into the middle of the main street. Burn the town completely. Burn up everything in it.

It's a whole burnt offering to the LORD your God. The town must remain a pile of stones forever. It must never be built again.

[17]Don't keep anything that should be destroyed. Then the LORD will turn away from his burning anger. He will show you mercy. He'll have deep concern for you. He'll increase your numbers. That's what he promised your people long ago. He took an oath when he made the promise.

[18]The LORD your God will do those things if you obey him. I'm giving you his commands today. And you must obey all of them. You must do what is right in his eyes.

Food That Is "Clean" and Food That Is Not

Deuteronomy 14

[1]You are the children of the LORD your God. Don't cut yourselves to honor the dead. Don't shave the front of your heads to honor them.

[2]You are a holy nation. The LORD your God has set you apart for himself. He has chosen you to be his special treasure. He chose you out of all of the nations on the face of the earth.

[3]Don't eat anything the LORD hates. [4]Here are the only animals you can eat. You can eat oxen, sheep, goats, [5]deer, gazelles, roe deer, wild goats, ibexes, antelope and mountain sheep.

[6]You can eat any animal that has hoofs that are separated completely in two. But it must also chew the cud. [7]Some animals only chew the cud. Others only have hoofs that are completely separated in two. The camel, rabbit and rock badger chew the cud, but they don't have hoofs that are completely separated. So you can't eat them. They are not "clean" for you.

[8]Pigs aren't "clean" for you either. They have hoofs that are completely separated, but they don't chew the cud. So don't eat their meat. And don't touch their dead bodies.

[9]Many creatures live in water. You can eat all of the ones that have fins and scales. [10]But don't eat anything that doesn't have fins and scales. It isn't "clean" for you.

[11]You can eat any "clean" bird. [12]But there are many birds you can't eat. They include eagles, vultures, and black vultures. [13]They include red kites, black kites and all kinds of falcons. [14]They include all kinds of ravens. [15]They include horned owls, screech owls, gulls and all kinds of hawks. [16]They include little owls, great owls, white owls [17]and desert owls. They include ospreys and cormorants. [18]They include storks and all kinds of herons. They also include hoopoes and bats.

[19]All insects that fly together in groups are "unclean" for you. So don't eat

them. [20]But you can eat any creature that has wings and is “clean.”

[21]If you find something that’s already dead, don’t eat it. You can give it to an outsider who is living in any of your towns. He can eat it. Or you can sell it to someone who is from another country. But you are a holy nation. The LORD your God has set you apart for himself.

Don’t cook a young goat in its mother’s milk.

Give a Tenth of What You Produce

[22]Be sure to set apart a tenth of everything your fields produce each year. [23]Here are the things you should eat in the sight of the LORD your God. You should eat a tenth part of your grain, olive oil and fresh wine. You should also eat the male animals among your livestock that were born first to their mothers. Eat all of those things at the special place the LORD your God will choose. He will put his Name there. You will learn to have respect for him always.

[24]But suppose the place the LORD will choose for his Name is too far away from you. And suppose your God has blessed you. And your tenth part is too heavy for you to carry. [25]Then sell it for silver. Take the silver with you. Go to the place the LORD your God will choose. [26]Use the silver to buy anything you like. It can be cattle or sheep. It can be any kind of wine. In fact, it can be anything else you wish. Then you and your family can eat there in the sight of the LORD your God. You can be filled with joy.

[27]Don’t forget to take care of the Levites who will live in your towns. They won’t receive any part of the land as their share.

[28]At the end of every three years, bring a tenth of everything you produce that year. Store it in your towns. [29]Then the Levites can come and eat. That’s because they won’t receive any part of the land as their share. The outsiders and widows who live in your towns can come. So can the children whose fathers have died. Everyone can have plenty to eat. Then the LORD your God will bless you in everything you do.

The Year for Forgiving People What They Owe

Deuteronomy 15

[1]At the end of every seven years you must forgive people what they owe you.
[2]Have you made a loan to one of your own people? Then forgive what is owed to you. You can't require that person to pay you back. The LORD's time to forgive what is owed has been announced. [3]You can require someone from another nation to pay you back. But you must forgive your own people what they owe you.

[4]There shouldn't be any poor people among you. The LORD will greatly bless you in the land he is giving you. You will take it over as your own. [5]The LORD your God will bless you if you obey him completely. Be careful to follow all of the commands I'm giving you today.

[6]The LORD your God will bless you, just as he has promised. You will lend money to many nations. But you won't have to borrow from any of them. You will rule over many nations. But none of them will rule over you.

[7]Suppose there are poor people among you. And suppose they live in one of the towns in the land the LORD your God is giving you. Then don't be mean to them. They are poor. So don't hold back money from them. [8]Instead, open your hands and lend them what they need. Do it freely.

[9]Be careful not to have an evil thought in your mind. Don't say to yourself, "The seventh year will soon be here. It's the year for forgiving people what they owe." If you think like that, you might treat your needy people badly. You might not give them anything. Then they might make their appeal to the LORD against you. And he will find you guilty of sin.

[10]So give freely to those who are needy. Open your hearts to them. Then the LORD your God will bless you in all of your work. He will bless you in everything you do. [11]There will always be poor people in the land. So I'm commanding you to give freely to those who are poor and needy in your land. Open your hands to them.

Set Your Hebrew Servants Free

12 Suppose Hebrew men or women sell themselves to you. If they do, they
will serve you for six years. Then in the seventh year you must let them go
free.

13 But when you set them free, don't send them away without anything to
show for all of their work. 14 Freely give them some animals from your flock.
Also give them some of your grain and wine. The LORD your God has blessed
you richly. Give to them as he has given to you.

15 Remember that you were slaves in Egypt. The LORD your God set you free.
That's why I'm giving you this command today.

16 But suppose your servant says to you, "I don't want to leave you." He loves
you and your family. And you are taking good care of him. 17 Then take him to
the door of your house. Poke a hole through his ear lobe into the doorpost. And
he will become your servant for life. Do the same with your female servant.

18 Don't think you are being cheated when you set your servants free. After
all, they have served you for six years. The service of each of them has been
worth twice as much as the service of a hired worker. And the LORD your God
will bless you in everything you do.

Male Animals That Are Born First to Their Mothers

19 Set apart to the LORD your God every male animal among your livestock
that was born first to its mother. Don't put that kind of ox to work. Don't clip
the wool from that kind of sheep. 20 Each year you and your family must eat
them. Do it in the sight of the LORD your God at the place he will choose.

21 Suppose an animal has something wrong with it. It might not be able to see
or walk. Or it might have a bad flaw. Then you must not sacrifice it to the LORD
your God. 22 You must eat it in your own towns. Those who are "clean" and
those who are not can eat it. Eat it as if it were antelope or deer meat.

23 But you must not eat meat that still has blood in it. Pour the blood out on
the ground like water.

The Passover Feast

Deuteronomy 16

[1]Celebrate the Passover Feast of the LORD your God in the month of Abib. In
that month he brought you out of Egypt at night.

[2]Sacrifice an animal from your flock or herd. It is the Passover sacrifice in
honor of the LORD your God. Sacrifice it at the special place the LORD will
choose. He will put his Name there.

[3]Don't eat the animal along with bread that is made with yeast. Instead, for
seven days eat bread that is made without yeast. It's the bread that reminds you
of how much you suffered. Remember that you left Egypt in a hurry.
Remember it all the days of your life. Don't forget the day you left Egypt.
[4]Don't keep any yeast anywhere in your land for seven days.

Don't let any of the meat you sacrifice on the evening of the first day be left
over until the next morning.

[5]You must not sacrifice the Passover animal in any town the LORD your God
is giving you. [6]Sacrifice it only in the special place he will choose for his
Name. Sacrifice it there in the evening when the sun goes down. Do it on the
same day every year. Be sure it's the day you left Egypt. [7]Cook it and eat it. Do
it at the place the LORD your God will choose. Then in the morning return to
your tents.

[8]For six days eat bread that is made without yeast. On the seventh day come
together for a service in honor of the LORD your God. Don't do any work.

The Feast of Weeks

[9]Count off seven weeks from the time you begin to cut your grain in the field.
[10]Then celebrate the Feast of Weeks in honor of the LORD your God. Give
anything you choose to give as an offering. Do it in keeping with the blessings
the LORD has given you.

11 Be filled with joy in the sight of the LORD your God. Be joyful at the special
place he will choose for his Name. You, your children, and your male and
female servants should be joyful. So should the Levites who are living in your
towns. So should the outsiders and widows who are living among you. And so
should the children whose fathers have died. 12 Remember that you were slaves
in Egypt. Be careful to obey the rules I'm giving you.

The Feast of Booths

13 Gather the grain from your threshing floors. Take the fresh wine from your
winepresses. Then celebrate the Feast of Booths for seven days. 14 Be filled
with joy at your Feast. You, your children, and your male and female servants
should be joyful. So should the Levites, the outsiders, and the widows who are
living in your towns. And so should the children whose fathers have died.

15 For seven days celebrate the Feast in honor of the LORD your God. Do it at
the place he will choose. The LORD will bless you when you gather all of your
crops. He'll bless you in everything you do. And you will be full of joy.

16 All of your men must appear in front of the LORD your God at the holy tent.
They must go to the place he will choose. They must do it three times a year.
They must go there to celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of
Weeks and the Feast of Booths.

No man should appear in front of the LORD without bringing something with
him. 17 Each of you must bring a gift. Do it in keeping with the way the LORD
your God has blessed you.

Appoint Judges and Officials

18 Appoint judges and officials for each of your tribes. Do it in every town the
LORD your God is giving you. They must judge the people fairly. 19 Do what is
right. Treat everyone the same. Don't take money from people who want
special favors. It makes those who are wise close their eyes to the truth. It
twists the words of those who do what is right. 20 Follow only what is right. If
you do, you will live. You will take over the land the LORD your God is giving
you.

Don't Worship Other Gods

[21]Don't set up a wooden pole that is used to worship the goddess Asherah. Don't set it up beside the altar you build to worship the LORD your God. [22]Don't set up a sacred stone to honor another god. The LORD your God hates Asherah poles and sacred stones.

Deuteronomy 17

[1]Suppose an ox or sheep has anything at all wrong with it. Then don't sacrifice it to the LORD your God. He hates it.

[2]Someone who is living among you might do what is evil in the sight of the LORD your God. It might happen in one of the towns the LORD is giving you. That person is breaking the LORD's covenant. [3]The person might have worshiped or bowed down to other gods. That person might have bowed down to the sun or moon or stars in the sky. I have commanded you not to do those things. [4]When you hear that people have done something like that, check the matter out carefully. If it's true, an evil thing has been done in Israel. It's something the LORD hates.

[5]So take the person who has done that evil thing to your city gate. Put that person to death with stones. [6]The witness of two or three people is required to put someone to death. No one can be put to death because of what only one witness says. It needs the witness of two or three people. [7]The witnesses must throw the first stones. Then the rest of the people must also throw stones. Get rid of that evil person.

Law Courts

[8]People will bring their cases to your courts. But some cases will be too hard for you to judge. They might be about murders, attacks or other crimes. Then take those hard cases to the place the LORD your God will choose. [9]Go to a priest, who is a Levite. And go to the judge who is in office at that time. Ask them for their decision. They will give it to you.

[10]They'll hand down their decisions at the place the LORD will choose. You must do what they decide. Be careful to do everything they direct you to do. [11]Act in keeping with the laws they teach you. Accept the decisions they give you. Don't turn away from what they tell you. Don't turn to the right or the left.

[12]Someone might make fun of the judge. Or he might make fun of the priest who serves the LORD your God at the place he will choose. If the man does that,

he must be put to death. Remove that evil person from Israel. [13]All of the people of Israel will hear about it. And they will be afraid to make fun of a judge or priest again.

Appoint the King the LORD Chooses

[14]You will enter the land the LORD your God is giving you. You will take it as your own. You will settle down in it. When you do, you will say, “Let’s appoint a king over us, just like all of the nations around us.” [15]When that happens, make sure you appoint over you the king the LORD your God chooses. He must be from among your own people. Don’t appoint over you someone from another country. Don’t choose anyone who isn’t from one of the tribes of Israel.

[16]The king must not get large numbers of horses for himself. He must not make the people return to Egypt to get more horses. The LORD has told you, “You must not go back there again.”

[17]The king must not have a lot of wives. If he does, he will be led down the wrong path. He must not store up large amounts of silver and gold.

[18]When he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he must make himself a copy of the law I’m teaching you. He must write it on a scroll. He must copy it from the scroll of a priest, who is a Levite.

[19]The king must keep the scroll close to him at all times. He must read it all the days of his life. Then he can learn to have respect for the LORD his God. He can carefully follow all of the words of that law and those rules. [20]He won’t think of himself as being better than his people are. He won’t turn away from the law. He won’t turn to the right or the left. Then he and his sons after him will rule over his kingdom in Israel for a long time.

Offerings for Priests and Levites

Deuteronomy 18

[1]The priests, who are Levites, won't receive any part of the land of Israel. That also applies to the whole tribe of Levi. They will eat the offerings that are made to the LORD with fire. That will be their share. [2]They won't have any part of the land the LORD gave the other tribes in Israel. The LORD himself is their share, just as he promised them.

[3]Anyone who sacrifices a bull or a sheep owes a share of it to the priests. Their share is the shoulder, jaws and inside parts. [4]You must give the priests the first share of the harvest of your grain, olive oil and fresh wine. You must also give them the first wool you clip from your sheep. [5]The LORD your God has chosen the Levites and their sons after them to serve him in his name always. He hasn't chosen priests from any of your other tribes.

[6]Sometimes a Levite will move from the town in Israel where he's living. And he will come to the place the LORD will choose. He'll do it because he really wants to. [7]Then he can serve in the name of the LORD his God. He'll be like all of the other Levites who serve the LORD there. [8]He must have an equal share of the good things they have. That applies even if he has already received money by selling things his family owned.

Practices the LORD Hates

[9]You will enter the land the LORD your God is giving you. When you do, don't copy the practices of the nations that are there. The LORD hates those practices.

[10]Here are things you must not do. Don't sacrifice your children in the fire to other gods. Don't practice any kind of evil magic at all. Don't use magic to try to explain the meaning of warnings in the sky or of any other signs. Don't take part in worshiping evil powers. [11]Don't put a spell on anyone. Don't get messages from those who have died. Don't talk to the spirits of the dead. Don't

get advice from the dead.

12The LORD your God hates it when anyone does those things. The nations
that are in the land he's giving you practice the things he hates. So he will drive
out those nations to make room for you. 13You must be without blame in the
sight of the LORD your God.

The Prophet of the LORD

14You will take over the nations that are in the land the LORD is giving you.
They listen to those who practice all kinds of evil magic. But you belong to the
LORD your God. He says you must not do those things.

15The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me. He will be one
of your own people. You must listen to him. 16At Mount Horeb you asked the
LORD your God for a prophet. You asked him on the day you gathered together.
You said, "We don't want to hear the voice of the LORD our God. We don't
want to see this great fire anymore. If we do, we'll die."

17The LORD said to me, "What they are saying is good. 18I will raise up for
them a prophet like you. He will be one of their own people. I will put my
words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him to say.

19"The prophet will speak in my name. But someone might not listen to what
I say through the prophet. Then that person will be accountable to me.

20"But suppose a prophet dares to speak in my name something I have not
commanded him to say. Or he speaks in the name of other gods. Then that
prophet must be put to death."

21You will say to yourselves, "How can we know when a message hasn't
been spoken by the LORD?" 22Sometimes a prophet will announce something in
the name of the LORD. And it won't take place or come true. Then that's a
message the LORD hasn't told him to speak. That prophet has dared to speak on
his own authority. So don't be afraid of him or what he says.

Cities to Go to for Safety

Deuteronomy 19

[1]The LORD your God will destroy the nations whose land he is giving you. You will drive them out. And you will settle down in their towns and houses.

[2]When you do, set apart for yourselves three cities in the land. It's the land the LORD your God is giving you to take as your own. [3]Build roads to those cities and separate the land into three parts. Then anyone who kills another person can run to one of the cities for safety. They are in the land the LORD your God is giving you as your own.

[4]Here is the rule about a person who kills someone. That person can run to one of those cities for safety. The rule applies to all those who kill a neighbor they didn't hate and didn't mean to kill.

[5]For example, suppose a man goes into a forest with his neighbor to cut wood. When he swings his ax to chop down a tree, the head of the ax flies off. And it hits his neighbor and kills him. Then that man can run to one of those cities and save his life.

[6]If he doesn't go to one of those cities, the dead man's nearest male relative might become very angry. He might chase the man. If the city is too far away, he might catch him and kill him. But he isn't worthy of death, because he didn't hate his neighbor. [7]That's why I command you to set apart for yourselves three cities.

[8]The LORD your God will increase the size of your territory. He took an oath and promised your fathers he would do it. He will give you the whole land he promised them. [9]But he'll do it only if you are careful to obey all of the laws I'm commanding you today. I'm commanding you to love the LORD your God. I want you to live always as he wants you to live.

When he gives you additional land, you must set apart three more cities. [10]Do it so the blood of those who aren't guilty of murder won't be spilled in your land. It's the land the LORD your God is giving you as your own.

[11]But suppose a man hates his neighbor. So he hides and waits for him. Then

he attacks him and kills him. And he runs to one of those cities for safety. [12]If he does, the elders of his own town must send for him. He must be brought back from the city and handed over to the dead man's nearest male relative. The relative will kill him.

[13]Don't feel sorry for him. He has killed someone who hadn't done anything wrong. Crimes like that must be punished in Israel. Then things will go well with you.

[14]Don't move your neighbor's boundary stone. It was set up by people who lived there before you. It marks the border of a field in the land you will receive as your own. The LORD your God is giving you that land. You will take it over.

WITNESSES

[15]Suppose someone is charged with committing a crime of any kind. Then one witness won't be enough to prove he is guilty. Every matter must be proved by the words of two or three witnesses.

[16]Suppose a witness who tells lies goes to court and brings charges against someone. The witness says that person committed a crime. [17]Then the two people in the case must stand in front of the LORD. They must stand in front of the priests and the judges who are in office at that time. [18]The judges must check out the matter carefully. And suppose the witness is proved to be lying. Then he has given false witness against another Israelite.

[19]So do to the lying witness what he tried to do to the other person. Get rid of that evil person. [20]The rest of the people will hear about it. And they will be afraid. They won't allow such an evil thing to be done among them again.

[21]Don't feel sorry for that evil person. A life must be taken for a life. An eye must be put out for an eye. A tooth must be knocked out for a tooth. A hand must be cut off for a hand and a foot for a foot.

Going to War

Deuteronomy 20

[1]When you go to war against your enemies, you might see that they have horses and chariots. They might even have an army that is stronger than yours. But don't be afraid of them. The LORD your God will be with you. After all, he brought you up out of Egypt.

[2]Just before you go into battle, the priest will come forward. He'll speak to the army. [3]He'll say, "Men of Israel, listen to me. Today you are going into battle against your enemies. Don't be scared. Don't be afraid. Don't panic. Don't be terrified by them. [4]The LORD your God is going with you. He'll fight for you. He'll help you win the battle over your enemies."

[5]The officers will speak to the army. They will say, "Has anyone built a new house and not started to live in it? Let him go home. If he doesn't, he might die in battle. Then someone else will live in his house. [6]Has anyone planted a vineyard and not started to enjoy it? Let him go home. If he doesn't, he might die in battle. Then someone else will enjoy his vineyard. [7]Has anyone promised to get married to a woman but hasn't done it yet? Let him go home. If he doesn't, he might die in battle. Then someone else will marry her." [8]The officers will continue, "Is any man afraid? Is anyone scared? Let him go home. Then the other men won't lose hope too."

[9]The officers will finish speaking to the army. When they do, they'll appoint commanders over it.

[10]Suppose you march up to attack a city. Before you attack it, offer peace to its people. [11]Suppose they accept your offer and open their gates. Then force all of the people in the city to be your slaves. They will have to work for you.

[12]But suppose they refuse your offer of peace and prepare for battle. Then surround that city. Get ready to attack it. [13]The LORD your God will hand it over to you. When he does, kill all of the men with your swords.

[14]But you can take the women and children for yourselves. You can also take the livestock and everything else in the city. What you have captured from your

enemies you can use for yourselves. The LORD your God has given it to you.

15That's how you must treat all of the cities that are far away from you. Those cities don't belong to the nations that are nearby.

16But what about the cities the LORD your God is giving you as your own? Kill everything in those cities that breathes. 17Completely destroy them. Wipe out the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. That's what the LORD your God commanded you to do.

18If you don't destroy them, they'll teach you to follow all of the things the LORD hates. He hates the way they worship their gods. If you do those things, you will sin against the LORD your God.

19Suppose you surround a city and get ready to attack it. And suppose you fight against it for a long time in order to capture it. Then don't chop its trees down and destroy them. You can eat their fruit. So don't cut them down. The trees of the field aren't people. So why should you attack them?

20But you can cut down trees that you know aren't fruit trees. You can build war machines out of their wood. You can use them until you capture the city you are fighting against.

What to Do When You Don't Know Who Killed Someone

Deuteronomy 21

[1]Suppose you find someone who has been killed. The body is lying in a field
in the land the LORD your God is giving you to take as your own. But no one
knows who the killer was. [2]Then your elders and judges will go out and
measure how far it is from the body to the nearby towns.

[3]The elders from the town that is nearest to the body will get a young cow. It
must never have been used for work. It must never have pulled a load. [4]The
elders must lead it down into a valley. The valley must not have been farmed.
There must be a stream flowing through it. There in the valley the elders must
break the cow's neck.

[5]The priests, who are sons of Levi, will step forward. The LORD your God has
chosen them to serve him. He wants them to bless the people in his name. He
wants them to decide all cases that have to do with people arguing and
attacking others.

[6]Then all of the elders from the town that is nearest to the body will wash
their hands. They will wash them over the young cow whose neck they broke
in the valley. [7]They'll say to the LORD, "We didn't kill that person. We didn't
see it happen. [8]Accept this payment for the sin of your people Israel. LORD, you
have set your people free. Don't hold them guilty for spilling the blood of
someone who hasn't done anything wrong." That will pay for the death of that
person.

[9]So you will get rid of the guilt of killing someone who didn't do anything
wrong. That's because you have done what is right in the LORD's eyes.

Getting Married to a Woman Who Is Your Prisoner

[10]Suppose you go to war against your enemies. And the LORD your God
hands them over to you and you take them as prisoners. [11]Then you notice a
beautiful woman among them. If you like her, you can get married to her.

12 Bring her home. Have her shave her head. Have her cut her nails. 13 Have
her throw away the clothes she was wearing when she was captured. Let her
live in your house and sob over her parents for a full month. Then you can go
to her and be her husband. And she will be your wife.

14 But suppose you aren't pleased with her. Then let her go where she wants
to. You must not sell her. You must not treat her as a slave. You have already
brought shame on her.

The Rights of the Oldest Son

15 Suppose a man has two wives. He loves one but not the other. And both of
them have sons by him. But the oldest son is the son of the wife the man
doesn't love. 16 Someday he'll leave his property to his sons. When he does, he
must not give the rights of the oldest son to the son of the wife he loves. He
must give those rights to his oldest son. He must do it even though his oldest
son is the son of the wife he doesn't love.

17 He must recognize the full rights of the oldest son, even though that son is
the son of the wife he doesn't love. He must give that son a double share of
everything he has. That son is the first sign of his father's strength. So the
rights of the oldest son belong to him.

A Stubborn Son

18 Suppose someone has a very stubborn son. He doesn't obey his father and
mother. And he won't listen to them when they try to correct him. 19 Then his
parents will take hold of him and bring him to the elders at the gate of his
town. 20 They will say to the elders, "This son of ours is very stubborn. He
won't obey us. He wastes his money. He's always getting drunk."

21 Then all of the people in his town will put him to death by throwing stones
at him. Get rid of that evil person. All of the people of Israel will hear about it.
And they will be afraid to disobey their parents.

Several Other Laws

[22]Suppose a man is put to death for a crime that is worthy of death. And a pole is stuck through his body and set up where people can see it. [23]Then you must not leave the body on the pole all night. Make sure you bury it that same day.

Everyone who is hung on a pole is under God's curse. You must not make the land "unclean." The LORD your God is giving it to you as your own.

Deuteronomy 22

[1]Suppose you see your neighbor's ox or sheep wandering away. Then don't act as if you didn't see it. Instead, make sure you take it back to him.

[2]Your neighbor might not live near you. Or you might not know who he is. Then take the animal home with you. Keep it until he comes looking for it. Then give it back.

[3]Do the same thing if you find his donkey, coat or anything he loses. Don't act as if you didn't see it.

[4]Suppose you see your neighbor's donkey or ox that has fallen down on the road. Then don't act as if you didn't see it. Help him get it up on its feet again.

[5]A woman must not wear men's clothes. And a man must not wear women's clothes. The LORD your God hates it when anyone does that.

[6]Suppose you happen to find a bird's nest beside the road. It might be in a tree or on the ground. And suppose the mother bird is sitting on her little birds or on the eggs. Then don't take the mother along with the little ones. [7]You can take the little ones. But make sure you let the mother go. Then things will go well with you. You will live for a long time.

[8]If you build a new house, put a low wall around the edge of your roof. Then you won't be held accountable if someone falls off your roof and dies.

[9]Don't plant two kinds of seeds in your vineyard. If you do, the crops you grow there will be polluted. Your grapes will also be polluted.

[10]Don't let an ox and a donkey pull the same plow together.

[11]Don't wear clothes made of wool and linen that are woven together.

[12]Make tassels on the four corners of the coat you wear.

Breaking Marriage Laws

[13]Suppose a man gets married to a woman and makes love to her. But then he doesn't like her. [14]So he tells lies about her and says she's a bad woman. He says, "I got married to this woman. But when I made love to her, I discovered

she wasn’t a virgin.” [15]Then the woman’s parents must bring proof that she was a virgin. They must give the proof to the elders at the gate of the town.

[16]The woman’s father will speak to the elders. He’ll say, “I gave my daughter to this man to be his wife. But he doesn’t like her. [17]So now he has told lies about her. He has said, ‘I discovered that your daughter wasn’t a virgin.’ But here’s the proof that my daughter was a virgin.” Then her parents will show the elders of the town the cloth that has her blood on it.

[18]The elders will punish the man. [19]They’ll make him weigh out two and a half pounds of silver. They’ll give it to the woman’s father. That’s because the man has said an Israelite virgin is a bad woman. She will continue to be his wife. He must not divorce her as long as he lives.

[20]But suppose the charge is true. And there isn’t any proof that the woman was a virgin. [21]Then she must be brought to the door of her father’s house. There the people of her town will put her to death by throwing stones at her. She has done a very terrible thing in Israel. She has had sex before she got married. Get rid of that evil person.

[22]Suppose a man is seen having sex with another man’s wife. Then the man and the woman must both die. Get rid of those evil people.

[23]Suppose a man happens to see a virgin in a town. And she has promised to get married to another man. But the man who happens to see her has sex with her. [24]Then you must take both of them to the gate of that town. You must put them to death by throwing stones at them. You must kill the woman because she was in a town and didn’t scream for help. And you must kill the man because he had sex with another man’s wife. Get rid of those evil people.

[25]But suppose a man happens to see a woman out in the country. And she has promised to marry another man. But the man who happens to see her rapes her. Then only the man who has done that will die. [26]Don’t do anything to the woman. She hasn’t committed a sin that is worthy of death. That case is like the case of someone who attacks and murders his neighbor. [27]The man found the woman out in the country. And she screamed. But there wasn’t anyone around who could save her.

[28]Suppose a man happens to see a virgin who hasn’t promised to marry another man. And the man who happens to see her rapes her. But someone discovers them. [29]Then the man must weigh out 20 ounces of silver. He must give it to the woman’s father. The man must marry the woman, because he

raped her. And he can never divorce her as long as he lives.

30 A man must not get married to his stepmother. He must not bring shame on his father by having sex with her.

Who Can Worship With the LORD's People?

Deuteronomy 23

[1]No man whose sex organs have been crushed or cut can join in worship with the LORD's people.

[2]No one who was born to a woman who wasn't married can join in worship with the LORD's people. That also applies to the person's children for all time to come.

[3]The people of Ammon and Moab can't join in worship with the LORD's people. That also applies to their children after them for all time to come. [4]The Ammonites and Moabites didn't come to meet you with food and water on your way out of Egypt. They even hired Balaam from Pethor in Aram Naharaim to call down a curse on you. Balaam was the son of Beor. [5]The LORD your God wouldn't listen to Balaam. Instead, he turned the curse into a blessing for you. He did it because he loves you. [6]So don't make a peace treaty with the Ammonites and Moabites as long as you live.

[7]Don't hate the people of Edom. They are your relatives. Don't hate the people of Egypt. After all, you lived as outsiders in their country. [8]The great-grandchildren of the Edomites and Egyptians can join in worship with the LORD's people.

Keep the Camp of the Soldiers Pure and Clean

[9]There will be times when you are at war with your enemies. And your soldiers will be in camp. Then keep away from anything that isn't pure and clean.

[10]Suppose semen flows from the body of one of your soldiers during the night. Then that will make him "unclean." He must go outside the camp and stay there. [11]But as evening approaches, he must wash himself. When the sun goes down, he can return to the camp.

12 Choose a place outside the camp where you can go to the toilet. 13 Keep a
shovel among your tools. When you go to the toilet, dig a hole. Then cover up
your waste.

14 The LORD your God walks around in your camp. He's there to keep you
safe. He's also there to hand your enemies over to you. So your camp must be
holy. Then he won't see anything among you that is shameful. He won't turn
away from you.

Several Other Laws

15 If a slave comes to you for safety, don't hand him over to his master. 16 Let
him live among you anywhere he wants to. Let him live in any town he
chooses. Don't crush him.

17 A man or woman in Israel must not become a temple prostitute. 18 The LORD
your God hates the money that men and women get for being prostitutes. So
don't take that money into the house of the LORD to pay what you promised to
give.

19 Don't charge your own people any interest. Don't charge them when they
borrow money, food or anything else. 20 You can charge interest to people from
another country. But don't charge your own people. Then the LORD your God
will bless you in everything you do. He will bless you in the land you are
entering to take as your own.

21 Don't put off giving to the LORD your God everything you promise him. He
will certainly require it from you. And you will be guilty of committing a sin.
22 But if you don't make a promise, you won't be guilty. 23 Make sure you do
what you promised to do. With your own mouth you made the promise to the
LORD your God. No one forced you to do it.

24 When you enter your neighbor's vineyard, you can eat all of the grapes you
want. But don't put any of them in your basket. 25 When you enter your
neighbor's field, you can pick heads of grain. But don't cut down his standing
grain.

Deuteronomy 24

[1]Suppose a man gets married to a woman. But later he decides he doesn't like
her. He finds something shameful about her. So he gives her a letter of divorce
and sends her away from his house. [2]Then after she leaves his house she
becomes another man's wife. [3]But her second husband doesn't like her either.
So he gives her a letter of divorce and sends her away from his house. Or
perhaps he dies. [4]Then her first husband isn't allowed to marry her again. The
LORD would hate that. When her first husband divorced her, she became
"unclean." Don't bring sin on the land the LORD your God is giving you as your
own.

[5]Suppose a man has just gotten married. Then don't send him into battle.
Don't give him any other duty either. He's free to stay home for one year. He
needs time to make his new wife happy.

[6]Someone might borrow money from you and give you two millstones to
keep until you are paid back. Don't keep them. Don't even keep the upper one.
That person depends on the millstones to make a living.

[7]Suppose a man is caught kidnapping another Israelite. And he sells or treats
that person as a slave. Then the kidnapper must die. Get rid of that evil person.

[8]What about skin diseases? Be very careful to do exactly what the priests,
who are Levites, tell you to do. You must be careful to follow the commands
I've given them. [9]Remember what the LORD your God did to Miriam on your
way out of Egypt.

[10]Suppose your neighbor borrows something from you. And he offers you
something to keep until you get paid back. Then don't go into his house to get
it. [11]Stay outside. Let the man bring it out to you.

[12]He might be poor. You might be given his coat to keep until you get paid
back. Don't go to sleep while you still have it. [13]Return it before the sun goes
down. He needs it to sleep in and will thank you for returning it. The LORD
your God will see it and know that you have done the right thing.

[14]Don't take advantage of any hired worker who is poor and needy. That
applies to your own people. It also applies to outsiders who are living in one of
your towns. [15]Give them their pay every day. They are poor and are counting

on it. If you don’t pay them, they might cry out to the LORD against you. Then you will be guilty of committing a sin.

16Parents must not be put to death because of what their children do. And children must not be put to death because of what their parents do. People must die because of their own sins.

17Do what is right and fair for outsiders and for children whose fathers have died. Suppose a widow borrows something from you. And she offers to give you her coat until she pays you back. Don’t take it.

18Remember that you were slaves in Egypt. Remember that the LORD your God set you free from there. That’s why I’m commanding you to do those things.

19When you are gathering crops in your field, you might leave some grain behind by mistake. Don’t go back to get it. Leave it for outsiders and widows. Leave it for children whose fathers have died. Then the LORD your God will bless you in everything you do.

20When you knock olives off your trees, don’t go back over the branches a second time. Leave what remains for outsiders and widows. Leave it for children whose fathers have died. 21When you pick grapes in your vineyard, don’t go back over the vines a second time. Leave what remains for outsiders and widows. Leave it for children whose fathers have died.

22Remember that you were slaves in Egypt. That’s why I’m commanding you to do those things.

Deuteronomy 25

[1]Suppose two men don’t agree about something. Then they must take their
case to court. The judges will decide the case. They will let the one who isn’t
guilty go free. And they will punish the one who is guilty.

[2]The guilty one might have done something that’s worthy of a beating. Then
the judge will make him lie down and be beaten with a whip right there in
court. The number of strokes should fit the crime. [3]But the judge must not give
the guilty man more than 40 strokes. If more than that are used, you will look
down on your Israelite neighbor.

[4]Don’t stop an ox from eating while you use it to separate grain from straw.

[5]Suppose two brothers are living near each other. And one of them dies
without having a son. Then his widow must not get married to anyone outside
the family. Her husband’s brother should marry her. That’s what a brother-in-
law is supposed to do. [6]Her first baby boy will be named after her first
husband. Then the dead man’s name will not be wiped out in Israel.

[7]But suppose the man doesn’t want to get married to his brother’s wife. Then
she will go to the elders at the gate of the town. She will say, “My husband’s
brother refuses to keep his brother’s name alive in Israel. He won’t do for me
what a brother-in-law is supposed to do.”

[8]Then the elders in his town will send for him. They will talk to him. But he
still might say, “I don’t want to marry her.” [9]Then his brother’s widow will go
up to him in front of the elders. She’ll pull one of his sandals off his foot.
She’ll spit in his face. And she’ll say, “That’s what we do to a man who won’t
build up his brother’s family line.” [10]That man’s family line will be known in
Israel as The Family of the Man Whose Sandal Was Pulled Off.

[11]Suppose two men are fighting. And the wife of one of them comes to save
her husband from his attacker. So she reaches out and grabs hold of his sex
organs. [12]Then you must cut off her hand. Don’t feel sorry for her.

[13]Don’t have two different scales. You must not have one that weighs things
heavier than they really are and another that weighs them lighter than they are.
[14]And don’t have two different sets of measures. You must not have one set
that measures things larger than they really are and another that measures them

smaller than they are. [15]You must use weights and measures that are honest and exact. Then you will live a long time in the land the LORD your God is giving you. [16]He hates anyone who cheats.

[17]Remember what the Amalekites did to you on your way out of Egypt. [18]You were tired and worn out. They met you on your journey. They attacked everyone who was lagging behind. They didn’t have any respect for God. [19]The LORD your God will give you peace and rest from all of the enemies who are around you. He’ll do it in the land he’s giving you to take over as your very own. Then you will wipe out the memory of the Amalekites from the earth. Don’t forget to do it!

Give the LORD His Share

Deuteronomy 26

[1]You will enter the land the LORD your God is giving you as your own. You will take it over. You will settle down in it. [2]When you do, get some of the first share of everything your soil produces. Put it in a basket. It's from the land the LORD your God is giving you. Take your gifts and go to the special place he will choose. He will put his Name there.

[3]Speak to the priest who is in office at that time. Tell him, "I announce today to the LORD your God that I have come to this land. It's the land he promised with an oath to our fathers to give us." [4]The priest will take the basket from you. He'll set it down in front of the altar of the LORD your God.

[5]Then you will speak while the LORD is listening. You will say, "My father Jacob was a wanderer from the land of Aram. He went down into Egypt with a few people. He lived there and became the father of a great nation. It had huge numbers of people.

[6]"But the people of Egypt treated us badly. They made us suffer. They made us work very hard. [7]Then we cried out to the LORD. He is the God of our people who lived long ago. He heard our voice. He saw how much we were suffering. The Egyptians were crushing us. They were making us work very hard.

[8]"So the LORD reached out his mighty hand and powerful arm and brought us out of Egypt. He did great and wonderful things. He did miraculous signs and wonders. [9]He brought us to this place. He gave us this land. It's a land that has plenty of milk and honey.

[10]"Now, LORD, I'm bringing you the first share of crops from the soil. After all, you have given them to me." Place the basket in front of the LORD your God. Bow down to him.

[11]You and the Levites and the outsiders among you will be full of joy. You will enjoy all of the good things the LORD your God has given to you and your family.

[12]You will set apart a tenth of everything you produce in the third year. That's

the year for giving the tenth to people who have special needs. You will give it to the Levites, outsiders and widows. You will also give it to children whose fathers have died. Then all of them will have plenty to eat in your towns.

13Speak to the LORD your God. Say to him, “I have taken your sacred share from my house. I have given it to the Levites, outsiders and widows. I have also given it to children whose fathers have died. I’ve done everything you commanded me to do. I haven’t turned away from your commands. I haven’t forgotten any of them. 14I haven’t eaten any part of your sacred share while I was sobbing over someone who had died. I haven’t taken any of it from my house while I was ‘unclean.’ And I haven’t offered any of it to the dead. LORD my God, I’ve obeyed you. I’ve done everything you commanded me to do.

15“Look down from the holy place where you live in heaven. Bless your people Israel. Bless the land you have given us. It’s the land you promised with an oath to give to our fathers. It’s a land that has plenty of milk and honey.”

Follow the LORD’s Commands

16This very day the LORD your God commands you to follow all of those rules and laws. Be careful to obey them with all your heart and with all your soul.

17Today you have announced that the LORD is your God. You have said you would live exactly as he wants you to live. You have agreed to keep his rules, commands and laws. And you have said you would obey him.

18Today the LORD has announced that you are his people. He has said that you are his special treasure. He promised that you would be. He has told you to keep all of his commands. 19He has announced that he will make you famous. He’ll give you more praise and honor than all of the other nations he has made. And he has said that you will be a holy nation. The LORD your God has set you apart for himself. That’s exactly what he promised to do.

The Altar on Mount Ebal

Deuteronomy 27

1The elders of Israel and I gave commands to the people. We said, “Obey all
of the commands we’re giving you today.

2“You will go across the Jordan River. You will enter the land the LORD your
God is giving you. When you do, set up some large stones. Put a coat of plaster
on them. 3Write all of the words of this law on them. Do it when you have
crossed over into the land the LORD your God is giving you. It’s a land that has
plenty of milk and honey. The LORD is the God of your fathers. He promised
you that you would enter the land. 4After you have gone across the Jordan, set
up those stones on Mount Ebal. Put a coat of plaster on them. We’re
commanding you today to do that.

5“Build an altar there to honor the LORD your God. Make it out of stones.
Don’t use any iron tool on them. 6Use stones you find in the fields to build his
altar. Then offer burnt offerings on it to the LORD your God. 7Sacrifice
friendship offerings there. Eat them and be filled with joy in the sight of the
LORD your God.

8“You must write all of the words of this law on the stones you have set up.
Write the words very clearly.”

Curses for Not Obeying the LORD

9Then the priests, who are Levites, and I spoke to all of the people of Israel.
We said, “Israel, be quiet! Listen! You have now become the people of the
LORD your God. 10Obey him. Follow his commands and rules that we’re giving
you today.”

11Here are the commands I gave the people that very day.

12You will go across the Jordan River. When you do, I want six tribes to stand
on Mount Gerizim to bless the people. Those tribes are Simeon, Levi, Judah,

Issachar, Joseph and Benjamin. 13I want the other six tribes to stand on Mount Ebal to announce some curses. Those tribes are Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali.

14The Levites will speak to all of the people of Israel in a loud voice. They will say,

15"May any man who makes a wooden or metal statue of a god and sets it up in secret be under the LORD's curse. That statue is made by a skilled worker. And the LORD hates it."

Then all of the people will say, "Amen!"

16"May anyone who brings shame on his father or mother be under the LORD's curse."

Then all of the people will say, "Amen!"

17"May anyone who moves his neighbor's boundary stone be under the LORD's curse."

Then all of the people will say, "Amen!"

18"May anyone who leads blind people down the wrong road be under the LORD's curse."

Then all of the people will say, "Amen!"

19"May anyone who isn't fair in the way he treats outsiders, widows, and children whose fathers have died be under the LORD's curse."

Then all of the people will say, "Amen!"

20"May any man who has sex with his stepmother be under the LORD's curse. That man brings shame on his father by doing that."

Then all of the people will say, "Amen!"

21"May anyone who has sex with animals be under the LORD's curse."

Then all of the people will say, "Amen!"

22"May any man who has sex with his sister be under the LORD's curse. It doesn't matter whether she is his full sister or his half sister."

Then all of the people will say, "Amen!"

23"May any man who has sex with his mother-in-law be under the LORD's curse."

Then all of the people will say, “Amen!”

24“May anyone who kills his neighbor secretly be under the LORD’s curse.”

Then all of the people will say, “Amen!”

25“May anyone who accepts money to kill someone who isn’t guilty of doing anything wrong be under the LORD’s curse.”

Then all of the people will say, “Amen!”

26“May anyone who doesn’t honor the words of this law by obeying them be under the LORD’s curse.”

Then all of the people will say, “Amen!”

Blessings for Obeying the LORD

Deuteronomy 28

[1]Make sure you obey the LORD your God completely. Be careful to follow all
of his commands. I'm giving them to you today. If you do those things, the
LORD will honor you more than all of the other nations on earth. [2]If you obey
the LORD your God, here are the blessings that will come to you and remain
with you.

[3]You will be blessed in the cities. You will be blessed out in the country.

[4]Your children will be blessed. Your crops will be blessed. The young
animals among your livestock will be blessed. That includes your calves and
lambs.

[5]Your baskets and bread pans will be blessed.

[6]You will be blessed no matter where you go.

[7]Enemies will rise up against you. But the LORD will help you win the battle
over them. They will come at you from one direction. But they'll run away
from you in seven directions.

[8]The LORD your God will bless your barns with plenty of grain and other
food. He will bless everything you do. He'll bless you in the land he's giving
you.

[9]The LORD your God will make you his holy people. He will set you apart for
himself. He took an oath and promised to do that. He promised to do it if you
would keep his commands and live exactly as he wants you to live. [10]All of the
nations on earth will see that you belong to the LORD. And they will be afraid of
you.

[11]The LORD will give you more than you need. You will have many children.
Your livestock will have many little ones. Your crops will do very well. All of
that will happen in the land he promised with an oath to your fathers to give
you.

12The LORD will open up the heavens. That's where he stores his riches. He
will send rain on your land at just the right time. He'll bless everything you do.
You will lend money to many nations. But you won't have to borrow from any
of them. 13The LORD your God will make you leaders, not followers.

Pay attention to his commands that I'm giving you today. Be careful to follow
them. Then you will always be on top. You will never be on the bottom.

14Don't turn away from any of the commands I'm giving you today. Don't
turn to the right or the left. Don't follow other gods. Don't worship them.

More Curses for Not Obeying the LORD

15But suppose you don't obey the LORD your God. And you aren't careful to
follow all of his commands and rules I'm giving you today. Then he will send
curses on you. They'll catch up with you. Here are those curses.

16You will be cursed in the cities. You will be cursed out in the country.

17Your baskets and bread pans will be cursed.

18Your children will be cursed. Your crops will be cursed. Your calves and
lambs will be cursed.

19You will be cursed no matter where you go.

20The LORD will send curses on you. You won't know what's going on. In
everything you do, he will be angry with you. You will be destroyed suddenly
and completely. That will happen because you did an evil thing when you
deserted the LORD.

21He will send all kinds of sicknesses on you. He'll send them until he has
destroyed you. He'll remove you from the land you are entering to take as your
own. 22The LORD will make you sick and very weak. He will strike you with
fever and swelling. He'll send burning heat. There won't be any rain. The hot
winds will completely dry up your crops. All of those things will happen until
you die.

23The sky above you will be like bronze. The ground beneath you will be like
iron. 24The LORD will turn the rain of your country into dust and powder. It will
come down from the skies until you are destroyed.

25 The LORD will help your enemies win the battle over you. You will come at
them from one direction. But you will run away from them in seven directions.
You will look so bad that all of the kingdoms on earth will be completely
shocked when they see you. 26 Birds and wild animals will eat up your dead
bodies. There won't be anyone left to scare them away.

27 The LORD will send boils on you, just like the ones he sent on the Egyptians.
You will have growths in your bodies and boils on your skin. You will itch all
over. No one will be able to heal you.

28 The LORD will make you lose your mind. He will make you blind. You
won't know what's going on. 29 Even at noon you will have to feel your way
around like a blind person in the dark. You won't have success in anything you
do. Day after day you will be robbed and beaten down. No one will be able to
save you.

30 You and a woman will promise to get married to each other. But another
man will take her and rape her. You will build a house. But you won't live in it.
You will plant a vineyard. But you won't eat a single grape from it. 31 Your ox
will be killed right in front of your eyes. But you won't eat any of it. Your
donkey will be taken away from you by force. And you will never get it back.
Your sheep will be given to your enemies. No one will be able to save them.

32 Your children will be given to another nation. Day after day you will watch
for them to come back. But you will only wear out your eyes. You won't be
able to help your children.

33 A nation you don't know anything about will eat what you work to produce
on your land. You will be completely beaten down as long as you live. 34 The
things you see will make you lose your mind. 35 The LORD will send painful
boils on your knees and legs. No one will be able to heal them. They will cover
you from head to toe.

36 The LORD will drive you out of the land. And he will drive out the king you
place over you. All of you will go to a nation you and your people long ago
didn't know anything about. There you will worship other gods. They will be
made out of wood and stone. 37 You will look very bad to all of the nations
where the LORD sends you. They will be completely shocked when they see
you. They will laugh at you and make fun of you.

38 You will plant many seeds in your field. But you will gather very little food.
Locusts will eat it up. 39 You will plant vineyards and take care of them. But

you won’t drink the wine. You won’t gather the grapes. Worms will eat them up. [40]You will have olive trees through your whole country. But you won’t use the oil. The olives will drop off the trees. [41]You will have children. But you won’t be able to keep them. They’ll be taken away as prisoners. [42]Large numbers of locusts will eat up the leaves on all of your trees. They will also eat up the crops on your land.

[43]Outsiders who live among you will become your leaders. They will rise higher and higher. But you will sink lower and lower. [44]They will lend money to you. But you won’t be able to lend money to them. They will be the leaders. But you will be the followers.

[45]The LORD your God will send all of those curses on you. They will follow you everywhere. They’ll catch up with you. You will be under the LORD’s curse until you are destroyed. That’s because you didn’t obey him. You didn’t keep the commands and rules he gave you. [46]Those curses will remain as miraculous signs and wonders against you and your children after you forever.

[47]You didn’t serve the LORD your God with joy and gladness when times were good. [48]So he will send enemies against you. You will have to serve them. You will be hungry and thirsty. You will be naked and poor. The LORD will put the iron chains of slavery around your necks until he has destroyed you.

[49]The LORD will bring a nation against you from far away. It will come from the ends of the earth. It will dive down on you like an eagle. You won’t understand that nation’s language. [50]Its people will look mean. They won’t have any respect for old people. They won’t show any kindness to young people.

[51]They will eat up the young animals among your livestock. They’ll eat up the crops on your land. They’ll destroy you. They won’t leave you any grain, olive oil or fresh wine. They won’t leave you any calves or lambs. They’ll destroy you. [52]They’ll surround all of the cities through your whole land. They’ll get ready to attack them. They’ll do those things until the high, strong walls you trust in fall down. That’s what will happen to the cities in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

[53]Your enemies will surround you and get ready to attack you. They will make you suffer greatly. So you will eat your own children. You will eat the dead bodies of the sons and daughters the LORD your God has given you.

[54]There may be a gentle and caring man among you. But he will treat his own

brother badly. He'll be just as mean to the wife he loves and to any of his children who are still alive. 55He won't give to a single one of them any part of the dead bodies of his children that he's eating. It will be all he has left to eat. That's how much your enemies will make you suffer when they surround all of your cities to attack them.

56There may be a gentle and caring woman among you. She wouldn't even touch the ground with her feet without first putting her sandals on. But she will not share anything with the husband she loves. She won't share with her own children either. 57She will eat what comes out of her body after she has a baby. Then she'll even eat her baby. She won't share it with anyone in her family. She'll plan to eat it in secret. There won't be anything else for her to eat because the city she lives in will be surrounded. That's an example of how much your enemies will make you suffer when they are getting ready to attack your cities.

58Be careful to follow all of the words of this law. They are written in this scroll. Have respect for the glorious and wonderful name of the LORD your God. If you don't, 59he will send terrible plagues on you and your children after you. He'll send horrible and lasting troubles. He'll make you very sick for a long time. 60He'll bring on you all of the sicknesses you were afraid of getting when you were in Egypt. You won't be able to get rid of them. 61The LORD will also bring on you all of the other kinds of sickness and trouble I haven't written down in this Scroll of the Law. You will be destroyed.

62At one time you were as many as the stars in the sky. But there will only be a few of you left. That's because you didn't obey the LORD your God. 63It pleased the LORD to give you success and to increase your numbers. But it will please him just as much to wipe you out and destroy you. You will be removed from the land you are entering to take as your own.

64Then the LORD will scatter you among all of the nations. He'll spread you around from one end of the earth to the other. There you will worship statues of gods that are made out of wood and stone. You and your people long ago hadn't known anything about those gods.

65Among those nations you won't find any peace. There won't be any place where you can settle down and rest your feet. There the LORD will give you minds that are filled with worry. He'll give you eyes that are worn out from sobbing. Your hearts won't have any hope.

66Your lives will always be in danger. You will be filled with fear night and

day. You will never be sure you are safe. [67]In the morning you will say, “We wish it were evening!” In the evening you will say, “We wish it were morning!” Your hearts will be filled with fear. The things you see will terrify you.

[68]The LORD will send you back to Egypt in ships. He’ll send you on a journey I said you should never have to make again. You will offer to sell yourselves to your enemies as slaves in Egypt. But no one will buy you.

Follow the Terms of the Covenant

Deuteronomy 29

[1]These are the terms of the covenant the LORD commanded me to make with the people of Israel in Moab. The terms were added to the covenant he had made with them at Mount Horeb.

[2]I sent for all of the Israelites. Here is what I said to them.

With your own eyes you have seen everything the LORD did in Egypt to Pharaoh. You have seen what he did to all of Pharaoh's officials and to his whole land. [3]With your own eyes you saw how the LORD really made them suffer. You saw his miraculous signs and great wonders.

[4]But to this very day the LORD hasn't given you a mind that understands. He hasn't given you eyes that see. He hasn't given you ears that hear.

[5]He led you through the desert for 40 years. During that time your clothes didn't wear out. The sandals on your feet didn't wear out either. [6]You didn't eat any bread. You didn't drink any kind of wine. The LORD did all of those things because he wanted you to know that he is the LORD your God.

[7]When we got here, Sihon and Og came out to fight against us. Sihon was the king of Heshbon. And Og was the king of Bashan. But we won the battle over them. [8]We took their land. We gave it to the tribes of Reuben and Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh as their share.

[9]Be careful to obey the terms of this covenant. Then you will have success in everything you do.

[10]Today all of you are standing here in the sight of the LORD your God. Your leaders and chief men are here. Your elders and officials are here. So are all of the other men of Israel. [11]Your children and wives are here with you too. So are the outsiders who are living in your camps. They chop your wood and carry your water.

[12]All of you are standing here in order to enter into a covenant with the LORD your God. He is making the covenant with you today. He's sealing it with an

oath. [13]Today he wants to show you that you are his people and that he is your God. That's what he promised with an oath to your fathers. He promised it to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

[14]I'm making this covenant. I'm sealing it with an oath. I'm not making it only with you [15]who are standing here with us today in the sight of the LORD our God. I'm also making it with those who aren't here today.

[16]You yourselves know how we lived in Egypt. You also know how we passed through other countries on the way here. [17]You saw the statues of their gods that were made out of wood, stone, silver and gold. The LORD hates those statues.

[18]Make sure there isn't a man or woman among your families or tribes who turns away from the LORD our God. No one must worship the gods of those nations. Make sure that kind of worship doesn't spread like bitter poison through your whole community.

[19]Some people who worship those gods will hear the oath that seals the covenant I'm making. They think they can escape trouble by saying to themselves, "We'll be safe, even though we're stubborn and go our own way." But trouble will come on them everywhere in the land.

[20]The LORD will never be willing to forgive those people. His burning anger will blaze out against them. All of the curses I've written down in this scroll will fall on them. And the LORD will wipe out their names from the earth. [21]He will find those people in all of the tribes of Israel and give them nothing but trouble. That will be in keeping with all of the curses of the covenant. They are written down in this Scroll of the Law.

[22]Even your children's children will see the troubles that have fallen on the land. They'll see the sicknesses the LORD has brought on it. People who come from countries far away will also see those things.

[23]The whole land will be burned up. Nothing but salt and sulfur will be left. Nothing will be planted there. Nothing will grow there. In fact, nothing will even start to grow there. The land will be like Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim after they were destroyed. The LORD wiped out those cities because he was very angry.

[24]All of the nations will ask, "Why has the LORD done this to the land? What could have made him so very angry?"

[25]And they will hear the answer, "It's because the people who are living there

have broken the covenant of the LORD. He's the God of their parents. He made that covenant with them when he brought them out of Egypt. [26]They went off and worshiped other gods. They bowed down to them. They hadn't known anything about those gods before. The LORD hadn't given those gods to them.

[27]"So the LORD's anger burned against the land. He brought on it all of the curses that are written down in this scroll. [28]The LORD's anger blazed out against his people. So he pulled them up out of their land. He threw them into another land. And that's where they are now."

[29]The LORD our God keeps certain things hidden. But he makes other things known to us and our children forever. He does it so we can obey all of the words of this law.

The LORD Will Bless His People

Deuteronomy 30

[1]I have told you about all of those blessings and curses. The LORD will bring
them on you. Then you will think carefully about them everywhere the LORD
your God scatters you among the nations. [2]You and your children will return to
the LORD your God. You will obey him with all your heart and with all your
soul. That will be in keeping with everything I'm commanding you today.

[3]When all of that happens, the LORD your God will bless you with great
success again. He will be very kind to you. He'll bring you back from all of the
nations where he scattered you. [4]Suppose you have been forced to go away to
the farthest land on earth. The LORD your God will bring you back even from
there.

[5]He will bring you to the land that belonged to your people long ago. You
will take it over. He'll make you better off than your people were. He'll
increase your numbers more than he increased theirs. [6]The LORD your God will
keep your hearts from being stubborn. He'll do the same thing for your
children and their children. Then you will love him with all your heart and with
all your soul. And you will live.

[7]The LORD your God will put all of those curses on your enemies. They hated
you and hunted you down.

[8]You will obey the LORD again. You will follow all of his commands that I'm
giving you today. [9]Then the LORD your God will give you great success in
everything you do. You will have many children. Your livestock will have
many little ones. Your crops will do very well. The LORD will take delight in
you again. He'll give you success. That's what he did for your people long ago.

[10]But you must obey the LORD your God. You must keep his commands and
rules. They are written in this Scroll of the Law. You must turn to the LORD
your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Choose Life

[11]What I’m commanding you today is not too hard for you. It isn’t beyond your reach. [12]It isn’t up in heaven. So you don’t have to ask, “Who will go up into heaven to get it? Who will announce it to us so we can obey it?” [13]And it isn’t beyond the ocean. So you don’t have to ask, “Who will go across the ocean to get it? Who will announce it to us so we can obey it?”

[14]No, the message isn’t far away at all. In fact, it’s really near you. It’s in your mouth and in your heart so that you can obey it.

[15]Today I’m giving you a choice. You can have life and success. Or you can have death and harm. [16]I’m commanding you today to love the LORD your God. I’m commanding you to live exactly as he wants you to live. You must obey his commands, rules and laws. Then you will live. Your numbers will increase. The LORD your God will bless you in the land you are entering to take as your own.

[17]Don’t let your hearts turn away from the LORD. Instead, obey him. Don’t let yourselves be drawn away to other gods. And don’t bow down to them and worship them. [18]If you do, I announce to you this very day that you will certainly be destroyed. You are about to go across the Jordan River and take over the land. But you won’t live there very long.

[19]I’m calling for heaven and earth to give witness against you this very day. I’m offering you the choice of life or death. You can choose either blessings or curses. But I want you to choose life. Then you and your children will live. [20]And you will love the LORD your God. You will obey him. You will remain true to him. The LORD is your very life. He will give you many years in the land. He took an oath. He promised to give that land to your fathers. He promised it to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Joshua Becomes the New Leader

Deuteronomy 31

[1]Here are the words I spoke to all of the people of Israel. [2]I said, “I am now
120 years old. I’m not able to lead you anymore. The LORD has said to me,
‘You will not go across the Jordan River.’

[3]“The LORD your God himself will go across ahead of you. He’ll destroy the
nations that are there in order to make room for you. You will take over their
land. Joshua will also go across ahead of you, just as the LORD said he would.

[4]“The LORD will do to those nations what he did to Sihon and Og. He
destroyed those Amorite kings along with their land. [5]The LORD will hand
those nations over to you. Then you must do to them everything I’ve
commanded you to do.

[6]“Be strong and brave. Don’t be afraid of them. Don’t be terrified because of
them. The LORD your God will go with you. He will never leave you. He’ll
never desert you.”

[7]Then I sent for Joshua. I spoke to him in front of all of the people of Israel. I
said, “Be strong and brave. You must go with these people. They are going into
the land the LORD promised with an oath to give to their fathers. You must
divide it up among them. They will each receive their share. [8]The LORD himself
will go ahead of you. He will be with you. He will never leave you. He’ll never
desert you. So don’t be afraid. Don’t lose hope.”

The Law Must Be Read

[9]I wrote down that law. I gave it to the priests, who are sons of Levi. They
carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD. I also gave the law to all of the
elders of Israel.

[10]Then I commanded them, “You must read this law at the end of every seven
years. Do it in the year when you forgive people what they owe. Read it during
the Feast of Booths. [11]That’s when all of the people of Israel come to appear in

front of the LORD your God at the holy tent. It will be at the place he will choose. You must read this law to them.

12"Gather the people together. Gather the men, women and children. Also bring together the outsiders who are living in your towns. Then they can listen and learn to have respect for the LORD your God. And they'll be careful to obey all of the words of this law. 13Their children must hear it read too. They don't know this law yet. They too must learn to have respect for the LORD your God. They must respect him as long as you live in the land. You are about to go across the Jordan River and take that land as your very own."

Israel Will Refuse to Obey the LORD

14The LORD spoke to me. He said, "The day when you will die is near. Have Joshua go to the Tent of Meeting. Join him there. That is where I will appoint him as the new leader." So Joshua and I went to the Tent of Meeting.

15Then the LORD appeared at the tent in a pillar of cloud. It stood over the entrance to the tent. 16The LORD spoke to me. He said, "You are going to join the members of your family who have already died. The people will not be faithful to me. They will soon join themselves to the strange gods that are worshiped in the land they are entering. The people will desert me. They will break the covenant I made with them.

17"On that day I will become angry with them. I will desert them. I will turn my face away from them. And they will be destroyed. Many horrible troubles and hard times will come on them. On that day they will say, 'Trouble has come on us. Our God isn't with us!'

18"I will certainly turn away from them on that day. I will do it because they did a very evil thing when they turned to other gods.

19"I want you to write down a song for yourselves. Teach it to the people of Israel. Have them sing it. It will be my witness against them.

20"I will bring them into a land that has plenty of milk and honey. I promised the land to their fathers. I took an oath when I promised it. In that land they will eat until they have had enough. They will get fat. When they do, they will turn to other gods and worship them. They will turn their backs on me. They will break my covenant.

21“Many horrible troubles and hard times will come on them. Then the song I
am giving you will be a witness against them. That is because the song will not
be forgotten by their children and their children’s children. I know what they
are likely to do. I know it even before I bring them into the land I promised
them with an oath.”

22So that day I wrote the song down. And I taught it to the people of Israel.

23The LORD gave a command to Joshua, the son of Nun. He said, “Be strong
and brave. You will bring the Israelites into the land I promised them with an
oath. I myself will be with you.”

24I finished writing the words of that law in a scroll. I wrote them down from
beginning to end.

25Then I gave a command to the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant
of the LORD. I said, 26“Take this Scroll of the Law. Place it beside the ark of the
covenant of the LORD your God. It will remain there as a witness against you.
27I know how you refuse to obey the LORD. I know how stubborn you are. You
have refused to obey him while I’ve been living among you. So you will
certainly refuse to obey him after I’m dead!

28Gather together all of the elders of your tribes and all of your officials.
Bring them to me. Then I can speak these words to them. I can call for heaven
and earth to give witness against them. 29I know that after I’m dead you will
certainly become very sinful. You will turn away from the path I’ve
commanded you to take. In days to come, trouble will fall on you. That’s
because you will do what is evil in the sight of the LORD. You will make him
very angry because of the statues of gods your hands have made.”

The Song of Moses

30I spoke the words of this song from beginning to end. The whole
community of Israel heard them. Here is what I said.

Deuteronomy 32

[1]Heavens, listen to me. Then I will speak.
Earth, hear the words of my mouth.
[2]Let my teaching fall like rain.
Let my words come down like dew.
Let them be like raindrops on new grass.
Let them be like rain on tender plants.

[3]I will make known the name of the LORD.
Praise God! How great he is!
[4]He is the Rock. His works are perfect.
All of his ways are right.
He is faithful. He doesn't do anything wrong.
He is honest and fair.

[5]Israel, you have sinned against him very much.
It's too bad for you that you aren't his children anymore.
You have become a twisted and evil nation.
[6]Is that how you thank the LORD?
You aren't wise. You are foolish.
Remember, he's your Father. He's your Creator.
He made you. He formed you.

[7]Remember the days of old.
Think about what the LORD did through those many years.
Ask your father. He will tell you.
Ask your elders. They'll explain it to you.
[8]The Most High God gave the nations their lands.
He divided up the human race.
He set up borders for the nations.
He did it based on the number of the sons of Israel.
[9]The LORD's people are his share.
Jacob is the nation he has received.

[10]The LORD found Israel in a desert land.
He found them in an empty and windy wasteland.
He took care of them and kept them safe.

He guarded them as he would guard his own eyes.
11 He was like an eagle that stirs up its nest.
It hovers over its little ones.
It spreads out its wings to catch them.
It carries them on its feathers.
12 The LORD was the only one who led Israel.
No other god was with them.

13 The LORD made them ride on the highest places in the land.
He fed them what grew in the fields.
He gave them the sweetest honey.
He fed them olive oil from a rocky hillside.
14 He gave them butter and milk from the herds and flocks.
He fed them the fattest lambs and goats.
He gave them the best of Bashan's rams.
He fed them the finest wheat.
They drank the bubbling red juice of grapes.

15 When Israel grew fat, they became stubborn.
When they were filled with food, they became fat and heavy.
They left the God who made them.
They turned away from the Rock who saved them.
16 They made him jealous by serving strange gods.
They made him angry by worshiping statues of gods.
He hated those gods.
17 The people sacrificed to demons, not to God.
The demons were gods they hadn't known anything about.
Those gods were new to them.
Their people long ago didn't worship them.
18 But then they deserted the Rock. He was their Father.
They forgot the God who created them.

19 When the LORD saw that, he turned away from them.
His sons and daughters made him angry.
20 "I will turn my face away from them," he said.
"I will see what will happen to them in the end.
They are sinful people.
They are unfaithful children.
21 They made me jealous by serving what is not even a god.
They made me angry by worshiping worthless statues of gods.
I will use people who are not a nation to make them jealous.

I will use a nation that has no understanding to make them angry.
22 My anger has started a fire.
It burns down to the kingdom of the dead.
It will eat up the earth and its crops.
It will set the base of the mountains on fire.

23 “I will pile troubles on my people.
I will shoot all of my arrows at them.
24 I will send them hunger. It will make them weak.
I will send terrible sickness. I will send deadly plagues.
I will send wild animals that will tear them apart.
Snakes that glide through the dust will bite them.
25 In the streets their children will be killed with swords.
Their homes will be filled with terror.
Young men and women will die.
Babies and old people will die.
26 I said I would scatter them.
I said I would wipe them from human memory.
27 But I was afraid their enemies would make fun of that.
I was afraid their attackers would not understand.
I was sure they would say, ‘We’re the ones who’ve beaten them!
The LORD isn’t the one who did it.’ ”

28 Israel is a nation that doesn’t have any sense.
They can’t understand anything.
29 I wish they were wise. Then they would understand what’s coming.
They’d realize what would happen to them in the end.
30 How could one person chase a thousand?
How could two make ten thousand run away?
It couldn’t happen unless their Rock had deserted them.
It couldn’t take place unless the LORD had given them up.
31 Their rock is not like our Rock.
Even our enemies know that.
32 Their vine comes from the vines of Sodom.
It comes from the vineyards of Gomorrah.
Their grapes are filled with poison.
Their bunches of grapes taste bitter.
33 Their wine is like the poison of snakes.
It’s like the deadly poison of cobras.

[34]The LORD says, “I have kept all of those terrible things stored away.
I have kept them sealed up in my strongbox.
[35]I punish people. I will pay them back.
The time will come when their feet will slip.
Their day of trouble is near.
Very soon they will be destroyed.”

[36]The LORD will judge his people.
He’ll show tender love to those who serve him.
He will know when their strength is gone.
He’ll see that no one at all is left.
[37]He’ll say, “Where are their gods now?
Where is the rock they went to for safety?
[38]Where are the gods who ate the fat of their sacrifices?
Where are the gods who drank the wine of their drink offerings?
Let them rise up to help you!
Let them keep you safe!

[39]“Look! I am the One!
There is no other God except me.
I put some people to death. I bring others to life.
I have wounded, and I will heal.
No one can save you from my powerful hand.
[40]I raise my hand to heaven. Here is the oath I take.
You can be sure that I live forever.
[41]And you can be just as sure
that I will sharpen my flashing sword.
My hand will hold it when I judge.
I will get even with my enemies.
I will pay back those who hate me.
[42]I will make my arrows drip with blood.
My sword will destroy people.
It will kill some. It will even kill prisoners.
It will cut off the heads of enemy leaders.”

[43]You nations, be full of joy. Be joyful together with God’s people.
The LORD will get even with his enemies.
He will pay them back for killing those who serve him.
He will wipe away the sin of his land and people.

44I spoke all of the words of that song to the people. Joshua, the son of Nun,
was with me. 45I finished speaking all of those words to all of the people of
Israel.

46Then I said to the people, “Think carefully about all of the words I have
announced to you today. I want you to command your children to be careful to
obey all of the words of this law. 47They aren’t just useless words for you.
They are your very life. If you obey them, you will live in the land for a long
time. It’s the land you are going across the Jordan River to take as your own.”

Moses Will Die on Mount Nebo

48On that same day the LORD spoke to me. He said, 49“Go up into the Abarim
Mountains. Go to Mount Nebo in Moab. It is across from Jericho. From there
look out over Canaan. It is the land I am giving the people of Israel to take as
their own.

50“You will die there on the mountain you have climbed. You will join the
members of your family who have already died. In the same way, your brother
Aaron died on Mount Hor. He joined the members of his family who had
already died.

51“You and Aaron disobeyed me in front of the Israelites. It happened at the
waters of Meribah Kadesh in the Desert of Zin. You did not honor me among
the Israelites as the holy God. 52So you will see the land. But you will see it
only from far away. You will not enter the land I am giving to the people of
Israel.”

Moses Blesses the Tribes

Deuteronomy 33

[1]Here is the blessing that Moses, the man of God, gave to the people of Israel
before he died. [2]He said,

"The LORD came from Mount Sinai.
Like the rising sun, he shone on his people from Mount Seir.
He shone on them from Mount Paran.
He came with large numbers of angels.
He came from his mountain slopes in the south.
[3]LORD, I'm sure you love your people.
All of the Israelites are in your hands.
At your feet all of them bow down.
And you teach them.
[4]They learn the law I gave them.
It belongs to the community of the people of Jacob.
[5]The LORD was king over Israel
when the leaders of the people came together.
The tribes of Israel were also there."

[6]Here's what Moses said about Reuben.

"Let Reuben live. Don't let him die.
But let his people be few."

[7]Here's what Moses said about Judah.

"LORD, listen to Judah cry out.
Bring him to his people.
By his own power he stands up for himself.
LORD, help him fight against his enemies!"

[8]Here’s what Moses said about Levi.

“Your Thummim and Urim belong to the man you favored.
You put him to the test at Massah.
You argued with him at the waters of Meribah.
[9]Levi didn’t show special favor to anyone.
He did not spare his father and mother.
He didn’t excuse his relatives or his children.
But he watched over your word.
He guarded your covenant.
[10]He teaches your rules to the people of Jacob.
He teaches your law to Israel.
He offers incense to you.
He sacrifices whole burnt offerings on your altar.
[11]LORD, bless all of his skills.
Be pleased with everything he does.
Destroy those who rise up against him.
Strike down his enemies until they can’t get up.”

[12]Here’s what Moses said about Benjamin.

“Let the one the LORD loves rest safely in him.
The LORD guards him all day long.
The one the LORD loves rests in his arms.”

[13]Here’s what Moses said about Joseph.

“May the LORD bless Joseph’s land.
May he bless it with dew from the highest heavens.
May he bless it with water from the deepest oceans.
[14]May he bless it with the best crops the sun can produce.
May he bless it with the finest crops the moon can give.
[15]May he bless it with the best products of the age-old mountains.
May he bless it with the many crops of the ancient hills.
[16]May he bless it with the best gifts that fill the earth.
May he bless it with the favor of the One who spoke out of the burning bush.
Let all of those blessings rest on the head of Joseph.

Let them rest on the head of the one who is prince among his brothers.
17 His glory is like the glory of a bull that was born first to its mother.
His horns are like the horns of a wild ox.
He will destroy the nations with them.
He'll wipe out the nations that are very far away.
The ten thousands of men in Ephraim's army are like the bull and the ox.
So are the thousands in the army of Manasseh."

18 Here's what Moses said about Zebulun and Issachar.

"Zebulun, be filled with joy when you go out.
Issachar, be joyful in your tents.
19 You will call for all of the other Israelites to go to the mountain.
There you will offer proper sacrifices.
You will enjoy the many good things your ships bring you.
You will enjoy treasures that are hidden in the sand."

20 Here's what Moses said about Gad.

"May the One who gives Gad more land be praised!
Gad lives there like a lion
that tears off arms and heads.
21 He chose the best land for his livestock.
The leader's share was kept for him.
The leaders of the people came together.
Then Gad carried out the LORD's holy plan.
He carried out the LORD's decisions for Israel."

22 Here's what Moses said about Dan.

"Dan is like a lion's cub
that charges out of the land of Bashan."

23 Here's what Moses said about Naphtali.

“The LORD greatly favors Naphtali.
The LORD fills him with his blessing.
Naphtali’s land will reach south to the Sea of Galilee.”

24Here’s what Moses said about Asher.

“Asher is the most blessed of sons.
Let his brothers show favor to him.
Let him wash his feet with olive oil.
25The bars of his gates will be made out of iron and bronze.
His strength will last as long as he lives.

26“There is no one like the God of Israel.
He rides in the heavens to help you.
He rides on the clouds in his glory.
27God lives forever! You can run to him for safety.
His powerful arms are always there to carry you.
He will drive out your enemies to make room for you.
He’ll say to you, ‘Destroy them!’
28So Israel will live alone in safety.
Jacob’s spring of water is safe
in a land that has grain and fresh wine.
There the heavens drop their dew.
29Israel, how blessed you are!
Who is like you?
The LORD has saved you.
He keeps you safe. He helps you.
He’s like a glorious sword to you.
Your enemies will bow down to you in fear.
You will bring them under your control.”

Moses Dies

Deuteronomy 34

1 Moses climbed Mount Nebo. He went up from the flatlands of Moab to the
highest slopes of Pisgah. It's across from Jericho.

At Pisgah the LORD showed him the whole land from Gilead all the way to
Dan. 2 Moses saw the whole land of Naphtali. He saw the territory of Ephraim
and Manasseh. The LORD showed him the whole land of Judah all the way to
the Mediterranean Sea. 3 Moses saw the Negev Desert. He saw the whole area
from the Valley of Jericho all the way to Zoar. Jericho was also known as The
City of Palm Trees.

4 Then the LORD spoke to Moses. He said, "This is the land I promised with an
oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I told them, 'I will give this land to your
children and their children.' Moses, I have let you see it with your own eyes.
But you will not go across the Jordan River to enter it."

5 Moses, the servant of the LORD, died there in Moab, just as the LORD had
said. 6 The LORD buried the body of Moses in Moab. His grave is in the valley
across from Beth Peor. But to this day no one knows where it is. 7 Moses was
120 years old when he died. But his eyes were not weak. He was still very
strong.

8 The people of Israel sobbed over Moses on the flatlands of Moab for 30
days. They did it until their time for sobbing and crying was over.

9 Joshua, the son of Nun, was filled with wisdom. That's because Moses had
placed his hands on him. So the Israelites listened to Joshua. They did what the
LORD had commanded Moses.

10 Since then, Israel has never had a prophet like Moses. The LORD knew him
face to face. 11 Moses did many miraculous signs and wonders. The LORD had
sent him to do them in Egypt. Moses did them against Pharaoh, against all of
his officials and against his whole land. 12 No one has ever had the mighty
power Moses had. No one has ever done the wonderful acts he did in the sight
of all of the people of Israel.

Joshua

Joshua 1
Joshua 2
Joshua 3
Joshua 4
Joshua 5
Joshua 6
Joshua 7
Joshua 8
Joshua 9
Joshua 10
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Joshua 23
Joshua 24

The LORD Gives Commands to Joshua

Joshua 1

[1]Moses, the servant of the LORD, died. After that, the LORD spoke to Joshua, the son of Nun. Joshua was Moses' helper. The LORD said to Joshua, [2]"My servant Moses is dead. Now then, I want you and all of these people to get ready to go across the Jordan River. I want all of you to go into the land I am about to give to the people of Israel.

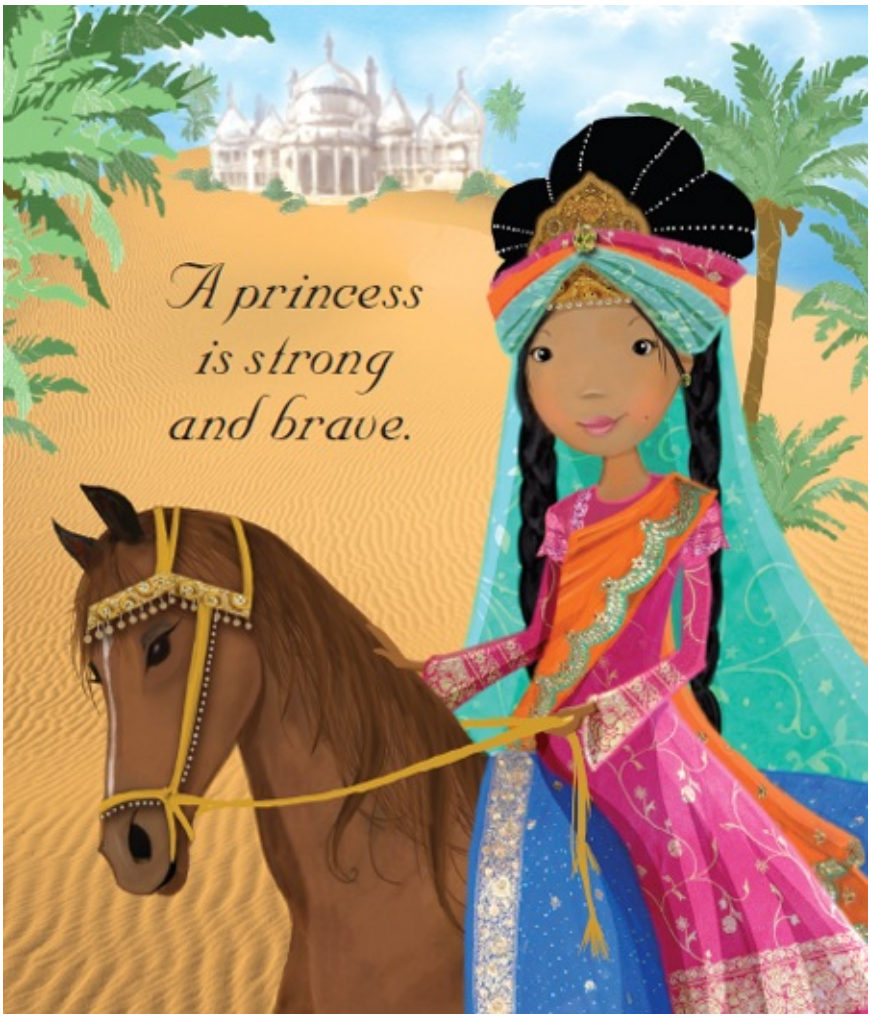
[3]"I will give all of you every place you walk on, just as I promised Moses. [4]Your territory will reach from the Negev Desert all the way to Lebanon. The great Euphrates River will be to the east. The Mediterranean Sea will be to the west. Your territory will include all of the Hittite country.

[5]"Joshua, no one will be able to stand up against you as long as you live. I will be with you, just as I was with Moses. I will never leave you. I will never desert you.

[6]"Be strong and brave. You will lead these people, and they will take the land as their very own. It is the land I promised with an oath to give their people long ago.

[7]"Be strong and very brave. Make sure you obey the whole law my servant Moses gave you. Do not turn away from it to the right or the left. Then you will have success everywhere you go. [8]Never stop reading this Scroll of the Law. Day and night you must think about what it says. Make sure you do everything that is written in it. Then things will go well with you. And you will have great success.

[9]"Here is what I am commanding you to do. Be strong and brave. Do not be terrified. Do not lose hope. I am the LORD your God. I will be with you everywhere you go."



Be strong and brave. Do not be terrified. Do not lose hope. I am the Lord your God. I will be with you everywhere you go.

Joshua 1:9

Joshua Gives Commands to the People

10So Joshua gave orders to the officers of the people. He said, 11"Go through
the camp. Tell the people, 'Get your supplies ready. Three days from now you
will go across the Jordan River right here. You will go in and take over the
land. The LORD your God is giving it to you as your very own.' "

12Joshua also spoke to the tribes of Reuben and Gad and half of the tribe of
Manasseh. He said to them, 13"Remember what Moses, the servant of the LORD,
commanded you. He said, 'The LORD your God is giving you this land. It's a
place where you can settle down and live in peace and rest.'

14"Your wives, children and livestock can stay here east of the Jordan River.
Moses gave you this land. But all of your fighting men must get ready for
battle. They must go across ahead of the other tribes. You must help them
15until the LORD gives them rest. In the same way, he has already given you
rest. You must help them until they also have taken over their land. It's the land
the LORD your God is giving them. After that, you can come back here. Then
you can live in your own land. It's the land that Moses, the servant of the LORD,
gave you east of the Jordan River. It's toward the sunrise."

16Then the tribes of Reuben and Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh
answered Joshua. They said, "We'll do what you have commanded us to do.
We'll go where you send us. 17We obeyed Moses completely. And we'll obey
you just as completely. But may the LORD your God be with you, just as he was
with Moses.

18"Suppose people question your authority. And suppose they refuse to obey
anything you command them to do. Then they will be put to death. Just be
strong and brave!"

Rahab Helps the Spies

Joshua 2

1 Joshua, the son of Nun, sent two spies from Shittim. He sent them in secret.
He said to them, “Go. Look the land over. Most of all, check out Jericho.”

So they went to Jericho. They stayed at the house of a prostitute. Her name
was Rahab.

2 The king of Jericho was told, “Look! Some of the people of Israel have
come here tonight. They’ve come to check out the land.”

3 So the king sent a message to Rahab. It said, “Bring out the men who came
into your house. They’ve come to check out the whole land.”

4 But the woman had hidden the two men. She said, “It’s true that the men
came here. But I didn’t know where they had come from. 5 They left at sunset,
when it was time to close the city gate. I don’t know which way they went. Go
after them quickly. You might catch up with them.”

6 But in fact she had taken them up on the roof. There she had hidden them
under some flax she had piled up.

7 The king’s men left to hunt down the spies. They took the road that leads to
where the Jordan River can be crossed. As soon as they had gone out of the
city, the gate was shut.

8 Rahab went up on the roof before the spies settled down for the night. 9 She
said to them, “I know that the LORD has given this land to you. We are very
much afraid of you. Everyone who lives in this country is weak with fear
because of you.

10 “We’ve heard how the LORD dried up the Red Sea for you when you came
out of Egypt. We’ve heard what you did to Sihon and Og, the two Amorite
kings. They ruled east of the Jordan River. You completely destroyed them.

11 “When we heard about it, our hearts melted away in fear. Because of you,
we aren’t brave anymore. The LORD your God is the God who rules over
heaven above and earth below.

12“Now then, please take an oath. Promise me in the name of the LORD that
you will be kind to my family. I’ve been kind to you. Promise me 13that you
will spare the lives of my father and mother. Spare my brothers and sisters.
Also spare everyone in their families. Promise that you won’t put any of us to
death.”

14So the men made a promise to her. “We’ll give up our lives to save yours,”
they said. “But don’t tell anyone what we’re doing. Then we’ll be kind and
faithful to you when the LORD gives us the land.”

15The house Rahab lived in was part of the city wall. So she let the spies
down by a rope through the window. 16She had said to them, “Go up into the
hills. The men who are chasing you won’t be able to find you. Hide yourselves
there for three days until they return. Then you can go on your way.”

17The men said to her, “You made us take an oath and make a promise. But
we won’t keep it 18unless you do what we say. When we enter the land, you
must tie this bright red rope in the window. Tie it in the window you let us
down through.

“Bring your father and mother into your house. Also bring your brothers and
everyone else in your family into your house. 19None of you must go out into
the street. If you do, anything that happens to you will be your own fault. Don’t
hold us accountable.

“But if anyone hurts someone who is inside the house with you, it will be our
fault. And you can hold us accountable.

20“Don’t tell anyone what we’re doing. If you do, we won’t have to keep the
promise you asked us to make.”

21“I agree,” Rahab replied. “I’ll do as you say.” So she sent them away, and
they left. Then she tied the bright red rope in the window.

22When the spies left, they went up into the hills. They stayed there for three
days. By that time the men who were chasing them had searched all along the
road. They couldn’t find them. So they returned.

23Then the two spies started back. They went down out of the hills. They
went across the Jordan River. They came to Joshua, the son of Nun. They told
him everything that had happened to them. 24They said, “We’re sure the LORD
has given the whole land over to us. All of the people there are weak with fear
because of us.”

Israel Goes Across the Jordan River

Joshua 3

1Early one morning Joshua and all of the people of Israel started out from
Shittim. They went down to the Jordan River. They camped there before they
went across it.

2After three days the officers went all through the camp. 3They gave orders to
the people. They said, “Watch for the ark of the covenant of the LORD your
God. The priests, who are Levites, will be carrying it. When you see it, you
must move out from where you are and follow it. 4Then you will know which
way to go. You have never gone this way before. But don’t go near the ark.
Stay about 1,000 yards away from it.”

5Joshua spoke to the people. He said, “Set yourselves apart to the LORD.
Tomorrow he’ll do amazing things among you.”

6Joshua said to the priests, “Go and get the ark of the covenant. Walk on
ahead of the people.” So they went and got it. Then they walked on ahead of
them.

7The LORD said to Joshua, “Today I will begin to honor you in the eyes of all
of the people of Israel. Then they will know that I am with you, just as I was
with Moses. 8Speak to the priests who carry the ark of the covenant. Tell them,
‘When you reach the edge of the Jordan River, go into the water and stand
there.’ ”

9Joshua spoke to the people of Israel. He said, “Come here. Listen to what the
LORD your God is saying. 10You will soon know that the living God is among
you. You can be sure that he’ll drive out the people who are now living in the
land. He’ll do it to make room for you. He’ll drive out the Canaanites, Hittites,
Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites and Jebusites.

11“The ark will go into the Jordan River ahead of you. It’s the ark of the
covenant of the Lord of the whole earth.

12“Choose 12 men from the tribes of Israel. Choose one from each tribe.

13“The priests will carry the ark of the LORD. He’s the Lord of the whole

earth. As soon as the priests step into the Jordan, it will stop flowing. The water that's coming down the river will pile up in one place. That's how you will know that the living God is among you."

14So the people took their tents down. They prepared to go across the Jordan River. The priests who were carrying the ark of the covenant went ahead of them.

15The water of the Jordan was going over its banks. It always does that at the time the crops are being gathered. The priests came to the river. Their feet touched the water's edge. 16Right away the water that was coming down the river stopped flowing. It piled up far away at a town called Adam near Zarethan. The water that was flowing down to the Dead Sea was completely cut off. So the people went across the Jordan River opposite Jericho.

17The priests carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD. They stood firm on dry ground in the middle of the river. They stayed there until the whole nation of Israel had gone across on dry ground.

Joshua 4

[1]After the whole nation had gone across the Jordan River, the LORD spoke to Joshua. He said, [2]"Choose 12 men from among the people. Choose one from each tribe. [3]Tell them to get 12 stones from the middle of the river. They must pick them up from right where the priests stood. They must carry the stones over with all of you. And they must put them down at the place where you will stay tonight."

[4]So Joshua called together the 12 men he had appointed from among the people of Israel. There was one man from each tribe. [5]He said to them, "Go back to the middle of the Jordan River. Go to where the ark of the LORD your God is. Each one of you must pick up a stone. You must carry it on your shoulder. There will be as many stones as there are tribes in Israel.

[6]"The stones will serve as a reminder to you. In days to come, your children will ask you, 'What do these stones mean?' [7]Tell them that the LORD cut off the flow of water in the Jordan River. Tell them its water stopped flowing when the ark of the covenant of the LORD went across. The stones will always remind the Israelites of what happened there."

[8]So the people of Israel did as Joshua commanded them. They took 12 stones from the middle of the Jordan River. There was one stone for each of the tribes of Israel. It was just as the LORD had told Joshua. The people carried the stones with them to their camp. There they put them down.

[9]Joshua piled up the 12 stones that had been in the middle of the river. They had been right where the priests who carried the ark of the covenant had stood. And they are still there to this very day.

[10]The priests who carried the ark remained standing in the middle of the Jordan River. They stayed there until the people had done everything the LORD had commanded Joshua. It was just as Moses had directed Joshua. All of the people went across quickly. [11]As soon as they did, the ark of the LORD and the priests also went across to the other side. The people were watching them.

[12]Among the people who went across the river were men from the tribes of Reuben and Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh. The men were armed. They went across ahead of the rest of the people of Israel. It was just as Moses had

directed them. [13]There were about 40,000 of them. All of them were ready for battle. They went across in front of the ark of the LORD. They went to the flatlands around Jericho. They were prepared to go to war.

[14]That day the LORD honored Joshua in the eyes of all of the people of Israel. They had respect for Joshua as long as he lived. They respected him just as much as they had respected Moses.

[15]Then the LORD spoke to Joshua. He said, [16]"Command the priests to come up out of the Jordan River. They are carrying the ark where the tablets of the covenant are kept."

[17]So Joshua gave a command to the priests. He said, "Come up out of the Jordan River."

[18]Then the priests came up out of the river. They were carrying the ark of the covenant of the LORD. As soon as they stepped out on dry ground, the water of the Jordan began to flow again. It went over its banks, just as it had done before.

[19]On the tenth day of the first month the people went up out of the Jordan River. They camped at Gilgal on the eastern border of Jericho.

[20]Joshua set up the 12 stones at Gilgal. They were the ones the people had taken out of the Jordan.

[21]Then he spoke to the people of Israel. He said, "In days to come, your children after you will ask their parents, 'What do these stones mean?' [22]Their parents must tell them, 'Israel went across the Jordan River on dry ground.' [23]The LORD your God dried up the Jordan for you until you had gone across it. He did to the Jordan River the same thing he had done to the Red Sea. He dried up the Red Sea ahead of us until we had gone across it. [24]He did it so that all of the nations on earth would know that he is powerful. He did it so that you would always have respect for the LORD your God."

Joshua Circumcises the Men of Israel

Joshua 5

[1]All of the Amorite and Canaanite kings heard how the LORD had dried up the Jordan River. They heard how he had dried it up for the people of Israel until they had gone across it. The Amorite kings lived west of the Jordan. The kings of Canaan lived along the Mediterranean Sea.

When all of those kings heard what the LORD had done, their hearts melted away in fear. They weren't brave enough to face the people of Israel anymore.

[2]At that time the LORD spoke to Joshua. He said, "Make knives out of hard stone. Circumcise the men of Israel."

[3]So Joshua made knives out of hard stone. Then he circumcised the men of Israel at Gibeath Haaraloth.

[4]Here is why Joshua circumcised them. All of the men who came out of Egypt had died. They died while they were going through the Sinai Desert after they had left Egypt. They were the men who were old enough to serve in the army. [5]All of the men who came out had been circumcised. But all of the men who were born in the desert during the journey from Egypt hadn't been circumcised.

[6]The people of Israel had moved around in the desert for 40 years. By the end of that time all of the men who were old enough to serve in the army when they left Egypt had died. That's because they hadn't obeyed the LORD. The LORD had taken an oath. He had told them they wouldn't see the land. It's the land he had promised with an oath to their people to give us. It's a land that has plenty of milk and honey.

[7]Because they hadn't obeyed him, he raised up their sons to take their place. They were the ones Joshua circumcised. They hadn't been circumcised yet. That's because no one had circumcised them during the journey. [8]So Joshua circumcised all of those men. The whole nation remained in the camp until the men were healed.

[9]Then the LORD spoke to Joshua. He said, "Today I have taken away from you the shame of being laughed at by Egypt." That's why the place where the men

were circumcised has been called Gilgal to this very day.

10The people of Israel celebrated the Passover Feast. They observed it on the evening of the 14th day of the month. They did it while they were camped at Gilgal on the flatlands around Jericho. 11The day after the Passover, they ate some of the food that was grown in the land. On that very day they ate grain that had been cooked. They also ate bread that was made without yeast. 12The manna stopped coming down the day after they ate the food that was grown in the land. The people of Israel didn't have manna anymore. Instead, that year they ate food that was grown in Canaan.

Israel Captures Jericho

13When Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him. The man was holding a sword. He was ready for battle. Joshua went up to him. He asked, "Are you on our side? Or are you on the side of our enemies?"

14"I am not on either side," he replied. "I have come as the commander of the LORD's army." Then Joshua fell with his face to the ground. He asked the man, "What message does my Lord have for me?"

15The commander of the LORD's army replied, "Take off your sandals. The place you are standing on is holy ground." So Joshua took them off.

Joshua 6

[1]The gates of Jericho were shut tight and guarded closely because of the
people of Israel. No one went out. No one came in.

[2]Then the LORD spoke to Joshua. He said, “I have handed Jericho over to you.
I have also handed its king and its fighting men over to you.

[3]“March around the city once with all of your fighting men. In fact, do it for
six days. [4]Have seven priests get trumpets that are made out of rams’ horns.
They must carry them in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the
city seven times. Have the priests blow the trumpets as you march.

[5]“You will hear them blow a long blast on the trumpets. When you do, have
all of the men give a loud shout. The wall of the city will fall down. Then the
whole army will go up to the city. Every man will go straight in.”

[6]So Joshua, the son of Nun, called for the priests. He said to them, “Go and
get the ark of the covenant of the LORD. I want seven of you to carry trumpets
in front of it.” [7]He gave an order to the men. He said, “Move out! March
around the city. Some of the fighting men must march in front of the ark of the
LORD.”

[8]When Joshua had spoken to the men, the seven priests went forward. They
were carrying the seven trumpets as they marched in front of the ark of the
LORD. They were blowing the trumpets. The ark of the LORD’s covenant was
carried behind the priests. [9]Some of the fighting men marched ahead of the
priests who were blowing the trumpets. The others followed behind the ark and
guarded all of them. That whole time the priests were blowing the trumpets.

[10]But Joshua had given an order to the fighting men. He had said, “Don’t
give a war cry. Don’t raise your voices. Don’t say a word until the day I tell
you to shout. Then shout!”

[11]So he had the ark of the LORD carried around the city once. Then the men
returned to camp. They spent the night there.

[12]Joshua got up early the next morning. The priests went and got the ark of
the LORD. [13]The seven priests who were carrying the seven trumpets started out.
They marched in front of the ark of the LORD. They blew the trumpets. Some of
the fighting men marched ahead of them. The others followed behind the ark

and guarded all of them. The priests kept blowing the trumpets.

14On the second day they marched around the city once. Then the men returned to camp. They did all of those things for six days.

15On the seventh day, they got up at sunrise. They marched around the city, just as they had done before. But on that day they went around it seven times.

16On the seventh time around, the priests blew a long blast on the trumpets.

Then Joshua gave a command to the men. He said, “Shout! The LORD has given you the city! 17The city and everything that is in it must be set apart to the LORD in a special way to be destroyed. But the prostitute Rahab and all those who are with her in her house must be spared. That’s because she hid the spies we sent.

18“But keep away from the things that have been set apart to the LORD. If you take any of them, you will be destroyed. And you will bring trouble on the camp of Israel. You will cause it to be destroyed. 19All of the silver and gold is holy. It is set apart to the LORD. So are all of the articles that are made out of bronze and iron. All of those things must be added to the treasures that are kept in the LORD’s house.”

20The priests blew the trumpets. As soon as the fighting men heard the sound, they gave a loud shout. Then the wall fell down. Every man charged straight in. So they took the city. 21They set it apart to the LORD in a special way to be destroyed. They destroyed every living thing in it with their swords. They killed men and women. They wiped out young people and old people. They destroyed cattle, sheep and donkeys.

22Then Joshua spoke to the two men who had gone in to check out the land. He said, “Go into the prostitute’s house. Bring her out. Also bring out everyone who is with her. That’s what you promised her you would do when you took an oath.”

23So the young men who had checked out the land went into Rahab’s house. They brought her out along with her parents and brothers. They brought out everyone else who was there with her. They put them in a place that was outside the camp of Israel.

24Then they burned the whole city and everything that was in it. But they added the silver and gold to the treasures that were kept in the LORD’s house. They also put there the articles that were made out of bronze and iron.

[25]But Joshua spared the prostitute Rahab. He spared her family. He also spared everyone else who was in the house with her. He did it because she hid the spies he had sent to Jericho. Rahab lives among the people of Israel to this very day.

[26]At that time Joshua took an oath and called down a curse. He said, “May the man who tries to rebuild this city of Jericho be under the LORD’s curse.

> “If he lays its foundations,
> it will cost the life of his oldest son.
> If he sets up its gates,
> it will cost the life of his youngest son.”

[27]So the LORD was with Joshua. And Joshua became famous everywhere in the land.

Achan Sins Against the LORD

Joshua 7

[1]But the people of Israel weren't faithful to the LORD. They didn't do what they were told to do with the things that had been set apart to him in a special way to be destroyed.

Achan had taken some of those things. So the LORD's anger burned against Israel. Achan was the son of Carmi. Carmi was the son of Zimri. And Zimri was the son of Zerah. They were from the tribe of Judah.

[2]Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai. Ai is near Beth Aven east of Bethel. Joshua told the men, "Go up and check out the area around Ai." So the men went up and checked it out.

[3]Then they returned to Joshua. They said, "The whole army doesn't have to go up and attack Ai. Send only two or three thousand men. They can take the city. Don't make the whole army go up there. Ai only has a few men."

[4]So only about 3,000 men went up. But the men of Ai drove them away. [5]They chased the men of Israel from the city gate all the way to Shebarim. They killed about 36 of them on the way down.

So the hearts of the people of Israel melted away in fear.

[6]Joshua and the elders of Israel became sad. Joshua tore his clothes. He fell in front of the ark of the LORD with his face to the ground. He remained there until evening. The elders did the same thing. They also sprinkled dust on their heads.

[7]Joshua said, "LORD and King, why did you ever bring these people across the Jordan River? Did you want to hand us over to the Amorites? Did you want them to destroy us? I wish we had been content to stay on the other side of the Jordan!

[8]"Lord, our enemies have driven us away. What can I say? [9]The people of Canaan will hear about it. So will everyone else in the country. They will surround us. They'll wipe our name from the face of the earth. Then what will you do when people don't honor your great name anymore?"

10The LORD said to Joshua, “Get up! What are you doing down there on your face?

11“Israel has sinned. I made a covenant with them. I commanded them to keep it. But they have broken it. They have taken some of the things that had been set apart to me in a special way to be destroyed. They have stolen. They have lied. They have taken the things they stole and have put them with their own things.

12“That is why the men of Israel can’t stand up against their enemies. They turn their backs and run. It is because I have decided to let them be destroyed. You must destroy the things you took that had been set apart to me. If you do not, I will not be with you anymore.

13“Go. Set the people apart. Tell them, ‘Make yourselves pure. Get ready for tomorrow. Here is what the LORD, the God of Israel, wants you to do. He says, “People of Israel, you have kept some of the things that had been set apart to me in a special way to be destroyed. You can’t stand up against your enemies until you get rid of those things.”

14“ ‘In the morning, come forward tribe by tribe. The tribe the LORD chooses will come forward group by group. The group the LORD chooses will come forward family by family. And the men in the family the LORD chooses will come forward one by one.

15“ ‘Anyone who is caught with the things that had been set apart to the LORD will be destroyed by fire. Everything that belongs to that person will also be destroyed. He has broken the LORD’s covenant. He has done a very terrible thing in Israel!’ ”

16Early the next morning Joshua had Israel come forward by tribes. The tribe of Judah was picked. 17The groups of Judah came forward. Joshua picked the group of Zerah. He had the group of Zerah come forward by families. The family of Zimri was picked. 18He had their men come forward one by one. Achan was picked. Achan was the son of Carmi. Carmi was the son of Zimri. And Zimri was the son of Zerah. Zerah was from the tribe of Judah.

19Joshua spoke to Achan. He said, “My son, the LORD is the God of Israel. So give him glory by telling the truth! Give him praise by admitting you have sinned! Tell me what you have done. Don’t hide it from me.”

20Achan replied, “It’s true! I’ve sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel. Here is what I’ve done. 21I saw a beautiful robe from Babylonia among the

things we had taken. I saw five pounds of silver. And I saw a gold bar that weighed 20 ounces. I wanted them, so I took them. I hid them in the ground inside my tent. The silver is on the bottom."

[22]So Joshua sent some messengers. They ran to Achan's tent. And there was everything, hidden in his tent! The silver was on the bottom. [23]They brought the things out of the tent. They took them to Joshua and all of the people of Israel. And they spread them out in the sight of the LORD.

[24]Then Joshua and all of the people grabbed hold of Achan, the son of Zerah. They took the silver, the robe and the gold bar. They took Achan's sons and daughters. They took his cattle, donkeys and sheep. They also took his tent and everything he had. They took all of it to the Valley of Achor.

[25]Joshua said to Achan, "Why have you brought this trouble on us? The LORD will bring trouble on you today."

Then all of the people killed Achan by throwing stones at him. They also killed the rest of his family with stones. They burned all of them up. [26]They placed a large pile of rocks on top of Achan's body. The place has been called the Valley of Achor ever since. That pile is still there to this very day.

After the people killed Achan, the LORD turned his burning anger away from them.

Israel Destroys Ai

Joshua 8

[1]Then the LORD spoke to Joshua. He said, “Do not be afraid. Do not lose hope. Go up and attack Ai. Take the whole army with you. I have handed the king of Ai over to you. I have given you his people, his city and his land.

[2]“Remember what you did to Jericho and its king. You will do the same thing to Ai and its king. But this time you can keep for yourselves the livestock and everything else you take from them. Have some of your fighting men hide behind the city and take them by surprise.”

[3]So Joshua and the whole army moved out to attack Ai. He chose 30,000 of his best fighting men. He sent them out at night. [4]He gave them orders. He said, “Listen carefully to what I’m saying. You must hide behind the city. Don’t go very far away from it. All of you must be ready to attack it.

[5]“I and all of the men who are with me will go up to the city. The men of Ai will come out to fight against us, just as they did before. Then we’ll run away from them. [6]They’ll chase us until we’ve drawn them away from the city. They’ll say, ‘They are running away from us, just as they did before.’

“When we run away from them, [7]come out of your hiding place. Take over the city. The LORD your God will hand it over to you. [8]When you have taken it, set it on fire. Do what the LORD has commanded. Make sure you obey my orders.”

[9]Then Joshua sent them away. They went to the place where they had planned to hide. They hid in a place west of Ai. It was between Bethel and Ai. But Joshua spent that night with his men.

[10]Early the next morning Joshua brought his men together. He and the leaders of Israel marched in front of them to Ai. [11]The whole army that was with him marched up to the city. They stopped in front of it. They set up camp north of Ai. There was a valley between them and the city.

[12]Joshua had chosen about 5,000 soldiers. He had ordered them to hide in a place west of Ai. It was between Bethel and Ai.

[13]The men took up their battle positions. All of the men who were in the camp that was north of the city took up their positions. So did those who were supposed to hide west of the city. That night Joshua went into the valley.

[14]The king of Ai saw what the army of Israel was doing. So he and all of his men hurried out of the city early in the morning. They marched out to meet Israel in battle. They went to a place that looked out over the Arabah Valley. The king didn’t know that some of Israel’s fighting men were hiding behind the city.

[15]Joshua and all of his men let the men of Ai drive them back. The men of Israel ran away toward the desert.

[16]All of the men of Ai were called out to chase them. They chased Joshua. So they were drawn away from the city. [17]Not even one man remained in Ai or Bethel. All of them went out to chase Israel. When they did, they left the city wide open.

[18]Then the LORD spoke to Joshua. He said, “Point the javelin that is in your hand at Ai. I will hand the city over to you.” So Joshua pointed his javelin at Ai.

[19]As soon as he did, the men who were hiding behind the city got up quickly. They came out of their hiding places and rushed forward. They entered the city and captured it. They quickly set it on fire.

[20]The men of Ai looked back. They saw smoke rising up from the city into the sky. But they couldn’t escape in any direction.

The men of Israel had been running away toward the desert. But now they turned around to face those who were chasing them. [21]Joshua and all of his men saw that the men who had been hiding behind the city had captured it. They also saw the smoke that was going up from it. So they turned around and attacked the men of Ai. [22]The men who had set Ai on fire came out of the city. They also fought against the men of Ai.

So the men of Ai were caught in the middle. The army of Israel was on both sides of them. Israel struck them down. They didn’t let anyone remain alive or get away. [23]But they took the king of Ai alive. They brought him to Joshua.

[24]Israel finished killing all of the men of Ai. They destroyed them in the fields and in the desert where they had chased them. They struck every one of them down with their swords. Then all of the men of Israel returned to Ai. And they killed those who were left in it.

25 The total number of men and women they killed that day was 12,000. They
put to death all of the people of Ai.

26 Joshua kept the javelin that was in his hand pointed at Ai. He didn't lower
his hand until he and his men had totally destroyed everyone who lived there.

27 But this time Israel kept for themselves the livestock and everything else
they had taken from the city. The LORD had directed Joshua to let them do it.

28 So Joshua burned Ai down. He tore it down so it could never be built again.
It has been deserted to this very day.

29 Joshua killed the king of Ai. He stuck a pole through the body. Then he set
it up where people could see it. He left it there until evening. At sunset, Joshua
ordered his men to remove the body from the pole. He told them to throw the
body down at the entrance of the city gate. They put a large pile of rocks over
the body. That pile is still there to this very day.

Joshua Reads the Scroll of the Law to the People

30 Joshua built an altar to honor the LORD, the God of Israel. He built it on
Mount Ebal. 31 Moses, the servant of the LORD, had commanded the people of
Israel to do that. Joshua built the altar in keeping with what is written in the
Scroll of the Law of Moses. He built an altar out of stones that iron tools had
never touched. Then the people offered on the altar burnt offerings to the LORD.
They also sacrificed friendship offerings on it.

32 Joshua copied the written law of Moses on stones. He did it while all of the
people of Israel were watching. 33 They were standing on both sides of the ark
of the covenant of the LORD. All of the people of Israel, including outsiders and
citizens, were there. Israel's elders, officials and judges were also there. All of
them faced the priests, who were Levites. They were carrying the ark. Half of
the people stood in front of Mount Gerizim. The other half stood in front of
Mount Ebal. Moses, the servant of the LORD, had earlier told them to do it. It
was when he had given directions to bless the people of Israel.

34 Then Joshua read all of the words of the law out loud. He read the blessings
and the curses. He read them in keeping with what is written in the Scroll of
the Law. 35 Joshua read every word Moses had commanded. He read them to
the whole community of Israel. That included the women and children. It also

included the outsiders who were living among them.

The People of Gibeon Trick Israel

Joshua 9

[1]All of the kings who ruled west of the Jordan River heard about the battles Israel had won. That included the kings who ruled in the central hill country and the western hills. It also included those who ruled along the entire coast of the Mediterranean Sea all the way to Lebanon. They were the kings of the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. [2]They brought their armies together to fight against Joshua and Israel.

[3]The people of Gibeon heard about what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai. [4]So they decided to trick the people of Israel. They packed supplies as if they were going on a long trip. They loaded their donkeys with old sacks and old wineskins. The wineskins were cracked but had been mended. [5]The men put worn-out sandals on their feet. The sandals had been patched. The men also wore old clothes. All of the bread they took along was dry and moldy.

[6]They went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal. They spoke to him and the men of Israel. They said, “We’ve come from a country that’s far away. Make a peace treaty with us.”

[7]The men of Israel spoke to the Hivites. They said, “But suppose you live close to us. If you do, we can’t make a peace treaty with you.”

[8]“We’ll serve you,” they said to Joshua.

But Joshua asked, “Who are you? Where do you come from?”

[9]They answered, “We’ve come from a country that’s very far away. We’ve come because the LORD your God is famous. We’ve heard reports about him. We’ve heard about everything he did in Egypt.

[10]“We’ve heard about everything he did to Sihon and Og. They were the two kings of the Amorites. They ruled east of the Jordan River. Sihon was the king of Heshbon. Og was the king of Bashan. He ruled in Ashtaroth.

[11]“Our elders and all of the people who are living in our country spoke to us. They said, ‘Take supplies for your trip. Go and meet the people of Israel. Say to them, “We’ll serve you. Make a peace treaty with us.” ’

12“Look at our bread. It was warm when we packed it. We packed it at home
on the day we left to come and see you. But look at how dry and moldy it is
now. 13When we filled these wineskins, they were new. But look at how
cracked they are now. And our clothes and sandals are worn out because we’ve
traveled so far.”

14The men of Israel looked over the supplies those men had brought. But they
didn’t ask the LORD what they should do.

15Joshua made a peace treaty with the men who had come. He agreed to let
them live. The leaders of the community took an oath to show that they agreed
with the treaty.

16The people of Israel made a peace treaty with the people of Gibeon. But
three days later they heard that the people of Gibeon lived close to them. 17So
the people of Israel started out to go to the cities of those men. On the third day
they came to Gibeon, Kephirah, Beeroth and Kiriath Jearim.

18But they didn’t attack those cities. That’s because the leaders of the
community had taken an oath and made a peace treaty with them. They had
taken the oath in the name of the LORD, the God of Israel.

The whole community told the leaders they weren’t happy with them.

19But all of the leaders answered, “We’ve made a peace treaty with them.
We’ve taken an oath in the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. So we can’t
touch them now.

20“But here is what we’ll do to them. We’ll let them live. Then the LORD’s
anger won’t fall on us because we didn’t keep the oath we took.” 21They
continued, “Let them live. But let them cut wood and carry water for the whole
community.” So the leaders kept their promise to them.

22Joshua sent for the people of Gibeon. He said, “Why did you trick us? You
said, ‘We live far away from you.’ But in fact you live close to us. 23So now
you are under a curse. You will always serve us. You will always cut wood and
carry water for the house of my God.”

24They answered Joshua, “We were clearly told what the LORD your God had
commanded his servant Moses to do. He commanded him to give you the
whole land. He also ordered him to wipe out all of its people to make room for
you. So we were afraid you would kill us. That’s why we tricked you. 25We are
now in your hands. Do to us what you think is good and right.”

[26]So Joshua saved the people of Gibeon. He didn’t let the people of Israel kill them. [27]That day he made them cut wood and carry water. They had to serve the community of Israel. They also had to serve at the altar of the LORD at the place where he would choose to put it. And they still serve the people of Israel to this very day.

The Sun Stands Still

Joshua 10

1 Adoni-Zedek was the king of Jerusalem. He heard that Joshua had taken Ai.
He found out that the city had been set apart to the LORD in a special way to be
destroyed. He heard that Joshua had done to Ai and its king the same thing he
had done to Jericho and its king.

Adoni-Zedek heard that the people of Gibeon had made a peace treaty with
Israel. He also found out that they were living among the people of Israel. 2 The
things he heard alarmed him and his people very much. That's because Gibeon
was an important city. It was like one of the royal cities. It was larger than Ai.
All of its men were good soldiers.

3 So Adoni-Zedek, the king of Jerusalem, made an appeal to Hoham, the king
of Hebron. He appealed to Piram, the king of Jarmuth. He appealed to Japhia,
the king of Lachish. He also made an appeal to Debir, the king of Eglon.
4 "Come up and help me attack Gibeon," he said. "Its people have made peace
with Joshua and the people of Israel."

5 The kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon gathered their
armies together. Those five Amorite kings moved all of their troops into
position to fight against Gibeon. Then they attacked it.

6 Joshua was in the camp at Gilgal. The people of Gibeon sent a message to
him there. It said, "Don't desert us. We serve you. Come up to us quickly! Save
us! Help us! All of the Amorite kings from the central hill country have
gathered their armies together to fight against us."

7 So Joshua marched up from Gilgal with his whole army. The army included
all of his best fighting men.

8 The LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid of them. I have handed them
over to you. Not one of them will be able to fight against you and win."

9 Joshua marched all night from Gilgal. He took the Amorite armies by
surprise. 10 The LORD threw them into a panic as Israel marched toward them.
Then Israel won a great battle over them at Gibeon. They chased them along

the road that goes up to Beth Horon. They struck them down all the way to Azekah and Makkedah.

11The Amorites ran away as Israel marched toward them. They ran down the road from Beth Horon to Azekah. As they ran, the LORD threw large hailstones down on them from the sky. The hailstones killed more of them than the swords of the men of Israel did.

12So the LORD gave the Amorites over to Israel. On that day Joshua spoke to the LORD while the people of Israel were listening. He said,

"Sun, stand still over Gibeon.
Moon, stand still over the Valley of Aijalon."
13So the sun stood still.
The moon stopped.
They didn't move again until the nation won the battle over its enemies.

You can read about it in the Book of Jashar.

The sun stopped in the middle of the sky. It didn't go down for about a full day. 14There has never been a day like it before or since. It was a day when the LORD listened to a mere man. You can be sure that the LORD was fighting for Israel!

15Joshua and his whole army returned to the camp at Gilgal.

Joshua Kills the Five Amorite Kings

16The five Amorite kings had run away. They had hidden in the cave at Makkedah.

17Joshua was told that the five kings had been found. He was also told that they were hiding in the cave at Makkedah. 18He said, "Roll some large rocks up to the opening of the cave. Put some men there to guard it. 19But keep on going! Chase your enemies. Attack them from behind. Don't let them get back to their cities. The LORD your God has handed them over to you."

20So Joshua and the men of Israel completely destroyed them. They killed

almost every one of them. But a few escaped. They went back to their cities that had high walls around them.

21Then Israel's whole army returned safely to Joshua. He was in the camp at Makkedah. No one in the land dared to say anything against the people of Israel.

22Joshua said, "Open up the cave. Bring those five kings out to me." 23So Joshua's men brought the five kings out of the cave. They were the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon.

24The men brought them to Joshua. Then he sent for all of the men of Israel. He spoke to the army commanders who had come with him. He said, "Come here. Put your feet on the necks of these kings." So they came forward and placed their feet on the necks of the kings.

25Joshua said to them, "Don't be afraid. Don't lose hope. Be strong and brave. This is what the LORD will do to all of the enemies you are going to fight."

26Joshua struck the five kings down and killed them. He stuck a pole through each of their bodies. Then he set the poles up where people could see the bodies. He left them there until evening.

27At sunset Joshua ordered his men to take the bodies down. So they took them down and threw them into the cave where the kings had been hiding. They placed large rocks at the opening of the cave. And the rocks are still there to this very day.

28That day Joshua took Makkedah. He killed its people and their king with the sword. He totally destroyed everyone in it. He didn't leave anyone alive. He did to the king of Makkedah the same thing he had done to the king of Jericho.

The Campaign Against the Cities in the South

29Joshua moved on from Makkedah to Libnah. Israel's whole army went with him. They attacked Libnah. 30The LORD also handed that city and its king over to Israel. Joshua destroyed the city. He and his men killed everyone in it with their swords. He didn't leave anyone alive there. He did to its king the same thing he had done to the king of Jericho.

[31]Joshua moved on from Libnah to Lachish. Israel's whole army went with him. The men took up their battle positions. Then Joshua attacked Lachish. [32]The LORD handed it over to Israel. Joshua took the city on the second day of the battle. He destroyed the city. He and his men killed everyone in it with their swords. He had done the same thing to Libnah.

[33]While all of that was happening, Horam had come up to help Lachish. He was the king of Gezer. But Joshua won the battle over him and his army. No one was left alive.

[34]Joshua moved on from Lachish to Eglon. Israel's whole army went with him. They took up their battle positions. Then they attacked Eglon. [35]They captured it that same day. They totally destroyed everyone in it with their swords. They had done the same thing to Lachish.

[36]Joshua went up from Eglon to Hebron. Israel's whole army went with him. Then they attacked Hebron. [37]They took the city. They destroyed it and its villages. They killed all of its people and their king with their swords. They didn't leave anyone alive. They totally destroyed the city and everyone in it. They had done the same thing at Eglon.

[38]Joshua turned back and attacked Debir. Israel's whole army went with him. [39]They took the city, its king and its villages. They totally destroyed everyone in Debir with their swords. They didn't leave anyone alive. They did to Debir and its king the same thing they had done to Libnah and its king. They had also done the same thing to Hebron.

[40]So Joshua brought the whole area under his control. That included the central hill country and the Negev Desert. It included the western hills and the mountain slopes. It also included all of the kings in that whole area. Joshua didn't leave anyone alive. He totally destroyed everyone who breathed. He did just as the LORD, the God of Israel, had commanded.

[41]Joshua brought everyone from Kadesh Barnea to Gaza under his control. He also brought everyone from the whole area of Goshen to Gibeon under his control. [42]He won the battle over all of those kings and their lands. He did it in one campaign. That's because the LORD, the God of Israel, fought for Israel.

[43]Then Joshua returned to the camp at Gilgal. Israel's whole army went with him.

The Campaign Against the Cities in the North

Joshua 11

[1]Jabin was the king of Hazor. He heard about the battles Israel had won. So he sent a message to Jobab. Jobab was the king of Madon. Jabin sent the same message to the kings of Shimron and Acshaph. [2]He also sent it to a lot of other kings. Some ruled in the mountains in the north. Some ruled in the Arabah Valley south of Kinnereth. Others ruled in the western hills. Still others ruled in Naphoth Dor in the west. [3]Jabin sent the same message to the people of east Canaan and west Canaan. He sent it to the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites and Jebusites. They lived in the central hill country. He also sent it to the Hivites who lived below Mount Hermon in the area of Mizpah.

[4]Those kings marched out with all of their troops. They had a large number of horses and chariots. It was a huge army. The fighting men were as many as the grains of sand on the seashore. [5]All of those kings gathered their armies together to fight against Israel. They set up camp together at the Waters of Merom.

[6]The LORD spoke to Joshua. He said, “Do not be afraid of them. By this time tomorrow I will hand all of them over to Israel. All of them will be killed. You must cut the legs of their horses. You must burn up their chariots.”

[7]So Joshua and his whole army attacked them suddenly. They fought against them at the Waters of Merom. [8]The LORD handed them over to Israel. Israel won the battle over them. They hunted them down all the way to Greater Sidon. They chased them to Misrephoth Maim. They chased them to the Valley of Mizpah in the east. Not one of them was left alive.

[9]Joshua did to them what the LORD had directed him to do. He cut the legs of their horses. He burned up their chariots.

[10]At that time Joshua turned back. He captured Hazor. He killed its king with his sword. Hazor was the most important city in all of those kingdoms. [11]The army of Israel killed everyone in Hazor with their swords. Its people had been set apart to the LORD in a special way to be destroyed. Israel’s army didn’t spare anything that breathed. Then Joshua burned up the city.

12 Joshua took all of those royal cities and their kings. He and his men killed
everyone in those cities with their swords. He totally destroyed them. He did
just as Moses, the servant of the LORD, had commanded. 13 Many cities were
built on top of earlier cities that had been destroyed. Israel didn't burn up any
of those except Hazor. Joshua burned it up.

14 The army of Israel kept for themselves the livestock and everything else
they took from those cities. But they killed all of the people with their swords.
They completely destroyed them. They didn't spare anyone who breathed.

15 The LORD had commanded his servant Moses to do all of those things.
Moses had passed that command on to Joshua. And Joshua carried it out. He
did everything the LORD had commanded Moses.

16 So Joshua took the whole land. He took the central hill country and the
whole Negev Desert. He took the whole area of Goshen. He took the western
hills. He took the Arabah Valley. He took the mountains of Israel and the hills
around them. 17 He took the area that begins at Mount Halak, which rises
toward Seir. The area ends at Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon below Mount
Hermon.

Joshua captured the kings who ruled over that whole land. He struck them
down and killed them. 18 He fought battles against all of those kings for a long
time.

19 Only the Hivites who lived in Gibeon made a peace treaty with the people
of Israel. No other city made a treaty with them. So Israel captured all of those
cities in battle. 20 The LORD himself made the hearts of their people stubborn.
He made them go to war against Israel so he could totally destroy them. He
wanted to wipe them out. He didn't show them any mercy. The LORD had
commanded Moses to destroy the people of Canaan.

21 At that time Joshua went and destroyed the Anakites. They lived all
through the hill country of Judah and Israel. They lived in Hebron, Debir and
Anab. Joshua totally destroyed the Anakites and their towns. 22 There weren't
any Anakites left alive in Israel's territory. But a few were left alive in Gaza,
Gath and Ashdod.

23 So Joshua took the whole land, just as the LORD had directed Moses. Joshua
gave the land to Israel as their very own. He divided it up and gave each tribe
its share.

Then the land had peace and rest.

Israel Wins the Battle Over the Kings in the Land

Joshua 12

[1]The people of Israel took over the territory east of the Jordan River. The land they took reached from the Arnon River valley to Mount Hermon. It included the whole east side of the Arabah Valley. Israel won the battle over the kings of that whole territory. Here are the lands Israel took from the kings they won the battle over.

[2]They took the land of Sihon. He was the king of the Amorites.

He ruled in Heshbon. The land he ruled over begins at Aroer. Aroer is on the rim of the Arnon River valley. He ruled from the middle of the valley to the Jabbok River. The Jabbok is the border of Ammon. Sihon's territory included half of Gilead. [3]He also ruled over the east side of the Arabah Valley. That land begins at the Sea of Galilee. It goes to the Dead Sea and over to Beth Jeshimoth. Then it goes south, below the slopes of Pisgah.

[4]Israel also took the territory of Og. He was the king of Bashan.

He was one of the last of the Rephaites. He ruled in Ashtaroth and Edrei. [5]He ruled over Mount Hermon, Salecah and the whole land of Bashan. He ruled all the way to the border of Geshur and Maacah. He ruled over half of Gilead. His land reached the border of Sihon. Sihon was the king of Heshbon.

[6]Moses was the servant of the LORD. Moses and the people of Israel won the battle over those two kings. He gave their land to the tribes of Reuben and Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh. He gave it to them as their share.

[7]Joshua and the people of Israel won the battle over the kings who ruled west of the Jordan River. The lands of the kings reached from Baal Gad in the

Valley of Lebanon to Mount Halak, which rises toward Seir.

Joshua gave their lands to the tribes of Israel as their very own. He divided them up and gave each tribe its share. [8]Those lands included the central hill country, the western hills and the Arabah Valley. They also included the mountain slopes, the Desert of Judah and the Negev Desert. Those lands belonged to the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. Here are the kings Israel won the battle over.

[9]the king of Jericho one
the king of Ai, which is near Bethel one
[10]the king of Jerusalem one
the king of Hebron one
[11]the king of Jarmuth one
the king of Lachish one
[12]the king of Eglon one
the king of Gezer one
[13]the king of Debir one
the king of Geder one
[14]the king of Hormah one
the king of Arad one
[15]the king of Libnah one
the king of Adullam one
[16]the king of Makkedah one
the king of Bethel one
[17]the king of Tappuah one
the king of Hepher one
[18]the king of Aphek one
the king of Lasharon one
[19]the king of Madon one
the king of Hazor one
[20]the king of Shimron Meron one
the king of Acshaph one

[21]the king of Taanach one
the king of Megiddo one
[22]the king of Kedesh one
the king of Jokneam in Carmel one
[23]the king of Dor in Naphoth Dor one
the king of Goyim in Gilgal one
[24]the king of Tirzah one

The total number of kings was 31.

The Land That Remained to Be Taken Over

Joshua 13

1 Joshua was now very old. The LORD said to him, “You are very old. And
there are still very large areas of land that have not been taken over yet.

2 “Here is the land that remains to be taken over. It includes all of the areas of
Philistia and Geshur. 3 Those areas begin at the Shihor River in the eastern part
of Egypt. They go to the territory of Ekron in the north. All of that land is
considered as belonging to the people of Canaan. The land that remains to be
taken over includes the territory of the five rulers of Philistia. They rule over
Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekron. The Avvites 4 live south of them.
The rest of the land of Canaan that remains to be taken over reaches from Arah
all the way to Aphek. Arah belongs to the people of Sidon. The land that
remains to be taken over includes the area where the Amorites live. 5 It includes
the area where the people of Byblos live. It also includes all of Lebanon to the
east. It reaches from Baal Gad below Mount Hermon to Lebo Hamath.

6 “I myself will drive out all of the people who live in the mountain areas.
Those areas reach from Lebanon to Misrephoth Maim. They include the area
where all of the people of Sidon live. I myself will drive those people out to
make room for the people of Israel.

“Make sure you set that land apart for Israel. Give it to them as their share,
just as I have directed you. 7 Divide it up among the nine tribes and half of the
tribe of Manasseh. Give each tribe its share.”

Moses Had Given the Eastern Tribes Their Land

8 The other half of Manasseh’s tribe had already received the share of land
Moses had given them. Their share was east of the Jordan River. The tribes of
Reuben and Gad had already received their share too. Moses, the servant of the

LORD, had given it to them.

9That land starts at Aroer on the rim of the Arnon River valley. It includes the
town in the middle of the valley. It includes the high flatlands of Medeba all
the way to Dibon. 10It also includes all of the towns of Sihon, the king of the
Amorites. He had ruled in Heshbon. That area reaches to the border of
Ammon. 11It also includes Gilead. It includes the territory of Geshur and
Maacah. It includes Mount Hermon and the whole land of Bashan all the way
to Salecah.

12So it includes the entire kingdom of Og in Bashan. Og had ruled in
Ashtaroth and Edrei. He was one of the last of the Rephaites. Moses had won
the battle over Sihon and Og. He had taken over their land.

13But the people of Israel didn't drive out the people of Geshur and Maacah.
So they continue to live among the people of Israel to this very day.

14Moses hadn't given any share of the land to the tribe of Levi. That's
because the offerings that are made with fire are their share. Those offerings
are made to the LORD, the God of Israel. Moses gave the Levites what he had
promised them.

15Here is what Moses had given to the tribe of Reuben, family group by family
group.

16Their territory starts at Aroer on the rim of the Arnon River valley. It
includes the town in the middle of the valley. It includes all of the high
flatlands that are near Medeba. 17It includes Heshbon and all of its towns on
those flatlands. Those towns include Dibon, Bamoth Baal, Beth Baal Meon,
18Jahaz, Kedemoth and Mephaath. 19They include Kiriathaim, Sibmah and
Zereth Shahar on the hill in the valley. 20They also include Beth Peor, Beth
Jeshimoth and the slopes of Pisgah. 21All of those towns are on the high
flatlands.

The territory includes the whole kingdom of Sihon, the king of the Amorites.
He had ruled in Heshbon. Moses had won the battle over him and over the
chiefs of Midian. Those chiefs were Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur and Reba. They

were princes who helped Sihon fight against Israel. They lived in that country.
22The people of Israel killed many of them in battle. They also killed Balaam with a sword. He was the son of Beor. Balaam used magic to find out what was going to happen.

23The border of the tribe of Reuben was the bank of the Jordan River. All of those towns and their villages were given to the tribe of Reuben as their very own. Each family group received its share.

24Here is what Moses had given to the tribe of Gad, family group by family group.

25Their territory includes Jazer and all of the towns of Gilead. It includes half of the country of Ammon all the way to Aroer, which was near Rabbah.
26Their territory reaches from Heshbon to Ramath Mizpah and Betonim. It reaches from Mahanaim to the territory of Debir. 27In the valley their land includes Beth Haram, Beth Nimrah, Succoth and Zaphon. It also includes the rest of the kingdom of Sihon. He was the king of Heshbon. His kingdom included the east side of the Jordan River. It reached up to the south end of the Sea of Galilee. 28All of those towns and their villages were given to the tribe of Gad as their very own. Each family group received its share.

29Here is what Moses had given to half of the tribe of Manasseh, family group by family group. It’s what Moses had given to half of Manasseh’s family line.

30Their territory starts at Mahanaim. It includes the whole land of Bashan. That was the entire kingdom of Og, the king of Bashan. Manasseh’s territory includes all of the 60 towns of Jair in Bashan. 31It includes half of the land of Gilead. It also includes Ashtaroth and Edrei. They were the royal cities of Og in Bashan. That land was given to half of the family line of Makir. He was the son of Manasseh. Each family group received its share.

32Those were the shares of land Moses had given the eastern tribes when he was in the flatlands of Moab. The flatlands are across the Jordan River east of

Jericho. [33]But Moses hadn’t given any share to the tribe of Levi. The LORD, the God of Israel, is their share. Moses gave the Levites what he had promised them.

The Western Tribes Are Given Their Land

Joshua 14

[1]The rest of the tribes of Israel received their shares of land in Canaan. The priest Eleazar and Joshua, the son of Nun, decided what each of the tribes should receive. The leaders of the tribes helped them make those decisions.

[2]The shares of nine tribes and half of the tribe of Manasseh were decided by using lots. That's what the LORD had commanded through Moses.

[3]Moses had given two tribes and the other half of the tribe of Manasseh their shares east of the Jordan River. But Moses had not given the Levites a share among the other tribes. [4]Manasseh and Ephraim were the sons of Joseph. They had become two tribes. The Levites didn't receive any share of the land. They only received towns to live in and grasslands for their flocks and herds.

[5]So the people of Israel divided up the land, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Joshua Gives Hebron to Caleb

[6]The men of Judah approached Joshua at Gilgal. Caleb, the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite, spoke to Joshua. He said, "You know what the LORD said to Moses, the man of God. He spoke to him at Kadesh Barnea about you and me. [7]Moses, the servant of the LORD, sent me from Kadesh Barnea to check out the land. I was 40 years old at that time. I brought back an honest report to him. I told him exactly what I had seen. [8]Several other men of Israel went up with me. What they reported made the hearts of the people melt away in fear. But I followed the LORD my God with my whole heart.

[9]"So on that day Moses took an oath and made a promise to me. He said, 'The land your feet have walked on will be your share. It will be the share of your children forever. That's because you have followed the LORD my God with your whole heart.' (Deuteronomy 1:36)

[10]"The LORD has done just as he promised. He made the promise while Israel

was wandering around in the desert. That was 45 years ago. He has kept me alive all of this time. So here I am today, 85 years old! 11I'm still as strong today as I was the day Moses sent me out. I'm just as able to go out to battle now as I was then.

12"So give me this hill country. The LORD promised it to me that day. At that time you yourself heard that the Anakites were living there. You also heard that their cities were large and had high walls. But I'll drive them out, just as the LORD said I would. He will help me do it."

13Then Joshua blessed Caleb, the son of Jephunneh. He gave him Hebron as his share.

14So ever since that time Hebron has belonged to Caleb, the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite. That's because he followed the LORD, the God of Israel, with his whole heart.

15Hebron used to be called Kiriath Arba. It was named after Arba. He was the greatest man among the Anakites.

So the land had peace and rest.

Land Is Given to Judah

Joshua 15

[1]Land was given to the tribe of Judah, family group by family group. It reached down to the territory of Edom. It went as far south as the Desert of Zin.

[2]Judah's border on the south started from the bay at the south end of the Dead Sea. [3]It went across to the south of Scorpion Pass. It continued on to Zin. It went over to the south of Kadesh Barnea. Then it ran past Hezron up to Addar. It curved around to Karka. [4]It then went along to Azmon. There it joined the Wadi of Egypt and ended at the Mediterranean Sea. That was the southern border of Judah.

[5]The border on the east was the Dead Sea. It went north all the way to where the Jordan River enters the sea.

The border on the north started at the bay of the Dead Sea. That's where the Jordan River enters the sea. [6]From there it went up to Beth Hoglah. It continued north of Beth Arabah to the Stone of Bohan, the son of Reuben. [7]Then it went from the Valley of Achor up to Debir. It turned north to Gilgal. Gilgal faces the Pass of Adummim south of the valley. The border continued along to the springs of En Shemesh. It came to an end at En Rogel. [8]Then it ran up the Valley of Ben Hinnom. It went along the south slope of Jerusalem. From there it climbed to the top of the hill that is west of the Hinnom Valley. The hill is also at the north end of the Valley of Rephaim. [9]From the top of the hill the border headed toward the springs of Nephtoah. It went to the towns near Mount Ephron. It went down toward Kiriath Jearim. [10]Then it curved west from Kiriath Jearim to Mount Seir. It ran along the north slope of Mount Kesalon. It continued down to Beth Shemesh and crossed over to Timnah. [11]It went to the north slope of Ekron. Then it turned toward Shikkeron. It passed along to Mount Baalah and reached Jabneel. The border came to an end at the Mediterranean Sea.

[12]The border on the west was the coastline of the Mediterranean Sea.

Those were the borders of the family groups of the tribe of Judah.

13 Joshua gave a part of Judah's share of land to Caleb, the son of Jephunneh.
That was in keeping with the LORD's command to Joshua. The share Caleb
received was the city of Hebron. It was also called Kiriath Arba. Anak came
from the family line of Arba. 14 Caleb drove three Anakites out of Hebron.
Their names were Sheshai, Ahiman and Talmai. They were from the family
line of Anak.

15 From Hebron, Caleb marched out against the people who were living in
Debir. It used to be called Kiriath Sepher. 16 Caleb said, "I will give my
daughter Acsah to be married. I'll give her to the man who attacks and captures
Kiriath Sepher."

17 Othniel captured it. So Caleb gave his daughter Acsah to him to be his wife.
Othniel was the son of Kenaz. He was Caleb's brother.

18 One day Acsah came to Othniel. She begged him to ask her father for a
field. When she got off her donkey, Caleb spoke to her. He asked, "What can I
do for you?"

19 She replied, "Do me a special favor. You have given me some land in the
Negev Desert. Give me springs of water also." So Caleb gave her the upper
and lower springs.

20 Here is the share of land that was given to the tribe of Judah, family group
by family group.

21 The towns farthest south that were given to Judah were in the Negev Desert.
They were near the border of Edom. Here is a list of those towns.

Kabzeel, Eder, Jagur, 22 Kinah, Dimonah, Adadah, 23 Kedesh, Hazor, Ithnan,
24 Ziph, Telem, Bealoth, 25 Hazor Hadattah, Hazor, 26 Amam, Shema, Moladah,
27 Hazar Gaddah, Heshmon, Beth Pelet, 28 Hazar Shual, Beersheba, Biziothiah,
29 Baalah, Iim, Ezem, 30 Eltolad, Kesil, Hormah, 31 Ziklag, Madmannah,
Sansannah, 32 Lebaoth, Shilhim, Ain and Rimmon. The total number of towns
was 29. Some of them had villages near them.

[33]Towns were also given to Judah in the western hills. Here is a list of those towns.

Eshtaol, Zorah, Ashnah, [34]Zanoah, En Gannim, Tappuah, Enam, [35]Jarmuth, Adullam, Socoh, Azekah, [36]Shaaraim, Adithaim and Gederah. Gederah is also called Gederothaim. The total number of towns was 14. Some of them had villages near them.

[37]Here's another list of towns that were given to Judah in the western hills.

Zenan, Hadashah, Migdal Gad, [38]Dilean, Mizpah, Joktheel, [39]Lachish, Bozkath, Eglon, [40]Cabbon, Lahmas, Kitlish, [41]Gederoth, Beth Dagon, Naamah and Makkedah. The total number of towns was 16. Some of them had villages near them.

[42]Here's another list of towns that were given to Judah in the western hills.

Libnah, Ether, Ashan, [43]Iphtah, Ashnah, Nezib, [44]Keilah, Aczib and Mareshah. The total number of towns was nine. Some of them had villages near them.

[45]Judah was also given Ekron and the settlements and villages that were around it. [46]West of Ekron, Judah was given all of the settlements and villages that were near Ashdod. [47]Judah was given Ashdod and the settlements and villages that were around it. And Judah was given Gaza and its settlements and villages. Judah's territory went all the way to the Wadi of Egypt and the coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

[48]Towns were also given to Judah in the central hill country. Here is a list of those towns.

Shamir, Jattir, Socoh, [49]Dannah, Debir, [50]Anab, Eshtemoh, Anim, [51]Goshen, Holon and Giloh. The total number of towns was 11. Some of them had villages near them.

[52]Here's another list of towns that were given to Judah in the central hill country.

Arab, Dumah, Eshan, [53]Janim, Beth Tappuah, Aphekah, [54]Humtah, Hebron

and Zior. The total number of towns was nine. Some of them had villages near them.

[55]Here's another list of towns that were given to Judah in the central hill country.

Maon, Carmel, Ziph, Juttah, [56]Jezreel, Jokdeam, Zanoah, [57]Kain, Gibeah and Timnah. The total number of towns was ten. Some of them had villages near them.

[58]Here's another list of towns that were given to Judah in the central hill country.

Halhul, Beth Zur, Gedor, [59]Maarath, Beth Anoth and Eltekon. The total number of towns was six. Some of them had villages near them.

[60]Here's another list of towns that were given to Judah in the central hill country.

Kiriath Jearim and Rabbah. The total number of towns was two. They had villages near them.

[61]Towns were also given to Judah in the desert. Here is a list of those towns.

Beth Arabah, Middin, Secacah, [62]Nibshan, the City of Salt and En Gedi. The total number of towns was six. Some of them had villages near them.

[63]Judah couldn't drive out the Jebusites who were living in Jerusalem. So they live there with the people of Judah to this very day.

Land Is Given to Ephraim and Manasseh

Joshua 16

[1]The land that was given to the two tribes in the family line of Joseph began at the Jordan River near Jericho. Their border started east of the springs of Jericho. It went up from there through the desert into the hill country of Bethel. [2]Bethel is also called Luz. From Bethel it crossed over to Ataroth. That's where the Arkites live. [3]Then it went west down to the territory of the Japhletites. It went all the way to the area of Lower Beth Horon. It went on to Gezer. It came to an end at the Mediterranean Sea.

[4]The tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim were from the family line of Joseph. So they received that land as their share.

[5]Here is the territory that was given to the tribe of Ephraim, family group by family group.

The border of their share of land started at Ataroth Addar in the east. It went to Upper Beth Horon. [6]It continued toward the Mediterranean Sea. From Micmethath on the north, it curved toward the east. It went to Taanath Shiloh. It passed by Taanath Shiloh to Janoah on the east. [7]Then it went down from Janoah to Ataroth and Naarah. It touched Jericho and came to an end at the Jordan River. [8]From Tappuah the border went west to the Kanah Valley. It came to an end at the Mediterranean Sea. That was the land that was given to the tribe of Ephraim. Each family group received its share.

[9]The tribe of Ephraim was also given other towns and villages that were set apart for them. Those towns and villages were in the share of land that was given to the tribe of Manasseh.

[10]The people of Ephraim didn't drive out the people of Canaan who were living in Gezer. The people of Canaan live among the people of Ephraim to this very day. But they are forced to work hard for the people of Ephraim.

Joshua 17

[1]Land was given to the tribe of Manasseh. It was given to Makir. Manasseh was Joseph's oldest son. Makir was Manasseh's oldest son. The people of Gilead came from the family line of Makir. The people of Gilead had received the lands of Gilead and Bashan. That's because the people of Makir were great soldiers. [2]So land was given to the rest of the people of Manasseh. It was given to the family groups of Abiezer, Helek, Asriel, Shechem, Hepher and Shemida. They were the other men in the family line of Manasseh, the son of Joseph. Those were their names by their family groups.

[3]Makir was the son of Manasseh. Gilead was the son of Makir. Hepher was the son of Gilead. And Zelophehad was the son of Hepher. Zelophehad didn't have any sons. He only had daughters. Their names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah.

[4]The daughters of Zelophehad went to the priest Eleazar and to Joshua, the son of Nun. They also went to the other leaders. They said, "The LORD commanded Moses to give us our share of land among our male relatives." So Joshua gave them land along with their male relatives. That was in keeping with what the LORD had commanded.

[5]Manasseh's share was made up of ten pieces of land. That land was in addition to Gilead and Bashan east of the Jordan River. [6]So the five granddaughters of Hepher in the family line of Manasseh received land, just as the other five sons of Manasseh did. The land of Gilead belonged to the rest of the family line of Manasseh.

[7]The territory of Manasseh reached from Asher to Micmethath. Micmethath was east of Shechem. The border ran south from Micmethath. The people who were living at En Tappuah were inside the border. [8]Manasseh had the land around Tappuah. But the town of Tappuah itself was on the border of Manasseh's land. It belonged to the people of Ephraim. [9]The border continued south to the Kanah Valley. Some of the towns that belonged to Ephraim were located among the towns of Manasseh. But the border of Manasseh was the north side of the valley. The border came to an end at the Mediterranean Sea.

[10]The land on the south belonged to Ephraim. The land on the north belonged to Manasseh. The territory of Manasseh reached the Mediterranean Sea. The

tribe of Asher was the border on the north. The tribe of Issachar was the border on the east.

11Inside the land that was given to Issachar and Asher, the towns of Beth Shan and Ibleam belonged to Manasseh. The towns of Dor, Endor, Taanach and Megiddo and their people also belonged to Manasseh. Manasseh was given all of those towns and the settlements that were around them. The third town in the list was also called Naphoth Dor.

12But the people of Manasseh weren't able to take over those towns. That's because the people of Canaan had made up their minds to live in that area. 13The people of Israel grew stronger. Then they forced the people of Canaan to work hard for them. But they didn't drive them out completely.

14The people in the family line of Joseph spoke to Joshua. They said, "Why have you given us only one share of the land to have as our own? There are large numbers of us. The LORD has blessed us greatly."

15"That's true," Joshua said. "There are large numbers of you. And the hill country of Ephraim is too small for you. So go up into the forest. Clear out some land for yourselves in the territory of the Perizzites and Rephaites."

16The people in Joseph's family line replied. They said, "The hill country isn't big enough for us. And all of the people of Canaan who live in the flatlands use chariots that have iron parts. They include the people of Beth Shan and its settlements. They also include the people who live in the Valley of Jezreel."

17Joshua spoke again to the people in Joseph's family line. He said to the people of Ephraim and Manasseh, "There are large numbers of you. And you are very powerful. You will have more than one piece of land. 18You will also have the central hill country. It's covered with trees. Cut them down and clear the land. That whole land from one end to the other will belong to you. The people of Canaan use chariots that have iron parts. And those people are strong. But you can drive them out."

The Rest of the Land Is Divided Up

Joshua 18

1 The whole community of Israel gathered together at Shiloh. They set up the
Tent of Meeting there. The country was brought under their control. 2 But there
were still seven tribes in Israel who had not yet received their shares of land.

3 So Joshua spoke to the people of Israel. He said, “The LORD, the God of your
people, has given you this land. How long will you wait before you begin to
take it over? 4 Appoint three men from each tribe. I’ll send them to map out the
land. Then they’ll write a report about its features. The report will point out the
share of land each tribe will receive. Then the men will return to me.

5 “You must divide the land up into seven shares. Judah must remain in its
territory in the south. The people in Joseph’s family line must remain in their
territory in the north. 6 Write reports about the features of those seven shares of
land. Bring them here to me. Then I’ll cast lots for you in the sight of the LORD
our God.

7 “But the Levites don’t get any share of your land. That’s because their share
is to serve the LORD as priests.

“The tribes of Gad and Reuben and half of the tribe of Manasseh have
already received their shares. They are on the east side of the Jordan River.
Moses, the servant of the LORD, gave their shares to them.”

8 The men started out on their way to map out the land. Joshua directed them,
“Go and map out the land. Write a report about its features. Then return to me.
I’ll cast lots for you here at Shiloh in the sight of the LORD.”

9 So the men left and went through the land. They wrote a report about its
features on a scroll. It showed how they divided up the land into seven shares.
It listed the towns that were in each share. The men returned to Joshua in the
camp at Shiloh.

10 Then Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh in the sight of the LORD. There he
gave out a share of land to each of the remaining tribes in Israel.

Land Is Given to Benjamin

[11]The first lot that was drawn out was for the tribe of Benjamin, family group by family group. The territory they were given was located between the tribes of the people of Judah and the people of Joseph. Here are the borders of Benjamin's territory.

[12]On the north side their border started at the Jordan River. It went past the north slope of Jericho. Then it headed west into the central hill country. It came to an end at the Desert of Beth Aven. [13]From there it crossed to the south slope of Bethel. Then it went down to Ataroth Addar on the hill south of Lower Beth Horon.

[14]From the hill that faces Beth Horon on the south the border turned south along the west side of the hill. It came to an end at Kiriath Jearim. That town belongs to the people of Judah. That was the border on the west.

[15]The border on the south side started at the west edge of Kiriath Jearim. It came to an end at the springs of Nephtoah. [16]It went down to the foot of the hill that faces the Valley of Ben Hinnom. The hill is north of the Valley of Rephaim. The border continued down the Hinnom Valley. It went along the south slope of Jerusalem, where the people of Jebus live. It continued on to En Rogel. [17]Then it curved north. It went to En Shemesh. It continued on to Geliloth. Geliloth faces the Pass of Adummim. The border ran down to the Stone of Bohan, the son of Reuben. [18]It continued to the north slope of Beth Arabah. It went on down into the Arabah Valley. [19]From there it went to the north slope of Beth Hoglah. It came to an end at the north bay of the Dead Sea. That's where the Jordan River flows into the Dead Sea. That was the border on the south.

[20]The Jordan River formed the border on the east side.

Those were the borders that marked out on all sides the land the family groups of Benjamin received as their share.

[21]Here is a list of towns that were given to the tribe of Benjamin, family group by family group.

Jericho, Beth Hoglah, Emek Keziz, [22]Beth Arabah, Zemaraim, Bethel,

[23]Avvim, Parah, Ophrah, [24]Kephar Ammoni, Ophni and Geba. The total number of towns and their villages was 12.

[25]Here is another list of towns that were given to Benjamin.

Gibeon, Ramah, Beeroth, [26]Mizpah, Kephirah, Mozah, [27]Rekem, Irpeel, Taralah, [28]Zelah, Haeleph, Jerusalem, Gibeah and Kiriath. The total number of towns and their villages was 14.

That was the share of land the family groups of Benjamin received.

Land Is Given to Simeon

Joshua 19

[1]The second lot that was drawn out was for the tribe of Simeon, family group by family group. The share of land they were given was in the territory of Judah. [2]Here is what Simeon's share included.

Beersheba, Moladah, [3]Hazar Shual, Balah, Ezem, [4]Eltolad, Bethul, Hormah, [5]Ziklag, Beth Marcaboth, Hazar Susah, [6]Beth Lebaoth and Sharuhen. The total number of towns was 13. Some of them had villages near them.

[7]Here's another list of towns that were given to Simeon.

Ain, Rimmon, Ether and Ashan. The total number of towns was four. Some of them had villages near them. [8]The towns and all of the villages that were around them reached all the way to Ramah in the Negev Desert.

That was the share of land the tribe of Simeon received, family group by family group. [9]Simeon's share of land was taken from Judah's share. That's because Judah had more land than they needed. So the people of Simeon received their share of land inside the territory of Judah.

Land Is Given to Zebulun

[10]The third lot that was drawn out was for the tribe of Zebulun, family group by family group. Here are the borders of Zebulun's territory.

The border of their share of land went as far as Sarid. [11]It ran west to Maralah and touched Dabbesheth. It reached to the valley near Jokneam. [12]It turned east from Sarid toward the sunrise. It went to the territory of Kisloth Tabor. It went on to Daberath and up to Japhia. [13]Then it continued east to Gath Hepher and Eth Kazin. It came to an end at Rimmon and turned toward Neah. [14]There the border went around on the north to Hannathon. It came to an end at the Valley

of Iphtah El. [15]Zebulun’s territory included Kattath, Nahalal, Shimron, Idalah and Bethlehem. The total number of towns was 12. Some of them had villages near them.

[16]Those towns and their villages were Zebulun’s share, family group by family group.

Land Is Given to Issachar

[17]The fourth lot that was drawn out was for the tribe of Issachar, family group by family group. [18]Here is what Issachar’s share included.

Jezreel, Kesulloth, Shunem, [19]Hapharaim, Shion, Anaharath, [20]Rabbith, Kishion, Ebez, [21]Remeth, En Gannim, En Haddah and Beth Pazzez. [22]The border touched Tabor, Shahazumah and Beth Shemesh. It came to an end at the Jordan River. The total number of towns was 16. Some of them had villages near them.

[23]Those towns and their villages were the share the tribe of Issachar received, family group by family group.

Land Is Given to Asher

[24]The fifth lot that was drawn out was for the tribe of Asher, family group by family group. [25]Here is what Asher’s share included.

Helkath, Hali, Beten, Acshaph, [26]Allammelech, Amad and Mishal. On the west the border touched Carmel and Shihor Libnath. [27]Then it turned east toward Beth Dagon. It touched Zebulun and the Valley of Iphtah El. It went north to Beth Emek and Neiel. It went past Cabul on the left. [28]It went to Abdon, Rehob, Hammon and Kanah. It reached all the way to Greater Sidon. [29]The border then turned back toward Ramah. It went to Tyre, a city that had high walls around it. It turned toward Hosah. It came to an end at the Mediterranean Sea in the area of Aczib, [30]Ummah, Aphek and Rehob. The total number of towns was 22. Some of them had villages near them.

31Those towns and their villages were the share the tribe of Asher received, family group by family group.

Land Is Given to Naphtali

32The sixth lot that was drawn out was for Naphtali, family group by family group.

33Their border started at Heleph and the large tree in Zaanannim. It went past Adami Nekeb and Jabneel. It went to Lakkum and came to an end at the Jordan River. 34The border ran west through Aznoth Tabor. It came to an end at Hukkok. It touched Zebulun on the south. It touched Asher on the west. It touched the Jordan on the east.

35The cities that had high walls around them were Ziddim, Zer, Hammath, Rakkath, Kinnereth, 36Adamah, Ramah, Hazor, 37Kedesh, Edrei, En Hazor, 38Iron, Migdal El, Horem, Beth Anath and Beth Shemesh. The total number of towns was 19. Some of them had villages near them.

39Those towns and their villages were the share the tribe of Naphtali received, family group by family group.

Land Is Given to Dan

40The seventh lot that was drawn out was for the tribe of Dan, family group by family group. 41Here is what Dan’s share of land included.

Zorah, Eshtaol, Ir Shemesh, 42Shaalabbin, Aijalon, Ithlah, 43Elon, Timnah, Ekron, 44Eltekeh, Gibbethon, Baalath, 45Jehud, Bene Berak, Gath Rimmon, 46Me Jarkon and Rakkon. Dan’s share included the area that faces Joppa.

47The people of Dan had trouble taking over their territory. So they went up and attacked Leshem. They took it. They killed its people with their swords. Then they moved into Leshem and settled down there. They named it Dan. That’s because they traced their family line back to him.

48All of those towns and their villages were the share the tribe of Dan received,

family group by family group.

Land Is Given to Joshua

49 The people of Israel finished dividing up the shares of land the tribes
received. Then they gave a share to Joshua, the son of Nun. 50 They did what
the LORD had commanded them to do. They gave Joshua the town he asked for.
It was Timnath Serah in the hill country of Ephraim. He built up the town and
settled down there.

51 All of those territories were given out by using lots at Shiloh. The lots were
drawn out by the priest Eleazar and by Joshua, the son of Nun. The leaders of
the tribes of Israel helped them. The lots were drawn out in front of the LORD at
the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. So the work of dividing up the land was
finished.

Cities to Go to for Safety

Joshua 20

1Then the LORD spoke to Joshua. He said, 2"Tell the people of Israel to choose
the cities to go to for safety, just as I directed you through Moses. 3Anyone
who kills a person by accident can run there for safety. So can anyone who
kills a person without meaning to. The one who is charged with murder will be
kept safe from the nearest male relative of the person who was killed.

4"Suppose the one who is charged runs for safety to one of those cities. Then
he must stand in the entrance of the city gate. He must state his case in front of
the elders of that city. They must let him come into their city. They must give
him a place to live there.

5"Suppose the nearest male relative of the person who was killed comes after
him. Then the elders must not hand him over to that relative. That's because he
didn't mean to kill his neighbor. He didn't make evil plans to do it.

6"He must stay in that city until his case has been brought to the community
court. He must stay there until the high priest who is serving at that time dies.
Then he can go back to his own home. He can return to the town he ran away
from."

7So the people of Israel set apart Kedesh in Galilee. It's in the hill country of
Naphtali. They set apart Shechem. It's in the hill country of Ephraim. They set
apart Kiriath Arba. It's in the hill country of Judah. Kiriath Arba is also called
Hebron.

8On the east side of the Jordan River near Jericho they chose Bezer. It's in the
desert on the high flatlands. It's in the territory of the tribe of Reuben. They
chose Ramoth in Gilead. It's in the territory of the tribe of Gad. They chose
Golan in the land of Bashan. It's in the territory of the tribe of Manasseh.

9Suppose you kill someone by accident. Or another Israelite does it. Or an
outsider who lives among you does it. Then any of you can run for safety to
one of those cities that have been chosen. There you won't be killed by the
nearest male relative of the person who was killed. First your case must be
brought to the community court.

Towns Are Given to the Levites

Joshua 21

1The leaders of the Levite family groups approached the priest Eleazar and
Joshua, the son of Nun. They also approached the leaders of the family groups
of Israel's other tribes. 2They went to all of them at Shiloh in Canaan. They
said to them, "Give us towns to live in. Also give us grasslands for our
livestock. That's what the LORD commanded through Moses."

3So the people of Israel gave the Levites towns and grasslands out of their
own shares of land. They did what the LORD had commanded. Here are the
towns the Levites were given.

4The first lot that was drawn out was for the people of Kohath, family group
by family group. Some of the Levites came from the family line of the priest
Aaron. They were given 13 towns from the tribes of Judah, Simeon and
Benjamin. 5The rest of Kohath's family groups were given ten towns from the
family groups of the tribes of Ephraim and Dan and half of the tribe of
Manasseh.

6The family groups of Gershon were given 13 towns from the family groups
of the tribes of Issachar, Asher and Naphtali and half of the tribe of Manasseh.
That part of Manasseh was in the land of Bashan.

7The family groups of Merari received 12 towns from the tribes of Reuben,
Gad and Zebulun. Each family group received its share.

8So the people of Israel gave those towns and their grasslands to the Levites.
They did what the LORD had commanded through Moses.

9They gave some towns from the territories of the tribes of Judah and Simeon
10to the members of the family line of Aaron. The towns were given to the
family groups of Kohath. They were Levites. The first lot that was drawn out
was for them. Here are the towns the family groups of Kohath were given.

11The people of Israel gave them Kiriath Arba and the grasslands that were

around it. Kiriath Arba is also called Hebron. It's in the hill country of Judah. Anak came from the family line of Arba. [12]But Israel had already given away the fields and villages around the city. They had given them to Caleb as his share. Caleb was the son of Jephunneh.

[13]So they gave Hebron to the members of the family line of the priest Aaron. Hebron was a city where anyone who was charged with murder could go for safety. They also gave them Libnah, [14]Jattir, Eshtemoa, [15]Holon, Debir, [16]Ain, Juttah and Beth Shemesh. They gave those towns and their grasslands to the family groups of Kohath. The total number of towns from the tribes of Judah and Simeon was nine.

[17]The people of Israel gave some towns from the tribe of Benjamin to the family groups of Kohath. The towns were Gibeon, Geba, [18]Anathoth and Almon. The total number of those towns and their grasslands was four.

[19]So the total number of towns and their grasslands that were given to the priests in the family line of Aaron was 13.

[20]There were other family groups of Kohath among the Levites. They were given towns from the tribe of Ephraim. Here are the towns those other family groups of Kohath were given.

[21]In the hill country of Ephraim they were given Shechem. It was a city where anyone who was charged with murder could go for safety. They were also given Gezer, [22]Kibzaim and Beth Horon. The total number of those towns and their grasslands was four.

[23]From the tribe of Dan they received Eltekeh, Gibbethon, [24]Aijalon and Gath Rimmon. The total number of those towns and their grasslands was four.

[25]From half of the tribe of Manasseh they received Taanach and Gath Rimmon. The total number of those towns and their grasslands was two.

[26]So all of those ten towns and their grasslands were given to the other family groups of Kohath.

[27]Here are the towns the family groups of Gershon among the Levites were

given.

From half of the tribe of Manasseh they received Golan in the land of Bashan. Golan was a city where anyone who was charged with murder could go for safety. They also received Be Eshtarah. The total number of those towns and their grasslands was two.

[28]From the tribe of Issachar

they received Kishion, Daberath, [29]Jarmuth and En Gannim. The total number of those towns and their grasslands was four.

[30]From the tribe of Asher

they received Mishal, Abdon, [31]Helkath and Rehob. The total number of those towns and their grasslands was four.

[32]From the tribe of Naphtali

they received Kedesh in Galilee. Kedesh was a city where anyone who was charged with murder could go for safety. They also received Hammoth Dor and Kartan. The total number of those towns and their grasslands was three.

[33]So the total number of towns and their grasslands that were given to the family groups of Gershon was 13.

[34]The rest of the Levites were from the family groups of Merari. Here are the towns they were given.

From the tribe of Zebulun

they received Jokneam, Kartah, [35]Dimnah and Nahalal. The total number of those towns and their grasslands was four.

[36]From the tribe of Reuben

they received Bezer, Jahaz, [37]Kedemoth and Mephaath. The total number of those towns and their grasslands was four.

[38]From the tribe of Gad

they received Ramoth in Gilead. Ramoth was a city where anyone who was charged with murder could go for safety. They also received Mahanaim, [39]Heshbon and Jazer. The total number of those towns and their grasslands was four.

[40]So the total number of towns that were given to the family groups of Merari was 12. That concludes the list of towns the rest of the Levites received.

[41]The total number of Levite towns and their grasslands in the territory that was given to Israel was 48. [42]Each of those towns had grasslands around it. That was true of all of them.

[43]So the LORD gave Israel all of the land he had promised with an oath to give to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And Israel took it over. Then they settled down there. [44]The LORD gave them peace and rest on every side. That's what he had promised their fathers he would do. Not one of their enemies was able to fight against Israel and win. The LORD handed all of their enemies over to them.

[45]The LORD kept all of the good promises he had made to the people of Israel. Every one of them came true.

The Eastern Tribes Return Home

Joshua 22

1 Joshua sent for the tribes of Reuben and Gad and half of the tribe of
Manasseh. 2 He said to them, “You have done everything that Moses, the
servant of the LORD, commanded. You have also obeyed everything I
commanded. 3 For a long time now you haven’t deserted the other Israelites.
Instead, you have done what the LORD your God sent you to do. You have
obeyed him to this very day.

4 “Now the LORD your God has given the other tribes peace and rest. That’s
what he promised to do. So return to your homes. They are in the land that
Moses, the servant of the LORD, gave you. It’s on the east side of the Jordan
River.

5 “Be very careful to obey the law that Moses, the servant of the LORD, gave
you. He commanded you to love the LORD your God. He told you to live
exactly as the LORD wants you to. He told you to obey the LORD’s commands.
He told you to remain true to the LORD. And he told you to serve the LORD with
all your heart and with all your soul.”

6 Joshua gave the eastern tribes his blessing. Then he sent them home. So they
went.

7 Moses had given land in Bashan to half of the tribe of Manasseh. Joshua had
given land to the other half of the tribe along with the other tribes on the west
side of the Jordan River.

When Joshua sent them home, he blessed them. 8 He said, “Return to your
homes. Take your great wealth with you. Return with your large herds of
livestock. Take your silver, gold, bronze and iron with you. Return with all of
your clothes. Divide up the things you have taken from your enemies. Share
them with your people.”

9 So the tribes of Reuben and Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh went
home. They left the other people of Israel at Shiloh in Canaan. They returned
to Gilead. That was their own land. They had gotten it in keeping with the
LORD’s command through Moses.

10The tribes of Reuben and Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh came to
Geliloth. It was near the Jordan River in the land of Canaan. They built a large
altar there by the Jordan.

11The rest of the people of Israel heard that they had built the altar. They
heard that they had built it on the border of Canaan at Geliloth. It was near the
Jordan River on the west side.

12So the whole community of Israel gathered together at Shiloh. They
decided to go to war against the eastern tribes.

13The people of Israel sent the priest Phinehas to the land of Gilead. Phinehas
was the son of Eleazar. They sent him to the tribes of Reuben and Gad and half
of the tribe of Manasseh.

14They sent ten of their leaders with him. There was one for each of the tribes
of Israel. Each man was the leader of a family group among the larger family
groups of Israel.

15They went to the tribes of Reuben and Gad and half of the tribe of
Manasseh in the land of Gilead. They said to them, 16"We're speaking for the
LORD's whole community. How could you disobey the God of Israel like this?
How could you turn away from the LORD? How could you disobey him by
building an altar for yourselves?

17"Don't you remember how we sinned at Peor? The LORD struck us with a
plague because of what we did. Up to this very day we're still suffering
because of that sin. 18Are you turning away from the LORD now?

"Suppose you disobey the LORD today. If you do, he'll be angry with the
whole community of Israel tomorrow.

19"If your own land isn't 'clean,' come over to the LORD's land. It's where his
holy tent stands. Share our land with us. But don't disobey the LORD. Don't turn
against us by building an altar for yourselves. Don't build any altar other than
the altar of the LORD our God.

20"Remember Achan, the son of Zerah. Achan wasn't faithful to the LORD. He
took the things that had been set apart to the LORD in a special way to be
destroyed. Didn't the LORD's anger come on the whole community of Israel?
And Achan wasn't the only one who died because of his sin."

21Then the tribes of Reuben and Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh
replied. They answered the leaders of the family groups of Israel. 22They said,

“The Mighty One, God, the LORD! The Mighty One, God, the LORD! He knows! And we want Israel to know! Have we opposed the LORD? Have we refused to obey him? If we have, don’t spare us today.

23“Have we built our own altar so we can turn away from the LORD? Have we built it to offer burnt offerings and grain offerings on it? Have we built it to sacrifice friendship offerings on it? If we have, may the LORD himself hold us accountable.

24“No! We built it because we were afraid. Someday your children might speak to our children. We were afraid they might say, ‘What do you have to do with the LORD? What do you have to do with the God of Israel? 25The LORD has made the Jordan River a border between us and you. You people of Reuben! You people of Gad! You don’t have anything to do with the LORD.’ If your children say that, they might cause our children to stop worshiping the LORD.

26“That’s why we said to ourselves, ‘Let’s get ready and build an altar. But let’s not build it to offer burnt offerings or sacrifices on it.’

27“So just the opposite is true. The altar will be a witness between us and you. It will be a witness between our children and yours after us. It will also be a witness that we will worship the LORD at his sacred tent. We’ll worship him there with our burnt offerings, sacrifices and friendship offerings. Then in days to come your children won’t be able to say to ours, ‘You don’t have anything to do with the LORD.’

28“So we said to ourselves, ‘Suppose they say that to us sometime. Or suppose they say it to our children after us. Then we’ll answer, “Look at this altar. It’s exactly like the LORD’s altar. Our people built it. They didn’t build it to offer burnt offerings and sacrifices on it. Instead, they built it to be a witness between us and you.” ’

29“We would never refuse to obey the LORD. We would never turn away from him now. We wouldn’t build an altar to offer burnt offerings, grain offerings and sacrifices on it. We wouldn’t use any altar other than the altar of the LORD our God. That altar stands in front of his holy tent.”

30The priest Phinehas heard what the tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh had to say. The leaders of the family groups of the community of Israel heard it too. All of them were pleased with what they heard.

31The priest Phinehas spoke to the tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh. Phinehas was the son of Eleazar. He said, “Today we know that the LORD is

with us. That’s because you have been faithful to him in this matter. Now you have saved the people of Israel from the LORD’s anger against them.”

32Then the priest Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, returned to Canaan. So did the leaders. All of them went back from their meeting with the tribes of Reuben and Gad in Gilead. They brought a report back to the people of Israel. 33The people were glad to hear the report. They praised God. They didn’t talk anymore about going to war against the eastern tribes. And they didn’t talk anymore about destroying the country where the tribes of Reuben and Gad lived.

34The tribes of Reuben and Gad gave the altar a name. They called it A Witness Between Us That the LORD Is God.

Joshua Says Good-by to the Leaders

Joshua 23

1 A long time had passed. The LORD had given Israel peace and rest from all of
their enemies who were around them. By that time Joshua was very old. 2 So he
sent for all of the elders, leaders, judges and officials of Israel. He said to them,
"I'm very old. 3 You yourselves have seen everything the LORD your God has
done. You have seen what he's done to all of those nations because of you. The
LORD your God fought for you.

4 "Remember how I've given you all of the land of the nations that remain
here. I've given each of your tribes a share of it. It's the land of the nations I
won the battle over. It's between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea in
the west. 5 The LORD your God himself will drive those nations out of your way.
He will push them out to make room for you. You will take over their land, just
as the LORD your God promised you.

6 "Be very strong. Be careful to obey everything that is written in the Scroll of
the Law of Moses. Don't turn away from it to the right or the left.

7 "Don't have anything to do with the nations that remain among you. Don't
use the names of their gods for any reason at all. Don't take oaths and make
promises in their names. You must not serve them. You must not bow down to
them. 8 You must remain true to the LORD your God, just as you have done until
now.

9 "The LORD has driven out great and powerful nations to make room for you.
To this very day no one has been able to fight against you and win. 10 One of
you can chase a thousand away. That's because the LORD your God fights for
you, just as he promised he would. 11 So be very careful to love the LORD your
God.

12 "But suppose you turn away from him. You mix with the people who are
left alive in the nations that remain among you. Later, you and they get married
to each other. And you do other kinds of things with them. 13 Then you can be
sure of what the LORD your God will do. He won't drive out those nations to
make room for you anymore. Instead, they will become traps and snares for

you. They will be like whips on your backs. They will be like thorns in your eyes. All of that will continue until you are destroyed. It will continue until you are removed from this good land. It's the land the LORD your God has given you.

14"Now I'm about to die, just as everyone else on earth does. The LORD your God has kept all of the good promises he gave you. Every one of them has come true. Not one has failed to come true. And you know that with all your heart and soul.

15"Every good promise of the LORD your God has come true. So you know that the LORD will bring on you all of the evil things he has warned you about. He'll do it until he has destroyed you. He'll do it until he has removed you from this good land. It's the land he has given you.

16"Suppose you break the covenant the LORD your God made with you. He commanded you to obey it. But suppose you go and serve other gods. And you bow down to them. Then the LORD's anger will burn against you. You will quickly be destroyed. You will be removed from the good land he has given you."

Joshua Tells Israel to Serve the LORD

Joshua 24

1Joshua gathered all of Israel's tribes together at Shechem. He sent for the
elders, leaders, judges and officials of Israel. They came and stood there in the
sight of God.

2Joshua spoke to all of the people. He said, "The LORD is the God of Israel.
He says, 'Long ago your people lived east of the Euphrates River. They
worshiped other gods there. Your people included Terah. He was the father of
Abraham and Nahor.

3" 'I took your father Abraham from the land that is east of the Euphrates. I
led him all through Canaan. I gave him many children and grandchildren. I
gave him Isaac. 4To Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. I gave the hill country of Seir
to Esau. But Jacob and his children went down to Egypt.

5" 'Then I sent Moses and Aaron. I made the people of Egypt suffer because
of the plagues I sent on them. But I brought you out of Egypt.

6" 'When I brought your parents out, they came to the Red Sea. The people of
Egypt chased them with chariots and with men on horses. They chased them all
the way to the sea. 7But your people cried out to me for help. So I put darkness
between you and the people of Egypt. I swept them into the sea. It completely
covered them. Your own eyes saw what I did to them. After that, you lived in
the desert for a long time.

8" 'I brought you to the land of the Amorites. They lived east of the Jordan
River. They fought against you. But I handed them over to you. I destroyed
them to make room for you. Then you took over their land.

9" 'Balak, the son of Zippor, prepared to fight against Israel. Balak was king
of Moab. He sent for Balaam. He wanted him to put a curse on you. Balaam
was the son of Beor. 10But I would not listen to Balaam's curses. So he blessed
you again and again. And I saved you from his power.

11" 'Then you went across the Jordan River. You came to Jericho. Its people
fought against you. So did the Amorites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hittites,

Girgashites, Hivites and Jebusites. But I handed them over to you.

12“ ‘I sent hornets ahead of you. They drove your enemies out to make room for you. That included the two Amorite kings. You did not do that with your own swords and bows. 13So I gave you a land you had never farmed. I gave you cities you had not built. You are now living in them. And you are eating the fruit of vineyards and olive trees you did not plant.’

14“So have respect for the LORD. Serve him. Be completely faithful to him. Throw away the gods your people worshiped east of the Euphrates River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD.

15“But suppose you don’t want to serve him. Then choose for yourselves right now whom you will serve. You can choose the gods your people served east of the Euphrates River. Or you can choose the gods the Amorites serve. After all, you are living in their land. But as for me and my family, we will serve the LORD.”

16Then the people answered Joshua. They said, “We would never desert the LORD! We would never serve other gods! 17The LORD our God himself brought us and our parents up out of Egypt. He brought us out of that land where we were slaves. With our own eyes, we saw those great and miraculous signs he did. He kept us safe on our entire journey. He kept us safe as we traveled through all of the nations. 18He drove them out to make room for us. That included the Amorites. They also lived in the land. We too will serve the LORD. That’s because he is our God.”

19Joshua spoke to the people. He said, “You aren’t able to serve the LORD. He is a holy God. He is a jealous God. He won’t forgive you when you disobey him. He won’t forgive you when you sin against him.

20“Suppose you desert the LORD. Suppose you serve the gods that people in other lands serve. If you do, he will turn against you. He will bring trouble on you. He will destroy you, even though he has been good to you.”

21But the people spoke to Joshua. They said, “No! We will serve the LORD.”

22Then Joshua said, “You are witnesses against yourselves. You have said that you have chosen to serve the LORD.”

“Yes. We are witnesses,” they replied.

23“Now then,” said Joshua, “throw away the gods that are among you. People from other lands serve those gods. Give yourselves completely to the LORD, the

God of Israel.”

24Then the people spoke to Joshua. They said, “We will serve the LORD our God. We will obey him.”

25On that day Joshua made a covenant for the people. There at Shechem he wrote down rules and laws for them. 26He recorded those things in the Scroll of the Law of God. Then he got a large stone. He set it up in Shechem under the oak tree. It was near the place that had been set apart for the LORD.

27“Look!” he said to all of the people. “This stone will be a witness against us. It has heard all of the words the LORD has spoken to us. Suppose you aren’t true to your God. Then the stone will be a witness against you.”

Joshua Dies

28Joshua sent the people away. He sent all of them to their own shares of land.

29Then Joshua, the servant of the LORD, died. He was the son of Nun. He was 110 years old when he died. 30His people buried his body at Timnath Serah on his own property. It’s north of Mount Gaash in the hill country of Ephraim.

31Israel served the LORD as long as Joshua lived. They also served him as long as the elders lived. Those were the elders who lived longer than Joshua did. They had seen for themselves everything the LORD had done for Israel.

32The people of Israel had brought Joseph’s bones up from Egypt. They buried his bones at Shechem in the piece of land Jacob had bought. He had bought it from the sons of Hamor. He had paid 100 pieces of silver for it. Hamor was the father of Shechem. That piece of land became the share that belonged to Joseph’s children after him.

33Aaron’s son Eleazar died. His body was buried at Gibeah in the hill country of Ephraim. Gibeah had been given to Eleazar’s son Phinehas.

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Israel Fights Against the Canaanites Who Are Still Left

Judges 1

1 Joshua died. After that, the people of Israel spoke to the LORD. They asked
him, “Who will go up first and fight for us against the people of Canaan?”

2 The LORD answered, “The tribe of Judah will go. I have handed the land over
to them.”

3 Then the men of Judah spoke to their fellow Israelites, the men of Simeon.
They said, “Come up with us. Come into the territory Joshua gave us. Help us
fight against the people of Canaan. Then we’ll go with you into your territory.”
So the men of Simeon went with them.

4 When the men of Judah attacked, the LORD helped them. He handed the
Canaanites and Perizzites over to them. They struck down 10,000 men at
Bezek.

5 Judah found Adoni-Bezek there. They fought against him. They struck down
the Canaanites and Perizzites. 6 But Adoni-Bezek ran away. Judah chased him
and caught him. Then they cut off his thumbs and big toes.

7 Adoni-Bezek said, “I cut off the thumbs and big toes of 70 kings. I made
them pick up scraps under my table. Now God has paid me back for what I did
to them.” The men of Judah brought Adoni-Bezek to Jerusalem. That’s where
he died.

8 The men of Judah attacked Jerusalem and took it. They set the city on fire.
They killed its people with their swords.

9 After that, the men of Judah went down to fight against the people of
Canaan who were living in the central hill country. They also fought against
those who were living in the Negev Desert and the western hills.

10 Then the men of Judah marched out against the Canaanites who were living
in Hebron. The men of Judah won the battle over Sheshai, Ahiman and Talmai.
Hebron used to be called Kiriath Arba.

11 From Hebron they marched out against the people who were living in
Debir. It used to be called Kiriath Sepher.

12 Caleb said, “I will give my daughter Acsah to be married. I’ll give her to
the man who attacks and captures Kiriath Sepher.”

13 Othniel captured it. So Caleb gave his daughter Acsah to him to be his wife.
Othniel was the son of Kenaz. He was Caleb’s younger brother.

14 One day Acsah came to Othniel. She begged him to ask her father for a
field. When she got off her donkey, Caleb spoke to her. He said, “What can I
do for you?”

15 She replied, “Do me a special favor. You have given me some land in the
Negev Desert. Give me springs of water also.” So Caleb gave her the upper
and lower springs.

16 Moses’ father-in-law was a Kenite. His family went up from Jericho. They
went up with the people of Judah to the Desert of Judah. They went there to
live among its people. Those people were living in the Negev Desert near
Arad. Jericho was also known as The City of Palm Trees.

17 The men of Judah went with their fellow Israelites, the men of Simeon.
They attacked the people of Canaan who were living in Zephath. They set the
city apart to the LORD in a special way to be destroyed. That’s why the city was
called Hormah.

18 The men of Judah took Gaza, Ashkelon and Ekron. They also took the
territory that was around each of those cities.

19 The LORD was with the men of Judah. They took over the central hill
country. But they weren’t able to drive the people out of the flatlands. That’s
because those people used chariots that had some iron parts.

20 Moses had promised to give Hebron to Caleb. So Hebron was given to
Caleb. He drove the three sons of Anak out of it.

21 But the people of Benjamin failed to drive out the Jebusites who were
living in Jerusalem. So they live there with the people of Benjamin to this very
day.

22 The men of Joseph attacked Bethel. The LORD was with them. 23 They sent
men to Bethel to check it out. It used to be called Luz.

24 Those who were sent saw a man coming out of the city. They said to him,
“Show us how to get into the city. If you do, we’ll see that you are treated
well.” 25 So he showed them how to get in.

The men of Joseph killed the people in the city with their swords. But they

spared the man from Bethel. They also spared his whole family. [26]Then he went to the land of the Hittites. He built a city there. He called it Luz. That's still its name to this very day.

[27]But the tribe of Manasseh didn't drive out the people of Beth Shan. They didn't drive out the people of Taanach, Dor, Ibleam and Megiddo. And they didn't drive out the people of the settlements that are around those cities either. That's because the people of Canaan had made up their minds to continue living in that land.

[28]Later, Israel became stronger. Then they forced the people of Canaan to work hard for them. But Israel never drove them out completely.

[29]The tribe of Ephraim didn't drive out the Canaanites who were living in Gezer. So they continued to live there among them.

[30]The tribe of Zebulun didn't drive out the Canaanites who were living in Kitron and Nahalol. So they remained among them. But Zebulun forced the Canaanites to work hard for them.

[31]The tribe of Asher didn't drive out the people who were living in Acco and Sidon. They didn't drive out the people of Ahlab, Aczib, Helbah, Aphek and Rehob. [32]So the people of Asher lived among the Canaanites who were in the land.

[33]The tribe of Naphtali didn't drive out the people who were living in Beth Shemesh and Beth Anath. So the people of Naphtali lived among the Canaanites who were in the land. The people of Beth Shemesh and Beth Anath were forced to work hard for them.

[34]The Amorites made the people of Dan stay in the central hill country. They didn't let them come down into the flatlands. [35]The Amorites made up their minds to stay in Mount Heres. They also stayed in Aijalon and Shaalbim.

But the power of the tribes of Joseph grew. Then the Amorites were forced to work hard for them.

[36]The border of the Amorites started at Scorpion Pass. It went to Sela and even past it.

The Angel of the LORD Warns Israel

Judges 2

1 The angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal to Bokim. There he spoke to the
people of Israel. “I brought you up out of Egypt,” he said. “I led you into this
land. It is the land I promised with an oath to give to Abraham, Isaac and
Jacob. I said, ‘I will never break the covenant I made with you. 2 So you must
not make a covenant with the people of this land. Instead, you must tear down
their altars.’

“But you have disobeyed me. Why did you do it? 3 I have something to tell
you. I will not drive those people out to make room for you. They will be like
thorns in your sides. Their gods will be a trap to you.”

4 The angel of the LORD spoke those things to all of the people of Israel. Then
the people began to sob out loud. 5 So that place was called Bokim. The people
offered sacrifices to the LORD there.

The People Turn Away From the LORD

6 Joshua sent the people of Israel away. Then they went to take over the land.
All of them went to their own shares of land.

7 The people served the LORD as long as Joshua lived. They also served him as
long as the elders lived. Those were the elders who lived longer than Joshua
did. They had seen all of the great things the LORD had done for Israel.

8 Joshua, the servant of the LORD, died. He was the son of Nun. He was 110
years old when he died. 9 His people buried his body on his own property at
Timnath Heres. It’s north of Mount Gaash in the hill country of Ephraim.

10 All of the people of Joshua’s time joined the members of their families who
had already died. Then those who were born after them grew up. They didn’t
know the LORD. They didn’t know what he had done for Israel.

11 The people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. They served

the gods that were named after Baal. 12They deserted the LORD, the God of their people. He had brought them out of Egypt. But now the people of Israel followed other gods and worshiped them. They served the gods of the nations that were around them. They made the LORD angry 13because they deserted him. They served Baal. They also served the goddesses that were named after Ashtoreth.

14The LORD became angry with Israel. So he handed them over to robbers. The robbers stole everything from them. He gave them over to their enemies who were all around them. Israel wasn't able to fight against them anymore and win. 15When Israel went out to fight, the LORD's power was against them. He let their enemies win the battle over them. The LORD had warned them with an oath that it would happen. And now they were suffering terribly.

16Then the LORD gave them leaders. The leaders saved them from the power of those robbers. 17But the people wouldn't listen to their leaders. They weren't faithful to the LORD. They joined themselves to other gods and worshiped them. They didn't obey the LORD's commands as their people before them had done. They quickly turned away from the path their people had taken.

18When the LORD gave them a leader, he was with that leader. He saved the people from the power of their enemies. He did it as long as the leader lived. He was very sorry for the people. They groaned because of what their enemies did to them. The enemies beat them down. They treated them badly.

19But when the leader died, the people returned to their evil ways. The things they did were even more sinful than the things their people before them had done. They followed other gods. They served them. They worshiped them. They refused to give up their evil practices. They wouldn't change their stubborn ways.

20So the LORD's anger burned against the people of Israel. He said, "This nation has broken my covenant. I made it with their people of long ago. But this nation has not listened to me. 21Joshua left some nations in the land when he died. I will not drive those nations out to make room for you anymore. 22I will use them to put Israel to the test. I will see whether Israel will live the way I want them to. I will see whether they will follow my path, just as their people did long ago."

23The LORD had let those nations remain in the land. He didn't drive them out right away. He didn't hand them over to Joshua.

Judges 3

[1]The LORD left some nations in the land. He left them there in order to put the people of Israel to the test. He did it for all those who hadn't lived through any of the wars in Canaan. [2]He wanted to teach the men in Israel who had never been in battle before. He wanted them to learn how to fight. [3]So he left the five rulers of the Philistines. He left the people of Canaan and the people of Sidon. He left the Hivites who were living in the Lebanon mountains. They lived in the area that was between Mount Baal Hermon and Lebo Hamath.

[4]The LORD left those nations where they were in order to put Israel to the test. He wanted to see whether they would obey his commands. He had given those commands through Moses to their people of long ago.

[5]So the people of Israel lived among the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. [6]They got married to the daughters of those people. They gave their own daughters to the sons of those people. And they served the gods of those people.

OTHNIEL

[7]The people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. They forgot the LORD their God. They served the gods that were named after Baal. They also served the goddesses that were named after Asherah.

[8]So the LORD's anger burned against Israel. He gave them over to the power of Cushan-Rishathaim. He was the king of Aram Naharaim. For eight years Israel was under his rule.

[9]They cried out to the LORD. Then he gave them a man to save them. His name was Othniel, the son of Kenaz. He was Caleb's younger brother. [10]The Spirit of the LORD came on Othniel. So he became Israel's leader. He went to war. The LORD handed Cushan-Rishathaim, the king of Aram, over to him. Othniel overpowered him.

[11]So the land was at peace for 40 years. Then Othniel, the son of Kenaz, died.

EHUD

[12]Once again the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. Because they did that, the LORD gave Eglon power over Israel. Eglon was the king of Moab. [13]He got the Ammonites and Amalekites to join him. All of them came and attacked Israel. They took over Jericho. Jericho was also known as The City of Palm Trees. [14]For 18 years the people of Israel were under the rule of Eglon, the king of Moab.

[15]Again the people of Israel cried out to the LORD. Then he gave them a man to save them. His name was Ehud, the son of Gera. Ehud was left-handed. He was from the tribe of Benjamin.

The people of Israel sent Ehud to Eglon, the king of Moab. They sent him to give the king what he required them to bring him. [16]Ehud had made a sword that had two edges. It was about a foot and a half long. He tied it to his right leg under his clothes. [17]Eglon, the king of Moab, was a very fat man. Ehud gave him the gift he had brought. [18]After that, he sent away those who had carried it.

[19]At the place where some statues of gods stood near Gilgal, Ehud turned back. He said, “King Eglon, I have a secret message for you.”

The king said, “I want everyone to be quiet.” And all of his attendants left him.

[20]Then Ehud approached him. King Eglon was sitting alone in the upstairs room of his summer palace. Ehud said, “I have a message from God for you.” So the king got up from his seat.

[21]Then Ehud reached out his left hand. He pulled out the sword that was tied to his right leg. He stuck it into the king’s stomach. [22]Even the handle sank in after the blade. The blade came right out the king’s back. Ehud didn’t pull the sword out. And the fat closed over it.

[23]Ehud went out to the porch. He shut the doors of the upstairs room behind him. Then he locked them.

[24]After he had gone, the servants came. They found the doors of the upstairs room locked. They said, “Eglon must be going to the toilet in the inside room of the house.”

[25]They waited for a long time. They waited so long they became worried. But

the king still didn’t open the doors of the room. So they took a key and unlocked them. There they saw their king. He had fallen to the floor. He was dead.

26While Eglon’s servants had been waiting, Ehud had gotten away. He passed by the statues of gods and escaped to Seirah. 27There in the hill country of Ephraim he blew a trumpet. Then he led the people of Israel down from the hills.

28“Follow me,” Ehud ordered. “The LORD has handed your enemy Moab over to you.”

So they followed him down. They took over the only places where people could go across the Jordan River to get to Moab. They didn’t let anyone go across. 29At that time they struck down about 10,000 men of Moab. All of those men were strong and powerful. But not even one escaped. 30That day Moab was brought under the rule of Israel.

So the land was at peace for 80 years.

SHAMGAR

31After Ehud, Shamgar became the next leader. He was the son of Anath. He struck down 600 Philistines with a large, pointed stick that was used to drive oxen. He saved Israel too.

Deborah

Judges 4

[1]After Ehud died, the people of Israel once again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD.

[2]So the LORD gave them over to the power of Jabin. He was a king in Canaan. He ruled in Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera. Sisera lived in Harosheth Haggoyim. [3]Jabin used 900 chariots that had some iron parts. He treated the people of Israel very badly for 20 years. So they cried out to the LORD for help.

[4]Deborah was a prophet. She was the wife of Lappidoth. She was leading Israel at that time. [5]Under The Palm Tree of Deborah she served the people as their judge. That place was between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim. The people of Israel came to her there. They came to have her decide cases for them. She settled matters between them.

[6]Deborah sent for Barak. He was the son of Abinoam. Barak was from Kedesh in the land of Naphtali. Deborah said to Barak, "The LORD, the God of Israel, is giving you a command. He says, 'Go! Take 10,000 men from the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun with you. Then lead the way to Mount Tabor. [7]I will draw Sisera into a trap. He is the commander of Jabin's army. I will bring him, his chariots and his troops to the Kishon River. There 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]"All right," Deborah said. "I'll go with you. But because of the way you are doing this, you won't receive any honor. The LORD will hand Sisera over to a woman."

So Deborah went to Kedesh with Barak. [10]There he sent for Zebulun and Naphtali. And 10,000 men followed him. Deborah also went with him.

[11]Heber, the Kenite, had left the other Kenites. They came from the family line of Hobab. He was the brother-in-law of Moses. Heber set up his tent by the

large tree in Zaanannim near Kedesh.

12Sisera was told that Barak, the son of Abinoam, had gone up to Mount
Tabor. 13So Sisera gathered together his 900 chariots that had some iron parts.
He also gathered all of his men together. He brought them from Harosheth
Haggoyim to the Kishon River.

14Then Deborah said to Barak, “Go! Today the LORD will hand Sisera over to
you. Hasn’t the LORD gone ahead of you?” So Barak went down Mount Tabor.
His 10,000 men followed him.

15As Barak’s men marched out, the LORD drove Sisera away from the field of
battle. He scattered all of Sisera’s chariots. Barak’s men struck down Sisera’s
army with their swords. Sisera left his chariot behind. He ran away on foot.

16But Barak chased Sisera’s chariots and army. He chased them all the way to
Harosheth Haggoyim. All of Sisera’s men were killed with swords. Not even
one was left.

17But Sisera ran away on foot. He ran to the tent of Jael. She was the wife of
Heber, the Kenite. Sisera ran there because Heber’s family was friendly toward
Jabin, the king of Hazor.

18Jael went out to meet Sisera. “Come in, sir,” she said. “Come right in.
Don’t be afraid.” So he entered her tent. Then she covered him up.

19“I’m thirsty,” he said. “Please give me some water.” So Jael opened a bottle
of milk. The bottle was made out of animal skin. She gave him a drink of milk.
Then she covered him up again.

20“Stand in the doorway of the tent,” he told her. “Someone might come by
and ask you, ‘Is anyone here?’ If that happens, say ‘No.’ ”

21But Heber’s wife Jael picked up a tent stake and a hammer. She went
quietly over to Sisera. He was lying there, fast asleep. He was very tired. She
drove the stake through his head right into the ground. So he died.

22Barak came by because he was chasing Sisera. Jael went out to meet him.
“Come right in,” she said. “I’ll show you the man you are looking for.” So he
went in with her. Sisera was lying there with the stake through his head. He
was dead.

23On that day God brought Jabin under Israel’s control. He was a king in
Canaan. 24Israel’s power grew stronger and stronger against Jabin, a king in
Canaan. They became so strong that they destroyed him.

The Song of Deborah

Judges 5

[1]On that day Deborah and Barak sang a song. Barak was the son of Abinoam.
Here is what Deborah and Barak sang.

[2]"The princes in Israel lead the way.
The people follow them just because they want to.
Praise the LORD!

[3]"Kings, hear this! Rulers, listen!
I will sing to the LORD. I will sing.
I will make music to the LORD. He is the God of Israel.

[4]"LORD, you went out from Mount Seir.
You marched out from the land of Edom.
The earth shook. The heavens poured.
The clouds poured down their water.
[5]The mountains shook because of the LORD. He was at Mount Sinai.
They shook because of the LORD. He is the God of Israel.

[6]"The roads were deserted. So travelers used the winding paths.
That happened in the days of Shamgar, the son of Anath.
It happened in the days of Jael.
[7]Life in the villages of Israel stopped.
It stopped until I, Deborah, came.
I came as a mother in Israel.
[8]The people chose new gods.
Then war came to the city gates.
But no shields or spears were seen anywhere.
There weren't any among 40,000 men in Israel.
[9]My heart is with the princes in Israel.
It's with the people who follow them just because they want to.
Praise the LORD!

10 “Some of you ride on white donkeys.
Some of you sit on your saddle blankets.
Some of you walk along the road.
Think about 11 the voices of the singers at the watering places.
They sing about the right things the LORD does.
They sing about the right things his warriors in Israel do.

“The people of the LORD
went down to the city gates.
12 ‘Wake up, Deborah! Wake up!’ they said.
‘Wake up! Wake up! Begin to sing!
Barak, get up!
Son of Abinoam, capture your prisoners!’

13 “Then the people who were left came down to the nobles.
The people of the LORD
came to me against the powerful enemy.
14 Some came from the part of Ephraim where some Amalekites lived.
Benjamin was with the people who followed Ephraim.
Captains came down from Makir.
Those who rule like commanders came down from Zebulun.
15 The princes of Issachar were with Deborah.
The men of Issachar were with Barak.
They rushed behind him into the valley.
In the territories of Reuben,
men looked deeply into their hearts.
16 Why did they stay among the campfires?
Why did they stay to hear shepherds whistling for the flocks?
In the territories of Reuben,
men looked deeply into their hearts.
17 Gilead stayed east of the Jordan River.
Why did Dan stay near the ships?
The men of Asher remained on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea.
They stayed in their safe harbors.
18 The people of Zebulun put their very lives in danger.
So did Naphtali on the hills in the open country.

19 “Kings came and fought.
The kings of Canaan fought
at Taanach by the streams of Megiddo.
But they didn’t carry any silver away.

They didn’t take anything at all.
20From the heavens the stars fought.
From the sky they fought against Sisera.
21The Kishon River swept them away.
The Kishon is a very old river.
My spirit, march on! Be strong!
22The hoofs of the horses pounded like thunder.
The powerful horses of our enemies galloped away.
23‘Let Meroz be cursed,’ said the angel of the LORD.
‘Let bitter curses fall on its people.
They did not come to help the LORD.
They did not come to help him against our powerful enemies.’

24“May Jael be the most blessed woman of all.
May the wife of the Kenite Heber be blessed.
May she be the most blessed woman of all those who live in tents.
25Sisera asked for water. She gave him milk.
In a bowl that was fit for nobles she brought him buttermilk.
26Her hand reached out for a tent stake.
Her right hand reached for a hammer.
She hit Sisera. She crushed his head.
She drove the stake right through his head.
27He sank down. He fell at her feet.
He was lying there.
At her feet he sank down. He fell.
He fell where he sank down.
That’s where he died.

28“Sisera’s mother looked out through the window.
From behind the wooden screen she cried out.
‘Why is his chariot taking so long to get here?’ she said.
‘Why can’t I hear the noise of his chariots yet?’
29Her wisest ladies answer her.
And here’s what she keeps saying to herself.
30She says, ‘They must be finding riches to bring back.
They must be dividing them up.
Each man is getting a woman or two.
They are giving colorful clothes to Sisera.
The clothes are very beautiful.
He will bring some for me to wear.

The men must be finding many things to bring home.’

31“LORD, may all of your enemies be destroyed.
But may those who love you be like the morning sun.
May they be like the sun when it shines the brightest.”

So the land was at peace for 40 years.

Gideon

Judges 6

[1]Once again the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. So for seven years he handed them over to the people of Midian.

[2]The Midianites treated the people of Israel very badly. That's why they made hiding places for themselves. They hid in holes in the mountains. They also hid in caves and in other safe places.

[3]Each year the people planted their crops. When they did, the Midianites came into the country and attacked it. So did the Amalekites and other tribes from the east. [4]They camped on the land. They destroyed the crops all the way to Gaza. They didn't spare any living thing for Israel. They didn't spare sheep or cattle or donkeys.

[5]The Midianites came up with their livestock and tents. They came like huge numbers of locusts. It was impossible to count all of those men and their camels. They came into the land to destroy it.

[6]Midian made the people of Israel very poor. So they cried out to the LORD for help.

[7]They cried out to the LORD because of what Midian had done. [8]So he sent a prophet to them. The prophet said, "The LORD is the God of Israel. He says, 'I brought you up out of Egypt. That is the land where you were slaves. [9]I saved you from the power of Egypt. I saved you from all those who were beating you down. I drove the people of Canaan out to make room for you. I gave you their land.

[10]" 'I said to you, "I am the LORD your God. You are now living in the land of the Amorites. Do not worship their gods." But you have not listened to me.' "

[11]The angel of the LORD came. He sat down under an oak tree in Ophrah. The tree belonged to Joash. He was from the family line of Abiezer.

Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress at Ophrah. He was the son of Joash. Gideon was threshing in a winepress to hide the wheat from the Midianites.

12The angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon. He said, “Mighty warrior, the
LORD is with you.”

13“But sir,” Gideon replied, “you say the LORD is with us. Then why has all of
this happened to us? Where are all of the wonderful things he has done? Our
parents told us about them. They said, ‘Didn’t the LORD bring us up out of
Egypt?’ But now the LORD has deserted us. He has handed us over to Midian.”

14The LORD turned to Gideon. He said to him, “You are strong. Go and save
Israel from the power of Midian. I am sending you.”

15“But Lord,” Gideon asked, “how can I possibly save Israel? My family
group is the weakest in the tribe of Manasseh. And I’m the least important
member of my family.”

16The LORD answered, “I will be with you. So you will strike down the men
of Midian all at one time.”

17Gideon replied, “If you are pleased with me, give me a special sign. Then
I’ll know that it’s really you talking to me. 18Please don’t go away until I come
back. I’ll bring my offering and set it down in front of you.”

The LORD said, “I will wait until you return.”

19Gideon went and prepared a young goat. From more than half a bushel of
flour he made bread without using yeast. He put the meat in a basket. In a pot
he put soup that was made from the meat. Then he brought all of it and offered
it to the LORD under the oak tree.

20The angel of God spoke to Gideon. He said, “Take the meat and the bread.
Place them on this rock. Then pour out the soup.” So Gideon did it.

21The angel of the LORD had a wooden staff in his hand. With the tip of his
staff he touched the meat and the bread. Fire blazed out of the rock. It burned
up the meat and the bread. Then the angel of the LORD disappeared.

22Gideon realized it was the angel of the LORD. He cried out, “LORD and King,
I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face!”

23But the LORD said to him, “May peace be with you! Do not be afraid. You
are not going to die.”

24So Gideon built an altar to honor the LORD there. He called it The LORD Is
Peace. It still stands in Ophrah to this very day. Ophrah is in the territory that
belongs to the family line of Abiezer.

25That same night the LORD spoke to Gideon. He said, “Get the second bull
from your father’s herd. Get the one that is seven years old. Tear down the altar
your father built in honor of Baal. Cut down the pole that is beside it. The pole
is used to worship the goddess Asherah.

26“Then build the right kind of altar. Build it in honor of the LORD your God.
Build it on top of this hill. Then use the wood from the Asherah pole you cut
down. Sacrifice the second bull as a burnt offering.”

27So Gideon went and got ten of his servants. He did just as the LORD had told
him. But he was afraid of his family. He was also afraid of the men in the town.
So he did everything at night instead of during the day.

28In the morning the men in the town got up. They saw that Baal’s altar had
been torn down. The Asherah pole that was beside it had been cut down. And
the second bull had been sacrificed on the new altar that had been built.

29They asked each other, “Who did this?”

They looked into the matter carefully. Someone told them, “Gideon, the son
of Joash, did it.”

30The men in the town spoke to Joash. They ordered him, “Bring your son
out here. He must die. He has torn down Baal’s altar. He has cut down the
Asherah pole that was beside it.”

31But Joash replied to the angry crowd that was around him. He said, “Are
you going to stand up for Baal? Are you trying to save him? Those who stand
up for him will be put to death by morning! Is Baal really a god? If he is, he
can stand up for himself when someone tears down his altar.”

32That’s why Gideon was called Jerub-Baal that day. He said, “Let Baal take
his stand against him.” Gideon had torn down Baal’s altar.

33All of the Midianites and Amalekites gathered their armies together. Other
tribes from the east joined them. All of them went across the Jordan River.
They camped in the Valley of Jezreel.

34Then the Spirit of the LORD came on Gideon. So Gideon blew the trumpet to
send for the men of Abiezer. He told them to follow him. 35He sent messengers
all through Manasseh. He called for the men of Manasseh to fight. He also sent
messengers to the men of Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali. So all of those men
went up to join the others.

36Gideon said to God, “You promised you would use me to save Israel.

[37]Please do something for me. I'll put a piece of wool on the threshing floor. Suppose dew is only on the wool tomorrow morning. And suppose the ground all around it is dry. Then I will know that you will use me to save Israel. I'll know that your promise will come true."

[38]And that's what happened. Gideon got up early the next day. He squeezed the dew out of the wool. The water filled a bowl.

[39]Then Gideon said to God, "Don't let your anger burn against me. Let me ask you for just one more thing. Let me use the wool for one more test. This time make the wool dry. And cover the ground with dew."

[40]So that night God did it. Only the wool was dry. The ground all around it was covered with dew.

Gideon Wins the Battle Over the Midianites

Judges 7

1 Early in the morning Jerub-Baal and all of his men camped at the spring of
Harod. Jerub-Baal was another name for Gideon. The camp of Midian was
north of Gideon's camp. It was in the valley near the hill of Moreh.

2 The LORD spoke to Gideon. He said, "I want to hand Midian over to you. But
you have too many men for me to do that. I do not want Israel to brag that their
own strength has saved them. 3 So here is what I want you to announce to your
men. Tell them, 'Those who tremble with fear can turn back. They can leave
Mount Gilead.' " So 22,000 men left. But 10,000 remained.

4 The LORD spoke to Gideon again. He said, "There are still too many men. So
take them down to the water. I will sort them out for you there. If I say, 'This
one will go with you,' he will go. But if I say, 'That one will not go with you,'
he will not go."

5 So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the LORD spoke to him. He
said, "Some men will drink the way dogs do. They will lap up the water with
their tongues. Separate them from those who get down on their knees to drink."

6 Three hundred men lapped up the water. They brought it up to their mouths
with their hands. All of the rest got down on their knees to drink.

7 The LORD spoke to Gideon. He said, "With the help of the 300 men who
lapped up the water I will save you. I will hand the Midianites over to you. Let
all of the other men go home."

8 So Gideon sent the rest of the men of Israel to their tents. But he kept the
300 men. They took over the supplies and trumpets the others had left.

The Midianites had set up their camp in the valley below where Gideon was.

9 During that night the LORD spoke to Gideon. He said, "Get up. Go down
against the camp. I am going to hand it over to you. 10 But what if you are
afraid to attack? Then go down to the camp with your servant Purah. 11 Listen
to what they are saying. After that, you will not be afraid to attack the camp."

So Gideon and his servant Purah went down to the edge of the camp. 12 The

Midianites had settled in the valley. So had the Amalekites and all of the other tribes from the east. There were so many of them that they looked like huge numbers of locusts. Like the grains of sand on the seashore, their camels couldn't be counted.

13 Gideon arrived just as a man was telling a friend about his dream. "I had a dream," he was saying. "A round loaf of barley bread came rolling into the camp of Midian. It hit a tent with great force. The tent turned over and fell down flat."

14 His friend replied, "That can only be the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash. Gideon is from Israel. God has handed the Midianites over to him. He has given him the whole camp."

15 Gideon heard the man explain what the dream meant. Then Gideon worshiped God. He returned to the camp of Israel. He called out, "Get up! The LORD has handed the Midianites over to you."

16 Gideon separated the 300 men into three companies. He put a trumpet and an empty jar into the hands of each man. And he put a torch inside each jar.

17 "Watch me," he told them. "Do what I do. I'll go to the edge of the enemy camp. Then do exactly as I do. 18 I and everyone who is with me will blow our trumpets. Then blow your trumpets from your positions all around the camp. And shout the battle cry, 'For the LORD and for Gideon!' "

19 Gideon and the 100 men who were with him reached the edge of the enemy camp. It was about ten o'clock at night. It was just after the guard had been changed. Gideon and his men blew their trumpets. They broke the jars that were in their hands.

20 The three companies blew their trumpets. They smashed their jars. They held their torches in their left hands. They held in their right hands the trumpets they were going to blow. Then they shouted the battle cry, "A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!"

21 Each man stayed in his position around the camp. But all of the Midianites ran away in fear. They were crying out as they ran.

22 When the 300 trumpets were blown, the LORD caused all of the men in the enemy camp to start fighting each other. They attacked each other with their swords. The army ran away to Beth Shittah toward Zererah. They ran all the way to the border of Abel Meholah near Tabbath.

23 The men of Israel from the tribes of Naphtali, Asher and all of Manasseh

were called out. They chased the Midianites.

[24]Gideon sent messengers through the entire hill country of Ephraim. They said, “Come on down against the Midianites. Take control of the waters of the Jordan River before they get there. Do it all the way to Beth Barah.”

So all of the men of Ephraim were called out. They took control of the waters of the Jordan all the way to Beth Barah.

[25]They also captured Oreb and Zeeb. Those men were two of the Midianite leaders. The men of Ephraim killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb. They killed Zeeb at the winepress of Zeeb. They chased the Midianites. And they brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon. He was by the Jordan River.

Gideon Destroys Midian's Whole Army

Judges 8

[1]The men of Ephraim spoke to Gideon. They asked, "Why have you treated
us like this? Why didn't you ask us to help you when you went out to fight
against Midian?" They spoke very sharply against Gideon.

[2]But he answered them, "What I've done isn't anything compared to what
you have done. After Ephraim's grapes have been gathered, isn't what is left
over better than all of the grapes that have been gathered from Abiezer's vines?
[3]God handed Oreb and Zeeb over to you. They were Midianite leaders. So
what was I able to do compared to what you did?"

After Gideon had said that, they didn't feel angry with him anymore.

[4]Gideon and his 300 men were very tired. But they kept on chasing their
enemies. They came to the Jordan River and went across it. [5]Gideon spoke to
the men of Succoth. He said, "Give my troops some bread. They are worn out.
And I'm still chasing Zebah and Zalmunna. They are the kings of Midian."

[6]But the officials of Succoth objected. They said, "Have you already killed
Zebah and Zalmunna? Have you cut their hands off and brought them back to
prove it? If you haven't, why should we give bread to your troops?"

[7]Gideon replied, "The LORD will hand Zebah and Zalmunna over to me.
When he does, I'll tear your skin with thorns from desert bushes."

[8]From there Gideon went up to Peniel. He asked its men for the same thing.
But they answered as the men of Succoth had. [9]So he said to the men of Peniel,
"I'll be back after I've won the battle. Then I'll tear down this tower."

[10]Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor. They had an army of about 15,000
men. That's all that was left of the armies of the tribes from the east. About
120,000 men who carried swords had died in battle.

[11]Gideon went up the trail the people of the desert had made. It ran east of
Nobah and Jogbehah. He attacked the army by surprise. [12]Zebah and Zalmunna
ran away. They were the two kings of Midian. Gideon chased them and
captured them. He destroyed their whole army.

[13]Then Gideon, the son of Joash, returned from the battle. He came back through the Pass of Heres.

[14]He caught a young man from Succoth. He asked him about the elders of the town. The young man wrote down for him the names of Succoth's 77 officials.

[15]Then Gideon came and spoke to the men of Succoth. He said, "Here are Zebah and Zalmunna. You made fun of me because of them. You said, 'Have you already killed Zebah and Zalmunna? Have you cut their hands off and brought them back to prove it? If you haven't, why should we give bread to your tired men?' "

[16]Gideon went and got the elders of the town. Then he taught the men of Succoth a lesson. He tore their skin with thorns from desert bushes. [17]He also pulled down the tower at Peniel. He killed the men in the town.

[18]Then he spoke to Zebah and Zalmunna. He asked, "What were the men like that you killed at Tabor?"

"Men like you," they answered. "Each one walked as if he were a prince."

[19]Gideon replied, "Those were my brothers. They were the sons of my own mother. You can be sure that the LORD lives. And you can be just as sure that if you had spared their lives, I wouldn't kill you."

[20]Then Gideon turned to his oldest son Jether. He said, "Kill them!" But Jether didn't pull out his sword. He was only a boy. So he was afraid.

[21]Zebah and Zalmunna said, "Come on. Do it yourself. 'The older the man, the stronger he is.' "

So Gideon stepped forward and killed them. Then he took the moon-shaped necklaces off the necks of their camels.

Gideon Refuses to Be Israel's Ruler

[22]The people of Israel spoke to Gideon. They said, "Rule over us. We want you, your son and your grandson to be our rulers. You have saved us from the power of Midian."

[23]But Gideon told them, "I will not rule over you. My son won't rule over you either. The LORD will rule over you."

[24]He continued, "I do ask one thing. I want each of you to give me an earring.

I’m talking about the earrings you took from your enemies.” It was the practice of the people in the family line of Ishmael to wear gold earrings.

25The people of Israel said, “We’ll be glad to give them to you.” So they spread out a piece of clothing. Each man threw a ring on it from what he had taken. 26The weight of the gold rings Gideon asked for was 43 pounds. That didn’t include the moon-shaped necklaces the kings of Midian had worn. It didn’t include their other necklaces or their purple clothes. And it didn’t include the gold chains that had been on the necks of their camels.

27Gideon made an object out of all of the gold. It looked like the linen apron the high priest of Israel wore. He placed it in Ophrah. That was his hometown. All of the people of Israel worshiped it there. They weren’t faithful to the LORD. So the gold object became a trap to Gideon and his family.

Gideon Dies

28Israel brought Midian under their control. Midian wasn’t able to attack Israel anymore. So the land was at peace for 40 years. The peace lasted as long as Gideon was living.

29Jerub-Baal, the son of Joash, went back home to live. Jerub-Baal was another name for Gideon. 30He had 70 sons of his own. That’s because he had a lot of wives. 31And he had a concubine who lived in Shechem. She also had a son by him. Gideon named that son Abimelech.

32Gideon, the son of Joash, died when he was very old. His body was buried in the tomb of his father Joash in Ophrah. Ophrah was in the territory that belonged to the family line of Abiezer.

33As soon as Gideon had died, the people of Israel joined themselves to the gods that were named after Baal. Israel wasn’t faithful to the LORD. They worshiped Baal-Berith as their god. 34They forgot what the LORD their God had done for them. He had saved them from the power of their enemies who were all around them.

35Jerub-Baal had done many good things for the people of Israel. But they weren’t kind to his family. Jerub-Baal was another name for Gideon.

Abimelech Becomes King of Shechem

Judges 9

1 Abimelech was the son of Jerub-Baal. He went to his mother's brothers in
Shechem. He spoke to them and to all of the members of his mother's family
group. He said, 2 "Speak to all of the citizens of Shechem. Tell them, 'You can
have all 70 of Jerub-Baal's sons rule over you. Or you can have just one man
rule over you. Which would you rather have?' Remember, I'm your own flesh
and blood."

3 The brothers told all of that to the citizens of Shechem. Then the people
decided to follow Abimelech. They said, "He's related to us."

4 They gave him 28 ounces of silver. They had taken it from the temple of the
god Baal-Berith. Abimelech used it to hire some men. They were wild. They
weren't good for anything. They became his followers.

5 Abimelech went to his father's home in Ophrah. There on a big rock he
murdered his 70 brothers. All of them were the sons of Jerub-Baal. But Jotham
escaped by hiding. He was Jerub-Baal's youngest son.

6 All of the citizens of Shechem and Beth Millo came together. They gathered
at the stone pillar that was beside the large tree in Shechem. They wanted to
crown Abimelech as their king.

7 Jotham was told about it. So he climbed up on top of Mount Gerizim. He
shouted down to them, "Citizens of Shechem! Listen to me! Then God will
listen to you. 8 One day the trees went out to anoint a king for themselves. They
said to an olive tree, 'Be our king.'

9 "But the olive tree answered, 'Should I give up my olive oil? It's used to
honor gods and people alike. Should I give that up just to rule over the trees?'

10 "Next, the trees spoke to a fig tree. They said, 'Come and be our king.'

11 "But the fig tree replied, 'Should I give up my fruit? It's so good and sweet.
Should I give that up just to rule over the trees?'

12 "Then the trees spoke to a vine. They said, 'Come and be our king.'

13“But the vine answered, ‘Should I give up my wine? It cheers up gods and
people alike. Should I give that up just to rule over the trees?’

14“Finally, all of the trees spoke to a bush that had thorns. They said, ‘Come
and be our king.’

15“The bush spoke to the trees. It said, ‘Do you really want to anoint me as
king over you? If you do, come and rest in my shade. But if you don’t, I will
destroy you! Fire will come out of me and burn up the cedar trees of Lebanon!’

16“Did you act in an honest way when you made Abimelech your king? Did
you really do the right thing? Have you been fair to Jerub-Baal and his family?
Have you given him the honor he’s worthy of?

17“Remember that my father fought for you. He put his life in danger for you.
He saved you from the power of Midian. 18But today you have turned against
my father’s family. You have murdered his 70 sons on a big rock. Abimelech is
only the son of my father’s female slave. But you have made him king over the
citizens of Shechem. You have done that because he’s related to you.

19“Have you citizens of Shechem and Beth Millo acted in an honest way
toward Jerub-Baal? Have you done the right thing to his family today? If you
have, may you be happy with Abimelech! And may he be happy with you!
20But if you haven’t, let fire come out from Abimelech and burn you up! And
let fire come out from you and burn Abimelech up!”

21Then Jotham ran away. He escaped to Beer. He lived there because he was
afraid of his brother Abimelech.

22Abimelech ruled over Israel for three years. 23Then God sent an evil spirit
to cause trouble between Abimelech and the citizens of Shechem. They turned
against Abimelech. They decided not to follow him anymore.

24God made that happen because of what Abimelech had done to Jerub-
Baal’s 70 sons. He had spilled their blood. God wanted to pay back their
brother Abimelech for doing that. He also wanted to pay back the citizens of
Shechem. They had helped Abimelech murder his brothers.

25The citizens of Shechem opposed Abimelech. So they hid some men on top
of the hills. They wanted them to attack and rob everyone who passed by.
Abimelech was told about it.

26Gaal and his relatives moved into Shechem. He was the son of Ebed. The
citizens of Shechem put their trust in Gaal.

[27]The people of Shechem went out into the fields. They gathered the grapes. They pressed the juice out of them by stomping on them. Then they held a feast in the temple of their god. While they were eating and drinking, they called down curses on Abimelech.

[28]Then Gaal, the son of Ebed, spoke up. “Who is Abimelech?” he said. “And who is Shechem? Why should we be under Abimelech’s rule? Isn’t he Jerub-Baal’s son? Isn’t Zebul his helper? It would be better to serve the men of Hamor. He was the father of Shechem. So why should we serve Abimelech? [29]I wish these people were under my command. Then I would get rid of him. I would say to him, ‘Call out your whole army!’ ”

[30]Zebul was the governor of Shechem. He heard about what Gaal, the son of Ebed, had said. So he burned with anger.

[31]Zebul sent messengers to Abimelech secretly. They said, “Gaal, the son of Ebed, has come to Shechem. His relatives have come with him. They are stirring up the city against you. [32]So come with your men during the night. Hide in the fields and wait. [33]In the morning at sunrise, attack the city. Gaal and his men will come out against you. Then do what you can.”

[34]So Abimelech and all of his troops started out at night. They went into their hiding places near Shechem. Abimelech had separated them into four companies.

[35]Gaal, the son of Ebed, had already gone out. He was standing at the entrance of the city gate. He had arrived there just as Abimelech and his troops came out of their hiding places.

[36]Gaal saw them. He said to Zebul, “Look! People are coming down from the tops of the mountains!”

Zebul replied, “You are wrong. Those aren’t people. They are just the shadows of the mountains.”

[37]But Gaal spoke up again. He said, “Look! People are coming down from the center of the land. Another company is coming from the direction of the fortune tellers’ tree.”

[38]Then Zebul said to Gaal, “Where is your big talk now? You said, ‘Who is Abimelech? Why should we be under his rule?’ Aren’t these the people you looked down on? Go out and fight against them!”

[39]So Gaal led the citizens out of Shechem. They fought against Abimelech.

40He chased Gaal from the field of battle. Many men were wounded as they ran
away. Abimelech chased them all the way to the entrance of the city gate. 41He
stayed in Arumah. Zebul drove Gaal and his relatives out of Shechem.

42The next day the people of Shechem went out to work in the fields.
Abimelech was told about it. 43So he gathered his men together. He separated
them into three companies. Then he hid them in the fields and told them to
wait. When he saw the people coming out of the city, he got up to attack them.

44Abimelech and the men who were with him ran forward. They placed
themselves at the entrance of the city gate. Then the other two companies
rushed over to the people who were in the fields. There they struck them down.
45Abimelech kept up his attack against the city all day long. He didn't stop
until he had captured it. Then he killed its people. He destroyed the city. He
scattered salt on it to make sure that nothing would be able to grow there.

46The citizens who were in the tower of Shechem heard about what was
happening. So they went to the safest place in the temple of the god El-Berith.

47Abimelech heard that they had gathered together there. 48He and all of his
men went up Mount Zalmon. He got an ax and cut off some branches. He
carried them on his shoulders. He ordered the men who were with him to do
the same thing. "Quick!" he said. "Do what you have seen me do!"

49So all of the men cut branches and followed Abimelech. They piled them
against the place where the people had gone for safety. Then they set the place
on fire with the people inside. There were about 1,000 men and women in the
tower of Shechem. All of them died.

50Next, Abimelech went to Thebez. He surrounded it. Then he attacked it and
captured it.

51But inside the city there was a strong tower. All of the people in the city ran
to it for safety. All of the men and women went into it. They locked themselves
in. They climbed up on the roof of the tower. 52Abimelech went to the tower
and attacked it. He approached the entrance to the tower to set it on fire. 53But
a woman dropped a large millstone on him. It broke his head open.

54He quickly called out to the man who was carrying his armor. He said,
"Pull out your sword and kill me. Then people can't say, 'A woman killed
him.' " So his servant stuck his sword through him. And Abimelech died.
55When the people of Israel saw he was dead, they went home.

[56]That’s how God paid Abimelech back for the evil thing he had done to his father. He had murdered his 70 brothers. [57]God also made the men of Shechem pay for all of the evil things they had done. The curse of Jotham came down on them. He was the son of Jerub-Baal.

Tola

Judges 10

[1]Tola rose up to save Israel. That happened after the time of Abimelech. Tola was from the tribe of Issachar. He was the son of Puah, who was the son of Dodo. Tola lived in Shamir. It's in the hill country of Ephraim. [2]Tola led Israel for 23 years. After he died, his body was buried in Shamir.

Jair

[3]Jair became the leader after Tola. Jair was from the land of Gilead. He led Israel for 22 years. [4]He had 30 sons. They rode on 30 donkeys. They controlled 30 towns in Gilead. Those towns are called Havvoth Jair to this very day. [5]After Jair died, his body was buried in Kamon.

Jephthah

[6]Once again the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. They served the gods that were named after Baal. They served the goddesses that were named after Ashtoreth. They worshiped the gods of Aram and Sidon. They served the gods of Moab and Ammon. They also worshiped the gods of the Philistines. The people of Israel deserted the LORD. They didn't serve him anymore.

[7]So the LORD's anger burned against them. He handed them over to the Philistines and the Ammonites. [8]That year they broke Israel's power completely. They treated the people of Israel badly for 18 years. Those people lived east of the Jordan River. They lived in Gilead. That was the land of the Amorites.

[9]The Ammonites also went across the Jordan. They crossed over to fight against Judah, Benjamin and the people of Ephraim. Israel was suffering

terribly.

10Then the people of Israel cried out to the LORD. They said, “We have sinned
against you. We have deserted our God. We have served the gods that are
named after Baal.”

11The LORD replied, “The Egyptians and Amorites beat you down. So did the
Ammonites and Philistines. 12And so did the Amalekites and the people of
Sidon and Maon. Each time you cried out to me for help. And I saved you from
their power.

13“But you have deserted me. You have served other gods. So I will not save
you anymore. 14Go and cry out to the gods you have chosen. Let them save
you when you get into trouble!”

15But the people of Israel replied to the LORD. They said, “We have sinned.
Do to us what you think is best. But please save us now.” 16Then they got rid
of the strange gods that were among them. They served the LORD. And he
couldn’t stand to see Israel suffer anymore.

17The Ammonites were called together to fight. They camped in the land of
Gilead. Then the men of Israel gathered together. They camped at the city of
Mizpah.

18The leaders of Gilead spoke to each other. They said, “Who will lead the
attack against the Ammonites? That man will be the ruler of all of the people
who live in Gilead.”

Judges 11

[1]Jephthah was a mighty warrior. He was from the land of Gilead. His father's name was Gilead. Jephthah's mother was a prostitute.

[2]Gilead's wife also had sons by him. When they had grown up, they drove Jephthah away. "You aren't going to get any share of our family's property," they said. "You are the son of another woman."

[3]So Jephthah ran away from his brothers. He settled in the land of Tob. A group of men who weren't good for anything gathered around him there. And they followed him.

[4]Some time later, the Ammonites went to war against Israel. [5]So the elders of Gilead went to get Jephthah from the land of Tob. [6]"Come with us," they said. "Be our commander. Then we can fight against the Ammonites."

[7]Jephthah said to them, "Didn't you hate me? Didn't you drive me away from my father's house? Why are you coming to me only when you are in trouble?"

[8]The elders of Gilead replied to him. "You are right," they said. "That's why we're turning to you now. Come with us and fight against the Ammonites. Then you will be our leader. You will rule over everyone who lives in Gilead."

[9]Jephthah said, "Suppose you take me back to fight against the Ammonites. And suppose the LORD gives them over to me. Then will I really be your leader?"

[10]The elders of Gilead replied, "The LORD is our witness. We'll certainly do as you say." [11]So Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead. And the people made him their leader and commander. He went to Mizpah. There he repeated to the LORD everything he had said.

[12]Then Jephthah sent messengers to the king of Ammon. They asked, "What do you have against us? Why have you attacked our country?"

[13]The king of Ammon answered Jephthah's messengers. He said, "Israel came up out of Egypt. At that time they took my land away. They took all of the land that was between the Arnon River and the Jabbok River. It reached all the way to the Jordan River. Now give it back. Then there will be peace."

[14]Jephthah sent messengers back to the king of Ammon. [15]They said,

“Here is what Jephthah says to you. Israel didn’t take the land of Moab. They
didn’t take the land of Ammon. 16When Israel came up out of Egypt, they went
through the desert to the Red Sea. From there they went on to Kadesh.

17“Then 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 sent the same message to the king of Moab. But he refused too. So
Israel stayed at Kadesh.

18“Next, they traveled through the desert. They traveled along the borders of
the lands of Edom and Moab. They passed along the east side of the country of
Moab. They camped on the other side of the Arnon River. They didn’t enter the
territory of Moab. The Arnon River was Moab’s border.

19“Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon. He was the king of the Amorites.
He ruled in Heshbon. They said to him, ‘Let us pass through your country to
our own land.’

20“But Sihon didn’t trust Israel to pass through his territory. Instead, he
gathered all of his men together. They camped at Jahaz. And they fought
against Israel.

21“Then the LORD, the God of Israel, handed Sihon and all of his men over to
Israel. Israel won the battle over them. Amorites were living in the country at
that time. And Israel took over all of their land. 22They captured all of the land
that was between the Arnon River and the Jabbok River. It reached from the
desert all the way to the Jordan River.

23“The LORD, the God of Israel, has driven the Amorites out to make room for
his people. So what right do you have to take it over? 24You will take what
your god Chemosh gives you, won’t you? In the same way, we will take over
what the LORD our God has given us. 25Are you better than Balak, the son of
Zippor? Balak was the king of Moab. Did he ever argue with Israel? Did he
ever fight against them?

26“For 300 years Israel has been living in Heshbon and Aroer. They have
been living in the settlements that are around those cities. They have also been
living in all of the towns that are along the Arnon River. Why didn’t you take
those places back during that time?

27“I haven’t done anything wrong to you. But you are doing something wrong
to me. You have gone to war against me. The LORD is the Judge. So let him
decide our case today. Let him settle matters between the people of Israel and

the people of Ammon.”

28But the king of Ammon didn’t pay any attention to the message Jephthah sent him.

29Then the Spirit of the LORD came on Jephthah. He went across the territories of Gilead and Manasseh. He passed through Mizpah in the land of Gilead. From there he attacked the people of Ammon.

30Jephthah made a promise to the LORD. He said, “Hand the Ammonites over to me. 31If you do, here’s what I’ll do when I come back from winning the battle. Anything that comes out the door of my house to meet me will belong to you. I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering.”

32Then Jephthah went over to fight against the Ammonites. The LORD handed them over to him. 33Jephthah destroyed 20 towns between Aroer and the area of Minnith. He destroyed them all the way to Abel Keramim. So Israel brought Ammon under their control.

34Jephthah returned to his home in Mizpah. And guess who came out to meet him. It was his daughter! She was dancing to the music of tambourines. She was his only child. He didn’t have any other sons or daughters.

35When Jephthah saw her, he was so upset that he tore his clothes. He cried out, “My daughter! You have filled me with trouble and sorrow. I’ve made a promise to the LORD. And I can’t break it.”

36“My father,” she replied, “you have given your word to the LORD. So do to me just what you promised to do. The Ammonites were your enemies. And the LORD has paid them back for what they did to you.

37“But please do one thing for me,” she continued. “Give me two months to wander around in the hills. Let me sob there with my friends. I want to do that because I’ll never get married.”

38“You can go,” he said. He let her go for two months. She and her friends went into the hills. They were filled with sadness because she would never get married.

39After the two months were over, she returned to her father. He did to her just what he had promised to do. And she was a virgin.

So that became a practice in Israel. 40Each year the young women of Israel go

away for four days. They do it in honor of the daughter of Jephthah. He was from the land of Gilead.

Jephthah Wins the Battle Over Ephraim

Judges 12

[1]The men of Ephraim called out their troops. The troops went across the Jordan River to Zaphon. When they arrived, they said to Jephthah, “You went to fight against the Ammonites. Why didn’t you ask us to go with you? We’re going to burn down your house over your head.”

[2]Jephthah answered, “I and my people were taking part in a great struggle. We were at war with the Ammonites. I asked you for help. But you didn’t come to save me from their power. [3]I saw that you wouldn’t help. So I put my own life in danger. I went across the Jordan to fight against the Ammonites. The LORD helped me win the battle over them. So why have you come up today to fight against me?”

[4]Then Jephthah called the men of Gilead together. They fought against Ephraim. The men of Gilead struck them down. The people of Ephraim had said, “You people of Gilead are nothing but deserters from Ephraim and Manasseh.”

[5]The men of Gilead captured the places where people go across the Jordan River to get to Ephraim. Some men of Ephraim weren’t killed in the battle. When they arrived at the river, they would say, “Let us go across.”

Then the men of Gilead would ask each one, “Are you from Ephraim?” Suppose he replied, “No.” [6]Then they would say, “All right. Say ‘Shibboleth.’ ” If he said “Sibboleth,” the way he said the word would give him away. He couldn’t say it correctly. So they would grab hold of him. Then they would kill him at one of the places where people go across the Jordan. At that time, 42,000 men of Ephraim were killed.

[7]Jephthah led Israel for six years. Then he died. His body was buried in a town in Gilead. Jephthah was from the land of Gilead.

Ibzan, Elon and Abdon

[8]After Jephthah, Ibzan from Bethlehem led Israel. [9]He had 30 sons and 30 daughters. He gave his daughters to be married to men who were outside his family group. He brought in 30 young women to be married to his sons. Those women also came from outside his family group. Ibzan led Israel for seven years. [10]Then he died. His body was buried in Bethlehem.

[11]After Ibzan, Elon led Israel. He was from the tribe of Zebulun. Elon led Israel for ten years. [12]Then he died. His body was buried in Aijalon. It was in the land of Zebulun.

[13]After Elon, Abdon led Israel. Abdon was the son of Hillel. Abdon was from Pirathon. [14]He had 40 sons and 30 grandsons. They rode on 70 donkeys. He led Israel for eight years. [15]Then he died. His body was buried at Pirathon in Ephraim. Pirathon was in the hill country of the Amalekites. Abdon was the son of Hillel.

Samson Is Born

Judges 13

1 Once again the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. So
the LORD handed them over to the Philistines for 40 years.

2 A certain man from Zorah was named Manoah. He was from the tribe of
Dan. Manoah had a wife who wasn't able to have children.

3 The angel of the LORD appeared to Manoah's wife. He said, "You are not
able to have children. But you are going to become pregnant. You will have a
baby boy. 4 Make sure you do not drink any kind of wine. Also make sure you
do not eat anything that is 'unclean.'

5 "You will become pregnant. You will have a son. He must not use a razor on
his head. He must not cut his hair. That is because the boy will be a Nazirite.
He will be set apart to God from the day he is born. He will begin to save Israel
from the power of the Philistines."

6 Then the woman went to her husband. She told him, "A man of God came to
me. He looked like an angel of God. His appearance was so amazing that it
filled me with great wonder. I didn't ask him where he came from. And he
didn't tell me his name.

7 "But he said to me, 'You will become pregnant. You will have a son. So do
not drink any kind of wine. Do not eat anything that is "unclean." That is
because the boy will be a Nazirite. He will belong to God in a special way from
the day he is born until the day he dies.' "

8 Then Manoah prayed to the LORD. He said, "Lord, I beg you to let the man of
God you sent to us come again. He told us we would have a son. We want the
man of God to teach us how to bring up the boy."

9 God heard Manoah. And the angel of God came again to the woman. He
came while she was out in the field. But her husband Manoah wasn't with her.
10 The woman hurried to her husband. She told him, "He's here! The man who
appeared to me the other day is here!"

11 Manoah got up and followed his wife. When he came to the man, he spoke

to him. He said, “Are you the one who talked to my wife?”

“I am,” he replied.

12So Manoah asked him, “What will happen when your words come true? What rules should we follow for the boy’s life and work?”

13The angel of the LORD answered him. He said, “Your wife must do everything I have told her to do. 14She must not eat anything that comes from grapevines. She must not drink any kind of wine. She must not eat anything that is ‘unclean.’ She must do everything I have commanded her to do.”

15Manoah spoke to the angel of the LORD. He said, “We would like you to stay and eat. We want to prepare a young goat for you.”

16The angel of the LORD replied, “Even if I stay, I will not eat any of your food. But if you still want to prepare a burnt offering, you must offer it to the LORD.” Manoah didn’t realize it was the angel of the LORD.

17Then Manoah asked the angel of the LORD a question. “What is your name?” he said. “We want to honor you when your word comes true.”

18The angel replied, “Why are you asking me what my name is? You would not be able to understand it.”

19Manoah got a young goat. He brought it together with the grain offering. He sacrificed it on a rock to the LORD.

Then the LORD did an amazing thing. It happened while Manoah and his wife were watching. 20A flame blazed up from the altar toward heaven. The angel of the LORD rose up in the flame. When Manoah and his wife saw it, they fell with their faces to the ground.

21The angel of the LORD didn’t show himself again to Manoah and his wife. Then Manoah realized it was the angel of the LORD.

22“We’re going to die!” he said to his wife. “We’ve seen God!”

23But his wife answered, “The LORD doesn’t want to kill us. If he did, he wouldn’t have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering from us. He wouldn’t have shown us all of those things. He wouldn’t have told us we’re going to have a son.”

24Later, the woman had a baby boy. She named him Samson. As he grew up, the LORD blessed him. 25The Spirit of the LORD began to work in his life. It happened while he was in Mahaneh Dan. It’s between Zorah and Eshtaol.

Samson Gets Married

Judges 14

[1]Samson went down to Timnah. There he saw a young Philistine woman. [2]When he returned, he spoke to his father and mother. He said, “I’ve seen a Philistine woman in Timnah. Get her for me. I want her to be my wife.”

[3]His father and mother replied, “Can’t we find a wife for you among your relatives? Isn’t there one among any of our people? Do you have to go to the Philistines to get a wife? They aren’t God’s people. They haven’t even been circumcised.”

But Samson said to his father, “Get her for me. She’s the right one for me.”

[4]Samson’s parents didn’t know that the LORD wanted things to happen that way. He was working out his plans against the Philistines. That’s because the Philistines were ruling over Israel at that time.

[5]Samson went down to Timnah. His father and mother went with him. They approached the vineyards of Timnah. Suddenly a young lion came roaring toward Samson.

[6]Then the Spirit of the LORD came on Samson with power. He tore the lion apart with his bare hands. He did it as easily as he might have torn a young goat apart. But he didn’t tell his father or mother what he had done.

[7]Then he went down and talked with the woman. He liked her.

[8]Some time later, he was going back to get married to her. But he turned off the road to look at the lion’s dead body. Large numbers of bees and some honey were in it. [9]He dug the honey out with his hands. He ate it as he walked along. Then he joined his parents again. He gave them some honey. They ate it too. But he didn’t tell them he had taken it from the lion’s dead body.

[10]Samson’s father went down to see the woman. Samson had a big dinner prepared there. He was following the practice of men when they got married. [11]When the people saw Samson, they gave him 30 companions.

[12]“Let me tell you a riddle,” Samson said to the companions. “The dinner will last for seven days. Give me the answer to the riddle before the dinner

ends. If you do, I'll give you 30 linen shirts. I'll also give you 30 sets of clothes. [13]But suppose you can't give me the answer. Then you must give me 30 linen shirts. You must also give me 30 sets of clothes."

"Tell us your riddle," they said. "Let's hear it."

[14]Samson replied,

> "Out of the eater came something to eat.
> Out of the strong came something sweet."

For three days they couldn't give him the answer.

[15]On the fourth day they spoke to Samson's wife. "Get your husband to explain the riddle for us," they said. "If you don't, we'll burn you to death. We'll burn up everyone in your family. Did you invite us here to rob us?"

[16]Then Samson's wife threw herself on him. She sobbed, "You hate me! You don't really love me. You have given my people a riddle. But you haven't told me the answer."

"I haven't even explained it to my father or mother," he replied. "So why should I explain it to you?"

[17]She cried during the whole seven days the dinner was going on. So on the seventh day he finally told her the answer to the riddle. That's because she kept on asking him to tell her. Then she explained the riddle to her people.

[18]Before sunset on the seventh day the men of the town spoke to Samson. They said,

> "What is sweeter than honey?
> What is stronger than a lion?"

Samson said to them,

> "You have plowed with my young cow.
> If you hadn't, you wouldn't have known the answer to my riddle."

[19]Then the Spirit of the LORD came on Samson with power. He went down to

Ashkelon. He struck down 30 of their men. He took everything they had with them. And he gave their clothes to those who had explained the riddle. Samson was burning with anger as he went up to his father’s house.

[20]Samson’s wife was given to someone else. She was given to a friend of Samson. The friend had helped him at his wedding.

Samson Gets Even With the Philistines

Judges 15

1 Later on, Samson went to visit his wife. He took a young goat with him. He
went at the time the wheat was being gathered. He said, “I’m going to my
wife’s room.” But her father wouldn’t let him go in.

2 Her father said, “I was sure you really hated her. So I gave her to your
friend. Isn’t her younger sister more beautiful? Take her instead.”

3 Samson said to them, “This time I have a right to get even with the
Philistines. I’m going to hurt them badly.”

4 So he went out and caught 300 foxes. He tied them in pairs by their tails.
Then he tied a torch to each pair of tails. 5 He lit the torches. He let the foxes
loose in the fields of grain that belonged to the Philistines. He burned up the
grain that had been cut and stacked. He burned up the grain that was still
growing. He also burned up the vineyards and olive trees.

6 The Philistines asked, “Who did this?” They were told, “Samson did. He’s
the son-in-law of the man from Timnah. Samson did it because his wife was
given to his friend.”

So the Philistines went up and burned the woman and her father to death.

7 Samson said to them, “Is that how you act? Then I won’t stop until I pay you
back.” 8 He struck them down with heavy blows. He killed many of them. Then
he went down and stayed in a cave. It was in the rock of Etam.

9 The Philistines went up and camped in Judah. They spread out near Lehi.
10 The men of Judah asked, “Why have you come to fight against us?”

“We’ve come to take Samson as our prisoner,” they answered. “We want to
do to him what he did to us.”

11 Then 3,000 men from Judah went to get Samson. They went down to the
cave that was in the rock of Etam. They said to Samson, “Don’t you realize the
Philistines are ruling over us? What have you done to us?”

Samson answered, “I only did to them what they did to me.”

12The men of Judah said to him, “We’ve come to tie you up. We’re going to
hand you over to the Philistines.”

Samson said, “Take an oath and promise me you won’t kill me yourselves.”

13“We agree,” they answered. “We’ll only tie you up and hand you over to
them. We won’t kill you.” So they tied him up with two new ropes. They led
him up from the rock.

14Samson approached Lehi. The Philistines came toward him shouting. Then
the Spirit of the LORD came on Samson with power. The ropes on his arms
became like burned thread. They dropped off his hands. 15He found a fresh
jawbone of a donkey. He grabbed hold of it and struck down 1,000 men.

16Then Samson said,

“By using a donkey’s jawbone
I’ve made them look like donkeys.
By using a donkey’s jawbone
I’ve struck down 1,000 men.”

17Samson finished speaking. Then he threw the jawbone away. That’s why the
place was called Ramath Lehi.

18Samson was very thirsty. So he cried out to the LORD. He said, “You have
helped me win this great battle. Do I have to die of thirst now? Must I fall into
the power of people who haven’t even been circumcised? They aren’t your
people.”

19Then God opened up the hollow place in Lehi. Water came out of it. When
Samson drank the water, his strength returned. He felt as good as new. So the
spring was called En Hakkore. It’s still there in Lehi.

20Samson led Israel for 20 years. In those days the Philistines were in the
land.

Samson and Delilah

Judges 16

[1]One day Samson went to Gaza. There he saw a prostitute. He went in to spend the night with her.

[2]The people of Gaza were told, “Samson is here!” So they surrounded the place. They hid and waited for him at the city gate all night long. They didn’t make any move against him during the night. They said, “Let’s wait until the sun comes up. Then we’ll kill him.”

[3]But Samson stayed there only until the middle of the night. Then he got up. He took hold of the doors of the city gate. He also took hold of the two doorposts. He tore them loose, together with their metal bar. He picked them up and put them on his shoulders. Then he carried them to the top of the hill that faces Hebron.

[4]Some time later, Samson fell in love again. The woman lived in the Valley of Sorek. Her name was Delilah.

[5]The rulers of the Philistines went to her. They said, “See if you can get him to tell you the secret of why he’s so strong. Find out how we can overpower him. Then we can tie him up. We can bring him under our control. Each of us will give you 28 pounds of silver.”

[6]So Delilah spoke to Samson. She said, “Tell me the secret of why you are so strong. Tell me how you can be tied up and controlled.”

[7]Samson answered her, “Let someone tie me up with seven new leather straps. They must be straps that aren’t completely dry. Then I’ll become as weak as any other man.”

[8]So the Philistine rulers brought seven new leather straps to her. They weren’t completely dry. Delilah tied Samson up with them.

[9]Men were hiding in the room. She called out to him. She said, “Samson! The Philistines are attacking you!” But he snapped the leather straps easily. They were like pieces of string that had come too close to a flame. So the secret of why he was so strong wasn’t discovered.

[10]Delilah spoke to Samson again. “You have made me look foolish,” she said. “You told me a lie. Come on. Tell me how you can be tied up.”

[11]Samson said, “Let someone tie me tightly with new ropes. They must be ropes that have never been used. Then I’ll become as weak as any other man.”

[12]So Delilah got some new ropes. She tied him up with them. Men were hiding in the room. She called out to him. She said, “Samson! The Philistines are attacking you!” But he snapped the ropes off his arms. They fell off just as if they were threads.

[13]Delilah spoke to Samson again. “Until now, you have been making me look foolish,” she said. “You have been telling me lies. This time really tell me how you can be tied up.”

He replied, “Weave the seven braids of my hair into the cloth on a loom. Then pin my hair to the loom. If you do, I’ll become as weak as any other man.”

So while Samson was sleeping, Delilah took hold of the seven braids of his hair. She wove them into the cloth on a loom. [14]Then she pinned his hair to the loom.

Again she called out to him. She said, “Samson! The Philistines are attacking you!” He woke up from his sleep. He pulled up the pin and the loom, together with the cloth.

[15]Then she said to him, “How can you say, ‘I love you’? You won’t even share your secret with me. This is the third time you have made me look foolish. And you still haven’t told me the secret of why you are so strong.”

[16]She continued to pester him day after day. She nagged him until he was sick and tired of it.

[17]So he told her everything. “I’ve never used a razor on my head,” he said. “I’ve never cut my hair. That’s because I’ve been a Nazirite since the day I was born. A Nazirite is set apart to God. If you shave my head, I won’t be strong anymore. I’ll become as weak as any other man.”

[18]Delilah realized he had told her everything. So she sent a message to the Philistine rulers. She said, “Come back one more time. He has told me everything.” So the rulers returned. They brought the silver with them.

[19]Delilah got Samson to go to sleep on her lap. Then she called for a man to shave off the seven braids of his hair. That’s how she began to bring him under

her control. And he wasn't strong anymore.

[20]She called out, "Samson! The Philistines are attacking you!"

He woke up from his sleep. He thought, "I'll go out just as I did before. I'll shake myself free." But he didn't know that the LORD had left him.

[21]Then the Philistines grabbed hold of him. They poked his eyes out. They took him down to Gaza. They put bronze chains around him. Then they made him grind grain in the prison. [22]His head had been shaved. But the hair on it began to grow again.

Samson Dies

[23]The rulers of the Philistines gathered together. They were going to offer a great sacrifice to their god Dagon. They were going to celebrate. They said, "Our god has handed our enemy Samson over to us."

[24]When the people saw Samson, they praised their god. They said,

> "Our god has handed our enemy over to us.
> Our enemy has destroyed our land.
> He has killed large numbers of our people."

[25]After they had drunk a lot of wine, they shouted, "Bring Samson out. Let him put on a show for us." So they called Samson out of the prison. He put on a show for them.

They had him stand near the temple pillars. [26]Then he spoke to the servant who was holding his hand. He said, "Put me where I can feel the pillars. I'm talking about the ones that hold the temple up. I want to lean against them."

[27]The temple was crowded with men and women. All of the Philistine rulers were there. About 3,000 men and women were on the roof. They were watching Samson put on a show.

[28]Then he prayed to the LORD. He said, "LORD and King, show me that you still have concern for me. God, please make me strong just one more time. Let me pay the Philistines back for what they did to my two eyes. Let me do it with only one blow."

[29]Then Samson reached toward the two pillars that were in the middle of the temple. They held the temple up. He put his right hand on one of them. He put his left hand on the other. He leaned hard against them.

[30]Samson said, “Let me die together with the Philistines!” Then he pushed with all his might. The temple came down on the rulers. It fell on all of the people who were in it. So Samson killed many more Philistines when he died than he did while he lived.

[31]Then his brothers went down to get him. So did his father’s whole family. All of them brought Samson’s body back home. They buried his body in the tomb of his father Manoah. It’s between Zorah and Eshtaol. Samson had led Israel for 20 years.

Micah Makes Some Statues of Gods

Judges 17

1 A man named Micah lived in the hill country of Ephraim. 2 He said to his
mother, “Someone took 28 pounds of silver from you. I heard you call down a
curse because of it. I have the silver with me. I’m the one who took it.”

Then his mother said, “My son, may the LORD bless you!”

3 He gave the 28 pounds of silver back to his mother. She said to him, “I’m
taking an oath and setting my silver apart to the LORD. My son, I want you to
use part of it for a statue of a god that is made out of wood or stone and
covered with silver. Use the rest of it to have another statue made out of silver.
That’s why I’ll give the silver back to you.”

4 He gave the silver back to his mother. She gave five pounds of it to a skilled
worker who made things out of silver. He used the silver for the two statues.
They were put in Micah’s house.

5 That same Micah had a small temple. He made a sacred linen apron and
some statues of gods. He prepared one of his sons to serve as his priest.

6 In those days Israel didn’t have a king. The people did anything they thought
was right.

7 A young Levite had been living in land that belonged to the tribe of Judah.
He was from Bethlehem in Judah. 8 He left that town to look for some other
place to stay. On his way he came to Micah’s house. It was in the hill country
of Ephraim.

9 Micah asked him, “Where are you from?”

“I’m a Levite,” he said. “I’m from Bethlehem in Judah. I’m looking for a
place to stay.”

10 Then Micah said to him, “Live with me. Be my father and priest. I’ll give
you four ounces of silver a year. I’ll also give you clothes and food.”

11 So the Levite agreed to live with him. The young man was just like a son to
Micah.

[12]Then Micah prepared the Levite to serve as his priest. He lived in Micah's house. [13]Micah said, "Now I know that the LORD will be good to me. This Levite has become my priest."

The People of Dan Settle Down in Laish

Judges 18

1 In those days Israel didn't have a king.

And in those days the tribe of Dan was looking for a place where they could settle down. They hadn't been able to take over their own share of land among the tribes of Israel.

2 So the people of Dan sent out five warriors from Zorah and Eshtaol. They told them to look the land over and check it out. Those men did it for all of their family groups. The people of Dan told the men, "Go. Check out the land."

So they entered the hill country of Ephraim. They went to the house of Micah. That's where they spent the night.

3 When they came near Micah's house, they recognized a voice. It was the voice of the young Levite. So they turned off the road and stopped there. They asked him, "Who brought you here? What are you doing in this place? Why are you here?"

4 The Levite told them what Micah had done for him. He said, "He has hired me. I'm his priest."

5 Then they said to him, "Please ask God for advice. Try to find out whether we'll have success on our journey."

6 The priest answered them, "Go in peace. The LORD is pleased with your journey."

7 So the five men left. They came to Laish. There they saw that the people felt secure. They were living in safety. Like the people in Sidon, they weren't expecting anything bad to happen to them. Their land had everything they needed. Things were going very well for them. They lived a long way from the people of Sidon. And they didn't think they would ever need help from anyone else.

8 The men returned to Zorah and Eshtaol. Their people asked them, "What did you find out?"

9 They answered, "Come on! Let's attack them! We've seen that the land is

very good. Aren’t you going to do something? Don’t wait any longer. Go there and take it over. 10When you get there, you will find people who aren’t expecting anything bad to happen to them. Their land has plenty of room. God has handed it over to you. It’s a land that has everything you will ever need.”

11So 600 men from the tribe of Dan started out from Zorah and Eshtaol. They were prepared for battle. 12On their way they set up camp. Their camp was near Kiriath Jearim in Judah. That’s why the place is called Mahaneh Dan to this very day. It’s west of Kiriath Jearim. 13From there they went to the hill country of Ephraim. They came to Micah’s house.

14Then the five men who had looked over the land of Laish spoke to the other members of their tribe. They said, “Don’t you know that one of these houses has a sacred linen apron in it? Some statues of family gods are there. It also has two statues of other gods in it. One of them is made out of wood or stone. The other is made out of silver. Now you know what to do.”

15So they turned off the road and stopped there. They went to the house of the young Levite. He was at Micah’s place. They greeted the young man. 16The 600 men from Dan stood at the entrance of the gate. They were prepared for battle.

17The five men who had looked over the land went inside. They took the two statues. They also took the family gods and the linen apron.

During that time, the priest stood at the entrance of the gate. The 600 men stood there with him. They were prepared for battle.

18When those men went into Micah’s house and took all of those things, the priest spoke to them. He asked, “What are you doing?”

19They answered him, “Be quiet! Don’t say a word. Come with us. Be our father and priest. You can serve a whole tribe and family group in Israel as our priest. Isn’t that better than serving just one man’s family?”

20The priest was glad. He took the linen apron and the family gods. He also took the statue of a god that was made out of wood or stone. Then he left with the people.

21They put their little children and their livestock in front of them. They also put everything else they owned in front of them. And they turned and went on their way.

22The men who lived near Micah were called together. Then they left and

caught up with the people of Dan. That's because Dan's people hadn't gone very far from Micah's house. [23]Those who lived near Micah shouted at them. The people of Dan turned around and spoke to Micah. "What's the matter with you?" they asked. "Why did you call your men out to fight against us?"

[24]He replied, "You took away the gods I made. And you took my priest away. What do I have left? So how can you ask, 'What's the matter with you?' "

[25]The people of Dan answered, "Don't argue with us. Some men get angry quickly. They might attack you. Then you and your family will lose your lives."

[26]So the people of Dan went on their way. Micah saw that they were too strong for him. So he turned around and went back home.

[27]The people of Dan took what Micah had made. They also took his priest. They continued on their way to Laish. They went there to fight against peaceful people who weren't expecting to be attacked. They struck them down with their swords. They burned their city down. [28]No one could save them. They lived a long way from Sidon. And they didn't think they would ever need help from anyone else. Their city was located in a valley near Beth Rehob.

The people of Dan rebuilt the city. Then they settled down there. [29]They named it Dan. That's because they traced their family line back to Dan. He was a son of Israel. The city used to be called Laish.

[30]There the people of Dan set up the statues of gods for themselves. Jonathan and his sons were priests for the tribe of Dan. Jonathan was the son of Gershom, the son of Moses. Jonathan and his sons were priests until the time when the land was captured. [31]They continued to use the statues Micah had made. They used them during the whole time the house of God was in Shiloh.

A Levite and His Concubine

Judges 19

1 In those days Israel didn't have a king.

There was a Levite who lived deep in the hill country of Ephraim. He got a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah. 2 But she wasn't faithful to him. She left him. She went back to her father's house in Bethlehem in Judah. She stayed there for four months.

3 Then her husband went to see her. He tried to talk her into coming back with him. He had his servant and two donkeys with him. She took her husband into her father's house. When her father saw him, he gladly welcomed him.

4 His father-in-law, the woman's father, begged him to stay. So he remained with him for three days. He ate, drank and slept there.

5 On the fourth day they got up early. The Levite prepared to leave. But the woman's father spoke to his son-in-law. He said, "Have something to eat. It will give you strength. Then you can go on your way."

6 So the two of them sat down. They ate and drank together. After that, the woman's father said, "Please stay tonight. Enjoy yourself."

7 The man got up to go. But his father-in-law talked him into staying. So he stayed there that night.

8 On the morning of the fifth day, he got up to go. But the woman's father said, "Have something to eat. It will give you strength. Wait until this afternoon!" So the two of them ate together.

9 Then the man got up to leave. His concubine and his servant got up when he did. But his father-in-law, the woman's father, spoke to him again. "Look," he said. "It's almost evening. The day is nearly over. So spend another night here. Please stay. Enjoy yourself. Early tomorrow morning you can get up and go back home."

10 But the man didn't want to stay another night. So he left. He went toward Jebus. He had his two donkeys and his concubine with him. The donkeys had saddles on them. Jebus is also called Jerusalem.

[11]By the time the travelers came near Jebus, the day was almost over. So the servant said to his master, “Come. Let’s stop at this Jebusite city. Let’s spend the night here.”

[12]His master replied, “No. We won’t go into a city where strangers live. The people there aren’t from Israel. We’ll continue on to Gibeah.” [13]He added, “Come. Let’s try to reach Gibeah or Ramah. We can spend the night in one of those places.”

[14]So they continued on. As they came near Gibeah in Benjamin, the sun went down. [15]They stopped there to spend the night. They went to the city’s main street and sat down. But no one took them home for the night.

[16]That evening an old man came into the city. He had been working in the fields. He was from the hill country of Ephraim. But he was living in Gibeah. The people who lived there were from the tribe of Benjamin. [17]The old man saw the traveler in the main street. He asked, “Where are you going? Where did you come from?”

[18]The Levite answered, “We’ve come from Bethlehem in Judah. We’re on our way to Ephraim. I live deep in the hill country there. I’ve been to Bethlehem. Now I’m going to the house of the LORD. But no one has taken me home for the night. [19]We have straw and feed for our donkeys. We have food and wine for ourselves. We have enough for me, my female servant and the young man who is with us. We don’t need anything.”

[20]“You are welcome at my house,” the old man said. “I’d be happy to supply anything you might need. But don’t spend the night in the street.”

[21]So the old man took him into his house and fed his donkeys. After the travelers had washed their feet, they had something to eat and drink.

[22]They were inside enjoying themselves. But some of the evil men who lived in the city surrounded the house. They pounded on the door. They shouted to the old man who owned the house. They said, “Bring out the man who came to your house. We want to have sex with him.”

[23]The owner of the house went outside. He said to them, “No, my friends. Don’t do such an evil thing. This man is my guest. So don’t do this terrible thing.

[24]“Look, here is my virgin daughter. And here’s the Levite’s concubine. I’ll bring them out to you now. You can have them. Do to them what you want to.

But don’t do such a terrible thing to this man.”

25The men wouldn’t listen to him. So the Levite sent his concubine out to them. They forced her to have sex with them. They raped her all night long. As the night was ending, they let her go.

26At sunrise she went back to the house where her master was staying. She fell down at the door. She stayed there until daylight.

27Later that morning her master got up. He opened the door of the house. He stepped out to continue on his way. But his concubine was lying there. She had fallen at the doorway of the house. Her hands were reaching out toward the door. 28He said to her, “Get up. Let’s go.” But there wasn’t any answer. Then he put her dead body on his donkey. And he started out for home.

29When he reached home, he got a knife. He cut up his concubine. He cut her into 12 pieces. He sent them into all of the territories of Israel.

30Everyone who saw it said, “Nothing like this has ever been seen or done before. Nothing like this has happened since the day the people of Israel came up out of Egypt. Think about it! Consider it! Tell us what to do!”

The Tribe of Benjamin Is Attacked by the Other Tribes

Judges 20

1Then all of the people of Israel came out. They came from the whole land
between Dan and Beersheba. They also came from the land of Gilead. All of
them gathered together in the sight of the LORD at Mizpah. 2The leaders of all
of the tribes of Israel came. They took their places among the people of God
who were gathered together. There were 400,000 fighting men who were
carrying swords. 3The tribe of Benjamin heard that the people of Israel had
gone up to Mizpah. The people of Israel said, “Tell us how that awful thing
happened.”

4So the Levite spoke. He was the husband of the woman who had been
murdered. He said, “I and my concubine went to Gibeah in Benjamin. We
spent the night there. 5During the night the men of Gibeah came after me. They
surrounded the house. They were planning to kill me. They raped my
concubine, and she died.

6“I took my concubine and cut her into pieces. I sent one piece to each part of
Israel’s territory. I did it because they had done a very terrible thing in Israel.
7All of you men of Israel, speak up now. Give your decision.”

8All of the men got up together. They said, “None of us will go home. Not
one of us will return to his house. 9Here is what we’ll do to Gibeah. We’ll use
lots to tell us how to attack the city. 10We’ll take ten men out of every 100 from
all of the tribes of Israel. We’ll take 100 from every 1,000. We’ll take 1,000
from every 10,000. The men we take will get supplies for the army. Then the
army will go to Gibeah in Benjamin. They’ll give Gibeah exactly what they
should get because of the evil thing they did in Israel.”

11So all of the men of Israel came together to fight against the city.

12The tribes of Israel sent men through the whole tribe of Benjamin. They
said, “What about this awful crime that was committed among you? 13Hand
over those evil men of Gibeah. We’ll put them to death. In that way we’ll get
rid of those evil people.”

But the people of Benjamin wouldn’t listen to the other people of Israel.
14They came together at Gibeah from their towns. They came to fight against
the other people of Israel.

15Right away the people of Benjamin gathered together 26,000 men from
their towns. They were carrying swords. The men were added to the 700 who
had been chosen from those who were living in Gibeah. 16Among all of those
men there were 700 who were left-handed. Each of them could sling a stone at
a hair and not miss.

17Israel gathered 400,000 men together. They were carrying swords. All of
them were fighting men. That number didn’t include the tribe of Benjamin.

18The people of Israel went up to Bethel. There they spoke to God. They
asked him, “Who will go up first and fight for us against the people of
Benjamin?”

The LORD answered, “The tribe of Judah will go first.”

19The next morning the people of Israel got up. They set up camp near
Gibeah. 20The men of Israel went out to fight against the men of Benjamin.
They took up their battle positions against them at Gibeah. 21The men of
Benjamin came out of Gibeah. They killed 22,000 men of Israel on the field of
battle that day. 22But the men of Israel cheered each other on. They again took
up their positions in the places where they had been the first day.

23The men of Israel went and sobbed in the sight of the LORD until evening.
They spoke to the LORD. They asked, “Should we go up again to fight against
the men of Benjamin? They are our fellow Israelites.”

The LORD answered, “Go up and fight against them.”

24The men of Israel came near the men of Benjamin on the second day. 25The
men of Benjamin came out from Gibeah to oppose them. That time they killed
18,000 more men of Israel. All of the men who died had been carrying swords.

26Then all of the people of Israel went up to Bethel. They sat there and
sobbed in the sight of the LORD. They didn’t eat anything that day until evening.
Then they brought burnt offerings and friendship offerings to the LORD.

27Again the people of Israel spoke to the LORD. In those days the ark of the
covenant of God was there. 28Phinehas was serving as priest at the ark. He was
the son of Eleazar. Eleazar was the son of Aaron. The people of Israel asked,
“Should we go up again to fight against the men of Benjamin? They are our

fellow Israelites."

The LORD answered, "Go. Tomorrow I will hand them over to you."

29Then Israel hid some men and had them wait all around Gibeah. 30They went up to fight against the men of Benjamin on the third day. They took up their positions against Gibeah, just as they had done before.

31The men of Benjamin came out to fight against them. They were drawn away from the city. They began to wound and kill the men of Israel just as they had done before. About 30 men fell in battle. They fell in the open fields and on the roads. One of the roads led to Bethel. The other led to Gibeah.

32The men of Benjamin said, "We're winning the battle over them, just as we did before."

But the men of Israel said, "Let's pull back. Let's draw them away from the city to the roads."

33All of the men of Israel moved away from their places. They took up new battle positions at Baal Tamar. The men who had been hiding charged out. They came from west of Gibeah.

34Then 10,000 of Israel's finest men attacked Gibeah. The men of Benjamin didn't realize they were about to be destroyed. The fighting was very heavy.

35The LORD helped Israel win the battle over Benjamin. On that day the men of Israel struck down 25,100 men of Benjamin. All of the men who died had been carrying swords. 36Then the men of Benjamin saw that they had lost the battle.

The men of Israel had moved away from their positions in front of Benjamin. They had depended on the men they had hidden near Gibeah. 37Suddenly the men who had been hiding rushed into Gibeah. They spread out. Then they killed everyone in the city with their swords.

38The men of Israel had made a plan with those who had been hiding. They had told them to send up a large cloud of smoke from the city. 39Then the men of Israel would turn around and attack.

The men of Benjamin had begun to wound and kill the men of Israel. They had struck down about 30 of them. They had said, "We're winning the battle over them, just as we did the first time."

40But a column of smoke began to go up from the city. The men of Benjamin turned around. They saw the smoke of the whole city going up into the sky.

41 Then the men of Israel turned around and attacked them.

The men of Benjamin were terrified. They realized they were going to be destroyed. 42 So they ran away from the men of Israel. They ran toward the desert. But they couldn't escape the battle. Other men of Israel came out of the towns. There they struck the men of Benjamin down. 43 They surrounded them. They chased them and easily caught up with them. That happened east of Gibeah.

44 So 18,000 men of Benjamin fell in battle. All of them were brave fighters.

45 Some men of Benjamin turned back. They ran toward the desert to the rock of Rimmon. As they did, the men of Israel struck down 5,000 of them along the roads. They kept chasing the men of Benjamin all the way to Gidom. Along the way they struck down 2,000 more.

46 On that day 25,000 men of Benjamin fell in battle. They had been carrying swords. All of them were brave fighters. 47 But 600 men turned back. They ran into the desert to the rock of Rimmon. They stayed there for four months.

48 The men of Israel went back to Benjamin. They killed the people in all of the towns with their swords. They even killed the animals. So they killed everything they found. They set on fire all of the towns they came to.

The Men of Benjamin Receive Wives

Judges 21

[1]The men of Israel had taken an oath and made a promise at Mizpah. They had said, “Not one of us will give his daughter to be married to a man from Benjamin.”

[2]The people went to Bethel. They sat there until evening in the sight of God. They sobbed loudly and bitterly. [3]“LORD, you are the God of Israel,” they cried. “Why has this happened to Israel? Why is one tribe missing from Israel today?”

[4]Early the next day the people built an altar. They brought burnt offerings and friendship offerings.

[5]Then the people of Israel asked, “Has anyone failed to come here in the sight of the LORD? Is anyone missing from all of the tribes of Israel?”

The people had made a promise with an oath. They had said that anyone who failed to come to Mizpah in the sight of the LORD should certainly be put to death.

[6]The people of Israel were very sad because of what had happened to the tribe of Benjamin. After all, they were their fellow Israelites. “Today one tribe has been cut off from Israel,” they said. [7]“How can we provide wives for the men who are left? We’ve made a promise with an oath in the sight of the LORD. We’ve promised not to give any of our daughters to be married to them.”

[8]Then they asked, “Has any tribe of Israel failed to come here to Mizpah in the sight of the LORD?”

They discovered that no one from Jabesh Gilead had come. No one from there had gathered together with the others in the camp. [9]They counted the people. They found that none of the people of Jabesh Gilead had come to Mizpah.

[10]So the community sent 12,000 fighting men to Jabesh Gilead. They directed them to take their swords and kill those who were living there. That included the women and children.

[11]“Here is what you must do,” they said. “Kill every male. Also kill every woman who is not a virgin.”

[12]They found 400 young women in Jabesh Gilead who had never made love to a man. So they took them to the camp at Shiloh in Canaan.

[13]Then the whole community sent an offer of peace to the men of Benjamin. The men were at the rock of Rimmon. [14]So the men of Benjamin returned at that time. They were given the women of Jabesh Gilead who had been spared. But there weren’t enough women for all of them.

[15]The people were very sad because of what had happened to the tribe of Benjamin. The LORD had left a gap in the tribes of Israel. They weren’t complete without Benjamin.

[16]The elders of the community spoke up. They said, “All of the women of Benjamin have been wiped out. So how will we find wives for the men who are left? [17]The men of Benjamin who are still alive need to have children,” they said. “If they don’t, a tribe of Israel will be wiped out.

[18]“But we can’t give them our daughters to be their wives. We Israelites have taken an oath and made a promise. We’ve said, ‘May anyone who gives a wife to a man from Benjamin be under the LORD’s curse.’

[19]“Look, a feast is celebrated every year in Shiloh in honor of the LORD. Shiloh is north of Bethel. It’s east of the road that goes from Bethel to Shechem. It’s south of Lebonah.”

[20]So they told the men of Benjamin what to do. They said, “Go. Hide in the vineyards [21]and watch. The young women of Shiloh will come out. They’ll join in the dancing. When they do, run out of the vineyards. Each of you grab hold of a young woman from Shiloh to be your wife. Then go to the land of Benjamin.

[22]“Their fathers or brothers might not be happy with what we’re doing. If they aren’t, we’ll say to them, ‘Do us a favor. Help the men of Benjamin. We didn’t get wives for them during the battle. You aren’t guilty of doing anything wrong. After all, you didn’t give your daughters to them. They were stolen from you.’ ”

[23]So that’s what the men of Benjamin did. While the young women were dancing, each man caught one. He carried her away to be his wife. Then the men returned to their own share of land. They built the towns again. They settled down in them.

[24]At that time the men of Israel also left. They went home to their tribes and family groups. Each one went to his own share of land.

[25]In those days Israel didn’t have a king. The people did anything they thought was right.

Ruth

Ruth 1 Ruth 2 Ruth 3 Ruth 4

Ruth Goes to Bethlehem With Naomi

Ruth 1

[1]There was a time when Israel didn't have kings to rule over them. But they had leaders to help them. This is a story about some things that happened during that time.

There wasn't enough food in the land of Judah. So a man went to live in the country of Moab for a while. He was from Bethlehem in Judah. His wife and two sons went with him.

[2]The man's name was Elimelech. His wife's name was Naomi. The names of his two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went to Moab and lived there.

[3]Naomi's husband Elimelech died. So she was left with her two sons. [4]They got married to women from Moab. One was named Orpah. The other was named Ruth. Naomi's family lived in Moab for about ten years. [5]Then Mahlon and Kilion also died. So Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband.

[6]While Naomi was in Moab, she heard that the LORD had helped his people. He had begun to provide food for them again. So Naomi and her daughters-in-law prepared to go from Moab back to her home. [7]She left the place where she had been living. Her two daughters-in-law went with her. They started out on the road that would take them back to the land of Judah.

[8]Naomi spoke to her two daughters-in-law. "Both of you go back," she said. "Each of you go to your own mother's home. You were kind to your husbands, who have died. You have also been kind to me. So may the LORD be just as kind to you. [9]May he help each of you find a secure place in the home of another husband. May he give you peace and rest."

Then she kissed them good-by. They broke down and sobbed loudly. [10]They said to her, "We'll go back to your people with you."

[11]But Naomi said, "Go home, my daughters. Why would you want to come with me? Am I going to have any more sons who could become your husbands?

12“Go home, my daughters. I’m too old to have another husband. Suppose I
thought there was still some hope for me. Suppose I got married to a man
tonight. And later I had sons by him. 13Would you wait until they grew up?
Would you stay single until you could get married to them? No, my daughters.
My life is more bitter than yours. The LORD’s powerful hand has been against
me!”

14When they heard that, they broke down and sobbed again. Then Orpah
kissed her mother-in-law good-by. But Ruth held on to her.

15“Look,” said Naomi. “Your sister-in-law is going back to her people and
her gods. Go back with her.”

16But Ruth replied, “Don’t try to make me leave you and go back. Where you
go I’ll go. Where you stay I’ll stay. Your people will be my people. Your God
will be my God. 17Where you die I’ll die. And there my body will be buried. I
won’t let anything except death separate you from me. If I do, may the LORD
punish me greatly.”

18Naomi realized that Ruth had made up her mind to go with her. So she
stopped trying to make her go back.

19The two women continued on their way. At last they arrived in Bethlehem.
The whole town was stirred up because of them. The women asked, “Can this
possibly be Naomi?”

20“Don’t call me Naomi,” she told them. “Call me Mara. The Mighty One has
made my life very bitter. 21I was full when I went away. But the LORD has
brought me back empty. So why are you calling me Naomi? The LORD has
made me suffer. The Mighty One has brought trouble on me.”

22So Naomi returned from Moab. Ruth, her daughter-in-law from Moab,
came with her. They arrived in Bethlehem just when people were beginning to
harvest the barley.

Ruth Meets Boaz

Ruth 2

[1]Naomi had a relative on her husband's side of the family. Her husband's
name was Elimelech. The relative's name was Boaz. He was a very important
man.

[2]Ruth, who was from Moab, spoke to Naomi. She said, "Let me go out to the
fields. I'll pick up the grain that has been left. I'll do it behind anyone who is
pleased with me."

Naomi said to her, "My daughter, go ahead."

[3]So Ruth went out and began to pick up grain. She worked in the fields
behind those who were cutting and gathering the grain. As it turned out, she
was working in a field that belonged to Boaz. He was from the family of
Elimelech.

[4]Just then Boaz arrived from Bethlehem. He greeted those who were cutting
and gathering the grain. He said, "May the LORD be with you!"

"And may the LORD bless you!" they replied.

[5]Boaz spoke to the man who was in charge of his workers. He asked, "Who is
that young woman?"

[6]The man replied, "She's from Moab. She came back from there with Naomi.
[7]She said, 'Please let me walk behind the workers. Let me pick up the grain
that is left.' Then she went into the field. She has kept on working there from
morning until now. She took only one short rest in the shade."

[8]So Boaz said to Ruth, "Dear woman, listen to me. Don't pick up grain in any
other field. Don't go anywhere else. Stay here with my female servants. [9]Keep
your eye on the field where the men are cutting grain. Walk behind the women
who are gathering it. Pick up the grain that is left. I've told the men not to
touch you. When you are thirsty, go and get a drink. Take water from the jars
the men have filled."

[10]When Ruth heard that, she bowed down with her face to the ground. She
asked, "Why are you being so kind to me? In fact, why are you even noticing

me? I’m from another country.”

[11]Boaz replied, “I’ve been told all about you. I’ve heard about everything you have done for your mother-in-law since your husband died. I know that you left your father and mother. I know that you left your country. You came to live with people you didn’t know before.

[12]“May the LORD reward you for what you have done. May the God of Israel bless you richly. You have come to him to find safety under his care.”

[13]“Sir, I hope you will continue to be kind to me,” Ruth said. “You have comforted me. You have spoken kindly to me. And I’m not even as important as one of your female servants!”

[14]When it was time to eat, Boaz spoke to Ruth again. “Come over here,” he said. “Have some bread. Dip it in the wine vinegar.”

She sat down with the workers. Then Boaz offered her some grain that had been cooked. She ate all she wanted. She even had some left over.

[15]Ruth got up to pick up more grain. Then Boaz gave orders to his men. He said, “Suppose she takes some stalks from what the women have tied up. If she does, don’t make her look bad. [16]Instead, pull some stalks out for her. Leave them for her to pick up. Don’t tell her she shouldn’t do it.”

[17]So Ruth picked up grain in the field until evening. Then she separated the barley from the straw. It amounted to more than half a bushel. [18]She carried it back to town. Her mother-in-law saw how much she had gathered. Ruth also brought out the food that was left over from the lunch Boaz had given her. She gave it to Naomi.

[19]Her mother-in-law asked her, “Where did you pick up grain today? Where did you work? May the man who noticed you be blessed!”

Then Ruth told her about the man whose field she had worked in. “The name of the man I worked with today is Boaz,” she said.

[20]“May the LORD bless him!” Naomi said to her daughter-in-law. “The LORD is still being kind to those who are living and those who are dead.”

She continued, “That man is a close relative of ours. He’s one of our family protectors.”

[21]Then Ruth, who was from Moab, said, “He told me more. He even said, ‘Stay with my workers until they have finished bringing in all of my grain.’ ”

[22]Naomi replied to her daughter-in-law Ruth. She said, “That will be good for

you, my daughter. Go with his female servants. You might be harmed if you go to someone else’s field.”

23So Ruth stayed close to the female servants of Boaz as she picked up grain. She worked until the time when all of the barley and wheat had been harvested. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

Ruth Goes to Boaz at the Threshing Floor

Ruth 3

1One day Ruth's mother-in-law Naomi spoke to her. She said, "My daughter,
shouldn't I try to find a secure place for you? Shouldn't you have peace and
rest? Shouldn't I find a home where things will go well with you? 2You have
been with the female servants of Boaz. He's a relative of ours. Tonight he'll be
separating the straw from his barley on the threshing floor.

3"So wash yourself. Put on some perfume. And put on your best clothes.
Then go down to the threshing floor. But don't let Boaz know you are there.
Wait until he has finished eating and drinking. 4Notice where he lies down.
Then go over and uncover his feet. Lie down there. He'll tell you what to do."

5"I'll do everything you say," Ruth answered. 6So she went down to the
threshing floor. She did everything her mother-in-law had told her to do.

7When Boaz had finished eating and drinking, he was in a good mood. He
went over to lie down at the far end of the grain pile. Then Ruth approached
quietly. She uncovered his feet and lay down there.

8In the middle of the night, something surprised Boaz and woke him up. He
turned and found a woman lying there at his feet.

9"Who are you?" he asked.

"I'm Ruth," she said. "You are my family protector. So take good care of me
by making me your wife."

10"Dear woman, may the LORD bless you," he replied. "You are showing even
more kindness now than you did earlier. You didn't run after the younger men,
whether they were rich or poor. 11Dear woman, don't be afraid. I'll do for you
everything you ask. All of the people of my town know that you are a noble
woman.

12"It's true that I'm a relative of yours. But there's a family protector who is
more closely related to you than I am. 13So stay here for the night. In the
morning if he wants to help you, good. Let him help you. But if he doesn't
want to, then I'll do it. You can be sure that the LORD lives. And you can be just

as sure that I’ll help you. Lie down here until morning.”

14So she stayed at his feet until morning. But she got up before anyone could be recognized. Boaz thought, “No one must know that a woman came to the threshing floor.”

15He said to Ruth, “Bring me the coat you have around you. Hold it out.” So she did. He poured more than fifty pounds of barley into it and helped her pick it up. Then he went back to town.

16Ruth came to her mother-in-law. Naomi asked, “How did it go, my daughter?”

Then Ruth told her everything Boaz had done for her. 17She said, “He gave me all of this barley. He said, ‘Don’t go back to your mother-in-law with your hands empty.’ ”

18Naomi said, “My daughter, sit down until you find out what happens. The man won’t rest until he settles the whole matter today.”

Boaz Gets Married to Ruth

Ruth 4

[1]Boaz went up to the town gate and sat down there. The family protector he had talked about came by. Then Boaz said, “Come over here, my friend. Sit down.” So the man went over and sat down.

[2]Boaz brought ten of the elders of the town together. He said, “Sit down here.” So they did.

[3]Then he spoke to the family protector. He said, “Naomi has come back from Moab. She’s selling the piece of land that belonged to our relative Elimelech. [4]I thought I should bring the matter to your attention. I suggest that you buy the land while those who are sitting here and the elders of my people are looking on as witnesses.

“If you are willing to buy it back, do it. But if you aren’t, tell me. Then I’ll know. No one has the right to buy it back except you. And I’m next in line.”

“I’ll buy it,” he said.

[5]Then Boaz said, “When you buy the land from Naomi and Ruth, who is from Moab, you must get married to Ruth. She’s the dead man’s widow. So you must take her as your wife. His name must stay with his property.”

[6]When the family protector heard that, he said, “Then I can’t buy the land. If I did, I might put my own property in danger. So you buy it. I can’t do it.”

[7]In earlier times in Israel, there was a certain practice. It was used when family land was bought back and changed owners. The practice made the sale final. One person would take his sandal off and give it to the other. That was how people in Israel showed that a business matter had been settled.

[8]So the family protector said to Boaz, “Buy it yourself.” And he took his sandal off.

[9]Then Boaz spoke to the elders and all of the people. He said, “Today you are witnesses. You have seen that I have bought land from Naomi. I have bought all of the property that had belonged to Elimelech, Kilion and Mahlon.

[10]“I’ve also taken Ruth, who is from Moab, to become my wife. She is

Mahlon's widow. I've decided to get married to her so the dead man's name will stay with his property. Now his name won't disappear from his family line. It won't disappear from the town records. Today you are witnesses!"

11Then the elders and all who were at the gate spoke. They said, "We are witnesses. The woman is coming into your home. May the LORD make her to be like Rachel and Leah. Together they built up the nation of Israel. May you be an important person in Ephrathah. May you be famous in Bethlehem. 12The LORD will give you children through this young woman. May your family be like the family of Perez. He was the son Tamar had by Judah."

The Family Line of David

13So Boaz got married to Ruth. She became his wife. Then he made love to her. The LORD blessed her so that she became pregnant. And she had a son.

14The women said to Naomi, "We praise the LORD. Today he has provided a family protector for you. May this child become famous all over Israel! 15He will make your life new again. He'll take care of you when you are old. He's the son of your very own daughter-in-law. She loves you. She is better to you than seven sons."

16Then Naomi put the child on her lap and took care of him. 17The women who were living there said, "Naomi has a son." They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse. Jesse was the father of David.

18Here is the family line of Perez.

Perez was the father of Hezron.
19Hezron was the father of Ram.
Ram was the father of Amminadab.
20Amminadab was the father of Nahshon.
Nahshon was the father of Salmon.
21Salmon was the father of Boaz.
Boaz was the father of Obed.
22Obed was the father of Jesse.
And Jesse was the father of David.

1 Samuel

1 Samuel 1
1 Samuel 2
1 Samuel 3
1 Samuel 4
1 Samuel 5
1 Samuel 6
1 Samuel 7
1 Samuel 8
1 Samuel 9
1 Samuel 10
1 Samuel 11
1 Samuel 12
1 Samuel 13
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1 Samuel 20
1 Samuel 21
1 Samuel 22
1 Samuel 23
1 Samuel 24
1 Samuel 25
1 Samuel 26
1 Samuel 27
1 Samuel 28
1 Samuel 29
1 Samuel 30
1 Samuel 31

Samuel Is Born

1 Samuel 1

1 A certain man from Ramathaim in the hill country of Ephraim was named
Elkanah. He was the son of Jeroham. Jeroham was the son of Elihu. Elihu was
the son of Tohu. Tohu was the son of Zuph. Elkanah belonged to the family
line of Zuph. Elkanah lived in the territory of Ephraim.

2 Elkanah had two wives. One was named Hannah. The other was named
Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah didn't.

3 Year after year Elkanah went up from his town to Shiloh. He went there to
worship and sacrifice to the LORD who rules over all. Hophni and Phinehas
served as priests of the LORD at Shiloh. They were the two sons of Eli.

4 Every time the day came for Elkanah to offer a sacrifice, he would give a
share of the meat to his wife Peninnah. He would also give a share to each of
her sons and daughters. 5 But he would give two shares of meat to Hannah.
That's because he loved her. He also gave her two shares because the LORD had
kept her from having children.

6 Peninnah teased Hannah to make her angry. She did it because the LORD had
kept Hannah from having children. 7 Peninnah teased Hannah year after year.
Every time Hannah would go up to the house of the LORD, Elkanah's other wife
would tease her. She would keep doing it until Hannah cried and wouldn't eat.

8 Her husband Elkanah would speak to her. He would say, "Hannah, why are
you crying? Why don't you eat? Why are you so angry and unhappy? Don't I
mean more to you than ten sons?"

9 One time when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah
stood up. The priest Eli was sitting on a chair by the doorpost of the LORD's
house. 10 Hannah was very bitter. She sobbed and sobbed. She prayed to the
LORD. 11 She made a promise to him. She said, "LORD, you rule over all. Please
see how I'm suffering! Show concern for me! Don't forget about me! Please
give me a son! If you do, I'll give him back to you. Then he will serve you all
the days of his life. He'll never use a razor on his head. He'll never cut his
hair."

12 As Hannah kept on praying to the LORD, Eli watched her lips. 13 She was
praying in her heart. Her lips were moving. But she wasn't making a sound.

Eli thought Hannah was drunk. 14 He said to her, "How long will you keep on
getting drunk? Get rid of your wine."

15 "That's not true, sir," Hannah replied. "I'm a woman who is deeply
troubled. I haven't been drinking wine or beer. I was telling the LORD all of my
troubles. 16 Don't think of me as an evil woman. I've been praying here because
I'm very sad. My pain is so great."

17 Eli answered, "Go in peace. May the God of Israel give you what you have
asked him for."

18 She said, "May you be pleased with me." Then she left and had something
to eat. Her face wasn't sad anymore.

19 Early the next morning Elkanah and his family got up. They worshiped the
LORD. Then they went back to their home in Ramah.

Elkanah made love to his wife Hannah. And the LORD showed concern for
her. 20 After some time, Hannah became pregnant. She had a baby boy. She
said, "I asked the LORD for him." So she named him Samuel.

Hannah Gives Samuel to the LORD

21 Elkanah went up to Shiloh to offer the yearly sacrifice to the LORD. He also
went there to keep a promise he had made. His whole family went with him.

22 But Hannah didn't go. She said to her husband, "When the boy doesn't
need me to nurse him anymore, I'll take him to the LORD's house. I'll give him
to the LORD there. He'll stay there for the rest of his life."

23 Her husband Elkanah told her, "Do what you think is best. Stay here at
home until Samuel doesn't need you to nurse him anymore. May the LORD
make his promise to you come true."

So Hannah stayed home. She nursed her son until he didn't need her milk
anymore.

24 When the boy didn't need her to nurse him anymore, she took him with her
to Shiloh. She took him there even though he was still very young. She brought
him to the LORD's house. She brought along a bull that was three years old. She

brought more than half a bushel of flour. She also brought a bottle of wine. The bottle was made out of animal skin.

25 After the bull was killed, Elkanah and Hannah brought the boy to Eli.
26 Hannah said to Eli, “Sir, I’m the woman who stood here beside you praying to the LORD. And that’s just as sure as you are alive. 27 I prayed for this child. The LORD has given me what I asked him for. 28 So now I’m giving him to the LORD. As long as he lives he’ll be given to the LORD.” And all of them worshiped the LORD there.

Hannah Gives Thanks to the LORD

1 Samuel 2

[1]Then Hannah prayed. She said,

"The LORD has filled my heart with joy.
He has made me strong.
I can laugh at my enemies.
I'm so glad he saved me.

[2]"There isn't anyone holy like the LORD.
There isn't anyone except him.
There isn't any Rock like our God.

[3]"Don't keep talking so proudly.
Don't let your mouth say such proud things.
The LORD is a God who knows everything.
He judges everything people do.

[4]"The bows of great heroes are broken.
But those who trip and fall are made strong.
[5]Those who used to be full have to work for food.
But those who used to be hungry aren't hungry anymore.
The woman who couldn't have children has seven of them now.
But the woman who has had many children is sad now because hers have died.

[6]"The LORD causes people to die. He also gives people life.
He brings people down to the grave. He also brings people up.
[7]The LORD makes people poor. He also makes people rich.
He brings people down. He also lifts people up.
[8]He raises poor people up from the trash pile.
He lifts needy people out of the ashes.
He lets them sit with princes.
He gives them places of honor.

“The foundations of the earth belong to the LORD.
On them he has set the world.
9He guards the paths of those who are faithful to him.
But evil people will lie silent in their dark graves.

“People don’t win just because they are strong.
10Those who oppose the LORD will be totally destroyed.
He will thunder against them from heaven.
He will judge the earth from one end to the other.

“He will give power to his king.
He will give honor to his anointed one.”

11Then Elkanah went home to Ramah. But the boy Samuel served the LORD under the direction of the priest Eli.

Eli’s Evil Sons

12Eli’s sons were evil men. They didn’t know the LORD. 13When anyone came to offer a sacrifice, here is what the priests would do. While the meat was being boiled, the servant of the priest would come with a large fork in his hand. 14He would stick it into the pan or pot or small or large kettle. Then the priest would take for himself everything the fork brought up. That’s how Eli’s sons treated all of the people of Israel who came to Shiloh.

15Even before the fat was burned, the servant of the priest would come over. He would speak to the man who was offering the sacrifice. He would say, “Give the priest some meat to cook. He won’t accept boiled meat from you. All he’ll accept is raw meat.”

16Sometimes the man would say to him, “Let the fat be burned up first. Then take what you want.”

But the servant would answer, “No. Hand it over right now. If you don’t, I’ll take it away from you by force.”

17That sin of Eli’s sons was very great in the LORD’s sight. That’s because they were making fun of his offering.

18But the boy Samuel served the LORD. He wore a sacred linen apron. 19Each year his mother made him a little robe. She took it to him when she went up to Shiloh with her husband. She did it when her husband went to offer the yearly sacrifice.

20Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife. He would say, “May the LORD give you children by this woman. May they take the place of the boy she prayed for and gave to him.” Then they would go home.

21The LORD was gracious to Hannah. She became pregnant. Over a period of years she had three more sons and two daughters. During that whole time the boy Samuel grew up serving the LORD.

22Eli was very old. He kept hearing about everything his sons were doing to all of the people of Israel. He also heard how they were having sex with the women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.

23So Eli said to his sons, “Why are you doing those things? All of the people are telling me about the evil things you are doing. 24No, my sons. The report I hear isn’t good. And it’s spreading among the LORD’s people. 25If a man sins against someone else, God can help that sinner. But if a man sins against the LORD, who can help him?”

In spite of what their father Eli said, his sons didn’t pay any attention to his warning. That’s because the LORD had already decided to put them to death.

26The boy Samuel continued to grow stronger. He also became more and more pleasing to the LORD and to people.

A Man of God Prophesies Against Eli’s Family

27A man of God came to Eli. He told him, “The LORD says, ‘I made myself clearly known to your relatives who lived long ago. I did it when they were in Egypt under Pharaoh. 28I chose your father Aaron to be my priest. I chose him out of all of the tribes of Israel. I told him to go up to my altar. I told him to burn incense. I chose him to wear a linen apron when he served me. I also gave his family all of the offerings that are made with fire by the people of Israel.

29“ ‘Why do all of you laugh at my sacrifices and offerings? I require them to be brought to the house where I live. Why do you honor your sons more than me? Why do you fatten yourselves on the best parts of every offering that is

made by my people Israel?’

30“The LORD is the God of Israel. He announced, ‘I promised that your family
and the family of Aaron would serve me as priests forever.’

“But now the LORD announces, ‘I will not let that happen! I will honor those
who honor me. But I will turn away from those who look down on me. 31The
time is coming when I will cut your life short. I will also cut short the lives of
those in your family. No man in your family line will grow old.

32“ ‘You will see nothing but trouble in the house where I live. Good things
will still happen to Israel. But no man in your family line will ever grow old.
33A member of your family will serve me at my altar. But what he does will
bring tears to your eyes. Your heart will be sad. And the rest of the men in your
family line will die while they are still young.

34“ ‘Something is going to happen to your two sons Hophni and Phinehas.
When it does, it will show you that what I am saying is true. They will both die
on the same day.

35“ ‘I will raise up for myself a faithful priest. He will do what my heart and
mind want him to do. I will make his family line very secure. They will always
serve as priests to my anointed king. 36Everyone who is left in your family line
will come and bow down to him. They will beg him for a piece of silver and a
crust of bread. They will say, “Please give me a place to serve among the
priests. Then I can have food to eat.” ’ ”

The LORD Calls Out to Samuel

1 Samuel 3

[1]The boy Samuel served the LORD under the direction of Eli. In those days the LORD didn't give many messages to his people. He didn't give them many visions.

[2]One night Eli was lying down in his usual place. His eyes were becoming so weak he couldn't see very well. [3]Samuel was lying down in the LORD's house. That's where the ark of God was kept. The lamp of God was still burning. [4]The LORD called out to Samuel.

Samuel answered, "Here I am." [5]He ran over to Eli. He said, "Here I am. You called out to me."

But Eli said, "I didn't call you. Go back and lie down." So he went and lay down.

[6]Again the LORD called out, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli. He said, "Here I am. You called out to me."

"My son," Eli said, "I didn't call you. Go back and lie down."

[7]Samuel didn't know the LORD yet. That's because the LORD still hadn't given him a message.

[8]The LORD called out to Samuel for the third time. Samuel got up and went to Eli. He said, "Here I am. You called out to me."

Then Eli realized that the LORD was calling the boy. [9]So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down. If someone calls out to you again, say, 'Speak, LORD. I'm listening.' " So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

[10]The LORD came and stood there. He called out, just as he had done the other times. He said, "Samuel! Samuel!"

Then Samuel replied, "Speak. I'm listening."

[11]The LORD said to Samuel, "Pay attention! I am about to do something terrible in Israel. It will make the ears of everyone who hears about it ring.

[12]"At that time I will do everything to Eli and his family that I said I would. I

will finish what I have started. [13]I told Eli I would punish his family forever. He knew his sons were sinning. He knew they were making fun of me. In spite of that, he failed to stop them.

[14]“So I took an oath and made a promise to the family of Eli. I said, ‘The sins of Eli’s family will never be paid for by bringing sacrifices or offerings.’ ”

[15]Samuel lay down until morning. Then he opened the doors of the LORD’s house. He was afraid to tell Eli about the vision he had received. [16]But Eli called out to him. He said, “Samuel, my son.”

Samuel answered, “Here I am.”

[17]“What did the LORD say to you?” Eli asked. “Don’t hide from me anything he told you. If you do, may God punish you greatly.”

[18]So Samuel told him everything. He didn’t hide anything from him.

Then Eli said, “He is the LORD. Let him do what he thinks is best.”

[19]As Samuel grew up, the LORD was with him. He made everything Samuel said come true. [20]So all of the people of Israel recognized that Samuel really was a prophet of the LORD. Everyone from Dan all the way to Beersheba knew it.

[21]The LORD continued to appear at Shiloh. There he made himself known to Samuel through the messages he gave him.

1 Samuel 4

[1]And Samuel gave those messages to all of the people of Israel.

The Philistines Capture the Ark

The people of Israel went out to fight against the Philistines. The Israelites camped at Ebenezer. The Philistines camped at Aphek. [2]The Philistines brought their forces together to fight against Israel. As the fighting spread, the men of Israel lost the battle to the Philistines. The Philistines killed about 4,000 of them on the field of battle.

[3]The rest of the Israelite soldiers returned to camp. Then the elders asked them, “Why did the LORD let the Philistines win the battle over us today? Let’s bring the ark of the LORD’s covenant from Shiloh. Let’s take it with us. It will save us from the power of our enemies.”

[4]So the people sent men to Shiloh. They brought back the ark of the covenant of the LORD. He sits there on his throne between the cherubim. He is the One who rules over all. Eli’s two sons Hophni and Phinehas were with the ark of the covenant of God in Shiloh.

[5]The ark of the LORD’s covenant was brought into the camp. Then all of the people of Israel shouted so loudly that the ground shook.

[6]The Philistines heard the noise. They asked, “What’s all that shouting about in the Hebrew camp?”

Then the Philistines found out that the ark of the LORD had come into the camp. [7]So they were afraid. “A god has come into their camp,” they said. “We’re in trouble! Nothing like this has ever happened before. [8]How terrible it will be for us! Who will save us from the power of those mighty gods? They struck down the people of Egypt in the desert. They sent all kinds of plagues on them.

[9]“Philistines, be strong! Fight like men! If you don’t, you will come under the control of the Hebrews. You will become their slaves, just as they have been your slaves. Fight like men!”

10So the Philistines fought. The people of Israel lost the battle. Every man ran back to his tent. A large number of them were killed. Israel lost 30,000 soldiers who were on foot.

11The ark of God was captured. And Eli's two sons Hophni and Phinehas died.

Eli Dies

12That same day a man from the tribe of Benjamin ran from the front lines of the battle. He went to Shiloh. His clothes were torn. He had dust on his head. 13When he arrived, there was Eli sitting on his chair. He was by the side of the road. He was watching because his heart was really concerned about the ark of God. The man entered the town and told everyone what had happened. Then the whole town cried out.

14Eli heard the people crying out. He asked, "What's the meaning of all of this noise?"

The man hurried over to Eli. 15Eli was 98 years old. His eyes were so bad he couldn't see. 16The man told Eli, "I've just come from the front lines of the battle. I ran away from there this very day."

Eli asked, "What happened, son?"

17The man who brought the news replied, "Israel ran away from the Philistines. Large numbers of men in the army were wounded or killed. Your two sons Hophni and Phinehas are also dead. And the ark of God has been captured."

18When the man spoke about the ark of God, Eli fell backward off his chair. He had been sitting by the side of the gate. When he fell, he broke his neck and died. He was old and fat. He had led Israel for 40 years.

19The wife of Phinehas was pregnant. She was Eli's daughter-in-law. It was near the time for her baby to be born. She heard the news that the ark of God had been captured. She heard that her father-in-law and her husband were dead. So she went into labor and had her baby. Her pain was so great that her life was slipping away.

20As she was dying, the women who were helping her spoke up. They said, "Don't be afraid. You have had a son." But she didn't reply. She didn't pay any

attention.

[21]She named the boy Ichabod. She said, “The God of glory has left Israel.” She said it because the ark of God had been captured. She also said it because her father-in-law and her husband had died. [22]She said, “The God of glory has left Israel.” She said it because the ark of God had been captured.

The Ark Is Taken to Ashdod and Ekron

1 Samuel 5

[1]The Philistines had captured the ark of God. They took it from Ebenezer to
Ashdod. [2]They carried the ark into the temple of their god Dagon. They set it
down beside the statue of Dagon.

[3]The people of Ashdod got up early the next day. They saw the statue of
Dagon. There it was, lying on the ground! It had fallen on its face in front of
the ark of the LORD. So they picked the statue of Dagon up. They put it back in
its place.

[4]But the following morning when they got up, they saw the statue of Dagon.
There it was, lying on the ground again! It had fallen on its face in front of the
ark of the LORD. Its head and hands had been broken off. Only the body of the
statue was left. Its head and hands were lying in the doorway of the temple.
[5]That's why to this very day no one steps on the bottom part of the doorway of
Dagon's temple at Ashdod. Not even the priests of Dagon step there.

[6]The LORD's powerful hand punished the people of Ashdod and the
settlements that were near it. He destroyed them. He made them suffer with
growths in their bodies.

[7]The people of Ashdod saw what was happening. They said, "The ark of the
god of Israel must not stay here with us. His powerful hand is punishing us and
our god Dagon."

[8]So they called all of the rulers of the Philistines together. They asked them,
"What should we do with the ark of the god of Israel?"

The rulers answered, "Have the ark moved to Gath." So they moved it.

[9]But after the people of Ashdod had moved the ark, the LORD's hand punished
Gath. That threw its people into a great panic. The LORD made them break out
with growths in their bodies. It happened to young people and old people alike.
[10]So the ark of God was sent to Ekron.

As the ark was entering Ekron, the people of the city cried out. They shouted,
"They've brought the ark of the god of Israel to us. They want to kill us and

our people.”

[11]So they called all of the rulers of the Philistines together. They said, “Send the ark of the god of Israel away. Let it go back to its own place. If you don’t, it will kill us and our people.” The death of so many people had filled the city with panic. God’s powerful hand was punishing the city. [12]Those who didn’t die suffered with growths in their bodies. The people of Ekron cried out to heaven for help.

The Philistines Return the Ark to Israel

1 Samuel 6

[1]The ark of the LORD had been in Philistine territory for seven months. [2]The Philistines called for the priests and for those who practice evil magic. They wanted their advice. They said to them, “What should we do with the ark of the LORD? Tell us how we should send it back to its place.”

[3]They answered, “If you return the ark of the god of Israel, don’t send it away empty. Be sure you send a guilt offering to their god along with it. Then you will be healed. You will find out why his hand hasn’t stopped punishing you.”

[4]The Philistines asked, “What guilt offering should we send to him?”

Their advisers replied, “There are five Philistine rulers. So send five gold models of the growths that are in your bodies. Also send five gold models of rats. Do it because the same plague has struck you and your rulers alike. [5]Make models of the growths and of the rats that are destroying the country. Pay honor to Israel’s god. Perhaps his hand will stop punishing you. Maybe it will stop punishing your gods and your land.

[6]“Why are you stubborn, as Pharaoh and the people of Egypt were? God was very hard on them. Only then did they send the people of Israel out. Only then did they let them go on their way.

[7]“Now then, get a new cart ready. Get two cows that have just had calves. Be sure the cows have never pulled a cart before. Tie the cart to them. But take their calves away and put them in a pen.

[8]“Then put the ark of the LORD on the cart. Put the gold models in a chest beside the ark. Send them back to the LORD as a guilt offering. Send the cart on its way.

[9]“But keep an eye on the cart. See if it goes up toward Beth Shemesh to its own territory. If it does, then it’s the LORD who has brought this horrible trouble on us. But if it doesn’t, then we’ll know it wasn’t his hand that struck us. We’ll know it happened to us by chance.”

[10]So that’s what they did. They took the two cows and tied the cart to them.

They put the calves in a pen. [11]They placed the ark of the LORD on the cart. They put the chest there along with it. The chest held the gold models of the rats and of the growths.

[12]Then the cows went straight up toward Beth Shemesh. They stayed on the road. They were mooing all the way. They didn't turn to the right or the left. The Philistine rulers followed them all the way to the border of Beth Shemesh.

[13]The people of Beth Shemesh were working in the valley. They were gathering their wheat crop. They looked up and saw the ark. When they saw it, they were filled with joy.

[14]The cart came to the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh. It stopped there beside a large rock. The people chopped up the wood the cart was made out of. They sacrificed the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD.

[15]Some Levites had taken the ark of the LORD off the cart. They had also taken off the chest that held the gold models. They placed them on the large rock. On that day the people of Beth Shemesh offered burnt offerings to the LORD. They also made sacrifices to him.

[16]The five Philistine rulers saw everything that happened. On that same day they returned to Ekron.

[17]The Philistines sent gold models of growths as a guilt offering to the LORD. There was one each for Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekron. [18]They also sent five gold models of rats. There was one for each of the Philistine towns that belonged to the five rulers. Each of those towns had high walls around it. The towns also had country villages around them.

The Levites set the ark of the LORD on a large rock. To this very day the rock gives witness to what happened there. It's in the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh.

[19]But some of the people of Beth Shemesh looked into the ark of the LORD. So he struck them down. He put 70 of them to death. The rest of the people were filled with sorrow. That's because the LORD had killed so many of them.

[20]The people of Beth Shemesh said, "The LORD is a holy God. Who can stand in front of him? Where can the ark go up to from here?"

[21]Then messengers were sent to the people of Kiriath Jearim. They said, "The Philistines have returned the ark of the LORD. Come down and take it up to your place."

1 Samuel 7

[1]So the men of Kiriath Jearim came and got the ark of the LORD. They took it up to Abinadab's house on the hill. They set his son Eleazar apart to guard the ark.

Samuel Brings the Philistines Under Israel's Control

[2]The ark remained at Kiriath Jearim for a long time. It was there for a full 20 years. All of the people of Israel were filled with sorrow. They looked to the LORD for help.

[3]Samuel spoke to the whole community of Israel. He said, "Do you really want to return to the LORD with all your hearts? If you do, get rid of your strange gods. Get rid of your statues of goddesses that are named after Ashtoreth. Commit yourselves to the LORD. Serve him only. Then he will save you from the powerful hand of the Philistines."

[4]So the people of Israel put away their statues of gods that were named after Baal. They put away their statues of goddesses named after Ashtoreth. They served the LORD only.

[5]Then Samuel said, "Gather all of the people of Israel together at Mizpah. I will pray to the LORD for you."

[6]When the people had come together at Mizpah, they went to the well and got water. They poured it out in the sight of the LORD. On that day they didn't eat any food. They admitted they had sinned. They said, "We've sinned against the LORD." Samuel was the leader of Israel at Mizpah.

[7]The Philistines heard that Israel had gathered together at Mizpah. So the Philistine rulers came up to attack them.

When the people of Israel heard about it, they were afraid. [8]They said to Samuel, "Don't stop crying out to the LORD our God to help us. Keep praying that he'll save us from the powerful hand of the Philistines."

[9]Then Samuel got a very young lamb. He sacrificed it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. He cried out to the LORD to help Israel. And the LORD

answered his prayer.

10The Philistines came near to attack Israel. At that time Samuel was sacrificing the burnt offering. But that day the LORD thundered loudly against the Philistines. He threw them into such a panic that the Israelites were able to chase them away. 11The men of Israel rushed out of Mizpah. They chased the Philistines all the way to a point below Beth Car. They killed them all along the way.

12Then Samuel got a big stone. He set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer. He said, “The LORD has helped us every step of the way.”

13So Samuel brought the Philistines under Israel’s control. The Philistines didn’t attack their territory again.

The LORD used his powerful hand against the Philistines as long as Samuel lived. 14The Philistines had captured many towns between Ekron and Gath. But they had to give all of them back. Israel took back the territories near those towns from the powerful hand of the Philistines.

During that time Israel and the Amorites were friendly toward each other.

15Samuel continued to lead Israel all the days of his life. 16From year to year he traveled from Bethel to Gilgal to Mizpah. He served Israel as judge in all of those places. 17But he always went back to Ramah. That’s where his home was. He served Israel as judge there too. And he built an altar there to honor the LORD.

Israel Asks Samuel for a King

1 Samuel 8

[1]When Samuel became old, he appointed his sons to serve as judges for Israel. [2]The name of his oldest son was Joel. The name of his second son was Abijah. They served as judges at Beersheba. [3]But his sons didn't live as he did. They were only interested in making money. They accepted money from people who wanted special favors. They made things that were wrong appear to be right.

[4]So all of the elders of Israel gathered together. They came to Samuel at Ramah. [5]They said to him, "You are old. Your sons don't live as you do. So appoint a king to lead us. We want a king just like the kings all of the other nations have."

[6]Samuel wasn't pleased when they said, "Give us a king to lead us." So he prayed to the LORD.

[7]The LORD told him, "Listen to everything the people are saying to you. You are not the one they have turned their backs on. I am the one they do not want as their king. [8]They are doing just as they have always done. They have deserted me and served other gods. They have done that from the time I brought them up out of Egypt until this very day. Now they are deserting you too.

[9]"Let them have what they want. But give them a strong warning. Let them know what the king who rules over them will do."

[10]Samuel told the people who were asking him for a king everything the LORD had said. [11]Samuel told them, "Here's what the king who rules over you will do. He will take your sons. He'll make them serve with his chariots and horses. They will run in front of his chariots. [12]He'll choose some of your sons to be commanders of thousands of men. Some will be commanders of fifties. Others will have to plow his fields and gather his crops. Still others will have to make weapons of war and parts for his chariots.

[13]"He'll also take your daughters. Some will have to make perfume. Others

will be forced to cook and bake.

14“He will take away your best fields and vineyards and olive groves. He’ll
give them to his attendants. 15He will take a tenth of your grain and a tenth of
your grapes. He’ll give it to his officials and attendants. 16He will also take
your male and female servants. He’ll take your best cattle and donkeys. He’ll
use all of them any way he wants to.

17“He will take a tenth of your sheep and goats. You yourselves will become
his slaves.

18“When that time comes, you will cry out for help because of the king you
have chosen. But the LORD won’t answer you at that time.”

19In spite of what Samuel said, the people refused to listen to him. “No!” they
said. “We want a king to rule over us. 20Then we’ll be like all of the other
nations. We’ll have a king to lead us. He’ll go out at the head of our armies and
fight our battles.”

21Samuel heard everything the people said. He told the LORD about it. 22The
LORD answered, “Listen to them. Give them a king.”

Then Samuel said to the men of Israel, “Each of you go back to your own
town.”

Samuel Anoints Saul to Be Israel's Leader

1 Samuel 9

[1]There was a man named Kish from the tribe of Benjamin. Kish was a very important person. He was the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror. Zeror was the son of Becorath, the son of Aphiah from the tribe of Benjamin. [2]Kish had a son named Saul. Saul was a handsome young man. There wasn't anyone like him among the people of Israel. He was a head taller than any of them.

[3]The donkeys that belonged to Saul's father Kish were lost. So Kish spoke to his son Saul. He said, "Go and look for the donkeys. Take one of the servants with you."

[4]Saul and his servant went through the hill country of Ephraim. They also went through the area around Shalisha. But they didn't find the donkeys. So they went on into the area of Shaalim. But the donkeys weren't there either. Then Saul went through the territory of Benjamin. But they still didn't find the donkeys.

[5]When Saul and the servant who was with him reached the area of Zuph, Saul spoke to him. He said, "Come on. Let's go back. If we don't, my father will stop thinking about the donkeys and start worrying about us."

[6]But the servant replied, "There's a man of God here in Ramah. People have a lot of respect for him. Everything he says comes true. So let's go and see him now. Perhaps he'll tell us which way to go."

[7]Saul said to his servant, "If we go to see the man, what can we give him? There isn't any food in our sacks. We don't have a gift for the man of God. So what can we give him?"

[8]The servant answered Saul again. "Look," he said. "I've got a tenth of an ounce of silver. I'll give it to the man of God. Then maybe he'll tell us which way to go."

[9]In Israel, prophets used to be called seers. So if a man wanted to ask God for advice, he would say, "Come on. Let's go to the seer."

[10]Saul said to his servant, "That's a good idea. Come on. Let's go and ask the

seer.” So they started out for the town where the man of God lived.

[11]They were going up the hill toward the town. Along the way they met some young women who were coming out to get water from the well. Saul and his servant asked them, “Is the seer here?”

[12]“Yes, he is,” they answered. “In fact, he’s just up ahead of you. So hurry along. He has just come to our town today. The people are going to offer a sacrifice at the high place where they worship. [13]As soon as you enter the town, you will find him. He’ll be there until he goes up to the high place to eat. The people won’t start eating until he gets there. He must bless the sacrifice first. After that, those who are invited will eat. So go on up. You should find him there just about now.”

[14]They went up to the town. As they were entering it, they saw Samuel. He was coming toward them. He was on his way up to the high place.

[15]The LORD had spoken to Samuel the day before Saul came. He had said, [16]“About this time tomorrow I will send you a man. He is from the land of Benjamin. Anoint him to be the leader of my people Israel. He will save them from the powerful hand of the Philistines. I have seen how much my people are suffering. Their cry for help has reached me.”

[17]When Samuel saw a man coming toward him, the LORD spoke to Samuel again. He said, “He is the man I told you about. His name is Saul. He will govern my people.”

[18]Saul approached Samuel at the gate of the town. He asked Samuel, “Can you please show me the house where the seer is staying?”

[19]“I’m the seer,” Samuel replied. “Go on up to the high place ahead of me. I want you and your servant to eat with me today. Tomorrow morning I’ll tell you what’s on your mind. Then I’ll let you go. [20]Don’t worry about the donkeys you lost three days ago. They’ve already been found. But who are all of the people of Israel longing for? You and your father’s whole family!”

[21]Saul answered, “But I’m from the tribe of Benjamin. It’s the smallest tribe in Israel. And my family group is the least important in the whole tribe of Benjamin. So why are you saying that to me?”

[22]Then Samuel brought Saul and his servant into the room where they would be eating. He seated them at the head table. About 30 people had been invited. [23]Samuel said to the cook, “Bring the piece of meat I gave you. It’s the one I told you to put to one side.”

[24]So the cook went and got a choice piece of thigh. He set it in front of Saul. Samuel said, “Here is what has been kept for you. Eat it. It was put to one side for you for this special occasion. We’ve saved it for you ever since I invited the guests.” And Saul ate with Samuel that day.

[25]They came down from the high place to the town. After that, Samuel talked with Saul on the roof of Samuel’s house.

[26]The next day they got up at about the time the sun was rising. Samuel called out to Saul on the roof. He said, “Get ready. Then I’ll send you on your way.” So Saul got ready. And he and Samuel went outside together.

[27]As they were on their way down to the edge of town, Samuel spoke to Saul. He said, “Tell the servant to go ahead of us.” So the servant went on ahead. Then Samuel continued, “Stay here awhile. I’ll give you a message from God.”

1 Samuel 10

[1]Then Samuel took a bottle of olive oil. He poured it on Saul's head and kissed him. He said, "The LORD has anointed you to be the leader of his people. [2]When you leave me today, you will meet two men. They will be near Rachel's tomb at Zelzah on the border of Benjamin. They'll say to you, 'The donkeys you have been looking for have been found. Now your father has stopped thinking about them. Instead, he's worried about you. He's asking, "What can I do to find my son?" '

[3]"You will go on from Zelzah until you come to the large tree at Tabor. Three men will meet you there. They'll be on their way up to Bethel to worship God. One of them will be carrying three young goats. Another will be carrying three loaves of bread. A third will be carrying a bottle of wine. It will be a bottle that is made out of animal skin. [4]The men will greet you. They'll offer you two loaves of bread. You will accept the loaves from them.

[5]"After that, you will go to Gibeah of God. Some Philistine soldiers are stationed there. As you approach the town, you will meet a group of prophets. They'll be coming down from the high place where they worship. People will be playing lyres, tambourines, flutes and harps at the head of the group. The prophets will be prophesying. [6]The Spirit of the LORD will come on you with power. Then you will prophesy along with them. You will become a different person.

[7]"All of those things will happen. Then do what you want to do. God is with you.

[8]"Go down ahead of me to Gilgal. You can be sure that I'll come down to you there. I'll come and sacrifice burnt offerings and friendship offerings. But you must wait there for seven days until I come to you. Then I'll tell you what to do."

Saul Is Made King of Israel

[9]As Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed Saul's heart. All of those things happened that day. [10]When Saul and his servant arrived at Gibeah, a

group of prophets met Saul. Then the Spirit of God came on him with power. He prophesied along with them. [11]Those who had known Saul before saw him prophesying with the prophets. They asked one another, “What has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also one of the prophets?”

[12]A man who lived in Gibeah answered, “Yes, he is. In fact, he’s their leader.” That’s why people say, “Is Saul also one of the prophets?”

[13]After Saul stopped prophesying, he went to the high place to worship.

[14]Later, Saul’s uncle spoke to him and his servant. He asked, “Where have you been?”

“Looking for the donkeys,” he said. “But we couldn’t find them. So we went to Samuel.”

[15]Saul’s uncle said, “Tell me what Samuel said to you.”

[16]Saul replied, “He told us the donkeys had been found.” But Saul didn’t tell his uncle that Samuel had said he would become king.

[17]Samuel sent a message to the people of Israel. He told them to meet with the LORD at Mizpah. [18]He said to them, “The LORD is the God of Israel. He says, ‘Israel, I brought you up out of Egypt. I saved you from their powerful hand. I also saved you from the powerful hand of all of the kingdoms that had beaten you down.’

[19]“But now you have turned your backs on your God. He saves you out of all of your trouble and suffering. In spite of that, you have said, ‘We refuse to listen. Place a king over us.’

“So now gather together to meet with the LORD. Do it tribe by tribe and family group by family group.”

[20]Then Samuel had each tribe of Israel come forward. The tribe of Benjamin was chosen. [21]Next he had the tribe of Benjamin come forward, family group by family group. Matri’s group was chosen. Finally Saul, the son of Kish, was chosen. But when people looked for him, they realized he wasn’t there. [22]They needed more help from the LORD. So they asked him, “Has the man come here yet?”

The LORD said, “Yes. He has hidden himself among the supplies.”

[23]So they ran over there and brought him out. When he stood up, the people saw that he was a head taller than any of them.

[24]Samuel spoke to all of the people. He said, “Look at the man the LORD has chosen! There isn’t anyone like him among all of the people.”

Then the people shouted, “May the king live a long time!”

[25]Samuel explained to the people what the king who ruled over them should do. He wrote it down on a scroll. He placed it in front of the LORD in the holy tent. Then he sent the people away. He sent each of them to their own homes.

[26]Saul also went to his home in Gibeah. Some brave men whose hearts God had touched went with Saul.

[27]But some evil people who wanted to stir up trouble said, “How can this fellow save us?” They looked down on him. They didn’t bring him any gifts. But Saul kept quiet about it.

Saul Saves the City of Jabesh Gilead

1 Samuel 11

[1]Nahash was the king of Ammon. He and his army went up to Jabesh Gilead. They surrounded it and got ready to attack it. All of the men of Jabesh spoke to Nahash. They said, “Make a peace treaty with us. Then we’ll be under your control.”

[2]Nahash, the king of Ammon, replied, “I will make a peace treaty with you. But I’ll do it only on one condition. You must let me put out the right eye of every one of you. I want to bring shame on the whole nation of Israel.”

[3]The elders of Jabesh said to him, “Give us seven days to report back to you. We’ll send messengers all through Israel. If no one comes to save us, we’ll hand ourselves over to you.”

[4]The messengers came to Gibeah of Saul. They reported to the people the terms Nahash had required. Then all of the people sobbed out loud.

[5]Just then Saul was coming in from the fields. He was walking behind his oxen. He asked, “What’s wrong with the people? Why are they sobbing?” He was told what the men of Jabesh had said.

[6]When Saul heard their words, the Spirit of God came on him with power. He burned with anger. [7]He got a pair of oxen and cut them into pieces. He sent the pieces by messengers all through Israel. They announced, “You must follow Saul and Samuel. If you don’t, this is what will happen to your oxen.”

The terror of the LORD fell on the people. So all of them came together with one purpose in mind.

[8]Saul brought his army together at Bezek. There were 300,000 men from Israel and 30,000 from Judah.

[9]The messengers who had come were told, “Go back and report to the men of Jabesh Gilead. Tell them, ‘By the hottest time of the day tomorrow, you will be saved.’ ”

The messengers went and reported it to the men of Jabesh. It made those men very happy. [10]They said to the people of Ammon, “Tomorrow we’ll hand

ourselves over to you. Then you can do to us what seems best to you.”

11The next day Saul separated his men into three groups. While it was still dark, they broke into the camp of the Ammonite army. They kept killing the men of Ammon until the hottest time of the day. Those who got away alive were scattered. There weren’t two of them left together anywhere.

The People Agree to Have Saul as King

12The people said to Samuel, “Who asked, ‘Is Saul going to rule over us?’ Bring those people to us. We’ll put them to death.”

13But Saul said, “We won’t put anyone to death today! After all, this is the day the LORD has saved Israel.”

14Then Samuel said to the people, “Come on. Let’s go to Gilgal. There we’ll agree to have Saul as our king.”

15So all of the people went to Gilgal. There, with the LORD as witness, they agreed to have Saul as their king. There they sacrificed friendship offerings to the LORD. And there Saul and all of the people of Israel celebrated with great joy.

Samuel Tells Israel to Serve the LORD

1 Samuel 12

[1]Samuel spoke to all of the people of Israel. He said, “I’ve done everything
you asked me to do. I’ve placed a king over you. [2]Now you have a king as your
leader. But I’m old. My hair is gray. My sons are here with you. I’ve been your
leader from the time I was young until this very day.

[3]“Here I stand. Bring charges against me if you can. The LORD is a witness.
And so is his anointed king. Whose ox have I taken? Whose donkey have I
taken? Have I cheated anyone? Have I beaten anyone down? Have I accepted
money from anyone who wanted special favors? If I’ve done any of those
things, I’ll make it right.”

[4]“You haven’t cheated us,” they replied. “You haven’t beaten us down. You
haven’t taken anything from anyone.”

[5]Samuel said to them, “The LORD is a witness against you this very day. And
so is his anointed king. They are witnesses that I haven’t taken anything from
any of you.”

“The LORD is a witness,” they said.

[6]Then Samuel said to the people, “The LORD appointed Moses and Aaron. He
brought up out of Egypt your people who lived long ago. [7]Now then, stand
here. I’m going to remind you of all of the good things the LORD has done for
you and your people. He is a witness.

[8]“After Jacob’s family entered Egypt, they cried out to the LORD for help. The
LORD sent Moses and Aaron. They brought your people out of Egypt. They
settled them in this land.

[9]“But the people forgot the LORD their God. So he gave them over to the
powerful hand of Sisera. Sisera was the commander of the army of Hazor. The
LORD also gave the people of Israel over to the powerful hand of the Philistines
and the king of Moab. All of those nations fought against Israel.

[10]“So the people cried out to the LORD. They said, ‘We have sinned. We’ve
deserted the LORD. We’ve served the gods that are named after Baal. We’ve

served the goddesses that are named after Ashtoreth. But save us now from the powerful hands of our enemies. Then we will serve you.’

11“The LORD sent Gideon, Barak, Jephthah and me. He saved you from the hands of your enemies, who were all around you. So you lived in safety.

12“But then you saw that Nahash, the king of Ammon, was about to attack you. So you said to me, ‘No! We want a king to rule over us.’ You said it even though the LORD your God was your king. 13Now here is the king you have chosen. He’s the one you asked for. The LORD has placed a king over you.

14“But you must have respect for the LORD. You must serve him and obey him. You must not say no to his commands. Both you and the king who rules over you must follow the LORD your God. If you do, that’s good. 15But you must not disobey him. You must not say no to his commands. If you do, his powerful hand will punish you. That’s what happened to your people who lived before you.

16“So stand still. Watch the great thing the LORD is about to do right here in front of you! 17It’s time to gather in the wheat, isn’t it? I’ll call out to the LORD to send thunder and rain. Then you will realize what an evil thing you did in the sight of the LORD. You shouldn’t have asked for a king.”

18Samuel called out to the LORD. That same day the LORD sent thunder and rain. So all of the people had great respect for the LORD and for Samuel.

19They said to Samuel, “Pray to the LORD your God for us. Pray that we won’t die because we asked for a king. That was an evil thing to do. We added it to all of our other sins.”

20“Don’t be afraid,” Samuel replied. “It’s true that you have done all of those evil things. But don’t turn away from the LORD. Serve him with all your heart.

21“Don’t turn away and worship statues of gods. They are useless. They can’t do you any good. They can’t save you either. They are completely useless.

22“But the LORD will be true to his great name. He won’t turn his back on his people. That’s because he was pleased to make you his own people.

23“I would never sin against the LORD by failing to pray for you. I’ll teach you to live in a way that is good and right.

24“But be sure to have respect for the LORD. Serve him faithfully. Do it with all your heart. Think about the great things he has done for you. 25But don’t be stubborn. Don’t continue to do what is evil. If you do, both you and your king

will be swept away.”

Saul Refuses to Obey the LORD's Command

1 Samuel 13

[1]Saul was 30 years old when he became king. He ruled over Israel for 42 years.

[2]He chose 3,000 of Israel's men. Two thousand of them were with him at Micmash and in the hill country of Bethel. One thousand were with Jonathan at Gibeah in the land of Benjamin. Saul sent the rest back to their homes.

[3]Some Philistine soldiers were stationed at Geba. Jonathan attacked them. The other Philistines heard about it.

Saul announced, "Let the Hebrew people hear about what has happened!" He had trumpets blown all through the land. [4]So all of the people of Israel heard the news. They were told, "Saul has attacked the Philistine army camp at Geba. He has made Israel smell very bad to the Philistines." The people of Israel were called out to join Saul at Gilgal.

[5]The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel. They had 3,000 chariots and 6,000 chariot drivers. Their soldiers were as many as the grains of sand on the seashore. They went up and camped at Micmash. It was east of Beth Aven.

[6]The men of Israel saw that their army was in deep trouble. So they hid in caves and bushes. They hid among the rocks. They hid in pits and empty wells. [7]Some of them even went across the Jordan River. They went to the lands of Gad and Gilead.

Saul remained at Gilgal. All of the troops who were with him were shaking with fear. [8]He waited seven days, just as Samuel had told him to. But Samuel didn't come to Gilgal. And Saul's men began to scatter. [9]So he said, "Bring me the burnt offering and the friendship offerings." Then he offered up the burnt offering.

[10]Just as Saul finished offering the sacrifice, Samuel arrived. Saul went out to greet him.

[11]"What have you done?" asked Samuel.

Saul replied, “I saw that the men were scattering. I saw that the Philistines were gathering together at Micmash. You didn’t come when you said you would. 12So I thought, ‘Now the Philistines will come down to attack me at Gilgal. And I haven’t asked the LORD to show us his favor.’ So I felt I had to sacrifice the burnt offering.”

13“You did a foolish thing,” Samuel said. “You haven’t obeyed the command the LORD your God gave you. If you had, he would have made your kingdom secure over Israel for all time to come. 14But now your kingdom won’t last. The LORD has already looked for a man who is dear to his heart. He has appointed him leader of his people. That’s because you haven’t obeyed the LORD’s command.”

15Then Samuel left Gilgal and went up to Gibeah in the land of Benjamin. Saul counted the men who stayed with him. The total number was about 600.

Israel Doesn’t Have Swords or Spears

16Saul and his son Jonathan were staying in Gibeah in the land of Benjamin. What was left of the army was there with them. At the same time, the Philistines camped at Micmash.

17Three groups of soldiers went out from the Philistine camp to attack Israel. One group turned and went toward Ophrah in the area of Shual. 18Another went toward Beth Horon. The third went toward the border that looked out over the Valley of Zeboim. That valley faces the desert.

19There weren’t any blacksmiths in the whole land of Israel. That’s because the Philistines had said, “The Hebrews might hire them to make swords or spears!”

20So all of the people of Israel had to go down to the Philistines. They had to go to them to get their plows, hoes, axes and sickles sharpened. 21It cost a fourth of an ounce of silver to sharpen a plow or a hoe. It cost an eighth of an ounce to sharpen a pitchfork or an axe. That’s also what it cost to put new tips on large sticks that were used to drive oxen.

22So not one of Saul’s or Jonathan’s soldiers had a sword or spear in his hand when he went out to battle. Only Saul and his son Jonathan had those weapons.

Jonathan Attacks the Philistines

[23]A group of Philistine soldiers had gone out to the pass at Micmash.

1 Samuel 14

[1]One day Jonathan, the son of Saul, spoke to the young man who was carrying his armor. “Come on,” he said. “Let’s go over to the Philistine army camp on the other side of the pass.” But he didn’t tell his father about it.

[2]Saul was staying just outside Gibeah. He was under a pomegranate tree in Migron. He had about 600 men with him. [3]Ahijah was one of them. He was wearing a sacred linen apron. He was a son of Ichabod’s brother Ahitub. Ahitub was the son of Eli’s son Phinehas. Eli had been the LORD’s priest in Shiloh. No one was aware that Jonathan had left.

[4]Jonathan planned to go across the pass to reach the Philistine camp. But there was a cliff on each side of the pass. One cliff was called Bozez. The other was called Seneh. [5]One cliff stood on the north side of the pass toward Micmash. The other stood on the south side toward Geba.

[6]Jonathan spoke to the young man who was carrying his armor. He said, “Come on. Let’s go over to the camp of those fellows who aren’t circumcised. Perhaps the LORD will help us. If he does, it won’t matter how many or how few of us there are. That won’t keep the LORD from saving us.”

[7]“Go ahead,” the young man said. “Do everything you have in mind. I’m with you all the way.”

[8]Jonathan said, “Come on, then. We’ll go across the pass toward the Philistines and let them see us. [9]Suppose they say to us, ‘Wait there until we come to you.’ Then we’ll stay where we are. We won’t go up to them. [10]But suppose they say, ‘Come up to us.’ Then we’ll climb up. That will show us that the LORD has handed them over to us.”

[11]So Jonathan and the young man let the soldiers in the Philistine camp see them. “Look!” said the Philistines. “Some of the Hebrews are crawling out of the holes they were hiding in.”

[12]The men in the Philistine camp shouted to Jonathan and the young man who was carrying his armor. They said, “Come on up here. We’ll teach you a thing or two.”

So Jonathan said to the young man, “Climb up after me. The LORD has handed them over to Israel.”

13 Using his hands and feet, Jonathan climbed up. The young man was right
behind him. Jonathan struck the Philistines down. The young man followed
him and killed those who were still alive. 14 In that first attack, Jonathan and the
young man killed about 20 men. They did it in an area of about half an acre.

Israel Chases the Philistines Away

15 Then panic struck the whole Philistine army. It struck those who were in the
camp and the field. It struck those who were at the edge of the camp. It also
struck those who were in the groups that had been sent out to attack Israel. The
ground shook. It was a panic that God had sent.

16 Saul's lookouts at Gibeah in the land of Benjamin saw what was happening.
They saw the Philistine army melting away in all directions.

17 Then Saul spoke to the men who were with him. He said, "Bring the troops
together. See who has left our camp." When they did, they discovered that
Jonathan and the young man who was carrying his armor weren't there.

18 Saul said to the priest Ahijah, "Bring the ark of God." At that time it was
with the people of Israel.

19 While Saul was talking to the priest, the noise in the Philistine camp
increased more and more. So Saul said to him, "Stop what you are doing."

20 Then Saul and all of his men gathered together. They went to the battle.
They saw that the Philistines were in total disorder. They were striking each
other with their swords.

21 At an earlier time some of the Hebrews had been on the side of the
Philistines. They had gone up with them to their camp. But now they changed
sides. They joined the people of Israel who were with Saul and Jonathan.

22 Some of the people had hidden in the hill country of Ephraim. They heard
that the Philistines were running away. They quickly joined the battle and
chased after them.

23 So the LORD saved Israel that day. And the fighting continued on past Beth
Aven.

Jonathan Eats Honey

[24]The men of Israel became very hungry that day. That's because Saul had put the army under an oath. He had said, "None of you must eat any food before evening comes. You must not eat until I've paid my enemies back for what they did. If you do, may you be under a curse!" So none of the troops ate any food at all.

[25]The whole army entered the woods. There was honey on the ground. [26]When they went into the woods, they saw the honey dripping out of a honeycomb. No one put any of the honey in his mouth. That's because they were afraid of the oath.

[27]But Jonathan hadn't heard that his father had put the army under an oath. Jonathan had a long stick in his hand. He reached out and dipped the end of it into the honeycomb. He put some honey in his mouth. It gave him new life.

[28]Then one of the soldiers told him, "Your father put the army under a strong oath. He said, 'None of you must eat any food today. If you do, may you be under a curse!' That's why the men are weak and ready to faint."

[29]Jonathan said, "My father has made trouble for the country. See how I gained new life after I tasted a little of this honey. [30]Our soldiers took food from their enemies today. Suppose they had eaten some of it. How much better off they would have been! Even more Philistines would have been killed."

[31]That day the men of Israel struck the Philistines down. They killed them from Micmash to Aijalon. By that time they were tired and worn out. [32]They grabbed what they had taken from their enemies. They killed some of the sheep, cattle and calves right there on the ground. They ate the meat while the blood was still in it.

[33]Then someone said to Saul, "Look! The men are sinning against the LORD. They're eating meat that still has blood in it."

Saul said to them, "You have broken your promise. Roll a large stone over here at once." [34]He continued, "Go out among the men. Tell them, 'Each of you bring me your cattle and sheep. Kill them here and eat them. Don't sin against the LORD by eating meat that still has blood in it.' "

So that night everyone brought the ox he had taken and killed it there.

[35]Then Saul built an altar to honor the LORD. It was the first time he had done that.

[36]Saul said, "Let's go down after the Philistines tonight. Let's not leave even

one of them alive. Let's take everything they have before it gets light."

"Do what you think is best," they replied.

But the priest said, "Let's ask God for advice first."

37So Saul asked God, "Should I go down after the Philistines? Will you hand them over to Israel?" But God didn't answer him that day.

38Saul said to the leaders of the army, "Come here. Let's find out what sin has been committed today. 39You can be sure that the LORD who saves Israel lives. And you can be just as sure that the sinner must die. He must die even if he's my son Jonathan." But no one said anything.

40Then Saul spoke to all of Israel's men. He said, "You stand over there. I and my son Jonathan will stand over here."

"Do what you think is best," the men replied.

41Then Saul prayed to the LORD, the God of Israel. He said, "Give me an answer." Jonathan and Saul were chosen by using lots. The other men were cleared of blame.

42Saul said, "Cast the lot to find out whether I or my son Jonathan is to blame." And Jonathan was chosen.

43Then Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done."

So Jonathan told him, "I only used the end of my stick to get a little honey and taste it. And now do I have to die?"

44Saul said, "Jonathan, I must certainly put you to death. If I don't, may God punish me greatly."

45But the men said to Saul, "Should Jonathan be put to death? Never! He has saved Israel in a wonderful way. He did it today with God's help. You can be sure that the LORD lives. And you can be just as sure that not even one hair on Jonathan's head will fall to the ground." So the men saved Jonathan. He wasn't put to death.

46Then Saul stopped chasing the Philistines. They went back to their own land.

47After Saul's kingdom was set firmly in place in Israel, he fought against their enemies who were all around them. He went to war against Moab, Ammon and Edom. He fought against the kings of Zobah and the Philistines. No matter where he went, he punished his enemies. 48He fought bravely. He

won the battle over the Amalekites. He saved Israel from the power of those who had carried off what belonged to Israel.

Saul's Family

[49]Saul's sons were Jonathan, Ishvi and Malki-Shua. His older daughter was named Merab. His younger daughter was named Michal. [50]Saul's wife was named Ahinoam. She was the daughter of Ahimaaz.

The commander of Saul's army was named Abner. He was the son of Ner. Ner was Saul's uncle. [51]Saul's father Kish and Abner's father Ner were sons of Abiel.

[52]As long as Saul was king, he had to fight hard against the Philistines. So every time Saul saw a strong or brave man, he took him into his army.

The LORD Is Sorry He Has Made Saul King

1 Samuel 15

1 Samuel said to Saul, “The LORD sent me to anoint you as king over his
people Israel. So listen now to a message from him. 2 The LORD who rules over
all says, ‘I will punish the Amalekites because of what they did to Israel. As
the people of Israel came up from Egypt, the Amalekites attacked them.

3 “ ‘Now go. Attack the Amalekites. Set everything apart that belongs to
them. Set it apart to me in a special way to be destroyed. Do not spare the
Amalekites. Put the men and women to death. Put the children and babies to
death. Also kill the cattle, sheep, camels and donkeys.’ ”

4 So Saul brought his men together at Telaim. The total number was 200,000
soldiers on foot from Israel and 10,000 men from Judah. 5 He went to the city
of Amalek. He had some of his men hide and wait in the valley.

6 Then Saul said to the Kenites, “You were kind to all of the people of Israel
when they came up out of Egypt. Get away from the Amalekites. Then I won’t
have to destroy you along with them.” So the Kenites moved away from the
Amalekites.

7 Saul attacked the Amalekites. He struck them down all the way from
Havilah to Shur. Shur was near the eastern border of Egypt. 8 He took Agag, the
king of the Amalekites, alive. He and his men totally destroyed all of Agag’s
people with swords.

9 But Saul and the army spared Agag. They spared the best of the sheep and
cattle. They spared the fat calves and lambs. They spared everything that was
valuable. They weren’t willing to completely destroy any of those things. But
they totally destroyed everything that was worthless and weak.

10 Then the LORD gave Samuel a message. He said, 11 “I am very sorry I have
made Saul king. He has turned away from me. He has not done what I directed
him to do.”

When Samuel heard that, he was troubled. He cried out to the LORD during
that whole night.

12 Early the next morning Samuel got up. He went to see Saul. But Samuel
was told, “Saul went to Carmel. There he set up a monument in his own honor.
Now he has gone on down to Gilgal.”

13 When Samuel got there, Saul said, “May the LORD bless you. I’ve done
what he directed me to do.”

14 But Samuel said, “Then why do I hear the baaing of sheep? Why do I hear
the mooing of cattle?”

15 Saul answered, “The soldiers brought them from the Amalekites. They
spared the best of the sheep and cattle. They did it to sacrifice them to the LORD
your God. But we totally destroyed everything else.”

16 “Stop!” Samuel said to Saul. “Let me tell you what the LORD said to me last
night.”

“Tell me,” Saul replied.

17 Samuel said, “There was a time when you didn’t think you were important.
But you became the leader of the tribes of Israel. The LORD anointed you to be
king over Israel. 18 He sent you to do something for him. He said, ‘Go and set
the Amalekites apart. Set those sinful people apart to me in a special way to be
destroyed. Fight against them until you have wiped them out.’

19 “Why didn’t you obey the LORD? Why did you grab what you had taken
from your enemies? Why did you do what is evil in the sight of the LORD?”

20 “But I did obey the LORD,” Saul said. “I went to do what he sent me to do. I
totally destroyed the Amalekites. I brought back Agag, their king.

21 “The soldiers took sheep and cattle from what had been taken from our
enemies. They took the best of what had been set apart to God. They wanted to
sacrifice them to the LORD your God at Gilgal.”

22 But Samuel replied,

“What pleases the LORD more?
Burnt offerings and sacrifices, or obeying him?
It is better to obey than to offer a sacrifice.
It is better to do what he says than to offer the fat of rams.
23 Refusing to obey him is as sinful as using evil magic.
Being proud is as evil as worshiping statues of gods.
You have refused to do what the LORD told you to do.
So he has refused to have you as king.”

[24]Then Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned. I’ve broken the LORD’s command. I haven’t done what you directed me to do. I was afraid of the people. So I did what they said I should do. [25]Now I beg you, forgive my sin. Come back into town with me so I can worship the LORD.”

[26]But Samuel said to him, “I won’t go back with you. You have refused to do what the LORD told you to do. So he has refused to have you as king over Israel!”

[27]Samuel turned to leave. But Saul grabbed hold of the hem of his robe, and it tore.

[28]Samuel said to Saul, “The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel away from you today. He has given it to one of your neighbors. He has given it to someone who is better than you. [29]The One who is the Glory of Israel does not lie. He doesn’t change his mind. That’s because he isn’t a mere man. If he were, he might change his mind.”

[30]Saul replied, “I have sinned. But please honor me in front of the elders of my people and in front of Israel. Come back with me so I can worship the LORD your God.”

[31]So Samuel went back with Saul. And Saul worshiped the LORD.

[32]Then Samuel said, “Bring me Agag, the king of the Amalekites.”

Agag wasn’t afraid when he came to Samuel. He thought, “The time for me to be put to death must have passed by now.”

[33]But Samuel said,

> “Your sword has killed the children of other women.
> So the child of your mother will be killed.”

Samuel put Agag to death at Gilgal in the sight of the LORD.

[34]Then Samuel left to go to Ramah. But Saul went up to his home in Gibeah of Saul. [35]Until the day Samuel died, he didn’t go to see Saul again. Samuel was filled with sorrow because of Saul. And the LORD was very sorry he had made Saul king over Israel.

Samuel Anoints David to Be Israel's King

1 Samuel 16

1 The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you be filled with sorrow because
of Saul? I have refused to have him as king over Israel. Fill your animal horn
with olive oil and go on your way. I am sending you to Jesse in Bethlehem. I
have chosen one of his sons to be king."

2 But Samuel said, "How can I go? Saul will hear about it. Then he'll kill me."

The LORD said, "Take a young cow with you. Tell the elders of Bethlehem,
'I've come to offer a sacrifice to the LORD.' 3 Invite Jesse to the sacrifice. Then I
will show you what to do. You must anoint for me the one I point out to you."

4 Samuel did what the LORD said. He arrived at Bethlehem. The elders of the
town met him. They were trembling with fear. They asked, "Have you come in
peace?"

5 Samuel replied, "Yes, I've come in peace. I've come to offer a sacrifice to
the LORD. Set yourselves apart to him and come to the sacrifice with me."

Then he set Jesse and his sons apart to the LORD. He invited them to the
sacrifice.

6 When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab. He thought, "This has to be the one
the LORD wants me to anoint for him."

7 But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider how handsome or tall he is. I
have not chosen him. I do not look at the things people look at. Man looks at
how someone appears on the outside. But I look at what is in the heart."

8 Then Jesse called for Abinadab. He had him walk in front of Samuel. But
Samuel said, "The LORD hasn't chosen him either."

9 Then Jesse had Shammah walk by. But Samuel said, "The LORD hasn't
chosen him either."

10 Jesse had seven of his sons walk in front of Samuel. But Samuel said to
him, "The LORD hasn't chosen any of them." 11 So he asked Jesse, "Are these
the only sons you have?"

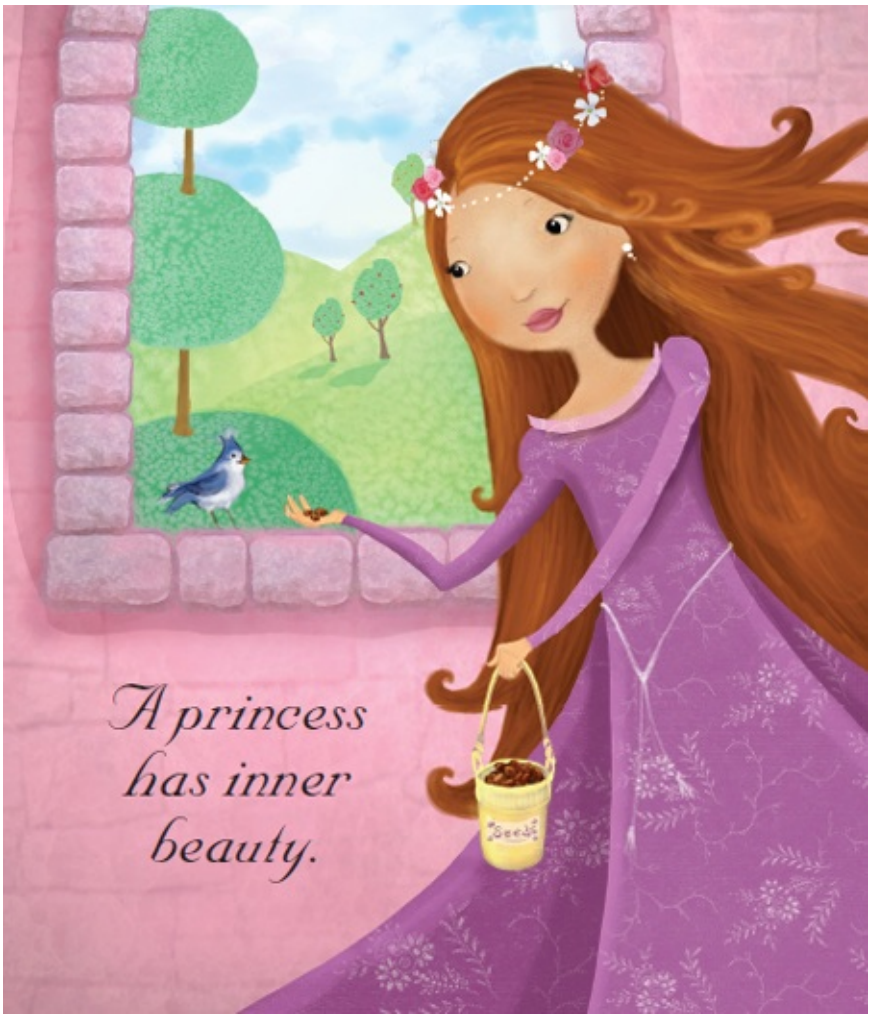
“No,” Jesse answered. “My youngest son is taking care of the sheep.”

Samuel said, “Send for him. We won’t sit down to eat until he arrives.”

12So Jesse sent for his son and had him brought in. His skin was tanned. He had a fine appearance and handsome features.

Then the LORD said, “Get up and anoint him. He is the one.”

13So Samuel got the animal horn that was filled with olive oil. He anointed David in front of his brothers. From that day on, the Spirit of the LORD came on David with power. Samuel went back to Ramah.



The Lord said,… "I do not look at the things people look at. Man looks at how someone appears on the outside. But I look at what is in the heart."

1 Samuel 16:7

David Serves Saul

14 The Spirit of the LORD had left Saul. And an evil spirit that was sent by the
LORD terrified him.

15 Saul's attendants said to him, "An evil spirit that was sent by God is
terrifying you. 16 Give us an order to look for someone who can play the harp.
He will play it when the evil spirit that was sent by God comes on you. Then
you will feel better."

17 So Saul said to his attendants, "Find someone who plays the harp well.
Bring him to me."

18 One of the servants said, "I've seen someone who knows how to play the
harp. He is a son of Jesse from Bethlehem. He's a brave man. He would make a
good soldier. He's a good speaker. He's very handsome. And the LORD is with
him."

19 Then Saul sent messengers to Jesse. He said, "Send me your son David, the
one who takes care of your sheep."

20 So Jesse got some bread and a bottle of wine. The bottle was made out of
animal skin. He also got a young goat. He loaded everything on the back of a
donkey. He sent all of it to Saul with his son David.

21 David went to Saul and began to serve him. Saul liked him very much.
David became one of the men who carried Saul's armor.

22 Saul sent a message to Jesse. It said, "Let David stay here. I want him to
serve me. I'm pleased with him."

23 When the evil spirit that was sent by God would come on Saul, David
would get his harp and play it. That would help Saul. He would feel better, and
the evil spirit would leave him.

David Kills Goliath

1 Samuel 17

[1]The Philistines gathered their army together for war. They came to Socoh in Judah. They set up camp at Ephes Dammim. It was between Socoh and Azekah. [2]Saul and the army of Israel gathered together. They camped in the Valley of Elah. They lined up their men to fight against the Philistines. [3]The Philistine army was camped on one hill. Israel's army was on another. The valley was between them.

[4]A mighty hero named Goliath came out of the Philistine camp. He was from Gath. He was more than nine feet tall. [5]He had a bronze helmet on his head. He wore a coat of bronze armor. It weighed 125 pounds. [6]On his legs he wore bronze guards. He carried a bronze javelin on his back. [7]His spear was as big as a weaver's rod. Its iron point weighed 15 pounds. The man who carried his shield walked along in front of him.

[8]Goliath stood and shouted to the soldiers of Israel. He said, "Why do you come out and line up for battle? I'm a Philistine. You are servants of Saul. Choose one of your men. Have him come down and face me. [9]If he's able to fight and kill me, we'll become your slaves. But if I win and kill him, you will become our slaves and serve us." [10]Goliath continued, "This very day I dare the soldiers of Israel to send a man down to fight against me."

[11]Saul and the whole army of Israel heard what the Philistine said. They were terrified.

[12]David was the son of an Ephrathite. His name was Jesse. He was from Bethlehem in Judah. Jesse had eight sons. When Saul was king, Jesse was already very old. [13]Jesse's three oldest sons had followed Saul into battle. The oldest son was Eliab. The second was Abinadab. The third was Shammah. [14]David was the youngest. The three oldest sons followed Saul. [15]But David went back and forth from Saul's camp to Bethlehem. He went to Bethlehem to take care of his father's sheep.

[16]Every morning and evening Goliath came forward and stood there. He did

it for 40 days.

17 Jesse said to his son David, “Get at least half a bushel of grain that has been
cooked. Also get ten loaves of bread. Take all of it to your brothers. Hurry to
their camp. 18 Take along these ten chunks of cheese to the commander of their
company. Find out how your brothers are doing. Bring me back some word
about them. 19 They are with Saul and all of the men of Israel. They are in the
Valley of Elah. They are fighting against the Philistines.”

20 Early in the morning David left his father’s flock in the care of a shepherd.
David loaded up the food and started out, just as Jesse had directed.

David reached the camp as the army was going out to its battle positions. The
soldiers were shouting the war cry. 21 Israel and the Philistines were lining up
their armies for battle. The armies were facing each other.

22 David left what he had brought with the man who took care of the supplies.
He ran to the battle lines and greeted his brothers. 23 As David was talking with
them, Goliath stepped forward from his line. Goliath was a mighty Philistine
hero from Gath. He again dared someone to fight him, and David heard it.

24 When Israel’s army saw Goliath, all of them ran away from him. That’s
because they were filled with fear.

25 The men of Israel had been saying, “Just look at how this man keeps
stepping forward! Again and again he dares Israel to fight him. The king will
make the man who kills him very wealthy. He will also give him his daughter
to be his wife. He won’t require anyone in his family to pay any taxes in
Israel.”

26 David spoke to the men who were standing near him. He asked them,
“What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine? Goliath is bringing
shame on Israel. What will be done for the one who removes it? This Philistine
isn’t even circumcised. He dares the armies of the living God to fight him.
Who does he think he is?”

27 The men told David what Israel’s soldiers had been saying. The men told
him what would be done for the man who killed Goliath.

28 David’s oldest brother Eliab heard him speaking with the men. So he
burned with anger at him. He asked him, “Why have you come down here?
Who did you leave those few sheep in the desert with? I know how proud you
are. I know how evil your heart is. The only reason you came down here was to
watch the battle.”

29 “What have I done now?” said David. “Can’t I even speak?”

30 Then he turned away to speak to some other men. He asked them the same question he had asked before. And they gave him the same answer.

31 Someone heard what David said and reported it to Saul. So Saul sent for him.

32 David said to Saul, “Don’t let anyone lose hope because of that Philistine. I’ll go out and fight him.”

33 Saul replied, “You aren’t able to go out there and fight that Philistine. You are too young. He’s been a fighting man ever since he was a boy.”

34 But David said to Saul, “I’ve been taking care of my father’s sheep. Sometimes a lion or a bear would come and carry off a sheep from the flock. 35 Then I would go after it and hit it. I would save the sheep it was carrying in its mouth. If it turned around to attack me, I would grab hold of its hair. I would strike it down and kill it. 36 In fact, I’ve killed both a lion and a bear. I’ll do the same thing to this Philistine. He isn’t even circumcised. He has dared the armies of the living God to fight him.

37 “The LORD saved me from the paw of the lion. He saved me from the paw of the bear. And he’ll save me from the powerful hand of this Philistine too.”

Saul said to David, “Go. And may the LORD be with you.”

38 Then Saul dressed David in his own military clothes. He put a coat of armor on him. He put a bronze helmet on his head. 39 David put on Saul’s sword over his clothes. He walked around for a while in all of that armor because he wasn’t used to it.

“I can’t go out there in all of this armor,” he said to Saul. “I’m not used to it.” So he took it off.

40 Then David picked up his wooden staff. He went down to a stream and chose five smooth stones. He put them in the pocket of his shepherd’s bag. Then he took his sling in his hand and approached Goliath.

41 At that same time, the Philistine kept coming closer to David. The man who was carrying Goliath’s shield walked along in front of him.

42 Goliath looked David over. He saw how young he was. He also saw how tanned and handsome he was. And he hated him. 43 He said to David, “Why are you coming at me with sticks? Do you think I’m only a dog?” The Philistine

called down curses on David in the name of his god. 44"Come over here," he said. "I'll feed your body to the birds of the air! I'll feed it to the wild animals!"

45David said to Goliath, "You are coming to fight against me with a sword, a spear and a javelin. But I'm coming against you in the name of the LORD who rules over all. He is the God of the armies of Israel. He's the one you have dared to fight against.

46"This very day the LORD will hand you over to me. I'll strike you down. I'll cut your head off. This very day I'll feed the bodies of the Philistine army to the birds of the air. I'll feed them to the wild animals. Then the whole world will know there is a God in Israel.

47"The LORD doesn't save by using a sword or a spear. And everyone who is here will know it. The battle belongs to the LORD. He will hand all of you over to us."

48As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly to the battle line to meet him. 49He reached into his bag. He took out a stone. He put it in his sling. He slung it at Goliath. The stone hit him on the forehead and sank into it. He fell to the ground on his face.

50So David won the fight against Goliath with a sling and a stone. He struck the Philistine down and killed him. He did it without even using a sword.

51David ran and stood over him. He took hold of Goliath's sword and pulled it out. After he killed him, he cut off his head with the sword.

The Philistines saw that their hero was dead. So they turned around and ran away.

52Then the men of Israel and Judah shouted and rushed forward. They chased the Philistines to the entrance of Gath. They chased them to the gates of Ekron. The dead bodies of the Philistines were scattered all along the road to Gath and Ekron. That's the road that leads to Shaaraim.

53Israel's army returned from chasing the Philistines. They had taken everything from the Philistine camp.

54David picked up Goliath's head. He brought it to Jerusalem. He put Goliath's weapons in his own tent.

55Saul had been watching David as he went out to meet the Philistine. He spoke to Abner, the commander of the army. He said to him, "Abner, whose

son is that young man?”

Abner replied, “King Saul, I don’t know. And that’s just as sure as you are alive.”

56The king said, “Find out whose son that young man is.”

57After David killed Goliath, he returned to the camp. Then Abner brought him to Saul. David was still carrying Goliath’s head.

58“Young man, whose son are you?” Saul asked him.

David said, “I’m the son of Jesse from Bethlehem.”

Saul Becomes Jealous of David

1 Samuel 18

[1]David finished talking with Saul. After that, Jonathan and David became close friends. Jonathan loved David just as he loved himself.

[2]From that time on, Saul kept David with him. He didn't let him return to his father's home.

[3]Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him just as he loved himself. [4]Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David. He also gave him his military clothes. He even gave him his sword, his bow and his belt.

[5]David did everything Saul sent him to do. He did it so well that Saul gave him a high rank in the army. That pleased Saul's whole army, including his officers.

[6]After David had killed Goliath, the men of Israel returned home. The women came out of all of the towns of Israel to meet King Saul. They danced and sang joyful songs. They played lutes and tambourines. [7]As they danced, they sang,

> "Saul has killed thousands of men.
> David has killed tens of thousands."

[8]That song made Saul very angry. It really upset him. He said to himself, "They are saying David has killed tens of thousands of men. But they are saying I've killed only thousands. The only thing left for him to get is the kingdom itself." [9]From that time on, Saul became very jealous of David. So he watched him closely.

[10]The next day an evil spirit that was sent by God came on Saul with power. Saul began to prophesy in his house. At that same time David began to play the harp, just as he usually did. Saul was holding a spear. [11]He threw it at David. As he did, he said to himself, "I'll pin David to the wall." But David got away from him twice.

12The LORD had left Saul and was with David. So Saul was afraid of David.
13He sent David away. He put him in command of 1,000 men. David led the
troops in battle. 14In everything he did, he was very successful. That's because
the LORD was with him.

15When Saul saw how successful David was, he became afraid of him. 16But
all of the troops of Israel and Judah loved David. That's because he led them in
battle.

17Saul said to David, "Here is my older daughter Merab. I'll give her to you
to be your wife. Just serve me bravely and fight the LORD's battles."

Saul said to himself, "I won't have to lift my hand to strike him down. The
Philistines will do that!"

18But David said to Saul, "Who am I? Is anyone in my whole family that
important in Israel? Am I worthy to become the king's son-in-law?"

19The time came for Saul to give his daughter Merab to David. Instead, Saul
gave her to Adriel from Meholah to be his wife.

20Saul's daughter Michal was in love with David. When they told Saul about
it, he was pleased. 21"I'll give her to him to be his wife," he said to himself.
"Then maybe she'll trap him. And maybe the powerful hand of the Philistines
will strike him down." So Saul said to David, "Now you have a second chance
to become my son-in-law."

22Then Saul gave an order to his attendants. He said, "Speak to David in
private. Tell him, 'The king is pleased with you. All of his attendants like you.
So become his son-in-law.' "

23Saul's attendants spoke those very words to David. But David said, "Do
you think it's a small thing to become the king's son-in-law? I'm only a poor
man. I'm not very well known."

24Saul's attendants told him what David had said. 25Saul said, "Tell David,
'Here's the price the king wants for the bride. He wants you to kill 100
Philistines. Then bring back the skins you cut off when you circumcise them.
That's how Saul will get even with his enemies.' " Saul hoped that the
powerful hand of the Philistines would strike David down.

26Saul's attendants also told David those things. Then David was pleased to
become the king's son-in-law. So before the day that was set for the wedding,
27David and his men went out and killed 200 Philistines. They circumcised

them. Then David brought all of the skins and gave them to the king. By doing that, he could become the king’s son-in-law. So Saul gave David his daughter Michal to be his wife.

28 Saul realized that the LORD was with David. He also realized that his daughter Michal loved David. 29 So Saul became even more afraid of him. He remained David’s enemy as long as he was king.

30 The Philistine commanders kept on going out to battle. Every time they did, David had more success against them than the rest of Saul’s officers. So his name became well known.

Michal Helps David Get Away

1 Samuel 19

[1]Saul told his son Jonathan and all of the attendants to kill David. But Jonathan liked David very much. [2]So Jonathan warned him, “My father Saul is looking for a chance to kill you. Be very careful tomorrow morning. Find a place to hide and stay there. [3]My father and I will come and stand in the field where you are hiding. I’ll speak to him about you. Then I’ll tell you what I find out.”

[4]Jonathan told his father Saul some good things about David. He said to him, “Please don’t do anything to harm David. He hasn’t done anything to harm you. And what he’s done has helped you a lot. [5]He put his own life in danger when he killed Goliath. The LORD used him to win a great battle for the whole nation of Israel. When you saw it, you were glad. So why would you do anything to harm a man like David? He isn’t guilty of doing anything to harm you. Why would you want to kill him without any reason?”

[6]Saul paid attention to Jonathan. He took an oath and made a promise. He said, “You can be sure that the LORD lives. And you can be just as sure that David will not be put to death.”

[7]So Jonathan sent for David and told him everything he and Saul had said. Then he brought David to Saul. David served Saul as he had done before.

[8]Once more war broke out. So David went out and fought against the Philistines. He struck them down with so much force that they ran away from him.

[9]But an evil spirit that was sent by the LORD came on Saul. It happened as he was sitting in his house and holding his spear. While David was playing the harp, [10]Saul tried to pin him to the wall with his spear. But David got away from him just as Saul drove the spear into the wall. That night David escaped.

[11]Saul sent some men to watch David’s house. He told them to kill David the next morning.

But David’s wife Michal warned him. She said, “You must run for your life

tonight. If you don’t, tomorrow you will be killed.” [12]So Michal helped David escape through a window. He ran and got away.

[13]Then Michal got a statue of a god. She laid it on David’s bed. She covered it with clothes. And she put some goat hair at the place where David’s head would have been.

[14]Saul sent the men to capture David. But Michal told them, “He’s sick.”

[15]Then Saul sent the men back to see David. He told them, “Bring him up here to me in his bed. Then I’ll kill him.”

[16]But when the men entered, they found nothing but the statue in the bed. Some goat hair was at the place where David’s head would have been.

[17]Saul said to Michal, “Why did you trick me like this? Why did you help my enemy escape?”

Michal told him, “He said to me, ‘Help me get away. If you don’t, I’ll kill you.’ ”

[18]After David had run away and escaped, he went to Samuel at Ramah. He told him everything Saul had done to him. Then David and Samuel went to Naioth and stayed there.

[19]Saul was told, “David is in Naioth at Ramah.” [20]So Saul sent some men to capture him. When they got there, they saw a group of prophets who were prophesying. Samuel was standing there as their leader. Then the Spirit of God came on Saul’s men. So they also began to prophesy. [21]Saul was told about it. So he sent some more men. They began to prophesy too. Saul sent some men a third time. And they also began to prophesy.

[22]Finally, Saul decided to go to Ramah himself. He went to the large well at Secu. He asked some people, “Where are Samuel and David?”

“Over in Naioth at Ramah,” they said.

[23]So Saul went to Naioth at Ramah. But the Spirit of God even came on him. He walked along and prophesied until he came to Naioth. [24]There he took off his royal robes. Then he prophesied in front of Samuel. He lay there without his robes on all that day and night. That’s why people say, “Is Saul also one of the prophets?”

Jonathan Helps David Get Away

1 Samuel 20

[1]David was in Naioth at Ramah. He ran away from there to where Jonathan was. He asked him, “What have I done? What crime have I committed? I haven’t done anything to harm your father. So why is he trying to kill me?”

[2]“That will never happen!” Jonathan replied. “You aren’t going to die! My father doesn’t do anything at all without telling me. So why would he hide that from me? He isn’t going to kill you!”

[3]But David took an oath. Then he said, “Your father knows very well that you are pleased with me. He has said to himself, ‘I don’t want Jonathan to know I’m planning to kill David. If he finds out, he’ll be very sad.’ But I’m very close to being killed. And that’s just as sure as the LORD and you are alive.”

[4]Jonathan said to David, “I’ll do anything you want me to do for you.”

[5]So David said, “Tomorrow is the time for the New Moon Feast. I’m supposed to eat with the king. But let me go and hide in the field. I’ll stay there until the evening of the day after tomorrow. [6]Your father might miss me. If he does, then tell him, ‘David begged me to let him hurry home to Bethlehem. A yearly sacrifice is being offered there for his whole family group.’ [7]Your father might say, ‘That’s all right.’ If he does, it will mean I’m safe. But he might become very angry. If he does, you can be sure he’s made up his mind to harm me.

[8]“Please be kind to me. You have made a covenant with me in the sight of the LORD. If I’m guilty, kill me yourself! Don’t hand me over to your father!”

[9]“I would never do that!” Jonathan said. “Suppose I had even the smallest clue that my father had made up his mind to harm you. Then I would tell you.”

[10]David asked, “Who will tell me if your father answers you in a mean way?”

[11]“Come on,” Jonathan said. “Let’s go out to the field.” So they went there together.

[12]Then Jonathan spoke to David. He said, “I promise you that I’ll find out what my father is planning to do. I’ll find out by this time the day after

tomorrow. The LORD, the God of Israel, is my witness. Suppose my father feels kind toward you. Then I'll send you a message and let you know. [13]But suppose he wants to harm you. And I don't let you know about it. I don't help you get away safely. Then may the LORD punish me greatly. May he be with you, just as he has been with my father.

[14]"But always be kind to me, just as the LORD is. Be kind to me as long as I live. Then I won't be killed. [15]And never stop being kind to my family. Don't stop even when the LORD has cut off every one of your enemies from the face of the earth."

[16]So Jonathan made a covenant with David and his family. He said, "May the LORD make David's enemies accountable for what they've done." [17]Jonathan had David take an oath again because he loved him. In fact, Jonathan loved David just as he loved himself.

[18]Then Jonathan said to David, "Tomorrow is the time for the New Moon Feast. You will be missed, because your seat at the table will be empty. [19]Go to the place where you hid when all of this trouble began. Go there the day after tomorrow, when evening is approaching. There's a stone out there called Ezel. [20]Wait by it.

"I'll shoot three arrows to one side of the stone. I'll pretend I'm practicing my shooting. [21]Then I'll send a boy out there. I'll tell him, 'Go and find the arrows.' Suppose I say to him, 'The arrows are on this side of you. Bring them here.' Then come. That will mean you are safe. You won't be in any danger. And that's just as sure as the LORD is alive. [22]But suppose I tell the boy, 'The arrows are far beyond you.' Then go. That will mean the LORD is sending you away.

[23]"And remember what we talked about. Remember that the LORD is a witness between you and me forever."

[24]So David hid in the field. When the time for the New Moon Feast came, the king sat down to eat. [25]He sat in his usual place by the wall. Jonathan sat across from him. Abner sat next to Saul. But David's place was empty.

[26]Saul didn't say anything that day. He said to himself, "Something must have happened to David to make him 'unclean.' That must be why he isn't here."

[27]But the next day, David's place was empty again. It was the second day of the month.

Finally, Saul spoke to his son Jonathan. He said, “Why hasn’t the son of Jesse come to the meal? He hasn’t been here yesterday or today.”

28Jonathan replied, “David begged me to let him go to Bethlehem. 29He said, ‘Let me go. Our family is offering a sacrifice in the town. My brother has ordered me to be there. Are you pleased with me? If you are, let me go and see my brothers.’ That’s why he hasn’t come to eat at your table.”

30Saul burned with anger against Jonathan. He said to him, “You are an evil son. You have refused to obey me. I know that you are on the side of Jesse’s son. You should be ashamed of that. And your mother should be ashamed of having a son like you. 31You will never be king as long as Jesse’s son lives on this earth. And you will never have a kingdom either. So send for the son of Jesse. Bring him to me. He must die!”

32“Why do you want to put him to death?” Jonathan asked his father. “What has he done?”

33But Saul threw his spear at Jonathan to kill him. Then Jonathan knew that his father wanted to kill David.

34So Jonathan got up from the table. He was burning with anger. On that second day of the month, he refused to eat. He was very sad that his father was treating David so badly.

35The next morning Jonathan went out to the field to meet David. He took a young boy with him. 36He said to the boy, “Run and find the arrows I shoot.” As the boy ran, Jonathan shot an arrow far beyond him. 37The boy came to the place where Jonathan’s arrow had fallen.

Then Jonathan shouted to him, “The arrow went far beyond you, didn’t it?” 38He continued, “Hurry up! Run fast! Don’t stop!”

The boy picked up the arrow and returned to his master. 39The boy didn’t know what was going on. Only Jonathan and David knew. 40Jonathan gave his weapons to the boy. He told him, “Go back to town. Take the weapons with you.”

41After the boy had gone, David got up from the south side of the stone. He bowed down in front of Jonathan with his face to the ground. He did it three times. Then they kissed each other and cried. But David cried more than Jonathan did.

42Jonathan said to David, “Go in peace. In the name of the LORD we have

taken an oath. We've promised to be friends. We've said, 'The LORD is a witness between you and me. He's a witness between your children and my children forever.' "

Then David left, and Jonathan went back to the town.

Ahimelech Helps David

1 Samuel 21

[1]David went to the priest Ahimelech at Nob. Ahimelech trembled with fear
when he met him. He asked David, “Why are you alone? Why isn’t anyone
with you?”

[2]David answered the priest Ahimelech, “The king gave me a special job to
do. He said to me, ‘I don’t want anyone to know what I’m sending you to do.
So don’t say anything about it.’ I’ve told my men to meet me at a certain place.
[3]Do you have anything for us to eat? Give me five loaves of bread, or anything
else you can find.”

[4]But the priest answered David, “I don’t have any bread that isn’t holy. I only
have some holy bread here. But it’s for men who haven’t made love to women
recently.”

[5]David replied, “Well, we haven’t made love to women recently. That’s the
way it is every time I lead my men out to battle. We keep ourselves holy even
when we do jobs that aren’t holy. And that’s even more true today.”

[6]So the priest gave him the holy bread. It was the only bread he had. It had
been removed from the table that was in front of the LORD. On the same day,
hot bread had been put in its place.

[7]One of Saul’s servants was there that day. He had been made to stay at the
holy tent for a while. He was Doeg from Edom. He was Saul’s chief shepherd.

[8]David asked Ahimelech, “Don’t you have a spear or sword here? I haven’t
brought my sword or any other weapon. That’s because the king’s business had
to be done right away.”

[9]The priest replied, “The sword of Goliath, the Philistine, is here. You killed
him in the Valley of Elah. His sword is wrapped in a cloth. It’s behind the
sacred linen apron. If you want it, take it. It’s the only sword here.”

David said, “There isn’t any sword like it. Give it to me.”

David Meets a Philistine King

10 That day David ran away from Saul. He went to Achish, the king of Gath.
11 But the servants of Achish spoke to him. They said, “Isn’t this David, the
king of the land? Isn’t he the one the Israelites sing about when they dance?
They sing,

> “ ‘Saul has killed thousands of men.
> David has killed tens of thousands.’ ”

12 David paid close attention to what the servants were saying. He became
very much afraid of what Achish, the king of Gath, might do. 13 So he
pretended to be out of his mind when he was with them. As long as he was in
Gath, he acted like someone who was crazy. He made marks on the doors of
the city gate. He let spit run down his beard.

14 Achish said to his servants, “Just look at the man! He’s out of his mind!
Why are you bringing him to me? 15 Don’t I have enough crazy people around
me already? So why do you have to bring this fellow here? Just look at how
he’s carrying on in front of me! Why do you have to bring this man into my
house?”

David Goes to Adullam and Mizpah

1 Samuel 22

[1]David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. His brothers and the other members of his family heard about it. So they went down to join him there. [2]Everyone who was in trouble or owed money or was unhappy gathered around him. He became their leader. About 400 men were with him.

[3]From there David went to Mizpah in Moab. He spoke to the king of Moab. He said, “Please let my father and mother come and stay with you. Let them stay until I learn what God will do for me.” [4]So David left his parents with the king of Moab. They stayed with him as long as David was in his usual place of safety.

[5]But the prophet Gad spoke to David. He said, “Don’t stay in your usual place of safety. Go into the land of Judah.” So David left and went to the forest of Hereth.

Saul Kills the Priests of Nob

[6]Saul heard that the place where David and his men were hiding had been discovered. Saul was sitting under a tamarisk tree on the hill at Gibeah. He was holding his spear. All of his officials were standing around him.

[7]Saul said to them, “Men of Benjamin, listen to me! Do you think Jesse’s son will give all of you fields and vineyards? Do you think he’ll make some of you commanders of thousands of men? Do you think he’ll make the rest of you commanders of hundreds? [8]Is that why all of you have joined together against me? No one tells me when my son makes a covenant with Jesse’s son. None of you is concerned about me. No one tells me that my son has stirred up Jesse’s son to hide and wait to attack me. But that’s exactly what’s happening now.”

[9]Doeg was standing with Saul’s officials. He was from Edom. He said, “I saw Jesse’s son David come to Ahimelech at Nob. Ahimelech is the son of Ahitub. [10]Ahimelech asked the LORD a question for David. He also gave him food and

the sword of Goliath, the Philistine."

[11]Then the king sent for the priest Ahimelech, the son of Ahitub. He sent for all of the men in his family. They were the priests at Nob. All of them came to the king.

[12]Saul said, "Son of Ahitub, listen to me."

"Yes, master," he answered.

[13]Saul said to him, "Why have you and Jesse's son joined together against me? Why did you give him bread and a sword? Why did you ask God a question for him? Now he has turned against me. He is hiding and waiting to attack me right now."

[14]Ahimelech answered the king, "David is true to you. In fact, he's more true to you than anyone else who serves you. He's your own son-in-law. He's the captain of your own personal guards. He's highly respected by everyone in your palace. [15]Was that day the first time I asked God a question for him? Of course not!

"Please don't bring charges against me. Please don't bring charges against anyone in my family. I don't know anything at all about this whole matter."

[16]But the king said, "Ahimelech, you will certainly be put to death. You and your whole family will be put to death."

[17]Then the king gave an order to the guards who were at his side. He said, "Go and kill the priests of the LORD. They are on David's side too. They knew he was running away from me. And they didn't even tell me."

But the king's officials wouldn't raise a hand to strike down the priests of the LORD.

[18]Then the king ordered Doeg, "You go and strike the priests down."

So Doeg, the Edomite, went and struck them down. That day he killed 85 men who wore linen aprons. [19]He also killed the people of Nob with his sword. Nob was a town where priests lived. Doeg killed its men and women. He killed its children and babies. He also destroyed its cattle, donkeys and sheep.

[20]But Abiathar, a son of Ahimelech, escaped. Ahimelech was the son of Ahitub. Abiathar ran away and joined David. [21]He told David that Saul had killed the priests of the LORD.

[22]Then David said to Abiathar, "One day I was at Nob. I saw Doeg, the Edomite, there. I knew he would be sure to tell Saul. Your whole family has

been killed. And I’m accountable for it. [23]So stay with me. Don’t be afraid. The man who wants to kill you wants to kill me too. You will be safe with me.”

David Saves the People of Keilah

1 Samuel 23

[1]David was told, “The Philistines are fighting against the town of Keilah.
They are stealing grain from the threshing floors.” [2]So he asked the LORD for
advice. He said, “Should I go and attack those Philistines?”

The LORD answered him, “Go and attack them. Save Keilah.”

[3]But David’s men said to him, “We’re afraid here in Judah. Suppose we go to
Keilah and fight against the Philistine army. Then we’ll be even more afraid.”

[4]Once again David asked the LORD what he should do.

The LORD answered him, “Go down to Keilah. I am going to hand the
Philistines over to you.”

[5]So David and his men went to Keilah. They fought against the Philistines
and carried off their livestock. David wounded and killed large numbers of
Philistines. And he saved the people of Keilah.

[6]Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, had brought the linen apron down with him
from Nob. He did it when he ran away to David at Keilah.

Saul Chases David

[7]Saul was told that David had gone to Keilah. He said, “God has handed him
over to me. David has trapped himself by entering a town that has gates and
heavy metal bars.” [8]So Saul brought together all of his soldiers to go to battle.
He ordered them to go down to Keilah. He told them to surround David and his
men. He told them to get ready to attack them.

[9]David learned that Saul was planning to attack him. So he said to the priest
Abiathar, “Bring the linen apron.” [10]Then David said, “LORD, you are the God
of Israel. I know for sure that Saul plans to come to Keilah. He plans to destroy
the town because of me. [11]Will the citizens of Keilah hand me over to him?
Will Saul come down here, as I’ve heard he would? LORD, you are the God of

Israel. Please answer me.”

The LORD said, “He will come down.”

12Again David asked, “Will the citizens of Keilah hand me and my men over to Saul?”

And the LORD said, “They will.”

13So David and his men left Keilah. The total number of them was about 600. They kept moving from place to place. Saul was told that David had escaped from Keilah. So he didn’t go there.

14Sometimes David stayed in places of safety in the desert. At other times he stayed in the hills of the Desert of Ziph. Day after day Saul looked for him. But God didn’t hand David over to him.

15David was at Horesh in the Desert of Ziph. There he learned that Saul had come out to kill him.

16Saul’s son Jonathan went to David at Horesh. He told David that God would make him strong. 17“Don’t be afraid,” he said. “My father Saul won’t lay a hand on you. You will be king over Israel. And I will be next in command. Even my father Saul knows this.”

18The two of them made a covenant in the sight of the LORD. Then Jonathan went home. But David remained at Horesh.

19The people of Ziph went up to Saul at Gibeah. They said, “David is hiding among us. He’s hiding in places of safety at Horesh. Horesh is south of Jeshimon on the hill of Hakilah. 20King Saul, come down when it pleases you to come. It will be our duty to hand David over to you.”

21Saul replied, “May the LORD bless you because you were concerned about me. 22Make sure you are right. Go and check things out again. Find out where David usually goes. Find out who has seen him there. People tell me he’s very tricky. 23Find out about all of the hiding places he uses. Come back to me with all of the facts. I’ll go with you. Suppose he’s in the area. Then I’ll track him down among all of the family groups of Judah.”

24So they started out. They went to Ziph ahead of Saul. David and his men were in the Desert of Maon. Maon is south of Jeshimon in the Arabah Valley. 25Saul and his men started out to look for David. David was told about it. So he went down to a rock in the Desert of Maon to hide. Saul heard he was there. So he went into the Desert of Maon to chase David.

[26]Saul was going along one side of the mountain. David and his men were on the other side. They were hurrying to get away from Saul. Saul and his army were closing in on David and his men. They were about to capture them. [27]Just then a messenger came to Saul. He said, “Come quickly! The Philistines are attacking the land.”

[28]So Saul stopped chasing David. He went to fight against the Philistines. That’s why they call that place Sela Hammahlekoth.

[29]David left that place. He went and lived in places of safety near En Gedi.

David Spares Saul's Life

1 Samuel 24

[1]Saul returned from chasing the Philistines. Then he was told, "David is in the Desert of En Gedi." [2]So Saul took 3,000 of the best soldiers from the whole nation of Israel. He started out to look for David and his men. He planned to look near the Rocky Cliffs of the Wild Goats.

[3]He came to some sheep pens along the way. A cave was there. Saul went in to go to the toilet. David and his men were far back in the cave.

[4]David's men said, "This is the day the LORD told you about. He said to you, 'I will hand your enemy over to you. Then you can deal with him as you want to.' "

So David came up close to Saul without being seen. He cut off a corner of Saul's robe.

[5]Later, David felt sorry that he had cut off a corner of Saul's robe. [6]He said to his men, "May the LORD keep me from doing a thing like that to my master again. He is the LORD's anointed king. So I promise that I will never lift my hand to strike him down. The LORD has anointed him."

[7]David said that to warn his men. He didn't allow them to attack Saul. So Saul left the cave and went on his way.

[8]Then David went out of the cave. He called out to Saul, "King Saul! My master!" When Saul looked behind him, David bowed down. He lay down flat with his face toward the ground.

[9]He said to Saul, "Why do you listen when men say, 'David is trying to harm you'? [10]This very day you have seen with your own eyes how the LORD handed you over to me in the cave. Some of my men begged me to kill you. But I spared you. I said, 'I will never lift my hand to strike my master down. He is the LORD's anointed king.'

[11]"Look, my father! Look at this piece of your robe in my hand! I cut off the corner of your robe. But I didn't kill you. I want you to know and understand that I'm not guilty of doing anything wrong. I haven't turned against you. I

haven’t done anything to harm you. But you are hunting me down. You want to kill me.

12“May the LORD judge between you and me. And may the LORD pay you back because of the wrong things you have done to me. But I won’t lay a hand on you. 13People say, ‘Evil acts come from those who do evil.’ So I won’t lay a hand on you.

14“King Saul, who are you trying to catch? Who do you think you are chasing? I’m nothing but a dead dog or a flea! 15May the LORD be our judge. May he decide between us. May he consider my case and stand up for me. May he show that I’m not guilty of doing anything wrong. May he save me from your powerful hand.”

16When David finished speaking, Saul asked him a question. He said, “My son David, is that your voice?” And Saul sobbed out loud. 17“You are a better person than I am,” he said. “You have treated me well. But I’ve treated you badly. 18You have just now told me about the good things you did to me. The LORD handed me over to you. But you didn’t kill me. 19Suppose a man finds his enemy. He doesn’t let him get away without harming him. May the LORD reward you with many good things. May he do it because of the way you treated me today. 20I know for sure that you will be king. I know that the kingdom of Israel will be made secure under your control. 21Now take an oath in the name of the LORD. Promise me that you won’t cut off my children from my family. Also promise me that you won’t wipe out my name from my family line.”

22So David took an oath and made that promise to Saul. Then Saul returned home. But David and his men went up to his usual place of safety.

David Gets Married to Abigail

1 Samuel 25

[1]Samuel died. The whole nation of Israel gathered together. They were filled with sorrow because he was dead. They buried his body at his home in Ramah.

Then David went down into the Desert of Maon. [2]A certain man in Maon was very wealthy. He owned property there at Carmel. He had 1,000 goats and 3,000 sheep. He was clipping the wool off the sheep in Carmel. [3]His name was Nabal. His wife's name was Abigail. She was a wise and beautiful woman. But her husband was rude and mean in the way he treated others. He was from the family of Caleb.

[4]David was staying in the Desert of Maon. While he was there, he heard that Nabal was clipping the wool off his sheep. [5]So he sent for ten young men. He said to them, "Go up to Nabal at Carmel. Greet him for me. [6]Say to him, 'May you live a long time! May everything go well with you and your family! And may things go well with everything that belongs to you!

[7]" 'I hear that you are clipping the wool off your sheep. When your shepherds were with us, we treated them well. The whole time they were at Carmel nothing that belonged to them was stolen. [8]Ask your own servants. They'll tell you. We've come to you now at a happy time of the year. Please show favor to my young men. Please give me and my men anything you can find for us.' "

[9]When David's men arrived, they gave Nabal the message from David. Then they waited.

[10]Nabal answered David's servants, "Who is this David? Who is this son of Jesse? Many servants are running away from their masters these days. [11]Why should I give away my bread and water? Why should I give away the meat I've prepared for those who clip the wool off my sheep? Why should I give food to men who come from who knows where?"

[12]So David's men turned around and went back. When they arrived, they reported to David every word Nabal had spoken. [13]David said to his men, "Put on your swords!" So they put their swords on. David put his on too. About 400

men went up with David. Two hundred men stayed behind with the supplies.

14One of the servants warned Nabal's wife Abigail. He said, "David sent some messengers from the desert to give his greetings to our master. But Nabal shouted at them and made fun of them.

15"David's men had been very good to us. They treated us well. The whole time we were near them out in the fields, nothing was stolen. 16We were taking care of our sheep near them. During that time, they were like a wall around us night and day. They kept us safe.

17"Now think it over. See what you can do. Horrible trouble will soon come to our master and his whole family. He's such an evil man that no one can even talk to him."

18Abigail didn't waste any time. She got 200 loaves of bread and two bottles of wine. The bottles were made out of animal skins. She got five sheep that were ready to be cooked. She got a bushel of grain that had been cooked. She got 100 raisin cakes. And she got 200 cakes of pressed figs. She loaded all of it on the backs of donkeys. 19Then she told her servants, "Go on ahead. I'll follow you." But she didn't tell her husband Nabal about it.

20Abigail rode her donkey into a mountain valley. There she saw David and his men. They were coming down toward her. 21David had just said, "Everything we've done hasn't been worth a thing! I watched over that fellow's property in the desert. I made sure none of it was stolen. But he has paid me back evil for good. 22I won't leave even one of his men alive until morning. If I do, may God punish me greatly!"

23When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey. She bowed down in front of David with her face toward the ground. 24She fell at his feet. She said, "Please let me speak to you, sir. Listen to what I'm saying. Let me take the blame myself. 25Don't pay any attention to that evil man Nabal. His name means Foolish Person. And that's exactly what he is. He's always doing foolish things. I'm sorry I didn't get a chance to see the men you sent.

26"Sir, the LORD has kept you from killing Nabal and his men. He has kept you from using your own hands to get even. May what's about to happen to Nabal happen to all of your enemies. May it also happen to everyone who wants to harm you. And may it happen just as surely as the LORD and you are alive.

27"I've brought a gift for you. Give it to the men who follow you. 28Please

forgive me for what I've done wrong.

"The LORD will certainly give you and your family line a kingdom that will last. That's because you fight the LORD's battles. Don't do anything wrong as long as you live.

29"Someone may chase you and try to kill you. But the LORD your God will keep your life safe like a treasure that is hidden in a bag. And he'll destroy your enemies. Their lives will be thrown away, just as a stone is thrown from a sling.

30"The LORD will do for you every good thing he promised to do. He'll appoint you leader over Israel. 31When that happens, you won't have this heavy load on your mind. You won't have to worry about how you killed people without any reason. You won't have to worry about how you got even. The LORD will give you success. When that happens, please remember me."

32David said to Abigail, "Give praise to the LORD. He is the God of Israel. He has sent you today to find me. 33May the LORD bless you for what you have done. You have shown a lot of good sense. You have kept me from killing Nabal and his men this very day. You have kept me from using my own hands to get even.

34"It's a good thing you came quickly to meet me. If you hadn't come, not one of Nabal's men would have been left alive by sunrise. And that's just as sure as the LORD, the God of Israel, is alive. He has kept me from harming you."

35Then David accepted from her what she had brought him. He said, "Go home in peace. I've heard your words. I'll do what you have asked."

36Abigail went back to Nabal. He was having a dinner party in the house. It was the kind of dinner a king would have. He had been drinking too much wine. He was very drunk. So she didn't tell him anything at all until sunrise.

37The next morning Nabal wasn't drunk anymore. Then his wife told him everything. When she did, his heart grew weak. He became like a stone. 38About ten days later, the LORD struck Nabal down. And he died.

39David heard that Nabal was dead. So he said, "Give praise to the LORD. Nabal made fun of me. But the LORD stood up for me. He has kept me from doing something wrong. He has paid Nabal back for the wrong things he did."

Then David sent a message to Abigail. He asked her to become his wife.

[40]His servants went to Carmel. They said to Abigail, “David has sent us to you. He wants you to come back with us and become his wife.”

[41]Abigail bowed down with her face toward the ground. She said, “Here I am. I’m ready to serve him. I’m ready to wash the feet of his servants.”

[42]Abigail quickly got on a donkey and went with David’s messengers. Her five female servants went with her. She became David’s wife.

[43]David had also gotten married to Ahinoam from Jezreel. Both of them became his wives.

[44]But Saul had given his daughter Michal, David’s first wife, to Paltiel. Paltiel was from Gallim. He was the son of Laish.

David Spares Saul's Life Again

1 Samuel 26

[1]Some people from Ziph went to Saul at Gibeah. They said, "David is hiding on the hill of Hakilah. It faces Jeshimon."

[2]So Saul went down to the Desert of Ziph. He took 3,000 of the best soldiers in Israel with him. They went to the desert to look for David. [3]Saul set up his camp beside the road. It was on the hill of Hakilah facing Jeshimon.

But David stayed in the desert. He saw that Saul had followed him there. [4]So he sent out scouts. From them he learned that Saul had arrived.

[5]Then David started out. He went to the place where Saul had camped. He saw where Saul and Abner were lying down. Saul was lying inside the camp. The army was camped all around him. Abner was commander of the army. He was the son of Ner.

[6]Then David spoke to Ahimelech, the Hittite. He also spoke to Joab's brother Abishai, the son of Zeruiah. He asked them, "Who will go down with me into the camp to Saul?"

"I'll go with you," said Abishai.

[7]So that night David and Abishai went into the camp. They found Saul lying asleep inside the camp. His spear was stuck in the ground near his head. Abner and the soldiers were lying asleep around him.

[8]Abishai said to David, "Today God has handed your enemy over to you. So let me pin him to the ground. I can do it with one jab of my spear. I won't even have to strike him twice."

[9]But David said to Abishai, "Don't destroy him! No one can lay a hand on the LORD's anointed king and not be guilty. [10]You can be sure that the LORD lives," he said. "And you can be just as sure that the LORD himself will strike Saul down. Perhaps he'll die a natural death. Or perhaps he'll go into battle and be killed. [11]May the LORD keep me from laying a hand on his anointed king. Now get the spear and water jug that are near his head. Then let's leave."

[12]So David took the spear and water jug that were near Saul's head. Then he

and Abishai left. No one saw them. No one knew about what they had done. In fact, no one even woke up. Everyone was sleeping. That's because the LORD had put them into a deep sleep.

13David went across to the other side of the valley. He stood on top of a hill far away from Saul's camp. There was a wide space between them. 14He called out to the army and to Abner, the son of Ner. He said, "Abner! Aren't you going to answer me?"

Abner replied, "Who is calling out to the king?"

15David said, "You are a great soldier, aren't you? There isn't anyone else like you in Israel. So why didn't you guard the king? He's your master, isn't he? Someone came into the camp to destroy him. 16You didn't guard him. And that isn't good. You can be sure that the LORD lives. And you can be just as sure that you and your men are worthy of death. That's because you didn't guard your master. He's the LORD's anointed king. Look around you. Where are the king's spear and water jug that were near his head?"

17Saul recognized David's voice. He said, "My son David, is that your voice?"

David replied, "Yes it is, King Saul, my master." 18He continued, "Why are you chasing me? What evil thing have I done? What am I guilty of?

19"King Saul, please listen to what I'm saying. Was it the LORD who made you angry with me? If it was, may he accept my offering. Was it people who made you angry at me? If it was, may the LORD send down a curse on them. They have now driven me from my share of the LORD's land. By doing that, they might as well have said, 'Go and serve other gods.'

20"Don't spill my blood on the ground far away from where the LORD lives. King Saul, you have come out to look for nothing but a flea. It's as if you were hunting a partridge in the mountains."

21Then Saul said, "I have sinned. My son David, come back. Today you thought my life was very special. So I won't try to harm you again. I've really acted like a foolish person. I've made a huge mistake."

22"Here's your spear," David answered. "Send one of your young men over to get it.

23"The LORD rewards everyone for doing what is right and being faithful. He handed you over to me today. But I wouldn't lay a hand on you. You are the

LORD's anointed king. [24]Today I thought your life had great value. In the same way, may the LORD think of my life as having great value. May he save me from all trouble."

[25]Then Saul said to David, "My son David, may the LORD bless you. You will do great things. You will also have great success."

So David went on his way. And Saul returned home.

David Lives in Philistine Territory

1 Samuel 27

[1]David thought, “Some day the powerful hand of Saul will destroy me. So the
best thing I can do is escape. I’ll go to the land of the Philistines. Then Saul
will stop looking for me everywhere in Israel. His hand won’t be able to reach
me.”

[2]So David and his 600 men left Israel. They went to Achish, the king of Gath.
He was the son of Maoch. [3]David and his men settled down in Gath near
Achish. Each of David’s men had his family with him. David had his two
wives with him. They were Ahinoam from Jezreel and Abigail from Carmel.
Abigail was Nabal’s widow.

[4]Saul was told that David had run away to Gath. So he didn’t look for David
anymore.

[5]David said to Achish, “If you are pleased with me, give me a place in one of
your country towns. I can live there. I don’t really need to live near you in the
royal city.”

[6]So on that day Achish gave David the town of Ziklag. It has belonged to the
kings of Judah ever since that time. [7]David lived in Philistine territory for a
year and four months.

[8]Sometimes David and his men would go up and attack the Geshurites. At
other times they would attack the Girzites or the Amalekites. All of those
people had lived in the land that reached all the way to Shur and Egypt. They
had been there for a long time.

[9]When David would attack an area, he wouldn’t leave a man or woman alive.
But he would take their sheep, cattle, donkeys, camels and clothes. Then he
would return to Achish.

[10]Achish would ask, “Who did you attack today?” David would answer, “The
people who live in the Negev Desert of Judah.” Or he would answer, “The
people in the Negev Desert of Jerahmeel.” Or he would answer, “The people in
the Negev Desert of the Kenites.”

[11]David wouldn’t leave a man or woman alive to be brought back to Gath. He thought, “They might tell on us. They might tell Achish who we really attacked.” That’s what David did as long as he lived in Philistine territory.

[12]Achish trusted David. He thought, “David has made himself smell very bad to his people, the Israelites. So he’ll serve me forever.”

Saul Disobeys the LORD at Endor

1 Samuel 28

[1]While David was living in Ziklag, the Philistines gathered their army
together. They planned to fight against Israel.

Achish said to David, “I want you to understand that you and your men must
march out with me and my army.”

[2]David said, “I understand. You will see for yourself what I can do.”

Achish replied, “All right. I’ll make you my own personal guard for life.”

[3]Samuel had died. The whole nation of Israel was filled with sorrow because
he was dead. They had buried his body in his own town of Ramah.

Saul had gotten rid of people who get messages from those who have died.
He had also gotten rid of people who talk to the spirits of the dead. He had
thrown all of them out of the land.

[4]The Philistines gathered together and set up camp at Shunem. At the same
time, Saul gathered all of the fighting men of Israel together. They set up camp
at Gilboa.

[5]When Saul saw the Philistine army, he was afraid. Terror filled his heart.
[6]He asked the LORD for advice. But the LORD didn’t answer him through dreams
or prophets. He didn’t answer him when Saul had the priest use the Urim.

[7]Saul spoke to his attendants. He said, “Find me a woman who gets messages
from those who have died. Then I can go and ask her some questions.”

“There’s a woman like that in Endor,” they said.

[8]Saul put on different clothes so people wouldn’t know who he was. At night
he and two of his men went to see the woman. “I want you to talk to a spirit for
me,” he said. “Bring up the spirit of the dead person I choose.”

[9]But the woman said to him, “By now you must know what Saul has done.
He has cut off everyone who gets messages from those who have died. He has
also cut off everyone who talks to the spirits of the dead. He has thrown all of
them out of the land. Why are you trying to trap me? Why do you want to have

me put to death?”

10Saul took an oath in the name of the LORD. He promised the woman, “You can be sure that the LORD lives. And you can be just as sure that you won’t be punished for helping me.”

11Then the woman asked, “Whose spirit should I bring up for you?”

“Bring Samuel up,” he said.

12When the woman saw Samuel, she let out a loud scream. She said to Saul, “Why have you tricked me? You are King Saul!”

13He said to her, “Don’t be afraid. Tell me what you see.”

The woman said, “I see a spirit. He’s coming up out of the ground.”

14“What does he look like?” Saul asked.

“An old man wearing a robe is coming up,” she said.

Then Saul knew it was Samuel. He bowed down. He lay down flat with his face toward the ground.

15Samuel said to Saul, “Why have you troubled me by bringing me up from the dead?”

“I’m having big problems,” Saul said. “The Philistines are fighting against me. God has turned away from me. He doesn’t answer me anymore. He doesn’t speak to me through prophets or dreams. So I’ve called on you to tell me what to do.”

16Samuel said, “The LORD has turned away from you. He has become your enemy. So why are you asking me what you should do? 17The LORD has spoken through me and has done what he said he would do. He has torn the kingdom out of your hands. He has given it to one of your neighbors. He has given it to David. 18You didn’t obey the LORD. You didn’t carry out his burning anger against the Amalekites. So he’s punishing you today.

19“He will hand both Israel and you over to the Philistines. Tomorrow you and your sons will be down here with me. The LORD will also hand Israel’s army over to the Philistines.”

20Immediately Saul fell flat on the ground. What Samuel had said filled Saul with fear. His strength was gone. He hadn’t eaten anything all that day and night.

21The woman went over to Saul because she saw that he was very upset. She

said, “Look, I’ve obeyed you. I put my own life in danger by doing what you told me to do. [22]So please listen to me. Let me give you some food. Eat it. Then you will have the strength to go on your way.”

[23]But he refused. He said, “I don’t want anything to eat.”

Then his men joined the woman in begging him to eat. Finally, he paid attention to them. He got up from the ground and sat on a couch.

[24]The woman had a fat calf at her house. She killed it at once. She got some flour. She mixed it and baked some bread that didn’t have any yeast in it. [25]Then she set the food in front of Saul and his men. They ate it. That same night they got up and left.

Achish Sends David Back to Ziklag

1 Samuel 29

[1]The Philistines gathered their whole army together at Aphek. Israel's army camped by the spring of water at Jezreel. [2]The Philistine rulers marched out in companies of hundreds and thousands. David and his men were marching with Achish behind the others.

[3]The commanders of the Philistines asked, "Why are these Hebrews here?"

Achish replied, "That's David, isn't it? Wasn't he an officer of Saul, the king of Israel? He has already been with me for more than a year. I haven't found any fault in him. That's been true from the day he left Saul until now."

[4]But the Philistine commanders were angry with Achish. They said, "Send David back. Let him return to the town you gave him. He must not go with us into battle. If he does, he'll turn against us during the fighting. In fact, he might even cut off the heads of our own men. What better way could he choose to win back his master's favor? [5]Isn't David the one the Israelites sang about when they danced? They sang,

> " 'Saul has killed thousands of men.
> David has killed tens of thousands.' "

[6]So Achish called David over to him. He said, "You have been faithful to me. And that's just as sure as the LORD is alive. I would be pleased to have you serve with me in the army. I haven't found any fault in you. That's been true from the day you came to me until now. But the Philistine rulers aren't pleased to have you come along. [7]So go back home in peace. Don't do anything that wouldn't please the Philistine rulers."

[8]"But what have I done?" asked David. "What have you found against me from the day I came to you until now? Why can't I go and fight against your enemies? After all, you are my king and master."

[9]Achish answered, "You have been as pleasing to me as an angel of God. But

the Philistine commanders have said, ‘We don’t want David to go up with us into battle.’ [10]So get up early in the morning. Take with you the men who used to serve Saul. Leave as soon as the sun begins to come up.”

[11]So David and his men got up early in the morning. They went back to the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

David Destroys the Amalekites

1 Samuel 30

[1]On the third day David and his men arrived in Ziklag. The Amalekites had attacked the people of the Negev Desert. They had also attacked Ziklag and burned it. [2]They had captured the women and everyone else who was in Ziklag. They had taken as prisoners young people and old people alike. But they didn't kill any of them. Instead, they carried them off as they went on their way.

[3]David and his men came to Ziklag. They saw that it had been destroyed by fire. They found out that their wives and sons and daughters had been captured. [4]So David and his men began to sob out loud. They sobbed until they couldn't sob anymore. [5]David's two wives had been captured. Their names were Ahinoam from Jezreel and Abigail from Carmel. Abigail was Nabal's widow.

[6]David was greatly troubled. His men were even talking about killing him by throwing stones at him. All of them were very bitter because their sons and daughters had been taken away. But David was made strong by the LORD his God.

[7]Then David spoke to the priest Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech. He said, "Bring me the linen apron." Abiathar brought it to him. [8]David asked the LORD for advice. He said, "Should I chase after the men who attacked Ziklag? If I do, will I catch up with them?"

"Chase after them," the LORD answered. "You will certainly catch up with them. You will succeed in saving those who were captured."

[9]David and his 600 men came to the Besor Valley. Some of them stayed behind there. [10]That's because 200 of them were too tired to go across the valley. But David and the other 400 continued the chase.

[11]David's men found an Egyptian in a field. They brought him to David. They gave him water to drink and food to eat. [12]They gave him part of a cake of pressed figs. They also gave him two raisin cakes. After he ate them, he felt as good as new. That's because he hadn't eaten any food for three days and

three nights. He hadn't drunk any water during that time either.

13David asked him, "Who do you belong to? Where do you come from?"

The man said, "I'm from Egypt. I'm the slave of an Amalekite. My master deserted me when I became ill three days ago. 14We attacked the people in the Negev Desert of the Kerethites. We attacked the territory that belongs to Judah. We attacked the people in the Negev Desert of Caleb. And we burned Ziklag."

15David asked him, "Can you lead me down to the men who attacked Ziklag?"

He answered, "Take an oath in the name of God. Promise me that you won't kill me. Promise that you won't hand me over to my master. Then I'll take you down to them."

16He led David down to where the men were. They were scattered all over the countryside. They were eating and drinking and dancing wildly. That's because they had taken a large amount of goods from those they had attacked. They had taken it from the land of the Philistines and from the people of Judah.

17David fought against them from sunset until the evening of the next day. None of them escaped except 400 young men. They rode off on camels and got away.

18David got everything back that the Amalekites had taken. That included his two wives. 19Nothing was missing. Not one young person or old person or boy or girl was missing. None of the goods or anything else the Amalekites had taken was missing. David brought everything back. 20He brought back all of the flocks and herds. His men drove them on ahead of the other livestock. They said, "Here's what David has captured."

21Then David came to the 200 men who had been too tired to follow him. They had been left behind in the Besor Valley. They came out to welcome David and the people who were with him. As David and his men approached, he greeted them. 22But some of the men who had gone out with David were evil. They wanted to stir up trouble. They said, "The 200 men didn't go out into battle with us. So we won't share with them the goods we brought back. But each man can take his wife and children and go home."

23David replied, "No, my friends. You must not hold back their share of what the LORD has given us. He has kept us safe. He has handed over to us the men who attacked Ziklag. 24So no one will pay any attention to what you are saying. Each man who stayed with the supplies will receive the same share as

each man who went down to the battle. Everyone's share will be the same."
25David made that a law and a rule for Israel. It has been followed from that
day until now.

26David arrived in Ziklag. He sent some of the goods to the elders of Judah.
They were his friends. He said, "Here's a present for you. It's part of the things
we took from the LORD's enemies."

27He sent some goods to the elders who were in Bethel, Ramoth Negev and
Jattir. 28He sent some to those who were in Aroer, Siphmoth, Eshtemoa 29and
Racal. He sent some to those who were in the towns of the Jerahmeelites and
Kenites. 30He sent some to those who were in Hormah, Bor Ashan, Athach
31and Hebron. He also sent some to those who were in all of the other places
where he and his men had wandered around.

Saul Takes His Own Life

1 Samuel 31

[1]The Philistines fought against Israel. The men of Israel ran away from them. But many Israelites were killed on Mount Gilboa.

[2]The Philistines kept chasing Saul and his sons. They killed his sons Jonathan, Abinadab and Malki-Shua. [3]The fighting was heavy around Saul. Men who were armed with bows and arrows caught up with him. They shot their arrows at him and wounded him badly.

[4]Saul spoke to the man who was carrying his armor. He said, “Pull out your sword. Stick it through me. If you don’t, those fellows who aren’t circumcised will come. They’ll stick their swords through me and hurt me badly.”

But the man was terrified. He wouldn’t do it. So Saul took his own sword and fell on it. [5]The man saw that Saul was dead. So he fell on his own sword and died with him.

[6]Saul and his three sons died together that same day. The man who carried his armor also died with them that day. So did all of Saul’s men.

[7]The Israelites who lived along the valley saw that their army had run away. So did those who lived across the Jordan River. They saw that Saul and his sons were dead. So they left their towns and ran away. Then the Philistines came and settled down in them.

[8]The day after the Philistines had won the battle, they came to take what they wanted from the dead bodies. They found Saul and his three sons dead on Mount Gilboa. [9]So they cut off Saul’s head. They took his armor from his body. Then they sent messengers through the whole land of the Philistines. They announced the news in the temple where they had set up statues of their gods. They also announced it among their people.

[10]They put Saul’s armor in the temple where they had set up statues of goddesses that were named after Ashtoreth. They hung his body up on the wall of Beth Shan.

[11]The people of Jabesh Gilead heard about what the Philistines had done to

Saul. [12]So all of their brave men traveled through the night to Beth Shan. They took down the bodies of Saul and his sons from the wall of Beth Shan. They brought them to Jabesh. There they burned them.

[13]Then they got the bones of Saul and his sons and buried them under a tamarisk tree at Jabesh. They didn’t eat anything for seven days.

2 Samuel

2 Samuel 1
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David Hears That Saul Has Died

2 Samuel 1

1 After Saul died, David returned to Ziklag. He had won the battle over the
Amalekites. He stayed in Ziklag for two days.

2 On the third day a man arrived from Saul's camp. His clothes were torn. He
had dust on his head. When he came to David, he fell to the ground to show
him respect.

3 "Where have you come from?" David asked him.

He answered, "I've escaped from Israel's camp."

4 "What happened?" David asked. "Tell me."

He said, "Israel's men ran away from the battle. Many of them were killed.
Saul and his son Jonathan are dead."

5 David spoke to the young man who brought him the report. He asked him,
"How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?"

6 "I just happened to be there on Mount Gilboa," the young man said. "Saul
was there too. He was leaning on his spear. The enemy chariots and chariot
drivers had almost caught up with him. 7 Then he turned around and saw me.
He called out to me. I said, 'What do you want me to do?'

8 "He asked me, 'Who are you?'

" 'An Amalekite,' I answered.

9 "Then he said to me, 'Stand over me and kill me! I'm close to death, but I'm
still alive.'

10 "So I stood over him and killed him. I did it because I knew that after he
had lost the battle he would be killed anyway. So I took the crown that was on
his head. I also took his armband. I've brought them here to you. You are my
master."

11 Then David took hold of his clothes and tore them. All of his men did the
same thing. 12 All of them were filled with sadness. They sobbed over the
whole nation of Israel. They didn't eat anything until evening. That's because

Saul and Jonathan and the LORD's army had been killed with swords.

13David spoke to the young man who had brought him the report. He asked, "Where are you from?"

"I'm the son of an outsider, an Amalekite," he answered.

14David asked him, "Why weren't you afraid to lift your hand to kill the LORD's anointed king?"

15Then David called for one of his men. He said, "Go! Strike him down!" So he struck the man down, and the man died. 16That's because David had said to him, "Anything that happens to you will be your own fault. What your own mouth has spoken is a witness against you. You said, 'I killed the LORD's anointed king.' "

David's Song of Sadness About Saul and Jonathan

17David sang a song of sadness about Saul and his son Jonathan. 18He ordered that it be taught to the people of Judah. It is called The Song of the Bow. It is written down in the Book of Jashar.

David sang,

19"Israel, your glorious leaders lie dead on your hills.
Your mighty men have fallen.

20"Don't announce it in Gath.
Don't tell it in the streets of Ashkelon.
If you do, the daughters of the Philistines will be glad.
The daughters of men who haven't been circumcised will be joyful.

21"Mountains of Gilboa,
may no dew or rain fall on you.
May your fields not produce any offerings of grain.
The shield of the mighty king lies polluted there.
The shield of Saul lies there. It isn't rubbed with oil anymore.
22The bow of Jonathan didn't turn back.
The sword of Saul didn't return without being satisfied.
They spilled the blood of their enemies.
They killed mighty men.

[23]“In life Saul and Jonathan were loved and gracious.
In death they were not parted.
They were faster than eagles.
They were stronger than lions.

[24]“Daughters of Israel, sob over Saul.
He dressed you in the finest clothes.
He decorated your clothes with ornaments of gold.

[25]“Your mighty men have fallen in battle.
Jonathan lies dead on your hills.
[26]My brother Jonathan, I’m filled with sadness because of you.
You were very special to me.
Your love for me was wonderful.
It was more wonderful than the love of women.

[27]“Israel’s mighty men have fallen.
Their weapons of war are broken.”

David Is Anointed to Be King Over Judah

2 Samuel 2

1 After Saul and Jonathan died, David asked the LORD for advice. “Should I go
up to one of the towns of Judah?” he asked.

The LORD said, “Go up.”

David asked, “Where should I go?”

“To Hebron,” the LORD answered.

2 So David went up there with his two wives. Their names were Ahinoam
from Jezreel and Abigail from Carmel. Abigail was Nabal’s widow. 3 David
also took his men and their families with him. They settled down in Hebron
and its towns.

4 Then the men of Judah came to Hebron. There they anointed David to be
king over the people of Judah.

David was told that the men of Jabesh Gilead had buried Saul’s body. 5 So he
sent messengers to them to speak for him.

The messengers said, “You were kind to bury the body of your master Saul.
May the LORD bless you for that. 6 And may he now be kind and faithful to you.
David will treat you well for being kind to Saul’s body. 7 Now then, be strong
and brave. Your master Saul is dead. And the people of Judah have anointed
David to be king over them.”

The Armies of David and Saul Fight Each Other

8 Abner, the son of Ner, was commander of Saul’s army. He had brought
Saul’s son Ish-Bosheth to Mahanaim. 9 There he made him king over Gilead,
Ashuri and Jezreel. He also made him king over Ephraim, Benjamin and other
areas of Israel.

10 Ish-Bosheth was 40 years old when he became king over Israel. He ruled
for two years. But the people of Judah followed David. 11 David was king in

Hebron over the people of Judah for seven and a half years.

[12]Abner, the son of Ner, left Mahanaim and went to Gibeon. The men of Ish-Bosheth, the son of Saul, went with him. [13]Joab, the son of Zeruiah, and David's men also went out. All of them met at the pool in Gibeon. One group sat down on one side of the pool. The other group sat on the other side.

[14]Then Abner said to Joab, "Let's have some of the young men get up and fight. Let's tell them to fight hand to hand in front of us."

"All right. Let them do it," Joab said.

[15]So the young men stood up and were counted off. There were 12 on the side of Benjamin and Saul's son Ish-Bosheth. And there were 12 on David's side. [16]Each man grabbed one of his enemies by the head. Each one stuck his dagger into the other man's side. And all of them fell down together and died. So that place in Gibeon was named Helkath Hazzurim.

[17]The fighting that day was very heavy. Abner and the men of Israel lost the battle to David's men.

[18]The three sons of Zeruiah were there. Their names were Joab, Abishai and Asahel. Asahel was as quick on his feet as a wild antelope. [19]He chased Abner. He didn't turn to the right or the left as he chased him. [20]Abner looked behind him. He asked, "Asahel, is that you?"

"It is," he answered.

[21]Then Abner said to him, "Turn to the right or the left. Fight one of the young men. Take his weapons away from him." But Asahel wouldn't stop chasing him.

[22]Again Abner warned Asahel, "Stop chasing me! If you don't, I'll strike you down. Then how could I look your brother Joab in the face?"

[23]But Asahel refused to give up the chase. So Abner drove the dull end of his spear into Asahel's stomach. The spear came out of his back. He fell and died right there on the spot. Every man stopped when he came to the place where Asahel had fallen and died.

[24]But Joab and Abishai chased Abner. As the sun was going down, they came to the hill of Ammah. It was near Giah on the way to the dry and empty land close to Gibeon. [25]The men of Benjamin gathered in a group around Abner. They took their stand on top of a hill.

[26]Abner called out to Joab, "Do you want our swords to keep on killing us

off? Don’t you know that all of this fighting will end in bitter feelings? How long will it be before you order your men to stop chasing their fellow Israelites?”

27Joab answered, “It’s a good thing you spoke up. If you hadn’t, the men would have kept on chasing their fellow Israelites until morning. And that’s just as sure as God is alive.”

28So Joab blew a trumpet. All of the men stopped. They didn’t chase Israel anymore. They didn’t fight anymore either.

29All that night Abner and his men marched through the Arabah Valley. They went across the Jordan River. They kept on going through the whole Bithron. Finally, they came to Mahanaim.

30Then Joab returned from chasing Abner. He gathered all of his men together. Besides Asahel, only 19 of David’s men were missing. 31But David’s men had killed 360 men from Benjamin who were with Abner. 32They got Asahel’s body and buried it in his father’s tomb at Bethlehem. Then Joab and his men marched all night. They arrived at Hebron at sunrise.

2 Samuel 3

[1]The war between Saul's royal house and David's royal house lasted a long time. David grew stronger and stronger. But the royal house of Saul grew weaker and weaker.

[2]Sons were born to David in Hebron.

His first son was Amnon. Amnon's mother was Ahinoam from Jezreel.

[3]His second son was Kileab. Kileab's mother was Abigail. She was Nabal's widow from Carmel.

The third son was Absalom. His mother was Maacah. She was the daughter of Talmai, the king of Geshur.

[4]The fourth son was Adonijah. His mother was Haggith.

The fifth son was Shephatiah. His mother was Abital.

[5]The sixth son was Ithream. His mother was David's wife Eglah.

Those sons were born to David in Hebron.

Abner Goes Over to David's Side

[6]The fighting continued between David's royal house and Saul's royal house. Abner gained more and more power in the royal house of Saul.

[7]While Saul was still alive, he had a concubine named Rizpah. She was the daughter of Aiah. Ish-Bosheth said to Abner, "Why did you have sex with my father's concubine?"

[8]Abner burned with anger because of what Ish-Bosheth said. He answered, "Do you think I'm only a dog's head? Am I on Judah's side? To this very day I've been true to the royal house of your father Saul. I've been true to his family and friends. I haven't handed you over to David. But now you claim that I've sinned with this woman!

[9]"I will do for David what the LORD promised him with an oath. If I don't, may God punish me greatly. [10]I'll take the kingdom away from Saul's royal house. I'll set up the throne of David's kingdom over Israel and Judah. He will

rule from Dan all the way to Beersheba."

[11]Ish-Bosheth didn't dare to say another word to Abner. He was much too afraid of him.

[12]Then Abner sent messengers to David to speak for him. They said, "Who will rule over this land? Make a covenant with me. Then I'll help you bring all of the people of Israel over to your side."

[13]"Good," said David. "I will make a covenant with you. But there's one thing I want you to do. Bring Saul's daughter Michal to me. Don't come to see me unless she's with you."

[14]Then David sent messengers to Saul's son Ish-Bosheth. He ordered them to say, "Give me my wife Michal. She was promised to me. I paid for her with the skins I cut off when I circumcised 100 Philistines."

[15]So Ish-Bosheth gave the order. He sent men who took Michal away from her husband Paltiel. Paltiel was the son of Laish. [16]But her husband followed her to Bahurim. He was crying all the way. Then Abner said to him, "Go back home!" So he did.

[17]Abner talked with the elders of Israel. He said, "For some time you have wanted to make David your king. [18]Now do it! The LORD made a promise to David. He said, 'I will save my people Israel from the powerful hand of the Philistines. I will also save them from all of their enemies. I will save them through my servant David.' "

[19]Abner also spoke to the people of Benjamin in person. Then he went to Hebron to tell David everything. He told him what Israel and all of the people of Benjamin wanted to do. [20]Abner had 20 men with him. They came to David at Hebron. So David prepared a big dinner for Abner and his men.

[21]Then Abner said to David, "Let me go right now. I'll gather together all of the people of Israel for you. After all, you are now my king and master. The people can make a covenant with you. Then you can rule over everyone you want to." So David sent Abner away. And he went in peace.

Joab Murders Abner

[22]Just then David's men and Joab came back from attacking their enemies. They brought with them the large amount of goods they had taken. But Abner

wasn’t with David in Hebron anymore. That’s because David had sent him away, and he had gone in peace.

23Joab and all of the soldiers who were with him arrived. Then he was told that Abner, the son of Ner, had come to see the king. He was told that the king had sent Abner away. He was also told that Abner had gone in peace.

24So Joab went to the king. He said, “What have you done? Abner came to you. Why did you let him get away? Now he’s gone! 25You know what Abner, the son of Ner, is like. He came to trick you. He wanted to watch your every move. He came to find out everything you are doing.”

26Then Joab left David. He sent messengers to get Abner. They brought Abner back from the well of Sirah. But David didn’t know about it.

27When Abner returned to Hebron, Joab took him to one side. He brought him to the entrance of the city gate. Joab acted as if he wanted to speak to him in private. But he really wanted to get even with him. That’s because Abner had spilled the blood of Joab’s brother Asahel. So Joab stabbed him in the stomach. And Abner died.

28Later on, David heard about it. He said, “I and the people of my kingdom aren’t guilty of spilling the blood of Abner, the son of Ner. We are free of blame forever in the sight of the LORD.

29“May Joab and his whole family line be held accountable for spilling Abner’s blood! May someone in Joab’s family always have an open sore or skin disease. May someone in his family always have to use a crutch to walk. May someone in his family be killed with a sword. And may someone in his family never have enough food to eat.”

30Joab and his brother Abishai murdered Abner. They did it because he had killed their brother Asahel in the battle at Gibeon.

31David spoke to Joab and all of the people who were with him. He said, “Tear your clothes. Put on black clothes. Sob when you walk in front of Abner’s body.” King David himself walked behind it.

32Abner’s body was buried in Hebron. The king sobbed out loud at Abner’s tomb. So did the rest of the people.

33King David sang a song of sadness over Abner. He said,

“Should Abner have died as sinful people do?

[34]His hands were not tied.
His feet were not chained.
He died as if he had been killed by evil people.”

All of the people sobbed over Abner again.

[35]Then all of them came and begged David to eat something. They wanted him to eat while it was still day. But David took an oath. He said, “I won’t taste bread or anything else before the sun goes down. If I do, may God punish me greatly!”

[36]All of the people heard it and were pleased. In fact, everything the king did pleased them. [37]So on that day all of the people of Judah and Israel understood. They knew that the king didn’t have anything to do with the murder of Abner, the son of Ner.

[38]The king spoke to his men. He said, “Don’t you realize that a great commander has died in Israel today? [39]I’m the anointed king. But today I’m weak. These sons of Zeruiah are too powerful for me. May the LORD pay back the one who killed Abner! May he pay him back for the evil thing he has done!”

Ish-Bosheth Is Murdered

2 Samuel 4

[1]Ish-Bosheth, the son of Saul, heard that Abner had died in Hebron. Then he
wasn't so brave anymore. And all of the people of Israel became alarmed.

[2]Two men in Ish-Bosheth's army led small companies that attacked their
enemies. The names of the men were Baanah and Recab. They were sons of
Rimmon from the town of Beeroth. Rimmon was from the tribe of Benjamin.
Beeroth is considered to be part of Benjamin. [3]That's because the people who
used to live in Beeroth had run away to Gittaim. They have lived there as
outsiders to this very day.

[4]Jonathan, the son of Saul, had a son named Mephibosheth. Both of
Mephibosheth's feet were hurt. He was five years old when the news that Saul
and Jonathan had died came from Jezreel. His nurse picked him up and ran.
But as she hurried to get away, he fell down. That's how his feet were hurt.

[5]Recab and Baanah started out for the house of Ish-Bosheth. They were the
sons of Rimmon from Beeroth. They arrived there during the hottest time of
the day. Ish-Bosheth was taking his early afternoon nap. [6]Recab and his brother
Baanah went into the inside part of the house. They acted as if they were going
to get some wheat. Instead, they stabbed Ish-Bosheth in the stomach. Then they
slipped away.

[7]They had gone into the house while Ish-Bosheth was lying on his bed in his
bedroom. They stabbed him and killed him. Then they cut off his head and
took it with them. They traveled all night through the Arabah Valley. [8]They
brought the head of Ish-Bosheth to King David at Hebron. They said to him,
"Here's the head of Ish-Bosheth, the son of Saul. Saul was your enemy. He
often tried to kill you. Today the LORD has paid Saul and his family back. He
has let you get even with them. You are our king and master."

[9]David gave an answer to Recab and his brother Baanah. They were the sons
of Rimmon of Beeroth. David said, "The LORD has saved me from all of my
troubles. [10]A man once told me, 'Saul is dead.' He thought he was bringing me
good news. But I grabbed hold of him. I had him put to death in Ziklag. That's

the reward I gave him for his news! And that’s just as sure as the LORD is alive.

11“Now you evil men have killed a man in his own house. He hadn’t done anything wrong. You killed him while he was lying on his own bed. You spilled his blood. So shouldn’t I spill your blood? Shouldn’t I wipe you off the face of the earth?”

12Then David gave an order to his men. They killed Recab and Baanah. They cut off their hands and feet. They hung their bodies by the pool in Hebron. But they buried the head of Ish-Bosheth in Abner’s tomb at Hebron.

David Becomes King Over Israel

2 Samuel 5

[1]All of the tribes of Israel came to see David at Hebron. They said, “We are your own flesh and blood. [2]In the past, Saul was our king. But you led the men of Israel on their military campaigns. And the LORD said to you, ‘You will be the shepherd over my people Israel. You will become their ruler.’ ”

[3]All of the elders of Israel came to see King David at Hebron. There the king made a covenant with them in the sight of the LORD. They anointed David as king over Israel.

[4]David was 30 years old when he became king. He ruled for 40 years. [5]In Hebron he ruled over Judah for seven and a half years. In Jerusalem he ruled over all of Israel and Judah for 33 years.

David Captures Jerusalem

[6]The king and his men marched to Jerusalem. They went to attack the Jebusites who lived there.

The Jebusites said to David, “You won’t get in here. Even blind people and those who are disabled can keep you from coming in.” They thought, “David can’t get in here.”

[7]But David captured the fort of Zion. It became known as the City of David.

[8]On that day David said, “Anyone who wins the battle over the Jebusites will have to crawl through the water tunnel to get into the city. That’s the only way he can reach those ‘disabled and blind’ enemies of mine.” That’s why people say, “Those who are ‘blind and disabled’ won’t enter David’s palace.”

[9]David moved into the fort. He called it the City of David. He built up the area around the fort. He filled in the low places. He started at the bottom and worked his way up. [10]David became more and more powerful. That’s because the LORD God who rules over all was with him.

[11]Hiram was king of Tyre. He sent messengers to David. He sent cedar logs along with them. He also sent skilled workers. They worked with wood and stone. They built a palace for David.

[12]David knew that the LORD had made his position as king secure. He knew that he had made him king over the whole nation of Israel. He knew that the LORD had greatly honored his kingdom. The LORD had done it because the Israelites were his people.

[13]After David left Hebron, he got more concubines and wives in Jerusalem. More sons and daughters were born to him there. [14]Here is a list of the children who were born to him in Jerusalem. Their names were Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, [15]Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, [16]Elishama, Eliada and Eliphelet.

David Wins the Battle Over the Philistines

[17]The Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over Israel. So their whole army went to look for him. But David heard about it. He went down to his usual place of safety. [18]The Philistines had come and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim.

[19]So David asked the LORD for advice. He said, “Should I go and attack the Philistines? Will you hand them over to me?”

The LORD answered him, “Go. You can be sure that I will hand the Philistines over to you.”

[20]So David went to Baal Perazim. There he won the battle over the Philistines. He said, “The LORD has broken through against my enemies when I’ve attacked them, just as water breaks through a dam.” That’s why the place was called Baal Perazim. [21]The Philistines left the statues of their gods there. So David and his men carried the statues off.

[22]Once more the Philistines came up. They spread out in the Valley of Rephaim.

[23]So David asked the LORD for advice. The LORD answered, “Do not go straight up. Instead, circle around behind them. Attack them in front of the balsam trees. [24]Listen for the sound of marching in the tops of the trees. Then move quickly. The sound will mean that I have gone out in front of you. I will

strike down the Philistine army.”

25So David did just as the LORD had commanded him. He struck down the Philistines. He struck them down from Gibeon all the way to Gezer.

David Brings the Ark to Jerusalem

2 Samuel 6

[1]Again David brought together the best soldiers in Israel. The total number was 30,000. [2]He and all of his men started out from Baalah in Judah. They wanted to bring the ark of God up to Jerusalem from there. The ark is named after the LORD. He is the LORD who rules over all. He sits on his throne between the cherubim that are on the ark.

[3]The ark of God was placed on a new cart. Then it was brought from Abinadab's house, which was on a hill. Uzzah and Ahio were guiding the cart. They were the sons of Abinadab. [4]The ark of God was on the cart. Ahio was walking in front of it.

[5]David was celebrating with all his might in the sight of the LORD. So was the whole community of Israel. All of them were singing songs. They were also playing harps, lyres, tambourines, rattles and cymbals.

[6]They came to the threshing floor of Nacon. The oxen nearly fell there. So Uzzah reached out and took hold of the ark of God.

[7]Then the LORD's anger burned against Uzzah. That's because what Uzzah did showed that he didn't have any respect for the LORD. So God struck him down. He died there beside the ark of God.

[8]David was angry because the LORD's burning anger had broken out against Uzzah. That's why the place is still called Perez Uzzah to this very day.

[9]David was afraid of the LORD that day. He asked, "How can the ark of the LORD ever be brought to me?" [10]He didn't want to take the ark of the LORD to be with him in the City of David. Instead, he took it to the house of Obed-Edom. Obed-Edom was from Gath. [11]The ark of the LORD remained in Obed-Edom's house for three months. And the LORD blessed him and his whole family.

[12]King David was told, "The LORD has blessed the family of Obed-Edom. He has also blessed everything that belongs to him. That's because the ark of God is in Obed-Edom's house."

So David went down there and brought up the ark. With great joy he brought it up from the house of Obed-Edom. He took it to the City of David. [13]Those who were carrying the ark of the LORD took six steps forward. Then David sacrificed a bull and a fat calf. [14]David was wearing a sacred linen apron. He danced in the sight of the LORD with all his might. [15]He did it while he was bringing up the ark of the LORD. The whole community of Israel helped him bring it up. They shouted. They blew trumpets.

[16]The ark of the LORD was brought into the City of David. Saul's daughter Michal was watching from a window. She saw King David leaping and dancing in the sight of the LORD. That made her hate him in her heart.

[17]The ark of the LORD was brought into Jerusalem. It was put in its place in the tent David had set up for it. David sacrificed burnt offerings and friendship offerings to the LORD.

[18]After he finished sacrificing those offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD who rules over all. [19]He gave to each Israelite man and woman a loaf of bread. He also gave each one a date cake and a raisin cake. Then all of the people went home.

[20]David returned home to bless his family. Saul's daughter Michal came out to meet him. She said, "You are the king of Israel. You have really brought honor to yourself today, haven't you? You have taken off your royal robe right in front of the female slaves of your officials. You acted like someone who is very foolish!"

[21]David said to Michal, "I did it to honor the LORD. He chose me instead of your father or anyone else in Saul's family. He appointed me ruler over his people Israel. I will celebrate in honor of the LORD. [22]And that's not all. I will bring even less honor to myself. I will bring even more shame on myself. But those female slaves you spoke about will honor me."

[23]Saul's daughter Michal didn't have any children as long as she lived.

God Makes a Promise to David

2 Samuel 7

1The king settled down in his palace. The LORD had given him peace and rest
from all of his enemies who were around him.

2Then the king spoke to the prophet Nathan. He said, “Here I am, living in a
palace that has beautiful cedar walls. But the ark of God remains in a tent.”

3Nathan replied to the king, “Go ahead and do what you want to. The LORD is
with you.”

4That night the word of the LORD came to Nathan. The LORD said,

5“Go and speak to my servant David. Tell him, ‘The LORD says, “Are you the
one to build me a house to live in? 6I have not lived in a house from the day I
brought the people of Israel up out of Egypt until now. I have been moving
from place to place. I have been living in a tent. 7I have moved from place to
place with all of the people of Israel. I commanded their rulers to be shepherds
over them. I never asked any of those rulers, ‘Why haven’t you built me a
house that has beautiful cedar walls?’ ” ’

8“So tell my servant David, ‘The LORD who rules over all says, “I took you
away from the grasslands. That’s where you were taking care of your father’s
sheep and goats. I made you ruler over my people Israel. 9I have been with you
everywhere you have gone. I cut off all of your enemies when you were
attacking them.

“ ‘ “Now I will make you famous. Your name will be just as respected as the
names of the most important people on earth. 10I will provide a place where my
people Israel can live. I will plant them in the land. Then they will have a home
of their own. They will not be bothered anymore. Evil people will no longer
crush them, as they did at first. 11That is what your enemies have done ever
since I appointed leaders over my people Israel. But I will give you peace and
rest from all of them.

“ ‘ “I tell you that I myself will set up a royal house for you. 12Some day your
life will come to an end. You will join the members of your family who have

already died. Then I will make one of your own sons the next king after you. And I will make his kingdom secure. 13He is the one who will build a house where I will put my Name.

“ ‘ “I will set up the throne of his kingdom. It will last forever. 14I will be his father. And he will be my son. When he does what is wrong, I will use other men to beat him with rods and whips. 15I took my love away from Saul. I removed him from being king. You were there when I did it. But I will never take my love away from your son.

16“ ‘ “Your royal house and your kingdom will last forever in my sight. Your throne will last forever.” ’ ”

17Nathan reported to David all of the words that the LORD had spoken to him.

David Prays to the LORD

18Then King David went into the holy tent. He sat down in front of the LORD. He said,

“LORD and King, who am I? My family isn’t important. So why have you brought me this far? 19I would have thought that you had already done more than enough for me. But now, LORD and King, you have also spoken about what is going to happen to my royal house in days to come. LORD and King, is this your usual way of dealing with people?

20“What more can I say to you? LORD and King, you know all about me. 21You have done a wonderful thing. You have made it known to me. You have done it because that’s what you said you would do. It’s exactly what you wanted to do for me.

22“LORD and King, how great you are! There isn’t anyone like you. There isn’t any God but you. We have heard about it with our own ears.

23“Who is like your people Israel? God, we are the one nation on earth you have saved. You have set us free for yourself. Your name has become famous. You have done great and wonderful things. You have driven out nations and their gods to make room for your people. You saved us when you set us free from Egypt. 24You made Israel your very own people forever. LORD, you have become our God.

25“And now, LORD God, keep forever the promise you have made to me and
my royal house. Do exactly as you promised. 26Then your name will be
honored forever. People will say, ‘The LORD rules over all. He is God over
Israel.’ My royal house will be made secure in your sight.

27“LORD who rules over all, you are the God of Israel. Here’s what you have
shown me. You told me, ‘I will build you a royal house.’ So I can boldly offer
this prayer to you. 28LORD and King, you are God! Your words can be trusted.
You have promised many good things to me.

29“Now please bless my royal house. Then it will continue forever in your
sight. LORD and King, you have spoken. Because you have given my royal
house your blessing, it will be blessed forever.”

David Wins Many Battles

2 Samuel 8

[1]While David was king of Israel, he won many battles over the Philistines. He brought them under his control. He took Metheg Ammah away from them.

[2]David also won the battle over the people of Moab. He made them lie down on the ground. Then he measured them off with a piece of rope. He put two-thirds of them to death. He let the other third remain alive. So the Moabites were brought under David's rule. They gave him the gifts he required them to bring him.

[3]David fought against Hadadezer, the son of Rehob. Hadadezer was king of Zobah. He had gone to take back control of the land along the Euphrates River. [4]David captured 1,000 of Hadadezer's chariots, 7,000 chariot riders and 20,000 soldiers on foot. He cut the legs of all but 100 of the chariot horses.

[5]The Arameans of Damascus came to help Hadadezer, the king of Zobah. But David struck down 22,000 of them. [6]He stationed some soldiers in the Aramean kingdom of Damascus. The people of Aram were brought under his rule. They gave him the gifts he required them to bring him. The LORD helped David win his battles everywhere he went.

[7]David took the gold shields that belonged to the officers of Hadadezer. He brought the shields to Jerusalem. [8]He took a huge amount of bronze from Tebah and Berothai. Those towns belonged to Hadadezer.

[9]Tou was king of Hamath. He heard that David had won the battle over the entire army of Hadadezer. [10]So Tou sent his son Joram to King David. Joram greeted David. He praised him because he had won the battle over Hadadezer. Hadadezer had been at war with Tou. So Joram brought with him articles that were made out of silver, gold and bronze.

[11]King David set those articles apart for the LORD. He had done the same thing with the silver and gold he had taken from the other nations he had brought under his control. [12]Those nations were Edom, Moab, Ammon, Philistia and Amalek. He also set apart for the LORD what he had taken from

Hadadezer, the son of Rehob. Hadadezer was king of Zobah.

13David returned after he had struck down 18,000 men of Edom in the Valley
of Salt. He became famous for doing it.

14He stationed some soldiers all through Edom. The whole nation of Edom
was brought under his rule. The LORD helped David win his battles everywhere
he went.

David's Officials

15David ruled over the whole nation of Israel. He did what was fair and right
for all of his people. 16Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was commander over the army.
Jehoshaphat, the son of Ahilud, kept the records. 17Zadok, the son of Ahitub,
was a priest. Ahimelech, the son of Abiathar, was also a priest. Seraiah was the
secretary. 18Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, was commander over the Kerethites
and Pelethites. And David's sons were royal advisers.

David Is Kind to Mephibosheth

2 Samuel 9

[1]David asked, “Is anyone left from the royal house of Saul? If there is, I want to be kind to him because of Jonathan.”

[2]Ziba was a servant in Saul’s family. David sent for him to come and see him. The king said to him, “Are you Ziba?”

“I’m ready to serve you,” he replied.

[3]The king asked, “Isn’t anyone left from the royal house of Saul? God has been very kind to me. I would like to be kind to someone in the same way.”

Ziba answered the king, “A son of Jonathan is still living. Both of his feet were hurt.”

[4]“Where is he?” the king asked.

Ziba answered, “He’s in the town of Lo Debar. He’s staying at the house of Makir, the son of Ammiel.”

[5]So King David had Mephibosheth brought from Makir’s house in Lo Debar.

[6]Mephibosheth came to David. He was the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul. Mephibosheth bowed down to David to show him respect.

David said, “Mephibosheth!”

“I’m ready to serve you,” he replied.

[7]“Don’t be afraid,” David told him. “You can be sure that I will be kind to you because of your father Jonathan. I’ll give back to you all of the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul. And I’ll always provide what you need.”

[8]Mephibosheth bowed down to David. He said, “Who am I? Why should you pay attention to me? I’m nothing but a dead dog.”

[9]Then the king sent for Saul’s servant Ziba. He said to him, “I’m giving your master’s grandson everything that belonged to Saul and his family. [10]You and your sons and your servants must farm the land for him. You must bring in the crops. Then he’ll be taken care of. I’ll always provide what he needs.” Ziba had 15 sons and 20 servants.

[11]Then Ziba said to the king, “I’ll do anything you command me to do. You are my king and master.” So David provided what Mephibosheth needed. He treated him like one of the king’s sons.

[12]Mephibosheth had a young son named Mica. All of the members of Ziba’s family became servants of Mephibosheth. [13]Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem. The king always provided what he needed. Both of his feet were hurt.

David Goes to War Against the People of Ammon

2 Samuel 10

[1]The king of Ammon died. His son Hanun became the next king after him.
[2]David thought, “I’m going to be kind to Hanun. His father Nahash was kind to me.” So David sent messengers to Hanun. He wanted them to tell Hanun how sad he was that Hanun’s father had died.

David’s messengers went to the land of Ammon. [3]The Ammonite nobles spoke to their master Hanun. They said, “David has sent messengers to tell you he is sad. They say he wants to honor your father. But the real reason they’ve come is to look the city over. They want to destroy it.”

[4]So Hanun grabbed hold of David’s men. He shaved off half of each man’s beard. He cut their clothes off just below the waist and left them half naked. Then he sent them away.

[5]David was told about it. So he sent messengers to his men because they were filled with shame. King David said to them, “Stay at Jericho until your beards grow out again. Then come back here.”

[6]The Ammonites realized that what they had done had made David very angry with them. So they hired 20,000 Aramean soldiers who were on foot. The soldiers came from Beth Rehob and Zobah. The Ammonites also hired the king of Maacah and 1,000 men. And they hired 12,000 men from Tob.

[7]David heard about it. So he sent Joab out with the entire army of Israel’s fighting men.

[8]The Ammonites marched out. They took up their battle positions at the entrance of their city gate. The Arameans of Zobah and Rehob gathered their troops together in the open country. So did the men of Tob and Maacah.

[9]Joab saw that there were lines of soldiers in front of him and behind him. So he chose some of the best troops in Israel. He sent them to march out against the Arameans.

[10]He put the rest of the men under the command of his brother Abishai. Joab sent them to march out against the Ammonites. [11]He said, “Suppose the

Arameans are too strong for me. Then you must come and help me. But suppose the Ammonites are too strong for you. Then I'll come and help you.

12"Be strong. Let's be brave as we fight for our people and the cities of our God. The LORD will do what he thinks is best."

13Then Joab and the troops who were with him marched out to attack the Arameans. They ran away from him. 14The Ammonites saw that the Arameans were running away. So they ran away from Abishai. They went inside the city. After Joab had fought against the Ammonites, he went back to Jerusalem.

15The Arameans saw that they had been driven away by Israel. So they brought their troops together. 16Hadadezer had some Arameans brought from east of the Euphrates River. They went to Helam under the command of Shobach. He was the commander of Hadadezer's army.

17David was told about it. So he gathered the whole army of Israel together. They went across the Jordan River to Helam. The Arameans lined up their soldiers to go to war against David. They began to fight against him. 18But then they ran away from Israel. David killed 700 of their chariot riders. He killed 40,000 of their soldiers who were on foot. He also struck down Shobach, the commander of their army. Shobach died there.

19All of the kings who were under the rule of Hadadezer saw that Israel had won the battle over them. So they made a peace treaty with the Israelites. They were brought under Israel's rule.

After that, the Arameans were afraid to help the Ammonites anymore.

David and Bathsheba

2 Samuel 11

[1]It was spring. It was the time when kings go off to war. So David sent Joab out with the king's special troops and the whole army of Israel. They destroyed the Ammonites. They went to the city of Rabbah. They surrounded it and got ready to attack it. But David remained in Jerusalem.

[2]One evening David got up from his bed. He walked around on the roof of his palace. From the roof he saw a woman taking a bath. She was very beautiful.

[3]David sent a messenger to find out who she was. The messenger returned and said, "She is Bathsheba. She's the daughter of Eliam. She's the wife of Uriah. He's a Hittite."

[4]Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him. And he had sex with her. Then she went back home. All of that took place after she had already made herself "clean" from her monthly period.

[5]Later, Bathsheba found out she was pregnant. She sent a message to David. It said, "I'm pregnant."

[6]So David sent a message to Joab. It said, "Send me Uriah, the Hittite." Joab sent him to David.

[7]Uriah came to David. David asked him how Joab and the soldiers were doing. He also asked him how the war was going.

[8]David said to Uriah, "Go home and enjoy some time with your wife." So Uriah left the palace. Then the king sent him a gift.

[9]But Uriah didn't go home. Instead, he slept at the entrance to the palace. He stayed there with all of his master's servants.

[10]David was told, "Uriah didn't go home." So he sent for Uriah. He said to him, "You have been away for a long time. Why didn't you go home?"

[11]Uriah said to David, "The ark and the army of Israel and Judah are out there in tents. My master Joab and your special troops are camped in the open fields. How could I go to my house to eat and drink? How could I go there and make

love to my wife? I could never do a thing like that. And that's just as sure as you are alive!"

12Then David said to him, "Stay here one more day. Tomorrow I'll send you back to the battle." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next.

13David invited Uriah to eat and drink with him. David got him drunk. But Uriah still didn't go home. In the evening he went out and slept on his mat. He stayed there among his master's servants.

14The next morning David wrote a letter to Joab. He sent it along with Uriah. 15In it he wrote, "Put Uriah on the front lines. That's where the fighting is the heaviest. Then pull your men back from him. When you do, the Ammonites will strike him down and kill him."

16So Joab attacked the city. He put Uriah at a place where he knew the strongest enemy fighters were. 17The troops came out of the city. They fought against Joab. Some of the men in David's army were killed. Uriah, the Hittite, also died.

18Joab sent David a full report of the battle. 19He told the messenger, "Tell the king everything that happened in the battle. When you are finished, 20his anger might explode. He might ask you, 'Why did you go so close to the city to fight against it? Didn't you know that the enemy soldiers would shoot arrows down from the wall? 21Don't you remember how Abimelech, the son of Jerub-Besheth, was killed? A woman dropped a large millstone on him from the wall. That's how he died in Thebez. So why did you go so close to the wall?' If the king asks you that, tell him, 'Your servant Uriah, the Hittite, is also dead.' "

22The messenger started out for Jerusalem. When he arrived there, he told David everything Joab had sent him to say. 23The messenger said to David, "The men who were in the city were more powerful than we were. They came out to fight against us in the open. But we drove them back to the entrance of the city gate. 24Then those who were armed with bows shot arrows at us from the wall. Some of your special troops were killed. Your servant Uriah, the Hittite, is also dead."

25David told the messenger, "Tell Joab, 'Don't get upset over what happened. Swords kill one person as well as another. So keep on attacking the city. Destroy it.' Tell that to Joab. It will cheer him up."

26Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead. She sobbed over him. 27When her time of sadness was over, David had her brought to his house. She

became his wife. And she had a son by him. But the LORD wasn’t pleased with what David had done.

David's Son Dies

2 Samuel 12

1The LORD sent the prophet Nathan to David. When Nathan came to him, he
said, "Two men lived in the same town. One was rich. The other was poor.
2The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle. 3But all the poor
man had was one little female lamb. He had bought it. He raised it. It grew up
with him and his children. It shared his food. It drank from his cup. It even
slept in his arms. It was just like a daughter to him.

4"One day a traveler came to the rich man. The rich man wanted to prepare a
meal for him. But he didn't want to kill one of his own sheep or cattle. Instead,
he took the little female lamb that belonged to the poor man. Then he cooked it
for the traveler who had come to him."

5David burned with anger against the rich man. He said to Nathan, "The man
who did that is worthy of death. And that's just as sure as the LORD is alive.
6The man must pay back four times as much as that lamb was worth. How
could he do such a thing? And he wasn't even sorry he had done it."

7Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! The LORD, the God of Israel,
says, 'I anointed you king over Israel. I saved you from Saul's powerful hand.
8I gave you everything that belonged to your master Saul. I even put his wives
into your arms. I made you king over the people of Israel and Judah. And if all
of that had not been enough for you, I would have given you even more.

9" 'Why did you turn your back on what I told you to do? You did what is
evil in my sight. You made sure that Uriah, the Hittite, would be killed in
battle. You took his wife to be your own. You let the men of Ammon kill him
with their swords.

10" 'So time after time members of your own royal house will be killed with
swords. That's because you turned your back on me. You took the wife of
Uriah, the Hittite, to be your own.'

11"The LORD also says, 'I am going to bring trouble on you. It will come from
your own family. I will take your wives away. Your own eyes will see it. I will
give your wives to a man who is close to you. He will have sex with them in

the middle of the day. [12]You committed your sins in secret. But I will make sure that the sin the man commits with your wives will take place in the middle of the day. Everyone in Israel will see it.' "

[13]Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."

Nathan replied, "The LORD has taken away your sin. You aren't going to die. [14]But you have dared to make fun of the LORD. So the son who has been born to you will die."

[15]Nathan went home. Then the LORD made the child that had been born to Uriah's wife by David very sick.

[16]David begged God to heal the child. David didn't eat anything. He spent his nights lying on the ground. [17]His most trusted servants stood beside him. They wanted him to get up from the ground. But he refused to do it. And he wouldn't eat any food with them.

[18]On the seventh day the child died. David's servants were afraid to tell him the child was dead. They thought, "While the child was still alive, we spoke to David. But he wouldn't listen to us. So how can we tell him the child is dead? He might do something terrible to himself."

[19]David saw that his servants were whispering to each other. Then he realized the child was dead. "Has the child died?" he asked.

"Yes," they replied. "He's dead."

[20]Then David got up from the ground. After he washed himself, he put on lotions. He changed his clothes. He went into the house of the LORD and worshiped him. Then he went to his own house. He asked for some food. They served it to him. And he ate it.

[21]His servants asked him, "Why are you acting like this? While the child was still alive, you wouldn't eat anything. You cried a lot. But now that the child is dead, you get up and eat!"

[22]He answered, "While the child was still alive, I didn't eat anything. And I cried a lot. I thought, 'Who knows? The LORD might show favor to me. He might let the child live.' [23]But now he's dead. So why should I go without eating? Can I bring him back to life again? Someday I'll go to him. But he won't return to me."

[24]Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba. He went to her and made love to her. Some time later she had a son. He was given the name Solomon. The

LORD loved him. [25]So the LORD sent a message through the prophet Nathan. It said, “Name the boy Jedidiah.”

David Captures the City of Rabbah

[26]During that time, Joab fought against Rabbah. It was the royal city of the Ammonites. It had high walls around it. Joab was about to capture it. [27]He sent messengers to David. He told them to say, “I have fought against Rabbah. I’ve taken control of its water supply. [28]So bring the rest of the troops together. Surround the city and get ready to attack it. Then capture it. If you don’t, I’ll capture it myself. Then it will be named after me.”

[29]So David brought the whole army together and went to Rabbah. He attacked it and captured it. [30]He took the gold crown off the head of the king of Ammon. The crown weighed 75 pounds. It had jewels in it. It was placed on David’s head. He took a huge amount of goods from the city. [31]He brought out the people who were there. He made them work with saws and iron picks and axes. He forced them to make bricks. He did that to all of the towns in Ammon. Then he and his entire army returned to Jerusalem.

Amnon Rapes Tamar

2 Samuel 13

[1]Some time later, David's son Amnon fell in love with Tamar. She was the beautiful sister of Absalom. He was another one of David's sons.

[2]Amnon's sister Tamar was a virgin. It seemed impossible for him to do what he wanted to do with her. But he wanted her so much it almost made him sick.

[3]Amnon had a friend named Jonadab. He was the son of David's brother Shimeah. Jonadab was a very clever man. [4]He asked Amnon, "You are the king's son, aren't you? So why do you look so worn out every morning? Won't you tell me?"

Amnon answered, "I'm in love with Tamar. She's the sister of my brother Absalom."

[5]"Go to bed," Jonadab said. "Pretend to be sick. Your father will come to see you. When he does, tell him, 'I would like my sister Tamar to come and give me something to eat. Let her prepare the food right here in front of me where I can watch her. Then she can feed it to me.' "

[6]So Amnon went to bed. He pretended to be sick. The king came to see him. Amnon said to him, "I would like my sister Tamar to come here. I want to watch her make some special bread. Then she can feed it to me."

[7]David sent a message to Tamar at the palace. It said, "Go to your brother Amnon's house. Prepare some food for him."

[8]So Tamar went to the house of her brother Amnon. He was lying in bed. She got some dough and mixed it. She shaped the bread right there in front of him. And she baked it. [9]Then she took the bread out of the pan and served it to him. But he refused to eat it.

"Send everyone out of here," Amnon said. So everyone left him.

[10]Then he said to Tamar, "Bring the food here into my bedroom. Please feed it to me."

So Tamar picked up the bread she had prepared. She brought it to her brother

Amnon in his bedroom. [11]She took it to him so he could eat it.

But he grabbed hold of her. He said, “My sister, come and have sex with me.”

[12]“Don’t do this, my brother!” she said to him. “Don’t force me to have sex with you. An evil thing like that should never be done in Israel! Don’t do it! [13]What about me? How could I ever get rid of my shame? And what about you? You would be as foolish as any evil person in Israel. Please speak to the king. He won’t keep me from getting married to you.”

[14]But Amnon refused to listen to her. He was stronger than she was. So he raped her.

[15]Then Amnon was filled with deep hatred for Tamar. In fact, he hated her now more than he had loved her before. He said to her, “Get up! Get out!”

[16]“No!” she said to him. “Don’t send me away. That would be worse than what you have already done to me.”

But he refused to listen to her. [17]He sent for his personal servant. He said, “Get this woman out of here. Lock the door behind her.”

[18]So his servant threw her out. Then he locked the door behind her.

Tamar was wearing a beautiful robe. It was the kind of robe the virgin daughters of the king wore. [19]She put ashes on her head. She tore the beautiful robe she was wearing. She put her hands on her head and went away. She was sobbing out loud as she went.

[20]When her brother Absalom saw her, he spoke to her. He said, “Has Amnon, that brother of yours, forced you to have sex with him? My sister, don’t let it upset you. Don’t let it bother you. He’s your brother.”

After that, Tamar lived in her brother Absalom’s house. She was very lonely.

[21]King David heard about everything that had happened. So he became very angry.

[22]Absalom never said a word of any kind to Amnon. He hated Amnon because he had brought shame on his sister Tamar.

Absalom Kills Amnon

[23]Two years later, Absalom invited all of the king’s sons to come to Baal Hazor. It was near the border of Ephraim. The workers who clipped the wool

off Absalom’s sheep were there.

24Absalom went to the king. He said, “I’ve had my workers come to clip the wool. Will you and your officials please join me?”

25“No, my son,” the king replied. “All of us shouldn’t go. It would be too much trouble for you.” Although Absalom begged him, the king still refused to go. But he gave Absalom his blessing.

26Then Absalom said, “If you won’t come, please let my brother Amnon come with us.”

The king asked him, “Why should he go with you?” 27But Absalom begged him. So the king sent Amnon with him. He also sent the rest of his sons.

28Absalom ordered his men, “Listen! When Amnon has had too much wine to drink, I’ll say to you, ‘Strike Amnon down.’ When I do, kill him. Don’t be afraid. I’ve given you an order, haven’t I? Be strong and brave.”

29So Absalom’s men killed Amnon, just as Absalom had ordered. Then all of the king’s sons got on their mules and rode away.

30While they were on their way, a report came to David. It said, “Absalom has struck down all of your sons. Not one of them is left alive.”

31The king stood up and tore his clothes. Then he lay down on the ground. All of his servants stood near him. They had also torn their clothes.

32Jonadab, the son of David’s brother Shimeah, spoke up. He said, “You shouldn’t think that all of the princes have been killed. The only one who is dead is Amnon. Absalom had planned to kill him ever since the day Amnon raped his sister Tamar. 33You are my king and master. You shouldn’t be concerned about this report. It’s not true that all of your sons are dead. The only one who is dead is Amnon.”

34While all of that was taking place, Absalom ran away.

The man on guard duty at Jerusalem looked up. He saw many people coming on the road west of him. They were coming down the side of the hill. He went and spoke to the king. He said, “I see men coming down the road from Horonaim. They are coming down the side of the hill.”

35Jonadab said to the king, “See, your sons are coming. It has happened just as I said it would.”

36As he finished speaking, the king’s sons came in. They were sobbing out loud. The king and all of his servants were also sobbing very bitterly.

[37]When Absalom ran away, he went to Talmai, the son of Ammihud. Talmai was king of Geshur. King David sobbed over his son every day.

[38]So Absalom ran away and went to Geshur. He stayed there for three years.

[39]After some time the king got over his sorrow because of Amnon’s death. Then he longed to go to Absalom.

Absalom Returns to Jerusalem

2 Samuel 14

[1]Joab, the son of Zeruiah, knew that the king longed to see Absalom. [2]So Joab sent someone to Tekoa to have a wise woman brought back from there. Joab said to her, “Pretend you are filled with sadness. Put on black clothes. Don’t use any makeup. Act like a woman who has spent many days sobbing over someone who has died. [3]Then go to the king. Give him the message I’m about to give you.” And Joab told her what to say.

[4]The woman from Tekoa went to the king. She bowed down with her face toward the ground. She did it to show him respect. She said, “King David, please help me!”

[5]The king asked her, “What’s bothering you?”

She said, “I’m a widow. My husband is dead. [6]I had two sons. They got into a fight with each other in the field. No one was there to separate them. One of my sons struck the other one down and killed him.

[7]“Now my whole family group has risen up against me. They say, ‘Hand over the one who struck his brother down. Then we can put him to death for killing his brother. That will also get rid of the one who will receive the family property.’ They want to kill the only living son I have left, just as someone would put out a burning coal. That would leave my husband without any son on the face of the earth to carry on his name.”

[8]The king said to the woman, “Go home. I’ll give an order to make sure you are taken care of.”

[9]But the woman from Tekoa said to him, “You are my king and master. No matter what you do, I and my family will take the blame for it. You and your royal family won’t be guilty of doing anything wrong.”

[10]The king replied, “If people give you any trouble, bring them to me. They won’t bother you again.”

[11]She said, “Please pray to the LORD your God. Pray that he will keep our nearest male relative from killing my other son. Then my son won’t be

destroyed.”

“You can be sure that the LORD lives,” the king said. “And you can be just as sure that not one hair of your son’s head will fall to the ground.”

12Then the woman said, “King David, please let me say something else to you.”

“Go ahead,” he replied.

13The woman said, “You are the king. So why have you done something that brings so much harm on God’s people? When you do that, you hand down a sentence against yourself. You won’t let the son you drove away come back. 14All of us must die. We are like water that is spilled on the ground. It can’t be put back into the jar. But God doesn’t take life away. Instead, he finds a way to bring back anyone who was driven away from him.

15“King David, I’ve come here to say this to you now. I’ve done it because people have made me afraid. I thought, ‘I’ll go and speak to the king. Perhaps he’ll do what I’m asking. 16Perhaps he’ll agree to save me from the man who is trying to cut off me and my son from the property God gave us.’

17“So now I’m saying, ‘May what you have told me bring me peace and rest. You are like an angel of God. You know what is good and what is evil. May the LORD your God be with you.’ ”

18Then the king said to the woman, “I’m going to ask you a question. I want you to tell me the truth.”

“Please ask me anything you want to,” the woman said.

19The king asked, “Joab told you to say all of this, didn’t he?”

The woman answered, “What you have told me is exactly right. And that’s just as sure as you are alive. It’s true that Joab directed me to do this. He told me everything he wanted me to say. 20He did it to change the way things now are. You are as wise as an angel of God. You know everything that happens in the land.”

21Later the king said to Joab, “All right. I’ll do what you want. Go. Bring the young man Absalom back.”

22Joab bowed down with his face toward the ground. He did it to honor the king. And he asked God to bless the king. He said, “You are my king and master. Today I know that you are pleased with me. You have given me what I asked for.”

[23]Then Joab went to Geshur. He brought Absalom back to Jerusalem. [24]But the king said, “He must go to his own house. I don’t want him to come and see me.”

So Absalom went to his own house. He didn’t go to see the king.

[25]In the whole land of Israel there wasn’t any man as handsome as Absalom was. That’s why everyone praised him. From the top of his head to the bottom of his feet he didn’t have any flaws. [26]He used to cut his hair when it became too heavy for him. Then he would weigh it. It weighed five pounds in keeping with the standard weights that were used in the palace.

[27]Three sons and a daughter were born to Absalom. The daughter’s name was Tamar. She became a beautiful woman.

[28]Absalom lived in Jerusalem for two years without going to see the king.

[29]Then Absalom sent for Joab. He wanted to send him to the king. But Joab refused to come to Absalom. So Absalom sent for him a second time. But Joab still refused to come.

[30]Then Absalom said to his servants, “Joab’s field is next to mine. He has barley growing there. Go and set it on fire.” So Absalom’s servants set the field on fire.

[31]Joab finally went to Absalom’s house. He said to Absalom, “Why did your servants set my field on fire?”

[32]Absalom said to Joab, “I sent a message to you. It said, ‘Come here. I want to send you to the king. I want you to ask him for me, “Why did you bring me back from Geshur? I would be better off if I were still there!” ’ Now then, I want to go and see the king. If I’m guilty of doing anything wrong, let him put me to death.”

[33]So Joab went to the king and told him that. Then the king sent for Absalom. He came in and bowed down to the king with his face toward the ground. And the king kissed Absalom.

Absalom Makes Secret Plans Against David

2 Samuel 15

1 Some time later, Absalom got a chariot and horses for himself. He also got
50 men to run in front of him. 2 He would get up early. He would stand by the
side of the road that led to the city gate. Sometimes a person would come with
a case for the king to decide.

Then Absalom would call out to him, “What town are you from?”

He would answer, “I’m from one of the tribes of Israel.”

3 Absalom would say, “Look, your claims are based on the law. So you have
every right to make them. But the king doesn’t have anyone here who can
listen to your case.” 4 Absalom would continue, “I wish I were appointed judge
in the land! Then anyone who has a case or a claim could come to me. I would
make sure he is treated fairly.”

5 Sometimes people would approach Absalom and bow down to him. Then he
would reach out his hand. He would take hold of them and kiss them.

6 Absalom did that to all of the people of Israel who came to the king with
their cases or claims. That’s why the hearts of the people were turned toward
him.

7 After Absalom had lived in Jerusalem for four years, he went and spoke to
the king. He said, “Let me go to Hebron. I want to keep a promise I made to
the LORD. 8 When I was living at Geshur in Aram, I made a promise. I said, ‘If
the LORD takes me back to Jerusalem, I’ll go to Hebron and worship him
there.’ ”

9 The king said to him, “Go in peace.” So he went to Hebron.

10 Then Absalom sent messengers secretly to all of the tribes of Israel. They
said, “Listen for the sound of trumpets. As soon as you hear them, say,
‘Absalom has become king in Hebron.’ ”

11 Absalom had taken 200 men from Jerusalem with him to Hebron. He had
invited them to be his guests. They went without having any idea what was
going to happen. 12 While Absalom was offering sacrifices, he sent for

Ahithophel. Ahithophel was David's adviser. He came to Absalom from Giloh, his hometown. The number of people who followed Absalom kept growing. So he became more and more able to carry out his plans against David.

David Runs Away From Absalom

13 A messenger came and spoke to David. He told him, "The hearts of the people are turned toward Absalom."

14 Then David spoke to all of his officials who were with him in Jerusalem. He said, "Come on! We have to leave right away! If we don't, none of us will escape from Absalom. He'll move quickly to catch up with us. He'll destroy us. His men will kill everyone in the city with their swords."

15 The king's officials answered him, "You are our king and master. We're ready to do anything you want."

16 The king started out. Everyone in his whole family went with him. But he left ten concubines behind to take care of the palace. 17 So the king and all those who were with him left. They stopped at a place that wasn't very far away.

18 All of David's officials marched past him. All of the Kerethites and Pelethites marched along with them. And all of the 600 men who had come with him from Gath marched in front of him.

19 The king spoke to Ittai. He was from Gath. The king said to him, "Why do you want to come along with us? Go back. Stay with King Absalom. You are a stranger. You left your own country. 20 You came to join me only a short time ago. So why should I make you wander around with us now? I don't even know where I'm going. So go on back. Take with you the others who are from your country. And may the LORD be kind and faithful to you."

21 But Ittai replied to the king, "You are my king and master. I want to be where you are. It doesn't matter whether I live or die. And that's just as sure as the LORD and you are alive."

22 David said to Ittai, "Go ahead then. Keep marching with my men."

So Ittai, the Gittite, kept marching. All of his men and their families marched with him.

23 All of the people in the countryside sobbed out loud as David and all of his followers passed by. The king went across the Kidron Valley. He and all of the

people who were with him moved on toward the desert.

[24]Zadok also went with them. Some of the Levites went with him. They were carrying the ark of the covenant of God. They set the ark down. Abiathar offered sacrifices until all of the people had left the city.

[25]Then the king said to Zadok, “Take the ark of God back into the city. If the LORD is pleased with me, he’ll bring me back. He’ll let me see the ark again. He’ll also let me see Jerusalem again. That’s the place where he lives. [26]But suppose he says, ‘I am not pleased with you.’ Then I accept that. Let him do to me what he thinks is best.”

[27]The king spoke again to the priest Zadok. He said, “You are a prophet, aren’t you? Go back to the city in peace. Take your son Ahimaaz with you. Also take Abiathar and his son Jonathan with you. [28]I’ll wait at the place in the desert where we can go across the Jordan River. I’ll wait there until you send word to let me know what’s happening.”

[29]So Zadok and Abiathar took the ark of God back to Jerusalem. They stayed there.

[30]But David went on up the Mount of Olives. He was sobbing as he went. His head was covered, and he was barefoot. All of the people who were with him covered their heads too. And they were sobbing as they went up.

[31]David had been told, “Ahithophel is one of those who are making secret plans with Absalom against you.” So David prayed, “LORD, make Ahithophel’s advice look foolish.”

[32]David arrived at the top of the Mount of Olives. That’s where people used to worship God. Hushai, the Arkite, was there to meet him. His robe was torn. There was dust on his head.

[33]David said to him, “If you go with me, you will be too much trouble for me. [34]So return to the city. Say to Absalom, ‘King Absalom, I’ll be your servant. In the past, I was your father’s servant. But now I’ll be your servant.’ If you do that, you can help me by making sure Ahithophel’s advice fails. [35]The priests Zadok and Abiathar will be there with you. Tell them everything you hear in the king’s palace. [36]They have their sons Ahimaaz and Jonathan there with them. Send them to tell me everything you hear.”

[37]So David’s friend Hushai went to Jerusalem. He arrived just as Absalom was entering the city.

Ziba Lies to David

2 Samuel 16

[1]David went just beyond the top of the Mount of Olives. Ziba was waiting there to meet him. He was Mephibosheth's manager. He had several donkeys with saddles on them. They were carrying 200 loaves of bread and 100 raisin cakes. They were also carrying 100 fig cakes and a bottle of wine. The bottle was made out of animal skin.

[2]The king asked Ziba, "Why have you brought all of these things?"

Ziba answered, "The donkeys are for the king's family to ride on. The bread and fruit are for the people to eat. The wine will make those who get tired in the desert feel like new again."

[3]Then the king asked, "Where is your master's grandson Mephibosheth?"

Ziba said to him, "He's staying in Jerusalem. He thinks, 'Today the people of Israel will give me back my grandfather Saul's kingdom.' "

[4]Then the king said to Ziba, "Everything that belonged to Mephibosheth belongs to you now."

"You are my king and master," Ziba said. "I make myself low in front of you. I bow down to you. May you be pleased with me."

Shimei Calls Down Curses on David

[5]King David approached Bahurim. As he did, a man came out toward him. The man was from the same family group that Saul was from. His name was Shimei. He was the son of Gera. As he came out of the town, he called down curses on David. [6]He threw stones at David and all of his officials. He did it even though all of the troops and the special guard were there. They were to the right and left of David.

[7]As Shimei called down curses, he said, "Get out! Get out, you murderer! You are a worthless and evil man! [8]You spilled the blood of a lot of people in

Saul's family. You took over his kingdom. Now the LORD is paying you back. He has handed the kingdom over to your son Absalom. You have been destroyed because you are a murderer!"

9Then Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, spoke to the king. He said, "King David, why should we let this dead dog call down curses on you? Let me go over there. I'll cut off his head."

10But the king said, "You and Joab are sons of Zeruiah. What do you and I have in common? Maybe the LORD said to him, 'Call down curses on David.' If he did, who can ask him, 'Why are you doing this?' "

11Then David spoke to Abishai and all of his officials. He said, "My very own son Absalom is trying to kill me. How much more should this man from Benjamin want to kill me! Leave him alone. Let him call down curses. The LORD has told him to do it. 12Maybe the LORD will see how much I'm suffering. Maybe he'll reward me with good things in place of the curses that are being called down on me today."

13So David and his men kept going along the road. At the same time, Shimei was going along the hillside across from him. He was calling down curses as he went. He was throwing stones at David. He was showering him with dirt.

14The king and all of the people who were with him came to the place they had planned to go to. They were very tired. So David rested there.

Hushai and Ahithophel Give Advice to Absalom

15During that time, Absalom and all of the men of Israel came to Jerusalem. Ahithophel was with him.

16Then Hushai, the Arkite, went to Absalom. He said to him, "May the king live a long time! May the king live a long time!" Hushai was David's friend.

17Absalom asked Hushai, "Is this the way you show love to your friend? Why didn't you go with him?"

18Hushai said to Absalom, "Why should I? You are the one the LORD has chosen. These people and all of the men of Israel have also chosen you. I want to be on your side. I want to stay with you. 19After all, who else should I serve? Shouldn't I serve the king's son? I will serve you, just as I served your father."

[20]Absalom said to Ahithophel, “Give us your advice. What should we do?”

[21]Ahithophel answered, “Your father left some concubines behind to take care of the palace. Go and have sex with them. Then all of the people of Israel will hear about it. They will hear that you have made yourself smell very bad to your father. Everyone who is with you will become braver.”

[22]So they set up a tent for Absalom on the roof of the palace. He went in and had sex with his father’s concubines. Everyone in Israel saw it.

[23]In those days the advice Ahithophel gave was as good as advice from someone who asks God for guidance. That’s what David and Absalom thought about all of Ahithophel’s advice.

2 Samuel 17

[1]One day Ahithophel said to Absalom, “Here’s what I suggest. Choose
12,000 men. Start out tonight and go after David. [2]Attack him while he’s tired
and weak. Fill him with terror. Then all of the people who are with him will
run away. Don’t strike down anyone except the king. [3]Bring all of the other
people back. After the man you want to kill is dead, everyone else will return
to you. And none of the people will be harmed.”

[4]Ahithophel’s plan seemed good to Absalom. It also seemed good to all of the
elders of Israel.

[5]But Absalom said, “Send for Hushai, the Arkite. Then we can find out what
he suggests.”

[6]Hushai came to him. Absalom said, “Ahithophel has given us his advice.
Should we do what he says? If we shouldn’t, tell us what you would do.”

[7]Hushai replied to Absalom, “The advice Ahithophel has given you isn’t
good this time. [8]You know your father and his men. They are fighters. They are
as strong as a wild bear whose cubs have been stolen from her. Besides, your
father really knows how to fight. He won’t spend the night with his troops. [9]In
fact, he’s probably hiding in a cave or some other place right now.

“Suppose he attacks your troops first. When people hear about it, they’ll say,
‘Many of the troops who followed Absalom have been killed.’ [10]Then the
hearts of your soldiers will melt away in fear. Even those who are as brave as a
lion will be terrified. That’s because everyone in Israel knows that your father
is a fighter. They know that those who are with him are brave.

[11]“So here’s what I suggest. Bring together all of the men of Israel from the
town of Dan all the way to Beersheba. They are as many as the grains of sand
on the seashore. You yourself should lead them into battle.

[12]“Then we’ll attack David no matter where we find him. As dew completely
covers the ground, we’ll completely overpower his entire army. We won’t leave
him or any of his men alive. [13]He might try to get away by going into a city. If
he does, all of us will bring ropes to that city. We’ll drag the whole city down
into the valley. No one will be able to find even a piece of that city.”

[14]Absalom and all of the men of Israel agreed. They said, “The advice of

Hushai, the Arkite, is better than the advice of Ahithophel." The LORD had decided that Ahithophel's good advice would fail. The LORD wanted to bring horrible trouble on Absalom.

15Hushai spoke to the priests Zadok and Abiathar. He said, "Ahithophel has given advice to Absalom and the elders of Israel. He suggested that they should do one thing. But I suggested something else.

16"Send a message right away. Tell David, 'Don't spend the night at the place in the desert where people can go across the Jordan River. Make sure you go on across. If you don't, you and all of the people who are with you will be swallowed up.' "

17Jonathan and Ahimaaz were staying at En Rogel just outside Jerusalem. They knew they would be in danger if anyone saw them entering the city. A female servant was supposed to go and tell them what had happened. Then they were supposed to go and tell King David. 18But a young man saw Jonathan and Ahimaaz and told Absalom about it. So the two men left quickly. They went to the house of a man in Bahurim. He had a well in his courtyard. They climbed down into it. 19The man's wife got a covering and spread it out over the opening of the well. Then she scattered grain on the covering. So no one knew that the men were hiding in the well.

20Absalom's men came to the house. They asked the woman, "Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan?"

She answered, "They went across the brook." When the men looked around, they didn't find anyone. So they returned to Jerusalem.

21After the men had gone, Jonathan and Ahimaaz climbed out of the well. They went to tell King David what they had found out. They said to him, "Go across the river right away. Ahithophel has told Absalom how to come after you and strike you down."

22So David and all of the people who were with him started out. They went across the Jordan River. By sunrise, everyone had crossed over.

23Ahithophel saw that his advice wasn't being followed. So he put a saddle on his donkey. He started out for his house in his hometown. When he got there, he put everything in order. He made out his will. Then he killed himself. So he died, and his body was buried in his father's tomb.

24David went to Mahanaim. Absalom went across the Jordan River with all of the men of Israel.

[25]Absalom had made Amasa commander of the army in place of Joab. Amasa was the son of a man named Jether. Jether belonged to the family line of Ishmael. He had gotten married to Abigail. She was the daughter of Nahash and the sister of Zeruiah. Zeruiah was the mother of Joab. [26]Absalom and the people of Israel camped in the land of Gilead.

[27]David came to Mahanaim. Shobi, the son of Nahash, met him there. Shobi was from Rabbah in the land of Ammon. Makir, the son of Ammiel from Lo Debar, met him there too. So did Barzillai from Rogelim in the land of Gilead. [28]They brought beds, bowls and clay pots. They brought wheat, barley, flour, and grain that had been cooked. They brought beans and lentils. [29]They brought honey, butter, sheep and cheese that was made from cows' milk. They brought all of that food for David and his people to eat. They said, "These people have become hungry. They've become tired and thirsty in the desert."

Absalom Dies

2 Samuel 18

[1]David brought together the men who were with him. He appointed commanders of thousands over some of them. He appointed commanders of hundreds over the others.

[2]Then David sent the troops out in three companies. One company was under the command of Joab. Another was under Joab's brother Abishai, the son of Zeruiah. The last was under Ittai, the Gittite. The king told the troops, "You can be sure that I myself will march out with you."

[3]But the men said, "You must not march out. If we are forced to run away, our enemies won't care about us. Even if half of us die, they won't care. But you are worth 10,000 of us. So it would be better for you to stay here in the city. Then you can send us help if we need it."

[4]The king said, "I'll do what you think is best."

So the king stood beside the city gate. The whole army marched out in companies of hundreds and companies of thousands.

[5]The king gave an order to Joab, Abishai and Ittai. He commanded them, "Be gentle with the young man Absalom. Do it for me." All of the troops heard the king give the commanders that order about Absalom.

[6]David's army marched into the field to fight against Israel. The battle took place in the forest of Ephraim. [7]There David's men won the battle over Israel's army. A huge number of men were wounded or killed that day. The total number was 20,000. [8]The fighting spread out over the whole countryside. But more men were killed in the forest that day than out in the open.

[9]Absalom happened to come across some of David's men. He was riding his mule. The mule went under the thick branches of a large oak tree. Absalom's head got caught in the tree. He was left hanging in the air. The mule he was riding kept on going.

[10]One of David's men saw what had happened. He told Joab, "I just saw Absalom hanging in an oak tree."

11 Joab said to the man, “What! You saw him? Why didn’t you strike him
down right there? Then I would have had to give you four ounces of silver and
a soldier’s belt.”

12 But the man replied, “I wouldn’t lift my hand to harm the king’s son. I
wouldn’t do it even for 25 pounds of silver. We heard the king’s command to
you and Abishai and Ittai. He said, ‘Be careful not to hurt the young man
Absalom. Do it for me.’ 13 Suppose I had put my life in danger by killing him.
The king would have found out about it. Nothing is hidden from him. And you
wouldn’t have stood up for me.”

14 Joab said, “I’m not going to waste any more time on you.” So he got three
javelins. Then he went over and drove them into Absalom’s heart. He did it
while Absalom was still hanging there alive in the oak tree.

15 Ten of the men who were carrying Joab’s armor surrounded Absalom. They
struck him down and killed him.

16 Then Joab blew his trumpet. He ordered his troops to stop chasing Israel’s
army. 17 Joab’s men threw Absalom’s body into a big pit in the forest. They
covered his body with a large pile of rocks. While all of that was going on, all
of the Israelites ran back to their homes.

18 Earlier in his life Absalom had set up a pillar in the King’s Valley. He had
put it up as a monument to himself. He thought, “I don’t have a son to carry on
the memory of my name.” So he named the pillar after himself. It is still called
Absalom’s Monument to this very day.

David Sobs Over Absalom

19 Ahimaaz said to Joab, “Let me run and take the news to the king. Let me
tell him that the LORD has saved him from the power of his enemies.” Ahimaaz
was the son of Zadok.

20 “I don’t want you to take the news to the king today,” Joab told him. “You
can do it some other time. But you must not do it today, because the king’s son
is dead.”

21 Then Joab said to a man from Cush, “Go. Tell the king what you have
seen.” The man bowed down in front of Joab. Then he ran off.

22 Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok, spoke again to Joab. He said, “I don’t care

what happens to me. Please let me run behind the man from Cush."

But Joab replied, "My son, why do you want to go? You don't have any news that will bring you a reward."

[23]He said, "I don't care what happens. I want to run."

So Joab said, "Run!" Then Ahimaaz ran across the flatlands of the Jordan River. As he ran, he passed the man from Cush.

[24]David was sitting in the area between the inner and outer gates of the city. The man on guard duty went up to the roof over the entrance of the gate by the wall. As he looked out, he saw someone running alone. [25]He called out to the king and reported it.

The king said, "If the runner is alone, he must be bringing good news." The man came closer and closer.

[26]Then the man on guard duty saw another man running. He called out to the man who was guarding the gate. He said, "Look! There's another man running alone!"

The king said, "He must be bringing good news too."

[27]The man on guard duty said, "I can see that the first one runs like Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok."

"He's a good man," the king said. "He's bringing good news."

[28]Then Ahimaaz called out to the king, "Everything's all right!" He bowed down in front of the king with his face toward the ground. He said, "You are my king and master. Give praise to the LORD your God! He has handed over to you the men who lifted their hands to kill you."

[29]The king asked, "Is the young man Absalom safe?"

Ahimaaz answered, "I saw total disorder. I saw it just as Joab was about to send the king's servant and me to you. But I don't know what it was all about."

[30]The king said, "Stand over there and wait." So he stepped over to one side and stood there.

[31]Then the man from Cush arrived. He said, "You are my king and master. I'm bringing you some good news. The LORD has saved you today from all those who were trying to kill you."

[32]The king asked the man from Cush, "Is the young man Absalom safe?"

The man replied, "King David, may your enemies be like that young man.

May all those who rise up to harm you be like him.”

33The king was very upset. He went up to the room over the entrance of the gate and sobbed. As he went, he said, “My son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! I wish I had died instead of you. Absalom! My son, my son!”

2 Samuel 19

[1]Someone told Joab, “The king is sobbing over Absalom. He’s filled with
sadness because his son has died.”

[2]The army had won a great battle that day. But their joy turned into sadness.
That’s because someone had told the troops, “The king is filled with sorrow
because his son is dead.” [3]The men came quietly into the city that day. They
were like fighting men who are ashamed because they’ve run away from a
battle.

[4]The king covered his face. He sobbed out loud, “My son Absalom!
Absalom, my son, my son!”

[5]Then Joab went into the king’s house. He said to him, “Today you have
made all of your men feel ashamed. They have just saved your life. They have
saved the lives of your sons and daughters. And they have saved the lives of
your wives and concubines.

[6]“You love those who hate you. You hate those who love you. The
commanders and their troops don’t mean anything to you. You made that very
clear today. I can see that you would be pleased if Absalom were alive today
and all of us were dead.

[7]“Now go out there and cheer up your men. If you don’t, you won’t have any
of them left with you by sunset. That will be worse for you than all of the
troubles you have ever had in your whole life. That’s what I promise you with
an oath in the LORD’s name.”

[8]So the king got up and took his seat in the entrance of the city gate. His men
were told, “The king is sitting in the entrance of the gate.” Then all of them
came and stood in front of him.

David Returns to Jerusalem

While all of that was going on, the Israelites had run back to their homes.
[9]People from all of the tribes of Israel began to argue with one another. They
were saying, “The king saved us from the power of our enemies. He saved us
from the power of the Philistines. But now he has left the country because of

Absalom. [10]We anointed Absalom to rule over us. But he has died in battle. So why aren't any of you talking about bringing the king back?"

[11]King David sent a message to the priests Zadok and Abiathar. It said, "Speak to the elders of Judah. Tell them I said, 'News has reached me where I'm staying. People all over Israel are talking about bringing me back to my palace. Why should you be the last to do something about it? [12]You are my relatives. You are my own flesh and blood. So why should you be the last to bring me back?'

[13]"Say to Amasa, 'Aren't you my own flesh and blood? From now on you will be the commander of my army in place of Joab. If that isn't true, may God punish me greatly.' "

[14]So the hearts of all of the men of Judah were turned toward David. All of them had the same purpose in mind. They sent a message to the king. It said, "We want you to come back. We want all of your men to come back too." [15]Then the king returned. He went as far as the Jordan River.

The men of Judah had come to Gilgal to welcome the king back. They had come to bring him across the Jordan. [16]Shimei, the son of Gera, was among them. Shimei was from Bahurim in the territory of Benjamin. He hurried down to welcome King David back. [17]There were 1,000 people from Benjamin with him. Ziba, the manager of Saul's house, was with him too. And so were Ziba's 15 sons and 20 servants. All of them rushed down to the Jordan River. That's where the king was. [18]They went across at the place where people usually cross it. Then they brought the king's family back over with them. They were ready to do anything he wanted them to do.

Shimei, the son of Gera, had also gone across the Jordan. When he did, he fell down flat with his face toward the ground in front of the king. [19]He said to him, "You are my king and master. Please don't hold me guilty. Please forgive me for the wrong things I did on the day you left Jerusalem. Please forget all about them. [20]I know I've sinned. But today I've come down here to welcome you. I'm the first member of Joseph's whole family to do it."

[21]Then Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, said, "Shouldn't Shimei be put to death for what he did? He called down curses on you. And you are the LORD's anointed king."

[22]But David replied, "You and Joab are sons of Zeruiah. What do you and I have in common? Abishai, you have now become my enemy! Should anyone

be put to death in Israel today? Don’t I know that today I am king over Israel again?”

23So the king took an oath and made a promise to Shimei. He said to him, “You aren’t going to be put to death.”

24Mephibosheth was Saul’s grandson. He had also gone down to welcome the king back. He had not taken care of his feet. He hadn’t trimmed his mustache or washed his clothes. He hadn’t done any of those things from the day the king left Jerusalem until the day he returned safely. 25He came from Jerusalem to welcome the king. The king asked him, “Mephibosheth, why didn’t you go with me?”

26He said, “You are my king and master. I’m disabled. So I thought, ‘I’ll have a saddle put on my donkey. I’ll ride on it. Then I can go with the king.’ But my servant Ziba turned against me. 27He has told you lies about me. King David, you are like an angel of God. So do what pleases you. 28You should have put all of the members of my grandfather’s family to death, including me. Instead, you always provided what I needed. So what right do I have to make any more appeals to you?”

29The king said to him, “You don’t have to say anything else. I order you and Ziba to divide up Saul’s fields between you.”

30Mephibosheth said to the king, “I’m happy that you have arrived home safely. So just let Ziba have everything.”

31Barzillai had also come down to go across the Jordan River with the king. He wanted to send the king on his way from there. Barzillai was from Rogelim in the land of Gilead. 32He was a very old man. He was 80 years old. He had given the king everything he needed while the king was staying in Mahanaim. That’s because Barzillai was very wealthy.

33The king said to Barzillai, “Come across the river with me. Stay with me in Jerusalem. I’ll take good care of you.”

34But Barzillai said to the king, “I won’t live for many more years. So why should I go up to Jerusalem with you? 35I’m already 80 years old. I can hardly tell the difference between what is good and what isn’t. I can hardly taste what I eat and drink. I can’t even hear the voices of male and female singers anymore. So why should I add my problems to yours?

36“I’ll go across the Jordan River with you for a little way. Why should you

reward me by taking care of me? [37]Let me go back home. Then I can die in my own town. I can be buried there in the tomb of my father and mother. But let Kimham take my place. Let him go across the river with you. Do for him what pleases you.”

[38]The king said, “Kimham will go across with me. I’ll do for him what pleases you. And I’ll do for you anything you want me to do.”

[39]So all of the people went across the Jordan River. Then the king crossed over. The king kissed Barzillai and gave him his blessing. And Barzillai went back home.

[40]After the king had gone across the river, he went to Gilgal. Kimham had gone across with him. All of the troops of Judah and half of the troops of Israel had taken the king across.

[41]Soon all of the men of Israel were coming to the king. They were saying to him, “Why did the men of Judah take you away from us? They are our relatives. What right did they have to bring you and your family across the Jordan River? What right did they have to bring all of your men over with you?”

[42]All of the men of Judah answered the men of Israel. They said, “We did that because the king is our close relative. So why should you be angry about what happened? Have we eaten any of the king’s food? Have we taken anything for ourselves?”

[43]Then the men of Israel answered the men of Judah. They said, “We have ten of the 12 tribes in the kingdom. So we have a stronger claim on David than you have. Why then are you acting as if you hate us? Weren’t we the first ones to talk about bringing back our king?”

But the men of Judah answered in an even meaner way than the men of Israel.

Sheba Tells Israel Not to Follow David

2 Samuel 20

[1]An evil man who always stirred up trouble happened to be in Gilgal. His
name was Sheba, the son of Bicri. Sheba was from the tribe of Benjamin. He
blew his trumpet. Then he shouted,

> "We don't have any share in David's kingdom!
> Jesse's son is not our king!
> Men of Israel, every one of you go back home!"

[2]So all of the men of Israel deserted David. They followed Sheba, the son of
Bicri. But the men of Judah stayed with their king. They remained with him
from the Jordan River all the way to Jerusalem.

[3]David returned to his palace in Jerusalem. He had left ten concubines there
to take care of the palace. He put them in a house and kept them under guard.
He gave them what they needed. But he didn't make love to them. They were
kept under guard until the day they died. They lived as if they were widows.

[4]The king said to Amasa, "Send for the men of Judah. Tell them to come to
me within three days. And be here yourself." [5]So Amasa went to get the men
of Judah. But he took longer than the time the king had set for him.

[6]David said to Abishai, "Sheba, the son of Bicri, will do more harm to us than
Absalom ever did. Take my men and go after him. If you don't, he'll find cities
that have high walls around them. He'll go into one of them and escape from
us."

[7]So Joab's men marched out with the Kerethites and Pelethites. They went
out with all of the mighty soldiers. All of them were under Abishai's command.
They marched out from Jerusalem and went after Sheba, the son of Bicri.

[8]They arrived at the great rock in Gibeon. Amasa went there to welcome
them. Joab was wearing his military clothes. Over them at his waist he strapped
on a belt that held a dagger. As he stepped forward, the dagger fell out.

[9]Joab said to Amasa, “How are you, my friend?” Then Joab reached out his right hand. He took hold of Amasa’s beard to kiss him.

[10]Amasa didn’t pay any attention to the dagger that was in Joab’s left hand. Joab stuck it into his stomach. His insides spilled out on the ground. Joab didn’t have to stab him again. Amasa was already dead. Then Joab and his brother Abishai went after Sheba, the son of Bicri.

[11]One of Joab’s men stood beside Amasa’s body. He said to the other men, “Are you pleased with Joab? Are you on David’s side? Then follow Joab!”

[12]Amasa’s body lay covered with his blood in the middle of the road. The man saw that all of the troops stopped there. He realized that everyone was stopping to look at Amasa’s body. So he dragged it from the road into a field. Then he threw some clothes on top of it. [13]After that happened, all of the men continued on with Joab. They went after Sheba, the son of Bicri.

[14]Sheba passed through all of the territory of the tribes of Israel. He arrived at the city of Abel Beth Maacah. He had gone through the entire area of the Berites. They had gathered together and followed him.

[15]Joab and all of his troops came to Abel Beth Maacah. They surrounded it because Sheba was there. They built a ramp up to the city. It stood against the outer wall. They pounded the wall with huge logs to bring it down.

[16]While that was going on, a wise woman called out from the city. She shouted, “Listen! Listen! Tell Joab to come here. I want to speak to him.” [17]So Joab went toward her. She asked, “Are you Joab?”

“I am,” he answered.

She said, “Listen to what I have to say.”

“I’m listening,” he said.

[18]She continued, “Long ago people used to say, ‘Get your answer at Abel.’ And that would settle the matter. [19]We are the most peaceful and faithful people in Israel. You are trying to destroy a city that is like a mother in Israel. Why do you want to swallow up what belongs to the LORD?”

[20]“I would never do anything like that!” Joab said. “I would never swallow up or destroy what belongs to the LORD! [21]That isn’t what I have in mind at all. There’s a man named Sheba, the son of Bicri, in your city. He’s from the hill country of Ephraim. He’s trying to kill King David. Hand that man over to me. Then I’ll pull my men back from your city.”

The woman said to Joab, “We’ll throw his head down to you from the wall.”

22Then the woman gave her wise advice to all of the people in the city. They cut off the head of Sheba, the son of Bicri. They threw it down to Joab. So he blew his trumpet. Then his men pulled back from the city. Each of them returned to his home. And Joab went back to the king in Jerusalem.

23Joab was commander over Israel’s entire army. Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, was commander over the Kerethites and Pelethites. 24Adoniram was in charge of those who were forced to work hard. Jehoshaphat, the son of Ahilud, kept the records. 25Sheva was the secretary. Zadok and Abiathar were priests. 26Ira, the Jairite, was David’s priest.

David Makes Things Right for the People of Gibeon

2 Samuel 21

[1]For three years in a row there wasn't enough food in the land. That was while David was king. So David asked the LORD why he wasn't showing his favor to his people. The LORD said, "It is because Saul and his family committed murder. He put the people of Gibeon to death."

[2]The people of Gibeon weren't a part of Israel. Instead, they were some of the Amorites who were still left alive. The people of Israel had promised with an oath to spare them. But Saul had tried to put an end to them. That's because he wanted to make Israel and Judah strong.

So now King David sent for the people of Gibeon and spoke to them. [3]He asked them, "What would you like me to do for you? How can I make up for the wrong things that were done to you? I want you to be able to pray that the LORD will once again bless his land."

[4]The people of Gibeon answered him. They said, "No amount of silver or gold can make up for what Saul and his family did to us. And we can't put anyone in Israel to death."

"What do you want me to do for you?" David asked.

[5]They answered the king, "Saul nearly destroyed us. He made plans to wipe us out. We don't have anywhere to live in Israel. [6]So let seven of the males in his family line be given to us. We'll kill them. We'll put their dead bodies out in the open in the sight of the LORD. We'll do it at Gibeah of Saul. Saul was the LORD's chosen king."

So King David said, "I'll give seven males to you."

[7]The king spared Mephibosheth. He was the son of Jonathan and the grandson of Saul. David had taken an oath in the sight of the LORD. He had promised to be kind to Jonathan and the family line of his father Saul.

[8]But the king chose Armoni and another Mephibosheth. They were the two sons of Aiah's daughter Rizpah. Saul was their father. The king also chose the five sons of Saul's daughter Merab. Adriel, the son of Barzillai, was their

father. Adriel was from Meholah.

9King David handed them over to the people of Gibeon. They killed them. They put their dead bodies out in the open on a hill in the sight of the LORD. All seven of them died together. They were put to death during the first days of the harvest. It happened just when people were beginning to harvest the barley.

10Aiah's daughter Rizpah got some black cloth. She spread it out for herself on a rock. She stayed there from the beginning of the harvest until it rained. The rain poured down from the sky on the dead bodies of the seven males. She didn't let the birds of the air touch them by day. She didn't let the wild animals touch them at night.

11Someone told David what Rizpah had done. She was Aiah's daughter and Saul's concubine.

12David got the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan. He got them from the citizens of Jabesh Gilead. They had taken them in secret from the main street in Beth Shan. That's where the Philistines had hung their bodies up on the city wall. They had done it after they struck Saul down on Mount Gilboa.

13David brought the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan from Jabesh Gilead. The bones of the seven males who had been killed and put out in the open were also gathered up.

14The bones of Saul and his son Jonathan were buried in the tomb of Saul's father Kish. The tomb was at Zela in the territory of Benjamin. Everything the king commanded was done. After that, God answered prayer and blessed the land.

Israel Goes to War Against the Philistines

15Once again there was a battle between the Philistines and Israel. David went down with his men to fight against the Philistines. He became very tired.

16Ishbi-Benob belonged to the family line of Rapha. The tip of his bronze spear weighed seven and a half pounds. He was also armed with a new sword. He said he would kill David.

17But Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, came to save David. He struck the Philistine down and killed him.

Then David's men took an oath and made a promise. They said to David,

“We never want you to go out with us to battle again. You are the lamp of Israel’s kingdom. We want that lamp to keep on burning brightly.”

18There was another battle against the Philistines. It took place at Gob. At that time Sibbecai killed Saph. Sibbecai was a Hushathite. Saph was from the family line of Rapha.

19In another battle against the Philistines at Gob, Elhanan killed Goliath’s brother. Elhanan was the son of Jaare-Oregim from Bethlehem. Goliath was from the city of Gath. His spear was as big as a weaver’s rod.

20There was still another battle. It took place at Gath. A huge man lived there. He had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot. So the total number of his toes and fingers was 24. He was also from the family of Rapha. 21He made fun of Israel. So Jonathan killed him. Jonathan was the son of David’s brother Shimeah.

22Those four Philistine men lived in Gath. They were from the family line of Rapha. David and his men killed them.

David Sings Praises to the LORD

2 Samuel 22

[1]David sang the words of this song to the LORD. He sang them when the LORD
saved him from the powerful hand of all of his enemies and of Saul. [2]He said,

"The LORD is my rock and my fort. He is the One who saves me.
[3]My God is my rock. I go to him for safety.
He is like a shield to me. He's the power that saves me.
He's my place of safety. I go to him for help. He's my Savior.
He saves me from those who want to hurt me.
[4]I call out to the LORD. He is worthy of praise.
He saves me from my enemies.

[5]"The waves of death were all around me.
A destroying flood swept over me.
[6]The ropes of the grave were tight around me.
Death set its trap in front of me.
[7]When I was in trouble I called out to the LORD.
I called out to my God.
From his temple he heard my voice.
My cry for help reached his ears.

[8]"The earth trembled and shook.
The pillars of the heavens rocked back and forth.
They trembled because the LORD was angry.
[9]Smoke came out of his nose.
Flames of fire came out of his mouth.
Burning coals blazed out of it.
[10]He opened the heavens and came down.
Dark clouds were under his feet.
[11]He got on the cherubim and flew.
The wings of the wind lifted him up.
[12]He covered himself with darkness.
The dark rain clouds of the sky were like a tent around him.

13 From the brightness that was all around him
flashes of lightning blazed out.
14 The LORD thundered from heaven.
The voice of the Most High God was heard.
15 He shot his arrows and scattered our enemies.
He sent flashes of lightning and chased the enemies away.
16 The bottom of the sea could be seen.
The foundations of the earth were uncovered.
It happened when the LORD's anger blazed out.
It came like a blast of breath from his nose.

17 "He reached down from heaven. He took hold of me.
He lifted me out of deep waters.
18 He saved me from my powerful enemies.
He set me free from those who were too strong for me.
19 They stood up to me when I was in trouble.
But the LORD helped me.
20 He brought me out into a wide and safe place.
He saved me because he was pleased with me.

21 "The LORD has been good to me because I do what is right.
He has rewarded me because I lead a pure life.
22 I have lived the way the LORD wanted me to.
I haven't done evil by turning away from my God.
23 I keep all of his laws in mind.
I haven't turned away from his commands.
24 He knows that I am without blame.
He knows I've kept myself from sinning.
25 The LORD has rewarded me for doing what is right.
He has rewarded me because I haven't done anything wrong.

26 "LORD, to those who are faithful you show that you are faithful.
To those who are without blame you show that you are without blame.
27 To those who are pure you show that you are pure.
But to those whose paths are crooked you show that you are clever.
28 You save those who aren't proud.
But you watch the proud to bring them down.
29 LORD, you are my lamp.
You bring light into my darkness.

30 With your help I can attack a troop of soldiers.
With the help of my God I can climb over a wall.

31 "God's way is perfect.
The word of the LORD doesn't have any flaws.
He is like a shield
to all who go to him for safety.
32 Who is God except the LORD?
Who is the Rock except our God?
33 God gives me strength for the battle.
He makes my way perfect.
34 He makes my feet like the feet of a deer.
He helps me stand on the highest places.
35 He trains my hands to fight every battle.
My arms can bend a bow of bronze.
36 LORD, you are like a shield that keeps me safe.
You help me win the battle.
You bend down to make me great.
37 You give me a wide path to walk in
so that I don't twist my ankles.

38 "I chased my enemies and crushed them.
I didn't turn back until they were destroyed.
39 I crushed them completely so that they couldn't get up.
They fell under my feet.
40 LORD, you gave me strength to fight the battle.
You made my enemies bow down at my feet.
41 You made them turn their backs and run away.
So I destroyed my enemies.
42 They cried out for help. But there was no one to save them.
They called out to you. But you didn't answer them.
43 I beat them as fine as the dust of the earth.
I pounded them and walked on them like mud in the streets.

44 "You saved me when my own people attacked me.
You have kept me as the ruler over nations.
People I didn't know serve me now.
45 People from other lands bow down to me in fear.
As soon as they hear me, they obey me.
46 All of them give up hope.

They come trembling out of their hiding places.

47 “The LORD lives! Give praise to my Rock!
Give honor to God, the Rock! He is my Savior!
48 He is the God who pays my enemies back.
He brings the nations under my control.
49 He sets me free from my enemies.
You have honored me more than them.
You have saved me from men who want to hurt me.
50 LORD, I will praise you among the nations.
I will sing praises to you.
51 You help me win great battles.
You show your faithful love to your anointed king.
You show it to me and my family forever.”

David's Last Words

2 Samuel 23

[1]Here are David's last words. He said,

"I am David, the son of Jesse. God has given me a message.
The Most High God has greatly honored me.
The God of Jacob anointed me as king.
I am Israel's singer of songs.

[2]"The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me.
I spoke his word with my tongue.
[3]The God of Israel spoke.
The Rock of Israel said to me,
'A king must rule over people in a way that is right.
He must have respect for me when he rules.
[4]Then he will be like the light of morning at sunrise
when there aren't any clouds.
He will be like the bright sun after rain
that makes the grass grow on the earth.'

[5]"Isn't my royal family right with God?
Hasn't he made a covenant with me that will last forever?
Every part of it was well prepared and made secure.
Won't he save me completely?
Won't he give me everything I long for?
[6]But evil people are like thorns that are thrown away.
You can't pick them up with your hands.
[7]Even if you touch them,
you must use an iron tool or a spear.
Thorns are burned up right where they are."

David's Mighty Men

[8]Here are the names of David's mighty men.

Josheb-Basshebeth was chief of the Three. He was a Tahkemonite. He used his spear against 800 men. He killed all of them at one time.

[9]Next to him was Eleazar. He was one of the three mighty men. He was the son of Dodai, the Ahohite. Eleazar was with David at Pas Dammim. That's where Israel's army made fun of the Philistines who were gathered there for battle. Then the men of Israel pulled back.

[10]But Eleazar stayed right where he was. He struck the Philistines down until his hand grew tired. But he still held on to his sword. The LORD helped him win a great battle that day. The troops returned to Eleazar. They came back to him only to take what they wanted from the dead bodies.

[11]Next to him was Shammah, the son of Agee. Shammah was a Hararite. The Philistines gathered together at a place where there was a field full of lentils. Israel's troops ran away from them.

[12]But Shammah took his stand in the middle of the field. He didn't let the Philistines capture it. He struck them down. The LORD helped him win a great battle.

[13]David was at the cave of Adullam. During harvest time, three of the 30 chief men came down to him there. A group of Philistines was camped in the Valley of Rephaim. [14]At that time David was in his usual place of safety. Some Philistine troops were stationed at Bethlehem.

[15]David longed for water. He said, "I wish someone would get me a drink of water from the well that is near the gate of Bethlehem."

[16]So the three mighty men fought their way past the Philistine guards. They got some water from the well that was near the gate of Bethlehem. They took the water back to David.

But David refused to drink it. Instead, he poured it out as a drink offering to the LORD. [17]"LORD, I would never drink that water!" David said. "It stands for the blood of these men. They put their lives in danger by going to Bethlehem to get it." So David wouldn't drink it.

Those were some of the brave things the three mighty men did.

[18]Abishai was chief over the Three. He was the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah. He used his spear against 300 men. He killed all of them. So he became as famous as the Three were. [19]In fact, he was even more honored than

the Three. He became their commander. But he wasn't included among them.

[20]Benaiah was a great hero from Kabzeel. He was the son of Jehoiada. Benaiah did many brave things. He struck down two of Moab's best fighting men. He also went down into a pit on a snowy day. He killed a lion there.

[21]And he struck down a huge Egyptian. The Egyptian was holding a spear. Benaiah went out to fight against him with a club. He grabbed the spear out of the Egyptian's hand. Then he killed him with it.

[22]Those were some of the brave things Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, did. He too was as famous as the three mighty men were. [23]He was honored more than any of the Thirty. But he wasn't included among the Three. David put him in charge of his own personal guards.

[24]Here is a list of David's men who were among the Thirty.

Asahel, the brother of Joab
Elhanan, the son of Dodo, from Bethlehem
[25]Shammah, the Harodite
Elika, the Harodite
[26]Helez, the Paltite
Ira, the son of Ikkesh, from Tekoa
[27]Abiezer from Anathoth
Mebunnai, the Hushathite
[28]Zalmon, the Ahohite
Maharai from Netophah
[29]Heled, the son of Baanah, from Netophah
Ithai, the son of Ribai, from Gibeah in Benjamin
[30]Benaiah from Pirathon
Hiddai from the valleys of Gaash
[31]Abi-Albon, the Arbathite
Azmaveth, the Barhumite
[32]Eliahba, the Shaalbonite
the sons of Jashen
Jonathan, [33]the son of Shammah, the Hararite

Ahiam, the son of Sharar, the Hararite
[34]Eliphelet, the son of Ahasbai, the Maacathite
Eliam, the son of Ahithophel, from Giloh
[35]Hezro from Carmel
Paarai, the Arbite
[36]Igal, the son of Nathan, from Zobah
the son of Hagri
[37]Zelek from Ammon
Naharai from Beeroth, who carried the armor of Joab, the son of Zeruiah
[38]Ira, the Ithrite
Gareb, the Ithrite
[39]Uriah, the Hittite

The total number of men was 37.

David Counts His Fighting Men

2 Samuel 24

1The LORD's anger burned against Israel. He stirred up David against them.
He said, "Go! Count the men of Israel and Judah."

2So the king spoke to Joab and the army commanders who were with him. He
said, "Go all through the territories of the tribes of Israel. Go from Dan all the
way to Beersheba. Count the fighting men. Then I'll know how many there
are."

3Joab replied to the king. He said, "King David, you are my master. May the
LORD your God multiply the troops 100 times. And may you live to see it. But
why would you want me to count the fighting men?"

4In spite of what Joab said, the king's word had more authority than the word
of Joab and the army commanders did. So they left the king and went out to
count the fighting men of Israel.

5They went across the Jordan River. They camped south of the town in the
middle of the Arnon River valley near Aroer. Then they went through Gad and
continued on to Jazer. 6They went to Gilead and the area of Tahtim Hodshi.
They continued to Dan Jaan and on around toward Sidon. 7Then they went
toward the fort of Tyre. They went to all of the towns of the Hivites and
Canaanites. Finally, they went on to Beersheba. It was in the Negev Desert of
Judah.

8They finished going through the entire land. Then they came back to
Jerusalem. They had been gone for nine months and 20 days.

9Joab reported to the king how many fighting men he had counted. In Israel
there were 800,000 men who were able to handle a sword. In Judah there were
500,000.

10David felt sorry that he had counted the fighting men. So he said to the
LORD, "I committed a great sin when I counted Judah and Israel's men. LORD, I
beg you to take away my guilt. I've done a very foolish thing."

11Before David got up the next morning, a message from the LORD came to

the prophet Gad. He was David's seer. The message said, [12]"Go and tell David, 'The LORD says, "I could punish you in three different ways. Choose one of them for me to use against you." ' "

[13]So Gad went to David. He said to him, "Take your choice. Do you want three years when there won't be enough food in your land? Or do you want three months when you will run away from your enemies while they chase you? Or do you want three days when there will be a plague in your land? Think it over. Then take your pick. Tell me how to answer the One who sent me."

[14]David said to Gad, "I'm suffering terribly. Let us fall into the hands of the LORD. His mercy is great. But don't let me fall into the hands of men."

[15]So the LORD sent a plague on Israel. It lasted from that morning until he decided to end it. From Dan all the way to Beersheba 70,000 people died.

[16]The angel reached his hand out to destroy Jerusalem. But the LORD was very sad because of the plague. So he spoke to the angel who was making the people suffer. He said, "That is enough! Do not kill any more people." The angel of the LORD was at Araunah's threshing floor. Araunah was from the city of Jebus.

[17]David saw the angel who was striking the people down. David said to the LORD, "I'm the one who has sinned. I'm the one who has done what is wrong. These people are like sheep. What have they done? Let your powerful hand punish me and my family."

David Builds an Altar

[18]On that day Gad went to David. Gad said to him, "Go up to the threshing floor of Araunah, the Jebusite. Build an altar there to honor the LORD."

[19]So David went up and did it. He did what the LORD had commanded through Gad.

[20]Araunah looked and saw the king and his officials coming toward him. So he went out to welcome them. He bowed down to the king with his face toward the ground.

[21]Araunah said, "King David, you are my master. Why have you come to see me?"

“To buy your threshing floor,” David answered. “I want to build an altar there to honor the LORD. When I do, the plague on the people will be stopped.”

22Araunah said to David, “Take anything that pleases you. Offer it up. Here are oxen for the burnt offering. Here are threshing sleds. And here are wooden collars from the necks of the oxen. Use all of the wood to burn the offering. 23King David, I’ll give all of it to you.” Araunah continued, “And may the LORD your God accept you.”

24But the king replied to Araunah, “No. I want to pay you for it. I won’t sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that haven’t cost me anything.”

So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen. He paid 20 ounces of silver for them. 25David built an altar there to honor the LORD. He sacrificed burnt offerings and friendship offerings.

Then the LORD answered prayer and blessed the land. The plague on Israel was stopped.

1 Kings

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1 Kings 21
1 Kings 22

Adonijah Makes Himself King

1 Kings 1

[1]King David was now very old. He couldn’t keep warm even when blankets were spread over him. [2]So his servants spoke to him. They said, “You are our king and master. Please let us try to find a young virgin to help you. She can take care of you. She can lie down beside you. Then you can keep warm.”

[3]So David’s servants looked all over Israel for a beautiful young woman. They found Abishag. She was from the town of Shunem. They brought her to the king. [4]The woman was very beautiful. She took care of the king and served him. But the king didn’t have sex with her.

[5]Adonijah was the son of David and his wife Haggith. He came forward and announced, “I’m going to be the next king.” So he got chariots and horses ready. He also got 50 men to run in front of him.

[6]His father had never tried to stop him from doing what he wanted to. His father had never asked him, “Why are you acting the way you do?”

Adonijah was also very handsome. Now that Absalom was dead, Adonijah was David’s oldest son.

[7]Adonijah talked things over with Joab, the son of Zeruiah. He also talked with the priest Abiathar. They agreed to help him.

[8]But the priest Zadok and Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, didn’t join Adonijah. The prophet Nathan didn’t join him. Shimei and Rei didn’t join him. And neither did David’s special guard.

[9]Adonijah sacrificed sheep, cattle and fat calves. He sacrificed them at the Stone of Zoheleth near En Rogel. He invited all of his brothers, the king’s sons, and all of the men of Judah who were royal officials.

[10]But he didn’t invite Benaiah or the prophet Nathan. He didn’t invite the special guard or his brother Solomon either.

[11]Nathan spoke to Solomon’s mother Bathsheba. He asked, “Haven’t you heard? Adonijah, the son of Haggith, has made himself king. And King David doesn’t even know about it.

12“So let me tell you what to do to save your life. It will also save the life of
your son Solomon. 13Go in and see King David. Say to him, ‘You are my king
and master. You took an oath. You promised me, “You can be sure that your
son Solomon will be king after me. He will sit on my throne.” If that’s really
true, why has Adonijah become king?’

14“While you are still talking to the king, I’ll come in. I’ll tell him that what
you have said is true.”

15So Bathsheba went to see the old king in his room. Abishag, the
Shunammite, was taking care of him there. 16Bathsheba bowed low. She got
down on her knees in front of the king.

“What do you want?” the king asked.

17She said to him, “My master, you took an oath in the name of the LORD your
God. You promised me, ‘Your son Solomon will be king after me. He will sit
on my throne.’

18“But now Adonijah has made himself king. And you don’t even know
about it. 19He has sacrificed large numbers of cattle, fat calves and sheep. He
has invited all of the king’s sons. He has also invited the priest Abiathar and
Joab, the commander of the army. But he hasn’t invited your son Solomon.

20“You are my king and master. All of the people of Israel are watching to see
what you will do. They want to find out from you who will sit on the throne
after you. 21If you don’t do something, I and my son Solomon will be treated
like people who have committed crimes. That will happen as soon as you join
the members of your family who have already died.”

22While she was still speaking with the king, the prophet Nathan arrived.
23The king was told, “The prophet Nathan is here.” So Nathan went to the
king. He bowed down with his face toward the ground.

24Nathan said, “You are my king and master. Have you announced that
Adonijah will be king after you? Have you said he will sit on your throne?
25Today he has gone down outside the city. He has sacrificed large numbers of
cattle, fat calves and sheep. He has invited all of the king’s sons. He has also
invited the commanders of the army and the priest Abiathar. Even now they are
eating and drinking with him. They are saying, ‘May King Adonijah live a long
time!’

26“But he didn’t invite me. He didn’t invite the priest Zadok or Benaiah, the

son of Jehoiada. He didn’t invite your son Solomon either.

27“King David, have you allowed all of that to happen? Did you do it without letting us know about it? Why didn’t you tell us who is going to sit on your throne after you?”

David Makes Solomon King

28King David said, “Tell Bathsheba to come in.” So she came and stood in front of the king.

29Then the king took an oath and made a promise. He said, “The LORD has saved me from all of my troubles. You can be sure that he lives. 30And you can be just as sure that I will do today what I promised in the name of the LORD. He is the God of Israel. I promised you that your son Solomon would be king after me. He will sit on my throne in my place.”

31Then Bathsheba bowed low with her face toward the ground. She got down on her knees in front of the king. She said, “King David, you are my master. May you live forever!”

32King David said, “Tell the priest Zadok and the prophet Nathan to come in. Also tell Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, to come.” So they came to the king.

33He said to them, “Take my officials with you. Put my son Solomon on my own mule. Take him down to the Gihon spring. 34Have the priest Zadok and the prophet Nathan anoint him as king over Israel there. Blow a trumpet. Shout, ‘May King Solomon live a long time!’ 35Then come back up to the city with him. Have him sit on my throne. He will rule in my place. I’ve appointed him ruler over Israel and Judah.”

36Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, answered the king. “Amen!” he said. “May the LORD your God make it come true. 37You are my king and master. The LORD has been with you. May he also be with Solomon. King David, may the LORD make Solomon’s kingdom even greater than yours!”

38So the priest Zadok and the prophet Nathan left the palace. Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, went with them. So did the Kerethites and Pelethites. They put Solomon on King David’s mule. And they brought him down to the Gihon spring.

39The priest Zadok had gotten an animal horn that was filled with olive oil.

He had taken it from the sacred tent. He anointed Solomon with the oil. The trumpet was blown. All of the people shouted, “May King Solomon live a long time!”

40Then they went up toward the city. Solomon was leading the way. The people were playing flutes. They were filled with great joy. The ground shook because of all of the noise.

41Adonijah and all of his guests heard it. They were just finishing their meal. Joab heard the sound of the trumpet. So he asked, “What does all of that noise in the city mean?”

42While Joab was still speaking, Jonathan arrived. Jonathan was the son of the priest Abiathar. Adonijah said, “Come in. I have respect for you. You must be bringing good news.”

43“No! I’m not!” Jonathan answered. “Our master King David has made Solomon king. 44David sent the priest Zadok and the prophet Nathan along with Solomon. He also sent Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, with him. He sent the Kerethites and Pelethites with him too. They put him on the king’s mule. 45They took him down to the Gihon spring. There the priest Zadok and the prophet Nathan anointed him as king. Now they’ve gone back up to the city. They were cheering all the way. The city is filled with the sound of it. That’s the noise you hear.

46“And that’s not all. Solomon has taken his seat on the royal throne. 47The royal officials came to give their blessing to our master King David. They said, ‘May your God make Solomon’s name more famous than yours! May he make Solomon’s kingdom greater than yours!’

“While King David was sitting on his bed, he bowed in worship. 48He said, ‘I praise the LORD. He is the God of Israel. He has let me live to see my son sitting on my throne today as the next king.’ ”

49When all of Adonijah’s guests heard that, they were terrified. So they got up and scattered.

50Adonijah was afraid of what Solomon might do to him. So he went and grabbed hold of the horns that stuck out from the upper corners of the altar for burnt offerings.

51Then Solomon was told, “King Solomon, Adonijah is afraid of you. He’s holding onto the horns of the altar. He says, ‘I want King Solomon to take an oath today. I want him to promise that he won’t kill me with his sword.’ ”

52Solomon replied, “Let him show that he’s a man people can respect. Then
not even one hair on his head will fall to the ground. But if I find out he’s done
something evil, he will die.”

53King Solomon got some men to bring Adonijah down from the altar. He
came and bowed down to King Solomon. Solomon said, “Go on home.”

David Gives Orders to Solomon

1 Kings 2

1 The time came near for David to die. So he gave orders to his son Solomon.
He said,

2 "I'm about to die, just as everyone else on earth does. So be strong. Show
how brave you are. 3 Do everything the LORD your God requires. Live the way
he wants you to. Obey his orders and commands. Keep his laws and rules. Do
everything that is written in the Law of Moses. Then you will have success in
everything you do. You will succeed everywhere you go.

4 "The LORD will keep the promise he made to me. He said, 'Your sons must
be careful about how they live. They must be faithful to me with all their heart
and soul. Then you will always have a man sitting on the throne of Israel.'

5 "You yourself know what Joab, the son of Zeruiah, did to me. You know that
he killed Abner, the son of Ner, and Amasa, the son of Jether. They were the
two commanders of Israel's armies. He killed them in a time of peace. It wasn't
a time of war. Joab spilled the blood of Abner and Amasa. It stained the belt
that was around his waist. It also stained the sandals on his feet. 6 You are wise.
So I leave him in your hands. Just don't let him live to become an old man.
Don't let him die peacefully.

7 "But be kind to the sons of Barzillai from Gilead. Provide what they need.
They were faithful to me when I had to run away from your brother Absalom.

8 "Don't forget Shimei, the son of Gera. He's still around. He's from Bahurim
in the territory of Benjamin. He called down bitter curses on me. He did it on
the day I went to Mahanaim. Later, he came down to welcome me at the Jordan
River. At that time I took an oath in the name of the LORD. I promised Shimei,
'I won't put you to death with my sword.' 9 But now I want you to think of him
as guilty. You are wise. You will know what to do to him. Don't let him live to
become an old man. Put him to death."

10 David joined the members of his family who had already died. His body
was buried in the City of David. 11 He had ruled over Israel for 40 years. He
ruled for seven years in Hebron. Then he ruled for 33 years in Jerusalem.

12So Solomon sat on the throne of his father David. His position as king was made secure.

Solomon's Kingdom Is Made Secure

13Adonijah was the son of David's wife Haggith. He went to Bathsheba. She was Solomon's mother. She asked Adonijah, "Have you come in peace?"

He answered, "Yes. I've come in peace." 14He continued, "I want to ask you something."

"Go ahead," she replied.

15He said, "As you know, the kingdom belonged to me. The whole nation of Israel thought of me as their king. But now things have changed. The kingdom belongs to my brother. The LORD has given it to him. 16But I have a favor to ask of you. Don't say no to me."

"Go ahead," she said.

17So he continued, "Please ask King Solomon for a favor. He won't say no to you. Ask him to give me Abishag from Shunem to be my wife."

18"All right," Bathsheba replied. "I'll speak to the king for you."

19So Bathsheba went to King Solomon. She went to him to speak for Adonijah. The king stood up to greet her. He bowed down to her. Then he sat down on his throne. He had a throne brought for his mother. She sat down at his right side.

20"I have one small favor to ask of you," she said. "Don't say no to me."

The king replied, "Mother, go ahead and ask. I won't say no to you."

21She said, "Let your brother Adonijah get married to Abishag, the Shunammite."

22King Solomon answered his mother, "Why are you asking for Abishag, the Shunammite, for Adonijah? You might as well ask me to give him the whole kingdom! After all, he's my older brother. And he doesn't want the kingdom only for himself. He also wants it for the priest Abiathar and for Joab, the son of Zeruiah."

23Then King Solomon took an oath and made a promise in the name of the

LORD. He said, “Adonijah will pay with his life because of what he has asked for. If he doesn’t, may God punish me greatly. 24The LORD has made my position as king secure. I’m sitting on the throne of my father David. The LORD has built a royal house for me, just as he promised. You can be sure that the LORD lives. And you can be just as sure that Adonijah will be put to death today.”

25So King Solomon gave the order to Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada. Benaiah struck Adonijah down. And Adonijah died.

26The king spoke to the priest Abiathar. He said, “Go back to your fields in Anathoth. You should really be put to death. But I won’t have it done now. That’s because you carried the ark of the LORD and King. You did it for my father David. You shared all of his hard times.”

27So Solomon wouldn’t let Abiathar serve as a priest of the LORD anymore. That’s how the message the LORD had spoken at Shiloh came true. He had spoken it about the family of Eli.

28News of what Solomon had done reached Joab. Joab had never made evil plans along with Absalom. But he had joined Adonijah. So he ran to the tent of the LORD. He took hold of the horns that stuck out from the upper corners of the altar for burnt offerings.

29King Solomon was told that Joab had run to the tent. He was also told that Joab was by the altar.

Then Solomon gave the order to Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada. He told him, “Go! Strike him down!”

30So Benaiah entered the tent of the LORD. He said to Joab, “The king says, ‘Come on out!’ ”

But Joab answered, “No. I’d rather die here.”

Benaiah told the king what Joab had said to him.

31Then the king commanded Benaiah, “Do what he says. Strike him down. Bury his body. Then I and my family won’t be held accountable for the blood Joab spilled. He killed people who weren’t guilty of doing anything wrong. 32The LORD will pay him back for the blood he spilled. Joab attacked two men. He killed them with his sword. And my father David didn’t even know anything about it.

“Joab killed Abner, the son of Ner. Abner was the commander of Israel’s army. Joab also killed Amasa, the son of Jether. Amasa was the commander of

Judah's army. Abner and Amasa were better men than Joab is. They were more honest than he is. [33]May Joab and his children after him be held forever accountable for spilling the blood of Abner and Amasa.

"But may David and his children after him enjoy the LORD's peace and rest forever. May the LORD also give his peace to David's royal house and kingdom forever."

[34]So Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, went up to the LORD's tent. There he struck Joab down. And he killed him. Joab's body was buried on his own land in the desert.

[35]The king put Benaiah in charge of the army. Benaiah took Joab's place. The king also put the priest Zadok in Abiathar's place.

[36]Then the king sent for Shimei. He said to him, "Build yourself a house in Jerusalem. Live there. Don't go anywhere else. [37]You must not leave the city and go across the Kidron Valley. If you do, you can be sure you will die. And it will be your own fault."

[38]Shimei replied to the king, "You are my king and master. What you say is good. I'll do it." Shimei stayed in Jerusalem for a long time.

[39]Three years after Solomon had talked with Shimei, two of Shimei's slaves ran off. They went to Achish, the king of Gath. He was the son of Maacah. Shimei was told, "Your slaves are in Gath." [40]When Shimei heard that, he put a saddle on his donkey. Then he went to Achish at Gath to look for his slaves. Shimei found them and brought them back from Gath.

[41]Solomon was told that Shimei had left Jerusalem. He was told he had gone to Gath and had returned.

[42]So the king sent for Shimei. He said to him, "Didn't I make you take an oath in the name of the LORD? Didn't I warn you? I said, 'You must not leave the city and go somewhere else. If you do, you can be sure you will die.' At that time you said to me, 'What you say is good. I'll obey your command.' [43]So why didn't you keep your oath to the LORD? Why didn't you obey the command I gave you?"

[44]The king continued, "You know all of the wrong things you did to my father David. In your heart you know them. Now the LORD will pay you back for what you did. [45]But I will be blessed. The LORD will make David's kingdom secure forever."

[46]Then the king gave the order to Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada. Benaiah left the palace and struck Shimei down. And he killed him.

So the kingdom was now made secure in Solomon’s hands.

Solomon Asks God for Wisdom

1 Kings 3

[1]Solomon and Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, agreed to help each other. So Solomon got married to Pharaoh's daughter. He brought her to the City of David. She stayed there until he finished building his palace, the LORD's temple, and the wall that was around Jerusalem.

[2]But the people continued to offer sacrifices at the high places where they worshiped. That's because a temple hadn't been built yet where the LORD would put his Name.

[3]Solomon showed his love for the LORD. He did it by obeying the laws his father David had taught him. But Solomon offered sacrifices at the high places. He also burned incense there.

[4]King Solomon went to the city of Gibeon to offer sacrifices. That's where the most important high place was. He offered 1,000 burnt offerings on the altar that was there.

[5]The LORD appeared to Solomon at Gibeon. He spoke to him in a dream during the night. God said, "Ask for anything you want me to give you."

[6]Solomon answered, "You have been very kind to my father David, your servant. That's because he was faithful to you. He did what was right. His heart was honest. And you have continued to be very kind to him. You have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day.

[7]"LORD my God, you have now made me king. You have put me in the place of my father David. But I'm only a little child. I don't know how to carry out my duties. [8]I'm here among the people you have chosen. They are a great nation. They are more than anyone can count. [9]So give me a heart that understands. Then I can rule over your people. I can tell the difference between what is right and what is wrong. Who can possibly rule over this great nation of yours?"

[10]The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for that. [11]So God said to him, "You have not asked to live for a long time. You have not asked to be

wealthy. You have not even asked to have your enemies killed. Instead, you have asked for understanding. You want to do what is right and fair when you judge people. Because that is what you have asked for, 12I will give it to you. I will give you a wise and understanding heart. So here is what will be true of you. There has never been anyone like you. And there never will be.

13"And that is not all. I will give you what you have not asked for. I will give you riches and honor. As long as you live, no other king will be as great as you are. 14Live the way I want you to. Obey my laws and commands, just as your father David did. Then I will let you live for a long time."

15Solomon woke up. He realized he had been dreaming.

He returned to Jerusalem. He stood in front of the ark of the LORD's covenant. He sacrificed burnt offerings and friendship offerings. Then he gave a big dinner for all of his officials.

Solomon Judges Wisely

16Two prostitutes came to the king. They stood in front of him. 17One of them said, "My master, this woman and I live in the same house. I had a baby while she was there with me. 18Three days after my child was born, this woman also had a baby. We were alone. There wasn't anyone in the house but the two of us.

19"During the night this woman's baby died. It happened because she was lying on top of him. 20So she got up in the middle of the night. She took my son from my side while I was asleep. She put him by her breast. Then she put her dead son by my breast. 21The next morning, I got up to nurse my son. But he was dead! I looked at him closely in the morning light. And I saw that it wasn't my baby."

22The other woman said, "No! The living baby is my son. The dead one belongs to you."

But the first woman said, "No! The dead baby is yours. The living one belongs to me." So they argued in front of the king.

23The king said, "One of you says, 'My son is alive. Your son is dead.' The other one says, 'No! Your son is dead. Mine is alive.' "

24He continued, "Bring me a sword." So a sword was brought to him. 25Then he gave an order. He said, "Cut the living child in two. Give half to one woman

and half to the other.”

[26]The woman whose son was alive was filled with deep concern for her son. She said to the king, “My master, please give her the living baby! Don’t kill him!”

But the other woman said, “Neither one of us will have him. Cut him in two!”

[27]Then the king made his decision. He said, “Give the living baby to the first woman. Don’t kill him. She’s his mother.”

[28]All of the people of Israel heard about the decision the king had given. That gave them great respect for him. They saw that God had given him wisdom. They knew that Solomon would do what was right and fair when he judged people.

Solomon's Officials and Governors

1 Kings 4

[1]So King Solomon ruled over the whole nation of Israel. [2]Here are the names of his chief officials.

Azariah was the priest. He was the son of Zadok.

[3]Elihoreph and Ahijah were secretaries. They were the sons of Shisha.
Jehoshaphat kept the records. He was the son of Ahilud.

[4]Benaiah was the commander in chief. He was the son of Jehoiada.
Zadok and Abiathar were priests.

[5]Azariah was in charge of the local officials. He was the son of Nathan.
Zabud was a priest. He was the king's personal adviser. He was the son of Nathan.

[6]Ahishar was in charge of the palace.
Adoniram was in charge of those who were forced to work for the king. He was the son of Abda.

[7]Solomon also had 12 local governors over the whole land of Israel. They provided supplies for the king and the royal family. Each governor had to provide supplies for one month out of each year. [8]Here are their names and areas.

Ben-Hur's area was the hill country of Ephraim.

[9]Ben-Deker's area was Makaz, Shaalbim, Beth Shemesh and Elon Bethhanan.

[10]Ben-Hesed's area was Arubboth. Socoh and the whole land of Hepher were included in his area.

[11]Ben-Abinadab's area was Naphoth Dor. He got married to Solomon's daughter Taphath.

12 Baana’s area was Taanach, Megiddo and the whole territory of Beth Shan. Beth Shan was next to Zarethan below Jezreel. Baana’s area reached from Beth Shan all the way to Abel Meholah. It also went across to Jokmeam. Baana was the son of Ahilud.

13 Ben-Geber’s area was Ramoth Gilead. The settlements of Jair, the son of Manasseh, were included in his area in Gilead. The area of Argob in Bashan was also included. That area had 60 large cities that had high walls around them. The city gates were made secure with heavy bronze bars.

14 Ahinadab’s area was Mahanaim. He was the son of Iddo.

15 Ahimaaz’s area was Naphtali. He had gotten married to Basemath. She was Solomon’s daughter.

16 Baana’s area was Asher and Aloth. He was the son of Hushai.

17 Jehoshaphat’s area was Issachar. He was the son of Paruah.

18 Shimei’s area was Benjamin. He was the son of Ela.

19 Geber’s area was Gilead. He was the only governor over the area. He was the son of Uri. Gilead had been the country of Sihon and Og. Sihon had been king of the Amorites. Og had been king of Bashan.

Solomon’s Daily Supplies

20 There were many people in Judah and Israel. In fact, they were as many as the grains of sand on the seashore. They ate, drank and were happy.

21 Solomon ruled over all of the kingdoms from the Euphrates River to the land of the Philistines. He ruled as far as the border of Egypt. All of those countries brought the gifts he required them to bring him. And Solomon ruled over those countries for his whole life.

22 Here are the supplies Solomon required every day.

185 bushels of fine flour
375 bushels of meal

23 ten head of cattle that had been fed by hand

20 head of cattle that had been fed on grasslands

100 sheep and goats
deer, antelopes and roebucks
the finest birds

24Solomon ruled over all of the kingdoms that were west of the Euphrates River. He ruled from Tiphsah all the way to Gaza. And he had peace and rest on every side.

25While Solomon was king, Judah and Israel lived in safety. They were secure from Dan all the way to Beersheba. Each man had his own vine and fig tree.

26Solomon had 4,000 spaces where he kept his chariot horses. He had a total of 12,000 horses.

27The local officials provided supplies for King Solomon. They provided them for all who ate at the king's table. Each official provided supplies for one month every year. The officials made sure the king had everything he needed. 28They also brought barley and straw for the chariot horses and the other horses. Each of them brought the amounts that were required of them. They brought them to the proper places.

God Makes Solomon Very Wise

29God made Solomon very wise. His understanding couldn't even be measured. It was like the sand on the seashore. People can't measure that either.

30Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all of the people of the east. It was greater than all of the wisdom of Egypt. 31Solomon was wiser than any other man. He was wiser than Ethan, the Ezrahite. He was wiser than Heman, Calcol and Darda. They were the sons of Mahol. Solomon became famous in all of the nations that were around him.

32He spoke 3,000 proverbs. He wrote 1,005 songs. 33He explained all about plants. He knew everything about them, from the cedar trees in Lebanon to the hyssop plants that grow out of walls. He taught about animals and birds. He also taught about reptiles and fish.

34The kings of all of the world's nations heard about how wise Solomon was.

So they sent their people to listen to him.

Solomon Asks Hiram to Help Build the Temple

1 Kings 5

[1]Hiram was the king of Tyre. He heard that Solomon had been anointed as king. He heard that Solomon had become the next king after his father David. Hiram had always been David's friend. So Hiram sent his messengers to Solomon.

[2]Then Solomon sent a message back to Hiram. It said,

[3]"As you know, my father David had to fight many battles. His enemies attacked him from every side. So he couldn't build a temple where the LORD his God would put his Name. That wouldn't be possible until the LORD had put his enemies under his control.

[4]"But now the LORD my God has given me peace and rest on every side. We don't have any enemies. And we don't have any other major problems either. [5]So I'm planning to build a temple. I want to build it for the Name of the LORD my God. That's what he told my father David he wanted me to do. He said, 'I will put your son on the throne in your place. He will build a temple. I will put my Name there.'

[6]"So give your men orders to cut down cedar trees in Lebanon for me. My men will work with yours. I'll pay you for your men's work. I'll pay any amount you decide on. As you know, we don't have anyone who is as skilled in cutting down trees as the men of Sidon are."

[7]When Hiram heard Solomon's message, he was very pleased. He said, "May the LORD be praised today. He has given David a wise son to rule over that great nation."

[8]So Hiram sent a message to Solomon. It said,

"I have received the message you sent me. I'll do everything you want me to. I'll provide the cedar and pine logs. [9]My men will bring them from Lebanon down to the Mediterranean Sea. I'll make them into rafts. I'll float them to the place you want me to. When the rafts arrive, I'll separate the logs from each

other. Then you can take them away.

“And here’s what I want in return. Provide food for all of the people in my palace.”

10So Hiram supplied Solomon with all of the cedar and pine logs he wanted.

11Solomon gave Hiram 125,000 bushels of wheat as food for the people in his palace. He also gave him 115,000 gallons of oil that was made from pressed olives. He did that for Hiram year after year.

12The LORD made Solomon wise, just as he had promised him. There was peace between Hiram and Solomon. The two of them made a peace treaty.

13King Solomon forced men from all over Israel to work hard for him. There were 30,000 of them. 14He sent them off to Lebanon in groups of 10,000 each month. They spent one month in Lebanon. Then they spent two months at home. Adoniram was in charge of the people who were forced to work. 15Solomon had 70,000 people who carried things. He had 80,000 who cut stones in the hills. 16He had 3,300 men who were in charge of the project. They also directed the workers.

17The people did what the king commanded. They removed large blocks of fine stone from a rock pit. They used them to provide a foundation for the temple. 18The skilled workers of Solomon and Hiram cut and prepared the logs and stones. They would later be used in building the temple. The people of Byblos helped the workers.

Solomon Builds the Temple

1 Kings 6

[1]Solomon began to build the temple of the LORD. It was 480 years after the
people of Israel had come out of Egypt. It was in the fourth year of Solomon's
rule over Israel. He started in the second month. That was the month of Ziv.

[2]The temple King Solomon built for the LORD was 90 feet long. It was 30 feet
wide. And it was 45 feet high. [3]The temple had a porch in front of the main
hall. The porch was as wide as the temple itself. It was 30 feet wide. It came
out 15 feet from the front of the temple. [4]Solomon made narrow windows high
up in the temple walls.

[5]He built side rooms around the temple. They were built against the walls of
the main hall and the Most Holy Room. [6]On the first floor the side rooms were
seven and a half feet wide. On the second floor they were nine feet wide. And
on the third floor they were ten and a half feet wide. Solomon made the walls
of the temple thinner as they went up floor by floor. The result was ledges
along the walls. So the floor beams of the side rooms rested on the ledges. The
beams didn't go into the temple walls.

[7]All of the stones that were used for building the temple were shaped where
they were cut. So hammers, chisels and other iron tools couldn't be heard
where the temple was being built.

[8]The entrance to the first floor was on the south side of the temple. A
stairway led up to the second floor. From there it went on up to the third floor.

[9]So Solomon built the temple and finished it. He made its roof out of beams
and cedar boards. [10]He built side rooms all along the temple. Each room was
seven and a half feet high. They were joined to the temple by cedar beams.

[11]A message came to Solomon from the LORD. The LORD said, [12]"You are now
building this temple. Follow my orders. Keep my rules. Obey all of my
commands. Then I will make the promise I gave your father David come true. I
will do it through you. [13]I will live among my people Israel. I will not desert
them."

[14]So Solomon built the temple and finished it. [15]He put cedar boards on its inside walls. He covered them from floor to ceiling. He covered the temple floor with pine boards. [16]He put up a wall 30 feet from the back of the temple. He made it with cedar boards from floor to ceiling. That formed a room inside the temple. It was the Most Holy Room. [17]The main hall in front of the room was 60 feet long. [18]The inside of the temple was covered with cedar wood. Gourds and open flowers were carved on the wood. Everything was cedar. There wasn't any stone showing anywhere.

[19]Solomon prepared the Most Holy Room inside the temple. That's where the ark of the covenant of the LORD would be placed. [20]The Most Holy Room was 30 feet long. It was 30 feet wide. And it was 30 feet high. Solomon covered the inside of it with pure gold. He prepared the cedar altar for burning incense. He covered it with gold. [21]Solomon covered the inside of the main hall with pure gold. He placed gold chains across the front of the Most Holy Room. That room was covered with gold. [22]So Solomon covered the inside of the whole temple with gold. He also covered the altar for burning incense with gold. It was right in front of the Most Holy Room.

[23]For the Most Holy Room Solomon made a pair of cherubim. He made them out of olive wood. Each cherub was 15 feet high. [24]One wing of the first cherub was seven and a half feet long. The other wing was also seven and a half feet long. So the wings measured 15 feet from tip to tip. [25]The second cherub's wings also measured 15 feet from tip to tip. The two cherubim had the same size and shape. [26]Each cherub was 15 feet high.

[27]Solomon placed the cherubim inside the Most Holy Room in the temple. Their wings were spread out. The wing tip of one cherub touched one wall. The wing tip of the other touched the other wall. The tips of their wings touched each other in the middle of the room. [28]Solomon covered the cherubim with gold.

[29]On the walls that were all around the temple he carved cherubim, palm trees and open flowers. He carved them on the walls of the Most Holy Room and the main hall. [30]He also covered the floors of those two rooms with gold.

[31]For the entrance to the Most Holy Room he made two doors out of olive wood. Each doorpost had five sides. [32]On the two olive wood doors he carved cherubim, palm trees and open flowers. He covered the cherubim and palm trees with hammered gold.

[33]In the same way he made olive wood doorposts for the entrance to the main hall. Each doorpost had four sides. [34]He also made two pine doors. Each door had two parts. They turned in bases that were shaped like cups. [35]He carved cherubim, palm trees and open flowers on the doors. He covered the doors with gold. He hammered the gold evenly over the carvings.

[36]He used blocks of stone to build a wall around the inside courtyard. The first three layers of the wall were made out of stone. The top layer was made out of beautiful cedar wood.

[37]The foundation of the LORD's temple was laid in Solomon's fourth year. It was in the month of Ziv. [38]The temple was finished in his 11th year. It was in the month of Bul. That was the eighth month. Everything was finished just as the plans required. Solomon had spent seven years building the temple.

Solomon Builds His Palace

1 Kings 7

[1]But it took Solomon 13 years to finish constructing his palace and the other buildings that were related to it.

[2]He built the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon. It was 150 feet long. It was 75 feet wide. And it was 45 feet high. It had four rows of cedar columns. They held up beautiful cedar beams. [3]Above the beams was a roof that was made out of cedar boards. It rested on the columns. There were three rows of beams with 15 in each row. The total number of beams was 45. [4]The windows of the palace were placed high up in the walls. They were in groups of three. And they faced each other. [5]All of the doorways had frames that were shaped like rectangles. They were in front. They were in groups of three. And they faced each other.

[6]Solomon made a covered area. It was 75 feet long. And it was 45 feet wide. Its roof was held up by columns. In front of it was a porch. In front of that were pillars and a roof that went out beyond them.

[7]Solomon built the throne hall. It was called the Hall of Justice. That's where he would serve as judge. He covered the hall with cedar boards from floor to ceiling.

[8]The palace where he would live was set farther back. Its plan was something like the plan for the hall. Solomon had gotten married to Pharaoh's daughter. He made a palace for her. It was like the hall.

[9]All of those buildings were made out of blocks of very fine stone. They were cut to the right size. They were shaped with a saw on the back and front sides. Those stones were used for the outside of each building and for the large courtyard. They were also used from the foundations up to the roofs. [10]Large blocks of very fine stone were used for the foundations. Some were 15 feet long. Others were 12 feet long. [11]The walls that were above them were made out of very fine stones. The stones were cut to the right size. On top of them was a layer of cedar beams.

[12]The large courtyard had a wall around it. The first three layers of the wall

were made out of blocks of stone. The top layer was made out of beautiful cedar wood. The same thing was done with the inside courtyard of the LORD's temple and its porch.

More Facts About the Temple

13 King Solomon sent messengers to Tyre. He wanted them to bring Huram
back with them. 14 Huram's mother was a widow. She was from the tribe of
Naphtali. Huram's father was from Tyre. He was skilled in working with
bronze. Huram also was very skilled. He had done all kinds of work with
bronze. He came to King Solomon and did all of the work he was asked to do.

15 Huram made two bronze pillars. Each of them was 27 feet high. And each
was 18 feet around. 16 Each pillar had a decorated top that was made out of
bronze. Each top was seven and a half feet high.

17 Chains that were linked together hung down from the tops of the pillars.
There were seven chains for each top. 18 Huram made two rows of
pomegranates. They circled the chains. The pomegranates decorated the tops of
the pillars. Huram did the same thing for each pillar. 19 The tops on the pillars
of the porch were shaped like lilies. The lilies were 6 feet high. 20 On the tops
of both pillars were 200 pomegranates. They were in rows all around the tops.
They were above the part that was shaped like a bowl. And they were next to
the chains.

21 Huram set the pillars up at the temple porch. The pillar on the south he
named Jakin. The one on the north he named Boaz. 22 The tops of the pillars
were shaped like lilies. So the work on the pillars was finished.

23 Huram made a huge metal bowl for washing. Its shape was round. It
measured 15 feet from rim to rim. It was seven and a half feet high. And it was
45 feet around. 24 Below the rim there was a circle of gourds around the bowl.
In every 18 inches around the bowl there were ten gourds. The gourds were
arranged in two rows. They were made as part of the bowl itself.

25 The huge bowl stood on 12 bulls. Three of them faced north. Three faced
west. Three faced south. And three faced east. The bowl rested on top of them.
Their rear ends were toward the center. 26 The bowl was three inches thick. Its
rim was like the rim of a cup. The rim was shaped like the bloom of a lily. The

bowl held 11,500 gallons of water.

27Huram also made ten stands out of bronze. They could be moved around. Each stand was six feet long. It was six feet wide. And it was four and a half feet high. 28Here is how the stands were made. They had sides that were joined to posts. 29On the sides between the posts were lions, bulls and cherubim. They were also on all of the posts. Above and below the lions and bulls were wreaths that were made out of hammered metal.

30Each stand had four bronze wheels with bronze axles. Each one had a bowl that rested on four supports. They had wreaths on each side.

31There was a round opening on the inside of each stand. The opening had a frame that was 18 inches deep. The sides were 27 inches high from the top of the opening to the bottom of the base. There was carving around the opening. The sides of the stands were square, not round.

32The four wheels were under the sides. The axles of the wheels were connected to the stand. Each wheel was 27 inches across. 33The wheels were made like chariot wheels. All of the axles, rims, spokes and hubs were made out of metal.

34Each stand had four handles on it. There was one on each corner. They came out from the stand. 35At the top of the stand there was a round band. It was nine inches deep. The sides and supports were connected to the top of the stand.

36Huram carved cherubim, lions and palm trees on the sides of the stands. He also carved them on the surfaces of the supports. His carving covered every open space. He had also carved wreaths all around.

37That’s how he made the ten stands. All of them were made in the same molds. And they had the same size and shape.

38Then Huram made ten bronze bowls. Each one held 230 gallons. The bowls measured six feet across. There was one bowl for each of the ten stands. 39He placed five of the stands on the south side of the temple. He placed the other five on the north side. He put the huge bowl on the south side. It was at the southeast corner of the temple. 40He also made the bowls, shovels and sprinkling bowls.

So Huram finished all of the work he had started for King Solomon. Here’s what he made for the LORD’s temple.

41 He made the two pillars.

He made the two tops for the pillars. The tops were shaped like bowls.
He made the two sets of chains that were linked together. They decorated the two bowl-shaped tops of the pillars.

42 He made the 400 pomegranates for the two sets of chains. There were two rows of pomegranates for each chain. They decorated the bowl-shaped tops of the pillars.

43 He made the ten stands with their ten bowls.

44 He made the huge bowl. He made the 12 bulls that were under it.

45 He made the pots, shovels and sprinkling bowls.

Huram made all of those objects for King Solomon for the LORD's temple. He made them out of bronze. Then he shined them up. 46 The king had made them in clay molds. It was done on the flatlands of the Jordan River between Succoth and Zarethan.

47 Solomon didn't weigh any of those things. There were too many of them to weigh. No one even tried to weigh the bronze they were made out of.

48 Solomon also made all of the articles that were in the LORD's temple.

He made the golden altar.
He made the golden table for the holy bread.

49 He made the pure gold lampstands. There were five on the right and five on the left. They were in front of the Most Holy Room.

He made the gold flowers. He made the gold lamps and tongs.

50 He made the bowls, wick cutters, sprinkling bowls, dishes, and shallow cups for burning incense. All of them were made out of pure gold.

He made the gold bases for the doors of the inside room. That's the Most Holy Room. He also made gold bases for the doors of the main hall of the temple.

51 King Solomon finished all of the work for the LORD's temple. Then he brought in the things his father David had set apart for the LORD. They included the silver and gold and all of the articles for the LORD's temple. Solomon placed

them with the other treasures that were there.

Solomon Brings the Ark to the Temple

1 Kings 8

[1]Then King Solomon sent for the elders of Israel. He told them to come to
him in Jerusalem. They included all of the leaders of the tribes. They also
included the chiefs of the families of Israel. Solomon wanted them to bring up
the ark of the LORD's covenant from Zion. Zion was the City of David. [2]All of
the men of Israel came together to where King Solomon was. It was at the time
of the Feast of Booths. The feast was held in the month of Ethanim. That's the
seventh month.

[3]All of the elders of Israel arrived. Then the priests picked up the ark and
carried it. [4]They brought up the ark of the LORD. They also brought up the Tent
of Meeting and all of the sacred articles that were in the tent. The priests and
Levites carried everything up.

[5]The entire community of Israel had gathered around King Solomon. All of
them were in front of the ark. They sacrificed huge numbers of sheep and
cattle. There were so many that they couldn't be recorded. In fact, they
couldn't even be counted.

[6]The priests brought the ark of the LORD's covenant to its place in the Most
Holy Room of the temple. They put it under the wings of the cherubim. [7]The
cherubim's wings were spread out over the place where the ark was. They
covered the ark. They also covered the poles that were used to carry it. [8]The
poles were so long that their ends could be seen from the Holy Room in front
of the Most Holy Room. But they couldn't be seen from outside the Holy
Room. They are still there to this very day.

[9]There wasn't anything in the ark except the two stone tablets. Moses had
placed them in it at Mount Horeb. That's where the LORD had made a covenant
with the Israelites. He made it after they came out of Egypt.

[10]The priests left the Holy Room. Then the cloud filled the temple of the
LORD. [11]The priests couldn't do their work because of it. That's because the
glory of the LORD filled his temple.

12Then Solomon said, “LORD, you have said you would live in a dark cloud.
13As you can see, I’ve built a beautiful temple for you. You can live in it
forever.”

14The whole community of Israel was standing there. The king turned around
and gave them his blessing. 15Then he said,

“I praise the LORD. He is the God of Israel. With his own mouth he made a
promise to my father David. With his own powerful hand he made it come true.
He said, 16‘I brought my people Israel out of Egypt. Ever since I did that, I
have not chosen a city in any tribe of Israel where a temple could be built for
my Name. But I have chosen David to rule over my people Israel.’

17“With all his heart my father David wanted to build a temple. He wanted to
do it so the LORD could put his Name there. The LORD is the God of Israel.

18“But the LORD spoke to my father David. He said, ‘With all your heart you
wanted to build a temple for my Name. It is good that you wanted to do that.
19But you will not build the temple. Instead, your son will build the temple for
my Name. He is your own flesh and blood.’

20“The LORD has kept the promise he made. I’ve become the next king after
my father David. Now I’m sitting on the throne of Israel. That’s exactly what
the LORD promised would happen. I’ve built the temple where the LORD will put
his Name. He is the God of Israel. 21I’ve provided a place for the ark there. The
tablets of the LORD’s covenant are inside it. He made that covenant with our
people of long ago. He made it when he brought them out of Egypt.”

Solomon Prays to Set the Temple Apart to the LORD

22Then Solomon stood in front of the LORD’s altar. He stood in front of the
whole community of Israel. He spread out his hands toward heaven. 23He said,

“LORD, you are the God of Israel. There is no God like you in heaven above or
on earth below. You keep the covenant you made with us. You show us your
love. You do that when we follow you with all our hearts. 24You have kept your
promise to my father David. He was your servant. With your mouth you made
a promise. With your powerful hand you have made it come true. And today
we can see it.

25“LORD, you are the God of Israel. Keep the promises you made to my father

David. Do it for him. He was your servant. You said to him, ‘You will always have a man to sit on the throne of Israel in my sight. That will be true only if your sons are careful in everything they do. They must live in my sight the way you have lived.’ [26]God of Israel, let your promise to my father David come true.

[27]“But will you really live on earth? After all, the heavens can’t hold you. In fact, even the highest heavens can’t hold you. So this temple I’ve built certainly can’t hold you!

[28]“But please pay attention to my prayer. LORD my God, show me your favor as I make my appeal to you. Listen to my cry for help. Hear the prayer I’m praying to you today. [29]Let your eyes look toward this temple night and day. You said, ‘I will put my Name there.’ So please listen to the prayer I’m praying toward this place.

[30]“Hear me when I ask you to show us your favor. Listen to your people Israel when they pray toward this place. Listen to us from heaven. It’s the place where you live. When you hear us, forgive us.

[31]“Suppose a man does something wrong to his neighbor. And he is required to take an oath and make a promise. He must come and do it in front of your altar in this temple. [32]When he does, listen to him from heaven. Take action. Judge between those people. Punish the one who is guilty. Do to him what he has done to his neighbor. Tell everyone that the one who hasn’t done anything wrong is free from blame. That will prove he isn’t guilty.

[33]“Suppose your people Israel have lost the battle against their enemies. And suppose they’ve sinned against you. But they turn back to you and praise your name. They pray to you in this temple. And they ask you to show them your favor. [34]Then listen to them from heaven. Forgive the sin of your people Israel. Bring them back to the land you gave to their people who lived long ago.

[35]“Suppose your people have sinned against you. And because of that, the sky is closed up and there isn’t any rain. But your people pray toward this place. They praise you by admitting they’ve sinned. And they turn away from their sin because you have made them suffer. [36]Then listen to them from heaven. Forgive the sin of your people Israel. Teach them the right way to live. Send rain on the land you gave them as their share.

[37]“Suppose there isn’t enough food in the land. And a plague strikes the land. The hot winds completely dry up our crops. Or locusts or grasshoppers come

and eat them up. Or an enemy surrounds one of our cities and gets ready to attack it. Or trouble or sickness comes. [38]But suppose one of your people prays to you. He asks you to show him your favor. He is aware of how much his own heart is suffering. And he spreads out his hands toward this temple to pray. [39]Then listen to him from heaven. It's the place where you live. Forgive him. Take action. Deal with him in keeping with everything he does. You know his heart. In fact, you are the only one who knows every human heart. [40]Your people will have respect for you. They will respect you as long as they are in the land you gave our people long ago.

[41]"Suppose there are strangers who don't belong to your people Israel. And they have come from a land far away. They've come because they've heard about your name. [42]When they get here, they will find out even more about your great name. They'll hear about how you reached out your mighty hand and powerful arm. So they'll come and pray toward this temple.

[43]"Then listen to them from heaven. It's the place where you live. Do what those strangers ask you to do. Then all of the nations on earth will know you. They will have respect for you. They'll respect you just as your own people Israel do. They'll know that your Name is in this house I've built.

[44]"Suppose your people go to war against their enemies. It doesn't matter where you send them. And suppose they pray to you toward the city you have chosen. They pray toward the temple I've built for your Name. [45]Then listen to them from heaven. Listen to their prayer. Listen to them when they ask you to show them your favor. Stand up for them.

[46]"Suppose your people sin against you. After all, there isn't anyone who doesn't sin. And suppose you get angry with them. You hand them over to their enemies. They take them as prisoners to their own land. It doesn't matter whether it's near or far away.

[47]"But suppose your people change their ways in the land where they are held as prisoners. They turn away from their sins. They beg you to help them in the land of those who won the battle over them. They say, 'We have sinned. We've done what is wrong. We've done what is evil.' [48]And they turn back to you with all their heart and soul. Suppose it happens in the land of their enemies who took them away as prisoners. There they pray to you toward the land you gave their people long ago. They pray toward the city you have chosen. And they pray toward the temple I've built for your Name.

[49]"Then listen to them from heaven. It's the place where you live. Listen to

their prayer. Listen to them when they ask you to show them your favor. Stand up for them.

50"Your people have sinned against you. Please forgive them. Forgive them for all of the wrong things they've done against you. And make those who won the battle over them show mercy to them. 51After all, they are your people. They belong to you. You brought them out of Egypt. You brought them out of that furnace that melts iron down and makes it pure.

52"Let your eyes be open to me when I ask you to show us your favor. Let them be open to your people Israel when they ask you to show them your favor. Pay attention to them every time they cry out to you.

53"After all, you chose them out of all of the nations in the world. You made them your very own people. You did it just as you had announced through your servant Moses. That's when you brought our people out of Egypt. You are our LORD and King."

54Solomon finished all of those prayers. He finished asking the LORD to show his favor to his people. Then he got up from in front of the LORD's altar. He had been down on his knees with his hands spread out toward heaven. 55He stood in front of the whole community of Israel. He blessed them with a loud voice. He said,

56"I praise the LORD. He has given peace and rest to his people Israel. That's exactly what he promised to do. He gave his people good promises through his servant Moses. Every single word of those promises has come true.

57"May the LORD our God be with us, just as he was with our people who lived long ago. May he never leave us. May he never desert us. 58May he turn our hearts to him. Then we will live the way he wants us to. We'll obey the commands, rules and directions he gave our people.

59"I've prayed these words to the LORD our God. May he keep them close to him day and night. May he stand up for me. May he also stand up for his people Israel. May he give us what we need every day. 60Then all of the nations on earth will know that the LORD is God. They'll know that there isn't any other god.

61"But you must commit your lives completely to the LORD our God. You must live by his rules. You must obey his commands. You must always do as you are doing now."

Solomon Sets the Temple Apart to the LORD

62Then the king and the whole community of Israel offered sacrifices to the LORD. 63Solomon sacrificed friendship offerings to the LORD. He sacrificed 22,000 head of cattle. He also sacrificed 120,000 sheep and goats. So the king and the whole community set the temple of the LORD apart to him.

64On that same day the king set the middle area of the courtyard apart to the LORD. It was in front of the LORD's temple. There Solomon sacrificed burnt offerings and grain offerings. He also sacrificed the fat of the friendship offerings there. He did it there because the bronze altar in front of the LORD was too small. It wasn't big enough to hold all of the burnt offerings, the grain offerings and the fat of the friendship offerings.

65At that time Solomon celebrated the Feast of Booths. The whole community of Israel was with him. It was a huge crowd. People came from as far away as Lebo Hamath and the Wadi of Egypt. For seven days they celebrated in front of the LORD our God. The feast continued for seven more days. That made a total of 14 days.

66On the following day Solomon sent the people away. They asked the LORD to bless the king. Then they went home. The people were glad. Their hearts were full of joy. That's because the LORD had done so many good things for his servant David and his people Israel.

The LORD Appears to Solomon

1 Kings 9

[1]Solomon finished building the LORD's temple and the royal palace. He had accomplished everything he had planned to do. [2]The LORD appeared to him a second time. He had already appeared to him at Gibeon. [3]The LORD said to him,

"I have heard you pray to me. I have heard you ask me to show you my favor. You have built this temple. I have set it apart for myself. My Name will be there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there.

[4]"But you must walk with me, just as your father David did. Your heart must be honest. It must be without blame. Do everything I command you to do. Obey my rules and laws. [5]Then I will set up your royal throne over Israel forever. I promised your father David I would do that. I said to him, 'You will always have a man on the throne of Israel.'

[6]"But suppose all of you turn away from me. Or your sons turn away from me. You refuse to obey the commands and rules I have given you. And you go off to serve other gods and worship them. [7]Then I will cut Israel off from the land. It is the land I gave them. I will turn my back on this temple. I will do it even though I have set it apart for my Name to be there. Then Israel will be hated by all of the nations. They will laugh and joke about Israel.

[8]"This temple is now grand and beautiful. But the time is coming when all those who pass by it will be shocked. They will make fun of it. And they will say, 'Why has the LORD done a thing like this to this land and temple?'

[9]"People will answer, 'Because they have deserted the LORD their God. He brought their people out of Egypt. But they have been holding on to other gods. They've been worshiping them. They've been serving them. That's why the LORD has brought all of this horrible trouble on them.' "

Other Things Solomon Did

[10]Solomon built the LORD's temple and the royal palace. It took him 20 years to construct those two buildings.

[11]King Solomon gave 20 towns in Galilee to Hiram. That's because Hiram had provided him with all of the cedar and pine logs he wanted. He had also provided him with all of the gold he wanted. Hiram was king of Tyre.

[12]Hiram went from Tyre to see the towns Solomon had given him. But he wasn't pleased with them. [13]"My friend," he asked, "what have you given me? What kind of towns are these?" So he called them the Land of Cabul. And that's what they are still called to this very day. [14]Hiram had sent four and a half tons of gold to Solomon.

[15]King Solomon forced people to work hard for him. Here is a record of what they did. They built the LORD's temple and Solomon's palace. They filled in the low places. They rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem. They built up Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer.

[16]Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, had attacked Gezer and captured it. He had set it on fire. He had killed the Canaanites who lived there. Then he had given Gezer as a wedding gift to his daughter. She was Solomon's wife.

[17]Solomon rebuilt Gezer. He built up Lower Beth Horon [18]and Baalath. He built up Tadmor in the desert. All of those towns were in his land. [19]He built up all of the cities where he could store things. He also built up the towns for his chariots and horses. He built anything he wanted to build in Jerusalem, Lebanon and all of the territory he ruled over.

[20]There were still many people left in the land who weren't Israelites. They included Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. [21]They were children of the people who had lived in the land before the Israelites came. Those people had been set apart to the LORD in a special way to be destroyed. But the Israelites hadn't been able to kill all of them. Solomon had forced them to work very hard as his slaves. And they still work for Israel to this very day.

[22]But Solomon didn't force any of the men of Israel to work as his slaves. Instead, some were his fighting men. Others were his government officials, his officers and his captains. Others were commanders of his chariots and chariot drivers. [23]Still others were the chief officials who were in charge of his projects. There were 550 officials in charge of those who did the work.

[24]Pharaoh's daughter moved from the City of David up to the palace Solomon had built for her. After that, he filled in the low places near the

palace.

[25]Three times a year Solomon sacrificed burnt offerings and friendship offerings. He sacrificed them on the altar he had built to honor the LORD. Along with the offerings, he burned incense to the LORD. So he carried out his duties for the temple.

[26]King Solomon also built ships at Ezion Geber. It’s near Elath in Edom. It’s on the shore of the Red Sea.

[27]Hiram sent his men to serve on the ships together with Solomon’s men. Hiram’s sailors knew the sea. [28]All of them sailed to Ophir. They brought back 16 tons of gold. They gave it to King Solomon.

The Queen of Sheba Visits Solomon

1 Kings 10

[1]The queen of Sheba heard about how famous Solomon was. She also heard about how he served and worshiped the LORD. So she came to test him with hard questions.

[2]She arrived in Jerusalem with a very large group of attendants. Her camels were carrying spices, huge amounts of gold, and valuable jewels. She came to Solomon and asked him about everything she wanted to know.

[3]Solomon answered all of her questions. There wasn't anything that was too hard for the king to explain to her.

[4]So the queen of Sheba saw how very wise Solomon was. She saw the palace he had built. [5]She saw the food that was on his table. She saw his officials sitting there. She saw the robes of the servants who waited on everyone. She saw his wine tasters. And she saw the burnt offerings Solomon sacrificed at the LORD's temple. She could hardly believe everything she had seen.

[6]She said to the king, "Back in my own country I heard a report about you. I heard about how much you had accomplished. I also heard about how wise you are. Everything I heard is true. [7]But I didn't believe those things. So I came to see for myself. And now I believe it! You are twice as wise and wealthy as people say you are. The report I heard doesn't even begin to tell the whole story about you.

[8]"How happy your men must be! How happy your officials must be! They always get to serve you and hear the wise things you say.

[9]"May the LORD your God be praised. He must take great delight in you. He placed you on the throne of Israel. The LORD will love Israel for all time to come. That's why he has made you king. He knows that you will do what is fair and right."

[10]She gave the king four and a half tons of gold. She also gave him huge amounts of spices and valuable jewels. No one would ever bring to King Solomon as many spices as the queen of Sheba gave him.

[11]Hiram’s ships brought gold from Ophir. From there they also brought huge amounts of almugwood and valuable jewels. [12]The king used the almugwood to make supports for the LORD’s temple and the royal palace. He also used it to make harps and lyres for those who played the music. That much almugwood has never been brought into Judah or seen there since that day.

[13]King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba everything she wanted and asked for. That was in addition to what he had given her out of his royal riches. Then she left. She returned to her own country with her attendants.

Solomon in All of His Glory

[14]Each year Solomon received 25 tons of gold. [15]That didn’t include the money that was brought in by business and trade. It also didn’t include the money from all of the kings of Arabia and the governors of Israel.

[16]King Solomon made 200 large shields out of hammered gold. Each one weighed seven and a half pounds. [17]He also made 300 small shields out of hammered gold. Each one weighed almost four pounds. The king put all of the shields in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon.

[18]Then he made a large throne. It was decorated with ivory. It was covered with fine gold. [19]The throne had six steps. Its back had a rounded top. The throne had armrests on both sides of the seat. A statue of a lion stood on each side of the throne. [20]Twelve lions stood on the six steps. There was one at each end of each step. Nothing like that throne had ever been made for any other kingdom.

[21]All of King Solomon’s cups were made out of gold. All of the articles that were used in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon were made out of pure gold. Nothing was made out of silver. When Solomon was king, silver wasn’t considered to be worth very much.

[22]He had many ships that carried goods to be traded. His ships went to sea along with Hiram’s ships. Once every three years the ships returned. They brought gold, silver, ivory, apes and baboons.

[23]King Solomon was richer than all of the other kings on earth. He was also wiser than they were. [24]People from the whole world wanted to meet Solomon in person. They wanted to see for themselves how wise God had made him.

[25]Year after year, everyone who came to him brought a gift. They brought articles that were made out of silver and gold. They brought robes, weapons and spices. They also brought horses and mules.

[26]Solomon had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horses. He kept some of his horses and chariots in the chariot cities. He kept the others with him in Jerusalem.

[27]The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones. He made cedar wood as common there as sycamore-fig trees in the western hills.

[28]Solomon got horses from Egypt and from Kue. The royal traders bought them from Kue. [29]They weighed out 15 pounds of silver for a chariot from Egypt. And they weighed out almost four pounds of silver for a horse. They also sold horses and chariots to all of the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Arameans.

Solomon's Wives Turn Him Away From the LORD

1 Kings 11

[1]King Solomon loved many women besides Pharaoh's daughter. They were from other lands. They were Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites.

[2]The LORD had warned Israel about women from other nations. He had said, "You must not get married to them. If you do, you can be sure they will turn your hearts toward their gods." But Solomon continued to love them anyway. He wouldn't give them up. [3]He had 700 wives who came from royal families. And he had 300 concubines. His wives led him down the wrong path.

[4]As Solomon grew older, his wives turned his heart toward other gods. He didn't follow the LORD his God with all his heart. So he wasn't like his father David. [5]Solomon worshiped Ashtoreth. Ashtoreth was the goddess of the people of Sidon. He also worshiped Molech. Molech was the god of the people of Ammon. The LORD hated that god.

[6]Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. He didn't follow the LORD completely. He didn't do what his father David had done.

[7]There is a hill east of Jerusalem. Solomon built a high place for worshiping Chemosh there. He built a high place for worshiping Molech there too. Chemosh was the god of Moab. Molech was the god of Ammon. The LORD hated both of those gods.

[8]Solomon also built high places so that all of his wives from other nations could worship their gods. Those women burned incense and offered sacrifices to their gods.

[9]The LORD became angry with Solomon. That's because his heart had turned away from the LORD. He is the God of Israel. He had appeared to Solomon twice. [10]He had commanded Solomon not to follow other gods. But Solomon didn't obey him.

[11]So the LORD said to Solomon, "You have chosen not to keep my covenant. You have decided not to obey my rules. I commanded you to do what I told

you. But you did not do it. So you can be absolutely sure I will tear the kingdom away from you. I will give it to one of your officials.

12"But I will not do that while you are still living. Because of your father David I will wait. I will tear the kingdom out of your son's hand. 13But I will not tear the whole kingdom away from him. I will give him one of the tribes because of my servant David. I will also do it because of Jerusalem. That is the city I have chosen."

The LORD Brings Enemies Against Solomon

14Then the LORD brought an enemy against Solomon. The enemy's name was Hadad. He was from Edom. In fact, he belonged to the royal family of Edom.

15David had fought against Edom. Joab had been the commander of the army. He had gone up to bury the dead bodies of the Israelites who had been killed in battle. At that time he had struck down all of the men in Edom. 16In fact, Joab and all of the men of Israel stayed there for six months. During that time they destroyed all of the men in Edom.

17But when Hadad was only a boy, he ran away to Egypt. Some officials from Edom went with him. They had served Hadad's father. 18They started out from Midian and went to Paran. They took some men from Paran with them. Then they went to Egypt. They went to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. He gave Hadad a house and some land. He also supplied him with food.

19Pharaoh was very pleased with Hadad. Pharaoh's wife was Queen Tahpenes. He gave Hadad her sister to be his wife. 20The sister of Tahpenes had a son by Hadad. The baby was named Genubath. Tahpenes brought him up in the royal palace. Genubath lived there with Pharaoh's own children.

21Hadad heard that David had joined the members of his family who had already died. He also heard that Joab, the commander of the army, was dead. Hadad heard those things while he was in Egypt. He said to Pharaoh, "Let me go. I want to return to my own country."

22"Why do you want to go back to your own country?" Pharaoh asked. "Don't you have everything you need right here?"

"Yes," Hadad replied. "But I want you to let me go anyway!"

23God brought another enemy against Solomon. The enemy's name was

Rezon. He was the son of Eliada. Rezon had run away from his master Hadadezer, the king of Zobah. 24He gathered some men together to follow him. He became the leader of a group of men who had refused to follow David. It happened when David destroyed the troops of Zobah. Then the group that was against David went to Damascus. They settled down there and took control of it. 25Rezon was Israel's enemy as long as Solomon was living. Rezon added to the trouble Hadad had caused. So Rezon ruled in Aram. He was Israel's enemy.

Jeroboam Refuses to Follow Solomon

26Jeroboam refused to follow King Solomon. He was one of Solomon's officials. He was from Zeredah in the territory of Ephraim. His father was Nebat. His mother was a widow named Zeruah.

27Here is the story of how Jeroboam refused to follow the king. Solomon had filled in the low places near the palace. He had also repaired the wall of the city of his father David. 28Jeroboam was a very important young man. Solomon saw how well he did his work. So he put him in charge of all of the workers in northern Israel.

29About that time Jeroboam was going out of Jerusalem. The prophet Ahijah met him on the road. Ahijah was from Shiloh. He was wearing a new coat. The two of them were all alone out in the country.

30Ahijah grabbed hold of the new coat he had on. He tore it up into 12 pieces. 31Then he said to Jeroboam, "Take ten pieces for yourself. The LORD is the God of Israel. He says, 'I am going to tear the kingdom out of Solomon's hand. I will give you ten of its tribes. 32Solomon will have one of its tribes. I will let him keep it because of my servant David and because of Jerusalem. I have chosen that city out of all of the cities in the tribes of Israel.

33" 'I will do those things because the tribes have deserted me. They have worshiped Ashtoreth, the goddess of the people of Sidon. They have worshiped Chemosh, the god of the people of Moab. And they have worshiped Molech, the god of the people of Ammon. They have not lived the way I wanted them to. They have not done what is right in my eyes. They have not obeyed my rules and laws as Solomon's father David did.

34" 'But I will not take the whole kingdom out of Solomon's hand. I have made him ruler all the days of his life. I have done it because of my servant

David. I chose him. He obeyed my commands and rules.

35“ ‘I will take the kingdom out of his son’s hands. And I will give you ten of the tribes.

36“ ‘I will give one of the tribes to David’s son. Then my servant David will always have a son on his throne in Jerusalem. The lamp of David’s kingdom will always burn brightly in my sight. Jerusalem is the city I chose for my Name.

37“ ‘But I will make you king over Israel. You will rule over everything your heart longs for. So you will be the king of Israel. 38Do everything I command you to do. Live the way I want you to. Do what is right in my eyes. Obey my rules and commands. That is what my servant David did. If you do those things, I will be with you. I will build you a kingdom. It will last as long as the one I built for David. I will give Israel to you.

39“ ‘I will punish David’s family because of what Solomon has done. But I will not punish them forever.’ ”

40Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam. But Jeroboam ran away to Egypt. He went to Shishak, the king of Egypt. He stayed there until Solomon died.

Solomon Dies

41The other events of Solomon’s rule are written down. Everything he did and the wisdom he showed are written down. They are written in the official records of Solomon.

42Solomon ruled in Jerusalem over the whole nation of Israel for 40 years. 43Then he joined the members of his family who had already died. His body was buried in the city of his father David. Solomon’s son Rehoboam became the next king after him.

Israel Refuses to Follow Rehoboam

1 Kings 12

[1]Rehoboam went to Shechem. All of the people of Israel had gone there to
make him king. [2]Jeroboam heard about it. He was the son of Nebat. Jeroboam
was still in Egypt at that time. He had gone there for safety. He wanted to get
away from King Solomon. But now he returned from Egypt.

[3]So the people sent for Jeroboam. He and the whole community of Israel
went to Rehoboam. They said to him, [4]"Your father put a heavy load on our
shoulders. But now make our hard work easier. Make the heavy load on us
lighter. Then we'll serve you."

[5]Rehoboam answered, "Go away for three days. Then come back to me." So
the people went away.

[6]King Rehoboam asked the elders for advice. They had served his father
Solomon while he was still living. Rehoboam asked them, "What advice can
you give me? How should I answer these people?"

[7]They replied, "Serve them today. Give them what they are asking for. Then
they'll always serve you."

[8]But Rehoboam didn't accept the advice the elders gave him. Instead, he
asked for advice from the young men who had grown up with him and were
now serving him. [9]He asked them, "What's your advice? How should I answer
these people? They say to me, 'Make the load your father put on our shoulders
lighter.' "

[10]The young men who had grown up with him gave their answer. They
replied, "These people say to you, 'Your father put a heavy load on our
shoulders. Make it lighter.' Tell them, 'My little finger is stronger than my
father's legs. [11]My father put a heavy load on your shoulders. But I'll make it
even heavier. My father beat you with whips. But I'll beat you with bigger
whips.' "

[12]Three days later Jeroboam and all of the people returned to Rehoboam.
That's because the king had said, "Come back to me in three days."

13The king answered the people in a mean way. He didn’t accept the advice
the elders had given him. 14Instead, he followed the advice of the young men.
He said, “My father put a heavy load on your shoulders. But I’ll make it even
heavier. My father beat you with whips. But I’ll beat you with bigger whips.”

15So the king didn’t listen to the people. That’s because the LORD had planned
it that way. What he had said through Ahijah came true. Ahijah had spoken the
LORD’s message to Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. Ahijah was from Shiloh.

16All of the people of Israel saw that the king refused to listen to them. So
they answered the king. They said,

> “We don’t have any share in David’s royal family.
> We don’t have any share in Jesse’s son.
> People of Israel, let’s go back to our homes.
> David’s royal family, take care of your own kingdom!”

So the people of Israel went home.

17But Rehoboam still ruled over the Israelites who were living in the towns of
Judah.

18Adoniram was in charge of those who were forced to work hard for King
Rehoboam. The king sent him out among all of the Israelites. But they killed
him by throwing stones at him. King Rehoboam was able to get away in his
chariot. He escaped to Jerusalem. 19Israel has refused to follow the royal
family of David to this very day.

20All of the people of Israel heard that Jeroboam had returned. They sent for
him. They wanted him to meet with the whole community. Then they made
him king over the entire nation of Israel. Only the tribe of Judah remained true
to David’s royal family.

21Rehoboam arrived in Jerusalem. He brought together 180,000 fighting men
from the royal house of Judah and the tribe of Benjamin. He had decided to
make war against the royal house of Israel. Solomon’s son Rehoboam wanted
his fighting men to get the kingdom of Israel back for him.

22But a message from God came to Shemaiah. He was a man of God. God
said to him, 23“Speak to Solomon’s son Rehoboam, the king of Judah. Speak to
the royal house of Judah and Benjamin. Also speak to the rest of the people.

Tell all of them, [24]‘The LORD says, “Do not go up to fight against the Israelites. They are your relatives. I want every one of you to go back home. Things have happened exactly the way I planned them.” ’ ” So the fighting men obeyed the LORD’s message. They went home again, just as he had ordered.

Jeroboam Sets Up Golden Calves at Bethel and Dan

[25]Jeroboam built up the walls of Shechem. It was in the hill country of Ephraim. Jeroboam made Shechem his home. From there he went out and built up Peniel.

[26]Jeroboam thought, “My kingdom still isn’t secure. It could very easily go back to the royal family of David. [27]Suppose the people of Israel go up to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices at the LORD’s temple. If they do, they will again decide to follow Rehoboam as their master. Then they’ll kill me. They’ll return to King Rehoboam. He is king of Judah.”

[28]So King Jeroboam asked for advice. Then he made two golden statues that looked like calves. He said to the people, “It’s too hard for you to go up to Jerusalem. Israel, here are your gods who brought you up out of Egypt.” [29]He set up one statue in Bethel. He set up the other one in Dan.

[30]What Jeroboam did was sinful. And it caused Israel to sin. The people even went all the way to Dan to worship the statue that was there.

[31]Jeroboam built temples for worshiping gods on high places. He appointed all kinds of people as priests. They didn’t even have to be Levites. [32]He established a feast. It was on the 15th day of the eighth month. He wanted to make it like the Feast of Booths that was held in Judah.

Jeroboam built an altar at Bethel. He offered sacrifices on it. He sacrificed to the calves he had made. He also put priests in Bethel. He did it at the high places he had made. [33]He offered sacrifices on the altar he had built at Bethel. It was on the 15th day of the eighth month. That’s the month he had chosen for it. So he established the feast for the people of Israel. And he went up to the altar to sacrifice offerings.

A Man of God Goes to Bethel

1 Kings 13

[1]A man of God went from Judah to Bethel. He had received a message from the LORD. He arrived in Bethel just as Jeroboam was standing by the altar to offer a sacrifice. [2]The man cried out. He shouted a message from the LORD against the altar. He said, “Altar! Altar! The LORD says, ‘A son named Josiah will be born into the royal family of David. Altar, listen to me! Josiah will sacrifice the priests of the high places on you. They will be the children of the priests who are offering sacrifices here now. So human bones will be burned on you.’ ”

[3]That same day the man of God spoke about a miraculous sign. He said, “Here is the sign the LORD has announced. This altar will be broken to pieces. The ashes on it will be spilled out.”

[4]The man of God announced that message against the altar at Bethel. When King Jeroboam heard it, he reached out his hand from the altar. He said, “Grab him!” But as he reached out his hand toward the man, it dried up. He couldn’t even pull it back.

[5]Also, the altar broke into pieces. Its ashes spilled out. That happened in keeping with the miraculous sign the man of God had announced. He had received a message from the LORD.

[6]King Jeroboam spoke to the man of God. He said, “Pray to the LORD your God for me. Pray that my hand will be as good as new again.”

So the man of God prayed to the LORD for the king. And the king’s hand became as good as new. It was just as healthy as it had been before.

[7]The king said to the man of God, “Come home with me. Have something to eat. I’ll give you a gift.”

[8]But the man of God replied to the king. He said, “What if you were to give me half of what you own? Even then I wouldn’t go with you. I wouldn’t eat bread or drink water here. [9]The LORD gave me a command. He said, ‘Do not eat bread or drink water there. Do not return the same way you came.’ ” [10]So he

took another road. He didn’t go back on the same road he had taken when he came to Bethel.

11An old prophet was living in Bethel. His sons came and spoke to him. They told him everything the man of God had done there that day. They also told their father what the man had said to the king.

12Their father asked them, “Which way did he go?”

His sons showed him the road the man of God from Judah had taken.

13So he said to his sons, “Put a saddle on the donkey for me.”

When they had done it, he got on the donkey. 14He traveled on the same road the man of God had taken. He found the man sitting under an oak tree. He asked him, “Are you the man of God who came from Judah?”

“I am,” he replied.

15So the prophet said to him, “Come home with me. I’ll give you something to eat.”

16The man of God said, “I can’t go back to Bethel with you. I can’t eat bread or drink water with you there. 17I’ve received a message from the LORD. He told me, ‘Do not eat bread or drink water there. Do not return the same way you came.’ ”

18The old prophet answered, “I’m also a prophet, just like you. An angel gave me a message from the LORD. The message said, ‘Bring the man of God back with you to your house. Then he can eat bread and drink water with you.’ ” But the old prophet was telling him a lie.

19The man of God returned with him. He ate and drank in his house.

20They were sitting at the table. The LORD gave a message to the old prophet who had brought the man of God back. 21He cried out to the man who had come from Judah. He told him, “The LORD says, ‘You have not done what I told you to do. You have not obeyed the command I gave you. I am the LORD your God. 22You came back here and ate bread and drank water. You did it in the place where I told you not to. So your body will not be buried in your family tomb.’ ”

23The man of God finished eating and drinking. Then the old prophet who had brought him back put a saddle on the man’s donkey for him. 24And the man went on his way. A lion attacked him on the road and killed him. His body was left lying on the road. The donkey and the lion were standing beside it.

25 Some people passed by. They saw the body lying on the road. They saw the
lion standing beside the body. Then they went and reported it in the city where
the old prophet lived.

26 The prophet who had brought the man back from his journey heard about
what had happened. He said, “It’s the man of God. He didn’t do what the LORD
told him to do. So the LORD has given him over to the lion. The lion has
attacked him and killed him. Everything has happened just as the LORD’s
message had warned him it would.”

27 The old prophet said to his sons, “Put a saddle on the donkey for me.” So
they did. 28 Then he went out. He found the body of the man of God lying on
the road. The donkey and the lion were standing beside it. The lion hadn’t
eaten the body. It hadn’t attacked the donkey either.

29 So the prophet picked up the man’s body. He put it on the donkey. He
brought it back to his own city. He wanted to sob over him and bury him.
30 Then he placed the body in his own tomb. People sobbed over him. They
said, “My friend! My dear friend!”

31 After the old prophet had buried the body of the man of God, he spoke to
his sons. He said, “When I die, bury my body in the grave where the man of
God is buried. Put my bones next to his bones. 32 I want you to do that because
he announced a message from the LORD. He spoke against the altar in Bethel.
He also spoke against all of the temples that were on the high places. They are
in the towns of Samaria. What the man of God said will certainly come true.”

33 Even after all of that happened, Jeroboam still didn’t change his evil ways.
Once more he appointed priests for the high places. He made priests out of all
kinds of people. In fact, he let anyone become a priest who wanted to. He set
them apart to serve at the high places. 34 All of that was the great sin the royal
family of Jeroboam committed. It led to their fall from power. Because of it,
they were destroyed from the face of the earth.

Ahijah Prophesies Against Jeroboam

1 Kings 14

1 At that time Abijah became sick. He was the son of Jeroboam. 2 Jeroboam
said to his wife, “Go. Put on some different clothes. Then no one will
recognize you as my wife. Go to Shiloh. That’s where the prophet Ahijah is.
He told me I would be king over the people of Israel. 3 Take ten loaves of bread
with you. Take some cakes and a jar of honey. Go to him. He’ll tell you what
will happen to our son.”

4 So Jeroboam’s wife did what he said. She went to Ahijah’s house in Shiloh.

Ahijah couldn’t see. He was blind because he was so old. 5 But the LORD had
told Ahijah, “Jeroboam’s wife is coming. Her son is sick. She’ll ask you about
him. Give her the answer I give you. When she arrives, she’ll pretend to be
someone else.”

6 Ahijah heard the sound of her footsteps at the door. He said, “Come in. I
know that you are Jeroboam’s wife. Why are you pretending to be someone
else? I have some bad news for you.

7 “Go. Tell Jeroboam that the LORD has a message for him. The LORD is the
God of Israel. He says, ‘I chose you from among the people. I made you the
leader of my people Israel. 8 I tore the kingdom away from the royal house of
David. I gave it to you. But you have not been like my servant David. He
obeyed my commands. He followed me with all his heart. He did only what
was right in my eyes. 9 You have done more evil things than all those who lived
before you. You have made other gods for yourself. You have made statues of
gods out of metal. You have made me very angry. You have turned your back
on me.

10 “ ‘Because of that, I am going to bring horrible trouble on your royal house.
I will cut off from you every male in Israel. It does not matter whether they are
slaves or free. I will burn up your royal house, just as someone burns up trash. I
will burn it until it is all gone. 11 Some of the people who belong to you will die
in the city. Dogs will eat them up. Others will die in the country. The birds of
the air will eat them. I have spoken!’

12“Now go back home. When you enter your city, your son will die. 13All of the people of Israel will sob over him. Then his body will be buried. He is the only one who belongs to Jeroboam who will be buried. That is because he is the only one in Jeroboam’s royal house in whom I have found anything good. I am the LORD, the God of Israel.

14“I will choose for myself a king over Israel. He will cut off the family of Jeroboam. This very day your son will die. Can that really be true? Yes. Even now, that is what I am telling you.

15“I will strike Israel down. Israel will be like tall grass swaying in the water. I will pull Israel up from this good land by the roots. I gave it to their people who lived long ago. I will scatter Israel to the east side of the Euphrates River. That is because they made me very angry. They made poles that were used to worship the goddess Asherah.

16“I will give Israel up because of the sins Jeroboam has committed. He has also caused Israel to commit those same sins.”

17Then Jeroboam’s wife got up and left. She went to the city of Tirzah. As soon as she stepped through the doorway of the house, her son died. 18His body was buried. All of the people of Israel sobbed over him. That’s what the LORD had said would happen. He had said it through his servant, the prophet Ahijah.

19The other events of Jeroboam’s rule are written down. His wars and how he ruled are written down. They are written in the official records of the kings of Israel. 20Jeroboam ruled for 22 years. Then he joined the members of his family who had already died. Jeroboam’s son Nadab became the next king after him.

Rehoboam, the King of Judah

21Rehoboam was king in Judah. He was the son of Solomon. Rehoboam was 41 years old when he became king. He ruled for 17 years in Jerusalem. It was the city the LORD had chosen out of all of the cities in the tribes of Israel. He wanted to put his Name there. Rehoboam’s mother was Naamah from Ammon.

22The people of Judah did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. The sins they had committed stirred up his jealous anger. They did more to make him angry than their people who lived before them had done.

[23]Judah also set up for themselves high places for worship. They set up sacred stones. They set up poles that were used to worship the goddess Asherah. They did it on every high hill and under every green tree.

[24]There were even male prostitutes at the temples in the land. The people took part in all of the practices of other nations. The LORD hated those practices. He had driven those nations out to make room for the people of Israel.

[25]Shishak attacked Jerusalem. It was in the fifth year that Rehoboam was king. Shishak was king of Egypt. [26]He carried away the treasures of the LORD's temple. He also carried the treasures of the royal palace away. He took everything. That included all of the gold shields Solomon had made.

[27]So King Rehoboam made bronze shields to take their place. He gave them to the commanders of the guards who were on duty at the entrance to the royal palace. [28]Every time the king went to the LORD's temple, the guards carried the shields. Later, they took them back to the room where they were kept.

[29]The other events of Rehoboam's rule are written down. Everything he did is written down. All of those things are written in the official records of the kings of Judah. [30]Rehoboam and Jeroboam were always at war with each other. [31]Rehoboam joined the members of his family who had already died. His body was buried in his family tomb in the City of David. His mother was Naamah from Ammon. His son Abijah became the next king after him.

Abijah Becomes King of Judah

1 Kings 15

1 Abijah became king of Judah. It was in the 18th year of Jeroboam's rule
over Israel. Jeroboam was the son of Nebat. 2 Abijah ruled in Jerusalem for
three years. His mother's name was Maacah. She was Abishalom's daughter.

3 Abijah committed all of the sins his father had committed before him.
Abijah didn't follow the LORD his God with all his heart. He didn't do what
King David had done.

4 But the LORD still kept the lamp of Abijah's kingdom burning brightly in
Jerusalem. He did it by giving him a son to be the next king after him. He also
did it by making Jerusalem strong. The LORD did those things because of
David. 5 David had done what was right in the eyes of the LORD. He had kept all
of the LORD's commands. He had obeyed them all the days of his life. But he
hadn't obeyed the LORD in the case of Uriah, the Hittite.

6 There was war between Jeroboam and Abijah's father Rehoboam. The war
continued all through Abijah's life. 7 The other events of Abijah's rule are
written down. Everything he did is written down. All of those things are
written in the official records of the kings of Judah. There was war between
Abijah and Jeroboam.

8 Abijah joined the members of his family who had already died. His body
was buried in the City of David. His son Asa became the next king after him.

Asa Becomes King of Judah

9 Asa became king of Judah. It was in the 20th year that Jeroboam was king of
Israel. 10 Asa ruled in Jerusalem for 41 years. His grandmother's name was
Maacah. She was Abishalom's daughter.

11 Asa did what was right in the eyes of the LORD. That's what King David had
done.

12 Asa threw out of the land the male prostitutes who were at the temples. He
got rid of all of the statues of gods his people before him had made. 13 He even
removed his grandmother Maacah from her position as queen mother. That's
because she had made a pole that was used to worship the goddess Asherah.
The LORD hated it. So Asa cut it down. He burned it in the Kidron Valley.

14 Asa didn't remove the high places from Israel. But he committed his whole
life completely to the LORD. 15 He and his father had set apart silver, gold and
other articles to the LORD. He brought them into the LORD's temple.

16 There was war between Asa and Baasha, the king of Israel. It lasted the
whole time they were kings. 17 Baasha was king of Israel. He marched out
against Judah. He built up the walls of Ramah. He did it to keep people from
leaving or entering the territory of Asa, the king of Judah.

18 Asa took all of the silver and gold that was left among the treasures of the
LORD's temple and his own palace. He put his officials in charge of it. He sent
the officials to Ben-Hadad. Ben-Hadad was king of Aram. He was ruling in
Damascus. He was the son of Tabrimmon and the grandson of Hezion.

19 "Let's make a peace treaty between us," Asa said. "My father and your
father had made a peace treaty between them. Now I'm sending you a gift of
silver and gold. So break your treaty with Baasha, the king of Israel. Then he'll
go back home."

20 Ben-Hadad agreed with King Asa. He sent his army commanders against
the towns of Israel. He attacked Ijon, Dan, Abel Beth Maacah and the whole
area of Kinnereth in addition to Naphtali.

21 Baasha heard about it. So he stopped building up Ramah. He went back
home to Tirzah.

22 Then King Asa gave an order to all of the men of Judah. Everyone was
required to help. They carried away from Ramah the stones and wood Baasha
had been using there. King Asa used them to build up Geba in the territory of
Benjamin. He also used them to build up Mizpah.

23 All of the other events of Asa's rule are written down. Everything he
accomplished is written down. Everything he did and the cities he built are
written down. They are written in the official records of the kings of Judah. But
when Asa became old, his feet began to give him trouble. 24 He joined the
members of his family who had already died. His body was buried in his
family tomb. It was in the city of King David. Asa's son Jehoshaphat became

the next king after him.

Nadab Becomes King of Israel

25 Nadab became king of Israel. It was in the second year that Asa was king of
Judah. Nadab ruled over Israel for two years. He was the son of Jeroboam.
26 Nadab did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. He lived the way his father
had lived. He sinned as his father had sinned. Jeroboam had also caused Israel
to commit the same sins.

27 Baasha was from the tribe of Issachar. He was the son of Ahijah. Baasha
made plans against Nadab and struck him down at Gibbethon. It was a
Philistine town. Baasha struck him down while Nadab and all of the men of
Israel were getting ready to attack Gibbethon. 28 He killed Nadab in the third
year that Asa was king of Judah. Baasha became the next king after Nadab.

29 As soon as Baasha became king, he killed Jeroboam's whole family. He
didn't leave any of them alive. He destroyed every one of them. He did what
the LORD had said would happen. The LORD had spoken that message through
his servant Ahijah from Shiloh.

30 The LORD judged Jeroboam's family because of the sins Jeroboam had
committed. He had also caused Israel to commit those same sins. He had made
the LORD very angry. The LORD is the God of Israel.

31 The other events of Nadab's rule are written down. Everything he did is
written down. All of those things are written in the official records of the kings
of Israel.

32 There was war between Asa and Baasha, the king of Israel. It lasted the
whole time they were kings.

Baasha Becomes King of Israel

33 Baasha became king of Israel in Tirzah. It was in the third year that Asa
was king of Judah. Baasha ruled for 24 years. He was the son of Ahijah.
34 Baasha did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. He lived the way Jeroboam
had lived. He sinned as Jeroboam had sinned. Jeroboam had also caused Israel

to commit the same sins.

1 Kings 16

[1]The LORD's message against Baasha came to Jehu. Jehu was the son of Hanani. The LORD said, [2]"I lifted you up from the dust. I made you leader of my people Israel. But you lived the way Jeroboam had lived. You also caused my people Israel to sin. And their sins made me very angry.

[3]"So I am about to destroy you and your royal house. I will make your house like the royal house of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. [4]Some of the people who belong to you will die in the city. Dogs will eat them up. Others will die in the country. The birds of the air will eat them."

[5]The other events of Baasha's rule are written down. What he did and what he accomplished are written down. All of those things are written in the official records of the kings of Israel. [6]Baasha joined the members of his family who had already died. His body was buried in Tirzah. His son Elah became the next king after him.

[7]The LORD's message came through the prophet Jehu, the son of Hanani. It was against Baasha and his royal house. Baasha had done all kinds of evil things in the sight of the LORD. What he did had made the LORD very angry. So Baasha had become as sinful as the royal house of Jeroboam had been. He had also destroyed it.

Elah Becomes King of Israel

[8]Elah became king of Israel. It was in the 26th year that Asa was king of Judah. Elah ruled in Tirzah for two years. He was the son of Baasha.

[9]Zimri was one of Elah's officials. He commanded half of Elah's chariot drivers. He made plans against Elah. Elah was in Tirzah at the time. He was getting drunk in the home of Arza. Arza was in charge of the palace at Tirzah. [10]Zimri came in. He struck Elah down and killed him. It was in the 27th year of Asa, the king of Judah. Zimri became the next king after Elah.

[11]As soon as Zimri was seated on the throne as king, he killed off Baasha's whole family. He didn't even spare one male. It didn't matter whether it was a relative or a friend. [12]So Zimri destroyed the whole family of Baasha. That's

what the LORD had said would happen. He had spoken against Baasha through the prophet Jehu.

13Baasha and his son Elah had committed all kinds of sin. They had also caused Israel to commit the same sins. So Israel made the LORD very angry. They did it by worshiping worthless statues of gods. The LORD is the God of Israel.

14The other events of Elah's rule are written down. Everything he did is written down. All of those things are written in the official records of the kings of Israel.

Zimri Becomes King of Israel

15Zimri ruled in Tirzah for seven days. It was in the 27th year that Asa was king of Judah. The army of Israel had set up camp near Gibbethon. It was a Philistine town.

16The people of Israel who were in the camp heard that Zimri had made plans against King Elah. They also heard that Zimri had murdered him. So they announced that Omri was king over Israel. He was the commander of the army. They made him king that very day in the camp.

17Then Omri and all of his men pulled back from Gibbethon. They marched to Tirzah and surrounded it. They attacked it and captured it.

18Zimri saw that they had taken over the city. So he went into the safest place in the royal palace. He set the palace on fire all around him. He died there 19because of the sins he had committed. He had done what was evil in the sight of the LORD. He had lived the way Jeroboam had lived. He had sinned as Jeroboam had sinned. Jeroboam had also caused Israel to commit the same sins.

20The other events of Zimri's rule are written down. The way he turned against King Elah and killed him is written down. All of those things are written in the official records of the kings of Israel.

Omri Becomes King of Israel

[21]The people of Israel divided up into two groups. Half of them wanted Tibni to be king. He was the son of Ginath. The other half wanted Omri. [22]But Omri's followers were stronger than those of Tibni, the son of Ginath. So Tibni died. And Omri began to rule.

[23]Omri became king of Israel. It was in the 31st year that Asa was king of Judah. Omri ruled for 12 years. He ruled in Tirzah for six of those years. [24]He bought the hill of Samaria from Shemer. He weighed out 150 pounds of silver for it. Then he built a city on the hill. He called it Samaria. He named it after Shemer. Shemer had owned the hill before him.

[25]But Omri did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. He sinned more than all of the kings who had ruled before him. [26]He lived the way Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, had lived. He sinned as Jeroboam had sinned. Jeroboam had also caused Israel to commit the same sins. Israel made the LORD very angry. They did it by worshiping worthless statues of gods. The LORD is the God of Israel.

[27]The other events of Omri's rule are written down. Everything he did and the things he accomplished are written down. All of those things are written in the official records of the kings of Israel. [28]Omri joined the members of his family who had already died. His body was buried in Samaria. His son Ahab became the next king after him.

Ahab Becomes King of Israel

[29]Ahab became king of Israel. It was in the 38th year that Asa was king of Judah. Ahab ruled over Israel in Samaria for 22 years. He was the son of Omri. [30]Ahab, the son of Omri, did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. He did more evil things than any of the kings who had ruled before him. [31]He thought it was only a small thing to commit the sins Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, had committed.

Ahab also got married to Jezebel. She was Ethbaal's daughter. Ethbaal was king of the people of Sidon. Ahab began to serve the god Baal and worship him. [32]He set up an altar to honor Baal. He set it up in the temple of Baal that he built in Samaria. [33]Ahab also made a pole that was used to worship the goddess Asherah.

He made the LORD very angry. He did more to make him angry than all of the

kings of Israel had done before him. The LORD is the God of Israel.

34In Ahab’s time, Hiel from Bethel rebuilt Jericho. When he laid its foundations, it cost him the life of his oldest son Abiram. When he set up its gates, it cost him the life of his youngest son Segub. That’s what the LORD had said would happen. He had spoken it through Joshua, the son of Nun.

Elijah Is Fed by Ravens

1 Kings 17

1 Elijah was from Tishbe in the land of Gilead. He said to Ahab, “I serve the
LORD. He is the God of Israel. You can be sure that he lives. And you can be
just as sure that there won’t be any dew or rain on the whole land. There won’t
be any during the next few years. It won’t come until I say so.”

2 Then a message from the LORD came to Elijah. It said, 3 “Leave this place.
Go east and hide in the Kerith Valley. It is east of the Jordan River. 4 You will
drink water from the brook. I have ordered some ravens to feed you there.”

5 So Elijah did what the LORD had told him to do. He went to the Kerith
Valley. It was east of the Jordan River. He stayed there. 6 The ravens brought
him bread and meat in the morning. They also brought him bread and meat in
the evening. He drank water from the brook.

Elijah Visits a Widow at Zarephath

7 Some time later the brook dried up. It hadn’t rained in the land for quite a
while. 8 A message came to Elijah from the LORD. He said, 9 “Go right away to
Zarephath in the territory of Sidon. Stay there. I have commanded a widow in
that place to supply you with food.”

10 So Elijah went to Zarephath. He came to the town gate. A widow was there
gathering sticks. He called out to her. He asked, “Would you bring me a little
water in a jar? I need a drink.”

11 She went to get the water.

Then he called out to her, “Please bring me a piece of bread too.”

12 “I don’t have any bread,” she replied. “And that’s just as sure as the LORD
your God is alive. All I have is a small amount of flour in a jar and a little olive
oil in a jug. I’m gathering a few sticks to take home. I’ll make one last meal for
myself and my son. We’ll eat it. After that, we’ll die.”

13Elijah said to her, “Don’t be afraid. Go home. Do what you have said. But
first make a little bread for me. Make it out of what you have. Bring it to me.
Then make some for yourself and your son.

14“The LORD is the God of Israel. He says, ‘The jar of flour will not be used
up. The jug will always have oil in it. You will have flour and oil until the day
the LORD sends rain on the land.’ ”

15She went away and did what Elijah had told her to do. So Elijah had food
every day. There was also food for the woman and her family. 16The jar of
flour wasn’t used up. The jug always had oil in it. That’s what the LORD had
said would happen. He had spoken that message through Elijah.

17Some time later the son of the woman who owned the house became sick.
He got worse and worse. Finally he stopped breathing.

18The woman said to Elijah, “You are a man of God. What do you have
against me? Did you come to bring my sin out into the open? Did you come to
kill my son?”

19“Give me your son,” Elijah replied. He took him from her arms. He carried
him to the upstairs room where he was staying. He put him down on his bed.

20Then Elijah cried out to the LORD. He said, “LORD my God, I’m staying with
this widow. Have you brought pain and sorrow to her? Have you caused her
son to die?”

21Then he lay down on the boy three times. He cried out to the LORD. He said,
“LORD my God, give this boy’s life back to him!”

22The LORD answered Elijah’s prayer. He gave the boy’s life back to him. So
the boy lived. 23Elijah picked up the boy. He carried him down from the
upstairs room into the house. He gave him to his mother. He said, “Look! Your
son is alive!”

24Then the woman said to Elijah, “Now I know that you are a man of God. I
know that the message you have brought from the LORD is true.”

Elijah Gives Obadiah a Message for Ahab

1 Kings 18

[1]It was now three years since it had rained. A message came to Elijah from the LORD. He said, “Go. Speak to Ahab. Then I will send rain on the land.”

[2]So Elijah went to speak to Ahab.

There wasn’t enough food in Samaria. The people there were very hungry. [3]Ahab had sent for Obadiah. He was in charge of Ahab’s palace. Obadiah had great respect for the LORD.

[4]Ahab’s wife Jezebel had been killing off the LORD’s prophets. So Obadiah had hidden 100 prophets in two caves. He had put 50 in each cave. He had supplied them with food and water.

[5]Ahab had said to Obadiah, “Go through the land. Go to all of the springs of water and to the valleys. Maybe we can find some grass there. It will keep the horses and mules alive. Then we won’t have to kill any of our animals.” [6]So they decided where each of them would look. Ahab went in one direction. Obadiah went in another.

[7]As Obadiah was walking along, Elijah met him. Obadiah recognized him. He bowed down to the ground. He said, “My master Elijah! Is it really you?”

[8]“Yes,” he replied. “Go and tell your master Ahab, ‘Elijah is here.’ ”

[9]“What have I done wrong?” asked Obadiah. “Why are you handing me over to Ahab to be put to death?

[10]“My master has sent people to look for you everywhere. There isn’t a nation or kingdom where he hasn’t sent someone to look for you. Suppose a nation or kingdom would claim you weren’t there. Then Ahab would make them take an oath and say they couldn’t find you. And that’s just as sure as the LORD your God is alive.

[11]“But now you are telling me to go to my master. You want me to say, ‘Elijah is here.’ [12]But the Spirit of the LORD might carry you away when I leave you. Then I won’t know where you are. If I go and tell Ahab and he doesn’t find you, he’ll kill me.

“But I’ve worshiped the LORD ever since I was young. 13My master, haven’t you heard what I did? Jezebel was killing the LORD’s prophets. But I hid 100 of them in two caves. I put 50 in each cave. I supplied them with food and water. 14And now you are telling me to go to my master Ahab. You want me to say to him, ‘Elijah is here.’ He’ll kill me!”

15Elijah said, “I serve the LORD who rules over all. You can be sure that he lives. And you can be just as sure that I will speak to Ahab today.”

The LORD Answers Elijah’s Prayer on Mount Carmel

16Obadiah went back to Ahab. He told Ahab that Elijah wanted to see him. So Ahab went to where Elijah was. 17When he saw Elijah, he said to him, “Is that you? You are always stirring up trouble in Israel.”

18“I haven’t made trouble for Israel,” Elijah replied. “But you and your father’s family have. You have turned away from the LORD’s commands. You have followed the gods that are named after Baal.

19“Now send for people from all over Israel. Tell them to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the 450 prophets of the god Baal. Also bring the 400 prophets of the goddess Asherah. All of them eat at Jezebel’s table.”

20So Ahab sent that message all through Israel. He gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel.

21Elijah went there and stood in front of the people. He said, “How long will it take you to make up your minds? If the LORD is the one and only God, follow him. But if Baal is the one and only God, follow him.”

The people didn’t say anything.

22Then Elijah said to them, “I’m the only one of the LORD’s prophets left. But Baal has 450 prophets. 23Get two bulls for us. Let Baal’s prophets choose one for themselves. Let them cut it into pieces. Then let them put it on the wood. But don’t let them set fire to it. I’ll prepare the other bull. I’ll put it on the wood. But I won’t set fire to it. 24Then you pray to your god. And I’ll pray to the LORD. The god who answers by sending fire down is the one and only God.”

Then all of the people said, “What you are saying is good.”

25 Elijah spoke to the prophets of Baal. He said, “Choose one of the bulls.
There are many of you. So prepare your bull first. Pray to your god. But don’t
light the fire.”

26 So they prepared the bull they had been given.

They prayed to Baal from morning until noon. “Baal! Answer us!” they
shouted. But there wasn’t any reply. No one answered. Then they danced
around the altar they had made.

27 At noon Elijah began to tease them. “Shout louder!” he said. “I’m sure Baal
is a god! Perhaps he has too much to think about. Or maybe he has gone to the
toilet. Or perhaps he’s away on a trip. Maybe he’s sleeping. You might have to
wake him up.”

28 So they shouted louder. They cut themselves with swords and spears until
their blood flowed. That’s what they usually did when things really looked
hopeless. 29 It was now past noon. The prophets of Baal continued to prophesy
with all their might. They did it until the time came to offer the evening
sacrifice. But there wasn’t any reply. No one answered. No one paid any
attention.

30 Then Elijah said to all of the people, “Come here to me.” So they went to
him. He rebuilt the altar of the LORD. It had been destroyed. 31 Elijah got 12
stones. There was one for each tribe in the family line of Jacob. The LORD’s
message had come to Jacob. It had said, “Your name will be Israel.” 32 Elijah
used the stones to build an altar in honor of the LORD. He dug a ditch around it.
The ditch was large enough to hold 13 quarts of seeds. 33 He arranged the wood
for the fire. He cut the bull into pieces. He placed the pieces on the wood.

Then he said to some of the people, “Fill four large jars with water. Pour it on
the offering and the wood.” So they did.

34 “Do it again,” he said. So they did it again.

“Do it a third time,” he ordered. And they did it the third time. 35 The water
ran down around the altar. It even filled the ditch.

36 When it was time to offer the evening sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped
forward. He prayed, “LORD, you are the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel.
Today let everyone know that you are God in Israel. Let them know I’m your
servant. Let them know I’ve done all of these things because you commanded
me to. 37 Answer me. LORD, answer me. Then these people will know that you
are the one and only God. They’ll know that you are turning their hearts back

to you again.”

38The fire of the LORD came down. It burned up the sacrifice. It burned up the wood and the stones and the soil. It even licked up the water in the ditch.

39All of the people saw it. Then they fell down flat with their faces toward the ground. They cried out, “The LORD is the one and only God! The LORD is the one and only God!”

40Then Elijah commanded them, “Grab hold of the prophets of Baal. Don’t let a single one of them get away!”

So they grabbed them. Elijah had them brought down to the Kishon Valley. There he had them put to death.

41Elijah said to Ahab, “Go. Eat and drink. I can hear the sound of a heavy rain.”

42So Ahab went off to eat and drink.

But Elijah climbed to the top of Mount Carmel. He bent down toward the ground. Then he put his face between his knees.

43“Go and look toward the sea,” he told his servant. So he went up and looked.

“I don’t see anything there,” he said.

Seven times Elijah said, “Go back.”

44The seventh time the servant said, “I see a cloud. It’s as small as a man’s hand. It’s coming up over the sea.”

Elijah said, “Go to Ahab. Tell him, ‘Tie your chariot to your horse. Go down to Jezreel before the rain stops you.’ ”

45Black clouds filled the sky. The wind came up, and a heavy rain began to fall. Ahab rode off to Jezreel.

46The power of the LORD came on Elijah. He tucked his coat into his belt. And he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel.

Elijah Runs Away to Mount Horeb

1 Kings 19

[1]Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done. He told her how Elijah had killed all of the prophets with his sword.

[2]So Jezebel sent a message to Elijah. She said, “You can be sure that I will kill you, just as I killed the other prophets. I’ll do it by this time tomorrow. If I don’t, may the gods punish me greatly.”

[3]Elijah was afraid. So he ran for his life. He came to Beersheba in Judah. He left his servant there.

[4]Then he traveled for one day into the desert. He came to a small tree. He sat down under it. He prayed that he would die. “LORD, I’ve had enough,” he said. “Take my life. I’m no better than my people of long ago.” [5]Then he lay down under the tree. And he fell asleep.

Suddenly an angel touched him. The angel said, “Get up and eat.” [6]Elijah looked around. Near his head he saw a flat cake of bread. It had been baked over hot coals. A jar of water was also there. So Elijah ate and drank. Then he lay down again.

[7]The angel of the LORD came to him a second time. He touched him and said, “Get up and eat. Your journey will be long and hard.”

[8]So he got up. He ate and drank. The food gave him new strength. He traveled for 40 days and 40 nights. He kept going until he arrived at Horeb. It was the mountain of God. [9]There he went into a cave and spent the night.

The LORD Appears to Elijah

A message came to Elijah from the LORD. He said, “Elijah, what are you doing here?”

[10]He replied, “LORD God who rules over all, I’ve been very committed to you. The people of Israel have turned their backs on your covenant. They have torn

down your altars. They've put your prophets to death with their swords. I'm the only one left. And they are trying to kill me."

11The LORD said, "Go out. Stand on the mountain in front of me. I am going to pass by."

As the LORD approached, a very powerful wind tore the mountains apart. It broke up the rocks. But the LORD wasn't in the wind.

After the wind there was an earthquake. But the LORD wasn't in the earthquake.

12After the earthquake a fire came. But the LORD wasn't in the fire.

And after the fire there was only a gentle whisper. 13When Elijah heard it, he pulled his coat over his face. He went out and stood at the entrance to the cave.

Then a voice said to him, "Elijah, what are you doing here?"

14He replied, "LORD God who rules over all, I've been very committed to you. The people of Israel have turned their backs on your covenant. They have torn down your altars. They've put your prophets to death with their swords. I'm the only one left. And they are trying to kill me."

15The LORD said to him, "Go back the way you came. Go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael as king over Aram. 16Also anoint Jehu as king over Israel. He is the son of Nimshi. And anoint Elisha from Abel Meholah as the next prophet after you. He is the son of Shaphat. 17Jehu will put to death anyone who escapes Hazael's sword. And Elisha will put to death anyone who escapes Jehu's sword.

18"But I will keep 7,000 people in Israel for myself. They have not bowed down to Baal. And they have not kissed him."

The LORD Chooses Elisha

19Elijah left Mount Horeb. He saw Elisha, the son of Shaphat. Elisha was plowing in a field. He was driving the last of 12 pairs of oxen. Elijah went up to him. He threw his coat around him. 20Then Elisha left his oxen. He ran after Elijah. "Let me kiss my father and mother good-by," he said. "Then I'll come with you."

"Go back," Elijah replied. "What have I done to you?"

[21]So Elisha left him and went back. He got his two oxen and killed them. He burned the plow to cook the meat. He gave it to the people, and they ate it. Then he started to follow Elijah. He became Elijah’s assistant.

Ben-Hadad Attacks Samaria

1 Kings 20

[1]Ben-Hadad brought his whole army together. He was king of Aram. He went
up to Samaria. He took 32 kings and their horses and chariots with him. All of
them surrounded Samaria and attacked it.

[2]Ben-Hadad sent messengers into the city. They spoke to Ahab, the king of
Israel. They told him, “Ben-Hadad says, [3]‘Your silver and gold belong to me.
The best of your wives and children also belong to me.’ ”

[4]The king of Israel replied, “What you say is true. You are my king and
master. I belong to you. And everything I have belongs to you.”

[5]The messengers came again. They told Ahab, “Ben-Hadad says, ‘I
commanded you to give me your silver and gold. I also commanded you to
give me your wives and children. [6]But now I’m going to send my officials to
you. They will come about this time tomorrow. They’ll search your palace.
They’ll search the houses of your officials. They’ll take everything you value.
And they’ll carry all of it away.’ ”

[7]The king of Israel sent for all of the elders of the land. He said to them,
“This man is really looking for trouble! He sent for my wives and children. He
sent for my silver and gold. And I agreed to give them to him.”

[8]All of the elders and people answered, “Don’t listen to him. Don’t agree to
give him what he wants.”

[9]So Ahab replied to Ben-Hadad’s messengers. He said, “Tell my king and
master, ‘I will do everything you commanded me to do the first time. But this
time, I can’t do what you want me to do.’ ”

They took Ahab’s answer back to Ben-Hadad.

[10]Then Ben-Hadad sent another message to Ahab. It said, “There won’t be
enough dust left in Samaria to give each of my followers even a handful. If
there is, may the gods punish me greatly.”

[11]The king of Israel replied. He said, “Tell him, ‘Someone who puts his armor
on shouldn’t brag like someone who takes it off.’ ”

12 Ben-Hadad and the kings were in their tents drinking. That's when he heard
the message. He ordered his men, "Get ready to attack." So they prepared to
attack the city.

Ahab Wins the Battle Over Ben-Hadad

13 During that time a prophet came to Ahab, the king of Israel. He announced,
"The LORD says, 'Do you see this huge army? I will hand it over to you today.
Then you will know that I am the LORD.' "

14 "But who will do it?" Ahab asked.

The prophet answered, "The LORD says, 'The young officers who are under
the area commanders will do it.' "

"And who will start the battle?" he asked.

The prophet answered, "You will."

15 So Ahab sent for the young officers who were under the area commanders.
The total number of officers was 232. Ahab gathered together the rest of the
men of Israel. The total number of them was 7,000. 16 They started out at noon.
At that time Ben-Hadad and the 32 kings who were helping him were in their
tents. They were getting drunk. 17 The young officers who were under Ahab's
area commanders marched out first.

Ben-Hadad had sent out scouts. They came back and reported, "Men are
marching against us from Samaria."

18 Ben-Hadad said, "They might be coming to make peace. If they are, take
them alive. Or they might be coming to make war. If they are, take them alive."

19 The young officers marched out of the city. The army was right behind
them. 20 Each man struck down the one who was fighting against him. When
that happened, the army of Aram ran away. The men of Israel chased them. But
Ben-Hadad, the king of Aram, escaped on a horse. Some of his horsemen
escaped with him.

21 The king of Israel attacked them. He overpowered the horses and chariots.
Large numbers of the men of Aram were wounded or killed.

22 After that, the prophet came to the king of Israel again. He said, "Make
your position stronger. Do what needs to be done. Next spring the king of

Aram will attack you again.”

23During that time, the officials of the king of Aram gave him advice. They said, “The gods of Israel are gods of the hills. That’s why they were too strong for us. But suppose we fight them on the flatlands. Then we’ll certainly be stronger than they are.

24“Here’s what you should do. Don’t let any of the kings continue as military leaders. Have other officers take their places. 25You must also put another army together. It should be just like the one you lost. It should have the same number of horses and chariots. Then we’ll be able to fight against Israel on the flatlands. And we’ll certainly be stronger than they are.”

Ben-Hadad agreed with their advice. He did what they suggested.

26The next spring Ben-Hadad brought together the men of Aram. They went up to the city of Aphek to fight against Israel.

27The men of Israel were also brought together. They were given supplies. They marched out to fight against their enemies. Israel’s army camped across from Aram’s army. The men of Israel looked like two small flocks of goats that had become separated from the others. But the men of Aram covered the countryside.

28The man of God came up to the king of Israel again. He told him, “The LORD says, ‘The men of Aram think I am a god of the hills. They do not think I am a god of the valleys. So I will hand their huge army over to you. Then you will know that I am the LORD.’ ”

29For seven days the two armies camped across from each other. On the seventh day the battle began. The men of Israel wounded or killed 100,000 Aramean soldiers on foot. That happened in a single day. 30The rest of the men of Aram escaped to the city of Aphek. Its wall fell down on 27,000 of them. Ben-Hadad ran to the city. He hid in a secret room.

31His officials said to him, “Look, we’ve heard that the kings of Israel’s royal house often show mercy. So let’s go to the king of Israel. Let’s wear black clothes. Let’s tie ropes around our heads. Perhaps Ahab will spare your life.”

32So they wore black clothes. They tied ropes around their heads. Then they went to the king of Israel. They told him, “Your servant Ben-Hadad says, ‘Please let me live.’ ”

The king answered, “Is he still alive? He used to be my friend.”

33The men thought that was good news. So they quickly used the word Ahab had used. “Yes! Your friend Ben-Hadad!” they said.

“Go and get him,” the king said.

Ben-Hadad came out of the secret room. Then Ahab had him get into his chariot.

34“I’ll return the cities my father took from your father,” Ben-Hadad offered. “You can set up your own market areas in Damascus. That’s what my father did in Samaria.”

Ahab said, “If we sign a peace treaty, I’ll set you free.”

So he made a treaty with him. Then Ahab let him go.

A Prophet Brings Charges Against Ahab

35There was a group that was called the company of the prophets. A message from the LORD came to one of their members. He said to his companion, “Strike me down with your weapon.” But the man wouldn’t do it.

36The prophet said, “You haven’t obeyed the LORD. So as soon as you leave me, a lion will kill you.”

The companion went away. And a lion found him and killed him.

37The prophet found another man. He said, “Please strike me down.”

So the man struck him down and wounded him.

38Then the prophet went and stood by the road. He waited for the king to come by. He pulled his headband down over his eyes so no one would recognize him.

39The king passed by. Then the prophet called out to him. He said, “I went into the middle of the battle. Someone came to me with a prisoner. He said, ‘Guard this man. Don’t let him get away. If he does, you will pay for his life with yours. Or you can pay 75 pounds of silver.’ 40While I was busy here and there, the man disappeared.”

“That’s your sentence,” the king of Israel told him. “You have said so yourself.”

41Then the prophet quickly removed the headband from his eyes. The king of Israel recognized him as one of the prophets. 42He told the king, “The LORD

says, ‘You have set a man free. But I had said he should be set apart to the LORD in a special way to be destroyed. So you must pay for his life with yours. You must pay for his people’s lives with the lives of your people.’ ”

43The king of Israel was angry. He was in a bad mood. He went back to his palace in Samaria.

Ahab Takes Over Naboth's Vineyard

1 Kings 21

[1]Some time later King Ahab wanted a certain vineyard. It belonged to Naboth from Jezreel. The vineyard was in Jezreel. It was close to the palace of Ahab, the king of Samaria.

[2]Ahab said to Naboth, "Let me have your vineyard. It's close to my palace. I want to use it for a vegetable garden. I'll trade you a better vineyard for it. Or, if you prefer, I'll pay you what it's worth."

[3]But Naboth replied, "May the LORD keep me from giving you the land my family handed down to me."

[4]So Ahab went home. He was angry. He was in a bad mood because of what Naboth from Jezreel had said. He had told him, "I won't give you the land my family handed down to me."

So Ahab lay on his bed. He was in a very bad mood. He wouldn't even eat anything.

[5]His wife Jezebel came in. She asked him, "Why are you in such a bad mood? Why won't you eat anything?"

[6]He answered her, "Because I spoke to Naboth from Jezreel. I said, 'Sell me your vineyard. Or, if you prefer, I'll give you another vineyard in its place.' But he said, 'I won't sell you my vineyard.' "

[7]His wife Jezebel said, "Is this how the king of Israel acts? Get up! Eat something! Cheer up. I'll get you the vineyard of Naboth from Jezreel."

[8]So she wrote some letters in Ahab's name. She stamped them with his seal. Then she sent them to the elders and nobles who lived in the city where Naboth lived. [9]In those letters she wrote,

"Announce a day when people are supposed to go without eating. Have Naboth sit in an important place among the people. [10]But put two worthless and evil men in seats across from him. Have them witness to the fact that he has called down curses on God and the king. Then take him out of the city. Kill him by throwing stones at him."

[11]So the elders and nobles who lived in that city did what Jezebel wanted. They did everything she directed in the letters she had written to them. [12]They announced a day of fasting. They had Naboth sit in an important place among the people.

[13]Then two worthless and evil men came and sat across from him. They brought charges against Naboth in front of the people. The two men said, “Naboth has called down curses on God and the king.” So they took him outside the city. They killed him by throwing stones at him.

[14]Then they sent a message to Jezebel. They said, “Naboth is dead. We killed him by throwing stones at him.”

[15]Jezebel heard that Naboth had been killed. As soon as she heard it, she said to Ahab, “Get up. Take over the vineyard of Naboth from Jezreel. It’s the one he wouldn’t sell to you. He isn’t alive anymore. He’s dead.”

[16]Ahab heard that Naboth was dead. So he got up. He went down to take over Naboth’s vineyard.

[17]Then a message from the LORD came to Elijah, who was from Tishbe. It said, [18]“Go down to see Ahab, the king of Israel. He rules in Samaria. You will find him in Naboth’s vineyard. He has gone there to take it over. [19]Tell him, ‘The LORD says, “Haven’t you murdered a man? Haven’t you taken over his property?” ’ Then tell him, ‘The LORD says, “Dogs licked up Naboth’s blood. In that same place dogs will lick up your blood. Yes, I said your blood!” ’ ”

[20]Ahab said to Elijah, “My enemy! You have found me!”

“I have found you,” he answered. “That’s because you gave yourself over to do evil things. You did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. [21]So the LORD says, ‘I am going to bring horrible trouble on you. I will destroy your children after you. I will cut off every male in Israel who is related to you. It does not matter whether they are slaves or free. [22]I will make your royal house like the house of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. I will make it like the house of Baasha, the son of Ahijah. You have made me very angry. You have caused Israel to commit sin.’

[23]“The LORD also says, ‘Dogs will eat up Jezebel near the wall of Jezreel.’

[24]“Some of the people who belong to Ahab will die in the city. Dogs will eat them up. Others will die in the country. The birds of the air will eat them.”

[25]There was never anyone like Ahab. He gave himself over to do what was evil in the sight of the LORD. His wife Jezebel talked him into it. [26]He acted in the most evil way. He worshiped statues of gods. He was like the Amorites. The LORD drove them out to make room for Israel.

[27]When Ahab heard what Elijah had said, he tore his clothes. He put on black clothes. He went without eating. He even slept in his clothes. He went around looking sad.

[28]Then a message from the LORD came to Elijah, who was from Tishbe. It said, [29]"Have you seen how Ahab has made himself low in my sight? Because he has done that, I will not bring trouble on him while he lives. But I will bring it on his royal house when his son is king."

Micaiah Prophesies Against Ahab

1 Kings 22

[1]For three years there wasn't any war between Aram and Israel. [2]In the third year Jehoshaphat went down to see Ahab, the king of Israel. Jehoshaphat was king of Judah.

[3]The king of Israel had spoken to his officials. He had said, "Don't you know that Ramoth Gilead belongs to us? And we aren't even doing anything to take it back from the king of Aram."

[4]So Ahab asked Jehoshaphat, "Will you go with me to fight against Ramoth Gilead?"

Jehoshaphat replied to the king of Israel, "Yes. I'll go with you. My men will go with you. My horses will also go with you." [5]Jehoshaphat continued, "First ask the LORD for advice."

[6]So the king of Israel brought about 400 prophets together. He asked them, "Should I go to war against Ramoth Gilead? Or should I stay here?"

"Go," they answered. "The Lord will hand it over to you."

[7]But Jehoshaphat asked, "Isn't there a prophet of the LORD here? If there is, ask him what we should do."

[8]The king of Israel answered Jehoshaphat. He said, "There is still one other man we can go to. We can ask the LORD for advice through him. But I hate him. He never prophesies anything good about me. He only prophesies bad things. His name is Micaiah. He's the son of Imlah."

"You shouldn't say bad things about him," Jehoshaphat replied.

[9]So the king of Israel called for one of his officials. He told him, "Bring Micaiah, the son of Imlah, at once."

[10]The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, were wearing their royal robes. They were sitting on their thrones at the threshing floor. It was near the entrance of the gate of Samaria. All of the prophets were prophesying in front of them.

[11]Zedekiah was the son of Kenaanah. Zedekiah had made horns out of iron. They looked like animal horns. He announced, “The LORD says, ‘With these horns you will drive back the men of Aram until they are destroyed.’ ”

[12]All of the other prophets were prophesying the same thing. “Attack Ramoth Gilead,” they said. “Win the battle over it. The LORD will hand it over to you.”

[13]A messenger went to get Micaiah. He said to him, “Look. The other prophets agree. All of them are saying the king will have success. So agree with them. Say the same thing they do.”

[14]But Micaiah said, “You can be sure that the LORD lives. And you can be just as sure that I can only tell the king what the LORD tells me to say.”

[15]When Micaiah arrived, the king spoke to him. He asked, “Should we go to war against Ramoth Gilead? Or should I stay here?”

“Attack,” he answered. “You will win. The LORD will hand Ramoth Gilead over to you.”

[16]The king said to him, “I’ve made you promise to tell the truth many times before. So don’t tell me anything but the truth in the name of the LORD.”

[17]Then Micaiah answered, “I saw all of the people of Israel scattered on the hills. They were like sheep that didn’t have a shepherd. The LORD said, ‘These people do not have a master. Let each of them go home in peace.’ ”

[18]The king of Israel spoke to Jehoshaphat. He said, “Didn’t I tell you he never prophesies anything good about me? He only prophesies bad things.”

[19]Micaiah continued, “Listen to the LORD’s message. I saw the LORD sitting on his throne. Some of the angels of heaven were standing at his right side. The others were standing at his left side. So all of them were standing around him. [20]The LORD said, ‘Who will try to get Ahab to attack Ramoth Gilead? I want him to die there.’

“One angel suggested one thing. Another suggested something else. [21]Finally, a spirit came forward and stood in front of the LORD. The spirit said, ‘I’ll try to get Ahab to do it.’

[22]“ ‘How?’ the LORD asked.

“The spirit said, ‘I’ll go out and put lies in the mouths of all of his prophets.’

“ ‘You will have success in getting Ahab to attack Ramoth Gilead,’ said the LORD. ‘Go and do it.’

[23]“So the LORD has put lies in the mouths of all of your prophets. He has said that great harm will come to you.”

[24]Then Zedekiah, the son of Kenaanah, went up and slapped Micaiah in the face. “So you think the spirit that was sent by the LORD went away from me to speak to you, do you?” he asked. “Which way did he go?”

[25]Micaiah replied, “You will find out on the day you go to hide in an inside room to save your life.”

[26]Then the king of Israel gave an order. He said, “Take Micaiah away. Send him back to Amon. Amon is the ruler of the city of Samaria. And send him back to Joash. Joash is a member of the royal court. [27]Tell him, ‘The king says, “Put this fellow in prison. Don’t give him anything but bread and water until I return safely.” ’ ”

[28]Micaiah announced, “Do you really think you will return safely? If you do, the LORD hasn’t spoken through me.” He continued, “All of you people, remember what I’ve said!”

Ahab Is Killed at Ramoth Gilead

[29]So the king of Israel went up to Ramoth Gilead. Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, went there too.

[30]The king of Israel spoke to Jehoshaphat. He said, “I’ll go into battle wearing different clothes. Then people won’t recognize me. But you wear your royal robes.”

So the king of Israel put on different clothes. Then he went into battle.

[31]The king of Aram had given an order to his 32 chariot commanders. He had said, “Fight only against the king of Israel. Don’t fight against anyone else.”

[32]The chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat. They thought, “That has to be the king of Israel.” So they turned to attack him. But Jehoshaphat cried out. [33]Then the commanders saw he wasn’t the king of Israel after all. So they stopped chasing him.

[34]But someone shot an arrow without taking aim. The arrow hit the king of Israel between the parts of his armor. The king told his chariot driver, “Turn the chariot around. Get me out of this battle. I’ve been wounded.” [35]All day long

the battle continued. The king kept himself standing up by leaning against the inside of his chariot. He kept his face toward the men of Aram. The blood from his wound ran down onto the floor of the chariot. That evening he died.

36As the sun was setting, a cry spread through the army. “Every man must go to his own town!” they said. “Everyone must go to his own land!”

37So the king died. He was brought to Samaria. They buried his body there. 38They washed the chariot at a pool in Samaria. It was where the prostitutes took baths. The dogs licked up Ahab’s blood. It happened exactly as the LORD had said it would.

39The other events of Ahab’s rule are written down. Everything he did is written down. That includes the palace he built and decorated with ivory. It also includes the cities he built up and put high walls around. All of those things are written in the official records of the kings of Israel. 40Ahab joined the members of his family who had already died. His son Ahaziah became the next king after him.

Jehoshaphat’s Rule Comes to an End

41Jehoshaphat began to rule over Judah. It was in the fourth year that Ahab was king of Israel. Jehoshaphat was the son of Asa. 42Jehoshaphat was 35 years old when he became king. He ruled in Jerusalem for 25 years. His mother’s name was Azubah. She was the daughter of Shilhi.

43Jehoshaphat followed all of the ways of his father Asa. He didn’t wander away from them. He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD. But the high places weren’t removed. The people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense at them.

44Jehoshaphat was also at peace with the king of Israel.

45The other events of Jehoshaphat’s rule are written down. The brave things he did in battle and everything else he accomplished are written down. All of those things are written in the official records of the kings of Judah.

46Jehoshaphat got rid of the rest of the male prostitutes who were at the temples. They had remained in the land even after the rule of his father Asa.

47At that time Edom didn’t have a king. An appointed official was in charge.

48 Jehoshaphat built many ships that he used to carry goods to be traded. The ships were supposed to go to Ophir for gold. But they never had a chance to sail. They were wrecked at Ezion Geber. 49 At that time Ahaziah, the son of Ahab, spoke to Jehoshaphat. He said, “Let my men sail with yours.” But Jehoshaphat refused.

50 Jehoshaphat joined the members of his family who had already died. His body was buried in the family tomb in the city of King David. His son Jehoram became the next king after him.

Ahaziah Becomes King of Israel

51 Ahaziah became king of Israel in Samaria. It was in the 17th year that Jehoshaphat was king of Judah. Ahaziah ruled over Israel for two years. He was the son of Ahab.

52 Ahaziah did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. He lived the way his father and mother had lived. He lived the way Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, had lived. Jeroboam had caused Israel to commit sin. 53 Ahaziah served and worshiped the god Baal. He made the LORD, the God of Israel, very angry. That’s exactly what his father had done.

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The LORD Judges Ahaziah

2 Kings 1

1 After Ahab died, Moab refused to remain under Israel's control.

2 Ahaziah had fallen through the window of his upstairs room in Samaria. He had hurt himself. So he sent messengers to ask the god Baal-Zebub for advice. Baal-Zebub was the god of the city of Ekron. Ahaziah said to the messengers, "Go and ask Baal-Zebub whether I will get well again."

3 But the angel of the LORD spoke to Elijah, who was from Tishbe. He said, "Go up to see the messengers of Ahaziah, the king of Samaria. Tell them, 'You are on your way to ask Baal-Zebub for advice. He is the god of Ekron. Are you going to that god because you think there is no God in Israel?' 4 The LORD says to Ahaziah, 'You will never leave the bed you are lying on. You can be sure that you will die!' " So Elijah went to see the messengers.

5 They returned to the king. He asked them, "Why have you come back?"

6 "A man met us on our way there," they replied. "He said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you. Tell him, "The LORD says, 'You are sending messengers to ask Baal-Zebub for advice. He is the god of Ekron. Are you going to that god because you think there is no God in Israel? You will never leave the bed you are lying on. You can be sure that you will die!' " ' "

7 The king asked them, "What kind of man came to see you? Who told you those things?"

8 They replied, "He was wearing clothes that were made out of hair. He had a leather belt around his waist."

The king said, "That was Elijah from Tishbe."

9 Then Ahaziah sent a captain to Elijah. The captain had his company of 50 men with him. Elijah was sitting on top of a hill. The captain went up to him. He said to Elijah, "Man of God, the king says, 'Come down!' "

10 Elijah answered the captain, "If I'm really a man of God, may fire come down from heaven! May it burn you and your 50 men up!"

Then fire came down from heaven. It burned up the captain and his men.

[11]After that happened, the king sent another captain to Elijah. The captain had his 50 men with him. He said to Elijah, “Man of God, the king says, ‘Come down at once!’ ”

[12]Elijah replied, “If I’m really a man of God, may fire come down from heaven! May it burn you and your 50 men up!”

Then the fire of God came down from heaven. It burned up the captain and his 50 men.

[13]So the king sent a third captain with his 50 men. The captain went up to Elijah. He fell on his knees in front of him. “Man of God,” he begged, “please have respect for my life! Please have respect for the lives of these 50 men! [14]Fire has come down from heaven. It has burned up the first two captains and all of their men. But please have respect for my life!”

[15]The angel of the LORD spoke to Elijah. He said, “Go down with him. Don’t be afraid of him.”

So Elijah got up. He went down with the captain to the king.

[16]Elijah told the king, “The LORD says, ‘You have sent messengers to ask Baal-Zebub for advice. He is the god of Ekron. Did you go to that god for advice because you think there is no God in Israel? You will never leave the bed you are lying on. You can be sure that you will die!’ ”

[17]So Ahaziah died. It happened just as the LORD had said it would. He had spoken that message through Elijah.

Ahaziah didn’t have any sons. So Joram, his younger brother, became the next king after him. It was the second year of Jehoram, the king of Judah. Jehoram was the son of Jehoshaphat.

[18]All of the other events of Ahaziah’s rule are written down. The things he did are written down. All of those things are written in the official records of the kings of Israel.

Elijah Is Taken Up to Heaven

2 Kings 2

[1]Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. The LORD was going to use
a strong wind to take Elijah up to heaven. [2]Elijah said to Elisha, “Stay here.
The LORD has sent me to Bethel.”

But Elisha said, “I won’t leave you. And that’s just as sure as the LORD and
you are alive.” So they went down to Bethel.

[3]There was a company of prophets at Bethel. They came out to where Elisha
was. They asked him, “Do you know what the LORD is going to do? He’s going
to take your master away from you today.”

“Yes, I know,” Elisha replied. “But don’t talk about it.”

[4]Then Elijah said to him, “Stay here, Elisha. The LORD has sent me to
Jericho.”

Elisha replied, “I won’t leave you. And that’s just as sure as the LORD and you
are alive.” So they went to Jericho.

[5]There was a company of prophets at Jericho. They went up to where Elisha
was. They asked him, “Do you know what the LORD is going to do? He’s going
to take your master away from you today.”

“Yes, I know,” Elisha replied. “But don’t talk about it.”

[6]Then Elijah said to him, “Stay here. The LORD has sent me to the Jordan
River.”

Elisha replied, “I won’t leave you. And that’s just as sure as the LORD and you
are alive.” So the two of them walked on.

[7]Fifty men from the company of the prophets followed them. The men
stopped and stood not far away from them. They faced the place where Elijah
and Elisha had stopped at the Jordan River. [8]Elijah rolled his coat up. Then he
struck the water with it. The water parted to the right and to the left. The two of
them went across the river on dry ground.

[9]After they had gone across, Elijah spoke to Elisha. He said, “Tell me. What

can I do for you before I’m taken away from you?”

“Please give me a double share of your spirit,” Elisha replied.

10“You have asked me for something I can’t give you,” Elijah said. “Only the LORD can give it. But suppose you see me when I’m taken away from you. Then you will receive what you have asked for. If you don’t see me, you won’t receive it.”

11They kept walking along and talking together. Suddenly a chariot and horses appeared. Fire was all around them. The chariot and horses came between the two men. Then Elijah went up to heaven in a strong wind.

12Elisha saw it. He cried out to Elijah, “My father! You are like a father to me! You are the true chariots and horsemen of Israel!”

Elisha didn’t see Elijah anymore. Then Elisha took hold of his own clothes and tore them apart.

13He picked up the coat that had fallen from Elijah. He went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan River. 14Then he struck the water with Elijah’s coat. “Where is the power of the LORD?” he asked. “Where is the power of the God of Elijah?” When Elisha struck the water, it parted to the right and to the left. He went across the river.

15The company of the prophets from Jericho were watching. They said, “The spirit of Elijah has been given to Elisha.” They went over to him. They bowed down to him with their faces toward the ground. 16“Look,” they said. “We have 50 able men. Let them go and look for your master. Perhaps the Spirit of the LORD has lifted him up. Maybe he has put him down on a mountain or in a valley.”

“No,” Elisha replied. “Don’t send them.”

17But they kept asking until he felt he couldn’t say no. So he said, “Send them.” And they sent 50 men. They looked for Elijah for three days. But they didn’t find him.

18So they returned to Elisha. He was staying in Jericho. Elisha said to them, “Didn’t I tell you not to go?”

Elisha Makes Jericho’s Water Pure

19The men of Jericho spoke to Elisha. “Look,” they said. “This town has a
good location. You can see that for yourself. But the spring of water here is
bad. So the land doesn’t produce anything.”

20“Bring me a new bowl,” Elisha said. “Put some salt in it.” So they brought
it to him.

21Then he went out to the spring. He threw the salt into it. He told them, “The
LORD says, ‘I have made this water pure. It will never cause death again. It will
never keep the land from producing crops again.’ ” 22The water has stayed pure
to this very day. That’s what Elisha had said would happen.

Some Young Fellows Make Fun of Elisha

23Elisha left Jericho and went up to Bethel. He was walking along the road.
Some young fellows came out of the town. They made fun of him. “Go on up!
You don’t even have any hair on your head!” they said. “Go on up! You don’t
even have any hair on your head!”

24He turned around and looked at them. And he called down a curse on them.
He did it in the name of the LORD. Then two bears came out of the woods. They
attacked 42 of the young fellows.

25Elisha went on to Mount Carmel. From there he returned to Samaria.

Moab's King Refuses to Obey Israel's King

2 Kings 3

[1]Joram became king of Israel in Samaria. It was in the 18th year that Jehoshaphat was king of Judah. Joram ruled for 12 years. He was the son of Ahab.

[2]Joram did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. But he wasn't as bad as his father and mother had been. His father had made a sacred stone that was used to worship the god Baal. Joram got rid of it. [3]But he kept on committing the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. Jeroboam had also caused Israel to commit those same sins. Joram didn't turn away from them.

[4]Mesha raised sheep. He was king of Moab. He had to supply the king of Israel with 100,000 lambs a year. He also had to supply him with the wool of 100,000 rams a year.

[5]Ahab died. Moab's king refused to obey the next king of Israel. [6]So at that time King Joram started out from Samaria. He gathered all of Israel's troops together.

[7]He also sent a message to Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah. It said, "The king of Moab is refusing to obey me. Will you go with me to fight against Moab?"

"Yes. I'll go with you," he replied. "My men will go with you. My horses will also go with you."

[8]"What road should we take to attack Moab?" Joram asked.

"The one that goes through the Desert of Edom," Jehoshaphat answered.

[9]So the king of Israel started out. The king of Judah and the king of Edom went with him. Their armies marched around the southern end of the Dead Sea. After seven days they ran out of water. There wasn't any water for the men or their animals.

[10]"What should we do now?" exclaimed the king of Israel. "The LORD has called us three kings together. Did he do it only to hand us over to Moab?"

[11]But Jehoshaphat asked, "Isn't there a prophet of the LORD here? Can't we ask the LORD for advice through him?"

An officer of the king of Israel spoke up. He answered, “Elisha is here. He’s the son of Shaphat. Elisha used to serve Elijah.”

12Jehoshaphat said, “The LORD speaks through him.” So the king of Israel went down to see Elisha. Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom also went there.

13Elisha spoke to the king of Israel. He said, “What do you and I have in common? Go to your father’s prophets. Go to your mother’s prophets.”

“No,” the king of Israel answered. “The LORD called us three kings together. He did it to hand us over to Moab.”

14Elisha said, “I serve the LORD who rules over all. You can be sure that he lives. And you can be just as sure that I have respect for Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah. If I didn’t, I wouldn’t look at you or even notice you. 15But now bring me someone who plays the harp.”

While that person was playing the harp, the LORD’s powerful hand came on Elisha. 16Elisha announced, “The LORD says, ‘Dig a lot of ditches in this valley.’ 17Do it because the LORD says, ‘You will not see wind or rain. But this valley will be filled with water. Then you, your cattle and your other animals will have water to drink.’

18“That’s an easy thing for the LORD to do. He will also hand Moab over to you. 19You will destroy every city that has high walls around it. You will destroy every major town. You will cut down every good tree. You will stop up all of the springs of water. And you will cover every good field with stones.”

20The next day, the time came to offer the morning sacrifice. And then it happened! Water was flowing from the direction of Edom! In fact, the land was filled with water!

21Now all of the people of Moab had heard that the kings had come to fight against them. So Moab sent for all of its fighting men. It didn’t matter whether they were young or old. They sent for everyone who could carry a weapon. All of them were stationed at the border.

22They got up early in the morning. The sun was already shining on the water. Across the way, the water looked red to the men of Moab. It looked like blood. 23“That’s blood!” they said. “Those kings must have fought and killed each other. Let’s go, Moab! Let’s take everything that has any value.”

24So the men of Moab went to the camp of Israel. Just as they arrived there, the men of Israel got ready to fight. They fought against the men of Moab until

they ran away. The men of Israel marched into the land and attacked it. They killed the people of Moab. [25]They destroyed the towns. Each man threw a large stone on every good field. They did that until the fields were covered. They stopped up all of the springs of water. And they cut down every good tree. The only town that was left with any stones in place was Kir Hareseth. But men who were armed with slings surrounded it. Then they attacked it.

[26]The king of Moab saw that the battle had gone against him. So he took with him 700 men who had swords. They tried to break through the battle lines to the king of Edom. But they couldn’t do it.

[27]Then the king of Moab got his oldest son. He was the son who would become the next king after him. He offered his son as a sacrifice on the city wall. That shocked and terrified the men of Israel. So they pulled back. And they returned to their own land.

Elisha Provides Olive Oil for a Widow

2 Kings 4

1 The wife of a man from the company of the prophets cried out to Elisha. She
said, “My husband is dead. You know how much respect he had for the LORD.
But he owed money to someone. And now that person is coming to take my
two boys away. They will become his slaves.”

2 Elisha replied to her, “How can I help you? Tell me. What do you have in
your house?”

“I don’t have anything there at all,” she said. “All I have is a little olive oil.”

3 Elisha said, “Go around to all of your neighbors. Ask them for empty jars.
Get as many as you can. 4 Then go inside your house. Shut the door behind you
and your sons. Pour oil into all of the jars. As each jar is filled, put it over to
one side.”

5 The woman left him. After that, she shut the door behind her and her sons.
They brought the jars to her. And she kept pouring. 6 When all of the jars were
full, she spoke to one of her sons. She said, “Bring me another jar.”

But he replied, “There aren’t any more left.” Then the oil stopped flowing.

7 She went and told the man of God about it. He said, “Go and sell the oil. Pay
what you owe. You and your sons can live on what is left.”

The Son of a Woman From Shunem Is Brought Back to Life

8 One day Elisha went to the town of Shunem. A rich woman lived there. She
begged him to stay and have a meal. So every time he came by, he stopped
there to eat.

9 The woman said to her husband, “That man often comes by here. I know
that he is a holy man of God. 10 Let’s make a small room for him on the roof.
We’ll put a bed and a table in it. We’ll also put a chair and a lamp in it. Then he
can stay there when he comes to visit us.”

[11]One day Elisha came. He went up to his room. He lay down there. [12]He said to his servant Gehazi, “Go and get the Shunammite woman.” So he did. She stood in front of Elisha.

[13]He said to Gehazi, “Tell her, ‘You have gone to a lot of trouble for us. Now what can we do for you? Can we speak to the king for you? Or can we speak to the commander of the army for you?’ ”

She replied, “I live among my own people. I have everything I need here.”

[14]After she left, Elisha asked Gehazi, “What can we do for her?”

Gehazi said, “Well, she doesn’t have a son. And her husband is old.”

[15]Then Elisha said, “Bring her here again.” So he did. She stood in the doorway. [16]“You will hold a son in your arms,” Elisha said. “It will be about this time next year.”

“No, my master!” she objected. “You are a man of God. So don’t lie to me!”

[17]But the woman became pregnant. She had a baby boy. It happened the next year about that same time. That’s exactly what Elisha had told her would happen.

[18]The child grew. One day he went out to get his father. His father was with those who were gathering the crops.

[19]The boy said to his father, “My head hurts! It really hurts!”

His father told a servant, “Carry him to his mother.” [20]The servant lifted the boy up. He carried him to his mother.

The boy sat on her lap until noon. Then he died. [21]She went up to the room on the roof. There she laid him on the bed of the man of God. Then she shut the door and went out.

[22]She sent for her husband. She said, “Please send me one of the servants and a donkey. Then I can go quickly to the man of God and return.”

[23]“Why do you want to go to him today?” he asked. “It isn’t the time for the New Moon Feast. It isn’t the Sabbath day.”

“Don’t let that bother you,” she said.

[24]She put a saddle on her donkey. She said to her servant, “Let’s go. Don’t slow down for me unless I tell you to.” [25]So she started out. She came to Mount Carmel. That’s where the man of God was.

When she was still a long way off, he saw her coming. He said to his servant

Gehazi, “Look! There’s the woman from Shunem! 26Run out there to meet her. Ask her, ‘Are you all right? Is your husband all right? Is your child all right?’ ”

“Everything is all right,” she said.

27She came to the man of God at the mountain. Then she took hold of his feet. Gehazi came over to push her away. But the man of God said, “Leave her alone! She is suffering terribly. But the LORD hasn’t told me the reason for it. He has hidden it from me.”

28“My master, did I ask you for a son?” she said. “Didn’t I tell you, ‘Don’t get my hopes up’?”

29Elisha said to Gehazi, “Tuck your coat into your belt. Take my wooden staff and run to Shunem. Don’t say hello to anyone you see. If anyone says hello to you, don’t answer. Lay my staff on the boy’s face.”

30But the child’s mother said, “I won’t leave you. And that’s just as sure as the LORD and you are alive.” So Elisha got up and followed her.

31Gehazi went on ahead. He laid Elisha’s wooden staff on the boy’s face. But there wasn’t any sound. The boy didn’t move at all.

So Gehazi went back to Elisha. He told him, “The boy hasn’t awakened.”

32Elisha arrived at the house. The boy was dead. He was lying on Elisha’s bed.

33Elisha went into the room. He shut the door. He was alone with the boy. He prayed to the LORD.

34Then he got on the bed. He lay down on the boy. His mouth touched the boy’s mouth. His eyes touched the boy’s eyes. And his hands touched the boy’s hands. As Elisha lay on the boy, the boy’s body grew warm.

35Elisha turned away. He walked back and forth in the room. Then he got on the bed again. He lay down on the boy once more. The boy sneezed seven times. After that, he opened his eyes.

36Elisha sent for Gehazi. He said to him, “Go and get the Shunammite woman.” So he did. When she came, Elisha said, “Take your son.”

37She came in. She fell at Elisha’s feet. She bowed down with her face toward the ground. Then she took her son and went out.

Deadly Food in a Pot

38 Elisha returned to Gilgal. There wasn’t enough food to eat in that area. The
company of the prophets was meeting with Elisha. So he said to his servant,
“Put the large pot over the fire. Cook some stew for these men.”

39 One of them went out into the fields to gather herbs. He found a wild vine.
He gathered up some of its gourds. He brought them back with him in his coat.
Then he cut them up into the pot of stew. But no one knew what they were.

40 The stew was poured out for the men. They began to eat it. But then they
cried out, “Man of God, the food in that pot will kill us!” They couldn’t eat it.

41 Elisha said, “Get some flour.” He put it in the pot. He said, “Serve it to the
men to eat.” Then there wasn’t anything in the pot that could harm them.

Elisha Feeds 100 People

42 A man came from Baal Shalishah. He brought the man of God 20 loaves of
barley bread. They had been baked from the first grain that had ripened. He
also brought some heads of new grain. “Give this food to the people to eat,”
Elisha said.

43 “How can I put this in front of 100 men?” his servant asked.

But Elisha answered, “Give it to the people to eat. Do it because the LORD
says, ‘They will eat and have some left over.’ ”

44 Then the servant put the food in front of them. They ate it and had some left
over. It happened just as the LORD had said it would.

Naaman Is Healed of a Skin Disease

2 Kings 5

[1]Naaman was commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was a very important man in the eyes of his master. And he was highly respected. That's because the LORD had helped him win the battle over Aram's enemies. He was a brave soldier. But he had a skin disease.

[2]Companies of soldiers from Aram had marched out. They had captured a young girl from Israel. She became a servant of Naaman's wife. [3]She spoke to the woman she was serving. She said, "I wish my master would go and see the prophet who is in Samaria. He would heal my master of his skin disease."

[4]Naaman went to see his own master. He told him what the girl from Israel had said.

[5]"I think you should go," the king of Aram replied. "I'll give you a letter to take to the king of Israel."

So Naaman left. He took 750 pounds of silver with him. He also took 150 pounds of gold. And he took ten sets of clothes. [6]He carried the letter to the king of Israel. It said, "I'm sending my servant Naaman to you with this letter. I want you to heal him of his skin disease."

[7]The king of Israel read the letter. As soon as he did, he tore his royal robes. He said, "Am I God? Can I kill people and bring them back to life? Why does this fellow send someone to me to be healed of his skin disease? He must be trying to pick a fight with me!"

[8]Elisha, the man of God, heard that the king of Israel had torn his robes. So he sent the king a message. It said, "Why have you torn your robes? Tell the man to come to me. Then he will know there is a prophet in Israel."

[9]So Naaman went to see Elisha. He took his horses and chariots with him. He stopped at the door of Elisha's house.

[10]Elisha sent a messenger out to him. The messenger said, "Go. Wash yourself in the Jordan River seven times. Then your skin will be healed. You will be pure and clean again."

[11]But Naaman went away angry. He said, “I was sure he would come out to me. I thought he would stand there and pray to the LORD his God. I thought he would wave his hand over my skin. Then I would be healed. [12]And what about the Abana and Pharpar rivers of Damascus? Aren’t they better than any of the rivers of Israel? Couldn’t I wash in them and be made pure and clean?” So he turned and went away. He was burning with anger.

[13]Naaman’s servants went over to him. They said, “You are like a father to us. What if the prophet Elisha had told you to do some great thing? Wouldn’t you have done it? But he only said, ‘Wash yourself. Then you will be pure and clean.’ You should be even more willing to do that!”

[14]So Naaman went down to the Jordan River. He dipped himself in it seven times. He did exactly what the man of God had told him to do. Then his skin was made pure again. It became clean like the skin of a young boy.

[15]Naaman and all of his attendants went back to the man of God. Naaman stood in front of Elisha. He said, “Now I know that there is no God anywhere in the whole world except in Israel. Please accept a gift from me.”

[16]The prophet answered, “I serve the LORD. You can be sure that he lives. And you can be just as sure that I won’t accept a gift from you.” Even though Naaman begged him to take it, Elisha wouldn’t.

[17]“I can see that you won’t accept a gift from me,” said Naaman. “But please let me have some soil from your land. Give me as much as a pair of mules can carry. Here’s why I want it. I won’t ever bring burnt offerings and sacrifices to any other god again. I’ll bring them only to the LORD. I’ll worship him on his own soil.

[18]“But there is one thing I hope the LORD will forgive me for. From time to time my master will enter the temple to bow down to his god Rimmon. When he does, he’ll lean on my arm. Then I’ll have to bow down there also. I hope the LORD will forgive me for that.”

[19]“Go in peace,” Elisha said.

Naaman started out on his way.

[20]Gehazi was the servant of Elisha, the man of God. Gehazi said to himself, “My master was too easy on Naaman from Aram. He should have accepted the gift he brought. I’m going to run after Naaman. I’m going to get something from him. And that’s just as sure as the LORD is alive.”

[21]Gehazi hurried after Naaman. Naaman saw him running toward him. So he

got down from the chariot to greet him. “Is everything all right?” he asked.

22“Everything is all right,” Gehazi answered. “My master sent me to say, ‘Two young men from the company of the prophets have just come to me. They’ve come from the hill country of Ephraim. Please give them 75 pounds of silver and two sets of clothes.’ ”

23“I wish you would take twice as much silver,” said Naaman. He begged Gehazi to accept it. Then Naaman tied up 150 pounds of silver in two bags. He also gave Gehazi two sets of clothes. He gave all of it to two of his own servants. They carried it ahead of Gehazi.

24Gehazi came to the hill where Elisha lived. Then the servants handed the things over to Gehazi. He put them away in Elisha’s house. He sent the men away, and they left. 25Then he went back inside the house. He stood in front of his master Elisha.

“Gehazi, where have you been?” Elisha asked.

“I didn’t go anywhere,” Gehazi answered.

26But Elisha said to him, “Didn’t my spirit go with you? I know that the man got down from his chariot to greet you. Is this the time for you to accept money or clothes? Is it the time to take olive groves, vineyards, flocks or herds? Is it the time to accept male and female servants? 27You and your children after you will have Naaman’s skin disease forever.”

Then Gehazi left Elisha. And he had Naaman’s skin disease. His skin was as white as snow.

An Ax Blade Floats

2 Kings 6

[1]The company of the prophets spoke to Elisha. They said, “Look. The place
where we meet with you is too small for us. [2]We would like to go to the Jordan
River. Each of us can get some wood there. We want to build a place there for
us to live in.”

Elisha said, “Go.”

[3]Then one of them said, “Won’t you please come with us?”

“I will,” Elisha replied. [4]And he went with them.

They went to the Jordan. There they began to cut down trees. [5]One of them
was cutting a tree down. The iron blade of his ax fell into the water. “Master!”
he cried out. “This ax was borrowed!”

[6]The man of God asked, “Where did the blade fall?” He showed him the
place. Then Elisha cut a stick and threw it there. That made the iron blade float.
[7]“Take it out of the water,” he said. So the man reached out and took it.

Elisha Makes the Soldiers of Aram Blind

[8]The king of Aram was at war with Israel. He talked things over with his
officers. Then he said, “I’m going to set up my camp in a certain place.”

[9]The man of God sent a message to the king of Israel. It said, “Try to stay
away from that place. Aram’s army is going to be down there.” [10]The king of
Israel checked on the place the man of God had told him about. Time after time
Elisha warned the king. So the king was on guard in those places.

[11]All of that made the king of Aram very angry. He sent for his officers. He
said to them, “Tell me. Which of us is on the side of the king of Israel?”

[12]“You are my king and master,” said one of his officers. “None of us is on
Israel’s side. But Elisha is a prophet in Israel. He tells the king of Israel the
very words you speak in your own bedroom.”

13“Go and find out where he is,” the king ordered. “Then I can send my men and capture him.” The report came back. It said, “He’s in Dothan.”

14Then the king sent horses and chariots and a strong army there. They went at night and surrounded the city.

15The servant of the man of God got up the next morning. He went out early. He saw that an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. “My master!” the servant said. “What can we do?”

16“Don’t be afraid,” the prophet answered. “Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.”

17Elisha prayed, “LORD, open my servant’s eyes so he can see.” Then the LORD opened his eyes. He looked up and saw the hills. He saw that Elisha was surrounded by horses and chariots. Fire was all around them.

18Aram’s army came down toward Elisha. Then he prayed to the LORD. He said, “Make these soldiers blind.” So the LORD made them blind, just as Elisha had prayed.

19Elisha told them, “This isn’t the right road. This isn’t the right city. Follow me. I’ll lead you to the man you are looking for.” He led them to Samaria.

20They entered the city. Then Elisha said, “LORD, open the eyes of these men. Help them see again.” Then the LORD opened their eyes. They looked around. And there they were, inside Samaria!

21The king of Israel saw them. So he asked Elisha, “Should I kill them? I need your advice. You are like a father to me. Should I kill them?”

22“Don’t kill them,” he answered. “Would you kill men you have captured with your own sword or bow? Put some food and water in front of them. Then they can eat and drink. They can go back to their master.”

23So he prepared a big dinner for them. After they had finished eating and drinking, he sent them away. They returned to their master. So the companies of soldiers from Aram stopped attacking Israel’s territory.

Aram’s Army Attacks Samaria

24Some time later, Ben-Hadad gathered his entire army together. Ben-Hadad was the king of Aram. His army marched up and surrounded Samaria. Then

they attacked it.

25There wasn't enough food anywhere in the city. It was surrounded for so long that people had to weigh out two pounds of silver for a donkey's head. They had to weigh out two ounces of silver for half a pint of seed pods.

26One day the king of Israel was walking on top of the wall. A woman cried out to him, "You are my king and master. Please help me!"

27The king replied, "If the LORD doesn't help you, where can I get help for you? From the threshing floor? From the winepress?" 28He continued, "What's wrong?"

She answered, "A woman said to me, 'Give up your son. Then we can eat him today. Tomorrow we'll eat my son.' 29So we cooked my son. Then we ate him. The next day I said to her, 'Give up your son. Then we can eat him.' But she had hidden him."

30When the king heard the woman's words, he tore his royal robes. As he walked along the wall, the people looked up at him. They saw that he was wearing black clothes under his robes. 31He said, "I'll cut the head of Shaphat's son Elisha off his shoulders today. If I don't, may God punish me greatly!"

32Elisha was sitting in his house. The elders were sitting there with him. The king went to see Elisha. He sent a messenger on ahead of him. Before the messenger arrived, Elisha spoke to the elders. He said, "That murderer is sending someone here to cut my head off. Can't you see that? When the messenger comes, close the door. Hold it shut against him. Can't you hear his master's footsteps right behind him?"

33Elisha was still talking to the elders when the messenger came down to him. The king also arrived. He said, "The LORD has sent this horrible trouble on us. Why should I wait any longer for him to help us?"

2 Kings 7

[1]Elisha said, “Listen to a message from the LORD. He says, ‘About this time tomorrow, you will be able to buy seven quarts of flour for less than half of an ounce of silver. You will also be able to buy 13 quarts of barley for the same price. That’s all you will have to pay for those things at the gate of Samaria.’ ”

[2]The king was leaning on an officer’s arm. The officer spoke to the man of God. He said, “Suppose the LORD opens the windows of the skies. Suppose he pours food down on us. Even if he does, could what you are saying really happen?”

“You will see it with your own eyes,” answered Elisha. “But you won’t eat any of it!”

The Attack on Samaria Ends

[3]There were four men who had a skin disease. They were at the entrance of the gate of Samaria. They said to one another, “Why should we stay here until we die? [4]Suppose we say, ‘We’ll go into the city.’ There isn’t any food there, and we’ll die. But if we stay here, we’ll die anyway. So let’s go over to Aram’s army camp. Let’s give ourselves up. If they spare us, we’ll live. If they kill us, we’ll die.”

[5]At sunset they got up. They went to Aram’s army camp. They arrived at the edge of it. But no one was there. [6]The Lord had caused the soldiers of Aram to hear a noise. It sounded like chariots and horses and a huge army. So the soldiers spoke to one another. They said, “Listen! The king of Israel has hired the Hittite and Egyptian kings. He has paid them to attack us!” [7]So they had gotten up and had run away at sunset. They had left their tents and horses and donkeys behind. They had left the camp as it was. And they had run for their lives.

[8]The men who had a skin disease arrived at the edge of the camp. They entered one of the tents. They ate and drank. Then they carried away silver, gold and clothes. They went off and hid them. They returned and entered another tent. They took some things from it and hid them also.

9But then they said to one another, “What we’re doing isn’t right. This is a day of good news. And we’re keeping it to ourselves. If we wait until sunrise, we’ll be punished. Let’s go at once. Let’s report this to the royal palace.”

10So they went. They called out to the people who were guarding the city gates. They told them, “We went into Aram’s army camp. No one was there. We didn’t hear anyone. The horses and donkeys were still tied up. The tents were left just as they were.”

11The people who guarded the gates shouted the news. It was reported inside the palace.

12The king of Israel got up in the night. He spoke to his officers. He said, “I’ll tell you what the men of Aram have done to us. They know we are very hungry. So they have left the camp to hide in the countryside. They are thinking, ‘We are sure they’ll come out. Then we’ll take them alive. And we’ll get into the city.’ ”

13One of the king’s officers spoke up. He said, “A few horses are still left in the city. Have some men get five of them. They won’t be any worse off than all of the other Israelites who are left here. In fact, all of us will soon be dead. So let’s send the men to find out what happened.”

14The men chose two chariots and their horses. The king sent them out to look for Aram’s army. He commanded the drivers, “Go and find out what has happened.”

15They followed the trail of Aram’s soldiers all the way to the Jordan River. They found clothes and supplies all along the road. The soldiers had thrown them down when they ran away. So the men returned. They reported to the king what they had seen.

16Then the people went out of the city. They took everything of value from Aram’s army camp. So seven quarts of flour sold for less than half of an ounce of silver. And 13 quarts of barley sold for the same price. That’s exactly what the LORD had said would happen.

17The king had put an officer in charge of the city gate. He was the officer on whose arm the king leaned. On their way out of the city, the people knocked the officer down. In the entrance of the gate they walked all over him. And he died. That’s exactly what the man of God had said would happen. He had said it when the king came down to his house.

18What the man of God had told the king came true. He had said, “About this

time tomorrow, you will be able to buy seven quarts of flour for less than half of an ounce of silver. You will also be able to buy 13 quarts of barley for the same price. That’s all you will have to pay for those things at the gate of Samaria.”

19The officer had spoken to the man of God. He had said, “Suppose the LORD opens the windows of the skies. Suppose he pours food down on us. Even if he does, could what you are saying really happen?” The man of God had replied, “You will see it with your own eyes. But you won’t eat any of it!”

20And that’s exactly what happened to the officer. On their way out of the city, the people knocked him down. In the entrance of the gate they walked all over him. And he died.

The Woman from Shunem Gets Her Land Back

2 Kings 8

[1]Elisha had brought a woman's son back to life. He had said to her, "Go away with your family. Stay for a while anywhere you can. The LORD has decided that there won't be enough food in the land. That will be true for seven years."

[2]The woman did just as the man of God told her to. She and her family went away. They stayed in the land of the Philistines for seven years.

[3]The seven years passed. Then she came back from the land of the Philistines. She went to the king of Israel. She wanted to beg him to get her house and land back.

[4]The king was talking to Gehazi. Gehazi was the servant of the man of God. The king had said, "Tell me about all of the great things Elisha has done." [5]Gehazi was telling the king how Elisha had brought a dead boy back to life. Just then the woman came to beg the king to get her house and land back. She was the woman whose son Elisha had brought back to life.

Gehazi said, "King Joram, this is the woman I've been telling you about. And this is her son. He's the one Elisha brought back to life." [6]The king asked the woman about her house and land. And she told him.

Then he appointed an official to look into her case. The king told him, "Give her back everything that belonged to her. That includes all of the money that was earned from her land. It was earned from the day she left the country until now."

Hazael Murders Ben-Hadad

[7]Elisha went to Damascus. Ben-Hadad was sick. He was king of Aram. The king was told, "The man of God has come all the way up here."

[8]Then the king said to Hazael, "Take a gift with you. Go and see the man of God. Ask him for the LORD's advice. Ask him whether I will get well again."

9 Hazael went to see Elisha. He took 40 camels with him as a gift. The camels were loaded with all of the finest goods of Damascus. Hazael went into Elisha's house and stood in front of him. He said, "Ben-Hadad has sent me. He is the king of Aram. He asks, 'Will I get well again?' "

10 Elisha answered, "Go and speak to him. Tell him, 'Yes. You will get well again.' But the LORD has shown me that he will in fact die."

11 Elisha stared at him without looking away. He did it until Hazael felt ashamed. Then the man of God began to sob.

12 "Why are you sobbing?" asked Hazael.

"Because I know how much harm you will do to the people of Israel," he answered. "You will set fire to their cities that have high walls around them. You will kill their young men with your sword. You will smash their little children on the ground. You will rip open their pregnant women."

13 Hazael said, "How could I possibly do a thing like that? I'm nothing but a dog. I don't have that kind of power."

"You will become king of Aram," Elisha answered. "That's what the LORD has shown me."

14 Then Hazael left Elisha. He returned to his master. Ben-Hadad asked, "What did Elisha say to you?"

Hazael replied, "He told me you would get well again."

15 But the next day Hazael got a thick cloth. He soaked it in water. He spread it over the king's face. He held it there until the king died. Then Hazael became the next king after him.

Jehoram Becomes King of Judah

16 Jehoram began to rule as king over Judah. It was in the fifth year that Joram was king of Israel. Joram was the son of Ahab. Jehoram was the son of Jehoshaphat. 17 Jehoram was 32 years old when he became king. He ruled in Jerusalem for eight years.

18 He followed the ways of the kings of Israel, just as the royal family of Ahab had done. In fact, he got married to a daughter of Ahab. Jehoram did what was evil in the sight of the LORD.

19But the LORD didn't want to destroy Judah. That's because the LORD had made a covenant with his servant David. He had promised to keep the lamp of David's kingdom burning brightly for him and his children after him forever.

20When Jehoram was king over Judah, Edom refused to remain under Judah's control. They set up their own king. 21So Jehoram went to Zair. He took all of his chariots with him. The men of Edom surrounded him and his chariot commanders. He got up at night and fought his way out. But his army ran back home.

22To this very day Edom has refused to remain under Judah's control. At that same time, Libnah also refused to remain under the control of Judah.

23The other events of Jehoram's rule are written down. Everything he did is written down. All of those things are written in the official records of the kings of Judah.

24Jehoram joined the members of his family who had already died. His body was buried in the family tomb in the City of David. His son Ahaziah became the next king after him.

Ahaziah Becomes King of Judah

25Ahaziah began to rule as king over Judah. It was in the 12th year that Joram was king of Israel. Joram was the son of Ahab. Ahaziah was the son of Jehoram. 26Ahaziah was 22 years old when he became king. He ruled in Jerusalem for one year. His mother's name was Athaliah. She was a granddaughter of Omri. Omri had been the king of Israel.

27Ahaziah followed the ways of the royal family of Ahab. Ahaziah did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, just as the family of Ahab had done. That's because he had married into Ahab's family.

28Ahaziah joined forces with Joram. They went to war against Hazael at Ramoth Gilead. Joram was the son of Ahab. Hazael was king of Aram. The soldiers of Aram wounded King Joram. 29So he returned to Jezreel to give his wounds time to heal. The soldiers of Aram had wounded him at Ramoth in his battle against Hazael, the king of Aram.

Ahaziah, the son of Jehoram, went down to Jezreel. He went there to see Joram. That's because Joram had been wounded. Ahaziah was king of Judah.

Joram was the son of Ahab.

Jehu Is Anointed as King of Israel

2 Kings 9

[1]The prophet Elisha sent for a man from the company of the prophets. Elisha said to him, “Tuck your coat into your belt. Take this bottle of olive oil with you. Go to Ramoth Gilead.

[2]“When you get there, look for Jehu. He’s the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi. Go to him. Get him away from his companions. Take him into an inside room. [3]Then get the bottle. Pour the oil on his head. Announce to him, ‘The LORD says, “I anoint you as king over Israel.” ’ After that, open the door and run away. Do it quickly!”

[4]So the young prophet went to Ramoth Gilead. [5]When he arrived, he found the army officers sitting together. “Commander, I have a message for you,” he said.

“For which one of us?” asked Jehu.

“For you, commander,” he replied.

[6]Jehu got up and went into the house. Then the prophet poured the oil on Jehu’s head. He announced, “The LORD is the God of Israel. He says, ‘I am anointing you as king over my people Israel. [7]You must destroy the royal house of your master Ahab. I will pay them back for spilling the blood of my servants the prophets. I will also pay them back for the blood of all of my servants that Jezebel spilled. [8]The whole house of Ahab will die out. I will cut off every male in Israel who is related to Ahab. It does not matter whether they are slaves or free.

[9]“ ‘I will make Ahab’s royal house like the house of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. I will make it like the house of Baasha, the son of Ahijah. [10]Dogs will eat up Jezebel on a piece of land at Jezreel. No one will bury her.’ ” Then the prophet opened the door and ran away.

[11]Jehu went out to where the other officers were. One of them asked him, “Is everything all right? Why did that crazy man come to you?”

“You know the man. You know the kinds of things he says,” Jehu replied.

12“That’s not true!” they said. “Tell us.”

Jehu said, “Here is what he told me. He announced, ‘The LORD says, “I am anointing you as king over Israel.” ’ ”

13The officers quickly grabbed their coats. They spread them out under Jehu on the bare steps of the house. Then they blew a trumpet. They shouted, “Jehu is king!”

Jehu Kills Joram and Ahaziah

14Jehu was the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi. Jehu made plans against Joram. During that time Joram and Israel’s whole army had been guarding Ramoth Gilead. They had been guarding it against Hazael, the king of Aram.

15But King Joram had returned to Jezreel. He had gone there to give his wounds time to heal. The soldiers of Aram had wounded him in his battle against Hazael, the king of Aram.

Jehu said to his men, “Are you really on my side? If you are, don’t let anyone sneak out of the city. Don’t let them go and tell the news in Jezreel.” 16Then Jehu got into his chariot. He rode off to Jezreel. Joram was resting there. And Ahaziah, the king of Judah, had gone down to see him.

17A lookout was standing on the roof of the tower in Jezreel. He saw Jehu’s troops approaching. So he called out, “I see some troops coming.”

“Get a horseman,” Joram ordered. “Send him to ride out to them. Have him ask, ‘Are you coming in peace?’ ”

18The horseman rode out to where Jehu was. He said, “The king asks, ‘Are you coming in peace?’ ”

“What do you know about peace?” Jehu answered. “Get in line behind me.”

The lookout reported, “The messenger has reached them. But he isn’t coming back.”

19So the king sent out a second horseman. When he came to them, he told them, “The king asks, ‘Are you coming in peace?’ ”

Jehu replied, “What do you know about peace? Get in line behind me.”

20The lookout reported, “The second messenger has reached them. But he

isn’t coming back either. The one driving the chariot drives like Jehu, the son of Nimshi. He’s driving like a crazy man.”

21“Get my chariot ready,” King Joram ordered. When it was ready, he rode out. Ahaziah, the king of Judah, rode out with him. Each of them was in his own chariot. They both went to meet Jehu. They met him at the piece of land that had belonged to Naboth from Jezreel.

22When Joram saw Jehu he asked, “Have you come here in peace, Jehu?”

“Your mother Jezebel worships statues of gods,” Jehu replied. “She also worships evil powers. The evil things she does have spread everywhere. As long as all of that goes on, how can there be peace?”

23Joram turned around and tried to get away. He called out to Ahaziah. He said, “It’s treason, Ahaziah!”

24Then Jehu shot an arrow at Joram. It hit him between the shoulders. It went through his heart. He sank down slowly in his chariot.

25Jehu spoke to Bidkar, his chariot officer. He said, “Pick him up. Throw him on the field that belonged to Naboth from Jezreel. Remember how you and I were riding together in chariots behind Joram’s father Ahab? It was when the LORD made a prophecy about him. He announced, 26‘Yesterday I saw the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons. You can be sure that I will make you pay for it on this piece of land.’ So pick him up. Throw him on that piece of land. That’s what the LORD said would happen.”

27Ahaziah, the king of Judah, saw what had happened. So he tried to get away. He went up the road toward Beth Haggan.

Jehu chased him. He shouted, “Kill him too!” Jehu’s men wounded Ahaziah in his chariot. It happened on the way up to Gur near Ibleam. But he escaped to Megiddo. And that’s where he died.

28Ahaziah’s servants took him to Jerusalem in his chariot. They buried his body in his family tomb in the City of David. 29Ahaziah had become king of Judah. It was in the 11th year of Joram, the son of Ahab.

Jehu Kills Jezebel

30Jehu went to Jezreel. Jezebel heard about it. So she put makeup on her eyes and fixed her hair. She looked out of a window. 31Jehu entered the gate below.

Then Jezebel said, “You are just like Zimri. You murdered your master. Have you come here in peace?”

32He looked up at the window. “Who is on my side?” he called out. “Who?” Two or three officials looked down at him. 33“Throw her down!” Jehu said. So they threw her down. Some of her blood splashed on the wall. Some of it splashed on Jehu’s chariot horses as they ran over her.

34Jehu went inside. He ate and drank. “The LORD put a curse on that woman,” he said. “Take proper care of her body. Bury it. After all, she was a king’s daughter.”

35So they went out to bury her body. But all they found was her skull, feet and hands.

36They went back and reported it to Jehu. He told them, “That’s what the LORD said would happen. He announced it through his servant Elijah, who was from Tishbe. He said, ‘On a piece of land at Jezreel, dogs will eat up Jezebel’s body. 37Her body will be left to rot on that piece of land. So no one will be able to say, “Here’s where Jezebel is buried.” ’ ”

Jehu Wipes Out Ahab's Royal House

2 Kings 10

[1]Ahab's royal family in the city of Samaria had a total of 70 sons. Jehu wrote some letters to the officials of the city. He also sent them to the elders there. And he sent them to those who took care of Ahab's children. He said, [2]"Your master's sons are with you. You also have chariots and horses and weapons. And you are living in a city that has high walls around it. As soon as you read this letter, here's what I want you to do. [3]Choose the best and most respected son of your master. Place him on his father Joram's throne. Then fight for your master's royal house."

[4]The leaders of Samaria were terrified. They said, "King Joram and King Ahaziah couldn't stand up against Jehu. So how can we?"

[5]The city governor and the person who was in charge of the palace sent a message to Jehu. The message was also from the elders and those who took care of Ahab's children. It said, "We will serve you. We'll do anything you say. We won't appoint anyone to be king. Do what you think is best."

[6]Then Jehu wrote them a second letter. It said, "You say you are on my side. You say you will obey me. If you really mean it, bring me the heads of your master's sons. Meet me in Jezreel by this time tomorrow."

There were 70 royal princes. They were with the most important men of the city. Those men were in charge of raising them. [7]When Jehu's letter arrived, the men went and got the princes. They killed all 70 of them. They put their heads in baskets. Then they sent them to Jehu in Jezreel.

[8]When the messenger arrived, he spoke to Jehu. He told him, "The heads of the princes have been brought here."

Then Jehu ordered his men, "Put them in two piles. Stack them up at the entrance of the city gate until morning."

[9]The next morning Jehu went out. He stood in front of all of the people. He said, "You aren't guilty of doing anything wrong. I'm the one who made plans against my master Joram. I killed him. But who killed all of these? [10]I want

you to know that the LORD has spoken against Ahab's royal house. Not a word of what he has said will fail. The LORD has done exactly what he promised through his servant Elijah."

[11]So Jehu killed everyone from Ahab's family who was in Jezreel. He also killed all of Ahab's chief men. And he killed Ahab's close friends and his priests. He didn't leave anyone in Ahab's family alive.

[12]Then Jehu started out for Samaria. At Beth Eked of the Shepherds, [13]he saw some people. They were relatives of Ahaziah, the king of Judah. Jehu asked them, "Who are you?"

They said, "We are Ahaziah's relatives. We've come down to visit the families of the king and of his mother."

[14]"Take them alive!" Jehu ordered. So his men took them alive. Then they killed them by the well of Beth Eked. They killed a total of 42 men. Jehu didn't leave anyone alive.

[15]After Jehu left there, he came upon Jehonadab. He was the son of Recab. Jehonadab was on his way to see Jehu. Jehu greeted him. He asked, "Are you my friend? You know I'm your friend."

"I am," Jehonadab answered.

"If that's true," said Jehu, "hold out your hand." So he did. Then Jehu helped him up into the chariot. [16]Jehu said, "Come along with me. See how committed I am to serve the LORD." He had him ride along in his chariot.

[17]Jehu came to Samaria. He killed everyone who was left there from Ahab's family. And so he wiped out Ahab's royal house. That's what the LORD had said would happen. He had spoken that message to Elijah.

Jehu Kills Those Who Serve Baal

[18]Then Jehu brought all of the people together. He said to them, "Ahab served the god Baal a little. I will serve him a lot. [19]Send for all of Baal's prophets. Also send for all of his priests and the others who serve him. Make sure that not a single one is missing. I'm going to hold a great sacrifice to honor Baal. Anyone who doesn't come will be killed." But Jehu was lying to them. He was planning to destroy those who served Baal.

[20]Jehu said, "Call everyone together to honor Baal." So they did. [21]Then he

sent a message all through Israel. All of those who served Baal came. Not a single one of them stayed away. They crowded into Baal's temple. It was full from one end to the other.

22Jehu spoke to the one who took care of the sacred robes. He told him, "Bring robes for everyone who serves Baal." So he brought the robes out for them.

23Then Jehu went into Baal's temple. Jehonadab, the son of Recab, went with him. Jehu spoke to those who served Baal. He said, "Look around. Make sure that no one who serves the LORD is here with you. Make sure only those who serve Baal are here." 24So they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings.

Jehu had stationed 80 men outside. He warned them, "I'm placing some men in your hands. Don't let a single one of them escape. If you do, you will pay for his life with yours."

25Jehu finished sacrificing the burnt offering. As soon as he did, he gave an order to the guards and officers. He commanded them, "Go inside and kill everyone. Don't let a single one of them escape."

So they cut them down with their swords. The guards and officers threw the bodies outside. Then they entered the most sacred area inside Baal's temple.

26They brought the sacred stone of Baal outside. They burned it up. 27So they destroyed Baal's sacred stone. They also tore down Baal's temple. People have used it as a public toilet to this very day.

28So Jehu destroyed the worship of the god Baal in Israel. 29But he didn't turn away from the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. Jeroboam had caused Israel to commit those same sins. Jehu worshiped the golden calves at Bethel and Dan.

30The LORD said to Jehu, "You have done well. You have accomplished what is right in my eyes. You have done to Ahab's royal house everything I wanted you to do. So your sons after you will sit on the throne of Israel. They will rule until the time of your children's grandchildren."

31But Jehu wasn't careful to obey the law of the LORD. He didn't obey the God of Israel with all his heart. He didn't turn away from the sins of Jeroboam. Jeroboam had caused Israel to commit those same sins.

32In those days the LORD began to make the kingdom of Israel smaller. Hazael gained control over many parts of Israel. He gained control over all of their territory 33east of the Jordan River. It included the whole land of Gilead from

Aroer by the Arnon River valley all the way to Bashan. That was the territory of Gad, Reuben and Manasseh.

34The other events of Jehu's rule are written down. Everything he did and accomplished is written down. All of those things are written in the official records of the kings of Israel.

35Jehu joined the members of his family who had already died. His body was buried in Samaria. His son Jehoahaz became the next king after him. 36Jehu had ruled over Israel in Samaria for 28 years.

Athaliah and Joash

2 Kings 11

1 Athaliah was Ahaziah's mother. She saw that her son was dead. So she
began to wipe out the whole royal house of Judah.

2 But Jehosheba went and got Joash, the son of Ahaziah. She was the daughter
of King Jehoram and the sister of Ahaziah. She stole Joash away from among
the royal princes. All of them were about to be murdered. She put Joash and his
nurse in a bedroom. That's how she hid him from Athaliah. And that's why
Athaliah didn't kill him. 3 The child remained hidden with his nurse at the
LORD's temple for six years. Athaliah ruled over the land during that time.

4 In the seventh year the priest Jehoiada sent for the commanders of
companies of 100 men. They were the commanders over the Carites and
guards. He had them brought to him at the temple of the LORD. He made a
covenant with them. He made them take an oath at the temple. Then he showed
them the king's son.

5 He gave them a command. He said, "Here's what you must do. There are
five companies of you. Some of you are in the three companies that are going
on duty on the Sabbath day. A third of you must guard the royal palace. 6 A
third of you must guard the Sur Gate. And a third of you must guard the gate
that is behind the guard. All of you must take turns guarding the temple.

7 "The rest of you are in the other two companies. Normally you are not on
duty on the Sabbath. But you also must guard the temple for the king. 8 Station
yourselves around the king. Each man must have his weapon in his hand.
Anyone else who approaches your companies must be put to death. Stay close
to the king no matter where he goes."

9 The commanders of the companies did just as the priest Jehoiada ordered.
Each commander got his men and came to Jehoiada. Some of the men were
going on duty on the Sabbath day. Others were going off duty.

10 Then Jehoiada gave weapons to the commanders. He gave them spears and
shields. The weapons had belonged to King David. They had been in the
LORD's temple.

[11]The guards stationed themselves around the new king. Each man had his weapon in his hand. They were near the altar and the temple. They stood from the south side of the temple to its north side. Their line formed half of a circle.

[12]Jehoiada brought Ahaziah's son out. He put the crown on him. He gave him a copy of the covenant. And he announced that Joash was king. Jehoiada and his sons anointed him. The people clapped their hands. Then they shouted, "May the king live a long time!"

[13]Athaliah heard the noise the guards and the people were making. So she went to the people at the LORD's temple. [14]She looked. And there was the king! He was standing next to the pillar. That was the usual practice. The officers and trumpet players were standing beside the king. All of the people of the land were filled with joy. They were blowing trumpets.

Then Athaliah tore her royal robes. She called out, "Treason! It's treason!"

[15]The priest Jehoiada gave an order to the commanders of the companies. They were in charge of the troops. He said to them, "Bring her away from the temple between the line of guards. Use your swords to kill anyone who follows her." The priest had said, "She must not be put to death at the LORD's temple."

[16]So they grabbed hold of her as she reached the place where the horses enter the palace grounds. There she was put to death.

[17]Then Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD and the king and people. He had the king and people promise that they would be the LORD's people. Jehoiada also made a covenant between the king and the people.

[18]All of the people of the land went to Baal's temple. They tore it down. They smashed to pieces the altars and the statues of gods. They killed Mattan in front of the altars. He was the priest of Baal.

Then the priest Jehoiada stationed guards at the temple of the LORD. [19]He took with him the commanders of companies of 100 men. They were the commanders over the Carites and guards. He also took with him all of the people of the land. All of them brought the new king down from the LORD's temple. They went into the palace. They entered it by going through the gate of the guards. Then the king sat down on the royal throne.

[20]All of the people of the land were filled with joy. And the city was quiet. That's because Athaliah had been killed with a sword at the palace.

[21]Joash was seven years old when he became king.

Joash Repairs the Temple

2 Kings 12

1 Joash became king of Judah. It was in the seventh year of Jehu's rule. Joash
ruled in Jerusalem for 40 years. His mother's name was Zibiah. She was from
Beersheba.

2 Joash did what was right in the eyes of the LORD. He lived that way as long
as the priest Jehoiada was teaching him.

3 But the high places weren't removed. The people continued to offer
sacrifices and burn incense there.

4 Joash spoke to the priests. He said, "Collect all of the money the people
bring as sacred offerings to the LORD's temple. That includes the money that is
collected when the men who are able to serve in the army are counted. It
includes the money that is received from people who make a special promise to
the LORD. It also includes the money people bring to the temple just because
they want to.

5 "Let each priest receive the money from one of the people who are in charge
of the temple's treasures. Let all of that money be used to repair the temple
where it needs it."

6 It was now the 23rd year of King Joash. And the priests still hadn't repaired
the temple. 7 So the king sent for the priest Jehoiada and the other priests. He
asked them, "Why aren't you repairing the temple where it needs it? Don't take
any more money from the people who are in charge of the treasures. Instead,
hand it over so the temple can be repaired."

8 The priests agreed that they wouldn't collect any more money from the
people. They also agreed that they wouldn't repair the temple themselves.

9 The priest Jehoiada got a chest. He drilled a hole in its lid. He placed the
chest beside the altar for burnt offerings. The chest was on the right side as
people enter the LORD's temple. Some priests guarded the entrance. They put
into the chest all of the money the people brought to the temple.

10 From time to time there was a large amount of money in the chest. When

that happened, the royal secretary and the high priest came. They counted the money the people had brought to the temple. Then they put it into bags.

[11]After they added it all up, they used it to repair the temple. They gave it to the men who had been put in charge of the work. Those men used it to pay the workers. They paid the builders and those who worked with wood. [12]They paid those who cut stones and those who laid them. They bought lumber and blocks of stone. So they used the money to repair the LORD's temple. They also paid all of the other costs to make the temple like new again.

[13]The money the people brought to the LORD's temple wasn't used to make silver bowls. It wasn't used for wick cutters, sprinkling bowls or trumpets. And it wasn't used for any other articles made out of gold or silver. [14]Instead, it was paid to the workers. They used it to repair the temple. [15]The royal secretary and the high priest didn't require a report from those who were in charge of the work. That's because they were completely honest. They always paid the workers. [16]Money was received from those who brought guilt offerings and sin offerings. But it wasn't taken to the LORD's temple. It belonged to the priests.

[17]About that time Hazael, the king of Aram, went up and attacked Gath. Then he captured it. After that, he turned back to attack Jerusalem.

[18]But Joash, the king of Judah, didn't want to go to war. So he got all of the sacred objects. They had been set apart to the LORD by the kings who had ruled over Judah before him. They were Jehoshaphat, Jehoram and Ahaziah. Joash got the gifts he himself had set apart. He got all of the gold that was among the temple treasures. He also got all of the gold from the royal palace. He sent all of those things to Hazael, the king of Aram. Then Hazael pulled his army back from Jerusalem.

[19]The other events of the rule of Joash are written down. Everything he did is written down. All of those things are written in the official records of the kings of Judah.

[20]The officials of Joash made evil plans against him. They killed him at Beth Millo. It happened on the road that goes down to Silla. [21]The officials who murdered him were Jozabad and Jehozabad. Jozabad was the son of Shimeath. Jehozabad was the son of Shomer.

After Joash died, his body was buried in the family tomb in the City of David. His son Amaziah became the next king after him.

Jehoahaz Becomes King of Israel

2 Kings 13

[1]Jehoahaz became king of Israel in Samaria. It was in the 23rd year of Joash, the king of Judah. Jehoahaz ruled for 17 years. Joash was the son of Ahaziah. Jehoahaz was the son of Jehu.

[2]Jehoahaz did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. He committed the sins Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, had committed. Jeroboam had caused Israel to commit those same sins. Jehoahaz didn't turn away from them.

[3]So the LORD's anger burned against Israel. For a long time he kept them under the power of Hazael, the king of Aram. He also kept them under the power of his son Ben-Hadad.

[4]Then Jehoahaz asked the LORD to show him his favor. The LORD listened to him. The LORD saw how badly the king of Aram was treating Israel. [5]The LORD provided someone to save Israel. And they escaped from the power of Aram. So the people of Israel lived in their own homes, just as they had before.

[6]But the people didn't turn away from the sins of the royal house of Jeroboam. He had caused Israel to commit those same sins. The people continued to commit them. And the pole that was used to worship the goddess Asherah remained standing in Samaria.

[7]The army of Jehoahaz had almost nothing left. All it had was 50 horsemen, 10 chariots and 10,000 soldiers on foot. The king of Aram had destroyed the rest of them. He had made them like dust at threshing time.

[8]The other events of the rule of Jehoahaz are written down. Everything he did and accomplished is written down. All of those things are written in the official records of the kings of Israel.

[9]Jehoahaz joined the members of his family who had already died. His body was buried in Samaria. His son Jehoash became the next king after him.

Jehoash Becomes King of Israel

[10]Jehoash became king of Israel in Samaria. It was in the 37th year that Joash was king of Judah. Jehoash ruled for 16 years. He was the son of Jehoahaz.

[11]Jehoash did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. He didn't turn away from any of the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. Jeroboam had caused Israel to commit those same sins. And Jehoash continued to commit them.

[12]The other events of the rule of Jehoash are written down. Everything he did and accomplished is written down. That includes his war against Amaziah, the king of Judah. All of those things are written in the official records of the kings of Israel.

[13]Jehoash joined the members of his family who had already died. His body was buried in the royal tombs in Samaria. Jeroboam became the next king on Israel's throne after him.

[14]Elisha was suffering from a sickness. Later he would die from it. Jehoash, the king of Israel, went down to see him. He sobbed over him. "My father!" he cried. "You are like a father to me! You are the true chariots and horsemen of Israel!"

[15]Elisha said to Jehoash, "Get a bow and some arrows." So he did.

[16]"Hold the bow in your hands," Elisha said to the king of Israel. So Jehoash took hold of the bow. Then Elisha put his hands on the king's hands.

[17]"Open the east window," Elisha said. So he did. "Shoot!" Elisha said. So he shot.

"That's the LORD's arrow!" Elisha announced. "It means you will win the battle over Aram! You will completely destroy the men of Aram at Aphek."

[18]He continued, "Get some arrows." So the king did. Elisha told him, "Strike the ground." He struck it three times. Then he stopped.

[19]The man of God was angry with him. He said, "You should have struck the ground five or six times. Then you would have won the war over Aram. You would have completely destroyed them. But now you will win only three battles over them."

[20]Elisha died. And his body was buried.

Some robbers from Moab used to enter the country of Israel every spring. [21]One day some people of Israel were burying a man's body. Suddenly they saw a group of robbers. So they threw the man's body into Elisha's tomb. The body touched Elisha's bones. When it did, the man came back to life again. He

stood up on his feet.

22 Hazael, the king of Aram, treated Israel badly. He did it the whole time
Jehoahaz was king.

23 But the LORD showed his favor to Israel. He was tender and kind to them.
He showed concern for them. He did all of those things because of the
covenant he had made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. To this very day he
hasn't been willing to destroy them. And he hasn't driven them out of his land.

24 Hazael, the king of Aram, died. His son Ben-Hadad became the next king
after him. 25 Then Jehoash took some towns back from Ben-Hadad, the son of
Hazael. Ben-Hadad had captured them in battle from Jehoahaz, the father of
Jehoash. Jehoash won three battles over Ben-Hadad. So Jehoash took back the
Israelite towns.

Amaziah Becomes King of Judah

2 Kings 14

[1]Amaziah began to rule as king over Judah. It was in the second year that Jehoash was king of Israel. He was the son of Jehoahaz. Amaziah was the son of Joash. [2]Amaziah was 25 years old when he became king. He ruled in Jerusalem for 29 years. His mother's name was Jehoaddin. She was from Jerusalem.

[3]Amaziah did what was right in the eyes of the LORD. But he didn't do what King David had done. He always followed the example of his father Joash. [4]The high places weren't removed. The people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there.

[5]The kingdom was firmly under his control. So he put to death the officials who had murdered his father, the king.

[6]But he didn't put their children to death. He obeyed what is written in the Scroll of the Law of Moses. There the LORD commanded, "Parents must not be put to death because of what their children do. And children must not be put to death because of what their parents do. People must die because of their own sins."(Deuteronomy 24:16)

[7]Amaziah won the battle over 10,000 men of Edom. It happened in the Valley of Salt. During the battle he captured the town of Sela. He called it Joktheel. That's the name it still has to this very day.

[8]Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash, the king of Israel. He was the son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu. The message said, "Come on. Meet me face to face in battle."

[9]But Jehoash, the king of Israel, answered Amaziah, the king of Judah. He said, "A thorn bush in Lebanon sent a message to a cedar tree there. It said, 'Give your daughter to be married to my son.' Then a wild animal in Lebanon came along. It walked all over the thorn bush. [10]It's true that you have won the battle over Edom. So you are proud. Enjoy your success while you can. But stay home and enjoy it! Why ask for trouble? Why bring yourself crashing down? Why bring Judah down with you?"

[11]But Amaziah wouldn’t listen. So Jehoash, the king of Israel, attacked. He and Amaziah, the king of Judah, faced each other in battle. The battle took place at Beth Shemesh in Judah.

[12]Israel drove Judah away. Every man ran home. [13]Jehoash king of Israel captured Amaziah king of Judah at Beth Shemesh. Amaziah was the son of Joash. Joash was the son of Ahaziah. Jehoash went to Jerusalem. He broke down part of its wall. It’s the part that went from the Ephraim Gate to the Corner Gate. That part of the wall was 600 feet long.

[14]Jehoash took all of the gold, silver and articles that were in the LORD’s temple. He also took all of those same kinds of things that were among the treasures of the royal palace. And he took the prisoners. Then he returned to Samaria.

[15]The other events of the rule of Jehoash are written down. Everything he did and accomplished is written down. That includes his war against Amaziah, the king of Judah. All of those things are written in the official records of the kings of Israel.

[16]Jehoash joined the members of his family who had already died. His body was buried in Samaria in the royal tombs of Israel. His son Jeroboam became the next king after him.

[17]Amaziah king of Judah lived for 15 years after Jehoash king of Israel died. Amaziah was the son of Joash. Jehoash was the son of Jehoahaz. [18]The other events of Amaziah’s rule are written down. They are written in the official records of the kings of Judah.

[19]Some people made evil plans against Amaziah in Jerusalem. So he ran away to Lachish. But they sent men to Lachish after him. There they killed him. [20]His body was brought back on a horse. Then he was buried in the family tomb in Jerusalem, the City of David.

[21]All of the people of Judah made Uzziah king. He was 16 years old. They made him king in place of his father Amaziah. [22]Uzziah rebuilt Elath. He brought it under Judah’s control again. He did it after Amaziah joined the members of his family who had already died.

Jeroboam II Becomes King of Israel

[23]Jeroboam became king of Israel in Samaria. It was in the 15th year that Amaziah was king of Judah. Jeroboam ruled for 41 years. Amaziah was the son of Joash. Jeroboam was the son of Jehoash.

[24]Jeroboam did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. He didn't turn away from any of the sins the earlier Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, had committed. That Jeroboam had caused Israel to commit those same sins.

[25]Jeroboam, the son of Jehoash, made the borders of Israel the same as they were before. They reached from Lebo Hamath all the way to the Dead Sea. That's what the LORD, the God of Israel, had said would happen. He had spoken that message through his servant Jonah. The prophet Jonah was the son of Amittai. Jonah was from Gath Hepher.

[26]The LORD had seen how much everyone in Israel was suffering. It didn't matter whether they were slaves or free. They didn't have anyone to help them.
[27]The LORD hadn't said he would wipe out Israel's name from the earth. So he saved them by using the powerful hand of Jeroboam, the son of Jehoash.

[28]The other events of the rule of Jeroboam are written down. Everything he did is written down. What he and his army accomplished is written down. That includes how he brought Damascus and Hamath back under Israel's control. Damascus and Hamath had belonged to the territory of Yaudi. All of those things are written in the official records of the kings of Israel.

[29]Jeroboam joined the members of his family who had already died. His body was buried in the royal tombs of Israel. His son Zechariah became the next king after him.

Uzziah Becomes King of Judah

2 Kings 15

[1]Uzziah began to rule as king over Judah. It was in the 27th year that Jeroboam was king of Israel. Uzziah was the son of Amaziah. [2]Uzziah was 16 years old when he became king. He ruled in Jerusalem for 52 years. His mother's name was Jecoliah. She was from Jerusalem.

[3]Uzziah did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father Amaziah had done.

[4]But the high places weren't removed. The people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there.

[5]The LORD caused King Uzziah to suffer from a skin disease until the day he died. He lived in a separate house. His son Jotham was in charge of the palace. Jotham ruled over the people of the land.

[6]The other events of the rule of Uzziah are written down. Everything he did is written down. All of those things are written in the official records of the kings of Judah.

[7]Uzziah joined the members of his family who had already died. His body was buried near them in the City of David. His son Jotham became the next king after him.

Zechariah Becomes King of Israel

[8]Zechariah became king of Israel in Samaria. It was in the 38th year that Uzziah was king of Judah. Zechariah ruled for six months. He was the son of Jeroboam, the son of Jehoash.

[9]Zechariah did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. He did what the kings of Israel before him had done. He didn't turn away from the sins Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, had committed. Jeroboam had caused Israel to commit those same sins.

[10]Shallum made evil plans against Zechariah. He attacked Zechariah in front of the people and killed him. Then he became the next king after him. Shallum was the son of Jabesh.

[11]The other events of the rule of Zechariah are written down. They are written in the official records of the kings of Israel. [12]That's what the LORD had said would happen. He had spoken that message to Jehu. It had said, "Your sons after you will sit on the throne of Israel. They will rule until the time of your children's grandchildren." (2 Kings 10:30)

Shallum Becomes King of Israel

[13]Shallum became king of Israel. It was in the 39th year that Uzziah was king of Judah. Shallum ruled in Samaria for one month. He was the son of Jabesh.

[14]Menahem went from Tirzah up to Samaria. There he attacked Shallum, the son of Jabesh. He killed him and became the next king after him. Menahem was the son of Gadi.

[15]The other events of Shallum's rule are written down. The evil things he planned are written down. All of those things are written in the official records of the kings of Israel.

[16]At that time Menahem started out from Tirzah and attacked Tiphsah. He attacked everyone in the city and the area around it. That's because they refused to open their gates for him. He destroyed Tiphsah. He ripped open all of their pregnant women.

Menahem Becomes King of Israel

[17]Menahem became king of Israel. It was in the 39th year that Uzziah was king of Judah. Menahem ruled in Samaria for ten years. He was the son of Gadi.

[18]Menahem did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. During his entire rule he didn't turn away from the sins Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, had committed. Jeroboam had caused Israel to commit those same sins.

[19]Then Tiglath-Pileser marched into the land of Israel. He was king of

Assyria. Menahem gave him 37 tons of silver to get his help. He wanted to make his control over the kingdom stronger. [20]Menahem forced Israel to give him that money. Every wealthy person had to give him 20 ounces of silver. All of it went to the king of Assyria. So he pulled his troops back. He didn't stay in the land anymore.

[21]The other events of the rule of Menahem are written down. Everything he did is written down. All of those things are written in the official records of the kings of Israel.

[22]Menahem joined the members of his family who had already died. His son Pekahiah became the next king after him.

Pekahiah Becomes King of Israel

[23]Pekahiah became king of Israel in Samaria. It was in the 50th year that Uzziah was king of Judah. Pekahiah ruled for two years. He was the son of Menahem.

[24]Pekahiah did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. He didn't turn away from the sins Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, had committed. Jeroboam had caused Israel to commit those same sins.

[25]One of Pekahiah's chief officers was Pekah. He was the son of Remaliah. Pekah made evil plans against Pekahiah. He took 50 men of Gilead with him and killed Pekahiah. He also killed Argob and Arieh. He killed all of them in the safest place in the royal palace at Samaria. So Pekah killed Pekahiah. He became the next king after him.

[26]The other events of the rule of Pekahiah are written down. Everything he did is written down. All of those things are written in the official records of the kings of Israel.

Pekah Becomes King of Israel

[27]Pekah became king of Israel in Samaria. It was in the 52nd year that Uzziah was king of Judah. Pekah ruled for 20 years. He was the son of Remaliah.

[28]Pekah did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. He didn't turn away from

the sins Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, had committed. Jeroboam had caused Israel to commit those same sins.

29During the rule of Pekah, the king of Israel, Tiglath-Pileser marched into the land again. He was king of Assyria. He took the towns of Ijon, Abel Beth Maacah, Janoah, Kedesh and Hazor. He also took the lands of Gilead and Galilee. That included the whole territory of Naphtali. He took the people away from their own land. He sent them off to Assyria.

30Then Hoshea made evil plans against Pekah, the son of Remaliah. Hoshea was the son of Elah. Hoshea attacked Pekah and killed him. Then Hoshea became the next king after him. It was in the 20th year of the rule of Jotham, the son of Uzziah.

31The other events of the rule of Pekah are written down. Everything he did is written down. All of those things are written in the official records of the kings of Israel.

Jotham Becomes King of Judah

32Jotham began to rule as king over Judah. It was in the second year that Pekah was king of Israel. He was the son of Remaliah. Jotham was the son of Uzziah. 33Jotham was 25 years old when he became king. He ruled in Jerusalem for 16 years. His mother's name was Jerusha. She was the daughter of Zadok.

34Jotham did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father Uzziah had done.

35But the high places weren't removed. The people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there. Jotham rebuilt the Upper Gate of the LORD's temple.

36The other events of the rule of Jotham are written down. Everything he did is written down. All of those things are written in the official records of the kings of Judah.

37In those days the LORD began to send Rezin and Pekah against Judah. Rezin was king of Aram. Pekah was the son of Remaliah.

38Jotham joined the members of his family who had already died. His body was buried in the family tomb in the city of King David. His son Ahaz became

the next king after him.

Ahaz Becomes King of Judah

2 Kings 16

1 Ahaz began to rule as king over Judah. It was in the 17th year of the rule of
Pekah, the son of Remaliah. Ahaz was the son of Jotham. 2 Ahaz was 20 years
old when he became king. He ruled in Jerusalem for 16 years.

Ahaz didn't do what was right in the eyes of the LORD his God. He didn't do
what King David had done. 3 He followed the ways of the kings of Israel. He
even sacrificed his son in the fire to another god. He followed the practices of
the nations. The LORD hated those practices. He had driven out those nations to
make room for the people of Israel. 4 Ahaz offered sacrifices and burned
incense at the high places. He also did it on the tops of hills and under every
green tree.

5 Rezin and Pekah marched up to Jerusalem and surrounded it. Rezin was
king of Aram. Pekah, the son of Remaliah, was king of Israel. They attacked
Ahaz. But they couldn't overpower him. 6 At that time Rezin, the king of Aram,
got back Elath for Aram. He drove out the people of Judah. Then the people of
Edom moved into Elath. And they still live there to this very day.

7 Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-Pileser. He was king of Assyria. The
message of Ahaz said, "I am your servant. You are my master. Come up and
save me from the powerful hands of the kings of Aram and Israel. They are
attacking me."

8 Ahaz took the silver and gold that were in the LORD's temple. He also took
the silver and gold that were among the treasures in the royal palace. He sent
all of it as a gift to the king of Assyria.

9 So the king of Assyria did what Ahaz asked him to do. He attacked the city
of Damascus and captured it. He sent its people away to Kir. And he put Rezin
to death.

10 Then King Ahaz went to Damascus. He went there to see Tiglath-Pileser,
the king of Assyria. Ahaz saw an altar in Damascus. He sent a drawing of it to
the priest Uriah. He also sent him plans for building it.

[11]So the priest Uriah built an altar. He followed all of the plans King Ahaz had sent from Damascus. He finished it before Ahaz returned.

[12]The king came back from Damascus. When he saw the altar, he approached it. Then he offered sacrifices on it. [13]He offered up his burnt offering and grain offering. He poured out his drink offering. And he sprinkled blood from his friendship offerings on the altar.

[14]The bronze altar for burnt offerings stood in front of the LORD. It was between the new altar and the LORD's temple. Ahaz took it away from the front of the temple. He put it on the north side of the new altar.

[15]Then King Ahaz gave orders to the priest Uriah. He said, "Offer sacrifices on the large new altar. Offer the morning burnt offering and the evening grain offering. Offer my burnt offering and my grain offering. Offer the burnt offering of all of the people of the land. Offer their grain offering and their drink offering. Sprinkle on the altar all of the blood from the burnt offerings and sacrifices. But I will use the bronze altar to look for advice and direction."

[16]The priest Uriah did just as King Ahaz had ordered.

[17]Ahaz took away the sides of the bronze stands. He removed the bowls from the stands. He removed the huge bowl from the bronze bulls it stood on. He placed the bowl on a stone base. [18]He took away the covered area that had been used on the Sabbath day. It had been built at the LORD's temple. He removed the royal entrance that was outside the temple. Ahaz did all of that to honor the king of Assyria.

[19]The other events of the rule of Ahaz are written down. Everything he did is written down. All of those things are written in the official records of the kings of Judah.

[20]Ahaz joined the members of his family who had already died. His body was buried in the family tomb in the City of David. His son Hezekiah became the next king after him.

Hoshea Becomes the Last King of Israel

2 Kings 17

[1]Hoshea became king of Israel in Samaria. It was in the 12th year that Ahaz
was king of Judah. Hoshea ruled for nine years. He was the son of Elah.

[2]Hoshea did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. But he wasn't as evil as
the kings of Israel who ruled before him.

[3]Shalmaneser came up to attack Hoshea. Shalmaneser was king of Assyria.
He had been Hoshea's master. He had forced Hoshea to bring him gifts. [4]But
the king of Assyria found out that Hoshea had turned against him. Hoshea had
sent messengers to So, the king of Egypt. Hoshea didn't send gifts to the king
of Assyria anymore. He had been sending them every year. So Shalmaneser
grabbed hold of him and put him in prison.

[5]The king of Assyria marched into the whole land of Israel. He marched to
Samaria and surrounded it for three years. From time to time he attacked it.
[6]Finally, the king of Assyria captured Samaria. It was in the ninth year of
Hoshea. The king of Assyria took the people of Israel away from their own
land. He sent them off to Assyria. He settled some of them in Halah. He settled
others in Gozan on the Habor River. And he settled still others in the towns of
the Medes.

Israel Is Forced to Go Away to Assyria

[7]All of that took place because the people of Israel had committed sins
against the LORD their God. He had brought them up out of Egypt. He had
brought them out from under the power of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. But they
worshiped other gods.

[8]The LORD had driven out other nations to make room for them. But they
followed the evil practices of those nations. They also followed the practices
that the kings of Israel had started. [9]The people of Israel did things against the
LORD their God in secret. What they did wasn't right. They built high places for

worship in all of their towns. They built them at lookout towers. They also built them at cities that had high walls around them. [10]They set up sacred stones. And they set up poles that were used to worship the goddess Asherah. They did that on every high hill and under every green tree.

[11]The LORD had driven out nations to make room for Israel. But the people of Israel burned incense at every high place, just as those nations had done. The Israelites did evil things that made the LORD very angry. [12]They worshiped statues of gods. They did it even though the LORD had said, “Do not do that.”

[13]The LORD warned Israel and Judah through all of his prophets and seers. He said, “Turn from your evil ways. Keep my commands and rules. Obey every part of my Law. I commanded your people who lived long ago to obey it. And I gave it to you through my servants the prophets.”

[14]But the people wouldn’t listen. They were as stubborn as their people of long ago had been. Those people didn’t trust in the LORD their God. [15]They refused to obey his rules. They broke the covenant he had made with them. They didn’t pay any attention to the warnings he had given them. They worshiped worthless statues of gods. Then they themselves became worthless. They followed the example of the nations that were around them. They did it even though the LORD had ordered them not to. He had said, “Do not do as they do.” They did the very things the LORD had told them not to do.

[16]They turned away from all of the commands of the LORD their God. They made two statues of gods for themselves. The statues were shaped like calves. They made a pole that was used to worship the goddess Asherah. They bowed down to all of the stars. And they worshiped the god Baal.

[17]They sacrificed their sons and daughters in the fire. They practiced all kinds of evil magic. They gave themselves over to do what was evil in the sight of the LORD. All of those things made him very angry.

[18]So the LORD was filled with anger against Israel. He removed them from his land. Only the tribe of Judah was left. [19]And even Judah didn’t obey the commands of the LORD their God. They followed the practices Israel had started.

[20]So the LORD turned his back on all of the people of Israel. He made them suffer. He handed them over to people who stole everything they had. And finally he threw them out of his land.

[21]He tore Israel away from the royal house of David. The people of Israel

made Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, their king. Jeroboam tried to get Israel to stop following the LORD. He caused them to commit a terrible sin. [22]The people of Israel were stubborn. They continued to commit all of the sins Jeroboam had committed. They didn't turn away from them.

[23]So the LORD removed them from his land. That's what he had warned them he would do. He had given that warning through all of his servants the prophets. So the people of Israel were taken away from their country. They were forced to go to Assyria. And that's where they still are.

Assyria Brings Other People to Samaria

[24]The king of Assyria brought people from Babylon. He also brought them from Cuthah, Avva, Hamath and Sepharvaim. He settled all of them in the towns of Samaria. They took the place of the people of Israel. They took over Samaria and lived in its towns.

[25]When they first lived there, they didn't worship the LORD. So he sent lions among them. And the lions killed some of the people.

[26]A report was given to the king of Assyria. He was told, "You forced people to leave their own homes. You settled them in the towns of Samaria. But they don't know what the god of that country requires. So he has sent lions among them. And the lions are killing the people off. That's because the people don't know what that god requires."

[27]Then the king of Assyria gave an order. He said, "Get one of the priests you captured from Samaria. Send him back to live there. Have him teach the people what the god of that land requires."

[28]So one of the priests went back to live in Bethel. He was one of those who had been forced to leave Samaria. He taught the people there how to worship the LORD.

[29]In spite of that, the people from each nation made statues of their own gods. They made them in all of the towns where they had settled. They set up those statues in small temples. The people of Samaria had built the temples at the high places. [30]The people from Babylon made statues of the god Succoth Benoth. Those from Cuthah made statues of Nergal. Those from Hamath made statues of Ashima. [31]The Avvites made statues of Nibhaz and Tartak. The

Sepharvites sacrificed their children in the fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech. They were the gods of Sepharvaim.

32So the people of Samaria worshiped the LORD. But they also appointed all kinds of their own people to serve them as priests. The priests served in the small temples at the high places. 33The people worshiped the LORD. But they also served their own gods. They followed the evil practices of the nations from which they had been brought.

34They are still stubborn. They continue in their old practices to this very day. And now they don't even worship the LORD. They don't follow his directions and rules. They don't obey his laws and commands. The LORD had given all of those laws to the family of Jacob. He gave the name Israel to Jacob.

35The LORD made a covenant with the people of Israel. At that time he commanded them, "Do not worship any other gods. Do not bow down to them. Do not serve them or sacrifice to them. 36I am the one you must worship. I brought you up out of Egypt by my great power. I saved you by reaching out my mighty arm. You must bow down to me. You must offer sacrifices to me. 37You must always be careful to follow my directions and rules. You must obey the laws and commands I wrote for you. Do not worship other gods.

38"Do not forget the covenant I made with you. And remember, you must not worship other gods. 39Instead, worship me. I will save you from the powerful hand of all of your enemies. I am the LORD your God."

40But the people wouldn't listen. Instead, they were stubborn. They continued in their old practices. 41They worshiped the LORD. But at the same time, they served the statues of their gods. And to this very day their children and grandchildren continue to do what their people before them did.

Hezekiah Becomes King of Judah

2 Kings 18

[1]Hezekiah began to rule as king over Judah. It was in the third year that Hoshea was king of Israel. He was the son of Elah. Hezekiah was the son of Ahaz. [2]Hezekiah was 25 years old when he became king. He ruled in Jerusalem for 29 years. His mother's name was Abijah. She was the daughter of Zechariah.

[3]Hezekiah did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as King David had done. [4]Hezekiah removed the high places. He smashed the sacred stones. He cut down the poles that were used to worship the goddess Asherah. He broke into pieces the bronze snake Moses had made. Up to that time the people of Israel had been burning incense to it. They called it Nehushtan.

[5]Hezekiah trusted in the LORD, the God of Israel. There was no one like him among all of the kings of Judah. There was no king like him either before him or after him. [6]Hezekiah remained true to the LORD. He didn't stop following him. He obeyed the commands the LORD had given Moses.

[7]The LORD was with Hezekiah. He was successful in everything he did. He refused to remain under the control of the king of Assyria. He didn't serve him. [8]He won the war against the Philistines. He won battles at their lookout towers. He won battles at their cities that had high walls around them. He won battles against the Philistines all the way to Gaza and its territory.

[9]Shalmaneser marched to Samaria and surrounded it. It was in the fourth year of King Hezekiah. That was the seventh year of Hoshea, the king of Israel. He was the son of Elah. Shalmaneser was king of Assyria.

[10]At the end of three years the army of Assyria took Samaria. So it was captured in the sixth year of Hezekiah. That was the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Israel. [11]The king of Assyria took the people of Israel away from their own land. He sent them off to Assyria. He settled some of them in Halah. He settled others in Gozan on the Habor River. And he settled still others in the towns of the Medes.

12Those things happened because the Israelites hadn't obeyed the LORD their God. They had broken the covenant he had made with them. They had refused to do everything Moses, the servant of the LORD, had commanded. They hadn't paid any attention to those commands. They hadn't obeyed them.

13Sennacherib attacked and captured all of the cities of Judah that had high walls around them. It was in the 14th year of the rule of Hezekiah. Sennacherib was king of Assyria.

14Hezekiah, the king of Judah, sent a message to the king of Assyria at Lachish. It said, "I have done what is wrong. Pull your troops back from me. Then I'll pay you anything you ask me to."

The king of Assyria forced Hezekiah, the king of Judah, to give him 11 tons of silver. Hezekiah also had to give him a ton of gold. 15So Hezekiah gave him all of the silver that was in the LORD's temple. He also gave him all of the silver that was among the treasures in the royal palace.

16Hezekiah, the king of Judah, had covered the doors and doorposts of the LORD's temple with gold. But now he had to strip it off. He had to give it to the king of Assyria.

Sennacherib Warns Jerusalem

17The king of Assyria sent his highest commander from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. He also sent his chief officer and his field commander along with a large army. All of them came up to Jerusalem. They stopped at the channel that brings water from the Upper Pool. It was on the road to the Washerman's Field. 18They called for King Hezekiah. Eliakim, Shebna and Joah went out to them. Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, was in charge of the palace. Shebna was the secretary. Joah, the son of Asaph, kept the records.

19The field commander said to them, "Give Hezekiah this message. Tell him,

" 'Sennacherib is the great king of Assyria. He says, "Why are you putting your faith in what your king says? 20You say you have a military plan. You say you have a strong army. But your words don't mean anything. Who are you depending on? Why don't you want to stay under my control?

21" ' "You are depending on Egypt. Why are you doing that? Egypt is nothing but a broken papyrus stem. Try leaning on it. It will only cut your hand.

Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, is just like that to everyone who depends on him.

22“ ‘ “Suppose you say to me, ‘We are depending on the LORD our God.’ Didn’t Hezekiah remove your god’s high places and altars? Didn’t Hezekiah say to the people of Judah and Jerusalem, ‘You must worship at the altar in Jerusalem’?

23“ ‘ “Come on. Make a deal with my master, the king of Assyria. I’ll give you 2,000 horses. But only if you can put riders on them! 24You are depending on Egypt for chariots and horsemen. You can’t drive away even the least important officer among my master’s officials.

25“ ‘ “Besides, do you think I’ve come without receiving a message from the LORD? Have I come to attack and destroy this place without a message from him? The LORD himself told me to march out against your country. He told me to destroy it.” ’ ”

26Then Shebna, Joah and Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, spoke to the field commander. They said, “Please speak to us in the Aramaic language. We understand it. Don’t speak to us in Hebrew. If you do, the people who are on the wall will be able to understand you.”

27But the commander replied, “My master sent me to say these things. Are these words only for your master and you to hear? Aren’t they also for the men who are sitting on the wall? They are going to suffer just like you. They’ll have to eat their own waste. They’ll have to drink their own urine.”

28Then the commander stood up and spoke in the Hebrew language. He called out, “Pay attention to what the great king of Assyria is telling you. 29He says, ‘Don’t let Hezekiah trick you. He can’t save you from my powerful hand. 30Don’t let Hezekiah talk you into trusting in the LORD. Don’t believe him when he says, “You can be sure that the LORD will save us. This city will not be handed over to the king of Assyria.” ’

31“Don’t listen to Hezekiah. The king of Assyria says, ‘Make a peace treaty with me. Come over to my side. Then every one of you will eat fruit from your own vine and fig tree. Every one of you will drink water from your own well. 32You will do that until I come back. Then I’ll take you to a land that is just like yours. It’s a land that has a lot of grain and fresh wine. It has plenty of bread and vineyards. It has olive trees and honey. So choose life! Don’t choose death!’

“Don’t pay any attention to Hezekiah. He’s telling you a lie when he says, ‘The LORD will save us.’

33“Has the god of any nation ever saved his land from the powerful hand of the king of Assyria? 34Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivvah? Have they saved Samaria from my power?

35“Which one of all of the gods of those countries has been able to save his land from me? So how can the LORD save Jerusalem from my power?”

36But the people remained silent. They didn’t say anything. That’s because King Hezekiah had commanded, “Don’t answer him.”

37Then Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, went to Hezekiah. Eliakim was in charge of the palace. The secretary Shebna went with him. So did Joah, the son of Asaph. Joah kept the records. All of them went to Hezekiah with their clothes torn. They told him what the field commander had said.

Isaiah Prophesies That Jerusalem Will Be Saved

2 Kings 19

[1]When King Hezekiah heard what the field commander had said, he tore his clothes. He put on black clothes. Then he went into the LORD's temple.

[2]Hezekiah sent Eliakim, who was in charge of the palace, to the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz. He also sent the leading priests and the secretary Shebna to him. All of them were wearing black clothes.

[3]They told Isaiah, "Hezekiah says, 'Today we're in great trouble. The LORD is warning us. He's bringing shame on us. Sometimes babies come to the moment when they should be born. But their mothers aren't strong enough to allow them to be born. Today we are like those mothers. We aren't strong enough to save ourselves.

[4]" 'Perhaps the LORD your God will hear everything the field commander has said. His master, the king of Assyria, has sent him to make fun of the living God. Maybe the LORD your God will punish him for what he has heard him say. So pray for the remaining people who are still alive here.' "

[5]King Hezekiah's officials came to Isaiah. [6]Then Isaiah said to them, "Tell your master, 'The LORD says, "Do not be afraid of what you have heard. The officers who are under the king of Assyria have spoken evil things against me. [7]Listen! I will send him news from his own country. It will upset him so much that he will return home. There I will have him cut down with a sword." ' "

[8]The field commander heard that the king of Assyria had left Lachish. So the commander pulled his troops back from Jerusalem. He went to join the king. He found out that the king was fighting against Libnah.

[9]During that time Sennacherib received a report. He was told that Tirhakah was marching out to fight against him. Tirhakah was the king of Egypt. He was from the land of Cush.

Sennacherib sent messengers again to Hezekiah with a letter. It said, [10]"Tell Hezekiah, the king of Judah, 'Don't let the god you depend on trick you. He says, "Jerusalem will not be handed over to the king of Assyria." But don't believe him.

11“ ‘I’m sure you have heard about what the kings of Assyria have done to all
of the other countries. They have destroyed them completely. So do you think
you will be saved? 12The kings who ruled before me destroyed many nations.
Did the gods of those nations save them? Did the gods of Gozan, Haran or
Rezeph save them? What about the gods of the people of Eden who were in Tel
Assar? 13Where is the king of Hamath? Where is the king of Arpad? Where is
the king of the city of Sepharvaim? Where are the kings of Hena or Ivvah?’ ”

Hezekiah Prays to the LORD

14When Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers, he read it. Then he
went up to the LORD’s temple. There he spread the letter out in front of the
LORD.

15Hezekiah prayed to the LORD. He said, “LORD, you are the God of Israel.
You sit on your throne between the cherubim. You alone are God over all of the
kingdoms on earth. You have made heaven and earth. 16Listen, LORD. Hear us.
Open your eyes, LORD. Look at the trouble we’re in. Listen to what Sennacherib
is saying. You are the living God. And he dares to make fun of you!

17“LORD, it’s true that the kings of Assyria have completely destroyed many
nations and their lands. 18They have thrown the statues of the gods of those
nations into the fire. And they have destroyed them. That’s because they
weren’t really gods at all. They were nothing but statues that were made out of
wood and stone. They were made by the hands of men.

19“LORD our God, save us from the powerful hand of Sennacherib. Then all of
the kingdoms on earth will know that you alone are God.”

Isaiah Prophesies That Sennacherib Will Fall From Power

20Isaiah sent a message to Hezekiah. Isaiah was the son of Amoz. Isaiah said,
“The LORD is the God of Israel. He says, ‘I have heard your prayer about
Sennacherib, the king of Assyria.’

21“Here is the message the LORD has spoken against him. The LORD says,

“ ‘You will not win the battle over Zion.
Its people hate you and make fun of you.
The people of Jerusalem lift up their heads proudly
as you run away.
22Who have you laughed at?
Who have you spoken evil things against?
Who have you raised your voice against?
Who have you looked at so proudly?
You have done it against me.
I am the Holy One of Israel!
23Through your messengers
you have laughed at me again and again.
And you have said,
“I have many chariots.
With them I have climbed to the tops of the mountains.
I’ve climbed the highest mountains in Lebanon.
I’ve cut down its tallest cedar trees.
I’ve cut down the best of its pine trees.
I’ve reached its farthest parts.
I’ve reached its finest forests.
24I’ve dug wells in strange lands.
I’ve drunk the water from them.
I’ve walked through all of Egypt’s streams.
I’ve dried up every one of them.”

25“ ‘But I, the LORD, say, “Haven’t you heard what I have done?
Long ago I arranged for you to do all of that.
In days of old I planned it.
Now I have made it happen.
You have turned cities with high walls
into piles of stone.
26Their people do not have any power left.
They are troubled and put to shame.
They are like plants in the field.
They are like new green plants.
They are like grass that grows on a roof.
It dries up before it is completely grown.

27“ ‘ “But I know where you live.
I know when you come and go.
I know how very angry you are with me.

[28]You roar against me and brag.
And I have heard your bragging.
So I will put my hook in your nose.
I will put my bit in your mouth.
And I will make you go home
by the same way you came.” ’ ”

[29]The LORD said, “Hezekiah, here is a miraculous sign for you.

“This year you will eat what grows by itself.
In the second year you will eat what grows from that.
But in the third year you will plant your crops and gather them in.
You will plant your grapevines and eat their fruit.
[30]The people of Judah who are still alive will be like plants.
Once more they will put down roots and produce fruit.
[31]Out of Jerusalem will come those who remain.
Out of Mount Zion will come those who are still left alive.

“My great love will make sure that happens.
I rule over all.

[32]“Here is a message from me about the king of Assyria. It says,

“ ‘He will not enter this city.
He will not even shoot an arrow at it.
He will not come near it with a shield.
He will not build a ramp in order to climb over its walls.
[33]By the same way he came he will go home.
He will not enter this city,’

announces the LORD.

[34]“ ‘I will guard this city and save it.
I will do it for myself. And I will do it for my servant David.’ ”

[35]That night the angel of the LORD went into the camp of the Assyrians. He put to death 185,000 soldiers there. The people of Jerusalem got up the next morning. They looked out and saw all of the dead bodies. [36]So Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, took the army tents down. Then he left. He returned to

Nineveh and stayed there.

37 One day Sennacherib was worshiping in the temple of his god Nisroch. His sons Adrammelech and Sharezer cut him down with their swords. Then they escaped to the land of Ararat. Esarhaddon became the next king after his father Sennacherib.

Hezekiah Becomes Sick

2 Kings 20

[1]In those days Hezekiah became very sick. He knew he was about to die.

The prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, went to him. Isaiah told Hezekiah, “The LORD says, ‘Put everything in order. Make out your will. You are going to die soon. You will not get well again.’ ”

[2]Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall. He prayed to the LORD. He said, [3]“LORD, please remember how faithful I’ve been to you. I’ve lived the way you wanted me to. I’ve served you with all my heart. I’ve done what is good in your sight.” And Hezekiah cried bitterly.

[4]Isaiah was leaving the middle courtyard. Before he had left it, a message came to him from the LORD. He said, [5]“Go back and speak to Hezekiah. He is the leader of my people. Tell him, ‘The LORD, the God of King David, says, “I have heard your prayer. I have seen your tears. And I will heal you. On the third day from now you will go up to my temple. [6]I will add 15 years to your life. And I will save you and this city from the powerful hand of the king of Assyria. I will guard this city. I will do it for myself. And I will do it for my servant David.” ’ ”

[7]Then Isaiah said, “Press some figs together. Spread them on a piece of cloth.” So that’s what they did. Then they applied it to Hezekiah’s boil. And he got well again.

[8]Hezekiah had said to Isaiah, “You say the LORD will heal me. You say that I’ll go up to his temple on the third day from now. What will the miraculous sign be to prove he’ll really do that?”

[9]Isaiah answered, “The LORD will do what he has promised. Here is his sign to you. Do you want the shadow the sun makes to go forward ten steps? Or do you want it to go back ten steps?”

[10]“It’s easy for the shadow to go forward ten steps,” said Hezekiah. “So have it go back ten steps.”

[11]Then the prophet Isaiah called out to the LORD. And the LORD made the

shadow go back ten steps. It went back the ten steps it had gone down on the stairway Ahaz had made.

Messengers Come From Babylon to Hezekiah

12 At that time Merodach-Baladan, the king of Babylonia, sent Hezekiah
letters and a gift. He had heard that Hezekiah had been sick. Merodach-
Baladan was the son of Baladan.

13 Hezekiah received the messengers. He showed them everything that was in
his storerooms. He showed them the silver and gold. He showed them the
spices and the fine olive oil. He showed them where he kept his weapons. And
he showed them all of his treasures. In fact, he showed them everything that
was in his palace and in his whole kingdom.

14 Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah. He asked him, "What did
those men say? Where did they come from?"

"They came from a land far away," Hezekiah said. "They came from
Babylon."

15 The prophet asked, "What did they see in your palace?"

"They saw everything in my palace," Hezekiah said. "I showed them all of
my treasures."

16 Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Listen to the LORD's message. He says,
17 'You can be sure the time will come when everything in your palace will be
carried off to Babylon. Everything the kings before you have stored up until
this day will be taken away. There will not be anything left,' says the LORD.
18 'Some of the members of your family line will be taken away. They will be
your own flesh and blood. They will include the children who will be born into
your family line in years to come. And they will serve the king of Babylonia in
his palace.' "

19 "The message the LORD has spoken through you is good," Hezekiah replied.
He thought, "There will be peace and safety while I'm still living."

20 The other events of the rule of Hezekiah are written down. Everything he
accomplished is written down. That includes how he made the pool and the
tunnel. He used them to bring water into Jerusalem. All of those things are
written in the official records of the kings of Judah.

[21]Hezekiah joined the members of his family who had already died. His son Manasseh became the next king after him.

Manasseh Becomes King of Judah

2 Kings 21

[1]Manasseh was 12 years old when he became king. He ruled in Jerusalem for
55 years. His mother's name was Hephzibah.

[2]Manasseh did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. He followed the
practices of the nations. The LORD hated those practices. He had driven those
nations out to make room for the people of Israel.

[3]Manasseh rebuilt the high places. His father Hezekiah had destroyed them.
Manasseh also set up altars to the god Baal. He made a pole that was used to
worship the goddess Asherah. Ahab, the king of Israel, had done those same
things. Manasseh even bowed down to all of the stars. And he worshiped them.

[4]He built altars in the LORD's temple. The LORD had said about his temple, "I
will put my Name there in Jerusalem." [5]In both courtyards of the LORD's
temple Manasseh built altars to honor all of the stars.

[6]He sacrificed his own son in the fire to another god. He practiced all kinds of
evil magic. He got messages from those who had died. He talked to the spirits
of the dead. He did many things that were evil in the sight of the LORD. He
made him very angry.

[7]Manasseh had carved a pole for worshiping Asherah. He put it in the temple.
The LORD had spoken to David and his son Solomon about the temple. He had
said, "My Name will be in this temple and in Jerusalem forever. Out of all of
the cities in the tribes of Israel I have chosen Jerusalem. [8]I gave this land to
your people who lived long ago. I will not make the Israelites wander away
from it again. But they must be careful to do everything I commanded them.
They must obey the whole Law that my servant Moses gave them."

[9]But the people didn't pay any attention. Manasseh led them down the wrong
path. They did more evil things than the nations the LORD had destroyed to
make room for the people of Israel.

[10]The LORD spoke through his servants the prophets. He said, [11]"Manasseh,
the king of Judah, has committed terrible sins. I hate them. Manasseh has done

more evil things than the Amorites who were in the land before him. And he has led Judah to commit sin by worshiping his statues of gods.

12"I am the God of Israel. I tell you, 'I am going to bring trouble on Jerusalem and Judah. It will be so horrible that the ears of everyone who hears about it will ring. 13I will measure out punishment against Jerusalem, just as I did against Samaria. I used a plumb line against the royal family of Ahab to prove that they did not measure up to my standards. I will use the same plumb line against Jerusalem. I will wipe out Jerusalem, just as someone wipes a dish. I will wipe it and turn it upside down. 14I will desert those who remain among my people. I will hand them over to their enemies. All of their enemies will rob them.

15" 'That is because my people have done what is evil in my sight. They have made me very angry. They have done that from the day their own people came out of Egypt until this very day.' "

16Manasseh also spilled the blood of many people who weren't guilty of doing anything wrong. He spilled so much blood that he filled Jerusalem with it from one end of the city to the other. And he caused Judah to commit sin. So they also did what was evil in the sight of the LORD.

17The other events of the rule of Manasseh are written down. Everything he did is written down. That includes the sin he committed. All of those things are written in the official records of the kings of Judah.

18Manasseh joined the members of his family who had already died. His body was buried in his palace garden. It was called the garden of Uzza. Manasseh's son Amon became the next king after him.

Amon Becomes King of Judah

19Amon was 22 years old when he became king. He ruled in Jerusalem for two years. His mother's name was Meshullemeth. She was the daughter of Haruz. She was from Jotbah.

20Amon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, just as his father Manasseh had done. 21He lived the way his father had lived. He worshiped the statues of the gods his father had worshiped. He bowed down to them. 22He deserted the LORD, the God of his people. He didn't live the way the LORD

wanted him to.

[23]Amon's officials made plans against him. They murdered the king in his palace. [24]Then the people of the land killed all those who had made plans against King Amon. They made his son Josiah king in his place.

[25]The other events of the rule of Amon are written down. Everything he did is written down. All of those things are written in the official records of the kings of Judah. [26]Amon's body was buried in his grave in the garden of Uzza. His son Josiah became the next king after him.

Hilkiah Finds the Scroll of the Law

2 Kings 22

1 Josiah was eight years old when he became king. He ruled in Jerusalem for
31 years. His mother's name was Jedidah. She was the daughter of Adaiah. She
was from Bozkath.

2 Josiah did what was right in the eyes of the LORD. He lived the way King
David had lived. He didn't turn away from it to the right or the left.

3 King Josiah sent his secretary Shaphan to the LORD's temple. It was in the
18th year of Josiah's rule. Shaphan was the son of Azaliah. Azaliah was the
son of Meshullam. Josiah said, 4 "Go up to the high priest Hilkiah. Have him
add up the money that has been brought into the LORD's temple. Those who
guard the doors have collected it from the people.

5 "Have them put all of the money in the care of the men who have been put
in charge of the work on the LORD's temple. Have them pay the workers who
repair it. 6 Have them pay the builders and those who work with wood. Have
them pay those who lay the stones. Also have them buy lumber and blocks of
stone to repair the temple.

7 "But they don't have to report how they use the money that is given to them.
That's because they are completely honest."

8 The high priest Hilkiah spoke to the secretary Shaphan. He said, "I've found
the Scroll of the Law in the LORD's temple." He gave it to Shaphan, who read
it.

9 Then Shaphan went to King Josiah. He told him, "Your officials have paid
out the money that was in the LORD's temple. They've put it in the care of the
workers and directors there." 10 Shaphan continued, "The priest Hilkiah has
given me a scroll." Shaphan read some of it to the king.

11 The king heard the words of the Scroll of the Law. When he did, he tore his
royal robes. 12 He gave orders to the priest Hilkiah, Ahikam, Acbor, the
secretary Shaphan and Asaiah. Ahikam was the son of Shaphan. Acbor was the
son of Micaiah. And Asaiah was the king's attendant.

Josiah commanded them, [13]“Go. Ask the LORD for advice. Ask him about what is written in this scroll that has been found. Do it for me. Also do it for the people and the whole nation of Judah. The LORD’s anger is burning against us. That’s because our people before us didn’t obey the words of this scroll. They didn’t do everything that is written there about us.”

[14]The priest Hilkiah went to speak to the prophet Huldah. So did Ahikam, Acbor, Shaphan and Asaiah. Huldah was the wife of Shallum. Shallum was the son of Tikvah. Tikvah was the son of Harhas. Shallum took care of the sacred robes. Huldah lived in the New Quarter of Jerusalem.

[15]She said to them, “The LORD is the God of Israel. He says, ‘Tell the man who sent you to me, [16]“The LORD says, ‘I am going to bring horrible trouble on this place and its people. Everything that is written in the scroll the king of Judah has read will take place.

[17]“ ‘ “ ‘That is because the people have deserted me. They have burned incense to other gods. They have made me very angry because of the statues of gods their hands have made. So my anger will burn against this place. The fire of my anger will not be put out.’ ” ’

[18]“The king of Judah sent you to ask the LORD for advice. Tell him, ‘The LORD is the God of Israel. He has a message for you about the things you heard. He says, [19]“Your heart was tender. You made yourself low in my sight. You heard what I spoke against this place and its people. I said they would be under a curse. I told them they would be destroyed. You tore your royal robes and sobbed. And I have heard you,” announces the LORD.

[20]“ ‘ “You will join the members of your family who have already died. Your body will be buried in peace. Your eyes will not see all of the trouble I am going to bring on this place.” ’ ”

Huldah’s answer was taken back to the king.

Josiah Promises to Follow the Covenant

2 Kings 23

[1]Then the king called together all of the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. [2]He went up to the LORD's temple. The people of Judah and Jerusalem went with him. So did the priests and prophets. All of them went, from the least important of them to the most important.

The king had all of the words of the Scroll of the Covenant read to them. The scroll had been found in the LORD's temple.

[3]The king stood next to his pillar. He agreed to the terms of the covenant in front of the LORD. He promised to follow him and obey his commands, directions and rules. He promised to obey them with all his heart and with all his soul. So he agreed to the terms of the covenant that were written down in that scroll. Then all of the people committed themselves to the covenant.

[4]Certain articles that were in the LORD's temple had been made to honor the god Baal and the goddess Asherah and all of the stars in the sky. The king ordered the high priest Hilkiah to remove those articles. He ordered the priests who were under him and the men who guarded the doors to help Hilkiah. Josiah burned the articles outside Jerusalem. He burned them in the fields in the Kidron Valley. And he took the ashes to Bethel.

[5]He got rid of the priests who served other gods. The kings of Judah had appointed them to burn incense. They burned the incense on the high places of the towns of Judah. And they burned it on the high places around Jerusalem. They burned incense to honor Baal and the sun and moon. They burned it to honor all of the stars.

[6]Josiah removed the Asherah pole from the LORD's temple. It had been used to worship Asherah. He took it to the Kidron Valley outside Jerusalem. There he burned it. He ground it into powder. And he scattered it over the graves of the ordinary people.

[7]He also tore down the rooms where the male temple prostitutes stayed. Those rooms were in the LORD's temple. The women had made cloth for Asherah in them.

[8]Josiah brought all of the priests from the towns of Judah and destroyed the high places. He destroyed them from Geba all the way to Beersheba. The priests had burned incense on them. Josiah broke down the high places at the gates. That included the high place at the entrance of the Gate of Joshua. It was on the left side of one of Jerusalem's gates. Joshua was the city governor.

[9]The priests of the high places didn't serve at the LORD's altar in Jerusalem. In spite of that, they ate with the other priests. All of them ate bread that was made without yeast.

[10]Josiah destroyed the high places at Topheth in the Valley of Ben Hinnom. He didn't want anyone to use them to sacrifice his son or daughter in the fire to the god Molech.

[11]He removed the statues of horses from the entrance to the LORD's temple. The kings of Judah had set them apart to honor the sun. The statues were in the courtyard. They were near the room of an official named Nathan-Melech. Josiah burned the chariots that had been set apart to honor the sun.

[12]He pulled down the altars the kings of Judah had set up. They had put them on the palace roof near the upstairs room of Ahaz. Josiah also pulled down the altars Manasseh had built. They were in the two courtyards of the LORD's temple. Josiah removed the altars from there. He smashed them to pieces. Then he threw the broken pieces into the Kidron Valley.

[13]The king also destroyed the high places that were east of Jerusalem. They were at the southern end of the Mount of Olives. They were the ones Solomon, the king of Israel, had built. He had built a high place for worshiping Ashtoreth. She was the evil goddess of the people of Sidon. Solomon had also built one for worshiping Chemosh. He was the evil god of Moab. And Solomon had built one for worshiping Molech. He was the god of the people of Ammon. The LORD hated that god.

[14]Josiah smashed the sacred stones. He cut down the poles that were used to worship the goddess Asherah. Then he covered all of those places with human bones.

[15]There was an altar at Bethel. It was at the high place that had been made by Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. Jeroboam had caused Israel to commit sin. Even that altar and high place were destroyed by Josiah. He burned the high place. He ground it into powder. He also burned the Asherah pole.

[16]Then Josiah looked around. He saw the tombs that were on the side of the

hill. He had the bones removed from them. And he burned them on the altar to make it “unclean.” That’s what the LORD had said would happen. He had spoken that message through a man of God. The man had announced those things long before they took place.

17The king asked, “What’s that stone on the grave over there?”

The men of the city said, “It marks the tomb where the body of a man of God is buried. He came from Judah. He spoke against the altar at Bethel. He announced the very things you have done to it.”

18“Leave it alone,” Josiah said. “Don’t let anyone touch his bones.”

So they spared his bones. They also spared the bones of the prophet who had come from the northern kingdom of Israel.

19Josiah did in the rest of the northern kingdom the same things he had done at Bethel. He removed all of the small temples at the high places. He made them “unclean.” The kings of Israel had built them in the towns of the northern kingdom. The people in those towns had made the LORD very angry.

20Josiah killed all of the priests of those high places on the altars. He burned human bones on the altars. Then he went back to Jerusalem.

21The king gave an order to all of the people. He said, “Celebrate the Passover Feast to honor the LORD your God. Do what is written in this Scroll of the Covenant.”

22A Passover Feast like that one had not been held for a long time. There hadn’t been any like it since the days of the judges who led Israel. And there hadn’t been any like it during the whole time the kings of Israel and Judah were ruling.

23King Josiah celebrated the Passover in Jerusalem to honor the LORD. It was in the 18th year of his rule.

24And that’s not all. Josiah got rid of those who got messages from people who had died. He got rid of those who talked to the spirits of the dead. He got rid of the statues of family gods and the statues of other gods. He got rid of everything else the LORD hates that was in Judah and Jerusalem. He did it to carry out what the law required. That law was written in the scroll the priest Hilkiah had found in the LORD’s temple.

25There was no king like Josiah either before him or after him. None of them turned to the LORD as he did. He followed the LORD with all his heart and all his soul. He followed him with all his strength. He did everything the Law of

Moses required.

[26]In spite of that, the LORD didn't turn away from his burning anger. It blazed out against Judah. That's because of everything Manasseh had done to make him very angry.

[27]So the LORD said, "I will remove Judah from my land. I will do to them what I did to Israel. I will turn my back on Jerusalem. It is the city I chose. I will also turn my back on this temple. I spoke about it. I said, 'I will put my Name here.' "(1 Kings 8:29)

[28]The other events of the rule of Josiah are written down. Everything he did is written down. All of those things are written in the official records of the kings of Judah.

[29]Pharaoh Neco was king of Egypt. He marched up to the Euphrates River. He went there to help the king of Assyria. It happened while Josiah was king. Josiah marched out to meet Neco in battle. When Neco saw him at Megiddo, he killed him.

[30]Josiah's servants brought his body in a chariot from Megiddo to Jerusalem. They buried his body in his own tomb. Then the people of the land went and got Jehoahaz. They anointed him as king in place of his father Josiah.

Jehoahaz Becomes King of Judah

[31]Jehoahaz was 23 years old when he became king. He ruled in Jerusalem for three months. His mother's name was Hamutal. She was the daughter of Jeremiah. She was from Libnah.

[32]Jehoahaz did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. He did just as the kings who had ruled before him had done. [33]Pharaoh Neco put him in chains at Riblah in the land of Hamath. That kept him from ruling in Jerusalem. Neco made the people of Judah pay him a tax of almost four tons of silver and 75 pounds of gold.

[34]Pharaoh Neco made Eliakim king in place of his father Josiah. He changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim. But he took Jehoahaz with him to Egypt. And that's where Jehoahaz died.

[35]Jehoiakim paid Pharaoh Neco the silver and gold he required. To get the money, Jehoiakim taxed the land. He forced the people to give him the silver

and gold. He made each one pay him what he required.

Jehoiakim Becomes King of Judah

[36]Jehoiakim was 25 years old when he became king. He ruled in Jerusalem for 11 years. His mother's name was Zebidah. She was the daughter of Pedaiah. She was from Rumah.

[37]Jehoiakim did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. He did just as the kings who had ruled before him had done.

2 Kings 24

[1]During Jehoiakim's rule, Nebuchadnezzar marched into the land and attacked it. He was king of Babylonia. He became Jehoiakim's master for three years. But then Jehoiakim decided he didn't want to remain under Nebuchadnezzar's control.

[2]The LORD sent robbers against Jehoiakim from Babylonia, Aram, Moab and Ammon. He sent them to destroy Judah. That's what the LORD had said would happen. He had spoken that message through his servants the prophets.

[3]Those things happened to Judah in keeping with what the LORD had commanded. He brought enemies against his people in order to remove them from his land. He removed them because of all of the sins Manasseh had committed. [4]He had spilled the blood of many people who weren't guilty of doing anything wrong. In fact, he spilled so much of their blood that he filled Jerusalem with it. So the LORD refused to forgive him.

[5]The other events of the rule of Jehoiakim are written down. Everything he did is written down. All of those things are written in the official records of the kings of Judah.

[6]Jehoiakim joined the members of his family who had already died. His son Jehoiachin became the next king after him.

[7]The king of Egypt didn't march out from his own country again. That's because the king of Babylonia had taken so much of his territory. That territory reached from the Wadi of Egypt all the way to the Euphrates River.

Jehoiachin Becomes King of Judah

[8]Jehoiachin was 18 years old when he became king. He ruled in Jerusalem for three months. His mother's name was Nehushta. She was the daughter of Elnathan. She was from Jerusalem.

[9]Jehoiachin did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. He did just as his father Jehoiakim had done.

[10]At that time the officers of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylonia,

marched to Jerusalem. They surrounded it and got ready to attack it. [11]Nebuchadnezzar himself came up to the city. He arrived while his officers were attacking it.

[12]Jehoiachin, the king of Judah, handed himself over to him. Jehoiachin's mother did the same thing. And so did all of his attendants, nobles and officials.

The king of Babylonia took Jehoiachin away as his prisoner. It was in the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar's rule.

[13]He removed all of the treasures from the LORD's temple. He also removed all of the treasures from the royal palace. He took away all of the gold articles that Solomon, the king of Israel, had made for the temple. That's what the LORD had announced would happen.

[14]Nebuchadnezzar took all of the people of Jerusalem to Babylonia as prisoners. That included all of the officers and fighting men. It also included all of the skilled workers. The total number of prisoners was 10,000. Only the poorest people were left in the land.

[15]Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin to Babylon as his prisoner. He also took the king's mother from Jerusalem to Babylon. And he took Jehoiachin's wives, his officials and the most important men in the land.

[16]The king also forced the whole army of 7,000 soldiers to go away to Babylonia. Those men were strong and able to go to war. And the king forced 1,000 skilled workers to go to Babylonia.

[17]Nebuchadnezzar made Jehoiachin's uncle Mattaniah king in his place. And he changed Mattaniah's name to Zedekiah.

Zedekiah Becomes King of Judah

[18]Zedekiah was 21 years old when he became king. He ruled in Jerusalem for 11 years. His mother's name was Hamutal. She was the daughter of Jeremiah. She was from Libnah.

[19]Zedekiah did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. He did just as Jehoiakim had done. [20]The enemies of Jerusalem and Judah attacked them because the LORD was angry. In the end he threw them out of his land.

Nebuchadnezzar Destroys Jerusalem

Zedekiah also refused to remain under the control of Nebuchadnezzar.

2 Kings 25

[1]Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylonia. He marched out against Jerusalem. All of his armies went with him. It was in the ninth year of the rule of Zedekiah. It was on the tenth day of the tenth month. Nebuchadnezzar set up camp outside the city. He brought in war machines all around it. [2]It was surrounded until the 11th year of King Zedekiah's rule.

[3]By the ninth day of the fourth month, there wasn't any food left in the city. So the people didn't have anything to eat.

[4]Then the Babylonians broke through the city wall. Judah's whole army ran away at night. They went out through the gate between the two walls that were near the king's garden. They escaped even though the Babylonians surrounded the city. Judah's army ran toward the Arabah Valley.

[5]But the armies of Babylonia chased King Zedekiah. They caught up with him in the flatlands near Jericho. All of his soldiers were separated from him. They had scattered in every direction.

[6]The king was captured. He was taken to the king of Babylonia at Riblah. That's where Nebuchadnezzar decided how he would be punished. [7]His men killed the sons of Zedekiah. They forced him to watch it with his own eyes. Then they poked out his eyes. They put him in bronze chains. And they took him to Babylon.

[8]Nebuzaradan was an official of the king of Babylonia. In fact, he was commander of the royal guard. He came to Jerusalem. It was in the 19th year that Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylonia. It was on the seventh day of the fifth month.

[9]Nebuzaradan set the LORD's temple on fire. He also set fire to the royal palace and all of the houses in Jerusalem. He burned down every important building. [10]The armies of Babylonia broke down the walls around Jerusalem. That's what the commander told them to do.

[11]Some people still remained in the city. But the commander Nebuzaradan took them away as prisoners. He also took the rest of the people of the land. That included those who had joined the king of Babylonia.

[12]But the commander left some of the poorest people of the land behind. He

told them to work in the vineyards and fields.

13The armies of Babylonia destroyed the LORD's temple. They broke the bronze pillars into pieces. They broke up the bronze stands that could be moved around. And they broke up the huge bronze bowl. Then they carried the bronze away to Babylon. 14They also took away the pots, shovels, wick cutters and dishes. They took away all of the bronze articles that were used for any purpose in the temple. 15The commander of the royal guard took away the shallow cups for burning incense. He took away the sprinkling bowls. So he took away everything that was made out of pure gold or silver.

16The bronze was more than anyone could weigh. It included the bronze from the two pillars. It also included the bronze from the huge bowl and the stands. Solomon had made all of those things for the LORD's temple. 17Each pillar was 27 feet high. The bronze top of one pillar was four and a half feet high. It was decorated with a set of bronze chains and pomegranates all around it. The other pillar was just like it. It also had a set of chains.

18The commander of the guard took some prisoners. They included the chief priest Seraiah and the priest Zephaniah who was under him. They also included the three men who guarded the temple doors.

19Some people were still left in the city. The commander took as a prisoner the officer who was in charge of the fighting men. He took the five men who gave advice to the king. He also took the secretary who was the chief officer in charge of getting the people of the land to serve in the army. And he took 60 of the secretary's men who were still in the city.

20The commander Nebuzaradan took all of them away. He brought them to the king of Babylonia at Riblah. 21There the king had them put to death. Riblah was in the land of Hamath.

So the people of Judah were taken as prisoners. They were taken far away from their own land.

22Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylonia, appointed Gedaliah to be over the people he had left behind in Judah. Gedaliah was the son of Ahikam. Ahikam was the son of Shaphan.

23All of Judah's army officers and their men heard about what had happened. They heard that the king had appointed Gedaliah as governor. So they came to Gedaliah at Mizpah. Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, came. So did Johanan, the son of Kareah. Seraiah, the son of Tanhumeth, also came. And so did

Jaazaniah, the son of the Maacathite. All of their men came too. Seraiah was from Netophah.

24Gedaliah took an oath to give hope to all of those men. He spoke in a kind way to them. He said, “Don’t be afraid of the officials from Babylonia. Settle down in the land of Judah. Serve the king of Babylonia. Then things will go well with you.”

25But in the seventh month Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, came with ten men. He killed Gedaliah. He also killed the people of Judah and Babylonia who were with Gedaliah at Mizpah. Nethaniah was the son of Elishama. Ishmael was a member of the royal family.

26After he had killed Gedaliah, all of the people ran away to Egypt. Everyone from the least important of them to the most important ran away. The army officers went with them. All of them went to Egypt because they were afraid of the Babylonians.

Jehoiachin Is Set Free

27Evil-Merodach set Jehoiachin, the king of Judah, free from prison. It was in the 37th year after Jehoiachin had been taken away to Babylon. It was also the year Evil-Merodach became king of Babylonia. It was on the 27th day of the 12th month. 28Evil-Merodach spoke kindly to Jehoiachin. He gave him a place of honor. Other kings were with Jehoiachin in Babylon. But his place was more important than theirs.

29So Jehoiachin put his prison clothes away. For the rest of Jehoiachin’s life the king provided what he needed. 30The king did that for Jehoiachin day by day as long as he lived.

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A List of Names From Adam to Abraham

A List of Names From Adam to the Sons of Noah

1 Chronicles 1

[1]Adam, Seth, Enosh, [2]Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, [3]Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah.

[4]The sons of Noah were
Shem, Ham and Japheth.

The Sons of Japheth

[5]The sons of Japheth were
Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech and Tiras.

[6]The sons of Gomer were
Ashkenaz, Riphath and Togarmah.

[7]The sons of Javan were
Elishah, Tarshish, the Kittim and the Rodanites.

The Sons of Ham

[8]The sons of Ham were
Cush, Egypt, Put and Canaan.

[9]The sons of Cush were
Seba, Havilah, Sabta, Raamah and Sabteca.
The sons of Raamah were
Sheba and Dedan.

[10]Cush was the father of
Nimrod. Nimrod grew up to be a mighty hero on the earth.

[11]Egypt was the father of

the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites and Naphtuhites. [12]He was also the father of the Pathrusites, Casluhites and Caphtorites. The Philistines came from the Casluhites.

[13]Canaan was the father of Sidon. Sidon was his oldest son.

Canaan was also the father of the Hittites, [14]Jebusites, Amorites and Girgashites. [15]And he was the father of the Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, [16]Arvadites, Zemarites and Hamathites.

The Sons of Shem

[17]The sons of Shem were

Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud and Aram.

The sons of Aram were

Uz, Hul, Gether and Meshech.

[18]Arphaxad was the father of Shelah.

Shelah was the father of Eber.

[19]Eber was the father of two sons.

One was named Peleg. The earth was divided up in his time. His brother was named Joktan.

[20]Joktan was the father of

Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth and Jerah. [21]He was also the father of Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, [22]Obal, Abimael, Sheba, [23]Ophir, Havilah and Jobab. All of them were sons of Joktan.

A List of Names From Shem to Abraham

[24]Shem, Arphaxad, Shelah,

[25]Eber, Peleg, Reu,

[26]Serug, Nahor, Terah,

[27]Abram. Abram was also called Abraham.

The Family Line of Abraham

[28]The sons of Abraham were
Isaac and Ishmael.

The Family Line of Hagar

[29]Here are the members of the family line of Hagar.
Nebaioth was Ishmael's oldest son. Then came Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, [30]Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadad, Tema, [31]Jetur, Naphish and Kedemah. All of them were Ishmael's sons.

The Family Line of Keturah

[32]Here are the sons that were born to Abraham's concubine Keturah.
They were Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah.
The sons of Jokshan were
Sheba and Dedan.
[33]The sons of Midian were
Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida and Eldaah.
All of them came from Keturah.

The Family Line of Sarah

[34]Abraham was the father of Isaac.
The sons of Isaac were
Esau and Israel.

The Family Line of Esau

[35]The sons of Esau were
Eliphaz, Reuel, Jeush, Jalam and Korah.
[36]The sons of Eliphaz were
Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam and Kenaz.
Timna had Amalek by Eliphaz.
[37]The sons of Reuel were

Nahath, Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah.

The People of Seir in Edom

[38]The sons of Seir were
Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer and Dishan.

[39]The sons of Lotan were
Hori and Homam. Timna was Lotan's sister.

[40]The sons of Shobal were
Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho and Onam.
The sons of Zibeon were
Aiah and Anah.

[41]The son of Anah was
Dishon.
The sons of Dishon were
Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran and Keran.

[42]The sons of Ezer were
Bilhan, Zaavan and Akan.
The sons of Dishan were
Uz and Aran.

The Rulers of Edom

[43]Before Israel had a king, there were kings who ruled in Edom.
Bela was the son of Beor. Bela's city was called Dinhabah.

[44]When Bela died, Jobab became the next king. Jobab was the son of Zerah from Bozrah.

[45]When Jobab died, Husham became the next king. Husham was from the land of the people of Teman.

[46]When Husham died, Hadad became the next king. Hadad was the son of Bedad. Hadad had won the battle over Midian in the country of Moab. Hadad's city was called Avith.

[47]When Hadad died, Samlah became the next king. Samlah was from

Masrekah.

48When Samlah died, Shaul became the next king. Shaul was from
Rehoboth on the river.

49When Shaul died, Baal-Hanan became the next king. Baal-Hanan was
the son of Acbor.

50When Baal-Hanan died, Hadad became the next king. Hadad's city was
called Pau. His wife's name was Mehetabel. She was the daughter of
Matred. Matred was the daughter of Me-Zahab. 51Hadad also died.

The chiefs of Edom were

Timna, Alvah, Jetheth, 52Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon, 53Kenaz, Teman,
Mibzar, 54Magdiel and Iram. They were the chiefs of Edom.

The Sons of Israel

1 Chronicles 2

[1]Here are the names of the sons of Israel.

Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, [2]Dan, Joseph,
Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad, Asher.

The Family Line of Judah

The Family Line From Judah's Sons to Hezron's Sons

[3]The sons of Judah were

Er, Onan and Shelah. A woman from Canaan had those three sons by
him. She was the daughter of Shua. Er was Judah's oldest son. He
was evil in the LORD's eyes. So the LORD put him to death. [4]Tamar
was Judah's daughter-in-law. She had Perez and Zerah by him. The
total number of Judah's sons was five.

[5]The sons of Perez were

Hezron and Hamul.

[6]The sons of Zerah were

Zimri, Ethan, Heman, Calcol and Darda. The total number of Zerah's
sons was five.

[7]The son of Carmi was Achar.

He brought trouble on Israel. He took some of the things that had been
set apart to the LORD in a special way to be destroyed. When he did
that, he disobeyed the LORD's command.

[8]The son of Ethan was

Azariah.

[9]Hezron was the father of

Jerahmeel, Ram and Caleb.

The Family Line of Ram

[10]Ram was the father of

Amminadab. Amminadab was the father of Nahshon. Nahshon was the leader of the people of Judah. [11]Nahshon was the father of Salmon. Salmon was the father of Boaz. [12]Boaz was the father of Obed. And Obed was the father of Jesse.

[13]Jesse's first son was

Eliab. His second son was Abinadab. The third was Shimea. [14]The fourth was Nethanel. The fifth was Raddai. [15]The sixth was Ozem. And the seventh was David. [16]Their sisters were Zeruiah and Abigail. Zeruiah's three sons were Abishai, Joab and Asahel. [17]Abigail was the mother of Amasa. Amasa's father was Jether. Jether belonged to the family line of Ishmael.

The Family Line of Caleb

[18]Caleb was the son of Hezron. Caleb's wife Azubah had children by him. Jerioth also had children by him. Azubah's sons were Jesher, Shobab and Ardon. [19]When Azubah died, Caleb got married to Ephrath. She had Hur by him. [20]Hur was the father of Uri. And Uri was the father of Bezalel.

[21]Later, Hezron made love to the daughter of Makir. He had gotten married to her when he was 60 years old. She had Segub by him. Makir was the father of Gilead. [22]Segub was the father of Jair. Jair controlled 23 towns in Gilead. [23]But Geshur and Aram captured Havvoth Jair. They also captured Kenath and the settlements that were around it. The total number of towns that were captured was 60. Hezron, Segub and Jair belonged to the family line of Makir. Makir was the father of Gilead.

[24]Hezron died in Caleb Ephrathah. Abijah was Hezron's wife. She had Ashhur by him. Ashhur was born after Hezron died. Ashhur was the

father of Tekoa.

The Family Line of Jerahmeel

25 Here are the sons of Jerahmeel. He was the oldest son of Hezron. Ram
was Jerahmeel's oldest son. Then came Bunah, Oren, Ozem and Ahijah.
26 Jerahmeel had another wife. Her name was Atarah. She was the
mother of Onam.

27 Here are the sons of Ram. He was the oldest son of Jerahmeel. The sons
of Ram were

Maaz, Jamin and Eker.

28 The sons of Onam were

Shammai and Jada.

The sons of Shammai were

Nadab and Abishur.

29 Abishur's wife was named Abihail. She had Ahban and Molid by him.

30 The sons of Nadab were

Seled and Appaim. Seled died without having any children.

31 The son of Appaim was

Ishi. Ishi was the father of Sheshan.

Sheshan was the father of Ahlai.

32 The sons of Jada were

Jether and Jonathan. Jada was Shammai's brother. Jether died without
having any children.

33 The sons of Jonathan were

Peleth and Zaza.

They belonged to the family line of Jerahmeel.

34 Sheshan didn't have any sons. All he had was daughters.

He had a servant from Egypt named Jarha. 35 Sheshan gave his
daughter to be married to his servant Jarha. She had Attai by Jarha.

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.

And Jekamiah was the father of Elishama.

The Family Groups of Caleb

[42]Caleb was the brother of Jerahmeel.

Caleb's oldest son was Mesha. Mesha was the father of Ziph. Caleb had another son named Mareshah. Mareshah was the father of Hebron.

[43]The sons of Hebron were

Korah, Tappuah, Rekem and Shema. [44]Shema was the father of Raham. Raham was the father of Jorkeam. Rekem was the father of Shammai. [45]The son of Shammai was Maon. Maon was the father of Beth Zur.

[46]Caleb had a concubine named Ephah. She was the mother of Haran, Moza and Gazez. Haran was the father of Gazez.

[47]The sons of Jahdai were

Regem, Jotham, Geshan, Pelet, Ephah and Shaaph.

[48]Caleb had a concubine named Maacah. She was the mother of Sheber and Tirhanah. [49]She was also the mother of Shaaph and Sheva. Shaaph was the father of Madmannah. Sheva was the father of Macbenah and Gibea. Caleb's daughter was Acsah. [50]All of them belonged to the family line of Caleb.

Hur was the oldest son of Ephrathah.

Hur was the brother of Shobal. Shobal was the father of Kiriath Jearim.
[51]Hur was the father of Salma. Salma was the father of Bethlehem.
Hur was also the father of Hareph. Hareph was the father of Beth
Gader.

[52]Here is the family line of Shobal, the father of Kiriath Jearim. It included

Haroeh and half of the people of Manahath. [53]It also included the
family groups of Kiriath Jearim. They were the Ithrites, Puthites,
Shumathites and Mishraites. The people of Zorah and Eshtaol
belonged to those family groups.

[54]Here is the family line of Salma. It included

Bethlehem, the people of Netophah, Atroth Beth Joab, half of the
people of Manahath, and the Zorites. [55]It also included the family
groups of secretaries who lived at Jabez. They were the Tirathites,
Shimeathites and Sucathites. They were the Kenites who belonged to
the family line of Hammath. Hammath was the father of the family
line of Recab.

The Sons of David

1 Chronicles 3

[1]Here are the sons of David who were born to him in Hebron.

His first son was Amnon. Amnon's mother was Ahinoam from Jezreel.

The second son was Daniel. His mother was Abigail from Carmel.

[2]The third son was Absalom. His mother was Maacah. She was the daughter of Talmai, the king of Geshur.

The fourth son was Adonijah. His mother was Haggith.

[3]The fifth son was Shephatiah. His mother was Abital.

The sixth son was Ithream. David's wife Eglah had Ithream by him.

[4]Those six sons were born to David in Hebron. He ruled there for seven and a half years.

After that, he ruled in Jerusalem for 33 years. [5]Children were born to him there.

They included Shammua, Shobab, Nathan and Solomon. The mother of those four sons was Bathsheba. She was the daughter of Ammiel. [6]David's children also included Ibhar, Elishua, Eliphelet, [7]Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, [8]Elishama, Eliada and Eliphelet. There were nine of them. [9]David was the father of all of those sons. His concubines also had sons by him. David's sons had a sister named Tamar.

The Kings of Judah

[10]Solomon's son was Rehoboam.

Abijah was the son of Rehoboam.

Asa was the son of Abijah.

Jehoshaphat was the son of Asa.

[11]Jehoram was the son of Jehoshaphat.

Ahaziah was the son of Jehoram.

Joash was the son of Ahaziah.

12 Amaziah was the son of Joash.

Azariah was the son of Amaziah.

Jotham was the son of Azariah.

13 Ahaz was the son of Jotham.

Hezekiah was the son of Ahaz.

Manasseh was the son of Hezekiah.

14 Amon was the son of Manasseh.

Josiah was the son of Amon.

15 Josiah's first son was Johanan.

Jehoiakim was his second son.

Zedekiah was the third son.

Shallum was the fourth son.

16 The next king after Jehoiakim was his son Jehoiachin.

After that, Josiah's son Zedekiah became king.

The Royal Family Line After Jehoiachin

17 Here are the members of the family line of Jehoiachin. He was taken as a prisoner to Babylon.

His sons were Shealtiel, 18 Malkiram, Pedaiah, Shenazzar, Jekamiah, Hoshama and Nedabiah.

19 The sons of Pedaiah were

Zerubbabel and Shimei.

The sons of Zerubbabel were

Meshullam and Hananiah.

Shelomith was their sister.

20 There were also five other sons.

They were Hashubah, Ohel, Berekiah, Hasadiah and Jushab-Hesed.

21 The family line of Hananiah included

Pelatiah and Jeshaiah. It also included the sons of Rephaiah, Arnan, Obadiah and Shecaniah.

[22]The family line of Shecaniah included

Shemaiah and his sons.

They were Hattush, Igal, Bariah, Neariah and Shaphat. The total number of men was six.

[23]The sons of Neariah were

Elioenai, Hizkiah and Azrikam. The total number of sons was three.

[24]The sons of Elioenai were

Hodaviah, Eliashib, Pelaiah, Akkub, Johanan, Delaiah and Anani. The total number of sons was seven.

Other Family Groups of Judah

1 Chronicles 4

[1]The family line of Judah included

Perez, Hezron, Carmi, Hur and Shobal.

[2]Reaiah was the son of Shobal and the father of Jahath. Jahath was the father of Ahumai and Lahad. Those were the family groups of the people of Zorah.

[3]The sons of Etam were

Jezreel, Ishma and Idbash. Their sister was named Hazzelelponi. [4]Penuel was the father of Gedor. Ezer was the father of Hushah.

Those people belonged to the family line of Hur. He was the oldest son of Ephrathah and the father of Bethlehem.

[5]Ashhur was the father of Tekoa. Ashhur had two wives. Their names were Helah and Naarah.

[6]Naarah had Ahuzzam, Hepher, Temeni and Haahashtari by Ashhur. They belonged to the family line of Naarah.

[7]The sons of Helah were

Zereth, Zohar, Ethnan [8]and Koz. Koz was the father of Anub and Hazzobebah. He was also the father of the family groups of Aharhel. Aharhel was the son of Harum.

[9]Jabez was more respected than his brothers. His mother had named him Jabez. She had said, “I was in a lot of pain when he was born.”

[10]Jabez cried out to the God of Israel. He said, “I wish you would bless me. I wish you would give me more territory. Let your powerful hand be with me. Keep me from harm. Then I won’t have any pain.” God gave him what he asked for.

[11]Kelub was the brother of Shuhah and the father of Mehir. Mehir was the

father of Eshton. [12]Eshton was the father of Beth Rapha, Paseah and Tehinnah. Tehinnah was the father of Ir Nahash. Those were the men of Recah.

[13]The sons of Kenaz 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. Joab was

the father of Ge Harashim. Ge Harashim was called by that name because all of its people were skilled workers.

[15]The sons of Caleb were

Iru, Elah and Naam. Caleb was the son of Jephunneh.

The son of Elah was

Kenaz.

[16]The sons of Jehallelel were

Ziph, Ziphah, Tiria and Asarel.

[17]The sons of Ezrah were

Jether, Mered, Epher and Jalon. One of Mered's wives had Miriam, Shammai and Ishbah by him. Ishbah was the father of Eshtemoa. [18]Those were the children of Pharaoh's daughter Bithiah. Mered had gotten married to her. His wife from Judah had Jered, Heber and Jekuthiel by him. Jered was the father of Gedor. Heber was the father of Soco. Jekuthiel was the father of Zanoah.

[19]Hodiah's wife was the sister of Naham. Her sons were

the father of Keilah the Garmite and Eshtemoa the Maacathite.

[20]The sons of Shimon were

Amnon, Rinnah, Ben-Hanan and Tilon.

The family line of Ishi included

Zoheth and Ben-Zoheth.

[21]Shelah was the son of Judah.

The sons of Shelah were Er and Laadah. Er was the father of Lecah.

Laadah was the father of Mareshah. He was also the father of the family groups of the linen workers who lived in Beth Ashbea. [22]Other sons of Shelah were Jokim, Joash, Saraph and the men of Cozeba. Moab and Jashubi Lehem were ruled by sons of Shelah. The records of all of those matters are very old. [23]Some of Shelah's sons were potters who lived in Netaim and Gederah. They stayed there and worked for the king.

The Family Line of Simeon

[24]The family line of Simeon included

Nemuel, Jamin, Jarib, Zerah and Shaul.

[25]Shallum was Shaul's son. Mibsam was Shallum's son. Mishma was Mibsam's son.

[26]The family line of Mishma included Hammuel. Hammuel was Mishma's son. Zaccur was Hammuel's son. Shimei was Zaccur's son.

[27]Shimei had 16 sons and six daughters. But his brothers didn't have many children. So their whole family group didn't have as many people as Judah had. [28]Shimei's family group lived in Beersheba, Moladah, Hazar Shual, [29]Bilhah, Ezem, Tolad, [30]Bethuel, Hormah, Ziklag, [31]Beth Marcaboth, Hazar Susim, Beth Biri and Shaaraim. Those were their towns until David became king. [32]Five of the villages that were around those towns were Etam, Ain, Rimmon, Token and Ashan. [33]The territory of all of the villages that were around those towns reached all the way to Baalath. Those were their settlements. The tribe of Simeon kept its own family history.

[34]Simeon's family line included Meshobab, Jamlech and Joshah. Joshah was the son of Amaziah. [35]Simeon's family line also included Joel and Jehu. Jehu was the son of Joshibiah. Joshibiah was the son of Seraiah. Seraiah was the son of Asiel. [36]And the family line included Elioenai, Jaakobah, Jeshohaiah, Asaiah, Adiel, Jesimiel, Benaiah [37]and Ziza. Ziza was the son of Shiphi. Shiphi was the son of Allon. Allon was the son of Jedaiah. Jedaiah was the son of Shimri. And Shimri was the son of Shemaiah.

[38]The men whose names are listed above were leaders of their family groups. Their families greatly increased their numbers.

[39]They spread out all the way to the edge of Gedor east of the valley. They looked for grasslands for their flocks. [40]They found grasslands that were rich and good. The land had plenty of room. It was peaceful and quiet. Some of the people of Ham had lived there before.

[41]The men whose names are listed lived at the time when Hezekiah was king of Judah. They came and attacked the Hamites in their homes. They also attacked the Meunites who were there. And they completely destroyed them. What happened to them is clear even to this very day. The men of Simeon settled down where the Meunites had lived. They had enough grasslands for their flocks.

[42]Five hundred of those men came into the hill country of Seir and attacked it. They were led by Pelatiah, Neariah, Rephaiah and Uzziel. Those four men were the sons of Ishi. [43]They killed the rest of the Amalekites who had escaped. And they still live there to this very day.

The Family Line of Reuben

1 Chronicles 5

[1]Here is a list of the sons of Reuben. First, here are a few things about him. Reuben was the oldest son of Israel. But he had sex with his father's concubine. He made his father's bed "unclean." That's why his rights as the oldest son were given to the sons of Joseph, the son of Israel. So Reuben isn't listed in the family history as the one who had the rights of the oldest son. [2]Judah was the leader among his brothers. A ruler came from his family line. But the rights of the oldest son belonged to Joseph. [3]Reuben was the oldest son of Israel. Reuben's sons were

Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron and Carmi.

[4]The family line of Joel includes

his son Shemaiah. Gog was the son of Shemaiah.

Shimei was the son of Gog. [5]Micah was the son of Shimei.

Reaiah was the son of Micah. Baal was the son of Reaiah.

[6]And Beerah was the son of Baal. Beerah was a leader of the people of Reuben. Tiglath-Pileser took Beerah as a prisoner to another country. Tiglath-Pileser was the king of Assyria.

[7]Here are the relatives of the family groups of Reuben. They are listed in their family history.

They include Chief Jeiel, Zechariah [8]and Bela. Bela was the son of Azaz. Azaz was the son of Shema. Shema was the son of Joel. All of them settled in the area from Aroer to Nebo and Baal Meon. [9]To the east they settled in the land up to the edge of the desert. That desert reaches all the way to the Euphrates River. They settled there because their livestock had increased their numbers in Gilead.

[10]While Saul was king, the people of Reuben went to war against the Hagrites. They won the battle over them. Then they settled down in their houses. They settled through the entire area east of Gilead.

The Family Line of Gad

[11]The people of Gad lived next to the people of Reuben in Bashan. They spread out all the way to Salecah.

[12]Joel was their chief. Shapham was next. Then came Janai and Shaphat in Bashan.

[13]Here are their relatives family by family. They included

Michael, Meshullam, Sheba, Jorai, Jacan, Zia and Eber. The total number of them was seven.

[14]Those were the sons of Abihail. Abihail was the son of Huri. Huri was the son of Jaroah. Jaroah was the son of Gilead. Gilead was the son of Michael. Michael was the son of Jeshishai. Jeshishai was the son of Jahdo. And Jahdo was the son of Buz.

[15]Ahi was the leader of some of the families of Gad. Ahi was the son of Abdiel. Abdiel was the son of Guni.

[16]The people of Gad lived in the land of Gilead. They lived in the villages of Bashan. They also lived on all of the grasslands of Sharon as far as they reached.

[17]All of those names were written down in the family history. They were written during the time when Jotham was king of Judah and Jeroboam was king of Israel.

[18]The tribes of Reuben and Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh had 44,760 men who were able to serve in the army. They were able to handle a shield and sword. They were also able to use a bow. They were trained for battle. [19]They went to war against the Hagrites, Jetur, Naphish and Nodab.

[20]God helped his people fight against the Hagrites and all who were helping them. He handed all of those enemies over to his people. That’s because they cried out to him during the battle. He answered their prayers, because they trusted in him.

[21]They captured the livestock of the Hagrites. They captured 50,000 camels, 250,000 sheep and 2,000 donkeys. They also took 100,000 people as prisoners. [22]Many others were killed, because God won the battle over them. His people lived in the land until they themselves were taken as prisoners to other

countries.

The Family Line of Half of the Tribe of Manasseh

[23]The people in half of the tribe of Manasseh greatly increased their numbers. They settled in the land from Bashan to Baal Hermon. Baal Hermon is also called Senir. Another name for it is Mount Hermon.

[24]Here are the leaders of their families. They included Epher, Ishi, Eliel, Azriel, Jeremiah, Hodaviah and Jahdiel. They were brave fighting men. They were famous. They were the leaders of their families. [25]But they weren't faithful to the God of their people. They joined themselves to the gods of the nations of the land and worshiped them. God had destroyed those nations to make room for his people.

[26]So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul. He was king of Assyria. He was also called Tiglath-Pileser. He took the tribes of Reuben and Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh to other countries as his prisoners. He took them to Halah, Habor, Hara and the river of Gozan. And that's where they still are to this very day.

The Family Line of Levi

1 Chronicles 6

[1]The sons of Levi were
Gershon, Kohath and Merari.
[2]The sons of Kohath were
Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel.
[3]Aaron, Moses and Miriam
were born in the family line of Amram.
The sons of Aaron 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 Zerahiah.
Zerahiah 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. Azariah 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.
And Seraiah was the father of Jehozadak.
[15]Jehozadak was taken away from his own land. The LORD took the people of Judah and Jerusalem to Babylonia. He used Nebuchadnezzar to take them there as prisoners.

[16]The sons of Levi were
Gershon, Kohath and Merari.
[17]The names of the sons of Gershon were
Libni and Shimei.
[18]The sons of Kohath were
Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel.
[19]The sons of Merari were
Mahli and Mushi.
Here are the members of the family groups of the Levites. They are listed under the names of their fathers.
[20]Gershon was the father of Libni.
Jahath was Libni's son.
Zimmah was Jahath's son.
[21]Joah was Zimmah's son.
Iddo was Joah's son.
Zerah was Iddo's son.
And Jeatherai was Zerah's son.
[22]The family line of Kohath included his son Amminadab.
Korah was Amminadab's son.
Assir was Korah's son.

[23]Elkanah was Assir’s son.
Ebiasaph was Elkanah’s son.
Assir was Ebiasaph’s son.
[24]Tahath was Assir’s son.
Uriel was Tahath’s son.
Uzziah was Uriel’s son.
And Shaul was Uzziah’s son.
[25]The family line of Elkanah included his son Amasai.
Amasai was the father of Ahimoth.
[26]Elkanah was Ahimoth’s son.
Zophai was Elkanah’s son.
Nahath was Zophai’s son.
[27]Eliab was Nahath’s son.
Jeroham was Eliab’s son.
Elkanah was Jeroham’s son.
And Samuel was Elkanah’s son.
[28]The sons of Samuel were
his first son Joel
and his second son Abijah.
[29]The family line of Merari included his son Mahli.
Libni was Mahli’s son.
Shimei was Libni’s son.
Uzzah was Shimei’s son.
[30]Shimea was Uzzah’s son.
Haggiah was Shimea’s son.
And Asaiah was Haggiah’s son.

The Levites Who Were in Charge of the Music

[31]Here are the Levites David put in charge of the music in the house of the LORD. He did it after the ark was placed there. [32]The men used their music to

serve in front of the holy tent, the Tent of Meeting. They served there until Solomon built the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem. They did their work based on the rules they had been given.

[33]Here are the men who served. The list also includes their sons.

The family line of Kohath included

Heman. He led the music.

He was the son of Joel.

Joel was the son of Samuel.

[34]Samuel was the son of Elkanah.

Elkanah was the son of Jeroham.

Jeroham was the son of Eliel.

Eliel was the son of Toah.

[35]Toah was the son of Zuph.

Zuph was the son of Elkanah.

Elkanah was the son of Mahath.

Mahath was the son of Amasai.

[36]Amasai was the son of Elkanah.

Elkanah was the son of Joel.

Joel was the son of Azariah.

Azariah was the son of Zephaniah.

[37]Zephaniah was the son of Tahath.

Tahath was the son of Assir.

Assir was the son of Ebiasaph.

Ebiasaph was the son of Korah.

[38]Korah was the son of Izhar.

Izhar was the son of Kohath.

Kohath was the son of Levi.

And Levi was the son of Israel.

[39]Heman had a relative named Asaph. Asaph served as Heman’s helper at his right side.

Asaph was the son of Berekiah.

Berekiah was the son of Shimea.
40 Shimea was the son of Michael.
Michael was the son of Baaseiah.
Baaseiah was the son of Malkijah.
41 Malkijah was the son of Ethni.
Ethni was the son of Zerah.
Zerah was the son of Adaiah.
42 Adaiah was the son of Ethan.
Ethan was the son of Zimmah.
Zimmah was the son of Shimei.
43 Shimei was the son of Jahath.
Jahath was the son of Gershon.
And Gershon was the son of Levi.
44 Here are the Levites in the family line of Merari who served as Heman's helpers at his left side. They were relatives of the Kohathites.
Ethan was the son of Kishi.
Kishi was the son of Abdi.
Abdi was the son of Malluch.
45 Malluch was the son of Hashabiah.
Hashabiah was the son of Amaziah.
Amaziah was the son of Hilkiah.
46 Hilkiah was the son of Amzi.
Amzi was the son of Bani.
Bani was the son of Shemer.
47 Shemer was the son of Mahli.
Mahli was the son of Mushi.
Mushi was the son of Merari.
And Merari was the son of Levi.

48 The rest of the Levites were appointed to do all of the other work at the

holy tent. It was the house of God.

49 Aaron and his sons after him brought the offerings. They sacrificed them on
the altar of burnt offering. They also burned incense on the altar of incense.
That was part of what they did in the Most Holy Room. That's how they paid
for the sin of Israel. They did everything just as Moses, the servant of God, had
commanded.

50 Here are the members of the family line of Aaron.

Eleazar was Aaron's son.

Phinehas was Eleazar's son.

Abishua was Phinehas's son.

51 Bukki was Abishua's son.

Uzzi was Bukki's son.

Zerahiah was Uzzi's son.

52 Meraioth was Zerahiah's son.

Amariah was Meraioth's son.

Ahitub was Amariah's son.

53 Zadok was Ahitub's son.

And Ahimaaz was Zadok's son.

54 Here were the places where they settled. They were given to them as their
territory. Some were given to the children of Aaron who were from the family
group of Kohath. They were given out by using lots. The first lot was for
Kohath.

55 The Kohathites were given Hebron in Judah. They also received the
grasslands that were around Hebron. 56 But the fields and villages that were
around the city were given to Caleb, the son of Jephunneh.

57 So the people in the family line of Aaron received Hebron. It was a city
where people could go for safety. Aaron's family line received Libnah, Jattir,
Eshtemoa, 58 Hilen and Debir. 59 They also received Ashan, Juttah and Beth
Shemesh. They were given all of those towns together with their grasslands.
60 From the tribe of Benjamin they received Gibeon, Geba, Alemeth and
Anathoth. They received those towns together with their grasslands.

All of those towns were handed out to the family groups of Kohath. The total number of towns was 13.

61The rest of the members of the family line of Kohath were given ten towns. The towns were from the family groups of half of the tribe of Manasseh.

62The members of the family line of Gershon were given 13 towns. They received them family group by family group. Most of the towns were from the tribes of Issachar, Asher and Naphtali. The rest were from the other half of the tribe of Manasseh. It’s in Bashan.

63The members of the family line of Merari were given 12 towns. They received them family group by family group. The towns were from the tribes of Reuben, Gad and Zebulun.

64So the people of Israel gave the Levites all of those towns and their grasslands. 65They gave other towns to them from the tribes of Judah, Simeon and Benjamin.

66Some of the family groups of Kohath were given towns from the tribe of Ephraim as their territory.

67In the hill country of Ephraim they received Shechem. Shechem was a city where people could go for safety. The Kohathites also received Gezer, 68Jokmeam, Beth Horon, 69Aijalon and Gath Rimmon. They were given all of those towns together with their grasslands.

70From half of the tribe of Manasseh the people of Israel gave the towns of Aner and Bileam. They gave them to the rest of the family groups of Kohath. They gave them together with their grasslands.

71Here is what the members of the family line of Gershon were given.

They received Golan in Bashan and also Ashtaroth. They received them together with their grasslands.

They received them from half of the tribe of Manasseh.

72From the tribe of Issachar

they received Kedesh, Daberath, 73Ramoth and Anem. They received them together with their grasslands.

74From the tribe of Asher

they received Mashal, Abdon, 75Hukok and Rehob. They received

them together with their grasslands.

[76]From the tribe of Naphtali

they received Kedesh in Galilee. They also received Hammon and Kiriathaim. They were given all of those towns together with their grasslands.

[77]The members of the family line of Merari make up the rest of the Levites. Here is what they were given.

From the tribe of Zebulun

they received Jokneam, Kartah, Rimmono and Tabor. They received them together with their grasslands.

[78]The tribe of Reuben was across the Jordan River east of Jericho. From that tribe the Merarites

received Bezer in the desert, Jahzah, [79]Kedemoth and Mephaath. They received them together with their grasslands.

[80]From the tribe of Gad

they received Ramoth in Gilead. They also received Mahanaim, [81]Heshbon and Jazer. They received all of those towns together with their grasslands.

The Family Line of Issachar

1 Chronicles 7

[1]The sons of Issachar were

Tola, Puah, Jashub and Shimron. The total number of sons was four.

[2]The sons of Tola were

Uzzi, Rephaiah, Jeriel, Jahmai, Ibsam and Samuel. They were the leaders of their families. The total number of fighting men who were listed in the history of the family line of Tola was 22,600. That was when David was king.

[3]The son of Uzzi was

Izrahiah.

The sons of Izrahiah were

Michael, Obadiah, Joel and Isshiah. All five of them were chiefs. [4]Based on their family history, 36,000 of their men were ready for battle. That's because they had many wives and children.

[5]The total number of fighting men who belonged to all of the family groups of Issachar was 87,000. The men were listed in their family history.

The Family Line of Benjamin

[6]The three sons of Benjamin were

Bela, Beker and Jediael.

[7]The sons of Bela were

Ezbon, Uzzi, Uzziel, Jerimoth and Iri. They were the leaders of their families. The total number of sons was five. Their family history listed 22,034 fighting men.

[8]The sons of Beker were

Zemirah, Joash, Eliezer, Elioenai, Omri, Jeremoth, Abijah, Anathoth and Alemeth. All of them were the sons of Beker. [9]Their family history listed the leaders of their families. It also listed 20,200 fighting men.

[10]The son of Jediael was

Bilhan.

The sons of Bilhan were

Jeush, Benjamin, Ehud, Kenaanah, Zethan, Tarshish and Ahishahar. [11]All of those sons of Jediael were the leaders of their families. There were 17,200 fighting men who were ready to go to war.

[12]The Shuppites and Huppites belonged to the family line of Ir. The Hushites belonged to the family line of Aher.

The Family Line of Naphtali

[13]The sons of Naphtali were

Jahziel, Guni, Jezer and Shillem. They belonged to the family line of Bilhah.

The Family Line of Manasseh

[14]Here is the family line of Manasseh.

He had a concubine who was from the land of Aram. She had Asriel and Makir by him. Makir was the father of Gilead. [15]Makir got married to a woman from among the Huppites and Shuppites. He had a sister named Maacah.

Another member of Manasseh's family line was Zelophehad. All he had was daughters.

[16]Makir's wife Maacah had a son by him. She named the boy Peresh. He had a brother named Sheresh. The sons of Sheresh were Ulam and Rakem.

[17]The son of Ulam was

Bedan.

Those were the members of the family line of Makir, the son of Manasseh. Gilead was the son of Makir. [18]Gilead's sister was Hammoleketh. She was the mother of Ishhod, Abiezer and Mahlah.

[19]The sons of Shemida were

Ahian, Shechem, Likhi and Aniam.

The Family Line of Ephraim

[20]Here are the members of the family line of Ephraim.

Shuthelah was Ephraim's son.

Bered was Shuthelah's son.

Tahath was Bered's son.

Eleadah was Tahath's son.

Tahath was Eleadah's son.

[21]Zabad was Tahath's son.

And Shuthelah was Zabad's son.

Men from Gath killed Ezer and Elead when they went down to steal their livestock. [22]Their father Ephraim sobbed over them for many days. His relatives came to comfort him. [23]Then he made love to his wife. She became pregnant and had a baby boy. Ephraim named him Beriah. That's because something bad had happened in his family. [24]His daughter was Sheerah. She built Lower and Upper Beth Horon. She also built Uzzen Sheerah.

[25]Rephah was Beriah's son.

Resheph was Rephah's son.

Telah was Resheph's son.

Tahan was Telah's son.

[26]Ladan was Tahan's son.

Ammihud was Ladan's son.

Elishama was Ammihud's son.

[27]Nun was Elishama's son.

And Joshua was the son of Nun.

28The lands and settlements of the members of Ephraim's line included Bethel and the villages that were around it. Naaran was on the east. Gezer and its villages were on the west. The lands and settlements included Shechem. They also included the villages that were around Shechem all the way to Ayyah and its villages. 29Along the borders of Manasseh were Beth Shan, Taanach, Megiddo and Dor, together with their villages. The members of the family line of Joseph lived in those towns. Joseph was the son of Israel.

The Family Line of Asher

30The sons of Asher were

Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi and Beriah. They had a sister named Serah.

31The sons of Beriah were

Heber and Malkiel. Malkiel was the father of Birzaith.

32Heber was the father of Japhlet, Shomer, Hotham and their sister Shua.

33The sons of Japhlet were

Pasach, Bimhal and Ashvath. They were Japhlet's sons.

34The sons of Shomer were

Ahi, Rohgah, Hubbah and Aram.

35The sons of Shomer's brother Helem were

Zophah, Imna, Shelesh and Amal.

36The sons of Zophah were

Suah, Harnepher, Shual, Beri, Imrah, 37Bezer, Hod, Shamma, Shilshah, Ithran and Beera.

38The sons of Jether were

Jephunneh, Pispah and Ara.

39The sons of Ulla were

Arah, Hanniel and Rizia.

40All of them were members of the family line of Asher. They were the leaders of their families. They were fine men. They were brave fighting men.

They were outstanding leaders. The total number of men who were ready for battle was 26,000. They were listed in their family history.

The Family History of Saul

1 Chronicles 8

[1]Benjamin was the father of Bela. Bela was his first son.
Ashbel was his second son. Aharah was the third.
[2]Nohah was the fourth. And Rapha was the fifth.
[3]The sons of Bela were
Addar, Gera, Abihud, [4]Abishua, Naaman, Ahoah, [5]Gera, Shephuphan and Huram.
[6]Here are the members of the family line of Ehud. They were the leaders of the families who were living in Geba. Later, they were taken away from their own land. They were forced to go to Manahath.
[7]The sons of Ehud were Naaman, Ahijah and Gera. Gera took them away from their land. He was the father of Uzza and Ahihud.
[8]Sons were born to Shaharaim in Moab. That happened after he had divorced his wives Hushim and Baara. [9]His wife Hodesh had sons by him. Their names were Jobab, Zibia, Mesha, Malcam, [10]Jeuz, Sakia and Mirmah. His sons were the leaders of their families. [11]His wife Hushim had Abitub and Elpaal by him.
[12]The sons of Elpaal were
Eber, Misham and Shemed. Shemed built Ono and Lod and the villages that were around it. [13]Beriah and Shema were also sons of Elpaal. They were the leaders of the families who were living in Aijalon. Beriah and Shema drove out the people who were living in Gath.
[14]Ahio, Shashak, Jeremoth, [15]Zebadiah, Arad, Eder, [16]Michael, Ishpah and Joha were the sons of Beriah.
[17]Zebadiah, Meshullam, Hizki, Heber, [18]Ishmerai, Izliah and Jobab were other sons of Elpaal.
[19]Jakim, Zicri, Zabdi, [20]Elienai, Zillethai, Eliel, [21]Adaiah, Beraiah and

Shimrath were the sons of Shimei.

22 Ishpan, Eber, Eliel, 23 Abdon, Zicri, Hanan, 24 Hananiah, Elam,
Anthothijah, 25 Iphdeiah and Penuel were the sons of Shashak.

26 Shamsherai, Shehariah, Athaliah, 27 Jaareshiah, Elijah and Zicri were the
sons of Jeroham.

28 All of those men were the leaders of their families. They were listed as chiefs in their family history. They lived in Jerusalem.

29 Jeiel lived in the city of Gibeon. He was the father of Gibeon.

Jeiel had a wife named Maacah. 30 His oldest son was Abdon. His other
sons were Zur, Kish, Baal, Ner, Nadab, 31 Gedor, Ahio, Zeker 32 and
Mikloth. Mikloth was the father of Shimeah. Mikloth and Shimeah
also lived in Jerusalem. They lived near their relatives.

33 Ner was the father of Kish. Kish was the father of Saul. Saul was the
father of Jonathan, Malki-Shua, Abinadab and Esh-Baal.

34 The son of Jonathan was

Merib-Baal. Merib-Baal was the father of Micah.

35 The sons of Micah 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. Raphah was Binea's son. Eleasah was Raphah's
son. And Azel was Eleasah's son.

38 Azel had six sons. Their names were

Azrikam, Bokeru, Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah and Hanan. All of them
were the sons of Azel.

39 Here are the sons of Azel's brother Eshek.

Ulam was his first son. Jeush was the second. Eliphelet was the third.
40 The sons of Ulam were brave fighting men. They could handle a
bow. They had many sons and grandsons. The total number of sons
and grandsons was 150.

All of those men belonged to the family line of Benjamin.

1 Chronicles 9

[1]The whole community of Israel was listed in their family histories. They were written down in the records of the kings of Israel.

The People Who Lived in Jerusalem

The people of Judah were taken away from their own land. They were taken as prisoners to Babylonia. That's because they weren't faithful to the LORD.
[2]The first ones who came back from there were some Israelites, priests, Levites and temple servants. They settled down again in their own towns on their own property.

[3]Some of them lived in Jerusalem. They included people from Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim and Manasseh.

[4]They included Uthai. He was the son of Ammihud. Ammihud was the son of Omri. Omri was the son of Imri. Imri was the son of Bani. Bani belonged to the family line of Perez. Perez was the son of Judah.

[5]The family line of Shelah included his oldest son Asaiah. It also included the sons of Asaiah.

[6]The family line of Zerah included Jeuel.

The total number of the people of Judah was 690.

[7]The family line of Benjamin included Sallu. He was the son of Meshullam. Meshullam was the son of Hodaviah. Hodaviah was the son of Hassenuah.

[8]Ibneiah was the son of Jeroham. Elah was the son of Uzzi. Uzzi was the son of Micri. Meshullam was the son of Shephatiah. Shephatiah was the son of Reuel. Reuel was the son of Ibnijah.

[9]The total number of the people of Benjamin was 956. They were listed in their family history. All of those men were the leaders of their families.

[10]The family line of the priests included Jedaiah, Jehoiarib and Jakin.

[11]It also included Azariah. He was the son of Hilkiah. Hilkiah was the
son of Meshullam. Meshullam was the son of Zadok. Zadok was the son
of Meraioth. Meraioth was the son of Ahitub. Azariah was the official
who was in charge of the house of God.

[12]Adaiah was the son of Jeroham. Jeroham was the son of Pashhur.
Pashhur was the son of Malkijah. Maasai was the son of Adiel. Adiel
was the son of Jahzerah. Jahzerah was the son of Meshullam. Meshullam
was the son of Meshillemith. Meshillemith was the son of Immer.

[13]The total number of priests was 1,760. They were the leaders of
their families. They were able men. It was their duty to serve in the
house of God.

[14]The family line of the Levites included Shemaiah. He was the son of
Hasshub. Hasshub was the son of Azrikam. Azrikam was the son of
Hashabiah. Shemaiah belonged to the family line of Merari. [15]The
family line of the Levites also included Bakbakkar, Heresh, Galal and
Mattaniah. Mattaniah was the son of Mica. Mica was the son of Zicri.
Zicri was the son of Asaph. [16]Obadiah was the son of Shemaiah.
Shemaiah was the son of Galal. Galal was the son of Jeduthun. Berekiah
was the son of Asa. Asa was the son of Elkanah. He lived in the villages
of the people of Netophah.

[17]The men who guarded the gates were Shallum, Akkub, Talmon, Ahiman
and other Levites. Shallum was their chief. [18]He was stationed at the
King’s Gate on the east side of the temple. That duty has continued to
this very day. Those guards belonged to the camp of the Levites.

[19]Shallum was the son of Kore. Kore was the son of Ebiasaph.
Ebiasaph was the son of Korah. Shallum and the other Levites in his
family belonged to the family line of Korah. They had the duty of
guarding the entrances to the temple.

Their fathers had also had the duty of guarding the entrance to the
house of the LORD. [20]Long ago Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, was in
charge of those who guarded the gate. And the LORD was with him.

[21]Zechariah guarded the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. He was the son
of Meshelemiah.

[22]The total number of the men who were chosen to guard the entrances was
212. They were listed in their family history in their villages. David and the

prophet Samuel had appointed them to their positions. They appointed them because they trusted them.

23Those Levites and their children after them were in charge of guarding the gates of the house of the LORD. The house of the LORD was also called the temple. 24The men who guarded the gates were on the four sides of the temple. They were on the east, west, north and south sides. 25From time to time, their relatives in their villages had to come to the temple. They had to share their duties for a week at a time.

26The four main men who guarded the gates were Levites. They were trusted with the duty of taking care of the storerooms and the other rooms in the house of God. 27They spent the night in their positions around the house of God. That's because they had to guard it. They were in charge of the key that opened the temple each morning.

28Some Levites were in charge of the articles that were used when they served at the temple. They counted the articles when they were brought in. They also counted them when they were taken out.

29Other Levites were appointed to take care of all of the other articles that belonged to the temple. They also took care of the flour, wine, olive oil, incense and spices. 30Some of the priests took care of mixing the spices.

31There was a Levite named Mattithiah. He was the oldest son of Shallum. Shallum belonged to the family line of Korah. Mattithiah was trusted with the duty of baking the offering bread. 32The bread was placed on the table every Sabbath day. Some Levites in the family line of Kohath were in charge of preparing the bread.

33Those who led the music lived in rooms in the temple. They were the leaders of their Levite families. Their only duty was to lead the music. They had to do that work day and night.

34All of them were the leaders of their Levite families. They were listed as chiefs in their family history. They lived in Jerusalem.

The Family History of Saul

35Jeiel lived in the city of Gibeon. He was the father of Gibeon.

Jeiel had a wife named Maacah. [36]His oldest son was Abdon. His other sons were Zur, Kish, Baal, Ner, Nadab, [37]Gedor, Ahio, Zechariah and Mikloth. [38]Mikloth was the father of Shimeam. Mikloth and Shimeam lived in Jerusalem. They lived near their relatives.

[39]Ner was the father of Kish. Kish was the father of Saul. Saul was the father of Jonathan, Malki-Shua, Abinadab and Esh-Baal.

[40]The son of Jonathan was

Merib-Baal. Merib-Baal was the father of Micah.

[41]The sons of Micah were

Pithon, Melech, Tahrea and Ahaz.

[42]Ahaz was the father of Jadah. Jadah was the father of Alemeth, Azmaveth and Zimri. Zimri was the father of Moza. [43]Moza was the father of Binea. Rephaiah was Binea's son. Eleasah was Rephaiah's son. And Azel was Eleasah's son.

[44]Azel had six sons. Their names were

Azrikam, Bokeru, Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah and Hanan. They were the sons of Azel.

Saul Takes His Own Life

1 Chronicles 10

[1]The Philistines fought against Israel. The men of Israel ran away from them. But many Israelites were killed on Mount Gilboa.

[2]The Philistines kept chasing Saul and his sons. They killed his sons Jonathan, Abinadab and Malki-Shua. [3]The fighting was heavy around Saul. Men who were armed with bows and arrows caught up with him. They shot their arrows at him and wounded him badly.

[4]Saul spoke to the man who was carrying his armor. He said, “Pull out your sword. Stick it through me. If you don’t, those men who aren’t circumcised will come and hurt me badly.”

But the man was terrified. He wouldn’t do it. So Saul took his own sword and fell on it. [5]The man saw that Saul was dead. So he fell on his own sword and died. [6]Saul and his three sons died. All of them died together.

[7]All of the Israelites who lived in the valley saw that their army had run away. They saw that Saul and his sons were dead. So they left their towns and ran away. Then the Philistines came and settled down in them.

[8]The day after the Philistines had won the battle, they came to take what they wanted from the dead bodies. They found Saul and his sons dead on Mount Gilboa. [9]So they took what they wanted from Saul’s body. They took his head and his armor. Then they sent messengers through the whole land of the Philistines. They announced the news to the statues of their gods. They also announced it among their people. [10]They put Saul’s armor in the temple of their gods. They hung his head up in the temple of their god Dagon.

[11]The people of Jabesh Gilead heard about everything the Philistines had done to Saul. [12]So all of their brave men went and got the bodies of Saul and his sons. They brought them to Jabesh. Then they buried the bones of Saul and his sons under the great tree that was there. They didn’t eat anything for seven days.

[13]Saul died because he wasn’t faithful to the LORD. He didn’t obey the word

of the LORD. He even asked for advice from a person who gets messages from those who have died. [14]He didn't ask the LORD for advice. So the LORD put him to death. He turned the kingdom over to David. David was the son of Jesse.

David Becomes King Over Israel

1 Chronicles 11

[1]The whole community of Israel came together to see David at Hebron. They said, “We are your own flesh and blood. [2]In the past, Saul was our king. But you led the men of Israel in battle. The LORD your God said to you, ‘You will be the shepherd over my people Israel. You will become their ruler.’ ”

[3]All of the elders of Israel came to see King David at Hebron. There he made a covenant with them in the sight of the LORD. They anointed David as king over Israel. It happened just as the LORD had promised through Samuel.

David Captures Jerusalem

[4]David and all of the men of Israel marched to Jerusalem. Jerusalem was also called Jebus.

The Jebusites who lived there [5]spoke to David. They said, “You won’t get in here.”

But David captured the fort of Zion. It became known as the City of David.

[6]David had said, “Anyone who leads the attack against the Jebusites will become the commander of Israel’s army.” Joab went up first. So he became the commander of the army. He was the son of Zeruiah.

[7]David moved into the fort. So it was called the City of David. [8]He built up the city around the fort. He filled in the low places. He built a wall around it. During that time, Joab built up the rest of the city.

[9]David became more and more powerful. That’s because the LORD who rules over all was with him.

David’s Mighty Men

[10]The chiefs of David's mighty men and the whole community of Israel helped David greatly. They helped him become king over the entire land. That's exactly what the LORD had promised him. [11]Here is a list of David's mighty men.

Jashobeam was chief of the officers. He was a Hacmonite. He used his spear against 300 men. He killed all of them at one time.

[12]Next to him was Eleazar. He was one of the three mighty men. He was the son of Dodai, the Ahohite. [13]Jashobeam was with David at Pas Dammim. The Philistines had gathered there for battle. Israel's troops ran away from the Philistines. At the place where that happened, there was a field that was full of barley. [14]The three mighty men took their stand in the middle of the field. They didn't let the Philistines capture it. They struck them down. The LORD helped them win a great battle.

[15]David was near the rock at the cave of Adullam. Three of the 30 chiefs came down to him there. A group of Philistines was camped in the Valley of Rephaim. [16]At that time David was in his usual place of safety. Some Philistine troops were stationed at Bethlehem.

[17]David longed for water. He said, "I wish someone would get me a drink of water from the well that is near the gate of Bethlehem!"

[18]So the Three fought their way past the Philistine guards. They got some water from the well that was near the gate of Bethlehem. They took the water back to David.

But David refused to drink it. Instead, he poured it out as a drink offering to the LORD. [19]"I would never drink that water!" David said. "It would be like drinking the blood of these men. They put their lives in danger by going to Bethlehem." The men had put their lives in danger by bringing the water back. So David wouldn't drink it.

Those were some of the brave things the three mighty men did.

[20]Abishai was chief over the Three. He was the brother of Joab. He used his spear against 300 men. He killed all of them. So he became as famous as the Three were. [21]He was honored twice as much as the Three. He became their commander. But he wasn't included among them.

[22]Benaiah was a great hero from Kabzeel. He was the son of Jehoiada. Benaiah did many brave things. He struck down two of Moab's best fighting men. He also went down into a pit on a snowy day. He killed a lion there.

[23]And Benaiah struck down an Egyptian who was seven and a half feet tall. The Egyptian was holding a spear as big as a weaver’s rod. Benaiah went out to fight against him with a club. He grabbed the spear out of the Egyptian’s hand. Then he killed him with it.

[24]Those were some of the brave things Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, did. He too was as famous as the three mighty men were. [25]He was honored more than any of the Thirty. But he wasn’t included among the Three. And David put him in charge of his own personal guards.

[26]Here is a list of David’s mighty men.

Asahel, the brother of Joab

Elhanan, the son of Dodo, from Bethlehem

[27]Shammoth, the Harorite

Helez, the Pelonite

[28]Ira, the son of Ikkesh, from Tekoa

Abiezer from Anathoth

[29]Sibbecai, the Hushathite

Ilai, the Ahohite

[30]Maharai from Netophah

Heled, the son of Baanah, from Netophah

[31]Ithai, the son of Ribai, from Gibeah in Benjamin

Benaiah from Pirathon

[32]Hurai from the valleys of Gaash

Abiel, the Arbathite

[33]Azmaveth, the Baharumite

Eliahba, the Shaalbonite

[34]the sons of Hashem, the Gizonite

Jonathan, the son of Shagee, the Hararite

[35]Ahiam, the son of Sacar, the Hararite

Eliphal, the son of Ur

[36]Hepher, the Mekerathite

Ahijah, the Pelonite

[37]Hezro from Carmel

Naarai, the son of Ezbai

[38]Joel, the brother of Nathan

Mibhar, the son of Hagri

[39]Zelek from Ammon

Naharai, from Beeroth, who carried the armor of Joab, the son of Zeruiah

[40]Ira, the Ithrite

Gareb, the Ithrite

[41]Uriah, the Hittite

Zabad, the son of Ahlai

[42]Adina, the son of Shiza, the Reubenite, who was chief of the Reubenites and the 30 men with him

[43]Hanan, the son of Maacah

Joshaphat, the Mithnite

[44]Uzzia, the Ashterathite

Shama and Jeiel, the sons of Hotham from Aroer

[45]Jediael, the son of Shimri

his brother Joha, the Tizite

[46]Eliel, the Mahavite

Jeribai and Joshaviah, the sons of Elnaam

Ithmah from Moab

[47]Eliel

Obed

Jaasiel, the Mezobaite

Fighting Men Join David

1 Chronicles 12

[1]Some fighting men came to David at Ziklag. They were among those who helped him in battle. David had been forced to hide from Saul, the son of Kish.
[2]The men were armed with bows. They were able to shoot arrows or throw stones from a sling with either hand. They were relatives of Saul from the tribe of Benjamin. Here is a list of them.

[3]Their chief Ahiezer and Joash, the sons of Shemaah the Gibeathite

Jeziel and Pelet, the sons of Azmaveth

Beracah

Jehu from Anathoth

[4]Ishmaiah, the Gibeonite, who was a mighty man among the Thirty and a leader of the Thirty

Jeremiah

Jahaziel

Johanan

Jozabad from Gederah

[5]Eluzai

Jerimoth

Bealiah

Shemariah

Shephatiah, the Haruphite

[6]the Korahites Elkanah, Isshiah, Azarel, Joezer and Jashobeam

[7]Joelah and Zebadiah, the sons of Jeroham from Gedor

[8]Some men of Gad went over to David's side at his usual place of safety in the desert. They were brave fighting men. They were ready for battle. They

were able to use shields and spears. Their faces were like the faces of lions. They could run as fast as antelopes in the mountains.

[9]Ezer was their chief.

Obadiah was next in command. Eliab was third.

[10]Mishmannah was fourth. Jeremiah was fifth.

[11]Attai was sixth. Eliel was seventh.

[12]Johanan was eighth. Elzabad was ninth.

[13]Jeremiah was tenth. And Macbannai was eleventh.

[14]All of those men of Gad were army commanders. The least important of them was equal to 100 men. The most important was equal to 1,000.

[15]They went across the Jordan River when it was flowing over its banks. That happened in the first month of spring. They chased away everyone who lived in the valleys. They chased them away from the east and west sides of the river.

[16]Some men from the territories of Benjamin and Judah also came to David at his usual place of safety.

[17]David went out to meet them. He said to them, “Have you come to me in peace? Have you come to help me? If you have, I’m ready to have you join me. But suppose you have come to hand me over to my enemies when I haven’t even harmed anyone. Then may the God of our people see it and judge you.”

[18]The Spirit of God came on Amasai. He was chief of the Thirty. He said,

> “David, we belong to you!
> Son of Jesse, we’re on your side!
> May you have great success.
> May those who help you also have success.
> Your God will help you.”

So David welcomed them. He made them leaders in his army.

[19]Some men of Manasseh went over to David’s side when he marched out with the Philistines to fight against Saul.

But David and his men didn’t help the Philistines. That’s because after all of the Philistine rulers had discussed the matter, they sent him away. They said, “Suppose he deserts to his master Saul. Then our heads will be cut off!”

[20]So David went to Ziklag. Here are the men of Manasseh who went over to his side. They were Adnah, Jozabad, Jediael, Michael, Jozabad, Elihu and Zillethai. They were leaders of companies of 1,000 men in Manasseh. [21]They helped David fight against enemy armies. All of the men of Manasseh were brave fighting men. They were commanders in David's army.

[22]Day after day men came to help him. Soon he had a large army. It was like the army of God.

Other Fighting Men Join David at Hebron

[23]Large numbers of men came to David at Hebron. They were prepared for battle. They came to hand Saul's kingdom over to him, just as the LORD had said. Here are the numbers of the men who came.

[24]The men from Judah carried shields and spears. They were prepared for battle. The total number of them was 6,800.

[25]The fighting men from Simeon were ready for battle. The total number of them was 7,100.

[26]The total number of men from Levi was 4,600. [27]They included Jehoiada. He was the leader of the family of Aaron. He came with 3,700 men. [28]They also included Zadok. He was a brave young fighter. He came with 22 officers from his family.

[29]The men from Benjamin were Saul's relatives. Most of them had remained faithful to Saul's family until that time. The total number of them was 3,000.

[30]The men from Ephraim were brave fighting men. They were famous in their own family groups. The total number of them was 20,800.

[31]The men from half of the tribe of Manasseh had been chosen by name to come and make David king. The total number of them was 18,000.

[32]The men from Issachar understood what was going on at that time. They knew what Israel should do. The total number of their chiefs was 200. They came with all of their relatives who were under their command.

[33]The men from Zebulun knew how to fight well. That's because they had done it many times before. They were prepared for battle. They had

every kind of weapon. They came to help David with their whole heart. The total number of them was 50,000.

[34]The total number of officers from Naphtali was 1,000. They came with 37,000 men who carried shields and spears.

[35]The men from Dan were ready for battle. The total number of them was 28,600.

[36]The men from Asher knew how to fight well. That’s because they had done it many times before. They were prepared for battle. The total number of them was 40,000.

[37]The men from the tribes of Reuben and Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh were armed with every kind of weapon. The men came from the east side of the Jordan River. The total number of them was 120,000.

[38]All of those fighting men offered to serve in the army. Before they came to Hebron, they had agreed completely to make David king over all of the people of Israel. All of the rest of the people also agreed to make David king.

[39]The men spent three days there with David. They ate and drank what their families had given them. [40]Their neighbors also brought food. They brought it on donkeys, camels, mules and oxen. They came from as far away as the territories of Issachar, Zebulun and Naphtali. There was plenty of flour, fig cakes, raisin cakes, wine, olive oil, cattle and sheep. The people of Israel brought all of those things because they were so happy.

David Wants to Bring the Ark Back

1 Chronicles 13

[1]David talked with each of his officers. He wanted to get their advice. Some of them were commanders of thousands of men. Others were commanders of hundreds.

[2]David spoke to the whole community of Israel. He said, “Let’s send word to the rest of our people no matter how far away they live. They live in all of the territories of Israel. Let’s also send word to the priests and Levites who are with them in their towns and grasslands. Let’s invite everyone to come and join us. Let’s do it if it seems good to you and if that’s what the LORD our God wants. [3]Let’s bring the ark of our God back here to us. We didn’t use it to ask God for advice during the whole time Saul was king.”

[4]So that’s what the whole community agreed to do. It seemed right to them.

[5]David gathered all of the people together. They came from the area between the Shihor River in Egypt and Lebo Hamath. They came to bring the ark of God from Kiriath Jearim to Jerusalem. [6]David went to Baalah of Judah. The whole community of Israel went with him. Baalah is also called Kiriath Jearim. All of the people went there to get the ark of God the LORD. He sits on his throne between the cherubim. The ark is named after the LORD.

[7]The ark of God was placed on a new cart. Then it was moved from Abinadab’s house. Uzzah and Ahio were guiding it.

[8]David was celebrating with all his might in the sight of God. So was the whole community of Israel. All of them were singing songs. They were also playing harps, lyres, tambourines, cymbals and trumpets.

[9]They came to the threshing floor of Kidon. The oxen nearly fell there. So Uzzah reached out his hand to hold the ark steady.

[10]Then the LORD’s anger burned against Uzzah. He struck him down because he had put his hand on the ark. So Uzzah died there in front of God.

[11]David was angry because the LORD’s burning anger had broken out against Uzzah. That’s why the place is still called Perez Uzzah to this very day.

12 David was afraid of God that day. He asked, “How can I ever bring the ark
of God back here to me?”

13 So he didn’t take the ark to be with him in the City of David. Instead, he
took it to the house of Obed-Edom. Obed-Edom was from Gath. 14 The ark of
God remained with the family of Obed-Edom. It stayed in his house for three
months. And the LORD blessed his family. He also blessed everything that
belonged to him.

David's Palace and Family

1 Chronicles 14

[1]Hiram was king of Tyre. He sent messengers to David. He sent cedar logs along with them. He also sent skilled workers to build a palace for David. They worked with stone and wood.

[2]David knew that the LORD had made his position as king secure. He knew that he had made him king over the whole nation of Israel. He knew that the LORD had greatly honored his kingdom. The LORD had done it because the Israelites were his people.

[3]In Jerusalem David got married to more women. He also became the father of more sons and daughters. [4]Here is a list of the children who were born to him in Jerusalem. Their names were Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, [5]Ibhar, Elishua, Elpelet, [6]Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, [7]Elishama, Beeliada and Eliphelet.

David Wins the Battle Over the Philistines

[8]The Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over the entire nation of Israel. So their whole army went to look for him. But David heard about it. He went out to where they were. [9]The Philistines had come and attacked the people in the Valley of Rephaim.

[10]So David asked God for advice. He said, "Should I go and attack the Philistines? Will you hand them over to me?"

The LORD answered him, "Go. I will hand them over to you."

[11]So David and his men went up to Baal Perazim. There David won the battle over the Philistines. He said, "God has broken through against my enemies, just as water breaks through a dam." That's why the place was called Baal Perazim.

[12]The Philistines had left the statues of their gods there. So David gave orders

to burn them up.

13 Once more the Philistines attacked the people in the valley. 14 So David asked God for advice again.

God answered him, “Do not go straight up. Instead, circle around them. Attack them in front of the balsam trees. 15 Listen for the sound of marching in the tops of the trees. Then move out to fight. The sound will mean that I have gone out in front of you. I will strike down the Philistine army.”

16 So David did just as God had commanded him. He and his men struck down the Philistine army. They struck them down from Gibeon all the way to Gezer.

17 So David became famous in every land. The LORD made all of the nations afraid of him.

David Brings the Ark to Jerusalem

1 Chronicles 15

[1]David constructed buildings for himself in the City of David. Then he
prepared a place for the ark of God. He set up a tent for it. [2]He said, “Only
Levites can carry the ark of God. That’s because the LORD chose them to carry
his ark. He chose them to serve him forever in front of the place where his
throne is.”

[3]David gathered the whole community of Israel together in Jerusalem. He
wanted to bring the ark of the LORD up to the place he had prepared for it. [4]He
called together the members of the family line of Aaron. He also called the
Levites together.

Here are the men who came from the families of the Levites.

[5]From the families of Kohath
came the leader Uriel and 120 relatives.

[6]From the families of Merari
came the leader Asaiah and 220 relatives.

[7]From the families of Gershon
came the leader Joel and 130 relatives.

[8]From the families of Elizaphan
came the leader Shemaiah and 200 relatives.

[9]From the families of Hebron
came the leader Eliel and 80 relatives.

[10]From the families of Uzziel
came the leader Amminadab and 112 relatives.

[11]David sent for the priests Zadok and Abiathar. He also sent for Uriel,
Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel and Amminadab. They were Levites. [12]He said to
them, “You are the leaders of the families of Levi. You and the other Levites
must set yourselves apart to serve the LORD and his people. You must bring up

the ark of the LORD. He is the God of Israel. Put the ark in the place I've prepared for it.

13"Remember when the anger of the LORD our God broke out against us? It was because you Levites didn't bring the ark up the first time. We didn't ask the LORD how to do it in the way the law requires."

14So the priests and Levites set themselves apart. Then they brought up the ark of the LORD. He is the God of Israel. 15This time the Levites used the poles to carry the ark of God on their shoulders. That's what Moses had commanded in keeping with the word of the LORD.

16David told the Levite leaders to appoint their relatives as singers. He wanted them to sing joyful songs. He also wanted them to play lyres, harps and cymbals along with their singing.

17So the Levites appointed Heman, the son of Joel. From his relatives they chose Asaph, the son of Berekiah. Other relatives were from the family of Merari. From them they chose Ethan, the son of Kushaiah. 18Along with them they chose their relatives who were next in line. Their names were Zechariah, Jaaziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, Mikneiah, Obed-Edom and Jeiel. They guarded the gates.

19Heman, Asaph and Ethan played the bronze cymbals. 20Zechariah, Aziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Maaseiah and Benaiah played the high notes on the lyres. 21Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, Mikneiah, Obed-Edom, Jeiel and Azaziah played the low notes on the harps.

22Kenaniah was the leader of the Levites. He was in charge of the singing because he was good at it.

23Berekiah and Elkanah guarded the ark. 24Some of the priests blew trumpets in front of the ark of God. Their names were Shebaniah, Joshaphat, Nethanel, Amasai, Zechariah, Benaiah and Eliezer. Obed-Edom and Jehiah also helped guard the ark.

25David and the elders of Israel went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD. So did the commanders of companies of 1,000 men. With great joy they brought the ark up from the house of Obed-Edom.

26God had helped the Levites who were carrying the ark of the covenant of the LORD. So seven bulls and seven rams were sacrificed.

27David was wearing a robe that was made out of fine linen. So were all of

the Levites who were carrying the ark. And so were the singers and the choir director Kenaniah. David was also wearing a sacred linen apron.

28So the whole community of Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD. They shouted. They blew rams' horns and trumpets. They played cymbals, lyres and harps.

29The ark of the covenant of the LORD was brought into the City of David. Saul's daughter Michal was watching from a window. She saw King David dancing and celebrating. That made her hate him in her heart.

1 Chronicles 16

[1]The ark of God was brought into Jerusalem. It was put in the tent David had
set up for it. The priests brought burnt offerings and friendship offerings to
God.

[2]After David finished sacrificing those offerings, he blessed the people in the
name of the LORD. [3]He gave to each Israelite man and woman a loaf of bread.
He also gave each one a date cake and a raisin cake.

[4]He appointed some of the Levites to serve in front of the ark of the LORD.
David wanted them to pray, give thanks and praise the LORD. He is the God of
Israel. [5]Asaph was the leader of those Levites. Zechariah was next. Then came
Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed-Edom and Jeiel.
They played the lyres and harps. Asaph played the cymbals. [6]The priests
Benaiah and Jahaziel blew the trumpets. They blew them at regular times in
front of the ark of the covenant of God.

David's Psalm of Thanks to the LORD

[7]That day was the first time David gave Asaph and his helpers this psalm of
thanks to the LORD.

[8]Give thanks to the LORD. Worship him.
Tell the nations what he has done.
[9]Sing to him. Sing praise to him.
Tell about all of the wonderful things he has done.
[10]Praise him, because his name is holy.
Let the hearts of those who trust in the LORD be glad.
[11]Look to the LORD and to his strength.
Always look to him.
[12]Remember the wonderful things he has done.
Remember his miracles and how he judged our enemies.
[13]Remember what he has done, you children of his servant Israel.
Remember it, you people of Jacob. You are God's chosen ones.

14 He is the LORD our God.
He judges the whole earth.
15 He will keep his covenant forever.
He will keep his promise for all time to come.
16 He will keep the covenant he made with Abraham.
He will keep the oath he took when he made his promise to Isaac.
17 He made it stand as a law for Jacob.
He made it stand as a covenant for Israel. It will last forever.
18 He said, “I will give you the land of Canaan.
It will belong to you.”

19 At first there weren’t very many of God’s people.
There were only a few. And they were strangers in the land.
20 They wandered from nation to nation.
They wandered from one kingdom to another.
21 But God didn’t allow anyone to beat them down.
To keep them safe, he gave a command to kings.
22 He said to them, “Do not touch my anointed ones.
Do not harm my prophets.”

23 All you people of the earth, sing to the LORD.
Day after day tell about how he saves us.
24 Tell the nations about his glory.
Tell all people about the wonderful things he has done.
25 The LORD is great. He is really worthy of praise.
People should have respect for him as the greatest God of all.
26 All of the gods of the nations are like their statues.
They can’t do anything.
But the LORD made the heavens.
27 Glory and majesty are all around him.
Strength and joy can be seen in the place where he lives.
28 Praise the LORD, all you nations.
Praise the LORD for his glory and strength.
29 Praise the LORD for the glory that belongs to him.
Bring an offering and come to him.
Worship the LORD because of his beauty and holiness.
30 All you people of the earth, tremble when you are with him.
The world is firmly set in place. It can’t be moved.
31 Let the heavens be filled with joy. Let the earth be glad.
Let them say among the nations, “The LORD rules!”

[32]Let the ocean and everything in it roar.
Let the fields and everything in them be glad.
[33]Then the trees in the forest will sing with joy.
They will sing to the LORD.
He will judge the people of the world.

[34]Give thanks to the LORD, because he is good.
His faithful love continues forever.
[35]Cry out, “Save us, God our Savior.
Save us. Bring us back from among the nations.
Then we will give thanks to you, because your name is holy.
We will celebrate by praising you.”
[36]Give praise to the LORD, the God of Israel,
for ever and ever.

Then all of the people said, “Amen!” They also said, “Praise the LORD.”

[37]David left Asaph and his helpers to serve in front of the ark of the covenant of the LORD. They served there at regular times. They did it as they were required to do each day. [38]David also left Obed-Edom and his 68 helpers to serve with them. Obed-Edom and Hosah guarded the gates. Obed-Edom was the son of Jeduthun.

[39]David left the priest Zadok and some other priests in front of the holy tent of the LORD. It was at the high place in Gibeon. [40]David left them there to sacrifice burnt offerings to the LORD on the altar every morning and evening. They did it in keeping with everything that is written in the Law of the LORD. That’s the Law he had given to Israel.

[41]Heman and Jeduthun were with the priests. So were the rest of those who had been chosen by name and appointed to serve. They had been chosen to give thanks to the LORD, “because his faithful love continues forever.” [42]It was the duty of Heman and Jeduthun to blow the trumpets. They also had the duty of playing the cymbals and other instruments for the sacred songs. The sons of Jeduthun were stationed at one of the gates.

[43]All of the people left. Everyone went home. And David returned home to bless his family.

God Makes a Promise to David

1 Chronicles 17

1 David settled down in his palace. Then he spoke to the prophet Nathan. He
said, “Here I am, living in a palace that has beautiful cedar walls. But the ark of
the covenant of the LORD is under a tent.”

2 Nathan replied to David, “Do what you want to. God is with you.”

3 That night a message came to Nathan from God. He said,

4 “Go and speak to my servant David. Tell him, ‘The LORD says, “You are not
the one who will build me a house to live in. 5 I have not lived in a house from
the day I brought Israel up out of Egypt until now. I have moved my tent from
one place to another. I have moved my home from one place to another. 6 I have
moved from place to place with all of the people of Israel. I commanded their
leaders to be shepherds over them. I never asked any of those leaders, ‘Why
haven’t you built me a house that has beautiful cedar walls?’ ” ’

7 “So tell my servant David, ‘The LORD who rules over all says, “I took you
away from the grasslands. That is where you were taking care of your father’s
sheep and goats. I made you ruler over my people Israel. 8 I have been with you
everywhere you have gone. I cut off all of your enemies when you were
attacking them. Now I will make you famous. Your name will be just as
respected as the names of the most important people on earth.

9 “ ‘ “I will provide a place where my people Israel can live. I will plant them
in the land. Then they will have a home of their own. They will not be bothered
anymore. Sinful people will no longer crush them, as they did at first. 10 That is
what your enemies have done ever since I appointed leaders over my people
Israel. But I will bring all of them under your control.

“ ‘ “I tell you that I will build a royal house for your family. 11 Some day your
life will come to an end. You will join the members of your family who have
already died. Then I will give you one of your own sons to become the next
king after you. I will make his kingdom secure.

12 “ ‘ “He is the one who will build me a house. I will set up his throne. It will

last forever. [13]I will be his father. And he will be my son. I took my love away from the man who ruled before you. But I will never take my love away from your son. [14]I will place him over my house and my kingdom forever. His throne will last forever.” ’ ”

[15]Nathan reported to David all of the words that the LORD had spoken to him.

David Prays to the LORD

[16]Then King David went into the holy tent. He sat down in front of the LORD. He said,

“LORD God, who am I? My family isn’t important. So why have you brought me this far? [17]I would have thought that you had already done more than enough for me. But now, God, you have spoken about what is going to happen to my royal house in days to come. LORD God, you have treated me as if I were the most honored man of all.

[18]“What more can I say to you for honoring me? You know all about me. [19]LORD, you have done a wonderful thing. You have given me many great promises. All of them are for my good. They are exactly what you wanted to give me.

[20]“LORD, there isn’t anyone like you. There isn’t any God but you. We have heard about it with our own ears.

[21]“Who is like your people Israel? God, we are the one nation on earth you have saved. You have set us free for yourself. Your name has become famous. You have done great and wonderful things. You have driven nations out to make room for your people. You saved us when you set us free from Egypt. No other god has done any of those things for its people. [22]You made Israel your very own people forever. LORD, you have become our God.

[23]“And now, LORD, let the promise you have made to me and my royal house stand forever. Do exactly as you promised. [24]When your promise comes true, your name will be honored forever. People will say, ‘The LORD rules over all. He is the God over Israel. He is Israel’s God.’ My royal house will be made secure in your sight.

[25]“My God, you have shown me that you will build me a royal house. So I

can pray to you boldly. [26]LORD, you are God! You have promised many good things to me. [27]You have been pleased to bless my royal house. Now it will continue forever in your sight. LORD, you have blessed it. And it will be blessed forever.”

David Wins Many Battles

1 Chronicles 18

[1]While David was king of Israel, he won many battles over the Philistines. He brought them under his control. He took Gath away from the Philistines. He also captured the villages that were around Gath.

[2]David also won the battle over the people of Moab. They were brought under his rule. They gave him the gifts he required them to bring him.

[3]David fought against Hadadezer all the way to Hamath. Hadadezer was king of Zobah. He had gone to take complete control of the land along the Euphrates River. [4]David captured 1,000 of Hadadezer's chariots, 7,000 chariot riders and 20,000 soldiers on foot. He cut the legs of all but 100 of the chariot horses.

[5]The Arameans of Damascus came to help Hadadezer, the king of Zobah. But David struck down 22,000 of them. [6]He stationed some soldiers in the Aramean kingdom of Damascus. The people of Aram were brought under his rule. They gave him the gifts he required them to bring him. The LORD helped David win his battles everywhere he went.

[7]David took the gold shields that were carried by the officers of Hadadezer. He brought the shields to Jerusalem. [8]He took a huge amount of bronze from Tebah and Cun. Those towns belonged to Hadadezer. Later, Solomon used the bronze to make the huge bronze bowl for washing. He also used it to make the pillars and many other bronze articles for the temple.

[9]Tou was king of Hamath. He heard that David had won the battle over the entire army of Hadadezer, the king of Zobah. [10]So Tou sent his son Hadoram to King David. Hadoram greeted David. He praised him because he had won the battle over Hadadezer. Hadadezer had been at war with Tou. So Hadoram brought David all kinds of articles that were made out of gold, silver and bronze.

[11]King David set those articles apart for the LORD. He had done the same thing with the silver and gold he had taken from other nations. The nations were Edom, Moab, Ammon, Philistia and Amalek.

[12]Abishai struck down 18,000 men of Edom in the Valley of Salt. Abishai was the son of Zeruiah. [13]He stationed some soldiers in Edom. The whole nation of Edom was brought under his rule. The LORD helped David win his battles everywhere he went.

David's Officials

[14]David ruled over the whole nation of Israel. He did what was fair and right for all of his people. [15]Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was commander over the army. Jehoshaphat, the son of Ahilud, kept the records. [16]Zadok, the son of Ahitub, was a priest. Ahimelech, the son of Abiathar, was also a priest. Shavsha was the secretary. [17]Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, was commander over the Kerethites and Pelethites. And King David's sons were the chief officials who served at his side.

David Goes to War Against the People of Ammon

1 Chronicles 19

[1]Nahash was king of Ammon. After he died, his son became the next king after him. [2]David thought, “I’m going to be kind to Hanun. His father Nahash was kind to me.” So David sent messengers to Hanun. He wanted them to tell Hanun how sad he was that Hanun’s father had died.

David’s messengers went to the land of Ammon. They told Hanun how sad David was.

[3]The Ammonite nobles spoke to Hanun. They said, “David has sent messengers to tell you he is sad. They say he wants to honor your father. But the real reason they’ve come is to look the land over. They want to destroy it.”

[4]So Hanun grabbed hold of David’s men. He shaved them. He cut their clothes off just below the waist and left them half naked. Then he sent them away.

[5]Someone came and told David what had happened to his men. So David sent messengers to them because they were filled with shame. King David said to them, “Stay at Jericho until your beards grow out again. Then come back here.”

[6]The Ammonites realized that what they had done had made David very angry with them. So Hanun and the Ammonites got 37 tons of silver. They used it to hire chariots and chariot riders from Aram Naharaim, Aram Maacah and Zobah. [7]They hired 32,000 chariots and riders. They also hired the king of Maacah and his troops. All of them came out and camped near Medeba. At the same time the Ammonites brought their troops together from their towns. Then they marched out to fight.

[8]David heard about it. So he sent Joab out with the entire army of Israel’s fighting men. [9]The Ammonites marched out. They took up their battle positions at the entrance to their city. The kings who came to help them gathered their troops together in the open country.

[10]Joab saw that there were lines of soldiers in front of him and behind him.

So he chose some of the best troops in Israel. He sent them to march out against the Arameans. 11He put the rest of the men under the command of his brother Abishai. They were sent to march out against the Ammonites.

12Joab said, “Suppose the Arameans are too strong for me. Then you must come and help me. But suppose the Ammonites are too strong for you. Then I’ll come and help you. 13Be strong. Let’s be brave as we fight for our people and the cities of our God. The LORD will do what he thinks is best.”

14Then Joab and the troops who were with him marched out to attack the Arameans. They ran away from him. 15The Ammonites saw that the Arameans were running away. So they also ran away from Joab’s brother Abishai. They went inside the city. Then Joab went back to Jerusalem.

16The Arameans saw that they had been driven away by Israel. So they sent messengers to get some Arameans from east of the Euphrates River. The Arameans were under the command of Shophach. He was the commander of Hadadezer’s army.

17David was told about it. So he gathered the whole army of Israel together. They went across the Jordan River. David marched out against the Arameans. He lined up his soldiers opposite them. He lined them up to meet the Arameans in battle.

The Arameans began to fight against him. 18But then they ran away from Israel. David killed 7,000 of their chariot riders. He killed 40,000 of their soldiers who were on foot. He also killed Shophach, the commander of their army.

19The people who were under the rule of Hadadezer saw that Israel had won the battle over them. So they made a peace treaty with David. They were brought under his rule.

After that, the Arameans wouldn’t help the Ammonites anymore.

Joab Captures the City of Rabbah

1 Chronicles 20

[1]In the spring, Joab led Israel's army out. It was the time when kings go off to war. Joab destroyed the land of Ammon. He went to the city of Rabbah. He surrounded it and got ready to attack it. But David remained in Jerusalem. Later, Joab attacked Rabbah and completely destroyed it.

[2]David took the gold crown off the head of the king of Ammon. The crown weighed 75 pounds. It had jewels in it. It was placed on David's head. He took a huge amount of goods from the city. [3]He brought out the people who were there. He made them work with saws and iron picks and axes. David did that to all of the towns in Ammon. Then he and his entire army returned to Jerusalem.

Israel Goes to War Against the Philistines

[4]War broke out at Gezer against the Philistines. At that time Sibbecai killed Sippai. So the Philistines were brought under Israel's control. Sibbecai was a Hushathite. Sippai was from the family line of Rapha.

[5]In another battle against the Philistines, Elhanan killed Lahmi. Elhanan was the son of Jair. Lahmi was the brother of Goliath. Goliath was from the city of Gath. Lahmi's spear was as big as a weaver's rod.

[6]There was still another battle. It took place at Gath. A huge man lived there. He had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot. So the total number of his toes and fingers was 24. He was also from the family line of Rapha. [7]He made fun of Israel. So Jonathan killed him. Jonathan was the son of David's brother Shimea.

[8]Those Philistine men lived in Gath. They were from the family line of Rapha. David and his men killed them.

David Counts His Fighting Men

1 Chronicles 21

[1]Satan rose up against Israel. He stirred up David to count the men of Israel.
[2]So David spoke to Joab and the commanders of the troops. He said, “Go! Count the men of Israel from Beersheba all the way to Dan. Report back to me. Then I’ll know how many there are.”

[3]Joab replied, “May the LORD multiply his troops 100 times. King David, you are my master. Aren’t all of the men under your control? Why would you want me to count them? Do you want to make Israel guilty?”

[4]In spite of what Joab said, the king’s word had more authority than Joab’s word did. So Joab left and went all through Israel. Then he came back to Jerusalem. [5]Joab reported to David how many fighting men he had counted. In the whole land of Israel there were 1,100,000 men who could use a sword well. That included 470,000 men in Judah.

[6]But Joab didn’t include the tribes of Levi and Benjamin in the total number. The king’s command was sickening to Joab. [7]It was also evil in the sight of God. So he punished Israel.

[8]Then David said to God, “I committed a great sin when I counted Israel’s men. I beg you to take away my guilt. I’ve done a very foolish thing.”

[9]The LORD spoke to David’s prophet Gad. He said, [10]“Go and tell David, ‘The LORD says, “I could punish you in three different ways. Choose one of them for me to use against you.” ’ ”

[11]So Gad went to David. He said to him, “The LORD says, ‘Take your choice.
[12]You can have three years when there will not be enough food in the land. You can have three months when your enemies will sweep you away. They will catch up with you. They will cut you down with their swords. Or you can have three days when my sword will punish you. That means there would be three days of plague in the land. My angel would strike people down in every part of Israel.’

“So take your pick. Tell me how to answer the One who sent me.”

13David said to Gad, “I’m suffering terribly. Let me fall into the hands of the LORD. His mercy is very great. But don’t let me fall into the hands of men.”

14So the LORD sent a plague on Israel. And 70,000 Israelites died. 15God sent an angel to destroy Jerusalem. But as the angel was doing it, the LORD saw it. He was very sad because of the plague. So he spoke to the angel who was destroying the people. He said, “That is enough! Do not kill any more people!”

The angel of the LORD was standing at Araunah’s threshing floor. Araunah was from the city of Jebus.

16David looked up. He saw the angel of the LORD standing between heaven and earth. The angel was holding out a sword over Jerusalem. David and the elders fell with their faces to the ground. They were wearing black clothes.

17David said to God, “I ordered the fighting men to be counted. I’m the one who has sinned. I’m the one who has done what is wrong. These people are like sheep. What have they done? LORD my God, let your powerful hand punish me and my family. But don’t let this plague continue to strike your people.”

David Builds an Altar

18Then the angel of the LORD ordered Gad to tell David to go up to the threshing floor of Araunah, the Jebusite. He wanted David to build an altar there to honor the LORD.

19So David went up and did it. He obeyed the message that Gad had spoken in the LORD’s name.

20Araunah was threshing wheat. He turned and saw the angel. His four children were with him. They hid themselves. 21David approached the threshing floor. Araunah looked up and saw him. So Araunah left the threshing floor. He bowed down to David with his face toward the ground.

22David said to him, “Let me have the property your threshing floor is on. I want to build an altar there to honor the LORD. When I do, the plague on the people will be stopped. Sell the threshing floor to me for the full price.”

23Araunah said to David, “Take it! King David, you are my master. Do what you please. I’ll even provide the oxen for the burnt offerings. Use boards from the threshing sleds for the wood. Use the wheat for the grain offering. I’ll give all of it to you.”

[24]But King David replied to Araunah, “No! I want to pay the full price. I won’t take what belongs to you and give it to the LORD. I won’t sacrifice a burnt offering that hasn’t cost me anything.”

[25]So David paid Araunah 15 pounds of gold for the property. [26]David built an altar there to honor the LORD. He sacrificed burnt offerings and friendship offerings. He called out to the LORD. The LORD answered him by sending fire from heaven on the altar for burnt offerings.

[27]Then the LORD spoke to the angel. And the angel put his sword away. [28]When the angel did that, David was still at the threshing floor of Araunah, the Jebusite. David saw that the LORD had answered him. So he offered sacrifices there.

[29]At that time, the LORD’s holy tent was at the high place in Gibeon. The altar for burnt offerings was there too. Moses had made the holy tent in the desert. [30]David couldn’t go to the tent to pray to God. That’s because he was afraid of the sword of the angel of the LORD.

1 Chronicles 22

[1]David announced, “The house of the LORD God will be built here. Israel’s altar for burnt offerings will also be here.”

David Makes Plans for Building the Temple

[2]David gave orders to bring together the outsiders who were living in Israel. He appointed some of them to cut stones. He wanted them to prepare blocks of stone for building the house of God.

[3]David provided a large amount of iron to make nails. They were for the doors of the gates and for the fittings. He provided more bronze than anyone could weigh. [4]He also provided more cedar logs than anyone could count. The people of Sidon and Tyre brought large numbers of logs to David.

[5]David said, “My son Solomon is young. He’s never done anything like this before. The house that will be built for the LORD should be very grand and wonderful. It should be famous and beautiful in the eyes of all of the nations. I’ll get things ready for it.” So David got many things ready before he died.

[6]Then he sent for his son Solomon. He told him to build a house for the LORD, the God of Israel.

[7]David said to Solomon, “My son, with all my heart I wanted to build a house for the LORD my God. That’s where his Name will be. [8]But a message from the LORD came to me. It said, ‘You have spilled the blood of many people. You have fought many wars. You are not the one who will build a house for my Name. That is because I have seen you spill the blood of many people on the earth.

[9]“ ‘But you are going to have a son. He will be a man of peace. And I will give him peace and rest from all of his enemies on every side. His name will be Solomon. I will give Israel peace and quiet while he is king. [10]He will build a house for my Name. He will be my son. And I will be his father. I will make his kingdom secure over Israel. It will last forever.’

[11]“My son, may the LORD be with you. May you have success. May you build

the house of the LORD your God, just as he said you would. 12May the LORD give you good sense. May he give you understanding when he makes you king over Israel. Then you will keep the law of the LORD your God.

13"Be careful to obey the rules and laws the LORD gave Moses for Israel. Then you will have success. Be strong and brave. Don't be afraid. Don't lose hope.

14"I've tried very hard to provide for the LORD's temple. I've provided 3,750 tons of gold and 37,500 tons of silver. I've provided more bronze and iron than anyone can weigh. I've also given plenty of wood and stone. You can add to it.

15"You have a lot of workers. You have people who can cut stones and people who can lay the stones. You have people who can work with wood. You also have people who are skilled in every other kind of work. 16Some of them can work with gold and silver. Others can work with bronze and iron. There are more workers than anyone can count. So begin the work. May the LORD be with you."

17Then David ordered all of Israel's leaders to help his son Solomon. 18He said to them, "The LORD your God is with you. He's given you peace and rest on every side. He's handed the people who are living in the land over to me. The land has been brought under the control of the LORD and his people.

19"So look to the LORD your God with all your heart and soul. Start building the temple of the LORD God. Then bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD into it. Also bring in the sacred articles that belong to God. The temple will be built for the Name of the LORD."

The Family Line of Levi

1 Chronicles 23

1 David had become very old. So he made his son Solomon king over Israel.

2 He gathered together all of the leaders of Israel. He also gathered the priests
and the Levites together. 3 The Levites who were 30 years old or more were
counted. The total number of men was 38,000.

4 David said, “From them, 24,000 will direct the work of the LORD’s temple.
And 6,000 will be officials and judges. 5 Another 4,000 will guard the gates.
And 4,000 will praise the LORD with the instruments of music I’ve provided for
that purpose.”

6 David separated the Levites into groups. He did it based on the sons of Levi.
The sons were Gershon, Kohath and Merari.

The Family of Gershon

7 Ladan and Shimei belonged to the family of Gershon.

8 The sons of Ladan were

Jehiel, Zetham and Joel. Jehiel was the oldest son. The total number of
sons was three.

9 The sons of Shimei were

Shelomoth, Haziel and Haran. The total number of sons was three.
They were the leaders of the families of Ladan.

10 The sons of Shimei were

Jahath, Ziza, Jeush and Beriah. The total number of the sons of Shimei
was four.

11 Jahath was the first son. Ziza was the second son. But Jeush and
Beriah didn’t have many sons. So they were counted as one family. They
had only one task.

The Family of Kohath

12 The sons of Kohath were

Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel. The total number of sons was four.

13 Aaron and Moses belonged to Amram's family line.

Aaron and his family line were set apart forever as the LORD's priests.

They had the duty of setting the most holy things apart to the LORD. They offered sacrifices to the LORD. They served him. They gave blessings in his name forever. 14 The sons of Moses, the man of God, were counted as part of the tribe of Levi.

15 The sons of Moses were

Gershom and Eliezer.

16 Shubael was the oldest son in the family line of Gershom.

17 Rehabiah was the oldest son in the family line of Eliezer.

Eliezer didn't have any other sons. But Rehabiah had a great many sons.

18 Shelomith was the oldest son of Izhar.

19 Jeriah was the first son of Hebron.

Amariah was his second son. Jahaziel was the third. Jekameam was the fourth.

20 Micah was the first son of Uzziel. Isshiah was his second son.

The Family of Merari

21 The sons of Merari were

Mahli and Mushi.

The sons of Mahli were

Eleazar and Kish.

22 Eleazar died without having any sons. All he had was daughters. They got married to their cousins. The cousins were the sons of Kish.

23 The sons of Mushi were

Mahli, Eder and Jerimoth. The total number of sons was three.

[24]Those were the family lines of Levi. They were recorded under the names of the family leaders. Each worker who was 20 years old or more was counted. They served in the LORD's temple.

[25]David had said, "The LORD is the God of Israel. He has given peace and rest to his people. He has come to Jerusalem to live there forever. [26]So the Levites don't need to carry the holy tent anymore. They don't need to carry any of its articles anymore. Those were the articles that were used to serve there."

[27]The Levites who were 20 years old or more were counted. That was in keeping with David's final directions.

[28]The Levites had the duty of helping the members of Aaron's family line. They helped them serve in the LORD's temple. They were in charge of the courtyards and the side rooms. They made all of the sacred things pure and clean.

They also had other duties at the house of God. [29]They were in charge of setting the holy bread out on the table. They prepared the flour for the grain offerings. They made the wafers without using any yeast. They did the baking and the mixing. They measured the amount and size of everything.

[30]They stood every morning to thank and praise the LORD. They did the same thing every evening. [31]They also did it every time burnt offerings were brought to the LORD. Those offerings were brought every Sabbath day. They were also brought at every New Moon Feast and during the appointed yearly feasts.

The Levites served in front of the LORD at regular times. The proper number of Levites was always used when they served. They served in the way the law required of them.

[32]So the Levites carried out their duties for the Tent of Meeting and for the Holy Room. They worked under their relatives who were in the family line of Aaron. They helped them serve at the LORD's temple.

The Groups of Priests

1 Chronicles 24

[1]Here are the groups of priests the sons of Aaron were separated into.

The sons of Aaron were Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. [2]But Nadab and Abihu died before their father did. They didn't have any sons. So Eleazar and Ithamar served as the priests.

[3]With the help of Zadok and Ahimelech, David separated the priests into groups. Each group served in its appointed order and time. Zadok belonged to the family line of Eleazar. Ahimelech belonged to the family line of Ithamar. [4]More leaders were found among Eleazar's family line than among Ithamar's. So the priests were separated into their groups based on that fact. There were 16 family leaders from Eleazar's line. There were eight family leaders from Ithamar's line.

[5]The priests were separated into their groups by using lots. That was the fair way to do it. The priests were officials of the temple and officials of God. They came from the family lines of Eleazar and Ithamar.

[6]Shemaiah was a Levite. He was the son of Nethanel. He was the writer who recorded the names of the priests. He wrote them down in front of the king and the officials. The officials included the priest Zadok and Ahimelech. Ahimelech was the son of Abiathar. They also included the leaders of the families of the priests and the Levites. One family was chosen by lot from Eleazar. Then one was chosen from Ithamar.

[7]The 1st lot that was drawn out was for Jehoiarib.
The 2nd was for Jedaiah.
[8]The 3rd was for Harim.
The 4th was for Seorim.
[9]The 5th was for Malkijah.
The 6th was for Mijamin.
[10]The 7th was for Hakkoz.

The 8th was for Abijah.
11 The 9th was for Jeshua.
The 10th was for Shecaniah.
12 The 11th was for Eliashib.
The 12th was for Jakim.
13 The 13th was for Huppah.
The 14th was for Jeshebeab.
14 The 15th was for Bilgah.
The 16th was for Immer.
15 The 17th was for Hezir.
The 18th was for Happizzez.
16 The 19th was for Pethahiah.
The 20th was for Jehezkel.
17 The 21st was for Jakin.
The 22nd was for Gamul.
18 The 23rd was for Delaiah.
The 24th was for Maaziah.

19 That was their appointed order for serving when they entered the LORD's temple. That order was based on the rules Aaron had given them long ago. Everything was done exactly as the LORD had commanded Aaron. The LORD is the God of Israel.

The Rest of the Levites

20 Here are the other members of the family line of Levi.
From the sons of Amram came Shubael.
From the sons of Shubael came Jehdeiah.
21 From the sons of Rehabiah came Isshiah.
Isshiah was the oldest.
22 From the people of Izhar came Shelomoth.

From the sons of Shelomoth came Jahath.

[23]Jeriah was the first son of Hebron. Amariah was his second son. Jahaziel was the third. Jekameam was the fourth.

[24]The son of Uzziel was Micah.

From the sons of Micah came Shamir.

[25]The brother of Micah was Isshiah.

From the sons of Isshiah came Zechariah.

[26]The sons of Merari were Mahli and Mushi.

The son of Jaaziah was Beno.

[27]The sons of Merari

from Jaaziah were Beno, Shoham, Zaccur and Ibri.

[28]From Mahli came Eleazar. Eleazar didn’t have any sons.

[29]From Kish came

Jerahmeel. Jerahmeel was the son of Kish.

[30]The sons of Mushi were Mahli, Eder and Jerimoth.

Those were the Levites, family by family. [31]They cast lots, just as their relatives, the sons of Aaron, had done. They did it in front of King David, Zadok and Ahimelech. They did it in front of the family leaders of the priests. They also did it in front of the family leaders of the Levites. The families of the oldest brother were treated in the same way as the families of the youngest.

The Singers

1 Chronicles 25

[1]David and the commanders of the army set apart some of the sons of Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun. They set them apart to serve the LORD by prophesying while harps, lyres and cymbals were being played. Here is the list of the men who served in that way.

[2]From the sons of Asaph came

Zaccur, Joseph, Nethaniah and Asarelah. The sons of Asaph were under the direction of Asaph. He prophesied under the king's direction.

[3]From the sons of Jeduthun came

Gedaliah, Zeri, Jeshaiah, Shimei, Hashabiah and Mattithiah. The total number was six. They were under the direction of their father Jeduthun. He prophesied while playing the harp. He used it to thank and praise the LORD.

[4]From the sons of Heman came

Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shubael, Jerimoth, Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti, Romamti-Ezer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir and Mahazioth. [5]All of them were sons of the king's prophet Heman. They were given to Heman to bring him honor. That's what God had promised. God gave him 14 sons and three daughters.

[6]All of them were under the direction of their fathers. They played music for the LORD's temple. They served at the house of God by playing cymbals, lyres and harps. Asaph, Jeduthun and Heman were under the king's direction.

[7]All of them were trained and skilled in playing music for the LORD. Their

total number was 288. That included their relatives. [8]Young and old alike cast lots for their duties. That was true for students as well as teachers.

[9]The 1st lot that was drawn out was for Asaph. It was for Joseph
and his sons and relatives. The total number was 12.
The 2nd lot was for Gedaliah
and his relatives and sons. The total number was 12.
[10]The 3rd was for Zaccur
and his sons and relatives. The total number was 12.
[11]The 4th was for Izri
and his sons and relatives. The total number was 12.
[12]The 5th was for Nethaniah
and his sons and relatives. The total number was 12.
[13]The 6th was for Bukkiah
and his sons and relatives. The total number was 12.
[14]The 7th was for Jesarelah
and his sons and relatives. The total number was 12.
[15]The 8th was for Jeshaiah
and his sons and relatives. The total number was 12.
[16]The 9th was for Mattaniah
and his sons and relatives. The total number was 12.
[17]The 10th was for Shimei
and his sons and relatives. The total number was 12.
[18]The 11th was for Azarel
and his sons and relatives. The total number was 12.
[19]The 12th was for Hashabiah
and his sons and relatives. The total number was 12.
[20]The 13th was for Shubael
and his sons and relatives. The total number was 12.
[21]The 14th was for Mattithiah

and his sons and relatives. The total number was 12.
22 The 15th was for Jerimoth
and his sons and relatives. The total number was 12.
23 The 16th was for Hananiah
and his sons and relatives. The total number was 12.
24 The 17th was for Joshbekashah
and his sons and relatives. The total number was 12.
25 The 18th was for Hanani
and his sons and relatives. The total number was 12.
26 The 19th was for Mallothi
and his sons and relatives. The total number was 12.
27 The 20th was for Eliathah
and his sons and relatives. The total number was 12.
28 The 21st was for Hothir
and his sons and relatives. The total number was 12.
29 The 22nd was for Giddalti
and his sons and relatives. The total number was 12.
30 The 23rd was for Mahazioth
and his sons and relatives. The total number was 12.
31 The 24th was for Romamti-Ezer
and his sons and relatives. The total number was 12.

The Men Who Guarded the Gates

1 Chronicles 26

[1]Here are the groups of men who guarded the gates.

From the family of Korah came Meshelemiah, the son of Kore. Kore was one of the sons of Asaph.

[2]Meshelemiah had sons.

Zechariah was his first son.

Jediael was his second son.

Zebadiah was the third.

Jathniel was the fourth.

[3]Elam was the fifth.

Jehohanan was the sixth.

And Eliehoenai was the seventh.

[4]Obed-Edom also had sons.

Shemaiah was his first son.

Jehozabad was his second son.

Joah was the third.

Sacar was the fourth.

Nethanel was the fifth.

[5]Ammiel was the sixth.

Issachar was the seventh.

And Peullethai was the eighth.

God had blessed Obed-Edom.

[6]His son Shemaiah also had sons. They were leaders in their family. That's because they were men of great ability. [7]The sons of Shemaiah were

Othni, Rephael, Obed and Elzabad. Elzabad's brothers Elihu and Semakiah were also able men. [8]All of them belonged to the family line of Obed-Edom. They and their sons and relatives were men of ability. They were strong enough to do their work. The total number of men in the family line of Obed-Edom was 62.

[9]Meshelemiah's sons and relatives were able men. Their total number was 18.

[10]Hosah belonged to the family line of Merari. Hosah's first son was Shimri. But Shimri wasn't the oldest son. His father had made him the first. [11]Hilkiah was Hosah's second son. Tabaliah was the third. Zechariah was the fourth. The total number of Hosah's sons and relatives was 13.

[12]Those groups of men guarded the gates. They worked under their chief men. They served at the LORD's temple, just as their relatives had served. [13]Lots were cast for each gate, family by family. Young and old alike were chosen.

[14]The lot that was drawn out for the East Gate was for Shelemiah. Then lots were cast for his son Zechariah. He gave wise advice. The lot that was drawn out for the North Gate was for him. [15]The lot for the South Gate was for Obed-Edom. The lot for the storeroom was for his sons. [16]Lots were drawn out for the West Gate and the Shalleketh Gate on the upper road. Those lots were for Shuppim and Hosah.

One guard stood next to another. [17]There were six Levites a day on the east. There were four a day on the north. There were four a day on the south. And there were two at a time at the storeroom. [18]Two Levite guards were at the courtyard to the west. And four were at the road.

[19]Those were the groups of the men who guarded the gates. They belonged to the family lines of Korah and Merari.

Other Officials

[20]The Levite relatives of the men who guarded the gates were in charge of the treasures in the house of God. They were also in charge of other treasures that

had been set apart for God.

21 Ladan was from the family line of Gershon. Some leaders of families
belonged to Ladan's family line. One of them was Jehieli. 22 The sons of Jehieli
were Zetham and his brother Joel. They were in charge of the treasures in the
LORD's temple.

23 Here are the officials who were from the family lines of Amram, Izhar,
Hebron and Uzziel.

24 Shubael was from the family line of Moses' son Gershom. Shubael was
the officer in charge of the treasures. 25 His relatives through Eliezer
included his son Rehabiah. Jeshaiah was Rehabiah's son. Joram was
Jeshaiah's son. Zicri was Joram's son. And Shelomith was Zicri's son.

26 Shelomith and his relatives were in charge of all of the treasures that
had been set apart for God. King David had set those treasures apart.
Some family leaders had also set them apart. They were the commanders
of thousands of men and commanders of hundreds. The treasures had
also been set apart by other army commanders.

27 Some of the goods that had been taken in battle were set apart to
repair the LORD's temple. 28 The prophet Samuel had set apart some
things for God. Saul, the son of Kish, had set apart other things. So had
Abner, the son of Ner. And so had Joab, the son of Zeruiah.

All of those things and all of the others that had been set apart were
taken care of by Shelomith and his relatives.

29 From the family line of Izhar came Kenaniah and his sons. They were
given duties that were away from the temple. They were officials and
judges over Israel.

30 From the family line of Hebron came Hashabiah and his relatives. They
were able men. The total number was 1,700. It was their duty to serve
the king in Israel west of the Jordan River. It was also their duty to do all
of the LORD's work there.

31 Jeriah was the chief of the family line of Hebron. That's based on their
family history. In the 40th year of David's rule, a search was made in the
records. That's how men of ability were found in the family line of
Hebron at Jazer in Gilead. 32 Jeriah had 2,700 relatives. They were able

men. They were family leaders. King David had put them in charge of the tribes of Reuben and Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh. They were in charge of matters having to do with God and the king.

The Companies in the King's Army

1 Chronicles 27

[1]Here is the list of the Israelites who served in the king's army. They included leaders of families. They included commanders of thousands of men and commanders of hundreds. They also included other officers. All of them served the king in everything concerning the army companies that were on duty month by month all through the year. The total number of men in each company was 24,000.

[2]Jashobeam was in charge of the first company for the first month. He was the son of Zabdiel. The total number of men in Jashobeam's company was 24,000. [3]He belonged to the family line of Perez. He was chief of all of the army officers for the first month.

[4]Dodai was in charge of the second company for the second month. He belonged to the family line of Ahoah. Mikloth was the leader of Dodai's company. The total number of men in Dodai's company was 24,000.

[5]The third army commander for the third month was the priest Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada. Benaiah was the chief. The total number of men in Benaiah's company was 24,000. [6]That same Benaiah was a mighty man among the Thirty. In fact, he was leader over the Thirty. His son Ammizabad was in charge of his company.

[7]The fourth commander for the fourth month was Joab's brother Asahel. Asahel's son Zebadiah was the next commander after him. The total number of men in Asahel's company was 24,000.

[8]The fifth commander for the fifth month was Shamhuth. He was an Izrahite. The total number of men in Shamhuth's company was 24,000.

[9]The sixth commander for the sixth month was Ira. He was the son of Ikkesh from Tekoa. The total number of men in Ira's company was 24,000.

[10]The seventh commander for the seventh month was Helez. He was a

Pelonite from Ephraim. The total number of men in Helez's company was 24,000.

[11]The eighth commander for the eighth month was Sibbecai. He was a Hushathite from Zerah. The total number of men in Sibbecai's company was 24,000.

[12]The ninth commander for the ninth month was Abiezer. He was from Anathoth in Benjamin. The total number of men in Abiezer's company was 24,000.

[13]The tenth commander for the tenth month was Maharai. He was a Netophathite from Zerah. The total number of men in Maharai's company was 24,000.

[14]The 11th commander for the 11th month was Benaiah. He was from Pirathon in Ephraim. The total number of men in Benaiah's company was 24,000.

[15]The 12th commander for the 12th month was Heldai. He was a Netophathite from the family line of Othniel. The total number of men in Heldai's company was 24,000.

The Officers Over the Tribes

[16]Here are the officers over the tribes of Israel.

Over the tribe of Reuben was Eliezer, the son of Zicri.
Over Simeon was Shephatiah, the son of Maacah.

[17]Over Levi was Hashabiah, the son of Kemuel.

Over Aaron was Zadok.

[18]Over Judah was Elihu. He was David's brother.

Over Issachar was Omri, the son of Michael.

[19]Over Zebulun was Ishmaiah, the son of Obadiah.

Over Naphtali was Jerimoth, the son of Azriel.

[20]Over Ephraim was Hoshea, the son of Azaziah.

Over half of the tribe of Manasseh was Joel, the son of Pedaiah.

[21]Over the half of the tribe of Manasseh in Gilead was Iddo, the son of

Zechariah.

Over Benjamin was Jaasiel, the son of Abner.

22 Over Dan was Azarel, the son of Jeroham.

Those were the officers over the tribes of Israel.

23 David didn't count the men who were 20 years old or less. That's because the LORD had promised to make the people of Israel as many as the stars in the sky. 24 Joab, the son of Zeruiah, began to count the men. But he didn't finish. The LORD was angry with Israel because David had begun to count the men. So the number wasn't written down in the official records of King David.

Other Officials of the King

25 Azmaveth was in charge of the royal storerooms. He was the son of Adiel.

Jonathan was in charge of the storerooms in the fields, towns, villages and lookout towers. He was the son of Uzziah.

26 Ezri was in charge of the workers who farmed the land. He was the son of Kelub.

27 Shimei was in charge of the vineyards. He was from Ramah.

Zabdi was in charge of the grapes from the vineyards. He was also in charge of storing the wine. He was a Shiphmite.

28 Baal-Hanan was in charge of the olive trees and sycamore-fig trees in the western hills. He was from Geder.

Joash was in charge of storing the olive oil.

29 Shitrai was in charge of the herds that ate grass in Sharon. He was from Sharon.

Shaphat was in charge of the herds in the valleys. He was the son of Adlai.

30 Obil was in charge of the camels. He was from the family line of Ishmael.

Jehdeiah was in charge of the donkeys. He was from Meronoth.

31 Jaziz was in charge of the flocks. He was a Hagrite.

All of those men were the officials in charge of King David's property.

[32]Jonathan was David’s uncle. He gave good advice. He was a man of understanding. He was also a secretary. Jehiel took care of the king’s sons. He was the son of Hacmoni.

[33]Ahithophel was the king’s adviser.

Hushai was the king’s friend. He was an Arkite. [34]Jehoiada and Abiathar became the next advisers after Ahithophel. Jehoiada was the son of Benaiah.

Joab was the commander of the royal army.

David Talks About His Plans for the Temple

1 Chronicles 28

[1]David asked all of the officials of Israel to come together at Jerusalem. He sent for the officers who were over the tribes. He sent for the commanders of the companies who served the king. He sent for the commanders of thousands of men and commanders of hundreds. He sent for the officials who were in charge of all of the royal property and livestock. They belonged to the king and his sons. He sent for the palace officials and the mighty men. He also sent for all of the brave fighting men.

[2]King David stood up. He said, "All of you, listen to me. With all my heart I wanted to build a house for the LORD. I wanted it to be a place of peace and rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD. The ark is the stool for our God's feet. I made plans to build the LORD's house. [3]But God said to me, 'You are not the one who will build a house for my Name. That is because you are a fighting man. You have spilled people's blood.'

[4]"But the LORD chose me. He is the God of Israel. He chose me from my whole family to be king over Israel forever. He chose Judah to lead the tribes. From the families of Judah he chose my family. From my father's sons he chose me. He was pleased to make me king over the whole nation of Israel.

[5]"The LORD has given me many sons. From all of them he has chosen my son Solomon. He wants Solomon to sit on the throne of the LORD's kingdom. He wants him to rule over Israel. [6]He said to me, 'Your son Solomon is the one who will build my house and my courtyards. I have chosen him to be my son. And I will be his father. [7]I will make his kingdom secure. It will last forever. That will happen if he does not turn away from my commands and laws. He must continue to obey them, just as he is doing now.'

[8]"So I'm giving you a command in the sight of all of the people of Israel. The LORD's community is watching. And our God is listening. I command you to be careful to follow all of the commands of the LORD your God. Then you will own this good land. You will pass it on to your children after you as their share forever.

9“My son Solomon, always remember the God of your father. Serve him with
all your heart. Do it with a mind that wants to obey him. The LORD looks deep
down inside every heart. He understands the real reasons for everything you
think. If you look to him, you will find him. But if you desert him, he will turn
his back on you forever. 10Think about it. The LORD has chosen you to build a
temple as a holy place where he can live. So be strong. Get to work.”

11Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for the porch of the temple. He
gave him the plans for its buildings and its storerooms. He gave him the plans
for its upper parts and its inside rooms. He gave him the plans for the place
where sin is paid for and forgiven. 12He gave him the plans for everything the
Spirit of the LORD had put in his mind. There were plans for the courtyards of
the LORD’s temple. There were plans for all of the rooms that were around it.
There were plans for the places where the treasure of God’s temple would be
kept. There were plans for the places where the things that were set apart for
God would be kept.

13David told Solomon how to separate the priests and Levites into groups. He
gave him directions for all of the work they should do when they served in the
LORD’s temple.

He also showed him how all of the articles should be used at the temple.
14Different articles were used for different purposes.

David told Solomon how much gold should be used for each gold article. He
also told him how much silver should be used for each silver article. 15He told
him how much gold should be used to make each gold lampstand and its
lamps. He told him how much silver should be used to make each silver
lampstand and its lamps. The amount depended on how each lampstand would
be used.

16David told Solomon how much gold should be used to make each table for
holy bread. He told him how much silver should be used to make the silver
tables. 17He told him how much pure gold should be used to make the forks,
sprinkling bowls and pitchers. He told him how much gold should be used to
make each gold dish. He told him how much silver should be used to make
each silver dish.

18And he told him how much pure gold should be used to make the altar for
burning incense. David also gave Solomon the plan for the chariot of the gold
cherubim. They spread their wings over the ark of the covenant of the LORD.

19 David said, “I have written everything down. The LORD’s powerful hand
helped me. He helped me understand every part of the plan.”

20 David also said to his son Solomon, “Be strong and brave. Get to work.
Don’t be afraid. Don’t lose hope. The LORD God is my God. He is with you. He
won’t fail you. He won’t desert you until all of the work for serving in the
LORD’s temple is finished. 21 The groups of the priests and Levites are ready to
do all of the work on God’s temple. Every worker who is willing and skilled
can help you do all of the work. The officials and all of the people will obey
every command you give them.”

Gifts Are Brought for the Temple

1 Chronicles 29

1 Then King David spoke to the whole community. He said, “God has chosen
my son Solomon. But Solomon is young. He’s never done anything like this
before. The task is huge. This grand and wonderful temple won’t be built for
human beings. It will be built for the LORD God.

2 “With all of my riches I’ve done everything I could for the temple of my
God. I’ve provided gold for the gold work and silver for the silver work. I’ve
provided bronze for the bronze work and iron for the iron work. I’ve given
wood for the things that will be made out of wood. I’ve given onyx and
turquoise for the settings. I’ve given stones of different colors and all kinds of
fine stone and marble. I’ve provided everything in huge amounts.

3 “With all my heart I want the temple of my God to be built. So I’m giving
my personal treasures of gold and silver for it. I’m adding them to everything
else I’ve provided for the holy temple. 4 I’m giving 110 tons of gold and 260
tons of pure silver. Cover the walls of the buildings with it. 5 Use it for the gold
work and the silver work. Use it for everything the skilled workers will do.
How many of you are willing to set yourselves apart to the LORD today?”

6 Many people were willing to give. They included the leaders of families and
the officers of the tribes of Israel. They included the commanders of thousands
of men and commanders of hundreds. They also included the officials who
were in charge of the king’s work. 7 All of them gave to the work on God’s
temple. They gave more than 190 tons of gold and 375 tons of silver. They also
gave 675 tons of bronze and 3,750 tons of iron. 8 Anyone who had valuable
jewels added them to the treasure for the LORD’s temple. Jehiel was in charge of
the temple treasure. He was from the family line of Gershon.

9 The people were happy when they saw what their leaders had been willing
to give. The leaders had given freely. With their whole heart they had given
everything to the LORD. King David was filled with joy.

David Praises the LORD

10 David praised the LORD in front of the whole community. He said,

"LORD, we give you praise.
You are the God of our father Israel.
We give you praise for ever and ever.
11 LORD, you are great and powerful.
Glory, majesty and beauty belong to you.
Everything in heaven and on earth belongs to you.
LORD, the kingdom belongs to you.
You are honored as the One who rules over all.
12 Wealth and honor come from you.
You are the ruler of all things.
In your hands are strength and power.
You can give honor and strength to everyone.
13 Our God, we give you thanks.
We praise your glorious name.

14 "But who am I? And who are my people? Without your help we wouldn't be able to give this much. Everything comes from you. We've given back to you only what comes from you. 15 We are outsiders and strangers in your sight. So were all of our people who lived long ago. Our days on this earth are like a shadow. We don't have any hope.

16 "LORD our God, we've given more than enough. We've provided it to build you a temple where you will put your holy Name. But all of it comes from you. All of it belongs to you. 17 My God, I know that you put our hearts to the test. And you are pleased when we are honest. I've given all of these things just because I wanted to. When I did it, I was completely honest with you. And I've been happy to see that your people who are here have also been willing to give to you.

18 "LORD, you are the God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Israel. Keep this longing in the hearts of your people forever. Keep their hearts true to you. 19 Help my son Solomon serve you with all his heart. Then he will keep your commands and rules. He will do what you require. He'll do everything to build the grand and wonderful temple I've provided for."

[20]Then David spoke to the whole community. He said, “Praise the LORD your God.” So all of them praised the LORD. He’s the God of their people who lived long ago. The whole community bowed low. They fell down flat with their faces toward the ground. They did it in front of the LORD and the king.

Solomon Becomes the Next King

[21]The next day they offered sacrifices to the LORD. They brought burnt offerings to him. They sacrificed 1,000 bulls, 1,000 rams and 1,000 male lambs. They also brought the required drink offerings. And they offered many other sacrifices for the whole community of Israel. [22]They ate and drank with great joy that day. They did it in the sight of the LORD.

Then they announced a second time that Solomon was king. He was the son of David. They anointed Solomon to be ruler in the sight of the LORD. They also anointed Zadok to be priest.

[23]So Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD. He ruled as king in place of his father David. Things went well with him. All of the people of Israel obeyed him. [24]All of the officers and mighty men promised to be completely faithful to King Solomon. So did all of King David’s sons.

[25]The LORD greatly honored Solomon in the sight of all of the people. He gave him royal majesty. Solomon was given more glory than any king over Israel had ever had.

David Dies

[26]David was king over the whole nation of Israel. He was the son of Jesse. [27]He ruled over Israel for 40 years. He ruled for seven years in Hebron and for 33 years in Jerusalem. [28]He died when he was very old. He had enjoyed a long life. He had enjoyed wealth and honor. His son Solomon became the next king after him.

[29]The events of King David’s rule from beginning to end are written down. They are written in the records of the prophets Samuel, Nathan and Gad. [30]The records tell all about David’s rule and power. They tell about what happened concerning him and Israel and the kingdoms of all of the other lands.

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Solomon Asks God for Wisdom

2 Chronicles 1

1 Solomon was the son of David. Solomon made his position secure over his
kingdom. The LORD his God was with him. He made Solomon very great.

2 Solomon spoke to the whole community of Israel. He spoke to the
commanders of thousands of men and commanders of hundreds. He spoke to
the judges and all of the leaders in Israel. He spoke to the leaders of Israel's
families. 3 Solomon and the whole community went to the high place at
Gibeon. That's because God's Tent of Meeting was there. The LORD's servant
Moses had made the tent in the desert.

4 David had brought the ark of God up from Kiriath Jearim. He had brought it
to the place he had prepared for it. He had set up a tent for it in Jerusalem.

5 But the bronze altar that Bezalel had made was in Gibeon. Bezalel was the
son of Uri. Uri was the son of Hur. The altar was in front of the LORD's holy
tent. So Solomon and the whole community asked the LORD for advice there.

6 Solomon went up to the bronze altar in front of the LORD at the Tent of
Meeting. Solomon sacrificed 1,000 burnt offerings on the altar.

7 That night God appeared to Solomon. He said to him, "Ask for anything you
want me to give you."

8 Solomon answered God, "You were very kind to my father David. Now you
have made me king in his place. 9 LORD God, let the promise you gave to my
father David come true. You have made me king. My people are like the dust
of the earth. They can't be counted. 10 Give me wisdom and knowledge. Then
I'll be able to lead these people. Without your help, who would be able to rule
this great nation of yours?"

11 God said to Solomon, "I am glad that those are the things you really want.
You have not asked for wealth, riches or honor. You have not even asked to
have your enemies killed. You have not asked to live for a long time. Instead,
you have asked for wisdom and knowledge. You want to be able to rule my
people wisely. I have made you king over them.

12“So wisdom and knowledge will be given to you. I will also give you
wealth, riches and honor. You will have more than any king before you ever
had. And no king after you will have as much.”

13Then Solomon left the high place at Gibeon. He went from the Tent of
Meeting there to Jerusalem. And he ruled over Israel.

14Solomon had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horses. He kept some of them in
the chariot cities. He kept others with him in Jerusalem.

15The king made silver and gold as common in Jerusalem as stones. He made
cedar wood as common there as sycamore-fig trees in the western hills.

16Solomon got horses from Egypt and Kue. The king’s buyers purchased
them from Kue. 17They could get a chariot from Egypt for 15 pounds of silver.
They could get a horse for less than four pounds of silver. They sold horses and
chariots to all of the Hittite and Aramean kings.

Solomon Asks Hiram to Help Build the Temple

2 Chronicles 2

[1]Solomon gave orders to build a temple. That's where the LORD would put his
Name. Solomon also gave orders to build a royal palace for himself. [2]He chose
70,000 men to carry things. He chose 80,000 to cut stones in the hills. He put
3,600 men in charge of them.

[3]Solomon sent a message to Hiram. Hiram was king of Tyre. The message
said,

"Send me cedar logs, just as you did for my father David. You sent him cedar
to build a palace to live in. [4]Now I'm about to build a temple. The Name of the
LORD my God will be there. I'll set the temple apart for him.

"Sweet-smelling incense will be burned in front of him there. The holy bread
will be set out at regular times. Burnt offerings will be sacrificed there every
morning and evening. They will be sacrificed every Sabbath day. They will be
sacrificed at every New Moon Feast. And they will be sacrificed at every
yearly appointed feast of the LORD our God. That's a law for Israel that will last
for all time to come.

[5]"The temple I'm going to build will be beautiful. That's because our God is
greater than all other gods. [6]So who is able to build a temple for him? After all,
the heavens can't hold him. In fact, not even the highest heavens can hold him.
So who am I to build a temple for him? It will only be a place to burn sacrifices
to him.

[7]"Send me someone who is skilled at working with gold, silver, bronze and
iron. He must also be able to work with purple, blue and bright red yarn. He
must be skilled in the art of carving. Send him to work in Judah and Jerusalem
with my skilled workers. My father David provided them to help me.

[8]"Also send me cedar, pine and algum logs from Lebanon. I know that your
men are skilled in cutting wood there. My men will work with yours. [9]They'll
provide me with plenty of lumber. That's because the temple I'm building must
be large and beautiful.

10“I’ll pay your servants. They will cut the wood. I’ll pay them 125,000 bushels of wheat that has been ground up. I’ll pay them 125,000 bushels of barley. I’ll also pay them 115,000 gallons of wine and 115,000 gallons of olive oil.”

11King Hiram of Tyre replied to Solomon. He wrote a letter to him. It said,

“The LORD loves his people. That’s why he has made you their king.”

12Hiram continued,

“I praise the LORD. He is the God of Israel. He made heaven and earth. He has given King David a wise son. You have good sense. You understand what is right. You will build a temple for the LORD. You will also build a palace for yourself.

13“I’m sending Huram-Abi to you. He is very skillful. 14His mother was from Dan. His father was from Tyre. He is trained to work with gold, silver, bronze and iron. He knows how to work with stone and wood. He can also work with purple, blue and bright red yarn and fine linen. He’s skilled in all kinds of carving. He can follow any pattern you give him. He’ll work with your skilled workers. He’ll also work with those of your father David. David was my master.

15“Now please send us what you promised. Send us the wheat, barley, olive oil and wine. 16And we’ll cut all of the logs from Lebanon you need. We’ll make rafts out of them. We’ll float them by sea down to Joppa. Then you can take them up to Jerusalem.”

17Solomon counted all of the outsiders who were living in Israel. He did it after his father David had counted them. There were 153,600 of them. 18He chose 70,000 to carry things. He chose 80,000 to cut stones in the hills. He put 3,600 men in charge of the people to keep them working.

Solomon Builds the Temple

2 Chronicles 3

[1]Then Solomon began to build the temple of the LORD. He built it on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem. That's where the LORD had appeared to Solomon's father David. He had appeared at the threshing floor of Araunah. Araunah was from Jebus. David had provided the threshing floor. [2]Solomon began building the temple on the second day of the second month. It was in the fourth year of his rule.

[3]Solomon laid the foundation for God's temple. It was 90 feet long and 30 feet wide. Solomon's men followed the standard measure that was used at that time. [4]The porch in front of the temple was 30 feet across and 30 feet high.

Solomon covered the inside of the temple with pure gold. [5]He covered the inside of the main hall with pine boards. Then he covered the boards with fine gold. He decorated the hall with palm tree patterns and chain patterns. [6]He decorated the temple with valuable jewels. The gold he used came from Parvaim. [7]He covered the ceiling beams, doorframes, walls and doors of the temple with gold. He carved cherubim on the walls.

[8]He built the Most Holy Room. It was as long as the temple was wide. It was 30 feet long and 30 feet wide. He covered the inside of the Most Holy Room with 23 tons of fine gold. [9]He also covered the upper parts with gold. The gold on the nails weighed 20 ounces.

[10]For the Most Holy Room, Solomon made a pair of carved cherubim. He covered them with gold. [11]The total length of the cherubim's wings from tip to tip was 30 feet. One wing of the first cherub was seven and a half feet long. Its tip touched the temple wall. The other wing was also seven and a half feet long. Its tip touched the wing tip of the other cherub.

[12]In the same way one wing of the second cherub was seven and a half feet long. Its tip touched the other temple wall. The other wing was also seven and a half feet long. Its tip touched the wing tip of the first cherub. [13]So the total length of the wings of the two cherubim was 30 feet from tip to tip. The cherubim stood facing the main hall.

[14]Solomon made the curtain out of blue, purple and bright red yarn and fine linen. A skilled worker sewed cherubim into its pattern.

[15]In front of the temple, Solomon made two pillars. Each pillar was 26 feet tall. Each had a decorated top that was seven and a half feet high. [16]Solomon made chains that were linked together. He put them on top of the pillars. He also made 100 pomegranates. He fastened them to the chains.

[17]Solomon set the pillars up in front of the temple. One was on the south. The other was on the north. He named the one on the south Jakin. The one on the north he named Boaz.

More Facts About the Temple

2 Chronicles 4

[1]Solomon made a bronze altar that was 30 feet long, 30 feet wide and 15 feet high. [2]He made a huge metal bowl for washing. Its shape was round. It measured 15 feet from rim to rim. It was seven and a half feet high. And it was 45 feet around. [3]Below the rim there was a circle of bull figures around the bowl. In every 18 inches around the bowl there were ten bulls. The bulls were arranged in two rows. They were made as part of the bowl itself.

[4]The bowl stood on 12 bulls. Three of them faced north. Three faced west. Three faced south. And three faced east. The bowl rested on top of them. Their rear ends were toward the center. [5]The bowl was three inches thick. Its rim was like the rim of a cup. The rim was shaped like the bloom of a lily. The bowl held 17,500 gallons of water.

[6]Solomon made ten smaller bowls for washing. He placed five of them on the south side of the huge bowl. He placed the other five on the north side.

The things that were used for the burnt offerings were rinsed in the smaller bowls. But the priests used the huge bowl for washing.

[7]Solomon made ten gold lampstands. He followed the pattern the LORD had given him. He placed the lampstands in the temple. He put five of them on the south side. He put the other five on the north side.

[8]He made ten tables. He placed them in the temple. He put five of them on the south side. He put the other five on the north side. He also made 100 gold sprinkling bowls.

[9]He made the courtyard of the priests. He also made the large courtyard. He made doors for it. He covered the doors with bronze.

[10]He placed the huge bowl on the south side of the courtyard. He put it at the southeast corner.

[11]He also made the pots, shovels and sprinkling bowls.

So Huram finished the work he had started for King Solomon. Here’s what he made for God’s temple.

12 He made the two pillars.

He made the two tops for the pillars. The tops were shaped like bowls.
He made the two sets of chains that were linked together. They decorated the two bowl-shaped tops of the pillars.

13 He made the 400 pomegranates for the two sets of chains. There were two rows of pomegranates for each chain. They decorated the bowl-shaped tops of the pillars.

14 He made the stands and their bowls.

15 He made the huge bowl. He made the 12 bulls that were under it.

16 He made the pots, shovels and meat forks. He also made all of the articles that were connected with them.

Huram-Abi made all of those objects for King Solomon for the LORD's temple. He made them out of bronze. Then he shined them up. 17 The king had them made in clay molds. It was done on the flatlands of the Jordan River between Succoth and Zarethan.

18 Solomon made huge numbers of those articles. There were too many of them to weigh. No one even tried to weigh the bronze they were made out of.

19 Solomon also made all of the articles that were in God's temple.

He made the golden altar.
He made the tables for the holy bread.

20 He made the pure gold lampstands and their lamps. The lamps burned in front of the Most Holy Room, just as the law required.

21 He made the gold flowers. He made the gold lamps and tongs. They were made out of solid gold.

22 He made the wick cutters, sprinkling bowls, dishes, and shallow cups for burning incense. All of them were made out of pure gold. He made the gold doors of the temple. They were the inner doors to the Most Holy Room and the doors of the main hall.

2 Chronicles 5

[1]Solomon finished all of the work for the LORD's temple. Then he brought in
the things his father David had set apart for the LORD. They included the silver
and gold and all of the articles for God's temple. Solomon placed them with the
other treasures that were there.

Solomon Brings the Ark to the Temple

[2]Then Solomon sent for the elders of Israel. He told them to come to
Jerusalem. They included all of the leaders of the tribes. They also included the
chiefs of the families of Israel. Solomon wanted them to bring up the ark of the
LORD's covenant from Zion. Zion was the City of David. [3]All of the men of
Israel came together to where the king was. It was at the time of the Feast of
Booths. The feast was held in the seventh month.

[4]All of the elders of Israel arrived. Then the Levites picked up the ark and
carried it. [5]They brought up the ark. They also brought up the Tent of Meeting
and all of the sacred articles that were in the tent. The priests, who were
Levites, carried everything up.

[6]The entire community of Israel had gathered around King Solomon. All of
them were in front of the ark. They sacrificed huge numbers of sheep and
cattle. There were so many that they couldn't be recorded. In fact, they
couldn't even be counted.

[7]The priests brought the ark of the LORD's covenant to its place in the Most
Holy Room of the temple. They put it under the wings of the cherubim.

[8]The cherubim's wings were spread out over the place where the ark was.
They covered the ark. They also covered the poles that were used to carry it.
[9]The poles reached out from the ark. They were so long that their ends could
be seen from in front of the Most Holy Room. But they couldn't be seen from
outside the Holy Room. They are still there to this very day.

[10]There wasn't anything in the ark except the two tablets. Moses had placed
them in it at Mount Horeb. That's where the LORD had made a covenant with
the Israelites. He made it after they came out of Egypt.

[11]The priests left the Holy Room. All of the priests who were there had set themselves apart to the LORD. It didn’t matter what group they were in.

[12]All of the Levites who played music stood near the east side of the altar. They included Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun and their sons and relatives. They were dressed in fine linen. They were playing cymbals, harps and lyres. They were joined by 120 priests who were blowing trumpets.

[13]The trumpet players and singers made music together as if they were only one voice. They praised the LORD. They gave thanks to him. Some of them played their trumpets, cymbals and other instruments. The others raised their voices to praise the LORD. They sang,

> “He is good.
> His faithful love continues forever.”

Then a cloud filled the temple of the LORD. [14]The priests couldn’t do their work because of it. The glory of the LORD filled God’s temple.

2 Chronicles 6

[1]Then Solomon said, “LORD, you have said you would live in a dark cloud.
[2]I’ve built a beautiful temple for you. You can live in it forever.”

[3]The whole community of Israel was standing there. The king turned around and gave them his blessing. [4]Then he said,

“I praise the LORD. He is the God of Israel. With his mouth he made a promise to my father David. With his powerful hands he made it come true. He said, [5]‘I brought my people out of Egypt. Ever since I did that, I have not chosen a city in any tribe of Israel where a temple could be built for my Name. I have not chosen anyone to be the leader over my people Israel. [6]But now I have chosen Jerusalem. I will put my Name there. And I have chosen David to rule over my people Israel.’

[7]“With all his heart my father David wanted to build a temple. He wanted to do it so the Name of the LORD could be there. The LORD is the God of Israel.

[8]“But the LORD spoke to my father David. He said, ‘With all your heart you wanted to build a temple for my Name. It is good that you wanted to do that.
[9]But you will not build the temple. Instead, your son will build the temple for my Name. He is your own flesh and blood.’

[10]“The LORD has kept the promise he made. I’ve become the next king after my father David. Now I’m sitting on the throne of Israel. That’s exactly what the LORD promised would happen. I’ve built the temple for the Name of the LORD. He is the God of Israel. [11]I’ve placed the ark there. The tablets of the LORD’s covenant are inside it. He made that covenant with the people of Israel.”

Solomon Prays to Set the Temple Apart to the LORD

[12]Then Solomon stood in front of the LORD’s altar. He stood in front of the whole community of Israel. He spread out his hands to pray. [13]He had made a bronze stage. It was seven and a half feet long and seven and a half feet wide. It was four and a half feet high. He had placed it in the center of the outer courtyard. He stood on the stage. Then he got down on his knees in front of the

whole community of Israel. He spread out his hands toward heaven. 14He said,

"LORD, you are the God of Israel. There is no God like you in heaven or on earth. You keep the covenant you made with us. You show us your love. You do that when we follow you with all our hearts. 15You have kept your promise to my father David. He was your servant. With your mouth you made a promise. With your powerful hand you have made it come true. And today we can see it.

16"LORD, you are the God of Israel. Keep the promises you made to my father David. Do it for him. He was your servant. You said to him, 'You will always have a son to sit on the throne of Israel in my sight. That will be true only if your sons are careful in everything they do. They must live the way my law tells them to. That is the way you have lived.' 17LORD, you are the God of Israel. So let your promise to your servant David come true.

18"But will you really live on earth with human beings? After all, the heavens can't hold you. In fact, even the highest heavens can't hold you. So this temple I've built certainly can't hold you!

19"But please pay attention to my prayer. LORD my God, show me your favor as I make my appeal to you. Listen to my cry for help. Hear the prayer I'm praying to you. 20Let your eyes look toward this temple day and night. You said you would put your Name here. Listen to the prayer I'm praying toward this place.

21"Hear me when I ask you to show us your favor. Listen to your people Israel when they pray toward this place. Listen to us from heaven. It's the place where you live. When you hear us, forgive us.

22"Suppose a man does something wrong to his neighbor. And he is required to take an oath and make a promise. He must come and do it in front of your altar in this temple. 23When he does, listen to him from heaven. Take action. Judge between the man and his neighbor. Pay back the one who is guilty. Do to him what he has done to the other person. Tell everyone that the person who hasn't done anything wrong is free of blame. That will prove he isn't guilty.

24"Suppose your people Israel have lost the battle against their enemies. And suppose they've sinned against you. But they turn back to you and praise your name. They pray to you in this temple. And they ask you to show them your favor. 25Then listen to them from heaven. Forgive the sin of your people Israel. Bring them back to the land you gave to them and their people who lived long

ago.

[26]“Suppose your people have sinned against you. And because of that, the sky is closed up and there isn’t any rain. But your people pray toward this place. They praise you by admitting they’ve sinned. And they turn away from their sin because you have made them suffer. [27]Then listen to them from heaven. Forgive the sin of your people Israel. Teach them the right way to live. Send rain on the land you gave them as their share.

[28]“Suppose there isn’t enough food in the land. And a plague strikes the land. The hot winds completely dry up our crops. Or locusts or grasshoppers come and eat them up. Or enemies surround one of our cities and get ready to attack it. Or trouble or sickness comes. [29]But suppose one of your people prays to you. He asks you to show him your favor. He is aware of how much he is suffering. And he spreads out his hands toward this temple to pray. [30]Then listen to him from heaven. It’s the place where you live. Forgive him. Deal with him in keeping with everything he does. You know his heart. In fact, you are the only one who knows every human heart.

[31]“Your people will have respect for you. They will live the way you want them to. They’ll live that way as long as they are in the land you gave our people long ago.

[32]“Suppose a stranger who doesn’t belong to your people Israel has come from a land far away. He has come because he’s heard about your great name. He has heard that you reached out your mighty hand and powerful arm. So he comes and prays toward this temple. [33]Then listen to him from heaven. It’s the place where you live. Do what that stranger asks you to do.

“Then all of the nations on earth will know you. They will have respect for you. They’ll respect you just as your own people Israel do. They’ll know that your Name is in this house I’ve built.

[34]“Suppose your people go to war against their enemies. It doesn’t matter where you send them. And suppose they pray to you toward this city you have chosen. They pray toward the temple I’ve built for your Name. [35]Then listen to them from heaven. Listen to their prayer. Listen to them when they ask you to show them your favor. Stand up for them.

[36]“Suppose they sin against you. After all, there isn’t anyone who doesn’t sin. And suppose you get angry with them. You hand them over to their enemies. They take them as prisoners to another land. It doesn’t matter whether it’s near

or far away. [37]But suppose your people change their ways in the land where they are held as prisoners. They turn away from their sins. They beg you to help them in the land where they are prisoners. They say, ‘We have sinned. We’ve done what is wrong. We’ve done what is evil.’ [38]And they turn back to you with all their heart and soul. Suppose it happens in the land where they were taken as prisoners. There they pray toward the land you gave their people long ago. They pray toward the city you have chosen. And they pray toward the temple I’ve built for your Name. [39]Then listen to them from heaven. It’s the place where you live. Listen to their prayer. Listen to them when they ask you to show them your favor. Stand up for them. Your people have sinned against you. Please forgive them.

[40]“My God, let your eyes see us. Let your ears pay attention to the prayers that are offered in this place.

[41]“LORD God, rise up and come to your resting place.
Come in together with the ark.
It’s the sign of your power.
LORD God, may your priests put on salvation as if it were their clothes.
May your faithful people be glad because you are so good.
[42]LORD God, don’t turn your back on your anointed king.
Remember the great love you promised to your servant David.”

Solomon Sets the Temple Apart to the LORD

2 Chronicles 7

[1]Solomon finished praying. Then fire came down from heaven. It burned up
the burnt offering and the sacrifices. The glory of the LORD filled the temple.
[2]The priests couldn't enter the temple of the LORD. His glory filled it.

[3]All of the people of Israel saw the fire coming down. They saw the glory of
the LORD above the temple. So they got down on their knees in the courtyard
with their faces toward the ground. They worshiped the LORD. They gave
thanks to him. They said,

"He is good.
His faithful love continues forever."

[4]Then the king and all of the people offered sacrifices to the LORD. [5]King
Solomon sacrificed 22,000 head of cattle and 120,000 sheep and goats. So the
king and all of the people set the temple of God apart.

[6]The priests and Levites took their positions. The Levites played the LORD's
musical instruments. King David had made them for praising the LORD. They
were used when he gave thanks to the LORD. He said, "His faithful love
continues forever."

Across from where the Levites were, the priests blew their trumpets. All of
the people of Israel were standing.

[7]Solomon set the middle area of the courtyard apart to the LORD. It was in
front of the LORD's temple. There Solomon sacrificed burnt offerings. He also
sacrificed the fat of the friendship offerings there. He did it there because the
bronze altar he had made couldn't hold all of the burnt offerings, the grain
offerings and the fat parts.

[8]At that time Solomon celebrated the Feast of Booths for seven days. The
whole community of Israel was with him. It was a huge crowd. People came
from as far away as Lebo Hamath and the Wadi of Egypt. [9]On the eighth day

they held a service. For seven days they had celebrated by setting the altar apart to honor God. The feast continued for seven more days.

10Then Solomon sent the people home. It was the 23rd day of the seventh month. The people were glad. Their hearts were full of joy. That's because the LORD had done good things for David and Solomon and his people Israel.

The LORD Appears to Solomon

11Solomon finished the LORD's temple and the royal palace. He had done everything he had planned to do in the LORD's temple and his own palace.

12The LORD appeared to him at night. He said,

"I have heard your prayer. I have chosen this place for myself. It is a temple where sacrifices will be offered.

13"Suppose I close up the sky and there isn't any rain. Suppose I command locusts to eat up the crops. And I send a plague among my people. 14But they make themselves low in my sight. They pray and look to me. And they turn from their evil ways. Then I will listen to them from heaven. I will forgive their sin. And I will heal their land. After all, they are my people.

15"Now my eyes will see them. My ears will pay attention to the prayers they offer in this place. 16I have chosen this temple. I have set it apart for myself. My Name will be there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there.

17"But you must walk with me, just as your father David did. Do everything I command you to do. Obey my rules and laws. 18Then I will set up your royal throne. I made a covenant with your father David to do that. I said to him, 'You will always have a son to rule over Israel.'

19"But suppose all of you turn away from me. You refuse to obey the rules and commands I have given you. And you go off to serve other gods and worship them. 20Then I will remove Israel from my land. It is the land I gave them. I will turn my back on this temple. I will do it even though I have set it apart for my Name to be there. I will make all of the nations hate it. They will laugh and joke about it.

21"This temple is now so grand and beautiful. But the time is coming when

all those who pass by it will be shocked. They will say, ‘Why has the LORD done a thing like this to this land and temple?’

22“People will answer, ‘Because they have deserted the LORD. He is the God of their people who lived long ago. He brought them out of Egypt. But they have been holding on to other gods. They’ve been worshiping them. They’ve been serving them. That’s why he has brought all of this horrible trouble on them.’ ”

Other Things Solomon Did

2 Chronicles 8

[1]Solomon built the LORD's temple and his own palace. It took him 20 years to build them. After that, [2]Solomon rebuilt the villages Hiram had given him. He settled Israelites in them.

[3]Then Solomon went to Hamath Zobah. He captured it. [4]He also built up Tadmor in the desert. He built up all of the cities in Hamath where he could store things. [5]He rebuilt Lower Beth Horon and Upper Beth Horon. He put up high walls around them. He made their city gates secure with heavy metal bars. [6]He rebuilt Baalath and all of the cities where he could store things. He also rebuilt all of the cities for his chariots and horses.

Solomon built anything he wanted to build in Jerusalem, Lebanon and all of the territory he ruled over.

[7]There were still many people left in the land who weren't Israelites. They included Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. [8]They were children of the people who had lived in the land before the Israelites came. The people of Israel hadn't destroyed them. Solomon had forced them to work very hard as his slaves. And they still work for Israel to this very day.

[9]But Solomon didn't force the men of Israel to work as his slaves. Instead, some were his fighting men. Others were commanders of his captains, chariots and chariot drivers. [10]Still others were King Solomon's chief officials. There were 250 officials in charge of the other men.

[11]Solomon brought Pharaoh's daughter up from the City of David to the palace he had built for her. He said, "My wife must not live in the palace of David, who was the king of Israel. It's one of the places the ark of the LORD has entered. That makes it holy."

[12]Solomon had built the LORD's altar. It stood in front of the temple porch. On that altar Solomon sacrificed burnt offerings to the LORD. [13]Each day he sacrificed what the Law of Moses required. He sacrificed the required offerings every Sabbath day. He also sacrificed them at each New Moon Feast and

during the three yearly feasts. Those three were the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Booths.

14 Solomon followed the orders his father David had given him. He appointed the groups of priests for their duties. He appointed the Levites to lead the people in praising the LORD. They also helped the priests do their required tasks each day. Solomon appointed the groups of men who guarded all of the gates. That's what David, the man of God, had ordered. 15 King David's commands were followed completely. They applied to the priests and Levites. They also applied to the temple treasure.

16 All of Solomon's work was carried out. It started the day the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid. It ended when the LORD's temple was finished.

17 Solomon went to Ezion Geber and Elath on the coast of Edom. 18 Hiram sent him ships that his own officers commanded. They were men who knew the sea. Together with Solomon's men they sailed to Ophir. They brought back 17 tons of gold. They gave it to King Solomon.

The Queen of Sheba Visits Solomon

2 Chronicles 9

[1]The queen of Sheba heard about how famous Solomon was. So she came to Jerusalem to test him with hard questions. She arrived with a very large group of attendants. Her camels were carrying spices, huge amounts of gold, and valuable jewels. She came to Solomon and asked him about everything she wanted to know.

[2]He answered all of her questions. There wasn't anything that was too hard for him to explain to her.

[3]So the queen of Sheba saw how wise Solomon was. She saw the palace he had built. [4]She saw the food that was on his table. She saw his officials sitting there. She saw the robes of the servants who waited on everyone. She saw the robes the wine tasters were wearing. And she saw the burnt offerings Solomon sacrificed at the LORD's temple. She could hardly believe everything she had seen.

[5]She said to the king, "Back in my own country I heard a report about you. I heard about how much you had accomplished. I also heard about how wise you are. Everything I heard is true. [6]But I didn't believe what people were saying. So I came to see for myself. And now I believe it! You are twice as wise as people say you are. The report I heard doesn't even begin to tell the whole story about you.

[7]"How happy your men must be! How happy your officials must be! They always get to serve you and hear the wise things you say.

[8]"May the LORD your God be praised. He must take great delight in you. He placed you on his throne as king. He put you there to rule for him. Your God loves Israel very much. He longs to take good care of them forever. That's why he has made you king over them. He knows that you will do what is fair and right."

[9]She gave the king four and a half tons of gold. She also gave him huge amounts of spices and valuable jewels. There had never been as many spices as the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

[10]The servants of Hiram and those of Solomon brought gold from Ophir. They also brought algumwood and valuable jewels. [11]The king used the algumwood to make steps for the LORD's temple and the royal palace. He also used it to make harps and lyres for those who played the music. No one had ever seen that much algumwood in Judah before.

[12]King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba everything she wanted and asked for. In fact, he gave her more than she had brought to him. Then she left. She returned to her own country with her attendants.

Solomon in All of His Glory

[13]Each year Solomon received 25 tons of gold. [14]That didn't include the money that was brought in by business and trade. All of the kings of Arabia also brought gold and silver to Solomon. So did the governors of Israel.

[15]King Solomon made 200 large shields out of hammered gold. Each one weighed seven and a half pounds. [16]He also made 300 small shields out of hammered gold. Each one weighed almost four pounds. The king put all of the shields in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon.

[17]Then he made a large throne. It was decorated with ivory. It was covered with pure gold. [18]The throne had six steps. A gold stool for the king's feet was connected to it. The throne had armrests on both sides of the seat. A statue of a lion stood on each side of the throne. [19]Twelve lions stood on the six steps. There was one at each end of each step. Nothing like that throne had ever been made for any other kingdom.

[20]All of King Solomon's cups were made out of gold. All of the articles that were used in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon were made out of pure gold. Nothing was made out of silver. When Solomon was king, silver wasn't considered to be worth very much.

[21]He had many ships that carried goods to be traded. The crews of those ships were made up of Hiram's men. Once every three years the ships returned. They brought gold, silver, ivory, apes and baboons.

[22]King Solomon was richer than all of the other kings on earth. He was also wiser than they were.

[23]All of these kings wanted to meet Solomon in person. They wanted to see

for themselves how wise God had made him. [24]Year after year, everyone who came to him brought a gift. They brought articles that were made out of silver and gold. They brought robes, weapons and spices. They also brought horses and mules.

[25]Solomon had 4,000 spaces where he kept his horses and chariots. He had 12,000 horses. He kept some of his horses and chariots in the chariot cities. He kept the others with him in Jerusalem.

[26]Solomon ruled over all of the kings from the Euphrates River to the land of the Philistines. He ruled all the way to the border of Egypt.

[27]The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones. He made cedar wood as common there as sycamore-fig trees in the western hills.

[28]Solomon got horses from Egypt. He also got them from many other countries.

Solomon Dies

[29]The other events of Solomon's rule from beginning to end are written down. They are written in the records of the prophet Nathan. They are written in the prophecy of Ahijah. He was from Shiloh. They are also written in the records of the visions of the prophet Iddo about Jeroboam. Jeroboam was the son of Nebat.

[30]Solomon ruled in Jerusalem over the whole nation of Israel for 40 years. [31]Then he joined the members of his family who had already died. His body was buried in the city of his father David. Solomon's son Rehoboam became the next king after him.

Israel Refuses to Follow Rehoboam

2 Chronicles 10

[1]Rehoboam went to Shechem. All of the people of Israel had gone there to
make him king.

[2]Jeroboam heard about it. He was the son of Nebat. Jeroboam was in Egypt at
that time. He had gone there for safety. He wanted to get away from King
Solomon. But now he returned from Egypt.

[3]So the people sent for Jeroboam. He and all of the people went to
Rehoboam. They said to him, [4]"Your father put a heavy load on our shoulders.
But now make our hard work easier. Make the heavy load on us lighter. Then
we'll serve you."

[5]Rehoboam answered, "Come back to me in three days." So the people went
away.

[6]Then King Rehoboam asked the elders for advice. They had served his
father Solomon while he was still living. Rehoboam asked them, "What advice
can you give me? How should I answer these people?"

[7]They replied, "Be kind to them. Please them. Give them what they are
asking for. Then they'll always serve you."

[8]But Rehoboam didn't accept the advice the elders gave him. He asked for
advice from the young men who had grown up with him and were now serving
him. [9]He asked them, "What's your advice? How should I answer these
people? They said to me, 'Make the load your father put on our shoulders
lighter.' "

[10]The young men who had grown up with him gave their answer. They
replied, "The people have said to you, 'Your father put a heavy load on our
shoulders. Make it lighter.' Tell them, 'My little finger is stronger than my
father's legs. [11]My father put a heavy load on your shoulders. But I'll make it
even heavier. My father beat you with whips. But I'll beat you with bigger
whips.' "

[12]Three days later Jeroboam and all of the people returned to Rehoboam.

That’s because the king had said, “Come back to me in three days.”

13The king answered them in a mean way. He didn’t accept the advice of the
elders. 14Instead, he followed the advice of the young men. He said, “My father
put a heavy load on your shoulders. But I’ll make it even heavier. My father
beat you with whips. But I’ll beat you with bigger whips.”

15So the king didn’t listen to the people. That’s because God had planned it
that way. What the LORD had said through Ahijah came true. Ahijah had spoken
the LORD’s message to Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. Ahijah was from Shiloh.

16All of the people of Israel saw that the king refused to listen to them. So
they answered the king. They said,

> “We don’t have any share in David’s royal family.
> We don’t have any share in Jesse’s son.
> People of Israel, let’s go back to our homes.
> David’s royal family, take care of your own kingdom!”

So all of the people of Israel went home.

17But Rehoboam still ruled over the Israelites who were living in the towns of
Judah.

18Adoniram was in charge of those who were forced to work hard for King
Rehoboam. The king sent him out among the Israelites. But they killed him by
throwing stones at him. Rehoboam was able to get away in his chariot. He
escaped to Jerusalem. 19Israel has refused to follow the royal family of David
to this very day.

2 Chronicles 11

[1]Rehoboam arrived in Jerusalem. He brought together 180,000 fighting men
from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. He had decided to make war against
Israel. He wanted his fighting men to get the kingdom of Israel back for him.

[2]But a message came to Shemaiah from the LORD. He was a man of God. The
LORD said to him, [3]"Speak to Solomon's son Rehoboam, the king of Judah.
Speak to all of the people of Israel in Judah and Benjamin. Tell them, [4]'The
LORD says, "Do not go up to fight against your relatives. I want every one of
you to go back home. Things have happened exactly the way I planned
them." ' "

So the fighting men obeyed the LORD's message. They turned back. They
didn't march out against Jeroboam.

Rehoboam Builds Up Judah's Towns

[5]Rehoboam lived in Jerusalem. He made Judah more secure by building up
their towns. [6]He built up Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, [7]Beth Zur, Soco and
Adullam. [8]He also built up Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, [9]Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah,
[10]Zorah, Aijalon and Hebron. All of them were cities in Judah and Benjamin
that had high walls around them.

[11]Rehoboam made those cities even more secure. He put commanders in
them. He gave them plenty of food, olive oil and wine. [12]He put shields and
spears in all of those cities. He made them very strong. So he ruled over Judah
and Benjamin.

[13]The priests and Levites were on Rehoboam's side. They came from their
territories all over Israel. [14]The Levites even left their grasslands and other
property behind. They came to Judah and Jerusalem. That's because Jeroboam
and his sons had refused to accept them as priests of the LORD. [15]Jeroboam
appointed his own priests to serve at the high places. He had made statues of
gods that looked like goats and calves. His priests served those gods.

[16]Some people from every tribe in Israel followed the Levites to Jerusalem.

With all their hearts they wanted to worship the LORD. He is the God of Israel. They came to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices to him. He was the God of their people of long ago.

17All those who came to Jerusalem made the kingdom of Judah strong. They helped Solomon's son Rehoboam for three years. During that time they lived the way David and Solomon had lived.

Rehoboam's Family

18Rehoboam got married to Mahalath. She was the daughter of David's son Jerimoth. Her mother was Abihail. Abihail was the daughter of Jesse's son Eliab. 19Mahalath had sons by Rehoboam. Their names were Jeush, Shemariah and Zaham.

20Then Rehoboam married Maacah. She was the daughter of Absalom. She had sons by Rehoboam. Their names were Abijah, Attai, Ziza and Shelomith. 21Rehoboam loved Absalom's daughter Maacah. In fact, he loved her more than any of his other wives and concubines. He had a total of 18 wives and 60 concubines. And he had a total of 28 sons and 60 daughters.

22Rehoboam appointed Maacah's son Abijah to be the chief prince among his brothers. He did it to make him king. 23He acted wisely. He scattered some of his sons through all of the territories of Judah and Benjamin. He put them in all of the cities that had high walls around them. He gave them plenty of food and everything else they needed. He also gave them many wives.

Shishak Attacks Jerusalem

2 Chronicles 12

[1]Rehoboam had made his position as king secure. He had become very strong. Then he turned away from the law of the LORD. So did all of the people of Judah.

[2]They hadn't been faithful to the LORD. So Shishak attacked Jerusalem. It was in the fifth year that Rehoboam was king. Shishak was king of Egypt. [3]He came with 1,200 chariots and 60,000 horsemen. Troops of Libyans, Sukkites and Cushites came with him from Egypt. There were so many of them they couldn't be counted. [4]Shishak captured the cities of Judah that had high walls around them. He came all the way to Jerusalem.

[5]Then the prophet Shemaiah came to Rehoboam and the leaders of Judah. They had gathered together in Jerusalem. They were afraid of Shishak. Shemaiah said to them, "The LORD says, 'You have left me. So now I am leaving you to Shishak.' "

[6]The king and the leaders of Israel made themselves low in the LORD's sight. They said, "The LORD does what is right and fair."

[7]The LORD saw they had made themselves low. So he gave a message to Shemaiah. It said, "They have made themselves low in my sight. So I will not destroy them. Instead, I will soon save them. I will not pour out my burning anger on Jerusalem through Shishak. [8]But its people will be brought under his control. Then they will learn the difference between serving me and serving the kings of other lands."

[9]Shishak, the king of Egypt, attacked Jerusalem. He carried away the treasures of the LORD's temple. He also carried the treasures of the royal palace away. He took everything. That included the gold shields Solomon had made.

[10]So King Rehoboam made bronze shields to take their place. He gave them to the commanders of the guards who were on duty at the entrance to the royal palace. [11]Every time the king went to the LORD's temple, the guards went with him. They carried the shields. Later, they took them back to the room where they were kept.

[12]Rehoboam had made himself low in the LORD's sight. So the LORD turned his anger away from him. Rehoboam wasn't totally destroyed. In fact, some good things happened in Judah.

[13]King Rehoboam had made his position secure in Jerusalem. He continued as king. He was 41 years old when he became king. He ruled for 17 years in Jerusalem. It was the city the LORD had chosen out of all of the cities in the tribes of Israel. He wanted to put his Name there. The name of Rehoboam's mother was Naamah from Ammon.

[14]Rehoboam did what was evil. That's because he hadn't worshiped the LORD with all his heart.

[15]The events of Rehoboam's rule from beginning to end are written down. They are written in the records of the prophets Shemaiah and Iddo. The records deal with family histories. Rehoboam and Jeroboam were always at war with each other.

[16]Rehoboam joined the members of his family who had already died. His body was buried in the City of David. His son Abijah became the next king after him.

Abijah Becomes King of Judah

2 Chronicles 13

1 Abijah became king of Judah. It was in the 18th year of Jeroboam's rule
over Israel. 2 Abijah ruled in Jerusalem for three years. His mother's name was
Maacah. She was a daughter of Uriel. Uriel was from Gibeah.

There was war between Abijah and Jeroboam. 3 Abijah went into battle with
an army of 400,000 able fighting men. Jeroboam lined up his soldiers against
them. He had 800,000 able troops.

4 Abijah stood on Mount Zemaraim. It's in the hill country of Ephraim. Abijah
said, "Jeroboam and all you men of Israel, listen to me! 5 The LORD is the God
of Israel. Don't you know that he has placed David and his sons after him on
Israel's throne forever? The LORD made a covenant of salt with David. The salt
means the covenant will last for all time to come.

6 "Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, was an official of David's son Solomon. But
he refused to obey his master. 7 Some worthless and evil men gathered around
him. They opposed Solomon's son Rehoboam. At that time Rehoboam was
young. He couldn't make up his mind. He wasn't strong enough to stand up
against those men.

8 "Now you plan to stand up against the kingdom of the LORD. His kingdom is
in the hands of men in David's family line. It's true that you have a huge army.
You have the golden calves that Jeroboam made to be your gods.

9 "But you drove out the priests of the LORD, the sons of Aaron. You also
drove out the Levites. You appointed your own priests. That's what the people
of other nations do. Anyone can come and set himself apart. All he has to do is
sacrifice a young bull and seven rams. Then he becomes a priest of gods that
aren't really gods at all!

10 "But the LORD is our God. We haven't deserted him. The priests who serve
the LORD belong to the family line of Aaron. The Levites help them. 11 Every
morning and evening the priests bring burnt offerings and sweet-smelling
incense to the LORD. They set out the holy bread on the table. That table is
'clean.' They light the lamps on the gold lampstand every evening.

“We always do what the LORD our God requires in his law. But you have deserted him. 12God is with us. He’s our leader. His priests will blow their trumpets. They will sound the battle cry against you. Men of Israel, don’t fight against the LORD. He’s the God of your people who lived long ago. You can’t possibly succeed.”

13Jeroboam had sent some troops behind Judah’s battle lines. He told them to hide and wait there. He and his men stayed in front of Judah’s lines.

14Judah turned and saw that they were being attacked from the front and from the back. Then they cried out to the LORD. The priests blew their trumpets. 15The men of Judah shouted the battle cry. When they did, God drove Jeroboam and all of Israel’s men away from Abijah and Judah.

16The men of Israel ran away from them. God handed Israel over to Judah. 17Abijah and his men wounded and killed large numbers of them. In fact, 500,000 of Israel’s able men lay dead or wounded.

18So at that time the men of Israel were brought under Judah’s control. The men of Judah won the battle over them. That’s because they trusted in the LORD. He’s the God of their people.

19Abijah chased Jeroboam. He took from him the towns of Bethel, Jeshanah and Ephron. He also took the villages that were around them. 20Jeroboam didn’t get his power back during the time of Abijah. In fact, the LORD struck him down. And he died.

21But Abijah grew stronger. He got married to 14 wives. He had 22 sons and 16 daughters.

22The other events of Abijah’s rule are written down. The things he did and said are written in the notes of the prophet Iddo.

2 Chronicles 14

[1]Abijah joined the members of his family who had already died. His body was buried in the City of David. His son Asa became the next king after him. While Asa was king, the country had peace and rest for ten years.

Asa Becomes King of Judah

[2]Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God. [3]He removed the altars where strange gods were worshiped. He took away the high places. He smashed the sacred stones. He cut down the poles that were used to worship the goddess Asherah. [4]He commanded Judah to worship the LORD, the God of their people. He commanded them to obey the LORD's laws and commands.

[5]He removed the high places and incense altars from every town in Judah. The kingdom had peace and rest under him. [6]He built up the cities of Judah that had high walls around them. The land was at peace. No one was at war with Asa during those years. That's because the LORD gave him peace and rest.

[7]"Let's build up our towns," Asa said to the people of Judah. "Let's put walls around them. Let's provide them with towers. Let's make them secure with gates that have heavy metal bars. The land still belongs to us. That's because we've trusted in the LORD our God. We trusted in him, and he has given us peace and rest on every side." So they built. And things went well for them.

[8]Asa had an army of 300,000 men from Judah. They carried spears and large shields. There were 280,000 men from Benjamin. They were armed with bows and small shields. All of those men were brave soldiers.

[9]Zerah marched out against them. He was from Cush. He had a huge army. He also had 300 chariots. They came all the way to Mareshah.

[10]Asa went out to meet Zerah in battle. They took up their positions in the Valley of Zephathah. It's near Mareshah.

[11]Then Asa called out to the LORD his God. He said, "LORD, there isn't anyone like you. You help the weak against the strong. LORD our God, help us. We trust in you. In your name we have come out to fight against this huge army. LORD,

you are our God. Don’t let mere men win the battle over you.”

12The LORD struck down the men of Cush for Asa and Judah. The Cushites
ran away. 13Asa and his army chased them all the way to Gerar. A large number
of Cushites fell down wounded or dead. So they couldn’t fight back. The LORD
and his army crushed them. The men of Judah carried off a large amount of
goods.

14They attacked all of the villages around Gerar. The LORD had made the
people in those villages afraid of him. The men of Judah took everything from
all of the villages. 15They also attacked the camps of those who took care of the
herds. They carried off large numbers of sheep, goats and camels. Then they
returned to Jerusalem.

Asa Makes Judah a Better Nation

2 Chronicles 15

1The Spirit of God came on Azariah. He was the son of Oded. 2Azariah went
out to meet Asa. He said to him, “Asa and all you people of Judah and
Benjamin, listen to me. The LORD is with you when you are with him. If you
really look for him, you will find him. But if you desert him, he will desert
you.

3“For a long time Israel didn’t worship the true God. They didn’t have a
priest who taught them. So they didn’t know God’s law. 4But when they were
in trouble, they turned to the LORD, the God of Israel. When they did, they
found him.

5“In those days it wasn’t safe to travel around. The people who lived in all of
the areas of the land were having a lot of trouble. 6One nation was crushing
another. One city was crushing another. That’s because God was causing them
to suffer terribly.

7“But be strong. Don’t give up. God will reward you for your work.”

8Asa heard that prophecy. He paid attention to the words of the prophet
Azariah, the son of Oded. So Asa became bolder than ever. He removed the
statues of gods from the whole land of Judah and Benjamin. He also removed
them from the towns he had captured in the hills of Ephraim. He did it because
he hated those gods. He repaired the altar of the LORD. It was in front of the
porch of the LORD’s temple.

9Then he gathered all of the people of Judah and Benjamin together. He also
gathered together the people from Ephraim, Manasseh and Simeon who had
settled among them. Large numbers of people had come over to him from
Israel. They came because they saw that the LORD his God was with him.

10They gathered in Jerusalem. It was the third month of the 15th year of
Asa’s rule. 11At that time they sacrificed to the LORD 700 head of cattle and
7,000 sheep and goats. The animals were among the things they had taken after
the battle.

12 They made a covenant to look to the LORD, the God of their people. They
looked to him with all their heart and soul. 13 All those who wouldn't look to
the LORD, the God of Israel, would be killed. It wouldn't matter how important
they were. It wouldn't matter whether they were men or women. 14 They took
an oath and made a promise to the LORD. They praised him out loud. They
shouted. They blew trumpets and horns.

15 All of the people of Judah were happy about the promise they had made.
They turned to God with all their heart. When they did, they found him. So the
LORD gave them peace and rest on every side.

16 King Asa also removed his grandmother Maacah from her position as
queen mother. That's because she had made a pole that was used to worship the
goddess Asherah. The LORD hated it. So Asa cut it down. He broke it up. He
burned it in the Kidron Valley.

17 Asa didn't remove the high places from Israel. But he committed his whole
life completely to the LORD. 18 He and his father had set apart silver, gold and
other articles to the LORD. He brought them into God's temple.

19 There weren't any more wars until the 35th year of Asa's rule.

The Last Years of Asa's Rule

2 Chronicles 16

1 Baasha was king of Israel. He marched out against Judah. It was in the 36th
year of Asa's rule over Judah. Baasha built up the walls of Ramah. He did it to
keep people from leaving or entering the territory of Asa, the king of Judah.

2 Asa took the silver and gold from among the treasures of the LORD's temple
and his own palace. He sent it to Ben-Hadad. Ben-Hadad was king of Aram.
He was ruling in Damascus. 3 "Let's make a peace treaty between us," Asa said.
"My father and your father had made a peace treaty between them. Now I'm
sending you silver and gold. So break your treaty with Baasha, the king of
Israel. Then he'll go back home."

4 Ben-Hadad agreed with King Asa. He sent his army commanders against the
towns of Israel. They attacked Ijon, Dan, Abel Maim and all of the cities in
Naphtali where Baasha stored things.

5 Baasha heard about it. So he stopped building up Ramah. He stopped
working there. 6 Then King Asa brought all of the men of Judah to Ramah.
They carried away the stones and wood Baasha had been using. Asa used them
to build up Geba and Mizpah.

7 At that time the prophet Hanani came to Asa, the king of Judah. He said to
him, "You trusted the king of Aram. You didn't trust in the LORD your God. So
the army of the king of Aram has escaped from you. 8 The people of Cush and
Libya had a strong army. They had large numbers of chariots and horsemen.
But you trusted in the LORD. So he handed them over to you. 9 The LORD looks
out over the whole earth. He gives strength to those who commit their lives
completely to him. You have done a foolish thing. From now on you will be at
war."

10 Asa was angry with the prophet because of what he had said. In fact, he
was so angry he put him in prison. At the same time, Asa treated some of his
own people very badly.

11 The events of Asa's rule from beginning to end are written down. They are
written in the records of the kings of Judah and Israel.

[12]In the 39th year of Asa’s rule his feet began to hurt. The pain was terrible. But even though he was suffering, he didn’t look to the LORD for help. All he did was go to the doctors.

[13]In the 41st year of Asa’s rule he joined the members of his family who had already died. [14]His body was buried in a tomb. He had cut it out for himself in the City of David. His body was laid on a wooden frame. It was covered with spices and different mixes of perfume. A huge fire was made in his honor.

Jehoshaphat Becomes King of Judah

2 Chronicles 17

1 Jehoshaphat was the son of Asa. Jehoshaphat became the next king after
him. He made his kingdom strong in case Israel would attack him. 2 He placed
troops in all of the cities of Judah that had high walls around them. He
stationed some soldiers in Judah. He also put some in the towns of Ephraim
that his father Asa had captured.

3 The LORD was with Jehoshaphat. That's because in his early years he lived
the way King David had lived. He didn't ask for advice from the gods that
were named after Baal. 4 Instead, he looked to the God of his father. He
followed the LORD's commands instead of the practices of Israel.

5 The LORD made the kingdom secure under Jehoshaphat's control. All of the
people of Judah brought gifts to Jehoshaphat. So he had great wealth and
honor. 6 His heart was committed to living the way the LORD wanted him to. He
removed the high places from Judah. He also removed the poles that were used
to worship the goddess Asherah.

7 In the third year of his rule, he sent his officials to teach in the towns of
Judah. The officials were Ben-Hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel and
Micaiah. 8 Some Levites were with them. Their names were Shemaiah,
Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah
and Tob-Adonijah. The priests Elishama and Jehoram were also with them.
9 They taught people all through Judah. They took the Scroll of the Law of the
LORD with them. They went around to all of the towns of Judah. And they
taught the people.

10 All of the kingdoms of the lands around Judah became afraid of the LORD.
So they didn't go to war against Jehoshaphat. 11 Some Philistines brought to
Jehoshaphat the gifts and silver he required of them. The Arabs brought him
their flocks. They brought him 7,700 rams and 7,700 goats.

12 Jehoshaphat became more and more powerful. He built forts in Judah. He
also built cities in Judah where he could store things. 13 He had large supplies in
the towns of Judah. In Jerusalem he kept men who knew how to fight well.

[14]Here is a list of them, family by family.

From Judah there were commanders of companies of 1,000.
One of them was Adnah. He commanded 300,000 fighting men.
[15]Another was Jehohanan. He commanded 280,000.
[16]Another was Amasiah, the son of Zicri. Amasiah commanded 200,000. He had offered to serve the LORD.
[17]From Benjamin there were also commanders.
One of them was Eliada. He was a brave soldier. He commanded 200,000 men. They were armed with bows and shields.
[18]Another was Jehozabad. He commanded 180,000 men. They were prepared for battle.

[19]Those were the men who served the king. He stationed some other men in the cities all through Judah. The cities had high walls around them.

Micaiah Prophesies Against Ahab

2 Chronicles 18

[1]Jehoshaphat had great wealth and honor. He joined forces with Ahab by
getting married to Ahab's daughter. [2]Some years later he went down to visit
Ahab in Samaria. Ahab killed a lot of sheep and cattle for him and the people
who were with him. Ahab tried to get Jehoshaphat to attack Ramoth Gilead.
[3]Ahab was the king of Israel. He spoke to Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah. He
asked, "Will you go with me to fight against Ramoth Gilead?"

Jehoshaphat replied, "Yes. I'll go with you. My men will also go with you.
We'll join you in the war." [4]He continued, "First ask the LORD for advice."

[5]So the king of Israel brought 400 prophets together. He asked them, "Should
we go to war against Ramoth Gilead? Or should I stay here?"

"Go," they answered. "God will hand it over to you."

[6]But Jehoshaphat asked, "Isn't there a prophet of the LORD here? If there is,
ask him what we should do."

[7]The king of Israel answered Jehoshaphat. He said, "There is still one other
man we can go to. We can ask the LORD for advice through him. But I hate him.
He never prophesies anything good about me. He only prophesies bad things.
His name is Micaiah. He's the son of Imlah."

"You shouldn't say bad things about him," Jehoshaphat replied.

[8]So the king of Israel called for one of his officials. He told him, "Bring
Micaiah, the son of Imlah, at once."

[9]The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, were wearing their
royal robes. They were sitting on their thrones at the threshing floor. It was
near the entrance of the gate of Samaria. All of the prophets were prophesying
in front of them.

[10]Zedekiah was the son of Kenaanah. Zedekiah had made horns out of iron.
They looked like animal horns. He announced, "The LORD says, 'With these
horns you will drive back the men of Aram until they are destroyed.' "

[11]All of the other prophets were prophesying the same thing. “Attack Ramoth Gilead,” they said. “Win the battle over it. The LORD will hand it over to you.”

[12]A messenger went to get Micaiah. He said to him, “Look. The other prophets agree. All of them are saying the king will have success. So agree with them. Say the same thing they do.”

[13]But Micaiah said, “You can be sure that the LORD lives. And you can be just as sure that I can only tell the king what my God says.”

[14]When Micaiah arrived, the king spoke to him. He asked, “Should we go to war against Ramoth Gilead? Or should I stay here?”

“Attack,” he answered. “You will win. The people of Ramoth Gilead will be handed over to you.”

[15]The king said to him, “I’ve made you promise to tell the truth many times before. So don’t tell me anything but the truth in the name of the LORD.”

[16]Then Micaiah answered, “I saw all of the people of Israel scattered on the hills. They were like sheep that didn’t have a shepherd. The LORD said, ‘These people do not have a master. Let each of them go home in peace.’ ”

[17]The king of Israel spoke to Jehoshaphat. He said, “Didn’t I tell you he never prophesies anything good about me? He only prophesies bad things.”

[18]Micaiah continued, “Listen to the LORD’s message. I saw the LORD sitting on his throne. Some of the angels of heaven were standing at his right side. The others were standing at his left side. [19]The LORD said, ‘Who will try to get Ahab, the king of Israel, to attack Ramoth Gilead? I want him to die there.’

“One angel suggested one thing. Another suggested something else. [20]Finally, a spirit came forward and stood in front of the LORD. The spirit said, ‘I’ll try to get Ahab to do it.’

“ ‘How?’ the LORD asked.

[21]“The spirit said, ‘I’ll go and put lies in the mouths of all of his prophets.’

“ ‘You will have success in getting Ahab to attack Ramoth Gilead,’ said the LORD. ‘Go and do it.’

[22]“So the LORD has put lies in the mouths of your prophets. He has said that great harm will come to you.”

[23]Then Zedekiah, the son of Kenaanah, went up and slapped Micaiah in the face. “So you think the spirit that was sent by the LORD went away from me to

speak to you, do you?” he asked. “Which way did he go?”

24Micaiah replied, “You will find out on the day you go to hide in an inside room to save your life.”

25Then the king of Israel gave an order. He said, “Take Micaiah away. Send him back to Amon. Amon is the ruler of the city of Samaria. And send him back to Joash. Joash is a member of the royal court. 26Tell them, ‘The king says, “Put this fellow in prison. Don’t give him anything but bread and water until I return safely.” ’ ”

27Micaiah announced, “Do you really think you will return safely? If you do, the LORD hasn’t spoken through me.” He continued, “All of you people, remember what I’ve said!”

Ahab Is Killed at Ramoth Gilead

28So the king of Israel went up to Ramoth Gilead. Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, went there too.

29The king of Israel spoke to Jehoshaphat. He said, “I’ll go into battle wearing different clothes. Then people won’t recognize me. But you wear your royal robes.” So the king of Israel put on different clothes. Then he went into battle.

30The king of Aram had given an order to his chariot commanders. He had said, “Fight only against the king of Israel. Don’t fight against anyone else.”

31The chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat. They thought, “That’s the king of Israel.” So they turned to attack him. But Jehoshaphat cried out. And the LORD helped him. God drew the commanders away from him. 32They saw he wasn’t the king of Israel after all. So they stopped chasing him.

33But someone shot an arrow without taking aim. The arrow hit the king of Israel between the parts of his armor. The king told the chariot driver, “Turn the chariot around. Get me out of this battle. I’ve been wounded.”

34All day long the battle continued. The king of Israel kept himself standing up by leaning against the inside of his chariot. He kept his face toward the men of Aram until evening. At sunset he died.

2 Chronicles 19

[1]Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, returned safely to his palace in Jerusalem.
[2]The prophet Jehu went out to meet him. He was the son of Hanani. Jehu said
to the king, “You shouldn’t help evil people. You shouldn’t love those who hate
the LORD. The LORD is angry with you. [3]But there’s some good in you. You
have gotten rid of all of the poles in the land that are used to worship the
goddess Asherah. And you have worshiped God with all your heart.”

Jehoshaphat Appoints Judges

[4]Jehoshaphat lived in Jerusalem. He went out again among the people. He
went from Beersheba to the hill country of Ephraim. He turned the people back
to the LORD, the God of Israel.

[5]Jehoshaphat appointed judges in the land. He put them in all of the cities of
Judah that had high walls around them. [6]He told the judges, “Think carefully
about what you do. After all, you aren’t judging for mere men. You are judging
for the LORD. He’s with you every time you make a decision. [7]Have respect for
the LORD. Judge carefully. He is always right. He treats everyone the same. He
doesn’t want his judges to take money from people who want special favors.”

[8]In Jerusalem, Jehoshaphat chose some Levites and priests. He also chose
some leaders of Israelite families. He appointed all of them to apply the law of
the LORD fairly. He wanted them to decide cases. He wanted them to settle
matters between people. All of those judges lived in Jerusalem.

[9]Here are the orders Jehoshaphat gave them. He said, “Have respect for the
LORD. Serve him faithfully. Do it with all your heart. [10]Cases will come to you
from your fellow judges who live in the other cities. The cases might be about
murder or other matters that the law, commands, directions and rules deal with.
Warn the judges not to sin against the LORD. If you don’t warn them, he will be
angry with you and your fellow judges. Do what I say. Then you won’t sin.

[11]“The chief priest Amariah will be over you in any matter that concerns the
LORD. Zebadiah is the leader of the tribe of Judah. He is the son of Ishmael.
Zebadiah will be over you in any matter that concerns the king. The Levites

will serve as your officials. Be brave. And may the LORD be with those of you who do well.”

Jehoshaphat Wins the Battle Over Moab and Ammon

2 Chronicles 20

1 After that, the Moabites, Ammonites and some Meunites went to war against
Jehoshaphat.

2 Some people came and told him, “A huge army is coming from Edom to
fight against you. They have come across the Dead Sea. They are already in
Hazazon Tamar.” Hazazon Tamar is also called En Gedi.

3 Jehoshaphat was alarmed. So he decided to ask the LORD for advice. He told
all of the people of Judah to go without eating. 4 The people came together to
ask the LORD for help. In fact, they came from every town in Judah to pray to
him.

5 Then Jehoshaphat stood up among the people of Judah and Jerusalem. He
was in front of the new courtyard at the LORD’s temple. 6 He said,

“LORD, you are the God of our people. You are the God who is in heaven. You
rule over all of the kingdoms of the nations. Your hands are strong and
powerful. No one can fight against you and win.

7 “Our God, you drove out the people who lived in this land. You drove them
out to make room for your people Israel. You gave this land forever to those
who belong to the family line of your friend Abraham.

8 “They have lived in this land. They’ve built a temple here for your Name.
They have said, 9 ‘Suppose trouble comes on us. It doesn’t matter whether it’s a
punishing sword, plague or hunger. We’ll serve you. We’ll stand in front of this
temple where your Name is. We’ll cry out to you when we’re in trouble. Then
you will hear us. You will save us.’

10 “But here are men from Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir. You wouldn’t
allow Israel to march in and attack their territory when the Israelites came from
Egypt. So Israel turned away from them. They didn’t destroy them. 11 See how
they are paying us back. They are coming to drive us out. They want to take
over the land you gave us as our share.

12 “Our God, won’t you please judge them? We don’t have the power to face

this huge army that's attacking us. We don't know what to do. But we're looking to you to help us."

13All of the men of Judah stood there in front of the LORD. Their wives, children and little ones were with them.

14Then the Spirit of the LORD came on Jahaziel. He was standing among the people of Israel. He was the son of Zechariah. Zechariah was the son of Benaiah. Benaiah was the son of Jeiel. Jeiel was the son of Mattaniah. Jahaziel was a Levite. He was from the family line of Asaph.

15Jahaziel said, "King Jehoshaphat, listen! All you who live in Judah and Jerusalem, listen! The LORD says to you, 'Do not be afraid. Do not lose hope because of this huge army. The battle is not yours. It is mine.

16" 'Tomorrow march down against them. They will be climbing up by the Pass of Ziz. You will find them at the end of the valley in the Desert of Jeruel. 17You will not have to fight this battle. Take your positions. Stand firm. You will see how I will save you. Judah and Jerusalem, do not be afraid. Do not lose hope. Go out and face them tomorrow. I will be with you.' "

18Jehoshaphat bowed down with his face toward the ground. All of the people of Judah and Jerusalem also bowed down. They worshiped the LORD.

19Then some Levites from the families of Kohath and Korah stood up. They praised the LORD, the God of Israel. They praised him with very loud voices.

20Early in the morning all of the people left for the Desert of Tekoa. As they started out, Jehoshaphat stood up. He said, "Judah, listen to me! People of Jerusalem, listen to me! Have faith in the LORD your God. He'll take good care of you. Have faith in his prophets. Then you will have success."

21Jehoshaphat asked the people for advice. Then he appointed men to sing to the LORD. He wanted them to praise him because of his glory and holiness. They marched out in front of the army. They said,

"Give thanks to the LORD.
His faithful love continues forever."

22They began to sing and praise him. Then the LORD hid some men and told them to wait. He wanted them to attack the people of Ammon, Moab and

Mount Seir. They had gone into Judah and attacked it. But they lost the battle.
23The men of Ammon and Moab rose up against the men from Mount Seir. They destroyed them. They put an end to them. When they finished killing the men from Seir, they destroyed each other.

24The men of Judah came to the place that looks out over the desert. They turned to look down at the huge army. But all they saw was dead bodies lying there on the ground. No one had escaped.

25So Jehoshaphat and his men went down there to carry off anything of value. Among the dead bodies they found a lot of supplies, clothes and articles of value. There was more than they could take away. There was so much it took three days to collect all of it.

26On the fourth day they gathered together in the Valley of Beracah. There they praised the LORD. That's why it's called the Valley of Beracah to this very day.

27Then all of the men of Judah and Jerusalem returned to Jerusalem. They were filled with joy. Jehoshaphat led them. The LORD had made them happy because all of their enemies were dead. 28They entered Jerusalem and went to the LORD's temple. They were playing harps, lutes and trumpets.

29All of the kingdoms of the surrounding countries began to have respect for God. They had heard how the LORD had fought against Israel's enemies.

30The kingdom of Jehoshaphat was at peace. His God had given him peace and rest on every side.

Jehoshaphat's Rule Comes to an End

31So Jehoshaphat ruled over Judah. He was 35 years old when he became Judah's king. He ruled in Jerusalem for 25 years. His mother's name was Azubah. She was the daughter of Shilhi.

32Jehoshaphat followed the ways of his father Asa. He didn't wander away from them. He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD.

33But the high places weren't removed. The people still hadn't worshiped the God of Israel with all their hearts.

34The other events of Jehoshaphat's rule from beginning to end are written

down. They are written in the official records of Jehu, the son of Hanani. They are written in the records of the kings of Israel.

35Jehoshaphat king of Judah and Ahaziah king of Israel agreed to be friends. Ahaziah was guilty of doing what was evil. 36Jehoshaphat agreed with him to build a lot of ships. They were built at Ezion Geber. They carried goods that were traded for other goods.

37Eliezer was the son of Dodavahu from Mareshah. Eliezer prophesied against Jehoshaphat. He said, “You have joined forces with Ahaziah. So the LORD will destroy what you have made.” The ships were wrecked. They were never able to sail or trade goods.

2 Chronicles 21

[1]Jehoshaphat joined the members of his family who had already died. His body was buried in the family tomb in the City of David. His son Jehoram became the next king after him.

[2]Jehoram's brothers, the sons of Jehoshaphat, were Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azariahu, Michael and Shephatiah. All of them were sons of Jehoshaphat, the king of Israel. [3]Their father had given them many gifts. He had given them silver, gold and articles of value. He had also given them cities in Judah that had high walls around them. But he had made Jehoram king. That's because Jehoram was his oldest son.

Jehoram Becomes King of Judah

[4]Jehoram made his position secure over his father's kingdom. Then he killed all of his brothers with his sword. He also killed some of the princes of Israel.

[5]Jehoram was 32 years old when he became king. He ruled in Jerusalem for eight years. [6]He followed the ways of the kings of Israel, just as the royal family of Ahab had done. In fact, he got married to a daughter of Ahab. Jehoram did what was evil in the sight of the LORD.

[7]But the LORD didn't want to destroy the royal family of David. That's because the LORD had made a covenant with him. He had promised to keep the lamp of David's kingdom burning brightly for him and his children after him forever.

[8]When Jehoram was king over Judah, Edom refused to remain under Judah's control. They set up their own king. [9]So Jehoram went to Edom. He took his officers and all of his chariots with him. The men of Edom surrounded him and his chariot commanders. But he got up at night and fought his way out. [10]To this very day Edom has refused to remain under Judah's control.

At that same time, Libnah also refused to remain under the control of Judah. That's because Jehoram had deserted the LORD, the God of his people. [11]He had also built high places on the hills of Judah. He had caused the people of Jerusalem to worship other gods. They weren't faithful to the LORD. Jehoram

had led Judah down the wrong path.

12Jehoram received a letter from the prophet Elijah. It said,

"The LORD is the God of your father David. The LORD says, 'You have not followed the ways of your own father Jehoshaphat or of Asa, the king of Judah. 13Instead, you have followed the ways of the kings of Israel. You have led Judah and the people of Jerusalem to worship other gods, just as the royal family of Ahab did. Also, you have murdered your own brothers. They were members of your own family. They were better men than you are.

14" 'So now I am about to strike your people down with a heavy blow. I will strike down your sons, your wives and everything that belongs to you. 15And you yourself will be very sick for a long time. The sickness will finally cause your insides to come out.' "

16The LORD stirred up the anger of the Philistines against Jehoram. He also stirred up the anger of the Arabs. They lived near the people of Cush. 17The Philistines and Arabs attacked Judah. They went in and carried off all of the goods they found in the king's palace. They also took his sons and wives. The only son he had left was Ahaziah. He was the youngest son.

18After all of that, the LORD made Jehoram very sick. He couldn't be healed. 19After he had been sick for two years, the sickness caused his insides to come out. He died in great pain. His people didn't make a fire in his honor, as they had done for the kings who ruled before him.

20Jehoram was 32 years old when he became king. He ruled in Jerusalem for eight years. No one was sorry when he passed away. His body was buried in the City of David. But it wasn't placed in the tombs of the kings.

Ahaziah Becomes King of Judah

2 Chronicles 22

[1]The people of Jerusalem made Ahaziah king in place of Jehoram. Ahaziah was Jehoram's youngest son. Robbers had come with the Arabs into Jehoram's camp. The robbers had killed all of his older sons. So Ahaziah, the king of Judah, began to rule. He was the son of Jehoram.

[2]Ahaziah was 22 years old when he became king. He ruled in Jerusalem for one year. His mother's name was Athaliah. She was a granddaughter of Omri.

[3]Ahaziah also followed the ways of the royal family of Ahab. That's because Ahaziah's mother gave him bad advice. She told him to do what was wrong. [4]So he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, just as the family of Ahab had done.

After Ahaziah's father died, the members of Ahab's family became his advisers. That's what destroyed him. [5]He also followed their advice when he joined forces with Joram, the king of Israel. They went to war against Hazael at Ramoth Gilead. Joram was the son of Ahab. Hazael was king of Aram. The soldiers of Aram wounded Joram. [6]So he returned to Jezreel to give his wounds time to heal. His enemies had wounded him at Ramoth in his battle against Hazael, the king of Aram.

Ahaziah, the son of Jehoram, went down to Jezreel. He went there to see Joram. That's because Joram had been wounded. Ahaziah was king of Judah. Joram was the son of Ahab.

[7]Through Ahaziah's visit to Joram, God caused Ahaziah to fall from power. When Ahaziah arrived, he rode out with Joram to meet Jehu, the son of Nimshi. The LORD had anointed Jehu to destroy the royal family of Ahab. [8]So Jehu punished Ahab's family, just as the LORD had told him to. While he was doing it, he found the princes of Judah and the sons of Ahaziah's relatives. They had been serving Ahaziah. So Jehu killed them.

[9]Then he went to look for Ahaziah. Jehu's men captured him while he was hiding in Samaria. Ahaziah was brought to Jehu and put to death. People buried his body, because they said, "He was a grandson of Jehoshaphat, who

followed the LORD with all his heart.”

So no one in the royal family of Ahaziah was powerful enough to keep the kingdom.

Athaliah and Joash

10 Athaliah was Ahaziah’s mother. She saw that her son was dead. So she
began to wipe out the whole royal house of Judah.

11 But Jehosheba went and got Joash, the son of Ahaziah. She was the
daughter of King Jehoram. She stole Joash away from among the royal princes.
All of them were about to be murdered. She put Joash and his nurse in a
bedroom. Jehosheba, the daughter of King Jehoram, was the wife of the priest
Jehoiada. She was also Ahaziah’s sister.

So Jehosheba hid the child from Athaliah. That’s why Athaliah couldn’t kill
him. 12 The child remained hidden with the priest and his wife at God’s temple
for six years. Athaliah ruled over the land during that time.

2 Chronicles 23

[1]When Joash was seven years old, Jehoiada showed how strong he was. He made a covenant with the commanders of companies of 100 men. The commanders were Azariah son of Jeroham, Ishmael son of Jehohanan, Azariah son of Obed, Maaseiah son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat son of Zicri. [2]They went all through Judah. They gathered together the Levites and the leaders of Israelite families from all of the towns. They came to Jerusalem. [3]The whole community made a covenant with the new king at God's temple.

Jehoiada said to them, "Ahaziah's son will rule over Judah. That's what the LORD promised concerning the family line of David. [4]Here's what I want you to do. A third of you priests and Levites who are going on duty on the Sabbath day must guard the doors. [5]A third of you must guard the royal palace. And a third of you must guard the Foundation Gate. All of the other men must guard the courtyards of the LORD's temple.

[6]"Don't let anyone enter the temple except the priests and Levites who are on duty. They can enter because they are set apart to the LORD. But all of the other men must guard the places where the LORD has sent them.

[7]"The Levites must station themselves around the new king. Each man must have his weapons in his hand. Anyone else who enters the temple must be put to death. Stay close to the king no matter where he goes."

[8]The Levites did just as the priest Jehoiada ordered. So did all of the men of Judah. Each commander got his men. Some of the men were going on duty on the Sabbath day. Others were going off duty. Jehoiada didn't let any of the groups go. [9]Then he gave weapons to the commanders of the companies. He gave them spears, large shields and small shields. The weapons had belonged to King David. They had been in God's temple.

[10]Jehoiada stationed all of the men around the new king. Each man had his weapon in his hand. They were standing near the altar and the temple. They stood from the south side of the temple to its north side. Their line formed half of a circle.

[11]Jehoiada and his sons brought Ahaziah's son out. They put the crown on him. They gave him a copy of the covenant. And they announced that he was king. They anointed him. Then they shouted, "May the king live a long time!"

12 Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and cheering the new king.
So she went to them at the LORD's temple.

13 She looked. And there was the king! He was standing next to his pillar at
the entrance. The officers and trumpet players were standing beside the king.
All of the people of the land were filled with joy. They were blowing trumpets.
Singers with their musical instruments were leading the songs of praise.

Then Athaliah tore her royal robes. She shouted, "Treason! It's treason!"

14 The priest Jehoiada sent out the commanders of the companies of 100 men.
They were in charge of the troops. He said to them, "Bring her away from the
temple between the line of guards. Use your swords to kill anyone who follows
her." The priest had said, "Don't put her to death at the LORD's temple."

15 So they grabbed hold of her as she reached the entrance of the Horse Gate
on the palace grounds. There they put her to death.

16 Then Jehoiada made a covenant. He promised that he, the people and the
king would be the LORD's people.

17 All of the people went to Baal's temple. They tore it down. They smashed
the altars and the statues of gods. They killed Mattan in front of the altars. He
was the priest of Baal.

18 Then Jehoiada put the priests, who were Levites, in charge of the LORD's
temple. David had given them their duties in the temple. He had appointed
them to sacrifice burnt offerings to the LORD. He wanted them to do it in
keeping with what was written in the Law of Moses. David wanted them to
sing and be full of joy.

19 Jehoiada stationed guards at the gates of the LORD's temple. No one who
was "unclean" in any way could enter.

20 Jehoiada took with him the commanders of hundreds, the nobles, the rulers
of the people, and all of the people of the land. He brought the new king down
from the LORD's temple. They went into the palace through the Upper Gate.
Then they seated the king on the royal throne.

21 All of the people of the land were filled with joy. And the city was quiet.
That's because Athaliah had been killed with a sword.

Joash Repairs the Temple

2 Chronicles 24

1 Joash was seven years old when he became king. He ruled in Jerusalem for
40 years. His mother's name was Zibiah. She was from Beersheba.

2 Joash did what was right in the eyes of the LORD. He lived that way as long
as the priest Jehoiada was alive. 3 Jehoiada chose two wives for Joash. They
had sons and daughters by Joash.

4 Some time later Joash decided to make the LORD's temple look like new
again. 5 He called together the priests and Levites. He said to them, "Go to the
towns of Judah. Collect the money that the nation of Israel owes every year.
Use it to repair the temple of your God. Do it now." But the Levites didn't do it
right away.

6 So the king sent for the chief priest Jehoiada. He said to him, "Why haven't
you required the Levites to bring in the tax from Judah and Jerusalem? It was
set up by the LORD's servant Moses and the whole community of Israel. It was
used for the tent where the tablets of the covenant were kept."

7 The children of that evil woman Athaliah had broken into God's temple.
They had used even its sacred objects for the gods that were named after Baal.

8 King Joash commanded that a wooden chest be made. It was placed outside
near the gate of the LORD's temple. 9 Then a message went out in Judah and
Jerusalem. It said that the people should bring the tax to the LORD. God's
servant Moses had required Israel to pay that tax when they were in the desert.

10 All of the officials and people gladly brought their money. They dropped it
into the chest until it was full.

11 The chest was brought in by the Levites to the king's officials. Every time
the officials saw there was a large amount of money in the chest, it was
emptied out. The royal secretary and the officer of the chief priest came and
emptied it. Then they carried it back to its place. They did it regularly. They
collected a great amount of money.

12 The king and Jehoiada gave it to the men who were doing the work on the

LORD's temple. They hired people who could lay the stones and people who could work with wood. They also hired people who could work with iron and bronze. They hired all of them to repair the temple.

13The men who were in charge of the work did their best. The repairs went very well under them. They rebuilt God's temple. They did it in keeping with its original plans. They made it stronger.

14So they finished the work. Then they brought the rest of the money to the king and Jehoiada. It was used to pay for the articles that were made for the LORD's temple. The articles were used for serving at the temple. They were also used for the burnt offerings. The articles included dishes and other objects that were made out of gold and silver. As long as Jehoiada lived, burnt offerings were sacrificed continually at the LORD's temple.

15Jehoiada had become very old. He died at the age of 130. 16His body was buried with the kings in the City of David. That's because he had done so many good things in Israel for God and his temple.

The Evil Things Joash Did

17After Jehoiada died, the officials of Judah came to King Joash. They bowed down to him. He listened to them. 18They turned their backs on the temple of the LORD, the God of their people. They worshiped poles that were made to honor the goddess Asherah. They also worshiped statues of other gods.

Because Judah and Jerusalem were guilty of sin, God became angry with them. 19The LORD sent prophets to the people to bring them back to him. The prophets gave witness against the people. But they wouldn't listen.

20Then the Spirit of God came on the priest Zechariah. He was the son of Jehoiada. Zechariah stood in front of the people. He told them, "God says, 'Why do you refuse to obey my commands? You will not have success. You have deserted me. So I have deserted you.' "

21But the people made evil plans against Zechariah. The king ordered them to kill Zechariah by throwing stones at him. They did it in the courtyard of the LORD's temple. 22King Joash didn't remember how kind Zechariah's father Jehoiada had been to him. So he killed Jehoiada's son.

As Zechariah was dying he said, "May the LORD see this. May he hold you

accountable.”

23In the spring, the army of Aram marched into Judah and Jerusalem against Joash. They killed all of the leaders of the people. They took a large amount of goods from Judah. They sent it to their king in Damascus. 24The army of Aram had come with only a few men. But the LORD allowed them to win the battle over a much larger army. Judah had deserted the LORD, the God of their people. That’s why the LORD punished Joash.

25The army of Aram pulled back. They left Joash badly wounded. His officials planned to do evil things to him. That’s because he murdered the son of the priest Jehoiada. They killed Joash in his bed. So he died. His body was buried in the City of David. But it wasn’t placed in the tombs of the kings.

26Those who made the plans against Joash were Zabad and Jehozabad. Zabad was the son of Shimeath. She was from Ammon. Jehozabad was the son of Shimrith. She was from Moab.

27The story of the sons of Joash is written in the notes on the records of the kings. The many prophecies about him are written there too. So is the record of how he made God’s temple look like new again. His son Amaziah became the next king after him.

Amaziah Becomes King of Judah

2 Chronicles 25

[1]Amaziah was 25 years old when he became king. He ruled in Jerusalem for
29 years. His mother's name was Jehoaddin. She was from Jerusalem.

[2]Amaziah did what was right in the eyes of the LORD. But he didn't do it with
all his heart. [3]The kingdom was firmly under his control. So he put to death the
officials who had murdered his father, the king.

[4]But he didn't put their children to death. He obeyed what is written in the
Law, the Scroll of Moses. There the LORD commanded, "Parents must not be
put to death because of what their children do. And children must not be put to
death because of what their parents do. People must die because of their own
sins."(Deuteronomy 24:16)

[5]Amaziah called the people of Judah together. He arranged them by families
under commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds. He did it for all
of the people of Judah and Benjamin. Then he brought together the men who
were 20 years old or more. He found out there were 300,000 men who were
able to serve in the army. They could handle spears and shields. [6]He also hired
100,000 fighting men from Israel. He had to pay them almost four tons of
silver.

[7]But a man of God came to him. He said, "King Amaziah, these troops from
Israel must not march out with you. The LORD is not with Israel. He isn't with
any of the people of Ephraim. [8]Go and fight bravely in battle if you want to.
But God will destroy you right in front of your enemies. God has the power to
help you or destroy you."

[9]Amaziah asked the man of God, "But what about all of that silver I paid for
these Israelite troops?"

The man of God replied, "The LORD can give you much more than that."

[10]So Amaziah let the troops go who had come to him from Ephraim. He sent
them home. They were very angry with Judah. In fact, they were burning with
anger when they went home.

[11]Then Amaziah showed how strong he was. He led his army to the Valley of Salt. There he killed 10,000 men of Seir. [12]The army of Judah also captured 10,000 men alive. They took them to the top of a cliff. Then they threw them down. All of them were smashed to pieces.

[13]The troops Amaziah had sent back attacked some towns in Judah. He hadn't allowed the troops to take part in the war. They attacked towns from Samaria to Beth Horon. They killed 3,000 people. They carried off huge amounts of goods.

[14]Amaziah returned from killing the men of Edom. He brought back the statues of the gods of Seir. He set them up as his own gods. He bowed down to them. He burned sacrifices to them.

[15]The LORD's anger burned against Amaziah. He sent a prophet to him. The prophet said, "Why do you ask the gods of those people for advice? They couldn't even save their own people from your power!"

[16]While the prophet was still speaking, the king spoke to him. He said, "Did I ask you for advice? Stop! If you don't, you will be struck down."

So the prophet stopped. But then he said, "I know that God has decided to destroy you. That's because you have worshiped other gods. You haven't listened to my advice."

[17]Amaziah, the king of Judah, spoke to his advisers. Then he sent a message to Jehoash, the king of Israel. Jehoash was the son of Jehoahaz. Jehoahaz was the son of Jehu. Amaziah dared Jehoash, "Come on. Meet me face to face in battle."

[18]But Jehoash, the king of Israel, answered Amaziah, the king of Judah. He said, "A thorn bush in Lebanon sent a message to a cedar tree there. It said, 'Give your daughter to be married to my son.' Then a wild animal in Lebanon came along. It walked all over the thorn bush. [19]You brag that you have won the battle over Edom. You are very proud. But stay home! Why ask for trouble? Why bring yourself crashing down? Why bring Judah down with you?"

[20]But Amaziah wouldn't listen. That's because God had planned to hand Judah over to Jehoash. After all, they had asked the gods of Edom for advice.

[21]So Jehoash, the king of Israel, attacked. He and Amaziah, the king of Judah, faced each other in battle. The battle took place at Beth Shemesh in Judah. [22]Israel drove Judah away. Every man ran home.

[23]Jehoash king of Israel captured Amaziah king of Judah at Beth Shemesh. Amaziah was the son of Joash. Joash was the son of Ahaziah. Jehoash brought Amaziah to Jerusalem. He broke down part of its wall. It’s the part that went from the Ephraim Gate to the Corner Gate. That part of the wall was 600 feet long.

[24]Jehoash took all of the gold and silver. He took all of the articles he found in God’s temple. Obed-Edom had been in charge of them. Jehoash also took the palace treasures and the prisoners. Then he returned to Samaria.

[25]Amaziah king of Judah lived for 15 years after Jehoash king of Israel died. Amaziah was the son of Joash. Jehoash was the son of Jehoahaz.

[26]The other events of Amaziah’s rule from beginning to end are written down. They are written in the records of the kings of Judah and Israel.

[27]Amaziah turned away from following the LORD. From that time on, some people made evil plans against him in Jerusalem. So he ran away to Lachish. But they sent men to Lachish after him. There they killed him. [28]His body was brought back on a horse. Then he was buried in the family tomb in Jerusalem, the City of Judah.

Uzziah Becomes King of Judah

2 Chronicles 26

[1]All of the people of Judah made Uzziah king. He was 16 years old. They made him king in place of his father Amaziah.

[2]Uzziah rebuilt Elath. He brought it under Judah's control again. He did it after Amaziah joined the members of his family who had already died.

[3]Uzziah was 16 years old when he became king. He ruled in Jerusalem for 52 years. His mother's name was Jecoliah. She was from Jerusalem.

[4]Uzziah did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father Amaziah had done. [5]He looked to God during the days of Zechariah. Zechariah taught him to have respect for God. As long as Uzziah looked to the LORD, God gave him success.

[6]Uzziah went to war against the Philistines. He broke down the walls of Gath, Jabneh and Ashdod. Then he rebuilt some towns that were near Ashdod. He also rebuilt some other towns where Philistines lived. [7]God helped him fight against the Philistines. He also helped him fight against the Meunites and against the Arabs who lived in Gur Baal. [8]The Ammonites brought to Uzziah the gifts he required of them. He became famous all the way to the border of Egypt. That's because he had become very powerful.

[9]Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem. They were at the Corner Gate, the Valley Gate and the angle of the wall. He made the towers very strong. [10]He also built towers in the desert.

He dug many wells, because he had a lot of livestock. The livestock were in the western hills and on the flatlands. Uzziah had people working in his fields and vineyards in the hills and in the rich lands. That's because he loved the soil.

[11]Uzziah's army was well trained. It was ready to march out by companies in keeping with their numbers. Jeiel and Maaseiah brought them together. Jeiel was the secretary. Maaseiah was the officer. They were under the direction of Hananiah. He was one of the royal officials. [12]The total number of family

leaders who were over the fighting men was 2,600. [13]An army of 307,500 men was under their command. The men were trained for war. They were a powerful force. They helped the king against his enemies. [14]Uzziah provided the entire army with shields, spears, helmets, coats of armor, bows, and stones for their slings. [15]In Jerusalem he made machines that were based on patterns that skilled men had drawn up. The machines were used on the towers and on the corners of walls. They could shoot arrows. They could also throw large stones.

Uzziah became famous everywhere. God greatly helped him until he became powerful.

[16]But after Uzziah became powerful, his pride brought him down. He wasn't faithful to the LORD his God. He entered the LORD's temple to burn incense on the altar for burning incense.

[17]The priest Azariah followed him in. So did 80 other brave priests of the LORD. [18]They stood up to Uzziah. They said, "Uzziah, it isn't right for you to burn incense to the LORD. Only the priests are supposed to do that. They are members of the family line of Aaron. They have been set apart to burn incense. So get out of here. Leave the temple. You haven't been faithful. The LORD God won't honor you."

[19]Uzziah was holding a shallow cup. He was ready to burn incense. He became angry. He shouted at the priests in the LORD's temple. He did it near the altar for burning incense.

While he was shouting, a skin disease suddenly broke out on his forehead. [20]The chief priest Azariah looked at him. So did all of the other priests. They saw that Uzziah had a skin disease on his forehead. So they hurried him out of the temple. Actually, he himself really wanted to leave. He knew that the LORD was making him suffer.

[21]King Uzziah had the skin disease until the day he died. He lived in a separate house because he had the disease. And he wasn't allowed to enter the LORD's temple.

Uzziah's son Jotham was in charge of the palace. Jotham ruled over the people of the land.

[22]The other events of Uzziah's rule from beginning to end were written down by the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah was the son of Amoz.

[23]Uzziah joined the members of his family who had already died. His body

was buried near theirs in a royal burial ground. People said, “He had a skin disease.” His son Jotham became the next king after him.

Jotham Becomes King of Judah

2 Chronicles 27

1 Jotham was 25 years old when he became king. He ruled in Jerusalem for 16
years. His mother's name was Jerusha. She was the daughter of Zadok.

2 Jotham did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father Uzziah
had done. But Jotham didn't enter the LORD's temple as Uzziah had done. In
spite of that, the people continued to do very sinful things.

3 Jotham rebuilt the Upper Gate of the LORD's temple. He did a lot of work on
the wall at the hill of Ophel. 4 He built towns in the hills of Judah. He also built
forts and towers in areas that had a lot of trees in them.

5 Jotham went to war against the king of Ammon. He won the battle over the
people of Ammon. That year they paid Jotham almost four tons of silver. They
paid him 62,000 bushels of wheat and 62,000 bushels of barley. They also
brought him the same amount in the second and third years.

6 Jotham became powerful. That's because he had worshiped the LORD his
God with all his heart.

7 The other events of Jotham's rule are written down. That includes all of his
wars and the other things he did. All of those things are written in the records
of the kings of Israel and Judah. 8 Jotham was 25 years old when he became
king. He ruled in Jerusalem for 16 years.

9 Jotham joined the members of his family who had already died. His body
was buried in the City of David. His son Ahaz became the next king after him.

Ahaz Becomes King of Judah

2 Chronicles 28

[1]Ahaz was 20 years old when he became king. He ruled in Jerusalem for 16 years.

He didn't do what was right in the eyes of the LORD. He didn't do what King David had done. [2]He followed the ways of the kings of Israel. He also made metal statues of gods that were named after Baal. [3]He burned sacrifices in the Valley of Ben Hinnom. He sacrificed his children in the fire to other gods. He followed the practices of the nations. The LORD hated those practices. He had driven out those nations to make room for the people of Israel. [4]Ahaz offered sacrifices and burned incense at the high places. He also did it on the tops of hills and under every green tree.

[5]So the LORD his God handed him over to the king of Aram. The men of Aram won the battle over him. They took many of his people as prisoners. They brought them to Damascus.

God also handed Ahaz over to Pekah. His army wounded or killed many of the troops of Ahaz. Pekah was king of Israel. [6]In one day Pekah killed 120,000 soldiers in Judah. That's because Judah had deserted the LORD, the God of their people. Pekah was the son of Remaliah.

[7]Zicri was a fighting man from Ephraim. He killed Maaseiah, Azrikam and Elkanah. Maaseiah was the king's son. Azrikam was the officer who was in charge of the palace. And Elkanah was next in command after the king. [8]The men of Israel captured 200,000 wives, sons and daughters from their relatives in Judah. They also took a large amount of goods. They carried all of it back to Samaria.

[9]But a prophet of the LORD was there. His name was Oded. When the army returned to Samaria, he went out to meet them. He said to them, "The LORD is the God of your people. He burned with anger against Judah. So he handed them over to you. But you have killed them. Your anger reached all the way to heaven.

[10]"Now you are planning to make the men and women of Judah and

Jerusalem your slaves. But aren't you also guilty of sins against the LORD your God? 11Listen to me! You have taken your relatives from Judah as prisoners. The LORD's anger is burning against you. So send your relatives back."

12Then some of the leaders in Ephraim stood up to those who were returning from the war. The leaders were Azariah, Berekiah, Jehizkiah and Amasa. Azariah was the son of Jehohanan. Berekiah was the son of Meshillemoth. Jehizkiah was the son of Shallum. And Amasa was the son of Hadlai. 13"Don't bring those prisoners here," they said. "If you do, we'll be guilty in the sight of the LORD. Do you really want to add to our sin and guilt? We're already very guilty. The LORD's anger is burning against Israel."

14So the soldiers gave up the prisoners and the goods they had taken. They did it in front of the officials and the whole community. 15Azariah, Berekiah, Jehizkiah and Amasa received the prisoners. From the goods that had been taken they gave clothes to all those who were naked. They gave them clothes, sandals, food, drink and healing lotion. They put all of the weak people on donkeys. They took them back to their relatives at Jericho. Then they returned to Samaria. Jericho was also known as the City of Palm Trees.

16At that time King Ahaz sent men to the king of Assyria to get help. 17The men of Edom had come again and attacked Judah. They had carried prisoners away. 18At the same time the Philistines had attacked towns in the western hills and in the Negev Desert of Judah. They had captured Beth Shemesh, Aijalon and Gederoth. They had also captured Soco, Timnah and Gimzo and the villages that were around them. They had settled down in all of them.

19The LORD had brought Judah down because of Ahaz, their king. Ahaz had stirred up the people of Judah to do evil things. He hadn't been faithful to the LORD at all.

20Tiglath-Pileser came to Ahaz. But he gave Ahaz trouble instead of help. Tiglath-Pileser was king of Assyria. 21Ahaz took some things from the LORD's temple. He also took some from the royal palace and from the princes. He gave all of them to the king of Assyria. But that didn't help him.

22When King Ahaz was in trouble, he became even more unfaithful to the LORD. 23He offered sacrifices to the gods of Damascus. They had won the battle over him. He thought, "The gods of the kings of Aram have helped them. So I'll sacrifice to them. Then they'll help me." But they brought him down. In fact, they brought the whole nation of Israel down.

[24]Ahaz gathered together everything that belonged to God’s temple. He took all of it away. He shut the doors of the LORD’s temple. He set up altars at every street corner in Jerusalem. [25]In every town in Judah he built high places. Sacrifices were burned there to other gods. That made the LORD, the God of his people, very angry.

[26]The other events of the rule of Ahaz and all of his evil practices from beginning to end are written down. They are written in the records of the kings of Judah and Israel.

[27]Ahaz joined the members of his family who had already died. His body was buried in the city of Jerusalem. But it wasn’t placed in the tombs of the kings of Israel. His son Hezekiah became the next king after him.

Hezekiah Purifies the Temple

2 Chronicles 29

1 Hezekiah was 25 years old when he became king. He ruled in Jerusalem for
29 years. His mother's name was Abijah. She was the daughter of Zechariah.

2 Hezekiah did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as King David had
done.

3 In the first month of Hezekiah's first year as king, he opened the doors of the
LORD's temple. He repaired them. 4 He brought the priests and Levites in. He
gathered them together in the open area on the east side of the temple.

5 He said, "Levites, listen to me! Set yourselves apart to the LORD. Set apart
the temple of the LORD. He's the God of your people. Remove anything that is
'unclean' from the temple. 6 Our people weren't faithful. They did what was
evil in the sight of the LORD our God. They deserted him. They turned their
faces away from the place where he lives. They turned their backs on him.
7 They also shut the doors of the temple porch. They put the lamps out. They
didn't burn incense at the temple. They didn't sacrifice burnt offerings to the
God of Israel there.

8 "So the LORD has become angry with Judah and Jerusalem. He has made
them look so bad that everyone is shocked when they see them. They laugh at
them. You can see it with your own eyes. 9 That's why our people have been
killed with swords. That's why our sons and daughters and wives have become
prisoners.

10 "So I'm planning to make a covenant with the LORD, the God of Israel.
Then he'll turn his burning anger away from us.

11 "My sons, don't fail to obey the LORD. He has chosen you to stand in front
of him and work for him. He wants you to serve him and burn incense to him."

12 Here are the Levites who went to work.

Mahath and Joel were from the family line of Kohath.
Mahath was the son of Amasai. Joel was the son of Azariah.
Kish and Azariah were from the family line of Merari.

Kish was the son of Abdi. Azariah was the son of Jehallelel.
Joah and Eden were from the family line of Gershon.
Joah was the son of Zimmah. Eden was the son of Joah.
13 Shimri and Jeiel were from
the family line of Elizaphan.
Zechariah and Mattaniah were from
the family line of Asaph.
14 Jehiel and Shimei were from
the family line of Heman.
Shemaiah and Uzziel were from
the family line of Jeduthun.

15 All of those Levites gathered the other Levites together. They set themselves apart to the LORD. Then they went in to purify the LORD's temple. That's what the king had ordered them to do. They did what the LORD told them to. 16 The priests went into the LORD's temple to make it pure. They brought out to the temple courtyard everything that was "unclean." They had found "unclean" things in the LORD's temple. The Levites took them and carried them out to the Kidron Valley.

17 On the first day of the first month they began to set everything in the temple apart to the LORD. By the eighth day of the month they reached the LORD's porch. For eight more days they set the LORD's temple itself apart to him. They finished on the 16th day of the first month.

18 Then they went to King Hezekiah. They reported, "We've purified the whole temple of the LORD. That includes the altar for burnt offerings and all of its tools. It also includes the table for the holy bread and all of its articles. 19 We've prepared all of the articles King Ahaz had removed. We've set them apart to the LORD. Ahaz had removed them while he was king. He wasn't faithful to the LORD. The articles are now in front of the LORD's altar."

20 Early the next morning King Hezekiah gathered the city officials together. They went up to the LORD's temple. 21 They brought seven bulls, seven rams, seven male lambs and seven male goats with them. They sacrificed the animals as a sin offering for the kingdom, for the temple and for Judah. The king commanded the priests to offer them on the LORD's altar. The priests were from the family line of Aaron.

22They killed the bulls. Then they sprinkled the blood on the altar. Next they killed the rams and sprinkled the blood on the altar. Then they killed the lambs and sprinkled the blood on the altar.

23The goats for the sin offering were brought to the king and the whole community. They placed their hands on them. 24Then the priests killed the goats. They put the blood on the altar as a sin offering. It paid for the sin of the whole nation of Israel. The king had ordered the burnt offering and the sin offering for the whole nation.

25He stationed the Levites in the LORD's temple. They had cymbals, harps and lyres. They did everything in the way King David, his prophet Gad, and the prophet Nathan had required. The LORD had given commands about all of those things through his prophets. 26So the Levites stood ready with David's musical instruments. And the priests had their trumpets ready.

27Hezekiah gave the order to sacrifice the burnt offering on the altar. The offering began. Singing to the LORD also began. The singing was accompanied by the trumpets and by the instruments of David. He had been king of Israel. 28The whole community bowed down. They worshiped the LORD. At the same time the singers sang. The priests blew their trumpets. All of that continued until the burnt offering had been sacrificed.

29So the offerings were finished. King Hezekiah got down on his knees. He worshiped the LORD. So did everyone who was with him.

30The king and his officials ordered the Levites to praise the LORD. They used the words of David and the prophet Asaph. They sang praises with joy. They bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD.

31Then Hezekiah said, "You have set yourselves apart to the LORD. Come and bring sacrifices and thank offerings to his temple."

So the whole community brought sacrifices and thank offerings. Everyone who wanted to brought burnt offerings.

32The whole community brought 70 bulls, 100 rams and 200 male lambs. They brought all of them as burnt offerings to the LORD. 33The total number of animals that were set apart as sacrifices to the LORD was 600 bulls and 3,000 sheep and goats.

34But there weren't enough priests to skin all of the burnt offerings. So their brother Levites helped them. They worked until the task was finished. By that time other priests had been set apart to the LORD. The Levites had been more

careful than the priests when they set themselves apart. [35]There were large numbers of burnt offerings, along with the drink offerings and the fat from the friendship offerings. They were offered along with the burnt offerings.

So the service of the LORD's temple was started up again. [36]Hezekiah and all of the people were filled with joy. That's because everything had been done so quickly. God had provided for his people in a wonderful way.

Hezekiah Celebrates the Passover Feast

2 Chronicles 30

[1]Hezekiah sent a message to all of the people of Israel and Judah. He also wrote letters to the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. He invited everyone to come to the LORD's temple in Jerusalem. He wanted them to celebrate the Passover Feast in honor of the LORD. He is the God of Israel.

[2]The king, his officials and the whole community in Jerusalem decided to celebrate the Passover in the second month. [3]They hadn't been able to celebrate it at the regular time. That's because there weren't enough priests who had set themselves apart to the LORD. Also, the people hadn't gathered together in Jerusalem.

[4]The plan seemed good to the king and the whole community. [5]They decided to send a message all through Israel. It was sent out from Beersheba all the way to Dan. The message invited the people to come to Jerusalem. It invited them to celebrate the Passover in honor of the LORD, the God of Israel.

The Passover hadn't been celebrated by large numbers of people for a long time. It hadn't been done in keeping with what was written in the law.

[6]Messengers went all through Israel and Judah. They carried letters from the king and his officials. The king had ordered them to do that. The letters said,

"People of Israel, return to the LORD. He is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel. Return to him. Then he will return to you who are left in the land. You have escaped from the power of the kings of Assyria.

[7]"Don't be like the rest of your people and relatives. They weren't faithful to the LORD, the God of their people. That's why he punished them. He made them look so bad that everyone was shocked when they saw them. You can see it for yourselves.

[8]"Don't be stubborn. Don't be as your people were. Obey the LORD. Come to the temple. He has set it apart to himself forever. Serve the LORD your God. Then he'll turn his burning anger away from you.

[9]"Suppose you return to the LORD. Then those who captured your relatives

and children will be kind to them. In fact, your relatives and children will come back to this land. The LORD your God is kind and tender. He won't turn away from you if you return to him."

10The messengers went from town to town in Ephraim and Manasseh. They went all the way to Zebulun. But the people made fun of them. They laughed at them. 11In spite of that, some men from Asher, Manasseh and Zebulun made themselves low in the LORD's sight. They went to Jerusalem.

12God's powerful hand helped the people of Judah. He helped them agree with one another. So they did what the king and his officials had ordered. They did what the LORD told them to do.

13A very large crowd of people gathered together in Jerusalem. They went there to celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It took place in the second month. 14They removed the altars in Jerusalem. They cleared away the altars for burning incense. They threw all of the altars into the Kidron Valley.

15They killed the Passover lamb on the 14th day of the second month. The priests and Levites were filled with shame. They set themselves apart to the LORD. They brought burnt offerings to his temple. 16Then they went to their regular positions. They did it just as the Law of Moses, the man of God, required. The Levites gave the blood of the animals to the priests. The priests sprinkled it on the altar.

17Many people in the crowd hadn't set themselves apart to the LORD. They weren't "clean." They couldn't set their lambs apart to him. So the Levites had to kill the Passover lambs for all of them.

18Many people came from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun. Most of them hadn't made themselves pure and clean. But they still ate the Passover meal. That was against what was written in the law. But Hezekiah prayed for them. He said, "The LORD is good. May he forgive everyone 19who wants to worship God with all his heart. God is the LORD, the God of their people. May he forgive them even if they aren't 'clean' in keeping with the rules of the temple."

20The LORD answered Hezekiah's prayer. He healed the people.

21The people of Israel who were in Jerusalem celebrated the Feast of Unleavened Bread. They celebrated for seven days with great joy.

The Levites and priests sang to the LORD every day. Their singing was accompanied by musical instruments. The instruments were used to praise the LORD.

22Hezekiah spoke words that gave hope to all of the Levites. They understood how to serve the LORD well. For the seven days of the Feast they ate the share that was given to them. They also sacrificed friendship offerings. They praised the LORD, the God of their people.

23Then the whole community agreed to celebrate the Feast for seven more days. So for another seven days they celebrated with joy.

24Hezekiah, the king of Judah, provided 1,000 bulls and 7,000 sheep and goats for the community. The officials provided 1,000 bulls and 10,000 sheep and goats for them. A large number of priests set themselves apart to the LORD.

25The entire community of Judah was filled with joy. So were the priests and Levites. And so were all of the people who had gathered together from Israel. That included the outsiders who had come from Israel. It also included those who lived in Judah.

26There was great joy in Jerusalem. There hadn’t been anything like it in Israel since the days of Solomon, the son of David. Solomon had been king of Israel.

27The priests and Levites gave their blessing to the people. God heard them. Their prayer reached all the way to heaven. It’s the holy place where he lives.

2 Chronicles 31

[1]The Feast came to an end. The people of Israel who were in Jerusalem went out to the towns of Judah. They smashed the sacred stones. They cut down the poles that were used to worship the goddess Asherah. They destroyed the high places and the altars. They did those things all through Judah and Benjamin. They also did them in Ephraim and Manasseh. They destroyed all of the objects that were used to worship other gods. Then the people returned to their own towns and property.

The People Bring Gifts to the LORD

[2]Hezekiah put the priests and Levites in groups based on their duties. The priests sacrificed burnt offerings and friendship offerings. The Levites served the LORD by giving thanks and singing praises at the gates of his house.

[3]The king gave some of his own possessions to the temple. He gave them for the morning and evening burnt offerings. He gave them for the burnt offerings for every Sabbath day. He gave them for the burnt offerings for every New Moon feast. And he gave them for the burnt offerings for every yearly appointed feast. He did it in keeping with what is written in the Law of the LORD.

[4]Hezekiah gave an order to the people who were living in Jerusalem. He commanded them to give to the priests and Levites the share they owed them. Then the priests and Levites could give their full attention to the Law of the LORD.

[5]The order went out. Right away the people of Israel began to give freely. They gave the first share of the harvest of their grain, fresh wine, olive oil and honey. They also gave the first share of everything else their fields produced. They brought a large amount. It was a tenth of everything.

[6]The people of Israel and Judah who lived in the towns of Judah brought a tenth of their herds and flocks. They also brought a tenth of the holy things they had set apart to the LORD their God. They put them in piles. [7]They began doing it in the third month. They finished in the seventh month. [8]Hezekiah and his officials came and saw the piles. When they did, they praised the LORD. And

they blessed his people Israel.

9Hezekiah asked the priests and Levites about the piles. 10The chief priest Azariah answered him. He said, “The people have been bringing their gifts to the LORD’s temple. Ever since they began to bring them, we’ve had enough to eat. We have even had plenty to spare. That’s because the LORD has blessed his people. So we have a large amount left over.” Azariah was from the family line of Zadok.

11Hezekiah gave orders to prepare storerooms in the LORD’s temple. And it was done. 12The people were faithful. They brought in their offerings, a tenth of everything they produced, and the gifts they had set apart to the LORD. The Levite Conaniah was in charge of those things. His brother Shimei was next in command after him. 13Conaniah and his brother Shimei had directors who worked under them. Their names were Jehiel, Azaziah, Nahath, Asahel, Jerimoth, Jozabad, Eliel, Ismakiah, Mahath and Benaiah. King Hezekiah and Azariah had appointed them. Azariah was the official who was in charge of God’s temple.

14The Levite Kore guarded the East Gate. He was in charge of the offerings people chose to give to God. He handed out the offerings that were made to the LORD. He also handed out the gifts that had been set apart to the LORD. Kore was the son of Imnah. 15Eden, Miniamin, Jeshua, Shemaiah, Amariah and Shecaniah helped Kore. They were faithful in helping him in the towns of the priests. They handed out gifts to their brother priests, group by group. They gave the gifts to young men and old men alike.

16In addition to that, they handed out gifts to the males who were three years old or more. The names of those males were listed in their family history. All of them would enter the LORD’s temple. They would carry out their duties each day. Each group did all of the different things it was supposed to do.

17Kore and his Levite companions also handed out gifts to the priests. The priests were listed by their families in their family history. Those Levites also handed out gifts to the Levites who were 20 years old or more. Each group did all of the different things it was supposed to do.

18Those groups included all of the little ones, the wives, and the sons and daughters of the whole community. All of them were listed in their family history. They were faithful in setting themselves apart to serve the LORD.

19Some of the priests, who were from the family line of Aaron, lived in other towns or on farms around their towns. Men were chosen by name to hand out

shares to those priests. They gave a share to every male among them. They also gave a share to everyone whose name was written down in the family history of the Levites.

[20]That's what Hezekiah did all through Judah. He did what was good and right. He was faithful to the LORD his God. [21]He looked to his God. He worked for him with all his heart. That's the way he worked in everything he did to serve God's temple. He obeyed the law. He followed the LORD's commands. So he had success.

Sennacherib's Army Surrounds Jerusalem

2 Chronicles 32

[1]Hezekiah had been completely faithful to the LORD. But in spite of that, Sennacherib came and marched into Judah. He was the king of Assyria. He surrounded the cities that had high walls around them. He got ready to attack them. He thought he could win the battle over them. He thought he could take them for himself.

[2]Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come to Jerusalem to make war against it. [3]So he asked his officials and military leaders for advice. He asked them about blocking off the water from the springs that were outside the city. They gave him the advice he asked for.

[4]A large group of men gathered together. They blocked all of the springs. They also blocked the stream that flowed through the land. "Why should the kings of Assyria come and find plenty of water?" they asked.

[5]Then Hezekiah worked hard repairing all of the broken parts of the wall. He built towers on it. He built another wall outside that one. He built up the areas that had been filled in around the City of David. He also made large numbers of weapons and shields.

[6]He appointed military officers over the people. He gathered the officers together in front of him in the open area at the city gate. He gave them words of hope. He said, [7]"Be strong. Be brave. Don't be afraid. Don't lose hope. The king of Assyria has a huge army with him. But there's a greater power with us than there is with him. [8]The only thing he has is human strength. But the LORD our God is with us. He will help us. He'll fight our battles."

The people had great faith in what Hezekiah, the king of Judah, said.

[9]Later Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, and all of his forces surrounded Lachish. They got ready to attack it. At that time, he sent his officers to Jerusalem. They went there with a message for Hezekiah, the king of Judah. The message was also for all of the people of Judah who were there. The message said,

10“Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, says, ‘Why are you putting your faith in
what your king says? Why do you remain in Jerusalem when you are
surrounded?
11“ ‘Hezekiah says, “The LORD our God will save us from the powerful hand
of the king of Assyria.” But he isn’t telling you the truth. If you listen to him,
you will die of hunger and thirst.
12“ ‘Didn’t Hezekiah himself remove your god’s high places and altars?
Didn’t Hezekiah say to the people of Judah and Jerusalem, “You must worship
at one altar. You must burn sacrifices on it”?
13“ ‘Don’t you know what I and the kings who ruled before me have done?
Don’t you know what we’ve done to all of the peoples of the other lands? Were
the gods of those nations ever able to save their lands from my power? 14The
kings who ruled before me destroyed many nations. Which one of the gods of
those nations has been able to save his people from me? So how can your god
save you from my power?
15“ ‘Don’t let Hezekiah trick you. He’s telling you lies. Don’t believe him. No
god of any nation or kingdom has been able to save his people from my power.
No god has been able to save his people from the power of the kings who ruled
before me. So your god won’t save you from my power either!’ ”

16Sennacherib’s officers spoke even more things against the LORD God and
his servant Hezekiah. 17The king also wrote letters against the LORD. His letters
made fun of the God of Israel. They said, “The peoples of other lands have
their gods. But those gods didn’t save their people from my powerful hand. So
the god of Hezekiah won’t save his people from my powerful hand either.”
18Then the officers called out in the Hebrew language to the people of
Jerusalem who were on the wall. They were trying to scare them and make
them afraid. That’s because they wanted to capture the city. 19They were
comparing the God of Jerusalem to the gods of the other nations of the world.
But those gods were only statues. They had been made by the hands of men.
20King Hezekiah cried out in prayer to God in heaven. He prayed about the
problem Jerusalem was facing. So did the prophet Isaiah. He was the son of
Amoz.
21The LORD sent an angel. The angel wiped out all of the enemy’s fighting
men, leaders and officers. He put an end to them right there in the camp of the

Assyrian king.

So Sennacherib went back to his own land in shame. He went into the temple of his god. There some of his own sons cut him down with their swords.

22So the LORD saved Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem. He saved them from the power of Sennacherib, the king of Assyria. He also saved them from all of their other enemies. He took care of them on every side.

23Many people brought offerings to Jerusalem for the LORD. They brought expensive gifts for Hezekiah, the king of Judah. From then on, all of the nations thought highly of him.

Hezekiah's Pride, Success and Death

24In those days Hezekiah became sick. He knew he was about to die. So he prayed to the LORD. And the LORD answered him. He gave him a miraculous sign.

25But Hezekiah's heart was proud. He didn't give thanks for the many kind things the LORD had done for him. So the LORD became angry with him. He also became angry with Judah and Jerusalem.

26Then Hezekiah had a change of heart. He was sorry he had been proud. The people of Jerusalem were also sorry they had sinned. So the LORD wasn't angry with them as long as Hezekiah was king.

27Hezekiah was very rich. He received great honor. He made storerooms for his silver and gold. He also made them for his jewels, spices, shields and all kinds of expensive things. 28He made buildings to store the harvest of grain, fresh wine and olive oil. He made barns for all kinds of cattle. He made sheep pens for his flocks. 29He built villages. He gained large numbers of flocks and herds. God had made him very rich.

30Hezekiah blocked up the upper opening of the Gihon spring. He directed the water to flow down to the west side of the City of David. He had success in everything he did.

31The rulers of Babylon sent messengers to him. They asked him about the miraculous sign that had taken place in the land. Then God left him to put him to the test. He wanted to know everything that was in his heart.

32Hezekiah did many things that showed he was faithful to the LORD. Those

things and the other events of his rule are written down. They are written in the record of the vision of the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz. That record is part of the records of the kings of Judah and Israel.

33Hezekiah joined the members of his family who had already died. His body was buried on the hill where the tombs of David's family are. The whole nation of Judah honored him when he died. So did the people of Jerusalem. Hezekiah's son Manasseh became the next king after him.

Manasseh Becomes King of Judah

2 Chronicles 33

1 Manasseh was 12 years old when he became king. He ruled in Jerusalem for
55 years.

2 Manasseh did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. He followed the
practices of the nations. The LORD hated those practices. He had driven those
nations out to make room for the people of Israel.

3 Manasseh rebuilt the high places. His father Hezekiah had destroyed them.
Manasseh also set up altars to the gods that were named after Baal. He made
poles that were used to worship the goddess Asherah. He even bowed down to
all of the stars. And he worshiped them.

4 He built altars in the LORD's temple. The LORD had said about his temple,
"My Name will remain in Jerusalem forever." 5 In both courtyards of the LORD's
temple Manasseh built altars to honor all of the stars.

6 He sacrificed his children in the fire to other gods. He did it in the Valley of
Ben Hinnom. He practiced all kinds of evil magic. He took part in worshiping
evil powers. He got messages from those who had died. He talked to the spirits
of the dead. He did many things that were evil in the sight of the LORD. He
made him very angry.

7 Manasseh had carved a statue of a god. He put it in God's temple. God had
spoken to David and his son Solomon about the temple. He had said, "My
Name will be in this temple and in Jerusalem forever. Out of all of the cities in
the tribes of Israel I have chosen Jerusalem. 8 I gave this land to your people
who lived long ago. I will not make the Israelites leave it again. But they must
be careful to do everything I commanded them. They must follow all of the
laws, directions, and rules I gave them through Moses."

9 But Manasseh led Judah and the people of Jerusalem down the wrong path.
They did more evil things than the nations the LORD had destroyed to make
room for the people of Israel.

10 The LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people. But they didn't pay any

attention to him. [11]So the LORD brought the army commanders of the king of Assyria against them. They took Manasseh as a prisoner. They put a hook in his nose. They put him in bronze chains. And they took him to Babylon.

[12]When Manasseh was in trouble, he asked the LORD his God to show favor to him. He made himself very low in the sight of the God of his people. [13]Manasseh prayed to him. When he did, the LORD felt sorry for him. He answered his prayer. He brought him back to Jerusalem and his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD is God.

[14]After that, Manasseh rebuilt the outer wall of the City of David. It was west of the Gihon spring in the valley. It reached all the way to the entrance of the Fish Gate. It went around the entire hill of Ophel. Manasseh also made the wall much higher. He stationed military commanders in all of the cities in Judah that had high walls around them.

[15]Manasseh got rid of the strange gods. He removed the statue of one of those gods from the LORD's temple. He also removed all of the altars he had built on the temple hill and in Jerusalem. He threw them out of the city. [16]Then he made the LORD's altar look like new again. He sacrificed friendship offerings and thank offerings on it. He told the people of Judah to serve the LORD, the God of Israel. [17]The people continued to offer sacrifices at the high places. But they offered them only to the LORD their God.

[18]The other events of Manasseh's rule are written down in the official records of the kings of Israel. They include his prayer to his God. They also include the words the prophets spoke to him in the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. [19]Everything about Manasseh is written in the records of the prophets. That includes his prayer and the fact that God felt sorry for him. It includes everything he did before he made himself low in the LORD's sight. It includes all of his sins and the fact that he wasn't faithful to the LORD. It includes the locations where he built high places. It includes the places where he set up poles that were used to worship the goddess Asherah. And it includes the places where he set up statues of other gods.

[20]Manasseh joined the members of his family who had already died. His body was buried in his palace. His son Amon became the next king after him.

Amon Becomes King of Judah

[21]Amon was 22 years old when he became king. He ruled in Jerusalem for two years.

[22]Amon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, just as his father Manasseh had done. Amon worshiped and offered sacrifices to all of the statues of gods that Manasseh had made. [23]He didn’t make himself low in the LORD’s sight as his father Manasseh had done. So Amon became even more guilty.

[24]Amon’s officials made plans against him. They murdered him in his palace. [25]Then the people of the land killed all those who had made plans against King Amon. They made his son Josiah king in his place.

Josiah Makes Judah a Better Nation

2 Chronicles 34

[1]Josiah was eight years old when he became king. He ruled in Jerusalem for 31 years.

[2]He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD. He lived the way King David had lived. He didn't turn away from it to the right or the left.

[3]While he was still young, he began to worship the God of King David. It was the eighth year of Josiah's rule.

In his 12th year he began to get rid of the high places in Judah and Jerusalem. He removed the poles that were used to worship the goddess Asherah. He also removed the wooden and metal statues of gods. [4]He ordered the altars of the gods that were named after Baal to be torn down. He cut to pieces the altars for burning incense that were above them. He smashed the Asherah poles. He also smashed the wooden and metal statues of gods. He broke all of them to pieces. He scattered the pieces over the graves of those who had offered sacrifices to those gods. [5]He burned the bones of the priests on their altars. That's the way he made Judah and Jerusalem pure and clean.

[6]He went to the towns of Manasseh, Ephraim and Simeon. He went all the way to Naphtali. He also went to the destroyed places around all of those towns. [7]Everywhere he went he tore down the altars and the Asherah poles. He crushed the statues of gods to powder. He cut to pieces all of the altars for burning incense. He destroyed all of those things everywhere in Israel. Then he went back to Jerusalem.

[8]In the 18th year of Josiah's rule, he decided to make the land and temple pure and clean. So he sent Shaphan, Maaseiah and Joah to repair the temple of the LORD his God. Shaphan was the son of Azaliah. Maaseiah was ruler of the city. And Joah, the son of Joahaz, kept the records.

[9]They went to the high priest Hilkiah. They gave him the money that had been brought into God's temple. The Levites who guarded the doors had collected it. They had received some of the money from the people of Manasseh, Ephraim and the others who remained in Israel. They had received

the rest of it from the people of Judah and Benjamin and those who lived in Jerusalem.

10They put all of the money in the care of the men who had been appointed to direct the work on the LORD's temple. Those men paid the workers who repaired the temple and made it look like new again. 11They also gave money to the builders and those who worked with wood. The workers used it to buy lumber and blocks of stone. The lumber was used for the supports and beams for the buildings. The kings of Judah had let the buildings fall down.

12The men were faithful in doing the work. Jahath and Obadiah directed them. They were Levites from the family line of Merari. Zechariah and Meshullam also directed them. They were from the family line of Kohath. The Levites were skilled in playing musical instruments. 13They were in charge of the laborers. They directed all of the workers from job to job. Some of the Levites were secretaries and writers. Others guarded the doors.

Hilkiah Finds the Scroll of the Law

14The money that had been taken into the LORD's temple was being brought out. At that time the priest Hilkiah found the Scroll of the Law of the LORD. It had been given through Moses. 15Hilkiah spoke to the secretary Shaphan. He said, "I've found the Scroll of the Law in the LORD's temple." He gave it to Shaphan.

16Then Shaphan took the scroll to King Josiah. He told him, "Your officials are doing everything they've been asked to do. 17They have paid out the money that was in the LORD's temple. They've put it in the care of the directors and workers." 18Shaphan continued, "The priest Hilkiah has given me a scroll." Shaphan read some of it to the king.

19The king heard the words of the Law. When he did, he tore his royal robes. 20He gave orders to Hilkiah, Ahikam, Abdon, the secretary Shaphan and Asaiah. Ahikam was the son of Shaphan. Abdon was the son of Micah. And Asaiah was the king's attendant. Josiah commanded them, 21"Go. Ask the LORD for advice. Ask him about what is written in this scroll that has been found. Do it for me. Also do it for those who remain in Israel and Judah. The LORD has poured out his burning anger on us. That's because our people before us didn't obey what the LORD had said. They didn't do everything that is written in this

scroll.”

22Hilkiah and those the king had sent with him went to speak to the prophet Huldah. She was the wife of Shallum. Shallum was the son of Tokhath. Tokhath was the son of Hasrah. Shallum took care of the sacred robes. Huldah lived in the New Quarter of Jerusalem.

23She said to them, “The LORD is the God of Israel. He says, ‘Tell the man who sent you to me, 24“‘The LORD says, ‘I am going to bring horrible trouble on this place and its people. All of the curses that are written down in the scroll that has been read to the king of Judah will take place. 25That is because the people have deserted me. They have burned incense to other gods. They have made me very angry because of everything their hands have made. So I will pour out my burning anger on this place. The fire of my anger will not be put out.’ ” ’

26“‘The king of Judah sent you to ask for advice. Tell him, ‘The LORD is the God of Israel. He has a message for you about the things you heard. 27He says, “Your heart was tender. You made yourself low in my sight. You heard what I spoke against this place and its people. So you made yourself low. You tore your royal robes and sobbed. And I have heard you,” announces the LORD.

28“ ‘ “You will join the members of your family who have already died. Your body will be buried in peace. Your eyes will not see all of the trouble I am going to bring on this place and those who live here.” ’ ”

Huldah’s answer was taken back to the king.

29Then the king called together all of the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. 30He went up to the LORD’s temple. The people of Judah and Jerusalem went with him. So did the priests and Levites. All of them went, from the least important of them to the most important. The king had all of the words of the Scroll of the Covenant read to them. The scroll had been found in the LORD’s temple.

31The king stood next to his pillar. He agreed to the terms of the covenant in front of the LORD. He promised to follow him and obey his commands, directions and rules. He promised to obey them with all his heart and with all his soul. So he promised to obey the terms of the covenant that were written down in that scroll.

32Then he had everyone in Jerusalem and in Benjamin commit themselves to the covenant. The people of Jerusalem did it in keeping with the covenant of the God of Israel.

[33]Josiah removed all of the statues of gods from the whole territory that belonged to the people of Israel. The LORD hated those statues. Josiah had everyone in Israel serve the LORD their God. As long as he lived, they didn’t fail to follow the LORD, the God of their people.

Josiah Celebrates the Passover Feast

2 Chronicles 35

[1]Josiah celebrated the Passover Feast in Jerusalem in honor of the LORD. The Passover lamb was killed on the 14th day of the first month. [2]Josiah appointed the priests to their duties. He cheered them up as they served the LORD at his temple.

[3]The Levites taught all of the people of Israel. The Levites had been set apart to the LORD. Josiah said to them, “Put the sacred ark of the covenant in the temple Solomon built. He was the son of David and king of Israel. The ark must not be carried around on your shoulders. Serve the LORD your God. Serve his people Israel. [4]Prepare yourselves by families in your groups. Do it based on the directions that were written by David, the king of Israel, and by his son Solomon.

[5]“Stand at the temple. Stand there with a group of Levites for each group of families among your people. [6]Kill the Passover lambs. Set yourselves apart to the LORD. Prepare the lambs for your people. Do what the LORD commanded through Moses.”

[7]Josiah provided animals for the Passover offerings. He gave them for all of the people who were there. He gave a total of 30,000 sheep and goats and 3,000 head of cattle. He gave all of them from his own possessions.

[8]His officials also gave freely. They gave to the people and the priests and Levites. Hilkiah, Zechariah and Jehiel were in charge of God’s temple. They gave the priests 2,600 Passover lambs and 300 head of cattle. [9]Conaniah and his brothers Shemaiah and Nethanel also gave offerings. So did Hashabiah, Jeiel and Jozabad. All of them were the leaders of the Levites. They gave 5,000 Passover lambs and 500 head of cattle for the Levites.

[10]The Passover service was arranged. The priests stood in their places. The Levites were in their groups. That’s what the king had ordered.

[11]The Passover lambs were killed. The priests sprinkled the blood that had been handed to them. The Levites skinned the animals.

12They set the burnt offerings to one side. Those offerings were for the smaller family groups of the people to offer to the LORD. That's what was written in the Scroll of Moses. The Levites did the same thing with the cattle.

13They cooked the Passover animals over the fire, just as the law required. They boiled the holy offerings in pots, large kettles and pans. They served the offerings quickly to all of the people.

14After that, they got things ready for themselves and the priests. That's because the priests, who were from the family line of Aaron, were busy until dark. They were sacrificing the burnt offerings and the fat parts. The Levites got things ready for themselves and for the priests, who belonged to Aaron's family line.

15Those who played music were from the family line of Asaph. They were in the places that had been set up by David, Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun. Jeduthun had been the king's prophet. The guards at each gate didn't have to leave their places. That's because their brother Levites got things ready for them.

16So at that time the entire service in honor of the LORD was carried out. The Passover Feast was celebrated. The burnt offerings were sacrificed on the LORD's altar. That's what King Josiah had ordered.

17The people of Israel who were there celebrated the Passover at that time. They observed the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days. 18The Passover hadn't been observed like that in Israel since the days of the prophet Samuel. None of the kings of Israel had ever celebrated a Passover like Josiah's. He celebrated it with the priests and Levites. All of the people of Judah and Israel were there along with the people of Jerusalem. 19That Passover Feast was celebrated in the 18th year of Josiah's rule.

Josiah Dies

20Josiah had put the temple in order. After all of that, Neco went up to fight at Carchemish. He was king of Egypt. Carchemish was on the Euphrates River. Josiah marched out to meet Neco in battle.

21But Neco sent messengers to him. They said, "King Josiah, there isn't any trouble between you and me. I'm not attacking you at this time. I'm at war with

another country. God told me to hurry. He's with me. So stop opposing him. If you don't, he'll destroy you."

22But Josiah wouldn't turn away from Neco. He wore different clothes so people wouldn't recognize him. He wanted to go to war against Neco. He wouldn't listen to what God had commanded Neco to say. Instead, he went out to fight him on the flatlands of Megiddo.

23Men who had bows shot arrows at King Josiah. After he was hit, he told his officers, "Take me away. I'm badly wounded." 24So they took him out of his chariot. They put him in his other chariot. They brought him to Jerusalem. There he died. His body was buried in the tombs of his family. All of the people of Judah and Jerusalem sobbed over him.

25Jeremiah wrote songs of sadness about Josiah. To this very day all of the male and female singers remember Josiah by singing those songs. That became a practice in Israel. The songs are written down in the Book of the Songs of Sadness.

26Josiah did many things that showed he was faithful to the LORD. Those things and the other events of Josiah's rule were in keeping with what is written in the Law of the LORD. 27All of the events from beginning to end are written down. They are written in the records of the kings of Israel and Judah.

2 Chronicles 36

[1]The people of the land went and got Jehoahaz. He was the son of Josiah. The people made Jehoahaz king in Jerusalem in place of his father.

Jehoahaz Becomes King of Judah

[2]Jehoahaz was 23 years old when he became king. He ruled in Jerusalem for three months. [3]The king of Egypt removed him from his throne in Jerusalem. The king of Egypt made the people of Judah pay him a tax of almost four tons of silver and 75 pounds of gold.

[4]Neco, the king of Egypt, made Eliakim king over Judah and Jerusalem. Eliakim was a brother of Jehoahaz. Neco changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim. But he took Eliakim's brother Jehoahaz with him to Egypt.

Jehoiakim Becomes King of Judah

[5]Jehoiakim was 25 years old when he became king. He ruled in Jerusalem for 11 years. He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD his God.

[6]Nebuchadnezzar attacked him. Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylonia. He put Jehoiakim in bronze chains. And he took him to Babylon. [7]Nebuchadnezzar also took articles from the LORD's temple. He took them to Babylon. He put them in his own temple there.

[8]The other events of Jehoiakim's rule are written in the records of the kings of Israel and Judah. He did things the LORD hated. Those things and everything that happened to him are also written in those records. His son Jehoiachin became the next king after him.

Jehoiachin Becomes King of Judah

[9]Jehoiachin was 18 years old when he became king. He ruled in Jerusalem for

three months and ten days. He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD.

10In the spring, King Nebuchadnezzar sent for him. He brought him to Babylon. He also brought articles of value from the LORD's temple. He made Zedekiah king over Judah and Jerusalem. Zedekiah was Jehoiachin's uncle.

Zedekiah Becomes King of Judah

11Zedekiah was 21 years old when he became king. He ruled in Jerusalem for 11 years.

12He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD his God. He didn't pay any attention to the message the LORD spoke through the prophet Jeremiah.

13Zedekiah also refused to remain under the control of King Nebuchadnezzar. The king had made him take an oath in God's name. But his heart became very stubborn. He wouldn't turn to the LORD, the God of Israel.

14And that's not all. The people and the leaders of the priests became more and more unfaithful. They followed all of the practices of the nations. The LORD hated those practices. The people and leaders made the LORD's temple "unclean." The LORD had set the temple in Jerusalem apart in a special way for himself.

Nebuchadnezzar Destroys Jerusalem

15The LORD, the God of Israel, sent word to his people through his messengers. He sent it to them again and again. He took pity on his people. He also took pity on the temple where he lived.

16But God's people made fun of his messengers. They hated his words. They laughed at his prophets. Finally the LORD's burning anger was stirred up against his people. Nothing could save them.

17The LORD brought the king of Babylonia against them. The Babylonian army killed their young people with their swords at the temple. They didn't spare young men or women. They didn't spare the old people either. God handed all of them over to Nebuchadnezzar.

18Nebuchadnezzar carried off to Babylon all of the articles from God's

temple. Some of the articles were large. Others were small. He carried off the treasures of the temple. He also carried off the treasures that belonged to the king and his officials.

19The Babylonians set God's temple on fire. They broke down the wall of Jerusalem. They burned all of the palaces. They destroyed everything of value there.

20Nebuchadnezzar took the rest of the people to Babylon as prisoners. They had escaped from being killed with swords. They served him and his sons. That lasted until the kingdom of Persia became stronger than Babylonia.

21The land of Israel enjoyed its sabbath years. It rested. That deserted land wasn't farmed for a full 70 years. What the LORD had spoken through Jeremiah came true.

22It was the first year of the rule of Cyrus. He was king of Persia. The LORD stirred him up to send a message all through his kingdom. It happened so that what the LORD had spoken through Jeremiah would come true. The message was written down. It said,

23Cyrus, the king of Persia, says,

" 'The LORD is the God of heaven. He has given me all of the kingdoms on earth. He has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Any one of his people among you can go up to Jerusalem. And may the LORD your God be with you.' "

Ezra

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Cyrus Helps the Jews Build the LORD's Temple

Ezra 1

1It was the first year of the rule of Cyrus. He was king of Persia. The LORD
stirred him up to send a message all through his kingdom. It happened so that
what the LORD had spoken through Jeremiah would come true. The message
was written down. It said,

2"Cyrus, the king of Persia, says,

" 'The LORD is the God of heaven. He has given me all of the kingdoms on
earth. He has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah.

3" 'Any one of his people among you can go up to Jerusalem. And may your
God be with you. You can build the LORD's temple. He is the God of Israel. He
is the God who is in Jerusalem.

4" 'The people who are still left alive in every place must bring him gifts.
They must provide him with silver and gold. They must bring goods and
livestock. They should also bring any offerings they choose to. All of those
gifts will be for God's temple in Jerusalem.' "

5Then everyone God had stirred up got ready to go. They wanted to go up to
Jerusalem and build the LORD's temple there. They included the family leaders
of Judah and Benjamin. They also included the priests and Levites.

6All of their neighbors helped them. They gave them silver and gold articles.
They gave them goods and livestock. And they gave them gifts of great value.
All of those things were added to the other offerings the people chose to give.

7King Cyrus also brought out the articles that belonged to the LORD's temple.
Nebuchadnezzar had carried them off from Jerusalem. He had put them in the
temple of his own god. 8Cyrus, the king of Persia, told Mithredath to bring
them out. Mithredath was in charge of the temple treasures. He counted the
articles. Then he gave them to Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah.

[9]Here is a list of the articles.

There were 30 gold dishes.
There were 1,000 silver dishes.
There were 29 silver pans.

[10]There were 30 gold bowls.

There were 410 matching silver bowls.
There were 1,000 other articles.

[11]The total number of gold and silver articles was 5,400. Sheshbazzar took all of them with him to Jerusalem. He brought them along when the Jews who had been forced to leave Judah came back from Babylon.

A List of People Who Returned to Judah

Ezra 2

[1]Nebuchadnezzar had taken many Jews away from the land of Judah. He had forced them to go to Babylonia as prisoners. Now they returned to Jerusalem and Judah. All of them went back to their own towns. Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylonia. [2]The leaders of the Jews included Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah and Reelaiah. They also included Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum and Baanah.

Here is a list of the men of Israel who returned home.

[3]There were 2,172 from the family line of Parosh.

[4]There were 372 from Shephatiah.

[5]There were 775 from Arah.

[6]There were 2,812 from Pahath-Moab through the family line of Jeshua and Joab.

[7]There were 1,254 from Elam.

[8]There were 945 from Zattu.

[9]There were 760 from Zaccai.

[10]There were 642 from Bani.

[11]There were 623 from Bebai.

[12]There were 1,222 from Azgad.

[13]There were 666 from Adonikam.

[14]There were 2,056 from Bigvai.

[15]There were 454 from Adin.

[16]There were 98 from Ater through the family line of Hezekiah.

[17]There were 323 from Bezai.

[18]There were 112 from Jorah.
[19]There were 223 from Hashum.
[20]There were 95 from Gibbar.

[21]There were 123 from the men of Bethlehem.
[22]There were 56 from Netophah.
[23]There were 128 from Anathoth.
[24]There were 42 from Azmaveth.
[25]There were 743 from Kiriath Jearim, Kephirah and Beeroth.
[26]There were 621 from Ramah and Geba.
[27]There were 122 from Micmash.
[28]There were 223 from Bethel and Ai.
[29]There were 52 from Nebo.
[30]There were 156 from Magbish.
[31]There were 1,254 from the other Elam.
[32]There were 320 from Harim.
[33]There were 725 from Lod, Hadid and Ono.
[34]There were 345 from Jericho.
[35]There were 3,630 from Senaah.

[36]Here is a list of the priests.

There were 973 from the family line of Jedaiah through the line of Jeshua.
[37]There were 1,052 from Immer.
[38]There were 1,247 from Pashhur.
[39]There were 1,017 from Harim.

[40]Here is a list of the Levites.

There were 74 from the family lines of Jeshua and Kadmiel through the line

of Hodaviah.

41 Here is a list of the singers.

There were 128 from the family line of Asaph.

42 Here is a list of the men who guarded the temple gates.

There were 139 from the family lines of
Shallum, Ater, Talmon,
Akkub, Hatita and Shobai.

43 Here is a list of the members of the family lines of the temple servants.

Ziha, Hasupha, Tabbaoth,
44 Keros, Siaha, Padon,
45 Lebanah, Hagabah, Akkub,
46 Hagab, Shalmai, Hanan,
47 Giddel, Gahar, Reaiah,
48 Rezin, Nekoda, Gazzam,
49 Uzza, Paseah, Besai,
50 Asnah, Meunim, Nephussim,
51 Bakbuk, Hakupha, Harhur,
52 Bazluth, Mehida, Harsha,
53 Barkos, Sisera, Temah,
54 Neziah, Hatipha

55 Here is a list of the members of the family lines of the servants of Solomon.

Sotai, Hassophereth, Peruda,
56 Jaala, Darkon, Giddel,

[57]Shephatiah, Hattil,
Pokereth-Hazzebaim, Ami

[58]The total number of the members of the family lines of the temple servants and the servants of Solomon was 392.

[59]Many people came up to Judah from the towns of Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Kerub, Addon and Immer. But they weren't able to prove that their families belonged to the people of Israel.

[60]There were 652 of them from the family lines of
Delaiah, Tobiah and Nekoda.

[61]Here is a list of the members of the family lines of the priests.

They were Hobaiah, Hakkoz and Barzillai. Barzillai had married a daughter of Barzillai from Gilead. So he was also called Barzillai.

[62]The priests looked for their family records. But they couldn't find them. So they weren't able to serve as priests. They weren't "clean."

[63]The governor gave them an order. He told them not to eat any of the most sacred food. They had to wait until there was a priest who could use the Urim and Thummim to find out what the LORD wanted them to do.

[64]The total number of the entire group that returned was 42,360. [65]That didn't include their 7,337 male and female slaves. There were also 200 male and female singers. [66]And there were 736 horses, 245 mules, [67]35 camels and 6,720 donkeys.

[68]All of the people arrived at the LORD's temple in Jerusalem. Then some of the leaders of the families brought offerings they chose to give. They would be used for rebuilding the house of God. It would stand in the same place it had been before. [69]The people gave money for the work. It was based on how much they had. They gave 1,100 pounds of gold. They also gave three tons of silver. And they gave 100 sets of clothes for the priests. All of that was added to the

temple treasure.

[70]The priests and Levites settled in their own towns. So did the singers, the men who guarded the gates, and the temple servants. The rest of the people of Israel also settled in their own towns.

The People Rebuild the Altar

Ezra 3

[1]The people of Israel had settled down in their towns. In the seventh month
all of them gathered together in Jerusalem.

[2]Then Jeshua began to build the altar for burnt offerings to honor the God of
Israel. Jeshua was the son of Jehozadak. The other priests helped Jeshua. So
did Zerubbabel and his men. They built the altar in keeping with what is
written in the Law of Moses. Moses was a man of God. Zerubbabel was the
son of Shealtiel.

[3]The people who built the altar were afraid of the nations that were around
them. But they built it anyway. They set it up where it had stood before. They
sacrificed burnt offerings on it to the LORD. They offered the morning and
evening sacrifices on it.

[4]Then they celebrated the Feast of Booths. They did it in keeping with what
is written in the Law. They sacrificed the number of burnt offerings that were
required for each day.

[5]After they celebrated the Feast of Booths, they sacrificed the regular burnt
offerings. They offered the New Moon sacrifices. They also offered the
sacrifices for all of the appointed sacred feasts of the LORD. And they sacrificed
the offerings the people chose to give him. [6]On the first day of the seventh
month they began to offer burnt offerings to the LORD. They did it even though
the foundation of the LORD's temple hadn't been finished yet.

The People Begin to Rebuild the Temple

[7]The people gave money to those who worked with stone and those who
worked with wood. They gave food and drink and olive oil to the people of
Sidon and Tyre. Then those people brought cedar logs down from Lebanon to
the Mediterranean Sea. They floated them down to Joppa. Cyrus, the king of
Persia, authorized them to do it.

[8]It was the second month of the second year after they had arrived at the house of God in Jerusalem. Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, began the work. Jeshua, the son of Jehozadak, helped him. So did everyone else. That included the priests and Levites. It also included the rest of those who had returned to Jerusalem. They had been prisoners in Babylonia. Levites who were 20 years old or more were appointed to be in charge of building the LORD's house.

[9]Those who joined together to direct the work included Jeshua and his sons and brothers. They also included Kadmiel and his sons. And they included the sons of Henadad and all of their sons and brothers. All of those men were Levites. Kadmiel and his sons were members of the family line of Hodaviah.

[10]The builders laid the foundation of the LORD's temple. Then the priests came. They were wearing their special clothes. They brought their trumpets with them. The Levites who belonged to the family line of Asaph also came. They brought their cymbals with them. The priests and Levites took their places to praise the LORD. They did everything just as King David had required them to. [11]They sang to the LORD. They praised him. They gave thanks to him. They said,

> "The LORD is good.
> His faithful love to Israel continues forever."

All of the people gave a loud shout. They praised the LORD. They were glad because the foundation of the LORD's temple had been laid.

[12]But many of the older priests and Levites and family leaders sobbed out loud. They had seen the first temple. So when they saw the foundation of the second temple being laid, they sobbed. Others shouted with joy.

[13]No one could tell the difference between the shouts of joy and the sounds of sobbing. That's because the people made so much noise. The sound was heard far away.

Enemies Oppose the Rebuilding of the Temple

Ezra 4

[1]The enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard about what the people who had returned from Babylonia were doing. They heard that they were building a temple to honor the LORD. He is the God of Israel. [2]The enemies came to Zerubbabel. The family leaders of Israel were with him. The enemies said, “We want to help you build. We’re just like you. We worship your God. We offer sacrifices to him. We’ve been doing that ever since the time of Esarhaddon. He was king of Assyria. He brought our people here.”

[3]Zerubbabel and Jeshua answered them. So did the rest of the family leaders of Israel. They said, “You can’t help us build a temple to honor our God. You aren’t part of us. We’ll build it ourselves. We’ll do it to honor the LORD. He is the God of Israel. Cyrus, the king of Persia, commanded us to build it.”

[4]Then the nations that were around Judah tried to make its people lose hope. They wanted to make them afraid to go on building. [5]So they hired advisers to work against them. They wanted their plans to fail. They did it during the whole time Cyrus was king of Persia. They kept doing it until Darius became king.

Later Enemies Also Oppose the Jews

[6]The enemies of the Jews brought charges against the people of Judah and Jerusalem. It happened when Xerxes began to rule over Persia.

[7]Then Artaxerxes became king of Persia. During his rule, Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel and their friends wrote a letter to him. It was written in the Aramaic language. And it used the Aramaic alphabet.

[8]Rehum and Shimshai also wrote a letter to King Artaxerxes. Rehum was the commanding officer. Shimshai was the secretary. Their letter was against the people of Jerusalem. It said,

[9]We, Rehum and Shimshai, are writing this letter. Rehum is the commanding officer. Shimshai is the secretary. Our friends join us in writing. They include the judges and officials who are in charge of the people from Tripolis, Persia, Erech and Babylon. They are also over the Elamites from Susa. [10]And they are over those who were forced to leave their countries. The great King Ashurbanipal, who is worthy of honor, forced them to leave. He settled them in the city of Samaria. He also settled them in other places west of the Euphrates River.

[11]Here is a copy of the letter that was sent to Artaxerxes.

We are sending this letter to you, King Artaxerxes.

It is from your servants who live west of the Euphrates River.

[12]We want you to know that the Jews who left you and came up to us have gone to Jerusalem. They are rebuilding that evil city. It has caused trouble for a long time. The Jews are making its walls like new again. They are repairing the foundations.

[13]Here is something else we want you to know. Suppose this city is rebuilt. And suppose its walls are made like new again. Then no more taxes, gifts or fees will be collected. And there will be less money for you.

[14]We owe a lot to you. We don’t want to see dishonor brought on you. So we’re sending this letter to tell you what is going on. [15]Then you can have a search made in the official records. Have someone check the records of the kings who ruled before you.

If you do, you will find out that Jerusalem is an evil city. It causes trouble for kings and countries. For a long time the city has refused to let anyone rule over it. That’s why it was destroyed. [16]We want you to know that this city shouldn’t be rebuilt. Its walls shouldn’t be made like new again. If that happens, you won’t have anything left west of the Euphrates River.

[17]The king replied,

I am writing this letter to Rehum, the commanding officer. I am also writing it to Shimshai, the secretary. And I am writing it to your friends who are living in Samaria and in other places west of the Euphrates River.

I give you my greetings.

[18]The letter you sent us has been read to me. It has been explained to me in my language. [19]I gave an order. I had a search made. We found out that Jerusalem has a long history of turning against the kings of the countries that have ruled over it. It has refused to remain under their control. It is always stirring up trouble. [20]Jerusalem has had powerful kings. Some of them ruled over everything west of the Euphrates. Taxes, gifts and fees were paid to them.

[21]So give an order to those men. Make them stop their work. Then the city won't be rebuilt until I give the order. [22]Pay careful attention to this matter. Why should we let this danger grow? That would not be in our best interests.

[23]The copy of the letter of King Artaxerxes was read to Rehum and the secretary Shimshai. It was also read to their friends. Right away they went to the Jews in Jerusalem. They forced them to stop their work.

[24]And so the work on the house of God in Jerusalem came to an end. Nothing more was done on it until the second year that Darius was king of Persia.

Tattenai Sends a Letter to King Darius

Ezra 5

[1]The prophets Haggai and Zechariah prophesied to the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem. They spoke to them in the name of the God of Israel. He had spoken to those prophets. Zechariah belonged to the family line of Iddo.

[2]Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, began to work. So did Jeshua, the son of Jehozadak. They began to rebuild the house of God in Jerusalem. The prophets of God were right there with them. They were helping them.

[3]At that time Tattenai was governor of the land west of the Euphrates River. He and Shethar-Bozenai and their friends went to the Jews. They asked them, "Who authorized you to rebuild this temple? Who told you that you could make this building like new again?" [4]They also asked, "What are the names of the men who are putting up this building?"

[5]But the God of the Jews was watching over their elders. So they didn't have to stop their work. First a report would have to be sent to Darius. Then they would have to receive his answer in writing.

[6]Here is a copy of the letter that was sent to King Darius. It was from Tattenai, the governor of the land west of the Euphrates. Shethar-Bozenai joined him in writing it. So did their friends. They were officials of that land. [7]The report they sent to the king said,

We are sending this letter to you, King Darius.

We give you our most friendly greetings.

[8]We want you to know that we went to the land of Judah. We went to the temple of the great God. The people are building it with large stones. They are putting wooden beams in the walls. The people are working hard. The work is moving ahead very quickly under the direction of the people.

[9]We asked the elders some questions. We said to them, “Who authorized you to rebuild this temple? Who told you that you could make this building like new again?” [10]We also asked them their names. We wanted to write down the names of their leaders for your information.

[11]Here is the answer they gave us. They said,

“We serve the God of heaven and earth. We are rebuilding the temple that was built many years ago. The great King Solomon built it and finished it. [12]But our people made the God of heaven angry. So he handed them over to Nebuchadnezzar from Chaldea. He was king of Babylonia. He destroyed this temple. He forced the Jews to leave their own country. He took them away to Babylonia.

[13]“But King Cyrus gave an order to rebuild this house of God. He gave it in the first year he was king of Babylonia. [14]He even removed some gold and silver articles from the temple of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar had brought them there from the house of God in Jerusalem. He had taken them to the temple in Babylon.

“Then King Cyrus brought them out. He gave them to a man named Sheshbazzar. Cyrus had appointed him as governor. [15]He told him, ‘Take these articles with you. Go and put them in the temple in Jerusalem. Rebuild the house of God in the same place where it stood before.’

[16]“So Sheshbazzar made the trip to Jerusalem. He laid the foundations of the house of God there. From that day until now the people have been working on it. But they haven’t finished it yet.”

[17]If it pleases you, King Darius, let a search be made in the official records of the kings of Babylonia. Find out whether King Cyrus really did give an order to rebuild this house of God in Jerusalem. Then tell us what you decide to do.

King Darius Sends a Reply to Tattenai

Ezra 6

[1]King Darius gave an order. He had a search made in the official records that were stored among the treasures at Babylon. [2]A scroll was found in a safe storeroom at Ecbatana in the land of Media. Here is what was written on it.

This is my official reply to your letter.

[3]In the first year that Cyrus was king, he gave an order. It concerned God's temple in Jerusalem. It said,

Rebuild the temple. Then the Jews can offer sacrifices there. Lay its foundations. The temple must be 90 feet high and 90 feet wide. [4]Its walls must have three layers of large stones. They must also have a layer of beautiful wood. Use money from the royal treasures to pay for everything.

[5]The gold and silver articles from the house of God must be returned. Nebuchadnezzar had taken them from the first temple in Jerusalem. And he had brought them to Babylon. Now they must be returned to their places in the temple at Jerusalem. They must be put in the house of God there.

[6]Tattenai, you are governor of the land west of the Euphrates River. I want you to stay away from the temple in Jerusalem. Shethar-Bozenai and the other officials of that area must also stay away from it. [7]Don't try to stop the work on God's temple. Let the governor of the Jews and their elders rebuild the house of their God. Let them build it in the same place where it stood before.

[8]Here is what I want you to do for the elders of the Jews. Here is how you must help the men who build the house of their God.

Pay all of their expenses from the royal treasures. Use the money you collect from the people who live west of the Euphrates. Don't let the work on the temple stop. [9]Don't fail to give the priests in Jerusalem what they ask for each

day. Give them what they need. Give them young bulls, rams and male lambs. The priests can use them to sacrifice burnt offerings to the God of heaven. Also give them wheat, salt, wine and olive oil. [10]Give them those things so they can offer sacrifices that please the God of heaven. And I want them to pray that things will go well for me and my sons.

[11]Don't change this order. If a man tries to change it, he must be put to death. A pole must be pulled from his house. The pole must be stuck through his body. Then it must be set up where people can see it. Because the man tried to change my royal order, his house must be broken to pieces. [12]God has chosen to put his Name in the temple at Jerusalem. May he wipe out any king or nation that lifts a hand to change this order. May he also wipe out anyone who tries to destroy the temple in Jerusalem.

That's what I have ordered. I am King Darius. Make sure you carry out my order.

The Temple Is Completed and Set Apart to God

[13]The governor Tattenai carried out the order King Darius had sent. So did Shethar-Bozenai and their friends.

[14]The elders of the Jews continued to build the temple. They enjoyed great success because of the preaching of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah. Zechariah belonged to the family line of Iddo.

The people finished building the temple. That's what the God of Israel had commanded them to do. Cyrus and Darius had given orders allowing them to do it. Later, Artaxerxes supplied many things that were needed in the temple. Those three men were kings of Persia.

[15]So the temple was completed on the third day of the month of Adar. It was in the sixth year that Darius was king.

[16]When the house of God was set apart, the people of Israel celebrated with joy. The priests and Levites joined them. So did the rest of those who had returned from Babylonia. [17]When the house of God was set apart to him, the people sacrificed 100 bulls. They also sacrificed 200 rams and 400 male lambs. As a sin offering for the whole nation of Israel, the people sacrificed 12 male goats. One goat was sacrificed for each tribe in Israel.

[18]The priests were appointed to their companies. And the Levites were appointed to their groups. All of them served God at Jerusalem. They served him in keeping with what is written in the Scroll of Moses.

The People Celebrate the Passover Feast

[19]Those who had returned from Babylonia celebrated the Passover Feast. It was on the 14th day of the first month. [20]The priests and Levites had made themselves pure and clean. The Levites killed the Passover lamb for everyone who had returned from Babylonia. They also did it for themselves and their relatives, the priests.

[21]So the people of Israel who had returned ate the Passover lamb. They ate it together with all those who had separated themselves from the practices of their neighbors who weren't Jews. Those practices were "unclean." The people worshiped the LORD. He is the God of Israel.

[22]For seven days they celebrated the Feast of Unleavened Bread with joy. That's because the LORD had filled them with joy. They were glad because he had changed the mind of the king of Persia. So the king had helped them with the work on the house of the God of Israel.

Ezra Comes to Jerusalem

Ezra 7

[1]After all of those things had happened, Ezra came up to Jerusalem from Babylonia. It was during the rule of Artaxerxes. He was king of Persia. Ezra was the son of Seraiah. Seraiah was the son of Azariah. Azariah was the son of Hilkiah. [2]Hilkiah was the son of Shallum. Shallum was the son of Zadok. Zadok was the son of Ahitub. [3]Ahitub was the son of Amariah. Amariah was the son of Azariah. Azariah was the son of Meraioth. [4]Meraioth was the son of Zerahiah. Zerahiah was the son of Uzzi. Uzzi was the son of Bukki. [5]Bukki was the son of Abishua. Abishua was the son of Phinehas. Phinehas was the son of Eleazar. And Eleazar was the son of the chief priest Aaron.

[6]So Ezra came up from Babylonia. He was a teacher. He knew the Law of Moses very well. The LORD had given Israel that law. He is the God of Israel. The king had given Ezra everything he asked for. That's because the powerful hand of the LORD his God helped him.

[7]Some of the people of Israel came up to Jerusalem too. They included priests, Levites and singers. They also included the temple servants and those who guarded the temple gates. It was in the seventh year that Artaxerxes was king.

[8]Ezra arrived in Jerusalem in the fifth month of the seventh year of the king's rule. [9]Ezra had begun his journey from Babylonia on the first day of the first month. He arrived in Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month. That's because the gracious hand of his God helped him.

[10]Ezra had committed himself to study and obey the Law of the LORD. He also wanted to teach the LORD's rules and laws in Israel.

King Artaxerxes Gives Ezra a Letter

[11]Ezra was a priest and teacher. He was an educated man. He knew the LORD's commands and rules for Israel very well. Here is a copy of a letter King

Artaxerxes had given to Ezra. It said,

12 I, Artaxerxes, am writing this letter. I am the greatest king of all.

I have given it to the priest Ezra. He is a teacher of the Law of the God of heaven.

I give you my greetings.

13 Ezra, there are people from Israel in my kingdom. I am giving an order that any of them who want to go to Jerusalem with you can go. The order also allows priests and Levites to go with you.

14 I and my seven advisers are sending you to see how things are going in Judah and Jerusalem. Find out whether the people there are obeying the Law of your God. You have a copy of that law with you.

15 I and my advisers have freely given some silver and gold to the God of Israel. He lives in Jerusalem. Take the silver and gold with you. 16 Also take any other silver and gold you can get from the land of Babylonia. And take the offerings the people and priests choose to give for the temple of their God in Jerusalem. 17 Make sure you use the money to buy bulls, rams and male lambs. Also buy their grain offerings and drink offerings. Then sacrifice them on the altar of the temple of your God in Jerusalem.

18 You and the other Jews can do what you think is best with the rest of the silver and gold. Do what your God wants you to do. 19 Give to the God of Jerusalem all of the articles you are accountable for. Use them for worshiping your God in his temple. 20 You might need to supply some other things for the temple of your God. If you do, take them from among the royal treasures.

21 I, King Artaxerxes, also give this order. It applies to all those who are in charge of the treasures west of the Euphrates River. Make sure you provide anything the priest Ezra might ask you to give. He is a teacher of the Law of the God of heaven. 22 Give Ezra up to three and three-fourths tons of silver. Give him up to 600 bushels of wheat. Give him up to 600 gallons of wine. Also give him up to 600 gallons of olive oil. And give him as much salt as he needs.

[23]Work hard for the temple of the God of heaven. Do everything he has required. I don’t want him to be angry with my kingdom and the kingdom of my sons.

[24]I want you to know that you don’t have any authority to collect taxes, gifts or fees from these people. You can’t collect them from the priests, Levites, singers or those who guard the temple gates. And you can’t collect them from the temple servants or other workers at the house of God in Jerusalem.

[25]Ezra, appoint judges and other court officials. When you do it, use the wisdom your God gives you. Those you appoint should do what is right and fair when they judge people. They should do it for everyone who lives west of the Euphrates. They should do it for everyone who knows the laws of your God. And I want you to teach the people who don’t know those laws.

[26]Anyone who doesn’t obey the law of your God must be punished. The same thing applies to anyone who doesn’t obey my law. The people must be punished in keeping with the laws they have broken. Some of them must be put to death. Others must be forced to leave the places where they live. Others must have their property taken away from them. Still others must be put in prison.

Ezra Praises the LORD

[27]People of Israel, give praise to the LORD. He is the God of our people who lived long ago. He has put it in the king’s heart to bring honor to the LORD’s temple in Jerusalem. The king has honored the LORD in his letter. [28]The LORD has shown his good favor to me. He has caused the king and his advisers to show me their favor. In fact, all of the king’s powerful officials have shown favor to me. The strong hand of the LORD my God helped me. That gave me new strength. So I gathered together leaders from Israel to go up to Jerusalem with me.

The Family Leaders Who Returned to Jerusalem With Ezra

Ezra 8

[1]Many family leaders came up to Jerusalem with me from Babylonia. So did
others who were listed with them. It was during the time when Artaxerxes was
king. Here is a list of those who came.

[2]Gershom came from the family line of Phinehas.
Daniel came from the family line of Ithamar.
Hattush came from the family line of David. [3]Hattush also belonged to
the family of Shecaniah.

Zechariah came from the family line of Parosh. The total number of men
who were listed with him was 150.

[4]Eliehoenai came from the family line of Pahath-Moab. Eliehoenai was the
son of Zerahiah. The total number of men with him was 200.

[5]Shecaniah came from the family line of Zattu. Shecaniah was the son of
Jahaziel. The total number of men with him was 300.

[6]Ebed came from the family line of Adin. Ebed was the son of Jonathan.
The total number of men with him was 50.

[7]Jeshaiah came from the family line of Elam. Jeshaiah was the son of
Athaliah. The total number of men with him was 70.

[8]Zebadiah came from the family line of Shephatiah. Zebadiah was the son
of Michael. The total number of men with him was 80.

[9]Obadiah came from the family line of Joab. Obadiah was the son of
Jehiel. The total number of men with him was 218.

[10]Shelomith came from the family line of Bani. Shelomith was the son of
Josiphiah. The total number of men with him was 160.

[11]Zechariah came from the family line of Bebai. Zechariah was the son of
Bebai. The total number of men with him was 28.

[12]Johanan came from the family line of Azgad. Johanan was the son of Hakkatan. The total number of men with him was 110.

[13]Eliphelet, Jeuel and Shemaiah came from the family line of Adonikam. Some members of their family had gone up to Jerusalem before them. The total number of men with them was 60.

[14]Uthai and Zaccur came from the family line of Bigvai. The total number of men with them was 70.

Ezra Leads Many Jews Back to Jerusalem

[15]I gathered the people together at the waterway that flows toward Ahava. We camped there for three days. I looked for Levites among the people and priests. But I didn't find any. [16]So I sent for Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah, Elnathan and Jarib. I also sent for Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah and Meshullam. All of them were leaders. And I sent for Joiarib and Elnathan. They were very well educated.

[17]I sent all of those men to Iddo. He was the leader in Casiphia. He and his relatives were temple servants there. I told my men what to say to them. I wanted Iddo and his relatives to bring some attendants to us for the house of our God.

[18]The gracious hand of our God helped us. So they brought us Sherebiah. He was a man of ability. He came from the family line of Mahli. Mahli was the son of Levi. Levi was a son of Israel. They also brought us Sherebiah's sons and brothers. The total number of men was 18. [19]And they brought Hashabiah and his brothers and nephews. They brought them together with Jeshaiah. He came from the family line of Merari. The total number of men was 20. [20]They also brought 220 of the temple servants. That was a special group David and his officials had established. They were supposed to help the Levites. All of them were listed by name.

[21]I announced a fast by the waterway that flows toward Ahava. I told the people not to eat any food. In that way, we made ourselves low in the sight of God. We prayed that he would give us and our children a safe journey. We asked him to keep safe everything we owned.

[22]I was ashamed to ask King Artaxerxes for soldiers and horsemen. They

could have kept us safe from enemies on the road. But we had told the king that our God would keep us safe. We had said, “The gracious hand of our God helps everyone who looks to him. But he becomes very angry with anyone who deserts him.”

23So we didn’t eat anything. We prayed to our God about all of those matters. And he answered our prayers.

24Then I set 12 of the leading priests apart. I also set apart Sherebiah, Hashabiah and ten of their relatives.

25I weighed out to them the offering of silver and gold and other articles. They had been given for the house of our God. The king, his advisers and officials, and all of the people of Israel who were there had given them. 26I weighed out 25 tons of silver to those men. I weighed out almost four tons of silver articles. I weighed out almost four tons of gold. 27I weighed out 20 gold bowls. They weighed 19 pounds. I also weighed out two fine articles. The bronze they were made out of was highly polished. They were as priceless as gold.

28I said to those men, “You are set apart to the LORD. So are these articles. The silver and gold were offered to the LORD by those who chose to give them. He is the God of your people. 29Guard all of those things carefully until you weigh them out. Weigh them in the special rooms of the LORD’s temple in Jerusalem. Do it in front of the leading priests and the Levites. Make sure the family leaders of Israel are watching.”

30Then the priests and Levites received the silver and gold and sacred articles. All of them had been weighed out. They were going to take them to the house of our God in Jerusalem.

31On the 12th day of the first month we started out. We left the waterway that flows toward Ahava. And we headed for Jerusalem. The powerful hand of our God helped us. He kept us safe from enemies and robbers along the way. 32So we arrived in Jerusalem. There we rested for three days.

33On the fourth day we weighed out the silver and gold. We also weighed out the sacred articles. We weighed everything in the house of our God. We handed all of it over to the priest Meremoth. He was the son of Uriah. Eleazar, Jozabad and Noadiah were with him. Eleazar was the son of Phinehas. Jozabad was the son of Jeshua. Noadiah was the son of Binnui. Jozabad and Noadiah were Levites. 34Everything was listed by number and weight. And the total weight

was recorded at that time.

35Then the people sacrificed burnt offerings to the God of Israel. They had returned from Babylonia. They offered 12 bulls for the whole nation of Israel. They offered 96 rams and 77 male lambs. All of that was a burnt offering to the LORD. They sacrificed 12 male goats as a sin offering.

36They also handed over the king’s orders. They gave them to the royal officials and governors who ruled over the land west of the Euphrates River. Then those men helped the people. They also did many things for the house of God.

Ezra Prays for the People

Ezra 9

1 After all of those things had been done, the leaders came to me. They said,
“The people of Israel have committed sins. Even the priests and Levites have
sinned. They haven’t kept themselves separate from the nations that are around
them. The LORD hates the practices of those nations. He hates what the
Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites and Jebusites do. He also hates what the
Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians and Amorites do.

2 “The men of Israel have gotten married to the daughters of some of those
people. They’ve also taken some of those women for their sons to marry. So
they’ve mixed our holy nation with the nations around us. By getting married
to women who don’t worship the LORD, we leaders and officials have led the
way in breaking our covenant with him. We haven’t been faithful to him.”

3 When I heard that, I tore my inner robe and my coat. I pulled hair from my
head and beard. I was so shocked I sat down. 4 Then everyone who trembled
with fear because of what the God of Israel had said gathered around me. They
came because the people who had returned from Babylonia had not been
faithful. So I sat there in shock until the time of the evening sacrifice.

5 Then I got up. I had been very sad for quite a while. My inner robe and my
coat were torn. I fell down on my knees. I spread my hands out to the LORD my
God. 6 I prayed,

“You are my God. I’m filled with shame and dishonor. I can hardly look to
you and pray. That’s because our sins are piled up above our heads. Our guilt
reaches all the way to the heavens. 7 We are filled with it. It has been like that
ever since the days of our people who lived long ago.

“Kings of other countries have killed many of us and our kings and priests
with their swords. They’ve forced others to leave their own land. They’ve
taken them away as prisoners. They’ve robbed others. They’ve made still
others feel ashamed and dishonored.

“All of those things have happened to us because we’ve committed so many
sins. And that’s how things still are to this very day.

[8]“But you are the LORD our God. Now you have shown us your favor for a short time. You have allowed a few of us to remain here. Your temple has given us new hope. So you have made things easier for us. You have given us a little rest from our slavery. [9]We are still slaves. But you are our God. You haven’t deserted us. You haven’t left us in our slavery. You have been kind to us. The kings of Persia have seen it. You have given us new life to repair your temple and rebuild it. You have given us a place of safety in Judah and Jerusalem.

[10]“You are our God. What can we say after the way you have blessed us? We said no to what you commanded us to do.

[11]“You gave us your commands through your servants the prophets. You said, ‘You are entering the land to take it as your own. The sinful practices of its people have polluted it. They have filled it with their unclean acts from one end to the other. The LORD hates all of their practices. [12]So don’t let your daughters get married to their sons. And don’t let their daughters marry your sons. Don’t make a peace treaty with them at any time. Then you will be strong. You will eat the good things the land produces. And you will leave all of it to your children as their share. They and their children after them will enjoy it forever.’

[13]“Our evil acts and our terrible sins have brought about the things that have happened to us. You are our God. Because we sinned so much, you should have punished us even more than you have. But you have left many of your people alive. [14]Suppose we don’t obey your commands again. And suppose we continue to get married to people who commit sins that you hate. If we do, you will be so angry with us that you will destroy us. You won’t leave us even a few people. You won’t leave anyone alive.

[15]“LORD, you are the God of Israel. You are holy. You always do what is right. Today you have left many of your people alive. Here we are with all of our guilt. You see the guilt of our sin. Because we have sinned, not one of us can stand in front of you.”

The People Admit They Have Sinned

Ezra 10

1 Ezra was praying and admitting to God that his people had sinned. He was
sobbing and throwing himself down in front of the house of God. Then a large
crowd gathered around him. Men, women and children were there. They too
sobbed bitterly.

2 Shecaniah spoke to Ezra. Shecaniah was the son of Jehiel. He belonged to
the family line of Elam. Shecaniah said, “We haven’t been faithful to our God.
We’ve gotten married to women from the nations that are around us. In spite of
that, there is still hope for Israel. 3 So let’s make a covenant in the sight of our
God. Let’s promise to send away all of those women and their children. That’s
what you have advised us to do. Those who respect our God’s commands have
given us the same advice. We want to do what the Law says.

4 “Get up, Ezra. This matter is in your hands. Do what you need to. We will be
behind you all the way. Be brave and do it.”

5 So Ezra got up. He made the leading priests and Levites and all of the people
of Israel take an oath. He made them promise they would do what Shecaniah
had suggested. And they took the oath.

6 Then Ezra left the house of God. He went to Jehohanan’s room. Jehohanan
was the son of Eliashib. While Ezra was there, he didn’t eat any food. He
didn’t drink any water. That’s because he was filled with sadness. He sobbed
because the people weren’t faithful to the LORD’s commands. Those people
were the ones who had returned from Babylonia.

7 Then an announcement was sent all through Judah and Jerusalem. All those
who had returned were told to gather together in Jerusalem. 8 They were
supposed to come there before three days had passed. If they didn’t, they
would lose all of their property. They would also be removed from the
community of those who had returned. That’s what the officials and elders had
decided.

9 Before the three days were over, all of the men of Judah and Benjamin had

gathered together in Jerusalem. It was the 20th day of the ninth month. They were sitting in the open area in front of the house of God. They were very upset by what they knew would happen. And they were upset because it was raining.

10Then the priest Ezra stood up. He said, “You haven’t been faithful to the LORD. You have gotten married to women from other lands. So you have added to Israel’s guilt. 11Admit to the LORD that you have sinned. Tell the God of your people what you have done. Then do what he wants you to do. Separate yourselves from the nations that are around you. Send away your wives from other lands.”

12The whole community answered with a loud voice. They said, “You are right! We must do as you say. 13But there are a lot of people here. And it’s the rainy season. So we can’t stand outside. Besides, this matter can’t be taken care of in just a day or two. That’s because we have sinned terribly by what we’ve done.

14“Our officials can act for the whole community. Have everyone in our towns who has married a woman from another land come at a certain time. Tell them to come together with the elders and judges of each town. Then our God will turn his burning anger away from us concerning this whole matter.”

15Only a few men opposed that. They included Jonathan and Jahzeiah. Meshullam and the Levite Shabbethai joined them. Jonathan was the son of Asahel. Jahzeiah was the son of Tikvah.

16So those who had returned did what had been suggested. The priest Ezra chose some family leaders. There was one from each family group. All of them were chosen by name. They sat down to check out each case. They started on the first day of the tenth month. 17By the first day of the first month they were finished. They had handled all of the cases of the men who had gotten married to women from other lands.

A List of Those Who Had Married Women From Other Lands

18Among the family lines of the priests, here are the men who had married women from other lands.

Maaseiah, Eliezer, Jarib and Gedaliah
came from the family line of Jeshua and his brothers. Jeshua was the

son of Jehozadak. [19]All of them made a firm promise to send their wives away. Each of those men brought a ram from his flock as a guilt offering.

[20]Hanani and Zebadiah

came from the family line of Immer.

[21]Maaseiah and Elijah

came from the family line of Harim. So did Shemaiah, Jehiel and Uzziah.

[22]Elioenai, Maaseiah and Ishmael

came from the family line of Pashhur. So did Nethanel, Jozabad and Elasah.

[23]Among the Levites, here are the men who had married women from other lands.

There were Jozabad, Shimei and Kelaiah. There were also Pethahiah, Judah and Eliezer. Kelaiah's other name was Kelita.

[24]Eliashib came from the singers.

Shallum, Telem and Uri

came from the men who guarded the temple gates.

[25]Among the other Israelites, here are the men who had married women from other lands.

Ramiah, Izziah, Malkijah and Mijamin

came from the family line of Parosh. So did Eleazar, Malkijah and Benaiah.

[26]Mattaniah, Zechariah and Jehiel

came from the family line of Elam. So did Abdi, Jeremoth and Elijah.

[27]Elioenai, Eliashib and Mattaniah

came from the family line of Zattu. So did Jeremoth, Zabad and Aziza.

[28]Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai and Athlai

came from the family line of Bebai.

[29]Meshullam, Malluch and Adaiah

came from the family line of Bani. So did Jashub, Sheal and Jeremoth.

[30]Adna, Kelal, Benaiah and Maaseiah

came from the family line of Pahath-Moab. So did Mattaniah, Bezalel, Binnui and Manasseh.

[31]Eliezer, Ishijah, Malkijah, Shemaiah and Shimeon

came from the family line of Harim. [32]So did Benjamin, Malluch and Shemariah.

[33]Mattenai, Mattattah, Zabad and Eliphelet

came from the family line of Hashum. So did Jeremai, Manasseh and Shimei.

[34]Maadai, Amram and Uel

came from the family line of Bani. [35]So did Benaiah, Bedeiah, Keluhi, [36]Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib, [37]Mattaniah, Mattenai and Jaasu.

[38]Shimei came from the family line of Binnui. [39]So did Shelemiah, Nathan, Adaiah, [40]Macnadebai, Shashai, Sharai, [41]Azarel, Shelemiah, Shemariah, [42]Shallum, Amariah and Joseph.

[43]Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad and Zebina

came from the family line of Nebo. So did Jaddai, Joel and Benaiah.

[44]All of those men had married women from other lands. Some of them had even had children by those wives.

Nehemiah

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Nehemiah Prays to the LORD

Nehemiah 1

1These are the words of Nehemiah. He was the son of Hacaliah.

I was in the safest place in Susa. I was there in the 20th year that Artaxerxes was king. It was in the month of Kislev. 2At that time Hanani came from Judah with some other men. He was one of my brothers. I asked him and the other men about the Jews who were left alive in Judah. They had returned from Babylonia. I also asked him about Jerusalem.

3He and the men who were with him said to me, “Some of the people who returned are still alive. They are back in the land of Judah. But they are having a hard time. People are making fun of them. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down. Its gates have been burned with fire.”

4When I heard about those things, I sat down and sobbed. For several days I was very sad. I didn’t eat any food. And I prayed to the God of heaven. 5I said,

“LORD, you are the God of heaven. You are a great and wonderful God. You keep the covenant you made with those who love you and obey your commands. You show them your love.

6“Please pay careful attention to my prayer. See how your people are suffering. Please listen to me. I’m praying to you day and night. I’m praying for the people of Israel. We Israelites have committed sins against you. All of us admit it. I and my family have also sinned against you. 7We’ve done some very evil things. We haven’t obeyed the commands, rules and laws you gave your servant Moses.

8“Remember what you told him. You said, ‘If you people are not faithful, I will scatter you among the nations. 9But if you return to me, I will bring you back. If you obey my commands, I will gather you together again. I will bring you back from the farthest places on earth. I will bring you to the special place where I have chosen to put my Name.’

10“LORD, they are your people. They serve you. You used your great strength
and mighty hand to set them free from Egypt. 11Lord, please pay careful
attention to my prayer. Listen to the prayers of all of us. We take delight in
bringing honor to your name. Give me success today. Help King Artaxerxes
show me his favor.”

I was the king’s wine taster.

Artaxerxes Sends Nehemiah to Jerusalem

Nehemiah 2

[1]Wine was brought in for King Artaxerxes. It was the month of Nisan in the 20th year of his rule. I got the wine and gave it to him. I hadn't been sad in front of him before. But now I was. [2]So the king asked me, "Why are you looking so sad? You aren't sick. You must be feeling sad deep down inside."

I was really afraid. [3]But I said to the king, "May you live forever! Why shouldn't I look sad? The city where my people of long ago are buried has been destroyed. And fire has burned up its gates."

[4]The king said to me, "What do you want?"

I prayed to the God of heaven. [5]Then I answered the king, "Are you pleased with me, King Artaxerxes? If it pleases you, send me to Judah. Let me go to the city of Jerusalem. That's where my people are buried. I want to rebuild it."

[6]The queen was sitting beside the king. He turned and asked me, "How long will your journey take? When will you get back?" It pleased the king to send me. So I chose a certain time.

[7]I also said to him, "If it pleases you, may I take some letters with me? I want to give them to the governors of the land west of the Euphrates River. Then they'll help me travel safely through their territory until I arrive in Judah.

[8]"May I also have a letter to Asaph? He takes care of your forest. I want him to give me some logs so I can make beams out of them. I want to use them for the gates of the fort that is by the temple. Some of the logs will be used in the city wall. And I'll need some for the house I'm going to live in." The gracious hand of my God helped me. So the king gave me what I asked for.

[9]Then I went to the governors of the land west of the Euphrates. I gave them the king's letters. He had also sent army officers and horsemen along with me.

[10]Sanballat and Tobiah heard about what was happening. They were very upset that someone had come to work for the good of Israel's people. Sanballat was a Horonite. Tobiah was an official from Ammon.

Nehemiah Checks Out the Walls of Jerusalem

[11]I went to Jerusalem. I stayed there for three days. [12]Then at night I took a few men with me to check out the walls. I hadn't told anyone what my God wanted me to do for Jerusalem. There weren't any donkeys with me except the one I was riding on.

[13]That night I went out through the Valley Gate. I went toward the Jackal Well and the Dung Gate. I checked out the walls of Jerusalem. They had been broken down. I also checked the city gates. Fire had burned them up. [14]I moved on toward the Fountain Gate and the King's Pool. But there wasn't enough room for my donkey to get through. [15]It was still night. I went up the Kidron Valley. I kept checking the wall. Finally, I turned back. I went back in through the Valley Gate.

[16]The officials didn't know where I had gone. They didn't know what I had done either. That's because I hadn't said anything to anyone yet. I hadn't told the priests or nobles or officials. And I hadn't spoken to any others who would be rebuilding the wall.

[17]I said to them, "You can see the trouble we're in. Jerusalem has been destroyed. Fire has burned up its gates. Come on. Let's rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. Then people won't make fun of us anymore." [18]I also told them how the gracious hand of my God was helping me. And I told them what the king had said to me.

They replied, "Let's start rebuilding." So they began that good work.

[19]But Sanballat, the Horonite, heard about it. So did Tobiah, the official from Ammon. Geshem, the Arab, heard about it too. All of them laughed at us. They made fun of us. "What do you think you are doing?" they asked. "Are you turning against the king?"

[20]I answered, "The God of heaven will give us success. We serve him. So we'll start rebuilding the walls. But you don't have any share in Jerusalem. You don't have any claim to it. You don't have any right to worship here."

A List of the People Who Repaired the Wall

Nehemiah 3

[1]The high priest Eliashib and the other priests went to work. They rebuilt the Sheep Gate. They set it apart to God. They put its doors in place. They continued to rebuild the wall up to the Tower of the Hundred. They set the tower apart to God. Then they continued to rebuild the wall all the way to the Tower of Hananel. [2]Some men from Jericho rebuilt the next part of the wall. And Zaccur rebuilt the next part. He was the son of Imri.

[3]The sons of Hassenaah rebuilt the Fish Gate. They laid its beams. They put its doors and metal bolts and bars in place. [4]Meremoth repaired the next part of the wall. He was the son of Uriah. Uriah was the son of Hakkoz. Next to Meremoth, Meshullam made some repairs. He was the son of Berekiah. Berekiah was the son of Meshezabel. Next to Meshullam, Zadok also made some repairs. He was the son of Baana. [5]Some men from Tekoa repaired the next part of the wall. But their nobles refused to do any work at all. They didn't pay any attention to the people who were in charge of the work.

[6]Joiada and Meshullam repaired the Jeshanah Gate. Joiada was the son of Paseah. Meshullam was the son of Besodeiah. Joiada and Meshullam laid the beams of the gate. They put its doors and metal bolts and bars in place. [7]Next to them, some men from Gibeon and Mizpah made repairs. They included Melatiah from Gibeon and Jadon from Meronoth. Those places were under the authority of the governor of the land west of the Euphrates River.

[8]Uzziel repaired the next part of the wall. He made his living by working with gold. He was the son of Harhaiah. Hananiah made repairs on the next part. He made his living by making perfume. So the wall of Jerusalem was made like new again all the way to the Broad Wall. [9]Rephaiah repaired the next part. He was the son of Hur. Rephaiah ruled over half of the territory where Jerusalem was located.

[10]Jedaiah repaired the part of the wall that was across from his house. He was

the son of Harumaph. Hattush made repairs next to Jedaiah. Hattush was the son of Hashabneiah. [11]Malkijah and Hasshub repaired another part of the wall. They also repaired the Tower of the Ovens. Malkijah was the son of Harim. Hasshub was the son of Pahath-Moab.

[12]Shallum repaired the next part. His daughters helped him. He was the son of Hallohesh. Shallum ruled over the other half of the territory where Jerusalem was located.

[13]Hanun repaired the Valley Gate. Some people who lived in Zanoah helped him. They rebuilt it. They put its doors and metal bolts and bars in place. They also repaired 500 yards of the wall. They repaired it all the way to the Dung Gate.

[14]Malkijah repaired the Dung Gate. He was the son of Recab. Malkijah ruled over the territory where Beth Hakkerem was located. He rebuilt the gate. He put its doors and metal bolts and bars in place.

[15]Shallun repaired the Fountain Gate. He was the son of Col-Hozeh. Shallun ruled over the territory where Mizpah was located. He rebuilt the gate. He put a roof over it. And he put the doors and metal bolts and bars of the gate in place. He also repaired the wall by the Pool of Siloam. It was near the King’s Garden. Shallun repaired the wall as far as the steps that go down from the City of David.

[16]Next to Shallun, Nehemiah made some repairs. He was the son of Azbuk. Nehemiah ruled over half of the territory where Beth Zur was located. He repaired the wall up to the part that was across from the tombs of David. He repaired it all the way to the man-made pool and the House of Heroes.

[17]Next to Nehemiah, some Levites made repairs. They worked under the direction of Rehum. He was the son of Bani. Next to Rehum, Hashabiah made repairs for his territory. He ruled over half of the territory where Keilah was located. [18]Next to him, other people from that territory made some repairs. They worked under the direction of Binnui. He was the son of Henadad. Binnui ruled over the other half of the territory where Keilah was located.

[19]Next to him, Ezer repaired another part of the wall. He was the son of Jeshua. Ezer ruled over the territory where Mizpah was located. He repaired

the part that was across from the place that went up to the storeroom where the weapons were kept. He repaired the wall up to the angle.

[20]Next to him, Baruch worked hard to repair another part of the wall. He was the son of Zabbai. He repaired the part from the angle to the entrance to Eliashib's house. Eliashib was high priest. [21]Next to Baruch, Meremoth repaired another part. He was the son of Uriah. Uriah was the son of Hakkoz. Meremoth repaired the part from the entrance to Eliashib's house to the end of the house.

[22]Next to Meremoth, some priests from the surrounding area made repairs. [23]Next to them, Benjamin and Hasshub repaired the part of the wall that was in front of their house. Next to them, Azariah repaired the part that was beside his house. He was the son of Maaseiah. Maaseiah was the son of Ananiah.

[24]Next to Azariah, Binnui made repairs on another part. Binnui was the son of Henadad. Binnui repaired the wall from Azariah's house to the angle and the corner. [25]Palal worked across from the angle. He was the son of Uzai. Palal also worked across from the tower that was part of the upper palace. It was near the courtyard of the guard. Next to him, Pedaiah made some repairs. He was the son of Parosh.

[26]The temple servants who lived on the hill of Ophel helped him. They repaired the wall up to the part that was across from the Water Gate. It was toward the east and the palace tower. [27]Next to the temple servants, the men from Tekoa repaired another part. They made repairs from the large palace tower to the wall of Ophel.

[28]The priests made repairs above the Horse Gate. Each priest repaired the part of the wall that was in front of his own house. [29]Next to them, Zadok made repairs across from his house. He was the son of Immer. Next to Zadok, Shemaiah made some repairs. He was the son of Shecaniah. Shemaiah guarded the East Gate.

[30]Next to him, Hananiah and Hanun repaired another part of the wall. Hananiah was the son of Shelemiah. Hanun was the sixth son of Zalaph. Next to Hananiah and Hanun, Meshullam made some repairs. He was the son of Berekiah. Meshullam repaired the part that was across from where he lived.

[31]Next to him, Malkijah made some repairs. He made his living by working with gold. He repaired the wall up to the house of the temple servants and the

traders. It was across from the Inspection Gate. He also repaired the wall as far as the room that was above the corner. [32]The traders and those who made their living by working with gold made some repairs. They repaired the wall from the room above the corner to the Sheep Gate.

Nehemiah's Enemies Oppose Him

Nehemiah 4

[1]Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall. So he burned with anger. He became very upset. He made fun of the Jews. [2]He spoke to his friends and the army of Samaria. He said, "What are those Jews trying to do? Can they make their city wall like new again? Will they offer sacrifices? Can they finish everything in a single day? The stones from their city wall and buildings are piled up like trash. And everything has been badly burned. Can they use those stones to rebuild everything again?"

[3]Tobiah from Ammon was at Sanballat's side. He said, "What are they building? They're putting up a stone wall. But suppose a fox climbs on top of it. Even that will break it down!"

[4]I prayed to God. I said, "Our God, please listen to our prayer. Some people hate us. They're making fun of us. So let others make fun of them. Let them be carried off like stolen goods. Let them be taken to another country as prisoners. [5]Don't hide your eyes from their guilt. Don't forgive their sins. They have made fun of the builders."

[6]So we rebuilt the wall. We repaired it until all of it was half as high as we wanted it to be. The people worked with all their heart.

[7]But Sanballat and Tobiah heard that Jerusalem's walls continued to be repaired. The Arabs and some people from Ammon heard the same thing. Some men from Ashdod heard about it too. They heard that the gaps in the wall were being filled in. So they burned with anger. [8]All of them made evil plans to come and fight against Jerusalem. They wanted to stir up trouble against it.

[9]But we prayed to our God. We put guards on duty day and night to watch out for danger.

[10]During that time, the people in Judah spoke up. They said, "The workers

are getting weaker and weaker all the time. Broken stones are piled up everywhere. They are in our way. So we can't rebuild the wall."

[11]And our enemies said, "We will be right there among them. We'll kill them. We'll put an end to their work. We'll do it before they even know it or see us."

[12]Then the Jews who lived near our enemies came to us. They told us ten times, "No matter where you are, they'll attack us."

[13]So I stationed some people behind the lowest parts of the wall. That's where our enemies could easily attack us. I stationed the people family by family. They had their swords, spears and bows with them.

[14]I looked things over. Then I stood up and spoke to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people. I said, "Don't be afraid of your enemies. Remember the Lord. He is great and powerful. So fight for your brothers and sisters. Fight for your sons and daughters. Fight for your wives and homes."

[15]Our enemies heard that we knew what they were trying to do. They heard that God had blocked their evil plans. So all of us returned to the wall. Each of us did our own work.

[16]From that day on, half of my men did the work. The other half were given spears, shields, bows and armor. The officers stationed themselves behind all of the people of Judah. [17]The people continued to build the wall. Those who carried supplies did their work with one hand. They held a weapon in the other hand. [18]Each of the builders wore his sword at his side as he worked. But the man who blew the trumpet stayed with me.

[19]Then I spoke to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people. I said, "This is a big job. It covers a lot of territory. We're separated too far from one another along the wall. [20]When you hear the sound of the trumpet, join us at that location. Our God will fight for us!"

[21]So we continued the work. Half of the men held spears. We worked from the first light of sunrise until the stars came out at night. [22]At that time I also spoke to the people. I told them, "Have every man and his helper stay inside Jerusalem at night. Then they can guard us at night. And they can work during the day."

[23]My relatives and I didn't take our clothes off. My men and the guards didn't take theirs off either. Each man kept his weapon with him, even when he went to get water.

Nehemiah Helps Some Poor People

Nehemiah 5

[1]Some men and their wives cried out against their Jewish brothers and sisters.
[2]Some of them were saying, “We and our sons and daughters have increased
our numbers. Now there are many of us. We have to get some grain so we can
eat and stay alive.”

[3]Others were saying, “We’re being forced to sell our fields, vineyards and
homes. We have to do it to buy grain. There isn’t enough food for everyone.”

[4]Still others were saying, “We’ve had to borrow money. We needed it to pay
the king’s tax on our fields and vineyards. [5]We belong to the same family lines
as the rest of our people. Our sons and daughters are as good as theirs. But
we’ve had to sell them off as slaves. Some of our daughters have already been
made slaves. But we can’t do anything about it. That’s because our fields and
vineyards now belong to others.”

[6]I heard them when they cried out. And I burned with anger when I heard
what they were saying. [7]I thought it over for a while. Then I brought charges
against the nobles and officials. I told them, “You are forcing your own people
to pay too much interest!”

So I called together a large group of people to handle the matter. [8]I said, “Our
Jewish brothers and sisters were sold to other nations. We’ve done everything
we could to buy them back and bring them home. But look at what you are
doing! You are actually selling your own people! Now we’ll have to buy them
back too!”

The people kept quiet. They couldn’t think of anything to say.

[9]So I continued, “What you are doing isn’t right. Shouldn’t you show respect
for our God? Shouldn’t you live in a way that will keep our enemies from
making fun of us?

[10]“I’m lending the people money and grain. So are my relatives and my men.
But you must stop charging too much interest!

[11]“Give the people’s fields back to them. Give them back their vineyards,

olive groves and houses. Do it right away. You have charged them too much. Give everything back to them. Give them back the one percent on the money, grain, fresh wine and olive oil you have charged them."

12"We'll give it back," they said. "And we won't require anything more from them. We'll do exactly as you say."

Then I sent for the priests. I made the nobles and officials take an oath to do what they had promised. 13I also shook out my pockets and emptied them. I said, "Some of you might decide not to keep the promise you have made. If that happens, may God shake you out of your house! May he empty you of everything you own! May you be left with nothing at all!"

The whole community said, "Amen." They praised the LORD. And the leaders did what they had promised to do.

14And that's not all. I was appointed as governor of Judah in the 20th year that Artaxerxes was king of Persia. I remained in that position until his 32nd year. During those 12 years, I and my relatives didn't eat the food that was provided for my table.

15But there had been governors before me. They had put a heavy load on the people. They had taken a pound of silver from each of them. They had also taken food and wine from them. Their officials had acted like high and mighty rulers over them.

But I have great respect for God. So I didn't act like that. 16Instead, I spent all of my time working on this wall. All of my men were gathered there to work on it too. We didn't receive any land for ourselves.

17Many people ate at my table. They included 150 Jews and officials. They also included leaders who came to us from the nations that were around us. 18Each day one ox, six of the best sheep and some birds were prepared for me. Every ten days plenty of wine of all kinds was brought in as well. In spite of all that, I never asked for the food that was provided for my table. That's because the people were already paying too many taxes.

19You are my God. Please remember me. Show me your favor. Keep in mind everything I've done for these people.

Nehemiah's Enemies Continue to Oppose Him

Nehemiah 6

[1]Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem, the Arab, heard about what I had done. So did the rest of our enemies. All of them heard I had rebuilt the wall. In fact, they heard there weren't any gaps left in it. But up to that time I hadn't put up the gates at the main entrances to the city.

[2]Sanballat and Geshem sent me a message. They said, "Come. Let's talk with one another. Let's meet in one of the villages on the flatlands of Ono."

But they were planning to harm me. [3]So I sent messengers to them with my answer. I replied, "I'm working on a huge project. So I can't get away. Why should the work stop while I leave it? Why should I go down and talk with you?"

[4]They sent me the same message four times. And I gave them the same answer each time.

[5]Sanballat sent his helper to me a fifth time. He brought the same message. He was carrying a letter that wasn't sealed. [6]It said,

"A report is going around among the nations. Geshem says it's true. We hear that you and the other Jews are planning to turn against the Persian rulers. And that's why you are building the wall.

"It's also reported that you are about to become their king. [7]People say that you have even appointed prophets to make an announcement about you. In Jerusalem they are going to say, 'Judah has a king!' That report will get back to the king of Persia. So come. Let's talk things over."

[8]I sent a reply to Sanballat. I said, "What you are saying isn't really happening. You are just making it up."

[9]All of them were trying to frighten us. They thought, "Their hands will get too weak to do the work. So it won't be completed."

But I prayed to God. I said, "Make my hands stronger."

[10]One day I went to Shemaiah's house. He was the son of Delaiah. Delaiah was the son of Mehetabel. Shemaiah had shut himself up in his home. He said, "Let's go to God's house. Let's meet inside the temple. Let's close the temple doors. Some people want to kill you. They will come at night."

[11]But I said, "Should a man like me run away? Should someone like me go into the temple just to save his life? No! I won't go!"

[12]I realized that God hadn't sent Shemaiah. Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. That's why he had prophesied lies about me. [13]They had hired him to scare me. They wanted me to commit a sin by doing what he said. That would give me a bad name in the community. People would find fault with me and my work.

[14]You are my God. Remember what Tobiah and Sanballat have done. Also remember the prophet Noadiah. She and the rest of the prophets have been trying to scare me.

The City Wall Is Completed

[15]So the city wall was completed on the 25th day of the month of Elul. It was finished in 52 days. [16]All of our enemies heard about it. All of the nations that were around us became afraid. They weren't sure of themselves anymore. They realized that our God had helped us finish the work.

[17]In those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters to Tobiah. And replies from Tobiah came back to them. [18]Many people in Judah had taken an oath that they would be faithful to him. That's because he was Shecaniah's son-in-law. Shecaniah was the son of Arah. Tobiah's son Jehohanan had married Meshullam's daughter. Meshullam was the son of Berekiah. [19]Tobiah's friends kept reporting to me the good things he did. They also kept telling him what I said. And Tobiah himself sent letters to scare me.

Nehemiah 7

[1]The wall had been rebuilt. I had put up the gates at the main entrances to the city. Those who guarded the gates were appointed to their positions. So were the singers and Levites. [2]I put my brother Hanani in charge of Jerusalem. Hananiah helped him. Hananiah was commander of the fort that was by the temple. Hanani was an honest man. He had more respect for God than most people do.

[3]I said to Hanani and Hananiah, “Don’t open the gates of Jerusalem until the hottest time of the day. Tell the men who guard the gates to shut them before they go off duty. Make sure they lock them up tight. Also appoint as guards some people who live in Jerusalem. Station some of them at their appointed places. Station others near their own homes.”

A List of People Who Returned to Judah

[4]Jerusalem was large. It had a lot of room. But only a few people lived there. The houses hadn’t been rebuilt yet. [5]So my God stirred me up to gather the people together. He also told me to gather the nobles and officials together with them. He wanted me to list them by families. I found the family history of those who had been the first to return. Here is what I found written in it.

[6]Nebuchadnezzar had taken many Jews away from the land of Judah. He had forced them to go to Babylonia as prisoners. Now they returned to Jerusalem and Judah. All of them went back to their own towns. Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylonia. [7]The leaders of the Jews included Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah and Nahamani. They also included Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum and Baanah.

Here is a list of the men of Israel who returned home.

[8]There were 2,172 from the family line of Parosh.

[9]There were 372 from Shephatiah.

[10]There were 652 from Arah.

[11]There were 2,818 from Pahath-Moab through the family line of Jeshua and Joab.

[12]There were 1,254 from Elam.

[13]There were 845 from Zattu.

[14]There were 760 from Zaccai.

[15]There were 648 from Binnui.

[16]There were 628 from Bebai.

[17]There were 2,322 from Azgad.

[18]There were 667 from Adonikam.

[19]There were 2,067 from Bigvai.

[20]There were 655 from Adin.

[21]There were 98 from Ater through the family line of Hezekiah.

[22]There were 328 from Hashum.

[23]There were 324 from Bezai.

[24]There were 112 from Hariph.

[25]There were 95 from Gibeon.

[26]There were 188 from the men of Bethlehem and Netophah.

[27]There were 128 from Anathoth.

[28]There were 42 from Beth Azmaveth.

[29]There were 743 from Kiriath Jearim, Kephirah and Beeroth.

[30]There were 621 from Ramah and Geba.

[31]There were 122 from Micmash.

[32]There were 123 from Bethel and Ai.

[33]There were 52 from Nebo.

[34]There were 1,254 from the other Elam.

[35]There were 320 from Harim.

[36]There were 345 from Jericho.

[37]There were 721 from Lod, Hadid and Ono.

[38]There were 3,930 from Senaah.

[39]Here is a list of the priests.

There were 973 from the family line of Jedaiah through the line of Jeshua.

[40]There were 1,052 from Immer.

[41]There were 1,247 from Pashhur.

[42]There were 1,017 from Harim.

[43]The Levites belonged to
the family line of Jeshua through Kadmiel through the line of Hodaviah. The total number of men was 74.

[44]The singers belonged to
the family line of Asaph. The total number of men was 148.

[45]The men who guarded the temple gates belonged to
the family lines of Shallum, Ater, Talmon, Akkub, Hatita and Shobai. The total number of men was 138.

[46]Here is a list of the members of the family lines of the temple servants.

Ziha, Hasupha, Tabbaoth,

[47]Keros, Sia, Padon,

[48]Lebana, Hagaba, Shalmai,

[49]Hanan, Giddel, Gahar,

[50]Reaiah, Rezin, Nekoda,

[51]Gazzam, Uzza, Paseah,

[52]Besai, Meunim, Nephussim,

[53]Bakbuk, Hakupha, Harhur,
[54]Bazluth, Mehida, Harsha,
[55]Barkos, Sisera, Temah,
[56]Neziah, Hatipha

[57]Here is a list of the members of the family lines of the servants of Solomon.

Sotai, Sophereth, Perida,
[58]Jaala, Darkon, Giddel,
[59]Shephatiah, Hattil,
Pokereth-Hazzebaim, Amon

[60]The total number of the members of the family lines of the temple servants and the servants of Solomon was 392.

[61]Many people came up to Judah from the towns of Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Kerub, Addon and Immer. But they weren't able to prove that their families belonged to the people of Israel.

[62]There were 642 of them from the family lines of
Delaiah, Tobiah and Nekoda.

[63]Here is a list of the members of the family lines of the priests.

They were
Hobaiah, Hakkoz and Barzillai. Barzillai had married a daughter of Barzillai from Gilead. So he was also called Barzillai.

[64]The priests looked for their family records. But they couldn't find them. So they weren't able to serve as priests. They weren't "clean."

[65]The governor gave them an order. He told them not to eat any of the most sacred food. They had to wait until there was a priest who could use the Urim and Thummim to get decisions from the LORD.

66The total number of the entire group that returned was 42,360. 67That didn’t include their 7,337 male and female slaves. There were also 245 male and female singers. 68And there were 736 horses, 245 mules, 6935 camels and 6,720 donkeys.

70Some of the family leaders helped pay for the work. The governor gave 19 pounds of gold to be added to the temple treasure. He also gave 50 bowls and 530 sets of clothes for the priests. 71Some of the family leaders gave 375 pounds of gold for the work. They also gave one and a third tons of silver. All of that was added to the temple treasure. 72The rest of the people gave a total of 375 pounds of gold and one and a fourth tons of silver. They also gave 67 sets of clothes for the priests.

73The priests and Levites settled down in their own towns. So did the singers, the temple servants and the men who guarded the gates. The rest of the people of Israel also settled in their own towns.

Ezra Reads the Law to the People

The people of Israel had settled down in their towns. In the seventh month,

Nehemiah 8

[1]all of them gathered together. They went to the open area in front of the Water Gate. They told Ezra to bring out the Scroll of the Law of Moses. The LORD had given Israel that law so they would obey him. Ezra was a teacher of the law.

[2]The priest Ezra brought the Law out to the whole community. It was the first day of the seventh month. The group was made up of men and women and everyone who was old enough to understand what Ezra was going to read.

[3]He read the Law to them from sunrise until noon. He did it as he faced the open area in front of the Water Gate. He read it to the men, women and others who could understand. And all of the people paid careful attention as Ezra was reading the Scroll of the Law.

[4]Ezra, the teacher, stood on a high wooden stage. It had been built for the occasion. Mattithiah, Shema and Anaiah stood at his right side. So did Uriah, Hilkiah and Maaseiah. Pedaiah, Mishael and Malkijah stood at his left side. So did Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah and Meshullam.

[5]Ezra opened the scroll. All of the people could see him. That's because he was standing above them. As he opened the scroll, the people stood up. [6]Ezra praised the LORD. He is the great God. All of the people lifted up their hands. They said, "Amen! Amen!" Then they bowed down. They turned their faces toward the ground. And they worshiped the LORD.

[7]The Levites taught the Law to the people. They remained standing while the Levites taught them. The Levites who were there included Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai and Hodiah. They also included Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan and Pelaiah. [8]All of those Levites read parts of the Scroll of the Law of God to the people. They made it clear to them. They told them what it meant. So the people were able to understand what was being read.

[9]Then Nehemiah and Ezra spoke up. So did the Levites who were teaching the people. All of those men said to the people, "This day is set apart to honor the LORD your God. So don't sob. Don't be sad." All of the people had been sobbing as they listened to the words of the Law. Nehemiah was governor. Ezra was a priest and a teacher of the law.

10 Nehemiah said, “Go and enjoy some good food and sweet drinks. Send
some of it to those who don’t have any. This day is set apart to honor our Lord.
So don’t be sad. The joy of the LORD makes you strong.”

11 The Levites calmed all of the people down. They said, “Be quiet. This is a
sacred day. So don’t be sad.”

12 Then all of the people went away to eat and drink. They shared their food
with others. They celebrated with great joy. Now they understood the words
they had heard. That’s because everything had been explained to them.

13 All of the family leaders gathered around Ezra, the teacher. So did the
priests and Levites. All of them paid attention to the words of the Law. It was
the second day of the month.

14 The LORD had given the Law through Moses. He wanted the people of
Israel to obey it. It is written there that they were supposed to live in booths
during the Feast of Booths. That Feast was celebrated in the seventh month.
15 They were also supposed to spread the message all through their towns and
in Jerusalem. They were supposed to announce, “Go out into the central hill
country. Bring back some branches from olive and wild olive trees. Also bring
some from myrtle, palm and shade trees. Use the branches to make booths.”

16 So the people went out and brought some branches back. They built
themselves booths on their own roofs. They made them in their courtyards.
They put them up in the courtyards of the house of God. They built them in the
open area in front of the Water Gate. And they built them in the open area in
front of the Gate of Ephraim.

17 All those who had returned from Babylonia made booths. They lived in
them during the Feast of Booths. They hadn’t celebrated the Feast with so
much joy for a long time. In fact, they had never celebrated it like that from the
days of Joshua, the son of Nun, until that very day. So their joy was very great.

18 Day after day, Ezra read parts of the Scroll of the Law of God to them. He
read it out loud from the first day to the last. They celebrated the Feast of
Booths for seven days. On the eighth day they gathered together. They
followed the required rules for celebrating the Feast.

The People of Israel Pray to the LORD

Nehemiah 9

[1]It was the 24th day of the seventh month. The people of Israel gathered together again. They didn't eat any food. They wore black clothes. They put dust on their heads. [2]The people of Israel separated themselves from everyone else. They stood and admitted they had sinned. They also admitted that their people before them had done evil things.

[3]They stood where they were. They listened while the Levites read parts of the Scroll of the Law of the LORD their God. They listened for a fourth of the day. They spent another fourth of the day admitting their sins. They also worshiped the LORD their God.

[4]The Levites stood on the stairs. They included Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel and Shebaniah. They also included Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani and Kenani. With loud voices they called out to the LORD their God. [5]Then some Levites spoke up. They included Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani and Hashabneiah. They also included Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah and Pethahiah. They said to the people, "Stand up. Praise the LORD your God. He lives for ever and ever!"

So the people said, "LORD, may your glorious name be praised. May it be lifted high above every other name that is blessed and praised. [6]You are the one and only LORD. You made the heavens. You made even the highest heavens. You created all of the stars in the sky. You created the earth and everything that is on it. And you made the oceans and everything that is in them. You give life to everything. Every living being in heaven worships you.

[7]"You are the LORD God. You chose Abram. You brought him out of Ur in Babylonia. You named him Abraham. [8]You knew that his heart was faithful to you. And you made a covenant with him. You promised to give to his children after him a land of their own. It was the land of the Canaanites, Hittites and Amorites. The Perizzites, Jebusites and Girgashites also lived there. You have kept your promise. That's because you always do what is right and fair.

[9]"You saw how our people suffered long ago in Egypt. You heard them cry out to you at the Red Sea. [10]You did miraculous signs and wonders against

Pharaoh. You sent plagues on all of his officials. In fact, you sent them on all of the people of Egypt. You knew how they treated our people. They looked down on them. But you made a name for yourself. That name remains to this very day.

11“You parted the Red Sea for the people of Israel. They passed through it on dry ground. But you threw into the sea those who chased them. They sank down like a stone into the mighty waters. 12By day you led them with a pillar of cloud. At night you led them with a pillar of fire. It gave them light to show them the way you wanted them to go.

13“You came down on Mount Sinai. From heaven you spoke to our people. You gave them rules and laws. Those laws are right and fair. You gave them orders and commands that are good. 14You taught them about your holy Sabbath day. You gave them commands, orders and laws. You did it through your servant Moses.

15“When the people were hungry, you gave them bread from heaven. When they were thirsty, you brought them water out of a rock.

“You told them to go into the land of Canaan. You told them to take it as their own. It was the land you had promised to give them. You had even raised your hand and taken an oath to do it.

16“But our people before us became proud and stubborn. They didn’t obey your commands. 17They refused to listen to you. They forgot the miracles you had done among them. So they became stubborn. When they refused to obey you, they appointed a leader for themselves. They wanted to go back to being slaves in Egypt. But you are a God who forgives. You are gracious. You are tender and kind. You are slow to get angry. You are full of love. So you didn’t desert them.

18“They made for themselves a metal statue of a god that looked like a calf. They said, ‘Here is your god. He brought you up out of Egypt.’ And they did evil things that dishonored you. But you still didn’t desert them.

19“Because you loved them so much, you didn’t leave them in the desert. During the day the pillar of cloud didn’t stop guiding them on their path. At night the pillar of fire didn’t stop shining on the way you wanted them to go. 20You gave them your good Spirit to teach them. You didn’t hold back your manna from their mouths. And you gave them water when they were thirsty. 21For 40 years you took good care of them in the desert. They had everything

they needed. Their clothes didn’t wear out. And their feet didn’t swell up.

22“You gave them kingdoms and nations. You even gave them lands far away.
They took over the country of Sihon. He was king of Heshbon. They also took
over the country of Og. He was king of Bashan. 23You gave them as many
children as there are stars in the sky. You told their parents to enter the land.
You told them to take it over. And you brought their children into it. 24Their
children went into the land. They took it as their own. You brought the people
of Canaan under Israel’s control. The Canaanites lived in the land. But you
handed them over to Israel. You also handed their kings and the other nations
in the land over to Israel. You allowed Israel to deal with them just as they
wanted to.

25“Your people captured cities that had high walls around them. They also
took over the rich land in Canaan. They took houses that were filled with all
kinds of good things. They took over wells that had already been dug. They
took many vineyards, olive groves and fruit trees. They ate until they were very
full and satisfied. They were filled with joy because you were so good to them.

26“But they didn’t obey you. Instead, they turned against you. They turned
their backs on your law. They killed your prophets. The prophets had warned
them to turn back to you. But they did very evil things that dishonored you.

27“So you handed them over to their enemies, who beat them down. Then
they cried out to you. From heaven you heard them. You loved them very
much. So you sent leaders to help them. The leaders saved them from the
powerful hand of their enemies.

28“But as soon as the people were enjoying peace and rest again, they did
what was evil in your sight. Then you handed them over to their enemies. So
their enemies ruled over them. When they cried out to you again, you heard
them from heaven. You loved them very much. So you saved them time after
time.

29“You warned them to obey your law again. But they became proud. They
didn’t obey your commands. They sinned against your rules. Anyone who
obeys them will live by them. But the people didn’t care about that. They
turned their backs on you. They became very stubborn. They refused to listen
to you.

30“For many years you put up with them. By your Spirit you warned them
through your prophets. In spite of that, they didn’t pay any attention. So you
handed them over to the nations that were around them. 31But you loved them

very much. So you didn’t put an end to them. You didn’t desert them. That’s because you are a gracious God. You are tender and kind.

32“Our God, you are great, mighty and wonderful. You keep the covenant you made with us. You show us your love. So don’t let all of our suffering seem like a small thing in your sight. We’ve suffered greatly. So have our kings and leaders. So have our priests and prophets. Our people who lived long ago also suffered. And all of your people are suffering right now. In fact, we’ve been suffering from the time of the kings of Assyria until today.

33“In spite of everything that has happened to us, you have been fair. You have been faithful in what you have done. But we did what was wrong. 34Our kings and leaders didn’t follow your law. Our priests and our people before us didn’t follow it either. They didn’t pay any attention to your commands. They didn’t listen to the warnings you gave them. 35They didn’t serve you. They didn’t turn from their evil ways. They didn’t obey you even when they had a kingdom. You were very good to them. And they enjoyed it. You gave them a rich land. It had plenty of room in it. But they still didn’t serve you.

36“Now look at us. We are slaves today. We’re slaves in the land you gave our people long ago. You gave it to them so they could eat its fruit and the other good things it produces. 37But we have sinned against you. So its great harvest goes to the kings of Persia. You have placed them over us. They rule over our bodies and cattle just as they please. And we are suffering terribly.

The People Agree to Obey God’s Law

38“So we are making a firm agreement. We’re writing it down. Our leaders are stamping it with their seals. And so are our Levites and priests.”

Nehemiah 10

[1]Here are the names of those who stamped the agreement with their seals.

The governor Nehemiah, the son of Hacaliah

Zedekiah, [2]Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah,
[3]Pashhur, Amariah, Malkijah,
[4]Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluch,
[5]Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah,
[6]Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch,
[7]Meshullam, Abijah, Mijamin,
[8]Maaziah, Bilgai, Shemaiah

They were the priests.

[9]Here are the names of the Levites.

Jeshua, the son of Azaniah
Binnui, one of the sons of Henadad
Kadmiel

[10]Here are the names of those who helped them.

Shebaniah, Hodiah, Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan,
[11]Mica, Rehob, Hashabiah,
[12]Zaccur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah,
[13]Hodiah, Bani, Beninu

[14]Here are the names of 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, Baanah

[28]The rest of the people gathered together. They included the priests, the Levites and the men who guarded the gates. They included the singers and temple servants. They also included all those who separated themselves from the surrounding nations to obey the Law of God. All of those men brought their wives with them. And they brought all of their sons and daughters who were old enough to understand what was being agreed to. [29]All of the men joined the nobles of their people. They made a firm agreement. They put themselves under a curse and took an oath. They promised to follow the Law of God. It had been given through Moses, the servant of God. They promised to obey carefully all of the commands, rules and laws of the LORD our Lord.

[30]The priests, Levites and people said, “We promise not to give our daughters to be married to men from the nations that are around us. And we promise not to let their daughters get married to our sons.

31“The people around us will bring goods and grain to sell on the Sabbath day. But we won’t buy anything from them on the Sabbath. In fact, we won’t buy anything from them on any holy day. Every seventh year we won’t farm the land. And we’ll forgive people what they owe us.

32“We will be accountable for carrying out the commands for serving in the house of our God. Each of us will give an eighth of an ounce of silver every year. 33It will pay for the holy bread that is placed on the table in the temple. It will pay for the regular grain offerings and burnt offerings. It will pay for the offerings on the Sabbath days. It will pay for the offerings at the New Moon Feasts and appointed feasts. It will pay for the holy offerings. It will be used for sin offerings to pay for the sin of Israel. It will also pay for everything else that needs to be done at the house of our God.

34“We are the priests, Levites and people. We have cast lots to decide when each of our families should bring a gift of wood to the house of our God. They will bring it at certain appointed times every year. The wood will be burned on the altar of the LORD our God. That’s what the Law requires.

35“We will also be accountable for bringing the first share of our crops each year. And we’ll bring the first share of every fruit tree. We’ll bring them to the LORD’s house.

36“Each of us will bring our oldest son to the priests who serve there. We’ll also bring the male animals that were born first to their mothers among our cattle, herds and flocks. We’ll bring them to the house of our God. That’s what the Law requires.

37“We will also bring the first part of the meal we grind. We’ll bring the first of our grain offerings. We’ll bring the first share of fruit from all of our trees. And we’ll bring the first share of our olive oil and fresh wine. We’ll give all of those things to the priests. They’ll put them in the storerooms of the house of our God.

“And we’ll give a tenth of our crops to the Levites. They collect the tenth shares. They do it in all of the towns where we work. 38A priest from Aaron’s family line must go with the Levites when they receive the tenth shares. And the Levites must bring a tenth of those shares up to the house of our God. They must put it in the rooms where the treasures are stored.

39“The people of Israel, including the Levites, must bring their gifts. They must bring grain, olive oil and fresh wine. They must put them in the storerooms where the articles for the temple are kept. That’s where the priests

stay when they are serving at the temple. The singers and the men who guard the gates also stay there.

“We won’t forget to take care of the house of our God.”

People Are Chosen to Live in Jerusalem

Nehemiah 11

[1]The leaders of the people settled down in Jerusalem. The rest of the people cast lots. They did it to choose one person out of every ten. That person was brought to live in the holy city of Jerusalem. The other nine had to stay in their own towns. [2]The people praised all those who agreed to live in Jerusalem.

[3]Here are the leaders from different parts of the country who settled down in Jerusalem. Some Israelites, priests and Levites lived in the towns of Judah. So did some temple servants and some members of the family lines of Solomon's servants. All of them lived on their own property in the towns of Judah. [4]At the same time, other people from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin lived in Jerusalem.

Here are the leaders from the family line of Judah.

There was Athaiah. He was the son of Uzziah. Uzziah was the son of Zechariah. Zechariah was the son of Amariah. Amariah was the son of Shephatiah. Shephatiah was the son of Mahalalel. Mahalalel belonged to the family line of Perez. [5]There was also Maaseiah. He was the son of Baruch. Baruch was the son of Col-Hozeh. Col-Hozeh was the son of Hazaiah. Hazaiah was the son of Adaiah. Adaiah was the son of Joiarib. Joiarib was the son of Zechariah. Zechariah belonged to the family line of Shelah. [6]Many able men who belonged to the family line of Perez lived in Jerusalem. The total number of them was 468.

[7]Here are the leaders from the family line of Benjamin.

There was Sallu. He was the son of Meshullam. Meshullam was the son of Joed. Joed was the son of Pedaiah. Pedaiah was the son of Kolaiah. Kolaiah

was the son of Maaseiah. Maaseiah was the son of Ithiel. Ithiel was the son of Jeshaiah. [8]There were also Gabbai and Sallai. They were Sallu's followers. The total number of men was 928. [9]Joel was their chief officer. He was the son of Zicri. A man named Judah was in charge of the New Quarter of Jerusalem. He was the son of Hassenuah.

[10]Here are the leaders from among the priests.

There were Jedaiah, Jakin and the son of Joiarib. [11]There was also Seraiah. He was the son of Hilkiah. Hilkiah was the son of Meshullam. Meshullam was the son of Zadok. Zadok was the son of Meraioth. Meraioth was the son of Ahitub. Ahitub was a ruler in God's house. [12]There were also those who helped them. They carried out the work for the temple. The total number of men was 822.

There was also Adaiah. He was the son of Jeroham. Jeroham was the son of Pelaliah. Pelaliah was the son of Amzi. Amzi was the son of Zechariah. Zechariah was the son of Pashhur. Pashhur was the son of Malkijah. [13]There were also those who helped Adaiah. They were family leaders. The total number of men was 242.

There was also Amashsai. He was the son of Azarel. Azarel was the son of Ahzai. Ahzai was the son of Meshillemoth. Meshillemoth was the son of Immer. [14]There were also those who helped Amashsai. They were able men. The total number of them was 128. Their chief officer was Zabdiel. He was the son of Haggedolim.

[15]Here are the leaders from among the Levites.

There was Shemaiah. He was the son of Hasshub. Hasshub was the son of Azrikam. Azrikam was the son of Hashabiah. Hashabiah was the son of Bunni. [16]There were also Shabbethai and Jozabad. They were two of the leaders of the Levites. They were in charge of the work that was done outside God's house.

[17]There was also Mattaniah. He led in prayer and in giving thanks. He was the son of Mica. Mica was the son of Zabdi. Zabdi was the son of Asaph. There was also Bakbukiah. He was second among those who helped Mattaniah. And there was Abda. He was the son of Shammua. Shammua was the son of Galal.

Galal was the son of Jeduthun. [18]The total number of Levites in the holy city was 284.

[19]Here are the leaders from among the men who guarded the gates.

There were Akkub, Talmon and those who helped them. They stood guard at the gates. The total number of men was 172.

[20]The rest of the Israelites were in all of the towns of Judah. The priests and Levites were with them. All of them lived on their own family property.

[21]The temple servants lived on the hill of Ophel. Ziha and Gishpa were in charge of them.

[22]Uzzi was the chief officer of the Levites in Jerusalem. He was the son of Bani. Bani was the son of Hashabiah. Hashabiah was the son of Mattaniah. Mattaniah was the son of Mica. Uzzi was one of the members of Asaph's family line. They were singers. They were in charge of the worship services at God's house. [23]The singers received their orders from the Persian king. He told them what they should do every day.

[24]Pethahiah worked for the king in all matters that were connected with the people. He was the son of Meshezabel. Meshezabel belonged to the family line of Zerah. Zerah was the son of Judah.

[25]Many of the people of Judah lived in villages that had fields around them. Some of them lived in Kiriath Arba and the settlements that were around it. Others lived in Dibon and its settlements. Others lived in Jekabzeel and its villages. [26]Others lived in Jeshua, Moladah and Beth Pelet.

[27]Others lived in Hazar Shual and in Beersheba and its settlements. [28]Others lived in Ziklag and in Meconah and its settlements. [29]Others lived in En Rimmon and Zorah. Others lived in Jarmuth, [30]Zanoah and Adullam and their villages. Others lived in Lachish and its fields. Still others lived in Azekah and its settlements. So the people of Judah were living all the way from Beersheba to the Valley of Hinnom.

[31]Some of the members of the family line of Benjamin who were from Geba lived in Micmash. Others lived in Aija and in Bethel and its settlements.

[32]Others lived in Anathoth, Nob and Ananiah. [33]Others lived in Hazor, Ramah and Gittaim. [34]Others lived in Hadid, Zeboim and Neballat. [35]Others lived in Lod and Ono. Still others lived in the Valley of Skilled Workers.

[36]Some of the groups of the Levites from Judah settled in the territory of Benjamin.

The Priests and Levites Who Returned to Judah

Nehemiah 12

[1]Some priests and Levites returned to Judah with Zerubbabel and Jeshua. Zerubbabel was the son of Shealtiel. Here are the names of those priests and Levites.

Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra,
[2]Amariah, Malluch, Hattush,
[3]Shecaniah, Rehum, Meremoth,
[4]Iddo, Ginnethon, Abijah,
[5]Mijamin, Moadiah, Bilgah,
[6]Shemaiah, Joiarib, Jedaiah,
[7]Sallu, Amok, Hilkiah, Jedaiah

All of them were the leaders of the priests and those who helped them. They lived in the days of Jeshua.

[8]The Levites were Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah and Judah. There were also Mattaniah and those who helped him. They were in charge of the songs for giving thanks. [9]Bakbukiah and Unni helped them. They stood and sang across from them during the services.

[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. And Jonathan was the father of Jaddua.

[12]Here are the names of the family leaders of the priests. They were the leaders in the days of Joiakim.

Meraiah was from Seraiah's family.
Hananiah was from Jeremiah's family.

[13]Meshullam was from Ezra’s family.
Jehohanan was from Amariah’s family.
[14]Jonathan was from Malluch’s family.
Joseph was from Shecaniah’s family.
[15]Adna was from Harim’s family.
Helkai was from Meremoth’s family.
[16]Zechariah was from Iddo’s family.
Meshullam was from Ginnethon’s family.
[17]Zicri was from Abijah’s family.
Piltai was from Miniamin’s and Moadiah’s family.
[18]Shammua was from Bilgah’s family.
Jehonathan was from Shemaiah’s family.
[19]Mattenai was from Joiarib’s family.
Uzzi was from Jedaiah’s family.
[20]Kallai was from Sallu’s family.
Eber was from Amok’s family.
[21]Hashabiah was from Hilkiah’s family.
And Nethanel was from Jedaiah’s family.

[22]The names of the family leaders of the Levites in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan and Jaddua were written down. So were the names of the family leaders of the priests. That happened while Darius ruled over Persia. [23]The names of the leaders in Levi’s family line up to the time of Johanan were written down. They were written in the official records. Johanan was the son of Eliashib. [24]The leaders of the Levites were Hashabiah, Sherebiah and Jeshua. Jeshua was the son of Kadmiel.

Those who helped them stood across from them to sing praises and give thanks. One group would sing back to the other. That’s what David, the man of God, had ordered.

[25]Mattaniah, Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon and Akkub stood at the gates of the temple. They guarded the storerooms at the gates. [26]They served in the days of Joiakim. He was the son of Jeshua. Jeshua was the son of Jehozadak. They also served in the days of Nehemiah and Ezra. Nehemiah was governor. Ezra was a priest and a teacher of the law.

The Wall of Jerusalem Is Set Apart to God

27The wall of Jerusalem was set apart to God. For that occasion, the Levites were gathered together from where they lived. They were brought to Jerusalem to celebrate that happy occasion. They celebrated the fact that the wall was being set apart to God. They did it by singing and giving their thanks to him. They celebrated by playing music on cymbals, harps and lyres.

28The singers were also brought together. Some of them came in from the area around Jerusalem. Others came from the villages where the people of Netophah lived. 29Others came from Beth Gilgal. Still others came from the area of Geba and Azmaveth. The singers had built villages for themselves around Jerusalem.

30The priests and Levites made themselves pure. Then they made the people, the gates and the wall pure and clean.

31I, Nehemiah, had the leaders of Judah go up on top of the wall. I also appointed two large choirs to sing and give thanks. I told one of them to walk south on top of the wall. That was toward the Dung Gate. 32Hoshaiah and half of the leaders of Judah followed them. 33Azariah, Ezra, Meshullam, 34Judah, Benjamin, Shemaiah and Jeremiah also followed them.

35Some priests who had trumpets followed them. So did Zechariah. He was the son of Jonathan. Jonathan was the son of Shemaiah. Shemaiah was the son of Mattaniah. Mattaniah was the son of Micaiah. Micaiah was the son of Zaccur. Zaccur was the son of Asaph. 36Those who helped Zechariah also marched along. They were Shemaiah, Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethanel, Judah and Hanani. They brought instruments of music with them. That’s what David, the man of God, had ordered. Ezra led the group that was marching south. He was a teacher of the law.

37At the Fountain Gate they continued straight up the steps of the City of David that went up to the wall. Then the group passed above David’s house. They continued on to the Water Gate on the east.

38The second choir went north. I followed them on top of the wall. Half of the people went with me. They went past the Tower of the Ovens. They went to the Broad Wall. 39They marched over the Gate of Ephraim. They went over the Jeshanah Gate and the Fish Gate. They went past the Tower of Hananel and the Tower of the Hundred. They continued on to the Sheep Gate. At the Gate of the

Guard they stopped.

[40]Then the two choirs that sang and gave thanks took their places in God's house. So did I. So did half of the officials. [41]And so did the priests. They were Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Micaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah and Hananiah. They had their trumpets with them. [42]Maaseiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar, Uzzi, Jehohanan, Malkijah, Elam and Ezer were also there. The choirs sang under the direction of Jezrahiah.

[43]On that day large numbers of sacrifices were offered. The people were glad because God had given them great joy. The women and children were also very happy. The joyful sound in Jerusalem could be heard far away.

[44]At that time some men were put in charge of the storerooms. That's where all of the gifts the people brought were placed. They included the first shares of their crops. They also included a tenth of everything the Law required. From the fields that were around the towns the people had to bring the shares of their crops that were required by the Law. They gave them to the priests and Levites. That's because the people of Judah were pleased with the priests and Levites who were serving God.

[45]The priests and Levites did everything their God wanted them to do. They made things pure and clean. The singers and those who guarded the temple gates also served God. Everything was done just as David and his son Solomon had commanded. [46]A long time ago there had been directors for the singers. There had also been directors for the songs for giving thanks and praise to God. It was in the time of David and Asaph.

[47]So now in the days of Zerubbabel and Nehemiah, all of the people of Israel brought their gifts. They gave the singers and those who guarded the gates what they were supposed to give them every day. They also set apart the shares for the other Levites. And the Levites set apart the shares for the priests in the family line of Aaron.

Nehemiah Warns the People

Nehemiah 13

[1]On that same day the Scroll of Moses was read out loud. All of the people heard it. It was written there that no one from Ammon or Moab should ever be allowed to become a member of the community of God. [2]That's because they hadn't given the people of Israel food and water. Instead, they had hired Balaam to call a curse down on them. But our God turned the curse into a blessing.

[3]When that law was read, the people of Judah obeyed it. They put out of Israel everyone who was from another nation.

[4]The priest Eliashib had been put in charge of the storerooms in the house of our God. He had worked closely with Tobiah. [5]He had also provided a large room for Tobiah. It had been used to store the grain offerings. The incense and temple articles had been put there. And a tenth of the grain, olive oil and fresh wine had been kept there. That's what the Law required for the Levites. That's also what it required for the singers and those who guarded the temple gates. The gifts for the priests had been kept there too.

[6]But I wasn't in Jerusalem while all of that was going on. I had returned to the Persian King Artaxerxes, the king of Babylonia. I went to him in the 32nd year of his rule. Some time later I asked him to let me return to Jerusalem.

[7]When I got back, I learned about the evil thing Eliashib had done. He had provided a room for Tobiah. It was in the courtyards of God's house. [8]So I was very unhappy. I threw all of Tobiah's things out of the room.

[9]I gave orders to make the rooms pure and clean again. Then I put the supplies from God's house back into them. That included the grain offerings and the incense.

[10]I also learned that the shares the Levites were supposed to receive hadn't been given to them. So all of the Levites and singers had to leave their regular temple duties. They had to go back and farm their own fields.

[11]I gave a warning to the officials. I asked them, "Why aren't you taking care

of God’s house?” Then I brought them together. I stationed them in their proper places. I put them back to work.

12All of the people of Judah brought a tenth of the grain, olive oil and fresh wine. They took it to the storerooms.

13I put some men in charge of the storerooms. They were Shelemiah, Zadok and Pedaiah. Shelemiah was a priest. Zadok was a teacher of the law. And Pedaiah was a Levite. I made Hanan their assistant. He was the son of Zaccur. Zaccur was the son of Mattaniah. I knew that those men could be trusted. They were put in charge of handing out the supplies to their people.

14You are my God. Remember me because of what I’ve done. I’ve worked faithfully for your temple and its services. So please don’t forget the good things I’ve done.

15In those days I saw some men of Judah stomping on grapes in winepresses. They were doing it on the Sabbath day. Others were bringing in grain. They were loading it on donkeys. Still others were loading up wine, grapes, figs and other kinds of things. They were bringing all of it into Jerusalem on the Sabbath. So I warned them not to sell food on that day. 16People from Tyre who lived in Jerusalem were bringing in fish. In fact, they were bringing in all kinds of goods. They were selling them in Jerusalem on the Sabbath. The people of Judah were buying them.

17I gave a warning to the nobles of Judah. I said, “Why are you doing such an evil thing? You are misusing the Sabbath day! 18Your people before you did the very same things. That’s why our God has brought all of this trouble on us. That’s why he’s making this city suffer so much. Now you are stirring up even more of his anger against Israel. You are misusing the Sabbath day.”

19Evening shadows fell on the gates of Jerusalem before the Sabbath started. So I ordered the gates to be shut. They had to remain closed until the Sabbath was over. I stationed some of my own men at the gates. I told them not to let anything be brought in on the Sabbath day.

20Once or twice some traders and sellers spent the night outside Jerusalem. They were hoping to sell all kinds of goods. 21But I gave them a warning. I said, “Why are you spending the night by the wall? If you do this again, I’ll arrest you.” So from that time on they didn’t come on the Sabbath anymore.

22I commanded the Levites to make themselves pure. Then I told them to go and guard the gates. I wanted the Sabbath day to be kept holy.

You are my God. Remember me because of the good things I've done. Be kind to me in keeping with your great love.

23In those days I also saw that some men of Judah had gotten married to women from Ashdod. Others had married women from Ammon or Moab. 24Half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod. Or they spoke the language of one of the other nations. They didn't even know how to speak the language of Judah.

25So I gave them a warning. I called curses down on them. I beat some of them up. I pulled their hair out. I made them take an oath in God's name. I said, "You must promise not to give your daughters to be married to their sons. You must promise not to let their daughters marry your sons. And you must not marry their daughters either.

26"That's how Solomon, the king of Israel, sinned. He married women from other nations. There wasn't a king like him anywhere. His God loved him. In fact, God made him king over the whole nation of Israel. But even he was led into sin by women from other lands. 27Now I hear that you too are doing all of the same terrible and evil things. You aren't being faithful to our God. You are marrying women from other lands."

28One of the sons of Joiada was the son-in-law of Sanballat. Joiada was the high priest. He was the son of Eliashib. I drove Joiada's son away from me. Sanballat was a Horonite.

29You are my God. Remember what those priests have done. They have polluted their own work. They have also polluted the covenant that God made with the priests and Levites long ago.

30So I made the priests and Levites pure. I made them pure from every practice that had come from other countries and had polluted them. I gave them their duties. Each one had his own job to do. 31I also made plans for gifts of wood to be brought at certain appointed times. And I made plans for the first

share of the crops to be brought.

You are my God. Please remember me. Show me your favor.

Esther

Esther 1
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Vashti Is Removed From Her Position as Queen

Esther 1

[1]King Xerxes ruled over the 127 territories in his kingdom. They reached
from India all the way to Cush. Here is what happened during the time Xerxes
ruled over the whole Persian kingdom. [2]He was ruling from his royal throne in
the safest place in Susa.

[3]In the third year of his rule King Xerxes gave a big dinner. It was for all of
his nobles and officials. The military leaders of Persia and Media were there.
So were the princes and the nobles of the territories he ruled over. [4]Every day
for 180 days he showed his guests the great wealth of his kingdom. He also
showed them how glorious his kingdom was.

[5]When those days were over, the king gave another big dinner. It lasted for
seven days. It was held in the garden of the king's courtyard. It was for all of
the people who lived in the safest place in Susa. Everyone from the least
important person to the most important was invited.

[6]The garden was decorated with white and blue linen banners. They hung
from ropes that were made out of white linen and purple cloth. The ropes were
connected to silver rings on marble pillars. There were gold and silver couches
in the garden. They were placed on a floor that was made out of small stones.
The floor had purple crystal, marble, mother-of-pearl and other stones of great
value.

[7]Royal wine was served in gold cups. Each cup was different from all of the
others. There was plenty of wine. The king always provided as much as his
guests wanted. [8]He commanded that they should be allowed to drink as much
or as little as they wished. He directed all of his servants to give them what
they asked for.

[9]Queen Vashti also gave a big dinner. Only women were invited. It was held
in the royal palace of King Xerxes.

[10]On the seventh day Xerxes was in a good mood because he had drunk a lot
of wine. So he gave a command to the seven officials who served him. They
were Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar and Carcas. [11]He

told them to bring Queen Vashti to him. He wanted her to come wearing her royal crown. He wanted to show off her beauty to the people and nobles. She was lovely to look at.

12The attendants told Queen Vashti what the king had ordered her to do. But she refused to come. So the king became very angry. In fact, he burned with anger.

13It was the king's practice to ask advice from those who knew a lot about matters of law and fairness. So he spoke with the wise men who were supposed to understand what was going on at that time. 14They were the men who were closest to the king. They were Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena and Memucan. They were the seven nobles of Persia and Media. They were the king's special advisers. In fact, they were the most important men in the kingdom.

15"You know the law," the king said. "What should I do to Queen Vashti? She hasn't obeyed my command. The officials told her what I ordered her to do, didn't they?"

16Then Memucan gave a reply to the king and the nobles. He said, "Queen Vashti has done what is wrong. But she didn't do it only against you, King Xerxes. She did it also against all of the nobles. And she did it against the people in all of the territories you rule over.

17"All of the women will hear about what the queen has done. Then they will look down on their husbands. They'll say, 'King Xerxes commanded Queen Vashti to be brought to him. But she wouldn't come.' 18Starting today, the leading women in Persia and Media who have heard about the queen's actions will act in the same way. They'll disobey all of your nobles, just as she disobeyed you. They won't have any respect for their husbands. They won't honor them.

19"So if it pleases you, send out a royal order. Let it be written down in the laws of Persia and Media. They can never be changed. Let the royal order say that Vashti can never see you again. Also let her position as queen be given to someone who is better than she is.

20"And let your order be announced all through your entire kingdom. Then all of the other women will have respect for their husbands from the least important of them to the most important."

21The king and his nobles were pleased with that advice. So he did what

Memucan had suggested. [22]He sent messages out to every territory in the kingdom. He sent them to each territory in its own writing. He sent them to every nation in its own language. The messages announced in each nation’s language that every man should rule over his own family.

Esther Becomes Queen of Persia

Esther 2

[1]Later, the anger of King Xerxes calmed down. Then he remembered Vashti and what she had done. He also remembered the royal order he had sent out concerning her.

[2]At that time the king's personal attendants made a suggestion. They said, "King Xerxes, let a search be made for some beautiful young virgins for you. [3]Appoint some officials in every territory in your kingdom. Have them bring all of those beautiful virgins into the safest place in Susa. Put them in the special place where the virgins stay. Then put Hegai in charge of them. He's the eunuch who serves you. He's in charge of the virgins. Let beauty care be given to the new group of virgins. [4]Then let the one who pleases you the most become queen in Vashti's place."

The king liked that advice. So he followed it.

[5]There was a Jew living in the safest place in Susa. He was from the tribe of Benjamin. His name was Mordecai. He was the son of Jair. Jair was the son of Shimei. Shimei was the son of Kish. [6]Nebuchadnezzar had forced Mordecai to leave Jerusalem. He was among the prisoners who were carried off along with Jehoiachin. Jehoiachin had been king of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylonia.

[7]Mordecai had a cousin named Hadassah. He had brought her up in his own home. She didn't have a father or mother. Hadassah was also called Esther. She was very beautiful. Mordecai had adopted her as his own daughter. He had done it when her father and mother died.

[8]After the king's order and law were announced, many virgins were brought to the safest place in Susa. Hegai was put in charge of them. Esther was also taken to the king's palace. She was put under the control of Hegai. He was in charge of the place where the virgins stayed.

[9]Esther pleased him. He showed her his favor. Right away he provided her with her beauty care and special food. He appointed seven female attendants to help her. They were chosen from the king's palace. He moved her and her

attendants into the best part of the place where the virgins stayed.

10Esther hadn't told anyone who her people were. She hadn't talked about her family. That's because Mordecai had told her not to.

11Mordecai tried to find out how Esther was getting along. He wanted to know what was happening to her. So he walked back and forth near the courtyard by the place where the virgins stayed. He did it every day.

12Each virgin had to complete 12 months of beauty care. They used oil of myrrh for six months. And they used perfume and make-up for the other six months. A virgin's turn to go in to King Xerxes could come only after a full 12 months had passed.

13And here is how she would go to the king. She would be given anything she wanted from the place where the virgins stayed. She could take it with her to the king's palace. 14In the evening she would go there. In the morning she would leave. Then she would go to the special place where the king's concubines stayed. She would be put under the control of Shaashgaz. He was the king's eunuch who was in charge of the concubines. She would never return to the king unless he was pleased with her. He had to send for her by name before she could go to him again.

15Mordecai had adopted Esther. She had been the daughter of his uncle Abihail. Her turn came to go in to the king. She only asked for what Hegai suggested. He was the king's eunuch who was in charge of the place where the virgins stayed. Everyone who saw Esther was pleased with her. 16She was taken to King Xerxes in the royal house. It was now the tenth month. That was the month of Tebeth. It was the seventh year of the rule of Xerxes.

17The king liked Esther more than he liked any of the other women. She pleased him more than any of the other virgins. So he put a royal crown on her head. He made her queen in Vashti's place.

18Then the king gave a big dinner. It was in honor of Esther. All of his nobles and officials were invited. He announced a holiday all through the territories he ruled over. He freely gave many gifts in keeping with his royal wealth.

Mordecai Uncovers a Plan to Kill the King

19The virgins were gathered together a second time. At that time Mordecai

was sitting at the palace gate. [20]Esther had kept her family history a secret. She hadn’t told anyone who her people were. Mordecai had told her not to. She continued to follow his directions. That’s what she had always done when he was bringing her up.

[21]Bigthana and Teresh were two of the king’s officers. They guarded the door of the royal palace. They became angry with King Xerxes. So they decided to kill him. They made their evil plans while Mordecai was sitting at the palace gate.

[22]So he found out about it. And he told Queen Esther. Then she reported it to the king. She told him that Mordecai had uncovered the plans against him. [23]Some people checked Esther’s report. And they found out it was true. So the two officials were put to death. Then poles were stuck through them. They were set up where people could see them. All of that was written in the official records. It was written down while the king was watching.

Haman Plans to Destroy the Jews

Esther 3

[1]After those events, King Xerxes honored Haman. Haman was the son of Hammedatha. He was from the family line of Agag. The king gave Haman a higher position than he had before. He gave him a seat of honor. It was higher than the positions any of the other nobles had. [2]All of the royal officials at the palace gate got down on their knees. They gave honor to Haman. That's because the king had commanded them to do it.

But Mordecai refused to get down on his knees. He wouldn't give Haman any honor at all.

[3]The royal officials at the palace gate asked Mordecai a question. They said, "Why don't you obey the king's command?" [4]Day after day they spoke to him. But he still refused to obey. So they told Haman about it. They wanted to see whether he would let Mordecai get away with what he was doing. Mordecai had told them he was a Jew.

[5]Haman noticed that Mordecai wouldn't get down on his knees. He wouldn't give Haman any honor. So Haman burned with anger. [6]But he had found out who Mordecai's people were. So he decided not to kill just Mordecai. He also looked for a way to destroy all of Mordecai's people. They were Jews. He wanted to kill all of them everywhere in the kingdom of Xerxes.

[7]The lot was cast in front of Haman. That was done to choose a day and a month. It was the 12th year that Xerxes was king. It was in the first month. That was the month of Nisan. The lot chose the 12th month. That was the month of Adar. The lot was also called *pur*.

[8]Then Haman said to King Xerxes, "Certain people are scattered among the nations. They live in all of the territories in your kingdom. Their practices are different from the practices of all other people. They don't obey your laws. It really isn't good for you to put up with them.

[9]"If it pleases you, give the order to destroy them. I'll even add 375 tons of silver to the royal treasures. You can use it to pay the men who take care of the matter."

[10]So the king took his ring off his finger. The ring had his royal seal on it. He gave the ring to Haman. Haman was the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite. He was the enemy of the Jews.

[11]“Keep the money,” the king said to Haman. “Do what you want to with those people.”

[12]The king sent for the royal secretaries. It was the 13th day of the first month. The secretaries wrote down all of Haman’s orders. They wrote them down in the writing of each territory in the kingdom. They also wrote them in the language of each nation. The orders were sent to the royal officials. They were also sent to the governors of the territories. And they went out to the nobles of the nations. The orders were written in the name of King Xerxes himself. And they were stamped with his own royal seal. [13]They were carried by messengers. They were sent to all of the king’s territories.

The orders commanded people to destroy, kill and wipe out all of the Jews. That included young people and old people alike. It included women and little children. All of the Jews were supposed to be killed on a single day. That day was the 13th day of the 12th month. It was the month of Adar. The orders also commanded people to take the goods that belonged to the Jews.

[14]A copy of the order had to be sent out as law. It had to be sent to every territory in the kingdom. It had to be announced to the people of every nation. Then they would be ready for that day.

[15]The king commanded the messengers to go out. So they did. The order was sent out from the safest place in Susa. Then the king and Haman sat down to drink wine. But the people in the city were bewildered.

Mordecai Talks Esther Into Helping the Jews

Esther 4

[1]Mordecai found out about everything that had been done. So he tore his clothes. He put on black clothes. He sat down in ashes. Then he went out into the city. He sobbed out loud. He cried bitter tears. [2]But he only went as far as the palace gate. That's because no one who was dressed in black clothes was allowed to go through it.

[3]All of the Jews were very sad. They didn't eat anything. They sobbed and cried. Many of them put on black clothes. They were lying down in ashes. They did all of those things in every territory where the king's order and law had been sent.

[4]Esther's eunuchs and female attendants came to her. They told her about Mordecai. So she became very troubled. She wanted him to take his black clothes off. So she sent him other clothes to wear. But he wouldn't accept them. [5]Then Esther sent for Hathach. He was one of the king's eunuchs. He had been appointed to take care of her. She ordered him to find out what was troubling Mordecai. She wanted to know why he was so upset.

[6]So Hathach went out to see Mordecai. He was in the open area in front of the palace gate. [7]Mordecai told him everything that had happened to him. He told him about the exact amount of money Haman had promised to add to the royal treasures. He said Haman wanted it to be used to pay some men to destroy the Jews.

[8]Mordecai also gave Hathach a copy of the order. It commanded people to wipe out the Jews. The order had been sent from Susa.

Mordecai told Hathach to show the order to Esther. He wanted him to explain it to her. He told him to try and get her to go to the king. He wanted her to beg for mercy. He wanted her to make an appeal to the king for her people.

[9]Hathach went back. He reported to Esther what Mordecai had said. [10]Then Esther directed him to give an answer to Mordecai. She told him to say, [11]"There is a certain law that everyone knows about. All of the king's officials know about it. The people in the royal territories know about it. It applies to

any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner courtyard without being sent for. It says they must be put to death. But there is a way out. Suppose the king reaches out his gold rod toward them. Then their lives will be spared. But 30 days have gone by since the king sent for me."

12 Esther's words were reported to Mordecai. 13 Then he sent back an answer. He said, "You live in the king's palace. But don't think that just because you are there you will be the only Jew who will escape. 14 What if you don't say anything at this time? Then help for the Jews will come from another place. But you and your family will die. Who knows? It's possible that you became queen for a time just like this."

15 Then Esther sent a reply to Mordecai. She said, 16 "Go. Gather together all of the Jews who are in Susa. And fast for my benefit. Don't eat or drink anything for three days. Don't do it night or day. I and my attendants will fast just as you do. Then I'll go to the king. I'll do it even though it's against the law. And if I have to die, I'll die."

17 So Mordecai went away. He carried out all of Esther's directions.

Esther Invites the King and Haman to a Big Dinner

Esther 5

1On the third day Esther put her royal robes on. She stood in the inner
courtyard of the palace. It was in front of the king's hall.

The king was sitting on his royal throne in the hall. He was facing the
entrance. 2He saw Queen Esther standing in the courtyard. He was pleased
with her. So he reached out toward her the gold rod that was in his hand. Then
Esther approached him. She touched the tip of the rod.

3The king asked, "What is it, Queen Esther? What do you want? I'll give it to
you. I'll even give you up to half of my kingdom."

4Esther replied, "King Xerxes, if it pleases you, come to a big dinner today.
I've prepared it for you. Please have Haman come with you."

5"Bring Haman at once," the king said to his servants. "Then we'll do what
Esther asks."

So the king and Haman went to the big dinner Esther had prepared. 6As they
were drinking wine, the king asked Esther the same question again. He said,
"What do you want? I'll give it to you. What do you want me to do for you?
I'll even give you up to half of my kingdom."

7Esther replied, "Here is what I want. Here is my appeal to you. 8I hope you
will show me your favor. I hope you will be pleased to give me what I want.
And I hope you will be pleased to listen to my appeal. If you are, I'd like you
and Haman to come tomorrow to the big dinner I'll prepare for you. Then I'll
answer your question."

Haman Brags About Being Invited to Esther's Dinner

9That day Haman was happy. So he left the palace in a good mood. But then
he saw Mordecai at the palace gate. He noticed that Mordecai didn't stand up
when he walked by. In fact, Mordecai didn't have any respect for him at all. So

he burned with anger against him. [10]But Haman was able to control himself. He went on home.

Haman called his friends and his wife Zeresh together. [11]He bragged to them about how rich he was. He talked about how many sons he had. He spoke about all of the ways the king had honored him. He bragged about how the king had given him a higher position than any of the other nobles and officials had. [12]"And that's not all!" Haman added. "I'm the only person Queen Esther invited to come with the king to the big dinner she gave. Now she has invited me along with the king tomorrow.

[13]"But even all of that doesn't satisfy me. I won't be satisfied as long as I see that Jew Mordecai sitting at the palace gate."

[14]Haman's wife Zeresh and all of his friends spoke up. They said to him, "Get a pole. In the morning, ask the king to have Mordecai put to death. Have the pole stuck through his body. Set it up at a place where it will be 75 feet above the ground. Everyone will be able to see it there. Then go to the dinner with the king. Have a good time."

Haman was delighted with that suggestion. So he got the pole ready.

The King Honors Mordecai

Esther 6

1That night the king couldn't sleep. So he ordered the official records of his
rule to be brought in. He ordered someone to read them to him. 2It was written
there that Mordecai had uncovered the plans of Bigthana and Teresh against
the king. They had been two of the king's officers who guarded the door of the
royal palace. They had decided to kill King Xerxes.

3"What great honor has Mordecai received for doing that?" the king asked.

"Nothing has been done for him," his attendants answered.

4The king asked, "Who is in the courtyard?"

Haman had just entered the outer courtyard of the palace. He had come to
speak to the king about putting Mordecai to death. He wanted to talk about
putting Mordecai's body up on the pole he had gotten ready for him.

5The king's attendants said to him, "Haman is standing in the courtyard."

"Bring him in," the king ordered.

6Haman entered. Then the king asked him, "What should be done for the man
I want to honor?"

Haman said to himself, "Is there anyone the king would rather honor than
me?" 7So he answered the king. He said, "Here is what you should do for the
man you want to honor. 8Have your servants get a royal robe you have worn.
Have them bring a horse you have ridden on. Have a royal crest placed on its
head. 9Then give the robe and horse to one of your most noble princes. Let the
robe be put on the man you want to honor. Let him be led on the horse through
the city streets. Let people announce in front of him, 'This is what is done for
the man the king wants to honor!' "

10"Go right away," the king commanded Haman. "Get the robe. Bring the
horse. Do exactly what you have suggested. Do it for the Jew Mordecai. He's
sitting out there at the palace gate. Make sure you do everything you have
suggested."

[11]So Haman got the robe and the horse. He put the robe on Mordecai. And he led him on horseback through the city streets. He walked along in front of him and announced, “This is what is done for the man the king wants to honor!”

[12]After that, Mordecai returned to the palace gate. But Haman rushed home. He covered his head because he was very sad. [13]He told his wife Zeresh everything that had happened to him. He also told all of his friends.

His advisers and his wife Zeresh spoke to him. They said, “Your fall from power started with Mordecai. He’s a Jew. So now you can’t stand up against him. You are going to be destroyed!” [14]They were still talking with him when the king’s officials arrived. They hurried Haman away to the big dinner Esther had prepared.

Haman Is Put to Death

Esther 7

[1]So the king and Haman went to dine with Queen Esther. [2]They were drinking wine on the second day. The king again asked, “What do you want, Queen Esther? I’ll give it to you. What do you want me to do for you? I’ll even give you up to half of my kingdom.”

[3]Then Queen Esther answered, “King Xerxes, I hope you will show me your favor. I hope you will be pleased to let me live. That’s what I want. Please spare my people. That’s my appeal to you.

[4]“My people and I have been sold to be destroyed. We’ve been sold to be killed and wiped out. Suppose we had only been sold as male and female slaves. Then I wouldn’t have said anything. That kind of suffering wouldn’t be a good enough reason to bother you.”

[5]King Xerxes asked Queen Esther, “Who is the man who has dared to do such a thing? And where is he?”

[6]Esther said, “The man hates us! He’s our enemy! He’s this evil Haman!”

Then Haman was terrified in front of the king and queen.

[7]The king got up. He was burning with anger. He left his wine and went out into the palace garden.

But Haman realized that the king had already decided what he was going to do to him. So he stayed behind to beg Queen Esther for his life.

[8]The king returned from the palace garden to the dinner hall. Just then he saw Haman falling on the couch where Esther was lying.

The king shouted, “Will he even rape the queen? Is he going to rape her while she’s right here with me in the palace?”

As soon as the king finished speaking, his men covered Haman’s face.

[9]Then Harbona said, “There’s a pole standing near Haman’s house. He has gotten it ready for Mordecai. Mordecai is the one who spoke up to help you. Haman had planned to have him put to death. He was going to have the pole stuck through his body. Then he was going to set it up at a place where it

would be 75 feet above the ground.” Harbona was one of the officials who attended the king.

The king said to his men, “Put Haman to death! Stick the pole through his body! Set it up where everyone can see it!” [10]So they did. And they used the pole Haman had gotten ready for Mordecai. Then the king’s anger calmed down.

The King Allows the Jews to Fight for Their Lives

Esther 8

1That same day King Xerxes gave Queen Esther everything Haman had
owned. Haman had been the enemy of the Jews.

Esther had told the king that Mordecai was her cousin. So Mordecai came to
see the king. 2The king took his ring off. It had his royal seal on it. He had
taken it back from Haman. Now he gave it to Mordecai. And Esther put
Mordecai in charge of everything Haman had owned.

3Esther made another appeal to the king. She fell at his feet and sobbed. She
begged him to put an end to the evil plan of Haman, the Agagite. He had
decided to kill the Jews.

4The king reached out his gold rod toward Esther. She got up and stood in
front of him.

5"King Xerxes, I hope you will show me your favor," she said. "I hope you
will think that what I'm asking is the right thing to do. I hope you are pleased
with me. If you are, and if it pleases you, let an order be written. Let it take the
place of the messages Haman wrote. Haman was the son of Hammedatha, the
Agagite. He planned to kill the Jews. He wrote orders to destroy us in all of
your territories. 6I couldn't stand by and see the horrible trouble that would fall
on my people! I couldn't stand to see my family destroyed!"

7King Xerxes gave a reply to Queen Esther and the Jew Mordecai. He said,
"Haman attacked the Jews. So I've given Esther everything he owned. My men
have stuck a pole through his dead body. And they've set it up where everyone
can see it.

8"Now write another order in my name. Do it for the benefit of the Jews. Do
what seems best to you. Stamp the order with my royal seal. Nothing that is
written in my name and stamped with my seal can ever be changed."

9Right away the king sent for the royal secretaries. It was the 23rd day of the
third month. That was the month of Sivan. They wrote down all of Mordecai's
orders to the Jews. They also wrote them to the royal officials, the governors
and the nobles of the 127 territories in his kingdom. The territories reached

from India all the way to Cush. The orders were written down in the writing of each territory. They were written in the language of each nation. They were also written to the Jews in their own writing and language.

10 Mordecai wrote the orders in the name of King Xerxes. He stamped them with the king's royal seal. He sent them by messengers on horseback. They rode fast horses that were raised just for the king.

11 The Jews in every city could now gather together and fight for their lives. The king's order gave them that right. But what if soldiers from any nation or territory attacked them? What if they attacked their women and children? Then the Jews could destroy, kill and wipe out those soldiers. They could also take the goods that belonged to their enemies. 12 A day was appointed for the Jews to do that in all of the king's territories. It was the 13th day of the 12th month. That was the month of Adar.

13 A copy of the order was sent out as law in every territory. It was announced to the people of every nation. So the Jews would be ready on that day. They could pay their enemies back.

14 The messengers rode on the royal horses. They raced along. That's what the king commanded them to do. The order was also sent out in the safest place in Susa.

15 Mordecai left the king and went on his way. Mordecai was wearing royal clothes. They were blue and white. He was also wearing a large gold crown. And he was wearing a purple coat. It was made out of fine linen. The city of Susa celebrated with great joy.

16 The Jews were filled with joy and happiness. They were very glad because now they were being honored. 17 They celebrated and enjoyed good food. They were glad and full of joy. That was true everywhere the king's order went out. It was true in every territory and every city. Many people from other nations announced that they had become Jews. That's because they were so afraid of the Jews.

The Jews Win the Battle Over Their Enemies

Esther 9

[1]The king's order had to be carried out on the 13th day of the 12th month. That was the month of Adar. On that day the enemies of the Jews had hoped to win the battle over them. But now everything had changed. The Jews had gained the advantage over those who hated them.

[2]The Jews gathered together in their cities. They gathered in all of the territories King Xerxes ruled over. They came together to attack those who were trying to destroy them. No one could stand up against them. The people from all of the other nations were afraid of them.

[3]All of the nobles in the territories helped the Jews. So did the royal officials, the governors and the king's officers. That's because they were so afraid of Mordecai. [4]He was well known in the palace. His fame spread all through the territories. So he became more and more important.

[5]The Jews struck down all of their enemies with swords. They killed them and destroyed them. They did what they pleased to those who hated them. [6]The Jews killed 500 men. They destroyed them in the safest place in Susa.

[7]They also killed Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha, [8]Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha, [9]Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai and Vaizatha. [10]They were the ten sons of Haman. He was the son of Hammedatha. Haman had been the enemy of the Jews. They didn't take anything that belonged to their enemies.

[11]A report was brought to the king that same day. He was told how many men had been killed in the safest place in Susa. [12]He said to Queen Esther, "The Jews have killed 500 men. They destroyed them in the safest place in Susa. They also killed the ten sons of Haman there. What have they done in the rest of my territories? Now what do you want? I'll give it to you. What do you want me to do for you? I'll do that too."

[13]"If it pleases you," Esther answered, "let the Jews in Susa carry out today's order tomorrow also. Stick poles through the dead bodies of Haman's ten sons. Set them up where everyone can see them."

[14]So the king commanded that it be done. An order was sent out in Susa. And the king's men did to the bodies of Haman's sons everything they were told to do. [15]The Jews in Susa came together on the 14th day of the month of Adar. They put 300 men to death in Susa. But they didn't take anything that belonged to those men.

[16]During that time, the rest of the Jews also gathered together. They lived in the king's territories. They came together to fight for their lives. They didn't want their enemies to bother them anymore. They wanted to get some peace and rest. So they killed 75,000 of their enemies. But they didn't take anything that belonged to them. [17]It happened on the 13th of Adar. On the 14th day they rested. They made it a day to celebrate with great joy. And they enjoyed good food.

Purim Is Celebrated

[18]But the Jews in Susa had gathered together on the 13th and 14th. Then on the 15th they rested. They made it a day to celebrate with great joy. And they enjoyed good food.

[19]That's why Jews who live out in the villages celebrate on the 14th of Adar. They celebrate that day with great joy. And they enjoy good food. They also give presents to each other on that day.

[20]Mordecai wrote down those events. He sent letters to all of the Jews all through the territories of King Xerxes. It didn't matter whether the Jews lived nearby or far away. [21]Mordecai told them to celebrate the 14th and 15th days of the month of Adar. He wanted them to do it every year.

[22]Mordecai told the Jews to celebrate the time when they got rest from their enemies. That was the month when their sadness was turned into joy. It was when their sobbing turned into a day for celebrating. He wrote the letters to celebrate those days as times of joy. He wanted the people to enjoy good food. He told them to give presents of food to one another. He also wanted them to give gifts to those who were poor.

[23]So the Jews agreed to continue the celebrating they had started. They kept doing what Mordecai had written to them.

[24]Haman was the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite. He had been the enemy

of all of the Jews. He had planned to destroy them. He had cast the lot to destroy them completely. The lot was also called *pur*. [25]But the king had found out about Haman's evil plan. So the king had sent out written orders. He had ordered that the evil plan Haman had made against the Jews should come back on his own head. He had also commanded that Haman and his sons should be put to death. Poles should be stuck through their dead bodies. Then they should be set up where everyone could see them.

[26]The days the Jews were celebrating were called Purim. Purim comes from the word *pur*. *Pur* means "lot." Now the Jews celebrate those two days every year. They do it because of everything that was written in Mordecai's letter. They also do it because of what they had seen and what had happened to them.

[27]So they established it as a regular practice. They decided they would always observe those two days of the year. They would celebrate in the required way. And they would celebrate at the appointed time. They and their children after them and everyone who joined them would always observe those days. [28]The days should be remembered and celebrated. They should be remembered by every family for all time to come. They should be celebrated in every territory and in every city. The Jews should never stop celebrating the days of Purim. Their children after them should always remember those days.

[29]So Queen Esther, the daughter of Abihail, wrote a second letter. She wrote it together with the Jew Mordecai. They wanted to give their full authority to this second letter about Purim. [30]Mordecai sent letters to all of the Jews in the 127 territories of the kingdom of Xerxes. The letters had messages of kindness and hope in them.

[31]The letters established the days of Purim at their appointed times. They spoke about what the Jew Mordecai and Queen Esther had ordered the people to do. Everything should be done in keeping with the directions the Jews had set up for themselves and their children after them. The directions applied to their times of fasting and sadness. [32]Esther's order established the rules about Purim. It was written down in the records.

The Greatness of Mordecai

Esther 10

[1]King Xerxes required people all through his kingdom to bring him gifts. He
required gifts from its farthest shores. [2]All of his powerful and mighty acts are
written down. That includes the whole story of how important Mordecai was.
The king had given him a position of great honor. All of those things are
written in the official records of the kings of Media and Persia.

[3]The Jew Mordecai's position was second only to the position of King
Xerxes. Mordecai was the most important Jew. All of the other Jews had the
highest respect for him. That's because he worked for the good of his people.
And he spoke up for the benefit of all of the Jews.

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The Story Begins

Job 1

1There was a man who lived in the land of Uz. His name was Job. He was honest. He did what was right. He had respect for God and avoided evil.

2Job had seven sons and three daughters. 3He owned 7,000 sheep and 3,000 camels. He owned 500 pairs of oxen and 500 donkeys. He also had a large number of servants. He was the most important man among all of the people in the east.

4His sons used to take turns giving big dinners in their homes. They would invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them.

5When the time for enjoying good food was over, Job would have his children made pure and clean. He would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them. He would do it early in the morning. He would think, "Perhaps my children have sinned. Maybe they have spoken evil things against God in their hearts."

That's what Job always did for his children when he felt they had sinned.

Job Is Put to the Test

6One day angels came to the LORD. Satan also came with them. 7The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?"

Satan answered, "From traveling all around the earth. I've been going from one end of it to the other."

8Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you thought about my servant Job? There isn't anyone on earth like him. He is honest. He does what is right. He has respect for me and avoids evil."

9"You always give Job everything he needs," Satan replied. "That's why he has respect for you. 10Haven't you guarded him and his family? Haven't you taken care of everything he has? You have blessed everything he does. His

flocks and herds are spread all through the land.

11"But reach out your hand and strike down everything he has. Then I'm sure he will speak evil things against you. In fact, he'll do it right in front of you."

12The LORD said to Satan, "All right. I am handing everything he has over to you. But do not touch the man himself."

Then Satan left the LORD and went on his way.

13One day Job's sons and daughters were at their oldest brother's house. They were enjoying good food and drinking wine.

14During that time a messenger came to Job. He said, "The oxen were plowing. The donkeys were eating grass near them. 15Then the Sabeans attacked us and carried the animals off. They killed some of the servants with their swords. I'm the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

16While he was still speaking, a second messenger came. He said, "God sent lightning from the sky. It struck the sheep and killed them. It burned up some of the servants. I'm the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

17While he was still speaking, a third messenger came. He said, "The Chaldeans separated themselves into three groups. They attacked your camels and carried them off. They killed the rest of the servants with their swords. I'm the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

18While he was still speaking, a fourth messenger came. He said, "Your sons and daughters were at their oldest brother's house. They were enjoying good food and drinking wine. 19Suddenly a strong wind blew in from the desert. It struck the four corners of the house. The house fell down on your children. Now all of them are dead. I'm the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

20After Job heard all of those reports, he got up and tore his robe. He shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground and worshiped the LORD. 21He said,

"I was born naked.
  And I'll leave here naked.
You have given, and you have taken away.
  May your name be praised."

22In spite of everything, Job didn't sin by blaming God for doing anything wrong.

Job Is Put to the Test Again

Job 2

1On another day angels came to the LORD. Satan also came to him along with
them. 2The LORD said to Satan, “Where have you come from?”

Satan answered, “From traveling all around the earth. I’ve been going from
one end of it to the other.”

3Then the LORD said to Satan, “Have you thought about my servant Job?
There isn’t anyone on earth like him. He is honest. He does what is right. He
has respect for me and avoids evil. You tried to turn me against him. You
wanted me to destroy him without any reason. But he still continues to be
faithful.”

4Satan replied, “A man will give everything he has to save himself. So Job is
willing to give up the lives of his family to save his own life.

5“But reach out your hand and strike his flesh and bones. Then I’m sure he
will speak evil things against you. In fact, he’ll do it right in front of you.”

6The LORD said to Satan, “All right. I am handing him over to you. But you
must spare his life.”

7Then Satan left the LORD and went on his way. He sent painful sores on Job.
They covered him from the bottom of his feet to the top of his head. 8He got
part of a broken pot. He used it to scrape his skin. He did it while he was sitting
in ashes.

9His wife said to him, “Are you still continuing to be faithful to the LORD?
Speak evil things against him and die!”

10Job replied, “You are talking like a foolish woman. We accept good things
from God. So we should also accept trouble when he sends it.”

In spite of everything, Job didn’t say anything that was sinful.

Job’s Three Friends Come to Comfort Him

[11]Job had three friends named Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. They heard about all of the troubles that had come to Job. So they started out from their homes. They had agreed to meet together. They wanted to go and show their concern for Job. They wanted to comfort him.

[12]When they got closer to where he lived, they could see him. But they could hardly recognize him. They began to sob out loud. They tore their robes and sprinkled 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. That’s because they saw how much he was suffering.

Job Wishes He Had Never Been Born

Job 3

1 After a while, Job opened his mouth to speak. He called down a curse on the
day he had been born. 2 He said,

3 "May the day I was born be wiped out.
May the night be wiped away when people said, 'A boy is born!'
4 May that day turn into darkness.
May God in heaven not care about it.
May no light shine on it.
5 May darkness and deep shadow take it back.
May a cloud settle over it.
May blackness cover up its light.
6 May deep darkness take over the night I was born.
May it not be included among the days of the year.
May it never appear in any of the months.
7 May no children ever have been born on that night.
May no shout of joy be heard in it.
8 May people call down a curse on that day.
May those who are ready to wake up the sea monster Leviathan
curse that day.
9 May its morning stars become dark.
May it lose all hope of ever seeing daylight.
May it not see the first light of the morning sun.
10 It didn't keep my mother from letting me be born.
It didn't keep my eyes from seeing trouble.

11 "Why didn't I die when I was born?
Why didn't I die as I came out of my mother's body?
12 Why was I placed on her knees?
Why did her breasts give me milk?
13 If all of that hadn't happened,
I would be lying down in peace.
I'd be asleep and at rest in the grave.

14 I’d be with the earth’s kings and advisers.
They had built for themselves places that are now destroyed.
15 I’d be with rulers who used to have gold.
They had filled their houses with silver.
16 Why wasn’t I buried like a baby who was born dead?
Why wasn’t I buried like a child who never saw the light of day?
17 In the grave, sinful people don’t cause trouble anymore.
And there those who are tired find rest.
18 Prisoners also enjoy peace there.
They don’t hear a slave driver shouting at them anymore.
19 The least important and most important people are there.
And there the slaves are set free from their owners.

20 “Why is the light that leads to life given to those who suffer?
Why is it given to those whose spirits are bitter?
21 Why is life given to those who long for death that doesn’t come?
Why is it given to those who would rather search for death
than for hidden treasure?
22 Why is life given to those who are actually happy and glad
when they reach the grave?
23 Why is life given to a man like me?
God hasn’t told me what will happen to me.
He has surrounded me with nothing but trouble.
24 I sigh instead of eating food.
Groans pour out of me like water.
25 What I was afraid of has come on me.
What I worried about has happened to me.
26 I don’t have any peace and quiet.
I can’t find any rest. All I have is trouble.”

The First Speech of Eliphaz

Job 4

[1]Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied,

[2]"Job, suppose someone tries to talk to you.
Will that make you uneasy?
I can't keep from speaking up.
[3]Look, you taught many people.
You made weak hands strong.
[4]Your words helped those who had fallen down.
You made shaky knees strong.
[5]Now trouble comes to you. And you are unhappy about it.
It strikes you down. And you are afraid.
[6]Shouldn't you worship God and trust in him?
Shouldn't your honest life give you hope?

[7]"Here's something to think about.
Have blameless people ever been wiped out?
Have honest people ever been completely destroyed?
[8]Here's what I've observed.
People gather a crop from what they plant.
If they plant evil and trouble, that's what they will harvest.
[9]The breath of God destroys them.
The blast of his anger wipes them out.
[10]Powerful lions might roar and growl.
But their teeth are broken.
[11]Lions die because they don't have any food.
Then their cubs are scattered.

[12]"A message came to me in secret.
It was as quiet as a whisper.
[13]I had a scary dream one night.
I was sound asleep.

[14]Fear and trembling grabbed hold of me.
That made every bone in my body shake.
[15]A spirit glided past my face.
The hair on my body stood on end.
[16]Then the spirit stopped.
But I couldn’t tell what it was.
Something stood there in front of me.
I heard a soft voice.
[17]It said, ‘Can a human being be more right than God?
Can a mere man be more pure than the One who made him?
[18]God doesn’t trust those who serve him.
He even brings charges against his angels.
[19]So he’ll certainly find fault with human beings.
After all, they are made out of dust.
They can be crushed more easily than a moth.
[20]Between sunrise and sunset they are broken to pieces.
Nobody even notices. They disappear forever.
[21]Like a tent that falls down, they get weak.
They die because they didn’t follow God’s wisdom.’ ”

Job 5

[1]Eliphaz continued,

"Call out if you want to, Job.
But who will answer you?
Which one of the holy angels will you turn to?
[2]Anger kills foolish people.
Jealousy destroys those who are childish.
[3]I saw that foolish people were having success.
But suddenly a curse came down on their houses.
[4]Their children aren't safe at all.
They lose their case in court.
No one speaks up for them.
[5]Hungry people eat up the crops of those who are foolish.
They even take the food that grows among thorns.
Thirsty people long for the wealth of the foolish.
[6]Hard times don't just grow out of the soil.
Trouble doesn't jump out of the ground.
[7]People are born to have trouble.
And that's just as sure as sparks fly up.

[8]"If I were you, I'd make my appeal to God.
I'd bring my case to be judged by him.
[9]He does wonderful things that can't be understood.
He does miracles that can't even be counted.
[10]He sends rain on the earth.
He sends water on the countryside.
[11]He lifts up those who are lowly in spirit.
He lifts up those who are sad.
He keeps them safe.
[12]He stops those who are tricky from doing what they plan to do.
The work of their hands doesn't succeed.
[13]Some people think they are so wise.
But God catches them in their own tricks.
He sweeps away the evil plans of sinful people.

[14]Darkness covers them in the daytime.
At noon they feel their way around as if it were night.
[15]God saves needy people from the cutting words of their enemies.
He saves them from their powerful hands.
[16]So those who are poor have hope.
And God shuts the mouths of people who don't treat others fairly.

[17]"Blessed is the person God corrects.
So don't hate the Mighty One's training.
[18]He wounds. But he also bandages up those he wounds.
He harms. But his hands also heal those he harms.
[19]From six troubles he will save you.
Even if you are in trouble seven times, no harm will come to you.
[20]When there isn't enough food, God will keep you from dying.
When you go into battle, he won't let a sword strike you down.
[21]He will keep you safe from words that can hurt you.
You won't need to be afraid
when everything is being destroyed.
[22]You will laugh when things are being destroyed.
You will enjoy life even when there isn't enough food.
You won't be afraid of wild animals.
[23]You will make a covenant with the stones in the fields.
They won't keep your crops from growing.
Even wild animals will be at peace with you.
[24]You will know that the tent you live in is secure.
You will check out your property.
You will see that nothing is missing.
[25]You can be sure you will have a lot of children.
They will be as many as the blades of grass on the earth.
[26]You will go down to the grave
while you are still very strong.
You will be like a crop that is gathered at the right time.

[27]"We have carefully studied all of those things.
And they are true.
So pay attention to them.
Apply them to yourself."

JOB'S REPLY

Job 6

[1]Job replied,

[2]"I wish my great pain could be weighed!
I wish all of my suffering could be weighed on scales!
[3]I'm sure they would weigh more than the grains of sand on the seashore.
No wonder I've been so quick to speak!
[4]The Mighty One has shot me with his arrows.
I have to drink their poison.
God's terrors are aimed at me.
[5]Does a wild donkey cry out when it has enough grass?
Does an ox call out when it has plenty of food?
[6]Is food that doesn't have any taste eaten without salt?
Is there any flavor in the white of an egg?
[7]I refuse to touch that kind of food.
It makes me sick.

[8]"I wish I could have what I'm asking for!
I wish God would give me what I'm hoping for!
[9]I wish he would crush me!
I wish his powerful hand would cut off my life!
[10]Then I'd still have one thing to comfort me.
It would be that I haven't said no to the Holy One's commands.
That would give me joy in spite of my pain that never ends.

[11]"I'm so weak that I no longer have any hope.
Things have gotten so bad that I can't wait for help anymore.
[12]Am I as strong as stone?
Is my body made out of bronze?
[13]I don't have the power to help myself.
All hope of success has been taken away from me.

14 “A man’s friends should love him when his hope is gone.
They should be faithful to him
even if he stops showing respect for the Mighty One.
15 But my friends aren’t faithful to me.
They are like streams that only flow for part of the year.
They are like rivers that flow over their banks
16 when the ice begins to break up.
The streams rise when the snow starts to melt.
17 But they stop flowing when the dry season comes.
They disappear from their stream beds when the weather warms up.
18 Groups of traders turn away from their usual paths.
They go up into the dry and empty land.
And they die there.
19 Traders from Tema look for water.
Traveling merchants from Sheba also hope to find it.
20 They become troubled because they had expected to find some.
But when they arrive at the stream beds,
they don’t find any water at all.
21 And now, my friends, you haven’t helped me either.
You see the horrible condition I’m in.
And that makes you afraid.
22 I’ve never said, ‘Give me something to help me.
Use your wealth to set me free.
23 Save me from the powerful hand of my enemy.
Set me free from the power of mean people.’

24 “Teach me. Then I’ll be quiet.
Show me what I’ve done wrong.
25 Honest words are so painful!
But your reasoning doesn’t prove anything.
26 Are you trying to correct what I’m saying?
You are treating the words of this hopeless man
like nothing but wind.
27 You would even cast lots for those whose fathers have died.
You would even trade away your closest friend.

28 “But now please look at me.
Would I tell you a lie right here in front of you?
29 Stop what you are saying. Don’t be so unfair.
Think it over again.

You are trying to take my honesty away from me.
30 Has my mouth spoken anything that is evil?
Do my lips say things that are hateful?”

Job 7

[1]Job continued,

"Doesn't every man have to work hard on this earth?
Aren't his days like the days of a hired worker?
[2]I've been like a slave
who longs for the evening shadows to come.
I've been like a hired worker
who can hardly wait to get paid.
[3]I've been given several months that were useless to me.
My nights have been filled with suffering.
[4]When I lie down I think,
'How long will it be before I can get up?'
The night drags on.
I toss and turn until sunrise.
[5]My body is covered with worms and sores.
My skin is broken. It has boils all over it.

[6]"My days pass by faster than a weaver can work.
They come to an end. I don't have any hope.
[7]God, remember that my life is only a breath.
I'll never be happy again.
[8]The eyes that see me now won't see me anymore.
You will look for me. But I'll be gone.
[9]When a cloud disappears, it's gone forever.
And anyone who goes down to the grave never returns.
[10]He never comes home again.
Even his own family doesn't remember him.

[11]"So I won't keep quiet.
When I'm suffering greatly, I'll speak out.
When my spirit is bitter, I'll tell you how unhappy I am.
[12]Am I the ocean? Am I the sea monster?
If I'm not, why do you guard me so closely?
[13]Sometimes I think my bed will comfort me.
I think my couch will keep me from being unhappy.

[14]But even then you send me dreams that frighten me.
You send me visions that terrify me.
[15]So I would rather choke to death.
That would be better than living in this body of mine.
[16]I hate my life. I don’t want to live forever.
Leave me alone. My days don’t mean anything to me.

[17]“What are human beings that you think so much of them?
What are they that you pay so much attention to them?
[18]You check up on them every morning.
You put them to the test every moment.
[19]Won’t you ever look away from me?
Won’t you leave me alone even for one second?
[20]If I’ve really sinned, tell me what I’ve done to you.
Why do you watch people so closely?
Why do you shoot your arrows at me?
Have I become a problem to you?
[21]Why don’t you forgive the wrong things I’ve done?
Why don’t you forgive me for my sins?
I’ll soon lie down in the dust of my grave.
You will search for me. But I’ll be gone.”

The First Speech of Bildad

Job 8

[1]Then Bildad the Shuhite replied,

[2]“Job, how long will you talk like that?
Your words don’t have any meaning.
[3]Does God ever treat people unfairly?
Does the Mighty One make what is wrong
appear to be right?
[4]Your children sinned against him.
So he punished them for their sin.
[5]But look to God.
Make your appeal to the Mighty One.
[6]Be pure and honest.
And he will rise up and help you now.
He’ll return you to the place where you belong.
[7]In the past, things went well with you.
But in days to come, things will get even better.

[8]“Find out what your people who lived long ago taught.
Discover what those who lived before them learned.
[9]After all, we were born only yesterday.
So we don’t know anything.
Our days on this earth are like a shadow that disappears.
[10]Won’t your people of long ago teach you and tell you?
Won’t the things they said help you understand?
[11]Can grass grow tall where there isn’t any swamp?
Can plants grow well where there isn’t any water?
[12]While they are still growing and haven’t been cut,
they dry up faster than grass does.
[13]The same thing happens to everyone who forgets God.
The hope of ungodly people dies out.
[14]What they trust in is very weak.

What they depend on is like a spider’s web.
15 A person leans on it, but it falls apart.
He holds on to it, but it gives way.
16 He is like a plant in the sunshine
that receives plenty of water.
It spreads its new growth all over the garden.
17 It wraps its roots around a pile of rocks.
It tries to find places to grow among the stones.
18 But when a plant is pulled up from its spot,
that place says, ‘I never saw you.’
19 The life of that plant is sure to dry up.
But from the same soil other plants will grow.

20 “I’m sure God doesn’t turn his back on anyone who is honest.
And he doesn’t help those who do what is evil.
21 He will fill your mouth with laughter.
Shouts of joy will come from your lips.
22 Your enemies will put on shame as if it were clothes.
The tents of sinful people will be gone.”

Job's Reply

Job 9

[1]Job replied,

[2]"I'm sure that what you have said is true.
But how can human beings be right with God?
[3]They might wish to argue with him.
But they couldn't answer him
even once in a thousand times.
[4]His wisdom is deep. His power is great.
No one opposes him and comes away unharmed.
[5]He moves mountains, and they don't even know it.
When he is angry, he turns them upside down.
[6]He shakes the earth loose from its place.
He makes its pillars tremble.
[7]When he tells the sun not to shine, it doesn't.
He turns off the light of the stars.
[8]He's the only one who can spread the heavens out.
He alone can walk on the waves of the ocean.
[9]He made the Big Dipper and Orion.
He created the Pleiades and the southern stars.
[10]He does wonderful things that can't be understood.
He does miracles that can't even be counted.
[11]When he passes by me, I can't see him.
When he goes past me, I can't recognize him.
[12]If he takes something, who can stop him?
Who would dare to ask him, 'What are you doing?'
[13]God doesn't hold back his anger.
Even the helpers of the sea monster Rahab
bowed in fear at his feet.

[14]"So how can I disagree with God?
How can I possibly argue with him?

15 Even if I hadn’t done anything wrong,
I couldn’t answer him.
I could only beg my Judge to have mercy on me.
16 Suppose I called out to him and he answered.
I don’t believe he’d listen to me.
17 He would send a storm to crush me.
He’d increase my wounds without any reason.
18 He wouldn’t let me catch my breath.
He’d make my life very bitter.
19 If it’s a matter of strength, he is mighty!
And if it’s a matter of being fair,
who would dare to bring charges against him?
20 Even if I hadn’t sinned, what I said would prove me guilty.
Even if I were honest, my words would show that I’m wrong.

21 “Even though I’m honest,
I’m not concerned about myself.
I hate my own life.
22 It all amounts to the same thing. That’s why I say,
‘God destroys honest people and sinful people alike.’
23 Suppose a plague brings sudden death.
Then he laughs when those who haven’t sinned lose hope.
24 Suppose a nation falls into the power of sinful people.
Then God makes its judges blind to the truth.
If he isn’t the one doing it, who is?

25 “God, my days race by like a runner.
They fly away without seeing any joy.
26 They speed along like papyrus boats.
They are like eagles swooping down on their food.
27 Suppose I say, ‘I’ll forget about all of my problems.
I’ll change my frown into a smile.’
28 Then I’d still be afraid I’d go on suffering.
That’s because I know you would say
I had done something wrong.
29 In fact, you have already said I’m guilty.
So why should I struggle without any reason?
30 Suppose I clean myself with soap.
Suppose I wash my hands with cleanser.
31 Even then you would throw me into a muddy pit.

And even my clothes would hate me.

32“God isn’t a man like me. I can’t answer him.
We can’t take each other to court.
33I wish someone would settle matters between us.
I wish someone would force us to work things out.
34I wish someone would keep God from punishing me.
Then his terror wouldn’t frighten me anymore.
35I would speak up without being afraid of him.
But as things stand now, I can’t do that.

Job 10

1 “I’m sick of living.
So I’ll talk openly about my problems.
I’ll speak out because my spirit is bitter.
2 I’ll say to God, ‘Don’t find me guilty.
Instead, tell me what charges
you are bringing against me.
3 Does it make you happy when you crush me?
Does it please you to turn your back on what you have made?
While you do those things,
you smile on the plans of sinful people!
4 You don’t have human eyes.
You don’t see as people see.
5 Your days aren’t like the days of a human being.
Your years aren’t like the years of a mere man.
6 So you search for my mistakes.
You look for my sin.
7 You already know I’m not guilty.
No one can save me from your powerful hand.

8 “ ‘Your hands shaped me and made me.
So are you going to destroy me now?
9 Remember, you molded me like clay.
So are you going to turn me back into dust?
10 Didn’t you pour me out like milk?
Didn’t you form me like cheese?
11 Didn’t you put skin and flesh on me?
Didn’t you sew me together with bones and muscles?
12 You gave me life. You were kind to me.
You took good care of me. You watched over me.

13 “ ‘But here’s what you hid in your heart.
Here’s what you had on your mind.
14 If I sinned, you would be watching me.
You wouldn’t let me go without punishing me.

15 If I were guilty, how terrible that would be for me!
Even if I haven't sinned,
I can't be proud of what I've done.
That's because I'm so full of shame.
I'm drowning in my suffering.
16 If I become proud, you hunt me down like a lion.
You show your mighty power against me.
17 You bring new witnesses against me.
You become more and more angry with me.
You use your power against me again and again.

18 " 'Why did you bring me out of my mother's body?
I wish I had died before anyone saw me.
19 I wish I'd never been born!
I wish I'd been carried straight from my mother's body to the grave!
20 Aren't my few days almost over?
Leave me so I can have a moment of joy.
21 Turn away before I go to the place I can't return from.
It's the land of darkness and deep shadow.
22 It's the land of darkest night
and deep shadow and disorder.
There even the light is like darkness.' "

The First Speech of Zophar

Job 11

[1]Then Zophar the Naamathite replied,

[2]"Don't all of your words require an answer?
I'm sure that what you are saying can't be right.
[3]Your useless talk won't keep us quiet.
Someone has to correct you when you make fun of truth.
[4]You say to God, 'My beliefs are perfect.
I'm pure in your sight.'
[5]I wish God would speak.
I wish he'd answer you.
[6]I wish he'd show you the secrets of wisdom.
After all, true wisdom has two sides.
Here's what I want you to know.
God has forgotten some of your sins.

[7]"Do you know how deep the mysteries of God are?
Can you discover the limits of the Mighty One's knowledge?
[8]They are higher than the heavens.
What can you do?
They are deeper than the deepest grave.
What can you know?
[9]They are longer than the earth.
They are wider than the ocean.

[10]"Suppose God comes along and puts you in prison.
Suppose he takes you to court.
Then who can oppose him?
[11]He certainly knows when people tell lies.
When he sees evil, he pays careful attention to it.
[12]A wild donkey's colt can't be born a human being.
And a man who doesn't have any sense can't become wise.

13 “So commit yourself to God completely.
Reach out your hands to him for help.
14 Get rid of all of the sin you have.
Don’t let anything that is evil stay in your tent.
15 Then you can face others without feeling any shame.
You can stand firm without being afraid.
16 You can be sure you will forget your troubles.
They will be like water that has flowed on by.
17 Life will be brighter than the sun at noon.
And darkness will become like morning.
18 You will be secure, because there is hope.
You will look around you and find a safe place to rest.
19 You will lie down, and no one will make you afraid.
Many people will want you to show them your favor.
20 But sinful people won’t find what they are looking for.
They won’t be able to escape.
All they can hope for is to die.”

Job's Reply

Job 12

[1]Job replied,

[2]"You people think you know everything, don't you?
You are sure that wisdom will die with you!
[3]But I have a brain, just like you.
I'm as clever as you are.
In fact, everyone knows as much as you do.

[4]"My friends laugh at me all the time,
even though I called out to God and he answered.
My friends laugh at me,
even though I'm honest and right.
[5]People who have an easy life look down on those who have problems.
They think trouble comes only to those whose feet are slipping.
[6]Why doesn't anyone bother the tents of robbers?
Why do those who make God angry remain secure?
They carry the statues of their gods in their hands!

[7]"But ask the animals what God does.
They will teach you.
Or ask the birds of the air.
They will tell you.
[8]Or speak to the earth. It will teach you.
Or let the fish of the ocean educate you.
[9]Are there any of those creatures that don't know
what the powerful hand of the LORD has done?
[10]He holds the life of every creature in his hand.
He controls the breath of every human being.
[11]Our tongues tell us what tastes good and what doesn't.
And our ears tell us what's true and what isn't.
[12]Old people are wise.

Those who live a long time have understanding.

13 “Wisdom and power belong to God.
Advice and understanding also belong to him.
14 What he tears down can’t be rebuilt.
Any man he puts in prison can’t be set free.
15 If he holds back the water, everything dries up.
If he lets the water loose, it floods the land.
16 Strength and success belong to him.
Those who tell lies and those who believe them also belong to him.
17 He removes the wisdom of advisers and leads them away.
He makes judges look foolish.
18 He sets people free from the chains that kings put on them.
Then he dresses the kings in the clothes of slaves.
19 He removes the authority of priests and leads them away.
He removes from their positions
those who have been in control for a long time.
20 He shuts the mouths of trusted advisers.
He takes away the understanding of elders.
21 He looks down on proud leaders.
He takes away the strength of those who are mighty.
22 He tells people the secrets of darkness.
He brings evil plans out into the light.
23 He makes nations great, and then he destroys them.
He makes nations grow, and then he scatters them.
24 He takes away the understanding of the leaders of the earth.
He makes them wander in a desert where no one lives.
25 Without any light, they feel their way along in darkness.
God makes them unsteady like those who get drunk.

Job 13

[1]“My eyes have seen everything God has done.
My ears have heard it and understood it.
[2]What you know, I also know.
I’m as clever as you are.
[3]In fact, I long to speak to the Mighty One.
I want to argue my case with God.
[4]But you spread lies about me and take away my good name.
If you are trying to heal me,
you aren’t very good doctors!
[5]I wish you would keep your mouths shut!
Then people would think you were wise.
[6]Listen to my case.
Listen as I make my appeal.
[7]Will you say evil things in order to help God?
Will you tell lies for him?
[8]Do you want to be on God’s side?
Will you argue his case for him?
[9]Would it turn out well if he looked you over carefully?
Could you fool him as you fool others?
[10]He would certainly correct you
if you took his side in secret.
[11]Wouldn’t his glory terrify you?
Wouldn’t the fear of him fall on you?
[12]Your sayings are as useless as ashes.
The answers you give are as weak as clay.

[13]“So be quiet and let me speak.
Then I won’t care what happens to me.
[14]Why do I put myself in danger?
Why do I take my life in my hands?
[15]Even if God kills me, I’ll still put my hope in him.
I’ll argue my case in front of him.
[16]No matter how things turn out,
I’m sure I’ll still be saved.

After all, no ungodly person
would dare to come into his court.
17 Listen carefully to what I'm saying.
Pay close attention to my words.
18 I've prepared my case.
And I know I'll be proved right.
19 Can others bring charges against me?
If they can, I'll keep quiet and die.

20 "God, I won't hide from you.
Here are the only two things I want.
21 Keep your powerful hand far away from me.
And stop making me so afraid.
22 Then send for me, and I'll answer.
Or let me speak, and you reply.
23 How many things have I done wrong?
How many sins have I committed?
Show me my crime. Show me my sin.
24 Why do you turn your face away from me?
Why do you think of me as your enemy?
25 I'm already like a leaf that is blown by the wind.
Are you going to terrify me even more?
I'm already like dry straw.
Are you going to keep on chasing me?
26 You write down bitter things against me.
You make me suffer for the sins
I committed when I was young.
27 You put my feet in chains.
You watch every step I take.
You do it by putting marks on the bottom of my feet.

28 "People waste away like something that is rotten.
They are like clothes that are eaten by moths.

Job 14

[1]They have only a few days to live.
Their lives are full of trouble.
[2]They grow like flowers, and then they dry up.
They are like shadows that quickly disappear.

[3]“God, why do you keep looking at someone like me?
Are you planning to take me to court?
[4]Who can bring what is pure from something that isn’t pure?
No one!
[5]You decide how long anyone will live.
You have established the number of his months.
You have set a limit to the number of his days.
[6]So look away from him. Leave him alone.
Let him put in his time like a hired worker.

[7]“At least there is hope for a tree.
If it’s cut down, it will begin to grow again.
New branches will appear on it.
[8]Its roots may grow old in the ground.
Its stump may die in the soil.
[9]But when it smells water, it will begin to grow.
It will send out new growth like a plant.
[10]No man is like that. When he dies, he is buried in a grave.
He takes his last breath. Then he is gone.
[11]Water disappears from lakes.
Riverbeds become empty and dry.
[12]In the same way, a man lies down and never gets up.
He won’t wake up or rise from his sleep
until the heavens are gone.

[13]“I wish you would hide me in a grave!
I wish you would cover me up until your anger passes by!
I wish you would set the time for me to spend in the grave
and then bring me back up!
[14]If a man dies, will he live again?
All the days of my hard work

I will wait for the time when you give me new life.
15 You will call out to me, and I will answer you.
Your hands created me. So you will long for me.
16 Then you will count every step I take.
But you won’t keep track of my sin.
17 The wrong things I’ve done will be sealed up in a bag.
You will wipe out my sins by forgiving them.

18 “A mountain wears away and crumbles.
A rock is moved from its place.
19 Water wears stones away.
Storms wash soil away.
In the same way, you destroy our hope.
20 You overpower us completely, and then we’re gone.
You change the way we look and send us to our graves.
21 If our children are honored, we don’t even know it.
If they are dishonored, we don’t even see it.
22 All we feel is the pain of our own bodies.
We are full of sadness only for ourselves.”

The Second Speech of Eliphaz

Job 15

[1]Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied,

[2]"Job, if you were wise,
would you answer us with a lot of meaningless talk?
Would you fill your stomach with the hot east wind?
[3]Would you argue with useless words?
Would you give worthless speeches?
[4]But you even cause others to lose their respect for God.
You make it hard for them to be faithful to him.
[5]Your sin makes you say evil things.
You talk like people who twist the truth.
[6]Your own mouth judges you, not mine.
Your own lips witness against you.

[7]"Are you the first man who was ever born?
Were you created before the hills?
[8]Do you listen in when God speaks with his angels?
Do you think you are the only wise person?
[9]What do you know that we don't know?
What understanding do you have that we don't have?
[10]People who are old and gray are on our side.
And they are even older than your parents!
[11]Aren't God's words of comfort enough for you?
He speaks them to you gently.
[12]Why have you let your wild ideas carry you away?
Why do your eyes flash with anger?
[13]Why do you get so angry with God?
Why do words like those pour out of your mouth?

[14]"Can human beings really be pure?
Can mere men really be right with God?

15 God doesn’t trust his holy angels.
Even the heavens aren’t pure in his sight.
16 So he’ll certainly find fault with human beings.
After all, they are evil and sinful.
They drink up evil as if it were water.

17 “Listen to me. I’ll explain things to you.
Let me tell you what I’ve seen.
18 I’ll tell you what those who are wise have said.
They don’t hide anything they’ve received
from their people of long ago.
19 The land was given only to those people.
Their wisdom didn’t come from outsiders.
And here’s what those who are wise have said.
20 Sinful people always suffer pain.
Mean people suffer all their lives.
21 Terrifying sounds fill their ears.
When everything seems to be going well,
robbers attack them.
22 They lose all hope of escaping the darkness of death.
They will certainly be killed with swords.
23 They wander around. They are like food for vultures.
They know that the day they will die is near.
24 Suffering and pain terrify them.
Their troubles overpower them,
like a king ready to attack his enemies.
25 They shake their fists at God.
They brag about themselves and oppose the Mighty One.
26 They boldly charge against him
with their thick, strong shields.

27 “Their faces are very fat.
Their stomachs hang out.
28 They’ll live in towns that have been destroyed.
They’ll live in houses where no one else lives.
The houses will crumble to pieces.
29 They won’t be rich anymore. Their wealth won’t last.
Their property will no longer spread out over the land.
30 They won’t escape the darkness of death.
A flame will dry up everything they have.

The breath of God will blow them away.
31 Don’t let them fool themselves
by trusting in what is worthless.
They won’t get anything out of it.
32 Even before they die, they’ll be paid back in full.
No matter what they do, it won’t succeed.
33 They’ll be like vines
that are stripped of their unripe grapes.
They’ll be like olive trees
that drop their flowers.
34 People who are ungodly won’t have any children.
Fire will burn up the tents of people who accept money
from those who want special favors.
35 Instead of having children,
ungodly people create suffering.
All they produce is evil.
They are full of lies.”

Job's Reply

Job 16

[1]Job replied,

[2]"I've heard many of those things before.
You are terrible at comforting me!
[3]Your speeches go on forever.
Won't they ever end?
What's wrong with you?
Why do you keep on arguing?
[4]If you and I changed places,
I could say the same things you are saying.
I could make fine speeches against you.
I could shake my head at you.
[5]But what I might say would give you hope.
My words of comfort would help you.

[6]"If I speak, it doesn't help me.
And if I keep quiet, my pain doesn't go away.
[7]God has worn me out completely.
He has destroyed my whole family.
[8]People can see the condition he has put me in.
My thin body stands as a witness against me.
[9]God is angry with me.
He attacks me and tears me up.
He grinds his teeth at me.
He stares at me as if he were my enemy.
[10]People make fun of me.
They slap my face and laugh at me.
All of them join together against me.
[11]God has turned me over to sinful people.
He has handed me over to them.
[12]Everything was going well with me.

But he broke me into pieces like a clay pot.
He grabbed me by the neck and crushed me.
He has taken aim at me.
13 He shoots his arrows at me from all sides.
Without pity, he stabs me in the kidneys.
He spills my insides on the ground.
14 He smashes through me as if I were a wall.
He rushes at me like a fighting man.

15 "I've sewed black cloth over my skin.
All I can do is sit here in the dust.
16 My face is red from crying.
I have deep circles under my eyes.
17 But I haven't harmed anyone.
My prayers to God are pure.

18 "Earth, please don't cover up my blood!
May God always hear my cry for help!
19 Even now my witness is in heaven.
The one who speaks up for me is there.
20 My go-between is my friend
as I pour out my tears to God.
21 He makes his appeal to God to help me
as a man begs someone to help his friend.

22 "Only a few years will pass by.
Then I'll go on a journey I won't return from.

Job 17

[1]My strength is almost gone.
I won’t live much longer.
A grave is waiting for me.
[2]People who make fun of me are all around me.
I’m forced to watch as they attack me with their words.

[3]“God, please pay the price to have me set free.
Who else would put up money for me?
[4]You have closed the minds of those who are trying to comfort me.
They don’t understand that I haven’t done anything wrong.
So don’t let them win the argument.
[5]Suppose a man tells lies about his friends to get a reward.
Then his own children will suffer for it.

[6]“God has made everyone laugh at me.
People spit in my face.
[7]My eyes have grown weak because I’m so sad.
My body is so thin it hardly casts a shadow.
[8]Those who claim to be honest
are shocked when they see me.
Those who think they haven’t sinned
are stirred up against me.
They think I’m ungodly.
[9]But godly people will keep doing what is right.
Those who have clean hands will grow stronger.

[10]“Come on, all of you! Try again!
I can’t find a wise person among you.
[11]My life is almost over. My plans are destroyed.
And so are the longings of my heart.
[12]People like you turn night into day.
Even though it’s dark you say,
‘Light is nearby.’
[13]Suppose the only home I can hope for is a grave.
And suppose I make my bed in the darkness of death.

[14]Suppose I say to the grave,
‘You are like a father to me.’
And suppose I say to its worms,
‘You are like a mother or sister to me.’
[15]Then what hope do I have?
Who can give me any hope?
[16]Will hope go down to the gates of death with me?
Will we go down together into the dust of the grave?”

The Second Speech of Bildad

Job 18

[1]Then Bildad the Shuhite replied,

[2]"Job, when will you stop these speeches of yours?
Be reasonable! Then we can talk.
[3]Why do you look at us as if we were cattle?
Why do you think of us as being stupid?
[4]Your anger is tearing you to pieces.
Does the earth have to be deserted just to prove you are right?
Must all of the rocks be moved from their places?

[5]"The lamps of sinful people are blown out.
Their flames will never burn again.
[6]The lights in their tents become dark.
The lamps beside those who are evil go out.
[7]They walk more slowly than they used to.
Their own evil plans make them fall.
[8]Their feet take them into a net.
They wander right into it.
[9]A trap grabs hold of their heels.
It refuses to let them go.
[10]A trap lies in their path.
A rope to catch them is hidden on the ground.
[11]Terrors alarm them on every side.
They follow them every step of the way.
[12]Trouble would like to eat them up.
Danger waits for them when they fall.
[13]It eats away parts of their skin.
Death itself feeds on their arms and legs.
[14]They are torn away from the safety of their tents.
They are marched off to the one who rules over death.
[15]Fire races through their tents.

Burning sulfur is scattered over their homes.
16 Their roots dry up under them.
Their branches dry up above them.
17 No one on earth remembers them.
Their names are forgotten in the land.
18 They are driven from light into darkness.
They are thrown out of the world.
19 Their family dies out among their people.
No one is left where they used to live.
20 What has happened to them shocks the people in the west.
It terrifies the people in the east.
21 Now you know what the homes of sinners are like.
Those who don’t know God live in places like that.”

Job's Reply

Job 19

[1]Job replied,

[2]"How long will you people make me suffer?
How long will you crush me with your words?
[3]You have already made fun of me many times.
You have attacked me without feeling any shame.
[4]Suppose it's true that I've gone down the wrong path.
Then it's my concern, not yours.
[5]Suppose you want to place yourselves above me.
Suppose you want to use my shame to prove I'm wrong.
[6]Then I want you to know that God hasn't treated me right.
In fact, he has captured me in his net.

[7]"I cry out, 'Someone harmed me!'
But I don't get any reply.
I call out for help.
But I'm not treated fairly.
[8]God has blocked my way, and I can't get through.
He has made my paths so dark I can't see where I'm going.
[9]He has taken my wealth away from me.
He has stripped me of my honor.
[10]He tears me down on every side until I'm gone.
He pulls up the roots of my hope as if I were a tree.
[11]His anger burns against me.
He thinks I'm one of his enemies.
[12]His troops march toward me in force.
They come at me from every direction.
They camp around my tent.

[13]"God has caused my brothers to desert me.
The people I used to know are now strangers to me.

14 My family has gone away.
My friends have forgotten me.
15 My guests and my female servants think of me as a stranger.
They look at me as if I were an outsider.
16 I send for my servant, but he doesn't answer.
He doesn't come, even though I beg him to.
17 My wife can't stand the way my breath smells.
My own relatives won't have anything to do with me.
18 Even little children laugh at me.
When I appear, they make fun of me.
19 All of my close friends hate me.
Those I love have turned against me.
20 I'm nothing but skin and bones.
I've only escaped by the skin of my teeth.

21 "Have pity on me, my friends! Please have pity!
God has struck me down with his powerful hand.
22 Why do you chase after me as he does?
Aren't you satisfied with what you have done to me already?

23 "I wish my words were written down!
I wish they were written on a scroll!
24 I wish they were cut into lead with an iron tool!
I wish they were carved in rock forever!
25 I know that my Redeemer lives.
In the end he will stand on the earth.
26 After my skin has been destroyed,
in my body I'll still see God.
27 I myself will see him with my own eyes.
I'll see him, and he won't be a stranger to me.
How my heart longs for that day!

28 "You might say, 'Let's keep bothering Job.
After all, he's the cause of all of his suffering.'
29 But you should be afraid when God comes to judge you.
He'll be angry. He'll punish you with his sword.
Then you will know that he is the Judge."

The Second Speech of Zophar

Job 20

[1]Then Zophar the Naamathite replied,

[2]"My troubled thoughts force me to answer you.
That's because I'm very upset.
[3]What you have just said makes fun of me.
So I really have to reply to you.

[4]"I'm sure you must know how things have always been.
They've been that way
ever since man was placed on this earth.
[5]Those who are evil are happy for only a short time.
The joy of ungodly people lasts only for a moment.
[6]Their pride might reach all the way up to the heavens.
Their heads might touch the clouds.
[7]But they will disappear forever,
like the waste from their own bodies.
Anyone who has seen them will say,
'Where did they go?'
[8]Like a dream they will fly away.
They will never be seen again.
They will be driven away like visions in the night.
[9]The eyes that saw them won't see them anymore.
Even their own families won't remember them.
[10]Their children must pay back what they took from poor people.
Their own hands must give back the wealth they stole.
[11]They might feel young and very strong.
But they will soon lie down in the dust of their graves.

[12]"Anything that is evil tastes sweet to them.
They keep it under their tongues for a while.
[13]They can't stand to let it go.

So they hold it in their mouths.
14 But their food will turn sour in their stomachs.
It will become like the poison of a serpent inside them.
15 They will spit out the rich food they swallowed.
God will make their stomachs throw it up.
16 They will suck the poison of a serpent.
The fangs of an adder will kill them.
17 They won't enjoy streams that flow with honey.
They won't enjoy rivers that flow with cream.
18 What they worked for they must give back
before they can eat it.
They won't enjoy what they have earned.
19 They've crushed poor people and left them with nothing.
They've taken over houses they didn't even build.

20 "No matter how much they have,
they always long for more.
But their treasure can't save them.
21 There isn't anything left for them to eat up.
Their success won't last.
22 While they are enjoying the good life,
trouble will catch up with them.
Terrible suffering will come on them.
23 When they've filled their stomachs,
God will pour out his burning anger on them.
He'll strike them down with blow after blow.
24 They might run away from iron weapons.
But arrows that have bronze tips will wound them.
25 They will pull the arrows out of their backs.
They will remove the shining tips from their livers.
They will be filled with terror.
26 Total darkness hides and waits for their treasures.
God will send a fire that will destroy them.
It will burn up everything that's left in their tents.
27 Heaven will show their guilt to everyone.
The earth will be a witness against them.
28 A flood will carry their houses away.
Rushing water will wash them away
on the day when God judges.
29 Now you know what God will do to sinful people.

Now you know what he has planned for them.”

Job's Reply

Job 21

[1]Job replied,

[2]"Listen carefully to what I'm saying.
Let that be the comfort you people give me.
[3]Put up with me while I speak.
After I've spoken, you can make fun of me!

[4]"I'm not arguing with mere human beings.
So why shouldn't I be angry and uneasy?
[5]Look at me and be amazed.
Put your hand over your mouth and stop talking!
[6]When I think about these things, I'm terrified.
My whole body trembles.
[7]Why do sinful people keep on living?
The older they grow, the richer they get.
[8]They see their children grow up around them.
They watch their family increase in number.
[9]Their homes are safe.
They don't have to be afraid.
God isn't punishing them.
[10]Every time their bulls mate, their cows become pregnant.
And the calves don't die before they are born.
[11]Sinful people send their children out like a flock of lambs.
Their little ones dance around.
[12]They sing to the music of tambourines and harps.
They have a good time while flutes are being played.
[13]Those who are evil spend their years living well.
They go down to their graves in peace.
[14]But they say to God, 'Leave us alone!
We don't want to know how you want us to live.
[15]Who is the Mighty One? Why should we serve him?

What would we get if we prayed to him?’
16But they aren’t in control of their own success.
So I don’t pay any attention to the advice they give.

17“How often are their lamps blown out?
How often does trouble come on them?
How often does God punish them when he’s angry?
18How often are they like dried-up seed coverings blowing in the wind?
How often are they like straw swept away by a storm?
19People say, ‘God punishes a man’s children for his sins.’
But let him punish the man himself.
Then he’ll learn a lesson from it.
20Let his own eyes see how he is destroyed.
Let him drink the wine of the Mighty One’s anger.
21What does he care about the family he leaves behind?
What does he care about them
when his life comes to an end?

22“Can anyone teach God anything?
After all, he judges even the angels in heaven.
23Some people die while they are still very strong.
They are completely secure. They have an easy life.
24They are well fed.
Their bodies are healthy.
25Others die while their spirits are bitter.
They’ve never enjoyed anything good.
26Side by side they lie in the dust of death.
The worms in their graves cover all of them.

27“I know exactly what you people are thinking.
I know you are planning to do bad things to me.
28You are saying to yourselves,
‘Where is the great man’s house now?
Where are the tents where his evil family lived?’
29Haven’t you ever asked questions of those who travel?
Haven’t you paid any attention to their stories?
30They’ll tell you that sinful people
are spared from the day of trouble.
They’ll say that those people
are saved from the day when God will judge.

[31]Who speaks against them for the way they act?
Who pays them back for what they've done?
[32]Their bodies will be carried to their graves.
Guards will watch over their tombs.
[33]The soil in the valley will be pleasant
to those who have died.
Many people will walk along behind their bodies.
Many others will walk in front of them.

[34]"So how can you comfort me with your speeches?
They don't make any sense at all.
Your answers are nothing but lies!"

The Third Speech of Eliphaz

Job 22

[1]Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied,

[2]“Can any man be of benefit to God?
Can even a wise man be of any help to him?
[3]Job, what pleasure would it give the Mighty One if you were right?
What would he get if you were completely honest?

[4]“You say you have respect for him.
Is that why he corrects you?
Is that why he brings charges against you?
[5]Haven’t you done many evil things?
Don’t you sin again and again?
[6]You took clothes away from your relatives
just because they owed you some money.
You left them naked for no reason at all.
[7]You didn’t give any water to people who were tired.
You held food back from those who were hungry.
[8]You did it even though you were honored and powerful.
You owned land and lived on it.
[9]But you sent widows away without anything.
You mistreated children whose fathers had died.
[10]That’s why traps have been set all around you.
That’s why sudden danger terrifies you.
[11]That’s why it’s so dark you can’t even see.
That’s why a flood covers you up.

[12]“Isn’t God in the highest parts of heaven?
See how high the highest stars are!
[13]But you still say, ‘What does God know?
Can he see through the darkest clouds to judge us?
[14]He goes around in the highest heavens.

Thick clouds keep him from seeing us.’
15Will you stay on the old path
that sinful people have walked on?
16They were carried off even before they died.
Their foundations were washed away by a flood.
17They said to God, ‘Leave us alone!
What can you do to us, you Mighty One?’
18But he was the one who filled their houses with good things.
So I don’t pay any attention to the advice they give.

19“Those who do what is right are joyful
when they see sinners destroyed.
Those who haven’t done anything wrong make fun of them.
20They say, ‘Our enemies are completely destroyed.
Fire has burned up their wealth.’

21“Job, obey God and be at peace with him.
Then he will help you succeed.
22Do what he teaches you to do.
Keep his words in your heart.
23If you return to the Mighty One,
you will have what you had before.
But first you must remove
everything that is evil far from your tent.
24You must throw your gold nuggets away.
You must toss your gold from Ophir into a valley.
25Then the Mighty One himself will be your gold.
He’ll be like the finest silver to you.
26You will find delight in the Mighty One.
You will honor God and trust in him.
27You will pray to him, and he will hear you.
You will keep the promises you made to him.
28What you decide to do will be done.
Light will shine on the path you take.
29When people are brought low you will say, ‘Lift them up!’
Then God will help them.
30He’ll even save those who are guilty.
He’ll save them because your hands are clean.”

Job's Reply

Job 23

[1]Job replied,

[2]"Even today my problems are more than I can handle.
In spite of my groans, God's hand is heavy on me.
[3]I wish I knew where I could find him!
I wish I could go to the place where he lives!
[4]I would state my case to him.
I'd give him all of my arguments.
[5]I'd find out what his answers would be.
I'd think about what he would say.
[6]Would he oppose me with his great power?
No. He wouldn't bring charges against me.
[7]I'm an honest person. I could state my case to him.
Then my Judge would tell me once and for all that I'm not guilty.

[8]"But if I go to the east, God isn't there.
If I go to the west, I don't find him.
[9]When he's working in the north, I don't see him there.
When he turns to the south, I don't see him there either.
[10]But he knows every step I take.
When he has put me to the test,
I'll come out as pure as gold.
[11]My feet have closely followed his steps.
I've stayed on his path without turning away.
[12]I haven't disobeyed his commands.
I've treasured his words more than my daily bread.

[13]"But he's the only God. Who can oppose him?
He does anything he wants to do.
[14]He carries out his plans against me.
And he still has many other plans just like them.

15 That’s why I’m so terrified.
When I think about all of this, I’m afraid of him.
16 God has made my heart weak.
The Mighty One has filled me with terror.
17 But even the darkness of death won’t make me silent.
When the darkness of the grave covers my face, I won’t be quiet.

Job 24

[1]“Why doesn’t the Mighty One set a time for judging sinful people?
Why do those who know him have to keep waiting for that day?
[2]People move their neighbor’s boundary stones.
They steal their neighbor’s flocks.
[3]They take away the donkeys
that belong to children whose fathers have died.
They take a widow’s ox until she has paid what she owes.
[4]They push those who are needy out of their way.
They force all of the poor people in the land to go into hiding.
[5]The poor are like wild donkeys in the desert.
They have to go around looking for food.
The dry and empty land provides the only food for their children.
[6]The poor go to the fields and get a little grain.
They gather up what is left in the vineyards of sinners.
[7]The poor don’t have any clothes. So they spend the night naked.
They don’t have anything to cover themselves in the cold.
[8]They are soaked by mountain rains.
They hug the rocks because they don’t have anything to keep them warm.
[9]Children whose fathers have died
are torn away from their mothers.
A poor person’s baby is taken away to pay back what is owed.
[10]The poor don’t have any clothes. They go around naked.
They carry bundles of grain, but they still go hungry.
[11]They work very hard as they crush olives.
They stomp on grapes in winepresses,
but they are still thirsty.
[12]The groans of those who are dying are heard from the city.
Those who are wounded cry out for help.
But God doesn’t charge anyone with doing what is wrong.

[13]“Some people hate it when daylight comes.
In the daytime they never walk outside.
[14]When daylight is gone, murderers get up.

They kill poor people and those who are in need.
In the night they sneak around like robbers.
15 Those who commit adultery wait until the sun goes down.
They think, ‘No one will see us.’
They keep their faces hidden.
16 In the dark, people break into houses.
But by day they shut themselves in.
They don’t want anything to do with the light.
17 The deepest darkness is like morning to them.
The terrors of darkness are their friends.

18 “But sinners are like bubbles on the surface of water.
Their share of the land is under God’s curse.
So no one goes to their vineyards.
19 Melted snow disappears when the air is hot and dry.
And sinners disappear when they go down into their graves.
20 Even their mothers forget them.
The worms in their graves eat them up.
No one remembers sinful people anymore.
They are cut down like trees.
21 They mistreat women who aren’t able to have children.
They aren’t kind to widows.
22 But God is powerful.
He even drags away people who are strong.
When he rises up against them,
they can never be sure they are safe.
23 God might let them rest and feel secure.
But his eyes see how they live.
24 For a little while they are honored.
Then they are gone.
They are brought low.
And they die like everyone else.
They are cut off like heads of grain.

25 “Who can prove that what I’m saying is wrong?
Who can prove that my words aren’t true?”

The Third Speech of Bildad

Job 25

1 Then Bildad the Shuhite replied,

2 “God is King. He should be feared.
He establishes peace in the highest parts of heaven.
3 Can anyone count his troops?
Is there anyone his light doesn’t shine on?
4 How can human beings be right with God?
How can mere people really be pure?
5 Even the moon isn’t bright
and the stars aren’t pure in God’s eyes.
6 So how about human beings? They are like maggots.
How about mere people? They are like worms.”

Job's Reply

Job 26

[1]Job replied,

[2]"Bildad, you haven't helped people who aren't strong!
You haven't saved people who are weak!
[3]You haven't offered advice to those who aren't wise!
In fact, you haven't understood anything at all!
[4]Who helped you say those things?
Whose spirit was speaking through you?

[5]"The spirits of the dead are suffering greatly.
So are those that are under the waters.
And so are all those that live in them.
[6]Death is naked in the sight of God.
The Grave lies open in front of him.
[7]He spreads out the northern skies over empty space.
He hangs the earth over nothing.
[8]He wraps up water in his clouds.
They are heavy, but they don't burst.
[9]He covers the face of the full moon.
He spreads his clouds over it.
[10]He marks out the place where the sky meets the sea.
He marks out the boundary between light and darkness.
[11]The pillars of the heavens shake.
They are terrified when his anger blazes out.
[12]With his power he stirred up the oceans.
In his wisdom he cut the sea monster Rahab to pieces.
[13]His breath made the skies bright and clear.
His hand wounded the serpent that glides through the sea.
[14]Those are only on the edges of what he does.
They are only the soft whispers that we hear from him.
So who can understand how very powerful he is?"

Job 27

[1]Job continued to speak. He said,

[2]“God hasn’t treated me fairly.
The Mighty One has made my spirit bitter.
You can be sure that God lives.
And here’s something else you can be sure of.
[3]As long as I have life
and God gives me breath,
[4]my mouth won’t say evil things.
My lips won’t tell lies.
[5]I’ll never admit you people are right.
Until I die, I’ll say I’m telling the truth.
[6]I’ll continue to say I’m right.
I’ll never let go of that.
I won’t blame myself as long as I live.

[7]“May my enemies suffer like sinful people!
May my attackers be punished like those who aren’t fair!
[8]What hope do ungodly people have when their lives are cut off?
What hope do they have when God takes away their lives?
[9]God won’t listen to their cry
when trouble comes on them.
[10]They won’t take delight in the Mighty One.
They’ll never call out to God.

[11]“I’ll teach all of you about God’s power.
I won’t hide the things the Mighty One does.
[12]You have seen those things yourselves.
So why do you continue your useless talk?

[13]“Here’s what God does to sinful people.
Here’s what those who are mean receive from the Mighty One.
[14]All of their children will be killed with swords.
They’ll never have enough to eat.

15 A plague will kill those who are left alive.
The widows of sinful men
won’t even sob over their own children.
16 Sinners might store up silver like dust
and clothes like piles of clay.
17 But people who do what is right will wear those clothes.
People who haven’t done anything wrong
will divide up that silver.
18 The house an evil person builds is like a moth’s cocoon.
It’s like a hut that’s made by someone on guard duty.
19 Sinful people lie down wealthy, but their wealth is taken away.
When they open their eyes, everything is gone.
20 Terrors sweep over them like a flood.
A storm takes them away during the night.
21 The east wind carries them off, and they are gone.
It sweeps them out of their houses.
22 It blows against them without mercy.
They try to escape from its power.
23 It claps its hands and makes fun of them.
It hisses them out of their houses.

Job 28

[1]“There are mines where silver is found.
There are places where gold is purified.
[2]Iron is taken out of the earth.
Copper is melted down from ore.
[3]A miner lights up the darkness.
He searches for ore in the deepest pits.
He looks for it in the blackest darkness.
[4]Far from where people live he cuts a tunnel.
He does it in places where others don’t go.
Far away from people he swings back and forth on ropes.
[5]Food grows on the surface of the earth.
But far below, the earth is changed as if by fire.
[6]Sapphires are taken from its rocks.
Its dust contains nuggets of gold.
[7]No bird knows the miner’s hidden path.
No falcon’s eye has seen it.
[8]Proud animals don’t walk on it.
Lions don’t prowl there.
[9]The miner attacks the hardest rock.
His strong hands uncover the base of the mountains.
[10]He tunnels through the rock.
His eyes see all of its treasures.
[11]He searches the places where the rivers begin.
He brings hidden things out into the light.

[12]“And where can wisdom be found?
Where does understanding live?
[13]No one knows how much it’s worth.
It can’t be found anywhere in the world.
[14]The ocean says, ‘It’s not in me.’
The sea says, ‘It’s not here either.’
[15]It can’t be bought with the finest gold.
Its price can’t be weighed out in silver.
[16]It can’t be bought with gold from Ophir.

It can’t be bought with priceless onyx or sapphires.
17 Gold or crystal can’t compare with it.
It can’t be bought with jewels made of gold.
18 Don’t bother to talk about coral and jasper.
Wisdom is worth far more than rubies.
19 A topaz from Cush can’t compare with it.
It can’t be bought with the purest gold.

20 “So where does wisdom come from?
Where does understanding live?
21 It’s hidden from the eyes of every living thing.
Even the birds of the air can’t find it.
22 Death and the Grave say,
‘Only reports about it have reached our ears.’
23 But God understands the way to it.
He’s the only one who knows where it lives.
24 He sees from one end of the earth to the other.
He views everything in the world.
25 He made the mighty wind.
He measured out the waters.
26 He gave orders for the rain to fall.
He made paths for the thunderstorms.
27 Then he looked at wisdom and set its price.
He established it and put it to the test.
28 He said to human beings,
‘Have respect for me. That will prove you are wise.
Avoid evil. That will show you have understanding.’ ”

Job 29

[1]Job continued to speak. He said,

[2]“How I long for the good old days!
That’s when God watched over me.
[3]The light of his lamp shone on me.
I walked through darkness by his light.
[4]Those were the best days of my life.
That’s when God’s friendship blessed my house.
[5]The Mighty One was still with me.
My children were all around me.
[6]The path in front of me was like sweet cream.
It was as if the rock poured out olive oil for me.

[7]“In those days I went to the city gate.
I took my seat as a member of the council.
[8]Young people who saw me stepped to one side.
Old people stood up as I approached.
[9]The leaders stopped speaking.
They covered their mouths with their hands.
[10]The voices of the nobles became quiet.
Their tongues stuck to the roofs of their mouths.
[11]Everyone who heard me said good things about me.
Those who saw me honored me.
[12]That’s because I saved poor people who cried out for help.
I saved helpless children whose fathers had died.
[13]Those who were dying gave me their blessing.
I made the hearts of widows sing.
[14]I put on a godly life as if it were my clothes.
Fairness was my robe and my turban.
[15]I was like eyes for those who were blind.
I was like feet for those who couldn’t walk.
[16]I was like a father to needy people.
I stood up for strangers in court.
[17]Sinners are like animals that have powerful teeth.

But I took from their mouths the people they had caught.

18 “I thought, ‘I’ll die in my own house.
The days of my life will be as many as the grains of sand.
19 My roots will reach down to the water.
The dew will lie all night on my branches.
20 I will remain healthy and strong.
My bow will stay as good as new in my hand.’

21 “People wanted to hear what I had to say.
They waited silently for the advice I gave them.
22 After I had spoken, they didn’t speak anymore.
My words fell gently on their ears.
23 They waited for me just as they would wait for showers.
They drank my words just as they would drink the spring rain.
24 When I smiled at them, they could hardly believe it.
The light of my face lifted their spirits.
25 I chose the way they should go. I sat as their chief.
I lived as a king lives among his troops.
I was like someone who comforts those who are sad.

Job 30

[1]“But now those who are younger than I am make fun of me.
I wouldn’t put even their parents with my sheep dogs!
[2]Their strong hands couldn’t give me any help.
That’s because their strength was gone.
[3]They were weak because they were needy and hungry.
They wandered through dry and empty deserts at night.
[4]Among the bushes they gathered salty plants.
They ate the roots of desert trees.
[5]They were driven away from society.
They were shouted at as if they were robbers.
[6]They were forced to live in dry stream beds.
They had to stay among rocks
and in holes in the ground.
[7]Like donkeys they cried out among the bushes.
There they crowded together and hid.
[8]They were so foolish that no one respected them.
They were driven out of the land.

[9]“Now their children laugh at me.
They make fun of me with their songs.
[10]They hate me. They stay away from me.
They even dare to spit in my face.
[11]God has made my body weak.
It’s like a tent that has fallen down.
So those children do what they want to in front of me.
[12]Many people attack me on my right side.
They lay traps for my feet.
They come at me from every direction.
[13]They tear up the road I walk on.
They succeed in destroying me.
They do it without any help.
[14]They attack me like troops smashing through a wall.
Among the destroyed buildings they come rolling in.
[15]Terrors sweep over me.

My honor is driven away as if by the wind.
My safety vanishes like a cloud.

16“Now my life is slipping away.
Days of suffering grab hold of me.
17At night my bones hurt.
My gnawing pains never stop.
18God’s great power becomes like clothes to me.
He chokes me like the neck of my shirt.
19He throws me down into the mud.
I’m nothing but dust and ashes.

20“God, I cry out to you. But you don’t answer me.
I stand up. But all you do is look at me.
21You do mean things to me.
Your mighty hand attacks me.
22You pick me up and blow me away with the wind.
You toss me around in the storm.
23I know that you will bring me down to death.
That’s what you have appointed for everyone.

24“No one would crush people
when they cry out for help in their trouble.
25Haven’t I sobbed over those who are in trouble?
Haven’t I felt sorry for poor people?
26I hoped good things would happen, but something evil came.
I looked for light, but all I saw was darkness.
27My insides are always churning.
Nothing but days of suffering are ahead of me.
28My skin has become dark, but the sun didn’t do it.
I stand up in the community and cry out for help.
29I’ve become a brother to wild dogs.
Owls are my companions.
30My skin grows black and peels.
My body burns with fever.
31My harp is tuned to sadness.
My flute makes a sound like sobbing.

Job 31

1 “I made an agreement with my eyes.
I promised not to look at another woman with sexual longing.
2 What do human beings receive from God above?
What do they get from the Mighty One in heaven?
3 Sinful people are destroyed.
Trouble comes to those who do what is wrong.
4 Doesn’t God see how I live?
Doesn’t he count every step I take?

5 “I haven’t told any lies.
My feet haven’t hurried to cheat others.
6 So let God weigh me in honest scales.
Then he’ll know I haven’t done anything wrong.
7 Suppose my steps have turned away from the right path.
Suppose my heart has longed for what my eyes have seen.
Or suppose my hands have become ‘unclean.’
8 Then may others eat what I’ve planted.
May my crops be pulled up by the roots.

9 “Suppose my heart has been tempted by a woman.
Or suppose I’ve prowled around my neighbor’s door.
10 Then may my wife grind another man’s grain.
May other men have sex with her.
11 Wanting another woman would have been a shameful thing.
It would have been a sin that should be judged.
12 It’s like a fire that burns down to the grave.
It would have caused my crops to be pulled up by the roots.

13 “Suppose I haven’t treated my male and female servants fairly
when they’ve brought charges against me.
14 Then what will I do when God opposes me?
What answer will I give him
when he asks me to explain myself?
15 Didn’t he who made me make my servants also?
Didn’t the same God form us inside our mothers?

16 “I haven’t said no to what poor people have wanted.
I haven’t let widows lose their hope.
17 I haven’t kept my bread to myself.
I’ve shared it with children whose fathers had died.
18 From the time I was young, I’ve helped those widows.
I’ve raised those children as a father would.
19 Suppose I’ve seen people dying
because they didn’t have any clothes.
I’ve seen needy people
who had nothing to wear.
20 And they didn’t give me their blessing
when I warmed them with wool from my sheep.
21 Suppose I’ve raised my hand
against children whose fathers have died.
And I did it because I knew
I had power in the courts.
22 Then let my arm fall from my shoulder.
Let it be broken off at the joint.
23 I was afraid God would destroy me.
His glory terrifies me.
So I’d never do things like that.

24 “Suppose I’ve put my trust in gold.
I’ve said to pure gold, ‘You make me feel secure.’
25 And I’m happy because I’m so wealthy.
I’m glad because my hands have earned so much.
26 Suppose I’ve worshiped the sun in all of its glory.
I’ve bowed down to the moon in all of its beauty.
27 My heart has been secretly tempted.
My hand has thrown kisses to the sun and moon.
28 Then those things would have been sins that should be judged.
And I wouldn’t have been faithful to God in heaven.

29 “I wasn’t happy when hard times came to my enemies.
I didn’t enjoy seeing the trouble they had.
30 I didn’t allow my mouth to sin
by calling down curses on them.
31 The workers in my house always said,
‘Job always gives plenty of food to everyone.’

[32]No stranger ever had to spend the night in the street.
My door was always open to travelers.
[33]I didn't hide my sin as others do.
I didn't hide my guilt in my heart.
[34]I was never afraid of the crowd.
I never worried that my relatives might hate me.
I didn't have to keep quiet or stay inside.

[35]"I wish someone would listen to me!
I'm signing my name to everything I've said.
I hope the Mighty One will give me his answer.
I hope the one who brings charges against me will write them down.
[36]I'll wear them on my shoulder.
I'll put them on my head like a crown.
[37]I'll give that person a report of every step I take.
I'll approach him like a prince.

[38]"Suppose my land cries out against me.
And all of its soil is wet with tears.
[39]Suppose I've used up its crops without paying for them.
Or I've broken the spirit of its renters.
[40]Then let thorns grow instead of wheat.
Let weeds come up instead of barley."

The words of Job end here.

The Speech of Elihu

Job 32

1So the three men stopped answering Job, because he thought he was right.

2But Elihu the Buzite burned with anger against Job. That's because Job said he himself was right instead of God. Elihu was the son of Barakel. He was from the family of Ram.

3Elihu's anger also burned against Job's three friends. They hadn't found any way to prove that Job was wrong. But they still said he was guilty.

4Elihu had waited before he spoke to Job. That's because the others were older than he was. 5But he saw that the three men didn't have anything more to say. So he burned with anger.

6Elihu the Buzite, the son of Barakel, said,

"I'm young, and you are old.
So I was afraid to tell you what I know.
7I thought, 'Those who are older should speak first.
Those who have lived for many years
should teach people how to be wise.'
8But the spirit in people gives them understanding.
The breath of the Mighty One gives them wisdom.
9Older people aren't the only ones who are wise.
They aren't the only ones who understand what is right.

10"So I'm saying you should listen to me.
I'll tell you what I know.
11I waited while you men spoke.
I listened to your reasoning.
While you were searching for words,
12I paid careful attention to you.
But not one of you has proved that Job is wrong.
None of you has answered his arguments.
13Don't claim, 'We have enough wisdom to answer Job.'

Let God, not a mere man, prove that he's wrong.
14 Job hasn't directed his words against me.
I won't answer him with your arguments.

15 "Job, those men are afraid.
They don't have anything else to say.
They've run out of words.
16 Do I have to keep on waiting, now that they are silent?
They are just standing there with nothing to say.
17 I too have something to say.
I too will tell what I know.
18 I'm full of words.
My spirit inside me forces me to speak.
19 Inside I'm like wine that is bottled up.
I'm like new wineskins ready to burst.
20 I must speak so I can feel better.
I must open my mouth and reply.
21 I'll treat everyone the same.
I won't praise anyone without meaning it.
22 If I weren't honest when I praised people,
my Maker would soon take me from this life.

Job 33

[1]“Job, listen now to my words.
Pay attention to everything I say.
[2]I’m about to open my mouth.
My words are on the tip of my tongue.
[3]What I say comes from an honest heart.
My lips speak only what I know is true.
[4]The Spirit of God has made me.
The breath of the Mighty One gives me life.
[5]So answer me if you can.
Prepare yourself to face me.
[6]In God’s sight I’m just like you.
I too have been made out of clay.
[7]You don’t have to be afraid of me.
My hand won’t be too heavy on you.

[8]“But I heard what you said.
And here are the exact words I heard.
[9]You said, ‘I’m pure. I haven’t sinned in the ways you have charged.
I’m clean. I’m not guilty of doing anything wrong.
[10]But God has found fault with me.
He thinks I’m his enemy.
[11]He puts my feet in chains.
He watches every step I take.’

[12]“But I’m telling you that you aren’t right when you talk like that.
After all, God is greater than a mere man.
[13]Why do you claim that God
never answers any of our questions?
[14]He speaks in one way and then another.
We might not even realize it.
[15]He might speak in a dream or in a vision at night.
That’s when people are sound asleep in their beds.
[16]He might speak in their ears.
His warnings might terrify them.

17 He warns men in order to turn them away from sinning.
He wants to keep them from being proud.
18 He wants to stop them from going down into the grave.
He doesn't want them to be killed with swords.
19 Someone might be punished by suffering in bed.
The pain in his bones might never go away.
20 He might feel so bad he can't eat anything.
He might even hate the finest food.
21 His body might waste away to nothing.
His bones might have been hidden.
But now they stick out.
22 He might approach the very edge of the grave.
The messengers of death might come for him.

23 "But suppose there is an angel who will speak up for him.
The angel is very special. He's one out of a thousand.
He will tell that person what is right for him.
24 He'll be gracious to him. He'll say to God,
'Spare him from going down into the grave.
I know a way that can set him free.'
25 Then his body is made like new again.
He becomes as strong and healthy as when he was young.
26 He prays to God and finds favor with him.
He sees God's face and shouts with joy.
God makes him right with himself again.
27 Then the person comes to others and says,
'I sinned. I made what was wrong appear to be right.
But I wasn't punished as I should have been.
28 God set me free. He kept me from going down into the grave.
So I'll live to enjoy the light that leads to life.'

29 "God does all of those things to people.
In fact, he does them again and again.
30 He wants to stop people from going down into the grave.
Then the light that leads to life will shine on them.

31 "Pay attention, Job! Listen to me!
Be quiet so I can speak.
32 If you have anything to say, answer me.
Speak up. I want to help you be cleared of all charges.

[33]But if you don’t have anything to say, listen to me.
Be quiet so I can teach you how to be wise.”

Job 34

[1]Elihu continued,

[2]“Hear what I’m saying, you wise men.
Listen to me, you who have learned so much.
[3]Our tongues tell us what tastes good and what doesn’t.
And our ears tell us what’s true and what isn’t.
[4]So let’s choose for ourselves what is right.
Let’s learn together what is good.

[5]“Job says, ‘I’m not guilty of doing anything wrong.
But God doesn’t treat me fairly.
[6]Even though I’m right,
he thinks I’m a liar.
Even though I’m not guilty,
his arrows give me wounds that can’t be healed.’
[7]Is there any other man like Job?
He laughs at God and makes fun of him.
[8]He’s a companion of those who do evil.
He spends his time with sinful people.
[9]He asks, ‘What good is it
to try to please God?’

[10]“So listen to me, you men who have understanding.
God would never do what is evil.
The Mighty One would never do what is wrong.
[11]He pays a man back for what he’s done.
He gives him exactly what he should get.
[12]It isn’t possible for God to do wrong.
The Mighty One would never treat people unfairly.
[13]Who appointed him to rule over the earth?
Who put him in charge of the whole world?
[14]If he really wanted to,
he could hold back his spirit and breath.
[15]Then everyone would die together.

They would return to the dust.

16“Job, if you have understanding, listen to me.
Pay attention to what I’m saying.
17Can someone who hates to be fair govern?
Will you bring charges against the holy and mighty One?
18He says to kings, ‘You are worthless.’
He says to nobles, ‘You are evil.’
19He doesn’t favor princes.
He treats rich people and poor people the same.
His hands created all of them.
20They die suddenly in the middle of the night.
God strikes them down, and they pass away.
Those who are mighty are removed, but not by human hands.

21“His eyes see how people live.
He watches every step they take.
22There isn’t a dark place or deep shadow
where those who do what is evil can hide.
23God doesn’t need to bring charges against men.
He knows they are guilty.
So he doesn’t need to have them appear in his court to be judged.
24He destroys the mighty without asking them questions in court.
Then he sets others up in their places.
25He knows what they do.
So he crushes them during the night.
26He punishes them for the sins they commit.
He does it where everyone can see them.
27That’s because they turned away from following him.
They didn’t have respect for anything he does.
28They caused poor people to cry out to him.
He heard the cries of those who were in need.
29But if he remains silent, who can judge him?
If he turns his face away, who can see him?
He rules over people and nations alike.
30He keeps those who are ungodly from ruling.
He keeps them from laying traps for others.

31“Someone might say to God,
‘I’m guilty of sinning,

but I won’t do it anymore.
32 Show me my sins that I’m not aware of.
If I’ve done what is wrong,
I won’t do it again.’
33 But you refuse to turn away from your sins.
So God won’t treat you the way you want to be treated.
You must decide, Job. I can’t do it for you.
So tell me what you know.

34 “You men who have understanding have spoken.
You wise men who hear me have said to me,
35 ‘Job doesn’t know what he’s talking about.
The things he has said don’t make any sense.’
36 I wish Job would be put to the hardest test!
He answered like someone who is evil.
37 To his sin he adds even more sin.
He claps his hands and makes fun of us.
He multiplies his words against God.”

Job 35

[1]Elihu continued,

[2]“Job, do you think it’s fair for you to say,
‘God will clear me of all charges’?
[3]You ask him, ‘What good is it for me not to sin?
What do I get by not sinning?’

[4]“I’d like to reply to you
and to your friends who are with you.
[5]Look up at the heavens.
Observe the clouds that are high above you.
[6]If you sin, what does that mean to God?
If you sin many times, what does that do to him?
[7]If you do what is right, how does that help him?
What does he get from you?
[8]The evil things you do only hurt someone like yourself.
The right things you do only help other human beings.

[9]“People cry out when they are beaten down.
They beg to be set free from the power of those who are over them.
[10]But no one says, ‘Where is the God who made me?
He gives us songs even during the night.
[11]He teaches more to us than to wild animals.
He makes us wiser than the birds of the air.’
[12]He doesn’t answer sinful people when they cry out to him.
That’s because they are so proud.
[13]In fact, God doesn’t listen to their empty cries.
The Mighty One doesn’t pay any attention to them.
[14]So he certainly won’t listen to you.
When you say you don’t see him, he won’t hear you.
He won’t listen when you state your case to him.
He won’t pay attention even if you wait for him.
[15]When you say his anger never punishes sin, he won’t hear you.
He won’t listen when you say he doesn’t pay any attention to evil.

[16]So you say things that don’t mean anything.
You use a lot of words,
but you don’t know what you are talking about.”

Job 36

[1]Elihu continued,

[2]“Put up with me a little longer.
I’ll show you I can speak up for God even more.
[3]I get my knowledge from far away.
I’ll announce that the One who made me is fair.
[4]You can be sure that my words are true.
One who has perfect knowledge is talking to you.

[5]“God is mighty, but he doesn’t hate people.
He’s mighty, and he knows exactly what he’s going to do.
[6]He doesn’t keep alive those who are evil.
Instead, he gives suffering people their rights.
[7]He watches over those who do what is right.
He puts them on thrones as if they were kings.
He honors them forever.
[8]But some people are held by chains.
They are tied up with painful ropes.
[9]God tells them what they’ve done.
He tells them they’ve become proud and sinned against him.
[10]He makes them listen when he corrects them.
He commands them to turn away
from the evil things they’ve done.
[11]If they obey him and serve him,
they’ll enjoy a long and happy life.
Things will go well with them.
[12]But if they don’t listen to him,
they’ll be killed with swords.
They’ll die because they didn’t want to know anything about him.

[13]“Those whose hearts are ungodly are always angry.
Even when God puts them in chains,
they don’t cry out for help.
[14]They die while they are still young.

They die among the male prostitutes at the temples.
15 But God saves suffering people while they are suffering.
He speaks to them while they are hurting.

16 "Job, he wants to take you out of the jaws of trouble.
He wants to bring you to a wide and safe place.
He'd like to seat you at a table that is loaded with the best food.
17 But now you are loaded down
with the punishment sinners will receive.
You have been judged fairly.
18 Be careful that no one tempts you with riches.
Don't take money from people who want special favors,
no matter how much it is.
19 Can your wealth keep you out of trouble?
Can all of your mighty efforts keep you going?
20 Don't long for the night to come
so you can drag people away from their homes.
21 Be careful not to do what is evil.
You seem to like evil better than suffering!

22 "God is honored because he is so powerful.
He has no equal as a teacher.
23 Who has told him what he can do?
Who has said to him, 'You have done what is wrong'?
24 Remember to thank him for what he's done.
People have praised him with their songs.
25 Every human being has seen his work.
People can see it from far away.
26 How great God is! We'll never completely understand him.
We'll never find out how long he has lived.

27 "He makes mist rise from the water.
Then it falls as rain into the streams.
28 The clouds pour down their moisture.
Rain showers fall on people everywhere.
29 Who can understand how God spreads out the clouds?
Who can explain how he thunders from his home in heaven?
30 See how he scatters his lightning around him!
He lights up the deepest parts of the ocean.
31 The rain he sends makes things grow for the nations.

He provides them with plenty of food.
[32]He holds lightning bolts in his hands.
He commands them to strike their marks.
[33]His thunder announces that a storm is coming.
Even the cattle let us know it’s approaching.

Job 37

[1]“When I hear the thunder, my heart pounds.
It beats faster inside me.
[2]Listen! Listen to the roar of his voice!
Listen to the thunder that comes from him!
[3]He sends his lightning across the sky.
It reaches from one end of the earth to the other.
[4]Next comes the sound of his roaring thunder.
He thunders with his majestic voice.
When his voice fills the air,
he doesn’t hold anything back.
[5]God’s voice thunders in wonderful ways.
We’ll never understand the great things he does.
[6]He says to the snow, ‘Fall on the earth.’
He tells the rain, ‘Pour down your mighty waters.’
[7]He stops everyone from working.
He wants them to see his work.
[8]The animals go inside.
They remain in their dens.
[9]The storm comes out of its storeroom in the heavens.
The cold comes from the driving winds.
[10]The breath of God produces ice.
The shallow water freezes over.
[11]He loads the clouds with moisture.
He scatters his lightning through them.
[12]He directs the clouds to circle
above the surface of the whole earth.
They do everything he commands them to do.
[13]He tells the clouds to punish people.
Or he brings them to water his earth and show his love.

[14]“Job, listen to me.
Stop and think about the wonderful things God does.
[15]Do you know how he controls the clouds?
Do you understand how he makes his lightning flash?

16 Do you know how the clouds stay up in the sky?
Do you understand the wonders of the One who has perfect knowledge?
17 Even your clothes are too hot for you
when the land lies quiet under the south wind.
18 Can you help God spread out the skies?
They are as hard as a mirror
that's made out of bronze.

19 "Job, tell us what we should say to God.
We can't prepare our case
because our minds are dark.
20 Should he be told that I want to speak?
Would any man ask to be destroyed by him?
21 No one can look at the sun.
It's too bright after the wind has swept the skies clean.
22 Out of the north, God comes in his shining glory.
He comes in all of his wonderful majesty.
23 We can't reach up to the Mighty One.
He is lifted high because of his power.
Everything he does is fair and right.
So he doesn't crush people.
24 That's why they have respect for him.
He cares about all those who are wise."

The First Speech of the LORD

Job 38

1 The LORD spoke to Job out of a storm. He said,

2 “Who do you think you are to disagree with my plans?
You do not know what you are talking about.
3 Get ready to stand up for yourself.
I will ask you some questions.
Then I want you to answer me.

4 “Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation?
Tell me, if you know.
5 Who measured it? I am sure you know!
Who stretched a measuring line across it?
6 What was it built on?
Who laid its most important stone?
7 When it happened, the morning stars sang together.
All of the angels shouted with joy.

8 “Who created the ocean?
Who caused it to be born?
9 I put clouds over it as if they were its clothes.
I wrapped it in thick darkness.
10 I set limits for it.
I put its doors and metal bars in place.
11 I said, ‘You can come this far.
But you can’t come any farther.
Here is where your proud waves have to stop.’

12 “Job, have you ever commanded the morning to come?
Have you ever shown the sun where to rise?
13 The daylight takes the earth by its edges
as if it were a blanket.

Then it shakes sinful people out of it.
14 The earth takes shape like clay under a seal.
Its features stand out
like the different parts of your clothes.
15 Sinners would rather have darkness than light.
When the light comes, their power is broken.

16 "Have you traveled to the springs at the bottom of the ocean?
Have you walked in its deepest parts?
17 Have the gates of death been shown to you?
Have you seen the gates of darkness?
18 Do you understand how big the earth is?
Tell me, if you know all of those things.

19 "Where does light come from?
And where does darkness live?
20 Can you take them to their places?
Do you know the paths to their houses?
21 I am sure you know! After all, you were already born!
You have lived so many years!

22 "Have you entered the places where the snow is kept?
Have you seen the storerooms for the hail?
23 I store up snow and hail for times of trouble.
I keep them for days of war and battle.
24 Where does lightning come from?
Where do the east winds that blow across the earth live?
25 Who tells the rain where it should fall?
Who makes paths for the thunderstorms?
26 They bring water to places where no one lives.
They water deserts that do not have anyone in them.
27 They satisfy the needs of dry and empty lands.
They make grass start growing there.
28 Does the rain have a father?
Who is the father of the drops of dew?
29 Does the ice have a mother?
Who is the mother of the frost from the heavens?
30 The waters become as hard as stone.
The surface of the ocean freezes over.

[31]“Can you tie up the beautiful Pleiades?
Can you untie the ropes that hold Orion together?
[32]Can you bring out all of the stars in their seasons?
Can you lead out the Big Dipper and the Little Dipper?
[33]Do you know the laws that govern the heavens?
Can you rule over the earth the way I do?

[34]“Can you give orders to the clouds?
Can you make them pour rain down on you?
[35]Do you send the lightning bolts on their way?
Do they report to you, ‘Here we are’?
[36]Who put wisdom in people’s hearts?
Who gave understanding to their minds?
[37]Who is wise enough to count the clouds?
Who can tip over the water jars of the heavens?
[38]I tip them over when the ground becomes hard.
I do it when the dirt sticks together.

[39]“Do you hunt for food for mother lions?
Do you satisfy the hunger of their cubs?
[40]Some of them lie low in their dens.
Others lie waiting in the bushes.
[41]Who provides food for ravens
when their babies cry out to me?
They wander around because they do not have anything to eat.

Job 39

[1]“Job, do you know when mountain goats have their babies?
Do you watch when female deer give birth?
[2]Do you count the months until the animals have their babies?
Do you know the time when they give birth?
[3]They bend their back legs and have their babies.
Then their labor pains stop.
[4]Their little ones grow strong and healthy in the wild.
They leave and do not come home again.

[5]“Who let the wild donkeys go free?
Who untied their ropes?
[6]I gave them the dry and empty land as their home.
I gave them salt flats to live in.
[7]They laugh at all of the noise in town.
They do not hear the shouts of the donkey drivers.
[8]They wander over the hills to look for grass.
They search for anything green to eat.

[9]“Job, will wild oxen agree to serve you?
Will they stay by your feed box at night?
[10]Can you keep them in straight rows with harnesses?
Will they plow the valleys behind you?
[11]Will you depend on them for their great strength?
Will you let them do your heavy work?
[12]Can you trust them to bring in your grain?
Will they take it to your threshing floor?

[13]“The wings of ostriches flap with joy.
But they can’t compare with the wings and feathers of storks.
[14]Ostriches lay their eggs on the ground.
They let them get warm in the sand.
[15]They do not know that something might step on them.
A wild animal might walk all over them.
[16]Ostriches are mean to their little ones.

They treat them as if they did not belong to them.
They do not care that their work was useless.
17 I did not provide ostriches with wisdom.
I did not give them good sense.
18 But when they spread their feathers to run,
they laugh at a horse and its rider.

19 “Job, do you give horses their strength?
Do you put flowing manes on their necks?
20 Do you make them jump like locusts?
They terrify others with their proud snorting.
21 They paw the ground wildly.
They are filled with joy.
They charge at their enemies.
22 They laugh at fear. They are not afraid of anything.
They do not run away from swords.
23 Many arrows rattle at their sides.
Flashing spears and javelins are also there.
24 They are so stirred up that they eat up the ground.
They can’t stand still when trumpets are blown.
25 When they hear the trumpets they snort, ‘Aha!’
They catch the smells of battle far away.
They hear the shouts of commanders and the battle cries.

26 “Job, are you wise enough to teach hawks where to fly?
They spread their wings and fly toward the south.
27 Do you command eagles to fly so high?
They build their nests as high as they can.
28 They live on cliffs and stay there at night.
High up on the rocks they think they are safe.
29 From there they look for their food.
They can see it from far away.
30 Their little ones like to eat blood.
Eagles gather where they see dead bodies.”

Job 40

[1]The LORD continued,

[2]“I am the Mighty One.
Will the man who argues with me correct me?
Let him who brings charges against me answer me!”

Job’s Reply

[3]Job replied to the LORD,

[4]“I’m not worthy. How can I reply to you?
I’m putting my hand over my mouth. I’ll stop talking.
[5]I spoke once. But I really don’t have any answer.
I spoke twice. But I won’t say anything else.”

The Second Speech of the LORD

[6]Then the LORD spoke to Job out of the storm. He said,

[7]“Get ready to stand up for yourself.
I will ask you some more questions.
Then I want you to answer me.

[8]“Would you dare to claim that I am not being fair?
Would you judge me in order to make yourself seem right?
[9]Is your arm as powerful as mine is?
Can your voice thunder as mine does?
[10]Then put on glory and beauty as if they were your clothes.
Also put honor and majesty on.
[11]Let loose your great anger.
Look at those who are proud and bring them low.

[12]Look at proud people and bring them down.
Crush those who are evil right where they are.
[13]Bury their bodies in the dust together.
Cover their faces in the grave.
[14]Then I myself will admit to you
that your own right hand can save you.

[15]“Look at the behemoth. It is a huge animal.
I made both of you.
It eats grass like an ox.
[16]Look at the strength it has in its hips!
What power it has in the muscles of its stomach!
[17]Its tail sways back and forth like a cedar tree.
The tendons of its thighs are close together.
[18]Its bones are like tubes made out of bronze.
Its legs are like rods made out of iron.
[19]It ranks first among my works.
I made it. I can approach it with my sword.
[20]The hills produce food for it.
All of the other wild animals play near it.
[21]It lies under lotus plants.
It hides in tall grass in the swamps.
[22]The lotus plants hide it in their shade.
Poplar trees near streams surround it.
[23]It is not afraid when the river roars.
It is secure even when the Jordan River rushes against its mouth.
[24]Can anyone capture it by its eyes?
Can anyone trap it and poke a hole through its nose?

Job 41

[1]“Job, can you pull the leviathan out of the sea with a fish hook?
Can you tie down its tongue with a rope?
[2]Can you put a rope through its nose?
Can you stick a hook through its jaw?
[3]Will it keep begging you for mercy?
Will it speak gently to you?
[4]Will it make an agreement with you?
Can you make it your slave for life?
[5]Can you make a pet out of it like a bird?
Can you put it on a leash for your young women?
[6]Will traders offer you something for it?
Will they divide it up among the merchants?
[7]Can you fill its body with harpoons?
Can you throw fishing spears into its head?
[8]If you touch it, it will fight you.
Then you will remember never to touch it again!
[9]No one can possibly control the leviathan.
Just looking at it will terrify you.
[10]No one dares to wake it up.
So who can possibly stand up to me?
[11]Who has a claim against me that I must pay?
Everything on earth belongs to me.

[12]“Now I will speak about the leviathan’s legs.
I will talk about its strength and its graceful body.
[13]Who can strip off its outer coat?
Who would try to put a bridle on it?
[14]Who dares to open its jaws?
Its mouth is filled with terrifying teeth.
[15]Its back has rows of shields
that are close together.
[16]Each one is so close to the next one
that not even air can pass between them.
[17]They are joined tightly to one another.

They stick together and can’t be forced apart.
18 The leviathan’s snorting throws out flashes of light.
Its eyes shine like the first light of day.
19 Fire seems to spray out of its mouth.
Sparks of fire shoot out.
20 Smoke pours out of its nose.
It is like smoke from a boiling pot over burning grass.
21 Its breath sets coals on fire.
Flames fly out of its mouth.
22 Its neck is very strong.
People run to get out of its way.
23 Its rolls of fat are close together.
They are firm and can’t be moved.
24 Its chest is as hard as rock.
It is as hard as a lower millstone.
25 When the leviathan rises up,
even mighty people are terrified.
They run away when it moves around wildly.
26 A sword that strikes it has no effect.
Neither does a spear or dart or javelin.
27 It treats iron as if it were straw.
It crushes bronze as if it were rotten wood.
28 Arrows do not make it run away.
Stones that are thrown from slings are like straw hitting it.
29 A club seems like a piece of straw to it.
It laughs when it hears a javelin rattling.
30 Its undersides are like broken pieces of pottery.
It leaves a trail in the mud like a threshing sled.
31 It makes the ocean churn like a boiling pot.
It stirs up the sea like perfume someone is making.
32 It leaves a shiny trail behind it.
You would think the ocean had white hair.
33 Nothing on earth is equal to the leviathan.
That creature is not afraid of anything.
34 It looks down on proud people.
It rules over all those who are proud.”

Job's Reply

Job 42

[1]Job replied to the LORD,

[2]"I know that you can do anything.
No one can keep you from doing what you plan to do.
[3]You asked me, 'Who do you think you are to disagree with my plans?
You do not know what you are talking about.'
I spoke about things I didn't completely understand.
I talked about things that were too wonderful for me to know.

[4]"You said, 'Listen now, and I will speak.
I will ask you some questions.
Then I want you to answer me.'
[5]My ears had heard about you.
But now my own eyes have seen you.
[6]So I hate myself.
I'm really sorry for what I said about you.
That's why I'm sitting in dust and ashes."

The Story Ends

[7]After the LORD finished speaking to Job, he spoke to Eliphaz the Temanite. He said, "I am angry with you and your two friends. You have not said what is true about me, as my servant Job has.

[8]"So now get seven bulls and seven rams. Go to my servant Job. Then sacrifice a burnt offering for yourselves. My servant Job will pray for you. And I will accept his prayer. I will not punish you for saying the foolish things you said. You have not said what is true about me, as my servant Job has."

[9]So Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite did what the LORD told them to do. And the LORD accepted Job's prayer.

[10]After Job had prayed for his friends, the LORD made him successful again. He gave him twice as much as he had before. [11]All of his brothers and sisters and everyone who had known him before came to see him. They ate with him in his house. They showed their concern for him. They comforted him because of all of the troubles the LORD had brought on him. Each one gave him a piece of silver and a gold ring.

[12]The LORD blessed the last part of Job's life even more than the first part. He gave Job 14,000 sheep and 6,000 camels. He gave him 1,000 pairs of oxen and 1,000 donkeys.

[13]Job also had seven sons and three daughters. [14]He named the first daughter Jemimah. He named the second Keziah. And he named the third Keren-Happuch. [15]Job's daughters were more beautiful than any other women in the whole land. Their father gave them a share of property along with their brothers.

[16]After all of that happened, Job lived for 140 years. He saw his children, his grandchildren and his great-grandchildren. [17]And so he died. He had lived for a very long time.

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BOOK I
Psalms 1–41

Psalm 1

[1]Blessed is the one who obeys the law of the LORD.
He doesn't follow the advice of evil people.
He doesn't make a habit of doing what sinners do.
He doesn't join those who make fun of the LORD and his law.
[2]Instead, he takes delight in the law of the LORD.
He thinks about his law day and night.
[3]He is like a tree that is planted near a stream of water.
It always bears its fruit at the right time.
Its leaves don't dry up.
Everything godly people do turns out well.

[4]Sinful people are not like that at all.
They are like straw
that the wind blows away.
[5]When the LORD judges them, their life will come to an end.
Sinners won't have any place among those who are godly.

[6]The LORD watches over the lives of those who are godly.
But the lives of sinful people will lead to their death.

Psalm 2

[1]Why do the nations plan evil together?
Why do they make useless plans?
[2]The kings of the earth take their stand against the LORD.
The rulers of the earth gather together against his anointed king.
[3]"Let us break free from their chains," they say.
"Let us throw off their ropes."

[4]The One who sits on his throne in heaven laughs.
The Lord makes fun of those rulers and their plans.
[5]When he is angry, he warns them.
When his anger blazes out, he terrifies them.
[6]He says to them,
"I have placed my king on my holy mountain of Zion."

[7]I will announce what the LORD has promised.

He said to me, "You are my son.
Today I have become your father.
[8]Ask me, and I will give the nations to you.
All nations on earth will belong to you.
[9]You will rule them with an iron rod.
You will break them to pieces like clay pots."

[10]Kings, be wise!
Rulers of the earth, be warned!
[11]Serve the LORD and have respect for him.
Serve him with joy and trembling.
[12]Obey the son completely, or he will be angry.
Your way of life will lead to your death.
His anger can blaze out at any moment.
Blessed are all those who go to him for safety.

Psalm 3

A psalm of David when he ran away from his son Absalom.

[1]LORD, I have so many enemies!
So many people are rising up against me!
[2]Many are saying about me,
"God will not save him." *Selah*

[3]LORD, you are like a shield that keeps me safe.
You honor me. You help me win the battle.
[4]I call out to the LORD.
He answers me from his holy hill. *Selah*

[5]I lie down and sleep.
I wake up again, because the LORD takes care of me.
[6]I won't be afraid of the tens of thousands
who are lined up against me on every side.

[7]LORD, rise up!
My God, save me!
Strike all my enemies in the face.
Break the teeth of sinful people.

[8]LORD, you are the one who saves.
May your blessing be on your people. *Selah*

Psalm 4

For the director of music. A psalm of David to be played on stringed instruments.

[1]My faithful God,
answer me when I call out to you.
Give me rest from my trouble.
Show me your favor. Hear my prayer.

[2]How long will you people turn my glory into shame?
How long will you love what will certainly fail you?
How long will you pray to statues of gods? *Selah*
[3]Remember that the LORD has set his faithful people apart for himself.
The LORD will hear me when I call out to him.

[4]When you are angry, do not sin.
When you are in bed,
look deep down inside you and be silent. *Selah*
[5]Offer sacrifices to the LORD in the right way.
Trust in him.

[6]Many are asking, "Who can show us anything good?"
LORD, let us see your face smiling on us with favor.
[7]You have filled my heart with great joy.
It is greater than the joy of people who have lots of grain and fresh wine.
[8]I will lie down and sleep in peace.
LORD, you alone keep me safe.

Psalm 5

For the director of music. A psalm of David to be played on flutes.

[1]LORD, listen to my words.
Pay attention when I sigh.
[2]My King and my God,
listen to me when I cry for help.
I pray to you.
[3]LORD, in the morning you hear my voice.
In the morning I pray to you.
I wait for you in hope.

[4]God, you aren't happy with anything that is evil.
Those who do what is wrong can't live where you are.
[5]Those who are proud can't stand in front of you.
You hate everyone who does what is evil.
[6]You destroy those who tell lies.
LORD, you hate murderers and those who cheat others.

[7]Because of your great love
I will come into your house.
With deep respect I will bow down
toward your holy temple.
[8]LORD, I have many enemies.
Lead me in your right path.
Make your way smooth and straight for me.

[9]Not a word from their mouths can be trusted.
Their hearts are filled with plans to destroy others.
Their throats are like open graves.
With their tongues they tell lies.
[10]God, show that they are guilty.
Let their evil plans bring them down.
Send them away because of their many sins.
They have refused to obey you.

[11]But let all those who go to you for safety be glad.
Let them always sing with joy.

Spread your cover over them and keep them safe.
Then those who love you will be glad because of you.
12 LORD, you bless those who do what is right.
Like a shield, your loving care keeps them safe.

Psalm 6

For the director of music. For sheminith. A psalm of David to be played on stringed instruments.

[1]LORD, don’t correct me when you are angry.
Don’t punish me when you are burning with anger.
[2]LORD, have mercy on me. I’m so weak.
LORD, heal me. My body is full of pain.
[3]My soul is very troubled.
LORD, how long will it be until you save me?

[4]LORD, turn to me and help me.
Save me. Your love never fails.
[5]People can’t remember you when they are dead.
How can they praise you when they are in the grave?

[6]My groaning has worn me out.
All night long my tears flood my bed.
My bed is wet because of my crying.
[7]I’m so sad I can’t see very well.
My eyesight gets worse because of all of my enemies.

[8]Get away from me, all of you who do evil.
The LORD has heard my sobbing.
[9]The LORD has heard my cry for his favor.
The LORD accepts my prayer.
[10]All of my enemies will be troubled and put to shame.
They will turn back in dishonor. It will happen suddenly.

Psalm 7

A shiggaion of David. He sang it to the LORD about Cush, who was from the tribe of Benjamin.

[1]LORD my God, I go to you for safety.
Help me. Save me from all those who are chasing me.
[2]If you don't, they will tear me apart as if they were lions.
They will rip me to pieces so that no one can save me.

[3]LORD my God, suppose I have done something wrong.
Suppose I am guilty.
[4]I have done evil to my friend.
Or I have robbed my enemy without any reason.
[5]If I have done any of those things, let my enemy chase me and catch me.
Let him walk all over me.
Let him bury me in the dust. *Selah*

[6]LORD, rise up in your anger.
Rise up against the great anger of my enemies.
My God, wake up. Command that the right thing be done.
[7]Let all the people of the earth gather around you.
Rule over them from your throne in heaven.
[8]LORD, judge all people.
LORD, judge me. But remember that I have done what is right.
Most High God, remember that I am honest.
[9]God, you always do what is right.
You look deep down inside the hearts and minds of people.
Bring to an end the terrible things sinful people do.
Make godly people safe.

[10]The Most High God is like a shield that keeps me safe.
He saves those whose hearts are honest.
[11]God judges fairly.
He shows his anger every day.
[12]If evil people don't change their ways,
God will sharpen his sword.
He will get his bow ready to use.

[13]He has prepared his deadly weapons.
He has made his flaming arrows ready.

[14]Anyone who is full of evil
plans trouble and ends up telling lies.
[15]Anyone who digs a hole and shovels it out
falls into the pit he has made.
[16]The trouble he causes comes back on him.
The terrible things he does come down on his own head.

[17]I will give thanks to the LORD because he does what is right.
I will sing praise to the LORD Most High.

Psalm 8

For the director of music. For gittith. A psalm of David.

[1]LORD, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in the whole earth!

You have made your glory
higher than the heavens.
[2]You have made sure that children
and infants praise you.
You have done it because of your enemies.
You have done it to put a stop to their talk.

[3]I think about the heavens.
I think about what your fingers have created.
I think about the moon and stars
that you have set in place.
[4]What is a human being that you think about him?
What is a son of man that you take care of him?
[5]You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings.
You placed on him a crown of glory and honor.

[6]You made human beings the rulers over all that your hands have created.
You put everything under their control.
[7]They rule over all flocks and herds
and over the wild animals.
[8]They rule over the birds of the air
and over the fish in the ocean.
They rule over everything that swims in the oceans.

[9]LORD, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in the whole earth!

Psalm 9

For the director of music. A psalm of David to the tune of "The Death of the Son."

[1]LORD, I will praise you with all my heart.
I will tell about all of the miracles you have done.
[2]I will be glad and full of joy because of you.
Most High God, I will sing praise to you.

[3]My enemies turn back.
They fall down and die right in front of you.
[4]You have proved that I haven't done anything wrong.
You have sat on your throne and judged fairly.
[5]You have punished the nations. You have destroyed evil people.
You have erased their names from your book for ever and ever.
[6]The enemy has been destroyed forever.
You have leveled their cities to the ground.
Even the memory of them is gone.

[7]The LORD rules forever.
He has set up his throne so that he can judge people.
[8]He will judge the world in keeping with what is right.
He will rule over all of its people fairly.
[9]The LORD is a place of safety for those who have been beaten down.
He keeps them safe in times of trouble.
[10]LORD, those who know you will trust in you.
You have never deserted those who look to you.

[11]Sing praises to the LORD. He rules from his throne in Zion.
Tell among the nations what he has done.
[12]The One who pays back murderers remembers.
He doesn't forget the cries of those who are hurting.

[13]LORD, see how badly my enemies treat me!
Show me your favor. Don't let me go down to the gates of death.
[14]Then I can give praise to you
at the gates of the city of Zion.

There I will be full of joy
because you have saved me.
15 The nations have fallen into the pit they have dug.
Their feet are caught in the net they have hidden.
16 The LORD is known to be fair.
Evil people are trapped by what they have done. *Higgaion. Selah*
17 Sinful people go down to the grave.
So do all the nations that forget God.
18 But those who are in need will always be remembered.
The hope of those who are hurting will never die.

19 LORD, rise up. Don't let people win the battle.
Let the nations come to you and be judged.
20 LORD, strike them with terror.
Let the nations know they are only human. *Selah*

Psalm 10

[1]LORD, why are you so far away?
Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?

[2]An evil person is proud and hunts down those who are weak.
He catches weak people by making clever plans.
[3]He brags about what his heart longs for.
He speaks well of those who always want more.
He attacks the LORD with his words.
[4]Because he is proud, that evil person doesn't turn to the LORD.
There is no room for God in any of his thoughts.
[5]Everything always goes well for him.
So he is proud.
He doesn't want to have anything to do with God's laws.
He makes fun of all of his enemies.
[6]He says to himself, "I will always be secure.
I will always be happy. I'll never have any trouble."
[7]His mouth is full of curses and lies and warnings.
With his tongue he speaks evil and makes trouble.

[8]Sinful people hide and wait near the villages.
From their hiding places they murder those who aren't guilty of doing anything wrong.
They watch in secret for those they want to attack.
[9]They hide and wait like a lion in the bushes.
From their hiding places they wait to catch those who are helpless.
They catch them and drag them off in their nets.
[10]Those they have attacked are beaten up. They fall to the ground.
They fall because their attackers are too strong for them.
[11]Sinful people say to themselves, "God doesn't pay any attention.
He covers his face. He never sees us."

[12]LORD, rise up! God, show your power!
Don't forget those who are helpless.
[13]Why do sinful people attack you with their words?
Why do they say to themselves,
"He won't hold us accountable"?

[14]God, you see trouble and sadness.
You take note of it. You do something about it.
So those who are attacked place themselves in your care.
You help children whose fathers have died.
[15]Take away the power of bad and sinful people.
Hold them accountable for the evil things they do.
Uncover all the evil they have done.

[16]The LORD is King for ever and ever.
The nations will disappear from his land.
[17]LORD, you hear the longings of those who are hurting.
You cheer them up and give them hope.
You listen to their cries.
[18]You stand up for those whose fathers have died
and for those who have been beaten down.
You do it so that no one made of dust
may terrify others anymore.

Psalm 11

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

[1]I run to the LORD for safety.
So how can you say to me,
"Fly away like a bird to your mountain.
[2]Look! Evil people are bending their bows.
They are placing their arrows against the strings.
They are planning to shoot from the shadows
at those who have honest hearts.
[3]When law and order are being destroyed,
what can godly people do?"

[4]The LORD is in his holy temple.
The LORD is on his throne in heaven.
He watches all people.
His eyes study them.
[5]The LORD watches over those who do what is right.
But he hates sinful people and those who love to hurt others.
[6]He will pour out flaming coals and burning sulfur
on those who do what is wrong.
A hot and dry wind will destroy them.

[7]The LORD always does what is right.
So he loves it when people do what is fair.
Those who are honest will enjoy his blessing.

Psalm 12

For the director of music. For sheminith. A psalm of David.

[1]Help, LORD! Those who do what is right are gone.
Those who are faithful have disappeared from the earth.
[2]Everyone tells lies to his neighbors.
With his lips he praises others, but he doesn't really mean it.

[3]May the LORD cut off all lips that don't mean what they say.
May he cut out every tongue that brags.
[4]They say, "We will win the battle with our tongues.
Our lips belong to us. No one else is in charge of us."

[5]The LORD says, "The weak are beaten down.
Those who are in need groan.
So I will stand up to help them.
I will keep them safe from those who tell lies about them."
[6]The words of the LORD are perfect.
They are like silver made pure in a clay furnace.
They are like silver made pure seven times over.

[7]LORD, you will keep us safe.
You will always keep sinners from hurting us.
[8]Proud and sinful people walk around openly
when the evil they do is praised by others.

Psalm 13

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

[1]LORD, how long must I wait? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you turn your face away from me?
[2]How long must I struggle with my thoughts?
How long must my heart be sad day after day?
How long will my enemies keep winning the battle over me?

[3]LORD my God, look at me and answer me.
Give me new life, or I will die.
[4]Then my enemies will say, “We have beaten him.”
They will be filled with joy when I die.

[5]But I trust in your faithful love.
My heart is filled with joy because you will save me.
[6]I will sing to the LORD.
He has been so good to me.

Psalm 14

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

[1]Foolish people say in their hearts,
“There is no God.”
They do all kinds of horrible and evil things.
No one does anything good.

[2]The LORD looks down from heaven
on all people.
He wants to see if there are any who understand.
He wants to see if there are any who trust in God.
[3]All of them have turned away.
They have all become evil.
No one does anything good,
no one at all.

[4]Won’t those who do evil ever learn?
They eat up my people as if they were eating bread.
They don’t call out to the LORD for help.
[5]Just look at them! They are filled with terror
because God is among those who do right.
[6]You who do evil make it hard for poor people to do what they plan to do.
But the LORD is their place of safety.

[7]How I pray that the One who saves Israel will come out of Zion!
Then the LORD will bless his people with great success again.
So let the people of Jacob be filled with joy! Let Israel be glad!

Psalm 15

A psalm of David.

[1]LORD, who can live in your sacred tent?
Who can stay on your holy hill?

[2]Anyone who lives without blame
and does what is right.
He speaks the truth from his heart.
[3]He doesn't tell lies about others.
He doesn't do wrong to his neighbors.
He doesn't say anything bad about them.
[4]He hates sinful people.
He honors those who have respect for the LORD.
He keeps his promises
even when it hurts.
[5]He lends his money without charging too much interest.
He doesn't accept money to harm those who aren't guilty.

Anyone who lives like that
will always be secure.

Psalm 16

A miktam of David.

[1]God, keep me safe.
I go to you for safety.

[2]I said to the LORD, “You are my Lord.
Without you, I don’t have anything that is good.”
[3]God’s people who live in our land are glorious.
I take great delight in them.
[4]Those who run after other gods
will have nothing but trouble.
I will not pour out offerings of blood to those gods.
My lips will not speak their names.

[5]LORD, everything you have given me is good.
You have made my life secure.
[6]I am very pleased with what you have given me.
I am very happy with what I’ve received from you.

[7]I will praise the LORD. He gives me good advice.
Even at night my heart teaches me.
[8]I know that the LORD is always with me.
He is at my right hand.
I will always be secure.

[9]So my heart is glad. Joy is on my tongue.
My body also will be secure.
[10]You will not leave me in the grave.
You will not let your faithful one rot away.
[11]You always show me the path that leads to life.
You will fill me with joy when I am with you.
You will give me endless pleasures at your right hand.

Psalm 17

A prayer of David.

[1]LORD, hear me when I ask you to treat me fairly.
Listen to my cry for help.
Hear my prayer.
It doesn't come from lips that tell lies.
[2]When you hand down your sentence, may it be in my favor.
May your eyes see what is right.

[3]Look deep down into my heart.
Study me carefully at night.
Put me to the test.
You won't find anything wrong.
I have made up my mind
that my mouth won't say sinful things.
[4]I don't do the things other people do.
By obeying your word
I have kept myself from acting
like those who try to hurt others.
[5]My steps have stayed on your paths.
My feet have not slipped.

[6]God, I call out to you because you will answer me.
Listen to me. Hear my prayer.
[7]Show the wonder of your great love.
By using your powerful right hand,
you save those who go to you for safety from their enemies.
[8]Take good care of me, just as you would take care of your own eyes.
Hide me in the shadow of your wings.
[9]Save me from the sinful people who attack me.
Save me from my deadly enemies who are all around me.

[10]They make their hearts hard and stubborn.
Their mouths speak with pride.
[11]They have tracked me down. They are all around me.
Their eyes watch for a chance to throw me to the ground.

[12]They are like a hungry lion, waiting to attack.
They are like a powerful lion, hiding in the bushes.

[13]LORD, rise up. Oppose them and bring them down.
With your sword, save me from those evil people.
[14]LORD, by your power save me from people like that.
They belong to this world. They get their reward in this life.

You satisfy the hunger of those you love.
Their children have plenty.
And those children store up wealth for their children.
[15]Because I do what is right, I will enjoy your blessing.
When I wake up, I will be satisfied because I will see you.

Psalm 18

For the director of music. A psalm of David, the servant of the LORD. He sang the words of this song to the LORD. He sang them when the LORD saved him from the powerful hand of all of his enemies and of Saul. He said,

[1]I love you, LORD.
You give me strength.

[2]The LORD is my rock and my fort. He is the One who saves me.
My God is my rock. I go to him for safety.
He is like a shield to me. He's the power that saves me. He's my place of safety.
[3]I call out to the LORD. He is worthy of praise.
He saves me from my enemies.

[4]The ropes of death were almost wrapped around me.
A destroying flood swept over me.
[5]The ropes of the grave were tight around me.
Death set its trap in front of me.
[6]When I was in trouble, I called out to the LORD.
I cried to my God for help.
From his temple he heard my voice.
My cry for help reached his ears.

[7]The earth trembled and shook.
The base of the mountains rocked back and forth.
It trembled because the LORD was angry.
[8]Smoke came out of his nose.
Flames of fire came out of his mouth.
Burning coals blazed out of it.
[9]He opened the heavens and came down.
Dark clouds were under his feet.
[10]He got on the cherubim and flew.
The wings of the wind lifted him up.
[11]He covered himself with darkness.
The dark rain clouds of the sky were like a tent around him.

12 Clouds came out of the brightness that was all around him.
They came with hailstones and flashes of lightning.
13 The LORD thundered from heaven.
The voice of the Most High God was heard.
14 He shot his arrows and scattered our enemies.
He sent great flashes of lightning and chased the enemies away.
15 The bottom of the sea could be seen.
The foundations of the earth were uncovered.
LORD, it happened when your anger blazed out.
It came like a blast of breath from your nose.

16 He reached down from heaven. He took hold of me.
He lifted me out of deep waters.
17 He saved me from my powerful enemies.
He set me free from those who were too strong for me.
18 They stood up to me when I was in trouble.
But the LORD helped me.
19 He brought me out into a wide and safe place.
He saved me because he was pleased with me.

20 The LORD has been good to me because I do what is right.
He has rewarded me because I lead a pure life.
21 I have lived the way the LORD wanted me to.
I haven't done evil by turning away from my God.
22 I keep all of his laws in mind.
I haven't turned away from his commands.
23 He knows that I am without blame.
He knows I've kept myself from sinning.
24 The LORD has rewarded me for doing what is right.
He has rewarded me because I haven't done anything wrong.

25 LORD, to those who are faithful you show that you are faithful.
To those who are without blame you show that you are without blame.
26 To those who are pure you show that you are pure.
But to those whose paths are crooked you show that you are clever.
27 You save those who aren't proud.
But you bring down those whose eyes are proud.
28 LORD, you keep the lamp of my life burning brightly.
You are my God. You bring light into my darkness.

[29]With your help I can attack a troop of soldiers.
With the help of my God I can climb over a wall.

[30]God's way is perfect.
The word of the LORD doesn't have any flaws.
He is like a shield
to all who go to him for safety.
[31]Who is God except the LORD?
Who is the Rock except our God?
[32]God gives me strength for the battle.
He makes my way perfect.
[33]He makes my feet like the feet of a deer.
He helps me stand on the highest places.
[34]He trains my hands to fight every battle.
My arms can bend a bow of bronze.
[35]LORD, you are like a shield that keeps me safe. You help me win the battle.
Your strong right hand keeps me going.
You bend down to make me great.
[36]You give me a wide path to walk on
so that I don't twist my ankles.

[37]I chased my enemies and caught them.
I didn't turn back until they were destroyed.
[38]I crushed them so that they couldn't get up.
They fell under my feet.
[39]LORD, you gave me strength to fight the battle.
You made my enemies bow down at my feet.
[40]You made them turn their backs and run away.
So I destroyed my enemies.
[41]They cried out for help. But there was no one to save them.
They called out to you. But you didn't answer them.
[42]I beat them as fine as dust blown by the wind.
I poured them out like mud in the streets.

[43]You saved me when my own people attacked me.
You made me the ruler over nations.
People I didn't know serve me now.
[44]As soon as they hear me, they obey me.
People from other lands bow down to me in fear.
[45]All of them give up hope.

They come trembling out of their hiding places.

46 The LORD lives! Give praise to my Rock!
Give honor to God my Savior!
47 He is the God who pays my enemies back.
He brings the nations under my control.
48 He saves me from my enemies.
You have honored me more than them.
You have saved me from men who want to hurt me.
49 LORD, I will praise you among the nations.
I will sing praises to you.
50 The LORD helps his king win great battles.
He shows his faithful love to his anointed king.
He shows it to me and my family forever.

Psalm 19

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

[1]The heavens tell about the glory of God.
The skies show that his hands created them.
[2]Day after day they speak about it.
Night after night they make it known.
[3]But they don't speak or use words.
No sound is heard from them.
[4]At the same time, their voice goes out into the whole earth.
Their words go out from one end of the world to the other.

God has set up a tent in the heavens for the sun.
[5]The sun is like a groom coming out of the room where he spent his wedding night.
The sun is like a great runner who takes delight in running a race.
[6]It rises at one end of the heavens.
Then it moves across to the other end.
Nothing can hide from its heat.

[7]The law of the LORD is perfect.
It gives us new strength.
The laws of the LORD can be trusted.
They make childish people wise.
[8]The rules of the LORD are right.
They give joy to our hearts.
The commands of the LORD shine brightly.
They give light to our minds.
[9]The law that brings respect for the LORD is pure.
It lasts forever.
The directions the LORD gives are true.
All of them are completely right.
[10]They are more priceless than gold.
They have greater value than huge amounts of pure gold.
They are sweeter than honey
that is taken from the honeycomb.
[11]I am warned by them.

When I obey them, I am greatly rewarded.

12 Can I know my mistakes?
Forgive my hidden faults.
13 Keep me also from the sins I want to commit.
May they not be my master.
Then I will be without blame.
I will not be guilty of any great sin against your law.

14 LORD, may the words of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart
be pleasing in your eyes.
You are my Rock and my Redeemer.

Psalm 20

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

[1]May the LORD answer you when you are in trouble.
May the God of Jacob keep you safe.
[2]May he send you help from the sacred tent.
May he give you aid from Zion.
[3]May he remember all of your sacrifices.
May he accept your burnt offerings. *Selah*
[4]May he give you what your heart longs for.
May he make all of your plans succeed.
[5]We will shout with joy when you win the battle.
We will lift up our flags in the name of our God.
May the LORD give you everything you ask for.

[6]Now I know that the LORD saves his anointed king.
He answers him from his holy heaven.
The power of God's right hand saves the king.
[7]Some trust in chariots. Some trust in horses.
But we trust in the LORD our God.
[8]They are brought to their knees and fall down.
But we get up and stand firm.

[9]LORD, save the king!
Answer us when we call out to you!

Psalm 21

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

[1]LORD, the king is filled with joy because you are strong.
How great is his joy because you help him win his battles!
[2]You have given him what his heart longed for.
You haven't kept back from him what his lips asked for. *Selah*
[3]You welcomed him with rich blessings.
You placed a crown of pure gold on his head.
[4]He asked you for life, and you gave it to him.
You promised him days that would never end.
[5]His glory is great because you helped him win his battles.
You have honored him with glory and majesty.
[6]You have given him blessings that will last forever.
You have made him glad and joyful because you are with him.

[7]The king trusts in the LORD.
The faithful love of the Most High God
will keep the king secure.

[8]You, the king, will capture all of your enemies.
Your right hand will take hold of them.
[9]When you appear,
you will be like a flaming furnace to them.
The LORD will swallow them up in his anger.
His fire will burn them up.
[10]You will wipe their children from the face of the earth.
You will remove them from the human race.
[11]Your enemies make evil plans against you.
They think up evil things to do. But they can't succeed.
[12]You will make them turn their backs and run away
when you aim your arrows at them.

[13]LORD, may you be honored because you are strong.
We will sing and praise your might.

Psalm 22

For the director of music. A psalm of David to the tune of "The Doe of the Morning."

[1]My God, my God, why have you deserted me?
Why do you seem to be so far away when I need you to save me?
Why do you seem to be so far away that you can't hear my groans?
[2]My God, I cry out in the daytime. But you don't answer.
I cry out at night. I can't keep quiet.

[3]But you rule from your throne as the Holy One.
You are the God Israel praises.
[4]Our people of long ago put their trust in you.
They trusted in you, and you saved them.
[5]They cried out to you and were saved.
They trusted in you, and you didn't let them down.

[6]People treat me like a worm and not a man.
They hate me and look down on me.
[7]All those who see me laugh at me.
They shout at me and make fun of me.
They shake their heads at me.
[8]They say, "He trusts in the LORD.
Let the LORD help him.
If the LORD is pleased with him,
let him save him."

[9]But you brought me out of my mother's body.
You made me trust in you
even when I was at my mother's breast.
[10]From the time I was born, you took good care of me.
Ever since I came out of my mother's body, you have been my God.
[11]Don't be far away from me.
Trouble is near,
and there is no one to help me.

[12]Many enemies are all around me.

They are like strong bulls from the land of Bashan.
13 They are like roaring lions that tear to pieces what they kill.
They open their mouths wide to attack me.
14 My strength is like water that is poured out on the ground.
I feel as if my bones aren't connected.
My heart has turned to wax.
It has melted away inside me.
15 My strength is dried up like a piece of broken pottery.
My tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth.
You bring me down to the edge of the grave.
16 A group of sinful people has closed in on me.
They are all around me like a pack of dogs.
They have pierced my hands and my feet.
17 I can see all of my bones right through my skin.
People stare at me. They laugh when I suffer.
18 They divide up my clothes among them.
They cast lots for what I am wearing.

19 LORD, don't be so far away.
You give me strength. Come quickly to help me.
20 Save me from the sword.
Save the only life I have. Save me from the power of those dogs.
21 Save me from the mouths of those lions.
Save me from the horns of those wild oxen.

22 I will announce your name to my brothers and sisters.
I will praise you among those who worship you.
23 You who have respect for the LORD, praise him!
All you people of Jacob, honor him!
All you people of Israel, worship him!
24 He has not forgotten the one who is hurting.
He has not turned away from his suffering.
He has not turned his face away from him.
He has listened to his cry for help.

25 Because of what you have done,
I will praise you in the whole community of those who worship you.
In front of those who respect you,
I will keep my promises.
26 Those who are poor will eat and be satisfied.

Those who look to the LORD will praise him.
May their hearts be filled with new hope!
27 People from one end of the earth to the other
will remember and turn to the LORD.
The people of all the nations
will bow down before him.
28 The LORD is King.
He rules over the nations.

29 All the rich people of the earth will worship God and take part in his feasts.
All those who go down to the edge of the grave will fall on their knees in front of him.
I'm talking about those who can hardly keep themselves alive.
30 Those who are not yet born will serve him.
Those who are born later will be told about the Lord.
31 And they will tell people who have not yet been born
that he has done what is right.

Psalm 23

A psalm of David.

[1]The LORD is my shepherd. He gives me everything I need.
[2]He lets me lie down in fields of green grass.
He leads me beside quiet waters.
[3]He gives me new strength.
He guides me in the right paths
for the honor of his name.
[4]Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,
I will not be afraid.
You are with me.
Your shepherd's rod and staff
comfort me.

[5]You prepare a feast for me
right in front of my enemies.
You pour oil on my head.
My cup runs over.
[6]I am sure that your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life.
And I will live in the house of the LORD
forever.

Psalm 24

A psalm of David.

[1]The earth belongs to the LORD. And so does everything in it.
The world belongs to him. And so do all those who live in it.
[2]He set it firmly on the oceans.
He made it secure on the waters.

[3]Who can go up to the temple on the hill of the LORD?
Who can stand in his holy place?
[4]Anyone who has clean hands and a pure heart.
He does not worship the statue of a god.
He doesn't use the name of that god when he makes a promise.
[5]People like that will receive the LORD's blessing.
When God their Savior hands down his sentence, it will be in their favor.
[6]The people who look to God are like that.
God of Jacob, they look to you. *Selah*

[7]Open wide, you gates.
Open up, you age-old doors.
Then the King of glory will come in.
[8]Who is the King of glory?
The LORD, who is strong and mighty.
The LORD, who is mighty in battle.
[9]Open wide, you gates.
Open wide, you age-old doors.
Then the King of glory will come in.
[10]Who is he, this King of glory?
The LORD who rules over all.
He is the King of glory. *Selah*

Psalm 25

A psalm of David.

[1]LORD, I worship you.
[2]My God, I trust in you.
Don't let me be put to shame.
Don't let my enemies win the battle over me.
[3]Those who put their hope in you
will never be put to shame.
But those who can't be trusted
will be put to shame. They have no excuse.

[4]LORD, show me your ways.
Teach me how to follow you.
[5]Guide me in your truth. Teach me.
You are God my Savior.
I put my hope in you all day long.
[6]LORD, remember your great mercy and love.
You have shown them to your people for a long time.
[7]Don't remember the sins I committed when I was young.
Don't remember how often I refused to obey you.
Remember me because you love me.
LORD, you are good.

[8]The LORD is honest and good.
He teaches sinners to walk in his ways.
[9]He shows those who aren't proud how to do what is right.
He teaches them his ways.
[10]All of the LORD's ways are loving and faithful
for those who obey what his covenant commands.
[11]LORD, be true to your name.
Forgive my sin, even though it is great.
[12]Who is the man who has respect for the LORD?
God will teach him the way he has chosen for him.
[13]Things will always go well for him.
His children will be given the land.
[14]The LORD shares his plans with those who have respect for him.

He makes his covenant known to them.
15 My eyes always look to the LORD.
He alone can set my feet free from the trap.

16 Turn to me and show me your favor.
I am lonely and hurting.
17 The troubles of my heart have increased.
Set me free from my great pain.
18 Look at how I'm hurting! See how much I suffer!
Take away all of my sins.
19 Look at how many enemies I have!
See how terrible their hatred is for me!
20 Guard my life. Save me.
Don't let me be put to shame.
I go to you for safety.
21 May my honest and good life keep me safe.
I have put my hope in you.

22 God, set Israel free
from all of their troubles!

Psalm 26

A psalm of David.

[1]LORD, when you hand down your sentence, let it be in my favor.
I have lived without blame.
I have trusted in the LORD.
I have never doubted him.
[2]LORD, test me. Try me out.
Look deep down into my heart and mind.
[3]Your love is always with me.
I have always lived by your truth.
[4]I don't spend time with people who tell lies.
I don't keep company with pretenders.
[5]I hate to be with a group of sinful people.
I refuse to spend time with those who are evil.
[6]I wash my hands to show that I'm not guilty.
LORD, I come near your altar.
[7]I shout my praise to you.
I tell about all the wonderful things you have done.
[8]LORD, I love the house where you live.
I love the place where your glory is.

[9]Don't destroy me together with sinners.
Don't take my life away along with murderers.
[10]Their hands are always planning to do evil.
Their right hands are full of money that bought them off.
[11]But I live without blame.
Set me free and show me your favor.

[12]My feet stand on level ground.
In the whole community I will praise the LORD.

Psalm 27

A psalm of David.

[1]The LORD gives me light and saves me.
Why should I fear anyone?
The LORD is my place of safety.
Why should I be afraid?
[2]My enemies are evil.
They will trip and fall
when they attack me
and try to eat me alive.
[3]Even if an army attacks me,
my heart will not be afraid.
Even if war breaks out against me,
I will still trust in God.

[4]I'm asking the LORD for only one thing.
Here is what I want.
I want to live in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life.
I want to look at the beauty of the LORD.
I want to worship him in his temple.
[5]When I'm in trouble,
he will keep me safe in his house.
He will hide me in the safety of his holy tent.
He will put me on a rock that is very high.
[6]Then I will win the battle
over my enemies who are all around me.
At his holy tent I will offer my sacrifice with shouts of joy.
I will sing and make music to the LORD.

[7]LORD, hear my voice when I call out to you.
Show me your favor and answer me.
[8]My heart says, "Look to him!"
LORD, I will look to you.
[9]Don't turn your face away from me.
Don't turn me away because you are angry.
You have helped me.

God my Savior, don’t say no to me.
Don’t desert me.
10 My father and mother may desert me,
but the LORD will accept me.
11 LORD, teach me your ways.
Lead me along a straight path.
There are many people who beat me down.
12 My enemies want to harm me. So don’t turn me over to them.
Witnesses who tell lies are rising up against me.
They are trying to destroy me.

13 Here is something I am still sure of.
I will see the LORD’S goodness
while I’m still alive.
14 Wait for the LORD.
Be strong and don’t lose hope.
Wait for the LORD.

Psalm 28

A psalm of David.

[1]LORD, my Rock, I call out to you.
Pay attention to me.
If you remain silent, I will die.
I will be like those who have gone down into the grave.
[2]Hear my cry for your favor
when I call out to you for help.
Hear me when I lift up my hands in prayer
toward your Most Holy Room.

[3]Don’t drag me away with sinners.
Don’t drag me away with those who do evil.
They speak in a friendly way to their neighbors.
But their hearts are full of hatred.
[4]Pay them back for their evil actions.
Pay them back for what their hands have done.
Give them exactly what they should get.
[5]They don’t care about the LORD’S mighty acts.
They don’t care about what his hands have done.
So he will tear them down.
He will never build them up again.

[6]Give praise to the LORD.
He has heard my cry for his favor.
[7]The LORD gives me strength. He is like a shield that keeps me safe.
My heart trusts in him, and he helps me.
My heart jumps for joy.
I will sing and give thanks to him.

[8]The LORD gives strength to his people.
He guards and saves his anointed king.
[9]Save your people. Bless those who belong to you.
Be their shepherd. Take care of them forever.

Psalm 29

A psalm of David.

[1]Praise the LORD, you mighty angels.
Praise the LORD for his glory and strength.
[2]Praise the LORD for the glory that belongs to him.
Worship the LORD because of his beauty and holiness.

[3]The voice of the LORD is heard over the waters.
The God of glory thunders.
The LORD thunders over the mighty waters.
[4]The voice of the LORD is powerful.
The voice of the LORD is majestic.
[5]The voice of the LORD breaks the cedar trees.
The LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon into pieces.
[6]He makes the mountains of Lebanon skip like a calf.
He makes Mount Hermon jump like a young wild ox.
[7]The voice of the LORD strikes
with flashes of lightning.
[8]The voice of the LORD shakes the desert.
The LORD shakes the Desert of Kadesh.
[9]The voice of the LORD twists the oak trees.
It strips the forests bare.
And in his temple everyone cries out, “Glory!”

[10]The LORD on his throne rules over the flood.
The LORD rules from his throne as King forever.
[11]The LORD gives strength to his people.
The LORD blesses his people with peace.

Psalm 30

A psalm of David. A song for committing the completed temple to God.

[1]LORD, I will give you honor.
You brought me out of deep trouble.
You didn't give my enemies the joy of seeing me die.
[2]LORD my God, I called out to you for help.
And you healed me.
[3]LORD, you brought me up from the edge of the grave.
You kept me from going down into the pit.

[4]Sing to the LORD, you who are faithful to him.
Praise him, because his name is holy.
[5]His anger lasts for only a moment.
But his favor lasts for a person's whole life.
Sobbing can remain through the night.
But joy comes in the morning.

[6]When I felt safe, I said,
"I will always be secure."
[7]LORD, when you showed me your favor,
you made my mountain stand firm.
But when you turned your face away from me,
I was terrified.

[8]LORD, I called out to you.
I cried to you for your favor.
[9]I said, "What good will come if I die?
What good will come if I go down into the grave?
Can the dust of my dead body praise you?
Can it tell how faithful you are?
[10]LORD, hear me. Show me your favor.
LORD, help me."

[11]You turned my loud crying into dancing.
You removed my black clothes and dressed me with joy.

12So my heart will sing to you. I can’t keep silent.
LORD, my God, I will give you thanks forever.

Psalm 31

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

[1]LORD, I have gone to you for safety.
Don’t let me ever be put to shame.
Save me, because you do what is right.
[2]Pay attention to me.
Come quickly to help me.
Be the rock I go to for safety.
Be the strong fort that saves me.
[3]You are my rock and my fort.
Lead me and guide me for the honor of your name.
[4]Free me from the trap that is set for me.
You are my place of safety.
[5]Into your hands I commit my very life.
LORD, set me free. You are my faithful God.

[6]I hate those who worship worthless statues of gods.
I trust in the LORD.
[7]I will be glad and full of joy because you love me.
You saw that I was hurting.
You took note of my great pain.
[8]You have not handed me over to the enemy.
You have put me in a wide and safe place.

[9]LORD, show me your favor. I’m in deep trouble.
I’m so sad I can hardly see.
My whole body grows weak with sadness.
[10]Pain has taken over my life.
My years are spent in groaning.
I have no strength because I’m hurting so much.
My body is getting weaker and weaker.
[11]My neighbors make fun of me
because I have so many enemies.
My friends are afraid of me.
Those who see me on the street run away from me.
[12]They have forgotten me. I might as well be dead.

I have become like broken pottery.
13 I hear the lies many people tell about me.
There is terror all around me.
Many have joined together against me.
They plan to kill me.

14 But I trust in you, LORD.
I say, “You are my God.”
15 My whole life is in your hands.
Save me from my enemies.
Save me from those who are chasing me.
16 Let your face smile on me with favor.
Save me because your love is faithful.
17 LORD, I have cried out to you.
Don’t let me be put to shame.
But let sinners be put to shame.
Let them lie silent in the grave.
18 Their lips tell lies. Let them be silenced.
They speak with pride against those who do right.
They make fun of them.

19 How great your goodness is!
You have stored it up for those who have respect for you.
While other people watch, you give it to those who run to you for safety.
20 They are safe because you are with them.
You hide them from the evil plans of their enemies.
In your house you keep them safe
from those who bring charges against them.

21 Give praise to the LORD.
He showed me his wonderful love
when my enemies attacked the city I was in.
22 I was afraid and said,
“I’ve been cut off from you!”
But you heard my cry for your favor.
You heard me when I called out to you for help.

23 Love the LORD, all of you who are faithful to him!
The LORD watches over the faithful.
But he completely pays back those who are proud.

[24]Be strong, all of you who put your hope in the LORD.
Never give up.

Psalm 32

A maskil of David.

[1]Blessed is the one whose lawless acts are forgiven.
His sins have been taken away.
[2]Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD never counts against him.
He doesn't want to cheat anyone.

[3]When I kept silent about my sin,
my body became weak
because I groaned all day long.
[4]Day and night
your heavy hand punished me.
I became weaker and weaker
as I do in the heat of summer. *Selah*
[5]Then I admitted my sin to you.
I didn't cover up the wrong I had done.
I said, "I will admit my lawless acts to the LORD."
And you forgave the guilt of my sin. *Selah*

[6]Let everyone who is godly pray to you
while they can still look to you.
When troubles come like a flood,
they certainly won't reach those who are godly.
[7]You are my hiding place.
You will keep me safe from trouble.
You will surround me with songs sung by those who praise you
because you save your people. *Selah*

[8]I will guide you and teach you the way you should go.
I will give you good advice and watch over you.
[9]Don't be like the horse or the mule.
They can't understand anything.
They have to be controlled by bits and bridles.
If they aren't, they won't come to you.
[10]Sinful people have all kinds of trouble.
But the LORD's faithful love
is all around those who trust in him.

[11]Be glad because of what the LORD has done for you.
Be joyful, you who do what is right!
Sing, all of you whose hearts are honest!

Psalm 33

[1]You who are godly, sing with joy to the LORD.
It is right for honest people to praise him.
[2]Praise the LORD with the harp.
Make music to him on the lyre that has ten strings.
[3]Sing a new song to him.
Play with skill, and shout with joy.

[4]What the LORD says is right and true.
He is faithful in everything he does.
[5]The LORD loves what is right and fair.
The earth is full of his faithful love.

[6]The heavens were made when the LORD commanded it to happen.
All of the stars were created by the breath of his mouth.
[7]He gathers the waters of the sea together.
He puts the oceans in their places.
[8]Let the whole earth have respect for the LORD.
Let all of the people in the world honor him.
[9]He spoke, and the world came into being.
He commanded, and it stood firm.
[10]The LORD blocks the sinful plans of the nations.
He keeps them from doing what they want to do.
[11]But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever.
What he wants to do will last for all time.

[12]Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD.
Blessed are the people he chose to be his own.
[13]From heaven the LORD looks down
and sees everyone.
[14]From his throne he watches
all those who live on the earth.
[15]He creates the hearts of all people.
He is aware of everything they do.
[16]A king isn't saved just because his army is big.
A soldier doesn't escape just because he is very strong.
[17]People can't trust a horse to save them either.

Though it is very strong, it can’t save them.
18 But the LORD looks with favor on those who respect him.
He watches over those who put their hope in his faithful love.
19 He watches over them to save them from death.
He wants to keep them alive when there is no food in the land.

20 We wait in hope for the LORD.
He helps us. He is like a shield that keeps us safe.
21 Our hearts are full of joy because of him.
We trust in him, because he is holy.
22 LORD, may your faithful love rest on us.
We put our hope in you.

Psalm 34

A psalm of David when he was in front of Abimelech and pretended to be out of his mind. Abimelech drove him away, and he left.

[1]I will thank the LORD at all times.
My lips will always praise him.
[2]I will honor the LORD.
Let those who are hurting hear and be joyful.
[3]Join me in giving glory to the LORD.
Let us honor him together.

[4]I looked to the LORD, and he answered me.
He saved me from everything I was afraid of.
[5]Those who look to him beam with joy.
They are never put to shame.
[6]This poor man called out, and the LORD heard him.
He saved him out of all of his troubles.
[7]The angel of the LORD stands guard
around those who have respect for him.
And he saves them.

[8]Taste and see that the LORD is good.
Blessed is the man who goes to him for safety.
[9]You people of God, have respect for the LORD.
Those who respect him have everything they need.
[10]The lions may grow weak and hungry.
But those who look to the LORD have every good thing they need.

[11]My children, come. Listen to me.
I will teach you to have respect for the LORD.
[12]Do you love life
and want to see many good days?
[13]Then keep your tongues from speaking evil.
Keep your lips from telling lies.
[14]Turn away from evil, and do good.
Look for peace, and go after it.

15 The LORD looks with favor on those who are godly.
His ears are open to their cry.
16 The LORD doesn't look with favor on those who do evil.
He removes all memory of them from the earth.

17 Godly people cry out, and the LORD hears them.
He saves them from all of their troubles.
18 The LORD is close to those whose hearts have been broken.
He saves those whose spirits have been crushed.

19 Anyone who does what is right may have many troubles.
But the LORD saves him from all of them.
20 The LORD watches over all of his bones.
Not one of them will be broken.

21 Sinners will be killed by their own evil.
The enemies of godly people will be judged.
22 The LORD sets those who serve him free.
No one who goes to him for safety will be judged.

Psalm 35

A psalm of David.

[1]LORD, stand up against those who stand up against me.
Fight against those who fight against me.
[2]Pick up your large shields and your small shields.
Rise up and help me.
[3]Get your spear and javelin ready to fight
against those who are chasing me.
Say to me, “I will save you.”

[4]Let those who are trying to kill me
be brought down in dishonor.
Let those who plan to destroy me
be turned back in terror.
[5]Let them be like straw blowing in the wind,
while the angel of the LORD drives them away.
[6]Let their path be dark and slippery,
while the angel of the LORD chases them.
[7]They set a trap for me without any reason.
Without any reason they dug a pit to catch me.
[8]So let them be destroyed without warning.
Let the trap they set for me catch them.
Let them fall into the pit and be destroyed.
[9]Then I will be full of joy because of what the LORD has done.
I will be glad because he has saved me.
[10]My whole being will cry out,
“Who is like you, LORD?
You save poor people from those who are too strong for them.
You save poor and needy people from those who rob them.”

[11]Mean people come forward to give witness against me.
They ask me things I don’t know anything about.
[12]They pay me back with evil, even though I was good to them.
They leave me without hope.
[13]But when they were sick, I put on black clothes.
I made myself low by going without food.

My prayers for them weren't always answered.
14 So I went around crying
as if I were crying over my friend or relative.
I bowed my head in sadness
as if I were sobbing over my mother.
15 But when I tripped and fell, they were all very happy.
Attackers gathered against me when I didn't even know it.
They kept on telling lies about me.
16 They were like ungodly people. They made fun of me.
They ground their teeth at me in hate.
17 Lord, how much longer will you just look on?
Save me from their deadly attacks.
Save the only life I have.
Save me from those lions.
18 I will give you thanks in the whole community.
Among all of your people I will praise you.

19 Don't let those who are my enemies without any reason
laugh at me and make fun of me.
Don't let those who hate me without any reason
wink at me with an evil purpose.
20 They don't speak words of peace.
They make up false charges
against those who live quietly in the land.
21 They open their mouths wide at me. They make fun of me.
They say, "With our own eyes we have seen what you did."

22 LORD, you have seen this. Don't be silent.
Lord, don't be far away from me.
23 Wake up! Rise up to help me!
My God and Lord, stand up for me.
24 LORD my God, when you hand down your sentence, let it be in my favor.
You always do what is right.
Don't let my enemies have the joy of seeing me fall.
25 Don't let them think, "That's exactly what we wanted!"
Don't let them say, "We have swallowed him up."

26 Let all those who laugh at me because I'm in trouble
be ashamed and bewildered.
Let all who think they are better than I am

put on shame and dishonor as if they were clothes.
[27]Let those who are happy when my name is cleared
shout with joy and gladness.
Let them always say, “May the LORD be honored.
He is pleased when everything goes well with the one who serves him.”
[28]You always do what is right. My tongue will speak about it
and praise you all day long.

Psalm 36

For the director of music. A psalm of David, the servant of the LORD.

[1]Here are the words God has given me to say
about the evil ways of anyone who sins.
He doesn't have any respect for God.
[2]He praises himself so much
that he can't see his sin or hate it.
[3]His mouth speaks words that are evil and false.
He has stopped being wise. He has stopped doing good.
[4]Even as he lies in bed he makes evil plans.
He commits himself to a sinful way of life.
He never says no to what is wrong.

[5]LORD, your love is as high as the heavens.
Your faithful love reaches up to the skies.
[6]You are as holy as the mountains are high.
You are as honest as the oceans are deep.
LORD, you keep people and animals safe.
[7]How priceless your faithful love is!
Important and ordinary people alike
find safety in the shadow of your wings.
[8]They eat well because there is more than enough in your house.
You let them drink from your river that flows with good things.
[9]You have the fountain of life.
We are filled with light because you give us light.

[10]Keep on loving those who know you.
Keep on doing right to those whose hearts are honest.
[11]Don't let the feet of those who are proud step on me.
Don't let the hands of those who are evil drive me away.
[12]See how those who do evil have fallen!
They are thrown down. They aren't able to get up.

Psalm 37

A psalm of David.

[1]Don’t be upset because of sinful people.
Don’t be jealous of those who do wrong.
[2]Like grass, they will soon dry up.
Like green plants, they will soon die.

[3]Trust in the LORD and do good.
Then you will live in the land and enjoy its food.
[4]Find your delight in the LORD.
Then he will give you everything your heart really wants.

[5]Commit your life to the LORD.
Here is what he will do if you trust in him.
[6]He will make your godly ways shine like the dawn.
He will make your honest life shine like the sun at noon.

[7]Be still. Be patient. Wait for the LORD to act.
Don’t be upset when other people succeed.
Don’t be upset when they carry out their evil plans.

[8]Keep from being angry. Turn away from anger.
Don’t be upset. That only leads to evil.
[9]Sinful people will be cut off from the land.
But it will be given to those who put their hope in the LORD.

[10]In a little while, there won’t be any more sinners.
Even if you look for them, you won’t be able to find them.
[11]But those who are free of pride will be given the land.
They will enjoy great peace.

[12]Sinful people make plans to harm those who do what is right.
They grind their teeth at them.
[13]But the Lord laughs at those who do evil.
He knows the day is coming when he will judge them.

14 Sinners pull out their swords.
They bend their bows.
They want to kill poor and needy people.
They plan to murder those who lead honest lives.
15 But they will be killed with their own swords.
Their own bows will be broken.

16 Those who do what is right may have very little.
But it's better than the wealth of many sinners.
17 The power of those who are evil will be broken.
But the LORD takes good care of those who do what is right.

18 Every day the LORD watches over those who are without blame.
What he has given them will last forever.
19 When trouble comes to them, they will have what they need.
When there is little food in the land, they will still have plenty.

20 But sinful people will die.
The LORD's enemies will be like flowers in the field.
They will disappear like smoke.

21 Sinful people borrow and don't pay back.
But those who are godly give freely to others.
22 The LORD will give the land to those he blesses.
But he will cut off those he puts a curse on.

23 If the LORD is pleased with the way a man lives,
he makes his steps secure.
24 Even if the man trips, he won't fall.
The LORD'S hand takes good care of him.

25 I once was young, and now I'm old.
But I've never seen godly people deserted.
I've never seen their children begging for bread.
26 The godly are always giving and lending freely.
Their children will be blessed.

27 Turn away from evil and do good.
Then you will live in the land forever.
28 The LORD loves those who are honest.

He will not desert those who are faithful to him.

They will be kept safe forever.
But the children of sinners will be cut off from the land.
29 Those who do what is right will be given the land.
They will live in it forever.

30 The mouths of those who do what is right speak words of wisdom.
They say what is honest.
31 God's law is in their hearts.
Their feet do not slip.

32 Those who are evil hide and wait for godly people.
They are trying to kill them.
33 But the LORD will not leave the godly in their power.
He will not let them be found guilty when they are brought into court.

34 Wait for the LORD to act.
Live as he wants you to.
He will honor you by giving you the land.
When sinners are cut off from it, you will see it.

35 I saw a mean and sinful person.
He was doing well, like a green tree in its own soil.
36 But he soon passed away and was gone.
Even though I looked for him, I couldn't find him.

37 Think about those who are without blame. Look at those who are honest.
A man who loves peace will have a tomorrow.
38 But all sinners will be destroyed.
Those who are evil won't have a tomorrow.
They will be cut off from the land.

39 The LORD saves those who do what is right.
He is their place of safety when trouble comes.
40 The LORD helps them and saves them.
He saves them from sinful people
because they go to him for safety.

Psalm 38

A psalm of David. A prayer.

[1]LORD, don’t correct me when you are angry.
Don’t punish me when you are burning with anger.
[2]You have wounded me with your arrows.
You have struck me with your hand.
[3]Because of your anger, my whole body is sick.
Because of my sin, I’m not healthy.
[4]My guilt has become too much for me.
It is a load too heavy to carry.

[5]My wounds are ugly. They stink.
I’ve been foolish. I have sinned.
[6]I am bent over. I’ve been brought very low.
All day long I go around sobbing.
[7]My back is filled with burning pain.
My whole body is sick.
[8]I am weak. I feel as if I’ve been broken in pieces.
I groan because of the great pain in my heart.

[9]Lord, everything I really want is clearly known to you.
You always hear me when I sigh.
[10]My heart pounds. My strength is gone.
My eyes can hardly see.
[11]My friends and companions avoid me because of my wounds.
My neighbors stay far away from me.
[12]Those who are trying to kill me set their traps.
Those who want to harm me talk about destroying me.
All day long they plan ways to trick me.

[13]I’m like a deaf person. I can’t hear.
I’m like someone who can’t speak, who can’t say a word.
[14]I’m like a man who doesn’t hear.
I’m like someone whose mouth can’t make any reply.
[15]LORD, I wait for you to help me.
LORD my God, I know you will answer.

16 I said, “Don’t let my enemies have the joy of seeing me fall.
Don’t let them brag when my foot slips.”

17 I am about to fall.
My pain never leaves me.
18 I admit that I have done wrong.
I am troubled by my sin.
19 I have many powerful enemies. They are strong and healthy.
They hate me without any reason.
20 They pay me back with evil, even though I was good to them.
They tell lies about me because I try to do what is good.

21 LORD, don’t desert me.
My God, don’t be far away from me.
22 Lord my Savior,
come quickly to help me.

Psalm 39

For the director of music. For Jeduthun. A psalm of David.

[1]I said, “I will be careful about how I live.
I will not sin by what I say.
I will keep my mouth closed
when sinful people are near me.”
[2]I was silent and kept quiet.
I didn’t even say anything good.
But the pain inside me grew worse.
[3]My heart was deeply troubled.
As I thought about what was happening to me,
I became even more troubled.
Then I spoke out.

[4]I said, “LORD, show me when my life will end.
Show me how many days I have left.
Tell me how short my life will be.
[5]You have given me only a few days to live.
My whole life doesn’t seem like anything to you.
No man’s life lasts any longer than a breath. *Selah*
[6]People are only shadows as they go here and there.
They rush around, but it doesn’t mean anything.
They pile up wealth, but they don’t know who will get it.

[7]“Lord, what can I look forward to now?
You are the only hope I have.
[8]Save me from all the wrong things I’ve done.
Don’t let foolish people make fun of me.
[9]I keep silent. I don’t open my mouth.
You are the one who has caused all of this to happen.
[10]Please stop beating me.
I’m about to die from the blows of your hand.
[11]You correct and punish people for their sin.
Just as a moth eats cloth, you destroy their wealth.
No one’s life lasts any longer than a breath. *Selah*

12 “LORD, hear my prayer.
Listen to my cry for help.
Pay attention to my sobbing.
I’m like a guest in your home.
I’m only a visitor, like all of my family who lived before me.
13 Leave me alone.
Let me be full of joy again before I die.”

Psalm 40

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

[1]I was patient while I waited for the LORD.
He turned to me and heard my cry for help.
[2]I was sliding down into the pit of death, and he pulled me out.
He brought me up out of the mud and dirt.
He set my feet on a rock.
He gave me a firm place to stand on.
[3]He gave me a new song to sing.
It is a hymn of praise to our God.
Many people will see what he has done and will worship him.
They will put their trust in the LORD.

[4]Blessed is the man
who trusts in the LORD.
He doesn't look to proud people for help.
He doesn't turn away to worship statues of gods.
[5]LORD my God,
no one can compare with you.
You have done many miracles.
And you plan to do many more for us.
There are too many of them
for me to talk about.

[6]You didn't want sacrifices and offerings.
You weren't pleased with burnt offerings and sin offerings.
You gave me ears to hear you and obey you.
[7]Then I said, "Here I am.
It is written about me in the scroll.
[8]My God, I have come to do what you want.
Your law is in my heart."

[9]I have told the whole community of those who worship you
that what you do is right.
LORD, you know
that I haven't kept quiet.
[10]I haven't kept to myself that what you did for me was right.

I have spoken about how faithful you were when you saved me.
I haven't hidden your love and truth
from the whole community.

11 LORD, don't hold back your mercy from me.
May your love and truth always keep me safe.
12 There are more troubles all around me than I can count.
My sins have caught up with me, and I can't see any longer.
My sins are more than the hairs of my head.
I have lost all hope.

13 LORD, please save me.
LORD, come quickly to help me.
14 Let all those who are trying to kill me be put to shame.
Let them not be honored.
Let all those who want to destroy me
be turned back in shame.
15 Some people make fun of me.
Let them be shocked when their plans fail.
16 But let all those who look to you
be joyful and glad because of what you have done.
Let those who love you because you save them always say,
"May the LORD be honored!"

17 But I am poor and needy.
May the Lord be concerned about me.
You are the One who helps me and saves me.
My God, please don't wait any longer.

Psalm 41

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

[1]Blessed is the one who cares about weak people.
When he is in trouble, the LORD saves him.
[2]The LORD will guard him and keep him alive.
He will bless him in the land.
He won't hand him over to the wishes of his enemies.
[3]The LORD will take care of him when he is lying sick in bed.
He will make him well again.

[4]I said, "LORD, show me your favor.
Heal me. I have sinned against you."
[5]My enemies are saying bad things about me.
They say, "When will he die and be forgotten?"
[6]When anyone comes to see me,
he says things he doesn't mean.
At the same time, he thinks up lies to tell against me.
Then he goes out and spreads those lies around.

[7]All of my enemies whisper to each other about me.
They want something terrible to happen to me.
[8]They say, "He is sick and will die very soon.
He will never get up from his bed again."
[9]Even my close friend, whom I trusted, has deserted me.
I even shared my bread with him.

[10]But LORD, show me your favor.
Make me well, so I can pay them back.
[11]Then I will know that you are pleased with me,
because my enemies haven't won the battle over me.
[12]You will take good care of me because I've been honest.
You will let me be with you forever.

[13]Give praise to the LORD, the God of Israel,
for ever and ever.

Amen and Amen.

BOOK II
Psalms 42–72

Psalm 42

For the director of music. A maskil of the Sons of Korah.

[1]A deer longs for streams of water.
God, I long for you in the same way.
[2]I am thirsty for God. I am thirsty for the living God.
When can I go and meet with him?
[3]My tears have been my food
day and night.
All day long people say to me,
"Where is your God?"
[4]When I remember what has happened,
I tell God all of my troubles.
I remember how I used to walk along with the crowd of worshipers.
I led them to the house of God.
We shouted with joy and gave thanks
as we went to the holy feast.

[5]My spirit, why are you so sad?
Why are you so upset deep down inside me?
Put your hope in God.
Once again I will have reason to praise him.
He is my Savior and [6]my God.

My spirit is very sad deep down inside me.
So I will remember you here where the Jordan River begins.
I will remember you here on the Hermon mountains
and on Mount Mizar.
[7]You have sent wave upon wave of trouble over me.
It roars down on me like a waterfall.
All of your waves and breakers have rolled over me.

[8]During the day the LORD sends his love to me.
During the night I sing about him.
I say a prayer to the God who gives me life.

[9]I say to God my Rock,
"Why have you forgotten me?

Why must I go around in sorrow?
Why am I beaten down by my enemies?”
10 My body suffers deadly pain
as my enemies make fun of me.
All day long they say to me,
“Where is your God?”

11 My spirit, why are you so sad?
Why are you so upset deep down inside me?
Put your hope in God.
Once again I will have reason to praise him.
He is my Savior and my God.

Psalm 43

[1]God, when you hand down your decision, let it be in my favor.
Stand up for me against an ungodly nation.
Save me from those lying and sinful people.
[2]You are God, my place of safety.
Why have you turned your back on me?
Why must I go around in sorrow?
Why am I beaten down by my enemies?
[3]Send out your light and your truth.
Let them guide me.
Let them bring me back to your holy mountain,
to the place where you live.
[4]Then I will go to the altar of God.
I will go to God. He is my joy and my delight.
God, you are my God.
I will praise you by playing the harp.

[5]My spirit, why are you so sad?
Why are you so upset deep down inside me?
Put your hope in God.
Once again I will have reason to praise him.
He is my Savior and my God.

Psalm 44

For the director of music. A maskil of the Sons of Korah.

[1]God, we have heard what you did.
Those who came before us have told us
what you did in their days,
in days long ago.
[2]With your powerful hand you drove out the nations.
You settled our people in the land.
You crushed the people who were there.
And you made our people do well.
[3]They didn't win the land with their swords.
They didn't gain success with their powerful arms.
Your powerful right hand and your mighty arm gave them success.
You looked on them with favor. You loved them.

[4]You are my King and my God.
You give success to the people of Jacob.
[5]With your help we push our enemies back.
By your power we walk all over them.
[6]I don't trust in my bow.
My sword doesn't bring me success.
[7]But you give us success over our enemies.
You put them to shame.
[8]All day long we talk about how great God is.
We will praise your name forever. *Selah*

[9]But now you have turned your back on us and made us low.
You don't march out with our armies anymore.
[10]You made us turn and run from our enemies.
They have taken what belongs to us.
[11]You handed us over to be eaten up like sheep.
You have scattered us among the nations.
[12]You sold your people for very little.
You didn't gain anything when you sold them.

[13]You have made us something that our neighbors laugh at.

Those who live around us make fun of us and tease us.
14 The nations make jokes about us.
They shake their heads at us.
15 All day long I am reminded of my shame.
My face is covered with it
16 because of those who laugh at me and attack me with their words.
They want to get even with me.

17 All of this happened to us,
even though we had not forgotten you.
We had been true to the covenant you made with us.
18 Our hearts had not turned away from you.
Our feet had not wandered from your path.
19 But you crushed us and left us to the wild dogs.
You covered us over with deep darkness.

20 We didn't forget our God.
We didn't spread out our hands in prayer to a strange god.
21 If we had, God would have discovered it.
He knows the secrets of our hearts.
22 But because of you, we face death all day long.
We are considered as sheep to be killed.

23 Lord, wake up! Why are you sleeping?
Get up! Don't say no to us forever.
24 Why do you turn your face away from us?
Why do you forget our pain and troubles?

25 We are brought down to the dust.
Our bodies lie flat on the ground.
26 Rise up and help us.
Save us because of your faithful love.

Psalm 45

For the director of music. A maskil of the Sons of Korah. A wedding song to the tune of "Lilies."

[1]My heart is full of beautiful words
as I say my poem for the king.
My tongue is like the pen of a skillful writer.

[2]You are the most excellent of men.
Your lips have been given the ability to speak gracious words.
God has blessed you forever.
[3]Mighty one, put your sword at your side.
Put on glory and majesty as if they were your clothes.
[4]In your majesty ride out with power
in honor of what is true and right.
Do it in honor of all those who are not proud.
Let your right hand do wonderful things.
[5]Shoot your sharp arrows into the hearts of your enemies.
Let the nations come under your control.
[6]Your throne is the very throne of God.
Your kingdom will last for ever and ever.
You will rule by treating everyone fairly.
[7]You love what is right and hate what is evil.
So your God has placed you above your companions.
He has filled you with joy by pouring the sacred oil on your head.
[8]Myrrh and aloes and cassia make all of your robes smell good.
In palaces decorated with ivory
the music played on stringed instruments makes you glad.
[9]Daughters of kings are among the women you honor.
At your right hand is the royal bride dressed in gold from Ophir.

[10]Royal bride, listen. Think about this and pay attention to it.
Forget about your people and the home you came from.
[11]The king is charmed by your beauty.
Honor him. He is now your master.
[12]The people of Tyre will come with gifts.
Wealthy people will try to gain your favor.

[13]The princess comes into the palace in all her glory.
Her gown has gold threads running through it.
[14]Dressed in beautiful clothes, she is led to the king.
Her virgin companions follow her
and are brought to him.
[15]They are led in with joy and gladness.
They enter the palace of the king.

[16]Your sons will rule just as your father and grandfather did.
You will make them princes through the whole land.
[17]I will make sure that people will always remember you.
The nations will praise you for ever and ever.

Psalm 46

For the director of music. A song of the Sons of Korah. For alamoth.

[1]God is our place of safety. He gives us strength.
He is always there to help us in times of trouble.
[2]The earth may fall apart.
The mountains may fall into the middle of the sea.
But we will not be afraid.
[3]The waters of the sea may roar and foam.
The mountains may shake when the waters rise.
But we will not be afraid. *Selah*

[4]God's blessings are like a river. They fill the city of God with joy.
That city is the holy place where the Most High God lives.
[5]Because God is there, the city will not fall.
God will help it at the beginning of the day.
[6]Nations are in disorder. Kingdoms fall.
God speaks, and the people of the earth melt in fear.

[7]The LORD who rules over all is with us.
The God of Jacob is like a fort to us. *Selah*

[8]Come and see what the LORD has done.
See the places he has destroyed on the earth.
[9]He makes wars stop from one end of the earth to the other.
He breaks every bow. He snaps every spear.
He burns every shield with fire.
[10]He says, "Be still, and know that I am God.
I will be honored among the nations.
I will be honored in the earth."

[11]The LORD who rules over all is with us.
The God of Jacob is like a fort to us. *Selah*

Psalm 47

For the director of music. A psalm of the Sons of Korah.

[1]Clap your hands, all you nations.
Shout to God with cries of joy.
[2]How wonderful is the LORD Most High!
He is the great King over the whole earth.
[3]He brought nations under our control.
He made them fall under us.
[4]He chose our land for us.
The people of Jacob are proud of their land,
and God loves them. *Selah*

[5]God went up to his throne while his people were shouting with joy.
The LORD went up while trumpets were playing.
[6]Sing praises to God. Sing praises.
Sing praises to our King. Sing praises.

[7]God is the King of the whole earth.
Sing a psalm of praise to him.
[8]God rules over the nations.
He is seated on his holy throne.
[9]The nobles of the nations come together.
They are now part of the people of the God of Abraham.
The kings of the earth belong to God.
He is greatly honored.

Psalm 48

A song. A psalm of the Sons of Korah.

[1]The LORD is great. He is really worthy of praise.
Praise him in the city of our God, his holy mountain.
[2]Mount Zion is high and beautiful.
It brings joy to everyone on earth.
Mount Zion is like the highest parts of Mount Zaphon.
It is the city of the Great King.
[3]God is there to keep it safe.
He has shown himself to be like a fort to the city.

[4]Many kings joined forces.
They entered Israel together.
[5]But when they saw Mount Zion, they were amazed.
They ran away in terror.
[6]Trembling took hold of them.
They felt pain like a woman giving birth to a baby.
[7]LORD, you destroyed them like ships of Tarshish
that were torn apart by an east wind.

[8]What we heard we have also seen.
We have seen it
in the city of the LORD who rules over all.
We have seen it in the city of our God.
We have heard and seen that God makes her secure forever. *Selah*

[9]God, inside your temple
we think about your faithful love.
[10]God, your fame reaches from one end of the earth to the other.
In the same way, people praise you from one end of the earth to the other.
You use your power to do what is right.
[11]Mount Zion is filled with joy.
The villages of Judah are glad.
That’s because you judge fairly.

[12]Walk around Zion. Go all around it.
Count its towers.
[13]Think carefully about its outer walls.
Just look at how safe it is!
Then you can tell its people that God keeps them safe.
[14]This God is our God for ever and ever.
He will be our guide to the very end.

Psalm 49

For the director of music. A psalm of the Sons of Korah.

[1]Hear this, all you nations.
Listen, all you who live in this world.
[2]Listen, ordinary and important people alike.
Listen, those of you who are rich or poor.
[3]My mouth will speak wise words.
What I say from my heart will give understanding.
[4]I will pay attention to a proverb.
I will explain my riddle as I play the harp.

[5]Why should I be afraid when trouble comes?
Why should I fear when sinners are all around me?
They are the kind of people who want to take advantage of me.
[6]They trust in their wealth.
They brag about how rich they are.
[7]No man can pay for the life of anyone else.
No one can give God what that would cost.
[8]The price for a life is very high.
No payment is ever enough.
[9]No one can pay enough to live forever
and not rot in the grave.

[10]Everyone can see that even wise people die.
Foolish and dumb people also pass away.
All of them leave their wealth to others.
[11]Their graves will remain their houses forever.
Their graves will be their homes for all time to come.
Naming lands after themselves won't help either.

[12]Even though people may be very rich, they don't live on and on.
They are like the animals. They die.

[13]That's what happens to those who trust in themselves.
It also happens to their followers, who agree with what they say.
Selah

[14]Like sheep they will end up in the grave.
Death will swallow them up.
When honest people come to power, a new day will dawn.
The bodies of sinners will waste away in the grave.
They will end up far away from their princely houses.
[15]But God will save me from the grave.
He will certainly take me to himself. *Selah*

[16]Don’t be upset when someone becomes rich.
Don’t be troubled when he becomes more and more wealthy.
[17]He won’t take anything with him when he dies.
His riches won’t go down to the grave with him.
[18]While he lived, he believed he was blessed.
People praised him when things were going well for him.
[19]But he will die, like his people of long ago.
He will never again see the light that leads to life.

[20]People who have riches but don’t understand
are like the animals. They die.

Psalm 50

A psalm of Asaph.

[1]The Mighty One, God, the LORD, speaks.
He calls out to the earth
from the sunrise in the east
to the sunset in the west.
[2]From Zion, perfect and beautiful,
God's glory shines out.
[3]Our God comes, and he won't be silent.
A burning fire goes ahead of him.
A terrible storm is all around him.
[4]He calls out to heaven and earth to be his witnesses.
Then he judges his people.
[5]He says, "Gather my holy people around me.
They made a covenant with me by offering a sacrifice."
[6]The heavens announce that what God decides is right.
He himself is the Judge. *Selah*

[7]God says, "Listen, my people, and I will speak.
Listen, Israel, and I will give witness against you.
I am God, your God.
[8]I don't find fault with you because of your sacrifices.
I don't find fault with the burnt offerings you always bring me.
[9]I don't need a bull from your barn.
I don't need goats from your pens.
[10]Every animal in the forest already belongs to me.
And so do the cattle on a thousand hills.
[11]I own every bird in the mountains.
The creatures of the field belong to me.
[12]If I were hungry, I wouldn't tell you.
The world belongs to me. And so does everything in it.
[13]Do I eat the meat of bulls?
Do I drink the blood of goats?
[14]Bring me thank offerings, because I am your God.
Carry out the promises you made to me, because I am the Most High God.

15 Call out to me when trouble comes.
I will save you. And you will honor me.”

16 But here is what God says to sinful people.

“What right do you have to speak the words of my laws?
How dare you speak the words of my covenant!
17 You hate my teaching.
You turn your back on what I say.
18 When you see a thief, you join him.
You make friends with those who commit adultery.
19 You use your mouth to speak evil.
You use your tongue to spread lies.
20 You always speak against your brother.
You always tell lies about your own mother’s son.
21 You have done those things, and I kept silent.
So you thought I was just like you.
But now I’m going to correct you.
I will bring charges against you.

22 “You who forget God, think about this.
If you don’t, I will tear you to pieces.
No one will be able to save you.
23 Anyone who sacrifices thank offerings to me honors me.
He makes it possible for me to show him
that I am the God who saves.”

Psalm 51

For the director of music. A psalm of David when the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.

[1]God, show me your favor
in keeping with your faithful love.
Because your love is so tender and kind,
wipe out my lawless acts.
[2]Wash away all of the evil things I've done.
Make me pure from my sin.

[3]I know the lawless acts I've committed.
I can't forget my sin.
[4]You are the one I've really sinned against.
I've done what is evil in your sight.
So you are right when you sentence me.
You are fair when you judge me.
[5]I know I've been a sinner ever since I was born.
I've been a sinner ever since my mother became pregnant with me.
[6]I know that you want truth to be in my heart.
You teach me wisdom deep down inside me.

[7]Make me pure by sprinkling me with hyssop plant. Then I will be clean.
Wash me. Then I will be whiter than snow.
[8]Let me hear you say, "Your sins are forgiven."
That will bring me joy and gladness.
Let the body you have broken be glad.
[9]Take away all of my sins.
Wipe away all of the evil things I've done.

[10]God, create a pure heart in me.
Give me a new spirit that is faithful to you.
[11]Don't send me away from you.
Don't take your Holy Spirit away from me.
[12]Give me back the joy that comes from being saved by you.
Give me a spirit that obeys you. That will keep me going.

[13]Then I will teach your ways to those who commit lawless acts.
And sinners will turn back to you.
[14]You are the God who saves me.
I have committed murder.
Take away my guilt.
Then my tongue will sing about how right you are
no matter what you do.
[15]Lord, open my lips so that I can speak.
Then my mouth will praise you.
[16]You don’t take delight in sacrifice.
If you did, I would bring it.
You don’t take pleasure in burnt offerings.
[17]The greatest sacrifice you want is a broken spirit.
God, you will gladly accept a heart
that is broken because of sadness over sin.

[18]May you be pleased to give Zion success.
Build up the walls of Jerusalem.
[19]Then holy sacrifices will be offered in the right way.
Whole burnt offerings will bring delight to you.
And bulls will be offered on your altar.

Psalm 52

For the director of music. A maskil of David when Doeg, who was from Edom, had gone to Saul. Doeg had told Saul, “David has gone to the house of Ahimelech.”

[1]You think you are such a big, strong man!
Why do you brag about the evil things you’ve done?
You are a dishonor to God all the time.
[2]You plan ways to destroy others.
Your tongue is like a blade that has a sharp edge.
You are always telling lies.
[3]You love evil instead of good.
You would rather lie than tell the truth. *Selah*
[4]You love to harm others with your words, you liar!

[5]So God will destroy you forever.
He will grab hold of you and throw you out of your tent.
He will remove you from this life. *Selah*
[6]Those who do what is right will see it and learn a lesson from it.
They will laugh at you and say,
[7]“Just look at this fellow!
He didn’t depend on God for his safety.
He put his trust in all his wealth.
He grew strong by destroying others!”

[8]But I am like a healthy olive tree.
My roots are deep in the house of God.
I trust in your faithful love
for ever and ever.
[9]I will praise you forever for what you have done.
I will put my hope in you because you are good.
I will praise you when I’m with your faithful people.

Psalm 53

For the director of music. For mahalath. A maskil of David.

[1]Foolish people say in their hearts,
“There is no God.”
They do all kinds of horrible and evil things.
No one does anything good.

[2]God looks down from heaven
on all people.
He wants to see if there are any who understand.
He wants to see if there are any who trust in God.
[3]All of them have turned away.
They have all become evil.
No one does anything good,
no one at all.

[4]Won’t those who do evil ever learn?
They eat up my people as if they were eating bread.
They don’t call out to God for help.
[5]Just look at them! They are filled with terror
even when there is nothing to be afraid of!
People of Israel, God will scatter the bones of those who attack you.
You will put them to shame, because God hates them.

[6]How I pray that the One who saves Israel will come out of Zion!
God will bless his people with great success again.
So let the people of Jacob be filled with joy! Let Israel be glad!

Psalm 54

For the director of music. To be played on stringed instruments. A maskil of David when the men from Ziph had gone to Saul. They had said, “Isn’t David hiding among us?”

[1]God, save me by your power.
Set me free by your might.
[2]God, hear my prayer.
Listen to what I’m saying.

[3]Strangers are attacking me.
Mean people are trying to kill me.
They don’t care about God. *Selah*

[4]But I know that God helps me.
The Lord is the one who keeps me going.

[5]My enemies tell lies about me.
Do to them the evil things they planned against me.
God, be faithful and destroy them.

[6]I will sacrifice an offering to you
just because I choose to.
LORD, I will praise your name
because it is good.
[7]You have saved me from all of my troubles.
With my own eyes I have seen you win the battle over my enemies.

Psalm 55

For the director of music. A maskil of David to be played on stringed instruments.

[1]God, listen to my prayer.
Pay attention to my cry for help.
[2]Hear me and answer me.
My thoughts upset me. I'm very troubled.
[3]I'm troubled by what my enemies say about me.
I'm upset because sinful people stare at me.
They cause me all kinds of suffering.
When they are angry, they attack me with their words.

[4]I feel great pain deep down inside me.
The terrors of death are crushing me.
[5]Fear and trembling have taken hold of me.
Panic has overpowered me.
[6]I said, "I wish I had wings like a dove!
Then I would fly away and be at rest.
[7]I would escape to a place far away.
I would stay out in the desert. *Selah*
[8]I would hurry to my place of safety.
It would be far away from the winds and storms I'm facing."

[9]Lord, destroy the plans of sinners. Keep them from understanding one another.
I see people destroying things and fighting in the city.
[10]Day and night they prowl around on top of its walls.
The city is full of crime and trouble.
[11]Forces that destroy are at work inside it.
Its streets are full of people who cheat others and take advantage of them.

[12]If an enemy were making fun of me,
I could stand it.
If he were looking down on me,
I could hide from him.

[13]But it’s you, someone like myself.
It’s my companion, my close friend.
[14]We used to enjoy good friendship
as we walked with the crowds at the house of God.

[15]Let death take my enemies by surprise.
Let them be buried alive,
because their hearts and homes are full of evil.

[16]But I call out to God.
And the LORD saves me.
[17]Evening, morning and noon
I groan and cry out.
And he hears my voice.
[18]Even though many enemies are fighting against me,
he brings me safely back from the battle.
[19]God sits on his throne forever.
He hears my prayers and makes my enemies suffer. *Selah*
They never change their ways.
They don’t have any respect for God.

[20]My companion attacks his friends.
He breaks his promise.
[21]His talk is as smooth as butter.
But he has war in his heart.
His words flow like olive oil.
But they are like swords ready for battle.

[22]Turn your worries over to the LORD.
He will keep you going.
He will never let godly people fall.
[23]God, you will bring sinners
down to the grave.
Murderers and liars
won’t live out even half of their lives.

But I trust in you.

Psalm 56

For the director of music. A miktam of David after the Philistines had captured him in Gath. To the tune of "A Dove on Distant Oak Trees."

[1]God, show me your favor. Men are chasing me.
All day long they keep attacking me.
[2]Those who tell lies about me chase me all day long.
Many proud people are attacking me.

[3]When I'm afraid,
I will trust in you.
[4]I trust in God. I praise his word.
I trust in God. I will not be afraid.
What can people do to me?

[5]All day long they twist my words.
They are always making plans to harm me.
[6]They get together and hide.
They watch my steps.
They hope to kill me.

[7]Make sure you don't let them escape.
God, bring down the nations in your anger.
[8]Write down my poem of sadness.
List my tears on your scroll.
Aren't you making a record of them?

[9]My enemies will turn back
when I call out to you for help.
Then I will know that God is on my side.
[10]I trust in God. I praise his word.
I trust in the LORD. I praise his word.
[11]I trust in God. I will not be afraid.
What can mere men do to me?

[12]God, I have made promises to you.
I will bring my thank offerings to you.

13 You have saved me from death.
You have kept me from tripping and falling.
Now I can live with you
in the light that leads to life.

Psalm 57

For the director of music. A miktam of David when he had run away from Saul into the cave. To the tune of "Do Not Destroy."

[1]Show me your favor, God. Show me your favor.
I go to you for safety.
I will find safety in the shadow of your wings.
There I will stay until the danger is gone.

[2]I cry out to God Most High.
I cry out to God, and he carries out his plan for me.
[3]He answers from heaven and saves me.
He puts to shame those who chase me. *Selah*
He shows me his love and his truth.

[4]Men who are like lions are all around me.
I am lying down among hungry animals.
Their teeth are like spears and arrows.
Their tongues are like sharp swords.

[5]God, may you be honored above the heavens.
Let your glory be over the whole earth.

[6]My enemies spread a net to catch me by the feet.
I felt helpless.
They dug a pit in my path.
But they fell into it themselves. *Selah*

[7]God, my heart feels secure.
My heart feels secure.
I will sing and make music to you.
[8]My spirit, wake up!
Harp and lyre, wake up!
I want to sing and make music before the sun rises.

[9]Lord, I will praise you among the nations.
I will sing about you among the people of the earth.

[10]Great is your love. It reaches to the heavens.
Your truth reaches to the skies.

[11]God, may you be honored above the heavens.
Let your glory be over the whole earth.

Psalm 58

For the director of music. A miktam of David to the tune of "Do Not Destroy."

[1]Are you rulers really fair when you speak?
Do you judge people honestly?
[2]No, in your hearts you plan to be unfair.
With your hands you do terrible things on the earth.
[3]Even from birth those who are evil go down the wrong path.
From the day they are born they go the wrong way and speak lies.
[4]Their words are like the poison of a snake.
They are like the poison of a cobra that has covered up its ears.
[5]It won't listen to any tune of a snake charmer,
even if the charmer really plays well.

[6]God, break the teeth in the mouths of those sinners!
LORD, tear out the sharp teeth of those lions!
[7]Let those people disappear like water that flows away.
When they draw their bows, let their arrows be dull.
[8]Let them be like a slug that melts away as it moves along.
Let them be like a baby that is born dead and never sees the sun.

[9]Evil people will be swept away quicker than a pot can feel the heat of thorns burning under it.
And it doesn't matter if the thorns are green or dry.
[10]Godly people will be glad when those who have hurt them are paid back.
They will wash their feet in the blood of those who do evil.
[11]Then people will say,
"The godly will get their reward.
There really is a God who judges the earth."

Psalm 59

For the director of music. A miktam of David when Saul had sent men to watch David's house in order to kill him. To the tune of "Do Not Destroy."

[1]God, save me from my enemies.
Keep me safe from those who rise up against me.
[2]Save me from those who do evil.
Save me from murderers.

[3]See how they hide and wait for me!
LORD, angry people plan to harm me,
even though I haven't hurt them in any way or sinned against them.
[4]I haven't done anything wrong to them. But they are ready to attack me.
Rise up and help me! Look at what I'm up against!
[5]LORD God who rules over all, rise up. God of Israel,
punish all of the nations.
Don't show any mercy to those sinful people
who have turned against me. *Selah*

[6]My enemies are like a pack of barking dogs
that come back to the city in the evening.
They prowl around the city.
[7]Listen to what pours out of their mouths.
The words from their lips are like swords.
They think, "Who can hear us?"
[8]But you laugh at them, LORD.
You make fun of all those nations.

[9]You give me strength. I look to you.
God, you are like a fort to me. [10]You are my loving God.

God will march out in front of me.
He will let me look down on those who tell lies about me.
[11]Lord, you are like a shield that keeps us safe.
Don't kill my enemies all at once.
If you do, my people will forget about it.

Use your power to make my enemies wander around.
Destroy them.
12 They have sinned with their mouths.
Their lips have spoken evil words.
They have called down a curse on me and lied.
Let them be caught in their pride.
13 Burn them up in your anger.
Burn them up until there isn't anything left of them.
Then everyone from one end of the earth to the other will know
that God rules over the people of Jacob. *Selah*

14 My enemies are like a pack of barking dogs
that come back into the city in the evening.
They prowl around the city.
15 They wander around looking for food.
They groan if they don't find something that will satisfy them.
16 But I will sing about your strength.
In the morning I will sing about your love.
You are like a fort to me.
You keep me safe in times of trouble.

17 You give me strength. I sing praise to you.
God, you are like a fort to me. You are my loving God.

Psalm 60

For the director of music. For teaching. A miktam of David when he fought against Aram Naharaim and Aram Zobah. That was when Joab returned and struck down 12,000 people from Edom in the Valley of Salt. To the tune of "The Lily of the Covenant."

[1]God, you have turned away from us. You have attacked us.
You have been angry. Now turn back to us!
[2]You have shaken the land and torn it open.
Fix its cracks, because it is falling apart.
[3]You have shown your people hard times.
You have made us drink the wine of your anger.
Now we can't even walk straight.

[4]But you lead into battle those who have respect for you.
You give them a flag to wave against the enemy's weapons. *Selah*

[5]Save us. Help us with your powerful right hand,
so that those you love may be saved.
[6]God has spoken from his temple.
He has said, "I will win the battle.
Then I will divide up the land around Shechem.
I will divide up the Valley of Succoth.
[7]Gilead belongs to me.
So does the land of Manasseh.
Ephraim is the strongest tribe.
It is like a helmet for my head.
Judah is the royal tribe.
It is like a ruler's staff.
[8]Moab serves me like one who washes my feet.
I toss my sandal on Edom to show that I own it.
I shout to Philistia that I have won the battle."

[9]Who will bring me to the city that has high walls around it?
Who will lead me to the land of Edom?
[10]God, isn't it you, even though you have now turned away from us?
Isn't it you, even though you don't lead our armies into battle

anymore?
[11]Help us against our enemies.
The help people give doesn’t amount to anything.
[12]With your help we will win the battle.
You will walk all over our enemies.

Psalm 61

For the director of music. A psalm of David to be played on stringed instruments.

[1]God, hear my cry for help.
Listen to my prayer.

[2]From a place far away I call out to you.
I call out as my heart gets weaker.
Lead me to the safety of a rock that is high above me.
[3]You have always kept me safe from my enemies.
You are like a strong tower to me.

[4]I long to live in your holy tent forever.
There I find safety in the shadow of your wings. *Selah*
[5]God, you have heard my promises.
You have given me what belongs to those who worship you.

[6]Add many days to the king's life.
Let him live on and on for many years.
[7]May he always enjoy your blessing as he rules.
Let your love and truth keep him safe.

[8]Then I will always sing praise to you.
I will keep my promises day after day.

Psalm 62

For the director of music. For Jeduthun. A psalm of David.

[1]I find my rest in God alone.
He is the One who saves me.
[2]He alone is my rock. He is the One who saves me.
He is like a fort to me. I will always be secure.

[3]How long will you enemies attack me?
Will all of you throw me down?
I'm like a leaning wall.
I'm like a fence that is about to fall.
[4]You only want to pull me down
from my place of honor.
You take delight in telling lies.
You bless me with what you say.
But in your hearts you call down curses on me. *Selah*

[5]I will find my rest in God alone.
He is the One who gives me hope.
[6]He alone is my rock. He is the One who saves me.
He is like a fort to me. I will always be secure.
[7]I depend on God to save me and to honor me.
He is my mighty rock. He is my place of safety.
[8]Trust in him at all times, you people.
Tell him all of your troubles.
God is our place of safety. *Selah*

[9]Ordinary people are only a breath.
Important people are not what they seem to be.
If they were weighed on a scale, they wouldn't amount to anything.
Together they are only a breath.
[10]Don't trust in money you have taken from others.
Don't be proud of things you have stolen.
Even if your riches grow,
don't put your trust in them.

[11]God, I have heard you say two things.

One is that you, God, are strong.
[12]The other is that you, Lord, are loving.
I’m sure you will reward each person
in keeping with what he has done.

Psalm 63

A psalm of David when he was in the Desert of Judah.

[1]God, you are my God.
I greatly long for you.
With all my heart I thirst for you
in this dry desert
where there isn't any water.

[2]I have seen you in the sacred tent.
There I have seen your power and your glory.
[3]Your love is better than life.
I will bring glory to you with my lips.
[4]I will praise you as long as I live.
I will lift up my hands when I pray to you.
[5]I will be as satisfied as if I had eaten the best food there is.
I will sing praise to you with my mouth.

[6]As I lie on my bed I remember you.
I think of you all night long.
[7]Because you have helped me,
I sing in the shadow of your wings.
[8]I hold on to you.
Your powerful right hand takes good care of me.

[9]Those who are trying to kill me will be destroyed.
They will go down into the grave.
[10]They will be killed with swords.
They will become food for wild dogs.

[11]But the king will be filled with joy because of what God has done.
All those who take an oath in God's name will praise him.
But the mouths of liars will be shut.

Psalm 64

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

[1]God, hear me as I tell you my problem.
Don't let my enemies kill me.
[2]Hide me from those who make evil plans against me.
Hide me from that crowd of people who are doing evil.

[3]They make their tongues like sharp swords.
They aim their words like deadly arrows.
[4]They shoot from their hiding places at people who aren't guilty of doing anything wrong.
They shoot quickly. They aren't afraid of being caught.

[5]They help each other make evil plans.
They talk about hiding their traps.
They say, "Who can see what we are doing?"
[6]They make plans to do what is evil.
They say, "We have thought up a perfect plan!"
The hearts and minds of people are so clever!

[7]But God will shoot my enemies with his arrows.
He will suddenly strike them down.
[8]He will turn their own words against them.
He will destroy them.
All those who see them will shake their heads
and look down on them.

[9]Everyone will respect God.
They will tell about his works.
They will think about what he has done.
[10]Let godly people be full of joy because of what the LORD has done.
Let them go to him for safety.
Let all those whose hearts are honest praise him.

Psalm 65

For the director of music. A psalm of David. A song.

[1]God, we look forward to praising you in Zion.
We will keep our promises to you.
[2]All people will come to you,
because you hear and answer prayer.
[3]When our sins became too much for us,
you forgave our lawless acts.
[4]Blessed are those you choose
and bring near to worship you.
You bring us into the courtyards of your holy temple.
There in your house we are filled with all kinds of good things.

[5]God our Savior, you answer us by doing wonderful things.
You save us by your power.
People all over the world and beyond the farthest oceans
put their hope in you.
[6]You formed the mountains by your power.
You showed how strong you are.
[7]You calmed the oceans and their roaring waves.
You calmed the angry words and actions of the nations.
[8]Those who live far away are amazed at the miracles you have done.
What you do makes people from one end of the earth to the other
sing for joy.

[9]You take care of the land and water it.
You make it very rich.
You fill your streams with water.
You provide the people with grain.
That's how you prepare the land.
[10]You water its rows.
You smooth out its bumps.
You soften it with showers.
And you bless its crops.
[11]You bring the year to a close with huge crops.
You provide more than enough food.

[12]The grass grows thick even in the desert.
The hills are dressed with gladness.
[13]The meadows are covered with flocks and herds.
The valleys are dressed with grain.
They sing and shout with joy.

Psalm 66

For the director of music. A song. A psalm.

[1]Shout to God with joy, everyone on earth!
[2]Sing about the glory of his name!
Give him glorious praise!
[3]Say to God, “What wonderful things you do!
Your power is so great
that your enemies bow down to you in fear.
[4]Everyone on earth bows down to you.
They sing praise to you.
They sing praise to your name.” *Selah*

[5]Come and see what God has done.
See what wonderful things he has done for his people!
[6]He turned the Red Sea into dry land.
The people of Israel passed through the waters on foot.
Come, let us be full of joy because of what he did.
[7]He rules by his power forever.
His eyes watch the nations.
Let no one who refuses to obey him rise up against him. *Selah*

[8]Praise our God, you nations.
Let the sound of the praise you give him be heard.
[9]He has kept us alive.
He has kept our feet from slipping.
[10]God, you have put us to the test.
You put us through fire to make us like silver.
[11]You put us in prison.
You placed heavy loads on our backs.
[12]You let people run over our heads.
We went through fire and water.
But you brought us to a place
where we have everything we need.

[13]I will come to your temple with burnt offerings.
I will keep my promises to you.

[14]I made them with my lips.
My mouth spoke them when I was in trouble.
[15]I will sacrifice fat animals to you as burnt offerings.
I will offer rams, bulls and goats to you. *Selah*

[16]Come and listen, all of you who have respect for God.
Let me tell you what he has done for me.
[17]I cried out to him with my mouth.
I praised him with my tongue.
[18]If I had enjoyed having sin in my heart,
the Lord would not have listened.
[19]But God has listened.
He has heard my prayer.
[20]Give praise to God.
He has accepted my prayer.
He has not held his love back from me.

Psalm 67

For the director of music. A psalm. A song to be played on stringed instruments.

[1]God, show us your favor. Bless us.
May you smile on us with your favor. *Selah*
[2]Then your ways will be known on earth.
All nations will see that you have the power to save.

[3]God, may the nations praise you.
May all of the people on earth praise you.
[4]May the nations be glad and sing with joy.
You rule the people of the earth fairly.
You guide the nations of the earth. *Selah*
[5]God, may the nations praise you.
May all of the people on earth praise you.

[6]Then the land will produce its crops.
God, our God, will bless us.
[7]God will bless us.
People from one end of the earth to the other
will have respect for him.

Psalm 68

For the director of music. A psalm of David. A song.

[1]May God rise up and scatter his enemies.
May they turn and run away from him.
[2]As wind blows smoke away,
so may God blow them away.
As fire melts wax,
so may he destroy sinful people.
[3]But may those who do what is right be glad
and filled with joy when they are with him.
May they be happy and joyful.

[4]Sing to God. Sing praise to his name.
Lift up a song to the One who rides on the clouds.
His name is the LORD.
Be glad when you are with him.
[5]God is in his holy temple.
He is a father to those whose fathers have died.
He takes care of women whose husbands have died.
[6]God gives lonely people a family.
He sets prisoners free, and they go out singing.
But those who refuse to obey him
live in a land that is baked by the sun.

[7]God, you led your people out.
You marched through a dry and empty land. *Selah*
[8]The ground shook
when you, the God of Sinai, appeared.
The heavens poured down rain
when you, the God of Israel, appeared.
[9]God, you gave us plenty of rain.
You renewed your worn-out land.
[10]God, your people settled in it.
From all of your riches, you provided for those who were poor.

[11]The Lord gave a message.
Many people made it widely known.

12 They said, “Kings and armies are running away.
In the camps, Israel’s soldiers are dividing up
the things they have taken from their enemies.
13 Even while the soldiers sleep near the campfires,
God wins the battle for them.
He gives the enemy’s silver and gold
to Israel, his dove.”
14 The Mighty One has scattered the kings around the land.
It was like snow falling on Mount Zalmon.

15 The mountains of Bashan are majestic.
The mountains of Bashan are very rocky.
16 You rocky mountains are jealous of Mount Zion, aren’t you?
That’s where God chooses to rule.
That’s where the LORD himself will live forever.
17 God has come with tens of thousands of his chariots.
He has come with thousands and thousands of them.
The Lord has come from Mount Sinai.
He has entered his holy place.
18 When he went up to his place on high,
he led a line of prisoners.
He received gifts from people,
even from those who refused to obey him.
The LORD God went up to live on Mount Zion.

19 Give praise to the Lord. Give praise to God our Savior.
He carries our heavy loads day after day. *Selah*
20 Our God is a God who saves.
He is the King and the LORD. He saves us from death.

21 God will certainly smash the heads of his enemies.
He will break the hairy heads of those who keep on sinning.
22 The Lord says, “I will bring your enemies from Bashan.
I will bring them up from the bottom of the sea.
23 Then your feet can wade in their blood.
The tongues of your dogs can lick up all the blood they want.”

24 God, those who worship you come marching into view.
My God and King, those who follow you have entered the sacred tent.

25 The singers are walking in front.
Next come those who play the music.
Young women playing tambourines are with them.
26 The leaders sing, “Praise God among all those who worship him.
Praise the LORD in the community of Israel.”
27 The little tribe of Benjamin leads the worshipers.
Next comes the great crowd of Judah’s princes.
Then come the princes of Zebulun and the princes of Naphtali.

28 God, show us your power.
Show us your strength.
God, do as you have done before.
29 Do it from your temple at Jerusalem,
where kings will bring you gifts.
30 Give a strong warning to Egypt, that beast among the tall grass.
Warn the leaders of the nations, who are like bulls among the calves.
May they bow down before you with gifts of silver.
Scatter the nations who like to make war.
31 Messengers will come from Egypt.
The people of Cush will be quick to bring gifts to you.

32 Sing to God, you kingdoms of the earth.
Sing praise to the Lord. *Selah*
33 He rides in the age-old skies above.
He thunders with his mighty voice.
34 Tell how powerful God is.
He rules as king over Israel.
The skies show how powerful he is.
35 How wonderful is God in his holy place!
The God of Israel gives power and strength to his people.

Give praise to God!

Psalm 69

For the director of music. A psalm of David to the tune of "Lilies."

[1]God, save me.
My troubles are like a flood.
I'm up to my neck in them.
[2]I'm sinking in deep mud.
I have no firm place to stand.
I am out in deep water.
The waves roll over me.
[3]I'm worn out from calling for help.
My throat is very dry.
My eyes grow tired
looking for my God.
[4]Those who hate me without any reason
are more than the hairs on my head.
Many people who don't have any reason to be my enemies
are trying to destroy me.
They force me to give back
what I didn't steal.

[5]God, you know how foolish I've been.
My guilt is not hidden from you.

[6]Lord, you are the LORD who rules over all.
May those who put their hope in you not be dishonored because of me.
You are the God of Israel.
May those who worship you not be put to shame because of me.
[7]Because of you, people laugh at me.
My face is covered with shame.
[8]I'm a stranger to my brothers.
I'm an outsider to my own mother's sons.
[9]My great love for your house destroys me.
Those who make fun of you make fun of me also.
[10]When I sob and go without eating,
they laugh at me.

[11]When I put on black clothes to show how sad I am,
people make jokes about me.
[12]Those who gather in public places make fun of me.
Those who get drunk make up songs about me.

[13]But LORD, I pray to you.
May this be the time you show me your favor.
God, answer me because you love me so much.
Save me, as you always do.
[14]Save me from the trouble I'm in.
It's like slippery mud. Don't let me sink in it.
Save me from those who hate me.
Save me from the deep water I'm in.
[15]Don't let the floods cover me.
Don't let the deep water swallow me up.
Don't let the grave close its mouth over me.
[16]LORD, answer me because your love is so good.
Turn to me because you are so kind.
[17]Don't turn your face away from me.
Answer me quickly. I'm in trouble.
[18]Come near and save me.
Set me free from my enemies.

[19]You know how they make fun of me.
They dishonor me and put me to shame.
You know all about my enemies.
[20]They have broken my heart by saying evil things about me.
It has left me helpless.
I looked for pity, but I didn't find any.
I looked for someone to comfort me, but I didn't find anyone.
[21]They put bitter spices in my food.
They gave me vinegar when I was thirsty.

[22]Let their feast be a trap and a snare.
Let my enemies get what's coming to them.
[23]Let their eyes grow weak so they can't see.
Let their backs be bent forever.
[24]Pour out your anger on them.
Let them feel its burning heat.
[25]May their homes be deserted.

May no one live in their tents.
[26]They attack those you have wounded.
They talk about the pain of those you have hurt.
[27]Charge them with one crime after another.
Don’t save them.
[28]May their names be erased from the Book of Life.
Don’t include them in the list of those who do right.

[29]I’m in pain. I’m in deep trouble.
God, save me and keep me safe.

[30]I will praise God’s name by singing to him.
I will bring him glory by giving him thanks.
[31]That will please the LORD more than offering him an ox.
It will please him more than offering him a bull with its horns and hoofs.
[32]Poor people will see it and be glad.
The hearts of those who worship God will be strengthened.
[33]The LORD hears those who are in need.
He doesn’t forget his people in prison.

[34]Let heaven and earth praise him.
Let the oceans and everything that moves in them praise him.
[35]God will save Zion.
He will build the cities of Judah again.
Then people will live in them and own the land.
[36]The children of those who serve God will receive it.
Those who love him will live there.

Psalm 70

For the director of music. A prayer of David.

[1]God, hurry and save me.
LORD, come quickly and help me.
[2]Let those who are trying to kill me be put to shame.
Let them not be honored.
Let all those who want to destroy me
be turned back in shame.
[3]Some people make fun of me.
Let them be turned back when their plans fail.
[4]But let all those who look to you
be joyful and glad because of what you have done.
Let those who love you because you save them always say,
"May God be honored!"

[5]But I am poor and needy.
God, come quickly to me.
You are the One who helps me and saves me.
LORD, please don't wait any longer.

Psalm 71

[1]LORD, I have gone to you for safety.
Let me never be put to shame.
[2]You do what is right. Save me and help me.
Pay attention to me and save me.
[3]Be my rock of safety
that I can always go to.
Give the command to save me.
You are my rock and my fort.
[4]My God, save me from the power of sinners.
Save me from the hands of those who are mean and evil.

[5]You are the King and the LORD. You have always been my hope.
I have trusted in you ever since I was young.
[6]From the time I was born I have depended on you.
You brought me out of my mother's body.
I will praise you forever.
[7]To many people I am an example of how much you care.
You are strong. You are my place of safety.
[8]My mouth is filled with praise for you.
All day long I will talk about your glory.

[9]Don't push me away when I'm old.
Don't desert me when my strength is gone.
[10]My enemies speak against me.
Those who want to kill me get together and make evil plans.
[11]They say, "God has deserted him.
Go after him and grab him.
No one will save him."
[12]God, don't stay so far away from me.
My God, come quickly and help me.
[13]May those who bring charges against me die in shame.
May those who want to harm me
be covered with shame and dishonor.

[14]But I will always have hope.
I will praise you more and more.

15 I will say that what you have done is right.
All day long I will talk about how you have saved your people.
It is more than I can understand.
16 LORD and King, I will come and announce your mighty acts.
I will announce that you alone do what is right.
17 God, ever since I was young you have taught me about what you have done.
To this very day I tell about your wonderful acts.
18 God, don't leave me
even when I'm old and have gray hair.
Let me live to tell my children about your power.
Let me tell all of them about your mighty acts.

19 God, your saving acts reach to the skies.
You have done great things.
God, who is like you?
20 You have sent many bitter troubles my way.
But you will give me new life.
Even if I'm almost in the grave,
you will bring me back.
21 You will honor me more and more.
You will comfort me once again.

22 My God, I will use the harp to praise you
because you are always faithful.
Holy One of Israel,
I will use the lyre to sing praise to you.
23 My lips will shout with joy
when I sing praise to you.
You have saved me.
24 All day long my tongue will say
that you have done what is right.
Those who wanted to harm me have been put to shame.
They have not been honored.

Psalm 72

A psalm of Solomon.

[1]God, give the king the ability to judge fairly.
He is your royal son. Help him to do what is right.
[2]Then he will rule your people in the right way.
He will be fair to those among your people who are hurting.
[3]The mountains and the hills will produce rich crops,
because the people will do what is right.
[4]The king will stand up for those who are hurting.
He will save the children of those who are in need.
He will crush those who beat others down.

[5]He will rule as long as the sun shines
and the moon gives its light.
He will rule for all time to come.
[6]He will be like rain falling on the fields.
He will be like showers watering the earth.
[7]Godly people will do well as long as he rules.
They will have more than they need as long as the moon lasts.

[8]He will rule from ocean to ocean.
His kingdom will reach from the Euphrates River to the ends of the earth.
[9]The desert tribes will bow down to him.
His enemies will lick the dust.
[10]The kings of Tarshish and of places far away
will bring him gifts.
The kings of Sheba and Seba
will give him presents.
[11]All kings will bow down to him.
All nations will serve him.

[12]People who are in need will cry out, and he will save them.
He will save those who are hurting.
They don’t have anyone else who can help them.
[13]He will take pity on those who are weak and in need.

He will save them from death.
14 He will save them from people who beat others down.
He will save them from people who do mean things to them.
Their lives are very special to him.

15 May he live a long time!
May gold from Sheba be given to him.
May people always pray for him.
May they ask the LORD to bless him all day long.
16 Let there be plenty of grain everywhere in the land.
May it sway in the wind on the tops of the hills.
Let crops grow well, like those in Lebanon.
Let them grow like the grass of the field.
17 May the king's name be remembered forever.
May his fame last as long as the sun shines.

All nations will be blessed because of him.
They will call him blessed.

18 Give praise to the LORD God, the God of Israel.
Only he can do wonderful things.
19 Give praise to his glorious name forever.
May his glory fill the whole earth.
Amen and Amen.

20 The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, end here.

BOOK III

Psalms 73–89

Psalm 73

A psalm of Asaph.

[1]God is truly good to Israel.
He is good to those who have pure hearts.

[2]But my feet had almost slipped.
I had almost tripped and fallen.
[3]I saw that proud and sinful people were doing well.
And I began to long for what they had.

[4]They don't have any troubles.
Their bodies are healthy and strong.
[5]They don't have the problems others have.
They don't suffer as other people do.
[6]Their pride is like a necklace.
They put on meanness as if it were their clothes.
[7]Many sins come out of their hard and stubborn hearts.
There is no limit to their proud and evil thoughts.
[8]They laugh at others and speak words of hatred.
They are proud. They warn others about the harm they can do to them.
[9]They brag as if they owned heaven itself.
They talk as if they controlled the earth.
[10]So people listen to them.
They lap up their words like water.
[11]They say, "How can God know what we're doing?
Does the Most High God really know that much?"

[12]Here is what sinful people are like.
They don't have a care in the world.
They keep getting richer and richer.

[13]It seems as if I have kept my heart pure without any reason.
It didn't do me any good to wash my hands
to show that I wasn't guilty of doing anything wrong.
[14]Day after day I've been in pain.

God has punished me every morning.

15 What if I had said, “I will speak as evil people do”?
Then I wouldn’t have been faithful to God’s children.
16 I tried to understand it all.
But it was more than I could handle.
17 It troubled me until I entered God’s temple.
Then I understood what will happen to bad people in the end.

18 God, I’m sure you will make them slip and fall.
You will throw them down and destroy them.
19 It will happen very suddenly.
A terrible death will take them away completely.
20 A dream goes away when a person wakes up.
Lord, it will be like that when you rise up.
It will be as if those people were only a dream.

21 At one time my heart was sad
and my spirit was bitter.
22 I didn’t have any sense. I didn’t know anything.
I acted like a wild animal toward you.

23 But I am always with you.
You hold me by my right hand.
24 You give me wise advice to guide me.
And when I die, you will take me away
into the glory of heaven.
25 I don’t have anyone in heaven but you.
I don’t want anything on earth besides you.
26 My body and my heart may grow weak.
God, you give strength to my heart.
You are everything I will ever need.

27 Those who don’t want anything to do with you will die.
You destroy all those who aren’t faithful to you.
28 But I am close to you. And that’s good.
LORD and King, I have made you my place of safety.
I will talk about everything you have done.

Psalm 74

A maskil of Asaph.

[1]God, why have you turned your back on us for so long?
Why does your anger burn against us? We are your very own sheep.
[2]Remember that you chose us to be your own people a long time ago.
Remember that you set us free from slavery to be your very own tribe.
Remember Mount Zion, where you lived.
[3]Walk through this place that has been torn down beyond repair.
See how completely your enemies have destroyed the temple!

[4]In the place where you used to meet with us,
your enemies have shouted, “We’ve won the battle!”
They have set up their flags to show they have beaten us.
[5]They acted like people cutting down a forest with axes.
[6]They smashed all of the beautiful wooden walls
with their axes and hatchets.
[7]They burned your temple to the ground.
They polluted the place where your Name is.
[8]They had said in their hearts, “We will crush them completely!”
They burned every place where you were worshiped in the land.
[9]You don’t give us miraculous signs anymore.
There aren’t any prophets left.
None of us knows how long that will last.

[10]God, how long will your enemies make fun of you?
Will they attack you with their words forever?
[11]Why don’t you help us? Why do you hold back your powerful right hand?
Use your strong arms to destroy your enemies!

[12]God, you have been my king for a long time.
The whole earth has seen you save us over and over again.
[13]You parted the Red Sea by your power.
You broke the heads of that sea monster in Egypt.
[14]You crushed the heads of the sea monster Leviathan.
You fed it to the creatures of the desert.

15 You opened up streams and springs.
You dried up rivers that flow all year long.
16 You rule over the day and the night.
You created the sun and the moon.
17 You decided where the borders of the earth would be.
You made both summer and winter.

18 LORD, remember how your enemies have made fun of you.
Remember how foolish people have attacked you with their words.
19 Don’t hand Israel, your dove, over to those wild animals.
Don’t forget your suffering people forever.
20 Honor the covenant you made with us.
Horrible things are happening in every dark corner of the land.
21 Don’t let your suffering people be put to shame.
May those who are poor and needy praise you.

22 God, rise up. Stand up for your cause.
Remember how foolish people make fun of you all day long.
23 Pay close attention to the shouts of your enemies.
The trouble they cause never stops.

Psalm 75

For the director of music. A psalm of Asaph. A song to the tune of "Do Not Destroy."

[1]God, we give thanks to you.
We give thanks because your Name is near.
People talk about the wonderful things you have done.

[2]You say, "I choose the appointed time to judge people.
And I judge them fairly.
[3]When the earth and all of its people tremble,
I keep everything from falling to pieces. *Selah*
[4]To the proud I say, 'Don't brag anymore.'
To sinners I say, 'Don't show off your power.
[5]Don't show it off against me.
Don't speak with your noses in the air.' "

[6]No one from east or west or north or south
can act as judge.
[7]God is the One who judges.
He says to one person, "You are guilty."
To another he says, "You are not guilty."
[8]In the hand of the LORD is a cup.
It is full of wine mixed with spices.
It is the wine of his anger.
He pours it out. All of the evil people on earth
drink it down to the very last drop.

[9]I will speak about this forever.
I will sing praise to the God of Jacob.
[10]God will destroy the power of all sinful people.
But he will make godly people more powerful.

Psalm 76

For the director of music. A psalm of Asaph. A song to be played on stringed instruments.

[1]In the land of Judah, God is known.
His name is great in Israel.
[2]His tent is in Jerusalem.
The place where he lives is on Mount Zion.
[3]There he broke the deadly arrows of his enemies.
He broke their shields and swords.
He broke their weapons of war. *Selah*

[4]God, you shine like a very bright light.
You are more majestic than mountains full of wild animals.
[5]Brave soldiers have been robbed of everything they had.
Now they lie there, sleeping in death.
Not one of them can even lift his hands.
[6]God of Jacob, at your command
both horse and chariot lie still.
[7]People should have respect for you alone.
Who can stand in front of you when you are angry?
[8]From heaven you handed down your sentence.
The land was afraid and became quiet.
[9]God, that happened when you rose up to judge.
It happened when you came to save all of your suffering people in the land. *Selah*
[10]Your anger against sinners brings you praise.
Those who live through your anger gather to worship you.

[11]Make promises to the LORD your God and keep them.
Let all of the neighboring nations
bring gifts to the One who should be respected.
[12]He breaks the proud spirit of rulers.
The kings of the earth have respect for him.

Psalm 77

For the director of music. For Jeduthun. A psalm of Asaph.

[1]I cried out to God for help.
I cried out to God to hear me.
[2]When I was in trouble, I looked to the Lord.
During the night I lifted up my hands in prayer.
But I refused to be comforted.

[3]God, I remembered you, and I groaned.
I thought about you, and I became weak. *Selah*
[4]You kept me from going to sleep.
I was so troubled I couldn't speak.
[5]I thought about days gone by.
I thought about the years of long ago.
[6]I remembered how I used to sing praise to you in the night.
I thought about it, and here is what I asked myself.

[7]"Will the Lord turn away from us forever?
Won't he ever show us his kindness again?
[8]Has his faithful love disappeared forever?
Has his promise failed for all time?
[9]Has God forgotten to show us his favor?
Has he held back his tender love because he was angry?" *Selah*

[10]Then I thought, "Here is what I will make my appeal to.
For many years the Most High God showed how powerful his right hand is."
[11]LORD, I will remember what you did.
Yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago.
[12]I will spend time thinking about everything you have done.
I will consider all of your mighty acts.

[13]God, everything you do is holy.
What god is so great as our God?
[14]You are the God who does miracles.
You show your power among the nations.

[15]With your mighty arm you set your people free.
You set the children of Jacob and Joseph free. *Selah*

[16]God, the water of the Red Sea saw you.
It saw you and boiled up.
The deepest waters were stirred up.
[17]The clouds poured down rain.
The skies rumbled with thunder.
Lightning flashed back and forth like arrows.
[18]Your thunder was heard in the windstorm.
Your lightning lit up the world.
The earth trembled and shook.
[19]Your path led through the Red Sea.
You walked through the mighty waters.
But your footprints were not seen.

[20]You led your people like a flock.
You led them by the hands of Moses and Aaron.

Psalm 78

A maskil of Asaph.

[1]My people, listen to my teaching.
Pay attention to what I say.
[2]I will open my mouth and tell stories.
I will speak about things that were hidden.
They happened a long time ago.
[3]We have heard about them and we know them.
Our people who lived before us have told us about them.
[4]We won't hide them from our children.
We will tell them to those who live after us.
We will tell them about what the LORD has done that is worthy of praise.
We will talk about his power and the wonderful things he has done.
[5]He gave laws to the people of Jacob.
He gave Israel their law.
He commanded our people who lived before us
to teach his laws to their children.
[6]Then those born later would know his laws.
Even their children yet to come would know them.
And they in turn would tell their children.
[7]Then they would put their trust in God.
They would not forget what he had done.
They would obey his commands.
[8]They would not be like their people who lived before them.
Those people were stubborn. They refused to obey God.
Their hearts were not true to him.
Their spirits were not faithful to him.

[9]The soldiers of Ephraim were armed with bows.
But they ran away on the day of battle.
[10]They didn't keep the covenant God had made with them.
They refused to live by his law.
[11]They forgot what he had done.
They didn't remember the wonders he had shown them.
[12]He did miracles right in front of our people who lived long ago.

At that time they were living in the land of Egypt, in the area of
Zoan.
13God parted the Red Sea and led them through it.
He made the water stand up like a wall.
14He guided them with the cloud during the day.
He led them with the light of a fire all night long.
15He broke the rocks open in the desert.
He gave them as much water as there is in the oceans.
16He brought streams out of a rocky cliff.
He made water flow down like rivers.

17But they continued to sin against him.
In the desert they refused to obey the Most High God.
18They were stubborn and put God to the test.
They ordered him to give them the food they longed for.
19They spoke against God. They said,
"Can God put food on a table in the desert?
20When he struck the rock, streams of water poured out.
Huge amounts of water flowed down.
But can he also give us food?
Can he supply meat for his people?"
21When the LORD heard what they said, he was very angry.
His anger broke out like fire against the people of Jacob.
He became very angry with Israel.
22That was because they didn't believe in God.
They didn't trust in his power to save them.
23But he gave a command to the skies above.
He opened the doors of the heavens.
24He rained down manna for the people to eat.
He gave them the grain of heaven.
25Mere men ate the bread of angels.
He sent them all of the food they could eat.
26He made the east wind blow from the heavens.
By his power he caused the south wind to blow.
27He rained meat down on them like dust.
He sent them birds like sand on the seashore.
28He made the birds come down inside their camp.
The birds fell all around their tents.
29People ate until they had more than enough.
He gave them what they had longed for.

30 But even before they had finished eating, God acted.
He did it while the food was still in their mouths.
31 His anger rose up against them.
He put to death the strongest among them.
He struck down Israel's young men.

32 But even after all that, they kept on sinning.
Even after they had seen the miracles he did, they still didn't believe.
33 So he brought their days to an end like a puff of smoke.
He ended their years with terror.
34 Every time God killed some of them, the others would look to him.
They gladly turned back to him again.
35 They remembered that God was their Rock.
They remembered that God Most High had set them free.
36 But they didn't mean it when they praised him.
They lied to him when they spoke.
37 Their hearts were not true to him.
They weren't faithful to the covenant he had made with them.
38 But he was full of tender love.
He forgave their sins
and didn't destroy his people.
Time after time he held back his anger.
He didn't let all of his burning anger blaze out.
39 He remembered that they were only human.
He remembered they were only a breath of air
that drifts by and doesn't return.

40 How often they refused to obey him in the desert!
How often they caused him sorrow in that dry and empty land!
41 Again and again they put God to the test.
They made the Holy One of Israel sad and angry.
42 They didn't remember his power.
They forgot the day he set them free
from those who had beaten them down.
43 They forgot how he had shown them his miraculous signs in Egypt.
They forgot his miracles in the area of Zoan.
44 He turned the rivers of Egypt into blood.
The people of Egypt couldn't drink water from their streams.
45 He sent large numbers of flies that bit them.

He sent frogs that destroyed their land.
46 He gave their crops to the grasshoppers.
He gave their food to the locusts.
47 He destroyed their vines with hail.
He destroyed their fig trees with sleet.
48 He killed their cattle with hail.
Their livestock were struck by lightning.
49 He brought great trouble on Egypt by pouring out his blazing anger.
In his hot anger he sent destroying angels against them.
50 God prepared a path for his anger.
He didn't spare their lives.
He gave them over to the plague.
51 He killed the oldest son of each family in Egypt.
He struck down the oldest son in every house in the land of Ham.
52 But he brought his people out like a flock.
He led them like sheep through the desert.
53 He guided them safely, and they weren't afraid.
But the Red Sea swallowed up their enemies.
54 He brought his people to the border of his holy land.
He led them to the central hill country he had taken by his power.
55 He drove the nations out to make room for his people.
He gave to each family a piece of land to pass on to their children.
He settled the tribes of Israel in their homes.

56 But they put God to the test.
They refused to obey the Most High God.
They didn't keep his laws.
57 Like their people who lived before them,
they turned away from him and were not faithful.
They were like a bow that doesn't shoot straight.
They couldn't be trusted.
58 They made God angry by going to their high places.
They made him jealous by worshiping the statues of their gods.
59 When God saw what the people were doing, he was very angry.
He turned away from them completely.
60 He deserted the holy tent at Shiloh.
He left the tent he had set up among his people.
61 He allowed the ark to be captured.
Into the hands of his enemies he sent the ark where his glory rested.
62 He let his people be killed with swords.

He was very angry with them.
63 Fire destroyed their young men.
Their young women had no one to get married to.
64 Their priests were killed with swords.
Their widows weren't able to cry.

65 Then the Lord woke up as if he had been sleeping.
He was like a man waking up from the deep sleep caused by wine.
66 He drove his enemies back.
He put them to shame that will last forever.
67 He turned his back on the tents of the people of Joseph.
He didn't choose to live in the tribe of Ephraim.
68 Instead, he chose to live in the tribe of Judah.
He chose Mount Zion, which he loved.
69 There he built his holy place as secure as the heavens.
He built it to last forever, like the earth.
70 He chose his servant David.
He took him from the sheep pens.
71 He brought him from tending sheep
to be the shepherd of his people Jacob.
He made him the shepherd of Israel, his special people.
72 David cared for them with a faithful and honest heart.
With skilled hands he led them.

Psalm 79

A psalm of Asaph.

[1]God, an army from the nations has attacked your land.
They have polluted your holy temple.
They have completely destroyed Jerusalem.
[2]They have given the dead bodies of your people
as food to the birds of the air.
They have given the bodies of your faithful people
to the animals of the earth.
[3]They have poured out the blood of your people like water
all around Jerusalem.
No one is left to bury the dead.
[4]We are something our neighbors joke about.
The nations around us laugh at us and make fun of us.

[5]LORD, how long will you be angry with us? Will it be forever?
How long will your jealousy burn like fire?
[6]Pour out your burning anger on the nations
that don't pay any attention to you.
Pour it out on the kingdoms
that don't worship you.
[7]They have swallowed up the people of Jacob.
They have destroyed Israel's homeland.
[8]Don't hold against us the sins of our people who lived before us.
May you be quick to show us your tender love.
We are in great need.

[9]God our Savior, help us.
Then glory will come to you.
Be true to your name.
Save us and forgive our sins.
[10]Why should the nations say,
"Where is their God?"
Show the nations that you punish those who kill your people.
We want to see it happen.
[11]Listen to the groans of the prisoners.
Use your powerful arm

to save the lives of those who have been sentenced to death.

12 Lord, our neighbors have laughed at you.
Pay them back seven times for what they have done.
13 We are your people. We are your very own sheep.
We will praise you forever.
For all time to come
we will keep on praising you.

Psalm 80

For the director of music. A psalm of Asaph to the tune of "The Lilies of the Covenant."

[1]Shepherd of Israel, hear us.
You lead the people of Joseph like a flock.
You sit on your throne between the cherubim.
Show your glory
[2]to the people of Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh.
Call your strength into action.
Come and save us.

[3]God, make us new again.
Let your face smile on us with favor.
Then we will be saved.

[4]LORD God who rules over all,
how long will your anger burn
against the prayers of your people?
[5]You have given us tears as our food.
You have made us drink tears by the bowlful.
[6]You have let our neighbors fight against us.
Our enemies laugh at us.

[7]God who rules over all, make us new again.
Let your face smile on us with favor.
Then we will be saved.

[8]You brought Israel out of Egypt.
Israel was like a vine.
After you drove the nations out of Canaan,
you planted the vine in their land.
[9]You prepared the ground for it.
It took root and spread out over the whole land.
[10]The mountains were covered with its shade.
The shade of its branches covered the mighty cedar trees.
[11]Your vine sent its branches out all the way to the Mediterranean Sea.

They reached as far as the Euphrates River.

12 Why have you broken down the walls around your vine?
Now all who pass by it can pick its grapes.
13 Wild pigs from the forest destroy it.
The creatures of the field feed on it.
14 God who rules over all, return to us!
Look down from heaven and see us!
Watch over your vine.
15 Guard the root you have planted with your powerful right hand.
Take care of the branch you have raised up for yourself.

16 Your vine has been cut down. Fire has burned it up.
You have been angry with us, and we are dying.
17 May you honor the people at your right hand.
May you honor the nation you have raised up for yourself.
18 Then we won't turn away from you.
Give us new life. We will worship you.

19 LORD God who rules over all, make us new again.
Let your face smile on us with favor.
Then we will be saved.

Psalm 81

For the director of music. For gittith. A psalm of Asaph.

[1]Sing joyfully to God! He gives us strength.
Give a loud shout to the God of Jacob!
[2]Let the music begin. Play the tambourines.
Play sweet music on harps and lyres.

[3]Blow the ram's horn on the day of the New Moon Feast.
Blow it again when the moon is full and the Feast of Booths begins.
[4]This is an order given to Israel.
It is a law of the God of Jacob.
[5]He gave it as a covenant law for the people of Joseph
when God went out to punish Egypt.
There we heard a language we didn't understand.

[6]God said, "I removed the load from your shoulders.
I set your hands free from carrying heavy baskets.
[7]You called out when you were in trouble, and I saved you.
I answered you out of a thundercloud.
I put you to the test at the waters of Meribah. *Selah*

[8]"My people, listen and I will warn you.
Israel, I wish you would listen to me!
[9]Don't have anything to do with the gods of other nations.
Don't bow down and worship strange gods.
[10]I am the LORD your God.
I brought you up out of Egypt.
Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it with good things.

[11]"But my people wouldn't listen to me.
Israel wouldn't obey me.
[12]So I let them go their own stubborn way.
I let them follow their own sinful plans.

[13]"I wish my people would listen to me!
I wish Israel would live as I want them to live!

[14]Then I would quickly bring their enemies under control.
I would use my power against their attackers.
[15]Those who hate me would bow down to me in fear.
They would be punished forever.
[16]But you would be fed with the finest wheat.
I would satisfy you with the sweetest honey.”

Psalm 82

A psalm of Asaph.

[1]God takes his place at the head of a large gathering of rulers and judges.
He announces his decisions among them.

[2]He says, “How long will you stand up for those who aren’t fair to others?
How long will you show favor to sinful people? *Selah*
[3]Stand up for those who are weak and for those whose fathers have died.
See to it that those who are poor and those who are beaten down are treated fairly.
[4]Save the weak and those who are in need.
Save them from the power of sinful people.

[5]“You rulers and judges don’t know anything.
You don’t understand anything.
You are in the dark about what is right.
Law and order have been destroyed all over the world.

[6]“I said, ‘Rulers and judges, you are “gods.”
You are all children of the Most High God.’
[7]But you will die, just like everyone else.
You will die like every other ruler.”

[8]God, rise up. Judge the earth.
All of the nations belong to you.

Psalm 83

A song. A psalm of Asaph.

[1]God, don't keep silent.
God, don't keep quiet. Don't be still.
[2]See how your enemies are getting ready for action.
See how they are rising up against you.
[3]They make clever plans against your people.
They make evil plans against those you love.
[4]"Come," they say. "Let's destroy that whole nation.
Then the name of Israel won't be remembered anymore."

[5]All of them agree on the evil plans they have made.
They join forces against you.
[6]Their forces include the people of Edom,
Ishmael, Moab and Hagar.
[7]They also include the people of Byblos, Ammon, Amalek,
Philistia and Tyre.
[8]Even Assyria has joined them
to give strength to the people of Moab and Ammon. *Selah*

[9]Do to them what you did to the people of Midian.
Do to them what you did to Sisera and Jabin at the Kishon River.
[10]Sisera and Jabin died near the town of Endor.
Their bodies were left to rot on the ground.
[11]Do to the nobles of your enemies what you did to Oreb and Zeeb.
Do to all of their princes what you did to Zebah and Zalmunna.
[12]They said, "Let's take over
the grasslands that belong to God."

[13]My God, make them like straw that the wind blows away.
Make them like tumbleweed.
[14]Destroy them as fire burns up a forest.
Destroy them as a flame sets mountains on fire.
[15]Chase them with your mighty winds.
Terrify them with your storm.
[16]LORD, put them to shame

so that people will worship you.

17 May they always be filled with terror and shame.
May they die in dishonor.
18 Your name is the LORD. Let them know
that you alone are the Most High God over the whole earth.

Psalm 84

For the director of music. For gittith. A psalm of the Sons of Korah.

[1]LORD who rules over all,
how lovely is the place where you live!
[2]I long to be in the courtyards of the LORD's temple.
I deeply long to be there.
My whole being cries out
for the living God.

[3]LORD who rules over all,
even the sparrow has found a home near your altar.
My King and my God,
the swallow also has a nest there,
where she may have her young.
[4]Blessed are those who live in your house.
They are always praising you. *Selah*

[5]Blessed are those whose strength comes from you.
They have decided to travel to your temple.
[6]As they pass through the dry Valley of Baca,
they make it a place where water flows.
The rain in the fall covers it with pools.
[7]Those people get stronger as they go along,
until each of them appears in Zion, where God lives.

[8]LORD God who rules over all, hear my prayer.
God of the people of Jacob, listen to me. *Selah*
[9]God, look with favor on your anointed king.
You appointed him to be like a shield that keeps us safe.

[10]A single day in your courtyards is better
than a thousand anywhere else.
I would rather guard the door of the house of my God
than live in the tents of sinful people.
[11]The LORD God is like the sun that gives us light.
He is like a shield that keeps us safe.
The LORD blesses us with favor and honor.

He doesn’t hold back anything good
from those whose lives are without blame.

12 LORD who rules over all,
blessed is everyone who trusts in you.

Psalm 85

For the director of music. A psalm of the Sons of Korah.

[1]LORD, you showed favor to your land.
You blessed the people of Jacob with great success again.
[2]You forgave the evil things your people did.
You took away all of their sins. *Selah*
[3]You stopped being angry with them.
You turned your burning anger away from them.

[4]God our Savior, make us new again.
Stop being unhappy with us.
[5]Will you be angry with us forever?
Will you be angry for all time to come?
[6]Won't you give us new life again?
Then we'll be joyful because of what you have done.
[7]LORD, show us your faithful love.
Save us.

[8]I will listen to what God the LORD will say.
He promises peace to his faithful people.
But they must not return to their foolish ways.
[9]I know he's ready to save those who have respect for him.
Then his glory can be seen in our land.

[10]God's truth and faithful love join together.
His peace and holiness kiss each other.
[11]His truth springs up from the earth.
His holiness looks down from heaven.
[12]The LORD will certainly give what is good.
Our land will produce its crops.
[13]God's holiness leads the way in front of him.
It prepares the way for his coming.

Psalm 86

A prayer of David.

[1]LORD, hear me and answer me.
I am poor and needy.
[2]Keep my life safe. I am faithful to you.
You are my God. Save me.
I trust in you.
[3]Lord, show me your favor.
I call out to you all day long.
[4]Bring joy to me.
Lord, I worship you.

[5]Lord, you are good. You are forgiving.
You are full of love for all who call out to you.
[6]LORD, hear my prayer.
Listen to my cry for your favor.
[7]When I'm in trouble, I will call out to you.
And you will answer me.

[8]Lord, there's no one like you among the gods.
No one can do what you do.
[9]Lord, all of the nations you have made
will come and worship you.
They will bring glory to you.
[10]You are great. You do wonderful things.
You alone are God.

[11]LORD, teach me how you want me to live.
Then I will follow your truth.
Give me a heart that doesn't want anything
more than to worship you.
[12]Lord my God, I will praise you with all my heart.
I will bring glory to you forever.
[13]Great is your love for me.
You have kept me from going down into the grave.

[14]God, proud people are attacking me.
A gang of mean people is trying to kill me.
They don’t care about you.
[15]But Lord, you are a God who is tender and kind.
You are gracious.
You are slow to get angry.
You are faithful and full of love.
[16]Turn to me and show me your favor.
Give me strength and save me.
[17]Prove your goodness to me.
Then my enemies will see it and be put to shame.
LORD, you have helped me and given me comfort.

Psalm 87

A psalm of the Sons of Korah. A song.

[1]The LORD has built his city
on the holy mountain.
[2]He loves the city of Zion
more than all of the other places
where the people of Jacob live.
[3]City of God,
the LORD says glorious things about you. *Selah*
[4]He says, “I will include Egypt and Babylon
in a list of those who recognize me as king.
I will also include Philistia and Tyre, along with Cush.
I will say about them, ‘They were born in Zion.’ ”

[5]Certainly it will be said about Zion,
“This nation and that nation were born in her.
The Most High God himself will make her secure.”
[6]Here is what the LORD will write in his list of the nations.
“Each of them was born in Zion.” *Selah*
[7]As they make music they will sing,
“Zion, all of our blessings come from you.”

Psalm 88

For the director of music. For mahalath leannoth. A song. A psalm of the Sons of Korah. A maskil of Heman the Ezrahite.

1 LORD, you are the God who saves me.
Day and night I cry out to you.
2 Please hear my prayer.
Pay attention to my cry for help.

3 I have so many troubles
I'm about to die.
4 People think my life is over.
I'm like someone who doesn't have any strength.
5 People treat me as if I were dead.
I'm like those who have been killed and are now in the grave.
You don't even remember them anymore.
They are cut off from your care.

6 It seems as if you have put me deep down in the grave,
that deep and dark place.
7 Your burning anger lies heavy on me.
All the waves of your anger have crashed over me. *Selah*
8 You have taken my closest friends away from me.
You have made me sickening to them.
I feel trapped. I can't escape.
9 I'm crying so much I can't see very well.

LORD, I call out to you every day.
I lift up my hands to you in prayer.
10 Do you work miracles for those who are dead?
Do dead people rise up and praise you? *Selah*
11 Do those who are dead speak about your love?
Do those who are in the grave tell how faithful you are?
12 Are your miracles known in that dark place?
Are your holy acts known in that land where the dead are forgotten?

13 LORD, I cry out to you for help.

In the morning I pray to you.
14 LORD, why do you say no to me?
Why do you turn your face away from me?

15 I've been in pain ever since I was young.
I've been close to death.
You have made me suffer terrible things.
I have lost all hope.
16 Your burning anger has swept over me.
Your terrors have destroyed me.
17 All day long they surround me like a flood.
They have closed in all around me.
18 You have taken my companions and loved ones away from me.
The darkness is my closest friend.

Psalm 89

A maskil of Ethan the Ezrahite.

[1]LORD, I will sing about your great love forever.
For all time to come, I will tell how faithful you are.
[2]I will tell everyone that your love stands firm forever.
I will tell them that you are always faithful, even in heaven itself.

[3]You said, “Here is the covenant I have made with my chosen one.
Here is the promise I have made to my servant David.
[4]‘I will make your family line continue forever.
I will make your kingdom secure for all time to come.’ ” *Selah*

[5]LORD, the heavens praise you for your miracles.
When your holy angels gather together,
they praise you for how faithful you are.
[6]Who in the skies above can compare with the LORD?
Who among the angels is like the LORD?
[7]God is highly respected among his holy angels.
He’s more wonderful than all those who are around him.
[8]LORD God who rules over all, who is like you?
LORD, you are mighty. You are faithful in everything you do.

[9]You rule over the stormy sea.
When its waves rise up, you calm them down.
[10]You crushed Egypt and killed her people.
With your powerful arm you scattered your enemies.
[11]The heavens belong to you. The earth is yours also.
You made the world and everything that is in it.
[12]You created everything from north to south.
Mount Tabor and Mount Hermon sing to you with joy.
[13]Your arm is powerful.
Your hand is strong.
Your right hand is mighty.

[14]Your kingdom is built on what is right and fair.
Your truth and faithful love lead the way in front of you.

15 Blessed are those who have learned to shout praise to you.
LORD, they live in the light of your favor.
16 All day long they are full of joy because of who you are.
They praise you because you do what is right.
17 You are their glory. You give them strength.
You favor them by honoring our king.
18 Our king is like a shield that keeps us safe.
He belongs to the LORD.
He belongs to the Holy One of Israel.

19 You once spoke to your faithful people in a vision.
You said, “I have given strength to a soldier.
I have raised up a young man from among the people.
20 I have found my servant David.
I have poured my sacred oil on his head.
21 My powerful hand will keep him going.
My mighty arm will give him strength.
22 No enemies will require him to bring gifts to them.
No evil person will beat him down.
23 I will crush the king’s enemies.
I will completely destroy them.
24 I will love him and be faithful to him.
Because of me his power will increase.
25 I will give him a great kingdom.
It will reach from the Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates River.
26 He will call out to me, ‘You are my Father.
You are my God. You are my Rock and Savior.’
27 I will also make him my oldest son.
Among all the kings of the earth, he will be the most important one.
28 I will continue to love him forever.
I will never break my covenant with him.
29 I will make his family line continue forever.
His kingdom will last as long as the heavens.

30 “What if his sons turn away from my laws
and do not follow them?
31 What if they disobey my orders
and fail to keep my commands?
32 Then I will punish them for their sins.
I will strike them with the rod.

I will whip them for their evil acts.
33 But I will not stop loving David.
I will always be faithful to him.
34 I will not break my covenant.
I will not go back on my word.
35 Once and for all, I have made a promise with an oath.
It is based on my holiness.
And I will not lie to David.
36 His family line will continue forever.
His kingdom will last as long as the sun.
37 It will last forever like the moon,
that faithful witness in the sky.” *Selah*

38 But you have turned your back on your anointed king.
You have been very angry with him.
39 You have broken the covenant you made with him.
You have thrown your servant’s crown into the dirt.
40 You have broken through the walls around his city.
You have completely destroyed his secure places.
41 All those who pass by have carried off what belonged to him.
His neighbors make fun of him.
42 You have made his enemies strong.
You have made all of them happy.
43 You have made his sword useless.
You have not helped him in battle.
44 You have put an end to his glory.
You have knocked his throne to the ground.
45 You have cut short the days of his life.
You have covered him with shame. *Selah*

46 LORD, how long will you hide yourself? Will it be forever?
How long will your anger burn like fire?
47 Remember how short my life is.
You have created all people for such a useless purpose!
48 What man can live and not die?
Who can escape the power of the grave? *Selah*
49 Lord, where is the great love you used to have?
You faithfully promised it to David.
50 Lord, remember how my enemies have made fun of me.
I’ve had to put up with mean words from all of the nations.

[51]LORD, your enemies have said mean things.
They have laughed at everything your anointed king has done.

[52]Give praise to the LORD forever!
Amen and Amen.

BOOK IV
Psalms 90–106

Psalm 90

A prayer of Moses, the man of God.

[1]Lord, from the very beginning
you have been like a home to us.
[2]Before you created the world and the mountains were made,
from the beginning to the end you are God.

[3]You turn human beings back to dust.
You say to them, “Return to dust.”
[4]To you a thousand years
are like a day that has just gone by.
They are like a few hours of the night.
[5]You sweep people away, and they die.
They are like new grass that grows in the morning.
[6]In the morning it springs up new,
but by evening it’s all dried up.

[7]Your anger destroys us.
Your burning anger terrifies us.
[8]You have put our sins right in front of you.
You have placed our secret sins where you can see them clearly.
[9]You have been angry with us all of our days.
We groan as we come to the end of our lives.
[10]We live to be about 70.
Or we may live to be 80, if we stay healthy.
But all that time is filled with trouble and sorrow.
The years quickly pass, and we are gone.

[11]Who knows how powerful your anger is?
It’s as great as the respect we should have for you.
[12]Teach us to realize how short our lives are.
Then our hearts will become wise.

[13]LORD, please stop punishing us!
How long will you keep it up?
Be kind to us.

[14]Satisfy us with your faithful love every morning.
Then we can sing with joy and be glad all of our days.
[15]Make us glad for as many days as you have made us suffer.
Give us joy for as many years as we've had trouble.
[16]Show us your mighty acts.
Let our children see your glorious power.

[17]May the Lord our God show us his favor.
Lord, make what we do succeed.
Please make what we do succeed.

Psalm 91

[1]The person who rests in the shadow of the Most High God
will be kept safe by the Mighty One.
[2]I will say about the LORD,
"He is my place of safety.
He is like a fort to me.
He is my God. I trust in him."

[3]He will certainly save you from hidden traps
and from deadly sickness.
[4]He will cover you with his wings.
Under the feathers of his wings you will find safety.
He is faithful. He will keep you safe like a shield or a tower.
[5]You won't have to be afraid of the terrors that come during the night.
You won't have to fear the arrows that come at you during the day.
[6]You won't have to be afraid of the sickness that attacks in the darkness.
You won't have to fear the plague that destroys at noon.
[7]A thousand may fall dead at your side.
Ten thousand may fall near your right hand.
But no harm will come to you.
[8]You will see with your own eyes
how God punishes sinful people.

[9]The LORD is the one who keeps you safe.
So let the Most High God be like a home to you.
[10]Then no harm will come to you.
No terrible plague will come near your tent.
[11]The LORD will command his angels
to take good care of you.
[12]They will lift you up in their hands.
Then you won't trip over a stone.
[13]You will walk all over lions and cobras.
You will crush mighty lions and poisonous snakes.

[14]The LORD says, "I will save the one who loves me.
I will keep him safe, because he trusts in me.
[15]He will call out to me, and I will answer him.

I will be with him in times of trouble.
I will save him and honor him.
16 I will give him a long and full life.
I will save him.”

Psalm 92

A psalm. A song for the Sabbath day.

[1]LORD, it is good to praise you.
Most High God, it is good to make music to honor you.
[2]It is good to sing every morning about your love.
It is good to sing every night about how faithful you are.
[3]I sing about it to the music of the lyre that has ten strings.
I sing about it to the music of the harp.

[4]LORD, you make me glad by what you have done.
I sing with joy about the works of your hands.
[5]LORD, how great are the things you do!
How wise your thoughts are!
[6]Here is something a man who isn't wise doesn't know.
Here is what a foolish person doesn't understand.
[7]Those who are evil spring up like grass.
Those who do wrong succeed.
But they will be destroyed forever.

[8]But LORD, you are honored forever.

[9]LORD, your enemies will certainly die.
All those who do evil will be scattered.
[10]You have made me as strong as a wild ox.
You have poured the finest olive oil on me.
[11]I've seen my evil enemies destroyed.
I've heard that they have lost the battle.

[12]Those who do what is right will grow like a palm tree.
They will grow strong like a cedar tree in Lebanon.
[13]Their roots will be firm in the house of the LORD.
They will grow strong and healthy in the courtyards of our God.
[14]When they get old, they will still bear fruit.
Like young trees they will stay fresh and strong.
[15]They will say to everyone, "The LORD is honest.
He is my Rock. There is no evil in him."

Psalm 93

[1]The LORD rules.
He puts on majesty as if it were clothes.
The LORD puts on majesty and strength.
The world is firmly set in place.
It can't be moved.
[2]LORD, you began to rule a long time ago.
You have always existed.

[3]LORD, the seas have lifted up their voice.
They have lifted up their pounding waves.
[4]But LORD, you are more powerful than the roar of the ocean.
You are stronger than the waves of the sea.
LORD, you are powerful in heaven.

[5]Your laws do not change.
LORD, your temple will be holy
for all time to come.

Psalm 94

[1]LORD, you are the God who punishes.
Since you are the one who punishes, come and show your anger.
[2]Judge of the earth, rise up.
Pay back proud people for what they have done.
[3]LORD, how long will those who are evil be glad?
How long will they be full of joy?

[4]Proud words pour out of their mouths.
All those who do evil are always bragging.
[5]LORD, they crush your people.
They beat down those who belong to you.
[6]They kill outsiders. They kill widows.
They murder children whose fathers have died.
[7]They say, “The LORD doesn’t see what’s happening.
The God of Jacob doesn’t pay any attention to it.”

[8]You who aren’t wise, pay attention.
You foolish people, when will you become wise?
[9]Does he who made the ear not hear?
Does he who formed the eye not see?
[10]Does he who corrects nations not punish?
Does he who teaches human beings not know anything?
[11]The LORD knows what people think.
He knows that their thoughts don’t amount to anything.

[12]LORD, blessed is the man you correct.
Blessed is the person you teach from your law.
[13]You give him rest from times of trouble,
until a pit is dug to trap sinners.
[14]The LORD won’t say no to his people.
He will never desert those who belong to him.
[15]He will again judge people in keeping with what is right.
All those who have honest hearts will follow the right way.

[16]Who will rise up for me against sinful people?
Who will stand up for me against those who do evil?

[17]Suppose the LORD had not helped me.
Then I would soon have been lying quietly in the grave.
[18]I said, “My foot is slipping.”
But LORD, your love kept me from falling.
[19]I was very worried.
But your comfort brought joy to my heart.

[20]Can you have anything to do with rulers who aren’t fair?
Can those who make laws that cause suffering be friends of yours?
[21]They join together against those who do what is right.
They sentence to death those who aren’t guilty of doing anything wrong.
[22]But the LORD has become like a fort to me.
My God is my rock. I go to him for safety.
[23]He will pay them back for their sins.
He will destroy them for their evil acts.
The LORD our God will destroy them.

Psalm 95

[1]Come, let us sing with joy to the LORD.
Let us give a loud shout to the Rock who saves us.
[2]Let us come to him and give him thanks.
Let us praise him with music and song.

[3]The LORD is the great God.
He is the greatest King.
He rules over all of the gods.
[4]He owns the deepest parts of the earth.
The mountain peaks belong to him.
[5]The ocean is his, because he made it.
He formed the dry land with his hands.

[6]Come, let us bow down and worship him.
Let us fall on our knees in front of the LORD our Maker.
[7]He is our God.
We are the sheep belonging to his flock.
We are the people he takes good care of.

Listen to his voice today.
[8]If you hear it, don't be stubborn as you were at Meribah.
Don't be stubborn as you were that day at Massah in the desert.
[9]There your people of long ago really put me to the test.
They did it even though they had seen what I had done for them.
[10]For 40 years I was angry with them.
I said, "Their hearts are always going down the wrong path.
They do not know how I want them to live."
[11]So when I was angry, I took an oath.
I said, "They will never enjoy the rest I planned for them."

Psalm 96

[1]Sing a new song to the LORD.
All you people of the earth, sing to the LORD.
[2]Sing to the LORD. Praise him.
Day after day tell about how he saves us.
[3]Tell the nations about his glory.
Tell all people about the wonderful things he has done.

[4]The LORD is great. He is really worthy of praise.
People should have respect for him as the greatest God of all.
[5]All of the gods of the nations are like their statues.
They can't do anything.
But the LORD made the heavens.
[6]Glory and majesty are all around him.
Strength and glory can be seen in his temple.

[7]Praise the LORD, all you nations.
Praise the LORD for his glory and strength.
[8]Praise the LORD for the glory that belongs to him.
Bring an offering and come into the courtyards of his temple.
[9]Worship the LORD because of his beauty and holiness.
All you people of the earth, tremble when you are with him.

[10]Say to the nations, "The LORD rules."
The world is firmly set in place. It can't be moved.
The LORD will judge the people of the world fairly.
[11]Let the heavens be full of joy. Let the earth be glad.
Let the ocean and everything in it roar.
[12]Let the fields and everything in them be glad.
Then all of the trees in the forest will sing with joy.
[13]They will sing to the LORD,
because he is coming to judge the earth.
He will judge the people of the world
in keeping with what is right and true.

Psalm 97

[1]The LORD rules. Let the earth be glad.
Let countries that are far away be full of joy.

[2]Clouds and thick darkness surround him.
His rule is built on what is right and fair.
[3]The LORD sends fire ahead of him.
It burns up his enemies all around him.
[4]His lightning lights up the world.
The earth sees it and trembles.
[5]The mountains melt like wax when the LORD is near.
He is the Lord of the whole earth.
[6]The heavens announce that what he does is right.
All people everywhere see his glory.

[7]All who worship statues of gods or brag about them are put to shame.
All you gods, worship the LORD!

[8]Zion hears about it and is filled with joy.
LORD, the villages of Judah are glad
because of how you judge.
[9]LORD, you are the Most High God.
You rule over the whole earth.
You are honored much more than all gods.

[10]Let those who love the LORD hate evil.
He guards the lives of those who are faithful to him.
He saves them from the power of sinful people.
[11]The light of his favor shines on those who do what is right.
Joy comes to those whose hearts are honest.
[12]You who are godly, be glad because of what the LORD has done.
Praise him, because his name is holy.

Psalm 98

A psalm.

[1]Sing a new song to the LORD.
He has done wonderful things.
By the power of his right hand and his holy arm
he has saved his people.
[2]The LORD has made known his power to save.
He has shown the nations that he does what is right.
[3]He has shown his faithful love
to the people of Israel.
People from one end of the earth to the other
have seen that our God has saved us.

[4]Shout to the LORD with joy, everyone on earth.
Burst into joyful songs and make music.
[5]Make music to the LORD with the harp.
Sing and make music with the harp.
[6]Blow the trumpets. Give a blast on the ram's horn.
Shout to the LORD with joy. He is the King.

[7]Let the ocean and everything in it roar.
Let the world and all who live in it shout.
[8]Let the rivers clap their hands.
Let the mountains sing together with joy.
[9]Let them sing to the LORD,
because he is coming to judge the earth.
He will judge the nations of the world
in keeping with what is right and fair.

Psalm 99

[1]The LORD rules.
Let the nations tremble.
He sits on his throne between the cherubim.
Let the earth shake.
[2]Great is the LORD in Zion.
He is honored over all of the nations.
[3]Let them praise his great and wonderful name.
He is holy.

[4]The King is mighty. He loves what is fair.
He has set up the rules for fairness.
He has done what is right and fair
for the people of Jacob.
[5]Honor the LORD our God.
Worship at his feet.
He is holy.

[6]Moses and Aaron were two of his priests.
Samuel was one of those who worshiped him.
They called out to the LORD.
And he answered them.
[7]He spoke to them from the pillar of cloud.
They obeyed his laws and the orders he gave them.

[8]LORD our God, you answered them.
You showed Israel that you are a God who forgives.
But when they did wrong, you punished them.
[9]Honor the LORD our God.
Worship at his holy mountain.
The LORD our God is holy.

Psalm 100

A psalm for giving thanks.

[1]Shout to the LORD with joy, everyone on earth.
[2]Worship the LORD with gladness.
Come to him with songs of joy.
[3]I want you to realize that the LORD is God.
He made us, and we belong to him.
We are his people.
We are the sheep belonging to his flock.

[4]Give thanks as you enter the gates of his temple.
Give praise as you enter its courtyards.
Give thanks to him and praise his name.
[5]The LORD is good. His faithful love continues forever.
It will last for all time to come.

Psalm 101

A psalm of David.

[1]I will sing about your love and fairness.
LORD, I will sing praise to you.
[2]I will be careful to lead a life
that is without blame.
When will you come and help me?

I will lead a life
that is without blame in my house.
[3]I won't look at anything that is evil.

I hate the acts of people who aren't faithful to you.
I don't even want people like that around me.
[4]I will stay away from those whose hearts are twisted.
I don't want to have anything to do with evil.

[5]I will get rid of anyone
who tells lies about his neighbor in secret.
I won't put up with anyone
whose eyes and heart are proud.

[6]I will look with favor on the faithful people in the land.
They will live with me.
Those whose lives are without blame will serve me.

[7]No one who lies and cheats
will live in my house.
No one who tells lies
will serve me.

[8]Every morning I will get rid of
all the sinful people in the land.
I will remove from the city of the LORD
everyone who does what is evil.

Psalm 102

A prayer of a suffering man when he is weak and pours out his problems to the LORD.

[1]LORD, hear my prayer.
Listen to my cry for help.
[2]Don't turn your face away from me
when I'm in trouble.
Pay attention to me.
When I call out for help, answer me quickly.

[3]My days are disappearing like smoke.
My body burns like glowing coals.
[4]My strength has dried up like grass.
I even forget to eat my food.
[5]I groan out loud because of my suffering.
I'm nothing but skin and bones.
[6]I'm like a desert owl.
I'm like an owl among destroyed buildings.
[7]I can't sleep. I've become
like a bird alone on a roof.
[8]All day long my enemies laugh at me.
Those who make fun of me use my name as a curse.
[9]I eat ashes as my food.
My tears fall into what I'm drinking.
[10]You were very angry with me.
So you picked me up and threw me away.
[11]The days of my life are like an evening shadow.
I dry up like grass.

[12]But LORD, you are seated on your throne forever.
Your fame will continue for all time to come.
[13]You will rise up and show deep concern for Zion.
The time has come for you to show favor to it.
[14]The stones of your destroyed city are priceless to us.
Even its dust brings deep concern to us.
[15]The nations will worship the LORD.

All of the kings on earth will respect his glorious power.
16 The LORD will build Zion again.
He will appear in his glory.
17 He will answer the prayer of those who don't have anything.
He won't say no to their cry for help.

18 Let this be written down for those born after us.
Then people who are not yet born can praise the LORD.
19 Here is what should be written.
"The LORD looked down from his temple in heaven.
From heaven he viewed the earth.
20 He heard the groans of the prisoners.
He set free those who were sentenced to death."
21 So people will talk about him in Zion.
They will praise him in Jerusalem.
22 Nations and kingdoms
will gather there to worship the LORD.

23 When I was still young, he took away my strength.
He wasn't going to let me live much longer.
24 So I said, "My God, don't let me die in the middle of my life.
You will live for all time to come.
25 In the beginning you made the earth secure.
You placed it on its foundations.
Your hands created the heavens.
26 They will pass away. But you will remain.
They will all wear out like a piece of clothing.
You will make them like clothes
that are taken off and thrown away.
27 But you remain the same.
Your years will never end.
28 Our children will live with you.
Their sons and daughters will be safe in your care."

Psalm 103

A psalm of David.

[1]I will praise the LORD.
Deep down inside me, I will praise him.
I will praise him, because his name is holy.
[2]I will praise the LORD.
I won’t forget anything he does for me.
[3]He forgives all my sins.
He heals all my sicknesses.
[4]He saves my life from going down into the grave.
His faithful and tender love makes me feel like a king.
[5]He satisfies me with the good things I long for.
Then I feel young and strong again, just like an eagle.

[6]The LORD does what is right and fair
for all who are beaten down.

[7]He told Moses all about his plans.
He let the people of Israel see his mighty acts.
[8]The LORD is tender and kind. He is gracious.
He is slow to get angry. He is full of love.
[9]He won’t keep bringing charges against us.
He won’t stay angry with us forever.
[10]He doesn’t punish us for our sins as much as we should be punished.
He doesn’t pay us back in keeping with the evil things we’ve done.
[11]His love for those who have respect for him
is as high as the heavens are above the earth.
[12]He has removed our lawless acts from us
as far as the east is from the west.
[13]A father is tender and kind to his children.
In the same way, the LORD is tender and kind
to those who have respect for him.
[14]He knows what we are made of.
He remembers that we are dust.
[15]People’s lives are like grass.
People grow like the flowers in the field.

16 When the wind blows on them, they are gone.
No one can tell that they had ever been there.
17 But the LORD's love
for those who have respect for him
lasts for ever and ever.
Their children's children will know
that he always does what is right.
18 He always loves those who keep his covenant.
He always does what is right for those who remember to obey his commands.

19 The LORD has set up his throne in heaven.
His kingdom rules over all.

20 Praise the LORD, you angels of his.
Praise him, you mighty ones
who carry out his orders and obey his word.
21 Praise the LORD, all you angels in heaven.
Praise him, all you who serve him and do what he wants.
22 Let everything the LORD has made praise him
everywhere in his kingdom.

I will praise the LORD.

Psalm 104

[1]I will praise the LORD.

LORD my God, you are very great.
You are dressed in glory and majesty.
[2]You wrap yourself in light as if it were a robe.
You spread the heavens out like a tent.
[3]You build your palace high in the heavens.
You make the clouds serve as your chariot.
You ride on the wings of the wind.
[4]You make the winds serve as your messengers.
You make flashes of lightning serve you.

[5]You placed the earth on its foundations.
It can never be moved.
[6]You covered it with the oceans like a blanket.
The waters covered the mountains.
[7]But you commanded the waters, and they ran away.
At the sound of your thunder they rushed off.
[8]They flowed down the mountains.
They went into the valleys.
They went to the place you appointed for them.
[9]You drew a line they can't cross.
They will never cover the earth again.

[10]You make springs pour water into the valleys.
It flows between the mountains.
[11]The springs give water to all of the wild animals.
The wild donkeys satisfy their thirst.
[12]The birds of the air build nests by the waters.
They sing among the branches.
[13]You water the mountains from your palace high in the clouds.
The earth is filled with the things you have made.
[14]You make grass grow for the cattle
and plants for people to take care of.
That's how they get food from the earth.
[15]There is wine to make people glad.

There is olive oil to make them healthy.
And there is bread to make them strong.
16 The cedar trees of Lebanon belong to the LORD.
You planted them and gave them plenty of water.
17 There the birds make their nests.
The stork has its home in the pine trees.
18 The high mountains belong to the wild goats.
The cliffs are a safe place for the rock badgers.

19 The moon serves to mark off the seasons.
The sun knows when to go down.
20 You bring darkness, and it becomes night.
Then all the animals of the forest prowl around.
21 The lions roar while they hunt.
All of their food comes from God.
22 The sun rises, and they slip away.
They return to their dens and lie down.
23 Then a man gets up and goes to work.
He keeps working until evening.

24 LORD, you have made so many things!
How wise you were when you made all of them!
The earth is full of your creatures.
25 Look at the ocean, so big and wide!
It is filled with more creatures than people can count.
It is filled with living things, from the largest to the smallest.
26 Ships sail back and forth on it.
The leviathan, the sea monster you made, plays in it.

27 All of those creatures depend on you
to give them their food when they need it.
28 When you give it to them,
they eat it.
When you open your hand,
they are satisfied with good things.
29 When you turn your face away from them,
they are terrified.
When you take away their breath,
they die and turn back into dust.
30 When you send your Spirit,

you create them.
You give new life to the earth.

31 May the glory of the LORD continue forever.
May the LORD be happy with what he has made.
32 When he looks at the earth, it trembles.
When he touches the mountains, they pour out smoke.

33 I will sing to the LORD all my life.
I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.
34 May these thoughts of mine please him.
I find my joy in the LORD.
35 But may those who sin be gone from the earth.
May evil people disappear.

I will praise the LORD.

Praise the LORD.

Psalm 105

[1]Give thanks to the LORD. Worship him.
Tell the nations what he has done.
[2]Sing to him. Sing praise to him.
Tell about all of the wonderful things he has done.
[3]Praise him, because his name is holy.
Let the hearts of those who trust in the LORD be glad.
[4]Look to the LORD and to his strength.
Always look to him.

[5]Remember the wonderful things he has done.
Remember his miracles and how he judged our enemies.
[6]Remember what he has done, you children of his servant Abraham.
Remember it, you people of Jacob, God's chosen ones.
[7]He is the LORD our God.
He judges the whole earth.

[8]He will keep his covenant forever.
He will keep his promise for all time to come.
[9]He will keep the covenant he made with Abraham.
He will keep the oath he took when he made his promise to Isaac.
[10]He made it stand as a law for Jacob.
He made it stand as a covenant for Israel. It will last forever.
[11]He said, "I will give you the land of Canaan.
It will belong to you."

[12]At first there weren't very many of God's people.
There were only a few. And they were strangers in the land.
[13]They wandered from nation to nation.
They wandered from one kingdom to another.
[14]But God didn't allow anyone to beat them down.
To keep them safe, he gave a command to kings.
[15]He said to them, "Do not touch my anointed ones.
Do not harm my prophets."

[16]He made the people in the land go hungry.
He destroyed all their food supplies.

[17]He sent a man ahead of them into Egypt.
That man was Joseph. He had been sold as a slave.
[18]The Egyptians put his feet in chains.
They put an iron collar around his neck.
[19]He was in prison until what he said would happen came true.
The word of the LORD proved that he was right.
[20]The king of Egypt sent for Joseph and let him out of prison.
The ruler of many nations set him free.
[21]He put Joseph in charge of his palace.
He made him ruler over everything he owned.
[22]Joseph was in charge of teaching the princes.
He taught the elders how to think and live wisely.

[23]Then the rest of Jacob's family went to Egypt.
The people of Israel lived as outsiders in the land of Ham.
[24]The LORD gave his people so many children
that there were too many of them for their enemies.
[25]He made the Egyptians hate his people.
The Egyptians made evil plans against them.
[26]The LORD sent his servant Moses to the king of Egypt.
He sent Aaron, his chosen one, along with him.
[27]The LORD gave them the power to do miraculous signs among the Egyptians.
They did his wonders in the land of Ham.
[28]He sent darkness over the land.
He did it because the Egyptians had refused to obey his words.
[29]He turned their rivers and streams into blood.
He caused the fish in them to die.
[30]Their land was covered with frogs.
Frogs even went into the bedrooms of the rulers.
[31]The LORD spoke, and large numbers of flies came.
Gnats filled the whole country.
[32]He turned their rain into hail.
Lightning flashed all through their land.
[33]He destroyed their vines and fig trees.
He broke down the trees in Egypt.
[34]He spoke, and the locusts came.
There were so many of them they couldn't be counted.
[35]They ate up every green thing in the land.

They ate up what the land produced.
36 Then he killed the oldest son of every family in Egypt.
He struck down the oldest of all of their sons.

37 He brought the people of Israel out of Egypt.
The Egyptians loaded them down with silver and gold.
From among the tribes of Israel no one got tired or fell down.
38 The Egyptians were glad when the people of Israel left.
They were terrified because of Israel.
39 The LORD spread out a cloud to cover his people.
He gave them a fire to light up the night.
40 They asked for meat, and he brought them quail.
He satisfied them with manna, the bread of heaven.
41 He broke open a rock, and streams of water poured out.
They flowed like a river in the desert.

42 He remembered the holy promise
he had made to his servant Abraham.
43 His chosen people shouted for joy
as he brought them out of Egypt.
44 He gave them the lands of other nations.
He let them take over what others had worked for.
45 He did it so they might obey his rules
and follow his laws.

Praise the LORD.

Psalm 106

[1]Praise the LORD.

Give thanks to the LORD, because he is good.
His faithful love continues forever.
[2]Who can speak enough about the mighty acts of the LORD?
Who can praise him as much as he should be praised?
[3]Blessed are those who always do what is fair.
Blessed are those who keep doing what is right.
[4]LORD, remember me when you show favor to your people.
Help me when you save them.
[5]Then I will enjoy the good things you give your chosen ones.
I will be joyful together with your people.
I will join them when they praise you.

[6]We have sinned, just as our people of long ago did.
We too have done what is evil and wrong.
[7]When our people were in Egypt,
they forgot about the LORD's miracles.
They didn't remember his many kind acts.
At the Red Sea they refused to obey him.
[8]But he saved them for the honor of his name.
He did it to make his mighty power known.
[9]He ordered the Red Sea to dry up, and it did.
He led his people through it as if it were a desert.
[10]He saved them from the power of their enemies.
He set them free from their control.
[11]The waters covered their enemies.
Not one of them escaped alive.
[12]Then his people believed his promises
and sang praise to him.

[13]But they soon forgot what he had done.
They didn't wait for his advice.
[14]In the desert they longed for food.
In that dry and empty land they put God to the test.
[15]So he gave them what they asked for.

But he also sent a sickness that killed many of them.

16 In their camp some of them became jealous of Moses.
They were also jealous of Aaron. He had been set apart to serve the LORD.
17 The ground opened up and swallowed Dathan.
It buried Abiram and his followers.
18 Fire blazed among all of them.
Flames destroyed those evil people.

19 At Mount Horeb they made a metal statue of a bull calf.
They worshiped that statue of a god.
20 They traded their glorious God
for a statue of a bull that eats grass.
21 They forgot the God who saved them.
They forgot the One who had done great things in Egypt.
22 They forgot the miracles he did in the land of Ham.
They forgot the wonderful things he did by the Red Sea.
23 So he said he would destroy them.
But Moses, his chosen one,
stood up for them.
He kept God's anger from destroying them.

24 Later on, they refused to enter the pleasant land of Canaan.
They didn't believe God's promise.
25 In their tents they told the LORD how unhappy they were.
They didn't obey him.
26 So he lifted up his hand and promised with an oath
that he would make them die in the desert.
27 He promised he would scatter their children's children among the nations.
He would make them die in other lands.

28 They joined in worshiping the Baal that was worshiped at Peor.
They ate food that had been offered to gods that aren't even alive.
29 Their evil ways made the LORD angry.
So a plague broke out among them.
30 But Phinehas stood up and took action.
Then the plague stopped.
31 What Phinehas did made him right with the LORD.
It will be remembered for all time to come.

[32]By the waters of Meribah the LORD's people made him angry.
Moses got in trouble because of them.
[33]They refused to obey the Spirit of God.
So Moses spoke without thinking.

[34]They didn't destroy the nations in Canaan
as the LORD had commanded them.
[35]Instead, they mixed with those nations
and adopted their ways.
[36]They worshiped statues of their gods.
That became a trap for them.
[37]They sacrificed their sons and daughters
as offerings to demons.
[38]They killed those who weren't guilty of doing anything wrong.
They killed their own sons and daughters.
They sacrificed them as offerings to statues of the gods of Canaan.
The land became "unclean" because of the blood of their children.
[39]The people polluted themselves by what they had done.
They weren't faithful to the LORD.

[40]So the LORD became angry with his people.
He turned away from his own children.
[41]He handed them over to the nations.
Their enemies ruled over them.
[42]They beat them down
and kept them under their power.
[43]Many times the LORD saved them.
But they refused to obey him.
So he destroyed them because of their sins.

[44]But he heard them when they cried out.
He paid special attention to their suffering.
[45]Because they were his people, he remembered his covenant.
Because of his great love, he felt sorry for them.
[46]He made all those who held them as prisoners
show concern for them.

[47]LORD our God, save us.
Bring us back from among the nations.

Then we will give thanks to you, because your name is holy.
We will celebrate by praising you.

[48]Give praise to the LORD, the God of Israel,
for ever and ever.
Let all of the people say, “Amen!”

Praise the LORD.

BOOK V
Psalms 107–150

Psalm 107

[1]Give thanks to the LORD, because he is good.
His faithful love continues forever.
[2]That's what those who have been set free by the LORD should say.
He set them free from the power of the enemy.
[3]He brought them back from other lands.
He brought them back from east and west, from north and south.

[4]Some of them wandered in deserts that were dry and empty.
They couldn't find their way to a city where they could settle down.
[5]They were hungry and thirsty.
Their lives were slipping away.
[6]Then they cried out to the LORD because of their problems.
And he saved them from their troubles.
[7]He led them straight
to a city where they could settle down.
[8]Let them give thanks to the LORD for his faithful love.
Let them give thanks for the miracles he does for his people.
[9]He gives those who are thirsty all of the water they want.
He gives those who are hungry all of the good food they can eat.

[10]Others lived in the deepest darkness.
They suffered as prisoners in iron chains.
[11]That's because they hadn't obeyed the words of God.
They had refused to follow the advice of the Most High God.
[12]So he made them do work that was hard and bitter.
They tripped and fell, and there was no one to help them.
[13]Then they cried out to the LORD because of their problems.
And he saved them from their troubles.
[14]He brought them out of the deepest darkness.
He broke their chains off.
[15]Let them give thanks to the LORD for his faithful love.
Let them give thanks for the miracles he does for his people.
[16]He breaks down gates that are made of bronze.
He cuts through bars that are made of iron.

[17]Others were foolish. They suffered because of their sins.

They suffered because they wouldn't obey the LORD.
18 They refused to eat anything.
They came close to passing through the gates of death.
19 Then they cried out to the LORD because of their problems.
And he saved them from their troubles.
20 He gave his command and healed them.
He saved them from the grave.
21 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his faithful love.
Let them give thanks for the miracles he does for his people.
22 Let them sacrifice thank offerings.
Let them talk about what he has done as they sing with joy.

23 Others sailed out on the ocean in ships.
They traded goods on the mighty waters.
24 They saw the works of the LORD.
They saw the miracles he did on the ocean.
25 He spoke and stirred up a storm.
It lifted the waves high.
26 They rose up to the heavens. Then they went down deep into the ocean.
In that kind of danger the people's boldness melted away.
27 They were unsteady like those who get drunk.
They didn't know what to do.
28 Then they cried out to the LORD because of their problems.
And he brought them out of their troubles.
29 He made the storm as quiet as a whisper.
The waves of the ocean calmed down.
30 The people were glad when the ocean became calm.
Then he guided them to the harbor they were looking for.
31 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his faithful love.
Let them give thanks for the miracles he does for his people.
32 Let them honor him among his people who gather for worship.
Let them praise him in the meeting of the elders.

33 He turned rivers into a desert.
He turned flowing springs into thirsty ground.
34 He turned land that produced crops into a salty land where nothing could grow.
He did it because the people who lived there were evil.
35 He turned the desert into pools of water.
He turned the dry and cracked ground into flowing springs.

[36]He brought hungry people there to live.
They built a city where they could settle down.
[37]They planted fields and vineyards
that produced large crops.
[38]He blessed the people, and they greatly increased their numbers.
He kept their herds from getting smaller.

[39]Then the number of God’s people got smaller.
They were brought low by trouble, suffering and sorrow.
[40]The One who looks down on proud nobles
made them wander in a desert where no one lives.
[41]But he lifted needy people out of their suffering.
He made their families increase like flocks of sheep.
[42]Honest people see it and are filled with joy.
But no one who is evil has anything to say.

[43]Let those who are wise pay attention to these things.
Let them think about the LORD’s great love.

Psalm 108

A song. A psalm of David.

[1]God, my heart feels secure.
I will sing and make music to you with all my heart.
[2]Harp and lyre, wake up!
I want to sing and make music before the sun rises.
[3]LORD, I will praise you among the nations.
I will sing about you among the people of the earth.
[4]Great is your love. It is higher than the heavens.
Your truth reaches to the skies.
[5]God, may you be honored above the heavens.
Let your glory be over the whole earth.

[6]Save us. Help us with your powerful right hand,
so that those you love may be saved.
[7]God has spoken from his temple.
He has said, “I will win the battle.
Then I will divide up the land around Shechem.
I will divide up the Valley of Succoth.
[8]Gilead belongs to me. So does the land of Manasseh.
Ephraim is the strongest tribe. It is like a helmet for my head.
Judah is the royal tribe. It is like a ruler’s staff.
[9]Moab serves me like one who washes my feet.
I toss my sandal on Edom to show that I own it.
I shout to Philistia that I have won the battle.”

[10]Who will bring me to the city that has high walls around it?
Who will lead me to the land of Edom?
[11]God, isn’t it you, even though you have now turned away from us?
Isn’t it you, even though you don’t lead our armies into battle anymore?
[12]Help us against our enemies.
The help people give doesn’t amount to anything.
[13]With your help we will win the battle.
You will walk all over our enemies.

Psalm 109

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

[1]God, I praise you.
Don’t remain silent.
[2]Sinful people who lie and cheat have spoken against me.
They have used their tongues to tell lies about me.
[3]They gather all around me with their words of hatred.
They attack me without any reason.
[4]They bring charges against me,
even though I love them
and pray for them.
[5]They pay me back with evil for the good things I do.
They pay back my love with hatred.

[6]Appoint an evil person to take my enemies to court.
Let him stand at their right hand and bring charges against them.
[7]When they are tried, let them be found guilty.
May even their prayers judge them.
[8]May their days be few.
Let others take their places as leaders.
[9]May their children’s fathers die.
May their wives become widows.
[10]May their children be driven from their destroyed homes.
May they wander around like beggars.
[11]May everything those people own be taken away to pay for what they owe.
May strangers rob them of everything they’ve worked for.
[12]May no one be kind to them
or take pity on the children they leave behind.
[13]May their family line come to an end.
May their names be forgotten by those who live after them.
[14]May the LORD remember the evil things their fathers have done.
May he never erase the sins of their mothers.
[15]May the LORD never forget their sins.
Then he won’t let people remember those sinners anymore.

16 They never thought about doing anything kind.
Instead, they drove those who were poor and needy to their deaths.
They did the same thing to those whose hearts were broken.
17 They loved to call down curses on others.
May their curses come back on them.
They didn't find any pleasure in giving anyone their blessing.
May no blessing ever come to them.
18 They called down curses on others as easily as they put on clothes.
Cursing was as natural to them as getting a drink of water
or putting olive oil on their bodies.
19 May their curses cover them like coats.
May their curses be wrapped around them like a belt forever.
20 May that be the LORD's way of paying back
those who bring charges against me.
May it happen to those who say
evil things about me.

21 But LORD and King,
be true to your name. Treat me well.
Because your love is so good, save me.
22 I am poor and needy.
My heart is wounded deep down inside me.
23 I fade away like an evening shadow.
I'm like a locust that someone brushes off.
24 My knees are weak because I've gone without food.
My body is very thin.
25 Those who bring charges against me laugh at me.
When they see me, they shake their heads at me.

26 LORD my God, help me.
Save me because you love me.
27 LORD, let my enemies know that you yourself have saved me.
You have done it with your own hand.
28 They may call down a curse on me.
But you will give me your blessing.
When they attack me, they will be put to shame.
But I will be filled with joy.
29 Those who bring charges against me will be clothed with dishonor.
They will be wrapped in shame as if it were a coat.

30 With my mouth I will continually praise the LORD.
I will praise him when all of his people gather for worship.
31 He stands ready to help those who need it.
He saves them from those who have sentenced them to death.

Psalm 110

A psalm of David.

[1]The LORD says to my Lord,
“Sit at my right hand
until I put your enemies
under your control.”

[2]The LORD will make your royal authority spread out from Zion to other lands.
You will rule over your enemies who are all around you.
[3]Your troops will be willing to fight for you
on the day of battle.
You will be wrapped in holy majesty.
Just as the dew falls fresh early in the morning,
you will always be young and strong.

[4]The LORD has taken an oath and made a promise.
He will not change his mind.
He has said, “You are a priest forever,
just like Melchizedek.”

[5]The Lord is at your right hand.
He will crush kings on the day when he is angry.
[6]He will judge the nations. He will pile up dead bodies on the field of battle.
He will crush the rulers of the whole earth.
[7]He will drink from a brook along the way and receive new strength.
And so he will win the battle.

Psalm 111

[1]Praise the LORD.

I will praise the LORD with all my heart.
I will praise him where honest people gather for worship.

[2]The LORD has done great things.
All who take delight in what he has done will spend time thinking about it.
[3]What he does shows his glory and majesty.
He will always do what is right.
[4]The LORD causes his miracles to be remembered.
He is kind and tender.
[5]He provides food for those who have respect for him.
He remembers his covenant forever.
[6]He has shown his people what his power can do.
He has given them the lands of other nations.
[7]He is faithful and right in everything he does.
All his rules can be trusted.
[8]They will stand firm for ever and ever.
They were given by the LORD.
He is faithful and honest.
[9]He set his people free.
He made a covenant with them that will last forever.
His name is holy and wonderful.

[10]If you really want to become wise,
you must begin by having respect for the LORD.
All those who follow his rules have good understanding.
People should praise him forever.

Psalm 112

[1]Praise the LORD.

Blessed is the one who has respect for the LORD.
He finds great delight when he obeys God’s commands.

[2]His children will be powerful in the land.
Because he is honest, his children will be blessed.
[3]His family will have wealth and riches.
He will always be blessed for doing what is right.
[4]Even in the darkness light shines on honest people.
It shines on those who are kind and tender and godly.
[5]Good things will come to those who are willing to lend freely.
Good things will come to those who are fair in everything they do.
[6]They will always be secure.
Those who do what is right will be remembered forever.
[7]They aren’t afraid when bad news comes.
They stand firm because they trust in the LORD.
[8]Their hearts are secure. They aren’t afraid.
In the end they will see their enemies destroyed.
[9]They have spread their gifts around to poor people.
Their good works continue forever.
They will be powerful and honored.

[10]Evil people will see it and be upset.
They will grind their teeth and become weaker and weaker.
What evil people long to do can’t succeed.

Psalm 113

[1]Praise the LORD.

Praise him, you who serve the LORD.
Praise the name of the LORD.
[2]Let us praise the name of the LORD,
both now and forever.
[3]From the sunrise in the east to the sunset in the west,
may the name of the LORD be praised.

[4]The LORD is honored over all of the nations.
His glory reaches to the highest heavens.
[5]Who is like the LORD our God?
He sits on his throne in heaven.
[6]He bends down to look
at the heavens and the earth.

[7]He raises poor people up from the trash pile.
He lifts needy people out of the ashes.
[8]He lets them sit with princes.
He lets them sit with the princes of their own people.
[9]He gives children to the woman who doesn't have any children.
He makes her a happy mother in her own home.

Praise the LORD.

Psalm 114

[1]The people of Israel came out of Egypt.
The people of Jacob left a land where a different language was spoken.
[2]Then Judah became the holy place where God lived.
Israel became the land he ruled over.

[3]The Red Sea saw him and parted.
The Jordan River stopped flowing.
[4]The mountains leaped like rams.
The hills skipped like lambs.

[5]Red Sea, why did you part?
Jordan River, why did you stop flowing?
[6]Why did you mountains leap like rams?
Why did you hills skip like lambs?

[7]Earth, tremble with fear when the Lord comes.
Tremble when the God of Jacob is near.
[8]He turned the rock into a pool.
He turned the hard rock into springs of water.

Psalm 115

[1]LORD, may glory be given to you, not to us.
You are loving and faithful.

[2]Why do the nations ask,
"Where is their God?"
[3]Our God is in heaven.
He does anything he wants to do.
[4]But the statues of their gods are made out of silver and gold.
They are made by the hands of men.
[5]They have mouths, but they can't speak.
They have eyes, but they can't see.
[6]They have ears, but they can't hear.
They have noses, but they can't smell.
[7]They have hands, but they can't feel.
They have feet, but they can't walk.
They have throats, but they can't say anything.
[8]Those who make statues of gods will be like them.
So will all those who trust in them.

[9]People of Israel, trust in the LORD.
He helps you. He is like a shield that keeps you safe.
[10]Priests of Aaron, trust in the LORD.
He helps you. He is like a shield that keeps you safe.
[11]You who have respect for the LORD, trust in him.
He helps you. He is like a shield that keeps you safe.

[12]The LORD remembers us and will bless us.
He will bless the people of Israel.
He will bless the priests of Aaron.
[13]The LORD will bless those who have respect for him.
He will bless important and unimportant people alike.

[14]May the LORD give you many children.
May he give them to you and to your children after you.
[15]May the LORD bless you.
He is the Maker of heaven and earth.

16 The highest heavens belong to the LORD.
But he has given the earth to human beings.
17 Dead people don't praise the LORD.
Those who lie quietly in the grave don't praise him.
18 But we who are alive praise the LORD,
both now and forever.

Praise the LORD.

Psalm 116

[1]I love the LORD, because he heard my voice.
He heard my cry for his favor.
[2]Because he paid attention to me,
I will call out to him as long as I live.

[3]The ropes of death were wrapped around me.
The horrors of the grave came over me.
I was overcome by trouble and sorrow.
[4]Then I called out to the LORD.
I cried out, "LORD, save me!"

[5]The LORD is holy and kind.
Our God is full of tender love.
[6]The LORD takes care of those who are as helpless as children.
When I was in great need, he saved me.

[7]I said to myself, "Be calm.
The LORD has been good to me."

[8]LORD, you have saved me from death.
You have dried the tears from my eyes.
You have kept me from tripping and falling.
[9]So now I can enjoy life here with you
while I'm still living.
[10]I believed in you even when I said to myself,
"I'm in great pain."
[11]When I was terrified, I said to myself,
"No one tells the truth."

[12]The LORD has been so good to me!
How can I ever pay him back?
[13]I will bring an offering of wine to the LORD
and thank him for saving me.
I will worship him.
[14]In front of all of the LORD's people,
I will do what I promised him.

15 The LORD pays special attention
when his faithful people die.
16 LORD, I serve you.
I serve you just as my mother did.
You have set me free from the chains of my suffering.

17 LORD, I will sacrifice a thank offering to you.
I will worship you.
18 In front of all of the LORD's people,
I will do what I promised him.
19 I will keep my promise in the courtyards of the LORD's temple.
I will keep my promise in Jerusalem itself.

Praise the LORD.

Psalm 117

[1]All you nations, praise the LORD.
All you people on earth, praise him.
[2]Great is his love for us.
The LORD is faithful forever.

Praise the LORD.

Psalm 118

[1]Give thanks to the LORD, because he is good.
His faithful love continues forever.

[2]Let the people of Israel say,
"His faithful love continues forever."
[3]Let the priests of Aaron say,
"His faithful love continues forever."
[4]Let those who have respect for the LORD say,
"His faithful love continues forever."

[5]When I was in great pain, I cried out to the LORD.
He answered me and set me free.
[6]The LORD is with me. I will not be afraid.
What can mere men do to me?
[7]The LORD is with me. He helps me.
I will win the battle over my enemies.

[8]It is better to go to the LORD for safety
than to trust in mere men.
[9]It is better to go to the LORD for safety
than to trust in human leaders.

[10]The nations were all around me.
But by the LORD's power I destroyed them.
[11]They were around me on every side.
But by the LORD's power I destroyed them.
[12]They attacked me like large numbers of bees.
But they died out as quickly as burning thorns.
By the LORD's power I destroyed them.

[13]I was pushed back. I was about to be killed.
But the LORD helped me.
[14]The LORD gives me strength. I sing about him.
He has saved me.

[15]Shouts of joy ring out in the tents of godly people.

They praise him for his help in battle.
They shout, “The LORD’s powerful right hand has done mighty things!
16The LORD’s powerful right hand has won the battle!
The LORD’s powerful right hand has done mighty things!”

17I will not die. I will live.
I will talk about what the LORD has done.
18The LORD has really punished me.
But he didn’t let me die.

19Open the gates of the temple for me.
I will enter and give thanks to the LORD.
20This is the gate of the LORD.
Only those who do what is right can go through it.
21LORD, I will give thanks to you, because you answered me.
You have saved me.

22The stone the builders didn’t accept
has become the most important stone of all.
23The LORD has done it.
It is wonderful in our eyes.
24The LORD has done it on this day.
Let us be joyful and glad in it.

25LORD, save us.
LORD, give us success.
26Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD.
From the temple of the LORD we bless you.
27The LORD is God.
He has made the light of his favor shine on us.
Take branches in your hands. Join in the march on the day of the feast.
March up to the corners of the altar.

28You are my God, and I will give thanks to you.
You are my God, and I will honor you.

29Give thanks to the LORD, because he is good.
His faithful love continues forever.

Psalm 119

א *Aleph*

[1]Blessed are those who live without blame.
They live in keeping with the law of the LORD.
[2]Blessed are those who obey his covenant laws.
They trust in him with all their hearts.
[3]They don't do anything wrong.
They live as he wants them to live.
[4]You have given me rules
that I must obey completely.
[5]I hope I will always stand firm
in following your orders.
[6]Then I won't be put to shame
when I think about all of your commands.
[7]I will praise you with an honest heart
as I learn about how fair your decisions are.
[8]I will obey your orders.
Please don't leave me all alone.

ב *Beth*

[9]How can a young person keep his life pure?
By living in keeping with your word.
[10]I trust in you with all my heart.
Don't let me wander away from your commands.
[11]I have hidden your word in my heart
so that I won't sin against you.
[12]LORD, I give praise to you.
Teach me your orders.
[13]With my lips I talk about
all of the decisions you have made.
[14]Following your covenant laws gives me joy
just as great riches give joy to others.
[15]I spend time thinking about your rules.
I consider how you want me to live.

16 I take delight in your orders.
I won’t fail to obey your word.

ג *Gimel*

17 Be good to me, and I will live.
I will obey your word.
18 Open my eyes so that I can see
the wonderful truths in your law.
19 I’m a stranger on earth.
Don’t hide your commands from me.
20 My heart is filled with longing
for your laws at all times.
21 You correct proud people. They are under your curse.
They wander away from your commands.
22 I obey your covenant laws.
So don’t let evil people laugh at me or hate me.
23 Even if rulers sit together and tell lies about me,
I will spend time thinking about your orders.
24 Your covenant laws are my delight.
They give me wise advice.

ד *Daleth*

25 I lie in the dust. I’m about to die.
Keep me alive as you have promised.
26 I told you how I’ve lived, and you gave me your answer.
Teach me your orders.
27 Help me understand what your rules can teach me.
Then I’ll spend time thinking about the miracles you have done.
28 My sadness has worn me out.
Give me strength as you have promised.
29 Keep me from cheating and telling lies.
Be kind and teach me your law.
30 I have chosen to be faithful to you.
I put my trust in your laws.
31 LORD, I’m careful to obey your covenant laws.
Don’t let me be put to shame.
32 I am quick to follow your commands,

because you have set my heart free.

ה *He*

33 LORD, teach me to follow your orders.
Then I will obey them to the very end.
34 Help me understand your law. Then I will follow it
and obey it with all my heart.
35 Teach me to live as you command,
because that makes me very happy.
36 Make me want to follow your covenant laws
instead of wanting to gain things only for myself.
37 Turn my eyes away from things that are worthless.
Keep me alive as you have promised.
38 Keep your promise to me.
Then other people will have respect for you.
39 Please don't let me be put to shame.
Your laws are good.
40 I really want to follow your rules.
Keep me alive, because you do what is right.

ו *Waw*

41 LORD, show me your faithful love.
Save me as you have promised.
42 Then I will answer those who make fun of me,
because I trust in your word.
43 Help me always to tell the truth about how faithful you are.
I have put my hope in your laws.
44 I will always obey your law,
for ever and ever.
45 I will lead a full and happy life,
because I've tried to obey your rules.
46 I will talk about your covenant laws to kings.
I will not be put to shame.
47 I take delight in obeying your commands
because I love them.
48 I praise your commands, and I love them.
I spend time thinking about your orders.

ז *Zayin*

49 Remember what you have said to me.
You have given me hope.
50 Even when I suffer, I am comforted
because you promised to keep me alive.
51 Proud people are always making fun of me.
But I don't turn away from your law.
52 LORD, I remember the laws you gave long ago.
I find comfort in them.
53 I am very angry
because evil people have turned away from your law.
54 No matter where I live,
I sing about your orders.
55 LORD, during the night I remember who you are.
That's why I keep your law.
56 I have really done my best
to obey your rules.

ח *Heth*

57 LORD, you are everything I need.
I have promised to obey your words.
58 I have looked to you with all my heart.
Be kind to me as you have promised.
59 I have thought about the way I live.
And I have decided to follow your covenant laws.
60 I won't waste any time.
I will be quick to obey your commands.
61 Evil people may tie me up with ropes.
But I won't forget to obey your law.
62 At midnight I get up to give you thanks
because your decisions are very fair.
63 I'm a friend to everyone who has respect for you.
I'm a friend to everyone who follows your rules.
64 LORD, the earth is filled with your love.
Teach me your orders.

ט *Teth*

65 LORD, be good to me
as you have promised.
66 Increase my knowledge and give me good sense,
because I believe in your commands.
67 Before I went through suffering, I went down the wrong path.
But now I obey your word.
68 You are good, and what you do is good.
Teach me your orders.
69 Proud people have spread lies about me and have taken away my good name.
But I follow your rules with all my heart.
70 Their hearts are hard and stubborn. They don't feel anything.
But I take delight in your law.
71 It was good for me to suffer.
That's what helped me to understand your orders.
72 The law you gave is worth more to me
than thousands of pieces of silver and gold.

י *Yodh*

73 You made me and formed me with your own hands.
Give me understanding so that I can learn your commands.
74 May those who have respect for you be filled with joy when they see me.
I have put my hope in your word.
75 LORD, I know that your laws are right.
You were faithful to your promise when you made me suffer.
76 May your faithful love comfort me
as you have promised me.
77 Show me your tender love so that I can live.
I take delight in your law.
78 Proud people have treated me badly without any reason. May they be put to shame.
I will spend time thinking about your rules.
79 May those who have respect for you come to me.
Then I can teach them your covenant laws.
80 May my heart be without blame as I follow your orders.
Then I won't be put to shame.

כ *Kaph*

81 I deeply long for you to save me.
I have put my hope in your word.
82 My eyes grow tired looking for what you have promised.
I say, “When will you comfort me?”
83 I’m as useless as a wineskin that smoke has dried up.
But I don’t forget to follow your orders.
84 How long do I have to wait?
When will you punish those who attack me?
85 Proud people do what is against your law.
They dig pits for me to fall into.
86 All of your commands can be trusted.
Help me, because people attack me without any reason.
87 They almost wiped me off the face of the earth.
But I have not turned away from your rules.
88 Keep me alive, because you love me.
Then I will obey the covenant laws you have given.

ל *Lamedh*

89 LORD, your word lasts forever.
It stands firm in the heavens.
90 You will be faithful for all time to come.
You made the earth, and it continues to exist.
91 Your laws continue to this very day,
because all things serve you.
92 If I had not taken delight in your law,
I would have died because of my suffering.
93 I will never forget your rules.
You have kept me alive, because I obey them.
94 Save me, because I belong to you.
I’ve tried to obey your rules.
95 Sinful people are waiting to destroy me.
But I will spend time thinking about your covenant laws.
96 I’ve learned that everything has its limits.
But your commands are perfect. They are always there when I need them.

מ *Mem*

97 LORD, I really love your law!
All day long I spend time thinking about it.
98 Your commands make me wiser than my enemies,
because your commands are always in my heart.
99 I know more than all of my teachers do,
because I spend time thinking about your covenant laws.
100 I understand more than the elders do,
because I obey your rules.
101 I've kept my feet from every path that sinners take
so that I might obey your word.
102 I haven't turned away from your laws,
because you yourself have taught me.
103 Your words are very sweet to my taste!
They are sweeter than honey to me.
104 I gain understanding from your rules.
So I hate every path that sinners take.

נ *Nun*

105 Your word is like a lamp that shows me the way.
It is like a light that guides me.
106 I have taken an oath. I have promised
to follow your laws, because they are right.
107 I have suffered very much.
LORD, keep me alive as you have promised.
108 LORD, accept the praise I freely give you.
Teach me your laws.
109 I keep putting my life in danger.
But I won't forget to obey your law.
110 Evil people have set a trap for me.
But I haven't wandered away from your rules.
111 Your covenant laws are your gift to me forever.
They fill my heart with joy.
112 I have decided to obey your orders
to the very end.

ס *Samekh*

113 I hate people who can't make up their minds.
But I love your law.
114 You are my place of safety.
You are like a shield that keeps me safe.
I have put my hope in your word.
115 Get away from me, you who do evil!
Then I can do what my God commands me to do.
116 Keep me going as you have promised. Then I will live.
Don't let me lose all hope.
117 Take good care of me, and I will be saved.
I will always honor your orders.
118 You turn your back on all those who wander away from your orders.
They lie and cheat, but it doesn't amount to anything.
119 You throw away all of the sinners on earth as if they were trash.
So I love your covenant laws.
120 My body trembles because I have respect for you.
I have great respect for your laws.

ע *Ayin*

121 I have done what is right and fair.
So don't leave me to those who beat me down.
122 Make sure that everything goes well with me.
Don't let proud people beat me down.
123 My eyes grow tired as I look to you to save me.
Please save me as you have promised.
124 Be good to me, because you love me.
Teach me your orders.
125 I serve you. Help me to understand what is right.
Then I will understand your covenant laws.
126 LORD, it's time for you to act.
People are breaking your law.
127 I love your commands more than gold.
I love them more than pure gold.
128 I consider all of your rules to be right.
So I hate every path that sinners take.

פ *Pe*

129 Your covenant laws are wonderful.
So I obey them.
130 When your words are made clear, they bring light.
They bring understanding to childish people.
131 I open my mouth and pant like a dog,
because I long to know your commands.
132 Turn to me and show me your favor.
That's what you've always done for those who love you.
133 Teach me how to live as you have promised.
Don't let any sin be my master.
134 Set me free from men who beat me down.
Then I will obey your rules.
135 Let your face smile on me with favor.
Teach me your orders.
136 Streams of tears flow from my eyes,
because people don't obey your law.

צ *Tsadhe*

137 LORD, you do what is fair.
And your laws are right.
138 The laws you have made are fair.
They can be completely trusted.
139 My anger is wearing me out,
because my enemies don't pay any attention to your words.
140 Your promises have proved to be true.
I love them.
141 I'm not important. People look down on me.
But I don't forget to obey your rules.
142 You always do what is right.
And your law is true.
143 I've had my share of trouble and suffering.
But I take delight in your commands.
144 Your covenant laws are always right.
Help me to understand them. Then I will live.

ק *Qoph*

145 LORD, I call out to you with all my heart.
Answer me, and I will obey your orders.
146 I call out to you.
Save me, and I will keep your covenant laws.
147 I get up before the sun rises. I cry out for help.
I've put my hope in your word.
148 My eyes stay open all night long.
I spend my time thinking about your promises.
149 Listen to me, because you love me.
LORD, keep me alive as you have promised.
150 Those who think up evil plans are near.
They have wandered far away from your law.
151 But LORD, you are near.
All your commands are true.
152 Long ago I learned from your covenant laws
that you made them to last forever.

ר *Resh*

153 Look at how I'm suffering!
Save me, because I haven't forgotten to obey your law.
154 Stand up for me and set me free.
Keep me alive as you have promised.
155 Those who are evil are far from being saved.
They don't want to obey your orders.
156 LORD, you have deep concern for me.
Keep me alive as you have promised.
157 Many enemies attack me.
But I haven't turned away from your covenant laws.
158 I get very angry when I see people who aren't faithful to you.
They don't obey your word.
159 See how I love your rules!
LORD, keep me alive, because you love me.
160 All your words are true.
All your laws are right. They last forever.

ש *Sin and Shin*

161 Rulers attack me without any reason.
But my heart trembles because of your word.
162 I'm filled with joy because of your promise.
It's like finding a great fortune.
163 I hate lies with a deep hatred.
But I love your law.
164 Seven times a day I praise you
for your laws, because they are right.
165 Those who love your law enjoy great peace.
Nothing can make them trip and fall.
166 LORD, I wait for you to save me.
I follow your commands.
167 I obey your covenant laws,
because I love them greatly.
168 I obey your rules and your covenant laws,
because you know all about how I live.

ת *Taw*

169 LORD, may you hear my cry.
Give me understanding, just as you said you would.
170 May you hear my prayer.
Save me, just as you promised.
171 May my lips pour out praise to you,
because you teach me your orders.
172 May my tongue sing about your word,
because all of your commands are right.
173 May your hand be ready to help me,
because I have chosen to obey your rules.
174 LORD, I long for you to save me.
I take delight in your law.
175 Let me live so that I can praise you.
May your laws keep me going.
176 Like a lost sheep, I've gone down the wrong path.
Come and look for me,
because I haven't forgotten to obey your commands.

Psalm 120

A song for those who go up to Jerusalem to worship the LORD.

1 I call out to the LORD when I'm in trouble,
and he answers me.
2 LORD, save me from people whose lips tell lies.
Save me from people whose tongues don't tell the truth.

3 What will the LORD do to you, you lying tongue?
And what more will he do?
4 He will punish you with the sharp arrows of a soldier.
He will punish you with burning wood from a desert tree.

5 How terrible it is for me to live in the tents of the people of Meshech!
How terrible to live in the tents of the people of Kedar!
6 I have lived too long
among those who hate peace.
7 I want peace.
But when I speak, they want war.

Psalm 121

A song for those who go up to Jerusalem to worship the LORD.

[1]I look up to the hills.
Where does my help come from?
[2]My help comes from the LORD.
He is the Maker of heaven and earth.

[3]He won't let your foot slip.
He who watches over you won't get tired.
[4]In fact, he who watches over Israel
won't get tired or go to sleep.

[5]The LORD watches over you.
The LORD is like a shade tree at your right hand.
[6]The sun won't harm you during the day.
The moon won't harm you during the night.

[7]The LORD will keep you from every kind of harm.
He will watch over your life.
[8]The LORD will watch over your life no matter where you go,
both now and forever.

Psalm 122

A song for those who go up to Jerusalem to worship the LORD. A psalm of David.

[1]I was very glad when they said to me,
"Let us go up to the house of the LORD."
[2]Jerusalem, our feet are standing
inside your gates.

[3]Jerusalem is built like a city
where everything is close together.
[4]The tribes of the LORD go there to praise his name.
They do it in keeping with the law he gave to Israel.
[5]The thrones of the family line of David are there.
That's where the people are judged.

[6]Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Say,
"May those who love you be secure.
[7]May there be peace inside your walls.
May your people be kept safe."
[8]I'm concerned for my family and friends.
So I say to Jerusalem, "May you enjoy peace."
[9]I'm concerned about the house of the LORD our God.
So I pray that things will go well with Jerusalem.

Psalm 123

A song for those who go up to Jerusalem to worship the LORD.

[1]I look up and pray to you.
Your throne is in heaven.
[2]Slaves depend on their masters.
Maids depend on the women they work for.
In the same way, we depend on the LORD our God.
We wait for him to show us his favor.

[3]LORD, show us your favor. Show us your favor,
because people have made so much fun of us.
[4]We have had to put up with a lot from those who are proud.
They were always laughing at us.

Psalm 124

A song for those who go up to Jerusalem to worship the LORD. A psalm of David.

[1]Here is what Israel should say.
Suppose the LORD had not been on our side.
[2]Suppose the LORD had not been on our side
when our enemies attacked us.
[3]Suppose he had not been on our side
when their anger blazed out against us.
Then they would have swallowed us alive.
[4]They would have been like a flood that drowned us.
They would have swept over us like a rushing river.
[5]They would have washed us away
like a swollen stream.

[6]Give praise to the LORD.
He has not let our enemies chew us up.
[7]We have escaped like a bird
from a hunter's trap.
The trap has been broken,
and we have escaped.
[8]Our help comes from the LORD.
He is the Maker of heaven and earth.

Psalm 125

A song for those who go up to Jerusalem to worship the LORD.

[1]Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion.
They will always be secure. They will last forever.
[2]Like the mountains around Jerusalem,
the LORD is all around his people
both now and forever.

[3]Evil people will not always rule
the land the LORD gave to those who do right.
If they did, those who do right
might do what is evil.

[4]LORD, do good to those who are good.
Do good to those whose hearts are honest.
[5]But what about those who have taken paths that are crooked?
The LORD will drive them out, along with those who do what is evil.

May Israel enjoy peace.

Psalm 126

A song for those who go up to Jerusalem to worship the LORD.

[1]Our enemies took us away from Zion.
But when the LORD brought us home,
it seemed like a dream to us.
[2]Our mouths were filled with laughter.
Our tongues sang with joy.
Then the people of other nations said,
"The LORD has done great things for them."
[3]The LORD has done great things for us.
And we are filled with joy.

[4]LORD, bless us with great success again,
as rain makes streams flow in the Negev Desert.
[5]Those who cry as they plant their crops
will sing with joy when they gather them in.
[6]Those who go out sobbing
as they carry seeds to plant
will come back singing with joy.
They will bring the new crop back with them.

Psalm 127

A song for those who go up to Jerusalem to worship the LORD. A psalm of Solomon.

[1]If the LORD doesn't build a house,
the work of its builders is useless.
If the LORD doesn't watch over a city,
it's useless for those on guard duty to stand watch over it.
[2]It's useless for you to work from early morning
until late at night
just to get food to eat.
God provides for those he loves even while they sleep.

[3]Children are a gift from the LORD.
They are a reward from him.
[4]Children who are born to people when they are young
are like arrows in the hands of a soldier.
[5]Blessed are those
who have many children.
They won't be put to shame
when they go up against their enemies in court.

Psalm 128

A song for those who go up to Jerusalem to worship the LORD.

[1]Blessed are all those who have respect for the LORD.
They live as he wants them to live.
[2]Your work will give you what you need.
Blessings and good things will come to you.
[3]As a vine bears a lot of fruit,
so your wife will have many children by you.
They will sit around your table
like young olive trees.
[4]Only a man who has respect for the LORD
will be blessed like that.

[5]May the LORD bless you from Zion.
May you enjoy the good things that come to Jerusalem
all the days of your life.
[6]May you live to see your grandchildren.

May Israel enjoy peace.

Psalm 129

A song for those who go up to Jerusalem to worship the LORD.

[1]Here is what Israel should say.
Many times my enemies have beaten me down ever since I was a young nation.
[2]Many times my enemies have beaten me down ever since I was a young nation,
but they haven't won the battle.
[3]They have made deep wounds in my back.
It looks like a field a farmer has plowed.
[4]The LORD does what is right.
Sinners had tied me up with ropes. But the LORD has set me free.

[5]May all those who hate Zion
be driven back in shame.
[6]May they be like grass that grows on the roof of a house.
It dries up before it can grow.
[7]There isn't enough of it to fill a person's hand.
There isn't enough to tie up and carry away.
[8]May no one who passes by say to those who hate Zion,
"May the blessing of the LORD be on you.
We bless you in the name of the LORD."

Psalm 130

A song for those who go up to Jerusalem to worship the LORD.

[1]LORD, I cry out to you
because I'm suffering so deeply.
[2]Lord, listen to me.
Pay attention to my cry for your favor.

[3]LORD, suppose you kept a record of sins.
Lord, who then wouldn't be found guilty?
[4]But you forgive.
So people have respect for you.

[5]With all my heart I wait for the LORD to help me.
I put my hope in his word.
[6]I wait for the Lord to help me.
I wait with more longing than those on guard duty wait for the morning.
I'll say it again.
I wait with more longing than those on guard duty wait for the morning.

[7]Israel, put your hope in the LORD,
because the LORD's love never fails.
He sets his people completely free.
[8]He himself will set Israel
free from all of their sins.

Psalm 131

A song for those who go up to Jerusalem to worship the LORD. A psalm of David.

[1]LORD, my heart isn’t proud.
My eyes aren’t proud either.
I don’t concern myself with important matters.
I don’t concern myself with things that are too wonderful for me.
[2]I have made myself calm and content
like a young child in its mother’s arms.
Deep down inside me, I am as content as a young child.

[3]Israel, put your hope in the LORD
both now and forever.

Psalm 132

A song for those who go up to Jerusalem to worship the LORD.

1 LORD, remember David
and all of the hard times he went through.

2 LORD, he took an oath.
Mighty One of Jacob, he made a promise to you.
3 He said, “I won’t enter my house
or go to bed.
4 I won’t let my eyes sleep.
I won’t close my eyelids
5 until I find a place for the LORD.
I want to build a house for the Mighty One of Jacob.”

6 Here are the words we heard in Ephrathah.
We heard them again in the fields of Kiriath Jearim.
7 “Let us go to the LORD’s house.
Let us worship at his feet.
8 LORD, rise up and come to your resting place.
Come in together with the ark. It’s the sign of your power.
9 May your priests put on godliness as if it were their clothes.
May your faithful people sing with joy.”

10 In honor of your servant David,
don’t turn your back on your anointed king.

11 The LORD took an oath and made a promise to David.
It is a firm promise that he will never break.
He said, “After you die,
I will place one of your own sons on your throne.
12 If your sons keep my covenant
and the laws I teach them,
then their sons will sit
on your throne for ever and ever.”

13 The LORD has chosen Zion.

That’s the place where he wants to live.
14He has said, “This will be my resting place for ever and ever.
Here I will sit on my throne, because that’s what I want.
15I will greatly bless Zion with everything it needs.
I will give plenty of food to the poor people living there.
16I will put salvation on its priests as if it were their clothes.
God’s faithful people will always sing with joy.

17“Here in Jerusalem I will raise up a mighty king from the family of David.
I will set up the lamp of David’s kingdom for my anointed king.
Its flame will burn brightly forever.
18I will put shame on his enemies as if it were their clothes.
But the royal crown he wears will shine with glory.”

Psalm 133

A song for those who go up to Jerusalem to worship the LORD. A psalm of David.

[1]How good and pleasant it is
when God's people live together in peace!
[2]It's like the special olive oil
that was poured on Aaron's head.
It ran down on his beard
and on the collar of his robe.
[3]It's as if the dew of Mount Hermon
were falling on Mount Zion.
There the LORD gives his blessing.
He gives life that never ends.

Psalm 134

A song for those who go up to Jerusalem to worship the LORD.

[1]All of you who serve the LORD, praise the LORD.
All of you who serve at night in the house of the LORD, praise him.
[2]Lift up your hands in the temple
and praise the LORD.

[3]May the LORD bless you from Zion.
He is the Maker of heaven and earth.

Psalm 135

[1]Praise the LORD.

Praise the name of the LORD.
You who serve the LORD, praise him.
[2]You who serve in the house of the LORD, praise him.
You who serve in the courtyards of the temple of our God, praise him.

[3]Praise the LORD, because he is good.
Sing praise to his name, because that is pleasant.
[4]The LORD has chosen the people of Jacob to be his own.
He has chosen Israel to be his special treasure.

[5]I know that the LORD is great.
I know that our Lord is greater than all gods.
[6]The LORD does anything he wants to do
in the heavens and on the earth.
He does it even in the deepest parts of the oceans.
[7]He makes clouds rise from one end of the earth to the other.
He sends lightning with the rain.
He brings the wind out of his storerooms.

[8]He killed the oldest son of each family in Egypt.
He struck down the oldest males that were born to people and animals.
[9]He did miraculous signs in Egypt.
He did wonders against Pharaoh and everyone who served him.
[10]He destroyed many nations.
He killed mighty kings.
[11]He killed Sihon, the king of the Amorites,
and Og, the king of Bashan.
He killed all of the kings of Canaan.
[12]He gave their land as a gift
to his people Israel.

[13]LORD, your name continues forever.

LORD, your fame will last for all time to come.
14When the LORD hands down his sentence, it will be in his people's favor.
He will show deep concern for those who serve him.

15The statues of the gods of the nations are made of silver and gold.
They are made by the hands of men.
16They have mouths, but they can't speak.
They have eyes, but they can't see.
17They have ears, but they can't hear.
They have mouths, but they can't breathe.
18Those who make statues of gods will be like them.
So will all those who trust in them.

19People of Israel, praise the LORD.
Priests of Aaron, praise the LORD.
20Tribe of Levi, praise the LORD.
You who have respect for the LORD, praise him.
21Give praise to the LORD in Zion.
Give praise to the One who lives in Jerusalem.

Praise the LORD.

Psalm 136

[1]Give thanks to the LORD, because he is good.
His faithful love continues forever.
[2]Give thanks to the greatest God of all.
His faithful love continues forever.
[3]Give thanks to the most powerful Lord of all.
His faithful love continues forever.

[4]Give thanks to the only one who can do great miracles.
His faithful love continues forever.
[5]By his understanding he made the heavens.
His faithful love continues forever.
[6]He spread out the earth on the waters.
His faithful love continues forever.
[7]He made the great lights in the sky.
His faithful love continues forever.
[8]He made the sun to rule over the day.
His faithful love continues forever.
[9]He made the moon and stars to rule over the night.
His faithful love continues forever.

[10]Give thanks to the One who killed the oldest son of each family in Egypt.
His faithful love continues forever.
[11]He brought the people of Israel out of Egypt.
His faithful love continues forever.
[12]He did it by reaching out his mighty hand and powerful arm.
His faithful love continues forever.

[13]Give thanks to the One who parted the Red Sea.
His faithful love continues forever.

[14]He brought Israel through the middle of it.

His faithful love continues forever.

[15]But he swept Pharaoh and his army into the Red Sea.

His faithful love continues forever.

[16]Give thanks to the One who led his people through the desert.

His faithful love continues forever.

[17]He killed great kings.

His faithful love continues forever.

[18]He struck down mighty kings.

His faithful love continues forever.

[19]He killed Sihon, the king of the Amorites.

His faithful love continues forever.

[20]He killed Og, the king of Bashan.

His faithful love continues forever.

[21]He gave their land as a gift.

His faithful love continues forever.

[22]He gave it as a gift to his servant Israel.

His faithful love continues forever.

[23]Give thanks to the One who remembered us when things were going badly for us.

His faithful love continues forever.

[24]He set us free from our enemies.

His faithful love continues forever.

[25]He gives food to every creature.

His faithful love continues forever.

[26]Give thanks to the God of heaven.

His faithful love continues forever.

Psalm 137

[1]We were sitting by the rivers of Babylon.
We cried when we remembered what had happened to Zion.
[2]On the nearby poplar trees
we hung up our harps.
[3]Those who held us as prisoners asked us to sing.
Those who enjoyed hurting us ordered us to sing joyful songs.
They said, “Sing one of the songs of Zion to us!”

[4]How can we sing the songs of the LORD
while we are in another land?
[5]Jerusalem, if I forget you,
may my right hand never be able to play the harp again.
[6]If I don’t remember you,
may my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth so I can’t sing.
May it happen if I don’t consider Jerusalem
to be my greatest joy.

[7]LORD, remember what the people of Edom did
on the day Jerusalem fell.
“Tear it down!” they cried.
“Tear it down to the ground!”

[8]People of Babylon, you are sentenced to be destroyed.
Happy are those who pay you back
for what you have done to us.
[9]Happy are those who grab your babies
and smash them against the rocks.

Psalm 138

A psalm of David.

[1]LORD, I will praise you with all my heart.
In front of those who think they are gods
I will sing praise to you.
[2]I will bow down facing your holy temple.
I will praise your name,
because you are loving and faithful.
You have honored your name and your word
more than anything else.
[3]When I called out to you, you answered me.
You made me strong and brave.

[4]LORD, may all of the kings on earth praise you
when they hear about what you have promised.
[5]LORD, may they sing about what you have done,
because your glory is great.

[6]The LORD is in heaven. But he watches over those who are free of pride.
He knows those who are proud and stays far away from them.
[7]Trouble is all around me,
but you keep me alive.
You reach out your hand to put a stop to the anger of my enemies.
With your powerful right hand you save me.
[8]LORD, you will do everything you have planned for me.
LORD, your faithful love continues forever.
You have done so much for us. Don’t stop now.

Psalm 139

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

[1]LORD, you have seen what is in my heart.
You know all about me.
[2]You know when I sit down and when I get up.
You know what I'm thinking even though you are far away.
[3]You know when I go out to work and when I come back home.
You know exactly how I live.
[4]LORD, even before I speak a word,
you know all about it.

[5]You are all around me. You are behind me and in front of me.
You hold me in your power.
[6]I'm amazed at how well you know me.
It's more than I can understand.

[7]How can I get away from your Spirit?
Where can I go to escape from you?
[8]If I go up to the heavens, you are there.
If I lie down in the deepest parts of the earth, you are also there.
[9]Suppose I were to rise with the sun in the east
and then cross over to the west where it sinks into the ocean.
[10]Your hand would always be there to guide me.
Your right hand would still be holding me close.

[11]Suppose I were to say, "I'm sure the darkness will hide me.
The light around me will become as dark as night."
[12]Even that darkness would not be dark to you.
The night would shine like the day,
because darkness is like light to you.

[13]You created the deepest parts of my being.
You put me together inside my mother's body.
[14]How you made me is amazing and wonderful.
I praise you for that.
What you have done is wonderful.

I know that very well.
15 None of my bones was hidden from you
when you made me inside my mother's body.
That place was as dark as the deepest parts of the earth.
When you were putting me together there,
16 your eyes saw my body even before it was formed.
You planned how many days I would live.
You wrote down the number of them in your book
before I had lived through even one of them.

17 God, your thoughts about me are priceless.
No one can possibly add them all up.
18 If I could count them,
they would be more than the grains of sand.
If I were to fall asleep counting and then wake up,
you would still be there with me.

19 God, I wish you would kill the people who are evil!
I wish those murderers would get away from me!
20 They are your enemies. They misuse your name.
They misuse it for their own evil purposes.
21 LORD, I really hate those who hate you!
I really hate those who rise up against you!
22 I have nothing but hatred for them.
I consider them to be my enemies.

23 God, see what is in my heart.
Know what is there.
Put me to the test.
Know what I'm thinking.
24 See if there's anything in my life you don't like.
Help me live in the way that is always right.

Psalm 140

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

[1]LORD, save me from sinful men.
Keep me safe from those who want to hurt me.
[2]They make evil plans in their hearts.
They are always starting fights.
[3]Their tongues are as deadly as the tongue of a serpent.
The words from their lips are like the poison of a snake. *Selah*

[4]LORD, keep me out of the hands of sinful people.
Keep me safe from men who want to hurt me.
They plan to trip me up and make me fall.
[5]Proud people have hidden their traps to catch me.
They have spread out their nets.
They have set traps for me along my path. *Selah*

[6]LORD, I say to you, "You are my God."
LORD, hear my cry for your favor.
[7]LORD and King, you save me because you are strong.
You are like a shield that keeps me safe in the day of battle.
[8]LORD, don't give sinners what they want.
Don't let their plans succeed.
If you do, they will become proud. *Selah*

[9]Those who are all around me have caused me trouble
by what their lips have said.
Let that trouble fall on their own heads.
[10]Let burning coals fall on people like that.
May they be thrown into the fire.
May they be thrown into muddy pits and never get out.
[11]Don't let men who tell lies about me settle down in the land.
May trouble hunt down those who want to hurt me.

[12]I know that the LORD makes sure that poor people are treated fairly.
He stands up for those who are in need.
[13]I'm sure that those who do right will praise your name.

Those who are honest will live with you.

Psalm 141

A psalm of David.

[1]LORD, I call out to you. Come quickly to help me.
Listen to me when I call out to you.
[2]May my prayer come to you like the sweet smell of incense.
When I lift up my hands in prayer, may it be like the evening sacrifice.

[3]LORD, guard my mouth.
Keep watch over the door of my lips.
[4]Don't let my heart be drawn to what is evil.
Don't let me join men who do evil.
They don't do what is right.
Don't let me join them and eat their fancy food.

[5]If a person who does what is right were to strike me, it would be an act of kindness.
If that person were to correct me, it would be like pouring olive oil on my head.
I wouldn't say no to it.

But I always pray against the things that sinful people do.
[6]When their rulers are thrown down from the rocky cliffs,
those evil people will realize that my words were true.
[7]They will say, "As clumps of dirt are left from plowing up the ground,
so our bones will be scattered near an open grave."

[8]But LORD and King, I keep looking to you.
I go to you for safety. Don't let me die.
[9]Keep me from the traps of those who do evil.
Save me from the traps they have set for me.
[10]Let evil people fall into their own nets.
But let me go safely on my way.

Psalm 142

A prayer of David when he was in the cave. A maskil.

[1]I call out to the LORD.
I pray to him for his favor.
[2]I pour out my problem to him.
I tell him about my trouble.

[3]When I grow weak,
you know what I'm going through.
In the path where I walk,
people have hidden a trap to catch me.
[4]Look around me, and you will see
that no one is concerned about me.
I have no place of safety.
No one cares whether I live or die.

[5]LORD, I cry out to you.
I say, "You are my place of safety.
You are everything I need in this life."
[6]Listen to my cry.
I am in great need.
Save me from those who are chasing me.
They are too strong for me.
[7]My troubles are like a prison.
Set me free so I can praise your name.

Then those who do what is right will gather around me
because you have been good to me.

Psalm 143

A psalm of David.

[1]LORD, hear my prayer.
Listen to my cry for your favor.
You are faithful and right.
Come and help me.
[2]Don't take me to court and judge me,
because in your eyes no living person does what is right.

[3]My enemies chase me.
They crush me down to the ground.
They make me live in darkness
like those who died long ago.
[4]So I grow weak.
Deep down inside me, I'm afraid.

[5]I remember what happened long ago.
I spend time thinking about all of your acts.
I consider what your hands have done.
[6]I spread out my hands to you in prayer.
I'm thirsty for you, just as dry ground is thirsty for rain. *Selah*

[7]LORD, answer me quickly.
I'm growing weak.
Don't turn your face away from me,
or I will be like those who go down into the grave.
[8]In the morning let me hear about your faithful love,
because I've put my trust in you.
Show me the way I should live,
because I pray to you.
[9]LORD, save me from my enemies,
because I go to you for safety.
[10]Teach me to do what you want,
because you are my God.
May your good Spirit
lead me on a level path.

[11]LORD, be true to your name. Keep me alive.
Because you do what is right, get me out of trouble.
[12]Because your love is faithful, put an end to my enemies.
Destroy all of them, because I serve you.

Psalm 144

A psalm of David.

[1]Give praise to the LORD. He is my rock.
He trains my hands for war.
He trains my fingers for battle.
[2]He is my loving God. He is like a fort to me.
He is my place of safety and the One who saves me.
He is like a shield that keeps me safe. I go to him for safety.
He brings nations under my control.

[3]LORD, what is a human being that you take care of him?
What is a son of man that you think about him?
[4]His life doesn't last any longer than a breath.
His days are like a shadow that quickly disappears.

[5]LORD, open up your heavens and come down.
Touch the mountains, and they will pour out smoke.
[6]Send flashes of lightning and scatter my enemies.
Shoot your arrows and chase them away.
[7]My enemies are like a mighty flood.
Reach down from heaven and save me.
Save me from strangers who attack me.
[8]They tell all kinds of lies with their mouths.
Even when they make a promise by raising their right hands, they don't mean it.

[9]God, I will sing a new song to you.
I will make music to you on a harp that has ten strings.
[10]You are the One who helps kings win battles.
You save your servant David from dying by the sword.

[11]Save me. Set me free
from strangers who attack me.
They tell all kinds of lies with their mouths.
Even when they make a promise by raising their right hands, they don't mean it.

12 While our sons are young,
they will be like healthy plants.
Our daughters will be like pillars
that have been made to decorate a palace.
13 Our storerooms will be filled
with every kind of food.
The sheep in our fields will increase by thousands.
They will increase by tens of thousands.
14 Our oxen will pull heavy loads.
None of our city walls will be broken down.
No one will be carried off as a prisoner.
No cries of pain will be heard in our streets.

15 Blessed are the people about whom all of those things are true.
Blessed are the people whose God is the LORD.

Psalm 145

A psalm of praise. A psalm of David.

[1]I will honor you, my God the King.
I will praise your name for ever and ever.
[2]Every day I will praise you.
I will praise your name for ever and ever.

[3]LORD, you are great. You are really worthy of praise.
No one can completely understand how great you are.
[4]Parents will praise your works to their children.
They will tell about your mighty acts.
[5]They will speak about your glorious majesty.
I will spend time thinking about your miracles.
[6]They will speak about the powerful and wonderful things you do.
I will talk about the great things you have done.
[7]They will celebrate your great goodness.
They will sing with joy about your holy acts.

[8]The LORD is gracious. He is kind and tender.
He is slow to get angry. He is full of love.
[9]The LORD is good to all.
He shows deep concern for everything he has made.
[10]LORD, every living thing you have made will praise you.
Your faithful people will praise you.
[11]They will tell about your glorious kingdom.
They will speak about your power.
[12]Then all people will know about the mighty things you have done.
They will know about the glorious majesty of your kingdom.
[13]Your kingdom is a kingdom that will last forever.
Your rule will continue for all time to come.

The LORD is faithful and will keep all of his promises.
He is loving toward everything he has made.
[14]The LORD takes good care of all those who fall.
He lifts up all those who feel helpless.
[15]Every living thing looks to you for food.

You give it to them exactly when they need it.
16 You open your hand
and satisfy the needs of every living creature.

17 The LORD is right in everything he does.
He is loving toward everything he has made.
18 The LORD is ready to help all those who call out to him.
He helps those who really mean it when they call out to him.
19 He satisfies the needs of those who have respect for him.
He hears their cry and saves them.
20 The LORD watches over all those who love him.
But he will destroy all sinful people.

21 I will praise the LORD with my mouth.
Let every creature praise his holy name
for ever and ever.

Psalm 146

[1]Praise the LORD.

I will praise the LORD.
[2]I will praise the LORD all my life.
I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.

[3]Don’t put your trust in human leaders.
Don’t trust in people. They can’t save you.
[4]When they die, they return to the ground.
On that very day their plans are bound to fail.

[5]Blessed are those who depend on the God of Jacob for help.
Blessed are those who put their hope in the LORD their God.
[6]He is the Maker of heaven and earth and the ocean.
He made everything in them.
The LORD remains faithful forever.
[7]He stands up for those who are beaten down.
He gives food to hungry people.
The LORD sets prisoners free.
[8]The LORD gives sight to those who are blind.
The LORD lifts up those who feel helpless.
The LORD loves those who do what is right.
[9]The LORD watches over the outsiders who live in our land.
He takes good care of children whose fathers have died.
He also takes good care of widows.
But he causes evil people to fail
in everything they do.

[10]The LORD rules forever.
The God of Zion will rule for all time to come.

Praise the LORD.

Psalm 147

[1]Praise the LORD.

How good it is to sing praises to our God!
How pleasant and right it is to praise him!

[2]The LORD builds up Jerusalem.
He gathers the scattered people of Israel.
[3]He heals those who have broken hearts.
He takes care of their wounds.

[4]He decides how many stars there should be.
He gives each one of them a name.
[5]Great is our Lord. His power is mighty.
There is no limit to his understanding.
[6]The LORD gives strength to those who aren't proud.
But he throws evil people down to the ground.

[7]Sing to the LORD and give thanks to him.
Make music to our God on the harp.
[8]He covers the sky with clouds.
He supplies the earth with rain.
He makes grass grow on the hills.
[9]He provides food for the cattle.
He provides for the young ravens when they cry out.

[10]He doesn't take pleasure in the strength of horses.
He doesn't take delight in the strong legs of men.
[11]The LORD takes delight in those who have respect for him.
They put their hope in his faithful love.

[12]Jerusalem, praise the LORD.
Zion, praise your God.
[13]He makes the bars of your gates stronger.
He blesses the people who live inside you.
[14]He keeps your borders safe and secure.
He satisfies you with the finest wheat.

15 He sends his command to the earth.
His word arrives there quickly.
16 He spreads the snow like wool.
He scatters the frost like ashes.
17 He throws down his hail like small stones.
No one can stand his icy blast.
18 He gives his command, and the ice melts.
He stirs up his winds, and the waters flow.

19 He has made his word known to the people of Jacob.
He has made his laws and rules known to Israel.
20 He hasn’t done that for any other nation.
They don’t know his laws.

Praise the LORD.

Psalm 148

[1]Praise the LORD.

Praise the LORD from the heavens.
Praise him in the heavens above.
[2]Praise him, all his angels.
Praise him, all his angels in heaven.
[3]Praise him, sun and moon.
Praise him, all you shining stars.
[4]Praise him, you highest heavens.
Praise him, you waters above the skies.
[5]Let all of them praise the name of the LORD,
because he gave a command and they were created.
[6]He set them in place for ever and ever.
He gave them laws they will always have to obey.

[7]Praise the LORD from the earth,
you great sea creatures and all of the deepest parts of the ocean.
[8]Praise him, lightning and hail, snow and clouds.
Praise him, you stormy winds that obey him.
[9]Praise him, all you mountains and hills.
Praise him, all you fruit trees and cedar trees.
[10]Praise him, all you wild animals and cattle.
Praise him, you small creatures and flying birds.
[11]Praise him, you kings of the earth and all nations.
Praise him, all you princes and rulers on earth.
[12]Praise him, young men and young women.
Praise him, old people and children.

[13]Let them praise the name of the LORD.
His name alone is honored.
His glory is higher than the earth and the heavens.
[14]He has given his people a strong king.
All of his faithful people praise him for that gift.
All of the people of Israel are close to his heart.

Praise the LORD.

Psalm 149

[1]Praise the LORD.

Sing a new song to the LORD.
Sing praise to him in the community of his faithful people.

[2]Let Israel be filled with joy because God is their Maker.
Let the people of Zion be glad because he is their King.
[3]Let them praise his name with dancing.
Let them make music to him with harps and tambourines.
[4]The LORD takes delight in his people.
He saves those who aren't proud. He makes them feel like kings.
[5]Let his faithful people be filled with joy because of that honor.
Let them sing with joy even when they are lying in bed.

[6]May they praise God with their mouths.
May they hold in their hands a sword that has two edges.
[7]Let them pay the nations back.
Let them punish the people of the earth.
[8]Let them put the kings of those nations in chains.
Let them put their nobles in iron chains.
[9]Let them carry out God's sentence against the nations.
That will bring glory to all of his faithful people.

Praise the LORD.

Psalm 150

[1]Praise the LORD.

Praise God in his holy temple.
Praise him in his mighty heavens.
[2]Praise him for his powerful acts.
Praise him because he is greater than anything else.
[3]Praise him by blowing trumpets.
Praise him with harps and lyres.
[4]Praise him with tambourines and dancing.
Praise him with stringed instruments and flutes.
[5]Praise him with clashing cymbals.
Praise him with clanging cymbals.

[6]Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.

Praise the LORD.

Proverbs

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Purpose

Proverbs 1

[1]These are the proverbs of Solomon. He was the son of David and the king of Israel.

[2]Proverbs teach you wisdom and train you.
They help you understand wise sayings.
[3]They provide you with training and help you live wisely.
They lead to what is right and honest and fair.
[4]They give understanding to childish people.
They give knowledge and good sense to those who are young.
[5]Let wise people listen and add to what they have learned.
Let those who understand what is right get guidance.
[6]What I'm teaching also helps you understand proverbs and stories.
It helps you understand the sayings and riddles of those who are wise.

Main Point

[7]If you really want to gain knowledge, you must begin by having respect for the LORD.
But foolish people hate wisdom and training.

Think and Live Wisely

A Warning Against a Life of Crime

[8]My son, listen to your father's advice.
Don't turn away from your mother's teaching.
[9]What they teach you will be like a beautiful crown on your head.

It will be like a chain to decorate your neck.

10 My son, if sinners tempt you,
don't give in to them.
11 They might say, "Come along with us.
Let's hide and wait to spill someone's blood.
Let's catch some harmless people in our trap.
12 Let's swallow them alive, as the grave does.
Let's swallow them whole, like those who go down into the pit.
13 We'll get all kinds of valuable things.
We'll fill our houses with what we steal.
14 Come and join our gang.
We'll share everything we have."
15 My son, don't go along with them.
Don't even set your feet on their paths.
16 They are always in a hurry to sin.
They are quick to spill someone's blood.
17 How useless it is to spread a net
while all the birds are watching!
18 Those who hide and wait will spill their own blood.
They will be caught in their own trap.
19 That's what happens to everyone
who goes after money in the wrong way.
That kind of money takes away
the lives of those who get it.

A Warning Against Turning Away From Wisdom

20 Wisdom calls out in the street.
She raises her voice in public places.
21 At the noisy street corners she cries out.
Here is what she says near the gates of the city.

22 "How long will you childish people love your childish ways?
How long will you rude people enjoy making fun of God and others?
How long will you foolish people hate knowledge?
23 Suppose you had paid attention to my warning.

Then I would have poured out my heart to you.
I would have told you what I was thinking.
24But you turned away from me when I called out to you.
None of you paid attention when I reached out my hand.
25You turned away from all my advice.
You wouldn’t accept my warning.
26So I will laugh at you when you are in danger.
I will make fun of you when hard times come.
27I will laugh when hard times hit you like a storm.
I will laugh when danger comes your way like a windstorm.
I will make fun of you when suffering and trouble come.

28“Then you will call to me. But I won’t answer.
You will look for me. But you won’t find me.
29You hated knowledge.
You didn’t choose to have respect for the LORD.
30You wouldn’t accept my advice.
You turned your backs on my warnings.
31So you will eat the fruit of the way you have lived.
You will choke on the fruit of what you have planned.

32“Childish people go down the wrong path. They will die.
Foolish people are satisfied with the way they live. They will be destroyed.
33But those who listen to me will live in safety.
They will not worry. They won’t be afraid of getting hurt.”

Good Things Come From Wisdom

Proverbs 2

[1]My son, accept my words.
Store up my commands inside you.
[2]Let your ears listen to wisdom.
Apply your heart to understanding.
[3]Call out for the ability to be wise.
Cry out for understanding.
[4]Look for it as you would look for silver.
Search for it as you would search for hidden treasure.
[5]Then you will understand how to have respect for the LORD.
You will find out how to know God.
[6]The LORD gives wisdom.
Knowledge and understanding come from his mouth.
[7]He stores up success for honest people.
He is like a shield to those who live without blame. He keeps them safe.
[8]He guards the path of those who are honest.
He watches over the way of his faithful ones.

[9]You will understand what is right and honest and fair.
You will understand the right way to live.
[10]Your heart will become wise.
Your mind will delight in knowledge.
[11]Good sense will keep you safe.
Understanding will guard you.

[12]Wisdom will save you from the ways of evil men.
It will save you from men who twist their words.
[13]Men like that leave the straight paths
to walk in dark ways.
[14]They take delight in doing what is wrong.
They take joy in twisting everything around.
[15]Their paths are crooked.

Their ways are not straight.

16 Wisdom will save you from a woman who commits adultery.
It will save you from a sinful wife and her tempting words.
17 She leaves the man she married when she was young.
She breaks the promise she made to her God.
18 Her house leads down to death.
Her paths lead to the spirits of the dead.
19 No one who goes to her comes back
or reaches the paths of life.

20 You will walk in the ways of good people.
You will follow the paths of those who do right.
21 Honest people will live in the land.
Those who are without blame will remain in it.
22 But sinners will be cut off from the land.
Those who aren't faithful will be torn away from it.

More Good Things Come From Wisdom

Proverbs 3

[1]My son, do not forget my teaching.
Keep my commands in your heart.
[2]They will help you live for many years.
They will bring you success.

[3]Don’t let love and truth ever leave you.
Tie them around your neck.
Write them on the tablet of your heart.
[4]Then you will find favor and a good name
in the eyes of God and people.

[5]Trust in the LORD with all your heart.
Do not depend on your own understanding.
[6]In all your ways remember him.
Then he will make your paths smooth and straight.

[7]Don’t be wise in your own eyes.
Have respect for the LORD and avoid evil.
[8]That will bring health to your body.
It will make your bones strong.

[9]Honor the LORD with your wealth.
Give him the first share of all your crops.
[10]Then your storerooms will be so full they can’t hold everything.
Your huge jars will spill over with fresh wine.

[11]My son, do not hate the LORD’s training.
Do not object when he corrects you.
[12]The LORD trains those he loves.
He is like a father who trains the son he is pleased with.

[13]Blessed is the one who finds wisdom.

Blessed is the one who gains understanding.
14 Wisdom pays better than silver does.
She earns more than gold does.
15 She is worth more than rubies.
Nothing you want can compare with her.
16 Long life is in her right hand.
In her left hand are riches and honor.
17 Her ways are pleasant ways.
All her paths lead to peace.
18 She is a tree of life to those who hold her close.
Those who hold on to her will be blessed.

19 By wisdom the LORD laid the earth's foundations.
Through understanding he set the heavens in place.
20 By his knowledge the seas were separated,
and the clouds dropped their dew.

21 My son, hold on to good sense and the understanding of what is right.
Don't let them out of your sight.
22 They will be life for you.
They will be like a gracious necklace around your neck.
23 Then you will go on your way in safety.
You will not trip and fall.
24 When you lie down, you won't be afraid.
When you lie down, you will sleep soundly.
25 Don't be terrified by sudden trouble.
Don't be afraid when sinners are destroyed.
26 The LORD is the one you will trust in.
He will keep your feet from being caught in a trap.

27 Don't hold back good from those who are worthy of it.
Don't hold it back when you can help.
28 Suppose you have something to give.
Don't say to your neighbor,
"Come back later.
I'll give it to you tomorrow."

29 Don't plan to harm your neighbor.
He lives near you and trusts you.
30 Don't bring charges against a man without any reason.

He has not harmed you.

31 Don’t be jealous of a man who hurts others.
Don’t choose any of his ways.
32 The LORD really hates sinful people.
But he makes honest people his closest friends.

33 The LORD puts a curse on the houses of sinners.
But he blesses the homes of those who do what is right.
34 He laughs at proud people who make fun of others.
But he gives grace to those who are not proud.
35 Wise people receive honor.
But the LORD puts foolish people to shame.

Wisdom Is Best

Proverbs 4

[1]My children, listen to a father's teaching.
Pay attention and gain understanding.
[2]I give you good advice.
So don't turn away from what I teach you.
[3]I was once a young boy in my father's house.
I was my mother's only child.
[4]My father taught me.
He said, "Hold on to my words with all your heart.
Keep my commands. Then you will live.
[5]Get wisdom. Get understanding.
Don't forget my words. Don't turn away from them.
[6]Stay close to wisdom, and she will keep you safe.
Love her, and she will watch over you.
[7]Wisdom is best. So get wisdom.
No matter what it costs, get understanding.
[8]Value wisdom, and she will lift you up.
Hold her close, and she will honor you.
[9]She will set a beautiful crown on your head.
She will give you a glorious crown."

[10]My son, listen. Accept what I say.
Then you will live for many years.
[11]I guide you in the way of wisdom.
I lead you along straight paths.
[12]When you walk, nothing will slow you down.
When you run, you won't trip and fall.
[13]Hold on to my teaching. Don't let it go.
Guard it well. It is your life.
[14]Don't take the path of evil people.
Don't live the way sinners do.
[15]Stay away from their path. Don't travel on it.
Turn away from it. Go on your way.

16 Sinners can’t sleep until they do what is evil.
They can’t rest until they make someone fall.
17 They do evil just as easily as they eat food.
They hurt others as easily as they drink wine.

18 The path of those who do what is right is like the first gleam of dawn.
It shines brighter and brighter until the full light of day.
19 But the way of those who do what is wrong is like deep darkness.
They don’t know what makes them trip and fall.

20 My son, pay attention to what I say.
Listen closely to my words.
21 Don’t let them out of your sight.
Keep them in your heart.
22 They are life to those who find them.
They are health to your whole body.
23 Above everything else, guard your heart.
It is where your life comes from.
24 Don’t speak with twisted words.
Keep evil talk away from your lips.
25 Let your eyes look straight ahead.
Keep looking right in front of you.
26 Make level paths for your feet to walk on.
Only go on ways that are firm.
27 Don’t turn to the right or left.
Keep your feet from the path of evil.

A Warning Against Committing Adultery

Proverbs 5

[1]My son, pay attention to my wisdom.
Listen carefully to my wise sayings.
[2]Then you will continue to have good sense.
Your lips will keep on speaking words of knowledge.
[3]A woman who commits adultery has lips that drip honey.
What she says is smoother than oil.
[4]But in the end she is like bitter poison.
She cuts like a sword that has two edges.
[5]Her feet go down to death.
Her steps lead straight to the grave.
[6]She doesn't give any thought to her way of life.
Her paths are crooked, but she doesn't realize it.

[7]My sons, listen to me.
Don't turn away from what I say.
[8]Stay on a path far away from that evil woman.
Don't even go near the door of her house.
[9]If you do, you will give your best strength to others.
You will give the best years of your life to someone who is mean.
[10]Strangers will use up all of your wealth.
Your hard work will make someone else rich.
[11]At the end of your life you will groan.
Your skin and your body will be worn out.
[12]You will say, "How I hated to take advice!
How my heart refused to be corrected!
[13]I would not obey my teachers.
I wouldn't listen to those who taught me.
[14]I was almost totally destroyed.
It happened right in front of the whole community."

[15]Drink water from your own well.
Drink running water from your own spring.

16 Should your springs pour out into the streets?
Should your streams of water pour out in public places?
17 No! Let them belong to you alone.
Never share them with strangers.
18 May your fountain be blessed.
May the wife you married when you were young make you happy.
19 She is like a loving doe, a graceful deer.
May her breasts always satisfy you.
May you always be captured by her love.
20 My son, why be captured by a woman who commits adultery?
Why hug the wife of another man?

21 The LORD watches a man's ways.
He studies all of his paths.
22 A sinner is trapped by his own evil acts.
He is held tight by the ropes of his sins.
23 He will die because he refused to be corrected.
His sins will capture him because he was very foolish.

Warnings Against Foolish Acts

Proverbs 6

[1]My son, don't put up money for what your neighbor owes.
Don't agree to pay up for someone else.
[2]Don't be trapped by what you have said.
Don't be caught by the words of your mouth.
[3]Instead, my son, do something to free yourself.
Don't fall into your neighbor's hands.
Don't be proud.
Hurry and make your appeal to your neighbor.
[4]Don't let your eyes go to sleep.
Don't let your eyelids close.
[5]As a deer frees itself from a hunter, free yourself.
As a bird frees itself from a trapper, free yourself.

[6]You people who don't want to work, think about the ant!
Consider its ways and be wise!
[7]It has no commander.
It has no leader or ruler.
[8]But it stores up its food in summer.
It gathers its food at harvest time.

[9]You lazy people, how long will you lie there?
When will you get up from your sleep?
[10]You might sleep a little or take a little nap.
You might even fold your hands and rest.
[11]Then you would be poor, as if someone had robbed you.
You would have little, as if someone had stolen from you.

[12]A worthless and evil man
goes around saying twisted things with his mouth.
[13]He winks with his eyes.
He makes signals with his feet.
He motions with his fingers.

14 His plans are evil. He has lies in his heart.
He is always stirring up fights.
15 Trouble will catch up with him in an instant.
He will suddenly be destroyed. Nothing can save him.

16 There are six things the LORD hates.
In fact, he hates seven things.
17 The LORD hates proud eyes,
a lying tongue,
and hands that kill those who aren't guilty.
18 He also hates hearts that make evil plans,
feet that are quick to do evil,
19 any witness who pours out lies,
and anyone who stirs up family fights.

A Warning Against Committing Adultery

20 My son, keep your father's commands.
Don't turn away from your mother's teaching.
21 Tie them to your heart forever.
Put them around your neck.
22 When you walk, they will guide you.
When you sleep, they will watch over you.
When you wake up, they will speak to you.
23 Your father's commands are like a lamp.
Your mother's teaching is like a light.
And the training that corrects you
leads to life.
24 It keeps you from a sinful woman.
It keeps you from the smooth tongue of a woman who commits adultery.
25 Don't hunger in your heart after her beauty.
Don't let her eyes capture you.
26 A prostitute leaves you with only a loaf of bread.
Another man's wife hunts your very life.
27 You can't shovel fire into your lap
without burning your clothes.
28 You can't walk on hot coals

without burning your feet.
29 It’s the same for anyone who has sex with another man’s wife.
Anyone who touches her will be punished.

30 People don’t hate a thief who steals
to fill his empty stomach.
31 But when he is caught, he must pay seven times as much as he stole.
It may even cost him everything he has.
32 A man who commits adultery has no sense.
Anyone who does it destroys himself.
33 He will be beaten up and dishonored.
His shame will never be wiped away.
34 Jealousy stirs up a husband’s anger.
He will show no mercy when he gets even.
35 He won’t accept any payment.
He won’t take any money, no matter how much he is offered.

A Warning Against a Woman Who Commits Adultery

Proverbs 7

[1]My son, obey my words.
Store up my commands inside you.
[2]Obey my commands and you will live.
Guard my teachings as you would your own eyes.
[3]Tie them on your fingers.
Write them on the tablet of your heart.
[4]Say to wisdom, “You are my sister.”
Call understanding a member of your family.
[5]They will keep you from a woman who commits adultery.
They will keep you from the smooth talk of a sinful wife.

[6]I stood at the window of my house.
I looked out through it.
[7]Among those who were childish
I saw a young man who had no sense.
[8]He went down the street near that sinful woman’s corner.
He walked toward her house.
[9]The sun had gone down. Day was fading.
The darkness of night was falling.

[10]A woman came out to meet him.
She was dressed like a prostitute and had a clever plan.
[11]She was a loud and pushy woman.
She never stayed at home.
[12]Sometimes in the streets, sometimes at other places,
at every corner she would wait.
[13]She took hold of the young man and kissed him.
With a bold face she spoke to him.

[14]She said, “At home I have meat left over from my offerings.
Today I offered what I had promised I would.
[15]So I came out to meet you.

I looked for you. And I have found you!
16 I have covered my bed
with colored sheets from Egypt.
17 I've perfumed my bed with spices.
I used myrrh, aloes and cinnamon.
18 Come, let's drink our fill of love until morning.
Let's enjoy ourselves by having sex!
19 My husband isn't home.
He's gone on a long journey.
20 He took his bag full of money.
He won't be home for several days."

21 She led him down the wrong path with her clever words.
She charmed him with her smooth talk.
22 All at once he followed her.
He was like an ox going to be killed.
He was like a deer stepping into a trap
23 until an arrow struck its liver.
He was like a bird rushing into a trap.
Little did he know it would cost him his life!

24 My sons, listen to me.
Pay attention to what I say.
25 Don't let your hearts turn to her ways.
Don't step onto her paths.
26 She has brought down a lot of men.
She has killed a huge crowd.
27 Her house is a road to the grave.
It leads down to the place of the dead.

Wisdom Is Worth More Than Anything

Proverbs 8

[1]Doesn’t wisdom call out?
Doesn’t understanding raise her voice?
[2]On the high roads along the way,
she takes her place where the paths meet.
[3]Beside the gates leading into the city,
she cries out at the entrances.
[4]She says, “Men, I call out to you.
I raise my voice to all human beings.
[5]You who are childish, get some good sense.
You who are foolish, gain understanding.
[6]Listen! I have worthy things to say.
I open my lips to speak what is right.
[7]My mouth speaks what is true.
My lips hate evil.
[8]All the words of my mouth are honest.
None of them is twisted or sinful.
[9]To those who have understanding, all my words are right.
To those who have knowledge, they are true.
[10]Choose my teaching instead of silver.
Choose knowledge rather than fine gold.
[11]Wisdom is worth more than rubies.
Nothing you want can compare with her.

[12]“I, wisdom, live together with understanding.
I have knowledge and good sense.
[13]To have respect for the LORD is to hate evil.
I hate pride and bragging.
I hate evil ways and twisted words.
[14]I have good sense and give good advice.
I have understanding and power.
[15]By me kings rule.
Leaders make laws that are fair.

16 By me princes govern.
By me all nobles rule on earth.
17 I love those who love me.
Those who look for me find me.
18 With me are riches and honor.
With me are lasting wealth and success.
19 My fruit is better than fine gold.
My gifts are better than the finest silver.
20 I walk in ways that are honest.
I take paths that are right.
21 I leave riches to those who love me.
I give them more than they have room for.

22 "The LORD created me as the first of his works,
before his acts of long ago.
23 I was formed at the very beginning.
I was formed before the world began.
24 Before there were any oceans, I was born.
There weren't any springs of water at that time.
25 Before the mountains were settled in place, I was born.
Before there were any hills, I was born.
26 It happened before the LORD made the earth and its fields.
It was before he made the dust of the world.
27 I was there when he set the heavens in place.
When he marked out the place where the sky meets the sea, I was there.
28 That was when he put the clouds above.
It was when he fixed the ocean springs in place.
29 It was when he set limits for the sea
so that the waters had to obey his command.
When he marked out the foundations of the earth, I was there.
30 I was the skilled worker at his side.
I was filled with delight day after day.
I was always happy to be with him.
31 His whole world filled me with joy.
I took delight in all human beings.

32 "My children, listen to me.
Blessed are those who keep my ways.
33 Listen to my teaching and be wise.

Don’t turn away from it.
34 Blessed is the one who listens to me.
He watches every day at my doors.
He waits beside my doorway.
35 Those who find me find life.
They receive favor from the LORD.
36 But those who don’t find me harm only themselves.
Everyone who hates me loves death.”

Wisdom and Foolishness Call Out

Proverbs 9

[1]Wisdom has built her house.
She has made its seven pillars.
[2]She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine.
She has also set her table.
[3]She has sent out her female servants.
She calls out from the highest point of the city.
[4]She says, “Let all who are childish come in here!”
She speaks to those who have no sense.
[5]“Come and eat my food.
Drink the wine I have mixed.
[6]Leave your childish ways and you will live.
Walk in the way that leads to understanding.

[7]“When you correct someone who makes fun of others, you might be laughed at.
When you warn a sinner, you might get hurt.
[8]Don’t warn those who make fun of others. They will hate you.
Warn those who are wise. They will love you.
[9]Teach a wise man. He will become even wiser.
Teach a person who does right. He will learn even more.

[10]“If you really want to become wise, you must begin by having respect for the LORD.
To know the Holy One is to gain understanding.
[11]Through me, you will live a long time.
Years will be added to your life.
[12]If you are wise, your wisdom will reward you.
If you make fun of others, you alone will suffer.”

[13]The woman called Foolishness is loud.
She doesn’t control herself. She doesn’t know anything.
[14]She sits at the door of her house.

She sits at the highest point of the city.
15 She calls out to those who pass by.
She calls out to those who go straight on their way.
16 She says, “Let all who are childish come in here!”
She speaks to those who have no sense.
17 She says, “Stolen water is sweet.
Food eaten in secret tastes good!”
18 But they don’t know that dead people are there.
They don’t know that her guests are in the deepest parts of the grave.

The Proverbs of Solomon

Proverbs 10

[1]These are the proverbs of Solomon.

A wise son makes his father glad.
But a foolish son brings sorrow to his mother.

[2]Riches that are gained by sinning aren't worth anything.
But doing what is right saves you from death.

[3]The LORD gives those who do right the food they need.
But he lets those who do wrong go hungry.

[4]Hands that don't want to work make you poor.
But hands that work hard bring wealth to you.

[5]A child who gathers crops in summer is wise.
But a child who sleeps at harvest time brings shame.

[6]Blessings are like crowns on the heads of those who do right.
But the trouble caused by what sinners say destroys them.

[7]To remember those who do right is a blessing.
But the names of those who do wrong will rot.

[8]A wise heart accepts commands.
But foolish chattering destroys you.

[9]Anyone who lives without blame walks safely.
But anyone who takes a crooked path will get caught.

[10]An evil wink gets you into trouble.
And foolish chattering destroys you.

[11]The mouths of those who do right are a fountain of life.
But the trouble caused by what sinners say destroys them.

12 Hate stirs up fights.
But love erases all sins by forgiving them.

13 Wisdom is found on the lips of those who understand what is right.
But those who have no sense are punished.

14 Wise people store up knowledge.
But the mouths of foolish people destroy them.

15 The wealth of rich people is like a city that makes them feel safe.
But having nothing destroys those who are poor.

16 People who do what is right earn life.
But what sinners earn causes them to be punished.

17 Anyone who pays attention to his training
is on his way to life.
But anyone who refuses to be corrected
leads others down the wrong path.

18 Anyone who hides hatred has lying lips.
And anyone who spreads lies is foolish.

19 Those who talk a lot are likely to sin.
But those who control their tongues are wise.

20 The tongues of those who do right are like fine silver.
But the hearts of those who do wrong aren't worth very much.

21 The words of those who do right benefit many people.
But those who are foolish die because they have no sense.

22 The blessing of the LORD brings wealth.
Trouble doesn't come with it.

23 A foolish person finds pleasure in doing evil things.
But a man who has understanding takes delight in wisdom.

24 What sinners are afraid of will catch up with them.
But those who do right will get what they want.

25 When the storm is over, sinners are gone.
But those who do right stand firm forever.

26 Anyone who doesn't want to work hurts those who send him.
He is like vinegar on the teeth or smoke in the eyes.

27 Having respect for the LORD leads to a longer life.
But the years of evil people are cut short.

28 Those who do right can expect joy.
But the hopes of sinners are bound to fail.

29 The way of the LORD leads to a safe place for those who do right.
But it destroys those who do evil.

30 Those who do right will never be removed from the land.
But those who do wrong will not remain in it.

31 The mouths of those who do right produce wisdom.
But tongues that speak twisted words will be cut out.

32 Those who do right know the proper thing to say.
But those who do wrong speak only twisted words.

Proverbs 11

[1]The LORD hates it when people use scales to cheat others.
But he is delighted when people use honest weights.

[2]When pride comes, shame follows.
But wisdom comes to those who are not proud.

[3]Those who do what is right are guided by their honest lives.
But those who aren't faithful are destroyed by their trickery.

[4]Wealth isn't worth anything when God judges you.
But doing what is right saves you from death.

[5]The ways of honest people are made straight because they do what is right.
But those who do what is wrong are brought down by their own sins.

[6]Godly people are saved by doing what is right.
But those who aren't faithful are trapped by evil longings.

[7]When an evil man dies, his hope dies with him.
Everything he expected to gain from his power will be lost.

[8]Those who do right are saved from trouble.
But trouble comes on those who do wrong.

[9]With their words ungodly people destroy their neighbors.
But those who do what is right escape because of their knowledge.

[10]When those who do right succeed, their city is glad.
When those who do wrong die, people shout for joy.

[11]The blessing of honest people builds up a city.
But the words of sinners destroy it.

[12]A person who has no sense makes fun of his neighbor.

But a man who has understanding controls his tongue.

13 Those who talk about others tell secrets.
But those who can be trusted keep things to themselves.

14 Without the guidance of good leaders a nation falls.
But many good advisers can save it.

15 Anyone who puts up money for what someone else owes will certainly suffer.
But a person who doesn't agree to pay up for someone else is safe.

16 A woman who has a kind heart gains respect.
But men who are not kind gain only wealth.

17 A kind man benefits himself.
But a mean person brings trouble on himself.

18 Those who do what is wrong really earn nothing.
But those who plant what is right will certainly be rewarded.

19 Right living leads to life.
But anyone who runs after evil will die.

20 The LORD hates those whose hearts are twisted.
But he is pleased with those who live without blame.

21 You can be sure that sinners will be punished.
And you can also be sure that godly people will go free.

22 A beautiful woman who has no sense
is like a gold ring in a pig's nose.

23 What godly people long for ends only in what is good.
But what sinners hope for ends only in God's anger.

24 Some give freely but get even richer.
Others don't give what they should but get even poorer.

25 Anyone who gives a lot will succeed.

Anyone who renews others will be renewed.

[26]People call down curses on those who store up grain for themselves.
But blessing makes those who are willing to sell feel like kings.

[27]Anyone who looks for what is good finds favor.
But bad things happen to a person who plans to do evil.

[28]Those who trust in their riches will fall.
But those who do right will be as healthy as a green leaf.

[29]Those who bring trouble on their families will receive nothing but wind.
And foolish people will serve wise people.

[30]The fruit that godly people bear is like a tree of life.
And those who lead others to do what is right are wise.

[31]Godly people get what they should get on earth.
So ungodly people and sinners will certainly get what they should get!

Proverbs 12

[1]Anyone who loves to be trained loves knowledge.
Anyone who hates to be corrected is stupid.

[2]The LORD blesses anyone who does good.
But he judges any man who is tricky.

[3]If a man does what is evil, he can't become strong and steady.
But if people do what is right, they can't be removed from the land.

[4]A noble wife is her husband's crown.
But a wife who brings shame is like sickness in his bones.

[5]The plans of godly people are right.
But the advice of sinners will lead you the wrong way.

[6]The words of those who are evil hide and wait to spill people's blood.
But the speech of those who are honest saves them from traps like that.

[7]Sinners are destroyed and taken away.
But the houses of godly people stand firm.

[8]A man is praised for how wise he is.
But people hate those who have twisted minds.

[9]Being nobody and having a servant
is better than pretending to be somebody and having no food.

[10]Those who do what is right take good care of their animals.
But the kindest acts of those who do wrong are mean.

[11]Anyone who farms his land will have plenty of food.
But a person who chases dreams has no sense.

[12]Those who do what is wrong want to steal from others.
But those who do what is right bear good fruit because of their deep

roots.

13 A sinner is trapped by his sinful talk.
But a godly person escapes trouble.

14 Many good things come from what a man says.
And the work of his hands rewards him.

15 The way of a foolish person seems right to him.
But a wise person listens to advice.

16 Foolish people are easily upset.
But wise people pay no attention to hurtful words.

17 An honest witness tells the truth.
But a dishonest witness tells lies.

18 Thoughtless words cut like a sword.
But the tongue of wise people brings healing.

19 Truthful words last forever.
But lies last for only a moment.

20 There are lies in the hearts of those who plan evil.
But there is joy for those who work to bring peace.

21 No harm comes to godly people.
But sinners have all the trouble they can handle.

22 The LORD hates those whose lips tell lies.
But he is pleased with people who tell the truth.

23 Wise people keep their knowledge to themselves.
But the hearts of foolish people shout foolish things.

24 Hands that work hard will rule.
But people who don’t want to work will become slaves.

25 Worry makes a man’s heart heavy.
But a kind word cheers him up.

[26]Godly people are careful about the friends they choose.
But the way of sinners leads them down the wrong path.

[27]Anyone who refuses to work doesn’t even cook what he catches.
But a man who works hard values what he has.

[28]There is life in doing what is right.
Along that path you will never die.



The Lord hates those whose lips tell lies. But he is pleased with people who tell the truth.

Proverbs 12:22

Proverbs 13

[1]A wise child pays attention to what his father teaches him.
But anyone who makes fun of others doesn’t listen to warnings.

[2]The good things a man says benefit him.
But a liar loves to hurt others.

[3]Anyone who guards what he says guards his life.
But anyone who speaks without thinking will be destroyed.

[4]People who refuse to work want things and get nothing.
But the longings of people who work hard are completely satisfied.

[5]Those who do right hate what is false.
But those who do wrong bring shame and dishonor.

[6]Doing right guards those who are honest.
But evil destroys those who are sinful.

[7]Some people pretend to be rich but have nothing.
Others pretend to be poor but have great wealth.

[8]A man who is rich might have to pay to save his life.
But a poor person is not in danger of that.

[9]The lights of godly people shine brightly.
But the lamps of sinners are blown out.

[10]Pride only leads to arguing.
But those who take advice are wise.

[11]Money that is gained in the wrong way disappears.
But money that is gathered little by little grows.

[12]Hope that is put off makes one sick at heart.
But a longing that is met is like a tree of life.

13 Anyone who hates what he is taught will pay for it later.
But a person who respects a command will be rewarded.

14 The teaching of wise people is like a fountain that gives life.
It turns those who listen to it away from the jaws of death.

15 Good understanding wins favor.
But the way of liars doesn't last.

16 Wise people act in keeping with the knowledge they have.
But foolish people show how foolish they are.

17 An evil messenger gets into trouble.
But a messenger who is trusted brings healing.

18 Those who turn away from their training become poor and ashamed.
But those who accept warnings are honored.

19 A longing that is met is like something that tastes sweet.
But foolish people hate to turn away from evil.

20 Anyone who walks with wise people grows wise.
But a companion of foolish people suffers harm.

21 Hard times chase those who are sinful.
But success is the reward of those who do right.

22 A good person leaves what he owns to his children and grandchildren.
But a sinner's wealth is stored up for those who do right.

23 The fields of poor people might produce a lot of food.
But those who beat them down destroy it all.

24 Those who don't correct their children hate them.
But those who love them are careful to train them.

25 Those who do right eat until they are full.
But the stomachs of those who do wrong go hungry.

Proverbs 14

[1]A wise woman builds her house.
But a foolish woman tears hers down with her own hands.

[2]An honest person has respect for the LORD.
But a person whose paths are crooked hates him.

[3]Foolish people are punished for what they say.
But the things wise people say keep them safe.

[4]Where there are no oxen, the feed box is empty.
But a strong ox brings in a great harvest.

[5]An honest witness does not lie.
But a dishonest witness pours out lies.

[6]Those who make fun of others look for wisdom and don't find it.
But knowledge comes easily to those who understand what is right.

[7]Stay away from a foolish man.
You won't find knowledge in what he says.

[8]People are wise and understanding when they think about the way they live.
But people are foolish when their foolish ways trick them.

[9]Foolish people laugh at making things right when they sin.
But honest people try to do the right thing.

[10]Each heart knows its own sadness.
And no one else can share its joy.

[11]The houses of sinners will be destroyed.
But the tents of honest people will stand firm.

[12]There is a way that may seem right to a man.
But in the end it leads to death.

[13]Even when you laugh, your heart can be hurting.
And your joy can end in sadness.

[14]Those who aren't faithful will be paid back
for what they've done.
And good men will receive rewards
for how they've lived.

[15]A childish person believes anything.
But a wise person thinks about how he lives.

[16]A wise person has respect for the LORD and avoids evil.
But a foolish person gets mad and is thoughtless.

[17]Anyone who gets angry quickly does foolish things.
And a man who is tricky is hated.

[18]Childish people act in keeping with their foolish ways.
But knowledge makes wise people feel like kings.

[19]Evil people will bow down in front of good people.
And those who do wrong will bow down at the gates of those who do right.

[20]Poor people are avoided even by their neighbors.
But rich people have many friends.

[21]Anyone who hates his neighbor commits sin.
But blessed is the person who is kind to those in need.

[22]Those who plan evil go down the wrong path.
But those who plan good find love and truth.

[23]All hard work pays off.
But if all you do is talk, you will be poor.

[24]The wealth of wise people is their crown.
But the foolish ways of foolish people lead to what is foolish.

25 An honest witness saves lives.
But a dishonest witness tells lies.

26 Anyone who shows respect for the LORD has a strong tower.
It will be a safe place for his children.

27 Respect for the LORD is like a fountain that gives life.
It turns you away from the jaws of death.

28 A large population is a king's glory.
But a prince without followers is destroyed.

29 Anyone who is patient has great understanding.
But anyone who gets angry quickly shows how foolish he is.

30 A peaceful heart gives life to the body.
But jealousy rots the bones.

31 Anyone who crushes poor people makes fun of their Maker.
But anyone who is kind to those in need honors God.

32 When trouble comes, sinners are brought down.
But godly people have a safe place even when they die.

33 Wisdom rests in the hearts of those who understand what is right.
And even among foolish people she makes herself known.

34 Doing what is right lifts people up.
But sin brings shame to any nation.

35 A king is pleased with a wise servant.
But a servant who is full of shame invites the king's anger.

Proverbs 15

[1]A gentle answer turns anger away.
But mean words stir up anger.

[2]The tongues of wise people use knowledge well.
But the mouths of foolish people pour out foolish words.

[3]The eyes of the LORD are everywhere.
They watch those who are evil and those who are good.

[4]A tongue that brings healing is like a tree of life.
But a tongue that tells lies produces a broken spirit.

[5]A foolish person turns his back on how his father has trained him.
But anyone who accepts being corrected shows understanding.

[6]The houses of those who do what is right hold great wealth.
But those who do what is wrong earn only trouble.

[7]The lips of wise people spread knowledge.
But that's not true of the hearts of foolish people.

[8]The LORD hates the sacrifice of sinful people.
But the prayers of honest people please him.

[9]The LORD hates how sinners live.
But he loves those who run after what is right.

[10]Hard training is in store for anyone who leaves the right path.
A person who hates to be corrected will die.

[11]Death and the Grave lie open in front of the LORD.
So the hearts of mere men certainly lie open to him!

[12]Anyone who makes fun of others doesn't like to be corrected.
He won't ask wise people for advice.

13 A happy heart makes a face look cheerful.
But a sad heart produces a broken spirit.

14 A heart that understands what is right looks for knowledge.
But the mouths of foolish people feed on what is foolish.

15 All the days of those who are crushed are filled with pain and suffering.
But a cheerful heart enjoys a good time that never ends.

16 It is better to have respect for the LORD and have little
than to be rich and have trouble.

17 A meal of vegetables where there is love
is better than the finest meat where there is hatred.

18 A man who burns with anger stirs up fights.
But a person who is patient calms things down.

19 The way of people who don't want to work is blocked with thorns.
But the path of honest people is a wide road.

20 A wise son makes his father glad.
But a foolish son hates his mother.

21 A person who has no sense enjoys doing foolish things.
But a man who has understanding walks straight ahead.

22 Plans fail without good advice.
But they succeed when there are many advisers.

23 Joy is found in giving the right answer.
And how good is a word spoken at the right time!

24 The path of life leads up for those who are wise.
It keeps them from going down to the grave.

25 The LORD tears down the proud person's house.
But he keeps the widow's property safe.

[26]The LORD hates the thoughts of sinful people.
But the thoughts of pure people are pleasing to him.

[27]Anyone who always wants more brings trouble to his family.
But a person who refuses to be paid off will live.

[28]The hearts of those who do right think about how they will answer.
But the mouths of those who do wrong pour out evil.

[29]The LORD is far away from those who do wrong.
But he hears the prayers of those who do right.

[30]A cheerful look brings joy to your heart.
And good news gives health to your body.

[31]If you listen to a warning, you will live.
You will be at home among those who are wise.

[32]Anyone who turns away from his training hates himself.
But anyone who accepts being corrected gains understanding.

[33]Having respect for the LORD teaches you how to live wisely.
So don’t be proud if you want to be honored.

Proverbs 16

[1]People make plans in their hearts.
But the LORD controls what they say.

[2]Everything a man does might seem right to him.
But the LORD knows what that man is thinking.

[3]Commit to the LORD everything you do.
Then your plans will succeed.

[4]The LORD works everything out for his own purposes.
Even those who do wrong were made for a day of trouble.

[5]The LORD hates all those who have proud hearts.
You can be sure that they will be punished.

[6]Through love and truth sin is paid for.
People avoid evil when they have respect for the LORD.

[7]When the way you live pleases the LORD,
he makes even your enemies live at peace with you.

[8]It is better to have a little and do right
than to have a lot and be unfair.

[9]In your heart you plan your life.
But the LORD decides where your steps will take you.

[10]A king might speak as if his words come from God.
But what he says should not turn right into wrong.

[11]Honest scales and balances come from the LORD.
He made all of the weights in the bag.

[12]A king hates it when his people do what is wrong.
A ruler is made secure when they do what is right.

[13]Kings are pleased when what you say is honest.
They value people who speak the truth.

[14]An angry king can order your death.
But a wise man will try to calm him down.

[15]When a king's face is happy, it means life.
His favor is like rain in the spring.

[16]It is much better to get wisdom than gold.
It is much better to choose understanding than silver.

[17]The path of honest people takes them away from evil.
Those who guard their ways guard their lives.

[18]If you are proud, you will be destroyed.
If you are proud, you will fall.

[19]Suppose you are lowly in spirit and are with those who are beaten down.
That's better than sharing stolen goods with those who are proud.

[20]If anyone pays attention to what he is taught, he will succeed.
Blessed is the person who puts his trust in the LORD.

[21]Wise hearts are known for understanding what is right.
Pleasant words make people want to learn more.

[22]Understanding is like a fountain of life to those who have it.
But foolish people are punished for the foolish things they do.

[23]The hearts of wise people guide their mouths.
Their words make people want to learn more.

[24]Pleasant words are like honey.
They are sweet to the spirit and bring healing to the body.

[25]There is a way that may seem right to a man.
But in the end it leads to death.

[26]The hunger of a worker makes him work.

His hunger drives him on.

27 A worthless man plans to do evil things.
His words are like a burning fire.

28 A twisted person stirs up fights.
Anyone who talks about others comes between close friends.

29 A man who wants to hurt others tries to get them to sin.
He leads them down a path that isn't good.

30 When he winks with his eyes, he is planning to do wrong.
When his lips are tightly closed, he is up to no good.

31 Gray hair is a glorious crown.
You get it by living the right way.

32 It is better to be patient than to fight.
It is better to control your temper than to take a city.

33 Lots are cast into the lap to make decisions.
But everything they decide comes from the LORD.

Proverbs 17

[1]It is better to eat a dry crust of bread in peace and quiet
than to eat a big dinner in a house that is full of fighting.

[2]A wise servant will rule over a shameful child.
He will be given part of the property as if he were a family member.

[3]Fire tests silver. Heat tests gold.
But the LORD tests our hearts.

[4]An evil person listens to evil words.
A liar pays attention to words that are harmful.

[5]Anyone who laughs at those who are poor makes fun of their Maker.
Anyone who is happy when others suffer will be punished.

[6]Grandchildren are like a crown to older people.
And children are proud of their parents.

[7]It isn't proper for foolish people to brag.
And it certainly isn't proper for rulers to tell lies!

[8]Money buys favors for those who give it.
No matter where they turn, they succeed.

[9]Those who erase a sin by forgiving it show love.
But those who talk about it come between close friends.

[10]A person who understands what is right learns more from just a warning
than a foolish person learns from 100 strokes with a whip.

[11]An evil person never wants to obey.
An official who shows no mercy will be sent against him.

[12]It is better to meet a bear whose cubs have been stolen
than to meet a foolish person who is acting foolishly.

[13]Evil will never leave the house
of anyone who pays back evil for good.

[14]Starting to argue is like making a crack in a dam.
So drop the matter before a fight breaks out.

[15]The LORD hates two things.
He hates it when the guilty are set free.
He also hates it when those who aren't guilty are punished.

[16]What good is money in the hands of a foolish person?
He doesn't want to become wise.

[17]A friend loves at all times.
He is there to help when trouble comes.

[18]A man who has little sense agrees to pay what other people owe.
It isn't wise to put up money for others.

[19]The one who loves to argue loves to sin.
The one who builds a high gate is just asking to be destroyed.

[20]If your heart is twisted, you won't succeed.
If your tongue tells lies, you will get into trouble.

[21]It is sad to have a foolish child.
The parents of a foolish person have no joy.

[22]A cheerful heart makes you healthy.
But a broken spirit dries you up.

[23]Anyone who does wrong accepts favors in secret.
Then he turns what is right into wrong.

[24]Anyone who understands what is right keeps wisdom in view.
But the eyes of a foolish person look everywhere else.

[25]A foolish child makes his father sad
and his mother sorry.

[26]It isn’t good to punish those who aren’t guilty.
It isn’t good to whip officials just because they are honest.

[27]Anyone who has knowledge controls his words.
A man who has understanding is not easily upset.

[28]We think even a foolish person is wise if he keeps silent.
We think he understands what is right if he controls his tongue.

Proverbs 18

[1]A person who isn't friendly looks out only for himself.
He opposes all good sense.

[2]A foolish person doesn't want to understand.
He takes delight in saying only what he thinks.

[3]People hate it when evil comes.
And they refuse to honor those who bring shame.

[4]The words of a person's mouth are like deep water.
But the fountain of wisdom is like a flowing stream.

[5]It isn't good to favor those who do wrong.
And it isn't good to hold back what is fair from those who aren't guilty.

[6]What a foolish person says leads to arguing.
He is just asking for a beating.

[7]The words of a foolish person drag him down.
He is trapped by what he says.

[8]The words of anyone who talks about others are like tasty bites of food.
They go deep down inside you.

[9]Anyone who doesn't want to work
is like someone who destroys.

[10]The name of the LORD is like a strong tower.
Godly people run to it and are safe.

[11]The wealth of rich people is like a city that makes them feel safe.
They think of it as a city with walls that can't be climbed.

[12]If a man's heart is proud, he will be destroyed.
So don't be proud if you want to be honored.

[13]To answer before listening
is foolish and shameful.

[14]A man's cheerful heart gives him strength when he is sick.
You can't keep going if you have a broken spirit.

[15]Those whose hearts understand what is right get knowledge.
The ears of those who are wise listen for it.

[16]A gift opens the way for the one who gives it.
It helps him meet important people.

[17]The first one to tell his case seems right.
Then someone else comes forward and questions him.

[18]Casting lots will put a stop to arguing.
It will keep the strongest enemies apart.

[19]A broken friendship is harder to deal with than a city that has high walls around it.
And arguing is like the locked gates of a mighty city.

[20]A man can fill his stomach with what he says.
The words from his lips can satisfy him.

[21]Your tongue has the power of life and death.
Those who love to talk will eat the fruit of their words.

[22]The one who finds a wife finds what is good.
He receives favor from the LORD.

[23]Poor people beg for mercy.
But rich people answer in a mean way.

[24]Even a man who has many companions can be destroyed.
But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

Proverbs 19

[1]It is better to be poor and to live without blame
than to be foolish and to twist words around.

[2]It isn't good to get all stirred up without knowledge.
And it isn't good to be in a hurry and miss the way.

[3]A man's own foolish acts destroy his life.
But his heart is angry with the LORD.

[4]Wealth brings many friends.
But the friends of poor people leave them alone.

[5]A dishonest witness will be punished.
And those who pour out lies will not go free.

[6]Many try to win the favor of rulers.
And everyone is the friend of a man who gives gifts.

[7]A poor person is avoided by his whole family.
His friends avoid him even more.
The poor person runs after them to beg.
But he can't find them.

[8]Anyone who gets wisdom loves himself.
Anyone who values understanding succeeds.

[9]A dishonest witness will be punished.
And those who pour out lies will die.

[10]It isn't proper for a foolish person to live in great comfort.
And it is much worse when a slave rules over princes!

[11]A man's wisdom makes him patient.
He will be honored if he forgives someone who sins against him.

[12]A king’s anger is like a lion’s roar.
But his favor is like dew on the grass.

[13]If a child is foolish, he destroys his father.
A nagging wife is like dripping that never stops.

[14]You will receive houses and wealth from your parents.
But a wise wife is given by the LORD.

[15]Anyone who doesn’t want to work sleeps his life away.
And a person who refuses to work goes hungry.

[16]Those who obey what they are taught guard their lives.
But those who don’t care how they live will die.

[17]Anyone who is kind to poor people lends to the LORD.
God will reward him for what he has done.

[18]Train your child. Then there is hope.
Don’t do anything to bring about his death.

[19]Anyone who burns with anger must pay for it.
If you save him, you will have to do it again.

[20]Listen to advice and accept what you are taught.
In the end you will be wise.

[21]A man may have many plans in his heart.
But the LORD’s purpose wins out in the end.

[22]Every man longs for love that never fails.
It is better to be poor than to be a liar.

[23]Having respect for the LORD leads to life.
Then you will be content and free from trouble.

[24]A person who doesn’t want to work leaves his hand in the dish.
He won’t even bring it back up to his mouth!

[25]If you whip a person who makes fun of others,

childish people will learn to be wise.
If you warn someone who already understands what is right,
he will gain even more knowledge.

[26]A child who robs his father and drives out his mother
brings shame and dishonor.

[27]My son, if you stop listening to what I teach you,
you will wander away from the words of knowledge.

[28]A dishonest witness makes fun of what is right.
The mouths of those who do wrong gulp down evil.

[29]Those who make fun of others will be judged.
Foolish people will be punished.

Proverbs 20

[1]Wine causes you to make fun of others, and beer causes you to start fights.
Anyone who is led down the wrong path by them is not wise.

[2]A king's anger is like a lion's roar.
Anyone who makes him angry may lose his life.

[3]Avoiding a fight brings honor to a man.
But every foolish person is quick to argue.

[4]Anyone who refuses to work doesn't plow in the right season.
When he looks for a crop at harvest time, he doesn't find it.

[5]The purposes of a man's heart are like deep water.
But a man who has understanding brings them out.

[6]Many claim to have love that never fails.
But who can find a faithful man?

[7]Anyone who does what is right lives without blame.
Blessed are his children after him.

[8]A king sits on his throne to judge.
He gets rid of all evil when he sees it.

[9]No one can say, "I have kept my heart pure.
I'm clean. I haven't sinned."

[10]The LORD hates two things.
He hates weights that weigh things heavier or lighter than they really are.
He also hates measures that measure things larger or smaller than they really are.

[11]A child is known by his actions.
He is known by whether his conduct is pure and right.

12 The LORD has made two things.
He has made ears that hear.
He has also made eyes that see.

13 Don't love sleep, or you will become poor.
Stay awake, and you will have more food than you need.

14 "It's no good. It's no good!" says a buyer.
Then off he goes and brags about what he bought.

15 There is gold. There are plenty of rubies.
But lips that speak knowledge are a priceless jewel.

16 Take the coat of one who puts up money for what a stranger owes.
Hold it until you get paid back if he does it for a woman who commits adultery.

17 Food gained by cheating tastes sweet to a man.
But he will end up with a mouth full of sand.

18 Make plans by asking for guidance.
If you go to war, get good advice.

19 A person who talks about others tells secrets.
So avoid anyone who talks too much.

20 If anyone calls down curses on his father or mother,
his lamp will be blown out in total darkness.

21 Property you gain quickly at the beginning
will not be blessed in the end.

22 Don't say, "I'll get even with you for the wrong you did to me!"
Wait for the LORD, and he will save you.

23 The LORD hates weights that weigh things heavier or lighter than they really are.
Scales that are not honest don't please him.

24 The LORD directs a man's steps.

So how can anyone understand his own way?

25 A man is trapped if he makes a hasty promise to God
and only later thinks about what he said.

26 A wise king gets rid of evil people.
He runs the threshing wheel over them.

27 The lamp of the LORD searches a man's heart.
It searches deep down inside him.

28 Love and truth keep a king safe.
Faithful love makes his throne secure.

29 Young men are proud of their strength.
Gray hair brings honor to old men.

30 Blows and wounds wash evil away.
And beatings make you pure deep down inside.

Proverbs 21

[1]The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD.
He directs it like a stream of water anywhere he pleases.

[2]Everything a man does might seem right to him.
But the LORD knows what he is thinking.

[3]Do what is right and fair.
The LORD accepts that more than sacrifices.

[4]Proud eyes and a proud heart are the lamp of sinful people.
But those things are evil.

[5]The plans of people who work hard succeed.
You can be sure that those in a hurry will become poor.

[6]A fortune made by people who tell lies
amounts to nothing and leads to death.

[7]The harmful things that evil people do will drag them away.
They refuse to do what is right.

[8]The path of those who are guilty is crooked.
But the conduct of those who are not guilty is honest.

[9]It is better to live on a corner of a roof
than to share a house with a nagging wife.

[10]A sinful person longs to do evil.
He doesn't show his neighbor any mercy.

[11]When you punish someone who makes fun of others, childish people get wise.
If you teach a person who is already wise, he will get even more knowledge.

[12]The Blameless One knows where sinners live.
And he destroys them.

[13]If you refuse to listen to the cries of poor people,
you too will cry out and not be answered.

[14]A secret gift calms anger down.
A hidden favor softens great anger.

[15]When you do what is fair, you make godly people glad.
But you terrify those who do what is evil.

[16]A man who leaves the path of understanding
ends up with those who are dead.

[17]Anyone who loves pleasure will become poor.
Anyone who loves wine and oil will never be rich.

[18]Those who do what is evil pay the price for setting godly people free.
Those who aren’t faithful pay the price for honest people.

[19]It is better to live in a desert
than to live with a nagging, angry wife.

[20]The best food and olive oil are stored up in the houses of wise people.
But a foolish man eats up everything he has.

[21]Anyone who wants to be godly and loving
finds life, success and honor.

[22]Those who are wise can attack a strong city.
They can pull down the place of safety its people trust in.

[23]Anyone who is careful about what he says
keeps himself out of trouble.

[24]A proud person is called a “mocker.”
He thinks much too highly of himself.

[25]Some people will die while they are still hungry.

That’s because their hands refuse to work.
26 All day long they hunger for more.
But godly people give without holding back.

27 God hates sacrifices that are brought by evil people.
He hates it even more when they bring them for the wrong reason.

28 Witnesses who aren’t honest will die.
And anyone who listens to them will be destroyed forever.

29 A sinful man tries to look as if he were bold.
But an honest person thinks about how he lives.

30 No wisdom, wise saying or plan
can succeed against the LORD.

31 You can prepare a horse for the day of battle.
But the power to win comes from the LORD.

Proverbs 22

[1]You should want a good name more than you want great riches.
To be highly respected is better than having silver or gold.

[2]The LORD made rich people and poor people.
That's what they have in common.

[3]Wise people see danger and go to a safe place.
But childish people keep going and suffer for it.

[4]Have respect for the LORD and don't be proud.
That will bring you wealth and honor and life.

[5]Thorns and traps lie in the paths of evil people.
But those who guard themselves stay far away from them.

[6]Train a child in the way he should go.
When he is old, he will not turn away from it.

[7]Rich people rule over those who are poor.
Borrowers are slaves to lenders.

[8]Anyone who plants evil gathers a harvest of trouble.
His power to beat others down will be destroyed.

[9]Anyone who gives freely will be blessed.
That's because he shares his food with those who are poor.

[10]If you drive away those who make fun of others, fighting also goes away.
Arguing and unkind words will stop.

[11]Have a pure and loving heart, and speak kindly.
Then you will be a friend of the king.

[12]The eyes of the LORD keep watch over knowledge.
But he does away with the words of those who aren't faithful.

[13]People who don’t want to work say, “There’s a lion outside!”
Or they say, “I’ll be murdered if I go out into the streets!”

[14]The mouth of a woman who commits adultery is like a deep pit.
Any man the LORD is angry with will fall into it.

[15]A child is going to do foolish things.
But correcting him will drive his foolishness far away from him.

[16]One person may beat poor people down in order to get rich.
Another person may give gifts to rich people. Both of them will become poor.

Sayings of Those Who Are Wise

[17]Pay attention and listen to the sayings of those who are wise.
Apply your heart to the sayings I teach.
[18]It is pleasing when you keep them in your heart.
Have all of them ready on your lips.
[19]You are the one I am teaching today.
I want you to trust in the LORD.
[20]I have written 30 sayings for you.
They will give you knowledge and good advice.
[21]I am teaching you words that are completely true.
Then you can give the right answers to the one who sent you.

1.

[22]Don’t take advantage of poor people just because they are poor.
Don’t beat down those who are in need by taking them to court.
[23]The LORD will stand up for them in court.
He will take back the stolen goods from those who have robbed them.

2.

[24]Don’t be a friend with anyone who burns with anger.
Don’t go around with a person who gets angry easily.
[25]You might learn his habits.
And then you will be trapped by them.

3.

[26]Don’t agree to pay for
what someone else owes.
[27]Don’t put up money for him.
If you don’t have the money to pay,
your bed will be taken right out from under you!

4.

[28]Don’t move old boundary stones
that your people set up long ago.

5.

[29]Do you see a man who does good work?
He will serve kings.
He won’t serve ordinary people.

6.

Proverbs 23

[1]When you sit down to eat with a ruler,
look carefully at what's in front of you.
[2]Put a knife to your throat
if you like to eat too much.
[3]Don't long for his fancy food.
It can fool you.

7.

[4]Don't wear yourself out to get rich.
Be wise enough to say no.
[5]When you take even a quick look at riches, they are gone.
They grow wings and fly away into the sky like an eagle.

8.

[6]Don't eat the food of anyone who won't share it.
Don't long for his fancy food.
[7]He is the kind of person
who is always thinking about how much it costs.
"Eat and drink," he says to you.
But he doesn't mean it.
[8]You will throw up what little you have eaten.
You will have wasted your words of praise.

9.

[9]Don't speak to a foolish person.
He will laugh at your wise words.

10.

[10]Don't move old boundary stones.
Don't try to take over the fields of children whose fathers have died.
[11]The One who guards them is strong.
He will stand up for them in court against you.

11.

[12]Apply your heart to what you are taught.
Listen carefully to words of knowledge.

12.

[13]Don’t hold back training from a child.
If you correct him, he won’t die.
[14]So correct him.
Then you will save him from death.

13.

[15]My child, if your heart is wise,
my heart will be glad.
[16]Deep down inside, I will be happy
when you say what is right.

14.

[17]Do not long for what sinners have.
But always show great respect for the LORD.
[18]There really is hope for you tomorrow.
So your hope will not be cut off.

15.

[19]My child, listen and be wise.
Keep your heart on the right path.
[20]Don’t join those who drink too much wine.
Don’t join those who stuff themselves with meat.
[21]Those who drink or eat too much will become poor.
If they sleep too much, they’ll have to wear rags.

16.

[22]Listen to your father, who gave you life.
Don’t hate your mother when she is old.
[23]Buy the truth. Don’t sell it.
Get wisdom, training and understanding.
[24]The father of a godly child is very happy.
Anyone who has a wise child is glad.
[25]May your father and mother be glad.
May the woman who gave birth to you be happy.

17.

[26]My son, give me your heart.
Keep your eyes on the way I live.
[27]A prostitute is like a deep pit.
A wife who commits adultery is like a narrow well.
[28]She hides and waits like a thief.
She causes many men to sin.

18.

[29]Who has trouble? Who has sorrow?
Who argues? Who has problems?
Who has wounds for no reason? Who has red eyes?
[30]Those who spend too much time with wine.
Or those who like to taste wine that is mixed with spices.
[31]Don’t look at wine when it is red.
Don’t look at it when it bubbles in the cup.
And don’t look at it when it goes down smoothly.
[32]In the end it bites like a snake.
It bites like a poisonous serpent.
[33]Your eyes will see strange sights.
Your mind will imagine weird things.
[34]You will feel like someone sleeping on the ocean.
You will think you are lying among the ropes in a boat.
[35]“They hit me,” you will say. “But I’m not hurt!
They beat me. But I don’t feel it!
When will I wake up
so I can find another drink?”

19.

Proverbs 24

[1]Do not want what evil men have.
Don’t long to be with them.
[2]In their hearts they plan to hurt others.
With their lips they talk about making trouble.

20.

[3]By wisdom a house is built.
Through understanding it is made secure.
[4]Through knowledge its rooms are filled
with priceless and beautiful things.

21.

[5]A wise man has great power.
A man who has knowledge increases his strength.
[6]If you go to war, you need guidance.
If you want to win, you need many good advisers.

22.

[7]Wisdom is too high for anyone who is foolish.
He has nothing to say when people meet at the city gate to conduct business.

23.

[8]Anyone who thinks up sinful things to do
will be known as one who plans evil.
[9]Foolish plans are sinful.
People hate those who make fun of others.

24.

[10]If you grow weak when trouble comes,
your strength is very small!

25.

[11]Save those who are being led away to death.
Hold back those who are about to be killed.
[12]Don’t say, “But we didn’t know anything about this.”
The One who knows what you are thinking sees it.
The One who guards your life knows it.

He will pay each person back for what he has done.

26.

[13]Eat honey, my child. It is good.
Honey from a honeycomb has a sweet taste.
[14]I want you to know that wisdom is sweet to you.
If you find it, there is hope for you tomorrow.
So your hope will not be cut off.

27.

[15]Don't hide and wait like a burglar at a godly person's house.
Don't rob his home.
[16]Even if godly people fall down seven times, they always get up.
But those who are evil are brought down by trouble.

28.

[17]Don't be happy when your enemy falls.
When he trips, don't let your heart be glad.
[18]The LORD will see it, but he won't be pleased.
He might turn his anger away from your enemy.

29.

[19]Don't be upset because of evil people.
Don't long for what sinners have.
[20]Tomorrow evil people won't have any hope.
The lamps of sinners will be blown out.

30.

[21]My son, have respect for the LORD and the king.
Don't join those who disobey them.
[22]The LORD and the king will suddenly destroy them.
Who knows what trouble those two can bring?

More Sayings of Those Who Are Wise

[23]Here are more sayings of those who are wise.

Taking sides in court is not good.
[24]A curse will fall on those who say the guilty are not guilty.
Nations will call down curses on them.

People will speak against them.
25 But it will go well with those who sentence guilty people.
Rich blessings will come to them.

26 An honest answer
is like a kiss on the lips.

27 Finish your outdoor work.
Get your fields ready.
After that, build your house.

28 Don’t give witness against your neighbor without any reason.
Don’t use your lips to tell lies.
29 Don’t say, “I’ll do to him what he did to me.
I’ll get even with that man for what he did.”

30 I went past the field of someone who didn’t want to work.
I went past the vineyard of a man who didn’t have any sense.
31 Thorns had grown up everywhere.
The ground was covered with weeds.
The stone wall had fallen down.
32 I applied my heart to what I observed.
I learned a lesson from what I saw.
33 You might sleep a little or take a little nap.
You might even fold your hands and rest.
34 Then you would be poor, as if someone had robbed you.
You would have little, as if someone had stolen from you.

More Proverbs of Solomon

Proverbs 25

[1]These are more proverbs of Solomon. They were copied down by the men of
Hezekiah, the king of Judah.

[2]When God hides a matter, he gets glory.
When kings figure out a matter, they get glory.

[3]The heavens are high and the earth is deep.
In the same way, the minds of kings are hard to figure out.

[4]Remove the scum from the silver.
Then the master worker can make something.
[5]Remove sinful people from where the king is.
When he does what is right, his kingdom will be secure.

[6]Don't brag in front of the king.
Don't claim a place among great people.
[7]Let the king say to you, "Come up here."
That's better than for him to shame you in front of nobles.

What you have seen with your own eyes
[8]don't bring too quickly to court.
What will you do in the end
if your neighbor puts you to shame?

[9]If you talk about a matter with your neighbor,
don't tell others what was said.
[10]If you do, someone might hear it and put you to shame.
Then no one will ever respect you again.

[11]The right word at the right time
is like golden apples in silver jewelry.

12 A wise person’s warning to a listening ear
is like a gold earring or jewelry made of fine gold.

13 A messenger trusted by those who send him
is like cool snow at harvest time.
He renews the spirit of his masters.

14 A man who brags about gifts he doesn’t give
is like wind and clouds that don’t produce rain.

15 If you are patient, you can win an official over to your side.
And gentle words can break a bone.

16 If you find honey, eat just enough.
If you eat too much of it, you will throw up.
17 Don’t go to your neighbor’s home very often.
If he sees too much of you, he will hate you.

18 A man who gives false witness against his neighbor
is like a club, a sword or a sharp arrow.

19 Trusting someone who is not faithful when trouble comes
is like a bad tooth or a disabled foot.

20 You may sing songs to a troubled heart.
But that’s like taking a coat away on a cold day.
It’s like pouring vinegar on baking soda.

21 If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat.
If he is thirsty, give him water to drink.
22 By doing those things, you will pile up burning coals on his head.
And the LORD will reward you.

23 The north wind brings rain.
And a crafty tongue brings angry looks.

24 It is better to live on a corner of a roof
than to share a house with a nagging wife.

25 Hearing good news from a land far away

is like drinking cold water when you are tired.

[26]Sometimes a godly person gives in to those who are evil.
Then he becomes like a muddy spring of water or a polluted well.

[27]It isn’t good for you to eat too much honey.
And you shouldn’t try to get others to honor you.

[28]A man who can’t control himself
is like a city whose walls are broken down.

Proverbs 26

[1]It isn’t proper to honor a foolish person.
That’s like having snow in summer or rain at harvest time.

[2]A curse given for no reason is like a wandering bird or a flying sparrow.
It doesn’t go anywhere.

[3]A whip is for a horse. A harness is for a donkey.
And a beating is for the backs of foolish people.

[4]Don’t answer a foolish person in keeping with his foolish acts.
If you do, you will be like him yourself.

[5]Answer a foolish person in keeping with his foolish acts.
If you do, he won’t be wise in his own eyes.

[6]Sending a message in the hand of a foolish person
is like cutting off your feet or drinking something harmful.

[7]A proverb in the mouth of a foolish person
is like disabled legs that are useless.

[8]Giving honor to a foolish person
is like tying a stone in a slingshot.

[9]A proverb in the mouth of a foolish person
is like a thorn in the hand of someone who is drunk.

[10]Anyone who hires a foolish person or someone who is passing by
is like a person who shoots arrows at just anybody.

[11]A foolish person who does the same foolish things again
is like a dog that returns to where it has thrown up.

[12]Do you see a man who is wise in his own eyes?
There is more hope for a foolish person than for him.

[13]A person who doesn’t want to work says, “There’s a lion in the road!
There’s an angry lion wandering in the streets!”

[14]A person who doesn’t want to work turns over in bed
just like a door that swings back and forth.

[15]A person who doesn’t want to work leaves his hand in the dish.
He acts as if he is too tired to bring it back up to his mouth.

[16]A person who doesn’t want to work is wiser in his own eyes
than seven people who give careful answers.

[17]Don’t get mixed up in someone else’s fight as you are passing by.
That’s like picking a dog up by its ears.

[18]Suppose a crazy person shoots
flaming arrows that can kill.
[19]A man who lies to his neighbor
and says, “I was only joking!” is just like that person.

[20]If you don’t have wood, your fire goes out.
If you don’t talk about others, arguing dies down.

[21]Coal glows. Wood burns.
And a man who argues stirs up fights.

[22]The words of anyone who talks about others are like tasty bites of food.
They go deep down inside you.

[23]Warm words that come from an evil heart
are like shiny paint on a clay pot.

[24]Someone who wants to hurt you uses his words to hide his hatred.
But his heart is full of lies that cover up his evil plans.
[25]What a person says can be charming. But don’t believe him.
Seven things that God hates can fill that person’s heart.
[26]Hatred can be hidden by lies.
But what is evil will be shown to everyone.

[27]If anyone digs a pit, he will fall into it.
If he rolls a big stone, it will roll back on him.

[28]A tongue that tells lies hates the people it hurts.
And words that seem to praise you destroy you.

Proverbs 27

[1]Don’t brag about tomorrow.
You don’t know what a day will bring.

[2]Let another person praise you, and not your own mouth.
Let someone else praise you, and not your own lips.

[3]Stones are heavy. Sand weighs a lot.
But letting a foolish person make you angry is a heavier load than both of them.

[4]Anger is mean. Great anger overpowers you.
But who can face jealousy?

[5]Being warned openly is better
than being loved in secret.

[6]Wounds from a friend can be trusted.
But an enemy kisses you many times.

[7]When you are full, you even hate honey.
When you are hungry, even what is bitter tastes sweet.

[8]A man who wanders away from his home
is like a bird that wanders from its nest.

[9]Perfume and incense bring joy to your heart.
And a friend is sweeter when he gives you honest advice.

[10]Don’t desert your friend or your father’s friend.
And don’t go to your family when trouble strikes you.
A neighbor nearby is better than a family member far away.

[11]My child, be wise and bring joy to my heart.
Then I can answer anyone who makes fun of me.

[12]Wise people see danger and go to a safe place.

But childish people keep on going and suffer for it.

13 Take the coat of one who puts up money for what a stranger owes.
Hold it until you get paid back if he does it for a woman who commits adultery.

14 Suppose you loudly bless your neighbor early in the morning.
Then you might as well be calling down a curse on him.

15 A nagging wife is like
dripping that never stops on a rainy day.
16 Stopping her is like trying to stop the wind.
It's like trying to grab oil with your hand.

17 As iron sharpens iron,
so one person sharpens another.

18 A person who takes good care of a fig tree will eat its fruit.
And a person who looks after his master will be honored.

19 When you look into water, you see a likeness of your face.
When you look into your heart, you see what you are really like.

20 Death and the Grave are never satisfied.
A man's eyes are never satisfied either.

21 Fire tests silver. Heat tests gold.
But a man is tested by the praise he receives.

22 You can grind a foolish person in a mill.
You can grind him as you would grind grain with a tool.
But you can't remove his foolishness from him.

23 Be sure you know how your flocks are doing.
Pay careful attention to your herds.
24 Riches don't last forever.
And a crown is not secure for all time to come.
25 The hay is removed, and new growth appears.
The grass from the hills is gathered in.
26 Then your lambs will provide you with clothes.

And the money from selling your goats will buy you a field.
27 You will have plenty of goats' milk.
It will feed you and your family.
It will also feed your female servants.

Proverbs 28

[1]Sinners run away even when no one is chasing them.
But those who do what is right are as bold as lions.

[2]A country has many rulers when its people don't obey.
But an understanding king knows how to keep order.

[3]A ruler who beats poor people down
is like a pounding rain that leaves no crops.

[4]Those who turn away from the law praise sinners.
But those who obey the law oppose them.

[5]Sinful men don't understand what is fair.
But those who worship the LORD understand it completely.

[6]It is better to be poor and live without blame
than to be rich and follow a crooked path.

[7]A child who obeys the law understands what is right.
But a child who likes to eat too much brings shame on his father.

[8]A person who increases his wealth by charging high interest
piles it up for someone who will be kind to poor people.

[9]If you don't pay attention to the law,
even your prayers are hated.

[10]Those who lead honest people down an evil path
will fall into their own trap.
But those who are without blame
will receive good things.

[11]Rich people may be wise in their own eyes.
But a poor person who understands what is right knows what they are really like.

12 When godly people win, everyone is very happy.
But when sinners take charge, everyone hides.

13 Anyone who hides his sins doesn't succeed.
But anyone who admits his sins and gives them up finds mercy.

14 Blessed is the one who always has respect for the LORD.
But anyone who is stubborn will get into trouble.

15 An evil person who rules over helpless people
is like a roaring lion or an angry bear.

16 A ruler who is mean to his people doesn't have any sense.
But anyone who hates money gained in the wrong way will enjoy a long life.

17 A man who is troubled because he is guilty of murder
will be on the run until the day he dies.
No one should give him any help.

18 Anyone who lives without blame is kept safe.
But anyone whose path is crooked will suddenly fall.

19 Anyone who farms his land will have plenty of food.
But anyone who chases dreams will be very poor.

20 A faithful man will be richly blessed.
But anyone who wants to get rich will be punished.

21 Favoring one person over another is not good.
But some men will do wrong for a piece of bread.

22 A man who won't share what he has wants to get rich.
He doesn't know he is going to be poor.

23 It is better to warn a man than to pretend to praise him.
In the end he will be more pleased with you.

24 Anyone who steals from his parents and says, "It's not wrong,"

is just like a man who destroys.

25 A person who always wants more stirs up fights.
But anyone who trusts in the LORD will succeed.

26 Anyone who trusts in himself is foolish.
But a person who lives wisely is kept safe.

27 Those who give to poor people
will have everything they need.
But those who close their eyes to the poor
will be under many curses.

28 When those who are evil take charge, other people hide.
But when those who are evil die, godly people grow stronger.

Proverbs 29

[1]A man who still won't obey after being warned many times
will suddenly be destroyed. Nothing can save him.

[2]When those who do right grow stronger, the people are glad.
But when those who do wrong become rulers, the people groan.

[3]A man who loves wisdom makes his father glad.
But a man who spends time with prostitutes wastes his father's wealth.

[4]By doing what is fair, a king makes a country secure.
But the one who wants to be paid off tears it down.

[5]A man who only pretends to praise his neighbor
is spreading a net to catch him by the feet.

[6]A sinful man is trapped by his own sin.
But a godly person can sing and be glad.

[7]Those who do what is right want to treat poor people fairly.
But those who do what is wrong don't care about the poor.

[8]Those who make fun of others stir up a city.
But wise people turn anger away.

[9]Suppose a wise man goes to court with a foolish person.
Then the foolish person gets mad and pokes fun. And there is no peace.

[10]Murderers hate honest people.
They try to kill those who do what is right.

[11]A foolish person lets his anger run wild.
But a wise person keeps himself under control.

[12]If rulers listen to lies,

all their officials become evil.

13 The LORD gives sight to the eyes of poor people and those who beat others down.
That's what they both have in common.

14 If a king judges poor people fairly,
his throne will always be secure.

15 If a child is corrected, he becomes wise.
But a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.

16 When those who do wrong grow stronger, so does sin.
But those who do right will see them destroyed.

17 If you train your children, they will give you peace.
They will bring delight to you.

18 Where there is no message from God, the people don't control themselves.
But blessed are those who obey the law.

19 A servant can't be corrected only by words.
Even if he understands, he won't obey.

20 Have you seen a man who speaks without thinking?
There is more hope for foolish people than for him.

21 If you spoil your servant while he is young,
he will bring you sorrow later on.

22 An angry man stirs up fights.
And a person who burns with anger commits many sins.

23 If a man is proud, he will be made low.
But if he isn't proud, he will be honored.

24 Anyone who helps a thief is his own enemy.
When he is put under oath, he doesn't dare give witness.

[25]If you are afraid of people, it will trap you.
But if you trust in the LORD, he will keep you safe.

[26]Many people want to meet a ruler.
But only the LORD sees that people are treated fairly.

[27]Those who do what is right hate dishonest people.
Those who do what is wrong hate honest people.

The Sayings of Agur

Proverbs 30

[1]These sayings are the words of Agur, son of Jakeh. He spoke them as if they
came from God.

He spoke them to Ithiel
and to Ucal.

[2]He said, “I know less than anyone.
I don’t understand as other men do.
[3]I haven’t learned wisdom.
And I don’t know the Holy One.
[4]Who has gone up to heaven and come down?
Who has gathered up the wind in the palms of his hands?
Who has wrapped up the waters in his coat?
Who has set all the boundaries of the earth in place?
What is his name? What is his son’s name?
Tell me if you know!

[5]“Every word of God is perfect.
He is like a shield to those who trust in him.
He keeps them safe.
[6]Don’t add to his words.
If you do, he will correct you.
He will prove that you are a liar.

[7]“LORD, I ask you for two things.
Don’t refuse me before I die.
[8]Keep lies far away from me.
Don’t make me either poor or rich,
but give me only the bread I need each day.
[9]If you don’t, I might have too much.
Then I might say I don’t know you.
I might say, ‘Who is the LORD?’

Or I might become poor and steal.
Then I would bring shame to the name of my God.

10“Don’t tell lies about a servant when you talk to his master.
If you do, he will call down curses on you. And you will pay for it.

11“Some people call down curses on their fathers.
Others don’t bless their mothers.
12Some are pure in their own eyes.
But their dirty sins haven’t been washed away.
13Some have eyes that are very proud.
They look down on others.
14Some people have teeth like swords.
The teeth in their jaws are as sharp as knives.
They are ready to eat up the poor people of the earth.
They are ready to eat up those who are the most needy.

15“A bloodsucking worm has two daughters.
They cry out, ‘Give! Give!’

“Three things are never satisfied.
Four things never say, ‘Enough!’
16The first is the grave.
The second is a woman who can’t have a baby.
The third is land. It never gets enough water.
And the fourth is fire. It never says, ‘Enough!’

17“Some make fun of their fathers.
Others laugh about obeying their mothers.
The ravens of the valley will peck their eyes out.
Then the vultures will eat them.

18“Three things are too amazing for me.
There are four things I don’t understand.
19The first is the way of an eagle in the sky.
The second is the way of a snake on a rock.
The third is the way of a ship on the ocean.
And the fourth is the way of a man with a young woman.

20“This is the way of a woman who commits adultery.
She eats. She wipes her mouth.

Then she says, ‘I haven’t done anything wrong.’

21“Under three things the earth shakes.
Under four things it can’t stand up.
22The first is a servant who becomes a king.
The second is a foolish person who is full of food.
23The third is a woman who is married but not loved by her husband.
And the fourth is a woman servant who takes the place of the woman she works for.

24“Four things on earth are small.
But they are very wise.
25The first are ants. They aren’t very strong.
But they store up their food in the summer.
26The second are rock badgers. They aren’t very powerful.
But they make their home among the rocks.
27The third are locusts. They don’t have a king.
But they all march forward in ranks.
28And the fourth are lizards. Your hand can catch them.
But you will find them in kings’ palaces.

29“Three things walk as if they were kings.
Four things move as kings do.
30The first is a lion. It is mighty among the animals.
It doesn’t back away from anything.
31The second is a rooster that walks proudly.
The third is a billy goat.
And the fourth is a king who has his army around him.

32“Have you been foolish?
Have you thought you were better than others?
Have you planned evil?
If you have, put your hand over your mouth and stop talking!
33If you churn cream, you will produce butter.
If you twist a nose, you will produce blood.
And if you stir up anger, you will produce a fight.”

The Sayings of King Lemuel

Proverbs 31

[1]These are the sayings of King Lemuel. His mother taught them to him. She spoke them as if they came from God.

[2]She said, “My son! My very own son!
The son I prayed for!
[3]Don’t waste your strength on women.
Don’t waste it on those who destroy kings.

[4]“Lemuel, it isn’t good for kings to drink wine.
It isn’t good for rulers to long for beer.
[5]If they do, they might drink and forget what the law commands.
They might take away the rights of all those who are beaten down.
[6]Give beer to those who are dying.
Give wine to those who are sad and troubled.
[7]Let them drink and forget how poor they are.
Let them forget their suffering.

[8]“Speak up for those who can’t speak for themselves.
Speak up for the rights of all those who are poor.
[9]Speak up and judge fairly.
Speak up for the rights of those who are poor and needy.”

The Noble Wife

[10]Who can find a noble wife?
She is worth far more than rubies.
[11]Her husband trusts her completely.
She gives him all the important things he needs.
[12]She brings him good, not harm,
all the days of her life.

[13]She chooses wool and flax.
She loves to work with her hands.
[14]She is like the ships of traders.
She brings her food from far away.
[15]She gets up while it is still dark.
She provides food for her family.
She also gives some to her female servants.
[16]She considers a field and buys it.
She uses some of the money she earns to plant a vineyard.
[17]She gets ready to work hard.
Her arms are strong.
[18]She sees that her trading earns a lot of money.
Her lamp doesn’t go out at night.
[19]With one hand she holds the wool.
With the other she spins the thread.
[20]She opens her arms to those who are poor.
She reaches out her hands to those who are needy.
[21]When it snows, she’s not afraid for her family.
All of them are dressed in the finest clothes.
[22]She makes her own bed coverings.
She is dressed in fine linen and purple clothes.
[23]Her husband is respected at the city gate.
There he takes his seat among the elders of the land.
[24]She makes linen clothes and sells them.
She supplies belts to the traders.
[25]She puts on strength and honor as if they were her clothes.
She can laugh at the days that are coming.
[26]She speaks wisely.
She teaches faithfully.
[27]She watches over family matters.
She is busy all the time.
[28]Her children stand up and call her blessed.
Her husband also rises up, and he praises her.
[29]He says, “Many women do noble things.
But you are better than all the others.”
[30]Charm can fool you. Beauty fades.
But a woman who has respect for the LORD should be praised.
[31]Give her the reward she has earned.
Let everything she has done bring praise to her at the city gate.

Ecclesiastes

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Nothing Has Any Meaning

Ecclesiastes 1

[1]These are the words of the Teacher. He was the son of David. He was also king in Jerusalem.

[2]“Meaningless! Everything is meaningless!”
says the Teacher.
“Everything is completely meaningless!
Nothing has any meaning.”

[3]What does a man get for all of his work?
Why does he work so hard on this earth?
[4]People come and people go.
But the earth remains forever.
[5]The sun rises. Then it sets.
And then it hurries back to where it rises.
[6]The wind blows to the south.
Then it turns to the north.
Around and around it goes.
It always returns to where it started.
[7]Every stream flows into the ocean.
But the ocean never gets full.
The streams return
to the place they came from.
[8]All things are tiresome.
They are more tiresome than anyone can say.
But our eyes never see enough of anything.
Our ears never hear enough.
[9]Everything that has ever been will come back again.
Everything that has ever been done will be done again.
Nothing is new on earth.
[10]There isn’t anything about which someone can say,
“Look! Here’s something new.”
It was already here long ago.
It was here before we were.

[11]No one remembers the men of long ago.
Even those who haven't been born yet
won't be remembered
by those who will be born after them.

Wisdom Doesn't Have Any Meaning

[12]I, the Teacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem. [13]I spent all of my time studying. I used my wisdom to check everything out. I looked into everything that is done on earth. What a heavy load God has put on men!

[14]I've seen what is done on this earth. It doesn't have any meaning. It's like chasing the wind.

[15]People can't straighten things that are twisted.
They can't count things that don't even exist.

[16]I said to myself, "Look, my wisdom has really been growing. In fact, I'm now wiser than anyone who ruled over Jerusalem in the past. I have a lot of wisdom and knowledge."

[17]Then I used my mind to understand what it really means to be wise. And I wanted to know what foolish pleasure is all about. But I found out that that's also like chasing the wind.

[18]A lot of human wisdom leads to a lot of sorrow.
More knowledge only brings more sadness.

Pleasure Doesn't Have Any Meaning

Ecclesiastes 2

[1]I said to myself, "Come on. I'll put pleasure to the test. I want to find out what is good." But that also proved to be meaningless.

[2]"Laughter is foolish," I said. "And what can pleasure do for me?" [3]I tried cheering myself up by drinking wine. I even tried living in a foolish way. But wisdom was still guiding my mind. I wanted to see what was really important for men to do on earth during the few days of their lives.

[4]So I started some large projects. I built houses for myself. I planted vineyards. [5]I made gardens and parks. I planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. [6]I made lakes to water groves of healthy trees.

[7]I bought male and female slaves. And I had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem ever had before. [8]I stored up silver and gold for myself. I gathered up the treasures of kings and their kingdoms. I got some male and female singers. I also got many women for myself. Women delight the hearts of men.

[9]I became far more important than anyone in Jerusalem had ever been before. And in spite of everything, I didn't lose my wisdom.

[10]I gave myself everything my eyes wanted.
There wasn't any pleasure that I refused to give myself.
I took delight in everything I did.
And that was what I got for all of my work.
[11]But then I looked over everything my hands had done.
I saw what I had worked so hard to get.
And nothing had any meaning.
It was like chasing the wind.
Nothing was gained on this earth.

Wisdom and Foolish Pleasure Don't Have Any Meaning

12 I decided to think about wisdom.
I also thought about foolish pleasure.
What more can a new king do?
Can he do anything more than others have already done?
13 I saw that wisdom is better than foolishness,
just as light is better than darkness.
14 The eyes of a wise man see things clearly.
A person who is foolish lives in darkness.
But I finally realized that death catches up
with both of them.

15 Then I thought,

"What happens to a foolish person will catch up with me too.
So what do I gain by being wise?"
I said to myself,
"That doesn't have any meaning either."
16 Like a foolish person, a wise man won't be remembered very long.
In days to come, both of them will be forgotten.
Like a person who is foolish,
a wise man must die too!

Work Doesn't Have Any Meaning

17 So I hated life. That's because the work that is done on this earth made me sad. None of it has any meaning. It's like chasing the wind.

18 I hated everything I had worked for on earth. I'll have to leave all of it to someone who lives after me. 19 And who knows whether he will be wise or foolish? Either way, he'll take over everything on earth I've worked so hard for. That doesn't have any meaning either.

20 So I began to lose hope because of all of my hard work on this earth. 21 A man might use wisdom, knowledge and skill to do his work. But then he has to leave everything he owns to someone who hasn't worked for it. That doesn't have any meaning either. In fact, it isn't fair.

22 What does a man get for all of his hard work on earth? What does he get for all of his worries? 23 As long as he lives, his work is nothing but pain and

sorrow. Even at night his mind can’t rest. That doesn’t have any meaning either.

24A man can’t do anything better than eat and drink and be satisfied with his work. I’m finally seeing that those things also come from the hand of God. 25Without his help, who can eat or find pleasure?

26God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness to a man who pleases him. But to a sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth. Then the sinner must hand it over to the one who pleases God. That doesn’t have any meaning either. It’s like chasing the wind.

There Is a Time for Everything

Ecclesiastes 3

[1]There is a time for everything.
There's a time for everything that is done on earth.

[2]There is a time to be born.
And there's a time to die.
There is a time to plant.
And there's a time to pull up what is planted.
[3]There is a time to kill.
And there's a time to heal.
There is a time to tear down.
And there's a time to build up.
[4]There is a time to cry.
And there's a time to laugh.
There is a time to be sad.
And there's a time to dance.
[5]There is a time to scatter stones.
And there's a time to gather them.
There is a time to hug.
And there's a time not to hug.
[6]There is a time to search.
And there's a time to stop searching.
There is a time to keep.
And there's a time to throw away.
[7]There is a time to tear.
And there's a time to mend.
There is a time to be silent.
And there's a time to speak.
[8]There is a time to love.
And there's a time to hate.
There is a time for war.
And there's a time for peace.

[9]What does the worker get for his hard work? [10]I've seen the heavy load God has put on men. [11]He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also given men a sense of what he's been doing down through the ages. But they can't completely figure out what he's done from the beginning to the end.

[12]They should be happy and do good while they live. I know there's nothing better for them to do than that. [13]Everyone should eat and drink. People should be satisfied with all of their hard work. That is God's gift to them.

[14]I know that everything God does will last forever. Nothing can be added to it. And nothing can be taken from it. God does that so men will have respect for him.

[15]Everything that now exists has already been.
And what is coming has existed before.
God will judge those who treat others badly.

[16]Here's something else I saw on earth.

Where people should be treated right,
they are treated wrong.
Where people should be treated fairly,
they are treated unfairly.

[17]I said to myself,

"God will judge
godly and sinful people alike.
He has a time for every act.
He has a time for everything that is done."

[18]I also thought, "God puts human beings to the test. Then they can see they are just like animals. [19]What happens to animals happens to people too. Death waits for people and animals alike. People die, just as animals do. All of them have the same breath. People don't have any advantage over animals. Nothing has any meaning.

[20]"People and animals go to the same place. All of them come from dust.

And all of them return to dust. [21]Who can know whether the spirit of a man goes up? Who can tell whether the spirit of an animal goes down into the earth?”

[22]So man should enjoy his work. That’s what God made him for. I saw that there’s nothing better for him to do than that. After all, who can show him what will happen after he is gone?

Suffering, Hard Work and Friendship

Ecclesiastes 4

[1]I looked and saw how much people were suffering on this earth.

I saw the tears of those who are suffering.
They don't have anyone to comfort them.
Power is on the side of those who beat them down.
Those who are suffering don't have anyone to comfort them.
[2]Then I announced that those
who have already died
are happier than those
who are still alive.
[3]But someone who hasn't been born yet
is better off than the dead or the living.
That's because he hasn't seen the evil things
that are done on earth.

[4]I also saw that man works hard and accomplishes a lot. But he does it only because he wants what his neighbor has. That doesn't have any meaning either. It's like chasing the wind.

[5]A foolish person folds his hands and doesn't work.
And that destroys him.
[6]One handful with peace and quiet
is better than two handfuls with hard work.
Working too hard is like chasing the wind.

[7]Again I saw something on earth that didn't mean anything.

[8]A man lived all by himself.
He didn't have any sons or brothers.
His hard work never ended.

But he wasn’t happy with what he had.
“Who am I working so hard for?” he asked.
“Why don’t I get the things I enjoy?”
That doesn’t have any meaning either.
In fact, it’s a very bad deal!

9 Two people are better than one.
They can help each other in everything they do.
10 Suppose someone falls down.
Then his friend can help him up.
But suppose the man who falls down doesn’t have anyone to help him up.
Then feel sorry for him!
11 Or suppose two people lie down together.
Then they’ll keep warm.
But how can one person keep warm alone?
12 One person could be overpowered.
But two people can stand up for themselves.
And a rope made out of three cords isn’t easily broken.

Getting Ahead Doesn’t Have Any Meaning

13 A poor but wise young man is better off than an old but foolish king. That king doesn’t pay attention to a warning anymore. 14 The young man might have come from prison to become king. Or he might have been born poor within the kingdom but still became king. 15 I saw that everyone was following the young man who had become the new king.

16 At first, all of the people served him when he became king. But those who came later weren’t pleased with the way he was ruling. That doesn’t have any meaning either. It’s like chasing the wind.

Have Respect for God

Ecclesiastes 5

[1]Be careful what you say when you go to God's house. Go there to listen.
Don't be like foolish people when you offer your sacrifice. They do what is
wrong and don't even know it.

[2]Don't be too quick to speak.
Don't be in a hurry to say anything to God.
He is in heaven. You are on earth.
So use only a few words when you speak.
[3]Dreams come to people when they worry a lot.
When foolish people talk, they use too many words.

[4]When you make a promise to God, don't wait too long to carry it out. He
isn't pleased with foolish people. So do what you have promised. [5]It is better to
make no promise at all than to make a promise and not keep it.

[6]Don't let your mouth cause you to sin. Don't object to the temple messenger.
Don't say, "My promise was a mistake." Why should God be angry with what
you say? Why should he destroy what you have done? [7]Dreaming too much
and talking too much are meaningless. So have respect for God.

Riches Don't Have Any Meaning

[8]Suppose you see poor people being mistreated somewhere. And what is
being done to them isn't right or fair. Don't be surprised by that. One official is
watched by a higher one. Others who are even higher are watching both of
them. [9]All of them take what the land produces. And the king himself takes his
share from the fields.

[10]Anyone who loves money never has enough.

Anyone who loves wealth is never satisfied with what he gets.
That doesn't have any meaning either.

11 As more and more goods are made,
more and more people use them up.
So how can those goods benefit their owner?
All he can do is look at them with longing.

12 The sleep of a worker is sweet.
It doesn't matter whether he eats a little or a lot.
But the wealth of a rich man
keeps him awake at night.

13 I've seen something very evil on earth.

It's when wealth is stored up
and then brings harm to its owner.
14 It's also when wealth is lost
because of an unwise business deal.
Then there won't be anything left
for the owner's son.
15 A man is born naked.
He comes into the world with nothing.
And he goes out of it with nothing.
He doesn't get anything from his work
that he can take with him.

16 Here's something else that is very evil.

A man is born, and a man dies.
And what does he get for his work?
Nothing. It's like working for the wind.
17 All his life he eats in darkness.
His life is full of trouble, suffering and anger.

18 I realized that it's good and proper for a man to eat and drink. It's good for him to be satisfied with his hard work on this earth. That's what he should do during the few days of life God has given him. That's what God made him for.

[19]Sometimes God gives a man wealth and possessions. He makes it possible
for him to enjoy them. He helps him accept the life he has given him. He helps
him to be happy in his work. All of those things are gifts from God. [20]A man
like that doesn’t have to think about how his life is going. That’s because God
fills his heart with joy.

Ecclesiastes 6

[1]I've seen another evil thing on this earth. And it's a heavy load on men.
[2]God gives a man wealth, possessions and honor. He has everything his heart
longs for. But God doesn't let him enjoy those things. Instead, strangers enjoy
them. That doesn't have any meaning. It's a very evil thing.

[3]A man might have a hundred children. He might live a long time. But
suppose he can't enjoy his wealth. And suppose he isn't buried in the proper
way. Then it doesn't matter how long he lives.

I'm telling you that a baby that is born dead is better off than he is. [4]That kind
of birth doesn't have any meaning. The baby dies in darkness and leaves this
world. And in darkness it is forgotten. [5]It didn't even see the sun. It didn't
know anything at all. But it has more rest than that man does. [6]And that's true
even if he lives for 2,000 years but doesn't get to enjoy his wealth. All people
die and go to the grave, don't they?

[7]Man eats up everything he works to get.
But he is never satisfied.
[8]What advantage does a wise man have
over someone who is foolish?
What does a poor man gain
by knowing how to act toward others?
[9]Being satisfied with what you have
is better than always wanting more.
That doesn't have any meaning either.
It's like chasing the wind.

[10]God has already planned what now exists.
He has already decided what man is.
A man can't argue with the One
who is stronger than he is.
[11]The more words people use,
the less meaning there is.
And that doesn't help anyone.

[12]Who knows what’s good for a man? He lives for only a few meaningless days. He passes through life like a shadow. Who can tell him what will happen on earth after he is gone?

Good Advice About How to Live

Ecclesiastes 7

[1]A good name is better than fine perfume.
People can learn more from sobbing when someone dies
than from being happy when someone is born.
[2]So it's better to go where people are sobbing
than to go where people are having a good time.
Everyone will die someday.
Those who are still living
should really think about that.
[3]Sadness is good for the heart.
That's why sorrow is better than laughter.
[4]Those who are wise are found where there is sorrow.
But foolish people are found where there is pleasure.
[5]Pay attention to a wise man's warning.
That's better than listening to the songs of those who are foolish.
[6]A foolish person's laughter
is like the crackling of thorns burning under a pot.
That doesn't have any meaning either.

[7]When a wise man takes wealth by force, he becomes foolish.
It is sinful to take money from people who want special favors.

[8]The end of a matter is better than its beginning.
So it's better to be patient than proud.
[9]Don't become angry quickly.
Anger lives in the hearts of foolish people.

[10]Don't say, "Why were things better in the good old days?"
It isn't wise to ask that kind of question.

[11]Wisdom is a good thing.
It's like getting a share of the family wealth.
It benefits those who live on this earth.

12 Wisdom provides safety,
just as money provides safety.
But here's the advantage of wisdom.
It guards the lives of those who have it.

13 Think about what God has done.

Who can make straight
what he has made crooked?
14 When times are good, be happy.
But when times are bad, here's something to think about.
God has made bad times.
He has also made good times.
So a man can't find out anything
about what's ahead for him.

15 In my meaningless life here's what I've seen.

I've seen a godly man dying
even though he is godly.
And I've seen a sinful man living a long time
even though he is sinful.
16 Don't claim to be better than you are.
And don't claim to be wiser than you are.
Why destroy yourself?
17 Don't be too sinful.
And don't be foolish.
Why die before your time comes?
18 It's good to hold on to both of those things.
Don't let go of either one.
A man who has respect for God will avoid
going too far in either direction.

19 Wisdom makes one wise man more powerful
than ten rulers in a city.

20 There isn't anyone on earth
who does only what is right and never sins.

[21]Don’t pay attention to everything people say.
If you do, you might hear your servant calling down a curse on you.
[22]Many times you yourself have called down curses on others.
Deep down inside, you know that’s true.

[23]I used wisdom to put all of those things to the test. I said,

“I’ve made up my mind to be wise.”
But it was more than I could accomplish.
[24]No matter what else wisdom may be,
it’s far away and very deep.
Who can find it?
[25]So I tried to understand wisdom more completely.
I wanted to study it and figure it out.
I tried to find out everything I could about it.
I tried to understand why it’s foolish to be evil.
I wanted to see why choosing foolishness is so unwise.

[26]A woman who hunts a man down
is more painful than death.
Her heart is like a trap.
Her hands are like chains.
A man who pleases God will try to get away from her.
But she will trap a sinner.

[27]“Look,” says the Teacher. “Here’s what I’ve discovered.

“I added one thing to another to find out
everything I could about wisdom.
[28]I searched and searched
but found very little.
I did find one honest man among a thousand.
But I didn’t find one honest woman among a thousand.
[29]Here’s the only other thing I found.
God made men honest.
But they’ve made many evil plans.”

Ecclesiastes 8

[1]Who is like a wise man?
Who knows how to explain things?
Wisdom makes a man's face bright.
It softens the look on his face.

Obey the King

[2]I'm telling you to obey the king's command. You took an oath to serve him. You made a promise to God. [3]Don't be in a hurry to quit your job in the palace. Don't stand up for something the king doesn't like. He'll do anything he wants to. [4]He has the final word. So who can ask him, "What are you doing?"

[5]No one who obeys his command will be harmed.
Those who are wise will know the proper time and way to approach him.
[6]There's a proper time and way for people to do everything.
That's true even though a man might be suffering greatly.

[7]No one knows what lies ahead.
So who can tell a person what's going to happen?
[8]He can't stop the wind from blowing.
And he doesn't have the power to decide when he will die.
No one is let out of the army in times of war.
And evil won't let go of those who practice it.

[9]I understood all of those things. I used my mind to study everything that's done on earth. A man sometimes makes life hard for others. But he ends up hurting himself.

[10]I also saw sinful people being buried. They used to come and go from the place of worship. And others praised them in the city where they worshiped. That doesn't have any meaning either.

[11]Sometimes the sentence for a crime isn’t carried out quickly. So people make plans to commit even more crimes.

[12]An evil man may be guilty of a hundred crimes and still live a long time. But I know that things will go better with men who have great respect for God. [13]Sinful people don’t respect God. So things won’t go well with them. Like a shadow, they won’t be around very long.

[14]Here’s something else on this earth that doesn’t have any meaning. Sometimes godly men get what sinful people should receive. And sinful men get what godly people should receive. Here’s what I’m telling you. That doesn’t have any meaning either.

[15]So I advise everyone to enjoy life. A man on this earth can’t do anything better than eat and drink and be glad. Then he will enjoy his work. He’ll be happy all the days of the life God has given him on earth.

[16]I used my mind to understand what it really means to be wise. I wanted to observe the hard work man does on earth. He doesn’t close his eyes and go to sleep day or night.

[17]I saw everything God has done. No one can understand what happens on earth. Man might try very hard to figure it out. But he still can’t discover what it all means. A wise man might claim he knows. But he can’t really understand it either.

Everyone Dies

Ecclesiastes 9

[1]I thought about all of those things. I realized that those who are wise and do what is right are under God's control. What they do is also under his control.

But a man doesn't know whether God will show favor to him. [2]Everyone will die someday. Death comes to godly and sinful people alike. It comes to good and bad people alike. It comes to "clean" and "unclean" people alike. Those who offer sacrifices and those who don't offer them also die.

A good person dies,
and so does a sinner.
Those who take oaths die.
So do those who are afraid to take them.

[3]Here's what is so bad about everything that happens on this earth. Death catches up with all of us. Also, the hearts of people are full of evil. They live in foolish pleasure. After that, they join those who have already died.

[4]Anyone who is living still has hope. Even a live dog is better off than a dead lion!

[5]People who are still alive know they'll die.
But those who have died don't know anything.
They don't receive any more rewards.
And they are soon forgotten.
[6]Their love, hate and jealousy disappear.
They will never share again
in anything that happens on earth.

[7]Go and enjoy your food. Be joyful as you drink your wine. Now is the time God favors what you do. [8]Always wear white clothes to show you are happy. Anoint your head with olive oil.

9 You love your wife. So enjoy life with her. Do it all the days of this
meaningless life God has given you on earth. That's what he made you for.
That's what you get for all of your hard work on earth.

10 No matter what you do, work at it with all your might. Remember, you are
going to your grave. And there isn't any work or planning or knowledge or
wisdom there.

11 Here's something else I've seen on this earth.

Races aren't always won by those who run fast.
  Battles aren't always won by those who are strong.
Wise people don't always have plenty of food.
  Clever people aren't always wealthy.
  Those who have learned a lot aren't always favored.
God controls the timing of every event.
  He also controls how things turn out.

12 A man doesn't know when trouble will come to him.

Fish are caught in nets.
  Birds are taken in traps.
And people are trapped by hard times
  that come when they don't expect them.

Being Wise Is Better Than Being Foolish

13 Here's something else I saw on this earth. I saw an example of wisdom that
touched me deeply. 14 There was once a small city. Only a few people lived
there. A powerful king attacked it. He brought in war machines all around it.

15 A certain man lived in that city. He was poor but wise. He used his wisdom
to save the city. But no one remembered that poor man. 16 So I said, "It's better
to be wise than to be powerful." But people looked down on the poor man's
wisdom. No one paid any attention to what he said.

17 People should listen to the quiet words

of those who are wise.
That’s better than paying attention to the shouts
of a ruler of foolish people.
18 Wisdom is better than weapons of war.
But one sinner destroys a lot of good.

Ecclesiastes 10

[1]Dead flies give perfume a bad smell.
And a little foolishness can make a lot of wisdom useless.
[2]The hearts of wise people lead them on the right path.
But the hearts of foolish people take them down the wrong path.
[3]A foolish person doesn't have any sense at all.
He shows everyone he is foolish.
He does it even when he is walking along the road.
[4]Suppose a ruler gets very angry with you.
If he does, don't quit your job in the palace.
Stay calm. That will overcome the effects of your big mistakes.

[5]Here's something evil I've seen on this earth.
And it's the kind of mistake that rulers make.
[6]Foolish people are given many important jobs.
Rich people are given unimportant ones.
[7]I've seen slaves on horseback.
I've also seen princes who were forced to walk as if they were slaves.

[8]Anyone who digs a pit might fall into it.
Anyone who breaks through a wall might be bitten by a snake.
[9]Anyone who removes stones from rock pits might get hurt.
Anyone who cuts logs might get wounded.

[10]Suppose the blade of an ax is dull.
And its edge hasn't been sharpened.
Then more effort is needed to use it.
But skill will bring success.

[11]Suppose a snake bites before it is charmed.
Then there isn't any benefit in being a snake charmer.

[12]A man who is wise says gracious things.
But a foolish person is destroyed by what his own lips speak.
[13]At first what he says is foolish.

In the end his words are very evil.
[14]He talks too much.

No one knows what lies ahead for him.
Who can tell him what will happen after he is gone?

[15]The work a foolish person does makes him tired.
He doesn't even know the way to town.

[16]How terrible it is for a land whose king used to be a servant!
How terrible if its princes get drunk in the morning!
[17]How blessed is the land whose king was born into the royal family!
How blessed if its princes eat and drink at the proper time!
How blessed if they eat and drink to become strong and not to get drunk!

[18]When a man won't work, the roof falls down.
When his hands aren't busy, the house leaks.

[19]People laugh at a dinner party.
And wine makes life happy.
People think money can buy everything.

[20]Don't call down curses on the king.
Don't even think about doing it.
Don't call down curses on rich people.
Don't even do it in your bedroom.
A bird might fly away and carry your words.
It might report what you said.

Be Bold

Ecclesiastes 11

[1]Put your money into trade across the ocean.
After a while you will earn something from it.
[2]Give shares of what you earn to a lot of people.
After all, you don't know what great trouble might come on the land.

[3]Clouds that are full of water
pour rain down on the earth.
A tree might fall to the south or the north.
It will stay in the place where it falls.
[4]Anyone who keeps on watching the wind won't plant seeds.
Anyone who keeps looking at the clouds won't gather crops.

[5]You don't know the path the wind takes.
You don't know how a baby is made inside its mother.
So you can't understand how God works either.
He made everything.

[6]In the morning plant your seeds.
In the evening keep your hands busy.
You don't know what will succeed.
It may be one or the other.
Or both might do equally well.

Remember the One Who Created You

[7]Light is sweet.
People enjoy being out in the sun.
[8]No matter how many years a man might live,
let him enjoy all of them.
But let him remember the dark days.

There will be many of them.
Nothing that's going to happen will have any meaning.

9 Young man, be happy while you are still young.
Let your heart be joyful while you are still strong.
Do what your heart tells you to do.
Go after what your eyes look at.
But I want you to know
that God will judge you for everything you do.
10 So drive worry out of your heart.
Get rid of all of your troubles.
Being young and strong doesn't have any meaning.

Ecclesiastes 12

[1]Remember the One who created you.
Remember him while you are still young.
Think about him before your times of trouble come.
The years will come when you will say,
"I don't find any pleasure in them."
[2]That's when the sunlight will become dark.
The moon and the stars will also grow dark.
And the clouds will return after it rains.
[3]Remember your Creator before those who guard the house tremble with old age.
That's when strong men will be bent over.
The women who grind grain will stop because there are so few of them left.
Those who look through the windows won't be able to see very well.
[4]Remember your Creator before the front doors are closed.
That's when the sound of grinding will fade away.
Old men will rise up when they hear birds singing.
But they will barely hear any of their songs.
[5]Remember your Creator before you become afraid of places that are too high.
You will also be terrified because of danger in the streets.
Remember your Creator before the almond trees have buds on them.
That's when grasshoppers will drag themselves along.
Old men will not want to make love anymore.
Man will go to his dark home in the grave.
And those who sob over the dead will walk around in the streets.

[6]Remember your Creator before the silver cord is cut.
That's when the golden bowl will be broken.
The wheel will be broken at the well.
The pitcher will be smashed at the spring.
[7]Remember your Creator before you return to the dust you came from.
That's when your spirit will go back to God who gave it.

[8]“Meaningless! Everything is meaningless!”
says the Teacher.
“Nothing has any meaning.”

Have Respect for God

[9]The Teacher was wise. He gave knowledge to people. He put many proverbs to the test. He thought about them carefully. Then he wrote them down in order. [10]He did his best to find just the right words. And what he wrote was honest and true.

[11]The sayings of those who are wise move people to take action. Their collected sayings really nail things down. They are given to us by one Shepherd. [12]My son, be careful not to pay attention to anything that is added to them.

Books will never stop being written. Too much studying makes people tired.

[13]Everything has now been heard.
And here’s the final thing I want to say.
Have respect for God and obey his commandments.
That’s what everyone should do.
[14]God will judge everything people do.
That includes everything they try to hide.
He’ll judge everything, whether it’s good or evil.

Song of Songs

Song of Solomon 1
Song of Solomon 2
Song of Solomon 3
Song of Solomon 4
Song of Solomon 5
Song of Solomon 6
Song of Solomon 7
Song of Solomon 8

Song of Songs 1

[1]This is the greatest song Solomon ever wrote.

A Shulammite woman says to King Solomon,

[2]“I long for your lips to kiss me!
Your love makes me happier than wine does.
[3]The lotion you have on pleases me.
Your name is like perfume that is poured out.
No wonder the young women love you!
[4]Take me away with you. Let us hurry!
King Solomon, bring me into your palace.”

The other women say,

“King Solomon, you fill us with joy. You make us happy.
We praise your love more than we praise wine.”

The woman says to the king,

“It is right for them to love you!

[5]“Women of Jerusalem,
my skin is dark but lovely.
It is dark like the tents in Kedar.
It’s like the curtains of Solomon’s tent.
[6]Don’t stare at me because I’m dark.
The sun has made my skin look like this.
My brothers burned with anger against me.
They made me take care of the vineyards.
I haven’t even taken care of my own vineyard.

[7]“King Solomon, I love you.

So tell me where you take care of your flock.
Tell me where you rest your sheep at noon.
Why should I have to act like a prostitute
near the flocks of your friends?”

The other women say,

8“You are the most beautiful woman of all.
Don’t you know where to find the king?
Follow the tracks the sheep make.
Take care of your young goats
near the tents of the shepherds.”

King Solomon says to the Shulammite woman,

9“You are my love.
You are like a mare that pulls one of Pharaoh’s chariots.
10Your earrings make your cheeks even more beautiful.
Your strings of jewels make your neck even more lovely.”

The other women say to her,

11“We will make gold earrings for you.
We’ll decorate them with silver.”

The woman says,

12“The king was at his table.
My perfume gave off a sweet smell.
13The one who loves me is like a small bag of myrrh
resting between my breasts.
14He is like henna flowers
from the vineyards of En Gedi.”

The king says,

15 “You are so beautiful, my love!
So beautiful!
Your eyes are like doves.”

The woman says,

16 “You are so handsome, my love!
So charming!
The green field is our bed.
17 Cedar trees above us are the beams of our house.
Fir trees overhead are its rafters.

Song of Songs 2

[1]“I am like a rose on the coast of Sharon.
I’m like a lily in the valleys.”

The king says,

[2]“My love, among the young women
you are like a lily among thorns.”

The woman says,

[3]“My love, among the young men
you are like an apple tree among the trees of the forest.
I’m happy to sit in your shade.
Your fruit tastes so sweet to me.
[4]You have taken me to the dinner hall.
Your banner of love is lifted high above me.
[5]Give me some raisins to make me strong.
Give me some apples to make me feel like new again.
Our love has made me weak.
[6]Your left arm is under my head.
Your right arm is around me.
[7]Women of Jerusalem, take an oath and make me a promise.
Let the antelopes and the does serve as witnesses.
Don’t stir up love.
Don’t wake it up until it’s ready.

[8]“Listen! I hear my love!
Look! Here he comes!
He’s leaping across the mountains.
He’s coming over the hills.
[9]The one who loves me is like an antelope or a young deer.
Look! There he stands behind our wall.
He’s gazing through the window.

He’s peering through the screen.
10 He said to me, ‘Rise up, my love.
Come with me, my beautiful one.
11 Look! The winter is past.
The rains are over and gone.
12 Flowers are appearing on the earth.
The season for singing has come.
The cooing of doves
is heard in our land.
13 The fig trees are producing their early fruit.
The flowers on the vines are giving off their sweet smell.
Rise up and come, my love.
Come with me, my beautiful one.’ ”

The king says,

14 “You are like a dove in an opening in the rocks.
You are like a dove in a hiding place on a mountainside.
Show me your face.
Let me hear your voice.
Your voice is so sweet.
Your face is so lovely.
15 Catch the foxes for us.
Catch the little foxes.
They destroy our vineyards.
The vineyards are in bloom.”

The woman says,

16 “My love belongs to me, and I belong to him.
Like an antelope, he eats among the lilies.
17 Until the day begins
and the shadows fade away,
turn to me, my love.
Be like an antelope
or like a young deer
on the rocky hills.

Song of Songs 3

[1]“All night long on my bed
I searched for the one my heart loves.
I looked for him but didn’t find him.
[2]I will get up. I’ll go around in the city.
I’ll look through all of its streets.
I’ll search for the one my heart loves.
So I looked for him but didn’t find him.
[3]Those on guard duty found me
as they were walking around in the city.
‘Have you seen the one my heart loves?’ I asked.
[4]As soon as I had passed by them
I found the one my heart loves.
I threw my arms around him. I didn’t let him go
until I had brought him to my mother’s house.
I took him to my mother’s room.
[5]Women of Jerusalem, take an oath and make me a promise.
Let the antelopes and the does serve as witnesses.
Don’t stir up love.
Don’t wake it up until it’s ready.”

The other women say,

[6]“Who is this man coming up from the desert
like a column of smoke?
He smells like myrrh and incense
made from all of the spices of the trader.
[7]Look! There’s Solomon’s movable throne.
Sixty soldiers accompany it.
They have been chosen from the best warriors in Israel.
[8]All of them are wearing swords.
They have fought many battles.
Each one has his sword at his side.
Each is prepared for the terrors of the night.
[9]King Solomon made the movable throne for himself.

He made it out of wood from Lebanon.
10 He formed its posts out of silver.
He made its base out of gold.
Its seat was covered with purple cloth.
It was decorated inside with loving care
by the women of Jerusalem.
11 Women of Zion, come out.
Look at King Solomon wearing his crown.
His mother placed it on him.
She did it on his wedding day.
His heart was full of joy.”

Song of Songs 4

[1]The king says to the Shulammite woman,

"You are so beautiful, my love!
So beautiful!
Your eyes behind your veil are like doves.
Your hair flows like a flock of black goats
coming down from Mount Gilead.
[2]Your teeth are as clean as a flock of sheep.
Their wool has just been clipped.
They have just come up from being washed.
Each of your teeth has its twin.
Not one of them is alone.
[3]Your lips are like a bright red ribbon.
Your mouth is so lovely.
Your cheeks behind your veil
are like the halves of a pomegranate.
[4]Your neck is strong and beautiful like the tower of David.
That tower is built with beautiful stones.
A thousand shields are hanging on it.
All of them belong to mighty soldiers.
[5]Your two breasts are lovely.
They are like two young antelopes
that eat among the lilies.
[6]I will go to the mountain of myrrh.
I'll go to the hill of incense.
I'll stay there until the day begins
and the shadows fade away.
[7]Every part of you is so beautiful, my love.
There is no flaw in you.

[8]"Come with me from Lebanon, my bride.
Come with me from Lebanon.
Come down from the top of Mount Amana.
Come down from the top of Senir.
Come to me from the peak of Mount Hermon.
Leave the dens where the lions live.

Leave the places in the mountains where the leopards stay.
[9]My bride, you have stolen my heart
with one glance of your eyes.
My sister, you have stolen my heart
with one jewel in your necklace.
[10]My bride, your love is so delightful.
My sister, your love makes me happier than wine does.
Your perfume smells better than any spice.
[11]Your lips are as sweet as a honeycomb, my bride.
Milk and honey are under your tongue.
Your clothes smell like the cedar trees in Lebanon.
[12]My bride, you are like a garden that is locked up.
My sister, you are like a spring of water that has a fence around it.
You are like a fountain that is sealed up.
[13]You are like trees whose branches are loaded
with pomegranates, fine fruits, henna and nard,
[14]with saffron, cane and cinnamon.
You are like every kind of incense tree.
You have myrrh, aloes
and all of the finest spices.
[15]You are like a fountain in a garden.
You are like a well of flowing water
streaming down from Lebanon.”

The woman says,

[16]“Wake up, north wind!
Come, south wind!
Blow on my garden.
Then its sweet smell will spread everywhere.
Let my love come into his garden.
Let him taste its fine fruits.”

Song of Songs 5

[1]The king says,

> “My bride, I have come into my garden.
> My sister, I’ve gathered my myrrh and my spice.
> I’ve eaten my honeycomb and my honey.
> I’ve drunk my wine and my milk.”

The other women say to the Shulammite woman and to Solomon,

> “Friends, eat and drink.
> Lovers, drink all you want.”

The woman says,

[2]“I slept, but my heart was awake.
> Listen! The one who loves me is knocking.
> He says, ‘My sister, I love you.
> Open up so I can come in.
> You are my dove.
> You are perfect in every way.
> My head is soaked with dew.
> The night air has made my hair wet.’

[3]“But I’ve taken my robe off.
> Must I put it on again?
> I’ve washed my feet.
> Must I get them dirty again?
[4]My love put his hand through the opening.
> My heart began to pound for him.
[5]I got up to open the door for my love.
> My hands dripped with myrrh.
> It flowed from my fingers
> onto the handles of the lock.
[6]I opened the door for my love.

But he had left. He was gone.
My heart sank because he had left.
I looked for him but didn't find him.
I called out to him, but he didn't answer.
7 Those on guard duty found me
as they were walking around in the city.
They beat me. They hurt me.
Those on guard duty at the walls
took my coat away from me.
8 Women of Jerusalem, take an oath and make me a promise.
If you find the one who loves me,
tell him our love has made me weak."

The other women say,

9 "You are the most beautiful woman of all.
How is the one you love better than others?
How is he better than anyone else?
Why do you ask us to make you a promise?"

The woman says,

10 "The one who loves me is tanned and handsome.
He's the finest man among 10,000.
11 His head is like the purest gold.
His hair is wavy and as black as a raven.
12 His eyes are like doves
by streams of water.
They look as if they've been washed in milk.
They are set like jewels in his head.
13 His cheeks are like beds of spice
that give off perfume.
His lips are like lilies
that drip with myrrh.
14 His arms are like gold
that are set with chrysolite.
His body is like polished ivory
that is decorated with sapphires.
15 His legs are like pillars of marble

that are set on bases of pure gold.
He looks like the finest cedar tree
in the mountains of Lebanon.
16 His mouth is very sweet.
Everything about him is delightful.
That’s what the one who loves me is like.
That’s what my friend is like, women of Jerusalem.”

Song of Songs 6

[1]The other women say,

"You are the most beautiful woman of all.
Where has the one who loves you gone?
Which way did he turn?
We'll help you look for him."

The woman says,

[2]"My love has gone down to his garden.
He's gone to the beds of spices.
He's eating in the gardens.
He's gathering lilies.
[3]I belong to my love, and he belongs to me.
He's eating among the lilies."

The king says,

[4]"My love, you are as beautiful as the city of Tirzah.
You are as lovely as Jerusalem.
You are as majestic as troops carrying their banners.
[5]Turn your eyes away from me.
They overpower me.
Your hair flows like a flock of black goats
coming down from Mount Gilead.
[6]Your teeth are as clean as a flock of sheep
coming up from being washed.
Each of your teeth has its twin.
Not one of them is alone.
[7]Your cheeks behind your veil
are like the halves of a pomegranate.
[8]There might be 60 queens and 80 concubines.
There might be more virgins than anyone can count.
[9]But you are my perfect dove.

There isn’t anyone like you.
You are your mother’s favorite daughter.
The young women see you and call you blessed.
The queens and concubines praise you.”

The other women say,

10 “Who is this woman?
She is like the sunrise in all of its glory.
She is as beautiful as the moon.
She is as bright as the sun.
She is as majestic as troops carrying their banners.”

The king says,

11 “I went down to a grove of nut trees.
I wanted to look at the new plants growing in the valley.
I wanted to find out whether the vines had budded.
I wanted to see if the pomegranate trees had bloomed.
12 Before I realized it,
I was among the royal chariots of my people.”

The other women say,

13 “Come back to us.
Come back, Shulammite woman.
Come back to us.
Come back. Then we can look at you.”

The woman says,

“Why do you want to look at me
as you would watch a dancer at Mahanaim?”

Song of Songs 7

[1]The king says to the Shulammite woman,

"You are like a prince's daughter.
Your feet in sandals are so beautiful.
Your graceful legs are like jewels.
The hands of a skilled worker must have shaped them.
[2]Your navel is like a round bowl
that always has mixed wine in it.
Your waist is like a mound of wheat
that is surrounded by lilies.
[3]Your two breasts are lovely.
They are like two young antelopes.
[4]Your neck is smooth and beautiful like an ivory tower.
Your eyes are like the pools of Heshbon
by the gate of Bath Rabbim.
Your nose is like the towering mountains of Lebanon
that face the city of Damascus.
[5]Your head is like a crown on you.
It is as beautiful as Mount Carmel.
Your hair is as smooth as purple silk.
I am captured by your flowing curls.
[6]You are so beautiful! You please me so much!
You are so delightful, my love!
[7]You are as graceful as a palm tree.
Your breasts are as sweet as the freshest fruit.
[8]I said, 'I will climb the palm tree.
I'll take hold of its fruit.'
May your breasts be as sweet as the fruit on the vine.
May your breath smell like the tastiest apples.
[9]May your lips be like the finest wine."

The woman says,

"May my wine go straight to you, my love.
May it flow gently over our lips as we sleep.

[10]“I belong to you, my love.
And you long for me.
[11]Come, my love. Let’s go to the country.
Let’s spend the night in the villages.
[12]Let’s go out to the vineyards early.
Let’s go and see if the vines have budded.
Let’s find out whether their flowers have opened.
Let’s see if the pomegranate trees are blooming.
I’ll make love to you in the vineyards.
[13]The mandrake flowers give off their strong smell.
All of the best things are waiting for us,
new and old alike.
I’ve stored them up for you, my love.

Song of Songs 8

[1]“I wish you were like a brother to me.
I wish my mother’s breasts had nursed you.
Then if I found you outside,
I could kiss you.
No one would look down on me.
[2]I’d bring you to my mother’s house.
She taught me everything I know.
I’d give you spiced wine to drink.
It’s the juice of my pomegranates.
[3]Your left arm is under my head.
Your right arm is around me.
[4]Women of Jerusalem, take an oath and make me a promise.
Don’t stir up love.
Don’t wake it up until it’s ready.”

The other women say,

[5]“Who is this woman coming up from the desert?
She’s leaning on the one who loves her.”

The woman says to the king,

“Under the apple tree I woke you up.
That’s where your mother became pregnant with you.
She went into labor, and you were born there.
[6]Hold me close to your heart like the seal around your neck.
Keep me close to yourself like the ring on your finger.
My love for you is so strong it won’t let you go.
Love is as powerful as death.
Love’s jealousy is as strong as the grave.
Love is like a blazing fire.
It burns like a mighty flame.
[7]No amount of water can put it out.

Rivers can’t drown it.
Suppose someone offers
all of his wealth to buy love.
That won’t even come close to being enough.”

The woman’s brothers say,

8“We have a little sister.
Her breasts are still small.
What should we do for our sister
when she gets engaged?
9If she were a wall,
we’d build silver towers on her.
If she were a door,
we’d cover her with cedar boards.”

The woman says to the king,

10“I am a wall.
My breasts are like well-built towers.
So in your eyes I’ve become
like someone who makes you happy.
11Solomon, you had a vineyard in Baal Hamon.
You rented your vineyard to others.
They had to pay 25 pounds
of silver for its fruit.
12But I can give my own vineyard to anyone I want to.
So I give my 25 pounds of silver to you, Solomon.
Give 5 pounds to those who take care of its fruit.”

The king says,

13“My love, you live in the gardens.
My friends listen for your voice.
But let me hear it now.”

The woman says,

14 “Come away with me, my love.
Be like an antelope
or like a young deer
on mountains that are full of spices.”

Isaiah

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Isaiah 1

[1]Here is the vision about Judah and Jerusalem that Isaiah had. It came to him when Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah were ruling. They were kings of Judah. Isaiah was the son of Amoz.

Israel Refuses to Obey the LORD

[2]Listen to me, heavens! Pay attention to me, earth!
The LORD has said,
"I raised children. I brought them up.
But they have refused to obey me.
[3]The ox knows its master.
The donkey knows where its owner feeds it.
But Israel does not know me.
My people do not understand me."

[4]They are a sinful nation.
They are loaded down with guilt.
They are people who do nothing but evil.
They are children who are always sinning.
They have deserted the LORD.
They have turned against the Holy One of Israel.
They have turned their backs on him.

[5]Israel, why do you want to be beaten all the time?
Why do you always refuse to obey the LORD?
Your head is covered with wounds.
Your whole heart is weak.
[6]There isn't a healthy spot on your body
from the bottom of your feet to the top of your head.
There are only wounds, cuts
and open sores.
They haven't been cleaned up or bandaged
or treated with olive oil.

[7]Your country has been deserted.

Your cities have been burned down.
The food from your fields is being eaten up by outsiders.
They are doing it right in front of you.
Your land has been completely destroyed.
It looks as if strangers have taken it over.
8 The city of Zion is left like a hut
where someone stands guard in a vineyard.
It is left like an empty cabin in a melon field.
It's like a city that is being attacked.
9 The LORD who rules over all
has let some people live through that time of trouble.
If he hadn't, we would have become like Sodom.
We would have been like Gomorrah.

10 Rulers of Sodom,
hear the LORD's message.
People of Gomorrah,
listen to the law of our God.
11 "Do you think I need any more of your sacrifices?"
asks the LORD.
"I have more than enough of your burnt offerings.
I have more than enough of rams
and the fat of your fattest animals.
I do not find any pleasure
in the blood of your bulls, lambs and goats.
12 Who asked you to bring all of those animals
when you come to worship me?
Who asked you and your animals
to walk all over my courtyards?
13 Stop bringing offerings that do not mean anything to me!
I hate your incense.
I can't stand your evil gatherings.
I can't stand the way you celebrate your New Moon Feasts,
Sabbath days and special services.
14 I hate your New Moon Feasts
and your other appointed feasts.
They have become a heavy load to me.
I am tired of carrying it.
15 You might spread out your hands toward me when you pray.
But I will not look at you.
You might even offer many prayers.

But I will not listen to them.
Your hands are covered with the blood of the people you have murdered.
16 So wash your hands. Make yourselves clean.
Get your evil actions out of my sight!
Stop doing what is wrong!
17 Learn to do what is right!
Treat people fairly.
Give hope to those who are beaten down.
Cheer them up.
Stand up in court for children whose fathers have died.
And do the same thing for widows.

18 "Come. Let us talk some more about this matter,"
says the LORD.
"Even though your sins are bright red,
they will be as white as snow.
Even though they are deep red,
they will be white like wool.
19 But you have to be willing to change and obey me.
If you are, you will eat the best food that grows on the land.
20 You must follow me. You must obey me.
If you do not, you will be killed with swords."
The LORD has spoken.

21 See how the faithful city of Jerusalem
has become like a prostitute!
Once it was full of people who treated others fairly.
Those who did what was right used to live in it.
But now murderers live there!
22 Jerusalem, your silver isn't pure anymore.
Your best wine has been made weak with water.
23 Your rulers refuse to obey the LORD.
They are companions of robbers.
All of them love to accept money from those who want special favors.
They are always looking for gifts from other people.
They don't stand up in court for children whose fathers have died.
They don't do it for widows either.
24 The Lord is the Mighty One of Israel.
The LORD who rules over all announces,

“Israel, you have become my enemies.
I will pay you back for what you have done.
Then you will not trouble me anymore.
25 I will turn my powerful hand against you.
I will make you completely clean.
I will remove everything that is not pure.
26 I will give judges to you like the ones you had long ago.
I will give you advisers like those you had at the beginning.
Then you will be called
The City That Does What Is Right.
You will also be called The Faithful City.”

27 Zion will be saved when others are treated fairly.
Those who are sorry for their sins will be saved
when what is right is done.
28 But sinners and those who refuse to obey the LORD will be destroyed.
And those who desert the LORD will die.

29 Israel, you take delight in worshiping among the sacred oak trees.
You will be full of shame for doing that.
You have chosen to worship in the sacred gardens.
You will be dishonored for doing that.
30 You will be like an oak tree whose leaves are dying.
You will be like a garden that doesn’t have any water.
31 Your strongest men will become like dry pieces of wood.
Their worship of other gods will be the spark that lights the fire.
Everything will be burned up.
No one will be there to put the fire out.

People From Many Nations Will Worship at Mount Zion

Isaiah 2

1 Here is a vision that Isaiah, the son of Amoz, had about Judah and
Jerusalem.

2 In the last days

the mountain where the LORD's temple is located will be famous.
It will be the most important mountain of all.
It will stand out above the hills.
All of the nations will go to it.

3 People from many nations will go there. They will say,

"Come. Let us go up to the LORD's mountain.
Let's go to the house of Jacob's God.
He will teach us how we should live.
Then we will live the way he wants us to."
The law of the LORD will be taught at Zion.
His message will go out from Jerusalem.
4 He will judge between the nations.
He'll settle problems among many of them.
They will hammer their swords into plows.
They'll hammer their spears into pruning tools.
Nations will not go to war against one another.
They won't even train to fight anymore.

5 People of Jacob, come.
Let us live the way the LORD has taught us to.

The Day of the LORD Is Coming

[6]LORD, you have deserted the people of Jacob.
They are your people.
The land is full of false beliefs from the east.
The people practice evil magic, just as the Philistines do.
They make ungodly people their friends.
[7]Their land is full of silver and gold.
There is no end to their treasures.
Their land is full of horses.
There is no end to their chariots.
[8]Their land is full of statues of gods.
They bow down to what their own hands have made.
They bow down to what their fingers have shaped.
[9]So man will be brought low.
People will be put to shame.
Do not forgive them.

[10]Go and hide in caves in the rocks, you people!
Hide in holes in the ground.
Hide from the terror of the LORD!
Hide when he comes in glory and majesty!
[11]A man who brags will be brought low.
Men who are proud will be put to shame.
The LORD alone will be honored at that time.

[12]The LORD who rules over all has set apart a day when he will judge.
He has set it apart for all those who are proud and think they are important.
He has set it apart for all those who brag about themselves.
All of them will be brought low.
[13]The LORD has set that day apart for all of the cedar trees in Lebanon.
They are very tall.
He has set it apart for all of the oak trees in Bashan.
[14]He has set it apart for all of the towering mountains.
He has set it apart for all of the high hills.
[15]He has set it apart for every high tower
and every strong wall.
[16]He has set it apart for every trading ship
and every beautiful boat.
[17]A man who brags will be brought low.
Men who are proud will be put to shame.

The LORD alone will be honored at that time.
[18]And the statues of gods will totally disappear.

[19]People will run and hide in caves in the rocks.
They will go into holes in the ground.
They will run away from the terror of the LORD.
They will run when he comes in glory and majesty.
When he comes, he will shake the earth.
[20]Men had made some statues of gods out of silver.
They had made others out of gold.
Then they worshiped them.
But when the LORD comes,
they will throw the statues away to the rodents and bats.
[21]They will run and hide in caves in the rocks.
They will go into holes in the cliffs.
They will run away from the terror of the LORD.
They will run when he comes in glory and majesty.
When he comes, he will shake the earth.

[22]Stop trusting man. He can’t help you.
He only lives for a little while.
What good is he?

The LORD Will Judge Jerusalem and Judah

Isaiah 3

[1]Here is what
the LORD who rules over all is about to do.
The Lord will take away from Jerusalem and Judah
supplies and help alike.
He will take away all of the supplies of food and water.
[2]He'll take away heroes and soldiers.
He'll take away judges and prophets.
He'll take away fortune tellers and elders.
[3]He'll take away captains of companies of 50 men.
He'll take away government leaders.
He'll take away advisers, skilled workers
and those who are clever at doing evil magic.

[4]The LORD will make young boys rule over all of them.
Mere children will govern them.
[5]People will crush one another.
They will fight against each other.
They will fight against their neighbors.
Young people will attack old people.
Ordinary people will attack those who are more important.

[6]A man will grab hold of one of his brothers
at his father's home. He will say,
"You have a coat. So you be our leader.
Take charge of all of these broken-down buildings!"
[7]But at that time the brother will cry out,
"I can't help you.
I don't have any food or clothing in my house.
Don't make me the leader of these people."

[8]Jerusalem is about to fall.
And so is Judah.
They say and do things against the LORD.

They dare to disobey him to his very face.
9 The look on their faces is a witness against them.
They show off their sin, just as the people of Sodom did.
They don't even try to hide it.
How terrible it will be for them!
They have brought trouble on themselves.

10 Tell those who do what is right that things will go well with them.
They will enjoy the results of the good things they've done.
11 But how terrible it will be for those who do what is evil!
Trouble is about to fall on them.
They will be paid back for the evil things they've done.

12 Those who are young crush my people.
Women rule over them.
My people, your leaders have taken you down the wrong path.
They have turned you away from the right path.

13 The LORD takes his place in court.
He stands up to judge the people.
14 He judges the elders and leaders of his people.
He says to them,
"My people are like a vineyard.
You have destroyed them.
The things you have taken from poor people are in your houses.
15 What do you mean by crushing my people?
Why are you grinding the faces of the poor into the dirt?"
announces the Lord.
He is the LORD who rules over all.

16 The LORD continues,
"The women in Zion are very proud.
They walk along with their noses in the air.
They tease men with their eyes.
They walk with quick, short steps.
Little chains jingle on their ankles.
17 So I will put sores on the heads of Zion's women.
And I will remove the hair from their heads."

18 At that time the Lord will take away the beautiful things they wear. He will

take away their decorations, headbands and moon-shaped necklaces. [19]He'll take away their earrings, bracelets and veils. [20]He'll remove their headdresses, ankle chains and belts. He'll take away their perfume bottles and charms. [21]He'll remove the rings they wear on their fingers and in their noses. [22]He'll take away their fine robes and their capes and coats. He'll take away their purses [23]and mirrors. And he'll take away their linen clothes, turbans and shawls.

[24]Instead of smelling sweet,
the women will smell bad.
Instead of wearing belts,
they will wear ropes.
Instead of having beautiful hair,
they won't have any hair at all.
Instead of wearing fine clothes,
they'll wear black clothes to show how sad they are.
Instead of being beautiful,
they'll have the brands of slaves on their bodies.
[25]Jerusalem, your men will be killed with swords.
Your soldiers will die in battle.
[26]The city of Zion will be very sad.
Like a widow, she will lose everything.
She will sit on the ground and sob.

Isaiah 4

[1]At that time seven women
will grab hold of one man.
They'll say to him, "We will eat our own food.
We'll provide our own clothes.
Just let us become your wives.
Take away our shame!"

The Branch of the LORD

[2]At that time Israel's king will be beautiful and glorious. He will be called The Branch of the LORD. The fruit of the land will be the pride and glory of those who are still left alive in Israel.

[3]Those who are left in Zion will be called holy. They will be recorded among those who are alive in Jerusalem. [4]The Lord will wash away the sin of the women in Zion. He will clean up the blood that was spilled there. He will judge those who spilled that blood. His burning anger will blaze out at them.

[5]Then the LORD will create over Jerusalem a cloud of smoke by day. He will also create a glow of flaming fire at night. They will appear over all of Mount Zion and those who gather together there. The LORD's glory will be like a tent over them. [6]It will cover them and give them shade from the hot sun all day long. It will be a safe place where they can hide from storms and rain.

The Song of the Vineyard

Isaiah 5

1 I will sing a song for the LORD.
He is the one I love.
It's a song about his vineyard Israel.
The one I love had a vineyard.
It was on a hillside that had rich soil.
2 He dug up the soil and removed its stones.
He planted the very best vines in it.
He built a lookout tower there.
He also cut out a winepress for it.
Then he kept looking for a crop of good grapes.
But the vineyard produced only bad fruit.

3 So the LORD said, "People of Jerusalem and Judah,
you be the judge between me and my vineyard.
4 What more could I have done for my vineyard?
I did everything I could.
I kept looking for a crop of good grapes.
So why did it produce only bad ones?
5 Now I will tell you
what I am going to do to my vineyard.
I will take away its fence.
And it will be destroyed.
I will break down its wall.
And people will walk all over it.
6 I will turn my vineyard into a dry and empty desert.
It will not be pruned or taken care of.
Thorns and bushes will grow there.
I will command the clouds
not to rain on it."

7 The vineyard of the LORD who rules over all
is the nation of Israel.
The people of Judah

are the garden he takes delight in.
He kept looking for them to do what is fair.
But all he saw was blood being spilled.
He kept looking for them to do what is right.
But all he heard were cries of suffering.

The LORD Judges His Vineyard

8 How terrible it will be for you who get too many houses!
How terrible for you who get too many fields!
Finally there won't be any space left in the land.
Then you will live all alone.

9 I heard the LORD who rules over all announce a message. He said,

"You can be sure that the great houses will become empty.
The fine homes will be left with no one living in them.
10 A ten-acre vineyard will produce only six gallons of wine.
Six bushels of seeds will produce less than a bushel of grain."

11 How terrible it will be for those who get up early in the morning
to start drinking!
How terrible for those who stay up late at night
until they are drunk with wine!
12 They have harps and lyres at their big dinners.
They have tambourines, flutes and wine.
But they don't have any concern for the mighty acts of the LORD.
They don't have any respect for what his powerful hands have done.
13 So my people will be taken away as prisoners.
That's because they don't understand what the LORD has done.
Their government leaders will die of hunger.
The rest of the people won't have any water to drink.
14 So the grave is hungry to receive them.
Its mouth is open wide to swallow them up.
Their nobles and the rest of the people will go down into it.
They will go there together with all those who have wild parties.
15 So man will be brought low.
People will be put to shame.

Those who brag will be brought down.
16 But the LORD who rules over all will be honored
because he judges fairly.
The holy God will show that he is holy
by doing what is right.
17 Then sheep will graze as if they were in their own grasslands.
Lambs will eat grass among the destroyed buildings
where rich people used to live.

18 How terrible it will be for those who continue to sin
and lie about it!
How terrible for those who keep on doing what is evil
as if they were tied to it!
19 How terrible for those who say,
"Let God hurry up and do what he says he will.
We want to see it happen.
Let the Holy One of Israel carry out his plan soon.
We want to know what it is."

20 How terrible it will be for those who say
that what is evil is good!
How terrible for those who say
that what is good is evil!
How terrible for those who say
that darkness is light
and light is darkness!
How terrible for those who say
that what is bitter is sweet
and what is sweet is bitter!

21 How terrible it will be for those who think they are wise!
How terrible for those who think they are really clever!

22 How terrible it will be for those
who are heroes at drinking wine!
How terrible for those
who are heroes at mixing drinks!
23 How terrible for those
who take money to set guilty people free!
How terrible for those
who don't treat good people fairly!

[24]Flames of fire burn up straw.
Dry grass sinks down into those flames.
Evil people will be like plants whose roots rot away.
They will be like flowers that are blown away like dust.
That's because they have said no to the law of the LORD who rules over all.
They have turned against the message of the Holy One of Israel.
[25]So the LORD's anger burns against his people.
He raises his hand against them. He strikes them down.
The mountains shake.
The bodies of dead people lie in the streets like trash.

Even then, the LORD is still angry.
His hand is still raised against them.

[26]He lifts up a banner to gather the nations that are far away.
He whistles for them to come
from the farthest places on earth.
Here they come.
They are moving very quickly.
[27]None of them grows tired.
None of them falls down.
None of them sleeps or even takes a nap.
All of them are ready for battle.
Every belt is pulled tight.
Not a single sandal strap is broken.
[28]The enemies' arrows are sharp.
All of their bows are ready.
The hoofs of their horses are as hard as rock.
Their chariot wheels turn like a twister.
[29]The sound of their army is like the roar of lions.
It's like the roar of young lions.
They growl as they capture what they were chasing.
They carry it off.
No one can take it away from them.
[30]At that time the enemy army will roar over Israel.
It will sound like the roaring of the ocean.
If someone looks at the land of Israel,
he will see darkness and trouble.
The clouds will make even the light become dark.

The Lord Appoints Isaiah to Speak for Him

Isaiah 6

1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord. He was seated on his
throne. His long robe filled the temple. He was highly honored.

2 Above him were seraphs. Each of them had six wings. With two wings they
covered their faces. With two wings they covered their feet. And with two
wings they were flying. 3 They were calling out to one another. They were
saying,

> "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD who rules over all.
> The whole earth is full of his glory."

4 The sound of their voices caused the stone doorframe to shake. The temple
was filled with smoke.

5 "How terrible it is for me!" I cried out. "I'm about to be destroyed! My
mouth speaks sinful words. And I live among people who speak sinful words.
Now I have seen the King with my own eyes. He is the LORD who rules over
all."

6 A seraph flew over to me. He was holding a hot coal. He had used tongs to
take it from the altar. 7 He touched my mouth with the coal. He said, "This has
touched your lips. Your guilt has been taken away. Your sin has been paid for."

8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord. He said, "Who will I send? Who will go
for us?"

I said, "Here I am. Send me!"

9 So he said, "Go and speak to these people. Tell them,

> " 'You will hear but never understand.
> You will see but never know what you are seeing.'
> 10 Make the hearts of these people stubborn.

Plug up their ears.
Close their eyes.
Otherwise they might see with their eyes.
They might hear with their ears.
They might understand with their hearts.
And they might turn to me and be healed.”

11 Then I said, “Lord, how long will it be like that?”

He answered,

“It will last until the cities of Israel are destroyed
and no one is living in them.
It will last until the houses are deserted.
The fields will be completely destroyed.
12 It will last until I have sent everyone far away.
The land will be totally deserted.
13 Even if a tenth of the people remain there,
the land will be completely destroyed again.
But when oak trees and terebinth trees
are cut down, stumps are left.
And my holy people will be like stumps
that begin to grow again.”

The Miraculous Sign of Immanuel

Isaiah 7

1 Ahaz was king of Judah. Rezin was king of Aram. And Pekah was king of
Israel. Rezin and Pekah marched up to fight against Jerusalem. But they
couldn't overpower it. Ahaz was the son of Jotham and the grandson of
Uzziah. Pekah was the son of Remaliah.

2 The royal family of Ahaz was told, "The army of Aram has joined forces
with Ephraim's army." So the hearts of Ahaz and his people trembled with fear.
They shook just as trees in the forest shake when the wind blows through them.

3 The LORD said to me, "Go out and see Ahaz. Take your son Shear-Jashub
with you. Meet Ahaz at the end of the channel that brings water from the
Upper Pool. It is on the road to the Washerman's Field.

4 "Tell Ahaz, 'Be careful. Stay calm. Do not be afraid. Do not lose hope
because of the burning anger of Rezin, Aram and the son of Remaliah. After
all, they are nothing but a couple of pieces of smoking firewood. 5 Aram,
Ephraim and Remaliah's son have planned to destroy you. They said, 6 "Let's
march into Judah and attack it. Let's tear everything down. Then we can share
the land among ourselves. And we can make Tabeel's son king over it."

7 " 'But I am the LORD and King. I say,

" ' "That will not happen.
It will not take place.
8 The capital of Aram is Damascus.
And the ruler of Damascus is only Rezin.
Do not worry about the people of Ephraim.
They will be too crushed to be considered a people.
That will happen before 65 years are over.
9 The capital of Ephraim is Samaria.
And the ruler of Samaria is only Remaliah's son.
If you do not stand firm in your faith,
you will not stand at all." ' "

10The LORD spoke to Ahaz through me again. He said, 11"I am the LORD your
God. Ask me to give you a miraculous sign. It can be anything in the deepest
grave or in the highest heaven."

12But Ahaz said, "I won't ask. I won't put the LORD to the test."

13Then I said, "Listen, you members of the royal family of Ahaz! Isn't it
enough for you to test the patience of men? Are you also going to test the
patience of my God? 14The LORD himself will give you a miraculous sign. The
virgin is going to have a baby. She will give birth to a son. And he will be
called Immanuel.

15"The time will come when he is old enough to decide between what is
wrong and what is right. By that time he will have only butter and honey to eat.
16But even before that happens, the lands of the two kings you are afraid of
will be completely destroyed.

17"The LORD will also bring the king of Assyria against you. And he will
bring him against your people and the whole royal family. That will be a time
of trouble unlike any since the people of Ephraim broke away from Judah."

18At that time the LORD will whistle for the Egyptians. They will come like
flies from the streams of Egypt. He will also whistle for the Assyrians. They
will come from their country like bees. 19All of them will come and camp in
the deep valleys. They will camp in caves in the rocks. And they'll camp near
bushes and water holes.

20At that time the Lord will use the Assyrians to punish you. Ahaz had hired
them earlier from east of the Euphrates River. Now their king will be like a
razor in the Lord's hand. He will shave the hair from your head and legs. He
will also shave off your beards.

21At that time a man will only be able to keep one young cow and two goats
alive. 22But they will give enough milk and butter to live on. Everyone who is
left alive in the land will have nothing but butter and honey to eat.

23The land used to have vineyards with 1,000 vines worth 25 pounds of
silver. But soon the whole land will be covered with thorns and bushes. 24Men
will go there to hunt with bows and arrows. That's because it will be covered
with bushes and thorns. 25All of the hills used to be plowed with hoes. But you
won't go there anymore. That's because you will be afraid of the thorns and
bushes. Cattle will be turned loose on those hills. And sheep will run there.

The LORD Uses Assyria to Judge Judah

Isaiah 8

[1]The LORD said to me, “Get a large scroll. Write ‘Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz’ on
it with a pen. [2]I will send for Zechariah and the priest Uriah. They can be
trusted. They will be witnesses for me. Zechariah is the son of Jeberekiah.”

[3]Then I went and made love to my wife, who was a prophet. She became
pregnant and had a baby boy. The LORD said to me, “Name him Maher-Shalal-
Hash-Baz.

[4]“The king of Assyria will carry off the wealth of Damascus. He will also
carry away the goods that were taken from Samaria. That will happen before
the boy knows how to say ‘My father’ or ‘My mother.’ ”

[5]The LORD continued,

[6]“I am like the gently flowing stream of Siloam.
But the people of Judah have turned their backs on me.
They are filled with joy because of the fall of Rezin
and the son of Remaliah.
[7]So I am about to bring against these people
the king of Assyria and his whole army.
The Assyrians will be like the mighty Euphrates River
when it is flooding.
They will run over everything in their path.
[8]They will sweep on into Judah like a flood.
They will pass through Judah and reach all the way to Jerusalem.
Immanuel, they will attack your land like an eagle.
Their wings will spread out and cover it.”

[9]Sound the battle cry, you nations!
But you will be torn apart.
Listen, all of you lands far away!
Prepare for battle! But you will be torn apart.
Prepare for battle! But you will be torn apart.
[10]Make your battle plans! But you won’t succeed.

Give your orders! But they won't be carried out.
That's because God is with us.

Have Respect for God

11 The LORD put his powerful hand on me and spoke to me. He warned me not to live the way these people live. He said,

12 "People of Judah, do not agree with those who say
Isaiah is guilty of treason.
Do not fear what they fear.
Do not be afraid.
13 I am the LORD who rules over all.
You must think about me as holy.
You must have respect for me.
You must fear me.
14 Then I will be a holy place of safety for you.
But for many people in Israel and Judah I will be
a stone that causes them to trip.
I will be a rock that makes them fall.
And for the people of Jerusalem I will be
a trap and a snare.
15 Many of them will trip.
They will fall and be broken.
They will be trapped and captured."

16 Keep safe what the LORD said to you through me.
Seal up among my followers what he taught you through me.
17 I will wait for the LORD.
He is turning his face away from Jacob's people.
I will put my trust in him.

18 Here I am. Here are the children the LORD has given me. We are signs and reminders to Israel from the LORD who rules over all. He lives on Mount Zion.

19 Some will tell you to ask for advice from people who get messages from those who have died. Others will tell you to ask for advice from people who talk to the spirits of the dead. But those people only whisper. Their words are

barely heard. So shouldn’t you ask for advice from your God? Why should you get advice from dead people to help those who are alive?

20Follow what the LORD taught you and said to you through me. People who don’t speak in keeping with those words won’t have any hope in the morning. 21They will suffer and be hungry. They’ll wander through the land. When they are very hungry, they will become angry. They’ll look up toward heaven. They’ll call down curses on their king and their God. 22Then they will look at the earth. They’ll see nothing but suffering and darkness. They’ll see terrible sadness. They’ll be driven into total darkness.

A Son Will Be Given to Us

Isaiah 9

[1]But there won't be any more sadness for those who were suffering. In the past the LORD brought shame on the land of Zebulun. He also brought shame on the land of Naphtali. But in days to come he will honor Galilee, where people from other nations live. He will honor the land along the Mediterranean Sea. And he will honor the territory east of the Jordan River.

[2]The people who are now living in darkness
will see a great light.
They are now living in a very dark land.
But a light will shine on them.
[3]LORD, you will make our nation larger.
You will increase their joy.
They will show you how glad they are.
They will be as glad as people are at harvest time.
They will be as glad as soldiers are
when they share the things they've taken after a battle.
[4]You set Israel free from Midian long ago.
In the same way, you will break
the heavy yoke that weighs Israel down.
You will break the wooden beams that are on their shoulders.
You will break the rods of those who strike them down.
[5]Every fighting man's boot that is used in battle will be burned up.
So will every piece of clothes
that is covered with blood.
All of them will be thrown into the fire.
[6]A child will be born to us.
A son will be given to us.
He will rule over us.
And he will be called
Wonderful Adviser and Mighty God.
He will also be called Father Who Lives Forever
and Prince Who Brings Peace.
[7]The authority of his rule will continue to grow.

The peace he brings will never end.
He will rule on David's throne
and over his kingdom.
He will make the kingdom strong and secure.
His rule will be based on what is fair and right.
It will last forever.
The LORD's great love will make sure that happens.
He rules over all.

The LORD Is Angry With Israel

8 The Lord has sent a message against Jacob's people.
He will punish Israel.
9 All of the people will know about it.
Ephraim's people and those who live in Samaria will know about it.
Their hearts are very proud.
They say,
10 "The brick buildings have fallen down.
But we will rebuild them with blocks of stone.
The fig trees have been chopped down.
But we'll plant cedar trees in place of them."
11 In spite of that, the LORD has made Rezin's enemies stronger.
He has stirred up Assyria to fight against Israel.
12 Arameans from the east
have opened their mouths and swallowed Israel up.
So have Philistines from the west.

Even then, the LORD is still angry.
His hand is still raised against them.

13 But his people have not returned
to the One who struck them down.
They haven't turned for help
to the LORD who rules over all.
14 So he will cut off from Israel heads and tails alike.
In a single day he will cut off palm branches and tall grass alike.
The palm branches are the people who rule over others.
The tall grass is the people who bow down to them.
15 The elders and important leaders are the heads.

The prophets who teach lies are the tails.
16 Those who guide the people of Israel are leading them down the wrong path.
So those who follow them aren't on the right road.
17 The Lord will not be pleased with the young men.
He won't take pity on widows and on children whose fathers have died.
All of them are ungodly and evil.
They say sinful things with their mouths.

Even then, the LORD is still angry.
His hand is still raised against them.

18 What is evil burns like a fire.
It burns up bushes and thorns.
It sets the forest on fire.
It sends up a huge column of smoke.
19 The LORD rules over all.
When he gets angry, he will burn up the land.
The people will die.
Men will eat their brothers.
20 People will eat up everything they can find on their right.
But they'll still be hungry.
They will eat everything they can find on their left.
But they won't be satisfied.
So they will eat the dead bodies of their children.
21 That's what Manasseh's people will do to Ephraim.
And that's what Ephraim's people will do to Manasseh.
Together they will turn against Judah.

Even then, the LORD is still angry.
His hand is still raised against them.

Isaiah 10

[1]How terrible it will be for you
who make laws that aren't fair!
How terrible for you
who write laws that make life hard for others!
[2]You take away the rights of poor people.
You hold back what is fair from my people who are suffering.
You take for yourselves what belongs to widows.
You rob children whose fathers have died.
[3]What will you do on the day when the LORD punishes you?
On that day trouble will come from far away.
Who will you run to for help?
Who will you trust your riches with?
[4]All you can do is bow down in fear among the prisoners.
All you can do is fall among those who have died in battle.

Even then, the LORD is still angry.
His hand is still raised against them.

The LORD Will Judge Assyria

[5]The LORD says, "How terrible it will be for the people of Assyria!
They are the war club that carries out my anger.
[6]I will send them against the ungodly nation of Judah.
I will order them to fight against my own people.
They make me angry.
I will order them to take their goods and carry them away.
I will order them to walk on my people
as if they were walking on mud.
[7]But that is not what the king of Assyria plans.
It is not what he has in mind.
His purpose is to destroy many nations.
His purpose is to put an end to them.
[8]'Aren't all of my commanders kings?' he says.
[9]'I took over Calno just as I took Carchemish.

I took over Hamath just as I did Arpad.
I took Samaria just as I did Damascus.
10My powerful hand grabbed hold of kingdoms
whose people worship statues of gods.
They had more gods than Jerusalem and Samaria did.
11I took over Samaria and its statues of gods.
In the same way, I will take Jerusalem and its gods.’ ”

12The Lord will finish everything he has planned to do against Mount Zion and Jerusalem. Then he’ll say, “Now I will punish the king of Assyria. I will punish him because his heart and his eyes are so proud.

13“The king of Assyria says,

“ ‘I have used my powerful hand
to take over all of those nations.
I am very wise.
I have great understanding.
I have wiped out the borders between nations.
I’ve taken their treasures.
Like a great hero I’ve brought their kings under my control.
14I’ve taken the wealth of the nations.
It was as easy as reaching into a bird’s nest.
I’ve gathered the riches of all of those countries.
It was as easy as gathering eggs
that have been left in a nest.
Not a single baby bird flapped its wings.
Not one of them opened its mouth to chirp.’ ”

15Does an ax claim to be more important
than the one who swings it?
Does a saw brag that it is better
than the one who uses it?
That would be like a stick
swinging someone who picks it up!
It would be like a war club
waving the one who carries it!
16So the LORD who rules over all will send a sickness.
The Lord will send it on the king of Assyria’s strong fighting men.
It will make them weaker and weaker.
The army he was so proud of will be completely destroyed.

It will be as if it had been burned up in a fire.
17 The LORD is the light of Israel.
He will become a fire.
Israel's Holy One will become a flame.
In a single day he will burn up all of Assyria's bushes.
He will destroy all of their thorns.
18 He will completely destroy the beauty
of their forests and rich farm lands.
The Assyrian army will be like a sick man
who becomes weaker and weaker.
19 It will be like the trees of their forests.
So few of them will be left standing
that even a child could count them.

Israel Will Return to the LORD

20 In days to come, some people will still be left alive in Israel.
They will be from Jacob's family line.
But they won't depend any longer on
the nation that struck them down.
Instead, they will truly depend on the LORD.
He is the Holy One of Israel.
21 The people of Jacob who are still alive
will return to the Mighty God.
22 Israel, your people might be as many as the grains of sand by the sea.
But only a few of them will return.
The LORD has handed down a death sentence.
He will destroy his people.
What he does is right.
23 The LORD who rules over all will carry out his sentence.
The Lord will destroy the whole land.

24 The LORD rules over all. The Lord says,

"My people who live in Zion,
do not be afraid of the Assyrian army.
They beat you with rods.
They lift up war clubs against you,

just as the Egyptians did.
25 Very soon I will not be angry with you anymore.
I will turn my anger against the Assyrians.
I will destroy them.”

26 The LORD who rules over all will beat them with a whip.
He will strike them down as he struck Midian down at the rock of Oreb.
And he will reach his wooden staff out over the waters.
That’s what he did in Egypt.
27 People of Zion, in days to come he will lift
the heavy load of the Assyrians from your shoulders.
He will remove their yokes from your necks.
They will be broken
because you have become so strong.

28 The Assyrian army has entered the town of Aiath.
They have passed through Migron.
They have stored up supplies at Micmash.
29 They have marched through the pass there. They said,
“Let’s camp for the night at Geba.”
The people of Ramah tremble with fear.
Those who live in Gibeah of Saul run away.
30 Town of Gallim, cry out!
Laishah, listen!
Poor Anathoth!
31 The people of Madmenah are running away.
Those who live in Gebim are hiding.
32 Today the Assyrians have stopped at Nob.
They are shaking their fists
at Mount Zion in the city of Jerusalem.

33 The Assyrian soldiers are like trees in a forest.
The LORD who rules over all
will chop them down.
The Lord will cut off their branches
with his great power.
He will chop the tall trees down.
He will cut down even the highest ones.
34 The Mighty One will chop down the forest with his ax.
He will cut down the cedar trees in Lebanon.

A Branch Will Come From Jesse's Family Line

Isaiah 11

[1]Jesse's family is like a tree that has been cut down.
A new little tree will grow from its stump.
From its roots a Branch will grow and produce fruit.
[2]The Spirit of the LORD will rest on that Branch.
He will help him to be wise and understanding.
He will help him make wise plans and carry them out.
He will help him know the LORD and have respect for him.
[3]The Branch will take delight
in respecting the LORD.

He will not judge things only by the way they look.
He won't make decisions based simply on what people say.
[4]He will always do what is right
when he judges those who are in need.
He'll be completely fair
when he makes decisions about poor people.
When he commands that people be punished,
it will happen.
When he orders that evil people be put to death,
it will take place.
[5]He will put godliness on as if it were his belt.
He'll wear faithfulness around his waist.

[6]Wolves will live with lambs.
Leopards will lie down with goats.
Calves and lions will eat together.
And little children will lead them around.
[7]Cows will eat with bears.
Their little ones will lie down together.
And lions will eat straw like oxen.
[8]A baby will play near a hole where cobras live.
A young child will put his hand into a nest
where poisonous snakes live.

9None of those animals will harm or destroy anything or anyone
on my holy mountain of Zion.
The oceans are full of water.
In the same way, the earth will be filled
with the knowledge of the LORD.

10At that time the man who is called the Root from Jesse's family line will be like a banner that brings nations together. They will come to him. And the place where he rules will be glorious.

11At that time the Lord will reach out his hand to gather his people a second time. He will bring back those who are left alive. He'll bring them back from Assyria, Lower Egypt, Upper Egypt and Cush. He'll bring them from Elam, Babylonia and Hamath. He will also bring them from the islands of the Mediterranean Sea.

12He will lift up a banner.
It will show the nations that he is gathering the people of Israel.
He'll bring back those who had been taken away as prisoners.
He'll gather together the scattered people of Judah.
He'll bring them back from all four directions.
13Ephraim's people won't be jealous anymore.
Judah's attackers will be cut off.
Ephraim won't be jealous of Judah.
And Judah won't attack Ephraim.
14Together they will rush down the slopes of Philistia to the west.
They'll take what belongs to the people of the east.
They'll take over Edom and Moab.
The people of Ammon will be under their control.
15The LORD will dry up
the Red Sea in Egypt.
With his powerful hand he'll send a burning wind
to sweep over the Euphrates River.
He will break it up into many streams.
Then people will be able to go across it wearing sandals.
16There was a road the people of Israel used
when they came up from Egypt.
In the same way, there will be a wide road coming out of Assyria.
It will be used by the LORD's people who are left alive there.

Two Songs of Praise

Isaiah 12

[1]In days to come, the people of Israel will sing,

"LORD, we will praise you.
You were angry with us.
But now your anger has turned away from us.
And you have brought us comfort.
[2]God, you are the one who saves us.
We will trust in you.
Then we won't be afraid.
LORD, you give us strength.
We sing about you.
LORD, you have saved us."
[3]People of Israel, he will save you.
That will bring you joy like water that is brought up from wells.

[4]In days to come, the people of Israel will sing,

"Give thanks to the LORD. Worship him.
Tell the nations what he has done.
Announce how honored he is.
[5]Sing to the LORD. He has done glorious things.
Let it be known all over the world.
[6]People of Zion, give a loud shout!
Sing with joy!
The Holy One of Israel is among you.
And he is great."

A Message About Babylonia

Isaiah 13

[1]Here is the vision about Babylonia that Isaiah, the son of Amoz, saw.

[2]Lift up a banner on the top of a bare hill.
Shout to the enemy soldiers.
Wave for them to enter the gates
that are used by the nobles of Babylon.
[3]The LORD has set those soldiers apart to fight for him.
He has sent for them to carry out his anger against Babylon.
They will be happy when he wins the battle for them.

[4]Listen! I hear a noise in the mountains.
It sounds like a huge crowd.
Listen! I hear a loud noise among the kingdoms.
It sounds like nations gathering together.
The LORD who rules over all is bringing
an army together for war.
[5]They come from lands far away.
They come from the farthest places on earth.
The LORD and those weapons of his anger
are coming to destroy the whole country of Babylonia.

[6]Cry out! The day of the LORD is near.
The Mighty One is coming to destroy them.
[7]Their hands won't be able to help them.
Everyone's heart will melt away in fear.
[8]The people will be filled with terror.
Pain and suffering will grab hold of them.
They will groan with pain like a woman having a baby.
They'll look at one another in terror.
Their faces will burn with shame.

[9]The day of the LORD is coming.
It will be a terrible day.

The LORD’s burning anger will blaze out.
He will make the land dry and empty.
He’ll destroy the sinners in it.
10 All of the stars in the sky
will stop giving their light.
The sun will be darkened as soon as it rises.
The moon will not shine.
11 The LORD will punish the world because it is so evil.
He will punish evil people for their sins.
He’ll put an end to the bragging of those who are proud.
He’ll bring down the pride of those who don’t show any pity.
12 He’ll make men harder to find than pure gold.
They will be harder to find than gold from Ophir.
13 He will make the heavens tremble.
He’ll shake the earth out of its place.
The LORD who rules over all will show how angry he is.
At that time his burning anger will blaze out.

14 Outsiders who live in Babylonia will scatter
like antelope that are chased by a hunter.
They are like sheep that don’t have a shepherd.
All of them will return to their own people.
They will run back to their own countries.
15 Those who are captured will have spears stuck through them.
Those who are caught will be killed with swords.
16 Their babies will be smashed to pieces
right in front of their eyes.
Their houses will be robbed.
Their wives will be raped.

17 The LORD will stir up the Medes to attack the Babylonians.
They aren’t interested in getting silver.
They don’t delight in gold.
18 Instead, they will use their bows and arrows
to strike the young men down.
They won’t even show any mercy to babies.
They won’t take pity on children.
19 The city of Babylon is the jewel of kingdoms.
It is the glory and pride of the Babylonians.
But God will destroy it
just as he did Sodom and Gomorrah.

[20]No one will ever live in Babylon again.
No one will live there for all time to come.
Arabs will never set up their tents there.
Shepherds will never rest their flocks there.
[21]But desert creatures will lie down there.
Wild dogs will fill its houses.
Owls will live there.
Wild goats will jump around in it.
[22]Hyenas will cry out in its forts.
Wild dogs will bark in its beautiful palaces.
The time for Babylon to be punished is near.
Its days are numbered.

Isaiah 14

[1]The LORD will show tender love toward Jacob's people.
Once again he will choose Israel.
He'll settle them in their own land.
Outsiders will join them.
They and the people of Jacob will become one people.
[2]Nations will help Israel
return to their own land.
People from other nations will belong to Israel.
They will serve them as male and female servants in the LORD's land.
The Israelites will make prisoners of those who had held them as prisoners.
They will rule over those who had crushed them.

[3]The LORD will put an end to Israel's suffering and trouble. They won't be slaves anymore. [4]They will make fun of the king of Babylonia. They will say,

"See how the one who crushed others has fallen!
See how his anger has come to an end!
[5]The LORD has taken away the authority of evil people.
He has broken the power of rulers.
[6]When they became angry, they struck nations down.
Their blows never stopped.
In their anger they brought nations under their control.
They attacked them again and again.
[7]All of the lands now enjoy peace and rest.
They break out into singing.
[8]Even the pine trees are glad.
The cedar trees of Lebanon are happy too.
They say, 'Babylon, you have fallen.
Now no one comes and cuts us down.'

[9]"King of Babylonia, many people in the grave are really excited
about meeting you when you go down there.
The spirits of the dead get up to welcome you.

At one time all of them were leaders in the world.
They were kings over the nations.
They get up from their thrones.
10 All of them call out to you.
They say,
‘You have become weak, just as we are.
You have become like us.’
11 Your grand show of power has been brought down to the grave.
The noise of your harps has come down here along with your power.
Maggots are spread out under you.
Worms cover you.

12 “King of Babylonia, you thought you were the bright morning star.
But now you have fallen from heaven!
You once brought nations down.
But now you have been thrown down to the earth!
13 You said in your heart,
‘I will go up to heaven.
I’ll raise my throne
above the stars of God.
I’ll sit as king on the mountain where the gods meet.
I’ll set up my throne on the highest slopes of the sacred mountain.
14 I will rise above the tops of the clouds.
I’ll make myself like the Most High God.’
15 But now you have been brought down to the grave.
You have been thrown into the deepest part of the pit.

16 “Those who see you stare at you.
They think about what has happened to you.
They say to themselves,
‘Is this the man who shook the earth?
Is he the one who made kingdoms tremble with fear?
17 Did he turn the world into a desert?
Did he destroy its cities?
Did he refuse to let his prisoners go home?’

18 “All of the kings of the nations are buried with honor.
Each of them lies in his own tomb.
19 But you have been thrown out of your tomb.
You are like a branch that is cut off and thrown away.
You are covered with the bodies

of those who have been killed with swords.
You have been tossed into a stony pit along with them.
You are like a dead body that people have walked on.
20You won't be buried like other kings.
That's because you have destroyed your land.
You have killed your people.

"The children of that evil man will be killed.
None of them will be left to carry on the family name.
21So prepare a place to kill his children.
Kill them because of the sins of the rulers
who lived before them.
They must not rise to power.
They must not rule over the world.
They must not cover the earth with their cities."

22"I will rise up against them,"
announces the LORD who rules over all.
"I will destroy Babylon.
It will not be remembered anymore.
No one will be left alive there.
I will destroy its people and their children after them,"
announces the LORD.

23"I will turn it into a place where nothing but owls can live.
I will turn it into a swamp.
I will sweep through it like a broom and destroy everything,"
announces the LORD who rules over all.

A Message About Assyria

24The LORD who rules over all has taken an oath. He has said,

"You can be sure that what I have planned will happen.
What I have decided will take place.
25I will crush the Assyrians in my land.
On my mountains I will walk all over them.
The yokes they put on my people will be removed.
The heavy load they put on their shoulders will be taken away."

[26]That's how the LORD carries out his plan all over the world.
That's how he reaches out his powerful hand to punish all of the nations.
[27]The LORD who rules over all has planned it.
Who can stop him?
He has reached out his powerful hand.
Who can keep him from using it?

A Message About the Philistines

[28]A message came to me from the LORD in the year King Ahaz died. The LORD said,

[29]"The rod of Assyria has struck all of you Philistines.
But do not be glad that it is broken.
That rod is like a snake that will produce an even more poisonous snake.
It will produce a darting, poisonous serpent.
[30]Even the poorest people in Israel will have plenty to eat.
Those who are in need will lie down in safety.
But I will destroy your families.
They will die of hunger.
I will kill any of them who are still left alive.

[31]"Cities of Philistia, cry out for help! Scream in pain!
All of you Philistines, melt away in fear!
An army is coming from the north in a cloud of dust.
No one in its ranks is falling behind.
[32]What answer should be given
to the messengers from that nation?
Tell them, 'The LORD has made Zion secure.
His suffering people will find safety there.' "

A Message About Moab

Isaiah 15

[1]Here is a message the LORD gave me about Moab.

The city of Ar in Moab is destroyed.
It happened in a single night.
Kir in Moab is also destroyed.
It happened in a single night.
[2]The people of Dibon go up to their temple to worship.
They go to their high places to sob.
The people of Moab cry over the cities of Nebo and Medeba.
All of their heads are shaved.
All of their beards have been cut off.
[3]In the streets they wear black clothes.
On their roofs and in the market places
all of them are crying.
They fall down flat with their faces toward the ground.
And they sob.
[4]The people of Heshbon and Elealeh cry out.
Their voices are heard all the way to Jahaz.
So the fighting men of Moab cry out.
Their hearts are weak.

[5]My heart cries out over Moab.
Some who run away get as far as Zoar.
Others run all the way to Eglath Shelishiyah.
Others go up the road to Luhith.
They are sobbing as they go.
Still others travel the road to Horonaim.
They sing a song of sadness because their town is being destroyed.
[6]The waters at Nimrim are dried up.
And so is the grass.
The plants have died.
Nothing green is left.

[7]The people are trying to escape
through the Valley of the Poplar Trees.
They are carrying with them the wealth
they have collected and stored up.
[8]Their loud cries echo along the border of Moab.
They reach as far as Eglaim.
Their songs of sadness reach all the way to Beer Elim.
[9]The waters of the city of Dimon are full of blood.
But the LORD will bring even more trouble on Dimon.
He will bring lions against those who run away from Moab.
They will also attack those who remain in the land.

Isaiah 16

[1]People of Moab, send lambs as a gift
to the ruler of Judah.
Send them from Sela.
Send them across the desert.
Send them to Mount Zion in the city of Jerusalem.
[2]The women of Moab are at the places
where people go across the Arnon River.
They are like birds that flap their wings
when they are pushed from their nest.

[3]The Moabites say to the rulers of Judah,
“Give us advice. Make a decision.
Cover us with your shadow.
Make it like night even at noon.
Hide those of us who are running away.
Don’t turn them over to their enemies.
[4]Let those who have run away from Moab stay with you.
Keep them safe from those who are trying to destroy them.”

Those who crush others will be destroyed.
The killing will stop.
The attackers will disappear from the earth.
[5]A man from the royal house of David will sit on Judah’s throne.
He will rule with faithful love.
When he judges he will do what is fair.
He will be quick to do what is right.

[6]We have heard all about Moab’s pride.
We have heard how very proud they are.
They think they are so much better than others.
They brag about themselves.
But all of their bragging is nothing but empty words.

[7]So the people of Moab cry out.
All of them cry over their country.
Sing a song of sadness.

Sob over the men of Kir Hareseth.
[8]The vineyards of Heshbon dry up.
So do the vines of Sibmah.
The rulers of the nations
have walked all over its finest vines.
Those vines once reached as far as Jazer.
They spread out toward the desert.
Their new growth went
all the way to the Dead Sea.
[9]Jazer sobs over the vines of Sibmah.
And so do I.
Heshbon and Elealeh,
I soak you with my tears!
There isn't any ripe fruit for people to shout about.
There isn't any harvest to make them happy.
[10]Joy and gladness are taken away from the orchards.
No one sings or shouts in the vineyards.
No one stomps on grapes at the winepresses.
That's because the LORD has put an end to the shouting.
[11]My heart sobs over Moab like a song of sadness played on a harp.
Deep down inside me I sob over Kir Hareseth.
[12]Moab's people go to their high place to pray.
But all they do is wear themselves out.
Their god Chemosh can't help them at all.

[13]That's the message the LORD has already spoken about Moab. [14]But now he says, "In exactly three years, people will look down on Moab's glory. Now Moab has many people. But by that time only a few of them will be left alive. And even they will be weak."

Messages About Damascus and Israel

Isaiah 17

[1]Here is a message the LORD gave me about Damascus. He said,

"Damascus will not be a city anymore.
Instead, all of its buildings will be knocked down.
[2]The cities of Aroer will be deserted.
They will be left to the flocks that lie down there.
No one will make them afraid.
[3]Ephraim's people will no longer have cities with high walls around them.
Royal power will disappear from Damascus.
Those who are left alive in Aram
will be like the glory of the people of Israel,"
announces the LORD who rules over all.

[4]"In days to come, the glory of Jacob's people will fade.
Their strength will get weaker and weaker.
[5]It will be as when a worker cuts and gathers grain
in the Valley of Rephaim.
He gathers up stalks with his arms.
Only a few heads of grain are left.
[6]In the same way, only a few people will be left alive.
It will be as when workers knock olives off the trees.
Only two or three olives are left on the highest branches.
Four or five at most are left on the limbs that produce fruit,"
announces the LORD, the God of Israel.

[7]In days to come, men will look to their Maker for help.
They will turn their eyes to the Holy One of Israel.
[8]They won't trust in the altars
they made with their own hands.
They won't pay any attention to the poles they used
to worship the goddess Asherah.
And they won't depend on the incense altars

they made with their own fingers.

9 At that time the strong cities in Israel will be deserted. They will be as they
were when the Israelites drove the Canaanites out of them. They will be like
places that are taken over by bushes and weeds. The whole land will become
dry and empty.

10 Israel, you have forgotten God, who saves you.
You have not remembered the Rock, who keeps you safe.
You might set out the finest plants.
You might plant vines from other lands.
11 The plants might start to grow on the day you set them out.
The vines might begin to bud on the morning you plant them.
But even if they do, there won't be any harvest.
Instead, there will be sickness and pain that won't go away.

12 How terrible it looks for us!
Many nations are marching against us.
The noise of their armies is like the sound of the ocean.
They are making a lot of noise.
It sounds like huge waves crashing on the shore.
13 It sounds like the roar of rushing waters.
But when the LORD speaks out against them, they run far away.
The wind blows them away like straw on the hills.
A strong wind drives them along like tumbleweeds.
14 In the evening, the nations terrify us.
But before morning comes, they are gone.
That's what happens to those who steal our goods.
That's what happens to those who take what belongs to us.

A Message About Cush

Isaiah 18

[1]How terrible it will be for the land
whose armies are like large numbers of flying insects!
That land is along the rivers of Cush.
[2]Its people send messengers on the Nile River.
They travel over the water in papyrus boats.

Messengers, hurry back home!
Go back to your people,
who are tall and have smooth skin.
Everyone is afraid of them.
They are warriors.
Their language is different from ours.
Their land is divided up by rivers.

[3]Pay attention, all you people of the world!
Listen, all you who live on earth!
Banners will be lifted up on the mountains.
And you will see them.
Trumpets will be blown.
And you will hear them.
[4]The LORD says to me,
"I will look down from heaven, where I live.
I will be as quiet as summer heat in the sunshine.
I will be as quiet as a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest."
[5]A farmer cuts off new growth with pruning knives.
He cuts down spreading branches and takes them away.
He does it before the grapes are harvested.
That's when the blooms are gone and the grapes are ripe.
In the same way, the LORD will cut off the nations
that are gathered against his people.
[6]Their dead bodies will be left for the birds of the mountains to eat.
They will be left for the wild animals.
The birds will eat the dead bodies all summer long.

The wild animals will eat them all through the winter.

[7]At that time gifts will be brought to the LORD who rules over all.

The people who are tall and have smooth skin will bring them.
Everyone is afraid of those people.
They are warriors. Their language is different from ours.
Their land is divided up by rivers.

They will bring their gifts to Mount Zion. That's where the LORD who rules over all has put his Name.

A Message About Egypt

Isaiah 19

[1]Here is a message the LORD gave me about Egypt.

The LORD is coming to Egypt.
He's riding on a cloud that moves very fast.
The statues of the gods in Egypt tremble with fear because of him.
The hearts of the people there melt away inside them.

[2]The LORD says, "I will stir up one Egyptian against another.
Relatives will fight against relatives.
Neighbors will fight against one another.
Cities will fight against cities.
Kingdoms will fight against one another.
[3]The people of Egypt will lose hope.
I will keep them from doing what they plan to do.
They will ask their gods for advice.
They will turn to the spirits of dead people for help.
They will go to people who get messages from those who have died.
They will ask for advice from people who talk to the spirits of the dead.
[4]I will hand the Egyptians over
to a mean and unkind master.
A powerful king will rule over them," announces the Lord.
He is the LORD who rules over all.

[5]The waters of the Nile River will dry up.
The bottom of it will be cracked and dry.
[6]Its waterways will stink.
And the streams of Egypt will get smaller and smaller
until they dry up.
The tall grass that grows along the river will dry up.
[7]So will the plants along the banks of the Nile.
Even the planted fields along the Nile will dry up.
Everything that grows there will blow away and disappear.

[8]The fishermen will moan.
All those who drop hooks into the Nile will sob.
Those who throw their nets on the water
will become very sad.
[9]Those who make clothes out of flax will lose hope.
So will those who weave fine linen.
[10]Those who work with cloth will be unhappy.
And all those who work for money will be sick at heart.

[11]The officials of the city of Zoan are very foolish.
Pharaoh's wise men give advice that doesn't make any sense.
How can they dare to say to Pharaoh,
"We're among the wise men"?
How can they say to him,
"We're like the advisers to the kings of long ago"?

[12]Pharaoh, where are your wise men now?
Let them tell you
what the LORD who rules over all
has planned against Egypt.
[13]The officials of Zoan have become foolish.
The leaders of Memphis have been lied to.
The most important leaders in Egypt
have led its people down the wrong path.
[14]The LORD has given them
a spirit that makes them feel dizzy.
They make Egypt unsteady in everything it does.
Egypt is like a person who drinks too much.
He throws up and then walks around in the mess he's made.
[15]No one in Egypt can do anything to help them.
Its elders and important leaders can't help them.
Its prophets and priests can't do anything.
Those who rule over others can't help.
And those who bow down to them can't help either.

[16]In days to come, the people of Egypt will be as terrified as women. The LORD who rules over all will raise his hand against them. Then they will tremble with fear. [17]The people of Judah will bring terror to the Egyptians. Everyone in Egypt who hears the name of Judah will be terrified. That's because of what the LORD who rules over all is planning to do to them.

18 At that time the people of five cities in Egypt will use the Hebrew language
when they worship the LORD who rules over all. They will take an oath. And
they will promise to be faithful to him. One of those cities is called The City of
the Sun.

19 At that time there will be an altar to the LORD in the middle of Egypt. There
will be a monument to him at its border. 20 They will remind people that the
LORD who rules over all is worshiped in Egypt. The people there will cry out to
the LORD because of those who treat them badly. He will send someone to stand
up for them and save them. And he will set them free.

21 So the LORD will make himself known to the people of Egypt. At that time
they will recognize that he is the LORD. They will worship him by bringing
sacrifices and grain offerings to him. They will make promises to the LORD.
And they will keep them. 22 The LORD will strike Egypt with a plague. But then
he will heal them. They will turn to the LORD. And he will answer their prayers
and heal them.

23 At that time there will be a wide road from Egypt to Assyria. The people of
Assyria will go to Egypt. And the people of Egypt will go to Assyria. The
people of Egypt and Assyria will worship the LORD together.

24 At that time Egypt, Assyria and Israel will be a blessing to the whole earth.
25 The LORD who rules over all will bless those three nations. He will say, “Let
the Egyptians be blessed. They are my people. Let the Assyrians be blessed.
My hands created them. And let the Israelites be blessed. They are my very
own people.”

A Message About Egypt and Cush

Isaiah 20

[1]Sargon sent his highest commander to the city of Ashdod. He attacked it and captured it. Sargon was king of Assyria. [2]Three years earlier the LORD had spoken to me. He had said, “Take off the black clothes you are wearing. And take your sandals off.” So I did. I went around barefoot. I didn’t have anything on but my underwear.

[3]After Ashdod was captured, the LORD said, “My servant Isaiah has gone around barefoot for three years. He has not worn anything but his underwear. He is a sign and reminder to Egypt and Cush about what will happen to them.

[4]“The king of Assyria will lead prisoners away from Egypt and Cush. Young people and old people alike will be taken away. Like Isaiah, they will be barefoot. They will not be wearing anything but their underwear. And their backsides will be bare. So the Egyptians will be put to shame.

[5]“People trusted in Cush to help them. They bragged about what Egypt could do for them. But they will be afraid and put to shame. [6]At that time the people who live on the coast of Philistia will speak up. They will say, ‘See what has happened to those we depended on! We ran to them for help. We wanted them to save us from the king of Assyria. Now how can we escape?’ ”

A Message About Babylonia

Isaiah 21

[1]Here is a message the LORD gave me about Babylonia. It is known as the Desert by the Two Rivers.

An attack is coming through the desert.
It is coming from a land of terror.
It's sweeping along like a windstorm blowing across the Negev Desert.

[2]I have seen a vision about something terrible that will happen.
People are turning against Babylon.
Robbers are taking its goods.
Elamites, attack the city! Medes, surround it!
The LORD will put an end to all of the suffering Babylon has caused.

[3]The vision fills my body with pain.
Pains take hold of me.
They are like the pains of a woman having a baby.
I am shaken by what I hear.
I'm terrified by what I see.
[4]My heart grows weak.
Fear makes me tremble.
I longed for evening to come.
But it brought me horror instead of rest.

[5]In my vision the Babylonians set the tables.
They spread the rugs out.
They eat. They drink.
Get up, you officers!
Rub your shields with oil!

[6]The Lord said to me,

“Go. Put a guard on duty on Jerusalem’s walls.
Have him report what he sees.
7Tell him to watch for chariots
that are pulled by teams of horses.
Tell him to watch for men riding on donkeys or camels.
Make sure he stays awake.
Make sure he stays wide awake.”

8“My master!” the guard shouts back.

“Day after day I stand here on the lookout tower.
Every night I stay here on duty.
9Look! Here comes a man in a chariot!
It’s being pulled by a team of horses.
He’s calling out the news,
‘Babylon has fallen! It has fallen!
All of the statues of its gods
lie broken in pieces on the ground!’ ”

10My people, you have been crushed
like grain on a threshing floor.
But now I’m telling you the good news I’ve heard.
It comes from the LORD who rules over all.
He is the God of Israel.

A Message About Edom

11Here is a message the LORD gave me about Edom.

Someone is calling out to me from the land of Seir. He says,
“Guard, when will the night be over?
Guard, how soon will it end?”
12The guard answers,
“Morning is coming. But the night will return.
If you want to ask again,
come back and ask.”

A Message About Arabia

13 Here is a message the LORD gave me about Arabia.

He told me to give orders to traders from Dedan.
They were camping in the bushes of Arabia.
14 I told them to bring water for those who are thirsty.
I also gave orders to those who live in Tema.
I told them to bring food for those who are running away.
15 They are running away from where the fighting is heaviest.
That's where the swords are ready to strike.
That's where the bows are ready to shoot.

16 The Lord says to me, "In exactly one year, Kedar's grand show of power will come to an end. 17 Only a few of Kedar's soldiers who shoot arrows will be left alive." The LORD has spoken. He is the God of Israel.

A Message About Jerusalem

Isaiah 22

1 Here is a message the LORD gave me about the Valley of Vision.

People of Jerusalem, what's the matter with you?
Why have all of you gone up on the roofs of your houses?
2 Why is your town so full of noise?
Why is your city so full of the sound of wild parties?
Those among you who died weren't killed with swords.
They didn't die in battle.
3 All of your leaders have run away.
They've been captured without a single arrow being shot.
All those who were caught were taken away as prisoners.
They ran off while your enemies were still far away.
4 So I said, "Leave me alone.
Let me sob bitter tears.
Don't try to comfort me.
My people have been destroyed."

5 The LORD who rules over all sent the noise of battle against you.
The Lord brought disorder and terror
to the Valley of Vision.
The walls of the city were knocked down.
Cries for help were heard in the mountains.
6 Soldiers from Elam came armed with bows and arrows.
They came with their chariots and horses.
Soldiers from Kir got their shields ready.
7 Your rich valleys filled up with chariots.
Horsemen took up their battle positions at your city gates.
8 Judah wasn't a safe place to live in anymore.

When all of that happened, you depended
on the weapons in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon.
9 You saw that the City of David
had many holes in its walls.

They needed to be repaired.
You stored up water
in the Lower Pool.
10You picked out the weaker buildings in Jerusalem.
You tore them down and used their stones
to strengthen the city walls against attack.
11You built a pool between the two walls.
You used it to save the water
that was running down from the Old Pool.
But you didn't look to the One who made it all possible.
You didn't pay any attention to the One
who planned everything long ago.

12The LORD who rules over all
called out to you at that time.
The Lord told you to sob and cry.
He told you to tear your hair out.
And he told you to put black clothes on.
13Instead, you are enjoying yourselves at wild parties!
You are killing cattle and sheep.
You are eating their meat and drinking wine.
You are saying, "Let's eat and drink,
because tomorrow we'll die."

14I heard the LORD who rules over all speaking. "Your sin can never be paid for as long as you people live," says the Lord.

15The LORD who rules over all speaks. The Lord says,

"Go. Speak to the head servant Shebna.
He is in charge of the palace. Tell him,
16'What are you doing here outside the city?
Who allowed you to cut out a tomb for yourself here?
Who said you could carve out your grave on the hillside?
Who allowed you to cut out your resting place in the rock?

17" 'Watch out, you mighty man!
The LORD is about to grab hold of you.
He is about to throw you away.

[18]He will roll you up tightly like a ball.
He will throw you into a very large country.
There you will die.
And there the chariots you are so proud of will remain.
You bring shame on your master's family!
[19]The LORD will remove you from your job.
You will be brought down from your high position.

[20]" 'At that time he will send for his servant Eliakim. He is the son of Hilkiah. [21]The LORD will put your robe on Eliakim. He will tie your belt around him. He will hand your authority over to him. Eliakim will be like a father to the people of Jerusalem and Judah.

[22]" 'The LORD will give Eliakim the key of authority in David's royal house. No one can shut what he opens. And no one can open what he shuts. [23]The LORD will set him firmly in place like a peg that is driven into a wall. He will hold a position of honor in his family. [24]The good name of his whole family will depend on him. They will be like bowls and jars hanging on a peg.

[25]" 'But a new day is coming,' " announces the LORD who rules over all. " 'At that time the peg that was driven into the wall will give way. It will break off and fall down. And the heavy load hanging on it will also fall.' " The LORD has spoken.

A Message About Tyre

Isaiah 23

[1]Here is a message the LORD gave me about Tyre.

Men in the ships of Tarshish, cry out!
The city of Tyre is destroyed.
Its houses and harbor are gone.
That's the message you have received
from the island of Cyprus.

[2]People on the island of Tyre, be silent.
Traders from the city of Sidon, be quiet.
Those who sail on the Mediterranean Sea have made you rich.
[3]Grain from Egypt
came across the mighty waters.
The harvest of the Nile River brought wealth to Tyre.
It became the market place of the nations.

[4]Sidon, be ashamed. Mighty Tyre out in the sea, be ashamed.
The sea has spoken. It has said,
"It's as if I had never felt labor pains or had children.
It's as if I had never brought up sons or daughters.
It's as if the city of Tyre had never existed."
[5]The Egyptians will hear about what has happened to Tyre.
They'll be very sad and troubled.

[6]People of the island of Tyre, cry out!
Go across the sea to Tarshish.
[7]Just look at Tyre.
It's no longer the old, old city that was known for its wild parties.
It no longer sends its people out
to settle in lands far away.
[8]Tyre was a city that produced kings.
Its traders were princes.
They were honored all over the earth.

So who planned to destroy such a city?
9 The LORD who rules over all planned to do it.
He wanted to bring down all of its pride and glory.
He wanted to put to shame those who were honored all over the earth.

10 People of Tarshish, spread out over your land
like the waters of the Nile.
There isn't anything to hold you back anymore.
11 The LORD has reached his powerful hand out over the sea.
He has made its kingdoms tremble with fear.
He has given a command concerning Phoenicia.
He has ordered that its forts be destroyed.
12 He said, "No more wild parties for you!
People of Sidon, you are now destroyed!

"Leave your city. Go across the sea to Cyprus.
Even there you will not find any rest."
13 Look at the land of the Babylonians.
No one lives there anymore.
The Assyrians have turned it
into a place for desert creatures.
They built their towers in order to attack it.
They took everything out of its forts.
They knocked all of its buildings down.

14 Men in the ships of Tarshish, cry out!
Mighty Tyre is destroyed!

15 A time is coming when people will forget about Tyre for 70 years. That's the length of a king's life. But at the end of those 70 years, Tyre will be like the prostitute that people sing about. They say,

16 "Forgotten prostitute, pick up a harp.
Walk through the city.
Play the harp well. Sing many songs.
Then you will be remembered."

17 At the end of the 70 years, the LORD will punish Tyre. He will let it return to

its way of life as a prostitute. It will earn its living with all of the kingdoms on the face of the earth. [18]But the money it earns will be set apart for the LORD. The money won't be stored up or kept for Tyre. Instead, it will go to those who live the way the LORD wants them to. It will pay for plenty of food and fine clothes for them.

The LORD Will Destroy the Earth

Isaiah 24

[1]The LORD is going to completely destroy everything on earth.
He will twist its surface.
He'll scatter those who live on it.
[2]Priests and people alike will suffer.
So will masters and their servants.
And so will women and their female servants.
Sellers and buyers alike will suffer.
So will those who borrow and those who lend.
And so will those who owe money and those who lend it.
[3]The earth will be completely destroyed.
Everything of value will be taken out of it.
That's what the LORD has said.

[4]The earth will dry up completely.
The world will dry up and waste away.
The most important people on earth will fade away.
[5]The earth is polluted by its people.
They haven't obeyed the laws of the LORD.
They haven't done what he told them to do.
They've broken the covenant that will last forever.
[6]So the LORD will send a curse on the earth.
Its people will pay for what they've done.
They will be burned up.
Very few of them will be left.
[7]The vines and fresh wine will dry up completely.
Those who used to have a good time will groan.
[8]The happy sounds of tambourines will be gone.
The noise of those who enjoy wild parties will stop.
The joyful music of harps will become silent.
[9]People will no longer sing as they drink wine.
Beer will taste bitter to those who drink it.
[10]Destroyed cities will lie empty.

People will lock themselves inside their houses.
[11]In the streets people will cry out for wine.
All joy will turn into sadness.
All happiness will be driven out of the earth.
[12]All of the buildings will be knocked down.
Every city gate will be smashed to pieces.
[13]That's how it will be on the earth.
And that's how it will be among the nations.
It will be as when workers knock all but a few olives off the trees.
It will be like a vine that has only a few grapes left after the harvest.

[14]Those who are left alive will shout with joy.
People from the west will praise the LORD because he is the King.
[15]So give glory to him, you who live in the east.
Honor the name of the LORD, you who are in the islands of the sea.
He is the God of Israel.
[16]From one end of the earth to the other we hear singing.
People are saying,
"Give glory to the One who always does what is right."

But I said, "I feel very bad.
I'm getting weaker and weaker.
How terrible it is for me!
People turn against one another.
They can't be trusted.
So they turn against each other."
[17]People of the earth,
terror, a pit and a trap are waiting for you.
[18]Anyone who runs away from the terror
will fall into the pit.
Anyone who climbs out of the pit
will be caught in the trap.

The LORD will open the windows of the skies.
He will flood the land.
The foundations of the earth will shake.
[19]The earth will be broken up.
It will split open.
It will be shaken to pieces.
[20]The earth will be unsteady like someone who is drunk.
It will sway like a tent in the wind.

Its sin will weigh so heavily on it that it will fall.
It will never get up again.

21 At that time the LORD will punish
the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens above.
He will also punish the kings on the earth below.
22 They will be brought together
like prisoners in chains.
They'll be locked up in prison.
After many days the LORD will punish them.
23 The LORD who rules over all will rule
on Mount Zion in Jerusalem.
The elders of the city will be there.
They will see his glory.
His rule will be so glorious that the sun and moon
will be too ashamed to shine.

A Song of Praise

Isaiah 25

[1]LORD, you are my God.
I will honor you.
I will praise your name.
You have been perfectly faithful.
You have done wonderful things.
You had planned them long ago.
[2]You have turned cities into piles of trash.
You have pulled down the high walls that were around them.
You have destroyed our enemies' forts.
They will never be rebuilt.
[3]Powerful nations will honor you.
Even sinful people from their cities will have respect for you.
[4]Poor people have come to you for safety.
You have kept needy people safe when they were in trouble.
You have been a place to hide when storms came.
You have been a shade from the heat of the sun.
Evil people attack us.
They are like a storm beating against a wall.
[5]They are like the heat of the desert.
You stopped the noisy shouts of our enemies.
You kept them from winning the battle over us and singing about it.
You are like the shadow of a cloud that cools the earth.

[6]On Mount Zion the LORD who rules over all will prepare
a feast for all of the nations.
The best and richest foods
and the finest aged wines will be served.
[7]On that mountain the LORD will destroy
the veil of sadness that covers all of the nations.
He will destroy the gloom that is spread over everyone.
[8]He will swallow up death forever.
The LORD and King will wipe away the tears
from everyone's face.

He will remove the shame of his people
from the whole earth.

The LORD has spoken.

9 At that time they will say,

"He is our God.
We trusted in him, and he saved us.
He is the LORD. We trusted in him.
Let us be filled with joy because he saved us."

10 The LORD's powerful hand will keep Mount Zion safe.
But he will walk all over Moab.
Its people will be crushed,
just as straw is crushed in animal waste.
11 They will try to swim their way out of it.
They will spread their hands out in it,
just as a swimmer spreads his hands out to swim.
But God will bring down Moab's pride.
None of their skill will help them.
12 He will pull down their high, strong walls.
He will bring them down to the ground.
He'll bring them right down to the dust.

Another Song of Praise

Isaiah 26

1 At that time a song will be sung in the land of Judah. It will say,

"We have a strong city.
God's saving power surrounds it
like walls and towers.
2 Open its gates
so that those who do what is right can enter.
They are the people who remain faithful to God.
3 LORD, you will give perfect peace
to anyone who commits himself to be faithful to you.
That's because he trusts in you.

4 "Trust in the LORD forever.
The LORD is the Rock.
The LORD will keep us safe forever.
5 He brings down those who are proud.
He pulls down cities that have high walls.
They fall down flat on the ground.
He throws them down to the dust.
6 The feet of those who were crushed stomp on them.
Those who were helpless walk all over them."

7 LORD, you are honest and fair.
You guide those who do what is right.
You lead them on a straight path.
You make their way smooth.
8 LORD, we are living the way your laws command us to live.
We are waiting for you to act.
Our hearts long for you to be true to your name.
That's what you are known for.
9 My heart longs for you at night.
My spirit longs for you in the morning.
You will come and judge the earth.

Then the people of the world will learn to do what is right.
10 Grace is shown to sinful people.
But they still don't learn to do what is right.
They keep on doing evil even in a land where others are honest and fair.
They don't have any respect for the majesty of the LORD.
11 LORD, you have raised your hand high to punish them.
But they don't even see it.
Let them see how much you love your people.
Then they will be put to shame.
Let the fire you are saving for your enemies burn them up.

12 LORD, you give us peace.
You are the one who has done everything we've accomplished.
13 LORD, you are our God.
Other masters besides you have ruled over us.
But your name is the only one we honor.
14 Those other masters are now dead.
They will never live again.
Their spirits won't rise from the dead.
You punished them and destroyed them.
You wiped out all memory of them.
15 LORD, you have made our nation grow.
You have made it larger.
You have gained glory for yourself.
You have increased the size of our land.

16 LORD, when your people were suffering, they came to you.
When you punished them,
they could barely whisper a prayer.
17 LORD, you made us like a woman who is having a baby.
She groans and cries out in pain.
18 We were pregnant. We groaned with pain.
But nothing was born.
We didn't bring your saving power to the earth.
We didn't give life to the people of the world.

19 Israel, those among you who have died will live again.
Their bodies will rise from the dead.
You who lie in the grave,
wake up and shout with joy.

The dew of the morning gives life to the earth.
So the earth will give up its dead people.

20 My people, go into your houses.
Shut the doors behind you.
Hide yourselves for a little while.
Do it until the LORD's anger is over.
21 He is coming from the place where he lives.
He will punish the people of the earth for their sins.
The blood that has been spilled on the earth will be brought out into the open.
The ground will no longer hide those who have been killed.

Israel Will Be Saved

Isaiah 27

[1]At that time

the LORD will punish Leviathan with his sword.
His great, powerful and deadly sword will punish
the serpent that glides through the sea.
He will kill that twisting sea monster.

[2]At that time the LORD will sing about his fruitful vineyard. He will say,

[3]"I am the LORD. I watch over my vineyard.
I water it all the time.
I guard it day and night.
I do it so no one can harm it.
[4]I am not angry with my vineyard.
I wish thorns and bushes would come up in it.
Then I would march out against them in battle.
I would set all of them on fire.
[5]So the enemies of my people had better come to me for safety.
They should make peace with me.
I will say it again.
They should make peace with me."

[6]In days to come, Jacob's people will put down roots like a vine.
Israel will bud and bloom.
They will fill the whole world with fruit.

[7]The LORD struck down those who struck Israel down.
But he hasn't punished Israel as much.
The LORD killed those who killed many of his people.
But he hasn't punished his people as much.
[8]The LORD will use war to punish Israel.

He will make them leave their land.
With a strong blast of his anger he will drive them out.
It will be as if the east wind were blowing.
9The people of Jacob will have to pay for their sin.
That must happen in order for their sin to be taken away.
They will make all of the altar stones like chalk.
They will crush them to pieces.
No poles that had been used to worship the goddess Asherah will be left standing.
No incense altars will be left either.
10Cities that have high walls around them will become empty.
They will be deserted settlements.
They will be like a desert.
Calves will eat and lie down in them.
They will strip the branches of their trees bare.
11When their twigs are dry, they will be broken off.
Then women will come and make fires with them.
The people of Jacob don't understand the LORD.
So the One who made them won't be concerned about them.
Their Creator won't show them his favor.

12At that time the LORD will separate Israel from other people. He will gather the Israelites together. He will gather them one by one from the Euphrates River all the way to the Wadi of Egypt. 13At that time a loud trumpet will be blown. Those who were dying in Assyria will come and worship the LORD. So will those who were taken away to Egypt. All of them will worship the LORD on his holy mountain in Jerusalem.

The LORD Will Judge Israel

Isaiah 28

[1]How terrible it will be for the city of Samaria!
It sits on a hill like a crown of flowers.
The leaders of Ephraim are drunk.
They take pride in their city.
It sits above a valley that has rich soil.
How terrible it will be for the glorious beauty of that fading flower!
[2]The Lord will bring the strong and powerful king of Assyria against Samaria.
The Lord will throw that city down to the ground with great force.
It will be like a hailstorm.
It will be like a wind that destroys everything.
It will be like a driving rain and a flooding storm.
[3]That city is like a crown.
The leaders of Ephraim are drunk.
They take pride in their city.
But its enemies will walk all over it.
[4]It sits on a hill above a rich valley.
It's like a crown of flowers whose glorious beauty is fading away.
But it will become like a fig that is ripe before harvest.
As soon as someone sees it,
he picks it and swallows it.

[5]At that time the LORD who rules over all
will be like a glorious crown.
He will be like a beautiful wreath
for those of his people who will be left alive.
[6]He will help those
who are fair when they judge.
He will give strength to those
who turn back their enemies at the city gate.

[7]Israel's leaders are drunk from wine.
They can't walk straight.

They are drunk from beer.
They are unsteady on their feet.
Priests and prophets drink beer.
They can’t walk straight.
They are mixed up from drinking too much wine.
They drink too much beer.
They are unsteady on their feet.
The prophets see visions but don’t really understand them.
The priests aren’t able to make good decisions.
8 They throw up. All of the tables are covered
with the mess they’ve made.
There isn’t one spot on the tables
that isn’t smelly and dirty.

9 My people are making fun of me. They say,
“Who does he think he’s trying to teach?
Who does he think he’s explaining his message to?
Is it to children who do not need their mother’s milk anymore?
Is it to those who have just been taken from her breast?
10 Here is how he teaches.
Do this and do that.
Do that and do this.
Obey this rule and obey that rule.
Obey that rule and obey this rule.
Learn a little here and learn a little there.”

11 All right then, these people won’t listen to me.
So God will speak to them.
He will speak by using people who speak unfamiliar languages.
He will speak by using the mouths of strangers.
12 He said to his people,
“I am offering you a resting place.
Let those who are tired rest.”
He continued, “I am offering you a place of peace and quiet.”
But they wouldn’t listen.
13 So then, here is what the LORD’s message will become to them.
Do this and do that.
Do that and do this.
Obey this rule and obey that rule.
Obey that rule and obey this rule.
Learn a little here and learn a little there.

So when they try to go forward,
they'll fall back and be wounded.
They'll be trapped and captured.

14 Listen to the LORD's message,
you who make fun of the truth.
Listen, you who rule over these people in Jerusalem.
15 You brag, "We have entered into a covenant with death.
We have made an agreement with the grave.
When a terrible plague comes to punish us,
it can't touch us.
That's because we depend on lies to keep us safe.
We hide behind what isn't true."

16 So the LORD and King speaks. He says,

"Look! I am laying a stone in Zion.
It is a stone that has been tested.
It is the most important stone for a firm foundation.
The one who trusts in that stone will never be shaken.
17 I will use a measuring line to prove that you have not been fair.
I will use a plumb line to prove that you have not done what is right.
Hail will sweep away the lies you depend on to keep you safe.
Water will flood your hiding place.
18 Your covenant with death will be called off.
The agreement you made with the grave will not stand.
When the terrible plague comes to punish you,
you will be beaten down by it.
19 As often as it comes, it will carry you away.
Morning after morning, day and night,
it will come to punish you."

If you understand this message,
it will bring you absolute terror.
20 You will be like someone whose bed is too short to lie down on.
You will be like those whose blankets are too small to wrap themselves in.
21 The LORD will rise up to judge, just as he did at Mount Perazim.
He will get up to act, just as he did in the Valley of Gibeon.
He'll do his work, but it will be strange work.

He'll carry out his task, but it will be an unexpected one.
22 Now stop making fun of me.
If you don't, your chains will become heavier.
The LORD who rules over all has spoken to me.
The Lord has told me he has ordered that the whole land be destroyed.

23 Listen and hear my voice.
Pay attention to what I'm saying.
24 When a farmer plows in order to plant, does he plow without stopping?
Does he keep on breaking up the soil and making the field level?
25 When he's made the surface even, doesn't he plant caraway seeds?
Doesn't he scatter cummin?
Doesn't he plant wheat in its proper place?
Doesn't he plant barley where it belongs?
Doesn't he plant spelt along the edge of the field?
26 His God directs him.
He teaches him the right way to do his work.

27 Caraway seeds are beaten out with a rod.
They aren't separated out under a threshing sled.
Cummin seeds are beaten out with a stick.
The wheel of a cart isn't rolled over them.
28 Grain must be ground up to make bread.
A farmer separates it out.
But he doesn't go on doing it forever.
He drives the wheels of a threshing cart over it.
But he doesn't let the horses grind it to dust.
29 All of those insights come from the LORD who rules over all.
His advice is wonderful. His wisdom is glorious.

The LORD Will Judge Jerusalem

Isaiah 29

[1]Jerusalem, how terrible it will be for you!
Ariel, you are the city where David settled.
The years will come and go.
Keep on celebrating your regular feasts.
[2]The LORD says, “Ariel, I will surround you.
Jerusalem, I will get ready to attack you.
Your people will sob.
They will sing songs of sadness.
I will make you like the front of an altar
that is covered with blood.
[3]I will be like an army that is camped against you on all sides.
I will surround you with towers in order to attack you.
I will build my ramps all around you and set up my ladders.
[4]You will be brought down to the grave.
You will speak from deep down inside the ground.
Your words will be barely heard out of the dust.
Your voice will sound like the voice of a ghost
coming from under the ground.
Your words will sound like a whisper out of the dust.”

[5]Jerusalem, all of your enemies will become like fine dust.
Their terrifying armies will become like straw
that the wind blows away.
All of a sudden, in an instant,
[6]the LORD who rules over all will come.
He will come with thunder, earthquakes and a lot of noise.
He’ll bring windstorms and rainstorms with him.
He’ll send a blazing fire that will burn everything up.

[7]Armies from all of the nations will fight against Ariel.
They will attack it and its fort.
They’ll surround it completely.
But suddenly those armies will disappear like a dream.

They will vanish like a vision in the night.
[8]They will be like a hungry person who dreams he is eating.
But when he wakes up, he's still hungry.
They will be like a thirsty person who dreams he is drinking.
But when he wakes up, he is weak.
His thirst hasn't been satisfied.
In the same way, the armies from all of the nations
that fight against Mount Zion will disappear.

[9]People of Jerusalem, be shocked and amazed.
Make yourselves blind so you can't see anything.
Get drunk, but not from wine.
Be unsteady on your feet, but not because of beer.
[10]The LORD has made you fall into a deep sleep.
He has closed the eyes of your prophets.
He has covered the heads of your seers so they can't see.

[11]For you, this whole vision is like words that are sealed up in a scroll. Suppose you give it to someone who can read. And suppose you say to him, "Please read this for us." Then he'll answer, "I can't. It's sealed up." [12]Or suppose you give the scroll to someone who can't read. And suppose you say, "Please read this for us." Then he'll answer, "I don't know how to read."

[13]The Lord says,

"These people worship me only with their words.
They honor me by what they say.
But their hearts are far away from me.
Their worship doesn't mean anything to me.
They teach nothing but human rules.
[14]So once more I will shock these people
with many wonderful acts.
I will destroy the wisdom of those who think they are so wise.
I will do away with the cleverness of those who think they are so smart."
[15]How terrible it will be for people who do everything they can
to hide their plans from the LORD!
They do their work in darkness.
They think, "Who sees us? Who will know?"

16 They turn everything upside down.
How silly they are to think that potters are like the clay they work with!
Can what is made say to the one who made it,
"You didn't make me"?
Can the pot say to the potter,
"You don't know anything"?

17 In a very short time, Lebanon will be turned into rich farm lands.
The rich farm lands will seem like a forest.
18 At that time those who can't hear will hear what is read from the scroll.
Those who are blind will come out of gloom and darkness.
They will be able to see.
19 Those who aren't proud will once again find their joy in the LORD.
And those who are in need will find their joy in the Holy One of Israel.
20 Those who don't show any pity will vanish.
Those who make fun of others will disappear.
All those who look for ways to do what is evil will be cut off.
21 Without any proof, they claim that a man is guilty.
In court they try to trap
the one who speaks up for others.
By using dishonest witnesses they keep those who aren't guilty
from being treated fairly.

22 Long ago the LORD saved Abraham from trouble. Now he says to Jacob's people,

"You will not be ashamed anymore.
Your faces will no longer grow pale with fear.
23 You will see your children living among you.
I myself will give you those children.
Then you will honor my name.
You will recognize how holy I am.
I am the Holy One of Jacob.
You will have great respect for me.
I am the God of Israel.
24 I will give understanding to you
who find yourselves going down the wrong path.
You who are always speaking against others

will accept what I teach you.”

The LORD Will Judge His Stubborn People

Isaiah 30

1 “How terrible it will be for these stubborn children of mine!”
announces the LORD.
“How terrible for those who carry out plans that did not come from me!
Their agreement with Egypt did not come from my Spirit.
So they pile up one sin on top of another.
2 They go down to Egypt
without asking me for advice.
They look to Pharaoh to help them.
They ask Egypt to keep them safe.
3 But looking to Pharaoh will only bring them shame.
Asking Egypt for help will bring them dishonor.
4 Their officials have gone to the city of Zoan.
Their messengers have arrived in Hanes.
5 But the people of Judah will be put to shame
because they are trusting in a nation that is useless to them.
Egypt will not bring them any help or advantage.
Instead, it will bring them shame and dishonor.”

6 Here is a message the LORD gave me about the animals in the Negev Desert.

Judah’s messengers carry their riches on the backs of donkeys.
They carry their treasures on the humps of camels.
They travel through a land of danger and suffering.
It’s a land that is filled with lions.
Poisonous snakes are also there.
The messengers travel to a nation
that can’t do them any good.
7 They travel to Egypt, whose help is totally useless.
That’s why I call it Rahab the Do-Nothing.

8 The LORD said to me, “Go now.

Write on a tablet for the people of Judah
what I am about to say.
Also write it on a scroll.
In days to come
it will be a witness that lasts forever.
9 The people of Judah refuse to obey me.
They are children who tell lies.
They will not listen to what I want to teach them.
10 They say to the seers,
‘Don’t see any more visions!’
They say to the prophets,
‘Don’t give us any more visions of what is right!
Tell us pleasant things.
Prophesy things we want to hear even if they aren’t true.
11 Get out of our way!
Get off our path!
Keep the Holy One of Israel away from us!’ ”

12 So the Holy One of Israel speaks. He says,

“You have turned your backs on what I have said.
You have depended on telling people lies.
You have crushed others.
13 Those sins are like cracks in a high wall.
They get bigger and bigger.
Suddenly the wall breaks apart.
Then it quickly falls down.
14 It breaks into small pieces like a clay pot.
It breaks up completely.
Not one piece is left big enough
for taking coals from a fireplace.
Not one piece is left for dipping water out of a well.”

15 The LORD and King is the Holy One of Israel. He says,

“You will find peace and rest
when you turn away from your sins and depend on me.
You will receive the strength you need
when you stay calm and trust in me.

But you do not want to do what I tell you to.
16 You said, ‘No. We’ll escape on horses.’
So you will have to escape!
You said, ‘We’ll ride off on fast horses.’
So those who chase you will use faster horses!
17 When one of them dares you to fight,
a thousand of you will run away.
When five of them dare you,
all of you will run away.
So few of you will be left that you will be
like a flagpole on top of a mountain.
You will be like only one banner on a hill.”

18 But the LORD longs to show you his favor.
He wants to give you his tender love.
The LORD is a God who is always fair.
Blessed are all those who wait for him to act!

19 People of Zion, who live in Jerusalem, you won’t sob anymore. When you cry out to the Lord for help, he will show you his favor. As soon as he hears you, he’ll answer you. 20 He might treat you like prisoners. You might eat the bread of trouble. You might drink the water of suffering. But he will be your Teacher. He won’t hide himself anymore. You will see him with your own eyes. 21 You will hear your Teacher’s voice behind you. You will hear it whether you turn to the right or the left. It will say, “Here is the path I want you to take. So walk on it.”

22 Then you will get rid of the silver statues of your gods. You won’t have anything to do with the gold statues either. All of them are “unclean.” So you will throw them away like dirty rags. You will say to them, “Get away from us!”

23 The LORD will send rain on the seeds you plant in the ground. The crops that grow will be rich and plentiful. At that time your cattle will eat grass in rolling meadows. 24 The oxen and donkeys that work the soil will eat the finest feed and crushed grain. The farmers will use pitchforks and shovels to separate it from the straw.

25 At that time the towers of your enemies will fall down. Their soldiers will

die. Streams of water will flow on every high mountain and hill.

[26]The moon will shine like the sun. And the sunlight will be seven times brighter than usual. It will be like the light of seven full days. That will happen when the LORD bandages and heals the wounds and bruises he has brought on his people.

[27]The LORD will come from far away
in all of his power and glory.
He will show his burning anger.
Thick clouds of smoke will be all around him.
His mouth will speak angry words.
The words from his tongue will be like a destroying fire.
[28]His breath will be like a rushing flood
that rises up to the neck.
He'll separate out the nations he is going to destroy.
He'll place a bit in their jaws.
It will lead them down the road to death.
[29]You will sing
as you do on the night you celebrate a holy feast.
Your hearts will be filled with joy.
You will be as joyful as people playing their flutes
as they go up to the mountain of the LORD.
He is the Rock of Israel.
[30]The LORD will cause people to hear his powerful voice.
He will make them see his arm coming down to punish them.
It will come down with burning anger and destroying fire.
It will come down with rain, thunderstorms and hail.
[31]The voice of the LORD will tear the Assyrians apart.
He will strike them down with his mighty rod.
[32]He will strike them
with his rod to punish them.
Each time he does, his people will celebrate
with the music of harps and tambourines.
He will use his powerful arm
to strike the Assyrians down in battle.
[33]In the Valley of Ben Hinnom, Topheth has been prepared for a long time.
It has been made ready for the king of Assyria.
Its fire pit has been made deep and wide.
It has plenty of wood for the fire.
The breath of the LORD

will be like a stream of burning sulfur.
It will set the wood on fire.

The LORD Will Judge Those Who Depend on Egypt

Isaiah 31

[1]How terrible it will be for those who go down to Egypt for help!
    How terrible for those who depend on horses!
They trust in how many chariots they have.
    They trust in how strong their horsemen are.
But they don't look to the Holy One of Israel.
    They don't ask the LORD for his help.
[2]He too is wise. He can bring horrible trouble.
    He does what he says he'll do.
He'll rise up against everyone who does what is evil.
    He'll fight against those who help them.
[3]The men of Egypt are only human.
    They aren't God.
Their horses are only flesh and blood.
    They aren't spirits.
The LORD will reach out his powerful hand
    to punish everyone.
The Egyptians provide help.
    But they will be tripped up.
The people of Judah receive the help.
    But they will fall down.
    All of them will be destroyed.

[4]The LORD says to me,

"A powerful lion stands over its food and growls.
    A lot of shepherds can be brought together to drive it away.
But the lion is not frightened by their shouts.
    It is not upset by the noise they make.
In the same way, I will come down from heaven.
    I will fight on Mount Zion and on its hills.
Nothing will drive me away.
    I am the LORD who rules over all.

[5]Like a bird hovering over its nest, I will guard Jerusalem.
I will keep it safe.
I will pass over it and save it.
I am the LORD who rules over all.”

[6]People of Israel, return to the LORD. He’s the one you have so strongly opposed. [7]The time will come when every one of you will turn your backs on your gods of silver and gold. You sinned when you made them with your own hands.

[8]The LORD says, “The Assyrians will be killed with swords.
But it will not be men who use them.
The swords that kill them will not be used by human beings.
The Assyrians will run away from those swords.
But their young men will be caught
and forced to work hard.
[9]Their hiding places will be destroyed
when terror strikes them.
When their commanders see their enemy’s battle flags,
they will be filled with panic,”
announces the LORD.
His fire blazes out from Mount Zion.
His furnace burns in Jerusalem.

The King Who Will Do What Is Right

Isaiah 32

[1]A king will come who will do what is right.
His officials will govern fairly.
[2]Each man will be like a place to get out of the wind.
He will be like a place to hide from storms.
He'll be like streams of water flowing in the desert.
He'll be like the shadow of a huge rock in a dry and thirsty land.

[3]Then the eyes of those who see won't be closed anymore.
The ears of those who hear will listen to the truth.
[4]The minds of thoughtless people will know and understand.
Tongues that stutter will speak clearly.
[5]Foolish people won't be considered noble anymore.
Those who are worthless won't be highly respected.
[6]A foolish person says foolish things.
His mind is full of evil thoughts.
He doesn't do what is right.
He tells lies about the LORD.
He doesn't give hungry people any food.
He doesn't let thirsty people have any water.
[7]The one who is worthless uses sinful methods.
He makes evil plans against poor people.
He destroys them with his lies.
He does it even when those people are right.
[8]But the man who is noble makes noble plans.
And by doing noble things he succeeds.

The Sinful Women in Jerusalem

[9]You women who are so contented,
pay attention to me.
You who feel so secure,

listen to what I have to say.
10 You feel secure now.
But in a little over a year you will tremble with fear.
The grape harvest will fail.
There won't be any fruit.
11 So tremble, you contented women.
Tremble with fear, you who feel so secure.
Take your fine clothes off.
Put black clothes on.
12 Beat your chests to show how sad you are.
The pleasant fields have been destroyed.
The fruitful vines have dried up.
13 My people's land is overgrown with thorns and bushes.
Sob over all of the houses that were once filled with joy.
Cry over this city that used to be full of wild parties.
14 The royal palace will be left empty.
The noisy city will be deserted.
The fort and lookout tower will become
a dry and empty desert forever.
Donkeys will enjoy being there.
Flocks will eat there.
15 That will continue until the Holy Spirit
is poured out on us from heaven.
Then the desert will be turned into rich farm lands.
The rich farm lands will seem like a forest.
16 In the desert and the rich farm lands
people will do what is right.
And they will treat one another fairly.
17 Doing what is right will bring peace and rest.
When my people do that, they will stay calm
and trust in the LORD forever.
18 They will live in a peaceful land.
Their homes will be secure.
They will enjoy peace and quiet.
19 Hail might strip the forests bare.
Cities might be completely destroyed.
20 But how blessed you people will be!
You will plant your seeds by every stream.
You will let your cattle and donkeys
wander anywhere they want to.

The LORD Will Judge Assyria

Isaiah 33

[1]How terrible it will be for you, you who destroy others!
Assyria, you haven't been destroyed yet.
How terrible for you, you who turn against others!
Others haven't turned against you yet.
When you stop destroying,
you will be destroyed.
When you stop turning against others,
others will turn against you.

[2]LORD, show us your favor.
We long for you to help us.
Make us strong every morning.
Save us when we're in trouble.
[3]When the nations hear you thunder, they run away.
When you rise up against them, they scatter.
[4]Nations, what you have taken in battle is destroyed.
It's as if young locusts had eaten it up.
Like large numbers of locusts,
people rush to get it.

[5]The LORD is honored. He lives in heaven.
He will fill Zion's people with what is fair and right.
[6]He will be the firm foundation for their entire lives.
He will give them all of the wisdom, knowledge and saving power they will ever need.
Respect for the LORD is the key to that treasure.

[7]Look! Judah's brave men cry out loud in the streets.
The messengers who were sent to bring peace sob bitter tears.
[8]The wide roads are deserted.
No one travels on them.
Our peace treaty with Assyria is broken.
Those who witnessed it are looked down on.

No one is respected.
9 The land is filled with sadness and wastes away.
Lebanon is full of shame and dries up.
The rich land of Sharon is like the Arabah Desert.
The trees of Bashan and Carmel drop their leaves.

10 "Now I will take action," says the LORD.
"Now I will be honored.
Now I will be respected.
11 Assyria, your plans and actions are like straw.
Your anger is a fire that will destroy you.
12 The nations will be burned to ashes.
They will be like bushes that are cut down and set on fire.

13 "You nations far away, listen to what I have done!
My people who are near, recognize how powerful I am!
14 The sinners in Zion are terrified.
They tremble with fear.
They say, 'Who of us can live through the LORD's destroying fire?
Who of us can live through the fire that burns forever?'
15 A person must do what is right.
He must be honest and tell the truth.
He must not get rich by cheating others.
His hands must not receive money from those who want special favors.
He must not let his ears listen to plans to commit murder.
He must close his eyes to even thinking about doing what is evil.
16 A person like that will be kept safe.
It will be as if he were living on high mountains.
It will be as if he were living in a mountain fort.
He will have all of the food he needs.
And he will never run out of water."

17 People of Judah, you will see the king in all of his glory and majesty.
You will view his kingdom spreading far and wide.
18 You will think about what used to terrify you.
You will say to yourself,
"Where is that chief officer of Assyria?
Where is the one who forced us to send gifts to his king?
Where is the officer in charge of the towers
that were used when we were attacked?"

[19]You won’t see those proud people anymore.
They spoke a strange language.
None of us could understand it.

[20]Just look at Zion! It’s the city
where we celebrate our regular feasts.
Turn your eyes toward Jerusalem.
It will be a peaceful place to live in.
It will be like a tent that will never be moved.
Its stakes will never be pulled up.
None of its ropes will be broken.
[21]There the LORD will be our Mighty One.
It will be like a place of wide rivers and streams.
No boat with oars will travel on them.
No mighty ship will sail on them.
[22]That’s because the LORD is our judge.
The LORD gives us our law.
The LORD is our king.
He will save us.

[23]The ropes on your ship hang loose.
The mast isn’t very secure.
The sail isn’t spread out.
But the LORD will strike the Assyrians down.
Then a large amount of goods will be taken from them and divided up.
Even people who are disabled will carry off what was taken.
[24]No one living in Zion will ever say again, “I’m sick.”
And the sins of those who live there will be forgiven.

The LORD Will Judge the Nations

Isaiah 34

[1]Nations, come near and listen to me!
Pay attention to what I'm about to say.
Let the earth and everything in it listen.
Let the world and everything that comes out of it pay attention.
[2]The LORD is angry with all of the nations.
His anger burns against all of their armies.
He will totally destroy them.
He will have them killed.
[3]Those who are killed won't be buried.
Their dead bodies will be thrown on the ground.
They will give off a very bad smell.
Their blood will cover the mountains.
[4]All of the stars in the heavens will vanish.
The sky will be rolled up like a scroll.
All of the stars in the sky will fall like dried-up leaves from a vine.
They will drop like wrinkled figs from a fig tree.

[5]The sword of the LORD will finish its deadly work in the sky.
Then it will come down to strike Edom.
He will totally destroy that nation.
[6]His sword will be red with blood.
It will be covered with fat.
The blood will flow like the blood
of lambs and goats being sacrificed.
The fat will be like the fat
taken from the kidneys of rams.
That's because the LORD will offer a sacrifice
in the city of Bozrah.
He will kill many people in Edom.
[7]The people and their leaders will be killed
like wild oxen and young bulls.
Their land will be wet with their blood.
The dust will be covered with their fat.

[8]That's because the LORD has set aside a day to pay Edom back.
He has set aside a year to pay them back for what they did to the city of Zion.
[9]The streams of Edom will be turned into tar.
Its dust will be turned into blazing sulfur.
Its land will become burning tar.
[10]The fire will keep burning night and day.
It can't be put out.
Its smoke will go up forever.
Edom will lie empty for all time to come.
No one will ever travel through it again.
[11]The desert owl and screech owl will make it their home.
The great owl and the raven will build their nests there.
God will use his measuring line
to show how completely Edom will be destroyed.
He will use his plumb line
to show how empty Edom will become.
[12]Edom's nobles won't have anything left there
that can be called a kingdom.
All of its princes will vanish.
[13]Thorns will cover its forts.
Bushes and weeds will cover its safest places.
It will become a home for wild dogs.
It will become a place where owls live.
[14]Desert creatures will meet with hyenas.
Wild goats will call out to each other.
Night creatures will also sleep there.
They will find places where they can rest.
[15]Owls will make their nests and lay their eggs there.
And they will hatch them.
They will take care of their little ones
under the shadow of their wings.
Male and female falcons will also gather there.

[16]Look in the scroll of the LORD. There you will read that

none of those animals will be missing.
Male and female alike will be there.
The LORD himself has commanded it.

And his Spirit will gather them together.
17 The LORD will decide what part of the land goes to each animal.
Then he will give each one its share.
It will belong to them forever.
And they will live there for all time to come.

The LORD Will Set His People Free

Isaiah 35

[1]The desert and the dry ground will be glad.
The dry places will be full of joy.
Flowers will grow there.
Like the first crocus in the spring,
[2]the desert will bloom with flowers.
It will be very glad and shout with joy.
The glorious beauty of Lebanon will be given to it.
It will be as beautiful as the rich lands
of Carmel and Sharon.
Everyone will see the glory of the LORD.
They will see the beauty of our God.

[3]Strengthen the hands of those who are weak.
Help those whose knees give way.
[4]Say to those whose hearts are afraid,
"Be strong. Do not fear.
Your God will come.
He will pay your enemies back.
He will come to save you."

[5]Then the eyes of those who are blind will be opened.
The ears of those who can't hear will be unplugged.
[6]Those who can't walk will leap like a deer.
And those who can't speak will shout with joy.
Water will pour out in dry places.
Streams will flow in the desert.
[7]The burning sand will become a pool of water.
The thirsty ground will become bubbling springs.
In the places where wild dogs once lay down,
tall grass and papyrus will grow.

[8]A wide road will go through the land.
It will be called The Way of Holiness.

Only those who are pure and clean can travel on it.
Only those who lead a holy life can use it.
Evil and foolish people can’t walk on it.
9 No lions will use it.
No wild animals will be on it.
None of them will be there.
Only people who have been set free will walk on it.
10 Those the LORD has saved will return to their land.
They will sing as they enter the city of Zion.
Joy that lasts forever will be
like beautiful crowns on their heads.
They will be filled with gladness and joy.
Sorrow and sighing will be gone.

Sennacherib Warns Jerusalem

Isaiah 36

1Sennacherib attacked and captured all of the cities of Judah that had high
walls around them. It was in the 14th year of the rule of Hezekiah. Sennacherib
was king of Assyria. 2He sent his field commander from Lachish to King
Hezekiah at Jerusalem. He sent him along with a large army. The commander
stopped at the channel that brings water from the Upper Pool. It was on the
road to the Washerman's Field.

3Eliakim, Shebna and Joah went out to him. Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, was
in charge of the palace. Shebna was the secretary. Joah, the son of Asaph, kept
the records.

4The field commander said to them, "Give Hezekiah this message. Tell him,

" 'Sennacherib is the great king of Assyria. He says, "Why are you putting
your faith in what your king says? 5You say you have a military plan. You say
you have a strong army. But your words don't mean anything. Who are you
depending on? Why don't you want to stay under my control?

6" ' "You are depending on Egypt. Why are you doing that? Egypt is nothing
but a broken papyrus stem. Try leaning on it. It will only cut your hand.
Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, is just like that to everyone who depends on him.

7" ' "Suppose you say to me, 'We are depending on the LORD our God.'
Didn't Hezekiah remove your god's high places and altars? Didn't Hezekiah
say to the people of Judah and Jerusalem, 'You must worship at the altar in
Jerusalem'?

8" ' "Come on. Make a deal with my master, the king of Assyria. I'll give you
2,000 horses. But only if you can put riders on them! 9You are depending on
Egypt for chariots and horsemen. You can't drive away even the least
important officer among my master's officials.

10" ' "Besides, do you think I've come without being sent by the LORD? Have
I come to attack and destroy this land without receiving a message from him?
The LORD himself told me to march out against your country. He told me to

destroy it.” ’ ”

11Then Eliakim, Shebna and Joah spoke to the field commander. They said, “Please speak to us in the Aramaic language. We understand it. Don’t speak to us in Hebrew. If you do, the people who are on the wall will be able to understand you.”

12But the commander replied, “My master sent me to say these things. Are these words only for your master and you to hear? Aren’t they also for the men who are sitting on the wall? They are going to suffer just like you. They’ll have to eat their own waste. They’ll have to drink their own urine.”

13Then the commander stood up and spoke in the Hebrew language. He called out, “Pay attention to what the great king of Assyria is telling you. 14He says, ‘Don’t let Hezekiah trick you. He can’t save you! 15Don’t let Hezekiah talk you into trusting in the LORD. Don’t believe him when he says, “You can be sure that the LORD will save us. This city will not be handed over to the king of Assyria.” ’

16“Don’t listen to Hezekiah. The king of Assyria says, ‘Make a peace treaty with me. Come over to my side. Then every one of you will eat fruit from your own vine and fig tree. Every one of you will drink water from your own well. 17You will do that until I come back. Then I’ll take you to a land that is just like yours. It’s a land that has a lot of grain and fresh wine. It has plenty of bread and vineyards.

18“ ‘Don’t let Hezekiah fool you. He’s telling you a lie when he says, “The LORD will save us.” Has the god of any nation ever saved his land from the powerful hand of the king of Assyria? 19Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Have they saved Samaria from my power? 20Which one of all of the gods of those countries has been able to save his land from me? So how can the LORD save Jerusalem from my power?’ ”

21But the people remained silent. They didn’t say anything. That’s because King Hezekiah had commanded, “Don’t answer him.”

22Then Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, went to Hezekiah. Eliakim was in charge of the palace. The secretary Shebna went with him. So did Joah, the son of Asaph. Joah kept the records. All of them went to Hezekiah with their clothes torn. They told him what the field commander had said.

Isaiah Prophesies That Jerusalem Will Be Saved

Isaiah 37

1When King Hezekiah heard what the field commander had said, he tore his clothes. He put on black clothes. Then he went into the LORD's temple. 2Hezekiah sent Eliakim, who was in charge of the palace, to me. He also sent the leading priests and the secretary Shebna to me. All of them were wearing black clothes.

3They told me, "Hezekiah says, 'Today we're in great trouble. The LORD is warning us. He's bringing shame on us. Sometimes babies come to the moment when they should be born. But their mothers aren't strong enough to allow them to be born. Today we are like those mothers. We aren't strong enough to save ourselves.

4" 'Perhaps the LORD your God will hear everything the field commander has said. His master, the king of Assyria, has sent him to make fun of the living God. Maybe the LORD your God will punish him for what he has heard him say. So pray for the remaining people who are still alive here.' "

5King Hezekiah's officials came to me. 6Then I said to them, "Tell your master, 'The LORD says, "Do not be afraid of what you have heard. The officers who are under the king of Assyria have spoken evil things against me. 7Listen! I will send him news from his own country. It will upset him so much that he will return home. There I will have him cut down with a sword." ' "

8The field commander heard that the king of Assyria had left Lachish. So the commander pulled his troops back from Jerusalem. He went to join the king. He found out that the king was fighting against Libnah.

9During that time Sennacherib received a report. He was told that Tirhakah was marching out to fight against him. Tirhakah was king of Egypt. He was from the land of Cush.

When Sennacherib heard the report, he sent messengers again to Hezekiah with a letter. It said, 10"Tell Hezekiah, the king of Judah, 'Don't let the god you depend on trick you. He says, "Jerusalem will not be handed over to the king of Assyria." But don't believe him. 11I'm sure you have heard about what the

kings of Assyria have done to all of the other countries. They have destroyed them completely. So do you think you will be saved?

12“ ‘The kings who ruled before me destroyed many nations. Did the gods of those nations save them? Did the gods of Gozan, Haran or Rezeph save them? What about the gods of the people of Eden who were in Tel Assar? 13Where is the king of Hamath? Where is the king of Arpad? Where is the king of the city of Sepharvaim? Where are the kings of Hena or Ivvah?’ ”

Hezekiah Prays to the LORD

14When Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers, he read it. Then he went up to the LORD’s temple. There he spread the letter out in front of the LORD.

15Hezekiah prayed to the LORD. He said, 16“LORD who rules over all, you are the God of Israel. You sit on your throne between the cherubim. You alone are God over all of the kingdoms on earth. You have made heaven and earth. 17Listen, LORD. Hear us. Open your eyes, LORD. Look at the trouble we’re in. Listen to what Sennacherib is saying. You are the living God. And he dares to make fun of you!

18“LORD, it’s true that the kings of Assyria have completely destroyed many nations and their lands. 19They have thrown the statues of the gods of those nations into the fire. And they have destroyed them. That’s because they weren’t really gods at all. They were nothing but statues that were made out of wood and stone. They were made by human hands.

20“LORD our God, save us from the powerful hand of Sennacherib. Then all of the kingdoms on earth will know that you alone are God.”

Sennacherib Falls From Power

21I sent a message to Hezekiah. I said, “The LORD is the God of Israel. He says, ‘You have prayed to me about Sennacherib, the king of Assyria. 22So here is the message I have spoken against him. I am telling him,

“ ‘ “You will not win the battle over Zion.

Its people hate you and make fun of you.
The people of Jerusalem lift up their heads proudly
as you run away.
23Who have you laughed at?
Who have you spoken evil things against?
Who have you raised your voice against?
Who have you looked at so proudly?
You have done it against me.
I am the Holy One of Israel!
24Through your messengers
you have laughed at me again and again.
And you have said,
‘I have many chariots.
With them I have climbed to the tops of the mountains.
I’ve climbed the highest mountains in Lebanon.
I’ve cut down its tallest cedar trees.
I’ve cut down the best of its pine trees.
I’ve reached its farthest mountains.
I’ve reached its finest forests.
25I’ve dug wells in strange lands.
I’ve drunk the water from them.
I’ve walked through all of Egypt’s streams.
I’ve dried up every one of them.’

26“ ‘ “But I, the LORD, say, ‘Haven’t you heard what I have done?
Long ago I arranged for you to do all of that.
In days of old I planned it.
Now I have made it happen.
You have turned cities with high walls
into piles of stone.
27Their people do not have any power left.
They are troubled and put to shame.
They are like plants in the field.
They are like new green plants.
They are like grass that grows on a roof.
It dries up before it is completely grown.

28“ ‘ “ ‘But I know where you live.
I know when you come and go.
I know how very angry you are with me.
29You roar against me and brag.

And I have heard your bragging.
So I will put my hook in your nose.
I will put my bit in your mouth.
And I will make you go home
by the same way you came.’ ” ’ ”

30The LORD said, “Hezekiah, here is a miraculous sign for you.

“This year you will eat what grows by itself.
Next year you will eat what grows from that.
But in the third year you will plant your crops and gather them in.
You will plant your grapevines and eat their fruit.
31The people of Judah who are still alive will be like plants.
Once more they will put down roots and produce fruit.
32Out of Jerusalem will come those who remain.
Out of Mount Zion will come those who are still left alive.
My great love will make sure that happens.
I rule over all.

33“Here is a message from me about the king of Assyria. It says,

“ ‘He will not enter this city.
He will not even shoot an arrow at it.
He will not come near it with a shield.
He will not build a ramp in order to climb over its walls.
34By the way that he came he will go home.
He will not enter this city,’

announces the LORD.

35“I will guard this city and save it.
I will do it for myself.
And I will do it for my servant David.”

36Then the angel of the LORD went into the camp of the Assyrians. He put to death 185,000 soldiers there. The people of Jerusalem got up the next morning. They looked out and saw all of the dead bodies. 37So Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, took the army tents down. Then he left. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there.

[38]One day Sennacherib was worshiping in the temple of his god Nisroch. His sons Adrammelech and Sharezer cut him down with their swords. Then they escaped to the land of Ararat. Esarhaddon became the next king after his father Sennacherib.

Hezekiah Praises the LORD for Healing Him

Isaiah 38

1In those days Hezekiah became very sick. He knew he was about to die. I
went to see him. I told him, “The LORD says, ‘Put everything in order. Make out
your will. You are going to die soon. You will not get well again.’ ”

2Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall. He prayed to the LORD. He said,
3“LORD, please remember how faithful I’ve been to you. I’ve lived the way you
wanted me to. I’ve served you with all my heart. I’ve done what is good in
your sight.” And Hezekiah cried bitterly.

4A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 5“Go and speak to Hezekiah.
Tell him, ‘The LORD, the God of King David, says, “I have heard your prayer. I
have seen your tears. I will add 15 years to your life. 6And I will save you and
this city from the powerful hand of the king of Assyria. I will guard this city.

7“ ‘ “Here is a miraculous sign from me. It will show you that I will heal you,
just as I promised I would. 8The shadow that was made by the sun has gone
down ten steps on the stairway of Ahaz. I will make it go back up those ten
steps.” ’ ” So the shadow went back up the ten steps it had gone down.

9Here is a song of praise that was written by Hezekiah, the king of Judah. He
wrote it after he was sick and had gotten well again.

10I said, “I’m enjoying the best years of my life.
Must I now go through the gates of death?
Will the rest of my years be taken away from me?”
11I said, “LORD, I’ll never see you again
while I’m still alive.
I’ll never see people anymore.
I’ll never again be with those who live in this world.
12My body is like a shepherd’s tent.
It has been pulled down and carried off.
My life is like a piece of cloth that I’ve rolled up.

You have cut it off from the loom.
In a short period of time you have brought my life to an end.
13 I waited patiently until sunrise.
But like a lion you broke all of my bones.
In a short period of time you have brought my life to an end.
14 I cried softly like a weak little bird.
I groaned like a sad dove.
My eyes grew tired as I looked up toward heaven.
Lord, I'm in trouble. Please come and help me!

15 "But what can I say?
You have promised to heal me.
And you yourself have done it.
Once I was proud and bitter.
But now I will live the rest of my life free of pride.
16 Lord, people find the will to live because you keep your promises.
And my spirit also finds life in your promises.
You brought me back to health.
You let me live.
17 I'm sure it was for my benefit
that I suffered such great pain.
You love me. You kept me
from going down into the pit of death.
You have put all of my sins
behind your back.
18 People in the grave can't praise you.
Dead people can't sing praise to you.
Those who go down to the grave
can't hope for you to be faithful to them.
19 It is those who are alive who praise you.
And that's what I'm doing today.
Fathers tell their children
about how faithful you are.

20 "You will save me.
So we will sing and play music on stringed instruments.
We will sing all the days of our lives
in your temple."

21 When Hezekiah was sick, I had said, "Press some figs together. Spread

them on a piece of cloth. Apply them to Hezekiah’s boil. Then he’ll get well again.”

22 At that time Hezekiah had asked me, “What will the miraculous sign be to prove I’ll go up to the LORD’s temple?” That’s when the LORD had made the shadow go back ten steps.

Messengers Come From Babylon to Hezekiah

Isaiah 39

[1]At that time Merodach-Baladan, the king of Babylonia, sent Hezekiah letters and a gift. He had heard that Hezekiah had been sick but had gotten well again. Merodach-Baladan was the son of Baladan.

[2]Hezekiah gladly received the messengers. He showed them what was in his storerooms. He showed them the silver and gold. He took them to where the spices and the fine olive oil were kept. He showed them where he kept all of his weapons. And he showed them all of his treasures. In fact, he showed them everything that was in his palace and in his whole kingdom.

[3]Then I went to King Hezekiah. I asked him, “What did those men say? Where did they come from?”

“They came from a land far away,” Hezekiah said. “They came to me from Babylon.”

[4]I asked, “What did they see in your palace?”

“They saw everything in my palace,” Hezekiah said. “I showed them all of my treasures.”

[5]Then I said to Hezekiah, “Listen to the message of the LORD who rules over all. He says, [6]‘You can be sure the time will come when everything in your palace will be carried off to Babylon. Everything the kings before you have stored up until this day will be taken away. There will not be anything left,’ says the LORD.

[7]“ ‘Some of the members of your family line will be taken away. They will be your own flesh and blood. They will include the children who will be born into your family line in years to come. And they will serve the king of Babylonia in his palace.’ ”

[8]“The message the LORD has spoken through you is good,” Hezekiah replied. He thought, “There will be peace and safety while I’m still living.”

God Comforts His People

Isaiah 40

[1]“Comfort my people,” says your God.
“Comfort them.
[2]Speak tenderly to the people of Jerusalem.
Announce to them
that their hard service has been completed.
Tell them that their sin has been paid for.
Tell them I have punished them enough
for all of their sins.”

[3]A messenger is calling out,
“In the desert prepare
the way for the LORD.
Make a straight road through it
for our God.
[4]Every valley will be filled in.
Every mountain and hill will be made level.
The rough ground will be smoothed out.
The rocky places will be made flat.
[5]Then the glory of the LORD will appear.
And everyone will see it.
The LORD has spoken.”

[6]Another messenger says, “Cry out.”
And I said, “What should I cry?”

“Cry out, ‘All people are like grass.
They don’t last any longer than flowers in the field.
[7]The grass dries up. The flowers fall to the ground.
That happens when the LORD makes his wind blow on them.
So people are just like grass.
[8]The grass dries up. The flowers fall to the ground.
But what our God says will stand forever.’ ”

[9]Zion, you are bringing good news to your people.
Go up on a high mountain and announce it.
Jerusalem, you are bringing good news to them.
Shout the message loudly.
Shout it out loud. Don’t be afraid.
Say to the towns of Judah,
“Your God is coming!”
[10]The LORD and King is coming with power.
His powerful arm will rule for him.
He has set his people free.
He is bringing them back as his reward.
He has won the battle over their enemies.
[11]He takes care of his flock like a shepherd.
He gathers the lambs in his arms.
He carries them close to his heart.
He gently leads those that have little ones.

[12]Who has measured the oceans by using the palm of his hand?
Who has used the width of his hand to mark off the sky?
Who has measured out the dust of the earth in a basket?
Who has weighed the mountains on scales?
Who has weighed the hills in a balance?
[13]Who can ever understand what is in the LORD’s mind?
Who can ever give him advice?
[14]Did the LORD have to ask anyone to help him understand?
Did he have to ask someone to teach him the right way?
Who taught him what he knows?
Who showed him how to understand?

[15]The nations are only a drop in a bucket to him.
He considers them as nothing but dust on the scales.
He weighs the islands as if they were only fine dust.
[16]Lebanon doesn’t have enough trees to keep his altar fires burning.
It doesn’t have enough animals to sacrifice as burnt offerings to him.
[17]To him, all of the nations don’t amount to anything.
He considers them to be worthless.
In fact, they are less than nothing in his sight.

[18]So who will you compare God to?

Is there any other god like him?
19 Will you compare him to a statue of a god?
Any skilled worker can make a statue.
Then another worker covers it with gold
and makes silver chains for it.
20 But someone who is too poor to bring that kind of offering
will choose some wood that won't rot.
Then he looks for a skilled worker.
He pays the worker to make a statue of a god that won't fall over.

21 Don't you know who made everything?
Haven't you heard about him?
Hasn't it been told to you from the beginning?
Haven't you understood it ever since the earth was made?
22 God sits on his throne high above the earth.
Its people look like grasshoppers to him.
He spreads the heavens out like a cover.
He sets it up like a tent to live in.
23 He takes the power of princes away from them.
He reduces the rulers of this world to nothing.
24 They are planted.
They are scattered like seeds.
They put down roots in the ground.
But as soon as that happens, God blows on them and they dry up.
Then a windstorm sweeps them away like straw.

25 "So who will you compare me to?
Who is equal to me?" says the Holy One.
26 Look up toward the sky.
Who created everything you see?
The LORD causes the stars to come out at night one by one.
He gives each one of them a name.
His power and strength are great.
So none of the stars is missing.

27 Family of Jacob, why do you say,
"The LORD doesn't notice our condition"?
People of Israel, why do you say,
"Our God doesn't pay any attention to our rightful claims"?
28 Don't you know who made everything?
Haven't you heard about him?

The LORD is the God who lives forever.
He created everything on earth.
He won’t become worn out or get tired.
No one will ever know how great his understanding is.
29 He gives strength to those who are tired.
He gives power to those who are weak.
30 Even young people become worn out and get tired.
Even the best of them trip and fall.
31 But those who trust in the LORD
will receive new strength.
They will fly as high as eagles.
They will run and not get tired.
They will walk and not grow weak.

THE LORD HELPS ISRAEL

Isaiah 41

[1]The LORD says, “People who live on the islands,
come and stand quietly in front of me.
Let the nations gain new strength
in order to state their case.
Let them come forward and speak.
Let us go to court and find out who is right.

[2]“Who has stirred up a king from the east?
Who has helped him win his battles?
I hand nations over to him.
I bring kings under his control.
He turns them into dust with his sword.
With his bow he turns them into straw blowing in the wind.
[3]He hunts them down. Then he moves on unharmed.
He travels so fast that his feet
don’t seem to touch the ground.
[4]Who has made that happen? Who has carried it out?
Who has created all of the people who have ever lived?
I, the LORD, have done it.
I was with the first of them.
And I will be with the last of them.”

[5]The people on the islands have seen that king coming.
And it has made them afraid.
People tremble with fear from one end of the earth to the other.
They come and gather together.
[6]They help each other.
They say to one another, “Be strong!”
[7]One skilled worker makes a statue of a god.
Another covers it with gold.
The first worker says to the second,
“You have done a good job.”
Another worker smooths out the metal with a hammer.

Still another gives the statue its final shape.
The third worker says to the last one,
"You have done a good job."
Then they nail the statue down so it won't fall over.

8 The LORD says, "People of Israel, you are my servants.
Family of Jacob, I have chosen you.
You are the children of my friend Abraham.
9 I gathered you from one end of the earth to the other.
From the farthest places on earth I brought you together.
I said, 'You are my servants.'
I have chosen you.
I have not turned my back on you.
10 So do not be afraid. I am with you.
Do not be terrified. I am your God.
I will make you strong and help you.
My powerful right hand will take good care of you.
I always do what is right.

11 "All those who are angry with you will be put to shame.
And they will be dishonored.
Those who oppose you will be destroyed.
And they will vanish.
12 You might search for your enemies.
But you will not find them.
Those who go to war against you
will completely disappear.
13 I am the LORD your God.
I take hold of your right hand.
I say to you, 'Do not be afraid.
I will help you.'
14 Family of Jacob, you are as weak as a worm.
But do not be afraid.
People of Israel, there are only a few of you.
But do not be afraid.
I myself will help you," announces the LORD.
He is the one who sets his people free.
He is the Holy One of Israel.
15 He says, "I will make you into a threshing sled.
It will be new and sharp.
It will have many teeth.

You will grind the mountains down and crush them.
You will turn the hills into nothing but straw.
16 You will toss them in the air.
A strong wind will catch them and blow them away.
You will be glad because I will make that happen.
You will praise me.
I am the Holy One of Israel.

17 "Those who are poor and needy search for water.
But there isn't any.
Their tongues are dry because they are thirsty.
But I will help them. I am the LORD.
I will not desert them.
I am Israel's God.
18 I will make streams flow on the bare hilltops.
I will make springs come up in the valleys.
I will turn the desert into pools of water.
I will turn the dry and cracked ground into flowing springs.
19 I will make trees grow in the desert.
I will plant cedar and acacia trees there.
I will plant myrtle and olive trees there.
I will make pine trees grow in the dry and empty desert.
I will plant fir and cypress trees there.
20 Then people will see and know
that my powerful hand has done it.
They will consider and understand
that I have created it.
I am the Holy One of Israel."

21 The LORD says to the nations and their gods,
"State your case."
Jacob's King says to them,
"Prove your case to me.
22 Show me your facts. Tell me and my people
what is going to happen.
Tell us what happened in the past.
Then we can check it out
and see if it is really true.
Or announce to us the things that will take place.
23 Tell us what will happen in the days ahead.
Then we will know that you are gods.

Do something. It does not matter whether it is good or bad.
Then we will be terrified and filled with fear.
24But you are less than nothing.
Your actions are completely worthless.
I hate it when people worship you.

25"I have stirred up a king
who will come from the north.
He lives in the east.
He will bring honor to me.
He walks all over rulers as if they were mud.
He steps on them just as a potter stomps on clay.
26Which one of you gods said those things
would happen before they did?
Who told us about them
so we could know them?
Who told us ahead of time?
Who told us so we could say,
'You are right'?
None of you told us about them.
None of you told us ahead of time.
In fact, no one heard you say anything at all.
27I was the first to tell Zion.
I said, 'Look! The people of Israel are coming back!'
I sent a prophet to Jerusalem with the good news.
28I look, but there is no one
among the gods that can give me advice.
None of them can answer
when I ask them the simplest question.
29So they are not really gods at all.
What they do does not amount to anything.
They are as useless as wind.

The LORD's Chosen Servant

Isaiah 42

[1]"Here is my servant. I take good care of him.
I have chosen him. I am very pleased with him.
I will put my Spirit on him.
He will make everything right among the nations.
[2]He will not shout or cry out.
He will not raise his voice in the streets.
[3]He will not break a bent twig.
He will not put out a dimly burning flame.
He will be faithful and make everything right.
[4]He will not grow weak or lose hope.
He will not give up until he makes everything right on the earth.
The islands will put their hope in his law."

[5]God created the heavens and spread them out.
The LORD made the earth and everything that grows on it.
He gives breath to its people.
He gives life to those who walk on it.
He says to his servant,
[6]"I, the LORD, have chosen you to do what is right.
I will take hold of your hand.
I will keep you safe.
You will put my covenant with the people of Israel into effect.
And you will be a light for the other nations.
[7]You will open eyes that can't see.
You will set prisoners free.
Those who sit in darkness will come out of their cells.

[8]"I am the LORD. That is my name!
I will not let any other god share my glory.
I will not let statues of gods share my praise.
[9]What I said would happen has taken place.
Now I announce new things to you.
Before they even begin to happen,

I announce them to you.”

A Song of Praise to the LORD

10 Sing a new song to the LORD.
Sing praise to him from one end of the earth to the other.
Sing, you who sail out on the ocean.
Sing, all of you creatures in it.
Sing, you islands.
Sing, all of you who live there.
11 Let the desert and its towns raise their voices.
Let those who live in the settlements of Kedar be glad.
Let the people of Sela sing with joy.
Let them shout from the tops of the mountains.
12 Let them give glory to the LORD.
Let them praise him in the islands.
13 The LORD will march out like a mighty warrior.
He will stir up his anger like a soldier getting ready to fight.
He will shout the battle cry.
And he will win the battle over his enemies.

14 The LORD says, “For a long time I have kept silent.
I have been calm and quiet.
But now, like a woman having a baby,
I cry out. I am struggling to breathe.
15 I will completely destroy the mountains and hills.
I will dry up everything that grows there.
I will turn rivers into dry land.
I will dry up the pools.
16 Israel is blind.
So I will lead them along paths
they had not known before.
I will guide them on roads they are not familiar with.
I will turn the darkness into light as they travel.
I will make the rough places smooth.
Those are the things I will do.
I will not desert my people.
17 Some people trust in statues of gods.
They say to them, ‘You are our gods.’

But they will be dishonored.
They will be put to shame.

Israel Can't See or Hear

18 "Israel, listen to me! You can hear,
but you do not understand.
Look to me! You can see,
but you do not know what you are seeing.
19 The people of Israel serve me. But who is more blind than they are?
Who is more deaf than the messengers I send?
Who is more blind than those who have committed themselves to be faithful to me?
Who is more blind than my servants?
20 Israel, you have seen many things.
But you have not paid any attention to me.
Your ears are open.
But you do not hear anything I say."
21 The LORD wanted his people to see
how great and glorious his law is.
He wanted to show them
that he always does what is right.
22 Enemies have carried off everything they own.
All of my people are trapped in pits
or hidden away in prisons.
They themselves have become like stolen goods.
No one can save them.
They have been carried off.
And there is no one who will say, "Send them back."

23 Family of Jacob, who among you will listen to what I'm saying?
People of Israel, which one of you will pay close attention in days to come?
24 Who allowed you to be carried off like stolen goods?
Who handed you over to robbers?
The LORD did it!
We have sinned against him.
Israel, you wouldn't follow his ways.
You didn't obey his law.

[25]So he poured his burning anger out on you.
He had many of you killed off in battle.
You were surrounded by flames.
But you didn’t realize what was happening.
Many of you were destroyed.
But you didn’t learn anything from it.

THE LORD SAVES ISRAEL

Isaiah 43

[1]Family of Jacob, the LORD created you.
People of Israel, he formed you.
He says, “Do not be afraid.
I will set you free.
I will send for you by name.
You belong to me.
[2]You will pass through deep waters.
But I will be with you.
You will pass through the rivers.
But their waters will not sweep over you.
You will walk through fire.
But you will not be burned.
The flames will not harm you.
[3]I am the LORD your God.
I am the Holy One of Israel.
I am the one who saves you.
I will give up Egypt to set you free.
I will give up Cush and Seba for you.
[4]You are priceless to me.
I love you and honor you.
So I will trade other people for you.
I will give up other nations to save your lives.
[5]Do not be afraid. I am with you.
I will bring your people back from the east.
I will gather you from the west.
[6]I will say to the north, ‘Let them go!’
And I will say to the south, ‘Do not hold them back.’
Bring my sons from far away.
Bring my daughters from the farthest places on earth.
[7]Bring back everyone who belongs to me.
I created them to bring glory to me.
I formed them and made them.”

[8]Lead my people into court.
They have eyes but can't see.
Bring those who have ears but can't hear.
[9]All of the nations are gathering together.
All of them are coming.
Which one of their gods said ahead of time
that the people of Israel would return?
Which of them told us anything at all about the past?
Let them bring in their witnesses to prove they were right.
Then others will hear them. And they will say,
"What they said is true."
[10]"People of Israel, you are my witnesses," announces the LORD.
"I have chosen you to be my servants.
I wanted you to know me and believe in me.
I wanted you to understand that I am the one and only God.
Before me, there was no other god at all.
And there will not be any god after me.
[11]I am the one and only LORD.
I am the only one who can save you.
[12]I have made known what would happen.
I told you about it. And I saved you.
I did it. It was not some other god you worship.
You are my witnesses that I am God," announces the LORD.
[13]"And that is not all! I have always been God,
and I always will be.
No one can save people from my powerful hand.
When I do something, who can undo it?"

The LORD Forgives Israel but Also Punishes Them

[14]The LORD sets his people free.
He is the Holy One of Israel. He says,
"People of Israel, I will send an army to Babylon to save you.
I will cause all of the Babylonians to run away.
They will try to escape in the ships they were so proud of.
[15]I am your LORD and King.
I am your Holy One.
I created you."

16 Long ago the LORD opened
a way for his people to go through the Red Sea.
He made a path through the mighty waters.
17 He caused Egypt to send out its chariots and horses.
He sent its entire army to its death.
Its soldiers lay down there.
They never got up again.
They were destroyed.
They were blown out like a dimly burning flame.
But the LORD says,
18 "Forget the things that happened in the past.
Do not keep on thinking about them.
19 I am about to do something new.
It is beginning to happen even now.
Don't you see it coming?
I am going to make a way for you to go through the desert.
I will make streams of water in the dry and empty land.
20 Even wild dogs and owls honor me.
That is because I provide water in the desert
for my people to drink.
I cause streams to flow in the dry and empty land
for my chosen ones.
21 I do it for the people I made for myself.
I want them to sing praise to me.

22 "Family of Jacob, you have not prayed to me as you should.
People of Israel, you have not even begun to get tired while doing it.
23 You have not brought me sheep for burnt offerings.
You have not honored me with your sacrifices.
I have not loaded you down
by requiring grain offerings.
I have not made you tired
by requiring you to burn incense.
24 But you have not bought any sweet-smelling cane for me.
You have not given me the fattest parts
of your animal sacrifices.
Instead, you have loaded me down with your sins.
You have made me tired with the wrong things you have done.

25 "I am the one who wipes out your lawless acts.
I do it because of who I am.

I will not remember your sins anymore.
[26]But let us go to court together.
Remind me of what you have done.
State your case.
Prove to me that you are not guilty.
[27]Your father Jacob sinned.
Your priests and prophets refused to obey me.
[28]So I will put the high officials of your temple to shame.
I will let Jacob’s family be totally destroyed.
And I will let people make fun of Israel.

You Are God's Precious Princess

God is the Lord of lords and King of kings.

I am your Lord and King.
I am your Holy One.
I created you.

Isaiah 43:15

You are a child of the King.

How great is the love the Father has given us so freely! Now we can be called children of God.

1 John 3:1

You are precious to the King.

This is what the Lord says…
"You are precious and honored in my sight, and… I love you."

Isaiah 43:1,4 (NIV)

The LORD Chooses Israel

Isaiah 44

1 “Family of Jacob, listen to me. You are my servants.
People of Israel, I have chosen you.
2 I made you. I formed you when you were born as a nation.
I will help you.
So listen to what I am saying.
Family of Jacob, do not be afraid. You are my servants.
People of Israel, I have chosen you.
3 I will pour water out on the thirsty land.
I will make streams flow on the dry ground.
I will pour out my Spirit on your children.
I will pour out my blessing on their children after them.
4 They will spring up like grass in a meadow.
They will grow like poplar trees near flowing streams.
5 Some will say, ‘We belong to the LORD.’
Others will call themselves by Jacob’s name.
Still others will write on their hands,
‘We belong to the Lord.’
And they will be called by the name of Israel.

Worship the LORD, Not Other Gods

6 “I am Israel’s King. I set them free.
I am the LORD who rules over all.
So listen to what I am saying.
I am the First and the Last.
I am the one and only God.
7 Who is like me? Let him come forward and speak boldly.
Let him tell me everything that has happened
since I created my people long ago.
And let him tell me what has not happened yet.
Let him announce ahead of time what is going to take place.

[8]Do not tremble with fear. Do not be afraid.
Didn’t I announce everything that has happened?
Didn’t I tell you about it long ago?
You are my witnesses. Is there any other God but me?
No! There is no other Rock. I do not know even one.”

[9]Those who make statues of gods don’t amount to anything.
And the statues they think so much of are worthless.
Those who would speak up for them are blind.
They don’t know anything.
So they will be put to shame.
[10]People make statues of gods.
But those gods can’t do them any good.
[11]People like that will be put to shame.
Those who make statues of gods are mere men.
Let all of them come together and state their case.
They will be terrified and put to shame.

[12]A blacksmith gets his tool.
He uses it to shape metal over the burning coals.
He uses his hammers to make a statue of a god.
He forms it with his powerful arm.
He gets hungry and loses his strength.
He doesn’t drink any water.
He gets weaker and weaker.
[13]A carpenter measures a piece of wood with a line.
He draws a pattern on it with a marker.
He cuts out a statue with sharp tools.
He marks it with compasses.
He shapes it into the form of a handsome man.
He does all of that so he can put it in a temple.
[14]He cuts down a cedar tree.
Or perhaps he takes a cypress or an oak tree.
It might be a tree that grew in the forest.
Or it might be a pine tree he planted.
And the rain made it grow.
[15]Man gets wood from trees for fuel.
He uses some of it to warm himself.
He starts a fire and bakes bread.
But he also uses some of it to make a god and worship it.
He makes a statue of a god and bows down to it.

[16]He burns half of the wood in the fire.
He prepares a meal over it.
He cooks meat over it.
He eats until he is full.
He also warms himself. He says,
“Good! I’m getting warm.
The fire is nice and hot.”
[17]From the rest of the wood he makes a statue.
It becomes his god.
He bows down and worships it.
He prays to it. He says,
“Save me. You are my god.”
[18]People like that don’t even know what they are doing.
Their eyes are shut so that they can’t see the truth.
Their minds are closed so that they can’t understand it.
[19]No one even stops to think about this.
No one has any sense or understanding.
If anyone did, he would say,
“I used half of the wood for fuel.
I even baked bread over the fire.
I cooked meat. Then I ate it.
Should I now make a statue of a god
out of the wood that’s left over?
Should I bow down to a block of wood?
The LORD would hate that.”
[20]That’s as foolish as eating ashes!
The mind of someone like that
has led him down the wrong path.
He can’t save himself.
He can’t bring himself to say,
“This thing I’m holding in my right hand
isn’t really a god at all.”

[21]The LORD says, “Family of Jacob, remember those things.
People of Israel, you are my servants.
I have made you. You are my servants.
Israel, I will not forget you.
[22]I will sweep your sins away as if they were a cloud.
I will blow them away as if they were the morning mist.
Return to me.
Then I will set you free.”

[23]Sing with joy, you heavens!
The LORD does wonderful things.
Shout out loud, you earth!
Burst into song, you mountains!
Sing, you forests and all of your trees!
The LORD sets the family of Jacob free.
He shows his glory in Israel.

People Will Live in Jerusalem Again

[24]The LORD says,
"People of Israel, I set you free.
I formed you when you were born as a nation.

"I am the LORD. I have made everything.
I alone spread out the heavens.
I formed the earth by myself.

[25]"Some prophets are not really prophets at all.
I show that their miraculous signs are fake.
I make those who practice evil magic look foolish.
I destroy the learning of those who think they are wise.
Their knowledge does not make any sense at all.
[26]I make the words of my servants the prophets come true.
I carry out what my messengers say will happen.

"I say about Jerusalem,
'My people will live there again.'
I say about the towns of Judah,
'They will be rebuilt.'
I say about their broken-down buildings,
'I will make them like new again.'
[27]I say to the deep waters,
'Dry up. Let your streams become dry.'
[28]I say about Cyrus,
'He is my shepherd.
He will accomplish everything I want him to.
He will say about Jerusalem,
"Let it be rebuilt."

And he will say about the temple,
“Let its foundations be laid.” ’

Isaiah 45

[1]“Cyrus is my anointed king.
I take hold of his right hand.
I give him the power
to bring nations under his control.
I help him strip kings of their power
to go to war against him.
I break city gates open so he can go through them.
I say to him,
[2]‘I will march out ahead of you.
I will make the mountains level.
I will break down bronze gates.
I will cut through their heavy iron bars.
[3]I will give you treasures that are hidden away in dark places.
I will give you riches that are stored up in secret places.
Then you will know that I am the LORD.
I am the God of Israel.
I am sending for you by name.
[4]Cyrus, I am sending for you by name.
I am doing it for the good of the family of Jacob.
They are my servants.
I am doing it for Israel.
They are my chosen people.
You do not know anything about me.
But I am giving you a title of honor.
[5]I am the LORD. There is no other LORD.
I am the one and only God.
You do not know anything about me.
But I will make you strong.
[6]Then people will know there is no God but me.
Everyone from where the sun rises in the east
to where it sets in the west will know it.
I am the LORD.
There is no other LORD.
[7]I cause light to shine. I also create darkness.
I bring good times. I also create hard times.
I do all of those things. I am the LORD.

[8]“ ‘Rain down godliness, you heavens above.
Let the clouds shower it down.
Let the earth open wide to receive it.
Let freedom spring to life.
Let godliness grow along with it.
I have created all of those things.
I am the LORD.’ ”

[9]How terrible it will be for anyone who argues with his Maker!
He is like a broken piece of pottery lying on the ground.
Does clay say to a potter,
“What are you making?”
Does a pot say,
“You don’t have any skill”?
[10]How terrible it will be for anyone who says to his father,
“Why did you give me life?”
How terrible for anyone who says to his mother,
“Why have you brought me into the world?”

[11]The LORD is the Holy One of Israel.
He made them.
He says to them,
“Are you asking me about what will happen to my children?
Are you telling me what I should do with what my hands have made?
[12]I made the earth.
I created man to live there.
My own hands spread out the heavens.
I put all of the stars in their places.
[13]I will stir up Cyrus and help him win his battles.
I will make all of his roads straight.
He will rebuild Jerusalem.
My people have been taken away from their country.
But he will set them free.
I will not pay him to do it.
He will not receive a reward for it,”
says the LORD who rules over all.

[14]The LORD says to the people of Jerusalem,

“You will get everything Egypt produces.
You will receive everything the people of Cush
and the tall Sabeans get in trade.
All of it will belong to you.
And all of those people will walk behind you as slaves.
They will be put in chains and come over to you.
They will bow down to you.
They will admit,
‘God is with you.
There is no other God.’ ”

15You are a God who hides yourself.
You are the God of Israel. You save us.
16All those who make statues of gods will be put to shame.
They will be dishonored.
They will be led away in shame together.
17But the LORD will save Israel.
He will save them forever.
They will never be put to shame or dishonored.
That will be true for all time to come.

18The LORD created the heavens.
He is God.
He formed the earth and made it.
He set it firmly in place.
He didn’t create it to be empty.
Instead, he formed it for people to live on.
He says, “I am the LORD.
There is no other LORD.
19I have not spoken in secret.
I have not spoken from a dark place.
I have not said to Jacob’s people,
‘It is useless to look for me.’
I am the LORD. I always speak the truth.
I always say what is right.

20“Come together, you people of the nations
who escaped from Babylonia.
Gather together and come into court.
Only people who do not know anything

would carry around gods that are made out of wood.
They pray to gods that can't save them.
21 Tell me what will happen. State your case.
Talk it over together.
Who spoke long ago about what would happen?
Who said it a long time ago?
I did. I am the LORD.
I am the one and only God.
I always do what is right.
I am the one who saves.
There is no God but me.

22 "All of you who live anywhere on earth,
turn to me and be saved.
I am God. There is no other God.
23 I have made a promise with an oath in my own name.
I have spoken with complete honesty.
I will not take back a single word. I said,
'Everyone's knee will bow down to me.
Everyone's mouth will take an oath in my name.'
24 They will say, 'The LORD always does what is right.
Only he can make us strong.' "
All those who have been angry with the LORD will come to him.
And they will be put to shame.
25 But the LORD will help all of the people of Israel.
He will make them right with himself.
And they will praise him.

There Is No Other God

Isaiah 46

[1]The gods Bel and Nebo are brought down in shame.
The statues of them are being carried away on the backs of animals.
They used to be carried around by the people who worshiped them.
But now they've become a heavy load for tired animals.
[2]Bel and Nebo are brought down in shame together.
They aren't able to save their own statues.
They themselves are carried off as prisoners.

[3]The LORD says, "Family of Jacob, listen to me.
Pay attention, you people of Israel who are left alive.
I have taken good care of you since your life began.
I have carried you since you were born as a nation.
[4]I will continue to carry you even when you are old.
I will take good care of you even when your hair is gray.
I have made you. And I will carry you.
I will take care of you. And I will save you.
I am the LORD.

[5]"Who will you compare me to?
Who is equal to me?
What am I like?
Who can you compare me to?
[6]Some people pour gold out of their bags.
They weigh out silver on the scales.
They hire someone who works with gold to make it into a god.
They bow down to it and worship it.
[7]They lift it up on their shoulders and carry it.
They set it up in its place. And there it stands.
It can't move from that spot.
Someone might cry out to it.
But it does not answer him.
It can't save him from his troubles.
[8]So remember that, you who refuse to obey me.

Keep it in your minds and hearts.

9 “Remember what happened in the past.
Think about what took place long ago.
I am God. There is no other God.
I am God. There is no one like me.
10 Before something even happens, I announce how it will end.
In fact, from times long ago I announced what was still to come.
I say, ‘My plan will succeed.
I will do anything I want to do.’
11 I will send for a man from the east to carry out my plan.
From a land far away, he will come like a bird that eats dead bodies.
I will bring about what I have said.
I will do what I have planned.
12 Listen to me, you stubborn people.
Pay attention, you who refuse to do what is right.
13 The time is almost here for me to make everything right.
It is not far away.
The time for me to save you will not be put off.
I will save the city of Zion.
I will bring honor to Israel.

Babylon Will Fall

Isaiah 47

1 “City of Babylon,
go down and sit in the dust.
Leave your throne and sit on the ground.
City of the Babylonians,
your life will not be comfortable
and easy anymore.
2 Get millstones and grind some flour like a female slave.
Take your veil off.
Lift your skirts up. Make your legs bare.
Wade through the streams.
3 Everyone will see your naked body.
Everyone will see your shame.
I will pay you back for what you did.
I will not spare any of your people.”

4 The one who sets us free is the Holy One of Israel.
His name is The LORD Who Rules Over All.

5 The LORD says, “City of the Babylonians,
go into a dark prison and sit there quietly.
You will not be called
the queen of kingdoms anymore.
6 I was angry with my people.
I treated them as if they did not belong to me.
I handed them over to you.
And you did not show them any pity.
You even placed heavy loads on their old people.
7 You said, ‘I will continue to be queen forever!’
But you did not think about what you were doing.
You did not consider how things might turn out.

8 “So listen, you who love pleasure.
You think you are safe and secure.

You say to yourself,
‘I am like a god.
No one is greater than I am.
I’ll never be a widow.
And my children will never be taken away from me.’
9But both of those things will happen to you in a moment.
They will take place on a single day.
You will lose your children.
And you will become a widow.
That is what will happen to you.
All of your evil magic
and powerful spells will not save you.
10You have felt secure in your evil ways.
You have said, ‘No one sees what I’m doing.’
Your wisdom and knowledge lead you down the wrong path.
You say to yourself,
‘I am like a god. No one is greater than I am.’
11So horrible trouble will come on you.
You will not know how to use your evil magic to make it go away.
Great trouble will fall on you.
No amount of money can keep it away.
Something terrible will happen to you all at once.
You will not see it coming ahead of time.

12“So keep on casting your magic spells.
Keep on practicing your evil magic.
You have been doing those things ever since you were a child.
Perhaps they will help you.
Maybe they will scare your enemies away.
13All of the advice you have received
has only worn you out!
Let those who study the heavens come forward.
They claim to know what is going to happen
by watching the stars every month.
So let them save you from the trouble
that is coming on you.
14They are just like straw.
Fire will burn them up.
They can’t even save themselves
from the powerful flames.
They are not like coals that can warm anyone.

They are not like a fire to sit by.
15 They can’t do you any good.
They have done business with them ever since you were a child.
You have always asked them for advice.
All of them are bewildered and continue in their own ways.
None of them can save you.”

Israel Is Stubborn

Isaiah 48

[1]People of Jacob, listen to me.
You are called by the name of Israel.
You come from the family line of Judah.
You take oaths in the name of the LORD.
You pray to Israel's God.
But you aren't honest.
You don't mean what you say.
[2]You call yourselves citizens of the holy city of Jerusalem.
You say you depend on Israel's God.
His name is The LORD Who Rules Over All. He says,
[3]"Long ago I told you ahead of time what would happen.
I announced it and made it known.
Then all of a sudden I acted.
And those things took place.
[4]I knew how stubborn you were.
Your neck was as unbending as iron.
Your forehead was as hard as bronze.
[5]So I told you those things long ago.
Before they happened I announced them to you.
I did it so you would not be able to say,
'My statues of gods did them.
My wooden and metal gods made them happen.'
[6]You have heard me tell you those things.
Think about all of them.
Won't you admit they have taken place?

"From now on I will tell you about new things that will happen.
I have not made them known to you before.
[7]Those things are taking place right now.
They did not happen long ago.
You have not heard of them before today.
So you can't say,
'Oh, yes. I already knew about them.'

[8]You have not heard or understood what I said.
Your ears have been plugged up for a long time.
I knew very well that you would turn against me.
From the day you were born, you have refused to obey me.
[9]For the honor of my own name I put off showing my anger.
I hold it back from you so people will continue to praise me.
I do not want to destroy you.
[10]I have put you to the test in the furnace of suffering.
I have tried to make you pure.
But I did not use as much heat as it takes to make silver pure.
[11]I tried to purify you for my own honor.
I did it for the honor of my name.
How can I let myself be dishonored?
I will not give up my glory to any other god.

Israel Is Set Free

[12]"Family of Jacob, listen to me.
People of Israel, pay attention.
I have chosen you.
I am the First and the Last.
I am the LORD.
[13]With my own hand I laid the foundations of the earth.
With my right hand I spread out the heavens.
When I send for them,
they come and stand ready to obey me.

[14]"People of Israel, come together and listen to me.
What other god has said ahead of time that certain things would happen?
I have chosen Cyrus.
He will carry out my plans against Babylon.
He will use his powerful arm against the Babylonians.
[15]I myself have spoken.
I have chosen him to carry out my purpose.
I will bring him to Babylon.
He will succeed in what I tell him to do.

16 “Come close and listen to me.

“From the first time I said Cyrus was coming,
I did not do it in secret.
When he comes, I will be there.”

The LORD and King has filled me with his Spirit.
People of Israel, he has sent me to you.

17 The LORD is the Holy One of Israel.
He sets his people free. He says to them,
“I am the LORD your God.
I teach you what is best for you.
I direct you in the way you should go.
18 I wish you would pay attention to my commands.
If you did, peace would flow over you like a river.
Holiness would sweep over you like the waves of the ocean.
19 Your family would be like the sand.
Your children after you would be as many as the grains of sand by the sea.
It would be impossible to count them.
I would always accept the members of your family line.
They would never be cut off or destroyed.”

20 People of Israel, leave Babylon!
Hurry up and get away from the Babylonians!
Here is what I want you to announce.
Make it known with shouts of joy.
Send the news out from one end of the earth to the other.
Say, “The LORD has set Jacob’s people free.
They are his servants.”
21 They didn’t get thirsty when he led them through the deserts.
He made water flow out of the rock for them.
He broke the rock open,
and water came out of it.

22 “There is no peace for those who are evil,” says the LORD.

THE SERVANT OF THE LORD

Isaiah 49

[1]People who live on the islands, listen to me.
Pay attention, you nations far away.
Before I was born the LORD chose me to serve him.
He appointed me by name.
[2]He made my words like a sharp sword.
He hid me in the palm of his hand.
He made me into a sharpened arrow.
He took good care of me and kept me safe.
[3]He said to me, “You are my true servant Israel.
I will show my glory through you.”
[4]But I said, “In spite of my hard work,
I feel as if I haven’t accomplished anything.
I’ve used up all of my strength.
It seems as if everything I’ve done is worthless.
But the LORD will give me what I should receive.
My God will reward me.”

[5]The LORD formed me in my mother’s body to be his servant.
He wanted me to bring the family of Jacob back to him.
He wanted me to gather the people of Israel to himself.
The LORD will honor me.
My God will give me strength.

[6]The LORD says to me,

“It is not enough for you as my servant
to bring the tribes of Jacob back to their land.
It is not enough for you to bring back
the people of Israel I have kept alive.
I will also make you a light for other nations.
Then you will make it possible for the whole world to be saved.”

[7]The LORD sets his people free.
He is the Holy One of Israel.
He speaks to his servant, who is looked down on and hated by the nations.
He speaks to the servant of rulers. He says to him,
"Kings will see you and rise up to honor you.
Princes will see you and bow down to show you their respect.
I am the LORD. I am faithful.
I am the Holy One of Israel.
I have chosen you."

Israel Is Brought Back to Their Land

[8]The LORD says to his servant,

"When it is time to show you my favor, I will answer your prayers.
When it is time to save you, I will help you.
I will keep you safe.
You will put my covenant with the people of Israel into effect.
Then their land will be made like new again.
Each tribe will be sent back to its territory that was left empty.
[9]I want you to say to the prisoners, 'Come out.'
Tell those who are in their dark cells, 'You are free!'

"On their way home they will eat beside the roads.
They will find plenty to eat on every bare hill.
[10]They will not get hungry or thirsty.
The heat from the desert sun will not beat down on them.
The One who shows his tender love to them will guide them.
Like a shepherd, he will lead them beside springs of water.
[11]I will make roads across the mountains.
I will build wide roads for my people.
[12]They will come from far away.
Some of them will come from the north.
Others will come from the west.
Still others will come from Aswan in the south."

[13]Shout with joy, you heavens!
Be glad, you earth!

Burst into song, you mountains!
The LORD will comfort his people.
He will show his tender love to those who are suffering.

14But the city of Zion said, “The LORD has deserted me.
The Lord has forgotten me.”

15The LORD answers, “Can a mother forget the baby
who is nursing at her breast?
Can she stop showing her tender love
to the child who was born to her?
She might forget her child.
But I will not forget you.
16I have written your name on the palms of my hands.
Your walls are never out of my sight.
17Your people will hurry back.
Those who destroyed you so completely will leave you.
18Look up. Look all around you.
All of your people are getting together
to come back to you.
You can be sure that I live,”
announces the LORD.
“And you can be just as sure that your people
will be like decorations you will wear.
Like a bride, you will wear them proudly.

19“Zion, you were destroyed. Your land was left empty.
It was turned into a dry and empty desert.
But now you will be too small to hold all of your people.
And those who destroyed you will be far away.
20The children who were born during your time of sorrow
will speak to you. They will say,
‘This city is too small for us.
Give us more space to live in.’
21Then you will say to yourself,
‘Whose children are these?
I lost my children.
And I couldn’t have any more.
My children were taken far away from me.
And no one wanted them.

Who brought these children up?
I was left all alone.
So where have these children come from?' "

22 The LORD and King continues,

"I will call out to the nations.
I will give a signal to them.
They will bring back your sons in their arms.
They will carry your daughters on their shoulders.
23 Their kings will become like fathers to you.
Their queens will be like mothers who nurse you.
They will bow down to you with their faces toward the ground.
They will kiss the dust at your feet to show you their respect.
Then you will know that I am the LORD.
Those who put their hope in me will not be ashamed."

24 Can goods that were stolen by soldiers be taken away from them?
Can prisoners be set free from the powerful Babylonians?

25 "Yes, they can," the LORD answers.

"Prisoners will be taken away from soldiers.
Stolen goods will be taken back from the powerful Babylonians.
Zion, I will fight against those who fight against you.
And I will save your people.
26 I will make those who beat you down eat the flesh of others.
They will drink blood and get drunk on it as if it were wine.
Then everyone on earth will know
that I am the one who saves you.
I am the LORD. I set you free.
I am the Mighty One of Jacob."

The LORD's Servant Obeys Him

Isaiah 50

[1]The LORD says to the people in Jerusalem,

"Do you think I divorced your people before you?
Is that why I sent them away?
If it is, show me the letter of divorce.
I did not sell you into slavery to pay someone I owe.
You were sold because you sinned against me.
Your people were sent away because of their lawless acts.
[2]When I came to save you, why didn't anyone welcome me?
When I called out to you, why didn't anyone answer me?
Wasn't my arm powerful enough to set you free?
Wasn't I strong enough to save you?
I dry up the sea with a single command.
I turn rivers into a desert.
Then fish rot because they do not have any water.
They die because they are thirsty.
[3]I make the sky turn dark.
It looks as if it is dressed in black clothes."

[4]The LORD and King has taught me what to say.
He has taught me how to help those who are tired.
He wakes me up every morning.
He makes me want to listen like a good student.
[5]The LORD and King has unplugged my ears.
I've always obeyed him.
I haven't turned away from him.
[6]I let my enemies beat me on my bare back.
I let them pull the hair out of my beard.
I didn't turn my face away
when they made fun of me and spit on me.
[7]The LORD and King helps me.
He won't let me be dishonored.
So I've made up my mind to keep on serving him.

I know he won’t let me be put to shame.
[8]He is near. He will prove I haven’t done anything wrong.
So who will bring charges against me?
Let’s face each other in court!
Who can bring charges against me?
Let him come and face me!
[9]The LORD and King helps me.
So who will judge me?
My enemies will be like clothes that moths have eaten up.
They will disappear.

[10]Does anyone among you have respect for the LORD?
Does anyone obey the message of the LORD’s servant?
Let the person who walks in the dark
trust in the LORD.
Let the one who doesn’t have any light to guide him
depend on his God.
[11]But all of you sinners who light fires
should go ahead and walk in their light.
You who carry flaming torches
should walk in their light.
Here’s what I’m going to do to you.
I’ll make you lie down in great pain.

Zion Will Be Saved

Isaiah 51

[1]The LORD says, “Listen to me, you who want to do what is right.
Pay attention, you who look to me.
Consider the rock you were cut out of.
Think about the rock pit you were dug from.
[2]Consider Abraham. He is the father of your people.
Think about Sarah. She is your mother.
When I chose Abraham, he did not have any children.
But I blessed him and gave him many of them.
[3]You can be sure that I will comfort Zion’s people.
I will look with loving concern on all of their destroyed buildings.
I will make their deserts like Eden.
I will make their dry and empty land like my very own garden.
Joy and gladness will be there.
People will sing and give thanks to me.

[4]“Listen to me, my people.
Pay attention, my nation.
My law will go out to the nations.
I make everything right.
That will be a guiding light for them.
[5]The time for me to set you free is near.
I will soon save you.
My powerful arm will make everything right among the nations.
The islands will put their hope in me.
They will wait for my powerful arm to act.
[6]Look up toward the heavens.
Then look at the earth.
The heavens will vanish like smoke.
The earth will wear out like clothes.
Those who live there will die like flies.
But I will save you forever.
My saving power will never end.

7 “Listen to me, you who know what is right.
Pay attention, you who have my law in your hearts.
Do not be afraid when mere people make fun of you.
Do not be terrified when they laugh at you.
8 They will be like clothes that moths have eaten up.
They will be like wool that worms have chewed up.
But my saving power will last forever.
I will save you for all time to come.”

9 Wake up! LORD, wake up! Dress your powerful arm with strength
as if it were your clothes.
Wake up, just as you did in the past.
Wake up, as you did long ago.
Didn’t you cut Rahab to pieces?
Didn’t you stab that sea monster to death?
10 Didn’t you dry up the Red Sea?
Didn’t you dry up those deep waters?
You made a road on the bottom of that sea.
Then those who were set free went across.
11 Those the LORD has saved will return to their land.
They will sing as they enter the city of Zion.
Joy that lasts forever will be like beautiful crowns on their heads.
They will be filled with gladness and joy.
Sorrow and sighing will be gone.

12 The LORD says to his people,
“I comfort you because of who I am.
Why are you afraid of mere men?
They are only human beings.
They are like grass that dries up.
13 How can you forget me? I made you.
I spread out the heavens.
I laid the foundations of the earth.
Why are you terrified every day?
Is it because those who are angry with you are crushing you?
Is it because they are trying to destroy you?
Their anger can’t harm you anymore.
14 You prisoners who are so afraid will soon be set free.
You will not die in your prison cells.
You will not go without food.
15 I am the LORD your God.

I stir up the ocean. I make its waves roar.
My name is The LORD Who Rules Over All.
16 I have put my words in your mouth.
I have kept you safe in the palm of my hand.
I set the heavens in place.
I laid the foundations of the earth.
I say to Zion, ‘You are my people.’ ”

The Cup of the LORD’s Burning Anger

17 Wake up, Jerusalem!
Wake up! Get up!
The LORD has handed you the cup of his burning anger.
And you have drunk from it.
That cup makes men unsteady on their feet.
And you have drunk from it to the very last drop.
18 None of the children who were born to you
are left to guide you.
None of the children you brought up
are left to lead you by the hand.
19 Nothing but trouble has come to you.
You have been wiped out and destroyed.
And you have suffered hunger and war.
No one feels sorry for you.
No one can comfort you.
20 Your children have fainted.
They lie helpless at every street corner.
They are like antelope that have been caught in a net.
They have felt the full force of the LORD’s burning anger.
Jerusalem, your God had to warn them strongly.

21 So listen to me, you suffering people of Jerusalem.
You have been made drunk, but not by drinking wine.
22 Your LORD and King speaks.
He is your God.
He stands up for his people. He says,
“I have taken from you the cup of my burning anger.
It made you unsteady on your feet.
But you will never drink
from that cup again.

[23]Instead, I will give it to those who made you suffer.
They said to you,
‘Fall down flat on the ground.
Then we can walk all over you.’
And that is exactly what you did.
You made your back like a street to be walked on.”

Isaiah 52

[1]Wake up! Zion, wake up!
Dress yourself with strength as if it were your clothes.
Holy city of Jerusalem,
put on your clothes of glory.
Those who haven't been circumcised will never enter you again.
Neither will those who are "unclean."
[2]Get up, Jerusalem! Shake off your dust.
Take your place on your throne.
Captured people of Zion,
remove the chains from your neck.

[3]The LORD says,

"When you were sold as slaves, no one paid anything for you.
Now no one will pay any money to set you free."

[4]The LORD and King continues,

"Long ago my people went down to Egypt.
They lived there for a while.
Later, Assyria crushed them without any reason.

[5]"Now look at what has happened to them," announces the LORD.

"Once again my people have been taken away.
And no one paid anything for them.
Those who rule over them brag about it,"
announces the LORD.
"All day long without stopping,
people speak evil things against my name.
[6]So the day will come when my people will really know the meaning of my name.
They will know what kind of God I am.

They will know that I told them ahead of time they would return to
their land.
They will know that it was I.”

7What a beautiful sight it is
to see messengers coming with good news!
How beautiful to see them coming down from the mountains
with a message about peace!
How wonderful it is when they bring the good news
that we are saved!
How wonderful when they say to Zion,
“Your God rules!”
8Listen! Those on guard duty are shouting out the message.
With their own eyes
they see the LORD returning to Zion.
So they shout with joy.
9Burst into songs of joy together,
you broken-down buildings in Jerusalem.
The LORD has comforted his people.
He has set Jerusalem free.
10The LORD will use the power of his holy arm to save his people.
All of the nations will see him do it.
Everyone from one end of the earth to the other will see it.

11You who carry the articles that belong to the LORD’s temple, leave
Babylon!
Leave it! Get out of there!
Don’t touch anything that isn’t pure and clean.
Come out of Babylon and be pure.
12But this time you won’t have to leave in a hurry.
You won’t have to rush away.
The LORD will go ahead of you and lead you.
The God of Israel will follow behind you and guard you.

The Suffering and Glory of the LORD’s Servant

13The LORD says, “My servant will act wisely and accomplish his task.
He will be highly honored. He will be greatly respected.
14Many people were shocked when they saw him.

He was so scarred that he did not look like a man at all.
His body was so twisted that he did not look like a human being anymore.
15 But many nations will be surprised when they see what he has done.
Kings will be so amazed that they will not be able to say anything.
They will understand things they were never told about.
They will know the meaning of things they never heard about.”

Isaiah 53

[1]Who has believed what we've been saying?
Who has seen the LORD's saving power?
[2]His servant grew up like a tender young plant.
He grew like a root coming up out of dry ground.
He didn't have any beauty or majesty that made us notice him.
There wasn't anything special about the way he looked that drew us to him.
[3]Men looked down on him. They didn't accept him.
He knew all about sorrow and suffering.
He was like someone people turn their faces away from.
We looked down on him. We didn't have any respect for him.

[4]He suffered the things we should have suffered.
He took on himself the pain that should have been ours.
But we thought God was punishing him.
We thought God was wounding him and making him suffer.
[5]But the servant was pierced because we had sinned.
He was crushed because we had done what was evil.
He was punished to make us whole again.
His wounds have healed us.
[6]All of us are like sheep. We have wandered away from God.
All of us have turned to our own way.
And the LORD has placed on his servant
the sins of all of us.

[7]He was beaten down and made to suffer.
But he didn't open his mouth.
He was led away like a sheep to be killed.
Lambs are silent while their wool is being cut off.
In the same way, he didn't open his mouth.
[8]He was arrested and sentenced to death.
Then he was taken away.
He was cut off from this life.
He was punished for the sins of my people.
Who among those who were living at that time

could have understood those things?
9He was given a grave with those who were evil.
But his body was buried in the tomb of a rich man.
He was killed even though he hadn't harmed anyone.
And he had never lied to anyone.

10The LORD says, "It was my plan to crush him
and cause him to suffer.
I made his life a guilt offering to pay for sin.
But he will see all of his children after him.
In fact, he will continue to live.
My plan will be brought about through him.
11After he suffers, he will see the light that leads to life.
And he will be satisfied.
My godly servant will make many people godly
because of what he will accomplish.
He will be punished for their sins.
12So I will give him a place of honor among those who are great.
He will be rewarded just like others who win the battle.
That is because he was willing to give his life as a sacrifice.
He was counted among those who had committed crimes.
He took the sins of many people on himself.
And he gave his life for those who had done what is wrong."

Jerusalem Will Be Glorious

Isaiah 54

1 “Jerusalem, sing!
You are now like a woman who never had a child.
Burst into song! Shout with joy!
You who have never had labor pains,
you are now all alone.
But you will have more children than a woman who still has a husband,”
says the LORD.
2 “Make a large area for your tent.
Spread out its curtains.
Go ahead and make your tent wider.
Make its ropes longer.
Drive the stakes down deeper.
3 You will spread out to the right and the left.
Your children after you will drive out the nations that are now living in your land.
They will settle down in the deserted cities of those nations.

4 “Do not be afraid. You will not be put to shame anymore.
Do not be afraid of being dishonored.
People will no longer make fun of you.
You will forget the time when you suffered as slaves in Egypt.
You will no longer remember the shame
of being a widow in Babylonia.
5 I made you. I am now your husband.
My name is The LORD Who Rules Over All.
I am the Holy One of Israel.
I have set you free.
I am the God of the whole earth.
6 You were like a wife who was deserted.
And her heart was broken.
You were like a wife who married young.
And her husband sent her away.

But now I am calling you to come back," says your God.
7"For a brief moment I left you.
But because I love you so much, I will bring you back.
8For a moment I turned my face away from you.
I was very angry with you.
But I will show you my loving concern.
My faithful love will continue forever,"
says the LORD. He is the one who set you free.

9"During Noah's time I took an oath and made a promise.
I said I would never cover the earth with water again.
In the same way, I have promised not to be angry with you.
I will never punish you again.
10The mountains might shake.
The hills might be removed.
But my faithful love for you will never be shaken.
And my covenant that promises peace to you will never be broken,"
says the LORD. He shows you his loving concern.

11"Suffering city, you have been beaten by storms.
You have not been comforted.
I will rebuild you with turquoise stones.
I will rebuild your foundations with sapphires.
12I will line the top of your city wall with rubies.
I will make your gates out of gleaming jewels.
And I will make all of your walls out of precious stones.
13I will teach all of your children.
And they will enjoy great peace.
14When you do what is right,
you will be made secure.
Your leaders will not be mean to you.
You will not have anything to be afraid of.
You will not be terrified anymore.
Terror will not come near you.
15People might attack you. But I will not be the cause of it.
Those who attack you will give themselves up to you.

16"I created blacksmiths.
They fan the coals into flames of fire.
They make weapons that are fit for their work.
I also created those who destroy others.

[17]But no weapon that is used against you will succeed.
People might bring charges against you.
But you will prove that they are wrong.
Those are the things I do for my servants.
I make everything right for them,”

announces the LORD.

The LORD Invites His People to Come to Him

Isaiah 55

1 “Come, all of you who are thirsty.
Come and drink the water I offer to you.
You who do not have any money, come.
Buy and eat the grain I give you.
Come and buy wine and milk.
You will not have to pay anything for it.
2 Why spend money on what is not food?
Why work for what does not satisfy you?
Listen carefully to me.
Then you will eat what is good.
You will enjoy the richest food there is.
3 Listen and come to me.
Pay attention to me.
Then you will live.
I will make a covenant with you that will last forever.
I will give you my faithful love.
I promised it to David.
4 I made him a witness to the nations.
He became a leader and commander over them.
5 You too will send for nations you do not know.
Even though they do not know you,
they will hurry and come to you.
That is what I will do. I am the LORD your God.
I am the Holy One of Israel.
I have honored you.”

6 Turn to the LORD before it’s too late.
Call out to him while he’s still ready to help you.
7 Let the one who is evil stop doing evil things.
And let him quit thinking evil thoughts.
Let him turn to the LORD.
The LORD will show him his tender love.
Let him turn to our God.

He is always ready to forgive.

8 “My thoughts are not like your thoughts.
And your ways are not like my ways,”
announces the LORD.
9 “The heavens are higher than the earth.
And my ways are higher than your ways.
My thoughts are higher than your thoughts.
10 The rain and the snow
come down from the sky.
They do not return to it
without watering the earth.
They make plants come up and grow.
The plants produce seeds for farmers.
They also produce food for people to eat.
11 The words I speak are like that.
They will not return to me without producing results.
They will accomplish what I want them to.
They will do exactly what I sent them to do.

12 “My people, you will leave Babylonia with joy.
You will be led out of it in peace.
The mountains and hills
will burst into song as you go.
And all of the trees in the fields
will clap their hands.
13 Pine trees will grow where there used to be bushes that had thorns on them.
And myrtle trees will grow where there used to be thorns.
That will bring me great fame.
It will be a lasting reminder of what I can do.
It will not be forgotten.”

The LORD Will Save Those Who Come to Him

Isaiah 56

1 The LORD says,

"Do what is fair and right.
I will soon come and save you.
Soon everyone will know that what I do is right.
2 Blessed is the man who does what I want him to.
He is faithful in keeping the Sabbath day.
He does not misuse it.
He does not do what is evil on that day."

3 Suppose an outsider wants to follow the LORD.
Then he shouldn't say,
"The LORD won't accept me as one of his people."
And a eunuch shouldn't say,
"I'm like a dry tree
that doesn't bear any fruit."

4 The LORD says,

"Suppose some eunuchs keep my Sabbath days.
They choose to do what pleases me.
And they are faithful in keeping my covenant.
5 Then I will set up a monument in the area of my temple.
Their names will be written on it.
That will be better for them than having sons and daughters.
The names of the eunuchs will be remembered forever.
They will never be forgotten.

6 "Suppose outsiders want to follow me
and serve me.
They want to love me

and worship me.
They keep the Sabbath day and do not misuse it.
And they are faithful in keeping my covenant.
7Then I will bring them to my holy mountain of Zion.
I will give them joy in my house.
They can pray there.
I will accept their burnt offerings and sacrifices on my altar.
My house will be called
a house where people from all nations can pray.”
8The LORD and King will gather
those who were taken away from their homes in Israel.
He announces, “I will gather them to myself.
And I will gather others to join them.”

The LORD Judges Israel’s Evil Leaders

9Come, all of you enemy nations! Come like wild animals.
Come and destroy like animals in the forest.
10Israel’s prophets are blind.
They don’t know the LORD.
All of them are like watchdogs that can’t even bark.
They just lie around and dream.
They love to sleep.
11They are like dogs that love to eat.
They never get enough.
They are like shepherds who don’t have any understanding.
All of them do as they please.
They only look for what they can get for themselves.
12“Come!” they shout. “Let’s get some wine!
Let’s drink all the beer we can!
Tomorrow we’ll do the same thing.
And that will be even better than today.”

Isaiah 57

[1]Those who are right with God die.
And no one really cares about it.
Men who are faithful to the LORD are swept away by trouble.
And no one understands why that happens
to those who do what is right.
[2]Those who lead honest lives
will enjoy peace and rest when they die.

[3]The LORD says, “Come here,
you children of women who practice evil magic!
You are children of prostitutes and those who commit adultery.
[4]Who are you making fun of?
Who are you laughing at?
Who are you sticking your tongue out at?
You are people who refuse to obey me.
You are just a bunch of liars!
[5]You burn with sinful longing among the oak trees.
You worship your gods by having sex under every green tree.
You sacrifice your children in the valleys.
You also do it under the cliffs.
[6]You have chosen some of the smooth stones in the valleys to be your gods.
You have joined yourselves to them.
You have even poured out drink offerings to them.
You have given grain offerings to them.
So why should I take pity on you?
[7]You have made your bed to have sex on a very high hill.
You went up there to offer your sacrifices.
[8]You have set up statues to remind you of your gods.
You have put them behind your doors and doorposts.
You deserted me. You invited other lovers into your bed.
You climbed into it and welcomed them.
You made a deal with them.
And you looked at their naked bodies.
[9]You went to the god Molech with olive oil.
You took a lot of perfume along with you.

You sent your messengers to places far away.
You even sent them down to the place of the dead.
10 All of your efforts wore you out.
But you would not say, ‘It’s hopeless.’
You received new strength.
So you did not give up.

11 “Who are you so afraid of
that you have not been true to me?
You have not remembered me.
You do not even care about me.
I have not punished you for a long time.
That is why you are not afraid of me.
12 You have not done what is right or good.
I will let everyone know about it.
And that will not be of any benefit to you.
13 Go ahead and cry out for help to all of the statues of your gods.
See if they can save you!
The wind will carry them off.
Just a puff of air will blow them away.
But anyone who comes to me for safety
will receive the land.
He will possess my holy mountain of Zion.”

The LORD Comforts Those Who Aren’t Proud

14 A messenger says,

“Build up the road! Build it up! Get it ready!
Remove anything that would keep my people from coming back.”
15 The One who is highly honored lives forever.
His name is holy. He says,
“I live in a high and holy place.
But I also live with anyone who turns away from his sins.
I live with anyone who is not proud.
I give new life to him.
I give it to anyone who turns away from his sins.
16 I will not find fault with my people forever.
I will not always be angry with them.

If I were, I would cause their spirits to grow weak.
The very breath of life would go out of the people I created.
17 I was very angry with them.
They always longed for more and more of everything.
So I punished them for that sin.
I turned my face away from them because I was angry.
But they kept on wanting their own way.
18 I have seen what they have done.
But I will heal them.
I will guide them.
And I will comfort them just as I did before.
19 Then the people of Israel who are sorry for their sins will praise me.
I will give perfect peace to those who are far away and those who are near.
And I will heal them," says the LORD.
20 But those who are evil are like the rolling sea.
It never rests.
Its waves toss up mud and sand.

21 "There is no peace for those who are evil," says my God.

What True Worship Is All About

Isaiah 58

[1]The LORD told me,

"Shout out loud. Do not hold back.
Raise your voice like a trumpet.
Tell my people that they have refused to obey me.
Tell the family of Jacob how much they have sinned.
[2]Day after day they worship me.
They seem ready and willing to know how I want them to live.
They act as if they were a nation that does what is right.
They act as if they have not turned away from my commands.
They claim to want me to give them fair decisions.
They seem ready and willing to come near and worship me.
[3]'We have gone without food,' they say.
'Why haven't you noticed it?
We have made ourselves suffer.
Why haven't you paid any attention to us?'

"On the day when you fast, you do as you please.
You take advantage of all of your workers.
[4]When you fast, it ends in arguing and fighting.
You hit one another with your fists.
That is an evil thing to do.
The way you are now fasting
keeps your prayers from being heard in heaven.
[5]Do you think that is the way I want you to fast?
Is it only a time for a man to make himself suffer?
Is it only for people to bow their heads like tall grass that is bent by the wind?
Is it only for people to lie down on black cloth and ashes?
Is that what you call a fast?
Do you think I can accept that?

[6]"Here is the way I want you to fast.

“Set free those who are held by chains without any reason.
Untie the ropes that hold people as slaves.
Set free those who are crushed.
Break every evil chain.
7Share your food with hungry people.
Provide homeless people with a place to stay.
Give naked people clothes to wear.
Provide for the needs of your own family.
8Then the light of my blessing will shine on you like the rising sun.
I will heal you quickly.
I will march out ahead of you.
And my glory will follow behind you and guard you.
That is because I always do what is right.
9You will call out to me for help.
And I will answer you.
You will cry out.
And I will say, ‘Here I am.’

“Get rid of the chains you use to hold others down.
Stop pointing your finger at others as if they had done something wrong.
Stop saying harmful things about them.
10Work hard to feed hungry people.
Satisfy the needs of those who are crushed.
Then my blessing will light up your darkness.
And the night of your suffering will become as bright as the noonday sun.
11I will always guide you.
I will satisfy your needs in a land that is baked by the sun.
I will make you stronger.
You will be like a garden that has plenty of water.
You will be like a spring whose water never runs dry.
12Your people will rebuild the cities that were destroyed long ago.
And you will build again on the old foundations.
You will be called The One Who Repairs Broken Walls.
You will be called The One Who Makes City Streets Like New Again.

13“Do not work on the Sabbath day.
Do not do just anything you want to on my holy day.

Make the Sabbath a day you can enjoy.
Honor my holy day.
Do not work on it.
Do not do just anything you want to.
Do not talk about things that are worthless.
14 Then you will find your joy in me.
I will give you control over the most important places in the land.
And you will enjoy all of the good things
in the land I gave your father Jacob.”

The LORD has spoken.

The LORD Sets His People Free

Isaiah 59

1 People of Israel, the LORD's arm is not too weak to save you.
His ears aren't too deaf to hear your cry for help.
2 But your sins have separated you from your God.
They have caused him to turn his face away from you.
So he won't listen to you.
3 Your hands and fingers are stained with blood.
You are guilty of committing murder.
Your mouth has told lies.
Your tongue says evil things.
4 People aren't fair when they present their cases in court.
They aren't honest when they state their case.
They depend on weak arguments. They tell lies.
They plan to make trouble.
Then they carry it out.
5 The plans they make are like the eggs of poisonous snakes.
Anyone who eats those eggs will die.
When one of them is broken, a snake comes out.
6 Those people weave their evil plans together like a spider's web.
But the webs they make can't be used as clothes.
They can't cover themselves with what they make.
Their acts are evil.
They do things to harm others.
7 They are always in a hurry to sin.
They run quickly to murder those who aren't guilty.
Their thoughts are evil.
They leave a trail of suffering and pain.
8 They don't know how to live at peace with others.
What they do isn't fair.
They lead twisted lives.
No one who lives like that will enjoy peace and rest.

9 We aren't being treated fairly.
We haven't been set free yet.

The God who always does what is right
hasn’t come to help us.
We look for light. But we see nothing but darkness.
We look for brightness. But we walk in deep shadows.
10 Like blind people we feel our way along the wall.
We are like those who can’t see.
At noon we trip and fall as if the sun had already set.
Compared to those who are healthy, we are like dead people.
11 All of us growl like hungry bears.
We cry like sad doves.
We want the LORD to do what is fair and save us.
But he doesn’t do it.
We long for him to set us free.
But the time for that seems far away.

12 That’s because we’ve done so many things he considers wrong.
Our sins prove that we are guilty.
The wrong things we’ve done are always troubling us.
We admit that we have sinned.
13 We’ve refused to obey the LORD.
We’ve made evil plans against him.
We’ve turned our backs on our God.
We’ve stirred up trouble and refused to follow him.
We’ve told lies that came from our own minds.
14 So people stop others from doing what is fair.
They keep them from doing what is right.
No one tells the truth in court anymore.
No one is honest there.
15 In fact, truth can’t be found anywhere.
Those who refuse to do evil are attacked.

The LORD sees that people aren’t treating others fairly.
That makes him unhappy.
16 He sees that there is no one who helps his people.
He is shocked that no one stands up for them.
So he will use his own powerful arm to save them.
He has the strength to do it because he is holy.
17 He will put the armor of holiness on his chest.
He’ll put the helmet of salvation on his head.
He’ll pay people back for the wrong things they do.
He’ll wrap himself in anger as if it were a coat.

[18]He will pay his enemies back for what they have done.
He'll pour his anger out on them.
He'll punish those who attack him.
He'll give the people in the islands what they have coming to them.
[19]People in the west will show respect for the LORD's name.
People in the east will worship him because of his glory.
The LORD will come like a rushing river that was held back.
His breath will drive it along.

[20]"I set my people free. I will come to Mount Zion.
I will come to those in Jacob's family who turn away from their sins,"

announces the LORD.

[21]"Here is the covenant I will make with them," says the LORD. "My Spirit is on you. I have put my words in your mouth. They will never leave your mouth. And they will never leave the mouths of your children or their children after them. That will be true for all time to come," says the LORD.

Zion Will Be Glorious

Isaiah 60

1 “People of Jerusalem, get up.
Shine, because your light has come.
My glory will shine on you.
2 Darkness covers the earth.
Thick darkness spreads over the nations.
But I will rise and shine on you.
My glory will appear over you.
3 Nations will come to your light.
Kings will come to the brightness of your new day.

4 “Look up. Look all around you.
All of your people are getting together to come back to you.
Your sons will come from far away.
Your daughters will be carried like little children.
5 Then your face will glow with joy.
Your heart will beat fast because you are so happy.
Wealth from across the ocean will be brought to you.
The riches of the nations will come to you.
6 Herds of young camels will cover your land.
They will come from Midian and Ephah.
They will also come from Sheba.
They’ll carry gold and incense.
And people will shout praises to me.
7 All of Kedar’s flocks will be gathered to you.
The rams of Nebaioth will serve as your sacrifices.
I will accept them as offerings on my altar.
That is how I will bring honor to my glorious temple.

8 “Whose ships are these that sail along like clouds?
They fly like doves to their nests.
9 People from the islands are coming to me.
The ships of Tarshish are out in front.
They are bringing your children back from far away.

Your children are bringing their silver and gold with them.
They are coming to honor me.
I am the LORD your God.
I am the Holy One of Israel.
I have honored you.

10 “People from other lands will rebuild your walls.
Their kings will serve you.
When I was angry with you, I struck you.
But now I will show you my tender love.
11 Your gates will always stand open.
They will never be shut, day or night.
Then people can bring you the wealth of the nations.
Their kings will come along with them.
12 The nation or kingdom that will not serve you will be destroyed.
It will be completely wiped out.

13 “Lebanon’s glorious trees will be brought to you.
Its pines, firs and cypress trees will be brought.
They will be used to make my temple beautiful.
And I will bring glory to the place where my throne is.
14 The children of those who crush you will come and bow down to you.
All those who hate you will kneel down at your feet.
Jerusalem, they will call you The City of the LORD.
They will name you Zion, the City of the Holy One of Israel.

15 “You have been deserted and hated.
No one even travels through you.
But I will make you into something to be proud of forever.
You will be a place of joy for all time to come.
16 You will get everything you need from kings and nations.
You will be like children who are nursing
at their mother’s breasts.
Then you will know that I am the one who saves you.
I am the LORD. I set you free.
I am the Mighty One of Jacob.
17 Instead of bronze I will bring you gold.
In place of iron I will give you silver.
Instead of wood I will bring you bronze.
In place of stones I will give you iron.

I will make peace govern you.
I will make godliness rule over you.
18 People will no longer harm one another in your land.
They will not wipe out or destroy anything inside your borders.
You will call your walls Salvation.
And you will name your gates Praise.
19 You will not need the light of the sun by day anymore.
The bright light of the moon will no longer have to shine on you.
I will be your light forever.
My glory will shine on you.
I am the LORD your God.
20 Your sun will never set again.
Your moon will never lose its light.
I will be your light forever.
Your days of sorrow will come to an end.
21 Then all of your people will do what is right.
The land will belong to them forever.
They will be like a young tree I have planted.
My hands have created them.
They will show how glorious I am.
22 The smallest family among you will become a tribe.
The smallest tribe will become a mighty nation.
I am the LORD.
When it is the right time, I will act quickly.”

The LORD's Servant Accomplishes His Work

Isaiah 61

[1]The Spirit of the LORD and King is on me.
The LORD has anointed me
to tell the good news to poor people.
He has sent me to comfort
those whose hearts have been broken.
He has sent me to announce freedom
for those who have been captured.
He wants me to set prisoners free
from their dark prisons.
[2]He has sent me to announce the year
when he will set his people free.
He wants me to announce the day
when he will pay his enemies back.
Our God has sent me to comfort all those who are sad.
[3]He wants me to help those in Zion who are filled with sorrow.
I will put beautiful crowns on their heads
in place of ashes.
I will anoint them with oil to give them gladness
instead of sorrow.
I will give them a spirit of praise
in place of a spirit of sadness.
They will be like oak trees that are strong and straight.
The LORD himself will plant them in the land.
That will show how glorious he is.

[4]They will rebuild the places that were destroyed long ago.
They will repair the buildings that have been broken down for many years.
They will make the destroyed cities like new again.
They have been broken down for a very long time.
[5]Outsiders will serve you by taking care of your flocks.
People from other lands will work in your fields and vineyards.
[6]You will be called priests of the LORD.

You will be named workers for our God.
You will enjoy the wealth of nations.
You will brag about getting their riches.

7 Instead of being put to shame
my people will receive a double share of wealth.
Instead of being dishonored
they will be glad to be in their land.
They will receive a double share of riches there.
And they'll be filled with joy that will last forever.

8 The LORD says, "I love those who do what is right.
I hate it when people steal and do other sinful things.
So I will be faithful to those who do what is right.
And I will bless them.
I will make a covenant with them
that will last forever.
9 Their children after them will be famous among the nations.
Their families will be praised by people everywhere.
All those who see them will agree
that I have blessed them."

10 The people of Jerusalem will say,
"We take great delight in the LORD.
We are joyful because we belong to our God.
He has dressed us with salvation as if it were our clothes.
He has put robes of godliness on us.
We are like a groom who is dressed up for his wedding.
We are like a bride who decorates herself with her jewels.
11 The soil makes the young plant come up.
A garden causes seeds to grow.
In the same way, the LORD and King will make godliness grow.
And all of the nations will praise him."

The LORD Gives Zion a New Name

Isaiah 62

[1]The LORD says, “For the good of Zion I will not keep silent.
For Jerusalem’s benefit I will not remain quiet.
I will not keep silent until its people’s godliness
shines like the sunrise.
I will not remain quiet until they are saved
and shine like a blazing torch.
[2]Jerusalem, the nations will see
that I have made everything right for you.
All of their kings will see your glory.
You will be called by a new name.
I myself will give it to you.
[3]You will be like a glorious crown in my strong hand.
You will be like a royal crown in my powerful hand.
[4]People will not call you Deserted anymore.
They will no longer name your land Empty.
Instead, you will be called The One the LORD Delights In.
Your land will be named The Married One.
I will take delight in you.
And your land will be like a bride.
[5]As a young man gets married to a young woman,
your people will marry you.
As a groom is happy with his bride,
I will be full of joy over you.”

[6]Jerusalem, I have stationed guards on your walls.
They must never be silent day or night.
You who call out to the LORD
must not give yourselves any rest.
[7]And don’t give him any rest
until he makes Jerusalem secure.
Don’t give him any peace
until people all over the earth praise that city.

[8]The LORD has taken an oath and made a promise.
He has lifted up his right hand and mighty arm.
He has promised, “I will never give your grain
to your enemies for food again.
Outsiders will never again drink the fresh wine
you have worked so hard for.
[9]Instead, those who gather the grain will eat it themselves.
And they will praise me.
Those who gather grapes to make the wine will enjoy it.
They will drink it in the courtyards of my temple.”

[10]Go out through your gates, people of Jerusalem! Go out!
Prepare the way for the rest of your people to return.
Build up the road! Build it up!
Remove the stones.
Raise a banner over the city
for the nations to see.

[11]The LORD has announced a message
from one end of the earth to the other.
He has said, “Tell the people of Zion,
‘Look! Your Savior is coming!
He is bringing his people back as his reward.
He has won the battle over their enemies.’ ”
[12]They will be called The Holy People.
The LORD will set them free.
And Jerusalem will be named The City the LORD Cares About.
It won’t be deserted anymore.

God Will Save His People and Punish Their Enemies

Isaiah 63

[1]Who is this man coming from the city of Bozrah in Edom?
His clothes are stained bright red.
Who is he? He is dressed up in all of his glory.
He is marching toward us with great strength.

The LORD answers, “It is I.
I have won the battle.
I am mighty.
I have saved my people.”

[2]Why are your clothes red?
They look as if you have been stomping
on grapes in a winepress.

[3]The LORD answers, “I have been stomping on the nations
as if they were grapes.
No one was there to help me.
I walked all over the nations because I was angry.
That is why I stomped on them.
Their blood splashed all over my clothes.
So my clothes were stained bright red.
[4]I decided it was time to pay Israel’s enemies back.
The year for me to set my people free had come.
[5]I looked around, but no one was there to help me.
I was shocked that no one gave me any help.
So I used my own powerful arm to save my people.
I had the strength to do it because I was angry.
[6]I walked all over the nations because I was angry with them.
I made them drink from the cup of my burning anger.
I poured their blood out on the ground.”

Isaiah Prays to the LORD

7 I will talk about the kind things the LORD has done.
I'll praise him for everything he's done for us.
He has done many good things
for the nation of Israel.
That's because he loves us and is very kind to us.
8 In the past he said, "They are my people.
They will not turn against me."
So he saved them.
9 When they suffered, he suffered with them.
He sent his angel to save them.
He set them free because he is loving and kind.
He lifted them up and carried them.
He did it again and again in days long ago.
10 But they refused to obey him.
They made his Holy Spirit sad.
So he turned against them and became their enemy.
He himself fought against them.

11 Then his people remembered what he did long ago.
They recalled the days of Moses and his people.
They asked, "Where is the One who brought
Israel through the Red Sea?
Moses led them as the shepherd of his flock.
Where is the One who put
his Holy Spirit among them?
12 He used his glorious and powerful arm
to help Moses.
He parted the waters of the sea in front of them.
That mighty act made him famous forever.
13 He led them through that deep sea.
Like a horse in open country,
they didn't trip and fall.
14 Like cattle that are taken down to the flatlands,
they were given rest by the Spirit of the LORD."
That's how he guided his people.
So he made a glorious name for himself.

15 LORD, look down from heaven.
Look down from your holy and glorious throne.
Where is your great love for us?
Where is your power?

Why don’t you show us
your tender love and concern?
16 You are our Father.
Abraham might not accept us as his children.
Jacob might not recognize us as his family.
But you are our Father, LORD.
Your name is The One Who Always Sets Us Free.
17 LORD, why do you let us wander away from you?
Why do you let us become so stubborn
that we don’t respect you?
Come back and help us.
We are the tribes that belong to you.
18 For a little while your holy people possessed the land.
But now our enemies have torn your temple down.
19 We are like people you never ruled over.
We are like those who don’t belong to you.

Isaiah 64

[1]I wish you would open up your heavens
and come down to us!
I wish the mountains would tremble
when you show your power!
[2]Be like a fire that causes twigs to burn.
It also makes water boil.
So come down and make yourself known to your enemies.
Cause the nations to shake with fear
when they see your power!
[3]Long ago you did some wonderful things we didn't expect.
You came down, and the mountains trembled
when you showed your power.
[4]No one's ears have ever heard of a God like you.
No one's eyes have ever seen a God who is greater than you.
No God but you acts for the good
of those who trust in him.
[5]You come to help those who enjoy doing what is right.
You help those who thank you for teaching them how to live.
But when we continued to disobey you,
you became angry with us.
So how can we be saved?
[6]All of us have become like someone who is "unclean."
All of the good things we do are like polluted rags to you.
All of us are like leaves that have dried up.
Our sins sweep us away like the wind.
[7]No one prays to you.
No one asks you for help.
You have turned your face away from us.
You have let us waste away
because we have sinned so much.

[8]LORD, you are our Father.
We are the clay. You are the potter.
Your hands made all of us.
[9]Don't be so angry with us, LORD.

Don’t remember our sins anymore.
Please show us your favor.
All of us belong to you.
10 Your sacred cities have become a desert.
Even Zion is a desert.
Jerusalem is a dry and empty place.
11 Our people used to praise you in our holy and glorious temple.
But now it has been burned down.
Everything we treasured has been destroyed.
12 LORD, won’t you help us even after everything that’s happened?
Will you keep silent and punish us more than we can stand?

The LORD Answers Isaiah's Prayer

Isaiah 65

[1]The LORD says, "I made myself known to those who were not asking for me.
I was found by those who were not trying to find me.
I spoke to a nation that did not pray to me.
'Here I am,' I said. 'Here I am.'
[2]All day long I have held out my hands
to welcome a stubborn nation.
They lead sinful lives.
They go where their evil thoughts take them.
[3]They are always making me very angry.
They do it right in front of me.
They offer sacrifices in the gardens of other gods.
They burn incense on altars that are made out of bricks.
[4]They sit among the graves.
They spend their nights talking to the spirits of the dead.
They eat the meat of pigs.
Their cooking pots hold soup that has 'unclean' meat in it.
[5]They say, 'Keep away! Don't come near us!
We are too sacred for you!'
Those people are like smoke in my nose.
They are like a fire that keeps burning all day.

[6]"I will judge them. I have even written it down.
I will not keep silent.
Instead, I will pay them back for all of their sins.
[7]I will punish them for their sins
and the sins of their people before them,"
says the LORD.
"They burned sacrifices on the mountains.
They disobeyed me by worshiping other gods on the hills.
So I will really punish them
for all of the sins they have committed."

[8]The LORD says,

"Sometimes juice is still left in grapes that have been crushed.
So people say, 'Don't destroy them.
Some good juice is still left in them.'
That is what I will do for the good of those who serve me.
I will not destroy all of my people.
[9]I will give children
to the families of Jacob and Judah.
They will possess my entire land.
My chosen people will be given all of it.
Those who serve me will live there.
[10]Their flocks will eat in the rich grasslands of Sharon.
Their herds will rest in the Valley of Achor.
That is what I will do for my people who follow me.

[11]"But some of you have deserted me.
You no longer worship on my holy mountain of Zion.
You spread a table for the god that is called Good Fortune.
You offer bowls of mixed wine to the god named Fate.
[12]So I will make it your fate to be killed with swords.
Each of you will die a horrible death.
That is because I called out to you, but you did not answer me.
I spoke to you, but you did not listen.
You did what is evil in my sight.
You chose to do what does not please me."

[13]So the LORD and King says,

"Those who serve me will have food to eat.
But you will be hungry.
My servants will have plenty to drink.
But you will be thirsty.
Those who serve me will be full of joy.
But you will be put to shame.
[14]My servants will sing
with joy in their hearts.
But you will cry out
because of the great pain in your hearts.
You will cry because your spirits are sad.

15 My chosen ones will use your names
when they call down curses on others.
I am your LORD and King.
I will put you to death.
But I will give new names to those who serve me.
16 They will ask me to bless their land.
They will do it in my name.
I am the God of truth.
They will take oaths and make promises in their land.
They will do it in my name.
I am the God of truth.
The troubles of the past will be forgotten.
They will be hidden from my eyes.

The LORD Will Create New Heavens and a New Earth

17 "I will create new heavens and a new earth.
The things that have happened before will not be remembered.
They will not even enter your minds.
18 So be glad and full of joy forever
because of what I will create.
I will cause others to take delight in Jerusalem.
They will be filled with joy
when they see its people.
19 And I will be full of joy because of Jerusalem.
I will take delight in my people.
Sobbing and crying
will not be heard there anymore.

20 "Babies in Jerusalem will no longer
live only a few days.
Old people will not fail
to live for a very long time.
Those who live to the age of 100
will be thought of as still being young when they die.
Those who die before they are 100
will be considered as having been under God's curse.
21 My people will build houses and live in them.
They will plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

[22]They will no longer build houses
only to have others live in them.
They will no longer plant crops
only to have others eat them.
My people will live to be as old as trees.
My chosen ones will enjoy for a long time
the things they have worked for.
[23]Their work will not be worthless anymore.
They will not have children who are sure to face sudden terror.
Instead, I will bless them.
I will also bless their children after them.
[24]Even before they call out to me, I will answer them.
While they are still speaking, I will hear them.
[25]Wolves and lambs will eat together.
Lions will eat straw like oxen.
Serpents will not bite anyone.
They will eat nothing but dust.
None of those animals will harm or destroy
anything or anyone on my holy mountain of Zion,”
says the LORD.

The LORD Judges Some People and Blesses Others

Isaiah 66

1 The LORD says,

"Heaven is my throne.
The earth is under my control.
So how could you ever build a house for me?
Where would my resting place be?
2 Didn't my powerful hand make everything?
That is how all things were created,"

announces the LORD.

"The person I value is not proud.
He is sorry for the wrong things he has done.
He has great respect for what I say.
3 But others are not like that.
They sacrifice bulls to me,
but at the same time they kill people.
They offer lambs to me,
but they also sacrifice dogs to other gods.
They bring grain offerings to me,
but they also offer pig's blood to other gods.
They burn incense to me,
but they also worship statues of gods.
They have chosen to go their own way.
They take delight in things I hate.
4 So I have also made a choice.
I will make them suffer greatly.
I will bring on them what they are afraid of.
When I called out to them, no one answered me.
When I spoke to them, no one listened.
They did what is evil in my sight.
They chose to do what displeases me."

[5]Listen to the word of the LORD.
Listen, you who tremble with fear when he speaks. He says,
"Some of your own people hate you.
They turn their backs on you because you are faithful to me.
They make fun of you and say,
'Let the LORD show his glory by saving you.
Then we can see how happy you are.'
But they will be put to shame.
[6]Hear the loud sounds coming from the city!
Listen to the noise coming from the temple!
I am the one who is causing it.
I am paying my enemies back for everything they have done.

[7]"Zion is like a woman who has a baby
before she goes into labor.
She has a son
even before her labor pains begin.
[8]Who has ever heard of anything like that?
Who has ever seen such a thing?
Can a country be born in a day?
Can a nation be created in a moment?
But as soon as Zion goes into labor,
her people increase their numbers.
[9]Zion, would I bring you to the moment of birth
and not let it happen?" says the LORD.
"Would I close up a mother's body
when it is time for her baby to be born?" says your God.
[10]"Be glad along with Jerusalem, all you who love her.
Be filled with joy because of her.
Take great delight in her,
all you who sob over her.
[11]You will nurse at her comforting breasts.
And you will be satisfied.
You will drink until you are full.
And you will delight in her rich and plentiful supply."

[12]The LORD continues,

"I will cause peace to flow over her like a river.
I will make the wealth of nations sweep over her like a flooding

stream.
You will nurse and be carried in her arms.
You will play on her lap.
13As a mother comforts her child,
I will comfort you.
You will find comfort in Jerusalem.”

14When you see that happen, your hearts will be filled with joy.
Just as grass grows quickly, you will succeed.
The LORD will show his power to those who serve him.
But he will pour out his anger on his enemies.
15The LORD will judge them with fire.
His chariots are coming like a windstorm.
He will pour out his burning anger on his enemies.
It will blaze out like flames of fire.
16The LORD will bring everyone into court.
He will use fire and his sword to punish those he finds guilty.
He will put many people to death.

17“Some people set themselves apart and make themselves pure. They do it so they can go into the gardens to worship other gods. They do what the worship leader tells them to do. They eat the meat of pigs and rats. They also eat other things I hate. All of those people will come to a horrible end,” announces the LORD.

18“They have done many evil things. And they plan to do even more. So I will come and gather the people of every nation and language. They will see my glory when I act.

19“I will do a miracle among them. I will send to the nations some of those who are left alive. I will send some of them to the people of Tarshish, Libya and Lydia, who are famous for using bows. I will send others to Tubal and Greece. And I will send still others to islands far away. The people who live there have not heard about my fame. They have not seen my glory. Those I send will tell the nations about my glory when I act.

20“And they will bring back all of the people of Israel from all of those nations. They will bring them to my holy mountain in Jerusalem. My people will ride on horses, mules and camels. They will come in chariots and wagons,” says the LORD. “Those messengers will bring my people as an offering to me. They will bring them to my temple, just as the Israelites bring

their grain offerings in bowls that are ‘clean.’ [21]And I will choose some of them to be priests and Levites,” says the LORD.

[22]“I will make new heavens and a new earth. And they will last forever,” announces the LORD. “In the same way, your name and your children after you will last. [23]Everyone will come and bow down to me. They will do it at every New Moon Feast and on every Sabbath day,” says the LORD.

[24]“When they go out of Jerusalem, they will see the dead bodies of those who refused to obey me. The worms that eat the bodies will not die. The fire that burns them will not be put out. It will make everyone sick just to look at them.”

Jeremiah

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Jeremiah 1

[1]These are the words Jeremiah received from the LORD. He was the son of Hilkiah. Jeremiah was one of the priests at Anathoth. That's a town in the territory of Benjamin. [2]A message came to Jeremiah from the LORD. It came in the 13th year that Josiah was king over Judah. Josiah was the son of Amon.

[3]The LORD's message also came to Jeremiah during the whole time Jehoiakim was king over Judah. Jehoiakim was the son of Josiah. The LORD continued to speak to Jeremiah until the fifth month of the 11th year that Zedekiah was king over Judah. That's when the people of Jerusalem were forced to leave their country. Zedekiah was the son of Josiah. Here is what Jeremiah said.

The LORD Chooses Jeremiah

[4]A message came to me from the LORD. He said,

[5]"Before I formed you in your mother's body I chose you.
Before you were born I set you apart to serve me.
I appointed you to be a prophet to the nations."

[6]"You are my LORD and King," I said. "I don't know how to speak. I'm only a child."

[7]But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I'm only a child.' You must go to everyone I send you to. You must say everything I command you to say. [8]Do not be afraid of the people I send you to. I am with you. I will save you," announces the LORD.

[9]Then the LORD reached out his hand. He touched my mouth and spoke to me. He said, "I have put my words in your mouth. [10]Today I am appointing you to speak to nations and kingdoms. I want you to pull them up by the roots and tear them down. I want you to destroy them and crush them. But I also want you to build them up and plant them."

[11]A message came to me from the LORD. He asked me, "What do you see,

Jeremiah?”

“The branch of an almond tree,” I replied.

12The LORD said to me, “You have seen correctly. I am watching to see that
my word comes true.”

13Another message came to me from the LORD. He asked me, “What do you
see?”

“A pot that has boiling water in it,” I answered. “It’s leaning toward us from
the north.”

14The LORD said to me, “Something very bad will be poured out on everyone
who lives in this land. It will come from the north. 15I am about to send for all
of the armies in the northern kingdoms,” announces the LORD.

“Their kings will come to Jerusalem.
They will set up their thrones at the very gates of the city.
They will attack all of the walls that surround the city.
They will go to war against all of the towns of Judah.
16I will judge my people.
They have done many evil things.
They have deserted me.
They have burned incense to other gods.
They have worshiped the gods
their own hands have made.

17“So get ready! Stand up! Tell them everything I command you to. Do not
let them terrify you. If you do, I will terrify you in front of them. 18Today I
have made you like a city that has a high wall around it. I have made you like
an iron pillar and a bronze wall. Now you can stand up against the whole land.
You can stand against the kings and officials of Judah. You can stand against its
priests and its people. 19They will fight against you. But they will not
overcome you. I am with you. I will save you,” announces the LORD.

Israel Deserts the LORD

Jeremiah 2

1 A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 2 “Go. Announce my
message to the people in Jerusalem. I want everyone to hear it. Tell them,

“ ‘I remember how faithful you were to me when you were young.
You loved me as if you were my bride.
You followed me through the desert.
Nothing had been planted there.
3 Your people were holy to me.
They were the first share of my harvest.
All those who destroyed them were held guilty.
And trouble came to their enemies,’ ”

announces the LORD.

4 People of Jacob, hear the LORD’s message.
Listen, all you tribes of Israel.

5 The LORD says,

“What did your people find wrong with me?
Why did they wander so far away from me?
They worshiped worthless statues of gods.
Then they themselves became worthless.
6 They did not ask, ‘Where is the LORD?
He brought us up out of Egypt.
He led us through a dry and empty land.
He guided us through deserts and deep valleys.
It was a land of darkness where there wasn’t any rain.
No one lived or traveled there.’
7 But I brought you into a land that has rich soil.
I gave you its fruit and its finest food.
In spite of that, you polluted my land.

You turned it into something I hate.
8 The priests did not ask,
'Where is the LORD?'
Those who taught my law did not know me.
The leaders refused to obey me.
The prophets prophesied in the name of Baal.
They worshiped worthless statues of gods.

9 "So I am bringing charges against you again,"
announces the LORD.
"And I will bring charges against your children's children.
10 Go over to the coasts of the western nations and look.
Send people to the land of Kedar and have them look closely.
See if there has ever been anything like this.
11 Has a nation ever changed its gods?
Actually, they are not even gods at all.
But my people have traded away their glorious God.
They have traded me for worthless statues of gods.
12 Sky above, be shocked over that.
Tremble with horror,"
announces the LORD.

13 "My people have sinned twice.
They have deserted me,
even though I am the spring of water that gives life.
And they have dug their own wells.
But those wells are broken.
They can't hold any water.
14 Are you people of Israel servants?
You were not born as slaves, were you?
Then why have you been carried off like stolen goods?
15 Lions have roared.
They have growled at you.
They have destroyed your land.
Your towns are burned and deserted.
16 The men of Memphis and Tahpanhes
have shaved your heads to dishonor you.
17 Haven't you brought that on yourselves?
I am the LORD your God, but you deserted me.
You left me even while I was leading you.
18 Why do you go to Egypt

to drink water from the Shihor River?
Why do you go to Assyria
to drink from the Euphrates River?
19You will be punished because you have sinned.
You will be corrected for turning away from me.
I am the LORD your God.
If you desert me, bad things will happen to you.
If you do not respect me, you will suffer bitterly.
I want you to understand that,"
announces the LORD who rules over all.

20"Long ago you broke off the yoke I put on you.
You tore off the ropes I tied you up with.
You said, 'I won't serve you!'
In fact, on every high hill
you lay down like a prostitute.
You worshiped other gods under every green tree.
21You were like a good vine when I planted you.
You were a healthy plant.
Then how did you turn against me?
How did you become a bad, wild vine?
22You might wash yourself with baking soda.
You might use plenty of soap.
But I can still see the stains your guilt covers you with,"
announces the LORD and King.

23"You say, 'I am "clean."
I haven't followed the gods that are named after Baal.'
How can you say that?
Remember how you acted in the valley.
Consider what you have done.
You are like a female camel running quickly here and there.
24You are like a wild donkey that lives in the desert.
She smells the wind when she longs for a mate.
Who can hold her back?
The males that run after her do not need to wear themselves out.
At mating time they will easily find her.
25Do not run after other gods
until your sandals are worn out and your throat is dry.
But you said, 'It's no use!
I love those gods.

I must go after them.’

26“A thief is dishonored when he is caught.
And you people of Israel are filled with shame.
Your kings and officials are dishonored.
So are your priests and your prophets.
27You say to a piece of wood, ‘You are my father.’
You say to a stone, ‘You are my mother.’
You have turned your backs to me.
You refuse to look at me.
But when you are in trouble, you say,
‘Come and save us!’
28So where are the gods you made for yourselves?
Let them come when you are in trouble!
Let them save you if they can!
Judah, you have as many gods
as you have towns.

29“Why do you bring charges against me?
All of you have refused to obey me,”

announces the LORD.

30“I punished your people. But it did not do them any good.
They did not pay attention when they were corrected.
You have killed your prophets with swords.
You have swallowed them up like a hungry lion.

31“You who are now living, consider my message. I am saying,

“Have I been like a desert to Israel?
Have I been like a land of deep darkness?
Why do my people say, ‘We are free to wander.
We won’t come to you anymore’?
32Does a young woman forget all about her jewelry?
Does a bride forget her wedding jewels?
But my people have forgotten me
more days than anyone can count.
33You are very skilled at chasing after love!
Even the worst of women can learn from how you act.
34The blood of those you have killed is on your clothes.

You have destroyed poor people who were not guilty.
You did not catch them in the act of breaking in.
In spite of all of that,
[35]you say, ‘I’m not guilty of doing anything wrong.
The LORD isn’t angry with me.’
But I will judge you.
That is because you say, ‘I haven’t sinned.’
[36]Why do you keep on
changing your ways so much?
Assyria did not help you.
And Egypt will not help you either.
[37]So you will also leave Egypt
with your hands tied together above your heads.
I have turned my back on those you trust.
They will not help you.

Jeremiah 3

[1]“Suppose a man divorces his wife.
What if she then gets married to another man?
Should her first husband return to her again?
If he does, won’t the land become completely ‘unclean’?
People of Israel, you have lived like a prostitute.
You have loved many other gods.
So do you think you can return to me now?”
announces the LORD.

[2]“Look up at the bare hilltops.
Is there any place where you have not committed adultery with other gods?
By the side of the road you sat waiting for lovers.
You sat there like someone who wanders in the desert.
You have polluted the land.
You are like a sinful prostitute.
[3]So I have held the showers back.
I have kept the spring rains from falling.
But you still have the bold face of a prostitute.
You refuse to blush with shame.
[4]You have just now called out to me.
You said,
‘My Father, you have been my friend
ever since I was young.
[5]Will you always be angry with me?
Will your anger continue forever?’
That is how you talk.
But you do all of the evil things you can.”

Israel Is Not Faithful to the LORD

[6]During the time Josiah was king, the LORD spoke to me. He said, “Have you seen what the people of Israel have done? They have not been faithful to me. They have committed adultery with other gods. They worshiped them on every

high hill and under every green tree.

7"I thought that after they had done all of those things, they would return to me. But they did not. Their sister nation Judah saw it. And they were not faithful to me either.

8"I gave Israel their letter of divorce. I sent them away because they were unfaithful to me so many times. But I saw that their sister nation Judah did not have any respect for me. They were not faithful to me either. They also went out and committed adultery with other gods.

9"Israel was not faithful to me, but that did not bother them at all. They made the land 'unclean.' They worshiped gods that were made out of stone and wood. 10In spite of all that, their sister Judah did not come back to me. They were not faithful to me either. They did not return with all their heart. They only pretended to," announces the LORD.

11The LORD said to me, "Israel and Judah have not been faithful to me. But Israel was not as bad as Judah was.

12"Go. Announce this message to the people in the north. Tell them,

" 'Israel, you have not been faithful,' announces the LORD.
'Return to me. Then I will look on you with favor again.
My love is faithful,' announces the LORD.
'I will not be angry with you forever.
13Admit that you are guilty of doing what is wrong.
You have refused to obey me. I am the LORD your God.
You have committed adultery with other gods.
You worshiped them under every green tree.
And you have not obeyed me,' "

announces the LORD.

14"You people have not been faithful," announces the LORD. "Return to me. I am your husband. I will choose one of you from each town. I will choose two from each territory. And I will bring you to the city of Zion.

15"Then I will give you shepherds who are dear to my heart. Their knowledge and understanding will help them lead you. 16In those days your numbers will increase greatly in the land," announces the LORD.

"Then people will not talk about the ark of the covenant of the LORD

anymore. It will never enter their minds. They will not remember it. The ark will not be missed. And another one will not be made.

17"At that time they will call Jerusalem The Throne of the LORD. All of the nations will gather together there. They will go there to honor me. They will no longer do what their stubborn and evil hearts want them to do.

18"In those days the people of Judah will join the people of Israel. Together they will come from a land in the north. They will come to the land I gave to your people long ago. I wanted them to have it as their very own.

19"I myself said,

" 'I would gladly treat you like my children.
I would give you a pleasant land.
It is the most beautiful land any nation could have.'
I thought you would call me 'Father.'
I hoped you would always follow me.
20But you people are like a woman who is not faithful to her husband.
Israel, you have not been faithful to me,"

announces the LORD.

21A cry is heard on the bare hilltops.
The people of Israel are sobbing and praying.
That's because their lives are so twisted.
They've forgotten the LORD their God.

22"You have not been faithful,"
says the LORD.
"Return to me. I will heal you.
Then you will not turn away from me anymore."

"Yes," the people say. "We will come to you.
You are the LORD our God.
23The gods we worship on the hills
and mountains are useless.
You are the LORD our God.
You are the only one who can save us.
24From our earliest years shameful gods have eaten up
everything our people worked for.
They have eaten up our flocks and herds.

They've destroyed our sons and daughters.
[25]Let us lie down in our shame.
Let our dishonor cover us.
You are the LORD our God. But we have sinned against you.
We and our people before us have sinned.
We haven't obeyed you
from our earliest years until now."

Jeremiah 4

[1]“If you will return, Israel,
return to me,”
announces the LORD.
“Put the statues of your gods out of my sight.
I hate them.
Stop going down the wrong path.
[2]Take all of your oaths in my name.
Say, ‘You can be sure that the LORD is alive.’
Let all of your promises be truthful, fair and honest.
Then I will bless the nations.
And they will take delight in me.”
[3]Here is what the LORD is telling the people of Judah and Jerusalem. He says,

“Your hearts are as hard as a field
that has not been plowed.
So change your ways and produce good crops.
Do not plant seeds among thorns.
[4]People of Judah and Jerusalem, obey me.
Do not let your hearts be stubborn.
If you do, my anger will blaze out against you.
It will burn like fire because of the evil things you have done.
No one will be able to put it out.

Trouble Will Come From the North

[5]“Announce my message in Judah.
Tell it in Jerusalem.
Say, ‘Blow trumpets all through the land!’
Give a loud shout and say,
‘Gather together!
Let’s run to cities that have high walls around them!’
[6]Warn everyone to go to Zion!
Run for safety! Do not wait!

I am bringing trouble from the north.
Everything will be totally destroyed.”

7 Lions have come out of their den.
Those who destroy nations have begun to march out.
They have left their place
to destroy your land completely.
Your towns will be broken to pieces.
No one will live in them.
8 So put on black clothes.
Sob and cry over what has happened.
The LORD hasn’t turned
his burning anger away from us.

9 “A dark day is coming,” announces the LORD.
“The king and his officials will lose hope.
The priests will be shocked.
And the prophets will be terrified.”

10 Then I said, “You are my LORD and King. You have completely tricked the people of Judah and Jerusalem. You have told them, ‘You will have peace and rest.’ But swords are pointed at our throats.”

11 At that time the people of Judah and Jerusalem will be warned. They will be told, “A hot and dry wind is coming, my people. It is blowing toward you from the bare hilltops in the desert. But it does not separate straw from grain. 12 It is much too strong for that. The wind is coming from me. I am making my decision against you.”

13 Look! Our enemies are approaching like the clouds.
Their chariots are coming like a strong wind.
Their horses are faster than eagles.
How terrible it will be for us!
We’ll be destroyed!
14 People of Jerusalem, wash your sins from your hearts and be saved.
How long will you hold on to your evil thoughts?
15 A voice is speaking all the way from the city of Dan.
From the hills of Ephraim it announces
that trouble is coming.
16 “Tell the nations.

Warn Jerusalem.
Say, ‘An army will attack you.
It is coming from a land far away.
It will shout a war cry
against the cities of Judah.
17It will surround them like people who guard a field.
Judah has refused to obey me,’ ”
announces the LORD.
18“The army will attack you
because of your conduct and actions.
That is how you will be punished.
It will be so bitter!
It will cut deep down into your hearts!”

19I’m suffering! I’m really suffering!
I’m hurting badly.
My heart is suffering so much!
It’s pounding inside me.
I can’t keep silent.
I’ve heard the sound of trumpets.
I’ve heard the battle cry.
20One trouble follows another.
The whole land is destroyed.
In an instant my tents are gone.
My home disappears in a moment.
21How long must I look at our enemy’s battle flag?
How long must I hear the sound of the trumpets?

22The LORD says, “My people are foolish.
They do not know me.
They are children who do not have any sense.
They have no understanding at all.
They are skilled in doing what is evil.
They do not know how to do what is good.”

23I looked at the earth.
It didn’t have any shape. And it was empty.
I looked at the sky.
Its light was gone.
24I looked at the mountains.
They were shaking.

All of the hills were swaying.
25 I looked. And there weren't any people.
Every bird in the sky had flown away.
26 I looked. And the fruitful land had become a desert.
All of its towns were destroyed.
The LORD had done all of that because of his burning anger.

27 The LORD says,

"The whole land will be destroyed.
But I will not destroy it completely.
28 So the earth will be filled with sadness.
The sky above will grow dark.
I have spoken, and I will not take pity on them.
I have made my decision, and I will not change my mind."

29 People can hear the sound of horsemen.
Men who are armed with bows are coming.
The people in every town run away.
Some of them go into the bushes.
Others climb up among the rocks.
All of the towns are deserted.
No one is living in them.

30 What are you doing, you who are destroyed?
Why do you dress yourself in bright red clothes?
Why do you put on jewels of gold?
Why do you put makeup on your eyes?
You make yourself beautiful for no reason at all.
Your lovers hate you.
They are trying to kill you.

31 I hear a cry like the cry of a woman having a baby.
I hear a groan like someone having her first child.
It's the cry of the people of Zion struggling to breathe.
They reach out their hands and say,
"Help us! We're fainting!
Murderers are about to kill us!"

No One Is Honest

Jeremiah 5

[1]The LORD says, “Go up and down the streets of Jerusalem.
Look around.
Think about what you see.
Search through the market places.
See if you can find one honest person who tries to be truthful.
If you can, I will forgive this city.
[2]They take all of their oaths in my name.
They say, ‘You can be sure that the LORD is alive.’
But their oaths can’t be trusted.”

[3]LORD, don’t your eyes look for truth?
You struck your people down.
But they didn’t feel any pain.
You crushed them.
But they refused to be corrected.
They made their faces harder than stone.
They refused to turn away from their sins.
[4]I thought, “The people of
Jerusalem are foolish.
They don’t know how the LORD wants them to live.
They don’t know what their God requires of them.
[5]So I will go to the leaders.
I’ll speak to them.
They should know how the LORD wants them to live.
They must know what their God requires of them.”
But all of them had broken off the yoke the LORD had put on them.
They had torn off the ropes he had tied them up with.
[6]So a lion from the forest will attack them.
A wolf from the desert will destroy them.
A leopard will hide and wait near their towns.
It will tear to pieces anyone who dares to go out.
Again and again they have refused to obey the LORD.
They have turned away from him many times.

[7]The LORD says, “Jerusalem, why should I forgive you?
Your people have deserted me.
They have taken their oaths in the names of gods
that are not really gods at all.
I supplied everything they needed.
But they committed adultery.
Large crowds went to the houses of prostitutes.
[8]Your people are like stallions that have plenty to eat.
Their sinful longings are out of control.
Each of them goes after another man’s wife.
[9]Shouldn’t I punish them for that?”
announces the LORD.
“Shouldn’t I pay back the nation
that does those things?

[10]“Armies of Babylonia, go through their vineyards and destroy them.
But do not destroy them completely.
Strip off their branches.
Those people do not belong to me.
[11]The people of Israel and Judah
have not been faithful to me at all,”
announces the LORD.

[12]They have told lies about the LORD.
They said, “He won’t do anything!
No harm will come to us.
We will never see war or be hungry.
[13]The prophets are nothing but wind.
Their message doesn’t come from the LORD.
So let what they say will happen be done to them.”

[14]The LORD God rules over all. He says to me,

“The people have spoken those words.
So my words will be like fire in your mouth.
I will make the people like wood.
And the fire will burn them up.”

15 “People of Israel, listen to me,”
announces the LORD.
“I am bringing against you
a nation from far away.
It is an old nation. And it will last for a long time.
Its people speak a language you do not know.
You can’t understand what they are saying.
16 The bags they carry their arrows in are like an open grave.
All of their soldiers are mighty.
17 They will eat up your crops and your food.
They will strike down your sons and daughters.
They will kill your sheep and cattle.
They will destroy your vines and fig trees.
You trust in your cities that have high walls around them.
But the people in them will be killed with swords.

18 “In spite of that, even in those days I will not destroy you completely,” announces the LORD.

19 “ ‘Jeremiah,’ the people will ask, ‘Why has the LORD our God done all of this to us?’

“Then you will tell them, ‘You have deserted the LORD. You have served other gods in your own land. So now you will serve another nation in a land that is not your own.’

20 “Here is what I want you to announce
to the people of Jacob.
Tell it in Judah.
Tell them I say,
21 ‘Listen to this, you foolish people,
who do not have any sense.
You have eyes, but you do not see.
You have ears, but you do not hear.
22 Shouldn’t you have respect for me?’ announces the LORD.
‘Shouldn’t you tremble with fear in front of me?
I made the sand to hold the ocean back.
It will do that forever.
The ocean can’t go past it.
The waves might roll, but they can’t sweep over it.
They might roar, but they can’t go across it.

[23]But you people have stubborn hearts.
You refuse to obey me.
You have turned away from me.
You have gone down the wrong path.
[24]You do not say to yourselves,
“Let us have respect for the LORD our God.
He sends rain in the fall and the spring.
He promises us that the harvest will come
at the same time each year.”
[25]But the things you have done wrong
have robbed you of those gifts.
Your sins have kept those good things
far away from you.’

[26]“Jeremiah, some of my people are evil.
They hide and wait just as people hide to catch birds.
They set traps for men.
[27]A hunter uses tricks to fill his cage with birds.
And my people have filled their houses with a lot of goods.
They have become rich and powerful.
[28]They have grown fat and heavy.
There is no limit to the evil things they do.
In court they do not state the case
of children whose fathers have died.
They do not stand up for poor people.
[29]Shouldn’t I punish them for that?”
announces the LORD.
“Shouldn’t I pay back the
nation that does those things?

[30]“Something horrible and shocking
has happened in the land.
[31]The prophets prophesy lies.
The priests rule by their own authority.
And my people love it that way.
But what will they do in the end?”

Babylonia Will Attack Jerusalem

Jeremiah 6

[1]The LORD says, “People of Benjamin, run for safety!
Run away from Jerusalem!
Blow trumpets in Tekoa!
Warn everyone in Beth Hakkerem!
Horrible trouble is coming from the north.
The Babylonians will destroy everything with awful power.
[2]I will destroy the city of Zion,
even though it is very beautiful.
[3]Shepherds will come against it with their flocks.
They will set up their tents around it.
All of them will take care of their own sheep.”

[4]The Babylonians say, “Prepare for battle against Judah!
Get up! Let’s attack them at noon!
But the daylight is fading.
The shadows of evening are getting longer.
[5]So get up! Let’s attack them at night!
Let’s destroy their strongest forts!”

[6]The LORD who rules over all speaks to the Babylonians. He says,

“Cut some trees down.
Use the wood to build ramps against Jerusalem’s walls.
I must punish that city.
It is filled with people who treat others badly.
[7]Wells keep giving fresh water.
And Jerusalem keeps on sinning.
Its people are always fighting and causing trouble.
When I look at them,
I see nothing but sickness and wounds.
[8]Jerusalem, listen to my warning.
If you do not, I will turn away from you.

Your land will become a desert.
No one will be able to live there.”

9The LORD rules over all. He says to me,

“People gather the few grapes that are left on a vine.
So let Israel’s enemies gather the few people
who are left alive in the land.
Look carefully at the branches again.
Do it like someone who gathers the last few grapes.”

10Who can I speak to? Who can I warn?
Who will even listen to me?
Their ears are closed
so they can’t hear.
The LORD’s message displeases them.
They don’t take any delight in it.
11But the LORD’s anger burns inside me.
I can no longer hold it in.

The LORD says to me, “Pour out my anger on the children in the street.
Pour it out on the young people who are gathered together.
Husband and wife alike will be caught in it.
So will those who are very old.
12I will reach out my hand
against those who live in the land,”

announces the LORD.

“Then their houses will be turned over to others.
So will their fields and their wives.
13Everyone wants to get richer and richer,
from the least important of them to the most important.
Prophets and priests alike
try to fool everyone they can.
14They bandage the wounds of my people
as if they were not very deep.
‘Peace, peace,’ they say.
But there isn’t any peace.
15Are they ashamed of their hateful actions?
No. They do not feel any shame at all.
They do not even know how to blush.

So they will fall like others who have already fallen.
They will be brought down when I punish them,”
says the LORD.

16 The LORD tells the people of Judah,

“Stand where the roads cross, and look around.
Ask where the old paths are.
Ask for the good path, and walk on it.
Then your hearts will find rest in me.
But you said, ‘We won’t walk on it.’
17 I appointed prophets to warn you. I said,
‘Listen to the sound of the trumpets!’
But you said, ‘We won’t listen.’
18 So pay attention, you nations.
Be witnesses for me.
Watch what will happen to my people.
19 Earth, pay attention.
I am going to bring trouble on them.
I will punish them because of the evil things they have done.
They have not listened to my words.
They have said no to my law.
20 What do I care about incense from the land of Sheba?
Why should I bother with sweet-smelling cane from a land far away?
I do not accept your burnt offerings.
Your sacrifices do not please me.”

21 So the LORD says,

“I will bring an army against the people of Judah.
Parents and children alike will trip and fall.
Neighbors and friends will die.”

22 The LORD says to Jerusalem,

“Look! An army is coming

from the land of the north.
I am stirring up a great nation.
Its army is coming from a land that is very far away.
23 Its soldiers are armed with bows and spears.
They are mean. They do not show any mercy at all.
They come riding in on their horses.
They sound like the roaring ocean.
They are lined up for battle.
They are marching out
to attack you, city of Zion.”

24 We have heard reports about them.
And our hands can’t help us.
We are suffering greatly.
It’s like the pain of a woman having a baby.
25 Don’t go out to the fields.
Don’t walk on the roads.
Our enemies have swords.
And there is terror on every side.
26 Put on black clothes, my people.
Roll among the ashes.
Cry with bitter sobbing
just as you would cry for an only child.
The one who is going to destroy us
will come suddenly.

27 The LORD says to me, “I have made you like one who tests metals.
My people are the ore.
I want you to watch them
and test the way they live.
28 All of them are used to disobeying me.
They go around telling lies about others.
They are like bronze mixed with iron.
All of them do very sinful things.
29 The fire is made very hot
so the lead will burn away.
But it is impossible to make those people pure.
Those who are evil are not removed.
30 They are like silver that is thrown away.
That is because I have not accepted them.”

Worshiping Other Gods Is Worthless

Jeremiah 7

1A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 2“Stand at the gate of my
house. Announce my message to the people there. Say,

“ ‘Listen to the LORD’s message, all of you people of Judah. You always come
through these gates to worship the LORD. 3The God of Israel is speaking to you.
He is the LORD who rules over all. He says, “Change the way you live and act.
Then I will let you live in this place.

4“ ‘ “Do not trust in lies. Do not say, ‘This is the temple of the LORD! This is
the temple of the LORD! This is the temple of the LORD!’

5“ ‘ “You must really change the way you live and act. Treat each other fairly.
6Do not treat outsiders or widows badly in this place. Do not take advantage of
children whose fathers have died. Do not kill those who are not guilty of doing
anything wrong. Do not worship other gods. That will only bring harm to you.

7“ ‘ “If you obey me, I will let you live in this place. It is the land I gave your
people who lived long ago. It was promised to them for ever and ever.

8“ ‘ “But look! You are trusting in worthless lies.

9“ ‘ “You continue to steal and commit murder. You commit adultery and tell
lies. You burn incense to Baal. You worship other gods you have not known
anything about before.

10“ ‘ “Then you come and stand in front of me. You keep coming to this
house where I have put my Name. You say, ‘We are safe.’ You think you are
safe when you do so many things I hate. 11My Name is in this house. But you
have made it a den for robbers! I have been watching you!” announces the
LORD.

12“ ‘ “Go now to the town of Shiloh. Go to the place where I first made a
home for my Name. See what I did to it because of the evil things my people
Israel were doing.

13“ ‘ “I spoke to you again and again,” announces the LORD. “I warned you
while you were doing all of those things. But you did not listen. I called out to

you. But you did not answer. 14So what I did to Shiloh I will now do to the house where my Name is. It is the temple you trust in. It is the place I gave to you and your people of long ago.

15“ ‘ “But I will throw you out of my land. That is exactly what I did to the people of Ephraim. And they are your relatives.” ’

16“Jeremiah, do not pray for those people. Do not make any appeal or request for them. Do not beg me. I will not listen to you.

17“Don’t you see what they are doing? They are worshiping other gods in the towns of Judah. They are offering sacrifices to them in the streets of Jerusalem. 18The children go out and gather wood. The fathers light the fire. The women mix the dough. They make flat cakes of bread for the goddess who is called the Queen of Heaven. They pour out drink offerings to other gods. That makes me very angry.

19“But am I the one they are hurting?” announces the LORD. “Aren’t they only harming themselves? They should be ashamed of it.”

20So the LORD and King says, “I will pour out my burning anger on this place. It will strike people and animals alike. It will destroy the trees and the crops in the fields. It will burn, and no one will be able to put it out.”

21The LORD who rules over all is the God of Israel. He says, “Go ahead! Add your burnt offerings to your other sacrifices. Eat the meat yourselves! 22When I brought your people out of Egypt, I spoke to them. But I did not just give them commands about burnt offerings and sacrifices. 23I also gave them another command. I said, ‘Obey me. Then I will be your God. And you will be my people. Live the way I command you to live. Then things will go well with you.’

24“But they did not listen. They refused to pay any attention to me. Instead, they did what their stubborn and evil hearts wanted them to do. They went backward and not forward.

25“Again and again I sent my servants the prophets to you. They came to you day after day. They prophesied from the time your people left Egypt until now.

26“But the people did not listen. They refused to pay any attention to me. They were stubborn. They did more evil things than their people who lived before them.

27“Jeremiah, when you tell them all of that, they will not listen to you. When

you call out to them, they will not answer.

28“So say to them, ‘You are a nation that has not obeyed the LORD your God.
You did not pay attention when you were corrected. Truth has died out. You do
not tell the truth anymore.’ ”

29The LORD says to the people of Jerusalem, “Cut off your hair. Throw it
away. Sing a song of sadness on the bare hilltops. I am very angry with you. I
have turned my back on you. I have deserted you.

The Valley of Death

30“The people of Judah have done what is evil in my eyes,” announces the
LORD. “They have set up statues of their gods. They have worshiped them in the
house where my Name is. They have made my house ‘unclean.’ I hate those
statues. 31The people have built the high places of Topheth in the Valley of Ben
Hinnom. There they worship other gods. And there they sacrifice their children
in the fire. That is something I did not command. It did not even enter my
mind.

32“So watch out!” announces the LORD. “The days are coming when people
will not call it Topheth anymore. And they will not call it the Valley of Ben
Hinnom either. Instead, they will call it the Valley of Death. They will bury the
dead bodies of some people in Topheth. But they will run out of room. 33Then
they will not be able to bury the bodies of other people there. So the bodies will
become food for the birds of the air and the wild animals. And no one will
scare them away.

34“I will put an end to the sounds of joy and gladness. The voices of brides
and grooms will not be heard anymore. There will not be any sounds of joy in
the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem. The land will become a desert.

Jeremiah 8

[1]“At that time the tombs will be opened,” announces the LORD. “The bones of
the kings and officials of Judah will be brought out. The bones of the priests
and prophets will be removed. So will the bones of the people of Jerusalem.
[2]They will lie outside under the sun, moon and all of the stars.

“All of those people had loved and served those things. They had followed
them and worshiped them. They had asked them for advice. So the bones of
those people will not be gathered up or buried again. Instead, they will be like
trash lying there on the ground.

[3]“Everyone who is left alive in this evil nation will want to die rather than
live. That is what they will long for in the lands where I force them to go,”
announces the LORD who rules over all.

The LORD Punishes His Sinful People

[4]“Jeremiah, tell them, ‘The LORD says,

“ ‘ “When people fall down, don’t they get up again?
When someone turns away, doesn’t he come back?
[5]Then why have the people of Jerusalem turned away from me?
Why do they always turn away?
They keep on telling lies.
They refuse to come back to me.
[6]I have listened carefully.
But they do not say what is right.
They refuse to turn away from their sins.
No one says, ‘What have I done?’
All of them go their own way.
They are like horses charging into battle.
[7]Storks know when to fly south.
So do doves, swifts and thrushes.
But my people do not know
what I require them to do.

8“ ‘ “How can you people say, ‘We are wise.
We have the law of the LORD’?
Actually, the teachers of the law have told lies about it.
Their pens have not written what is true.
9Those who think they are wise will be put to shame.
They will become terrified. They will be trapped.
They have not accepted my message.
So what kind of wisdom do they have?
10I will give their wives to other men.
I will give their fields to new owners.
Everyone wants to get richer and richer,
from the least important of them to the most important.
Prophets and priests alike
try to fool everyone they can.
11They bandage the wounds of my people
as if they were not very deep.
‘Peace, peace,’ they say.
But there isn’t any peace.
12Are they ashamed of their hateful actions?
No. They do not feel any shame at all.
They do not even know how to blush.
So they will fall like others who have already fallen.
They will be brought down when I punish them,”

says the LORD.

13“ ‘ “I will take away their harvest,”

announces the LORD.

“There will not be any grapes on the vines.
The trees will not bear any figs.
The leaves on the trees will dry up.
What I have given them
will be taken away from them.” ’ ”

14Why are we sitting here?
Let’s gather together!
Let’s run to the cities that have high walls around them!
Let’s die there!
The LORD our God has sentenced us to death.
He has given us poisoned water to drink.
That’s because we’ve sinned against him.

15 We hoped peace would come.
But nothing good has happened to us.
We hoped we would finally be healed.
But all we got was terror.
16 When our enemy's horses snort,
the noise is heard all the way from Dan.
When their stallions neigh,
the whole land trembles with fear.
They have come to destroy
the land and everything in it.
The city and everyone who lives there will be destroyed.

17 "People of Judah, I will send poisonous snakes among you.
No one will be able to charm them.
And they will bite you,"

announces the LORD.

18 LORD, my heart is weak inside me.
You comfort me when I'm sad.
19 Listen to the cries of my people
from a land far away.
They cry out, "Isn't the LORD in Zion?
Isn't its King there anymore?"

The LORD says, "Why have they made me so angry
by worshiping their wooden gods?
Why have they made me angry
with their worthless statues
of gods from other lands?"

20 The people say, "The harvest is over.
The summer has ended.
And we still haven't been saved."

21 My people are crushed, so I am crushed.
I sob, and I am filled with horror.
22 Isn't there any healing lotion in Gilead?
Isn't there a doctor there?
Then why doesn't someone heal
the wounds of my people?

Jeremiah 9

[1]I wish my head were a spring of water!
I wish my eyes were a fountain of tears!
I would sob day and night
over my people who have been killed.
[2]I wish I had somewhere to go in the desert
where a traveler could stay!
Then I could leave my people.
I could get away from them.
All of them commit adultery by worshiping other gods.
They aren't faithful to the LORD.

[3]"They get ready to use
their tongues like bows,"
announces the LORD.
"Their mouths shoot out lies like arrows.
They tell lies to gain power in the land.
They go from one sin to another.
They do not pay any attention to me.
[4]Be on guard against your friends.
Do not trust the members of your own family.
Every one of them cheats.
Every friend tells lies.
[5]One friend cheats another.
No one tells the truth.
They have taught their tongues how to lie.
They wear themselves out sinning.
[6]Jeremiah, you live among people who tell lies.
When they lie, they refuse to pay any attention to me,"
announces the LORD.

[7]So the LORD who rules over all says,

"I will put them through the fire to test them.
What else can I do?
My people are so sinful!

[8]Their tongues are like deadly arrows.
They tell lies.
With their mouths all of them speak kindly to their neighbors.
But in their hearts they set traps for them.
[9]Shouldn’t I punish them for that?”
announces the LORD.
“Shouldn’t I pay back the nation
that does those things?”

[10]I will cry and sob over the fields in the hills.
I will sing a song of sadness about the desert grasslands.
They are dry and empty. No one travels through them.
The mooing of cattle isn’t heard there.
The birds of the air have flown away.
All of the animals are gone.

[11]The LORD says, “I will knock all of Jerusalem’s buildings down.
I will make it a home for wild dogs.
The towns of Judah will be completely destroyed.
No one will be able to live in them.”

[12]Who is wise enough to understand those things? Who has been taught by the LORD? Who can explain them? Why has the land been destroyed so completely? Why has it become like a desert that no one can go across?

[13]The LORD answered me, “Because my people have turned away from my law. I gave it to them. But they have not kept it. They have not obeyed me. [14]Instead, they have done what their stubborn hearts wanted them to do. They have worshiped the gods that are named after Baal. They have done what their people have taught them to do down through the years.”

[15]So now the LORD who rules over all speaks. He is the God of Israel. He says, “I will make these people eat bitter food. I will make them drink poisoned water. [16]I will scatter them among the nations. They and their people before them have not had anything to do with those nations before. I will chase these people with swords. I will hunt them down until I have destroyed them.”

[17]The LORD rules over all. He says,

"Here is something I want you to think about.
Send for the women who sob over the dead.
Send for the most skilled among them."

18 Let them come quickly
and sob over us.
Let them cry until tears flow from our eyes.
Let them sob until water pours out of our eyes.
19 People are heard sobbing in Zion.
They are saying, "We are destroyed!
We are filled with shame!
We must leave our land.
Our houses have been torn down."

20 Women, hear the LORD's message.
Listen to what he's saying.
Teach your daughters how to sob over the dead.
Teach one another a song of sadness.
21 Death has climbed in through our windows.
It has entered our forts.
It has removed the children from the streets.
It has taken the young people out of the market places.

22 Say, "The LORD announces,

" 'The dead bodies of men will be like trash
lying in the open fields.
They will lie there like grain
that is cut down at harvest time.
No one will gather them up.' "

23 The LORD says,

"Do not let a wise man brag about how wise he is.
Do not let a strong man boast about how strong he is.
Do not let a rich person brag about how rich he is.
24 But here is what the one who brags should boast about.
He should brag that he has understanding and knows me.

I want him to know that I am the LORD.
No matter what I do on earth, I am always kind, fair and right.
And I take delight in that,”

announces the LORD.

25“The days are coming when I will judge people,” announces the LORD. “I will punish all those who are circumcised only in their bodies. 26That includes the people of Egypt, Judah, Edom, Ammon and Moab. It also includes all those who live in the desert in places far away. None of the people in those nations is really circumcised. And not even the people of Israel are circumcised in their hearts.”

The LORD Is the Only True God

Jeremiah 10

[1]People of Israel, listen to what the LORD is telling you. [2]He says,

"Do not follow the practices of other nations.
Do not be terrified by warnings in the sky.
Do not be afraid, even though the nations are terrified by them.
[3]The practices of those nations are worthless.
People cut a tree out of the forest.
A skilled worker shapes the wood with a sharp tool.
[4]Others decorate it with silver and gold.
They use a hammer to nail it to the floor.
They want to keep it from falling down.
[5]The statues of their gods can't speak.
They are like scarecrows in a field of melons.
They have to be carried around
because they can't walk.
So do not worship them.
They can't do you any harm.
And they can't do you any good either."

[6]LORD, no one is like you.
You are great.
You are mighty and powerful.
[7]King of the nations,
everyone should have respect for you.
That's what people should give you.
Among all of the wise people in the nations
there is no one like you.
No one can compare with you in all of their kingdoms.
[8]All of them are foolish. They don't have any sense.
They think they are taught by worthless wooden gods.
[9]Hammered silver is brought from Tarshish.
Gold is brought from Uphaz.
People who are skilled in working with wood and gold make a statue.

Then they put blue and purple clothes on it.
The whole thing is made by skilled workers.
10 But you are the only true God.
You are the only living God.
You are the King who rules forever.
When you are angry, the earth trembles with fear.
The nations can't stand up under your anger.

11 The LORD says to the Jews who are living in Babylonia, "Tell the people of the nations, 'Your gods did not make the heavens and the earth. In fact, those gods will disappear from the earth. They will vanish from under the heavens.' "

12 But God used his power to make the earth.
His wisdom set the world in place.
His understanding spread the heavens out.
13 When he thunders, the waters in the heavens roar.
He makes clouds rise from one end of the earth to the other.
He sends lightning along with the rain.
He brings the wind out from his storerooms.

14 No one has any sense. No one knows anything at all.
Everyone who works with gold is put to shame by his wooden gods.
The metal gods he worships are fakes.
They can't even breathe.
15 They are worthless. People make fun of them.
When the LORD judges them, they will be destroyed.
16 The God of Jacob is not like them.
He gives his people everything they need.
He made everything that exists.
And that includes Israel.
It's the nation that belongs to him.
His name is The LORD Who Rules Over All.

The Land Will Be Destroyed

17 People of Jerusalem, your enemies have surrounded you.
They are attacking you.
So gather up what belongs to you.

Then leave the land.
18 The LORD says,
"I am about to throw out of this land
everyone who lives in it.
I will bring trouble on them.
They will be captured."

19 How terrible it will be for me!
I've been wounded!
And my wound can't be healed!
In spite of that, I said to myself,
"I'm sick. But I'll have to put up with it."
20 Jerusalem is like a tent that has been destroyed.
All of its ropes have snapped.
My people have gone away from me.
Now no one is left to set up my tent.
I have no one to set it up for me.
21 The leaders of my people are like shepherds
who don't have any sense.
They don't ask the LORD for advice.
That's why they don't succeed.
And that's why their whole flock
is scattered like sheep.
22 Listen! A message is coming!
I hear the sound of a great army
marching down from the north!
It will turn Judah's towns into a desert.
They will become a home for wild dogs.

Jeremiah Prays to the LORD

23 LORD, I know that a man doesn't control his own life.
He doesn't direct his own steps.
24 Correct me, LORD. But please be fair.
Don't correct me when you are angry.
If you do, nothing will be left of me.
25 Pour out your burning anger on the nations.
They don't pay any attention to you.
They refuse to worship you.

They have destroyed the people of Jacob.
They've wiped them out completely.
They've also destroyed the land they lived in.

The LORD's People Have Broken His Covenant

Jeremiah 11

1 A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 2 "Listen to the terms of the
covenant I made with my people long ago. Tell Judah the terms still apply to
them. Tell those who live in Jerusalem that they must obey them too.

3 "I am the God of Israel. So let the people know what I want them to do. Tell
them I am saying, 'May the man who does not obey the terms of the covenant
be under my curse. 4 I gave those terms to your people long ago. That was when
I brought them out of Egypt. I saved them out of that furnace that melts iron
down and makes it pure.' I said, 'Obey me. Do everything I command you to
do. Then you will be my people. And I will be your God.

5 " 'I raised my hand and made an oath to your people long ago. I promised
them I would give them a land that had plenty of milk and honey.' It is the land
you own today. I kept my promise."

I replied, "Amen, LORD."

6 The LORD said to me, "Here is what I want you to announce in the towns of
Judah. Say it also in the streets of Jerusalem. Tell the people, 'Listen to the
terms of my covenant. Obey them. 7 Long ago I brought your people up from
Egypt. From that time until today, I warned them again and again. I said,
"Obey me."

8 " 'But they did not listen. They did not pay any attention to me. Instead, they
did what their stubborn and evil hearts wanted them to do. So I brought down
on them all of the curses of the covenant. I commanded them to obey it. But
they refused.' "

9 The LORD continued, "The people of Judah have made some evil plans. So
have those who live in Jerusalem. 10 All of them have returned to the sins their
people committed long ago. Those people refused to listen to what I told them.
And now the people of Israel and Judah alike have worshiped other gods and
served them. They have broken the covenant I made with their people who
lived before them.

11 “So I say, ‘I will bring trouble on them. They will not be able to escape it.
They will cry out to me. But I will not listen to them.

12 “ ‘The people of Jerusalem and of the towns of Judah will cry out to the
gods they burn incense to. But those gods will not help them at all when
trouble strikes them. 13 Judah, you have as many gods as you have towns. And
in Jerusalem you have set up as many altars as there are streets. You are
burning incense to that shameful god Baal.’

14 “Jeremiah, do not pray for those people. Do not make any appeal or request
for them. They will call out to me when they are in trouble. But I will not listen
to them.

15 “I love the people of Judah.
But they are working out their evil plans along with many others.
So what are they doing in my temple?
Can meat that is offered to me keep me from punishing you?
When you do evil things, you get a lot of pleasure from them.”

16 People of Judah, the LORD once called you a healthy olive tree.
He thought its fruit was beautiful.
But now he will come with the roar of a mighty storm.
He will set the tree on fire.
And its branches will be broken.

17 The LORD who rules over all planted you. But now he has ordered your
enemies to destroy you. The people of Israel and Judah have done what is evil.
They have made the LORD very angry by burning incense to Baal.

Jeremiah’s Enemies Make Evil Plans Against Him

18 The LORD told me about the evil plans of my enemies. That’s how I knew
about them. He showed me what they were doing. 19 I had been like a gentle
lamb that was led off to be killed. I didn’t realize they had made plans against
me. They had said,

“Let’s destroy the tree and its fruit.

Let’s cut him off while he’s still living.
Then his name won’t be remembered anymore.”
[20]But LORD, you rule over all.
You always judge fairly.
You put people’s hearts and minds to the test.
So pay them back for what they’ve done.
I’ve committed my cause to you.

[21]The LORD says, “Jeremiah, here is what I am telling you about the men of Anathoth. They want to kill you. They are saying, ‘Don’t prophesy in the LORD’s name. If you do, we will kill you with our own hands.’ ”

[22]So the LORD who rules over all says, “I will punish them. Their young men will be killed with swords. Their sons and daughters will die of hunger. [23]Only a few people will be left alive. I will judge the men of Anathoth. I will destroy them when the time to punish them comes.”

Jeremiah Argues With the LORD

Jeremiah 12

[1]LORD, when I bring a matter to you,
you always do what is right.
But now I would like to speak with you
about whether you are being fair.
Why are sinful people successful?
Why do those who can't be trusted have an easy life?
[2]You have planted them.
Their roots are deep in the ground.
They grow and produce fruit.
They honor you by what they say.
But their hearts are far away from you.
[3]LORD, you know me and see me.
You test my thoughts about you.
Drag those people off like sheep to be killed!
Set them apart for the day of their death!
[4]How long will the land be thirsty for water?
How long will the grass in every field be dry?
The people who live in the land are evil.
So the animals and birds have died.
And that's not all. The people are saying,
"The LORD won't see what happens to us."

The LORD Replies to Jeremiah

[5]The LORD says, "Suppose you have run in a race with other men.
And suppose they have worn you out.
Then how would you be able to race against horses?
Suppose you feel safe only in open country.
Then how would you get along in the bushes near the Jordan River?
[6]Even your own family has turned against you.
They have shouted loudly at you.
They might say nice things about you.

But do not trust them.

7 “I will turn my back on my people.
I will desert my land.
I love the people of Judah.
In spite of that, I will hand them over to their enemies.
8 My land has become to me
like a lion in the forest.
It roars at me.
So I hate it.
9 My own land has become like a spotted hawk.
And other hawks surround it and attack it.
Come, all of you wild animals!
Gather together!
Come together to eat up my land.
10 Many shepherds will destroy my vineyard.
They will walk all over it.
They will turn my pleasant vineyard
into a dry and empty land.
11 My vineyard will become a desert.
It will be dry and empty in my sight.
The whole land will be completely destroyed.
And no one even cares.
12 Many will come to destroy it.
They will gather on the bare hilltops in the desert.
I will use them as my sword to destroy my people.
They will kill them from one end of the land to the other.
No one will be safe.
13 People will plant wheat. But all they will gather is thorns.
They will wear themselves out. But they will not have anything to show for it.
My anger is burning against you.
So you will be ashamed of the crop you gather.”

14 The LORD continues, “All of my evil neighbors have taken over the land I gave my people Israel. So I will pull them up by their roots from the lands they live in. And I will pull up the roots of the people of Judah from among them.

15 “But after I pull those nations up, I will show my tender love to them again. I will bring all of them back to their own lands. I will take all of them back to

their own countries.

16“Suppose they learn to follow the practices of my people. And they take an oath and make a promise in my name. They say, ‘You can be sure that the LORD is alive.’ They do it just as they once taught my people to take oaths in Baal’s name. Then I will give them a place among my people.

17“But what if one of those nations does not listen? Then you can be sure I will pull it up by the roots and destroy it,” announces the LORD.

A Linen Belt

Jeremiah 13

1The LORD said to me, “Go and buy a linen belt. Put it around your waist. But
do not let it get wet.”

2So I bought a belt, just as the LORD had told me to do. And I put it around
my waist.

3Then another message came to me from the LORD. He said, 4“Take off the
belt you bought and are wearing around your waist. Go to Perath. Hide the belt
there in a crack in the rocks.”

5So I went and hid it at Perath. I did just as the LORD had told me to do.

6Many days later the LORD spoke to me again. He told me, “Go to Perath. Get
the belt I told you to hide there.”

7So I went to Perath. I dug up the belt. I took it from the place where I had
hidden it. But it had rotted. It was completely useless.

8Then another message came to me from the LORD. He said, 9“In the same
way, I will destroy Judah’s pride. And I will destroy the great pride of
Jerusalem.

10“Those people are evil. They refuse to listen to what I say. They do what
their stubborn hearts want them to do. They chase after other gods. They serve
them and worship them. So they will be like this belt. They will be completely
useless. 11A belt is tied around a man’s waist. In the same way, I tied all of the
people of Israel and Judah to me,” announces the LORD. “I wanted them to be
my people. They should have brought me fame and praise and honor. But they
have not listened to me.

Wineskins

12“Tell them, ‘The LORD is the God of Israel. He says, “Every wineskin
should be filled with wine.” ’

“The people might say to you, ‘Don’t we know that every wineskin should be filled with wine?’

13“If they do, tell them, ‘The LORD says, “I am going to fill with wine everyone who lives in this land. I will make the kings who sit on David’s throne drunk. And I will fill with wine the priests, the prophets and everyone who lives in Jerusalem. 14I will smash them against one another. I will punish parents and children alike,” announces the LORD. “I will not feel sorry for them. I will not show them any kindness. My tender love for them will not keep me from destroying them.” ’ ”

Judah Will Be Taken Away From Their Land

15People of Judah, listen to me.
Pay attention. Don’t be proud.
The LORD has spoken.
16Give glory to the LORD your God.
Honor him before he sends
darkness to cover the land.
Do it before you trip and fall
on the darkened hills.
You hope that light will come.
But he will turn it into thick darkness.
He will change it to deep shadows.
17If you don’t listen,
I will sob in secret.
Because you are so proud,
I will sob bitterly.
Tears will flow from my eyes.
The LORD’s flock will be taken away as prisoners.

18Speak to the king and his mother. Tell them,
“Come down from your thrones.
Your glorious crowns
are about to fall from your heads.”
19The gates of the cities in the Negev Desert will be shut tight.
There won’t be anyone to open them.
You will be carried away as prisoners.
You will be taken away completely.

[20]Jerusalem, look up!
Your enemies are coming from the north.
Where is the flock you were supposed to take care of?
Where are the sheep you were so proud of?
[21]You have worked hard to make special friends.
But the LORD will let them rule over you.
Then what will you say?
Suffering will take hold of you.
It will be like the pain of a woman having a baby.
[22]Suppose you ask yourself,
"Why has this happened to me?"
It's because you have committed so many sins.
That's the reason your skirt has been torn off.
That's why your body has been treated so badly.
[23]Can people from Ethiopia change their skin?
Can leopards change their spots?
It's the same with you.
You have always done what is evil.
So how can you do what is good?

[24]The LORD says, "I will scatter you like straw
that the desert wind blows away.
[25]That is what will happen to you.
I have appointed it for you,"

announces the LORD.

"You have forgotten me.
You have trusted in other gods.
[26]So I will pull your skirt up over your face.
Then people will see the shame of your naked body.
[27]They will see that you have not been faithful to me.
You have committed adultery with other gods.
And you have acted like a prostitute
who does not have any shame.
I have seen what you did
on the hills and in the fields.
And I hate it.
How terrible it will be for you, Jerusalem!
How long will you choose to be 'unclean'?"

War and Hunger

Jeremiah 14

1 A message came to me from the LORD. He told me there wouldn’t be any rain
in the land. He said,

2 “Judah is filled with sadness.
Its cities are wasting away.
The people sob over the land.
Crying is heard in Jerusalem.
3 The nobles send their servants to get water.
They go to the wells.
But they do not find any water.
They return with empty jars.
They are terrified. They do not have any hope.
They cover their heads.
4 The ground is dry and cracked.
There isn’t any rain in the land.
The farmers are terrified.
They cover their heads.
5 Even the does in the fields
desert their newborn fawns.
There isn’t any grass to eat.
6 Wild donkeys stand on the bare hilltops.
They long for water as wild dogs do.
Their eyesight fails
because they do not have any grass to eat.”

7 Our sins are a witness against us.
LORD, do something for the honor of your name.
We have completely turned away from you.
We’ve sinned against you.
8 You are Israel’s only hope.
You save us when we’re in trouble.
Why are you like a stranger to us?
Why are you like a traveler who stays for only one night?

9 Why are you like a man who is taken by surprise?
Why are you like a soldier who can't save anyone?
LORD, you are among us.
And we are your people.
Please don't desert us!

10 The LORD has given me a message about these people. He says,

"They really love to wander away from me.
Their feet go down the wrong path.
I do not accept these people.
I will remember the evil things they have done.
I will punish them for their sins."

11 The LORD continued, "Do not pray that things will go well with them. 12 Even if they go without food, I will not listen to their cry for help. They might sacrifice burnt offerings and grain offerings. But I will not accept them. Instead, I will destroy them with war, hunger and plague."

13 But I said, "LORD and King, the prophets keep telling them something else. They say, 'You won't have to suffer from war or hunger. Instead, the LORD will give you peace and rest in this place.' "

14 Then the LORD said to me, "The prophets are prophesying lies in my name. I have not sent them or appointed them. I have not even spoken to them. Everything they tell you about their visions or secret knowledge is a lie. They pretend to bring you messages from other gods. They try to get you to believe their own mistaken ideas.

15 "So here is what I am saying about the prophets who are prophesying in my name. I did not send them. But they are saying, 'No war or hunger will come to this land.' Those same prophets will die because of war and hunger. 16 And the people they are prophesying to will be thrown out into the streets of Jerusalem. They will die because of hunger and war. No one will bury their bodies. No one will bury their wives or children. I will pour trouble out on them. That is exactly what they should get.

17 "Jeremiah, give them this message. Tell them,

“ ‘Let tears flow from my eyes.
Let them pour out night and day.
Never let them stop.
The people of my own nation
have suffered a terrible wound.
They have been crushed.
18Suppose I go into the country.
Then I see people who have been killed with swords.
Or suppose I go into the city.
Then I see people who have died of hunger.
Prophet and priest alike have gone to a land
they hadn’t had anything to do with before.’ ”

19LORD, have you turned your back on Judah completely?
Do you hate the city of Zion?
Why have you made us suffer?
We can’t be healed.
We hoped peace would come.
But nothing good has happened to us.
We hoped we would finally be healed.
But all we got was terror.
20LORD, we admit we’ve done evil things.
We also admit that our people of long ago were guilty.
It’s true that we’ve sinned against you.
21For the honor of your name, don’t turn your back on us.
Don’t bring shame on your glorious throne in the temple.
Remember the covenant you made with us.
Please don’t break it.
22Do any of the worthless gods of the nations bring rain?
Do the skies send down showers all by themselves?
No. LORD our God, you send the rain.
So we put our hope in you.
You are the one who does all of those things.

Jeremiah 15

[1]Then the LORD said to me, “Suppose Moses and Samuel were standing in front of me. Even then my heart would not feel sorry for these people. Send them away from me! Let them go!

[2]“Suppose they ask you, ‘Where should we go?’

“Then tell them, ‘The LORD says,

“ ‘ “Those I have appointed to die will die.
Those I have appointed to be killed with swords
will be killed with swords.
Those I have appointed to die of hunger
will die of hunger.
Those I have appointed to be taken away as prisoners
will be taken away.” ’

[3]“I will send four kinds of destroyers against them,” announces the LORD. “Swords will kill them. Dogs will drag them away. Birds of the air will eat them up. And wild animals will destroy them.

[4]“I will make all of the kingdoms on earth hate them. That will happen because of what Manasseh did in Jerusalem. He was king of Judah and the son of Hezekiah.

[5]“Jerusalem, who will have pity on you?
Who will sob over you?
Who will stop to ask how you are doing?
[6]You have said no to me,” announces the LORD.
“You keep on turning away from me.
So I will destroy you with my own hands.
I can’t show you my tender love anymore.
[7]I will stand at the city gates of the land.
I will separate the straw from the grain.
I will destroy my people. I will bring great sorrow on them.
They have not changed their ways.
[8]I will increase the number of their widows.
They will be more than the grains of sand on the seashore.

At noon I will bring a destroyer
against the mothers of the young men among my people.
All at once I will bring down on them
great suffering and terror.
9 Mothers who have many children will grow weak.
They will take their last breath.
The sun will set on them while it is still day.
They will be dishonored and put to shame.
All those who are left alive I will kill with swords.
I will have their enemies do it,”
announces the LORD.

10 My mother, I wish I had never been born!
The whole land opposes me.
They fight against me.
I haven’t made loans to anyone.
And I haven’t borrowed anything.
But everyone still calls down curses on me.

11 The LORD said,

“Jeremiah, I will keep you safe for a good purpose.
I will make your enemies ask you to pray for them.
They will make their appeal to you
when they are in great trouble.

12 “People of Judah, the armies of Babylonia
will come from the north.
They are as strong as iron and bronze.
Can anyone break their power?
13 I will give away your wealth and your treasures.
Your enemies will carry off everything.
And they will not pay anything for it.
That will happen because you have sinned so much.
You have done it all through your country.
14 I will make you slaves to your enemies.
You will serve them in a land
you have not had anything to do with before.
My anger will start a fire
that will burn you up.”

15 LORD, you understand how much I’m suffering.
Show concern for me. Take care of me.
Pay back those who are trying to harm me.
You are patient. Don’t take my life away from me.
Think about how much shame I suffer because of you.
16 When I received your words, I ate them.
They filled me with joy.
My heart took delight in them.
LORD God who rules over all,
I belong to you.
17 I never sat around with those who go to wild parties.
I never had a good time with them.
I sat alone because you had put your powerful hand on me.
Your anger against sin was burning inside me.
18 Why does my pain never end?
Why is my wound so deep?
Why can’t I ever get well?
To me you are like a stream that runs dry.
You are like a spring that doesn’t have any water.

19 So the LORD says,

“Turn away from your sins. Then I will heal you.
And then you will be able to serve me.
Speak words that are worthy, not worthless.
Then you will be speaking for me.
Let these people turn to you.
But you must not turn to them.
20 I will make you like a wall to them.
I will make you like a strong bronze wall.
The people will fight against you.
But they will not overcome you.
I am with you.
I will save you,”

announces the LORD.

21 “I will save you from the hands of evil people.
I will set you free from those who treat you badly.”

Times of Trouble Are Coming

Jeremiah 16

1 A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 2 “You must not get married.
You must not have any sons or daughters in this land.”

3 Here is the LORD’s message about the children who are born in this place. He
says about them and their parents, 4 “Some of them will die of deadly
sicknesses. No one will sob over them. Their bodies will not be buried. Instead,
they will be like trash lying there on the ground. Others will die because of war
and hunger. Their bodies will not be buried. Instead, they will become food for
the birds of the air and the wild animals.”

5 The LORD says, “Jeremiah, do not enter a house where a meal is being served
because someone has died. Do not go there to sob or to comfort the family. I
will not bless these people anymore. I have taken my love and pity away from
them,” announces the LORD.

6 “Important and ordinary people alike will die in this land. Their bodies will
not be buried. No one will sob over them. No one will cut himself or shave his
head because of them. 7 No one will offer food or drink to comfort those who
sob over the dead. No one will do it even if someone’s father or mother has
died.

8 “Do not enter a house where a big dinner party is being held. Do not sit
down there to eat and drink. 9 I am the LORD who rules over all. I am the God of
Israel. I am telling you, ‘In your days I will judge your people. You will see it
with your own eyes. I will put an end to the sounds of joy and gladness here in
Jerusalem. The voices of brides and grooms will not be heard anymore.’

10 “Tell these people all of those things. They will ask you, ‘Why has the LORD
decided to send so much trouble on us? We haven’t done anything wrong. We
haven’t committed any sins against the LORD our God.’

11 “When they say that, tell them, ‘I did it because your people of long ago
deserted me,’ announces the LORD. ‘They followed other gods. They served
them and worshiped them. They deserted me. They did not obey my law.

12“ ‘But you have done more evil things than they did. All of you are doing
what your stubborn and evil hearts want you to do. You are not obeying me.

13“ ‘So I will throw you out of this land. I will send you away to a land that
you and your people have not had anything to do with before. There you will
serve other gods day and night. And I will not show you any favor.’

14“But a new day is coming,” announces the LORD. “At that time people will
no longer say, ‘The LORD brought the people of Israel up out of Egypt. And
that’s just as sure as he is alive.’

15“Instead, they will say, ‘The LORD brought the people of Israel up out of the
land of the north. He gathered them out of all of the countries where he had
forced them to go. And that’s just as sure as he is alive.’ I will bring them back
to the land I gave their people long ago.

16“But now I will send for many fishermen,” announces the LORD. “They will
catch some of these people. After that, I will send for many hunters. They will
hunt the others down on every mountain and hill. They will bring them out of
the cracks in the rocks. 17My eyes see everything these people do. What they
do is not hidden from me. I always see their sin. 18I will pay them back double
for their sin and the evil things they have done. They have made my land
‘unclean.’ They have set up lifeless statues of their evil gods. They have filled
my land with them. I hate those gods.”

19LORD, you give me strength.
You are like a fort to me.
When I’m in trouble,
I go to you for safety.
The nations will come to you
from one end of the earth to the other.
They will gather together and say,
“Our people of long ago didn’t own anything
except statues of gods.
The statues were worthless.
They didn’t do them any good.
20Do men really make their own gods?
Yes. But they aren’t really gods at all!”

21The LORD says, “So I will teach them about myself.
This time I will show them
how powerful and mighty I am.

Then they will know
that I am the LORD.

Jeremiah 17

[1]“Judah’s sin is carved with an iron tool.
It is written with a sharp stone.
It is carved on the tablets of their hearts.
It is written on the horns that stick out
from the corners of their altars.
[2]Even their children offer sacrifices
to other gods on those altars.
They use the poles that were made
to worship the goddess Asherah.
They worship strange gods beside the green trees
and on the high hills.
[3]I will give away my holy Mount Zion to the Babylonians.
Your enemies will carry off your wealth
and all of your treasures.
I will give away your high places.
That will happen because you have sinned.
You have done it all through your country.
[4]You will lose the land I gave you.
And it will be your own fault.
I will make you slaves to your enemies.
You will serve them in a land you have not had anything to do with
before.
You have set my anger on fire.
It will burn forever.”

[5]The LORD says,

“Those who trust in man are under my curse.
They depend on human strength.
Their hearts turn away from me.
[6]They will be like a bush in a dry and empty land.
They will not enjoy success when it comes.
They will live in dry places in the desert.
It is a land of salt where no one else lives.

[7]“But I will bless any man who trusts in me.

I will show my favor to the one who depends on me.
[8]He will be like a tree that is planted near water.
It sends out its roots beside a stream.
It is not afraid when heat comes.
Its leaves are always green.
It does not worry when there is no rain.
It always bears fruit.”

[9]A human heart is more dishonest than anything else.
It can’t be healed.
Who can understand it?

[10]The LORD says, “I look deep down inside human hearts.
I see what is in people’s minds.
I reward a man in keeping with his conduct.
I bless him based on what he has done.”

[11]Some people get rich in the wrong way.
They are like a partridge that hatches eggs it didn’t lay.
When their lives are half over, their riches will desert them.
In the end they will prove how foolish they have been.

[12]Our temple is where the LORD’s glorious throne is.
From the beginning it has been high and lifted up.
[13]LORD, you are Israel’s only hope.
Everyone who deserts you will be put to shame.
The names of those who turn away from you will be listed among the dead.
LORD, they have deserted you.
You are the spring of water that gives life.

[14]LORD, heal me. Then I will be healed.
Save me from my enemies. Then I will be saved.
You are the one I praise.
[15]They keep saying to me,
“What has happened to the message the LORD gave you?
Let it come true right now!”
[16]I haven’t run away from being the shepherd of your people.
You know I haven’t wanted the day of Jerusalem’s fall to come.
You are aware of every word that comes from my lips.
[17]Don’t be a terror to me.

When I’m in trouble, I go to you for safety.
[18]Let those who attack me be put to shame.
But keep me from shame.
Let them be terrified.
But keep me from terror.
Bring the day of trouble on them.
Destroy them once and for all.

Keep the Sabbath Day Holy

[19]The LORD said to me, “Go. Stand at the city gate where the people gather together. That is where the kings of Judah go in and out. Also go to all of the other gates of Jerusalem. [20]Say, ‘Listen to the LORD’s message, you kings of Judah and all of you people of Judah and Jerusalem. You always come through these gates.

[21]“ ‘The LORD says, “Make sure you do not carry a load on the Sabbath day. Do not bring it through the gates of Jerusalem. [22]Do not bring a load out of your houses on the Sabbath. Do not do any work on that day. Instead, keep the Sabbath day holy. Do as I commanded your people long ago. [23]But they did not listen. They did not pay any attention to me. They were stubborn. They would not listen or pay attention when I corrected them.

[24]“ ‘ “Be careful to obey me,” announces the LORD. “Do not bring a load through the gates of this city on the Sabbath. Instead, keep the Sabbath day holy. Do not do any work on it.

[25]“ ‘ “Then kings who sit on David’s throne will come through the gates of this city. They and their officials will come riding in chariots and on horses. The people of Judah and Jerusalem will come along with them. And this city will always have people living in it. [26]Some will come from the towns of Judah. And some will come in from the villages around Jerusalem. Others will come from the territory of Benjamin. And others will come in from the western hills. Still others will come from the central hill country and the Negev Desert. All of them will bring burnt offerings and sacrifices. They will come bringing grain offerings, incense and thank offerings. They will take all of those offerings to my house.

[27]“ ‘ “But what if you do not obey me? Suppose you do not keep the Sabbath day holy. And suppose you carry a load through the gates of Jerusalem on the

Sabbath. Then I will start a fire that can’t be put out. It will begin at the gates of Jerusalem. It will destroy its mighty towers.” ’ ”

The LORD Sends Jeremiah to the Potter's House

Jeremiah 18

1 A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 2 "Go down to the potter's
house. I will give you my message there."

3 So I went down to the potter's house. I saw him working at his wheel. 4 His
hands were shaping a pot out of clay. But he saw that something was wrong
with it. So he formed it into another pot. He shaped it in the way that seemed
best to him.

5 Then the LORD's message came to me. He said, 6 "People of Israel, I can do
with you just as this potter does," announces the LORD. "The clay is in the
potter's hand. And you are in my hand, people of Israel.

7 "Suppose at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is going to be
pulled up by the roots. And I tell it that it will be torn down and destroyed.
8 But suppose the nation I warned turns away from its sins. Then I will not do
what I said I would. I will not bring trouble on it as I had planned.

9 "Suppose at another time I announce that a nation or kingdom is going to be
built up and planted. 10 But it does what is evil in my sight. It does not obey me.
Then I will think again about the good things I had wanted to do for it.

11 "So speak to the people of Judah and Jerusalem. Tell them, 'The LORD says,
"Look! I am making plans against you. I am going to bring trouble on you. So
each one of you must turn from your evil ways. Change the way you live and
act." '

12 "But they will reply, 'It's no use. We will continue to do what we've
already planned. All of us will do what our stubborn and evil hearts want us to
do.' "

13 So the LORD says,

"Ask the nations a question. Say to them,
'Who has ever heard anything like this?

The people of Israel have done
a very horrible thing.
14 Does the snow ever disappear
from Lebanon’s rocky slopes?
Do its cool waters ever stop
flowing from places far away?
15 But my people have forgotten me.
They burn incense to worthless gods.
Their gods made them trip and fall
as they walked on the old paths.
They made them use side roads
instead of roads that were built up.
16 So their land will be completely destroyed.
People will make fun of it again and again.
All those who pass by it will be shocked.
They will shake their heads.
17 I will sweep over my people like a wind from the east.
I will use the Babylonians to scatter them.
I will show them my back and not my face.
I will desert them when their day of trouble comes.’ ”

18 They said, “Come on. Let’s make plans against Jeremiah. We’ll still have priests to teach us the law. We’ll always have wise people to give us advice. We’ll have prophets to bring us messages from the LORD. So come on. Let’s speak out against Jeremiah. We shouldn’t pay any attention to what he says.”

19 LORD, please listen to me!
Hear what my enemies are saying about me!
20 Should the good things I’ve done be paid back with evil?
But my enemies have dug a pit for me.
Remember that I stood in front of you
and spoke up for them.
I tried to turn your anger away from them.
21 So let their children die of hunger.
Let my enemies be killed in war.
Let their wives lose their children and husbands.
Let their men be put to death.
Let their young men be killed in battle.
22 Bring their enemies against them without warning.
Let cries be heard from their houses.

They have dug a pit to capture me.
They have hidden traps for my feet.
23 But LORD, you know
all about their plans to kill me.
Don’t forgive their crimes.
Don’t erase their sins from your sight.
Destroy my enemies.
Punish them when the time to show your anger comes.

Jeremiah 19

1The LORD said to me, “Go and buy a clay jar from a potter. Take along some
of the elders of the people. Also tell some of the priests to go with you. 2Go out
to the Valley of Ben Hinnom. Stand near the entrance of the gate where broken
pieces of pottery are thrown away.

“There announce the message I give you. 3Tell the people, ‘Listen to the
LORD’s message, you kings of Judah and people of Jerusalem. The LORD who
rules over all is the God of Israel. He says, “Listen! I am going to bring trouble
on Jerusalem. It will be so horrible that it will make the ears of everyone who
hears about it ring.

4“ ‘ “My people have deserted me. They have made this city a place where
other gods are worshiped. They have burned sacrifices to them here. They and
their people and the kings of Judah had never had anything to do with those
gods before. My people have also filled this place with the blood of those who
are not guilty of anything. 5They have built the high places where they worship
Baal. There they sacrifice their children in the fire as offerings to Baal. That is
something I did not command or talk about. It did not even enter my mind.

6“ ‘ “So watch out!” announces the LORD. “The days are coming when people
will not call this place Topheth anymore. And they will not call it the Valley of
Ben Hinnom either. Instead, they will call it the Valley of Death.

7“ ‘ “In this place I will make the plans of Judah and Jerusalem as useless as a
broken jar. I will use their enemies to kill my people with swords. They will die
at the hands of those who want to take their lives. I will give their dead bodies
as food to the birds of the air and the wild animals.

8“ ‘ “I will destroy this city completely. People will make fun of it. All those
who pass by it will be shocked. They will laugh at its people because of all of
their wounds. 9I will make the people of this city eat the dead bodies of their
sons and daughters. And they will eat one another. They will do it because
things will be so bad during the attack. The enemies who want to take their
lives will bring all of that trouble on them.” ’

10“Jeremiah, break the jar while those who go with you are watching. 11Tell
them, ‘The LORD who rules over all says, “This potter’s jar is smashed and
can’t be repaired. And I will smash this nation and this city. People will bury

their dead in Topheth. But they will run out of room. [12]Here is what I will do to Jerusalem and those who live here," announces the LORD. "I will make this city like Topheth. [13]The houses in Jerusalem will be made 'unclean' like Topheth. So will the houses of the kings of Judah. All of those people burned incense on their roofs to all of the stars. They poured out drink offerings to other gods." ' "

[14]Then I returned from Topheth. That's where the LORD had sent me to prophesy. I stood in the courtyard of the LORD's temple. I spoke to all of the people. I said, [15]"The LORD who rules over all is the God of Israel. He says, 'Listen! I am going to punish this city and the villages that are around it. I am going to bring against them all of the trouble I have announced. That is because my people were stubborn. They would not listen to what I said.' "

Jeremiah and Pashhur

Jeremiah 20

[1]The priest Pashhur was chief officer in the LORD's temple. He was the son of Immer. Pashhur heard me prophesying that Jerusalem would be destroyed. [2]So he had me beaten. Then he put me in prison at the Upper Gate of Benjamin at the LORD's temple.

[3]The next day Pashhur set me free. I said to him, "The LORD's name for you isn't Pashhur. It's Magor-Missabib. That name means Terror on Every Side.

[4]"The LORD says to you, 'I will make you a terror to yourself. You will also be a terror to all of your friends. With your own eyes you will see them die. Their enemies will kill them with swords. I will hand all of the people of Judah over to the king of Babylonia. He will carry them away to Babylonia or kill them with swords.

[5]" 'I will hand all of the wealth of this city over to Judah's enemies. I will give them all of its products and everything of value. I will turn over to them all of the treasures that belonged to the kings of Judah. They will take those things and carry them off to Babylon.

[6]" 'Pashhur, you and everyone who lives in your house will also be forced to go there. You have prophesied lies to all of your friends. So all of you will die in Babylonia. And that's where your bodies will be buried.' "

Jeremiah Argues With the LORD

[7]LORD, you tricked me, and I was tricked.
You overpowered me and won.
People make fun of me all day long.
Everyone laughs at me.

[8]Every time I speak, I cry out.
All you ever tell me to talk about
is fighting and trouble.

Your message has brought me nothing but dishonor.
It has made me suffer shame all day long.
9 Sometimes I think, “I won’t talk about him anymore.
I’ll never speak in his name again.”
But then your message burns in my heart.
It’s like a fire inside my very bones.
I’m tired of holding it in.
In fact, I can’t.
10 I hear many people whispering,
“There is terror on every side!
Report Jeremiah! Let’s report him to the authorities!”
All of my friends
are waiting for me to slip.
They are saying, “Perhaps he will be tricked
into making a mistake.
Then we’ll win out over him.
We’ll get even with him.”

11 But you are with me like a mighty warrior.
So those who are trying to harm me will trip and fall.
They won’t win out over me.
They will fail. They’ll be totally put to shame.
Their dishonor will never be forgotten.

12 LORD, you rule over all.
You test those who do what is right.
You see what is in people’s hearts and minds.
So pay them back for what they’ve done.
I’ve committed my cause to you.

13 Sing to the LORD, you people!
Give praise to him!
He saves the lives of those who are in need.
He saves them from the powerful hands of sinful people.

14 May the day I was born be under a curse!
May the day I was born to my mother not be blessed!
15 May the man who brought my father the news be under a curse!
He’s the one who made my father very glad.
He said, “You have had a baby! It’s a boy!”
16 May that man be like the towns

the LORD destroyed without pity.
May that man hear loud sobs in the morning.
May he hear a battle cry at noon.
17 He should have killed me in my mother’s body.
He should have made my mother my grave.
He should have let her body stay large forever.
18 Why did I ever come out of my mother’s body?
I’ve seen nothing but trouble and sorrow.
My days will end in shame.

The LORD Refuses Zedekiah's Appeal

Jeremiah 21

1 A message came to me from the LORD. It came when King Zedekiah sent
Pashhur to me. Pashhur was the son of Malkijah. Zedekiah sent the priest
Zephaniah along with him. Zephaniah was the son of Maaseiah. They said to
me, 2 "Ask the LORD to help us. Nebuchadnezzar is attacking us. He is king of
Babylonia. In the past the LORD did wonderful things for us. Maybe he'll do
them again. Then Nebuchadnezzar will pull his armies back from us."

3 But I answered them, "Tell Zedekiah and his people, 4 'The LORD is the God
of Israel. He says, "The king of Babylonia and his armies are all around this
city. They are getting ready to attack you. You have weapons of war in your
hands to fight against them. But I am about to turn your weapons against you.
And I will bring your enemies inside this city.

5 " ' "I myself will fight against you. I will reach out my powerful hand and
mighty arm. I will come against you with all of my burning anger. 6 I will strike
down those who live in this city. I will kill people and animals alike. They will
die of a terrible plague.

7 " ' "After that, I will hand you over to your enemies who want to kill you,"
announces the LORD. "I will hand over Zedekiah, the king of Judah. I will hand
over his officials and the people in this city who live through the plague, war
and hunger. All of them will be turned over to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of
Babylonia. He will kill them with swords. He will not show them any kindness.
He will not feel sorry for them. In fact, he will not have any concern for them
at all." '

8 "Tell the people, 'The LORD says, "I am offering you a choice. You can
choose the way that leads to life. Or you can choose the way that leads to
death. 9 Those who stay in this city will die of war, hunger or plague. But those
who go out and give themselves up to the Babylonians who are attacking you
will live. They will escape with their lives.

10 " ' "I have decided to do this city harm and not good," announces the LORD.
"It will be handed over to the king of Babylonia. And he will destroy it with

fire.” ’

11“Also speak to Judah’s royal family. Tell them, ‘Listen to the LORD’s
message. 12The LORD says to you who belong to David’s royal house,

“ ‘ “Every morning do what is right and fair.
Save those who have been robbed.
Set them free from the people who have treated them badly.
If you do not, my anger will blaze out against you.
It will burn like fire because of the evil things you have done.
No one will be able to put it out.
13Jerusalem, I am against you,”

announces the LORD.

“You live above this valley.
You are on a high, rocky flatland.
And you say, ‘Who can come against us?
Who can enter our place of safety?’
14But I will punish you in keeping with what you have done,”

announces the LORD.

“I will start a fire in your forests.
It will burn up everything around you.” ’ ”

The LORD Judges Evil Kings

Jeremiah 22

1The LORD said to me, “Jeremiah, go down to the palace of the king of Judah.
Announce my message there. Tell him, 2‘King of Judah, listen to the LORD’s
message. You are sitting on David’s throne. You and your officials and your
people come through these gates. 3The LORD says, “Do what is fair and right.
Save those who have been robbed. Set them free from the people who have
treated them badly. Do not do anything wrong to outsiders or widows in this
place. Do not harm children whose fathers have died. Do not kill those who are
not guilty of doing anything wrong.

4“ ‘ “Be careful to obey those commands. Then kings who sit on David’s
throne will come through the gates of this palace. They will come riding in
chariots and on horses. Their officials and their people will come along with
them.

5“ ‘ “But suppose you do not obey those commands,” announces the LORD.
“Then I promise you that this palace will be destroyed. I make that promise by
taking an oath in my own name.” ’ ”

6The LORD speaks about the palace of the king of Judah. He says,

“You are like the land of Gilead to me.
You are like the highest mountain in Lebanon.
But I will make you like a desert.
You will become like towns that no one lives in.
7I will send destroyers against you.
All of them will come with their weapons.
They will cut up your fine cedar beams.
They will throw them into the fire.

8“People from many nations will pass by this city. They will ask one another,
‘Why has the LORD done such a thing to this great city?’

9“And the answer will be, ‘Because its people have turned away from the

covenant the LORD their God made with them. They have worshiped other gods. And they have served them.’ ”

10Don’t sob over dead King Josiah.
Don’t be sad because he’s gone.
Instead, sob bitterly over King Jehoahaz.
He was forced to leave his country.
He will never return.
He’ll never see his own land again.

11Jehoahaz became king of Judah after his father Josiah. But he has gone away from this place. That’s because the LORD says about him, “He will never return. 12He will die in Egypt. That is where he was taken as a prisoner. He will not see this land again.”

13The LORD says, “How terrible it will be for King Jehoiakim!
He builds his palace
by mistreating his people.
He builds its upstairs rooms
with money that was gained by sinning.
He makes his own people work for nothing.
He does not pay them for what they do.
14He says, ‘I will build myself a great palace.
It will have large rooms upstairs.’
So he makes big windows in it.
He covers its walls with cedar boards.
He decorates it with red paint.

15“Jehoiakim, does having more and more cedar boards
make you a king?
Your father Josiah had enough to eat and drink.
He did what was right and fair.
So everything went well with him.
16He stood up for those who were poor or needy.
So everything went well with him.
That is what it means to know me,”
announces the LORD.
17“Jehoiakim, the only thing on your mind

is to get rich by cheating others.
You would even kill people who are not guilty
of doing anything wrong.
You would mistreat them.
You would take everything they own."

18So the LORD speaks about King Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah. He says,

"His people will not sob over him.
They will not say,
'My poor brother! My poor sister!'
They will not sob over him.
They will not say,
'My poor master! How sad that his glory is gone!'
19In fact, he will be buried like a donkey.
His body will be dragged away and thrown
outside the gates of Jerusalem."

20The LORD says, "People of Jerusalem, go up to Lebanon.
Cry out for help.
Let your voice be heard in the land of Bashan.
Cry out from the mountains of Abarim.
All those who were going to help you are crushed.
21When you felt secure, I warned you.
But you said, 'I won't listen!'
You have acted like that ever since you were young.
You have not obeyed me.
22The wind will drive all of your shepherds away.
All those who were going to help you will be carried off as prisoners.
Then you will be dishonored and put to shame.
That will happen because you have been so sinful.
23Some of you live in Jerusalem in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon.
You are comfortable in your cedar buildings.
But you will groan when pain comes on you.
It will be like the pain of a woman having a baby.

24"King Jehoiachin, you are the son of Jehoiakim," announces the LORD.

“Suppose you were a ring on my right hand. And suppose the ring even had my royal seal on it. Then I would still pull you off my finger. And that is just as sure as I am alive.

25“I will hand you over to those who are trying to kill you. I will turn you over to people you are afraid of. I will give you to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylonia. I will hand you over to his armies.

26“I will throw you out into another country. I will throw your mother out. Neither of you was born in that country. But both of you will die there. 27You will never come back to the land you long to return to.”

28This man Jehoiachin is like a broken pot.
Everyone hates him. No one wants him.
Why will he and his children be thrown out of this land?
Why will they be sent to a land
they didn’t have anything to do with before?
29Land, land, land,
listen to the LORD’s message!
30The LORD says,
“Let the record say that this man did not have any children.
Let it report that he did not have any success in life.
None of his children will have success either.
None of them will sit on David’s throne.
None of them will ever rule over Judah.

The True and Rightful Branch

Jeremiah 23

1 “How terrible it will be for the shepherds who lead my people down the
wrong path!” announces the LORD. “They are destroying and scattering the
sheep that belong to my flock.”

2 So the LORD, the God of Israel, speaks to the shepherds who take care of my
people. He tells them, “You have scattered my sheep. You have driven them
away. You have not taken good care of them. So I will punish you for the evil
things you have done,” announces the LORD.

3 “I myself will gather together those who are left alive in my flock. I will
gather them out of all of the countries where I have driven them. And I will
bring them back to their own land. There my sheep will have many lambs.
Their numbers will increase.

4 “I will place shepherds over them who will take good care of them. My
sheep will not be afraid or terrified anymore. And none of them will be
missing,” announces the LORD.

5 “A new day is coming,” announces the LORD.
“At that time I will raise up from David’s royal line
a true and rightful Branch.
He will be a King who will rule wisely.
He will do what is fair and right in the land.
6 In his days Judah will be saved.
Israel will live in safety.
And the Branch will be called
The LORD Who Makes Us Right With Himself.

7 “Other days are also coming,” announces the LORD. “At that time people will
no longer say, ‘The LORD brought the people of Israel up out of Egypt. And
that’s just as sure as he is alive.’

8 “Instead, they will say, ‘The LORD brought the people of Israel up out of the

land of the north. He gathered them out of all of the countries where he had forced them to go. And that's just as sure as he is alive.' Then they will live in their own land."

Prophets Who Tell Lies

[9]Here is my message about the prophets.

My heart is broken inside me.
All of my bones tremble with fear.
I am like a man who is drunk.
I am like someone who has had too much wine.
That's what the LORD's holy words
have done to me.
[10]The land is full of people
who aren't faithful to the LORD.
Now the land is under his curse.
And that's why it is thirsty for water.
That's why the grasslands in the desert are dry.
The prophets are leading sinful lives.
They don't use their power in the right way.

[11]"Prophets and priests alike are ungodly,"
announces the LORD.
"Even in my temple I find them sinning.
[12]So their path will become slippery.
They will be thrown out into darkness.
There they will fall.
I will bring trouble on them
when the time to punish them comes,"
announces the LORD.

[13]"Among the prophets of Samaria
I saw something I can't stand.
They were prophesying in the name of Baal.
They were leading my people Israel down the wrong path.
[14]I have also seen something horrible among Jerusalem's prophets.
They are not faithful to me.

They are not living by the truth.
They strengthen the hands of those who do evil.
So the people do not turn from their sinful ways.
All of them are like the people of Sodom to me.
They are just like the people of Gomorrah.”

15So the LORD who rules over all speaks about the prophets. He says,

“I will make them eat bitter food.
I will make them drink poisoned water.
The prophets of Jerusalem have spread
their ungodly ways all through the land.”

16The LORD who rules over all says to the people of Judah,

“Do not listen to what the prophets are saying to you.
They fill you with false hopes.
They talk about visions that come from their own minds.
What they say does not come from my mouth.
17They keep speaking to those who hate me. They say,
‘The LORD says you will have peace.’
They speak to all those who do
what their stubborn hearts want them to do.
They tell them, ‘No harm will come to you.’
18But which of them has ever stood in my courts?
Have they been there to see a vision or hear my message?
Who has listened and heard my message there?
19A storm will burst out
because of my burning anger.
A windstorm will sweep down
on the heads of sinful people.
20My anger will not turn back.
I will accomplish everything
I plan to do.
In days to come
you will understand it clearly.
21I did not send those prophets.
But they have run to tell you their message anyway.
I did not speak to them.

But they have still prophesied.
22 Suppose they had stood in my courts.
Then they would have announced my message to my people.
They would have turned my people from their evil ways.
They would have turned them away from their sins.

23 “Am I only a God who is nearby?”

announces the LORD.

“Am I not a God who is also far away?
24 Can anyone hide in secret places
so that I can’t see him?”

announces the LORD.

“Don’t I fill heaven and earth?”

announces the LORD.

25 “I have heard what the prophets are saying. They prophesy lies in my name. They say, ‘I had a dream! The LORD has given me a dream!’ 26 How long will that continue in the hearts of those prophets who tell lies? They try to get others to believe their own mistaken ideas. 27 They tell one another their dreams. They think that will make my people forget my name. In the same way, their people of long ago forgot my name when they worshiped Baal.

28 “Let the prophet who has a dream tell his dream. But let the one who has my message speak it faithfully. Your prophets have given you straw to eat instead of grain,” announces the LORD.

29 “My message is like fire,” announces the LORD. “It is like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces.

30 “So I am against those prophets,” announces the LORD. “I am against those who steal messages from one another. They claim that the messages come from me.

31 “Yes,” announces the LORD. “I am against the prophets who wag their own tongues but still say, ‘Here is what the LORD says.’ 32 I am against prophets who talk about dreams that did not come from me,” announces the LORD. “They tell foolish lies. Their lies lead my people down the wrong path.

“But I did not send those prophets. I did not appoint them. They do not help my people in the least,” announces the LORD.

Prophets Who Give Messages That Are Not From the LORD

33“Jeremiah, those people might ask you a question. Or a prophet or priest
might do it. They might ask, ‘What message have you received from the LORD?’

“Then tell them, ‘You ask, “What message?” Here it is. “I will desert you,”
announces the LORD.’

34“A prophet or priest might make a claim. Or someone else might do it. He
might claim, ‘I have received a message from the LORD.’ Then I will punish
him and his family.

35“Here is what each of you people keeps on saying to your friend or relative.
You ask, ‘What is the LORD’s answer?’ Or you ask, ‘What has the LORD
spoken?’ 36But you must not talk about ‘a message from the LORD’ again. That
is because your message becomes your own message. And so you twist my
words. I am the living God. I am the LORD who rules over all. And I am your
God.

37“Here is what you keep saying to a prophet. You ask, ‘What is the LORD’s
answer to you?’ Or you ask, ‘What has the LORD spoken?’ 38You claim, ‘I have
received a message from the LORD.’ But I really say, ‘You used the words, “I
have received a message from the LORD.” But I told you that you must not
claim, “I have received a message from the LORD.” ’

39“So you can be sure I will forget you. I will throw you out of my sight. I
will also destroy the city I gave you and your people. 40I will bring shame on
you that will last forever. It will never be forgotten.”

Judah Is Like Two Baskets of Figs

Jeremiah 24

1King Jehoiachin was forced to leave Jerusalem. He was the son of
Jehoiakim. Jehoiachin was taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, the king of
Babylonia. The officials and all of the skilled workers were forced to leave
with him.

After they left, the LORD showed me two baskets of figs. They were in front
of his temple. 2One basket had very good figs in it. They were like figs that
ripen early. The other basket had figs that weren't good at all. In fact, they were
so bad they couldn't even be eaten.

3Then the LORD asked me, "What do you see, Jeremiah?"

"Figs," I answered. "The good ones are very good. But the others are so bad
they can't be eaten."

4Then a message came to me from the LORD. He said, 5"I am the LORD, the
God of Israel. I say, 'I consider the people who were forced to leave Judah to
be like those good figs. I sent them away from this place. I forced them to go to
Babylonia. 6My eyes will watch over them. I will be good to them. And I will
bring them back to this land. I will build them up. I will not tear them down. I
will plant them. I will not pull them up by the roots.

7" 'I will change their hearts. Then they will know that I am the LORD. They
will be my people. And I will be their God. They will return to me with all
their heart.

8" 'But there are also figs that are not very good. In fact, they are so bad they
can't be eaten,' says the LORD. 'Zedekiah, the king of Judah, is like those bad
figs. So are his officials and the people of Jerusalem who are still left alive. I
will punish them whether they remain in this land or live in Egypt.

9" 'I will make all of the kingdoms on earth displeased with them. In fact,
they will hate them a great deal. They will laugh and joke about them. They
will call down curses on them. All of that will happen no matter where I force
them to go. 10I will send war, hunger and plague against them. They will be
destroyed from the land I gave them and their people of long ago.' "

Seventy Years in Babylonia

Jeremiah 25

1A message about all of the people of Judah came to me from the LORD. It
came in the fourth year that Jehoiakim was king of Judah. It was the first year
that Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylonia. Jehoiakim was the son of Josiah.

2I, the LORD's prophet, spoke to all of the people of Judah and Jerusalem. I
said, 3"For 23 years the LORD's messages have been coming to me. They began
to come in the 13th year that Josiah was king of Judah. He was the son of
Amon. The LORD's messages still come to me today. I've spoken to you people
again and again. But you haven't listened to me.

4"The LORD has sent all of his servants the prophets to you. They've come to
you again and again. But you haven't listened. You haven't paid any attention
to them.

5"They said, 'Each of you must turn from your evil ways and practices. Then
you can stay in the land forever. It's the land the LORD gave you and your
people long ago. 6Don't follow other gods. Don't serve them or worship them.
Don't make the LORD angry with the gods your own hands have made. Then he
won't harm you.'

7" 'But you did not listen to me,' announces the LORD. 'You have made me
very angry with the gods your hands have made. And you have brought harm
on yourselves.'

8"The LORD who rules over all says, 'You have not listened to my words. 9So
I will send for all of the nations in the north. And I will send for my servant
Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylonia,' announces the LORD.

" 'I will bring all of them against this land and against you who live here.
They will march out against all of the nations that are around this land. I will
set them apart in a special way to be destroyed. People will be shocked because
of them. And they will make fun of them. Those nations will be destroyed
forever.

10" 'I will put an end to the sounds of joy and gladness. I will put an end to
the voices of brides and grooms. The sound of grinding millstones will not be

heard anymore. And lamps will not be lit anymore. [11]This whole country will become dry and empty. And those nations will serve the king of Babylonia for 70 years.

[12]“ ‘But I will punish that king and his nation because they are guilty. I will do it when the 70 years are over,’ announces the LORD. ‘I will make that land a desert forever.

[13]“ ‘I have spoken against that land. And I will make all of those things happen to it. Everything will happen that is written in this scroll. And I will make everything Jeremiah prophesied against all of the nations come true. [14]The people of Babylonia will become slaves of many other nations and great kings. I will pay them back for what their hands have done.’ ”

The LORD Judges the Nations

[15]The LORD is the God of Israel. He said to me, “Take this cup from my hand. It is filled with the wine of my burning anger. Make all of the nations to which I send you drink it. [16]When they drink it, they will not even be able to walk straight. It will drive them out of their minds. I am going to send war against them.”

[17]So I took the cup from the LORD’s hand. I made all of the nations to which he sent me drink from it. [18]He sent me to Judah’s kings and officials. He told me to go to Jerusalem and the towns of Judah. He wanted me to tell them they would be destroyed. Then people would be shocked because of them. They would make fun of them. They would call down curses on them. And that’s how things still are today.

[19]Here is a list of the other kings and nations he sent me to.

Pharaoh, the king of Egypt
his attendants, his officials, all of his people

[20]all of the people from other lands who lived there

all of the kings of Uz
the Philistine kings of Ashkelon, Gaza and Ekron
the Philistines who were still living in Ashdod

[21]Edom, Moab, Ammon

[22]all of the kings of Tyre and Sidon
the kings of the islands and other lands along the Mediterranean Sea
[23]Dedan, Teman, Buz
all of the other places far away in the east
[24]all of the kings of Arabia
all of the other kings of people who live in the desert
[25]all of the kings of Zimri, Elam and Media
[26]all of the kings in the north, near and far

So he sent me to all of the kingdoms on the face of the earth, one after the other. After all of them drink from the cup of the LORD's anger, the king of Babylonia will drink from it too.

[27]The LORD says, "Tell them, 'The LORD who rules over all is the God of Israel. He says, "Drink from this cup. Get drunk and throw up. Fall down and do not get up again. I am going to send war against you." '

[28]"But they might refuse to take the cup from your hand. They might not want to drink from it. Then tell them, 'The LORD who rules over all says, "You have to drink from it! [29]I am beginning to bring trouble on the city where I have put my Name. You might think you will not be punished. But you will certainly be punished. I am sending war against everyone who lives on earth," announces the LORD who rules over all.'

[30]"Jeremiah, prophesy against them. Tell them,

" 'The LORD will roar from heaven like a lion.
His voice will sound like thunder
from his holy temple there.
He will roar loudly against his land.
He will shout like those who stomp on grapes in winepresses.
He will shout against everyone who lives on earth.
[31]The noise of battle will be heard
from one end of the earth to the other.
That's because the LORD will bring charges against the nations.
He will judge every human being.
He will kill sinful people with his sword,' "

announces the LORD.

[32]The LORD who rules over all says,

"Look! Horrible trouble is spreading
from one nation to another.
A mighty storm is rising.
It is coming from a place
that is very far away."

[33]At that time those the LORD kills will be lying around everywhere. They will be found from one end of the earth to the other. No one will sob over them. Their dead bodies will not be gathered up or buried. Instead, they will be like trash lying there on the ground.

[34]Sob and cry, you shepherds.
Roll in the dust, you leaders of the flock.
Your time to be killed has come.
You will fall and be broken to pieces like fine clay pots.
[35]The shepherds won't have any place to run to.
The leaders of the flock won't be able to escape.
[36]Listen to the cries of the shepherds.
Hear the sobs of the leaders of the flock.
The LORD is destroying their grasslands.
[37]Their peaceful meadows will be completely destroyed
because of the LORD's burning anger.
[38]Like a lion he will leave his den.
The land of those leaders will become a desert.
That's because the sword of the LORD brings great harm.
His anger will burn against them.

Jeremiah's Enemies Try to Have Him Killed

Jeremiah 26

1 A message came to me from the LORD. It was shortly after Jehoiakim became
king of Judah. He was the son of Josiah. 2 The LORD said, "Stand in the
courtyard of my house. Speak to the people of the towns in Judah. Speak to all
those who come to worship in my house. Tell them everything I command you.
Do not leave out a single word. 3 Perhaps they will listen. Maybe they will turn
from their evil ways. Then I will not do what I said I would. I will not bring
trouble on them. I had planned to punish them because of the evil things they
had done.

4 "Tell them, 'The LORD says, "Listen to me. Obey my law that I gave you.
5 And listen to the words my servants the prophets are speaking. I have sent
them to you again and again. But you have not listened to them. 6 So I will
make this house like Shiloh. All of the nations on earth will call down curses
on this city." ' "

7 I spoke those words in the LORD's house. The priests, the prophets and all of
the people heard me. 8 I finished telling all of the people everything the LORD
had commanded me to say.

But as soon as I did, the priests, the prophets and all of the people grabbed
hold of me. They said, "You must die! 9 Why do you prophesy those things in
the LORD's name? Why do you say that this house will become like Shiloh?
Why do you say that this city will be empty and deserted?" And all of the
people crowded around me in the LORD's house.

10 The officials of Judah heard what had happened. So they went up from the
royal palace to the LORD's house. There they took their places at the entrance of
the New Gate. 11 Then the priests and prophets spoke to the officials and all of
the people. They said, "This man should be sentenced to death. He has
prophesied against this city. You have heard it with your own ears!"

12 Then I spoke to all of the officials and people. I said, "The LORD sent me to
prophesy against this house and this city. He told me to say everything you
have heard. 13 So change the way you live and act. Obey the LORD your God.

Then he won’t do what he said he would. He won’t bring on you the trouble he said he would bring.

14“As for me, I’m in your hands. Do to me what you think is good and right. 15But you can be sure of one thing. If you put me to death, you will be held accountable for spilling my blood. And I haven’t even done anything wrong. You will bring guilt on yourselves and this city and those who live in it. The LORD has sent me to you. He wanted me to say all of those things so you could hear them. And that’s the truth.”

16Then the officials and all of the people spoke to the priests and prophets. They said, “This man shouldn’t be sentenced to death! He has spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God.”

17Some of the elders of the land stepped forward. They spoke to the whole community that was gathered there. They said, 18“Micah from Moresheth prophesied. It was during the time Hezekiah was king over Judah. Micah spoke to all of the people of Judah. He told them, ‘The LORD who rules over all says,

> “ ‘ “Zion will be plowed up like a field.
> Jerusalem will be turned into a pile of trash.
> The temple hill will be covered with bushes and weeds.” ’(Micah 3:12)

19“Did King Hezekiah or anyone else in Judah put Micah to death? Hezekiah had respect for the LORD. He asked the LORD to show him his favor. And the LORD didn’t judge Jerusalem as he said he would. He didn’t bring on it the trouble he said he would bring. But we are about to bring horrible trouble on ourselves!”

20Uriah was another man who prophesied in the name of the LORD. He was from Kiriath Jearim. He was the son of Shemaiah. Uriah prophesied against this city and this land. He said the same things I did.

21King Jehoiakim and all of his officers and officials heard Uriah’s words. So the king tried to have him put to death.

But Uriah heard about it. He was afraid. And he ran away to Egypt.

22So King Jehoiakim sent Elnathan to Egypt. He also sent some other men along with him. Elnathan was the son of Acbor. 23Those men brought Uriah

out of Egypt. They took him to King Jehoiakim. Then the king had Uriah struck down with a sword. He had Uriah’s body thrown into one of the graves of the ordinary people.

24In spite of that, Ahikam stood up for me. He was the son of Shaphan. Because of Ahikam, I wasn’t handed over to the people to be put to death.

Judah Will Serve Nebuchadnezzar

Jeremiah 27

1A message came to me from the LORD. It was shortly after Zedekiah became
king of Judah. He was the son of Josiah. 2The LORD said, “Make a yoke out of
ropes and wooden boards. Put it on your neck.

3“Then write down a message for the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre
and Sidon. Give it to their messengers who have come to Jerusalem. They have
come to see Zedekiah, the king of Judah. 4Give them a message for the kings
who sent them. It should say, ‘The LORD who rules over all is the God of Israel.
He says, “Here is what I want you to tell your masters. 5I reached out my great
and powerful arm. I made the earth. I made its people and animals. And I can
give the earth to anyone I please.

6“ ‘ “Now I will hand all of your countries over to my servant
Nebuchadnezzar. He is king of Babylonia. I will put even the wild animals
under his control. 7All of the nations will serve him and his son and grandson.
After that, I will judge his land. Then many nations and great kings will make
him serve them.

8“ ‘ “But suppose any nation or kingdom will not serve Nebuchadnezzar, the
king of Babylonia. And suppose it refuses to put its neck under his yoke. Then
I will punish that nation with war, hunger and plague,” announces the LORD. “I
will punish it until his powerful hand destroys it.

9“ ‘ “So do not listen to your prophets. Do not listen to those who claim to
have secret knowledge. Do not listen to those who try to explain your dreams.
Do not listen to those who get messages from people who have died. Do not
listen to those who practice evil magic. All of them will tell you, ‘You won’t
serve the king of Babylonia.’

10“ ‘ “But they prophesy lies to you. If you listen to them, you will be
removed far away from your lands. I will drive you away from them. And you
will die.

11“ ‘ “But suppose any nation will put its neck under the yoke of the king of
Babylonia. And suppose it serves him. Then I will let that nation remain in its

own land. I will let its people plow the land and live there," ' " announces the LORD.

12I gave the same message to Zedekiah, the king of Judah. I said, "Put your neck under the yoke of the king of Babylonia. Obey him. Serve his people. Then you will live. 13Why should you and your people die? Why should you die of war, hunger and plague? That's what the LORD said would happen to any nation that won't serve the king of Babylonia.

14"Don't listen to the words of the prophets who say to you, 'You won't serve the king of Babylonia.' They are prophesying lies to you. 15'I have not sent them,' announces the LORD. 'They are prophesying lies in my name. So I will drive you away from your land. And you will die. So will the prophets who prophesy to you.' "

16Then I spoke to the priests and all of those people. I said, "The LORD says, 'Do not listen to the prophets who say, "Very soon the articles from the LORD's house will be brought back from Babylon." They are prophesying lies to you. 17Do not listen to them. Serve the king of Babylonia. Then you will live. Why should this city be destroyed?

18" 'If they are prophets and have received a message from me, let them pray to me. I am the LORD who rules over all. Those prophets should pray that what is still in Jerusalem will remain here. They should pray that the articles in my house and the king's palace will not be taken to Babylon.

19" 'I am the LORD who rules over all. Do you know what those articles are? They include the two pillars in front of the temple. They include the huge metal bowl. They include the bronze stands that can be moved around. And they include the other articles that are left in this city. 20Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylonia, did not take those things away at first. That was when he took King Jehoiachin from Jerusalem to Babylon. He also took all of the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem along with him. Jehoiachin is the son of Jehoiakim.

21" 'I am the LORD who rules over all. I am the God of Israel. Here is what will happen to the things that are left in my house, the king's palace and Jerusalem. 22They will be taken to Babylon. They will remain there until the day I come for them,' announces the LORD. 'Then I will bring them back. I will return them to this place.' "

Hananiah Opposes Jeremiah

Jeremiah 28

1The prophet Hananiah spoke to me in the LORD's house. It was shortly after
Zedekiah became king of Judah. It was in the fifth month of his fourth year.
Hananiah was from Gibeon. He was the son of Azzur. In front of the priests
and all of the people Hananiah said to me, 2"The LORD who rules over all is the
God of Israel. He says, 'I will break the yoke of the king of Babylonia.
3Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylonia, removed all of the articles that belong
to my house. He took them to Babylon. Before two years are over, I will bring
them back to this place.

4" 'I will also bring King Jehoiachin back. He is the son of Jehoiakim. And I
will bring back all of the others who were taken from Judah to Babylon,'
announces the LORD. 'I will break the yoke of the king of Babylonia.' "

5Then I, the prophet Jeremiah, replied to the prophet Hananiah. I spoke to
him in front of the priests and all of the people. They were standing in the
LORD's house. 6I said, "Amen, Hananiah! May the LORD do those things! May
he make the words you have prophesied come true. May he bring back from
Babylon the articles that belong to the LORD's house. May he bring back to this
place all of the people who were taken away.

7"But listen to what I have to say. I want you and all of the people to hear it.
8There have been prophets long before you and I were ever born. They have
prophesied against many countries and great kingdoms. They have spoken
about war, trouble and plague. 9But what if a prophet says peace will come?
Only if it comes true will he be recognized as one who has been truly sent by
the LORD."

10The prophet Hananiah took the yoke off my neck. Then he broke it. 11In
front of all of the people he said, "The LORD says, 'In the same way, I will
break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylonia. Before two years are
over, I will remove it from the necks of all of the nations.' " When I heard that,
I went on my way.

12A message came to me from the LORD. It was shortly after the prophet

Hananiah had broken the yoke off my neck. The message said, [13]“Go. Tell Hananiah, ‘The LORD says, “You have broken a wooden yoke. But in its place you will get an iron yoke.” [14]The LORD who rules over all is the God of Israel. He says, “I will put an iron yoke on the necks of all of those nations. I will make them serve Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylonia. So they will serve him. I will even give him control over the wild animals.” ’ ”

[15]Then I, the prophet Jeremiah, spoke to the prophet Hananiah. I said, “Listen, Hananiah! The LORD hasn’t sent you. But you have tricked these people. Now they trust in lies. [16]So the LORD says, ‘I am about to remove you from the face of the earth. Before this year is over, you will die. You have taught the people to turn against me.’ ”

[17]In the seventh month of that very year, the prophet Hananiah died.

Jeremiah's Letter to the Jews in Babylonia

Jeremiah 29

[1]I, the prophet Jeremiah, sent a letter from Jerusalem to Babylonia. It was for the Jewish elders who were still alive there. It was also for the priests and prophets in Babylonia. And it was for all of the other people Nebuchadnezzar had taken from Jerusalem to Babylon. [2]It was sent to them after King Jehoiachin had been forced to leave Jerusalem. His mother and the court officials were taken with him. The leaders of Judah and Jerusalem and all of the skilled workers had also been forced to go to Babylon.

[3]I gave the letter to Elasah and Gemariah. Zedekiah, the king of Judah, had sent them to King Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon. Elasah was the son of Shaphan. Gemariah was the son of Hilkiah. Here is what the letter said.

[4]The LORD who rules over all is the God of Israel. He speaks to all those he forced to go from Jerusalem to Babylon. He says, [5]"Build houses and settle down. Plant gardens and eat what they produce. [6]Get married. Have sons and daughters. Find wives for your sons. Give your daughters to be married. Then they too can have sons and daughters. Increase your numbers there. Do not let the number of your people get smaller.

[7]"Also work for the success of the city I have sent you to. Pray to the LORD for that city. If it succeeds, you too will enjoy success."

[8]The LORD who rules over all is the God of Israel. He says, "Do not let the prophets trick you. Do not be fooled by those who claim to have secret knowledge. Do not listen to people who try to explain their dreams to you. [9]All of them are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them," announces the LORD.

[10]The LORD says, "You will be forced to live in Babylonia for 70 years. After they are over, I will come to you. My gracious promise to you will come true. I will bring you back home.

[11]"I know the plans I have for you," announces the LORD. "I want you to enjoy success. I do not plan to harm you. I will give you hope for the years to

come. [12]Then you will call out to me. You will come and pray to me. And I will listen to you. [13]When you look for me with all your heart, you will find me.

[14]"I will be found by you," announces the LORD. "And I will bring you back from where you were taken as prisoners. I will gather you from all of the nations. I will gather you from the places where I have forced you to go," announces the LORD. "I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you away."

[15]You might say, "The LORD has given us prophets in Babylonia." [16]But here is what the LORD says about the king who now sits on David's throne. He also says it about all of the people who remain in this city. And he says it about all those who did not go with you to Babylon. [17]The LORD who rules over all says, "I will send war, hunger and plague against them. I will make them like bad figs. They are so bad they can't be eaten. [18]I will hunt them down with war, hunger and plague. I will make all of the kingdoms on earth displeased with them. They will call down curses on them. All of the nations where I drive them will be shocked at them. They will make fun of them. And they will bring shame on them.

[19]"That is because they have not listened to my words," announces the LORD. "I sent messages to them again and again. I sent them through my servants the prophets. And you who were taken to Babylon have not listened either," announces the LORD.

[20]So listen to the LORD's message. Listen, all of you whom he has sent away from Jerusalem to Babylon. [21]The LORD who rules over all is the God of Israel. He speaks about Ahab and Zedekiah. They are prophesying lies to you in my name. Ahab is the son of Kolaiah. Zedekiah is the son of Maaseiah. The LORD says about Ahab and Zedekiah, "I will hand them over to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylonia. He will put them to death. You will see it with your own eyes.

[22]"Because of what happens to them, people will use their names when they call down curses on someone. All those who have been taken from Judah to Babylon will use their names in that way. They will say, 'May the LORD treat you like Zedekiah and Ahab. The king of Babylonia burned them in the fire.'

[23]"That will happen because they have done awful things in Israel. They have committed adultery with their neighbors' wives. They have spoken lies in my name. I did not tell them to do that. I know what they have done. And I am a

witness to it,” announces the LORD.

Shemaiah Opposes Jeremiah

24Tell Shemaiah, the Nehelamite, 25“The LORD who rules over all is the God
of Israel. He says, ‘You sent letters in your own name to all of the people in
Jerusalem. You also sent them to the priest Zephaniah, the son of Maaseiah.
And you sent them to all of the other priests.

“ ‘You said to Zephaniah, 26“The LORD has appointed you priest in place of
Jehoiada. He has put you in charge of the LORD’s house. You are supposed to
arrest any crazy person who claims to be a prophet. You should put him in
prison. You should put iron bands around his neck.

27“ ‘ “So why haven’t you punished Jeremiah from Anathoth? He claims to
be a prophet among you. 28He has sent a message to us in Babylon. It says,
‘You will be there a long time. So build houses and settle down. Plant gardens
and eat what they produce.’ ” ’ ”

29But the priest Zephaniah read the letter to me. 30Then a message came to
me from the LORD. He said, 31“Send a message to all of the people who were
taken away. Tell them, ‘The LORD speaks about Shemaiah, the Nehelamite. He
says, “Shemaiah has prophesied to you. But I did not send him. He has made
you believe a lie.

32“ ‘ “So I say, ‘I will certainly punish Shemaiah, the Nehelamite. I will also
punish his children after him. He will not have any children left among these
people. I will do good things for my people. But he will not see them,’ ” ’ ”
announces the LORD. “ ‘ “ ‘That is because he has taught people to turn against
me.’ ” ’ ”

Israel Will Return to the LORD

Jeremiah 30

1 A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 2 "I am the LORD. I am the
God of Israel. I say, 'Write on a scroll all of the words I have spoken to you. 3 A
new day is coming,' " announces the LORD. " 'At that time I will bring my
people Israel and Judah back from where they have been taken as prisoners. I
will bring them back to this land. Long ago I gave it to their people to have as
their own,' " says the LORD.

4 Here are the words the LORD spoke about Israel and Judah. He said, 5 "I am
the LORD. I say,

" 'Cries of fear are heard.
There is terror. There isn't any peace.
6 Ask and see.
Can a man give birth to children?
Then why do I see every strong man
with his hands on his stomach?
Each of them is acting like a woman having a baby.
Every face is as pale as death.
7 How awful that day will be!
No other day will be like it.
It will be a time of trouble for the people of Jacob.
But they will be saved out of it.

8 " 'At that time I will break the yoke off their necks,'
announces the LORD who rules over all.
'I will tear off the ropes that hold them.
People from other lands will not make them slaves anymore.
9 Instead, they will serve me.
And they will serve David their king.
I will raise him up for them.
I am the LORD their God.

10 " 'People of Jacob, do not be afraid.

You are my servant.
Israel, do not be terrified,’ ”

announces the LORD.

“ ‘You can be sure that I will save you.
I will bring you out of a place far away.
I will bring your children back
from the land where they were taken.
Your people will have peace and security again.
And no one will make them afraid.
11 I am with you. I will save you,’ ”
announces the LORD.
“ ‘I will completely destroy all of the nations
among which I scatter you.
But I will not completely destroy you.
I will correct you. But I will be fair.
I will punish you in a way that is fair and right.’ ”

12 The LORD says,

“Your wound can’t be cured.
Your pain can’t be healed.
13 No one will stand up for you.
There isn’t any medicine for your sore.
There isn’t any healing for you.
14 All those who were going to help you have forgotten you.
They do not care about you.
I have struck you as if I were your enemy.
I have punished you as if I were very mean.
That is because your guilt is so great.
You have sinned so much.
15 Why do you cry out about your wound?
Your pain can’t be healed.
Your guilt is very great.
And you have committed many sins.
That is why I have done all of those things to you.

16 “But everyone who destroys you will be destroyed.
All of your enemies will be forced
to leave their countries.
Those who steal from you will be stolen from.

I will take the belongings
of those who take things from you.
17But I will make you healthy again.
I will heal your wounds,”

announces the LORD.

“That is because you have been thrown out.
You are called Zion, the one no one cares about.”

18The LORD says,

“I will bless Jacob’s people with great success again.
I will show tender love to Israel.
Jerusalem will be rebuilt where it was destroyed.
The palace will stand in its proper place.
19From those places the songs of people giving thanks will be heard.
The sound of great joy will come from there.
I will increase the numbers of my people.
Their numbers will not become smaller.
I will bring them honor.
People will have respect for them.
20Things will be as they used to be for Jacob’s people.
I will make their community firm and secure.
I will punish everyone who treats them badly.
21Their leader will be one of their own people.
Their ruler will rise up from among them.
I will bring him near.
And he will come close to me.
He will commit himself to serve me,”

announces the LORD.

22“So you will be my people.
And I will be your God.”

23A storm will burst out
because of the LORD’s burning anger.
A strong wind will sweep down
on the heads of evil people.
24The LORD’s burning anger won’t turn back.
He will accomplish everything
his heart plans to do.

In days to come
you will understand that.

Jeremiah 31

[1]“At that time I will be the God of all of the tribes of Israel,” announces the LORD. “And they will be my people.”

[2]The LORD says,

“Some of my people will live through
everything their enemies do to them.
They will find help in the desert.
I will come to give peace and rest to Israel.”

[3]The LORD appeared to us in the past. He said,

“I have loved you with a love that lasts forever.
I have kept on loving you with faithful love.
[4]I will build you up again.
Nation of Israel, you will be rebuilt.
Once again you will use your tambourines to celebrate.
You will go out and dance with joy.
[5]Once again you will plant vineyards
on the hills of Samaria.
Farmers will plant them.
They will enjoy their fruit.
[6]There will be a day when those on guard duty will cry out.
They will stand on the hills of Ephraim.
And they will shout,
‘Come! Let’s go up to Zion.
Let’s go up to where the LORD our God is.’ ”

[7]The LORD says,

“Sing with joy because the people of Jacob are blessed.
Shout because the LORD has made them the greatest nation.
Make your praises heard.
Say, ‘LORD, save your people.
Save the people who are left alive in Israel.’

[8]I will bring them from the land of the north.
I will gather them from one end of the earth to the other.
Even those who are blind and those who can't walk
will be among them.
Pregnant women and women having their babies
will be among them also.
A large number will return.
[9]Their eyes will be filled with tears as they come.
They will pray as I bring them back.
I will lead them beside streams of water.
I will lead them on a level path
where they will not trip or fall.
I am Israel's father.
And Ephraim is my oldest son.

[10]"Listen to my message, you nations.
Announce it on shores far away.
Say, 'He who scattered Israel will gather them.
He will watch over his flock like a shepherd.'
[11]I will set the people of Jacob free.
I will save them from those who are stronger than they are.
[12]They will come and shout for joy on Mount Zion.
They will be joyful because of everything I give them.
I give them grain, olive oil and fresh wine.
I give them the young animals in their flocks and herds.
Israel will be like a garden that has plenty of water.
And they will not be sad anymore.
[13]Then young women will dance and be glad.
And so will the men, young and old alike.
I will turn their sobbing into gladness.
I will comfort them.
And I will give them joy instead of sorrow.
[14]I will satisfy the priests. I will give them more than enough.
And my people will be filled with the good things I give them,"
announces the LORD.

[15]The LORD says,

"A voice is heard in Ramah.
It is the sound of crying and deep sadness.

Rachel is crying over her children.
She refuses to be comforted,
because they are gone.”

16 The LORD says,

“Do not sob anymore.
Do not let tears fall from your eyes.
I will reward you for your work,”

announces the LORD.

“Your children will return from the land of the enemy.
17 So I am giving you hope for the years to come,”

announces the LORD.

“Your children will return to their own land.

18 “I have heard the groans of Ephraim’s people. They say,
‘You corrected us like a calf you were training.
And we have been trained.
Bring us back to you, and we will come back.
You are the LORD our God.
19 After we wandered away from you,
we turned away from our sins.
After we learned our lesson,
we beat our chests in sorrow.
We were full of shame.
What we did when we were young brought dishonor on us.’
20 Aren’t the people of Ephraim my dear children?
Aren’t they the children I take delight in?
I often speak against them.
But I still remember them.
So my heart longs for them.
I love them with a tender love,”

announces the LORD.

21 The LORD says, “Put up road signs.
Set up stones to show the way.
Look carefully for the highway.
Look for the road you will take.

Return, people of Israel.
Return to your towns.
22How long will you wander,
you people who are not faithful to me?
I will create a new thing on earth.
A woman will guard a man.”

23The LORD who rules over all is the God of Israel. He says, “I will bring them back from the place where they were taken. The people in Judah and its towns will say once again, ‘Holy temple in Jerusalem, may the LORD bless you. Sacred mountain, may he bless you.’

24“People will live together in Judah and all of its towns. Farmers and shepherds will live there. 25I will give rest to those who are tired. I will satisfy those who are weak.”

26When I heard that, I woke up and looked around. My sleep had been pleasant.

27The LORD announces, “The days are coming when I will plant the nation of Israel and Judah again. I will plant it with children and young animals.

28“I watched over Israel and Judah to pull them up by the roots. I tore them down. I crushed them. I destroyed them. I brought horrible trouble on them. But now I will watch over them to build them up and plant them,” announces the LORD.

29“In those days people will no longer say,

‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes.
But the children have a bitter taste in their mouths.’

30Instead, everyone will die for his own sin. The one who eats sour grapes will taste how bitter they are.

31“A new day is coming,” announces the LORD.
“I will make a new covenant
with the people of Israel.
I will also make it with the people of Judah.
32It will not be like the covenant

I made with their people long ago.
That was when I took them by the hand.
I led them out of Egypt.
But they broke my covenant.
They did it even though I was like a husband to them,"
announces the LORD.
33"This is the covenant I will make with Israel
after that time," announces the LORD.
"I will put my law in their minds.
I will write it on their hearts.
I will be their God.
And they will be my people.
34A man will not need to teach his neighbor anymore.
And he will not need to teach his friend anymore.
He will not say, 'Know the LORD.'
Everyone will know me.
From the least important of them to the most important,
all of them will know me,"
announces the LORD.
"I will forgive their evil ways.
I will not remember their sins anymore."

35The LORD speaks.

He makes the sun
shine by day.
He orders the moon and stars
to shine at night.
He stirs up the ocean.
He makes its waves roar.
His name is The LORD Who Rules Over All.
36"Suppose my orders for creation disappear from my sight,"
announces the LORD.
"Only then will the people of Israel stop being
a nation in my sight."

37The LORD says,

“Suppose the sky above could be measured.
Suppose the foundations of the earth below could be completely discovered.
Only then would I turn the people of Israel away.
Even though they have committed many sins,
I will still accept them,”

announces the LORD.

38“A new day is coming,” announces the LORD. “At that time Jerusalem will be rebuilt for me. It will be rebuilt from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate. 39The measuring line will reach out from there. It will go straight to the hill of Gareb. Then it will turn and reach as far as Goah.

40“There is a valley where dead bodies and ashes are thrown. That whole valley will be holy to me. The side of the Kidron Valley east of the city will be holy to me. It will be holy all the way to the corner of the Horse Gate. The city will never again be pulled up by the roots. It will never be destroyed.”

Jeremiah Buys a Field

Jeremiah 32

1A message came to me from the LORD. It came in the 10th year that Zedekiah
was king of Judah. It was in the 18th year of the rule of Nebuchadnezzar. 2The
armies of the king of Babylonia were getting ready to attack Jerusalem. I, the
prophet Jeremiah, was being held as a prisoner. I was kept in the courtyard of
the guard. It was part of Judah's royal palace.

3Zedekiah, the king of Judah, had made me a prisoner there. He had said to
me, "Why do you prophesy as you do? You say, 'The LORD says, "I am about to
hand this city over to the king of Babylonia. He will capture it.

4" ' "Zedekiah, the king of Judah, will not escape from the powerful hands of
the armies of Babylonia. He will certainly be handed over to the king of
Babylonia. Zedekiah will speak with him face to face. He will see him with his
own eyes. 5Nebuchadnezzar will take Zedekiah to Babylon. Zedekiah will
remain there until I deal with him," announces the LORD. "Suppose you fight
against the armies of Babylonia. If you do, you will not succeed." ' "

6I said, "A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 7'Hanamel is going
to come to you. He is the son of your uncle Shallum. Hanamel will say, "Buy
my field at Anathoth. You are my closest relative. So it's your right and duty to
buy it." '

8"Then my cousin Hanamel came to me. I was in the courtyard of the guard.
It happened just as the LORD had said it would. Hanamel said, 'Buy my field at
Anathoth. It is in the territory of Benjamin. It is your right to buy it and own it.
So buy it for yourself.'

"I knew that this was the LORD's message. 9So I bought the field at Anathoth
from my cousin Hanamel. I weighed out seven ounces of silver for him. 10I
signed and sealed the deed of purchase. I had some people witness everything.
And I weighed out the silver on the scales.

11"There were two copies of the deed. One was sealed and the other wasn't.
The deed included the terms and conditions of the sale. 12I gave Baruch the
copies of the deed. My cousin Hanamel saw me do it. The witnesses who had

signed the deed were there too. So were all of the Jews who were sitting in the courtyard of the guard. Baruch was the son of Neriah. Neriah was the son of Mahseiah.

13“I gave Baruch directions in front of all of them. I said, 14‘The LORD who rules over all is the God of Israel. He says, “Take this deed of purchase. Take the sealed and unsealed copies. Put them in a clay jar. Then they will last a long time.” 15The LORD who rules over all is the God of Israel. He says, “Houses, fields and vineyards will again be bought in this land.” ’

16“I gave the deed of purchase to Baruch, the son of Neriah. Then I prayed to the LORD. I said,

17“ ‘LORD and King, you have reached out your great and powerful arm. You have made the heavens and the earth. Nothing is too hard for you.

18“ ‘You show your love to thousands of people. But you punish children for the sins of their fathers. Great and powerful God, your name is The LORD Who Rules Over All. 19Your purposes are great. Your acts are mighty. Your eyes see everything people do. You reward each one of them in keeping with his conduct. You do it based on what he has done.

20“ ‘You performed miraculous signs and wonders in Egypt. And you have continued to do them to this very day. You have done them in Israel and among all people. You are still known for doing them. 21You brought your people Israel out of Egypt. You did it with miraculous signs and wonders. You reached out your mighty hand and powerful arm. You did great and wonderful things.

22“ ‘You gave Israel this land. Long before that, you took an oath. You promised to give their people a land that had plenty of milk and honey. 23They came in and took it over. But they did not obey you. They didn’t follow your law. They didn’t do what you commanded them to do. So you brought all of this trouble on them.

24“ ‘See how ramps are built up against Jerusalem’s walls to attack it. The city will be handed over to the armies of Babylonia. They are attacking it. It will fall because of war, hunger and plague. What you said would happen is now happening, as you can see. 25LORD and King, the city will be handed over to the armies of Babylonia. In spite of that, you tell me to buy a field. You say, “Pay for it with silver. And have the sale witnessed.” ’ ”

[26]Then a message came to me from the LORD. He said, [27]“I am the LORD. I am the God of all people. Is anything too hard for me?”

[28]So the LORD says, “I am about to hand this city over to the armies of Babylonia. I will give it to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylonia. He will capture it. [29]The armies of Babylonia are now attacking this city. They will come in and set it on fire. They will burn it down. They will burn up the houses where the people made me very angry. They burned incense on their roofs to the god Baal. And they poured out drink offerings to other gods.

[30]“The people of Israel and Judah have done nothing but evil in my sight. They have done it since the nation was young. In fact, they have done nothing but make me very angry. They have worshiped statues of gods their own hands have made,” announces the LORD. [31]“This city has always stirred up my burning anger. It has done it since the day it was built. Now I must remove it from my sight.

[32]“The people of Israel and Judah have made me very angry. They have done many evil things. They, their kings and officials have sinned. So have their priests and prophets. And the people of Judah and Jerusalem have also sinned. [33]They turned their backs to me. They would not face me. I taught them again and again. But they would not listen or pay attention when they were corrected.

[34]“They set up statues of their gods. They did it in the house where I have put my Name. They made my house ‘unclean.’ I hate those statues.

[35]“The people built high places for Baal in the Valley of Ben Hinnom. That is where they sacrifice their children to Molech in the fire. That is something I did not command. It did not even enter my mind. They did something I hate. They made Judah sin.”

[36]You people of Judah are saying about this city, “By war, hunger and plague it will be handed over to the king of Babylonia.”

But the LORD, the God of Israel, says, [37]“You can be sure that I will gather my people again. I will bring them from all of the lands where I send them when my burning anger blazes out against them. I will bring them back to this place. And I will let them live in safety.

[38]“They will be my people. And I will be their God. [39]I will give them a single purpose in life. Then, they will always have respect for me. I will do it for their own good. And it will be for the good of their children after them.

[40]“I will make a covenant with them that will last forever. I promise that I

will never stop doing good to them. I will cause them to respect me. Then they will never turn away from me again. 41I will take pleasure in doing good things for them. I will certainly plant them in this land. I will do those things with all my heart and soul.”

42The LORD says, “I have brought all of this horrible trouble on these people. But now I will give them all of the good things I have promised them.

43“Once more fields will be bought in this land. It is the land about which you now say, ‘It is a dry and empty desert. It doesn’t have any people or animals in it. It has been handed over to the armies of Babylonia.’ 44Fields will be bought with silver. Deeds will be signed, sealed and witnessed. That will be done in the territory of Benjamin. It will be done in the villages around Jerusalem and in the towns of Judah. It will also be done in the towns of the central hill country. And it will be done in the towns of the western hills and the Negev Desert. I will bless their people with great success again,” announces the LORD.

The LORD Keeps His Promises

Jeremiah 33

1I was still being held as a prisoner. I was kept in the courtyard of the guard.
Then another message came to me from the LORD. He said, 2"I made the earth. I
formed it. And I set it in place. The LORD is my name. 3Call out to me. I will
answer you. I will tell you great things you do not know. You will not be able
to understand them."

4The LORD is the God of Israel. He speaks about the houses in Jerusalem. He
talks about the royal palaces of Judah. The people had torn many of them
down. They had used their stones to strengthen the city walls against attack.
5That was during their fight with the armies of Babylonia. The LORD says, "The
houses will be filled with dead bodies. They will be the bodies of the men I
will kill when my anger burns against them. I will hide my face from this city.
That is because its people have committed so many sins.

6"But now I will bring health and healing to Jerusalem. I will heal my people.
I will let them enjoy great peace and security. 7I will bring Judah and Israel
back from the places where they have been taken. I will build up the nation
again. It will be just as it was before.

8"I will wash from its people all of the sins they have committed against me.
And I will forgive all of the sins they committed when they turned away from
me.

9"Then this city will bring me fame, joy, praise and honor. All of the nations
on earth will hear about the good things I do for this city. They will see the
great success and peace I give it. Then they will be filled with wonder. And
they will tremble with fear."

10The LORD says, "You say about this place, 'It's a dry and empty desert. It
doesn't have any people or animals in it.' The towns of Judah and the streets of
Jerusalem are now deserted. So they do not have any people or animals living
in them. But happy sounds will be heard there once more. 11They will be the
sounds of joy and gladness. The voices of brides and grooms will fill the
streets.

“And the voices of those who bring thank offerings to my house will be heard there. They will say,

‘Give thanks to the LORD who rules over all,
because he is good.
His faithful love continues forever.’

That is because I will bless this land with great success again. It will be as it was before,” says the LORD.

12The LORD who rules over all says, “This place is a desert. It does not have any people or animals in it. But there will again be grasslands near all of its towns. Shepherds will rest their flocks there. 13Flocks will again pass under the hands of shepherds as they count their sheep,” says the LORD. “That will be done in the towns of the central hill country. It will be done in the western hills and the Negev Desert. It will be done in the territory of Benjamin. And it will be done in the villages around Jerusalem and in the towns of Judah.

14“A new day is coming,” announces the LORD. “At that time my gracious promise to my people will come true. I made it to the people of Israel and the people of Judah.

15“In those days and at that time
I will make a true and rightful Branch grow from David’s royal line.
He will do what is fair and right in the land.
16In those days Judah will be saved.
Jerusalem will live in safety.
And it will be called
The LORD Who Makes Us Right With Himself.”

17The LORD says, “David will always have a son to sit on the throne of the nation of Israel.

18“The priests, who are Levites, will always have a man to serve me. He will sacrifice burnt offerings. He will burn grain offerings. And he will offer sacrifices.”

19A message came to me from the LORD. 20He said, “Could you ever break my

covenant with the day? Could you ever break my covenant with the night? Could you ever stop day and night from coming at their appointed times? [21]Only then could my covenant with my servant David be broken. Only then could my covenant with the Levites who serve me as priests be broken. Only then would David no longer have someone from his family line to rule on his throne.

[22]"Here is what I will do for my servant David. And here is what I will do for the Levites who serve me. I will make their children after them as many as the stars in the sky. And I will make them as many as the grains of sand on the seashore. It will be impossible to count them."

[23]A message came to me from the LORD. He said, [24]"Haven't you noticed what these people are saying? They say, 'The LORD once chose the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah. But now he has turned his back on them.' So they hate my people. They do not think of them as a nation anymore.

[25]"I say, 'What if I had not made my covenant with day and night? What if I had not established the laws of heaven and earth? [26]Only then would I turn my back on the children of Jacob and my servant David. Only then would I not choose one of David's sons to rule over the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But I will bless my people with great success again. I will love them with tender love.' "

Zedekiah Is Warned

Jeremiah 34

1 Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylonia, and all of his armies were fighting
against Jerusalem. They were also fighting against all of the towns that were
around it. All of the kingdoms and nations Nebuchadnezzar ruled over were
helping him.

At that time a message came to me from the LORD. He said, 2 "I am the LORD,
the God of Israel. Go to Zedekiah, the king of Judah. Tell him, 'The LORD says,
"I am about to hand this city over to the king of Babylonia. He will burn it
down. 3 You will not escape from his powerful hand. You will certainly be
captured. You will be handed over to him. You will see the king of Babylonia
with your own eyes. He will speak with you face to face. And you will go to
Babylon.

4 " ' "But listen to my promise, Zedekiah. Listen, king of Judah. I say that you
will not be killed with a sword. 5 You will die in a peaceful way. People made
fires to honor the kings who died before you. In the same way, they will make
a fire in your honor. They will sob over you. They will say, 'My poor master!' I
myself make this promise," announces the LORD.' "

6 Then I, the prophet Jeremiah, told all of that to King Zedekiah in Jerusalem.
7 At that time Nebuchadnezzar's armies were fighting against Jerusalem. They
were also fighting against Lachish and Azekah. Those two cities were still
holding out. They were the only cities left in Judah that had high walls around
them.

The People Set Their Slaves Free

8 A message came to me from the LORD. King Zedekiah had made a covenant
with all of the people in Jerusalem. He had told them to set their Hebrew slaves
free. 9 All of them had to do it. That applied to male and female slaves alike. No
one was allowed to hold another Jew as a slave.

10So all of the officials and people entered into that covenant. They agreed to
set their male and female slaves free. They agreed not to hold them as slaves
anymore. Instead, they set them free. 11But later they changed their minds.
They took back the people they had set free. They made them slaves again.

12Then a message came to me from the LORD. 13The LORD is the God of Israel.
He says, “I made a covenant with your people long ago. I brought them out of
Egypt. That is the land where they were slaves. I said, 14‘Every seventh year
you must set your people free. You must set free all of the Hebrews who have
sold themselves to you. Let them serve you for six years. Then you must let
them go free.’(Deuteronomy 15:12) But your people did not listen to me. They
did not pay any attention to me.

15“Recently you turned away from your sins. You did what is right in my
eyes. Each of you set your Hebrew slaves free. You even made a covenant in
front of me. You did it in the house where I have put my Name. 16But now you
have turned around. You have treated my name as if it were not holy. Each of
you has taken back your male and female slaves. You had set them free to go
where they wished. But now you have forced them to become your slaves
again.”

17So the LORD says, “You have not obeyed me. You have not set your Hebrew
slaves free. So now I will set you free,” announces the LORD. “I will set you
free to be destroyed by war, plague and hunger. I will make all of the kingdoms
on earth displeased with you.

18“The men who have broken my covenant will be punished. They have not
lived up to the terms of the covenant they made in front of me. When you made
that covenant, you cut a calf in two. Then you walked between its pieces. Now
I will cut you to pieces. 19That includes all of you who walked between the
pieces of the calf. It includes the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the court
officials and the priests. It also includes some of the people of the land.

20“So I will hand all of those people over to their enemies who are trying to
kill them. Their dead bodies will become food for the birds of the air and the
wild animals.

21“I will hand King Zedekiah and his officials over to their enemies. I will
hand them over to those who want to kill them. I will give them over to the
armies of the king of Babylonia. They have now pulled back from you. 22But I
am going to give an order,” announces the LORD. “I will bring them back to this
city. They will fight against it. They will take it and burn it down. And I will

completely destroy the towns of Judah. No one will be able to live there.”

The Family of Recab

Jeremiah 35

[1]A message came to me from the LORD. It came during the time Jehoiakim was king over Judah. He was the son of Josiah. The message said, [2]"Go to the members of the family line of Recab. Invite them to come to one of the side rooms in my house. Then give them wine to drink."

[3]So I went to get Jaazaniah. He was the son of Jeremiah. Jeremiah was the son of Habazziniah. I also went to get Jaazaniah's brothers and all of his sons. That included all of the members of the family line of Recab. [4]I brought them into the LORD's house. I took them into the room of the sons of Hanan. He was the son of Igdaliah. He was also a man of God. His room was next to the room of the officials. Their room was above the room of Maaseiah. He was the son of Shallum. He also was one of those who guarded the temple doors. [5]Then I got bowls full of wine and some cups. I set them down in front of the men from the family line of Recab. I said to them, "Drink some wine."

[6]But they replied, "We don't drink wine. That's because Jonadab gave us a command. He was the son of Recab. He was also one of our own people from long ago. He commanded, 'You and your children after you must never drink wine. [7]Also you must never build houses. You must never plant crops or vineyards. You must never have any of those things. Instead, you must always live in tents. Then you will live a long time in the land where you are wandering around.'

[8]"We have done everything Jonadab, the son of Recab, commanded us to do. So we and our wives and our children have never drunk wine. [9]We have never built houses to live in. We've never had vineyards, fields or crops. [10]We've always lived in tents. We've completely obeyed everything Jonadab commanded our people of long ago.

[11]"But Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylonia, marched into this land. Then we said, 'Come. We must go to Jerusalem. There we can escape the armies of Babylonia and Aram.' So we have remained in Jerusalem."

[12]Then a message came to me from the LORD. It said, [13]"The LORD who rules

over all is the God of Israel. He says, ‘Go. Speak to the people of Judah and Jerusalem. Tell them, “Won’t you ever learn a lesson? Won’t you ever obey my words?” announces the LORD.

14“ ‘ “Jonadab, the son of Recab, ordered his children not to drink wine. And they have kept his command. To this very day they do not drink wine. They obey the command Jonadab gave their people long ago. But I have spoken to you again and again. In spite of that, you have not obeyed me.

15“ ‘ “Again and again I sent all of my servants the prophets to you. They said, ‘Each of you must turn from your evil ways. You must change the way you act. Do not worship other gods. Do not serve them. Then you will live in the land. I gave it to you and your people long ago.’ But you have not paid any attention. You have not listened to me.

16“ ‘ “The children of Jonadab, the son of Recab, have obeyed the command Jonadab gave them long ago. But the people of Judah have not obeyed me.” ’ ”

17So the LORD God who rules over all speaks. The God of Israel says, “Listen! I am going to bring horrible trouble on Judah. I will also bring it on everyone who lives in Jerusalem. I will bring on them every trouble I said I would. I spoke to them. But they did not listen. I called out to them. But they did not answer.”

18Then I spoke to the members of the family line of Recab. I said, “The LORD who rules over all is the God of Israel. He says, ‘You have obeyed the command Jonadab gave your people long ago. You have followed all of his directions. You have done everything he ordered.’ 19So the LORD who rules over all speaks. The God of Israel says, ‘Jonadab, the son of Recab, will always have a man from his family to serve me.’ ”

Jehoiakim Burns Up Jeremiah's Scroll

Jeremiah 36

[1]A message came to me from the LORD. It came in the fourth year that Jehoiakim was king of Judah. He was the son of Josiah. The message said, [2]"Get a scroll. Write on it all of the words I have spoken to you. Write down what I have said about Israel, Judah and all of the other nations. Write what I have said to you from the time of King Josiah until now. [3]The people of Judah will hear about all of the trouble I plan to bring on them. Maybe then all of them will turn from their evil ways. If they do, I will forgive their sins and the evil things they have done."

[4]So I sent for Baruch, the son of Neriah. I told him to write down all of the words the LORD had spoken to me. And Baruch wrote them on the scroll.

[5]Then I said to him, "I'm not allowed to go to the LORD's temple. [6]So you go there. Go on a day when the people are fasting. Read to them from the scroll. Read the words of the LORD you wrote down as I gave them to you. Read them to all of the people of Judah who come in from their towns. [7]They will hear what the LORD will do to them when his burning anger blazes out against them. Then perhaps they will pray to him. And maybe all of them will turn from their evil ways."

[8]Baruch, the son of Neriah, did everything I told him to do. He went to the LORD's temple. There he read the words of the LORD from the scroll. [9]It was in the fifth year that Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, was king of Judah. It was the ninth month of that year. A time of fasting at the LORD's temple had been ordered. All of the people in Jerusalem were told to take part in it. So were those who had come in from the towns of Judah.

[10]Baruch read to all of the people who were at the LORD's temple. He read my words from the scroll. He was in the room of the secretary Gemariah. It was located in the upper courtyard at the entrance of the New Gate of the temple. Gemariah was the son of Shaphan.

[11]Micaiah was the son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan. Micaiah heard Baruch reading all of the LORD's words that were written on the scroll.

[12]Then he went down to the secretary's room in the royal palace. All of the officials were sitting there. They included the secretary Elishama and Delaiah, the son of Shemaiah. Elnathan, the son of Acbor, was also there. So was Gemariah, the son of Shaphan. Zedekiah, the son of Hananiah, was there too. And so were all of the other officials. [13]Micaiah told all of them what he had heard. He told them everything Baruch had read to the people from the scroll.

[14]All of the officials sent Jehudi to speak to Baruch, the son of Neriah. Jehudi was the son of Nethaniah. Nethaniah was the son of Shelemiah. Shelemiah was the son of Cushi. Jehudi said to Baruch, "Come. Bring the scroll you have read to the people."

So Baruch went to them. He carried the scroll with him. [15]The officials said to him, "Please sit down. Read the scroll to us."

So Baruch read it to them. [16]They heard all of its words. Then they looked at each other in fear. They said to Baruch, "We must report all of these words to the king."

[17]They said to Baruch, "Tell us. How did you happen to write all of these things? Did Jeremiah tell you to do it?"

[18]"Yes," Baruch replied. "He told me to write down all of these words. So I wrote them in ink on the scroll."

[19]Then the officials spoke to Baruch. They said, "You and Jeremiah must go and hide. Don't let anyone know where you are."

[20]The officials put the scroll in the room of the secretary Elishama. Then they went to the king in the courtyard. They reported everything to him.

[21]The king sent Jehudi to get the scroll. Jehudi brought it from the room of the secretary Elishama. He read it to the king. All of the officials were standing beside the king. So they heard it too. [22]It was the ninth month. The king was sitting in his winter apartment. A fire was burning in the fire pot in front of him. [23]Jehudi read three or four columns from the scroll. Then the king cut them off with a secretary's knife. He threw them into the fire pot. He did that until the entire scroll was burned up in the fire. [24]The king and some of his attendants heard all of those words. But they weren't afraid. They didn't tear their clothes.

[25]Elnathan, Delaiah and Gemariah begged the king not to burn the scroll. But he wouldn't listen to them. [26]Instead, the king commanded three men to arrest

the secretary Baruch and the prophet Jeremiah. But the LORD had hidden them. The three were Jerahmeel, Seraiah and Shelemiah. Jerahmeel was a member of the royal court. Seraiah was the son of Azriel. And Shelemiah was the son of Abdeel.

27A message came to me from the LORD. It came after the king burned the scroll that had the words Baruch had written down. I had told him to write them. The message said, 28"Get another scroll. Write on it all of the words that were on the first one. King Jehoiakim burned that one up.

29"Also tell King Jehoiakim, 'The LORD says, "You burned that scroll. You said to Baruch, 'Why did you write that the king of Babylonia would certainly come? Why did you write that he would destroy this land? Why did you write that he would cut off people and animals alike from it?' "

30" 'So now the LORD has something to say about Jehoiakim, the king of Judah. He says, "No one from Jehoiakim's family line will sit on David's throne. Jehoiakim's body will be thrown out. It will lie outside in the heat by day and in the frost at night. 31I will punish him and his children and his attendants. I will punish them for their sinful ways. I will bring on them all of the trouble I said I would. And I will bring it on the people of Jerusalem and Judah. They have not listened to me." ' "

32So I got another scroll. I gave it to the secretary Baruch, the son of Neriah. I told him what to write on it. He wrote down all of the words that were on the scroll King Jehoiakim had burned up in the fire. And he added many more words the LORD had given to me. They were similar to those that had already been written.

Jeremiah Is Put in Prison

Jeremiah 37

1 Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylonia, appointed Zedekiah to be king of
Judah. He was the son of Josiah. Zedekiah ruled in place of Jehoiachin, the son
of Jehoiakim. 2 Zedekiah and his attendants didn't pay any attention to what the
LORD had said through me. And the people of the land didn't pay any attention
either.

3 But King Zedekiah sent Jehucal to me. He sent the priest Zephaniah along
with him. Jehucal was the son of Shelemiah. Zephaniah was the son of
Maaseiah. Jehucal and Zephaniah brought the king's message to me. It said,
"Please pray to the LORD our God for us."

4 At that time I was free to come and go among the people. I had not yet been
put in prison. 5 The armies of Babylonia were attacking Jerusalem. They
received a report that Pharaoh's army had marched out of Egypt to help
Zedekiah. So they pulled back from Jerusalem.

6 A message came to me from the LORD. 7 The LORD is the God of Israel. He
says, "The king of Judah has sent you to ask me for advice. Tell him,
'Pharaoh's army has marched out to help you. But it will go back to its own
land. It will return to Egypt. 8 Then the armies of Babylonia will come back
here. They will attack this city. They will capture it. Then they will burn it
down.'

9 "The LORD says, 'Do not fool yourselves. You think, "The Babylonians will
leave us alone." But they will not! 10 Suppose you destroy all of the armies of
Babylonia that are attacking you. Suppose only wounded men are left in their
tents. Even then they will come out and burn this city down.' "

11 The armies of Babylonia had pulled back from Jerusalem because of
Pharaoh's army. 12 So I started to leave the city. I was planning to go to the
territory of Benjamin. I wanted to get my share of the property among the
people there. 13 I got as far as the Benjamin Gate. But the captain of the guard
arrested me. He said, "You are going over to the side of the Babylonians!" The
captain's name was Irijah, the son of Shelemiah. Shelemiah was the son of

Hananiah.

14I said to Irijah, “That isn’t true! I’m not going to the side of the Babylonians.”

But Irijah wouldn’t listen to me. Instead, he arrested me. He brought me to the officials. 15They were angry with me. So they had me beaten. Then they took me to the house of the secretary Jonathan. It had been made into a prison. That’s where they put me.

16I was put into a prison cell that was below ground level. I remained there a long time. 17Then King Zedekiah sent for me. He had me brought to the palace. There he spoke to me in private. He asked, “Do you have a message from the LORD for me?”

“Yes,” I replied. “You will be handed over to the king of Babylonia.”

18Then I continued, “Why have you put me in prison? What crime have I committed against you? What have I done to your officials or these people? 19Where are your prophets who prophesied to you? They said, ‘The king of Babylonia won’t attack you. He won’t march into this land.’

20“But now please listen, my king and master. Let me make my appeal to you. Please don’t send me back to the house of the secretary Jonathan. If you do, I’ll die there.”

21Then King Zedekiah gave the order. His men put me in the courtyard of the guard. They gave me bread from the street of the bakers. They did it every day until all of the bread in the city was gone. So I remained in the courtyard of the guard.

Jeremiah Is Thrown Into an Empty Well

Jeremiah 38

1 Shephatiah, Gedaliah, Jehucal and Pashhur heard what I was telling all of
the people. Shephatiah was the son of Mattan. Gedaliah was the son of
Pashhur. Jehucal was the son of Shelemiah. And Pashhur was the son of
Malkijah. Those four men heard me say, 2 "The LORD says, 'Those who stay in
this city will die of war, hunger or plague. But those who go over to the side of
the Babylonians will live. They will escape with their lives. They will remain
alive.' 3 The LORD also says, 'This city will certainly be handed over to the
armies of the king of Babylonia. They will capture it.' "

4 Then those officials said to the king, "That man should be put to death. What
he says is making the soldiers who are left in this city lose hope. It's making all
of the people lose hope too. He isn't interested in what is best for the people. In
fact, he's trying to destroy them."

5 "He's in your hands," King Zedekiah answered. "I can't do anything to
oppose you."

6 So they took me and put me into an empty well. It belonged to Malkijah. He
was a member of the royal court. His well was in the courtyard of the guard.
Zedekiah's men lowered me by ropes into the well. It didn't have any water in
it. All it had was mud. And I sank down into the mud.

7 Ebed-Melech was an official in the royal palace. He was from the land of
Cush. He heard that I had been put into the well. The king was sitting by the
Benjamin Gate at that time. 8 Ebed-Melech went out of the palace. He said to
the king, 9 "My king and master, everything those men have done to the prophet
Jeremiah is evil. They have thrown him into an empty well. Soon there won't
be any more bread in the city. Then he'll starve to death."

10 So the king gave an order to Ebed-Melech from Cush. He said, "Take 30
men from here with you. Lift the prophet Jeremiah out of the well before he
dies."

11 Then Ebed-Melech took the men with him. He went to a room under the
place in the palace where the treasures were stored. He got some old rags and

worn-out clothes from there. Then he let them down with ropes to me in the well.

12Ebed-Melech from Cush told me what to do. He said, “Put these old rags and worn-out clothes under your arms. They’ll pad the ropes.” So I did. 13Then the men pulled me up with the ropes. They lifted me out of the well. And I remained in the courtyard of the guard.

Zedekiah Questions Jeremiah Again

14Then King Zedekiah sent for me. He had me brought to the third entrance to the LORD’s temple. “I want to ask you something,” the king said to me. “Don’t hide anything from me.”

15I said to Zedekiah, “Suppose I give you an answer. You will kill me, won’t you? Suppose I give you good advice. You won’t listen to me, will you?”

16But King Zedekiah took an oath. He promised me secretly, “I won’t kill you. And I won’t hand you over to those who want to take your life. That’s just as sure as the LORD is alive. He’s the one who has given us breath.”

17So I said to Zedekiah, “The LORD God who rules over all is the God of Israel. He says, ‘Give yourself up to the officers of the king of Babylonia. Then your life will be spared. And this city will not be burned down. You and your family will remain alive.

18“ ‘But what if you do not give yourself up to them? Then this city will be handed over to the Babylonians. They will burn it down. And you yourself will not escape from their powerful hands.’ ”

19King Zedekiah said to me, “I’m afraid of some of the Jews. They are the ones who have gone over to the side of the Babylonians. The Babylonians might hand me over to them. And those Jews will treat me badly.”

20“They won’t hand you over to them,” I replied. “Obey the LORD. Do what I tell you to do. Then things will go well with you. Your life will be spared.

21“Don’t refuse to give yourself up. The LORD has shown me what will happen if you do. 22All of the women who are left in your palace will be brought out. They’ll be given to the officials of the king of Babylonia. Those women will say to you,

“ ‘Your trusted friends have tricked you.
They have gotten the best of you.
Your feet are sunk down in the mud.
Your friends have deserted you.’

23“All of your wives and children will be brought out to the Babylonians. You yourself won’t escape from their powerful hands. You will be captured by the king of Babylonia. And this city will be burned down.”

24Then Zedekiah said to me, “Don’t let anyone know about the talk we’ve had. If you do, you might die. 25Suppose the officials find out that I’ve talked with you. And suppose they come to you and say, ‘Tell us what you said to the king. Tell us what the king said to you. Don’t hide it from us. If you do, we’ll kill you.’ 26Then tell them, ‘I was begging the king not to send me back to Jonathan’s house. I don’t want to die there.’ ”

27All of the officials came to me. And they questioned me. I told them everything the king had ordered me to say. None of them had heard what I told the king. So they didn’t say anything else to me.

28I remained in the courtyard of the guard. I stayed there until the day Jerusalem was captured.

Jerusalem Is Destroyed

Jeremiah 39

Here is how Jerusalem was captured. [1]Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylonia, marched out against it. He came with all of his armies and attacked it. It was in the ninth year that Zedekiah was king of Judah. It was in the tenth month. [2]The city wall was broken through. It happened on the ninth day of the fourth month. It was in the 11th year of Zedekiah's rule.

[3]All of the officials of the king of Babylonia came. They took seats near the Middle Gate. Nergal-Sharezer from Samgar was there. Nebo-Sarsekim, a chief officer, was also there. So was Nergal-Sharezer, a high official. And all of the other officials of the king of Babylonia were there too.

[4]King Zedekiah and all of the soldiers saw them. Then they ran away. They left the city at night. They went by way of the king's garden. They went out through the gate between the two walls. And they headed toward the Arabah Valley.

[5]But the armies of Babylonia chased them. They caught up with Zedekiah in the flatlands near Jericho. They captured him there. And they took him to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylonia. He was at Riblah in the land of Hamath. That's where Nebuchadnezzar decided how he would be punished. [6]The king of Babylonia killed the sons of Zedekiah at Riblah. He forced Zedekiah to watch it with his own eyes. He also killed all of the nobles of Judah. [7]Then he poked out Zedekiah's eyes. He put him in bronze chains. And he took him to Babylon.

[8]The Babylonians set the royal palace on fire. They also set fire to the houses of the people. And they broke down the walls of Jerusalem.

[9]Nebuzaradan was commander of the royal guard. Some people still remained in the city. But he took them away to Babylon as prisoners. He also took along those who had gone over to his side. And he took the rest of the people.

[10]Nebuzaradan, the commander of the guard, left some of the poor people of Judah behind. They didn't own anything. So at that time he gave them

vineyards and fields.

[11]Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylonia, had given orders about me. He had given them to Nebuzaradan, the commander of the royal guard. Nebuchadnezzar had said, [12]"Take him. Look after him. Don't harm him. Do for him anything he asks."

[13]So that's what Nebuzaradan, the commander of the guard, did. Nebushazban and Nergal-Sharezer were with him. So were all of the other officers of the king of Babylonia. Nebushazban was a chief officer. Nergal-Sharezer was a high official. All of those men [14]sent for me. They had me taken out of the courtyard of the guard. They turned me over to Gedaliah. They told him to take me back to my home. So I remained among my own people. Gedaliah was the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan.

[15]A message came to me from the LORD. It came while I was being kept in the courtyard of the guard. He said, [16]"Go. Speak to Ebed-Melech from Cush. Tell him, 'The LORD who rules over all is the God of Israel. He says, "I am about to make the words I spoke against this city come true. I will not give success to it. Instead, I will bring horrible trouble on it. At that time my words will come true. You will see it with your own eyes.

[17]" ' "But I will save you on that day," announces the LORD. "You will not be handed over to those you are afraid of. [18]I will save you. You will not be killed with a sword. Instead, you will escape with your life. That is because you trust in me," announces the LORD.' "

Jeremiah Is Set Free From His Chains

Jeremiah 40

[1]A message came to me from the LORD. It came after Nebuzaradan, the commander of the royal guard, had set me free at Ramah. I was being held by chains when he found me. I was among all of the prisoners from Jerusalem and Judah. We were being taken to Babylon.

[2]But the commander of the guard found me. He said to me, “The LORD your God ordered that this place be destroyed. [3]And now he has brought it about. He has done exactly what he said he would do. All of these things have happened because you people sinned against the LORD. You didn’t obey him. [4]But today I’m setting you free from the chains that are on your wrists. Come with me to Babylon if you want to. I’ll take good care of you there. But if you don’t want to come, then don’t. The whole country lies in front of you. Go anywhere you want to.”

[5]But before I turned to go, Nebuzaradan continued, “Go back to Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam. The king of Babylonia has appointed Gedaliah to be over the towns of Judah. Go and live with him among your people. Or go anywhere else you want to.” Ahikam was the son of Shaphan.

The commander gave me food and water. He also gave me a gift. Then he let me go. [6]So I went to Mizpah to see Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam. I stayed with him. I lived among the people who were left behind in the land.

Gedaliah Is Murdered

[7]Some of Judah’s army officers and their men were still in the open country. They heard that the king of Babylonia had appointed Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, as governor over Judah. He had put him in charge of the men, women and children who were still there. They were the poorest people in the land. They hadn’t been taken to Babylon.

[8]When the army officers and their men heard those things, they came to

Gedaliah at Mizpah. Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, came. So did Johanan and Jonathan, the sons of Kareah. Seraiah, the son of Tanhumeth, also came. The sons of Ephai from Netophah came too. And so did Jaazaniah, the son of the Maacathite. All of their men came with them.

9Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, took an oath to give hope to all of those men. He spoke in a kind way to them. He said, “Don’t be afraid to serve the Babylonians. Settle down in the land of Judah. Serve the king of Babylonia. Then things will go well with you. 10I myself will stay at Mizpah. I’ll speak for you to the officials of Babylonia who come to us. But you must harvest the wine, summer fruit and olive oil. Put them in your jars. Store them up. And live in the towns you have taken over.”

11All of the Jews in Moab, Ammon and Edom heard what had happened. So did the Jews in all of the other countries. They heard that the king of Babylonia had left some people behind in Judah. They also heard that he had appointed Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, as governor over them. Ahikam was the son of Shaphan.

12When they heard those things, all of them came back to the land of Judah. They went to Gedaliah at Mizpah. They came from all of the countries where they had been scattered. And they harvested a large amount of wine and summer fruit.

13Johanan and all of the other army officers who were still in the open country came to Gedaliah at Mizpah. Johanan was the son of Kareah. 14The officers said to Gedaliah, “Don’t you know that Baalis, the king of Ammon, has sent someone to take your life? It’s Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah.” But Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, didn’t believe them.

15Then Johanan, the son of Kareah, spoke in private to Gedaliah in Mizpah. He said, “Let me go and kill Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah. No one will know about it. Why should he take your life? Why should he cause all of the Jews who are gathered around you to be scattered? Why should he cause the people who remain in Judah to die?”

16But Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, spoke to Johanan, the son of Kareah. He said, “Don’t do an awful thing like that! What you are saying about Ishmael isn’t true.”

Jeremiah 41

[1]In the seventh month Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, came with ten men to Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, at Mizpah. Nethaniah was the son of Elishama. Ishmael was a member of the royal family. He had been one of the king's officers. Ishmael and his ten men were eating together at Mizpah.

[2]They got up and struck down Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, with their swords. They killed him even though the king of Babylonia had appointed him as governor over Judah. Ahikam was the son of Shaphan. [3]Ishmael also killed all of the Jews who were with Gedaliah at Mizpah. And he killed the Babylonian soldiers who were there.

[4]On the next day, people still hadn't found out that Gedaliah had been murdered. [5]On that day 80 men came from Shechem, Shiloh and Samaria. They had shaved off their beards. They had torn their clothes. And they had cut themselves. They brought grain offerings and incense with them. They took them to the LORD's house.

[6]Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, went out from Mizpah to meet them. He was sobbing as he went. When he met them, he said, "Come to Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam."

[7]They went with him into the city. Then Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, and the men who were with him killed them. And they threw them into an empty well.

[8]But ten of the men had spoken to Ishmael. They had said, "Don't kill us! We have some wheat and barley. We also have olive oil and honey. We've hidden all of it in a field." So he let them alone. He didn't kill them along with the others.

[9]But he had thrown all of the bodies of the men he had killed into the empty well. That included Gedaliah's body. The well was the one King Asa had made. He had made it when he strengthened Mizpah against attack by Baasha, the king of Israel. Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, filled it with the bodies of those he had killed.

[10]Ishmael made prisoners of all the rest of the people who were in Mizpah. That included women who were members of the royal court. It also included all of the others who were left there. Nebuzaradan had appointed Gedaliah, the

son of Ahikam, over them. Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, took them as prisoners. Then he started out to go across the Jordan River to the land of Ammon. Nebuzaradan was the commander of the royal guard.

[11]Johanan, the son of Kareah, and all of the other army officers who were with him were told what had happened. They heard about all of the crimes Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, had committed. [12]So they brought all of their men together. Then they went to fight against Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah. They caught up with him near the large pool in Gibeon.

[13]Ishmael had many people with him. They saw Johanan, the son of Kareah. And they saw the other army officers who were with him. So the people who had been forced to go with Ishmael were glad. [14]All those whom Ishmael had taken as prisoners at Mizpah turned and went over to the side of Johanan, the son of Kareah. [15]But Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, and eight of his men escaped from Johanan. They ran away to the land of Ammon.

Some Jews Take Jeremiah to Egypt

[16]Then Johanan, the son of Kareah, led away all of the people from Mizpah who were still alive. All of the other army officers who were with Johanan helped him do it. He had taken them away from Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah. That happened after Ishmael had murdered Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam. The people Johanan had taken away included the soldiers, women, children and court officials he had brought from Gibeon.

[17]They went on their way. They stopped at Geruth Kimham near Bethlehem. They were going to Egypt. [18]They wanted to get away from the Babylonians. They were afraid of them because Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, had killed Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam. The king of Babylonia had appointed Gedaliah as governor over Judah.

Jeremiah 42

[1]Then all of the army officers approached me. They included Johanan, the
son of Kareah, and Jezaniah, the son of Hoshaiah. All of the people from the
least important of them to the most important also came. [2]All of them said to
me, “Please listen to our appeal. Pray to the LORD your God. Pray for all of us
who are left here. Once there were many of us. But as you can see, only a few
of us are left now. [3]So pray to the LORD your God. Pray that he’ll tell us where
we should go. Pray that he’ll tell us what we should do.”

[4]“I’ve heard you,” I replied. “I’ll certainly pray to the LORD your God. I’ll do
what you have asked me to do. In fact, I’ll tell you everything the LORD says. I
won’t keep anything back from you.”

[5]Then they said to me, “We’ll do everything the LORD your God sends you to
tell us to do. If we don’t, may he be a true and faithful witness against us. [6]It
doesn’t matter whether what you say is in our favor or not. We’re asking you to
pray to the LORD our God. And we’ll obey him. Things will go well with us.
That’s because we will obey the LORD our God.”

[7]Ten days later a message came to me from the LORD. [8]So I sent for Johanan,
the son of Kareah, and all of the other army officers who were with him. I also
gathered together all of the people from the least important of them to the most
important.

[9]I said to all of them, “The LORD is the God of Israel. You asked me to present
your appeal to him. [10]He told me, ‘Stay in this land. Then I will build you up. I
will not tear you down. I will plant you. I will not pull you up by the roots. I
am very sad that I had to bring all of this trouble on you.

[11]“ ‘Do not be afraid of the king of Babylonia. You are afraid of him now. Do
not be,’ announces the LORD. ‘I am with you. I will keep you safe. I will save
you from his powerful hands. [12]I will show you my loving concern. Then he
will have concern for you. And he will let you return to your land.’

[13]“But suppose you say, ‘We won’t stay in this land.’ If you do, you will be
disobeying the LORD your God. [14]And suppose you say, ‘No! We’ll go and live
in Egypt. There we won’t have to face war anymore. We won’t hear the
trumpets of war. And we won’t get hungry.’

15“Then listen to what the LORD says to you who are left in Judah. He is the LORD who rules over all. He is the God of Israel. He says, ‘Have you already made up your minds to go to Egypt? Are you going to settle down there?

16“ ‘Then the war you fear will catch up with you there. The hunger you are afraid of will follow you into Egypt. And you will die there. 17In fact, that will happen to all those who go and settle in Egypt. All of them will die of war, hunger and plague. Not one of them will live. None of them will escape the trouble I will bring on them.’

18“He is the LORD who rules over all. He is the God of Israel. He says, ‘My burning anger has been poured out on those who used to live in Jerusalem. In the same way, it will be poured out on you when you go to Egypt. People will call down curses on you. They will be shocked at you. They will say bad things about you. And they will bring shame on you. You will never see this place again.’

19“The LORD has spoken to you who are left in Judah. He has said, ‘Do not go to Egypt.’ Here is something you can be sure of. I am warning you about it today. 20You made a big mistake when you asked me to pray to the LORD your God. You said, ‘Pray to the LORD our God for us. Tell us everything he says. We’ll do it.’

21“I have told you today what the LORD your God wants you to do. But you still haven’t obeyed him. You haven’t done anything he sent me to tell you to do. 22So here is something else you can be sure of. You will die of war, hunger and plague. You want to go and settle down in Egypt. But you will die there.”

Jeremiah 43

[1]I finished telling the people everything the LORD their God had said. I told them everything he had sent me to tell them. [2]After that, Azariah, the son of Hoshaiah, and Johanan, the son of Kareah, spoke to me. And all of the proud men joined them. They said, “You are lying! The LORD our God hasn’t sent you to speak to us. He hasn’t told you to say, ‘You must not go to Egypt and settle down there.’ [3]But Baruch, the son of Neriah, is turning you against us. He wants us to be handed over to the Babylonians. Then they can kill us. Or they can take us away to Babylon.”

[4]So Johanan, the son of Kareah, disobeyed the LORD’s command. So did all of the other army officers and all of the people. They didn’t stay in the land of Judah.

[5]Instead Johanan, the son of Kareah, and all of the other army officers led away all of the people who were left in Judah. Those people had returned to Judah from all of the nations where they had been scattered. [6]Johanan and the other officers also led away many people Nebuzaradan had left in Mizpah. They included men, women and children. They also included women who were members of the royal court. Nebuzaradan had left them with Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam. He had also left them with the prophet Jeremiah and Baruch, the son of Neriah. Nebuzaradan was commander of the royal guard. Ahikam was the son of Shaphan.

[7]So the Jewish leaders disobeyed the LORD. They took everyone to Egypt. They went all the way to Tahpanhes.

[8]In Tahpanhes a message came to me from the LORD. He said, [9]“Make sure the Jews are watching you. Then get some large stones. Go to the entrance to Pharaoh’s house in Tahpanhes. Bury the stones in the clay under the brick walkway there.

[10]“Then tell the Jews, ‘The LORD who rules over all is the God of Israel. He says, “I will send for my servant Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylonia. And I will set his throne over these stones that are buried here. He will set up his royal tent over them. [11]He will come and attack Egypt. He will bring death to those I have appointed to die. He will take away as prisoners those I have appointed to be taken away. And he will kill with swords those I have

appointed to be killed.

12“ ‘ “He will set the temples of the gods of Egypt on fire. He will burn their temples down. He will take the statues of their gods away. Nebuchadnezzar will be like a shepherd who wraps his coat around himself. He will wrap Egypt around himself. And he will leave there unharmed. 13At Heliopolis in Egypt he will smash the sacred pillars to pieces. And he will burn down the temples of the gods of Egypt.” ’ ”

Don't Worship Other Gods

Jeremiah 44

1A message came to me from the LORD about all of the Jews who were living
in Lower Egypt. They were living in Migdol, Tahpanhes and Memphis. It was
also about all of the Jews who were living in Upper Egypt. 2The LORD who
rules over all is the God of Israel. He said, "You saw all of the trouble I
brought on Jerusalem. I also brought it on all of the towns in Judah. Today they
lie there deserted and destroyed. 3That is because of the evil things their people
did. They made me very angry. They burned incense to other gods. And they
worshiped them. They and you and your people of long ago never had anything
to do with those gods before.

4"Again and again I sent my servants the prophets. They said, 'Don't worship
other gods! The LORD hates it!'

5"But the people didn't listen. They didn't pay any attention. They didn't turn
from their sinful ways. They didn't stop burning incense to other gods.

6"So my burning anger was poured out. It blazed out against the towns of
Judah and the streets of Jerusalem. It made them the dry and empty places they
are today."

7The LORD God who rules over all is the God of Israel. He says, "Why do you
want to bring all of this trouble on yourselves? You are cutting off from Judah
its men and women. You are cutting off the children and babies. Not one of you
will be left. 8Why do you want to make me angry with the gods your hands
have made? Why do you burn incense to the gods of Egypt, where you have
come to live? You will destroy yourselves. All of the nations on earth will call
down curses on you. They will bring shame on you.

9"Have you forgotten the evil things your people did long ago? The kings and
queens of Judah did those same things. So did you and your wives. They were
done in the land of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem.

10"To this very day the people of Judah have not made themselves low in my
sight. They have not shown any respect for me. They have not obeyed my law.
They have not followed the rules I gave you and your people long ago."

[11]The LORD who rules over all is the God of Israel. He says, “I have decided to bring horrible trouble on you. I will destroy the whole land of Judah. [12]I will destroy the people of Judah who are left. They had decided to go to Egypt and settle down there. But all of them will die in Egypt. They will die of war or hunger. All of them will die, from the least important of them to the most important. They will die of war or hunger. People will call down curses on them. They will be shocked at them. They will say bad things about them. And they will bring shame on them. [13]I will use war, hunger and plague to punish the Jews who live in Egypt. I punished Jerusalem in the same way.

[14]“None of the people of Judah who have gone to live in Egypt will escape. Not one of them will live to return to Judah. They long to return and live there. But only a few will escape from Egypt and go back.”

[15]All of the Jews who were living in Lower and Upper Egypt gathered to give me their answer. A large crowd had come together. It included men who knew that their wives were burning incense to other gods. Their wives were there with them.

All of them said to me, [16]“We won’t listen to the message you have spoken to us in the LORD’s name! [17]We will certainly do everything we said we would. We’ll burn incense to the goddess who is called the Queen of Heaven. We’ll pour out drink offerings to her. We’ll do just as we and our people before us did. Our kings and our officials also did it. All of us did it in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem. At that time we had plenty of food. We were well off. We didn’t suffer any harm.

[18]“But then we stopped burning incense to the Queen of Heaven. We stopped pouring out drink offerings to her. And ever since that time we haven’t had anything. Instead, we’ve been dying of war and hunger.”

[19]The women added, “We burned incense to the Queen of Heaven. We poured out drink offerings to her. And our husbands knew we were making cakes that looked like her. They knew we were pouring out drink offerings to her.”

[20]Then I spoke to all of the people who were answering me. I spoke to men and women alike. I said, [21]“Didn’t the LORD know you were burning incense in the towns of Judah? Didn’t he care that you were also doing it in the streets of Jerusalem? You and your people before you were doing it. Your kings and officials were doing it too. So were the rest of the people in the land.

22“The LORD couldn’t put up with the evil things you were doing anymore.
He hated the things you did. So people called down curses on your land. It
became a dry and empty desert. No one lived there. And that’s the way it still is
today.

23“You have burned incense to other gods. You have sinned against the LORD.
You haven’t obeyed him or his law. You haven’t followed his rules. You
haven’t lived up to the terms of the covenant he made with you. That’s why all
of this trouble has come on you. You have seen it with your own eyes.”

24Then I spoke to all of the people. That included the women. I said, “All you
people of Judah in Egypt, listen to the LORD’s message. 25The LORD who rules
over all is the God of Israel. He says, ‘You and your wives have done what you
promised you would do. You said, “We will certainly keep the promises we
made to the Queen of Heaven. We’ll burn incense to her. We’ll pour out drink
offerings to her.” ’

“Go ahead then. Do what you said you would! Keep your promises! 26But
listen to the LORD’s message. Listen, all you Jews living in Egypt. ‘I take an
oath in my own great name,’ says the LORD. ‘I promise that no one from Judah
who lives anywhere in Egypt will ever again pray in my name. None of them
will ever take an oath and say, “You can be sure that the LORD and King is
alive.”

27“ ‘I am watching over them to do them harm and not good. The Jews in
Egypt will die of war and hunger until all of them are destroyed. 28Some will
not be killed. They will return to Judah from Egypt. But they will be very few.
Then all of the people of Judah who came to live in Egypt will know the truth.
They will know whether what I say or what they say will come true.

29“ ‘I will give you a miraculous sign that I will punish you in this place,’
announces the LORD. ‘Then you can be sure that my warnings of harm against
you will come true.’ 30The LORD says, ‘I am going to hand Pharaoh Hophra
over to his enemies who want to take his life. In the same way, I handed King
Zedekiah over to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylonia. He was the enemy
who wanted to take Zedekiah’s life.’ ” Hophra was king of Egypt.

The LORD Speaks to Baruch

Jeremiah 45

1 I, the prophet Jeremiah, talked to Baruch, the son of Neriah. It was in the
fourth year that Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, was king of Judah. But it was
after Baruch had written down on a scroll the words I was telling him to write.
I said, 2 "The LORD is the God of Israel. Baruch, he says to you, 3 'You have
said, "How terrible it is for me! The LORD has added sorrow to my pain. I'm
worn out from all of my groaning. I can't find any rest." ' "

4 The LORD said, "Tell Baruch, 'I say, "I will destroy what I have built up. I
will pull up by the roots what I have planted. I will do it all through the earth.
5 So should you long for great things for yourself? Do not long for them. I will
bring trouble on everyone," announces the LORD. "But no matter where you go,
I will let you escape with your life." ' "

The LORD's Message About the Nations

Jeremiah 46

[1]A message came to me from the LORD. It was about the nations.

A Message About Egypt

[2]Here is what the LORD says about Egypt.

Here is his message against the army of Pharaoh Neco. He was king of Egypt. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylonia, won the battle over his army. That happened at Carchemish on the Euphrates River. It was in the fourth year that Jehoiakim was king of Judah. He was the son of Josiah.

The message says,

[3]"Egyptians, prepare your shields!
Prepare large and small shields alike!
March out for battle!
[4]Get the horses and chariots ready to ride!
Take up your battle positions!
Put your helmets on!
Shine up your spears!
Put on your armor!
[5]What do I see?
The Egyptians are terrified.
They are pulling back.
Their soldiers are losing.
They run away as fast as they can.
They do not look back.
There is terror on every side,"

announces the LORD.

[6]"Those who run fast can't get away.

Those who are strong can’t escape.
In the north by the Euphrates River
they trip and fall.

7“Who is this that rises like the Nile River?
Who rises like rivers of rushing waters?
8Egypt rises like the Nile River.
It rises like rivers of rushing waters.
Egypt says, ‘I will rise and cover the earth.
I’ll destroy cities and their people.’
9Charge, you horses!
Drive fast, you chariot drivers!
March on, you soldiers!
March on, you men of Cush and Put who carry shields.
March on, you men of Lydia who draw bows.
10But that day belongs to me.
I am the LORD who rules over all.
It is a day for me to pay back my enemies.
The sword will eat until it is satisfied.
It will drink until it has no more thirst for blood.
I am the Lord. I am the LORD who rules over all.
I will offer a sacrifice.
I will offer it in the land of the north
by the Euphrates River.

11“People of Egypt,
go up to Gilead and get some healing lotion.
But no matter what you try, you will not be healed.
There isn’t any healing for you.
12The nations will hear about your shame.
Your cries of pain will fill the earth.
One soldier will trip over another.
Both of them will fall down together.”

13Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylonia, was coming to attack Egypt. Here is the message the LORD spoke to me about it. He said,

14“Egyptians, here is what I want you to announce in your land.
Announce it in Migdol.
Also announce it in Memphis and Tahpanhes.

Say, ‘Take up your battle positions! Get ready!
The sword eats up those who are around you.’
15 Why are your soldiers lying on the ground?
They can’t stand, because I bring them down.
16 They will trip again and again.
They will fall over one another.
They will say, ‘Get up. Let’s go back home.
Let’s return to our own people and our own lands.
Let’s get away from the swords
that will bring us great harm.’
17 The Egyptian soldiers will cry out,
‘Pharaoh is our king. But he’s only a loud noise.
He has missed his chance to win the battle.’

18 “I am the King.
My name is The LORD Who Rules Over All.
Someone will come who is like Mount Tabor among the mountains.
He is like Mount Carmel by the Mediterranean Sea.
And that is just as sure as I am alive,”
announces the King.
19 “So pack your belongings, you who live in Egypt.
You will be taken away from your land.
Memphis will be completely destroyed.
Its buildings will be broken down.
No one will live there.

20 “Egypt is like a beautiful young cow.
But Nebuchadnezzar is coming against her from the north.
He will bite her like a fly.
21 Hired soldiers are in Egypt’s army.
They are like fat calves.
All of them will turn and run away.
They will not hold their positions.
The day of trouble is coming on them.
The time for them to be punished is near.
22 The Egyptians will hiss like a snake that is trying to get away.
A powerful army will advance against them.
Their enemies will come against them with axes.
They will be like those who cut down trees.
23 Egypt is like a thick forest.
But they will chop it down,”

announces the LORD.

"There are more of them than there are locusts.
In fact, they can't even be counted.
24The nation of Egypt will be put to shame.
It will be handed over to the people of the north."

25The LORD who rules over all is the God of Israel. He says, "I am about to punish Amon, the god of Thebes. I will also punish Pharaoh. I will punish Egypt and its gods and kings. And I will punish those who depend on Pharaoh. 26I will hand them over to those who are trying to kill them. I will give them to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylonia, and his officers. But later, many people will live in Egypt again as in times past," announces the LORD.

27"People of Jacob, do not be afraid.
You are my servant.
Israel, do not be terrified.
I will bring you safely out of a place far away.
I will bring your children back
from the land where they were taken.
Your people will have peace and security again.
And no one will make them afraid.
28People of Jacob, do not be afraid.
You are my servant.
I am with you," announces the LORD.
"I will completely destroy all of the nations
among which I scatter you.
But I will not completely destroy you.
I will correct you. But I will be fair.
I will punish you in a way that is fair and right."

A Message About the Philistines

Jeremiah 47

1 A message came to me from the LORD. It was about the Philistines before
Pharaoh attacked Gaza.

2 The LORD said,

"The armies of Babylonia are like waters rising in the north.
They will become a great flood.
They will flow over the land and everything in it.
They will flow over the towns and those who live in them.
The people will cry out.
All those who live in the land will sob.
3 They will sob when they hear galloping horses.
They will sob at the noise of enemy chariots.
They will sob at the rumble of their wheels.
Fathers will not even try to help their children.
Their hands will not be able to help them.
4 The day has come
to destroy all of the Philistines.
The time has come to cut off all those
who could help Tyre and Sidon.
I am about to destroy the Philistines.
I will not leave anyone alive
who came from the coasts of Crete.
5 The people of Gaza will be so sad
they will shave their heads.
And Ashkelon's people will be silent.
You who remain on the flatlands,
how long will you cut yourselves?

6 " 'Sword of the LORD!' you cry out.
'How long will it be until you rest?
Return to the place you came from.

Stop killing us! Be still!’
7 But how can my sword rest
when I have given it a command?
I have ordered it
to attack Ashkelon and the Philistine coast.”

A Message About Moab

Jeremiah 48

[1]Here is what the LORD says about Moab.

The LORD who rules over all is the God of Israel. He says,

"How terrible it will be for Nebo!
It will be destroyed.
Kiriathaim will be captured.
It will be put to shame.
Its fort will be broken down.
It will be put to shame.
[2]Moab will not be praised anymore.
In Heshbon people will plan its fall from power.
They will say, 'Come. Let's put an end to that nation.'
City of Madmen, you too will be silent because you are sad.
My sword will hunt you down.
[3]Listen to the cries from Horonaim.
The town is being completely destroyed.
[4]Moab will be broken.
Her little ones will cry out.
[5]The people go up the road to Luhith.
They are sobbing bitterly as they go.
Loud cries are heard on the road down to Horonaim.
People cry out because the town is being destroyed.
[6]People of Moab run away! Run for your lives!
Become like a lonely bush in the desert.
[7]You trust in the things you can do.
You trust in your riches.
So you too will be taken away as prisoners.
Your god Chemosh will be carried away.
So will its priests and officials.
[8]The one who is going to destroy you

will come against every town.
Not even one of them will escape.
The valley and the high flatlands
will be destroyed.
I, the LORD, have spoken.
9Sprinkle salt all over Moab.
It will be completely destroyed.
Its towns will be a dry and empty desert.
No one will live in them.

10"May a person who is lazy when he does my work
be under my curse!
May anyone who keeps his sword from killing
be under my curse!

11"Moab has been at peace and rest from its earliest days.
It is like wine that has not been shaken up.
It has not been poured from one jar to another.
Moab's people have not been taken away from their land.
They are like wine that tastes as it always did.
Its smell has not changed at all.
12But other days are coming,"
announces the LORD.
"At that time I will send people who pour wine from jars.
They will pour Moab out like wine.
They will empty its jars.
They will smash its jugs.
13Then Moab's people will be ashamed of their god Chemosh.
They will be ashamed just as the people of Israel were
when they trusted in their god at Bethel.

14"How can you say, 'We are soldiers.
We are men who are brave in battle'?
15Moab will be destroyed.
Its enemies will march into its towns.
Her finest young men will die in battle,"
announces the King.
His name is The LORD Who Rules Over All.
16"The fall of Moab is near.
Its time of trouble will come quickly.
17All you who live around it, sob over its people.

Be sad, you who know how famous Moab is.
Say, ‘Its powerful ruler’s rod is broken!
His glorious staff is smashed.’

18“Come down from your glorious city, you who live in Dibon.
Come and sit on the thirsty ground.
The one who destroys your country
will come up and attack you.
Your enemies will destroy your cities
that have high walls around them.
19Stand by the road and watch,
you who live in Aroer.
Ask the men who are running away.
Ask the women who are escaping.
Ask them, ‘What has happened?’
20Moab has been put to shame.
It has been destroyed.
Sob and cry out!
Tell everyone Moab has been destroyed.
Announce it by the Arnon River.
21The high flatlands have been judged.
So have Holon, Jahzah and Mephaath.
22Dibon, Nebo and Beth Diblathaim have been judged.
23So have Kiriathaim, Beth Gamul and Beth Meon.
24Kerioth and Bozrah have also been judged.
And so have all of the towns of Moab, far and near alike.
25Moab’s power is gone.
Its strength is broken,”

announces the LORD.

26“Moab’s people think they are better than I am.
So let their enemies make them drunk.
Let the people get sick and throw up.
Let them roll around in the mess they have made.
Let people laugh at them.
27Moab, you laughed at Israel, didn’t you?
Were Israel’s people caught among robbers?
Is that why you shake your head at them?
Is that why you make fun of them
every time you talk about them?

[28]Leave your towns,
you who live in Moab.
Go and live among the rocks.
Be like a dove that makes its nest
at the mouth of a cave.

[29]"We have heard all about Moab's pride.
We have heard how very proud they are.
They think they are so much better than others.
Their pride reaches deep down inside their hearts.
[30]I know how rude they are.
But it will not get them anywhere,"

announces the LORD.

"Their bragging does not accomplish anything.
[31]So I cry out over Moab.
I cry for all of Moab's people.
I groan for the men of Kir Hareseth.
[32]I sob over you as Jazer sobs,
you vines of Sibmah.
Your branches used to spread out.
They went all the way down to the Dead Sea.
They reached as far as the sea of Jazer.
The one who destroys your country
has taken away your grapes and ripe fruit.
[33]Joy has left your orchards.
Gladness is gone from your fields.
I have stopped the flow of juice from your winepresses.
No one stomps on your grapes with shouts of joy.
There are shouts.
But they are not shouts of joy.

[34]"The sound of their cry rises from Heshbon.
It rises as far as Elealeh and Jahaz.
It rises from Zoar.
It goes all the way to Horonaim and Eglath Shelishiyah.
Even the waters at Nimrim are dried up.
[35]In Moab people sacrifice offerings on the high places.
They burn incense to their gods.
But I will put an end to those people,"

announces the LORD.

36“Like a flute my heart sings a song of sadness for Moab.
It sings like a flute for the men of Kir Hareseth.
The wealth they had gotten is gone.
37Every head is shaved.
Every beard is cut off.
Every hand is cut.
And every waist is covered with black cloth.
38Sobbing is the only sound in Moab.
It is heard on all of its roofs.
It is heard in the market places.
I have broken Moab
like a jar that no one wants,”

announces the LORD.

39“How broken Moab is! How the people sob!
They turn away from others
because they are so ashamed.
All those who are around them laugh at them.
They are shocked at them.”

40The LORD says,

“Look! Nebuchadnezzar is like an eagle diving down.
He is spreading his wings over Moab.
41Kerioth will be captured.
Its forts will be taken.
At that time the hearts of Moab’s soldiers will tremble in fear.
They will be like the heart of a woman having a baby.
42Moab will be destroyed as a nation.
That is because its people thought
they were better than I am.
43You people of Moab,”

announces the LORD,

“terror, a pit and a trap are waiting for you.
44Anyone who runs away from the terror
will fall into the pit.
Anyone who climbs out of the pit
will be caught in the trap.
The time is coming
when I will punish Moab,”

announces the LORD.

45“In the shadow of Heshbon
those who are trying to escape stand helpless.
A fire has blazed out from Heshbon.
Flames have come out from Sihon’s city.
It burns the foreheads of Moab’s people.
It burns the skulls of those who brag loudly.
46How terrible it will be for you, Moab!
Those who worship Chemosh are destroyed.
Your sons are being taken to another country.
Your daughters are taken away as prisoners.

47“But in days to come
I will bless Moab with great success again,”
announces the LORD.

That’s the report about how the LORD said he would judge Moab.

A Message About Ammon

Jeremiah 49

[1]Here is what the LORD says about the people of Ammon.

He says,

"Doesn't Israel have any sons?
Doesn't Israel have anyone
to take over the family property?
Then why has the god Molech taken over Gad?
Why do those who worship him live in its towns?
[2]But a new day is coming,"
announces the LORD.
"At that time I will sound the battle cry.
I will sound it against Rabbah in the land of Ammon.
It will become a pile of broken-down buildings.
The villages that are around it will be set on fire.
Then Israel will drive out
those who drove her out,"

says the LORD.

[3]"Heshbon, sob over Ai! It is destroyed!
Cry out, you who live in Rabbah!
Put on black clothes and sob.
Run here and there inside the walls.
Your god Molech will be carried away.
So will its priests and officials.
[4]Why do you brag about your valleys?
You brag that they produce so many crops.
You are an unfaithful country.
You trust in your riches. You say,
'Who will attack me?'
[5]I will bring terror on you.
It will come from all those who are around you,"

announces the Lord. He is the LORD who rules over all.

"Every one of you will be driven away.
No one will bring back those who escape.

6"But after that, I will bless the people of Ammon
with great success again,"

announces the LORD.

A Message About Edom

7Here is what the LORD says about Edom.

The LORD who rules over all says,

"Isn't there wisdom in the town of Teman anymore?
Can't those who are wise give advice?
Has their wisdom disappeared completely?
8Turn around and run away, you who live in Dedan.
Hide in deep caves.
I will bring trouble on Esau's family line.
I will do it at the time I punish them.
9Edom, suppose grape pickers came to harvest your vines.
They would still leave a few grapes.
Suppose robbers came at night.
They would steal only as much as they wanted.
10But I will strip everything away from Esau's people.
I will uncover their hiding places.
They will not be able to hide anywhere.
Their children, relatives and neighbors will die.
Then Esau's people will be gone.
11Leave your children whose fathers have died.
I will watch over them.
Your widows can also trust in me."

12The LORD says, "What if those who do not have to drink the cup must drink it anyway? Then shouldn't you be punished? You will certainly be punished. You must drink the cup. 13I make a promise with an oath in my own name.

Bozrah will be destroyed," announces the LORD. "People will be shocked at it. They will bring shame on it. They will call down curses on it. And all of its towns will be destroyed forever."

14 I've heard a message from the LORD.
A messenger was sent to the nations. The LORD told him to say,
"Gather yourselves together to attack Edom!
Prepare for battle!"

15 The LORD says to Edom, "I will make you weak among the nations.
They will look down on you.
16 You live in the safety of the rocks.
You live on top of the hills.
But the terror you stir up has now turned against you.
Your proud heart has tricked you.
You build your nest as high as an eagle does.
But I will bring you down from there,"

announces the LORD.

17 "People of Edom,
all those who pass by you will be shocked.
They will make fun of you
because of all of your wounds.
18 Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed.
So were the towns that were near them,"

says the LORD.

"You will be just like them.
No one will live in your land.
No one will stay there even for a short time.

19 "I will be like a lion coming up
from the bushes by the Jordan River.
I will hunt in rich grasslands.
I will chase you from your land in an instant.
What nation will I choose to do it?
Which one will I appoint?
Is anyone like me?
Who would dare to argue with me?
What leader can stand against me?"
20 So listen to what the LORD has planned
against the people of Edom.

Hear what he has planned against those who live in Teman.
Edom's young people will be dragged away.
The LORD will completely destroy
their grasslands because of them.
21When the earth hears Edom fall, it will shake.
The people's cries will be heard all the way to the Red Sea.
22Look! An enemy is coming.
It's like an eagle diving down.
It will spread its wings over Bozrah.
At that time the hearts of Edom's soldiers
will tremble in fear.
They'll be like the heart of a woman having a baby.

A Message About Damascus

23Here is what the LORD says about Damascus. He says,

"The people of Hamath and Arpad are terrified.
They have heard bad news.
They have lost all hope.
They are troubled like the rolling sea.
24The people of Damascus have become weak.
They have turned to run away.
Panic has taken hold of them.
Suffering and pain have taken hold of them.
Their pain is like the pain of a woman having a baby.
25Why hasn't the famous city been deserted?
It is the town I take delight in.
26You can be sure its young men will fall dead in the streets.
All of its soldiers will be put to death at that time,"
announces the LORD who rules over all.
27"I will set the walls of Damascus on fire.
It will burn up the strong towers of King Ben-Hadad."

A Message About Kedar and Hazor

28Here is what the LORD says about the land of Kedar and the kingdoms of

Hazor. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylonia, was planning to attack them.

The LORD says to the armies of Babylonia,

"Prepare for battle. Attack Kedar.
Destroy the people of the east.
29 Their tents and flocks will be taken away from them.
Their tents will be carried off.
All of their goods and camels will be stolen.
People will shout to them,
'There is terror on every side!'

30 "Run away quickly!
You who live in Hazor, stay in deep caves,"
announces the LORD.
"Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylonia,
has made plans against you.
He has decided to attack you.

31 "Armies of Babylonia, prepare for battle.
Attack a nation that feels secure.
Its people do not have any worries,"
announces the LORD.
"That nation does not have gates or heavy metal bars.
Its people live all alone.
32 Their camels will be stolen.
Their large herds will be taken away.
I will scatter to the winds those who are in places far away.
I will bring trouble on them from every side,"
announces the LORD.

33 "Hazor will become a home for wild dogs.
It will be a dry and empty desert forever.
No one will live in that land.
No one will stay there even for a short time."

A Message About Elam

34 A message came to me from the LORD. It was about Elam. It came shortly
after Zedekiah became king of Judah.

35 The LORD who rules over all said,

"Elam's bow is the secret of its strength.
But I will break it.
36 I will bring the four winds against Elam.
I will bring them from all four directions.
I will scatter Elam's people to the four winds.
They will be taken away
to every nation on earth.
37 I will use Elam's enemies to smash them.
Those who are trying to take their lives will kill them.
I will bring trouble on Elam's people.
My anger will burn against them,"

announces the LORD.

"I will chase them with swords.
I will hunt them down
until I have destroyed them.
38 I will set up my throne in Elam.
I will destroy its king and officials,"

announces the LORD.

39 "But in days to come I will bless Elam
with great success again,"

announces the LORD.

A Message About Babylonia

Jeremiah 50

1 Here is the message the LORD spoke through me about the city of Babylon
and the land of Babylonia. He said,

2 “Announce this message among the nations.
Lift up a banner.
Let the nations hear the message.
Do not keep anything back.
Say, ‘Babylon will be captured.
The god Bel will be put to shame.
Marduk will be filled with terror.
Babylon’s gods will be put to shame.
The gods its people made will be filled with terror.’
3 A nation from the north will attack it.
That nation will destroy Babylonia.
No one will live there.
People and animals alike will run away.

4 “A new day is coming,”
announces the LORD.
“At that time the people of Israel and Judah will gather together.
They will come in tears to me.
I am the LORD their God.
5 They will ask how to get to Zion.
Then they will turn their faces toward it.
They will come and join themselves to me.
They will enter into the covenant I make with them.
It will last forever.
It will never be forgotten.

6 “My people have been like lost sheep.
Their shepherds have led them down the wrong path.
They have caused them to wander in the mountains.
They have wandered over mountains and hills.

They have forgotten that I am their true resting place.
[7]Everyone who found them destroyed them.
Their enemies said, ‘We aren’t guilty.
They sinned against the LORD.
He gave them everything they needed.
He has always been Israel’s hope.’

[8]“People of Judah, run away from Babylon.
Leave the land of Babylonia.
Be like the goats that lead the flock.
[9]I will stir up great nations
that will join forces against Babylon.
I will bring them from the land of the north.
They will take up their battle positions against Babylon.
They will come from the north and capture it.
Their arrows will be like skilled soldiers.
They will not miss their mark.
[10]So the riches of Babylonia will be taken away.
All those who steal from it will have more than enough,”
announces the LORD.

[11]“People of Babylonia, you have stolen what belongs to me.
That has made you glad and full of joy.
You dance around like a young cow on a threshing floor.
You neigh like stallions.
[12]Because of that, you will bring great shame on your land.
Your whole nation will be dishonored.
It will become the least important of the nations.
It will become a dry and empty desert.
[13]Because I am angry with it, no one will live there.
It will be completely deserted.
All those who pass by it will be shocked.
They will make fun of it because of all of its wounds.

[14]“All you who draw the bow,
take up your battle positions around Babylon.
Shoot at it! Do not spare any arrows!
Its people have sinned against me.
[15]Shout against them on every side!
They are giving up.

The towers of the city are falling.
Its walls are being pulled down.
I am paying its people back.
So pay them back yourselves.
Do to them what they have done to others.
16 Do not leave anyone in Babylonia to plant the fields.
Do not leave anyone to harvest the grain.
Let each of them return to his own people.
Let him run away to his own land.
If he doesn't, his enemy's sword will bring him great harm.

17 "Israel is like a scattered flock
that lions have chased away.
The first lion that ate them up
was the king of Assyria.
The last one that broke their bones
was Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylonia."

18 The LORD who rules over all is the God of Israel. He says,

"I punished the king of Assyria.
In the same way, I will punish
the king of Babylonia and his land.
19 But I will bring Israel back to their own grasslands.
I will feed them on Mount Carmel and in Bashan.
I will satisfy their hunger
on the hills of Ephraim and Gilead.
20 A new day is coming,"
announces the LORD.
"At that time people will search for Israel's guilt.
But they will not find any.
They will search for Judah's sins.
But they will not find any.
That is because I will forgive the people I have spared.

21 "Enemies of Babylonia, attack their land of Merathaim.
Make war against those who live in Pekod.
Chase them and kill them. Destroy them completely,"
announces the LORD.
"Do everything I have commanded you to do.

[22]The noise of battle is heard in the land.
It is the noise of a great city being destroyed!
[23]It has been broken to pieces.
It was the hammer that broke the whole earth.
How empty Babylonia is among the nations!
[24]Babylonia, I set a trap for you.
And you were caught before you knew it.
You were found and captured.
That is because you opposed me.
[25]I have opened up my storeroom.
I have brought out the weapons I use when I am angry.
I am the LORD and King who rules over all.
I have work to do in the land of the Babylonians.
[26]So come against it from far away.
Open up its storerooms.
Stack everything up like piles of grain.
Completely destroy that country.
Do not leave anyone alive there.
[27]Kill all of its people.
Let them die in battle.
How terrible it will be for them!
Their time to be judged has come.
Now they will be punished.
[28]Listen to those who have escaped.
Listen to those who have returned from Babylonia.
They are announcing in Zion
how I have paid Babylonia back.
I have paid it back for destroying my temple.

[29]"Send for men who are armed with bows and arrows.
Send them against Babylon.
Set up camp all around it.
Do not let anyone escape.
Pay it back for what its people have done.
Do to them what they have done to others.
They have dared to disobey me.
I am the Holy One of Israel.
[30]You can be sure its young men will fall dead in the streets.
All of its soldiers will be put to death at that time,"

announces the LORD.

31 “Proud Babylonians, I am against you,”
announces the Lord.
The LORD who rules over all says,
“Your day to be judged has come.
It is time for you to be punished.
32 You proud people will trip and fall.
No one will help you up.
I will start a fire in your towns.
It will burn up everyone who is around you.”

33 The LORD who rules over all says,

“The people of Israel are being treated badly.
So are the people of Judah.
Those who have captured them are holding them.
They refuse to let them go.
34 But I am strong and will save them.
My name is The LORD Who Rules Over All.
I will stand up for them.
I will bring peace and rest to their land.
But I will bring trouble to those who live in Babylonia.

35 “A sword is coming against the Babylonians!”
announces the LORD.
“It is coming against those who live in Babylonia.
It is coming against their officials and wise men.
36 A sword is coming against their prophets.
But they are not really prophets at all!
So they will look foolish.
A sword is coming against their soldiers!
They will be filled with terror.
37 A sword is coming against their horses and chariots!
It is coming against all of the hired soldiers in their armies.
They will become like weak women.
A sword is coming against their treasures!
They will be stolen.
38 There will not be any rain for their rivers.
So they will dry up.
Those things will happen because their land is full of statues of gods.
Those gods will go crazy with terror.

[39]“Desert creatures and hyenas will live in Babylon.
And so will owls.
People will never live there again.
It will not be lived in for all time to come.
[40]I destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.
I also destroyed the towns that were near them,”
announces the LORD.
“Babylonia will be just like them.
No one will live there.
No one will stay there even for a short time.

[41]“Look! An army is coming from the north.
I am stirring up a great nation and many kings.
They are coming from a land that is very far away.
[42]Their soldiers are armed with bows and spears.
They are mean.
They do not show any mercy at all.
They come riding in on their horses.
They sound like the roaring ocean.
They are lined up for battle.
They are coming to attack you, city of Babylon.
[43]The king of Babylonia has heard reports about them.
His hands can’t help him.
He is in great pain.
It is like the pain of a woman having a baby.
[44]I will be like a lion coming up from the bushes by the Jordan River.
I will hunt in rich grasslands.
I will chase the people of Babylon from their land in an instant.
What nation will I choose to do it?
Which one will I appoint?
Is anyone like me? Who would dare to argue with me?
What leader can stand against me?”
[45]So listen to what the LORD has planned against Babylon.
Hear what he has planned against the land of the Babylonians.
Their young people will be dragged away.
The LORD will completely destroy their grasslands because of them.
[46]When the earth hears that Babylonia has been captured,
it will shake.
The people’s cries will be heard among the nations.

Jeremiah 51

[1]The LORD says,

"I will stir up the spirits of destroyers.
They will march out against Babylonia and its people.
[2]I will send other nations against it
to separate the straw from the grain.
I will send them to destroy Babylonia completely.
They will oppose it on every side.
At that time it will be destroyed.
[3]Do not let its soldiers get their bows ready to use.
Do not let them put on their armor.
Do not spare their young men.
Destroy their armies completely.
[4]They will fall down dead in Babylon.
They will receive deadly wounds in its streets.
[5]The land of Israel and Judah is full of guilt.
Its people have sinned against me.
But I have not deserted them. I am their God.
I am the LORD who rules over all.
I am the Holy One of Israel.

[6]"People of Judah, run away from Babylonia!
Run for your lives!
Do not be destroyed because of the sins of its people.
It is time for me to pay them back.
I will punish them for what they have done.
[7]Babylon was like a gold cup in my hand.
That city made the whole earth drunk.
The nations drank its wine.
So now they have gone crazy.
[8]Babylon will suddenly fall and be broken.
Sob over it!
Get healing lotion for its pain.
Perhaps it can be healed.

9 “The nations say, ‘We would have healed Babylon.
But it can’t be healed.
So let’s leave it. Let’s each go to our own land.
Babylon’s sins reach all the way to the skies.
They rise up as high as the clouds.’

10 “The people of Judah say,
‘The LORD has made things right for us again.
So come. Let’s tell in Zion
what the LORD our God has done.’

11 “I have stirred up you kings of the Medes.
So sharpen your arrows!
Get your shields!
I plan to destroy Babylon.
I will pay the Babylonians back.
They have destroyed my temple.
12 Lift up a banner! Attack Babylon’s walls!
Put more guards on duty!
Station more of them to watch over you!
Hide and wait to attack them!
I will do what I have planned.
I will do what I have decided to do
against the people of Babylon.
13 You who live by the rivers of Babylon,
your end has come.
You who are rich in treasures,
it is time for you to be destroyed.
14 I am the LORD who rules over all.
I have made a promise with an oath in my own name.
I have said, ‘I will certainly fill your land with soldiers.
They will be as many as a huge number of locusts.
They will win the battle over you.
They will shout for joy.’

15 “I used my power to make the earth.
I used my wisdom to set the world in place.
I used my understanding to spread the heavens out.
16 When I thunder, the waters in the heavens roar.
I make clouds rise from one end of the earth to the other.
I send lightning with the rain.

I bring out the wind from my storerooms.

17 “No one has any sense.
No one knows anything.
Everyone who works with gold is put to shame
by his wooden gods.
His metal gods are fakes.
They can’t even breathe.
18 They are worthless. People make fun of them.
When I judge them, they will be destroyed.
19 I am not like them. I am the God of Jacob.
I give my people everything they need.
I can do it because I made everything, including Israel.
It is the nation that belongs to me.
My name is The LORD Who Rules Over All.

20 “Babylonia, you are my war club.
You are my weapon for battle.
I use you to destroy nations.
I use you to wipe out kingdoms.
21 I use you to destroy horses and their riders.
I use you to destroy chariots and their drivers.
22 I use you to destroy men and women.
I use you to destroy old people and young people.
I use you to destroy young men and young women.
23 I use you to destroy shepherds and their flocks.
I use you to destroy farmers and their oxen.
I use you to destroy governors and officials.

24 “Judah, I will pay Babylon back. You will see it with your own eyes. I will pay back all those who live in Babylonia. I will pay them back for all of the wrong things they have done in Zion,” announces the LORD.

25 “Babylonia, I am against you.
Your kingdom is like a destroying mountain.
You have destroyed the whole earth,”

announces the LORD.

“I will reach out my hand against you.
I will roll you off the cliffs.

I will make you like a mountain that has been burned up.
[26]No rock will be taken from you to be used
as the most important stone for a building.
No stones will be taken from you
to be used for a foundation.
Your land will be empty forever,”
announces the LORD.

[27]“Nations, lift up a banner in the land of Babylonia!
Blow a trumpet among yourselves!
Prepare yourselves for battle against Babylonia.
Send the kingdoms
of Ararat, Minni and Ashkenaz against it.
Appoint a commander against it.
Send many horses against it.
Let them be as many as a huge number of locusts.
[28]Prepare yourselves for battle against Babylonia.
Prepare the kings of the Medes.
Prepare their governors and all of their officials.
Prepare all of the countries they rule over.
[29]The Babylonians tremble and shake with fear.
My plans against them stand firm.
I plan to destroy their land completely.
Then no one will live there.
[30]Babylon’s soldiers have stopped fighting.
They remain in their forts.
Their strength is all gone.
They have become like weak women.
Their buildings are set on fire.
The heavy metal bars on their gates are broken.
[31]One messenger after another
comes to the king of Babylonia.
All of them announce that
his entire city is captured.
[32]The places where people go across the Euphrates River have been captured.
The swamps have been set on fire.
And the soldiers are terrified.”

[33]The LORD who rules over all is the God of Israel. He says,

"The city of Babylon is like a threshing floor
when cattle are walking on it.
The time to destroy it will soon come."

34 The people of Jerusalem say,
"Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylonia, has destroyed us.
He has thrown us into a panic.
He has emptied us out like a jar.
Like a snake he has swallowed us up.
He has filled his stomach with our rich food.
Then he has spit us out of his mouth."
35 The people continue, "May the people of Babylon
pay for the harmful things they have done to us.
May those who live in Babylonia
pay for spilling the blood of our people."
That's what the people who live in Zion say.

36 So the LORD says,

"I will stand up for you.
I will pay the Babylonians back for what they did to you.
I will dry up their water supply.
I will make their springs run dry.
37 Babylon will have all of its buildings knocked down.
It will be a home for wild dogs.
No one will live there.
People will be shocked at it.
They will make fun of it.
38 All of its people roar like young lions.
They growl like lion cubs.
39 They are stirred up.
So I will set a big dinner in front of them.
I will make them drunk.
And they will shout and laugh.
But then they will lie down and die.
They will never wake up,"

announces the LORD.

40 "I will lead them down like lambs to be put to death.
They will be like rams and goats that have been killed.

41“Babylon will be captured!
The whole earth was very proud of it.
But it will be taken over by others!
The nations will be shocked when it falls.
42Babylon’s enemies will sweep over it like an ocean.
Like roaring waves they will cover it.
43The towns of Babylonia will be empty.
It will become a dry and desert land.
No one will live there.
No one will even travel through it.
44I will punish the god Bel in Babylon.
I will make Bel spit out what it has swallowed.
The nations will not come and worship it anymore.
And Babylon’s walls will fall down.

45“Come out of there, my people!
Run for your lives!
Run away from my burning anger.
46You will hear about terrible things
that are happening in Babylonia.
But do not lose hope. Do not be afraid.
You will hear one thing this year.
And you will hear something else next year.
You will hear about awful things in the land.
You will hear about one ruler fighting against another.
47I will punish the gods of Babylon.
That time will certainly come.
Then the whole land will be full of shame.
Its people will lie down and die there.
48So heaven and earth and everything in them will shout for joy.
They will be glad because of what will happen to Babylon.
Armies will attack it from the north.
And they will destroy it,”

announces the LORD.

49“Babylon’s people have killed my people Israel.
They have also killed people all over the earth.
So now Babylon itself must fall.
50You who have not been killed in the war against Babylon,

leave! Do not wait!
In a land far away remember me.
And think about Jerusalem.”

51The people of Judah reply, “No one honors us anymore.
People make fun of us.
Our faces are covered with shame.
People from other lands have entered
the holy places of the LORD’s house.”

52“But a new day is coming,” announces the LORD.
“At that time I will punish the gods of Babylon.
And all through its land
wounded people will groan.
53What if Babylon reached all the way to the sky?
What if it made its high walls even stronger?
I would still send destroyers against it,”
announces the LORD.

54“The noise of people screaming comes from Babylon.
A terrible sound comes from its land.
It is the sound of a mighty city being destroyed.
55I will destroy Babylon.
I will put an end to all of its noise.
Waves of enemies will sweep through it like great waters.
The roar of their voices will fill the air.
56A destroying army will come against Babylon.
The soldiers in the city will be captured.
Their bows will be broken.
I am the LORD God who pays people back.
I will pay them back in full.
57I will make Babylon’s officials and wise men drunk.
I will do the same thing to its governors, officers and soldiers.
They will lie down and die. They will never wake up,”
announces the King. His name is The LORD Who Rules Over All.

58The LORD who rules over all says,

“Babylon’s thick walls will fall down flat.

Its high gates will be set on fire.
The nations wear themselves out for no reason at all.
Their hard work will only be burned up in the flames.”

59I gave a message to the staff officer Seraiah, the son of Neriah. I told him to take it with him to Babylon. He went there with Zedekiah, the king of Judah. He left in the fourth year of Zedekiah’s rule. Neriah was the son of Mahseiah. 60I had written about all of the trouble that would come on Babylon. I had written it down on a scroll. It included everything that had been recorded about Babylon.

61I said to Seraiah, “When you get to Babylon, here’s what I want you to do. Make sure that you read all of these words out loud. 62Then say, ‘LORD, you have said you will destroy this place. You have said that no people or animals will live here. It will be empty forever.’

63“Finish reading the scroll. Tie a stone to it. Throw it into the Euphrates River. 64Then say, ‘In the same way, Babylon will sink down. It will never rise again. That is because I will bring such horrible trouble on it. And its people will fall along with it.’ ”

The words of Jeremiah end here.

Nebuchadnezzar Destroys Jerusalem

Jeremiah 52

[1]Zedekiah was 21 years old when he became king. He ruled in Jerusalem for 11 years. His mother's name was Hamutal. She was the daughter of Jeremiah. She was from Libnah.

[2]Zedekiah did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. He did just as Jehoiakim had done. [3]The enemies of Jerusalem and Judah attacked them because the LORD was angry. In the end he threw them out of his land.

Zedekiah refused to obey the king of Babylonia.

[4]Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylonia. He marched out against Jerusalem. All of his armies went with him. It was in the ninth year of the rule of Zedekiah. It was on the tenth day of the tenth month. The armies set up camp outside the city. They set up ladders and built ramps and towers all around it. [5]It was surrounded until the 11th year of King Zedekiah's rule.

[6]By the ninth day of the fourth month, there wasn't any food left in the city. So the people didn't have anything to eat. [7]Then the Babylonians broke through the city wall.

Judah's whole army ran away. They left the city at night. They went out through the gate between the two walls that were near the king's garden. They escaped even though the Babylonians surrounded the city. Judah's army ran toward the Arabah Valley.

[8]But the armies of Babylonia chased King Zedekiah. They caught up with him in the flatlands near Jericho. All of his soldiers were separated from him. They had scattered in every direction. [9]The king was captured.

He was taken to the king of Babylonia at Riblah. Riblah was in the land of Hamath. That's where Nebuchadnezzar decided how he would be punished. [10]At Riblah the king of Babylonia killed the sons of Zedekiah. He forced him to watch it with his own eyes. Nebuchadnezzar also killed all of the officials of Judah. [11]Then he poked out Zedekiah's eyes. He put him in bronze chains. And he took him to Babylon. There he put Zedekiah in prison until the day he died.

[12]Nebuzaradan served the king of Babylonia. In fact, he was commander of the royal guard. He came to Jerusalem. It was in the 19th year that Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylonia. It was on the tenth day of the fifth month.

[13]Nebuzaradan set the LORD's temple on fire. He also set fire to the royal palace and all of the houses in Jerusalem. He burned down every important building. [14]The armies of Babylonia broke down all of the walls around Jerusalem. That's what the commander told them to do.

[15]Some of the poorest people still remained in the city along with the others. But the commander Nebuzaradan took them away as prisoners. He also took the rest of the skilled workers. That included the people who had joined the king of Babylonia. [16]But Nebuzaradan left the rest of the poorest people of the land behind. He told them to work in the vineyards and fields.

[17]The armies of Babylonia destroyed the LORD's temple. They broke the bronze pillars into pieces. They broke up the bronze stands that could be moved around. And they broke up the huge bronze bowl. Then they carried all of the bronze away to Babylon.

[18]They also took away the pots, shovels, wick cutters, sprinkling bowls and dishes. They took away all of the bronze articles that were used for any purpose in the temple. [19]The commander of the royal guard took away the bowls and the shallow cups for burning incense. He took away the sprinkling bowls, the pots, the lampstands and the dishes. He took away the bowls that were used for drink offerings. So he took away everything that was made out of pure gold or silver.

[20]The bronze was more than anyone could weigh. It included the bronze from the two pillars. It included the bronze from the huge bowl and the 12 bronze bulls that were under it. It also included the stands. King Solomon had made all of those things for the LORD's temple.

[21]Each of the pillars was 27 feet high and 18 feet around. The pillars were hollow. The metal in each of them was three inches thick. [22]The bronze top of one pillar was seven and a half feet high. It was decorated with a set of bronze chains and pomegranates all around it. The other pillar was just like it. It also had pomegranates. [23]There were 96 pomegranates on the sides of each of the two tops. The total number of pomegranates above the bronze chains around each top was 100.

[24]The commander of the guard took many prisoners. They included the chief priest Seraiah and the priest Zephaniah who was under him. They also included the three men who guarded the temple doors. [25]Some people were still left in the city. The commander took as a prisoner the officer who was in charge of the fighting men. He took the seven men who gave advice to the king. He also took the secretary who was the chief officer in charge of getting the people of the land to serve in the army. And he took 60 of the secretary's men who were still in the city.

[26]The commander Nebuzaradan took all of them away. He brought them to the king of Babylonia at Riblah. [27]There the king had them put to death. Riblah was in the land of Hamath.

So the people of Judah were taken as prisoners. They were taken far away from their own land. [28]Here is the number of the people Nebuchadnezzar took to Babylon as prisoners.

In the seventh year of his rule, he took 3,023 Jews.

[29]In his 18th year,

he took 832 people from Jerusalem.

[30]In Nebuchadnezzar's 23rd year,

Nebuzaradan, the commander of the royal guard, took 745 Jews to Babylon.

The total number of people who were taken to Babylon was 4,600.

Jehoiachin Is Set Free

[31]Evil-Merodach set Jehoiachin, the king of Judah, free from prison. It was in the 37th year after Jehoiachin had been taken away to Babylon. It was also the year Evil-Merodach became king of Babylonia. It was on the 25th day of the 12th month. [32]Evil-Merodach spoke kindly to Jehoiachin. He gave him a place of honor. Other kings were with Jehoiachin in Babylon. But his place was more important than theirs.

[33]So Jehoiachin put his prison clothes away. For the rest of Jehoiachin's life the king of Babylonia provided what he needed. [34]The king did that for Jehoiachin day by day as long as he lived. He did it until the day Jehoiachin

died.

Lamentations

Lamentations 1
Lamentations 2
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Lamentations 5

Lamentations 1

[1]The city of Jerusalem is so empty!
It used to be full of people.
But now it's like a woman whose husband has died.
She used to be great among the nations.
She was like a queen among the kingdoms.
But now she is a slave.

[2]Jerusalem sobs bitterly at night.
Tears run down her cheeks.
None of her friends comforts her.
All those who were going to help her
have turned against her.
They have become her enemies.

[3]After Judah's people had suffered greatly,
they were taken away as prisoners.
Now they live among the nations.
They can't find any place to rest.
All those who were chasing them have caught up with them.
And they can't get away.

[4]The roads to Zion are empty.
No one travels to its appointed feasts.
All of the public places near its gates are deserted.
Its priests groan.
Its young women are sad.
And Zion itself sobs bitterly.

[5]Its enemies have become its masters.
They have an easy life.
The LORD has brought suffering to Jerusalem
because its people have committed so many sins.
Its children have been taken away as prisoners.
Their enemies have forced them to leave their homes.

[6]The city of Zion used to be full of glory.
But now its glory has faded away.

Its princes are like deer.
They can't find anything to eat.
They are almost too weak to get away
from those who hunt them down.

7 Jerusalem's people are suffering and wandering.
They remember all of the treasures
they used to have.
But they fell into the hands of their enemies.
And no one was there to help them.
Their enemies looked at them.
They laughed because Jerusalem had been destroyed.

8 Its people have committed many sins.
They have become polluted.
All those who honored Jerusalem now look down on it.
They look at it as if it were a naked woman.
The city groans and turns away in shame.

9 Her skirts are dirty.
She didn't think about how things might turn out.
Her fall from power amazed everyone.
And no one was there to comfort her.
She said, "LORD, please pay attention to how much I'm suffering.
My enemies have won the battle over me."

10 Jerusalem's enemies took away
all of its treasures.
Its people saw strangers
enter its temple.
The LORD had commanded them
not to do that.

11 All of Jerusalem's people groan
as they search for bread.
They trade their treasures for food
just to stay alive.
They say, "LORD, look at us.
Think about our condition.
Everyone looks down on us."

[12]They also say, “All of you who are passing by,
don’t you care about what has happened to us?
Just look at our condition.
Has anyone suffered the way we have?
The LORD has brought all of this on us.
He has made us suffer.
His anger has burned against us.

[13]“He sent fire down from heaven.
It went deep down into our very bones.
He spread a net to catch us by the feet.
He stopped us right where we were.
He made our city empty.
We are sick all the time.

[14]“We must carry the heavy load of our sins.
He tied it on us with his hands.
Our sins are heavy on our necks.
The Lord has taken away our strength.
He has handed us over to our enemies.
We can’t win the battle over them.

[15]“The Lord has refused to accept
any of our soldiers.
He has sent for an army
to crush our young men.
We are like grapes in the Lord’s winepress.
He has stomped on us,
even though we are his very own people.

[16]“That’s why we are sobbing.
Tears are flowing from our eyes.
No one is near to comfort us.
No one can heal our spirits.
Our children don’t have anything.
Our enemies are much too strong for us.”

[17]Zion reaches out its hands.
But no one is there to comfort its people.
The LORD has ordered that
the neighbors of Jacob’s people would become their enemies.

Jerusalem has become polluted among them.

18 Its people say, “The LORD always does what is right.
But we refused to obey his commands.
Listen, all of you nations.
Pay attention to how much we’re suffering.
Our young women and young men
have been taken away as prisoners.

19 “We called out to those who were going to help us.
But they turned against us.
Our priests and elders
died in the city.
They were searching for food
just to stay alive.

20 “LORD, see how upset we are!
We are suffering deep down inside.
Our hearts are troubled.
Again and again we have refused to obey you.
Outside the city, people are being killed with swords.
Inside, there is nothing but death.

21 “People have heard us groan.
But no one is here to comfort us.
Our enemies have heard about all of our troubles.
What you have done makes them happy.
So please judge them, just as you said you would.
Let them become like us.

22 “Please pay attention to all of their sinful ways.
Punish them as you have punished us.
You judged us because we had committed so many sins.
We groan all the time.
And our hearts are weak.”

Lamentations 2

[1]See how the Lord covered the city of Zion
with the cloud of his anger!
He threw Israel's glory down
from heaven to earth.
When he was angry, he turned his back
on his own city.

[2]Without pity the Lord swallowed up
all of the homes of Jacob's people.
When he was angry, he tore down
the forts of the people of Judah.
He brought their kingdom and its princes
down to the ground in dishonor.

[3]When he burned with anger,
he took away Israel's power.
He pulled back his powerful right hand
as the enemy approached.
His burning anger blazed out in Jacob's land.
It burned up everything that was near it.

[4]Like an enemy the Lord got his bow ready to use.
He had a sword in his right hand.
Like an enemy he destroyed
everything that used to be pleasing to him.
His anger blazed out like fire.
It burned up the homes in the city of Zion.

[5]The Lord was like an enemy.
He swallowed up Israel.
He swallowed up all of its palaces.
He destroyed its forts.
He filled the people of Judah
with sorrow and sadness.

[6]The LORD's temple was like a garden.

But he completely destroyed it.
He destroyed the place
where he used to meet with his people.
He made Zion's people forget
their appointed feasts and Sabbath days.
When he was very angry, he turned his back on
king and priest alike.

7 The Lord deserted his altar.
He left his temple.
He handed the walls of Jerusalem's palaces
over to its enemies.
They shouted loudly in the house of the LORD.
You would have thought it was the day
of an appointed feast.

8 The LORD decided to tear down
the walls around the city of Zion.
He measured out what he wanted to destroy.
Then he destroyed it with his powerful hand.
He made even its towers and walls sing songs of sadness.
All of them fell down.

9 Its gates sank down into the ground.
He broke their metal bars and destroyed them.
Its king and princes were taken away to other nations.
There is no law anymore.
Jerusalem's prophets no longer receive
visions from the LORD.

10 The elders of the city of Zion
sit silently on the ground.
They have sprinkled dust on their heads.
They've put on black clothes to show how sad they are.
The young women of Jerusalem
have bowed their heads toward the ground.

11 I've cried so much I can't see very well.
I'm suffering deep down inside.
My heart is broken
because my people are destroyed.
Children and babies are fainting

in the streets of the city.

12 They say to their mothers,
“Where can we find something to eat and drink?”
They faint like wounded soldiers
in the streets of the city.
Their lives are slipping away
in their mothers’ arms.

13 City of Jerusalem, what can I say about you?
What can I compare you to?
People of Zion, what are you like?
I want to comfort you.
Your wound is as deep as the ocean.
Who can heal you?

14 The visions of your prophets were lies.
They weren’t worth anything.
They didn’t show you the sins you had committed.
So that’s why you were captured.
The messages they gave you were lies.
They led you down the wrong path.

15 All those who pass by
clap their hands and make fun of you.
They laugh at you and shake their heads
at the city of Jerusalem.
They say, “Could that be the city
that was called perfect and beautiful?
Is that the city that brought joy to everyone on earth?”

16 All of your enemies open their mouths
wide against you.
They laugh at you and grind their teeth.
They say, “We have swallowed Jerusalem’s people up.
This is the day we’ve waited for.
And we’ve lived to see it.”

17 The LORD has done what he planned to do.
He has made what he said come true.
He gave the command long ago.

He has destroyed you without pity.
He has let your enemies laugh at you.
He has made them stronger than you are.

18 People in the city of Zion,
cry out from your heart to the Lord.
Let your tears flow like a river
day and night.
Don't stop at all.
Don't give your eyes any rest.

19 Get up. Cry out as the night begins.
Tell the Lord all of your troubles.
Lift up your hands to him.
Pray that the lives of your children will be spared.
At every street corner they faint
because they are so hungry.

20 Jerusalem says, "LORD, look at me.
Think about my condition.
Have you ever treated anyone else like this?
Should women have to eat their babies?
Should they eat the children they've taken care of?
Should priests and prophets be killed
in your own temple?

21 "Young people and old people alike
lie dead in the dust of my streets.
My young women and young men
have been killed with swords.
You killed them when you were angry.
You put them to death without pity.

22 "You sent for terrors to come against me on every side.
It was as if you were inviting people to enjoy a feast day.
Because you were angry, no one escaped.
No one was left alive.
I took good care of my children and brought them up.
But my enemies have destroyed them."

Lamentations 3

[1]I am a man who has suffered greatly.
The LORD has used the Babylonians
to punish our people.
[2]He has driven me away. He has made me walk
in darkness instead of light.
[3]He has turned his powerful hand against me.
He has done it again and again, all day long.

[4]He has worn my body out.
He has broken my bones.
[5]He has surrounded me and attacked me.
He has made me suffer bitterly.
He has made things hard for me.
[6]He has made me live in darkness
like those who are dead and gone.

[7]He has built walls around me. I can't escape.
He has put heavy chains on me.
[8]I call out and cry for help.
But he won't listen to me when I pray.
[9]He has put up a stone wall to block my way.
He has made my paths crooked.

[10]He has been like a bear waiting to attack me.
He has been like a lion hiding in the bushes.
[11]He has dragged me off the path.
He has torn me to pieces.
And he has left me helpless.
[12]He has gotten his bow ready to use.
He has shot his arrows at me.

[13]The arrows from his bag
have gone through my heart.
[14]My people laugh at me all the time.
They sing and make fun of me all day long.

15 The LORD has made my life bitter.
He has made me suffer bitterly.

16 He made me chew stones that broke my teeth.
He has walked all over me in the dust.
17 I have lost all hope of ever having any peace.
I've forgotten what good times are like.
18 So I say, "My glory has faded away.
My hope in the LORD is gone."

19 I remember how I suffered and wandered.
I remember how bitter my life was.
20 I remember it very well.
My spirit is very sad deep down inside me.
21 But here is something else I remember.
And it gives me hope.

22 The LORD loves us very much.
So we haven't been completely destroyed.
His loving concern never fails.
23 His great love is new every morning.
LORD, how faithful you are!
24 I say to myself, "The LORD is everything I will ever need.
So I will put my hope in him."

25 The LORD is good to those who put their hope in him.
He is good to those who look to him.
26 It is good when people wait quietly
for the LORD to save them.
27 It is good for a man to carry a heavy load of suffering
while he is young.

28 Let him sit alone and not say anything.
The LORD has placed that load on him.
29 Let him bury his face in the dust.
There might still be hope for him.
30 Let him turn his cheek toward those who would slap him.
Let him be filled with shame.

31 The Lord doesn't turn his back

on people forever.
32 He might bring suffering.
But he will also show loving concern.
How great his faithful love is!
33 He doesn't want to bring pain
or suffering to people.

34 Every time people crush prisoners under their feet,
the Lord knows all about it.
35 When people refuse to give a man his rights,
the Most High God knows it.
36 When people don't treat a man fairly,
the Lord knows it.

37 Suppose people order something to happen.
It won't happen unless the Lord has planned it.
38 Troubles and good things alike come to people
because the Most High God has commanded them to come.
39 A man who is still alive shouldn't blame God
when God punishes him for his sins.

40 Let's take a good look at the way we're living.
Let's return to the LORD.
41 Let's lift up our hands to God in heaven.
Let's pray to him with all our hearts.
42 Let's say, "We have sinned.
We've refused to obey you.
And you haven't forgiven us.

43 "You have covered yourself with the cloud of your anger.
You have chased us.
You have killed our people without pity.
44 You have covered yourself with the cloud of your anger.
Our prayers can't get through to you.
45 You have made us become like trash and garbage
among the nations.

46 "All of our enemies have opened their mouths wide
to swallow us up.
47 We are terrified and trapped.

We are broken and destroyed.”
48Streams of tears flow from my eyes.
That’s because my people are destroyed.

49Tears will never stop flowing from my eyes.
My eyes can’t get any rest.
50I’ll sob until the LORD looks down from heaven.
I’ll cry until he notices my tears.
51What I see brings pain to my spirit.
All of the people in my city are suffering so much.

52Those who were my enemies for no reason at all
hunted me down as if I were a bird.
53They tried to end my life
by throwing me into a deep pit.
They threw stones down at me.
54The water rose and covered my head.
I thought I was going to die.

55LORD, I called out to you.
I called out from the bottom of the pit.
56I prayed, “Please don’t close your ears
to my cry for help.”
And you heard my appeal.
57You came near when I called out to you.
You said, “Do not be afraid.”

58Lord, you stood up for me in court.
You saved my life and set me free.
59LORD, you have seen the wrong things
people have done to me.
Stand up for me again!
60You have seen how my enemies
have tried to get even with me.
You know all about their plans against me.

61LORD, you have heard them laugh at me.
You know all about their plans against me.
62You have heard my enemies
whispering among themselves.

They speak against me all day long.
63 Just look at them sitting and standing there!
They sing and make fun of me.

64 LORD, pay them back.
Punish them for what their hands have done.
65 Cover their minds with a veil.
Put a curse on them!
66 LORD, get angry with them and hunt them down.
Wipe them off the face of the earth.

Lamentations 4

[1]Look at how the gold has lost its brightness!
    See how dull the fine gold has become!
  The sacred jewels are scattered
    at every street corner.

[2]The priceless children of Zion
    were worth their weight in gold.
  But now they are thought of as clay pots
    made by the hands of a potter.

[3]Even wild dogs
    nurse their young pups.
  But my people are as mean
    as ostriches in the desert.

[4]When our babies get thirsty,
    their tongues stick to the roofs of their mouths.
  When our children beg for bread,
    no one gives them any.

[5]Those who once ate fine food
    are dying in the streets.
  Those who wore fancy clothes
    are now lying on piles of trash.

[6]My people have been punished
    more than Sodom was.
  It was destroyed in a moment.
    No one offered it a helping hand.

[7]Jerusalem's princes were brighter than snow.
    They were whiter than milk.
  Their bodies were redder than rubies.
    They looked like sapphires.

[8]But now they are blacker than coal.
No one even recognizes them in the streets.
Their skin is wrinkled on their bones.
It has become as dry as a stick.

[9]Those who have been killed with swords are better off
than those who have to die of hunger.
Those who are hungry waste away to nothing.
They don’t have any food from the fields.

[10]With their own hands, loving mothers
have had to cook even their own children.
They ate their children
when my people were destroyed.

[11]The LORD has become very angry.
He has poured out his burning anger.
He started a fire in Zion.
It burned up the very foundations.

[12]The kings of the earth couldn’t believe what was happening.
Neither could any of the world’s people.
Enemies actually attacked and entered
the gates of Jerusalem.

[13]It happened because Jerusalem’s prophets had sinned.
Its priests had done evil things.
All of them spilled the blood
of those who did what was right.

[14]Now those prophets and priests
have to feel their way along the streets
like people who are blind.
The blood of those they killed has made them “unclean.”
So no one dares even to touch their clothes.

[15]“Go away! You are ‘unclean’!”
people cry out to them.
“Go away! Get out of here!
Don’t touch us!”
So they run away and wander around.

Then people among the nations say,
“They can’t stay here anymore.”

16 The LORD himself has scattered them.
He doesn’t watch over them anymore.
No one shows the priests any respect.
No one honors the elders.

17 And that’s not all. Our eyes grew tired.
We looked for help that never came.
We watched from our towers.
We kept looking for a nation that couldn’t save us.

18 People hunted us down no matter where we went.
We couldn’t even walk in our streets.
Our end was near. We only had a few days to live.
Our end had come.

19 Those who were hunting us down were faster
than eagles in the sky.
They chased us over the mountains.
They hid and waited for us in the desert.

20 Zedekiah, the LORD’s anointed king, was our last hope.
But he was caught in their traps.
We thought he would keep us safe.
We expected to continue living among the nations.

21 People of Edom, be joyful.
You who live in the land of Uz, be glad.
But the cup of the LORD’s anger will also be passed to you.
Then you will become drunk.
Your clothes will be stripped off.

22 People of Zion, the time for you to be punished
will come to an end.
The LORD won’t keep you away from your land any longer.
But he will punish your sin, people of Edom.
He will show you the evil things you have done.

Lamentations 5

[1]LORD, think about what has happened to us.
Look at the shame our enemies have brought on us.
[2]The land you gave us has been turned over to outsiders.
Our homes have been given to strangers.
[3]Our fathers have been killed.
Our mothers don’t have husbands.
[4]We have to buy the water we drink.
We have to pay for the wood we use.
[5]Those who chase us are right behind us.
We’re tired. We can’t get any rest.
[6]We put ourselves under the control of Egypt and Assyria
just to get enough bread.
[7]Our people before us sinned.
And they are now dead.
We are being punished because of their sins.
[8]Slaves rule over us.
No one can set us free
from their powerful hands.
[9]We put our lives in danger just to get some bread to eat.
Robbers in the desert might kill us with their swords.
[10]Our skin is as hot as an oven.
We are so hungry we’re burning up with fever.
[11]Our women have been raped in Zion.
Our virgins have been raped in the towns of Judah.
[12]Our princes have been hung up by their hands.
No one shows our elders any respect.
[13]Our young men are forced to grind grain at the mill.
Our boys almost fall down
as they carry heavy loads of wood.
[14]Our elders don’t go to the city gate anymore.
Our young men have stopped playing their music.
[15]There isn’t any joy in our hearts.
Our dancing has turned into sobbing.
[16]All of our honor is gone.
How terrible it is for us! We have sinned.

[17]So our hearts are weak.
Our eyes can’t see very clearly.
[18]Mount Zion has been deserted.
Wild dogs are prowling all around on it.

[19]LORD, you rule forever.
Your throne will last for all time to come.
[20]Why do you always forget us?
Why have you deserted us for so long?
[21]LORD, please bring us back to you.
Then we can return.
Make our lives like new again.
[22]Or have you completely turned away from us?
Are you really that angry with us?

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The LORD Gives Ezekiel Visions of His Glory

Ezekiel 1

1 I was 30 years old. I was with my people who had been taken away from
their country. We were by the Kebar River in the land of Babylonia. On the
fifth day of the fourth month, the heavens were opened. I saw visions of God.

2 It was the fifth day of the month. Jehoiachin had been king of Judah. It was
the fifth year since he had been brought to Babylon as a prisoner. 3 A message
came to me from the LORD. I was by the Kebar River in Babylonia. The LORD
put his strong hand on me there. I am Ezekiel, the son of Buzi. I'm a priest.

4 I looked up and saw a windstorm coming from the north. I saw a huge cloud.
The fire of lightning was flashing out of it. Bright light surrounded it. The
center of the fire looked like glowing metal.

5 I saw in the fire something that looked like four living creatures. They
appeared to have the shape of a man. 6 But each of them had four faces and four
wings. 7 Their legs were straight. Their feet looked like the feet of a calf. They
were as bright as polished bronze.

8 The creatures had a man's hands under their wings on their four sides. All
four of them had faces and wings. 9 Their wings touched one another. Each of
the creatures went straight ahead. They didn't change their direction as they
moved.

10 Here's what their faces looked like. Each of the four creatures had a man's
face. On the right side each had the face of a lion. On the left each had the face
of an ox. Each one also had an eagle's face. 11 That's what their faces looked
like.

Two of their wings were spread out and lifted up. Each one touched the wing
of another creature on either side. The other two wings covered their bodies.
12 All of the creatures went straight ahead. Anywhere their spirits would lead
them to go, they would go. They didn't change their direction as they went.

13 The living creatures looked like burning coals of fire or like torches. Fire
moved back and forth among the creatures. It was bright. Lightning flashed out

of it. [14]The creatures raced back and forth like flashes of lightning.

[15]As I looked at the living creatures, I saw wheels on the ground beside them. Each creature had four faces. [16]Here's how the wheels looked and worked. They gleamed like chrysolite. All four of them looked alike. Each one seemed to be made like a wheel inside another wheel at right angles.

[17]The wheels could go in any one of the four directions the creatures faced. The wheels didn't change their direction as the creatures moved. [18]Their rims were high and terrifying. All four rims were full of eyes all the way around them.

[19]When the creatures moved, the wheels beside them moved. When the living creatures rose from the ground, the wheels also rose. [20]Anywhere their spirits would lead them to go, they would go. And the wheels would rise along with them. That's because the spirits of the living creatures were in the wheels.

[21]When the creatures moved, the wheels also moved. When the creatures stood still, they also stood still. When the creatures rose from the ground, the wheels rose along with them. That's because the spirits of the living creatures were in the wheels.

[22]Something that looked like a huge space was spread out above the heads of the living creatures. It gleamed like ice. It was terrifying. [23]The wings of the creatures were spread out under the space. They reached out toward one another. Each creature had two wings covering its body.

[24]When the creatures moved, I heard the sound of their wings. It was like the roar of rushing waters. It sounded like the thundering voice of the Mighty One. It was like the loud noise an army makes. When the creatures stood still, they lowered their wings.

[25]Then a voice came from above the huge space over their heads. They stood with their wings lowered. [26]Above the space over their heads was something that looked like a throne made out of sapphire.

On the throne high above was a figure that appeared to be human. [27]From his waist up he looked like glowing metal that was full of fire. From his waist down he looked like fire. Bright light surrounded him. [28]The glow around him looked like a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day.

That's what the glory of the LORD looked like. When I saw it, I fell with my face toward the ground. Then I heard the voice of someone speaking.

The LORD Chooses Ezekiel

Ezekiel 2

[1]He said to me, “Son of man, stand up on your feet. I will speak to you.” [2]As
he spoke, the Spirit of the LORD came into me. He raised me to my feet. I heard
him speaking to me.

[3]He said, “Son of man, I am sending you to the people of Israel. That nation
has refused to obey me. They have turned against me. They and their people
before them have been against me to this very day. [4]The people I am sending
you to are very stubborn. Tell them, ‘Here is what the LORD and King says.’

[5]“They might listen, or they might not. After all, they refuse to obey me. But
whether they listen or not, they will know that a prophet was among them.

[6]“Son of man, do not be afraid of them or of what they say. Do not be afraid,
even if thorns and bushes are all around you and you live among scorpions. Do
not be afraid of what they say. Do not be terrified by them. They always refuse
to obey me.

[7]“You must give them my message. They might listen, or they might not.
After all, they refuse to obey me. [8]Son of man, listen to what I tell you. Do not
be like those who refuse to obey me. Open your mouth. Eat what I give you.”

[9]Then I looked up. I saw a hand reach out to me. A scroll was in it. [10]He
unrolled it in front of me. Both sides had words written on them. They spoke
about sadness, sorrow and trouble.

Ezekiel 3

[1]He said to me, “Son of man, eat what is in front of you. Eat this scroll. Then
go and speak to the people of Israel.” [2]So I opened my mouth. And he gave me
the scroll to eat.

[3]Then he said to me, “Son of man, eat this scroll I am giving you. Fill your
stomach with it.” So I ate it. And it tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth.

[4]Then he said to me, “Son of man, go to the people of Israel. Give them my
message.

[5]“I am not sending you to people who speak another language that is hard to
learn. Instead, I am sending you to the people of Israel. [6]You are not being sent
to many nations whose people speak other languages that are hard to learn. You
would not be able to understand them. Suppose I had sent you to them. Then
they certainly would have listened to you. [7]But the people of Israel do not want
to listen to you. That is because they do not want to listen to me.

“All of the people of Israel are very stubborn. [8]But I will make you just as
stubborn as they are. [9]I will make you very brave. So do not be afraid of them.
Do not let them terrify you, even though they refuse to obey me.”

[10]He continued, “Son of man, listen carefully. Take to heart everything I tell
you. [11]Go now to your own people who were brought here as prisoners. Speak
to them. Tell them, ‘Here is what the LORD and King says.’ Speak to them
whether they listen or not.”

[12]Then the Spirit of the LORD lifted me up. I heard a loud rumbling sound
behind me. May the glory of the LORD be praised in the place where he lives!
[13]The sound was made by the wings of the living creatures. They were
brushing against one another. The sound was also made by the wheels beside
them. It was a loud rumbling sound.

[14]Then the Spirit lifted me up and took me away. My spirit was bitter. I was
burning with anger. The strong hand of the LORD was on me. [15]I came to my
people who had been brought as prisoners to Tel Abib. It was near the Kebar
River. I went to where they were living. There I sat among them for seven
days. I was shocked by everything that had happened.

The LORD Warns Israel

16After seven days, a message came to me from the LORD. 17He said, “Son of
man, I have appointed you as a prophet to warn the people of Israel. So listen
to my message. Give them a warning from me.

18“Suppose I say to a sinful person, ‘You can be sure you will die.’ And you
do not warn him. You do not try to get him to change his evil ways in order to
save his life. Then he will die because he has sinned. And I will hold you
accountable for his death.

19“But suppose you do warn that sinful person. And he does not turn away
from his sin or his evil ways. Then he will die because he has sinned. But you
will have saved yourself.

20“Or suppose a godly person turns away from his godliness and does what is
evil. And suppose I put something in his way that will trip him up. Then he
will die. Since you did not warn him, he will die for his sin. The godly things
he did will not be remembered. And I will hold you accountable for his death.

21“But suppose you do warn a godly person not to sin. And he does not sin.
Then you can be sure that he will live because he listened to your warning.
And you will have saved yourself.”

22The strong hand of the LORD was on me. He said, “Get up. Go out to the
flatlands. I will speak to you there.”

23So I got up and went out to the flatlands. The glory of the LORD was
standing there. It was just like the glory I had seen by the Kebar River. So I fell
with my face toward the ground.

24Then the Spirit of the LORD came into me. He raised me to my feet. He said
to me, “Go, son of man. Shut yourself inside your house. 25Some people will
tie you up with ropes. So you will not be able to go out among your people. 26I
will make your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth. Then you will be silent.
You will not be able to correct them. They always refuse to obey me.

27“But later I will speak to you. I will open your mouth. Then you will tell
them, ‘Here is what the LORD and King says.’ Those who listen will listen. And
those who refuse to listen will refuse. They always refuse to obey me.

An Attack on Jerusalem Is Pictured

Ezekiel 4

[1]“Son of man, get a clay tablet. Put it in front of you. Draw the city of Jerusalem on it. [2]Then pretend to surround it and attack it. Make some little models of war machines. Build a ramp up to it. Set camps up around it. Surround it with models of logs to be used for knocking down its gates. [3]Then get an iron pan. Put it between you and the city. Pretend it is an iron wall. Turn your face toward the city. It will be under attack when you begin to attack it. That will show the people of Israel what is going to happen to Jerusalem.

[4]“Next, lie down on your left side. Pretend that you are putting Israel’s sin on yourself. Keep their sin on you for the number of days you lie on your side. [5]Let each day you lie there stand for one year of their sin. So you will keep Israel’s sin on you for 390 days.

[6]“After you have finished that, lie down again. This time lie on your right side. Pretend that you are putting Judah’s sin on yourself. Lie there for 40 days. That is one day for each year of their sin.

[7]“Next, turn your face toward the model of Jerusalem under attack. Uncover your arm as if you were a soldier ready to fight. Prophesy against the city.

[8]“I will tie you up with ropes. Then you will not be able to turn from one side to the other. You will stay that way until you have finished attacking Jerusalem.

[9]“Get some wheat and barley. Also get some beans and lentils. And get some millet and spelt. Put everything in a storage jar. Use it to make some bread for yourself. Eat it during the 390 days you are lying down on your side. [10]Weigh out eight ounces of food to eat each day. Eat it at your regular mealtimes. [11]Also measure out two thirds of a quart of water. Drink it at your regular mealtimes.

[12]“Eat your food as you would eat a barley cake. Bake it over human waste in front of the people.” [13]The LORD said, “That is how the people of Israel will eat ‘unclean’ food. They will eat it in the nations where I will drive them.”

[14]Then I said, “No, LORD and King! I won’t do it! I’ve never eaten anything

that was ‘unclean.’ From the time I was young until now, I’ve never eaten anything that was found dead. And I’ve never eaten anything that was torn apart by wild animals. ‘Unclean’ meat has never entered my mouth.”

15“All right,” he said. “I will let you bake your bread over waste from cows. You can use that instead of human waste.”

16He continued, “Son of man, I will cut off the food supply in Jerusalem. The people will be worried as they eat their tiny share of food. They will not have any hope as they drink their tiny share of water. 17There will be very little food and water. The people will be shocked as they look at one another. They will become weaker and weaker because of their sin.

Ezekiel 5

[1]“Son of man, get a sharp sword. Use it as a barber’s razor. Shave your head and beard with it. Then get a set of scales and weigh the hair. Separate it into three piles.

[2]“Burn up a third of the hair inside the city. Do it when you stop attacking the model of Jerusalem. Next, get another third of the hair. Strike it with a sword all around the city. Then scatter the last third to the winds. That is because I will chase the people with a sword that is ready to strike them down. [3]But save a few of the hairs. Tuck them away in the clothes you are wearing.

[4]“Next, get a few more hairs. Throw them into the fire. Burn them up. The fire will spread to all of the people of Israel.”

[5]The LORD and King says, “This little model stands for Jerusalem. I have placed that city in the center of the nations. Countries are all around it. [6]But its people are sinful. They have refused to obey my laws and rules. They have turned their backs on my laws. They have not followed my rules. Those people are worse than the nations and countries around them.”

[7]The LORD and King continues, “You people have been worse than the nations around you. You have not lived by my rules or kept my laws. You have not even lived up to the standards of the nations around you.”

[8]The LORD and King continues, “Jerusalem, I myself am against you. I will punish you in the sight of the nations. [9]I will do to you what I have never done before and will never do again. That is because you worship statues of gods. I hate them. [10]So parents will eat their own children inside the city. And children will eat their parents. I will punish you. And I will scatter to the winds anyone who is left alive.

[11]“You have made my temple ‘unclean.’ You have set up statues of all of your evil gods. You have done other things I hate. So I will not show you my favor anymore. I will not spare you or feel sorry for you. And that is just as sure as I am alive,” announces the LORD and King.

[12]“A third of your people will die of the plague inside your walls. Or they will die of hunger there. Another third will be killed with swords outside your walls. And I will scatter the last third of your people to the winds. I will chase

them with a sword that is ready to strike them down.

13“Then I will not be angry anymore. My burning anger against them will die down. And I will be satisfied. Then they will know that I have spoken with strong feelings. And my burning anger toward them will come to an end. I am the LORD.

14“I will destroy you. I will bring shame on you in the sight of the nations that are around you. All those who pass by will see it. 15You will be put to shame. The nations will make fun of you. You will serve as a warning to others. They will be shocked when they see you. So I will punish you because my anger burns against you. You will feel the sting of my warning. I have spoken. I am the LORD.

16“I will shoot at you with my deadly, destroying arrows of hunger. I will shoot to kill. I will bring more and more hunger on you. I will cut off your food supply. 17I will send hunger and wild animals against you. They will destroy all of your children. Plague and murder will sweep over you. And I will send swords to kill you. I have spoken. I am the LORD.”

Ezekiel Prophesies Against the Mountains of Israel

Ezekiel 6

1 A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 2 “Son of man, turn your
attention to the mountains of Israel. Prophesy against them. 3 Say, ‘Mountains
of Israel, listen to the message of the LORD and King. Here is what he says to
the mountains and hills. And here is what he says to the canyons and valleys.
He tells them, “I will send swords to kill your people. I will destroy the high
places where you worship other gods.

4 “ ‘ “Your altars will be torn down. Your incense altars will be smashed. And
I will kill your people in front of the statues of your gods. 5 I will put the dead
bodies of Israelites in front of those statues. I will scatter your bones around
your altars.

6 “ ‘ “No matter where you live, the towns will be destroyed. The high places
will be torn down. So your altars will be completely destroyed. The statues of
your gods will be smashed to pieces. Your incense altars will be broken down.
And everything you have made will be wiped out. 7 Your people will fall down
dead among you. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

8 “ ‘ “But I will spare some of you. Some will escape from being killed with
swords. You will be scattered among other lands and nations. 9 You will be
taken away to those nations as prisoners. Those of you who escape will
remember me. You will recall how much pain your unfaithful hearts gave me.
You turned away from me. Your eyes longed to see the statues of your gods.
You will hate yourselves because of all of the evil things you have done. I hate
those things too. 10 You will know that I am the LORD. I said I would bring
trouble on you. And my warning came true.” ’ ”

11 The LORD and King said to me, “Clap your hands. Stamp your feet. Cry out,
‘How sad!’ Do it because the people of Israel have done so many evil things. I
hate those things. Israel will be destroyed by war, hunger and plague. 12 Those
who are far away will die of the plague. Those who are near will be killed with
swords. Those who are left alive and are spared will die of hunger. And my
burning anger toward them will come to an end.

13 “Then they will know that I am the LORD. Their people will lie dead among
the statues of their gods around their altars. Their bodies will lie on every high
hill and every mountaintop. They will lie under every green tree and leafy oak
tree. They used to offer sweet-smelling incense to all of their gods at those
places. 14 I will reach out my powerful hand against them. The land will
become dry and empty. Those people will live from the desert all the way to
Diblah. They will know that I am the LORD.”

The End Has Come

Ezekiel 7

1A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 2“Son of man, I am the LORD
and King. I say to the land of Israel, ‘The end has come! It has come on the
four corners of the land. 3The end has now come for you. I will pour out my
anger on you. I will judge you based on how you have lived. I will pay you
back for all of your evil practices. I hate them.

4“ ‘I will not spare you or feel sorry for you. You can be sure that I will pay
you back in keeping with how you have lived. I will judge you for your evil
practices. I hate them. You will know that I am the LORD.’

5“I am the LORD and King. I say, ‘Horrible trouble is coming! No one has ever
heard of anything like it.

6“ ‘The end has come! The end has come! It has stirred itself up against you.
It is here! 7Death has come on you who live in the land. The time for you to be
destroyed has come. The day when it will happen is near. There is no joy on
your mountains. There is nothing but panic.

8“ ‘I am about to pour out all of my burning anger on you. I will judge you
based on how you have lived. I will pay you back for all of your evil practices.
I hate them.

9“ ‘I will not spare you or feel sorry for you. I will pay you back based on
how you have lived. I will judge you for your evil practices. I hate them. You
will know that I am the one who strikes you down. I am the LORD.

10“ ‘The day for me to punish you is here! It has come! Death has arrived.
The time is ripe for you to be judged. Your pride has grown so much that you
will be destroyed. 11Your mean and harmful acts have become like a rod. I will
use it to punish you for your sins. None of you will be left. No wealth or
anything of value will remain.

12“ ‘The time has come! The day has arrived! I will soon pour out my
burning anger on the whole crowd of you. Do not let the buyer be happy. Do
not let the seller be sad. 13The seller will not get back the land that was sold as

long as both of them are alive.

“ ‘Ezekiel, the vision I gave you about that whole crowd will come true. They have committed many sins. So none of them will remain alive. 14They might blow trumpets. They might get everything ready. But no one will go into battle. I will soon pour out my burning anger on the whole crowd.

15“ ‘There is trouble everywhere. War is outside the city. Plague and hunger are inside it. Those who are out in the country will die in battle. Those in the city will be destroyed by hunger and plague. 16All those who escape and are left alive will run to the mountains. They have committed many sins. So they will cry like sad doves in the valleys.

17“ ‘Their hands will be powerless to help them. Their knees will become as weak as water. 18They will put on black clothes. They will put on terror as if it were their clothes. Their faces will be covered with shame. Their heads will be shaved.

19“ ‘They will throw their silver into the streets. Their gold will be like an “unclean” thing. Their silver and gold will not be able to save them on the day I pour out my anger on them. They will not be able to satisfy their hunger. Their stomachs will not be full. Their silver and gold have tripped them up. They have made them fall into sin. 20My people were so proud of their beautiful jewelry. They used it to make statues of their evil gods. I hate those gods. So I will turn their statues into an “unclean” thing for them.

21“ ‘I will hand everything over to strangers. I will turn it over to sinful people in other countries. They will pollute it. 22I will turn my face away from my people. Their enemies will pollute my beautiful temple. Robbers will enter it and pollute it.

23“ ‘Ezekiel, get ready to put my people in chains. The land is full of murderers. They are harming one another all over Jerusalem. 24I will bring the most evil nations against them. They will take over the houses in the city. I will put an end to the pride of those who are mighty. Their holy places will be polluted.

25“ ‘When terror comes, they will look for peace. But there will not be any. 26Trouble after trouble will come. One report will follow another. But they will not be true. The people will try to get visions from the prophets. But there will not be any. The teaching of the law by the priests will be gone. So will advice from the elders.

27“ ‘The king will be filled with sadness. The princes will lose all hope. The hands of the people of the land will tremble. I will punish them based on how they have lived. I will judge them by their own standards. Then they will know that I am the LORD.’ ”

The People Worship Other Gods in the Temple

Ezekiel 8

[1]It was the sixth year since King Jehoiachin had been brought to Babylon as a
prisoner. On the fifth day of the sixth month, I was sitting in my house. The
elders of Judah were sitting there with me. The LORD and King put his powerful
hand on me there.

[2]I looked up and saw a figure that appeared to be human. From his waist
down he looked like fire. From his waist up he looked as bright as glowing
metal. [3]He reached out what appeared to be a hand. He took hold of me by the
hair of my head. The Spirit of the LORD lifted me up between earth and heaven.
In visions God gave me, the Spirit took me to Jerusalem. He brought me to the
entrance of the north gate of the inner courtyard. The statue of a god was
standing there. It made God very angry. [4]There in front of me was the glory of
the God of Israel. It looked just as it did in the vision I had seen on the
flatlands.

[5]Then the LORD said to me, “Son of man, look toward the north.” So I did. I
saw a statue that made God angry. It was in the entrance of the gate north of
the altar.

[6]He said to me, “Son of man, do you see what the people of Israel are doing
here? They are doing things I hate very much. Those things will cause me to go
far away from my temple. But you will see things I hate even more.”

[7]Then he brought me to the entrance to the courtyard. I looked up and saw a
hole in the wall. [8]He said to me, “Son of man, dig into the wall.” So I did. And
I saw a door there.

[9]He continued, “Go through it. Look at the evil things they are doing here. I
hate those things.”

[10]So I went in and looked. All over the walls were pictures of all kinds of
crawling things and other animals. The LORD hates it when people worship
those things. There were also carvings of all of the gods of the people of Israel.

[11]In front of them stood 70 elders of Israel. Jaazaniah was standing there

among them. He is the son of Shaphan. Each elder was holding a shallow cup. A sweet-smelling cloud of incense was rising from the cups.

12The LORD said to me, “Son of man, do you see what the elders of Israel are doing in the dark? Each of them is in his own room worshiping his own god. They say, ‘The LORD doesn’t see us. He has deserted the land.’ ” 13He continued, “You will see them doing things I hate even more.”

14Then he brought me to the entrance of the north gate of the LORD’s house. I saw women sitting there. They were sobbing over the god Tammuz. 15The LORD said to me, “Son of man, do you see what they are doing? You will see things I hate even more.”

16Then he brought me into the inner courtyard of the LORD’s house. About 25 men were there. They were at the entrance to the LORD’s temple between the porch and the altar. Their backs were turned toward the temple. Their faces were turned toward the east. And they were bowing down to the sun.

17He said to me, “Son of man, have you seen all of that? The people of Judah are doing things here that I hate. This is a very serious matter. They are harming one another all through the land. They continue to make me very angry. Just look at them making fun of me! 18So I am angry with them. I will punish them. I will not spare them or feel sorry for them. They might even shout in my ears. But I will not listen to them.”

The LORD Judges Those Who Worship Other Gods

Ezekiel 9

1Then I heard the LORD call out in a loud voice. He said, “Bring those who
guard the city here. Make sure each of them has a weapon.” 2I saw six men
coming from the direction of the upper gate. It faces north. Each of them had a
deadly weapon. A man who was wearing linen clothes came along with them.
He was carrying a writing kit at his side. They came in and stood beside the
bronze altar.

3The glory of the God of Israel had been above the cherubim. It moved from
there to the doorway of the temple.

Then the LORD called to the man who was dressed in linen clothes. He had the
writing kit. 4The LORD said to him, “Go all through Jerusalem. Look for those
who are sad and sorry about all of the things that are being done there. I hate
those things. Put a mark on the foreheads of those people.”

5I heard him speak to the six men. He said, “Follow him through the city. Do
not show any pity or concern. 6Kill old men and women, young men and
women, and children. But do not touch anyone who has the mark. Start at my
temple.” So they began with the elders who were in front of the temple.

7Then he said to the men, “Make the temple ‘unclean.’ Fill the courtyards
with dead bodies. Go!” So they went out and started killing people all through
the city.

8While they were doing it, I was left alone. I fell with my face toward the
ground. I cried out, “LORD and King, are you going to destroy all of the
Israelites who are still left alive? Will you pour out your burning anger on all
those who remain in Jerusalem?”

9He answered me, “The sin of Israel and Judah is very great. The land is full
of murderers. They are not being fair to one another anywhere in Jerusalem.
They say, ‘The LORD has deserted the land. He doesn’t see us.’ 10So I will not
spare them or feel sorry for them. Anything that happens to them will be their
own fault.”

[11]Then the man who was wearing linen clothes returned. He had the writing kit. He reported, “I’ve done what you commanded.”

The Glory of the LORD Moves Out of the Temple

Ezekiel 10

1 I looked up and saw something that appeared to be a throne made out of
sapphire. It was above the huge space that was spread out over the heads of the
cherubim. 2 The LORD spoke to the man who was wearing linen clothes. He
said, “Go in among the wheels beneath the cherubim. Fill your hands with
burning coals from the fire that is among the cherubim. Scatter the coals over
the city.” As I watched, he went in.

3 The cherubim were standing on the south side of the temple when the man
went in. A cloud filled the inner courtyard. 4 Then the glory of the LORD rose
from above the cherubim. It moved to the doorway of the temple. The cloud
filled the temple. And the courtyard was full of the brightness of the glory of
the LORD. 5 The sound the wings of the cherubim made could be heard as far
away as the outer courtyard. It was like the voice of the Mighty God when he
speaks.

6 The LORD gave a command to the man who was dressed in linen clothes. He
said, “Get some coals of fire from among the wheels. Take them from among
the cherubim.” So the man went in and stood beside a wheel. 7 Then one of the
cherubim reached out his hand. He picked up some of the burning coals that
were among the wheels. He handed them to the man who was wearing linen
clothes. The man took them and left. 8 I saw what looked like a man’s hands.
They were under the wings of the cherubim.

9 I looked up and saw four wheels beside the cherubim. One wheel was beside
each of them. The wheels gleamed like chrysolite. 10 All four of them looked
alike. Each wheel appeared to be inside another wheel at right angles. 11 The
wheels could go in any one of the four directions the cherubim faced. The
wheels didn’t change their direction as the cherubim moved. The cherubim
went in the direction their heads faced. They didn’t change their direction as
they moved.

12 Their whole bodies were completely covered with eyes. That included their
backs, hands and wings. Their four wheels were covered with eyes too. 13 I

heard someone tell the wheels to start spinning around. [14]Each of the cherubim had four faces. One face was the face of a cherub. The second was a man's face. The third was the face of a lion. And the fourth was an eagle's face.

[15]The cherubim rose from the ground. They were the same living creatures I had seen by the Kebar River. [16]When the cherubim moved, the wheels beside them moved. The cherubim spread their wings to rise from the ground. As they did, the wheels didn't leave their side. [17]When the cherubim stood still, the wheels also stood still. When the cherubim rose, the wheels rose along with them. That's because the spirits of the living creatures were in the wheels.

[18]Then the glory of the LORD moved away from the doorway of the temple. It stopped above the cherubim. [19]While I watched, they spread their wings. They rose from the ground. As they went, the wheels went along with them. They stopped at the entrance of the east gate of the LORD's house. And the glory of the God of Israel was above them.

[20]Those were the same living creatures I had seen by the Kebar River. I had seen them beneath the God of Israel. I realized that they were cherubim. [21]Each one had four faces and four wings. Under their wings was what looked like a man's hands. [22]Their faces looked the same as the ones I had seen by the Kebar River. Each of the cherubim went straight ahead.

The LORD Punishes Israel's Leaders

Ezekiel 11

1Then the Spirit of the LORD lifted me up. He brought me to the east gate of
the LORD's house. There were 25 men at the entrance of the gate. I saw
Jaazaniah and Pelatiah among them. They were leaders of the people.
Jaazaniah is the son of Azzur. Pelatiah is the son of Benaiah.

2The LORD said to me, "Son of man, these men are making evil plans. They
are giving bad advice to the city. 3They say, 'This is not the time to build
houses. The city is like a cooking pot. And we are the meat.' 4So prophesy
against them. Prophesy, son of man."

5Then the Spirit of the LORD came on me. He told me to tell them, "The LORD
says, 'People of Israel, that is what you are saying. But I know what you are
thinking. 6You have killed many people in this city. In fact, you have filled its
streets with dead bodies.'

7"So the LORD and King says, 'The bodies you have thrown there are the
meat. And the city is the cooking pot. But I will drive you out of it. 8You are
afraid of the swords of war. But I will bring them against you,' announces the
LORD and King.

9" 'I will drive you out of the city. I will hand you over to strangers. And I
will punish you. 10You will be killed with swords. I will judge you at the
borders of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

11" 'This city will not be a pot for you. And you will not be the meat in it. I
will judge you at the borders of Israel. 12Then you will know that I am the
LORD. You have not followed my rules. You have not kept my laws. Instead,
you have lived by the standards of the nations that are around you.' "

13Pelatiah, the son of Benaiah, died as I was prophesying. Then I fell with my
face toward the ground. I cried out in a loud voice. I said, "LORD and King, will
you destroy all of the Israelites who are still left alive?"

14A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 15"Son of man, the people
of Jerusalem have spoken about your relatives. They have also spoken about all

of the other people of Israel. They have said, ‘Stay far away from the LORD. This land was given to us. And it belongs to us.’

The LORD Will Bring His People Back Home

16“So tell them, ‘The LORD and King says, “I sent some of my people far
away among the nations. I scattered them among the countries. But for a little
while I have been their temple in the countries where they have gone.” ’

17“Tell them, ‘The LORD and King says, “I will gather you from the nations. I
will bring you back from the countries where you have been scattered. I will
give you back the land of Israel.” ’

18“They will return to it. They will remove all of its statues of evil gods. I
hate those gods. 19I will give my people hearts that are completely committed
to me. I will give them a new spirit that is faithful to me. I will remove their
stubborn hearts from them. And I will give them hearts that obey me. 20Then
they will follow my rules. They will be careful to keep my laws. They will be
my people. And I will be their God.

21“But some people have hearts that are committed to worshiping the statues
of their evil gods. I hate those gods. Anything that happens to those people will
be their own fault,” announces the LORD and King.

22Then the cherubim spread their wings. The wheels were beside them. The
glory of the God of Israel was above them. 23The glory of the LORD went up
from the city. It stopped above the Mount of Olives east of it.

24The Spirit of God lifted me up. He took me to those who had been brought
to Babylonia as prisoners. Those are the things that happened in the visions the
Spirit gave me.

Then the visions I had seen were gone. 25I told my people everything the
LORD had shown me.

Many People Will Be Taken to Babylonia

Ezekiel 12

1A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 2“Son of man, you are living
among people who refuse to obey me. They have eyes that can see. But they do
not really see. They have ears that can hear. But they do not really hear. They
refuse to obey me.

3“Son of man, pack your belongings as if you were going on a long trip.
Leave in the daytime. Let the people see you. Start out from where you are. Go
to another place. Perhaps they will understand the meaning of what you are
doing. But they will still refuse to obey me. 4Bring out your belongings packed
for a long trip. Do it during the daytime. Let the people see you. Then in the
evening, pretend you are being forced to leave home. Let the people see you.

5“While the people are watching, dig through the mud bricks of your house.
Then take your belongings out through the hole in the wall. 6Put them on your
shoulder. Carry them out at sunset. Let the people see you. Cover your face so
you can’t see the land. All of that will show the people of Israel what is going
to happen to them.”

7So I did just as he commanded me. During the day I brought out my things
as if I were going on a long trip. In the evening I dug through the wall of my
house with my hands. At sunset I took my belongings out. I put them on my
shoulders. The people watched what I was doing.

8In the morning a message came to me from the LORD. He said, 9“Son of man,
didn’t the people of Israel ask you, ‘What are you doing?’ They always refuse
to obey me.

10“Tell them, ‘The LORD and King says, “This message is about Zedekiah, the
prince in Jerusalem. It is also about all of the people of Israel who still live
there.” ’ 11Tell them, ‘The things I’ve done are a picture of what’s going to
happen to you. So what I’ve done will happen to you. You will be forced to
leave home. You will be taken to Babylonia as prisoners.’

12“The prince among them will put his things on his shoulder and leave. He
will do it at sunset. Someone will dig a hole in a wall for him to go through. He

will cover his face so he can't see the land. [13]I will spread out my net to catch him. He will be caught in my trap. I will bring him to Babylonia. It is the land where the Chaldeans live. But he will not see it. He will die there. [14]I will scatter to the winds all those who are around him. I will scatter his officials and all of his troops. And I will chase them with a sword that is ready to strike them down.

[15]"They will know that I am the LORD when I scatter them among the nations. I will send them to other countries. [16]But I will spare a few of them. I will save them from war, hunger and plague. In those countries they will admit they have done all kinds of evil things. I hate those things. They will know that I am the LORD."

[17]A message came to me from the LORD. He said, [18]"Son of man, tremble with fear as you eat your food. Tremble as you drink your water. [19]Speak to the people of the land. Say to them, 'Here is what the LORD and King says about those who live in Jerusalem and Israel. He tells them, "They will be worried as they eat their food. They will not have any hope as they drink their water. Their land will be stripped of everything in it because all those who live there are harming one another. [20]The towns where people live will be completely destroyed. The land will become a dry and empty desert. Then you will know that I am the LORD." ' "

[21]A message came to me from the LORD. He said, [22]"Son of man, you have a proverb in the land of Israel. It says, 'The days go by, and not even one vision comes true.' [23]Tell them, 'The LORD and King says, "I am going to put an end to that proverb. They will not use that saying in Israel anymore." ' Tell them, 'The days are coming soon when every vision will come true. [24]There will be no more false visions. People will no longer use magic to find out whether good things are going to happen in Israel. [25]I am the LORD. So I will say what I want to. And it will come true when I want it to. In your days I will do everything I say I will. But you people always refuse to obey me,' announces the LORD and King."

[26]A message came to me from the LORD. He said, [27]"Son of man, the people of Israel are saying, 'The vision Ezekiel sees won't come true for many years. He is prophesying about a time that is a long way off.'

[28]"So tell them, 'The LORD and King says, "Everything I say will come true. It will happen when I want it to," announces the LORD and King.' "

The LORD Punishes Those Who Pretend to Be True Prophets

Ezekiel 13

1A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 2“Son of man, prophesy
against those who are now prophesying in Israel. What they prophesy comes
out of their own minds. Tell them, ‘Listen to the LORD’s message! 3The LORD
and King says, “How terrible it will be for you foolish prophets! You say what
your own minds tell you to. Your visions did not come from me.

4“ ‘ “Israel, your prophets are like wild dogs that live among broken-down
buildings. 5You have not repaired the cracks in the city wall for the people of
Israel. So it will not stand firm in the battle on the day I judge you. 6The
visions of those prophets are false. They use magic to try to find out what is
going to happen. But their magic tricks are lies. They say, ‘The LORD
announces.’ But I have not sent them. In spite of that, they expect their words
to come true.

7“ ‘ “You prophets have seen false visions. You have used magic to try to find
out what is going to happen. But your magic tricks are lies. So you lied when
you said, ‘The LORD announces.’ I did not even speak to you at all.”

8“ ‘The LORD and King says, “I am against you prophets. Your messages are
false. Your visions do not come true,” announces the LORD and King.

9“ ‘ “Israel, my powerful hand will be against the prophets who see false
visions. Their magic tricks are lies. They will not be among the leaders of my
people. They will not be listed in the records of Israel. In fact, they will not
even enter the land. Then you will know that I am the LORD and King.

10“ ‘ “They lead my people away from me. They say, ‘Peace.’ But there isn’t
any peace. They are like people who build a weak wall. They try to cover up
the weakness by painting the wall white. 11Tell those who do it that their wall
is going to fall. Heavy rains will come. I will send hailstones crashing down.
Powerful winds will blow. 12The wall will fall down. Then people will ask
them, ‘Now where is the paint you covered it with?’ ”

13“ ‘So the LORD and King speaks. He says, “When I am burning with anger, I

will send a powerful wind. Hailstones and heavy rains will come. They will fall with great force. 14I will tear down the wall you prophets painted over. I will knock it down. The only thing left will be its foundation. When it falls, you will be destroyed along with it. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

15“ ‘ “So I will pour out all of my burning anger on the wall. I will also send it against you prophets who painted it. I will say to you, ‘The wall is gone. You who painted it will be gone too. 16You prophets of Israel prophesied to Jerusalem. You saw visions of peace for its people. But there wasn’t any peace,’ announces the LORD and King.” ’

17“Son of man, turn your attention to the daughters of your people. What they prophesy comes out of their own minds. So prophesy against them. 18Tell them, ‘The LORD and King says, “How terrible it will be for you women who sew magic charms to put around your wrists! You make veils of different lengths to put on your heads. You do those things to trap people. You trap my people. But you will also be trapped. 19You have treated me as if I were not holy. You did it among my very own people. You did it for a few handfuls of barley and scraps of bread. You told lies to my people. They like to listen to lies. You killed those who should have lived. And you spared those who should have died.”

20“ ‘So the LORD and King says, “I am against your magic charms. You use them to trap people as if they were birds. I will tear them off your arms. I will set free the people you trap like birds. 21I will tear your veils off your heads. I will save my people from your powerful hands. They will no longer be under your control. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

22“ ‘ “I had not made godly people sad. But when you told them lies, you made them lose all hope. You advised sinful people not to turn from their evil ways. You did not want them to save their lives. 23So you will never see false visions again. You will not use your magic tricks anymore. I will save my people from your powerful hands. Then you will know that I am the LORD.” ’ ”

The LORD Judges Those Who Worship Other Gods

Ezekiel 14

1Some of the elders of Israel came to see me. They sat down with me. 2Then
a message came to me from the LORD. He said, 3"Son of man, these men have
thought about nothing but other gods. They have fallen into the evil trap of
worshiping them. Should I let those men ask me for any advice?

4"Speak to them. Tell them, 'The LORD and King says, "Suppose an Israelite
thinks about other gods. And he falls into the evil trap of worshiping them.
Then he goes to a prophet to ask for advice. If he does, I myself will tell the
prophet to answer him in keeping with his worship of many gods. 5I will win
back the hearts of the people of Israel. All of them have deserted me for their
other gods." '

6"So speak to the people of Israel. Tell them, 'The LORD and King says, "Turn
away from your sins! Also turn away from your gods. Give up all of the evil
things you have done. I hate them.

7" ' "Suppose an Israelite or outsider who lives in Israel separates himself
from me. And he thinks about other gods. He falls into the evil trap of
worshiping them. Then he goes to a prophet to ask me for advice. If he does, I
myself will tell the prophet to answer him. 8I will turn against him. I will make
an example out of him. People will laugh at him. I will cut him off from you.
Then you will know that I am the LORD.

9" ' "Suppose that prophet is stirred up to give a prophecy. Then I am the one
who has stirred him up. And I will reach out my powerful hand against him. I
will destroy him from among my people Israel. 10The prophet will be as much
to blame as the one who asks him for advice. Both of them will be guilty.
11Then the people of Israel will no longer wander away from me. And they will
not pollute themselves anymore with their many sins. They will be my people.
And I will be their God," ' announces the LORD and King."

The LORD Punishes All Sinners

12A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 13“Son of man, suppose the
people in a certain country sin against me. And they are not faithful to me. So I
reach out my powerful hand against them. I cut off their food supply. I make
them very hungry. I kill them and their animals. 14And suppose Noah, Daniel
and Job were in that country. Then those three men could save only themselves
by doing what is right,” announces the LORD and King.

15“Or suppose I send wild animals through that country. And they kill all of
its children. It becomes a dry and empty desert. No one can pass through it
because of the animals. 16And suppose those three men were in that country.
Then they could not save their own sons or daughters. They alone would be
saved. But the land would become a dry and empty desert. And that is just as
sure as I am alive,” announces the LORD and King.

17“Or suppose I send swords to kill the people in that country. And I say, ‘Let
swords sweep all through the land.’ And I kill its people and their animals.
18And suppose those three men were in that country. Then they could not save
their own sons or daughters. They alone would be saved. And that is just as
sure as I am alive,” announces the LORD and King.

19“Or suppose I send a plague into that land. And I pour out my burning
anger on it by spilling blood. I kill its people and their animals. 20And suppose
Noah, Daniel and Job were in that land. Then they could not save their own
sons or daughters. They could save only themselves by doing what is right.
And that is just as sure as I am alive,” announces the LORD and King.

21The LORD and King says, “It will get much worse. I will punish Jerusalem
in four horrible ways. There will be war, hunger, wild animals and plague.
They will destroy the people and their animals.

22“But some people will be left alive. Some children will be brought out of
the city. They will come to you. You will see how they act and the way they
live. And you will be comforted in spite of all of the trouble I brought on
Jerusalem. 23You will be comforted when you see how they act and the way
they live. Then you will know that I did not do anything there without a
reason,” announces the LORD and King.

Jerusalem Is Like a Useless Vine

Ezekiel 15

1 A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 2 “Son of man, is the wood of
a vine better than the wood of any of the trees in the forest? 3 Can its wood ever
be made into anything useful? Can pegs be made from it to hang things on?

4 “Suppose it is thrown in the fire to be burned. And the fire burns both ends
and blackens the middle. Then is it useful for anything? 5 It was not useful
when it was whole. So how can it be made into something useful now? The fire
has burned it and blackened it.”

6 The LORD and King says, “Instead of the wood of any tree in the forest, I
have given the vine to burn in the fire. I will treat the people who live in
Jerusalem the same way. 7 I will turn against them. They might have come out
of the fire. But the fire will destroy them anyway. I will turn against them.
Then they will know that I am the LORD. 8 I will make the land a dry and empty
desert. My people have not been faithful to me,” announces the LORD and King.

A Story That Pictures Unfaithful Jerusalem

Ezekiel 16

1A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 2“Son of man, tell the people
of Jerusalem the evil things they have done. I hate those things.

3“Tell them, ‘The LORD and King speaks to Jerusalem. He says, “Your history
in the land of Canaan goes back a long way. Your father was an Amorite. Your
mother was a Hittite. 4On the day you were born your cord was not cut. You
were not washed with water to clean you up. You were not rubbed with salt.
And you were not wrapped in large strips of cloth. 5No one took pity on you.
No one was concerned enough to do any of those things for you. Instead, you
were thrown out into an open field. You were hated on the day you were born.

6“ ‘ “I was passing by. I saw you kicking around in your blood. As you were
lying there, I said to you, ‘Live!’ 7I made you grow like a plant in a field. Soon
you had grown up. You became the most beautiful jewel of all. Your breasts
had formed. Your hair had grown. But you were naked and bare.

8“ ‘ “Later, I was passing by again. I looked at you. I saw that you were old
enough for love. So I got married to you and took good care of you. I covered
your naked body. I took an oath and made a firm promise to you. I entered into
a covenant with you. And you became mine,” announces the LORD and King.

9“ ‘ “I bathed you with water. I washed the blood off you. And I put lotions
on you. 10I put a beautiful dress on you. I gave you leather sandals. I dressed
you in fine linen. I covered you with expensive clothes. 11I decorated you with
jewelry. I put bracelets on your arms. I gave you a necklace for your neck. 12I
put rings on your nose and ears. And I gave you a beautiful crown for your
head.

13“ ‘ “So you were decorated with gold and silver. Your clothes were made
out of fine linen. They were made of expensive and beautiful cloth. Your food
was made out of fine flour, honey and olive oil. You became very beautiful.
You became a queen. 14You were so beautiful that your fame spread among the
nations. The glory I had given you made your beauty perfect,” announces the
LORD and King.

15“ ‘ “But you trusted in your beauty. You used your fame to become a
prostitute. You offered your body freely to anyone who passed by. In fact, you
gave yourself to anyone who wanted you. 16You used some of your clothes to
make high places colorful. That is where people worshiped other gods. You
were a prostitute there. Things like that should never happen. They should
never take place.

17“ ‘ “I had given you fine jewelry. It was made out of gold and silver. You
used it to make for yourself statues of male gods. You worshiped those gods.
You were not faithful to me. 18You put your beautiful clothes on them. You
offered my oil and incense to them. 19You also offered them the food that was
made out of fine flour, olive oil and honey. I had given it to you to eat. You
offered it as sweet-smelling incense to them. That is what you did,” announces
the LORD and King.

20“ ‘ “Then you got your sons and daughters who belonged to me. And you
sacrificed them as food to other gods. Wasn’t it enough for you to be a
prostitute? 21You killed my children. You sacrificed them to other gods.

22“ ‘ “You did not remember the days when you were young. At that time you
were naked and bare. You were kicking around in your blood. But now you
have done evil things. I hate them. You have worshiped other gods. You have
not been faithful to me.

23“ ‘ “How terrible it will be for you!” announces the LORD and King. “How
terrible for you! You continued to sin against me. 24Your people built up
mounds for themselves in every market place. They put little places of worship
on them. 25They set them up at every street corner. Jerusalem, you misused
your beauty. You offered your body to anyone who passed by. You did it again
and again.

26“ ‘ “You committed shameful acts with the people of Egypt. They were
your neighbors, and they were filled with longing for their lovers. You offered
yourself to others again and again. That made me very angry. 27So I reached
out my powerful hand against you. I made your territory smaller. I handed you
over to your Philistine enemies. The people in their towns were shocked by
your impure conduct.

28“ ‘ “You also committed shameful acts with the people of Assyria. Nothing
ever seemed to satisfy you. You could never get enough. 29Then you offered
yourself to the people of Babylonia. But that did not satisfy you either. There

are many traders in the land of Babylonia.

30“ ‘ “You can’t control yourself,” announces the LORD and King. “Just look at all of the things you are doing! You are acting like a prostitute who has no shame at all. 31Your people built up mounds at every street corner. You put little places of worship on them in every market place. But you did not really act like a prostitute. You refused to let your lovers pay you anything.

32“ ‘ “You unfaithful wife! You would rather be with strangers than with your own husband! 33Every prostitute gets paid. But you give gifts to all of your lovers. You offer them money to come to you from everywhere. You want them to make love to you. You are not faithful to me. 34As a prostitute, you are the opposite of others. No one runs after you to make love to you. You are exactly the opposite. You pay them. They do not pay you.” ’ ”

35You prostitute, listen to the LORD’s message. 36The LORD and King says, “You poured out your wealth on your lovers. You took your clothes off and made love to them. You did it again and again. You worshiped other gods. I hate them. You even sacrificed your children to them.

37“So I am going to gather together all of the lovers you found pleasure with. They include those you loved and those you hated. I will gather them against you from everywhere. I will take your clothes off right in front of them. Then they will see you completely naked. 38I will hand down my sentence against you. You will be punished like women who commit adultery and sacrifice their children to other gods. My anger burns against you so much that I will sentence you to death for everything you have done.

39“Then I will hand you over to your lovers. They will tear down those mounds you built. They will destroy the little places of worship you put on them. They will take your clothes off. They will remove your fine jewelry. And they will leave you naked and bare.

40“They will bring a crowd against you. The crowd will put you to death by throwing stones at you. And they will chop you to pieces with their swords. 41They will burn your houses down and punish you. Many women will see it.

“I will not let you be a prostitute anymore. You will no longer pay your lovers. 42Then my burning anger against you will die down. My jealous anger will turn away from you. I will be calm. I will not be angry anymore.

43“You did not remember the days when you were young. The things you did made me very angry. So anything that happens to you will be your own fault,”

announces the LORD and King. “You added impure conduct to all of the other evil things you did. I hate all of those things.

44“All those who use proverbs will use this one about you. They will say, ‘Like mother, like daughter.’ 45You are a true daughter of your mother. She hated her husband and children. And you are a true sister of your sisters. They hated their husbands and children.

“Your mother was a Hittite. Your father was an Amorite. 46Your older sister was Samaria. She lived north of you with her daughters. Your younger sister was Sodom. She lived south of you with her daughters. 47You lived exactly the way they did. You copied their evil practices. I hate those practices. Everything you did was so sinful that you soon became even worse than they were.

48“Your sister Sodom and her daughters never did what you and your daughters have done. And that is just as sure as I am alive,” announces the LORD and King.

49“Here is the sin your sister Sodom committed. She and her daughters were proud. They ate too much. They were not concerned about others. They did not help those who were poor and in need. 50They were very proud. They did many things that were evil in my sight. I hated those things. So I got rid of Sodom and her daughters, just as you have seen.

51“Samaria did not commit half the sins you did. You sinned even more than they did. I hate those sins. Compared to what you did, you made your sisters seem godly. 52So you will be dishonored. You have given your sisters an excuse for what they did. Your sins were far worse than theirs. In fact, your sisters appear to be more godly than you. So then, be ashamed. You will be dishonored. You have made them appear to be godly.

53“I will not only give you back what you had before. I will also do the same thing for Sodom and her daughters. And I will do the same for Samaria and her daughters. 54That will make you feel dishonored. You will be ashamed of everything you have done. You have made them feel better because you sinned more and were punished more than they were. 55Your sisters Sodom and Samaria and their daughters will return to what they were before. And you and your daughters will return to what you were before.

56“In the past you would not even mention your sister Sodom. You were proud at that time. 57That was before your sin was uncovered. Now the daughters of Edom make fun of you. So do all of her neighbors and the

daughters of the Philistines. Everyone who lives around you looks down on you. [58]You will be punished for your impure conduct. I will also punish you for the other evil things you have done. I hate all of those things," announces the LORD.

[59]The LORD and King says, "I will punish you in keeping with what you have done. I sealed with an oath the covenant I made with you. You hated that oath. And you broke my covenant.

[60]"But I will remember my covenant with you. I made it with you when you were young. Now I will make a new covenant with you. It will last forever. [61]Then you will remember how you have lived. You will be ashamed when I give you Samaria and Sodom. Samaria is your older sister. Sodom is your younger one. I will give them and their daughters to you as daughters. That can't happen based on my old covenant with you. [62]So I will make my new covenant with you. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

[63]"I will pay for all of the sins you have committed. Then you will remember what you have done. You will be ashamed of it. Because of your shame, you will never speak against me again," announces the LORD and King.

Two Eagles and a Vine

Ezekiel 17

1A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 2“Son of man, tell the people
of Israel a story about their kings. Let them know what will happen to them.
3Tell them, ‘The LORD and King says, “A great eagle came to the city of
‘Lebanon.’ It had powerful wings and a lot of long feathers. The feathers were
colorful and beautiful. The eagle landed in the top of a cedar tree. 4It broke off
the highest twig. It carried it away to Babylonia. There are many traders in that
land. The eagle planted the twig in the city of Babylon.

5“ ‘ “Then it got a seed from your land. It put it in rich soil near plenty of
water. It planted the seed like a willow tree. 6The seed grew into a low,
spreading vine. Its branches turned toward the eagle. And its roots remained
under the eagle. So the seed became a vine. It produced branches and put out
leaves.

7“ ‘ “But there was another great eagle. It also had powerful wings and a lot
of feathers. The vine now sent its roots out toward that eagle. It sent them out
from the place where it was planted. And it reached out its branches to the
eagle for water. 8The seed had been planted in good soil near plenty of water.
Then it could produce branches and bear fruit. It could become a beautiful
vine.” ’

9“Ezekiel, tell the Israelites, ‘The LORD and King asks, “Will the vine grow?
Won’t it be pulled up by its roots? Won’t all of its fruit be stripped off? Won’t it
dry up? All of its new growth will dry up. It will not take a strong arm or many
people to pull it up. 10It will not grow even if it is pulled up and planted
somewhere else. It will dry up completely when the east wind strikes it. It will
dry up in the place where it grew.” ’ ”

11A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 12“These people refuse to
obey me. Ask them, ‘Don’t you know what these things mean?’ Tell them,
‘Nebuchadnezzar went to Jerusalem. He was king of Babylonia. He carried off
King Jehoiachin and the nobles. He brought them back with him to the city of
Babylon.

13“ ‘Then Nebuchadnezzar made a peace treaty with Zedekiah. He was a member of Jerusalem’s royal family. Nebuchadnezzar made him take an oath and promise he would keep the treaty. He also took the leading men of the land away as prisoners. 14He did it to bring their kingdom down. It would not rise again. In fact, it would be able to last only by keeping his treaty.

15“ ‘But Zedekiah turned against him. He sent messengers to Egypt. They went there to get horses and a large army. Will he succeed? Will he who does things like that escape? Can he break the peace treaty and still escape?

16“ ‘Zedekiah will die in Babylon,’ announces the LORD and King. ‘And that is just as sure as I am alive. He will die in the land of King Nebuchadnezzar, who put him on the throne. He is the king whose oath Zedekiah hated. He also broke Nebuchadnezzar’s treaty.

17“ ‘So Nebuchadnezzar will build ramps against the walls of Jerusalem. He will set up war machines to destroy many lives. Pharaoh will not be able to help Zedekiah during the war. The huge and mighty army of Egypt will not be of any help.

18“ ‘Zedekiah hated Nebuchadnezzar’s oath and broke his treaty. He had made a firm promise to keep it. But he broke it anyway. So he will not escape.

19“ ‘The LORD and King says, “Zedekiah hated the oath he took in my name. He broke the treaty. So I will pay him back. And that is just as sure as I am alive. 20I will spread out my net to catch him. He will be caught in my trap. I will bring him to Babylon. I will judge him there because he was not faithful to me.

21“ ‘ “All of Zedekiah’s troops will be killed with swords when they try to run away. Those who are left alive will be scattered to the winds. Then you will know that I have spoken. I am the LORD.”

22“ ‘The LORD and King says, “I myself will get a twig from the very top of a cedar tree and plant it. I will break off the highest twig. I will plant it on a very high mountain. 23I will plant it on the high mountains of Israel. It will produce branches and bear fruit. It will become a beautiful cedar tree. All kinds of birds will make their nests in it. They will live in the shade of its branches. 24All of the trees in the fields will know that I bring tall trees down. I make short trees grow tall. I dry up green trees. And I make dry trees green.”

“ ‘I have spoken. I will do it. I am the LORD.’ ”

People Will Die Because of Their Own Sins

Ezekiel 18

1 A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 2 “You people have a proverb
about the land of Israel. What do you mean by it? It says,

> “ ‘The parents eat sour grapes.
> But the children have a bitter taste in their mouths.’

3 “You will not use that proverb in Israel anymore,” announces the LORD and
King. “And that is just as sure as I am alive. 4 Everyone belongs to me. Father
and son alike belong to me. People will die because of their own sins.

5 “Suppose a godly man
does what is fair and right.
6 And he does not eat at the mountain temples.
He does not worship the statues of Israel’s gods.
He does not have sex with another man’s wife.
He does not make love to his own wife
during her monthly period.
7 He does not treat anyone badly.
Instead, he always gives back
what he took as security for a loan.
He does not steal.
Instead, he gives his food to hungry people.
He provides clothes for those who are naked.
8 He does not lend money and charge too much interest.
He keeps himself from doing what is wrong.
He judges cases fairly.
9 He follows my rules.
He is faithful in keeping my laws.
He always does what is right.
You can be sure he will live,”

announces the LORD and King.

10 “But suppose he has a mean son who harms other people. The son commits
murder. Or he does some other things that are wrong. 11 Suppose he does those
things even though his father never did.

“Suppose he eats at the mountain temples.
And he has sex with another man’s wife.
12 He treats poor and needy people badly.
He steals.
He does not pay back what he owes.
He worships statues of gods.
He does other things I hate.
13 He lends money and charges too much interest.

Will a man like that live? He will not! You can be sure he will be put to death.
And what happens to him will be his own fault. He did many things I hate.

14 “But suppose that son has a son of his own. And the son sees all of the sins
his father commits. He sees them, but he does not do them.

15 “Suppose he does not eat at the mountain temples.
And he does not worship the statues of Israel’s gods.
He does not have sex with another man’s wife.
16 He does not treat anyone badly.
He does not make people give him something
to prove they will pay back what they owe him.
He does not steal.
Instead, he gives his food to hungry people.
He provides clothes for those who are naked.
17 He keeps himself from committing sins.
He does not lend money and charge too much interest.
He keeps my laws and follows my rules.

He will not die because of his father’s sin. You can be sure he will live. 18 But
his father will die because of his own sin. He got rich by cheating others. He
robbed his relatives. He also did what was wrong among his people.

19“But you still ask, ‘Is the son guilty along with his father?’ No! The son did
what was fair and right. He was careful to keep all of my rules. So you can be
sure he will live. 20People will die because of their own sins. The son will not
be guilty because of what his father did. And the father will not be guilty
because of what his son did. The right things a godly person does will be added
to his account. The wrong things a sinful person does will be charged against
him.

21“But suppose a sinful person turns away from all of the sins he has
committed. And he keeps all my rules. He does what is fair and right. Then you
can be sure he will live. He will not die. 22None of the sins he has committed
will be held against him. Because of the godly things he has done, he will live.

23“When sinful people die, it does not give me any joy,” announces the LORD
and King. “But when they turn away from their sins and live, that makes me
very happy.

24“Suppose a godly person stops doing what is right. And he commits sin. He
does the same evil things a sinful person does. He does things I hate. Then he
will not live. I will not remember any of the right things he has done. He has
not been faithful to me. He has also committed many other sins. So he is guilty.
He will die.

25“But you say, ‘What the Lord does isn’t fair.’ Listen to me, people of Israel.
What I do is always fair. What you do is not.

26“Suppose a godly person stops doing what is right. And he commits sin.
Then he will die because of it. He will die because of the sin he has committed.

27“But suppose a sinful person turns away from the evil things he has done.
And he does what is fair and right. Then he will save his life. 28He thinks about
all of the evil things he has done. And he turns away from them. So you can be
sure he will live. He will not die.

29“But the people of Israel still say, ‘What the Lord does isn’t fair.’ People of
Israel, what I do is always fair. What you do is not.

30“So I will judge you people. I will judge each of you in keeping with what
you have done,” announces the LORD and King.

“Turn away from your sins! Turn away from all of the evil things you have
done. Then sin will not bring you down. 31Get rid of all of the evil things you
have done. Let me give you a new heart and a new spirit. Then you will be

faithful to me. Why should you die, people of Israel? 32When anyone dies, it does not give me any joy," announces the LORD and King. "So turn away from your sins. Then you will live!

A Song of Sadness About Israel's Princes

Ezekiel 19

1 "Sing a song of sadness about Israel's princes. 2 Say to Israel,

" 'You were like a mother lion to your princes.
She lay down among the young lions.
She brought up her cubs.
3 One of them was Jehoahaz.
He became a strong lion.
He learned to tear apart what he caught.
And he ate men up.
4 The nations heard about him.
They trapped him in their pit.
They put hooks in his face.
And they led him away to Egypt.

5 " 'The mother lion looked and waited.
But all of her hope was gone.
So she got another one of her cubs.
She made him into a strong lion.
6 He prowled with the lions.
He became very strong.
He learned to tear apart what he caught.
And he ate men up.
7 He broke down their forts.
He completely destroyed their towns.
The land and all those who were in it
were terrified when he roared.
8 Then nations came against him.
They came from all around him.
They spread out their net to catch him.
He was trapped in their pit.
9 They used hooks to pull him into a cage.
They brought him to the king of Babylonia.
They put him in prison.

So his roar was not heard anymore
on the mountains of Israel.

10“ ‘Israel, you were like a vine in a vineyard.
It was planted near water.
It had a lot of fruit and many branches.
There was plenty of water.
11Its branches were strong.
Each was good enough to be made into a ruler’s rod.
The vine grew high
above all of the leaves.
It stood out because it was so tall
and had so many branches.
12But Nebuchadnezzar became angry.
He pulled it up by its roots.
He threw it to the ground.
The east wind dried it up.
Its fruit was stripped off.
Its strong branches dried up.
And fire destroyed them.
13Now it is planted in the Babylonian desert.
It is in a dry and thirsty land.
14One of its main branches was Zedekiah.
Fire spread from it and burned up its fruit.
None of its branches is good enough
to be made into a ruler’s rod.’

“That is a song of sadness. And that is how it should be used.”

Israel Refuses to Obey the LORD

Ezekiel 20

[1]It was the seventh year since King Jehoiachin had been brought to Babylon
as a prisoner. On the tenth day of the fifth month, some of the elders of Israel
came to ask the LORD for advice. They sat down with me.

[2]Then a message came to me from the LORD. He said, [3]"Son of man, speak to
the elders of Israel. Tell them, 'The LORD and King says, "Have you come to
ask me for advice? I will not let you do that," announces the LORD and King.
"And that is just as sure as I am alive." '

[4]"Are you going to judge them, son of man? Will you judge them? Tell them
the evil things their people did long ago. I hate those things. [5]Tell them, 'The
LORD and King says, "I chose Israel. On that day I raised my hand and took an
oath. I made a promise to the members of Jacob's family line. I made myself
known to them in Egypt. I raised my hand and told them, 'I am the LORD your
God.'

[6]" ' "On that day I promised I would bring them out of Egypt. I told them I
would take them to a land I had found for them. It had plenty of milk and
honey. It was the most beautiful land of all. [7]I said to them, 'Each of you must
get rid of the statues of the evil gods you worship. Do not pollute yourselves by
worshiping the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.'

[8]" ' "But they refused to obey me. They would not listen to me. They did not
get rid of the evil gods they worshiped. And they did not turn away from
Egypt's gods. So I said I would pour out all of my burning anger on them in
Egypt.

[9]" ' "But I wanted my name to be honored. I kept it from being treated as if it
were not holy. I did not want that to happen in front of the nations my people
lived among. I had made myself known to Israel in the sight of those nations. I
had brought my people out of Egypt.

[10]" ' "So I led them out of Egypt. I brought them into the Desert of Sinai. [11]I
gave them my rules. I made my laws known to them. The one who obeys them
will live by them. [12]I also told them to observe my Sabbath days. That is the

sign of the covenant I made with them. I wanted them to know that I made them holy. I am the LORD.

13“ ‘ “But the people of Israel refused to obey me in the desert. They did not follow my rules. They turned their backs on my laws. The one who obeys them will live by them. They totally misused my Sabbath days. So I said I would pour out my burning anger on them. I would destroy them in the desert.

14“ ‘ “But I wanted my name to be honored. I kept it from being treated as if it were not holy. I did not want that to happen in front of the nations. They had seen me bring Israel out of Egypt.

15“ ‘ “I also raised my hand and took an oath in the desert. I told my people I would not bring them into the land I had given them. It had plenty of milk and honey. It was the most beautiful land of all. 16But they turned their backs on my laws. They did not follow my rules. They misused my Sabbaths. Their hearts were committed to worshiping the statues of their gods.

17“ ‘ “Then I felt sorry for them. So I did not destroy them. I did not put an end to them in the desert. 18I spoke to their children there. I said, ‘Do not follow the rules your parents gave you. Do not obey their laws. Do not pollute yourselves by worshiping their gods. 19I am the LORD your God. So follow my rules. Be careful to obey my laws. 20Keep my Sabbath days holy. That is the sign of the covenant I made with you. You will know that I am the LORD your God.’

21“ ‘ “But their children refused to obey me. They did not follow my rules. They were not careful to keep my laws. The one who obeys them will live by them. They misused my Sabbaths. So I said I would pour out all of my burning anger on them in the desert.

22“ ‘ “But I kept myself from punishing them at that time. I wanted my name to be honored. So I kept it from being treated as if it were not holy. I did not want that to happen in front of the nations. They had seen me bring Israel out of Egypt.

23“ ‘ “I also raised my hand and took an oath in the desert. I told my people I would scatter them among the nations. I would send them to other countries. 24They had not obeyed my laws. They had turned their backs on my rules. They had misused my Sabbaths. Their eyes longed to see the statues of their parents’ gods.

25“ ‘ “I even let them follow rules that were not good. I let them have laws

they could not live by. [26]I let them become polluted by offering sacrifices to other gods. They even sacrificed the first male child who was born in each family. I wanted to fill them with horror. Then they would know that I am the LORD.” ’

[27]“Son of man, speak to the people of Israel. Tell them, ‘The LORD and King says, “Your people spoke evil things against me long ago. They deserted me. [28]But I brought them into the land. I had taken an oath and promised to give the land to them. Then they offered sacrifices that made me very angry. They did it on every high hill and under every green tree. There they brought their sweet-smelling incense. And there they poured out their drink offerings. [29]Then I said to them, ‘What? You are going to a high place?’ ” ’ ” That high place is called Bamah to this very day.

The LORD Judges Israel and Blesses Them

[30]The LORD said to me, “Speak to the people of Israel. Tell them, ‘The LORD and King says, “Are you going to pollute yourselves the way your people did? Do you long to see the statues of their evil gods? [31]You pollute yourselves by offering sacrifices to other gods. You even sacrifice your children in the fire. You continue to do those things to this very day. People of Israel, should I let you ask me for advice? I will not let you do that,” announces the LORD and King. “And that is just as sure as I am alive.

[32]“ ‘ “You say, ‘We want to be like the other nations. We want to be like all of the other people in the world. They serve gods that are made out of wood and stone.’ But what you have in mind will never happen. [33]I will rule over you by reaching out my mighty hand and powerful arm. I will pour my burning anger out on you,” announces the LORD and King. “And that is just as sure as I am alive.

[34]“ ‘ “I will bring you back from the nations. I will gather you together from the countries where you have been scattered. I will reach out my mighty hand and powerful arm. I will pour my burning anger out on you. [35]I will send you among the nations. There I will judge you face to face. It will be as if I were judging you in the desert again. [36]Long ago, I judged your people in the desert of Egypt. In the same way, I will judge you,” announces the LORD and King.

[37]“ ‘ “I will take note of you as you pass under my shepherd’s rod. I will

separate those who obey me from those who do not. And I will give the blessings of the new covenant to those of you who obey me. [38]I will get rid of those among you who turn against me and refuse to obey me. I will bring them out of the land where they are living. But they will not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

[39]“ ‘ “People of Israel, the LORD and King says, ‘Go, every one of you! Serve your gods. But later you will listen to me. You will no longer treat my name as if it were not holy. You will not offer sacrifices to other gods anymore.

[40]“ ‘ “ ‘People of Israel, you will serve me,’ announces the LORD and King. ‘You will serve me on my high and holy mountain in Jerusalem. There I will accept you. I will require your offerings and your finest gifts. I want you to bring them along with all of your other holy sacrifices. [41]I will bring you back from the nations. I will gather you together from the countries where you have been scattered. Then I will accept you as if you were sweet-smelling incense. I will show that I am holy among you. The nations will see it.

[42]“ ‘ “ ‘I will bring you into the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD. Long ago I raised my hand and took an oath. I promised to give that land to your people. [43]There you will remember your conduct. You will think about everything you did that polluted you. And you will hate yourselves because of all of the evil things you have done.

[44]“ ‘ “ ‘People of Israel, I will deal with you for the honor of my name. I will not deal with you based on your evil conduct and sinful practices. Then you will know that I am the LORD,’ announces the LORD and King.” ’ ”

Ezekiel Prophesies Against the South

[45]A message came to me from the LORD. He said, [46]“Son of man, turn your attention to Judah in the south. Preach against it. Prophesy against its forests. [47]Tell them, ‘Listen to the LORD’s message. The LORD and King says, “I am about to set you on fire. The fire will destroy all of your trees. It will burn up green trees and dry trees alike. The blazing flame will not be put out. The faces of everyone from south to north will be burned by it. [48]Everyone will see that I started the fire. It will not be put out. I am the LORD.” ’ ”

[49]Then I said, “LORD and King, people are talking about me. They are saying, ‘Isn’t he just telling stories?’ ”

God Uses Babylonia to Judge Israel

Ezekiel 21

1 A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 2 “Son of man, turn your
attention to Jerusalem. Preach against the temple. Prophesy against the land of
Israel.

3 “Tell them, ‘The LORD says, “I am against you. I will pull out my sword. I
will cut off from you godly people and sinful people alike. 4 Because I am
going to cut them off, my sword will be ready to use. I will strike everyone
down from south to north. 5 Then all people will know that I have pulled out
my sword. I will not put it back. I am the LORD.” ’

6 “Groan, son of man! Groan in front of your people with a broken heart and
bitter sorrow. 7 They will ask you, ‘Why are you groaning?’

“Then you will say, ‘Because of the news that is coming. The hearts of all of
the people will melt away in fear. Their hands will not be able to help them.
Their spirits will grow weak. And their knees will become as weak as water.’

“The news is coming! You can be sure those things will happen,” announces
the LORD and King.

8 A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 9 “Son of man, prophesy. Say,
‘The Lord says,

“ ‘ “A sword! A sword!
A sharp and shiny sword is coming from Babylonia!
10 It is sharpened to kill people.
It flashes like lightning.” ’ ”

The people say, “Should we take delight in the rod of the ruler of the LORD’s
son Judah? The sword looks down on every stick like that.”

11 The LORD says,

“I have told Nebuchadnezzar to shine his sword.

It is in his hand.
It has been sharpened and shined.
It is ready for the killer's hand.
12 Son of man, cry out and sob.
The sword is against my people.
It is against all of the princes of Israel.
It will kill them
along with the rest of my people.
So beat your chest in sorrow.

13 "You can be sure that testing will come. Why does the sword look down on the rod? Because the rod will not continue to rule," announces the LORD and King.

14 "Son of man, prophesy.
Clap your hands.
Let the sword strike twice.
Let it strike even three times.
It is a sword to kill people.
It is a sword to kill many people.
It is closing in on them from every side.
15 People's hearts will melt away in fear.
Many will be wounded or killed.
I have prepared the sword to kill people
at all of their city gates.
It flashes like lightning.
It is in the killer's hand.
16 Sword, cut to the right.
Then cut to the left.
Strike people down everywhere your blade is turned.
17 I too will clap my hands.
My burning anger will calm down.
I have spoken. I am the LORD."

18 A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 19 "Son of man, mark out on a map two roads for the sword to take. The sword belongs to the king of Babylonia. Both roads start from the same country. Put up a sign where the road turns off to the city of Rabbah. 20 Mark out one road for the sword to take against Rabbah in Ammon. Mark out another against Judah and the walls of

Jerusalem.

21“The king of Babylonia will stop at the place where the two roads meet. He will ask his gods to tell him which way to go. He will cast lots by pulling arrows out of a bag. And he will look carefully at the liver of a sheep.

22“His right hand will pull out the arrow for Jerusalem. There he will get huge logs ready to knock down its gates. He will give the command to kill its people. He will sound the battle cry. He will build a ramp up to the city wall. He will bring in his war machines.

23“The decision to attack Jerusalem will seem like the wrong advice to those who made a treaty with Nebuchadnezzar. But he will remind them that they are guilty. And he will take them away as prisoners.”

24So the LORD and King says, “You people have reminded everyone of how guilty you are. You have done it by refusing to obey me or any other authority. Everything you do clearly shows how sinful you are. So you will be taken away as prisoners.”

25King Zedekiah, the day for you to be punished has finally come. You are an unholy and evil prince in Israel. Your time is up. 26The LORD and King says, “Take off your turban. Remove your crown. Things will not be as they were in the past. Those who are not important will be honored. And those who are honored will be brought down. 27Jerusalem will fall. I will destroy it. It will not be rebuilt until the true king comes. After all, the kingdom belongs to him. I will give it to him.

28“Son of man, prophesy. Say, ‘The LORD and King speaks about the Ammonites. He also talks about the way they laugh because of Jerusalem’s fall. He says,

“ ‘ “A sword! A sword!
Nebuchadnezzar’s sword is ready to kill you.
It is shined to destroy you.
It flashes like lightning.
29The visions of your prophets are false.
They use magic to try to find out
what is going to happen to you.
But their magic tricks are lies.
The sword will strike the necks of you sinful people.
You will be killed.
The day for you to be punished has finally come.

Your time is up.
30 Ammon, return your sword to its place.
In the land where you were created, I will judge you.
That is where you came from.
31 I will pour out my anger on you.
I will breathe out my burning anger against you.
I will hand you over to mean people.
They are skilled at destroying others.
32 You will be burned in the fire.
Your blood will be spilled in your land.
You will not be remembered anymore.
I have spoken. I am the LORD.” ’ ”

Jerusalem Sins Against the LORD

Ezekiel 22

1A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 2“Son of man, are you going
to judge Jerusalem? Will you judge this city that has so many murderers in it?
Then tell its people they have done many evil things. I hate those things. 3Tell
them, ‘The LORD and King says, “Your city brings death on itself. You spill
blood inside its walls. You pollute yourselves by making statues of gods. 4You
are guilty of spilling blood. The statues you have made have polluted you.

“ ‘ “You have brought your days to a close. The end of your years has come.
So the nations will make fun of you. All of the countries will laugh at you.
5Those who are near you will tell jokes about you. So will those who are far
away. Trouble fills the streets of your sinful city.

6“ ‘ “The princes of Israel are in your city. All of them use their power to spill
blood. 7They have made fun of fathers and mothers alike. They have crushed
outsiders. They have treated badly the children whose fathers have died. They
have done the same thing to widows.

8“ ‘ “You have looked down on the holy things that were set apart to me. You
have misused my Sabbath days. 9You have spread lies about others so you can
spill someone’s blood. You eat at the mountain temples. You commit impure
acts.

10“ ‘ “You bring shame on your fathers by having sex with their wives. You
have sex with women during their monthly period. That is when they are
‘unclean.’ 11One of you has sex with another man’s wife. I hate that sin.
Another brings shame on his daughter-in-law by having sex with her. Still
another has sex with his sister, even though she is his own father’s daughter.

12“ ‘ “You accept money from people who want special favors. You do it to
spill someone’s blood. You charge too much interest when you lend money.
You get rich by cheating your neighbors. And you have forgotten me,”
announces the LORD and King.

13“ ‘ “I will clap my hands because I am so angry. You got rich by cheating

others. You spilled blood inside the walls of your city. 14Will you be brave on the day I deal with you? Will you be strong at that time? I have spoken. I will do it. I am the LORD.

15“ ‘ “I will scatter you among the nations. I will send you to other countries. I will put an end to your ‘uncleanness.’ 16You will be polluted in the sight of the nations. Then you will know that I am the LORD.” ’ ”

17A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 18“Son of man, the people of Israel have become like scum to me. All of them are like the copper, tin, iron and lead that are left inside a furnace. They are only the scum that is removed from silver.”

19So the LORD and King says, “People of Israel, all of you have become like scum. So I will gather you together in Jerusalem. 20Men put silver, copper, iron, lead and tin into a furnace. They melt it with a blazing fire. In the same way, I will gather you. I will pour out my burning anger on you. I will put you inside the city and melt you. 21I will gather you together. My burning anger will blaze out at you. And you will be melted inside Jerusalem. 22Silver is melted in a furnace. And you will be melted inside the city. Then you will know that I have poured out my burning anger on you. I am the LORD.”

23Another message came to me from the LORD. He said, 24“Son of man, speak to the land. Tell it, ‘You have not had any rain or showers. That is because I am angry with you.’

25“Ezekiel, the princes of the land are like a roaring lion that tears its food apart. They eat people up. They take treasures and other valuable things. They cause many women in the land to become widows.

26“Its priests break my law. They treat things that are set apart to me as if they were not holy. They treat holy and common things as if they were the same. They teach that there is no difference between things that are ‘clean’ and things that are not. They refuse to keep my Sabbath days. So they treat me as if I were not holy.

27“The officials in the land are like wolves that tear their food apart. They spill blood and kill people to get rich. 28The prophets cover up those acts for them. The visions of those prophets are false. They use magic to try to find out what is going to happen. But their magic tricks are lies. They say, ‘The LORD and King says,’ But I have not spoken to them.

29“The people of the land get rich by cheating others. They steal. They crush

those who are poor and in need. They treat outsiders badly. They refuse to be fair to them.

30“I looked for a man among them who would stand up for Jerusalem. I tried to find someone who would pray to me for the land. Then I would not have to destroy it. But I could not find anyone who would pray for it. 31So I will pour out my anger on its people. I will destroy them because my anger burns against them. And anything that happens to them will be their own fault,” announces the LORD and King.

Samaria and Jerusalem Are Like Two Impure Sisters

Ezekiel 23

1 A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 2 “Son of man, once there
were two women. They had the same mother. 3 They became prostitutes in
Egypt. They have been unfaithful to me since they were young. In that land
they allowed their breasts to be touched. They permitted their virgin breasts to
be kissed.

4 “The older sister was named Oholah. The younger one was Oholibah. They
belonged to me. Sons and daughters were born to them. Oholah stands for
Samaria. And Oholibah stands for Jerusalem.

5 “Oholah was unfaithful to me even while she still belonged to me. She
longed for her Assyrian lovers. 6 They included soldiers who wore blue
uniforms. They also included governors and commanders. All of them were
young and handsome. They rode horses. 7 She gave herself as a prostitute to all
of Assyria’s finest warriors. She polluted herself with the statues of the gods of
everyone she longed for.

8 “She started being a prostitute in Egypt. And she never stopped. When she
was young, men had sex with her. They kissed her virgin breasts. They used up
all of their sinful longings on her.

9 “So I handed her over to her Assyrian lovers. She longed for them. 10 They
stripped her naked. They took her sons and daughters away. And they killed
her with their swords. Other women laughed when that happened. I was the
one who had punished her.

11 “Her sister Oholibah saw it. But her evil longing for sexual sin was worse
than her sister’s. 12 She too longed for the men of Assyria. They included
governors and commanders. They included soldiers who wore uniforms. They
also included men who rode horses. All of them were young and handsome. 13 I
saw that she too polluted herself. So both sisters did the same evil things.

14 “But Oholibah went even further with her sexual sins. She saw pictures of
men drawn on a wall. They were figures of Babylonians drawn in red. 15 They

had belts around their waists. They wore flowing turbans on their heads. All of them looked like Babylonian chariot officers. They were from the land of the Chaldeans.

16"As soon as she saw the pictures, she longed for the men. So she sent messengers to them in Babylonia. 17Then the Babylonians came to her. They went to bed with her. They made love to her. They polluted her when they had sex with her. After they did it, she became sick of them. So she turned away from them.

18"She acted like a prostitute who had no shame at all. She openly showed her naked body. I became sick of what she was doing. So I turned away from her. I had also turned away from her sister.

19"But Oholibah offered her body to her lovers again and again. She remembered the days when she was a young prostitute in Egypt. 20There she had longed for her lovers. Their private parts seemed as big as those of donkeys. And their flow of semen appeared to be as much as that of horses. 21So you wanted to return to the days when you were young. You longed for the time when you first became impure in Egypt. That was when you allowed your breasts to be kissed. And you permitted your young breasts to be touched."

22So the LORD and King says, "Oholibah, I will stir up your lovers against you. You became sick of them. You turned away from them. But I will bring them against you from every side. 23They include the Babylonians and all of the Chaldeans. They include the men from Pekod, Shoa and Koa. They also include all of the Assyrians. They are young and handsome. Some of them are governors and commanders. Others are chariot officers. Still others are very high officials. All of them ride horses.

24"So a huge army will come against you with weapons, chariots and wagons. They will take up positions against you on every side. They will carry large and small shields. They will wear helmets. I will turn you over to them to be punished. They will punish you in their own way.

25"I will pour out my jealous anger on you. And the army's anger will burn against you. They will cut off your noses and ears. Some of you who are left will be killed with swords. They will take your sons and daughters away. Others of you who are left will be burned up. 26The army will also strip your clothes off. They will take your fine jewelry away from you.

27“You became an impure prostitute in Egypt. But I will put a stop to all of
that. You will no longer want to do any of it. You will not remember Egypt
anymore.”

28The LORD and King says, “I am about to hand you over to people you hate.
You became sick of them. You turned away from them. 29They will punish you
because they hate you so much. They will take everything you have worked for
away from you. They will leave you naked and bare. Then everyone will see
that you are a prostitute who has no shame at all. You were impure. You
offered your body to your lovers again and again.

30“That is why you will be punished. You longed for lovers in other nations.
You polluted yourself by worshiping their gods. 31You did the same things your
sister Oholah did. So I will put her cup in your hand. It is filled with the wine
of my anger.”

32The LORD and King says to Oholibah,

“You will drink from your sister’s cup.
It is large and deep.
It is filled with the wine of my anger.
So others will laugh at you.
They will make fun of you.
33You will become drunk and sad.
The cup of my anger will completely destroy you.
It is the same cup your sister Samaria drank from.
34You will drink from it until it is empty.
Then you will throw it down and break it in pieces.
And you will claw at your breasts.

I have spoken,” announces the LORD and King.

35So the LORD and King says, “You have forgotten me. You have pushed me
behind your back. You have been impure. You have acted like a prostitute. So I
will punish you.”

36The LORD said to me, “Son of man, are you going to judge Oholah and
Oholibah? Then tell them they have done many evil things. I hate those things.
37They have committed adultery. Their hands are covered with the blood of the

people they have murdered. They have worshiped other gods. They have not been faithful to me. They have even sacrificed their children as food to other gods. Those children belonged to me.

38“Here are some other things the sisters have done to me. They have polluted my temple. They have misused my Sabbath days. 39They have sacrificed their children to their gods. On that same day they entered my temple and polluted it. That is what they have done in my house.

40“They even sent messengers to bring men from far away. When the men arrived, Oholibah took a bath. She put makeup on her eyes. She put her jewelry on. 41She sat down on a beautiful couch. A table was in front of it. There she put the incense and olive oil that belonged to me.

42“The noise of a carefree crowd was all around her. Sabeans were brought from the desert. Other men were brought along with them. They put bracelets on the arms of the two sisters. They put beautiful crowns on their heads.

43“Then I spoke about Oholibah. She was worn out by adultery. I said, ‘Let them use her as a prostitute. After all, that is what she is.’ 44So they had sex with her. In fact, they had sex with both of those impure women, Oholah and Oholibah. It was just like having sex with prostitutes.

45“But men who are right with God will sentence the sisters to be punished. They will be punished in the same way as women who commit adultery and murder. After all, they have committed adultery. And their hands are covered with the blood of the people they have murdered.”

46The LORD and King says, “Bring an angry crowd against the sisters. Hand them over to those who will terrify them and steal everything they have. 47The crowd will kill them by throwing stones at them. They will cut them down with their swords. They will kill their sons and daughters. And they will burn their houses down.

48“So I will put an end to impurity in the land. Then all of its women will be warned. They will not want to be like the sisters. 49Those sisters will be punished because of the impure things they have done. They will be judged because they have worshiped other gods. Then they will know that I am the LORD and King.”

Jerusalem Is Like a Cooking Pot

Ezekiel 24

1It was the ninth year since King Jehoiachin had been brought to Babylon as
a prisoner. On the tenth day of the tenth month, a message came to me from the
LORD. He said, 2“Son of man, write down today’s date. The king of Babylonia
has surrounded Jerusalem and attacked it this very day.

3“Your people refuse to obey me. So tell them a story. Say to them, ‘The
LORD and King told me,

“ ‘ “Put a cooking pot on the fire.
Pour water into it.
4Put pieces of meat in it.
Use all of the best pieces.
Use the leg and shoulder.
Fill it with the best bones.
5Pick the finest animal in the flock.
Pile wood under the pot to cook the bones.
Bring the water to a boil.
Cook the bones in it.” ’ ”

6The LORD and King says,

“How terrible it will be for this city!
It has so many murderers in it.
How terrible for the pot that is coated with scum!
The scum on it will not go away.
Take the meat and bones out of the pot piece by piece.
Do not cast lots for them.

7“The blood Jerusalem’s people spilled is inside its walls.
They poured it out on a bare rock.
They did not pour it on the ground.

If they had, dust would have covered it up.
[8]So I put their blood on the bare rock.
I did not want it to be covered up.
I poured my burning anger out on them.
I paid them back.”

[9]So the LORD and King said to me,

“How terrible it will be for this city!
It has so many murderers in it.
I too will pile the wood high.
[10]So pile on the wood.
Light the fire.
Cook the meat well.
Mix in the spices.
Let the bones be blackened.
[11]Then set the empty pot on the coals.
Let it get hot. Let its copper glow.
Then what is not pure in it will melt.
Its scum will be burned away.
[12]But it can’t be cleaned up.
Its thick scum has not been removed.
Even fire can’t burn it off.

[13]“Jerusalem, you are really impure. I tried to clean you up. But you would not let me make you pure. So you will not be clean again until my burning anger against you has calmed down.

[14]“I have spoken. The time has come for me to act. I will not hold back. I will not feel sorry for you. I will do what I said I would do. You will be judged for your conduct and actions. I am the LORD,” announces the LORD and King.

Ezekiel’s Wife Dies

[15]A message came to me from the LORD. He said, [16]“Son of man, I will take

away from you the wife you delight in. It will happen very soon. But do not sing songs of sadness. Do not let any tears flow from your eyes. [17]Groan quietly. Do not sob out loud over your wife when she dies. Keep your turban on your head. Keep your sandals on your feet. Do not cover the lower part of your face. Do not eat the food people eat to comfort them when someone dies."

[18]So I spoke to my people in the morning. And in the evening my wife died. The next morning I did what I had been commanded to do.

[19]Then the people said to me, "Tell us what these things have to do with us."

[20]So I told them. I said, "A message came to me from the LORD. He said, [21]'Speak to the people of Israel. Tell them, "The LORD and King says, 'I am about to pollute my temple. I will let the Babylonians burn it down. It is the beautiful building you are so proud of. You take delight in it. You love it. The sons and daughters you left behind will be killed with swords.

[22]" ' " 'So do what Ezekiel did. Do not cover the lower part of your face. Do not eat the food people eat to comfort them when someone dies. [23]Keep your turbans on your heads. Keep your sandals on your feet. Do not cry or sob. You will waste away because you have sinned so much. You will groan among yourselves.

[24]" ' " 'What Ezekiel has done will show you what is going to happen to you. You will do just as he has done. Then you will know that I am the LORD and King.' " '

[25]"Son of man, I will take away their beautiful temple. It is their joy and glory. They take delight in it. Their hearts long for it. I will also take away their sons and daughters. [26]On the day I destroy everything, a man will escape. He will come and tell you the news.

[27]"At that time I will open your mouth. Then you will no longer be silent. You will speak with the man. That will show them what will happen to them. And they will know that I am the LORD."

A Message About Ammon

Ezekiel 25

[1]A message came to me from the LORD. He said, [2]“Son of man, turn your attention to the Ammonites. Prophesy against them. [3]Tell them, ‘Listen to the message of the LORD and King. He says, “You laughed when my temple was polluted. You also laughed when the land of Israel was completely destroyed. You made fun of the people of Judah when they were taken away as prisoners. [4]So I am going to hand you over to the people of the east. They will set up their tents in your land. They will camp among you. They will eat your fruit. They will drink your milk. [5]I will turn the city of Rabbah into grasslands for camels. Ammon will become a resting place for sheep. Then you will know that I am the LORD.” ’ ”

[6]The LORD and King says, “You clapped your hands. You stamped your feet. You hated the land of Israel deep down inside you. You were glad because of what happened to it. [7]So I will reach out my powerful hand against you. I will give you and everything you have to the nations. I will cut you off from them. I will wipe you out. I will destroy you. Then you will know that I am the LORD.”

A Message About Moab

[8]The LORD and King says, “Moab and Edom said, ‘Look! The people of Judah have become like all of the other nations.’ [9]So I will let Moab’s enemies attack its lower hills. They will begin at the border towns. Those towns include Beth Jeshimoth, Baal Meon and Kiriathaim. They are the glory of that land. [10]I will hand Moab over to the people of the east. I will also give the Ammonites to them. And the Ammonites will no longer be remembered among the nations. [11]I will punish Moab. Then they will know that I am the LORD.”

A Message About Edom

[12]The LORD and King says, “Edom got even with the people of Judah. That made them very guilty.” [13]He continues, “I will reach out my hand against Edom. I will kill its people and their animals. I will completely destroy it. They will be killed with swords from Teman all the way to Dedan. [14]I will use my people Israel to pay Edom back. They will punish Edom because my anger burns against it. They will know how I pay my enemies back,” announces the LORD and King.

A Message About the Philistines

[15]The LORD and King says, “The Philistines hated Judah deep down inside them. So they tried to get even with them. They had been Judah’s enemies for many years. So they tried to destroy them.” [16]He continues, “I am about to reach out my hand against the Philistines. I will cut off the Kerethites. I will destroy those who remain along the coast. [17]You can be sure that I will pay them back. I will punish them because my anger burns against them. When I pay them back, they will know that I am the LORD.”

A Message About Tyre

Ezekiel 26

1It was the first day of a month near the end of the 11th year since King
Jehoiachin had been brought to Babylon as a prisoner. A message came to me
from the LORD. He said, 2"Son of man, Tyre laughed because of what happened
to Jerusalem. The people of Tyre said, 'Jerusalem is the gateway to the nations.
But the gate is broken. Its doors have swung open to us. Jerusalem has been
destroyed. So now we will succeed.' "

3The LORD and King says, "But I am against you, Tyre. I will bring many
nations against you. They will come in like the waves of the sea. 4They will
destroy your walls. They will pull your towers down. I will clear away the
stones of your broken-down buildings. I will turn you into nothing but a bare
rock.

5"Out in the Mediterranean Sea your island city will become a place to spread
fishnets. I have spoken," announces the LORD and King. "The nations will take
you and everything you have. 6Your settlements on the coast will be destroyed
by war. Then you will know that I am the LORD."

7The LORD and King says, "From the north I am going to bring
Nebuchadnezzar against Tyre. He is king of Babylonia. He is the greatest king
of all. He will come with horses and chariots. Horsemen and a great army will
be brought along with him.

8"He will go to war against you. He will destroy your settlements on the
coast. He will bring in war machines to attack you. A ramp will be built up to
your walls. He will use his shields against you. 9He will use huge logs to knock
your walls down. He will destroy your towers with his weapons.

10"He will have so many horses that they will cover you with dust. Your
walls will shake because of the noise of his war horses, wagons and chariots.
He will enter your gates, just as men enter a city whose walls have been broken
through. 11The hoofs of his horses will pound in your streets. He will kill your
people with swords. Your strong pillars will fall to the ground.

12 “His men will take away from you your wealth and anything else you have.
They will pull your walls down. They will completely destroy your fine
houses. They will throw the stones and lumber of your broken-down buildings
into the sea.

13 “I will put an end to your noisy songs. No one will hear the music of your
harps anymore. 14 I will turn you into nothing but a bare rock. You will become
a place to spread fishnets. You will never be rebuilt. I have spoken. I am the
LORD,” announces the LORD and King.

15 The LORD and King speaks to Tyre. He says, “The lands along the coast will
shake because of the sound of your fall. Wounded people will groan because so
many are dying there.

16 “Then all of the princes along the coast will step down from their thrones.
They will put their robes away. They will take off their beautiful clothes. They
will sit on the ground. They will put on terror as if it were their clothes. They
will tremble with fear all the time. They will be shocked because of what has
happened to you.

17 “Then they will sing a song of sadness about you. They will say to you,

“ ‘Famous city, you have been completely destroyed!
You were filled with sea traders.
You and your citizens
were a mighty power on the seas.
You terrified everyone
who lived in you.
18 The lands along the coast trembled with fear
when you fell.
The islands in the sea
were terrified when you were destroyed.’ ”

19 The LORD and King says to Tyre, “I will turn you into an empty city. You
will be like cities where no one lives anymore. I will cause the ocean to sweep
over you. Its mighty waters will cover you. 20 So I will bring you down together
with those who go down into the grave. The people who are there lived long
ago. You will have to live in the earth below. It will be like living in buildings
that were destroyed many years ago. You will go down into the grave along
with others. And you will never come back. You will not take your place in this

world again. [21]I will bring you to a horrible end. You will be gone forever. People will look for you. But they will never find you," announces the LORD and King.

A Song of Sadness About Tyre

Ezekiel 27

1 A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 2 “Son of man, sing a song of
sadness about Tyre. 3 It is located at the gateway to the Mediterranean Sea. It
does business with nations on many coasts. Say to it, ‘The LORD and King says,

“ ‘ “Tyre, you say,
‘I am perfect and beautiful.’
4 You were like a ship that ruled over the high seas.
Your builders made you perfect and beautiful.
5 They cut all of your lumber
from pine trees on Mount Hermon.
They used a cedar tree from Lebanon
to make a mast for you.
6 They made your oars
out of oak trees from Bashan.
They made your deck out of cypress wood
from the coasts of Cyprus.
They decorated it with ivory.
7 Your sail was made out of beautiful, Egyptian linen.
It served as your banner.
Your shades were made out of blue and purple cloth.
They were from the coasts of Elishah.
8 Men from Sidon and Arvad manned your oars.
Tyre, your sailors were skillful.
9 Very skilled workers from Byblos were on board.
They kept you waterproof.
All of the ships on the sea and their sailors
came up beside you.
They brought their goods to trade for yours.

10 “ ‘ “City of Tyre, men from Persia, Lydia and Put
served as soldiers in your army.
They hung their shields and helmets on your walls.
That brought glory to you.

[11]Men from Arvad and Cilicia
guarded your walls on every side.
Men from Gammad
were in your towers.
They hung their shields around your walls.
They made you perfect and beautiful.

[12]“ ‘ “Tarshish did business with you because you had so much wealth. They traded silver, iron, tin and lead for your goods.

[13]“ ‘ “Greece, Tubal and Meshech did business with you. They traded slaves and bronze articles for your products.

[14]“ ‘ “Men from Beth Togarmah traded work horses, war horses and mules for your goods.

[15]“ ‘ “Men from Rhodes did business with you. Many lands along the coast bought goods from you. They paid you with ivory tusks and ebony wood.

[16]“ ‘ “Aram did business with you because you had so many products for sale. They traded turquoise, purple cloth and needlework for your goods. They also traded fine linen, coral and rubies for them.

[17]“ ‘ “Judah and Israel did business with you. They traded wheat from Minnith, sweets, honey, olive oil and lotion for your products.

[18]“ ‘ “Damascus traded wine from Helbon and wool from Zahar to you. They did business with you because you had so many products and so much wealth.

[19]“ ‘ “Danites and Greeks from Uzal bought goods from you. They traded wrought iron, cassia and cane for your products.

[20]“ ‘ “Dedan traded saddle blankets to you.

[21]“ ‘ “Arabia and all of the princes of Kedar bought goods from you. They traded you lambs, rams and goats for them.

[22]“ ‘ “Traders from Sheba and Raamah did business with you. They traded the finest spices, jewels and gold for your goods.

[23]“ ‘ “Haran, Canneh and Eden did business with you. So did traders from Sheba, Asshur and Kilmad. [24]In your market place they traded beautiful clothes, blue cloth, and needlework to you. They also traded colorful rugs that had twisted cords and tight knots.

25“ ‘ “The ships of Tarshish
carry your products.
You are like a ship filled with a heavy load
in the middle of the sea.
26The sailors who man your oars take you
out to the high seas.
But the east wind will break you in pieces
in the middle of the sea.
27You will be wrecked on that day.
Your wealth, goods and products
will sink deep into the sea.
So will your sailors, officers, carpenters,
traders and all of your soldiers.
Anyone else on board will sink too.
28The lands along the coast will shake
when your officers cry out.
29All those who man the oars
will desert their ships.
The sailors and all of the officers
will stand on the shore.
30They will raise their voices.
They will cry bitterly over you.
They will sprinkle dust on their heads.
They will roll in ashes.
31They will shave their heads because of you.
And they will put on black clothes.
They will sob over you.
Their spirits will be greatly troubled.
They will be very sad.
32As they sob and cry over you,
they will sing a song of sadness about you.
They will say, ‘Who was ever like Tyre?
It was destroyed in the sea.’
33Your goods went out on the seas.
You supplied many nations with what they needed.
You had so much wealth and so many products.
You made the kings of the earth rich.
34Now the sea has torn you apart.
You have sunk deep down into it.
Your products and all of your people
have gone down with you.

35 All those who live in the lands along the coast
are shocked because of what has happened to you.
Their kings tremble with fear.
Their faces are twisted in horror.
36 The traders among the nations hiss at you.
You have come to a horrible end.
And you will be gone forever.” ’ ”

A Message About the King of Tyre

Ezekiel 28

1 A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 2 “Son of man, speak to
Ethbaal. He is the ruler of Tyre. Tell him, ‘The LORD and King says,

“ ‘ “In your proud heart
you say, ‘I am a god.
I sit on the throne of a god
in the Mediterranean Sea.’
But you are only a man. You are not a god.
In spite of that, you think you are as wise as a god.
3 Are you wiser than Daniel?
Isn’t even one secret hidden from you?
4 You are wise and understanding.
So you have become very wealthy.
You have piled up gold and silver
among your treasures.
5 You have used your great skill in trading
to increase your wealth.
You are very rich.
So your heart has become proud.” ’ ”

6 The LORD and King says,

“You think you are wise.
In fact, you claim to be as wise as a god.
7 So I am going to bring strangers against you.
They will not show you any pity at all.
They will use their swords against your beauty and wisdom.
They will strike down your shining glory.
8 They will bring you down to the grave.
You will die a horrible death
in the middle of the sea.
9 Then will you say, ‘I am a god’?

Will you say that to those who kill you?
You will be only a man to those who kill you.
You will not be a god to them.
10You will die just like those who have not been circumcised.
Strangers will kill you.

I have spoken," announces the LORD and King.

11A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 12"Son of man, sing a song of sadness about the king of Tyre. Tell him, 'The LORD and King says,

" ' "You were the model of perfection.
You were full of wisdom.
You were perfect and beautiful.
13You were in Eden.
It was my garden.
All kinds of jewels decorated you.
Here is a list of them.

ruby, topaz and emerald
chrysolite, onyx and jasper
sapphire, turquoise and beryl

Your settings and mountings were made out of gold.
On the day you were created,
they were prepared.
14I appointed you to be like a guardian cherub.
I anointed you for that purpose.
You were on my holy mountain.
You walked among the gleaming jewels.
15Your conduct was without blame
from the day you were created.
But soon you began to sin.
16You traded with many nations.
You harmed people everywhere.
And you sinned.
So I sent you away from my mountain in shame.
Guardian cherub, I drove you away

from among the gleaming jewels.
17You thought you were so handsome
that it made your heart proud.
You thought you were so glorious
that it spoiled your wisdom.
So I threw you down to the earth.
I made an example out of you in front of kings.
18Your many sins and dishonest trade
polluted your temple.
So I made you go up in flames.
I turned you into nothing but ashes on the ground.
I let everyone see it.
19All of the nations that knew you
are shocked because of what happened to you.
You have come to a horrible end.
And you will be gone forever.” ’ ”

A Message About Sidon

20A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 21“Son of man, turn your attention to the city of Sidon. Prophesy against it. 22Say, ‘The LORD and King says,

“ ‘ “Sidon, I am against your people.
I will gain glory for myself inside your city walls.
I will punish your people.
I will show that I am holy among them.
Then they will know that I am the LORD.
23I will send a plague on them.
I will make blood flow in your streets.
Those who are killed will fall inside you.
Swords will strike your people on every side.
Then they will know that I am the LORD.

24“ ‘ “The people of Israel will no longer have neighbors who hate them. Those neighbors will not be like sharp and painful thorns anymore. Then Israel will know that I am the LORD and King.” ’ ”

[25]The LORD and King says, “I will gather the people of Israel together from the nations where they have been scattered. I will show that I am holy among them. I will let the nations see it. Then Israel will live in their own land. I gave it to my servant Jacob. [26]My people will live there in safety. They will build houses. They will plant vineyards. They will live in safety. I will punish all of their neighbors who told lies about them. Then Israel will know that I am the LORD their God.”

A Message About Egypt

Ezekiel 29

[1]It was the tenth year since King Jehoiachin had been brought to Babylon as a prisoner. On the 12th day of the tenth month, a message came to me from the LORD. He said, [2]"Son of man, turn your attention to Pharaoh Hophra. He is king of Egypt. Prophesy against him and the whole land of Egypt. [3]Tell him, 'The LORD and King says,

" ' "Pharaoh Hophra, I am against you.
King of Egypt, you are like a huge monster
lying among your streams.
You say, 'The Nile River belongs to me.
I made it for myself.'
[4]But I will put hooks in your jaws.
I will make the fish in your streams
stick to your scales.
I will pull you out from among your streams.
All of the fish will stick to your scales.
[5]I will leave you out in the desert.
All of the fish in your streams
will be there with you.
You will fall down in an open field.
You will not be picked up.
I will feed you to the wild animals
and to the birds of the air.

[6]Then everyone who lives in Egypt will know that I am the LORD.

" ' "You have been like a walking stick made out of a papyrus stem. The people of Israel tried to lean on you. [7]They took hold of you. But you broke under their weight. You tore their shoulders open. They leaned on you. But you snapped in two. And their backs were broken." ' "

[8]So the LORD and King says, “I will send Nebuchadnezzar’s sword against you. He will kill your people and their animals. [9]Egypt will become a dry and empty desert. Then your people will know that I am the LORD.

“You said, ‘The Nile River belongs to me. I made it for myself.’ [10]So I am against you and your streams. I will destroy the land of Egypt. I will turn it into a dry and empty desert from Migdol all the way to Aswan. I will destroy everything as far as the border of Cush.

[11]“No people or animals will travel through Egypt. No one will even live there for 40 years. [12]Egypt will be more empty than any other land. Its destroyed cities will lie empty for 40 years. I will scatter the people of Egypt among the nations. I will send them to other countries.”

[13]But the LORD and King says, “At the end of 40 years I will gather the Egyptians together from the nations where they were scattered. [14]I will bring them back from where they were taken as prisoners. I will return them to Upper Egypt. That is where they came from. There they will be an unimportant kingdom.

[15]“Egypt will be the least important kingdom of all. It will never place itself above the other nations again. I will make it very weak. Then it will never again rule over the nations. [16]The people of Israel will no longer trust in Egypt. Instead, Egypt will remind them of how they sinned when they turned to it for help. Then they will know that I am the LORD and King.”

[17]It was the 27th year since King Jehoiachin had been brought to Babylon as a prisoner. On the first day of the first month, a message came to me from the LORD. He said, [18]“Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylonia, drove his army in a hard military campaign against Tyre. Their helmets rubbed their heads bare. The heavy loads they carried made their shoulders raw. But he and his army did not gain anything from the campaign he led against Tyre.

[19]“So I am going to give Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylonia. He will carry off its wealth. He will take away anything else you have. He will give it to his army. [20]I have given Egypt to him as a reward for his efforts. After all, he and his army attacked Egypt because I told them to,” announces the LORD and King.

[21]“When Nebuchadnezzar wins the battle over Egypt, I will make the people of Israel strong again. Ezekiel, I will open your mouth. And you will be able to

speak to them. Then they will know that I am the LORD.”

A Song of Sadness About Egypt

Ezekiel 30

1 A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 2 “Son of man, prophesy. Say,
‘The LORD and King says,

“ ‘ “Cry out,
‘A terrible day is coming!’
3 The day is near.
The day of the LORD is coming.
It will be a cloudy day.
The nations have been sentenced to die.
4 I will send Nebuchadnezzar’s sword against Egypt.
Cush will suffer terribly.
Many will die in Egypt.
Then its wealth will be carried away.
Its foundations will be torn down.

5 The people of Cush, Put, Lydia, Libya and the whole land of Arabia will be killed with swords. So will the Jews who live in Egypt. They went there from the covenant land of Israel. And the Egyptians will die too.” ’ ”

6 The LORD says,

“Those who were going to help Egypt will die.
The strength Egypt was so proud of will fail.
Its people will be killed with swords
from Migdol all the way to Aswan,”
announces the LORD and King.

7 “Egypt will be more empty than any other land.
Its cities will be completely destroyed.
8 I will set Egypt on fire.
All those who came to help it will be crushed.
Then they will know that I am the LORD.

9“At that time I will send messengers out in ships. They will terrify the
people of Cush who are so contented. Cush will suffer greatly when Egypt
falls. And you can be sure it will fall.”

10The LORD and King says,

“I will put an end to the huge armies of Egypt.
I will use Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylonia, to do it.
11He and his armies will attack the land and destroy it.
They will not show its people any pity at all.
They will use their swords against Egypt.
They will fill the land with dead bodies.
12I will dry up the streams of the Nile River.
I will sell the land to evil men.
I will use the powerful hands of strangers
to destroy the land and everything in it.

“I have spoken. I am the LORD.”

13The LORD and King says,

“I will destroy the statues of Egypt’s gods.
I will put an end to the gods
the people in Memphis worship.
Egypt will not have princes anymore.
I will spread fear all through the land.
14I will completely destroy Upper Egypt.
I will set Zoan on fire.
I will punish Thebes.
15I will pour out my burning anger on Pelusium.
It is a fort in eastern Egypt.
I will cut off the huge army of Thebes.
16I will set Egypt on fire.
Pelusium will groan with terrible pain.
Thebes will be ripped apart.
Memphis will suffer greatly

because of everything that happens.
[17]The young men of Heliopolis and Bubastis
will be killed with swords.
Their people will be taken away as prisoners.
[18]I will break Egypt's power over other lands.
That will be a dark day for Tahpanhes.
There the strength Egypt was so proud of
will come to an end.
Egypt will be covered with clouds.
The people in its villages
will be taken away as prisoners.
[19]So I will punish Egypt.
Then they will know that I am the LORD."

[20]It was the 11th year since King Jehoiachin had been brought to Babylon as a prisoner. On the seventh day of the first month, a message came to me from the LORD. He said, [21]"Son of man, I have broken the powerful arm of Pharaoh Hophra, the king of Egypt. No bandages have been put on his arm to heal it. It has not been put in a cast. So his arm will not be strong enough to use a sword. [22]I am against Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. I will break both of his arms. I will break his healthy arm and his broken one. His sword will fall from his hand. [23]I will scatter the people of Egypt among the nations. I will send them to other countries.

[24]"I will make the arms of the king of Babylonia stronger. I will put my sword in his hand. But I will break the arms of Pharaoh. And he will groan in front of Nebuchadnezzar. He will cry out like someone dying from his wounds. [25]I will make the arms of the king of Babylonia stronger. But the arms of Pharaoh will not be able to help Egypt. I will put my sword in Nebuchadnezzar's hand. He will get ready to use it against Egypt. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

[26]"I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations. I will send them to other countries. Then they will know that I am the LORD."

A Cedar Tree in Lebanon

Ezekiel 31

[1]It was the 11th year since King Jehoiachin had been brought to Babylon as a prisoner. On the first day of the third month, a message came to me from the LORD. He said, [2]"Son of man, speak to Pharaoh Hophra, the king of Egypt. Also speak to his huge army. Tell him,

" 'Who can be compared with your majesty?
[3]Think about what happened to Assyria.
Once it was like a cedar tree in Lebanon.
It had beautiful branches
that provided shade for the forest.
It grew very high.
Its top was above all of the leaves.
[4]The waters fed it.
Deep springs made it grow tall.
Their streams flowed
all around its base.
They made their way
to all of the trees in the fields.
[5]So it grew higher
than any other tree in the fields.
It grew more limbs.
Its branches grew long.
They spread because they had plenty of water.
[6]All of the birds of the air
made their nests in its limbs.
All of the wild animals
had their babies under its branches.
All of the great nations
lived in its shade.
[7]Its spreading branches
made it majestic and beautiful.
Its roots went down deep
to where there was plenty of water.

[8]The cedar trees in my garden
were no match for it.
The pine trees
could not equal its limbs.
The plane trees
could not compare with its branches.
No tree in my garden
could match its beauty.
[9]I gave it many branches.
They made it beautiful.
All of the trees in my Garden of Eden
were jealous of it.’ ”

[10]So the LORD and King says, “The cedar tree grew very high. Its top was above all of the leaves. It was proud of how tall it was. [11]So I handed it over to the Babylonian ruler of the nations. I wanted him to punish it because it was so evil. I decided to get rid of it.

[12]“The Babylonians cut it down and left it there. They did not show it any pity at all. Some of its branches fell on the mountains. Others fell in all of the valleys. They lay broken in all of the stream beds in the land. All of the nations on earth came out from under its shade. And they went on their way. [13]All of the birds of the air settled on the fallen tree. All of the wild animals moved among its branches.

[14]“So trees that receive plenty of water must never grow so high that it makes them proud. Their tops must never be above the rest of the leaves. No other trees that receive a lot of water must ever grow that high. They are appointed to die and go down into the earth below. They will join the other nations that go down into the grave.”

[15]The LORD and King says, “Assyria was like a cedar tree. But I brought it down to the grave. On that day I dried up the deep springs of water and covered them. I held its streams back. I shut off its rich supply of water. Because of that, Lebanon was dressed in darkness as if it were clothes. All of the trees in the fields dried up.

[16]“I brought the cedar tree down to the grave. It joined the other nations that go down there. I made the nations on earth shake because of the sound of its fall. Then all of the trees of Eden were comforted in the earth below. That included the finest and best trees in Lebanon. And it included all the trees that

received plenty of water. [17]Others also went down into the grave along with it. That included those that lived in its shade. And it included those nations that were going to help it. They joined those who had been killed with swords.

[18]"Which one of the trees of Eden can be compared with you? What tree is as glorious and majestic as you are? But you too will be brought down to the earth below. There you will join the trees of Eden. You will lie down with those who have not been circumcised. You will be among those who were killed with swords.

"That is what will happen to Pharaoh and his huge armies," announces the LORD and King.

A Song of Sadness About Pharaoh

Ezekiel 32

1It was the 12th year since King Jehoiachin had been brought to Babylon as a
prisoner. On the first day of the 12th month, a message came to me from the
LORD. He said, 2"Son of man, sing a song of sadness about Pharaoh Hophra, the
king of Egypt. Tell him,

" 'You are like a lion among the nations.
You are like a monster in the sea.
You move around wildly in your rivers.
You churn the water with your feet.
You make the streams muddy.' "

3The LORD and King says,

"I will use a large crowd of people
to throw my net over you.
They will pull you up in it.
4Then I will throw you on the land.
I will toss you into an open field.
I will let all of the birds of the air settle on you.
I will let all of the wild animals eat you up.
5I will scatter the parts of your body all over the mountains.
I will fill the valleys with your remains.
6I will soak the land with your blood.
It will flow all the way to the mountains.
The valleys will be filled with the parts of your body.
7When I wipe you out,
I will put a cover over the heavens.
I will darken the stars.
I will cover the sun with a cloud.
The moon will stop shining.
8I will darken all of the bright lights
in the sky above you.

I will bring darkness over your land,”

announces the LORD and King.

9“The hearts of many people will be troubled.
That is because I will destroy you among the nations.
You had never known anything about those lands before.
10Many nations will be shocked
when they see what has happened to you.
Their kings will tremble with fear
when they find out about it.
I will get ready to use Nebuchadnezzar
as my sword against them.
On the day you fall from power,
each of the kings will tremble with fear.
Each will be afraid he is the next to die.”

11The LORD and King says,

“I will send against you
the sword of the king of Babylonia.
12I will destroy your huge army.
They will be killed with the swords
of Babylonia’s mighty soldiers.
The soldiers will not show them any pity.
They will bring Egypt down in all of its pride.
Its huge armies will be thrown down.
13I will destroy all of its cattle
from the places where they have plenty of water.
Human feet will never stir the water up again.
The hoofs of cattle will not make it muddy anymore.
14I will let the waters of Egypt settle.
I will make its streams flow like olive oil,”

announces the LORD and King.

15“I will turn Egypt into an empty land.
I will strip away everything in it.
I will strike down everyone who lives there.
Then they will know that I am the LORD.

16“That is the song of sadness people will sing about Egypt. Women from

other nations will sing it. They will sob over Egypt and its huge armies,” announces the LORD and King.

17It was the 15th day of a month near the end of the 12th year since King Jehoiachin had been brought to Babylon as a prisoner. A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 18“Son of man, sob over the huge army of Egypt. Tell the Egyptians they will go down into the earth below. The women singers from the other mighty nations will go down into the grave along with them and others.

19“Tell them, ‘Are you any better than others? Since you are not, go down there. Lie down with those who have not been circumcised.’

20“They will fall dead among those who were killed with swords. Nebuchadnezzar is ready to use his sword against them. Let Egypt be dragged off together with its huge armies.

21“The mighty leaders who are already in the grave will talk about Egypt. They will also speak about the nations that were going to help it. They will say, ‘They have come down here. They are lying down with those who had not been circumcised. They are here with those who were killed with swords.’

22“Assyria is there with its whole army. Its king is surrounded by the graves of all of its people who were killed with swords. 23Their graves are deep down in the pit. Assyria’s army lies around the grave of its king. All those who spread terror while they were alive are now dead. They were killed with swords.

24“Elam is also there. Its huge armies lie around the grave of its king. All those who spread terror while they were alive are now dead. They were killed with swords. They had not been circumcised. They went down into the earth below. Their shame is like the shame of others who go down into the grave.

25“A bed is made for Elam’s king among the dead. His huge armies lie around his grave. They had not been circumcised. They were killed with swords. They had spread terror while they were alive. So now their shame is like the shame of others who go down into the grave. They lie down among the dead.

26“Meshech and Tubal are also there. Their huge armies lie around the graves of their kings. They had not been circumcised. They had spread their terror while they were alive. So they were killed with swords.

27“They lie down with the other dead soldiers who had not been circumcised. They and their weapons had gone down into the grave. Their swords had been placed under their heads. They had spread their terror while they were alive. But now the shame of their sin covers their bones.

28“Pharaoh Hophra, you too will be broken. You will lie down among those who had not been circumcised. You will be there with those who were killed with swords.

29“Edom is also there. So are its kings and all of its princes. In spite of their power, they lie down with those who were killed with swords. They lie down with those who had not been circumcised. They are there with others who went down into the grave.

30“All of the princes of the north are there too. So are all of the people of Sidon. They went down into the grave in dishonor. While they were alive, they used their power to spread terror. They had never been circumcised. But now they lie down there with those who were killed with swords. Their shame is like the shame of others who go down into the grave.

31“Pharaoh and his whole army will see all of them. That will comfort him in spite of the fact that his huge armies were killed with swords,” announces the LORD and King. 32“I let Pharaoh spread terror while he was alive. But now he and his huge armies will be buried with those who had not been circumcised. They will lie down there with those who were killed with swords,” announces the LORD and King.

The LORD Warns Israel

Ezekiel 33

1 A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 2 “Son of man, speak to the
people of your own country. Tell them, ‘Suppose I send enemies against a land.
And its people choose one of their men to stand guard. 3 He sees the enemies
coming against the land. He blows a trumpet to warn the people.

4 “ ‘Someone hears the trumpet. But he does not pay any attention to the
warning. The enemies come and kill him. Then what happens to him will be
his own fault. 5 He heard the sound of the trumpet. But he did not pay any
attention to the warning. So what happened to him was his own fault. If he had
paid attention, he would have saved himself.

6 “ ‘But suppose the guard sees the enemies coming. And he does not blow
the trumpet to warn the people. The enemies come and kill one of them. Then
his life has been taken away from him because he sinned. But I will hold the
guard accountable for his death.’

7 “Son of man, I have appointed you as a prophet to warn the people of Israel.
So listen to my message. Give them a warning from me.

8 “Suppose I say to a sinful person, ‘You can be sure that you will die.’ And
suppose you do not try to get him to change his ways. Then he will die because
he has sinned. And I will hold you accountable for his death.

9 “But suppose you do warn that sinful person. You tell him to change his
ways. But he does not do it. Then he will die because he has sinned. But you
will have saved yourself.

10 “Son of man, speak to the people of Israel. Tell them, ‘You are saying, “Our
sins and the wrong things we have done weigh us down. We are wasting away
because we have sinned so much. So how can we live?” ’

11 “Tell them, ‘When sinful people die, it does not give me any joy. But when
they turn away from their sins and live, that makes me very happy. And that is
just as sure as I am alive,’ announces the LORD and King. ‘So turn away from
your sins! Change your evil ways! Why should you die, people of Israel?’

12“Son of man, speak to the people of your own country. Tell them, ‘The right
things a godly person does will not save him when he does not obey the LORD.
The wrong things a sinful person does will not destroy him when he turns away
from them. If a godly person sins, he will not be allowed to live just because he
used to do what is right.’

13“Suppose I tell someone who is godly that he will live. And he trusts in the
fact that he used to do what was right. But now he does what is evil. Then I
will not remember any of the right things he has done. He will die because he
has done so many evil things.

14“Suppose I say to a sinful person, ‘You can be sure you will die.’ And then
he turns away from his sin. He does what is fair and right. 15He gives back
what he took as security for a loan. He returns what he has stolen. He follows
my rules that give life. He does not do what is evil. Then you can be sure he
will live. He will not die. 16None of the sins he has committed will be held
against him. He has done what is fair and right. So you can be sure he will live.

17“In spite of that, your people say, ‘What the Lord does isn’t fair.’ But it is
what you do that is not fair.

18“Suppose someone who is godly stops doing what is right. And he does
what is evil. Then he will die because of it. 19But suppose a sinful person turns
away from the evil things he has done. And he does what is fair and right. Then
he will live by doing that.

20“In spite of that, you people of Israel say, ‘What the Lord does isn’t fair.’
But I will judge each of you based on how you have lived.”

The LORD Explains Why Jerusalem Fell

21It was the 12th year since we had been brought to Babylonia as prisoners.
On the fifth day of the tenth month, a man who had escaped from Jerusalem
came to bring me a report. He said, “The city has fallen!”

22The evening before the man arrived, the LORD put his strong hand on me.
He opened my mouth before the man came to me in the morning. So my mouth
was opened. I was no longer silent.

23Then a message came to me from the LORD. He said, 24“Son of man, the
people who live in those broken-down buildings in Israel are saying, ‘Abraham

was only one man. But he owned the land. We are many people. The land must certainly belong to us.’

25“So tell them, ‘The LORD and King says, “You eat meat that still has blood in it. You worship your gods. You commit murder. So should you still possess the land? 26You depend on your swords. You do things I hate. Each one of you has sex with your neighbor’s wife. So should you still possess the land?” ’

27“Tell them, ‘The LORD and King says, “The people who are left in those broken-down buildings will be killed with swords. Wild animals will eat up those who are out in the country. Those who are in caves and other safe places will die of a plague. And that is just as sure as I am alive.

28“ ‘ “I will turn the land into a dry and empty desert. The strength Jerusalem is so proud of will come to an end. The mountains of Israel will be deserted. No one will travel across them. 29So I will turn the land into a dry and empty desert. I will punish my people because of all of the evil things they have done. I hate those things. They will know that I am the LORD.” ’

30“Son of man, your people are talking about you. They are getting together by the walls of their houses and at their doors. They are saying to one another, ‘Come. Listen to the LORD’s message.’

31“My people come to you, just as they usually do. They sit in front of you. They listen to what you say. But they do not put it into practice. With their mouths they claim to be faithful to me. But in their hearts they want what belongs to others. They try to get rich by cheating them. 32You are nothing more to them than someone who sings love songs. They say you have a beautiful voice. They think you play an instrument well. They listen to what you say. But they do not put it into practice.

33“Everything I have told you will come true. You can be sure of it. Then the people will know that a prophet has been among them.”

The LORD Is the Shepherd of His People

Ezekiel 34

1A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 2“Son of man, prophesy
against the shepherds of Israel. Tell them, ‘The LORD and King says, “How
terrible it will be for you shepherds of Israel! You only take care of yourselves.
You should take good care of your flocks. 3Instead, you eat the butter. You
dress yourselves with the wool. You kill the finest animals. But you do not take
care of your flocks. 4You have not made the weak ones in the flock stronger.
You have not healed the sick. You have not bandaged those that are hurt. You
have not brought back those that have wandered away. You have not searched
for the lost. When you ruled over them, you were mean to them. You treated
them badly.

5“ ‘ “So they were scattered because they did not have a shepherd. They
became food for all of the wild animals. 6My sheep wandered all over the
mountains and high hills. They were scattered over the whole earth. No one
searched for them. No one looked for them.”

7“ ‘Shepherds, listen to the LORD’s message. 8He says, “My flock does not
have a shepherd. Many of my sheep have been stolen. They have become food
for all of the wild animals. My shepherds did not care for my sheep. They did
not even search for them. Instead, they only took care of themselves. And that
is just as sure as I am alive,” announces the LORD and King.

9“ ‘Shepherds, listen to the LORD’s message. 10The LORD and King says, “I am
against the shepherds. I will hold them accountable for my flock. I will stop
them from taking care of the flock. Then they will not be able to feed
themselves anymore. I will save my flock from their mouths. My sheep will no
longer be food for them.” ’ ”

11The LORD and King says, “I myself will search for my sheep. I will look
after them. 12A shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them.
And I will look after my sheep. I will save them from all of the places where
they were scattered on a dark and cloudy day.

13“I will bring them out from among the nations. I will gather them together

from other countries. I will bring them into their own land. They will eat grass on the mountains of Israel. I will also let them eat in the valleys and in all of the places in the land where people live. 14I will take care of them in the best grasslands. They will eat grass on the high mountains of Israel. There they will lie down in the finest grasslands. They will eat grass in the best places on Israel's mountains.

15"I myself will take care of my sheep. I will let them lie down in safety," announces the LORD and King. 16"I will search for the lost. I will bring back those that have wandered away. I will bandage the ones that are hurt. I will make the weak ones stronger. But I will destroy those that are fat and strong. I will take good care of my sheep. I will treat them fairly."

17The LORD and King says, "You are my flock. I will judge between one sheep and another. I will judge between rams and goats. 18You already eat in the best grasslands. Must you also stomp all over the other fields? You already drink clear water. Must you also make the rest of the water muddy with your feet? 19Must my flock have to eat the grass you have stomped on? Must they drink the water you have made muddy?"

20So the LORD and King speaks to them. He says, "I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the skinny sheep. 21You push the other sheep around with your hips and shoulders. You use your horns to butt all of the weak sheep. Finally, you drive them away. 22But I will save my sheep. They will not be carried off anymore. I will judge between one sheep and another.

23"I will place one shepherd over them. He will belong to the family line of my servant David. He will take good care of them. He will look after them. He will be their shepherd. 24I am the LORD. I will be their God. And my servant from David's line will be prince among them. I have spoken. I am the LORD.

25"I will make a covenant with them. It promises to give them peace. I will get rid of the wild animals in the land. Then my sheep can live safely in the desert. They can sleep in the forests.

26"I will bless them. I will also bless the places surrounding my holy mountain of Zion. I will send down rain at the right time. There will be showers of blessing. 27The trees in the fields will bear their fruit. And the ground will produce its crops. The people will be secure in their land. I will break the chains that hold them. I will save them from the powerful hands of those who made them slaves. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

28“The nations will not carry them off anymore. Wild animals will no longer
eat them up. They will live in safety. And no one will make them afraid. 29I
will give them a land that is famous for its crops. They will never be hungry
there again. The nations will not make fun of them anymore.

30“Then they will know that I am with them. I am the LORD their God. And
they will know that they are my people Israel,” announces the LORD and King.

31“You are the sheep belonging to my flock. You are my people. And I am
your God,” announces the LORD and King.

A Message About Edom

Ezekiel 35

1A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 2“Son of man, turn your
attention to Mount Seir. Prophesy against it. 3Tell it, ‘The LORD and King says,
“Mount Seir, I am against you. I will reach out my powerful hand against you.
I will turn you into a dry and empty desert. 4I will destroy your towns. Your
land will become empty. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

5“ ‘ “People of Edom, you have been Israel’s enemies for a long time. You let
many Israelites be killed with swords when they were in great trouble. At that
time I used Nebuchadnezzar to punish them and destroy them completely.
6Now I will hand you over to murderers. They will hunt you down. You
murdered others. So murderers will chase you. And that is just as sure as I am
alive,” announces the LORD and King.

7“ ‘ “I will turn Mount Seir into a dry and empty desert. No one will be able
to go anywhere or do anything there. 8I will fill your mountains with dead
bodies. Some of those who are killed with swords will fall down dead on your
hills. Others will die in your valleys and in all of your canyons. 9I will make
your land empty forever. No one will live in your towns. Then you will know
that I am the LORD.

10“ ‘ “You said, ‘The nations of Israel and Judah will belong to us. We will
take them over.’ You said that, even though I was there. I am the LORD. 11You
were full of anger, jealousy and hatred toward my people. So I will punish you.
When I judge you, they will know that I am the LORD. And that is just as sure
as I am alive,” announces the LORD and King.

12“ ‘ “You will know that I have heard all of the terrible things you said about
those who live in the mountains of Israel. You made fun of them. You said,
‘They have been destroyed. They’ve been handed over to us. Let’s wipe them
out.’ 13You bragged that you were better than I am. You spoke against me. You
did not hold anything back. But I heard it.” ’ ”

14The LORD and King says, “The whole earth will be glad. But I will make

your land empty. [15]You were happy when the land of Israel became empty. So I will treat you in the same way. Mount Seir, you will be empty. So will the whole land of Edom. Then you will know that I am the LORD.”

A Message About Israel

Ezekiel 36

1“Son of man, prophesy to the mountains of Israel. Tell them, ‘Mountains of
Israel, listen to the LORD’s message. 2The LORD and King says, “Your enemies
made fun of you. They bragged, ‘The hills you lived in for a long time belong
to us now.’ ” ’

3“Ezekiel, prophesy. Say, ‘The LORD and King says, “Your enemies destroyed
you. They hunted you down from every side. So the rest of the nations took
over your land. People talked about you. They told lies about you.” ’ ”

4Mountains of Israel, listen to the message of the LORD and King. He speaks
to you mountains, hills, canyons and valleys. He speaks to you destroyed cities
and deserted towns. The rest of the nations around you took everything of
value away from you. They made fun of you. 5So the LORD and King says, “My
anger burns against those nations. I have spoken against them and the whole
land of Edom. They were very happy when they took over my land. Deep
down inside them they hated Israel. They wanted to take its grasslands.

6“Ezekiel, prophesy about the land of Israel. Speak to the mountains, hills,
canyons and valleys. Tell them, ‘The LORD and King says, “My jealous anger
burns against the nations. They have laughed at you.” 7So the LORD and King
says, “I raise my hand and take an oath. I promise that the nations around you
will also be laughed at.

8“ ‘ “Mountains of Israel, you will produce branches and bear fruit for my
people Israel. They will come home soon. 9I am concerned about you. I will
look on you with favor. Farmers will plow your ground. They will plant seeds
in it.

10“ ‘ “I will multiply the number of people who live in Israel. The towns will
no longer be empty. Their broken-down houses will be rebuilt. 11I will increase
the number of your people and animals. They will have many babies. I will
settle people in your towns, just as I did in the past. I will help you succeed
more than ever before. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

12“ ‘ “I will let my people Israel walk there again. They will possess you. They will receive you as their own. You will never take their children away from them again.” ’ ”

13The LORD and King says, “People say to you mountains, ‘You destroy people. You let your nation’s children be taken away.’ 14But I will not let you destroy people anymore. I will no longer let your nation’s children be taken away,” announces the LORD and King.

15“You will not have to listen to the nations laughing at you anymore. People will no longer make fun of you. You will not let your nation fall,” announces the LORD and King.

16Another message came to me from the LORD. He said, 17“Son of man, the people of Israel used to live in their own land. But they polluted it because of how they acted and the way they lived. To me they were ‘unclean’ like a woman who was having her monthly period.

18“They spilled people’s blood in the land. They polluted the land by worshiping other gods. So I poured out my burning anger on them. 19I scattered them among the nations. I sent them to other countries. I judged them based on how they acted and the way they lived.

20“They treated my name as if it were not holy. They did it everywhere they went among the nations. People said about them, ‘They are the LORD’s people. But they were forced to leave his land.’ 21I was concerned about my holy name. The people of Israel treated it as if it were not holy. They did it everywhere they went among the nations.

22“But tell the people of Israel, ‘The LORD and King speaks. He says, “People of Israel, I will not take action for your benefit. Instead, I will act for the honor of my holy name. You have treated it as if it were not holy. You did it everywhere you went among the nations. 23But I will show everyone how holy my great name is. You have treated it as if it were not holy. So I will use you to show the nations how holy I am. Then they will know that I am the LORD,” announces the LORD and King.

24“ ‘ “I will take you out of the nations. I will gather you together from all of the countries. I will bring you back into your own land.

25“ ‘ “I will sprinkle pure water on you. Then you will be ‘clean.’ I will make you completely pure and clean. I will take all of the statues of your gods away from you. 26I will give you new hearts. I will give you a new spirit that is

faithful to me. I will remove your stubborn hearts from you. I will give you hearts that obey me.

27“ ‘ “I will put my Spirit in you. I will move you to follow my rules. I want you to be careful to keep my laws. 28You will live in the land I gave your people long ago. You will be my people. And I will be your God.

29“ ‘ “I will save you from all of your ‘uncleanness.’ I will give you plenty of grain. You will have more than enough. So you will never be hungry again. 30I will multiply the fruit on your trees. I will increase the crops in your fields. Then the nations will no longer make fun of you because you are hungry.

31“ ‘ “You will remember your evil ways and the sinful things you have done. You will hate yourselves because you have sinned so much. I also hate your evil practices. 32I want you to know that I am not doing those things for your benefit,” announces the LORD and King. “People of Israel, you should be ashamed of yourselves! Your conduct has brought dishonor to you.” ’ ”

33The LORD and King says, “I will make you pure from all of your sins. On that day I will settle you in your towns again. Your broken-down houses will be rebuilt. 34The dry and empty land will be farmed again.

“Everyone who passes through it will see that it is no longer empty. 35They will say, ‘This land was completely destroyed. But now it’s like the Garden of Eden. The cities were full of broken-down buildings. They were destroyed and empty. But now they have high walls around them. And people live in them.’

36“Then the nations that remain around you will know that I have rebuilt what was once destroyed. I have planted again the fields that were once empty. I have spoken. And I will do it. I am the LORD.”

37The LORD and King says, “Once again I will answer the prayers of the people of Israel. Here is what I will do for them. I will multiply them as if they were sheep. 38Large flocks of animals are sacrificed at Jerusalem during the appointed feasts there. In the same way, the destroyed cities will be filled with flocks of people. Then they will know that I am the LORD.”

Israel's Dry Bones Will Come to Life Again

Ezekiel 37

[1]The LORD put his strong hand on me. His Spirit brought me away from my home. He put me down in the middle of a valley. It was full of bones. [2]He led me back and forth among them. I saw a huge number of bones in the valley. The bones were very dry.

[3]The LORD asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?"

I said, "LORD and King, you are the only one who knows."

[4]Then he said to me, "Prophesy to these bones. Tell them, 'Dry bones, listen to the LORD's message. [5]The LORD and King speaks to you. He says, "I will put breath in you. Then you will come to life again. [6]I will attach tendons to you. I will put flesh on you. I will cover you with skin. So I will put breath in you. And you will come to life again. Then you will know that I am the LORD." ' "

[7]So I prophesied just as the LORD commanded me to. As I was prophesying, I heard a noise. It was a rattling sound. The bones came together. One bone connected itself to another. [8]I saw tendons and flesh appear on them. Skin covered them. But there was no breath in them.

[9]Then the LORD said to me, "Prophesy to the breath. Prophesy, son of man. Tell it, 'The LORD and King says, "Breath, come from all four directions. Go into these dead bodies. Then they can live." ' "

[10]So I prophesied just as he commanded me to. And the breath entered them. Then they came to life again. They stood up on their feet. They were like a huge army.

[11]Then the LORD said to me, "Son of man, these bones stand for all of the people of Israel. The people say, 'Our bones are dried up. We've lost all hope. We are cut off.'

[12]"So prophesy. Tell them, 'The LORD and King says, "My people, I am going to open up your graves. I am going to bring you out of them. I will take you back to the land of Israel. [13]So I will open up your graves and bring you out of them. Then you will know that I am the LORD. You are my people. [14]I will put

my Spirit in you. And you will live again. I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I have spoken. I have done it," announces the LORD.' "

Israel Will Be One Nation Under One King

15A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 16"Son of man, get a stick of wood. Write on it, 'Belonging to the tribe of Judah and the Israelites who are connected with it.' Then get another stick. Write on it, 'Ephraim's stick. Belonging to the tribes of Joseph and all of the Israelites connected with them.' 17Join them together into one stick in your hand.

18"The people of your own country will ask you, 'What do you mean by this?' 19Tell them, 'The LORD and King says, "I am going to get the stick of Joseph and the Israelites connected with it. That stick is in Ephraim's hand. I am going to join it to Judah's stick. They will become a single stick of wood in my hand." '

20"Show them the sticks you wrote on. 21Tell them, 'The LORD and King says, "I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them together from all around. I will bring them back to their own land. 22There I will make them one nation. They will live on the mountains of Israel. All of them will have one king. They will never be two nations again. They will never again be separated into two kingdoms.

23" ' "They will no longer pollute themselves by worshiping any of their evil gods. They will not do wrong things anymore. They always turn away from me. But I will save them from that sin. I will make them pure and clean. They will be my people. And I will be their God.

24" ' "A man who belongs to the family line of my servant David will be their king. All of them will have one shepherd. They will follow my laws. And they will be careful to keep my rules. 25They will live in the land I gave to my servant Jacob. That is where your people lived long ago. They, their children, their children's children, and their children after them will live there forever. And my servant from David's line will be their prince forever.

26" ' "I will make a covenant with them. It promises to give them peace. The covenant will last forever. I will make them my people. And I will increase their numbers. I will put my temple among them forever. 27I will live with

them. I will be their God. And they will be my people. [28]My temple will be among them forever. Then the nations will know that I make Israel holy. I am the LORD.” ’ ”

A Message About Gog

Ezekiel 38

1A message came to me from the LORD. He said, 2“Son of man, turn your
attention to Gog. He is from the land of Magog. He is the chief prince of
Meshech and Tubal. Prophesy against him.

3“Tell him, ‘The LORD and King says, “Gog, I am against you. You are the
chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. 4But I will turn you around. I will put
hooks in your jaws. I will bring you out of your land along with your whole
army. Your horses will come with you. Your horsemen will be completely
armed. Your huge army will carry large and small shields. All of them will be
ready to use their swords.

5“ ‘ “The men of Persia, Cush and Put will march out with them. All of them
will have shields and helmets. 6Gomer and all of its troops will be there too.
Beth Togarmah from the far north will also come with all of its troops. Many
nations will help you.

7“ ‘ “Get ready. Be prepared. Take command of the huge armies that are
gathered around you. 8After many years you will be called together to fight.
Later, you will march into a land that has not had war for a while. Its people
were gathered together from many nations. They came to the mountains of
Israel. No one had lived in those mountains for a long time. So the people had
been brought back from other nations. Now all of the people live in safety.
9You, all of your troops and the many nations with you will march up to attack
them. All of you will advance like a storm. You will be like a cloud covering
their land.”

10“ ‘The LORD and King says, “At that time some ideas will come to you. You
will make evil plans. 11You will say, ‘I will march out against a land whose
villages don’t have walls around them. I’ll attack those peaceful people. I’ll do
it when they aren’t expecting it. None of their villages has walls or gates with
heavy metal bars on them.

12“ ‘ “ ‘I will rob those people. I’ll steal everything they have. Then I’ll turn
my attention to the destroyed houses where people are living again. They have

returned there from other nations. Now they are rich. They have plenty of livestock and all kinds of goods. They are living in Israel. It is the center of the earth.’

13“ ‘ “The people of Sheba and Dedan will speak to you. So will the traders of Tarshish and all of its villages. They will say, ‘Have you come to rob us? Have you gathered your huge army together to steal our silver and gold? Are you going to take our livestock and goods away from us? Do you plan to carry off everything we have?’ ” ’

14“Son of man, prophesy. Tell Gog, ‘The LORD and King says, “A time is coming when my people Israel will be living in safety. You will see that it is a good time to attack them. 15So you will come from your place in the far north. Many nations will join you. All of their men will be riding on horses. You will have a huge and mighty army. 16They will advance against my people Israel. They will be like a cloud covering their land. Gog, in days to come I will bring you against my land. Then the nations will know me. I will use you to show them how holy I am.”

17“ ‘The LORD and King says to Gog, “In the past I spoke about you through my servants, the prophets of Israel. At that time they prophesied for years that I would bring you against them. 18Here is what will happen in days to come. You will attack the land of Israel. That will stir up my hot anger,” announces the LORD and King.

19“ ‘ “At that time my burning anger will blaze out at you. There will be a great earthquake in the land of Israel. 20The fish in the sea, the birds of the air and the wild animals will tremble with fear because of what I will do. So will every creature that moves along the ground. And so will all of the people on earth. The mountains will come crashing down. The cliffs will break into pieces. Every wall will fall to the ground.

21“ ‘ “I will punish you on all of my mountains,” announces the LORD and King. “Your men will use their swords against one another. 22I will judge you. I will send a plague against you. A lot of blood will be spilled. I will send heavy rain, hailstones and burning sulfur down to the earth. They will fall on you and your troops. They will also come down on the many nations that are helping you. 23That will show how great and holy I am. I will make myself known to many nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD.” ’

Ezekiel 39

[1]“Son of man, prophesy against Gog. Tell him, ‘The LORD and King says, “Gog, I am against you. You are the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. [2]But I will turn you around. I will drag you along. I will bring you from the far north. I will send you against the mountains of Israel. [3]Then I will knock your bow out of your left hand. I will make your arrows drop from your right hand.

[4]“ ‘ “You will fall dead on the mountains of Israel. You and all of your troops will die there. So will the nations that join you. I will feed you to all kinds of birds that eat dead bodies. So they and the wild animals will eat you up. [5]You will fall dead in the open fields. I have spoken,” announces the LORD and King.

[6]“ ‘ “I will send fire on the land of Magog. It will burn up the people who live in safety on the coast. So they will know that I am the LORD.

[7]“ ‘ “I will make my holy name known among my people Israel. I will no longer let them treat my name as if it were not holy. Then the nations will know that I am the Holy One in Israel. I am the LORD. [8]The day I will judge you is coming. You can be sure of it,” announces the LORD and King. “It is the day I have spoken about.

[9]“ ‘ “At that time those who live in the towns of Israel will go out and light a fire. They will use it to burn up the weapons. That includes small and large shields. It also includes bows and arrows, war clubs and spears. It will take seven years to burn all of them up. [10]People will not gather wood from the fields. They will not cut the forests down. Instead, they will burn the weapons. And they will rob those who robbed them. They will steal from those who stole from them,” announces the LORD and King.

[11]“ ‘ “Gog, at that time I will bury you in a grave in Israel. It will be in the valley where people travel east of the Dead Sea. It will block the path of travelers. That is because you and your huge armies will be buried there. So it will be called The Valley of Gog’s Armies.

[12]“ ‘ “It will take seven months for the people of Israel to bury the bodies. They will do it to make the land ‘clean’ again. [13]All of the people in the land will bury them. That will bring glory to me. It will be a time to remember,” announces the LORD and King.

14“ ‘ “After the seven months are over, men will be hired to finish the job of
making the land ‘clean’ again. Some will go all through it. They will look for
any remaining human bones on the ground. Other people will bury the bones.
15So some will go through the land. When they see a bone, they will put a
marker beside it. Then those who dig the graves will take it to The Valley of
Gog’s Armies. There they will bury it. 16That is how they will make the land
‘clean’ again.” ’ ” Also a town called Gog’s Armies will be located there.

17The LORD and King said to me, “Son of man, speak to every kind of bird.
Call out to all of the wild animals. Tell them, ‘Gather together. Come from
everywhere. Gather around the sacrifice I am preparing for you. It is the great
sacrifice on the mountains of Israel. There you will eat human bodies and drink
human blood.

18“ ‘You will eat the bodies of mighty men. You will drink the blood of the
princes of the earth. You will eat their bodies and drink their blood as if they
were rams and lambs, goats and bulls. You will enjoy it as if you were eating
the fattest animals from Bashan.

19“ ‘So I am preparing a sacrifice for you. You will eat fat until you are
completely full. You will drink blood until you are drunk. 20At my table you
will eat horses, riders, mighty men and soldiers until you are full,’ announces
the LORD and King.

21“ ‘I will show all of the nations my glory. They will see how I punish them
when I use my powerful hand against them. 22From that time on, the people of
Israel will know that I am the LORD their God.

23“ ‘The nations will know that the people of Israel were taken away as
prisoners because they sinned against me. They were not faithful to me. So I
turned my face away from them. I handed them over to their enemies. All of
them were killed with swords. 24I punished them because they were “unclean.”
They did many things that were wrong. So I turned my face away from
them.’ ”

25The LORD and King says, “I will now bring the people of Jacob back home
again. I will show my tender love for all of the people of Israel. I will make
sure that my name is kept holy.

26“My people will forget the shameful things they have done. They will not
remember all of the ways they were unfaithful to me. They used to live in
safety in their land. At that time no one made them afraid.

[27]“So I will bring them back from the nations. I will gather them from the countries of their enemies. And I will use them to show many nations how holy I am. [28]Then they will know that I am the LORD their God. I let the nations take my people away as prisoners. But now I will bring them back to their own land. I will not leave anyone behind. [29]I will no longer turn my face away from the people of Israel. I will pour out my Spirit on them,” announces the LORD and King.

The New Temple Area

Ezekiel 40

[1]It was the 14th year after Jerusalem had been captured. It was the tenth day of a month near the beginning of the 25th year since we had been brought to Babylonia as prisoners. On that very day the LORD put his strong hand on me. He took me back to my land. [2]In visions God gave me, he brought me to the land of Israel. He set me on a very high mountain. Some buildings were on the south side of it. They looked like a city.

[3]He took me there. I saw a man who appeared to be made out of bronze. He was standing at the gate of the outer courtyard. He was holding a linen measuring tape and a measuring rod. [4]The man said to me, “Son of man, look with your eyes. Listen with your ears. Pay attention to everything I show you. That is why the LORD brought you here. Tell the people of Israel everything you see.”

The East Gate to the Outer Courtyard

[5]I saw a wall that completely surrounded the temple area. The measuring rod in the man’s hand was ten and a half feet long. He measured the wall with it. The wall was as thick and as high as one measuring rod.

[6]Then the man went to the gate that faced east. He climbed its steps. He measured the gateway. It was one rod wide. [7]The rooms where the guards stood were one rod long and one rod wide. The walls between the rooms were almost nine feet thick. The gateway next to the porch was one rod wide. The porch faced the front of the temple.

[8]Then the man measured the porch of the gateway. [9]It was 14 feet wide. Each of its doorposts was three and a half feet thick. The porch of the gateway faced the front of the temple.

[10]Inside the east gate were three rooms on each side. All of the rooms were the same size. The walls on each side of the rooms had the same thickness.

[11]Then the man measured the entrance of the gateway. It was 17 and a half feet wide and almost 23 feet long. [12]In front of each room was a wall. It was 21 inches high. The rooms measured ten and a half feet on each side.

[13]Then he measured the gateway from the back wall of one room to the back wall of the room across from it. It was almost 44 feet from the top of one wall to the top of the other.

[14]He measured along the front of the side walls that were all around the inside of the gateway. The total was 105 feet. That didn't include the porch that faced the courtyard. [15]It was 87 and a half feet from the entrance of the gateway to the far end of its porch.

[16]The rooms and their side walls inside the gateway had narrow openings on top of them. So did the porch. All of the openings faced the inside. The front of each side wall was decorated with a palm tree.

The Outer Courtyard

[17]Then the man brought me into the outer courtyard. There I saw some rooms and a sidewalk. They had been built all around the courtyard. Along the sidewalk were 30 rooms. [18]The sidewalk went all the way up to the sides of the gateways. It was as wide as they were long. That was the lower sidewalk.

[19]Then he measured from the inside of the lower gateway to the outside of the inner courtyard. The east side measured 175 feet. So did the north side.

The North Gate

[20]Then the man measured the gate that faced north. He wanted to show me how long and wide it was. The gate led into the outer courtyard. [21]It had three rooms on each side. Their side walls and porch measured the same as the ones at the first gateway. They measured 87 and a half feet long and almost 44 feet wide. [22]Its openings, porch and palm tree decorations measured the same as the ones at the east gate. Seven steps led up to the north gate. Its porch was across from them.

[23]The inner courtyard had a gate. It faced the gate on the north. It was just

like the east gate. He measured from one gate to the one across from it. The total was 175 feet.

The South Gate

[24]Then the man led me to the south side of the courtyard. There I saw a gate that faced south. He measured its doorposts and porch. They measured the same as the others. [25]The gateway and its porch had narrow openings all around. The openings were the same as the others had. The side walls and porch measured 87 and a half feet long and almost 44 feet wide. [26]Seven steps led up to it. Its porch was across from them. The front of each side wall was decorated with a palm tree.

[27]The inner courtyard also had a gate that faced south. The man measured from that gate to the outer gate on the south side. The total was 175 feet.

The Gates to the Inner Courtyard

[28]Then the man brought me into the inner courtyard. We went through the south gate. He measured it. It was the same size as the others. [29]Its rooms, side walls and porch measured the same as the ones at the other gateways. The gateway and its porch had openings all around. The side walls and porch measured 87 and a half feet long and almost 44 feet wide. [30]The porches of the gateways around the inner courtyard were almost 44 feet wide and 9 feet long. [31]Its porch faced the outer courtyard. Palm trees decorated its doorposts. Eight steps led up to it.

[32]Then the man brought me to the east side of the inner courtyard. There he measured the gateway. It was the same size as the others. [33]Its rooms, side walls and porch measured the same as the ones at the other gateways. The gateway and its porch had openings all around. The side walls and porch measured 87 and a half feet long and almost 44 feet wide. [34]Its porch faced the outer courtyard. Each doorpost was decorated with a palm tree. Eight steps led up to the porch.

[35]Then the man brought me to the north gate. He measured it. It was the same size as the others. [36]Its rooms, side walls and porch measured the same as the

ones at the other gateways. It had openings all around. The side walls and the porch measured 87 and a half feet long and almost 44 feet wide. [37]The porch faced the outer courtyard. Each doorpost was decorated with a palm tree. Eight steps led up to the porch.

The Rooms for Preparing Sacrifices

[38]A room with a doorway was by the porch of each inner gateway. The burnt offerings were washed there. [39]On each side of the porch of the gateway were two tables. The burnt offerings were killed on them. So were the sin offerings and guilt offerings.

[40]Two more tables were by the outer wall of the gateway porch. They were near the steps at the entrance of the north gateway. Two more tables were on the other side of the steps. [41]So there were four tables on each side of the gateway. The total number of tables was eight. Animals for sacrifice were killed on all of them.

[42]There were also four other tables for the burnt offerings. They were made out of blocks of stone. Each table was two and a half feet long and two and a half feet wide. And each was almost two feet high. The tools for killing the burnt offerings and other sacrifices were placed on them. [43]Large hooks hung on the walls all around. Each was three inches long. The meat of the offerings was placed on the tables.

The Rooms for the Priests

[44]Near the inner gates were two rooms. They were in the inner courtyard. One room was next to the north gate. It faced south. The other one was next to the south gate. It faced north. [45]The man said to me, “The room that faces south is for the priests who are in charge of the temple. [46]The one that faces north is for the priests who are in charge of the altar. All of those priests are the sons of Zadok. They are the only Levites who can approach the LORD to serve him.”

[47]Then the man measured the courtyard. It was square. It measured 175 feet long and 175 feet wide. And the altar was in front of the temple.

The Temple

[48]The man brought me to the porch of the temple. He measured the doorposts of the porch. Each of them was almost nine feet wide. The entrance was 24 and a half feet wide. Each of the side walls was a little over five feet wide. [49]The porch was 35 feet wide. It was 21 feet from front to back. It was reached by some stairs. Pillars were on each side of the doorposts.

Ezekiel 41

[1]Then the man brought me to the Holy Room in the temple. There he measured the doorposts. Each of them was ten and a half feet wide. [2]The entrance was 17 and a half feet wide. Each of its side walls was almost nine feet wide. He also measured the Holy Room. It was 70 feet long and 35 feet wide.

[3]Then he went into the Most Holy Room. There he measured the doorposts at the entrance. Each one of them was three and a half feet wide. The entrance itself was ten and a half feet wide. Each of its side walls was a little over 12 feet wide.

[4]He also measured the Most Holy Room. It was 35 feet long and 35 feet wide. He said to me, “This is the Most Holy Room.” It was beyond the back wall of the Holy Room.

[5]Then the man measured the wall of the temple. It was ten and a half feet thick. Each side room around the temple was seven feet wide. [6]The side rooms were on three floors. There were 30 rooms on each floor. Ledges had been built all around the wall of the temple. So the floor beams of the side rooms rested on the ledges. The beams didn’t go into the temple wall. [7]The side rooms of the temple were wider as we went up floor by floor. A stairway went from the lowest floor all the way up to the top floor. It passed through the middle floor.

[8]I saw that the temple had a raised base all around it. The base formed the foundation of the side rooms. It was as long as one measuring rod. So it was ten and a half feet long. [9]The outer wall of each side room was almost nine feet thick. The open area between the side rooms of the temple [10]and the priests’ rooms was 35 feet wide all around the temple. [11]The side rooms had entrances from the open area. One was on the north side. Another was on the south. The base next to the open area was almost nine feet wide all around.

[12]There was a large building right behind the temple. It was on the west side of the outer courtyard. It was 122 and a half feet wide. Its wall was almost nine feet thick all around. And it was 157 and a half feet long.

[13]Then the man measured the temple. It was 175 feet long. The open area and the large building behind the temple also measured 175 feet. [14]The east side of

the inner courtyard was 175 feet wide. That included the front of the temple.

15Then the man measured the building that was on the west side of the outer courtyard. It was behind the temple. It was 175 feet long. That included the walkways of the building on each side.

The Holy Room, the Most Holy Room and the porch that faced the inner courtyard 16were covered with wood. So were the gateways, narrow openings and walkways around those three places. The gateways and everything beyond them were covered with wood. The floor, the wall up to the openings, and the openings themselves were also covered.

17The area above the outside of the entrance to the Most Holy Room was decorated. There were also decorations all around the walls of the Most Holy Room. 18Carved cherubim and palm trees were used in the decorations. Each cherub had a palm tree next to it. And each palm tree had a cherub next to it.

Each cherub had two faces. 19One was a man’s face. It looked toward the palm tree on one side. The other was the face of a lion. It looked toward the palm tree on the other side. The decorations were carved all around the whole temple.

20Cherubim and palm trees decorated the wall of the Holy Room. They were carved from the floor all the way up to the area above the entrance.

21The Holy Room had a doorframe that was shaped like a rectangle. So did the Most Holy Room. 22A wooden altar stood in the Holy Room. It was a little over five feet high. It was three and a half feet long and three and a half feet wide. Its corners, base and sides were made out of wood. The man said to me, “This is the table that stands in front of the LORD.”

23The Holy Room had double doors. So did the Most Holy Room. 24Each door had two parts that could swing back and forth. 25Cherubim and palm trees were carved on the doors of the Holy Room. The decorations were like the ones on the walls. A wooden roof went out beyond the front of the porch. 26The side walls of the porch had narrow openings on top of them. Palm trees were carved on each side. A wooden roof went out beyond the entrance to each side room of the temple.

The Rooms for the Priests

Ezekiel 42

[1]Then the man led me north into the outer courtyard of the temple. He
brought me to the rooms that were across from the inner courtyard. They were
across from the outer wall of the temple on the north side. [2]The rooms were in
a building north of the temple. The building had a door that faced north. It was
175 feet long. It was 87 and a half feet wide.

[3]One row of rooms was next to the inner courtyard. The other row was across
from the sidewalk of the outer courtyard. Each room was 35 feet long.
Walkways in front of each row faced each other on all three floors. [4]Between
the two rows was an inner sidewalk. It was 17 and a half feet wide and 175 feet
long. Each of the rooms had a door on the north side.

[5]The rooms on the top floor were narrower than the others. The walkways
took up more space from them than they did from the rooms on the other two
floors. [6]The courtyards had pillars. But the rooms on the third floor didn't. So
their floor space was smaller than the space in the rooms on the other floors.

[7]The building had an outer wall that was even with the outer row of rooms
and with the outer courtyard. The wall continued east of the outer row for 87
and a half feet. [8]So there were two rows of rooms. The row next to the outer
courtyard was 87 and a half feet long. The one closest to the temple was 175
feet long. [9]The first floor of the building had an entrance on the east side. It led
to the outer courtyard.

[10]There were also two rows of rooms in a building next to the south side of
the inner courtyard. The building was across from the south wall of the outer
courtyard. [11]Between the two rows was an inner sidewalk. The rooms were like
the ones in the north building. They were as long and wide as the rooms on the
north. The doorways of the rooms on the south were like the ones on the north.
[12]People entered the south rooms through the doorway at the east end of the
inner sidewalk. The south wall continued east of the outer row of rooms.

[13]The man said to me, "The north and south rooms face the inner courtyard.
They are the priests' rooms. That is where the priests who approach the LORD

will eat the very holy offerings. They will also store them there. That includes the grain offerings, sin offerings and guilt offerings. This place is holy.

14“The priests who enter these holy rooms must leave behind the clothes they served in. Then they can go into the outer courtyard. The clothes they served in are holy. So they must put other clothes on. They have to do that before they go near the places where other people go.”

15The man finished measuring what was inside the temple area. Then he led me out through the east gate. He measured all around the area. 16He measured the east side with his measuring rod. It was 875 feet long. 17He measured the north side. It was 875 feet long. 18He measured the south side. It was 875 feet long. 19Finally, he turned and measured the west side. It was 875 feet long. 20So he measured the area on all four sides. It had a wall around it. The wall was 875 feet long and 875 feet wide. It separated what was holy from what was not.

The Glory of the LORD Returns to the Temple

Ezekiel 43

[1]Then the man brought me to the east gate. [2]There I saw the glory of the God
of Israel. He was coming from the east. His voice was like the roar of rushing
waters. His glory made the land shine brightly.

[3]The vision I saw was like the one I had when he came to destroy the city. It
was also like the visions I had seen by the Kebar River. I fell with my face
toward the ground. [4]The glory of the LORD entered the temple through the east
gate. [5]Then the Spirit lifted me up. He brought me into the inner courtyard. The
glory of the LORD filled the temple.

[6]The man was standing beside me. I heard someone speaking to me from
inside the temple. [7]He said, “Son of man, this is the place where my throne is.
The stool for my feet is also here. I will live here among the people of Israel
forever. They will never again treat my name as if it were not holy. They and
their kings will not serve other gods anymore. The people will no longer
worship the lifeless gods of their kings at their high places.

[8]“The people of Israel placed their own doorway next to my holy doorway.
They put their doorposts right beside mine. Nothing but a thin wall separated
us. They treated my name as if it were not holy. I hated it when they did that.
So I became angry with them and destroyed them. [9]Now let them stop serving
other gods. Let them quit worshiping the lifeless gods of their kings. If they
obey me, I will live among them forever.

[10]“Son of man, tell the people of Israel about the temple. Then they will be
ashamed of their sins. Let them think carefully about the plan of the temple.
[11]What if they are ashamed of everything they have done? Then show them all
of the plans of the temple. Explain to them how it is laid out. Tell them about
its exits and entrances. Show them exactly what it will look like. Give them all
of its rules and laws. Write everything down so they can see it. Then they will
be faithful to its plan. And they will obey all of its rules.

[12]“Here is the law of the temple. The whole area on top of Mount Zion will
be very holy. That is the law of the temple.”

The Altar

13The man said, “Here is the size of the altar. The standard measurement I am
using is 21 inches. The base of the altar is 21 inches high. The base has a ledge
that is 21 inches wide. It also has a rim that is nine inches wide around the
edge. Here is how high the altar is. 14The lower part is three and a half feet
high. It has a ledge that is 21 inches wide. The middle part is seven feet high. It
has a ledge that is 21 inches wide.

15“The top part is where the sacrifices are burned. It is seven feet high. A
horn sticks out from each of its upper four corners. 16The top part of the altar is
square. It is 21 feet long and 21 feet wide. 17The middle part is also square. It is
24 and a half feet long. It is 24 and a half feet wide. Its rim is ten and a half
inches wide. The base of the altar is 21 inches high all the way around. The
steps leading up to the top of the altar face east.”

18Then the man said to me, “Son of man, the LORD and King speaks. He says,
‘Here are the rules for the altar when it is built. Follow them when you
sacrifice burnt offerings and sprinkle blood on it. 19Give a young bull to the
priests as a sin offering. They are Levites from the family of Zadok. They
approach me to serve me,’ announces the LORD and King. 20‘Get some of the
bull’s blood. Put it on the four horns. Also put it on the four corners of the
middle part of the altar and all around the rim. That will make the altar pure
and clean. 21Use the bull for the sin offering. Burn it in the proper place outside
the temple.

22“ ‘On the second day offer a male goat. It must not have any flaws. It is a
sin offering to make the altar pure and clean. So do as you did with the bull.
23When you finish making the altar pure, offer a young bull and a ram from the
flock. They must not have any flaws. 24Offer them to me. The priests must
sprinkle salt on them. Then they must sacrifice them as a burnt offering to me.

25“ ‘Provide a male goat each day for seven days. It is a sin offering. Also
provide a young bull and a ram from the flock. They must not have any flaws.
26For seven days the priests must make the altar pure and clean. That is how
they will set it apart to me.

27“ ‘From the eighth day on, the priests must bring your burnt offerings and
friendship offerings. They must sacrifice them on the altar. Then I will accept
you,’ announces the LORD and King.”

The Prince, the Levites and the Priests

Ezekiel 44

[1]Then the man brought me back to the outer gate of the temple. It was the one
that faced east. It was shut. [2]The LORD said to me, “This gate must remain shut.
It must not be opened. No one can enter through it. It must remain shut because
I have entered through it. I am the God of Israel. [3]The prince is the only one
who can sit in the gateway. There he can eat in front of me. He must enter
through the porch of the gateway. And he must go out the same way.”

[4]Then the man brought me through the north gate. He took me to the front of
the temple. I looked up and saw the glory of the LORD. It filled his temple. I fell
with my face toward the ground.

[5]The LORD said to me, “Son of man, pay attention. Look carefully. Listen
closely to everything I tell you about all of the rules concerning my temple.
Pay attention to the entrance to the temple and to all of its exits.

[6]“Speak to the people of Israel. They refuse to obey me. Tell them, ‘The LORD
and King says, “People of Israel, I have had enough of your evil practices. I
hate them. [7]You brought strangers into my temple. They were not circumcised.
Their hearts were stubborn. You polluted my temple. But you offered me food,
fat and blood anyway. When you did all of those things, you broke the
covenant I made with you. I hated all of the evil things you did.

[8]“ ‘ “You did not do what I told you to. You did not take care of my holy
things. Instead, you put other people in charge of my temple.” ’ ” [9]The LORD
and King says, “No stranger whose heart is stubborn can enter my temple.
They have not been circumcised. Even if they live among the people of Israel
they can’t enter it.

[10]“Some Levites wandered far away from me when Israel went down the
wrong path. They worshiped the statues of their gods. So they will be punished
because they have sinned. [11]They might serve in my temple. They might be in
charge of its gates. They might kill the burnt offerings and sacrifices for the
people. And they might stand in front of the people and serve them in other
ways.

12“But they served the people of Israel while they were worshiping their
gods. They made the people fall into sin. So I raised my hand and took an oath.
I warned them that I would punish them because of their sin,” announces the
LORD and King. 13“They must not approach me to serve me as priests. They
must not come near any of my holy things. They must stay away from my very
holy offerings. They did many things they should have been ashamed of. I
hated those things.

14“But I will still put them in charge of the temple duties. They can do all of
the work that has to be done there.

15“But the priests must approach me to serve me. They are Levites from
Zadok’s family line. They faithfully carried out their duties in my temple. They
obeyed me when the people of Israel turned away from me. Those priests must
serve me by offering sacrifices of fat and blood,” announces the LORD and
King. 16“They are the only ones who can enter my temple. Only they can come
near to serve me and do my work.

17“They will enter the gates of the inner courtyard. When they do, they must
wear linen clothes. They will serve at the gates of the inner courtyard or inside
the temple. When they do, they must not wear any clothes that are made out of
wool. 18They must have linen turbans on their heads. They must wear linen
underwear around their waists. They must not put anything on that makes them
sweat.

19“They will go into the outer courtyard where the people are. When they do,
they must take off the clothes they have been serving in. They must leave them
in the sacred rooms. And they must put other clothes on. Then they will not
make the people holy if the people happen to touch their clothes.

20“The priests must not shave their heads. They must not let their hair grow
long. They must keep it cut short. 21No priest can drink wine when he enters
the inner courtyard. 22They must not get married to widows or divorced
women. They can only marry Israelite virgins or the widows of priests.

23“The priests must teach my people the difference between what is holy and
what is not. They must show them how to tell the difference between what is
‘clean’ and what is not.

24“When people do not agree, the priests must serve as judges between them.
They must make their decisions based on my laws. They must obey my laws
and rules for all of my appointed feasts. And they must keep my Sabbath days

holy.

25“A priest must not make himself ‘unclean’ by going near a dead person. But
suppose the dead person was his father or mother. Or suppose it was his son or
daughter or brother or unmarried sister. Then the priest can make himself
‘unclean.’ 26After he is pure and clean again, he must wait seven days. 27Then
he can go to the inner courtyard to serve in the temple. But when he does, he
must sacrifice a sin offering for himself,” announces the LORD and King.

28“The priests will not receive any part of the land of Israel. I myself will be
their only share. 29They will eat the grain offerings, sin offerings and guilt
offerings. Everything in Israel that is set apart to me in a special way will
belong to them. 30The best of every first share of the people’s crops will belong
to the priests. So will all of their special gifts. The people must give the priests
the first share of their ground meal. Then I will bless my people’s families.

31“The priests must not eat any bird or animal that is found dead. They must
not eat anything that wild animals have torn apart.

Dividing Up the Land

Ezekiel 45

1 “People of Israel, you will divide up the land you will receive. When you do,
give me my share of it. It will be a sacred area. It will be eight and a fourth
miles long and six and a half miles wide. The entire area will be holy. 2 The
temple area in it will be 875 feet long and 875 feet wide. An 87-and-a-half-foot
strip around it will be open land.

3 “In the sacred area, measure off a large strip of land. It will be eight and a
fourth miles long and three and a third miles wide. The temple will be in it. It
will be the most holy place of all. 4 The large strip will be the sacred share of
land for the priests. There they will serve in the temple. And they will approach
me to serve me there. Their houses will be built on that land. The holy temple
will also be located there.

5 “So the Levites will serve in the temple. They will have an area eight and a
fourth miles long and three and a third miles wide. The towns they live in will
be located there.

6 “Give the city an area one and two thirds miles wide and eight and a fourth
miles long. It will be right next to the sacred area. It will belong to all of the
people of Israel.

7 “The prince will have land on both sides of the sacred area and the city. Its
border will run east and west along the land of one of the tribes. 8 The prince
will own that land in Israel. And my princes will not crush my people anymore.
Instead, they will allow the people of Israel to receive their own share of land.
It will be divided up based on their tribes.”

9 The LORD and King says, “Princes of Israel, you have gone far enough! Stop
hurting others. Do not crush them. Do what is fair and right. Stop taking my
people’s land away from them,” announces the LORD and King.

10 “Use weights and measures that are honest and exact. 11 Use the same
standard to measure dry and liquid products. Use a 6-bushel measure for dry
products. And use a 60-gallon measure for liquids. 12 Every amount of money
must be weighed out in keeping with the standard weights.

Offerings and Holy Days

13"You must offer a special gift. It must be 13 and a third cups out of every six bushels of grain. 14Give two and a half quarts out of every 60 gallons of olive oil. 15Also give one sheep from every flock of 200 sheep. Get them from the grasslands of Israel that receive plenty of water. Use them for grain offerings, burnt offerings and friendship offerings. They will be used to pay for the sin of the people," announces the LORD and King.

16"All of the people in the land will take part in that special gift. The prince in Israel will use it. 17He must provide the burnt offerings, grain offerings and drink offerings. They will be for the yearly feasts, New Moon Feasts and Sabbath days. So they will be for all of the appointed feasts of the people of Israel. The prince will provide the sin offerings, grain offerings, burnt offerings and friendship offerings. They will be used to pay for the sin of the people."

18The LORD and King says, "Get a young bull. It must not have any flaws. Use it to make the temple pure and clean. Do it on the first day of the first month. 19The priest must get some of the blood from the sin offering. He must put some on the doorposts of the temple. He must apply some to the four corners of the middle part of the altar. He must put the rest on the gateposts of the inner courtyard.

20"Do the same thing on the seventh day of the month. Do it for those who sin without meaning to. And do it for those who sin without realizing what they are doing. So you will make the temple pure and clean.

21"Keep the Passover Feast on the 14th day of the first month. It will last for seven days. During that time you must eat bread that is made without yeast.

22"The prince must provide a bull as a sin offering. It will be for him and all of the people of the land. 23For each of the seven days of the Feast he must provide seven bulls and seven rams. They must not have any flaws. They will be a burnt offering to me. The prince must also provide a male goat for a sin offering. 24He must bring a little over half a bushel for each bull or ram. He must also provide four quarts of olive oil for each of them.

25"The seven days of the Feast begin on the 15th day of the seventh month. During those days the prince must provide the same sin offerings, burnt

offerings, grain offerings and olive oil.”

Ezekiel 46

[1]The LORD and King says, “On the six working days of each week you must keep the east gate of the inner courtyard of the temple shut. But open it on Sabbath days and during New Moon Feasts. [2]The prince must enter the temple area through the porch of the gateway. He must stand by the gatepost. The priests must sacrifice his burnt offering and friendship offerings. He must worship at the entrance of the gateway. Then he must leave. But the gate will not be shut until evening.

[3]“On Sabbath days and during New Moon Feasts the people of the land must gather together at the entrance of the temple gateway. That is where they must worship me.

[4]“The prince must bring a burnt offering to me on the Sabbath. It will be six male lambs and a ram. They must not have any flaws. [5]He must offer a little over half a bushel of grain along with the ram. The grain he offers along with the lambs can be as much as he wants to give. He must also offer four quarts of olive oil for every half bushel of grain.

[6]“On the day of the New Moon Feast the prince must also offer a young bull, six lambs and a ram. They must not have any flaws. [7]He must offer a little over half a bushel of grain along with the bull or ram. The grain he offers along with the lambs can be as much as he wants to give. He must also offer four quarts of olive oil for every half bushel of grain.

[8]“When the prince enters the temple area, he must go in through the porch of the gateway. He must leave the same way.

[9]“The people of the land must worship me at the appointed feasts. Those who enter through the north gate must leave through the south gate. Those who enter through the south gate must leave through the north gate. They must not leave through the same gate they entered. Each one must go out the opposite gate. [10]The prince must be among them. He must go in when they go in. And he must leave when they leave.

[11]“At the yearly feasts and other appointed feasts there must be grain offerings. The prince must offer a little over half a bushel of grain along with a bull or ram. The grain he offers along with the lambs can be as much as he wants to give. He must also offer four quarts of olive oil for every half bushel

of grain. [12]He can also bring another offering to me because he chooses to. It might be a burnt offering or friendship offering. When he brings it, the east gate must be opened for him. He will bring his offering just as he does on the Sabbath day. Then he will leave. After he has gone out, the gate must be shut.

[13]"Every day you must provide a lamb that is a year old. It must not have any flaws. It is a burnt offering to me. You must provide it every morning. [14]You must also offer grain along with it every morning. Bring 13 and a third cups of grain. Also bring one and a third quarts of olive oil to make the flour a little wet. So you will give the grain offering to me. That will be a law that will last for all time to come. [15]Provide the lamb, grain offering and oil every morning. They will be used for a regular burnt offering."

[16]The LORD and King says, "Suppose the prince makes a gift from his share of land. And he gives it to one of his sons. Then the property will also belong to his sons after him. It will be handed down to them.

[17]"But suppose he makes a gift from his share of land to one of his servants. Then the servant can keep it until the Year of Jubilee. After that, it will be returned to the prince. His property can be handed down only to his sons. It belongs to them.

[18]"The prince must not take any share of land that belongs to the people. He must not drive them off their property. He must give his sons their share out of his own property. Then my people will not be separated from their property."

[19]The man brought me through the entrance at the side of the north building. That's where the priests' sacred rooms were located. He showed me a place west of the building. [20]He said to me, "This is where the priests will cook the guilt offerings and sin offerings. They will also bake the grain offerings here. Then they will not have to bring the offerings into the outer courtyard. That will keep the people from touching the offerings and becoming holy."

[21]Then the man brought me to the outer courtyard. He led me around to its four corners. In each corner I saw another smaller courtyard. [22]So in the four corners of the outer courtyard were walled courtyards. Each one was 70 feet long and 52 and a half feet wide. All of them were the same size. [23]Around the inside of each of the four courtyards was a stone ledge. Places for fire were built all around under each ledge. [24]The man said to me, "These are the kitchens. Those who serve at the temple will cook the people's sacrifices here."

A River Will Flow From the Temple

Ezekiel 47

[1]The man brought me back to the entrance to the temple. I saw water flowing
east from under a temple gateway. The temple faced east. The water was
coming down from under the south side of the temple. It was flowing south of
the altar.

[2]Then he brought me out through the north gate of the outer courtyard. He led
me around the outside to the outer gate that faced east. The water was flowing
from the south side of the east gate.

[3]Then the man went toward the east. He had a measuring line in his hand. He
measured off 1,750 feet. He led me through water that was up to my ankles.
[4]Then he measured off another 1,750 feet. He led me through water that was up
to my knees. Then he measured off another 1,750 feet. He led me through
water that was up to my waist. [5]Then he measured off another 1,750 feet. But
now it was a river that I could not go across. The water had risen so high that it
was deep enough to swim in. [6]He asked me, “Son of man, do you see this?”

Then he led me back to the bank of the river. [7]When I arrived there, I saw a
large number of trees. They were on both sides of the river.

[8]The man said to me, “This water flows toward the eastern territory. It goes
down into the Arabah Valley. There it enters the Dead Sea. When it empties
into it, the water there becomes fresh. [9]Large numbers of creatures will live
where the river flows. It will have huge numbers of fish. This water flows there
and makes the salt water fresh. So where the river flows everything will live.

[10]“People will stand along the shore to fish. From En Gedi all the way to En
Eglaim there will be places for spreading fishnets. The Dead Sea will have
many kinds of fish. They will be like the fish in the Mediterranean Sea.

[11]“But none of the swamps will have fresh water in them. They will stay
salty.

[12]“Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves
will not dry up. The trees will always have fruit on them. Every month they

will bear fruit. The water from the temple will flow to them. Their fruit will be used for food. And their leaves will be used for healing.”

The Borders of the Land

13 The LORD and King says, “People of Israel, here are the borders you will have after you divide up the land. Each of the 12 tribes will receive a share. But the family of Joseph will have two shares. 14 Divide the land into equal parts. Long ago I raised my hand and took an oath. I promised to give the land to your people. So all of it will belong to you.

15 “Here are the borders of the land.

“On the north side the border will start at the Mediterranean Sea. It will go by the Hethlon road past Lebo Hamath. Then it will continue on to Zedad, 16 Berothah and Sibraim. Sibraim is between Damascus and Hamath. The border will reach all the way to Hazer Hatticon. It is right next to Hauran. 17 The border will go from the sea to Hazar Enan. It will run north of Damascus and south of Hamath. That will be the north border.

18 “On the east side the border will run between Hauran and Damascus. It will continue along the Jordan River between Gilead and the land of Israel. It will reach to the Dead Sea and all the way to Tamar. That will be the east border.

19 “On the south side the border will start at Tamar. It will reach all the way to the waters of Meribah Kadesh. Then it will run along the Wadi of Egypt. It will end at the Mediterranean Sea. That will be the south border.

20 “On the west side, the Mediterranean Sea will be the border. It will go to a point across from Lebo Hamath. That will be the west border.

21 “You must divide up this land among yourselves. Do it based on the number of men in your tribes. 22 Each of the tribes must receive a share of the land.

“You must also give some land to the outsiders who have settled among you and who have children. Treat them as if they had been born in Israel. Let them have some land among your tribes. [23]Outsiders can settle in any tribe. There you must give them their share,” announces the LORD and King.

The Land Will Be Divided Up

Ezekiel 48

[1]"Here are the tribes. They are listed by their names. Dan will receive one share of land. It will be at the northern border of Israel. The border will follow the Hethlon road to Lebo Hamath. Hazar Enan will be part of the border. So will the northern border of Damascus next to Hamath. Dan's northern border will run from east to west.

[2]"Asher will receive one share. It will border the territory of Dan from east to west.

[3]"Naphtali will receive one share. It will border the territory of Asher from east to west.

[4]"Manasseh will receive one share. It will border the territory of Naphtali from east to west.

[5]"Ephraim will receive one share. It will border the territory of Manasseh from east to west.

[6]"Reuben will receive one share. It will border the territory of Ephraim from east to west.

[7]"Judah will receive one share. It will border the territory of Reuben from east to west.

[8]"You must give one share as a special gift to me. It will border the territory of Judah from east to west. It will be eight and a fourth miles wide. It will be as long as the border of each of the territories of the tribes. Its border will run from east to west. The temple will be in the center of that strip of land.

[9]"Give that special share of land to me. It will be eight and a fourth miles long and three and a third miles wide. [10]It will be the sacred share of land for the priests. It will be eight and a fourth miles long on the north side. It will be three and a third miles wide on the west side. It will be three and a third miles wide on the east side. And it will be eight and a fourth miles long on the south side. My temple will be in the center of it.

[11]"This share of land will be for the priests who are set apart to me. They will

come from the family line of Zadok. The members of that family served me faithfully. They did not go down the wrong path as the Levites and other Israelites did. [12]Their share of land will be a special gift to them. It will be part of the sacred share of the land. It will be very holy. Its border will run along the territory of the Levites.

[13]"The Levites will receive a share. It will be next to the territory of the priests. The Levites' share will be eight and a fourth miles long and three and a third miles wide. [14]They must not sell or trade any of it. It is the best part of the land. It must not be handed over to anyone else. It is set apart to me.

[15]"The area that remains is one and two thirds miles wide. It is eight and a fourth miles long. It will not be holy. The people in Jerusalem can build houses there. They can use some of it as grasslands. The city will be in the center of it. [16]Each of the four sides of the city will be one and a half miles long. [17]Each of the four sides of the city's grasslands will be 437 and a half feet long.

[18]"What remains of the area will be three and a third miles long on the east and west sides. Its border will run along the border of the sacred share. Its crops will supply food for the city workers. [19]They will farm the area. They will come from all of the tribes of Israel. [20]The entire area will be a square. Each of its four sides will be eight and a fourth miles long. Set the sacred share apart as a special gift to me. Do the same thing with the property of the city.

[21]"The area that remains on both sides will belong to the prince. So his land does not include the sacred share and the city property. The eastern part of his land will reach from the sacred share all the way to the eastern border. The western part will reach from the sacred share to the western border. The sacred share itself is eight and a fourth miles long on its east and west sides. Both of those areas will be right next to the borders of the two tribes on the north and south sides. They will belong to the prince. The sacred share will be in the center of them. It will have the temple in it.

[22]"The property of the Levites will lie in the center of the prince's share. So will the property of the city. The prince's land will lie between the borders of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

[23]"Here is the land for the rest of the tribes. Benjamin will receive one share. It will reach from the eastern border to the western border.

[24]"Simeon will receive one share. It will border the territory of Benjamin from east to west.

25“Issachar will receive one share. It will border the territory of Simeon from east to west.

26“Zebulun will receive one share. It will border the territory of Issachar from east to west.

27“Gad will receive one share. It will border the territory of Zebulun from east to west.

28“The southern border of Gad will run south from Tamar to the waters of Meribah Kadesh. It will continue along the Wadi of Egypt. It will end at the Mediterranean Sea.

29“That is the land you must divide among the tribes of Israel. And those will be the shares they will receive,” announces the LORD and King.

The Gates of the City

30“Here is a list of the gates of the city. Start with its north side. It will be a mile and a half long. 31The city gates will be named after the tribes of Israel. The north side will have three gates. They will be the gates of Reuben, Judah and Levi.

32“The east side will be a mile and a half long. It will have three gates. They will be the gates of Joseph, Benjamin and Dan.

33“The south side will be a mile and a half long. It will have three gates. They will be the gates of Simeon, Issachar and Zebulun.

34“The west side will be a mile and a half long. It will have three gates. They will be the gates of Gad, Asher and Naphtali.

35“The city will be six miles around.

“From that time on, its name will be

THE LORD IS THERE.”

Daniel

Daniel 1
Daniel 2
Daniel 3
Daniel 4
Daniel 5
Daniel 6
Daniel 7
Daniel 8
Daniel 9
Daniel 10
Daniel 11
Daniel 12

Daniel Is Trained in Babylon

Daniel 1

[1]It was the third year that Jehoiakim was king of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar
came to Jerusalem. His armies surrounded the city and attacked it.
Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylonia.

[2]The LORD handed Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, over to him.
Nebuchadnezzar also took some of the articles from God's temple. He carried
them off to the temple of his god in Babylonia. He put them among the
treasures of his god.

[3]The king gave Ashpenaz an order. Ashpenaz was the chief of
Nebuchadnezzar's court officials. The king told him to bring in some of the
Israelites. He wanted nobles and men from the royal family. [4]He was looking
for young men who were healthy and handsome. They had to be able to learn
anything. They had to be well educated. They had to have the ability to
understand new things quickly and easily. The king wanted men who could
serve in his palace. Ashpenaz was supposed to teach them the Babylonian
language and writings.

[5]The king had his servants give them food and wine from his own table. They
received a certain amount every day. The young men had to be trained for three
years. After that, they could begin to serve the king.

[6]Some of the men were from Judah. Their names were Daniel, Hananiah,
Mishael and Azariah. [7]The chief official gave them new names. He gave
Daniel the name Belteshazzar. He gave Hananiah the name Shadrach. He gave
Mishael the name Meshach. And he gave Azariah the name Abednego.

[8]Daniel decided not to make himself "unclean" by eating the king's food and
drinking his wine. So he asked the chief official for a favor. He wanted
permission not to make himself "unclean" with the king's food and wine.

[9]God had caused the official to be kind and friendly to Daniel. [10]But the
official refused to do what Daniel asked for. He said, "I'm afraid of the king.
He is my master. He has decided what you and your three friends must eat and
drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men who are

the same age you are? When he sees how you look, he might kill me.”

[11]So Daniel spoke to one of the guards. The chief official had appointed him over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. [12]Daniel said to him, “Please test us for ten days. Give us nothing but vegetables to eat. And give us only water to drink. [13]Then compare us with the young men who eat the king’s food. See how we look. After that, do what you want to.”

[14]So the guard agreed. He tested them for ten days.

[15]After the ten days they looked healthy and well fed. In fact, they looked better than any of the young men who ate the king’s food. [16]So the guard didn’t require Daniel and his friends to eat the special food or drink the wine. He gave them vegetables instead.

[17]God gave knowledge and understanding to those four young men. So they understood all kinds of writings and subjects. And Daniel could understand all kinds of visions and dreams.

[18]The three years the king had set for their training ended. So the chief official brought them to Nebuchadnezzar. [19]The king talked with them. He didn’t find anyone equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. So they began to serve the king. [20]He asked them for advice in matters that required wisdom and understanding. He always found their answers to be the best. In fact, the men were ten times better than anyone in his kingdom who claimed to get knowledge by using magic.

[21]Daniel served in Babylon until the first year Cyrus ruled over Babylonia. Cyrus was king of Persia.

Nebuchadnezzar Dreams About a Large Statue

Daniel 2

[1]In the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's rule, he had a dream. His mind was troubled. He couldn't sleep.

[2]So the king sent for those who claimed to get knowledge by using magic. He also sent for those who practiced evil magic and those who studied the heavens. He wanted them to tell him what he had dreamed. They came in and stood in front of the king. [3]He said to them, "I had a dream. It troubles me. So I want to know what it means."

[4]Then those who studied the heavens answered the king. They spoke in Aramaic. They said, "King Nebuchadnezzar, may you live forever! Tell us what you dreamed. Then we'll explain what it means."

[5]The king replied to them, "I have made up my mind. You must tell me what I dreamed. And you must tell me what it means. If you don't, I'll have you cut to pieces. And I'll have your houses turned into piles of trash.

[6]"So tell me what I dreamed. Explain it to me. Then I'll give you gifts. I'll reward you. I'll give you great honor. So tell me the dream. And tell me what it means."

[7]Once more they replied, "King Nebuchadnezzar, tell us what you dreamed. Then we'll tell you what it means."

[8]The king answered, "I know what you are doing. You are trying to gain more time. You realize that I've made up my mind. [9]You must tell me the dream. If you don't, you will pay for it. You have gotten together and made evil plans. You hope things will change. So you are telling me lies. But I want you to tell me what I dreamed. Then I'll know that you can tell me what it means."

[10]They answered the king, "There isn't a man on earth who can do what you are asking! No king has ever asked for anything like that. Not even a king as great and mighty as you has asked for it. Those who get knowledge by using magic have never been asked to do what you are asking. And those who study

the heavens haven’t been asked to do it either. [11]What you are asking is much too hard. No one can tell you what you dreamed except the gods. And they don’t live among human beings.”

[12]That made the king very angry. He ordered that all of the wise men in Babylon be put to death. [13]So the order was given to kill them. Men were sent out to look for Daniel and his friends. They were also supposed to be put to death.

[14]Arioch was the commander of the king’s guard. He went out to put the wise men of Babylon to death. So Daniel spoke to him wisely and carefully. [15]He asked the king’s officer, “Why did Nebuchadnezzar give a terrible order like that?” Then Arioch explained to Daniel what was going on.

[16]When Daniel heard that, he went to the king. He told him he would explain the dream to him. But he needed more time.

[17]Then Daniel returned to his house. He explained everything to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. [18]He asked them to pray that the God of heaven would give him mercy. He wanted God to help him understand the mystery of the king’s dream. Then he and his friends wouldn’t be killed along with the other wise men in Babylon.

[19]During that night, God gave Daniel a vision. He showed him what the mystery was all about. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven. [20]He said,

“May God be praised for ever and ever!
He is wise and powerful.
[21]He changes times and seasons.
He sets up kings.
He removes them from power.
The wisdom of those who are wise comes from him.
He gives knowledge to those who have understanding.
[22]He explains deep and hidden things.
He knows what happens in the darkest places.
And where he is, everything is light.
[23]God of my people, I thank and praise you.
You have given me wisdom and power.
You have made known to me what we asked you for.
You have shown us the king’s dream.”

Daniel Tells the King What His Dream Means

[24]Then Daniel went to Arioch. The king had appointed him to put the wise men of Babylon to death. Daniel said to him, “Don’t kill the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king. I’ll tell him what his dream means.”

[25]So Arioch took Daniel to the king at once. Arioch said, “I have found a man among those you brought here from Judah. He can tell you what your dream means.”

[26]Nebuchadnezzar spoke to Daniel, who was also called Belteshazzar. The king asked him, “Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream? And can you tell me what it means?”

[27]Daniel replied, “You have asked us to explain a mystery to you. But no wise man can do that. And those who try to figure things out by using magic can’t do it either.

[28]“But there is a God in heaven who can explain mysteries. Nebuchadnezzar, he has shown you what is going to happen. Here is what you dreamed. And here are the visions that passed through your mind while you were lying on your bed.

[29]“My king, while you were still in bed your mind thought about things that haven’t happened yet. The One who explains mysteries showed those things to you.

[30]“Now the mystery has been explained to me. But it isn’t because I have greater wisdom than anyone else. It’s because God wants you to know what the mystery means, my king. He wants you to understand what went through your mind.

[31]“King Nebuchadnezzar, you looked up and saw a large statue standing in front of you. It was huge. It shone brightly. And it terrified you. [32]The head of the statue was made out of pure gold. Its chest and arms were made of silver. Its stomach and thighs were bronze. [33]Its legs were made out of iron. And its feet were partly iron and partly baked clay.

[34]“While you were watching, a rock was cut out. But human hands didn’t do it. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay. It smashed them. [35]Then the iron and clay were broken to pieces. So were the bronze, silver and gold. All of them were broken to pieces at the same time. They became like straw on a

threshing floor at harvest time. The wind blew them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain. It filled the whole earth.

36"That was your dream. Now I will tell you what it means.
37Nebuchadnezzar, you are the greatest king of all. The God of heaven has given you authority and power. He has given you might and glory. 38He has put everyone under your control. He has also given you authority over the wild animals and the birds of the air. It doesn't matter where they live. He has made you ruler over all of them. You are that head of gold.

39"After you, another kingdom will take over. It won't be as powerful as yours. Next, a third kingdom will rule over the whole earth. The bronze part of the statue stands for that kingdom.

40"Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom. It will be as strong as iron. Iron breaks and smashes everything to pieces. And the fourth kingdom will crush and break all of the others. 41You saw that the feet and toes were made out of iron and baked clay. And the fourth kingdom will be divided up. But it will still be almost as strong as iron. That's why you saw iron mixed with clay. 42The toes were partly iron and partly clay. And the fourth kingdom will be partly strong and partly weak. 43You saw the iron mixed with baked clay. And the fourth kingdom will be made up of all kinds of people. They won't hold together any more than iron mixes with clay.

44"In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom. It will never be destroyed. And no other nation will ever take it over. It will crush all of those other kingdoms. It will bring them to an end. But it will last forever.
45That's what the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain means. Human hands didn't cut the rock out. It broke the statue to pieces. It smashed the iron, bronze, clay, silver and gold.

"The great God has shown you what will take place in days to come. The dream is true. And you can trust the meaning I have given you for it."

46Then King Nebuchadnezzar bowed low in front of Daniel. He wanted to honor him. So he ordered that an offering and incense be offered up to him.

47The king said to Daniel, "I'm sure your God is the greatest God of all. He is the Lord of kings. He explains mysteries. That's why you were able to explain the mystery of my dream."

48Then the king put Daniel in a position of authority. He gave him many gifts.

He made him ruler over the city of Babylon and the towns around it. He put him in charge of all of its other wise men.

[49]The king also did what Daniel asked him to. He appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to help Daniel govern Babylon and the towns around it. Daniel himself remained at the royal court.

Daniel's Friends Are Thrown Into a Blazing Furnace

Daniel 3

[1]King Nebuchadnezzar made a statue that was covered with gold. It was 90 feet tall and 9 feet wide. He set it up on the flatlands of Dura near the city of Babylon.

[2]Then the king sent for the royal rulers, high officials and governors. He sent for the advisers, treasurers, judges and court officers. And he sent for all of the other officials of Babylon. He asked them to come to a special gathering to honor the statue he had set up.

[3]So the royal rulers, high officials and governors came together. So did the advisers, treasurers, judges and court officers. All of the other officials joined them. They came to honor the statue that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. They stood in front of it.

[4]Then a messenger called out loudly, "Listen, you people who come from every nation! Pay attention, you who speak other languages! Here is what the king commands you to do. [5]You will soon hear the sound of horns and flutes. You will hear zithers, lyres, harps and pipes. In fact, you will hear all kinds of music. When you do, you must fall down and worship the gold statue that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. [6]If you don't, you will be thrown into a blazing furnace right away."

[7]All of the people heard the sound of the horns and flutes. They heard the zithers, lyres, harps and other musical instruments. As soon as they did, they fell down and worshiped Nebuchadnezzar's gold statue. They had come from every nation and language.

[8]At that time some people who studied the heavens came forward. They spoke against the Jews. [9]They said, "King Nebuchadnezzar, may you live forever! [10]You commanded everyone to fall down and worship the gold statue. You told them to do it when they heard the horns, flutes, zithers, lyres, harps, pipes and other musical instruments. [11]If they didn't, they would be thrown into a blazing furnace. [12]But you have appointed some Jews to help Daniel govern Babylon and the towns around it. Their names are Shadrach, Meshach

and Abednego. They don’t pay any attention to you, King Nebuchadnezzar. They don’t serve your gods. And they refuse to worship the gold statue you have set up.”

13Nebuchadnezzar burned with anger. He sent for Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So they were brought to him.

14The king said to them, “Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, is what I heard about you true? Don’t you serve my gods? Don’t you worship the gold statue I set up? 15You will hear the horns, flutes, zithers, lyres, harps, pipes and other musical instruments. When you do, fall down and worship the statue I made. If you will, that’s very good. But if you won’t, you will be thrown at once into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to save you from my powerful hand?”

16Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king. They said, “King Nebuchadnezzar, we don’t need to talk about this anymore. 17We might be thrown into the blazing furnace. But the God we serve is able to bring us out of it alive. He will save us from your powerful hand.

18“But we want you to know this. Even if we knew that our God wouldn’t save us, we still wouldn’t serve your gods. We wouldn’t worship the gold statue you set up.”

19Then Nebuchadnezzar’s anger burned against Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. The look on his face changed. And he ordered that the furnace be heated seven times hotter than usual. 20He also gave some of the strongest soldiers in his army a command. He ordered them to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Then he told his men to throw them into the blazing furnace. 21So they were tied up. Then they were thrown into the furnace. They were wearing their robes, pants, turbans and other clothes.

22The king’s command was carried out quickly. The furnace was so hot that its flames killed the soldiers who threw Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego into it. 23So the three men were firmly tied up. And they fell into the blazing furnace.

24Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet. He was so amazed he asked his advisers, “Didn’t we tie three men up? Didn’t we throw three men into the fire?”

“Yes, we did,” they replied.

25The king said, “Look! I see four men walking around in the fire. They

aren’t tied up. And the fire hasn’t even harmed them. The fourth man looks like a son of the gods.”

[26]Then the king approached the opening of the blazing furnace. He shouted, “Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, come out! You who serve the Most High God, come here!”

So they came out of the fire. [27]The royal rulers, high officials, governors and advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire hadn’t harmed their bodies. Not one hair on their heads was burned. Their robes weren’t burned either. And they didn’t even smell like smoke.

[28]Then Nebuchadnezzar said, “May the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be praised! He has sent his angel and saved his servants. They trusted in him. They refused to obey my command. They were willing to give up their lives. They would rather die than serve or worship any god except their own God.

[29]“No other god can save people that way. So I’m giving an order. No one from any nation or language can say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. If they do, they’ll be cut to pieces. And their houses will be turned into piles of trash.”

[30]Then the king honored Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. He gave them higher positions in the city of Babylon and the towns around it.

Nebuchadnezzar Dreams About a Tree

Daniel 4

1 I, King Nebuchadnezzar, am writing this letter.

I am sending it to you people from every nation and language in the whole world.

May you have great success!

2 I am pleased to tell you what has happened. The Most High God has done miraculous signs and wonders for me.

3 His miraculous signs are great.
His wonders are mighty.
His kingdom will last forever.
His rule will never end.

4 I was at home in my palace. I was content and very successful. 5 But I had a dream that made me afraid. I was lying on my bed. Then dreams and visions passed through my mind. They terrified me.

6 So I commanded that all of the wise men in Babylon be brought to me. I wanted them to tell me what my dream meant. 7 Those who try to figure things out by using magic came. So did those who study the heavens. I told all of them what I had dreamed. But they couldn't tell me what it meant.

8 Finally, Daniel came to me. He is called Belteshazzar, after the name of my god. The spirit of the holy gods is in him. I told him my dream.

9 I said, "Belteshazzar, you are chief of the magicians. I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you. No mystery is too hard for you to figure out. Here is my dream. Tell me what it means.

[10]“Here are the visions I saw while I was lying on my bed. I looked up and saw a tree standing in the middle of the land. It was very tall. [11]It had grown to be large and strong. Its top touched the sky. It could be seen anywhere on earth. [12]Its leaves were beautiful. It had a lot of fruit on it. It provided enough food for people and animals. Under the tree, the wild animals found shade. The birds of the air lived in its branches. Every creature was fed from that tree.

[13]“While I was still lying on my bed, I looked up. In my visions, I saw a holy messenger. He was coming down from heaven. [14]He called out in a loud voice. He said, ‘Cut the tree down. Break off its branches. Strip its leaves off. Scatter its fruit. Let the animals that are under it run away. Let the birds that are in its branches fly off. [15]But leave the stump with its roots in the ground. Let it stay in the field. Put a band of iron and bronze around it.

“ ‘Let King Nebuchadnezzar become wet with the dew of heaven. Let him live like the animals among the plants of the earth. [16]Let him no longer have the mind of a man. Instead, let him be given the mind of an animal. Let him stay that way until seven periods of time pass by.

[17]“ ‘The decision is announced by holy messengers. So all who are alive will know that the Most High God is King. He rules over all of the kingdoms of men. He gives them to anyone he wants. Sometimes he puts the least important men in charge of them.’

[18]“That’s the dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, had. Now tell me what it means, Belteshazzar. None of the wise men in my kingdom can explain it to me. But you can. After all, the spirit of the holy gods is in you.”

Daniel Explains Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream

[19]Daniel, who was also called Belteshazzar, was very bewildered for a while. His thoughts terrified him. So the king said, “Belteshazzar, don’t let the dream or its meaning make you afraid.”

Belteshazzar answered, “My master, I wish the dream were about your enemies! I wish its meaning had to do with them! [20]You saw a tree. It grew to be large and strong. Its top touched the sky. It could be seen from anywhere on earth. [21]Its leaves were beautiful. It had a lot of fruit on it. It provided enough food for people and animals. Under the tree, the wild animals found shade. The

birds of the air lived in its branches.

22“My king, you are that tree! You have become great and strong. Your greatness has grown until it reaches the sky. Your rule has spread to all parts of the earth.

23“My king, you saw a holy messenger. He came down from heaven. He said, ‘Cut the tree down. Destroy it. But leave the stump with its roots in the ground. Let it stay in the field. Put a band of iron and bronze around it. Let King Nebuchadnezzar become wet with the dew of heaven. Let him live like the wild animals. Let him stay that way until seven periods of time pass by.’

24“My king and master, here is what your dream means. The Most High God has given an order against you. 25You will be driven away from people. You will live like the wild animals. You will eat grass just as cattle do. You will become wet with the dew of heaven. Seven periods of time will pass by for you. Then you will recognize that the Most High God rules over all of the kingdoms of men. He gives them to anyone he wants.

26“But he gave a command to leave the stump of the tree along with its roots. That means your kingdom will be given back to you. It will happen when you recognize that the God of heaven rules.

27“So, my king, I hope you will accept my advice. Stop being sinful. Do what is right. Give up your evil practices. Show kindness to those who are being treated badly. Then perhaps things will continue to go well with you.”

Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream Comes True

28All of that happened to me. 29It took place twelve months later. I was walking on the roof of my palace in Babylon. 30I said, “Isn’t this the great Babylon I have built as a place for my royal palace? I used my mighty power to build it. It shows how glorious my majesty is.”

31I was still speaking when a voice was heard from heaven. It said, “King Nebuchadnezzar, here is what has been ordered concerning you. Your royal authority has been taken from you. 32You will be driven away from people. You will live like the wild animals. You will eat grass just as cattle do. Seven periods of time will pass by for you. Then you will recognize that the Most High God rules over all of the kingdoms of men. He gives them to anyone he

wants.”

33What had been said about me came true at once. I was driven away from people. I ate grass just as cattle do. My body became wet with the dew of heaven. I stayed that way until my hair grew like the feathers of an eagle. My nails became like the claws of a bird.

34At the end of that time I, Nebuchadnezzar, looked up toward heaven. My mind became clear again. Then I praised the Most High God. I gave honor and glory to the One who lives forever.

His rule will last forever.
His kingdom will never end.
35He considers all of the nations on earth
to be nothing.
He does as he pleases
with the powers of heaven.
He does what he wants
with the nations of the earth.
No one can hold his hand back.
No one can say to him,
“What have you done?”

36My honor and glory were returned to me when my mind became clear again. The glory of my kingdom was given back to me. My advisers and nobles came to me. And I was put back on my throne. I became even greater than I had been before.

37Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, give praise and honor and glory to the King of heaven. Everything he does is right. All of his ways are fair. He is able to bring down those who live proudly.

A Hand Writes on the Palace Wall

Daniel 5

[1]King Belshazzar gave a big dinner. He invited a thousand of his nobles to it. He drank wine with them.

[2]While Belshazzar was drinking his wine, he gave orders to his servants. He commanded them to bring in some gold and silver cups. They were the cups his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple in Jerusalem. Belshazzar had them brought in so everyone could drink from them. That included the king himself, his nobles, his wives and his concubines.

[3]So the servants brought in the gold cups that had been taken from God's temple in Jerusalem. The king and his nobles drank from them. So did his wives and concubines. [4]As they drank the wine, they praised their gods. The statues of those gods were made out of gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood or stone.

[5]Suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared. They wrote something on the plaster of the palace wall. It happened near the lampstand.

The king watched the hand as it wrote. [6]His face turned pale. He became so afraid that his knees knocked together. His legs couldn't hold him up any longer.

[7]The king sent for those who try to figure things out by using magic. He also sent for those who study the heavens. All of them were wise men in Babylon. He ordered that they be brought to him. He said to them, "I want one of you to read this writing and tell me what it means. If you do, you will be dressed in purple clothes. A gold chain will be put around your neck. And you will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom."

[8]Then all of the king's wise men came in. But they couldn't read the writing. They couldn't tell him what it meant. [9]So King Belshazzar became even more terrified. His face grew more pale. And his nobles were bewildered.

[10]The queen heard the king and his nobles talking. So she came into the dining hall. "King Belshazzar, may you live forever!" she said. "Don't be

afraid! Don’t look so pale! 11I know a man in your kingdom who has the spirit
of the holy gods in him. He has understanding and wisdom and good sense just
like the gods. That was discovered when your father Nebuchadnezzar was
king. Nebuchadnezzar appointed him chief of those who tried to figure things
out by using magic. He also put him in charge of those who studied the
heavens.

12“The man’s name is Daniel. Your father called him Belteshazzar. He has a
clever mind and knowledge and understanding. He is also able to tell what
dreams mean. He can explain riddles and solve hard problems. Send for him.
He’ll tell you what the writing means.”

13So Daniel was brought to the king. The king said to him, “Are you Daniel?
Are you one of the prisoners my father the king brought here from Judah? 14I
have heard that the spirit of the gods is in you. I’ve also heard that you have
understanding and good sense and special wisdom.

15“The wise men and those who practice magic were brought to me. They
were asked to read this writing and tell me what it means. But they couldn’t.

16“I have heard that you are able to explain things and solve hard problems. I
hope you can read this writing and tell me what it means. If you can, you will
be dressed in purple clothes. A gold chain will be put around your neck. And
you will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom.”

17Then Daniel answered the king. He said, “You can keep your gifts for
yourself. You can give your rewards to someone else. But I will read the
writing for you. I’ll tell you what it means.

18“King Belshazzar, the Most High God was good to your father
Nebuchadnezzar. He gave him authority and greatness and glory and honor.
19God gave him a high position. Then all of the people from every nation and
language became afraid of the king. He put to death anyone he wanted to. He
spared anyone he wanted to spare. He gave high positions to anyone he wanted
to. And he brought down anyone he wanted to bring down.

20“But his heart became very stubborn and proud. So he was removed from
his royal throne. His glory was stripped away from him. 21He was driven away
from people. He was given the mind of an animal. He lived like the wild
donkeys. He ate grass just as cattle do. His body became wet with the dew of
heaven. He stayed that way until he recognized that the Most High God rules
over all of the kingdoms of men. He puts anyone he wants to in charge of

them.

22“But you knew all of that, Belshazzar. After all, you are Nebuchadnezzar’s
son. In spite of that, you are still proud. 23You have taken your stand against
the Lord of heaven. You had your servants bring cups from his temple to you.
You and your nobles drank wine from them. So did your wives and
concubines. You praised your gods. The statues of those gods are made out of
silver, gold, bronze, iron, wood or stone. They can’t see or hear or understand
anything. But you didn’t honor the God who holds in his hand your very life
and everything you do. 24So he sent the hand that wrote on the wall.

25“Here is what was written.

MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN

26“And here is what those words mean.

Mene means that God has limited the time of your rule. He has brought
it to an end.

27*Tekel* means that you have been weighed on scales. And you haven’t
measured up to God’s standard.

28*Peres* means that your authority over your kingdom will be taken away
from you. It will be given to the Medes and Persians.”

29Then Belshazzar commanded his servants to dress Daniel in purple clothes.
So they did. They put a gold chain around his neck. And he was made the third
highest ruler in the kingdom.

30That very night Belshazzar, the king of Babylonia, was killed. 31His
kingdom was given to Darius the Mede. Darius was 62 years old.

Daniel Is Thrown Into a Den of Lions

Daniel 6

1It pleased Darius to appoint 120 royal rulers over his entire kingdom. 2He
placed three leaders over them. One of the leaders was Daniel. The royal rulers
were made accountable to the three leaders. Then the king wouldn't lose any of
his wealth. 3Daniel did a better job than the other two leaders or any of the
royal rulers. He was an unusually good and able man. So the king planned to
put him in charge of the whole kingdom.

4But the other two leaders and the royal rulers heard about it. So they looked
for a reason to bring charges against Daniel. They tried to find something
wrong with the way he ran the government. But they weren't able to. They
couldn't find any fault with his work. He could always be trusted. He never did
anything wrong. And he always did what he was supposed to.

5Finally those men said, "It's almost impossible for us to come up with a
reason to bring charges against this man Daniel. If we do, it will have to be in
connection with the law of his God."

6So the two leaders and the royal rulers went as a group to the king. They
said, "King Darius, may you live forever! 7All of the royal leaders, high
officials, royal rulers, advisers and governors want to make a suggestion.
We've agreed that you should give an order. And you should make sure it's
obeyed. Here is the command you should give. King Darius, during the next 30
days don't let any of your people pray to any god or man except to you. If they
do, throw them into the lions' den.

8"Now give the order. Write it down in the laws of the Medes and Persians.
Then it can't be changed." 9So King Darius put the order in writing.

10Daniel found out that the king had signed the order. In spite of that, he did
just as he had always done before. He went home to his upstairs room. Its
windows opened toward Jerusalem. He went to his room three times a day to
pray. He got down on his knees and gave thanks to his God.

11Some of the other royal officials went to where Daniel was staying. They
saw him praying and asking God for help. 12So they went to the king. They

spoke to him about his royal order. They said, “King Darius, didn’t you sign an official order? It said that for the next 30 days none of your people could pray to any god or man except to you. If they did, they would be thrown into the lions’ den.”

The king answered, “The order must still be obeyed. It’s one of the laws of the Medes and Persians. So it can’t be changed.”

13Then they spoke to the king again. They said, “Daniel is one of the prisoners from Judah. He doesn’t pay any attention to you, King Darius. He doesn’t obey the order you put in writing. He still prays to his God three times a day.”

14When the king heard that, he was very upset. He didn’t want Daniel to be harmed in any way. Until sunset, he did everything he could to save him.

15Then the men went as a group to the king. They said to him, “King Darius, remember that no order or law you make can be changed. That’s what the laws of the Medes and Persians require.”

16So the king gave the order. Daniel was brought out and thrown into the lions’ den. The king said to him, “You always serve your God faithfully. So may he save you!”

17A stone was brought and placed over the opening of the den. The king sealed it with his own special ring. He also sealed it with the rings of his nobles. Then nothing could be done to help Daniel.

18The king returned to his palace. He didn’t eat anything that night. He didn’t ask for anything to be brought to him for his enjoyment. And he couldn’t sleep.

19As soon as the sun began to rise, the king got up. He hurried to the lions’ den. 20When he got near it, he called out to Daniel. His voice was filled with great concern. He said, “Daniel! You serve the living God. You always serve him faithfully. So has he been able to save you from the lions?”

21Daniel answered, “My king, may you live forever! 22My God sent his angel. And his angel shut the mouths of the lions. They haven’t hurt me at all. That’s because I haven’t done anything wrong in God’s sight. I’ve never done anything wrong to you either, my king.”

23The king was filled with joy. He ordered his servants to lift Daniel out of the den. So they did. They didn’t see any wounds on him. That’s because he had trusted in his God.

[24]Then the king gave another order. The men who had said bad things about Daniel were brought in. They were thrown into the lions' den. So were their wives and children. Before they hit the bottom of the den, the lions attacked them. And the lions crushed all of their bones.

[25]Then King Darius wrote to the people from every nation and language in the whole world. He said,

"May you have great success!

[26]"I order people in every part of my kingdom to respect and honor Daniel's God.

"He is the living God.
He will live forever.
His kingdom will not be destroyed.
His rule will never end.
[27]He sets people free and saves them.
He does miraculous signs and wonders.
He does them in the heavens and on the earth.
He has saved Daniel
from the power of the lions."

[28]So Daniel had success while Darius was king. Things went well with him during the rule of Cyrus, the Persian.

Daniel Has a Vision About Four Animals

Daniel 7

1It was the first year that Belshazzar was king of Babylon. Daniel had a
dream. He was lying on his bed. In his dream, visions passed through his mind.
He wrote down what he saw.

2Daniel said, “I had a vision at night. I looked up and saw the four winds of
heaven. They were stirring up the Mediterranean Sea. 3Four large animals
came up out of the sea. Each one was different from the others.

4“The first animal was like a lion. It had the wings of an eagle. I watched
until its wings were torn off. Then it was lifted up from the ground. It stood on
two feet like a man. And a man’s heart was given to it.

5“I saw a second animal. It looked like a bear. It was raised up on one of its
sides. And it had three ribs between its teeth. It was told, ‘Get up! Eat meat
until you are full!’

6“After that, I saw another animal. It looked like a leopard. On its back were
four wings like the wings of a bird. It had four heads. And it was given
authority to rule.

7“After that, in my vision I looked up and saw a fourth animal. It was
terrifying and very powerful. It had large iron teeth. It crushed those it attacked
and ate them up. It stomped on anything that was left. It was different from the
other animals. And it had ten horns.

8“I thought about the horns. Then I saw another horn. It was a little one. It
grew up among the other horns. Three of the first horns were pulled up by their
roots to make room for it. The little horn had eyes like the eyes of a man. Its
mouth was always bragging.

9“As I watched,

“thrones were set in place.
The Eternal God took his seat.
His clothes were as white as snow.
The hair on his head was white like wool.

His throne was blazing with fire.
And flames were all around its wheels.
10A river of fire was flowing.
It was coming out from in front of God.
Thousands and thousands of angels served him.
Millions of them stood in front of him.
The court was seated.
And the books were opened.

11"Then I continued to watch because of the way the horn was bragging. I kept looking until the fourth animal was killed. I watched until its body was destroyed. It was thrown into the blazing fire. 12The authority of the other animals had been stripped away from them. But they were allowed to live for a period of time.

13"In my vision I saw One who looked like a son of man. He was coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Eternal God. He was led right up to him. 14And he was given authority, glory and a kingdom. People from every nation and language worshiped him. His authority will last forever. It will not pass away. His kingdom will never be destroyed.

An Angel Tells Daniel What His Dream Means

15"My spirit was troubled. The visions that passed through my mind upset me. 16I approached an angel who was standing there. I asked him what all of those things really meant.

"So he explained everything to me. He told me what it meant. He said, 17'The four large animals stand for four kingdoms. The kingdoms will appear on the earth. 18But the holy people of the Most High God will receive the kingdom. They will possess it forever. It will belong to them for ever and ever.'

19"Then I wanted to know what the fourth animal stood for. It was different from the others. It was the most terrifying of all. It had iron teeth and bronze claws. It crushed those it attacked and ate them up. It stomped on anything that was left.

20"I also wanted to know about the ten horns on its head. And I wanted to know about the other horn that grew up later. It caused three of the ten horns to

fall out. It appeared to be stronger than the others. It had eyes. And its mouth was always bragging.

21“I saw that the horn was at war with God’s people. It was winning the battle over them. 22But then the Eternal God came. He decided in favor of his holy people. So the time came when the kingdom was given to them.

23“Here’s how the angel explained it to me. He said, ‘The fourth animal stands for a fourth kingdom. It will appear on earth. It will be different from the other kingdoms. It will eat up the whole earth. It will stomp on it and crush it. 24The ten horns stand for ten kings. They will come from the fourth kingdom.

“ ‘After them another king will appear. He will be different from the earlier ones. He’ll bring three kings under his control. 25He’ll speak against the Most High God. He’ll treat God’s people badly. He will try to change the times and laws that were given by God. God’s people will be handed over to him for three and a half years.

26“ ‘But the court will open. And the power of that king will be taken away from him. It will be completely destroyed forever. 27Then the authority, power and greatness of all of the kingdoms on earth will be handed over to the people of the Most High God. His kingdom will last forever. Every ruler will worship and obey him.’

28“That’s all I saw. My thoughts deeply troubled me. My face turned pale. But I kept those things to myself.”

Daniel Has a Vision About a Ram and a Goat

Daniel 8

[1]It was the third year of King Belshazzar's rule. After the vision that had already appeared to me, I had another one. [2]In my vision I saw myself in the city of Susa. It has high walls around it. It is in the land of Elam. In the vision I was beside the Ulai Waterway.

[3]I looked up and saw a ram that had two horns. He was standing beside the waterway. His horns were long. One of them was longer than the other. But it grew up later. [4]I watched the ram as he charged toward the west. He also charged toward the north and the south. No animal could stand up against him. Not one of them could save anyone from his power. He did as he pleased. And he became great.

[5]I was thinking about all of that. Then a goat suddenly came from the west. He had a large horn between his eyes. He raced across the whole earth without even touching the ground. [6]He came toward the ram that had the two horns. It was the ram I had seen standing beside the waterway. The goat was burning with anger. He charged at the ram. [7]I saw him attack the ram with mighty force. He struck the ram and broke his two horns. The ram didn't have the power to stand up against him. The goat knocked him to the ground and stomped on him. No one could save the ram from his power.

[8]The goat became very great. But when his power was at its greatest, his large horn was broken off. In its place four large horns grew up toward the four winds of heaven.

[9]Out of one of the four horns came another horn. It started small but became more and more powerful. It grew to the south and to the east and toward the beautiful land of Israel. [10]It grew until it reached the stars in the sky. It threw some of them down to the earth. And it stomped on them.

[11]It set itself up to be as great as God. He is the Prince of the heavenly army. It took the daily sacrifices away from him. And his temple in Jerusalem was brought low. [12]Because many of God's people refused to obey him, they were handed over to the horn. The daily sacrifices were also given over to it. It was

successful no matter what it did. And the true worship of God was thrown down to the ground.

13Then I heard a holy angel speaking. Another holy angel spoke to him. He asked, “How long will it take for the vision to come true? The daily sacrifices will be stopped. Those who refuse to obey God will be destroyed. The temple will be handed over to an enemy. And some of the stars will be stomped on.”

14One of the holy angels said to me, “It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings. Then the temple will be made holy again.”

Gabriel Tells Daniel What His Vision Means

15I was watching the vision. And I was trying to understand it. Then I saw someone who looked like a man. 16I heard a voice from the Ulai Waterway. It called out, “Gabriel, tell Daniel what his vision means.”

17Gabriel came close to where I was standing. I was terrified and fell down flat with my face toward the ground. He said to me, “Son of man, I want you to understand that the vision tells about the time of the end.”

18While he was speaking to me, I was sound asleep. I lay with my face toward the ground. Then he touched me. He raised me to my feet.

19He said, “I am going to tell you what will happen later. It will take place when God is angry. The vision tells about the appointed time of the end. 20You saw a ram that had two horns. It stands for the kings of Media and Persia. 21The goat stands for the king of Greece. The large horn between his eyes is the first king. 22Four horns took its place when it was broken off. They stand for four kingdoms that will come from his nation. But those kingdoms will not be as powerful as his.

23“Toward the end of their rule, those who refuse to obey God will become completely evil. Then another king will appear. He will have a mean-looking face. He will be a master at making clever plans. 24He will become very strong. But he will not get that way by his own power. People will be amazed at the way he destroys everything. He will be successful no matter what he does. He will destroy the mighty men and the holy people.

25“He will tell lies in order to succeed. He will think he is more important than anyone else. When people feel safe, he will destroy many of them. He will

stand up against the greatest Prince of all. Then he will be destroyed. But he will not be killed by human beings.

26“The vision of the evenings and mornings that has been given to you is true. But seal up the vision. It tells about a time far off.”

27I was worn out. I lay sick for several days. Then I got up and returned to my work for the king. The vision bewildered me. I couldn’t understand it.

Daniel Prays to the LORD

Daniel 9

1It was the first year that Darius was king of Babylonia. He was from Media
and was the son of Xerxes. 2In that year I learned from the Scriptures that
Jerusalem would remain destroyed for 70 years. That was what the LORD had
told the prophet Jeremiah. 3So I prayed to the Lord God. I begged him. I made
many appeals to him. I didn't eat anything. I put on black clothes. And I sat
down in ashes.

4I prayed to the LORD my God. I admitted that we had sinned. I said,

"Lord, you are a great and wonderful God. You keep the covenant you made
with all those who love you and obey your commands. You show them your
love.

5"We have sinned and done what is wrong. We have been evil. We have
refused to obey you. We have turned away from your commands and laws. 6We
haven't listened to your servants the prophets. They spoke in your name to our
kings and princes. They also brought your message to all of our people in the
land.

7"Lord, you always do what is right. But we are covered with shame today.
We are the people of Judah and Jerusalem. All of us are Israelites, no matter
where we live. We are now living in many countries. You scattered us among
the nations because we weren't faithful to you. 8LORD, we and our kings and
princes and people are covered with shame. We have sinned against you.

9"You are the Lord our God. You show us your tender love. You forgive us.
But we have turned against you. 10You are the LORD our God. But we haven't
obeyed you. We haven't kept the laws you gave us through your servants the
prophets. 11All of the people of Israel have broken your law and turned away
from it. They have refused to obey you.

"Curses and warnings are written down in the Law of Moses. He was your
servant. Those curses have been poured out on us. That's because we have
sinned against you. 12The warnings you gave us and our rulers have come true.

You have brought great trouble on us. Nothing like what has been done to Jerusalem has ever happened anywhere else on earth.

13“The curses that are written in the Law of Moses have fallen on us. We have received nothing but trouble. You are the LORD our God. But we haven’t asked for your favor. We haven’t turned away from our sins. We’ve refused to pay attention to the laws you gave us. 14LORD, you didn’t hold back from bringing this trouble on us. You always do what is right. But we haven’t obeyed you.

15“Lord our God, you used your mighty hand to bring your people out of Egypt. You made a name for yourself. It is still great to this very day. But we have sinned. We’ve done what is wrong. 16Lord, you saved your people before. So turn your burning anger away from Jerusalem again. After all, it is your city. It’s your holy mountain. All those who live around us laugh at Jerusalem and your people. That’s because we have sinned. Our people before us did evil things too.

17“Our God, hear my prayers. Pay attention to the appeals I make to you. Look with favor on your temple that has been destroyed. Do it for your own honor. 18Our God, please listen to us. The city that belongs to you has been destroyed. Open your eyes and see it. We aren’t asking you to answer our prayers because we are godly. Instead, we’re asking you to do it because you love us so much.

19“Lord, please listen! Lord, please forgive us! Lord, hear our prayers! Take action for your own honor. Our God, please don’t wait. Your city and your people belong to you.”

Gabriel Tells Daniel About Seventy “Weeks”

20I was speaking and praying. I was admitting that I and my people Israel had sinned. I was making my appeal to the LORD my God concerning his holy mountain of Zion.

21While I was still praying, Gabriel came to me. I had seen him in my earlier vision. He flew over to me very quickly. It was about the time when the evening sacrifice is offered. 22He helped me understand. He said, “Daniel, I have come now to give you a good knowledge and understanding of these things. 23You are highly respected. So as soon as you began to pray, the LORD

gave you an answer. I have come to tell you what it is. Here is how you must understand the vision.

24“The LORD has appointed 70 ‘weeks’ for your people and your holy city. During that time, acts against God’s law will be stopped. Sin will come to an end. And the evil things people do will be paid for. Then everyone will always do what is right. Everything that has been made known in visions and prophecies will come true. And the Most Holy Room in the temple will be anointed.

25“Here is what I want you to know and understand. There will be seven ‘weeks.’ Then there will be 62 ‘weeks.’ The seven ‘weeks’ will begin when an order is given to rebuild Jerusalem and make it like new again.

“At the end of the 62 ‘weeks,’ the Anointed King will come. Jerusalem will have streets and a water system when it is rebuilt. But that will be done in times of trouble. 26After the 62 ‘weeks,’ the Anointed King will be cut off. His followers will desert him. And everything he has will be taken away from him. The army of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the temple. The end will come like a flood. War will continue until the end. The LORD has ordered that many places be destroyed.

27“A covenant will be put into effect with many people for one ‘week.’ In the middle of the ‘week’ sacrifices and offerings will come to an end. In one part of the temple a hated thing that destroys will be set up. It will remain until the LORD brings the end he has ordered.”

Daniel Has a Vision About What Will Happen to Israel

Daniel 10

[1]It was the third year that Cyrus, the king of Persia, ruled over Babylonia. At
that time I was living in Babylon. There the people called me Belteshazzar. A
message came to me from God. It was true. It was about a great war. I had a
vision that showed me what it meant.

[2]At that time I was very sad for three weeks. [3]I didn't eat any rich food. No
meat or wine touched my lips. I didn't use any lotions at all until the three
weeks were over.

[4]I was standing on the bank of the great Tigris River. It was the 24th day of
the first month. [5]I looked up and saw a man who was dressed in linen clothes.
A belt that was made out of the finest gold was around his waist. [6]His body
gleamed like chrysolite. His face shone like lightning. His eyes were like
flaming torches. His arms and legs were as bright as polished bronze. And his
voice was like the sound of a large crowd.

[7]I was the only one who saw the vision. The men who were there with me
didn't see it. But they were so terrified that they ran and hid. [8]So I was left
alone as I was watching that great vision. I felt very weak. My face turned as
pale as death. And I was helpless.

[9]Then I heard the man speak. As I listened to him, I fell sound asleep. My
face was toward the ground.

[10]A hand touched me. It pulled me up on my hands and knees. I began to
tremble with fear. [11]The man said, "Daniel, you are highly respected. Think
carefully about what I am going to say to you. And stand up. God has sent me
to you." When he said that, I trembled as I stood up.

[12]He continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. You decided to get more
understanding. You went without food as you worshiped your God. Since the
first day you did those things, your words were heard. I have come to give you
an answer. [13]But the prince of Persia opposed me for 21 days. Then Michael
came to help me. He is one of the leaders of the angels. He helped me win the

battle over the king of Persia.

14“Now I have come to explain the vision to you. I will tell you what will happen to your people. The vision shows what will take place in days to come.”

15While he was telling me those things, I bowed with my face toward the ground. I wasn’t able to speak. 16Then someone who looked like a man touched my lips. I opened my mouth. I began to speak to the one who was standing in front of me. I said, “My master, I’m greatly troubled because of the vision I’ve seen. And I’m helpless. 17How can I talk with you? I feel very weak. In fact, I can hardly breathe.”

18The one who looked like a man touched me again. He gave me strength. 19“Do not be afraid,” he said. “You are highly respected. May peace be with you! Be strong now. Be strong.”

When he spoke to me, I became stronger. I said, “Speak, my master. You have given me strength.”

20So he said, “Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia. When I go, the prince of Greece will come. 21But first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. No one gives me any help against those princes except Michael. He is your leader.

Daniel 11

[1]I stepped forward to help him and keep him safe. It was the first year that Darius, the Mede, was king.

The Kings of Egypt and Syria

[2]"Now then, what I'm about to tell you is true. Three more kings will appear in Persia. Then a fourth one will rule. He will be much richer than all of the others. He will use his wealth to gain power. And he will stir up everyone against the kingdom of Greece.

[3]"After him, a mighty king will appear. He will rule with great power. He will do as he pleases. [4]Not long after his rule ends, his kingdom will be broken up. It will be divided up into four parts. His children will not receive it when he dies. And it will not be as strong as his kingdom. It will be pulled up by the roots. And it will be given to others.

[5]"The king of Egypt will become strong. But one of his commanders will become even stronger. He will rule over his own kingdom with great power. [6]After many years, the two kingdoms will join forces. The daughter of the next king of Egypt will go to the king of Syria. She will join forces with him. But she will not hold on to her power. And he and his power will not last either. In those days she and her attendants will be put to death. Her father will die. So will the one who helped her.

[7]"Someone from her family line will take her place. He will attack the army of the next king of Syria. Then he will enter his fort. He will fight against that army and win. [8]He will take the metal statues of their gods. He will also take away their priceless articles of silver and gold. He will carry everything off to Egypt. For many years he will leave the king of Syria alone.

[9]"That king will march into territory that was controlled by Egypt. Then he will return to his own country. [10]His sons will prepare for war. They will gather a huge army. It will sweep along like a mighty flood. It will fight its way as far as one of the Egyptian forts.

[11]"Another king of Egypt will march out with mighty force. He will fight

against the next king of Syria. That king will gather a huge army. But it will lose the battle. 12His soldiers will be carried off. Then the king of Egypt will be filled with pride. He will kill many thousands of soldiers. But his success will not last.

13"The king of Syria will bring another army together. It will be larger than the first one. After several years, he will march out with a huge army. It will have everything it needs for battle.

14"In those times many people will rise up against the next king of Egypt. Lawless men in your own nation will refuse to obey him. That is what you saw in your vision. But they will not succeed.

15"Then the king of Syria will go to a certain city that has high walls around it. He will build ramps against them. And he will capture that city. The forces of Egypt will not have the power to stop him. Even their best troops will not be strong enough to stand up against him. 16He will do anything he wants to. No one will be able to stand up against him. He will take over the beautiful land of Israel. And he will have the power to destroy it.

17"He will decide to come with the might of his entire kingdom. He will join forces with the king of Egypt. And he will give him his daughter to become his wife. He will do it in order to take control of Egypt. But his plans will not succeed. They will not help him.

18"Then he will turn his attention to the lands along the Mediterranean coast. He will take over many of them. But a commander will put an end to his proud actions. He will turn his pride back on him.

19"After that, the king of Syria will return to the forts in his own country. But he will trip and fall. And he will never be seen again.

20"The next king after him will send someone out to collect taxes. The taxes will help maintain the glory of his kingdom. But in a few years the king will be destroyed. It will not happen because someone becomes angry with him or kills him in battle.

21"Another king will take his place. Many people will hate him. He will not be honored as a king should be. He will lead an army into the kingdom when its people feel secure. He will make clever plans to capture it. 22Then he will sweep away a huge army. The army and a prince of the covenant will be destroyed.

23"The king of Syria will make an agreement with that prince. But then he

will not keep his word. He will rise to power with the help of only a few people. [24]When the people in the richest areas feel secure, he will attack them. He will do what the kings before him could not do. And he will reward his followers with the goods and wealth he takes. He will make clever plans to take over the forts. But that will last for only a short time.

[25]"He will stir up his strength and courage. With a large army he will go to war against the next king of Egypt. That king will fight against him with a huge and very powerful army. But he will not be able to stand up against him. So the plans of the king of Syria will succeed. [26]The trusted advisers of the king of Egypt will try to destroy him. His army will be swept away. Many of his soldiers will be wounded or killed.

[27]"The kings of Syria and Egypt will sit at the same table. But in their hearts they will plan to do what is evil. And they will tell lies to each other. But it will not do them any good. God will put an end to their plans at his appointed time.

[28]"The king of Syria will return to his own country. He will go back there with great wealth. But he will make evil plans against the holy temple in Jerusalem. He will do a lot of harm to the temple and the people who worship there. Then he will return to his own country.

[29]"At God's appointed time, the king of Syria will march south again. But this time things will turn out differently. [30]Roman ships will oppose him. He will lose hope. Then he will turn back. He will take out his anger against the holy temple. And he will show favor to the Jews who desert it.

[31]"His army will come and make the temple area 'unclean.' They will put a stop to the daily sacrifices. Then they will set up a hated thing that destroys. [32]He will pretend to praise those who have broken the covenant. He will lead them to do what is evil. But the people who know their God will firmly oppose him.

[33]"Those who are wise will teach many others. But for a while, some of the wise will be killed with swords. Others will be burned to death. Still others will be made prisoners. Or they will be robbed of everything they have. [34]When that happens, they will receive a little help. Many who are not honest will join them.

[35]"So some of the wise people will suffer. They will be made pure in the fire. They will be made spotless until the time of the end. It will still come at God's appointed time.

A King Will Honor Himself

36"A certain king will do as he pleases. He will honor himself. He will put himself above every god. He will say things that have never been heard before against the greatest God of all. He will have success until God is not angry anymore. What God has decided to do must take place.

37"The king will not show any respect for the gods his people have always worshiped. He will not respect the one women long for. He will not have respect for any god. Instead, he will put himself above all of them. 38In place of them, he will worship a god of war. He will honor a god his people have not had anything to do with before. He will give gold and silver to that god. He will bring jewels and expensive gifts to it.

39"He will attack the strongest forts. A new god will help him do it. He will greatly honor those who recognize him as their leader. He will make them rulers over many people. And he will give them land as a reward.

40"A king in the south will go to war against him. It will happen at the time of the end. The king who will honor himself will rush out against him. He will come with chariots and horsemen. He will attack with a lot of ships. He will lead his army into many countries. He will sweep through them like a flood.

41"He will also march into the beautiful land of Israel. Many countries will fall. But Edom, Moab and the leaders of Ammon will be saved from his mighty hand. 42His power will reach out into many countries. Even Egypt will not escape. 43He will gain control of all of Egypt's riches. He will take their gold and silver treasures. The people of Libya and Cush will be under his control.

44"But reports from the east and the north will terrify him. He will burn with anger and march out to destroy many people and wipe them out. 45He will set up his royal tents. He will put them between the Mediterranean Sea and the beautiful holy mountain of Zion. But his end will come. And no one will help him.

The Time of the End

Daniel 12

1 “At that time Michael will appear. He is the great leader of the angels who
guards your people. There will be a time of terrible suffering. Things will be
worse than at any time since nations began. But at that time of suffering your
people will be saved. Their names are written in the Book of Life.

2 “Huge numbers of people who lie dead in their graves will wake up. Some
will rise up to life that will never end. Others will rise up to shame that will
never end. 3 Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the sky. Those
who lead many others to do what is right will be like the stars for ever and
ever.

4 “But I want you to roll up the scroll, Daniel. Seal it until the time of the end.
Many people will go here and there to increase their knowledge.”

5 Then I looked up and saw two other angels. One was on this side of the
Tigris River. And one was on the other side. 6 The man who was dressed in
linen was above the waters of the river. One of the angels said to him, “How
long will it be before these amazing things come true?”

7 The man raised both hands toward heaven. I heard him take an oath in the
name of the One who lives forever. He answered me, “Three and a half years.
Then the power of the holy people will be broken at last. And all of those
things will come true.”

8 I heard what he said. But I didn’t understand it. So I asked, “My master,
what will come of all of this?”

9 He answered, “Go on your way, Daniel. The scroll is rolled up. It is sealed
until the time of the end. 10 Many people will be made pure in the fire. They
will be made spotless. But sinful people will continue to be evil. Not one sinful
person will understand. But those who are wise will.

11 “The daily sacrifices will be stopped. And the hated thing that destroys will

be set up. After that, there will be 1,290 days. [12]Blessed are those who wait for the 1,335 days and reach the end of them.

[13]“Daniel, go on your way until the end. Your body will rest in the grave. Then at the end of the days you will rise from the dead. And you will receive what God has appointed for you.”

Hosea

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Hosea 1

[1]A message came to Hosea from the LORD. He was the son of Beeri. The message came while Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah were kings of Judah. It also came while Jeroboam was king of Israel. He was the son of Jehoash. Here is what Hosea said.

Hosea's Wife and Children

[2]The LORD began to speak through me. He said to me, "Go. Get married to a woman who will commit adultery. Take as your own the children who will be born as a result of her adultery. Marry her because the people of the land are guilty of the worst kind of adultery. They have not been faithful to me." [3]So I married Gomer. She was the daughter of Diblaim. Gomer became pregnant. And she had a son by me.

[4]Then the LORD said to me, "Name him Jezreel. That is because I will soon punish Jehu's royal family. He killed many people at the city of Jezreel. So I will put an end to the kingdom of Israel. [5]At that time I will break their military power. It will happen in the Valley of Jezreel."

[6]Gomer became pregnant again. She had a daughter. Then the LORD said to me, "Name her Lo-Ruhamah. That is because I will no longer show love to the people of Israel. I will not forgive them anymore. [7]But I will show love to the people of Judah. And I will save them. I will not use bows or swords or other weapons of war to do it. I will not save them by using horses and horsemen either. Instead, I will use my own power to save them. I am the LORD their God."

[8]Later, Gomer stopped nursing Lo-Ruhamah. After that, she had another son. [9]Then the LORD said, "Name him Lo-Ammi. That is because Israel is no longer my people. And I am no longer their God.

[10]"But the time will come when the people of Israel will be like the sand on the seashore. It can't be measured or counted. Now it is said about them, 'You are not my people.' But at that time they will be called 'children of the living God.' [11]The people of Judah and Israel will be brought together again. They

will appoint one leader. They will increase their numbers in the land. And Jezreel’s day will be great. That is because I will plant Israel in the land again.

Hosea 2

[1]“People of Israel, call your brothers My People. And call your sisters My Loved Ones.”

Israel Is Punished and Brought Back to the LORD

[2]I said to my children,

“Talk things over with your mother.
Talk to her.
She isn’t acting like a wife to me anymore.
She no longer treats me as her husband.
Tell her to stop looking and acting like a prostitute.
Tell her not to let her lovers
lie on her breasts anymore.
[3]If she doesn’t stop it, I will strip her naked.
I’ll make her as bare as she was on the day she was born.
I’ll make her like a desert.
She will become like dry land.
And I’ll let her die of thirst.”

[4]I won’t show my love to Gomer’s children.
They are the children of other men.
[5]Their mother hasn’t been faithful to me.
She who became pregnant with them
has brought shame on herself.
She said, “I will chase after my lovers.
They give me my food and water.
They provide me with wool and linen.
They give me olive oil and wine.”
[6]So I will block her path with bushes that have thorns.
I’ll build a wall around her.
Then she can’t go to her lovers.
[7]She will still chase after her lovers.
But she won’t catch them.
She’ll look for them.

But she won’t find them.
Then she’ll say,
“I’ll go back to my husband.
That’s where I was at first.
I was better off then than I am now.”
8She wouldn’t admit that I was the one
who gave her everything she had.
I provided her with grain, olive oil and fresh wine.
I gave her plenty of silver and gold.
But she used it to make statues of Baal.

9So I will take away my grain when it gets ripe.
I’ll take my fresh wine when it’s ready.
I’ll take back my wool and my linen.
I gave them to her to cover her naked body.
10So now I’ll uncover her body.
All of her lovers will see it.
No one can stop me from punishing her.
11I will put a stop to the special times she celebrates.
I’ll bring an end to the feasts she celebrates each year.
I’ll stop her New Moon Feasts and her Sabbath days.
I’ll bring all of her appointed feasts to an end.
12I will destroy her vines and her fig trees.
She said they were her pay from her lovers.
I’ll make them like clumps of bushes and weeds.
Wild animals will eat them up.

13The LORD announces,

“Israel burned incense to the gods
that were named after Baal.
I will punish her
for all of the times she did that.
She decorated herself with rings and jewelry.
Then she went after her lovers.
But she forgot all about me.

14“So now I am going to draw her back to me.
I will lead her into the desert.
There I will speak tenderly to her.

15 I will give her back her vineyards.
I will make the Valley of Achor a door of hope for her.
Then she will love me, as she did when she was young.
She will love me just as she did
when she came up out of Egypt.

16 "A new day is coming," announces the LORD.
"Israel will call me My Husband.
She will no longer call me My Master.
17 She will no longer speak about the gods
that are named after Baal.
She will not pray to them for help anymore.
18 At that time I will make a covenant
for the good of my people.
I will make it with the wild animals
and the birds of the air.
It will also be made with the creatures
that move on the ground.
I will remove bows and swords
and other weapons of war from the land.
Then my people can lie down in safety.
19 I will make Israel my own.
She will belong to me forever.
I will do to her what is right and fair.
I will love her tenderly.
20 I will be faithful to her.
And she will recognize me as the LORD.

21 "So at that time I will answer her,"
announces the LORD.
"I will command the skies
to send rain on the earth.
22 Then the earth will produce grain, olive oil and fresh wine.
And Israel will be called Jezreel.
That is because I will answer her prayers.
23 I will plant her in the land for myself.
I will show my love to the one I called Not My Loved One.
I will say, 'You are my people'
to those who were called Not My People.
And they will say, 'You are my God.' "

Hosea Brings His Wife Back to Himself

Hosea 3

[1]The LORD said to me, “Go. Show your love to your wife again. She is loved by another man. And she has committed adultery. But I want you to love her just as I love the people of Israel. They turn to other gods. And they love to offer raisin cakes to Baal and eat them. In spite of that, I love my people.”

[2]So I bought Gomer for six ounces of silver and about ten bushels of barley. [3]Then I told her, “You must wait for me for a long time. You must not be a prostitute. You must not have sex with any man. And I will wait for you.”

[4]So the people of Israel will live for a long time without a king or prince. They won’t have sacrifices or sacred stones. They won’t have sacred linen aprons or statues of family gods. [5]After that, the people of Israel will return to the LORD their God. They will look to him and to a king from the family line of David. In the last days, they will tremble with fear as they come to the LORD. And they will receive his full blessing.

The LORD Brings Charges Against Israel

Hosea 4

[1]People of Israel, listen to the LORD's message.
He is bringing charges
against you who live in Israel.
He says, "There is no faithfulness
or love in the land.
No one recognizes me as God.
[2]People call down curses on others.
They tell lies and commit murder.
They steal and commit adultery.
They break all of my laws.
They keep on spilling the blood of others.
[3]That is why the land is drying up.
All those who live in it
are getting weaker and weaker.
The wild animals and the birds of the air are dying.
So are the fish in the ocean.

[4]"But you priests should not blame the people.
You should not find fault with one another.
After all, your people
could also bring charges against you.
[5]You trip and fall day and night.
And the prophets fall down along with you.
So I will destroy your nation.
She is the one who gave birth to you.
[6]My people are destroyed
because they do not know me.

"You priests have refused to obey me.
So I will refuse to accept you as my priests.
You have not paid any attention to my law.
So I will not let your children be my priests.
[7]The more priests there are,

the more they sin against me.
They have traded their glorious God for that shameful god Baal.
8 They live off the sins of my people.
And they want them to keep on sinning.
9 So here is what I will do.
I will punish people and priests alike.
I will judge them because of their sinful lives.
I will pay them back
for the evil things they have done.

10 "My people will eat.
But they will not have enough.
They will have sex with prostitutes.
But they will not have any children.
That is because they have deserted me.
11 They have sex with prostitutes.
They drink old wine and fresh wine.
When they do those things,
it destroys their ability to understand.
12 They ask a wooden statue of a god for advice.
They expect to get answers from a stick of wood.
They act like prostitutes.
That leads them down the wrong path.
I am their God.
But they are not faithful to me.
13 They offer sacrifices on the mountaintops.
They burn offerings on the hills.
They worship under oak, poplar and terebinth trees.
The trees provide plenty of shade.
So your daughters become prostitutes.
And your daughters-in-law commit adultery.

14 "I will not punish your daughters
when they become prostitutes.
I will not judge your daughters-in-law
when they commit adultery.
After all, the men themselves have sex with sinful women.
They offer sacrifices where temple prostitutes earn their living.
People who can't understand will be destroyed!

15 "Israel, you are not faithful to me.

But I do not want Judah to become guilty too.

"My people, do not go to Gilgal to offer sacrifices.
Do not go up to Bethel to worship other gods.
Do not take an oath and say,
'You can be sure that the LORD is alive.'
16The people of Israel are stubborn.
They are as stubborn as a young cow.
So how can I take care of them
like lambs in a meadow?
17The people of Ephraim have joined themselves to other gods.
And nothing can be done to help them.
18They continue to be unfaithful to me
even when their drinks are gone.
And their rulers love to do shameful things.
19A windstorm will blow all of them away.
And their sacrifices will bring shame on them.

THE LORD JUDGES ISRAEL

Hosea 5

[1]“Listen to me, you priests!
Pay attention, people of Israel!
Listen, you members of the royal family!
Here is my decision against you.
You have been like a trap at Mizpah.
You have been like a net spread out on Mount Tabor.
[2]You refuse to obey me.
You offer sacrifices to other gods.
So I will punish all of you.
[3]People of Ephraim, I know all about you.
What you are doing is not hidden from me.
Now you have joined yourselves to other gods.
You have made yourselves ‘unclean.’

[4]“You can’t return to me
because you have done so many evil things.
In your hearts you long to act like prostitutes.
You do not recognize me as the LORD.
[5]Israel, your pride witnesses that you are guilty.
People of Ephraim, you trip and fall because you have sinned.
Judah, you fall down along with them.
[6]Israel, you will come to worship me.
You will bring your animals to offer as sacrifices.
But you will not find me.
I have turned away from you.
[7]You are not faithful to me.
Your children do not belong to me.
The way you act at your New Moon Feasts
will destroy you and your fields.

[8]“My people, blow trumpets in Gibeah!
Blow horns in Ramah!
Shout the battle cry in Bethel!

Say to Benjamin, ‘The Assyrian army is coming!’
9 People of Ephraim, you will be completely destroyed
when it is time for me to punish you.
You can be sure it will happen.
I am announcing it among your tribes.
10 Judah, your leaders have stolen some land.
They have moved their borders farther north.
So I will pour out my anger on you
like a flood of water.
11 Ephraim, you will soon be crushed.
The Assyrians will stomp all over you.
It will happen because you have made up your minds
to chase after other gods.
12 Ephraim, I will be like a moth to you.
Judah, I will cause you to rot away.

13 “Ephraim, you saw how sick you were.
Judah, you saw that you were wounded.
Ephraim, you turned to Assyria for help.
You sent gifts to the great King Tiglath-Pileser.
But he is not able to make you well.
He can’t heal your wounds.
14 Ephraim, I will be like a lion to you.
Judah, I will attack you like a powerful lion.
I will tear you to pieces.
I will drag you off.
Then I will leave you.
No one will be able to save you.
15 I will go back to my home in heaven.
I will stay there until you admit you have sinned.
Then you will turn to me.
You will suffer so much
that you will really want me to help you.”

Israel Refuses to Turn Away From Their Sins

Hosea 6

[1]The people say, “Come.
Let us return to the LORD.
He has torn us to pieces.
But he will heal us.
He has wounded us.
But he’ll bandage our wounds.
[2]After two days he will give us new life.
On the third day he’ll make us like new again.
Then we will enjoy his blessing.
[3]Let’s recognize him as the LORD.
Let’s keep trying to really know him.
You can be sure the sun will rise.
And you can be just as sure the LORD will appear.
He will come to renew us like the winter rains.
He will be like the spring rains that water the earth.”

[4]The LORD says, “Ephraim, what can I do with you?
And what can I do with you, Judah?
Your love for me vanishes like the morning mist.
It soon disappears like the early dew.
[5]So I used the words of my prophets to cut you in pieces.
I used my words to put you to death.
When I judged you, I struck you like lightning.
[6]I want mercy and not sacrifice.
I want you to recognize me as God
instead of bringing me burnt offerings.
[7]Just as Adam disobeyed me,
you have broken the covenant I made with you.
You were not faithful to me in the land I gave you.
[8]Ramoth Gilead is a city where sinful people live.
It is stained with footprints of blood.
[9]On the road to Shechem, groups of priests act like robbers.
They hide and wait to attack people.

They murder them
and commit other shameful crimes.
10 People of Israel, I have seen
a horrible thing in your land.
People of Ephraim, you have joined yourselves to other gods.
You have made yourselves ‘unclean.’

11 “People of Judah, I have appointed a time
for you to be destroyed.

“My people, I would like to bless you
with great success again.”

Hosea 7

[1]The LORD says,

"I would like to heal Israel.
But when I try to, Ephraim's sins
are brought out into the open.
The crimes of Samaria
are made known to everyone.
The people tell lies.
They break into houses and steal.
They rob others in the streets.
[2]But they do not realize
that I remember all of the evil things they do.
Their sins pile up and cover them.
I am always aware of those sins.

[3]"Their evil conduct even makes the king glad.
Their lies make the princes happy.
[4]But all of the people are unfaithful to the king.
Their anger against him burns
like the coals in an oven.
The baker does not even need to stir up the fire
until the dough is ready."

[5]On special days to honor our king,
the princes get drunk with wine.
And the king enjoys the party.
He joins hands with those
who pretend to be faithful to him.
[6]Their hearts are as hot as an oven.
They make evil plans to get rid of him.
Their anger burns like a slow fire all night.
In the morning it blazes out like a flaming fire.
[7]All of them are as hot as an oven.
They destroy their rulers.
All of their kings fall from power.

But none of them calls on the LORD for help.

8 The people of Ephraim mix with the nations.
They are like a flat cake
that is baked on only one side.
9 People from other lands make them weaker and weaker.
But they don't realize it.
Their hair is becoming gray.
But they don't even notice it.
10 The pride of Israel witnesses that they are guilty.
But in spite of everything,
they don't return to the LORD their God.
They don't go to him for help.

11 The LORD says,

"The people of Ephraim are like a dove.
They are easily tricked.
They do not have any sense at all.
First they call out to Egypt for help.
Then they turn to Assyria.
12 When they send for help,
I will throw my net over them.
I will capture them like birds of the air.
I will punish them,
just as I warned them I would.
13 How terrible it will be for them!
They have wandered away from me.
So they will be destroyed.
They have refused to obey me.
I long to save them.
But they tell lies about me.
14 They do not cry out to me from their hearts.
Instead, they just lie on their beds and sob.
They cut themselves when they pray to Baal
for grain and fresh wine.
So they turn away from me.
15 I brought them up and made them strong.
But they make evil plans against me.
16 I am the Most High God. But they do not turn to me.

They are like a bow that does not shoot straight.
Their leaders will be killed with swords.
They will die because they have spoken too proudly.
The people of Egypt
will make fun of them.”

Israel Will Harvest a Windstorm

Hosea 8

[1]The LORD said to me,

"Put a trumpet to your lips!
Give a warning to my people!
Assyria is like an eagle.
It is ready to attack my land.
My people have broken the covenant I made with them.
They have refused to obey my law.
[2]Israel shouts to me,
'We recognize you as our God!'
[3]But they have turned away from what is good.
So an enemy will chase them.
[4]My people appoint kings I do not want.
They choose princes without my permission.
They use their silver and gold
to make statues of gods.
That is how they destroy themselves."
[5]The LORD says, "People of Samaria,
throw out your god that looks like a calf!
My anger burns against you.
How long will it be until you are able
to remain faithful to me?
[6]Your calf is not God.
A skilled worker from Israel made it.
But it will be broken to pieces."

[7]The LORD says,

"Worshiping other gods is like worshiping the wind.
It is like planting worthless seeds.
Assyria is like a windstorm.

That is all my people will harvest.
There are no heads of grain
on the stems that will come up.
So they will not produce any flour.
Even if they did produce grain,
the Assyrians would eat all of it up.
8So the people of Israel are swallowed up.
Now they are like a worthless pot to me
among the nations.
9They have gone up to Assyria for help.
They are like a wild donkey
that wanders around by itself.
Ephraim's people have sold themselves
to their Assyrian lovers.
10They have sold themselves to the nations
to get their help.
But now I will gather them together.
They will get weaker and weaker.
The mighty kings of Assyria will crush them.

11"Ephraim built many altars where they sacrificed
sin offerings to other gods.
So their altars have become
places where they commit sin.
12I wrote down many things in my law for their good.
But they considered my laws as something strange.
13They offer sacrifices to me.
They eat the meat of the animals they bring.
But I am not pleased with any of that.
I will remember the evil things they have done.
I will punish them for their sins.
And they will return to Egypt.
14Israel has forgotten the One who made them.
They have built palaces for themselves.
Judah has built forts in many towns.
But I will send fire down on their cities.
It will burn up their forts."

Israel Will Be Punished

Hosea 9

[1]Israel, don't be joyful.
Don't be glad as the other nations are.
You haven't been faithful to your God.
You love to get paid for being a prostitute.
Your pay is the grain at every threshing floor.
[2]But soon there won't be any grain or wine to feed you.
There won't even be any fresh wine.
[3]You won't remain in the LORD's land.
Ephraim, you will return to Egypt.
You will eat "unclean" food in Assyria.
[4]You won't pour out wine offerings to the LORD.
Your sacrifices won't please him.
They'll be like the bread people eat when someone dies.
Everyone who eats those sacrifices will be "unclean."
They themselves will have to eat that kind of food.
They can't bring it into the LORD's temple.

[5]What will you do when your appointed feasts come?
What will you do on the LORD's special days?
[6]Some of you will escape without being destroyed.
But you will die in Egypt.
Your bodies will be buried at Memphis.
Weeds will cover your treasures of silver.
Thorns will grow up in your tents.
[7]The time when God will punish you is coming.
The day when he will judge you is near.
I want you to know that.
You have committed many sins.
And you hate me very much.
That's why you think I'm foolish.
You think I'm crazy.
But the LORD speaks through me.
[8]People of Ephraim, I'm a true prophet.

My God is warning you through me.
But you set traps for me everywhere I go.
You hate me so much
you even wait for me in God's house.
9 You have sunk very deep into sin,
just as our people did at Gibeah long ago.
God will remember the evil things you have done.
He will punish you for your sins.

10 The LORD says,

"When I first found Israel,
it was like finding grapes in the desert.
When I saw your people long ago,
it was like seeing the early fruit on a fig tree.
But then they went to Baal Peor.
There they gave themselves to that shameful god Baal.
They became as evil as the god they loved.
11 Ephraim's greatness and glory will be gone.
It will fly away like a bird.
Women will no longer have children.
They will not be able to get pregnant.
12 But suppose they do have children.
Then I will kill every one of them.
How terrible it will be for them
when I turn away from them!"

13 Tyre is planted in a pleasant place.
And so is Ephraim.
But the Assyrians will kill
Ephraim's children.
14 LORD, what should you do to Ephraim's people?
Give them women whose babies die before they are born.
Give them women whose breasts don't have any milk.

15 The LORD says,

"My people did many evil things in Gilgal.
That is why I hated them there.

They committed many sins.
So I will drive them out of my land.
I will not love them anymore.
All of their leaders refuse to obey me.
16 Ephraim is like a worthless plant.
Its roots are dried up.
It does not produce any fruit.
Suppose Ephraim's people have children.
Then I will kill the children they love so much."

17 My God will turn his back on his people.
They have not obeyed him.
So they will wander among other nations.

Hosea 10

[1]Israel was like a spreading vine.
They produced fruit for themselves.
As they grew more fruit,
they built more altars.
As their land became richer,
they made the sacred stones they worshiped more beautiful.
[2]Their hearts are dishonest.
So now they must pay for their sins.
The LORD will tear their altars down.
He'll destroy their sacred stones.

[3]Then they'll say, "We don't have a king.
That's because we didn't have
any respect for the LORD.
But suppose we did have a king.
What could he do for us?"
[4]They make a lot of promises.
They make agreements among themselves.
They take oaths they don't mean to keep.
So court cases spring up
like poisonous weeds in a plowed field.
[5]The people who live in Samaria are filled with fear.
They are afraid their god that looks like a calf
will be carried off from Bethel.
They will sob over it.
So will the priests who lead them to worship it.
The priests were full of joy
because their statue was so glorious.
But it will be captured
and taken far away from them.
[6]It will be carried off to Assyria.
The people of Ephraim will be forced
to give it to the great king.
They will be dishonored.
Israel will be ashamed
that all they have left to worship is a wooden god.

[7]Samaria's king will be carried off.
He will be like a twig floating away in a river.
[8]The high places where Israel worshiped other gods
will be destroyed.
That's where they sinned against the LORD.
Thorns and weeds will grow up there.
They will cover the altars.
Then the people will say to the mountains, "Cover us!"
They'll say to the hills, "Fall on us!"

[9]The LORD says,

"Israel, you have done evil things
ever since your people sinned at Gibeah long ago.
And you are still doing what is evil.
War caught up
with those who sinned at Gibeah.
[10]So I will punish you when I want to.
Nations will gather together to fight against you.
They will put you in chains
because you have committed so many sins.
[11]Ephraim, you were like a well-trained young cow.
It loved to thresh grain.
I spared its pretty neck
from pulling heavy loads.
But now I will make you do hard work.
Judah also must plow.
So all of the people of Jacob
must break up the ground.
[12]Your hearts are as hard as a field
that has not been plowed.
If you change your ways,
you will produce good crops.
So plant the seeds of doing what is right.
Then you will harvest the fruit of your faithful love.
It is time to turn to me.
When you do, I will come
and shower my blessings on you.
[13]But you have planted the seeds of doing what is wrong.
So you have harvested the fruit of your evil conduct.

You have had to eat the fruit of your lies.
You have trusted in your own strength.
You have depended on your many soldiers.
14But the roar of battle will come against you.
All of your forts will be completely destroyed.
It will happen just as Shalman
destroyed Beth Arbel in a battle.
Mothers and their children
were smashed on the ground.
15People of Bethel, that will happen to you.
You have committed far too many sins.
When the time for me to punish you comes,
your king will be completely destroyed.”

The LORD Loves Israel

Hosea 11

[1]The LORD continues,

"When Israel was a young nation, I loved them.
I chose to bring my son out of Egypt.
[2]But the more I called out to Israel,
the further they went away from me.
They brought sacrifices to the statues of the gods
that were named after Baal.
And they burned incense to them.
[3]I taught Israel to walk.
I took them up in my arms.
But they did not realize
I was the one who took care of them.
[4]I led them with kindness and love.
I did not lead them with ropes.
I lifted the heavy loads from their shoulders.
I bent down and fed them.

[5]"But they refuse to turn away from their sins.
So they will return to Egypt.
And Assyria will rule over them.
[6]Swords will flash in their cities.
The heavy metal bars on their gates will be destroyed.
Their plans will come to an end.
[7]My people have made up their minds
to turn away from me.
Even if they call out to me,
I will certainly not honor them.
I am the Most High God."

[8]The LORD continues,

“People of Ephraim, how can I give you up?
Israel, how can I hand you over to your enemies?
Can I destroy you as I did the town of Admah?
Can I treat you like Zeboiim?
My heart is stirred inside me.
It is filled with pity for you.
[9]My anger will not burn against you anymore.
I will not completely destroy you.
After all, I am God.
I am not a mere man.
I am the Holy One among you.
My burning anger will not come against you.
[10]I will roar like a lion against my enemies.
You will follow me.
When I roar, my children will come home trembling with fear.
You will return from the west.
[11]You will come trembling like birds from Egypt.
You will return like doves from Assyria.
I will settle you again in your homes,”
announces the LORD.

Israel Has Sinned

[12]The people of Ephraim tell nothing but lies.
Israel has not been honest with me.
And Judah continues to wander away from God.
They have deserted the faithful Holy One.

Hosea 12

[1]The people of Ephraim look to others for help.
It’s like chasing the wind.
The wind they keep chasing
is hot and dry.
They tell more and more lies.
They are always hurting others.
They make a peace treaty with Assyria.
They send olive oil to Egypt to get help.
[2]The LORD is bringing charges against Judah.
He will punish Jacob’s people
because of how they act.
He’ll pay them back
for the evil things they’ve done.
[3]Even before Jacob was born,
he was holding on to his brother’s heel.
When he became a man,
he struggled with God.
[4]At Peniel he struggled with the angel and won.
He sobbed and begged for his blessing.
God also met with him at Bethel.
He talked with him there.
[5]He is the LORD God who rules over all.
He wants us to remember
that his name is The LORD.
[6]People of Jacob, you must return to your God.
You must hold on to love and do what is fair.
You must trust in your God always.

[7]You are like a trader who uses dishonest scales.
You love to cheat others.
[8]People of Ephraim, you brag,
“We are very rich.
We’ve become wealthy.
And no one can prove we sinned
to gain all of this wealth.”

9 The LORD says,

"I am the LORD your God.
I brought you out of Egypt.
But I will make you live in tents again.
That is what you did when you celebrated
the Feast of Booths in the desert.
10 I spoke to the prophets.
They saw many visions.
I gave you warnings through them."

11 The people of Gilead are evil!
They aren't worth anything!
Gilgal's people sacrifice bulls to other gods.
Their altars will become like piles of stones
on a plowed field.
12 Jacob ran away to the country of Aram.
There Israel served Laban to get a wife.
He took care of sheep to pay for her.
13 The prophet Moses brought Israel up from Egypt.
The LORD used him to take care of them.
14 But Ephraim's people have made the LORD very angry.
Their Lord will hold them accountable for the blood they've spilled.
He'll pay them back for the shameful things they've done.

The LORD Is Angry With Israel

Hosea 13

[1]When the tribe of Ephraim spoke,
the other tribes trembled with fear.
Ephraim was honored in Israel.
But its people sinned by worshiping Baal.
So they were as good as dead.
[2]Now they sin more and more.
They use their silver
to make statues of gods for themselves.
The statues come from their own clever ideas.
Skilled workers make all of them.
The people pray to those gods.
They offer human sacrifices to them.
They kiss the gods that look like calves.
[3]So those people will vanish like the morning mist.
They will soon disappear like the early dew.
They will be like straw
that the wind blows around on a threshing floor.
They will be like smoke
that escapes through a window.

[4]The LORD says,

"People of Israel, I am the LORD your God.
I brought you out of Egypt.
You must not recognize any God but me.
You must not have any Savior except me.
[5]I took care of you in the desert.
It was a land of burning heat.
[6]I fed you until you were satisfied.
Then you became proud.
You forgot all about me.
[7]So I will leap on you like a lion.

I will hide and wait
beside the road like a leopard.
8 I will attack you like a bear
that is robbed of her cubs.
I will rip you wide open.
Like a lion I will eat you up.
Like a wild animal I will tear you apart.

9 "Israel, you will be destroyed.
I helped you. But you turned against me.
10 Where is your king?
Wasn't he supposed to save you?
Where are the rulers in all of your towns?
You said, 'Give us a king and princes.'
11 So I became angry and gave you a king.
Then I took him away from you.
12 Ephraim, your guilt is piling up.
I am keeping a record of all of your sins.
13 You will suffer pain like a woman having a baby.
You are like a foolish child.
It is time for you to be born.
But you refuse to come out of your mother's body.

14 "I will set you free from the power of the grave.
I will save you from death.
Death, where are your plagues?
Grave, where is your power to destroy?

"Ephraim, I will no longer pity you.
15 Even though you are doing well among the other tribes,
trouble will come to you.
I will send a hot and dry wind from the east.
It will blow in from the desert.
Your springs will not have any water.
Your wells will dry up.
All of your treasures
will be taken out of your storerooms.
16 People of Samaria, you must pay for your sins.
You have refused to obey me.
You will be killed with swords.
Your little children will be smashed on the ground.

Your pregnant women will be ripped wide open.”

The LORD Blesses Those Who Turn Away From Sin

Hosea 14

1 Israel, return to the LORD your God.
Your sins have destroyed you!
2 Tell the LORD you are turning away from your sins.
Return to him.
Say to him,
"Forgive us for all of our sins.
Please be kind to us.
Welcome us back to you.
Then our lips will offer you our praise.
3 Assyria can't save us.
We won't trust in our war horses.
Our own hands have made statues of gods.
But we will never call them our gods again.
We are like children whose fathers have died.
But you show us your tender love."

4 Then the LORD will answer,

"My people always wander away from me.
But I will put an end to that.
My anger has turned away from them.
Now I will love them freely.
5 I will be like the dew to Israel.
They will bloom like a lily.
They will send their roots down deep
like a cedar tree in Lebanon.
6 They will spread out like new branches.
They will be as beautiful as an olive tree.
They will smell as sweet as the cedar trees in Lebanon.
7 Once again my people will live
in the safety of my shade.
They will grow like grain.

They will bloom like vines.
And they will be as famous
as wine from Lebanon.
8 Ephraim will have nothing more to do with other gods.
I will answer the prayers of my people.
I will take good care of them.
I will be like a green pine tree to them.
All of the fruit they bear will come from me.”

9 If you are wise, you will realize
that what I’ve said is true.
If you have understanding,
you will know what it means.
The ways of the LORD are right.
People who are right with God live the way he wants them to.
But those who refuse to obey him trip and fall.

Joel

Joel 1 Joel 2 Joel 3

Joel 1

[1]A message came to Joel from the LORD. He was the son of Pethuel. Here is what Joel said.

Locusts Attack the Land

[2]Elders, listen to me.
Pay attention, all you who live in the land.
Has anything like this ever happened in your whole life?
Did it ever happen to your people
who lived long ago?
[3]Tell your children about it.
Let them tell their children.
And let their children tell it
to those who live after them.
[4]The giant locusts have eaten
what the common locusts have left.
The young locusts have eaten
what the giant locusts have left.
And other locusts have eaten
what the young locusts have left.

[5]Get up and sob, you people who drink too much!
Cry, all you who drink wine!
Cry because the fresh wine
has been taken away from you.
[6]The locusts are like an army
that has marched into our land.
There are so many of them
they can't even be counted.
Their teeth are as sharp as a lion's teeth.
They are like the fangs of a female lion.
[7]The locusts have completely destroyed our vines.
They have wiped out our fig trees.
They've stripped off the bark and thrown it away.
They've left the branches bare.

[8]My people, sob like a virgin
who is dressed in black clothes.
She is sad because she has lost
the young man she was going to marry.
[9]No one brings grain offerings and drink offerings
to the LORD's house anymore.
So the priests who serve the LORD
are filled with sorrow.
[10]Our fields are wiped out.
The ground is dried up.
The grain is destroyed.
The fresh wine is gone.
And there isn't any more olive oil.
[11]Farmers, be sad.
Cry, you who grow vines.
Sob because the wheat and barley are gone.
The crops in the fields are destroyed.
[12]The vines and fig trees are dried up.
The pomegranate, palm and apple trees
don't have any fruit on them.
In fact, all of the trees in the fields are dried up.
And my people's joy has faded away.

Turn Away From Sin

[13]Priests, put on black clothes and sob.
Cry, you who serve at the altar.
Come, you who serve my God in the temple.
Spend the night dressed in black clothes.
Sob because no one brings grain offerings and drink offerings
to the house of your God anymore.
[14]Announce a holy fast.
Tell the people not to eat anything.
Gather them together for a special service.
Send for all of the elders
who live in the land.
Have them come to the house of the LORD your God.
And pray to him.

15 The day of the LORD is near.
How sad it will be on that day!
The Mighty One is coming to destroy you.

16 Our food has been taken away
right in front of our eyes.
There isn't any joy or gladness
in the house of our God.
17 The seeds have dried up in the ground.
The grain is also gone.
The storerooms have been destroyed.
The barns are broken down.
18 Listen to the cattle groan!
The herds wander around.
They don't have any grass to eat.
The flocks of sheep are also suffering.

19 LORD, I call out to you.
Fire has burned up the grasslands.
Flames have destroyed all of the trees in the fields.
20 Even the wild animals cry out to you for help.
The streams of water have dried up.
Fire has burned up the grasslands.

The LORD Sends an Army of Locusts

Joel 2

[1]Priests, blow the trumpets in Zion.
Give a warning on my holy mountain.
Let everyone who lives in the land tremble with fear.
The day of the LORD is coming.
It is very near.
[2]That day will be dark and sad.
It will be black and cloudy.
A huge army of locusts is coming.
They will spread across the mountains
like the sun when it rises.
There has never been an army like it.
And there will never be another
for all time to come.

[3]Like fire they eat up everything in their path.
Behind them it looks as if flames have burned the land.
In front of them the land is like the Garden of Eden.
Behind them it is a dry and empty desert.
Nothing escapes them.
[4]They look like horses.
Like war horses they charge ahead.
[5]They sound like chariots as they leap over the mountaintops.
They crackle like fire burning up dry weeds.
They are like a mighty army
that is ready for battle.

[6]When people see them, they tremble with fear.
All of their faces turn pale.
[7]The locusts charge ahead like warriors.
They climb over walls like soldiers.
All of them march in line.
They don't turn to the right or the left.
[8]They don't bump into one another.

Each of them marches straight ahead.
They charge through everything that tries to stop them.
But they still stay in line.
9They attack a city.
They run along its wall.
They climb into houses.
They enter through windows like robbers.

10As they march forward, the earth shakes.
The sky trembles as they approach.
The sun and moon grow dark.
And the stars stop shining.
11The LORD thunders with his mighty voice
as he leads his army.
He has so many forces they can't even be counted.
Those who obey his commands are great in number.
The day of the LORD is great and terrifying.
Who can live through it?

Let Your Hearts Be Broken

12The Lord announces to his people,

"Return to me with all your heart.
There is still time.
Do not eat any food.
Sob and cry."

13Don't just tear your clothes to show how sad you are.
Let your hearts be broken.
Return to the LORD your God.
He is gracious.
He is tender and kind.
He is slow to get angry.
He is full of love.
He takes pity on you.
He won't destroy you.
14Who knows? He might turn toward you
and have pity on you.

He might even give you his blessing.
Then you can bring grain offerings and drink offerings
to the LORD your God.

15 Priests, blow the trumpets in Zion.
Announce a holy fast.
Tell the people not to eat anything.
Gather them together for a special service.
16 Bring them together.
Set all of them apart to me.
Bring together the elders.
Gather the children and the babies
who are still nursing.
Let the groom leave his bedroom.
Let the bride leave their marriage bed.
17 Let the priests who serve the LORD sob.
Let them cry between the temple porch and the altar.
Let them say, "LORD, spare your people.
Don't let others make fun of them.
Don't let the nations laugh at them.
Don't let them tease your people and say,
'Where is their God?' "

The LORD Answers the Prayer of His People

18 Then the LORD will show concern for his land.
He will take pity on his people.

19 He will reply,

"I will send you grain, olive oil and fresh wine.
It will be enough to satisfy you completely.
I will never allow other nations
to make fun of you again.

20 "I will drive far away from you
the army that comes from the north.
I will send some of its forces
into a dry and empty land.

Those in front will be pushed into the Dead Sea.
The ones in back will be driven into the Mediterranean Sea.
Their dead bodies will give off a bad smell."

The LORD has done great things.
[21]Land, don't be afraid.
Be glad and full of joy.
The LORD has done great things.
[22]Wild animals, don't be afraid.
The grasslands are turning green again.
The trees are bearing their fruit.
The vines and fig trees are producing rich crops.
[23]People of Zion, be glad.
Be joyful because of what the LORD your God has done.
He has given you the right amount of rain in the fall.
He has sent you plenty of showers.
He has sent fall and spring rains alike,
just as he did before.
[24]Your threshing floors will be covered with grain.
Olive oil and fresh wine will spill over
from the places where they are stored.

[25]The LORD says,

"I sent a great army of locusts to attack you.
They included common locusts, giant locusts,
young locusts and other locusts.
I will make up for the years
they ate your crops.
[26]You will have plenty to eat.
It will satisfy you completely.
Then you will praise me.
I am the LORD your God.
I have done wonderful miracles for you.
My people will never be put to shame again.
[27]You will know that I am with you in Israel.
I am the LORD your God.
There is no other God.
So my people will never be put to shame again.

The Day of the LORD Is Coming

28 “After that, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy.
Your old men will have dreams.
Your young men will have visions.
29 In those days I will pour out my Spirit
on those who serve me, men and women alike.
30 I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth.
There will be blood and fire and clouds of smoke.
31 The sun will become dark.
The moon will turn red like blood.
It will happen before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes.
32 Everyone who calls out to me will be saved.
On Mount Zion and in Jerusalem
some of my people will be left alive.
I have chosen them.
That is what I have promised.

The LORD Judges the Nations

Joel 3

[1]"At that time I will bless Judah and Jerusalem
with great success again.
[2]I will gather all of the nations together.
I will bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat.
There I will judge them.
I will punish them for what they have done
to my people Israel.
They scattered them among the nations.
They divided up my land among themselves.
[3]They cast lots for my people.
They sold boys into slavery to get prostitutes.
They sold girls to buy some wine to drink.

[4]"Tyre and Sidon, why are you doing things like that to me? And why are you doing them, all of you people in Philistia? Are you trying to get even with me for something I have done? If you are, I will pay you back for it in a quick and speedy way. [5]You took my silver and gold. You carried off my finest treasures to your temples. [6]You sold the people of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks. You wanted to send them far away from their own country.

[7]"But now I will stir them up into action. I will bring them back from the places you sold them to. And I will do to you what you did to them. [8]I will sell your sons and daughters to the people of Judah. And they will sell them to the Sabeans far away." The LORD has spoken.

[9]Announce this among the nations.
Tell them to prepare for battle.
Nations, get your soldiers ready!
Bring all of your fighting men together
and march out to attack.
[10]Hammer your plows into swords.

Hammer your pruning tools into spears.
Let those who are weak say,
"We are soldiers!"
[11]Come quickly, all of you surrounding nations.
Gather together in the Valley of Jehoshaphat.

LORD, send your soldiers
down from heaven!

[12]The LORD says,

"Stir up the nations into action!
Let them march into the valley
where I will judge them.
I will take my seat in court.
I will judge all of the surrounding nations.
[13]My soldiers, swing your sickles.
The nations are ripe for harvest.
Come. Stomp on them as if they were grapes.
Crush them until the winepress of my anger is full.
Do it until the wine spills over
from the places where it is stored.
The nations have committed far too many sins!"

[14]Huge numbers of soldiers are gathered in the valley
where the LORD will hand down his sentence.
The day of the LORD is near in that valley.
[15]The sun and moon will become dark.
The stars won't shine anymore.
[16]The LORD will roar like a lion from Jerusalem.
His voice will sound like thunder from Zion.
The earth and sky will tremble.
But the LORD will keep the people of Israel safe.
He will be a place of safety for them.

The LORD Blesses His People

[17]The LORD says,

“You will know that I am the LORD your God.
I live in Zion.
It is my holy mountain.
Jerusalem will be my holy city.
People from other lands
will never attack it again.

18“At that time fresh wine will drip from the mountains.
Milk will flow down from the hills.
Water will run through all of Judah’s valleys.
A fountain will flow out of my temple.
It will water the places where acacia trees grow.
19But Egypt will be deserted.
Edom will become a dry and empty desert.
They did terrible harm to the people of Judah.
My people were not guilty of doing anything wrong.
But Egypt and Edom spilled their blood anyway.
20My people will live in Judah and Jerusalem forever.
The land will be their home for all time to come.
21Egypt and Edom have spilled my people’s blood.
I will punish them for it.”

The LORD lives in Zion!

Amos

Amos 1
Amos 2
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Amos 1

[1]These are the words of Amos. He was a shepherd from the town of Tekoa. Here is the vision he saw concerning Israel. It came to him two years before the earthquake. At that time Uzziah was king of Judah. Jeroboam was king of Israel. He was the son of Jehoash. Here are the words of Amos.

[2]I said,

"The LORD roars like a lion from Jerusalem.
His voice sounds like thunder from Zion.
The grasslands of the shepherds turn brown.
The top of Mount Carmel dries up."

The LORD Punishes Israel's Neighbors

[3]The LORD says,

"The people of Damascus have sinned again and again.
So I will punish them.
They used threshing sleds with iron teeth
to crush Gilead's people.
[4]So I will send fire to destroy the palace of King Hazael.
It will burn up the forts of his son Ben-Hadad.
[5]I will break down the city gate of Damascus.
I will cut off the king
who lives in the Valley of Aven.
He holds the ruler's rod in Beth Eden.
The people of Aram will be taken away to Kir as prisoners,"
says the LORD.

[6]The LORD says,

"The people of Gaza have sinned again and again.
So I will punish them.

They captured whole communities.
They sold them to Edom.
7So I will send fire to destroy the walls of Gaza.
It will burn up its forts.
8I will cut off the king of Ashdod.
He holds the ruler’s rod in Ashkelon.
I will use my powerful hand against Ekron.
Every single Philistine will die,”
says the LORD and King.

9The LORD says,

“The people of Tyre have sinned again and again.
So I will punish them.
They captured whole communities.
They sold them to Edom.
They did not honor the treaty
of friendship they had made.
10So I will send fire to destroy the walls of Tyre.
It will burn up its forts.”

11The LORD says,

“The people of Edom have sinned again and again.
So I will punish them.
They chased Israel with swords
that were ready to strike them down.
They did not show them any pity.
They were angry all the time.
Their anger blazed out.
It could not be stopped.
12So I will send fire to destroy the city of Teman.
It will burn up Bozrah’s forts.”

13The LORD says,

“The people of Ammon have sinned again and again.
So I will punish them.

They ripped open the pregnant women in Gilead.
They wanted to add land to their territory.
14 So I will set fire to destroy the walls of Rabbah.
It will burn up its forts.
War cries will be heard on that day of battle.
Strong winds will blow on that stormy day.
15 Ammon's god Molech will be carried away.
So will its officials,"

says the LORD.

Amos 2

[1]The LORD says,

"The people of Moab have sinned again and again.
So I will punish them.
They burned the bones
of Edom's king to ashes.
[2]So I will send fire to destroy Moab.
It will burn up Kerioth's forts.
Moab will come crashing down with a loud noise.
War cries will be heard.
So will the blast of trumpets.
[3]I will cut off Moab's ruler.
I will also kill all of its officials,"

says the LORD.

[4]The LORD says,

"The people of Judah have sinned again and again.
So I will punish them.
They have refused to obey my law.
They have not kept my rules.
Other gods have led them down the wrong path.
Their people before them
worshiped those gods.
[5]So I will send fire to destroy Judah.
It will burn up Jerusalem's forts."

The LORD Punishes Israel

[6]The LORD says,

"The people of Israel have sinned again and again.

So I will punish them.
They sell into slavery those who do what is right.
They trade needy people
for a mere pair of sandals.
7They grind the heads of the poor
into the dust of the ground.
They refuse to be fair to those who are crushed.
A father and his son have sex with the same girl.
They treat my name as if it were not holy.
8They lie down beside every altar
on clothes they had taken
until the owner paid back what was owed.
In the house of their God
they drink wine that was taken as fines.

9"I destroyed the Amorites to make room
for my people in the land.
The Amorites were as tall as cedar trees.
They were as strong as oak trees.
But I cut off their fruit above the ground
and their roots below it.

10"People of Israel, I brought you up out of Egypt.
I led you in the desert for 40 years.
I gave you the land of the Amorites.
11I raised up prophets from among your children.
I also set some of your young people apart to me as Nazirites.
Isn't that true, people of Israel?"

announces the LORD.

12"But you made the Nazirites drink wine.
You commanded the prophets not to prophesy.

13"A cart that is loaded with grain
crushes anything it runs over.
In the same way, I will crush you.
14Your fastest runners will not escape.
The strongest people will not get away.
Even soldiers will not be able
to save their own lives.
15Men who are armed with bows will lose the battle.

Soldiers who are quick on their feet will not escape.
Horsemen will not be able
to save their own lives.
16 Even your bravest soldiers
will run away naked on that day,”
announces the LORD.

The LORD Judges His Chosen People

Amos 3

[1]People of Israel, listen to the LORD's message. It is against you. It is against
the whole family he brought up out of Egypt. He says,

[2]"Out of all of the families on earth
I have chosen only you.
So I will punish you
because you have committed so many sins."

[3]Do two people walk together
unless they've agreed to do so?
[4]Does a lion roar in the bushes
when it doesn't have any food?
Does it growl in its den
when it hasn't caught anything?
[5]Does a bird fall into a trap on the ground
where no one has set a trap for it?
Does a net spring up from the earth
when there isn't anything for it to catch?
[6]When someone blows a trumpet in a city,
don't the people tremble with fear?
When trouble comes to a city,
hasn't the LORD caused it?

[7]The LORD and King never does anything
without telling his servants the prophets about it.

[8]A lion has roared.
Who isn't afraid?
The LORD and King has spoken.
Who can do anything but prophesy?

[9]Speak to the people in the forts of Ashdod and Egypt.
Tell them, "Gather together

on the mountains of Samaria.
Look at the great trouble in that city.
Its people are committing many crimes.”

10“They do not know how to do what is right,”
announces the LORD.
“They pile up stolen goods in their forts.”

11So the LORD and King says,

“Enemies will take over your land.
They will pull down your places of safety.
They will rob your forts.”

12The LORD says,

“Suppose a shepherd saves only two leg bones
from a lion’s mouth.
Or he might save only a piece of an ear.
That is how the Israelites will be saved.
They sit in Samaria
on the edge of their beds.
They lie down in Damascus
on their couches.”

13“Listen to me,” announces the LORD. “Witness against the people of Jacob,” says the LORD God who rules over all.

14“I will punish Israel for their sins.
When I do, I will destroy their altars at Bethel.
The horns that stick out from the upper corners
of their main altar will be cut off.
They will fall to the ground.
15I will tear their winter houses down.
I will also pull down their summer houses.
The houses they have decorated with ivory will be destroyed.
And their princely houses will be torn down,”
announces the LORD.

Israel Has Not Returned to the LORD

Amos 4

[1]Listen to the LORD's message,
you women who live on the hill of Samaria.
You treat poor people badly.
You crush those who are in need.
You say to your husbands,
"Bring us some drinks!"
But you are already as fat
as the cows in Bashan.
[2]The LORD and King has taken an oath
in his own holy name.
He says, "You can be sure
that the time will come
when your enemies will put hooks in your faces.
They will lead every one of you away with fishhooks.
[3]Each of you will go straight out
through a gap in the wall.
You will be thrown out of the city
on the hill where you crush others,"
announces the LORD.
[4]"People of Samaria, go to Bethel and sin!
Go to Gilgal! Sin there even more!
Bring your sacrifices every morning.
Every third year, bring a tenth
of everything you produce.
[5]Bake some bread with yeast.
Burn it as a thank offering.
Brag about the offerings you freely give.
That is what you Israelites love to do,"
announces the LORD and King.

[6]"I made sure your stomachs were empty in every city.
You did not have enough bread in any of your towns.

In spite of that, you still have not returned to me,”

announces the LORD.

7“I also held rain back from you.
The time to harvest crops
was still three months away.
I sent rain on one town.
But I held it back from another.
One field had rain.
Another did not. So it dried up.
8People wandered from town to town to look for water.
But they did not get enough to drink.
In spite of that, you still have not returned to me,”

announces the LORD.

9“Many times I struck your gardens and vineyards.
I sent hot winds to dry them up completely.
Locusts ate up your fig and olive trees.
In spite of that, you still have not returned to me,”

announces the LORD.

10“I sent plagues on you,
just as I did on Egypt.
I killed your young men with swords.
I also let the horses you had captured be killed.
I filled your noses with the bad smell of your camps.
In spite of that, you still have not returned to me,”

announces the LORD.

11“I destroyed some of you,
just as I did Sodom and Gomorrah.
You were like a burning stick that was pulled out of the fire.
In spite of that, you still have not returned to me,”

announces the LORD.

12“People of Israel, I will punish you.
Because I will do that to you,
prepare to meet your God!”

[13]The LORD forms the mountains.
He creates the wind.
He makes his thoughts known to human beings.
He turns sunrise into darkness.
He rules over the highest places on earth.
His name is The LORD God Who Rules Over All.

Look to the LORD and Live

Amos 5

1 People of Israel, listen to the LORD's message. Hear my song of sadness
about you. I say,

2 "The people of Israel have fallen.
They will never get up again.
They are deserted in their own land.
No one can lift them up."

3 The LORD and King says,

"A thousand soldiers will march out from a city in Israel.
But only a hundred will return.
A hundred soldiers will march out from a town.
But only ten will come back."

4 The LORD speaks to the people of Israel. He says,

"Look to me and live.
5 Do not look to Bethel.
Do not go to Gilgal.
Do not travel to Beersheba.
The people of Gilgal will be taken away as prisoners.
Nothing will be left of Bethel."

6 Israel, look to the LORD and live.
If you don't, he will sweep through
the people of Joseph like a fire.
It will burn everything up.
And Bethel won't have anyone to put it out.

7 You turn what is fair into something bitter.

What is right you throw down to the ground.
8 The LORD made the Pleiades and Orion.
He turns darkness into sunrise.
He makes the day fade into night.
He sends for the waters in the clouds.
Then he pours them out on the surface of the land.
His name is The LORD.
9 He destroys places of safety.
He tears down cities
that have high walls around them.
10 Israel, you hate those who do what is right in court.
You can't stand those who tell the truth.

11 You walk all over poor people.
You make them give you grain.
You have built stone houses.
But you won't live in them.
You have planted fruitful vineyards.
But you won't drink the wine they produce.
12 I know how many crimes you have committed.
You have sinned far too much.

You crush those who do what is right.
You accept money from people who want special favors.
You take away the rights of poor people in the courts.
13 So those who are wise keep quiet in times like these.
That's because the times are evil.

14 Look to what is good, not to what is evil.
Then you will live.
And the LORD God who rules over all
will be with you,
just as you say he is.
15 Hate what is evil. Love what is good.
Do what is fair in the courts.
Perhaps the LORD God who rules over all
will show you his favor.
After all, you are the only ones left
in the family line of Joseph.

16 The LORD God rules over all. The Lord says,

"People will sob in all of the streets.
They will be very sad in every market place.
Even farmers will be told to cry loudly.
People will sob over the dead.
17 Workers will cry in all of the vineyards.
That is because I will punish you,"

says the LORD.

THE DAY OF THE LORD IS COMING

18 How terrible it will be for you
who long for the day of the LORD!
Why do you want it to come?
That day will be dark, not light.
19 It will be like a man running away from a lion
only to meet a bear.
He enters his house and rests his hand on a wall
only to be bitten by a snake.
20 The day of the LORD will be dark, not light.
It will be very black.
There won't be a ray of sunlight anywhere.

21 The LORD says,

"I hate your holy feasts.
I can't stand them.
I hate it when you gather together.
22 You bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings.
But I will not accept them.
You bring your best friendship offerings.
But I will not even look at them.
23 Take the noise of your songs away!
I will not listen to the music of your harps.
24 I want you to treat others fairly.
So let fair treatment roll on

just as a river does!
Always do what is right.
Let right living flow along
like a stream that never runs dry!

25 “People of Israel, did you bring me sacrifices and offerings
for 40 years in the desert?
26 Yes. But you have honored the place
where your king worshiped other gods.
You have carried the stands
the statues of your gods were on.
You have lifted up the banners
of the stars you worship as gods.
You made all of those things for yourselves.
27 So I will send you away
as prisoners beyond Damascus,”
says the LORD.
His name is God Who Rules Over All.

The LORD Judges Israel's Pride

Amos 6

[1]How terrible it will be for you men
who are so contented on Mount Zion!
How terrible for you who feel secure
on the hill of Samaria!
You are famous men from the greatest nation.
The people of Israel come to you
for help and advice.
[2]Go to the city of Calneh. Look at it.
Go from there to the great city of Hamath.
Then go down to Gath in Philistia.
Are those places better off than your two kingdoms?
Is their land larger than yours?
[3]You are trying to avoid the time
when trouble will come.
But you are only bringing closer
the Assyrian rule of terror.
[4]You lie down on beds
that are decorated with ivory.
You rest on your couches.
You eat the best lambs
and the fattest calves.
[5]You pluck away on your harps as David did.
You play new songs on musical instruments.
[6]You drink wine by the bowlful.
You use the finest lotions.
But Joseph's people will soon be destroyed.
And you aren't even sad about it.
[7]So you will be among the first
to be taken away as prisoners.
You won't be able to enjoy good food.
You won't lie around on couches anymore.

[8]The LORD and King has taken an oath in his own name. He is the LORD God
who rules over all. He announces,

"I hate the pride of Jacob's people.
I can't stand their forts.
I will hand the city of Samaria
and everything in it over to their enemies."

[9]Ten men might be left in one house. If they are, they will die there.
[10]Relatives might come to burn the dead bodies. If they do, they'll have to
carry them out of the house first. They might ask someone still hiding there, "Is
anyone here with you?" If the answer is no, the relatives will say, "Be quiet!
We must not pray in the LORD's name."

[11]The LORD has already given an order.
He will smash large houses to pieces.
He will crush small houses to bits.

[12]Horses don't run on rocky ground.
People don't plow there with oxen.
But you have turned fair treatment into poison.
You have turned the fruit of right living into bitterness.
[13]You are happy because you captured the town of Lo Debar.
You say, "We were strong enough to take Karnaim too."

[14]But the LORD God rules over all. He announces, "People of Israel,
I will stir up a nation against you.
They will crush you from Lebo Hamath
all the way down to the Arabah Valley."

The LORD Gives Amos Three Visions

Amos 7

[1]The LORD and King gave me a vision. He was bringing large numbers of
locusts on the land. The king's share of the first crop had already been
harvested. Now the second crop was coming up. [2]The locusts stripped the land
clean. Then I cried out, "LORD and King, forgive Israel! How can Jacob's
people continue? They are such a weak nation!"

[3]So the LORD had pity on them.

"I will let them continue for now," he said.

[4]The LORD and King gave me a second vision. He was using fire to punish his
people. It dried up the deep waters. It burned the land up. [5]Then I cried out,
"LORD and King, please stop! How can Jacob's people continue? They are such
a weak nation!"

[6]So the LORD had pity on them.

"I will let them continue for now," the LORD and King said.

[7]Then the Lord gave me a third vision. He was standing by a wall. It had been
built very straight, all the way up and down. He was holding a plumb line.
[8]The LORD asked me, "What do you see, Amos?"

"A plumb line," I replied.

Then the Lord said, "Look at what I am doing. I am hanging a plumb line
next to my people Israel. It will show how crooked they are. I will no longer
spare them.

[9]"The high places where Isaac's people worship other gods will be
destroyed.
The other places of worship in Israel will also be torn down.
I will use my sword
to attack Jeroboam's royal family."

Amaziah Tells Amos to Stop Prophesying

10 Amaziah was priest of Bethel. He sent a message to Jeroboam, the king of
Israel. He said, “Amos is making evil plans against you right here in Israel. The
people in the land can’t stand to listen to what he’s saying. 11 Amos is telling
them,

> “ ‘Jeroboam will be killed with a sword.
> The people of Israel will be taken away as prisoners.
> They will be carried off from their own land.’ ”

12 Then Amaziah said to Amos, “Get out of Israel, you prophet! Go back to
the land of Judah. Earn your living there. Do your prophesying there. 13 Don’t
prophesy here at Bethel anymore. This is where the king worships. The main
temple in the kingdom is located here.”

14 Amos answered Amaziah, “I was not a prophet. I wasn’t even a prophet’s
son. I was a shepherd. I also took care of sycamore-fig trees. 15 But the LORD
took me away from taking care of the flock. He said to me, ‘Go. Prophesy to
my people Israel.’ 16 Now then, listen to the LORD’s message. You say,

> “ ‘Don’t prophesy against Israel.
> Stop preaching against the people of Isaac.’

17 “But the LORD says,

> “ ‘Your wife will become a prostitute
> in the city of Bethel.
> Your sons and daughters will be killed with swords.
> Your land will be measured and divided up.
> And you yourself will die in another country.
> The people of Israel will be taken away as prisoners.
> They will be carried off from their own land.’ ”

The LORD Gives Amos Another Vision

Amos 8

[1]The LORD and King gave me a vision. He showed me a basket of ripe fruit.
[2]"What do you see, Amos?" he asked.

"A basket of ripe fruit," I replied.

Then the LORD said to me, "The time is ripe for my people Israel. I will no longer spare them.

[3]"The time is coming when the songs in the temple will turn to crying," announces the LORD and King. "Many, many bodies will be thrown everywhere! So be quiet!"

[4]Listen to me, you who walk all over needy people.
You crush those who are poor in the land.

[5]You say,

"When will the New Moon Feast be over?
Then we can sell our grain.
When will the Sabbath day come to an end?
Then people can buy our wheat."
But you don't measure out the right amount.
You raise your prices.
You cheat others by using dishonest scales.
[6]You buy poor people to make slaves out of them.
You buy those who are in need for a mere pair of sandals.
You even sell the worthless parts of your wheat.

[7]People of Jacob, you are proud that the LORD is your God. But he has taken an oath in his own name. He says, "I will never forget anything Israel has done.

[8]"The land will tremble because of what will happen.

Everyone who lives in it will sob.
So the whole land will rise like the Nile River.
It will be stirred up.
Then it will settle back down again
like that river in Egypt.”

9The LORD and King announces,

“At that time I will make the sun go down at noon.
The earth will become dark in the middle of the day.
10I will turn your holy feasts into times for sobbing.
I will turn all of your songs into crying.
You will have to wear black clothes.
You will shave your heads.
I will make you sob as if your only son had died.
The end of that time will be like a bitter day.”

11The LORD and King announces,

“The days are coming
when I will send hunger through the land.
But people will not be hungry for food.
They will not be thirsty for water.
Instead, they will be hungry
to hear a message from me.
12People will wander from the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean.
They will travel from north to east.
They will look for a message from me.
But they will not find it.

13“At that time

“the lovely young women and strong young men
will faint because they are so thirsty.
14Some people take oaths in the name
of Samaria’s shameful god.
Others say, ‘People of Dan, you can be sure
that your god is alive.’

Still others say, ‘You can be sure
that Beersheba’s god is alive.’
But all of those people will fall dead.
They will never get up again.”

The LORD Gives Amos a Final Vision

Amos 9

[1]I saw the Lord standing next to the altar in the temple. He said to me,

"Strike the tops of the temple pillars.
Then the heavy stones at the base of the entrance will shake.
Bring everything down on the heads of everyone there.
I will kill with my swords
those who are left alive.
Not one of them will escape.
None will get away.
[2]They might dig down to the deepest parts of the grave.
But my powerful hand will take them out of there.
They might climb up to the heavens.
But I will bring them down from there.
[3]They might hide on top of Mount Carmel.
But I will hunt them down
and grab hold of them.
They might hide from me at the bottom of the ocean.
But I will command the serpent to bite them.
[4]Their enemies might take them away
as prisoners to another country.
But I will command their enemies
to kill them with their swords.
I will turn my eyes toward them to harm them.
I will not help them."

[5]The LORD rules over all.
The Lord touches the earth, and it melts.
Everyone who lives in it sobs.
The whole land rises like the Nile River.
Then it settles back down again
like that river in Egypt.
[6]The LORD builds his palace high in the heavens.
He lays its foundation on the earth.

He sends for the waters in the clouds.
Then he pours them out on the surface of the land.
His name is The LORD.

7 "You Israelites are just like
the people of Cush to me,"

announces the LORD.

"I brought Israel up from Egypt.
I also brought the Philistines from Crete
and the Arameans from Kir.

8 "I am the LORD and King.
My eyes are watching the sinful kingdom of Israel.
I will wipe it off the face of the earth.
But I will not totally destroy the people of Jacob,"

announces the LORD.

9 "I will give an order.
I will shake the people of Israel
among all of the nations.
They will be like grain that is shaken through a screen.
Not a pebble will fall to the ground.
10 All of the sinners among my people
will be killed with swords.
They say, 'Nothing bad will ever happen to us.'

Israel Will Be Made Like New Again

11 "The time will come when I will rebuild
David's fallen tent.
I will repair its broken places.
I will rebuild what was destroyed.
I will make it what it used to be.
12 Then my people will take control of those
who are left alive in Edom.
They will also possess all of the nations
that belong to me,"

announces the LORD.

He will do all of those things.

13 “A new day is coming,” announces the LORD.

“At that time those who plow the land
will catch up with those who harvest the crops.
Those who stomp on grapes
will catch up with those who plant the vines.
Fresh wine will drip from the mountains.
It will flow down from all of the hills.
14 I will bring my people Israel back home.
I will bless them with great success again.
They will rebuild the destroyed cities and live in them.
They will plant vineyards and drink the wine they produce.
They will make gardens and eat their fruit.
15 I will plant Israel in their own land.
They will never again be removed
from the land I have given them,”

says the LORD your God.

Obadiah

[1]This is the vision about Edom that Obadiah had. Here is what he said.

We've heard a message from the LORD and King.
A messenger was sent to the nations.
The LORD told him to say,
"Get up! Let us go and make war against Edom."

[2]The LORD says to Edom,

"I will make you weak among the nations.
They will look down on you.
[3]You live in the safety of the rocks.
You make your home high up in the mountains.
But your proud heart has tricked you.
So you say to yourself,
'No one can bring me down to the ground.'
[4]You have built your home as high as an eagle does.
You have made your nest among the stars.
But I will bring you down from there,"

announces the LORD.

[5]"Edom, suppose robbers came to you at night.
They would steal only as much as they wanted.
Suppose grape pickers came to harvest your vines.
They would still leave a few grapes.
But you are facing horrible trouble!
[6]People of Esau, everything will be taken away from you.
Your hidden treasures will be stolen.
[7]All those who are helping you
will force you to leave your country.
Your friends will trick you and overpower you.
Those who eat bread with you
will set a trap for you.
But you will not see it."

[8]The LORD announces, "At that time
I will destroy the wise men of Edom.
I will wipe out the men of understanding
in the mountains of Esau.

9 People of Teman, your soldiers will be terrified.
Everyone in Esau’s mountains
will be cut down with swords.
10 You did harmful things to your brothers,
the people of Jacob.
So you will be covered with shame.
You will be destroyed forever.
11 Strangers entered the gates of Jerusalem.
They cast lots to see what each one would get.
They carried off its wealth.
When that happened, you just stood there and did nothing.
You were like one of them.
12 That was a time of trouble for your brothers.
So you should not have looked down on them.
The people of Judah were destroyed.
So you should not have been happy about it.
You should not have laughed at them so much
when they were in trouble.
13 You should not have marched
through the gates of my people’s city
when they were having so much trouble.
You should not have looked down on them.
You should not have stolen their wealth.
14 You waited where the roads cross.
You wanted to cut down those who were running away.
You should not have done that.
You handed over to their enemies
those who were still left alive.
You should not have done that.
They were in trouble.

15 “The day of the LORD is near
for all of the nations.
Others will do to you
what you have done to them.
You will be paid back
for what you have done.
16 You Edomites polluted my holy mountain of Zion
by drinking and celebrating there.
So all of the nations will drink
from the cup of my anger.

And they will keep on drinking from it.
They will vanish.
It will be as if they had never existed.
17 But on Mount Zion some of my people will be left alive.
I will save them.
Zion will be my holy mountain once again.
And the people of Jacob
will again receive the land as their own.
18 They will be like a fire.
Joseph's people will be like a flame.
The nation of Esau will be like straw.
Jacob's people will set Edom on fire and burn it up.
No one will be left alive
among Esau's people."

The LORD has spoken.

19 Israelites from the Negev Desert
will take over Esau's mountains.
Israelites from the western hills
will possess Philistia.
They'll take over the territories
of Ephraim and Samaria.
Israelites from the tribe of Benjamin
will possess the land of Gilead.
20 Some Israelites were forced to leave their homes.
They'll come back to Canaan and possess
it all the way to the town of Zarephath.
Some people from Jerusalem were taken
to the city of Sepharad.
They'll return and possess
the towns of the Negev Desert.
21 Leaders from Mount Zion will go
and rule over the mountains of Esau.
And the kingdom will belong to the LORD.

Jonah

Jonah 1 Jonah 2 Jonah 3 Jonah 4

Jonah Runs Away From the LORD

Jonah 1

[1]A message from the LORD came to Jonah. He was the son of Amittai. The
LORD said, [2]"Go to the great city of Nineveh. Preach against it. The sins of its
people have come to my attention."

[3]But Jonah ran away from the LORD. He headed for Tarshish. So he went
down to the port of Joppa. There he found a ship that was going to Tarshish.
He paid the fare and went on board. Then he sailed for Tarshish. He was
running away from the LORD.

[4]But the LORD sent a strong wind over the Mediterranean Sea. A wild storm
came up. It was so wild that the ship was in danger of breaking apart. [5]All of
the sailors were afraid. Each one cried out to his own god for help. They threw
the ship's contents into the sea. They were trying to make the ship lighter.

But Jonah had gone below deck. There he lay down and fell into a deep sleep.
[6]The captain went down to him and said, "How can you sleep? Get up and call
out to your god for help! Maybe he'll pay attention to what's happening to us.
Then we won't die."

[7]The sailors said to one another, "Come. Let's cast lots to find out who is to
blame for getting us into all of this trouble." So they did. And Jonah was
picked.

[8]They asked him, "What terrible thing have you done to bring all of this
trouble on us? Tell us. What do you do for a living? Where do you come from?
What is your country? What people do you belong to?"

[9]He answered, "I'm a Hebrew. I worship the LORD. He is the God of heaven.
He made the sea and the land."

[10]They found out he was running away from the LORD. That's because he had
told them. Then they became terrified. So they asked him, "How could you do
a thing like that?"

[11]The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, "What should
we do to you to make the sea calm down?"

12“Pick me up and throw me into the sea,” he replied. “Then it will become
calm. I know it’s my fault that this terrible storm has come on you.”

13Instead of doing what he said, the men did their best to row back to land.
But they couldn’t. The sea got even rougher than before.

14Then they cried out to the LORD. They prayed, “LORD, please don’t let us die
for taking this man’s life. After all, he might not be guilty of doing anything
wrong. So don’t hold us accountable for killing him. LORD, you always do what
you want to.” 15Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard. And the
stormy sea became calm.

16When the men saw what had happened, they began to have great respect for
the LORD. They offered a sacrifice to him. And they made promises to him.

17But the LORD sent a huge fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was inside the
fish for three days and three nights.

JONAH PRAYS TO THE LORD

Jonah 2

[1]From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the LORD his God. [2]He said,

"When I was in trouble, I called out to you.
And you answered me.
When I had almost drowned,
I called out for help.
And you listened to my cry.
[3]You threw me into the Mediterranean Sea.
I was in the middle of its waters.
They were all around me.
All of your rolling waves
were sweeping over me.
[4]I said, 'I have been driven away from you.
But I will look again
toward your holy temple in Jerusalem.'
[5]I had almost drowned in the waves.
The deep waters were all around me.
Seaweed was wrapped around my head.
[6]I sank down to the bottom of the mountains.
I thought I had died
and gone down into the grave forever.
But you brought my life up
from the very edge of the pit.
You are the LORD my God.

[7]"When my life was nearly over,
I remembered you, LORD.
My prayer rose up to you.
It reached you in your holy temple in heaven.

[8]"Some people worship the worthless statues of their gods.
They turn away from the grace
you want to give them.

[9]But I will sacrifice a thank offering to you.
And I will sing a song of thanks.
I will do what I have promised.
LORD, you are the one who saves.”

[10]The LORD gave the fish a command. And it spit Jonah up onto dry land.

Jonah Goes to Nineveh

Jonah 3

1 A message came to Jonah from the LORD a second time. He said, 2 “Go to the
great city of Nineveh. Announce to its people the message I give you.”

3 Jonah obeyed the LORD. He went to Nineveh. It was a very important city. In
fact, it took about three days to see all of it. 4 On the first day, Jonah started into
the city. He announced, “In 40 days Nineveh will be destroyed.”

5 The people of Nineveh believed God’s warning. They decided not to eat any
food for a while. All of them put on black clothes. That’s what everyone from
the least important of them to the most important did.

6 The news reached the king of Nineveh. He got up from his throne. He took
his royal robes off and dressed himself in black clothes. He sat down in the
dust. 7 Then he sent out a message to the people of Nineveh. He said,

“I and my nobles give this order.

“Don’t let any person or animal taste anything. That includes your herds and
flocks. People and animals must not eat or drink anything. 8 Let people and
animals alike be covered with black cloth. All of you must call out to God with
all your hearts. Stop doing what is evil. Don’t harm others. 9 Who knows? God
might take pity on us. He might turn away from his burning anger. Then we
won’t die.”

10 God saw what they did. They stopped doing what was evil. So he took pity
on them. He didn’t destroy them as he had said he would.

The LORD Shows Concern for Nineveh

Jonah 4

1But Jonah was very upset. He became angry. 2He prayed to the LORD and
said, "LORD, isn't this exactly what I thought would happen when I was still at
home? That's why I was so quick to run away to Tarshish. I knew that you are
gracious. You are tender and kind. You are slow to get angry. You are full of
love. You are a God who takes pity on people. You don't want to destroy them.
3LORD, take away my life. I'd rather die than live."

4But the LORD replied, "Do you have any right to be angry?"

5Jonah left the city. He sat down at a place east of it. There he put some
branches over his head. He sat in their shade. He waited to see what would
happen to the city.

6Then the LORD God sent a vine and made it grow up over Jonah. It gave him
more shade for his head. It made him more comfortable. Jonah was very happy
he had the vine. 7But before sunrise the next day, God sent a worm. It chewed
the vine so much that it dried up.

8When the sun rose, God sent a burning east wind. The sun beat down on
Jonah's head. It made him very weak. He wanted to die. So he said, "I'd rather
die than live."

9But God said to Jonah, "Do you have any right to be angry about what
happened to the vine?"

"I do," he said. "In fact, I'm angry enough to die."

10But the LORD said, "You have been concerned about this vine. But you did
not take care of it. You did not make it grow. It grew up in one night and died
the next. 11Nineveh has more than 120,000 people. They can't tell right from
wrong. Nineveh also has a lot of cattle. So shouldn't I show concern for that
great city?"

Micah

Micah 1
Micah 2
Micah 3
Micah 4
Micah 5
Micah 6
Micah 7

Micah 1

[1]A message came to Micah from the LORD. He was from the town of
Moresheth. The message came while Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah were kings
of Judah. This is the vision Micah saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.
Here is what he said.

[2]Listen to me, all of you nations!
Earth and everyone who lives in it, pay attention!
The LORD and King will be a witness against you.
The Lord will speak from his holy temple in heaven.

The LORD Will Judge Samaria and Jerusalem

[3]The LORD is about to come down
from his home in heaven.
He rules over the highest places on earth.
[4]The mountains will melt under him
like wax near a fire.
The valleys will be broken apart
by water rushing down a slope.
[5]All of that will happen because
Jacob's people have done what is wrong.
The people of Israel
have committed many sins.
Who is to blame
for the wrong things Jacob has done?
Samaria!
Who is to blame for the high places
where Judah's people worship other gods?
Jerusalem!

[6]So the LORD says,

"I will turn Samaria into a pile of trash.
It will become a place for planting vineyards.

I will dump its stones down into the valley.
And I will destroy it
down to its very foundations.
7All of the statues of Samaria's gods
will be broken to pieces.
All of the gifts its people gave to temple prostitutes
will be burned with fire.
I will destroy all of the statues of its gods.
Samaria collected gifts that were paid to temple prostitutes.
So the Assyrians will use the gifts
to pay their own temple prostitutes."

Micah Sobs Over His People

8I will sob and cry because Samaria will be destroyed.
I'll walk around barefoot.
I won't have anything on but my underwear.
I'll bark like a wild dog.
I'll hoot like an owl.
9Samaria's wounds can't be healed.
The LORD will also judge Judah.
Enemies will march up to the very gate of my people.
They will reach Jerusalem itself.
10Don't tell the people of Gath about it.
Don't let them see you sob.
People in Beth Ophrah, roll in the dust.
11You who live in the town of Shaphir,
leave in shame and without your clothes.
Those who live in Zaanan
won't come out to help you.
The people in Beth Ezel will sob.
They won't be able to help keep you safe.
12Those who live in Maroth will groan with pain
as they wait for help.
That's because the LORD will bring trouble on them.
It will reach the very gate of Jerusalem.
13You who live in Lachish,
get your horses ready to pull their chariots.
You trust in military power.
That was the beginning of sin

for the people of Zion.
The wrong things Israel did
were also done by you.
14 People of Judah, you might as well say good-by
to Moresheth near Gath.
The town of Aczib won't give any help
to the kings of Israel.
15 An enemy will attack
you who live in Mareshah.
Israel's glorious leaders will have to run away
and hide in the cave of Adullam.
16 The children you enjoy so much
will be taken away as prisoners.
So shave your heads and sob.
Make them as bare as the head of a vulture.

People's Plans and God's Plans

Micah 2

[1]How terrible it will be for those
who plan to harm others!
How terrible for those who make evil plans
before they even get out of bed!
As soon as daylight comes,
they carry them out.
That's because they have the power to do it.
[2]If they want fields or houses,
they take them.
They cheat men out of
their homes and property.

[3]So the LORD says to them,

"I am planning to send trouble on you.
You will not be able to save yourselves from it.
You will not live so proudly anymore.
It will be a time of trouble.
[4]At that time people will make fun of you.
They will tease you by singing a song of sadness.
They will pretend to be you and say,
'We are totally destroyed.
Our enemies have divided up our land.
The LORD has taken it away from us!
He has given our fields to those
who turned against us.' "

[5]So you won't even have anyone left
in the LORD's community
who can divide up the land for you.

Some Prophets Aren't Really Prophets at All

6"Don't prophesy," the people's prophets say.
"Don't prophesy about bad things.
Nothing shameful is going to happen to us."
7People of Jacob, should others say,
"The LORD isn't angry with us.
He doesn't do things like that"?

The LORD replies, "What I promise brings good things
to those who lead honest lives.
8But lately my people have attacked one another
as if they were enemies.
You strip the rich robes off
those who happen to pass by.
They thought they were as safe as men
returning from a battle they had won.
9You drive the women among my people
out of their pleasant homes.
You take my blessing away
from their children forever.
10Get up! Leave this land!
It is no longer your resting place.
You have made it 'unclean.'
You have completely destroyed it.
11Suppose a prophet goes around telling lies.
And he prophesies that you will have
plenty of wine and beer.
Then that kind of prophet would be
just right for this nation!

The LORD Promises He Will Save His People

12"People of Jacob, I will gather all of you.
I will bring together
you who are still left alive in Israel.
I will gather you together like sheep in a pen.
You will be like a flock in its grasslands.
Your country will be filled with people.

[13]I will open the way for you to return.
I will march in front of you.
You will break through the city gates and go free.
I am your King. I will pass through the gates
in front of you.
I will lead the way.”

The LORD Warns Israel's Leaders and Prophets

Micah 3

[1]Then I said,

"Listen, you leaders of Jacob's people!
Pay attention, you rulers of Israel!
You should know how to judge others fairly.
[2]But you hate what is good.
And you love what is evil.
You are like someone
who tears the skin off my people.
You pull the meat off their bones.
[3]You eat my people's bodies.
You strip their skin off.
You break their bones in pieces.
You chop them up like meat.
You put them in a cooking pot."

[4]The time will come when Israel
will cry out to the LORD.
But he won't answer them.
In fact, he'll turn his face away from them.
They have done what is evil.

[5]The LORD says,

"You prophets are leading my people
down the wrong path.
If they feed you,
you promise them peace.
If they do not,
you prepare to go to war against them.
[6]So night will come on you.

But you will not have any visions.
Darkness will cover you.
But you will not be able
to figure out what is going to happen.
The sun will set on you prophets.
The day will become dark for you.
7 You who see visions will be put to shame.
You who try to figure out what is going to happen
will be dishonored.
All of you will cover your faces.
I will not answer you.”

8 The Spirit of the LORD
has filled me with power.
He helps me do what is fair.
He makes me brave.
Now I’m prepared to tell Jacob’s people
what they’ve done wrong.
I’m ready to tell Israel they’ve sinned.
9 Listen to me, you leaders of Jacob’s people!
Pay attention, you rulers of Israel!
You hate to do what is fair.
You twist everything that is right.
10 You build up Zion by spilling the blood of others.
You build Jerusalem by doing what is evil.
11 Your judges take money from people
who want special favors.
Your priests teach only if they get paid for it.
Your prophets won’t tell fortunes
unless they receive money.
But you still claim to depend on the LORD.
You say, “The LORD is with us.
No trouble will come on us.”
12 So because of what you have done,
Zion will be plowed up like a field.
Jerusalem will be turned into a pile of trash.
The temple hill will be covered with bushes and weeds.

People From Many Nations Will Worship at Mount Zion

Micah 4

[1]In the last days

the mountain where the LORD's temple is located will be famous.
It will be the most important mountain of all.
It will stand out above the hills.
And nations will go to it.

[2]People from many nations will go there. They will say,

"Come, let us go up to the LORD's mountain.
Let's go to the house of Jacob's God.
He will teach us how we should live.
Then we will live the way he wants us to."
The law of the LORD will be taught at Zion.
His message will go out from Jerusalem.
[3]He will judge between people from many nations.
He'll settle problems among strong nations everywhere.
They will hammer their swords into plows.
They'll hammer their spears into pruning tools.
Nations will not go to war against one another.
They won't even train to fight anymore.
[4]Every man will have
his own vine and fig tree.
And no one will make them afraid.
That's what the LORD who rules over all has promised.
[5]Other nations worship and trust in their gods.
But we will worship and obey the LORD.
He will be our God for ever and ever.

The LORD's Kingdom Will Come

6“The time is coming
when I will gather those who are disabled,”
announces the LORD.
“I will bring together those
who were taken away as prisoners.
I will gather those I have allowed to suffer.
7I will make the disabled my faithful people.
I will make those who were driven away from their homes a strong nation.
I will rule over them on Mount Zion.
I will be their King from that time on and forever.
8Jerusalem, you used to be
like a guard tower for my flock.
City of Zion, you used to be
a place of safety for my people.
The glorious kingdom you had before
will be given back to you.
Once again a king will rule over your people.”

9Why are you crying out so loudly now?
Don’t you have a king?
Have your advisers died?
Is that why pain comes on you
like the pain of a woman having a baby?
10People of Zion, groan with pain.
Cry out like a woman having a baby.
Soon you must leave your city.
You must camp in the open fields.
You will have to go to Babylonia.
But that’s where the LORD will save you.
There he will set you free
from the powerful hand of your enemies.

11But now many nations
have gathered together to attack you.
They say, “Let Jerusalem be polluted.
We want to see others laugh when Zion suffers!”
12But those nations don’t know
what the LORD has in mind.
They don’t understand his plan.
He will gather them up like bundles of grain.

He will take them to his threshing floor.

13 The LORD says,

"People of Zion, get up
and crush your enemies.
I will make you like a threshing ox.
I will give you iron horns and bronze hoofs.
So you will crush many nations."

They got their money in the wrong way.
But you will set it apart to the LORD.
You will give their wealth
to the Lord of the whole earth.

A Ruler Will Come From Bethlehem

Micah 5

[1]Jerusalem, you are being attacked.
So bring your troops together.
Our enemies have surrounded us.
They want to slap the face of Israel's ruler.

[2]The LORD says,

"Bethlehem, you might not be
an important town in the nation of Judah.
But out of you will come
a ruler over Israel for me.
His family line goes back
to the early years of your nation.
It goes all the way back
to days of long ago."
Bethlehem was also called Ephrathah.

[3]The LORD will hand his people over to their enemies.
That will last until the promised ruler is born.
Then his relatives in Judah
will return to their land.
The LORD will rule over them
and the people of Israel.

[4]The promised ruler will stand firm
and take care of his flock.
The LORD will give him the strength to do it.
The LORD his God will give him
the authority to rule.
His people will live safely.
His greatness will reach
from one end of the earth to the other.

[5]And he will bring them peace.

The LORD Will Save His People From Their Enemies

The Assyrians will attack our land.
Enemies will march through our forts.
But we will raise up many shepherds against them.
We'll send out against them
as many leaders as we need to.
[6]They will use their swords to rule over Assyria.
They'll rule the land of Nimrod
with swords that are ready to strike.
The Assyrians will march across our borders
and attack our land.
But the promised ruler will save us from them.

[7]Jacob's people who are still left alive
will be scattered among many nations.
They will be like dew the LORD has sent.
It doesn't wait for a man's command.
They will be like rain that falls on the grass.
Rain doesn't wait for someone to give it orders.
[8]So Jacob's people will be scattered
among many nations.
They will be like a lion
among the animals in the forest.
They'll be like a young lion
among flocks of sheep.
Lions attack and tear as they move along.
No one can keep them
from killing what they want.
[9]LORD, your powerful hand will win the battle
over your enemies.
All of them will be destroyed.

[10]"At that time I will destroy
your war horses," announces the LORD.
"I will smash your chariots.
[11]I will destroy the cities in your land.
I will tear down all of your forts.

[12]I will destroy your worship of evil powers.
You will no longer be able
to put a spell on anyone.
[13]I will destroy the statues of your gods.
I will take your sacred stones away from you.
You will no longer bow down
to the gods your hands have made.
[14]I will pull down the poles you used
to worship the goddess Asherah.
And I will destroy your cities completely.
[15]I will pay back the nations
that have not obeyed me.
My anger will burn against them.”

The LORD Brings Charges Against Israel

Micah 6

1 Israel, listen to the LORD's message. He says to me,

"Stand up in court.
Let the mountains serve as witnesses.
Let the hills hear what you have to say."

2 Hear the LORD's case, you mountains.
Listen, you age-old foundations of the earth.
The LORD has a case against his people Israel.
He is bringing charges against them.

3 The LORD says,

"My people, what have I done to you?
Have I made things too hard for you? Answer me.
4 I brought your people up out of Egypt.
I set them free from the land
where they were slaves.
I sent Moses to lead them.
Aaron and Miriam helped him.
5 Remember how Balak, the king of Moab,
planned to put a curse on your people.
But Balaam, the son of Beor,
gave them a blessing instead.
Remember their journey from Shittim to Gilgal.
I want you to know
that I always do what is right."

6 The people of Israel say,

"What should we bring with us
when we go to worship the LORD?
What should we offer the God of heaven
when we bow down to him?
Should we take burnt offerings to him?
Should we sacrifice calves
that are a year old?
7 Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams?
Will he take delight in 10,000 rivers of olive oil?
Should we offer our oldest sons
for the wrong things we've done?
Should we sacrifice our own children
to pay for our sins?"

8 The LORD has shown you what is good.
He has told you what he requires of you.
You must treat people fairly.
You must love others faithfully.
And you must be very careful to live
the way your God wants you to.

The LORD Will Punish His People

9 The LORD is calling out to Jerusalem.
And it would be wise to pay attention to him.
He says, "Listen, tribe of Judah
and you people who are gathered in the city.
10 You sinful people, should I forget
that you got your treasures by stealing them?
You use dishonest measures to cheat others.
I have placed a curse on that practice.
11 Should I forgive you who use dishonest scales?
You use weights that weigh things heavier
or lighter than they really are.
12 The rich people among you harm others.
You are always telling lies.
You try to fool others by what you say.
13 So I will strike you down.
I will destroy you
because you have sinned so much.

[14]You will eat. But you will not be satisfied.
Your stomachs will still be empty.
You will try to save what you can.
But you will not be able to.
If you do save something,
it will be destroyed in battle.
[15]You will plant seeds.
But you will not harvest any crops.
You will press olives.
But you will not use the oil for yourselves.
You will crush grapes.
But you will not drink the wine
that is made from them.
[16]You have followed the evil practices
of King Omri of Israel.
You have done what the family
of King Ahab did.
You have followed their bad example.
So I will let you be destroyed.
Others will make fun of you.
The nations will laugh at you.”

Micah Is Sad Because Israel Has Sinned

Micah 7

[1]I'm suffering very much!
I'm like someone who gathers summer fruit in a vineyard
after the good fruit has already been picked.
No grapes are left to eat.
None of the early figs I long for remain.
[2]Faithful people have disappeared from the land.
Those who are honest are gone.
All men hide and wait
to spill the blood of others.
They use nets to try and trap one another.
[3]They are very good at doing what is evil.
Rulers require gifts.
Judges accept money from people
who want special favors.
Those who are powerful
always get what they want.
All of them make evil plans together.
[4]The best of them are as harmful as thorns.
The most honest of them are even worse.
The time your prophets warned you about has come.
God is about to punish you.
Panic has taken hold of you.
[5]Don't trust your neighbors.
Don't put your faith in your friends.
Be careful of what you say
even to your own wife.
[6]Sons don't honor their fathers.
Daughters refuse to obey their mothers.
Daughters-in-law are against their mothers-in-law.
A man's enemies are the members of his own family.

[7]So I will look to the LORD.
I'll put my trust in God my Savior.

He will hear me.

Jerusalem Will Be Rebuilt

[8]The people of Jerusalem say,

"Don't laugh when we suffer,
you enemies of ours!
We have fallen.
But we'll get up.
Even though we sit in the dark,
the LORD will give us light.
[9]We've sinned against the LORD.
So he is angry with us.
That will continue until he takes up our case.
Then he'll do what is right for us.
He'll bring us out into the light.
Then we'll see him save us.
[10]The people of Nineveh will see it too.
And they will be put to shame.
After all, they said to us,
'Where is the LORD your God?'
But we will see them destroyed.
Soon they will be stomped on
like mud in the streets."

[11]People of Jerusalem, the time will come
when your walls will be rebuilt.
Land will be added to your territory.
[12]At that time your people will come back to you.
They'll return from Assyria
and the cities of Egypt.
They'll come from the countries
between Egypt and the Euphrates River.
They'll return from the lands
between the seas.
They'll come back from the countries
between the mountains.
[13]But the rest of the earth will be deserted.

The people who live in it
have done many evil things.

Prayer and Praise

14 LORD, be like a shepherd to your people.
Take good care of them.
They are your flock.
They live by themselves
in the safety of a forest.
Rich grasslands are all around them.
Let them eat grass in Bashan and Gilead
just as they did long ago.

15 The LORD says to his people,

"I showed your people my wonders
when they came out of Egypt long ago.
In the same way, I will show them to you."

16 When the nations see those wonders,
they will be put to shame.
All of their power will be taken away from them.
They will be so amazed
that they won't be able to speak or hear.
17 They'll be forced to eat dust like a snake.
They'll be like creatures
that have to crawl on the ground.
They'll come out of their dens
trembling with fear.
They'll show respect for the LORD our God.
They will also have respect for his people.
18 LORD, who is a God like you?
You forgive sin.
You forgive your people
when they do what is wrong.
You don't stay angry forever.
Instead, you take delight in showing
your faithful love to them.

[19]Once again you will show loving concern for us.
You will completely wipe out
the evil things we've done.
You will throw all of our sins
into the bottom of the sea.
[20]You will be true to Jacob's people.
You will show your faithful love
to Abraham's children.
You will do what you promised to do for our people
when you took an oath long ago.

Nahum

Nahum 1 Nahum 2 Nahum 3

Nahum 1

[1]Here is a message the LORD gave Nahum in a vision about Nineveh. It is written on a scroll. Nahum was from the town of Elkosh. Here is what he said.

The LORD Is Angry With Nineveh

[2]The LORD is a jealous God who punishes people.
He pays them back for the evil things they do.
His anger burns against them.
The LORD punishes his enemies.
He holds his anger back
until the right time to use it.
[3]The LORD is slow to get angry.
He is very powerful.
The LORD will not let guilty people go
without punishing them.
When he marches out, he stirs up winds and storms.
Clouds are the dust kicked up by his feet.
[4]He controls the seas. He dries them up.
He makes all of the rivers run dry.
Bashan and Mount Carmel dry up.
The flowers in Lebanon fade.
[5]He causes the mountains to shake.
The hills melt away.
The earth trembles because he is there.
So do the world and all those who live in it.
[6]Who can stand firm when his anger burns?
Who can live when he is angry?
His anger blazes out like fire.
He smashes the rocks to pieces.

[7]The LORD is good.
When people are in trouble,
they can go to him for safety.
He takes good care of those
who trust in him.

[8]But he will destroy Nineveh
with a powerful flood.
He will chase his enemies
into the darkness of punishment.

[9]The LORD will put an end
to anything they plan against him.
He won't allow Assyria to win the battle
over his people a second time.
[10]His enemies will be tangled up among thorns.
Their wine will make them drunk.
They'll be burned up like dry straw.
[11]Nineveh, a king has marched out from you.
He makes evil plans against the LORD.
He gives harmful advice.

[12]The LORD says,

"His army has many soldiers.
Other nations are helping them.
But they will be cut off and pass away.
Judah, I punished you.
But I will not do it anymore.
[13]Now I will break Assyria's yoke off your neck.
I will tear off the ropes that hold you."

[14]Nineveh, the LORD has given an order concerning you.
He has said, "You will not have any children
to carry on your name.
I will destroy the wooden and metal statues
that are in the temple of your gods.
I will get your grave ready for you.
You are worthless."

[15]Look at the mountains of Judah!
I see a messenger running to bring good news!
He's telling us that peace has come!
People of Judah, celebrate your feasts.
Carry out your promises.
The evil Assyrians won't attack you again.

They’ll be completely destroyed.

The LORD Will Destroy Nineveh

Nahum 2

[1]Nineveh, armies are coming to attack you.
Guard the forts!
Watch the roads!
Get ready!
Gather all of your strength!

[2]Assyria once took everything of value from God's people.
Its army destroyed all of their vines.
But the LORD will bring back
the glory of Jacob's people.
He'll make Israel glorious again.

[3]The shields of the soldiers attacking Nineveh are red.
The armies are dressed in bright red uniforms.
The metal on their chariots flashes
when they are prepared for war.
Their spears are ready to use.
[4]The chariots race through the main streets.
They rush back and forth through them.
They look like flaming torches.
They dart around like lightning.

[5]The commander of the attackers
sends for his special troops.
But they trip and fall on their way.
They run toward the city wall.
They keep their shield in front of them.
[6]They open the gates that hold back
the waters of the river.
And the palace falls down.
[7]The attackers order that the city's people
be taken away as prisoners.
The female slaves cry like sad doves.

They beat their chests.
[8]Nineveh is like a pool.
Its water is draining away.
"Stop running away!" someone cries out.
But no one turns back.
[9]"Steal the silver!" the attackers shout.
"Grab the gold!"
The supply is endless.
There is plenty of wealth
among all of the city's treasures.
[10]Nineveh is destroyed, robbed and stripped!
Hearts melt away in fear.
Knees give way.
Bodies tremble with fear.
Everyone's face turns pale.

[11]Assyria is like a lion.
Where is the lions' den now?
Where did they feed their cubs?
Where did all of the lions go?
In their den they had nothing to fear.
[12]The lion killed enough for his cubs to eat.
He choked what he caught for his mate.
He filled his home with what he had killed.
He brought to his dens what he had caught.

[13]"Nineveh, I am against you,"
announces the LORD who rules over all.
"I will burn up your chariots with fire.
Your young lions will be killed with swords.
I will leave you nothing on earth to catch.
The voices of your messengers
will no longer be heard."

The LORD Will Judge Nineveh

Nahum 3

[1]How terrible it will be for Nineveh!
It is a city of murderers!
It is full of liars!
It’s filled with stolen goods!
The killing never stops!
[2]Whips crack!
Wheels clack!
Horses charge!
Chariots rumble!
[3]Horsemen attack!
Swords flash!
Spears gleam!
Many people die.
Dead bodies pile up.
They can’t even be counted.
People trip over them.
[4]All of that was caused by the evil longings
of the prostitute Nineveh.
That woman who practiced evil magic
was very beautiful.
She used her sinful charms
to make slaves out of the nations.
She worshiped evil powers
in order to trap others.

[5]“Nineveh, I am against you,”
announces the LORD who rules over all.
“I will pull your skirts up over your face.
I will show the nations your naked body.
Kingdoms will make fun of your shame.
[6]I will throw garbage at you.
I will look down on you.
I will make an example out of you.

[7]All those who see you will run away from you.
They will say, ‘Nineveh is destroyed.
Who will sob over it?’
Where can I find someone
to comfort your people?”

[8]Nineveh, are you better than Thebes
on the Nile River?
There was water all around that city.
The river helped to keep it safe.
The waters were like a wall around it.
[9]Cush and Egypt gave it all of the strength it needed.
Put and Libya also helped it.
[10]But Thebes was captured anyway.
Its people were taken away as prisoners.
Its babies were smashed to pieces
at every street corner.
The Assyrian soldiers cast lots
for all of its great leaders.
They put them in chains
and made slaves out of them.
[11]People of Nineveh, you too will get drunk.
You will try to hide from your enemies.
You will look for a place of safety.

[12]All of your forts are like fig trees
that have their first ripe fruit on them.
When the trees are shaken,
the figs fall into the mouths
of those who eat them.
[13]Look at your troops.
All of them are weak.
The gates of your forts
are wide open to your enemies.
Fire has destroyed their heavy metal bars.

[14]Prepare for the attack by storing up water!
Make your walls as strong as you can!
Make some bricks out of clay!
Mix the mud to hold them together!
Use them to repair the walls!

15 In spite of all of your hard work,
fire will burn you up inside your city.
Your enemies will cut you down with their swords.
They will destroy you
just as grasshoppers eat up crops.
Multiply like grasshoppers!
Increase your numbers like locusts!
16 You have more traders
than the number of stars in the sky.
But like locusts they strip the land.
Then they fly away.
17 Your guards are like grasshoppers.
Your officials are like large numbers of locusts.
They settle in the walls on a cold day.
But when the sun appears, they fly away.
And no one knows where they go.

18 King of Assyria, your leaders are asleep.
Your nobles lie down to rest.
Your people are scattered on the mountains.
No one is left to gather them together.
19 Nothing can heal your wounds.
You will die of them.
All those who hear the news about you clap their hands
because you have fallen from power.
All of them suffered
because you never showed them any pity.

Habakkuk

Habakkuk 1 Habakkuk 2 Habakkuk 3

Habakkuk 1

[1]This is a vision the prophet Habakkuk received from the LORD. Here is what Habakkuk said.

Habakkuk Asks the LORD a Question

[2]LORD, how long do I have to call out for help?
Why don't you listen to me?
How long must I keep telling you
that things are terrible?
Why don't you save us?
[3]Why do you make me watch while
people treat others so unfairly?
Why do you put up with the wrong things
they are doing?
I have to look at death.
People are harming others.
They are arguing and fighting all the time.
[4]The law can't do what it's supposed to do.
Fairness never comes out on top.
Sinful people surround those
who do what is right.
So people are never treated fairly.

The LORD Gives His Answer

[5]The LORD replies,

"Look at the nations. Watch them.
Be totally amazed at what you see.
I am going to do something in your days
that you would never believe.
You would not believe it
even if someone told you about it.

6 I am going to send the armies of Babylonia to attack you.
They are very mean. They move quickly.
They sweep across the whole earth.
They take over places
that do not belong to them.
7 They terrify others.
They do not recognize any laws but their own.
That is how proud they are.
8 Their horses are faster than leopards.
They are meaner than wolves in the dark.
Their horsemen charge straight into battle.
They ride in from far away.
They come down like an eagle
diving for its food.
9 All of them are ready to destroy others.
Their huge armies advance like a wind out of the desert.
They gather prisoners like sand.
10 They laugh at kings
and make fun of rulers.
They laugh at all of the cities
that have high walls around them.
They build dirt ramps against the walls
and capture the cities.
11 They sweep past like the wind.
Then they go on their way.
They are guilty.
They worship their own strength."

Habakkuk Asks the LORD Another Question

12 LORD, haven't you existed forever?
You are my holy God.
So we won't die, will we?
LORD, you have appointed the Babylonians
to punish your people.
My Rock, you have chosen them to judge us.
13 Your eyes are too pure to look at what is evil.
You can't put up with the wrong things people do.
So why do you put up

with those who can’t be trusted?
The evil Babylonians swallow up
those who are more godly than themselves.
So why are you silent?
14 You have made men as if they were only fish in the sea.
They are like sea creatures that don’t have a ruler.
15 The evil Babylonians pull all of them up with hooks.
They catch them in their nets.
They gather them up.
So they celebrate.
They are glad.
16 They offer sacrifices to their nets.
They burn incense to them.
Their nets allow them to live in great comfort.
They enjoy the finest food.
17 Are you going to let them
keep on emptying their nets?
Will they go on destroying nations
without showing them any mercy?

Habakkuk 2

[1]I will go up to the lookout tower.
I'll station myself on the city wall.
I'll wait to see how the LORD will reply to me.
Then I'll try to figure out how to answer him.

The LORD Gives His Answer

[2]The LORD replies,

"Write down the message I am showing you in a vision.
Write it clearly on the tablets you use.
Then a messenger can read it
and run to announce it.
[3]The message I give you
waits for the time I have appointed.
It speaks about what is going to happen.
And all of it will come true.
It might take a while.
But wait for it.
You can be sure it will come.
It will happen when I want it to.

[4]"The Babylonians are very proud.
What they want is not good.

"But the one who is right with God
will live by faith.

[5]"Wine makes the Babylonians do foolish things.
They are proud. They never rest.
Like the grave, they are always hungry for more.
Like death, they are never satisfied.
They gather all of the nations to themselves.

They take their people away as prisoners.

6“Won’t those people laugh at the Babylonians? Won’t they make fun of them? They will say to them,

“ ‘How terrible it will be for you
who pile up stolen goods!
You get rich by cheating others.
How long will that go on?
7Those who owe you money will suddenly rise up.
You charge them too much interest.
So they will wake up
and make you tremble with fear.
Then they will take away
everything you have.
8You have robbed many nations.
So the nations that are left will rob you.
You have spilled man’s blood.
You have destroyed lands and cities
and everyone in them.’

9“How terrible it will be for the Babylonians!
They build their kingdom with money
they gained by cheating others.
They have tried to make the kingdom
as secure as possible.
After all, they did not want to be destroyed.
10They have planned to wipe out many nations.
But they have brought shame on their own kingdom.
So they must pay with their own lives.
11The stones in the walls of their homes will cry out.
And the wooden beams will echo that cry.

12“How terrible it will be for the Babylonians!
They build cities by spilling the blood of others.
They establish towns by committing crimes.
13I am the LORD who rules over all.
Human effort is no better than wood that feeds a fire.
So the nations wear themselves out for nothing.
14The oceans are full of water.

In the same way, the earth will be filled
with the knowledge of my glory.

15 “How terrible it will be for the Babylonians!
They give drinks to their neighbors.
They pour the drinks from wineskins
until their neighbors are drunk.
They want to look at their naked bodies.
16 But the Babylonians will be filled
with shame instead of glory.
So now it is their turn to drink
and be stripped of their clothes.
The cup of anger in my powerful right hand
is going to punish them.
They will be covered with shame instead of glory.
17 The harm they have done to Lebanon
will bring them down.
Because they have killed so many animals,
animals will terrify them.
They have spilled man’s blood.
They have destroyed lands and cities
and everyone in them.

18 “If someone carves a statue of a god, what is it worth?
What value is there in a god
that teaches lies?
The one who trusts in another god
worships his own creation.
He makes statues of gods that can’t speak.
19 How terrible it will be for the Babylonians!
They say to a wooden god, ‘Come to life!’
They say to a stone god, ‘Wake up!’
Can those gods give advice?
They are covered with gold and silver.
They can’t even breathe.
20 But I am in my holy temple.
Let the whole earth be silent in front of me.”

Habakkuk Prays to the LORD

Habakkuk 3

[1]This is a prayer of the prophet Habakkuk. It is on *shigionoth*. Here is what he said.

[2]LORD, I know how famous you are.
I have great respect for you
because of your mighty acts.
Do them again for us.
Make them known in our time.
When you are angry,
please show us your tender love.

[3]God, you came from Teman.
You, the Holy One, came from Mount Paran. *Selah*
Your glory covered the heavens.
Your praise filled the earth.
[4]Your glory was like the sunrise.
Rays of light flashed from your mighty hand.
Your power was hidden there.
[5]You sent plagues ahead of you.
Sickness followed behind you.
[6]When you stood up, the earth shook.
When you looked at the nations,
they trembled with fear.
The age-old mountains crumbled.
The ancient hills fell down.
Your mighty acts will last forever.
[7]I saw the tents of Cushan in trouble.
The people of Midian were suffering greatly.

[8]LORD, did your anger burn against the rivers?
Were you angry with the streams?
Were you angry with the Red Sea?
You rode your horses and chariots

to overcome it.
[9]You got your bow ready to use.
You asked for many arrows. *Selah*
You broke up the surface
of the earth with rivers.
[10]The mountains saw you and shook.
Floods of water swept by.
The sea roared.
It lifted its waves high.

[11]The sun and moon stood still in the sky.
They stopped because your flying arrows flashed by.
Your gleaming spear shone like lightning.
[12]When you were angry, you marched across the earth.
Because of your anger you destroyed the nations.
[13]You came out to set your people free.
You saved your chosen ones.
You crushed Pharaoh, the leader of that evil land of Egypt.
You stripped him from head to foot. *Selah*
[14]His soldiers rushed out to scatter us.
They were laughing at us.
They thought they would easily destroy us.
They saw us as weak people who were trying to hide.
So you wounded Pharaoh's head with his own spear.
[15]Your horses charged into the Red Sea.
They stirred up the great waters.

[16]I listened and my heart pounded.
My lips trembled at the sound.
My bones seemed to rot.
And my legs shook.
But I will be patient.
I'll wait for the day of trouble to come on Babylonia.
It's the nation that is attacking us.
[17]The fig trees might not bud.
The vines might not produce any grapes.
The olive crop might fail.
The fields might not produce any food.
There might not be any sheep in the pens.
There might not be any cattle in the barns.
[18]But I will still be glad

because of what the LORD has done.
God my Savior fills me with joy.

19 The LORD and King gives me strength.
He makes my feet like the feet of a deer.
He helps me walk on the highest places.

This prayer is for the director of music. It should be sung while being accompanied by stringed instruments.

Zephaniah

Zephaniah 1 Zephaniah 2 Zephaniah 3

Zephaniah 1

[1]A message came to Zephaniah from the LORD. He was the son of Cushi. Cushi was the son of Gedaliah. Gedaliah was the son of Amariah. Amariah was the son of King Hezekiah. The LORD spoke to Zephaniah during the rule of Josiah. He was king of Judah and the son of Amon.

The LORD Will Judge the World

[2]"I will sweep away everything
from the face of the earth,"

announces the LORD.

[3]"I will destroy people and animals alike.
I will wipe out the birds of the air
and the fish in the waters.
I will destroy sinful people along with their gods.
I will wipe man off the face of the earth,"

announces the LORD.

The LORD Warns Judah

[4]"I will reach out my powerful hand against Judah.
I will punish all those who live in Jerusalem.
I will cut off from that place
what is left of Baal worship.
The officials and priests who serve other gods
will be removed.
[5]I will wipe out those who bow down on their roofs
to worship all of the stars.
I will destroy those who take oaths
not only in my name but also in the name of Molech.
[6]I will cut off those who stop following me.
They no longer look to me or ask me for advice.
[7]Be silent in front of me.

I am the LORD and King.
The day of the LORD is near.
I have prepared a sacrifice.
I have set apart for myself
the people I invited.
8 When my sacrifice is ready to be offered,
I will punish the princes and the king's sons.
I will also judge all those who follow
the practices of other nations.
9 At that time I will punish
all those who worship other gods.
They fill the temples of their gods
with lies and other harmful things.

10 "At that time people at the Fish Gate in Jerusalem
will cry out," announces the LORD.
"So will those at the New Quarter.
The buildings on the hills will come crashing down
with a loud noise.
11 Cry out, you who live in the market places.
All of your merchants will be wiped out.
Those who trade in silver will be destroyed.
12 At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps.
I will punish those who are so contented.
They are like wine that has not been shaken up.
They think, 'The LORD won't do anything.
It doesn't matter whether it's good or bad.'
13 Their wealth will be stolen.
Their houses will be destroyed.
They will build houses.
But they will not live in them.
They will plant vineyards.
But they will not drink the wine they produce.

The Day of the LORD Is Coming

14 "The great day of the LORD is near.
In fact, it is coming quickly.
Listen! The cries on that day will be bitter.
Even soldiers will cry out in fear.

15 At that time I will pour out my anger.
There will be great suffering and pain.
It will be a day of horrible trouble.
It will be a time of darkness and gloom.
It will be filled with the blackest clouds.
16 Trumpet blasts and battle cries will be heard.
Soldiers will attack cities
that have forts and corner towers.
17 I will bring trouble on the people.
They will trip and fall as if they were blind.
They have sinned against me.
Their blood will be poured out like dust.
Their bodies will lie rotting on the ground.
18 Their silver and gold
will not be able to save them
on the day I pour out my anger.
The whole world will be burned up
when my jealous anger blazes out.
Everyone who lives on earth
will come to a sudden end.”

Zephaniah 2

[1]Gather your people together,
you shameful nation of Judah!
Gather them together!
[2]Come together before the appointed time arrives.
The day of the LORD will sweep in
like straw blown by the wind.
Soon the LORD's anger will burn against you.
The day of his anger will come on you.
[3]So look to him, all of you people in the land
who worship him faithfully.
You always do what he commands you to do.
Continue to do what is right.
Don't be proud.
Then perhaps the LORD will keep you safe
on the day he pours out his anger on the world.

A Message About Philistia

[4]Gaza will be deserted.
Ashkelon will be destroyed.
Ashdod will be emptied out at noon.
Ekron will be pulled up by its roots.
[5]How terrible it will be for you Kerethites
who live by the Mediterranean Sea!
Philistia, the LORD has spoken against you.
What happened to Canaan will happen to you.

The LORD says, "I will destroy you.
No one will be left."

[6]The Kerethites live in the land by the sea.
It will become a place for shepherds and sheep pens.
[7]It will belong to those who are still left alive
among the people of Judah.

They will find grasslands there.
They will take over
the houses in Ashkelon and live in them.
The LORD their God will take care of them.
He will bless them with great success again.

A Message About Moab and Ammon

8 The LORD says,

"I have heard Moab make fun of my people.
The Ammonites also laughed at them.
They told them that bad things
would happen to their land.
9 So Moab will become like Sodom,"
announces the LORD who rules over all.
"Ammon will be like Gomorrah.
Weeds and salt pits will cover those countries.
They will be dry and empty deserts forever.
Those who are still left alive among my people
will take all of their valuable things.
So they will receive those lands as their own.
And that is just as sure as I am alive."
The LORD is the God of Israel.

10 Moab and Ammon will be judged
because they are so proud.
They made fun of the LORD's people.
They laughed at them.
11 The LORD who rules over all will terrify Moab and Ammon.
He will destroy all of the gods on earth.
Then the nations on every shore will worship him.
All of them will serve him in their own lands.

A Message About Cush

12 The LORD says, "People of Cush,
you too will be killed with my sword."

A Message About Assyria

[13]The LORD will reach out his powerful hand against the north.
He will destroy Assyria.
He'll leave Nineveh totally empty.
It will be as dry as a desert.
[14]Flocks and herds will lie down there.
So will creatures of every kind.
Desert owls and screech owls
will rest on its pillars.
Their cries will echo through the windows.
The doorways will be full of trash.
The cedar beams will be showing.
[15]Nineveh is a carefree city.
It lived in safety.
It said to itself,
"I am like a god.
No one is greater than I am."
But it has been destroyed.
Wild animals make their home there.
All those who pass by laugh
and shake their fists at it.

The LORD Will Save Jerusalem

Zephaniah 3

[1]How terrible it will be for Jerusalem!
Its people crush others.
They refuse to obey the LORD.
They are “unclean.”
[2]They don’t obey anyone.
They don’t accept the LORD’s warnings.
They don’t trust in him.
They don’t ask their God for his help.
[3]Their officials are like roaring lions.
Their rulers are like wolves that hunt in the evening.
They don’t leave anything to eat in the morning.
[4]Their prophets are proud.
They can’t be trusted.
Their priests pollute the temple.
They break the law they teach others to obey.
[5]In spite of that, the LORD is good to Jerusalem.
He never does anything that is wrong.
Every morning he does what is fair.
Each new day he does the right thing.
But those who do what is wrong
aren’t even ashamed of it.

[6]The LORD says to his people,

“I have cut off other nations.
I have wiped out their forts.
I have left their streets deserted.
No one walks along them.
Their cities are destroyed.
Not even one person is left.
[7]I said to you people of Jerusalem,
‘Because I cut off other nations,

you will have respect for me.
Now you will accept my warning.’
I wish you had returned to me.
Then your homes would not have been torn down.
And I would not have had to punish you so much.
But you still wanted to go on sinning
in every way you could.
8So wait for me to come as judge,”
announces the LORD.
“Wait for the day I will stand up
to witness against all sinners.
I have decided to gather the nations.
I will bring the kingdoms together.
And I will pour out all of my burning anger on them.
The fire of my jealous anger
will burn the whole world up.

9“But then I will purify what all of the nations say.
And they will use their words to worship me.
They will serve me together.
10My scattered people, you will come to me
from beyond the rivers of Cush.
You will worship me.
You will bring me offerings.
11You have done many wrong things to me.
But at that time you will not be put to shame anymore.
Then I will remove from this city
those who take delight in their pride.
You will never be proud again
on my holy mountain of Zion.
12But inside your city I will leave
those who are not proud at all.
They trust in me.
13Those who are still left alive in Israel
will not do anything wrong.
They will not tell any lies.
They will not say anything to fool others.
They will eat and lie down in peace.
And no one will make them afraid.”

14People of Zion, sing!

Israel, shout loudly!
People of Jerusalem, be glad!
Let your hearts be full of joy.
15 The LORD has stopped punishing you.
He has made your enemies turn away from you.
The LORD is the King of Israel.
He is with you.
You will never again be afraid
that others will harm you.
16 The time is coming when people will say to Jerusalem,
"Zion, don't be afraid.
Don't give up.
17 The LORD your God is with you.
He is mighty enough to save you.
He will take great delight in you.
The quietness of his love will calm you down.
He will sing with joy because of you."

18 The LORD says to his people,

"You used to celebrate my appointed feasts in Jerusalem.
You are sad because you can't do that anymore.
So others make fun of those feasts.
That was a heavy load for you to carry.
But I will bring you back to your city.
19 At that time I will punish
all those who crushed you.
I will save those among you who are disabled.
I will gather those who have been scattered.
I will give you praise and honor
in every land where you were put to shame.
20 At that time I will gather you together.
And I will bring you home.
I will give you honor and praise
among all of the nations on earth.
I will bless you with great success again,"

says the LORD.

Haggai

Haggai 1

Haggai 2

Haggai Tells His People to Rebuild the LORD's Temple

Haggai 1

[1]A message came to the prophet Haggai from the LORD. Haggai gave it to Zerubbabel and Jeshua. It came on the first day of the sixth month of the second year that Darius was king of Persia. Zerubbabel was governor of Judah and the son of Shealtiel. Jeshua was high priest and the son of Jehozadak. Here is what Haggai said.

[2]The LORD who rules over all says, "The people of Judah are saying, 'The time hasn't come yet for the LORD's temple to be rebuilt.' "

[3]So the message came to me from the LORD. He said, [4]"My temple is still destroyed. In spite of that, you are living in your houses that have beautiful wooden walls."

[5]The LORD who rules over all says, "Think carefully about how you are living. [6]You have planted many seeds. But the crops you have gathered are small. So you eat. But you never have enough. You drink. But you are never full. You put your clothes on. But you are not warm. You earn your pay. But it will not buy everything you need."

[7]He continues, "Think carefully about how you are living. [8]Go up into the mountains. Bring logs down. Use them to rebuild my house. Then I will enjoy it. And you will honor me," says the LORD.

[9]"You expected a lot. But you can see what a small amount it turned out to be," announces the LORD who rules over all. "I blew away what you brought home. Why? Because my temple is still destroyed. In spite of that, each one of you is busy with your own house.

[10]"So because of what you have done, the heavens have held back the dew. And the earth has not produced its crops. [11]I ordered the rain not to fall on the fields and mountains. Then the ground did not produce any grain. There were not enough grapes to make fresh wine. The trees did not bear enough olives to make oil. People and cattle suffered. All of your hard work failed."

12Then Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, and the high priest Jeshua, the son of Jehozadak, obeyed the LORD their God. So did all of the LORD's people who were still left alive. He had given his message to them through me. He had sent me to speak to them. And the people had respect for him.

13I was the LORD's messenger. So I gave his message to the people. I told them, "The LORD announces, 'I am with you.' "

14So the LORD stirred up the spirits of Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, and the high priest Jeshua. He also stirred up the rest of the people to help them. Then everyone began to work on the temple of the LORD who rules over all. He is their God. 15It was the 24th day of the sixth month of the second year that Darius was king.

The New Temple Will Be Beautiful

Haggai 2

1 A second message came to me from the LORD. It came on the 21st day of the
seventh month. The LORD said, 2 "Speak to Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah
and the son of Shealtiel. Also speak to the high priest Jeshua, the son of
Jehozadak. And speak to all of my people who are still left alive. Ask them,
3 'Did any of you who are here see how beautiful this temple used to be? How
does it look to you now? It doesn't look so good, does it?

4 " 'But be strong, Zerubbabel,' announces the LORD. 'Be strong, Jeshua. Be
strong, all of you people in the land,' announces the LORD. 'Start rebuilding. I
am with you,' announces the LORD who rules over all. 5 'That is what I
promised you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit continues to be with
you. So do not be afraid.' "

6 The LORD says, "In a little while I will shake the heavens and the earth once
more. I will also shake the ocean and the dry land. 7 I will shake all of the
nations. Then what they consider to be priceless will come to my temple. And I
will fill the temple with glory," says the LORD who rules over all.

8 "The silver belongs to me. So does the gold," announces the LORD. 9 "The
new temple will be more beautiful than the first one was," says the LORD. "And
in this place I will give peace to my people," announces the LORD who rules
over all.

The LORD Will Make His People Pure and Clean

10 A third message came to me from the LORD. It came on the 24th day of the
ninth month of the second year that Darius was king. 11 The LORD who rules
over all speaks. He says, "Ask the priests what the law says. 12 Suppose
someone carries holy meat in the clothes he is wearing. And the clothes touch
some bread or stew. Or they touch some wine, olive oil or other food. Then do
those things also become holy?"

The priests answered, “No.”

13So I said, “Suppose someone is made ‘unclean’ by touching a dead body. And then he touches one of those things. Does it become ‘unclean’ too?”

“Yes,” the priests replied. “It does.”

14Then I said, “The LORD announces, ‘That is how I look at these people and this nation. Anything they do and anything they sacrifice on the altar is “unclean.”

15“ ‘Now think carefully about the time before one stone was laid on top of another in my temple. 16People went to get 20 measures of grain. But they could find only 10. They went to where the wine was stored to get 50 measures. But only 20 were there. 17You worked very hard to produce all of those things. But I struck them with rot, mold and hail. And you still did not turn to me,’ announces the LORD.

18“ ‘It is the 24th day of the ninth month. From this day on, think carefully about the day when the foundation of my temple was laid. Think about it carefully. 19Are any seeds still left in your barns? Until now, your vines and fig trees have not produced any fruit. Your pomegranate and olive trees have not produced any either.

“ ‘But from this day on I will bless you.’ ”

The LORD Compares Zerubbabel to His Royal Ring

20A final message came to me from the LORD. It also came on the 24th day of the ninth month. He said, 21“Speak to Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah. Tell him I will shake the heavens and the earth. 22I will throw down royal thrones. I will smash the power of other kingdoms. I will destroy chariots and their drivers. Horses and their riders will fall. They will be killed with the swords of their relatives.

23“ ‘Zerubbabel, at that time I will pick you,’ announces the LORD. ‘You are my servant,’ announces the LORD. ‘You will be like a ring that has my royal seal on it. I have chosen you,’ announces the LORD who rules over all.”

Zechariah

Zechariah 1
Zechariah 2
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Zechariah 14

The LORD Wants His People to Return to Him

Zechariah 1

1 A message came to the prophet Zechariah from the LORD. It was the eighth
month of the second year that Darius was king of Persia. Zechariah was the son
of Berekiah. Berekiah was the son of Iddo. Here is what Zechariah said.

2 The LORD who rules over all was very angry with our people years ago. 3 And
now he says to us, “Return to me. Then I will return to you,” announces the
LORD. 4 “Do not be like your people years ago. The earlier prophets gave them
my message. I said, ‘Stop doing what is evil. Turn away from your sinful
practices.’ But they would not listen to me. They would not pay any attention,”
announces the LORD.

5 “Where are those people now? And what about my prophets? Do they live
forever? 6 I commanded my servants the prophets what to say. I told them what
I planned to do. But your people refused to obey me. So I had to punish them.

“Then they had a change of heart. They said, ‘The LORD who rules over all
has punished us because of how we have lived. He was fair and right to do that.
He has done to us just what he decided to do.’ ”

A Vision of a Horseman Among Some Myrtle Trees

7 During the second year that Darius was king, a message came to me from
the LORD. It was the 24th day of the 11th month. That’s the month of Shebat.

8 I had a vision at night. I saw a man riding a red horse. He was standing
among the myrtle trees in a valley. Behind him were red, brown and white
horses.

9 An angel was talking with me. I asked him, “Sir, what are these?”

He answered, “I will show you what they are.”

10 Then the man who was standing among the myrtle trees said, “They are the
messengers the LORD has sent out. He told them to go all through the earth.”

[11]They brought a report to the angel of the LORD. He was standing among the myrtle trees. They said to him, “We have gone all through the earth. We’ve found the whole world enjoying peace and rest.”

[12]Then the angel of the LORD spoke up. He said, “LORD, you rule over all. How long will you keep from showing your tender love to Jerusalem? How long will you keep it from the towns of Judah? You have been angry with them for 70 years.”

[13]So the LORD replied with kind and comforting words. He spoke them to the angel who talked with me.

[14]Then the angel said, “Announce this message. Say, ‘The LORD who rules over all says, “I am very jealous for my people in Jerusalem and Zion. [15]But I am very angry with the nations that feel secure. I was only a little angry with my people. But the nations went too far and tried to wipe them out.”

[16]“ ‘So the LORD says, “I will return to Jerusalem. I will show its people my tender love. My temple will be rebuilt there. Workers will use a measuring line when they rebuild Jerusalem,” announces the LORD.

[17]“ ‘He says, “My towns will be filled with good things once more. I will comfort Zion. And I will choose Jerusalem again.” ’ ”

A Vision of Four Horns and Four Skilled Workers

[18]Then I looked up and saw four animal horns. [19]I spoke to the angel who was talking with me. “What are these horns?” I asked.

He said, “They are the powerful nations that scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem.”

[20]Then the LORD showed me four skilled workers. [21]I asked, “What are they coming to do?”

He answered, “They are the powerful nations that scattered the people of Judah. That made them helpless. But the workers have come to terrify the horns. They will destroy the power of those nations. They had used their power to scatter Judah’s people.”

A Vision of a Man Holding a Measuring Line

Zechariah 2

1Then I looked up and saw a man. He was holding a measuring line. 2"Where
are you going?" I asked.

"To measure Jerusalem," he answered. "I want to find out how wide and how
long it is."

3Then the angel who was talking with me left. Another angel came over to
him. 4He said to him, "Run! Tell that young man Zechariah, 'Jerusalem will be
like a city that does not have any walls around it. It will have huge numbers of
people and animals in it. 5And I myself will be like a wall of fire around it,'
announces the LORD. 'I will be the city's glory.' "

6"Israel, I have scattered you in all four directions," announces the LORD.
"Come quickly! Run away from the land of the north," announces the LORD.

7"Come, people of Zion who are in Babylonia! Escape, you who live in the
city of Babylon!" 8The LORD rules over all. His angel says to Israel, "The LORD
has sent me to honor him. He wants me to punish the nations that have robbed
you of everything. After all, anyone who hurts you hurts those the LORD loves
and guards. 9So I will raise my powerful hand to strike your enemies down.
Their own slaves will rob them of everything. Then you will know that the
LORD who rules over all has sent me.

10" 'People of Zion, shout and be glad! I am coming to live among you,'
announces the LORD. 11'At that time many nations will join themselves to me.
And they will become my people. I will live among you.' says the LORD. Then
you will know that the LORD who rules over all has sent me to you.

12"He will receive Judah as his share in the holy land. And he will choose
Jerusalem again.

13"All you people of the world, be still because the LORD is coming. He is
getting ready to come down from his holy temple in heaven."

A Vision of the High Priest Dressed in Fine Clothes

Zechariah 3

[1]Then the LORD showed me the high priest Jeshua. He was standing in front of the angel of the LORD. Satan was standing to the right of Jeshua. He was there to bring charges against the high priest. [2]The LORD said to Satan, “May the LORD correct you! He has chosen Jerusalem. So may he correct you! Isn’t this man Jeshua like a burning stick pulled out of the fire?”

[3]Jeshua stood in front of the angel. He was wearing clothes that were very dirty. [4]The angel spoke to those who were standing near him. He said, “Take his dirty clothes off.”

He said to Jeshua, “I have taken your sin away. I will put fine clothes on you.”

[5]I added, “Put a clean turban on his head.” So they did. And they dressed him while the angel of the LORD stood by.

[6]Then the angel spoke to Jeshua. He said, [7]“The LORD who rules over all says, ‘You must live the way I want you to. And you must do what I want you to do. Then you will rule in my temple. You will be in charge of my courtyards. And I will give you a place among these who are standing here.

[8]“ ‘High priest Jeshua, pay attention! I want you other priests who are sitting with Jeshua to listen also. All of you men are signs of things to come. I am going to bring my servant the Branch. [9]Look at the stone I have put in front of Jeshua! There are seven eyes on that one stone. I will carve a message on it,’ says the LORD who rules over all. ‘And I will remove the sin of this land in one day.

[10]“ ‘At that time each of you will invite your neighbors to visit you. They will sit under your vines and fig trees,’ announces the LORD.”

A Vision of the Gold Lampstand and Two Olive Trees

Zechariah 4

[1]Then the angel who was talking with me returned. He woke me up. It was as if I had been asleep. [2]"What do you see?" he asked me.

"I see a solid gold lampstand," I answered. "It has a bowl on top of it. There are seven lamps on it. Seven tubes lead to each of them. [3]There are two olive trees by the lampstand. One is on its right side. The other is on its left."

[4]I asked the angel who was talking with me, "Sir, what are these?"

[5]He answered, "Don't you know what they are?"

"No, sir," I replied.

[6]So he said to me, "A message came to Zerubbabel from the LORD. He said, 'Your strength will not get my temple rebuilt. Your power will not do it either. Only the power of my Spirit will do it,' says the LORD who rules over all.

[7]"So nothing can stop Zerubbabel from completing the temple. Even a mountain of problems will be smoothed out by him. When the temple is finished, he will put its most important stone in place. Then the people will shout, 'God bless it! God bless it!' "

[8]A message came to me from the LORD. His angel said, [9]"The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple. His hands will also complete it. Then you will know that the LORD who rules over all has sent me to you.

[10]"Do not look down on the small amount of work done on the temple so far. People will be filled with joy when they see Zerubbabel holding the most important stone.

"The seven eyes on the stone are the eyes of the LORD himself. He looks out over the whole earth."

[11]Then I said to the angel, "I see two olive trees. One is on the right side of the lampstand. The other is on the left. What are those trees?"

[12]I continued, "I also see two olive branches. They are next to the two gold

pipes that pour out golden olive oil. What are those branches?”

13He answered, “Don’t you know what they are?”

“No, sir,” I said.

14So he told me, “They are Zerubbabel and Jeshua. The Lord of the whole earth has anointed them to serve him.”

A Vision of a Flying Scroll

Zechariah 5

[1]I looked up again and saw a flying scroll.

[2]"What do you see?" the angel asked me.

"A flying scroll," I replied. "It's 30 feet long and 15 feet wide."

[3]He said to me, "A curse sent by the LORD is written on it. It is going out over the whole land. Every thief will be driven out of the land. That is what it says on one side of the scroll. Everyone who lies when taking an oath to tell the truth will also be driven out. That is what it says on the other side. [4]The LORD who rules over all announces, 'I will send the curse out. It will enter the house of the thief. It will also enter the house of anyone who lies when taking an oath in my name. It will remain in that house and destroy it. It will pull down its beams and stones.' "

A Vision of a Woman in a Basket

[5]Then the angel who was talking with me came forward. He said to me, "Look at what is coming."

[6]"What is it?" I asked.

"A measuring basket," he replied. "The sins of the people all through the land are in it."

[7]Then the basket's cover was lifted up. It was made out of lead. A woman was sitting in the basket! [8]The angel said, "She stands for everything that is evil." Then he pushed her down into the basket. He put the lead cover back over its opening.

[9]I looked up and saw two other women. They had wings like the wings of a stork. A wind sent by the LORD carried them along. They lifted the basket up between heaven and earth.

[10]"Where are they taking the basket?" I asked the angel.

[11]He replied, “To the country of Babylonia. A temple will be built for it. When the temple is ready, the basket will be set there in its place.”

A Vision of Four Chariots

Zechariah 6

1 I looked up again and saw four chariots. They were coming out from
between two mountains. The mountains were made out of bronze.

2 The first chariot was pulled by red horses. The second one had black horses.
3 The third had white horses. And the fourth had spotted horses. All of the
horses were powerful.

4 I asked the angel who was talking with me, “Sir, what are these?”

5 The angel answered, “The four spirits of heaven. They are going out to serve
the Lord of the whole world. 6 The chariot pulled by the black horses is going
toward the north country. The one with the white horses is going toward the
west. And the one with the spotted horses is going toward the south.”

7 The powerful horses went out. They were in a hurry to go all over the earth.
The angel said, “Go all through the earth!” So they did.

8 Then the LORD called out to me, “Look! The horses going toward the north
have given my Spirit rest in the north country.”

A Crown Is Given to Jeshua

9 A message came to me from the LORD. His angel said, 10 “Get some silver
and gold from Heldai, Tobijah and Jedaiah. They have just come back from
Babylonia. On that same day go to Josiah’s house. He is the son of Zephaniah.
11 Use the silver and gold to make a crown. Set it on the head of the high priest
Jeshua. He is the son of Jehozadak.

12 “Give Jeshua a message from the LORD who rules over all. He says, ‘Here is
the man whose name is The Branch. He will branch out and build my temple.
13 That is what he will do. He will be dressed in majesty as if it were his royal
robe. He will sit as king on his throne. He will also be a priest there. So he will
combine the positions of king and priest in himself.’

14“The crown will be given to Heldai, Tobijah, Jedaiah and Zephaniah’s son
Hen. The crown will be kept in the LORD’s temple. It will remind everyone that
the LORD’s promises will come true.

15“Those who are far away will come to Jerusalem. They will help build the
LORD’s temple. Then his people will know that the LORD who rules over all has
sent me to them. It will happen if they are careful to obey the LORD their God.”

Treat Everyone Fairly

Zechariah 7

1During the fourth year that Darius was king, a message came to me from the LORD. It was the fourth day of the ninth month. That's the month of Kislev.

2The people of Bethel wanted to ask the LORD to show them his favor. So they sent Sharezer and Regem-Melech and their men. 3They went to the prophets and priests at the LORD's temple. They asked them, "Should we sob and go without eating in the fifth month? That's what we've done for many years."

4Then the message came to me from the LORD who rules over all. He said, 5"Ask the priests and all of the people in the land a question for me. Say to them, 'You sobbed and fasted in the fifth and seventh months. You did it for the past 70 years. But did you really do it for me? 6And when you were eating and drinking, weren't you just enjoying good food for yourselves?

7" 'Didn't I tell you the same thing through the earlier prophets? That was when Jerusalem and the towns around it were at rest and enjoyed success. People lived in the Negev Desert and the western hills at that time.' "

8Another message came to me from the LORD. 9He rules over all. He says to his people, "Treat everyone fairly. Show faithful love and tender concern to one another. 10Do not take advantage of widows. Do not mistreat children whose fathers have died. Do not crush strangers or poor people. Do not make evil plans against one another."

11But they refused to pay attention to the LORD. They were stubborn. They turned their backs and covered up their ears. 12They made their hearts as hard as the hardest stone. They wouldn't listen to the law. They wouldn't pay attention to the LORD's messages.

So the LORD who rules over all was very angry. After all, his Spirit had spoken to his people through the earlier prophets.

13"When I called, they did not listen," says the LORD. "So when they called, I would not listen. 14I used a windstorm to scatter them among all of the nations. They were strangers there. The land they left behind became dry and empty.

No one could even travel through it. That is how they turned the pleasant land into a dry and empty desert.”

The LORD Promises to Bless Jerusalem

Zechariah 8

[1]Another message came to me from the LORD who rules over all. He said, [2]"I
am very jealous for my people in Zion. In fact, I am burning with jealousy for
them."

[3]He continued, "I will return to Zion. I will live among my people in
Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called The City of Truth. And my mountain
will be called The Holy Mountain."

[4]He continued, "Once again old men and women will sit in the streets of
Jerusalem. All of them will be using canes because they are old. [5]The city
streets will be filled with boys and girls. They will be playing there."

[6]He continued, "All of that might seem wonderful to the people who are
living at that time. But it will not seem wonderful to me."

[7]He continued, "I will save my people. I will gather them from the countries
of the east and the west. [8]I will bring them back to live in Jerusalem. They will
be my people. I will be their faithful God. I will keep my promises to them."

[9]The LORD who rules over all says to his people, "Listen to the words that
were spoken by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah. They spoke to you when
the work on my temple started up again. Let your hands be strong so that you
can rebuild the temple.

[10]"Before the work was started again, there was no pay for the people or food
for the animals. People could not go about their business safely because of
their enemies. I had turned all of them against one another. [11]But now I will not
punish you who are living at this time. I will not treat you as I treated your
people before you," announces the LORD who rules over all.

[12]"Your seeds will grow well. Your vines will bear fruit. The ground will
produce crops for you. And the heavens will drop their dew on your land. I will
give all of those things to those who are still left alive here.

[13]"Judah and Israel, in the past the nations called down curses on you. But
now I will save you. You will be a blessing to others. Do not be afraid. Let

your hands be strong so that you can do my work.”

14The LORD who rules over all says, “Years ago your people made me angry.
So I decided to bring trouble on them. I did not show them any pity. 15But now
I plan to do good things to Jerusalem and Judah again. So do not be afraid.

16“Here is what you must do. Speak the truth to one another. Make true and
wise decisions in your courts. 17Do not make evil plans against your neighbors.
When you take an oath to tell the truth, do not lie. Many people love to do that.
But I hate all of those things,” announces the LORD.

18Another message came to me from the LORD who rules over all. He said,
19“You have established special times to go without eating. They are your fasts
in the fourth, fifth, seventh and tenth months. They will become days of joy.
They will be happy times for Judah. It will happen if you take delight in telling
the truth and bringing about peace.”

20He continued, “Many nations will still come to you. And those who live in
many cities will also come. 21The people who live in one city will go to
another city. They will say, ‘Let’s go right away to ask the LORD to show us his
favor. Let’s look to him as our God. We ourselves are going.’ 22Large numbers
of people and nations will come to Jerusalem. They will look to me. They will
ask me to show them my favor.”

23He continued, “At that time many men from all nations and languages will
take hold of one Jew. They will grab hold of the hem of his robe. And they will
say, ‘We want to go to Jerusalem with you. We’ve heard that God is with
you.’ ”

The LORD Destroys Israel's Enemies

Zechariah 9

[1]This is the LORD's message
against the land of Hadrach.
He will judge Damascus.
That's because all of the tribes of Israel look to him.
So do other people.
[2]The LORD will judge Hamath too.
It's next to Damascus.
He will also punish Tyre and Sidon
even though they are very clever.
[3]Tyre's people have built a fort for themselves.
They've piled up silver like dust.
They have as much gold as the dirt in the streets.
[4]But the Lord will take away everything they have.
He'll destroy their power on the Mediterranean Sea.
And Tyre will be completely burned up.
[5]Ashkelon will see it and become afraid.
Gaza will groan with pain.
So will Ekron. Its hope will vanish.
Gaza will no longer have a king.
Ashkelon will be deserted.
[6]Strangers will take over Ashdod.
The LORD says, "I will take away everything
the Philistines are so proud of.
[7]They will no longer drink the blood of their animal sacrifices.
I will remove the 'unclean' food from between their teeth.
The Philistines who are left will belong to our God.
They will become leaders in Judah.
And Ekron will be like the Jebusites.
So the Philistines will become part of Israel.
[8]But I will guard my temple
against enemy armies.
No one will ever crush my people again.
I will make sure it does not happen.

A King Comes to Zion

9 “City of Zion, be full of joy!
People of Jerusalem, shout!
See, your king comes to you.
He always does what is right.
He has the power to save.
He is gentle and riding on a donkey.
He is sitting on a donkey’s colt.
10 I will take the chariots away from Ephraim.
I will remove the war horses from Jerusalem.
I will break the bows that are used in battle.
Your king will announce peace to the nations.
He will rule from ocean to ocean.
His kingdom will reach from the Euphrates River
to the ends of the earth.
11 I will set your prisoners free
from where their enemies are keeping them.
I will do it because of the blood
that put my covenant with you into effect.
12 Return to your place of safety,
you prisoners who still have hope.
Even now I announce that I will give you back
much more than you had before.
13 I will bend Judah as I bend my bow.
I will make Ephraim’s people my arrows.
Zion, I will stir up your sons.
Greece, they will attack your sons.
My people, I will use you as my sword.”

The LORD Will Appear

14 Then the LORD will appear over his people.
His arrows will flash like lightning.
The LORD and King will blow the trumpet of his thunder.
He’ll march out like a storm in the south.
15 The LORD who rules over all
will be like a shield to his people.
They will destroy their enemies.

They'll use slings to throw stones at them.
They'll drink the blood of their enemies
as if it were wine.
They'll be full like the bowl that is used
for sprinkling the corners of the altar.
16 The LORD their God will save his people on that day.
They will be like sheep that belong to his flock.
They will gleam in his land
like jewels in a crown.
17 How very beautiful they will be!
Grain and fresh wine
will make the young men and women strong.

THE LORD WILL TAKE CARE OF JUDAH

Zechariah 10

[1]People of Judah, ask the LORD
to send rain in the spring.
He is the one who makes the storm clouds.
He sends down showers of rain on all people.
He gives everyone the plants in the fields.
[2]Other gods tell lies.
Those who practice magic
see visions that aren't true.
They tell dreams that fool people.
They give comfort that doesn't do any good.
So the people wander around like sheep.
They are crushed because they don't have a shepherd.

[3]The LORD who rules over all says,

"My anger burns against the shepherds.
I will punish the leaders.
I will take care of my flock.
They are the people of Judah.
I will make them like a proud horse in battle.
[4]The most important building stone
will come from the tribe of Judah.
The tent stake will also come from it.
And the bow that is used in battle will come from it.
In fact, every ruler will come from it.
[5]Together they will be like soldiers in battle.
They will fight their way
through the muddy streets.
I will be with them.
So they will fight against the horsemen
and destroy them.

[6]“I will make the family of Judah strong.
I will save the people of Joseph.
I will bring them back
because I have tender love for them.
It will be as if
I had not sent them away.
I am the LORD their God.
I will help them.
[7]The people of Ephraim will become like mighty men.
Their hearts will be glad
as if they were drinking wine.
Their children will see it
and be filled with joy.
I will make their hearts glad.
[8]I will whistle for my people
and gather them in.
I will set them free.
There will be as many of them as before.
[9]I have scattered them among the nations.
But in lands far away they will remember me.
They and their children will be kept alive.
And they will return.
[10]I will bring them back from Egypt.
I will gather them from Assyria.
I will bring them to Gilead and Lebanon.
There will not be enough room for them.
[11]They will pass through a sea of trouble.
The stormy sea will calm down.
All of the deep places in the Nile River will dry up.
Assyria’s pride will be brought down.
Egypt’s right to rule will disappear.
[12]I will make my people strong.
They will worship and obey me,”

announces the LORD.

Zechariah 11

[1]Lebanon, open your doors!
Then fire can burn up your cedar trees.
[2]Pine trees, cry out!
The cedar trees have fallen down.
The majestic trees are destroyed.
Cry out, you oak trees of Bashan!
The thick forest has been cut down.
[3]Listen to the shepherds cry out!
Their rich grasslands are destroyed.
Listen to the lions roar!
The trees and bushes along the Jordan River are gone.

The Two Shepherds

[4]The LORD my God says, “Take care of the sheep that are set apart to be sacrificed. [5]Those who buy them kill them. And they are not punished for it. Those who sell them say, ‘Praise the LORD! We’re rich!’ And their own shepherds do not spare them.

[6]“I will no longer have pity on the people in the land,” announces the LORD. “I will hand all of them over to their neighbors and their king. They will crush the people in the land. And I will not save them from their powerful hands.”

[7]So I took care of the sheep set apart to be sacrificed. I took special care of those that had been crushed. Then I got two shepherd’s staffs. I called one of them Favor. I called the other one Union. And I took care of the flock. [8]In one month I got rid of three worthless shepherds.

The sheep hated me. And I got tired of them. [9]So I said, “I won’t be your shepherd anymore. Let those of you who are dying die. Let those who are passing away pass away. Let those who are left eat one another up.”

[10]Then I got my staff called Favor. I broke it. That meant the covenant the LORD had made with all of the nations was broken. [11]It happened that very day. The sheep that had been crushed were watching me. They knew it was the

LORD's message.

12I told them, "If you think it is best, give me my pay. But if you don't think so, you keep it." So they paid me 30 silver coins.

13The LORD said to me, "Throw the coins to the potter." What a good price they had set for me! So I threw the 30 silver coins to the potter in the LORD's temple.

14Then I broke my second staff called Union. That broke the union between Judah and Israel.

15The LORD said to me, "Now pretend to be a foolish shepherd. Get the things you need. 16I am going to raise up a shepherd over the land. He will not take care of those that are wounded. He will not look for the young ones. He will not heal those that are hurt. He will not feed the healthy ones. Instead, he will eat the best sheep. He will even tear their hoofs off.

17"How terrible it will be for that worthless shepherd!
He deserts the flock.
May a sword strike his arm and his right eye!
May his powerful arm become weak!
May his right eye be totally blinded!"

The LORD Will Destroy Jerusalem's Enemies

Zechariah 12

[1]This is the LORD's message about Israel. The LORD spread out the heavens.
He laid the foundation of the earth. He created the spirits of all men. He says,
[2]"Jerusalem will be like a cup in my hand. It will make all of the surrounding
nations drunk from the wine of my anger. Judah will be attacked by its
enemies. So will Jerusalem.

[3]"At that time all of the nations on earth will gather together against
Jerusalem. Then it will become like a rock that can't be moved. All of the
nations that try to move it will only hurt themselves. [4]On that day I will fill
every horse with panic. I will make every rider crazy," announces the LORD. "I
will watch over the people of Judah. But I will make all of the horses of the
nations blind.

[5]"Then the leaders of Judah will say in their hearts, 'The people of Jerusalem
are strong. That's because the LORD who rules over all is their God.'

[6]"At that time Judah's leaders will be like a fire pot in a pile of wood. They
will be like a burning torch among bundles of grain. They will destroy all of
the surrounding nations on every side. But Jerusalem will remain unharmed in
its place.

[7]"I will save the houses in Judah first. The honor of David's family line is
great. So is the honor of those who live in Jerusalem. But their honor will not
be greater than the honor of the rest of Judah.

[8]"At that time I will be like a shield to those who live in Jerusalem. Then
even the weakest among them will be great warriors like David. And David's
family line will be like the Angel of the LORD who leads them. [9]On that day I
will begin to destroy all of the nations that attack Jerusalem.

Israel's People Will Sob Over the One They Pierced

[10]"I will pour out a spirit of grace and prayer on David's family line. I will

also send it on those who live in Jerusalem. They will look to me. I am the one they have pierced. They will sob over me as someone sobs over an only child who has died. They will be full of sorrow over me, just like someone who is full of sorrow over an oldest son.

11“At that time there will be a lot of crying in Jerusalem. It will sound like the sobs of the people at Hadad Rimmon over Josiah’s death in the Valley of Megiddo. 12Everyone in the land will sob. Each family will cry by themselves and their wives by themselves. That will include the family lines of David, Nathan, 13Levi, Shimei and 14all of the others.

The LORD Makes Israel Pure and Clean

Zechariah 13

1 “At that time a fountain will be opened for the benefit of David’s family
line. It will also bless the others who live in Jerusalem. It will wash away their
sins. It will make them pure and clean.

2 “On that day I will remove the names of other gods from the land. They will
not even be remembered anymore,” announces the LORD who rules over all. “I
will drive the evil prophets out of the land. I will get rid of the spirit that put
lies in their mouths. 3 Some people might still prophesy. But their own fathers
and mothers will speak to them. They will tell them, ‘You must die. You have
told lies in the LORD’s name.’ When they prophesy, their own parents will stab
them.

4 “At that time every prophet will be ashamed of his vision. He will no longer
pretend to be a true prophet. He will not put on clothes that are made out of
hair in order to trick people. 5 In fact, he will say, ‘I’m not really a prophet. I’m
a farmer. I’ve farmed the land since I was young.’ 6 Suppose someone asks him,
‘What are those wounds on your body?’ Then he will answer, ‘I was given
these wounds at the house of my friends.’

The Good Shepherd Is Killed and the Sheep Are Scattered

7 “My sword, wake up! Attack my shepherd!
Attack the man who is close to me,”
announces the LORD who rules over all.
“Strike the shepherd down.
Then the sheep will be scattered.
And I will turn my hand against their little ones.
8 Here is what will happen in the whole land,”
announces the LORD.
“Two-thirds of the people will be struck down and die.
But one-third will be left.

[9]I will put that third in the fire.
I will make them as pure as silver.
I will test them like gold.
They will call out to me.
And I will answer them.
I will say, ‘They are my people.’
And they will say, ‘The LORD is our God.’ ”

The LORD Will Be King Over the Whole Earth

Zechariah 14

[1]The day of the LORD is coming. At that time Jerusalem's enemies will steal
everything its people have. They will divide it up right in front of them.

[2]The LORD will gather all of the nations together. They will fight against
Jerusalem. They'll capture the city. Its houses will be robbed. Its women will
be raped. Half of the people will be taken away as prisoners. But the rest of
them won't be taken.

[3]Then the LORD will march out and fight against those nations. He will go to
war against them.

[4]On that day he will stand on the Mount of Olives. It's east of Jerusalem. It
will be split in two from east to west. Half of the mountain will move north.
The other half will move south. A large valley will be formed. [5]The people will
run away through that mountain valley. It will reach all the way to Azel.
They'll run away just as they ran from the earthquake when Uzziah was king
of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come. All of the holy ones will come
with him.

[6]There won't be any light on that day. The sun, moon and stars will not shine.
[7]It will be a day unlike any other. It won't be separated into day and night. It
will be a day known only to the LORD. After that day is over, there will be light
again.

[8]At that time water that gives life will flow out from Jerusalem. Half of it will
run into the Dead Sea. The other half will go to the Mediterranean Sea. The
water will flow in summer and winter.

[9]The LORD will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one
LORD. His name will be the only name.

[10]The whole land south of Jerusalem will be changed. From Geba to Rimmon
it will become like the Arabah Valley. But Jerusalem will be raised up. It will
remain in its place. From the Benjamin Gate to the First Gate to the Corner
Gate nothing will be changed. From the Tower of Hananel to the royal

winepress the city will remain the same. [11]People will live in it. Jerusalem will never be destroyed again. It will be secure.

[12]The LORD will punish all of the nations that fought against Jerusalem. He'll strike them with a plague. It will make their bodies rot while they are still standing on their feet. Their eyes will rot in their heads. Their tongues will rot in their mouths. [13]On that day the LORD will fill people with great panic. They will grab one another by the hand. And they'll attack each other.

[14]Judah will also fight at Jerusalem. The wealth of all of the surrounding nations will be collected. Huge amounts of gold, silver and clothes will be gathered up. [15]The same kind of plague will strike the horses, mules, camels and donkeys. In fact, it will strike all of the animals in the army camps.

[16]But some people from all of the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will still be left alive. All of them will go up there to worship the King. He is the LORD who rules over all. Year after year they will celebrate the Feast of Booths.

[17]Some nations might not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King. If they don't, they won't have any rain. [18]The people of Egypt might not go up there to take part. Then they won't have any rain either. That's the plague the LORD will send on the nations that don't go to celebrate the Feast of Booths. [19]Egypt will be punished. So will all of the other nations that don't celebrate the Feast.

[20]On that day HOLY TO THE LORD will be carved on the bells of the horses. The cooking pots in the LORD's temple will be just like the sacred bowls in front of the altar for burnt offerings. [21]Every pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be set apart to the LORD. All those who come to offer sacrifices will get some of the pots and cook in them. At that time there won't be any Canaanites in the LORD's temple. He is the LORD who rules over all.

Malachi

Malachi 1 Malachi 2 Malachi 3 Malachi 4

Malachi 1

[1]This is the LORD's message to Israel through Malachi.

The LORD Chooses Jacob Instead of Esau

[2]"Israel, I have loved you," says the LORD.

"But you ask, 'How have you loved us?'

"Wasn't Esau Jacob's brother?" says the LORD. "But I chose Jacob [3]instead of Esau. I turned Esau's mountains into a dry and empty land. I left that land of Edom to the wild dogs in the desert."

[4]Edom might say, "We have been crushed. But we'll rebuild our cities."

The LORD who rules over all says, "They might rebuild their cities. But I will destroy them. They will be called The Evil Land. My anger will always remain on them. [5]You will see it with your own eyes. You will say, 'The LORD is great! He rules even beyond the borders of Israel!'

Give Your Best to the LORD

[6]"A son honors his father. A servant honors his master. If I am a father, where is the honor I should have? If I am a master, where is the respect you should give me?" says the LORD who rules over all. "You priests look down on me.

"But you ask, 'How have we looked down on you?'

[7]"You put 'unclean' food on my altar.

"But you ask, 'How have we made you "unclean?" '

"You do it by looking down on my altar. [8]You sacrifice blind animals to me. Isn't that wrong? You sacrifice disabled or sick animals. Isn't that wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?" says the LORD who rules over all.

[9]"Now you dare to ask me to show you my favor! But as long as you give offerings like those, how can I accept you?" says the LORD.

10“You might as well shut the temple doors! Then you would not light useless
fires on my altar. I am not pleased with you,” says the LORD. “I will not accept
any of the offerings you bring.

11“My name will be great among the nations. They will worship me from
where the sun rises in the east to where it sets in the west. In every place,
incense and pure offerings will be brought to me. That is because my name will
be great among the nations,” says the LORD.

12“But you treat my name as if it were not holy. You say my altar is ‘unclean.’
And you look down on its food. 13You say, ‘What a heavy load our work is!’
And you turn your nose up as if you hate working for me,” says the LORD who
rules over all.

“You bring animals that have been hurt. Or you bring disabled or sick
animals. Then you dare to offer them to me as sacrifices! Should I accept them
from you?” says the LORD.

14“Suppose you have a male sheep or goat that does not have any flaws. And
you promise to offer it to me. But then you sacrifice an animal that has flaws.
When you do that, you cheat me. And anyone who cheats me is under my
curse. After all, I am a great king,” says the LORD who rules over all. “The
other nations have respect for my name. So why don’t you respect it?

The LORD Warns the Priests

Malachi 2

1 “Now I am giving a warning to you priests. 2 Listen to it. Honor me with all
your heart,” says the LORD who rules over all. “If you do not, I will send a
curse on you. I will turn your blessings into curses. In fact, I have already done
that because you have not honored me with all your heart.

3 “Because of what you have done, I will punish your children. I will smear
the guts from your sacrifices on your faces. And you will be carried off to the
dump along with them. 4 You will know that I have given you a warning. I have
warned you so that my covenant with Levi will continue,” says the LORD who
rules over all.

5 “My covenant promised Levi life and peace. So I gave them to him. I
required him to respect me. And he had great respect for my name. 6 True
teaching came from his mouth. Nothing but the truth came from his lips. He
walked with me in peace. He did what was right. He turned many people away
from their sins.

7 “The lips of a priest should guard knowledge. People should look for true
teaching from his mouth. After all, he is my messenger. 8 But you have turned
away from the right path. Your teaching has caused many people to trip and
fall. You have broken my covenant with Levi,” says the LORD who rules over
all. 9 “So I have caused all of the people to hate you. They have lost respect for
you. You have not done what I told you to do. Instead, you have favored one
person over another in matters of the law.”

Judah Is Not Faithful to the LORD

10 People of Judah, all of us have one Father. One God created us. So why do
we break the covenant the LORD made with our people long ago? We don’t
even keep our promises to one another.

11 You have broken your promises. A hateful thing has been done in Israel and

Jerusalem. The LORD loves his temple. But you have polluted it. You men have married women who worship other gods.

12May the LORD punish you who do that. It doesn't matter who you are. May the LORD who rules over all cut you off from the tents of Jacob's people. May he remove you even if you bring offerings to him.

13Here's something else you do. You flood the LORD's altar with your tears. You sob and cry because he doesn't pay attention to your offerings anymore. He doesn't accept them from your hands with pleasure.

14You ask, "Why?" It's because the LORD is holding you accountable. He watches how you treat the wife you married when you were young. You have broken your promise to her. You did it even though she's your partner. You promised to stay married to her. And the LORD was a witness to it.

15Hasn't he made the two of you one? Both of you belong to him in body and spirit. And why has he made you one? Because he was looking for godly children. So guard yourself in your spirit. Don't break your promise to the wife you married when you were young.

16"I hate divorce," says the LORD God of Israel. "I hate it when people do anything that harms others," says the LORD who rules over all.

So guard yourself in your spirit. And don't break your promises.

The LORD Will Judge His People

17You have worn the LORD out by what you keep saying.

"How have we worn him out?" you ask.

You have done it by saying, "All those who do evil things are good in the LORD'S sight. And he is pleased with them." Or you ask, "Is God really fair?"

Malachi 3

[1]The LORD who rules over all says, “I will send my messenger. He will prepare my way for me. Then suddenly the Lord you are looking for will come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant will come. He is the one you long for.”

[2]But who can live through the day when he comes? Who will be left standing when he appears? He will be like a fire that makes things pure. He will be like soap that makes things clean. [3]He will act like one who makes silver pure. And he will purify the Levites, just as gold and silver are purified with fire.

Then the LORD’s people will bring proper offerings. [4]And the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to him. It will be as it was in days and years gone by.

[5]“So I will come and judge you. I will be quick to bring charges against all of you,” says the LORD who rules over all. “I will bring charges against you sinful people who do not have any respect for me. That includes those who practice evil magic. It includes those who commit adultery and those who tell lies in court. It includes those who cheat workers out of their pay. It includes those who crush widows. It also includes those who mistreat children whose fathers have died. And it includes those who take away the rights of outsiders in the courts.

Do Not Steal From God

[6]“I am the LORD. I do not change. That is why I have not destroyed you members of Jacob’s family. [7]You have turned away from my rules. You have not obeyed them. You have lived that way ever since the days of your people long ago. Return to me. Then I will return to you,” says the LORD who rules over all.

“But you ask, ‘How can we return?’

[8]“Will a man dare to steal from me? But you rob me!

“You ask, ‘How do we rob you?’

“By holding back your offerings. You also steal from me when you do not

bring me a tenth of everything you produce. [9]So you are under my curse. In fact, your whole nation is under it. That is because you are robbing me.

[10]"Bring the entire tenth to the storerooms in my temple. Then there will be plenty of food. Put me to the test," says the LORD. "Then you will see that I will throw open the windows of heaven. I will pour out so many blessings that you will not have enough room for them. [11]I will keep bugs from eating up your crops. And your grapes will not drop from the vines before they are ripe," says the LORD.

[12]"Then all of the nations will call you blessed. Your land will be delightful," says the LORD who rules over all.

[13]"You have spoken bad things against me," says the LORD.

"But you ask, 'What have we spoken against you?'

[14]"You have said, 'It is useless to serve God. What did we gain by obeying his laws? And what did we get by pretending to be sad in front of the LORD? [15]But now we call proud people blessed. Things go well with those who do what is evil. And God doesn't even punish those who argue with him.' "

[16]Those who had respect for the LORD talked with one another. They cheered each other up. And the LORD heard them. A list of people and what they did was written on a scroll in front of him. It included the names of those who respected the LORD and honored him.

[17]"They will belong to me," says the LORD who rules over all. "They will be my special treasure. I will spare them just as a loving father spares his son who serves him. [18]Then once again you will see the difference between godly people and sinful people. And you will see the difference between those who serve me and those who do not.

The Day of the LORD Is Coming

Malachi 4

1 “You can be sure the day of the LORD is coming. My anger will burn like a
furnace. All those who are proud will be like straw. So will all those who do
what is evil. The day that is coming will set them on fire,” says the LORD who
rules over all. “Not even a root or a branch will be left to them.

2 “But here is what will happen for you who have respect for me. The sun that
brings life will rise. Its rays will bring healing to my people. You will go out
and leap like calves that have just been let out of the barn.

3 “Then you will stomp on sinful people. They will be like ashes under your
feet. That will happen on the day I act,” says the LORD.

4 “Remember the law my servant Moses gave you. Remember the rules and
laws I gave him at Mount Horeb. They were for the whole nation of Israel.

5 “I will send you the prophet Elijah. He will come before the day of the LORD
arrives. It will be a great and terrifying day. 6 Elijah will teach parents how to
love their children. He will also teach children how to honor their parents. If
that does not happen, I will come. And I will put a curse on the land.”

The New Testament

Matthew

Matthew 1
Matthew 2
Matthew 3
Matthew 4
Matthew 5
Matthew 6
Matthew 7
Matthew 8
Matthew 9
Matthew 10
Matthew 11
Matthew 12
Matthew 13
Matthew 14
Matthew 15
Matthew 16
Matthew 17
Matthew 18
Matthew 19
Matthew 20
Matthew 21
Matthew 22
Matthew 23
Matthew 24
Matthew 25
Matthew 26
Matthew 27
Matthew 28

The Family Line of Jesus

Matthew 1

1 This is a record of the family line of Jesus Christ. He is the son of David. He
is also the son of Abraham.

2 Abraham was the father of Isaac.
Isaac was the father of Jacob.
Jacob was the father of Judah and his brothers.

3 Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah. Tamar was their mother.
Perez was the father of Hezron.
Hezron was the father of Ram.

4 Ram was the father of Amminadab.
Amminadab was the father of Nahshon.
Nahshon was the father of Salmon.

5 Salmon was the father of Boaz. Rahab was Boaz's mother.
Boaz was the father of Obed. Ruth was Obed's mother.
Obed was the father of Jesse.

6 And Jesse was the father of King David.

David was the father of Solomon. Solomon's mother had been Uriah's
wife.

7 Solomon was the father of Rehoboam.
Rehoboam was the father of Abijah.
Abijah was the father of Asa.

8 Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat.
Jehoshaphat was the father of Jehoram.
Jehoram was the father of Uzziah.

9 Uzziah was the father of Jotham.
Jotham was the father of Ahaz.

Ahaz was the father of Hezekiah.

10 Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh.

Manasseh was the father of Amon.
Amon was the father of Josiah.

11 And Josiah was the father of Jeconiah and his brothers. At that time, the Jewish people were forced to go away to Babylon.

12 After this, the family line continued.

Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel.
Shealtiel was the father of Zerubbabel.

13 Zerubbabel was the father of Abiud.

Abiud was the father of Eliakim.
Eliakim was the father of Azor.

14 Azor was the father of Zadok.

Zadok was the father of Akim.
Akim was the father of Eliud.

15 Eliud was the father of Eleazar.

Eleazar was the father of Matthan.
Matthan was the father of Jacob.

16 Jacob was the father of Joseph. Joseph was the husband of Mary. And Mary gave birth to Jesus, who is called Christ.

17 So there were 14 generations from Abraham to David. There were 14 from David until the Jewish people were forced to go away to Babylon. And there were 14 from that time to the Christ.

Jesus Christ Is Born

18 This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. His mother Mary and Joseph had promised to get married. But before they started to live together, it became clear that she was going to have a baby. She became pregnant by the power of the Holy Spirit. 19 Her husband Joseph was a godly man. He did not want to put her to shame in public. So he planned to divorce her quietly.

[20]But as Joseph was thinking about this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. The angel said, “Joseph, son of David, don’t be afraid to take Mary home as your wife. The baby inside her is from the Holy Spirit. [21]She is going to have a son. You must give him the name Jesus. That is because he will save his people from their sins.”

[22]All of this took place to bring about what the Lord had said would happen. He had said through the prophet, [23]“The virgin is going to have a baby. She will give birth to a son. And he will be called Immanuel.”(Isaiah 7:14) The name Immanuel means “God with us.”

[24]Joseph woke up. He did what the angel of the Lord commanded him to do. He took Mary home as his wife. [25]But he did not make love to her until after she gave birth to a son. And Joseph gave him the name Jesus.

The Wise Men Visit Jesus

Matthew 2

1 Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea. This happened while Herod was king
of Judea.

After Jesus' birth, Wise Men from the east came to Jerusalem. 2 They asked,
"Where is the child who has been born to be king of the Jews? When we were
in the east, we saw his star. Now we have come to worship him."

3 When King Herod heard about it, he was very upset. Everyone in Jerusalem
was troubled too. 4 So Herod called together all the chief priests of the people.
He also called the teachers of the law. He asked them where the Christ was
going to be born.

5 "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied. "This is what the prophet has written.
He said,

> 6 " 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
> are certainly not the least important among the towns of Judah.
> A ruler will come out of you.
> He will be the shepherd of my people Israel.' " (Micah 5:2)

7 Then Herod called for the Wise Men secretly. He found out from them
exactly when the star had appeared. 8 He sent them to Bethlehem. He said, "Go!
Make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, bring me a report.
Then I can go and worship him too."

9 After the Wise Men had listened to the king, they went on their way. The
star they had seen when they were in the east went ahead of them. It finally
stopped over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they
were filled with joy.

11 The Wise Men went to the house. There they saw the child with his mother
Mary. They bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures.
They gave him gold, incense and myrrh.

12 But God warned them in a dream not to go back to Herod. So they returned
to their country on a different road.

Jesus' Family Escapes to Egypt

13 When the Wise Men had left, Joseph had a dream. In the dream an angel of
the Lord appeared to him. "Get up!" the angel said. "Take the child and his
mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you to come back. Herod is
going to search for the child. He wants to kill him."

14 Joseph got up. During the night, he left for Egypt with the child and his
mother Mary. 15 They stayed there until King Herod died. So the words the
Lord had spoken through the prophet came true. He had said, "I chose to bring
my son out of Egypt."(Hosea 11:1)

16 Herod realized that the Wise Men had tricked him. So he became very
angry. He gave orders concerning Bethlehem and the area around it. All the
boys two years old and under were to be killed. This agreed with the time when
the Wise Men had seen the star.

17 In this way, the words the prophet Jeremiah spoke came true. He had said,

18 "A voice is heard in Ramah.
It's the sound of crying and deep sadness.
Rachel is crying over her children.
She refuses to be comforted,
because they are gone." (Jeremiah 31:15)

Jesus' Family Returns to Nazareth

19 After Herod died, Joseph had a dream while he was still in Egypt. In the
dream an angel of the Lord appeared to him. 20 The angel said, "Get up! Take
the child and his mother. Go to the land of Israel. Those who were trying to kill
the child are dead."

21 So Joseph got up. He took the child and his mother Mary back to the land
of Israel. 22 But then he heard that Archelaus was king of Judea. Archelaus was
ruling in place of his father Herod. This made Joseph afraid to go there.

Warned in a dream, Joseph went back to the land of Galilee instead. [23]There he lived in a town called Nazareth. So what the prophets had said about Jesus came true. They had said, “He will be called a Nazarene.”

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

Matthew 3

1 In those days John the Baptist came and preached in the Desert of Judea.
2 He said, “Turn away from your sins! The kingdom of heaven is near.”

3 John is the one the prophet Isaiah had spoken about. He had said,

> “A messenger is calling out in the desert,
> ‘Prepare the way for the Lord.
> Make straight paths for him.’ ” (Isaiah 40:3)

4 John’s clothes were made out of camel’s hair. He had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. 5 People went out to him from Jerusalem and all of Judea. They also came from the whole area around the Jordan River. 6 When they admitted they had sinned, John baptized them in the Jordan.

7 John saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing. He said to them, “You are like a nest of poisonous snakes! Who warned you to escape the coming of God’s anger? 8 Produce fruit that shows you have turned away from your sins. 9 Don’t think you can say to yourselves, ‘Abraham is our father.’ I tell you, God can raise up children for Abraham even from these stones. 10 The ax is already lying at the roots of the trees. All the trees that don’t produce good fruit will be cut down. They will be thrown into the fire.

11 “I baptize you with water, calling you to turn away from your sins. But after me, one will come who is more powerful than I am. And I’m not fit to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. 12 His pitchfork is in his hand to clear the straw from his threshing floor. He will gather his wheat into the storeroom. But he will burn up the husks with fire that can’t be put out.”

Jesus Is Baptized

[13]Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan River. He wanted to be baptized by John. [14]But John tried to stop him. He told Jesus, “I need to be baptized by you. So why do you come to me?”

[15]Jesus replied, “Let it be this way for now. It is right for us to do this. It carries out God’s holy plan.” Then John agreed.

[16]As soon as Jesus was baptized, he came up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened. Jesus saw the Spirit of God coming down on him like a dove.

[17]A voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, and I love him. I am very pleased with him.”

Jesus Is Tempted

Matthew 4

[1]The Holy Spirit led Jesus into the desert. There the devil tempted him.
[2]After 40 days and 40 nights of going without eating, Jesus was hungry.

[3]The tempter came to him. He said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”

[4]Jesus answered, “It is written, ‘Man doesn’t live only on bread. He also lives on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’ ”(Deuteronomy 8:3)

[5]Then the devil took Jesus to the holy city. He had him stand on the highest point of the temple. [6]“If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. It is written,

> “ ‘The Lord will command his angels to take good care of you.
> They will lift you up in their hands.
> Then you won’t trip over a stone.’ ” (Psalm 91:11, 12)

[7]Jesus answered him, “It is also written, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ”(Deuteronomy 6:16)

[8]Finally, the devil took Jesus to a very high mountain. He showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. [9]“If you bow down and worship me,” he said, “I will give you all of this.”

[10]Jesus said to him, “Get away from me, Satan! It is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God. He is the only one you should serve.’ ”(Deuteronomy 6:13)

[11]Then the devil left Jesus. Angels came and took care of him.

Jesus Begins to Preach

[12]John had been put in prison. When Jesus heard about this, he returned to Galilee.

13 Jesus left Nazareth. He went to live in the city of Capernaum. It was by the
lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali. 14 In that way, what the prophet Isaiah
had said came true. He had said,

15 "Land of Zebulun! Land of Naphtali!
Galilee, where non-Jewish people live!
Land along the Mediterranean Sea! Territory east of the Jordan
River!
16 The people who are now living in darkness
will see a great light.
They are now living in a very dark land.
But a light will shine on them." (Isaiah 9:1, 2)

17 From that time on Jesus began to preach. "Turn away from your sins!" he
said. "The kingdom of heaven is near."

Jesus Chooses the First Disciples

18 One day Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee. There he saw two
brothers. They were Simon Peter and his brother Andrew. They were throwing
a net into the lake. They were fishermen. 19 "Come. Follow me," Jesus said. "I
will make you fishers of people."

20 At once they left their nets and followed him.

21 Going on from there, he saw two other brothers. They were James, son of
Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee.
As they were preparing their nets, Jesus called out to them.

22 Right away they left the boat and their father and followed Jesus.

Jesus Heals Sick People

23 Jesus went all over Galilee. There he taught in the synagogues. He preached
the good news of God's kingdom. He healed every illness and sickness the
people had.

[24]News about him spread all over Syria. People brought to him all who were ill with different kinds of sicknesses. Some were suffering great pain. Others were controlled by demons. Some were shaking wildly. Others couldn’t move at all. And Jesus healed all of them.

[25]Large crowds followed him. Some people came from Galilee, from the area known as the Ten Cities, and from Jerusalem and Judea. Others came from the area across the Jordan River.

Jesus Gives Blessings

Matthew 5

1 Jesus saw the crowds. So he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His
disciples came to him. 2 Then he began to teach them.

He said,

3 "Blessed are those who are spiritually needy.
The kingdom of heaven belongs to them.
4 Blessed are those who are sad.
They will be comforted.
5 Blessed are those who are free of pride.
They will be given the earth.
6 Blessed are those who are hungry and thirsty for what is right.
They will be filled.
7 Blessed are those who show mercy.
They will be shown mercy.
8 Blessed are those whose hearts are pure.
They will see God.
9 Blessed are those who make peace.
They will be called sons of God.
10 Blessed are those who suffer for doing what is right.
The kingdom of heaven belongs to them.

11 "Blessed are you when people make fun of you and hurt you because of me.
You are also blessed when they tell all kinds of evil lies about you because of
me. 12 Be joyful and glad. Your reward in heaven is great. In the same way,
people hurt the prophets who lived long ago.

Salt and Light

13 "You are the salt of the earth. But suppose the salt loses its saltiness. How

can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything. It will be thrown out. People will walk all over it.

14"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill can't be hidden. 15Also, people do not light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand. Then it gives light to everyone in the house.

16"In the same way, let your light shine in front of others. Then they will see the good things you do. And they will praise your Father who is in heaven.

Jesus Gives Full Meaning to the Law

17"Do not think I have come to get rid of what is written in the Law or in the Prophets. I have not come to do that. Instead, I have come to give full meaning to what is written. 18What I'm about to tell you is true. Heaven and earth will disappear before the smallest letter disappears from the Law. Not even the smallest stroke of a pen will disappear from the Law until everything is completed.

19"Do not break even one of the least important commandments. And do not teach others to break them. If you do, you will be called the least important person in the kingdom of heaven. Instead, practice and teach these commands. Then you will be called important in the kingdom of heaven.

20"Here is what I tell you. You must be more godly than the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. If you are not, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Murder

21"You have heard what was said to people who lived long ago. They were told, 'Do not commit murder.(Exodus 20:13) Anyone who murders will be judged for it.' 22But here is what I tell you. Do not be angry with your brother. Anyone who is angry with his brother will be judged. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' must stand trial in the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire in hell.

23"Suppose you are offering your gift at the altar. And you remember that

your brother has something against you. [24]Leave your gift in front of the altar. First go and make peace with your brother. Then come back and offer your gift.

[25]"Suppose someone has a claim against you and is taking you to court. Settle the matter quickly. Do it while you are still with him on your way. If you don't, he may hand you over to the judge. The judge may hand you over to the officer. And you may be thrown into prison. [26]What I'm about to tell you is true. You will not get out until you have paid the very last penny!

Adultery

[27]"You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.'(Exodus 20:14) [28]But here is what I tell you. Do not even look at a woman in the wrong way. Anyone who does has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

[29]"If your right eye causes you to sin, poke it out and throw it away. Your eye is only one part of your body. It is better to lose it than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

[30]"If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. Your hand is only one part of your body. It is better to lose it than for your whole body to go into hell.

Divorce

[31]"It has been said, 'Suppose a man divorces his wife. If he does, he must give her a letter of divorce.'(Deuteronomy 24:1) [32]But here is what I tell you. Anyone who divorces his wife causes her to commit adultery. And anyone who gets married to the divorced woman commits adultery. A man may divorce his wife only if she has not been faithful to him.

Oaths

[33]"Again, you have heard what was said to your people long ago. They were told, 'Do not break the promises you make to the Lord. Keep the oaths you

have made to him.’ [34]But here is what I tell you. Do not make any promises like that at all. Do not make them in the name of heaven. That is God’s throne. [35]Do not make them in the name of the earth. That is the stool for God’s feet. Do not make them in the name of Jerusalem. That is the city of the Great King. [36]And do not take an oath in the name of your head. You can’t make even one hair white or black.

[37]“Just let your ‘Yes’ mean ‘Yes.’ Let your ‘No’ mean ‘No.’ Anything more than this comes from the evil one.

Be Kind to Others

[38]“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye must be put out for an eye. A tooth must be knocked out for a tooth.’(Exodus 21:24; Leviticus 24:20; Deuteronomy 19:21) [39]But here is what I tell you. Do not fight against an evil person.

“Suppose someone hits you on your right cheek. Turn your other cheek to him also. [40]Suppose someone takes you to court to get your shirt. Let him have your coat also. [41]Suppose someone forces you to go one mile. Go two miles with him.

[42]“Give to the one who asks you for something. Don’t turn away from the one who wants to borrow something from you.

Love Your Enemies

[43]“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor.(Leviticus 19:18) Hate your enemy.’ [44]But here is what I tell you. Love your enemies. Pray for those who hurt you. [45]Then you will be sons of your Father who is in heaven.

“He causes his sun to shine on evil people and good people. He sends rain on those who do right and those who don’t.

[46]“If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Even the tax collectors do that. [47]If you greet only your own people, what more are you doing than others? Even people who are ungodly do that. [48]So be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Giving to Needy People

Matthew 6

1 “Be careful not to do ‘good works’ in front of others. Don’t do them to be
seen by others. If you do, your Father in heaven will not reward you.

2 “When you give to needy people, do not announce it by having trumpets
blown. Do not be like those who only pretend to be holy. They announce what
they do in the synagogues and on the streets. They want to be honored by
others. What I’m about to tell you is true. They have received their complete
reward.

3 “When you give to the needy, don’t let your left hand know what your right
hand is doing. 4 Then your giving will be done secretly. Your Father will reward
you. He sees what you do secretly.

Prayer

5 “When you pray, do not be like those who only pretend to be holy. They
love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners. They want
to be seen by others. What I’m about to tell you is true. They have received
their complete reward.

6 “When you pray, go into your room. Close the door and pray to your Father,
who can’t be seen. He will reward you. Your Father sees what is done secretly.

7 “When you pray, do not keep talking on and on the way ungodly people do.
They think they will be heard because they talk a lot. 8 Do not be like them.
Your Father knows what you need even before you ask him.

9 “This is how you should pray.

“ ‘Our Father in heaven,
may your name be honored.
10 May your kingdom come.
May what you want to happen be done

on earth as it is done in heaven.
[11]Give us today our daily bread.
[12]Forgive us our sins,
just as we also have forgiven those who sin against us.
[13]Keep us from falling into sin when we are tempted.
Save us from the evil one.’

[14]“Forgive people when they sin against you. If you do, your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you. [15]But if you do not forgive people their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Fasting

[16]“When you go without eating, do not look gloomy like those who only pretend to be holy. They make their faces very sad. They want to show people they are fasting. What I’m about to tell you is true. They have received their complete reward.

[17]“But when you go without eating, put olive oil on your head. Wash your face. [18]Then others will not know that you are fasting. Only your Father, who can’t be seen, will know it. He will reward you. Your Father sees what is done secretly.

Put Away Riches in Heaven

[19]“Do not put away riches for yourselves on earth. Moths and rust can destroy them. Thieves can break in and steal them. [20]Instead, put away riches for yourselves in heaven. There, moths and rust do not destroy them. There, thieves do not break in and steal them. [21]Your heart will be where your riches are.

[22]“The eye is like a lamp for the body. Suppose your eyes are good. Then your whole body will be full of light. [23]But suppose your eyes are bad. Then your whole body will be full of darkness. If the light inside you is darkness, then it is very dark!

24“No one can serve two masters at the same time. He will hate one of them
and love the other. Or he will be faithful to one and dislike the other. You can’t
serve God and Money at the same time.

Do Not Worry

25“I tell you, do not worry. Don’t worry about your life and what you will eat
or drink. And don’t worry about your body and what you will wear. Isn’t there
more to life than eating? Aren’t there more important things for the body than
clothes?

26“Look at the birds of the air. They don’t plant or gather crops. They don’t
put away crops in storerooms. But your Father who is in heaven feeds them.
Aren’t you worth much more than they are?

27“Can you add even one hour to your life by worrying?

28“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the wild flowers grow.
They don’t work or make clothing. 29But here is what I tell you. Not even
Solomon in all of his glory was dressed like one of those flowers.

30“If that is how God dresses the wild grass, won’t he dress you even better?
After all, the grass is here only today. Tomorrow it is thrown into the fire. Your
faith is so small!

31“So don’t worry. Don’t say, ‘What will we eat?’ Or, ‘What will we drink?’
Or, ‘What will we wear?’ 32People who are ungodly run after all of those
things. Your Father who is in heaven knows that you need them.

33“But put God’s kingdom first. Do what he wants you to do. Then all of
those things will also be given to you.

34“So don’t worry about tomorrow. Tomorrow will worry about itself. Each
day has enough trouble of its own.

Be Fair When You Judge Others

Matthew 7

1 “Do not judge others. Then you will not be judged. 2 You will be judged in
the same way you judge others. You will be measured in the same way you
measure others.

3 “You look at the bit of sawdust in your friend’s eye. But you pay no
attention to the piece of wood in your own eye. 4 How can you say to your
friend, ‘Let me take the bit of sawdust out of your eye’? How can you say this
while there is a piece of wood in your own eye?

5 “You pretender! First take the piece of wood out of your own eye. Then you
will be able to see clearly to take the bit of sawdust out of your friend’s eye.

6 “Do not give holy things to dogs. Do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you
do, they might walk all over them. Then they might turn around and tear you to
pieces.

Ask, Search, Knock

7 “Ask, and it will be given to you. Search, and you will find. Knock, and the
door will be opened to you. 8 Everyone who asks will receive. He who searches
will find. The door will be opened to the one who knocks.

9 “Suppose your son asks for bread. Which of you will give him a stone? 10 Or
suppose he asks for a fish. Which of you will give him a snake? 11 Even though
you are evil, you know how to give good gifts to your children. How much
more will your Father who is in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

12 “In everything, do to others what you would want them to do to you. This is
what is written in the Law and in the Prophets.

The Large and Small Gates

13“Enter God’s kingdom through the narrow gate. The gate is large and the
road is wide that lead to death and hell. Many people go that way. 14But the
gate is small and the road is narrow that lead to life. Only a few people find it.

A Tree and Its Fruit

15“Watch out for false prophets. They come to you pretending to be sheep.
But on the inside they are hungry wolves. 16You can tell what they really are
by what they do.

“Do people pick grapes from bushes? Do they pick figs from thorns? 17In the
same way, every good tree bears good fruit. But a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18A
good tree can’t bear bad fruit. And a bad tree can’t bear good fruit. 19Every tree
that does not bear good fruit is cut down. It is thrown into the fire. 20You can
tell each tree by its fruit.

21“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of
heaven. Only those who do what my Father in heaven wants will enter.

22“Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord! Lord! Didn’t we prophesy in your
name? Didn’t we drive out demons in your name? Didn’t we do many miracles
in your name?’ 23Then I will tell them clearly, ‘I never knew you. Get away
from me, you who do evil!’

The Wise and Foolish Builders

24“So then, everyone who hears my words and puts them into practice is like
a wise man. He builds his house on the rock. 25The rain comes down. The
water rises. The winds blow and beat against that house. But it does not fall. It
is built on the rock.

26“But everyone who hears my words and does not put them into practice is
like a foolish man. He builds his house on sand. 27The rain comes down. The
water rises. The winds blow and beat against that house. And it falls with a
loud crash.”

[28]Jesus finished saying all these things. The crowds were amazed at his teaching. [29]He taught like one who had authority. He did not speak like their teachers of the law.

Jesus Heals a Man Who Had a Skin Disease

Matthew 8

1 Jesus came down from the mountainside. Large crowds followed him.

2 A man who had a skin disease came and got down on his knees in front of
Jesus. He said, “Lord, if you are willing to make me ‘clean,’ you can do it.”

3 Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. “I am willing to do it,” he
said. “Be ‘clean’!”

Right away the man was healed of his skin disease.

4 Then Jesus said to him, “Don’t tell anyone. Go and show yourself to the
priest. Offer the gift Moses commanded. It will be a witness to them.”

A Roman Commander Has Faith

5 When Jesus entered Capernaum, a Roman commander came to him. He
asked Jesus for help. 6 “Lord,” he said, “my servant lies at home and can’t
move. He is suffering terribly.”

7 Jesus said, “I will go and heal him.”

8 The commander replied, “Lord, I am not good enough to have you come
into my house. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. 9 I myself
am a man under authority. And I have soldiers who obey my orders. I tell this
one, ‘Go,’ and he goes. I tell that one, ‘Come,’ and he comes. I say to my
servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.”

10 When Jesus heard this, he was amazed. He said to those following him,
“What I’m about to tell you is true. In Israel I have not found anyone whose
faith is so strong.

11 “I say to you that many will come from the east and the west. They will
take their places at the feast in the kingdom of heaven. They will sit with
Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. 12 But those who think they belong to the kingdom
will be thrown outside, into the darkness. There they will sob and grind their

teeth.”

13Then Jesus said to the Roman commander, “Go! It will be done just as you believed it would.”

And his servant was healed at that very hour.

Jesus Heals Many People

14When Jesus came into Peter’s house, he saw Peter’s mother-in-law. She was lying in bed. She had a fever.

15Jesus touched her hand, and the fever left her. She got up and began to wait on him.

16When evening came, many people controlled by demons were brought to Jesus. He drove out the spirits with a word. He healed all who were sick.

17He did it to make what the prophet Isaiah had said come true. He had said,

> “He suffered the things we should have suffered.
> He took on himself the sicknesses that should have been ours.”
> (Isaiah 53:4)

It Costs to Follow Jesus

18Jesus saw the crowd around him. So he gave his disciples orders to go to the other side of the Sea of Galilee.

19Then a teacher of the law came to him. He said, “Teacher, I will follow you no matter where you go.”

20Jesus replied, “Foxes have holes. Birds of the air have nests. But the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.”

21Another follower said to him, “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.”

22But Jesus told him, “Follow me. Let the dead bury their own dead.”

Jesus Calms the Storm

[23]Jesus got into a boat. His disciples followed him. [24]Suddenly a terrible storm came up on the lake. The waves crashed over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping.

[25]The disciples went and woke him up. They said, “Lord! Save us! We’re going to drown!”

[26]He replied, “Your faith is so small! Why are you so afraid?”

Then Jesus got up and ordered the winds and the waves to stop. It became completely calm.

[27]The disciples were amazed. They asked, “What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!”

Jesus Heals Two Men Controlled by Demons

[28]Jesus arrived at the other side of the lake in the area of the Gadarenes. Two men controlled by demons met him. They came from the tombs. The men were so wild that no one could pass that way.

[29]“Son of God, what do you want with us?” they shouted. “Have you come here to punish us before the time for us to be judged?”

[30]Not very far away, a large herd of pigs was feeding. [31]The demons begged Jesus, “If you drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs.”

[32]Jesus said to them, “Go!”

So the demons came out of the men and went into the pigs. The whole herd rushed down the steep bank. They ran into the lake and drowned in the water.

[33]Those who were tending the pigs ran off. They went into the town and reported all this. They told the people what had happened to the men who had been controlled by demons.

[34]Then the whole town went out to meet Jesus. When they saw him, they begged him to leave their area.

Jesus Heals a Man Who Could Not Walk

Matthew 9

1 Jesus stepped into a boat. He went over to the other side of the lake and
came to his own town. 2 Some men brought to him a man who could not walk.
He was lying on a mat. Jesus saw that they had faith. So he said to the man,
“Don’t lose hope, son. Your sins are forgiven.”

3 Then some teachers of the law said to themselves, “This fellow is saying a
very evil thing!”

4 Jesus knew what they were thinking. So he said, “Why do you have evil
thoughts in your hearts? 5 Is it easier to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven’? Or to say,
‘Get up and walk’? 6 I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on
earth to forgive sins.”

Then he spoke to the man who could not walk. “Get up,” he said. “Take your
mat and go home.” 7 The man got up and went home.

8 When the crowd saw this, they were filled with wonder. They praised God
for giving that kind of authority to men.

Jesus Chooses Matthew

9 As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew. He was sitting
at the tax collector’s booth.

“Follow me,” Jesus told him. Matthew got up and followed him.

10 Later Jesus was having dinner at Matthew’s house. Many tax collectors and
“sinners” came. They ate with Jesus and his disciples.

11 The Pharisees saw this. So they asked the disciples, “Why does your
teacher eat with tax collectors and ‘sinners’?”

12 Jesus heard that. So he said, “Those who are healthy don’t need a doctor.
Sick people do. 13 Go and learn what this means, ‘I want mercy and not

sacrifice.’(Hosea 6:6) I have not come to get those who think they are right with God to follow me. I have come to get sinners to follow me.”

Jesus Is Asked About Fasting

14One day John’s disciples came. They said to Jesus, “We and the Pharisees go without eating. Why don’t your disciples go without eating?”

15Jesus answered, “How can the guests of the groom be sad while he is with them? The time will come when the groom will be taken away from them. Then they will fast.

16“People don’t sew a patch of new cloth on old clothes. The new piece will pull away from the old. That will make the tear worse.

17“People don’t pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst. The wine will run out, and the wineskins will be destroyed. No, everyone pours new wine into new wineskins. Then both are saved.”

A Dead Girl and a Suffering Woman

18While Jesus was saying this, a ruler came. He got down on his knees in front of Jesus. He said, “My daughter has just died. But come and place your hand on her. Then she will live again.”

19Jesus got up and went with him. So did his disciples.

20Just then a woman came up behind Jesus. She had a sickness that made her bleed. It had lasted for 12 years. She touched the edge of his clothes. 21She thought, “I only need to touch his clothes. Then I will be healed.”

22Jesus turned and saw her. “Dear woman, don’t give up hope,” he said. “Your faith has healed you.” The woman was healed at that very moment.

23When Jesus entered the ruler’s house, he saw the flute players there. And he saw the noisy crowd. 24He said, “Go away. The girl is not dead. She is sleeping.” But they laughed at him.

25After the crowd had been sent outside, Jesus went in. He took the girl by the hand, and she got up. 26News about what Jesus had done spread all over

that area.

Jesus Heals Two Blind Men

27 As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him. They called out,
“Have mercy on us, Son of David!”

28 When Jesus went indoors, the blind men came to him. He asked them, “Do
you believe that I can do this?”

“Yes, Lord,” they replied.

29 Then he touched their eyes. He said, “It will happen to you just as you
believed.” 30 They could now see again. Jesus strongly warned them, “Be sure
that no one knows about this.” 31 But they went out and spread the news. They
talked about him all over that area.

32 While they were going out, another man was brought to Jesus. A demon
controlled him, and he could not speak. 33 When the demon was driven out, the
man spoke.

The crowd was amazed. They said, “Nothing like this has ever been seen in
Israel.” 34 But the Pharisees said, “He drives out demons by the power of the
prince of demons.”

There Are Only a Few Workers

35 Jesus went through all the towns and villages. He taught in their
synagogues. He preached the good news of the kingdom. And he healed every
illness and sickness. 36 When he saw the crowds, he felt deep concern for them.
They were beaten down and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

37 Then Jesus said to his disciples, “The harvest is huge. But there are only a
few workers. 38 So ask the Lord of the harvest to send workers out into his
harvest field.”

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve Disciples

Matthew 10

[1]Jesus called for his 12 disciples to come to him. He gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every illness and sickness.

[2]Here are the names of the 12 apostles. First are Simon Peter and his brother Andrew. Then come James, son of Zebedee, and his brother John. [3]Next are Philip and Bartholomew, and also Thomas and Matthew the tax collector. Two more are James, son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus. [4]The last are Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot. Judas is the one who was later going to hand Jesus over to his enemies.

[5]Jesus sent these 12 out with the following orders. “Do not go among those who aren’t Jews,” he said. “Do not enter any town of the Samaritans. [6]Instead, go to the people of Israel. They are like sheep that have become lost. [7]As you go, preach this message, ‘The kingdom of heaven is near.’ [8]Heal those who are sick. Bring those who are dead back to life. Make those who have skin diseases ‘clean’ again. Drive out demons. You have received freely, so give freely.

[9]“Do not take along any gold, silver or copper in your belts. [10]Do not take a bag for the journey. Do not take extra clothes or sandals or walking sticks. A worker should be given what he needs.

[11]“When you enter a town or village, look for someone who is willing to welcome you. Stay at that person’s house until you leave. [12]As you enter the home, greet those who live there. [13]If that home welcomes you, give it your blessing of peace. If it does not, don’t bless it.

[14]“Some people may not welcome you or listen to your words. If they don’t, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town. [15]What I’m about to tell you is true. On judgment day it will be easier for Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town.

[16]“I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. So be as wise as snakes and as harmless as doves.

[17]“Watch out! Men will hand you over to the local courts. They will whip you

in their synagogues. [18]You will be brought to governors and kings because of me. You will be witnesses to them and to those who aren't Jews.

[19]"But when they arrest you, don't worry about what you will say or how you will say it. At that time you will be given the right words to say. [20]It will not be you speaking. The Spirit of your Father will be speaking through you.

[21]"Brothers will hand over brothers to be killed. Fathers will hand over their children. Children will rise up against their parents and have them put to death. [22]Everyone will hate you because of me. But anyone who stands firm to the end will be saved.

[23]"When people attack you in one place, escape to another. What I'm about to tell you is true. You will not finish going through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

[24]"A student is not better than his teacher. A servant is not better than his master. [25]It is enough for the student to be like his teacher. And it is enough for the servant to be like his master. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebub, what can the others who live there expect?

[26]"So don't be afraid of your enemies. Everything that is secret will be brought out into the open. Everything that is hidden will be uncovered. [27]What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight. What is whispered in your ear, shout from the rooftops. [28]Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but can't kill the soul. Instead, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

[29]"Aren't two sparrows sold for only a penny? But not one of them falls to the ground without your Father knowing it. [30]He even counts every hair on your head! [31]So don't be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows.

[32]"What about someone who says in front of others that he knows me? I will also say in front of my Father who is in heaven that I know him. [33]But what about someone who says in front of others that he doesn't know me? I will say in front of my Father who is in heaven that I don't know him.

[34]"Do not think that I came to bring peace to the earth. I didn't come to bring peace. I came to bring a sword. [35]I have come to turn

> " 'sons against their fathers.
> Daughters will refuse to obey their mothers.

Daughters-in-law will be against their mothers-in-law.
[36]A man's enemies will be the members of his own family.' (Micah 7:6)

[37]"Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. Anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. [38]And anyone who does not pick up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. [39]If anyone finds his life, he will lose it. If anyone loses his life because of me, he will find it.

[40]"Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me. And anyone who welcomes me welcomes the One who sent me. [41]Suppose someone welcomes a prophet as a prophet. That one will receive a prophet's reward. And suppose someone welcomes a godly person as a godly person. That one will receive a godly person's reward. [42]Suppose someone gives even a cup of cold water to a little one who follows me. What I'm about to tell you is true. That one will certainly be rewarded."

Jesus and John the Baptist

Matthew 11

1 Jesus finished teaching his 12 disciples. Then he went on to teach and preach
in the towns of Galilee.

2 John was in prison. When he heard what Christ was doing, he sent his
disciples to him. 3 They asked Jesus, “Are you the one who was supposed to
come? Or should we look for someone else?”

4 Jesus replied, “Go back to John. Report to him what you hear and see.
5 Blind people receive sight. Disabled people walk. Those who have skin
diseases are healed. Deaf people hear. Those who are dead are raised to life.
And the good news is preached to those who are poor. 6 Blessed are those who
do not give up their faith because of me.”

7 As John’s disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about
John. He said, “What did you go out into the desert to see? Tall grass waving in
the wind? 8 If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes?
No. People who wear fine clothes are in kings’ palaces. 9 Then what did you go
out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 10 He is the one
written about in Scripture. It says,

> “ ‘I will send my messenger ahead of you.
> He will prepare your way for you.’ (Malachi 3:1)

11 “What I’m about to tell you is true. No one more important than John the
Baptist has ever been born. But the least important person in the kingdom of
heaven is more important than he is. 12 Since the days of John the Baptist, the
kingdom of heaven has been advancing with force. And forceful people are
taking hold of it. 13 All the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John came.
14 If you are willing to accept it, John is the Elijah who was supposed to come.
15 Those who have ears should listen.

16 “What can I compare today’s people to? They are like children sitting in the

market places and calling out to others. They say,

17“ ‘We played the flute for you.
But you didn’t dance.
We sang a funeral song.
But you didn’t become sad.’

18When John came, he didn’t eat or drink as you do. And people say, ‘He has a demon.’ 19But when the Son of Man came, he ate and drank as you do. And people say, ‘This fellow is always eating and drinking far too much. He’s a friend of tax collectors and “sinners.” ’ Those who act wisely prove that wisdom is right.”

Cities That Do Not Turn Away From Sin

20Jesus began to speak against the cities where he had done most of his miracles. The people there had not turned away from their sins. So he said, 21“How terrible it will be for you, Korazin! How terrible for you, Bethsaida! Suppose the miracles done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon. They would have turned away from their sins long ago. They would have put on black clothes. They would have sat down in ashes. 22But I tell you this. On judgment day it will be easier for Tyre and Sidon than for you.

23“And what about you, Capernaum? Will you be lifted up to heaven? No! You will go down to the place of the dead. Suppose the miracles done in you had been done in Sodom. It would still be here today. 24But I tell you this. On judgment day it will be easier for Sodom than for you.”

Rest for All Who Are Tired

25At that time Jesus said, “I praise you, Father. You are Lord of heaven and earth. You have hidden these things from the wise and educated. But you have shown them to little children. 26Yes, Father. This is what you wanted.

27“My Father has given all things to me. The Father is the only one who

knows the Son. And the only ones who know the Father are the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to make him known.

28“Come to me, all of you who are tired and are carrying heavy loads. I will give you rest. 29Become my servants and learn from me. I am gentle and free of pride. You will find rest for your souls. 30Serving me is easy, and my load is light.”

Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath Day

Matthew 12

[1]One Sabbath day Jesus walked through the grainfields. His disciples were hungry. So they began to break off some heads of grain and eat them. [2]The Pharisees saw this. They said to Jesus, “Look! It is against the Law to do this on the Sabbath. But your disciples are doing it anyway!”

[3]Jesus answered, “Haven’t you read about what David did? He and his men were hungry. [4]So he entered the house of God. He and his men ate the holy bread. Only priests were allowed to eat it. [5]Haven’t you read the Law? It tells how every Sabbath day the priests in the temple have to do their work on that day. But they are not considered guilty.

[6]“I tell you that one who is more important than the temple is here. [7]Scripture says, ‘I want mercy and not sacrifice.’(Hosea 6:6) You don’t know what those words mean. If you did, you would not bring charges against those who are not guilty. [8]The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath day.”

[9]Going on from that place, Jesus went into their synagogue. [10]A man with a weak and twisted hand was there. The Pharisees were trying to find fault with Jesus. So they asked him, “Does the Law allow us to heal on the Sabbath day?”

[11]He said to them, “What if one of your sheep falls into a pit on the Sabbath? Won’t you take hold of it and lift it out? [12]A man is worth more than sheep! So the Law allows us to do good on the Sabbath day.”

[13]Then Jesus said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” So he stretched it out. It was as good as new, just as good as the other hand. [14]But the Pharisees went out and planned how to kill Jesus.

God’s Chosen Servant

[15]Jesus knew all about the Pharisees’ plans. So he left that place. Many followed him, and he healed all their sick people. [16]But he warned them not to

tell who he was. [17]This was to make what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah come true. It says,

[18]"Here is my servant. I have chosen him.
He is the one I love. I am very pleased with him.
I will put my Spirit on him.
He will announce to the nations that everything will be made right.
[19]He will not argue or cry out.
No one will hear his voice in the streets.
[20]He will not break a bent twig.
He will not put out a dimly burning flame.
He will make everything right.
[21]The nations will put their hope in him." (Isaiah 42:1–4)

Jesus and Beelzebub

[22]A man controlled by demons was brought to Jesus. The man was blind and could not speak. Jesus healed him. Then the man could speak and see. [23]All the people were amazed. They said, "Could this be the Son of David?"

[24]The Pharisees heard this. So they said, "This fellow drives out demons by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of demons."

[25]Jesus knew what they were thinking. So he said to them, "Every kingdom that fights against itself will be destroyed. Every city or family that is divided against itself will not stand. [26]If Satan drives out Satan, he fights against himself. Then how can his kingdom stand? [27]You say I drive out demons by the power of Beelzebub. Then by whose power do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. [28]But suppose I drive out demons by the Spirit of God. Then God's kingdom has come to you.

[29]"Or think about this. How can you enter a strong man's house and just take what the man owns? You must first tie him up. Then you can rob his house.

[30]"Anyone who is not with me is against me. Anyone who does not gather sheep with me scatters them. [31]So here is what I tell you. Every sin and every evil word spoken against God will be forgiven. But speaking evil things against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. [32]Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven. But anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit

will not be forgiven. A person like that won't be forgiven either now or in days to come.

33"If you make a tree good, its fruit will be good. If you make a tree bad, its fruit will be bad. You can tell a tree by its fruit.

34"You nest of poisonous snakes! How can you who are evil say anything good? Your mouths say everything that is in your hearts. 35A good man says good things. These come from the good that is put away inside him. An evil man says evil things. These come from the evil that is put away inside him. 36But here is what I tell you. On judgment day, people will have to account for every careless word they have spoken. 37By your words you will be found guilty or not guilty."

The Miraculous Sign of Jonah

38Some of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law came to Jesus. They said, "Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you."

39He answered, "Evil and unfaithful people ask for a miraculous sign! But none will be given except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40Jonah was in the stomach of a huge fish for three days and three nights. Something like that will happen to the Son of Man. He will spend three days and three nights in the grave.

41"The men of Nineveh will stand up on judgment day with the people now living. And the Ninevites will prove that those people are guilty. The men of Nineveh turned away from their sins when Jonah preached to them. And now one who is more important than Jonah is here.

42"The Queen of the South will stand up on judgment day with the people now living. And she will prove that they are guilty. She came from very far away to listen to Solomon's wisdom. And now one who is more important than Solomon is here.

43"What happens when an evil spirit comes out of a man? It goes through dry areas looking for a place to rest. But it doesn't find it. 44Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives there, it finds the house empty. The house has been swept clean and put in order. 45Then the evil spirit goes and takes with it seven other spirits more evil than itself. They go in and live there.

That man is worse off than before. That is how it will be with the evil people of today.”

Jesus’ Mother and Brothers

46While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood
outside. They wanted to speak to him. 47Someone told him, “Your mother and
brothers are standing outside. They want to speak to you.”

48Jesus replied to him, “Who is my mother? And who are my brothers?”
49Jesus pointed to his disciples. He said, “Here is my mother! Here are my
brothers! 50Anyone who does what my Father in heaven wants is my brother or
sister or mother.”

The Story of the Farmer

Matthew 13

[1]That same day Jesus left the house and sat by the Sea of Galilee. [2]Large crowds gathered around him. So he got into a boat. He sat down in it. All the people stood on the shore. [3]Then he told them many things by using stories.

He said, “A farmer went out to plant his seed. [4]He scattered the seed on the ground. Some fell on a path. Birds came and ate it up. [5]Some seed fell on rocky places, where there wasn’t much soil. The plants came up quickly, because the soil wasn’t deep. [6]When the sun came up, it burned the plants. They dried up because they had no roots. [7]Other seed fell among thorns. The thorns grew up and crowded out the plants. [8]Still other seed fell on good soil. It produced a crop 100, 60 or 30 times more than what was planted. [9]Those who have ears should listen.”

[10]The disciples came to him. They asked, “Why do you use stories when you speak to the people?”

[11]He replied, “You have been given the chance to understand the secrets of the kingdom of heaven. It has not been given to outsiders. [12]Everyone who has that kind of knowledge will be given more. In fact, they will have very much. If anyone doesn’t have that kind of knowledge, even what little he has will be taken away from him. [13]Here is why I use stories when I speak to the people. I say,

> “They look, but they don’t really see.
> They listen, but they don’t really hear or understand.

[14]“In them the words of the prophet Isaiah come true. He said,

> “ ‘You will hear but never understand.
> You will see but never know what you are seeing.

15 The hearts of these people have become stubborn.
They can barely hear with their ears.
They have closed their eyes.
Otherwise they might see with their eyes.
They might hear with their ears.
They might understand with their hearts.
They might turn to the Lord, and then he would heal them.' (Isaiah 6:9, 10)

16 "But blessed are your eyes because they see. And blessed are your ears because they hear. 17 What I'm about to tell you is true. Many prophets and godly people wanted to see what you see. But they didn't see it. They wanted to hear what you hear. But they didn't hear it.

18 "Listen! Here is the meaning of the story of the farmer. 19 People hear the message about the kingdom but do not understand it. Then the evil one comes. He steals what was planted in their hearts. Those people are like the seed planted on a path. 20 Others received the seed that fell on rocky places. They are those who hear the message and at once receive it with joy. 21 But they have no roots. So they last only a short time. They quickly fall away from the faith when trouble or suffering comes because of the message. 22 Others received the seed that fell among the thorns. They are those who hear the message. But then the worries of this life and the false promises of wealth crowd it out. They keep it from producing fruit. 23 But still others received the seed that fell on good soil. They are those who hear the message and understand it. They produce a crop 100, 60 or 30 times more than the farmer planted."

The Story of the Weeds

24 Jesus told the crowd another story. "Here is what the kingdom of heaven is like," he said. "A man planted good seed in his field. 25 But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came. The enemy planted weeds among the wheat and then went away. 26 The wheat began to grow and form grain. At the same time, weeds appeared.

27 "The owner's servants came to him. They said, 'Sir, didn't you plant good seed in your field? Then where did the weeds come from?'

28“ ‘An enemy did this,’ he replied.

“The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull the weeds up?’

29“ ‘No,’ the owner answered. ‘While you are pulling up the weeds, you might pull up the wheat with them. 30Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the workers what to do. Here is what I will say to them. First collect the weeds. Tie them in bundles to be burned. Then gather the wheat. Bring it into my storeroom.’ ”

The Stories of the Mustard Seed and the Yeast

31Jesus told the crowd another story. He said, “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed. Someone took the seed and planted it in a field. 32It is the smallest of all your seeds. But when it grows, it is the largest of all garden plants. It becomes a tree. Birds come and rest in its branches.”

33Jesus told them still another story. “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast,” he said. “A woman mixed it into a large amount of flour. The yeast worked its way all through the dough.”

34Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd by using stories. He did not say anything to them without telling a story. 35So the words spoken by the prophet came true. He had said,

> “I will open my mouth and tell stories.
> I will speak about things that were hidden since the world was made.” (Psalm 78:2)

Jesus Explains the Story of the Weeds

36Then Jesus left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him. They said, “Explain to us the story of the weeds in the field.”

37He answered, “The one who planted the good seed is the Son of Man. 38The field is the world. The good seed stands for the people who belong to the kingdom. The weeds are the people who belong to the evil one. 39The enemy who plants them is the devil. The harvest is judgment day. And the workers are

angels.

40“The weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire. That is how it will be on judgment day. 41The Son of Man will send out his angels. They will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin. They will also get rid of all who do evil. 42They will throw them into the blazing furnace. There people will sob and grind their teeth. 43Then God’s people will shine like the sun in their Father’s kingdom. Those who have ears should listen.

The Stories of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl

44“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure that was hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again. He was very happy. So he went and sold everything he had. And he bought that field.

45“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a trader who was looking for fine pearls. 46He found one that was very valuable. So he went away and sold everything he had. And he bought that pearl.

The Story of the Net

47“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net. It was let down into the lake. It caught all kinds of fish. 48When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and gathered the good fish into baskets. But they threw the bad fish away. 49This is how it will be on judgment day. The angels will come. They will separate the people who did what is wrong from those who did what is right. 50They will throw the evil people into the blazing furnace. There the evil ones will sob and grind their teeth.

51“Do you understand all these things?” Jesus asked.

“Yes,” they replied.

52He said to them, “Every teacher of the law who has been taught about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house. He brings new treasures out of his storeroom as well as old ones.”

A Prophet Without Honor

53 Jesus finished telling these stories. Then he moved on from there. 54 He
came to his hometown of Nazareth. There he began teaching the people in their
synagogue. They were amazed.

"Where did this man get this wisdom? Where did he get this power to do
miracles?" they asked. 55 "Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's
name Mary? Aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? 56 Aren't all
his sisters with us? Then where did this man get all these things?" 57 They were
not pleased with him at all.

But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not honored in his hometown. He
doesn't receive any honor in his own home."

58 He did only a few miracles there because they had no faith.

John the Baptist's Head Is Cut Off

Matthew 14

[1]At that time Herod, the ruler of Galilee and Perea, heard reports about Jesus.
[2]He said to his attendants, "This is John the Baptist. He has risen from the
dead! That is why he has the power to do miracles."

[3]Herod had arrested John. He had tied him up and put him in prison because
of Herodias. She was the wife of Herod's brother Philip. [4]John had been saying
to Herod, "It is against the Law for you to have her." [5]Herod wanted to kill
John. But he was afraid of the people, because they thought John was a
prophet.

[6]On Herod's birthday the daughter of Herodias danced for Herod and his
guests. She pleased Herod very much. [7]So he promised with an oath to give her
anything she asked for. [8]Her mother told her what to say. So the girl said to
Herod, "Give me the head of John the Baptist on a big plate."

[9]The king was very upset. But he thought of his promise and his dinner
guests. So he told one of his men to give her what she asked for. [10]Herod had
John's head cut off in the prison. [11]His head was brought in on a big plate and
given to the girl. She then carried it to her mother.

[12]John's disciples came and took his body and buried it. Then they went and
told Jesus.

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

[13]Jesus heard what had happened to John. He wanted to be alone. So he went
in a boat to a quiet place. The crowds heard about this. They followed him on
foot from the towns. [14]When Jesus came ashore, he saw a large crowd. He felt
deep concern for them. He healed their sick people.

[15]When it was almost evening, the disciples came to him. "There is nothing
here," they said. "It's already getting late. Send the crowds away. They can go

and buy some food in the villages."

16 Jesus replied, "They don't need to go away. You give them something to eat."

17 "We have only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered.

18 "Bring them here to me," he said. 19 Then Jesus directed the people to sit down on the grass. He took the five loaves and the two fish. He looked up to heaven and gave thanks. He broke the loaves into pieces. Then he gave them to the disciples. And the disciples gave them to the people.

20 All of them ate and were satisfied. The disciples picked up 12 baskets of leftover pieces. 21 The number of men who ate was about 5,000. Women and children also ate.

Jesus Walks on the Water

22 Right away Jesus made the disciples get into the boat. He had them go on ahead of him to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. Then he sent the crowd away. 23 After he had sent them away, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone. 24 The boat was already a long way from land. It was being pounded by the waves because the wind was blowing against it.

25 Early in the morning, Jesus went out to the disciples. He walked on the lake. 26 They saw him walking on the lake and were terrified. "It's a ghost!" they said. And they cried out in fear.

27 Right away Jesus called out to them, "Be brave! It is I. Don't be afraid."

28 "Lord, is it you?" Peter asked. "If it is, tell me to come to you on the water."

29 "Come," Jesus said.

So Peter got out of the boat. He walked on the water toward Jesus. 30 But when Peter saw the wind, he was afraid. He began to sink. He cried out, "Lord! Save me!"

31 Right away Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "Your faith is so small!" he said. "Why did you doubt me?"

[32]When they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. [33]Then those in the boat worshiped Jesus. They said, “You really are the Son of God!”

[34]They crossed over the lake and landed at Gennesaret. [35]The men who lived there recognized Jesus. So they sent a message all over the nearby countryside. People brought all their sick to Jesus. [36]They begged him to let those who were sick just touch the edge of his clothes. And all who touched him were healed.

What Makes People "Unclean"?

Matthew 15

1 Some Pharisees and some teachers of the law came from Jerusalem to see
Jesus. They asked, 2 "Why don't your disciples obey what the elders teach?
Your disciples don't wash their hands before they eat!"

3 Jesus replied, "And why don't you obey God's command? You would rather
follow your own teachings! 4 God said, 'Honor your father and
mother.'(Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16) He also said, 'If anyone calls
down a curse on his father or mother, he will be put to death.'(Exodus 21:17;
Leviticus 20:9) 5 But you allow people to say to their parents, 'Any help you
might have received from us is a gift set apart for God.' 6 So they do not need to
honor their parents with their gift. You make the word of God useless in order
to follow your own teachings.

7 "You pretenders! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you. He said,

8 " 'These people honor me by what they say.
But their hearts are far away from me.
9 Their worship doesn't mean anything to me.
They teach nothing but human rules.' " (Isaiah 29:13)

10 Jesus called the crowd to him. He said, "Listen and understand. 11 What
goes into your mouth does not make you 'unclean.' It's what comes out of your
mouth that makes you 'unclean.' "

12 Then the disciples came to him. They asked, "Do you know that the
Pharisees were angry when they heard this?"

13 Jesus replied, "There are plants that my Father in heaven has not planted.
They will be pulled up by the roots. 14 Leave them. The Pharisees are blind
guides. If a blind person leads another who is blind, both of them will fall into
a pit."

15 Peter said, "Explain this to us."

16“Don’t you understand yet?” Jesus asked them. 17“Don’t you see?
Everything that enters the mouth goes into the stomach. Then it goes out of the
body. 18But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart. Those
are the things that make you ‘unclean.’ 19Evil thoughts come out of the heart.
So do murder, adultery, and other sexual sins. And so do stealing, false witness,
and telling lies about others. 20Those are the things that make you ‘unclean.’
But eating without washing your hands does not make you ‘unclean.’ ”

The Faith of a Woman From Canaan

21Jesus left Galilee and went to the area of Tyre and Sidon. 22A woman from
Canaan lived near Tyre and Sidon. She came to him and cried out, “Lord! Son
of David! Have mercy on me! A demon controls my daughter. She is suffering
terribly.”

23Jesus did not say a word. So his disciples came to him. They begged him,
“Send her away. She keeps crying out after us.”

24Jesus answered, “I was sent only to the people of Israel. They are like lost
sheep.”

25Then the woman fell to her knees in front of him. “Lord! Help me!” she
said.

26He replied, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and throw it to their
dogs.”

27“Yes, Lord,” she said. “But even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their
owners’ table.”

28Then Jesus answered, “Woman, you have great faith! You will be given
what you are asking for.” And her daughter was healed at that very moment.

Jesus Feeds the Four Thousand

29Jesus left there. He walked along the Sea of Galilee. Then he went up on a
mountainside and sat down. 30Large crowds came to him. They brought blind
people and those who could not walk. They also brought disabled people, those
who could not speak, and many others. They laid them at his feet, and he

healed them.

31The people were amazed. Those who could not speak were speaking. The disabled were made well. Those not able to walk were walking. Those who were blind could see. So the people praised the God of Israel.

32Then Jesus called for his disciples to come to him. He said, “I feel deep concern for these people. They have already been with me three days. They don’t have anything to eat. I don’t want to send them away hungry. If I do, they will become too weak on their way home.”

33His disciples answered him. “There is nothing here,” they said. “Where could we get enough bread to feed this large crowd?”

34“How many loaves do you have?” Jesus asked.

“Seven,” they replied, “and a few small fish.”

35Jesus told the crowd to sit down on the ground. 36He took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks. Then he broke them and gave them to the disciples. And the disciples passed them out to the people. 37All of them ate and were satisfied. After that, the disciples picked up seven baskets of leftover pieces. 38The number of men who ate was 4,000. Women and children also ate.

39After Jesus had sent the crowd away, he got into the boat. He went to the area near Magadan.

Jesus Is Asked for a Miraculous Sign

Matthew 16

1 The Pharisees and Sadducees came to put Jesus to the test. They asked him
to show them a miraculous sign from heaven.

2 He replied, “In the evening you look at the sky. You say, ‘It will be good
weather. The sky is red.’ 3 And in the morning you say, ‘Today it will be stormy.
The sky is red and cloudy.’ You know the meaning of what you see in the sky.
But you can’t understand the signs of what is happening right now. 4 An evil
and unfaithful people look for a miraculous sign. But none will be given to
them except the sign of Jonah.”

Then Jesus left them and went away.

The Yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees

5 The disciples crossed over to the other side of the lake. They had forgotten
to take bread. 6 “Be careful,” Jesus said to them. “Watch out for the yeast of the
Pharisees and Sadducees.”

7 The disciples talked about this among themselves. They said, “He must be
saying this because we didn’t bring any bread.”

8 Jesus knew what they were saying. So he said, “Your faith is so small! Why
are you talking to each other about having no bread? 9 Don’t you understand
yet? Don’t you remember the five loaves for the 5,000? Don’t you remember
how many baskets of pieces you gathered? 10 Don’t you remember the seven
loaves for the 4,000? Don’t you remember how many baskets of pieces you
gathered? 11 How can you possibly not understand? I wasn’t talking to you
about bread. But watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

12 Then the disciples understood that Jesus was not telling them to watch out
for the yeast used in bread. He was warning them against what the Pharisees
and Sadducees taught.

Peter Says That Jesus Is the Christ

13 Jesus went to the area of Caesarea Philippi. There he asked his disciples,
"Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

14 They replied, "Some say John the Baptist. Others say Elijah. Still others say
Jeremiah, or one of the prophets."

15 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ. You are the Son of the living
God."

17 Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah! No mere man showed
this to you. My Father in heaven showed it to you. 18 Here is what I tell you.
You are Peter. On this rock I will build my church. The gates of hell will not be
strong enough to destroy it. 19 I will give you the keys to the kingdom of
heaven. What you lock on earth will be locked in heaven. What you unlock on
earth will be unlocked in heaven."

20 Then Jesus warned his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.

Jesus Tells About His Coming Death

21 From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples what would
happen to him. He told them he must go to Jerusalem. There he must suffer
many things from the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law. He
must be killed and on the third day rise to life again.

22 Peter took Jesus to one side and began to scold him. "Never, Lord!" he said.
"This will never happen to you!"

23 Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are standing in
my way. You do not have in mind the things of God. Instead, you are thinking
about human things."

24 Then Jesus spoke to his disciples. He said, "If anyone wants to follow me,
he must say no to himself. He must pick up his cross and follow me. 25 If he
wants to save his life, he will lose it. But if he loses his life for me, he will find
it.

26 "What good is it if someone gains the whole world but loses his soul? Or

what can anyone trade for his soul? [27]The Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory. His angels will come with him. And he will reward everyone in keeping with what they have done.

[28]"What I'm about to tell you is true. Some who are standing here will not die before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

Jesus' Appearance Is Changed

Matthew 17

[1]After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John the brother of James with
him. He led them up a high mountain. They were all alone. [2]There in front of
them his appearance was changed. His face shone like the sun. His clothes
became as white as the light. [3]Just then Moses and Elijah appeared in front of
them. Moses and Elijah were talking with Jesus.

[4]Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put
up three shelters. One will be for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

[5]While Peter was still speaking, a bright cloud surrounded them. A voice
from the cloud said, "This is my Son, and I love him. I am very pleased with
him. Listen to him!"

[6]When the disciples heard this, they were terrified. They fell with their faces
to the ground. [7]But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be
afraid." [8]When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.

[9]They came down the mountain. On the way down, Jesus told them what to
do. "Don't tell anyone what you have seen," he said. "Wait until the Son of
Man has been raised from the dead."

[10]The disciples asked him, "Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah
has to come first?"

[11]Jesus replied, "That's right. Elijah is supposed to come and make all things
new again. [12]But I tell you, Elijah has already come. People didn't recognize
him. They have done to him everything they wanted to do. In the same way,
they are going to make the Son of Man suffer."

[13]Then the disciples understood that Jesus was talking to them about John the
Baptist.

Jesus Heals a Boy Who Had a Demon

14When they came near the crowd, a man approached Jesus. He got on his knees in front of him. 15“Lord,” he said, “have mercy on my son. He shakes wildly and suffers a great deal. He often falls into the fire or into the water. 16I brought him to your disciples. But they couldn’t heal him.”

17“You unbelieving and evil people!” Jesus replied. “How long do I have to stay with you? How long do I have to put up with you? Bring the boy here to me.”

18Jesus ordered the demon to leave the boy, and it came out of him. He was healed at that very moment.

19Then the disciples came to Jesus in private. They asked, “Why couldn’t we drive out the demon?”

20/21He replied, “Because your faith is much too small. What I’m about to tell you is true. If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, it is enough. You can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there.’ And it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”

22They came together in Galilee. Then Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be handed over to men. 23They will kill him. On the third day he will rise from the dead.”

Then the disciples were filled with deep sadness.

Jesus Pays the Temple Tax

24Jesus and his disciples arrived in Capernaum. There the tax collectors came to Peter. They asked him, “Doesn’t your teacher pay the temple tax?”

25“Yes, he does,” he replied.

When Peter came into the house, Jesus spoke first. “What do you think, Simon?” he asked. “Who do the kings of the earth collect taxes and fees from? Do they collect from their own sons or from others?”

26“From others,” Peter answered.

“Then the sons don’t have to pay,” Jesus said to him. 27“But we don’t want to make them angry. So go to the lake and throw out your fishing line. Take the first fish you catch. Open its mouth. There you will find the exact coin you need. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours.”

Who Is the Most Important Person in the Kingdom?

Matthew 18

1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus. They asked him, “Who is the most
important person in the kingdom of heaven?”

2 Jesus called a little child over to him. He had the child stand among them.
3 Jesus said, “What I’m about to tell you is true. You need to change and
become like little children. If you don’t, you will never enter the kingdom of
heaven. 4 Anyone who becomes as free of pride as this child is the most
important in the kingdom of heaven.

5 “Anyone who welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me.

6 “But what if someone leads one of these little ones who believe in me to sin?
If he does, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his
neck and be drowned at the bottom of the sea.

7 “How terrible it will be for the world because of the things that lead people
to sin! Things like that must come. But how terrible for those who cause them!

8 “If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It would
be better for you to enter the kingdom of heaven with only one hand or one
foot than to go into hell with two hands and two feet. In hell the fire burns
forever. 9 If your eye causes you to sin, poke it out and throw it away. It would
be better for you to enter the kingdom of heaven with one eye than to have two
eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.

The Story of the Lost Sheep

10/11 “See that you don’t look down on one of these little ones. Here is what I
tell you. Their angels in heaven can go at any time to see my Father who is in
heaven.

12 “What do you think? Suppose a man owns 100 sheep and one of them
wanders away. Won’t he leave the 99 sheep on the hills? Won’t he go and look

for the one that wandered off? 13What I'm about to tell you is true. If he finds that sheep, he is happier about the one than about the 99 that didn't wander off. 14It is the same with your Father in heaven. He does not want any of these little ones to be lost.

When Someone Sins Against You

15"If your brother sins against you, go to him. Tell him what he did wrong. Keep it between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won him back.

16"But what if he won't listen to you? Then take one or two others with you. Scripture says, 'Every matter must be proved by the words of two or three witnesses.'(Deuteronomy 19:15) 17But what if he also refuses to listen to the witnesses? Then tell it to the church. And what if he refuses to listen even to the church? Then don't treat him as your brother. Treat him as you would treat an ungodly person or a tax collector.

18"What I'm about to tell you is true. What you lock on earth will be locked in heaven. What you unlock on earth will be unlocked in heaven.

19"Again, here is what I tell you. Suppose two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for. My Father in heaven will do it for you. 20Where two or three people meet together in my name, I am there with them."

The Servant Who Had No Mercy

21Peter came to Jesus. He asked, "Lord, how many times should I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?"

22Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but 77 times.

23"The kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to collect all the money his servants owed him. 24As the king began to do it, a man who owed him millions of dollars was brought to him. 25The man was not able to pay. So his master gave an order. The man, his wife, his children, and all he owned had to be sold to pay back what he owed.

26"The servant fell on his knees in front of him. 'Give me time,' he begged. 'I'll pay everything back.'

27“His master felt sorry for him. He forgave him what he owed and let him
go.

28“But then that servant went out and found one of the other servants who
owed him a few dollars. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back
what you owe me!’ he said.

29“The other servant fell on his knees. ‘Give me time,’ he begged him. ‘I’ll
pay you back.’

30“But the first servant refused. Instead, he went and had the man thrown into
prison. The man would be held there until he could pay back what he owed.
31The other servants saw what had happened. It troubled them greatly. They
went and told their master everything that had happened.

32“Then the master called the first servant in. ‘You evil servant,’ he said. ‘I
forgave all that you owed me because you begged me to. 33Shouldn’t you have
had mercy on the other servant just as I had mercy on you?’ 34In anger his
master turned him over to the jailers. He would be punished until he paid back
everything he owed.

35“This is how my Father in heaven will treat each of you unless you forgive
your brother from your heart.”

Jesus Teaches About Divorce

Matthew 19

[1]When Jesus finished saying these things, he left Galilee. He went into the area of Judea on the other side of the Jordan River. [2]Large crowds followed him. He healed them there.

[3]Some Pharisees came to put him to the test. They asked, “Does the Law allow a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?”

[4]Jesus replied, “Haven’t you read that in the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female’?(Genesis 1:27) [5]He said, ‘That’s why a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife. The two will become one.’(Genesis 2:24) [6]They are no longer two, but one. So a man must not separate what God has joined together.”

[7]They asked, “Then why did Moses command that a man can give his wife a letter of divorce and send her away?”

[8]Jesus replied, “Moses let you divorce your wives because you were stubborn. But it was not this way from the beginning. [9]Here is what I tell you. Anyone who divorces his wife and gets married to another woman commits adultery. A man may divorce his wife only if she has not been faithful to him.”

[10]The disciples said to him, “If that’s the way it is between a husband and wife, it is better not to get married.”

[11]Jesus replied, “Not everyone can accept the idea of staying single. Only those who have been helped to live without getting married can accept it. [12]Some men are not able to have children because they were born that way. Some have been made that way by other people. Others have made themselves that way in order to serve the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept living that way should do it.”

Little Children Are Brought to Jesus

13 Some people brought little children to Jesus. They wanted him to place his
hands on the children and pray for them. But the disciples told the people to
stop.

14 Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me. Don’t keep them away. The
kingdom of heaven belongs to people like them.” 15 Jesus placed his hands on
them. Then he went on from there.

Jesus and the Rich Young Man

16 A man came up to Jesus. He asked, “Teacher, what good thing must I do to
receive eternal life?”

17 “Why do you ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only
One who is good. If you want to enter the kingdom, obey the commandments.”

18 “Which ones?” the man asked.

Jesus said, “ ‘Do not commit murder. Do not commit adultery. Do not steal.
Do not give false witness. 19 Honor your father and mother.’(Exodus 20:12–16;
Deuteronomy 5:16–20) And ‘love your neighbor as you love
yourself.’ ”(Leviticus 19:18)

20 “I have obeyed all those commandments,” the young man said. “What else
do I need to do?”

21 Jesus answered, “If you want to be perfect, go and sell everything you have.
Give the money to those who are poor. You will have treasure in heaven. Then
come and follow me.”

22 When the young man heard this, he went away sad. He was very rich.

23 Then Jesus said to his disciples, “What I’m about to tell you is true. It is
hard for rich people to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24 Again I tell you, it is
hard for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. But it is even harder for the
rich to enter God’s kingdom.”

25 When the disciples heard this, they were really amazed. They asked, “Then
who can be saved?”

26 Jesus looked at them and said, “With man, that is impossible. But with God,
all things are possible.”

27 Peter answered him, “We have left everything to follow you! What reward

will be given to us?”

[28]“What I’m about to tell you is true,” Jesus said to them. “When all things are made new, the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne. Then you who have followed me will also sit on 12 thrones. You will judge the 12 tribes of Israel. [29]Everyone who has left houses or families or fields because of me will receive 100 times as much. They will also receive eternal life. [30]But many who are first will be last. And many who are last will be first.

The Story of the Workers in the Vineyard

Matthew 20

[1]"The kingdom of heaven is like a man who owned land. He went out early in the morning to hire people to work in his vineyard. [2]He agreed to give them the usual pay for a day's work. Then he sent them into his vineyard.

[3]"About nine o'clock in the morning he went out again. He saw others standing in the market place doing nothing. [4]He told them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard. I'll pay you what is right.' [5]So they went.

"He went out again about noon and at three o'clock and did the same thing. [6]About five o'clock he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, 'Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?'

[7]" 'Because no one has hired us,' they answered.

"He said to them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard.'

[8]"When evening came, the owner of the vineyard spoke to the person who was in charge of the workers. He said, 'Call the workers and give them their pay. Begin with the last ones I hired. Then go on to the first ones.'

[9]"The workers who were hired about five o'clock came. Each received the usual day's pay. [10]So when those who were hired first came, they expected to receive more. But each of them also received the usual day's pay.

[11]"When they received it, they began to complain about the owner. [12]'These people who were hired last worked only one hour,' they said. 'You have paid them the same as us. We have done most of the work and have been in the hot sun all day.'

[13]"The owner answered one of them. 'Friend,' he said, 'I'm being fair to you. Didn't you agree to work for the usual day's pay? [14]Take your money and go. I want to give the ones I hired last the same pay I gave you. [15]Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Do you feel cheated because I gave so freely to the others?'

[16]"So those who are last will be first. And those who are first will be last."

Jesus Again Tells About His Coming Death

17 Jesus was going up to Jerusalem. On the way, he took the 12 disciples to
one side to talk to them.

18 "We are going up to Jerusalem," he said. "The Son of Man will be handed
over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will sentence him to
death. 19 Then they will turn him over to people who are not Jews. The people
will make fun of him and whip him. They will nail him to a cross. On the third
day, he will rise from the dead!"

A Mother Asks a Favor of Jesus

20 The mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus. Her sons came with her.
Getting on her knees, she asked a favor of him.

21 "What do you want?" Jesus asked.

She said, "Promise me that one of my two sons may sit at your right hand in
your kingdom. Promise that the other one may sit at your left hand."

22 "You don't know what you're asking for," Jesus said to them. "Can you
drink the cup of suffering I am going to drink?"

"We can," they answered.

23 Jesus said to them, "You will certainly drink from my cup. But it is not for
me to say who will sit at my right or left hand. These places belong to those my
Father has prepared them for."

24 The other ten disciples heard about this. They became angry at the two
brothers.

25 Jesus called them together. He said, "You know about the rulers of the
nations. They hold power over their people. Their high officials order them
around. 26 Don't be like that. Instead, anyone who wants to be important among
you must be your servant. 27 And anyone who wants to be first must be your
slave.

28 "Be like the Son of Man. He did not come to be served. Instead, he came to
serve others. He came to give his life as the price for setting many people free."

Two Blind Men Receive Their Sight

[29]Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho. A large crowd followed him. [30]Two blind men were sitting by the side of the road. They heard that Jesus was going by. So they shouted, “Lord! Son of David! Have mercy on us!”

[31]The crowd commanded them to stop. They told them to be quiet. But the two men shouted even louder, “Lord! Son of David! Have mercy on us!”

[32]Jesus stopped and called out to them. “What do you want me to do for you?” he asked.

[33]“Lord,” they answered, “we want to be able to see.”

[34]Jesus felt deep concern for them. He touched their eyes. Right away they could see. And they followed him.

Jesus Enters Jerusalem

Matthew 21

1 As they all approached Jerusalem, they came to Bethphage. It was on the
Mount of Olives. Jesus sent out two disciples. 2 He said to them, “Go to the
village ahead of you. As soon as you get there, you will find a donkey tied up.
Her colt will be with her. Untie them and bring them to me. 3 If anyone says
anything to you, say that the Lord needs them. The owner will send them right
away.”

4 This took place so that what was spoken through the prophet would come
true. It says,

> 5 “Say to the city of Zion,
> ‘See, your king comes to you.
> He is gentle and riding on a donkey.
> He is riding on a donkey’s colt.’ ” (Zechariah 9:9)

6 The disciples went and did what Jesus told them to do. 7 They brought the
donkey and the colt. They placed their coats on them. Then Jesus sat on the
coats. 8 A very large crowd spread their coats on the road. Others cut branches
from the trees and spread them on the road. 9 Some of the people went ahead of
him, and some followed. They all shouted,

> “Hosanna to the Son of David!”
>
> “Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!” (Psalm 118:26)
>
> “Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

10 When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up. The people
asked, “Who is this?”

[11]The crowds answered, “This is Jesus. He is the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”

Jesus Clears Out the Temple

[12]Jesus entered the temple area. He began chasing out all those who were buying and selling there. He turned over the tables of the people who were exchanging money. He also turned over the benches of those who were selling doves. [13]He said to them, “It is written that the Lord said, ‘My house will be called a house where people can pray.’(Isaiah 56:7) But you are making it a ‘den for robbers.’ ”(Jeremiah 7:11)

[14]Blind people and those who were disabled came to Jesus at the temple. There he healed them. [15]The chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did. They also saw the children in the temple area shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” But when they saw all of this, they became angry.

[16]“Do you hear what these children are saying?” they asked him.

“Yes,” replied Jesus. “Haven’t you ever read about it in Scripture? It says,

> “ ‘You have made sure that children and infants
> praise you.’ ” (Psalm 8:2)

[17]Then Jesus left the people and went out of the city to Bethany. He spent the night there.

The Fig Tree Dries Up

[18]Early in the morning, Jesus was on his way back to Jerusalem. He was hungry. [19]He saw a fig tree by the road. He went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, “May you never bear fruit again!” Right away the tree dried up.

[20]When the disciples saw this, they were amazed. “How did the fig tree dry up so quickly?” they asked.

21 Jesus replied, “What I’m about to tell you is true. You must have faith and
not doubt. Then you can do what was done to the fig tree. And you can say to
this mountain, ‘Go and throw yourself into the sea.’ It will be done. 22 If you
believe, you will receive what you ask for when you pray.”

The Authority of Jesus Is Questioned

23 Jesus entered the temple courtyard. While he was teaching there, the chief
priests and the elders of the people came to him. “By what authority are you
doing these things?” they asked. “Who gave you this authority?”

24 Jesus replied, “I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell
you by what authority I am doing these things. 25 Where did John’s baptism
come from? Was it from heaven? Or did it come from men?”

They talked to each other about it. They said, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he
will ask, ‘Then why didn’t you believe him?’ 26 But what if we say, ‘From
men’? We are afraid of the people. Everyone believes that John was a prophet.”

27 So they answered Jesus, “We don’t know.”

Jesus said, “Then I won’t tell you by what authority I am doing these things
either.

The Story of the Two Sons

28 “What do you think about this? A man had two sons. He went to the first
and said, ‘Son, go and work today in the vineyard.’

29 “ ‘I will not,’ the son answered. But later he changed his mind and went.

30 “Then the father went to the other son. He said the same thing. The son
answered, ‘I will, sir.’ But he did not go.

31 “Which of the two sons did what his father wanted?”

“The first,” they answered.

Jesus said to them, “What I’m about to tell you is true. Tax collectors and
prostitutes will enter the kingdom of God ahead of you. 32 John came to show
you the right way to live. And you did not believe him. But the tax collectors

and the prostitutes did. You saw this. But even then you did not turn away from your sins and believe him.

The Story of the Renters

33"Listen to another story. A man who owned some land planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it. He dug a pit for a winepress in it. He also built a lookout tower. He rented the vineyard out to some farmers. Then he went away on a journey. 34When harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the renters. He told the servants to collect his share of the fruit.

35"But the renters grabbed his servants. They beat one of them. They killed another. They threw stones at the third to kill him. 36Then the man sent other servants to the renters. He sent more than he did the first time. The renters treated them the same way.

37"Last of all, he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he said.

38"But the renters saw the son coming. They said to each other, 'This is the one who will receive all the owner's property someday. Come, let's kill him. Then everything will be ours.' 39So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard. Then they killed him.

40"When the owner of the vineyard comes back, what will he do to those renters?"

41"He will destroy those evil people," they replied. "Then he will rent the vineyard out to other renters. They will give him his share of the crop at harvest time."

42Jesus said to them, "Haven't you ever read what the Scriptures say,

> " 'The stone the builders didn't accept
> has become the most important stone of all.
> The Lord has done it.
> It is wonderful in our eyes'? (Psalm 118:22, 23)

43"So here is what I tell you. The kingdom of God will be taken away from you. It will be given to people who will produce its fruit. 44Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces. But the stone will crush anyone it falls

on.”

45The chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus’ stories. They knew he was talking about them. 46So they looked for a way to arrest him. But they were afraid of the crowd. The people believed that Jesus was a prophet.

The Story of the Wedding Dinner

Matthew 22

[1]Jesus told them more stories. He said, [2]"Here is what the kingdom of heaven
is like. A king prepared a wedding dinner for his son. [3]He sent his servants to
those who had been invited to the dinner. The servants told them to come. But
they refused.

[4]"Then he sent some more servants. He said, 'Tell those who were invited
that I have prepared my dinner. I have killed my oxen and my fattest cattle.
Everything is ready. Come to the wedding dinner.'

[5]"But the people paid no attention. One went away to his field. Another went
away to his business. [6]The rest grabbed his servants. They treated them badly
and then killed them.

[7]"The king became very angry. He sent his army to destroy them. They killed
those murderers and burned their city.

[8]"Then the king said to his servants, 'The wedding dinner is ready. But those
I invited were not fit to come. [9]Go to the street corners. Invite to the dinner
anyone you can find.' [10]So the servants went out into the streets. They gathered
all the people they could find, both good and bad. Soon the wedding hall was
filled with guests.

[11]"The king came in to see the guests. He noticed a man there who was not
wearing wedding clothes. [12]'Friend,' he asked, 'how did you get in here
without wedding clothes?' The man couldn't think of anything to say.

[13]"Then the king told his servants, 'Tie up his hands and feet. Throw him
outside into the darkness. Out there people will sob and grind their teeth.'

[14]"Many are invited, but few are chosen."

Is It Right to Pay Taxes to Caesar?

[15]The Pharisees went out. They made plans to trap Jesus with his own words.

16They sent their followers to him. They sent the Herodians with them.

"Teacher," they said, "we know you are a man of honor. You teach the way of God truthfully. You don't let others tell you what to do or say. You don't care how important they are. 17Tell us then, what do you think? Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

18But Jesus knew their evil plans. He said, "You pretenders! Why are you trying to trap me? 19Show me the coin people use for paying the tax."

They brought him a silver coin.

20He asked them, "Whose picture is this? And whose words?"

21"Caesar's," they replied.

Then he said to them, "Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar. And give to God what belongs to God."

22When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away.

Marriage When the Dead Rise

23That same day the Sadducees came to Jesus with a question. They do not believe that people rise from the dead.

24"Teacher," they said, "here is what Moses told us. If a man dies without having children, his brother must get married to the widow. He must have children to carry on his brother's name. 25There were seven brothers among us. The first one got married and died. Since he had no children, he left his wife to his brother. 26The same thing happened to the second and third brothers. It happened right on down to the seventh brother. 27Finally, the woman died. 28Now then, when the dead rise, whose wife will she be? All seven of them were married to her."

29Jesus replied, "You are mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures. And you do not know the power of God. 30When the dead rise, they won't get married. And their parents won't give them to be married. They will be like the angels in heaven.

31"What about the dead rising? Haven't you read what God said to you? 32He said, 'I am the God of Abraham. I am the God of Isaac. And I am the God of Jacob.'(Exodus 3:6) He is not the God of the dead. He is the God of the

living.”

33When the crowds heard this, they were amazed by what he taught.

The Most Important Commandment

34The Pharisees heard that the Sadducees weren’t able to answer Jesus. So the Pharisees got together. 35One of them was an authority on the law. So he tested Jesus with a question. 36“Teacher,” he asked, “which is the most important commandment in the Law?”

37Jesus replied, “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Love him with all your mind.’(Deuteronomy 6:5) 38This is the first and most important commandment. 39And the second is like it. ‘Love your neighbor as you love yourself.’(Leviticus 19:18) 40Everything that is written in the Law and the Prophets is based on these two commandments.”



Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Love him with all your mind.

Matthew 22:37

Whose Son Is the Christ?

41The Pharisees were gathered together. Jesus asked them, 42"What do you
think about the Christ? Whose son is he?"

"The son of David," they replied.

43He said to them, "Then why does David call him 'Lord'? The Holy Spirit
spoke through David himself. David said,

> 44" 'The Lord said to my Lord,
> "Sit at my right hand
> until I put your enemies
> under your control." ' (Psalm 110:1)

45So if David calls him 'Lord,' how can he be David's son?"

46No one could answer him with a single word. From that day on, no one
dared to ask him any more questions.

Jesus Judges the Pharisees and the Teachers of the Law

Matthew 23

1 Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples. 2 "The teachers of the law and
the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat," he said. 3 "So you must obey them. Do
everything they tell you. But don't do what they do. They don't practice what
they preach. 4 They tie up heavy loads and put them on other people's
shoulders. But they themselves aren't willing to lift a finger to move them.

5 "Everything they do is done for others to see. On their foreheads and arms
they wear little boxes that hold Scripture verses. They make the boxes very
wide. And they make the tassels on their coats very long.

6 "They love to sit down in the place of honor at dinners. They also love to
have the most important seats in the synagogues. 7 They love to be greeted in
the market places. They love it when people call them 'Rabbi.'

8 "But you shouldn't be called 'Rabbi.' You have only one Master, and you
are all brothers. 9 Do not call anyone on earth 'father.' You have one Father, and
he is in heaven. 10 You shouldn't be called 'teacher.' You have one Teacher, and
he is the Christ. 11 The most important person among you will be your servant.
12 Anyone who lifts himself up will be brought down. And anyone who is
brought down will be lifted up.

13/14 "How terrible it will be for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees! You
pretenders! You shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. You yourselves
do not enter. And you will not let those enter who are trying to.

15 "How terrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees! You pretenders!
You travel everywhere to win one person to your faith. Then you make him
twice as much a son of hell as you are.

16 "How terrible for you, blind guides! You say, 'If anyone takes an oath in the
name of the temple, it means nothing. But anyone who takes an oath in the
name of the gold of the temple must keep the oath.' 17 You are blind and
foolish! Which is more important? Is it the gold? Or is it the temple that makes
the gold holy?

18“You also say, ‘If anyone takes an oath in the name of the altar, it means
nothing. But anyone who takes an oath in the name of the gift on it must keep
the oath.’ 19You blind men! Which is more important? Is it the gift? Or is it the
altar that makes the gift holy?

20“So anyone who takes an oath in the name of the altar takes an oath in the
name of it and of everything on it. 21And anyone who takes an oath in the
name of the temple takes an oath in the name of it and of the One who lives in
it. 22And anyone who takes an oath in the name of heaven takes an oath in the
name of God’s throne and of the One who sits on it.

23“How terrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees! You pretenders!
You give God a tenth of your spices, like mint, dill and cummin. But you have
not practiced the more important things of the law, like fairness, mercy and
faithfulness. You should have practiced the last things without failing to do the
first. 24You blind guides! You remove the smallest insect from your food. But
you swallow a whole camel!

25“How terrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees! You pretenders!
You clean the outside of the cup and dish. But on the inside you are full of
greed. You only want to satisfy yourselves. 26Blind Pharisee! First clean the
inside of the cup and dish. Then the outside will also be clean.

27“How terrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees! You pretenders!
You are like tombs that are painted white. They look beautiful on the outside.
But on the inside they are full of the bones of the dead. They are also full of
other things that are not pure and clean. 28It is the same with you. On the
outside you seem to be doing what is right. But on the inside you are full of
what is wrong. You pretend to be what you are not.

29“How terrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees! You pretenders!
You build tombs for the prophets. You decorate the graves of the godly. 30And
you say, ‘If we had lived in the days of those who lived before us, we wouldn’t
have done what they did. We wouldn’t have helped to kill the prophets.’ 31So
you give witness against yourselves. You admit that you are the children of
those who murdered the prophets. 32So finish the sins that those who lived
before you started!

33“You nest of poisonous snakes! How will you escape from being sentenced
to hell? 34So I am sending you prophets, wise men, and teachers. You will kill
some of them. You will nail some to a cross. Others you will whip in your

synagogues. You will chase them from town to town.

35“So you will pay for all the godly people’s blood spilled on earth. I mean
from the blood of godly Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berekiah.
Zechariah was the one you murdered between the temple and the altar. 36What
I’m about to tell you is true. All this will happen to those who are now living.

37“Jerusalem! Jerusalem! You kill the prophets and throw stones in order to
kill those who are sent to you. Many times I have wanted to gather your people
together. I have wanted to be like a hen who gathers her chicks under her
wings. But you would not let me! 38Look, your house is left empty. 39I tell you,
you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in the
name of the Lord.’ ”(Psalm 118:26)

Signs of the End

Matthew 24

[1]Jesus left the temple. He was walking away when his disciples came up to
him. They wanted to call his attention to the temple buildings.

[2]"Do you see all these things?" Jesus asked. "What I'm about to tell you is
true. Not one stone here will be left on top of another. Every stone will be
thrown down."

[3]Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives. There the disciples came to him in
private. "Tell us," they said. "When will this happen? And what will be the
sign of your coming? What will be the sign of the end?"

[4]Jesus answered, "Keep watch! Be careful that no one fools you. [5]Many will
come in my name. They will claim, 'I am the Christ!' They will fool many
people.

[6]"You will hear about wars. You will also hear people talking about future
wars. Don't be alarmed. Those things must happen. But the end still isn't here.
[7]Nation will fight against nation. Kingdom will fight against kingdom. People
will go hungry. There will be earthquakes in many places. [8]All these are the
beginning of birth pains.

[9]"Then people will hand you over to be treated badly and killed. All nations
will hate you because of me. [10]At that time, many will turn away from their
faith. They will hate each other. They will hand each other over to their
enemies. [11]Many false prophets will appear. They will fool many people.
[12]Because evil will grow, most people's love will grow cold. [13]But the one who
stands firm to the end will be saved. [14]This good news of the kingdom will be
preached in the whole world. It will be a witness to all nations. Then the end
will come.

[15]"The prophet Daniel spoke about 'the hated thing that destroys.'(Daniel
9:27; 11:31; 12:11) Someday you will see it standing in the holy place. The
reader should understand this. [16]Then those who are in Judea should escape to
the mountains. [17]No one on the roof should go down into his house to take

anything out. [18]No one in the field should go back to get his coat. [19]How awful it will be in those days for pregnant women! How awful for nursing mothers! [20]Pray that you will not have to escape in winter or on the Sabbath day. [21]There will be terrible suffering in those days. It will be worse than any other from the beginning of the world until now. And there will never be anything like it again. [22]If the time had not been cut short, no one would live. But because of God's chosen people, it will be shortened.

[23]"At that time someone may say to you, 'Look! Here is the Christ!' Or, 'There he is!' Do not believe it. [24]False Christs and false prophets will appear. They will do great signs and miracles. They will try to fool God's chosen people if possible. [25]See, I have told you ahead of time.

[26]"So if anyone tells you, 'He is far out in the desert,' do not go out there. Or if anyone says, 'He is deep inside the house,' do not believe it. [27]Lightning that comes from the east can be seen in the west. It will be the same when the Son of Man comes. [28]The vultures will gather wherever there is a dead body.

[29]"Right after the terrible suffering of those days,

> " 'The sun will be darkened.
> The moon will not shine.
> The stars will fall from the sky.
> The heavenly bodies will be shaken.' (Isaiah 13:10; 34:4)

[30]"At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky. All the nations on earth will be sad. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky. He will come with power and great glory. [31]He will send his angels with a loud trumpet call. They will gather his chosen people from all four directions. They will bring them from one end of the heavens to the other.

[32]"Learn a lesson from the fig tree. As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. [33]In the same way, when you see all those things happening, you know that the end is near. It is right at the door. [34]What I'm about to tell you is true. The people living at that time will certainly not pass away until all those things have happened. [35]Heaven and earth will pass away. But my words will never pass away.

The Day and Hour Are Not Known

36 “No one knows about that day or hour. Not even the angels in heaven know.
The Son does not know. Only the Father knows.

37 “Remember how it was in the days of Noah. It will be the same when the
Son of Man comes.

38 “In the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking. They were
getting married. They were giving their daughters to be married. They did all
those things right up to the day Noah entered the ark. 39 They knew nothing
about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is
how it will be when the Son of Man comes.

40 “Two men will be in the field. One will be taken and the other left. 41 Two
women will be grinding with a hand mill. One will be taken and the other left.

42 “So keep watch. You do not know on what day your Lord will come. 43 You
must understand something. Suppose the owner of the house knew what time
of night the robber was coming. Then he would have kept watch. He would not
have let his house be broken into. 44 So you also must be ready. The Son of
Man will come at an hour when you don’t expect him.

45 “Suppose a master puts one of his servants in charge of the other servants in
his house. The servant’s job is to give them their food at the right time. The
master wants a faithful and wise servant for this. 46 It will be good for the
servant if the master finds him doing his job when the master returns. 47 What
I’m about to tell you is true. The master will put that servant in charge of
everything he owns.

48 “But suppose that servant is evil. Suppose he says to himself, ‘My master is
staying away a long time.’ 49 Suppose he begins to beat the other servants. And
suppose he eats and drinks with those who drink too much. 50 The master of
that servant will come back on a day the servant doesn’t expect him. He will
return at an hour the servant does not know. 51 Then the master will cut him to
pieces. He will send him to the place where pretenders go. There people will
sob and grind their teeth.

The Story of Ten Bridesmaids

Matthew 25

1 “Here is what the kingdom of heaven will be like at that time. Ten
bridesmaids took their lamps and went out to meet the groom. 2 Five of them
were foolish. Five were wise. 3 The foolish ones took their lamps but didn’t
take any olive oil with them. 4 The wise ones took oil in jars along with their
lamps. 5 The groom did not come for a long time. So the bridesmaids all grew
tired and fell asleep.

6 “At midnight someone cried out, ‘Here’s the groom! Come out to meet
him!’

7 “Then all the bridesmaids woke up and got their lamps ready. 8 The foolish
ones said to the wise ones, ‘Give us some of your oil. Our lamps are going
out.’

9 “ ‘No,’ they replied. ‘There may not be enough for all of us. Instead, go to
those who sell oil. Buy some for yourselves.’

10 “So they went to buy the oil. But while they were on their way, the groom
arrived. The bridesmaids who were ready went in with him to the wedding
dinner. Then the door was shut.

11 “Later, the other bridesmaids also came. ‘Sir! Sir!’ they said. ‘Open the
door for us!’

12 “But he replied, ‘What I’m about to tell you is true. I don’t know you.’

13 “So keep watch. You do not know the day or the hour that the groom will
come.

The Story of Three Servants

14 “Again, here is what the kingdom of heaven will be like. A man was going
on a journey. He sent for his servants and put them in charge of his property.
15 He gave $10,000 to one. He gave $4,000 to another. And he gave $2,000 to

the third. The man gave each servant the amount of money he knew the servant could take care of. Then he went on his journey.

16“The servant who had received the $10,000 went at once and put his money to work. He earned $10,000 more. 17The one with the $4,000 earned $4,000 more. 18But the man who had received $2,000 went and dug a hole in the ground. He hid his master’s money in it.

19“After a long time the master of those servants returned. He wanted to collect all the money they had earned. 20The man who had received $10,000 brought the other $10,000. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you trusted me with $10,000. See, I have earned $10,000 more.’

21“His master replied, ‘You have done well, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things. I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

22“The man with $4,000 also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you trusted me with $4,000. See, I have earned $4,000 more.’

23“His master replied, ‘You have done well, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things. I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

24“Then the man who had received $2,000 came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man. You harvest where you have not planted. You gather crops where you have not scattered seed. 25So I was afraid. I went out and hid your $2,000 in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’

26“His master replied, ‘You evil, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not planted? You knew that I gather crops where I have not scattered seed? 27Well then, you should have put my money in the bank. When I returned, I would have received it back with interest.’

28“Then his master commanded the other servants, ‘Take the $2,000 from him. Give it to the one who has $20,000. 29Everyone who has will be given more. He will have more than enough. And what about anyone who doesn’t have? Even what he has will be taken away from him. 30Throw that worthless servant outside. There in the darkness, people will sob and grind their teeth.’

The Sheep and the Goats

31“The Son of Man will come in all his glory. All the angels will come with
him. Then he will sit on his throne in the glory of heaven. 32All the nations will
be gathered in front of him. He will separate the people into two groups. He
will be like a shepherd who separates the sheep from the goats. 33He will put
the sheep to his right and the goats to his left.

34“Then the King will speak to those on his right. He will say, ‘My Father has
blessed you. Come and take what is yours. It is the kingdom prepared for you
since the world was created. 35I was hungry. And you gave me something to
eat. I was thirsty. And you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger. And
you invited me in. 36I needed clothes. And you gave them to me. I was sick.
And you took care of me. I was in prison. And you came to visit me.’

37“Then the people who have done what is right will answer him. ‘Lord,’ they
will ask, ‘when did we see you hungry and feed you? When did we see you
thirsty and give you something to drink? 38When did we see you as a stranger
and invite you in? When did we see you needing clothes and give them to you?
39When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

40“The King will reply, ‘What I’m about to tell you is true. Anything you did
for one of the least important of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’

41“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘You are cursed! Go away from me
into the fire that burns forever. It has been prepared for the devil and his angels.
42I was hungry. But you gave me nothing to eat. I was thirsty. But you gave me
nothing to drink. 43I was a stranger. But you did not invite me in. I needed
clothes. But you did not give me any. I was sick and in prison. But you did not
take care of me.’

44“They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty and
not help you? When did we see you as a stranger or needing clothes or sick or
in prison and not help you?’

45“He will reply, ‘What I’m about to tell you is true. Anything you didn’t do
for one of the least important of these, you didn’t do for me.’

46“Then they will go away to be punished forever. But those who have done
what is right will receive eternal life.”

The Plan to Kill Jesus

Matthew 26

1 Jesus finished saying all these things. Then he said to his disciples, 2 "As you
know, the Passover Feast is two days away. The Son of Man will be handed
over to be nailed to a cross."

3 Then the chief priests met with the elders of the people. They met in the
palace of Caiaphas, the high priest. 4 They made plans to arrest Jesus in a clever
way. They wanted to kill him. 5 "But not during the Feast," they said. "The
people may stir up trouble."

A Woman Pours Perfume on Jesus

6 Jesus was in Bethany. He was in the home of a man named Simon, who had
a skin disease. 7 A woman came to Jesus with a special sealed jar of very
expensive perfume. She poured the perfume on his head while he was at the
table.

8 When the disciples saw this, they became angry. "Why this waste?" they
asked. 9 "The perfume could have been sold at a high price. The money could
have been given to poor people."

10 Jesus was aware of this. So he said to them, "Why are you bothering this
woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me. 11 You will always have poor
people with you. But you will not always have me. 12 She poured the perfume
on my body to prepare me to be buried. 13 What I'm about to tell you is true.
What she has done will be told anywhere this good news is preached all over
the world. It will be told in memory of her."

Judas Agrees to Hand Jesus Over

[14]One of the Twelve went to the chief priests. His name was Judas Iscariot. [15]He asked, “What will you give me if I hand Jesus over to you?” So they counted out 30 silver coins for him. [16]From then on, Judas watched for the right time to hand Jesus over to them.

The Lord’s Supper

[17]It was the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The disciples came to Jesus. They asked, “Where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover meal?”

[18]He replied, “Go into the city to a certain man. Tell him, ‘The Teacher says, “My time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover at your house with my disciples.” ’ ”

[19]So the disciples did what Jesus had told them to do. They prepared the Passover meal.

[20]When evening came, Jesus was at the table with the Twelve. [21]While they were eating, he said, “What I’m about to tell you is true. One of you will hand me over to my enemies.”

[22]The disciples became very sad. One after the other, they began to say to him, “It’s not I, Lord, is it?”

[23]Jesus replied, “The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will hand me over. [24]The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But how terrible it will be for the one who hands over the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.”

[25]Judas was the one who was going to hand him over. He said, “It’s not I, Rabbi, is it?”

Jesus answered, “Yes. It is you.”

[26]While they were eating, Jesus took bread. He gave thanks and broke it. He handed it to his disciples and said, “Take this and eat it. This is my body.”

[27]Then he took the cup. He gave thanks and handed it to them. He said, “All of you drink from it. [28]This is my blood of the new covenant. It is poured out to forgive the sins of many. [29]Here is what I tell you. From now on, I won’t drink wine with you again until the day I drink it with you in my Father’s

kingdom.”

30Then they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus Says That Peter Will Fail

31Jesus told them, “This very night you will all turn away because of me. It is written that the Lord said,

> “ ‘I will strike the shepherd down.
> Then the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’ (Zechariah 13:7)

32But after I rise from the dead, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.”

33Peter replied, “All the others may turn away because of you. But I never will.”

34“What I’m about to tell you is true,” Jesus answered. “It will happen this very night. Before the rooster crows, you will say three times that you don’t know me.”

35But Peter said, “I may have to die with you. But I will never say I don’t know you.” And all the other disciples said the same thing.

Jesus Prays in Gethsemane

36Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane. He said to them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.”

37He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him. He began to be sad and troubled. 38Then he said to them, “My soul is very sad. I feel close to death. Stay here. Keep watch with me.”

39He went a little farther. Then he fell with his face to the ground. He prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, take this cup of suffering away from me. But let what you want be done, not what I want.”

40Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Couldn’t you

men keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. [41]"Watch and pray. Then you won't fall into sin when you are tempted. The spirit is willing. But the body is weak."

[42]Jesus went away a second time. He prayed, "My Father, is it possible for this cup to be taken away? But if I must drink it, may what you want be done."

[43]Then he came back. Again he found them sleeping. They couldn't keep their eyes open. [44]So he left them and went away once more. For the third time he prayed the same thing.

[45]Then he returned to the disciples. He said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look! The hour is near. The Son of Man is about to be handed over to sinners. [46]Get up! Let us go! Here comes the one who is handing me over to them!"

Jesus Is Arrested

[47]While Jesus was still speaking, Judas arrived. He was one of the Twelve. A large crowd was with him. They were carrying swords and clubs. The chief priests and the elders of the people had sent them.

[48]Judas, who was going to hand Jesus over, had arranged a signal with them. "The one I kiss is the man," he said. "Arrest him."

[49]So Judas went to Jesus at once. He said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" And he kissed him.

[50]Jesus replied, "Friend, do what you came to do."

Then the men stepped forward. They grabbed Jesus and arrested him. [51]At that moment, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword. He pulled it out and struck the servant of the high priest with it. He cut off the servant's ear.

[52]"Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him. "All who use the sword will die by the sword. [53]Do you think I can't ask my Father for help? He would send an army of more than 70,000 angels right away. [54]But then how would the Scriptures come true? They say it must happen in this way."

[55]At that time Jesus spoke to the crowd. "Am I leading a band of armed men against you?" he asked. "Do you have to come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courtyard teaching. And you didn't

arrest me. [56]But all this has happened so that the words of the prophets would come true.”

Then all the disciples left him and ran away.

Jesus Is Taken to the Sanhedrin

[57]Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas, the high priest. The teachers of the law and the elders had come together there. [58]Not too far away, Peter followed Jesus. He went right up to the courtyard of the high priest. He entered and sat down with the guards to see what would happen.

[59]The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for something to use against Jesus. They wanted to put him to death. [60]But they did not find any proof, even though many false witnesses came forward.

Finally, two other witnesses came forward. [61]They said, “This fellow claimed, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God. I can build it again in three days.’ ”

[62]Then the high priest stood up. He asked Jesus, “Aren’t you going to answer? What are these charges that these men are bringing against you?”

[63]But Jesus remained silent.

The high priest said to him, “I command you under oath by the living God. Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.”

[64]“Yes. It is just as you say,” Jesus replied. “But here is what I say to all of you. In days to come, you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One. You will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven.”

[65]Then the high priest tore his clothes. He said, “He has spoken a very evil thing against God! Why do we need any more witnesses? You have heard him say this evil thing. [66]What do you think?”

“He must die!” they answered.

[67]Then they spit in his face. They hit him with their fists. Others slapped him. [68]They said, “Prophesy to us, Christ! Who hit you?”

Peter Says He Does Not Know Jesus

69 Peter was sitting out in the courtyard. A female servant came to him. “You
also were with Jesus of Galilee,” she said.

70 But in front of all of them, Peter said he was not. “I don’t know what you’re
talking about,” he said.

71 Then he went out to the gate leading into the courtyard. There another
woman saw him. She said to the people, “This fellow was with Jesus of
Nazareth.”

72 Again he said he was not. With an oath he said, “I don’t know the man!”

73 After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter. “You must be one
of them,” they said. “The way you talk gives you away.”

74 Then Peter began to call down curses on himself. He took an oath and said
to them, “I don’t know the man!”

Right away a rooster crowed. 75 Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said.
“The rooster will crow,” Jesus had told him. “Before it does, you will say three
times that you don’t know me.” Peter went outside. He broke down and
sobbed.

Judas Hangs Himself

Matthew 27

[1]It was early in the morning. All the chief priests and the elders of the people decided to put Jesus to death. [2]They tied him up and led him away. Then they handed him over to Pilate, who was the governor.

[3]Judas, who had handed him over, saw that Jesus had been sentenced to die. He felt deep shame and sadness for what he had done. So he returned the 30 silver coins to the chief priests and the elders. [4]"I have sinned," he said. "I handed over a man who is not guilty."

"What do we care?" they replied. "That's your problem."

[5]So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

[6]The chief priests picked up the coins. They said, "It's against the law to put this money into the temple fund. It is blood money. It has paid for a man's death." [7]So they decided to use the money to buy a potter's field. People from other countries would be buried there. [8]That is why it has been called The Field of Blood to this very day. [9]Then the words spoken by Jeremiah the prophet came true. He had said, "They took the 30 silver coins. That price was set for him by the people of Israel. [10]They used the coins to buy a potter's field, just as the Lord commanded me."(Zechariah 11:12, 13; Jeremiah 19:1–13; 32:6–9)

Jesus Is Brought to Pilate

[11]Jesus was standing in front of the governor. The governor asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

"Yes. It is just as you say," Jesus replied.

[12]But when the chief priests and the elders brought charges against him, he did not answer. [13]Then Pilate asked him, "Don't you hear the charges they are bringing against you?"

[14]But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge. The governor was really amazed.

[15]It was the governor's practice at the Passover Feast to let one prisoner go free. The people could choose the one they wanted. [16]At that time they had a well-known prisoner named Barabbas. [17]So when the crowd gathered, Pilate asked them, "Which one do you want me to set free? Barabbas? Or Jesus who is called Christ?" [18]Pilate knew that the leaders were jealous. He knew this was why they had handed Jesus over to him.

[19]While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him a message. It said, "Don't have anything to do with that man. He is not guilty. I have suffered a great deal in a dream today because of him."

[20]But the chief priests and the elders talked the crowd into asking for Barabbas and having Jesus put to death.

[21]"Which of the two do you want me to set free?" asked the governor.

"Barabbas," they answered.

[22]"Then what should I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" Pilate asked.

They all answered, "Crucify him!"

[23]"Why? What wrong has he done?" asked Pilate.

But they shouted even louder, "Crucify him!"

[24]Pilate saw that he wasn't getting anywhere. Instead, the crowd was starting to get angry. So he took water and washed his hands in front of them. "I am not guilty of this man's death," he said. "You are accountable for that!"

[25]All the people answered, "We and our children will accept the guilt for his death!"

[26]Pilate let Barabbas go free. But he had Jesus whipped. Then he handed him over to be nailed to a cross.

The Soldiers Make Fun of Jesus

[27]The governor's soldiers took Jesus into the palace, which was called the Praetorium. All the rest of the soldiers gathered around him. [28]They took off his clothes and put a purple robe on him. [29]Then they twisted thorns together to

make a crown. They placed it on his head. They put a stick in his right hand. Then they fell on their knees in front of him and made fun of him. “We honor you, king of the Jews!” they said. [30]They spit on him. They hit him on the head with the stick again and again.

[31]After they had made fun of him, they took off the robe. They put his own clothes back on him. Then they led him away to nail him to a cross.

Jesus Is Nailed to a Cross

[32]On their way out of the city, they met a man from Cyrene. His name was Simon. They forced him to carry the cross.

[33]They came to a place called Golgotha. The word Golgotha means The Place of the Skull. [34]There they mixed wine with bitter spices and gave it to Jesus to drink. After tasting it, he refused to drink it.

[35]When they had nailed him to the cross, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. [36]They sat down and kept watch over him there.

[37]Above his head they placed the written charge against him. It read, THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

[38]Two robbers were crucified with him. One was on his right and one was on his left.

[39]Those who passed by shouted at Jesus and made fun of him. They shook their heads [40]and said, “So you are going to destroy the temple and build it again in three days? Then save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!”

[41]In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders made fun of him. [42]“He saved others,” they said. “But he can’t save himself! He’s the King of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross! Then we will believe in him. [43]He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him. He’s the one who said, ‘I am the Son of God.’ ”

[44]In the same way the robbers who were being crucified with Jesus also made fun of him.

Jesus Dies

45From noon until three o’clock, the whole land was covered with darkness.
46About three o’clock, Jesus cried out in a loud voice. He said, *“Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?”* This means “My God, my God, why have you deserted me?”(Psalm 22:1)

47Some of those standing there heard Jesus cry out. They said, “He’s calling for Elijah.”

48Right away one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar and put it on a stick. He offered it to Jesus to drink. 49The rest said, “Leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to save him.”

50After Jesus cried out again in a loud voice, he died.

51At that moment the temple curtain was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook. The rocks split. 52Tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. 53They came out of the tombs. After Jesus was raised to life, they went into the holy city. There they appeared to many people.

54The Roman commander and those guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened. They were terrified. They exclaimed, “He was surely the Son of God!”

55Not very far away, many women were watching. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to take care of his needs. 56Mary Magdalene was among them. Mary, the mother of James and Joses, was also there. So was the mother of Zebedee’s sons.

Jesus Is Buried

57As evening approached, a rich man came from the town of Arimathea. His name was Joseph. He had become a follower of Jesus. 58He went to Pilate and asked for Jesus’ body. Pilate ordered that it be given to him.

59Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth. 60He placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb. Then he went away.

61Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there across from the tomb.

The Guards at the Tomb

62 The next day was the day after Preparation Day. The chief priests and the
Pharisees went to Pilate. 63 "Sir," they said, "we remember something that liar
said while he was still alive. He claimed, 'After three days I will rise again.'
64 So give the order to make the tomb secure until the third day. If you don't,
his disciples might come and steal the body. Then they will tell the people that
Jesus has been raised from the dead. This last lie will be worse than the first."

65 "Take some guards with you," Pilate answered. "Go. Make the tomb as
secure as you can." 66 So they went and made the tomb secure. They put a seal
on the stone and placed some guards on duty.

Jesus Rises From the Dead

Matthew 28

[1]The Sabbath day was now over. It was dawn on the first day of the week. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

[2]There was a powerful earthquake. An angel of the Lord came down from heaven. The angel went to the tomb. He rolled back the stone and sat on it. [3]His body shone like lightning. His clothes were as white as snow. [4]The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

[5]The angel said to the women, “Don’t be afraid. I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. [6]He is not here! He has risen, just as he said he would! Come and see the place where he was lying. [7]Go quickly! Tell his disciples, ‘He has risen from the dead. He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’ Now I have told you.”

[8]So the women hurried away from the tomb. They were afraid, but they were filled with joy. They ran to tell the disciples.

[9]Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings!” he said.

They came to him, took hold of his feet and worshiped him.

[10]Then Jesus said to them, “Don’t be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee. There they will see me.”

The Guards Report to the Chief Priests

[11]While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city. They reported to the chief priests all that had happened.

[12]When the chief priests met with the elders, they came up with a plan. They gave the soldiers a large amount of money. [13]They told the soldiers, “We want you to say, ‘His disciples came during the night. They stole his body while we were sleeping.’ [14]If the governor hears this report, we will pay him off. That will keep you out of trouble.”

15So the soldiers took the money and did as they were told. This story has spread all around among the Jews to this very day.

Jesus' Final Orders to His Disciples

16Then the 11 disciples went to Galilee. They went to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. 17When they saw him, they worshiped him. But some still had their doubts.

18Then Jesus came to them. He said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19So you must go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. 20Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And you can be sure that I am always with you, to the very end."

Mark

Mark 1
Mark 2
Mark 3
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Mark 16

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

Mark 1

[1]This is the beginning of the good news about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

[2]Long ago Isaiah the prophet wrote,

> "I will send my messenger ahead of you.
> He will prepare your way." (Malachi 3:1)
> [3]"A messenger is calling out in the desert,
> 'Prepare the way for the Lord.
> Make straight paths for him.' " (Isaiah 40:3)

[4]And so John came. He baptized people in the desert. He also preached that people should be baptized and turn away from their sins. Then God would forgive them. [5]All the people from the countryside of Judea went out to him. All the people from Jerusalem went too. When they admitted they had sinned, John baptized them in the Jordan River. [6]John wore clothes made out of camel's hair. He had a leather belt around his waist. And he ate locusts and wild honey.

[7]Here is what John was preaching. "After me, one will come who is more powerful than I am. I'm not good enough to bend down and untie his sandals. [8]I baptize you with water. But he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Jesus Is Baptized and Tempted

[9]At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee. John baptized him in the Jordan River. [10]Jesus was coming up out of the water. Just then he saw heaven being torn open. He saw the Holy Spirit coming down on him like a dove. [11]A voice spoke to him from heaven. It said, "You are my Son, and I love you. I am

very pleased with you.”

12At once the Holy Spirit sent Jesus out into the desert. 13He was in the desert
40 days. There Satan tempted him. The wild animals didn’t harm Jesus. Angels
took care of him.

Jesus Chooses the First Disciples

14After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee. He preached God’s
good news. 15“The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God is near.
Turn away from your sins and believe the good news!”

16One day Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee. There he saw Simon
and his brother Andrew. They were throwing a net into the lake. They were
fishermen. 17“Come. Follow me,” Jesus said. “I will make you fishers of
people.”

18At once they left their nets and followed him.

19Then Jesus walked a little farther. As he did, he saw James, son of Zebedee,
and his brother John. They were in a boat preparing their nets. 20Right away he
called out to them. They left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired
men. Then they followed Jesus.

Jesus Drives Out an Evil Spirit

21Jesus and those with him went to Capernaum. When the Sabbath day came,
he went into the synagogue. There he began to teach. 22The people were
amazed at his teaching. He taught them like one who had authority. He did not
talk like the teachers of the law.

23Just then a man in their synagogue cried out. He was controlled by an evil
spirit. He said, 24“What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you
come to destroy us? I know who you are. You are the Holy One of God!”

25“Be quiet!” said Jesus firmly. “Come out of him!”

26The evil spirit shook the man wildly. Then it came out of him with a
scream.

[27]All the people were amazed. So they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching! And with so much authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits, and they obey him.” [28]News about Jesus spread quickly all over Galilee.

Jesus Heals Many People

[29]Jesus and those with him left the synagogue. Right away they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. [30]Simon’s mother-in-law was lying in bed. She had a fever. They told Jesus about her. [31]So he went to her. He took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her. Then she began to serve them.

[32]That evening after sunset, the people brought to Jesus all who were sick. They also brought all who were controlled by demons. [33]All the people in town gathered at the door. [34]Jesus healed many of them. They had all kinds of sicknesses. He also drove out many demons. But he would not let the demons speak, because they knew who he was.

Jesus Prays in a Quiet Place

[35]It was very early in the morning and still dark. Jesus got up and left the house. He went to a place where he could be alone. There he prayed. [36]Simon and his friends went to look for Jesus. [37]When they found him, they called out, “Everyone is looking for you!”

[38]Jesus replied, “Let’s go somewhere else. I want to go to the nearby towns. I must preach there also. That is why I have come.” [39]So he traveled all around Galilee. He preached in their synagogues. He also drove out demons.

Jesus Heals a Man Who Had a Skin Disease

[40]A man who had a skin disease came to Jesus. On his knees he begged Jesus. He said, “If you are willing to make me ‘clean,’ you can do it.”

[41]Jesus was filled with deep concern. He reached out his hand and touched

the man. “I am willing to do it,” he said. “Be ‘clean’!” [42]Right away the disease left him. He was healed.

[43]Jesus sent him away at once. He gave the man a strong warning. [44]“Don’t tell this to anyone,” he said. “Go and show yourself to the priest. Offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded. It will be a witness to the priest and the people that you are ‘clean.’ ”

[45]But the man went out and started talking right away. He spread the news to everyone. So Jesus could no longer enter a town openly. He stayed outside in lonely places. But people still came to him from everywhere.

Jesus Heals a Man Who Could Not Walk

Mark 2

[1]A few days later, Jesus entered Capernaum again. The people heard that he had come home. [2]So many people gathered that there was no room left. There was not even room outside the door. And Jesus preached the word to them.

[3]Four of those who came were carrying a man who could not walk. [4]But they could not get him close to Jesus because of the crowd. So they made a hole in the roof above Jesus. Then they lowered the man through it on a mat.

[5]Jesus saw their faith. So he said to the man, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”

[6]Some teachers of the law were sitting there. They were thinking, [7]“Why is this fellow talking like that? He’s saying a very evil thing! Only God can forgive sins!”

[8]Right away Jesus knew what they were thinking. So he said to them, “Why are you thinking these things? [9]Is it easier to say to this man, ‘Your sins are forgiven’? Or to say, ‘Get up, take your mat and walk’? [10]I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.”

Then Jesus spoke to the man who could not walk. [11]“I tell you,” he said, “get up. Take your mat and go home.”

[12]The man got up and took his mat. Then he walked away while everyone watched. All the people were amazed. They praised God and said, “We have never seen anything like this!”

Jesus Chooses Levi

[13]Once again Jesus went out beside the Sea of Galilee. A large crowd came to him. He began to teach them. [14]As he walked along he saw Levi, son of Alphaeus. Levi was sitting at the tax collector’s booth. “Follow me,” Jesus told him. Levi got up and followed him.

[15]Later Jesus was having dinner at Levi’s house. Many tax collectors and

“sinners” were eating with him and his disciples. They were part of the large crowd following Jesus.

16Some teachers of the law who were Pharisees were there. They saw Jesus eating with “sinners” and tax collectors. So they asked his disciples, “Why does he eat with tax collectors and ‘sinners’?”

17Jesus heard that. So he said to them, “Those who are healthy don’t need a doctor. Sick people do. I have not come to get those who think they are right with God to follow me. I have come to get sinners to follow me.”

Jesus Is Asked About Fasting

18John’s disciples and the Pharisees were going without eating. Some people came to Jesus. They said to him, “John’s disciples are fasting. The disciples of the Pharisees are also fasting. But your disciples are not. Why aren’t they?”

19Jesus answered, “How can the guests of the groom go without eating while he is with them? They will not fast as long as he is with them. 20But the time will come when the groom will be taken away from them. On that day they will go without eating.

21“People don’t sew a patch of new cloth on old clothes. If they do, the new piece will pull away from the old. That will make the tear worse. 22People don’t pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the wine will burst the skins. Then the wine and the wineskins will both be destroyed. No, everyone pours new wine into new wineskins.”

Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath Day

23One Sabbath day Jesus was walking with his disciples through the grainfields. The disciples began to break off some heads of grain. 24The Pharisees said to Jesus, “Look! It is against the Law to do this on the Sabbath. Why are your disciples doing it?”

25He answered, “Haven’t you ever read about what David did? He and his men were hungry. They needed food. 26It was when Abiathar was high priest. David entered the house of God and ate the holy bread. Only priests were

allowed to eat it. David also gave some to his men.”

[27]Then Jesus said to them, “The Sabbath day was made for man. Man was not made for the Sabbath day. [28]So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath day.”

Mark 3

[1]Another time Jesus went into the synagogue. A man with a weak and twisted hand was there. [2]Some Pharisees were trying to find fault with Jesus. They watched him closely. They wanted to see if he would heal the man on the Sabbath day.

[3]Jesus spoke to the man with the weak and twisted hand. “Stand up in front of everyone,” he said.

[4]Then Jesus asked them, “What does the Law say we should do on the Sabbath day? Should we do good? Or should we do evil? Should we save life? Or should we kill?” But no one answered.

[5]Jesus looked around at them in anger. He was very upset because their hearts were stubborn. Then he said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was as good as new.

[6]Then the Pharisees went out and began to make plans with the Herodians. They wanted to kill Jesus.

Crowds Follow Jesus

[7]Jesus went off to the Sea of Galilee with his disciples. A large crowd from Galilee followed. [8]People heard about all that Jesus was doing. And many came to him. They came from Judea, Jerusalem, and Idumea. They came from the lands east of the Jordan River. And they came from the area around Tyre and Sidon.

[9]Because of the crowd, Jesus told his disciples to get a small boat ready for him. This would keep the people from crowding him. [10]Jesus had healed many people. So those who were sick were pushing forward to touch him.

[11]When people with evil spirits saw him, they fell down in front of him. The spirits shouted, “You are the Son of God!” [12]But Jesus ordered them not to tell who he was.

Jesus Appoints the Twelve Apostles

13 Jesus went up on a mountainside. He called for certain people to come to
him, and they came. 14 He appointed 12 of them and called them apostles. From
that time on they would be with him. He would also send them out to preach.
15 They would have authority to drive out demons.

16 So Jesus appointed the Twelve. Simon was one of them. Jesus gave him the
name Peter. 17 There were James, son of Zebedee, and his brother John. Jesus
gave them the name Boanerges. Boanerges means Sons of Thunder. 18 There
were also Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, and James, son of
Alphaeus. And there were Thaddaeus and Simon the Zealot. 19 Judas Iscariot
was one of them too. He was the one who was later going to hand Jesus over to
his enemies.

Jesus and Beelzebub

20 Jesus entered a house. Again a crowd gathered. It was so large that Jesus
and his disciples were not even able to eat. 21 His family heard about this. So
they went to take charge of him. They said, “He is out of his mind.”

22 Some teachers of the law were there. They had come down from Jerusalem.
They said, “He is controlled by Beelzebub! He is driving out demons by the
power of the prince of demons.”

23 So Jesus called them over and spoke to them by using stories. He said,
“How can Satan drive out Satan? 24 If a kingdom fights against itself, it can’t
stand. 25 If a family is divided, it can’t stand. 26 And if Satan fights against
himself, and his helpers are divided, he can’t stand. That is the end of him. 27 In
fact, none of you can enter a strong man’s house and just take what the man
owns. You must first tie him up. Then you can rob his house.

28 “What I’m about to tell you is true. Everyone’s sins and evil words against
God will be forgiven. 29 But anyone who speaks evil things against the Holy
Spirit will never be forgiven. His guilt will last forever.”

30 Jesus said this because the teachers of the law were saying, “He has an evil
spirit.”

Jesus' Mother and Brothers

[31]Jesus' mother and brothers came and stood outside. They sent someone in to get him. [32]A crowd was sitting around Jesus. They told him, "Your mother and your brothers are outside. They are looking for you."

[33]"Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?" he asked.

[34]Then Jesus looked at the people sitting in a circle around him. He said, "Here is my mother! Here are my brothers! [35]Anyone who does what God wants is my brother or sister or mother."

The Story of the Farmer

Mark 4

1 Again Jesus began to teach by the Sea of Galilee. The crowd that gathered
around him was very large. So he got into a boat. He sat down in it out on the
lake. All the people were along the shore at the water's edge. 2 He taught them
many things by using stories.

In his teaching he said, 3 "Listen! A farmer went out to plant his seed. 4 He
scattered the seed on the ground. Some fell on a path. Birds came and ate it up.
5 Some seed fell on rocky places, where there wasn't much soil. The plants
came up quickly, because the soil wasn't deep. 6 When the sun came up, it
burned the plants. They dried up because they had no roots. 7 Other seed fell
among thorns. The thorns grew up and crowded out the plants. So the plants
did not bear grain. 8 Still other seed fell on good soil. It grew up and produced a
crop 30, 60, or even 100 times more than the farmer planted."

9 Then Jesus said, "Those who have ears should listen."

10 Later Jesus was alone. The Twelve asked him about the stories. So did the
others around him. 11 He told them, "The secret of God's kingdom has been
given to you. But to outsiders everything is told by using stories. 12 In that way,

> " 'They will see but never know what they are seeing.
> They will hear but never understand.
> Otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!' " (Isaiah 6:9, 10)

13 Then Jesus said to them, "Don't you understand this story? Then how will
you understand any stories of this kind? 14 The seed the farmer plants is God's
message. 15 What is seed scattered on a path like? The message is planted. The
people hear the message. Then Satan comes. He takes away the message that
was planted in them. 16 And what is seed scattered on rocky places like? The
people hear the message. At once they receive it with joy. 17 But they have no
roots. So they last only a short time. They quickly fall away from the faith

when trouble or suffering comes because of the message. [18]And what is seed scattered among thorns like? The people hear the message. [19]But then the worries of this life come to them. Wealth comes with its false promises. The people also long for other things. All of those are the kinds of things that crowd out the message. They keep it from producing fruit. [20]And what is seed scattered on good soil like? The people hear the message. They accept it. They produce a good crop 30, 60, or even 100 times more than the farmer planted."

A Lamp on a Stand

[21]Jesus said to them, "Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a large bowl or a bed? Don't you put it on its stand? [22]What is hidden is meant to be seen. And what is put out of sight is meant to be brought out into the open. [23]Everyone who has ears should listen."

[24]"Think carefully about what you hear," he said. "As you give, so you will receive. In fact, you will receive even more. [25]If you have something, you will be given more. If you have nothing, even what you have will be taken away from you."

The Story of the Growing Seed

[26]Jesus also said, "Here is what God's kingdom is like. A farmer scatters seed on the ground. [27]Night and day the seed comes up and grows. It happens whether the farmer sleeps or gets up. He doesn't know how it happens. [28]All by itself the soil produces grain. First the stalk comes up. Then the head appears. Finally, the full grain appears in the head. [29]Before long the grain ripens. So the farmer cuts it down, because the harvest is ready."

The Story of the Mustard Seed

[30]Again Jesus said, "What can we say God's kingdom is like? What story can we use to explain it? [31]It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest seed planted in the ground. [32]But when you plant the seed, it grows. It becomes the

largest of all garden plants. Its branches are so big that birds can rest in its shade.”

33Using many stories like those, Jesus spoke the word to them. He told them as much as they could understand. 34He did not say anything to them without using a story. But when he was alone with his disciples, he explained everything.

Jesus Calms the Storm

35When evening came, Jesus said to his disciples, “Let’s go over to the other side of the lake.” 36They left the crowd behind. And they took him along in a boat, just as he was. There were also other boats with him.

37A wild storm came up. Waves crashed over the boat. It was about to sink. 38Jesus was in the back, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him up. They said, “Teacher! Don’t you care if we drown?”

39He got up and ordered the wind to stop. He said to the waves, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind died down. And it was completely calm.

40He said to his disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Don’t you have any faith at all yet?”

41They were terrified. They asked each other, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”

Jesus Heals a Man Controlled by Demons

Mark 5

[1]They went across the Sea of Galilee to the area of the Gerasenes. [2]Jesus got out of the boat. A man with an evil spirit came from the tombs to meet him. [3]The man lived in the tombs. No one could keep him tied up anymore. Not even a chain could hold him. [4]His hands and feet had often been chained. But he tore the chains apart. And he broke the iron cuffs on his ankles. No one was strong enough to control him. [5]Night and day he screamed among the tombs and in the hills. He cut himself with stones.

[6]When he saw Jesus a long way off, he ran to him. He fell on his knees in front of him. [7]He shouted at the top of his voice, "Jesus, Son of the Most High God, what do you want with me? Promise before God that you won't hurt me!" [8]This was because Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you evil spirit!"

[9]Then Jesus asked the demon, "What is your name?"

"My name is Legion," he replied. "There are many of us." [10]And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area.

[11]A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. [12]The demons begged Jesus, "Send us among the pigs. Let us go into them." [13]Jesus allowed it. The evil spirits came out of the man and went into the pigs. There were about 2,000 pigs in the herd. The whole herd rushed down the steep bank. They ran into the lake and drowned.

[14]Those who were tending the pigs ran off. They told the people in the town and countryside what had happened. The people went out to see for themselves.

[15]Then they came to Jesus. They saw the man who had been controlled by many demons. He was sitting there. He was now dressed and thinking clearly. All this made the people afraid. [16]Those who had seen it told them what had happened to the man. They told about the pigs as well. [17]Then the people began to beg Jesus to leave their area.

18 Jesus was getting into the boat. The man who had been controlled by
demons begged to go with him. 19 Jesus did not let him. He said, “Go home to
your family. Tell them how much the Lord has done for you. Tell them how
kind he has been to you.”

20 So the man went away. In the area known as the Ten Cities, he began to tell
how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

A Dying Girl and a Suffering Woman

21 Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee in a boat. It landed at the other side.
There a large crowd gathered around him. 22 Then a man named Jairus came.
He was a synagogue ruler. Seeing Jesus, he fell at his feet. 23 He begged Jesus,
“Please come. My little daughter is dying. Place your hands on her to heal her.
Then she will live.” 24 So Jesus went with him.

A large group of people followed. They crowded around him. 25 A woman
was there who had a sickness that made her bleed. It had lasted for 12 years.
26 She had suffered a great deal, even though she had gone to many doctors.
She had spent all the money she had. But she was getting worse, not better.
27 Then she heard about Jesus. She came up behind him in the crowd and
touched his clothes. 28 She thought, “I just need to touch his clothes. Then I will
be healed.” 29 Right away her bleeding stopped. She felt in her body that her
suffering was over.

30 At once Jesus knew that power had gone out from him. He turned around in
the crowd. He asked, “Who touched my clothes?”

31 “You see the people,” his disciples answered. “They are crowding against
you. And you still ask, ‘Who touched me?’ ”

32 But Jesus kept looking around. He wanted to see who had touched him.

33 Then the woman came and fell at his feet. She knew what had happened to
her. She was shaking with fear. But she told him the whole truth.

34 He said to her, “Dear woman, your faith has healed you. Go in peace. You
are free from your suffering.”

35 While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus.
He was the synagogue ruler. “Your daughter is dead,” they said. “Why bother

the teacher anymore?”

[36]But Jesus didn’t listen to them. He told the synagogue ruler, “Don’t be afraid. Just believe.”

[37]He let only Peter, James, and John, the brother of James, follow him. [38]They came to the home of the synagogue ruler. There Jesus saw a lot of confusion. People were crying and sobbing loudly. [39]He went inside. Then he said to them, “Why all this confusion and sobbing? The child is not dead. She is only sleeping.” [40]But they laughed at him.

He made them all go outside. He took only the child’s father and mother and the disciples who were with him. And he went in where the child was. [41]He took her by the hand. Then he said to her, *“Talitha koum!”* This means, “Little girl, I say to you, get up!” [42]The girl was 12 years old. Right away she stood up and walked around. They were totally amazed at this. [43]Jesus gave strict orders not to let anyone know what had happened. And he told them to give her something to eat.

A Prophet Without Honor

Mark 6

1 Jesus left there and went to his hometown of Nazareth. His disciples went
with him. 2 When the Sabbath day came, he began to teach in the synagogue.
Many who heard him were amazed.

"Where did this man get these things?" they asked. "What's this wisdom that
has been given to him? He even does miracles! 3 Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't
this Mary's son? Isn't this the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon?
Aren't his sisters here with us?" They were not pleased with him at all.

4 Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not honored in his hometown. He doesn't
receive any honor among his relatives. And he doesn't receive any in his own
home."

5 Jesus laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. But he could not
do any other miracles there. 6 He was amazed because they had no faith.

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve Disciples

Jesus went around teaching from village to village. 7 He called the Twelve to
him. Then he sent them out two by two. He gave them authority to drive out
evil spirits.

8 Here were his orders. "Take only a walking stick for your trip. Do not take
bread or a bag. Take no money in your belts. 9 Wear sandals. But do not take
extra clothes. 10 When you are invited into a house, stay there until you leave
town. 11 Some places may not welcome you or listen to you. If they don't,
shake the dust off your feet when you leave. That will be a witness against the
people living there."

12 They went out. And they preached that people should turn away from their
sins. 13 They drove out many demons. They poured olive oil on many sick
people and healed them.

John the Baptist's Head Is Cut Off

14 King Herod heard about this. Jesus' name had become well known. Some were saying, "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead! That is why he has the power to do miracles."

15 Others said, "He is Elijah."

Still others claimed, "He is a prophet. He is like one of the prophets of long ago."

16 But when Herod heard this, he said, "I had John's head cut off. And now he has been raised from the dead!"

17 In fact, it was Herod himself who had given orders to arrest John. He had him tied up and put in prison. He did this because of Herodias. She was the wife of Herod's brother Philip. But now Herod was married to her. 18 John had been saying to Herod, "It is against the Law for you to have your brother's wife." 19 Herodias held that against John. She wanted to kill him. But she could not, 20 because Herod was afraid of John. So he kept John safe. Herod knew John was a holy man who did what was right. When Herod heard him, he was very puzzled. But he liked to listen to him.

21 Finally the right time came. Herod gave a big dinner on his birthday. He invited his high officials and military leaders. He also invited the most important men in Galilee. 22 Then the daughter of Herodias came in and danced. She pleased Herod and his dinner guests.

The king said to the girl, "Ask me for anything you want. I'll give it to you." 23 And he promised her with an oath, "Anything you ask for I will give you. I'll give you up to half of my kingdom."

24 She went out and said to her mother, "What should I ask for?"

"The head of John the Baptist," she answered.

25 At once the girl hurried to ask the king. She said, "I want you to give me the head of John the Baptist on a big plate right now."

26 The king was very upset. But he thought of his promise and his dinner guests. So he did not want to say no to the girl. 27 He sent a man right away to bring John's head. The man went to the prison and cut off John's head. 28 He brought it back on a big plate. He gave it to the girl, and she gave it to her

mother.

29John's disciples heard about this. So they came and took his body. Then they placed it in a tomb.

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

30The apostles gathered around Jesus. They told him all they had done and taught. 31But many people were coming and going. So they did not even have a chance to eat.

Then Jesus said to his apostles, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place. You need to get some rest." 32So they went away by themselves in a boat to a quiet place.

33But many people who saw them leaving recognized them. They ran from all the towns and got there ahead of them. 34When Jesus came ashore, he saw a large crowd. He felt deep concern for them. They were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

35By that time it was late in the day. His disciples came to him. "There is nothing here," they said. "It's already very late. 36Send the people away. They can go and buy something to eat in the nearby countryside and villages."

37But Jesus answered, "You give them something to eat."

They said to him, "That would take eight months of a person's pay! Should we go and spend that much on bread? Are we supposed to feed them?"

38"How many loaves do you have?" Jesus asked. "Go and see."

When they found out, they said, "Five loaves and two fish."

39Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. 40So they sat down in groups of 100s and 50s.

41Jesus took the five loaves and the two fish. He looked up to heaven and gave thanks. He broke the loaves into pieces. Then he gave them to his disciples to set in front of the people. He also divided the two fish among them all.

42All of them ate and were satisfied. 43The disciples picked up 12 baskets of broken pieces of bread and fish. 44The number of men who had eaten was 5,000.

Jesus Walks on the Water

45 Right away Jesus made his disciples get into the boat. He had them go on
ahead of him to Bethsaida. Then he sent the crowd away. 46 After leaving them,
he went up on a mountainside to pray.

47 When evening came, the boat was in the middle of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus
was alone on land. 48 He saw the disciples pulling hard on the oars. The wind
was blowing against them.

Early in the morning, he went out to them. He walked on the lake. When he
was about to pass by them, 49 they saw him walking on the lake. They thought
he was a ghost. They cried out. 50 They all saw him and were terrified.

Right away he said to them, “Be brave! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”

51 Then he climbed into the boat with them. The wind died down. And they
were completely amazed. 52 They had not understood about the loaves. They
were stubborn.

53 They crossed over the lake and landed at Gennesaret. There they tied up the
boat. 54 As soon as Jesus and his disciples got out, people recognized him.
55 They ran through that whole area to bring to him those who were sick. They
carried them on mats to where they heard he was.

56 He went into the villages, the towns and the countryside. Everywhere he
went, the people brought the sick to the market places. Those who were sick
begged him to let them touch just the edge of his clothes. And all who touched
him were healed.

What Makes People "Unclean"?

Mark 7

[1]The Pharisees gathered around Jesus. So did some of the teachers of the law. All of them had come from Jerusalem. [2]They saw some of his disciples eating food with "unclean" hands. That means they were not washed.

[3]The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands to make them pure. That's what the elders teach. [4]When they come from the market place, they do not eat unless they wash. And they follow many other teachings. For example, they wash cups, pitchers, and kettles in a special way.

[5]So the Pharisees and the teachers of the law questioned Jesus. "Why don't your disciples live by what the elders teach?" they asked. "Why do they eat their food with 'unclean' hands?"

[6]He replied, "Isaiah was right. He prophesied about you people who pretend to be good. He said,

> " 'These people honor me by what they say.
> But their hearts are far away from me.
> [7]Their worship doesn't mean anything to me.
> They teach nothing but human rules.' (Isaiah 29:13)

[8]You have let go of God's commands. And you are holding on to the teachings that men have made up."

[9]Jesus then said to them, "You have a fine way of setting aside God's commands! You do this so you can follow your own teachings. [10]Moses said, 'Honor your father and mother.'(Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16) He also said, 'If anyone calls down a curse on his father or mother, he will be put to death.'(Exodus 21:17; Leviticus 20:9) [11]But you allow people to say to their parents, 'Any help you might have received from us is Corban.' (Corban means 'a gift set apart for God.') [12]So you no longer let them do anything for their

parents. [13]You make the word of God useless by putting your own teachings in its place. And you do many things like that."

[14]Again Jesus called the crowd to him. He said, "Listen to me, everyone. Understand this. [15]/16Nothing outside of you can make you 'unclean' by going into you. It is what comes out of you that makes you 'unclean.' "

[17]Then he left the crowd and entered the house. His disciples asked him about this teaching.

[18]"Don't you understand?" Jesus asked. "Don't you see? Nothing that enters people from the outside can make them 'unclean.' [19]It doesn't go into the heart. It goes into the stomach. Then it goes out of the body." In saying this, Jesus was calling all foods "clean."

[20]He went on to say, "What comes out of people makes them 'unclean.' [21]Evil thoughts come from the inside, from people's hearts. So do sexual sins, stealing and murder. Adultery, [22]greed, hate and cheating come from people's hearts too. So do desires that are not pure, and wanting what belongs to others. And so do telling lies about others and being proud and being foolish. [23]All those evil things come from inside a person. They make him 'unclean.' "

The Faith of a Greek Woman

[24]Jesus went from there to a place near Tyre. He entered a house. He did not want anyone to know where he was. But he could not keep it a secret.

[25]Soon a woman heard about him. An evil spirit controlled her little daughter. The woman came to Jesus and fell at his feet. [26]She was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter.

[27]"First let the children eat all they want," he told her. "It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to their dogs."

[28]"Yes, Lord," she replied. "But even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."

[29]Then he told her, "That was a good reply. You may go. The demon has left your daughter."

[30]So she went home and found her child lying on the bed. And the demon was gone.

Jesus Heals a Man Who Could Not Hear or Speak

31 Then Jesus left the area of Tyre and went through Sidon. He went down to
the Sea of Galilee and into the area known as the Ten Cities.

32 There some people brought a man to him. The man was deaf and could
hardly speak. They begged Jesus to place his hand on him.

33 Jesus took the man to one side, away from the crowd. He put his fingers
into the man's ears. Then he spit and touched the man's tongue. 34 Jesus looked
up to heaven. With a deep sigh, he said to the man, *"Ephphatha!"* That means
"Be opened!" 35 The man's ears were opened. His tongue was freed up, and he
began to speak clearly.

36 Jesus ordered the people not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the
more they kept talking about it.

37 People were really amazed. "He has done everything well," they said. "He
even makes deaf people able to hear. And he makes those who can't speak able
to talk."

Jesus Feeds the Four Thousand

Mark 8

1During those days another large crowd gathered. They had nothing to eat. So
Jesus called for his disciples to come to him. He said, 2"I feel deep concern for
these people. They have already been with me three days. They don't have
anything to eat. 3If I send them away hungry, they will become too weak on
their way home. Some of them have come from far away."

4His disciples answered him. "There is nothing here," they said. "Where can
anyone get enough bread to feed them?"

5"How many loaves do you have?" Jesus asked.

"Seven," they replied.

6He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. He took the seven loaves and
gave thanks to God. Then he broke them and gave them to his disciples. They
set the loaves down in front of the people. 7The disciples also had a few small
fish. Jesus gave thanks for them too. He told the disciples to pass them around.
8The people ate and were satisfied.

After that, the disciples picked up seven baskets of leftover pieces. 9About
4,000 men were there. Jesus sent them away. 10Then he got into a boat with his
disciples. He went to the area of Dalmanutha.

11The Pharisees came and began to ask Jesus questions. They wanted to put
him to the test. So they asked him for a miraculous sign from heaven. 12He
sighed deeply. He said, "Why do you people ask for a sign? What I'm about to
tell you is true. No sign will be given to you."

13Then he left them. He got back into the boat and crossed to the other side of
the lake.

The Yeast of the Pharisees and Herod

14The disciples had forgotten to bring bread. They had only one loaf with

them in the boat.

15“Be careful,” Jesus warned them. “Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees. And watch out for the yeast of Herod.”

16They talked about this with each other. They said, “He must be saying this because we don’t have any bread.”

17Jesus knew what they were saying. So he asked them, “Why are you talking about having no bread? Why can’t you see or understand? Are you stubborn? 18Do you have eyes and still don’t see? Do you have ears and still don’t hear? And don’t you remember? 19Earlier I broke five loaves for the 5,000. How many baskets of pieces did you pick up?”

“Twelve,” they replied.

20“Later I broke seven loaves for the 4,000. How many baskets of pieces did you pick up?”

“Seven,” they answered.

21He said to them, “Can’t you understand yet?”

Jesus Heals a Blind Man

22Jesus and his disciples came to Bethsaida. Some people brought a blind man. They begged Jesus to touch him.

23He took the blind man by the hand. Then he led him outside the village. He spit on the man’s eyes and put his hands on him.

“Do you see anything?” Jesus asked.

24The man looked up. He said, “I see people. They look like trees walking around.”

25Once more Jesus put his hands on the man’s eyes. Then his eyes were opened so that he could see again. He saw everything clearly.

26Jesus sent him home. He told him, “Don’t go into the village.”

Peter Says That Jesus Is the Christ

27 Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On
the way he asked them, “Who do people say I am?”

28 They replied, “Some say John the Baptist. Others say Elijah. Still others say
one of the prophets.”

29 “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

Peter answered, “You are the Christ.”

30 Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

Jesus Tells About His Coming Death

31 Jesus then began to teach his disciples. He taught them that the Son of Man
must suffer many things. He taught them that the elders would not accept him.
The chief priests and the teachers of the law would not accept him either. He
must be killed and after three days rise again. 32 He spoke clearly about this.

Peter took Jesus to one side and began to scold him.

33 Jesus turned and looked at his disciples. He scolded Peter. “Get behind me,
Satan!” he said. “You are not thinking about the things of God. Instead, you are
thinking about human things.”

34 Jesus called the crowd to him along with his disciples. He said, “If anyone
wants to come after me, he must say no to himself. He must pick up his cross
and follow me. 35 If he wants to save his life, he will lose it. But if he loses his
life for me and for the good news, he will save it. 36 What good is it if someone
gains the whole world but loses his soul? 37 Or what can anyone trade for his
soul?

38 “Suppose you are ashamed of me and my words among these adulterous
and sinful people. Then the Son of Man will be ashamed of you when he
comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels.”

Mark 9

[1]Jesus said to them, “What I’m about to tell you is true. Some who are standing here will not die before they see God’s kingdom coming with power.”

Jesus’ Appearance Is Changed

[2]After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him. He led them up a high mountain. They were all alone. There in front of them his appearance was changed. [3]His clothes became so white they shone. They were whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. [4]Elijah and Moses appeared in front of Jesus and his disciples. The two of them were talking with Jesus.

[5]Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters. One will be for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” [6]Peter didn’t really know what to say, because they were so afraid.

[7]Then a cloud appeared and surrounded them. A voice came from the cloud. It said, “This is my Son, and I love him. Listen to him!”

[8]They looked around. Suddenly they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.

[9]They came down the mountain. On the way down, Jesus ordered them not to tell anyone what they had seen. He told them to wait until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. [10]So they kept the matter to themselves. But they asked each other what “rising from the dead” meant.

[11]Then they asked Jesus, “Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah has to come first?”

[12]Jesus replied, “That’s right. Elijah does come first. He makes all things new again. So why is it written that the Son of Man must suffer much and not be accepted? [13]I tell you, Elijah has come. They have done to him everything they wanted to do. They did it just as it is written about him.”

Jesus Heals a Boy Who Had an Evil Spirit

[14]When Jesus and those who were with him came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them. The teachers of the law were arguing with them. [15]When all the people saw Jesus, they were filled with wonder. And they ran to greet him.

[16]“What are you arguing with them about?” Jesus asked.

[17]A man in the crowd answered. “Teacher,” he said, “I brought you my son. He is controlled by a spirit. Because of this, my son can’t speak anymore. [18]When the spirit takes hold of him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth. He grinds his teeth. And his body becomes stiff. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit. But they couldn’t do it.”

[19]“You unbelieving people!” Jesus replied. “How long do I have to stay with you? How long do I have to put up with you? Bring the boy to me.”

[20]So they brought him. As soon as the spirit saw Jesus, it threw the boy into a fit. He fell to the ground. He rolled around and foamed at the mouth.

[21]Jesus asked the boy’s father, “How long has he been like this?”

“Since he was a child,” he answered. [22]“The spirit has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us. Please help us.”

[23]“ ‘If you can’?” said Jesus. “Everything is possible for the one who believes.”

[24]Right away the boy’s father cried out, “I do believe! Help me overcome my unbelief!”

[25]Jesus saw that a crowd was running over to see what was happening. Then he ordered the evil spirit to leave the boy. “You spirit that makes him unable to hear and speak!” he said. “I command you, come out of him. Never enter him again.”

[26]The spirit screamed. It shook the boy wildly. Then it came out of him. The boy looked so lifeless that many people said, “He’s dead.” [27]But Jesus took him by the hand. He lifted the boy to his feet, and the boy stood up.

[28]Jesus went indoors. Then his disciples asked him in private, “Why couldn’t we drive out the evil spirit?”

[29]He replied, “This kind can come out only by prayer.”

[30]They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone

to know where they were. [31]That was because he was teaching his disciples.

He said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be handed over to men. They will kill him. After three days he will rise from the dead.” [32]But they didn’t understand what he meant. And they were afraid to ask him about it.

Who Is the Most Important Person?

[33]Jesus and his disciples came to a house in Capernaum. There he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the road?” [34]But they kept quiet. On the way, they had argued about which one of them was the most important person.

[35]Jesus sat down and called for the Twelve to come to him. Then he said, “If you want to be first, you must be the very last. You must be the servant of everyone.”

[36]Jesus took a little child and had the child stand among them. Then he took the child in his arms. He said to them, [37]“Anyone who welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me. And anyone who welcomes me doesn’t welcome only me but also the One who sent me.”

Anyone Who Is Not Against Us Is for Us

[38]“Teacher,” said John, “we saw a man driving out demons in your name. We told him to stop, because he was not one of us.”

[39]“Do not stop him,” Jesus said. “No one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me. [40]Anyone who is not against us is for us.

[41]“What I’m about to tell you is true. Suppose someone gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to me. That one will certainly not go without a reward.

Leading People to Sin

42“What if someone leads one of these little ones who believe in me to sin? If
he does, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a large
millstone tied around his neck.

43/44“If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It would be better for you to
enter God’s kingdom with only one hand than to go into hell with two hands.
In hell the fire never goes out.

45/46“If your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It would be better for you to
enter God’s kingdom with only one foot than to have two feet and be thrown
into hell.

47“If your eye causes you to sin, poke it out. It would be better for you to
enter God’s kingdom with only one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown
into hell. 48In hell,

> “ ‘The worms do not die.
> The fire is not put out.’ (Isaiah 66:24)

49Everyone will be salted with fire.

50“Salt is good. But suppose it loses its saltiness. How can you make it salty
again? Have salt in yourselves. And be at peace with each other.”

Jesus Teaches About Divorce

Mark 10

1 Jesus left that place and went into the area of Judea and across the Jordan
River. Again crowds of people came to him. As usual, he taught them.

2 Some Pharisees came to put him to the test. They asked, “Does the Law
allow a man to divorce his wife?”

3 “What did Moses command you?” he replied.

4 They said, “Moses allowed a man to write a letter of divorce and send her
away.”

5 “You were stubborn. That’s why Moses wrote you this law,” Jesus replied.
6 “But at the beginning of creation, God ‘made them male and female.’(Genesis
1:27) 7 ‘That’s why a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his
wife. 8 The two of them will become one.’(Genesis 2:24) They are no longer
two, but one. 9 So a man must not separate what God has joined together.”

10 When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this.

11 He answered, “What if a man divorces his wife and gets married to another
woman? He commits adultery against her. 12 And what if she divorces her
husband and gets married to another man? She commits adultery.”

Little Children Are Brought to Jesus

13 People were bringing little children to Jesus. They wanted him to touch
them. But the disciples told the people to stop.

14 When Jesus saw this, he was angry. He said to his disciples, “Let the little
children come to me. Don’t keep them away. God’s kingdom belongs to people
like them. 15 What I’m about to tell you is true. Anyone who will not receive
God’s kingdom like a little child will never enter it.”

16 Then he took the children in his arms. He put his hands on them and

blessed them.

Jesus and the Rich Young Man

17As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him. He fell on his knees
before Jesus. “Good teacher,” he said, “what must I do to receive eternal life?”

18“Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good except God.
19You know what the commandments say. ‘Do not commit murder. Do not
commit adultery. Do not steal. Do not give false witness. Do not cheat. Honor
your father and mother.’ ”(Exodus 20:12–16; Deuteronomy 5:16–20)

20“Teacher,” he said, “I have obeyed all those commandments since I was a
boy.”

21Jesus looked at him and loved him. “You are missing one thing,” he said.
“Go and sell everything you have. Give the money to those who are poor. You
will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me.”

22The man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he was very rich.

23Jesus looked around. He said to his disciples, “How hard it is for rich
people to enter God’s kingdom!”

24The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, “Children,
how hard it is to enter God’s kingdom! 25Is it hard for a camel to go through
the eye of a needle? It is even harder for the rich to enter God’s kingdom!”

26The disciples were even more amazed. They said to each other, “Then who
can be saved?”

27Jesus looked at them and said, “With man, that is impossible. But not with
God. All things are possible with God.”

28Peter said to him, “We have left everything to follow you!”

29“What I’m about to tell you is true,” Jesus replied. “Has anyone left home
or family or fields for me and the good news? 30They will receive 100 times as
much in this world. They will have homes and families and fields. But they
will also be treated badly by others. In the world to come they will live forever.
31But many who are first will be last. And the last will be first.”

Jesus Again Tells About His Coming Death

[32]They were on their way up to Jerusalem. Jesus was leading the way. The disciples were amazed. Those who followed were afraid.

Again Jesus took the Twelve to one side. He told them what was going to happen to him. [33]"We are going up to Jerusalem," he said. "The Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will sentence him to death. Then they will hand him over to people who are not Jews. [34]The people will make fun of him and spit on him. They will whip him and kill him. Three days later he will rise from the dead!"

James and John Ask a Favor of Jesus

[35]James and John came to Jesus. They were the sons of Zebedee. "Teacher," they said, "we would like to ask a favor of you."

[36]"What do you want me to do for you?" he asked.

[37]They replied, "Let one of us sit at your right hand in your glorious kingdom. Let the other one sit at your left hand."

[38]"You don't know what you're asking for," Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup of suffering I drink? Or can you go through the baptism of suffering I must go through?"

[39]"We can," they answered.

Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink. And you will go through the baptism I go through. [40]But it is not for me to say who will sit at my right or left hand. These places belong to those they are prepared for."

[41]The other ten disciples heard about it. They became angry at James and John.

[42]Jesus called them together. He said, "You know about those who are rulers of the nations. They hold power over their people. Their high officials order them around. [43]Don't be like that. Instead, anyone who wants to be important among you must be your servant. [44]And anyone who wants to be first must be the slave of everyone. [45]Even the Son of Man did not come to be served. Instead, he came to serve others. He came to give his life as the price for

setting many people free.”

Blind Bartimaeus Receives His Sight

46 Jesus and his disciples came to Jericho. They were leaving the city. A large
crowd was with them.

A blind man was sitting by the side of the road begging. His name was Bartimaeus. Bartimaeus means Son of Timaeus. 47 He heard that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. So he began to shout, “Jesus! Son of David! Have mercy on me!”

48 Many people commanded him to stop. They told him to be quiet. But he shouted even louder, “Son of David! Have mercy on me!”

49 Jesus stopped and said, “Call for him.”

So they called out to the blind man, “Cheer up! Get up on your feet! Jesus is calling for you.”

50 He threw his coat to one side. Then he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.

51 “What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked him.

The blind man said, “Rabbi, I want to be able to see.”

52 “Go,” said Jesus. “Your faith has healed you.”

Right away he could see. And he followed Jesus along the road.

Jesus Enters Jerusalem

Mark 11

[1]As they all approached Jerusalem, they came to Bethphage and Bethany at
the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent out two of his disciples. [2]He said to them, “Go
to the village ahead of you. Just as you enter it, you will find a donkey’s colt
tied there. No one has ever ridden it. Untie it and bring it here. [3]Someone may
ask you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ If so, say, ‘The Lord needs it. But he will
send it back here soon.’ ”

[4]So they left. They found a colt out in the street. It was tied at a doorway.
They untied it. [5]Some people standing there asked, “What are you doing? Why
are you untying that colt?” [6]They answered as Jesus had told them to. So the
people let them go.

[7]They brought the colt to Jesus. They threw their coats over it. Then he sat on
it.

[8]Many people spread their coats on the road. Others spread branches they had
cut in the fields. [9]Those in front and those in back shouted,

> “Hosanna!”
>
> “Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!” (Psalm 118:25, 26)

[10]“Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!”

> “Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

[11]Jesus entered Jerusalem and went to the temple. He looked around at
everything. But it was already late. So he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

Jesus Clears the Temple

12The next day as Jesus and his disciples were leaving Bethany, they were
hungry. 13Not too far away, he saw a fig tree. It was covered with leaves. He
went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but
leaves. It was not the season for figs.

14Then Jesus said to the tree, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again!”
And his disciples heard him say it.

15When Jesus reached Jerusalem, he entered the temple area. He began
chasing out those who were buying and selling there. He turned over the tables
of the people who were exchanging money. He also turned over the benches of
those who were selling doves. 16He would not allow anyone to carry items for
sale through the temple courtyards.

17Then he taught them. He told them, “It is written that the Lord said,

> “ ‘My house will be called
> a house where people from all nations can pray.’ (Isaiah 56:7)

But you have made it a ‘den for robbers.’ ”(Jeremiah 7:11)

18The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard about this. They began
looking for a way to kill Jesus. They were afraid of him, because the whole
crowd was amazed at his teaching.

19When evening came, Jesus and his disciples left the city.

The Dried-up Fig Tree

20In the morning as Jesus and his disciples walked along, they saw the fig
tree. It was dried up all the way down to the roots.

21Peter remembered. He said to Jesus, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree you put a
curse on has dried up!”

22“Have faith in God,” Jesus said. 23“What I’m about to tell you is true.
Suppose one of you says to this mountain, ‘Go and throw yourself into the sea.’
You must not doubt in your heart. You must believe that what you say will
happen. Then it will be done for you.

24“So I tell you, when you pray for something, believe that you have already
received it. Then it will be yours. 25/26And when you stand praying, forgive
anyone you have anything against. Then your Father in heaven will forgive
your sins.”

The Authority of Jesus Is Questioned

27Jesus and his disciples arrived again in Jerusalem. He was walking in the
temple courtyards. Then the chief priests came to him. The teachers of the law
and the elders came too.

28“By what authority are you doing these things?” they asked. “Who gave
you authority to do this?”

29Jesus replied, “I will ask you one question. Answer me, and I will tell you
by what authority I am doing these things. 30Was John’s baptism from heaven?
Or did it come from men? Tell me!”

31They talked to each other about it. They said, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he
will ask, ‘Then why didn’t you believe him?’ 32But what if we say, ‘From
men’?” They were afraid of the people. Everyone believed that John really was
a prophet.

33So they answered Jesus, “We don’t know.”

Jesus said, “Then I won’t tell you by what authority I am doing these things
either.”

The Story of the Renters

Mark 12

1 Jesus began to speak to the people by using stories. He said, “A man planted
a vineyard. He put a wall around it. He dug a pit for a winepress. He also built
a lookout tower. He rented the vineyard out to some farmers. Then he went
away on a journey.

2 “At harvest time he sent a servant to the renters. He told the servant to
collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. 3 But they grabbed the
servant and beat him up. Then they sent him away with nothing. 4 So the man
sent another servant to the renters. They hit this one on the head and treated
him badly. 5 The man sent still another servant. The renters killed him. The man
sent many others. The renters beat up some of them. They killed the others.

6 “The man had one person left to send. It was his son, and he loved him. He
sent him last of all. He said, ‘They will respect my son.’

7 “But the renters said to each other, ‘This is the one who will receive all the
owner’s property someday. Come, let’s kill him. Then everything will be ours.’
8 So they took him and killed him. They threw him out of the vineyard.

9 “What will the owner of the vineyard do then? He will come and kill those
renters. He will give the vineyard to others.

10 “Haven’t you read what Scripture says,

> “ ‘The stone the builders didn’t accept
> has become the most important stone of all.
> 11 The Lord has done it.
> It is wonderful in our eyes’?” (Psalm 118:22, 23)

12 Then the religious leaders looked for a way to arrest Jesus. They knew he
had told the story against them. But they were afraid of the crowd. So they left
him and went away.

Is It Right to Pay Taxes to Caesar?

[13]Later the religious leaders sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus. They wanted to trap him with his own words.

[14]They came to him and said, “Teacher, we know you are a man of honor. You don’t let others tell you what to do or say. You don’t care how important they are. But you teach the way of God truthfully. Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not? [15]Should we pay or shouldn’t we?”

But Jesus knew what they were trying to do. So he asked, “Why are you trying to trap me? Bring me a silver coin. Let me look at it.”

[16]They brought the coin.

He asked them, “Whose picture is this? And whose words?”

“Caesar’s,” they replied.

[17]Then Jesus said to them, “Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar. And give to God what belongs to God.”

They were amazed at him.

Marriage When the Dead Rise

[18]The Sadducees came to Jesus with a question. They do not believe that people rise from the dead. [19]“Teacher,” they said, “Moses wrote for us about a man who died and didn’t have any children. But he did leave a wife behind. That man’s brother must get married to the widow. He must have children to carry on his dead brother’s name.

[20]“There were seven brothers. The first one got married. He died without leaving any children. [21]The second one got married to the widow. He also died and left no child. It was the same with the third one. [22]In fact, none of the seven left any children. Last of all, the woman died too. [23]When the dead rise, whose wife will she be? All seven of them were married to her.”

[24]Jesus replied, “You are mistaken because you do not know the Scriptures. And you do not know the power of God. [25]When the dead rise, they won’t get married. And their parents won’t give them to be married. They will be like the angels in heaven.

[26]“What about the dead rising? Haven’t you read in the scroll of Moses the story of the bush? God said to Moses, ‘I am the God of Abraham. I am the God of Isaac. And I am the God of Jacob.’(Exodus 3:6) [27]He is not the God of the dead. He is the God of the living. You have made a big mistake!”

The Most Important Commandment

[28]One of the teachers of the law came and heard the Sadducees arguing. He noticed that Jesus had given the Sadducees a good answer. So he asked him, “Which is the most important of all the commandments?”

[29]Jesus answered, “Here is the most important one. Moses said, ‘Israel, listen to me. The Lord is our God. The Lord is one. [30]Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Love him with all your mind and with all your strength.’(Deuteronomy 6:4, 5) [31]And here is the second one. ‘Love your neighbor as you love yourself.’(Leviticus 19:18) There is no commandment more important than these.”

[32]“You have spoken well, teacher,” the man replied. “You are right in saying that God is one. There is no other God but him. [33]To love God with all your heart and mind and strength is very important. So is loving your neighbor as you love yourself. These things are more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.”

[34]Jesus saw that the man had answered wisely. He said to him, “You are not far from God’s kingdom.”

From then on, no one dared to ask Jesus any more questions.

Whose Son Is the Christ?

[35]Jesus was teaching in the temple courtyard. He asked, “Why do the teachers of the law say that the Christ is the son of David? [36]The Holy Spirit spoke through David himself. David said,

> “ ‘The Lord said to my Lord,
> “Sit at my right hand
> until I put your enemies

under your control.” ’ (Psalm 110:1)

37David himself calls him ‘Lord.’ So how can he be David’s son?”

The large crowd listened to Jesus with delight.

38As he taught, he said, “Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in long robes. They like to be greeted in the market places. 39They love to have the most important seats in the synagogues. They also love to have the places of honor at dinners. 40They take over the houses of widows. They say long prayers to show off. God will punish those men very much.”

The Widow’s Offering

41Jesus sat down across from the place where people put their temple offerings. He watched the crowd putting their money into the offering boxes. Many rich people threw large amounts into them.

42But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins. They were worth much less than a penny.

43Jesus asked his disciples to come to him. He said, “What I’m about to tell you is true. That poor widow has put more into the offering box than all the others. 44They all gave a lot because they are rich. But she gave even though she is poor. She put in everything she had. She gave all she had to live on.”

Signs of the End

Mark 13

1 Jesus was leaving the temple. One of his disciples said to him, “Look,
Teacher! What huge stones! What wonderful buildings!”

2 “Do you see these huge buildings?” Jesus asked. “Not one stone here will be
left on top of another. Every stone will be thrown down.”

3 Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, across from the temple. Peter,
James, John and Andrew asked him a question in private. 4 “Tell us,” they said.
“When will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all
about to come true?”

5 Jesus said to them, “Keep watch! Be careful that no one fools you. 6 Many
will come in my name. They will claim, ‘I am he.’ They will fool many people.

7 “You will hear about wars. You will also hear people talking about future
wars. Don’t be alarmed. Those things must happen. But the end still isn’t here.
8 Nation will fight against nation. Kingdom will fight against kingdom. There
will be earthquakes in many places. People will go hungry. All of those things
are the beginning of birth pains.

9 “Watch out! You will be handed over to the local courts. You will be
whipped in the synagogues. You will stand in front of governors and kings
because of me. In that way you will be witnesses to them. 10 The good news has
to be preached to all nations before the end comes. 11 You will be arrested and
brought to trial. But don’t worry ahead of time about what you will say. Just
say what God brings to your mind at the time. It is not you speaking, but the
Holy Spirit.

12 “Brothers will hand over brothers to be killed. Fathers will hand over their
children. Children will rise up against their parents and have them put to death.
13 Everyone will hate you because of me. But the one who stands firm to the
end will be saved.

14 “You will see ‘the hated thing that destroys.’(Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11) It
will stand where it does not belong. The reader should understand this. Then

those who are in Judea should escape to the mountains. [15]No one on the roof should go down into his house to take anything out. [16]No one in the field should go back to get his coat. [17]How awful it will be in those days for pregnant women! How awful for nursing mothers! [18]Pray that this will not happen in winter.

[19]"Those days will be worse than any others from the time God created the world until now. And there will never be any like them again. [20]If the Lord had not cut the time short, no one would live. But because of God's chosen people, he has shortened it.

[21]"At that time someone may say to you, 'Look! Here is the Christ!' Or, 'Look! There he is!' Do not believe it. [22]False Christs and false prophets will appear. They will do signs and miracles. They will try to fool God's chosen people if possible. [23]Keep watch! I have told you everything ahead of time.

[24]"So in those days there will be terrible suffering. After that, Scripture says,

" 'The sun will be darkened.
The moon will not shine.
[25]The stars will fall from the sky.
The heavenly bodies will be shaken.' (Isaiah 13:10; 34:4)

[26]"At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds. He will come with great power and glory. [27]He will send his angels. He will gather his chosen people from all four directions. He will bring them from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.

[28]"Learn a lesson from the fig tree. As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. [29]In the same way, when you see those things happening, you know that the end is near. It is right at the door. [30]What I'm about to tell you is true. The people living at that time will certainly not pass away until all those things have happened. [31]Heaven and earth will pass away. But my words will never pass away.

The Day and Hour Are Not Known

[32]"No one knows about that day or hour. Not even the angels in heaven know.

The Son does not know. Only the Father knows.

33“Keep watch! Stay awake! You do not know when that time will come. 34It’s like a man going away. He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge. Each one is given a task to do. He tells the one at the door to keep watch.

35“So keep watch! You do not know when the owner of the house will come back. It may be in the evening or at midnight. It may be when the rooster crows or at dawn. 36He may come suddenly. So do not let him find you sleeping.

37“What I say to you, I say to everyone. ‘Watch!’ ”

A Woman Pours Perfume on Jesus

Mark 14

[1]The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were only two days away. The chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for a clever way to arrest Jesus. They wanted to kill him. [2]“But not during the Feast,” they said. “The people may stir up trouble.”

[3]Jesus was in Bethany. He was at the table in the home of a man named Simon, who had a skin disease. A woman came with a special sealed jar of very expensive perfume. It was made out of pure nard. She broke the jar open and poured the perfume on Jesus’ head.

[4]Some of the people there became angry. They said to one another, “Why waste this perfume? [5]It could have been sold for more than a year’s pay. The money could have been given to poor people.” So they found fault with the woman.

[6]“Leave her alone,” Jesus said. “Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. [7]You will always have poor people with you. You can help them any time you want to. But you will not always have me. [8]She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body to prepare me to be buried. [9]What I’m about to tell you is true. What she has done will be told anywhere the good news is preached all over the world. It will be told in memory of her.”

[10]Judas Iscariot was one of the Twelve. He went to the chief priests to hand Jesus over to them. [11]They were delighted to hear that he would do this. They promised to give Judas money. So he watched for the right time to hand Jesus over to them.

The Lord’s Supper

[12]It was the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. That was the time to sacrifice the Passover lamb.

Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and prepare for you to eat the Passover meal?"

13So he sent out two of his disciples. He told them, "Go into the city. A man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. 14He will enter a house. Say to its owner, 'The Teacher asks, "Where is my guest room? Where can I eat the Passover meal with my disciples?" ' 15He will show you a large upstairs room. It will have furniture and will be ready. Prepare for us to eat there."

16The disciples left and went into the city. They found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover meal.

17When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. 18While they were at the table eating, Jesus said, "What I'm about to tell you is true. One of you who is eating with me will hand me over to my enemies."

19The disciples became sad. One by one they said to him, "It's not I, is it?"

20"It is one of the Twelve," Jesus replied. "It is the one who dips bread into the bowl with me. 21The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But how terrible it will be for the one who hands over the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born."

22While they were eating, Jesus took bread. He gave thanks and broke it. He handed it to his disciples and said, "Take it. This is my body."

23Then he took the cup. He gave thanks and handed it to them. All of them drank from it.

24"This is my blood of the new covenant," he said to them. "It is poured out for many. 25What I'm about to tell you is true. I won't drink wine with you again until the day I drink it in God's kingdom."

26Then they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus Says That Peter Will Fail

27"You will all turn away," Jesus told the disciples. "It is written,

> " 'I will strike the shepherd down.
> Then the sheep will be scattered.' (Zechariah 13:7)

[28]But after I rise from the dead, I will go ahead of you into Galilee."

[29]Peter said, "All the others may turn away. But I will not."

[30]"What I'm about to tell you is true," Jesus answered. "It will happen today, this very night. Before the rooster crows twice, you yourself will say three times that you don't know me."

[31]But Peter would not give in. He said, "I may have to die with you. But I will never say I don't know you." And all the others said the same thing.

Jesus Prays in Gethsemane

[32]Jesus and his disciples went to a place called Gethsemane. Jesus said to them, "Sit here while I pray."

[33]He took Peter, James and John along with him. He began to be very upset and troubled. [34]"My soul is very sad. I feel close to death," he said to them. "Stay here. Keep watch."

[35]He went a little farther. Then he fell to the ground. He prayed that, if possible, the hour might pass by him. [36]"*Abba*," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup of suffering away from me. But let what you want be done, not what I want." *Abba* means Father.

[37]Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Simon," he said to Peter, "are you asleep? Couldn't you keep watch for one hour? [38]Watch and pray. Then you won't fall into sin when you are tempted. The spirit is willing. But the body is weak."

[39]Once more Jesus went away and prayed the same thing. [40]Then he came back. Again he found them sleeping. They couldn't keep their eyes open. They did not know what to say to him.

[41]Jesus returned the third time. He said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look! The Son of Man is about to be handed over to sinners. [42]Get up! Let us go! Here comes the one who is handing me over to them!"

Jesus Is Arrested

43 Just as Jesus was speaking, Judas appeared. He was one of the Twelve. A
crowd was with him. They were carrying swords and clubs. The chief priests,
the teachers of the law, and the elders had sent them.

44 Judas, who was going to hand Jesus over, had arranged a signal with them.
"The one I kiss is the man," he said. "Arrest him and have the guards lead him
away."

45 So Judas went to Jesus at once. He said, "Rabbi!" And he kissed him.

46 The men grabbed Jesus and arrested him.

47 Then one of those standing nearby pulled his sword out. He struck the
servant of the high priest and cut off his ear.

48 "Am I leading a band of armed men against you?" asked Jesus. "Do you
have to come out with swords and clubs to capture me? 49 Every day I was with
you. I taught in the temple courtyard, and you didn't arrest me. But the
Scriptures must come true."

50 Then everyone left him and ran away.

51 A young man was following Jesus. The man was wearing nothing but a
piece of linen cloth. When the crowd grabbed him, 52 he ran away naked. He
left his clothing behind.

Jesus Is Taken to the Sanhedrin

53 The crowd took Jesus to the high priest. All of the chief priests, the elders,
and the teachers of the law came together.

54 Not too far away, Peter followed Jesus. He went right into the courtyard of
the high priest. There he sat with the guards. He warmed himself at the fire.

55 The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for something to
use against Jesus. They wanted to put him to death. But they did not find any
proof. 56 Many witnesses lied about him. But their stories did not agree.

57 Then some stood up. They gave false witness about him. 58 "We heard him
say, 'I will destroy this temple made by human hands. In three days I will build
another temple, not made by human hands.' " 59 But what they said did not
agree.

60Then the high priest stood up in front of them. He asked Jesus, “Aren’t you going to answer? What are these charges these men are bringing against you?”

61But Jesus remained silent. He gave no answer.

Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Christ? Are you the Son of the Blessed One?”

62“I am,” said Jesus. “And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One. You will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven.”

63The high priest tore his clothes. “Why do we need any more witnesses?” he asked. 64“You have heard him say a very evil thing against God. What do you think?”

They all found him guilty and said he must die.

65Then some began to spit at him. They blindfolded him. They hit him with their fists. They said, “Prophesy!” And the guards took him and beat him.

Peter Says He Does Not Know Jesus

66Peter was below in the courtyard. One of the high priest’s female servants came by. 67When she saw Peter warming himself, she looked closely at him.

“You also were with Jesus, that Nazarene,” she said.

68But Peter said he had not been with him. “I don’t know or understand what you’re talking about,” he said. He went out to the entrance to the courtyard.

69The servant saw him there. She said again to those standing around, “This fellow is one of them.”

70Again he said he was not.

After a little while, those standing nearby said to Peter, “You must be one of them. You are from Galilee.”

71He began to call down curses on himself. He took an oath and said to them, “I don’t know this man you’re talking about!”

72Right away the rooster crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered what Jesus had spoken to him. “The rooster will crow twice,” he had said. “Before it does, you will say three times that you don’t know me.” Peter broke

down and sobbed.

Jesus Is Brought to Pilate

Mark 15

1It was very early in the morning. The chief priests, with the elders, the
teachers of the law, and the whole Sanhedrin, made a decision. They tied Jesus
up and led him away. Then they handed him over to Pilate.

2"Are you the king of the Jews?" asked Pilate.

"Yes. It is just as you say," Jesus replied.

3The chief priests brought many charges against him. 4So Pilate asked him
again, "Aren't you going to answer? See how many things they charge you
with."

5But Jesus still did not reply. Pilate was amazed.

6It was the usual practice at the Passover Feast to let one prisoner go free.
The people could choose the one they wanted. 7A man named Barabbas was in
prison. He was there with some other people who had fought against the
country's rulers. They had committed murder while they were fighting against
the rulers. 8The crowd came up and asked Pilate to do for them what he usually
did.

9"Do you want me to let the king of the Jews go free?" asked Pilate. 10He
knew that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him because they were
jealous. 11But the chief priests stirred up the crowd. So the crowd asked Pilate
to let Barabbas go free instead.

12"Then what should I do with the one you call the king of the Jews?" Pilate
asked them.

13"Crucify him!" the crowd shouted.

14"Why? What wrong has he done?" asked Pilate.

But they shouted even louder, "Crucify him!"

15Pilate wanted to satisfy the crowd. So he let Barabbas go free. He ordered
that Jesus be whipped. Then he handed him over to be nailed to a cross.

The Soldiers Make Fun of Jesus

16The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace. It was called the Praetorium.
They called together the whole company of soldiers.

17The soldiers put a purple robe on Jesus. Then they twisted thorns together
to make a crown. They placed it on his head. 18They began to call out to him,
"We honor you, king of the Jews!" 19Again and again they hit him on the head
with a stick. They spit on him. They fell on their knees and pretended to honor
him.

20After they had made fun of him, they took off the purple robe. They put his
own clothes back on him. Then they led him out to nail him to a cross.

Jesus Is Nailed to a Cross

21A man named Simon from Cyrene was passing by. He was the father of
Alexander and Rufus. Simon was on his way in from the country. The soldiers
forced him to carry the cross.

22They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha. The word Golgotha means
The Place of the Skull. 23Then they gave him wine mixed with spices. But he
did not take it.

24They nailed him to the cross. Then they divided up his clothes. They cast
lots to see what each of them would get.

25It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. 26They wrote
out the charge against him. It read, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

27/28They crucified two robbers with him. One was on his right and one was
on his left.

29Those who passed by shouted at Jesus and made fun of him. They shook
their heads and said, "So you are going to destroy the temple and build it again
in three days? 30Then come down from the cross! Save yourself!"

31In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law made fun of
him among themselves. "He saved others," they said. "But he can't save
himself! 32Let this Christ, this King of Israel, come down now from the cross!
When we see that, we will believe."

Those who were being crucified with Jesus also made fun of him.

Jesus Dies

33 At noon, darkness covered the whole land. It lasted three hours. 34 At three
o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*" This
means "My God, my God, why have you deserted me?"(Psalm 22:1)

35 Some of those standing nearby heard Jesus cry out. They said, "Listen!
He's calling for Elijah."

36 One of them ran and filled a sponge with wine vinegar. He put it on a stick.
He offered it to Jesus to drink. "Leave him alone," he said. "Let's see if Elijah
comes to take him down."

37 With a loud cry, Jesus took his last breath.

38 The temple curtain was torn in two from top to bottom.

39 A Roman commander was standing there in front of Jesus. He heard his cry
and saw how Jesus died. Then he said, "This man was surely the Son of God!"

40 Not very far away, some women were watching. Mary Magdalene was
among them. Mary, the mother of the younger James and of Joses, was also
there. So was Salome. 41 In Galilee those women had followed Jesus. They had
taken care of his needs.

Many other women were also there. They had come up with him to
Jerusalem.

Jesus Is Buried

42 It was the day before the Sabbath. That day was called Preparation Day. As
evening approached, 43 Joseph went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body.
Joseph was from the town of Arimathea. He was a leading member of the
Jewish Council. He was waiting for God's kingdom.

44 Pilate was surprised to hear that Jesus was already dead. So he called for
the Roman commander. He asked him if Jesus had already died. 45 The
commander said it was true. So Pilate gave the body to Joseph.

[46]Then Joseph bought some linen cloth. He took the body down and wrapped it in the linen. He put it in a tomb cut out of rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance to the tomb.

[47]Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where Jesus' body had been placed.

Jesus Rises From the Dead

Mark 16

[1]The Sabbath day ended. Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices. They were going to apply them to Jesus' body.

[2]Very early on the first day of the week, they were on their way to the tomb. It was just after sunrise. [3]They asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance to the tomb?"

[4]Then they looked up and saw that the stone had been rolled away. The stone was very large.

[5]They entered the tomb. As they did, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe. He was sitting on the right side. They were alarmed.

[6]"Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. But he has risen! He is not here! See the place where they had put him. [7]Go! Tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him. It will be just as he told you.' "

[8]The women were shaking and confused. They went out and ran away from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

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[9]Jesus rose from the dead early on the first day of the week. He appeared first to Mary Magdalene. He had driven seven demons out of her. [10]She went and told those who had been with him. She found them crying. They were very sad. [11]They heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him. But they did not believe it.

[12]After that, Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them. This happened while they were walking out in the country. [13]The two returned and told the others about it. But the others did not believe them either.

[14]Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating. He spoke firmly to them because they had no faith. They would not believe those who had seen him after he rose from the dead.

[15]He said to them, “Go into all the world. Preach the good news to everyone. [16]Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved. But anyone who does not believe will be punished. [17]Here are the miraculous signs that those who believe will do. In my name they will drive out demons. They will speak in languages they had not known before. [18]They will pick up snakes with their hands. And when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all. They will place their hands on sick people. And the people will get well.”

[19]When the Lord Jesus finished speaking to them, he was taken up into heaven. He sat down at the right hand of God.

[20]Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere. The Lord worked with them. And he backed up his word by the signs that went with it.

Luke

Luke 1
Luke 2
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Luke 24

Luke Writes an Orderly Report

Luke 1

1 Many people have attempted to write about the things that have taken place
among us. 2 Reports of these things were handed down to us. There were people
who saw these things for themselves from the beginning and then passed the
word on.

3 I myself have carefully looked into everything from the beginning. So it
seemed good also to me to write down an orderly report of exactly what
happened. I am doing this for you, most excellent Theophilus. 4 I want you to
know that the things you have been taught are true.

The Coming Birth of John the Baptist

5 Herod was king of Judea. During the time he was ruling, there was a priest
named Zechariah. He belonged to a group of priests named after Abijah. His
wife Elizabeth also came from the family line of Aaron. 6 Both of them did
what was right in God's eyes. They obeyed all the Lord's commandments and
rules faithfully. 7 But they had no children, because Elizabeth was not able to
have any. And they were both very old.

8 One day Zechariah's group was on duty. He was serving as a priest in God's
temple. 9 He happened to be chosen, in the usual way, to go into the temple of
the Lord. There he was supposed to burn incense. 10 The time came for this to
be done. All who had gathered to worship were praying outside.

11 Then an angel of the Lord appeared to Zechariah. The angel was standing at
the right side of the incense altar. 12 When Zechariah saw him, he was amazed
and terrified.

13 But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah. Your prayer has
been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will have a child. It will be a boy, and you
must name him John. 14 He will be a joy and delight to you. His birth will make

many people very glad. [15]He will be important in the Lord's eyes.

"He must never use wine or other such drinks. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit from the time he is born. [16]He will bring many of Israel's people back to the Lord their God. [17]And he will prepare the way for the Lord. He will have the same spirit and power that Elijah had. He will teach parents how to love their children. He will also teach people who don't obey to be wise and do what is right. In this way, he will prepare a people who are ready for the Lord."

[18]Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man, and my wife is old too."

[19]The angel answered, "I am Gabriel. I serve God. I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. [20]And now you will have to be silent. You will not be able to speak until after John is born. That's because you did not believe my words. They will come true when the time is right."

[21]During that time, the people were waiting for Zechariah to come out. They wondered why he stayed in the temple so long. [22]When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple. They knew this because he kept motioning to them. He still could not speak.

[23]When his time of service was over, he returned home. [24]After that, his wife Elizabeth became pregnant. She stayed at home for five months. [25]"The Lord has done this for me," she said. "In these days, he has been kind to me. He has taken away my shame among the people."

The Coming Birth of Jesus

[26]In the sixth month after Elizabeth had become pregnant, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee. [27]He was sent to a virgin. The girl was engaged to a man named Joseph. He came from the family line of David. The virgin's name was Mary. [28]The angel greeted her and said, "The Lord has given you special favor. He is with you."

[29]Mary was very upset because of his words. She wondered what kind of greeting this could be. [30]But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary. God is very pleased with you. [31]You will become pregnant and give birth to a son. You must name him Jesus. [32]He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God. The Lord God will make him a king like his father David

of long ago. [33]He will rule forever over his people, who came from Jacob's family. His kingdom will never end."

[34]"How can this happen?" Mary asked the angel. "I am a virgin."

[35]The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come to you. The power of the Most High God will cover you. So the holy one that is born will be called the Son of God. [36]Your relative Elizabeth is old. And even she is going to have a child. People thought she could not have children. But she has been pregnant for six months now. [37]Nothing is impossible with God."

[38]"I serve the Lord," Mary answered. "May it happen to me just as you said it would." Then the angel left her.

Mary Visits Elizabeth

[39]At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in Judea's hill country. [40]There she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. [41]When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby inside her jumped. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. [42]In a loud voice she called out, "God has blessed you more than other women. And blessed is the child you will have! [43]But why is God so kind to me? Why has the mother of my Lord come to me? [44]As soon as I heard the sound of your voice, the baby inside me jumped for joy. [45]You are a woman God has blessed. You have believed that what the Lord has said to you will be done!"

Mary's Song

[46]Mary said,

"My soul gives glory to the Lord.
[47]My spirit delights in God my Savior.
[48]He has taken note of me
even though I am not important.
From now on all people will call me blessed.
[49]The Mighty One has done great things for me.
His name is holy.

50 He shows his mercy to those who have respect for him,
from parent to child down through the years.
51 He has done mighty things with his arm.
He has scattered those who are proud in their deepest thoughts.
52 He has brought down rulers from their thrones.
But he has lifted up people who are not important.
53 He has filled those who are hungry with good things.
But he has sent those who are rich away empty.
54 He has helped the people of Israel, who serve him.
He has always remembered to be kind
55 to Abraham and his children down through the years.
He has done it just as he said to our people of long ago."

56 Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months. Then she returned home.

John the Baptist Is Born

57 The time came for Elizabeth to have her baby. She gave birth to a son. 58 Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had been very kind to her. They shared her joy.

59 On the eighth day, they came to have the child circumcised. They were going to name him Zechariah, like his father. 60 But his mother spoke up. "No!" she said. "He must be called John."

61 They said to her, "No one among your relatives has that name."

62 Then they motioned to his father. They wanted to find out what he would like to name the child. 63 He asked for something to write on. Then he wrote, "His name is John." Everyone was amazed.

64 Right away Zechariah could speak again. His first words gave praise to God. 65 The neighbors were all filled with fear and wonder. All through Judea's hill country, people were talking about all these things. 66 Everyone who heard this wondered about it. And because the Lord was with John, they asked, "What is this child going to be?"

Zechariah's Song

[67]His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit. He prophesied,

[68]“Give praise to the Lord, the God of Israel!
He has come and set his people free.
[69]He has acted with great power and has saved us.
He did it for those who are from the family line of his servant David.
[70]Long ago holy prophets said he would do it.
[71]He has saved us from our enemies.
We are rescued from all who hate us.
[72]He has been kind to our people.
He has remembered his holy covenant.
[73]He made an oath to our father Abraham.
[74]He promised to save us from our enemies,
so that we could serve him without fear.
[75]He wants us to be holy and godly as long as we live.

[76]“And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High God.
You will go ahead of the Lord to prepare the way for him.
[77]You will tell his people how they can be saved.
You will tell them that their sins can be forgiven.
[78]All of that will happen because our God is tender and caring.
His kindness will bring the rising sun to us from heaven.
[79]It will shine on those living in darkness
and in the shadow of death.
It will guide our feet on the path of peace.”

[80]The child grew up, and his spirit became strong. He lived in the desert until he appeared openly to Israel.

Jesus Is Born

Luke 2

1In those days, Caesar Augustus made a law. It required that a list be made of
everyone in the whole Roman world. 2It was the first time a list was made of
the people while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3All went to their own towns
to be listed.

4So Joseph went also. He went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea.
That is where Bethlehem, the town of David, was. Joseph went there because
he belonged to the family line of David. 5He went there with Mary to be listed.
Mary was engaged to him. She was expecting a baby.

6While Joseph and Mary were there, the time came for the child to be born.
7She gave birth to her first baby. It was a boy. She wrapped him in large strips
of cloth. Then she placed him in a manger. There was no room for them in the
inn.

Angels Appear to the Shepherds

8There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby. It was night, and they
were looking after their sheep. 9An angel of the Lord appeared to them. And
the glory of the Lord shone around them. They were terrified.

10But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of
great joy. It is for all the people. 11Today in the town of David a Savior has
been born to you. He is Christ the Lord. 12Here is how you will know I am
telling you the truth. You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying
in a manger.”

13Suddenly a large group of angels from heaven also appeared. They were
praising God. They said,

14“May glory be given to God in the highest heaven!

And may peace be given to those he is pleased with on earth!”

15The angels left and went into heaven. Then the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem. Let’s see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

16So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and the baby. The baby was lying in the manger. 17After the shepherds had seen him, they told everyone. They reported what the angel had said about this child. 18All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

19But Mary kept all these things like a secret treasure in her heart. She thought about them over and over.

20The shepherds returned. They gave glory and praise to God. Everything they had seen and heard was just as they had been told.

Joseph and Mary Take Jesus to the Temple

21When the child was eight days old, he was circumcised. At the same time he was named Jesus. This was the name the angel had given him before his mother became pregnant.

22The time for making them pure came as it is written in the Law of Moses. So Joseph and Mary took Jesus to Jerusalem. There they presented him to the Lord. 23In the Law of the Lord it says, “The first boy born in every family must be set apart for the Lord.”(Exodus 13:2, 12) 24They also offered a sacrifice. They did it in keeping with the Law, which says, “a pair of doves or two young pigeons.”(Leviticus 12:8)

25In Jerusalem there was a man named Simeon. He was a good and godly man. He was waiting for God’s promise to Israel to happen. The Holy Spirit was with him. 26The Spirit had told Simeon that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. 27The Spirit led him into the temple courtyard.

Then Jesus’ parents brought the child in. They came to do for him what the Law required.

28Simeon took Jesus in his arms and praised God. He said,

[29]“Lord, you are the King over all.
Now let me, your servant, go in peace.
That is what you promised.
[30]My eyes have seen your salvation.
[31]You have prepared it in the sight of all people.
[32]It is a light to be given to those who aren’t Jews.
It will bring glory to your people Israel.”

[33]The child’s father and mother were amazed at what was said about him. [34]Then Simeon blessed them. He said to Mary, Jesus’ mother, “This child is going to cause many people in Israel to fall and to rise. God has sent him. But many will speak against him. [35]The thoughts of many hearts will be known. A sword will wound your own soul too.”

[36]There was also a prophet named Anna. She was the daughter of Penuel from the tribe of Asher. Anna was very old. After getting married, she lived with her husband seven years. [37]Then she was a widow until she was 84. She never left the temple. She worshiped night and day, praying and going without eating.

[38]Anna came up to Jesus’ family at that very moment. She gave thanks to God. And she spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the time when Jerusalem would be set free.

[39]Joseph and Mary did everything the Law of the Lord required. Then they returned to Galilee. They went to their own town of Nazareth. [40]And the child grew and became strong. He was very wise. He was blessed by God’s grace.

The Boy Jesus at the Temple

[41]Every year Jesus’ parents went to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast. [42]When he was 12 years old, they went up to the Feast as usual.

[43]After the Feast was over, his parents left to go back home. The boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. But they were not aware of it. [44]They thought he was somewhere in their group. So they traveled on for a day.

Then they began to look for him among their relatives and friends. [45]They did not find him. So they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. [46]After three

days they found him in the temple courtyard. He was sitting with the teachers. He was listening to them and asking them questions. [47]Everyone who heard him was amazed at how much he understood. They also were amazed at his answers.

[48]When his parents saw him, they were amazed. His mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been worried about you. We have been looking for you everywhere.”

[49]“Why were you looking for me?” he asked. “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?” [50]But they did not understand what he meant by that.

[51]Then he went back to Nazareth with them, and he obeyed them. But his mother kept all these things like a secret treasure in her heart. [52]Jesus became wiser and stronger. He also became more and more pleasing to God and to people.

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

Luke 3

[1]Tiberius Caesar had been ruling for 15 years. Pontius Pilate was governor of
Judea. Herod was the ruler of Galilee. His brother Philip was the ruler of Iturea
and Traconitis. Lysanias was ruler of Abilene. [2]Annas and Caiaphas were high
priests. At that time God's word came to John, son of Zechariah, in the desert.
[3]He went into all the countryside around the Jordan River. There he preached
that people should be baptized and turn away from their sins. Then God would
forgive them.

[4]Here is what is written in the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. It says,

"A messenger is calling out in the desert,
'Prepare the way for the Lord.
Make straight paths for him.
[5]Every valley will be filled in.
Every mountain and hill will be made level.
The crooked roads will become straight.
The rough ways will become smooth.
[6]And everyone will see God's salvation.' " (Isaiah 40:3–5)

[7]John spoke to the crowds coming to be baptized by him. He said, "You are
like a nest of poisonous snakes! Who warned you to escape the coming of
God's anger? [8]Produce fruit that shows you have turned away from your sins.
And don't start saying to yourselves, 'Abraham is our father.' I tell you, God
can raise up children for Abraham even from these stones. [9]The ax is already
lying at the roots of the trees. All the trees that don't produce good fruit will be
cut down. They will be thrown into the fire."

[10]"Then what should we do?" the crowd asked.

[11]John answered, "If you have extra clothes, you should share with those who
have none. And if you have extra food, you should do the same."

[12]Tax collectors also came to be baptized. "Teacher," they asked, "what

should we do?”

13“Don’t collect any more than you are required to,” John told them.

14Then some soldiers asked him, “And what should we do?”

John replied, “Don’t force people to give you money. Don’t bring false charges against people. Be happy with your pay.”

15The people were waiting. They were expecting something. They were all wondering in their hearts if John might be the Christ.

16John answered them all, “I baptize you with water. But One who is more powerful than I am will come. I’m not good enough to untie the straps of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. 17His pitchfork is in his hand to toss the straw away from his threshing floor. He will gather the wheat into his storeroom. But he will burn up the husks with fire that can’t be put out.”

18John said many other things to warn the people. He also preached the good news to them.

19But John found fault with Herod, the ruler of Galilee, because of Herodias. She was the wife of Herod’s brother. John also spoke strongly to Herod about all the other evil things he had done. 20So Herod locked him up in prison. He added this sin to all his others.

The Baptism and Family Line of Jesus

21When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened. 22The Holy Spirit came down on him in the form of a dove. A voice came from heaven. It said, “You are my Son, and I love you. I am very pleased with you.”

23Jesus was about 30 years old when he began his special work for God and others. It was thought that he was the son of Joseph.

Joseph was the son of Heli.
24Heli was the son of Matthat.
Matthat was the son of Levi.
Levi was the son of Melki.

Melki was the son of Jannai.
Jannai was the son of Joseph.

25 Joseph was the son of Mattathias.

Mattathias was the son of Amos.
Amos was the son of Nahum.
Nahum was the son of Esli.
Esli was the son of Naggai.

26 Naggai was the son of Maath.

Maath was the son of Mattathias.
Mattathias was the son of Semein.
Semein was the son of Josech.
Josech was the son of Joda.

27 Joda was the son of Joanan.

Joanan was the son of Rhesa.
Rhesa was the son of Zerubbabel.
Zerubbabel was the son of Shealtiel.
Shealtiel was the son of Neri.

28 Neri was the son of Melki.

Melki was the son of Addi.
Addi was the son of Cosam.
Cosam was the son of Elmadam.
Elmadam was the son of Er.

29 Er was the son of Joshua.

Joshua was the son of Eliezer.
Eliezer was the son of Jorim.
Jorim was the son of Matthat.
Matthat was the son of Levi.

30 Levi was the son of Simeon.

Simeon was the son of Judah.
Judah was the son of Joseph.
Joseph was the son of Jonam.
Jonam was the son of Eliakim.

31 Eliakim was the son of Melea.

Melea was the son of Menna.
Menna was the son of Mattatha.
Mattatha was the son of Nathan.
Nathan was the son of David.

[32]David was the son of Jesse.

Jesse was the son of Obed.
Obed was the son of Boaz.
Boaz was the son of Salmon.
Salmon was the son of Nahshon.

[33]Nahshon was the son of Amminadab.

Amminadab was the son of Ram.
Ram was the son of Hezron.
Hezron was the son of Perez.
Perez was the son of Judah.

[34]Judah was the son of Jacob.

Jacob was the son of Isaac.
Isaac was the son of Abraham.
Abraham was the son of Terah.
Terah was the son of Nahor.

[35]Nahor was the son of Serug.

Serug was the son of Reu.
Reu was the son of Peleg.
Peleg was the son of Eber.
Eber was the son of Shelah.

[36]Shelah was the son of Cainan.

Cainan was the son of Arphaxad.
Arphaxad was the son of Shem.
Shem was the son of Noah.
Noah was the son of Lamech.

[37]Lamech was the son of Methuselah.

Methuselah was the son of Enoch.
Enoch was the son of Jared.
Jared was the son of Mahalalel.
Mahalalel was the son of Kenan.

[38]Kenan was the son of Enosh.

Enosh was the son of Seth.
Seth was the son of Adam.
Adam was the son of God.

Jesus Is Tempted

Luke 4

1 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan River. The Spirit led
him into the desert. 2 There the devil tempted him for 40 days.

Jesus ate nothing during that time. At the end of the 40 days, he was hungry.

3 The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become
bread.”

4 Jesus answered, “It is written, ‘Man doesn’t live only on
bread.’ ”(Deuteronomy 8:3)

5 Then the devil led Jesus up to a high place. In an instant, he showed Jesus all
the kingdoms of the world. 6 He said to him, “I will give you all their authority
and glory. It has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. 7 So if
you worship me, it will all be yours.”

8 Jesus answered, “It is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God. He is the only
one you should serve.’ ”(Deuteronomy 6:13)

9 Then the devil led Jesus to Jerusalem. He had him stand on the highest point
of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down from
here. 10 It is written,

> “ ‘The Lord will command his angels to take good care of you.
> 11 They will lift you up in their hands.
> Then you won’t trip over a stone.’ ” (Psalm 91:11, 12)

12 Jesus answered, “Scripture says, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the
test.’ ”(Deuteronomy 6:16)

13 When the devil finished all this tempting, he left Jesus until a better time.

Jesus Is Not Accepted in Nazareth

14 Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Holy Spirit. News about him
spread through the whole countryside. 15 He taught in their synagogues, and
everyone praised him.

16 Jesus went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. On the Sabbath day
he went into the synagogue as he usually did. And he stood up to read.

17 The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. He unrolled it and
found the right place. There it is written,

18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me.
He has anointed me
to tell the good news to poor people.
He has sent me to announce freedom for prisoners.
He has sent me so that the blind will see again.
He wants me to free those who are beaten down.
19 And he has sent me to announce the year when he will set his
people free." (Isaiah 61:1, 2)

20 Then Jesus rolled up the scroll. He gave it back to the attendant and sat
down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were staring at him.

21 He began by saying to them, "Today this passage of Scripture is coming
true as you listen."

22 Everyone said good things about him. They were amazed at the gracious
words they heard from his lips. "Isn't this Joseph's son?" they asked.

23 Jesus said, "Here is a saying you will certainly apply to me. 'Doctor, heal
yourself! Do the things here in your hometown that we heard you did in
Capernaum.' "

24 "What I'm about to tell you is true," he continued. "A prophet is not
accepted in his hometown. 25 I tell you for sure that there were many widows in
Israel in the days of Elijah. And there had been no rain for three and a half
years. There wasn't enough food to eat anywhere in the land. 26 But Elijah was
not sent to any of those widows. Instead, he was sent to a widow in Zarephath
near Sidon. 27 And there were many in Israel who had skin diseases in the days
of Elisha the prophet. But not one of them was healed except Naaman the
Syrian."

28 All the people in the synagogue were very angry when they heard that.

[29]They got up and ran Jesus out of town. They took him to the edge of the hill on which the town was built. They planned to throw him down the cliff. [30]But Jesus walked right through the crowd and went on his way.

Jesus Drives Out an Evil Spirit

[31]Then Jesus went to Capernaum, a town in Galilee. On the Sabbath day he began to teach the people. [32]They were amazed at his teaching, because his message had authority.

[33]In the synagogue there was a man controlled by a demon, an evil spirit. He cried out at the top of his voice. [34]"Ha!" he said. "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are. You are the Holy One of God!"

[35]"Be quiet!" Jesus said firmly. "Come out of him!"

Then the demon threw the man down in front of everybody. And it came out without hurting him.

[36]All the people were amazed. They said to each other, "What is this teaching? With authority and power he gives orders to evil spirits. And they come out!"

[37]The news about Jesus spread throughout the whole area.

Jesus Heals Many People

[38]Jesus left the synagogue and went to the home of Simon. At that time, Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever. So they asked Jesus to help her. [39]He bent over her and commanded the fever to leave, and it left her. She got up at once and began to serve them.

[40]At sunset, people brought to Jesus all who were sick. He placed his hands on each one and healed them. [41]Also, demons came out of many people. The demons shouted, "You are the Son of God!" But he commanded them to be quiet. He would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Christ.

[42]At dawn, Jesus went out to a place where he could be by himself. The

people went to look for him. When they found him, they tried to keep him from leaving them. [43]But he said, “I must announce the good news of God’s kingdom to the other towns also. That is why I was sent.” [44]And he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

Jesus Chooses the First Disciples

Luke 5

[1]One day Jesus was standing by the Sea of Galilee. The people crowded around him and listened to the word of God. [2]Jesus saw two boats at the edge of the water. They had been left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. [3]He got into the boat that belonged to Simon. Jesus asked him to go out a little way from shore. Then he sat down in the boat and taught the people.

[4]When he finished speaking, he turned to Simon. He said, “Go out into deep water. Let the nets down so you can catch some fish.”

[5]Simon answered, “Master, we’ve worked hard all night and haven’t caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets.”

[6]When they had done so, they caught a large number of fish. There were so many that their nets began to break. [7]So they motioned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. They came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

[8]When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus’ knees. “Go away from me, Lord!” he said. “I am a sinful man!”

[9]He and everyone with him were amazed at the number of fish they had caught. [10]So were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who worked with Simon.

Then Jesus said to Simon, “Don’t be afraid. From now on you will catch people.”

[11]So they pulled their boats up on shore. Then they left everything and followed him.

Jesus Heals a Man With a Skin Disease

[12]While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along. He had a skin disease all over his body. When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the

ground. He begged him, “Lord, if you are willing to make me ‘clean,’ you can do it.”

13Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. “I am willing to do it,” he said. “Be ‘clean’!” Right away the disease left him.

14Then Jesus ordered him, “Don’t tell anyone. Go and show yourself to the priest. Offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded. It will be a witness to the priest and the people that you are ‘clean.’ ”

15But the news about Jesus spread even more. So crowds of people came to hear him. They also came to be healed of their sicknesses. 16But Jesus often went away to be by himself and pray.

Jesus Heals a Man Who Could Not Walk

17One day Jesus was teaching. Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there. They had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem. They heard that the Lord had given Jesus the power to heal the sick.

18Some men came carrying a man who could not walk. He was lying on a mat. They tried to take him into the house to place him in front of Jesus. 19They could not find a way to do this because of the crowd. So they went up on the roof. Then they lowered the man on his mat through the opening in the roof tiles. They lowered him into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus.

20When Jesus saw that they had faith, he said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven.”

21The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began to think, “Who is this fellow who says such an evil thing? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

22Jesus knew what they were thinking. So he asked, “Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? 23Is it easier to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven’? Or to say, ‘Get up and walk’? 24I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he spoke to the man who could not walk. “I tell you,” he said, “get up. Take your mat and go home.”

25Right away, the man stood up in front of them. He took his mat and went home praising God. 26Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They

were filled with wonder. They said, “We have seen unusual things today.”

Jesus Chooses Levi

27After this, Jesus left the house. He saw a tax collector sitting at the tax
booth. The man’s name was Levi.

“Follow me,” Jesus said to him.

28Levi got up, left everything and followed him.

29Then Levi gave a huge dinner for Jesus at his house. A large crowd of tax
collectors and others were eating with them. 30But the Pharisees and their
teachers of the law complained to Jesus’ disciples. They said, “Why do you eat
and drink with tax collectors and ‘sinners’?”

31Jesus answered them, “Those who are healthy don’t need a doctor. Sick
people do. 32I have not come to get those who think they are right with God to
follow me. I have come to get sinners to turn away from their sins.”

Jesus Is Asked About Fasting

33Some of the people who were there said to Jesus, “John’s disciples often
pray and go without eating. So do the disciples of the Pharisees. But yours go
on eating and drinking.”

34Jesus answered, “Can you make the guests of the groom go without eating
while he is with them? 35But the time will come when the groom will be taken
away from them. In those days they will fast.”

36Then Jesus gave them an example. He said, “People don’t tear a patch from
new clothes and sew it on old clothes. If they do, they will tear the new clothes.
Also, the patch from the new clothes will not match the old clothes. 37People
don’t pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the new wine will burst the
skins. The wine will run out, and the wineskins will be destroyed. 38No, new
wine must be poured into new wineskins. 39After people drink old wine, they
don’t want the new. They say, ‘The old wine is better.’ ”

Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath Day

Luke 6

1 One Sabbath day Jesus was walking through the grainfields. His disciples
began to break off some heads of grain. They rubbed them in their hands and
ate them.

2 Some of the Pharisees said, “It is against the Law to do this on the Sabbath.
Why are you doing it?”

3 Jesus answered them, “Haven’t you ever read about what David did? He and
his men were hungry. 4 He entered the house of God and took the holy bread.
He ate the bread that only priests were allowed to eat. David also gave some to
his men.”

5 Then Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath day.”

6 On another Sabbath day, Jesus went into the synagogue and was teaching. A
man whose right hand was weak and twisted was there. 7 The Pharisees and the
teachers of the law were trying to find fault with Jesus. So they watched him
closely. They wanted to see if he would heal on the Sabbath.

8 But Jesus knew what they were thinking. He spoke to the man who had the
weak and twisted hand. “Get up and stand in front of everyone,” he said. So the
man got up and stood there.

9 Then Jesus said to them, “What does the Law say we should do on the
Sabbath day? Should we do good? Or should we do evil? Should we save life?
Or should we destroy it?”

10 He looked around at all of them.

Then he said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.”

He did, and his hand was as good as new.

11 But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law were very angry. They began
to talk to each other about what they might do to Jesus.

Jesus Chooses the Twelve Apostles

12 On one of those days, Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray. He spent
the night praying to God. 13 When morning came, he called for his disciples to
come to him. He chose 12 of them and made them apostles.

14 Simon was one of them. Jesus gave him the name Peter. There were also
Simon's brother Andrew, James, John, Philip and Bartholomew. 15 And there
were Matthew, Thomas, and James, son of Alphaeus. There were also Simon
who was called the Zealot 16 and Judas, son of James. Judas Iscariot was one of
them too. He was the one who would later hand Jesus over to his enemies.

Jesus Gives Blessings and Warnings

17 Jesus went down the mountain with them and stood on a level place. A
large crowd of his disciples was there. A large number of other people were
there too. They came from all over Judea, including Jerusalem. They also came
from the coast of Tyre and Sidon.

18 They had all come to hear Jesus and to be healed of their sicknesses. People
who were troubled by evil spirits were made well. 19 Everyone tried to touch
Jesus. Power was coming from him and healing them all.

20 Jesus looked at his disciples. He said to them,

"Blessed are you who are needy.
God's kingdom belongs to you.
21 Blessed are you who are hungry now.
You will be satisfied.
Blessed are you who are sad now.
You will laugh.
22 Blessed are you when people hate you,
when they have nothing to do with you
and say bad things about you,
and when they treat your name as something evil.
They do all this because you are followers of the Son of Man.

23 "Their people treated the prophets the same way long ago. When these
things happen to you, be glad and jump for joy. You will receive many
blessings in heaven.

[24]“But how terrible it will be for you who are rich!
You have already had your easy life.
[25]How terrible for you who are well fed now!
You will go hungry.
How terrible for you who laugh now!
You will cry and be sad.
[26]How terrible for you when everyone says good things about you!
Their people treated the false prophets the same way long ago.

Love Your Enemies

[27]“But here is what I tell you who hear me. Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. [28]Bless those who call down curses on you. And pray for those who treat you badly.

[29]“Suppose someone hits you on one cheek. Turn your other cheek to him also. Suppose someone takes your coat. Don’t stop him from taking your shirt.

[30]“Give to everyone who asks you. And if anyone takes what belongs to you, don’t ask to get it back. [31]Do to others as you want them to do to you.

[32]“Suppose you love those who love you. Should anyone praise you for that? Even ‘sinners’ love those who love them. [33]And suppose you do good to those who are good to you. Should anyone praise you for that? Even ‘sinners’ do that. [34]And suppose you lend money to those who can pay you back. Should anyone praise you for that? Even a ‘sinner’ lends to ‘sinners,’ expecting them to pay everything back.

[35]“But love your enemies. Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then you will receive a lot in return. And you will be sons of the Most High God. He is kind to people who are evil and are not thankful. [36]So have mercy, just as your Father has mercy.

Be Fair When You Judge Others

[37]“If you do not judge others, then you will not be judged. If you do not find others guilty, then you will not be found guilty. Forgive, and you will be

forgiven. [38]Give, and it will be given to you. A good amount will be poured into your lap. It will be pressed down, shaken together, and running over. The same amount you give will be measured out to you."

[39]Jesus also gave them another example. He asked, "Can a blind person lead another blind person? Won't they both fall into a pit? [40]Students are not better than their teachers. But everyone who is completely trained will be like his teacher.

[41]"You look at the bit of sawdust in your friend's eye. But you pay no attention to the piece of wood in your own eye. [42]How can you say to your friend, 'Let me take the bit of sawdust out of your eye'? How can you say this while there is a piece of wood in your own eye? You pretender! First take the piece of wood out of your own eye. Then you will be able to see clearly to take the bit of sawdust out of your friend's eye.

A Tree and Its Fruit

[43]"A good tree doesn't bear bad fruit. And a bad tree doesn't bear good fruit. [44]You can tell each tree by the kind of fruit it bears. People do not pick figs from thorns. And they don't pick grapes from bushes.

[45]"A good man says good things. These come from the good that is put away in his heart. An evil man says evil things. These come from the evil that is put away in his heart. Their mouths say everything that is in their hearts.

The Wise and Foolish Builders

[46]"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and still don't do what I say? [47]Some people come to me and listen to me and do what I say. I will show you what they are like. [48]They are like someone who builds a house. He digs down deep and sets it on solid rock. When a flood comes, the river rushes against the house. But the water can't shake it. The house is well built.

[49]"But here is what happens when people listen to my words and do not obey them. They are like someone who builds a house on soft ground instead of solid rock. The moment the river rushes against that house, it falls down. It is completely destroyed."

A Roman Commander Has Faith

Luke 7

1 Jesus finished saying all those things to the people. Then he entered
Capernaum.

2 There the servant of a Roman commander was sick and about to die. His
master thought highly of him. 3 The commander heard about Jesus. So he sent
some elders of the Jews to him. He told them to ask Jesus to come and heal his
servant.

4 They came to Jesus and begged him, “This man deserves to have you do
this. 5 He loves our nation and has built our synagogue.” 6 So Jesus went with
them.

When Jesus came near the house, the Roman commander sent friends to him.
He told them to say, “Lord, don’t trouble yourself. I am not good enough to
have you come into my house. 7 That is why I did not even think I was fit to
come to you. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. 8 I myself
am a man who is under authority. And I have soldiers who obey my orders. I
tell this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes. I tell that one, ‘Come,’ and he comes. I say to
my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.”

9 When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him. He turned to the crowd that
was following him. He said, “I tell you, even in Israel I have not found anyone
whose faith is so strong.”

10 Then the men who had been sent to Jesus returned to the house. They found
that the servant was healed.

Jesus Raises a Widow’s Son From the Dead

11 Some time later, Jesus went to a town called Nain. His disciples and a large
crowd went along with him. 12 He approached the town gate. Just then, a dead
person was being carried out. He was the only son of his mother. She was a

widow. A large crowd from the town was with her.

13When the Lord saw her, he felt sorry for her. So he said, “Don’t cry.”

14Then he went up and touched the coffin. Those carrying it stood still.

Jesus said, “Young man, I say to you, get up!”

15The dead man sat up and began to talk. Then Jesus gave him back to his mother.

16The people were all filled with wonder and praised God. “A great prophet has appeared among us,” they said. “God has come to help his people.” 17This news about Jesus spread all through Judea and the whole country.

Jesus and John the Baptist

18John’s disciples told him about all these things. So he chose two of them. 19He sent them to the Lord. They were to ask Jesus, “Are you the one who was supposed to come? Or should we look for someone else?”

20The men came to Jesus. They said, “John the Baptist sent us to ask you, ‘Are you the one who was supposed to come? Or should we look for someone else?’ ”

21At that very time Jesus healed many people. They had illnesses, sicknesses and evil spirits. He also gave sight to many who were blind. 22So Jesus replied to the messengers, “Go back to John. Tell him what you have seen and heard. Blind people receive sight. Disabled people walk. Those who have skin diseases are healed. Deaf people hear. Those who are dead are raised to life. And the good news is preached to those who are poor. 23Blessed are those who do not give up their faith because of me.”

24So John’s messengers left. Then Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John. He said, “What did you go out into the desert to see? Tall grass waving in the wind? 25If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No. Those who wear fine clothes and have many expensive things are in palaces. 26Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.

27“He is the one written about in Scripture. It says,

“ ‘I will send my messenger ahead of you.
He will prepare your way for you.’ (Malachi 3:1)

28I tell you, no one more important than John has ever been born. But the least important person in God’s kingdom is more important than he is.”

29All the people who heard Jesus’ words agreed that God’s way was right. Even the tax collectors agreed. These people had all been baptized by John. 30But the Pharisees and the authorities on the law did not accept God’s purpose for themselves. They had not been baptized by John.

31“What can I compare today’s people to?” Jesus asked. “What are they like? 32They are like children sitting in the market place and calling out to each other. They say,

“ ‘We played a flute for you.
But you didn’t dance.
We sang a funeral song.
But you didn’t cry.’

33“That is how it has been with John the Baptist. When he came to you, he didn’t eat bread or drink wine. And you say, ‘He has a demon.’ 34But when the Son of Man came, he ate and drank as you do. And you say, ‘This fellow is always eating and drinking far too much. He’s a friend of tax collectors and “sinners.” ’ 35All who follow wisdom prove that wisdom is right.”

A Sinful Woman Pours Perfume on Jesus

36One of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him. So he went to the Pharisee’s house. He took his place at the table.

37There was a woman in that town who had lived a sinful life. She learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee’s house. So she came with a special sealed jar of perfume. 38She stood behind Jesus and cried at his feet. She began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair. She kissed them and poured perfume on them.

[39]The Pharisee who had invited Jesus saw this. He said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him. He would know what kind of woman she is. She is a sinner!”

[40]Jesus answered him, “Simon, I have something to tell you.”

“Tell me, teacher,” he said.

[41]“Two people owed money to a certain lender. One owed him 500 silver coins. The other owed him 50 silver coins. [42]Neither of them had the money to pay him back. So he let them go without paying. Which of them will love him more?”

[43]Simon replied, “I suppose the one who owed the most money.”

“You are right,” Jesus said.

[44]Then he turned toward the woman. He said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water to wash my feet. But she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. [45]You did not give me a kiss. But this woman has not stopped kissing my feet since I came in. [46]You did not put any olive oil on my head. But she has poured perfume on my feet. [47]So I tell you this. Her many sins have been forgiven. She has loved a lot. But the one who has been forgiven little loves only a little.”

[48]Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.”

[49]The other guests began to talk about this among themselves. They said, “Who is this who even forgives sins?”

[50]Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.”

The Story of the Farmer

Luke 8

1 After this, Jesus traveled around from one town and village to another. He
announced the good news of God's kingdom. The Twelve were with him. 2 So
were some women who had been healed of evil spirits and sicknesses. One was
Mary Magdalene. Seven demons had come out of her. 3 Another was Joanna,
the wife of Cuza. He was the manager of Herod's household. Susanna and
many others were there also. These women were helping to support Jesus and
the Twelve with their own money.

4 A large crowd gathered together. People came to Jesus from town after town.
As they did, he told a story. He said, 5 "A farmer went out to plant his seed. He
scattered the seed on the ground. Some fell on a path. People walked on it, and
the birds of the air ate it up. 6 Some seed fell on rocky places. When it grew, the
plants dried up because they had no water. 7 Other seed fell among thorns. The
thorns grew up with it and crowded out the plants. 8 Still other seed fell on good
soil. It grew up and produced a crop 100 times more than the farmer planted."

When Jesus said this, he called out, "Those who have ears should listen."

9 His disciples asked him what the story meant.

10 He said, "You have been given the chance to understand the secrets of
God's kingdom. But to outsiders I speak by using stories. In that way,

> " 'They see, but they will not know what they are seeing.
> They hear, but they will not understand what they are hearing.'
> (Isaiah 6:9)

11 "Here is what the story means. The seed is God's message. 12 People on the
path are those who hear. But then the devil comes. He takes away the message
from their hearts. He does it so they won't believe. Then they can't be saved.
13 Those on the rock are the ones who hear the message and receive it with joy.
But they have no roots. They believe for a while. But when they are put to the

test, they fall away from the faith. [14]The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear the message. But as they go on their way, they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures. So they do not reach full growth.

[15]"But the seed on good soil stands for those with an honest and good heart. They hear the message. They keep it in their hearts. They remain faithful and produce a good crop.

A Lamp on a Stand

[16]"People do not light a lamp and then hide it in a jar or put it under a bed. Instead, they put it on a stand. Then those who come in can see its light. [17]What is hidden will be seen. And what is out of sight will be brought into the open and made known.

[18]"So be careful how you listen. If you have something, you will be given more. If you have nothing, even what you think you have will be taken away from you."

Jesus' Mother and Brothers

[19]Jesus' mother and brothers came to see him. But they could not get near him because of the crowd. [20]Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside. They want to see you."

[21]He replied, "My mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and do what it says."

Jesus Calms the Storm

[22]One day Jesus said to his disciples, "Let's go over to the other side of the lake." So they got into a boat and left.

[23]As they sailed, Jesus fell asleep. A storm came down on the lake. It was so bad that the boat was about to sink. They were in great danger.

[24]The disciples went and woke Jesus up. They said, "Master! Master! We're

going to drown!”

He got up and ordered the wind and the huge waves to stop. The storm quieted down. It was completely calm.

25“Where is your faith?” he asked his disciples.

They were amazed and full of fear. They asked one another, “Who is this? He commands even the winds and the waves, and they obey him.”

Jesus Heals a Man Controlled by Demons

26Jesus and his disciples sailed to the area of the Gerasenes across the lake from Galilee. 27When Jesus stepped on shore, he was met by a man from the town. The man was controlled by demons. For a long time he had not worn clothes or lived in a house. He lived in the tombs.

28When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet. He shouted at the top of his voice, “Jesus, Son of the Most High God, what do you want with me? I beg you, don’t hurt me!”

29This was because Jesus had commanded the evil spirit to come out of the man. Many times the spirit had taken hold of him. His hands and feet were chained, and he was kept under guard. But he had broken his chains. And then the demon had forced him to go out into lonely places in the countryside.

30Jesus asked him, “What is your name?”

“Legion,” he replied, because many demons had gone into him. 31And they begged Jesus again and again not to order them to go into the Abyss.

32A large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. The demons begged Jesus to let them go into the pigs. And he allowed it.

33When the demons came out of the man, they went into the pigs. Then the herd rushed down the steep bank. They ran into the lake and drowned.

34Those who were tending the pigs saw what had happened. They ran off and reported it in the town and countryside. 35The people went out to see what had happened.

Then they came to Jesus. They found the man who was now free of the demons. He was sitting at Jesus’ feet. He was dressed and thinking clearly. All this made the people afraid.

36 Those who had seen it told the others how the man who had been controlled
by demons was now healed. 37 Then all the people who lived in the area of the
Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them. They were filled with fear. So he got into
the boat and left.

38 The man who was now free of the demons begged to go with him. But
Jesus sent him away. He said to him, 39 "Return home and tell how much God
has done for you."

So the man went away. He told people all over town how much Jesus had
done for him.

A Dying Girl and a Suffering Woman

40 When Jesus returned, a crowd welcomed him. They were all expecting him.

41 Then a man named Jairus came. He was a synagogue ruler. He fell at Jesus'
feet. He begged Jesus to come to his house. 42 His only daughter was dying.
She was about 12 years old.

As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him.

43 A woman was there who had a sickness that made her bleed. Her sickness
had lasted for 12 years. No one could heal her. 44 She came up behind Jesus and
touched the edge of his clothes. Right away her bleeding stopped.

45 "Who touched me?" Jesus asked.

They all said they didn't do it. Then Peter said, "Master, the people are
crowding and pushing against you."

46 But Jesus said, "Someone touched me. I know that power has gone out
from me."

47 The woman realized that people would notice her. Shaking with fear, she
came and fell at his feet. In front of everyone, she told why she had touched
him. She also told how she had been healed in an instant.

48 Then he said to her, "Dear woman, your faith has healed you. Go in peace."

49 While Jesus was still speaking, someone came from the house of Jairus.
Jairus was the synagogue ruler. "Your daughter is dead," the messenger said.
"Don't bother the teacher anymore."

[50]Hearing this, Jesus said to Jairus, “Don’t be afraid. Just believe. She will be healed.”

[51]When he arrived at the house of Jairus, he did not let everyone go in with him. He took only Peter, John and James, and the child’s father and mother.

[52]During this time, all the people were crying and sobbing loudly over the child. “Stop crying!” Jesus said. “She is not dead. She is sleeping.”

[53]They laughed at him. They knew she was dead.

[54]But he took her by the hand and said, “My child, get up!”

[55]Her spirit returned, and right away she stood up. Then Jesus told them to give her something to eat. [56]Her parents were amazed. But Jesus ordered them not to tell anyone what had happened.

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve Disciples

Luke 9

1 Jesus called the Twelve together. He gave them power and authority to drive
out all demons and to heal sicknesses. 2 Then he sent them out to preach about
God's kingdom and to heal those who were sick.

3 He told them, "Don't take anything for the journey. Do not take a walking
stick or a bag. Do not take any bread, money or extra clothes. 4 When you are
invited into a house, stay there until you leave town. 5 Some people may not
welcome you. If they don't, shake the dust off your feet when you leave their
town. This will be a witness against the people living there."

6 So the Twelve left. They went from village to village. They preached the
good news and healed people everywhere.

7 Now Herod, the ruler of Galilee, heard about everything that was going on.
He was bewildered, because some were saying that John the Baptist had been
raised from the dead. 8 Others were saying that Elijah had appeared. Still others
were saying that a prophet of long ago had come back to life. 9 But Herod said,
"I had John's head cut off. So who is it that I hear such things about?" And he
tried to see Jesus.

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

10 The apostles returned. They told Jesus what they had done. Then he took
them with him. They went off by themselves to a town called Bethsaida. 11 But
the crowds learned about it and followed Jesus. He welcomed them and spoke
to them about God's kingdom. He also healed those who needed to be healed.

12 Late in the afternoon the Twelve came to him. They said, "Send the crowd
away. They can go to the nearby villages and countryside. There they can find
food and a place to stay. There is nothing here."

13 Jesus replied, "You give them something to eat."

The disciples answered, “We have only five loaves of bread and two fish. We would have to go and buy food for all this crowd.” [14]About 5,000 men were there.

But Jesus said to his disciples, “Have them sit down in groups of about 50 each.” [15]The disciples did so, and everyone sat down.

[16]Jesus took the five loaves and the two fish. He looked up to heaven and gave thanks. He broke them into pieces. Then he gave them to the disciples to set in front of the people. [17]All of them ate and were satisfied. The disciples picked up 12 baskets of leftover pieces.

Peter Says That Jesus Is the Christ

[18]One day Jesus was praying alone. Only his disciples were with him. He asked them, “Who do the crowds say I am?”

[19]They replied, “Some say John the Baptist. Others say Elijah. Still others say that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life.”

[20]“But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

Peter answered, “The Christ of God.”

[21]Jesus strongly warned them not to tell this to anyone. [22]He said, “The Son of Man must suffer many things. The elders will not accept him. The chief priests and teachers of the law will not accept him either. He must be killed and on the third day rise from the dead.”

[23]Then he said to all of them, “If anyone wants to follow me, he must say no to himself. He must pick up his cross every day and follow me. [24]If he wants to save his life, he will lose it. But if he loses his life for me, he will save it. [25]What good is it if someone gains the whole world but loses or gives up his very self?

[26]“Suppose you are ashamed of me and my words. The Son of Man will come in his glory and in the glory of the Father and the holy angels. Then he will be ashamed of you.

[27]“What I’m about to tell you is true. Some who are standing here will not die before they see God’s kingdom.”

Jesus' Appearance Is Changed

28About eight days after Jesus said this, he went up on a mountain to pray. He took Peter, John and James with him.

29As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed. His clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. 30Two men, Moses and Elijah, 31appeared in shining glory. Jesus and the two of them talked together. They spoke about his coming death. He was going to die soon in Jerusalem.

32Peter and his companions had been very sleepy. But then they became completely awake. They saw Jesus' glory and the two men standing with him.

33As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter spoke up. "Master," he said to him, "it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters. One will be for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." He didn't really know what he was saying.

34While Jesus was speaking, a cloud appeared. It surrounded them. The disciples were afraid as they entered the cloud. 35A voice came from the cloud. It said, "This is my Son, and I have chosen him. Listen to him." 36When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone.

The disciples kept quiet about this. They didn't tell anyone at that time what they had seen.

Jesus Heals a Boy Who Had an Evil Spirit

37The next day Jesus and those who were with him came down from the mountain. A large crowd met Jesus.

38A man in the crowd called out. "Teacher," he said, "I beg you to look at my son. He is my only child. 39A spirit takes hold of him, and he suddenly screams. It throws him into fits so that he foams at the mouth. It hardly ever leaves him. It is destroying him. 40I begged your disciples to drive it out. But they couldn't do it."

41"You unbelieving and evil people!" Jesus replied. "How long do I have to stay with you? How long do I have to put up with you?"

Then he said to the man, "Bring your son here."

42Even while the boy was coming, the demon threw him into a fit. The boy

fell to the ground. But Jesus ordered the evil spirit to leave the boy. Then Jesus healed him and gave him back to his father. [43]They were all amazed at God's greatness.

Everyone was wondering about all that Jesus did. Then Jesus said to his disciples, [44]"Listen carefully to what I am about to tell you. The Son of Man is going to be handed over to men." [45]But they didn't understand what this meant. That was because it was hidden from them. And they were afraid to ask Jesus about it.

Who Is the Most Important Person?

[46]The disciples began to argue about which one of them would be the most important person. [47]Jesus knew what they were thinking. So he took a little child and had the child stand beside him.

[48]Then he spoke to them. "Anyone who welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me," he said. "And anyone who welcomes me welcomes the One who sent me. The least important person among all of you is the most important."

[49]"Master," said John, "we saw a man driving out demons in your name. We tried to stop him, because he is not one of us."

[50]"Do not stop him," Jesus said. "Anyone who is not against you is for you."

The Samaritans Do Not Welcome Jesus

[51]The time grew near for Jesus to be taken up to heaven. So he made up his mind to go to Jerusalem. [52]He sent messengers on ahead. They went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him. [53]But the people there did not welcome Jesus. That was because he was heading for Jerusalem.

[54]The disciples James and John saw this. They asked, "Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to destroy them?"

[55]But Jesus turned and commanded them not to do it. [56]They went on to another village.

It Costs to Follow Jesus

57 Once Jesus and those who were with him were walking along the road. A
man said to Jesus, “I will follow you no matter where you go.”

58 Jesus replied, “Foxes have holes. Birds of the air have nests. But the Son of
Man has no place to lay his head.”

59 He said to another man, “Follow me.”

But the man replied, “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.”

60 Jesus said to him, “Let dead people bury their own dead. You go and tell
others about God’s kingdom.”

61 Still another man said, “I will follow you, Lord. But first let me go back
and say good-by to my family.”

62 Jesus replied, “Suppose you start to plow and then look back. If you do,
you are not fit for service in God’s kingdom.”

Jesus Sends Out the Seventy-two

Luke 10

1 After this the Lord appointed 72 others. He sent them out two by two ahead
of him. They went to every town and place where he was about to go.

2 He told them, “The harvest is huge, but the workers are few. So ask the Lord
of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest field.

3 “Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. 4 Do not take a purse
or bag or sandals. And don’t greet anyone on the road.

5 “When you enter a house, first say, ‘May this house be blessed with peace.’
6 If someone there loves peace, your blessing of peace will rest on him. If not, it
will return to you. 7 Stay in that house. Eat and drink anything they give you.
Workers are worthy of their pay. Do not move around from house to house.

8 “When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set down in front of
you. 9 Heal the sick people who are there. Tell them, ‘God’s kingdom is near
you.’

10 “But what if you enter a town and are not welcomed? Then go into its
streets and say, 11 ‘We wipe off even the dust of your town that sticks to our
feet. We do it to show that God isn’t pleased with you. But here is what you
can be sure of. God’s kingdom is near.’

12 “I tell you this. On judgment day it will be easier for Sodom than for that
town.

13 “How terrible it will be for you, Korazin! How terrible for you, Bethsaida!
Suppose the miracles done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon. They
would have turned away from their sins long ago. They would have put on
black clothes. They would have sat down in ashes. 14 On judgment day it will
be easier for Tyre and Sidon than for you.

15 “And what about you, Capernaum? Will you be lifted up to heaven? No!
You will go down to the place of the dead.

16 “Anyone who listens to you listens to me. Anyone who does not accept you

does not accept me. And anyone who does not accept me does not accept the One who sent me."

17The 72 returned with joy. They said, "Lord, even the demons obey us when we speak in your name."

18Jesus replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 19I have given you authority to walk all over snakes and scorpions. You will be able to destroy all the power of the enemy. Nothing will harm you. 20But do not be glad when the evil spirits obey you. Instead, be glad that your names are written in heaven."

21At that time Jesus was full of joy through the Holy Spirit. He said, "I praise you, Father. You are Lord of heaven and earth. You have hidden these things from the wise and educated. But you have shown them to little children. Yes, Father. This is what you wanted.

22"My Father has given all things to me. The Father is the only one who knows who the Son is. And the only ones who know the Father are the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to make the Father known."

23Then Jesus turned to his disciples. He said to them in private, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. 24I tell you, many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see. But they didn't see it. They wanted to hear what you hear. But they didn't hear it."

The Story of the Good Samaritan

25One day an authority on the law stood up to put Jesus to the test. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to receive eternal life?"

26"What is written in the Law?" Jesus replied. "How do you understand it?"

27He answered, " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Love him with all your strength and with all your mind.'(Deuteronomy 6:5) And, 'Love your neighbor as you love yourself.' "(Leviticus 19:18)

28"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do that, and you will live."

29But the man wanted to make himself look good. So he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

30 Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. Robbers
attacked him. They stripped off his clothes and beat him. Then they went away,
leaving him almost dead. 31 A priest happened to be going down that same road.
When he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. 32 A Levite also came by.
When he saw the man, he passed by on the other side too.

33 But a Samaritan came to the place where the man was. When he saw the
man, he felt sorry for him. 34 He went to him, poured olive oil and wine on his
wounds and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey. He took
him to an inn and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two silver
coins. He gave them to the owner of the inn. ‘Take care of him,’ he said. ‘When
I return, I will pay you back for any extra expense you may have.’

36 “Which of the three do you think was a neighbor to the man who was
attacked by robbers?”

37 The authority on the law replied, “The one who felt sorry for him.”

Jesus told him, “Go and do as he did.”

Jesus at the Home of Martha and Mary

38 Jesus and his disciples went on their way. Jesus came to a village where a
woman named Martha lived. She welcomed him into her home. 39 She had a
sister named Mary.

Mary sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said. 40 But Martha was busy
with all the things that had to be done. She came to Jesus and said, “Lord, my
sister has left me to do the work by myself. Don’t you care? Tell her to help
me!”

41 “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered. “You are worried and upset about
many things. 42 But only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better.
And it will not be taken away from her.”

Jesus Teaches About Prayer

Luke 11

1 One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his
disciples spoke to him. “Lord,” he said, “teach us to pray, just as John taught
his disciples.”

2 Jesus said to them, “When you pray, this is what you should say.

“ ‘Father,
may your name be honored.
May your kingdom come.
3 Give us each day our daily bread.
4 Forgive us our sins,
as we also forgive everyone who sins against us.
Keep us from falling into sin when we are tempted.’ ”

5 Then Jesus said to them, “Suppose someone has a friend. He goes to him at
midnight. He says, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread. 6 A friend of mine on
a journey has come to stay with me. I have nothing for him to eat.’

7 “Then the one inside answers, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is already locked.
My children are with me in bed. I can’t get up and give you anything.’

8 “I tell you, that person will not get up. And he won’t give the man bread just
because he is his friend. But because the man keeps on asking, he will get up.
He will give him as much as he needs.

9 “So here is what I say to you. Ask, and it will be given to you. Search, and
you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you. 10 Everyone who asks
will receive. He who searches will find. And the door will be opened to the one
who knocks.

11 “Fathers, suppose your son asks for a fish. Which of you will give him a
snake instead? 12 Or suppose he asks for an egg. Which of you will give him a
scorpion? 13 Even though you are evil, you know how to give good gifts to your

children. How much more will your Father who is in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

Jesus and Beelzebub

14 Jesus was driving out a demon. The man who had the demon could not
speak. When the demon left, the man began to speak. The crowd was amazed.

15 But some of them said, “Jesus is driving out demons by the power of
Beelzebub, the prince of demons.” 16 Others put Jesus to the test by asking for a
miraculous sign from heaven.

17 Jesus knew what they were thinking. So he said to them, “Any kingdom
that fights against itself will be destroyed. A family that is divided against itself
will fall. 18 If Satan fights against himself, how can his kingdom stand?

“I say this because of what you claim. You say I drive out demons by the
power of Beelzebub. 19 Suppose I do drive out demons with Beelzebub’s help.
With whose help do your followers drive them out? So then, they will be your
judges. 20 But suppose I drive out demons with the help of God’s powerful
finger. Then God’s kingdom has come to you.

21 “When a strong man is completely armed and guards his house, what he
owns is safe. 22 But when someone stronger attacks, he is overpowered. The
attacker takes away the armor the man had trusted in. Then he divides up what
he has stolen.

23 “Anyone who is not with me is against me. Anyone who does not gather
sheep with me scatters them.

24 “What happens when an evil spirit comes out of a man? It goes through dry
areas looking for a place to rest. But it doesn’t find it. Then it says, ‘I will
return to the house I left.’ 25 When it arrives there, it finds the house swept clean
and put in order. 26 Then the evil spirit goes and takes seven other spirits more
evil than itself. They go in and live there. That man is worse off than before.”

27 As Jesus was saying these things, a woman in the crowd called out. She
shouted, “Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you.”

28 He replied, “Instead, blessed are those who hear God’s word and obey it.”

The Miraculous Sign of Jonah

29 As the crowds grew larger, Jesus spoke to them. “The people of today are
evil,” he said. “They ask for a miraculous sign from God. But none will be
given except the sign of Jonah. 30 He was a sign from God to the people of
Nineveh. In the same way, the Son of Man will be a sign from God to the
people of today.

31 “The Queen of the South will stand up on judgment day with the men now
living. And she will prove that they are guilty. She came from very far away to
listen to Solomon’s wisdom. And now one who is more important than
Solomon is here.

32 “The men of Nineveh will stand up on judgment day with the people now
living. And the Ninevites will prove that those people are guilty. The men of
Nineveh turned away from their sins when Jonah preached to them. And now
one who is more important than Jonah is here.

The Eye Is the Lamp of the Body

33 “No one lights a lamp and hides it. No one puts it under a bowl. Instead,
people put a lamp on its stand. Then those who come in can see the light.

34 “Your eye is like a lamp for your body. Suppose your eyes are good. Then
your whole body also is full of light. But suppose your eyes are bad. Then your
body also is full of darkness. 35 So make sure that the light inside you is not
darkness.

36 “Suppose your whole body is full of light. And suppose no part of it is dark.
Then your body will be completely lit up. It will be as when the light of a lamp
shines on you.”

Six Warnings

37 Jesus finished speaking. Then a Pharisee invited him to eat with him. So
Jesus went in and took his place at the table. 38 But the Pharisee noticed that
Jesus did not wash before the meal. He was surprised.

[39]Then the Lord spoke to him. “You Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish,” he said. “But inside you are full of greed and evil. [40]You foolish people! Didn’t the one who made the outside make the inside also? [41]Give to poor people what is inside the dish. Then everything will be clean for you.

[42]“How terrible it will be for you Pharisees! You give God a tenth of your garden plants, such as mint and rue. But you have forgotten to be fair and to love God. You should have practiced the last things without failing to do the first.

[43]“How terrible for you Pharisees! You love the most important seats in the synagogues. You love having people greet you in the market places.

[44]“How terrible for you! You are like graves that are not marked. People walk over them without knowing it.”

[45]An authority on the law spoke to Jesus. He said, “Teacher, when you say things like that, you say bad things about us too.”

[46]Jesus replied, “How terrible for you authorities on the law! You put such heavy loads on people that they can hardly carry them. But you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them.

[47]“How terrible for you! You build tombs for the prophets. It was your people of long ago who killed them. [48]So you give witness that you agree with what your people did long ago. They killed the prophets, and now you build the prophets’ tombs.

[49]“So God in his wisdom said, ‘I will send prophets and apostles to them. They will kill some. And they will try to hurt others.’ [50]So the people of today will be punished. They will pay for all the prophets’ blood spilled since the world began. [51]I mean from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the temple. Yes, I tell you, the people of today will be punished for all these things.

[52]“How terrible for you authorities on the law! You have taken away the key to the door of knowledge. You yourselves have not entered. And you have stood in the way of those who were entering.”

[53]When Jesus left there, the Pharisees and the teachers of the law strongly opposed him. They threw a lot of questions at him. [54]They set traps for him. They wanted to catch him in something he might say.

Jesus Gives Words of Warning and Hope

Luke 12

1During that time a crowd of many thousands had gathered. There were so
many people that they were stepping on one another.

Jesus spoke first to his disciples. “Be on your guard against the yeast of the
Pharisees,” he said. “They just pretend to be godly. 2Everything that is secret
will be brought out into the open. Everything that is hidden will be uncovered.
3What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight. What you have
whispered to someone behind closed doors will be shouted from the rooftops.

4“My friends, listen to me. Don’t be afraid of those who kill the body but
can’t do any more than that. 5I will show you whom you should be afraid of.
Be afraid of the One who can kill the body and also has the power to throw you
into hell. Yes, I tell you, be afraid of him.

6“Aren’t five sparrows sold for two pennies? But God does not forget even
one of them. 7In fact, he even counts every hair on your head! So don’t be
afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows.

8“What about someone who says in front of others that he knows me? I tell
you, the Son of Man will say that he knows that person in front of God’s
angels. 9But what about someone who says in front of others that he doesn’t
know me? I, the Son of Man, will say that I don’t know him in front of God’s
angels.

10“Everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven. But
anyone who speaks evil things against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

11“You will be brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities. But do not
worry about how to stand up for yourselves or what to say. 12The Holy Spirit
will teach you at that time what you should say.”

The Story of the Rich Man

13 Someone in the crowd spoke to Jesus. “Teacher,” he said, “tell my brother
to divide the family property with me.”

14 Jesus replied, “Friend, who made me a judge or umpire between you?”

15 Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against wanting to
have more and more things. Life is not made up of how much a person has.”

16 Then Jesus told them a story. He said, “A certain rich man’s land produced
a good crop. 17 He thought to himself, ‘What should I do? I don’t have any
place to store my crops.’

18 “Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my storerooms and
build bigger ones. I will store all my grain and my other things in them. 19 I’ll
say to myself, “You have plenty of good things stored away for many years.
Take life easy. Eat, drink and have a good time.” ’

20 “But God said to him, ‘You foolish man! This very night I will take your
life away from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’

21 “That is how it will be for anyone who stores things away for himself but is
not rich in God’s eyes.”

Do Not Worry

22 Then Jesus spoke to his disciples. He said, “I tell you, do not worry. Don’t
worry about your life and what you will eat. And don’t worry about your body
and what you will wear. 23 There is more to life than eating. There are more
important things for the body than clothes.

24 “Think about the ravens. They don’t plant or gather crops. They don’t have
any storerooms at all. But God feeds them. You are worth much more than
birds!

25 “Can you add even one hour to your life by worrying? 26 You can’t do that
very little thing. So why worry about the rest?

27 “Think about how the lilies grow. They don’t work or make clothing. But
here is what I tell you. Not even Solomon in all of his glory was dressed like
one of those flowers. 28 If that is how God dresses the wild grass, how much
better will he dress you! After all, the grass is here only today. Tomorrow it is
thrown into the fire. Your faith is so small!

29“Don’t spend time thinking about what you will eat or drink. Don’t worry
about it. 30People who are ungodly run after all of those things. Your Father
knows that you need them.

31“But put God’s kingdom first. Then those other things will also be given to
you.

32“Little flock, do not be afraid. Your Father has been pleased to give you the
kingdom. 33Sell what you own. Give to those who are poor. Provide purses for
yourselves that will not wear out. Put away riches in heaven that will not be
used up. There, no thief can come near it. There, no moth can destroy it. 34Your
heart will be where your riches are.

Be Ready

35“Be dressed and ready to serve. Keep your lamps burning. 36Be like
servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding dinner. When he
comes and knocks, they can open the door for him at once.

37“It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready when he
comes. What I’m about to tell you is true. The master will then dress himself so
he can serve them. He will have them take their places at the table. And he will
come and wait on them. 38It will be good for those servants whose master finds
them ready. It will even be good if he comes very late at night.

39“But here is what you must understand. Suppose the owner of the house
knew at what hour the robber was coming. He would not have let his house be
broken into. 40You also must be ready. The Son of Man will come at an hour
when you don’t expect him.”

41Peter asked, “Lord, are you telling this story to us, or to everyone?”

42The Lord answered, “Suppose a master puts one of his servants in charge of
his other servants. The servant’s job is to give them the food they are to receive
at the right time. The master wants a faithful and wise manager for this. 43It
will be good for the servant if the master finds him doing his job when the
master returns. 44What I’m about to tell you is true. The master will put that
servant in charge of everything he owns.

45“But suppose the servant says to himself, ‘My master is taking a long time

to come back.’ Suppose he begins to beat the other servants. Suppose he feeds himself. And suppose he drinks until he gets drunk. 46The master of that servant will come back on a day the servant doesn’t expect him. He will return at an hour the servant doesn’t know. Then the master will cut him to pieces. He will send him to the place where unbelievers go.

47“Suppose a servant knows his master’s wishes. But he doesn’t get ready. And he doesn’t do what his master wants. That servant will be beaten with many blows.

48“But suppose the servant does not know his master’s wishes. And suppose he does things for which he should be punished. He will be beaten with only a few blows.

“Much will be required of everyone who has been given much. Even more will be asked of the person who is supposed to take care of much.

Jesus Will Separate People From One Another

49“I have come to bring fire on the earth. How I wish the fire had already started! 50But I have a baptism of suffering to go through. And I will be very troubled until it is completed.

51“Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you. I have come to separate people. 52From now on there will be five members in a family, each one against the other. There will be three against two and two against three. 53They will be separated. Father will turn against son and son against father. Mother will turn against daughter and daughter against mother. Mother-in-law will turn against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”

Understanding What Is Happening

54Jesus spoke to the crowd. He said, “You see a cloud rising in the west. Right away you say, ‘It’s going to rain.’ And it does. 55The south wind blows. So you say, ‘It’s going to be hot.’ And it is. 56You pretenders! You know how to understand the appearance of the earth and the sky. Why can’t you understand the meaning of what is happening right now?

[57]“Why don’t you judge for yourselves what is right? [58]Suppose someone has a claim against you, and you are on your way to court. Try hard to settle the matter on the way. If you don’t, that person may drag you off to the judge. The judge may turn you over to the officer. And the officer may throw you into prison. [59]I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the very last penny!”

Jesus Gives a Warning

Luke 13

1 Some people who were there at that time told Jesus about certain Galileans.
Pilate had mixed their blood with their sacrifices.

2 Jesus said, “These people from Galilee suffered greatly. Do you think they
were worse sinners than all the other Galileans? 3 I tell you, no! But unless you
turn away from your sins, you will all die too. 4 Or what about the 18 people in
Siloam? They died when the tower fell on them. Do you think they were more
guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? 5 I tell you, no! But unless you
turn away from your sins, you will all die too.”

6 Then Jesus told a story. “A man had a fig tree,” he said. “It had been planted
in his vineyard. When he went to look for fruit on it, he didn’t find any. 7 So he
went to the man who took care of the vineyard. He said, ‘For three years now
I’ve been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree. But I haven’t found any. Cut
it down! Why should it use up the soil?’

8 “ ‘Sir,’ the man replied, ‘leave it alone for one more year. I’ll dig around it
and feed it. 9 If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.’ ”

Jesus Heals a Disabled Woman on the Sabbath Day

10 Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on a Sabbath day. 11 A woman
there had been disabled by an evil spirit for 18 years. She was bent over and
could not stand up straight.

12 Jesus saw her. He asked her to come to him. He said to her, “Woman, you
will no longer be disabled. I am about to set you free.” 13 Then he put his hands
on her.

Right away she stood up straight and praised God.

14 Jesus had healed the woman on the Sabbath day. This made the synagogue
ruler angry. He told the people, “There are six days for work. So come and be

healed on those days. But do not come on the Sabbath."

15The Lord answered him, "You pretenders! Doesn't each of you go to the barn and untie his ox or donkey on the Sabbath day? Then don't you lead it out to give it water? 16This woman is a member of Abraham's family line. But Satan has kept her disabled for 18 long years. Shouldn't she be set free on the Sabbath day from what was keeping her disabled?"

17When Jesus said this, all those who opposed him were put to shame. But the people were delighted. They loved all the wonderful things he was doing.

The Stories of the Mustard Seed and the Yeast

18Then Jesus asked, "What is God's kingdom like? What can I compare it to? 19It is like a mustard seed. Someone took the seed and planted it in a garden. It grew and became a tree. The birds sat in its branches."

20Again he asked, "What can I compare God's kingdom to? 21It is like yeast that a woman used. She mixed it into a large amount of flour. The yeast worked its way all through the dough."

The Narrow Door

22Then Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching the people. He was on his way to Jerusalem. 23Someone asked him, "Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?"

He said to them, 24"Try very hard to enter through the narrow door. I tell you, many will try to enter and will not be able to. 25The owner of the house will get up and close the door. Then you will stand outside knocking and begging. You will say, 'Sir, open the door for us.'

"But he will answer, 'I don't know you. And I don't know where you come from.'

26"Then you will say, 'We ate and drank with you. You taught in our streets.'

27"But he will reply, 'I don't know you. And I don't know where you come from. Get away from me, all you who do evil!'

28“You will sob and grind your teeth when you see those who are in God’s
kingdom. You will see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets there.
But you yourselves will be thrown out. 29People will come from east and west
and north and south. They will take their places at the feast in God’s kingdom.
30Then the last will be first. And the first will be last.”

Jesus’ Sadness Over Jerusalem

31At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus. They said to him, “Leave this
place. Go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you.”

32He replied, “Go and tell that fox, ‘I will drive out demons. I will heal
people today and tomorrow. And on the third day I will reach my goal.’ 33In
any case, I must keep going today and tomorrow and the next day. Certainly no
prophet can die outside Jerusalem!

34“Jerusalem! Jerusalem! You kill the prophets and throw stones in order to
kill those who are sent to you. Many times I have wanted to gather your people
together. I have wanted to be like a hen who gathers her chicks under her
wings. But you would not let me!

35“Look, your house is left empty. I tell you, you will not see me again until
you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.’ ”(Psalm
118:26)

Jesus Eats at a Pharisee's House

Luke 14

[1]One Sabbath day, Jesus went to eat in the house of a well-known Pharisee. While he was there, he was being carefully watched. [2]In front of him was a man whose body was badly swollen.

[3]Jesus turned to the Pharisees and the authorities on the law. He asked them, "Is it breaking the Law to heal on the Sabbath?"

[4]But they remained silent.

So Jesus took hold of the man and healed him. Then he sent him away.

[5]He asked them another question. He said, "Suppose one of you has a son or an ox that falls into a well on the Sabbath day. Wouldn't you pull him out right away?" [6]And they had nothing to say.

[7]Jesus noticed how the guests picked the places of honor at the table. So he told them a story. [8]He said, "Suppose someone invites you to a wedding feast. Do not take the place of honor. A person more important than you may have been invited. [9]If so, the host who invited both of you will come to you. He will say, 'Give this person your seat.' Then you will be filled with shame. You will have to take the least important place.

[10]"But when you are invited, take the lowest place. Then your host will come over to you. He will say, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honored in front of all the other guests. [11]Anyone who lifts himself up will be brought down. And anyone who is brought down will be lifted up."

[12]Then Jesus spoke to his host. "Suppose you give a lunch or a dinner," he said. "Do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, or your relatives, or your rich neighbors. If you do, they may invite you to eat with them. So you will be paid back.

[13]"But when you give a big dinner, invite those who are poor. Also invite those who can't walk, the disabled and the blind. [14]Then you will be blessed. Your guests can't pay you back. But you will be paid back when those who are right with God rise from the dead."

The Story of the Big Dinner

15 One of the people at the table with Jesus heard him say those things. So he
said to Jesus, “Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in God’s kingdom.”

16 Jesus replied, “A certain man was preparing a big dinner. He invited many
guests. 17 Then the day of the dinner arrived. He sent his servant to those who
had been invited. The servant told them, ‘Come. Everything is ready now.’

18 “But they all had the same idea. They began to make excuses. The first one
said, ‘I have just bought a field. I have to go and see it. Please excuse me.’

19 “Another said, ‘I have just bought five pairs of oxen. I’m on my way to try
them out. Please excuse me.’

20 “Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’

21 “The servant came back and reported this to his master.

“Then the owner of the house became angry. He ordered his servant, ‘Go out
quickly into the streets and lanes of the town. Bring in those who are poor.
Also bring those who can’t walk, the blind and the disabled.’

22 “ ‘Sir,’ the servant said, ‘what you ordered has been done. But there is still
room.’

23 “Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads. Go out to the
country lanes. Make the people come in. I want my house to be full. 24 I tell
you, not one of those men who were invited will get a taste of my dinner.’ ”

It Costs to Be a Disciple

25 Large crowds were traveling with Jesus. He turned and spoke to them. He
said, 26 “Anyone who comes to me must hate his father and mother. He must
hate his wife and children. He must hate his brothers and sisters. And he must
hate even his own life. Unless he does, he can’t be my disciple. 27 Anyone who
doesn’t carry his cross and follow me can’t be my disciple.

28 “Suppose someone wants to build a tower. Won’t he sit down first and
figure out how much it will cost? Then he will see whether he has enough
money to finish it. 29 Suppose he starts building and is not able to finish. Then

everyone who sees what he has done will laugh at him. [30]They will say, ‘This fellow started to build. But he wasn’t able to finish.’

[31]“Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. And suppose he has 10,000 men, while the other has 20,000 coming against him. Won’t he first sit down and think about whether he can win?

[32]“And suppose he decides he can’t win. Then he will send some men to ask how peace can be made. He will do this while the other king is still far away.

[33]“In the same way, you must give up everything you have. If you don’t, you can’t be my disciple.

[34]“Salt is good. But suppose it loses its saltiness. How can it be made salty again? [35]It is not good for the soil. And it is not good for the trash pile. It will be thrown out.

“Those who have ears should listen.”

The Story of the Lost Sheep

Luke 15

[1]The tax collectors and “sinners” were all gathering around to hear Jesus. [2]But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law were whispering among themselves. They said, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

[3]Then Jesus told them a story. [4]He said, “Suppose one of you has 100 sheep and loses one of them. Won’t he leave the 99 in the open country? Won’t he go and look for the one lost sheep until he finds it? [5]When he finds it, he will joyfully put it on his shoulders [6]and go home. Then he will call his friends and neighbors together. He will say, ‘Be joyful with me. I have found my lost sheep.’

[7]“I tell you, it will be the same in heaven. There will be great joy when one sinner turns away from sin. Yes, there will be more joy than for 99 godly people who do not need to turn away from their sins.

The Story of the Lost Coin

[8]“Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. She will light a lamp and sweep the house. She will search carefully until she finds the coin. [9]And when she finds it, she will call her friends and neighbors together. She will say, ‘Be joyful with me. I have found my lost coin.’

[10]“I tell you, it is the same in heaven. There is joy in heaven over one sinner who turns away from sin.”

The Story of the Lost Son

[11]Jesus continued, “There was a man who had two sons. [12]The younger son spoke to his father. He said, ‘Father, give me my share of the family property.’ So the father divided his property between his two sons.

13“Not long after that, the younger son packed up all he had. Then he left for
a country far away. There he wasted his money on wild living. 14He spent
everything he had.

“Then the whole country ran low on food. So the son didn’t have what he
needed. 15He went to work for someone who lived in that country, who sent
him to the fields to feed the pigs. 16The son wanted to fill his stomach with the
food the pigs were eating. But no one gave him anything.

17“Then he began to think clearly again. He said, ‘How many of my father’s
hired workers have more than enough food! But here I am dying from hunger!
18I will get up and go back to my father. I will say to him, “Father, I have
sinned against heaven. And I have sinned against you. 19I am no longer fit to
be called your son. Make me like one of your hired workers.” ’ 20So he got up
and went to his father.

“While the son was still a long way off, his father saw him. He was filled
with tender love for his son. He ran to him. He threw his arms around him and
kissed him.

21“The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.
I am no longer fit to be called your son.’

22“But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it
on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23Bring the fattest calf
and kill it. Let’s have a big dinner and celebrate. 24This son of mine was dead.
And now he is alive again. He was lost. And now he is found.’

“So they began to celebrate.

25“The older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard
music and dancing. 26So he called one of the servants. He asked him what was
going on.

27“ ‘Your brother has come home,’ the servant replied. ‘Your father has killed
the fattest calf. He has done this because your brother is back safe and sound.’

28“The older brother became angry. He refused to go in. So his father went
out and begged him.

29“But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve worked like a slave
for you. I have always obeyed your orders. You never gave me even a young
goat so I could celebrate with my friends. 30But this son of yours wasted your
money with some prostitutes. Now he comes home. And for him you kill the

fattest calf!’

31“ ‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me. Everything I have is
yours. 32But we had to celebrate and be glad. This brother of yours was dead.
And now he is alive again. He was lost. And now he is found.’ ”

The Story of the Clever Manager

Luke 16

1 Jesus told his disciples another story. He said, “There was a rich man who
had a manager. Some said that the manager was wasting what the rich man
owned. 2 So the rich man told him to come in. He asked him, ‘What is this I
hear about you? Tell me exactly how you have handled what I own. You can’t
be my manager any longer.’

3 “The manager said to himself, ‘What will I do now? My master is taking
away my job. I’m not strong enough to dig. And I’m too ashamed to beg. 4 I
know what I’m going to do. I’ll do something so that when I lose my job here,
people will welcome me into their houses.’

5 “So he called in each person who owed his master something. He asked the
first one, ‘How much do you owe my master?’

6 “ ‘I owe 800 gallons of olive oil,’ he replied.

“The manager told him, ‘Take your bill. Sit down quickly and change it to
400 gallons.’

7 “Then he asked the second one, ‘And how much do you owe?’

“ ‘I owe 1,000 bushels of wheat,’ he replied.

“The manager told him, ‘Take your bill and change it to 800 bushels.’

8 “The manager had not been honest. But the master praised him for being
clever. The people of this world are clever in dealing with those who are like
themselves. They are more clever than God’s people.

9 “I tell you, use the riches of this world to help others. In that way, you will
make friends for yourselves. Then when your riches are gone, you will be
welcomed into your eternal home in heaven.

10 “Suppose you can be trusted with very little. Then you can be trusted with a
lot. But suppose you are not honest with very little. Then you will not be
honest with a lot.

11 “Suppose you have not been worthy of trust in handling worldly wealth.

Then who will trust you with true riches? 12Suppose you have not been worthy of trust in handling someone else's property. Then who will give you property of your own?

13"No servant can serve two masters at the same time. He will hate one of them and love the other. Or he will be faithful to one and dislike the other. You can't serve God and Money at the same time."

14The Pharisees loved money. They heard all that Jesus said and made fun of him. 15Jesus said to them, "You try to make yourselves look good in the eyes of other people. But God knows your hearts. What is worth a great deal among people is hated by God.

More Teachings

16"The teachings of the Law and the Prophets were preached until John came. Since then, the good news of God's kingdom is being preached. And everyone is trying very hard to enter it. 17It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the smallest part of a letter to drop out of the Law.

18"Anyone who divorces his wife and gets married to another woman commits adultery. Also, the man who gets married to a divorced woman commits adultery.

The Rich Man and Lazarus

19"Once there was a rich man. He was dressed in purple cloth and fine linen. He lived an easy life every day. 20A man named Lazarus was placed at his gate. Lazarus was a beggar. His body was covered with sores. 21Even dogs came and licked his sores. All he wanted was to eat what fell from the rich man's table.

22"The time came when the beggar died. The angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. 23In hell, the rich man was suffering terribly. He looked up and saw Abraham far away. Lazarus was by his side. 24So the rich man called out, 'Father Abraham! Have pity on me! Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water. Then he can cool my tongue with it. I am in terrible pain in this fire.'

25“But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember what happened in your lifetime.
You received your good things. Lazarus received bad things. Now he is
comforted here, and you are in terrible pain. 26Besides, a wide space has been
placed between us and you. So those who want to go from here to you can’t go.
And no one can cross over from there to us.’

27“The rich man answered, ‘Then I beg you, father. Send Lazarus to my
family. 28I have five brothers. Let Lazarus warn them. Then they will not come
to this place of terrible suffering.’

29“Abraham replied, ‘They have the teachings of Moses and the Prophets. Let
your brothers listen to them.’

30“ ‘No, father Abraham,’ he said. ‘But if someone from the dead goes to
them, they will turn away from their sins.’

31“Abraham said to him, ‘They do not listen to Moses and the Prophets. So
they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’ ”

Sin, Faith and Duty

Luke 17

1 Jesus spoke to his disciples. “Things that make people sin are sure to come,”
he said. “But how terrible it will be for the person who brings them! 2 Suppose
people lead one of these little ones to sin. It would be better for those people to
be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around their neck. 3 So watch what
you do.

“If your brother sins, tell him he is wrong. Then if he turns away from his
sins, forgive him. 4 Suppose he sins against you seven times in one day. And
suppose he comes back to you each time and says, ‘I’m sorry.’ Forgive him.”

5 The apostles said to the Lord, “Give us more faith!”

6 He replied, “Suppose you have faith as small as a mustard seed. Then you
can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be pulled up. Be planted in the sea.’ And it will
obey you.

7 “Suppose one of you had a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. And
suppose the servant came in from the field. Would you say to him, ‘Come
along now and sit down to eat’? 8 No. Instead, you would say, ‘Prepare my
supper. Get yourself ready. Wait on me while I eat and drink. Then after that
you can eat and drink.’ 9 Would you thank the servant because he did what he
was told to do?

10 “It’s the same with you. Suppose you have done everything you were told
to do. Then you should say, ‘We are not worthy to serve you. We have only
done our duty.’ ”

Jesus Heals Ten Men

11 Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. He traveled along the border between
Samaria and Galilee. 12 As he was going into a village, ten men met him. They
had a skin disease. They were standing close by. 13 And they called out in a

loud voice, “Jesus! Master! Have pity on us!”

14Jesus saw them and said, “Go. Show yourselves to the priests.” While they were on the way, they were healed.

15When one of them saw that he was healed, he came back. He praised God in a loud voice. 16He threw himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him. The man was a Samaritan.

17Jesus asked, “Weren’t all ten healed? Where are the other nine? 18Didn’t anyone else return and give praise to God except this outsider?”

19Then Jesus said to him, “Get up and go. Your faith has healed you.”

The Coming of God’s Kingdom

20Once the Pharisees asked Jesus when God’s kingdom would come. He replied, “The coming of God’s kingdom is not something you can see just by watching for it carefully. 21People will not say, ‘Here it is.’ Or, ‘There it is.’ God’s kingdom is among you.”

22Then Jesus spoke to his disciples. “The time is coming,” he said, “when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man. But you won’t see it. 23People will tell you, ‘There he is!’ Or, ‘Here he is!’ Don’t go running off after them.

24“When the Son of Man comes, he will be like the lightning. It flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other. 25But first the Son of Man must suffer many things. He will not be accepted by the people of today.

26“Remember how it was in the days of Noah. It will be the same when the Son of Man comes. 27People were eating and drinking. They were getting married. They were giving their daughters to be married. They did all those things right up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.

28“It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking. They were buying and selling. They were planting and building. 29But on the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven. And all the people were destroyed.

30“It will be just like that on the day the Son of Man is shown to the world.

31 Suppose someone is on the roof of his house on that day. And suppose his goods are inside the house. He should not go down to get them. No one in the field should go back for anything either. 32 Remember Lot's wife! 33 Anyone who tries to keep his life will lose it. Anyone who loses his life will keep it.

34 "I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed. One person will be taken and the other left. 35 /36 Two women will be grinding grain together. One will be taken and the other left."

37 "Where, Lord?" his disciples asked.

He replied, "The vultures will gather where there is a dead body."

The Story of the Widow Who Would Not Give Up

Luke 18

1 Jesus told his disciples a story. He wanted to show them that they should
always pray and not give up. 2 He said, “In a certain town there was a judge. He
didn’t have any respect for God or care about people. 3 A widow lived in that
town. She came to the judge again and again. She kept begging him, ‘Make
things right for me. Someone is doing me wrong.’

4 “For some time the judge refused. But finally he said to himself, ‘I don’t
have any respect for God. I don’t care about people. 5 But this widow keeps
bothering me. So I will see that things are made right for her. If I don’t, she will
wear me out by coming again and again!’ ”

6 The Lord said, “Listen to what the unfair judge says.

7 “God’s chosen people cry out to him day and night. Won’t he make things
right for them? Will he keep putting them off? 8 I tell you, God will see that
things are made right for them. He will make sure it happens quickly.

“But when the Son of Man comes, will he find people on earth who have
faith?”

The Story of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector

9 Jesus told a story to some people who were sure they were right with God.
They looked down on everybody else. 10 He said to them, “Two men went up to
the temple to pray. One was a Pharisee. The other was a tax collector.

11 “The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself. ‘God, I thank you that I
am not like other people,’ he said. ‘I am not like robbers or those who do other
evil things. I am not like those who commit adultery. I am not even like this tax
collector. 12 I fast twice a week. And I give a tenth of all I get.’

13 “But the tax collector stood not very far away. He would not even look up
to heaven. He beat his chest and said, ‘God, have mercy on me. I am a sinner.’

14“I tell you, the tax collector went home accepted by God. But not the Pharisee. Everyone who lifts himself up will be brought down. And anyone who is brought down will be lifted up.”

Little Children Are Brought to Jesus

15People were also bringing babies to Jesus. They wanted him to touch them. When the disciples saw this, they told the people to stop.

16But Jesus asked the children to come to him. “Let the little children come to me,” he said. “Don’t keep them away. God’s kingdom belongs to people like them. 17What I’m about to tell you is true. Anyone who will not receive God’s kingdom like a little child will never enter it.”

Jesus and the Rich Ruler

18A certain ruler asked Jesus a question. “Good teacher,” he said, “what must I do to receive eternal life?”

19“Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good except God. 20You know what the commandments say. ‘Do not commit adultery. Do not commit murder. Do not steal. Do not give false witness. Honor your father and mother.’ ”(Exodus 20:12–16; Deuteronomy 5:16–20)

21“I have obeyed all those commandments since I was a boy,” the ruler said.

22When Jesus heard this, he said to him, “You are still missing one thing. Sell everything you have. Give the money to those who are poor. You will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me.”

23When the ruler heard this, he became very sad. He was very rich.

24Jesus looked at him. Then he said, “How hard it is for rich people to enter God’s kingdom! 25Is it hard for a camel to go through the eye of a needle? It is even harder for the rich to enter God’s kingdom!”

26Those who heard this asked, “Then who can be saved?”

27Jesus replied, “Things that are impossible with people are possible with God.”

[28]Peter said to him, “We have left everything we had in order to follow you!”

[29]“What I’m about to tell you is true,” Jesus said to them. “Has anyone left home or family for God’s kingdom? [30]They will receive many times as much in this world. In the world to come they will live forever.”

Jesus Again Tells About His Coming Death

[31]Jesus took the Twelve to one side. He told them, “We are going up to Jerusalem. Everything that the prophets wrote about the Son of Man will come true. [32]He will be handed over to people who are not Jews. They will make fun of him. They will laugh at him and spit on him. They will whip him and kill him. [33]On the third day, he will rise from the dead!”

[34]The disciples did not understand any of this. Its meaning was hidden from them. So they didn’t know what Jesus was talking about.

A Blind Beggar Receives His Sight

[35]Jesus was approaching Jericho. A blind man was sitting by the side of the road begging. [36]The blind man heard the crowd going by. He asked what was happening. [37]They told him, “Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.”

[38]So the blind man called out, “Jesus! Son of David! Have mercy on me!”

[39]Those who led the way commanded him to stop. They told him to be quiet. But he shouted even louder, “Son of David! Have mercy on me!”

[40]Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. When the man came near, Jesus spoke to him. [41]“What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked.

“Lord, I want to be able to see,” the blind man replied.

[42]Jesus said to him, “Receive your sight. Your faith has healed you.”

[43]Right away he could see. He followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised God.

Zacchaeus the Tax Collector

Luke 19

1 Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. 2 A man named Zacchaeus
lived there. He was a chief tax collector and was very rich.

3 Zacchaeus wanted to see who Jesus was. But he was a short man. He could
not see Jesus because of the crowd. 4 So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-
fig tree. He wanted to see Jesus, who was coming that way.

5 Jesus reached the spot where Zacchaeus was. He looked up and said,
"Zacchaeus, come down at once. I must stay at your house today." 6 So
Zacchaeus came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

7 All the people saw this. They began to whisper among themselves. They
said, "Jesus has gone to be the guest of a 'sinner.' "

8 But Zacchaeus stood up. He said, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of
what I own to those who are poor. And if I have cheated anybody out of
anything, I will pay it back. I will pay back four times the amount I took."

9 Jesus said to Zacchaeus, "Today salvation has come to your house. You are a
member of Abraham's family line. 10 The Son of Man came to look for the lost
and save them."

The Story of Three Servants

11 While the people were listening to these things, Jesus told them a story. He
was near Jerusalem. The people thought that God's kingdom was going to
appear right away.

12 Jesus said, "A man from an important family went to a country far away.
He went there to be made king and then return home. 13 So he sent for ten of his
servants. He gave them each about three months' pay. 'Put this money to work
until I come back,' he said.

14 "But those he ruled over hated him. They sent some messengers after him.

They were sent to say, ‘We don’t want this man to be our king.’

15“But he was made king and returned home. Then he sent for the servants he had given the money to. He wanted to find out what they had earned with it.

16“The first one came to him. He said, ‘Sir, your money has earned ten times as much.’

17“ ‘You have done well, my good servant!’ his master replied. ‘You have been faithful in a very small matter. So I will put you in charge of ten towns.’

18“The second servant came to his master. He said, ‘Sir, your money has earned five times as much.’

19“His master answered, ‘I will put you in charge of five towns.’

20“Then another servant came. He said, ‘Sir, here is your money. I have kept it hidden in a piece of cloth. 21I was afraid of you. You are a hard man. You take out what you did not put in. You harvest what you did not plant.’

22“His master replied, ‘I will judge you by your own words, you evil servant! So you knew that I am a hard man? You knew that I take out what I did not put in? You knew that I harvest what I did not plant? 23Then why didn’t you put my money in the bank? When I came back, I could have collected it with interest.’

24“Then he said to those standing by, ‘Take his money away from him. Give it to the one who has ten times as much.’

25“ ‘Sir,’ they said, ‘he already has ten times as much!’

26“He replied, ‘I tell you that everyone who has will be given more. But here is what will happen to anyone who has nothing. Even what he has will be taken away from him. 27And what about my enemies who did not want me to be king over them? Bring them here! Kill them in front of me!’ ”

Jesus Enters Jerusalem

28After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead. He was going up to Jerusalem.

29He approached Bethphage and Bethany. The hill there was called the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent out two of his disciples. He said to them, 30“Go to the village ahead of you. As soon as you get there, you will find a donkey’s

colt tied up. No one has ever ridden it. Untie it and bring it here. [31]Someone may ask you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ If so, say, ‘The Lord needs it.’ ”

[32]Those who were sent ahead went and found the young donkey. It was there just as Jesus had told them. [33]They were untying the colt when its owners came. The owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?”

[34]They replied, “The Lord needs it.”

[35]Then the disciples brought the colt to Jesus. They threw their coats on the young donkey and put Jesus on it. [36]As he went along, people spread their coats on the road.

[37]Jesus came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives. There the whole crowd of disciples began to praise God with joy. In loud voices they praised him for all the miracles they had seen. They shouted,

[38]“Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!” (Psalm 118:26)

“May there be peace and glory in the highest heaven!”

[39]Some of the Pharisees in the crowd spoke to Jesus. “Teacher,” they said, “tell your disciples to stop!”

[40]“I tell you,” he replied, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”

[41]He approached Jerusalem. When he saw the city, he began to sob. [42]He said, “I wish you had known today what would bring you peace! But now it is hidden from your eyes.

[43]“The days will come when your enemies will arrive. They will build a wall of dirt up against your city. They will surround you and close you in on every side. [44]You didn’t recognize the time when God came to you. So your enemies will smash you to the ground. They will destroy you and all the people inside your walls. They will not leave one stone on top of another.”

Jesus Clears Out the Temple

[45]Then Jesus entered the temple area. He began chasing out those who were selling there. [46]He told them, “It is written that the Lord said, ‘My house will

be a house where people can pray.’(Isaiah 56:7) But you have made it a ‘den for robbers.’ ”(Jeremiah 7:11)

47Every day Jesus was teaching at the temple. But the chief priests and the teachers of the law were trying to kill him. So were the leaders among the people. 48But they couldn’t find any way to do it. All the people were paying close attention to his words.

The Authority of Jesus Is Questioned

Luke 20

[1]One day Jesus was teaching the people in the temple courtyard. He was preaching the good news to them.

The chief priests and the teachers of the law came up to him. The elders came with them. [2]"Tell us by what authority you are doing these things," they all said. "Who gave you this authority?"

[3]Jesus replied, "I will also ask you a question. Tell me, [4]was John's baptism from heaven? Or did it come from men?"

[5]They talked to each other about it. They said, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask, 'Why didn't you believe him?' [6]But if we say, 'From men,' all the people will throw stones at us and kill us. They believe that John was a prophet."

[7]So they answered Jesus, "We don't know where John's baptism came from."

[8]Jesus said, "Then I won't tell you by what authority I am doing these things either."

The Story of the Renters

[9]Jesus went on to tell the people a story. "A man planted a vineyard," he said. "He rented it out to some farmers. Then he went away for a long time.

[10]"At harvest time he sent a servant to the renters. They were supposed to give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the renters beat the servant. Then they sent him away with nothing. [11]So the man sent another servant. They beat that one and treated him badly. They also sent him away with nothing. [12]The man sent a third servant. The renters wounded him and threw him out.

[13]"Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What should I do? I have a son, and I love him. I will send him. Maybe they will respect him.'

14 “But when the renters saw the son, they talked the matter over. ‘This is the
one who will receive all the owner’s property someday,’ they said. ‘Let’s kill
him. Then everything will be ours.’ 15 So they threw him out of the vineyard.
And they killed him.

“What will the owner of the vineyard do to the renters? 16 He will come and
kill them. He will give the vineyard to others.”

When the people heard this, they said, “We hope this never happens!”

17 Jesus looked right at them and said, “Here is something I want you to
explain the meaning of. It is written,

> “ ‘The stone the builders didn’t accept
> has become the most important stone of all.’ (Psalm 118:22)

18 Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces. But the stone will
crush anyone it falls on.”

19 The teachers of the law and the chief priests looked for a way to arrest
Jesus at once. They knew he had told that story against them. But they were
afraid of the people.

Is It Right to Pay Taxes to Caesar?

20 The religious leaders sent spies to keep a close watch on Jesus. The spies
pretended to be honest. They hoped they could trap Jesus with something he
would say. Then they could hand him over to the power and authority of the
governor.

21 So the spies questioned Jesus. “Teacher,” they said, “we know that you
speak and teach what is right. We know you don’t favor one person over
another. You teach the way of God truthfully. 22 Is it right for us to pay taxes to
Caesar or not?”

23 Jesus saw they were trying to trick him. So he said to them, 24 “Show me a
silver coin. Whose picture and words are on it?”

25 “Caesar’s,” they replied.

He said to them, “Then give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar. And give to God what belongs to God.”

[26]They were not able to trap him with what he had said there in front of all the people. Amazed by his answer, they became silent.

Marriage When the Dead Rise

[27]The Sadducees do not believe that people rise from the dead. Some of them came to Jesus with a question. [28]“Teacher,” they said, “Moses wrote for us about a man’s brother who dies. Suppose the brother leaves a wife but has no children. Then the man must get married to the widow. He must have children to carry on his dead brother’s name.

[29]“There were seven brothers. The first one got married to a woman. He died without leaving any children. [30]The second one got married to her. [31]And then the third one got married to her. One after another, the seven brothers got married to her. They all died. None left any children. [32]Finally, the woman died too. [33]Now then, when the dead rise, whose wife will she be? All seven brothers were married to her.”

[34]Jesus replied, “People in this world get married. And their parents give them to get married. [35]But it will not be like that when the dead rise. Those who are considered worthy to take part in what happens at that time won’t get married. And their parents won’t give them to be married. [36]They can’t die anymore. They are like the angels. They are God’s children. They will be given a new form of life when the dead rise.

[37]“Remember the story of Moses and the bush. Even Moses showed that the dead rise. The Lord said to him, ‘I am the God of Abraham. I am the God of Isaac. And I am the God of Jacob.’(Exodus 3:6) [38]He is not the God of the dead. He is the God of the living. In his eyes, everyone is alive.”

[39]Some of the teachers of the law replied, “You have spoken well, teacher!” [40]And no one dared to ask him any more questions.

Whose Son Is the Christ?

41 Jesus said to them, “Why do people say that the Christ is the Son of David?
42 David himself says in the Book of Psalms,

“ ‘The Lord said to my Lord,
“Sit at my right hand
43 until I put your enemies
under your control.” ’ (Psalm 110:1)

44 David calls him ‘Lord.’ So how can he be David’s son?”

45 All the people were listening. Jesus said to his disciples, 46 “Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in long robes. They love to be greeted in the market places. They love to have the most important seats in the synagogues. They also love to have the places of honor at dinners. 47 They take over the houses of widows. They say long prayers to show off. God will punish those men very much.”

The Widow's Offering

Luke 21

1As Jesus looked up, he saw rich people putting their gifts into the temple
offering boxes. 2He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins.

3"What I'm about to tell you is true," Jesus said. "That poor widow has put in
more than all the others. 4All of those other people gave a lot because they are
rich. But even though she is poor, she put in everything. She had nothing left to
live on."

Signs of the End

5Some of Jesus' disciples were talking about the temple. They spoke about
how it was decorated with beautiful stones and with gifts that honored God.
But Jesus asked, 6"Do you see all this? The time will come when not one stone
will be left on top of another. Every stone will be thrown down."

7"Teacher," they asked, "when will these things happen? And what will be
the sign that they are about to take place?"

8Jesus replied, "Keep watch! Be careful that you are not fooled. Many will
come in my name. They will claim, 'I am he!' And they will say, 'The time is
near!' Do not follow them. 9Do not be afraid when you hear about wars and
about fighting against rulers. Those things must happen first. But the end will
not come right away."

10Then Jesus said to them, "Nation will fight against nation. Kingdom will
fight against kingdom. 11In many places there will be powerful earthquakes.
People will go hungry. There will be terrible sicknesses. Things will happen
that will make people afraid. There will be great and miraculous signs from
heaven.

12"But before all this, people will arrest you and treat you badly. They will
hand you over to synagogues and prisons. You will be brought to kings and

governors. All this will happen to you because of my name. [13]In that way you will be witnesses to them. [14]But make up your mind not to worry ahead of time about how to stand up for yourselves. [15]I will give you words of wisdom. None of your enemies will be able to withstand them or oppose them.

[16]"Even your parents, brothers, sisters, relatives and friends will hand you over to the authorities. They will put some of you to death. [17]Everyone will hate you because of me. [18]But not a hair on your head will be harmed. [19]If you stand firm, you will gain life.

[20]"A time is coming when you will see armies surround Jerusalem. Then you will know that it will soon be destroyed. [21]Those who are in Judea should then escape to the mountains. Those in the city should get out. Those in the country should not enter the city. [22]This is the time when God will punish Jerusalem. Everything will come true, just as it has been written.

[23]"How awful it will be in those days for pregnant women! How awful for nursing mothers! There will be terrible suffering in the land. There will be great anger against those people. [24]Some will be killed by the sword. Others will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be overrun by those who aren't Jews until the times of the non-Jews come to an end.

[25]"There will be miraculous signs in the sun, moon and stars. The nations of the earth will be in terrible pain. They will be puzzled by the roaring and tossing of the sea. [26]Terror will make people faint. They will be worried about what is happening in the world. The sun, moon and stars will be shaken from their places.

[27]"At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud. He will come with power and great glory. [28]When these things begin to take place, stand up. Hold your head up with joy and hope. The time when you will be set free will be very close."

[29]Jesus told them a story. "Look at the fig tree and all the trees," he said. [30]"When you see leaves appear on the branches, you know that summer is near. [31]In the same way, when you see these things happening, you will know that God's kingdom is near.

[32]"What I'm about to tell you is true. The people living at that time will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. [33]Heaven and earth will pass away. But my words will never pass away.

34“Be careful. If you aren’t, your hearts will be loaded down with wasteful
living, drunkenness and the worries of life. Then the day the Son of Man
returns will close on you like a trap. You will not be expecting it. 35That day
will come upon every person who lives on the whole earth.

36“Always keep watching. Pray that you will be able to escape all that is
about to happen. Also, pray that you will not be judged guilty when the Son of
Man comes.”

37Each day Jesus taught at the temple. And each evening he went to spend the
night on the hill called the Mount of Olives. 38All the people came to the
temple early in the morning. They wanted to hear Jesus speak.

Judas Agrees to Hand Jesus Over

Luke 22

1 The Feast of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover, was near. 2 The chief
priests and the teachers of the law were looking for a way to get rid of Jesus.
They were afraid of the people.

3 Then Satan entered Judas, who was called Iscariot. Judas was one of the
Twelve. 4 He went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard. He
talked with them about how he could hand Jesus over to them. 5 They were
delighted and agreed to give him money.

6 Judas accepted their offer. He watched for the right time to hand Jesus over
to them. He wanted to do it when no crowd was around.

The Last Supper

7 Then the day of Unleavened Bread came. That was the time the Passover
lamb had to be sacrificed. 8 Jesus sent Peter and John on ahead. “Go,” he told
them. “Prepare for us to eat the Passover meal.”

9 “Where do you want us to prepare for it?” they asked.

10 Jesus replied, “When you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will
meet you. Follow him to the house he enters. 11 Then say to the owner of the
house, ‘The Teacher asks, “Where is the guest room? Where can I eat the
Passover meal with my disciples?” ’ 12 He will show you a large upstairs room
with furniture in it. Prepare for us to eat there.”

13 Peter and John left. They found things just as Jesus had told them. So they
prepared the Passover meal.

14 When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles took their places at the table.
15 He said to them, “I have really looked forward to eating this Passover meal
with you. I wanted to do this before I suffer. 16 I tell you, I will not eat the
Passover meal again until it is celebrated in God’s kingdom.”

17After Jesus took the cup, he gave thanks. He said, “Take this cup and share
it among yourselves. 18I tell you, I will not drink wine with you again until
God’s kingdom comes.”

19Then Jesus took bread. He gave thanks and broke it. He handed it to them
and said, “This is my body. It is given for you. Every time you eat it, do it in
memory of me.”

20In the same way, after the supper he took the cup. He said, “This cup is the
new covenant in my blood. It is poured out for you. 21But someone here is
going to hand me over to my enemies. His hand is with mine on the table.
22The Son of Man will go to his death, just as God has already decided. But
how terrible it will be for the one who hands him over!”

23The apostles began to ask each other about this. They wondered which one
of them would do it.

24They also started to argue. They disagreed about which of them was
thought to be the most important person.

25Jesus said to them, “The kings of the nations hold power over their people.
And those who order them around call themselves Protectors. 26But you must
not be like that. Instead, the most important among you should be like the
youngest. The one who rules should be like the one who serves.

27“Who is more important? Is it the one at the table, or the one who serves?
Isn’t it the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.
28You have stood by me during my troubles. 29And I give you a kingdom, just
as my Father gave me a kingdom. 30Then you will eat and drink at my table in
my kingdom. And you will sit on thrones, judging the 12 tribes of Israel.

31“Simon, Simon! Satan has asked to sift you disciples like wheat. 32But I
have prayed for you, Simon. I have prayed that your faith will not fail. When
you have turned back, help your brothers to be strong.”

33But Simon replied, “Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to
death.”

34Jesus answered, “I tell you, Peter, you will say three times that you don’t
know me. And you will do it before the rooster crows today.”

35Then Jesus asked the disciples, “Did you need anything when I sent you
without a purse, bag or sandals?”

“Nothing,” they answered.

[36]He said to them, “But now if you have a purse, take it. And also take a bag. If you don’t have a sword, sell your coat and buy one. [37]It is written, ‘He was counted among those who had committed crimes.’(Isaiah 53:12) I tell you that what is written about me must come true. Yes, it is already coming true.”

[38]The disciples said, “See, Lord, here are two swords.”

“That is enough,” he replied.

Jesus Prays on the Mount of Olives

[39]Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives. His disciples followed him. [40]When they reached the place, Jesus spoke. “Pray that you won’t fall into sin when you are tempted,” he said to them.

[41]Then he went a short distance away from them. There he got down on his knees and prayed. [42]He said, “Father, if you are willing, take this cup of suffering away from me. But do what you want, not what I want.”

[43]An angel from heaven appeared to Jesus and gave him strength. [44]Because he was very sad and troubled, he prayed even harder. His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

[45]After that, he got up from prayer and went back to the disciples. He found them sleeping. They were worn out because they were very sad.

[46]“Why are you sleeping?” he asked them. “Get up! Pray that you won’t fall into sin when you are tempted.”

Jesus Is Arrested

[47]While Jesus was still speaking, a crowd came up. The man named Judas was leading them. He was one of the Twelve. Judas approached Jesus to kiss him.

[48]But Jesus asked him, “Judas, are you handing over the Son of Man with a kiss?”

[49]Jesus’ followers saw what was going to happen. So they said, “Lord, should we use our swords against them?” [50]One of them struck the servant of the high

priest and cut off his right ear.

51But Jesus answered, “Stop this!” And he touched the man’s ear and healed him.

52Then Jesus spoke to the chief priests, the officers of the temple guard, and the elders. They had all come for him. “Am I leading a band of armed men against you?” he asked. “Do you have to come with swords and clubs? 53Every day I was with you in the temple courtyard. And you didn’t lay a hand on me. But this is your hour. This is when darkness rules.”

Peter Says He Does Not Know Jesus

54Then the men arrested Jesus and led him away. They took him into the high priest’s house. Peter followed from far away. 55They started a fire in the middle of the courtyard. Then they sat down together. Peter sat down with them.

56A female servant saw him sitting there in the firelight. She looked closely at him. Then she said, “This man was with Jesus.”

57But Peter said he had not been with him. “Woman, I don’t know him,” he said.

58A little later someone else saw Peter. “You also are one of them,” he said.

“No,” Peter replied. “I’m not!”

59About an hour later, another person spoke up. “This fellow must have been with Jesus,” he said. “He is from Galilee.”

60Peter replied, “Man, I don’t know what you’re talking about!”

Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. 61The Lord turned and looked right at Peter. Then Peter remembered what the Lord had spoken to him. “The rooster will crow today,” Jesus had said. “Before it does, you will say three times that you don’t know me.” 62Peter went outside. He broke down and sobbed.

The Guards Make Fun of Jesus

63There were men guarding Jesus. They began laughing at him and beating

him. [64]They blindfolded him. They said, “Prophesy! Who hit you?” [65]They also said many other things to make fun of him.

Jesus Is Brought to Pilate and Herod

[66]At dawn the elders of the people met together. These included the chief priests and the teachers of the law. Jesus was led to them. [67]“If you are the Christ,” they said, “tell us.”

Jesus answered, “If I tell you, you will not believe me. [68]And if I asked you, you would not answer. [69]But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God.”

[70]They all asked, “Are you the Son of God then?”

He replied, “You are right in saying that I am.”

[71]Then they said, “Why do we need any more witnesses? We have heard it from his own lips.”

Luke 23

[1]Then the whole group got up and led Jesus off to Pilate. [2]They began to bring charges against Jesus. They said, “We have found this man misleading our people. He is against paying taxes to Caesar. And he claims to be Christ, a king.”

[3]So Pilate asked Jesus, “Are you the king of the Jews?”

“Yes. It is just as you say,” Jesus replied.

[4]Then Pilate spoke to the chief priests and the crowd. He announced, “I find no basis for a charge against this man.”

[5]But they kept it up. They said, “His teaching stirs up the people all over Judea. He started in Galilee and has come all the way here.”

[6]When Pilate heard this, he asked if the man was from Galilee. [7]He learned that Jesus was from Herod’s area of authority. So Pilate sent Jesus to Herod. At that time Herod was also in Jerusalem.

[8]When Herod saw Jesus, he was very pleased. He had been wanting to see Jesus for a long time. He had heard much about him. He hoped to see Jesus do a miracle.

[9]Herod asked him many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer. [10]The chief priests and the teachers of the law were standing there. With loud shouts they brought charges against him.

[11]Herod and his soldiers laughed at him and made fun of him. They dressed him in a beautiful robe. Then they sent him back to Pilate. [12]That day Herod and Pilate became friends. Before this time they had been enemies.

[13]Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers and the people. [14]He said to them, “You brought me this man. You said he was turning the people against the authorities. I have questioned him in front of you. I have found no basis for your charges against him. [15]Herod hasn’t either. So he sent Jesus back to us. As you can see, Jesus has done nothing that is worthy of death. [16]/17So I will just have him whipped and let him go.”

[18]With one voice the crowd cried out, “Kill this man! Give Barabbas to us!” [19]Barabbas had been thrown into prison. He had taken part in a struggle in the

city against the authorities. He had also committed murder.

[20]Pilate wanted to let Jesus go. So he made an appeal to the crowd again. [21]But they kept shouting, “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

[22]Pilate spoke to them for the third time. “Why?” he asked. “What wrong has this man done? I have found no reason to have him put to death. So I will just have him whipped and let him go.”

[23]But with loud shouts they kept calling for Jesus to be crucified. The people’s shouts won out.

[24]So Pilate decided to give them what they wanted. [25]He set free the man they asked for. The man had been thrown in prison for murder and for fighting against the authorities. Pilate gave Jesus over to them so they could carry out their plans.

Jesus Is Nailed to a Cross

[26]As they led Jesus away, they took hold of Simon. Simon was from Cyrene. He was on his way in from the country. They put a wooden cross on his shoulders. Then they made him carry it behind Jesus.

[27]A large number of people followed Jesus. Some were women whose hearts were filled with sorrow. They cried loudly because of him.

[28]Jesus turned and said to them, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not cry for me. Cry for yourselves and for your children. [29]The time will come when you will say, ‘Blessed are the women who can’t have children! Blessed are those who never gave birth or nursed babies!’ [30]It is written,

> “ ‘The people will say to the mountains, “Fall on us!”
> They’ll say to the hills, “Cover us!” ’ (Hosea 10:8)

[31]People do these things when trees are green. So what will happen when trees are dry?”

[32]Two other men were also led out with Jesus to be killed. Both of them had broken the law. [33]The soldiers brought them to the place called The Skull.

There they nailed Jesus to the cross. He hung between the two criminals. One was on his right and one was on his left.

34Jesus said, “Father, forgive them. They don’t know what they are doing.”
The soldiers divided up his clothes by casting lots.

35The people stood there watching. The rulers even made fun of Jesus. They said, “He saved others. Let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One.”

36The soldiers also came up and poked fun at him. They offered him wine vinegar. 37They said, “If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.”

38A written sign had been placed above him. It read, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

39One of the criminals hanging there made fun of Jesus. He said, “Aren’t you the Christ? Save yourself! Save us!”

40But the other criminal scolded him. “Don’t you have any respect for God?” he said. “Remember, you are under the same sentence of death. 41We are being punished fairly. We are getting just what our actions call for. But this man hasn’t done anything wrong.”

42Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

43Jesus answered him, “What I’m about to tell you is true. Today you will be with me in paradise.”

Jesus Dies

44It was now about noon. The whole land was covered with darkness until three o’clock. 45The sun had stopped shining. The temple curtain was torn in two. 46Jesus called out in a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my very life.” After he said this, he took his last breath.

47The Roman commander saw what had happened. He praised God and said, “Jesus was surely a man who did what was right.”

48The people had gathered to watch that sight. When they saw what happened, they beat their chests and went away. 49But all those who knew Jesus stood not very far away, watching those things. They included the women who had followed him from Galilee.

Jesus Is Buried

50 A man named Joseph was a member of the Jewish Council. He was a good
and honest man. 51 He had not agreed with what the leaders had decided and
done. He was from Arimathea, a town in Judea. He was waiting for God's
kingdom.

52 Joseph went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. 53 He took it down and
wrapped it in linen cloth. Then he put it in a tomb cut in the rock. No one had
ever been buried there. 54 It was Preparation Day. The Sabbath was about to
begin.

55 The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph. They
saw the tomb and how Jesus' body was placed in it. 56 Then they went home.
There they prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath day
in order to obey the Law.

Jesus Rises From the Dead

Luke 24

[1]It was very early in the morning on the first day of the week. The women took the spices they had prepared. Then they went to the tomb. [2]They found the stone rolled away from it. [3]When they entered the tomb, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. [4]They were wondering about this.

Suddenly two men in clothes as bright as lightning stood beside them. [5]The women were terrified. They bowed down with their faces to the ground.

Then the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? [6]Jesus is not here! He has risen! Remember how he told you he would rise. It was while he was still with you in Galilee. [7]He said, ‘The Son of Man must be handed over to sinful people. He must be nailed to a cross. On the third day he will rise from the dead.’ ”

[8]Then the women remembered Jesus’ words.

[9]They came back from the tomb. They told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. [10]Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them were the ones who told the apostles. [11]But the apostles did not believe the women. Their words didn’t make any sense to them.

[12]But Peter got up and ran to the tomb. He bent over and saw the strips of linen lying by themselves. Then he went away, wondering what had happened.

On the Road to Emmaus

[13]That same day two of Jesus’ followers were going to a village called Emmaus. It was about seven miles from Jerusalem. [14]They were talking with each other about everything that had happened.

[15]As they talked about those things, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them. [16]But God kept them from recognizing him.

[17]Jesus asked them, “What are you talking about as you walk along?”

They stood still, and their faces were sad. [18]One of them was named Cleopas. He said to Jesus, “You must be a visitor to Jerusalem. If you lived there, you would know the things that have happened there in the last few days.”

[19]“What things?” Jesus asked.

“About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “He was a prophet. He was powerful in what he said and did in the eyes of God and all of the people. [20]The chief priests and our rulers handed Jesus over to be sentenced to death. They nailed him to a cross. [21]But we had hoped that he was the one who was going to set Israel free. Also, it is the third day since all this happened.

[22]“Some of our women amazed us too. Early this morning they went to the tomb. [23]But they didn’t find his body. So they came and told us what they had seen. They saw angels, who said Jesus was alive. [24]Then some of our friends went to the tomb. They saw it was empty, just as the women had said. They didn’t see Jesus’ body there.”

[25]Jesus said to them, “How foolish you are! How long it takes you to believe all that the prophets said! [26]Didn’t the Christ have to suffer these things and then receive his glory?”

[27]Jesus explained to them what was said about himself in all the Scriptures. He began with Moses and all the Prophets.

[28]The two men approached the village where they were going. Jesus acted as if he were going farther. [29]But they tried hard to keep him from leaving. They said, “Stay with us. It is nearly evening. The day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them.

[30]He joined them at the table. Then he took bread and gave thanks. He broke it and began to give it to them. [31]Their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. But then he disappeared from their sight.

[32]They said to each other, “He talked with us on the road. He opened the Scriptures to us. Weren’t our hearts burning inside us during that time?”

[33]They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them. They were all gathered together. [34]They were saying, “It’s true! The Lord has risen! He has appeared to Simon!”

[35]Then the two of them told what had happened to them on the way. They

told how they had recognized Jesus when he broke the bread.

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

36 The disciples were still talking about this when Jesus himself suddenly
stood among them. He said, “May peace be with you!”

37 They were surprised and terrified. They thought they were seeing a ghost.

38 Jesus said to them, “Why are you troubled? Why do you have doubts in
your minds? 39 Look at my hands and my feet. It is really I! Touch me and see.
A ghost does not have a body or bones. But you can see that I do.”

40 After he said that, he showed them his hands and feet. 41 But they still did
not believe it. They were amazed and filled with joy.

So Jesus asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?”

42 They gave him a piece of cooked fish. 43 He took it and ate it in front of
them.

44 Jesus said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you.
Everything written about me must happen. Everything written about me in the
Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms must come true.”

45 Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. 46 He
told them, “This is what is written. The Christ will suffer. He will rise from the
dead on the third day. 47 His followers will preach in his name. They will tell
others to turn away from their sins and be forgiven. People from every nation
will hear it, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 You have seen these things with your
own eyes.

49 “I am going to send you what my Father has promised. But for now, stay in
the city. Stay there until you have received power from heaven.”

Jesus Is Taken Up Into Heaven

50 Jesus led his disciples out to the area near Bethany. Then he lifted up his
hands and blessed them. 51 While he was blessing them, he left them. He was
taken up into heaven.

[52]Then they worshiped him. With great joy, they returned to Jerusalem.
[53]Every day they went to the temple, praising God.

John

John 1
John 2
John 3
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John 21

The Word Became Human

John 1

[1]In the beginning, the Word was already there. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2]He was with God in the beginning.

[3]All things were made through him. Nothing that has been made was made without him. [4]Life was in him, and that life was the light for all people. [5]The light shines in the darkness. But the darkness has not understood it.

[6]A man came who was sent from God. His name was John. [7]He came to give witness about that light. He gave witness so that all people could believe.

[8]John himself was not the light. He came only as a witness to the light. [9]The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

[10]The Word was in the world that was made through him. But the world did not recognize him. [11]He came to what was his own. But his own people did not accept him.

[12]Some people did accept him. They believed in his name. He gave them the right to become children of God. [13]To be a child of God has nothing to do with human parents. Children of God are not born because of human choice or because a husband wants them to be born. They are born because of what God does.

[14]The Word became a human being. He made his home with us. We have seen his glory. It is the glory of the one and only Son.

He came from the Father. And he was full of grace and truth.

[15]John gives witness about him. He cries out and says, “This was the one I was talking about. I said, ‘He who comes after me is more important than I am. He is more important because he existed before I was born.’ ”

[16]We have all received one blessing after another. God’s grace is not limited. [17]Moses gave us the law. Jesus Christ has given us grace and truth.

[18]No one has ever seen God. But God, the one and only Son, is at the Father’s side. He has shown us what God is like.

John the Baptist Is Not the Christ

19The Jews of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask John who he was.
John gave witness to them. 20He did not try to hide the truth. He spoke to them
openly. He said, “I am not the Christ.”

21They asked him, “Then who are you? Are you Elijah?”

He said, “I am not.”

“Are you the Prophet we’ve been expecting?” they asked.

“No,” he answered.

22They asked one last time, “Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to
those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?”

23John replied, using the words of Isaiah the prophet. John said, “I’m the
messenger who is calling out in the desert, ‘Make the way for the Lord
straight.’ ”(Isaiah 40:3)

24Some Pharisees who had been sent 25asked him, “If you are not the Christ,
why are you baptizing people? Why are you doing that if you aren’t Elijah or
the Prophet we’ve been expecting?”

26“I baptize people with water,” John replied. “But One is standing among
you whom you do not know. 27He is the One who comes after me. I am not
good enough to untie his sandals.”

28This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan River. That
was where John was baptizing.

Jesus Is the Lamb of God

29The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him. John said, “Look! The
Lamb of God! He takes away the sin of the world! 30This is the One I was
talking about. I said, ‘A man who comes after me is more important than I am.
That’s because he existed before I was born.’ 31I did not know him. But God
wants to make it clear to Israel who this person is. That’s the reason I came
baptizing with water.”

32Then John told them, “I saw the Holy Spirit come down from heaven like a

dove. The Spirit remained on Jesus. [33]I would not have known him. But the One who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘You will see the Spirit come down and remain on someone. He is the One who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ [34]I have seen it happen. I give witness that this is the Son of God.”

Jesus Chooses the First Disciples

[35]The next day John was again with two of his disciples. [36]He saw Jesus walking by. John said, “Look! The Lamb of God!”

[37]The two disciples heard him say this. So they followed Jesus.

[38]Then Jesus turned around and saw them following. He asked, “What do you want?”

They said, “Rabbi, where are you staying?” *Rabbi* means Teacher.

[39]“Come,” he replied. “You will see.”

So they went and saw where he was staying. They spent the rest of the day with him. It was about four o’clock in the afternoon.

[40]Andrew was Simon Peter’s brother. Andrew was one of the two disciples who heard what John had said. He had also followed Jesus. [41]The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon. He told him, “We have found the Messiah.” Messiah means Christ. [42]And he brought Simon to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon, son of John. You will be called Cephas.” Cephas means Peter (or rock).

Jesus Chooses Philip and Nathanael

[43]The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Follow me.”

[44]Philip was from the town of Bethsaida. So were Andrew and Peter. [45]Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the One that Moses wrote about in the Law. The prophets also wrote about him. He is Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

[46]“Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked.

“Come and see,” said Philip.

47Jesus saw Nathanael approaching. Here is what Jesus said about him. “He is a true Israelite. There is nothing false in him.”

48“How do you know me?” Nathanael asked.

Jesus answered, “I saw you while you were still under the fig tree. I saw you there before Philip called you.”

49Nathanael replied, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God. You are the King of Israel.”

50Jesus said, “You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that.”

51Then he said to the disciples, “What I’m about to tell you is true. You will see heaven open. You will see the angels of God going up and coming down on the Son of Man.”

Jesus Changes Water Into Wine

John 2

1 On the third day there was a wedding. It took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus’
mother was there. 2 Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the
wedding. 3 When the wine was gone, Jesus’ mother said to him, “They have no
more wine.”

4 “Dear woman, why do you bring me into this?” Jesus replied. “My time has
not yet come.”

5 His mother said to the servants, “Do what he tells you.”

6 Six stone water jars stood nearby. The Jews used water from that kind of jar
for special washings to make themselves pure. Each jar could hold 20 to 30
gallons.

7 Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water.” So they filled them to
the top.

8 Then he told them, “Now dip some out. Take it to the person in charge of the
dinner.”

They did what he said. 9 The person in charge tasted the water that had been
turned into wine. He didn’t realize where it had come from. But the servants
who had brought the water knew.

Then the person in charge called the groom to one side. 10 He said to him,
“Everyone brings out the best wine first. They bring out the cheaper wine after
the guests have had too much to drink. But you have saved the best until now.”

11 That was the first of Jesus’ miraculous signs. He did it at Cana in Galilee.
Jesus showed his glory by doing it. And his disciples put their faith in him.

Jesus Clears Out the Temple

12 After this, Jesus went down to Capernaum. His mother and brothers and
disciples went with him. They all stayed there for a few days.

[13]It was almost time for the Jewish Passover Feast. So Jesus went up to Jerusalem. [14]In the temple courtyard he found people who were selling cattle, sheep and doves. Others were sitting at tables exchanging money.

[15]So Jesus made a whip out of ropes. He chased all the sheep and cattle from the temple area. He scattered the coins of the people exchanging money. And he turned over their tables. [16]He told those who were selling doves, “Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father’s house into a market!”

[17]His disciples remembered what had been written. It says, “My great love for your house will destroy me.”(Psalm 69:9)

[18]Then the Jews asked him, “What miraculous sign can you show us? Can you prove your authority to do all of this?”

[19]Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple. I will raise it up again in three days.”

[20]The Jews replied, “It has taken 46 years to build this temple. Are you going to raise it up in three days?”

[21]But the temple Jesus had spoken about was his body.

[22]His disciples later remembered what he had said. That was after he had been raised from the dead. Then they believed the Scriptures. They also believed the words that Jesus had spoken.

[23]Meanwhile, he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast. Many people saw the miraculous signs he was doing. And they believed in his name. [24]But Jesus did not fully trust them. He knew what people are like. [25]He didn’t need others to tell him what people are like. He already knew what was in the human heart.

Jesus Teaches Nicodemus

John 3

[1]There was a Pharisee named Nicodemus. He was one of the Jewish rulers. [2]He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. We know that God is with you. If he weren’t, you couldn’t do the miraculous signs you are doing.”

[3]Jesus replied, “What I’m about to tell you is true. No one can see God’s kingdom without being born again.”

[4]“How can I be born when I am old?” Nicodemus asked. “I can’t go back inside my mother! I can’t be born a second time!”

[5]Jesus answered, “What I’m about to tell you is true. No one can enter God’s kingdom without being born through water and the Holy Spirit. [6]People give birth to people. But the Spirit gives birth to spirit. [7]You should not be surprised when I say, ‘You must all be born again.’

[8]“The wind blows where it wants to. You hear the sound it makes. But you can’t tell where it comes from or where it is going. It is the same with everyone who is born through the Spirit.”

[9]“How can this be?” Nicodemus asked.

[10]“You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus. “Don’t you understand these things?

[11]“What I’m about to tell you is true. We speak about what we know. We give witness to what we have seen. But still you people do not accept our witness. [12]I have spoken to you about earthly things, and you do not believe. So how will you believe if I speak about heavenly things?

[13]“No one has ever gone into heaven except the One who came from heaven. He is the Son of Man. [14]Moses lifted up the snake in the desert. The Son of Man must be lifted up also. [15]Then everyone who believes in him can live with God forever.

[16]“God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life.

17“God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world. He sent his
Son to save the world through him. 18Anyone who believes in him is not
judged. But anyone who does not believe is judged already. He has not
believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.

19“Here is the judgment. Light has come into the world, but people loved
darkness instead of light. They loved darkness because what they did was evil.

20“Everyone who does evil things hates the light. They will not come into the
light. They are afraid that what they do will be seen. 21But anyone who lives by
the truth comes into the light. He does this so that it will be easy to see that
what he has done is with God’s help.”

John the Baptist Gives Witness About Jesus

22After this, Jesus and his disciples went out into the countryside of Judea.
There he spent some time with them. And he baptized people there.

23John was also baptizing. He was at Aenon near Salim, where there was
plenty of water. People were coming all the time to be baptized. 24That was
before John was put in prison.

25Some of John’s disciples and a certain Jew began to argue. They argued
about special washings to make people “clean.” 26They came to John and said
to him, “Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan
River is baptizing people. He is the one you gave witness about. Everyone is
going to him.”

27John replied, “A person can receive only what God gives him from heaven.
28You yourselves are witnesses that I said, ‘I am not the Christ. I was sent
ahead of him.’ 29The bride belongs to the groom. The friend who helps the
groom waits and listens for him. He is full of joy when he hears the groom’s
voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. 30He must become more
important. I must become less important.

31“The One who comes from above is above everything. The one who is from
the earth belongs to the earth and speaks like someone from the earth. The One
who comes from heaven is above everything. 32He gives witness to what he
has seen and heard. But no one accepts what he says. 33Anyone who has

accepted it has said, ‘Yes. God is truthful.’ [34]The One whom God has sent
speaks God’s words. God gives the Holy Spirit without limit.

[35]“The Father loves the Son and has put everything into his hands. [36]Anyone
who believes in the Son has eternal life. Anyone who says no to the Son will
not have life. God’s anger remains on him.”

Jesus Talks With a Woman From Samaria

John 4

[1]The Pharisees heard that Jesus was winning and baptizing more disciples
than John. [2]But in fact Jesus was not baptizing. His disciples were. [3]When the
Lord found out about all this, he left Judea. He went back to Galilee again.

[4]Jesus had to go through Samaria. [5]He came to a town in Samaria called
Sychar. It was near the piece of land Jacob had given his son Joseph. [6]Jacob's
well was there. Jesus was tired from the journey. So he sat down by the well. It
was about noon.

[7]A woman from Samaria came to get some water. Jesus said to her, "Will you
give me a drink?" [8]His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.

[9]The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew. I am a Samaritan
woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" She said this because Jews don't
have anything to do with Samaritans.

[10]Jesus answered her, "You do not know what God's gift is. And you do not
know who is asking you for a drink. If you did, you would have asked him. He
would have given you living water."

[11]"Sir," the woman said, "you don't have anything to get water with. The well
is deep. Where can you get this living water?

[12]"Our father Jacob gave us the well. He drank from it himself. So did his
sons and his flocks and herds. Are you more important than he is?"

[13]Jesus answered, "All who drink this water will be thirsty again. [14]But
anyone who drinks the water I give him will never be thirsty. In fact, the water
I give him will become a spring of water in him. It will flow up into eternal
life."

[15]The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water. Then I will never be
thirsty. And I won't have to keep coming here to get water."

[16]He told her, "Go. Get your husband and come back."

[17]"I have no husband," she replied.

Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. 18The fact is, you have had five husbands. And the man you have now is not your husband. What you have just said is very true.”

19“Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. 20Our people have worshiped on this mountain for a long time. But you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”

21Jesus said, “Believe me, woman. A time is coming when you will not worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. 22You Samaritans worship what you do not know. We worship what we do know. Salvation comes from the Jews.

23“But a new time is coming. In fact, it is already here. True worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. They are the kind of worshipers the Father is looking for.

24“God is spirit. His worshipers must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

25The woman said, “I know that Messiah is coming.” (He is called Christ.) “When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

26Then Jesus said, “I, the one speaking to you, am he.”

The Disciples Join Jesus Again

27Just then Jesus’ disciples returned. They were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want from her?” No one asked, “Why are you talking with her?”

28The woman left her water jar and went back to the town. She said to the people, 29“Come. See a man who told me everything I’ve ever done. Could this be the Christ?”

30The people came out of the town and made their way toward Jesus.

31His disciples were saying to him, “Rabbi, eat something!”

32But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.”

33Then his disciples asked each other, “Did someone bring him food?”

34Jesus said, “My food is to do what my Father sent me to do. My food is to finish his work.

35“You say, ‘Four months more, and then it will be harvest time.’ But I tell
you, open your eyes! Look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest right now.
36Those who gather the crop are already getting paid. They are already
harvesting the crop for eternal life. So those who plant and those who gather
can now be glad together.

37“Here is a true saying. ‘One plants and another gathers.’ 38I sent you to
gather what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work. You
have gathered the benefits of their work.”

Many Samaritans Believe in Jesus

39Many of the Samaritans from the town of Sychar believed in Jesus. They
believed because of the woman’s witness. She said, “He told me everything
I’ve ever done.”

40Then the Samaritans came to him and tried to get him to stay with them. So
he stayed two days. 41Because of his words, many more people became
believers.

42They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you
said. We have now heard for ourselves. We know that this man really is the
Savior of the world.”

Jesus Heals the Official’s Son

43After the two days, Jesus left for Galilee. 44He himself had pointed out that
a prophet is not respected in his own country. 45When he arrived in Galilee, the
people living there welcomed him. They had seen everything he had done in
Jerusalem at the Passover Feast. That was because they had also been there.

46Once more, Jesus visited Cana in Galilee. Cana is where he had turned the
water into wine. A royal official was there. His son was sick in bed at
Capernaum. 47The official heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea.
So he went to Jesus and begged him to come and heal his son. The boy was
close to death.

48Jesus told him, “You people will never believe unless you see miraculous

signs and wonders.”

49The royal official said, “Sir, come down before my child dies.”

50Jesus replied, “You may go. Your son will live.”

The man believed what Jesus said, and so he left. 51While he was still on his way home, his servants met him. They gave him the news that his boy was living. 52He asked what time his son got better. They said to him, “The fever left him yesterday afternoon at one o’clock.”

53Then the father realized what had happened. That was the exact time Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live.” So he and all his family became believers.

54This was the second miraculous sign that Jesus did after coming from Judea to Galilee.

Jesus Heals a Disabled Man

John 5

[1]Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for a Jewish feast. [2]In Jerusalem
near the Sheep Gate is a pool. In the Aramaic language it is called Bethesda. It
is surrounded by five rows of columns with a roof over them. [3]/4Here a great
number of disabled people used to lie down. Among them were those who
were blind, those who could not walk, and those who could hardly move.

[5]One person who was there had been disabled for 38 years. [6]Jesus saw him
lying there. He knew that the man had been in that condition for a long time.
So he asked him, “Do you want to get well?”

[7]“Sir,” the disabled man replied, “I have no one to help me into the pool
when an angel stirs the water up. I try to get in, but someone else always goes
down ahead of me.”

[8]Then Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.”

[9]At once the man was healed. He picked up his mat and walked.

The day this happened was a Sabbath. [10]So the Jews said to the man who had
been healed, “It is the Sabbath. The law does not allow you to carry your mat.”

[11]But he replied, “The one who made me well said to me, ‘Pick up your mat
and walk.’ ”

[12]They asked him, “Who is this fellow? Who told you to pick it up and
walk?”

[13]The one who was healed had no idea who it was. Jesus had slipped away
into the crowd that was there.

[14]Later Jesus found him at the temple. Jesus said to him, “See, you are well
again. Stop sinning, or something worse may happen to you.” [15]The man went
away. He told the Jews it was Jesus who had made him well.

Life Because of the Son

16 Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath day. So the Jews began to
oppose him.

17 Jesus said to them, “My Father is always doing his work. He is working
right up to this very day. I am working too.”

18 For this reason the Jews tried even harder to kill him. Jesus was not only
breaking the Sabbath. He was even calling God his own Father. He was making
himself equal with God.

19 Jesus answered, “What I’m about to tell you is true. The Son can do
nothing by himself. He can do only what he sees his Father doing. What the
Father does, the Son also does. 20 This is because the Father loves the Son. He
shows him everything he does. Yes, you will be amazed! The Father will show
him even greater things than these.

21 “The Father raises the dead and gives them life. In the same way, the Son
gives life to anyone he wants to.

22 “Also, the Father does not judge anyone. He has given the Son the task of
judging. 23 Then all people will honor the Son just as they honor the Father.
Those who do not honor the Son do not honor the Father, who sent him.

24 “What I’m about to tell you is true. Anyone who hears my word and
believes him who sent me has eternal life. He will not be found guilty. He has
crossed over from death to life.

25 “What I’m about to tell you is true. A time is coming for me to give life. In
fact, it has already begun. The dead will hear the voice of the Son of God.
Those who hear it will live.

26 “The Father has life in himself. He has also allowed the Son to have life in
himself. 27 And the Father has given him the authority to judge. This is because
he is the Son of Man.

28 “Do not be amazed at this. A time is coming when all who are in the grave
will hear his voice. 29 They will all come out of their graves. Those who have
done good will rise and live again. Those who have done evil will rise and be
found guilty.

30 “I can do nothing by myself. I judge only as I hear. And my judging is fair.
I do not try to please myself. I try only to please the One who sent me.

Giving Witness About Jesus

31 "If I give witness about myself, it doesn't count. 32 There is someone else
who gives witness in my favor. And I know that his witness about me counts.

33 "You have sent people to John. He has given witness to the truth. 34 I do not
accept human witness. I only talk about it so you can be saved. 35 John was like
a lamp that burned and gave light. For a while you chose to enjoy his light.

36 "The witness I have is more important than John's. I am doing the very
work the Father gave me to finish. It gives witness that the Father has sent me.

37 "The Father who sent me has himself given witness about me. You have
never heard his voice. You have never seen what he really looks like. 38 And his
word does not live in you. This is because you do not believe the One he sent.

39 "You study the Scriptures carefully. You study them because you think they
will give you eternal life. The Scriptures you study give witness about me.
40 But you refuse to come to me and receive life.

41 "I do not accept praise from people. 42 But I know you. I know that you do
not have love for God in your hearts. 43 I have come in my Father's name, and
you do not accept me. But if someone else comes in his own name, you will
accept him.

44 "You accept praise from one another. But you make no effort to receive the
praise that comes from the only God. So how can you believe?

45 "Do not think I will bring charges against you in front of the Father. Moses
is the one who does that. And he is the one you build your hopes on.

46 "Do you believe Moses? Then you should believe me. He wrote about me.
47 But you do not believe what he wrote. So how are you going to believe what
I say?"

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

John 6

1 Some time after this, Jesus crossed over to the other side of the Sea of
Galilee. It is also called the Sea of Tiberias. 2 A large crowd of people followed
him. They had seen the miraculous signs he had done on those who were sick.

3 Then Jesus went up on a mountainside. There he sat down with his disciples.
4 The Jewish Passover Feast was near.

5 Jesus looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him. So he said to
Philip, “Where can we buy bread for these people to eat?” 6 He asked this only
to put Philip to the test. He already knew what he was going to do.

7 Philip answered him, “Eight months’ pay would not buy enough bread for
each one to have a bite!”

8 Another of his disciples spoke up. It was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother.
9 He said, “Here is a boy with five small loaves of barley bread. He also has
two small fish. But how far will that go in such a large crowd?”

10 Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” There was plenty of grass in that
place, and they sat down. The number of men among them was about 5,000.

11 Then Jesus took the loaves and gave thanks. He handed out the bread to
those who were seated. He gave them as much as they wanted. And he did the
same with the fish.

12 When all of them had enough to eat, Jesus spoke to his disciples. “Gather
the leftover pieces,” he said. “Don’t waste anything.”

13 So they gathered what was left over from the five barley loaves. They filled
12 baskets with the pieces left by those who had eaten.

14 The people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus did. Then they began to say,
“This must be the Prophet who is supposed to come into the world.” 15 But
Jesus knew that they planned to come and force him to be their king. So he
went away again to a mountain by himself.

Jesus Walks on the Water

16When evening came, Jesus' disciples went down to the Sea of Galilee.
17There they got into a boat and headed across the lake toward Capernaum. By
now it was dark. Jesus had not yet joined them.

18A strong wind was blowing, and the water became rough. 19They rowed
three or three and a half miles. Then they saw Jesus coming toward the boat.
He was walking on the water. They were terrified.

20But he said to them, "It is I. Don't be afraid."

21Then they agreed to take him into the boat. Right away the boat reached the
shore where they were heading.

22The next day the crowd that had stayed on the other side of the lake
realized something. They saw that only one boat had been there. They knew
that Jesus had not gotten into it with his disciples. And they knew that the
disciples had gone away alone.

23Then some boats from Tiberias landed. It was near the place where the
people had eaten the bread after the Lord gave thanks. 24The crowd realized
that Jesus and his disciples were not there. So they got into boats and went to
Capernaum to look for Jesus.

Jesus Is the Bread of Life

25They found him on the other side of the lake. They asked him, "Rabbi,
when did you get here?"

26Jesus answered, "What I'm about to tell you is true. You are not looking for
me because you saw miraculous signs. You are looking for me because you ate
the loaves until you were full. 27Do not work for food that spoils. Work for
food that lasts forever. That is the food the Son of Man will give you. God the
Father has put his seal of approval on him."

28Then they asked him, "What does God want from us? What works does he
want us to do?"

29Jesus answered, "God's work is to believe in the One he has sent."

30So they asked him, "What miraculous sign will you give us? What will you

do so we can see it and believe you? [31]Long ago our people ate the manna in the desert. It is written in Scripture, ‘The Lord gave them bread from heaven to eat.’ ”(Exodus 16:4; Nehemiah 9:15; Psalm 78:24, 25)

[32]Jesus said to them, “What I’m about to tell you is true. It is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven. It is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. [33]The bread of God is the One who comes down from heaven. He gives life to the world.”

[34]“Sir,” they said, “give us this bread from now on.”

[35]Then Jesus said, “I am the bread of life. No one who comes to me will ever go hungry. And no one who believes in me will ever be thirsty.

[36]“But it is just as I told you. You have seen me, and you still do not believe. [37]Everyone the Father gives me will come to me. I will never send away anyone who comes to me.

[38]“I have not come down from heaven to do what I want to do. I have come to do what the One who sent me wants me to do. [39]The One who sent me doesn’t want me to lose anyone he has given me. He wants me to raise them up on the last day. [40]My Father wants all who look to the Son and believe in him to have eternal life. I will raise them up on the last day.”

[41]Then the Jews began to complain about Jesus. That was because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” [42]They said, “Isn’t this Jesus, the son of Joseph? Don’t we know his father and mother? How can he now say, ‘I came down from heaven’?”

[43]“Stop complaining among yourselves,” Jesus answered. [44]“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me brings him. Then I will raise him up on the last day.

[45]“It is written in the Prophets, ‘God will teach all of them.’(Isaiah 54:13) Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me.

[46]“No one has seen the Father except the One who has come from God. Only he has seen the Father. [47]What I’m about to tell you is true. Everyone who believes has life forever.

[48]“I am the bread of life. [49]Long ago your people ate the manna in the desert, and they still died. [50]But here is the bread that comes down from heaven. A person can eat it and not die. [51]I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Everyone who eats some of this bread will live forever. The bread is

my body. I will give it for the life of the world.”

52Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves. They said, “How
can this man give us his body to eat?”

53Jesus said to them, “What I’m about to tell you is true. You must eat the
Son of Man’s body and drink his blood. If you don’t, you have no life in you.
54Anyone who eats my body and drinks my blood has eternal life. I will raise
him up on the last day.

55“My body is real food. My blood is real drink. 56Anyone who eats my body
and drinks my blood remains in me. And I remain in him.

57“The living Father sent me, and I live because of him. In the same way,
those who feed on me will live because of me. 58This is the bread that came
down from heaven. Long ago your people ate manna and died. But those who
feed on this bread will live forever.”

59He said this while he was teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

Many Disciples Leave Jesus

60Jesus’ disciples heard this. Many of them said, “This is a hard teaching.
Who can accept it?”

61Jesus was aware that his disciples were complaining about his teaching. So
he said to them, “Does this upset you? 62What if you see the Son of Man go up
to where he was before? 63The Holy Spirit gives life. The body means nothing
at all. The words I have spoken to you are from the Spirit. They give life. 64But
there are some of you who do not believe.”

Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe. And he
had known who was going to hand him over to his enemies. 65So he continued
speaking. He said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless
the Father helps him.”

66From this time on, many of his disciples turned back. They no longer
followed him.

67“You don’t want to leave also, do you?” Jesus asked the Twelve.

68Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, who can we go to? You have the words
of eternal life. 69We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”

[70]Then Jesus replied, “Didn’t I choose you, the 12 disciples? But one of you
is a devil!” [71]He meant Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. Judas was one of the
Twelve. But later he was going to hand Jesus over to his enemies.

Jesus Goes to the Feast of Booths

John 7

[1]After this, Jesus went around in Galilee. He stayed away from Judea on purpose. He knew that the Jews there were waiting to kill him.

[2]The Jewish Feast of Booths was near. [3]Jesus' brothers said to him, "You should leave here and go to Judea. Then your disciples will see the kinds of things you do. [4]No one who wants to be well known does things in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world." [5]Even Jesus' own brothers did not believe in him.

[6]So Jesus told them, "The right time has not yet come for me. For you, any time is right. [7]The people of the world can't hate you. But they hate me. This is because I give witness that what they do is evil.

[8]"You go to the Feast. I am not yet going up to this Feast. For me, the right time has not yet come."

[9]After he said this, he stayed in Galilee.

[10]When his brothers had left for the Feast, he went also. But he went secretly, not openly. [11]At the Feast the Jews were watching for him. They were asking, "Where is he?"

[12]Many people in the crowd were whispering about him. Some said, "He is a good man."

Others replied, "No. He fools the people."

[13]But no one would say anything about him openly. They were afraid of the Jews.

Jesus Teaches at the Feast

[14]Jesus did nothing until halfway through the Feast. Then he went up to the temple courtyard and began to teach. [15]The Jews were amazed. They asked,

“How did this man learn so much without studying?”

16Jesus answered, “What I teach is not my own. It comes from the One who
sent me. 17Anyone who chooses to do what God wants him to do will find out
whether my teaching comes from God or from me. 18Someone who speaks on
his own does it to get honor for himself. But someone who works for the honor
of the One who sent him is truthful. There is nothing false about him.

19“Didn’t Moses give you the law? But not one of you keeps the law. Why
are you trying to kill me?”

20“You are controlled by demons,” the crowd answered. “Who is trying to kill
you?”

21Jesus said to them, “I did one miracle, and you are all amazed. 22Moses
gave you circumcision, and so you circumcise a child on the Sabbath day. But
circumcision did not really come from Moses. It came from Abraham. 23You
circumcise a child on the Sabbath day. You think that if you do, you won’t
break the law of Moses. Then why are you angry with me? I healed a whole
man on the Sabbath!

24“Stop judging only by what you see. Judge correctly.”

Is Jesus the Christ?

25Then some of the people of Jerusalem began asking questions. They said,
“Isn’t this the man some people are trying to kill? 26Here he is! He is speaking
openly. They aren’t saying a word to him. Have the authorities really decided
that he is the Christ? 27But we know where this man is from. When the Christ
comes, no one will know where he is from.”

28Jesus was still teaching in the temple courtyard. He cried out, “Yes, you
know me. And you know where I am from. I am not here on my own. The One
who sent me is true. You do not know him. 29But I know him. I am from him,
and he sent me.”

30When he said this, they tried to arrest him. But no one laid a hand on him.
His time had not yet come.

31Still, many people in the crowd put their faith in him. They said, “How will
it be when the Christ comes? Will he do more miraculous signs than this man?”

[32]The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering things like this about him. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple guards to arrest him.

[33]Jesus said, “I am with you for only a short time. Then I will go to the One who sent me. [34]You will look for me, but you won’t find me. You can’t come where I am going.”

[35]The Jews said to one another, “Where does this man plan to go? Does he think we can’t find him? Will he go where our people live scattered among the Greeks? Will he go there to teach the Greeks? [36]What did he mean when he said, ‘You will look for me, but you won’t find me’? And, ‘You can’t come where I am going’?”

[37]It was the last and most important day of the Feast. Jesus stood up and spoke in a loud voice. He said, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. [38]Does anyone believe in me? Then, just as Scripture says, streams of living water will flow from inside him.”

[39]When he said this, he meant the Holy Spirit. Those who believed in Jesus would receive the Spirit later. Up to that time, the Spirit had not been given. This was because Jesus had not yet received glory.

[40]When some of the people heard his words, they said, “This man must be the Prophet we’ve been expecting.”

[41]Others said, “He is the Christ.”

Still others asked, “How can the Christ come from Galilee? [42]Doesn’t Scripture say that the Christ will come from David’s family? Doesn’t it say that he will come from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?”

[43]So the people did not agree about who Jesus was. [44]Some wanted to arrest him. But no one laid a hand on him.

The Jewish Leaders Do Not Believe

[45]Finally the temple guards went back to the chief priests and the Pharisees. They asked the guards, “Why didn’t you bring him in?”

[46]“No one ever spoke the way this man does,” the guards replied.

[47]“You mean he has fooled you also?” the Pharisees asked. [48]“Have any of the rulers or Pharisees believed in him? [49]No! But this mob knows nothing

about the law. There is a curse on them.”

50Then Nicodemus, a Pharisee, spoke. He was the one who had gone to Jesus earlier. He asked, 51“Does our law find someone guilty without hearing him first? Doesn’t it want to find out what he is doing?”

52They replied, “Are you from Galilee too? Look into it. You will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee.”

53Then each of them went home.

John 8

[1]But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. [2]At sunrise he arrived in the temple courtyard again. All the people gathered around him there. He sat down to teach them.

[3]The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman. She had been caught in adultery. They made her stand in front of the group. [4]They said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught having sex with a man who was not her husband. [5]In the Law, Moses commanded us to kill such women by throwing stones at them. Now what do you say?” [6]They were trying to trap Jesus with that question. They wanted to have a reason to bring charges against him.

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger.

[7]They kept asking him questions. So he stood up and said to them, “Has any one of you not sinned? Then you be the first to throw a stone at her.”

[8]He bent down again and wrote on the ground.

[9]Those who heard what he had said began to go away. They left one at a time, the older ones first. Soon only Jesus was left. The woman was still standing there.

[10]Jesus stood up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Hasn’t anyone found you guilty?”

[11]“No one, sir,” she said.

“Then I don’t find you guilty either,” Jesus said. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”

Jesus’ Witness Is True

[12]Jesus spoke to the people again. He said, “I am the light of the world. Those who follow me will never walk in darkness. They will have the light that leads

to life.”

13The Pharisees argued with him. “Here you are,” they said, “appearing as your own witness. But your witness does not count.”

14Jesus answered, “Even if I give witness about myself, my witness does count. I know where I came from. And I know where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going. 15You judge by human standards. I don’t judge anyone.

16“But if I do judge, what I decide is right. This is because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. 17Your own Law says that the witness of two is what counts. 18I give witness about myself. My other witness is the Father, who sent me.”

19Then they asked him, “Where is your father?”

“You do not know me or my Father,” Jesus replied. “If you knew me, you would know my Father also.”

20He spoke these words while he was teaching in the temple area. He was near the place where the offerings were put. But no one arrested him. His time had not yet come.

21Once more Jesus spoke to them. “I am going away,” he said. “You will look for me, and you will die in your sin. You can’t come where I am going.”

22This made the Jews ask, “Will he kill himself? Is that why he says, ‘You can’t come where I am going’?”

23But Jesus said, “You are from below. I am from heaven. You are from this world. I am not from this world. 24I told you that you would die in your sins. Do you believe that I am the one I claim to be? If you don’t, you will certainly die in your sins.”

25“Who are you?” they asked.

“Just what I have been claiming all along,” Jesus replied. 26“I have a lot to say that will judge you. But the One who sent me can be trusted. And I tell the world what I have heard from him.”

27They did not understand that Jesus was telling them about his Father. 28So Jesus said, “You will lift up the Son of Man. Then you will know that I am the one I claim to be. You will also know that I do nothing on my own. I speak just what the Father has taught me. 29The One who sent me is with me. He has not

left me alone, because I always do what pleases him.”

30Even while Jesus was speaking, many people put their faith in him.

The Children of Abraham

31Jesus spoke to the Jews who had believed him. “If you obey my teaching,” he said, “you are really my disciples. 32Then you will know the truth. And the truth will set you free.”

33They answered him, “We are Abraham’s children. We have never been slaves of anyone. So how can you say that we will be set free?”

34Jesus replied, “What I’m about to tell you is true. Everyone who sins is a slave of sin. 35A slave has no lasting place in the family. But a son belongs to the family forever. 36So if the Son of Man sets you free, you will really be free.

37“I know you are Abraham’s children. But you are ready to kill me. You have no room for my word. 38I am telling you what I saw when I was with my Father. You do what you have heard from your father.”

39“Abraham is our father,” they answered.

Jesus said, “Are you really Abraham’s children? If you are, you will do the things Abraham did. 40But you have decided to kill me. I am a man who has told you the truth I heard from God. Abraham didn’t do the things you want to do. 41You are doing the things your own father does.”

“We are not children of people who weren’t married to each other,” they objected. “The only Father we have is God himself.”

The Children of the Devil

42Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me. I came from God, and now I am here. I have not come on my own. He sent me.

43“Why aren’t my words clear to you? Because you can’t really hear what I say. 44You belong to your father, the devil. You want to obey your father’s wishes.

“From the beginning, the devil was a murderer. He has never obeyed the

truth. There is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his natural language. He does this because he is a liar. He is the father of lies.

45“But because I tell the truth, you don’t believe me! 46Can any of you prove I am guilty of sinning? Am I not telling the truth? Then why don’t you believe me?

47“Everyone who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you don’t hear is that you don’t belong to God.”

Jesus Makes Claims About Himself

48The Jews answered Jesus, “Aren’t we right when we say you are a Samaritan? Aren’t you controlled by a demon?”

49“I am not controlled by a demon,” said Jesus. “I honor my Father. You do not honor me. 50I am not seeking glory for myself. But there is One who brings glory to me. He is the judge. 51What I’m about to tell you is true. Anyone who obeys my word will never die.”

52Then the Jews cried out, “Now we know you are controlled by a demon! Abraham died. So did the prophets. But you say that anyone who obeys your word will never die. 53Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died. So did the prophets. Who do you think you are?”

54Jesus replied, “If I bring glory to myself, my glory means nothing. You claim that my Father is your God. He is the one who brings glory to me. 55You do not know him. But I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you. But I do know him. And I obey his word.

56“Your father Abraham was filled with joy at the thought of seeing my day. He saw it and was glad.”

57“You are not even 50 years old,” the Jews said to Jesus. “And you have seen Abraham?”

58“What I’m about to tell you is true,” Jesus answered. “Before Abraham was born, I am!”

59When he said this, they picked up stones to kill him. But Jesus hid himself. He slipped away from the temple area.

Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind

John 9

[1]As Jesus went along, he saw a man who was blind. He had been blind since
he was born. [2]Jesus' disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned? Was this man
born blind because he sinned? Or did his parents sin?"

[3]"It isn't because this man sinned," said Jesus. "It isn't because his parents
sinned. This happened so that God's work could be shown in his life. [4]While it
is still day, we must do the work of the One who sent me. Night is coming.
Then no one can work. [5]While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

[6]After he said this, he spit on the ground. He made some mud with the spit.
Then he put the mud on the man's eyes.

[7]"Go," he told him. "Wash in the Pool of Siloam." Siloam means Sent.

So the man went and washed. And he came home able to see.

[8]His neighbors and those who had earlier seen him begging asked questions.
"Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?" they asked.

[9]Some claimed that he was.

Others said, "No. He only looks like him."

But the man who had been blind kept saying, "I am the man."

[10]"Then how were your eyes opened?" they asked.

[11]He replied, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my
eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed. Then I
could see."

[12]"Where is this man?" they asked him.

"I don't know," he said.

The Pharisees Want to Know What Happened

[13]They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. [14]The day Jesus made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. [15]So the Pharisees also asked him how he was able to see.

"He put mud on my eyes," the man replied. "Then I washed. And now I can see."

[16]Some of the Pharisees said, "Jesus has not come from God. He does not keep the Sabbath day."

But others asked, "How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?"

So the Pharisees did not agree with each other.

[17]Finally they turned again to the blind man. "What do you have to say about him?" they asked. "It was your eyes he opened."

The man replied, "He is a prophet."

[18]The Jews still did not believe that the man had been blind and now could see. So they sent for his parents. [19]"Is this your son?" they asked. "Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?"

[20]"We know he is our son," the parents answered. "And we know he was born blind. [21]But we don't know how he can now see. And we don't know who opened his eyes. Ask him. He is an adult. He can speak for himself."

[22]His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews. The Jews had already decided that anyone who said Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue. [23]That was why the man's parents said, "He is an adult. Ask him."

[24]Again they called the man who had been blind to come to them. "Give glory to God by telling the truth!" they said. "We know that the man who healed you is a sinner."

[25]He replied, "I don't know if he is a sinner or not. I do know one thing. I was blind, but now I can see!"

[26]Then they asked him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"

[27]He answered, "I have already told you. But you didn't listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?"

[28]Then they began to attack him with their words. "You are this fellow's disciple!" they said. "We are disciples of Moses! [29]We know that God spoke to

Moses. But we don’t even know where this fellow comes from.”

30The man answered, “That is really surprising! You don’t know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. 31We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to godly people who do what he wants them to do. 32Nobody has ever heard of anyone opening the eyes of a person born blind. 33If this man had not come from God, he could do nothing.”

34Then the Pharisees replied, “When you were born, you were already deep in sin. How dare you talk like that to us!” And they threw him out of the synagogue.

The Blind Will See

35Jesus heard that the Pharisees had thrown the man out. When he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”

36“Who is he, sir?” the man asked. “Tell me, so I can believe in him.”

37Jesus said, “You have now seen him. In fact, he is the one speaking with you.”

38Then the man said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him.

39Jesus said, “I have come into this world to judge it. I have come so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind.”

40Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this. They asked, “What? Are we blind too?”

41Jesus said, “If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin. But since you claim you can see, you remain guilty.

The Shepherd and the Flock

John 10

1 “What I’m about to tell you is true. What if someone does not enter the
sheep pen through the gate but climbs in another way? That person is a thief
and a robber. 2 The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the
sheep. 3 The gatekeeper opens the gate for him. The sheep listen to his voice.
He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought all
of his own sheep out, he goes on ahead of them. His sheep follow him because
they know his voice. 5 But they will never follow a stranger. In fact, they will
run away from him. They don’t recognize a stranger’s voice.”

6 Jesus used this story. But the Jews who were there didn’t understand what he
was telling them.

7 So Jesus said again, “What I’m about to tell you is true. I am like a gate for
the sheep. 8 All those who ever came before me were thieves and robbers. But
the sheep did not listen to them. 9 I’m like a gate. Anyone who enters through
me will be saved. He will come in and go out. And he will find plenty of food.
10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so they can
have life. I want them to have it in the fullest possible way.

11 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep.
12 The hired man is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when the hired
man sees the wolf coming, he leaves the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf
attacks the flock and scatters it. 13 The man runs away because he is a hired
man. He does not care about the sheep.

14 “I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep, and my sheep know me. 15 They
know me just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I give my
life for the sheep.

16 “I have other sheep that do not belong to this sheep pen. I must bring them
in too. They also will listen to my voice. Then there will be one flock and one
shepherd.

17 “The reason my Father loves me is that I give up my life. But I will take it

back again. [18]No one takes it from me. I give it up myself. I have the authority to give it up. And I have the authority to take it back again. I received this command from my Father.”

[19]After Jesus spoke these words, the Jews again could not agree with each other. [20]Many of them said, “He is controlled by a demon. He has gone crazy! Why should we listen to him?”

[21]But others said, “A person controlled by a demon does not say things like this. Can a demon open the eyes of someone who is blind?”

The Jews Do Not Believe

[22]Then came the Feast of Hanukkah at Jerusalem. It was winter. [23]Jesus was in the temple area walking in Solomon’s Porch. [24]The Jews gathered around him. They said, “How long will you keep us waiting? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.”

[25]Jesus answered, “I did tell you. But you do not believe. The kinds of things I do in my Father’s name speak for me. [26]But you do not believe, because you are not my sheep.

[27]“My sheep listen to my voice. I know them, and they follow me. [28]I give them eternal life, and they will never die. No one can steal them out of my hand. [29]My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than anyone. No one can steal them out of my Father’s hand. [30]I and the Father are one.”

[31]Again the Jews picked up stones to kill him.

[32]But Jesus said to them, “I have shown you many miracles from the Father. Which one of these are you throwing stones at me for?”

[33]“We are not throwing stones at you for any of these,” replied the Jews. “We are stoning you for saying a very evil thing. You are only a man. But you claim to be God.”

[34]Jesus answered them, “Didn’t God say in your Law, ‘I have said you are gods’?(Psalm 82:6) [35]We know that Scripture is always true. God spoke to some people and called them ‘gods.’ [36]If that is true, what about the One the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world? Why do you charge me with saying a very evil thing? Is it because I said, ‘I am God’s Son’?

[37]“Don’t believe me unless I do what my Father does. [38]But what if I do it? Even if you don’t believe me, believe the miracles. Then you will know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.”

[39]Again they tried to arrest him. But he escaped from them.

[40]Then Jesus went back across the Jordan River. He went to the place where John had been baptizing in the early days. There he stayed. [41]Many people came to him. They said, “John never did a miraculous sign. But everything he said about this man was true.” [42]And in that place many believed in Jesus.

Lazarus Dies

John 11

1 A man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village where
Mary and her sister Martha lived. 2 Mary would later pour perfume on the Lord.
She would also wipe his feet with her hair. Her brother Lazarus was sick in
bed. 3 So the sisters sent a message to Jesus. “Lord,” they told him, “the one
you love is sick.”

4 When Jesus heard this, he said, “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is
for God’s glory. God’s Son will receive glory because of it.”

5 Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. 6 But after he heard Lazarus
was sick, he stayed where he was for two more days.

7 Then he said to his disciples, “Let us go back to Judea.”

8 “But Rabbi,” they said, “a short time ago the Jews tried to kill you with
stones. Are you still going back there?”

9 Jesus answered, “Aren’t there 12 hours of daylight? A person who walks
during the day won’t trip and fall. He can see because of this world’s light.
10 But when he walks at night, he’ll trip and fall. He has no light.”

11 After he said this, Jesus went on speaking to them. “Our friend Lazarus has
fallen asleep,” he said. “But I am going there to wake him up.”

12 His disciples replied, “Lord, if he’s sleeping, he will get better.”

13 Jesus had been speaking about the death of Lazarus. But his disciples
thought he meant natural sleep.

14 So then he told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. 15 For your benefit, I am glad
I was not there. Now you will believe. But let us go to him.”

16 Then Thomas, who was called Didymus, spoke to the rest of the disciples.
“Let us go also,” he said. “Then we can die with Jesus.”

Jesus Comforts the Sisters

[17]When Jesus arrived, he found out that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. [18]Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem. [19]Many Jews had come to Martha and Mary. They had come to comfort them because their brother was dead.

[20]When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him. But Mary stayed at home.

[21]"Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "I wish you had been here! Then my brother would not have died. [22]But I know that even now God will give you anything you ask for."

[23]Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

[24]Martha answered, "I know he will rise again. This will happen when people are raised from the dead on the last day."

[25]Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even if he dies. [26]And those who live and believe in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

[27]"Yes, Lord," she told him. "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God. I believe that you are the One who was supposed to come into the world."

[28]After she said this, she went back home. She called her sister Mary to one side to talk to her. "The Teacher is here," Martha said. "He is asking for you."

[29]When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. [30]Jesus had not yet entered the village. He was still at the place where Martha had met him. [31]Some Jews had been comforting Mary in the house. They noticed how quickly she got up and went out. So they followed her. They thought she was going to the tomb to cry there.

[32]Mary reached the place where Jesus was. When she saw him, she fell at his feet. She said, "Lord, I wish you had been here! Then my brother would not have died."

[33]Jesus saw her crying. He saw that the Jews who had come along with her were crying also. His spirit became very sad, and he was troubled.

[34]"Where have you put him?" he asked.

"Come and see, Lord," they replied.

[35]Jesus sobbed.

[36]Then the Jews said, "See how much he loved him!"

37But some of them said, “He opened the eyes of the blind man. Couldn’t he have kept this man from dying?”

Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead

38Once more Jesus felt very sad. He came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone in front of the entrance.

39“Take away the stone,” he said.

“But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad smell. Lazarus has been in the tomb for four days.”

40Then Jesus said, “Didn’t I tell you that if you believed, you would see God’s glory?”

41So they took away the stone.

Then Jesus looked up. He said, “Father, I thank you for hearing me. 42I know that you always hear me. But I said this for the benefit of the people standing here. I said it so they will believe that you sent me.”

43Then Jesus called in a loud voice. He said, “Lazarus, come out!”

44The dead man came out. His hands and feet were wrapped with strips of linen. A cloth was around his face.

Jesus said to them, “Take off the clothes he was buried in and let him go.”

The Plan to Kill Jesus

45Many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary saw what Jesus did. So they put their faith in him.

46But some of them went to the Pharisees. They told the Pharisees what Jesus had done. 47Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin.

“What can we do?” they asked. “This man is doing many miraculous signs. 48If we let him keep on doing this, everyone will believe in him. Then the Romans will come. They will take away our temple and our nation.”

49One of them spoke up. His name was Caiaphas. He was high priest at that

time. He said, “You don’t know anything at all! [50]You don’t realize what is good for you. It is better if one man dies for the people than if the whole nation is destroyed.”

[51]He did not say this on his own. But he was high priest at that time. So he told ahead of time that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation. [52]He also prophesied that Jesus would die for God’s children scattered everywhere. He would die to bring them together and make them one.

[53]So from that day on, the Jewish rulers planned to kill Jesus.

[54]Jesus no longer moved around openly among the Jews. Instead, he went away to an area near the desert. He went to a village called Ephraim. There he stayed with his disciples.

[55]It was almost time for the Jewish Passover Feast. Many people went up from the country to Jerusalem. They went there for the special washing that would make them pure before the Passover Feast. [56]They kept looking for Jesus as they stood in the temple area. They asked one another, “What do you think? Isn’t he coming to the Feast at all?”

[57]But the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders. They had commanded anyone who found out where Jesus was staying to report it. Then they could arrest him.

Mary Pours Perfume on Jesus

John 12

[1]It was six days before the Passover Feast. Jesus arrived at Bethany, where Lazarus lived. Lazarus was the one Jesus had raised from the dead. [2]A dinner was given at Bethany to honor Jesus. Martha served the food. Lazarus was among those at the table with Jesus.

[3]Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard. It was an expensive perfume. She poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the sweet smell of the perfume.

[4]But Judas Iscariot didn't like what Mary did. He was one of Jesus' disciples. Later he was going to hand Jesus over to his enemies. Judas said, [5]"Why wasn't this perfume sold? Why wasn't the money given to poor people? It was worth a year's pay."

[6]He didn't say this because he cared about the poor. He said it because he was a thief. Judas was in charge of the money bag. He used to help himself to what was in it.

[7]"Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "The perfume was meant for the day I am buried. [8]You will always have the poor among you. But you won't always have me."

[9]Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there, so they came. But they did not come only because of Jesus. They also came to see Lazarus. After all, Jesus had raised him from the dead.

[10]So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus too. [11]Because of Lazarus, many of the Jews were starting to follow Jesus. They were putting their faith in him.

Jesus Enters Jerusalem

[12]The next day the large crowd that had come for the Feast heard that Jesus

was on his way to Jerusalem. [13]So they took branches from palm trees and went out to meet him. They shouted,

> "Hosanna!"
>
> "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Psalm 118:25, 26)
>
> "Blessed is the King of Israel!"

[14]Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it. This is just as it is written in Scripture. It says,

> [15]"City of Zion, do not be afraid.
> See, your king is coming.
> He is sitting on a donkey's colt." (Zechariah 9:9)

[16]At first, Jesus' disciples did not understand all this. They realized it only after he had received glory. Then they realized that these things had been written about him. They realized that the people had done these things to him.

[17]A crowd had been with Jesus when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead. So they continued to tell everyone about what had happened. [18]Many people went out to meet him. They had heard that he had done this miraculous sign.

[19]So the Pharisees said to one another, "This isn't getting us anywhere. Look how the whole world is following him!"

Jesus Tells About His Coming Death

[20]There were some Greeks among the people who went up to worship during the Feast. [21]They came to ask Philip for a favor. Philip was from Bethsaida in Galilee.

"Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus."

[22]Philip went to tell Andrew. Then Andrew and Philip told Jesus.

[23]Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to receive glory. [24]What I’m about to tell you is true. Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only one seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.

[25]“Anyone who loves his life will lose it. But anyone who hates his life in this world will keep it and have eternal life. [26]Anyone who serves me must follow me. And where I am, my servant will also be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

[27]“My heart is troubled. What should I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No. This is the very reason I came to this hour. [28]Father, bring glory to your name!”

Then a voice came from heaven. It said, “I have brought glory to my name. I will bring glory to it again.”

[29]The crowd there heard the voice. Some said it was thunder. Others said an angel had spoken to Jesus.

[30]Jesus said, “This voice was for your benefit, not mine. [31]Now it is time for the world to be judged. Now the prince of this world will be thrown out. [32]But I am going to be lifted up from the earth. When I am, I will bring all people to myself.” [33]He said this to show them how he was going to die.

[34]The crowd spoke up. “The Law tells us that the Christ will remain forever,” they said. “So how can you say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is this ‘Son of Man’?”

[35]Then Jesus told them, “You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light. Do this before darkness catches up with you. Anyone who walks in the dark does not know where he is going. [36]While you have the light, put your trust in it. Then you can become sons of light.”

When Jesus had finished speaking, he left and hid from them.

The Jews Still Do Not Believe

[37]Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in front of them. But they still would not believe in him. [38]This happened as Isaiah the prophet had said it would. He had said,

“Lord, who has believed what we’ve been saying?
Who has seen the Lord’s saving power?” (Isaiah 53:1)

39For this reason, they could not believe. As Isaiah says in another place,

40“The Lord has blinded their eyes.
He has closed their minds.
So they can’t see with their eyes.
They can’t understand with their minds.
They can’t turn to the Lord. If they could, he would heal them.”
(Isaiah 6:10)

41Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus’ glory and spoke about him.

42At the same time that Jesus did those miracles, many of the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees, they would not admit they believed. They were afraid they would be thrown out of the synagogue. 43They loved praise from people more than praise from God.

44Then Jesus cried out, “Anyone who believes in me does not believe in me only. He also believes in the One who sent me. 45When he looks at me, he sees the One who sent me.

46“I have come into the world to be a light. No one who believes in me will stay in darkness.

47“I don’t judge a person who hears my words but does not obey them. I didn’t come to judge the world. I came to save it. 48But there is a judge for anyone who does not accept me and my words. The very words I have spoken will judge him on the last day.

49“I did not speak on my own. The Father who sent me commanded me what to say. He also told me how to say it. 50I know that his command leads to eternal life. So everything I say is just what the Father has told me to say.”

Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet

John 13

1It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for
him to leave this world. It was time for him to go to the Father. Jesus loved his
disciples who were in the world. So he now showed them how much he really
loved them.

2The evening meal was being served. The devil had already tempted Judas
Iscariot, son of Simon. He had told Judas to hand Jesus over to his enemies.
3Jesus knew that the Father had put everything under his power. He also knew
he had come from God and was returning to God.

4So he got up from the meal and took off his outer clothes. He wrapped a
towel around his waist. 5After that, he poured water into a large bowl. Then he
began to wash his disciples' feet. He dried them with the towel that was
wrapped around him.

6He came to Simon Peter.

"Lord," Peter said to him, "are you going to wash my feet?"

7Jesus replied, "You don't realize now what I am doing. But later you will
understand."

8"No," said Peter. "You will never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you can't share life with me."

9"Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet! Wash my hands and my head
too!"

10Jesus answered, "A person who has had a bath needs to wash only his feet.
The rest of his body is clean. And you are clean. But not all of you are."

11Jesus knew who was going to hand him over to his enemies. That was why
he said not every one was clean.

12When Jesus finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes. Then he
returned to his place.

"Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. 13"You call

me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord.’ You are right. That is what I am. 14I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet. So you also should wash one another’s feet. 15I have given you an example. You should do as I have done for you.

16“What I’m about to tell you is true. A servant is not more important than his master. And a messenger is not more important than the one who sends him. 17Now you know these things. So you will be blessed if you do them.

Jesus Tells What Judas Will Do

18“I am not talking about all of you. I know those I have chosen. But this will happen so that Scripture will come true. It says, ‘The one who shares my bread has deserted me.’(Psalm 41:9)

19“I am telling you now, before it happens. When it does happen, you will believe that I am he. 20What I’m about to tell you is true. Anyone who accepts someone I send accepts me. And anyone who accepts me accepts the One who sent me.”

21After he had said this, Jesus’ spirit was troubled. Here is the witness he gave. “What I’m about to tell you is true,” he said. “One of you is going to hand me over to my enemies.”

22His disciples stared at one another. They had no idea which one of them he meant. 23The disciple Jesus loved was next to him at the table. 24Simon Peter motioned to that disciple. He said, “Ask Jesus which one he means.”

25The disciple was leaning back against Jesus. He asked him, “Lord, who is it?”

26Jesus answered, “It is the one I will give this piece of bread to. I will give it to him after I have dipped it in the dish.”

He dipped the piece of bread. Then he gave it to Judas Iscariot, son of Simon. 27As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him.

“Do quickly what you are going to do,” Jesus told him.

28But no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him. 29Judas was in charge of the money. So some of the disciples thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the Feast. Others thought Jesus was talking about giving something to poor people.

30 As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night.

Jesus Says That Peter Will Fail

31 After Judas was gone, Jesus spoke. He said, “Now the Son of Man receives
glory. And he brings glory to God. 32 If the Son brings glory to God, God
himself will bring glory to the Son. God will do it at once.

33 “My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me.
Just as I told the Jews, so I am telling you now. You can’t come where I am
going.

34 “I give you a new command. Love one another. You must love one another,
just as I have loved you. 35 If you love one another, everyone will know you are
my disciples.”

36 Simon Peter asked him, “Lord, where are you going?”

Jesus replied, “Where I am going you can’t follow now. But you will follow
me later.”

37 “Lord,” Peter asked, “why can’t I follow you now? I will give my life for
you.”

38 Then Jesus answered, “Will you really give your life for me? What I’m
about to tell you is true. Before the rooster crows, you will say three times that
you don’t know me!

Jesus Comforts His Disciples

John 14

1 “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God. Trust in me also.

2 “There are many rooms in my Father’s house. If this were not true, I would
have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3 If I go and do that,
I will come back. And I will take you to be with me. Then you will also be
where I am.

4 “You know the way to the place where I am going.”

Jesus Is the Way to the Father

5 Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going. So how
can we know the way?”

6 Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to
the Father except through me. 7 If you really knew me, you would know my
Father also. From now on, you do know him. And you have seen him.”

8 Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father. That will be enough for us.”

9 Jesus answered, “Don’t you know me, Philip? I have been among you such a
long time! Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. So how can you say,
‘Show us the Father’?

10 “Don’t you believe that I am in the Father? Don’t you believe that the
Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. The Father lives
in me. He is the One who is doing his work. 11 Believe me when I say I am in
the Father. Also believe that the Father is in me. Or at least believe what the
miracles show about me.

12 “What I’m about to tell you is true. Anyone who has faith in me will do
what I have been doing. In fact, he will do even greater things. That is because
I am going to the Father.

13“And I will do anything you ask in my name. Then the Son will bring glory
to the Father. 14You may ask me for anything in my name. I will do it.

The Father Will Send the Holy Spirit

15“If you love me, you will obey what I command. 16I will ask the Father.
And he will give you another Friend to help you and to be with you forever.
17The Friend is the Spirit of truth. The world can’t accept him. That is because
the world does not see him or know him. But you know him. He lives with
you, and he will be in you.

18“I will not leave you like children who don’t have parents. I will come to
you.

19“Before long, the world will not see me anymore. But you will see me.
Because I live, you will live also. 20On that day you will realize that I am in my
Father. You will know that you are in me, and I am in you.

21“Anyone who has my commands and obeys them loves me. My Father will
love the one who loves me. I too will love him. And I will show myself to
him.”

22Then Judas spoke. “Lord,” he said, “why do you plan to show yourself only
to us? Why not also to the world?” The Judas who spoke those words was not
Judas Iscariot.

23Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father
will love him. We will come to him and make our home with him. 24Anyone
who does not love me will not obey my teaching. The words you hear me say
are not my own. They belong to the Father who sent me.

25“I have spoken all these things while I am still with you. 26But the Father
will send the Friend in my name to help you. The Friend is the Holy Spirit. He
will teach you all things. He will remind you of everything I have said to you.

27“I leave my peace with you. I give my peace to you. I do not give it to you
as the world does. Do not let your hearts be troubled. And do not be afraid.

28“You heard me say, ‘I am going away. And I am coming back to you.’ If
you loved me, you would be glad I am going to the Father. The Father is
greater than I am. 29I have told you now before it happens. Then when it does

happen, you will believe.

30“I will not speak with you much longer. The prince of this world is coming. He has no power over me. 31But the world must learn that I love the Father. They must also learn that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me to do.

“Come now. Let us leave.

The Vine and the Branches

John 15

1 “I am the true vine. My Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch
joined to me that does not bear fruit. He trims every branch that does bear fruit.
Then it will bear even more fruit.

3 “You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain
joined to me, and I will remain joined to you. No branch can bear fruit by
itself. It must remain joined to the vine. In the same way, you can’t bear fruit
unless you remain joined to me.

5 “I am the vine. You are the branches. If anyone remains joined to me, and I
to him, he will bear a lot of fruit. You can’t do anything without me. 6 If anyone
does not remain joined to me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and dries
up. Branches like those are picked up. They are thrown into the fire and
burned.

7 “If you remain joined to me and my words remain in you, ask for anything
you wish. And it will be given to you. 8 When you bear a lot of fruit, it brings
glory to my Father. It shows that you are my disciples.

9 “Just as the Father has loved me, I have loved you. Now remain in my love.
10 If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love. In the same way, I
have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love. 11 I have told you
this so that my joy will be in you. I also want your joy to be complete.

12 “Here is my command. Love each other, just as I have loved you. 13 No one
has greater love than the one who gives his life for his friends. 14 You are my
friends if you do what I command.

15 “I do not call you servants anymore. Servants do not know their master’s
business. Instead, I have called you friends. I have told you everything I
learned from my Father.

16 “You did not choose me. Instead, I chose you. I appointed you to go and
bear fruit. It is fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you anything you
ask for in my name.

17“Here is my command. Love each other.

The World Hates the Disciples

18“Does the world hate you? Remember that it hated me first. 19If you
belonged to the world, it would love you like one of its own. But you do not
belong to the world. I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world
hates you.

20“Remember the words I spoke to you. I said, ‘A servant is not more
important than his master.’(John 13:16) If people hated me and tried to hurt
me, they will do the same to you. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey
yours also. 21They will treat you like that because of my name. They do not
know the One who sent me.

22“If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. But
now they have no excuse for their sin. 23Those who hate me hate my Father
also.

24“I did miracles among them that no one else did. If I hadn’t, they would not
be guilty of sin. But now they have seen those miracles. And still they have
hated both me and my Father. 25This has happened so that what is written in
their Law would come true. It says, ‘They hated me without any
reason.’(Psalms 35:19; 69:4)

26“I will send the Friend to you from the Father. He is the Spirit of truth, who
comes out from the Father. When the Friend comes to help you, he will give
witness about me.

27“You also must give witness. This is because you have been with me from
the beginning.

John 16

1 “I have told you all of this so that you will not go down the wrong path.
2 You will be thrown out of the synagogue. In fact, a time is coming when those
who kill you will think they are doing God a favor. 3 They will do things like
that because they do not know the Father or me.

4 “Why have I told you this? So that when the time comes, you will remember
that I warned you. I didn’t tell you this at first because I was with you.

What the Holy Spirit Will Do

5 “Now I am going to the One who sent me. But none of you asks me, ‘Where
are you going?’ 6 Because I have said these things, you are filled with sadness.

7 “But what I’m about to tell you is true. It is for your good that I am going
away. Unless I go away, the Friend will not come to help you. But if I go, I will
send him to you. 8 When he comes, he will prove that the world’s people are
guilty. He will prove their guilt concerning sin and godliness and judgment.

9 “The world is guilty as far as sin is concerned. That is because people do not
believe in me. 10 The world is guilty as far as godliness is concerned. That is
because I am going to the Father, where you can’t see me anymore. 11 The
world is guilty as far as judgment is concerned. That is because the devil, the
prince of this world, has already been judged.

12 “I have much more to say to you. It is more than you can handle right now.
13 But when the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will
not speak on his own. He will speak only what he hears. And he will tell you
what is still going to happen.

14 “He will bring me glory by receiving something from me and showing it to
you. 15 Everything that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the
Holy Spirit will receive something from me and show it to you.

16 “In a little while, you will no longer see me. Then after a little while, you
will see me.”

The Disciples' Sadness Will Turn Into Joy

[17]Some of his disciples spoke to one another. They said, "What does he mean by saying, 'In a little while, you will no longer see me. Then after a little while, you will see me'? And what does he mean by saying, 'I am going to the Father'?" [18]They kept asking, "What does he mean by 'a little while'? We don't understand what he is saying."

[19]Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about those things. So he said to them, "Are you asking one another what I meant? Didn't you understand when I said, 'In a little while, you will no longer see me. Then after a little while, you will see me'? [20]What I'm about to tell you is true. You will cry and be full of sorrow while the world is full of joy. You will be sad, but your sadness will turn into joy.

[21]"A woman giving birth to a baby has pain. This is because her time to give birth has come. But when her baby is born, she forgets the pain. She forgets because she is so happy that a baby has been born into the world.

[22]"That's the way it is with you. Now it's your time to be sad. But I will see you again. Then you will be full of joy. And no one will take your joy away.

[23]"When that day comes, you will no longer ask me for anything. What I'm about to tell you is true. My Father will give you anything you ask for in my name. [24]Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask, and you will receive what you ask for. Then your joy will be complete.

[25]"I have not been speaking to you plainly. But a time is coming when I will speak clearly. Then I will tell you plainly about my Father. [26]When that day comes, you will ask for things in my name. I am not saying I will ask the Father instead of you asking him. [27]No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me. He also loves you because you have believed that I came from God.

[28]"I came from the Father and entered the world. Now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father."

[29]Then Jesus' disciples said, "Now you are speaking plainly. You are using examples that are clear. [30]Now we can see that you know everything. You don't even need anyone to ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God."

31“At last you believe!” Jesus said. 32“But a time is coming when you will be
scattered and go to your own homes. In fact, that time is already here. You will
leave me all alone. But I am not really alone. My Father is with me.

33“I have told you these things, so that you can have peace because of me. In
this world you will have trouble. But cheer up! I have won the battle over the
world.”

Jesus Prays for Himself

John 17

1 After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed. He said,

"Father, the time has come. Bring glory to your Son. Then your Son will
bring glory to you. 2 You gave him authority over all people. He gives eternal
life to all those you have given him.

3 "And what is eternal life? It is knowing you, the only true God, and Jesus
Christ, whom you have sent. 4 I have brought you glory on earth. I have
finished the work you gave me to do. 5 So now, Father, give glory to me in
heaven where your throne is. Give me the glory I had with you before the
world began.

Jesus Prays for His Disciples

6 "I have shown you to the disciples you gave me out of the world. They were
yours. You gave them to me. And they have obeyed your word. 7 Now they
know that everything you have given me comes from you. 8 I gave them the
words you gave me. And they accepted them. They knew for certain that I
came from you. They believed that you sent me.

9 "I pray for them. I am not praying for the world. I am praying for those you
have given me, because they are yours. 10 All I have is yours, and all you have
is mine. Glory has come to me because of my disciples.

11 "I will not remain in the world any longer. But they are still in the world,
and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them safe by the power of your
name. It is the name you gave me. Keep them safe so they can be one, just as
you and I are one.

12 "While I was with them, I guarded them. I kept them safe through the name
you gave me. None of them has been lost, except the one who was sentenced to
be destroyed. It happened so that Scripture would come true.

13“I am coming to you now. But I say these things while I am still in the
world. I say them so that those you gave me can have all my joy inside them.
14I have given them your word. The world has hated them. This is because they
are not part of the world any more than I am. 15I do not pray that you will take
them out of the world. I pray that you will keep them safe from the evil one.

16“They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to it. 17Use the
truth to make them holy. Your word is truth. 18You sent me into the world. In
the same way, I have sent them into the world. 19I make myself holy for them
so that they too can be made holy in a true sense.

Jesus Prays for All Believers

20“I do not pray only for them. I pray also for those who will believe in me
because of their message. 21Father, I pray that all of them will be one, just as
you are in me and I am in you. I want them also to be in us. Then the world
will believe that you have sent me.

22“I have given them the glory you gave me. I did this so they would be one,
just as we are one. 23I will be in them, just as you are in me. I want them to be
brought together perfectly as one. This will let the world know that you sent
me. It will also show the world that you have loved those you gave me, just as
you have loved me.

24“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am. I want
them to see my glory, the glory you have given me. You gave it to me because
you loved me before the world was created.

25“Father, you are holy. The world does not know you, but I know you. Those
you have given me know you have sent me. 26I have shown you to them. And I
will continue to show you to them. Then the love you have for me will be in
them. I myself will be in them.”

Jesus Is Arrested

John 18

[1]When Jesus had finished praying, he left with his disciples. They crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was a grove of olive trees. Jesus and his disciples went into it.

[2]Judas knew the place. He was going to hand Jesus over to his enemies. Jesus had often met in that place with his disciples. [3]So Judas came to the grove. He was guiding a group of soldiers and some officials. The chief priests and the Pharisees had sent them. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons.

[4]Jesus knew everything that was going to happen to him. So he went out and asked them, “Who is it that you want?”

[5]“Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied.

“I am he,” Jesus said.

Judas, who was going to hand Jesus over, was standing there with them. [6]When Jesus said, “I am he,” they moved back. Then they fell to the ground.

[7]He asked them again, “Who is it that you want?”

They said, “Jesus of Nazareth.”

[8]“I told you I am he,” Jesus answered. “If you are looking for me, then let these men go.” [9]This happened so that the words Jesus had spoken would come true. He had said, “I have not lost anyone God has given me.”(John 6:39)

[10]Simon Peter had a sword and pulled it out. He struck the high priest’s servant and cut off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus.

[11]Jesus commanded Peter, “Put your sword away! Shouldn’t I drink the cup of suffering the Father has given me?”

Jesus Is Taken to Annas

[12]Then the group of soldiers, their leader and the Jewish officials arrested

Jesus. They tied him up [13]and brought him first to Annas. He was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest at that time. [14]Caiaphas had advised the Jews that it would be good if one man died for the people.

Peter Says He Is Not Jesus' Disciple

[15]Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. The high priest knew the other disciple. So that disciple went with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard. [16]But Peter had to wait outside by the door.

The other disciple came back. He was the one the high priest knew. He spoke to the woman who was on duty there. Then he brought Peter in.

[17]The woman at the door spoke to Peter. "You are not one of Jesus' disciples, are you?" she asked him.

"I am not," he replied.

[18]It was cold. The servants and officials stood around a fire. They had made it to keep warm. Peter was also standing with them. He was warming himself.

The High Priest Questions Jesus

[19]Meanwhile, the high priest questioned Jesus. He asked him about his disciples and his teaching.

[20]"I have spoken openly to the world," Jesus replied. "I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I didn't say anything in secret. [21]Why question me? Ask the people who heard me. They certainly know what I said."

[22]When Jesus said that, one of the officials nearby hit him in the face. "Is this any way to answer the high priest?" he asked.

[23]"Have I said something wrong?" Jesus replied. "If I have, give witness to it. But if I spoke the truth, why did you hit me?"

[24]While Jesus was still tied up, Annas sent him to Caiaphas, the high priest.

Peter Again Says He Is Not Jesus' Disciple

25 Simon Peter stood there. He was warming himself. Then someone asked him, “You aren’t one of Jesus’ disciples, are you?”

He said, “I am not.”

26 One of the high priest’s servants was a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off. He said to Peter, “Didn’t I see you with Jesus in the olive grove?”

27 Again Peter said no.

At that very moment a rooster began to crow.

Jesus Is Brought to Pilate

28 Then the Jews led Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning. The Jews did not want to be made “unclean.” They wanted to be able to eat the Passover meal. So they did not enter the palace.

29 Pilate came out to them. He asked, “What charges are you bringing against this man?”

30 “He has committed crimes,” they replied. “If he hadn’t, we would not have handed him over to you.”

31 Pilate said, “Take him yourselves. Judge him by your own law.”

“But we don’t have the right to put anyone to death,” the Jews complained. 32 This happened so that the words Jesus had spoken about how he was going to die would come true.

33 Then Pilate went back inside the palace. He ordered Jesus to be brought to him. Pilate asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?”

34 “Is that your own idea?” Jesus asked. “Or did others talk to you about me?”

35 “Am I a Jew?” Pilate replied. “It was your people and your chief priests who handed you over to me. What have you done?”

36 Jesus said, “My kingdom is not part of this world. If it were, those who serve me would fight. They would try to keep the Jews from arresting me. My kingdom is from another place.”

37 “So you are a king, then!” said Pilate.

Jesus answered, “You are right to say I am a king. In fact, that’s the reason I

was born. I came into the world to give witness to the truth. Everyone who is on the side of truth listens to me.”

38“What is truth?” Pilate asked.

Then Pilate went out again to the Jews. He said, “I find no basis for any charge against him. 39But it is your practice for me to set one prisoner free for you at Passover time. Do you want me to set ‘the king of the Jews’ free?”

40They shouted back, “No! Not him! Give us Barabbas!” Barabbas had taken part in an armed struggle against the country’s rulers.

Jesus Is Sentenced to Be Crucified

John 19

[1]Then Pilate took Jesus and had him whipped. [2]The soldiers twisted thorns
together to make a crown. They put it on Jesus' head. Then they put a purple
robe on him. [3]They went up to him again and again. They kept saying, "We
honor you, king of the Jews!" And they hit him in the face.

[4]Once more Pilate came out. He said to the Jews, "Look, I am bringing Jesus
out to you. I want to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against
him."

[5]Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Then Pilate
said to them, "Here is the man!"

[6]As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted,
"Crucify him! Crucify him!"

But Pilate answered, "You take him and crucify him. I myself find no basis
for a charge against him."

[7]The Jews replied, "We have a law. That law says he must die. He claimed to
be the Son of God."

[8]When Pilate heard that, he was even more afraid. [9]He went back inside the
palace. "Where do you come from?" he asked Jesus.

But Jesus did not answer him.

[10]"Do you refuse to speak to me?" Pilate said. "Don't you understand? I have
the power to set you free or to nail you to a cross."

[11]Jesus answered, "You were given power from heaven. If you weren't, you
would have no power over me. So the one who handed me over to you is guilty
of a greater sin."

[12]From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free. But the Jews kept shouting, "If
you let this man go, you are not Caesar's friend! Anyone who claims to be a
king is against Caesar!"

[13]When Pilate heard that, he brought Jesus out. Pilate sat down on the judge's

seat. It was at a place called The Stone Walkway. In the Aramaic language it was called Gabbatha. [14]It was about noon on Preparation Day in Passover Week.

"Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews.

[15]But they shouted, "Kill him! Kill him! Crucify him!"

"Should I crucify your king?" Pilate asked.

"We have no king but Caesar," the chief priests answered.

[16]Finally, Pilate handed Jesus over to them to be nailed to a cross.

Jesus Is Nailed to a Cross

So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. [17]He had to carry his own cross. He went out to a place called The Skull. In the Aramaic language it was called Golgotha. [18]There they nailed Jesus to the cross. Two other men were crucified with him. One was on each side of him. Jesus was in the middle.

[19]Pilate had a notice prepared. It was fastened to the cross. It read, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. [20]Many of the Jews read the sign. The place where Jesus was crucified was near the city. The sign was written in the Aramaic, Latin and Greek languages.

[21]The chief priests of the Jews argued with Pilate. They said, "Do not write 'The King of the Jews.' Write that this man claimed to be king of the Jews."

[22]Pilate answered, "I have written what I have written."

[23]When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes. They divided them into four parts. Each soldier got one part. Jesus' long, inner robe was left. It did not have any seams. It was made out of one piece of cloth from top to bottom.

[24]"Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's cast lots to see who will get it."

This happened so that Scripture would come true. It says,

> "They divided up my clothes among them.
> They cast lots for what I was wearing." (Psalm 22:18)

So that is what the soldiers did.

25 Jesus' mother stood near his cross. So did his mother's sister, Mary the wife
of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

26 Jesus saw his mother there. He also saw the disciple he loved standing
nearby. Jesus said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son." 27 He said to
the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, the disciple took her
into his home.

Jesus Dies

28 Later Jesus said, "I am thirsty." He knew that everything was now finished.
He knew that what Scripture said must come true. 29 A jar of wine vinegar was
there. So they soaked a sponge in it. They put the sponge on a stem of the
hyssop plant. Then they lifted it up to Jesus' lips.

30 After Jesus drank he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and
died.

31 It was Preparation Day. The next day would be a special Sabbath. The Jews
did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath. So they asked
Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. 32 The soldiers came
and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus. Then
they broke the legs of the other man.

33 But when they came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead. So they
did not break his legs. 34 Instead, one of the soldiers stuck his spear into Jesus'
side. Right away, blood and water flowed out. 35 The man who saw it has given
witness. And his witness is true. He knows that he tells the truth. He gives
witness so that you also can believe.

36 These things happened in order that Scripture would come true. It says,
"Not one of his bones will be broken."(Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12; Psalm
34:20) 37 Scripture also says, "They will look to the one they have
pierced."(Zechariah 12:10)

Jesus Is Buried

[38]Later Joseph asked Pilate for Jesus' body. Joseph was from the town of Arimathea. He was a follower of Jesus. But he followed Jesus secretly because he was afraid of the Jews. After Pilate gave him permission, Joseph came and took the body away.

[39]Nicodemus went with Joseph. He was the man who had earlier visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought some mixed spices, about 75 pounds. [40]The two men took Jesus' body. They wrapped it in strips of linen cloth, along with the spices. That was the way the Jews buried people's bodies.

[41]At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden. A new tomb was there. No one had ever been put in it before. [42]That day was the Jewish Preparation Day, and the tomb was nearby. So they placed Jesus there.

The Tomb Is Empty

John 20

1 Early on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb. It was
still dark. She saw that the stone had been moved away from the entrance. 2 So
she ran to Simon Peter and another disciple, the one Jesus loved. She said,
"They have taken the Lord out of the tomb! We don't know where they have
put him!"

3 So Peter and the other disciple started out for the tomb. 4 Both of them were
running. The other disciple ran faster than Peter. He reached the tomb first. 5 He
bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there. But he did not go in.

6 Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived. He went into the tomb. He
saw the strips of linen lying there. 7 He also saw the burial cloth that had been
around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself. It was separate from the
linen.

8 The disciple who had reached the tomb first also went inside. He saw and
believed. 9 They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise
from the dead.

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

10 Then the disciples went back to their homes. 11 But Mary stood outside the
tomb crying. As she cried, she bent over to look into the tomb. 12 She saw two
angels dressed in white. They were seated where Jesus' body had been. One of
them was where Jesus' head had been laid. The other sat where his feet had
been placed.

13 They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

"They have taken my Lord away," she said. "I don't know where they have
put him."

14 Then she turned around and saw Jesus standing there. But she didn't realize

that it was Jesus.

15"Woman," he said, "why are you crying? Who are you looking for?"

She thought he was the gardener. So she said, "Sir, did you carry him away? Tell me where you put him. Then I will go and get him."

16Jesus said to her, "Mary."

She turned toward him. Then she cried out in the Aramaic language, "Rabboni!" Rabboni means Teacher.

17Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me. I have not yet returned to the Father. Instead, go to those who believe in me. Tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' "

18Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news. She said, "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

19On the evening of that first day of the week, the disciples were together. They had locked the doors because they were afraid of the Jews.

Jesus came in and stood among them. He said, "May peace be with you!" 20Then he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were very happy when they saw the Lord.

21Again Jesus said, "May peace be with you! The Father has sent me. So now I am sending you." 22He then breathed on them. He said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven. If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

Jesus Appears to Thomas

24Thomas was one of the Twelve. He was called Didymus. He was not with the other disciples when Jesus came. 25So they told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he said to them, "First I must see the nail marks in his hands. I must put my finger where the nails were. I must put my hand into his side. Only then

will I believe what you say.”

[26]A week later, Jesus’ disciples were in the house again. Thomas was with them. Even though the doors were locked, Jesus came in and stood among them.

He said, “May peace be with you!” [27]Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here. See my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

[28]Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

[29]Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen me but still have believed.”

[30]Jesus did many other miraculous signs in front of his disciples. They are not written down in this book. [31]But these are written down so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. If you believe this, you will have life because you belong to him.

Jesus Does a Miracle at the Sea

John 21

[1]After this, Jesus appeared to his disciples again. It was by the Sea of Galilee. Here is what happened.

[2]Simon Peter and Thomas, who was called Didymus, were there together. Nathanael from Cana in Galilee and the sons of Zebedee were with them. So were two other disciples.

[3]"I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them. They said, "We'll go with you." So they went out and got into the boat. That night they didn't catch anything.

[4]Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore. But the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus.

[5]He called out to them, "Friends, don't you have any fish?"

"No," they answered.

[6]He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat. There you will find some fish."

When they did, they could not pull the net into the boat. There were too many fish in it.

[7]Then the disciple Jesus loved said to Simon Peter, "It is the Lord!"

As soon as Peter heard that, he put his coat on. He had taken it off earlier. Then he jumped into the water.

[8]The other disciples followed in the boat. They were towing the net full of fish. The shore was only about 100 yards away. [9]When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals. There were fish on it. There was also some bread.

[10]Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught."

[11]Simon Peter climbed into the boat. He dragged the net to shore. It was full of large fish. There were 153 of them. But even with that many fish the net was not torn.

[12]Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast."

None of the disciples dared to ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord.

13 Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them. He did the same thing with the fish. 14 This was the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

Jesus Takes Peter Back

15 When Jesus and the disciples had finished eating, Jesus spoke to Simon Peter. He asked, “Simon, son of John, do you really love me more than these others do?”

“Yes, Lord,” he answered. “You know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”

16 Again Jesus asked, “Simon, son of John, do you really love me?”

He answered, “Yes, Lord. You know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”

17 Jesus spoke to him a third time. He asked, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?”

Peter felt bad because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He answered, “Lord, you know all things. You know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my sheep. 18 What I’m about to tell you is true. When you were younger, you dressed yourself. You went wherever you wanted to go. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands. Someone else will dress you. Someone else will lead you where you do not want to go.”

19 Jesus said this to point out how Peter would die. His death would bring glory to God.

Then Jesus said to him, “Follow me!”

20 Peter turned around. He saw that the disciple Jesus loved was following them. He was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper. He had said, “Lord, who is going to hand you over to your enemies?” 21 When Peter saw that disciple, he asked, “Lord, what will happen to him?”

22 Jesus answered, “Suppose I want him to remain alive until I return. What does that matter to you? You must follow me.”

[23]Because of what Jesus said, a false report spread among the believers. The story was told that the disciple Jesus loved wouldn’t die. But Jesus did not say he would not die. He only said, “Suppose I want him to remain alive until I return. What does that matter to you?”

[24]This is the disciple who gives witness to these things. He also wrote them down. We know that his witness is true.

[25]Jesus also did many other things. What if every one of them were written down? I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.

Acts

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Acts 27
Acts 28

Jesus Is Taken Up Into Heaven

Acts 1

1 Theophilus, I wrote about Jesus in my earlier book. I wrote about all he did
and taught 2 until the day he was taken up to heaven. Before Jesus left, he gave
orders to the apostles he had chosen. He did this through the Holy Spirit. 3 After
his suffering and death, he appeared to them. In many ways he proved that he
was alive. He appeared to them over a period of 40 days. During that time he
spoke about God's kingdom.

4 One day Jesus was eating with them. He gave them a command. "Do not
leave Jerusalem," he said. "Wait for the gift my Father promised. You have
heard me talk about it. 5 John baptized with water. But in a few days you will be
baptized with the Holy Spirit."

6 When the apostles met together, they asked Jesus a question. "Lord," they
said, "are you going to give the kingdom back to Israel now?"

7 He said to them, "You should not be concerned about times or dates. The
Father has set them by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the
Holy Spirit comes on you. Then you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem. You
will be my witnesses in all Judea and Samaria. And you will be my witnesses
from one end of the earth to the other."

9 After Jesus said this, he was taken up to heaven. They watched until a cloud
hid him from their sight.

10 While he was going up, they kept on looking at the sky. Suddenly two men
dressed in white clothing stood beside them. 11 "Men of Galilee," they said,
"why do you stand here looking at the sky? Jesus has been taken away from
you into heaven. But he will come back in the same way you saw him go."

Matthias Is Chosen to Take the Place of Judas

12 The apostles returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives. It is almost a

mile from the city. [13]When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Peter, John, James and Andrew were there. Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew were there too. So were James, son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas, son of James. [14]They all came together regularly to pray. The women joined them too. So did Jesus' mother Mary and his brothers.

[15]In those days Peter stood up among the believers. About 120 of them were there. [16]Peter said, "Brothers, a long time ago the Holy Spirit spoke through David's mouth about Judas. What he said in Scripture had to come true. Judas was the guide for the men who arrested Jesus. [17]But Judas was one of us. He shared with us in our work for God."

[18]Judas bought a field with the reward he got for the evil thing he had done. He fell down headfirst in the field. His body burst open. All his insides spilled out. [19]Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this. So they called that field Akeldama. In their language, Akeldama means The Field of Blood.

[20]Peter said, "Here is what is written in the book of Psalms. It says,

> " 'May his home be deserted.
> May no one live in it.' (Psalm 69:25)

The Psalms also say,

> " 'Let someone else take his place as leader.' (Psalm 109:8)

[21]So we need to choose someone to take his place. It will have to be a man who was with us the whole time the Lord Jesus lived among us. [22]That time began when John was baptizing. It ended when Jesus was taken up from us. The one we choose must join us in giving witness that Jesus rose from the dead."

[23]So they suggested two men. One was Joseph, who was called Barsabbas. He was also called Justus. The other man was Matthias. [24]Then they prayed. "Lord," they said, "you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen. [25]Show us who should take the place of Judas as an apostle. He gave up being an apostle to go where he belongs." [26]Then they cast lots.

Matthias was chosen. So he was added to the 11 apostles.

The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost

Acts 2

[1]The day of Pentecost came. The believers all gathered in one place.
[2]Suddenly a sound came from heaven. It was like a strong wind blowing. It
filled the whole house where they were sitting. [3]They saw something that
looked like tongues of fire. The flames separated and settled on each of them.
[4]All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit. They began to speak in languages
they had not known before. The Spirit gave them the ability to do this.

[5]Godly Jews from every country in the world were staying in Jerusalem. [6]A
crowd came together when they heard the sound. They were bewildered
because they each heard the believers speaking in their own language. [7]The
crowd was really amazed. They asked, “Aren’t all these people from Galilee?
[8]Why, then, do we each hear them speaking in our own native language? [9]We
are Parthians, Medes and Elamites. We live in Mesopotamia, Judea and
Cappadocia. We are from Pontus, Asia, [10]Phrygia and Pamphylia. Others of us
are from Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene. Still others are visitors
from Rome. [11]Some of the visitors are Jews. Others have accepted the Jewish
faith. Also, Cretans and Arabs are here. We hear all these people speaking
about God’s wonders in our own languages!” [12]They were amazed and
bewildered. They asked one another, “What does this mean?”

[13]But some people in the crowd made fun of the believers. “They’ve had too
much wine!” they said.

Peter Speaks to the Crowd

[14]Then Peter stood up with the Eleven. In a loud voice he spoke to the crowd.
“My Jewish friends,” he said, “let me explain this to you. All of you who live
in Jerusalem, listen carefully to what I say. [15]You think these people are drunk.
But they aren’t. It’s only nine o’clock in the morning! [16]No, here is what the
prophet Joel meant. [17]He said,

“ ‘In the last days, God says,
I will pour out my Holy Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy.
Your young men will see visions.
Your old men will have dreams.
18 In those days I will pour out my Spirit
even on those who serve me, both men and women.
When I do, they will prophesy.
19 I will show wonders in the heavens above.
I will show miraculous signs on the earth below.
There will be blood and fire and clouds of smoke.
20 The sun will become dark.
The moon will turn red like blood.
This will happen before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.
21 Everyone who calls
on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ (Joel 2:28–32)

22 “Men of Israel, listen to this! Jesus of Nazareth was a man who had God’s approval. God did miracles, wonders and signs among you through Jesus. You yourselves know this. 23 Long ago God planned that Jesus would be handed over to you. With the help of evil people, you put Jesus to death. You nailed him to the cross. 24 But God raised him from the dead. He set him free from the suffering of death. It wasn’t possible for death to keep its hold on Jesus. 25 David spoke about him. He said,

“ ‘I know that the Lord is always with me.
He is at my right hand.
I will always be secure.
26 So my heart is glad. Joy is on my tongue.
My body also will be full of hope.
27 You will not leave me in the grave.
You will not let your Holy One rot away.
28 You always show me the path that leads to life.
You will fill me with joy when I am with you.’ (Psalm 16:8–11)

29 “Brothers, you can be sure that King David died. He was buried. His tomb

is still here today. [30]But David was a prophet. He knew that God had made a promise to him. He had taken an oath that someone in David's family line would be king after him. [31]David saw what was ahead. So he spoke about the Christ rising from the dead. He said that the Christ would not be left in the grave. His body wouldn't rot in the ground. [32]God has raised this same Jesus back to life. We are all witnesses of this. [33]Jesus has been given a place of honor at the right hand of God. He has received the Holy Spirit from the Father. This is what God had promised. It is Jesus who has poured out what you now see and hear. [34]David did not go up to heaven. But he said,

" 'The Lord said to my Lord,
"Sit at my right hand.
[35]I will put your enemies
under your control." ' (Psalm 110:1)

[36]"So be sure of this, all you people of Israel. You nailed Jesus to the cross. But God has made him both Lord and Christ."

[37]When the people heard this, their hearts were filled with shame. They said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?"

[38]Peter replied, "All of you must turn away from your sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then your sins will be forgiven. You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. [39]The promise is for you and your children. It is also for all who are far away. It is for all whom the Lord our God will choose."

[40]Peter said many other things to warn them. He begged them, "Save yourselves from these evil people." [41]Those who accepted his message were baptized. About 3,000 people joined the believers that day.

The Believers Share Life Together

[42]The believers studied what the apostles taught. They shared life together. They broke bread and ate together. And they prayed. [43]Everyone felt that God was near. The apostles did many wonders and miraculous signs. [44]All the believers were together. They shared everything they had. [45]They sold what they owned. They gave each other everything they needed. [46]Every day they

met together in the temple courtyard. In their homes they broke bread and ate together. Their hearts were glad and honest and true. [47]They praised God. They were respected by all the people. Every day the Lord added to their group those who were being saved.

Peter Heals the Disabled Beggar

Acts 3

[1]One day Peter and John were going up to the temple. It was three o’clock in the afternoon. It was the time for prayer. [2]A man unable to walk was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful. He had been that way since he was born. Every day someone put him near the gate. There he would beg from people going into the temple courtyards.

[3]He saw that Peter and John were about to enter. So he asked them for money. [4]Peter looked straight at him, and so did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” [5]So the man watched them closely. He expected to get something from them.

[6]Peter said, “I don’t have any silver or gold. But I’ll give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk.” [7]Then Peter took him by the right hand and helped him up. At once the man’s feet and ankles became strong. [8]He jumped to his feet and began to walk. He went with Peter and John into the temple courtyards. He walked and jumped and praised God. [9]All the people saw him walking and praising God. [10]They recognized him as the same man who used to sit and beg at the temple gate called Beautiful. They were filled with wonder. They were amazed at what had happened to him.

Peter Speaks to the Jews

[11]The beggar was holding on to Peter and John. All the people were amazed. They came running to them at Solomon’s Porch. [12]When Peter saw this, he said, “Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us? We haven’t made this man walk by our own power or godliness. [13]The God of our fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has done this. He has brought glory to Jesus, who serves him. But you handed Jesus over to be killed. Pilate had decided to let him go. But you spoke against Jesus when he was in Pilate’s court. [14]You spoke against the Holy and Blameless One. You asked for a

murderer to be set free instead. [15]You killed the one who gives life. But God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. [16]This man whom you see and know was made strong because of faith in Jesus' name. Faith in Jesus has healed him completely. You can see it with your own eyes.

[17]"My friends, I know you didn't realize what you were doing. Neither did your leaders. [18]But God had given a promise through all the prophets. And this is how he has made his promise come true. He said that his Christ would suffer. [19]So turn away from your sins. Turn to God. Then your sins will be wiped away. The time will come when the Lord will make everything new. [20]He will send the Christ. Jesus has been appointed as the Christ for you. [21]He must remain in heaven until the time when God makes everything new. He promised this long ago through his holy prophets. [22]Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me. He will be one of your own people. You must listen to everything he tells you. [23]Those who do not listen to him will be completely cut off from their people.'(Deuteronomy 18:15, 18, 19)

[24]"Samuel and all the prophets after him spoke about this. They said these days would come. [25]What the prophets said was meant for you. The covenant God made with your people long ago is yours also. He said to Abraham, 'All nations on earth will be blessed through your children.'(Genesis 22:18; 26:4) [26]God raised up Jesus, who serves him. God sent him first to you. He did it to bless you. He wanted to turn each of you from your evil ways."

Peter and John Are Taken to the Sanhedrin

Acts 4

[1]Peter and John were speaking to the people. The priests, the captain of the temple guard, and the Sadducees came up to the apostles. [2]They were very upset by what the apostles were teaching the people. The apostles were saying that because Jesus rose from the dead, people can be raised from the dead. [3]So the temple authorities arrested Peter and John. It was already evening, so they put them in prison until the next day. [4]But many who heard the message believed. The number of men who believed grew to about 5,000.

[5]The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. [6]Annas, the high priest, was there. So were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others in the high priest's family. [7]They had Peter and John brought to them. They wanted to question them. "By what power did you do this?" they asked. "And through whose name?"

[8]Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit. He said to them, "Rulers and elders of the people! [9]Are you asking us to explain our actions today? Do you want to know why we were kind to a disabled man? Are you asking how he was healed? [10]Then listen to this, you and all the people of Israel! You nailed Jesus Christ of Nazareth to the cross. But God raised him from the dead. It is through Jesus' name that this man stands healed in front of you. [11]Scripture says that Jesus is

> " 'the stone you builders did not accept.
> But it has become the most important stone of all.' (Psalm 118:22)

[12]You can't be saved by believing in anyone else. God has given us no other name under heaven that will save us."

[13]The leaders saw how bold Peter and John were. They also realized that Peter and John were ordinary men with no training. This surprised the leaders.

They realized that these men had been with Jesus. [14]The leaders could see the man who had been healed standing there with them. So there was nothing they could say. [15]They ordered Peter and John to leave the Sanhedrin. Then they talked things over. [16]"What can we do with these men?" they asked. "Everybody in Jerusalem knows they have done an outstanding miracle. We can't say it didn't happen. [17]We have to stop this thing. It must not spread any further among the people. We have to warn these men. They must never speak to anyone in Jesus' name again."

[18]Once again the leaders called in Peter and John. They commanded them not to speak or teach at all in Jesus' name. [19]But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves. Which is right from God's point of view? Should we obey you? Or God? [20]There's nothing else we can do. We have to speak about the things we've seen and heard."

[21]The leaders warned them again. Then they let them go. They couldn't decide how to punish Peter and John. They knew that all the people were praising God for what had happened. [22]The man who had been healed by the miracle was over 40 years old.

The Believers Pray

[23]Peter and John were allowed to leave. They went back to their own people. They reported everything the chief priests and the elders had said to them. [24]When the believers heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Lord and King," they said, "you made the heavens, the earth and the sea. You made everything in them. [25]Long ago you spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of our father David, who served you. You said,

> " 'Why are the nations angry?
> Why do the people make useless plans?
> [26]The kings of the earth take their stand against the Lord.
> The rulers of the earth gather together
> against his Anointed King.' (Psalm 2:1, 2)

[27]"In fact, Herod and Pontius Pilate met together in this city with those who weren't Jews. They also met with the people of Israel. All of them made plans

against your holy servant Jesus. He is the one you anointed. [28]They did what your power and purpose had already decided should happen. [29]Now, Lord, consider the bad things they say they are going to do. Help us to be very bold when we speak your word. [30]Stretch out your hand to heal. Do miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus."

[31]After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit. They were bold when they spoke God's word.

The Believers Share What They Own

[32]All the believers were agreed in heart and mind. They didn't claim that anything they had was their own. They shared everything they owned. [33]With great power the apostles continued their teaching. They gave witness that the Lord Jesus had risen from the dead. And they were greatly blessed by God.

[34]There were no needy persons among them. From time to time, those who owned land or houses sold them. They brought the money from the sales. [35]They put it down at the apostles' feet. It was then given out to anyone who needed it.

[36]Joseph was a Levite from Cyprus. The apostles called him Barnabas. The name Barnabas means Son of Help. [37]Barnabas sold a field he owned. He brought the money from the sale. He put it down at the apostles' feet.

Ananias and Sapphira

Acts 5

[1]A man named Ananias and his wife, Sapphira, also sold some land. [2]He kept part of the money for himself. Sapphira knew he had kept it. He brought the rest of it and put it down at the apostles' feet.

[3]Then Peter said, "Ananias, why did you let Satan fill your heart? He made you lie to the Holy Spirit. You have kept some of the money you received for the land. [4]Didn't the land belong to you before it was sold? After it was sold, you could have used the money as you wished. What made you think of doing such a thing? You haven't lied to just anyone. You've lied to God."

[5]When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. All who heard what had happened were filled with fear. [6]Some young men came and wrapped up his body. They carried him out and buried him.

[7]About three hours later, the wife of Ananias came in. She didn't know what had happened. [8]Peter asked her, "Tell me. Is this the price you and Ananias sold the land for?"

"Yes," she said. "That's the price."

[9]Peter asked her, "How could you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! You can hear the steps of the men who buried your husband. They are at the door. They will carry you out also."

[10]At that very moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in. They saw that Sapphira was dead. So they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. [11]The whole church and all who heard about these things were filled with fear.

The Apostles Heal Many People

[12]The apostles did many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. All the believers used to meet together at Solomon's Porch. [13]No outsider

dared to join them. But the people thought highly of them. [14]More and more men and women believed in the Lord. They joined the other believers. [15]So people brought those who were sick into the streets. They placed them on beds and mats. They hoped that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he walked by. [16]Crowds even gathered from the towns around Jerusalem. They brought their sick. They also brought those who were suffering because of evil spirits. All of them were healed.

An Angel Opens the Prison Doors

[17]The high priest and all his companions were Sadducees. They were very jealous of the apostles. [18]So they arrested them and put them in the public prison. [19]But during the night an angel of the Lord came. He opened the prison doors and brought the apostles out. [20]"Go! Stand in the temple courtyard," the angel said. "Tell the people all about this new life."

[21]Early the next day they did as they had been told. They entered the temple courtyard. There they began to teach the people.

The high priest and his companions arrived. They called the Sanhedrin together. The Sanhedrin was a gathering of all the elders of Israel. They sent for the apostles who were in prison. [22]The officers arrived at the prison. But they didn't find the apostles there. So they went back and reported it. [23]"We found the prison locked up tight," they said. "The guards were standing at the doors. But when we opened the doors, we didn't find anyone inside." [24]When the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests heard this report, they were bewildered. They wondered what would happen next.

[25]Then someone came and said, "Look! The men you put in prison are standing in the temple courtyard. They are teaching the people." [26]So the captain went with his officers and brought the apostles back. But they didn't use force. They were afraid the people would kill them by throwing stones at them.

[27]They brought the apostles to be judged by the Sanhedrin. The high priest questioned them. [28]"We gave you clear orders not to teach in Jesus' name," he said. "But you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching. You want to make us guilty of this man's death."

[29]Peter and the other apostles replied, “We must obey God instead of people!
[30]You had Jesus killed by nailing him to a cross. But the God of our people
raised Jesus from the dead. [31]Now Jesus is Prince and Savior. God has proved
this by giving him a place of honor at his own right hand. He did it so that he
could turn Israel away from their sins and forgive them. [32]We are witnesses of
these things. And so is the Holy Spirit. God has given the Spirit to those who
obey him.”

[33]When the leaders heard this, they became very angry. They wanted to put
the apostles to death. [34]But a Pharisee named Gamaliel stood up in the
Sanhedrin. He was a teacher of the law. He was honored by all the people. He
ordered the men to be taken outside for a little while. [35]Then he spoke to the
Sanhedrin. “Men of Israel,” he said, “think carefully about what you plan to do
to these men. [36]Some time ago Theudas appeared. He claimed he was really
somebody. About 400 people followed him. But he was killed. All his
followers were scattered. So they accomplished nothing. [37]After this, Judas
from Galilee came along. This was in the days when the Romans made a list of
all the people. Judas led a gang of men against the Romans. He too was killed.
All his followers were scattered. [38]So let me give you some advice. Leave
these men alone! Let them go! If their plans and actions are only human, they
will fail. [39]But if their plans come from God, you won’t be able to stop these
men. You will only find yourselves fighting against God.”

[40]His speech won the leaders over. They called the apostles in and had them
whipped. The leaders ordered them not to speak in Jesus’ name. Then they let
the apostles go.

[41]The apostles were full of joy as they left the Sanhedrin. They considered it
an honor to suffer shame for the name of Jesus. [42]Day after day, they kept
teaching in the temple courtyards and from house to house. They never stopped
telling the good news that Jesus is the Christ.

Seven Leaders Are Chosen

Acts 6

1 In those days the number of believers was growing. The Jews who followed
Greek practices complained against the Jews who followed only Jewish
practices. They said that the widows of men who followed Greek practices
were not being taken care of. They weren't getting their fair share of food each
day. 2 So the Twelve gathered all the believers together. They said, "It wouldn't
be right for us to give up teaching God's word in order to wait on tables.
3 Brothers, choose seven of your men. They must be known as men who are
wise and full of the Holy Spirit. We will turn this important work over to them.
4 Then we can give our attention to prayer and to teaching the word."

5 This plan pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen. He was full of faith
and of the Holy Spirit. Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon and Parmenas were
chosen too. The group also chose Nicolas from Antioch. He had accepted the
Jewish faith. 6 The group brought them to the apostles. Then the apostles
prayed and placed their hands on them.

7 So God's word spread. The number of believers in Jerusalem grew quickly.
Also, a large number of priests began to obey Jesus' teachings.

Stephen Is Arrested

8 Stephen was full of God's grace and power. He did great wonders and
miraculous signs among the people. 9 But members of the group called the
Synagogue of the Freedmen began to oppose him. Some of them were Jews
from Cyrene and Alexandria. Others were Jews from Cilicia and Asia Minor.
They all began to argue with Stephen. 10 But he was too wise for them. They
couldn't stand up against the Holy Spirit who spoke through him.

11 Then in secret they talked some men into lying about Stephen. They said,
"We heard Stephen speak evil things against Moses. He also spoke evil things
against God."

[12]So the people were stirred up. The elders and the teachers of the law were stirred up too. They arrested Stephen and brought him to the Sanhedrin. [13]They found people who were willing to tell lies. The false witnesses said, “This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place. He also speaks against the law. [14]We have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place. He says Jesus will change the practices that Moses handed down to us.”

[15]All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked right at Stephen. They saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

Stephen Speaks to the Sanhedrin

Acts 7

1Then the high priest questioned Stephen. “Is what these people are saying
true?” he asked.

2“Brothers and fathers, listen to me!” Stephen replied. “The God of glory
appeared to our father Abraham. At that time Abraham was still in
Mesopotamia. He had not yet begun living in Haran. 3‘Leave your country and
your people,’ God said. ‘Go to the land I will show you.’(Genesis 12:1)

4“So Abraham left the land of Babylonia. He settled in Haran. After his father
died, God sent Abraham to this land where you are now living. 5God didn’t
give him any property here. He didn’t give him even a foot of land. But God
made a promise to him and to all his family after him. He said they would
possess the land. The promise was made even though at that time Abraham had
no child.

6“Here is what God said to him. ‘Your family after you will be strangers in a
country that is not their own. They will be slaves and will be treated badly for
400 years. 7But I will punish the nation that makes them slaves,’ God said.
‘After that, they will leave that country and worship me here.’(Genesis 15:13,
14)

8“Then God made a covenant with Abraham. God told him that circumcision
would show who the members of the covenant were. Abraham became Isaac’s
father. He circumcised Isaac eight days after he was born. Later, Isaac became
Jacob’s father. Jacob had 12 sons. They became the founders of the 12 tribes of
Israel.

9“Jacob’s sons were jealous of their brother Joseph. So they sold him as a
slave. He was taken to Egypt. But God was with him. 10He saved Joseph from
all his troubles. God made Joseph wise. He helped him to become the friend of
Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. So Pharaoh made Joseph ruler over Egypt and his
whole palace.

11“There was not enough food for all Egypt and Canaan. This brought great

suffering. Jacob and his sons couldn't find food. [12]But Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt. So he sent his sons on their first visit. [13]On their second visit, Joseph told his brothers who he was. Pharaoh learned about Joseph's family.

[14]"After this, Joseph sent for his father Jacob and his whole family. The total number of people was 75. [15]Then Jacob went down to Egypt. There he and his family died. [16]Some of their bodies were brought back to Shechem. They were placed in a tomb Abraham had bought. He had purchased it from Hamor's sons at Shechem for a certain amount of money.

[17]"In Egypt the number of our people grew and grew. It was nearly time for God to make his promise to Abraham come true. [18]Another king became ruler of Egypt. He knew nothing about Joseph. [19]He was very evil and dishonest with our people. He beat them down. He forced them to throw out their newborn babies to die.

[20]"At that time Moses was born. He was not an ordinary child. For three months he was taken care of by his family. [21]Then he was placed outside. But Pharaoh's daughter took him home. She brought him up as her own son. [22]Moses was taught all the knowledge of the people of Egypt. He became a powerful speaker and a man of action.

[23]"When Moses was 40 years old, he decided to visit the people of Israel. They were his own people. [24]He saw one of them being treated badly by a man of Egypt. So he went to help him. He got even by killing the man. [25]Moses thought his own people would realize that God was using him to save them. But they didn't.

[26]"The next day Moses saw two men of Israel fighting. He tried to make peace between them. 'Men, you are both of Israel,' he said. 'Why do you want to hurt each other?'

[27]"But the man who was treating the other one badly pushed Moses to one side. He said, 'Who made you ruler and judge over us? [28]Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?'(Exodus 2:14) [29]When Moses heard this, he escaped to Midian. He lived there as a stranger. He became the father of two sons there.

[30]"Forty years passed. Then an angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush. This happened in the desert near Mount Sinai. [31]When Moses

saw the bush, he was amazed. He went over for a closer look. There he heard the Lord's voice. [32]'I am the God of your fathers,' the Lord said. 'I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.'(Exodus 3:6) Moses shook with fear. He didn't dare to look.

[33]"Then the Lord said to him, 'Take off your sandals. The place you are standing on is holy ground. [34]I have seen my people beaten down in Egypt. I have heard their groans. I have come down to set them free. Now come. I will send you back to Egypt.'(Exodus 3:5, 7, 8, 10)

[35]"This is the same Moses the two men of Israel would not accept. They had said, 'Who made you ruler and judge?' But God himself sent Moses to rule the people of Israel and set them free. He spoke to Moses through the angel who had appeared to him in the bush. [36]So Moses led them out of Egypt. He did wonders and miraculous signs in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and for 40 years in the desert.

[37]"This is the same Moses who spoke to the people of Israel. 'God will send you a prophet,' he said. 'He will be like me. He will come from your own people.'(Deuteronomy 18:15) [38]Moses was with the Israelites in the desert. He was with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai. Moses was with our people of long ago. He received living words to pass on to us.

[39]"But our people refused to obey Moses. They would not accept him. In their hearts, they wished they were back in Egypt. [40]They told Aaron, 'Make us a god who will lead us. This fellow Moses led us out of Egypt. But we don't know what has happened to him!'(Exodus 32:1) [41]That was the time they made a statue to be their god. It looked like a calf. They brought sacrifices to it. They were glad because of what they had made with their own hands. [42]But God turned away from them. He left them to worship the sun, moon and stars. This agrees with what is written in the book of the prophets. There it says,

" 'People of Israel, did you bring me sacrifices and offerings
for 40 years in the desert?
[43]You lifted up the place where Molech was worshiped.
You lifted up the star of your god Rephan.
You made statues of them to worship.
So I will send you away from your country.' (Amos 5:25–27)
God sent them to Babylon and even farther.

44“Long ago our people had with them in the desert the holy tent where the tablets of the covenant were kept. Moses had made the holy tent as God had commanded him. It was made like the pattern he had seen. 45Our people received the tent from God. They brought it with them when they took the land of Canaan. God drove out the nations that were in their way. At that time Joshua was Israel’s leader.

“The tent remained in the land until David’s time. 46David was blessed by God. So David asked if he could build a house for the God of Jacob. 47Instead, it was Solomon who built it for him.

48“But the Most High God does not live in houses made by human hands. As God says through the prophet,

49“ ‘Heaven is my throne.
The earth is under my control.
What kind of house will you build for me?
says the Lord.
Where will my resting place be?
50Didn’t my hand make all these things?’ (Isaiah 66:1, 2)

51“You people! You won’t obey! You are stubborn! You won’t listen! You are just like your people of long ago! You always oppose the Holy Spirit! 52Was there ever a prophet your people didn’t try to hurt? They even killed those who told about the coming of the Blameless One. And now you have handed him over to his enemies. You have murdered him. 53The law you received was brought by angels. But you haven’t obeyed it.”

Stephen Is Killed

54When the Sanhedrin heard this, they became very angry. They ground their teeth at Stephen. 55But he was full of the Holy Spirit. He looked up to heaven and saw God’s glory. He saw Jesus standing at God’s right hand. 56“Look!” he said. “I see heaven open. The Son of Man is standing at God’s right hand.”

57When the Sanhedrin heard this, they covered their ears. They yelled at the top of their voices. They all rushed at him. 58They dragged him out of the city.

They began to throw stones at him to kill him. The witnesses took off their coats. They placed them at the feet of a young man named Saul.

59While the members of the Sanhedrin were throwing stones at Stephen, he prayed. “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,” he said. 60Then he fell on his knees. He cried out, “Lord! Don’t hold this sin against them!” When he had said this, he died.

Acts 8

[1]Saul was there. He had agreed that Stephen should die.

The Church Is Scattered

On that day the church in Jerusalem began to be attacked and treated badly. All except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

[2]Godly Jews buried Stephen. They sobbed and sobbed over him.

[3]But Saul began to destroy the church. He went from house to house. He dragged men and women away and put them in prison.

Philip Goes to Samaria

[4]The believers who had been scattered preached the word everywhere they went. [5]Philip went down to a city in Samaria. There he preached about the Christ. [6]The crowds listened to Philip. They saw the miraculous signs he did. They all paid close attention to what he said. [7]Evil spirits screamed and came out of many people. Many who were disabled or who couldn't walk were healed. [8]So there was great joy in that city.

Simon the Evil Magician

[9]A man named Simon lived in the city. For quite a while he had practiced evil magic there. He amazed all the people of Samaria. He claimed to be someone great. [10]All of the people listened to him, from the least important of them to the most important. They exclaimed, "This man is known as the Great Power of God!" [11]He had amazed them for a long time with his magic. So they followed him.

[12]But Philip preached the good news of God's kingdom. He preached the

name of Jesus Christ. So men and women believed and were baptized. [13]Simon himself believed and was baptized. He followed Philip everywhere. He was amazed by the great signs and miracles he saw.

[14]The apostles in Jerusalem heard that people in Samaria had accepted God's word. So they sent Peter and John to them. [15]When they arrived there, they prayed that the believers would receive the Holy Spirit. [16]The Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. [17]Then Peter and John placed their hands on them. And they received the Holy Spirit.

[18]Simon watched as the apostles placed their hands on them. He saw that the Spirit was given to them. So he offered money to Peter and John. [19]He said, "Give me this power too. Then everyone I place my hands on will receive the Holy Spirit."

[20]Peter answered, "May your money be destroyed with you! Do you think you can buy God's gift with money? [21]You have no part or share in this holy work. Your heart is not right with God. [22]Turn away from this evil sin of yours. Pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. [23]I see that you are very bitter. You are a prisoner of sin."

[24]Then Simon answered, "Pray to the Lord for me. Pray that nothing you have said will happen to me."

[25]Peter and John gave witness and preached the Lord's word. Then they returned to Jerusalem. On the way they preached the good news in many villages in Samaria.

Philip and the Man From Ethiopia

[26]An angel of the Lord spoke to Philip. "Go south to the desert road," he said. "It's the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." [27]So Philip started out. On his way he met an Ethiopian official. The man had an important position. He was in charge of all the wealth of Candace. She was the queen of Ethiopia. He had gone to Jerusalem to worship. [28]On his way home he was sitting in his chariot. He was reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. [29]The Holy Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot. Stay near it."

30So Philip ran up to the chariot. He heard the man reading Isaiah the
prophet. “Do you understand what you’re reading?” Philip asked.

31“How can I?” he said. “I need someone to explain it to me.” So he invited
Philip to come up and sit with him.

32Here is the part of Scripture the official was reading. It says,

> “He was led like a sheep to be killed.
> Just as lambs are silent while their wool is being cut off,
> he did not open his mouth.
> 33When he was treated badly, he was refused a fair trial.
> Who can say anything about his children?
> His life was cut off from the earth.” (Isaiah 53:7, 8)

34The official said to Philip, “Tell me, please. Who is the prophet talking
about? Himself, or someone else?” 35Then Philip began with that same part of
Scripture. He told him the good news about Jesus.

36/37As they traveled along the road, they came to some water. The official
said, “Look! Here is water! Why shouldn’t I be baptized?” 38He gave orders to
stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the official went down into the water.
Philip baptized him. 39When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the
Lord suddenly took Philip away. The official did not see him again. He went on
his way full of joy. 40Philip was seen next at Azotus. From there he traveled all
around. He preached the good news in all the towns. Finally he arrived in
Caesarea.

Saul Becomes a Believer

Acts 9

[1]Meanwhile, Saul continued to oppose the Lord's followers. He said they would be put to death. He went to the high priest. [2]He asked the priest for letters to the synagogues in Damascus. He wanted to find men and women who belonged to the Way of Jesus. The letters would allow him to take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.

[3]On his journey, Saul approached Damascus. Suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. [4]He fell to the ground. He heard a voice speak to him. "Saul! Saul!" the voice said. "Why are you opposing me?"

[5]"Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus," he replied. "I am the one you are opposing. [6]Now get up and go into the city. There you will be told what you must do."

[7]The men traveling with Saul stood there. They weren't able to speak. They had heard the sound. But they didn't see anyone. [8]Saul got up from the ground. He opened his eyes, but he couldn't see. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. [9]For three days he was blind. He didn't eat or drink anything.

[10]In Damascus there was a believer named Ananias. The Lord called out to him in a vision. "Ananias!" he said.

"Yes, Lord," he answered.

[11]The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street. Ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul. He is praying. [12]In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias. The man has come and placed his hands on him. Now he will be able to see again."

[13]"Lord," Ananias answered, "I've heard many reports about this man. They say he has done great harm to God's people in Jerusalem. [14]Now he has come here to arrest all those who worship you. The chief priests have given him authority to do this."

[15]But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! I have chosen this man to work for me.

He will carry my name to those who aren't Jews and to their kings. He will bring my name to the people of Israel. [16]I will show him how much he must suffer for me."

[17]Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. He placed his hands on Saul. "Brother Saul," he said, "you saw the Lord Jesus. He appeared to you on the road as you were coming here. He has sent me so that you will be able to see again. You will be filled with the Holy Spirit."

[18]Right away something like scales fell from Saul's eyes. And he could see again. He got up and was baptized. [19]After eating some food, he got his strength back.

Saul in Damascus and Jerusalem

Saul spent several days with the believers in Damascus. [20]At once he began to preach in the synagogues. He taught that Jesus is the Son of God. [21]All who heard him were amazed. They asked, "Isn't he the man who caused great trouble in Jerusalem for those who worship Jesus? Hasn't he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?" [22]But Saul grew more and more powerful. The Jews living in Damascus couldn't believe what was happening. Saul proved to them that Jesus is the Christ.

[23]After many days, the Jews had a meeting. They planned to kill Saul. [24]But he learned about their plan. Day and night they watched the city gates closely in order to kill him. [25]But his followers helped him escape by night. They lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall.

[26]When Saul came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the believers. But they were all afraid of him. They didn't believe he was really one of Jesus' followers. [27]But Barnabas took him to the apostles. He told them about Saul's journey. He said that Saul had seen the Lord. He told how the Lord had spoken to Saul. Barnabas also said that Saul had preached without fear in Jesus' name in Damascus.

[28]So Saul stayed with the believers. He moved about freely in Jerusalem. He spoke boldly in the Lord's name. [29]He talked and argued with Jews who followed Greek practices. But they tried to kill him. [30]The other believers heard about this. They took Saul down to Caesarea. From there they sent him

off to Tarsus.

31Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. The Holy Spirit gave the church strength and boldness. So they grew in numbers. And they worshiped the Lord.

Peter Goes to Lydda and Joppa

32As Peter traveled around the country, he went to visit God's people in Lydda. 33There he found a disabled man named Aeneas. For eight years the man had spent most of his time in bed. 34"Aeneas," Peter said to him, "Jesus Christ heals you. Get up! Take care of your mat!" So Aeneas got up right away. 35Everyone who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him. They turned to the Lord.

36In Joppa there was a believer named Tabitha. Her name in the Greek language was Dorcas. She was always doing good and helping poor people.

37About that time she became sick and died. Her body was washed and placed in a room upstairs. 38Lydda was near Joppa. The believers heard that Peter was in Lydda. So they sent two men to him. They begged him, "Please come at once!"

39Peter went with them. When he arrived, he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him crying. They showed him the robes and other clothes Dorcas had made while she was still alive.

40Peter sent them all out of the room. Then he got down on his knees and prayed. He turned toward the dead woman. He said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes. When she saw Peter, she sat up. 41He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called the believers and the widows. He brought her to them. They saw that she was alive. 42This became known all over Joppa. Many people believed in the Lord. 43Peter stayed in Joppa for some time. He stayed with Simon, a man who worked with leather.

Cornelius Calls for Peter

Acts 10

[1]A man named Cornelius lived in Caesarea. He was a Roman commander in the Italian Regiment. [2]Cornelius and all his family were faithful and worshiped God. He gave freely to people who were in need. He prayed to God regularly. [3]One day about three o'clock in the afternoon he had a vision. He saw an angel of God clearly. The angel came to him and said, "Cornelius!"

[4]Cornelius was afraid. He stared at the angel. "What is it, Lord?" he asked.

The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to poor people have come up like an offering to God. So he has remembered you. [5]Now send men to Joppa. Have them bring back a man named Simon. He is also called Peter. [6]He is staying with another Simon, a man who works with leather. His house is by the sea."

[7]The angel who spoke to him left. Then Cornelius called two of his servants. He also called a godly soldier who was one of his attendants. [8]He told them everything that had happened. Then he sent them to Joppa.

Peter Has a Vision

[9]It was about noon the next day. The men were on their journey and were approaching the city. Peter went up on the roof to pray. [10]He became hungry. He wanted something to eat. While the meal was being prepared, Peter had a vision. [11]He saw heaven open up. There he saw something that looked like a large sheet. It was being let down to earth by its four corners. [12]It had all kinds of four-footed animals in it. It also had reptiles of the earth and birds of the air. [13]Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat."

[14]"No, Lord! I will not!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything that is not pure and 'clean.' "

[15]The voice spoke to him a second time. "Do not say anything is not pure that

God has made ‘clean,’ ” it said.

16This happened three times. Right away the sheet was taken back up to heaven.

17Peter was wondering what the vision meant. At that very moment the men sent by Cornelius found Simon’s house. They stopped at the gate 18and called out. They asked if Simon Peter was staying there.

19Peter was still thinking about the vision. The Holy Spirit spoke to him. “Simon,” he said, “three men are looking for you. 20Get up and go downstairs. Don’t let anything keep you from going with them. I have sent them.”

21Peter went down and spoke to the men. “I’m the one you’re looking for,” he said. “Why have you come?”

22The men replied, “We have come from Cornelius, the Roman commander. He is a good man who worships God. All the Jewish people respect him. A holy angel told him to invite you to his house. Cornelius wants to hear what you have to say.” 23Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests.

Peter Goes to the House of Cornelius

The next day Peter went with the three men. Some of the believers from Joppa went along. 24The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them. He had called together his relatives and close friends.

25When Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him. As a sign of respect, he fell at Peter’s feet. 26But Peter made him get up. “Stand up,” he said. “I am only a man myself.”

27Talking with Cornelius, Peter went inside. There he found a large group of people. 28He said to them, “You know that it is against our law for a Jew to have anything to do with those who aren’t Jews. But God has shown me that I should not say anyone is not pure and ‘clean.’ 29So when you sent for me, I came without asking any questions. May I ask why you sent for me?”

30Cornelius answered, “Four days ago at this very hour I was in my house praying. It was three o’clock in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood in front of me. 31He said, ‘Cornelius, God has heard your prayer. He has remembered your gifts to poor people. 32Send someone to Joppa to get

Simon Peter. He is a guest in the home of another Simon, who works with leather. He lives by the sea.’ 33So I sent for you right away. It was good of you to come. Now we are all here. And God is here with us. We are ready to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us.”

34Then Peter began to speak. “I now realize how true it is that God treats everyone the same,” he said. 35“He accepts people from every nation. He accepts all who have respect for him and do what is right.

36“You know the message God sent to the people of Israel. It is the good news of peace through Jesus Christ. He is Lord of all. 37You know what has happened all through Judea. It started in Galilee after John preached about baptism. 38You know how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. Jesus went around doing good. He healed all who were under the devil’s power. God was with him.

39“We are witnesses of everything he did in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by nailing him to a cross. 40But on the third day God raised him from the dead. God allowed Jesus to be seen. 41But he wasn’t seen by all the people. He was seen only by us. We are witnesses whom God had already chosen. We ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.

42“He commanded us to preach to the people. He told us to give witness that he is the one appointed by God to judge the living and the dead. 43All the prophets give witness about him. They say that all who believe in him have their sins forgiven through his name.”

44While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. 45Some Jewish believers had come with Peter. They were amazed because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on those who weren’t Jews. 46They heard them speaking in languages they had not known before. They also heard them praising God.

Then Peter said, 47“Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” 48So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

Peter Explains His Actions

Acts 11

1The apostles and the believers all through Judea heard that people who were
not Jews had also received God's word. 2Peter went up to Jerusalem. There the
Jewish believers found fault with him. 3They said, "You went into the house of
those who aren't Jews. You ate with them."

4Peter explained everything to them. He told them exactly what had
happened. 5"I was in the city of Joppa praying," he said. "There I had a vision.
I saw something that looked like a large sheet. It was being let down from
heaven by its four corners. It came down to where I was. 6I looked into it and
saw four-footed animals of the earth. There were also wild animals, reptiles
and birds. 7Then I heard a voice speaking to me. 'Get up, Peter,' the voice said.
'Kill and eat.'

8"I replied, 'No, Lord! I will not! Nothing that is not pure and "clean" has
ever entered my mouth.'

9"A second time the voice spoke from heaven. 'Do not say anything is not
pure that God has made "clean," ' the voice said. 10This happened three times.
Then the sheet was pulled up into heaven.

11"Just then three men stopped at the house where I was staying. They had
been sent to me from Caesarea. 12The Holy Spirit told me not to let anything
keep me from going with them. These six brothers here went with me. We
entered the man's house. 13He told us how he had seen an angel appear in his
house. The angel said, 'Send to Joppa for Simon Peter. 14He has a message to
bring to you. You and your whole family will be saved through it.'

15"As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them. He came just as he had
come on us at the beginning. 16Then I remembered the Lord's words. 'John
baptized with water,' he had said. 'But you will be baptized with the Holy
Spirit.' 17God gave them the same gift he gave those of us who believed in the
Lord Jesus Christ. So who was I to think that I could oppose God?"

18When they heard this, they didn't object anymore. They praised God. They

said, “So then, God has allowed even those who aren’t Jews to turn away from their sins and live.”

Believers Are Called Christians for the First Time

19 Some believers had been scattered by the suffering that came to them after
Stephen’s death. They traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch. But
they told the message only to Jews. 20 Some believers from Cyprus and Cyrene
went to Antioch. There they began to speak to Greeks also. They told them the
good news about the Lord Jesus. 21 The Lord’s power was with them. Large
numbers of people believed and turned to the Lord.

22 The church in Jerusalem heard about this. So they sent Barnabas to
Antioch. 23 When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was
glad. He told them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts.
24 Barnabas was a good man. He was full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. Large
numbers of people came to know the Lord.

25 Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul. 26 He found him there. Then
he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the
church. They taught large numbers of people. At Antioch the believers were
called Christians for the first time.

27 In those days some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28 One
of them was named Agabus. He stood up and spoke through the Spirit. He said
there would not be nearly enough food anywhere in the Roman world. This
happened while Claudius was the emperor. 29 The believers decided to provide
help for the brothers and sisters living in Judea. All of them helped as much as
they could. 30 They sent their gift to the elders through Barnabas and Saul.

An Angel Helps Peter Escape From Prison

Acts 12

[1]About this time, King Herod arrested some people who belonged to the church. He planned to make them suffer greatly. [2]He had James killed with a sword. James was John's brother. [3]Herod saw that the death of James pleased the Jews. So he arrested Peter also. This happened during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. [4]After Herod arrested Peter, he put him in prison. Peter was placed under guard. He was watched by four groups of four soldiers each. Herod planned to put Peter on public trial. It would take place after the Passover Feast.

[5]So Peter was kept in prison. But the church prayed hard to God for him.

[6]It was the night before Herod was going to bring him to trial. Peter was sleeping between two soldiers. Two chains held him there. Lookouts stood guard at the entrance. [7]Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared. A light shone in the prison cell. The angel struck Peter on his side. Peter woke up. "Quick!" the angel said. "Get up!" The chains fell off Peter's wrists.

[8]Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." Peter did so. "Put on your coat," the angel told him. "Follow me." [9]Peter followed him out of the prison. But he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening. He thought he was seeing a vision. [10]They passed the first and second guards. Then they came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself. They went through it. They walked the length of one street. Suddenly the angel left Peter.

[11]Then Peter realized what had happened. He said, "Now I know for sure that the Lord sent his angel. He set me free from Herod's power. He saved me from everything the Jewish people were hoping for."

[12]When Peter understood what had happened, he went to Mary's house. Mary was the mother of John Mark. Many people had gathered in her home. They were praying there. [13]Peter knocked at the outer entrance. A servant named Rhoda came to answer the door. [14]She recognized Peter's voice. She was so

excited that she ran back without opening the door. “Peter is at the door!” she exclaimed.

15“You’re out of your mind,” they said to her. But she kept telling them it was true. So they said, “It must be his angel.”

16Peter kept on knocking. When they opened the door and saw him, they were amazed. 17Peter motioned with his hand for them to be quiet. He explained how the Lord had brought him out of prison. “Tell James and the others about this,” he said. Then he went to another place.

18In the morning the soldiers were bewildered. They couldn’t figure out what had happened to Peter. 19So Herod had them look everywhere for Peter. But they didn’t find him. Then Herod questioned the guards closely. He ordered that they be put to death.

Herod Dies

Herod went from Judea to Caesarea. He stayed there awhile. 20He had been quarreling with the people of Tyre and Sidon. So they got together and asked for a meeting with him. This was because they depended on the king’s country to supply them with food. They gained the support of Blastus and asked for peace. Blastus was a trusted personal servant of the king.

21The appointed day came. Herod was seated on his throne. He was wearing his royal robes. He made a speech to the people. 22Then they shouted, “This is the voice of a god. It’s not the voice of a man.” 23Right away an angel of the Lord struck Herod down. Herod had not given praise to God. So he was eaten by worms and died.

24But God’s word continued to increase and spread.

25Barnabas and Saul finished their task. Then they returned from Jerusalem. They took John Mark with them.

Barnabas and Saul Are Sent Off

Acts 13

[1]In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers. Among them were Barnabas, Simeon, and Lucius from Cyrene. Simeon was also called Niger. Another was Manaen. He had been brought up with Herod, the ruler of Galilee. Saul was among them too. [2]While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit spoke. “Set apart Barnabas and Saul for me,” he said. “I have appointed them to do special work.” [3]The prophets and teachers fasted and prayed. They placed their hands on Barnabas and Saul. Then they sent them off.

Events on Cyprus

[4]Barnabas and Saul were sent on their way by the Holy Spirit. They went down to Seleucia. From there they sailed to Cyprus. [5]They arrived at Salamis. There they preached God’s word in the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their helper.

[6]They traveled all across the island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jew named Bar-Jesus. He was an evil magician and a false prophet. [7]He was an attendant of Sergius Paulus, the governor. Paulus was a man of understanding. He sent for Barnabas and Saul. He wanted to hear God’s word.

[8]But Elymas, the evil magician, opposed them. The name Elymas means “magician.” He tried to keep the governor from becoming a believer. [9]Saul was also known as Paul. He was filled with the Holy Spirit. He looked straight at Elymas. He said to him, [10]“You are a child of the devil! You are an enemy of everything that is right! You cheat people. You use all kinds of tricks. Won’t you ever stop twisting the right ways of the Lord? [11]Now the Lord’s hand is against you. You are going to go blind. You won’t be able to see the light of the sun for a while.”

Right away mist and darkness came over him. He tried to feel his way

around. He wanted to find someone to lead him by the hand. [12]When the governor saw what had happened, he believed. He was amazed at what Paul was teaching about the Lord.

Paul Preaches in Pisidian Antioch

[13]From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia. There John left them and returned to Jerusalem. [14]From Perga they went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath day they entered the synagogue and sat down. [15]The Law and the Prophets were read aloud. Then the synagogue rulers sent word to Paul and his companions. They said, “Brothers, do you have a message of hope for the people? If you do, please speak.”

[16]Paul stood up and motioned with his hand. Then he said, “Men of Israel, and you non-Jews who worship God, listen to me! [17]The God of Israel chose our people who lived long ago. He blessed them greatly while they were in Egypt. With his mighty power he led them out of that country. [18]He put up with them for about 40 years in the desert. [19]He destroyed seven nations in Canaan. Then he gave the land to his people as their rightful share. [20]All of this took about 450 years.

“After this, God gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet. [21]Then the people asked for a king. He gave them Saul, son of Kish. Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin. He ruled for 40 years. [22]God removed him and made David their king. Here is God’s witness about him. ‘David, son of Jesse, is a man dear to my heart,’ he said. ‘He will do everything I want him to do.’

[23]“From this man’s family line God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus. This is what he had promised. [24]Before Jesus came, John preached that we should turn away from our sins and be baptized. He preached this to all Israel. [25]John was coming to the end of his work. ‘Who do you think I am?’ he said. ‘I am not the one you are looking for. No, he is coming after me. I am not good enough to untie his sandals.’

[26]“Listen, brothers, you children of Abraham! Listen, you non-Jews who worship God! This message of salvation has been sent to us. [27]The people of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize Jesus. By finding him guilty, they made the prophets’ words come true. These are read every Sabbath day. [28]The

people and their rulers had no reason at all for sentencing Jesus to death. But they asked Pilate to have him killed. [29]They did everything that had been written about Jesus. Then they took him down from the cross. They laid him in a tomb. [30]But God raised him from the dead. [31]For many days he was seen by those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. Now they are his witnesses to our people.

[32]"We are telling you the good news. What God promised our people long ago [33]he has done for us, their children. He has raised up Jesus. This is what is written in the second Psalm. It says,

> " 'You are my Son.
> Today I have become your Father.' (Psalm 2:7)

[34]God raised Jesus from the dead. He will never rot in the grave. This is what is written in Scripture. It says,

> " 'Holy and sure blessings were promised to David.
> I will give them to you.' (Isaiah 55:3)

[35]In another place it says,

> " 'You will not let your Holy One rot away.' (Psalm 16:10)

[36]"David carried out God's purpose while he lived. Then he died. He was buried with his people. His body rotted away. [37]But the One whom God raised from the dead did not rot away.

[38]"My brothers, here is what I want you to know. I announce to you that your sins can be forgiven because of what Jesus has done. [39]Through him everyone who believes is made right with God. Moses' law could not make you right in God's eyes. [40]Be careful! Don't let what the prophets spoke about happen to you. They said,

> [41]" 'Look, you who make fun of the truth!

Wonder and die!
I am going to do something in your days
that you would never believe.
You wouldn't believe it even if someone told you.' " (Habakkuk 1:5)

42Paul and Barnabas started to leave the synagogue. The people invited them to say more about these things on the next Sabbath day. 43The people were told they could leave the service. Many Jews followed Paul and Barnabas. Many non-Jews who faithfully worshiped the God of the Jews did the same. Paul and Barnabas talked with them. They tried to get them to keep living in God's grace.

44On the next Sabbath day, almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. 45When the Jews saw the crowds, they became very jealous. They said evil things against what Paul was saying.

46Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly. "We had to speak God's word to you first," they said. "But you don't accept it. You don't think you are good enough for eternal life. So now we are turning to those who aren't Jews. 47This is what the Lord has commanded us to do. He said,

" 'I have made you a light for those who aren't Jews.
You will bring salvation to the whole earth.' " (Isaiah 49:6)

48When the non-Jews heard this, they were glad. They honored the word of the Lord. All who were appointed for eternal life believed.

49The word of the Lord spread through the whole area. 50But the Jews stirred up the important women who worshiped God. They also stirred up the men who were leaders in the city. They tried to get them to attack Paul and Barnabas. They threw them out of that area. 51Paul and Barnabas didn't like this. So they shook the dust from their feet. They went on to Iconium. 52The believers were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Paul and Barnabas Preach in Iconium

Acts 14

[1]At Iconium, Paul and Barnabas went into the Jewish synagogue as usual. They spoke there with great power. Large numbers of Jews and non-Jews became believers. [2]But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up those who weren't Jews. They poisoned their minds against the two men and the new believers. [3]So Paul and Barnabas spent a lot of time there. They spoke boldly for the Lord. He gave them the ability to do miraculous signs and wonders. In this way the Lord showed that they were telling the truth about his grace.

[4]The people of the city did not agree with each other. Some were on the side of the Jews. Others were on the side of the apostles. [5]Jews and non-Jews alike planned to treat Paul and Barnabas badly. Their leaders agreed. They planned to kill them by throwing stones at them. [6]But Paul and Barnabas found out about the plan. They escaped to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding area. [7]There they continued to preach the good news.

Paul Preaches in Lystra

[8]In Lystra there sat a man who couldn't walk. He hadn't been able to use his feet since the day he was born. [9]He listened as Paul spoke. Paul looked right at him. He saw that the man had faith to be healed. [10]So he called out, "Stand up on your feet!" Then the man jumped up and began to walk.

[11]The crowd saw what Paul had done. They shouted in the Lycaonian language. "The gods have come down to us in human form!" they exclaimed. [12]They called Barnabas Zeus. Paul was the main speaker. So they called him Hermes. [13]Just outside the city was the temple of the god Zeus. The priest of Zeus brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates. He and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas.

[14]But the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard about this. So they tore their

clothes. They rushed out into the crowd. They shouted, [15]"Why are you men doing this? We are only human, just like you. We are bringing you good news. Turn away from these worthless things. Turn to the living God. He is the one who made the heavens and the earth and the sea. He made everything in them. [16]In the past, he let all nations go their own way. [17]But he has given proof of what he is like. He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven. He gives you crops in their seasons. He provides you with plenty of food. He fills your hearts with joy." [18]Paul and Barnabas told them all these things. But they had trouble keeping the crowd from offering sacrifices to them.

[19]Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium. They won the crowd over to their side. They threw stones at Paul. They thought he was dead, so they dragged him out of the city. [20]The believers gathered around Paul. Then he got up and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe.

Paul and Barnabas Return to Antioch

[21]Paul and Barnabas preached the good news in the city of Derbe. They won large numbers of followers. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch. [22]There they helped the believers gain strength. They told them to remain true to what they had been taught. "We must go through many hard times to enter God's kingdom," they said. [23]Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church. The elders had trusted in the Lord. Paul and Barnabas prayed and fasted. They placed the elders in the Lord's care.

[24]After going through Pisidia, Paul and Barnabas came into Pamphylia. [25]They preached the word in Perga. Then they went down to Attalia.

[26]From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch. That was where they had been committed to God's grace. They had now completed the work God had given them to do. [27]When they arrived at Antioch, they gathered the church together. They reported all that God had done through them. They told how he had opened the way for non-Jews to believe. [28]And they stayed there a long time with the believers.

Church Leaders Meet in Jerusalem

Acts 15

1 Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch. Here is what they were
teaching the believers. “Moses commanded you to be circumcised,” they said.
“If you aren’t, you can’t be saved.” 2 But Paul and Barnabas didn’t agree with
this. They argued strongly with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed to
go up to Jerusalem. Some other believers were chosen to go with them. They
were supposed to see the apostles and elders about this question.

3 The church sent them on their way. As they traveled through Phoenicia and
Samaria, they told how those who weren’t Jews had turned to God. This news
made all the believers very glad.

4 When they arrived in Jerusalem, the church welcomed them. The apostles
and elders welcomed them too. Then Paul and Barnabas reported everything
God had done through them.

5 Some of the believers were Pharisees. They stood up and said, “Those who
aren’t Jews must be circumcised. They must obey the law of Moses.”

6 The apostles and elders met to consider this question. 7 After they had talked
it over, Peter got up and spoke to them.

“Brothers,” he said, “you know that some time ago God chose me to take the
good news to those who aren’t Jews. He wanted them to hear the good news
and believe. 8 God knows the human heart. By giving the Holy Spirit to non-
Jews, he showed that he accepted them. He did the same for them as he had
done for us. 9 He showed that there is no difference between us and them. He
made their hearts pure because of their faith.

10 “Now then, why are you trying to test God? You test him when you put a
heavy load on the believers’ shoulders. Our people of long ago couldn’t carry
that load. We can’t either. 11 No! We believe we are saved through the grace of
our Lord Jesus. Those who aren’t Jews are saved in the same way.”

12 Everyone became quiet as they listened to Barnabas and Paul. They were
telling about the miraculous signs and wonders God had done through them

among non-Jews.

13When they finished, James spoke up. “Brothers,” he said, “listen to me.
14Simon Peter has explained to us how God first showed his concern for those who aren’t Jews. He chose some of them to be his very own people.

15The prophets’ words agree with that. They say,

16“ ‘After this I will return
and rebuild David’s fallen tent.
I will rebuild what was destroyed.
I will make it what it used to be.
17Then the rest of the people can look to the Lord.
This means all the non-Jews who belong to me.
The Lord says this. He is the one who does these things.’ (Amos 9:11, 12)
18The Lord does things that have been known for a long time.

19“Now here is my opinion. We should not make it hard for the non-Jews who are turning to God. 20Here is what we should write to them. They must not eat food polluted by being offered to statues of gods. They must not commit sexual sins. They must not eat the meat of animals that have been choked to death. And they must not drink blood. 21These laws of Moses have been preached in every city from the earliest times. They are read out loud in the synagogues every Sabbath day.”

A Letter Is Written to Non-Jewish Believers

22Then the apostles, the elders and the whole church decided what to do. They would choose some of their own men. They would send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. So they chose two leaders among the believers. Their names were Judas Barsabbas and Silas. 23Here is the letter they sent with them.

The apostles and elders, your brothers, are writing this letter.

We are sending it to the non-Jewish believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia.

Greetings.

[24]We have heard that some of our people came to you and caused trouble. You were upset by what they said. But we had given them no authority to go. [25]So we all agreed to send our dear friends Barnabas and Paul to you. We chose some others to go with them. [26]Barnabas and Paul have put their lives in danger for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. [27]So we are sending Judas and Silas with them. What they say will agree with this letter.

[28]It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to give you a load that is too heavy. So here are a few basic rules. [29]Don't eat food that has been offered to statues of gods. Don't drink blood. Don't eat the meat of animals that have been choked to death. And don't commit sexual sins. You will do well to keep away from these things.

Farewell.

[30]The men were sent down to Antioch. There they gathered the church together. They gave the letter to them. [31]The people read it. They were glad for its message of hope. [32]Judas and Silas were prophets. They said many things to give strength and hope to the believers. [33]/34Judas and Silas stayed there for some time. Then the believers sent them away with the blessing of peace. They sent them back to those who had sent them out.

[35]Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch. There they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord.

Paul and Barnabas Do Not Agree

[36]Some time later Paul spoke to Barnabas. "Let's go back to all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord," he said. "Let's visit the believers and see how they are doing." [37]Barnabas wanted to take John Mark with them.

[38]But Paul didn’t think it was wise to take him. Mark had deserted them in Pamphylia. He hadn’t continued with them in their work. [39]Barnabas and Paul strongly disagreed with each other. So they went their separate ways. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus. [40]But Paul chose Silas. The believers asked the Lord to give his grace to Paul and Silas as they went. [41]Paul traveled through Syria and Cilicia. He gave strength to the churches there.

Timothy Joins Paul and Silas

Acts 16

1 Paul came to Derbe. Then he went on to Lystra. A believer named Timothy
lived there. His mother was Jewish and a believer. His father was a Greek.
2 The believers at Lystra and Iconium said good things about Timothy. 3 Paul
wanted to take him along on the journey. So he circumcised Timothy because
of the Jews who lived in that area. They all knew that Timothy's father was a
Greek. 4 Paul and his companions traveled from town to town. They reported
what the apostles and elders in Jerusalem had decided. The people were
supposed to obey what was in the report. 5 So the churches were made strong in
the faith. The number of believers grew every day.

Paul's Vision of the Man From Macedonia

6 Paul and his companions traveled all through the area of Phrygia and
Galatia. The Holy Spirit had kept them from preaching the word in Asia Minor.
7 They came to the border of Mysia. From there they tried to enter Bithynia.
But the Spirit of Jesus would not let them. 8 So they passed by Mysia. Then
they went down to Troas.

9 During the night Paul had a vision. He saw a man from Macedonia standing
and begging him. "Come over to Macedonia!" the man said. "Help us!" 10 After
Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia. We
decided that God had called us to preach the good news there.

Lydia Becomes a Believer

11 At Troas we got into a boat. We sailed straight for Samothrace. The next
day we went on to Neapolis. 12 From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman
colony. It is an important city in that part of Macedonia. We stayed there

several days.

13On the Sabbath day we went outside the city gate. We walked down to the river. There we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered together. 14One of those listening was a woman named Lydia. She was from the city of Thyatira. Her business was selling purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to accept Paul's message. 15She and her family were baptized. Then she invited us to her home. "Do you consider me a believer in the Lord?" she asked. "If you do, come and stay at my house." She succeeded in getting us to go home with her.

Paul and Silas Are Thrown Into Prison

16One day we were going to the place of prayer. On the way we were met by a female slave. She had a spirit that helped her to tell ahead of time what was going to happen. She earned a lot of money for her owners by telling fortunes. 17The woman followed Paul and the rest of us around. She shouted, "These men serve the Most High God. They are telling you how to be saved." 18She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became upset. Turning around, he spoke to the spirit. "In the name of Jesus Christ," he said, "I command you to come out of her!" At that very moment the spirit left her.

19The female slave's owners realized that their hope of making money was gone. So they grabbed Paul and Silas. They dragged them into the market place to face the authorities. 20They brought them to the judges. "These men are Jews," her owners said. "They are making trouble in our city. 21They are suggesting practices that are against Roman law. These are practices we can't accept or take part in."

22The crowd joined the attack against Paul and Silas. The judges ordered that Paul and Silas be stripped and beaten. 23They were whipped without mercy. Then they were thrown into prison. The jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. 24When he received his orders, he put Paul and Silas deep inside the prison. He fastened their feet so they couldn't get away.

25About midnight Paul and Silas were praying. They were also singing hymns to God. The other prisoners were listening to them. 26Suddenly there

was a powerful earthquake. It shook the prison from top to bottom. All at once the prison doors flew open. Everybody's chains came loose.

[27]The jailer woke up. He saw that the prison doors were open. He pulled out his sword and was going to kill himself. He thought the prisoners had escaped. [28]"Don't harm yourself!" Paul shouted. "We are all here!"

[29]The jailer called out for some lights. He rushed in, shaking with fear. He fell down in front of Paul and Silas. [30]Then he brought them out. He asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

[31]They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus. Then you and your family will be saved." [32]They spoke the word of the Lord to him. They also spoke to all the others in his house.

[33]At that hour of the night, the jailer took Paul and Silas and washed their wounds. Right away he and his whole family were baptized. [34]The jailer brought them into his house. He set a meal in front of them. He and his whole family were filled with joy. They had become believers in God.

[35]Early in the morning the judges sent their officers to the jailer. They ordered him, "Let those men go." [36]The jailer told Paul, "The judges have ordered me to set you and Silas free. You can leave now. Go in peace."

[37]But Paul replied to the officers. "They beat us in public," he said. "We weren't given a trial. And we are Roman citizens! They threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and personally lead us out."

[38]The officers reported this to the judges. When the judges heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they became afraid. [39]So they came and said they were sorry. They led them out of the prison. Then they asked them to leave the city. [40]After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia's house. There they met with the believers. They told them to be brave. Then they left.

Paul and Silas Arrive in Thessalonica

Acts 17

[1]Paul and Silas passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia. They came to
Thessalonica. A Jewish synagogue was there. [2]Paul went into the synagogue as
he usually did. For three Sabbath days in a row he talked about the Scriptures
with the Jews. [3]He explained and proved that the Christ had to suffer and rise
from the dead. “This Jesus I am telling you about is the Christ!” he said. [4]His
words won some of the Jews over. They joined Paul and Silas. A large number
of Greeks who worshiped God joined them too. So did quite a few important
women.

[5]But the Jews were jealous. So they rounded up some evil fellows from the
market place. Forming a crowd, they started all kinds of trouble in the city. The
Jews rushed to Jason’s house. They were looking for Paul and Silas. They
wanted to bring them out to the crowd. [6]But they couldn’t find them. So they
dragged Jason and some other believers to the city officials. “These men have
caused trouble all over the world,” they shouted. “Now they have come here.
[7]Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all disobeying Caesar’s
commands. They say there is another king. He is called Jesus.”

[8]When the crowd and the city officials heard this, they became very upset.
[9]They made Jason and the others give them money. They wanted to make sure
they would return to the court. Then they let them go.

Paul and Silas Are Sent to Berea

[10]As soon as it was night, the believers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea.
When they arrived, they went to the Jewish synagogue.

[11]The Bereans were very glad to receive Paul’s message. They studied the
Scriptures carefully every day. They wanted to see if what Paul said was true.
So they were more noble than the Thessalonians. [12]Many of the Jews believed.
A number of important Greek women also became believers. And so did many

Greek men.

13The Jews in Thessalonica found out that Paul was preaching God's word in Berea. So they went there too. They stirred up the crowds and got them all worked up.

14Right away the believers sent Paul to the coast. But Silas and Timothy stayed in Berea. 15The men who went with Paul took him to Athens. Then they returned with orders that Silas and Timothy were supposed to join him as soon as they could.

Paul Preaches in Athens

16Paul was waiting for Silas and Timothy in Athens. He was very upset to see that the city was full of statues of gods. 17So he went to the synagogue. There he talked with Jews and with Greeks who worshiped God. Each day he spoke with anyone who happened to be in the market place.

18A group of Epicurean and Stoic thinkers began to argue with him. Some of them asked, "What is this fellow chattering about?" Others said, "He seems to be telling us about gods we've never heard of." They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus. He was telling them that Jesus had risen from the dead.

19They took him to a meeting of the Areopagus. There they said to him, "What is this new teaching you're giving us? 20You have some strange ideas. We've never heard them before. We want to know what they mean."

21All the people of Athens spent their time talking about and listening to the latest ideas. People from other lands who lived there did the same.

22Then Paul stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus. He said, "Men of Athens! I see that you are very religious in every way. 23As I walked around, I looked carefully at the things you worship. I even found an altar with TO AN UNKNOWN GOD written on it. Now I am going to tell you about this 'unknown god' that you worship.

24"He is the God who made the world. He also made everything in it. He is the Lord of heaven and earth. He doesn't live in temples built by hands. 25He is not served by human hands. He doesn't need anything. He himself gives life and breath to all people. He also gives them everything else they have. 26From

one man he made all the people of the world. Now they live all over the earth. He decided exactly when they should live. And he decided exactly where they should live. [27]God did this so that people would seek him. Then perhaps they would reach out for him and find him. They would find him even though he is not far from any of us. [28]‘In him we live and move and exist.’ As some of your own poets have also said, ‘We are his children.’

[29]“Yes, we are God’s children. So we shouldn’t think that God is made out of gold or silver or stone. He isn’t a statue planned and made by clever people. [30]In the past, God didn’t judge people for what they didn’t know. But now he commands all people everywhere to turn away from their sins. [31]He has set a day when he will judge the world fairly. He has appointed a man to be its judge. God has proved this to all people by raising that man from the dead.”

[32]When they heard Paul talk about the dead rising, some of them made fun of it. But others said, “We want to hear you speak about this again.” [33]So Paul left the meeting of the Areopagus. [34]A few men became followers of Paul and believed in Jesus. Dionysius was one of them. He was a member of the Areopagus. A woman named Damaris also became a believer. And so did some others.

Paul Goes to Corinth

Acts 18

[1]After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. [2]There he met a Jew named Aquila, who was a native of Pontus. Aquila had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla. The emperor Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see Aquila and Priscilla. [3]They were tentmakers, just as he was. So he stayed and worked with them. [4]Every Sabbath day he went to the synagogue. He was trying to get both Jews and Greeks to believe in the Lord.

[5]Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia. Then Paul spent all his time preaching. He gave witness to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. [6]But the Jews opposed Paul. They treated him badly. He didn't like this. So he shook out his clothes. Then he said to them, "Anything that happens to you will be your own fault! Don't blame me for it! From now on I will go to people who are not Jews."

[7]Then Paul left the synagogue. He went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a man who worshiped God. [8]Crispus was the synagogue ruler. He and his whole family came to believe in the Lord. Many others who lived in Corinth heard Paul. They too believed and were baptized.

[9]One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision. "Don't be afraid," he said. "Keep on speaking. Don't be silent. [10]I am with you. No one will attack you and harm you. I have many people in this city." [11]So Paul stayed there for a year and a half. He taught them God's word.

[12]At that time Gallio was governor of Achaia. The Jews got together and attacked Paul. They brought him into court. [13]"This man," they charged, "is trying to talk people into worshiping God in ways that are against the law."

[14]Paul was about to speak up for himself. But just then Gallio spoke to the Jews. "You Jews are not claiming that Paul has committed a crime, whether large or small," he said. "If you were, it would make sense for me to listen to you. [15]But this is about your own law. It is a question of words and names. Settle the matter yourselves. I will not be a judge of such things." [16]So he had

them thrown out of the court. [17]Then all the Jews turned against Sosthenes. He was the synagogue ruler. They beat him up in front of the court. But Gallio didn't care at all.

Priscilla and Aquila Teach Apollos

[18]Paul stayed in Corinth for some time. Then he left the believers and sailed for Syria. Priscilla and Aquila went with him. Before he sailed, he had his hair cut off at Cenchrea. He did this because he had made a promise to God. [19]They arrived at Ephesus. There Paul said good-by to Priscilla and Aquila. He himself went into the synagogue and talked with the Jews. [20]The Jews asked him to spend more time with them. But he said no. [21]As he left, he made them a promise. "If God wants me to," he said, "I will come back." Then he sailed from Ephesus. [22]When he landed at Caesarea, he went up to Jerusalem. There he greeted the church. He then went down to Antioch.

[23]Paul spent some time in Antioch. Then he left and traveled all over Galatia and Phrygia. He gave strength to all the believers there.

[24]At that time a Jew named Apollos came to Ephesus. He was an educated man from Alexandria. He knew the Scriptures very well. [25]Apollos had been taught the way of the Lord. He spoke with great power. He taught the truth about Jesus. But he only knew about John's baptism. [26]He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. Priscilla and Aquila heard him. So they invited him to their home. There they gave him a better understanding of the way of God.

[27]Apollos wanted to go to Achaia. The brothers agreed with him. They wrote to the believers there. They asked them to welcome him. When he arrived, he was a great help to those who had become believers by God's grace. [28]He argued strongly against the Jews in public meetings. He proved from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

Paul Goes to Ephesus

Acts 19

1While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road to Ephesus. When he
arrived, he found some believers there. 2He asked them, “Did you receive the
Holy Spirit when you became believers?”

“No,” they answered. “We haven’t even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.”

3So Paul asked, “Then what baptism did you receive?”

“John’s baptism,” they replied.

4Paul said, “John baptized people, calling them to turn away from their sins.
He told them to believe in the one who was coming after him. Jesus is that
one.” 5After hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.
6Paul placed his hands on them. Then the Holy Spirit came on them. They
spoke in languages they had not known before. They also prophesied. 7There
were about 12 of them in all.

8Paul entered the synagogue. There he spoke boldly for three months. He
tried to talk the people into accepting his teaching about God’s kingdom. 9But
some of them wouldn’t listen. They refused to believe. In public they said evil
things about the Way of Jesus. So Paul left them. He took the believers with
him. Each day he talked with people in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. 10This
went on for two years. So all the Jews and Greeks who lived in Asia Minor
heard the word of the Lord.

11God did amazing miracles through Paul. 12Even handkerchiefs and aprons
that had touched him were taken to those who were sick. When this happened,
their sicknesses were healed and evil spirits left them.

13Some Jews went around driving out evil spirits. They tried to use the name
of the Lord Jesus to set free those who were controlled by demons. They said,
“In Jesus’ name I command you to come out. He is the Jesus that Paul is
preaching about.” 14Seven sons of Sceva were doing this. Sceva was a Jewish
chief priest. 15One day the evil spirit answered them, “I know Jesus. And I
know about Paul. But who are you?” 16Then the man who had the evil spirit

jumped on Sceva's sons. He overpowered them all. He gave them a terrible beating. They ran out of the house naked and bleeding.

17The Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus heard about this. They were all overcome with fear. They held the name of the Lord Jesus in high honor. 18Many who believed now came and openly admitted the evil they had done. 19A number of those who had practiced evil magic brought their scrolls together. They set them on fire out in the open. They added up the value of the scrolls. They found that it would take more than two lifetimes to earn what the scrolls were worth.

20The word of the Lord spread everywhere. It became more and more powerful.

21After all this had happened, Paul decided to go to Jerusalem. He went through Macedonia and Achaia. "After I have been to Jerusalem," he said, "I must visit Rome also." 22He sent Timothy and Erastus, two of his helpers, to Macedonia. But he stayed a little longer in Asia Minor.

Trouble in Ephesus

23At that time many people became very upset about the Way of Jesus. 24There was a man named Demetrius who made things out of silver. He made silver models of the temple of the goddess Artemis. He brought in a lot of business for the other skilled workers. 25One day he called them together. He also called others who were in the same kind of business. "Men," he said, "you know that we make good money from our work. 26You have seen and heard what this fellow Paul is doing. He has talked to large numbers of people here in Ephesus. Almost everywhere in Asia Minor he has led people away from our gods. He says that the gods we make are not gods at all. 27Our work is in danger of losing its good name. People's faith in the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be weakened. Now she is worshiped through all of Asia Minor and the whole world. But soon she will be robbed of her greatness."

28When they heard this, they became very angry. They began shouting, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" 29Soon people were making trouble in the whole city. They all rushed into the theater. They dragged Gaius and Aristarchus along with them. These two men had come with Paul from

Macedonia. [30]Paul wanted to appear in front of the crowd. But the believers wouldn’t let him. [31]Some of the officials in Asia Minor were friends of Paul. They sent him a message, begging him not to go into the theater.

[32]The crowd didn’t know what was going on. Some were shouting one thing and some another. Most of the people didn’t even know why they were there. [33]The Jews pushed Alexander to the front. Some of the crowd tried to tell him what to say. But he motioned for them to be quiet. He wanted to speak up for himself in front of the people. [34]But then they realized that he was a Jew. So they all shouted the same thing for about two hours. “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” they yelled.

[35]The city clerk quieted the crowd down. “Men of Ephesus!” he said. “The whole world knows that the city of Ephesus guards the temple of the great Artemis. They know that Ephesus guards her statue, which fell from heaven. [36]These facts can’t be questioned. So calm down. Don’t do anything foolish.

[37]“These men haven’t robbed any temples. They haven’t said evil things against our goddess. But you have brought them here anyhow. [38]Demetrius and the other skilled workers may feel they have been wronged by someone. Let them bring charges. The courts are open. We have our governors. [39]Is there anything else you want to bring up? Settle it in a court of law. [40]As it is, today we are in danger of being charged with causing all this trouble. But there is no reason for it. We wouldn’t be able to explain what has happened.” [41]After he said this, he sent the people away.

Paul Travels Through Macedonia and Greece

Acts 20

[1]All the trouble came to an end. Then Paul sent for the believers. After cheering them up, he said good-by. He then left for Macedonia. [2]He traveled through that area, speaking many words of hope to the people. Finally he arrived in Greece. [3]There he stayed for three months. He was just about to sail for Syria. But the Jews were making plans against him. So he decided to go back through Macedonia. [4]Sopater, son of Pyrrhus, from Berea went with him. Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, and Timothy went too. Tychicus and Trophimus from Asia Minor also went with him. [5]These men went on ahead. They waited for us at Troas. [6]But we sailed from Philippi after the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Five days later we joined the others at Troas. We stayed there for seven days.

Eutychus Is Raised From the Dead

[7]On the first day of the week we met to break bread and eat together. Paul spoke to the people. He kept on talking until midnight because he planned to leave the next day. [8]There were many lamps in the room upstairs where we were meeting. [9]A young man named Eutychus was sitting in a window. He sank into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. Sound asleep, Eutychus fell from the third floor. When they picked him up from the ground, he was dead.

[10]Paul went down and threw himself on the young man. He put his arms around him. “Don’t be alarmed,” he told them. “He’s alive!” [11]Then Paul went upstairs again. He broke bread and ate with them. He kept on talking until daylight. Then he left. [12]The people took the young man home. They were greatly comforted because he was alive.

Paul Says Good-by to the Ephesian Elders

[13]We went on ahead to the ship. We sailed for Assos. There we were going to take Paul on board. He had planned it this way because he wanted to go there by land. [14]So he met us at Assos. We took him on board and went on to Mitylene.

[15]The next day we sailed from there. We arrived near Kios. The day after that we crossed over to Samos. We arrived at Miletus the next day. [16]Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus. He didn't want to spend time in Asia Minor. He was in a hurry to get to Jerusalem. If he could, he wanted to be there by the day of Pentecost.

[17]From Miletus, Paul sent for the elders of the church at Ephesus. [18]When they arrived, he spoke to them. "You know how I lived the whole time I was with you," he said. "From the first day I came into Asia Minor, [19]I was free of pride. I served the Lord with tears. I served him even though I was greatly tested by the evil plans of the Jews. [20]You know I haven't let anyone keep me from preaching anything that would be helpful to you. I have taught you in public and from house to house. [21]I have told both Jews and Greeks that they must turn away from their sins to God. They must have faith in our Lord Jesus.

[22]"Now I am going to Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit compels me. I don't know what will happen to me there. [23]I only know that in every city the Spirit warns me. He tells me that I will face prison and suffering. [24]But my life means nothing to me. I only want to finish the race. I want to complete the work the Lord Jesus has given me. He wants me to give witness to others about the good news of God's grace.

[25]"I have spent time with you preaching about the kingdom. I know that none of you will ever see me again. [26]So I tell you today that I am not guilty if anyone has not believed. [27]I haven't let anyone keep me from telling you everything God wants you to do.

[28]"Keep watch over yourselves. Keep watch over all the believers. The Holy Spirit has made you leaders over them. Be shepherds of God's church. He bought it with his own blood.

[29]"I know that after I leave, wild wolves will come in among you. They won't spare any of the sheep. [30]Even men from your own people will rise up and twist the truth. They want to get the believers to follow them. [31]So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning you. Night and day I warned each of you with tears.

[32]“Now I commit you to God’s care. I commit you to the word of his grace. It
can build you up. Then you will share in what God plans to give all his people.
[33]I haven’t longed for anyone’s silver or gold or clothing. [34]You yourselves
know that I have used my own hands to meet my needs. I have also met the
needs of my companions. [35]In everything I did, I showed you that we must
work hard and help the weak. We must remember the words of the Lord Jesus.
He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ ”

[36]When Paul had said this, he got down on his knees with all of them and
prayed. [37]They all cried as they hugged and kissed him. [38]What hurt them the
most was that he had said they would never see his face again. Then they went
with him to the ship.

Paul Continues His Journey

Acts 21

[1]After we had torn ourselves away from the Ephesian elders, we headed out
to sea. We sailed straight to Cos. The next day we went to Rhodes. From there
we continued on to Patara. [2]We found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia. So we
went on board and headed out to sea. [3]We came near Cyprus and passed to the
south of it. Then we sailed on to Syria. We landed at Tyre. There our ship was
supposed to unload. [4]We found the believers there and stayed with them for
seven days. Led by the Holy Spirit, they tried to get Paul not to go on to
Jerusalem. [5]But when it was time to leave, we continued on our way. All the
believers and their families went with us out of the city. There on the beach we
got down on our knees to pray. [6]We said good-by to each other. Then we went
on board the ship. And they returned home.

[7]Continuing on from Tyre, we landed at Ptolemais. There we greeted the
brothers and sisters. We stayed with them for a day. [8]The next day we left and
arrived at Caesarea. We stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist. He was
one of the seven deacons. [9]He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied.

[10]We stayed there several days. Then a prophet named Agabus came down
from Judea. [11]He came over to us. Then he took Paul's belt and tied his own
hands and feet with it. He said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'This is how the Jews of
Jerusalem will tie up the owner of this belt. They will hand him over to people
who are not Jews.' "

[12]When we heard this, we all begged Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. [13]He
asked, "Why are you crying? Why are you breaking my heart? I'm ready to be
put in prison. In fact, I'm ready to die in Jerusalem for the Lord Jesus." [14]We
couldn't change his mind. So we gave up. We said, "May what the Lord wants
to happen be done."

[15]After this, we got ready and went up to Jerusalem. [16]Some of the believers
from Caesarea went with us. They brought us to Mnason's home. We were
supposed to stay there. Mnason was from Cyprus. He was one of the first
believers.

Paul Arrives in Jerusalem

17When we arrived in Jerusalem, the brothers and sisters gave us a warm welcome. 18The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James. All the elders were there. 19Paul greeted them. Then he reported everything God had done among the non-Jews through his work.

20When they heard this, they praised God. Then they spoke to Paul. “Brother,” they said, “you see that thousands of Jews have become believers. All of them try very hard to obey the law. 21They have been told that you teach all the Jews who live among the non-Jews to turn away from Moses. They think that you teach them not to circumcise their children. They think that you teach them to give up our Jewish ways.

22“What should we do? They will certainly hear that you have come. 23So do what we tell you. There are four men with us who have made a promise to God. 24Take them with you. Join them in the Jewish practice that makes people pure and clean. Pay their expenses so they can have their heads shaved. Then everybody will know that these reports about you are not true in any way. They will know that you yourself obey the law.

25“We have already given written directions to the believers who are not Jews. They must not eat food that has been offered to statues of gods. They must not drink blood. They must not eat the meat of animals that have been choked to death. And they must not commit sexual sins.”

26The next day Paul took the men with him. They all made themselves pure and clean in the usual way. Then Paul went to the temple. There he reported the date when the days of cleansing would end. At that time the proper offering would be made for each of them.

Paul Is Arrested

27The seven days of cleansing were almost over. Some Jews from Asia Minor saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd. They arrested Paul. 28“Men of Israel, help us!” they shouted. “This is the man who teaches everyone in all places against our people. He speaks against our law and against this holy place. Besides, he has brought Greeks into the temple area. He

has made this holy place unclean.” [29]They said this because they had seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with Paul. They thought Paul had brought him into the temple area.

[30]The whole city was stirred up. People came running from all directions. They grabbed Paul and dragged him out of the temple. Right away the temple gates were shut. [31]The people were trying to kill Paul. But news reached the commander of the Roman troops. He heard that people were making trouble in the whole city of Jerusalem. [32]At once he took some officers and soldiers with him. They ran down to the crowd. The people causing the trouble saw the commander and his soldiers. So they stopped beating Paul.

[33]The commander came up and arrested Paul. He ordered him to be held with two chains. Then he asked who Paul was and what he had done. [34]Some in the crowd shouted one thing, some another. But the commander couldn’t get the facts because of all the noise. So he ordered that Paul be taken into the fort. [35]Paul reached the steps. But then the mob became so wild that he had to be carried by the soldiers. [36]The crowd that followed kept shouting, “Kill him!”

Paul Speaks to the Crowd

[37]The soldiers were about to take Paul into the fort. Then he asked the commander, “May I say something to you?”

“Do you speak Greek?” he replied. [38]“Aren’t you the Egyptian who turned some of our people against their leaders? Didn’t you lead 4,000 terrorists out into the desert some time ago?”

[39]Paul answered, “I am a Jew from Tarsus in Cilicia. I am a citizen of an important city. Please let me speak to the people.”

[40]The commander told him he could. So Paul stood on the steps and motioned to the crowd. When all of them were quiet, he spoke to them in the Aramaic language.

Acts 22

[1]“Brothers and fathers,” Paul began, “listen to me now. I want to speak up for myself.”

[2]When they heard that he was speaking to them in Aramaic, they became very quiet.

Then Paul said, [3]“I am a Jew. I was born in Tarsus in Cilicia. But I grew up here in Jerusalem. I was well trained by Gamaliel in the law of our people. I wanted to serve God as much as any of you do today. [4]I hurt the followers of the Way of Jesus. I sent many of them to their death. I arrested men and women. I threw them into prison. [5]The high priest and the whole Council can give witness to this. I even had some official letters they had written to their friends in Damascus. So I went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.

[6]“I had almost reached Damascus. About noon a bright light from heaven suddenly flashed around me. [7]I fell to the ground and heard a voice speak to me. ‘Saul! Saul!’ it said. ‘Why are you opposing me?’

[8]“ ‘Who are you, Lord?’ I asked.

“ ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth,’ he replied. ‘I am the one you are opposing.’

[9]“The light was seen by my companions. But they didn’t understand the voice of the one speaking to me.

[10]“ ‘What should I do, Lord?’ I asked.

“ ‘Get up,’ the Lord said. ‘Go into Damascus. There you will be told everything you have been given to do.’ [11]The brightness of the light had blinded me. So my companions led me by the hand into Damascus.

[12]“A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a godly Jew who obeyed the law. All the Jews living there respected him very much. [13]He stood beside me and said, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ At that very moment I was able to see him.

[14]“Then he said, ‘The God of our people has chosen you. He wanted to tell you his plans for you. You have seen the Blameless One. You have heard words from his mouth. [15]Now you will give witness to all people about what

you have seen and heard. [16]So what are you waiting for? Get up and call on his name. Be baptized. Have your sins washed away.’

[17]“I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple. Then it seemed to me that I was dreaming. [18]I saw the Lord speaking to me. ‘Quick!’ he said. ‘Leave Jerusalem at once. These people will not accept your witness about me.’

[19]“ ‘Lord,’ I replied, ‘these people know what I used to do. I went from one synagogue to another and put believers in prison. I also beat them. [20]Stephen was a man who gave witness to others about you. I stood there when he was killed. I had agreed that he should die. I even guarded the coats of those who were killing him.’

[21]“Then the Lord said to me, ‘Go. I will send you far away to people who are not Jews.’ ”

Paul the Roman Citizen

[22]The crowd listened to Paul until he said this. Then they shouted, “Kill him! He isn’t fit to live!”

[23]They shouted and threw off their coats. They threw dust into the air. [24]So the commanding officer ordered Paul to be taken into the fort. He gave orders for Paul to be whipped and questioned. He wanted to find out why the people were shouting at him like this.

[25]A commander was standing there as they stretched Paul out to be whipped. Paul said to him, “Does the law allow you to whip a Roman citizen who hasn’t even been found guilty?”

[26]When the commander heard this, he went to the commanding officer and reported it. “What are you going to do?” the commander asked. “This man is a Roman citizen.”

[27]So the commanding officer went to Paul. “Tell me,” he asked. “Are you a Roman citizen?”

“Yes, I am,” Paul answered.

[28]Then the officer said, “I had to pay a lot of money to become a citizen.”

“But I was born a citizen,” Paul replied.

[29]Right away those who were about to question him left. Even the officer was alarmed. He realized that he had put Paul, a Roman citizen, in chains.

Paul Is Taken to the Sanhedrin

[30]The commanding officer wanted to find out exactly what the Jews had against Paul. So the next day he let Paul out of prison. He ordered a meeting of the chief priests and all the Sanhedrin. Then he brought Paul and had him stand in front of them.

Acts 23

[1]Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin. “My brothers,” he said, “I have always
done my duty to God. To this very day I feel that I have done nothing wrong.”

[2]Ananias the high priest heard this. So he ordered the men standing near Paul
to hit him on the mouth.

[3]Then Paul said to him, “You pretender! God will hit you! You sit there and
judge me by the law. But you yourself broke the law when you commanded
them to hit me!”

[4]Those who were standing near Paul said, “How dare you talk like that to
God’s high priest!”

[5]Paul replied, “Brothers, I didn’t realize he was the high priest. It is written,
‘Do not speak evil about the ruler of your people.’ ”(Exodus 22:28)

[6]Paul knew that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees. So
he called out in the Sanhedrin. “My brothers,” he said, “I am a Pharisee. I am
the son of a Pharisee. I believe that people will rise from the dead. That’s why I
am on trial.”

[7]When he said this, the Pharisees and the Sadducees started to argue. They
began to take sides. [8]The Sadducees say that people will not rise from the dead.
They don’t believe there are angels or spirits either. But the Pharisees believe
all these things.

[9]People were causing trouble and making a lot of noise. Some of the teachers
of the law who were Pharisees stood up. They argued strongly. “We find
nothing wrong with this man,” they said. “What if a spirit or an angel has
spoken to him?” [10]The arguing got out of hand. The commanding officer was
afraid that Paul would be torn to pieces by those who were arguing. So he
ordered the soldiers to go down and take him away from them by force. They
were supposed to bring him into the fort.

[11]The next night the Lord stood near Paul. He said, “Be brave! You have
given witness about me in Jerusalem. You must do the same in Rome.”

The Plan to Kill Paul

12The next morning the Jews gathered secretly to make plans against Paul.
They took an oath that they would not eat or drink anything until they had
killed him. 13More than 40 men took part in this plan. 14They went to the chief
priests and the elders. They said, “We have taken a strong oath. We have made
a special promise to God. We will not eat anything until we have killed Paul.
15Now then, you and the Sanhedrin must make an appeal to the commanding
officer. Ask him to bring Paul to you. Pretend you want more facts about his
case. We are ready to kill him before he gets here.”

16But Paul’s nephew heard about this plan. So he went into the fort and told
Paul.

17Then Paul called one of the commanders. He said to him, “Take this young
man to the commanding officer. He has something to tell him.” 18So the
commander took Paul’s nephew to the officer.

The commander said, “Paul, the prisoner, sent for me. He asked me to bring
this young man to you. The young man has something to tell you.”

19The commanding officer took the young man by the hand. He spoke to him
in private. “What do you want to tell me?” the officer asked.

20He said, “The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul to the Sanhedrin
tomorrow. They will pretend they want more facts about him. 21Don’t give in
to them. More than 40 of them are waiting in hiding to attack him. They have
taken an oath that they will not eat or drink anything until they have killed him.
They are ready now. All they need is for you to bring Paul to the Sanhedrin.”

22The commanding officer let the young man go. But he gave him a warning.
“Don’t tell anyone you have reported this to me,” he said.

Paul Is Taken to Caesarea

23Then the commanding officer called for two of his commanders. He
ordered them, “Gather a company of 200 soldiers, 70 horsemen and 200 men
armed with spears. Get them ready to go to Caesarea at nine o’clock tonight.
24Provide horses for Paul so that he may be taken safely to Governor Felix.”

25Here is the letter the officer wrote.

26I, Claudius Lysias, am writing this letter.

I am sending it to His Excellency, Governor Felix.

Greetings.

[27]The Jews grabbed Paul. They were about to kill him. But I came with my soldiers and saved him. I had learned that he is a Roman citizen. [28]I wanted to know why they were bringing charges against him. So I brought him to their Sanhedrin. [29]I found out that the charge against him was based on questions about their law. But there was no charge against him worthy of death or prison. [30]Then I was told about a plan against the man. So I sent him to you at once. I also ordered those bringing charges against him to tell you their case.

[31]The soldiers followed their orders. During the night they took Paul with them. They brought him as far as Antipatris. [32]The next day they let the horsemen go on with him. The soldiers returned to the fort. [33]The horsemen arrived in Caesarea. They gave the letter to the governor. Then they handed Paul over to him. [34]The governor read the letter. He asked Paul where he was from. He learned that Paul was from Cilicia. [35]So he said, “I will hear your case when those bringing charges against you get here.” Then he ordered that Paul be kept under guard in Herod’s palace.

Paul's Trial in Front of Felix

Acts 24

[1]Five days later Ananias the high priest went down to Caesarea. Some elders
and a lawyer named Tertullus went with him. They brought their charges
against Paul to the governor. [2]So Paul was called in. Tertullus began to bring
the charges against Paul. He said to Felix, "We have enjoyed a long time of
peace while you have been ruling. You are a wise leader. You have made this a
better nation. [3]Most excellent Felix, we gladly admit this everywhere and in
every way. And we are very thankful. [4]I don't want to bother you. But would
you be kind enough to listen to us for a short time?

[5]"We have found that Paul is a troublemaker. He stirs up trouble among Jews
all over the world. He is a leader of those who follow Jesus of Nazareth. [6]/7He
even tried to pollute our temple. So we arrested him. [8]Question him yourself.
Then you will learn the truth about all these charges we are bringing against
him."

[9]The Jews said the same thing. They agreed that the charges were true.

[10]The governor motioned for Paul to speak. Paul said, "I know that you have
been a judge over this nation for quite a few years. So I am glad to stand up for
myself. [11]About 12 days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship. You can easily
check on this. [12]Those bringing charges against me did not find me arguing
with anyone at the temple. I wasn't stirring up a crowd in the synagogues or
anywhere else in the city. [13]They can't prove to you any of the charges they are
making against me.

[14]"It is true that I worship the God of our people. I am a follower of the Way
of Jesus. Those bringing charges against me call it a cult. I believe everything
that agrees with the Law. I believe everything written in the Prophets. [15]I have
the same hope in God that these men have. I believe that both the godly and the
ungodly will rise from the dead. [16]So I always try not to do anything wrong in
the eyes of God and man.

[17]"I was away for several years. Then I came to Jerusalem to bring my people

gifts for those who were poor. I also came to offer sacrifices. [18]They found me doing this in the temple courtyard. I had already been made pure and clean in the usual way. There was no crowd with me. I didn't stir up any trouble.

[19]"But there are some other Jews who should be here in front of you. They are from Asia Minor. They should bring charges if they have anything against me. [20]Let the Jews who are here tell you what crime I am guilty of. After all, I was put on trial by the Sanhedrin. [21]Perhaps they blame me for what I said when I was on trial. I shouted, 'I believe that people will rise from the dead. That is why I am on trial here today.' "

[22]Felix knew all about the Way of Jesus. So he put off the trial for the time being. "Lysias the commanding officer will come," he said. "Then I will decide your case." [23]He ordered the commander to keep Paul under guard. He told him to give Paul some freedom. He also told him to allow Paul's friends to take care of his needs.

[24]Several days later Felix came with his wife Drusilla. She was a Jew. Felix sent for Paul and listened to him speak about faith in Christ Jesus. [25]Paul talked about how to live right. He talked about how people should control themselves. He also talked about the time when God will judge everyone. Then Felix became afraid. "That's enough for now!" he said. "You may leave. When I find the time, I will send for you." [26]He was hoping that Paul would offer him some money to let him go. So he often sent for Paul and talked with him.

[27]Two years passed. Porcius Festus took the place of Felix. But Felix wanted to do the Jews a favor. So he left Paul in prison.

Paul's Trial in Front of Festus

Acts 25

[1]Three days after Festus arrived, he went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem. [2]There the chief priests and Jewish leaders came to him and brought their charges against Paul. [3]They tried to get Festus to have Paul taken to Jerusalem. They asked for this as a favor. They were planning to hide and attack Paul along the way. They wanted to kill him. [4]Festus answered, "Paul is being held at Caesarea. Soon I'll be going there myself. [5]Let some of your leaders come with me. If the man has done anything wrong, they can bring charges against him there."

[6]Festus spent eight or ten days in Jerusalem with them. Then he went down to Caesarea. The next day he called the court together. He ordered Paul to be brought to him. [7]When Paul arrived, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him. They brought many strong charges against him. But they couldn't prove them.

[8]Then Paul spoke up for himself. He said, "I've done nothing wrong against the law of the Jews or against the temple. I've done nothing wrong against Caesar."

[9]But Festus wanted to do the Jews a favor. So he said to Paul, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem? Are you willing to go on trial there? Are you willing to face these charges in my court?"

[10]Paul answered, "I'm already standing in Caesar's court. This is where I should go on trial. I haven't done anything wrong to the Jews. You yourself know that very well. [11]If I am guilty of anything worthy of death, I'm willing to die. But the charges brought against me by these Jews are not true. No one has the right to hand me over to them. I make my appeal to Caesar!"

[12]Festus talked it over with the members of his court. Then he said, "You have made an appeal to Caesar. To Caesar you will go!"

Festus Talks With King Agrippa

13 A few days later King Agrippa and Bernice arrived in Caesarea. They came
to pay a visit to Festus. 14 They were spending many days there. So Festus
talked with the king about Paul's case. He said, "There's a man here that Felix
left as a prisoner. 15 When I went to Jerusalem, the Jewish chief priests and the
elders brought charges against the man. They wanted him to be found guilty.

16 "I told them that this is not the way Romans do things. We don't judge
people before they have faced those bringing charges against them. They must
have a chance to speak up for themselves. 17 When the Jews came back with
me, I didn't waste any time. I called the court together the next day. I ordered
the man to be brought in. 18 Those bringing charges against him got up to
speak. But they didn't charge him with any of the crimes I had expected.
19 Instead, they argued with him about their own beliefs. They didn't agree
about a dead man named Jesus. Paul claimed Jesus was alive.

20 "I had no idea how to look into such matters. So I asked Paul if he would be
willing to go to Jerusalem. There he could be tried on these charges. 21 But Paul
made an appeal to have the Emperor decide his case. So I ordered him to be
held until I could send him to Caesar."

22 Then Agrippa said to Festus, "I would like to hear this man myself."

Festus replied, "Tomorrow you will hear him."

Paul Speaks to Agrippa

23 The next day Agrippa and Bernice arrived. They acted like very important
people. They entered the courtroom. The most important officers and the
leading men of the city came with them. When Festus gave the command, Paul
was brought in. 24 Festus said, "King Agrippa, and all who are here with us,
take a good look at this man! Both in Jerusalem and here in Caesarea a large
number of Jews have come to me about him. They keep shouting that he
shouldn't live any longer. 25 I have found that he hasn't done anything worthy
of death. But he made his appeal to the Emperor. So I decided to send him to
Rome.

26 "I don't have anything certain to write about him to His Majesty. So I have
brought him here today. Now all of you will be able to hear him. King Agrippa,
it will also be very good for you to hear him. As a result of this hearing, I will

have something to write. [27]It doesn’t make sense to send a prisoner to Rome without listing the charges against him.”

Acts 26

[1]Agrippa said to Paul, “You may now speak for yourself.”

So Paul motioned with his hand. Then he began to stand up for himself. [2]“King Agrippa,” he said, “I am happy to be able to stand here today. I will speak up for myself against all the charges brought by the Jews. [3]I am very pleased that you are familiar with Jewish ways. You know the kinds of things they argue about. So I beg you to be patient as you listen to me.

[4]“The Jews all know how I have lived ever since I was a child. They know all about me from the beginning of my life. They know how I lived in my own country and in Jerusalem. [5]They have known me for a long time. So if they wanted to, they could give witness that I lived by the rules of the Pharisees. Those rules are harder to obey than the rules of any other group in the Jewish faith.

[6]“Today I am on trial because of the hope I have. I believe in what God promised our people long ago. [7]It is the promise that our 12 tribes are hoping to see come true. Because of this hope they serve God with a true and honest heart day and night. King Agrippa, it is also because of this hope that the Jews are bringing charges against me. [8]Why should any of you think it is impossible for God to raise the dead?

[9]“I myself believed that I should do everything I could to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. [10]That’s just what I was doing in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests, I put many of God’s people in prison. I agreed that they should die. [11]I often went from one synagogue to another to have them punished. I tried to force them to speak evil things against Jesus. I hated them so much that I even went to cities in other lands to hurt them.

[12]“On one of these journeys I was on my way to Damascus. I had the authority and commission of the chief priests. [13]About noon, King Agrippa, I was on the road. I saw a light coming from heaven. It was brighter than the sun. It was shining around me and my companions. [14]We all fell to the ground. I heard a voice speak to me in the Aramaic language. ‘Saul! Saul!’ it said. ‘Why are you opposing me? It is hard for you to go against what you know is right.’

15“Then I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’

“ ‘I am Jesus,’ the Lord replied. ‘I am the one you are opposing. 16Now get up. Stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you to serve me and be my witness. You will tell others that you have seen me today. You will also tell them that I will show myself to you again.

17“ ‘I will save you from your own people and from those who aren’t Jews. I am sending you to them 18to open their eyes. I want you to turn them from darkness to light. I want you to turn them from Satan’s power to God. I want their sins to be forgiven. They will be forgiven when they believe in me. They will have their place among God’s people.’

19“So then, King Agrippa, I obeyed the vision that appeared from heaven. 20First I preached to people in Damascus. Then I preached in Jerusalem and in all Judea. I preached also to people who are not Jews. I told them to turn away from their sins to God. The way they live must prove that they have turned away from their sins. 21That’s why the Jews grabbed me in the temple courtyard and tried to kill me.

22“But God has helped me to this very day. So I stand here and give witness to both small and great. I have been saying nothing different from what the prophets and Moses said would happen. 23They said the Christ would suffer. He would be the first to rise from the dead. He would announce the light of life to his own people and to those who aren’t Jews.”

24While Paul was still speaking up for himself, Festus interrupted. “You are out of your mind, Paul!” he shouted. “Your great learning is driving you crazy!”

25“I am not crazy, most excellent Festus,” Paul replied. “What I am saying is true and reasonable. 26The king is familiar with these things. So I can speak openly to him. I am certain he knows everything that has been going on. After all, it was not done in secret. 27King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do.”

28Then Agrippa spoke to Paul. “Are you trying to talk me into becoming a Christian?” he said. “Do you think you can do that in such a short time?”

29Paul replied, “I don’t care if it takes a short time or a long time. I pray to God for you and all who are listening to me today. I pray that you may become like me, except for these chains.”

[30]The king stood up. The governor and Bernice and those sitting with them stood up too. [31]They left the room and began to talk with one another. “Why should this man die or be put in prison?” they said. “He has done nothing worthy of that!”

[32]Agrippa said to Festus, “This man could have been set free. But he has made an appeal to Caesar.”

Paul Sails for Rome

Acts 27

[1]It was decided that we would sail for Italy. Paul and some other prisoners were handed over to a Roman commander named Julius. He belonged to the Imperial Guard. [2]We boarded a ship from Adramyttium. It was about to sail for ports along the coast of Asia Minor. We headed out to sea. Aristarchus was with us. He was a Macedonian from Thessalonica.

[3]The next day we landed at Sidon. There Julius was kind to Paul. He let Paul visit his friends so they could give him what he needed. [4]From there we headed out to sea again. We passed the calmer side of Cyprus because the winds were against us.

[5]We sailed across the open sea off the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia. Then we landed at Myra in Lycia. [6]There the commander found a ship from Alexandria sailing for Italy. He put us on board. [7]We moved along slowly for many days. We had trouble getting to Cnidus. The wind did not let us stay on course. So we passed the calmer side of Crete, opposite Salmone. [8]It was not easy to sail along the coast. Then we came to a place called Fair Havens. It was near the town of Lasea.

[9]A lot of time had passed. Sailing had already become dangerous. By now it was after the Day of Atonement, a day of fasting. So Paul gave them a warning. [10]"Men," he said, "I can see that our trip is going to be dangerous. The ship and everything in it will be lost. Our own lives will be in danger also."

[11]But the commander didn't listen to what Paul said. Instead, he followed the advice of the pilot and the ship's owner. [12]The harbor wasn't a good place for ships to stay during winter. So most of the people decided we should sail on. They hoped we would reach Phoenix. They wanted to spend the winter there. Phoenix was a harbor in Crete. It faced both southwest and northwest.

The Storm

13A gentle south wind began to blow. They thought that this was what they had been waiting for. So they pulled up the anchor and sailed along the shore of Crete. 14Before very long, a wind blew down from the island. It had the force of a hurricane. It was called a “northeaster.”

15The ship was caught by the storm. We could not keep it sailing into the wind. So we gave up and were driven along. 16We passed the calmer side of a small island called Cauda. We almost lost the lifeboat. 17So the men lifted it on board. Then they tied ropes under the ship itself to hold it together. They were afraid it would get stuck on the sandbars of Syrtis. They lowered the sea anchor and let the ship be driven along.

18We took a very bad beating from the storm. The next day the crew began to throw the ship’s contents overboard. 19On the third day, they even threw the ship’s gear overboard with their own hands. 20The sun and stars didn’t appear for many days. The storm was terrible. So we gave up all hope of being saved.

21The men had not eaten for a long time. Paul stood up in front of them. “Men,” he said, “you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete. Then you would have avoided this harm and loss.

22“Now I beg you to be brave. Not one of you will die. Only the ship will be destroyed. 23I belong to God and serve him. Last night his angel stood beside me. 24The angel said, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul. You must go on trial in front of Caesar. God has shown his grace by sparing the lives of all those sailing with you.’

25“Men, continue to be brave. I have faith in God. It will happen just as he told me. 26But we must run the ship onto the beach of some island.”

The Ship Is Destroyed

27On the 14th night we were still being driven across the Sea of Adria. About midnight the sailors had a feeling that they were approaching land. 28They measured how deep the water was. They found that it was 120 feet deep. A short time later they measured the water again. This time it was 90 feet deep. 29They were afraid we would crash against the rocks. So they dropped four anchors from the back of the ship. They prayed that daylight would come.

30 The sailors wanted to escape from the ship. So they let the lifeboat down
into the sea. They pretended they were going to lower some anchors from the
front of the ship. 31 But Paul spoke to the commander and the soldiers. “These
men must stay with the ship,” he said. “If they don’t, you can’t be saved.” 32 So
the soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat. They let it drift away.

33 Just before dawn Paul tried to get them all to eat. “For the last 14 days,” he
said, “you have wondered what would happen. You have gone without food.
You haven’t eaten anything. 34 Now I am asking you to eat some food. You
need it to live. Not one of you will lose a single hair from your head.”

35 After Paul said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God. He did
this where they all could see him. Then he broke it and began to eat. 36 All of
them were filled with hope. So they ate some food. 37 There were 276 of us on
board. 38 They ate as much as they wanted. They needed to make the ship
lighter. So they threw the rest of the grain into the sea.

39 When daylight came, they saw a bay with a sandy beach. They didn’t
recognize the place. But they decided to run the ship onto the beach if they
could. 40 So they cut the anchors loose and left them in the sea. At the same
time, they untied the ropes that held the rudders. They lifted the sail at the front
of the ship to the wind. Then they headed for the beach. 41 But the ship hit a
sandbar. So the front of it got stuck and wouldn’t move. The back of the ship
was broken to pieces by the pounding of the waves.

42 The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners. They wanted to keep them from
swimming away and escaping. 43 But the commander wanted to save Paul’s
life. So he kept the soldiers from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who
could swim to jump overboard first and swim to land. 44 The rest were
supposed to get there on boards or other pieces of the ship. That is how
everyone reached land safely.

On Shore at Malta

Acts 28

[1]When we were safe on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta.
[2]The people of the island were unusually kind. It was raining and cold. So they
built a fire and welcomed all of us.

[3]Paul gathered some sticks and put them on the fire. A poisonous snake was
driven out by the heat. It fastened itself on Paul's hand. [4]The people of the
island saw the snake hanging from his hand. They said to each other, "This
man must be a murderer. He escaped from the sea. But Justice won't let him
live." Justice was the name of a goddess.

[5]Paul shook the snake off into the fire. He was not harmed. [6]The people
expected him to swell up. They thought he would suddenly fall dead. They
waited for a long time. But they didn't see anything unusual happen to him. So
they changed their minds. They said he was a god.

[7]Publius owned property nearby. He was the chief official on the island. He
welcomed us to his home. For three days he took care of us. He treated us with
kindness. [8]His father was sick in bed. The man suffered from fever and
dysentery. So Paul went in to see him. Paul prayed for him. He placed his
hands on him and healed him.

[9]Then the rest of the sick people on the island came. They too were healed.
[10]The people of the island honored us in many ways. When we were ready to
sail, they gave us the supplies we needed.

Paul Arrives in Rome

[11]After three months we headed out to sea. We sailed in a ship that had stayed
at the island during the winter. It was a ship from Alexandria. On the front of it
the figures of twin gods were carved. Their names were Castor and Pollux.
[12]We landed at Syracuse and stayed there for three days.

[13]From there we sailed to Rhegium. The next day the south wind came up. The day after that, we reached Puteoli. [14]There we found some believers. They invited us to spend a week with them.

At last we came to Rome. [15]The brothers and sisters there had heard we were coming. They traveled as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us. When Paul saw these people, he thanked God and was cheered up. [16]When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself. But a soldier guarded him.

Paul Preaches in Rome

[17]Three days later Paul called a meeting of the Jewish leaders. So they came. Paul said to them, "My brothers, I have done nothing against our people. I have also done nothing against what our people of long ago practiced. But I was arrested in Jerusalem. I was handed over to the Romans.

[18]"They questioned me. And they wanted to let me go. They saw I wasn't guilty of any crime worthy of death. [19]But the Jews objected. So I had to make an appeal to Caesar.

"It wasn't that I had anything against my own people. [20]I share Israel's hope. That is why I am held with this chain. So I have asked to see you and talk with you."

[21]They replied, "We have not received any letters from Judea about you. None of our companions who came from there has reported or said anything bad about you. [22]But we want to hear what your ideas are. We know that people everywhere are talking against those who believe as you do."

[23]They decided to meet Paul on a certain day. At that time even more people came to the place where he was staying. From morning until evening, he told them about God's kingdom and explained it to them. Using the Law of Moses and the Prophets, he tried to get them to believe in Jesus.

[24]Some believed what he said. Others did not. [25]They didn't agree with each other. They began to leave after Paul had made a final statement. He said, "The Holy Spirit was right when he spoke to your people long ago. Through Isaiah the prophet the Spirit said,

[26]“ ‘Go to your people. Say to them,
“You will hear but never understand.
You will see but never know what you are seeing.”
[27]These people’s hearts have become stubborn.
They can barely hear with their ears.
They have closed their eyes.
Otherwise they might see with their eyes.
They might hear with their ears.
They might understand with their hearts.
They might turn, and then I would heal them.’ (Isaiah 6:9, 10)

[28]/29“Here is what I want you to know. God has sent his salvation to people who are not Jews. And they will listen!”

[30]For two whole years Paul stayed there in a house he rented. He welcomed all who came to see him. [31]He preached boldly about God’s kingdom. No one could keep him from teaching people about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans

Romans 1
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Romans 3
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Romans 1

[1]I, Paul, am writing this letter. I serve Christ Jesus. I have been appointed to be an apostle. God set me apart to tell others his good news. [2]He promised the good news long ago. He announced it through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures.

[3]The good news is about God's Son. As a human being, the Son of God belonged to King David's family line. [4]By the power of the Holy Spirit, he was appointed to be the mighty Son of God because he rose from the dead. He is Jesus Christ our Lord.

[5]I received God's grace because of what Jesus did so that I could bring glory to him. He made me an apostle to all those who aren't Jews. I must invite them to have faith in God and obey him. [6]You also are among those who are appointed to belong to Jesus Christ.

[7]I am sending this letter to all of you in Rome who are loved by God and appointed to be his people.

May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

Paul Longs to Visit Rome

[8]First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you. People all over the world are talking about your faith. [9]I serve God with my whole heart. I preach the good news about his Son. God knows that I always remember you [10]in my prayers. I pray that now at last it may be God's plan to open the way for me to visit you.

[11]I long to see you. I want to make you strong by giving you a gift from the Holy Spirit. [12]I want us to cheer each other up by sharing our faith.

[13]Brothers and sisters, I want you to know that I planned many times to visit you. But until now I have been kept from coming. My work has produced results among others who are not Jews. In the same way, I want to see results

among you.

14I have a duty both to Greeks and to non-Greeks. I have a duty both to wise
people and to foolish people. 15So I really want to preach the good news also to
you who live in Rome.

16I am not ashamed of the good news. It is God's power. And it will save
everyone who believes. It is meant first for the Jews. It is meant also for those
who aren't Jews.

17The good news shows how God makes people right with himself. From
beginning to end, becoming right with God depends on a person's faith. It is
written, "Those who are right with God will live by faith."(Habakkuk 2:4)

God's Anger Against Sinners

18God shows his anger from heaven. It is against all the godless and evil
things people do. They are so evil that they say no to the truth. 19The truth
about God is plain to them. God has made it plain.

20Ever since the world was created it has been possible to see the qualities of
God that are not seen. I'm talking about his eternal power and about the fact
that he is God. Those things can be seen in what he has made. So people have
no excuse for what they do.

21They knew God. But they didn't honor him as God. They didn't thank him.
Their thinking became worthless. Their foolish hearts became dark. 22They
claimed to be wise. But they made fools of themselves. 23They would rather
have statues of gods than the glorious God who lives forever. Their statues of
gods are made to look like people, birds, animals and reptiles.

24So God let them go. He allowed them to do what their sinful hearts wanted
to. He let them commit sexual sins. They polluted one another's bodies by
what they did.

25They chose a lie instead of God's truth. They worshiped and served created
things. They didn't worship the Creator. But he must be praised forever. Amen.

26So God let them go. They were filled with shameful longings. Their women
committed sexual acts that were not natural. 27In the same way, the men turned
away from their natural love for women. They burned with sexual longing for

each other. Men did shameful things with other men. They suffered in their bodies for all the twisted things they did.

[28]They didn’t think it was important to know God. So God let them go. He allowed them to have dirty minds. They did things they shouldn’t do.

[29]They are full of every kind of sin, evil and ungodliness. They want more than they need. They commit murder. They want what belongs to other people. They fight and cheat. They hate others. They say mean things about other people. [30]They tell lies about them. They hate God. They are rude and proud. They brag. They think of new ways to do evil. They don’t obey their parents. [31]They are foolish. They can’t be trusted. They are not loving and kind.

[32]They know that God’s commands are right. They know that those who do evil things should die. But they continue to do those very things. They also approve of others who do them.

God Judges Fairly

Romans 2

[1]If you judge someone else, you have no excuse for it. When you judge another person, you are judging yourself. You do the same things you blame others for doing.

[2]We know that when God judges those who do evil things, he judges fairly. [3]Though you are only a human being, you judge others. But you yourself do the same things. So how do you think you will escape when God judges you?

[4]Do you make fun of God's great kindness and favor? Do you make fun of God when he is patient with you? Don't you realize that God's kindness is meant to turn you away from your sins?

[5]But you are stubborn. In your heart you are not sorry for your sins. You are storing up anger against yourself. The day of God's anger is coming. Then his way of judging fairly will be shown. [6]God "will give to each person in keeping with what he has done."(Psalm 62:12; Proverbs 24:12)

[7]God will give eternal life to those who keep on doing good. They want glory, honor, and life that never ends. [8]But there are others who only look out for themselves. They don't accept the truth. They go down an evil path. God will pour out his burning anger on them. [9]There will be trouble and suffering for everyone who does evil. That is meant first for the Jews. It is also meant for the non-Jews. [10]But there will be glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good. That is meant first for the Jews. It is also meant for the non-Jews. [11]God treats everyone the same.

[12]Some people do not know God's law when they sin. They will not be judged by the law when they die. Others do know God's law when they sin. They will be judged by the law. [13]Hearing the law does not make a person right with God. People are considered to be right with God only when they obey the law.

[14]Those who aren't Jews do not have the law. Sometimes they just naturally do what the law requires. They are a law for themselves. This is true even

though they don’t have the law. 15They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts. The way their minds judge them gives witness to that fact. Sometimes their thoughts find them guilty. At other times their thoughts find them not guilty.

16People will be judged on the day God appoints Jesus Christ to judge their secret thoughts. That’s part of my good news.

The Jews and the Law

17Suppose you call yourself a Jew. You trust in the law. You brag that you are close to God. 18You know what God wants. You agree with what is best because the law teaches you. 19You are sure you can lead people who are blind. You are sure you are a light for those who are in the dark. 20You claim to be able to teach foolish people. You can even teach babies. You think that in the law you have all knowledge and truth.

21You teach others. But you don’t teach yourself! You preach against stealing. But you steal! 22You say that people should not commit adultery. But you commit adultery! You hate statues of gods. But you rob temples! 23You brag about the law. But when you break it, you rob God of his honor! 24It is written, “Those who aren’t Jews say evil things against God’s name because of you.”(Isaiah 52:5; Ezekiel 36:22)

25Circumcision has value if you obey the law. But if you break the law, it is just as if you hadn’t been circumcised.

26Sometimes those who aren’t circumcised do what the law requires. Won’t God accept them as if they had been circumcised? 27Many are not circumcised physically, but they obey the law. They will prove that you are guilty. You are breaking the law, even though you have the written law and are circumcised.

28A man is not a Jew if he is a Jew only on the outside. And circumcision is more than just something done to the outside of a man’s body.

29No, a man is a Jew only if he is a Jew on the inside. And true circumcision means that the heart has been circumcised. It is done by the Holy Spirit. It is more than just obeying the written Law. Then a man’s praise will not come from others. It will come from God.

God Is Faithful

Romans 3

[1]Is there any advantage in being a Jew? Is there any value in being
circumcised?

[2]There is great value in every way! First of all, the Jews have been given the
very words of God.

[3]What if some Jews did not believe? Will the fact that they don't have faith
keep God from being faithful? [4]Not at all! God is true, even though every
human being is a liar. It is written,

> "You are right when you sentence me.
> You are fair when you judge me." (Psalm 51:4)

[5]Doesn't the fact that we are wrong prove more clearly that God is right?
Then what can we say? Can we say that God is not fair when he brings his
anger down on us? As you can tell, I am just using human ways of thinking.
[6]God is certainly fair! If he weren't, how could he judge the world?

[7]Someone might argue, "When I lie, it becomes clearer that God is truthful. It
makes his glory shine more brightly. Why then does he find me guilty of sin?"

[8]Why not say, "Let's do evil things so that good things will happen"? Some
people actually lie by reporting that this is what we say. They are the ones who
should be found guilty.

No One Is Right With God

[9]What should we say then? Are we Jews any better? Not at all! We have
already claimed that Jews are sinners. The same is true of those who aren't
Jews.

[10]It is written,

“No one is right with God, no one at all.
[11]No one understands.
No one trusts in God.
[12]All of them have turned away.
They have all become worthless.
No one does anything good,
no one at all.” (Psalms 14:1–3; 53:1–3; Ecclesiastes 7:20)
[13]“Their throats are like open graves.
With their tongues they tell lies.” (Psalm 5:9)
“The words from their lips are like the poison of a snake.” (Psalm 140:3)
[14]“Their mouths are full of curses and bitterness.” (Psalm 10:7)
[15]“They run quickly to commit murder.
[16]They leave a trail of failure and pain.
[17]They do not know the way of peace.” (Isaiah 59:7, 8)
[18]“They don’t have any respect for God.” (Psalm 36:1)

[19]What the law says, it says to those who are ruled by the law. Its purpose is to shut every mouth and make the whole world accountable to God. [20]So it can’t be said that anyone will be made right with God by obeying the law. Not at all! The law makes us more aware of our sin.

Becoming Right With God

[21]But now God has shown us how to become right with him. The Law and the Prophets give witness to this. It has nothing to do with obeying the law. [22]We are made right with God by putting our faith in Jesus Christ. That happens to all who believe.

It is no different for the Jews than for anyone else. [23]Everyone has sinned. No one measures up to God’s glory. [24]The free gift of God’s grace makes all of us right with him. Christ Jesus paid the price to set us free. [25]God gave him as a sacrifice to pay for sins. So he forgives the sins of those who have faith in his blood.

God did all of that to prove that he is fair. Because of his mercy he did not punish people for the sins they had committed before Jesus died for them.

[26]God did that to prove in our own time that he is fair. He proved that he is right. He also made right with himself those who believe in Jesus.

[27]So who can brag? No one! Are people saved by obeying the law? Not at all! They are saved because of their faith. [28]We firmly believe that people are made right with God because of their faith. They are not saved by obeying the law.

[29]Is God the God of Jews only? Isn’t he also the God of those who aren’t Jews? Yes, he is their God too. [30]There is only one God. When those who are circumcised believe in him, he makes them right with himself. When those who are not circumcised believe in him, he also makes them right with himself. [31]Does faith make the law useless? Not at all! We agree with the law.

Abraham's Faith Made Him Right With God

Romans 4

[1]What should we say about those things? What did our father Abraham discover about being right with God? [2]Did he become right with God because of something he did? If so, he could brag about it. But he couldn't brag to God. [3]What do we find in Scripture? It says, "Abraham believed God. God accepted Abraham's faith, and so his faith made him right with God."(Genesis 15:6)

[4]When a man works, his pay is not considered a gift. It is owed to him. [5]But things are different with God. He makes evil people right with himself. If people trust in him, their faith is accepted even though they do not work. Their faith makes them right with God.

[6]King David says the same thing. He tells us how blessed some people are. God makes those people right with himself. But they don't have to do anything in return. David says,

[7]"Blessed are those
whose lawless acts are forgiven.
Blessed are those
whose sins are taken away.
[8]Blessed is the man
whose sin the Lord never counts against him." (Psalm 32:1, 2)

[9]Is that blessing only for those who are circumcised? Or is it also for those who are not circumcised? We have been saying that God accepted Abraham's faith, and so his faith made him right with God. [10]When did it happen? Was it after Abraham was circumcised, or before? It was before he was circumcised, not after! [11]He was circumcised as a sign of the covenant God had made with him. It showed that his faith had made him right with God before he was circumcised.

So Abraham is the father of all believers who have not been circumcised. God accepts their faith. So their faith makes them right with him. [12]Abraham is

also the father of the circumcised who believe. So just being circumcised is not enough. Those who are circumcised must also follow the steps of our father Abraham. He had faith before he was circumcised.

13 Abraham and his family received a promise. God promised that Abraham would receive the world. It would not come to him because he obeyed the law. It would come because of his faith, which made him right with God.

14 Do those who obey the law receive the promise? If they do, faith would have no value. God's promise would be worthless. 15 The law brings God's anger. Where there is no law, the law can't be broken.

16 The promise is based on God's grace. The promise comes by faith. All of Abraham's children will certainly receive the promise. And it is not only for those who are ruled by the law. Those who have the same faith that Abraham had are also included. He is the father of us all.

17 It is written, "I have made you a father of many nations."(Genesis 17:5) God considers Abraham to be our father. The God that Abraham believed in gives life to the dead. Abraham's God also speaks of things that do not exist as if they do exist.

18 When there was no reason for hope, Abraham believed because he had hope. He became the father of many nations, exactly as God had promised. God said, "That is how many children you will have."(Genesis 15:5)

19 Without becoming weak in his faith, Abraham accepted the fact that he was past the time when he could have children. At that time he was about 100 years old. He also realized that Sarah was too old to have children.

20 But he kept believing in God's promise. He became strong in his faith. He gave glory to God. 21 He was absolutely sure that God had the power to do what he had promised. 22 That's why "God accepted Abraham because he believed. So his faith made him right with God."

23 The words "God accepted Abraham's faith" were written not only for Abraham. 24 They were written also for us. We believe in the God who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. So God will accept our faith and make us right with himself.

25 Jesus was handed over to die for our sins. He was raised to life in order to make us right with God.

Peace and Joy

Romans 5

[1]We have been made right with God because of our faith. Now we have peace with him because of our Lord Jesus Christ. [2]Through faith in Jesus we have received God's grace. In that grace we stand. We are full of joy because we expect to share in God's glory.

[3]And that's not all. We are full of joy even when we suffer. We know that our suffering gives us the strength to go on. [4]The strength to go on produces character. Character produces hope. [5]And hope will never let us down. God has poured his love into our hearts. He did it through the Holy Spirit, whom he has given to us.

[6]At just the right time Christ died for ungodly people. He died for us when we had no power of our own. [7]It is unusual for anyone to die for a godly person. Maybe someone would be willing to die for a good person. [8]But here is how God has shown his love for us. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

[9]The blood of Christ has made us right with God. So we are even more sure that Jesus will save us from God's anger. [10]Once we were God's enemies. But we have been brought back to him because his Son has died for us. Now that God has brought us back, we are even more secure. We know that we will be saved because Christ lives.

[11]And that is not all. We are full of joy in God because of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of him, God has brought us back to himself.

Death Through Adam, Life Through Christ

[12]Sin entered the world because one man sinned. And death came because of sin. Everyone sinned, so death came to all people.

[13]Before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not judged when

there is no law. [14]Death ruled from the time of Adam to the time of Moses. Death ruled even over those who did not sin as Adam did. He broke God's command. But he also became a pattern of the One who was going to come.

[15]God's gift is different from Adam's sin. Many people died because of the sin of that one man. But it was even more sure that God's grace would also come through one man. That man is Jesus Christ. God's gift of grace was more than enough for the whole world.

[16]The result of God's gift is different from the result of Adam's sin. God judged one sin. That brought guilt. But after many sins, God's gift made people right with him.

[17]One man sinned, and death ruled because of his sin. But we are even more sure of what will happen because of what the one man, Jesus Christ, has done. Those who receive the rich supply of God's grace will rule with Christ in his kingdom. They have received God's gift and have been made right with him.

[18]One man's sin brought guilt to all people. So also one right act made all people right with God. And all who are right with God will live. [19]Many people were made sinners because one man did not obey. But one man did obey. That is why many people will be made right with God.

[20]The law was given so that sin would increase. But where sin increased, God's grace increased even more. [21]Sin ruled because of death. So also grace rules in the lives of those who are right with God. The grace of God brings eternal life because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done.

Living a New Life

Romans 6

[1]What should we say then? Should we keep on sinning so that God's grace can increase? [2]Not at all! As far as sin is concerned, we are dead. So how can we keep on sinning? [3]All of us were baptized into Christ Jesus. Don't you know that we were baptized into his death? [4]By being baptized, we were buried with Christ into his death. Christ has been raised from the dead by the Father's glory. And like Christ we also can live a new life.

[5]By being baptized, we have been joined with him in his death. We will certainly also be joined with him in his resurrection. [6]We know that what we used to be was nailed to the cross with him. That happened so our sinful bodies would lose their power. We are no longer slaves of sin. [7]Those who have died have been set free from sin.

[8]We died with Christ. So we believe that we will also live with him. [9]We know that Christ was raised from the dead and will never die again. Death doesn't control him anymore. [10]When he died, he died once and for all time as far as sin is concerned. Now that he lives, he lives as far as God is concerned.

[11]In the same way, consider yourselves to be dead as far as sin is concerned. Now that you believe in Christ Jesus, consider yourselves to be alive as far as God is concerned.

[12]So don't let sin rule your body, which is going to die. Don't obey its evil longings. [13]Don't give the parts of your body to serve sin. Don't let them be used to do evil. Instead, give yourselves to God. You have been brought from death to life. Give the parts of your body to him to do what is right.

[14]Sin will not be your master. Law does not rule you. God's grace has set you free.

Slaves to Right Living

15 What should we say then? Should we sin because we are not ruled by law
but by God's grace? Not at all!

16 Don't you know that when you give yourselves to obey someone you
become that person's slave? You can be slaves of sin. Then you will die. Or
you can be slaves who obey God. Then you will live a godly life. 17 You used to
be slaves of sin. But thank God that with your whole heart you obeyed the
teachings you were given! 18 You have been set free from sin. You have become
slaves to right living.

19 Because you are human, you find this hard to understand. So I have said it
in a way that will help you understand it. You used to give the parts of your
body to be slaves to unclean living. You were becoming more and more evil.
Now give your bodies to be slaves to right living. Then you will become holy.

20 Once you were slaves of sin. At that time right living did not control you.
21 What benefit did you gain from doing the things you are now ashamed of?
Those things lead to death!

22 You have been set free from sin. God has made you his slaves. The benefit
you gain leads to holy living. And the end result is eternal life. 23 When you sin,
the pay you get is death. But God gives you the gift of eternal life because of
what Christ Jesus our Lord has done.

An Example From Marriage

Romans 7

[1]Brothers and sisters, I am speaking to you who know the law. Don't you know that the law has authority over us only as long as we are alive? [2]For example, by law a married woman is joined to her husband as long as he is living. But suppose her husband dies. Then the marriage law no longer applies to her. [3]But suppose that married woman gets married again while her husband is still alive. Then she is called a woman who commits adultery. But suppose her husband dies. Then she is free from that law. She is not guilty of adultery even if she marries another man.

[4]My brothers and sisters, when Christ died you also died as far as the law is concerned. Then it became possible for you to belong to him. He was raised from the dead. Now our lives can be useful to God. [5]Our sinful nature used to control us. The law stirred up sinful longings in our bodies. So the things we did resulted in death.

[6]But now we have died to what used to control us. We have been set free from the law. Now we serve in the new way of the Holy Spirit. We no longer serve in the old way of the written law.

Struggling With Sin

[7]What should we say then? That the law is sin? Not at all! I wouldn't have known what sin was unless the law had told me. The law said, "Do not want what belongs to other people."(Exodus 20:17; Deuteronomy 5:21) If the law hadn't said that, I would not have known what it was like to want what belonged to others. [8]But the commandment gave sin an opportunity. Sin caused me to want all kinds of things that belonged to others. No one can break a law that doesn't exist.

[9]Before I knew about the law, I was alive. But then the commandment came. Sin came to life, and I died. [10]I found that the commandment that was

supposed to bring life actually brought death. [11]When the commandment gave sin the opportunity, sin tricked me. It used the commandment to put me to death. [12]So the law is holy. The commandment also is holy and right and good.

[13]Did what is good cause me to die? Not at all! Sin had to be recognized for what it really is. So it produced death in me through what was good. Because of the commandment, sin became totally sinful.

[14]We know that the law is holy. But I am not. I have been sold to be a slave of sin. [15]I don't understand what I do. I don't do what I want to do. Instead, I do what I hate to do. [16]I do what I don't want to do. So I agree that the law is good. [17]As it is, I am no longer the one who does these things. It is sin living in me that does them.

[18]I know there is nothing good in my sinful nature. I want to do what is good, but I can't. [19]I don't do the good things I want to do. I keep on doing the evil things I don't want to do. [20]I do what I don't want to do. But I am not really the one who is doing it. It is sin living in me.

[21]Here is the law I find working in me. When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. [22]Deep inside me I find joy in God's law. [23]But I see another law working in the parts of my body. It fights against the law of my mind. It makes me a prisoner of the law of sin. That law controls the parts of my body.

[24]What a terrible failure I am! Who will save me from this sin that brings death to my body? [25]I give thanks to God. He will do it through Jesus Christ our Lord.

So in my mind I am a slave to God's law. But in my sinful nature I am a slave to the law of sin.

The Holy Spirit Gives Life

Romans 8

[1]Those who belong to Christ Jesus are no longer under God's sentence. [2]I am now controlled by the law of the Holy Spirit. That law gives me life because of what Christ Jesus has done. It has set me free from the law of sin that brings death.

[3]The written law was made weak by our sinful nature. But God did what the written law could not do. He made his Son to be like those who have a sinful nature. He sent him to be an offering for sin. In that way, he judged sin in his Son's human body. [4]Now we can do everything the law requires. Our sinful nature no longer controls the way we live. The Holy Spirit now controls the way we live.

[5]Don't live under the control of your sinful nature. If you do, you will think about what your sinful nature wants. Live under the control of the Holy Spirit. If you do, you will think about what the Spirit wants.

[6]The way a sinful person thinks leads to death. But the mind controlled by the Spirit brings life and peace. [7]The sinful mind is at war with God. It does not obey God's law. It can't. [8]Those who are controlled by their sinful nature can't please God.

[9]But your sinful nature does not control you. The Holy Spirit controls you. The Spirit of God lives in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Christ.

[10]Christ lives in you. So your body is dead because of sin. But your spirit is alive because you have been made right with God. [11]The Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you. So the God who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your bodies, which are going to die. He will do this by the power of his Spirit, who lives in you.

[12]Brothers and sisters, we have a duty. Our duty is not to live under the control of our sinful nature. [13]If you live under the control of your sinful nature, you will die. But by the power of the Holy Spirit you can put to death

the sins your body commits. Then you will live.

14Those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. 15You didn't receive a spirit that makes you a slave to fear once again. Instead you received the Holy Spirit, who makes you God's child. By the Spirit's power we call God *"Abba." Abba* means Father. 16The Spirit himself joins with our spirits. Together they give witness that we are God's children.

17As his children, we will receive all that he has for us. We will share what Christ receives. But we must share in his sufferings if we want to share in his glory.

The Hope of Future Glory

18What we are suffering now is nothing compared with the glory that will be shown in us. 19Everything God created looks forward to the time when his children will appear in their full and final glory. 20The created world was bound to fail. But that was not the result of its own choice. It was planned that way by the One who made it. God planned 21to set the created world free. He didn't want it to rot away completely. Instead, he wanted it to have the same glorious freedom that his children have.

22We know that all that God created has been groaning. It is in pain as if it were giving birth to a child. The created world continues to groan even now. 23And that's not all. We have the Holy Spirit as the promise of future blessing. But we also groan inside ourselves as we look forward to the time when God will adopt us as full members of his family. Then he will give us everything he has for us. He will raise our bodies and give glory to them.

24That's the hope we had when we were saved. But hope that can be seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? 25We hope for what we don't have yet. So we are patient as we wait for it.

26In the same way, the Holy Spirit helps us when we are weak. We don't know what we should pray for. But the Spirit himself prays for us. He prays with groans too deep for words. 27God, who looks into our hearts, knows the mind of the Spirit. And the Spirit prays for God's people just as God wants him to pray.

We Will Win

28 We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him.
He appointed them to be saved in keeping with his purpose.

29 God planned that those he had chosen would become like his Son. In that
way, Christ will be the first and most honored among many brothers. 30 And
those God has planned for, he has also appointed to be saved. Those he has
appointed, he has made right with himself. To those he has made right with
himself, he has given his glory.

31 What should we say then? Since God is on our side, who can be against us?
32 God did not spare his own Son. He gave him up for us all. Then won't he
also freely give us everything else?

33 Who can bring any charge against God's chosen ones? God makes us right
with himself. 34 Who can sentence us to death? Christ Jesus is at the right hand
of God and is also praying for us. He died. More than that, he was raised to
life.

35 Who can separate us from Christ's love? Can trouble or hard times or harm
or hunger? Can nakedness or danger or war? 36 It is written,

> "Because of you, we face death all day long.
> We are considered as sheep to be killed." (Psalm 44:22)

37 No! In all these things we will do even more than win! We owe it all to
Christ, who has loved us.

38 I am absolutely sure that not even death or life can separate us from God's
love. Not even angels or demons, the present or the future, or any powers can
do that. 39 Not even the highest places or the lowest, or anything else in all
creation can do that. Nothing at all can ever separate us from God's love
because of what Christ Jesus our Lord has done.

God's Free Choice

Romans 9

[1]I speak the truth in Christ. I am not lying. My mind tells me that what I say
is true. It is guided by the Holy Spirit. [2]My heart is full of sorrow. My sadness
never ends. [3]I am so concerned about my people, who are members of my own
race. I am ready to be cursed, if that would help them. I am even willing to be
separated from Christ.

[4]They are the people of Israel. They have been adopted as God's children.
God's glory belongs to them. So do the covenants. They received the law. They
were taught to worship in the temple. They were given the promises. [5]The
founders of our nation belong to them. Christ comes from their family line. He
is God over all. May he always be praised! Amen.

[6]Their condition does not mean that God's word has failed. Not everyone in
the family line of Israel really belongs to Israel. [7]Not everyone in Abraham's
family line is really his child. Not at all! Scripture says, "Your family line will
continue through Isaac."(Genesis 21:12)

[8]In other words, God's children are not just Abraham's natural children.
Instead, they are the children God promised to him. They are the ones
considered to be Abraham's children. [9]God promised, "I will return at the
appointed time. Sarah will have a son."(Genesis 18:10, 14)

[10]And that's not all. Rebekah's children had the same father. He was our
father Isaac.

[11]Here is what happened. Rebekah's twins had not even been born. They
hadn't done anything good or bad yet. So they show that God's purpose is
based firmly on his free choice. [12]It was not because of anything they did but
because of God's choice. So Rebekah was told, "The older son will serve the
younger one."(Genesis 25:23) [13]It is written, "I chose Jacob instead of
Esau."(Malachi 1:2, 3)

[14]What should we say then? Is God unfair? Not at all! [15]He said to Moses,

"I will have mercy on whom I have mercy.
I will show love to those I love." (Exodus 33:19)

16So it doesn't depend on what we want or do. It depends on God's mercy.

17In Scripture, God says to Pharaoh, "I had a special reason for making you king. I decided to use you to show my power. I wanted my name to become known everywhere on earth."(Exodus 9:16) 18So God does what he wants to do. He shows mercy to one person and makes another stubborn.

19One of you will say to me, "Then why does God still blame us? Who can oppose what he wants to do?" 20But you are a mere man. So who are you to talk back to God? Scripture says, "Can what is made say to the one who made it, 'Why did you make me like this?' "(Isaiah 29:16; 45:9) 21Isn't the potter free to make different kinds of pots out of the same lump of clay? Some are for special purposes. Others are for ordinary use.

22What if God chose to show his great anger? What if he chose to make his power known? That is why he put up with people he was angry with. They had been made to be destroyed. 23What if he did that to show the riches of his glory to others? Those are the people he shows his mercy to. He had prepared them to receive his glory. 24We are those people. He has chosen us. We do not come only from the Jewish race. Many of us are not Jews. 25God says in Hosea,

"I will call those who are not my people 'my people.'
I will call the one who is not my loved one 'my loved one.' " (Hosea 2:23)

26He also says,

"Once it was said to them,
'You are not my people.'
In that very place they will be called 'children of the living God.' " (Hosea 1:10)

27Isaiah cries out concerning Israel. He says,

"The number of people from Israel may be like the sand by the sea.
But only a few of them will be saved.
28 The Lord will carry out his sentence.
He will be quick to carry it out on earth, once and for all." (Isaiah 10:22, 23)

29 Earlier Isaiah had said,

"The Lord who rules over all
left us children and grandchildren.
If he hadn't, we would have become like Sodom.
We would have been like Gomorrah." (Isaiah 1:9)

Israel Does Not Believe

30 What should we say then? Those who aren't Jews did not look for a way to be right with God. But they found it by having faith. 31 Israel did look for a law that could make them right with God. But they didn't find it.

32 Why not? Because they didn't look for it by faith. They tried to get it by working for it. They tripped over the stone that causes people to trip and fall. 33 It is written,

"Look! In Zion I am laying a stone that causes people to trip.
It is a rock that makes them fall.
The one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." (Isaiah 8:14; 28:16)

Romans 10

[1]Brothers and sisters, with all my heart I long for the people of Israel to be saved. I pray to God for them. [2]I can give witness about them that they really want to serve God. But how they are trying to do it is not based on what they know.

[3]They didn't know how God makes people right with himself. They tried to get right with God in their own way. They didn't do it in God's way.

[4]Christ has completed the law. So now everyone who believes can be right with God.

[5]Moses explained how the law could help a person do what God requires. He said, "The one who does those things will live by them."(Leviticus 18:5)

[6]But the way to do what God requires must begin by having faith in him. Scripture says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will go up into heaven?' "(Deuteronomy 30:12) That means to go up into heaven and bring Christ down. [7]"And do not say, 'Who will go down into the grave?' "(Deuteronomy 30:13) That means to bring Christ up from the dead.

[8]But what does it say? "The word is near you. It's in your mouth and in your heart."(Deuteronomy 30:14) That means the word we are preaching. You must put your faith in it.

[9]Say with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord." Believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead. Then you will be saved. [10]With your heart you believe and are made right with God. With your mouth you say that Jesus is Lord. And so you are saved. [11]Scripture says, "The one who trusts in him will never be put to shame."(Isaiah 28:16)

[12]There is no difference between those who are Jews and those who are not. The same Lord is Lord of all. He richly blesses everyone who calls on him. [13]Scripture says, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."(Joel 2:32)

[14]How can they call on him unless they believe in him? How can they believe in him unless they hear about him? How can they hear about him unless someone preaches to them? [15]And how can anyone preach without being sent? It is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"(Isaiah

52:7)

16But not all the people of Israel accepted the good news. Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?”(Isaiah 53:1) 17So faith comes from hearing the message. And the message that is heard is the word of Christ.

18But I ask, “Didn’t the people of Israel hear?” Of course they did. It is written,

> “Their voice has gone out into the whole earth.
> Their words have gone out from one end of the world to the other.”
> (Psalm 19:4)

19Again I ask, “Didn’t Israel understand?” First, Moses says,

> “I will use people who are not a nation to make you jealous.
> I will use a nation that has no understanding to make you angry.”
> (Deuteronomy 32:21)

20Then Isaiah boldly speaks about what God says. God said,

> “I was found by those who were not trying to find me.
> I made myself known to those who were not asking for me.” (Isaiah 65:1)

21But Isaiah also speaks about what God says concerning Israel. God said,

> “All day long I have held out my hands.
> I have held them out to a stubborn people who do not obey me.”
> (Isaiah 65:2)

God's Faithful People in Israel

Romans 11

[1]So here is what I ask. Did God turn his back on his people? Not at all! I myself belong to Israel. I am one of Abraham's children. I am from the tribe of Benjamin. [2]God didn't turn his back on his people. After all, he chose them.

Don't you know what Scripture says about Elijah? He complained to God about Israel. [3]He said, "Lord, they have killed your prophets. They have torn down your altars. I'm the only one left. And they are trying to kill me."(1 Kings 19:10, 14)

[4]How did God answer him? God said, "I have kept 7,000 people for myself. They have not bowed down to Baal."(1 Kings 19:18)

[5]Some are also faithful today. They have been chosen by God's grace. [6]And if they are chosen by grace, it is no longer a matter of working for it. If it were, grace wouldn't be grace anymore.

[7]What should we say then? Israel did not receive what they wanted so badly. But those who were chosen did. God made the rest of them stubborn.

[8]It is written,

> "God made it hard for them to understand.
> He gave them eyes that could not see.
> He gave them ears that could not hear.
> And they are still like that today." (Deuteronomy 29:4; Isaiah 29:10)

[9]David says,

> "Let their feast be a trap and a snare.
> Let it make Israel trip and fall. Let Israel get what's coming to them.
> [10]Let their eyes grow dark so they can't see.
> Let their backs be bent forever." (Psalm 69:22, 23)

Two Kinds of Olive Branches

11 Again, here is what I ask. They didn't trip and fall once and for all time, did
they? Not at all! Because Israel sinned, those who aren't Jews can be saved.
That will make Israel jealous of them. 12 Israel's sin brought riches to the world.
Their loss brought riches to the non-Jews. What greater riches will come when
all Israel turns to God!

13 I am talking to you who are not Jews. I am the apostle to the non-Jews. So I
think the work I do for God and others is very important.

14 I hope somehow to stir up my own people to want what you have. Perhaps I
can save some of them. 15 When they were not accepted, it became possible for
the whole world to be brought back to God. So what will happen when they are
accepted? It will be like life from the dead.

16 The first handful of dough that is offered is holy. This makes all of the
dough holy.

If the root is holy, so are the branches.

17 Some of the natural branches have been broken off. You are a wild olive
branch. But you have been joined to the tree with the other branches. Now you
enjoy the life-giving sap of the olive tree root. 18 So don't think you are better
than the other branches. Remember, you don't give life to the root. The root
gives life to you.

19 You will say, "Some branches were broken off so that I could be joined to
the tree." 20 That's true. But they were broken off because they didn't believe.
You stand only because you do believe. So don't be proud. Be afraid. 21 God
didn't spare the natural branches. He won't spare you either.

22 Think about how kind God is! Also think about how firm he is! He was
hard on those who stopped following him. But he is kind to you. So you must
continue to live in his kindness. If you don't, you also will be cut off.

23 If the people of Israel do not continue in their unbelief, they will again be
joined to the tree. God is able to join them to the tree again.

24 After all, weren't you cut from a wild olive tree? Weren't you joined to an
olive tree that was taken care of? And wasn't that the opposite of how things
should be done? How much more easily will the natural branches be joined to
their own olive tree!

All Israel Will Be Saved

25 Brothers and sisters, here is a mystery I want you to understand. It will keep
you from being proud. Part of Israel has refused to obey God. That will
continue until the full number of non-Jews has entered God's kingdom. 26 And
so all Israel will be saved. It is written,

"The One who saves will come from Mount Zion.
He will remove sin from Jacob.
27 Here is my covenant with them.
I will take away their sins." (Isaiah 59:20, 21; 27:9; Jeremiah 31:33,
34)

28 As far as the good news is concerned, the people of Israel are enemies. That
is for your good. But as far as God's choice is concerned, the people of Israel
are loved. That is because of God's promises to the founders of our nation.
29 God does not take back his gifts. He does not change his mind about those he
has chosen.

30 At one time you did not obey God. But now you have received mercy
because Israel did not obey. 31 In the same way, Israel has not been obeying
God. But now they receive mercy because of God's mercy to you. 32 God has
found everyone guilty of not obeying him. So now he can have mercy on
everyone.

Praise to God

33 How very rich are God's wisdom and knowledge!
How he judges is more than we can understand!
The way he deals with people is more than we can know!
34 "Who can ever know what is in the Lord's mind?
Or who can ever give him advice?" (Isaiah 40:13)
35 "Has anyone ever given anything to God,
so that God has to pay him back?" (Job 41:11)
36 All things come from him.
All things are directed by him.

All things are for his good.

May God be given the glory forever! Amen.

Living for God

Romans 12

[1]Brothers and sisters, God has shown you his mercy. So I am asking you to offer up your bodies to him while you are still alive. Your bodies are a holy sacrifice that is pleasing to God. When you offer your bodies to God, you are worshiping him. [2]Don't live any longer the way this world lives. Let your way of thinking be completely changed. Then you will be able to test what God wants for you. And you will agree that what he wants is right. His plan is good and pleasing and perfect.

[3]God's grace has been given to me. So here is what I say to every one of you. Don't think of yourself more highly than you should. Be reasonable when you think about yourself. Keep in mind the amount of faith God has given you.

[4]Each of us has one body with many parts. And the parts do not all have the same purpose. [5]So also we are many persons. But in Christ we are one body. And each part of the body belongs to all the other parts.

[6]We all have gifts. They differ in keeping with the grace that God has given each of us. Do you have the gift of prophecy? Then use it in keeping with the faith you have. [7]Is it your gift to serve? Then serve. Is it teaching? Then teach. [8]Is it telling others how they should live? Then tell them. Is it giving to those who are in need? Then give freely. Is it being a leader? Then work hard at it. Is it showing mercy? Then do it cheerfully.

Love

[9]Love must be honest and true. Hate what is evil. Hold on to what is good. [10]Love each other deeply. Honor others more than yourselves. [11]Never let the fire in your heart go out. Keep it alive. Serve the Lord.

[12]When you hope, be joyful. When you suffer, be patient. When you pray, be faithful. [13]Share with God's people who are in need. Welcome others into your homes.

14 Bless those who hurt you. Bless them, and do not call down curses on them.
15 Be joyful with those who are joyful. Be sad with those who are sad. 16 Agree
with each other. Don’t be proud. Be willing to be a friend of people who aren’t
considered important. Don’t think that you are better than others.

17 Don’t pay back evil with evil. Be careful to do what everyone thinks is
right. 18 If possible, live in peace with everyone. Do that as much as you can.

19 My friends, don’t try to get even. Leave room for God to show his anger. It
is written, “I am the One who judges people. I will pay them
back,”(Deuteronomy 32:35) says the Lord. 20 Do just the opposite. Scripture
says,

> “If your enemies are hungry, give them food to eat.
> If they are thirsty, give them something to drink.
> By doing those things, you will pile up burning coals on their heads.”
> (Proverbs 25:21, 22)

21 Don’t let evil overcome you. Overcome evil by doing good.

Obey Those in Authority

Romans 13

[1]All of you must be willing to obey completely those who rule over you.
There are no authorities except the ones God has chosen. Those who now rule
have been chosen by God. [2]So when you oppose the authorities, you are
opposing those whom God has appointed. Those who do that will be judged.

[3]If you do what is right, you won't need to be afraid of your rulers. But watch
out if you do what is wrong! You don't want to be afraid of those in authority,
do you? Then do what is right. The one in authority will praise you. [4]He serves
God and will do you good. But if you do wrong, watch out! The ruler doesn't
carry a sword for no reason at all. He serves God. And God is carrying out his
anger through him. The ruler punishes anyone who does wrong.

[5]You must obey the authorities. Then you will not be punished. You must also
obey them because you know it is right.

[6]That's also why you pay taxes. The authorities serve God. Ruling takes up
all their time. [7]Give to everyone what you owe. Do you owe taxes? Then pay
them. Do you owe anything else to the government? Then pay it. Do you owe
respect? Then give it. Do you owe honor? Then show it.

Love, Because the Day Is Near

[8]Pay everything you owe. But you can never pay back all the love you owe
each other. Those who love others have done everything the law requires.
[9]Here are some commandments to think about. "Do not commit adultery." "Do
not commit murder." "Do not steal." "Do not want what belongs to
others."(Exodus 20:13–15, 17; Deuteronomy 5:17–19, 21) These and other
commandments are all included in one rule. Here's what it is. "Love your
neighbor as you love yourself."(Leviticus 19:18) [10]Love does not harm its
neighbor. So love does everything the law requires.

[11]When you do those things, keep in mind the times we are living in. The

hour has come for you to wake up from your sleep. Our full salvation is closer now than it was when we first believed in Christ. [12]The dark night of evil is nearly over. The day of Christ's return is almost here. So let us get rid of the works of darkness. Let us put on the armor of light.

[13]Let us act as we should, like people living in the daytime. Have nothing to do with wild parties. Don't get drunk. Don't take part in sexual sins or evil conduct. Don't fight with each other. Don't be jealous of anyone.

[14]Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ as your clothing. Don't think about how to satisfy what your sinful nature wants.

The Weak and the Strong

Romans 14

1 Accept those whose faith is weak. Don't judge them where you have
differences of opinion.

2 The faith of some people allows them to eat anything. But others eat only
vegetables because their faith is weak. 3 People who eat everything must not
look down on those who do not. And people who don't eat everything must not
judge those who do. God has accepted them.

4 Who are you to judge someone else's servants? Whether they are faithful or
not is their own master's concern. They will be faithful, because the Lord has
the power to make them faithful.

5 Some people consider one day to be more holy than another. Others think all
days are the same. Each person should be absolutely sure in his own mind.
6 Those who think one day is special do it to honor the Lord. Those who eat
meat do it to honor the Lord. They give thanks to God. Those who don't eat
meat do it to honor the Lord. They also give thanks to God.

7 We don't live for ourselves alone. And we don't die all by ourselves. 8 If we
live, we live to honor the Lord. If we die, we die to honor the Lord. So whether
we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

9 Christ died and came back to life. He did this to become the Lord of both the
dead and the living.

10 Now then, who are you to judge your brother or sister? Why do you look
down on them? We will all stand in God's courtroom to be judged. 11 It is
written,

> " 'You can be sure that I live,' says the Lord.
> 'And you can be just as sure that every knee will bow down in front of
> me.
> Every tongue will tell the truth to God.' " (Isaiah 45:23)

12So we will all have to explain to God the things we have done.

13Let us stop judging one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put anything in your brother’s way that would make him trip and fall.

14I am absolutely sure that no food is “unclean” in itself. I say this as one who belongs to the Lord Jesus. But some people may consider a thing to be “unclean.” If they do, it is “unclean” for them. 15Your brothers and sisters may be upset by what you eat. If they are, you are no longer acting as though you love them. So don’t destroy them by what you eat. Christ died for them. 16Don’t let something you consider good be spoken of as if it were evil.

17God’s kingdom has nothing to do with eating or drinking. It is a matter of being right with God. It brings the peace and joy the Holy Spirit gives.

18Those who serve Christ in this way are pleasing to God. They are pleasing to people too.

19So let us do all we can to live in peace. And let us work hard to build each other up.

20Don’t destroy the work of God because of food. All food is “clean.” But it is wrong for you to eat anything that causes someone else to trip and fall. 21Don’t eat meat if it will cause your brothers and sisters to fall. Don’t drink wine or do anything else that will make them fall.

22No matter what you think about those things, keep it between yourself and God. Blessed are those who do not have to feel guilty for what they allow.

23But those who have doubts are guilty if they eat. Their eating is not based on faith. Everything that is not based on faith is sin.

Romans 15

[1]We who have strong faith should help the weak with their problems. We
should not please only ourselves. [2]We should all please our neighbors. Let us
do what is good for them. Let us build them up.

[3]Even Christ did not please himself. It is written, “Those who make fun of
you have made fun of me also.”(Psalm 69:9) [4]Everything that was written in
the past was written to teach us. The Scriptures give us strength to go on. They
cheer us up and give us hope.

[5]Our God is a God who strengthens you and cheers you up. May he help you
agree with each other as you follow Christ Jesus. [6]Then you can give glory to
God with one heart and voice. He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus
Christ.

[7]Christ has accepted you. So accept one another in order to bring praise to
God.

[8]I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews. He teaches us that
God is true. He shows us that God will keep the promises he made to the
founders of our nation. [9]Jesus became a servant of the Jews so that people who
are not Jews could give glory to God for his mercy. It is written,

> “I will praise you among those who aren’t Jews.
> I will sing praises to you.” (2 Samuel 22:50; Psalm 18:49)

[10]Again it says,

> “You non-Jews, be full of joy.
> Be joyful together with God’s people.” (Deuteronomy 32:43)

[11]And again it says,

> “All you non-Jews, praise the Lord.

All you nations, sing praises to him.” (Psalm 117:1)

12And Isaiah says,

“The Root of Jesse will grow up quickly.
He will rule over the nations.
Those who aren’t Jews will put their hope in him.” (Isaiah 11:10)

13May the God who gives hope fill you with great joy. May you have perfect peace as you trust in him. May the power of the Holy Spirit fill you with hope.

Paul Serves the Non-Jews

14My brothers and sisters, I am sure that you are full of goodness. What you know is complete. You are able to teach one another.

15I have written to you very boldly about some things. I wanted you to think about them again. The grace of God has allowed me 16to serve Christ Jesus among those who aren’t Jews. My duty as a priest is to preach God’s good news. Then the non-Jews will become an offering that pleases God. The Holy Spirit will make the offering holy.

17Because I belong to Christ Jesus, I can take pride in my work for God. 18I will not try to speak of anything except what Christ has done through me. He has been leading those who aren’t Jews to obey God. He has been doing this by what I have said and done.

19He has given me power to do signs and miracles. He has given me the power of the Holy Spirit.

From Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum I have finished preaching the good news about Christ. 20I have always wanted to preach the good news where Christ was not known. I don’t want to build on what someone else has started. 21It is written,

“Those who were not told about him will understand.
Those who have not heard will know what it all means.” (Isaiah

52:15)

22That's why I have often been kept from coming to you.

Paul Plans to Visit Rome

23Now there is no more place for me to work in those areas. For many years I have been longing to see you. 24So I plan to see you when I go to Spain. I hope to visit you while I am passing through. And I hope you will help me on my journey there. But first I want to enjoy being with you for a while.

25Now I am on my way to Jerusalem to serve God's people there. 26The believers in Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to take an offering for those who were poor among God's people in Jerusalem. 27They were happy to do it. And of course they owe it to them. Those who aren't Jews have shared from the Jews' spiritual blessings. So the non-Jews should share their earthly blessings with the Jews.

28I want to finish my task. I want to make sure that the poor in Jerusalem have received the offering. Then I will go to Spain. On my way I will visit you. 29I know that when I come to you, I will come with the full blessing of Christ.

30Brothers and sisters, I am asking you through the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. Pray for me with the love the Holy Spirit provides. 31Pray that I will be saved from those in Judea who do not believe. Pray that my work in Jerusalem will be accepted by God's people there. 32Then, as God has planned, I will come to you with joy. Together we will be renewed.

33May the God who gives peace be with you all. Amen.

Personal Greetings

Romans 16

[1]I would like you to welcome our sister Phoebe. She serves the church in Cenchrea. [2]I ask you to receive her as one who belongs to the Lord. Receive her in the way God's people should. Give her any help she may need from you. She has been a great help to many people, including me.

[3]Greet Priscilla and Aquila. They work together with me in serving Christ Jesus. [4]They have put their lives in danger for me. I am thankful for them. So are all the non-Jewish churches.

[5]Greet also the church that meets in the house of Priscilla and Aquila.

Greet my dear friend Epenetus. He was the first person in Asia Minor to become a believer in Christ.

[6]Greet Mary. She worked very hard for you.

[7]Greet Andronicus and Junias, my relatives. They have been in prison with me. They are leaders among the apostles. They became believers in Christ before I did.

[8]Greet Ampliatus. I love him as a brother in the Lord.

[9]Greet Urbanus. He works together with me in serving Christ. And greet my dear friend Stachys.

[10]Greet Apelles. Even though he was put to the test, he remained faithful as one who belonged to Christ.

Greet those who live in the house of Aristobulus.

[11]Greet Herodion, my relative.

Greet the believers who live in the house of Narcissus.

[12]Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa. Those women work hard for the Lord.

Greet my dear friend Persis. She is another woman who has worked very hard for the Lord.

[13]Greet Rufus. He is a choice believer in the Lord. And greet his mother.

She has been like a mother to me too.

14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon and Hermes. Greet Patrobas, Hermas and the
believers with them.

15 Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister. Greet Olympas and all of
God’s people with them.

16 Greet one another with a holy kiss.

All the churches of Christ send their greetings.

17 I am warning you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who try to keep you from staying together. They want to trip you up. They teach you things opposite to what you have learned. Stay away from them. 18 People like that are not serving Christ our Lord. They are serving only themselves. With smooth talk and with words they don’t mean they fool people who don’t know any better.

19 Everyone has heard that you obey God. So you have filled me with joy. I want you to be wise about what is good. And I want you to have nothing to do with what is evil.

20 The God who gives peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

21 Timothy works together with me. He sends his greetings to you. So do Lucius, Jason and Sosipater, my relatives.

22 I, Tertius, wrote down this letter. I greet you as a believer in the Lord.

23/24 Gaius sends you his greetings. He has welcomed me and the whole church here into his house.

Erastus is the director of public works here in the city. He sends you his greetings. Our brother Quartus also greets you.

25 May God receive glory. He is able to strengthen your faith because of the good news I preach. It is the message about Jesus Christ. It is in keeping with the mystery that was hidden for a very long time. 26 The mystery has now been made known through the writings of the prophets. The eternal God commanded that it be made known. He wanted all nations to believe and obey him. 27 May the only wise God receive glory forever through Jesus Christ. Amen.

1 Corinthians

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1 Corinthians 1

[1]I, Paul, am writing this letter. I have been chosen to be an apostle of Christ Jesus just as God planned. Our brother Sosthenes joins me in writing.

[2]We are sending this letter to you, the members of God's church in Corinth. You have been made holy because you belong to Christ Jesus. God has chosen you to be his holy people. He has done the same for all those everywhere who pray to our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is their Lord and ours.

[3]May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

Paul Gives Thanks

[4]I always thank God for you. I thank him because of the grace he has given to you who belong to Christ Jesus. [5]You have been blessed in every way because of him. All your teaching of the truth is better. Your understanding of it is more complete. [6]Our witness about Christ has been proved to be true in you.

[7]There is no gift of the Holy Spirit that you don't have. You are full of hope as you wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to come again. [8]God will keep you strong to the very end. Then you will be without blame on the day our Lord Jesus Christ returns.

[9]God is faithful. He has chosen you to share life with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Taking Sides in the Church

[10]Brothers and sisters, I ask all of you to agree with one another. I make my appeal in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Then you won't take sides. You will be in complete agreement in all that you think.

[11]My brothers and sisters, some people who live in Chloe's house have told

me you are arguing with each other. [12]Here is what I mean. One of you says, “I follow Paul.” Another says, “I follow Apollos.” Another says, “I follow Peter.” And still another says, “I follow Christ.”

[13]Does Christ take sides? Did Paul die on the cross for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul? [14]I’m thankful that I didn’t baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius. [15]No one can say that you were baptized in my name.

[16]It’s true that I also baptized those who live in the house of Stephanas. Besides that, I don’t remember if I baptized anyone else.

[17]Christ did not send me to baptize. He sent me to preach the good news. He commanded me not to use the kind of wisdom that people commonly use. That would take all the power away from the cross of Christ.

Christ Is God’s Power and Wisdom

[18]The message of the cross seems foolish to those who are lost and dying. But it is God’s power to us who are being saved. [19]It is written,

> “I will destroy the wisdom of those who are wise.
> I will do away with the cleverness of those who think they are so smart.” (Isaiah 29:14)

[20]Where is the wise person? Where is the educated person? Where are the great thinkers of this world? Hasn’t God made the wisdom of the world foolish? [21]God wisely planned that the world would not know him through its own wisdom. It pleased God to use the foolish things we preach to save those who believe.

[22]Jews require miraculous signs. Greeks look for wisdom. [23]But we preach about Christ and his death on the cross. That is very hard for Jews to accept. And everyone else thinks it’s foolish.

[24]But there are those God has chosen, both Jews and others. To them Christ is God’s power and God’s wisdom. [25]The foolish things of God are wiser than human wisdom. The weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

[26]Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when God chose you. Not many of you were considered wise by human standards. Not many of you were powerful. Not many of you belonged to important families.

[27]But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise. He chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. [28]God chose the things of this world that are common and looked down on. He chose what is not considered to be important to do away with what is considered to be important. [29]So no one can brag to God.

[30]Because of what God has done, you belong to Christ Jesus. He has become God's wisdom for us. He makes us right with God. He makes us holy and sets us free. [31]It is written, "The one who brags should brag about what the Lord has done."(Jeremiah 9:24)

1 Corinthians 2

[1]Brothers and sisters, when I came to you I didn’t come with fancy words or great wisdom. I preached to you the truth about God’s love. [2]I made up my mind to pay attention to only one thing while I was with you. That one thing was Jesus Christ and his death on the cross.

[3]When I came to you, I was weak and afraid and trembling all over. [4]I didn’t preach my message with clever and compelling words. As I preached, the Holy Spirit showed his power. [5]That was so you would believe not because of human wisdom but because of God’s power.

Wisdom From the Holy Spirit

[6]The words we speak to those who have grown in the faith are wise. Our words are different from the words of the wise people or rulers of this world. People like that aren’t going anywhere. [7]No, we speak about God’s secret wisdom. His wisdom has been hidden. But before time began, God planned that his wisdom would bring us heavenly glory.

[8]None of the rulers of this world understood God’s wisdom. If they had, they would not have nailed the Lord of glory to the cross. [9]It is written,

> “No eye has seen,
> no ear has heard,
> no mind has known
> what God has prepared for those who love him.” (Isaiah 64:4)

[10]But God has shown it to us through his Spirit.

The Spirit understands all things. He understands even the deep things of God. [11]Who can know the thoughts of another person? Only a person’s own spirit can know them. In the same way, only the Spirit of God knows God’s thoughts.

[12]We have not received the spirit of the world. We have received the Spirit

who is from God. The Spirit helps us understand what God has freely given us.

13That is what we speak about. We don't use words taught to us by people.
We use words taught to us by the Holy Spirit. We use the words of the Spirit to
teach the truths of the Spirit.

14Some people don't have the Holy Spirit. They don't accept the things that
come from the Spirit of God. Things like that are foolish to them. They can't
understand them. In fact, such things can't be understood without the Spirit's
help.

15Everyone who has the Spirit can judge all things. But no one can judge
those who have the Spirit. It is written,

16"Who can ever know what is in the Lord's mind?
Can anyone ever teach him?" (Isaiah 40:13)

But we have the mind of Christ.

Taking Sides in the Church

1 Corinthians 3

[1]Brothers and sisters, I couldn’t speak to you as if you were guided by the Holy Spirit. I had to speak to you as if you were following the ways of the world. You aren’t growing as Christ wants you to. You are still like babies. [2]The words I spoke to you were like milk, not like solid food. You weren’t ready for solid food yet. And you still aren’t ready for it.

[3]You are still following the ways of the world. Some of you are jealous. Some of you argue. So aren’t you following the ways of the world? Aren’t you acting like ordinary human beings? [4]One of you says, “I follow Paul.” Another says, “I follow Apollos.” Aren’t you acting like ordinary human beings?

[5]After all, what is Apollos? And what is Paul? We are only people who serve. We helped you to believe. The Lord has given each of us our own work to do. [6]I planted the seed. Apollos watered it. But God made it grow.

[7]So the one who plants is not important. The one who waters is not important. It is God who makes things grow. He is the One who is important. [8]The one who plants and the one who waters have the same purpose. The Lord will give each of us a reward for our work. [9]We work together with God. You are like God’s field. You are like his building.

[10]God has given me the grace to lay a foundation as a master builder. Now someone else is building on it. But each one should build carefully. [11]No one can lay any other foundation than the one that has already been laid. That foundation is Jesus Christ.

[12]A person may build on it using gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay or straw. [13]But each person’s work will be shown for what it is. On judgment day it will be brought to light. It will be put through fire. The fire will test how good everyone’s work is. [14]If the building doesn’t burn up, God will give the builder a reward for his work. [15]If the building burns up, the builder will lose everything. The builder will be saved, but only like one escaping through the flames.

16 Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple? God’s Spirit lives in
you. 17 If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him. God’s temple is
holy. And you are that temple.

18 Don’t fool yourselves. Suppose some of you think you are wise by the
standards of the world. Then you should become a “fool” so that you can
become wise.

19 The wisdom of this world is foolish in God’s eyes. It is written, “God
catches wise people in their own tricks.”(Job 5:13) 20 It is also written, “The
Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise don’t amount to anything.”(Psalm
94:11)

21 So no more bragging about human beings! All things are yours. 22 That
means Paul or Apollos or Peter or the world or life or death or the present or
the future. All are yours. 23 You are joined to Christ and belong to him. And
Christ is joined to God.

Apostles of Christ

1 Corinthians 4

[1]Here is how you should think of us. We serve Christ. We are trusted with
God's secret truth. [2]Those who have been given a trust must prove that they are
faithful.

[3]I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court. I don't even
judge myself. [4]I don't feel I have done anything wrong. But that doesn't mean
I'm not guilty. The Lord judges me.

[5]So don't judge anything before the appointed time. Wait until the Lord
returns. He will bring to light what is hidden in the dark. He will show the real
reasons why people do what they do. At that time each person will receive
praise from God.

[6]Brothers and sisters, I have used myself and Apollos as examples to help
you. You can learn from us the meaning of the saying, "Don't go beyond what
is written." Then you won't be proud that you follow one person instead of
another.

[7]Who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did
not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you brag as though you did not?

[8]You already have everything you want, don't you? Have you already
become rich? Have you begun to rule as kings? And did you do that without
us? I wish that you really had begun to rule. Then we could rule with you!

[9]It seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of a parade.
We are like men sentenced to die in front of a crowd. We have been made a
show for the whole creation to see. Angels and people are staring at us.

[10]We are fools for Christ. But you are so wise in Christ! We are weak. But
you are so strong! You are honored. But we are looked down on! [11]Up to this
very hour we are hungry and thirsty. We are dressed in rags. We are being
treated badly. We have no homes. [12]We work hard with our own hands. When
others call down a curse on us, we bless them. When we are attacked, we put
up with it. [13]When others say bad things about us, we answer kindly. Up to this

moment we have become the world’s garbage. We are everybody’s trash.

14I am not writing this to shame you. You are my dear children, and I want to warn you. 15You may have 10,000 believers in Christ watching over you. But you don’t have many fathers. I became your father by serving Christ Jesus and telling you the good news. 16So I’m asking you to follow my example.

17That’s the reason I’m sending Timothy to you. He is like a son to me, and I love him. He is faithful in serving the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in serving Christ Jesus. And that agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.

18Some of you have become proud. You act as if I weren’t coming to you. 19But I will come very soon, if that’s what the Lord wants. Then I will find out how those proud people are talking. I will also find out what power they have. 20The kingdom of God is not a matter of talk. It is a matter of power.

21Which do you want? Should I come to you with a whip? Or should I come in love and with a gentle spirit?

Throw the Evil Person Out!

1 Corinthians 5

[1]It is actually reported that there is sexual sin among you. I'm told that a man is living with his father's wife and is having sex with her. Even people who do not know God don't commit that sin. [2]And you are proud! Shouldn't you be filled with sadness instead? Shouldn't you have put the man who did that out of your church?

[3]Even though I am not right there with you, I am with you in spirit. And I have already judged the one who did that, just as if I were there.

[4]When you come together in the name of our Lord Jesus, I will be with you in spirit. The power of our Lord Jesus will also be with you. [5]When you come together like that, hand that man over to Satan. Then his sinful nature will be destroyed. His spirit will be saved on the day the Lord returns.

[6]Your bragging is not good. It is like yeast. Don't you know that just a little yeast works its way through the whole batch of dough? [7]Get rid of the old yeast. Be like a new batch of dough without yeast. That is what you really are, because Christ has been offered up for us. He is our Passover lamb.

[8]So let us keep the Feast, but not with the old yeast. I'm talking about yeast that is full of hatred and evil. Let us keep the Feast with bread made without yeast. Let us do it with bread that is honest and true.

[9]I wrote a letter to you to tell you to stay away from people who commit sexual sins. [10]I didn't mean the people of this world who sin that way or who always want more and more. I didn't mean those who cheat or who worship statues of gods. In that case you would have to leave this world!

[11]But here is what I am writing to you. You must stay away from anyone who claims to be a believer but who does those things. Stay away from anyone who commits sexual sins or who always wants more and more things. Stay away from a person who worships statues of gods or who tells lies about others. Stay away from anyone who gets drunk or who cheats. Don't even eat with a person like that.

[12]Is it my business to judge those outside the church? Aren’t you supposed to judge those inside the church? [13]God will judge those outside. Scripture says, “Get rid of that evil person!”(Deuteronomy 17:7; 19:19; 21:21; 22:21, 24; 24:7)

Do Not Take Believers to Court

1 Corinthians 6

[1]Suppose one of you wants to bring a charge against another believer. Should you take it to the ungodly to be judged? Why not take it to God's people?

[2]Don't you know that God's people will judge the world? And if you are going to judge the world, aren't you able to judge small cases? [3]Don't you know that we will judge angels? Then we should be able to judge the things of this life even more!

[4]So if you want to press charges in matters like that, appoint as judges members of the church who aren't very important! [5]I say this to shame you. Is it possible that no one among you is wise enough to judge matters between believers? [6]Instead, one believer goes to court against another. And this happens in front of unbelievers!

[7]The very fact that you take another believer to court means you have lost the battle already. Why not be treated wrongly? Why not be cheated? [8]Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong. And you do it to your brothers and sisters.

[9]Don't you know that evil people will not receive God's kingdom? Don't be fooled. Those who commit sexual sins will not receive the kingdom. Neither will those who worship statues of gods or commit adultery. Neither will men who are prostitutes or who commit homosexual acts. [10]Neither will thieves or those who always want more and more. Neither will those who are often drunk or tell lies or cheat. People who live like that will not receive God's kingdom.

[11]Some of you used to do those things. But your sins were washed away. You were made holy. You were made right with God. All of that was done in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Sexual Sins

[12]Some of you say, "Everything is permitted for me." But not everything is

good for me. Again some of you say, “Everything is permitted for me.” But I will not be controlled by anything. [13]Some of you say, “Food is for the stomach. And the stomach is for food.” But God will destroy both of them.

The body is not meant for sexual sins. The body is meant for the Lord. And the Lord is meant for the body. [14]By his power God raised the Lord from the dead. He will also raise us up.

[15]Don’t you know that your bodies belong to the body of Christ? Should I take what belongs to Christ and join it to a prostitute? Never! [16]Don’t you know that when you join yourself to a prostitute, you become one with her in body? Scripture says, “The two will become one.”(Genesis 2:24) [17]But anyone who is joined to the Lord becomes one with him in spirit.

[18]Keep far away from sexual sins. All the other sins a person commits are outside his body. But sexual sins are sins against one’s own body.

[19]Don’t you know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit? The Spirit is in you. You have received him from God. You do not belong to yourselves. [20]Christ has paid the price for you. So use your bodies in a way that honors God.

Marriage

1 Corinthians 7

[1]Now I want to deal with the things you wrote me about.

Some of you say, “It is good for a man not to have sex with a woman.” [2]But since there is so much sexual sin, each man should have his own wife. And each woman should have her own husband. [3]A husband should satisfy his wife’s sexual needs. And a wife should satisfy her husband’s sexual needs.

[4]The wife’s body does not belong only to her. It also belongs to her husband. In the same way, the husband’s body does not belong only to him. It also belongs to his wife. [5]You shouldn’t stop giving yourselves to each other except when you both agree to do so. And that should be only to give yourselves time to pray for a while. Then you should come together again. In that way, Satan will not tempt you when you can’t control yourselves.

[6]I say those things to you as my advice, not as a command. [7]I wish all of you were like me. But you each have your own gift from God. One has this gift. Another has that.

[8]I speak to those who are not married. I also speak to widows. It is good for you to stay single like me. [9]But if you can’t control yourselves, you should get married. It is better to get married than to burn with sexual longing.

[10]I give a command to those who are married. It is a direct command from the Lord, not from me. A wife must not leave her husband. [11]But if she does, she must not get married again. Or she can go back to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.

[12]I also have something to say to everyone else. It is from me, not a direct command from the Lord. Suppose a brother has a wife who is not a believer. If she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. [13]And suppose a woman has a husband who is not a believer. If he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. [14]The unbelieving husband has been made holy through his wife. The unbelieving wife has been made holy through her believing husband. If that were not the case, your children would not be pure and clean.

But as it is, they are holy.

15If the unbeliever leaves, let that person go. In that case, a believing man or
woman does not have to stay married. God wants us to live in peace. 16Wife,
how do you know if you can save your husband? Husband, how do you know
if you can save your wife?

17But each of you should remain in the place in life that the Lord has given
you. Stay as you were when God chose you. That's the rule all the churches
must follow.

18Was a man already circumcised when God chose him? Then he should not
become uncircumcised. Was he uncircumcised when God chose him? Then he
should not be circumcised. 19Being circumcised means nothing. Being
uncircumcised means nothing. Doing what God commands is what counts.

20Each of you should stay as you were when God chose you.

21Were you a slave when God chose you? Don't let it trouble you. But if you
can get your master to set you free, do it. 22Those who were slaves when the
Lord chose them are now the Lord's free people. Those who were free when
God chose them are now slaves of Christ. 23Christ has paid the price for you.
Don't become slaves of human beings.

24Brothers and sisters, you are accountable to God. So all of you should stay
as you were when God chose you.

25Now I want to say something about virgins. I have no direct command from
the Lord. But I give my opinion. Because of the Lord's mercy, I give it as one
who can be trusted.

26Times are hard for you right now. So I think it's good for you to stay as you
are. 27Are you married? Then don't get a divorce. Are you single? Then don't
look for a wife. 28But if you get married, you have not sinned. And if a virgin
gets married, she has not sinned. But those who get married will have many
troubles in this life. I want to save you from that.

29Brothers and sisters, what I mean is that the time is short. From now on,
those who have a husband or wife should live as if they did not. 30Those who
are sad should live as if they were not. Those who are happy should live as if
they were not. Those who buy something should live as if it were not theirs to
keep. 31Those who use the things of the world should not become all wrapped
up in them. The world as it now exists is passing away.

[32]I don’t want you to have anything to worry about. A single man is concerned about the Lord’s matters. He wants to know how he can please the Lord. [33]But a married man is concerned about the matters of this world. He wants to know how he can please his wife. [34]His concerns pull him in two directions.

A single woman or a virgin is concerned about the Lord’s matters. She wants to serve the Lord with both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the matters of this world. She wants to know how she can please her husband.

[35]I’m saying those things for your own good. I’m not trying to hold you back. I want you to be free to live in a way that is right. I want you to give yourselves completely to the Lord.

[36]Suppose a man thinks he is not acting properly toward the virgin he has promised to marry. Suppose she is getting old, and he feels that he should marry her. He should do as he wants. He is not sinning. They should get married.

[37]But suppose the man has decided not to marry the virgin. And suppose he has no compelling need to get married and can control himself. If he has made up his mind not to get married, he also does the right thing.

[38]So then, the man who marries the virgin does the right thing. But the man who doesn’t marry her does an even better thing.

[39]A woman has to stay married to her husband as long as he lives. If he dies, she is free to marry anyone she wants to. But the one she marries must belong to the Lord. [40]In my opinion, she is happier if she stays single. And I also think that I am led by the Spirit of God in saying that.

Food Offered to Statues of Gods

1 Corinthians 8

[1]Now I want to deal with food offered to statues of gods.

We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes people proud. But love builds them up. [2]Those who think they know something still don't know as they should. [3]But those who love God are known by God.

[4]So then, here is what I say about eating food that is offered to statues of gods. We know that a god made by human hands is really nothing at all in the world. We know there is only one God. [5]There may be so-called gods either in heaven or on earth. In fact, there are many "gods" and many "lords." [6]But for us there is only one God. He is the Father. All things came from him, and we live for him. And there is only one Lord. He is Jesus Christ. All things came because of him, and we live because of him.

[7]But not everyone knows that. Some people still think that statues of gods are real gods. When they eat food that was offered to statues of gods, they think of it as food that was offered to real gods. And because they have a weak sense of what is right and wrong, they feel guilty. [8]But food doesn't bring us close to God. We are no worse if we don't eat. We are no better if we do eat.

[9]But be careful how you use your freedom. Be sure it doesn't trip up someone who is weaker than you.

[10]Suppose you who have that knowledge are eating in a temple of one of those gods. And suppose someone who has a weak sense of what is right and wrong sees you. Won't that person become bold and eat what has been offered to statues of gods? [11]If so, then your knowledge destroys that weak brother or sister for whom Christ died.

[12]When you sin against other believers in that way, you harm their weak sense of what is right and wrong. By doing that you sin against Christ.

[13]So what should I do if what I eat causes my brother or sister to fall into sin? I will never eat meat again. In that way, I will not cause them to fall.

The Rights of an Apostle

1 Corinthians 9

[1]Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Haven't I seen Jesus our Lord? Aren't you the result of my work for the Lord? [2]Even though others may not think of me as an apostle, I am certainly one to you! You are the proof that I am the Lord's apostle. [3]That is what I say to stand up for myself when people judge me.

[4]Don't we have the right to eat and drink? [5]Don't we have the right to take a believing wife with us when we travel? The other apostles do. The Lord's brothers do. Peter does. [6]Or are Barnabas and I the only ones who have to work for a living?

[7]Who serves as a soldier but doesn't get paid? Who plants a vineyard but doesn't eat any of its grapes? Who takes care of a flock but doesn't drink any of the milk? [8]Do I say that from only a human point of view? The Law says the same thing.

[9]Here is what is written in the Law of Moses. "Do not stop an ox from eating while it helps separate the grain from the straw."(Deuteronomy 25:4) Is it oxen that God is concerned about? [10]Doesn't he say that for us? Yes, it was written for us. When a farmer plows and separates the grain, he does it because he hopes to share in the crop.

[11]We have planted spiritual seed among you. Is it too much to ask that we receive from you some of the things we need? [12]Others have the right to receive help from you. Don't we have even more right to do so?

But we didn't use that right. No, we have put up with everything. We didn't want to keep the good news of Christ from spreading.

[13]Don't you know that those who work in the temple get their food from the temple? Don't you know that those who serve at the altar eat from what is offered on the altar? [14]In the same way, those who preach the good news should receive their living from their work. That is what the Lord has commanded.

15But I haven’t used any of those rights. And I’m not writing because I hope
you will do things like that for me. I would rather die than have anyone take
away my pride in my work. 16But when I preach the good news, I can’t brag. I
have to preach it. How terrible it will be for me if I do not preach the good
news!

17If I preach because I want to, I get a reward. If I preach because I have to,
I’m only doing my duty. 18Then what reward do I get? Here is what it is. I am
able to preach the good news free of charge. And I can do it without making
use of my rights when I preach it.

19I am free. I don’t belong to anyone. But I make myself a slave to everyone.
I do it to win as many as I can to Christ.

20To the Jews I became like a Jew. That was to win the Jews. To those under
the law I became like one who was under the law, even though I myself am not
under the law. That was to win those under the law. 21To those who don’t have
the law I became like one who doesn’t have the law. I am not free from God’s
law. I am under Christ’s law. Now I can win those who don’t have the law. 22To
those who are weak I became weak. That was to win the weak.

I have become all things to all people so that in all possible ways I might save
some. 23I do all of that because of the good news. And I want to share in its
blessings.

24In a race all the runners run. But only one gets the prize. You know that,
don’t you? So run in a way that will get you the prize. 25All who take part in
the games train hard. They do it to get a crown that will not last. But we do it to
get a crown that will last forever.

26So I do not run like someone who doesn’t run toward the finish line. I do
not fight like a boxer who hits nothing but air. 27No, I train my body and bring
it under control. Then after I have preached to others, I myself will not break
the rules and fail to win the prize.

Warnings From Israel's History

1 Corinthians 10

[1]Brothers and sisters, here is what I want you to know about our people who lived long ago. They were all led by the cloud. They all walked through the Red Sea. [2]They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. [3]They all ate the same supernatural food. [4]They all drank the same supernatural water. They drank from the supernatural rock that went with them. That rock was Christ.

[5]But God was not pleased with most of them. Their bodies were scattered all over the desert.

[6]Now those things happened as examples for us. They are supposed to keep us from longing for evil things, as the people of Israel did.

[7]So don't worship statues of gods, as some of them did. It is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink. Then they got up to dance wildly in front of their god."(Exodus 32:6) [8]We should not commit sexual sins, as some of them did. In one day 23,000 of them died. [9]We should not put the Lord to the test, as some of them did. They were killed by snakes. [10]Don't tell your leaders how unhappy you are with them. That's what some of the people of Israel did. And they were killed by the destroying angel.

[11]Those things happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us who are living at the time when God's work is being completed. [12]So be careful. When you think you are standing firm, you might fall.

[13]You are tempted in the same way all other human beings are. God is faithful. He will not let you be tempted any more than you can take. But when you are tempted, God will give you a way out so that you can stand up under it.

Sharing in the Body and Blood of Christ

[14]My dear friends, run away from statues of gods. Don't worship them. [15]I'm

talking to people who are reasonable. Judge for yourselves what I say.

16When we give thanks for the cup at the Lord's Supper, aren't we sharing in
the blood of Christ? When we break the bread, aren't we sharing in the body of
Christ? 17Just as there is one loaf, so we who are many are one body. We all eat
from the one loaf.

18Think about the people of Israel. Don't those who eat the offerings share in
the altar? 19Do I mean that what is offered to a statue of a god is anything? Do
I mean that a statue of a god is anything? 20No! But what is offered by those
who worship statues of gods is really offered to demons. It is not offered to
God. I don't want you to be sharing with demons.

21You can't drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too. You can't
have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons. 22Are we trying to
make the Lord jealous? Are we stronger than he is?

The Believer's Freedom

23You say, "Everything is permitted." But not everything is good for us.
Again you say, "Everything is permitted." But not everything builds us up.
24We should not look out for our own interests. Instead, we should look out for
the interests of others.

25Eat anything that is sold in the meat market. Don't ask if it's right or wrong.
26Scripture says, "The earth belongs to the Lord. And so does everything in
it."(Psalm 24:1)

27Suppose an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go. Then eat
anything that is put in front of you. Don't ask if it's right or wrong.

28But suppose someone says to you, "This food has been offered to a statue
of a god." Then don't eat it. Keep in mind the good of the one who told you.
And don't eat because of a sense of what is right and wrong. 29I'm talking
about the other person's sense of what is right and wrong, not yours.

Why should my freedom be judged by what someone else thinks? 30Suppose
I give thanks when I eat. Then why should I be blamed for eating food I thank
God for?

31So eat and drink and do everything else for the glory of God. 32Don't do

anything that causes another person to trip and fall. It doesn’t matter if that person is a Jew or a Greek or a member of God’s church.

33Follow my example. I try to please everyone in every way. I’m not looking out for what is good for me. I’m looking out for the interests of others. I do it so that they might be saved.

1 Corinthians 11

[1]Follow my example, just as I follow the example of Christ.

Proper Worship

[2]I praise you for being faithful in remembering me. I also praise you for staying true to all my teachings, just as I gave them to you.

[3]Now I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ. The head of the woman is the man. And the head of Christ is God. [4]Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered brings shame on his head. [5]And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered brings shame on her head. It is just as if her head were shaved.

[6]What if a woman does not cover her head? She should have her hair cut off. But it is shameful for her to cut her hair or shave it off. So she should cover her head.

[7]A man should not cover his head. He is the likeness and glory of God. But the woman is the glory of the man. [8]The man did not come from the woman. The woman came from the man.

[9]Also, the man was not created for the woman. The woman was created for the man. [10]That's why a woman should have her head covered. It shows that she is under authority. She should also cover her head because of the angels.

[11]But here is how things are for those who belong to the Lord. The woman is not independent of the man. And the man is not independent of the woman. [12]The woman came from the man, and the man is born from the woman. But everything comes from God.

[13]You be the judge. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God without covering her head? [14]Suppose a man has long hair. Doesn't the very nature of things teach you that it is shameful? [15]And suppose a woman has long hair. Doesn't the very nature of things teach you that it is her glory? Long hair is given to her as a covering.

16If anyone wants to argue about that, we don’t have any other practice. And God’s churches don’t either.

The Lord’s Supper

17In the following matters, I don’t praise you. Your meetings do more harm than good.

18First, here is what people are telling me. When you come together as a church, you take sides. And in some ways I believe it. 19No doubt you need to take sides in order to show which of you God agrees with!

20When you come together, it is not the Lord’s Supper you eat. 21As you eat, each of you goes ahead without waiting for anyone else. One remains hungry and another gets drunk. 22Don’t you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you think so little of God’s church that you shame those in it who have nothing? What should I say to you? Should I praise you for that? Certainly not!

23I passed on to you what I received from the Lord. On the night the Lord Jesus was handed over to his enemies, he took bread. 24When he had given thanks, he broke it. He said, “This is my body. It is given for you. Every time you eat it, do it in memory of me.” 25In the same way, after supper he took the cup. He said, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Every time you drink it, do it in memory of me.”

26When you eat the bread and drink the cup, you are announcing the Lord’s death until he comes again.

27So do not eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord in a way that isn’t worthy of him. If you do, you will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.

28A person should take a careful look at himself before he eats the bread and drinks from the cup. 29Anyone who eats and drinks must recognize the body of the Lord. If he doesn’t, God will judge him for it. 30That is why many of you are weak and sick. That is why a number of you have died.

31We should judge ourselves. Then we would not be found guilty. 32When the Lord judges us, he corrects us. Then we will not be judged along with the rest of the world.

[33]My brothers and sisters, when you come together to eat, wait for each other.
[34]Those who are hungry should eat at home. Then when you come together, you will not be judged.

When I come, I will give you more directions.

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

1 Corinthians 12

[1]Brothers and sisters, I want you to know about the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

[2]You know that at one time you were unbelievers. You were somehow drawn away to worship statues of gods that couldn't even speak. [3]So I tell you that no one who is speaking with the help of God's Spirit says, "May Jesus be cursed." And without the help of the Holy Spirit no one can say, "Jesus is Lord."

[4]There are different kinds of gifts. But they are all given by the same Spirit. [5]There are different ways to serve. But they all come from the same Lord. [6]There are different ways to work. But the same God makes it possible for all of us to have all those different things.

[7]The Holy Spirit is given to each of us in a special way. That is for the good of all. [8]To some people the Spirit gives the message of wisdom. To others the same Spirit gives the message of knowledge. [9]To others the same Spirit gives faith. To others that one Spirit gives gifts of healing. [10]To others he gives the power to do miracles. To others he gives the ability to prophesy. To others he gives the ability to tell the spirits apart. To others he gives the ability to speak in different kinds of languages they had not known before. And to still others he gives the ability to explain what was said in those languages.

[11]All of the gifts are produced by one and the same Spirit. He gives them to each person, just as he decides.

One Body but Many Parts

[12]There is one body. But it has many parts. Even though it has many parts, they make up one body. It is the same with Christ. [13]We were all baptized by one Holy Spirit into one body. It didn't matter whether we were Jews or Greeks, slaves or free people. We were all given the same Spirit to drink.

[14]The body is not made up of just one part. It has many parts. [15]Suppose the

foot says, “I am not a hand. So I don’t belong to the body.” It is still part of the body. 16And suppose the ear says, “I am not an eye. So I don’t belong to the body.” It is still part of the body.

17If the whole body were an eye, how could it hear? If the whole body were an ear, how could it smell? 18God has placed each part in the body just as he wanted it to be. 19If all the parts were the same, how could there be a body? 20As it is, there are many parts. But there is only one body.

21The eye can’t say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” The head can’t say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” 22In fact, it is just the opposite. The parts of the body that seem to be weaker are the ones we can’t do without. 23The parts that we think are less important we treat with special honor. The private parts aren’t shown. But they are treated with special care. 24The parts that can be shown don’t need special care.

But God has joined together all the parts of the body. And he has given more honor to the parts that didn’t have any. 25In that way, the parts of the body will not take sides. All of them will take care of each other. 26If one part suffers, every part suffers with it. If one part is honored, every part shares in its joy.

27You are the body of Christ. Each one of you is a part of it. 28First, God has appointed apostles in the church. Second, he has appointed prophets. Third, he has appointed teachers. Then he has appointed people who do miracles and those who have gifts of healing. He also appointed those able to help others, those able to direct things, and those who can speak in different kinds of languages they had not known before.

29Is everyone an apostle? Is everyone a prophet? Is everyone a teacher? Do all work miracles? 30Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in languages they had not known before? Do all explain what is said in those languages? 31But above all, you should want the more important gifts.

Love

And now I will show you the best way of all.

1 Corinthians 13

[1]Suppose I speak in the languages of human beings and of angels. If I don’t
have love, I am only a loud gong or a noisy cymbal. [2]Suppose I have the gift of
prophecy. Suppose I can understand all the secret things of God and know
everything about him. And suppose I have enough faith to move mountains. If
I don’t have love, I am nothing at all. [3]Suppose I give everything I have to poor
people. And suppose I give my body to be burned. If I don’t have love, I get
nothing at all.

[4]Love is patient. Love is kind. It does not want what belongs to others. It does
not brag. It is not proud. [5]It is not rude. It does not look out for its own
interests. It does not easily become angry. It does not keep track of other
people’s wrongs.

[6]Love is not happy with evil. But it is full of joy when the truth is spoken. [7]It
always protects. It always trusts. It always hopes. It never gives up.

[8]Love never fails. But prophecy will pass away. Speaking in languages that
had not been known before will end. And knowledge will pass away.

[9]What we know now is not complete. What we prophesy now is not perfect.
[10]But when what is perfect comes, the things that are not perfect will pass
away.

[11]When I was a child, I talked like a child. I thought like a child. I had the
understanding of a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind
me.

[12]Now we see only a dim likeness of things. It is as if we were seeing them in
a mirror. But someday we will see clearly. We will see face to face. What I
know now is not complete. But someday I will know completely, just as God
knows me completely.

[13]The three most important things to have are faith, hope and love. But the
greatest of them is love.

The Gifts the Holy Spirit Gives

1 Corinthians 14

1 Follow the way of love. You should also want the gifts the Holy Spirit gives.
Most of all, you should want the gift of prophecy.

2 Anyone who speaks in a language he had not known before doesn't speak to
people. He speaks only to God. In fact, no one understands that person. What
he says with his spirit remains a mystery. 3 But anyone who prophesies speaks
to people. He says things to make them stronger, to give them hope and to
comfort them. 4 Those who speak in other languages build themselves up. But
those who prophesy build up the church.

5 I would like all of you to speak in other languages. But I would rather have
you prophesy. Those who prophesy are more helpful than those who speak in
other languages. But that is not the case if those who speak in other languages
explain what they have said. Then the whole church can be built up.

6 Brothers and sisters, suppose I were to come to you and speak in other
languages. What good would I be to you? None! I would need to come with
new truth or knowledge, or a prophecy or a teaching.

7 Here are some examples. Certain objects make sounds. Take a flute or a
harp. No one will know what the tune is unless different notes are played.
8 Also, if the trumpet call isn't clear, who will get ready for battle?

9 It's the same with you. You must speak words that people understand. If you
don't, no one will know what you are saying. You will just be speaking into the
air.

10 It is true that there are all kinds of languages in the world. And they all
have meaning. 11 But if I don't understand what someone is saying, I am a
stranger to that person. And that person is a stranger to me.

12 It's the same with you. You want to have gifts of the Spirit. So try to do
your best in using gifts that build up the church.

13 For that reason, those who speak in languages they had not known before
should pray that they can explain what they say. 14 If I pray in another language,

my spirit prays. But my mind does not pray. [15]So what should I do? I will pray with my spirit. But I will also pray with my mind. I will sing with my spirit. But I will also sing with my mind.

[16]Suppose you are praising God with your spirit. And suppose there are visitors among you who don't understand what's going on. How can they say "Amen" when you give thanks? They don't know what you are saying. [17]You might be giving thanks well enough. But the others are not being built up.

[18]I thank God that I speak in other languages more than all of you do. [19]But in the church I would rather speak five words that people can understand than 10,000 words in another language. Then I would be teaching others.

[20]Brothers and sisters, stop thinking like children. Be like babies as far as evil is concerned. But be grown up in your thinking. [21]In the Law it is written,

> "Through people who speak unfamiliar languages
> and through the lips of strangers
> I will speak to these people.
> But even then they will not listen to me." (Isaiah 28:11, 12)

That is what the Lord says.

[22]So speaking in other languages is a sign for those who don't believe. It is not a sign for those who do believe. But prophecy is for believers. It is not for those who don't believe.

[23]Suppose the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in other languages. And suppose visitors or unbelievers come in. Won't they say you are out of your minds? [24]But suppose unbelievers or visitors come in while everyone is prophesying. Then they will be shown by all who speak that they are sinners. They will be judged by all. [25]The secrets of their hearts will be brought out into the open. They will fall down and worship God. They will exclaim, "God is really here among you!"

Proper Worship

[26]Brothers and sisters, what should we say then? When you come together,

every one of you brings something. You bring a hymn or a teaching or a word from God. You bring a message in another language or explain what was said. All of those things must be done to make the church strong.

[27]No more than two or three people should speak in another language. And they should speak one at a time. Then someone must explain what was said. [28]If there is no one to explain, the speakers should keep quiet in the church. They can speak to themselves and to God.

[29]Only two or three prophets are supposed to speak. Others should decide if what is being said is true. [30]What if a message from God comes to someone else who is sitting there? Then the one who is speaking should stop.

[31]Those who prophesy can all take turns. In that way, everyone can be taught and be given hope. [32]Those who prophesy should control their speaking. [33]God is not a God of disorder. He is a God of peace.

As in all the churches of God's people, [34]women should remain silent in the meetings. They are not allowed to speak. They must follow the lead of those who are in authority, as the Law says. [35]If they have a question about something, they should ask their own husbands at home. It is shameful for women to speak in church meetings.

[36]Did the word of God begin with you? Or are you the only people it has reached? [37]Suppose some think they are prophets or have gifts of the Holy Spirit. They should agree that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command. [38]Anyone who does not recognize that will not be recognized.

[39]Brothers and sisters, you should want to prophesy. And don't stop people from speaking in languages they had not known before. [40]But everything should be done in a proper and orderly way.

Paul Explains the Good News

1 Corinthians 15

[1]Brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the good news I preached to you. You received it and have put your faith in it. [2]Because you believed the good news, you are saved. But you must hold firmly to the message I preached to you. If you don't, you have believed it for nothing.

[3]What I received I passed on to you. And it is the most important of all. Here is what it is. Christ died for our sins, just as Scripture said he would. [4]He was buried. He was raised from the dead on the third day, just as Scripture said he would be. [5]He appeared to Peter.

Then he appeared to the Twelve. [6]After that, he appeared to more than 500 believers at the same time. Most of them are still living. But some have died. [7]He appeared to James. Then he appeared to all the apostles. [8]Last of all, he also appeared to me. I was like someone who wasn't born at the right time or in a normal way.

[9]I am the least important of the apostles. I'm not even fit to be called an apostle. I tried to destroy God's church. [10]But because of God's grace I am what I am. And his grace was not wasted on me. No, I have worked harder than all the other apostles. But I didn't do the work. God's grace was with me.

[11]So whether it was I or the other apostles who preached to you, that is what we preach. And that is what you believed.

Believers Will Rise From the Dead

[12]We have preached that Christ has been raised from the dead. So how can some of you say that no one rises from the dead? [13]If no one rises from the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. [14]And if Christ has not been raised, what we preach doesn't mean anything. Your faith doesn't mean anything either. [15]More than that, we would be lying about God. We have given witness

that God raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if the dead are not raised.

16If the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. 17And if Christ has not been raised, your faith doesn't mean anything. Your sins have not been forgiven. 18Those who have died believing in Christ are also lost.

19Do we have hope in Christ only for this life? Then people should pity us more than anyone else.

20But Christ really has been raised from the dead. He is the first of all those who will rise.

21Death came because of what a man did. Rising from the dead also comes because of what a man did. 22Because of Adam, all people die. So because of Christ, all will be made alive.

23But here is the order of events. Christ is the first of those who rise from the dead. When he comes back, those who belong to him will be raised. 24Then the end will come. Christ will destroy all rule, authority and power. He will hand over the kingdom to God the Father.

25Christ must rule until he has put all his enemies under his control. 26The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. 27Scripture says that God "has put everything under his control."(Psalm 8:6) It says that "everything" has been put under him. But it is clear that this does not include God himself, who puts everything under Christ. 28When he has done that, the Son also will be under God's rule. God puts everything under the Son. In that way, God will be all in all.

29Suppose no one rises from the dead. Then what will people do who are baptized for the dead? Suppose the dead are not raised at all. Then why are people baptized for them? 30And why would we put ourselves in danger every hour?

31I die every day. I really mean that, brothers and sisters. Here is something you can be sure of. I take pride in what Christ Jesus our Lord has done for you through my work. 32Did I fight wild animals in Ephesus for only human reasons? Then what have I gotten for it? If the dead are not raised,

> "Let us eat and drink,
> because tomorrow we will die." (Isaiah 22:13)

[33]Don’t let anyone fool you. “Bad companions make a good person bad.”
[34]You should come back to your senses and stop sinning. Some of you don’t
know anything about God. I say this to make you ashamed.

The Body That Rises From the Dead

[35]But someone might ask, “How are the dead raised? What kind of body will
they have?” [36]How foolish! What you plant doesn’t come to life unless it dies.
[37]When you plant something, it isn’t a completely grown plant that you put in
the ground. You only plant a seed. Maybe it’s wheat or something else. [38]But
God gives the seed a body just as he has planned. And to each kind of seed he
gives its own body.

[39]All earthly creatures are not the same. People have one kind of body.
Animals have another. Birds have another kind. Fish have still another.

[40]There are also heavenly bodies as well as earthly bodies. Heavenly bodies
have one kind of glory. Earthly bodies have another. [41]The sun has one kind of
glory. The moon has another kind. The stars have still another. And one star’s
glory is different from that of another star.

[42]It will be like that with bodies that are raised from the dead. The body that
is planted does not last forever. The body that is raised from the dead lasts
forever. [43]It is planted without honor. But it is raised in glory. It is planted in
weakness. But it is raised in power. [44]It is planted as an earthly body. But it is
raised as a spiritual body.

Just as there is an earthly body, there is also a spiritual body. [45]It is written,
“The first man Adam became a living person.”(Genesis 2:7) The last Adam
became a spirit that gives life. [46]What is spiritual did not come first. What is
earthly came first. What is spiritual came after that. [47]The first man came from
the dust of the earth. The second man came from heaven.

[48]Those who belong to the earth are like the one who came from the earth.
And those who are spiritual are like the one who came from heaven. [49]We are
like the earthly man. And we will be like the man from heaven.

[50]Brothers and sisters, here is what I’m telling you. Bodies made of flesh and

blood can’t share in the kingdom of God. And what dies can’t share in what never dies.

51Listen! I am telling you a mystery. We will not all die. But we will all be changed. 52That will happen in a flash, as quickly as you can wink an eye. It will happen when the last trumpet sounds. The trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised to live forever. And we will be changed.

53Our natural bodies don’t last forever. They must be dressed with what does last forever. What dies must be dressed with what does not die. 54In fact, that is going to happen. What does not last will be dressed with what lasts forever. What dies will be dressed with what does not die. Then what is written will come true. It says, “Death has been swallowed up. It has lost the battle.”(Isaiah 25:8)

55“Death, where is the battle you thought you were winning?
Death, where is your sting?” (Hosea 13:14)

56The sting of death is sin. And the power of sin is the law. 57But let us give thanks to God! He wins the battle for us because of what our Lord Jesus Christ has done.

58My dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Don’t let anything move you. Always give yourselves completely to the work of the Lord. Because you belong to the Lord, you know that your work is not worthless.

The Offering for God's People

1 Corinthians 16

[1]Now I want to deal with the offering of money for God's people.

Do what I told the churches in Galatia to do. [2]On the first day of every week, each of you should put some money away. The amount should be in keeping with how much money you make. Save the money so that you won't have to take up an offering when I come. [3]When I arrive, I will send some people with your gift to Jerusalem. They will be people you consider to be good. And I will give them letters that explain who they are. [4]If it seems good for me to go also, they will go with me.

What Paul Asks for Himself

[5]After I go through Macedonia, I will come to you. I will only be passing through Macedonia. [6]But I might stay with you for a while. I might even spend the winter. Then you can help me on my journey everywhere I go.

[7]I don't want to see you now while I am just passing through. I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord allows it. [8]But I will stay at Ephesus until the day of Pentecost. [9]A door has opened wide for me to do some good work here. There are many people who oppose me.

[10]Timothy might come to you. Make sure he has nothing to worry about while he is with you. He is doing the work of the Lord, just as I am. [11]No one should refuse to accept him. Send him safely on his way so he can return to me. I'm expecting him to come back along with the others.

[12]I want to say something about our brother Apollos. I tried my best to get him to go to you with the others. But he didn't want to go right now. He will go when he can.

[13]Be on your guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be brave. Be strong. [14]Be loving in everything you do.

15 You know that the first believers in Achaia were from the family of
Stephanas. They have spent all their time serving God's people. Brothers and
sisters, I am asking you 16 to follow the lead of people like them. Follow
everyone who joins in the task and works hard at it.

17 I was glad when Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus arrived. They have
supplied me with what you couldn't give me. 18 They renewed my spirit, and
yours also. People like that are worthy of honor.

Final Greetings

19 The churches in Asia Minor send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla greet
you warmly because of the Lord's love. So does the church that meets in their
house. 20 All the brothers and sisters here send you greetings. Greet one another
with a holy kiss.

21 I, Paul, am writing this greeting with my own hand.

22 If anyone does not love the Lord, let a curse be on that person! Come,
Lord!

23 May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.

24 I give my love to all of you who belong to Christ Jesus. Amen.

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2 Corinthians 1

[1]I, Paul, am writing this letter. I am an apostle of Christ Jesus just as God planned. Timothy our brother joins me in writing.

We are sending this letter to you, the members of God's church in Corinth. It is also for all of God's people everywhere in Achaia.

[2]May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

God Gives Comfort

[3]Give praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! He is the Father who gives tender love. All comfort comes from him. [4]He comforts us in all our troubles. Now we can comfort others when they are in trouble. We ourselves have received comfort from God. [5]We share the sufferings of Christ. We also share his comfort.

[6]If we are having trouble, it is so that you will be comforted and renewed. If we are comforted, it is so that you will be comforted. Then you will be able to put up with the same suffering we have gone through. [7]Our hope for you remains firm. We know that you suffer just as we do. In the same way, God comforts you just as he comforts us.

[8]Brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the hard times we suffered in Asia Minor. We were having a lot of trouble. It was far more than we could stand. We even thought we were going to die. [9]In fact, in our hearts we felt as if we were under the sentence of death.

But that happened so that we would not depend on ourselves but on God. He raises the dead to life. [10]God has saved us from deadly dangers. And he will continue to do it. We have put our hope in him. He will continue to save us.

[11]You must help us by praying for us. Then many people will give thanks because of what will happen to us. They will thank God for his kindness to us in answer to the prayers of many.

Paul Changes His Plans

12Here is what we take pride in. Our sense of what is right and wrong gives
witness that we have acted in God's holy and honest ways. That is how we live
in the world. We live that way most of all when we are dealing with you. Our
way of living is not wise in the eyes of the world. But it is in keeping with
God's grace.

13We are writing only what you can read and understand. And here is what I
hope. 14Up to this point you have understood some of the things we have said.
But now I hope that someday you will be able to take pride in us, just as we
will take pride in you on the day the Lord Jesus returns. When you are able to
do that, you will understand us completely.

15I was sure of those things. So I planned to visit you first. Here is how I
thought you would be helped twice. 16I planned to visit you on my way to
Macedonia. I would have come back to you from there. Then you would have
sent me on my way to Judea.

17When I planned all of that, did I do it without much thought? No. I don't
make my plans the way the world makes theirs. In the same breath the world
says, "Yes! Yes!" and "No! No!"

18But just as sure as God is faithful, our message to you is not "Yes" and
"No." 19Silas, Timothy and I preached to you about the Son of God, Jesus
Christ. Our message did not say "Yes" and "No" at the same time. The
message of Christ has always been "Yes."

20God has made a great many promises. They are all "Yes" because of what
Christ has done. So through Christ we say "Amen." We want God to receive
glory.

21He makes both us and you stand firm because we belong to Christ. He
anointed us. 22He put his Spirit in our hearts and marked us as his own. We can
now be sure that he will give us everything he promised us.

23I call God as my witness. I wanted to spare you. So I didn't return to
Corinth. 24Your faith is not under our control. You stand firm in your own faith.
But we work together with you for your joy.

2 Corinthians 2

[1]So I made up my mind that I would not make another painful visit to you. [2]If
I make you sad, who is going to make me glad? Only you, the one I made sad.

[3]I wrote what I did for a special reason. When I came, I didn't want to be
troubled by those who should make me glad. I was sure that all of you would
share my joy. [4]I was very troubled when I wrote to you. My heart was sad. My
eyes were full of tears. I didn't want to make you sad. I wanted to let you know
that I love you very deeply.

Forgive Those Who Make You Sad

[5]Suppose someone has made us sad. In some ways, he hasn't made me sad so
much as he has made all of you sad. But I don't want to put this too strongly.
[6]He has been punished because most of you decided he should be. That is
enough for him.

[7]Now you should forgive him and comfort him. Then he won't be sad more
than he can stand. [8]So I'm asking you to tell him again that you still love him.

[9]I wrote to you for a special reason. I wanted to see if you could stand the
test. I wanted to see if you could obey everything that was asked of you.

[10]Anyone you forgive I also forgive. Was there anything to forgive? If so, I
have forgiven it for your benefit, knowing that Christ is watching. [11]We don't
want Satan to outsmart us. We know how he does his evil work.

Serving Under the New Covenant

[12]I went to Troas to preach the good news about Christ. There I found that the
Lord had opened a door of opportunity for me. [13]But I still had no peace of
mind. I couldn't find my brother Titus there. So I said good-by to the believers
at Troas and went on to Macedonia.

[14]Give thanks to God! He always leads us in the winners' parade because we

belong to Christ. Through us, God spreads the knowledge of Christ everywhere like perfume. [15]God considers us to be the sweet smell that Christ is spreading among people who are being saved and people who are dying. [16]To the one, we are the smell of death. To the other, we are the perfume of life. Who is able to do that work?

[17]Unlike many people, we aren’t selling God’s word to make money. In fact, it is just the opposite. Because of Christ we speak honestly before God. We speak like people God has sent.

2 Corinthians 3

[1]Are we beginning to praise ourselves again? Some people need letters that speak well of them. Do we need those kinds of letters, either to you or from you?

[2]You yourselves are our letter. You are written on our hearts. Everyone knows you and reads you. [3]You make it clear that you are a letter from Christ. You are the result of our work for God. You are a letter written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God. You are a letter written not on tablets made out of stone but on human hearts.

[4]Through Christ, we can be sure of this because of our faith in God's power. [5]In ourselves we are not able to claim anything for ourselves. The power to do what we do comes from God. [6]He has given us the power to serve under a new covenant. The covenant is not based on the written Law of Moses. It comes from the Holy Spirit. The written Law kills, but the Spirit gives life.

The Glory of the New Covenant

[7]The Law was written in letters on stone. Even though it was a way of serving God, it led to death. But even that way of serving God came with glory. And even though the glory was fading, the people of Israel couldn't look at Moses' face very long.

[8]Since all of that is true, won't the work of the Holy Spirit be even more glorious? [9]The Law that sentences people to death is glorious. How much more glorious is the work of the Spirit! His work makes people right with God.

[10]The glory of the old covenant is nothing compared with the far greater glory of the new. [11]The glory of the old is fading away. How much greater is the glory of the new! It will last forever.

[12]Since we have that kind of hope, we are very bold. [13]We are not like Moses. He used to cover his face with a veil. That was to keep the people of Israel from looking at his face while the brightness was fading away.

[14]But their minds were made stubborn. To this very day, the same veil

remains when the old covenant is read. The veil has not been removed. Only faith in Christ can take it away. [15]To this very day, when the Law of Moses is read, a veil covers the minds of those who hear it.

[16]But when anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. [17]Now the Lord is the Holy Spirit. And where the Spirit of the Lord is, freedom is also there.

[18]Our faces are not covered with a veil. We all display the Lord’s glory. We are being changed to become more like him so that we have more and more glory. And the glory comes from the Lord, who is the Holy Spirit.

A Treasure in Clay Jars

2 Corinthians 4

[1]So because of God's mercy, we have work to do. He has given it to us. And we don't give up. [2]Instead, we have given up doing secret and shameful things. We don't twist God's word. In fact, we do just the opposite. We present the truth plainly. In the sight of God, we make our appeal to everyone's sense of what is right and wrong.

[3]Suppose our good news is covered with a veil. Then it is veiled to those who are dying. [4]The god of this world has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They can't see the light of the good news of Christ's glory. He is the likeness of God.

[5]We do not preach about ourselves. We preach about Jesus Christ. We say that he is Lord. And we serve you because of him.

[6]God said, "Let light shine out of darkness."(Genesis 1:3) He made his light shine in our hearts. It shows us the light of God's glory in the face of Christ.

[7]Treasure is kept in clay jars. In the same way, we have the treasure of the good news in these earthly bodies of ours. That shows that the mighty power of the good news comes from God. It doesn't come from us.

[8]We are pushed hard from all sides. But we are not beaten down. We are bewildered. But that doesn't make us lose hope. [9]Others make us suffer. But God does not desert us. We are knocked down. But we are not knocked out. [10]We always carry around the death of Jesus in our bodies. In that way, the life of Jesus can be shown in our bodies.

[11]We who are alive are always in danger of death because we are serving Jesus. So his life can be shown in our earthly bodies. [12]Death is at work in us. But life is at work in you.

[13]It is written, "I believed, and so I have spoken."(Psalm 116:10) With that same spirit of faith we also believe. And we also speak.

[14]We know that God raised the Lord Jesus from the dead. And he will also

raise us up with Jesus. He will bring us with you to God in heaven. [15]All of that is for your benefit. God’s grace is reaching more and more people. So they will become more and more thankful. They will give glory to God.

[16]We don’t give up. Our bodies are becoming weaker and weaker. But our spirits are being renewed day by day. [17]Our troubles are small. They last only for a short time. But they are earning for us a glory that will last forever. It is greater than all our troubles.

[18]So we don’t spend all our time looking at what we can see. Instead, we look at what we can’t see. What can be seen lasts only a short time. But what can’t be seen will last forever.

Our Home in Heaven

2 Corinthians 5

[1]We know that the earthly tent we live in will be destroyed. But we have a building made by God. It is a house in heaven that lasts forever. Human hands did not build it.

[2]During our time on earth we groan. We long to put on our house in heaven as if it were clothing. [3]Then we will not be naked.

[4]While we live in this tent of ours, we groan under our heavy load. We don't want to be naked. We want to be dressed with our house in heaven. What must die will be swallowed up by life.

[5]God has made us for that very purpose. He has given us the Holy Spirit as a down payment. The Spirit makes us sure of what is still to come.

[6]So here is what we can always be certain about. As long as we are at home in our bodies, we are away from the Lord. [7]We live by believing, not by seeing. [8]We are certain about that. We would rather be away from our bodies and at home with the Lord. [9]So we try our best to please him. We want to please him whether we are at home in our bodies or away from them.

[10]We must all stand in front of Christ to be judged. Each one of us will be judged for the good things and the bad things we do while we are in our bodies. Then each of us will receive what we are supposed to get.

Christ Brings Us Back to God

[11]We know what it means to have respect for the Lord. So we try to help other people to understand it.

What we are is plain to God. I hope it is also plain to your way of thinking. [12]We are not trying to make an appeal to you again. But we are giving you a chance to take pride in us. Then you can answer those who take pride in how people look rather than in what is really in their hearts.

13 Are we out of our minds? That is because we want to serve God. Does what
we say make sense? That is because we want to serve you.

14 Christ's love controls us. We are sure that one person died for everyone.
And so everyone died.

15 Christ died for everyone. He died so that those who live should not live for
themselves anymore. They should live for Christ. He died for them and was
raised again.

16 So from now on we don't look at anyone the way the world does. At one
time we looked at Christ in that way. But we don't anymore.

17 Anyone who believes in Christ is a new creation. The old is gone! The new
has come! 18 It is all from God. He brought us back to himself through Christ's
death on the cross. And he has given us the task of bringing others back to him
through Christ.

19 God was bringing the world back to himself through Christ. He did not hold
people's sins against them. God has trusted us with the message that people
may be brought back to him. 20 So we are Christ's official messengers. It is as if
God were making his appeal through us. Here is what Christ wants us to beg
you to do. Come back to God!

21 Christ didn't have any sin. But God made him become sin for us. So we can
be made right with God because of what Christ has done for us.

2 Corinthians 6

[1]We work together with God. So we are asking you not to receive God's grace and then do nothing with it. [2]He says,

> "When I showed you my favor, I heard you.
> On the day I saved you, I helped you." (Isaiah 49:8)

I tell you, now is the time God shows his favor. Now is the day he saves.

Paul's Sufferings

[3]We don't put anything in anyone's way. So no one can find fault with our work for God. [4]Instead, we make it clear that we serve God in every way. We serve him by holding steady. We stand firm in all kinds of trouble, hard times and suffering.

[5]We don't give up when we are beaten or put in prison. When people stir up trouble in the streets, we continue to serve God. We work hard for him. We go without sleep and food. [6]We remain pure. We understand completely what it means to serve God. We are patient and kind. We serve him in the power of the Holy Spirit. We serve him with true love. [7]We speak the truth. We serve in the power of God. We hold the weapons of godliness in the right hand and in the left. [8]We serve God in times of glory and shame. We serve him whether the news about us is bad or good. We are true to our calling.

But people treat us as if we were pretenders. [9]We are known, but people treat us as if we were unknown. We are dying, but we continue to live. We are beaten, but we are not killed. [10]We are sad, but we are always full of joy. We are poor, but we make many people rich. We have nothing, but we own everything.

[11]Believers at Corinth, we have spoken freely to you. We have opened our hearts wide to you. [12]We are not holding back our love from you. But you are

holding back your love from us. [13]I speak to you as if you were my children. It is only fair that you open your hearts wide to us also.

Do Not Be Joined to Unbelievers

[14]Do not be joined to unbelievers. What do right and wrong have in common? Can light and darkness be friends? [15]How can Christ and Satan agree? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? [16]How can the temple of the true God and the statues of other gods agree?

We are the temple of the living God. God has said, "I will live with them. I will walk among them. I will be their God. And they will be my people."(Leviticus 26:12; Jeremiah 32:38; Ezekiel 37:27)

[17]"So come out from among them
and be separate,
says the Lord.
Do not touch anything that is not pure and clean.
Then I will receive you." (Isaiah 52:11; Ezekiel 20:34, 41)
[18]"I will be your Father.
You will be my sons and daughters,
says the Lord who rules over all." (2 Samuel 7:14; 7:8)

2 Corinthians 7

[1]Dear friends, we have these promises from God. So let us make ourselves pure from everything that pollutes our bodies and spirits. Let us be completely holy. We want to honor God.

Paul's Joy

[2]Make room for us in your hearts. We haven't done anything wrong to anyone. We haven't caused anyone to sin. We haven't taken advantage of anyone.

[3]I don't say this to judge you. I have told you before that you have an important place in our hearts. We would live or die with you. [4]I have great faith in you. I am very proud of you. I am very happy. Even with all our troubles, my joy has no limit.

[5]When I came to Macedonia, my body wasn't able to rest. I was attacked no matter where I went. I had battles on the outside and fears on the inside.

[6]But God comforts those who are sad. He comforted me when Titus came. [7]I was comforted not only when he came but also by the comfort you had given him. He told me how much you longed for me. He told me about your deep sadness and concern for me. That made my joy greater than ever.

[8]Even if my letter made you sad, I'm not sorry I sent it. At first I was sorry. I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while. [9]Now I am happy. I'm not happy because you were made sad. I'm happy because your sadness led you to turn away from your sins. You became sad just as God wanted you to. So you were not hurt in any way by us.

[10]Godly sadness causes us to turn away from our sins and be saved. And we are certainly not sorry about that! But worldly sadness brings death.

[11]Look at what that godly sadness has produced in you. You are working hard to clear yourselves. You are angry and alarmed. You are longing to see me. You are concerned. You are ready to make sure that the right thing is done. In every way you have proved that you are not guilty in that matter.

[12]So even though I wrote to you, it wasn’t because of the one who did the wrong. It wasn’t because of the one who was hurt. Instead, I wrote you so that in the sight of God you could see for yourselves how faithful you are to us. [13]All of that cheers us up.

We were also very glad to see how happy Titus was. You have all renewed his spirit. [14]I had bragged about you to him. And you have not let me down. Everything we said to you was true. In the same way, our bragging about you to Titus has also turned out to be true. [15]His love for you is even greater when he remembers that you all obeyed his teaching. You received him with fear and trembling. [16]I am glad I can have complete faith in you.

Giving Freely to Others

2 Corinthians 8

[1]Brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given to the churches in Macedonia. [2]They have suffered a great deal. But their joy was more than full. Even though they were very poor, they gave very freely.

[3]I give witness that they gave as much as they could. In fact, they gave even more than they could. Completely on their own, [4]they begged us for the chance to share in serving God's people in that way. [5]They did more than we expected. First they gave themselves to the Lord. Then they gave themselves to us in keeping with what God wanted.

[6]Titus had already started collecting money from you. So we asked him to get you to finish making your kind gift.

[7]You do well in everything else. You do well in faith and in speaking. You do well in knowledge and in complete commitment. And you do well in your love for us. So make sure that you also do well in the grace of giving to others.

[8]I am not commanding you to do it. But I want to put you to the test. I want to find out if you really love God. I want to compare your love with that of others.

[9]You know the grace shown by our Lord Jesus Christ. Even though he was rich, he became poor to help you. Because he became poor, you can become rich.

[10]Here is my advice about what is best for you in that matter. Last year you were the first to give. You were also the first to want to give. [11]So finish the work. Then your longing to do it will be matched by your finishing it. Give on the basis of what you have.

[12]Do you really want to give? Then the gift is received in keeping with what you have, not with what you don't have.

[13]We don't want others to have it easy at your expense. We want things to be equal. [14]Right now you have plenty in order to take care of what they need.

Then they will have plenty to take care of what you need. That will make things equal. [15]It is written, “Those who gathered a lot didn’t have too much. And those who gathered a little had enough.”(Exodus 16:18)

Paul Sends Titus to Corinth

[16]God put into the heart of Titus the same concern I have for you. I am thankful to God for this. [17]Titus welcomed our appeal. He is also excited about coming to you. It was his own idea.

[18]Along with Titus, we are sending another brother. All the churches praise him for his service in telling the good news. [19]He was also chosen by the churches to go with us as we bring the offering. We are in charge of it. We want to honor the Lord himself. We want to show how ready we are to help.

[20]We want to keep anyone from blaming us for how we take care of that large gift. [21]We are trying hard to do what is right in the Lord’s eyes and in the eyes of people.

[22]We are also sending another one of our brothers with them. He has often proved to us in many ways that he is very committed. He is now even more committed because he has great faith in you.

[23]Titus is my helper. He and I work together among you. Our brothers are messengers from the churches. They honor Christ. [24]So show them that you really love them. Show them why we are proud of you. Then the churches can see it.

2 Corinthians 9

[1]I don’t need to write to you about giving to God’s people. [2]I know how much you want to help. I have been bragging about it to the people in Macedonia. I have been telling them that since last year you who live in Achaia were ready to give. You are so excited that it has stirred up most of them to take action.

[3]But I am sending the brothers. Then our bragging about you in this matter will have a good reason. You will be ready, just as I said you would be.

[4]Suppose people from Macedonia come with me and find out that you are not prepared. Then we, as well as you, would be ashamed of being so certain.

[5]So I thought I should try to get the brothers to visit you ahead of time. They will finish the plans for the large gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a gift that is freely given. It will not be given by force.

Planting Many Seeds

[6]Here is something to remember. The one who plants only a little will gather only a little. And the one who plants a lot will gather a lot. [7]You should each give what you have decided in your heart to give. You shouldn’t give if you don’t want to. You shouldn’t give because you are forced to. God loves a cheerful giver.

[8]And God is able to shower all kinds of blessings on you. In all things and at all times you will have everything you need. You will do more and more good works. [9]It is written,

> “They have spread their gifts around to poor people.
> Their good works continue forever.” (Psalm 112:9)

[10]God supplies seed to the planter. He supplies bread for food. God will also supply and increase the amount of your seed. He will increase the results of your good works. [11]You will be made rich in every way. Then you can always

give freely. We will take your many gifts to the people who need them. And they will give thanks to God.

12 Your gifts meet the needs of God's people. And that's not all. Your gifts also cause many people to thank God.

13 You have shown yourselves to be worthy by what you have given. So people will praise God because you obey him. That proves that you really believe the good news about Christ. They will also praise God because you share freely with them and with everyone else. 14 Their hearts will be filled with longing for you when they pray for you. God has given you grace that is better than anything.

15 Let us give thanks to God for his gift. It is so great that no one can tell how wonderful it really is!

Paul Speaks Up for Himself

2 Corinthians 10

[1]Christ is gentle and free of pride. So I make my appeal to you. I, Paul, am the one you call shy when I am face to face with you. But when I am away from you, you call me bold. [2]I beg you that when I come I won't have to be as bold as I expect to be toward some people. They think that I live the way the people of this world live.

[3]I do live in the world. But I don't fight my battles the way the people of the world do. [4]The weapons I fight with are not the weapons the world uses. In fact, it is just the opposite. My weapons have the power of God to destroy the camps of the enemy.

[5]I destroy every claim and every reason that keeps people from knowing God. I keep every thought under control in order to make it obey Christ. [6]Until you have obeyed completely, I will be ready to punish you every time you don't obey.

[7]You are looking only at what appears on the surface of things. Suppose you are sure you belong to Christ. Then you should consider again that I belong to Christ just as much as you do.

[8]Do I brag too much about the authority the Lord gave me? If I do, it's because I want to build you up, not pull you down. And I'm not ashamed of that kind of bragging.

[9]Don't think that I'm trying to scare you with my letters. [10]Some say, "His letters sound important. They are powerful. But in person he doesn't seem like much. And what he says doesn't amount to anything." [11]People like that have a lot to learn. What I say in my letters when I'm away from you, I will do in my actions when I'm with you.

[12]I don't dare to compare myself with those who praise themselves. I'm not that kind of person. They measure themselves by themselves. They compare themselves with themselves. When they do that, they are not wise.

[13]But I won't brag more than I should. Instead, I will brag only about what I

have done in the area God has given me. It is an area that reaches all the way to you. [14]I am not going too far in my bragging. I would be going too far if I hadn’t come to where you live. But I did get there with the good news about Christ.

[15]And I won’t brag about work done by others. If I did, I would be bragging more than I should. As your faith continues to grow, I hope that my work among you will greatly increase. [16]Then I will be able to preach the good news in the areas beyond you. I don’t want to brag about work already done in someone else’s territory.

[17]But, “The one who brags should brag about what the Lord has done.”(Jeremiah 9:24) [18]Those who praise themselves are not accepted. Those the Lord praises are accepted.

Paul and Those Who Pretend to Be Apostles

2 Corinthians 11

[1]I hope you will put up with a little of my foolish bragging. But you are already doing that.

[2]My jealousy for you comes from God himself. I promised to give you to only one husband. That husband is Christ. I wanted to be able to give you to him as if you were a pure virgin. [3]But Eve was tricked by the snake's clever lies. And I'm afraid that in the same way your minds will somehow be led down the wrong path. They will be led away from your true and pure love for Christ.

[4]Suppose someone comes to you and preaches about a Jesus different from the Jesus we preached about. Or suppose you receive a spirit different from the one you received before. Or suppose you receive a message of good news different from the one you accepted earlier. You put up with those kinds of things easily enough.

[5]But I don't think I'm in any way less important than those "super-apostles." [6]I may not be a trained speaker. But I do have knowledge. I've made that very clear to you in every way.

[7]When I preached God's good news to you free of charge, I put myself down in order to lift you up. Was that a sin? [8]Did I rob other churches when I received help from them so that I could serve you? [9]When I was with you and needed something, I didn't cause you any expense. The believers who came from Macedonia gave me what I needed. I haven't caused you any expense at all. And I won't ever do it.

[10]I'm sure that the truth of Christ is in me. And I'm just as sure that nobody in Achaia will keep me from bragging. [11]Why? Because I don't love you? No! God knows I do! [12]And I will keep on doing what I'm doing. That will stop those who claim they have things to brag about. They think they have a chance to be considered equal with us.

[13]People like that are false apostles. They work hard to trick others. They

only pretend to be apostles of Christ.

14That comes as no surprise. Even Satan himself pretends to be an angel of light. 15So it doesn't surprise us that those who serve Satan pretend to be serving God. They will finally get exactly what they should.

Paul Brags About His Sufferings

16I will say it again. Don't let anyone think I'm a fool. But if you do, receive me just as you would receive a fool. Then I can do a little bragging.

17When I brag about myself like this, I'm not talking the way the Lord would. I'm talking like a fool. 18Many are bragging the way the people of the world do. So I will brag like that too.

19You are so wise! You gladly put up with fools! 20In fact, you even put up with anyone who makes you a slave or uses you. You put up with those who take advantage of you. You put up with those who claim to be better than you. You put up with those who slap you in the face.

21I'm ashamed to have to say that I was too weak for that!

What anyone else dares to brag about, I also dare to brag about. I'm speaking like a fool! 22Are they Hebrews? So am I. Do they belong to the people of Israel? So do I. Are they Abraham's children? So am I. 23Are they serving Christ? I am serving him even more. I'm out of my mind to talk like this!

I have worked much harder. I have been in prison more often. I have suffered terrible beatings. Again and again I almost died. 24Five times the Jews gave me 39 strokes with a whip. 25Three times I was beaten with sticks. Once they tried to kill me by throwing stones at me. Three times I was shipwrecked. I spent a night and a day in the open sea.

26I have had to keep on the move. I have been in danger from rivers. I have been in danger from robbers. I have been in danger from people from my own country. I have been in danger from those who aren't Jews. I have been in danger in the city, in the country, and at sea. I have been in danger from people who pretended they were believers.

27I have worked very hard. Often I have gone without sleep. I have been hungry and thirsty. Often I have gone without food. I have been cold and naked.

[28]Besides everything else, every day I am concerned about all the churches. It is a very heavy load. [29]If anyone is weak, I feel weak. If anyone is led into sin, I burn on the inside.

[30]If I have to brag, I will brag about the things that show how weak I am. [31]I am not lying. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus knows this. May God be praised forever. [32]In Damascus the governor who served under King Aretas had their city guarded. He wanted to arrest me. [33]But I was lowered in a basket from a window in the wall. So I slipped through the governor’s hands.

Paul's Vision and His Painful Problem

2 Corinthians 12

1We can't gain anything by bragging. But I have to do it anyway. I am going
to tell you what I've seen. I want to talk about what the Lord has shown me.

2I know a believer in Christ who was taken up to the third heaven 14 years
ago. I don't know if his body was taken up or not. Only God knows. 3I don't
know if that man was in his body or out of it. Only God knows. But I do know
that 4he was taken up to paradise. He heard things that couldn't be put into
words. They were things that people aren't allowed to talk about.

5I will brag about a man like that. But I won't brag about myself. I will brag
only about how weak I am.

6Suppose I decide to brag. That would not make me a fool, because I would
be telling the truth. But I don't do it. Then no one will think more of me than
he should because of what I do or say.

7I could have become proud of myself because of the amazing and wonderful
things God has shown me. So I was given a problem that caused pain in my
body. It is a messenger from Satan to make me suffer. 8Three times I begged
the Lord to take it away from me. 9But he said to me, "My grace is all you
need. My power is strongest when you are weak."

So I am very happy to brag about how weak I am. Then Christ's power can
rest on me. 10Because of how I suffered for Christ, I'm glad that I am weak. I
am glad in hard times. I am glad when people say mean things about me. I am
glad when things are difficult. And I am glad when people make me suffer.
When I am weak, I am strong.

Paul's Concern for the People of Corinth

11I have made a fool of myself. But you made me do it. You should have
praised me. Even though I am nothing, I am in no way less important than the

“super-apostles.” [12]You can recognize apostles by the signs, wonders and miracles they do. Those things were faithfully done among you no matter what happened.

[13]How were you less important than the other churches? The only difference was that I didn’t cause you any expense. Forgive me for that wrong!

[14]Now I am ready to visit you for the third time. I won’t cause you any expense. I don’t want what you have. What I really want is you. After all, children shouldn’t have to save up for their parents. Parents should save up for their children. [15]So I will be very happy to spend everything I have for you. I will even spend myself. If I love you more, will you love me less?

[16]In any case, I haven’t caused you any expense. But I’m such a tricky fellow! I have caught you by tricking you!

[17]Did I take advantage of you through any of the men I sent to you? [18]I asked Titus to go to you. And I sent our brother with him. Titus didn’t take advantage of you, did he? Didn’t I act in the same spirit? Didn’t I follow the same path?

[19]All this time, have you been thinking that I’ve been speaking up for myself? No, I’ve been speaking with God as my witness. I’ve been speaking like a believer in Christ. Dear friends, everything I do is to help you become stronger.

[20]I’m afraid that when I come I won’t find you as I want you to be. I’m afraid that you won’t find me as you want me to be. I’m afraid there will be arguing, jealousy and fits of anger. I’m afraid you will separate into your own little groups. Then you will tell lies about each other. You will talk about each other. I’m afraid you will be proud and cause trouble.

[21]I’m afraid that when I come again my God will put me to shame in front of you. Then I will be sad about many who sinned earlier and have not turned away from it. They have not turned away from uncleanness, sexual sins and wild living. They have done all those things.

Final Warnings

2 Corinthians 13

[1]This will be my third visit to you. Scripture says, “Every matter must be proved by the words of two or three witnesses.”(Deuteronomy 19:15) [2]I already warned you during my second visit. I now say it again while I’m away. When I return, I won’t spare those who sinned earlier. I won’t spare any of the others either.

[3]You are asking me to prove that Christ is speaking through me. He is not weak in dealing with you. He is powerful among you. [4]It is true that Christ was nailed to the cross because he was weak. But he lives by God’s power. In the same way, I share his weakness. But by God’s power I will live with him to serve you.

[5]Take a good look at yourselves to see if you are really believers. Test yourselves. Don’t you realize that Christ Jesus is in you? Unless, of course, you fail the test! [6]I hope you will discover that I haven’t failed the test.

[7]I pray to God that you won’t do anything wrong. I don’t pray so that people will see that I have passed the test. Instead, I pray so that you will do what is right, even if it seems I have failed. [8]I can’t do anything to stop the truth. I can only work for the truth.

[9]I’m glad when I am weak but you are strong. I pray that you will become perfect. [10]That’s why I write these things before I come to you. Then when I do come, I won’t have to be hard on you when I use my authority.

The Lord gave me the authority to build you up. He didn’t give it to me to tear you down.

Final Greetings

[11]Finally, brothers and sisters, good-by. Try to be perfect. Pay attention to what I’m saying. Agree with one another. Live in peace. And the God who

gives love and peace will be with you.

[12]Greet one another with a holy kiss. [13]All of God’s people send their greetings.

[14]May the grace shown by the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love that God has given us, and the sharing of life brought about by the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Galatians

Galatians 1
Galatians 2
Galatians 3
Galatians 4
Galatians 5
Galatians 6

Galatians 1

[1]I, Paul, am writing this letter. I am an apostle. People have not sent me. No human authority has sent me. I have been sent by Jesus Christ and by God the Father. God raised Jesus from the dead. [2]All the brothers who are with me join me in writing.

We are sending this letter to you, the members of the churches in Galatia.

[3]May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. [4]Jesus gave his life for our sins. He set us free from this evil world. That was what our God and Father wanted. [5]Give glory to God for ever and ever. Amen.

There Is No Other Good News

[6]I am amazed. You are so quickly deserting the One who chose you because of the grace that Christ has provided. You are turning to a different "good news." [7]What you are accepting is really not the good news at all.

It seems that some people have gotten you all mixed up. They are trying to twist the good news about Christ.

[8]But suppose even we should preach a different "good news." Suppose even an angel from heaven should preach it. I'm talking about a different one than the good news we gave you. Let anyone who does that be judged by God forever. [9]I have already said it. Now I will say it again. Anyone who preaches a "good news" that is different from the one you accepted should be judged by God forever.

[10]Am I now trying to get people to think well of me? Or do I want God to think well of me? Am I trying to please people? If I were, I would not be serving Christ.

Paul Was Appointed by God

[11]Brothers and sisters, here is what I want you to know. The good news I preached is not something a human being made up. [12]No one gave it to me. No one taught it to me. Instead, I received it from Jesus Christ. He showed it to me.

[13]You have heard of my earlier way of life as a Jew. With all my strength I attacked the church of God. I tried to destroy it. [14]I was moving ahead in my Jewish way of life. I went beyond many Jews who were my own age. I held firmly to the teachings passed down by my people.

[15]But God set me apart from the time I was born. He showed me his grace by appointing me. He was pleased [16]to show his Son in my life. He wanted me to preach about Jesus among those who aren't Jews.

When God appointed me, I didn't talk to anyone. [17]I didn't go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was. Instead, I went at once into Arabia. Later I returned to Damascus.

[18]Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem. I went there to get to know Peter. I stayed with him for 15 days. [19]I didn't see any of the other apostles. I only saw James, the Lord's brother. [20]Here is what you can be sure of. And God gives witness to it. What I am writing you is not a lie.

[21]Later I went to Syria and Cilicia. [22]The members of Christ's churches in Judea did not know me in a personal way. [23]They only heard others say, "The man who used to attack us has changed. He is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." [24]And they praised God because of me.

Paul Is Accepted by the Apostles

Galatians 2

[1]Fourteen years later I went up again to Jerusalem. This time I went with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. [2]I went because God showed me what he wanted me to do. I told the people there the good news that I preach among those who aren't Jews. But I spoke in private to those who seemed to be leaders. I was afraid that I was running or had run my race for nothing.

[3]Titus was with me. He was a Greek. But even he was not forced to be circumcised.

[4]That matter came up because some who pretended to be believers had slipped in among us. They wanted to find out about the freedom we have because we belong to Christ Jesus. They wanted to make us slaves again.

[5]We didn't give in to them for a moment. We wanted the truth of the good news to remain with you.

[6]Some people in Jerusalem seemed to be important. It makes no difference to me what they were. God does not judge by what he sees on the outside. Those people added nothing to my message.

[7]In fact, it was just the opposite. They saw that I had been trusted with the task of preaching the good news just as Peter had been. My task was to preach to the non-Jews. Peter's task was to preach to the Jews. [8]God was working through Peter as an apostle to the Jews. He was also working through me as an apostle to the non-Jews.

[9]James, Peter and John are considered to be pillars in the church. They recognized the special grace that was given to me. So they shook my hand and the hand of Barnabas. They wanted to show they accepted us. They agreed that we should go to the non-Jews. They would go to the Jews. [10]They asked only one thing. They wanted us to continue to remember poor people. That was what I really wanted to do anyway.

Paul Opposes Peter

[11]When Peter came to Antioch, I told him to his face that I was against what he was doing. He was clearly wrong. [12]He used to eat with those who weren't Jews. But certain men came from the group that was led by James. When they arrived, Peter began to draw back. He separated himself from the non-Jews. He was afraid of the circumcision group.

[13]Peter's actions were not honest. The other Jews joined him. Even Barnabas was led down the wrong path.

[14]I saw what they were doing. It was not in line with the truth of the good news. So I spoke to Peter in front of them all. "You are a Jew," I said. "But you live like one who is not. So why do you force non-Jews to follow Jewish ways?"

God's Grace and Our Faith

[15]We are Jews by birth. We are not "non-Jewish sinners." [16]We know that no one is made right with God by obeying the law. It is by believing in Jesus Christ. So we too have put our faith in Christ Jesus. That is so we can be made right with God by believing in Christ, not by obeying the law. No one can be made right with God by obeying the law.

[17]We are trying to be made right with God through Christ. But it is clear that we are sinners. So does that mean that Christ causes us to sin? Certainly not! [18]Suppose I build again what I had destroyed. Then I prove that I break the Law.

[19]Because of the law, I died as far as the law is concerned. I died so that I might live for God. [20]I have been crucified with Christ. I don't live any longer. Christ lives in me. My faith in the Son of God helps me to live my life in my body. He loved me. He gave himself for me.

[21]I do not get rid of the grace of God. What if a person could become right with God by obeying the law? Then Christ died for nothing!

Faith or Obeying the Law

Galatians 3

[1]You foolish people of Galatia! Who has put you under an evil spell? When I
preached, I clearly showed you that Jesus Christ had been nailed to the cross.

[2]I would like to learn just one thing from you. Did you receive the Holy Spirit
by obeying the law? Or did you receive the Spirit by believing what you heard?
[3]Are you so foolish? You began with the Holy Spirit. Are you now trying to
complete God's work in you by your own strength?

[4]Have you suffered so much for nothing? And was it really for nothing?
[5]Why does God give you his Spirit? Why does he work miracles among you?
Is it because you do what the law says? Or is it because you believe what you
have heard?

[6]Think about Abraham. Scripture says, "Abraham believed God. God
accepted Abraham because he believed. So his faith made him right with
God."(Genesis 15:6) [7]So you see, those who have faith are children of
Abraham.

[8]Long ago, Scripture knew that God would make non-Jews right with himself
by believing in him. He announced the good news ahead of time to Abraham.
He said, "All nations will be blessed because of you."(Genesis 12:3; 18:18;
22:18) [9]So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham. He was the
man of faith.

[10]All who depend on obeying the law are under a curse. It is written, "May
everyone who doesn't continue to do everything that is written in the Book of
the Law be under God's curse."(Deuteronomy 27:26) [11]We know that no one is
made right with God by keeping the law. Scripture says, "Those who are right
with God will live by faith."(Habakkuk 2:4)

[12]The law is not based on faith. In fact, it is just the opposite. It teaches that
"the one who does those things will live by them."(Leviticus 18:5)

[13]Christ set us free from the curse of the law. He did it by becoming a curse
for us. It is written, "Everyone who is hung on a pole is under God's

curse."(Deuteronomy 21:23) [14]Christ Jesus set us free so that the blessing given to Abraham would come to non-Jews through Christ. He did it so that we might receive the promise of the Holy Spirit by believing in Christ.

The Law and the Promise

[15]Brothers and sisters, let me give you an example from everyday life. No one can get rid of an official agreement between people. No one can add to it. It can't be changed after it has been made. It is the same with God's covenant. [16]The promises were given to Abraham. They were also given to his seed. Scripture does not say, "and to seeds." That means many people. It says, "and to your seed."(Genesis 12:7; 13:15; 24:7) That means one person. And that one person is Christ.

[17]Here is what I mean. The law came 430 years after the promise. But the law does not get rid of God's covenant and promise. The covenant had already been made by God. So the law does not do away with the promise.

[18]The great gift that God has for us does not depend on the law. If it did, it would no longer depend on a promise. But God gave it to Abraham as a free gift through a promise.

[19]Then what was the purpose of the law? It was added because of human sin. And it was supposed to control us until the promised Seed had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a go-between. [20]A go-between does not take sides. God didn't use a go-between when he made his promise to Abraham. But the same God was at work in both the law and the promise.

[21]So is the law opposed to God's promises? Certainly not! What if a law had been given that could give life? Then people could become right with God by obeying the law. [22]But Scripture announces that the whole world is a prisoner because of sin. It does so in order that what was promised might be given to those who believe. The promise comes through faith in Jesus Christ.

[23]Before faith in Christ came, we were held prisoners by the law. We were locked up until faith was made known. [24]So the law was put in charge until Christ came. He came so that we might be made right with God by believing in Christ.

[25]But now faith in Christ has come. So we are no longer under the control of

the law.

Children of God

[26]You are all children of God by believing in Christ Jesus. [27]All of you who were baptized into Christ have put on Christ as if he were your clothes. [28]There is no Jew or Greek. There is no slave or free person. There is no male or female. Because you belong to Christ Jesus, you are all one.

[29]You who belong to Christ are Abraham’s seed. You will receive what God has promised.

Galatians 4

[1]Here is what I have been saying. As long as your own children are young, they are no different from slaves in your house. They are no different, even though they own all of the property. [2]They are under the care of guardians and those who manage the property. They are under their care until the time when their fathers give them the property. [3]It is the same with us. When we were children, we were slaves to the basic things the people of the world believe.

[4]But then the right time came. God sent his Son. A woman gave birth to him. He was born under the authority of the law. [5]He came to set free those who were under the law. He wanted us to be adopted as children with all the rights children have.

[6]Because you are his children, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts. He is the Holy Spirit. By his power we call God "*Abba.*" *Abba* means Father.

[7]So you aren't slaves any longer. You are God's children. Because you are his children, he gives you what he promised to give his people.

Paul's Concern for the Believers in Galatia

[8]At one time you didn't know God. You were slaves to gods that are really not gods at all. [9]But now you know God. Even better, God knows you. So why are you turning back to those weak and worthless beliefs? Do you want to be slaves to them all over again?

[10]You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! [11]I am afraid for you. I am afraid that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you.

Paul's Appeal to the Believers

[12]I make my appeal to you, brothers and sisters. I'm asking you to become like me. After all, I became like you. You didn't do anything wrong to me.

[13]As you know, it was because I was sick that I first preached the good news

to you. [14]My sickness was hard on you. But you didn't put me off. You didn't make fun of me. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God. You welcomed me as if I were Christ Jesus himself.

[15]What has happened to all of your joy? If you could have torn out your own eyes and given them to me, you would have. I can give witness to that. [16]Have I become your enemy now by telling you the truth?

[17]Those people are trying hard to win you over. But it is not for your good. They want to take you away from us. They want you to commit yourselves to them. [18]It is fine to be committed to something, if the purpose is good. And you shouldn't be committed only when I am with you. You should always be committed.

[19]My dear children, I am in pain for you. Once again I have pain like a woman giving birth. And my pain will continue until Christ makes you like himself.

[20]I wish I could be with you now. I wish I could change my tone of voice. As it is, you bewilder me.

Hagar and Sarah

[21]You who want to be under the authority of the law, tell me something. Don't you know what the law says? [22]It is written that Abraham had two sons. The slave woman gave birth to one of them. The free woman gave birth to the other one. [23]Abraham's son by the slave woman was born in the usual way. But his son by the free woman was born because of God's promise.

[24]Those things can be taken as examples. The two women stand for two covenants. One covenant comes from Mount Sinai. It gives birth to children who are going to be slaves. It is Hagar. [25]Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia. She stands for the present city of Jerusalem. That's because she and her children are slaves.

[26]But the Jerusalem that is above is free. She is our mother. [27]It is written,

> "Be glad, woman,
> you who have no children.
> Start shouting,

you who have no labor pains.
The woman who is all alone has more children
than the woman who has a husband.” (Isaiah 54:1)

[28]Brothers and sisters, you are children because of God’s promise just as Isaac was. [29]At that time, the son born in the usual way tried to hurt the son born by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the same now.

[30]But what does Scripture say? “Get rid of the slave woman. Get rid of her son. The slave woman’s son will never have a share of the family’s property with the free woman’s son.”(Genesis 21:10)

[31]Brothers and sisters, we are not the slave woman’s children. We are the free woman’s children.

Christ Sets Us Free

Galatians 5

[1]Christ has set us free. He wants us to enjoy freedom. So stand firm. Don’t let the chains of slavery hold you again.

[2]Here is what I, Paul, say to you. Don’t let yourselves be circumcised. If you do, Christ won’t be of any value to you. [3]I say it again. Every man who lets himself be circumcised must obey the whole law.

[4]Some of you are trying to be made right with God by obeying the law. You have been separated from Christ. You have fallen away from God’s grace.

[5]But we expect to be made completely holy because of our faith in Christ. Through the Holy Spirit we wait in hope. [6]Circumcision and uncircumcision aren’t worth anything to those who believe in Christ Jesus. The only thing that really counts is faith that shows itself through love.

[7]You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth? [8]The One who chooses you does not keep you from obeying the truth. [9]You should know that “just a little yeast works its way through the whole batch of dough.”

[10]The Lord makes me certain that you will not think in any other way. The one who has gotten you all mixed up will pay the price. It doesn’t matter who that may be.

[11]Brothers and sisters, I am not still preaching that people must be circumcised. If I were, why am I still being opposed? If that were what I preach, then the cross wouldn’t upset anyone.

[12]So then, what about troublemakers who try to get others to be circumcised? I wish they would go the whole way! I wish they would cut off everything that marks them as men!

Chosen to Be Free

13 My brothers and sisters, you were chosen to be free. But don't use your
freedom as an excuse to live in sin. Instead, serve one another in love. 14 The
whole law can be found in a single command. "Love your neighbor as you love
yourself."(Leviticus 19:18)

15 You must not keep on biting each other. You must not keep eating each
other up. Watch out! You might destroy each other.

Living by the Holy Spirit's Power

16 So I say, live by the Holy Spirit's power. Then you will not do what your
sinful nature wants you to do.

17 The sinful nature does not want what the Spirit delights in. And the Spirit
does not want what the sinful nature delights in. The two are at war with each
other. That's what makes you do what you don't want to do. 18 But if you are
led by the Spirit, you are not under the authority of the law.

19 What the sinful nature does is clear. It enjoys sexual sins, impure acts and
wild living. 20 It worships statues of gods. It also worships evil powers. It is full
of hatred and fighting. It is full of jealousy and fits of anger. It is interested
only in getting ahead. It stirs up trouble. It separates people into their own little
groups. 21 It wants what others have. It gets drunk and takes part in wild parties.
It does many things of that kind. I warn you now as I did before. People who
live like that will not receive God's kingdom.

22 But the fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy and peace. It is being
patient, kind and good. It is being faithful 23 and gentle and having control of
oneself. There is no law against things of that kind.

24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed their sinful nature to his
cross. They don't want what their sinful nature loves and longs for.

25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us march in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not
become proud. Let us not make each other angry. Let us not want what belongs
to others.

Do Good to Everyone

Galatians 6

[1]Brothers and sisters, what if someone is caught in a sin? Then you who are guided by the Spirit should correct that person. Do it in a gentle way. But be careful. You could be tempted too. [2]Carry each other's heavy loads. If you do, you will give the law of Christ its full meaning.

[3]If you think you are somebody when you are nobody, you are fooling yourselves. [4]Each of you should put your own actions to the test. Then you can take pride in yourself. You won't be comparing yourself to somebody else. [5]Each of you should carry your own load.

[6]Those who are taught the word must share all good things with their teacher.

[7]Don't be fooled. You can't outsmart God. A man gathers a crop from what he plants. [8]Some people plant to please their sinful nature. From that nature they will harvest death. Others plant to please the Holy Spirit. From the Spirit they will harvest eternal life.

[9]Let us not become tired of doing good. At the right time we will gather a crop if we don't give up. [10]So when we can do good to everyone, let us do it. Let us make a special point of doing good to those who belong to the family of believers.

The Creation of a New Nature

[11]Look at the big letters I'm using as I write to you with my own hand!

[12]Some people want others to think well of them. They are trying to force you to be circumcised. They do it for only one reason. They don't want to suffer by being connected with the cross of Christ. [13]Even those who are circumcised don't obey the law. But they want you to be circumcised. Then they can brag about what has been done to your body.

[14]I never want to brag about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus

Christ. Through that cross the ways of the world have been crucified as far as I am concerned. And I have been crucified as far as the ways of the world are concerned.

15 Circumcision and uncircumcision don’t mean anything. What really counts is the creation of a new nature.

16 May peace and mercy be given to all who follow this rule. May peace and mercy be given to the Israel that belongs to God.

17 Finally, let no one cause trouble for me. My body has marks that show I belong to Jesus.

18 Brothers and sisters, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

Ephesians

Ephesians 1
Ephesians 2
Ephesians 3
Ephesians 4
Ephesians 5
Ephesians 6

Ephesians 1

[1]I, Paul, am writing this letter. I am an apostle of Christ Jesus just as God planned.

I am sending this letter to you, God's people in Ephesus. Because you belong to Christ Jesus, you are faithful.

[2]May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

God Gives Spiritual Blessings

[3]Give praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. Those blessings come from the heavenly world. They belong to us because we belong to Christ.

[4]God chose us to belong to Christ before the world was created. He chose us to be holy and without blame in his eyes. He loved us. [5]So he decided long ago to adopt us as his children. He did it because of what Jesus Christ has done. It pleased God to do it. [6]All those things bring praise to his glorious grace. God freely gave us his grace because of the One he loves.

[7]We have been set free because of what Christ has done. Through his blood our sins have been forgiven. We have been set free because God's grace is so rich. [8]He poured his grace on us by giving us great wisdom and understanding.

[9]He showed us the mystery of his plan. It was in keeping with what he wanted to do. It was what he had planned through Christ. [10]It will all come about when history has been completed. God will then bring together all things in heaven and on earth under one ruler. The ruler is Christ.

[11]We were also chosen to belong to him. God decided to choose us long ago in keeping with his plan. He works out everything to fit his plan and purpose. [12]We were the first to put our hope in Christ. We were chosen to bring praise to his glory.

[13]You also became believers in Christ. That happened when you heard the message of truth. It was the good news about how you could be saved. When you believed, he marked you with a seal. The seal is the Holy Spirit that he promised.

[14]The Spirit marks us as God's own. We can now be sure that someday we will receive all that God has promised. That will happen after God sets all of his people completely free. All of those things will bring praise to his glory.

Paul Prays and Gives Thanks

[15]I have heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus. I have also heard about your love for all of God's people. That is why [16]I have not stopped thanking God for you. I always remember you in my prayers.

[17]I pray to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is the glorious Father. I keep asking him to give you the wisdom and understanding that come from the Holy Spirit. I want you to know God better.

[18]I also pray that your mind might see more clearly. Then you will know the hope God has chosen you to receive. You will know that the things God's people will receive are rich and glorious. [19]And you will know his great power. It can't be compared with anything else. It is at work for us who believe. It is like the mighty strength [20]God showed when he raised Christ from the dead.

He seated him at his right hand in his heavenly kingdom. [21]There Christ sits far above all who rule and have authority. He also sits far above all powers and kings. He is above every title that can be given in this world and in the world to come.

[22]God placed all things under Christ's rule. He appointed him to be ruler over everything for the church. [23]The church is Christ's body. It is filled by Christ. He fills everything in every way.

God Has Given Us New Life Through Christ

Ephesians 2

[1]You were living in your sins and lawless ways. But in fact you were dead.
[2]You used to live as sinners when you followed the ways of this world. You served the one who rules over the spiritual forces of evil. He is the spirit who is now at work in those who don't obey God.

[3]At one time we all lived among them. We tried to satisfy what our sinful nature wanted to do. We followed its longings and thoughts. God was angry with us and everyone else because of the kind of people we were.

[4]But God loves us deeply. He is full of mercy. [5]So he gave us new life because of what Christ has done. He gave us life even when we were dead in sin. God's grace has saved you.

[6]God raised us up with Christ. He has seated us with him in his heavenly kingdom because we belong to Christ Jesus. [7]He has done it to show the riches of his grace for all time to come. His grace can't be compared with anything else. He has shown it by being kind to us because of what Christ Jesus has done.

[8]God's grace has saved you because of your faith in Christ. Your salvation doesn't come from anything you do. It is God's gift. [9]It is not based on anything you have done. No one can brag about earning it.

[10]God made us. He created us to belong to Christ Jesus. Now we can do good things. Long ago God prepared them for us to do.

God's New Family

[11]You who are not Jews by birth, here is what I want you to remember. You are called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "circumcised." But they have only been circumcised in their bodies by human hands.

[12]Before you believed in Christ, you were separated from him. You were not

considered to be citizens of Israel. You were not included in what the covenants promised. You were without hope and without God in the world. 13At one time you were far away from God. But now you belong to Christ Jesus. He spilled his blood for you. That has brought you near to God.

14Christ himself is our peace. He has made Jews and non-Jews into one group of people. He has destroyed the hatred that was like a wall between us. 15Through his body on the cross, Christ put an end to the law with all its commands and rules. He wanted to create one new group of people out of the two. He wanted to make peace between them.

16He planned to bring both of them as one body back to God because of the cross. Christ put their hatred to death on that cross.

17He came and preached peace to you who were far away. He also preached peace to those who were near. 18Through Christ we both come to the Father by the power of one Holy Spirit.

19So you are no longer strangers and outsiders. You are citizens together with God’s people. You are members of God’s family.

20You are a building that is built on the apostles and prophets. They are the foundation. Christ Jesus himself is the most important stone in the building. 21The whole building is held together by him. It rises to become a holy temple because it belongs to the Lord.

22And because you belong to him, you too are being built together. You are being made into a house where God lives through his Spirit.

Paul Is the Messenger to Non-Jews

Ephesians 3

[1]I, Paul, am a prisoner because of Christ Jesus. I am in prison because of my work among you who are not Jews.

[2]I am sure you have heard that God appointed me to share his grace with you. [3]I'm talking about the mystery God showed me. I have already written a little about it. [4]By reading it you will be able to understand what I know about the mystery of Christ.

[5]The mystery was not made known to people of other times. But now the Holy Spirit has made it known to God's holy apostles and prophets.

[6]Here is the mystery. Because of the good news, God's promises are for non-Jews as well as for Jews. Both groups are parts of one body. They share in the promise. It belongs to them because they belong to Christ Jesus.

[7]I now serve the good news because God gave me his grace. His power is at work in me. [8]I am by far the least important of all of God's people. But he gave me the grace to preach to the non-Jews about the wonderful riches that Christ gives.

[9]God told me to make clear to everyone how the mystery came about. In times past it was kept hidden in the mind of God, who created all things. [10]He wanted the rulers and authorities in the heavenly world to come to know his great wisdom. The church would make it known to them.

[11]That was God's plan from the beginning. He has worked it out through Christ Jesus our Lord. [12]Through him and through faith in him we can approach God. We can come to him freely. We can come without fear.

[13]So here is what I'm asking you to do. Don't lose hope because I am suffering for you. It will lead to the time when God will give you his glory.

Paul Prays for God's People

[14]I bow in prayer to the Father because of my work among you. [15]From the Father his whole family in heaven and on earth gets its name.

[16]I pray that he will use his glorious riches to make you strong. May his Holy Spirit give you his power deep down inside you. [17]Then Christ will live in your hearts because you believe in him.

And I pray that your love will have deep roots. I pray that it will have a strong foundation. [18]May you have power with all God's people to understand Christ's love. May you know how wide and long and high and deep it is. [19]And may you know his love, even though it can't be known completely. Then you will be filled with everything God has for you.

[20]God is able to do far more than we could ever ask for or imagine. He does everything by his power that is working in us. [21]Give him glory in the church and in Christ Jesus. Give him glory through all time and for ever and ever. Amen.



Don’t be proud at all. Be completely gentle. Be patient. Put up with one another in love.

Ephesians 4:2

The Body of Christ Is One

Ephesians 4

[1]I am a prisoner because of the Lord. So I am asking you to live a life worthy
of what God chose you for.

[2]Don't be proud at all. Be completely gentle. Be patient. Put up with one
another in love. [3]The Holy Spirit makes you one in every way. So try your best
to remain as one. Let peace keep you together.

[4]There is one body. There is one Spirit. You were appointed to one hope
when you were chosen. [5]There is one Lord. There is one faith and one baptism.
[6]There is one God and Father of all. He is over everything. He is through
everything. He is in everything.

[7]But each one of us has received a gift of grace, just as Christ wanted us to
have it. [8]That is why Scripture says,

> "When he went up to his place on high,
> he led a line of prisoners.
> He gave gifts to people." (Psalm 68:18)

[9]What does "he went up" mean? It can only mean that he also came down to
the lower, earthly places. [10]The One who came down is the same as the One
who went up higher than all the heavens. He did it in order to fill all of
creation. [11]He is the One who gave some the gift to be apostles. He gave some
the gift to be prophets. He gave some the gift of preaching the good news. And
he gave some the gift to be pastors and teachers. [12]He did it so that they might
prepare God's people to serve. If they do, the body of Christ will be built up.

[13]That will continue until we all become one in the faith and in the
knowledge of God's Son. Then we will be grown up in the faith. We will
receive everything that Christ has for us.

[14]We will no longer be babies in the faith. We won't be like ships tossed
around by the waves. We won't be blown here and there by every new

teaching. We won't be blown around by the cleverness and tricks of people who try to hide their evil plans. [15]Instead, we will speak the truth in love. We will grow up into Christ in every way.

He is the Head. [16]He makes the whole body grow and build itself up in love. Under the control of Christ, each part of the body does its work. It supports the other parts. In that way, the body is joined and held together.

Living as Children of Light

[17]Here is what I'm telling you. I am speaking for the Lord as I warn you. You must no longer live like those who aren't Jews. Their thoughts don't have any purpose. [18]They can't understand the truth. They are separated from the life of God. That is because they don't know him. And they don't know him because their hearts are stubborn.

[19]They have lost all feeling for what is right. They have given themselves over to the evil pleasures of their bodies. They take part in every kind of unclean act. And they always long for more.

[20]But that is not what you have learned about Christ. [21]I'm sure you heard of him. I'm sure you were taught by him. What you learned was the truth about Jesus.

[22]You were taught not to live the way you used to. You must get rid of your old way of life. That's because it is polluted by longing for things that lead you down the wrong path.

[23]You were taught to be made new in your thinking. [24]You were taught to start living a new life. It is created to be truly good and holy, just as God is.

[25]So each of you must get rid of your lying. Speak the truth to your neighbor. We are all parts of one body.

[26]Scripture says, "When you are angry, do not sin."(Psalm 4:4) Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry. [27]Don't give the devil a chance.

[28]Those who have been stealing must never steal again. Instead, they must work. They must do something useful with their own hands. Then they will have something to give to people in need.

[29]Don't let any evil talk come out of your mouths. Say only what will help to

build others up and meet their needs. Then what you say will help those who listen.

30 Do not make God's Holy Spirit sad. He marked you with a seal for the day when God will set you completely free.

31 Get rid of all hard feelings, anger and rage. Stop all fighting and lying. Put away every form of hatred. 32 Be kind and tender to one another. Forgive each other, just as God forgave you because of what Christ has done.

Ephesians 5

[1]You are the children that God dearly loves. So be just like him. [2]Lead a life of love, just as Christ did. He loved us. He gave himself up for us. He was a sweet-smelling offering and sacrifice to God.

[3]There should not be even a hint of sexual sin among you. Don't do anything unclean. And do not always want more and more. Things like that are not what God's holy people should do.

[4]There must not be any unclean speech or foolish talk or dirty jokes. All of them are out of place. Instead, you should give thanks.

[5]Here is what you can be sure of. Those who give themselves over to sexual sins are lost. So are people whose lives are not pure. The same is true of those who always want more and more. People who do those things might as well worship statues of gods. No one who does them will receive a share in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

[6]Don't let anyone fool you with words that don't mean anything. Because of things like that, God is angry with those who don't obey. [7]So don't go along with people like that.

[8]At one time you were in the dark. But now you are in the light because of what the Lord has done. Live like children of the light. [9]The light produces what is completely good, right and true. [10]Find out what pleases the Lord.

[11]Have nothing to do with the acts of darkness. They don't produce anything good. Show what they are really like. [12]It is shameful even to talk about what people who don't obey do in secret.

[13]But everything the light shines on can be seen. [14]Light makes everything clear. That is why it is said,

> "Wake up, sleeper.
> Rise from the dead.
> Then Christ will shine on you."

[15]So be very careful how you live. Do not live like people who aren't wise.

Live like people who are wise. [16]Make the most of every opportunity. The days are evil. [17]So don't be foolish. Instead, understand what the Lord wants.

[18]Don't fill yourself up with wine. Getting drunk will lead to wild living. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit.

[19]Speak to each other with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord. [20]Always give thanks to God the Father for everything. Give thanks to him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[21]Follow the lead of one another because of your respect for Christ.

Wives and Husbands

[22]Wives, follow the lead of your husbands as you follow the Lord. [23]The husband is the head of the wife, just as Christ is the head of the church. The church is Christ's body. He is its Savior. [24]The church follows the lead of Christ. In the same way, wives should follow the lead of their husbands in everything.

[25]Husbands, love your wives. Love them just as Christ loved the church. He gave himself up for her. [26]He did it to make her holy. He made her clean by washing her with water and the word. [27]He did it to bring her to himself as a brightly shining church. He wants a church that has no stain or wrinkle or any other flaw. He wants a church that is holy and without blame.

[28]In the same way, husbands should love their wives. They should love them as they love their own bodies. Any man who loves his wife loves himself. [29]After all, people have never hated their own bodies. Instead, they feed and care for their bodies. And that is what Christ does for the church. [30]We are parts of his body.

[31]Scripture says, "That's why a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife. The two will become one."(Genesis 2:24) [32]That is a deep mystery. But I'm talking about Christ and the church.

[33]A husband also must love his wife. He must love her just as he loves himself. And a wife must respect her husband.

Children and Parents

Ephesians 6

[1]Children, obey your parents as believers in the Lord. Obey them because it's
the right thing to do. [2]Scripture says, "Honor your father and mother." That is
the first commandment that has a promise. [3]"Then things will go well with
you. You will live a long time on the earth."(Deuteronomy 5:16)

[4]Fathers, don't make your children angry. Instead, train them and teach them
the ways of the Lord as you raise them.

Slaves and Masters

[5]Slaves, obey your masters here on earth. Respect them and honor them with
a heart that is true. Obey them just as you would obey Christ. [6]Don't obey
them only to please them when they are watching. Do it because you are slaves
of Christ. Be sure your heart does what God wants.

[7]Serve your masters with all your heart. Work as if you were not serving
people but the Lord. [8]You know that the Lord will give you a reward. He will
give to each of you in keeping with the good you do. It doesn't matter whether
you are slaves or free.

[9]Masters, treat your slaves in the same way. When you warn them, don't be
too hard on them. You know that the One who is their Master and yours is in
heaven. And he treats everyone the same.

God's Armor

[10]Finally, let the Lord make you strong. Depend on his mighty power. [11]Put
on all of God's armor. Then you can stand firm against the devil's evil plans.
[12]Our fight is not against human beings. It is against the rulers, the authorities
and the powers of this dark world. It is against the spiritual forces of evil in the

heavenly world.

13So put on all of God’s armor. Evil days will come. But you will be able to stand up to anything. And after you have done everything you can, you will still be standing.

14So stand firm. Put the belt of truth around your waist. Put the armor of godliness on your chest. 15Wear on your feet what will prepare you to tell the good news of peace. 16Also, pick up the shield of faith. With it you can put out all of the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17Put on the helmet of salvation. And take the sword of the Holy Spirit. The sword is God’s word.

18At all times, pray by the power of the Spirit. Pray all kinds of prayers. Be watchful, so that you can pray. Always keep on praying for all of God’s people.

19Pray also for me. Pray that when I open my mouth, the right words will be given to me. Then I can be bold as I tell the mystery of the good news. 20Because of the good news, I am being held by chains as the Lord’s messenger. So pray that I will be bold as I preach the good news. That’s what I should do.

Final Greetings

21Tychicus is a dear brother. He is faithful in serving the Lord. He will tell you everything about me. Then you will know how I am and what I am doing. 22That’s why I am sending him to you. I want you to know how we are. And I want him to cheer you up.

23May God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give peace to the brothers and sisters. May they also give them love and faith.

24May grace be given to everyone who loves our Lord Jesus Christ with a love that will never die.

Philippians

Philippians 1

[1]We, Paul and Timothy, are writing this letter. We serve Christ Jesus.

We are sending this letter to you, all of God's people in Philippi. You belong to Christ Jesus. We are also sending this letter to your leaders and deacons.

[2]May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

Paul Prays and Gives Thanks

[3]I thank my God every time I remember you. [4]In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy. [5]I am happy because you have joined me in spreading the good news. You have done so from the first day until now.

[6]I am sure that the One who began a good work in you will carry it on until it is completed. That will be on the day Christ Jesus returns.

[7]It is right for me to feel this way about all of you. I love you with all my heart. I may be held by chains, or I may be standing up for the truth of the good news. Either way, all of you share in God's grace together with me. [8]God can give witness that I long for all of you. I love you with the love that Christ Jesus gives.

[9]I pray that your love will grow more and more. And let it be based on knowledge and understanding. [10]Then you will be able to know what is best. You will be pure and without blame until the day Christ returns. [11]You will be filled with the fruit of right living produced by Jesus Christ. All of those things bring glory and praise to God.

Paul Honors Christ in Prison

[12]Brothers and sisters, here is what I want you to know. What has happened to me has really helped to spread the good news. [13]One thing has become clear.

I am being held by chains because of my stand for Christ. All of the palace guards and everyone else know it.

14Because I am being held by chains, most of the believers in the Lord have become bolder. They now speak God's word more boldly and without fear.

15It's true that some preach about Christ because they are jealous. But others preach about Christ to help me in my work. 16The last group acts out of love. They know I have been put here to stand up for the good news. 17But the others preach about Christ only to get ahead. They are not honest and true. They think they can stir up trouble for me while I am being held by chains.

18But what does it matter? Here is the important thing. Whether for reasons that are right or wrong, Christ is being preached about. That makes me very glad.

And I will continue to be glad. 19I know that you are praying for me. I also know that the Spirit of Jesus Christ will help me. So no matter what happens, I'm sure I will still be saved.

20I completely expect and hope that I won't be ashamed in any way. I'm sure I will be brave enough. Now as always Christ will be lifted high through my body. He will be lifted up whether I live or die.

21For me, life finds all of its meaning in Christ. Death also has its benefits.

22Suppose I go on living in my body. Then I will be able to carry on my work. It will bear a lot of fruit. But what should I choose? I don't know. 23I can't decide between the two. I long to leave this world and be with Christ. That is better by far.

24But it is more important for you that I stay alive. 25I'm sure of that. So I know I will remain with you. And I will continue with all of you to help you grow and be joyful in what you have been taught. 26I'm sure I will be with you again. Then your joy in Christ Jesus will be greater than ever because of me.

27No matter what happens, live in a way that brings honor to the good news about Christ. Then I will know that you stand firm with one purpose. I may come and see you or only hear about you. But I will know that you work together as one person. And I will know that you work to spread the teachings of the good news.

28So don't be afraid in any way of those who oppose you. That will show them that they will be destroyed and that you will be saved. That's what God

will do.

[29]Here is what he has given you to do for Christ. You must not only believe in him. You must also suffer for him.

[30]You are going through the same struggle you saw me go through. As you have heard, I am still struggling.

Thinking Like Christ

Philippians 2

[1]Are you cheerful because you belong to Christ? Does his love comfort you? Is the Holy Spirit your companion? Has Christ been gentle and loving toward you? [2]Then make my joy complete by agreeing with each other. Have the same love. Be one in spirit and purpose.

[3]Don’t do anything only to get ahead. Don’t do it because you are proud. Instead, be free of pride. Think of others as better than yourselves.

[4]None of you should look out just for your own good. You should also look out for the good of others.

[5]You should think in the same way Christ Jesus does.

[6]In his very nature he was God.
But he did not think that being equal with God was something he should hold on to.
[7]Instead, he made himself nothing.
He took on the very nature of a servant.
He was made in human form.
[8]He appeared as a man.
He came down to the lowest level.
He obeyed God completely, even though it led to his death.
In fact, he died on a cross.
[9]So God lifted him up to the highest place.
He gave him the name that is above every name.
[10]When the name of Jesus is spoken, everyone’s knee will bow to worship him.
Every knee in heaven and on earth and under the earth will bow to worship him.
[11]Everyone’s mouth will say that Jesus Christ is Lord.
And God the Father will receive the glory.

Living Like Christ

12 My dear friends, you have always obeyed God. You obeyed while I was
with you. And you have obeyed even more while I am not with you. So
continue to work out your own salvation. Do it with fear and trembling. 13 God
is working in you. He wants your plans and your acts to be in keeping with his
good purpose.

14 Do everything without finding fault or arguing. 15 Then you will be pure and
without blame. You will be children of God without fault in a sinful and evil
world. Among the people of the world you shine like stars in the heavens.
16 You shine as you hold out to them the word of life. So I can brag about you
on the day Christ returns. I can be happy that I didn't run or work for nothing.

17 But my life might even be poured out like a drink offering on your
sacrifices. I'm talking about the way you serve because you believe. Even so, I
am glad. I am joyful with all of you. 18 So you too should be glad and joyful
with me.

Timothy and Epaphroditus

19 I hope to send Timothy to you soon if the Lord Jesus allows it. Then I will
be cheered up when I receive news about you. 20 I have no one else like
Timothy. He truly cares about how you are doing.

21 All the others are looking out for their own interests. They are not looking
out for the interests of Jesus Christ. 22 But you know that Timothy has proved
himself. He has served with me like a son with his father in spreading the good
news.

23 So I hope to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. 24 And I'm
sure I myself will come soon if the Lord allows it.

25 But I think it's necessary to send Epaphroditus back to you. He is my
brother in the Lord. He is a worker and a soldier of Christ together with me. He
is also your messenger. You sent him to take care of my needs. 26 He longs for
all of you. He is troubled because you heard he was sick.

27 He was very sick. In fact, he almost died. But God had mercy on him. He

also had mercy on me. God spared me sadness after sadness. [28]So I want even more to send him to you. Then when you see him again, you will be glad. And I won’t worry so much.

[29]Welcome him as a brother in the Lord with great joy. Honor people like him. [30]He almost died for the work of Christ. He put his life in danger to make up for the help you couldn’t give me.

Do Not Trust Human Nature

Philippians 3

[1]Finally, my brothers and sisters, be joyful because you belong to the Lord. It is no trouble for me to write about some important matters to you again. If you know about them, you will have a safe path to follow.

[2]Watch out for those dogs. They do evil things. When they circumcise, it is nothing more than a useless cutting of the body.

[3]But we have been truly circumcised. We worship God by the power of his Spirit. We brag about what Christ Jesus has done. We don't put our trust in our weak human nature.

[4]I have many reasons to trust in my human nature. Others may think they have reasons to trust in theirs. But I have even more. [5]I was circumcised on the eighth day. I am part of the people of Israel. I am from the tribe of Benjamin. I am a pure Hebrew. As far as the law is concerned, I am a Pharisee. [6]As far as being committed is concerned, I opposed and attacked the church. As far as keeping the Law is concerned, I kept it perfectly.

[7]I thought things like that were for my benefit. But now I consider them to be nothing because of Christ. [8]Even more, I consider everything to be nothing compared to knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. To know him is the best thing of all. Because of him I have lost everything. But I consider all of it to be garbage so I can get to know Christ. [9]I want to be joined to him.

For me, being right with God does not come from the law. It comes because I believe in Christ. It comes from God. It is received by faith.

[10]I want to know Christ better. I want to know the power that raised him from the dead. I want to share in his sufferings. I want to become like him by sharing in his death. [11]Then by God's grace I will rise from the dead.

Moving on Toward the Goal

[12]I have not yet received all of those things. I have not yet been made perfect. But I move on to take hold of what Christ Jesus took hold of me for.

[13]Brothers and sisters, I don’t consider that I have taken hold of it yet. But here is the one thing I do. I forget what is behind me. I push hard toward what is ahead of me. [14]I move on toward the goal to win the prize. God has appointed me to win it. The heavenly prize is Christ Jesus himself.

[15]All of us who are grown up in the faith should see things that way. Maybe you think differently about something. But God will make it clear to you. [16]Only let us live up to what we have already reached.

[17]Brothers and sisters, join with others in following my example. Pay close attention to those who live in keeping with the pattern we gave you.

[18]I have told you those things many times before. Now I say it again with tears in my eyes. Many people live like enemies of the cross of Christ. [19]The only thing they have coming to them is death. Their stomach is their god. They brag about what they should be ashamed of. They think only about earthly things.

[20]But we are citizens of heaven. And we can hardly wait for a Savior from there. He is the Lord Jesus Christ. [21]He has the power to bring everything under his control. By his power he will change our earthly bodies. They will become like his glorious body.

Philippians 4

[1]My brothers and sisters, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord's strength. I love you and long for you. Dear friends, you are my joy and my crown.

Do What Is Best

[2]Here is what I'm asking Euodia and Syntyche to do. I want them to agree with each other because they belong to the Lord.

[3]My true companion, here is what I ask you to do. Help those women. They have served at my side. They have helped me spread the good news. So have Clement and the rest of those who have worked together with me. Their names are all written in the Book of Life.

[4]Always be joyful because you belong to the Lord. I will say it again. Be joyful. [5]Let everyone know how gentle you are. The Lord is coming soon.

[6]Don't worry about anything. Instead, tell God about everything. Ask and pray. Give thanks to him. [7]Then God's peace will watch over your hearts and your minds because you belong to Christ Jesus. God's peace can never be completely understood.

[8]Finally, my brothers and sisters, always think about what is true. Think about what is noble, right and pure. Think about what is lovely and worthy of respect. If anything is excellent or worthy of praise, think about those kinds of things. [9]Do what you have learned or received or heard from me. Follow my example.

The God who gives peace will be with you.

Paul Gives Thanks for Help Received

[10]At last you are concerned about me again. That makes me very happy. We belong to the Lord. I know that you have been concerned. But you had no

chance to show it.

[11]I'm not saying that because I need anything. I have learned to be content no matter what happens to me. [12]I know what it's like not to have what I need. I also know what it's like to have more than I need. I have learned the secret of being content no matter what happens. I am content whether I am well fed or hungry. I am content whether I have more than enough or not enough. [13]I can do everything by the power of Christ. He gives me strength.

[14]But it was good of you to share in my troubles. [15]And you believers at Philippi know what happened when I left Macedonia. Not one church helped me in the matter of giving and receiving. You were the only one that did. That was in the early days when you first heard the good news. [16]Even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me help when I needed it. You did it again and again.

[17]I'm not looking for a gift. I'm looking for what is best for you. [18]I have received my full pay, and even more than that. I have everything I need. That's because Epaphroditus brought me the gifts you sent. They are a sweet-smelling offering. They are a gift that God accepts. He is pleased with it.

[19]My God will meet all your needs. He will meet them in keeping with his wonderful riches that come to you because you belong to Christ Jesus.

[20]Give glory to our God and Father for ever and ever. Amen.

Final Greetings

[21]Greet all of God's people. They belong to Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me send greetings. [22]All of God's people here send you greetings. Most of all, those who live in the palace of Caesar send you greetings.

[23]May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

Colossians

Colossians 1

[1]I, Paul, am writing this letter. I am an apostle of Christ Jesus just as God planned. Our brother Timothy joins me in writing.

[2]We are sending this letter to you, our brothers and sisters in Colosse. You belong to Christ. You are holy and faithful.

May God our Father give you grace and peace.

Paul Prays and Gives Thanks

[3]We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you. [4]We thank him because we have heard about your faith in Christ Jesus. We have also heard that you love all of God's people.

[5]Your faith and love are based on the hope you have. What you hope for is stored up for you in heaven. You have already heard about it. You were told about it when the message of truth was given to you. I'm talking about the good news [6]that has come to you.

All over the world the good news is bearing fruit and growing. It has been doing that among you since the day you heard it. That is when you understood God's grace in all its truth.

[7]You learned the good news from Epaphras. He is dear to us. He serves Christ together with us. He faithfully works for Christ and for us among you. [8]He also told us about your love that comes from the Holy Spirit.

[9]That's why we have not stopped praying for you. We have been praying for you since the day we heard about you. We have been asking God to fill you with the knowledge of what he wants. We pray that he will give you spiritual wisdom and understanding.

[10]We pray that you will lead a life that is worthy of the Lord. We pray that you will please him in every way. So we want you to bear fruit in every good thing you do. We want you to grow to know God better. [11]We want you to be

very strong, in keeping with his glorious power. We want you to be patient. Never give up. Be joyful [12]as you give thanks to the Father.

He has made you fit to share with all his people. You will all receive a share in the kingdom of light.

[13]He has saved us from the kingdom of darkness. He has brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves. [14]Because of what the Son has done, we have been set free. Because of him, all of our sins have been forgiven.

Christ Is Far Above Everything

[15]Christ is the exact likeness of God, who can't be seen. He is first, and he is over all of creation. [16]All things were created by him. He created everything in heaven and on earth. He created everything that can be seen and everything that can't be seen. He created kings, powers, rulers and authorities. Everything was created by him and for him. [17]Before anything was created, he was already there. He holds everything together.

[18]And he is the head of the body, which is the church. He is the beginning. He is the first to be raised from the dead. That happened so that he would be far above everything. [19]God was pleased to have his whole nature living in Christ. [20]God was pleased to bring all things back to himself because of what Christ has done. That includes all things on earth and in heaven. God made peace through Christ's blood, through his death on the cross.

[21]At one time you were separated from God. You were enemies in your minds because of your evil ways. [22]But because Christ died, God has brought you back to himself. Christ's death has made you holy in God's sight. So now you don't have any flaw. You are free from blame.

[23]But you must keep your faith steady and firm. Don't move away from the hope that the good news holds out to you. It is the good news that you heard. It has been preached to every creature under heaven. I, Paul, now serve the good news.

Paul's Work for the Church

[24]I am happy because of what was suffered for you. And in my body I fill up my share in Christ's sufferings. I do it for his body, which is the church. [25]I serve the church. God appointed me to bring all of his word to you.

[26]That word contains the mystery that has been hidden for many ages. But now it has been made known to God's people. [27]God has chosen to make known to them the glorious riches of that mystery. He has made it known among those who aren't Jews. And here is what it is. Christ is in you. He is your hope of glory.

[28]We preach about him. With all the wisdom we have, we warn and teach everyone. When we bring them to God, we want them to be perfect as people who belong to Christ.

[29]That's what I'm working for. I work hard with all of Christ's strength. His strength works powerfully in me.

Colossians 2

[1]I want you to know how hard I am working for you. I'm concerned for those who are in Laodicea. I'm also concerned for everyone who has not met me in person. [2]I want their hearts to be made cheerful and strong. I want them to be joined together in love. Then their understanding will be rich and complete. They will know the mystery of God. That mystery is Christ.

[3]All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in him.

[4]But I don't want anyone to fool you with fast talk that only sounds good. [5]So even though I am away from you in body, I am with you in spirit. I am glad to see that you are doing everything in good order. And I am happy that your faith in Christ is so strong.

Freedom From Human Rules

[6]You received Christ Jesus as Lord. So keep on living in him. [7]Have your roots in him. Build yourselves up in him. Grow strong in what you believe, just as you were taught. Be more thankful than ever before.

[8]Make sure no one captures you. They will try to capture you by using false reasoning that has no meaning. Their ideas depend on human teachings. They also depend on the basic things the people of this world believe. They don't depend on Christ.

[9]God's whole nature is living in Christ in human form. [10]Because you belong to Christ, you have everything you need. He is the ruler over every power and authority.

[11]When you received Christ, you were also circumcised by putting away your sinful nature. Human hands didn't circumcise you. Christ did.

[12]When you were baptized, you were buried together with him. You were raised to life together with him by believing in God's power. God raised Jesus from the dead.

[13]At one time you were dead in your sins. Your sinful nature was not circumcised. But God gave you new life together with Christ. He forgave us all

of our sins.

[14]He wiped out the written Law with its rules. The Law was against us. It opposed us. He took it away and nailed it to the cross. [15]He took away the weapons of the powers and authorities. He made a public show of them. He won the battle over them by dying on the cross.

[16]So don’t let anyone judge you because of what you eat or drink. Don’t let anyone judge you about holy days. I’m talking about special feasts and New Moons and Sabbath days. [17]They are only a shadow of the things that were going to come. But what is real is found in Christ.

[18]Some people enjoy pretending they aren’t proud. They worship angels. But don’t let people like that hold you back from winning the prize. They tell you every little thing about what they have seen. Their minds are not guided by the Holy Spirit. So they are proud of their useless ideas.

[19]They aren’t connected to the Head. But the whole body grows from the Head. The muscles and tendons hold the body together. And God causes it to grow.

[20]The people of the world believe certain basic things. You died with Christ as far as things like that are concerned. So why do you act as if you still belong to the world? Here are the rules you follow. [21]“Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!” [22]Rules like that are all going to die out as time goes by. They are only based on human rules and teachings.

[23]It is true that those rules seem wise. Because of them, people give themselves over to their own kind of worship. They pretend they aren’t proud. They treat their bodies very badly. But rules like that don’t help. They don’t stop people from chasing after sinful pleasures.

Rules for Holy Living

Colossians 3

[1]You have been raised up with Christ. So think about things that are in heaven. That is where Christ is. He is sitting at God's right hand. [2]Think about things that are in heaven. Don't think about things that are on earth.

[3]You died. Now your life is hidden with Christ in God. [4]Christ is your life. When he appears again, you also will appear with him in heaven's glory.

[5]So put to death anything that belongs to your earthly nature. Get rid of your sexual sins and unclean acts. Don't let your feelings get out of control. Remove from your life all evil longings. Stop always wanting more and more. You might as well be worshiping statues of gods. [6]God's anger is going to come because of those things. [7]That's the way you lived at one time in your life.

[8]But now here are the kinds of things you must get rid of. You must put away anger, rage, hate and lies. Let no dirty words come out of your mouths. [9]Don't lie to each other.

You have gotten rid of your old way of life and its habits. [10]You have started living a new life. It is being made new so that what you know has the Creator's likeness.

[11]Here there is no Greek or Jew. There is no difference between those who are circumcised and those who are not. There is no rude outsider, or even a Scythian. There is no slave or free person. But Christ is everything. And he is in everything.

[12]You are God's chosen people. You are holy and dearly loved. So put on tender mercy and kindness as if they were your clothes. Don't be proud. Be gentle and patient. [13]Put up with each other. Forgive the things you are holding against one another. Forgive, just as the Lord forgave you.

[14]And over all of those good things put on love. Love holds them all together perfectly as if they were one.

[15]Let the peace that Christ gives rule in your hearts. As parts of one body, you were appointed to live in peace. And be thankful.

16 Let Christ’s word live in you like a rich treasure. Teach and correct each
other wisely. Sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing with thanks in your
hearts to God. 17 Do everything you say or do in the name of the Lord Jesus.
Always give thanks to God the Father through Christ.

Rules for Christian Families

18 Wives, follow the lead of your husbands. That’s what the Lord wants you to
do.

19 Husbands, love your wives. Don’t be mean to them.

20 Children, obey your parents in everything. That pleases the Lord.

21 Fathers, don’t make your children bitter. If you do, they will lose hope.

22 Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything. Don’t do it just to please
them when they are watching you. Obey them with an honest heart. Do it out
of respect for the Lord.

23 Work at everything you do with all your heart. Work as if you were
working for the Lord, not for human masters. 24 Work because you know that
you will finally receive as a reward what the Lord wants you to have. You are
serving the Lord Christ.

25 Anyone who does wrong will be paid back for what he does. God treats
everyone the same.

Colossians 4

[1]Masters, give your slaves what is right and fair. Do it because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

More Directions

[2]Spend a lot of time in prayer. Always be watchful and thankful.

[3]Pray for us too. Pray that God will open a door for our message. Then we can preach the mystery of Christ. Because I preached it, I am being held by chains. [4]Pray that I will preach it clearly, as I should.

[5]Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders. Make the most of every opportunity. [6]Let the words you speak always be full of grace. Season them with salt. Then you will know how to answer everyone.

Final Greetings

[7]Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother. He is a faithful worker. He serves the Lord together with us. [8]I am sending him to you for one reason. I want you to know what is happening here. I want him to cheer you up and make your hearts strong.

[9]He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother. He is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here.

[10]Aristarchus is in prison with me. He sends you his greetings. So does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. You have been given directions about him. If he comes to you, welcome him. [11]Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings. They are the only Jews who work together with me for God’s kingdom. They have been a comfort to me.

[12]Epaphras sends greetings. He is one of you. He serves Christ Jesus. He is always praying hard for you. He prays that you will stand firm in holding to all that God has in mind for us. He prays that you will continue to grow in your

knowledge of what God wants you to do. He also prays that you will be completely sure about it. [13]I am happy to tell you that he is working very hard for you. He is also working hard for everyone in Laodicea and Hierapolis.

[14]Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, sends greetings. So does Demas.

[15]Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters in Laodicea. Also give my greetings to Nympha and the church that meets in her house.

[16]After this letter has been read to you, send it on. Be sure that it is also read to the church in Laodicea. And be sure that you read the letter from Laodicea.

[17]Tell Archippus, “Be sure that you complete the work the Lord gave you to do.”

[18]I, Paul, am writing this greeting with my own hand. Remember that I am being held by chains. May grace be with you.

1 Thessalonians

1 Thessalonians 1
1 Thessalonians 2
1 Thessalonians 3
1 Thessalonians 4
1 Thessalonians 5

1 Thessalonians 1

[1]I, Paul, am writing this letter. Silas and Timothy join me in writing.

We are sending this letter to you, the members of the church in Thessalonica. You belong to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

May grace and peace be given to you.

Paul Gives Thanks

[2]We always thank God for all of you. We pray for you. [3]We never forget you when we pray to our God and Father. Your work is produced by your faith. Your service is the result of your love. Your strength to continue comes from your hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

[4]Brothers and sisters, you are loved by God. We know that he has chosen you. [5]Our good news didn't come to you only in words. It came with power. It came with the Holy Spirit's help. He gave us complete faith in what we were preaching. You know how we lived among you for your good.

[6]We and the Lord were your examples. You followed us. You suffered terribly. Even so, you welcomed our message with the joy the Holy Spirit gives. [7]So you became a model to all the believers in the lands of Macedonia and Achaia.

[8]The Lord's message rang out from you. That was true not only in Macedonia and Achaia. Your faith in God has also become known everywhere. So we don't have to say anything about it. [9]The believers themselves report the kind of welcome you gave us. They tell about how you turned away from statues of gods to serve the living and true God. [10]They tell about how you are waiting for his Son to come from heaven.

God raised him from the dead. He is Jesus. He saves us from God's anger, and his anger is sure to come.

Paul's Work for God in Thessalonica

1 Thessalonians 2

[1]Brothers and sisters, you know that our visit to you was not a failure. [2]You know what happened earlier in the city of Philippi. We suffered, and people treated us badly there. But God gave us the boldness to tell you his good news. We preached to you even though people opposed us strongly.

[3]The appeal we make is based on truth. It comes from a pure heart. We are not trying to trick you. [4]In fact, it is just the opposite. God has accepted us to preach. He has trusted us with the good news. We aren't trying to please people. We want to please God. He puts our hearts to the test.

[5]As you know, we never praised you if we didn't mean it. We didn't put on a mask to cover up any sinful longing. God is our witness that this is true. [6]We were not expecting people to praise us. We were not looking for praise from you or anyone else.

As Christ's apostles, we could have caused you some expense. [7]But we were gentle among you. We were like a mother caring for her little children. [8]We loved you so much that we were happy to share with you God's good news. We were also happy to share our lives with you. You had become very special to us.

[9]Brothers and sisters, I am sure you remember how hard we worked. We labored night and day while we preached to you God's good news. We didn't want to cause you any expense.

[10]You are witnesses of how we lived among you believers. God is also a witness that we were holy and godly and without blame. [11]You know that we treated each of you as a father treats his own children.

[12]We gave you hope and strength. We comforted you. We really wanted you to live in a way that is worthy of God. He chooses you to enter his glorious kingdom.

[13]We never stop thanking God for the way you received his word. You heard it from us. But you didn't accept it as a human word. You accepted it for what

it really is. It is God’s word. It is at work in you who believe.

14 Brothers and sisters, you became like the members of God’s churches in
Judea. They are believers in Christ Jesus, just as you are. People in your own
country made you suffer. You went through the same things the church
members in Judea suffered from the Jews.

15 The Jews who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets also forced us to
leave. They do not please God. They are enemies of everyone. 16 They try to
keep us from speaking to those who aren’t Jews. The Jews don’t want them to
be saved. In that way, the Jews always increase their sins to the limit. God’s
anger has come on them at last.

Paul Longs to See the Believers in Thessalonica

17 Brothers and sisters, we were torn away from you for a short time. We were
no longer with you in person, but we kept you in our thoughts. We really
longed to see you. So we tried very hard to do so. 18 We wanted to come to you.
Again and again I, Paul, wanted to come. But Satan stopped us.

19 What is our hope? What is our joy? When our Lord Jesus returns, what is
the crown we will delight in? Isn’t it you? 20 Yes, you are our glory and our joy.

1 Thessalonians 3

[1]We couldn’t wait any longer. So we thought it was best to be left by
ourselves in Athens. [2]We sent our brother Timothy to give you strength and
hope in your faith. He works together with God in spreading the good news
about Christ. [3]We sent him so that no one would be upset by times of testing.

You know very well that we have to go through them. [4]In fact, when we were
with you, we kept telling you that our enemies would make us suffer. As you
know very well, it has turned out that way.

[5]That’s the reason I sent someone to find out about your faith. I couldn’t wait
any longer. I was afraid that Satan might have tempted you in some way. Then
our efforts would have been useless.

Timothy Brings a Good Report

[6]But Timothy has come to us from you just now. He has brought good news
about your faith and love. He has told us that you always have happy memories
of us. He has also said that you long to see us, just as we long to see you.

[7]Brothers and sisters, in all our trouble and suffering your faith cheered us up.
[8]Now we really live, because you are standing firm in the Lord.

[9]How can we thank God enough for you because of all the joy that comes
only from our God? [10]Night and day we pray very hard that we will see you
again. We want to give you what is missing in your faith.

[11]Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus open up a way
for us to come to you. [12]May the Lord make your love grow. May it be like a
rising flood. May your love for one another increase. May it also increase for
everyone else. May it be just like our love for you. [13]May the Lord give you
strength in your hearts. Then you will be holy and without blame in the sight of
our God and Father. May that be true when our Lord Jesus comes with all his
holy ones.

Living in a Way That Pleases God

1 Thessalonians 4

[1]Finally, brothers and sisters, we taught you how to live in a way that pleases God. In fact, that is how you are living. In the name of the Lord Jesus we ask and beg you to do it more and more.

[2]You know the directions we gave you. They were given by the authority of the Lord Jesus.

[3]God wants you to be made holy. He wants you to stay away from sexual sins. [4]He wants all of you to learn to control your own bodies. You must live in a way that is holy. You must live with honor. [5]Don't long to commit sexual sins like those who don't know God. [6]None of you should sin against your brother by doing that. You should not take advantage of him. The Lord will punish everyone who commits those kinds of sins. We have already told you and warned you about that. [7]God chose us to live pure lives. He wants us to be holy.

[8]So if you refuse to accept my teaching, you turn your back on God, not on people. God gives you his Holy Spirit.

[9]We don't need to write to you about love among believers. God himself has taught you to love each other. [10]In fact, you do love all the brothers and sisters all around Macedonia. But we are asking you to love each other more and more.

[11]Do everything you can to live a quiet life. Mind your own business. Work with your hands, just as we told you to. [12]Then unbelievers will have respect for your everyday life. And you won't have to depend on anyone.

The Lord Is Coming

[13]Brothers and sisters, we want you to know what happens to those who die. We don't want you to be sad, as other people are. They don't have any hope.

[14]We believe that Jesus died and rose again. When he returns, many who believe in him will have died already. We believe that God will bring them back with Jesus.

[15]That agrees with what the Lord has said. When the Lord comes, many of us will still be alive. We tell you that we will certainly not go up before those who have died.

[16]The Lord himself will come down from heaven. We will hear a loud command. We will hear the voice of the leader of the angels. We will hear a blast from God’s trumpet. Many who believe in Christ will have died already. They will rise first. [17]After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them. We will be taken up in the clouds. We will meet the Lord in the air. And we will be with him forever.

[18]So cheer each other up with these words of comfort.

1 Thessalonians 5

[1]Brothers and sisters, we don’t have to write to you about times and dates.
[2]You know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the
night. [3]People will be saying that everything is peaceful and safe. Then
suddenly they will be destroyed. It will happen like birth pains coming on a
pregnant woman. None of the people will escape.

[4]Brothers and sisters, you are not in darkness. So that day should not surprise
you as a thief would. [5]All of you are children of the light. You are children of
the day. We don’t belong to the night. We don’t belong to the darkness.

[6]So let us not be like the others. They are asleep. Instead, let us be wide
awake and in full control of ourselves.

[7]Those who sleep, sleep at night. Those who get drunk, get drunk at night.
[8]But we belong to the day. So let us control ourselves. Let us put the armor of
faith and love on our chest. Let us put on the hope of salvation like a helmet.

[9]God didn’t choose us to receive his anger. He chose us to receive salvation
because of what our Lord Jesus Christ has done.

[10]Jesus died for us. Some will be alive when he comes. Others will be dead.
Either way, we will live together with him. [11]So cheer each other up with the
hope you have. Build each other up. In fact, that’s what you are doing.

Final Directions

[12]Brothers and sisters, we ask you to have respect for the godly leaders who
work hard among you. They have authority over you. They correct you. [13]Have
a lot of respect for them. Love them because of what they do. Live in peace
with each other.

[14]Brothers and sisters, we are asking you to warn those who don’t want to
work. Cheer up those who are shy. Help those who are weak. Put up with
everyone. [15]Make sure that nobody pays back one wrong act with another.
Always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else.

16 Always be joyful. 17 Never stop praying. 18 Give thanks no matter what
happens. God wants you to thank him because you believe in Christ Jesus.

19 Don’t put out the Holy Spirit’s fire. 20 Don’t treat prophecies as if they
amount to nothing. 21 Put everything to the test. Hold on to what is good. 22 Stay
away from every kind of evil.

23 God is the God who gives peace. May he make you holy through and
through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept free from blame. May
you be without blame from now until our Lord Jesus Christ comes. 24 The One
who has chosen you is faithful. He will do all these things.

25 Brothers and sisters, pray for us. 26 Greet all the believers with a holy kiss.
27 While the Lord is watching, here is what I command you. Have this letter
read to all the believers.

28 May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

2 Thessalonians

2 Thessalonians 1 2 Thessalonians 2 2 Thessalonians 3

2 Thessalonians 1

1 I, Paul, am writing this letter. Silas and Timothy join me in writing.

We are sending this letter to you, the members of the church in Thessalonica. You belong to God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 May God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

Paul Prays and Gives Thanks

3 Brothers and sisters, we should always thank God for you. That is only right, because your faith is growing more and more. The love you all have for each other is increasing. 4 So among God's churches we brag about the fact that you don't give up easily. We brag about your faith in all the suffering and testing you are going through.

5 All of this proves that when God judges, he is fair. So you will be considered worthy to enter God's kingdom. You are suffering for his kingdom.

6 God is fair. He will pay back trouble to those who give you trouble. 7 He will help you who are troubled. And he will also help us.

All of those things will happen when the Lord Jesus appears from heaven. He will come in blazing fire. He will come with the angels who are given the power to do what God wants. 8 He will punish those who don't know God. He will punish those who don't obey the good news about our Lord Jesus. 9 They will be destroyed forever. They will be shut out of heaven. They will never see the glory of the Lord's power.

10 All of those things will happen when he comes. On that day his glory will be seen in his holy people. Everyone who has believed will be amazed when they see him. That includes you, because you believed the witness we gave you.

11 Keeping this in mind, we never stop praying for you. Our God has chosen you. We pray that he will consider you worthy of his choice. We pray that by

his power he will make every good thing you have planned come true. We pray that he will make perfect all that you have done by faith. [12]We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus will receive glory through what you have done. We also pray that you will receive glory through what he has done. We pray all these things in keeping with the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Man of Sin

2 Thessalonians 2

[1]Brothers and sisters, we want to ask you something. It has to do with the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. It concerns the time when we will go to be with him.

[2]What if you receive a prophecy, report or letter that is supposed to have come from us? What if it says that the day of the Lord has already come? If it does, we ask you not to become easily upset or alarmed.

[3]Don’t let anyone trick you in any way. That day will not come until people rise up against God. It will not come until the man of sin appears. He is a marked man. He is sentenced to be destroyed. [4]He will oppose everything that is called God. He will oppose everything that is worshiped. He will give himself power over everything. He will set himself up in God’s temple. He will announce that he himself is God.

[5]Don’t you remember? When I was with you, I used to tell you those things.

[6]Now you know what is holding the man of sin back. He is held back so that he can make his appearance at the right time. [7]The secret power of sin is already at work. But the one who now holds that power back will keep doing it until he is taken out of the way.

[8]Then the man of sin will appear. The Lord Jesus will overthrow him with the breath of his mouth. The glorious brightness of Jesus’ coming will destroy the man of sin.

[9]The coming of the man of sin will be Satan’s work. His work will be seen in all kinds of fake miracles, signs and wonders. [10]It will be seen in every kind of evil that fools people who are dying. They are dying because they refuse to love the truth. The truth would save them.

[11]So God will fool them completely. Then they will believe the lie. [12]Many will not believe the truth. They will take pleasure in evil. They will be judged.

Stand Firm

13 Brothers and sisters, we should always thank God for you. The Lord loves
you. God chose you from the beginning. He wanted you to be saved. Salvation
comes through the Holy Spirit's work. He makes people holy. It also comes
through believing the truth. 14 He chose you to be saved by accepting the good
news that we preach. And you will share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

15 Brothers and sisters, stand firm. Hold on to what we taught you. We passed
our teachings on to you by what we preached and wrote.

16 Our Lord Jesus Christ and God our Father loved us. By his grace God gave
us comfort that will last forever. The hope he gave us is good.

May our Lord Jesus Christ and God our Father 17 comfort your hearts. May
they make you strong in every good thing you do and say.

Paul Asks for Prayer

2 Thessalonians 3

[1]Finally, brothers and sisters, pray for us. Pray that the Lord's message will spread quickly. Pray that others will honor it just as you did. [2]And pray that we will be saved from sinful and evil people. Not everyone is a believer.

[3]But the Lord is faithful. He will strengthen you. He will guard you from the evil one.

[4]We trust in the Lord. So we are sure that you are doing the things we tell you to do. And we are sure that you will keep on doing them.

[5]May the Lord fill your hearts with God's love. May Christ give you the strength to go on.

Paul Warns Those Who Do Not Want to Work

[6]Brothers and sisters, here is a command we give you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Keep away from every believer who doesn't want to work. Keep away from anyone who doesn't live up to the teaching you received from us.

[7]You know how you should follow our example. We worked when we were with you. [8]We didn't eat anyone's food without paying for it. In fact, it was just the opposite. We worked night and day. We worked very hard so that we wouldn't cause any expense to any of you.

[9]We worked, even though we have the right to receive help from you. We did it in order to be a model for you to follow. [10]Even when we were with you, we gave you a rule. We said, "Anyone who will not work will not eat."

[11]We hear that some people among you don't want to work. They aren't really busy. Instead, they are bothering others. [12]We belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. So we strongly command people like that to settle down. They have to earn the food they eat.

[13]Brothers and sisters, don't ever get tired of doing the right thing.

[14]Keep an eye on anyone who doesn’t obey the directions in our letter. Watch that person closely. Have nothing to do with him. Then he will feel ashamed. [15]But don’t think of him as an enemy. Instead, warn him as a brother or sister.

Final Greetings

[16]May the Lord who gives peace give you peace at all times and in every way. May the Lord be with all of you.

[17]I, Paul, write this greeting in my own handwriting. That’s how I prove that I am the author of all my letters. I always do it that way.

[18]May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

1 Timothy

1 Timothy 1
1 Timothy 2
1 Timothy 3
1 Timothy 4
1 Timothy 5
1 Timothy 6

1 Timothy 1

1 I, Paul, am writing this letter. I am an apostle of Christ Jesus, just as God our
Savior commanded. Christ Jesus also commanded it. We have put our hope in
him.

2 Timothy, I am sending you this letter. You are my true son in the faith.

May God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord give you grace, mercy and
peace.

Paul Warns Against Certain Teachers of the Law

3 Stay there in Ephesus. That is what I told you to do when I went into
Macedonia. I want you to command certain people not to teach things that
aren't true. 4 Command them not to spend their time on stories that aren't
completely true. They must not waste time on family histories that never end.
Things like that cause people to argue instead of doing God's work. His work
is done by faith.

5 Love is the purpose of my command. Love comes from a pure heart. It
comes from a good sense of what is right and wrong. It comes from faith that is
honest and true.

6 Some have wandered away from those teachings. They would rather talk
about things that have no meaning. 7 They want to be teachers of the law. And
they are very sure about that law. But they don't know what they are talking
about.

8 We know that the law is good if it is used properly. 9 We also know that the
law isn't made for godly people. It is made for those who break the law. It is
for those who refuse to obey. It is for ungodly and sinful people. It is for those
who aren't holy and who don't believe. It is for those who kill their fathers or
mothers. It is for murderers.

10 It is for those who commit adultery. It is for those who have a twisted view

of sex. It is for people who buy and sell slaves. It is for liars. It is for those who give witness to things that aren't true. And it is for anything else that is the opposite of true teaching.

11True teaching agrees with the glorious good news of the blessed God. He trusted me with that good news.

The Lord Pours Out His Grace on Paul

12I am thankful to Christ Jesus our Lord. He has given me strength. I thank him that he considered me faithful. And I thank him for appointing me to serve him.

13I used to speak evil things against Jesus. I tried to hurt his followers. I really pushed them around. But God showed me mercy anyway. I did those things without knowing any better. I wasn't a believer.

14Our Lord poured out more and more of his grace on me. Along with it came faith and love from Christ Jesus.

15Here is a saying that you can trust. It should be accepted completely. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

And I am the worst sinner of all. 16But for that very reason, God showed me mercy. And I am the worst of sinners. He showed me mercy so that Christ Jesus could show that he is very patient. I was an example for those who would come to believe in him. Then they would receive eternal life.

17The eternal King will never die. He can't be seen. He is the only God. Give him honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

18My son Timothy, I give you these teachings. They are in keeping with the prophecies that were once made about you. By following them, you can fight the good fight. 19Then you will hold on to faith. You will hold on to a good sense of what is right and wrong.

Some have not accepted these teachings. By doing that, they have destroyed their faith. They are like a ship that has sunk. 20Hymenaeus and Alexander are among them. I have handed them over to Satan. That will teach them not to speak evil things against God.

DIRECTIONS FOR WORSHIP

1 Timothy 2

[1]First, I want all of you to pray for everyone. Ask God to bless them. Give thanks for them.

[2]Pray for kings. Pray for all who are in authority. Pray that we will live peaceful and quiet lives. And pray that we will be godly and holy.

[3]That is good. It pleases God our Savior. [4]He wants everyone to be saved. He wants them to come to know the truth.

[5]There is only one God. And there is only one go-between for God and human beings. He is the man Christ Jesus. [6]He gave himself to pay for the sins of everyone. That was a witness given by God at just the right time.

[7]I was appointed to be a messenger and an apostle to preach the good news. I am telling the truth. I'm not lying. God appointed me to be a teacher of the true faith to those who aren't Jews.

[8]I want men everywhere to pray. I want them to lift up holy hands. I don't want them to be angry when they pray. I don't want them to argue.

[9]I also want women to dress simply. They should wear clothes that are right and proper. They shouldn't braid their hair. They shouldn't wear gold or pearls. They shouldn't spend too much on clothes. [10]Instead, they should put on good works as if they were their clothes. That is proper for women who claim to worship God.

[11]When a woman is learning, she should be quiet. She should follow the leaders in every way. [12]I do not let women teach. I do not let them have authority over men. They must be quiet.

[13]Adam was made first. Then Eve was made. [14]Adam was not the one who was tricked. The woman was tricked and became a sinner. [15]Will women be saved by having children? Only if they keep on believing, loving, and leading a holy life in a proper way.

Leaders and Deacons

1 Timothy 3

[1]Here is a saying you can trust. If anyone wants to be a leader in the church,
he wants to do a good work for God and people.

[2]A leader must be free from blame. He must be faithful to his wife. In
anything he does, he must not go too far. He must control himself. He must be
worthy of respect. He must welcome people into his home. He must be able to
teach. [3]He must not get drunk. He must not push people around. He must be
gentle. He must not be a person who likes to argue. He must not love money.

[4]He must manage his own family well. He must make sure that his children
obey him and show him proper respect. [5]Suppose someone doesn't know how
to manage his own family. Then how can he take care of God's church?

[6]The leader must not be a new believer. If he is, he might become proud.
Then he would be judged just like the devil.

[7]The leader must also be respected by those who are outside the church. Then
he will not be put to shame. He will not fall into the devil's trap.

[8]Deacons also must be worthy of respect. They must be honest and true. They
must not drink too much wine. They must not try to get money by cheating
people. [9]They must hold on to the deep truths of the faith. Even their own
minds tell them to do that. [10]First they must be tested. Then let them serve as
deacons if there is nothing against them.

[11]In the same way, their wives must be worthy of respect. They must not say
things that harm others. In anything they do, they must not go too far. They
must be worthy of trust in everything.

[12]A deacon must be faithful to his wife. He must manage his children and
family well. [13]Those who have served well earn the full respect of others. They
also become more sure of their faith in Christ Jesus.

[14]I hope I can come to you soon. But now I am writing these directions to
you. [15]Then if I have to put off my visit, you will know how you should act in

God’s family. The family of God is the church of the living God. It is the pillar and foundation of the truth.

16 There is no doubt that godliness is a great mystery.

Jesus appeared in a body.
    The Holy Spirit proved that he was the Son of God.
He was seen by angels.
    He was preached among the nations.
People in the world believed in him.
    He was taken up to heaven in glory.

1 Timothy 4

[1]The Holy Spirit clearly says that in the last days some people will leave the faith. They will follow spirits that will fool them. They will believe things that demons will teach them.

[2]Teachings like those come from liars who pretend to be what they are not. Their sense of what is right and wrong has been burned as if with a hot iron. [3]They do not allow people to get married. They order them not to eat certain foods. But God created those foods. So people who believe and know the truth should receive them and give thanks for them.

[4]Everything God created is good. You shouldn't turn anything down. Instead, you should thank God for it. [5]The word of God and prayer make it holy.

[6]Point these things out to the brothers and sisters. Then you will serve Christ Jesus well. You were brought up in the truths of the faith. You received good teaching. You followed it.

[7]Don't have anything to do with godless stories and silly tales. Instead, train yourself to be godly. [8]Training the body has some value. But being godly has value in every way. It promises help for the life you are now living and the life to come.

[9]Here is a saying you can trust. You can accept it completely. [10]We work hard for it. Here is the saying. We have put our hope in the living God. He is the Savior of all people. Most of all he is the Savior of those who believe.

[11]Command those things. Teach them. [12]Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young. Set an example for the believers in what you say and in how you live. Also set an example in how you love and in what you believe. Show the believers how to be pure.

[13]Until I come, spend your time reading Scripture out loud to one another. Spend your time preaching and teaching. [14]Don't fail to use the gift the Holy Spirit gave you. He gave it to you through a message from God. It was given when the elders placed their hands on you.

[15]Keep on doing those things. Give them your complete attention. Then everyone will see how you are coming along. [16]Be careful of how you live and what you believe. Never give up. Then you will save yourself and those who hear you.

Advice About Widows, Elders and Slaves

1 Timothy 5

[1]Don’t tell an older man off. Make an appeal to him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as if they were your brothers. [2]Treat older women as if they were your mothers. Treat younger women as if they were your sisters. Be completely pure in the way you treat them.

[3]Take care of the widows who really need help. [4]But suppose a widow has children or grandchildren. They should first learn to put their faith into practice. They should care for their own family. In that way they will pay back their parents and grandparents. That pleases God.

[5]The widow who really needs help and is left all alone puts her hope in God. Night and day she keeps on praying. Night and day she asks God for help. [6]But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she is still living.

[7]Give those directions to the people also. Then no one can be blamed. [8]Everyone should provide for his own relatives. Most of all, everyone should take care of his own family. If he doesn’t, he has left the faith. He is worse than someone who doesn’t believe.

[9]No widow should be put on the list of widows unless she is more than 60 years old. She must also have been faithful to her husband. [10]She must be well known for the good things she does. That includes bringing up children. It includes inviting guests into her home. It includes washing the feet of God’s people. It includes helping those who are in trouble. A widow should spend her time doing all kinds of good things.

[11]Don’t put younger widows on that kind of list. They might want pleasure more than they want Christ. Then they would want to get married again. [12]If they do that, they will be judged. They have broken their first promise.

[13]Besides, they get into the habit of having nothing to do. They go around from house to house. They waste time. They talk about others. They bother people. They say things they shouldn’t say.

[14]So here is the advice I give to younger widows. Get married. Have children.

Take care of your own homes. Don’t give the enemy the chance to tell lies about you. [15]In fact, some have already turned away to follow Satan.

[16]Suppose a woman is a believer and has widows in her family. She should help them. She shouldn’t let the church pay the expenses. Then the church can help the widows who really need it.

[17]The elders who do the church’s work well are worth twice as much honor. That is true in a special way of elders who preach and teach. [18]Scripture says, “Do not stop the ox from eating while it helps separate the grain from the straw.”(Deuteronomy 25:4) Scripture also says, “Workers are worthy of their pay.”(Luke 10:7)

[19]Don’t believe a charge against an elder unless two or three witnesses bring it. [20]Elders who sin should be corrected in front of the other believers. That will be a warning to the others.

[21]I command you to follow those directions. I command you in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the chosen angels. Treat everyone the same. Don’t favor one person over another.

[22]Don’t be too quick to place your hands on others to set them apart to serve God. Don’t take part in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure.

[23]Stop drinking only water. If your stomach is upset, drink a little wine. It can also help the other sicknesses you often have.

[24]The sins of some people are easy to see. They are already being judged. Others will be judged later. [25]In the same way, good works are easy to see. But even good works that are hard to see can’t stay hidden.



Don’t take part in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure.

1 Timothy 5:22

1 Timothy 6

[1]All who are forced to serve as slaves should consider their masters worthy of full respect. Then people will not speak evil things against God’s name and against what we teach.

[2]Some slaves have masters who are believers. They shouldn’t show less respect for their masters just because they are believers. Instead, they should serve them even better. That’s because those who benefit from their service are believers. They are loved by them.

Teach the slaves those things. Try hard to get them to do them.

Love for Money

[3]Suppose someone teaches ideas that are false. He doesn’t agree with the true teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. He doesn’t agree with godly teaching. [4]People like that are proud. They don’t understand anything. They like to argue more than they should. They can’t agree about what words mean.

All of that results in wanting what others have. It causes fighting, harmful talk, and evil distrust. [5]It stirs up trouble all the time among people whose minds are twisted by sin. The truth they once had has been taken away from them. They think they can get rich by being godly.

[6]You gain a lot when you live a godly life. But you must be happy with what you have. [7]We didn’t bring anything into the world. We can’t take anything out of it. [8]If we have food and clothing, we will be happy with that.

[9]People who want to get rich are tempted. They fall into a trap. They are tripped up by wanting many foolish and harmful things. Those who live like that are dragged down by what they do. They are destroyed and die.

[10]Love for money causes all kinds of evil. Some people want to get rich. They have wandered away from the faith. They have wounded themselves with many sorrows.

Paul Gives a Command to Timothy

[11]But you are a man of God. Run away from all of those things. Try hard to do what is right and godly. Have faith, love and gentleness. Hold on to what you believe. [12]Fight the good fight along with all other believers. Take hold of eternal life. You were chosen for it when you openly told others what you believe. Many witnesses heard you.

[13]God gives life to everything. Christ Jesus told the truth when he gave witness to Pontius Pilate. In the sight of God and Christ, I give you a command. [14]Obey it until our Lord Jesus Christ appears. Obey it completely. Then no one can find fault with it or you.

[15]God will bring Jesus back at a time that pleases him. God is the blessed and only Ruler. He is the greatest King of all. He is the most powerful Lord of all. [16]God is the only one who can't die. He lives in light that no one can get close to. No one has seen him. No one can see him.

Give honor and power to him forever. Amen.

[17]Command people who are rich in this world not to be proud. Tell them not to put their hope in riches. Wealth is so uncertain. Command those who are rich to put their hope in God. He richly provides us with everything to enjoy.

[18]Command the rich to do what is good. Tell them to be rich in doing good things. They must give freely. They must be willing to share. [19]In that way they will put riches away for themselves. It will provide a firm basis for the next life. Then they will take hold of the life that really is life.

[20]Timothy, guard what God has trusted you with. Turn away from godless chatter. Stay away from opposing ideas that are falsely called knowledge. [21]Some people believe them. By doing that they have wandered away from the faith.

May God's grace be with you.

2 Timothy

2 Timothy 1

[1]I, Paul, am writing this letter. I am an apostle of Christ Jesus just as God planned. He sent me to tell about the promise of life that is found in Christ Jesus.

[2]Timothy, I am sending you this letter. You are my dear son.

May God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord give you grace, mercy and peace.

Paul Tells Timothy to Be Faithful

[3]I serve God, knowing that what I have done is right. That is how our people served him long ago. Night and day I thank God for you. Night and day I always remember you in my prayers.

[4]I remember your tears. I long to see you so that I can be filled with joy. [5]I remember your honest and true faith. It was alive first in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice. And I am certain that it is now alive in you also.

[6]That is why I remind you to help God's gift grow, just as a small spark grows into a fire. God put his gift in you when I placed my hands on you.

[7]God didn't give us a spirit that makes us weak and fearful. He gave us a spirit that gives us power and love. It helps us control ourselves.

[8]So don't be ashamed to give witness about our Lord. And don't be ashamed of me, his prisoner. Instead, join with me as I suffer for the good news. God's power will help us do that.

[9]God has saved us. He has chosen us to live a holy life. It wasn't because of anything we have done. It was because of his own purpose and grace. Through Christ Jesus, God gave us that grace even before time began. [10]It has now been made known through the coming of our Savior, Christ Jesus. He has destroyed death. Because of the good news, he has brought life out into the light. That

life never dies.

[11]I was appointed to announce the good news. I was appointed to be an apostle and a teacher. [12]That's why I'm suffering the way I am. But I'm not ashamed. I know the One I have believed in. I am sure he is able to take care of what I have given him. I can trust him with it until the day he returns as judge.

[13]Follow what you heard from me as the pattern of true teaching. Follow it with faith and love because you belong to Christ Jesus. [14]Guard the truth of the good news that you were trusted with. Guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

[15]You know that all the believers in Asia Minor have deserted me. They include Phygelus and Hermogenes.

[16]May the Lord show mercy to all who live in the house of Onesiphorus. He often cheered me up. He was not ashamed that I was being held by chains. [17]In fact, it was just the opposite. When he was in Rome, he looked everywhere for me. At last he found me.

[18]May Onesiphorus find mercy from the Lord on the day Jesus returns as judge. You know very well how many ways Onesiphorus helped me in Ephesus.

2 Timothy 2

[1]My son, be strong in the grace that is found in Christ Jesus. [2]You have heard
me teach in front of many witnesses. Pass on to men you can trust the things
you've heard me say. Then they will be able to teach others also. [3]Like a good
soldier of Christ Jesus, share in the hard times with us.

[4]A soldier does not take part in things that don't have anything to do with the
army. He wants to please his commanding officer. [5]In the same way, anyone
who takes part in a sport doesn't receive the winner's crown unless he plays by
the rules. [6]The farmer who works hard should be the first to receive a share of
the crops.

[7]Think about what I'm saying. The Lord will help you understand what all of
it means.

[8]Remember Jesus Christ. He came from David's family line. He was raised
from the dead. That is my good news. [9]I am suffering for it. I have even been
put in chains like someone who has committed a crime. But God's word is not
held back by chains.

[10]So I put up with everything for the good of God's chosen people. Then they
also can be saved. Christ Jesus saves them. He gives them glory that will last
forever.

[11]Here is a saying you can trust.

If we died with him,
we will also live with him.
[12]If we don't give up,
we will also rule with him.
If we say we don't know him,
he will also say he doesn't know us.
[13]Even if we are not faithful,
he will remain faithful.
He must be true to himself.

A Worker Who Pleases God

14 Keep reminding the believers of those things. While God is watching, warn
them not to argue about words. That doesn't have any value. It only destroys
those who listen.

15 Do your best to please God. Be a worker who doesn't need to be ashamed.
Teach the message of truth correctly.

16 Stay away from godless chatter. Those who take part in it will become more
and more ungodly. 17 Their teaching will spread like a deadly sickness.

Hymenaeus and Philetus are two of those teachers. 18 They have wandered
away from the truth. They say that the time when people will rise from the
dead has already come. They destroy the faith of some people.

19 But God's solid foundation stands firm. Here is the message written on it.
"The Lord knows who his own people are."(Numbers 16:5) Also, "All who say
they believe in the Lord must turn away from evil."

20 In a large house there are things made out of gold and silver. But there are
also things made out of wood and clay. Some have honorable purposes. Others
do not. 21 Suppose someone stays away from what is not honorable. Then the
Master will be able to use him for honorable purposes. He will be made holy.
He will be ready to do any good work.

22 Run away from the evil things that young people long for. Try hard to do
what is right. Have faith, love and peace. Do these things together with those
who call on the Lord from a pure heart. 23 Don't have anything to do with
arguing. It is dumb and foolish. You know it only leads to fights.

24 Anyone who serves the Lord must not fight. Instead, he must be kind to
everyone. He must be able to teach. He must not hold anything against anyone.
25 He must gently teach those who oppose him.

Maybe God will give a change of heart to those who are against you. That
will lead them to know the truth. 26 Maybe they will come to their senses.
Maybe they will escape the devil's trap. He has taken them prisoner to do what
he wanted.

Terrible Times in the Last Days

2 Timothy 3

[1]Here is what I want you to know. There will be terrible times in the last
days. [2]People will love themselves. They will love money. They will brag and
be proud. They will tear others down. They will not obey their parents. They
won't be thankful or holy. [3]They won't love others. They won't forgive others.
They will tell lies about people. They will be out of control. They will be wild.
They will hate what is good.

[4]They will turn against their friends. They will act without thinking. They
will think they are better than others. They will love what pleases them instead
of loving God. [5]They will act as if they were serving God. But what they do
will show that they have turned their backs on God's power. Have nothing to
do with those people.

[6]They are the kind who worm their way into the homes of silly women. They
get control over them. Women like that are loaded down with sins. They give
in to all kinds of evil longings. [7]They are always learning. But they never come
to know the truth.

[8]Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses. In the same way, the teachers I'm
talking about oppose the truth. Their minds are twisted. As far as the faith is
concerned, God doesn't accept them. [9]They won't get very far. Just like Jannes
and Jambres, their foolish ways will be clear to everyone.

Paul Gives a Command to Timothy

[10]But you know all about my teaching. You know how I live and what I live
for. You know about my faith and love. You know how patient I am. You know
I haven't given up. [11]You know that I was treated badly. You know that I
suffered greatly. You know what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch,
Iconium and Lystra. You know how badly I have been treated. But the Lord
saved me from all of my troubles.

12 In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be
treated badly. 13 Evil people and pretenders will go from bad to worse. They
will fool others, and others will fool them.

14 But I want you to continue to follow what you have learned. Don’t give up
what you are sure of. You know the people you learned it from. 15 You have
known the Holy Scriptures ever since you were a little child. They are able to
teach you how to be saved by believing in Christ Jesus.

16 God has breathed life into all of Scripture. It is useful for teaching us what
is true. It is useful for correcting our mistakes. It is useful for making our lives
whole again. It is useful for training us to do what is right. 17 By using
Scripture, a man of God can be completely prepared to do every good thing.

2 Timothy 4

[1]I give you a command in the sight of God and Christ Jesus. Christ will judge the living and the dead. Because he and his kingdom are coming, here is the command I give you. [2]Preach the word. Be ready to serve God in good times and bad. Correct people's mistakes. Warn them. Cheer them up with words of hope. Be very patient as you do these things. Teach them carefully.

[3]The time will come when people won't put up with true teaching. Instead, they will try to satisfy their own longings. They will gather a large number of teachers around them. The teachers will say what the people want to hear. [4]The people will turn their ears away from the truth. They will turn to stories that aren't completely true.

[5]But I want you to keep your head no matter what happens. Don't give up when times are hard. Work to spread the good news. Do everything God has given you to do.

[6]I am already being poured out like a drink offering. The time has come for me to leave.

[7]I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. [8]Now there is a crown waiting for me. It is given to those who are right with God. The Lord, who judges fairly, will give it to me on the day he returns. He will not give it only to me. He will also give it to all those who are longing for him to return.

Personal Words

[9]Do your best to come to me quickly.

[10]Demas has deserted me. He has gone to Thessalonica. He left me because he loved this world. Crescens has gone to Galatia. Titus has gone to Dalmatia. [11]Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you. He helps me in my work for the Lord. [12]I sent Tychicus to Ephesus.

[13]When you come, bring my coat. I left it with Carpus at Troas. Also bring my scrolls. Most of all, bring the ones made out of animal skins.

[14]Remember Alexander, the one who works with metal? He did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will pay him back for what he has done. [15]You too should watch out for him. He strongly opposed our message.

[16]The first time I was put on trial, no one came to help me. Everyone deserted me. I hope they will be forgiven for it.

[17]The Lord stood at my side. He gave me the strength to preach the whole message. Then all those who weren't Jews heard it. I was saved from the lion's mouth. [18]The Lord will save me from every evil attack. He will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom.

Give him glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Final Greetings

[19]Greet Priscilla and Aquila. Greet those who live in the house of Onesiphorus.

[20]Erastus stayed in Corinth. I left Trophimus sick in Miletus.

[21]Do your best to get here before winter.

Eubulus greets you. So do Pudens, Linus, Claudia and all the brothers.

[22]May the Lord be with your spirit. May God's grace be with you.

Titus

Titus 1 Titus 2 Titus 3

Titus 1

[1]I, Paul, am writing this letter. I serve God. I am an apostle of Jesus Christ. God sent me to help his chosen people believe in Christ. I have been sent to help them understand the truth that leads to godly living. [2]Faith and understanding rest on the hope of eternal life. Before time began, God promised to give that life. And he does not lie. [3]At just the right time he made his word plain. He did it through the preaching that he trusted me with. God our Savior has commanded all those things.

[4]Titus, I am sending you this letter. You are my true son in the faith we share.

May God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior give you grace and peace.

The Work of Titus on Crete

[5]I left you on the island of Crete. There were some things that hadn't been finished. You needed to sort them out. You also had to appoint elders in every town. I told you how to do it.

[6]An elder must be without blame. He must be faithful to his wife. His children must be believers. They must not give anyone a reason to say that they are wild and don't obey.

[7]A church leader is trusted with God's work. That's why he must be without blame. He must not look after only his own interests. He must not get angry easily. He must not get drunk. He must not push people around. He must not try to get money by cheating people.

[8]Instead, he must welcome people into his home. He must love what is good. He must control his mind and feelings. He must do what is right. He must be holy. He must control what his body longs for. [9]The message as it has been taught can be trusted. He must hold firmly to it. Then he will be able to use true teaching to comfort others and build them up. He will be able to prove that people who oppose it are wrong.

[10]Many people refuse to obey God. All they do is talk a lot. They try to fool others. No one does these things more than the circumcision group. [11]They must be stopped. They are destroying entire families. They are teaching things they shouldn’t. They do it to get money by cheating people.

[12]Even one of their own prophets has said, “People from Crete are always liars. They are evil beasts. They don’t want to work. They live only to eat.” [13]What I have just said is true. So give them a strong warning. Then they will understand the faith correctly. [14]They will pay no attention to Jewish stories that aren’t completely true. They won’t listen to the commands of those who turn away from the truth.

[15]To people who are pure, all things are pure. But to those who have twisted minds and don’t believe, nothing is pure. In fact, their minds and their sense of what is right and wrong are twisted. [16]They claim to know God. But their actions show they don’t know him. They are hated by God. They refuse to obey him. They aren’t fit to do anything good.

Teaching God's People

Titus 2

1 What you teach must agree with true teaching.

2 Tell the older men that in anything they do, they must not go too far. They must be worthy of respect. They must control themselves. They must have true faith. They must love others. They must not give up.

3 In the same way, teach the older women to lead a holy life. They must not tell lies about others. They must not let wine control them. Instead, they must teach what is good. 4 Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children.

5 The younger women must control themselves. They must be pure. They must take good care of their homes. They must be kind. They must follow the lead of their husbands. Then no one will be able to speak evil things against God's word.

6 In the same way, help the young men to control themselves. 7 Do what is good. Set an example for them in everything. When you teach, be honest and serious. 8 No one can question the truth. So teach what is true. Then those who oppose you will be ashamed. That's because they will have nothing bad to say about us.

9 Teach slaves to obey their masters in everything they do. Tell them to try to please their masters. They must not talk back to them. 10 They must not steal from them. Instead, they must show that they can be trusted completely. Then they will make the teaching about God our Savior appealing in every way.

11 God's saving grace has appeared to all people. 12 It teaches us to say no to godless ways and sinful longings. We must control ourselves. We must do what is right. We must lead godly lives in today's world. 13 That's how we should live as we wait for the blessed hope God has given us.

We are waiting for Jesus Christ to appear in all his glory. He is our great God and Savior. 14 He gave himself for us. By doing that, he set us free from all evil. He wanted to make us pure. He wanted us to be his very own people. He

wanted us to long to do what is good.

15 Those are the things you should teach. Cheer people up and give them hope. Correct them with full authority. Don’t let anyone look down on you.

Do What Is Good

Titus 3

[1]Remind God's people to obey rulers and authorities. Remind them to be
ready to do what is good. [2]Tell them not to speak evil things against anyone.
Remind them to live in peace. They must consider the needs of others. They
must be kind and gentle toward all people.

[3]At one time we too acted like fools. We didn't obey God. We were tricked.
We were controlled by all kinds of longings and pleasures. We were full of
evil. We wanted what belongs to others. People hated us, and we hated one
another.

[4]But the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared. [5]He saved us. It
wasn't because of the good things we had done. It was because of his mercy.
He saved us by washing away our sins. We were born again. The Holy Spirit
gave us new life.

[6]God poured out the Spirit on us freely because of what Jesus Christ our
Savior has done. [7]His grace made us right with God. So now we have received
the hope of eternal life as God's children.

[8]You can trust that saying. Those things are important. Treat them that way.
Then those who have trusted in God will be careful to commit themselves to
doing what is good. Those things are excellent. They are for the good of
everyone.

[9]But keep away from foolish disagreements. Don't argue about family
histories. Don't make trouble. Don't fight about what the law teaches. Don't
argue about things like that. It doesn't do any good. It doesn't help anyone.

[10]Warn anyone who tries to get believers to take sides and separate into their
own little groups. Warn him more than once. After that, have nothing to do
with him. [11]You can be sure that someone like that is twisted and sinful. His
own actions judge him.

Final Words

[12]I will send Artemas or Tychicus to you. Then do your best to come to me at Nicopolis. I’ve decided to spend the winter there.

[13]Do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos. Send them on their way. See that they have everything they need.

[14]Our people must learn to commit themselves to doing what is good. Then they will be able to provide for the daily needs of others. If they do that, their lives won’t turn out to be useless.

[15]Everyone who is with me sends you greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith.

May God’s grace be with you all.

Philemon

[1]I, Paul, am writing this letter. I am a prisoner because of Christ Jesus. Our brother Timothy joins me in writing.

Philemon, we are sending you this letter. You are our dear friend. You work together with us. [2]We are also sending it to our sister Apphia and to Archippus. He is a soldier of Christ together with us. And we are sending it to the church that meets in your home.

[3]May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

Paul Prays and Gives Thanks

[4]I always thank my God when I remember you in my prayers. [5]That's because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus. I hear about your love for all of God's people. [6]I pray that you will be active in sharing what you believe. Then you will completely understand every good thing we have in Christ.

[7]Your love has given me great joy. It has cheered me up. My brother, you have renewed the hearts of God's people.

Paul Makes an Appeal for Onesimus

[8]Because of the authority Christ has given me, I could be bold. I could order you to do what you should do anyway. [9]But I make my appeal to you on the basis of our love for each other.

I, Paul, am an old man. I am now also a prisoner because of Christ Jesus. [10]I make an appeal to you for my son Onesimus. He became a son to me while I was being held by chains. [11]Before that, he was useless to you. But now he has become useful to you and to me.

[12]I'm sending Onesimus back to you. My very heart goes with him. [13]I would have liked to keep him with me. Then he could have taken your place in helping me while I'm being held by chains because of the good news. [14]But I didn't want to do anything unless you agreed. Any favor you do must be done

because you want to do it, not because you have to.

15Onesimus was separated from you for a little while. Maybe that was so you could have him back for good. 16You could have him back not as a slave. Instead, he would be better than a slave. He would be a dear brother. He is very dear to me. But he is even more dear to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord.

17Do you think of me as a believer who works together with you? Then welcome Onesimus as you would welcome me. 18Has he done anything wrong to you? Does he owe you anything? Then charge it to me. 19I'll pay it back. I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I won't even mention that you owe me your very life.

20My brother, I wish I could receive some benefit from you because we both belong to the Lord. Renew my heart. We know that Christ is the one who really renews it. 21I'm sure you will obey. So I'm writing to you. I know you will do even more than I ask.

22There is one more thing. Have a guest room ready for me. I hope I can return to all of you in answer to your prayers.

23Epaphras sends you greetings. Together with me, he is a prisoner because of Christ Jesus. 24Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke work together with me. They also send you greetings.

25May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Hebrews

Hebrews 1
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The Son Is Greater Than the Angels

Hebrews 1

[1]In the past, God spoke to our people through the prophets. He spoke at many times. He spoke in different ways. [2]But in these last days, he has spoken to us through his Son. He is the one whom God appointed to receive all things. God made everything through him. [3]The Son is the gleaming brightness of God's glory. He is the exact likeness of God's being. He uses his powerful word to hold all things together. He provided the way for people to be made pure from sin. Then he sat down at the right hand of the King, the Majesty in heaven. [4]So he became higher than the angels. The name he received is more excellent than theirs.

[5]God never said to any of the angels,

> "You are my Son.
> Today I have become your Father." (Psalm 2:7)

Or,

> "I will be his Father.
> And he will be my Son." (2 Samuel 7:14; 1 Chronicles 17:13)

[6]God's first and only Son is over all things. When God brings him into the world, he says,

> "Let all of God's angels worship him." (Deuteronomy 32:43)

[7]Here is something else God says about the angels.

> "God makes his angels to be like winds.
> He makes those who serve him to be like flashes of lightning."

(Psalm 104:4)

8 But here is what he says about the Son.

"You are God. Your throne will last for ever and ever.
Your kingdom will be ruled by what is right.
9 You have loved what is right and hated what is evil.
So your God has placed you above your companions.
He has filled you with joy by pouring the sacred oil on your head."
(Psalm 45:6, 7)

10 He also says,

"Lord, in the beginning you made the earth secure. You placed it on its foundations.
The heavens are the work of your hands.
11 They will pass away. But you remain.
They will all wear out like a piece of clothing.
12 You will roll them up like a robe.
They will be changed as a person changes clothes.
But you remain the same.
Your years will never end." (Psalm 102:25–27)

13 God never said to an angel,

"Sit at my right hand
until I put your enemies
under your control." (Psalm 110:1)

14 All angels are spirits who serve. God sends them to serve those who will receive salvation.

A Warning to Pay Attention

Hebrews 2

[1]So we must pay more careful attention to what we have heard. Then we will not drift away from it. [2]Even the message God spoke through angels had to be obeyed. Every time people broke the Law, they were punished. Every time they didn't obey, they were punished. [3]Then how will we escape if we don't pay attention to God's great salvation?

The Lord first announced that salvation. Those who heard him gave us the message about it. [4]God gave witness to it through signs and wonders. He gave witness through different kinds of miracles. He also gave witness through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. He gave them out as it pleased him.

Jesus Was Made Like His Brothers

[5]God has not put angels in charge of the world that is going to come. We are talking about that world. [6]There is a place where someone has given witness to it. He said,

> "What is a human being that you think about him?
> What is the son of man that you take care of him?
> [7]You made him a little lower than the angels.
> You placed on him a crown of glory and honor.
> [8]You have put everything under his control." (Psalm 8:4–6)

So God has put everything under him. Everything is under his control.

We do not now see everything under his control. [9]But we do see Jesus already given a crown of glory and honor. He was made a little lower than the angels. He suffered death. By the grace of God, he tasted death for everyone. That is why he was given his crown.

10 God has made everything. He has acted in exactly the right way. He is
bringing his many sons and daughters to share in his glory. To do so, he has
made the One who saved them perfect because of his sufferings.

11 The One who makes people holy and the people he makes holy belong to
the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them his brothers and sisters.
12 He says,

> "I will announce your name to my brothers and sisters.
> I will sing your praises among those who worship you." (Psalm
> 22:22)

13 Again he says,

> "I will put my trust in him." (Isaiah 8:17)

And again he says,

> "Here I am. Here are the children God has given me." (Isaiah 8:18)

14 Those children have bodies made out of flesh and blood. So Jesus became
human like them in order to die for them. By doing that, he could destroy the
one who rules over the kingdom of death. I'm talking about the devil. 15 Jesus
could set people free who were afraid of death. All their lives they were held as
slaves by that fear.

16 It is certainly Abraham's children that he helps. He doesn't help angels.
17 So he had to be made like his brothers in every way. Then he could serve
God as a kind and faithful high priest. And then he could pay for the sins of the
people by dying for them.

18 He himself suffered when he was tempted. Now he is able to help others
who are being tempted.

Jesus Is Greater Than Moses

Hebrews 3

[1]Holy brothers and sisters, God chose you to be his people. So keep thinking about Jesus. He is our apostle. He is our high priest. We believe in him.

[2]Moses was faithful in everything he did in the house of God. In the same way, Jesus was faithful to the One who appointed him.

[3]The person who builds a house has greater honor than the house itself. In the same way, Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses. [4]Every house is built by someone. But God is the builder of everything.

[5]Moses was faithful as one who serves in the house of God. He gave witness to what God would say in days to come. [6]But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. We are his house if we continue to come boldly to God. We must also hold on to the hope we take pride in.

A Warning Against Unbelief

[7]The Holy Spirit says,

> "Listen to his voice today.
> [8]If you hear it, don't be stubborn.
> You were stubborn when you opposed me.
> You did that when you were put to the test in the desert.
> [9]There your people of long ago put me to the test.
> For 40 years they saw what I did.
> [10]That is why I was angry with them.
> I said, 'Their hearts are always going down the wrong path.
> They have not known my ways.'
> [11]So in my anger I took an oath.
> I said, 'They will never enjoy the rest I planned for them.' " (Psalm 95:7–11)

12 Brothers and sisters, make sure that none of you has a sinful heart. Do not
let an unbelieving heart turn you away from the living God. 13 But build one
another up every day. Do it as long as there is still time. Then none of you will
become stubborn. You won't be fooled by sin's tricks.

14 We belong to Christ if we hold firmly to the faith we had at first. But we
must hold to it until the end. 15 It has just been said,

> "Listen to his voice today.
> If you hear it, don't be stubborn.
> You were stubborn when you opposed me." (Psalm 95:7, 8)

16 Who were those who heard and refused to obey? Weren't they all the
people Moses led out of Egypt? 17 Who was God angry with for 40 years?
Wasn't it with those who sinned? They died in the desert. 18 What people did
God promise with an oath that they would never enjoy the rest he planned for
them? Wasn't it those who didn't obey?

19 So we see that they weren't able to enter. That's because they didn't
believe.

God's People Enter His Sabbath Rest

Hebrews 4

[1]God's promise of enjoying his rest still stands. So be careful that none of you fails to receive it.

[2]The good news was preached to our people long ago. It has also been preached to us. The message they heard didn't have any value for them. They didn't combine it with faith. [3]Now we who have believed enjoy that rest. God said,

> "When I was angry I took an oath.
> I said, 'They will never enjoy the rest I planned for them.' " (Psalm 95:11)

Ever since God created the world, his work has been finished.

[4]Somewhere he spoke about the seventh day. He said, "On the seventh day God rested from all his work."(Genesis 2:2) [5]In the part of Scripture I talked about earlier God said, "They will never enjoy the rest I planned for them."(Psalm 95:11)

[6]It is still true that some will enjoy that rest. But those who had the good news preached to them earlier didn't go in. That was because they didn't obey.

[7]So God again chose a certain day. He named it Today. He did that when he spoke through David a long time later. As it was said earlier,

> "Listen to his voice today.
> If you hear it, don't be stubborn." (Psalm 95:7, 8)

[8]Suppose Joshua had given them rest. If he had, God would not have spoken later about another day. [9]So there is still a Sabbath rest for God's people.

[10]God rested from his work. Those who enjoy God's rest also rest from their

work. [11]So let us make every effort to enjoy that rest. Then no one will fall into sin by following the example of those who didn’t obey God.

[12]The word of God is living and active. It is sharper than any sword that has two edges. It cuts deep enough to separate soul from spirit. It can separate joints from bones. It judges the thoughts and purposes of the heart. [13]Nothing God created is hidden from him. His eyes see everything. He will hold us accountable for everything we do.

Jesus Is the Great High Priest

[14]We have a great high priest. He has gone up into the heavens. He is Jesus the Son of God. So let us hold firmly to what we say we believe.

[15]We have a high priest who can feel it when we are weak and hurting. We have a high priest who has been tempted in every way, just as we are. But he did not sin. [16]So let us boldly approach the throne of grace. Then we will receive mercy. We will find grace to help us when we need it.

Hebrews 5

[1]Every high priest is chosen from among men. He is appointed to act for
them in everything that has to do with God. He offers gifts and sacrifices for
their sins. [2]He is able to deal gently with those who have gone down the wrong
path without knowing it. He can do that because he himself is weak. [3]That's
why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins. He must also do it for the sins
of the people.

[4]No one can take that honor for himself. He must be appointed by God, just
as Aaron was.

[5]Even Christ did not take the glory of becoming a high priest for himself.
God said to him,

> "You are my Son.
> Today I have become your Father." (Psalm 2:7)

[6]In another place he said,

> "You are a priest forever,
> just like Melchizedek." (Psalm 110:4)

[7]Jesus prayed while he lived on earth. He made his appeal with loud cries and
tears. He prayed to the One who could save him from death. God heard him
because he truly honored God.

[8]Jesus was God's Son. But by suffering he learned what it means to obey. [9]In
that way he was made perfect. Eternal salvation comes from him. He saves all
those who obey him.

[10]God appointed him to be the high priest, just like Melchizedek.

A Warning Against Falling Away

[11]We have a lot to say about that. But it is hard to explain it to you. You learn too slowly. [12]By this time you should be teachers. But in fact, you need someone to teach you all over again. You need even the simple truths of God’s word. You need milk, not solid food.

[13]Anyone who lives on milk is still a baby. That person does not want to learn about living a godly life. [14]Solid food is for those who are grown up. They have trained themselves with a lot of practice. They can tell the difference between good and evil.

Hebrews 6

[1]So let us leave the simple teachings about Christ. Let us grow up as
believers. Let us not start all over again with the basic teachings. They taught
us that we need to turn away from doing things that lead to death. They taught
us that we must have faith in God. [2]They taught us about different kinds of
baptism. They taught us about placing hands on people. They taught us that
people will rise from the dead. They taught us that God will judge everyone.
And they taught us that what he decides will last forever.

[3]If God permits, we will go beyond those teachings and grow up.

[4]What if some people fall away from the faith? It won't be possible to bring
them back. It is true that they have seen the light. They have tasted the
heavenly gift. They have shared in the Holy Spirit. [5]They have tasted the good
things of God's word. They have tasted the powers of the age to come. [6]But
they have fallen away from the faith. So it won't be possible to bring them
back. They won't be able to turn away from their sins. They are losing
everything. That's because they are nailing the Son of God to the cross all over
again. They are bringing shame on him in front of everyone.

[7]Some land drinks the rain that falls on it. It produces a crop that is useful to
those who farm the land. That land receives God's blessing. [8]But other land
produces only thorns and weeds. That land isn't worth anything. It is in danger
of coming under God's curse. In the end, it will be burned.

[9]Dear friends, we have to say these things. But we are sure of better things in
your case. We are talking about the things that go along with being saved.

[10]God is fair. He will not forget what you have done. He will remember the
love you have shown him. You showed it when you helped his people. And
you show it when you keep on helping them.

[11]We want each of you to be faithful to the very end. We want you to be sure
of what you hope for. [12]We don't want you to slow down. Instead, be like those
who have faith and are patient. They will receive what God promised.

God Keeps His Promise

[13]When God made his promise to Abraham, he took an oath to keep it. But there was no one greater than himself to take an oath by. So he took his oath by making an appeal to himself.

[14]He said, “I will certainly bless you. I will give you many children.”(Genesis 22:17) [15]Abraham was patient while he waited. Then he received what God promised him.

[16]People take oaths by someone greater than themselves. An oath makes a promise certain. It puts an end to all arguing. [17]So God took an oath when he made his promise. He wanted to make it very clear that his purpose does not change. He wanted those who would receive what was promised to know that.

[18]God took an oath so we would have good reason not to give up. We have run away from everything else to take hold of the hope offered to us in God’s promise. So God gave his promise and his oath. Those two things can’t change. He couldn’t lie about them.

[19]Our hope is certain. It is something for the soul to hold on to. It is strong and secure. It goes all the way into the Most Holy Room behind the curtain. [20]That is where Jesus has gone. He went there to open the way ahead of us. He has become a high priest forever, just like Melchizedek.

Melchizedek the Priest

Hebrews 7

[1]Melchizedek was the king of Salem. He was the priest of God Most High. He met Abraham, who was returning from winning a battle over some kings. Melchizedek blessed him. [2]Abraham gave him a tenth of everything.

First, the name Melchizedek means “king of what is right.” Also, “king of Salem” means “king of peace.” [3]Melchizedek has no father or mother. He has no family line. His days have no beginning. His life has no end. He remains a priest forever, just like the Son of God.

[4]Think how great Melchizedek was. Even our father Abraham gave him a tenth of what he had captured. [5]Now the law lays down a rule for the sons of Levi who become priests. They must collect a tenth from the people. They must collect it even from those who belong to the family line of Abraham.

[6]Melchizedek did not trace his family line from Levi. But he collected a tenth from Abraham. Melchizedek blessed the one who had received the promises. [7]Without a doubt, the more important person blesses the less important one. [8]In the one case, the tenth is collected by men who die. But in the other case, it is collected by the one who is said to be living.

[9]Levi collects the tenth. But we might say that Levi paid the tenth through Abraham. [10]That’s because when Melchizedek met Abraham, Levi was still in Abraham’s body.

Jesus Is Like Melchizedek

[11]Suppose the Levites who were priests could have made people perfect. The law was given to the people so they could become perfect through the priests. Then why was there still a need for another priest to come? And why did he need to be like Melchizedek? Why wasn’t he from Aaron’s family line?

[12]A change of priests requires a change of law. [13]Those things are said about

one who is from a different tribe. No one from that tribe has ever served at the altar. [14]It is clear that our Lord came from the family line of Judah. Moses said nothing about priests who were from that tribe.

[15]But suppose another priest like Melchizedek appears. Then what we have said is even more clear. [16]He has not become a priest because of a rule about his family line. He has become a priest because of his powerful life. His life can never be destroyed. [17]Scripture says,

> "You are a priest forever,
> just like Melchizedek." (Psalm 110:4)

[18]The old rule is done away with. It was weak and useless. [19]The law didn't make anything perfect. Now a better hope has been given to us. That hope brings us near to God.

[20]The change of priests was made with an oath. Others became priests without any oath. [21]But Jesus became a priest with an oath. God said to him,

> "The Lord has taken an oath and made a promise.
> He will not change his mind. He has said,
> 'You are a priest forever.' " (Psalm 110:4)

[22]Because of that oath, Jesus makes the promise of a better covenant certain.

[23]There were many priests in Levi's family line. Death kept them from continuing in office. [24]But Jesus lives forever. So he always holds the office of priest. [25]People now come to God through him. And he is able to save them completely and for all time. Jesus lives forever. He prays for them.

[26]A high priest like that meets our need. He is holy, pure and without blame. He isn't like other people. He does not sin. He is lifted high above the heavens.

[27]He isn't like the other high priests. They need to offer sacrifices day after day. First they bring offerings for their own sins. Then they do it for the sins of the people. But Jesus gave one sacrifice for the sins of the people. He gave it once and for all time. He did it by offering himself.

[28]The law appoints men who are weak to be high priests. But God's oath

came after the law. The oath appointed the Son. He has been made perfect forever.

The High Priest of a New Covenant

Hebrews 8

[1]Here is the point of what we are saying. We have a high priest like that. He sat down at the right hand of the throne of the King, the Majesty in heaven. [2]He serves in the sacred tent. The Lord set up the true holy tent. A mere man did not set it up.

[3]Every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices. So that priest also had to have something to offer.

[4]What if he were on earth? Then he would not be a priest. There are already priests who offer the gifts required by the law. [5]They serve at a sacred tent. But it is only a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. That's why God warned Moses when he was about to build the holy tent. God said, "Be sure to make everything just like the pattern I showed you on the mountain."(Exodus 25:40)

[6]Jesus has been given a greater work to do for God. He is the go-between for the new covenant. That covenant is better than the old one. It is based on better promises.

[7]Suppose nothing had been wrong with that first covenant. Then no one would have looked for another covenant. [8]But God found fault with the people. He said,

"A new day is coming, says the Lord.
I will make a new covenant
with the people of Israel.
I will also make it with the people of Judah.
[9]It will not be like the covenant
I made with their people of long ago.
That was when I took them by the hand.
I led them out of Egypt.
My new covenant will be different because they didn't remain faithful
to my old covenant.
So I turned away from them,
says the Lord.

[10]This is the covenant I will make with Israel
after that time, says the Lord.
I will put my laws in their minds.
I will write them on their hearts.
I will be their God.
And they will be my people.
[11]A man will not teach his neighbor anymore.
And he will not teach his friend anymore.
He will not say, ‘Know the Lord.’
Everyone will know me.
From the least important of them to the most important,
all of them will know me.
[12]I will forgive their evil ways.
I will not remember their sins anymore.” (Jeremiah 31:31–34)

[13]God called that covenant “new.” So he has made the first one out of date. And what is out of date and getting older will soon disappear.

Worship in the Holy Tent on Earth

Hebrews 9

[1]The first covenant had rules for worship. It also had a sacred tent on earth.

[2]A holy tent was set up. The lampstand was in the first room. So were the table and the holy bread. That was called the Holy Room. [3]Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Room. [4]It had the golden altar for incense. It also had the wooden chest called the ark of the covenant. The ark was covered with gold. It held the gold jar of manna. It held Aaron's wooden staff that had budded. It also held the stone tablets. The words of the covenant were written on them.

[5]The cherubim were above the ark. God showed his glory there. The cherubim spread their wings over the place where sin was paid for. But we can't deal with those things more completely now.

[6]That's how everything was arranged in the holy tent. The priests entered it at regular times. They went into the outer room to do their work for God and others. [7]But only the high priest went into the inner room. He went in only once a year. He never entered without taking blood with him. He offered the blood for himself. He also offered it for the sins the people had committed because they didn't know any better.

[8]Here is what the Holy Spirit was showing us. He was telling us that God had not yet clearly shown the way into the Most Holy Room. It would not be clearly shown as long as the first holy tent was still standing.

[9]That's an example for the present time. It shows us that the gifts and sacrifices they offered were not enough. They were not able to remove the worshiper's feelings of guilt. [10]They deal only with food and drink and different kinds of special washings. They are rules that deal with things outside our bodies. People had to obey them only until the new covenant came.

The Blood of Christ

[11]Christ came to be the high priest of the good things that are already here. When he came, he went through the greater and more perfect holy tent. The tent was not made by people. In other words, it is not a part of this creation.

[12]He did not enter by spilling the blood of goats and calves. He entered the Most Holy Room by spilling his own blood. He did it once and for all time. He paid the price to set us free from sin forever.

[13]The blood of goats and bulls is sprinkled on people. So are the ashes of a young cow. They are sprinkled on people the Law called unclean. The people are sprinkled to make them holy. That makes them clean on the outside.

[14]But Christ offered himself to God without any flaw. He did this through the power of the eternal Holy Spirit. So how much more will his blood wash from our minds our feelings of guilt for committing sin! Sin always leads to death. But now we can serve the living God.

[15]That's why Christ is the go-between of a new covenant. Now those God calls to himself will receive the eternal gift he promised. They will receive it now that Christ has died to save them. He died to set them free from the sins they committed under the first covenant.

[16]What happens in the case of a will? It is necessary to prove that the person who made the will has died. [17]A will is in effect only when somebody has died. It never takes effect while the one who made it is still living. [18]That's why even the first covenant was not put into effect without the spilling of blood.

[19]Moses first announced every commandment of the law to all the people. Then he took the blood of calves. He also took water, bright red wool and branches of a hyssop plant. He sprinkled the scroll. He also sprinkled all of the people. [20]He said, "This is the blood of the covenant God has commanded you to keep."(Exodus 24:8) [21]In the same way, he sprinkled the holy tent with blood. He also sprinkled everything that was used in worship there.

[22]In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be made clean with blood. Without the spilling of blood, no one can be forgiven.

[23]So the copies of the heavenly things had to be made pure with those sacrifices. But the heavenly things themselves had to be made pure with better sacrifices.

[24]Christ did not enter a sacred tent made by people. That tent was only a copy of the true one. He entered heaven itself. He did it to stand in front of God for

us. He is there right now.

25The high priest enters the Most Holy Room every year. He enters with
blood that is not his own. But Christ did not enter heaven to offer himself again
and again. 26If he had, he would have had to suffer many times since the world
was created. But now he has appeared once and for all time. He has come at
the end of the ages to do away with sin. He has done that by offering himself.

27People have to die once. After that, God will judge them. 28In the same
way, Christ was offered up once. He took away the sins of many people.

He will also come a second time. At that time he will not suffer for sin.
Instead, he will come to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Christ's Sacrifice Is Once and for All Time

Hebrews 10

[1]The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming. It is not the
real things themselves. The same sacrifices have to be offered over and over
again. They must be offered year after year. That's why the law can never make
perfect those who come near to worship. [2]If it could, wouldn't the sacrifices
have stopped being offered? The worshipers would have been made clean once
and for all time. They would not have felt guilty for their sins anymore.

[3]But those offerings remind people of their sins every year. [4]It isn't possible
for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

[5]So when Christ came into the world, he said,

> "You didn't want sacrifices and offerings.
> Instead, you prepared a body for me.
> [6]You weren't pleased
> with burnt offerings and sin offerings.
> [7]Then I said, 'Here I am. It is written about me in the scroll.
> God, I have come to do what you want.' " (Psalm 40:6–8)

[8]First Christ said, "You didn't want sacrifices and offerings. You didn't want
burnt offerings and sin offerings. You weren't pleased with them." He said that
even though the law required people to bring them. [9]Then he said, "Here I am.
I have come to do what you want." He did away with the first. He did it to put
the second in place.

[10]We have been made holy by what God wanted. We have been made holy
because Jesus Christ offered his body once and for all time.

[11]Day after day every priest stands and does his special duties. He offers the
same sacrifices again and again. But they can never take away sins.

[12]Jesus our priest offered one sacrifice for sins for all time. Then he sat down
at the right hand of God. [13]Since that time, he waits for his enemies to be put

under his control. [14]By that one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

[15]The Holy Spirit also gives witness to us about this. First he says,

[16]"This is the covenant I will make with them
after that time, says the Lord.
I will put my laws in their hearts.
I will write my laws on their minds." (Jeremiah 31:33)

[17]Then he adds,

"I will not remember their sins anymore.
I will not remember the evil things they have done." (Jeremiah 31:34)

[18]Where those have been forgiven, there is no longer any offering for sin.

A Warning to Remain Faithful

[19]Brothers and sisters, we are not afraid to enter the Most Holy Room. We enter boldly because of the blood of Jesus. [20]His way is new because he lives. It has been opened for us through the curtain. I'm talking about his body.

[21]We also have a great priest over the house of God. [22]So let us come near to God with an honest and true heart. Let us come near with a faith that is sure and strong. Our hearts have been sprinkled. Our minds have been cleansed from a sense of guilt. Our bodies have been washed with pure water.

[23]Let us hold firmly to the hope we claim to have. The One who promised is faithful.

[24]Let us consider how we can stir up one another to love. Let us help one another to do good works. [25]Let us not give up meeting together. Some are in the habit of doing this. Instead, let us cheer each other up with words of hope. Let us do it all the more as you see the day coming when Christ will return.

[26]What if we keep sinning on purpose? What if we do it even after we know

the truth? Then there is no offering for our sins. [27]All we can do is to wait in fear for God to judge. His blazing fire will burn up his enemies.

[28]Anyone who did not obey the law of Moses died without mercy if there were two or three witnesses. [29]What should be done to anyone who has hated the Son of God or has said no to him? What should be done to a person who treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that makes him holy? What should be done to someone who has made fun of the Holy Spirit who brings God's grace? Don't you think people like that should be punished more than anyone else?

[30]We know the One who said, "I am the One who judges people. I will pay them back."(Deuteronomy 32:35) Scripture also says, "The Lord will judge his people."(Deuteronomy 32:36; Psalm 135:14)

[31]It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

[32]Remember those earlier days after you received the light. At that time you stood firm in a great struggle. You did it even in the face of suffering.

[33]Sometimes you were made fun of in front of others. You were treated badly. At other times you stood side by side with people who were being treated like that. [34]You suffered together with people in prison. When your property was taken from you, you accepted it with joy. You knew that God had given you better and more lasting things.

[35]So don't throw away your bold faith. It will bring you rich rewards. [36]You need to be faithful. Then you will do what God wants. You will receive what he has promised. [37]In just a very little while,

> "The one who is coming will come. He will not wait.
> [38]The one who is in the right will live by faith.
> If he pulls back,
> I will not be pleased with him." (Habakkuk 2:3, 4)

[39]But we aren't people who pull back and are destroyed. We are people who believe and are saved.

Living by Faith

Hebrews 11

[1]Faith is being sure of what we hope for. It is being certain of what we do not
see. [2]That is what the people of long ago were praised for.

[3]We have faith. So we understand that everything was made when God
commanded it. That's why we believe that what we see was not made out of
what could be seen.

[4]Abel had faith. So he offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain did.
Because of his faith Abel was praised as a godly man. God said good things
about his offerings. Because of his faith Abel still speaks. He speaks even
though he is dead.

[5]Enoch had faith. So he was taken from this life. He didn't die. He just
couldn't be found. God had taken him away. Before God took him, Enoch was
praised as one who pleased God.

[6]Without faith it isn't possible to please God. Those who come to God must
believe that he exists. And they must believe that he rewards those who look to
him.

[7]Noah had faith. So he built an ark to save his family. He built it because of
his great respect for God. God had warned him about things that could not yet
be seen. Because of his faith he showed the world that it was guilty. Because of
his faith he was considered right with God.

[8]Abraham had faith. So he obeyed God. God called him to go to a place he
would later receive as his own. So he went. He did it even though he didn't
know where he was going. [9]Because of his faith he made his home in the land
God had promised him. He was like an outsider in a strange country. He lived
there in tents. So did Isaac and Jacob. They received the same promise he did.
[10]Abraham was looking forward to the city that has foundations. He was
waiting for the city that God planned and built.

[11]Abraham had faith. So God made it possible for him to become a father. He
became a father even though he was too old. Sarah also was too old to have

children. But Abraham believed that the One who made the promise was faithful. [12]Abraham was past the time when he could have children. But many children came from that one man. They were as many as the stars in the sky. They were as many as the sand on the seashore. No one could count them.

[13]All those people were still living by faith when they died. They didn't receive the things God had promised. They only saw them and welcomed them from a long way off. They openly said that they were outsiders and strangers on earth.

[14]People who say things like that show that they are looking for a country of their own. [15]What if they had been thinking of the country they had left? Then they could have returned to it. [16]Instead, they longed for a better country. They wanted one in heaven.

So God is pleased when they call him their God. In fact, he has prepared a city for them.

[17]Abraham had faith. So he offered Isaac as a sacrifice. That happened when God put him to the test. Abraham had received the promises. But he was about to offer his one and only son. [18]God had said to him, "Your family line will continue through Isaac."(Genesis 21:12) Even so, Abraham was going to offer him up. [19]Abraham believed that God could raise the dead. In a way, he did receive Isaac back from death.

[20]Isaac had faith. So he blessed Jacob and Esau. He told them what was ahead for them.

[21]Jacob had faith. So he blessed each of Joseph's sons. He blessed them when he was dying. Because of his faith he worshiped God as he leaned on the top of his wooden staff.

[22]Joseph had faith. So he spoke to the people of Israel about their leaving Egypt. He gave directions about his bones. He did that toward the end of his life.

[23]Moses' parents had faith. So they hid him for three months after he was born. They saw he was a special child. They were not afraid of the king's command.

[24]Moses had faith. So he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. That happened after he had grown up. [25]He chose to be treated badly together with the people of God. He chose that instead of enjoying sin's pleasures for a

short time. [26]He suffered shame because of Christ. He thought it had great value. He considered it better than the riches of Egypt. He was looking ahead to God’s reward.

[27]Because of his faith he left Egypt. It wasn’t because he was afraid of the king’s anger. He didn’t let anything stop him. He saw the One who can’t be seen.

[28]Because of his faith he was the first to keep the Passover Feast. He commanded the people of Israel to sprinkle blood on their doorways. He did it so that the destroying angel would not touch their oldest sons.

[29]The people had faith. So they passed through the Red Sea. They went through it as if it were dry land. The Egyptians tried to do it also. But they drowned.

[30]The people had faith. So the walls of Jericho fell down. It happened after they had marched around the city for seven days.

[31]Rahab, the prostitute, had faith. So she welcomed the spies. That’s why she wasn’t killed with those who didn’t obey God.

[32]What more can I say? I don’t have time to tell about all the others. I don’t have time to talk about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah. I don’t have time to tell about David, Samuel and the prophets. [33]Because of their faith they took over kingdoms. They ruled fairly. They received the blessings God had promised. They shut the mouths of lions. [34]They put out great fires. They escaped being killed by the sword. Their weakness was turned to strength. They became powerful in battle. They beat back armies from other countries.

[35]Women received their dead back. The dead were raised to life again. Others were made to suffer greatly. But they refused to be set free. They did that so that after death they would be raised to a better life.

[36]Some were laughed at. Some were whipped. Still others were held by chains. They were put in prison. [37]Some were killed with stones. They were sawed in two. They were put to death by the sword. They went around wearing the skins of sheep and goats. They were poor. They were attacked. They were treated badly. [38]The world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains. They lived in caves. They lived in holes in the ground.

[39]All of those people were praised because they had faith. But none of them received what God had promised. [40]God had planned something better for us.

So they would only be made perfect together with us.

Hebrews 12

[1]A huge cloud of witnesses is all around us. So let us throw off everything
that stands in our way. Let us throw off any sin that holds on to us so tightly.
Let us keep on running the race marked out for us.

[2]Let us keep looking to Jesus. He is the author of faith. He also makes it
perfect. He paid no attention to the shame of the cross. He suffered there
because of the joy he was looking forward to. Then he sat down at the right
hand of the throne of God.

[3]He put up with attacks from sinners. So think about him. Then you won't get
tired. You won't lose hope.

God Trains His Children

[4]You struggle against sin. But you have not yet fought to the point of spilling
your blood. [5]You have forgotten that word of hope. It speaks to you as
children. It says,

> "My son, think of the Lord's training as important.
> Do not lose hope when he corrects you.
> [6]The Lord trains those he loves.
> He punishes everyone he accepts as a son." (Proverbs 3:11, 12)

[7]Put up with hard times. God uses them to train you. He is treating you as
children. What children are not trained by their parents? [8]God trains all of his
children. But what if he doesn't train you? Then you are like children of people
who weren't married to each other. You are not truly God's children.

[9]Besides, we have all had human parents who trained us. We respected them
for it. How much more should we be trained by the Father of our spirits and
live!

[10]Our parents trained us for a little while. They did what they thought was
best. But God trains us for our good. He wants us to share in his holiness.

[11]No training seems pleasant at the time. In fact, it seems painful. But later on it produces a harvest of godliness and peace. It does that for those who have been trained by it.

[12]So lift your sagging arms. Strengthen your weak knees. [13]"Make level paths for your feet to walk on."(Proverbs 4:26) Then those who have trouble walking won't be disabled. Instead, they will be healed.

A Warning Against Saying No to God

[14]Try your best to live in peace with everyone. Try to be holy. Without holiness no one will see the Lord.

[15]Be sure that no one misses God's grace. See to it that a bitter plant doesn't grow up. If it does, it will cause trouble. And it will pollute many people. [16]See to it that no one commits sexual sins.

See to it that no one is godless like Esau. He sold the rights to what he would receive as the oldest son. He sold them for a single meal. [17]As you know, after that he wanted to receive his father's blessing. But he was turned away. With tears he tried to get the blessing. But he couldn't get his father to change his mind.

[18]You haven't come to a mountain that can be touched. You haven't come to a mountain that is burning with fire. You haven't come to darkness, gloom and storm. [19]You haven't come to a blast from God's trumpet. You haven't come to a voice speaking to you. When people heard that voice long ago, they begged it not to say anything more to them. [20]What God commanded was too much for them. He said, "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be killed with stones."(Exodus 19:12, 13) [21]The sight was terrifying. Moses said, "I am trembling with fear."(Deuteronomy 9:19)

[22]But you have come to Mount Zion. You have come to the Jerusalem in heaven. It is the city of the living God. You have come to a joyful gathering of angels. There are thousands and thousands of them. [23]You have come to the church of God's people. God's first and only Son is over all things. God's people share in what belongs to his Son. Their names are written in heaven. You have come to God. He is the judge of all people.

You have come to the spirits of godly people who have been made perfect.

[24]You have come to Jesus. He is the go-between of a new covenant. You have come to the sprinkled blood. It promises better things than the blood of Abel.

[25]Be sure that you don’t say no to the One who speaks. People did not escape when they said no to the One who warned them on earth. And what if we turn away from the One who warns us from heaven? How much less will we escape!

[26]At that time his voice shook the earth. But now he has promised, “Once more I will shake the earth. I will also shake the heavens.”(Haggai 2:6) [27]The words “once more” point out that what can be shaken can be taken away. I’m talking about created things. Then what can’t be shaken will remain.

[28]We are receiving a kingdom that can’t be shaken. So let us be thankful. Then we can worship God in a way that pleases him. We will worship him with deep respect and wonder. [29]Our “God is like a fire that burns everything up.”(Deuteronomy 4:24)

Final Words

Hebrews 13

[1]Keep on loving each other as brothers and sisters. [2]Don’t forget to welcome strangers. By doing that, some people have welcomed angels without knowing it.

[3]Remember those in prison as if you were in prison with them. And remember those who are treated badly as if you yourselves were suffering.

[4]All of you should honor marriage. You should keep the marriage bed pure. God will judge the person who commits adultery. He will judge everyone who commits sexual sins.

[5]Don’t be controlled by love for money. Be happy with what you have. God has said,

> “I will never leave you.
> I will never desert you.” (Deuteronomy 31:6)

[6]So we can say boldly,

> “The Lord helps me. I will not be afraid.
> What can a mere man do to me?” (Psalm 118:6, 7)

[7]Remember your leaders. They spoke God’s word to you. Think about the results of their way of life. Copy their faith.

[8]Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

[9]Don’t be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings. It is good that God’s grace makes our hearts strong. Don’t depend on foods the Law requires. They have no value for the people who eat them. [10]Some worship at the holy tent. But we have an altar that they have no right to eat from.

[11]The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Room. He

brings their blood as a sin offering. But the bodies are burned outside the camp.
12Jesus also suffered outside the city gate. He suffered to make the people holy
by spilling his own blood.

13So let us go to him outside the camp. Let us be willing to suffer the shame
he suffered. 14Here we do not have a city that lasts. But we are looking for the
city that is going to come.

15So let us never stop offering to God our praise through Jesus. Let us offer it
as the fruit of lips that say they believe in him.

16Don’t forget to do good. Don’t forget to share with others. God is pleased
with those kinds of offerings.

17Obey your leaders. Put yourselves under their authority. They keep watch
over you. They know they are accountable to God for everything they do. Obey
them so that their work will be a joy. If you make their work a heavy load, it
won’t do you any good.

18Pray for us. We feel sure we have done what is right. We long to live as we
should in every way.

19I beg you to pray that I may return to you soon.

20Our Lord Jesus is the great Shepherd of the sheep. The God who gives
peace brought him back from the dead. He did it because of the blood of the
eternal covenant. May God 21supply you with everything good. Then you can
do what he wants. May he do in us what is pleasing to him. We can do it only
with the help of Jesus Christ. Give him glory for ever and ever. Amen.

22Brothers and sisters, I beg you to accept my word. It tells you to be faithful.
I have written you only a short letter.

23I want you to know that our brother Timothy has been set free. If he arrives
soon, I will come with him to see you.

24Greet all of your leaders. Greet all of God’s people. The believers from
Italy send you their greetings.

25May grace be with you all.

James

James 1
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James 1

[1]I, James, am writing this letter. I serve God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I am sending this letter to you, the 12 tribes that are scattered among the nations.

Greetings.

Facing All Kinds of Trouble

[2]My brothers and sisters, you will face all kinds of trouble. When you do, think of it as pure joy. [3]Your faith will be put to the test. You know that when that happens it will produce in you the strength to continue. [4]The strength to keep going must be allowed to finish its work. Then you will be all you should be. You will have everything you need.

[5]If any of you need wisdom, ask God for it. He will give it to you. God gives freely to everyone. He doesn't find fault.

[6]But when you ask, you must believe. You must not doubt. People who doubt are like waves of the sea. The wind blows and tosses them around. [7]A man like that shouldn't expect to receive anything from the Lord. [8]He can't make up his mind. He can never decide what to do.

[9]A believer who finds himself in a low position in life should be proud that God has given him a high position. [10]But someone who is rich should take pride in his low position. That's because he will fade away like a wild flower.

[11]The sun rises. Its burning heat dries up the plants. Their blossoms fall. Their beauty is destroyed. In the same way, a rich person will fade away even as he goes about his business.

[12]Blessed is the man who keeps on going when times are hard. After he has come through them, he will receive a crown. The crown is life itself. God has promised it to those who love him.

13When you are tempted, you shouldn’t say, “God is tempting me.” God can’t be tempted by evil. And he doesn’t tempt anyone.

14But your own evil longings tempt you. They lead you on and drag you away. 15When they are allowed to grow, they give birth to sin. When sin has grown up, it gives birth to death.

16My dear brothers and sisters, don’t let anyone fool you. 17Every good and perfect gift is from God. It comes down from the Father. He created the heavenly lights. He does not change like shadows that move.

18God chose to give us new birth through the message of truth. He wanted us to be the first and best of everything he created.

Listen to the Word and Do What It Says

19My dear brothers and sisters, pay attention to what I say. Everyone should be quick to listen. But they should be slow to speak. They should be slow to get angry. 20A man’s anger doesn’t produce the kind of life God wants.

21So get rid of everything that is dirty and sinful. Get rid of the evil that is all around us. Don’t be too proud to accept the word that is planted in you. It can save you.

22Don’t just listen to the word. You fool yourselves if you do that. You must do what it says.

23Suppose you listen to the word but don’t do what it says. Then you are like a man who looks at his face in a mirror. 24After looking at himself, he leaves. Right away he forgets what he looks like.

25But suppose you take a good look at the perfect law that gives freedom. You keep looking at it. You don’t forget what you’ve heard, but you do what the law says. Then you will be blessed in what you do.

26Suppose you think your beliefs are right because of how you live. But you don’t control what you say. Then you are fooling yourselves. Your beliefs are not worth anything at all.

27Here are the kinds of beliefs that God our Father accepts as pure and without fault. When widows and children who have no parents are in trouble, take care of them. And keep yourselves from being polluted by the world.

Treat Everyone the Same

James 2

[1]My brothers and sisters, you are believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ.
So treat everyone the same.

[2]Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine
clothes. And suppose a poor man in worn-out clothes also comes in. [3]Would
you show special attention to the one who is wearing fine clothes? Would you
say, “Here’s a good seat for you”? Would you say to the poor person, “You
stand there”? Or “Sit on the floor by my feet”? [4]If you would, aren’t you
treating some people better than others? Aren’t you like judges who have evil
thoughts?

[5]My dear brothers and sisters, listen to me. Hasn’t God chosen those who are
poor in the world’s eyes to be rich in faith? Hasn’t he chosen them to receive
the kingdom? Hasn’t he promised it to those who love him?

[6]But you have put poor people down. Aren’t rich people taking advantage of
you? Aren’t they dragging you into court? [7]Aren’t they speaking evil things
against the worthy name of Jesus? Remember, you belong to him.

[8]The royal law is found in Scripture. It says, “Love your neighbor as you love
yourself.”(Leviticus 19:18) If you really keep that law, you are doing what is
right. [9]But you sin if you don’t treat everyone the same. The law judges you
because you have broken it.

[10]Suppose you keep the whole law but trip over just one part of it. Then you
are guilty of breaking all of it. [11]God said, “Do not commit adultery.”(Exodus
20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18) He also said, “Do not commit murder.”(Exodus
20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17) Suppose you don’t commit adultery but do commit
murder. Then you have broken the Law.

[12]Speak and act like people who are going to be judged by the law that gives
freedom. [13]Those who have not shown mercy will not receive mercy when
they are judged. To show mercy is better than to judge.

Show Your Faith by What You Do

14My brothers and sisters, what good is it if people claim they have faith but
don't act like it? Can that kind of faith save them?

15Suppose a brother or sister has no clothes or food. 16Suppose one of you
says to them, "Go. I hope everything turns out fine for you. Keep warm. Eat
well." And you do nothing about what they really need. Then what good have
you done?

17It is the same with faith. If it doesn't cause us to do something, it's dead.

18But someone will say, "You have faith. I do good works."

Show me your faith that doesn't do good works. And I will show you my
faith by what I do. 19You believe there is one God. Good! Even the demons
believe that. And they tremble!

20You foolish man! Do you want proof that faith without good works is
useless? 21Our father Abraham offered his son Isaac on the altar. Wasn't he
considered to be right with God because of what he did? 22So you see that what
he believed and what he did were working together. What he did made his faith
complete.

23That is what Scripture means where it says, "Abraham believed God. God
accepted Abraham because he believed. So his faith made him right with
God."(Genesis 15:6) And that's not all. God called Abraham his friend. 24So
you see that a person is made right with God by what he does. It doesn't
happen only because of what he believes.

25Didn't God make even Rahab the prostitute right with him? That's because
of what she did. She gave the spies a place to stay. Then she sent them off in a
different direction.

26The body without the spirit is dead. In the same way, faith without good
works is dead.

Control What You Say

James 3

[1]My brothers and sisters, most of you shouldn’t want to be teachers. You know that those of us who teach will be held more accountable.

[2]All of us get tripped up in many ways. Suppose someone is never wrong in what he says. Then he is a perfect man. He is able to keep his whole body under control.

[3]We put a bit in the mouth of a horse to make it obey us. We can control the whole animal with it. [4]And how about ships? They are very big. They are driven along by strong winds. But they are steered by a very small rudder. It makes them go where the captain wants to go.

[5]In the same way, the tongue is a small part of the body. But it brags a lot. Think about how a small spark can set a big forest on fire.

[6]The tongue also is a fire. The tongue is the most evil part of the body. It pollutes the whole person. It sets a person’s whole way of life on fire. And the tongue is set on fire by hell.

[7]People have controlled all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea. They still control them. [8]But no one can control the tongue. It is an evil thing that never rests. It is full of deadly poison.

[9]With our tongues we praise our Lord and Father. With our tongues we call down curses on people. We do it even though they have been created to be like God. [10]Praise and cursing come out of the same mouth. My brothers and sisters, it shouldn’t be that way.

[11]Can fresh water and salt water flow out of the same spring? [12]My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives? Can a grapevine bear figs? Of course not. And a saltwater spring can’t produce fresh water either.

Two Kinds of Wisdom

[13]Are any of you wise and understanding? You should show it by living a good life. Wise people aren’t proud when they do good works.

[14]But suppose your hearts are jealous and bitter. Suppose you are concerned only about getting ahead. Don’t brag about it. Don’t say no to the truth. [15]Wisdom like that doesn’t come down from heaven. It belongs to the earth. It doesn’t come from the Holy Spirit. It comes from the devil.

[16]Are you jealous? Are you concerned only about getting ahead? Then your life will be a mess. You will be doing all kinds of evil things.

[17]But the wisdom that comes from heaven is pure. That’s the most important thing about it. And that’s not all. It also loves peace. It thinks about others. It obeys. It is full of mercy and good fruit. It is fair. It doesn’t pretend to be what it is not.

[18]Those who make peace should plant peace like a seed. If they do, it will produce a crop of right living.

Obey God

James 4

[1]Why do you fight and argue among yourselves? Isn't it because of your
sinful longings? They fight inside you.

[2]You want something, but you can't get it. You kill and want what others
have. But you can't have what you want. You argue and fight. You don't have
what you want, because you don't ask God. [3]When you do ask for something,
you don't receive it. Why? Because you ask for the wrong reason. You want to
spend your money on your sinful pleasures.

[4]You are not faithful to God. Don't you know that to be a friend of the world
is to hate God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an
enemy of God. [5]Don't you know what Scripture says? The spirit that God
caused to live in us wants us to belong only to God. Don't you think Scripture
has a reason for saying that? [6]God continues to give us more grace. That's why
Scripture says,

> "God opposes those who are proud.
> But he gives grace to those who are not." (Proverbs 3:34)

[7]So obey God. Stand up to the devil. He will run away from you. [8]Come near
to God, and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners. Make
your hearts pure, you who can't make up your minds.

[9]Be full of sorrow. Cry and sob. Change your laughter to crying. Change your
joy to sadness. [10]Bow down to the Lord. He will lift you up.

[11]My brothers and sisters, don't speak against one another. Anyone who
speaks against another believer speaks against the law. And anyone who judges
another believer judges the law. When you judge the law, you are not keeping
it. Instead, you are acting as if you were its judge.

[12]There is only one Lawgiver and Judge. He is the One who is able to save
life or destroy it. But who are you to judge your neighbor?

Bragging About Tomorrow

13 Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that
city. We will spend a year there. We will buy and sell and make money.” 14 You
don’t even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? It is a mist that
appears for a little while. Then it disappears. 15 Instead, you should say, “If it
pleases the Lord, we will live and do this or that.”

16 As it is, you are proud. You brag about it. That kind of bragging is evil.
17 So when you know the good things you should do and don’t do them, you
sin.

A Warning to Rich People

James 5

[1]You rich people, listen to me. Cry and sob, because you will soon be suffering.

[2]Your riches have rotted. Moths have eaten your clothes. [3]Your gold and silver have lost their brightness. Their dullness will give witness against you. Your wanting more and more will eat your body like fire. You have stored up riches in these last days.

[4]You have even failed to pay the workers who mowed your fields. Their pay is crying out against you. The cries of those who gathered the harvest have reached the ears of the Lord who rules over all.

[5]You have lived an easy life on earth. You have given yourselves everything you wanted. You have made yourselves fat like cattle that will soon be butchered. [6]You have judged and murdered people who aren't guilty. And they weren't even opposing you.

Be Patient When You Suffer

[7]Brothers and sisters, be patient until the Lord comes. See how the farmer waits for the land to produce its rich crop. See how patient he is for the fall and spring rains. [8]You too must be patient. You must stand firm. The Lord will soon come back.

[9]Brothers and sisters, don't find fault with one another. If you do, you will be judged. And the Judge is standing at the door!

[10]Brothers and sisters, think about the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. They are an example of how to be patient when you suffer. [11]As you know, we think that people who don't give up are blessed. You have heard that Job was patient. And you have seen what the Lord finally did for him. The Lord is full of tender mercy and loving concern.

[12]My brothers and sisters, don’t take an oath when you make a promise. Don’t call on heaven or earth or anything else to back up what you say. Let your “Yes” be yes. And let your “No” be no. If you don’t, you will be judged.

The Prayer of Faith

[13]Are any of you in trouble? Then you should pray. Are any of you happy? Then sing songs of praise.

[14]Are any of you sick? Then send for the elders of the church to pray over you. Ask them to anoint you with oil in the name of the Lord. [15]The prayer offered by those who have faith will make you well. The Lord will heal you. If you have sinned, you will be forgiven.

[16]So admit to one another that you have sinned. Pray for one another so that you might be healed. The prayer of a godly person is powerful. It makes things happen.

[17]Elijah was just like us. He prayed hard that it wouldn’t rain. And it didn’t rain on the land for three and a half years. [18]Then he prayed again. That time it rained. And the earth produced its crops.

[19]My brothers and sisters, suppose one of you wanders away from the truth and someone brings you back. [20]Then here is what I want everyone to remember. Anyone who turns a sinner from going down the wrong path will save him from death. God will erase many sins by forgiving him.

1 Peter

1 Peter 1
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1 Peter 1

[1]I, Peter, am writing this letter. I am an apostle of Jesus Christ.

I am sending this letter to you, God's chosen people. You are strangers in the world. You are scattered all over Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia. [2]You have been chosen in keeping with what God the Father had planned. That happened through the Spirit's work to make you pure and holy. God chose you so that you might obey Jesus Christ. He wanted you to be made clean by the blood of Christ.

May more and more grace and peace be given to you.

Peter Praises God for a Hope That Is Alive

[3]Give praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In his great mercy he has given us a new birth and a hope that is alive. It is alive because Jesus Christ rose from the dead. [4]He has given us new birth so that we might share in what belongs to him. It is a gift that can never be destroyed. It can never spoil or even fade away. It is kept in heaven for you. [5]Through faith you are kept safe by God's power. Your salvation is going to be completed. It is ready to be shown to you in the last days.

[6]Because you know this, you have great joy. You have joy even though you may have had to suffer for a little while. You may have had to suffer sadness in all kinds of trouble.

[7]Your troubles have come in order to prove that your faith is real. It is worth more than gold. Gold can pass away even though fire has made it pure. Your faith is meant to bring praise, honor and glory to God. That will happen when Jesus Christ returns.

[8]Even though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not see him now, you believe in him. You are filled with a glorious joy that can't be put into words. [9]You are receiving the salvation of your souls. It is the result of

your faith.

10The prophets searched very hard and with great care to find out about that
salvation. They spoke about the grace that was going to come to you. 11They
wanted to find out when that salvation would come. The Spirit of Christ in
them was telling them about the sufferings of Christ that were going to come.
He was also telling them about the glory that would follow.

12It was made known to the prophets that they were not serving themselves.
Instead, they were serving you when they spoke about the things that you have
now heard. Those who have preached the good news to you have told you
those things. They have done it with the help of the Holy Spirit sent from
heaven. Even angels long to look into those things.

Be Holy

13So prepare your minds for action. Control yourselves. Put your hope
completely in the grace that will be given to you when Jesus Christ returns.

14You should obey. You shouldn't give in to evil longings. They controlled
your life when you didn't know any better. 15The one who chose you is holy.
So you should be holy in all that you do. 16It is written, "Be holy, because I am
holy."(Leviticus 11:44, 45; 19:2)

17You call on a Father who judges each person's work without favoring one
over another. So live your lives as strangers here. Have the highest respect for
God.

18The blood of Christ set you free from an empty way of life. That way of life
was handed down to you by your own people long ago. You know that you
were not bought with things that can pass away, like silver or gold. 19Instead,
you were bought by the priceless blood of Christ. He is a perfect lamb. He
doesn't have any flaws at all. 20He was chosen before God created the world.
But he came into the world in these last days for you.

21Because of what Christ has done, you believe in God. It was God who
raised him from the dead. And it was God who gave him glory. So your faith
and hope are in God.

22You have made yourselves pure by obeying the truth. So you have an
honest and true love for your brothers and sisters. Love each other deeply, from

the heart.

23 You have been born again by means of the living word of God. His word
lasts forever. You were not born again from a seed that will die. You were born
from a seed that can't die. 24 It is written,

> "All people are like grass.
> All of their glory is like the flowers in the field.
> The grass dries up. The flowers fall to the ground.
> 25 But the word of the Lord stands forever." (Isaiah 40:6–8)

And that word was preached to you.

1 Peter 2

[1]So get rid of every kind of evil. Stop telling lies. Don’t pretend to be something you are not. Stop wanting what others have. Don’t speak against each other.

[2]Like babies that were just born, you should long for the pure milk of God’s word. It will help you grow up as believers. [3]You can do it now that you have tasted how good the Lord is.

The Living Stone and a Chosen People

[4]Christ is the living Stone. People did not accept him. But God chose him. God places the highest value on him.

[5]You also are like living stones. As you come to him you are being built into a house for worship. There you will be holy priests. You will offer spiritual sacrifices. God will accept them because of what Jesus Christ has done.

[6]In Scripture it says,

> “Look! I am placing a stone in Zion.
> It is a chosen and very valuable stone.
> It is the most important stone in the building.
> The one who trusts in him
> will never be put to shame.” (Isaiah 28:16)

[7]The stone is very valuable to you who believe. But to people who do not believe,

> “The stone the builders did not accept
> has become the most important stone of all.” (Psalm 118:22)

[8]And,

> “It is a stone that causes people to trip.
> It is a rock that makes them fall.” (Isaiah 8:14)

They trip and fall because they do not obey the message. That is also what God planned for them.

9But God chose you to be his people. You are royal priests. You are a holy nation. You are a people who belong to God. All of this is so that you can sing his praises. He brought you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10Once you were not a people. But now you are the people of God. Once you had not received mercy. But now you have received mercy.

11Dear friends, you are outsiders and strangers in this world. So I’m asking you not to give in to your sinful longings. They fight against your soul. 12People who don’t believe might say you are doing wrong. But lead good lives among them. Then they will see your good works. And they will give glory to God on the day he comes to judge.

Obey Your Rulers and Masters

13Follow the lead of every human authority. Do it because the Lord wants you to. Obey the king. He is the highest authority. 14Obey the governors. The king sends them to punish those who do wrong. He also sends them to praise those who do right. 15By doing good you will put a stop to the talk of foolish people. They don’t know what they are saying. God wants you to stop them.

16Live like free people. But don’t use your freedom to cover up evil. Live like people who serve God. 17Show proper respect to everyone. Love the community of believers. Have respect for God. Honor the king.

18Slaves, obey your masters with all the respect you should give them. Obey not only those who are good and kind. Obey also those who are not kind. 19Suppose a person suffers pain unfairly because he wants to obey God. That is worthy of praise. 20But suppose you receive a beating for doing wrong, and you put up with it. Will anyone honor you for that? Of course not. But suppose you suffer for doing good, and you put up with it. God will praise you for that.

[21]Christ suffered for you. He left you an example. He expects you to follow in his steps. You too were chosen to suffer. [22]Scripture says,

> “He didn’t commit any sin.
> No lies ever came out of his mouth.” (Isaiah 53:9)

[23]People shouted at him and made fun of him. But he didn’t do the same back to them. He suffered. But he didn’t say that bad things would happen to them. Instead, he trusted in the One who judges fairly.

[24]He himself carried our sins in his body on the cross. He did it so that we would die as far as sins are concerned. Then we would lead godly lives. His wounds have made you whole.

[25]You were like sheep who were wandering away. But now you have returned to the Shepherd. He is the Leader of your souls.



Show proper respect to everyone. Love the community of believers. Have respect for God. Honor the king.

1 Peter 2:17

Wives and Husbands

1 Peter 3

[1]Wives, follow the lead of your husbands. Suppose some of them don't
believe God's word. Then let them be won to Christ without words by seeing
how their wives behave. [2]Let them see how pure you are. Let them see that
your lives are full of respect for God.

[3]Braiding your hair doesn't make you beautiful. Wearing gold jewelry or fine
clothes doesn't make you beautiful. [4]Instead, your beauty comes from inside
you. It is the beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit. Beauty like that doesn't fade
away. God places great value on it.

[5]This is how the holy women of the past used to make themselves beautiful.
They put their hope in God. And they followed the lead of their own husbands.

[6]Sarah was like that. She obeyed Abraham. She called him her master. Do
you want to be like her? Then do what is right. And don't give in to fear.

[7]Husbands, take good care of your wives. They are weaker than you. So treat
them with respect. Honor them as those who will share with you the gracious
gift of life. Then nothing will stand in the way of your prayers.

Suffering for Doing Good

[8]Finally, I want all of you to live together in peace. Be understanding. Love
one another like members of the same family. Be kind and tender. Don't be
proud. [9]Don't pay back evil with evil. Don't pay back unkind words with
unkind words. Instead, pay them back with kind words. That's what you have
been chosen to do. You can receive a blessing by doing it.

[10]Scripture says,

> "Do you want to love life
> and see good days?
> Then keep your tongues from speaking evil.

Keep your lips from telling lies.
[11]Turn away from evil, and do good.
Look for peace, and go after it.
[12]The Lord's eyes look with favor on those who are godly.
His ears are open to their prayers.
But the Lord doesn't look with favor on those who do evil." (Psalm 34:12–16)

[13]Who is going to hurt you if you really want to do good? [14]But suppose you suffer for doing what is right. Then you will be blessed. Scripture also says, "Don't fear what others fear. Don't be afraid."(Isaiah 8:12)

[15]But make sure in your hearts that Christ is Lord. Always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks you about the hope you have. Be ready to give the reason for it. But do it gently and with respect.

[16]Live so that you don't have to feel you've done anything wrong. Some people may say evil things about your good conduct as believers in Christ. If they do, they will be put to shame for speaking like that about you. [17]It is better to suffer for doing good than for doing evil if that's what God wants.

[18]Christ died for sins once and for all time. The One who did what is right died for those who don't do right. He died to bring you to God. His body was put to death. But the Holy Spirit brought him back to life.

[19]By means of the Spirit, Christ went and preached to the spirits in prison. [20]Long ago they did not obey. God was patient while Noah was building the ark. He waited, but only a few people went into the ark. A total of eight were saved by means of water.

[21]The water of the flood is a picture of the baptism that now saves you also. The baptism I'm talking about has nothing to do with removing dirt from your body. Instead, it promises God that you will keep a clear sense of what is right and wrong.

Jesus Christ has saved you by rising from the dead. [22]He has gone into heaven. He is at God's right hand. Angels, authorities and powers are under his control.

Living for God

1 Peter 4

[1]Christ suffered in his body. So get ready as a soldier does. Prepare yourselves to think in the same way Christ did. Do it because those who have suffered in their bodies are finished with sin. [2]As a result, they don't live the rest of their lives on earth controlled by evil human longings. Instead, they live to do what God wants.

[3]You have spent enough time in the past doing what ungodly people choose to do. You lived a wild life. You longed for evil things. You got drunk. You went to wild parties. You worshiped statues of gods. The Lord hates that.

[4]Ungodly people think that it's strange when you no longer join them in what they do. They want you to rush into the same flood of wasteful living. So they say bad things about you.

[5]But they will have to explain their actions to God. He is ready to judge the living and the dead. [6]That's why the good news was preached even to people who are now dead. Human judges said they were guilty as far as their bodies were concerned. But God set their spirits free to live as he wanted them to.

[7]The end of all things is near. So keep a clear mind. Control yourselves. Then you can pray. [8]Most of all, love one another deeply. Love erases many sins by forgiving them. [9]Welcome others into your homes without complaining.

[10]God's gifts of grace come in many forms. Each of you has received a gift in order to serve others. You should use it faithfully. [11]If you speak, you should do it like one speaking God's very words. If you serve, you should do it with the strength God provides. Then in all things God will be praised through Jesus Christ.

Give him the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Suffering for Being a Christian

12 Dear friends, don’t be surprised by the painful suffering you are going
through. Don’t feel as if something strange were happening to you. 13 Be joyful
that you are taking part in Christ’s sufferings. Then you will be filled with joy
when Christ returns in glory.

14 Suppose people make fun of you because you believe in Christ. Then you
are blessed, because God’s Spirit rests on you. He is the Spirit of glory.
15 Suppose you suffer. Then it shouldn’t be because you are a murderer or a
thief. It shouldn’t be because you do evil things. It shouldn’t be because you
poke your nose into other people’s business. 16 But suppose you suffer for being
a Christian. Then don’t be ashamed. Instead, praise God because you are
known by that name.

17 It is time for people to be judged. It will begin with the family of God. And
since it begins with us, what will happen to people who don’t obey God’s good
news? 18 Scripture says,

> “Suppose it is hard for godly people to be saved.
> Then what will happen to ungodly people and sinners?” (Proverbs
> 11:31)

19 Some people will suffer because God has planned it that way. They should
commit themselves to their faithful Creator. And they should continue to do
good.

To Elders and Young Men

1 Peter 5

[1]I'm speaking to the elders among you. I was a witness of Christ's sufferings. And I will also share in the glory that is going to come. I'm making my appeal to you as one who is an elder together with you. [2]Be shepherds of God's flock, the believers who are under your care. Serve as their leaders. Don't serve them because you have to. Instead, do it because you want to. That's what God wants you to do. Don't do it because you want to get more and more money. Do it because you really want to serve.

[3]Don't act as if you were a ruler over those who are under your care. Instead, be examples to the flock. [4]The Chief Shepherd will come again. Then you will receive the crown of glory. It is a crown that will never fade away.

[5]Young men, follow the lead of those who are older. All of you, put on a spirit that is free of pride toward each other as if it were your clothes. Scripture says,

> "God opposes those who are proud.
> But he gives grace to those who are not." (Proverbs 3:34)

[6]So don't be proud. Put yourselves under God's mighty hand. Then he will honor you at the right time. [7]Turn all your worries over to him. He cares about you.

[8]Control yourselves. Be on your guard. Your enemy the devil is like a roaring lion. He prowls around looking for someone to chew up and swallow. [9]Stand up to him. Stand firm in what you believe. All over the world you know that your brothers and sisters are going through the same kind of suffering.

[10]God always gives you all the grace you need. So you will only have to suffer for a little while. Then God himself will build you up again. He will make you strong and steady. And he has chosen you to share in his eternal glory because you belong to Christ.

[11]Give him the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Final Greetings

[12]I consider Silas to be a faithful brother. With his help I have written you this short letter. I have written it to cheer you up. And I have written to give witness about the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.

[13]The members of the church in Babylon send you their greetings. They were chosen together with you. Mark, my son in the faith, also sends you his greetings. [14]Greet each other with a friendly kiss.

May God give peace to all of you who believe in Christ.

2 Peter

2 Peter 1 2 Peter 2 2 Peter 3

2 Peter 1

[1]I, Simon Peter, am writing this letter. I serve Jesus Christ. I am his apostle.

I am sending this letter to you who have received a faith as valuable as ours. You received it because our God and Savior Jesus Christ does what is right and fair for everyone.

[2]May more and more grace and peace be given to you. May they come to you as you learn more about God and about Jesus our Lord.

Be Sure That God Has Chosen You

[3]God's power has given us everything we need to lead a godly life. All of that has come to us because we know the One who chose us. He chose us because of his own glory and goodness.

[4]He has also given us his very great and valuable promises. He did it so you could share in his nature. He also did it so you could escape from the evil in the world. That evil is caused by sinful longings.

[5]So you should try very hard to add goodness to your faith. To goodness, add knowledge. [6]To knowledge, add the ability to control yourselves. To the ability to control yourselves, add the strength to keep going. To the strength to keep going, add godliness. [7]To godliness, add kindness to believers. And to kindness to believers, add love.

[8]You should possess more and more of those good points. They will make you useful and fruitful as you get to know our Lord Jesus Christ better.

[9]But what if some of you do not have those good points? Then you can't see very well. You are blind. You have forgotten that your past sins have been washed away.

[10]My brothers and sisters, be very sure that God has appointed you to be saved. Be sure that he has chosen you. If you do everything I have just said, you will never trip and fall. [11]You will receive a rich welcome into the

kingdom that lasts forever. It is the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Prophecy Comes From God

12So I will always remind you of these things. I'll do it even though you know them. I'll do it even though you now have deep roots in the truth. 13I think it is right for me to remind you. It is right as long as I live in this tent. I'm talking about my body.

14I know my tent will soon be removed. Our Lord Jesus Christ has made that clear to me. 15I hope that you will always be able to remember these things after I'm gone. I will try very hard to see that you do.

16We told you about the time our Lord Jesus Christ came with power. But we didn't make up stories when we told you about it. With our own eyes we saw him in all his majesty. 17God the Father gave him honor and glory. The voice of the Majestic Glory came to him. It said, "This is my Son, and I love him. I am very pleased with him."(Matthew 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35) 18We ourselves heard the voice that came from heaven. We were with him on the sacred mountain.

19The word of the prophets is made more certain. We have that word. You must pay attention to it. It is like a light shining in a dark place. It will shine until the day Jesus comes. Then the Morning Star will rise in your hearts.

20Above all, here is what you must understand. No prophecy in Scripture ever came from a prophet's own understanding. 21It never came simply because a prophet wanted it to. Instead, the Holy Spirit guided the prophets as they spoke. So prophecy comes from God.

False Teachers Will Be Destroyed

2 Peter 2

[1]But there were also false prophets among the people. In the same way there will be false teachers among you. In secret they will bring in teachings that will destroy you. They will even turn against the Lord and Master who died to save them. His death paid for their sins. They will quickly destroy themselves. [2]Many people will follow their shameful ways. They will give the way of truth a bad name.

[3]Those teachers are never satisfied. They want to get something out of you. So they make up stories to take advantage of you. They have been under a sentence of death for a long time. The One who will destroy them has not been sleeping.

[4]God did not spare angels when they sinned. Instead, he sent them to hell. He put them in dark prisons. He will keep them there until he judges them. [5]God did not spare the world's ungodly people long ago. He brought the flood on them. But Noah preached about the right way to live. God kept him safe. He also saved seven others. [6]God judged the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. He burned them to ashes. He made them an example of what is going to happen to ungodly people.

[7]God saved Lot. He was a man who did what was right. He was shocked by the dirty, sinful lives of people who didn't obey God's laws. [8]That good man lived among them day after day. He saw and heard the evil things they were doing. They were breaking God's laws. And his godly spirit was deeply troubled.

[9]So the Lord knows how to keep godly people safe in times of testing. He also knows how to keep ungodly people under guard until the day they will be judged. In the meantime, he continues to punish them. [10]Most of all, this is true of people who follow the evil longings of their sinful natures. They hate to be under authority.

Those false prophets are bold and proud. They aren't afraid to speak evil things against heavenly beings. [11]Angels are stronger and more powerful than

those people. But even angels don’t bring to the Lord evil charges against heavenly beings.

12Those people speak evil about things they don’t understand. They are like wild animals. They do what comes naturally to them. They are born only to be caught and destroyed. Just like animals, they too will die.

13They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. Their idea of pleasure is to have wild parties in the middle of the day. They are like spots and stains. They enjoy their sinful pleasures while they eat with you. 14They stare at women who are not their wives. They want to have sex with them. They never stop sinning. They trap those who are not firm in their faith. They have mastered the art of getting what they want. God has placed them under his curse.

15They have left God’s way. They have wandered off. They follow the way of Balaam, son of Beor. He loved to get paid for doing his evil work. 16But a donkey corrected him for the wrong he did. Animals don’t speak. But the donkey spoke with a human voice. It tried to stop the prophet from doing a very dumb thing.

17Those false prophets are like springs without water. They are like mists driven by a storm. The blackest darkness is reserved for them.

18They speak empty, bragging words. They make their appeal to the earthly longings of people’s sinful nature. They tempt new believers who are just escaping from the company of sinful people. 19They promise to give freedom to the new believers. But they themselves are slaves to sinful living. A person is a slave to anything that controls him.

20They may have escaped the sin of the world. They may have come to know our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. But what if they are once again caught up in sin? And what if it has become their master? Then they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning.

21What if they had not known the way of godliness? That would have been better than to have known it and then to have turned their backs on it. The way of godliness is the sacred command that was passed on to them.

22What the proverbs say about them is true. “A dog returns to where it has thrown up.”(Proverbs 26:11) And, “A pig that is washed goes back to rolling in the mud.”

The Day of the Lord

2 Peter 3

[1]Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders. I want to stir you up to think in a way that is pure. [2]I want you to remember the words the holy prophets spoke in the past. Remember the command our Lord and Savior gave through your apostles.

[3]First of all, here is what you must understand. In the last days people will make fun of the truth. They will laugh at it. They will follow their own evil longings. [4]They will say, “Where is this ‘return’ he promised? Everything goes on in the same way it has since our people of long ago died. In fact, it has continued that way since God first created everything.”

[5]Long ago, God’s word brought the heavens into being. His word separated the earth from the waters. And the waters surrounded it. But those people forget things like that on purpose. [6]The waters also flooded the world of that time. It was destroyed.

[7]By God’s word the heavens and earth of today are being reserved for fire. They are being kept for the day when God will judge. Then ungodly people will be destroyed.

[8]Dear friends, here is one thing you must not forget. With the Lord a day is like a thousand years. And a thousand years are like a day. [9]The Lord is not slow to keep his promise. He is not slow in the way some people understand it. He is patient with you. He doesn’t want anyone to be destroyed. Instead, he wants all people to turn away from their sins.

[10]But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar. Fire will destroy everything in them. God will judge the earth and everything in it.

[11]So everything will be destroyed. And what kind of people should you be? You should lead holy and godly lives. [12]Live like that as you look forward to the day of God. It will make the day come more quickly. On that day fire will destroy the heavens. Its heat will melt everything in them.

[13]But we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth. Godliness will make its home there. All of this is in keeping with God’s promise.

[14]Dear friends, I know you are looking forward to that. So try your best to be found pure and without blame. Be at peace with God. [15]Remember that while our Lord is waiting patiently to return, people are being saved.

Our dear brother Paul also wrote to you about that. God made him wise to write as he did. [16]He writes the same way in all his letters. He speaks about what I have just told you. His letters include some things that are hard to understand. People who don’t know better and aren’t firm in the faith twist what he says. They twist the other Scriptures too. So they will be destroyed.

[17]Dear friends, you already know that. So be on your guard. Then you won’t be led down the wrong path by the mistakes of people who don’t obey the law. You won’t fall from your safe position.

[18]Grow in the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Get to know him better.

Give him glory both now and forever. Amen.

1 John

1 John 1
1 John 2
1 John 3
1 John 4
1 John 5

The Word of Life

1 John 1

[1]Here is what we announce to everyone about the Word of life. He was
already here from the beginning. We have heard him. We have seen him with
our eyes. We have looked at him. Our hands have touched him. [2]That life has
appeared. We have seen him. We give witness about him. And we announce to
you that same eternal life. He was already with the Father. He has appeared to
us.

[3]We announce to you what we have seen and heard. We do it so you can
share life together with us. And we share life with the Father and with his Son,
Jesus Christ. [4]We are writing this to make our joy complete.

Walking in the Light

[5]Here is the message we have heard from him and announce to you. God is
light. There is no darkness in him at all.

[6]Suppose we say that we share life with God but still walk in the darkness.
Then we are lying. We are not living by the truth. [7]But suppose we walk in the
light, just as he is in the light. Then we share life with one another. And the
blood of Jesus, his Son, makes us pure from all sin.

[8]Suppose we claim we are without sin. Then we are fooling ourselves. The
truth is not in us. [9]But God is faithful and fair. If we admit that we have sinned,
he will forgive us our sins. He will forgive every wrong thing we have done.
He will make us pure. [10]If we say we have not sinned, we are calling God a
liar. His word has no place in our lives.

1 John 2

[1]My dear children, I'm writing this to you so that you will not sin. But
suppose someone does sin. Then we have one who speaks to the Father for us.
He stands up for us. He is Jesus Christ, the Blameless One. [2]He gave his life to
pay for our sins. But he not only paid for our sins. He also paid for the sins of
the whole world.

[3]We know that we have come to know God if we obey his commands.

[4]Suppose someone says, "I know him." But suppose that person does not do
what God commands. Then that person is a liar and is not telling the truth. [5]But
if anyone obeys God's word, then God's love is truly made complete in that
person. Here is how we know we belong to him. [6]Those who claim to belong
to him must live just as Jesus did.

[7]Dear friends, I'm not writing you a new command. Instead, I'm writing one
you have heard before. You have had it since the beginning.

[8]But I am writing what amounts to a new command. Its truth was shown in
how Jesus lived. It is also shown in how you live. The darkness is passing
away. The true light is already shining.

[9]Suppose someone claims to be in the light but hates his brother or sister.
Then he is still in the darkness.

[10]Those who love their brothers and sisters are living in the light. There is
nothing in them to make them fall into sin. [11]But those who hate a brother or
sister are in the darkness. They walk around in the darkness. They don't know
where they are going. The darkness has made them blind.

[12]Dear children, I'm writing to you
because your sins have been forgiven.
They have been forgiven because of what Jesus has done.
[13]Fathers, I'm writing to you
because you have known the One who is from the beginning.
Young people, I'm writing to you
because you have won the battle over the evil one.

Dear children, I'm writing to you

because you have known the Father.
[14]Fathers, I'm writing to you
because you have known the One who is from the beginning.
Young people, I'm writing to you
because you are strong.
God's word lives in you.
You have won the battle over the evil one.

Do Not Love the World

[15]Do not love the world or anything in it. If you love the world, love for the Father is not in you.

[16]Here is what people who belong to this world do. They try to satisfy what their sinful natures want to do. They long for what their sinful eyes look at. They brag about what they have and what they do. All of this comes from the world. It doesn't come from the Father.

[17]The world and its evil longings are passing away. But those who do what God wants them to do live forever.

A Warning About the Enemies of Christ

[18]Dear children, we are living in the last days. You have heard that the great enemy of Christ is coming. But even now many enemies of Christ have already come. That's how we know that these are the last days.

[19]The enemies left our group. They didn't really belong to us. If they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us. But by leaving they showed that none of them belonged to us.

[20]You have received the Spirit from the Holy One. And all of you know the truth. [21]I'm not writing to you because you don't know the truth but because you do know it. I'm writing to you because no lie comes from the truth.

[22]Who is the liar? The person who says that Jesus is not the Christ. People who say that are the enemies of Christ. They say no to the Father and the Son. [23]Those who say no to the Son don't belong to the Father. But anyone who says yes to the Son belongs to the Father also.

[24]Make sure that you don’t forget what you have heard from the beginning. Then you will remain joined to the Son and to the Father. [25]That’s what God has promised us. We have eternal life.

[26]I’m writing these things to warn you about those who are trying to lead you down the wrong path.

[27]But you have received the Holy Spirit from God. He continues to live in you. So you don’t need anyone to teach you. God’s Spirit teaches you about everything. What he says is true. He doesn’t lie. Remain joined to Christ, just as you have been taught by the Spirit.

Children of God

[28]Dear children, remain joined to Christ. Then when he comes, we can be bold. We will not be ashamed to meet him when he comes.

[29]You know that God is right and always does what is right. And you know that everyone who does what is right has been born again because of what God has done.

1 John 3

[1]How great is the love the Father has given us so freely! Now we can be called children of God. And that's what we really are! The world doesn't know us because it didn't know him.

[2]Dear friends, now we are children of God. He still hasn't let us know what we will be. But we know that when Christ appears, we will be like him. We will see him as he really is. [3]He is pure. All who hope to be like him make themselves pure.

[4]Everyone who sins breaks the law. In fact, breaking the law is sin. [5]But you know that Christ came to take our sins away. And there is no sin in him. [6]No one who remains joined to him keeps on sinning. No one who keeps on sinning has seen him or known him.

[7]Dear children, don't let anyone lead you down the wrong path. Those who do what is right are holy, just as Christ is holy. [8]Those who do what is sinful belong to the devil. They are just like him. He has been sinning from the beginning. But the Son of God came to destroy the devil's work.

[9]Those who are born again because of what God has done will not keep on sinning. God's very nature remains in them. They can't go on sinning. They have been born again because of what God has done.

[10]Here is how you can tell the difference between the children of God and the children of the devil. Those who don't do what is right do not belong to God. Those who don't love their brothers and sisters do not belong to him either.

Love One Another

[11]From the beginning we have heard that we should love one another. [12]Don't be like Cain. He belonged to the evil one. He murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because the things Cain had done were wrong. But the things his brother had done were right.

[13]My brothers and sisters, don't be surprised if the world hates you. [14]We know that we have left our old dead condition and entered into new life. We

know it because we love one another. Those who do not are still living in their old condition.

15 Those who hate their brothers and sisters are murderers. And you know that murderers do not have eternal life in their hearts.

16 We know what love is because Jesus Christ gave his life for us. So we should give our lives for our brothers and sisters.

17 Suppose someone sees a brother or sister in need and is able to help them. If he doesn't take pity on them, how can the love of God be in him?

18 Dear children, don't just talk about love. Put your love into action. Then it will truly be love. 19 That's how we know that we hold to the truth. And that's how we put our hearts at rest, knowing that God is watching. 20 Our hearts may judge us. But God is greater than our hearts. He knows everything.

21 Dear friends, if our hearts do not judge us, we can be bold with God. 22 And he will give us anything we ask. That's because we obey his commands. We do what pleases him.

23 God has commanded us to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ. He has also commanded us to love one another. 24 Those who obey his commands remain joined to him. And he remains joined to them.

How do we know that God lives in us? We know it because of the Holy Spirit he gave us.

Put the Spirits to the Test

1 John 4

[1]Dear friends, do not believe every spirit. Put the spirits to the test to see if
they belong to God. Many false prophets have gone out into the world.

[2]How can you recognize the Spirit of God? Every spirit that agrees that Jesus
Christ came in a human body belongs to God. [3]But every spirit that doesn't
agree with this does not belong to God. It is the spirit of the great enemy of
Christ. You have heard that the enemy is coming. Even now he is already in the
world.

[4]Dear children, you belong to God. You have not accepted the teachings of
the false prophets. That's because the One who is in you is more powerful than
the one who is in the world.

[5]False prophets belong to the world. So they speak from the world's point of
view. The world listens to them. [6]We belong to God. And those who know God
listen to us. But those who don't belong to God don't listen to us. That's how
we can tell the difference between the Spirit of truth and the spirit of lies.

We Love Because God Loved Us

[7]Dear friends, let us love one another, because love comes from God.
Everyone who loves has been born again because of what God has done. That
person knows God. [8]Anyone who does not love does not know God, because
God is love.

[9]How did God show his love for us? He sent his one and only Son into the
world. He sent him so we could receive life through him.

[10]What is love? It is not that we loved God. It is that he loved us and sent his
Son to give his life to pay for our sins.

[11]Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we should also love one
another. [12]No one has ever seen God. But if we love one another, God lives in

us. His love is made complete in us.

13We know that we belong to him and he belongs to us. He has given us his Holy Spirit.

14The Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. We have seen it. We give witness to it. 15God lives in anyone who agrees that Jesus is the Son of God. That kind of person remains joined to God. 16So we know that God loves us. We depend on it.

God is love. Anyone who leads a life of love shows that he is joined to God. And God is joined to him.

17So love is made complete among us. We will be bold on the day God judges us. That's because in this world we love as Jesus did.

18There is no fear in love. Instead, perfect love drives fear away. Fear has to do with being punished. The one who fears does not have perfect love.

19We love because he loved us first. 20Anyone who says he loves God but in fact hates his brother or sister is a liar. He doesn't love his brother or sister, whom he has seen. So he can't love God, whom he has not seen.

21Here is the command God has given us. Anyone who loves God must also love his brothers and sisters.

Faith in the Son of God

1 John 5

[1]Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born again because of what
God has done. And everyone who loves the Father loves his children as well.

[2]How do we know that we love God's children? We know it when we love
God and obey his commands. [3]Here is what it means to love God. It means that
we obey his commands. And his commands are not hard to obey. [4]That's
because everyone who is a child of God has won the battle over the world. Our
faith has won the battle for us.

[5]Who is it that has won the battle over the world? Only the person who
believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

[6]Jesus Christ is the one who was baptized in water and died on the cross. He
wasn't just baptized in water. He also died on the cross. The Holy Spirit has
given a truthful witness about him. That's because the Spirit is the truth.

[7]There are three that give witness about Jesus. [8]They are the Holy Spirit, the
baptism of Jesus and his death. And the three of them agree.

[9]We accept the witness of people. But the witness of God is more important
because it is God who gives it. He has given witness about his Son.

[10]Those who believe in the Son of God have accepted that witness in their
hearts. Those who do not believe God's witness are calling him a liar. That's
because they have not believed his witness about his Son.

[11]Here is God's witness. He has given us eternal life. That life is found in his
Son. [12]Those who belong to the Son have life. Those who do not belong to the
Son of God do not have life.

Final Words

[13]I'm writing these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God.
I'm doing it so you will know that you have eternal life.

[14]There is one thing we can be sure of when we come to God in prayer. If we ask anything in keeping with what he wants, he hears us. [15]If we know that God hears what we ask for, we know that we have it.

[16]Suppose you see your brother or sister commit a sin. But that sin is not the kind that leads to death. Then you should pray for them. And God will give life to them. I'm talking about someone whose sin does not lead to death. But there is a sin that does lead to death. I'm not saying that you should pray about that. [17]Every wrong thing we do is sin. But there are sins that do not lead to death.

[18]We know that those who are children of God do not keep on sinning. The Son of God keeps them safe. The evil one can't harm them. [19]We know that we are children of God. We know that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.

[20]We also know that the Son of God has come. He has given us understanding. Now we can know the One who is true. And we belong to the One who is true. We also belong to his Son, Jesus Christ. He is the true God. He is eternal life.

[21]Dear children, keep away from statues of gods.

2 John

[1]I, the elder, am writing this letter.

I am sending it to the chosen lady and her children. I love all of you because of the truth. I'm not the only one who loves you. So does everyone who knows the truth. [2]I love you because of the truth that is alive in us. That truth will be with us forever.

[3]God the Father and Jesus Christ his Son will give you grace, mercy and peace. Those blessings will be with us because we love the truth.

[4]It has given me great joy to find some of your children living by the truth. That's just what the Father commanded us to do.

[5]Dear lady, I'm not writing you a new command. I'm writing a command we've had from the beginning. I'm asking that we love one another. [6]The way we show our love is to obey God's commands. He commands you to lead a life of love. That's what you have heard from the beginning.

[7]Many people who try to fool others have gone out into the world. They don't agree that Jesus Christ came in a human body. People like that try to trick others. They are enemies of Christ. [8]Watch out that you don't lose what you have worked for. Make sure that you get your complete reward.

[9]Some people run ahead of others. They don't follow the teaching of Christ. People like that don't belong to God. But those who follow the teaching of Christ belong to the Father and the Son.

[10]Suppose someone comes to you and doesn't teach these truths. Then don't take him into your house. Don't welcome him. [11]Anyone who welcomes him shares in his evil work.

[12]I have a lot to write to you. But I don't want to use paper and ink. Instead, I hope I can visit you. Then I can talk with you face to face. That will make our joy complete.

[13]The children of your chosen sister send their greetings.

3 John

[1]I, the elder, am writing this letter.

I am sending it to you, my dear friend Gaius. I love you because of the truth.

[2]Dear friend, I know that your spiritual life is going well. I pray that you also may enjoy good health. And I pray that everything else may go well with you.

[3]Some believers came to me and told me that you are faithful to the truth. They told me that you continue to live by it. That gave me great joy. [4]I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are living by the truth.

[5]Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the believers. You are faithful even though they are strangers to you. [6]They have told the church about your love. Please help them by sending them on their way in a manner that honors God.

[7]They started on their journey to serve Jesus Christ. They didn't receive any help from those who aren't believers. [8]So we should welcome people like them. We should work together with them for the truth.

[9]I wrote to the church. But Diotrephes won't have anything to do with us. He loves to be the first in everything. [10]So if I come, I will point out what he is doing. He is saying evil things about us to others. Even that doesn't satisfy him. He refuses to welcome other believers. He also keeps others from welcoming them. In fact, he throws them out of the church.

[11]Dear friend, don't be like those who do evil. Be like those who do good. Anyone who does what is good belongs to God. Anyone who does what is evil hasn't really seen or known God.

[12]Everyone says good things about Demetrius. He lives in keeping with the truth. We also say good things about him. And you know that our witness is true.

[13]I have a lot to write to you. But I don't want to write with pen and ink. [14]I hope I can see you soon. Then we can talk face to face.

May you have peace. The friends here send their greetings. Greet the friends

there by name.

Jude

[1]I, Jude, am writing this letter. I serve Jesus Christ. I am a brother of James.

I am sending this letter to you who have been chosen by God. You are loved by God the Father. You are kept safe by Jesus Christ.

[2]May more and more mercy, peace, and love be given to you.

A Warning Against Ungodly Teachers

[3]Dear friends, I really wanted to write to you about the salvation we share. But now I feel I should write and ask you to stand up for the faith. God's people were trusted with it once and for all time.

[4]Certain people have slipped in among you in secret. Long ago it was written that they would be judged. They are godless people. They use the grace of our God as an excuse for sexual sins. They say no to Jesus Christ. He is our only Lord and King.

[5]I want to remind you about some things you already know. The Lord saved his people. He brought them out of Egypt. But later he destroyed those who did not believe. [6]Some of the angels didn't stay where they belonged. They didn't keep their positions of authority. The Lord has kept those angels in darkness. They are held by chains that last forever. On judgment day, God will judge them.

[7]The people of Sodom and Gomorrah and the towns around them also did evil things. They gave themselves over to sexual sins. They committed sins of the worst possible kind. They are an example of those who are punished with fire. The fire never goes out.

[8]In the very same way, those dreamers pollute their own bodies. They don't accept authority. They speak evil things against heavenly beings. [9]But not even Michael did that. He was the leader of the angels. He argued with the devil about the body of Moses. But he didn't dare to speak evil things against the devil. Instead, he said, "May the Lord stop you!"

[10]But those people speak evil things against what they don't understand. They are like wild animals. They can't think for themselves. They do what

comes naturally to them. Those are the very things that destroy them.

[11]How terrible it will be for them! They followed the way of Cain. They rushed ahead and made the same mistake as Balaam did. They did it because they loved money. They are like Korah. He turned against his leaders. Those people will certainly be destroyed, just as Korah was.

[12]They are like stains at the meals you share. They eat too much. They have no shame. They are shepherds who feed only themselves. They are like clouds without rain. They are blown along by the wind. They are like trees in the fall. Since they have no fruit, they are pulled up. So they die twice.

[13]They are like wild waves of the sea. Their shame rises up like foam. They are like falling stars. God has reserved a place of very black darkness for them. He will keep them there forever.

[14]Enoch was the seventh man in the family line of Adam. He gave a prophecy about those people. He said, “Look! The Lord is coming with thousands and thousands of his holy ones. [15]He is coming to judge everyone. He is coming to sentence all ungodly people. He will judge them for all the ungodly acts they have done. They have done them in ungodly ways. He will sentence ungodly sinners for all the bad things they have said about him.”

[16]Those people complain. They find fault with others. They follow their own evil longings. They brag about themselves. They praise others to help themselves.

Remain in God’s Love

[17]Dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ said was going to happen. [18]They told you, “In the last days, some people will make fun of the truth. They will follow their own ungodly longings.” [19]They are the people who separate you from one another. They do only what comes naturally. They are not led by the Holy Spirit.

[20]Dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith. Let the Holy Spirit guide and help you when you pray. [21]The mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ will bring you eternal life. As you wait for his mercy, remain in God’s love.

[22]Show mercy to those who doubt. [23]Pull others out of the fire. Save them. To others, show mercy mixed with fear. Hate even the clothes that are stained by

the sins of those who wear them.

Praise to God

[24]Give praise to the One who is able to keep you from falling into sin. He will bring you into his heavenly glory without any fault. He will bring you there with great joy. [25]Give praise to the only God. He is our Savior. Glory, majesty, power and authority belong to him. Give praise to him through Jesus Christ our Lord. Give praise to the One who was before all time, who now is, and who will be forever. Amen.

Revelation

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Revelation 1

[1]This is the revelation that God gave to Jesus Christ. Jesus shows those who serve God what will happen soon. God made it known by sending his angel to his servant John. [2]John gives witness to everything he saw. The things he gives witness to are God's word and what Jesus Christ has said.

[3]Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy. Blessed are those who hear it and think everything it says is important. The time when these things will come true is near.

Greetings

[4]I, John, am writing this letter.

I am sending it to the seven churches in Asia Minor.

May grace and peace come to you from the One who is, and who was, and who will come. May grace and peace come to you from the seven spirits who are in front of God's throne. [5]May grace and peace come to you from Jesus Christ. What Jesus gives witness to can always be trusted. He was the first to rise from the dead. He rules over the kings of the earth.

Give glory and power to the One who loves us! He has set us free from our sins by pouring out his blood for us. [6]He has made us members of his royal family. He has made us priests who serve his God and Father. Give him glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

[7]Look! He is coming with the clouds!
Every eye will see him.
Even those who pierced him will see him.
All the nations of the earth will be sad because of him.

This will really happen! Amen.

8“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,” says the Lord God.
“I am the One who is, and who was, and who will come. I am the Mighty
One.”

One Who Looks Like a Son of Man

9I, John, am a believer like you. I am a friend who suffers like you. As
members of Jesus’ royal family, we can put up with anything that happens to
us.

I was on the island of Patmos because I taught God’s word and what Jesus
said. 10The Holy Spirit took complete control of me on the Lord’s Day. I heard
a loud voice behind me that sounded like a trumpet. 11The voice said, “Write
on a scroll what you see. Send it to the seven churches in Asia Minor. They are
Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.”

12I turned around to see who was speaking to me. When I turned, I saw seven
golden lampstands. 13In the middle of them was someone who looked “like a
son of man.”(Daniel 7:13)

He was dressed in a long robe with a gold strip of cloth around his chest.
14The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow. His eyes were
like a blazing fire. 15His feet were like bronze metal glowing in a furnace. His
voice sounded like rushing waters. 16He held seven stars in his right hand. Out
of his mouth came a sharp sword that had two edges. His face was like the sun
shining in all of its brightness.

17When I saw him, I fell at his feet as if I were dead.

Then he put his right hand on me and said, “Do not be afraid. I am the First
and the Last. 18I am the Living One. I was dead. But look! I am alive for ever
and ever! And I hold the keys to Death and Hell.

19“So write down what you have seen. Write about what is happening now
and what will happen later. 20Here is what the mystery of the seven stars you
saw in my right hand means. They are the angels of the seven churches. And
the seven golden lampstands you saw stand for the seven churches.

The Letter to the Church in Ephesus

Revelation 2

[1]"Here is what I command you to write to the church in Ephesus.

Here are the words of the One who holds the seven stars in his right hand. He also walks among the seven golden lampstands. He says, [2]'I know what you are doing. You work long and hard. I know you can't put up with those who are evil. You have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not. You have found out that they are liars. [3]You have been faithful and have put up with a lot of trouble because of me. You have not given up.

[4]'But here is something I hold against you. You don't have as much love as you had at first. [5]Remember how far you have fallen! Turn away from your sins. Do the things you did at first. If you don't, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.

[6]'But you do have this in your favor. You hate the way the Nicolaitans act. I hate it too.

[7]'Those who have ears should listen to what the Holy Spirit says to the churches. I will allow those who overcome to eat from the tree of life in God's paradise.'

The Letter to the Church in Smyrna

[8]"Here is what I command you to write to the church in Smyrna.

Here are the words of the One who is the First and the Last. He is the One who died and came to life again. He says, [9]'I know that you suffer and are poor. But you are rich! Some people say they are Jews but are not. I know that their words are evil. Their worship is satanic.

[10]'Don't be afraid of what you are going to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you. You will be treated badly for ten days. Be faithful, even if it means you must die. Then I will give you a crown. The

crown is life itself.

11‘Those who have ears should listen to what the Holy Spirit says to the churches. Those who overcome will not be hurt at all by the second death.’

The Letter to the Church in Pergamum

12“Here is what I command you to write to the church in Pergamum.

Here are the words of the One with the sharp sword that has two edges. He says, 13‘I know that you live where Satan has his throne. But you remain true to me. You did not give up your faith in me, even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness. He was put to death in your city, where Satan lives.

14‘But I have a few things against you. You have people there who follow the teaching of Balaam. He taught Balak to lead the people of Israel into sin. So they ate food that had been offered to statues of gods. And they committed sexual sins. 15You also have people who follow the teaching of the Nicolaitans.

16‘So turn away from your sins! If you don’t, I will come to you soon. I will fight against those people with the sword that comes out of my mouth.

17‘Those who have ears should listen to what the Holy Spirit says to the churches. I will give hidden manna to those who overcome. I will also give each of them a white stone with a new name written on it. Only the one who receives that name will know what it is.’

The Letter to the Church in Thyatira

18“Here is what I command you to write to the church in Thyatira.

Here are the words of the Son of God. He is the One whose eyes are like blazing fire. His feet are like polished bronze. He says, 19‘I know what you are doing. I know your love and your faith. I know how well you have served. I know you don’t give up easily. In fact, you are doing more now than you did at first.

20‘But here is what I have against you. You put up with that woman Jezebel. She calls herself a prophet. With her teaching, she has led my servants into sexual sin. She has tricked them into eating food offered to statues of gods.

[21]‘I’ve given her time to turn away from her sinful ways. But she doesn’t
want to. [22]She sinned on a bed. So I will make her suffer on a bed. And those
who commit adultery with her will suffer greatly. Their only way out is to turn
away from what she taught them to do. [23]I will strike her children dead. Then
all the churches will know that I am the One who searches hearts and minds. I
will pay each of you back for what you have done.

[24]‘I won’t bother the rest of you in Thyatira. You don’t follow the teaching of
Jezebel. You haven’t learned what some people call Satan’s deep secrets. [25]Just
hold on to what you have until I come.

[26]‘I’ll give authority over the nations to all who overcome and who carry out
my plans to the end. [27]It is written,

> ‘ “He will rule them with an iron rod.
> He will break them to pieces like clay pots.” (Psalm 2:9)

I have received this authority from my Father. [28]I will also give the morning
star to all who overcome.

[29]‘Those who have ears should listen to what the Holy Spirit says to the
churches.’

The Letter to the Church in Sardis

Revelation 3

1"Here is what I command you to write to the church in Sardis.

Here are the words of the One who holds the seven spirits of God. He has the seven stars in his hand. He says, 'I know what you are doing. People think you are alive, but you are dead. 2Wake up! Strengthen what is left, or it will die. You have not done all that my God wants you to do.

3'So remember what you have been taught and have heard. Obey it. Turn away from your sins. If you don't wake up, I will come like a thief. You won't know when I will come to you.

4'But you have a few people in Sardis who have kept their clothes clean. They will walk with me, dressed in white, because they are worthy. 5Those who overcome will also be dressed in white. I will never erase their names from the Book of Life. I will speak of them by name to my Father and his angels.

6'Those who have ears should listen to what the Holy Spirit says to the churches.'

The Letter to the Church in Philadelphia

7"Here is what I command you to write to the church in Philadelphia.

Here are the words of the One who is holy and true. He holds the key of David. No one can shut what he opens. And no one can open what he shuts. He says, 8'I know what you are doing. Look! I have put an open door in front of you. No one can shut it. I know that you don't have much strength. But you have obeyed my word. You have not said no to me.

9'Some people claim they are Jews but are not. They are liars. Their worship is from Satan. I will make them come and fall down at your feet. I will make them say in public that I love you.

10‘You have kept my command to put up with anything that happens. So I will keep you from the time of suffering that is going to come to the whole world. It will test those who live on the earth.

11‘I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have. Then no one will take away your crown.

12‘I’ll see to it that those who overcome will be pillars in the temple of my God. They will never leave it again. I will write the name of my God on them. I will write the name of the city of my God on them. This is the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God. I will also write my new name on them.

13‘Those who have ears should listen to what the Holy Spirit says to the churches.’

The Letter to the Church in Laodicea

14“Here is what I command you to write to the church in Laodicea.

Here are the words of the One who is the Amen. What he gives witness to is faithful and true. He rules over what God has created. He says, 15‘I know what you are doing. I know you aren’t cold or hot. I wish you were either one or the other! 16But you are lukewarm. You aren’t hot or cold. So I am going to spit you out of my mouth.

17‘You say, “I am rich. I’ve become wealthy and don’t need anything.” But you don’t realize how pitiful and miserable you have become. You are poor, blind and naked.

18‘So here’s my advice. Buy from me gold made pure by fire. Then you will become rich. Buy from me white clothes to wear. Then you will be able to cover your shameful nakedness. And buy from me healing lotion to put on your eyes. Then you will be able to see.

19‘I correct and train those I love. So be sincere, and turn away from your sins.

20‘Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If any of you hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with you. And you will eat with me.

21‘I’ll give those who overcome the right to sit with me on my throne. In the

same way, I overcame. Then I sat down with my Father on his throne.

22‘Those who have ears should listen to what the Holy Spirit says to the churches.’ ”

The Throne in Heaven

Revelation 4

[1]After this I looked, and there in front of me was a door standing open in heaven. I heard the voice I had heard before. It sounded like a trumpet. The voice said, “Come up here. I will show you what must happen after this.”

[2]At once the Holy Spirit took complete control of me. There in front of me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. [3]The One who sat there shone like jewels. Around the throne was a rainbow that looked like an emerald.

[4]Twenty-four other thrones surrounded that throne. Twenty-four elders were sitting on them. The elders were dressed in white. They had gold crowns on their heads.

[5]From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and thunder. Seven lamps were blazing in front of the throne. These stand for the seven spirits of God. [6]There was something that looked like a sea of glass in front of the throne. It was as clear as crystal.

In the inner circle, around the throne, were four living creatures. They were covered with eyes, in front and in back. [7]The first creature looked like a lion. The second looked like an ox. The third had a man’s face. The fourth looked like a flying eagle. [8]Each of the four living creatures had six wings. Each creature was covered all over with eyes, even under the wings. Day and night, they never stop saying,

“Holy, holy, holy
is the Lord God who rules over all.
He was, and he is, and he will come.”

[9]The living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to the One who sits on the
throne and who lives for ever and ever. [10]At the same time, the 24 elders fall
down and worship the One who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and
ever. They lay their crowns in front of the throne. They say,

[11]“You are worthy, our Lord and God!
You are worthy to receive glory and honor and power.
You are worthy because you created all things.
They were created and they exist.
That is the way you planned it.”

The Scroll and the Lamb

Revelation 5

1 Then I saw a scroll in the right hand of the One sitting on the throne. The
scroll had writing on both sides. It was sealed with seven seals.

2 I saw a mighty angel calling out in a loud voice, “Who is worthy to break
the seals and open the scroll?” 3 But no one in heaven or on earth or under the
earth could open the scroll. No one could even look inside it.

4 I cried and cried because no one was found who was worthy to open the
scroll or look inside.

5 Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not cry! The Lion of the tribe of
Judah has won the battle. He is the Root of David. He is able to break the seven
seals and open the scroll.”

6 Then I saw a Lamb that looked as if he had been put to death. He stood in
the center of the area around the throne. The Lamb was surrounded by the four
living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes. The eyes
stand for the seven spirits of God, which are sent out into all the earth.

7 The Lamb came and took the scroll from the right hand of the One sitting on
the throne. 8 Then the four living creatures and the 24 elders fell down in front
of the Lamb. Each one had a harp. They were holding golden bowls full of
incense, which stand for the prayers of God’s people.

9 Here is the new song they sang.

“You are worthy to take the scroll
and break open its seals.
You are worthy because you were put to death.
With your blood you bought people for God.
They come from every tribe, language, people and nation.
10 You have made them members of a royal family.
You have made them priests to serve our God.
They will rule on the earth.”

[11]Then I looked and heard the voice of millions and millions of angels. They surrounded the throne. They surrounded the living creatures and the elders. [12]In a loud voice they sang,

> “The Lamb, who was put to death, is worthy!
> He is worthy to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength!
> He is worthy to receive honor and glory and praise!”

[13]All creatures in heaven, on earth, under the earth, and on the sea, and all that is in them, were singing. I heard them say,

> “May praise and honor for ever and ever
> be given to the One who sits on the throne and to the Lamb!
> Give them glory and power
> for ever and ever!”

[14]The four living creatures said, “Amen.” And the elders fell down and worshiped.

The Seals

Revelation 6

1 I watched as the Lamb broke open the first of the seven seals. Then I heard
one of the four living creatures say in a voice that sounded like thunder,
"Come!" 2 I looked, and there in front of me was a white horse! Its rider held a
bow in his hands. He was given a crown. He rode out like a hero on his way to
victory.

3 The Lamb broke open the second seal. Then I heard the second living
creature say, "Come!" 4 Another horse came out. It was flaming red. Its rider
was given power to take peace from the earth and to make people kill each
other. He was given a large sword.

5 The Lamb broke open the third seal. Then I heard the third living creature
say, "Come!" I looked, and there in front of me was a black horse! Its rider was
holding a pair of scales in his hand. 6 Next, I heard what sounded like a voice
coming from among the four living creatures. It said, "A quart of wheat for a
day's pay. And three quarts of barley for a day's pay. But don't spoil the olive
oil and the wine!"

7 The Lamb broke open the fourth seal. Then I heard the voice of the fourth
living creature say, "Come!" 8 I looked, and there in front of me was a pale
horse! Its rider's name was Death. Following close behind him was Hell. They
were given power over a fourth of the earth. They were given power to kill
people with the sword, hunger and sickness. They could also use the earth's
wild animals to kill.

9 He broke open the fifth seal. I saw souls under the altar. They were the souls
of people who were killed because of God's word and their faithful witness.
10 They called out in a loud voice. "How long, Lord and King, holy and true?"
they asked. "How long will you wait to judge those who live on the earth?
How long will it be until you pay them back for killing us?"

11 Then each of them was given a white robe. "Wait a little longer," they were
told. "There are still more of your believing brothers and sisters who must be
killed."

[12]I watched as he broke open the sixth seal. There was a powerful earthquake. The sun turned black like black clothes that were made from the hair of a goat. The whole moon turned as red as blood. [13]The stars in the sky fell to earth. They dropped like ripe figs from a tree shaken by a strong wind. [14]The sky rolled back like a scroll. Every mountain and island was moved out of its place.

[15]Everyone hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. This included the kings of the earth, the princes and the generals, rich people and powerful people. It also included every slave and everyone who was free. [16]They called out to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us! Hide us from the face of the One who sits on the throne! Hide us from the anger of the Lamb! [17]The great day of their anger has come. Who can live through it?”

144,000 Are Sealed

Revelation 7

[1]After this I saw four angels. They were standing at the four corners of the earth. They were holding back the four winds of the earth. This kept the winds from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree.

[2]Then I saw another angel coming up from the east. He had the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been allowed to harm the land and the sea. [3]"Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees," he said. "Wait until we mark with a seal the foreheads of those who serve our God."

[4]Then I heard how many people were sealed. There were 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel.

[5]From the tribe of Judah, 12,000 were sealed.

From the tribe of Reuben, 12,000.
From the tribe of Gad, 12,000.

[6]From the tribe of Asher, 12,000.

From the tribe of Naphtali, 12,000.
From the tribe of Manasseh, 12,000.

[7]From the tribe of Simeon, 12,000.

From the tribe of Levi, 12,000.
From the tribe of Issachar, 12,000.

[8]From the tribe of Zebulun, 12,000.

From the tribe of Joseph, 12,000.
From the tribe of Benjamin, 12,000.

The Huge Crowd Wearing White Robes

[9]After this I looked, and there in front of me was a huge crowd of people.

They stood in front of the throne and in front of the Lamb. There were so many that no one could count them. They came from every nation, tribe, people and language. They were wearing white robes. In their hands they were holding palm branches. [10]They cried out in a loud voice,

> “Salvation belongs to our God,
> who sits on the throne.
> Salvation also belongs to the Lamb.”

[11]All the angels were standing around the throne. They were standing around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces in front of the throne and worshiped God. [12]They said,

> “Amen!
> May praise and glory
> and wisdom be given to our God for ever and ever.
> Give him thanks and honor and power and strength.
> Amen!”

[13]Then one of the elders spoke to me. “Who are these people dressed in white robes?” he asked. “Where did they come from?”

[14]I answered, “Sir, you know.”

He said, “They are the ones who have come out of the time of terrible suffering. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. [15]So

> “they are in front of the throne of God.
> They serve him day and night in his temple.
> The One who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them.
> [16]Never again will they be hungry.
> Never again will they be thirsty.
> The sun will not beat down on them.
> The heat of the desert will not harm them.
> [17]The Lamb, who is at the center of the area around the throne, will be their shepherd.
> He will lead them to springs of living water.
> And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

The Seventh Seal and the Gold Cup

Revelation 8

[1]The Lamb opened the seventh seal. Then there was silence in heaven for
about half an hour.

[2]I saw the seven angels who stand in front of God. Seven trumpets were
given to them.

[3]Another angel came and stood at the altar. He had a shallow gold cup for
burning incense. He was given a lot of incense to offer on the golden altar in
front of the throne. With the incense he offered the prayers of all God's people.
[4]The smoke of the incense together with the prayers of God's people rose up
from the angel's hand. It went up in front of God.

[5]Then the angel took the cup and filled it with fire from the altar. He threw it
down on the earth. There were rumblings and thunder, flashes of lightning, and
an earthquake.

The Trumpets

[6]Then the seven angels who had the seven trumpets got ready to blow them.

[7]The first angel blew his trumpet. Hail and fire mixed with blood were
thrown down on the earth. A third of the earth was burned up. A third of the
trees were burned up. All the green grass was burned up.

[8]The second angel blew his trumpet. Something that looked like a huge
mountain on fire was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea turned into blood.
[9]A third of the living creatures in the sea died. A third of the ships were
destroyed.

[10]The third angel blew his trumpet. Then a great star fell from the sky. It
looked like a blazing torch. It fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of
water. [11]The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the water turned bitter.
Many people died from it.

12 The fourth angel blew his trumpet. Then a third of the sun was struck. A
third of the moon was struck. A third of the stars were struck. So a third of each
of them turned dark. Then a third of the day had no light. The same thing
happened to a third of the night.

13 As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying high in the air. It called out in
a loud voice, “How terrible! How terrible it will be for those living on the
earth! How terrible! They will suffer as soon as the next three angels blow their
trumpets!”

Revelation 9

[1]The fifth angel blew his trumpet. Then I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the tunnel leading down into the Abyss. [2]When the star opened the Abyss, smoke rose up from it like the smoke from a huge furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss.

[3]Out of the smoke came locusts. They settled down on the earth. They were given power like the power of scorpions of the earth. [4]They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree. They were supposed to harm only the people who didn't have God's seal on their foreheads. [5]They were not allowed to kill them. But they could hurt them over and over for five months. The pain the people suffered was like the sting of a scorpion when it strikes a man.

[6]In those days, people will look for a way to die but won't find it. They will want to die, but death will escape them.

[7]The locusts looked like horses ready for battle. On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold. Their faces looked like human faces. [8]Their hair was like women's hair. Their teeth were like lions' teeth. [9]Their chests were covered with something that looked like armor made out of iron. The sound of their wings was like the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle. [10]They had tails and stings like scorpions. And in their tails they had power to hurt people over and over for five months.

[11]Their king was the angel of the Abyss. In the Hebrew language his name is Abaddon. In Greek it is Apollyon.

[12]The first terrible judgment is past. Two others are still coming.

[13]The sixth angel blew his trumpet. Then I heard a voice coming from the corners of the golden altar that stands in front of God. [14]The voice spoke to the sixth angel who had the trumpet. It said, "Set the four angels free who are held at the great river Euphrates."

[15]The four angels had been ready for this very hour and day and month and year. They were set free to kill a third of all people. [16]The number of troops on horseback was 200,000,000. I heard how many there were.

[17]The horses and riders I saw in my vision had armor on their chests. It was flaming red, dark blue, and yellow like sulfur. The heads of the horses looked like lions' heads. Out of their mouths came fire, smoke and sulfur. [18]A third of all people were killed by the three plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur that came out of the horses' mouths. [19]The power of the horses was in their mouths and in their tails. The tails were like snakes whose heads could bite.

[20]The people who were not killed by these plagues still did not turn away from what they had been doing. They did not stop worshiping demons. They kept worshiping statues of gods made out of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood, which can't see or hear or walk. [21]The people also did not turn away from their murders, witchcraft, sexual sins and stealing.

The Angel and the Little Scroll

Revelation 10

1Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven. He was
wearing a cloud like a robe. There was a rainbow above his head. His face was
like the sun. His legs were like pillars of fire.

2He was holding a little scroll. It was lying open in his hand. The angel put
his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land. 3Then he gave a loud
shout like the roar of a lion. When he shouted, the voices of the seven thunders
spoke.

4When they had spoken, I was getting ready to write. But I heard a voice
from heaven say, “Seal up what the seven thunders have said. Do not write it
down.”

5Then the angel I had seen standing on the sea and on the land raised his right
hand to heaven. 6He made a promise in the name of the One who lives for ever
and ever. He took an oath in the name of the One who created the sky, earth
and sea and all that is in them. He said, “There will be no more waiting! 7But
in the days when the seventh angel is ready to blow his trumpet, the last part of
God’s plan will be carried out. God told all this to the prophets who served him
long ago.”

8Then the voice I had heard from heaven spoke to me again. It said, “Go and
take the scroll from the angel standing on the sea and on the land. It is lying
open in his hand.”

9So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to
me, “Take it and eat it. It will become sour in your stomach. But in your mouth
it will taste as sweet as honey.” 10I took the little scroll from the angel’s hand
and ate it. In my mouth it tasted as sweet as honey. But when I had eaten it, it
became sour in my stomach. 11Then I was told, “You must prophesy again
about many peoples, nations, languages and kings.”

The Two Witnesses

Revelation 11

[1]I was given a long stick that looked like a measuring rod. I was told, “Go and measure the temple of God and the altar. Count the worshipers who are there. [2]But do not measure the outer courtyard. It has been given to those who aren’t Jews. They will overrun the holy city for 42 months.

[3]“I will give power to my two witnesses. They will prophesy for 1,260 days. They will be dressed in black clothes to show how sad they are.”

[4]The witnesses are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand in front of the Lord of the earth. [5]If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and eats up their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die.

[6]These witnesses have power to close up the sky. Then it will not rain while they are prophesying. They also have power to turn the waters into blood. And they can strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want to.

[7]When they have finished giving their witness, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them. He will overpower them and kill them. [8]Their bodies will lie in the street of the great city where their Lord was nailed to the cross. The city is sometimes pictured as Sodom, or as Egypt.

[9]For three and a half days, people from every tribe, language and nation will stare at their bodies. They will refuse to bury them. [10]Those who live on the earth will be happy about this and will celebrate. They will send each other gifts, because these two prophets had made them suffer.

[11]But after the three and a half days, a breath of life from God entered the two witnesses. They stood up. Terror struck those who saw them.

[12]Then the two witnesses heard a loud voice from heaven. It said to them, “Come up here.” They went up to heaven in a cloud. Their enemies watched it happen.

[13]At that very hour there was a powerful earthquake. A tenth of the city crumbled and fell. In the earthquake, 7,000 people were killed. Those who

lived through it were terrified. They gave glory to the God of heaven.

14 The second terrible judgment has passed. The third is coming soon.

The Seventh Trumpet

15 The seventh angel blew his trumpet. There were loud voices in heaven. They said,

> "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and
> of his Christ.
> He will rule for ever and ever."

16 The 24 elders were sitting on their thrones in front of God. They fell on their faces and worshiped God. 17 They said,

> "Lord God who rules over all, we give thanks to you.
> You are the One who is and who was.
> We give you thanks because you have taken your great power
> and have begun to rule.
> 18 The nations were angry,
> and the time for your anger has come.
> The time has come to judge the dead.
> It is time to reward your servants the prophets
> and your own people and those who honor you.
> There is a reward for all your people,
> both great and small.
> It is time to destroy
> those who destroy the earth."

19 Then God's temple in heaven was opened. Inside it the wooden chest called the ark of his covenant could be seen. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings and thunder, an earthquake and a great hailstorm.

The Woman and the Dragon

Revelation 12

[1]A great and miraculous sign appeared in heaven. It was a woman wearing
the sun like clothes. The moon was under her feet. On her head she wore a
crown of 12 stars. [2]She was pregnant. She cried out in pain because she was
about to have a baby.

[3]Then another sign appeared in heaven. It was a huge red dragon. He had
seven heads and ten horns. On his seven heads he wore seven crowns. [4]His tail
swept a third of the stars out of the sky. It threw them down to earth.

The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to have a baby. He
wanted to eat her child the moment it was born.

[5]She gave birth to a son. He will rule all the nations with an iron rod. Her
child was taken up to God and to his throne.

[6]The woman escaped into the desert where God had a place prepared for her.
There she would be taken care of for 1,260 days.

[7]There was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon.
And the dragon and his angels fought back. [8]But the dragon wasn't strong
enough. He and his angels lost their place in heaven.

[9]The great dragon was thrown down to the earth, and his angels with him.
The dragon is that old serpent called the devil, or Satan. He leads the whole
world down the wrong path.

[10]Then I heard a loud voice in heaven. It said,

> "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God have
> come.
> The authority of his Christ has come.
> Satan, who brings charges against our brothers and sisters,
> has been thrown down.
> He brings charges against them before our God day and night.
> [11]They overcame him
> because the Lamb gave his life's blood for them.

They overcame him
by giving witness about Jesus to others.
They were willing to risk their lives,
even if it led to death.
12So be joyful, you heavens!
Be glad, all you who live there!
But how terrible it will be for the earth and the sea!
The devil has come down to you.
He is very angry.
He knows his time is short.”

13The dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth. So he chased the woman who had given birth to the boy.

14The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle so that she could fly away. She could fly to the place prepared for her in the desert. There she would be taken care of for three and a half years. She would be out of the serpent’s reach.

15Then the serpent spit water like a river out of his mouth. He wanted to catch her and sweep her away in the flood. 16But the earth helped the woman. It opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had spit out.

17The dragon was very angry with the woman. He went off to make war against the rest of her children. They obey God’s commands and hold firmly to what Jesus has said.

Revelation 13

[1]The dragon stood on the seashore.

The Beast out of the Sea

I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads. There were ten crowns on his horns. On each head was an evil name that was displeasing to God.

[2]The beast I saw looked like a leopard. But he had feet like a bear and a mouth like a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power, his throne, and great authority. [3]One of the beast's heads seemed to have had a deadly wound. But the wound had been healed. The whole world was amazed and followed the beast.

[4]People worshiped the dragon, because he had given authority to the beast. They also worshiped the beast. They asked, "Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?"

[5]The beast was given a mouth to brag and speak evil things against God. The beast was allowed to use his authority for 42 months. [6]He opened his mouth to speak evil things against God. He told lies about God's character and about the place where God lives and about those who live in heaven with him. [7]He was allowed to make war against God's people and to overcome them. He was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation.

[8]All who live on earth whose names have not been written in the Book of Life will worship the beast. The Book of Life belongs to the Lamb whose death was planned before the world was created.

[9]Everyone who has ears should listen.

[10]Everyone who is supposed to be captured
will be captured.
Everyone who is supposed to be killed with a sword
will be killed with a sword.

So God’s people must be patient and faithful.

The Beast out of the Earth

11 Then I saw another beast. This one came out of the earth. He had two horns
like a lamb. But he spoke like a dragon. 12 He had all the authority of the first
beast. He did what that beast wanted. He made the earth and all who live on it
worship the first beast. The first beast was the one whose deadly wound had
been healed.

13 The second beast did great and miraculous signs. He even made fire come
from heaven. It came down to earth where everyone could see it. 14 He did the
signs the first beast wanted him to do. In that way the second beast tricked
those who live on the earth. He ordered them to set up a statue to honor the
first beast.

The first beast was the one who had been wounded by the sword and still lived.

15 The second beast was allowed to give breath to the statue so it could speak.
He was allowed to kill all who refused to worship the statue. 16 He also forced
everyone to receive a mark on the right hand or on the forehead. People great
or small, rich or poor, free or slave had to receive the mark. 17 They could not
buy or sell anything unless they had the mark. The mark is the name of the
beast or the number of his name.

18 Here is a problem that you have to be wise to figure out. If you can, figure
out what the beast’s number means. It is man’s number. His number is 666.

The Lamb and the 144,000

Revelation 14

1 I looked, and there in front of me was the Lamb. He was standing on Mount
Zion. With him were 144,000 people. Written on their foreheads were his name
and his Father's name.

2 I heard a sound from heaven. It was like the roar of rushing waters and loud
thunder. The sound I heard was like the music of harps being played.

3 Then everyone sang a new song in front of the throne. They sang it in front
of the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except
the 144,000. They had been set free from the evil of the earth.

4 They had not committed sexual sins with women. They had kept themselves
pure. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from
among people as a first offering to God and the Lamb. 5 Their mouths told no
lies. They are without blame.

The Three Angels

6 I saw another angel. He was flying high in the air. He came to tell everyone
on earth the good news that will always be true. He told it to every nation,
tribe, language and people. 7 In a loud voice he said, "Have respect for God.
Give him glory. The hour has come for God to judge. Worship him who made
the heavens and the earth. Worship him who made the sea and the springs of
water."

8 A second angel followed him. He said, "Fallen! Babylon the Great has
fallen! The city of Babylon made all the nations drink the strong wine of her
terrible sins."

9 A third angel followed them. He said in a loud voice, "Watch out, all you
who worship the beast and his statue! Watch out, all you who have his mark on
your forehead or your hand! 10 You, too, will drink the wine of God's great
anger. His wine has been poured full strength into the cup of his anger. You

will be burned with flaming sulfur. The holy angels and the Lamb will see it happen. [11]The smoke of your terrible suffering will rise for ever and ever. Day and night, there is no rest for you who worship the beast and his statue. There is no rest for you who receive the mark of his name."

[12]God's people need to be very patient. They are the ones who obey God's commands. They remain faithful to Jesus.

[13]Then I heard a voice from heaven. "Write this," it said. "Blessed are the dead who die as believers in the Lord from now on."

"Yes," says the Holy Spirit. "They will rest from their labor. What they have done will not be forgotten."

The Harvest of the Earth

[14]I looked, and there in front of me was a white cloud. Sitting on the cloud was One who looked "like a son of man."(Daniel 7:13) He wore a gold crown on his head. In his hand was a sharp, curved blade for cutting grain.

[15]Then another angel came out of the temple. He called in a loud voice to the one sitting on the cloud. "Take your blade," he said. "Cut the grain. The time has come. The earth is ready to be harvested."

[16]So the one sitting on the cloud swung his blade over the earth. And the earth was harvested.

[17]Another angel came out of the temple in heaven. He too had a sharp, curved blade. [18]Still another angel came from the altar. He was in charge of the fire on the altar. He called out in a loud voice to the angel who had the sharp blade. "Take your blade," he said, "and gather the bunches of grapes from the earth's vine. Its grapes are ripe."

[19]So the angel swung his blade over the earth. He gathered its grapes. Then he threw them into a huge winepress. The winepress stands for God's anger.

[20]In the winepress outside the city, the grapes were stomped on. Blood flowed out of the pit. It spread over the land for about 180 miles. It rose as high as the horses' heads.

Seven Angels With Seven Plagues

Revelation 15

1 I saw in heaven another great and miraculous sign. Seven angels were about
to bring the seven last plagues. The plagues would complete God's anger.

2 Then I saw something that looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire.
Standing beside the sea were those who had won the battle over the beast. They
had also overcome his statue and the number of his name. They held harps
given to them by God.

3 They sang the song of Moses, who served God, and the song of the Lamb.
They sang,

"Lord God who rules over all,
everything you do is great and wonderful.
King of the ages,
your ways are true and fair.
4 Lord, who will not have respect for you?
Who will not bring glory to your name?
You alone are holy.
All nations will come
and worship you.
They see that the things you do are right."

5 After this I looked, and the temple was opened in heaven. The temple is the
holy tent where the tablets of the covenant were kept.

6 Out of the temple came the seven angels who were bringing the seven
plagues. They were dressed in clean, shining linen. They wore gold strips of
cloth around their chests.

7 Then one of the four living creatures gave seven golden bowls to the seven
angels. The bowls were filled with the anger of God, who lives for ever and
ever. 8 The temple was filled with smoke that came from the glory and power of
God. No one could enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels
were completed.

The Seven Bowls of God's Anger

Revelation 16

[1]Then I heard a loud voice from the temple speaking to the seven angels. "Go," it said. "Pour out the seven bowls of God's anger on the earth."

[2]The first angel went and poured out his bowl on the land. Ugly and painful sores broke out on the people who had the mark of the beast and worshiped his statue.

[3]The second angel poured out his bowl on the sea. It turned into blood like the blood of a dead person. Every living thing in the sea died.

[4]The third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and on the springs of water. They became blood.

[5]Then I heard the angel who was in charge of the waters. He said,

"The way you judge is fair.
You are the Holy One.
You are the One who is and who was.
[6]The beast's worshipers have poured out the life's blood of your people and your prophets.
So you have given those worshipers blood to drink.
That's exactly what they should get."

[7]Then I heard the altar reply,

"Lord God who rules over all,
the way you judge is true and fair."

[8]The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun. The sun was allowed to burn people with fire. [9]They were burned by the blazing heat. So they spoke evil things against the name of God, who controlled these plagues. But they refused to turn away from their sins. They did not give glory to God.

[10]The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast. The kingdom of the beast became very dark. People bit their tongues because they were suffering so much. [11]They spoke evil things against the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores. But they refused to turn away from the sins they had committed.

[12]The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates. Its water dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the East.

[13]Then I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs. They came out of the mouths of the dragon, the beast and the false prophet. [14]They are spirits of demons performing miraculous signs. They go out to gather the kings of the whole world for battle. That battle will take place on the great day of the God who rules over all.

[15]“Look! I am coming like a thief! Blessed are those who stay awake and keep their clothes with them. They will not be caught naked. They will not be put to shame.”

[16]Then the evil spirits gathered the kings together. The place where the kings met is called Armageddon in the Hebrew language.

[17]The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air. Out of the temple came a loud voice from the throne. It said, “It is done!”

[18]Then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, thunder and a powerful earthquake. There has never been an earthquake as terrible as this since man has lived on earth. [19]The great city split into three parts. The cities of the nations crumbled and fell. God remembered Babylon the Great. He gave her the cup filled with the wine of his terrible anger.

[20]Every island ran away. The mountains could not be found. [21]Huge hailstones of about 100 pounds each fell from the sky. The hail crushed people. They spoke evil things against God because the plague of hail was so terrible.

The Woman and the Beast

Revelation 17

[1]One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came to me. He said, “Come. I will show you how the great prostitute will be punished. She is the one who sits on many waters. [2]The kings of the earth took part in her evil ways. The people living on earth were drunk with the wine of her terrible sins.”

[3]Then the angel carried me away in a vision. The Holy Spirit took me into a desert. There I saw a woman sitting on a bright red beast. It was covered with names that say evil things that are displeasing to God. It had seven heads and ten horns.

[4]The woman was dressed in purple and bright red. She was gleaming with gold, jewels and pearls. In her hand she held a golden cup filled with things that God hates. It was filled with her terrible, dirty sins. [5]Here is the name that was written on her forehead.

MYSTERY
THE GREAT CITY OF BABYLON
THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES
THE MOTHER OF EVERYTHING ON EARTH THAT GOD HATES

[6]I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of God’s people. They are the ones who gave witness to Jesus.

When I saw her, I was very amazed.

[7]Then the angel said to me, “Why are you amazed? I will explain to you the mystery of the woman and of the beast she rides on. The beast is the one who has the seven heads and ten horns. [8]The beast that you saw used to exist. But now he does not. He will come up out of the Abyss. He will be destroyed. Some of the people who live on the earth will be amazed when they see the beast. Their names have not been written in the Book of Life from the time the

world was created. They will be amazed because even though the beast used to exist and now does not, he will come again.

9“Here is a problem that you have to be wise to understand. The seven heads are seven hills that the woman sits on. 10They are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is ruling, and the other has still not come. When he does come, he must remain for a little while.

11“The beast who used to exist, and now does not, is an eighth king. He belongs to the other seven. He will be destroyed.

12“The ten horns you saw are ten kings. They have not yet received a kingdom. But for one hour they will receive authority to rule together with the beast. 13They have only one purpose. So they give their power and authority to the beast. 14They will make war against the Lamb. But the Lamb will overcome them because he is the most powerful Lord of all and the greatest King of all. His appointed, chosen and faithful followers will be with him.”

15Then the angel spoke to me. “You saw the waters the prostitute sits on,” he said. “They stand for all the nations of the world, no matter what their race or language is. 16The beast and the ten horns you saw will hate the prostitute. They will destroy her and leave her naked. They will eat her flesh and burn her with fire. 17God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose. So they agreed to give the beast their power to rule. They will give him that power until God’s words come true.

18“The woman you saw stands for the great city that rules over the kings of the earth.”

Babylon Falls

Revelation 18

1 After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven. He had
great authority. His glory filled the earth with light. 2 With a mighty voice he
shouted,

"Fallen! Babylon the Great has fallen!
She has become a place where demons live.
She has become a den for every evil spirit.
She has become a nest for every 'unclean' and hated bird.
3 All the nations have drunk
the strong wine of her terrible sins.
The kings of the earth took part in her evil ways.
The traders of the world grew rich from her great wealth."

4 Then I heard another voice from heaven. It said,

"Come out of her, my people.
Then you will not take part in her sins.
You will not suffer from any of her plagues.
5 Her sins are piled up to heaven.
God has remembered her crimes.
6 Do to her as she has done to others.
Pay her back double for what she has done.
Mix her a double dose of what she has mixed for others.
7 Give her as much pain and suffering
as the glory and wealth she gave herself.
She brags to herself,
'I rule like a queen. I am not a widow.
I will never be sad.'
8 But she will be plagued by death, sadness and hunger.
In a single day they will all catch up with her.
She will be burned up by fire.
The Lord God who judges her is mighty.

[9]“The kings of the earth who committed terrible sins with her will sob. They will be sad because they used to share her riches. They will see the smoke rising as she burns. [10]They will be terrified by her suffering. Standing far away, they will exclaim,

> “ ‘How terrible! How terrible it is for you, great city!
> How terrible for you, Babylon, city of power!
> In just one hour you have been destroyed!’

[11]“The traders of the world will cry and be sad over her. No one buys what they sell anymore. [12]Here is what they had for sale.

> Gold, silver, jewels, pearls.
> Fine linen, purple, silk, bright red cloth.
> Every kind of expensive wood.
> All sorts of articles made out of ivory, valuable wood, bronze, iron and marble.
>
> [13]Cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense.
>
> Wine, olive oil, fine flour, wheat.
> Cattle, sheep, horses, carriages, human slaves.

[14]“The merchants will say, ‘The pleasure you longed for has left you. All your riches and glory have disappeared forever.’ [15]The traders who sold these things and became rich because of her will stand far away. Her suffering will terrify them. They will cry and be sad. [16]They will cry out,

> “ ‘How terrible! How terrible it is for you, great city,
> dressed in fine linen, purple and bright red!
> How terrible for you, great city, gleaming with gold, jewels and pearls!
> [17]In just one hour your great wealth has been destroyed!’

“Every sea captain and all who travel by ship will stand far away. So will the sailors and all who earn their living from the sea. [18]They will see the smoke rising as Babylon burns. They will ask, ‘Was there ever a city like this great city?’ [19]They will throw dust on their heads. They will cry and be sad. They

will cry out,

“ ‘How terrible! How terrible it is for you, great city!
All who had ships on the sea
became rich because of her wealth!
In just one hour she has been destroyed!
20 Heaven, be glad for this!
God’s people, be glad! Apostles and prophets, be glad!
God has judged her for the way she treated you.’ ”

21 Then a mighty angel picked up a huge rock. It was the size of a large millstone. He threw it into the sea. Then he said,

“That is how
the great city of Babylon will be thrown down.
Never again will it be found.
22 The songs of musicians will never be heard in you again.
Gone will be the music of harp, flute and trumpet.
No worker of any kind
will ever be found in you again.
The sound of a millstone
will never be heard in you again.
23 The light of a lamp
will never shine in you again.
The voices of brides and grooms
will never be heard in you again.
Your traders were among the world’s most important people.
By your magic spell all the nations were led down the wrong path.
24 You were guilty of the murder of prophets and God’s people.
You were guilty of the blood of all who have been killed on the earth.”

HALLELUJAH!

Revelation 19

[1]After these things I heard a roar in heaven. It sounded like a huge crowd shouting,

> “Hallelujah!
> Salvation and glory and power belong to our God.
> [2]The way he judges is true and fair.
> He has judged the great prostitute.
> She polluted the earth with her terrible sins.
> God has paid her back for killing those who served him.”

[3]Again they shouted,

> “Hallelujah!
> The smoke from her fire goes up for ever and ever.”

[4]The 24 elders and the four living creatures bowed down. They worshiped God, who was sitting on the throne. They cried out,

> “Amen! Hallelujah!”

[5]Then a voice came from the throne. It said,

> “Praise our God,
> all you who serve him!
> Praise God, all you who have respect for him,
> both great and small!”

[6]Then I heard the noise of a huge crowd. It sounded like the roar of rushing waters and like loud thunder. The people were shouting,

“Hallelujah!
Our Lord God is the King who rules over all.
7Let us be joyful and glad!
Let us give him glory!
It is time for the Lamb’s wedding.
His bride has made herself ready.
8Fine linen, bright and clean,
was given to her to wear.”

Fine linen stands for the right things that God’s people do.

9Here is what the angel told me to write. “Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!” Then he added, “These are the true words of God.”

10When I heard this, I fell at his feet to worship him.

But he said to me, “Don’t do that! I serve God, just as you do. I am God’s servant, just like other believers who hold firmly to what Jesus has taught. Worship God! What Jesus taught is the very heart of prophecy.”

The Rider on the White Horse

11I saw heaven standing open. There in front of me was a white horse. Its rider is called Faithful and True. When he judges or makes war, he is always fair. 12His eyes are like blazing fire. On his head are many crowns. A name is written on him that only he knows. 13He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood. His name is The Word of God.

14The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses. They were dressed in fine linen, white and clean.

15Out of the rider’s mouth comes a sharp sword. He will strike down the nations with it. Scripture says, “He will rule them with an iron rod.”(Psalm 2:9) He stomps on the grapes of God’s winepress. The winepress stands for the terrible anger of the God who rules over all.

16 Here is the name that is written on the rider’s robe and on his thigh.

THE GREATEST KING OF ALL AND THE MOST POWERFUL LORD OF ALL

17 I saw an angel standing in the sun. He cried in a loud voice to all the birds
flying high in the air, “Come! Gather together for the great supper of God.
18 Come and eat the dead bodies of kings, generals, and other mighty people.
Eat the bodies of horses and their riders. Eat the bodies of all people, free and
slave, great and small.”

19 Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies. They had
gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army.

20 But the beast and the false prophet were captured. The false prophet had
done miraculous signs for the beast. In this way the false prophet had tricked
those who had received the mark of the beast and had worshiped his statue.
The beast and the false prophet were thrown alive into the lake of fire that
burns with sulfur. 21 The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out
of the rider’s mouth. All the birds stuffed themselves with the dead bodies.

The Thousand Years

Revelation 20

1 I saw an angel coming down out of heaven. He had the key to the Abyss. In
his hand he held a heavy chain.

2 He grabbed the dragon, that old serpent. The serpent is also called the devil,
or Satan. The angel put him in chains for 1,000 years. 3 Then he threw him into
the Abyss. He locked it and sealed him in. This was to keep Satan from fooling
the nations anymore until the 1,000 years were ended. After that, he must be
set free for a short time.

4 I saw thrones. Those who had been given authority to judge were sitting on
them. I also saw the souls of those whose heads had been cut off because they
had given witness for Jesus and because of God's word. They had not
worshiped the beast or his statue. They had not received his mark on their
foreheads or hands. They came to life and ruled with Christ for 1,000 years.

5 This is the first resurrection. The rest of the dead did not come to life until
the 1,000 years were ended.

6 Blessed and holy are those who take part in the first resurrection. The second
death has no power over them. They will be priests of God and of Christ. They
will rule with him for 1,000 years.

Satan Is Judged

7 When the 1,000 years are over, Satan will be set free from his prison. 8 He
will go out to fool the nations. He will gather them from the four corners of the
earth. He will bring Gog and Magog together for battle.

Their troops are as many as the grains of sand on the seashore. 9 They
marched across the whole earth. They surrounded the place where God's
people were camped. It was the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven
and burned them up.

[10]The devil, who fooled them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur. That is where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will all suffer day and night for ever and ever.

The Dead Are Judged

[11]I saw a great white throne and the One who was sitting on it. When the earth and sky saw his face, they ran away. There was no place for them.

[12]I saw the dead, great and small, standing in front of the throne. Books were opened. Then another book was opened. It was the Book of Life. The dead were judged by what they had done. The things they had done were written in the books. [13]The sea gave up the dead that were in it. And Death and Hell gave up their dead. Each of the dead was judged by what he had done.

[14]Then Death and Hell were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. [15]Anyone whose name was not written in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire.

The New Jerusalem

Revelation 21

1 I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth
were completely gone. There was no longer any sea.

2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem. It was coming down out of heaven
from God. It was prepared like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

3 I heard a loud voice from the throne. It said, “Now God makes his home
with people. He will live with them. They will be his people. And God himself
will be with them and be their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their
eyes. There will be no more death or sadness. There will be no more crying or
pain. Things are no longer the way they used to be.”

5 He who was sitting on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then
he said, “Write this down. You can trust these words. They are true.”

6 He said to me, “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the
Last. I am the Beginning and the End. Anyone who is thirsty may drink from
the spring of the water of life. It doesn’t cost anything! 7 Anyone who
overcomes will receive all this from me. I will be his God, and he will be my
child.

8 “But others will have their place in the lake of fire that burns with sulfur.
Those who are afraid and those who do not believe will be there. Murderers
and those who pollute themselves will join them. Those who commit sexual
sins and those who practice witchcraft will go there. Those who worship
statues of gods and all who tell lies will be there too. It is the second death.”

9 One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke to me.
The bowls were filled with the seven last plagues. The angel said, “Come. I
will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.”

10 Then he carried me away in a vision. The Spirit took me to a huge, high
mountain. He showed me Jerusalem, the Holy City. It was coming down out of
heaven from God. 11 It shone with the glory of God. It gleamed like a very
valuable jewel. It was like a jasper, as clear as crystal.

[12]The city had a huge, high wall with 12 gates. Twelve angels were at the gates, one at each of them. On the gates were written the names of the 12 tribes of Israel. [13]There were three gates on the east and three on the north. There were three gates on the south and three on the west. [14]The wall of the city had 12 foundations. Written on them were the names of the 12 apostles of the Lamb.

[15]The angel who talked with me had a gold measuring rod. He used it to measure the city, its gates and its walls.

[16]The city was laid out like a square. It was as long as it was wide. The angel measured the city with the rod. It was 1,400 miles long. It was as wide and high as it was long.

[17]He measured the wall of the city. It was 200 feet thick. The angel did the measuring as a man would. [18]The wall was made out of jasper. The city was made out of pure gold, as pure as glass.

[19]The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of jewel. The first foundation was made out of jasper. The second was made out of sapphire. The third was made out of chalcedony. The fourth was made out of emerald. [20]The fifth was made out of sardonyx. The sixth was made out of carnelian. The seventh was made out of chrysolite. The eighth was made out of beryl. The ninth was made out of topaz. The tenth was made out of chrysoprase. The eleventh was made out of jacinth. The twelfth was made out of amethyst.

[21]The 12 gates were made from 12 pearls. Each gate was made out of a single pearl. The main street of the city was made out of pure gold, as clear as glass.

[22]I didn’t see a temple in the city. This was because the Lamb and the Lord God who rules over all are its temple. [23]The city does not need the sun or moon to shine on it. God’s glory is its light, and the Lamb is its lamp.

[24]The nations will walk by the light of the city. The kings of the world will bring their glory into it. [25]Its gates will never be shut, because there will be no night there. [26]The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it.

[27]Only what is pure will enter it. No one who fools others or does shameful things will enter it. Only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life will enter the city.

The River of Life

Revelation 22

[1]Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life. It was as clear as crystal. It flowed from the throne of God and of the Lamb. [2]It flowed down the middle of the city's main street.

On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing 12 crops of fruit. Its fruit was ripe every month. The leaves of the tree bring healing to the nations.

[3]There will no longer be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city. God's servants will serve him. [4]They will see his face. His name will be on their foreheads.

[5]There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun. The Lord God will give them light. They will rule for ever and ever.

[6]The angel said to me, "You can trust these words. They are true. The Lord is the God of the spirits of the prophets. He sent his angel to show those who serve him the things that must soon take place."

Jesus Is Coming

[7]"Look! I am coming soon! Blessed are those who obey the words of the prophecy in this book."

[8]I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things.

After I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel. He is the one who had been showing me these things.

[9]But he said to me, "Don't do that! I serve God, just as you do. I am God's servant, just like the other prophets and all who obey the words of this book. Worship God!"

[10]Then he told me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy in this book.

These things are about to happen. [11]Let those who do wrong keep on doing wrong. Let those who are evil continue to be evil. Let those who do what is right keep on doing what is right. And let those who are holy continue to be holy."

[12]"Look! I am coming soon! I bring my rewards with me. I will reward each person for what he has done. [13]I am the Alpha and the Omega. I am the First and the Last. I am the Beginning and the End.

[14]"Blessed are those who wash their robes. They will have the right to come to the tree of life. They will be allowed to go through the gates into the city.

[15]"Outside the city are the dogs and those who practice witchcraft. Outside are also those who commit sexual sins and murder. Those who worship statues of gods, and everyone who loves and does what is false, are outside too.

[16]"I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this witness for the churches. I am the Root and the Son of David. I am the bright Morning Star."

[17]The Holy Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" Let those who hear say, "Come!" Anyone who is thirsty should come. Anyone who wants to take the free gift of the water of life should do so.

[18]I am warning everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book. If you add anything to them, God will add to you the plagues told about in this book. [19]If you take any words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from you your share in the tree of life. He will also take away your place in the Holy City. This book tells about these things.

[20]He who gives witness to these things says, "Yes. I am coming soon."

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

[21]May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen.