

⁸They said to Joshua, "We are your servants." Then Joshua asked them, "Who are you and where do you come from?"

⁹They replied to him, "Your servants have come from a faraway land because of the reputation of the LORD your God. For we have heard of his fame, and all that he did in Egypt, ¹⁰and all that he did to the two Amorite kings beyond the Jordan — King Sihon of Heshbon and King Og of Bashan, who was in Ashtaroth. ¹¹So our elders and all the inhabitants of our land told us, 'Take provisions with you for the journey; go and meet them and say, "We are your servants. Please make a treaty with us."'¹² This bread of ours was warm when we took it from our houses as food on the day we left to come to you; but see, it is now dry and crumbly. ¹³These wineskins were new when we filled them; but see, they are cracked. And these clothes and sandals of ours are worn out from the extremely long journey." ¹⁴Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions, but did not seek the LORD's decision. ¹⁵So Joshua established peace with them and made a treaty to let them live, and the leaders of the community swore an oath to them.

GIBEON'S DECEPTION DISCOVERED

¹⁶Three days after making the treaty with them, they heard that the Gibeonites were their neighbors, living among them. ¹⁷So the Israelites set out and reached the Gibeonite cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kiriath-jearim. ¹⁸But the Israelites did not attack them, because the leaders of the community had sworn an oath to them by the LORD, the God of Israel. Then the whole community grumbled against the leaders.

¹⁹All the leaders answered them, "We have sworn an oath to them by the LORD, the God of Israel, and now we cannot touch them. ²⁰This is how we will treat them: we will let them live, so that no wrath will fall on us because of the oath we swore to them." ²¹They also said, "Let them live." So the Gibeonites became woodcutters and water carriers for the whole community, as the leaders had promised them.

²²Joshua summoned the Gibeonites and said to them, "Why did you deceive us by telling us you live far away from us, when in fact you live among us? ²³Therefore you are cursed

and will always be slaves — woodcutters and water carriers for the house of my God."

²⁴The Gibeonites answered him, "It was clearly communicated to your servants that the LORD your God had commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land before you. We greatly feared for our lives because of you, and that is why we did this. ²⁵Now we are in your hands. Do to us whatever you think is right." ²⁶This is what Joshua did to them: he rescued them from the Israelites, and they did not kill them. ²⁷On that day he made them woodcutters and water carriers — as they are today — for the community and for the LORD's altar at the place he would choose.

THE DAY THE SUN STOOD STILL

10 Now King Adoni-zedek of Jerusalem heard that Joshua had captured Ai and completely destroyed it, treating Ai and its king as he had Jericho and its king, and that the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel and were living among them. ²So Adoni-zedek and his people were ⁸greatly alarmed because Gibeon was a large city like one of the royal cities; it was larger than Ai, and all its men were warriors. ³Therefore King Adoni-zedek of Jerusalem sent word to King Hoham of Hebron, King Piram of Jarmuth, King Japhia of Lachish, and King Debir of Eglon, saying, ⁴"Come up and help me. We will attack Gibeon, because they have made peace with Joshua and the Israelites." ⁵So the five Amorite kings — the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon — joined forces, advanced with all their armies, besieged Gibeon, and fought against it.

⁶Then the men of Gibeon sent word to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal: "Don't give up on ^cyour servants. Come quickly and save us! Help us, for all the Amorite kings living in the hill country have joined forces against us." ⁷So Joshua and all his troops, including all his best soldiers, came from Gilgal.

⁸The LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid of them, for I have handed them over to you. Not one of them will be able to stand against you."

⁹So Joshua caught them by surprise, after marching all night from Gilgal. ¹⁰The LORD threw them into confusion before Israel. He defeated them in a great slaughter at Gibeon,

^a9:25 Lit *us as is good and as is right in your eyes do* ^b10:2 One Hb ms, Syr, Vg read *So he was* ^c10:6 Lit *Don't withdraw your hands from*

chased them through the ascent of Beth-horon, and struck them down as far as Azekah and Makkedah. ¹¹ As they fled before Israel, the LORD threw large hailstones on them from the sky along the descent of Beth-horon all the way to Azekah, and they died. More of them died from the hail than the Israelites killed with the sword.

¹² On the day the LORD gave the Amorites over to the Israelites, Joshua spoke to the LORD in the presence of Israel:

"Sun, stand still over Gibeon,
and moon, over the Valley of Aijalon."

¹³ And the sun stood still
and the moon stopped
until the nation took vengeance
on its enemies.

Isn't this written in the Book of Jashar?^a
So the sun stopped
in the middle of the sky
and delayed its setting
almost a full day.

¹⁴ There has been no day like it before or since, when the LORD listened to a man, because the LORD fought for Israel. ¹⁵ Then Joshua and all Israel with him returned to the camp at Gilgal.

EXECUTION OF THE FIVE KINGS

¹⁶ Now the five defeated kings had fled and hidden in the cave at Makkedah. ¹⁷ It was reported to Joshua: "The five kings have been found; they are hiding in the cave at Makkedah."

¹⁸ Joshua said, "Roll large stones against the mouth of the cave, and station men by it to guard the kings. ¹⁹ But as for the rest of you, don't stay there. Pursue your enemies and attack them from behind. Don't let them enter their cities, for the LORD your God has handed them over to you." ²⁰ So Joshua and the Israelites finished inflicting a terrible slaughter on them until they were destroyed, although a few survivors ran away to the fortified cities. ²¹ The people returned safely to Joshua in the camp at Makkedah. And no one dared to threaten^b the Israelites.

²² Then Joshua said, "Open the mouth of the cave, and bring those five kings to me out of there." ²³ That is what they did. They brought the five kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon to Joshua out of the cave. ²⁴ When they had brought the kings to him, Joshua summoned all the men of Israel and said

to the military commanders who had accompanied him, "Come here and put your feet on the necks of these kings." So the commanders came forward and put their feet on their necks. ²⁵ Joshua said to them, "Do not be afraid or discouraged. Be strong and courageous, for the LORD will do this to all the enemies you fight."

²⁶ After this, Joshua struck them down and executed them. He hung^c their bodies on five trees^d and they were there until evening. ²⁷ At sunset Joshua commanded that they be taken down from the trees and thrown into the cave where they had hidden. Then large stones were placed against the mouth of the cave, and the stones are still there today.

CONQUEST OF SOUTHERN CITIES

²⁸ On that day Joshua captured Makkedah and struck it down with the sword, including its king. He completely destroyed it^e and everyone in it, leaving no survivors. So he treated the king of Makkedah as he had the king of Jericho.

²⁹ Joshua and all Israel with him crossed from Makkedah to Libnah and fought against Libnah. ³⁰ The LORD also handed it and its king over to Israel. He struck it down, putting everyone in it to the sword, and left no survivors in it. He treated Libnah's king as he had the king of Jericho.

³¹ From Libnah, Joshua and all Israel with him crossed to Lachish. They laid siege to it and attacked it. ³² The LORD handed Lachish over to Israel, and Joshua captured it on the second day. He struck it down, putting everyone in it to the sword, just as he had done to Libnah.

³³ At that time King Horam of Gezer went to help Lachish, but Joshua struck him down along with his people, leaving no survivors.

³⁴ Then Joshua crossed from Lachish to Eglon and all Israel with him. They laid siege to it and attacked it. ³⁵ On that day they captured it and struck it down, putting everyone in it to the sword. He completely destroyed it that day, just as he had done to Lachish.

³⁶ Next, Joshua and all Israel with him went up from Eglon to Hebron and attacked it. ³⁷ They captured it and struck down its king, all its villages, and everyone in it with the sword. He left no survivors, just as he had done at Eglon. He completely destroyed Hebron and everyone in it.

^a10:13 Or of the Upright ^b10:21 Lit No one sharpened his tongue against ^c10:26 Or impaled ^d10:26 Or wooden stakes, also in v. 27 ^e10:28 Some Hb mss read them

³⁸ Finally, Joshua turned toward Debir and attacked it. And all Israel was with him. ³⁹ He captured it — its king and all its villages. They struck them down with the sword and completely destroyed everyone in it, leaving no survivors. He treated Debir and its king as he had treated Hebron and as he had treated Libnah and its king.

⁴⁰ So Joshua conquered the whole region — the hill country, the Negev, the Judean foothills,^a and the slopes — with all their kings, leaving no survivors. He completely destroyed every living being, as the LORD, the God of Israel, had commanded. ⁴¹ Joshua conquered everyone from Kadesh-barnea to Gaza, and all the land of Goshen as far as Gibeon. ⁴² Joshua captured all these kings and their land in one campaign,^b because the LORD, the God of Israel, fought for Israel. ⁴³ Then Joshua returned with all Israel to the camp at Gilgal.

CONQUEST OF NORTHERN CITIES

11 When King Jabin of Hazor heard this news, he sent a message to: King Jobab of Madon, the kings of Shimron and Achshaph, ² and the kings of the north in the hill country, the Arabah south of Chinnereth, the Judean foothills,^c and the Slopes of Dor^d to the west, ³ the Canaanites in the east and west, the Amorites, Hethites, Perizzites, and Jebusites in the hill country, and the Hivites at the foot of Hermon in the land of Mizpah. ⁴ They went out with all their armies — a multitude as numerous as the sand on the seashore — along with a vast number of horses and chariots. ⁵ All these kings joined forces; they came and camped together at the Waters of Merom to attack Israel.

⁶ The LORD said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid of them, for at this time tomorrow I will cause all of them to be killed before Israel. You are to hamstring their horses and burn their chariots.” ⁷ So Joshua and all his troops surprised them at the Waters of Merom and attacked them. ⁸ The LORD handed them over to Israel, and they struck them down, pursuing them as far as greater Sidon and Misrephoth-maim, and to the east as far as the Valley of Mizpeh. They struck them down, leaving no survivors. ⁹ Joshua treated them as the LORD had told him; he hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots.

¹⁰ At that time Joshua turned back, captured Hazor, and struck down its king with the sword, because Hazor had formerly been the leader of all these kingdoms. ¹¹ They struck down everyone in it with the sword, completely destroying them; he left no one alive. Then he burned Hazor.

¹² Joshua captured all these kings and their cities and struck them down with the sword. He completely destroyed them, as Moses the LORD’s servant had commanded. ¹³ However, Israel did not burn any of the cities that stood on their mounds except Hazor, which Joshua burned. ¹⁴ The Israelites plundered all the spoils and cattle of these cities for themselves. But they struck down every person with the sword until they had annihilated them, leaving no one alive. ¹⁵ Just as the LORD had commanded his servant Moses, Moses commanded Joshua. That is what Joshua did, leaving nothing undone of all that the LORD had commanded Moses.

SUMMARY OF CONQUESTS

¹⁶ So Joshua took all this land — the hill country, all the Negev, all the land of Goshen, the foothills, the Arabah, and the hill country of Israel with its foothills — ¹⁷ from Mount Halak, which ascends to Seir, as far as Baal-gad in the Valley of Lebanon at the foot of Mount Hermon. He captured all their kings and struck them down, putting them to death. ¹⁸ Joshua waged war with all these kings for a long time. ¹⁹ No city made peace with the Israelites except the Hivites who inhabited Gibeon; all of them were taken in battle. ²⁰ For it was the LORD’s intention to harden their hearts, so that they would engage Israel in battle, be completely destroyed without mercy, and be annihilated, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

²¹ At that time Joshua proceeded to exterminate the Anakim from the hill country — Hebron, Debir, Anab — all the hill country of Judah and of Israel. Joshua completely destroyed them with their cities. ²² No Anakim were left in the land of the Israelites, except for some remaining in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod.

²³ So Joshua took the entire land, in keeping with all that the LORD had told Moses. Joshua then gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments. After this, the land had rest from war.

^a10:40 Or the Shephelah ^b10:42 Lit land at one time ^c11:2 Or Shephelah, also in v. 16 ^d11:2 Or and in Naphtoth-dor

TERRITORY EAST OF THE JORDAN

12 The Israelites struck down the following kings of the land and took possession of their land beyond the Jordan to the east and from the Arnon River to Mount Hermon, including all the Arabah eastward:

² King Sihon of the Amorites lived in Heshbon. He ruled from Aroer on the rim of the Arnon River, along the middle of the valley, and half of Gilead up to the Jabbok River (the border of the Ammonites), ³ the Arabah east of the Sea of Chinnereth to the Sea of Arabah (that is, the Dead Sea), eastward through Beth-jeshimoth and southward^A below the slopes of Pisgah.

⁴ King Og^B of Bashan, of the remnant of the Rephaim, lived in Ashtaroth and Edrei. ⁵ He ruled over Mount Hermon, Salecah, all Bashan up to the Geshurite and Maacathite border, and half of Gilead to the border of King Sihon of Heshbon. ⁶ Moses the LORD's servant and the Israelites struck them down. And Moses the LORD's servant gave their land as an inheritance to the Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh.

TERRITORY WEST OF THE JORDAN

⁷ Joshua and the Israelites struck down the following kings of the land beyond the Jordan to the west, from Baal-gad in the Valley of Lebanon to Mount Halak, which ascends toward Seir (Joshua gave their land as an inheritance to the tribes of Israel according to their allotments: ⁸ the hill country, the Judean foothills,^C the Arabah, the slopes, the wilderness, and the Negev — the lands of the Hethites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites):

- | | |
|---|-----|
| ⁹ the king of Jericho | one |
| the king of Ai, which is next to 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 Hopher | 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 Achshaph | one |
| ²¹ the king of Taanach | one |
| the king of Megiddo | one |
| ²² the king of Kadesh | one |
| the king of Jokneam in Carmel | one |
| ²³ the king of Dor in Naphath-dor ^D | one |
| the king of Gaiim in Gilgal ^E | one |
| ²⁴ the king of Tirzah | one |
| the total number of all kings: thirty-one. | |

UNCONQUERED LANDS

13 Joshua was now old, advanced in age, and the LORD said to him, "You have become old, advanced in age, but a great deal of the land remains to be possessed. ² This is the land that remains:

All the districts of the Philistines and the Geshurites: ³ from the Shihor east of Egypt to the border of Ekron on the north (considered to be Canaanite territory) — the five Philistine rulers of Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron, as well as the Avvites ⁴ in the south; all the land of the Canaanites, from Arah of the Sidonians to Aphek and as far as the border of the Amorites; ⁵ the land of the Gebalites; and all Lebanon east from Baal-gad below Mount Hermon to the entrance of Hamath^F — ⁶ all the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon to Misrephoth-maim, all the Sidonians.

I will drive them out before the Israelites, only distribute the land as an inheritance for Israel, as I have commanded you. ⁷ Therefore, divide this land as an inheritance to the nine tribes and half the tribe of Manasseh."

THE INHERITANCE EAST OF THE JORDAN

⁸ With the other half of the tribe of Manasseh, the Reubenites and Gadites had received the inheritance Moses gave them beyond the Jordan to the east, just as Moses the LORD's servant had given them:

^A12:3 Or and from Teman ^B12:4 LXX; MT reads The territory of Og ^C12:8 Or the Shephelah ^D12:23 Or in the Slopes of Dor ^E12:23 LXX reads Gallilee ^F13:5 Or to Lebo-hamath

⁹From Aroer on the rim of the Arnon Valley, along with the city in the middle of the valley, all the Medeba plateau as far as Dibon, ¹⁰and all the cities of King Sihon of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, to the border of the Ammonites; ¹¹also Gilead and the territory of the Geshurites and Maacathites, all Mount Hermon, and all Bashan to Salecah — ¹²the whole kingdom of Og in Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth and Edrei; he was one of the remaining Rephaim.

Moses struck them down and drove them out, ¹³but the Israelites did not drive out the Geshurites and Maacathites. So Geshur and Maacath still live in Israel today.

¹⁴He did not, however, give any inheritance to the tribe of Levi. This was their inheritance, just as he had promised: the offerings made by fire to the LORD, the God of Israel.

REUBEN'S INHERITANCE

¹⁵To the tribe of Reuben's descendants by their clans, Moses gave ¹⁶this as their territory: From Aroer on the rim of the Arnon Valley, along with the city in the middle of the valley, the whole plateau as far as ^AMedeba, ¹⁷with Heshbon and all its cities on the plateau — Dibon, Bamoth-baal, Beth-baal-meon, ¹⁸Jahaz, Kedemoth, Mephaath, ¹⁹Kiriathaim, Sibmah, Zereth-shahar on the hill in the valley, ²⁰Beth-peor, the slopes of Pisgah, and Beth-jeshimoth — ²¹all the cities of the plateau, and all the kingdom of King Sihon of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon. Moses had killed him and the chiefs of Midian — Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba — the princes of Sihon who lived in the land. ²²Along with those the Israelites put to death, they also killed the diviner, Balaam son of Beor, with the sword.

²³The border of the Reubenites was the Jordan and its plain. This was the inheritance of the Reubenites by their clans, with the cities and their settlements.

GAD'S INHERITANCE

²⁴To the tribe of the Gadites by their clans, Moses gave ²⁵this as their territory:

Jazer and all the cities of Gilead, and half the land of the Ammonites to Aroer, near

Rabbah; ²⁶from Heshbon to Ramath-mizpeh and Betonim, and from Mahanaim to the border of Debir; ^B²⁷in the valley: Beth-haram, Beth-nimrah, Succoth, and Zaphon — the rest of the kingdom of King Sihon of Heshbon. Their land also included the Jordan and its territory as far as the edge of the Sea of Chinnereth on the east side of the Jordan. ^C

²⁸This was the inheritance of the Gadites by their clans, with the cities and their settlements.

EAST MANASSEH'S INHERITANCE

²⁹And to half the tribe of Manasseh (that is, to half the tribe of Manasseh's descendants by their clans) Moses gave ³⁰this as their territory:

From Mahanaim through all Bashan — all the kingdom of King Og of Bashan, including all of Jair's Villages^D that are in Bashan — sixty cities. ³¹But half of Gilead, and Og's royal cities in Bashan — Ashtaroth and Edrei — are for the descendants of Machir son of Manasseh (that is, half the descendants of Machir by their clans).

³²These were the portions Moses gave them on the plains of Moab beyond the Jordan east of Jericho. ³³But Moses did not give a portion to the tribe of Levi. The LORD, the God of Israel, was their inheritance, just as he had promised them.

ISRAEL'S INHERITANCE IN CANAAN

14 The Israelites received these portions that the priest Eleazar, Joshua son of Nun, and the family heads of the Israelite tribes gave them in the land of Canaan. ²Their inheritance was by lot as the LORD commanded through Moses for the nine and a half tribes, ³because Moses had given the inheritance to the two and a half tribes beyond the Jordan. But he gave no inheritance among them to the Levites. ⁴The descendants of Joseph became two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim. No portion of the land was given to the Levites except cities to live in, along with pasturelands for their cattle and livestock. ⁵So the Israelites did as the LORD commanded Moses, and they divided the land.

^A13:16 Some Hb mss read *plateau near* ^B13:26 Or *Lidbir, or Lo-debar* ^C13:27 Lit *Chinnereth beyond the Jordan to the east*

^D13:30 Or *all of Havvoth-jair*



CALEB'S INHERITANCE

⁶The descendants of Judah approached Joshua at Gilgal, and Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, "You know what the LORD promised Moses the man of God at Kadesh-barnea about you and me. ⁷I was forty years old when Moses the LORD's servant sent me from Kadesh-barnea to scout the land, and I brought back an honest report. ⁸My brothers who went with me caused the people to lose heart,^a but I followed the LORD my God completely. ⁹On that day Moses swore to me: 'The land where you have set foot will be an inheritance for you and your descendants forever, because you have followed the LORD my God completely.'

¹⁰"As you see, the LORD has kept me alive these forty-five years as he promised, since the LORD spoke this word to Moses while Israel was journeying in the wilderness. Here I am today, eighty-five years old. ¹¹I am still as strong today as I was the day Moses sent me out. My strength for battle and for daily tasks^b is now as it was then. ¹²Now give me this hill country the LORD promised me on that day, because you heard then that the Anakim are there, as well as large fortified cities. Perhaps the LORD will be with me and I will drive them out as the LORD promised."

¹³Then Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh and gave him Hebron as an inheritance. ¹⁴Therefore, Hebron still belongs to Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite as an inheritance today because he followed the LORD, the God of Israel, completely. ¹⁵Hebron's name used to be Kiriath-arba; Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim. After this, the land had rest from war.

JUDAH'S INHERITANCE

15 Now the allotment for the tribe of the descendants of Judah by their clans was in the southernmost region, south to the Wilderness of Zin and over to the border of Edom.

²Their southern border began at the tip of the Dead Sea on the south bay^c ³and went south of the Scorpions' Ascent,^d proceeded to Zin, ascended to the south of Kadesh-barnea, passed Hebron, ascended to Addar, and turned to Karka.

⁴It proceeded to Azmon and to the Brook of Egypt and so the border ended at the

Mediterranean Sea. This is your^e southern border.

⁵Now the eastern border was along the Dead Sea to the mouth of the Jordan.

The border on the north side was from the bay of the sea at the mouth of the Jordan. ⁶It ascended to Beth-hoglah, proceeded north of Beth-arabah, and ascended to the Stone of Bohan son of Reuben. ⁷Then the border ascended to Debir from the Valley of Achor, turning north to the Gilgal that is opposite the Ascent of Adummim, which is south of the ravine. The border proceeded to the Waters of En-shemesh and ended at En-rogel. ⁸From there the border ascended Ben Hinnom Valley to the southern Jebusite slope (that is, Jerusalem) and ascended to the top of the hill that faces Hinnom Valley on the west, at the northern end of Rephaim Valley. ⁹From the top of the hill the border curved to the spring of the Waters of Nephtoah, went to the cities of Mount Ephron, and then curved to Baalah (that is, Kiriath-jearim). ¹⁰The border turned westward from Baalah to Mount Seir, went to the northern slope of Mount Jearim (that is, Chesalon), descended to Beth-shemesh, and proceeded to Timnah. ¹¹Then the border reached to the slope north of Ekron, curved to Shikeron, proceeded to Mount Baalah, went to Jabneel, and ended at the Mediterranean Sea.

¹²Now the western border was the coastline of the Mediterranean Sea.

This was the boundary of the descendants of Judah around their clans.

CALEB AND OTHNIEL

¹³He gave Caleb son of Jephunneh the following portion among the descendants of Judah based on the LORD's instruction to Joshua: Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron; Arba was the father of Anak). ¹⁴Caleb drove out from there the three sons of Anak: Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmi, descendants of Anak. ¹⁵From there he marched against the inhabitants of Debir,

^a14:8 Lit people's hearts to melt with fear ^b14:11 Lit for going out and coming in ^c15:2 Lit Sea at the tongue that turns southward ^d15:3 Lit of scorpions ^e15:4 LXX reads their



which used to be called Kiriath-sepher,¹⁶ and Caleb said, "Whoever attacks and captures Kiriath-sepher, I will give my daughter Achsah to him as a wife."¹⁷ So Othniel son of Caleb's brother, Kenaz, captured it, and Caleb gave his daughter Achsah to him as a wife.¹⁸ When she arrived, she persuaded Othniel to ask her father for a field. As she got off her donkey, Caleb asked her, "What can I do for you?"¹⁹ She replied, "Give me a blessing. Since you have given me land in the Negev, give me the springs also." So he gave her the upper and lower springs.

JUDAH'S CITIES

²⁰ This was the inheritance of the tribe of the descendants of Judah by their clans.

²¹ These were the outermost cities of the tribe of the descendants of Judah toward the border of Edom in the Negev: Kabzeel, Eder, Jagur,²² Kinah, Dimonah, Adadah,²³ Kedesh, Hazor, Ithnan,²⁴ Ziph, Telem, Bealoth,²⁵ Hazor-hadattah, Kerioth-hezron (that is, Hazor),²⁶ Amam, Shema, Moladah,²⁷ Hazar-gaddah, Heshmon, Beth-pelet,²⁸ Hazar-shual, Beer-sheba, Biziothiah,²⁹ Baalah, Iim, Ezem,³⁰ Eltolad, Chesil, Hormah,³¹ Ziklag, Madmannah, Sansannah,³² Lebaoth, Shilhim, Ain, and Rimmon — twenty-nine cities in all, with their settlements.

³³ In the Judean foothills: ^a Eshtaol, Zorah, Ashnah,³⁴ Zanoah, En-gannim, Tappuah,^b Enam,³⁵ Jarmuth, Adullam, Socoh,^c Azekah,³⁶ Shaaraim, Adithaim, Gederah, and Gederothaim — fourteen cities, with their settlements;³⁷ Zenan, Hadashah, Migdal-gad,³⁸ Dilan, Mizpeh, Jokthe-el,³⁹ Lachish, Bozkath, Eglon,⁴⁰ Cabbon, Lahmam, Chitlish,⁴¹ Gederoth, Beth-dagon, Naamah, and Makkedah — sixteen cities, with their settlements;⁴² Libnah, Ether, Ashan,⁴³ Iphtah, Ashnah, Nezib,⁴⁴ Keilah, Achzib, and Mareshah — nine cities, with their settlements;⁴⁵ Ekron, with its surrounding villages and settlements;⁴⁶ from Ekron to the sea, all the cities near Ashdod, with their settlements;⁴⁷ Ashdod, with its surrounding villages and settlements; Gaza, with its surrounding villages and settlements,

to the Brook of Egypt and the coastline of the Mediterranean Sea.

⁴⁸ In the hill country: Shamir, Jattir, Socoh,⁴⁹ Dannah, Kiriath-sannah (that is, Debir),⁵⁰ Anab, Eshtemoh, Anim,⁵¹ Goshen, Holon, and Giloh — eleven cities, with their settlements;⁵² Arab, Dumah,^d Eshan,⁵³ Janim, Beth-tappuah, Aphekah,⁵⁴ Humtah, Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron), and Zior — nine cities, with their settlements;⁵⁵ Maon, Carmel, Ziph, Juttah,⁵⁶ Jezreel, Jokdeam, Zanoah,⁵⁷ Kain, Gibeah, and Timnah — ten cities, with their settlements;⁵⁸ Halhul, Beth-zur, Gedor,⁵⁹ Maarath, Beth-anoth, and Eltekon — six cities, with their settlements;^e ⁶⁰ Kiriath-baal (that is, Kiriath-jearim), and Rabbah — two cities, with their settlements.

⁶¹ In the wilderness: Beth-arabah, Middin, Secacah,⁶² Nibshan, the City of Salt,^f and En-gedi — six cities, with their settlements.

⁶³ But the descendants of Judah could not drive out the Jebusites who lived in Jerusalem. So the Jebusites still live in Jerusalem among the descendants of Judah today.

JOSEPH'S INHERITANCE

16 The allotment for the descendants of Joseph went from the Jordan at Jericho to the Waters of Jericho on the east, through the wilderness ascending from Jericho into the hill country of Bethel.¹ From Bethel it went to Luz and proceeded to the border of the Archites by Ataroth.² It then descended westward to the border of the Japhletites as far as the border of lower Beth-horon, then to Gezer, and ended at the Mediterranean Sea.³ So Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph, received their inheritance.

EPHRAIM'S INHERITANCE

⁵ This was the territory of the descendants of Ephraim by their clans:

The border of their inheritance went from Ataroth-addar on the east to Upper Beth-horon.⁶ In the north the border went westward from Michmethath; it

^a15:33 Or the Shephelah ^b15:34 Or En-gannim-tappuah ^c15:35 Or Adullam-socoh ^d15:52 Some Hb mss read Rumah

^e15:59 LXX adds Tekoa, Ephrathah (that is, Bethlehem), Peor, Etam, Culom, Tatam, Sores, Carem, Gallim, Baither, and Manach — eleven cities, with their settlements ^f15:62 Or Ir-hamelach

turned eastward from Taanath-shiloh and passed it east of Janoah. ⁷From Janoah it descended to Ataroth and Naarah, and then reached Jericho and went to the Jordan. ⁸From Tappuah the border went westward along the Brook of Kanah and ended at the Mediterranean Sea.

This was the inheritance of the tribe of the descendants of Ephraim by their clans, together with ⁹the cities set apart for the descendants of Ephraim within the inheritance of the descendants of Manasseh — all these cities with their settlements. ¹⁰However, they did not drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer. So the Canaanites still live in Ephraim today, but they are forced laborers.

WEST MANASSEH'S INHERITANCE

17 This was the allotment for the tribe of Manasseh as Joseph's firstborn. Gilead and Bashan were given to Machir, the firstborn of Manasseh and the father of Gilead, because he was a man of war. ²So the allotment was for the rest of Manasseh's descendants by their clans, for the sons of Abiezer, Helek, Asriel, Shechem, Hephher, and Shemida. These are the male descendants of Manasseh son of Joseph, by their clans.

³Now Zelophehad son of Hephher, son of Gilead, son of Machir, son of Manasseh, had no sons, only daughters. These are the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. ⁴They came before the priest Eleazar, Joshua son of Nun, and the leaders, saying, "The LORD commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our male relatives." So they gave them an inheritance among their father's brothers, in keeping with the LORD's instruction. ⁵As a result, ten tracts fell to Manasseh, besides the land of Gilead and Bashan, which are beyond the Jordan, ⁶because Manasseh's daughters received an inheritance among his sons. The land of Gilead belonged to the rest of Manasseh's sons.

⁷The border of Manasseh went from Asher to Michmethath near Shechem. It then went southward toward the inhabitants of En-tappuah. ⁸The region of Tappuah belonged to Manasseh, but Tappuah itself on Manasseh's border belonged to the descendants of Ephraim.

⁹From there the border descended to the

Brook of Kanah; south of the brook, cities belonged to Ephraim among Manasseh's cities. Manasseh's border was on the north side of the brook and ended at the Mediterranean Sea. ¹⁰Ephraim's territory was to the south and Manasseh's to the north, with the Sea as its border. They reached Asher on the north and Issachar on the east. ¹¹Beth-shean, Ibleam, and the inhabitants of Dor with their surrounding villages; the inhabitants of En-dor, Taanach, and Megiddo — the three cities of ⁸Naphath — with their surrounding villages.

¹²The descendants of Manasseh could not possess these cities, because the Canaanites were determined to stay in this land. ¹³However, when the Israelites grew stronger, they imposed forced labor on the Canaanites but did not drive them out completely.

JOSEPH'S ADDITIONAL INHERITANCE

¹⁴Joseph's descendants said to Joshua, "Why did you give us only one tribal allotment^c as an inheritance? We have many people, because the LORD has been blessing us greatly."

¹⁵"If you have so many people," Joshua replied to them, "go to the forest and clear an area for yourselves there in the land of the Perizzites and the Rephaim, because Ephraim's hill country is too small for you."

¹⁶But the descendants of Joseph said, "The hill country is not enough for us, and all the Canaanites who inhabit the valley area have iron chariots, both at Beth-shean with its surrounding villages and in the Jezreel Valley."

¹⁷So Joshua replied to Joseph's family (that is, Ephraim and Manasseh), "You have many people and great strength. You will not have just one allotment, ¹⁸because the hill country will be yours also. It is a forest; clear it and its outlying areas will be yours. You can also drive out the Canaanites, even though they have iron chariots and are strong."

LAND DISTRIBUTION AT SHILOH

18 The entire Israelite community assembled at Shiloh and set up the tent of meeting there. The land had been subdued before them, ²but seven tribes among the Israelites were left who had not divided up their inheritance. ³So Joshua asked the Israelites, "How long will you delay going out to take

^a17:5 = east of the Jordan River ^b17:11 LXX, Vg read *the third is*

^c17:14 Lit *one lot and one territory*, also in v. 17

possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, gave you? ⁴ Appoint for yourselves three men from each tribe, and I will send them out. They are to go and survey the land, write a description of it for the purpose of their inheritance, and return to me. ⁵ Then they are to divide it into seven portions. Judah is to remain in its territory in the south and Joseph's family in their territory in the north. ⁶ When you have written a description of the seven portions of land and brought it to me, I will cast lots for you here in the presence of the LORD our God. ⁷ But the Levites among you do not get a portion, because their inheritance is the priesthood of the LORD. Gad, Reuben, and half the tribe of Manasseh have taken their inheritance beyond the Jordan to the east, which Moses the LORD's servant gave them."

⁸ As the men prepared to go, Joshua commanded them ^a to write down a description of the land, saying, "Go and survey the land, write a description of it, and return to me. I will then cast lots for you here in Shiloh in the presence of the LORD." ⁹ So the men left, went through the land, and described it by towns in a document of seven sections. They returned to Joshua at the camp in Shiloh. ¹⁰ Joshua cast lots for them at Shiloh in the presence of the LORD where he distributed the land to the Israelites according to their divisions.

BENJAMIN'S INHERITANCE

¹¹ The lot came up for the tribe of Benjamin's descendants by their clans, and their allotted territory lay between Judah's descendants and Joseph's descendants.

¹² Their border on the north side began at the Jordan, ascended to the slope of Jericho on the north, through the hill country westward, and ended at the wilderness around Beth-aven. ¹³ From there the border went toward Luz, to the southern slope of Luz (that is, Bethel); it then went down by Ataroth-addar, over the hill south of Lower Beth-horon.

¹⁴ On the west side, from the hill facing Beth-horon on the south, the border curved, turning southward, and ended at Kiriath-baal (that is, Kiriath-jearim), a city of the descendants of Judah. This was the west side of their border.

¹⁵ The south side began at the edge of Kiriath-jearim, and the border extended westward; it went to the spring at the Waters of Nephtoah. ¹⁶ The border descended to the foot of the hill that faces Ben Hinnom Valley at the northern end of Rephaim Valley. It ran down Hinnom Valley toward the south Jebusite slope and downward to En-rogel. ¹⁷ It curved northward and went to En-shemesh and on to Geliloth, which is opposite the Ascent of Adummim, and continued down to the Stone of Bohan son of Reuben. ¹⁸ Then it went north to the slope opposite the Arabah ^b and proceeded into the plains. ^c

¹⁹ The border continued to the north slope of Beth-hoglah and ended at the northern bay of the Dead Sea, at the southern end of the Jordan. This was the southern border.

²⁰ The Jordan formed the border on the east side.

This was the inheritance of Benjamin's descendants, by their clans, according to its surrounding borders.

BENJAMIN'S CITIES

²¹ These were the cities of the tribe of Benjamin's descendants by their clans:

Jericho, Beth-hoglah, Emek-keziz, ²² Beth-arabah, Zemaraim, Bethel, ²³ Avvim, Parah, Ophrah, ²⁴ Chephar-ammoni, Ophni, and Geba — twelve cities, with their settlements; ²⁵ Gibeon, Ramah, Beeroth, ²⁶ Mizpeh, Chephirah, Mozah, ²⁷ Rekem, Irpeel, Taralah, ²⁸ Zela, Haeleph, Jebus ^d (that is, Jerusalem), Gibeah, and Kiriath ^e — fourteen cities, with their settlements.

This was the inheritance for Benjamin's descendants by their clans.

SIMEON'S INHERITANCE

19 The second lot came out for Simeon, for the tribe of his descendants by their clans, but their inheritance was within the inheritance given to Judah's descendants.

² Their inheritance included

Beer-sheba (or Sheba), Moladah, ³ Hazarshual, Balah, Ezem, ⁴ Eltolad, Bethul, Hormah, ⁵ Ziklag, Beth-marcaboth, Hazar-susah, ⁶ Beth-lebaoth, and Sharuhenn

^a18:8 Lit the ones going around ^b18:18 LXX reads went northward to Beth-arabah ^c18:18 Or the Arabah ^d18:28 Lit Jebusite ^e18:28 LXX, Syr read Kiriath-jearim

— thirteen cities, with their settlements;⁷ Ain, Rimmon, Ether, and Ashan — four cities, with their settlements;⁸ and all the settlements surrounding these cities as far as Baalath-beer (Ramah in the south^a). This was the inheritance of the tribe of Simeon's descendants by their clans.⁹ The inheritance of Simeon's descendants was within the territory of Judah's descendants, because the share for Judah's descendants was too large. So Simeon's descendants received an inheritance within Judah's portion.

ZEBULUN'S INHERITANCE

¹⁰ The third lot came up for Zebulun's descendants by their clans.

The territory of their inheritance stretched as far as Sarid;¹¹ their border went up westward to Maralah, reached Dabbesheth, and met the brook east of Jokneam.¹² From Sarid, it turned due east along the border of Chisloth-tabor, went to Daberath, and went up to Japhia.¹³ From there, it went due east to Gath-hepher and to Eth-kazin; it extended to Rimmon, curving around to Neah.¹⁴ The border then circled around Neah on the north to Hannathon and ended at Iphtah-el Valley,¹⁵ along with Kattath, Nahalal, Shimron, Idalah, and Bethlehem — twelve cities, with their settlements.

¹⁶ This was the inheritance of Zebulun's descendants by their clans, these cities, with their settlements.

ISSACHAR'S INHERITANCE

¹⁷ The fourth lot came out for the tribe of Issachar's descendants by their clans.

¹⁸ Their territory went to Jezreel, and included Chesulloth, Shunem,¹⁹ Hapharaim, Shion, Anaharath,²⁰ Rabbith, Kishion, Ebez,²¹ Remeth, En-gannim, En-haddah, and Beth-pazzez.²² The border reached Tabor, Shahazumah, and Beth-shemesh, and ended at the Jordan — sixteen cities, with their settlements.

²³ This was the inheritance of the tribe of Issachar's descendants by their clans, the cities, with their settlements.

ASHER'S INHERITANCE

²⁴ The fifth lot came out for the tribe of Asher's descendants by their clans.

²⁵ Their boundary included Helkath, Hali, Beten, Achshaph,²⁶ Allammelech, Amad, and Mishal and reached westward to Carmel and Shihor-libnath.²⁷ It turned eastward to Beth-dagon, reached Zebulun and Iphtah-el Valley, north toward Beth-emek and Neiel, and went north to Cabul,²⁸ Ebron, Rehob, Hammon, and Kanah, as far as greater Sidon.²⁹ The boundary then turned to Ramah as far as the fortified city of Tyre; it turned back to Hosah and ended at the Mediterranean Sea, including Mahalab, Achzib,³⁰ Um-mah, Aphek, and Rehob — twenty-two cities, with their settlements.

³¹ This was the inheritance of the tribe of Asher's descendants by their clans, these cities with their settlements.

NAPHTALI'S INHERITANCE

³² The sixth lot came out for Naphtali's descendants by their clans.

³³ Their boundary went from Heleph and from the oak in Zaanannim, including Adami-nekeb and Jabneel, as far as Lak-kum, and ended at the Jordan.³⁴ To the west, the boundary turned to Aznoth-tabor and went from there to Hukkok, reaching Zebulun on the south, Asher on the west, and Judah^c at the Jordan on the east.³⁵ The fortified cities were Ziddim, Zer, Hammath, Rakkath, Chinnereth,³⁶ Adamah, Ramah, Hazor,³⁷ Kedesh, Edrei, En-hazor,³⁸ Iron, Migdal-el, Horem, Beth-anath, and Beth-shemesh — nineteen cities, with their settlements.

³⁹ This was the inheritance of the tribe of Naphtali's descendants by their clans, the cities with their settlements.

DAN'S INHERITANCE

⁴⁰ The seventh lot came out for the tribe of Dan's descendants by their clans.

⁴¹ The territory of their inheritance included Zorah, Eshtaol, Ir-shemesh,⁴² Shaalabbin, Aijalon, Ithlah,⁴³ Elon, Timnah, Ekron,⁴⁴ Eltekeh, Gibbethon, Baalath,⁴⁵ Jehud, Bene-berak, Gath-rimmon,⁴⁶ Me-jarkon, and Rakkon, with the territory facing Joppa.

⁴⁷ When the territory of the descendants of Dan slipped out of their control, they went up and fought against Leshem, captured it,

^a19:8 Or *the Negev* ^b19:29 Or *Sea, in the region of Achzib* ^c19:34 LXX omits *Judah*

and struck it down with the sword. So they took possession of it, lived there, and renamed Leshem after their ancestor Dan. ⁴⁸ This was the inheritance of the tribe of Dan's descendants by their clans, these cities with their settlements.

JOSHUA'S INHERITANCE

⁴⁹ When they had finished distributing the land into its territories, the Israelites gave Joshua son of Nun an inheritance among them. ⁵⁰ By the LORD's command, they gave him the city Timnath-serah in the hill country of Ephraim, which he requested. He rebuilt the city and lived in it.

⁵¹ These were the portions that the priest Eleazar, Joshua son of Nun, and the family heads distributed to the Israelite tribes by lot at Shiloh in the LORD's presence at the entrance to the tent of meeting. So they finished dividing up the land.

CITIES OF REFUGE

20 Then the LORD spoke to Joshua, ² "Tell the Israelites: Select your cities of refuge, as I instructed you through Moses, ³ so that a person who kills someone unintentionally or accidentally may flee there. These will be your refuge from the avenger of blood. ⁴ When someone flees to one of these cities, stands at the entrance of the city gate, and states his case before ^a the elders of that city, they are to bring him into the city and give him a place to live among them. ⁵ And if the avenger of blood pursues him, they must not hand the one who committed manslaughter over to him, for he killed his neighbor accidentally and did not hate him beforehand. ⁶ He is to stay in that city until he stands trial before the assembly and until the death of the high priest serving at that time. Then the one who committed manslaughter may return home to his own city from which he fled."

⁷ So they designated Kedesh in the hill country of Naphtali in Galilee, Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim, and Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron) in the hill country of Judah. ⁸ Across the Jordan east of Jericho, they selected Bezer on the wilderness plateau from Reuben's tribe, Ramoth in Gilead from Gad's tribe, and Golan in Bashan from Manasseh's tribe.

⁹ These are the cities appointed for all the Israelites and the aliens residing among them,

so that anyone who kills a person unintentionally may flee there and not die at the hand of the avenger of blood until he stands before the assembly.

CITIES OF THE LEVITES

21 The Levite family heads approached the priest Eleazar, Joshua son of Nun, and the family heads of the Israelite tribes. ² At Shiloh, in the land of Canaan, they told them, "The LORD commanded through Moses that we be given cities to live in, with their pasturelands for our livestock." ³ So the Israelites, by the LORD's command, gave the Levites these cities with their pasturelands from their inheritance.

⁴ The lot came out for the Kohathite clans: The Levites who were the descendants of the priest Aaron received thirteen cities by lot from the tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin. ⁵ The remaining descendants of Kohath received ten cities by lot from the clans of the tribes of Ephraim, Dan, and half the tribe of Manasseh.

⁶ Gershon's descendants received thirteen cities by lot from the clans of the tribes of Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and half the tribe of Manasseh in Bashan.

⁷ Merari's descendants received twelve cities for their clans from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Zebulun.

⁸ The Israelites gave these cities with their pasturelands around them to the Levites by lot, as the LORD had commanded through Moses.

CITIES OF AARON'S DESCENDANTS

⁹ The Israelites gave these cities by name from the tribes of the descendants of Judah and Simeon ¹⁰ to the descendants of Aaron from the Kohathite clans of the Levites, because they received the first lot. ¹¹ They gave them Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron; Arba was the father of Anak) with its surrounding pasturelands in the hill country of Judah. ¹² But they gave the fields and settlements of the city to Caleb son of Jephunneh as his possession.

¹³ They gave to the descendants of the priest Aaron:

Hebron, the city of refuge for the one who commits manslaughter, with its pasturelands, Libnah with its pasturelands,

^a20:4 Lit in the ears of

¹⁴ Jattir with its pasturelands, Eshtemoa with its pasturelands, ¹⁵ Holon with its pasturelands, Debir with its pasturelands, ¹⁶ Ain with its pasturelands, Juttah with its pasturelands, and Beth-shemesh with its pasturelands — nine cities from these two tribes.

¹⁷ From the tribe of Benjamin they gave: Gibeon with its pasturelands, Geba with its pasturelands, ¹⁸ Anathoth with its pasturelands, and Almon with its pasturelands — four cities. ¹⁹ All thirteen cities with their pasturelands were for the priests, the descendants of Aaron.

CITIES OF KOHATH'S OTHER DESCENDANTS

²⁰ The allotted cities to the remaining clans of Kohath's descendants, who were Levites, came from the tribe of Ephraim. ²¹ The Israelites gave them:

Shechem, the city of refuge for the one who commits manslaughter, with its pasturelands in the hill country of Ephraim, Gezer with its pasturelands, ²² Kibzaim with its pasturelands, and Beth-horon with its pasturelands — four cities.

²³ From the tribe of Dan they gave: Elteke with its pasturelands, Gibbethon with its pasturelands, ²⁴ Aijalon with its pasturelands, and Gath-rimmon with its pasturelands — four cities.

²⁵ From half the tribe of Manasseh they gave: Taanach with its pasturelands and Gath-rimmon^a with its pasturelands — two cities.

²⁶ All ten cities with their pasturelands were for the clans of Kohath's other descendants.

CITIES OF GERSHON'S DESCENDANTS

²⁷ From half the tribe of Manasseh, they gave to the descendants of Gershon, who were one of the Levite clans:

Golan, the city of refuge for the one who commits manslaughter, with its pasturelands in Bashan, and Beeshterah with its pasturelands — two cities.

²⁸ From the tribe of Issachar they gave: Kishion with its pasturelands, Daberath with its pasturelands, ²⁹ Jarmuth with its

pasturelands, and En-gannim with its pasturelands — four cities.

³⁰ From the tribe of Asher they gave: Mishal with its pasturelands, Abdon with its pasturelands, ³¹ Helkath with its pasturelands, and Rehob with its pasturelands — four cities.

³² From the tribe of Naphtali they gave: Kedesh in Galilee, the city of refuge for the one who commits manslaughter, with its pasturelands, Hammoth-dor with its pasturelands, and Kartan with its pasturelands — three cities.

³³ All thirteen cities with their pasturelands were for the Gershonites by their clans.

CITIES OF MERARI'S DESCENDANTS

³⁴ From the tribe of Zebulun, they gave to the clans of the descendants of Merari, who were the remaining Levites:

Jokneam with its pasturelands, Kartah with its pasturelands, ³⁵ Dimnah with its pasturelands, and Nahalal with its pasturelands — four cities.

³⁶ From the tribe of Reuben they gave: Bezer with its pasturelands, Jahzah^b with its pasturelands, ³⁷ Kedemoth with its pasturelands, and Mephaath with its pasturelands — four cities.^c

³⁸ From the tribe of Gad they gave: Ramoth in Gilead, the city of refuge for the one who commits manslaughter, with its pasturelands, Mahanaim with its pasturelands, ³⁹ Heshbon with its pasturelands, and Jazer with its pasturelands — four cities in all. ⁴⁰ All twelve cities were allotted to the clans of Merari's descendants, the remaining Levite clans.

⁴¹ Within the Israelite possession there were forty-eight cities in all with their pasturelands for the Levites. ⁴² Each of these cities had its own surrounding pasturelands; this was true for all the cities.

THE LORD'S PROMISES FULFILLED

⁴³ So the LORD gave Israel all the land he had sworn to give their fathers, and they took possession of it and settled there. ⁴⁴ The LORD gave

^a21:25 Or *Ibleam* ^b21:36 Or *Jahaz* ^c21:36-37 Some Hb mss omit these vv.

them rest on every side according to all he had sworn to their fathers. None of their enemies were able to stand against them, for the LORD handed over all their enemies to them.⁴⁵ None of the good promises the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed. Everything was fulfilled.

EASTERN TRIBES RETURN HOME

22 Joshua summoned the Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh² and told them, “You have done everything Moses the LORD’s servant commanded you and have obeyed me in everything I commanded you.³ You have not deserted your brothers even once this whole time but have carried out the requirement of the command of the LORD your God.⁴ Now that he has given your brothers rest, just as he promised them, return to your homes in your own land that Moses the LORD’s servant gave you across the Jordan.⁵ Only carefully obey the command and instruction that Moses the LORD’s servant gave you: to love the LORD your God, walk in all his ways, keep his commands, be loyal to him, and serve him with all your heart and all your soul.”

⁶ Joshua blessed them and sent them on their way, and they went to their homes.⁷ Moses had given territory to half the tribe of Manasseh in Bashan, but Joshua had given territory to the other half,^a with their brothers, on the west side of the Jordan. When Joshua sent them to their homes and blessed them,⁸ he said, “Return to your homes with great wealth: a huge number of cattle, and silver, gold, bronze, iron, and a large quantity of clothing. Share the spoil of your enemies with your brothers.”

EASTERN TRIBES BUILD AN ALTAR

⁹ The Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh left the Israelites at Shiloh in the land of Canaan to return to their own land of Gilead, which they took possession of according to the LORD’s command through Moses.¹⁰ When they came to the region of^b the Jordan in the land of Canaan, the Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh built a large, impressive altar there by the Jordan.

¹¹ Then the Israelites heard it said, “Look, the Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh have built an altar on the frontier of the land of Canaan at the region of^c the Jordan, on the Israelite side.”¹² When the Israelites

heard this, the entire Israelite community assembled at Shiloh to go to war against them.

EXPLANATION OF THE ALTAR

¹³ The Israelites sent Phinehas son of Eleazar the priest to the Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, in the land of Gilead.

¹⁴ They sent ten leaders with him — one family leader for each tribe of Israel. All of them were heads of their ancestral families^d among the clans of Israel.¹⁵ They went to the Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, in the land of Gilead, and told them,¹⁶ “This is what the LORD’s entire community says: ‘What is this treachery you have committed today against the God of Israel by turning away from the LORD and building an altar for yourselves, so that you are in rebellion against the LORD today?’

¹⁷ Wasn’t the iniquity of Peor, which brought a plague on the LORD’s community, enough for us? We have not cleansed ourselves from it even to this day,¹⁸ and now would you turn away from the LORD? If you rebel against the LORD today, tomorrow he will be angry with the entire community of Israel.¹⁹ But if the land you possess is defiled, cross over to the land the LORD possesses where the LORD’s tabernacle stands, and take possession of it among us. But don’t rebel against the LORD or against us by building for yourselves an altar other than the altar of the LORD our God.²⁰ Wasn’t Achan son of Zerah unfaithful regarding what was set apart for destruction, bringing wrath on the entire community of Israel? He was not the only one who perished because of his iniquity.”

²¹ The Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh answered the heads of the Israelite clans,²² “The Mighty One, God, the LORD! The Mighty One, God, the LORD!^e He knows, and may Israel also know. Do not spare us today, if it was in rebellion or treachery against the LORD²³ that we have built for ourselves an altar to turn away from him. May the LORD himself hold us accountable if we intended to offer burnt offerings and grain offerings on it, or to sacrifice fellowship offerings on it.

²⁴ We actually did this from a specific concern that in the future your descendants might say to our descendants, ‘What relationship do you have with the LORD, the God of Israel?’

²⁵ For the LORD has made the Jordan a border

^a22:7 Lit to his half ^b22:10 Or to Geliloth by ^c22:11 Or at Geliloth by ^d22:14 Lit the house of their fathers ^e22:22 Or The LORD is the God of gods! The LORD is the God of gods!



between us and you descendants of Reuben and Gad. You have no share in the LORD! ' So your descendants may cause our descendants to stop fearing the LORD.

²⁶ "Therefore we said: Let us take action and build an altar for ourselves, but not for burnt offering or sacrifice. ²⁷ Instead, it is to be a witness between us and you, and between the generations after us, so that we may carry out the worship of the LORD in his presence with our burnt offerings, sacrifices, and fellowship offerings. Then in the future, your descendants will not be able to say to our descendants, 'You have no share in the LORD! ' ²⁸ We thought that if they said this to us or to our generations in the future, we would reply: Look at the replica of the LORD's altar that our fathers made, not for burnt offering or sacrifice, but as a witness between us and you. ²⁹ We would never ever rebel against the LORD or turn away from him today by building an altar for burnt offering, grain offering, or sacrifice, other than the altar of the LORD our God, which is in front of his tabernacle."

CONFLICT RESOLVED

³⁰ When the priest Phinehas and the community leaders, the heads of Israel's clans who were with him, heard what the descendants of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh had to say, they were pleased. ³¹ Phinehas son of Eleazar the priest said to the descendants of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, "Today we know that the LORD is among us, because you have not committed this treachery against him. As a result, you have rescued the Israelites from the LORD's power."

³² Then the priest Phinehas son of Eleazar and the leaders returned from the Reubenites and Gadites in the land of Gilead to the Israelites in the land of Canaan and brought back a report to them. ³³ The Israelites were pleased with the report, and they blessed God. They spoke no more about going to war against them to ravage the land where the Reubenites and Gadites lived. ³⁴ So the Reubenites and Gadites named the altar: It^a is a witness between us that the LORD is God.

JOSHUA'S FAREWELL ADDRESS

23 A long time after the LORD had given Israel rest from all the enemies around them, Joshua was old, advanced in age. ² So Joshua summoned all Israel, including its elders,

leaders, judges, and officers, and said to them, "I am old, advanced in age, ³ and you have seen for yourselves everything the LORD your God did to all these nations on your account, because it was the LORD your God who was fighting for you. ⁴ See, I have allotted these remaining nations to you as an inheritance for your tribes, including all the nations I have destroyed, from the Jordan westward to the Mediterranean Sea. ⁵ The LORD your God will force them back on your account and drive them out before you so that you can take possession of their land, as the LORD your God promised you.

⁶ "Be very strong and continue obeying all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, so that you do not turn from it to the right or left⁷ and so that you do not associate with these nations remaining among you. Do not call on the names of their gods or make an oath to them; do not serve them or bow in worship to them. ⁸ Instead, be loyal to the LORD your God, as you have been to this day.

⁹ "The LORD has driven out great and powerful nations before you, and no one is able to stand against you to this day. ¹⁰ One of you routed a thousand because the LORD your God was fighting for you, as he promised. ¹¹ So diligently watch yourselves! Love the LORD your God! ¹² If you ever turn away and become loyal to the rest of these nations remaining among you, and if you intermarry or associate with them and they with you, ¹³ know for certain that the LORD your God will not continue to drive these nations out before you. They will become a snare and a trap for you, a sharp stick^c for your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you disappear from this good land the LORD your God has given you.

¹⁴ "I am now going the way of the whole earth, and you know with all your heart and all your soul that none of the good promises the LORD your God made to you has failed. Everything was fulfilled for you; not one promise has failed. ¹⁵ Since every good thing the LORD your God promised you has come about, so he will bring on you every bad thing until he has annihilated you from this good land the LORD your God has given you. ¹⁶ If you break the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods, and bow in worship to them, the LORD's anger will burn against you, and you will quickly disappear from this good land he has given you."

^a22:34 Some Hb mss, Syr, Tg read *altar Witness because it* ^b23:10 Lit *promised you* ^c23:13 Or *a whip*; Hb obscure



REVIEW OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY

24 Joshua assembled all the tribes of Israel at Shechem and summoned Israel's elders, leaders, judges, and officers, and they presented themselves before God. ² Joshua said to all the people, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Long ago your ancestors, including Terah, the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the Euphrates River and worshiped other gods. ³ But I took your father Abraham from the region beyond the Euphrates River, led him throughout the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants. I gave him Isaac, ⁴ and to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. I gave the hill country of Seir to Esau as a possession.

"Jacob and his sons, however, went down to Egypt. ⁵ I sent Moses and Aaron, and I defeated Egypt by what I did within it, and afterward I brought you out. ⁶ When I brought your fathers out of Egypt and you reached the Red Sea, the Egyptians pursued your fathers with chariots and horsemen as far as the sea. ⁷ Your fathers cried out to the LORD, so he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea over them, engulfing them. Your own eyes saw what I did to Egypt. After that, you lived in the wilderness a long time.

⁸ "Later, I brought you to the land of the Amorites who lived beyond the Jordan. They fought against you, but I handed them over to you. You possessed their land, and I annihilated them before you. ⁹ Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab, set out to fight against Israel. He sent for Balaam son of Beor to curse you, ¹⁰ but I would not listen to Balaam. Instead, he repeatedly blessed you, and I rescued you from him.

¹¹ "You then crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho. Jericho's citizens — as well as the Amorites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hethites, Girgashites, Hivites, and Jebusites — fought against you, but I handed them over to you. ¹² I sent hornets^a ahead of you, and they drove out the two Amorite kings before you. It was not by your sword or bow. ¹³ I gave you a land you did not labor for, and cities you did not build, though you live in them; you are eating from vineyards and olive groves you did not plant.'

THE COVENANT RENEWAL

¹⁴ "Therefore, fear the LORD and worship him in sincerity and truth. Get rid of the gods your fathers worshiped beyond the Euphrates River

and in Egypt, and worship the LORD. ¹⁵ But if it doesn't please you to worship the LORD, choose for yourselves today: Which will you worship — the gods your fathers worshiped beyond the Euphrates River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living? As for me and my family, we will worship the LORD."

¹⁶ The people replied, "We will certainly not abandon the LORD to worship other gods! ¹⁷ For the LORD our God brought us and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery, and performed these great signs before our eyes. He also protected us all along the way we went and among all the peoples whose lands we traveled through. ¹⁸ The LORD drove out before us all the peoples, including the Amorites who lived in the land. We too will worship the LORD, because he is our God."

¹⁹ But Joshua told the people, "You will not be able to worship the LORD, because he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions and sins. ²⁰ If you abandon the LORD and worship foreign gods, he will turn against you, harm you, and completely destroy you, after he has been good to you."

²¹ "No!" the people answered Joshua. "We will worship the LORD."

²² Joshua then told the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you yourselves have chosen to worship the LORD."

"We are witnesses," they said.

²³ "Then get rid of the foreign gods that are among you and turn your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel."

²⁴ So the people said to Joshua, "We will worship the LORD our God and obey him."

²⁵ On that day Joshua made a covenant for the people at Shechem and established a statute and ordinance for them. ²⁶ Joshua recorded these things in the book of the law of God; he also took a large stone and set it up there under the oak at the sanctuary of the LORD. ²⁷ And Joshua said to all the people, "You see this stone — it will be a witness against us, for it has heard all the words the LORD said to us, and it will be a witness against you, so that you will not deny your God." ²⁸ Then Joshua sent the people away, each to his own inheritance.

BURIAL OF THREE LEADERS

²⁹ After these things, the LORD's servant, Joshua son of Nun, died at the age of 110. ³⁰ They buried him in his allotted territory at Timnath-serah,

^a24:12 Or *sent terror*

in the hill country of Ephraim north of Mount Gaash.³¹ Israel worshiped the LORD throughout Joshua's lifetime and during the lifetimes of the elders who outlived Joshua and who had experienced all the works the LORD had done for Israel.

³² Joseph's bones, which the Israelites had brought up from Egypt, were buried at Shechem

in the parcel of land Jacob had purchased from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for a hundred pieces of silver.^a It was an inheritance for Joseph's descendants.

³³ And Eleazar son of Aaron died, and they buried him at Gibeah,^b which had been given to his son Phinehas in the hill country of Ephraim.

^a24:32 Lit a *hundred qesitahs* ^b24:33 = the Hill

JUDGES

JUDAH'S LEADERSHIP AGAINST THE CANAANITES

1 After the death of Joshua, the Israelites inquired of the LORD, "Who will be the first to fight for us against the Canaanites?"

² The LORD answered, "Judah is to go. I have handed the land over to him."

³ Judah said to his brother Simeon, "Come with me to my allotted territory, and let us fight against the Canaanites. I will also go with you to your allotted territory." So Simeon went with him.

⁴ When Judah attacked, the LORD handed the Canaanites and Perizzites over to them. They struck down ten thousand men in Bezek. ⁵ They found Adoni-bezek in Bezek, fought against him, and struck down the Canaanites and Perizzites.

⁶ When Adoni-bezek fled, they pursued him, caught him, and cut off his thumbs and big toes. ⁷ Adoni-bezek said, "Seventy kings with their thumbs and big toes cut off used to pick up scraps^a under my table. God has repaid me for what I have done." They brought him to Jerusalem, and he died there.

⁸ The men of Judah fought against Jerusalem, captured it, put it to the sword, and set the city on fire. ⁹ Afterward, the men of Judah marched down to fight against the Canaanites who were living in the hill country, the Negev, and the Judean foothills. ¹⁰ Judah also marched against the Canaanites who were living in Hebron (Hebron was formerly named Kiriath-arba). They struck down Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai. ¹¹ From there they marched against the residents of Debir (Debir was formerly named Kiriath-sepher).

¹² Caleb said, "Whoever attacks and captures Kiriath-sepher, I will give my daughter Achsah to him as a wife." ¹³ So Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb's youngest brother, captured it, and Caleb gave his daughter Achsah to him as his wife.

¹⁴ When she arrived, she persuaded Othniel to ask her father for a field. As she got off her donkey, Caleb asked her, "What do you want?"

¹⁵ She answered him, "Give me a blessing. Since you have given me land in the Negev, give me

springs also." So Caleb gave her both the upper and lower springs.

¹⁶ The descendants of the Kenite, Moses's father-in-law, had gone up with the men of Judah from the City of Palms^c to the Wilderness of Judah, which was in the Negev of Arad. They went to live among the people.

¹⁷ Judah went with his brother Simeon, struck the Canaanites who were living in Zephath, and completely destroyed the town. So they named the town Hormah. ¹⁸ Judah captured Gaza and its territory, Ashkelon and its territory, and Ekron and its territory. ¹⁹ The LORD was with Judah and enabled them to take possession of the hill country, but they could not drive out the people who were living in the valley because those people had iron chariots.

²⁰ Judah gave Hebron to Caleb, just as Moses had promised. Then Caleb drove out the three sons of Anak who lived there.

BENJAMIN'S FAILURE

²¹ At the same time the Benjaminites did not drive out the Jebusites who were living in Jerusalem. The Jebusites have lived among the Benjaminites in Jerusalem to this day.

SUCCESS OF THE HOUSE OF JOSEPH

²² The house of Joseph also attacked Bethel, and the LORD was with them. ²³ They sent spies to Bethel (the town was formerly named Luz).

²⁴ The spies saw a man coming out of the town and said to him, "Please show us how to get into town, and we will show you kindness."

²⁵ When he showed them the way into the town, they put the town to the sword but released the man and his entire family. ²⁶ Then the man went to the land of the Hittites, built a town, and named it Luz. That is its name still today.

FAILURE OF THE OTHER TRIBES

²⁷ At that time Manasseh failed to take possession of Beth-shean and Taanach and their surrounding villages, or the residents of Dor, Ibleam, and Megiddo and their surrounding villages; the Canaanites were determined to stay in this land. ²⁸ When Israel became

^a1:7 Lit toes cut off are gathering ^b1:9 Or the Shephelah ^c1:16 = Jericho; Dt 34:3; Jdg 3:13; 2Ch 28:15

stronger, they made the Canaanites serve as forced labor but never drove them out completely.

²⁹ At that time Ephraim failed to drive out the Canaanites who were living in Gezer, so the Canaanites have lived among them in Gezer.

³⁰ Zebulun failed to drive out the residents of Kitron or the residents of Nahalol, so the Canaanites lived among them and served as forced labor.

³¹ Asher failed to drive out the residents of Acco or of Sidon, or Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphik, or Rehob. ³² The Asherites lived among the Canaanites who were living in the land, because they failed to drive them out.

³³ Naphtali did not drive out the residents of Beth-shemesh or the residents of Beth-anath. They lived among the Canaanites who were living in the land, but the residents of Beth-shemesh and Beth-anath served as their forced labor.

³⁴ The Amorites forced the Danites into the hill country and did not allow them to go down into the valley. ³⁵ The Amorites were determined to stay in ^aHar-heres, Aijalon, and Shaalbim. When the house of Joseph got the upper hand, ^b the Amorites ^c were made to serve as forced labor. ³⁶ The territory of the Amorites extended from the Scorpions' Ascent, that is from Sela upward.

PATTERN OF SIN AND JUDGMENT

2 The angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal to Bochim and said, "I brought you out of Egypt and led you into the land I had promised to your fathers. I also said: I will never break my covenant with you. ² You are not to make a covenant with the inhabitants of this land. You are to tear down their altars. But you have not obeyed me. What is this you have done? ³ Therefore, I now say: I will not drive out these people before you. They will be thorns ^{d,e} in your sides, and their gods will be a trap for you." ⁴ When the angel of the LORD had spoken these words to all the Israelites, the people wept loudly. ⁵ So they named that place Bochim ^f and offered sacrifices there to the LORD.

JOSHUA'S DEATH

⁶ Previously, when Joshua had sent the people away, the Israelites had gone to take possession

of the land, each to his own inheritance. ⁷ The people worshiped the LORD throughout Joshua's lifetime and during the lifetimes of the elders who outlived ⁶ Joshua. They had seen all the LORD's great works he had done for Israel.

⁸ Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of 110. ⁹ They buried him in the territory of his inheritance, in Timnath-heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash. ¹⁰ That whole generation was also gathered to their ancestors. After them another generation rose up who did not know the LORD or the works he had done for Israel.

¹¹ The Israelites did what was evil in the LORD's sight. They worshiped the Baals ¹² and abandoned the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of Egypt. They followed other gods from the surrounding peoples and bowed down to them. They angered the LORD, ¹³ for they abandoned him and worshiped Baal and the Ashtoreths.

¹⁴ The LORD's anger burned against Israel, and he handed them over to marauders who raided them. He sold them to ^h the enemies around them, and they could no longer resist their enemies. ¹⁵ Whenever the Israelites went out, the LORD ⁱ was against them and brought disaster on them, just as he had promised and sworn to them. So they suffered greatly.

¹⁶ The LORD raised up judges, who saved them from the power of their marauders, ¹⁷ but they did not listen to their judges. Instead, they prostituted themselves with other gods, bowing down to them. They quickly turned from the way of their fathers, who had walked in obedience to the LORD's commands. They did not do as their fathers did. ¹⁸ Whenever the LORD raised up a judge for the Israelites, the LORD was with him and saved the people from the power of their enemies while the judge was still alive. ^j The LORD was moved to pity whenever they groaned because of those who were oppressing and afflicting them. ¹⁹ Whenever the judge died, the Israelites would act even more corruptly than their fathers, following other gods to serve them and bow in worship to them. They did not turn from their evil practices or their obstinate ways.

²⁰ The LORD's anger burned against Israel, and he declared, "Because this nation has violated my covenant that I made with their fathers and disobeyed me, ²¹ I will no longer

^a1:35 Or Amorites determined to live in ^b1:35 Lit When the hand of the house of Joseph was heavy ^c1:35 LXX reads Joseph became strong on the Amorites, they ^d2:3 LXX reads affliction ^e2:3 Lit traps ^f2:5 Or Weeping ^g2:7 Lit extended their days after ^h2:14 Lit into the hand of ⁱ2:15 Lit the hand of the LORD ^j2:18 Lit enemies all the days of the judge

drive out before them any of the nations Joshua left when he died.²² I did this to test Israel and to see whether or not they would keep the LORD's way by walking in it, as their fathers had."²³ The LORD left these nations and did not drive them out immediately. He did not hand them over to Joshua.

THE LORD TESTS ISRAEL

3 These are the nations the LORD left in order to test all those in Israel who had experienced^a none of the wars in Canaan.² This was to teach the future generations of the Israelites how to fight in battle, especially those who had not fought before.³ These nations included the five rulers of the Philistines and all of the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites who lived in the Lebanese mountains from Mount Baal-hermon as far as the entrance to Hamath.^c ⁴ The LORD left them to test Israel, to determine if they would keep the LORD's commands he had given their fathers through^d Moses.⁵ But they settled among the Canaanites, Hethites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites.⁶ The Israelites took their daughters as wives for themselves, gave their own daughters to their sons, and worshiped their gods.

OTHNIEL, THE FIRST JUDGE

⁷ The Israelites did what was evil in the LORD's sight; they forgot the LORD their God and worshiped the Baals and the Asherahs.⁸ The LORD's anger burned against Israel, and he sold them to^e King Cushan-rishathaim^f of Aram-naharaim,^g and the Israelites served him eight years.

⁹ The Israelites cried out to the LORD. So the LORD raised up Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb's youngest brother, as a deliverer to save the Israelites.¹⁰ The Spirit of the LORD came on him, and he judged Israel. Othniel went out to battle, and the LORD handed over King Cushan-rishathaim of Aram to him, so that Othniel overpowered him.¹¹ Then the land had peace for forty years, and Othniel son of Kenaz died.

EHUD

¹² The Israelites again did what was evil in the LORD's sight. He gave King Eglon of Moab power over Israel, because they had done what was evil in the LORD's sight.¹³ After Eglon convinced the Ammonites and the Amalekites to

join forces with him, he attacked and defeated Israel and took possession of the City of Palms.¹⁴ The Israelites served King Eglon of Moab eighteen years.

¹⁵ Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD, and he raised up Ehud son of Gera, a left-handed Benjaminite,¹ as a deliverer for them. The Israelites sent him with the tribute for King Eglon of Moab.

¹⁶ Ehud made himself a double-edged sword eighteen inches long.¹ He strapped it to his right thigh under his clothes¹⁷ and brought the tribute to King Eglon of Moab, who was an extremely fat man.¹⁸ When Ehud had finished presenting the tribute, he dismissed the people who had carried it.¹⁹ At the carved images near Gilgal he returned and said, "King Eglon, I have a secret message for you." The king said, "Silence!" and all his attendants left him.²⁰ Then Ehud approached him while he was sitting alone in his upstairs room where it was cool. Ehud said, "I have a message from God for you," and the king stood up from his throne.²¹ Ehud reached with his left hand, took the sword from his right thigh, and plunged it into Eglon's belly.²² Even the handle went in after the blade, and Eglon's fat closed in over it, so that Ehud did not withdraw the sword from his belly. And the waste came out.^k ²³ Ehud escaped by way of the porch, closing and locking the doors of the upstairs room behind him.

²⁴ Ehud was gone when Eglon's servants came in. They looked and found the doors of the upstairs room locked and thought he was relieving himself⁴ in the cool room.²⁵ The servants waited until they became embarrassed and saw that he had still not opened the doors of the upstairs room. So they took the key and opened the doors — and there was their lord lying dead on the floor!

²⁶ Ehud escaped while the servants waited. He passed the Jordan near the carved images and reached Seirah.²⁷ After he arrived, he sounded the ram's horn throughout the hill country of Ephraim. The Israelites came down with him from the hill country, and he became their leader.²⁸ He told them, "Follow me, because the LORD has handed over your enemies, the Moabites, to you." So they followed him, captured the fords of the Jordan leading to Moab, and did not allow anyone to

^a3:1 Lit had known ^b3:2 Lit not known it ^c3:3 Or as Lebo-hamath ^d3:4 Lit by the hand of ^e3:8 Lit into the hand of

^f3:8 Lit Doubly-Evil ^g3:8 = Mesopotamia ^h3:13 = Jericho; Dt 34:3; Jdg 1:16; 2Ch 28:15 ⁱ3:15 = son of the right hand ^j3:16 Lit sword a gomed in length ^k3:22 Or And Eglon's bowels discharged ^l3:24 Lit was covering his feet

cross over.²⁹ At that time they struck down about ten thousand Moabites, all stout and able-bodied men. Not one of them escaped.³⁰ Moab became subject to Israel that day, and the land had peace for eighty years.

SHAMGAR

³¹ After Ehud, Shamgar son of Anath became judge. He also delivered Israel, striking down six hundred Philistines with a cattle prod.

DEBORAH AND BARAK

4 The Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD after Ehud had died.² So the LORD sold them to King Jabin of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera who lived in Harosheth of the Nations.³ Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD, because Jabin had nine hundred iron chariots, and he harshly oppressed them twenty years.

⁴ Deborah, a prophetess and the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time.⁵ She would sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites went up to her to settle disputes.

⁶ She summoned Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, "Hasn't the LORD, the God of Israel, commanded you: 'Go, deploy the troops on Mount Tabor, and take with you ten thousand men from the Naphtalites and Zebulunites?' Then I will lure Sisera commander of Jabin's army, his chariots, and his infantry at the Wadi Kishon to fight against you, and I will hand him over to you."

⁸ Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, I will go. But if you will not go with me, I will not go."

⁹ "I will gladly go with you," she said, "but you will receive no honor on the road you are about to take, because the LORD will sell Sisera to a woman." So Deborah got up and went with Barak to Kedesh.¹⁰ Barak summoned Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; ten thousand men followed him, and Deborah also went with him.

¹¹ Now Heber the Kenite had moved away from the Kenites, the sons of Hobab, Moses's father-in-law, and pitched his tent beside the oak tree of Zaanannim, which was near Kedesh.

¹² It was reported to Sisera that Barak son of Abinoam had gone up Mount Tabor.¹³ Sisera summoned all his nine hundred iron chariots

and all the troops who were with him from Harosheth of the Nations to the Wadi Kishon.¹⁴ Then Deborah said to Barak, "Go! This is the day the LORD has handed Sisera over to you. Hasn't the LORD gone before you?" So Barak came down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him.

¹⁵ The LORD threw Sisera, all his charioteers, and all his army into a panic before Barak's assault. Sisera left his chariot and fled on foot.¹⁶ Barak pursued the chariots and the army as far as Harosheth of the Nations, and the whole army of Sisera fell by the sword; not a single man was left.

¹⁷ Meanwhile, Sisera had fled on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, because there was peace between King Jabin of Hazor and the family of Heber the Kenite.¹⁸ Jael went out to greet Sisera and said to him, "Come in, my lord. Come in with me. Don't be afraid." So he went into her tent, and she covered him with a blanket.¹⁹ He said to her, "Please give me a little water to drink for I am thirsty." She opened a container of milk, gave him a drink, and covered him again.²⁰ Then he said to her, "Stand at the entrance to the tent. If a man comes and asks you, 'Is there a man here?' say, 'No.'"²¹ While he was sleeping from exhaustion, Heber's wife Jael took a tent peg, grabbed a hammer, and went silently to Sisera. She hammered the peg into his temple and drove it into the ground, and he died.

²² When Barak arrived in pursuit of Sisera, Jael went out to greet him and said to him, "Come and I will show you the man you are looking for." So he went in with her, and there was Sisera lying dead with a tent peg through his temple!

²³ That day God subdued King Jabin of Canaan before the Israelites.²⁴ The power of the Israelites continued to increase against King Jabin of Canaan until they destroyed him.

DEBORAH'S SONG

5 On that day Deborah and Barak son of Abinoam sang:

² When the leaders lead^b in Israel,
when the people volunteer,
blessed be the LORD.

³ Listen, kings! Pay attention, princes!
I will sing to the LORD;
I will sing praise to the LORD God
of Israel.

^a4:2 Or *Harosheth-ha-goiim*, also in vv. 13, 16 ^b5:2 Or *the locks of hair are loose*

- 4 LORD, when you came from Seir,
when you marched from the fields
of Edom,
the earth trembled,
the skies poured rain,
and the clouds poured water.
- 5 The mountains melted before the LORD,
even Sinai, ^a before the LORD, the God
of Israel.
- 6 In the days of Shamgar son of Anath,
in the days of Jael,
the main roads were deserted
because travelers kept
to the side roads.
- 7 Villages were deserted, ^b
they were deserted in Israel,
until I, ^c Deborah, arose,
a mother in Israel.
- 8 Israel chose new gods,
then there was war in the city gates.
Not a shield or spear was seen
among forty thousand in Israel.
- 9 My heart is with the leaders of Israel,
with the volunteers of the people.
Blessed be the LORD!
- 10 You who ride on white ^b donkeys,
who sit on saddle blankets,
and who travel on the road, give praise!
- 11 Let them tell the righteous acts
of the LORD,
the righteous deeds of his warriors
in Israel,
with the voices of the singers
at the watering places. ^b
- Then the LORD's people went down
to the city gates.
- 12 "Awake! Awake, Deborah!
Awake! Awake, sing a song!
Arise, Barak,
and take your prisoners,
son of Abinoam!"
- 13 Then the survivors came down
to the nobles;
the LORD's people came down to me ^d
with the warriors.
- 14 Those with their roots in Amalek ^e
came from Ephraim;
Benjamin came with your people
after you.
The leaders came down from Machir,
and those who carry a marshal's staff
came from Zebulun.
- 15 The princes of Issachar were
with Deborah;
Issachar was with Barak;
they were under his leadership ^f
in the valley.
There was great searching ^g of heart
among the clans of Reuben.
- 16 Why did you sit among the sheep pens ^h
listening to the playing of pipes
for the flocks?
There was great searching of heart
among the clans of Reuben.
- 17 Gilead remained beyond the Jordan.
Dan, why did you linger at the ships?
Asher remained at the seashore
and stayed in his harbors.
- 18 The people of Zebulun defied death,
Naphtali also, on the heights
of the battlefield.
- 19 Kings came and fought.
Then the kings of Canaan fought
at Taanach by the Waters of Megiddo,
but they did not plunder the silver.
- 20 The stars fought from the heavens;
the stars fought with Sisera
from their paths.
- 21 The river Kishon swept them away,
the ancient river, the river Kishon.
March on, my soul, in strength!
- 22 The horses' hooves then hammered —
the galloping, galloping
of his' stallions.
- 23 "Curse Meroz," says the angel
of the LORD,
"Bitterly curse her inhabitants,
for they did not come to help the LORD,
to help the LORD with the warriors."
- 24 Jael is most blessed of women,
the wife of Heber the Kenite;
she is most blessed among
tent-dwelling women.
- 25 He asked for water; she gave him milk.
She brought him cream
in a majestic bowl.
- 26 She reached for a tent peg,
her right hand,
for a workman's hammer.
Then she hammered Sisera —

^a5:5 Or LORD, this one of Sinai ^b5:7,10,11 Hb obscure ^c5:7 Or you ^d5:13 LXX reads down for him ^e5:14 LXX reads in the valley ^f5:15 Lit they set out as his feet ^g5:15 Some Hb mss, Syr read There were great resolves ^h5:16 Or the campfires
ⁱ5:22 = Sisera's



- she crushed his head;
 she shattered and pierced his temple.
- ²⁷ He collapsed, he fell, he lay down
 between her feet;
 he collapsed, he fell between her feet;
 where he collapsed, there he fell —
 dead.
- ²⁸ Sisera's mother looked
 through the window;
 she peered through the lattice,
 crying out:
 "Why is his chariot so long in coming?
 Why don't I hear the hoofbeats
 of his horses?"^a
- ²⁹ Her wisest princesses answer her;
 she even answers herself:^b
- ³⁰ "Are they not finding and dividing
 the spoil —
 a girl or two^c for each warrior,
 the spoil of colored garments
 for Sisera,
 the spoil of an embroidered garment
 or two for my neck?"^d
- ³¹ LORD, may all your enemies perish
 as Sisera did.^e
 But may those who love him
 be like the rising of the sun
 in its strength.

And the land had peace for forty years.

MIDIAN OPPRESSES ISRAEL

6 The Israelites did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD handed them over to Midian seven years,² and they oppressed Israel. Because of Midian, the Israelites made hiding places for themselves in the mountains, caves, and strongholds.³ Whenever the Israelites planted crops, the Midianites, Amalekites, and the Qedemites came and attacked them.⁴ They encamped against them and destroyed the produce of the land, even as far as Gaza. They left nothing for Israel to eat, as well as no sheep, ox, or donkey.⁵ For the Midianites came with their cattle and their tents like a great swarm of locusts. They and their camels were without number, and they entered the land to lay waste to it.⁶ So Israel became poverty-stricken because of Midian, and the Israelites cried out to the LORD.

⁷ When the Israelites cried out to him because of Midian,⁸ the LORD sent a prophet to them. He said to them, "This is what the LORD God of Israel says: 'I brought you out of Egypt and out of the place of slavery.⁹ I rescued you from the power of Egypt and the power of all who oppressed you. I drove them out before you and gave you their land.¹⁰ I said to you: I am the LORD your God. Do not fear the gods of the Amorites whose land you live in. But you did not obey me.'"

THE LORD CALLS GIDEON

¹¹ The angel of the LORD came, and he sat under the oak that was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash, the Abiezrite. His son Gideon was threshing wheat in the winepress in order to hide it from the Midianites.¹² Then the angel of the LORD appeared to him and said: "The LORD is with you, valiant warrior."

¹³ Gideon said to him, "Please, my lord, if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened? And where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about? They said, 'Hasn't the LORD brought us out of Egypt?' But now the LORD has abandoned us and handed us over to Midian."

¹⁴ The LORD turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and deliver Israel from the grasp of Midian. I am sending you!"

¹⁵ He said to him, "Please, Lord, how can I deliver Israel? Look, my family is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father's family."

¹⁶ "But I will be with you," the LORD said to him. "You will strike Midian down as if it were one man."

¹⁷ Then he said to him, "If I have found favor with you, give me a sign that you are speaking with me.¹⁸ Please do not leave this place until I return to you. Let me bring my gift and set it before you."

And he said, "I will stay until you return."

¹⁹ So Gideon went and prepared a young goat and unleavened bread from a half bushel^f of flour. He placed the meat in a basket and the broth in a pot. He brought them out and offered them to him under the oak.

²⁰ The angel of God said to him, "Take the meat with the unleavened bread, put it on this stone, and pour the broth on it." So he did that.

²¹ The angel of the LORD extended the tip of the staff that was in his hand and touched the

^a5:28 Lit *Why have the hoofbeats of his chariots delayed* ^b5:29 Lit *answers her words* ^c5:30 Lit *a womb or two wombs*

^d5:30 Hb obscure ^e5:31 Lit *perish in this way* ^f6:19 Lit *an ephah*



meat and the unleavened bread. Fire came up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. Then the angel of the LORD vanished from his sight.

²² When Gideon realized that he was the angel of the LORD, he said, "Oh no, Lord God! I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face!"

²³ But the LORD said to him, "Peace to you. Don't be afraid, for you will not die." ²⁴ So Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and called it The LORD Is Peace.^a It is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites today.

GIDEON TEARS DOWN A BAAL ALTAR

²⁵ On that very night the LORD said to him, "Take your father's young bull and a second bull seven years old. Then tear down the altar of Baal that belongs to your father and cut down the Asherah pole beside it. ²⁶ Build a well-constructed altar to the LORD your God on the top of this mound. Take the second bull and offer it as a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah pole you cut down." ²⁷ So Gideon took ten of his male servants and did as the LORD had told him. But because he was too afraid of his father's family and the men of the city to do it in the daytime, he did it at night.

²⁸ When the men of the city got up in the morning, they found Baal's altar torn down, the Asherah pole beside it cut down, and the second bull offered up on the altar that had been built. ²⁹ They said to each other, "Who did this?" After they made a thorough investigation, they said, "Gideon son of Joash did it."

³⁰ Then the men of the city said to Joash, "Bring out your son. He must die, because he tore down Baal's altar and cut down the Asherah pole beside it."

³¹ But Joash said to all who stood against him, "Would you plead Baal's case for him? Would you save him? Whoever pleads his case will be put to death by morning! If he is a god, let him plead his own case because someone tore down his altar." ³² That day he was called Jerubbaal, since Joash said, "Let Baal contend with him," because he tore down his altar.

THE SIGN OF THE FLEECE

³³ All the Midianites, Amalekites, and Qemites gathered together, crossed over the Jordan, and camped in the Jezreel Valley.

³⁴ The Spirit of the LORD enveloped^b Gideon, and he blew the ram's horn and the Abiezrites

rallied behind him. ³⁵ He sent messengers throughout all of Manasseh, who rallied behind him. He also sent messengers throughout Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, who also came to meet him.

³⁶ Then Gideon said to God, "If you will deliver Israel by my hand, as you said, ³⁷ I will put a wool fleece here on the threshing floor. If dew is only on the fleece, and all the ground is dry, I will know that you will deliver Israel by my strength, as you said." ³⁸ And that is what happened. When he got up early in the morning, he squeezed the fleece and wrung dew out of it, filling a bowl with water.

³⁹ Gideon then said to God, "Don't be angry with me; let me speak one more time. Please allow me to make one more test with the fleece. Let it remain dry, and the dew be all over the ground." ⁴⁰ That night God did as Gideon requested: only the fleece was dry, and dew was all over the ground.

GOD SELECTS GIDEON'S ARMY

7 Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and all the troops who were with him, got up early and camped beside the spring of Harod. The camp of Midian was north of them, below the hill of Moreh, in the valley. ² The LORD said to Gideon, "You have too many troops for me to hand the Midianites over to them, or else Israel might elevate themselves over me and say, 'My own strength saved me.' ³ Now announce to the troops: 'Whoever is fearful and trembling may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.'" So twenty-two thousand of the troops turned back, but ten thousand remained.

⁴ Then the LORD said to Gideon, "There are still too many troops. Take them down to the water, and I will test them for you there. If I say to you, 'This one can go with you,' he can go. But if I say about anyone, 'This one cannot go with you,' he cannot go." ⁵ So he brought the troops down to the water, and the LORD said to Gideon, "Separate everyone who laps water with his tongue like a dog. Do the same with everyone who kneels to drink." ⁶ The number of those who lapped with their hands to their mouths was three hundred men, and all the rest of the troops knelt to drink water. ⁷ The LORD said to Gideon, "I will deliver you with the three hundred men who lapped and hand the Midianites over to you. But everyone else is to go home." ⁸ So Gideon sent all

^a6:24 = *Yahweh-shalom* ^b6:34 Lit *clothed*; 1Ch 12:18; 2Ch 24:20 ^c7:2 Lit *brag against me*



the Israelites to their tents but kept the three hundred troops, who took the provisions and their trumpets. The camp of Midian was below him in the valley.

GIDEON SPIES ON THE MIDIANITE CAMP

⁹ That night the LORD said to him, "Get up and attack the camp, for I have handed it over to you. ¹⁰ But if you are afraid to attack the camp, go down with Purah your servant. ¹¹ Listen to what they say, and then you will be encouraged^a to attack the camp." So he went down with Purah his servant to the outpost of the troops^b who were in the camp.

¹² Now the Midianites, Amalekites, and all the Qedemites had settled down in the valley like a swarm of locusts, and their camels were as innumerable as the sand on the seashore. ¹³ When Gideon arrived, there was a man telling his friend about a dream. He said, "Listen, I had a dream: a loaf of barley bread came tumbling into the Midianite camp, struck a tent, and it fell. The loaf turned the tent upside down so that it collapsed."

¹⁴ His friend answered: "This is nothing less than the sword of Gideon son of Joash, the Israelite. God has handed the entire Midianite camp over to him."

GIDEON ATTACKS THE MIDIANITES

¹⁵ When Gideon heard the account of the dream and its interpretation, he bowed in worship. He returned to Israel's camp and said, "Get up, for the LORD has handed the Midianite camp over to you." ¹⁶ Then he divided the three hundred men into three companies and gave each of the men a trumpet in one hand and an empty pitcher with a torch inside it in the other hand.

¹⁷ "Watch me," he said to them, "and do what I do. When I come to the outpost of the camp, do as I do. ¹⁸ When I and everyone with me blow our trumpets, you are also to blow your trumpets all around the camp. Then you will say, 'For the LORD and for Gideon!'"

¹⁹ Gideon and the hundred men who were with him went to the outpost of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch after the sentries had been stationed. They blew their trumpets and broke the pitchers that were in their hands. ²⁰ The three companies blew their trumpets and shattered their pitchers. They held their torches in their left hands, their

trumpets^c in their right hands, and shouted, "A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!" ²¹ Each Israelite took his position around the camp, and the entire Midianite army began to run, and they cried out as they fled. ²² When Gideon's men blew their three hundred trumpets, the LORD caused the men in the whole army to turn on each other with their swords. They fled to Acacia House^d in the direction of Zerah as far as the border of Abel-meholah near Tabbath. ²³ Then the men of Israel were called from Naphtali, Asher, and Manasseh, and they pursued the Midianites.

THE MEN OF EPHRAIM JOIN THE BATTLE

²⁴ Gideon sent messengers throughout the hill country of Ephraim with this message: "Come down to intercept the Midianites and take control of the watercourses ahead of them as far as Beth-barah and the Jordan." So all the men of Ephraim were called out, and they took control of the watercourses as far as Beth-barah and the Jordan. ²⁵ They captured Oreb and Zeeb, the two princes of Midian; they killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb and Zeeb at the winepress of Zeeb, while they were pursuing the Midianites. They brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon across the Jordan.

8 The men of Ephraim said to him, "Why have you done this to us, not calling us when you went to fight against the Midianites?" And they argued with him violently.

² So he said to them, "What have I done now compared to you? Is not the gleanings of Ephraim better than the grape harvest of Abiezer?"

³ God handed over to you Oreb and Zeeb, the two princes of Midian. What was I able to do compared to you?" When he said this, their anger against him subsided.

GIDEON PURSUES THE KINGS OF MIDIAN

⁴ Gideon and the three hundred men came to the Jordan and crossed it. They were exhausted but still in pursuit. ⁵ He said to the men of Succoth, "Please give some loaves of bread to the troops under my command,^e because they are exhausted, for I am pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian."

⁶ But the princes of Succoth asked, "Are^f Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hands that we should give bread to your army?"

^a7:11 Lit then your hands will be strengthened ^b7:11 Lit of those who were arranged in companies of 50 ^c7:20 Lit trumpets to blow ^d7:22 Or Beth-shittah ^e8:5 Lit troops at my feet ^f8:6 Lit Are the hands of, also in v. 15



⁷ Gideon replied, "Very well, when the LORD has handed Zebah and Zalmunna over to me, I will tear^a your flesh with thorns and briers from the wilderness!" ⁸ He went from there to Penuel and asked the same thing from them. The men of Penuel answered just as the men of Succoth had answered. ⁹ He also told the men of Penuel, "When I return safely, I will tear down this tower!"

¹⁰ Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor, and with them was their army of about fifteen thousand men, who were all those left of the entire army of the Qedemites. Those who had been killed were one hundred twenty thousand armed men. ¹¹ Gideon traveled on the caravan route^c east of Nobah and Jogbehah and attacked their army while the army felt secure. ¹² Zebah and Zalmunna fled, and he pursued them. He captured these two kings of Midian and routed the entire army.

¹³ Gideon son of Joash returned from the battle by the Ascent of Heres. ¹⁴ He captured a youth from the men of Succoth and interrogated him. The youth wrote down for him the names of the seventy-seven leaders and elders of Succoth. ¹⁵ Then he went to the men of Succoth and said, "Here are Zebah and Zalmunna. You taunted me about them, saying, 'Are Zebah and Zalmunna now in your power that we should give bread to your exhausted men?' " ¹⁶ So he took the elders of the city, and he took some thorns and briers from the wilderness, and he disciplined the men of Succoth with them. ¹⁷ He also tore down the tower of Penuel and killed the men of the city.

¹⁸ He asked Zebah and Zalmunna, "What kind of men did you kill at Tabor?"

"They were like you," they said. "Each resembled the son of a king."

¹⁹ So he said, "They were my brothers, the sons of my mother! As the LORD lives, if you had let them live, I would not kill you." ²⁰ Then he said to Jether, his firstborn, "Get up and kill them." The youth did not draw his sword, for he was afraid because he was still a youth.

²¹ Zebah and Zalmunna said, "Get up and strike us down yourself, for a man is judged by his strength." So Gideon got up, killed Zebah and Zalmunna, and took the crescent ornaments that were on the necks of their camels.

GIDEON'S LEGACY

²² Then the Israelites said to Gideon, "Rule over us, you as well as your sons and your grandsons, for you delivered us from the power of Midian."

²³ But Gideon said to them, "I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you; the LORD will rule over you." ²⁴ Then he said to them, "Let me make a request of you: Everyone give me an earring from his plunder." Now the enemy had gold earrings because they were Ishmaelites.

²⁵ They said, "We agree to give them." So they spread out a cloak, and everyone threw an earring from his plunder on it. ²⁶ The weight of the gold earrings he requested was forty-three pounds^d of gold, in addition to the crescent ornaments and ear pendants, the purple garments on the kings of Midian, and the chains on the necks of their camels. ²⁷ Gideon made an ephod from all this and put it in Ophrah, his hometown. Then all Israel prostituted themselves by worshiping it there, and it became a snare to Gideon and his household.

²⁸ So Midian was subdued before the Israelites, and they were no longer a threat. ^e The land had peace for forty years during the days of Gideon. ²⁹ Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) son of Joash went back to live at his house.

³⁰ Gideon had seventy sons, his own offspring, since he had many wives. ³¹ His concubine who was in Shechem also bore him a son, and he named him Abimelech. ³² Then Gideon son of Joash died at a good old age and was buried in the tomb of his father Joash in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

³³ When Gideon died, the Israelites turned and prostituted themselves by worshiping the Baals and made Baal-berith^f their god. ³⁴ The Israelites did not remember the LORD their God who had rescued them from the hand of the enemies around them. ³⁵ They did not show kindness to the house of Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) for all the good he had done for Israel.

ABIMELECH BECOMES KING

9 Abimelech son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem and spoke to his uncles and to his mother's whole clan, saying, ² "Please speak in the hearing of all the citizens of Shechem, 'Is it better for you that seventy men, all the sons of Jerubbaal, rule over you or that one

^a8:7 Lit thresh ^b8:10 Lit men who drew the sword ^c8:11 Lit on the route of those who live in tents ^d8:26 Lit 1,700 shekels ^e8:28 Lit they no longer raised their head ^f8:33 Lit Baal of the Covenant, or Lord of the Covenant

man rule over you? 'Remember that I am your own flesh and blood.'^a

³ His mother's relatives spoke all these words about him in the hearing of all the citizens of Shechem, and they were favorable to Abimelech, for they said, "He is our brother." ⁴ So they gave him seventy pieces of silver from the temple of Baal-berith. ⁵ Abimelech used it to hire worthless and reckless men, and they followed him. ⁵ He went to his father's house in Ophrah and killed his seventy brothers, the sons of Jerubbaal, on top of a large stone. But Jotham, the youngest son of Jerubbaal, survived, because he hid. ⁶ Then all the citizens of Shechem and of Beth-millo gathered together and proceeded to make Abimelech king at the oak of the pillar in Shechem.

JOTHAM'S PARABLE

⁷ When they told Jotham, he climbed to the top of Mount Gerizim, raised his voice, and called to them:

Listen to me, citizens of Shechem,
and may God listen to you:

- ⁸ The trees decided
to anoint a king over themselves.
They said to the olive tree,
"Reign over us."
- ⁹ But the olive tree said to them,
"Should I stop giving my oil
that people use to honor both God
and men,
and rule^c over the trees?"
- ¹⁰ Then the trees said to the fig tree,
"Come and reign over us."
- ¹¹ But the fig tree said to them,
"Should I stop giving
my sweetness and my good fruit,
and rule over trees?"
- ¹² Later, the trees said to the grapevine,
"Come and reign over us."
- ¹³ But the grapevine said to them,
"Should I stop giving my wine
that cheers both God and man,
and rule over trees?"
- ¹⁴ Finally, all the trees said to the bramble,
"Come and reign over us."
- ¹⁵ The bramble said to the trees,

"If you really are anointing me
as king over you,
come and find refuge in my shade.
But if not,
may fire come out from the bramble
and consume the cedars of Lebanon."

¹⁶ "Now if you have acted faithfully and honestly in making Abimelech king, if you have done well by Jerubbaal and his family, and if you have rewarded him appropriately for what he did — ¹⁷ for my father fought for you, risked his life, and rescued you from Midian, ¹⁸ and now you have attacked my father's family today, killed his seventy sons on top of a large stone, and made Abimelech, the son of his slave woman, king over the citizens of Shechem 'because he is your brother' — ¹⁹ so if you have acted faithfully and honestly with Jerubbaal and his house this day, rejoice in Abimelech and may he also rejoice in you. ²⁰ But if not, may fire come from Abimelech and consume the citizens of Shechem and Beth-millo, and may fire come from the citizens of Shechem and Beth-millo and consume Abimelech." ²¹ Then Jotham fled, escaping to Beer, and lived there because of his brother Abimelech.

ABIMELECH'S PUNISHMENT

²² When Abimelech had ruled over Israel three years, ²³ God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the citizens of Shechem. They treated Abimelech deceitfully, ²⁴ so that the crime against the seventy sons of Jerubbaal might come to justice and their blood would be avenged on their brother Abimelech, who killed them, and on the citizens of Shechem, who had helped him^d kill his brothers. ²⁵ The citizens of Shechem rebelled against him by putting men in ambush on the tops of the mountains, and they robbed everyone who passed by them on the road. So this was reported to Abimelech.

²⁶ Gaal son of Ebed came with his brothers and crossed into Shechem, and the citizens of Shechem trusted him. ²⁷ So they went out to the countryside and harvested grapes from their vineyards. They trampled the grapes and held a celebration. Then they went to the house of their god, and as they ate and drank, they cursed Abimelech. ²⁸ Gaal son of Ebed

^a9:2 Lit *your bone and your flesh* ^b9:4 Lit *Baal of the Covenant, or Lord of the Covenant* ^c9:9 Lit *and go to sway, also in vv. 11, 13* ^d9:24 Lit *had strengthened his hands*

said, "Who is Abimelech and who is Shechem that we should serve him? Isn't he the son of Jerubbaal, and isn't Zebul his officer? You are to serve the men of Hamor, the father of Shechem. Why should we serve Abimelech?" ²⁹ If only these people were in my power, I would remove Abimelech." So he said ^a to Abimelech, "Gather your army and come out."

³⁰ When Zebul, the ruler of the city, heard the words of Gaal son of Ebed, he was angry. ³¹ So he secretly sent messengers to Abimelech, saying, "Beware! Gaal son of Ebed, with his brothers, have come to Shechem and are turning the city against you." ³² Now tonight, you and the troops with you, come and wait in ambush in the countryside. ³³ Then get up early, and at sunrise attack the city. When he and the troops who are with him come out against you, do to him whatever you can." ³⁴ So Abimelech and all the troops with him got up at night and waited in ambush for Shechem in four units.

³⁵ Gaal son of Ebed went out and stood at the entrance of the city gate. Then Abimelech and the troops who were with him got up from their ambush. ³⁶ When Gaal saw the troops, he said to Zebul, "Look, troops are coming down from the mountaintops!" But Zebul said to him, "The shadows of the mountains look like men to you."

³⁷ Then Gaal spoke again, "Look, troops are coming down from the central part of the land, and one unit is coming from the direction of the Diviners' Oak." ³⁸ Zebul replied, "What do you have to say now? You said, 'Who is Abimelech that we should serve him?' Aren't these the troops you despised? Now go and fight them!"

³⁹ So Gaal went out leading the citizens of Shechem and fought against Abimelech, ⁴⁰ but Abimelech pursued him, and Gaal fled before him. Numerous bodies were strewn as far as the entrance of the city gate. ⁴¹ Abimelech stayed in Arumah, and Zebul drove Gaal and his brothers from Shechem.

⁴² The next day when the people of Shechem ^c went into the countryside, this was reported to Abimelech. ⁴³ He took the troops, divided them into three companies, and waited in ambush in the countryside. He looked, and the people were coming out of the city, so he arose against them and struck them down. ⁴⁴ Then Abimelech and the units that were with him rushed

forward and took their stand at the entrance of the city gate. The other two units rushed against all who were in the countryside and struck them down. ⁴⁵ So Abimelech fought against the city that entire day, captured it, and killed the people who were in it. Then he tore down the city and sowed it with salt.

⁴⁶ When all the citizens of the Tower of Shechem heard, they entered the inner chamber ^d of the temple of El-berith. ^e ⁴⁷ Then it was reported to Abimelech that all the citizens of the Tower of Shechem had gathered. ⁴⁸ So Abimelech and all the troops who were with him went up to Mount Zalmon. Abimelech took his ax in his hand and cut a branch from the trees. He picked up the branch, put it on his shoulder, and said to the troops who were with him, "Hurry and do what you have seen me do." ⁴⁹ Each of the troops also cut his own branch and followed Abimelech. They put the branches against the inner chamber and set it on fire; about a thousand men and women died, including all the men of the Tower of Shechem.

⁵⁰ Abimelech went to Thebez, camped against it, and captured it. ⁵¹ There was a strong tower inside the city, and all the men, women, and citizens of the city fled there. They locked themselves in and went up to the roof of the tower. ⁵² When Abimelech came to attack the tower, he approached its entrance to set it on fire. ⁵³ But a woman threw the upper portion of a millstone on Abimelech's head and fractured his skull. ⁵⁴ He quickly called his armor-bearer and said to him, "Draw your sword and kill me, or they'll say about me, 'A woman killed him.' " So his armor-bearer ran him through, and he died. ⁵⁵ When the Israelites saw that Abimelech was dead, they all went home.

⁵⁶ In this way, God brought back Abimelech's evil—the evil that Abimelech had done to his father when he killed his seventy brothers. ⁵⁷ God also brought back to the men of Shechem all their evil. So the curse of Jotham son of Jerubbaal came upon them.

TOLA AND JAIR

10 After Abimelech, Tola son of Puah, son of Dodo became judge and began to deliver Israel. He was from Issachar and lived in Shamir in the hill country of Ephraim. ² Tola judged Israel twenty-three years and when he died, was buried in Shamir.

^a9:29 DSS read *They said*; LXX reads *I would say* ^b9:31 Hb obscure ^c9:42 of *Shechem* supplied for clarity ^d9:46 Or *the crypt*, or *the vault* ^e9:46 = God of the Covenant



³ After him came Jair the Gileadite, who judged Israel twenty-two years. ⁴ He had thirty sons who rode on thirty donkeys. They had thirty towns^a in Gilead, which are still called Jair's Villages^b today. ⁵ When Jair died, he was buried in Kamon.

ISRAEL'S REBELLION AND REPENTANCE

⁶ Then the Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. They worshiped the Baals and the Ashtoreths, the gods of Aram, Sidon, and Moab, and the gods of the Ammonites and the Philistines. They abandoned the LORD and did not worship him. ⁷ So the LORD's anger burned against Israel, and he sold them to^c the Philistines and the Ammonites. ⁸ They shattered and crushed the Israelites that year, and for eighteen years they did the same to all the Israelites who were on the other side of the Jordan in the land of the Amorites in Gilead. ⁹ The Ammonites also crossed the Jordan to fight against Judah, Benjamin, and the house of Ephraim. Israel was greatly oppressed, ¹⁰ so they cried out to the LORD, saying, "We have sinned against you. We have abandoned our God and worshiped the Baals."

¹¹ The LORD said to the Israelites, "When the Egyptians, Amorites, Ammonites, Philistines, ¹² Sidonians, Amalekites, and Maonites^d oppressed you, and you cried out to me, did I not deliver you from them? ¹³ But you have abandoned me and worshiped other gods. Therefore, I will not deliver you again. ¹⁴ Go and cry out to the gods you have chosen. Let them deliver you whenever you are oppressed."

¹⁵ But the Israelites said, "We have sinned. Deal with us as you see fit;^e only rescue us today!" ¹⁶ So they got rid of the foreign gods among them and worshiped the LORD, and he became weary of Israel's misery.

¹⁷ The Ammonites were called together, and they camped in Gilead. So the Israelites assembled and camped at Mizpah. ¹⁸ The rulers^f of Gilead said to one another, "Which man will begin the fight against the Ammonites? He will be the leader of all the inhabitants of Gilead."

JEPHTHAH BECOMES ISRAEL'S LEADER

11 Jephthah the Gileadite was a valiant warrior, but he was the son of a prostitute, and Gilead was his father. ² Gilead's wife bore him sons, and when they grew up, they drove

Jephthah out and said to him, "You will have no inheritance in our father's family, because you are the son of another woman." ³ So Jephthah fled from his brothers and lived in the land of Tob. Then some worthless men joined Jephthah and went on raids with him.

⁴ Some time later, the Ammonites fought against Israel. ⁵ When the Ammonites made war with Israel, the elders of Gilead went to get Jephthah from the land of Tob. ⁶ They said to him, "Come, be our commander, and let's fight the Ammonites."

⁷ Jephthah replied to the elders of Gilead, "Didn't you hate me and drive me out of my father's family? Why then have you come to me now when you're in trouble?"

⁸ They answered Jephthah, "That's true. But now we turn to you. Come with us, fight the Ammonites, and you will become leader of all the inhabitants of Gilead."

⁹ So Jephthah said to them, "If you are bringing me back to fight the Ammonites and the LORD gives them to me, I will be your leader."

¹⁰ The elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, "The LORD is our witness if we don't do as you say."

¹¹ So Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead. The people made him their leader and commander, and Jephthah repeated all his terms in the presence of the LORD at Mizpah.

JEPHTHAH REJECTS AMMONITE CLAIMS

¹² Jephthah sent messengers to the king of the Ammonites, asking, "What do you have against me that you have come to fight me in my land?"

¹³ The king of the Ammonites said to Jephthah's messengers, "When Israel came from Egypt, they seized my land from the Arnon to the Jabbok and the Jordan. Now restore it peaceably."

¹⁴ Jephthah again sent messengers to the king of the Ammonites ¹⁵ to tell him, "This is what Jephthah says: Israel did not take away the land of Moab or the land of the Ammonites. ¹⁶ But when they came from Egypt, Israel traveled through the wilderness to the Red Sea and came to Kadesh. ¹⁷ Israel sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying, 'Please let us travel through your land,' but the king of Edom would not listen. They also sent messengers to the king of Moab, but he refused. So Israel stayed in Kadesh.

^a10:4 LXX; MT reads *donkeys* ^b10:4 Or *called Havvoth-jair* ^c10:7 Lit *into the hand of* ^d10:12 LXX reads *Midianites*

^e10:15 Lit *Do to us what is good in your eyes* ^f10:18 Lit *The people, rulers*



¹⁸ "Then they traveled through the wilderness and around the lands of Edom and Moab. They came to the east side of the land of Moab and camped on the other side of the Arnon but did not enter into the territory of Moab, for the Arnon was the boundary of Moab.

¹⁹ "Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, king of Heshbon. Israel said to him, 'Please let us travel through your land to our country,' ²⁰ but Sihon would not trust Israel to pass through his territory. Instead, Sihon gathered all his troops, camped at Jahaz, and fought with Israel. ²¹ Then the LORD God of Israel handed over Sihon and all his troops to Israel, and they defeated them. So Israel took possession of the entire land of the Amorites who lived in that country. ²² They took possession of all the territory of the Amorites from the Arnon to the Jabbok and from the wilderness to the Jordan.

²³ "The LORD God of Israel has now driven out the Amorites before his people Israel, and will you now force us out? ²⁴ Isn't it true that you can have whatever your god Chemosh conquers for you, and we can have whatever the LORD our God conquers for us? ²⁵ Now are you any better than Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he ever contend with Israel or fight against them? ²⁶ While Israel lived three hundred years in Heshbon and Aroer and their surrounding villages, and in all the cities that are on the banks of the Arnon, why didn't you take them back at that time? ²⁷ I have not sinned against you, but you are doing me wrong by fighting against me. Let the LORD who is the judge decide today between the Israelites and the Ammonites." ²⁸ But the king of the Ammonites would not listen to Jephthah's message that he sent him.

JEPHTHAH'S VOW AND SACRIFICE

²⁹ The Spirit of the LORD came on Jephthah, who traveled through Gilead and Manasseh, and then through Mizpah of Gilead. He crossed over to the Ammonites from Mizpah of Gilead. ³⁰ Jephthah made this vow to the LORD: "If you in fact hand over the Ammonites to me, ³¹ whoever comes out the doors of my house to greet me when I return safely from the Ammonites will belong to the LORD, and I will offer that person as a burnt offering."

³² Jephthah crossed over to the Ammonites to fight against them, and the LORD handed

them over to him. ³³ He defeated twenty of their cities with a great slaughter from Aroer all the way to the entrance of Minnith and to Abel-keramim. So the Ammonites were subdued before the Israelites.

³⁴ When Jephthah went to his home in Mizpah, there was his daughter, coming out to meet him with tambourines and dancing! She was his only child; he had no other son or daughter besides her. ³⁵ When he saw her, he tore his clothes and said, "No! Not my daughter! You have devastated me! You have brought great misery on me. ^a I have given my word to the LORD and cannot take it back."

³⁶ Then she said to him, "My father, you have given your word to the LORD. Do to me as you have said, for the LORD brought vengeance on your enemies, the Ammonites." ³⁷ She also said to her father, "Let me do this one thing: Let me wander two months through the mountains with my friends and mourn my virginity."

³⁸ "Go," he said. And he sent her away two months. So she left with her friends and mourned her virginity as she wandered through the mountains. ³⁹ At the end of two months, she returned to her father, and he kept the vow he had made about her. And she had never been intimate with a man. Now it became a custom in Israel ⁴⁰ that four days each year the young women of Israel would commemorate the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite.

CONFLICT WITH EPHRAIM

12 The men of Ephraim were called together and crossed the Jordan to Zaphon. They said to Jephthah, "Why have you crossed over to fight against the Ammonites but didn't call us to go with you? We will burn your house with you in it!"

² Then Jephthah said to them, "My people and I had a bitter conflict with the Ammonites. So I called for you, but you didn't deliver me from their power. ³ When I saw that you weren't going to deliver me, I took my life in my own hands and crossed over to the Ammonites, and the LORD handed them over to me. Why then have you come today to fight against me?"

⁴ Then Jephthah gathered all of the men of Gilead. They fought and defeated Ephraim, because Ephraim had said, "You Gileadites are Ephraimite fugitives in the territories

^a11:35 Lit *have been among those who trouble me*

of Ephraim and Manasseh.”⁵ The Gileadites captured the fords of the Jordan leading to Ephraim. Whenever a fugitive from Ephraim said, “Let me cross over,” the Gileadites asked him, “Are you an Ephraimite?” If he answered, “No,”⁶ they told him, “Please say Shibboleth.” If he said, “Sibboleth,” because he could not pronounce it correctly, they seized him and executed him at the fords of the Jordan. At that time forty-two thousand from Ephraim died.

⁷ Jephthah judged Israel six years, and when he died, he was buried in one of the cities of Gilead.^A

IBZAN, ELON, AND ABDON

⁸ Ibzan, who was from Bethlehem, judged Israel after Jephthah⁹ and had thirty sons. He gave his thirty daughters in marriage to men outside the tribe and brought back thirty wives for his sons from outside the tribe. Ibzan judged Israel seven years,¹⁰ and when he died, he was buried in Bethlehem.

¹¹ Elon, who was from Zebulun, judged Israel after Ibzan. He judged Israel ten years,¹² and when he died, he was buried in Aijalon in the land of Zebulun.

¹³ After Elon, Abdon son of Hillel, who was from Pirathon, judged Israel.¹⁴ He had forty sons and thirty grandsons, who rode on seventy donkeys. Abdon judged Israel eight years,¹⁵ and when he died, he was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the hill country of the Amalekites.

BIRTH OF SAMSON

13 The Israelites again did what was evil in the LORD’s sight, so the LORD handed them over to the Philistines forty years.² There was a certain man from Zorah, from the family of Dan, whose name was Manoah; his wife was unable to conceive and had no children.³ The angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, “It is true that you are unable to conceive and have no children, but you will conceive and give birth to a son.⁴ Now please be careful not to drink wine or beer, or to eat anything unclean;⁵ for indeed, you will conceive and give birth to a son. You must never cut his hair,⁶ because the boy will be a Nazirite to God from birth, and he will begin to save Israel from the power of the Philistines.”

⁶ Then the woman went and told her husband, “A man of God came to me. He looked like the awe-inspiring angel of God. I didn’t ask him where he came from, and he didn’t tell me his name.⁷ He said to me, ‘You will conceive and give birth to a son. Therefore, do not drink wine or beer, and do not eat anything unclean, because the boy will be a Nazirite to God from birth until the day of his death.’”

⁸ Manoah prayed to the LORD and said, “Please, Lord, let the man of God you sent come again to us and teach us what we should do for the boy who will be born.”

⁹ God listened to^c Manoah, and the angel of God came again to the woman. She was sitting in the field, and her husband Manoah was not with her.¹⁰ The woman ran quickly to her husband and told him, “The man who came to me the other day has just come back!”

¹¹ So Manoah got up and followed his wife. When he came to the man, he asked, “Are you the man who spoke to my wife?”

“I am,” he said.

¹² Then Manoah asked, “When your words come true, what will be the boy’s responsibilities and work?”

¹³ The angel of the LORD answered Manoah, “Your wife needs to do everything I told her.¹⁴ She must not eat anything that comes from the grapevine or drink wine or beer. And she must not eat anything unclean. Your wife must do everything I have commanded her.”

¹⁵ “Please stay here,” Manoah told him, “and we will prepare a young goat for you.”

¹⁶ The angel of the LORD said to him, “If I stay, I won’t eat your food. But if you want to prepare a burnt offering, offer it to the LORD.” (Manoah did not know he was the angel of the LORD.)

¹⁷ Then Manoah said to him, “What is your name, so that we may honor you when your words come true?”

¹⁸ “Why do you ask my name,” the angel of the LORD asked him, “since it is beyond understanding.”

¹⁹ Manoah took a young goat and a grain offering and offered them on a rock to the LORD, who did something miraculous⁹ while Manoah and his wife were watching.²⁰ When the flame went up from the altar to the sky, the angel of the LORD went up in its flame. When Manoah and his wife saw this, they fell facedown on the

^A12:7 LXX reads in his city in Gilead ⁹13:5 Lit And a razor is not to go up on his head ^c13:9 Lit to the voice of ⁹13:19 LXX reads to the LORD, to the one who works wonders

ground.²¹ The angel of the LORD did not appear again to Manoah and his wife. Then Manoah realized that it was the angel of the LORD.

²² "We're certainly going to die," he said to his wife, "because we have seen God!"

²³ But his wife said to him, "If the LORD had intended to kill us, he wouldn't have accepted the burnt offering and the grain offering from us, and he would not have shown us all these things or spoken to us like this."

²⁴ So the woman gave birth to a son and named him Samson. The boy grew, and the LORD blessed him. ²⁵ Then the Spirit of the LORD began to stir him in the Camp of Dan,^a between Zorah and Eshtaol.

SAMSON'S RIDDLE

14 Samson went down to Timnah and saw a young Philistine woman there. ² He went back and told his father and his mother: "I have seen a young Philistine woman in Timnah. Now get her for me as a wife."

³ But his father and mother said to him, "Can't you find a young woman among your relatives or among any of our people? Must you go to the uncircumcised Philistines for a wife?"

But Samson told his father, "Get her for me. She's the right one for me." ⁴ Now his father and mother did not know this was from the LORD, who wanted the Philistines to provide an opportunity for a confrontation.^b At that time, the Philistines were ruling Israel.

⁵ Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother and came to the vineyards of Timnah. Suddenly a young lion came roaring at him, ⁶ the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully on him, and he tore the lion apart with his bare hands as he might have torn a young goat. But he did not tell his father or mother what he had done. ⁷ Then he went and spoke to the woman, because she seemed right to Samson.

⁸ After some time, when he returned to marry her, he left the road to see the lion's carcass, and there was a swarm of bees with honey in the carcass. ⁹ He scooped some honey into his hands and ate it as he went along. When he came to his father and mother, he gave some to them and they ate it. But he did not tell them that he had scooped the honey from the lion's carcass.

¹⁰ His father went to visit the woman, and Samson prepared a feast there, as young men

were accustomed to do. ¹¹ When the Philistines saw him, they brought thirty men to accompany him.

¹² "Let me tell you a riddle," Samson said to them. "If you can explain it to me during the seven days of the feast and figure it out, I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothes. ¹³ But if you can't explain it to me, you must give me thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothes."

"Tell us your riddle," they replied.^c "Let's hear it."

¹⁴ So he said to them:

Out of the eater came something to eat,
and out of the strong came something
sweet.

After three days, they were unable to explain the riddle. ¹⁵ On the fourth^d day they said to Samson's wife, "Persuade your husband to explain the riddle to us, or we will burn you and your father's family to death. Did you invite us here to rob us?"

¹⁶ So Samson's wife came to him, weeping, and said, "You hate me and don't love me! You told my people the riddle, but haven't explained it to me."

"Look," he said,^e "I haven't even explained it to my father or mother, so why should I explain it to you?"

¹⁷ She wept the whole seven days of the feast, and at last, on the seventh day, he explained it to her, because she had nagged him so much. Then she explained it to her people. ¹⁸ On the seventh day, before sunset, the men of the city said to him:

What is sweeter than honey?
What is stronger than a lion?

So he said to them:

If you hadn't plowed with
my young cow,
you wouldn't know my riddle now!

¹⁹ The Spirit of the LORD came powerfully on him, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty of their men. He stripped them and gave their clothes to those who had explained the riddle. In a rage, Samson returned to his father's house,²⁰ and his wife was given to one of the men who had accompanied him.

^a13:25 Or in Mahaneh-dan ^b14:4 for a confrontation supplied for clarity ^c14:13 Lit replied to him ^d14:15 LXX, Syr; MT reads seventh ^e14:16 Lit said to her



SAMSON'S REVENGE

15 Later on, during the wheat harvest, Samson took a young goat as a gift and visited his wife. "I want to go to my wife in her room," he said. But her father would not let him enter.

² "I was sure you hated her," her father said, "so I gave her to one of the men who accompanied you. Isn't her younger sister more beautiful than she is? Why not take her instead?"

³ Samson said to them, "This time I will be blameless when I harm the Philistines." ⁴ So he went out and caught three hundred foxes. He took torches, turned the foxes tail-to-tail, and put a torch between each pair of tails. ⁵ Then he ignited the torches and released the foxes into the standing grain of the Philistines. He burned the piles of grain and the standing grain as well as the vineyards and olive groves.

⁶ Then the Philistines asked, "Who did this?"

They were told, "It was Samson, the Timnite's son-in-law, because he took Samson's wife and gave her to his companion." So the Philistines went to her and her father and burned them to death.

⁷ Then Samson told them, "Because you did this, I swear that I won't rest until I have taken vengeance on you." ⁸ He tore them limb from limb^a and then went down and stayed in the cave at the rock of Etam.

⁹ The Philistines went up, camped in Judah, and raided Lehi. ¹⁰ So the men of Judah said, "Why have you attacked us?"

They replied, "We have come to tie Samson up and pay him back for what he did to us."

¹¹ Then three thousand men of Judah went to the cave at the rock of Etam, and they asked Samson, "Don't you realize that the Philistines rule us? What have you done to us?"

"I have done to them what they did to me," he answered.^b

¹² They said to him, "We've come to tie you up and hand you over to the Philistines."

Then Samson told them, "Swear to me that you yourselves won't kill me."

¹³ "No," they said,^c "we won't kill you, but we will tie you up securely and hand you over to them." So they tied him up with two new ropes and led him away from the rock.

¹⁴ When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came to meet him shouting. The Spirit of the LORD came powerfully on him, and the ropes that were on his arms and wrists became like

burnt flax and fell off. ¹⁵ He found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, reached out his hand, took it, and killed a thousand men with it. ¹⁶ Then Samson said:

With the jawbone of a donkey

I have piled them in heaps.

With the jawbone of a donkey

I have killed a thousand men.

¹⁷ When he finished speaking, he threw away the jawbone and named that place Ramath-lehi.^d ¹⁸ He became very thirsty and called out to the LORD: "You have accomplished this great victory through your servant. Must I now die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?" ¹⁹ So God split a hollow place in the ground at Lehi, and water came out of it. After Samson drank, his strength returned, and he revived. That is why he named it En-hakkore,^e which is still in Lehi today. ²⁰ And he judged Israel twenty years in the days of the Philistines.

SAMSON AND DELILAH

16 Samson went to Gaza, where he saw a prostitute and went to bed with her.

² When the Gazites heard that Samson was there, they surrounded the place and waited in ambush for him all that night at the city gate. They kept quiet all night, saying, "Let's wait until dawn; then we will kill him." ³ But Samson stayed in bed only until midnight. Then he got up, took hold of the doors of the city gate along with the two gateposts, and pulled them out, bar and all. He put them on his shoulders and took them to the top of the mountain overlooking Hebron.

⁴ Some time later, he fell in love with a woman named Delilah, who lived in the Sorek Valley.

⁵ The Philistine leaders went to her and said, "Persuade him to tell you^f where his great strength comes from, so we can overpower him, tie him up, and make him helpless. Each of us will then give you 1,100 pieces of silver."

⁶ So Delilah said to Samson, "Please tell me, where does your great strength come from? How could someone tie you up and make you helpless?"

⁷ Samson told her, "If they tie me up with seven fresh bowstrings that have not been dried, I will become weak and be like any other man."

⁸ The Philistine leaders brought her seven fresh bowstrings that had not been dried, and

^a15:8 Lit He struck them hip and thigh with a great slaughter ^b15:11 Lit answered them ^c15:13 Lit said to him

^d15:17 = High Place of the Jawbone ^e15:19 = Spring of the One Who Cried Out ^f16:5 Lit him and see



she tied him up with them.⁹ While the men in ambush were waiting in her room, she called out to him, "Samson, the Philistines are here!"^a But he snapped the bowstrings as a strand of yarn snaps when it touches fire. The secret of his strength remained unknown.

¹⁰ Then Delilah said to Samson, "You have mocked me and told me lies! Won't you please tell me how you can be tied up?"

¹¹ He told her, "If they tie me up with new ropes that have never been used, I will become weak and be like any other man."

¹² Delilah took new ropes, tied him up with them, and shouted, "Samson, the Philistines are here!" But while the men in ambush were waiting in her room, he snapped the ropes off his arms like a thread.

¹³ Then Delilah said to Samson, "You have mocked me all along and told me lies! Tell me how you can be tied up."

He told her, "If you weave the seven braids on my head into the fabric on a loom —"^b

¹⁴ She fastened the braids with a pin and called to him, "Samson, the Philistines are here!" He awoke from his sleep and pulled out the pin, with the loom and the web.

¹⁵ "How can you say, 'I love you,'" she told him, "when your heart is not with me? This is the third time you have mocked me and not told me what makes your strength so great!"

¹⁶ Because she nagged him day after day and pleaded with him until she wore him out,^c ¹⁷ he told her the whole truth and said to her, "My hair has never been cut,^d because I am a Nazirite to God from birth. If I am shaved, my strength will leave me, and I will become weak and be like any other man."

¹⁸ When Delilah realized that he had told her the whole truth, she sent this message to the Philistine leaders: "Come one more time, for he has told me the whole truth." The Philistine leaders came to her and brought the silver with them.

¹⁹ Then she let him fall asleep on her lap and called a man to shave off the seven braids on his head. In this way, she made him helpless, and his strength left him. ²⁰ Then she cried, "Samson, the Philistines are here!" When he awoke from his sleep, he said, "I will escape as I did before and shake myself free." But he did not know that the LORD had left him.

SAMSON'S DEFEAT AND DEATH

²¹ The Philistines seized him and gouged out his eyes. They brought him down to Gaza and bound him with bronze shackles, and he was forced to grind grain in the prison. ²² But his hair began to grow back after it had been shaved.

²³ Now the Philistine leaders gathered together to offer a great sacrifice to their god Dagon. They rejoiced and said:

Our god has handed over
our enemy Samson to us.

²⁴ When the people saw him, they praised their god and said:

Our god has handed over to us
our enemy who destroyed our land
and who multiplied our dead.

²⁵ When they were in good spirits,^e they said, "Bring Samson here to entertain us." So they brought Samson from prison, and he entertained them. They had him stand between the pillars.

²⁶ Samson said to the young man who was leading him by the hand, "Lead me where I can feel the pillars supporting the temple, so I can lean against them." ²⁷ The temple was full of men and women; all the leaders of the Philistines were there, and about three thousand men and women were on the roof watching Samson entertain them. ²⁸ He called out to the LORD: "Lord God, please remember me. Strengthen me, God, just once more. With one act of vengeance, let me pay back the Philistines for my two eyes." ²⁹ Samson took hold of the two middle pillars supporting the temple and leaned against them, one on his right hand and the other on his left. ³⁰ Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines." He pushed with all his might, and the temple fell on the leaders and all the people in it. And those he killed at his death were more than those he had killed in his life.

³¹ Then his brothers and all his father's family came down, carried him back, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of his father Manoah. So he judged Israel twenty years.

MICAH'S PRIEST

17 There was a man from the hill country of Ephraim named Micah. ² He said to his mother, "The 1,100 pieces of silver taken

^a16:9 Lit are on you, also in vv. 12, 14, 20 ^b16:13-14 LXX reads loom and fasten them with a pin into the wall and I will become weak and be like any other man. ^c14 And while he was sleeping, Delilah wove the seven braids on his head into the loom.

^d16:16 Lit him and he became short to death ^e16:17 Lit A razor has not gone up on my head ^f16:25 Or When they were feeling good

from you, and that I heard you place a curse on — here's the silver. I took it."

Then his mother said, "My son, may you be blessed by the LORD!"

³ He returned the 1,100 pieces of silver to his mother, and his mother said, "I personally consecrate the silver to the LORD for my son's benefit to make a carved image and a silver idol. ^a I will give it back to you." ⁴ So he returned the silver to his mother, and she took five pounds of silver and gave it to a silver-smith. He made it into a carved image and a silver idol, and it was in Micah's house.

⁵ This man Micah had a shrine, and he made an ephod and household idols, and installed one of his sons to be his priest. ⁶ In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did whatever seemed right to him.

⁷ There was a young man, a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, who was staying within the clan of Judah. ⁸ The man left the town of Bethlehem in Judah to stay wherever he could find a place. On his way he came to Micah's home in the hill country of Ephraim.

⁹ "Where do you come from?" Micah asked him.

He answered him, "I am a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, and I'm going to stay wherever I can find a place."

¹⁰ Micah replied, ^b "Stay with me and be my father and priest, and I will give you four ounces of silver a year, along with your clothing and provisions." So the Levite went in ¹¹ and agreed to stay with the man, and the young man became like one of his sons. ¹² Micah consecrated the Levite, and the young man became his priest and lived in Micah's house. ¹³ Then Micah said, "Now I know that the LORD will be good to me, because a Levite has become my priest."

DAN'S INVASION AND IDOLATRY

18 In those days, there was no king in Israel, and the Danite tribe was looking for territory to occupy. Up to that time no territory had been captured by them among the tribes of Israel. ² So the Danites sent out five brave men from all their clans, from Zorah and Eshtaol, to scout out the land and explore it. They told them, "Go and explore the land."

They came to the hill country of Ephraim as far as the home of Micah and spent

the night there. ³ While they were near Micah's home, they recognized the accent of the young Levite. So they went over to him and asked, "Who brought you here? What are you doing in this place? What is keeping you here?" ⁴ He told them, "This is what Micah has done for me: He has hired me, and I became his priest."

⁵ Then they said to him, "Please inquire of God for us to determine if we will have a successful journey."

⁶ The priest told them, "Go in peace. The LORD is watching over the journey you are going on."

⁷ The five men left and came to Laish. They saw that the people who were there were living securely, in the same way as the Sidonians, quiet and unsuspecting. There was nothing lacking^c in the land and no oppressive ruler. They were far from the Sidonians, having no alliance with anyone.^d

⁸ When the men went back to their relatives at Zorah and Eshtaol, their relatives asked them, "What did you find out?"

⁹ They answered, "Come on, let's attack them, for we have seen the land, and it is very good. Why wait? Don't hesitate to go and invade and take possession of the land!" ¹⁰ When you get there, you will come to an unsuspecting people and a spacious land, for God has handed it over to you. It is a place where nothing on earth is lacking." ¹¹ Six hundred Danites departed from Zorah and Eshtaol armed with weapons of war. ¹² They went up and camped at Kiriath-jearim in Judah. This is why the place is still called the Camp of Dan^e today; it is west of Kiriath-jearim. ¹³ From there they traveled to the hill country of Ephraim and arrived at Micah's house.

¹⁴ The five men who had gone to scout out the land of Laish told their brothers, "Did you know that there are an ephod, household gods, and a carved image and a silver idol^f in these houses? Now think about what you should do." ¹⁵ So they detoured there and went to the house of the young Levite at the home of Micah and greeted him. ¹⁶ The six hundred Danite men were standing by the entrance of the city gate, armed with their weapons of war. ¹⁷ Then the five men who had gone to scout out the land went in and took the carved image, the ephod, the household idols, and the silver idol,^g while the priest was standing by the entrance of the

^a17:3 Or *image and a cast image*, also in v. 4 ^b17:10 Lit *replied to him* ^c18:7 Hb *obscure* ^d18:7 MT; some LXX mss, Sym, Old Lat, Syr read *Aram* ^e18:12 Or *called Mahaneh-dan* ^f18:14 Or *image, the cast image* ^g18:17 Or *the cast image*, also in v. 18

city gate with the six hundred men armed with weapons of war.

¹⁸ When they entered Micah's house and took the carved image, the ephod, the household idols, and the silver idol, the priest said to them, "What are you doing?"

¹⁹ They told him, "Be quiet. Keep your mouth shut.^a Come with us and be a father and a priest to us. Is it better for you to be a priest for the house of one person or for you to be a priest for a tribe and family in Israel?" ²⁰ So the priest was pleased and took his ephod, household idols, and carved image, and went with the people. ²¹ They prepared to leave, putting their dependents, livestock, and possessions in front of them.

²² After they were some distance from Micah's house, the men who were in the houses near it were mustered and caught up with the Danites. ²³ They called to the Danites, who turned to face them, and said to Micah, "What's the matter with you that you mustered the men?"

²⁴ He said, "You took the gods I had made and the priest, and went away. What do I have left? How can you say to me, 'What's the matter with you?'"

²⁵ The Danites said to him, "Don't raise your voice against us, or angry men will attack you, and you and your family will lose your lives."

²⁶ The Danites went on their way, and Micah turned to go back home, because he saw that they were stronger than he was.

²⁷ After they had taken the gods Micah had made and the priest that belonged to him, they went to Laish, to a quiet and unsuspecting people. They killed them with their swords and burned the city. ²⁸ There was no one to rescue them because it was far from Sidon and they had no alliance with anyone. It was in a valley that belonged to Beth-rehob. They rebuilt the city and lived in it. ²⁹ They named the city Dan, after the name of their ancestor Dan, who was born to Israel. The city was formerly named Laish.

³⁰ The Danites set up the carved image for themselves. Jonathan son of Gershom, son of Moses,^b and his sons were priests for the Danite tribe until the time of the exile from the land. ³¹ So they set up for themselves Micah's carved image that he had made, and it was there as long as the house of God was in Shiloh.

OUTRAGE IN BENJAMIN

19 In those days, when there was no king in Israel, a Levite staying in a remote part of the hill country of Ephraim acquired a woman from Bethlehem in Judah as his concubine. ² But she was unfaithful to^c him and left him for her father's house in Bethlehem in Judah. She was there for four months. ³ Then her husband got up and followed her to speak kindly to her^d and bring her back. He had his servant with him and a pair of donkeys. So she brought him to her father's house, and when the girl's father saw him, he gladly welcomed him. ⁴ His father-in-law, the girl's father, detained him, and he stayed with him for three days. They ate, drank, and spent the nights there.

⁵ On the fourth day, they got up early in the morning and prepared to go, but the girl's father said to his son-in-law, "Have something to eat to keep up your strength and then you can go." ⁶ So they sat down and the two of them ate and drank together. Then the girl's father said to the man, "Please agree to stay overnight and enjoy yourself." ⁷ The man got up to go, but his father-in-law persuaded him, so he stayed and spent the night there again. ⁸ He got up early in the morning of the fifth day to leave, but the girl's father said to him, "Please keep up your strength." So they waited until late afternoon and the two of them ate. ⁹ The man got up to go with his concubine and his servant, when his father-in-law, the girl's father, said to him, "Look, night is coming. Please spend the night. See, the day is almost over. Spend the night here, enjoy yourself, then you can get up early tomorrow for your journey and go home."

¹⁰ But the man was unwilling to spend the night. He got up, departed, and arrived opposite Jebus (that is, Jerusalem). The man had his two saddled donkeys and his concubine with him. ¹¹ When they were near Jebus and the day was almost gone, the servant said to his master, "Please, why not let us stop at this Jebusite city and spend the night here?"

¹² But his master replied to him, "We will not stop at a foreign city where there are no Israelites. Let's move on to Gibeah." ¹³ "Come on," he said, ^e "let's try to reach one of these places and spend the night in Gibeah or Ramah."

¹⁴ So they continued on their journey, and the

^a18:19 Lit Put your hand on your mouth ^b18:30 Some Hb mss, LXX, Vg; other Hb mss read *Manasseh* ^c19:2 LXX reads *was angry with* ^d19:3 Lit speak to her heart ^e19:13 Lit said to his servant



sun set as they neared Gibeah in Benjamin. ¹⁵ They stopped^a to go in and spend the night in Gibeah. The Levite went in and sat down in the city square, but no one took them into their home to spend the night.

¹⁶ In the evening, an old man came in from his work in the field. He was from the hill country of Ephraim, but he was residing in Gibeah where the people were Benjaminites. ¹⁷ When he looked up and saw the traveler in the city square, the old man asked, "Where are you going, and where do you come from?"

¹⁸ He answered him, "We're traveling from Bethlehem in Judah to the remote hill country of Ephraim, where I am from. I went to Bethlehem in Judah, and now I'm going to the house of the LORD.^b No one has taken me into his home, ¹⁹ although there's straw and feed for the donkeys, and I have bread and wine for me, my concubine, and the servant^c with us. There is nothing we lack."

²⁰ "Welcome!" said the old man. "I'll take care of everything you need. Only don't spend the night in the square." ²¹ So he brought him to his house and fed the donkeys. Then they washed their feet and ate and drank. ²² While they were enjoying themselves, all of a sudden, wicked men of the city surrounded the house and beat on the door. They said to the old man who was the owner of the house, "Bring out the man who came to your house so we can have sex with him!"

²³ The owner of the house went out and said to them, "Please don't do this evil, my brothers. After all, this man has come into my house. Don't commit this horrible outrage. ²⁴ Here, let me bring out my virgin daughter and the man's concubine now. Abuse them and do whatever you want^d to them. But don't commit this outrageous thing against this man."

²⁵ But the men would not listen to him, so the man seized his concubine and took her outside to them. They raped^e her and abused her all night until morning. At daybreak they let her go. ²⁶ Early that morning, the woman made her way back, and as it was getting light, she collapsed at the doorway of the man's house where her master was.

²⁷ When her master got up in the morning, opened the doors of the house, and went out to leave on his journey, there was the woman,

his concubine, collapsed near the doorway of the house with her hands on the threshold. ²⁸ "Get up," he told her. "Let's go." But there was no response. So the man put her on his donkey and set out for home.

²⁹ When he entered his house, he picked up a knife, took hold of his concubine, cut her into twelve pieces, limb by limb, and then sent her throughout the territory of Israel. ³⁰ Everyone who saw it said, "Nothing like this has ever happened or has been seen since the day the Israelites came out of the land of Egypt until now.^f Think it over, discuss it, and speak up!"

WAR AGAINST BENJAMIN

20 All the Israelites from Dan to Beer-sheba and from the land of Gilead came out, and the community assembled as one body before the LORD at Mizpah. ² The leaders of all the people and of all the tribes of Israel presented themselves in the assembly of God's people: four hundred thousand armed^g foot soldiers. ³ The Benjaminites heard that the Israelites had gone up to Mizpah.

The Israelites asked, "Tell us, how did this evil act happen?"

⁴ The Levite, the husband of the murdered woman, answered: "I went to Gibeah in Benjamin with my concubine to spend the night. ⁵ Citizens of Gibeah came to attack me and surrounded the house at night. They intended to kill me, but they raped my concubine, and she died. ⁶ Then I took my concubine and cut her in pieces, and sent her throughout Israel's territory, because they have committed a wicked outrage in Israel. ⁷ Look, all of you are Israelites. Give your judgment and verdict here and now."

⁸ Then all the people stood united and said, "None of us will go to his tent or return to his house. ⁹ Now this is what we will do to Gibeah: we will attack it. By lot^h we will take ten men out of every hundred from all the tribes of Israel, and one hundred out of every thousand, and one thousand out of every ten thousand to get provisions for the troops when they go to Gibeah in Benjamin to punish them for all the outrage they committed in Israel."

¹¹ So all the men of Israel gathered united against the city. ¹² Then the tribes of Israel sent men throughout the tribe of Benjamin, saying,

^a19:15 Lit *stopped there* ^b19:18 LXX reads *to my house* ^c19:19 Some Hb mss, Syr, Tg, Vg; other Hb mss read *servants*

^d19:24 Lit *do what is good in your eyes* ^e19:25 Lit *knew* ^f19:30 LXX reads *until now*. "He commanded the men he sent out, saying, 'You will say this to all the men of Israel: Has anything like this happened since the day the Israelites came out of Egypt until this day?'" ^g20:2 Lit *drawing the sword*



"What is this evil act that has happened among you?" ¹³ Hand over the wicked men in Gibeah so we can put them to death and eradicate evil from Israel." But the Benjaminites would not listen to their fellow Israelites. ¹⁴ Instead, the Benjaminites gathered together from their cities to Gibeah to go out and fight against the Israelites. ¹⁵ On that day the Benjaminites mobilized twenty-six thousand armed men^a from their cities, besides seven hundred fit young men rallied by the inhabitants of Gibeah. ¹⁶ There were seven hundred fit young men who were left-handed among all these troops; all could sling a stone at a hair and not miss.

¹⁷ The Israelites, apart from Benjamin, mobilized four hundred thousand armed men, every one an experienced warrior. ¹⁸ They set out, went to Bethel, and inquired of God. The Israelites asked, "Who is to go first to fight for us against the Benjaminites?"

And the LORD answered, "Judah will be first."

¹⁹ In the morning, the Israelites set out and camped near Gibeah. ²⁰ The men of Israel went out to fight against Benjamin and took their battle positions against Gibeah. ²¹ The Benjaminites came out of Gibeah and slaughtered twenty-two thousand men of Israel on the field that day. ²² But the Israelite troops rallied and again took their battle positions in the same place where they positioned themselves on the first day. ²³ They went up, wept before the LORD until evening, and inquired of him: "Should we again attack our brothers the Benjaminites?"

And the LORD answered: "Fight against them."

²⁴ On the second day the Israelites advanced against the Benjaminites. ²⁵ That same day the Benjaminites came out from Gibeah to meet them and slaughtered an additional eighteen thousand Israelites on the field; all were armed.^b

²⁶ The whole Israelite army went to Bethel where they wept and sat before the LORD. They fasted that day until evening and offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings to the LORD. ²⁷ Then the Israelites inquired of the LORD. In those days, the ark of the covenant of God was there, ²⁸ and Phinehas son of Eleazar, son of Aaron, was serving before it. The Israelites asked: "Should we again fight against our brothers the Benjaminites or should we stop?"

The LORD answered: "Fight, because I will hand them over to you tomorrow." ²⁹ So Israel set up an ambush around Gibeah. ³⁰ On the third day the Israelites fought against the Benjaminites and took their battle positions against Gibeah as before. ³¹ Then the Benjaminites came out against the troops and were drawn away from the city. They began to attack the troops as before, killing about thirty men of Israel on the highways, one of which goes up to Bethel and the other to Gibeah through the open country. ³² The Benjaminites said, "We are defeating them as before."

But the Israelites said, "Let's flee and draw them away from the city to the highways." ³³ So all the men of Israel got up from their places and took their battle positions at Baaltamar, while the Israelites in ambush charged out of their places west of^c Gaba. ³⁴ Then ten thousand fit young men from all Israel made a frontal assault against Gibeah, and the battle was fierce, but the Benjaminites did not know that disaster was about to strike them. ³⁵ The LORD defeated Benjamin in the presence of Israel, and on that day the Israelites slaughtered 25,100 men of Benjamin; all were armed. ³⁶ Then the Benjaminites realized they had been defeated.

The men of Israel had retreated before Benjamin, because they were confident in the ambush they had set against Gibeah. ³⁷ The men in ambush had rushed quickly against Gibeah; they advanced and put the whole city to the sword. ³⁸ The men of Israel had a prearranged signal with the men in ambush: when they sent up a great cloud of smoke from the city, ³⁹ the men of Israel would return to the battle. When Benjamin had begun to strike them down, killing about thirty men of Israel, they said, "They're defeated before us, just as they were in the first battle." ⁴⁰ But when the column of smoke began to go up from the city, Benjamin looked behind them, and the whole city was going up in smoke.^d ⁴¹ Then the men of Israel returned, and the men of Benjamin were terrified when they realized that disaster had struck them. ⁴² They retreated before the men of Israel toward the wilderness, but the battle overtook them, and those who came out of the cities^e slaughtered those between them. ⁴³ They surrounded the Benjaminites,

^a20:15 Lit *men drawing the sword*, also in vv. 17, 46 ^b20:25 Lit *were drawing the sword*, also in v. 35 ^c20:33 LXX, Syr, Vg; MT reads *places in the plain of, or places in the cave of* ^d20:40 Lit *up to the sky* ^e20:42 LXX, Vg read *city*

pursued them, and easily overtook them near Gibeah toward the east. ⁴⁴ There were eighteen thousand men who died from Benjamin; all were warriors. ⁴⁵ Then Benjamin turned and fled toward the wilderness to Rimmon Rock, and Israel killed five thousand men on the highways. They overtook them at Gidom and struck two thousand more dead.

⁴⁶ All the Benjaminites who died that day were twenty-five thousand armed men; all were warriors. ⁴⁷ But six hundred men escaped into the wilderness to Rimmon Rock and stayed there four months. ⁴⁸ The men of Israel turned back against the other Benjaminites and killed them with their swords — the entire city, the animals, and everything that remained. They also burned all the cities that remained.

BRIDES FOR BENJAMIN

21 The men of Israel had sworn an oath at Mizpah: “None of us will give his daughter to a Benjaminite in marriage.” ² So the people went to Bethel and sat there before God until evening. They wept loudly and bitterly, ³ and cried out, “Why, LORD God of Israel, has it occurred^a that one tribe is missing in Israel today?” ⁴ The next day the people got up early, built an altar there, and offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. ⁵ The Israelites asked, “Who of all the tribes of Israel didn’t come to the LORD with the assembly?” For a great oath had been taken that anyone who had not come to the LORD at Mizpah would certainly be put to death.

⁶ But the Israelites had compassion on their brothers, the Benjaminites, and said, “Today a tribe has been cut off from Israel. ⁷ What should we do about wives for the survivors? We’ve sworn to the LORD not to give them any of our daughters as wives.” ⁸ They asked, “Which city among the tribes of Israel didn’t come to the LORD at Mizpah?” It turned out that no one from Jabesh-gilead had come to the camp and the assembly. ⁹ For when the roll was called, no men were there from the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead.

¹⁰ The congregation sent twelve thousand brave warriors^b there and commanded them: “Go and kill the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead with the sword, including women and

dependents. ¹¹ This is what you should do: Completely destroy every male, as well as every woman who has gone to bed with a man.” ¹² They found among the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead four hundred young virgins, who had not gone to bed with a man, and they brought them to the camp at Shiloh in the land of Canaan.

¹³ The whole congregation sent a message of peace to the Benjaminites who were at Rimmon Rock. ¹⁴ Benjamin returned at that time, and Israel gave them the women they had kept alive from Jabesh-gilead. But there were not enough for them.

¹⁵ The people had compassion on Benjamin, because the LORD had made this gap in the tribes of Israel. ¹⁶ The elders of the congregation said, “What should we do about wives for those who are left, since the women of Benjamin have been destroyed?” ¹⁷ They said, “There must be heirs for the survivors of Benjamin, so that a tribe of Israel will not be wiped out. ¹⁸ But we can’t give them our daughters as wives.” For the Israelites had sworn, “Anyone who gives a wife to a Benjaminite is cursed.” ¹⁹ They also said, “Look, there’s an annual festival to the LORD in Shiloh, which is north of Bethel, east of the highway that goes up from Bethel to Shechem, and south of Lebonah.”

²⁰ Then they commanded the Benjaminites: “Go and hide in the vineyards. ²¹ Watch, and when you see the young women of Shiloh come out to perform the dances, each of you leave the vineyards and catch a wife for yourself from the young women of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin. ²² When their fathers or brothers come to us and protest, we will tell them, ‘Show favor to them, since we did not get enough wives for each of them in the battle. You didn’t actually give the women to them, so^c you are not guilty of breaking your oath.’”

²³ The Benjaminites did this and took the number of women they needed from the dancers they caught. They went back to their own inheritance, rebuilt their cities, and lived in them. ²⁴ At that time, each of the Israelites returned from there to his own tribe and family. Each returned from there to his own inheritance.

²⁵ In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did whatever seemed right to him.

^a21:3 Lit has this occurred in Israel ^b21:10 Lit twelve thousand of their sons of valor ^c21:22 Lit at this time

RUTH

NAOMI'S FAMILY IN MOAB

1 During the time^a of the judges, there was a famine in the land. A man left Bethlehem^b in Judah with his wife and two sons to stay in the territory of Moab for a while. ² The man's name was Elimelech,^c and his wife's name was Naomi.^d The names of his two sons were Mahlon^e and Chilion.^f They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They entered the fields of Moab and settled there. ³ Naomi's husband Elimelech died, and she was left with her two sons. ⁴ Her sons took Moabite women as their wives: one was named Orpah and the second was named Ruth. After they lived in Moab about ten years, ⁵ both Mahlon and Chilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two children and without her husband.

RUTH'S LOYALTY TO NAOMI

⁶ She and her daughters-in-law set out to return from the territory of Moab, because she had heard in Moab that the LORD had paid attention to his people's need by providing them food. ⁷ She left the place where she had been living, accompanied by her two daughters-in-law, and traveled along the road leading back to the land of Judah.

⁸ Naomi said to them, "Each of you go back to your mother's home. May the LORD show kindness to you as you have shown to the dead and to me. ⁹ May the LORD grant each of you rest in the house of a new husband." She kissed them, and they wept loudly.

¹⁰ They said to her, "We insist on returning with you to your people."

¹¹ But Naomi replied, "Return home, my daughters. Why do you want to go with me? Am I able to have any more sons who could become your husbands? ¹² Return home, my daughters. Go on, for I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me to have a husband tonight and to bear sons, ¹³ would you be willing to wait for them to grow up? Would you restrain yourselves from remarrying?^g ¹⁴ No, my daughters, my life is much too bitter for you to share,^h because the LORD's hand has turned against

me." ¹⁴ Again they wept loudly, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. ¹⁵ Naomi said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods. Follow your sister-in-law."

¹⁶ But Ruth replied:

Don't plead with me to abandon you
or to return and not follow you.
For wherever you go, I will go,
and wherever you live, I will live;
your people will be my people,
and your God will be my God.

¹⁷ Where you die, I will die,
and there I will be buried.
May the LORD punish me,ⁱ
and do so severely,
if anything but death separates you
and me.

¹⁸ When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped talking to her.

¹⁹ The two of them traveled until they came to Bethlehem. When they entered Bethlehem, the whole town was excited about their arrival^j and the local women exclaimed, "Can this be Naomi?"

²⁰ "Don't call me Naomi. Call me Mara,"^k she answered, "for the Almighty has made me very bitter. ²¹ I went away full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has opposed^l me, and the Almighty has afflicted me?"

²² So Naomi came back from the territory of Moab with her daughter-in-law Ruth the Moabitess. They arrived in Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

RUTH AND BOAZ MEET

2 Now Naomi had a relative on her husband's side. He was a prominent man of noble character from Elimelech's family. His name was Boaz.

² Ruth the Moabitess asked Naomi, "Will you let me go into the fields and gather fallen grain behind someone with whom I find favor?"

Naomi answered her, "Go ahead, my daughter." ³ So Ruth left and entered the field to gather grain behind the harvesters. She happened to

^a1:1 Lit *In the days of the judging* ^b1:1 = House of Bread ^c1:2 = My God Is King ^d1:2 = Pleasant ^e1:2 = Sickly ^f1:2 = Weak or Failing ^g1:13 Lit *marrying a man* ^h1:13 Lit *daughters, for more bitter to me than you* ⁱ1:17 A solemn oath formula; 15m 3:17; 25m 3:9,35; 1Kg 2:23; 2Kg 6:31 ^j1:19 Lit *excited because of them* ^k1:20 = Bitter ^l1:21 LXX, Syr, Vg read *has humiliated*

be in the portion of the field belonging to Boaz, who was from Elimelech's family.

⁴ Later, when Boaz arrived from Bethlehem, he said to the harvesters, "The LORD be with you."

"The LORD bless you," they replied.

⁵ Boaz asked his servant who was in charge of the harvesters, "Whose young woman is this?"

⁶ The servant answered, "She is the young Moabite woman who returned with Naomi from the territory of Moab. ⁷ She asked, 'Will you let me gather fallen grain among the bundles behind the harvesters?' She came and has been on her feet since early morning, except that she rested a little in the shelter."^A

⁸ Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Listen, my daughter. ⁸ Don't go and gather grain in another field, and don't leave this one, but stay here close to my female servants. ⁹ See which field they are harvesting, and follow them. Haven't I ordered the young men not to touch you?^C When you are thirsty, go and drink from the jars the young men have filled."

¹⁰ She fell facedown, bowed to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor with you, so that you notice me, although I am a foreigner?"

¹¹ Boaz answered her, "Everything you have done for your mother-in-law since your husband's death has been fully reported to me: how you left your father and mother and your native land, and how you came to a people you didn't previously know. ¹² May the LORD reward you for what you have done, and may you receive a full reward from the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge."

¹³ "My lord," she said, "I have found favor with you, for you have comforted and encouraged^O your servant, although I am not like one of your female servants."

¹⁴ At mealtime Boaz told her, "Come over here and have some bread and dip it in the vinegar sauce." So she sat beside the harvesters, and he offered her roasted grain. She ate and was satisfied and had some left over.

¹⁵ When she got up to gather grain, Boaz ordered his young men, "Let her even gather grain among the bundles, and don't humiliate her. ¹⁶ Pull out some stalks from the bundles for her and leave them for her to gather. Don't

rebuke her."¹⁷ So Ruth gathered grain in the field until evening. She beat out what she had gathered, and it was about twenty-six quarts^E of barley. ¹⁸ She picked up the grain and went into the town, where her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. She brought out what she had left over from her meal and gave it to her.

¹⁹ Her mother-in-law said to her, "Where did you gather barley today, and where did you work? May the LORD bless the man who noticed you."

Ruth told her mother-in-law whom she had worked with and said, "The name of the man I worked with today is Boaz."

²⁰ Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "May the LORD bless him because he has not abandoned his kindness to the living or the dead." Naomi continued, "The man is a close relative. He is one of our family redeemers."

²¹ Ruth the Moabitess said, "He also told me, 'Stay with my young men until they have finished all of my harvest.'"

²² So Naomi said to her daughter-in-law Ruth, "My daughter, it is good for you to work^F with his female servants, so that nothing will happen to you in another field." ²³ Ruth stayed close to Boaz's female servants and gathered grain until the barley and the wheat harvests were finished. And she lived with^G her mother-in-law.

RUTH'S APPEAL TO BOAZ

3 Ruth's mother-in-law Naomi said to her, "My daughter, shouldn't I find rest for you, so that you will be taken care of? ² Now isn't Boaz our relative? Haven't you been working with his female servants? This evening he will be winnowing barley on the threshing floor. ³ Wash, put on perfumed oil, and wear your best clothes. Go down to the threshing floor, but don't let the man know you are there until he has finished eating and drinking. ⁴ When he lies down, notice the place where he's lying, go in and uncover his feet, and lie down. Then he will explain to you what you should do."

⁵ So Ruth said to her, "I will do everything you say."^H ⁶ She went down to the threshing floor and did everything her mother-in-law had charged her to do. ⁷ After Boaz ate, drank, and was in good spirits,^I he went to lie down

^A2:7 LXX reads *morning, and until evening she has not rested in the field a little*; Vg reads *morning until now and she did not return to the house*; Hb uncertain ^B2:8 Lit "Haven't you heard, my daughter?" ^C2:9 Either sexual or physical harassment ^D2:13 Lit and spoken to the heart of ^E2:17 Lit about an ephah ^F2:22 Lit go out ^G2:23 Some Hb mss, Vg read *she returned to* ^H3:5 Alt Hb tradition reads *say to me* ^I3:7 Lit and his heart was glad

at the end of the pile of barley, and she came secretly, uncovered his feet, and lay down.

⁸ At midnight, Boaz was startled, turned over, and there lying at his feet was a woman! ⁹ So he asked, "Who are you?"

"I am Ruth, your servant," she replied. "Take me under your wing,^a for you are a family redeemer."

¹⁰ Then he said, "May the LORD bless you, my daughter. You have shown more kindness now than before,^b because you have not pursued younger men, whether rich or poor. ¹¹ Now don't be afraid, my daughter. I will do for you whatever you say,^c since all the people in my town^d know that you are a woman of noble character. ¹² Yes, it is true that I am a family redeemer, but there is a redeemer closer than I am. ¹³ Stay here tonight, and in the morning, if he wants to redeem you, that's good. Let him redeem you. But if he doesn't want to redeem you, as the LORD lives, I will. Now lie down until morning."

¹⁴ So she lay down at his feet until morning but got up while it was still dark.^e Then Boaz said, "Don't let it be known that a^f woman came to the threshing floor." ¹⁵ And he told Ruth, "Bring the shawl you're wearing and hold it out." When she held it out, he shoveled six measures of barley into her shawl, and she^g went into the town.

¹⁶ She went to her mother-in-law, Naomi, who asked her, "What happened, my daughter?"

Then Ruth told her everything the man had done for her. ¹⁷ She said, "He gave me these six measures of barley, because he said, 'Don't go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed.'"

¹⁸ Naomi said, "My daughter, wait until you find out how things go, for he won't rest unless he resolves this today."

RUTH AND BOAZ MARRY

4 Boaz went to the gate of the town and sat down there. Soon the family redeemer Boaz had spoken about came by. Boaz said, "Come over here¹ and sit down." So he went over and sat down. ² Then Boaz took ten men of the town's elders and said, "Sit here." And they sat down. ³ He said to the redeemer, "Naomi, who has returned from the territory of Moab,

is selling the portion of the field that belonged to our brother Elimelech. ⁴ I thought I should inform you:^k Buy it back in the presence of those seated here and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you want to redeem it, do it. But if you do^l not want to redeem it, tell me so that I will know, because there isn't anyone other than you to redeem it, and I am next after you."

"I want to redeem it," he answered.

⁵ Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the field from Naomi, you will acquire^m Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the deceased man, to perpetuate the man's name on his property."ⁿ

⁶ The redeemer replied, "I can't redeem it myself, or I will ruin my own inheritance. Take my right of redemption, because I can't redeem it."

⁷ At an earlier period in Israel, a man removed his sandal and gave it to the other party in order to make any matter legally binding concerning the right of redemption or the exchange of property. This was the method of legally binding a transaction in Israel.

⁸ So the redeemer removed his sandal and said to Boaz, "Buy back the property yourself."

⁹ Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses today that I am buying from Naomi everything that belonged to Elimelech, Chilion, and Mahlon. ¹⁰ I have also acquired Ruth the Moabitess, Mahlon's widow, as my wife, to perpetuate the deceased man's name on his property, so that his name will not disappear among his relatives or from the gate of his hometown. You are witnesses today."

¹¹ All the people who were at the city gate, including the elders, said, "We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman who is entering your house like Rachel and Leah, who together built the house of Israel. May you be powerful in Ephrathah and your name well known in Bethlehem. ¹² May your house become like the house of Perez, the son Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring the LORD will give you by this young woman."

¹³ Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. He slept with her, and the LORD granted conception to her, and she gave birth to a son.

¹⁴ The women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the

^a3:9 Or "Spread the edge of your garment"; lit "Spread the wing of your garment"; Ru 2:12 ^b3:10 Lit kindness at the last than at the first ^c3:11 Some Hb mss, Orig, Syr, Tg, Vg read say to me ^d3:11 Lit all the gate of my people ^e3:14 Lit up before a man could recognize his companion ^f3:14 LXX; MT reads the ^g3:15 Some Hb mss, Aramaic, Syr, Vg; other Hb mss read he ^h3:16 Lit "Who are you" ⁱ3:17 Alt Hb tradition, LXX, Syr, Tg read said to me ^j4:1 Or said, "Come here Mr. So-and-so" ^k4:4 Lit should uncover your ear, saying ^l4:4 Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Vg; other Hb mss read if he does ^m4:5 Lit Naomi and from ⁿ4:5 Alt Hb tradition reads Naomi, I will have already acquired from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead man, the privilege of raising up the name of the dead man on his property



LORD, who has not left you without a family redeemer today. May his name become well known in Israel. ¹⁵ He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. Indeed, your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.” ¹⁶ Naomi took the child, placed him on her lap, and became his nanny. ¹⁷ The neighbor women said, “A son has been born to Naomi,” and they named him Obed. ^a He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

DAVID’S GENEALOGY FROM JUDAH’S SON

¹⁸ Now these are the family records of Perez:

- Perez fathered Hezron,
¹⁹ Hezron fathered Ram, ^b
Ram fathered Amminadab,
²⁰ Amminadab fathered Nahshon,
Nahshon fathered Salmon,
²¹ Salmon fathered Boaz,
Boaz fathered Obed,
²² Obed fathered Jesse,
and Jesse fathered David.

^a4:17 = Servant ^b4:19 LXX reads *Aram*; Mt 1:3-4



1 SAMUEL

HANNAH'S VOW

1 There was a man from Ramathaim-zophim in^a the hill country of Ephraim. His name was Elkanah son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. ² He had two wives, the first named Hannah and the second Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah was childless. ³ This man would go up from his town every year to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD of Armies at Shiloh, where Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were the LORD's priests.

⁴ Whenever Elkanah offered a sacrifice, he always gave portions of the meat to his wife Peninnah and to each of her sons and daughters. ⁵ But he gave a double^b portion to Hannah, for he loved her even though the LORD had kept her from conceiving. ⁶ Her rival would taunt her severely just to provoke her, because the LORD had kept Hannah from conceiving. ⁷ Year after year, when she went up to the LORD's house, her rival taunted her in this way. Hannah would weep and would not eat. ⁸ "Hannah, why are you crying?" her husband Elkanah would ask. "Why won't you eat? Why are you troubled? Am I not better to you than ten sons?"

⁹ On one occasion, Hannah got up after they ate and drank at Shiloh. ^c The priest Eli was sitting on a chair by the doorpost of the LORD's temple. ¹⁰ Deeply hurt, Hannah prayed to the LORD and wept with many tears. ¹¹ Making a vow, she pleaded, "LORD of Armies, if you will take notice of your servant's affliction, remember and not forget me, and give your servant a son, ^d I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and his hair will never be cut."^e

¹² While she continued praying in the LORD's presence, Eli watched her mouth. ¹³ Hannah was praying silently, ^f and though her lips were moving, her voice could not be heard. Eli thought she was drunk ¹⁴ and said to her, "How long are you going to be drunk? Get rid of your wine!"

¹⁵ "No, my lord," Hannah replied. "I am a woman with a broken heart. I haven't had any wine or beer; I've been pouring out my heart before the LORD. ¹⁶ Don't think of me as a wicked woman; I've been praying from the depth of my anguish and resentment."

¹⁷ Eli responded, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant the request you've made of him."

¹⁸ "May your servant find favor with you," she replied. Then Hannah went on her way; she ate and no longer looked despondent.^g

SAMUEL'S BIRTH AND DEDICATION

¹⁹ The next morning Elkanah and Hannah got up early to worship before the LORD. Afterward, they returned home to Ramah. Then Elkanah was intimate with his wife Hannah, and the LORD remembered her. ²⁰ After some time, ^h Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, ⁱ because she said, "I requested him from the LORD."

²¹ When Elkanah and all his household went up to make the annual sacrifice and his vow offering to the LORD, ²² Hannah did not go and explained to her husband, "After the child is weaned, I'll take him to appear in the LORD's presence and to stay there permanently."

²³ Her husband Elkanah replied, "Do what you think is best, ^j and stay here until you've weaned him. May the LORD confirm your^k word." So Hannah stayed there and nursed her son until she weaned him. ²⁴ When she had weaned him, she took him with her to Shiloh, as well as a three-year-old bull, ^l half a bushel^m of flour, and a clay jar of wine. Though the boy was still young, ⁿ she took him to the LORD's house at Shiloh. ²⁵ Then they slaughtered the bull and brought the boy to Eli.

²⁶ "Please, my lord," she said, "as surely as you live, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you praying to the LORD. ²⁷ I prayed for this boy, and since the LORD gave me what I asked him for, ²⁸ I now give the boy to the

^a1:1 Or from Ramathaim, a Zuphite from ^b1:5 Or gave only one; Hb obscure ^c1:9 LXX adds and presented herself before the LORD ^d1:11 Lit a seed of men ^e1:11 Lit and no razor will go up on his head ^f1:13 Lit praying to her heart ^g1:18 Lit and her face was not to her again ^h1:20 Lit In the turning of the days ⁱ1:20 In Hb, the name Samuel sounds like the phrase "requested from God." ^j1:23 Lit what is good in your eyes ^k1:23 DSS, LXX, Syr; MT reads his ^l1:24 DSS, LXX, Syr; MT reads Shiloh with three bulls ^m1:24 Lit bull and an ephah ⁿ1:24 Lit And the youth was a youth

LORD. For as long as he lives, he is given to the LORD." Then he^a worshiped the LORD there.^b

HANNAH'S TRIUMPHANT PRAYER

- 2** Hannah prayed:
 My heart rejoices in the LORD;
 my horn is lifted up by the LORD.
 My mouth boasts over my enemies,
 because I rejoice in your salvation.
- 2** There is no one holy like the LORD.
 There is no one besides you!
 And there is no rock like our God.
- 3** Do not boast so proudly,
 or let arrogant words come out of
 your mouth,
 for the LORD is a God of knowledge,
 and actions are weighed by him.
- 4** The bows of the warriors are broken,
 but the feeble are clothed
 with strength.
- 5** Those who are full hire themselves out
 for food,
 but those who are starving hunger
 no more.
 The woman who is childless gives birth
 to seven,
 but the woman with many sons
 pines away.
- 6** The LORD brings death and gives life;
 he sends some down to Sheol,
 and he raises others up.
- 7** The LORD brings poverty and gives
 wealth;
 he humbles and he exalts.
- 8** He raises the poor from the dust
 and lifts the needy from the trash heap.
 He seats them with noblemen
 and gives them a throne of honor.^c
 For the foundations of the earth are the
 LORD's;
 he has set the world on them.
- 9** He guards the steps^d
 of his faithful ones,
 but the wicked perish in darkness,
 for a person does not prevail by
 his own strength.
- 10** Those who oppose the LORD
 will be shattered;^e
 he will thunder in the heavens
 against them.
 The LORD will judge the ends
 of the earth.

He will give power to his king;
 he will lift up the horn of his anointed.^f

¹¹ Elkanah went home to Ramah, but the boy served the LORD in the presence of the priest Eli.

ELI'S FAMILY JUDGED

¹² Eli's sons were wicked men; they did not respect the LORD¹³ or the priests' share of the sacrifices from the people. When anyone offered a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come with a three-pronged meat fork while the meat was boiling¹⁴ and plunge it into the container, kettle, cauldron, or cooking pot. The priest would claim for himself whatever the meat fork brought up. This is the way they treated all the Israelites who came there to Shiloh. ¹⁵ Even before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and say to the one who was sacrificing, "Give the priest some meat to roast, because he won't accept boiled meat from you — only raw." ¹⁶ If that person said to him, "The fat must be burned first; then you can take whatever you want for yourself," the servant would reply, "No, I insist that you hand it over right now. If you don't, I'll take it by force!" ¹⁷ So the servants' sin was very severe in the presence of the LORD, because the men treated the LORD's offering with contempt.

¹⁸ Samuel served in the LORD's presence — this mere boy was dressed in the linen ephod. ¹⁹ Each year his mother made him a little robe and took it to him when she went with her husband to offer the annual sacrifice. ²⁰ Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife: "May the LORD give you children by this woman in place of the one she^g has given to the LORD." Then they would go home.

²¹ The LORD paid attention to Hannah's need, and she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile, the boy Samuel grew up in the presence of the LORD.

²² Now Eli was very old. He heard about everything his sons were doing to all Israel and how they were sleeping with the women who served at the entrance to the tent of meeting. ²³ He said to them, "Why are you doing these things? I have heard about your evil actions from all these people. ²⁴ No, my sons, the news

^a1:28 DSS read *she*; some Hb mss, Syr, Vg read *they* ^b1:28 LXX reads *Then she left him there before the LORD* ^c2:8 DSS, LXX add *He gives the vow of the one who makes a vow and he blesses the years of the just.* ^d2:9 Lit *feet* ^e2:10 DSS, LXX read *The LORD shatters those who dispute with him* ^f2:10 Or *Messiah* ^g2:20 DSS; MT reads *he*

I hear the LORD's people spreading is not good.
²⁵ If one person sins against another, God can intercede for him, but if a person sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?" But they would not listen to their father, since the LORD intended to kill them. ²⁶ By contrast, the boy Samuel grew in stature and in favor with the LORD and with people.

²⁷ A man of God came to Eli and said to him, "This is what the LORD says: 'Didn't I reveal myself to your forefather's family^a when they were in Egypt and belonged to Pharaoh's palace? ²⁸ Out of all the tribes of Israel, I chose your house^b to be my priests, to offer sacrifices on my altar, to burn incense, and to wear an ephod in my presence. I also gave your forefather's family all the Israelite fire offerings. ²⁹ Why, then, do all of you despise my sacrifices and offerings that I require at the place of worship? You have honored your sons more than me, by making yourselves fat with the best part of all of the offerings of my people Israel.'

³⁰ "Therefore, this is the declaration of the LORD, the God of Israel: 'I did say that your family and your forefather's family would walk before me forever. But now,' this is the LORD's declaration, 'no longer! For those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me will be disgraced. ³¹ Look, the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your forefather's house, so that none in your family will reach old age. ³² You will see distress in the place of worship, in spite of all that is good in Israel, and no one in your family will ever again reach old age. ³³ Any man from your family I do not cut off from my altar will bring grief^c and sadness to you. All your descendants will die violently.^{d,e} ³⁴ This will be the sign that will come to you concerning your two sons Hophni and Phinehas: both of them will die on the same day.

³⁵ "Then I will raise up a faithful priest for myself. He will do whatever is in my heart and mind. I will establish a lasting dynasty for him, and he will walk before my anointed one for all time. ³⁶ Anyone who is left in your family will come and bow down to him for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread. He will say: Please appoint me to some priestly office so I can have a piece of bread to eat.'"

SAMUEL'S CALL

3 The boy Samuel served the LORD in Eli's presence. In those days the word of the LORD was rare and prophetic visions were not widespread.

² One day Eli, whose eyesight was failing, was lying in his usual place. ³ Before the lamp of God had gone out, Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was located.

⁴ Then the LORD called Samuel,^f and he answered, "Here I am." ⁵ He ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

"I didn't call," Eli replied. "Go back and lie down." So he went and lay down.

⁶ Once again the LORD called, "Samuel!"

Samuel got up, went to Eli, and said, "Here I am; you called me."

"I didn't call, my son," he replied. "Go back and lie down."

⁷ Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, because the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. ⁸ Once again, for the third time, the LORD called Samuel. He got up, went to Eli, and said, "Here I am; you called me."

Then Eli understood that the LORD was calling the boy. ⁹ He told Samuel, "Go and lie down. If he calls you, say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.' " So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

¹⁰ The LORD came, stood there, and called as before, "Samuel, Samuel!"

Samuel responded, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

¹¹ The LORD said to Samuel, "I am about to do something in Israel that everyone who hears about it will shudder. ¹² On that day I will carry out against Eli everything I said about his family, from beginning to end. ¹³ I told him that I am going to judge his family forever because of the iniquity he knows about: his sons are cursing God,^h and he has not stopped them. ¹⁴ Therefore, I have sworn to Eli's family: The iniquity of Eli's family will never be wiped out by either sacrifice or offering."

¹⁵ Samuel lay down until the morning; then he opened the doors of the LORD's house. He was afraid to tell Eli the vision, ¹⁶ but Eli called him and said, "Samuel, my son."

"Here I am," answered Samuel.

¹⁷ "What was the message he gave you?" Eli asked. "Don't hide it from me. May God punish

^a2:27 Lit the palace of your father ^b2:28 Lit selected him ^c2:33 Lit grief to your eyes ^d2:33 DSS, LXX read die by the sword of men ^e2:33 Lit die men ^f3:4 DSS, LXX read called, "Samuel! Samuel!" ^g3:11 Lit about it, his two ears will tingle; Hb obscure ^h3:13 LXX, Old Lat; MT reads them

you and do so severely if you hide anything from me that he told you.”¹⁸ So Samuel told him everything and did not hide anything from him. Eli responded, “He is the LORD. Let him do what he thinks is good.”^a

¹⁹ Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and he fulfilled everything Samuel prophesied.^b ²⁰ All Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was a confirmed prophet of the LORD. ²¹ The LORD continued to appear in Shiloh, because there he revealed himself to Samuel by his word.¹ And Samuel’s words came to all Israel.

THE ARK CAPTURED BY THE PHILISTINES

Israel went out to meet the Philistines in battle and^c camped at Ebenezer while the Philistines camped at Aphek. ² The Philistines lined up in battle formation against Israel, and as the battle intensified, Israel was defeated by the Philistines, who struck down about four thousand men on the battlefield.

³ When the troops returned to the camp, the elders of Israel asked, “Why did the LORD defeat us today before the Philistines? Let’s bring the ark of the LORD’s covenant from Shiloh. Then it^d will go with us and save us from our enemies.”⁴ So the people sent men to Shiloh to bring back the ark of the covenant of the LORD of Armies, who is enthroned between the cherubim. Eli’s two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.⁵ When the ark of the covenant of the LORD entered the camp, all the Israelites raised such a loud shout that the ground shook.

⁶ The Philistines heard the sound of the war cry and asked, “What’s this loud shout in the Hebrews’ camp?” When the Philistines discovered that the ark of the LORD had entered the camp,⁷ they panicked. “A god has entered their camp!” they said. “Woe to us, nothing like this has happened before.”⁸ Woe to us, who will rescue us from these magnificent gods? These are the gods that slaughtered the Egyptians with all kinds of plagues in the wilderness.⁹ Show some courage and be men, Philistines! Otherwise, you’ll serve the Hebrews just as they served you. Now be men and fight!”

¹⁰ So the Philistines fought, and Israel was defeated, and each man fled to his tent. The

slaughter was severe — thirty thousand of the Israelite foot soldiers fell. ¹¹ The ark of God was captured, and Eli’s two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

ELI’S DEATH AND ICHABOD’S BIRTH

¹² That same day, a Benjaminite man ran from the battle and came to Shiloh. His clothes were torn, and there was dirt on his head. ¹³ When he arrived, there was Eli sitting on his chair beside the road watching, because he was anxious about the ark of God. When the man entered the city to give a report, the entire city cried out.

¹⁴ Eli heard the outcry and asked, “Why this commotion?” The man quickly came and reported to Eli. ¹⁵ At that time Eli was ninety-eight years old, and his eyes didn’t move^e because he couldn’t see.

¹⁶ The man said to Eli, “I’m the one who came from the battle.”^f I fled from there today.”

“What happened, my son?” Eli asked.

¹⁷ The messenger answered, “Israel has fled from the Philistines, and also there was a great slaughter among the people. Your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are both dead, and the ark of God has been captured.”¹⁸ When he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell backward off the chair by the city gate, and since he was old and heavy, his neck broke and he died. Eli had judged Israel forty years.

¹⁹ Eli’s daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant and about to give birth. When she heard the news about the capture of God’s ark and the deaths of her father-in-law and her husband, she collapsed and gave birth because her labor pains came on her. ²⁰ As she was dying,^g the women taking care of her said, “Don’t be afraid. You’ve given birth to a son!” But she did not respond or pay attention. ²¹ She named the boy Ichabod,^h saying, “The glory has departed from Israel,” referring to the capture of the ark of God and to the deaths of her father-in-law and her husband. ²² “The glory has departed from Israel,” she said, “because the ark of God has been captured.”

THE ARK IN PHILISTINE HANDS

5 After the Philistines had captured the ark of God, they took it from Ebenezer to Ashdod,² brought it into the temple of Dagonⁱ and placed it next to his statue.³ When

^a3:18 Lit what is good in his eyes ^b3:19 Lit he let none of his words fall to the ground ^c4:1 LXX reads In those days the Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel, and Israel went out to engage them in battle. They ^d4:3 Or he ^e4:7 Lit yesterday or the day before ^f4:15 Lit his eyes stood; 1Kg 14:4 ^g4:16 LXX reads camp ^h4:20 LXX reads And in her time of delivery, she was about to die ⁱ4:21 = Where Is Glory? ^j5:2 A Philistine god of the sea, grain, or storm ^k5:2 Lit to Dagon

the people of Ashdod got up early the next morning, there was Dagon, fallen with his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD. So they took Dagon and returned him to his place.⁴ But when they got up early the next morning, there was Dagon, fallen with his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD. This time, Dagon's head and both of his hands were broken off and lying on the threshold. Only Dagon's torso remained.⁵ That is why, still today, the priests of Dagon and everyone who enters the temple of Dagon in Ashdod do not step on Dagon's threshold.

⁶The LORD's hand was heavy on the people of Ashdod. He terrified the people of Ashdod and its territory and afflicted them with tumors.^{8,9} When the people of Ashdod saw what was happening, they said, "The ark of Israel's God must not stay here with us, because his hand is strongly against us and our god Dagon."⁸ So they called all the Philistine rulers together and asked, "What should we do with the ark of Israel's God?"

"The ark of Israel's God should be moved to Gath," they replied. So they moved the ark of Israel's God.⁹ After they had moved it, the LORD's hand was against the city of Gath, causing a great panic. He afflicted the people of the city, from the youngest to the oldest, with an outbreak of tumors.

¹⁰The people of Gath then sent the ark of God to Ekron, but when it got there, the Ekronites cried out, "They've moved the ark of Israel's God to us to kill us and our people!"¹⁰

¹¹The Ekronites called all the Philistine rulers together. They said, "Send the ark of Israel's God away. Let it return to its place so it won't kill us and our people!"¹¹ For the fear of death pervaded the city; God's hand was oppressing them. ¹²Those who did not die were afflicted with tumors, and the outcry of the city went up to heaven.

THE RETURN OF THE ARK

6 When the ark of the LORD had been in Philistine territory for seven months,² the Philistines summoned the priests and the diviners and pleaded, "What should we do with the ark of the LORD? Tell us how we can send it back to its place."

³They replied, "If you send the ark of Israel's God away, do not send it without an offering. Send back a guilt offering to him, and you will be healed. Then the reason his hand hasn't been removed from you will be revealed."³

⁴They asked, "What guilt offering should we send back to him?"

And they answered, "Five gold tumors and five gold mice corresponding to the number of Philistine rulers, since there was one plague for both you⁶ and your rulers. ⁵Make images of your tumors and of your mice that are destroying the land. Give glory to Israel's God, and perhaps he will stop oppressing you,"⁴ your gods, and your land. ⁶Why harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened theirs? When he afflicted them, didn't they send Israel away, and Israel left?

⁷"Now then, prepare one new cart and two milk cows that have never been yoked. Hitch the cows to the cart, but take their calves away and pen them up. ⁸Take the ark of the LORD, place it on the cart, and put the gold objects that you're sending him as a guilt offering in a box beside the ark. Send it off and let it go its way. ⁹Then watch: If it goes up the road to its homeland toward Beth-shemesh, it is the LORD who has made this terrible trouble for us. However, if it doesn't, we will know that it was not his hand that punished us — it was just something that happened to us by chance."

¹⁰The men did this: They took two milk cows, hitched them to the cart, and confined their calves in the pen. ¹¹Then they put the ark of the LORD on the cart, along with the box containing the gold mice and the images of their tumors. ¹²The cows went straight up the road to Beth-shemesh. They stayed on that one highway, lowing as they went; they never strayed to the right or to the left. The Philistine rulers were walking behind them to the territory of Beth-shemesh.

¹³The people of Beth-shemesh were harvesting wheat in the valley, and when they looked up and saw the ark, they were overjoyed to see it. ¹⁴The cart came to the field of Joshua of Beth-shemesh and stopped there near a large rock. The people of the city chopped up the cart and offered the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD. ¹⁵The Levites removed the ark of

⁴5:4 LXX; Hb reads *Only Dagon remained on it* ⁵5:6 LXX adds *He brought up mice against them, and they swarmed in their ships. Then mice went up into the land and there was a mortal panic in the city.* ⁶5:6 Perhaps bubonic plague ⁷5:10 DSS, LXX read *"Why have you moved . . . people?"* ⁸5:11 DSS, LXX read *"Why don't you return it to . . . people?"* ⁹6:3 DSS, LXX read *healed, and an atonement shall be made for you. Shouldn't his hand be removed from you?"* ¹⁰6:4 Some Hb mss, LXX; other Hb mss read *them* ¹¹6:5 Lit *will lighten the heaviness of his hand from you*

the LORD, along with the box containing the gold objects, and placed them on the large rock. That day the people of Beth-shemesh offered burnt offerings and made sacrifices to the LORD. ¹⁶ When the five Philistine rulers observed this, they returned to Ekron that same day.

¹⁷ As a guilt offering to the LORD, the Philistines had sent back one gold tumor for each city: Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron. ¹⁸ The number of gold mice also corresponded to the number of Philistine cities of the five rulers, the fortified cities and the outlying villages. The large rock ^a on which the ark of the LORD was placed is still in the field of Joshua of Beth-shemesh today.

¹⁹ God struck down the people of Beth-shemesh because they looked inside the ark of the LORD. ^b He struck down seventy persons. ^c The people mourned because the LORD struck them with a great slaughter. ²⁰ The people of Beth-shemesh asked, "Who is able to stand in the presence of the LORD this holy God? To whom should the ark go from here?"

²¹ They sent messengers to the residents of Kiriath-jearim, saying, "The Philistines have returned the ark of the LORD. Come down and get it."^d

7 So the people of Kiriath-jearim came for the ark of the LORD and took it to Abinadab's house on the hill. They consecrated his son Eleazar to take care of it.

VICTORY AT MIZPAH

² Time went by until twenty years had passed since the ark had been taken to Kiriath-jearim. Then the whole house of Israel longed for the LORD. ³ Samuel told them, "If you are returning to the LORD with all your heart, get rid of the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths that are among you, dedicate yourselves to ^e the LORD, and worship only him. Then he will rescue you from the Philistines." ⁴ So the Israelites removed the Baals and the Ashtoreths and only worshiped the LORD.

⁵ Samuel said, "Gather all Israel at Mizpah, and I will pray to the LORD on your behalf."

⁶ When they gathered at Mizpah, they drew water and poured it out in the LORD's presence. They fasted that day, and there they confessed, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel judged the Israelites at Mizpah.

⁷ When the Philistines heard that the Israelites had gathered at Mizpah, their rulers marched up toward Israel. When the Israelites heard about it, they were afraid because of the Philistines. ⁸ The Israelites said to Samuel, "Don't stop crying out to the LORD our God for us, so that he will save us from the Philistines."

⁹ Then Samuel took a young lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. He cried out to the LORD on behalf of Israel, and the LORD answered him. ¹⁰ Samuel was offering the burnt offering as the Philistines approached to fight against Israel. The LORD thundered loudly against the Philistines that day and threw them into such confusion that they were defeated by Israel. ¹¹ Then the men of Israel charged out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines striking them down all the way to a place below Beth-car.

¹² Afterward, Samuel took a stone and set it upright between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, ^f explaining, "The LORD has helped us to this point." ¹³ So the Philistines were subdued and ^g did not invade Israel's territory again. The LORD's hand was against the Philistines all of Samuel's life. ¹⁴ The cities from Ekron to Gath, which they had taken from Israel, were restored; Israel even rescued their surrounding territories from Philistine control. There was also peace between Israel and the Amorites.

¹⁵ Samuel judged Israel throughout his life. ¹⁶ Every year he would go on a circuit to Beth-el, Gilgal, and Mizpah and would judge Israel at all these locations. ¹⁷ Then he would return to Ramah because his home was there, he judged Israel there, and he built an altar to the LORD there.

ISRAEL'S DEMAND FOR A KING

8 When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as judges over Israel. ² His firstborn son's name was Joel and his second was Abijah. They were judges in Beer-sheba. ³ However, his sons did not walk in his ways — they turned toward dishonest profit, took bribes, and perverted justice.

⁴ So all the elders of Israel gathered together and went to Samuel at Ramah. ⁵ They said to him, "Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Therefore, appoint a king to judge us the same as all the other nations have."

^a6:18 Some Hb mss, DSS, LXX, Tg; other Hb mss read *meadow* ^b6:19 LXX reads *But the sons of Jeconiah did not rejoice with the men of Beth-shemesh when they saw the ark of the LORD.* ^c6:19 Some Hb mss, Josephus; other Hb mss read *70 men, 50,000 men* ^d6:21 Lit *and bring it up to you* ^e7:3 Lit *you and set your hearts on* ^f7:12 = Stone of Help ^g7:13 LXX reads *The LORD humbled the Philistines and they*

⁶When they said, "Give us a king to judge us," Samuel considered their demand wrong, so he prayed to the LORD. ⁷But the LORD told him, "Listen to the people and everything they say to you. They have not rejected you; they have rejected me as their king. ⁸They are doing the same thing to you that they have done to me,^a since the day I brought them out of Egypt until this day, abandoning me and worshiping other gods. ⁹Listen to them, but solemnly warn them and tell them about the customary rights of the king who will reign over them."

¹⁰Samuel told all the LORD's words to the people who were asking him for a king. ¹¹He said, "These are the rights of the king who will reign over you: He will take your sons and put them to his use in his chariots, on his horses, or running in front of his chariots. ¹²He can appoint them for his use as commanders of thousands or commanders of fifties, to plow his ground and reap his harvest, or to make his weapons of war and the equipment for his chariots. ¹³He can take your daughters to become perfumers, cooks, and bakers. ¹⁴He can take your best fields, vineyards, and olive orchards and give them to his servants. ¹⁵He can take a tenth of your grain and your vineyards and give them to his officials and servants. ¹⁶He can take your male servants, your female servants, your best young men,^b and your donkeys and use them for his work. ¹⁷He can take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves can become his servants. ¹⁸When that day comes, you will cry out because of the king you've chosen for yourselves, but the LORD won't answer you on that day."

¹⁹The people refused to listen to Samuel. "No!" they said. "We must have a king over us. ²⁰Then we'll be like all the other nations: our king will judge us, go out before us, and fight our battles."

²¹Samuel listened to all the people's words and then repeated them to the LORD.^c ²²"Listen to them," the LORD told Samuel. "Appoint a king for them."

Then Samuel told the men of Israel, "Each of you, go back to your city."

SAUL ANOINTED KING

9 There was a prominent man of Benjamin named Kish son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Becorath, son of Aphiah, son of a Benjaminite.² He had a son named Saul, an impressive

young man. There was no one more impressive among the Israelites than he. He stood a head taller than anyone else.^d

³One day the donkeys of Saul's father Kish wandered off. Kish said to his son Saul, "Take one of the servants with you and go look for the donkeys."⁴ Saul and his servant went through the hill country of Ephraim and then through the region of Shalishah, but they didn't find them. They went through the region of Shaalim — nothing. Then they went through the Benjaminite region but still didn't find them.

⁵When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to the servant who was with him, "Come on, let's go back, or my father will stop worrying about the donkeys and start worrying about us."

⁶"Look," the servant said, "there's a man of God in this city who is highly respected; everything he says is sure to come true. Let's go there now. Maybe he'll tell us which way we should go."

⁷"Suppose we do go," Saul said to his servant, "what do we take the man? The food from our packs is gone, and there's no gift to take to the man of God. What do we have?"

⁸The servant answered Saul: "Here, I have a little^e silver. I'll give it to the man of God, and he will tell us which way we should go."

⁹Formerly in Israel, a man who was going to inquire of God would say, "Come, let's go to the seer," for the prophet of today was formerly called the seer.

¹⁰"Good," Saul replied to his servant. "Come on, let's go." So they went to the city where the man of God was.¹¹ As they were climbing the hill to the city, they found some young women coming out to draw water and asked, "Is the seer here?"

¹²The women answered, "Yes, he is ahead of you. Hurry, he just now entered the city, because there's a sacrifice for the people at the high place today. ¹³As soon as you enter the city, you will find him before he goes to the high place to eat. The people won't eat until he comes because he must bless the sacrifice; after that, the guests can eat. Go up immediately — you can find him now."¹⁴ So they went up toward the city.

Saul and his servant were entering the city when they saw Samuel coming toward them

^a8:8 LXX; MT omits to me ^b8:16 LXX reads best cattle ^c8:21 Lit them in the LORD's ears ^d9:2 Lit From his shoulder and up higher than any of the people ^e9:8 Lit a quarter of a shekel (about a tenth of an ounce)

on his way to the high place.¹⁵ Now the day before Saul's arrival, the LORD had informed Samuel,^a ¹⁶"At this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin. Anoint him ruler over my people Israel. He will save them from the Philistines because I have seen the affliction of my people, for their cry has come to me."¹⁷ When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD told him, "Here is the man I told you about; he will govern my people."

¹⁸Saul approached Samuel in the city gate and asked, "Would you please tell me where the seer's house is?"

¹⁹"I am the seer," Samuel answered. ^b"Go up ahead of me to the high place and eat with me today. When I send you off in the morning, I'll tell you everything that's in your heart."²⁰ As for the donkeys that wandered away from you three days ago, don't worry about them because they've been found. And who does all Israel desire but you and all your father's family?"

²¹Saul responded, "Am I not a Benjaminite from the smallest of Israel's tribes and isn't my clan the least important of all the clans of the Benjaminite tribe? So why have you said something like this to me?"

²²Samuel took Saul and his servant, brought them to the banquet hall, and gave them a place at the head of the thirty^c or so men who had been invited.²³ Then Samuel said to the cook, "Get the portion of meat that I gave you and told you to set aside."

²⁴The cook picked up the thigh and what was attached to it and set it before Saul. Then Samuel said, "Notice that the reserved piece is set before you. Eat it because it was saved for you for this solemn event at the time I said, 'I've invited the people.'" So Saul ate with Samuel that day.²⁵ Afterward, they went down from the high place to the city, and Samuel spoke with Saul on the roof.^d

²⁶They got up early, and just before dawn, Samuel called to Saul on the roof, "Get up, and I'll send you on your way!" Saul got up, and both he and Samuel went outside.²⁷ As they were going down to the edge of the city, Samuel said to Saul, "Tell the servant to go on ahead of us, but you stay for a while, and I'll reveal the word of God to you." So the servant went on.

10 Samuel took the flask of oil, poured it out on Saul's head, kissed him, and said, "Hasn't the LORD anointed you ruler over his inheritance?"^e ²Today when you leave me, you'll find two men at Rachel's Grave at Zelzah in the territory of Benjamin. They will say to you, "The donkeys you went looking for have been found, and now your father has stopped being concerned about the donkeys and is worried about you, asking: What should I do about my son?"

³"You will proceed from there until you come to the oak of Tabor. Three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you there, one bringing three goats, one bringing three loaves of bread, and one bringing a clay jar of wine.⁴ They will ask how you are and give you two loaves^f of bread, which you will accept from them.

⁵"After that you will come to Gibeah of God where there are Philistine garrisons.⁶ When you arrive at the city, you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place prophesying. They will be preceded by harps, tambourines, flutes, and lyres.⁶ The Spirit of the LORD will come powerfully on you, you will prophesy with them, and you will be transformed.⁷ When these signs have happened to you, do whatever your circumstances require^h because God is with you.⁸ Afterward, go ahead of me to Gilgal. I will come to you to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice fellowship offerings. Wait seven days until I come to you and show you what to do."

⁹When Saul turned aroundⁱ to leave Samuel, God changed his heart,^j and all the signs came about that day.¹⁰ When Saul and his servant arrived at Gibeah, a group of prophets met him. Then the Spirit of God came powerfully on him, and he prophesied along with them.

¹¹Everyone who knew him previously and saw him prophesy with the prophets asked each other, "What has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?"

¹²Then a man who was from there asked, "And who is their father?"

As a result, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" became a popular saying.¹³ Then Saul finished prophesying and went to the high place.

^a9:15 Lit had uncovered Samuel's ear, saying ^b9:19 Lit answered Saul ^c9:22 LXX reads 70 ^d9:25 LXX reads city. They prepared a bed for Saul on the roof, and he slept. ^e10:1 LXX adds And you will reign over the LORD's people, and you will save them from the hand of their enemies all around. And this is the sign to you that the LORD has anointed you ruler over his inheritance. ^f10:4 DSS, LXX read wave offerings ^g10:5 Or governors ^h10:7 Lit do for yourself whatever your hand finds ⁱ10:9 Lit turned his shoulder ^j10:9 Lit God turned to him another heart

¹⁴ Saul's uncle asked him and his servant, "Where did you go?"

"To look for the donkeys," Saul answered. "When we saw they weren't there, we went to Samuel."

¹⁵ "Tell me," Saul's uncle asked, "what did Samuel say to you?"

¹⁶ Saul told him, "He assured us the donkeys had been found." However, Saul did not tell him what Samuel had said about the matter of kingship.

SAUL RECEIVED AS KING

¹⁷ Samuel summoned the people to the LORD at Mizpah ¹⁸ and said to the Israelites, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I brought Israel out of Egypt, and I rescued you from the power of the Egyptians and all the kingdoms that were oppressing you.' ¹⁹ But today you have rejected your God, who saves you from all your troubles and afflictions. You said to him, 'You^a must set a king over us.' Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and clans."

²⁰ Samuel had all the tribes of Israel come forward, and the tribe of Benjamin was selected. ²¹ Then he had the tribe of Benjamin come forward by its clans, and the Matrite clan was selected. ⁸ Finally, Saul son of Kish was selected. But when they searched for him, they could not find him. ²² They again inquired of the LORD, "Has the man come here yet?"

The LORD replied, "There he is, hidden among the supplies."

²³ They ran and got him from there. When he stood among the people, he stood a head taller than anyone else. ²⁴ Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see the one the LORD has chosen? There is no one like him among the entire population."

And all the people shouted, ^b "Long live the king!"

²⁵ Samuel proclaimed to the people the rights of kingship. He wrote them on a scroll, which he placed in the presence of the LORD. Then Samuel sent all the people home.

²⁶ Saul also went to his home in Gibeah, and brave men whose hearts God had touched

went with him. ²⁷ But some wicked men said, "How can this guy save us?" They despised him and did not bring him a gift, but Saul said nothing. ^{e,f}

SAUL'S DELIVERANCE OF JABESH-GILEAD

11 Nahash ^g the Ammonite came up and laid siege to Jabesh-gilead. All the men of Jabesh said to him, "Make a treaty with us, and we will serve you."

² Nahash the Ammonite replied, "I'll make one with you on this condition: that I gouge out everyone's right eye and humiliate all Israel."

³ "Don't do anything to us for seven days," the elders of Jabesh said to him, "and let us send messengers throughout the territory of Israel. If no one saves us, we will surrender to you."

⁴ When the messengers came to Gibeah, Saul's hometown, and told the terms to ^h the people, all wept aloud. ⁵ Just then Saul was coming in from the field behind his oxen. "What's the matter with the people? Why are they weeping?" Saul inquired, and they repeated to him the words of the men from Jabesh.

⁶ When Saul heard these words, the Spirit of God suddenly came powerfully on him, and his anger burned furiously. ⁷ He took a team of oxen, cut them in pieces, and sent them throughout the territory of Israel by messengers who said, "This is what will be done to the ox of anyone who doesn't march behind Saul and Samuel." As a result, the terror of the LORD fell on the people, and they went out united.

⁸ Saul counted them at Bezek. There were three hundred thousand ⁱ Israelites and thirty thousand ^j men from Judah. ⁹ He told the messengers who had come, "Tell this to the men of Jabesh-gilead: 'Deliverance will be yours tomorrow by the time the sun is hot.' " So the messengers told the men of Jabesh, and they rejoiced.

¹⁰ Then the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Tomorrow we will come out, and you can do whatever you want ^k to us."

¹¹ The next day Saul organized the troops into three divisions. During the morning watch, they invaded the Ammonite camp and

^a10:19 Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Vg read *You said, 'No, you* ⁸10:21 LXX adds *And he had the Matrite clan come forward, man by man.* ^c10:23 Lit *people, and he was higher than any of the people from his shoulder and up* ^d10:24 LXX reads *acknowledged and said* ^e10:27 DSS add *Nahash king of the Ammonites had been severely oppressing the Gadites and Reubenites. He gouged out the right eye of each of them and brought fear and trembling on Israel. Of the Israelites beyond the Jordan none remained whose right eye Nahash, king of the Ammonites, had not gouged out. But there were seven thousand men who had escaped from the Ammonites and entered Jabesh-gilead.* ^f10:27 Lit *gift, and he was like a mute person* ^g11:1 DSS, LXX read *About a month later, Nahash* ^h11:4 Lit *in the ears of* ⁱ11:8 LXX reads *600,000* ^j11:8 DSS, LXX read *70,000* ^k11:10 Lit *do what is good in your eyes*

slaughtered them until the heat of the day. There were survivors, but they were so scattered that no two of them were left together.

SAUL'S CONFIRMATION AS KING

¹² Afterward, the people said to Samuel, "Who said that Saul should not^a reign over us? Give us those men so we can kill them!"

¹³ But Saul ordered, "No one will be executed this day, for today the LORD has provided deliverance in Israel."

¹⁴ Then Samuel said to the people, "Come, let's go to Gilgal, so we can renew the kingship there." ¹⁵ So all the people went to Gilgal, and there in the LORD's presence they made Saul king. There they sacrificed fellowship offerings in the LORD's presence, and Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

SAMUEL'S FINAL PUBLIC SPEECH

12 Then Samuel said to all Israel, "I have carefully listened to everything you said to me and placed a king over you. ² Now you can see that the king is leading you. As for me, I'm old and gray, and my sons are here with you. I have led you from my youth until now. ³ Here I am. Bring charges against me before the LORD and his anointed: Whose ox or donkey have I taken? Whom have I wronged or mistreated? From whom have I accepted a bribe to overlook something?^b ⁴ I will return it to you."

⁴ "You haven't wronged us, you haven't mistreated us, and you haven't taken anything from anyone," they responded.

⁵ He said to them, "The LORD is a witness against you, and his anointed is a witness today that you haven't found anything in my hand."

"He is a witness," they said.

⁶ Then Samuel said to the people, "The LORD, who appointed Moses and Aaron and who brought your ancestors up from the land of Egypt, is a witness. ⁷ Now present yourselves, so I may confront you before the LORD about all the righteous acts he has done for you and your ancestors.

⁸ "When Jacob went to Egypt,^c your ancestors cried out to the LORD, and he sent them Moses and Aaron, who led your ancestors out of Egypt and settled them in this place. ⁹ But they forgot the LORD their God, so he handed

them over to Sisera commander of the army of Hazor, to the Philistines, and to the king of Moab. These enemies fought against them.

¹⁰ Then they cried out to the LORD and said, 'We have sinned, for we abandoned the LORD and worshiped the Baals and the Ashtoreths. Now rescue us from the power of our enemies, and we will serve you.' ¹¹ So the LORD sent Jerubbabai, Barak,^d Jephthah, and Samuel. He rescued you from the power of the enemies around you, and you lived securely. ¹² But when you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites was coming against you, you said to me, 'No, we must have a king reign over us' — even though the LORD your God is your king.

¹³ "Now here is the king you've chosen, the one you requested. Look, this is the king the LORD has placed over you. ¹⁴ If you fear the LORD, worship and obey him, and if you don't rebel against the LORD's command, then both you and the king who reigns over you will follow the LORD your God. ¹⁵ However, if you disobey the LORD and rebel against his command, the LORD's hand will be against you as it was against your ancestors.^e

¹⁶ "Now, therefore, present yourselves and see this great thing that the LORD will do before your eyes. ¹⁷ Isn't the wheat harvest today? I will call on the LORD, and he will send thunder and rain so that you will recognize^f what an immense evil you committed in the LORD's sight by requesting a king for yourselves."

¹⁸ Samuel called on the LORD, and on that day the LORD sent thunder and rain. As a result, all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.

¹⁹ They pleaded with Samuel, "Pray to the LORD your God for your servants so we won't die! For we have added to all our sins the evil of requesting a king for ourselves."

²⁰ Samuel replied, "Don't be afraid. Even though you have committed all this evil, don't turn away from following the LORD. Instead, worship the LORD with all your heart. ²¹ Don't turn away to follow worthless^g things that can't profit or rescue you; they are worthless. ²² The LORD will not abandon his people, because of his great name and because he has determined to make you his own people.

²³ "As for me, I vow that I will not sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you. I will teach you the good and right way. ²⁴ Above all, fear

^a11:12 Some Hb mss, LXX; other Hb mss omit *not* ^b12:3 LXX reads *bribe or a pair of shoes? Testify against me.* ^c12:3 Lit *bribe and will hide my eyes with it?* ^d12:6 LXX; MT omits *is a witness* ^e12:8 LXX reads "When Jacob and his sons went to Egypt and Egypt humbled them" ^f12:11 LXX, Syr; MT reads *Bedan*; Jdg 4:6; Heb 11:32 ^g12:15 LXX *against you and against your king*

^h12:17 Lit *know and see* ⁱ12:21 LXX reads *away after empty*

the LORD and worship him faithfully with all your heart; consider the great things he has done for you. ²⁵ However, if you continue to do what is evil, both you and your king will be swept away."

SAUL'S FAILURE

13 Saul was thirty years^a old when he became king, and he reigned forty-two years^b over Israel. ^{c2} He chose three thousand men from Israel for himself: two thousand were with Saul at Michmash and in Bethel's hill country, and one thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin. He sent the rest of the troops away, each to his own tent.

³ Jonathan attacked the Philistine garrison^d that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard about it. So Saul blew the ram's horn throughout the land saying, "Let the Hebrews hear!" ^e

⁴ And all Israel heard the news, "Saul has attacked the Philistine garrison, and Israel is now repulsive to the Philistines." Then the troops were summoned to join Saul at Gilgal.

⁵ The Philistines also gathered to fight against Israel: three thousand^f chariots, six thousand horsemen, and troops as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They went up and camped at Michmash, east of Beth-aven.^g

⁶ The men of Israel saw that they were in trouble because the troops were in a difficult situation. They hid in caves, in thickets, among rocks, and in holes and cisterns. ⁷ Some Hebrews even crossed the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead.

Saul, however, was still at Gilgal, and all his troops were gripped with fear. ⁸ He waited seven days for the appointed time that Samuel had set, but Samuel didn't come to Gilgal, and the troops were deserting him. ⁹ So Saul said, "Bring me the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings." Then he offered the burnt offering.

¹⁰ Just as he finished offering the burnt offering, Samuel arrived. So Saul went out to greet him, ¹¹ and Samuel asked, "What have you done?"

Saul answered, "When I saw that the troops were deserting me and you didn't come within the appointed days and the Philistines were gathering at Michmash, ¹² I thought, 'The

Philistines will now descend on me at Gilgal, and I haven't sought the LORD's favor.' So I forced myself to offer the burnt offering."

¹³ Samuel said to Saul, "You have been foolish. You have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you. It was at this time that the LORD would have permanently established your reign over Israel, ¹⁴ but now your reign will not endure. The LORD has found a man after his own heart," ^h and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over his people, because you have not done what the LORD commanded." ¹⁵ Then Samuel wentⁱ from Gilgal to Gibeah in Benjamin. Saul registered the troops who were with him, about six hundred men.

¹⁶ Saul, his son Jonathan, and the troops who were with them were staying in Geba of Benjamin, and the Philistines were camped at Michmash. ¹⁷ Raiding parties went out from the Philistine camp in three divisions. One division headed toward the Ophrah road leading to the land of Shual. ¹⁸ The next division headed toward the Beth-horon road, and the last division headed down the border road that looks out over the Zeboim Valley toward the wilderness.

¹⁹ No blacksmith could be found in all the land of Israel because the Philistines had said, "Otherwise, the Hebrews will make swords or spears." ²⁰ So all the Israelites went to the Philistines to sharpen their plows, mattocks, axes, and sickles. ²¹ The price was two-thirds of a shekel^k for plows and mattocks, and one-third of a shekel for pitchforks and axes, and for putting a point on a cattle prod. ²² So on the day of battle not a sword or spear could be found in the hand of any of the troops who were with Saul and Jonathan; only Saul and his son Jonathan had weapons.

JONATHAN'S VICTORY OVER THE PHILISTINES

²³ Now a Philistine garrison took control of the pass at Michmash. ¹ That same day Saul's son Jonathan said to the attendant who carried his weapons, "Come on, let's cross over to the Philistine garrison on the other side." However, he did not tell his father.

² Saul was staying under the pomegranate tree in Migron on the outskirts of Gibeah. ³ The troops with him numbered about six hundred.

^a13:1 Some LXX mss; MT reads *was one year* ^b13:1 Text emended; MT reads *two years* ^c13:1 Some LXX mss omit v. 1

^d13:3 Or *governor*, also in v. 4 ^e13:3 LXX reads *"The slaves have revolted"* ^f13:5 One LXX ms, Syr; MT reads *30,000* ^g13:5 LXX reads *Michmash, opposite Beth-horon to the south* ^h13:14 Lit *man according to his heart* ⁱ13:15 LXX reads *Samuel left Gilgal and went on his way, and the rest of the people followed Saul to join the people in his army. They went* ^j13:20 LXX; MT reads *plowshares* ^k13:21 Lit *of a pim*; about one-fourth ounce of silver ^l14:2 LXX reads *on top of the hill*

³ Ahijah, who was wearing an ephod, was also there. He was the son of Ahitub, the brother of Ichabod son of Phinehas, son of Eli the LORD's priest at Shiloh. But the troops did not know that Jonathan had left.

⁴ There were sharp columns^a of rock on both sides of the pass that Jonathan intended to cross to reach the Philistine garrison. One was named Bozez and the other Seneh; ⁵ one stood to the north in front of Michmash and the other to the south in front of Geba. ⁶ Jonathan said to the attendant who carried his weapons, "Come on, let's cross over to the garrison of these uncircumcised men. Perhaps the LORD will help us. Nothing can keep the LORD from saving, whether by many or by few."

⁷ His armor-bearer responded, "Do what is in your heart. You choose. I'm right here with you whatever you decide."

⁸ "All right," Jonathan replied, "we'll cross over to the men and then let them see us. ⁹ If they say, 'Wait until we reach you,' then we will stay where we are and not go up to them. ¹⁰ But if they say, 'Come on up,' then we'll go up, because the LORD has handed them over to us — that will be our sign."

¹¹ They let themselves be seen by the Philistine garrison, and the Philistines said, "Look, the Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they've been hiding!" ¹² The men of the garrison called to Jonathan and his armor-bearer. "Come on up, and we'll teach you a lesson!" they said.

"Follow me," Jonathan told his armor-bearer, "for the LORD has handed them over to Israel." ¹³ Jonathan climbed up using his hands and feet, with his armor-bearer behind him. Jonathan cut them down, and his armor-bearer followed and finished them off. ¹⁴ In that first assault Jonathan and his armor-bearer struck down about twenty men in a half-acre field.

A DEFEAT FOR THE PHILISTINES

¹⁵ Terror spread through the Philistine camp and the open fields to all the troops. Even the garrison and the raiding parties were terrified. The earth shook, and terror spread from God. ¹⁶ When Saul's watchmen in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, they saw the panicking troops scattering in every direction. ¹⁷ So Saul said to the troops with him, "Call the roll and

determine who has left us." They called the roll and saw that Jonathan and his armor-bearer were gone.

¹⁸ Saul told Ahijah, "Bring the ark of God," for it was with the Israelites^c at that time. ¹⁹ While Saul spoke to the priest, the panic in the Philistine camp increased in intensity. So Saul said to the priest, "Stop what you're doing."^d

²⁰ Saul and all the troops with him assembled and marched to the battle, and there the Philistines were, fighting against each other in great confusion! ²¹ There were Hebrews from the area who had gone earlier into the camp to join the Philistines, but even they joined the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan. ²² When all the Israelite men who had been hiding in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were fleeing, they also joined Saul and Jonathan in the battle. ²³ So the LORD saved Israel that day.

SAUL'S RASH OATH

The battle extended beyond Beth-aven,²⁴ and the men of Israel were worn out that day, for Saul had^e placed the troops under an oath: "The man who eats food before evening, before I have taken vengeance on my enemies is cursed." So none of the troops tasted any food.

²⁵ Everyone^f went into the forest, and there was honey on the ground. ²⁶ When the troops entered the forest, they saw the flow of honey, but none of them ate any of it^g because they feared the oath. ²⁷ However, Jonathan had not heard his father make the troops swear the oath. He reached out with the end of the staff he was carrying and dipped it into the honeycomb. When he ate the honey,^h he had renewed energy.ⁱ ²⁸ Then one of the troops said, "Your father made the troops solemnly swear, 'The man who eats food today is cursed,' and the troops are exhausted."

²⁹ Jonathan replied, "My father has brought trouble to the land. Just look at how I have renewed energy^j because I tasted a little of this honey. ³⁰ How much better if the troops had eaten freely today from the plunder they took from their enemies! Then the slaughter of the Philistines would have been much greater."

³¹ The Israelites struck down the Philistines that day from Michmash all the way to Aijalon. Since the Israelites were completely exhausted,

^a14:4 Lit There was a tooth ^b14:15 Or and a great terror spread ^c14:18 LXX reads "Bring the ephod." For he wore the ephod before Israel ^d14:19 Lit "Withdraw your hand" ^e14:24 LXX adds committed a great act of ignorance and ^f14:25 Lit All the land ^g14:26 Lit but there was none who raised his hand to his mouth ^h14:27 Lit he returned his hand to his mouth ⁱ14:27 Lit his eyes became bright ^j14:29 Lit how my eyes became bright

³² they rushed to the plunder, took sheep, goats, cattle, and calves, slaughtered them on the ground, and ate meat with the blood still in it. ³³ Some reported to Saul: "Look, the troops are sinning against the LORD by eating meat with the blood still in it."

Saul said, "You have been unfaithful. Roll a large stone over here at once." ³⁴ He then said, "Go among the troops and say to them, 'Let each man bring me his ox or his sheep. Do the slaughtering here and then you can eat. Don't sin against the LORD by eating meat with the blood in it.'" So every one of the troops brought his ox that night and slaughtered it there. ³⁵ Then Saul built an altar to the LORD; it was the first time he had built an altar to the LORD.

³⁶ Saul said, "Let's go down after the Philistines tonight and plunder them until morning. Don't let even one remain!"

"Do whatever you want," ^a the troops replied.

But the priest said, "Let's approach God here."

³⁷ So Saul inquired of God, "Should I go after the Philistines? Will you hand them over to Israel?" But God did not answer him that day.

³⁸ Saul said, "All you leaders of the troops, come here. Let us investigate ^b how this sin has occurred today. ³⁹ As surely as the LORD lives who saves Israel, even if it is because of my son Jonathan, he must die!" Not one of the troops answered him.

⁴⁰ So he said to all Israel, "You will be on one side, and I and my son Jonathan will be on the other side."

And the troops replied, "Do whatever you want."

⁴¹ So Saul said to the LORD, "God of Israel, why have you not answered your servant today? If the unrighteousness is in me or in my son Jonathan, LORD God of Israel, give Urim; but if the fault is in your people Israel, give Thummim." ^c Jonathan and Saul were selected, and the troops were cleared of the charge.

⁴² Then Saul said, "Cast the lot between me and my son Jonathan," and Jonathan was selected. ⁴³ Saul commanded him, "Tell me what you did."

Jonathan told him, "I tasted a little honey with the end of the staff I was carrying. I am ready to die!"

⁴⁴ Saul declared to him, "May God punish me and do so severely if you do not die, Jonathan!"

⁴⁵ But the people said to Saul, "Must Jonathan die, who accomplished such a great deliverance for Israel? No, as the LORD lives, not a hair of his head will fall to the ground, for he worked with God's help today." So the people redeemed Jonathan, and he did not die. ⁴⁶ Then Saul gave up the pursuit of the Philistines, and the Philistines returned to their own territory.

SUMMARY OF SAUL'S KINGSHIP

⁴⁷ When Saul assumed the kingship over Israel, he fought against all his enemies in every direction: against Moab, the Ammonites, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines. Wherever he turned, he caused havoc. ^d ⁴⁸ He fought bravely, defeated the Amalekites, and rescued Israel from those who plundered them.

⁴⁹ Saul's sons were Jonathan, Ishvi, and Malchishua. The names of his two daughters were Merab, his firstborn, and Michal, the younger. ⁵⁰ The name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam daughter of Ahimaaz. The name of the commander of his army was Abner son of Saul's uncle Ner. ⁵¹ Saul's father was Kish. Abner's father was Ner son of Abiel.

⁵² The conflict with the Philistines was fierce all of Saul's days, so whenever Saul noticed any strong or valiant man, he enlisted him.

SAUL REJECTED AS KING

15 Samuel told Saul, "The LORD sent me to anoint you as king over his people Israel. Now, listen to the words of the LORD. ² This is what the LORD of Armies says: 'I witnessed ^e what the Amalekites did to the Israelites when they opposed them along the way as they were coming out of Egypt. ³ Now go and attack the Amalekites and completely destroy everything they have. Do not spare them. Kill men and women, infants and nursing babies, oxen and sheep, camels and donkeys.'"

⁴ Then Saul summoned the troops and counted them at Telaim: two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand men from Judah. ⁵ Saul came to the city of Amalek and set up an ambush in the wadi. ⁶ He warned the Kenites, "Since you showed kindness to all the Israelites when they came out of Egypt, go on and leave! Get away from the Amalekites, or I'll sweep you away with them." So the Kenites withdrew from the Amalekites.

^a14:36 Lit *Do what is good in your eyes*, also in v. 40 ^b14:38 Lit *know and see* ^c14:41 LXX; MT reads *said to the LORD, "God of Israel, give us the right decision."* ^d14:47 LXX reads *he was victorious* ^e15:2 LXX reads *I will avenge*

⁷Then Saul struck down the Amalekites from Havilah all the way to Shur, which is next to Egypt. ⁸He captured King Agag of Amalek alive, but he completely destroyed all the rest of the people with the sword. ⁹Saul and the troops spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, goats, cattle, and choice animals,^a as well as the young rams and the best of everything else. They were not willing to destroy them, but they did destroy all the worthless and unwanted things.

¹⁰Then the word of the LORD came to Samuel, ¹¹"I regret that I made Saul king, for he has turned away from following me and has not carried out my instructions." So Samuel became angry and cried out to the LORD all night.

¹²Early in the morning Samuel got up to confront Saul, but it was reported to Samuel, "Saul went to Carmel where he set up a monument for himself. Then he turned around and went down to Gilgal." ¹³When Samuel came to him, Saul said, "May the LORD bless you. I have carried out the LORD's instructions."

¹⁴Samuel replied, "Then what is this sound of sheep, goats,^b and cattle I hear?"

¹⁵Saul answered, "The troops brought them from the Amalekites and spared the best sheep, goats, and cattle in order to offer a sacrifice to the LORD your God, but the rest we destroyed."

¹⁶"Stop!" exclaimed Samuel. "Let me tell you what the LORD said to me last night."

"Tell me," he replied.

¹⁷Samuel continued, "Although you once considered yourself unimportant, have you not become the leader of the tribes of Israel? The LORD anointed you king over Israel¹⁸ and then sent you on a mission and said: 'Go and completely destroy the sinful Amalekites. Fight against them until you have annihilated them.'

¹⁹So why didn't you obey the LORD? Why did you rush on the plunder and do what was evil in the LORD's sight?"

²⁰"But I did obey the LORD!" Saul answered.^c "I went on the mission the LORD gave me: I brought back King Agag of Amalek, and I completely destroyed the Amalekites. ²¹The troops took sheep, goats, and cattle from the plunder — the best of what was set apart for destruction — to sacrifice to the LORD your God at Gilgal."

²²Then Samuel said:

Does the LORD take pleasure
in burnt offerings and sacrifices
as much as in obeying the LORD?

Look: to obey is better than sacrifice,
to pay attention is better than the fat
of rams.

²³ For rebellion is like the sin
of divination,
and defiance is like wickedness
and idolatry.

Because you have rejected the word
of the LORD,
he has rejected you as king.

²⁴Saul answered Samuel, "I have sinned. I have transgressed the LORD's command and your words. Because I was afraid of the people, I obeyed them. ²⁵Now therefore, please forgive my sin and return with me so I can worship the LORD."

²⁶Samuel replied to Saul, "I will not return with you. Because you rejected the word of the LORD, the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel." ²⁷When Samuel turned to go, Saul grabbed the corner of his robe, and it tore. ²⁸Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingship of Israel away from you today and has given it to your neighbor who is better than you. ²⁹Furthermore, the Eternal One of Israel does not lie or change his mind, for he is not man who changes his mind."

³⁰Saul said, "I have sinned. Please honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel. Come back with me so I can bow in worship to the LORD your God." ³¹Then Samuel went back, following Saul, and Saul bowed down to the LORD.

³²Samuel said, "Bring me King Agag of Amalek."

Agag came to him trembling,^d for he thought, "Certainly the bitterness of death has come."^{e,f}

³³Samuel declared:

As your sword has made women
childless,
so your mother will be childless
among women.

Then he hacked Agag to pieces before the LORD at Gilgal.

³⁴Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his home in Gibeah of Saul. ³⁵Even to the day of his death, Samuel never saw Saul

^a15:9 Lit and the second ones ^b15:14 Lit sheep in my ears ^c15:20 Lit answered Samuel ^d15:32 Hb obscure ^e15:32 LXX reads "Is death bitter in this way?" ^f15:32 Lit turned

again. Samuel mourned for Saul, and the LORD regretted he had made Saul king over Israel.

SAMUEL ANOINTS DAVID

16 The LORD said to Samuel, "How long are you going to mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem because I have selected a king from his sons."

² Samuel asked, "How can I go? Saul will hear about it and kill me!"

The LORD answered, "Take a young cow with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.'"³ Then invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will let you know what you are to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate to you."

⁴ Samuel did what the LORD directed and went to Bethlehem. When the elders of the town met him, they trembled^a and asked, "Do^b you come in peace?"

⁵ "In peace," he replied. "I've come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice."^c Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. ⁶ When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and said, "Certainly the LORD's anointed one is here before him."

⁷ But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or his stature because I have rejected him. Humans do not see what the LORD sees,^d for humans see what is visible,^e but the LORD sees the heart."

⁸ Jesse called Abinadab and presented him to Samuel. "The LORD hasn't chosen this one either," Samuel said. ⁹ Then Jesse presented Shammah, but Samuel said, "The LORD hasn't chosen this one either."¹⁰ After Jesse presented seven of his sons to him, Samuel told Jesse, "The LORD hasn't chosen any of these."¹¹ Samuel asked him, "Are these all the sons you have?"

"There is still the youngest," he answered, "but right now he's tending the sheep." Samuel told Jesse, "Send for him. We won't sit down to eat until he gets here."¹² So Jesse sent for him. He had beautiful eyes and a healthy,^f handsome appearance.

Then the LORD said, "Anoint him, for he is the one."¹³ So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully on

David from that day forward. Then Samuel set out and went to Ramah.

DAVID IN SAUL'S COURT

¹⁴ Now the Spirit of the LORD had left Saul, and an evil spirit sent from the LORD began to torment him,¹⁵ so Saul's servants said to him, "You see that an evil spirit from God is tormenting you."¹⁶ Let our lord command your servants here in your presence to look for someone who knows how to play the lyre. Whenever the evil spirit from God comes on you, that person can play the lyre, and you will feel better."

¹⁷ Then Saul commanded his servants, "Find me someone who plays well and bring him to me."

¹⁸ One of the young men answered, "I have seen a son of Jesse of Bethlehem who knows how to play the lyre. He is also a valiant man, a warrior, eloquent, handsome, and the LORD is with him."

¹⁹ Then Saul dispatched messengers to Jesse and said, "Send me your son David, who is with the sheep."²⁰ So Jesse took a donkey loaded with bread, a wineskin, and one young goat and sent them by his son David to Saul.²¹ When David came to Saul and entered his service, Saul loved him very much, and David became his armor-bearer.²² Then Saul sent word to Jesse: "Let David remain in my service, for he has found favor with me."²³ Whenever the spirit from God came on Saul, David would pick up his lyre and play, and Saul would then be relieved, feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him.

DAVID VERSUS GOLIATH

17 The Philistines gathered their forces for war at Socoh in Judah and camped between Socoh and Azekah in Ephes-dammim.² Saul and the men of Israel gathered and camped in the Valley of Elah; then they lined up in battle formation to face the Philistines.

³ The Philistines were standing on one hill, and the Israelites were standing on another hill with a ravine between them. ⁴ Then a champion named Goliath, from Gath, came out from the Philistine camp. He was nine feet, nine inches^{g,h} tall⁵ and wore a bronze helmetⁱ and bronze scale armor that weighed one hundred twenty-five pounds.⁶ There was

^a16:4 LXX reads *were astonished* ^b16:4 DSS, LXX read "See, do" ^c16:5 LXX reads *and rejoice with me today* ^d16:7 LXX reads *God does not see as a man sees* ^e16:7 Lit *for the man sees according to the eyes* ^f16:12 Or *ruddy* ^g17:4 DSS, LXX read *four cubits and a span* ^h17:4 Lit *was six cubits and a span* ⁱ17:5 Lit *helmet on his head* ^j17:5 Lit *5,000 shekels*

bronze armor on his shins, and a bronze javelin was slung between his shoulders.⁷ His spear shaft was like a weaver's beam, and the iron point of his spear weighed fifteen pounds.^a In addition, a shield-bearer was walking in front of him.

⁸ He stood and shouted to the Israelite battle formations: "Why do you come out to line up in battle formation?" He asked them, "Am I not a Philistine and are you not servants of Saul? Choose one of your men and have him come down against me.⁹ If he wins in a fight against me and kills me, we will be your servants. But if I win against him and kill him, then you will be our servants and serve us."¹⁰ Then the Philistine said, "I defy the ranks of Israel today. Send me a man so we can fight each other!"¹¹ When Saul and all Israel heard these words from the Philistine, they lost their courage and were terrified.

¹² Now David was the son of the Ephrathite from Bethlehem of Judah named Jesse. Jesse had eight sons and during Saul's reign was already an old man.¹³ Jesse's three oldest sons had followed Saul to the war, and their names were Eliab, the firstborn, Abinadab, the next, and Shammah, the third,¹⁴ and David was the youngest. The three oldest had followed Saul,¹⁵ but David kept going back and forth from Saul to tend his father's flock in Bethlehem.

¹⁶ Every morning and evening for forty days the Philistine came forward and took his stand.¹⁷ One day Jesse had told his son David: "Take this half-bushel^b of roasted grain along with these ten loaves of bread for your brothers and hurry to their camp.¹⁸ Also take these ten portions of cheese to the field commander.^c Check on the well-being of your brothers and bring a confirmation from them.¹⁹ They are with Saul and all the men of Israel in the Valley of Elah fighting with the Philistines."

²⁰ So David got up early in the morning, left the flock with someone to keep it, loaded up, and set out as Jesse had charged him.

He arrived at the perimeter of the camp as the army was marching out to its battle formation shouting their battle cry.²¹ Israel and the Philistines lined up in battle formation facing each other.²² David left his supplies in the care of the quartermaster and ran to the battle line. When he arrived, he asked his brothers

how they were.²³ While he was speaking with them, suddenly the champion named Goliath, the Philistine from Gath, came forward from the Philistine battle line and shouted his usual words, which David heard.²⁴ When all the Israelite men saw Goliath, they retreated from him terrified.

²⁵ Previously, an Israelite man had declared: "Do you see this man who keeps coming out? He comes to defy Israel. The king will make the man who kills him very rich and will give him his daughter. The king will also make the family of that man's father exempt from paying taxes in Israel."

²⁶ David spoke to the men who were standing with him: "What will be done for the man who kills that Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? Just who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

²⁷ The troops told him about the offer, concluding, "That is what will be done for the man who kills him."

²⁸ David's oldest brother Eliab listened as he spoke to the men, and he became angry with him. "Why did you come down here?" he asked. "Who did you leave those few sheep with in the wilderness? I know your arrogance and your evil heart — you came down to see the battle!"

²⁹ "What have I done now?" protested David. "It was just a question."³⁰ Then he turned from those beside him to others in front of him and asked about the offer. The people gave him the same answer as before.

³¹ What David said was overheard and reported to Saul, so he had David brought to him.³² David said to Saul, "Don't let anyone be discouraged by^d him; your servant will go and fight this Philistine!"

³³ But Saul replied, "You can't go fight this Philistine. You're just a youth, and he's been a warrior since he was young."

³⁴ David answered Saul: "Your servant has been tending his father's sheep. Whenever a lion or a bear came and carried off a lamb from the flock,³⁵ I went after it, struck it down, and rescued the lamb from its mouth. If it reared up against me, I would grab it by its fur,^e strike it down, and kill it.³⁶ Your servant has killed lions and bears; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, for he has defied the

^a17:7 Lit 600 shekels ^b17:17 Lit this ephah ^c17:18 Lit the leader of 1,000 ^d17:32 Lit let a man's heart fall over ^e17:35 LXX reads throat; lit beard

armies of the living God.”³⁷ Then David said, “The LORD who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine.”

Saul said to David, “Go, and may the LORD be with you.”

³⁸ Then Saul had his own military clothes put on David. He put a bronze helmet on David’s head and had him put on armor. ³⁹ David strapped his sword on over the military clothes and tried to walk, but he was not used to them. “I can’t walk in these,” David said to Saul, “I’m not used to them.” So David took them off. ⁴⁰ Instead, he took his staff in his hand and chose five smooth stones from the wadi and put them in the pouch, in his shepherd’s bag. Then, with his sling in his hand, he approached the Philistine.

⁴¹ The Philistine came closer and closer to David, with the shield-bearer in front of him. ⁴² When the Philistine looked and saw David, he despised him because he was just a youth, healthy^a and handsome. ⁴³ He said to David, “Am I a dog that you come against me with sticks?”^b Then he cursed David by his gods. ⁴⁴ “Come here,” the Philistine called to David, “and I’ll give you flesh to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts!”

⁴⁵ David said to the Philistine: “You come against me with a sword, spear, and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD of Armies, the God of the ranks of Israel — you have defied him. ⁴⁶ Today, the LORD will hand you over to me. Today, I’ll strike you down, remove your head, and give the corpses^c of the Philistine camp to the birds of the sky and the wild creatures of the earth. Then all the world will know that Israel has a God, ⁴⁷ and this whole assembly will know that it is not by sword or by spear that the LORD saves, for the battle is the LORD’s. He will hand you over to us.”

⁴⁸ When the Philistine started forward to attack him, David ran quickly to the battle line to meet the Philistine. ⁴⁹ David put his hand in the bag, took out a stone, slung it, and hit the Philistine on his forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell facedown to the ground. ⁵⁰ David defeated the Philistine with a sling and a stone. David overpowered the Philistine and killed him without having a sword. ⁵¹ David ran and stood over him. He

grabbed the Philistine’s sword, pulled it from its sheath, and used it to kill him. Then he cut off his head. When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they fled. ⁵² The men of Israel and Judah rallied, shouting their battle cry, and chased the Philistines to the entrance of the valley and to the gates of Ekron.^d Philistine bodies were strewn all along the Shaaraim road to Gath and Ekron.

⁵³ When the Israelites returned from the pursuit of the Philistines, they plundered their camps. ⁵⁴ David took Goliath’s^e head and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put Goliath’s weapons in his own tent.

⁵⁵ ^f When Saul had seen David going out to confront the Philistine, he asked Abner the commander of the army, “Whose son is this youth, Abner?”

“Your Majesty, as surely as you live, I don’t know,” Abner replied.

⁵⁶ The king said, “Find out whose son this young man is!”

⁵⁷ When David returned from killing the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul with the Philistine’s head still in his hand. ⁵⁸ Saul said to him, “Whose son are you, young man?”

“The son of your servant Jesse of Bethlehem,” David answered.

DAVID’S SUCCESS

18 When David had finished speaking with Saul, Jonathan was bound to David in close friendship,^g and loved him as much as he loved himself. ² Saul kept David with him from that day on and did not let him return to his father’s house.

³ Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as much as himself. ⁴ Then Jonathan removed the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his military tunic, his sword, his bow, and his belt.

⁵ David marched out with the army and was successful in everything Saul sent him to do. Saul put him in command of the fighting men, which pleased all the people and Saul’s servants as well.

⁶ As the troops were coming back, when David was returning from killing the Philistine, the women came out from all the cities of Israel to meet King Saul, singing and dancing with tambourines, with shouts of joy, and with

^a17:42 Or *ruddy* ^b17:43 Some LXX mss add *and stones?* “And David said, ‘No! Worse than a dog!’” ^c17:46 LXX reads *give your limbs and the limbs* ^d17:52 LXX reads *Ashkelon* ^e17:54 Lit *the Philistine’s* ^f17:55 LXX omits 1Sm 17:55–18:5 ^g18:1 Lit *the life of Jonathan was bound to the life of David*

three-stringed instruments.⁷ As they danced, the women sang:

Saul has killed his thousands,
but David his tens of thousands.

⁸ Saul was furious and resented this song.^a "They credited tens of thousands to David," he complained, "but they only credited me with thousands. What more can he have but the kingdom?"⁹ So Saul watched David jealously from that day forward.

SAUL ATTEMPTS TO KILL DAVID

¹⁰ The next day an evil spirit sent from God came powerfully on Saul, and he began to rave^b inside the palace. David was playing the lyre as usual, but Saul was holding a spear,¹¹ and he threw it, thinking, "I'll pin David to the wall." But David got away from him twice.

¹² Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with David but had left Saul.¹³ Therefore, Saul sent David away from him and made him commander over a thousand men. David led the troops¹⁴ and continued to be successful in all his activities because the LORD was with him.¹⁵ When Saul observed that David was very successful, he dreaded him.¹⁶ But all Israel and Judah loved David because he was leading their troops.¹⁷ Saul told David, "Here is my oldest daughter Merab. I'll give her to you as a wife, if you will be a warrior for me and fight the LORD's battles." But Saul was thinking, "I don't need to raise a hand against him; let the hand of the Philistines be against him."

¹⁸ Then David responded, "Who am I, and what is my family or my father's clan in Israel that I should become the king's son-in-law?"

¹⁹ When it was time to give Saul's daughter Merab to David, she was given to Adriel the Meholathite as a wife.

DAVID'S MARRIAGE TO MICHAL

²⁰ Now Saul's daughter Michal loved David, and when it was reported to Saul, it pleased him.^c ²¹ "I'll give her to him," Saul thought. "She'll be a trap for him, and the hand of the Philistines will be against him." So Saul said to David a second time, "You can now be my son-in-law."

²² Saul then ordered his servants, "Speak to David in private and tell him, 'Look, the king is pleased with you, and all his servants love

you. Therefore, you should become the king's son-in-law.'"

²³ Saul's servants reported these words directly to David,^d but he replied, "Is it trivial in your sight to become the king's son-in-law? I am a poor commoner."

²⁴ The servants reported back to Saul, "These are the words David spoke."

²⁵ Then Saul replied, "Say this to David: 'The king desires no other bride-price except a hundred Philistine foreskins, to take revenge on his enemies.'"

Actually, Saul intended to cause David's death at the hands of the Philistines.

²⁶ When the servants reported these terms to David, he was pleased^e to become the king's son-in-law. Before the wedding day arrived,^f

²⁷ David and his men went out and killed two hundred^g Philistines. He brought their foreskins and presented them as full payment to the king to become his son-in-law. Then Saul gave his daughter Michal to David as his wife.²⁸ Saul realized^h that the LORD was with David and that his daughter Michal loved him,²⁹ and he became even more afraid of David. As a result, Saul was David's enemy from then on.

³⁰ Every time the Philistine commanders came out to fight, David was more successful than all of Saul's officers. So his name became well known.

DAVID DELIVERED FROM SAUL

19 Saul ordered his son Jonathan and all his servants to kill David. But Saul's son Jonathan liked David very much,² so he told him: "My father Saul intends to kill you. Be on your guard in the morning and hide in a secret place and stay there. ³ I'll go out and stand beside my father in the field where you are and talk to him about you. When I see what he says, I'll tell you."

⁴ Jonathan spoke well of David to his father Saul. He said to him: "The king should not sin against his servant David. He hasn't sinned against you; in fact, his actions have been a great advantage to you. ⁵ He took his life in his hands when he struck down the Philistine, and the LORD brought about a great victory for all Israel. You saw it and rejoiced, so why would you sin against innocent blood by killing David for no reason?"

^a18:8 Lit *furious*; this saying was evil in his eyes ^b18:10 Or *prophecy* ^c18:20 Lit *Saul, the thing was right in his eyes*

^d18:23 Lit *words in David's ears* ^e18:26 Lit *David, it was right in David's eyes* ^f18:26 Lit *And the days were not full*

^g18:27 LXX reads *100* ^h18:28 Lit *saw and knew*

⁶ Saul listened to Jonathan's advice and swore an oath: "As surely as the LORD lives, David will not be killed." ⁷ So Jonathan summoned David and told him all these words. Then Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he served him as he did before.

⁸ When war broke out again, David went out and fought against the Philistines. He defeated them with such great force that they fled from him.

⁹ Now an evil spirit sent from the LORD came on Saul as he was sitting in his palace holding a spear. David was playing the lyre, ¹⁰ and Saul tried to pin David to the wall with the spear. As the spear struck the wall, David eluded Saul, ran away, and escaped that night. ¹¹ Saul sent agents to David's house to watch for him and kill him in the morning. But his wife Michal warned David, "If you don't escape tonight, you will be dead tomorrow!" ¹² So she lowered David from the window, and he fled and escaped. ¹³ Then Michal took the household idol and put it on the bed, placed some goat hair on its head, and covered it with a garment. ¹⁴ When Saul sent agents to seize David, Michal said, "He's sick."

¹⁵ Saul sent the agents back to see David and said, "Bring him on his bed so I can kill him." ¹⁶ When the agents arrived, to their surprise, the household idol was on the bed with some goat hair on its head.

¹⁷ Saul asked Michal, "Why did you deceive me like this? You sent my enemy away, and he has escaped!"

She answered him, "He said to me, 'Let me go! Why should I kill you?'"

¹⁸ So David fled and escaped and went to Samuel at Ramah and told him everything Saul had done to him. Then he and Samuel left and stayed at Naioth.

¹⁹ When it was reported to Saul that David was at Naioth in Ramah, ²⁰ he sent agents to seize David. However, when they saw the group of prophets prophesying with Samuel leading them, the Spirit of God came on Saul's agents, and they also started prophesying. ²¹ When they reported to Saul, he sent other agents, and they also began prophesying. So Saul tried again and sent a third group of agents, and even they began prophesying. ²² Then Saul himself went to Ramah. He came to the large cistern at Secu and asked, "Where are Samuel and David?"

"At Naioth in Ramah," someone said.

²³ So he went to Naioth in Ramah. The Spirit of God also came on him, and as he walked along, he prophesied until he entered Naioth in Ramah. ²⁴ Saul then removed his clothes and also prophesied before Samuel; he collapsed and lay naked all that day and all that night. That is why they say, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

JONATHAN PROTECTS DAVID

20 David fled from Naioth in Ramah and came to Jonathan and asked, "What have I done? What did I do wrong? How have I sinned against your father so that he wants to take my life?"

² Jonathan said to him, "No, you won't die. Listen, my father doesn't do anything, great or small, without telling me. ^a So why would he hide this matter from me? This can't be true."

³ But David said, "Your father certainly knows that I have found favor with you. He has said, 'Jonathan must not know of this, or else he will be grieved.'" David also swore, "As surely as the LORD lives and as you yourself live, there is but a step between me and death."

⁴ Jonathan said to David, "Whatever you say, I will do for you."

⁵ So David told him, "Look, tomorrow is the New Moon, and I'm supposed to sit down and eat with the king. Instead, let me go, and I'll hide in the countryside for the next two nights. ^b

⁶ If your father misses me at all, say, 'David urgently requested my permission to go quickly to his hometown Bethlehem for an annual sacrifice there involving the whole clan.' ⁷ If he says, 'Good,' then your servant is safe, but if he becomes angry, you will know he has evil intentions. ⁸ Deal kindly with ^c your servant, for you have brought me into a covenant with you before the LORD. If I have done anything wrong, then kill me yourself; why take me to your father?"

⁹ "No!" Jonathan responded. "If I ever find out my father has evil intentions against you, wouldn't I tell you about it?"

¹⁰ So David asked Jonathan, "Who will tell me if your father answers you harshly?"

¹¹ He answered David, "Come on, let's go out to the countryside." So both of them went out to the countryside. ¹² "By the LORD, the God of Israel, I will sound out my father by this time tomorrow or the next day. If I find out that he is favorable toward you, will I not send for you

^a20:2 Lit without uncovering my ear ^b20:5 Lit countryside until the third night ^c20:8 Or Show loyalty to

and tell you?^a ¹³ If my father intends to bring evil on you, may God punish Jonathan and do so severely if I do not tell you^b and send you away so you may leave safely. May the LORD be with you, just as he was with my father. ¹⁴ If I continue to live, show me kindness^c from the LORD, but if I die, ¹⁵ don't ever withdraw your kindness from my household — not even when the LORD cuts off every one of David's enemies from the face of the earth." ¹⁶ Then Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, "May the LORD hold David's enemies accountable."^d ¹⁷ Jonathan once again swore to David^e in his love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself.

¹⁸ Then Jonathan said to him, "Tomorrow is the New Moon; you'll be missed because your seat will be empty. ¹⁹ The following day hurry down and go to the place where you hid on the day this incident began and stay beside the rock Ezel. ²⁰ I will shoot three arrows beside it as if I'm aiming at a target. ²¹ Then I will send a servant and say, 'Go and find the arrows!' Now, if I expressly say to the servant, 'Look, the arrows are on this side of you — get them,' then come, because as the LORD lives, it is safe for you and there is no problem. ²² But if I say this to the youth, 'Look, the arrows are beyond you!' then go, for the LORD is sending you away. ²³ As for the matter you and I have spoken about, the LORD will be a witness^f between you and me forever." ²⁴ So David hid in the countryside.

At the New Moon, the king sat down to eat the meal. ²⁵ He sat at his usual place on the seat by the wall. Jonathan sat facing him^g and Abner took his place beside Saul, but David's place was empty. ²⁶ Saul did not say anything that day because he thought, "Something unexpected has happened; he must be ceremonially unclean — yes, that's it, he is unclean."

²⁷ However, the day after the New Moon, the second day, David's place was still empty, and Saul asked his son Jonathan, "Why didn't Jesse's son come to the meal either yesterday or today?"

²⁸ Jonathan answered, "David asked for my permission to go to Bethlehem. ²⁹ He said, 'Please let me go because our clan is holding a sacrifice in the town, and my brother has told me to be there. So now, if I have found favor with you, let me go so I can see my brothers.' That's why he didn't come to the king's table."

³⁰ Then Saul became angry with Jonathan and shouted, "You son of a perverse and rebellious woman! Don't I know that you are siding with Jesse's son to your own shame and to the disgrace of your mother?"^h ³¹ Every day Jesse's son lives on earth you and your kingship are not secure. Now send for him and bring him to me — he must die!"

³² Jonathan answered his father back: "Why is he to be killed? What has he done?"

³³ Then Saul threw his spear at Jonathan to kill him, so he knew that his father was determined to kill David. ³⁴ He got up from the table fiercely angry and did not eat any food that second day of the New Moon, for he was grieved because of his father's shameful behavior toward David.

³⁵ In the morning Jonathan went out to the countryside for the appointed meeting with David. A young servant was with him. ³⁶ He said to the servant, "Run and find the arrows I'm shooting." As the servant ran, Jonathan shot an arrow beyond him. ³⁷ He came to the location of the arrow that Jonathan had shot, but Jonathan called to him and said, "The arrow is beyond you, isn't it?"

³⁸ Then Jonathan called to him, "Hurry up and don't stop!" Jonathan's servant picked up the arrow and returned to his master. ³⁹ He did not know anything; only Jonathan and David knew the arrangement. ⁴⁰ Then Jonathan gave his equipment to the servant who was with him and said, "Go, take it back to the city."

⁴¹ When the servant had gone, David got up from the south side of the stone Ezel, fell facedown to the ground, and paid homage three times. Then he and Jonathan kissed each other and wept with each other, though David wept more.

⁴² Jonathan then said to David, "Go in the assurance the two of us pledged in the name of the LORD when we said: The LORD will be a witness between you and me and between my offspring and your offspring forever." Then David left, and Jonathan went into the city.

DAVID FLEES TO NOB

21 David went to the priest Ahimelech at Nob. Ahimelech was afraid to meet David, so he said to him, "Why are you alone and no one is with you?"

^a20:12 Lit *and uncover your ear* ^b20:13 Lit *severely — I will uncover your ear* ^c20:14 Or *loyalty*, also in v. 15 ^d20:16 Lit *LORD require it from the hand of David's enemies* ^e20:17 LXX; MT reads *Jonathan once again made David swear*

^f20:23 LXX; MT omits *a witness* ^g20:25 Text emended; MT reads *Jonathan got up* ^h20:30 Lit *your mother's nakedness*

²David answered the priest Ahimelech, "The king gave me a mission, but he told me, 'Don't let anyone know anything about the mission I'm sending you on or what I have ordered you to do.' I have stationed my young men at a certain place. ³Now what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread or whatever can be found."

⁴The priest told him, "There is no ordinary bread on hand. However, there is consecrated bread, but the young men may eat it^a only if they have kept themselves from women."

⁵David answered him, "I swear that women are being kept from us, as always when I go out to battle. The young men's bodies^b are consecrated even on an ordinary mission, so of course their bodies are consecrated today."⁶ So the priest gave him the consecrated bread, for there was no bread there except the Bread of the Presence that had been removed from the presence of the LORD. When the bread was removed, it had been replaced with warm bread.

⁷One of Saul's servants, detained before the LORD, was there that day. His name was Doeg the Edomite, chief of Saul's shepherds.

⁸David said to Ahimelech, "Do you have a spear or sword on hand? I didn't even bring my sword or my weapons since the king's mission was urgent."

⁹The priest replied, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the Valley of Elah, is here, wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If you want to take it for yourself, then take it, for there isn't another one here."

"There's none like it!" David said. "Give it to me."

DAVID FLEES TO GATH

¹⁰David fled that day from Saul's presence and went to King Achish of Gath. ¹¹But Achish's servants said to him, "Isn't this David, the king of the land? Don't they sing about him during their dances:

Saul has killed his thousands,
but David his tens of thousands?"

¹²David took this to heart^c and became very afraid of King Achish of Gath, ¹³so he pretended to be insane in their presence. He acted like a madman around them,^d scribbling^e on the doors of the city gate and letting saliva run down his beard.

¹⁴"Look! You can see the man is crazy," Achish said to his servants. "Why did you bring him to me?" ¹⁵Do I have such a shortage of crazy people that you brought this one to act crazy around me? Is this one going to come into my house?"

SAUL'S INCREASING PARANOIA

22 So David left Gath and took refuge in the cave of Adullam. When David's brothers and his father's whole family heard, they went down and joined him there. ²In addition, every man who was desperate, in debt, or discontented rallied around him, and he became their leader. About four hundred men were with him.

³From there David went to Mizpeh of Moab where he said to the king of Moab, "Please let my father and mother stay with you until I know what God will do for me." ⁴So he left them in the care of the king of Moab, and they stayed with him the whole time David was in the stronghold.

⁵Then the prophet Gad said to David, "Don't stay in the stronghold. Leave and return to the land of Judah." So David left and went to the forest of Hereth.

⁶Saul heard that David and his men had been discovered. At that time Saul was in Gibeah, sitting under the tamarisk tree at the high place. His spear was in his hand, and all his servants were standing around him. ⁷Saul said to his servants, "Listen, men of Benjamin: Is Jesse's son going to give all of you fields and vineyards? Do you think he'll make all of you commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds?" ⁸That's why all of you have conspired against me! Nobody tells me^f when my own son makes a covenant with Jesse's son. None of you cares about me or tells me^g that my son has stirred up my own servant to wait in ambush for me, as is the case today."

⁹Then Doeg the Edomite, who was in charge of Saul's servants, answered: "I saw Jesse's son come to Ahimelech son of Ahitub at Nob. ¹⁰Ahimelech inquired of the LORD for him and gave him provisions. He also gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine."

SLAUGHTER OF THE PRIESTS

¹¹The king sent messengers to summon the priest Ahimelech son of Ahitub, and his father's whole family, who were priests in Nob.

^a21:4 DSS; MT omits *may eat it* ^b21:5 Lit *vessels* ^c21:12 Lit *David placed these words in his heart* ^d21:13 Lit *madman in their hand* ^e21:13 LXX reads *drumming* ^f22:8 Lit *No one uncovers my ear* ^g22:8 Lit *or uncovers my ear*

All of them came to the king.¹² Then Saul said, "Listen, son of Ahitub!"

"I'm at your service, my lord," he said.

¹³ Saul asked him, "Why did you and Jesse's son conspire against me? You gave him bread and a sword and inquired of God for him, so he could rise up against me and wait in ambush, as is the case today."

¹⁴ Ahimelech replied to the king: "Who among all your servants is as faithful as David? He is the king's son-in-law, captain of your bodyguard, and honored in your house. ¹⁵ Was today the first time I inquired of God for him? Of course not! Please don't let the king make an accusation against your servant or any of my father's family, for your servant didn't have any idea^a about all this."

¹⁶ But the king said, "You will die, Ahimelech — you and your father's whole family!"

¹⁷ Then the king ordered the guards standing by him, "Turn and kill the priests of the LORD because they sided with David. For they knew he was fleeing, but they didn't tell me."^b But the king's servants would not lift a hand to execute the priests of the LORD.

¹⁸ So the king said to Doeg, "Go and execute the priests!" So Doeg the Edomite went and executed the priests himself. On that day, he killed eighty-five men who wore linen ephods.¹⁹ He also struck down Nob, the city of the priests, with the sword — both men and women, infants and nursing babies, oxen, donkeys, and sheep.

²⁰ However, one of the sons of Ahimelech son of Ahitub escaped. His name was Abiathar, and he fled to David.²¹ Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the priests of the LORD.²² Then David said to Abiathar, "I knew that Doeg the Edomite was there that day and that he was sure to report to Saul. I myself am responsible for^c the lives of everyone in your father's family.²³ Stay with me. Don't be afraid, for the one who wants to take my life wants to take your life. You will be safe with me."

DELIVERANCE AT KEILAH

23 It was reported to David: "Look, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and raiding the threshing floors."

² So David inquired of the LORD: "Should I launch an attack against these Philistines?"

The LORD answered David, "Launch an attack against the Philistines and rescue Keilah."

³ But David's men said to him, "Look, we're afraid here in Judah; how much more if we go to Keilah against the Philistine forces!"

⁴ Once again, David inquired of the LORD, and the LORD answered him: "Go at once to Keilah, for I will hand the Philistines over to you."⁵ Then David and his men went to Keilah, fought against the Philistines, drove their livestock away, and inflicted heavy losses on them. So David rescued the inhabitants of Keilah.⁶ Abiathar son of Ahimelech fled to David at Keilah, and he brought an ephod with him.

⁷ When it was reported to Saul that David had gone to Keilah, he said, "God has handed him over to me, for he has trapped himself by entering a town with barred gates."⁸ Then Saul summoned all the troops to go to war at Keilah and besiege David and his men.

⁹ When David learned that Saul was plotting evil against him, he said to the priest Abiathar, "Bring the ephod."

¹⁰ Then David said, "LORD God of Israel, your servant has reliable information that Saul intends to come to Keilah and destroy the town because of me. ¹¹ Will the citizens of Keilah hand me over to him? Will Saul come down as your servant has heard? LORD God of Israel, please tell your servant."

The LORD answered, "He will come down."

¹² Then David asked, "Will the citizens of Keilah hand me and my men over to Saul?"

"They will," the LORD responded.

¹³ So David and his men, numbering about six hundred, left Keilah at once and moved from place to place. When it was reported to Saul that David had escaped from Keilah, he called off the expedition.¹⁴ David then stayed in the wilderness strongholds and in the hill country of the Wilderness of Ziph. Saul searched for him every day, but God did not hand David over to him.

A RENEWED COVENANT

¹⁵ David was in the Wilderness of Ziph in Horesh when he saw that Saul had come out to take his life.¹⁶ Then Saul's son Jonathan came to David in Horesh and encouraged him in his faith^d in God,¹⁷ saying, "Don't be afraid, for my father Saul will never lay a hand on you. You yourself will be king over Israel, and I'll be your second-in-command. Even my father Saul knows it is true."¹⁸ Then the two of them

^a22:15 Lit *didn't know a thing, small or large* ^b22:17 Lit *didn't uncover my ear* ^c22:22 LXX, Syr, Vg; MT reads *I myself turn in*

^d23:16 Lit *and strengthened his hand*

made a covenant in the LORD's presence. Afterward, David remained in Horesh, while Jonathan went home.

DAVID'S NARROW ESCAPE

¹⁹ Some Ziphites came up to Saul at Gibeath and said, "David is^a hiding among us in the strongholds in Horesh on the hill of Hachilah south of Jeshimon. ²⁰ Now, whenever the king wants to come down, let him come down. Our part will be to hand him over to the king."

²¹ "May you be blessed by the LORD," replied Saul, "for you have shown concern for me. ²² Go and check again. Investigate^b where he goes^c and who has seen him there; they tell me he is extremely cunning. ²³ Investigate^d all the places where he hides. Then come back to me with accurate information, and I'll go with you. If it turns out he really is in the region, I'll search for him among all the clans^e of Judah."

²⁴ So they went to Ziph ahead of Saul.

Now David and his men were in the wilderness near Maon in the Arabah south of Jeshimon, ²⁵ and Saul and his men went to look for him. When David was told about it, he went down to the rock and stayed in the Wilderness of Maon. Saul heard of this and pursued David there.

²⁶ Saul went along one side of the mountain and David and his men went along the other side. Even though David was hurrying to get away from Saul, Saul and his men were closing in on David and his men to capture them. ²⁷ Then a messenger came to Saul saying, "Come quickly, because the Philistines have raided the land!" ²⁸ So Saul broke off his pursuit of David and went to engage the Philistines. Therefore, that place was named the Rock of Separation. ²⁹ From there David went up and stayed in the strongholds of En-gedi.

DAVID SPARES SAUL

24 When Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, "David is in the wilderness near En-gedi." ² So Saul took three thousand of Israel's fit young men and went to look for David and his men in front of the Rocks of the Wild Goats. ³ When Saul came to the sheep pens along the road, a cave was there, and he went in to relieve himself. ^f David and his men were staying in the recesses of

the cave, ⁴ so they said to him, "Look, this is the day the LORD told you about: 'I will hand your enemy over to you so you can do to him whatever you desire.' " Then David got up and secretly cut off the corner of Saul's robe.

⁵ Afterward, David's conscience bothered^g him because he had cut off the corner of Saul's robe. ⁶ He said to his men, "I swear before the LORD: I would never do such a thing to my lord, the LORD's anointed. I will never lift my hand against him, since he is the LORD's anointed." ⁷ With these words David persuaded^h his men, and he did not let them rise up against Saul.

Then Saul left the cave and went on his way. ⁸ After that, David got up, went out of the cave, and called to Saul, "My lord the king!" When Saul looked behind him, David knelt low with his face to the ground and paid homage. ⁹ David said to Saul, "Why do you listen to the words of people who say, 'Look, David intends to harm you'? ¹⁰ You can see with your own eyes that the LORD handed you over to me today in the cave. Someone advised me to kill you, but I^{j,k} took pity on you and said: I won't lift my hand against my lord, since he is the LORD's anointed. ¹¹ Look, my father! Look at the corner of your robe in my hand, for I cut it off, but I didn't kill you. Recognize^l that I've committed no crime or rebellion. I haven't sinned against you even though you are hunting me down to take my life.

¹² "May the LORD judge between me and you, and may the LORD take vengeance on you for me, but my hand will never be against you. ¹³ As the old proverb says, 'Wickedness comes from wicked people.' My hand will never be against you. ¹⁴ Who has the king of Israel come after? What are you chasing after? A dead dog? A single flea? ¹⁵ May the LORD be judge and decide between you and me. May he take notice and plead my case and deliver^m me from you."

¹⁶ When David finished saying these things to him, Saul replied, "Is that your voice, David my son?" Then Saul wept aloud ¹⁷ and said to David, "You are more righteous than I, for you have done what is good to me though I have done what is evil to you. ¹⁸ You yourself have told me today what good you did for me: when the LORD handed me over to you, you didn't kill me. ¹⁹ When a man finds his enemy,

^a23:19 Lit "Is David not . . . Jeshimon?" ^b23:22 Lit Know and see ^c23:22 Lit watch his place where his foot will be

^d23:23 Lit See and know ^e23:23 Or thousands ^f24:3 Lit to cover his feet ^g24:5 Lit David's heart struck ^h24:5 Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Vg; other Hb mss omit robe ⁱ24:7 Or restrained ^j24:10 LXX, Syr, Tg; MT reads she or it ^k24:10 Or my eye

^l24:11 Lit Know and see ^m24:15 Lit render a verdict for

does he let him go unharmed?^a May the LORD repay you with good for what you've done for me today.

²⁰ "Now I know for certain you will be king, and the kingdom of Israel will be established^b in your hand. ²¹ Therefore swear to me by the LORD that you will not cut off my descendants or wipe out my name from my father's family." ²² So David swore to Saul. Then Saul went back home, and David and his men went up to the stronghold.

DAVID, NABAL, AND ABIGAIL

25 Samuel died, and all Israel assembled to mourn for him, and they buried him by his home in Ramah. David then went down to the Wilderness of Paran.^c

² A man in Maon had a business in Carmel; he was a very rich man with three thousand sheep and one thousand goats and was shearing his sheep in Carmel. ³ The man's name was Nabal, and his wife's name, Abigail. The woman was intelligent and beautiful, but the man, a Calebite, was harsh and evil in his dealings.

⁴ While David was in the wilderness, he heard that Nabal was shearing sheep, ⁵ so David sent ten young men instructing them, "Go up to Carmel, and when you come to Nabal, greet him^d in my name. ⁶ Then say this: 'Long life to you,^e and peace to you, peace to your family, and peace to all that is yours. ⁷ I hear that you are shearing.^f When your shepherds were with us, we did not harass them, and nothing of theirs was missing the whole time they were in Carmel. ⁸ Ask your young men, and they will tell you. So let my young men find favor with you, for we have come on a feast^g day. Please give whatever you have on hand to your servants and to your son David.' "

⁹ David's young men went and said all these things to Nabal on David's behalf,^h and they waited. ¹⁰ Nabal asked them, "Who is David? Who is Jesse's son? Many slaves these days are running away from their masters. ¹¹ Am I supposed to take my bread, my water, and my meat that I butchered for my shearers and give them to these men? I don't know where they are from."

¹² David's young men retraced their steps. When they returned to him, they reported all these words. ¹³ He said to his men, "All of you,

put on your swords!" So each man put on his sword, and David also put on his sword. About four hundred men followed David while two hundred stayed with the supplies.

¹⁴ One of Nabal's young men informed Abigail, Nabal's wife: "Look, David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master, but he screamed at them. ¹⁵ The men treated us very well. When we were in the field, we weren't harassed and nothing of ours was missing the whole time we were living among them. ¹⁶ They were a wall around us, both day and night, the entire time we were with them herding the sheep. ¹⁷ Now consider carefullyⁱ what you should do, because there is certain to be trouble for our master and his entire family. He is such a worthless fool nobody can talk to him!"

¹⁸ Abigail hurried, taking two hundred loaves of bread, two clay jars of wine, five butchered sheep, a bushel^k of roasted grain, one hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of pressed figs, and loaded them on donkeys. ¹⁹ Then she said to her male servants, "Go ahead of me. I will be right behind you." But she did not tell her husband Nabal.

²⁰ As she rode the donkey down a mountain pass hidden from view, she saw David and his men coming toward her and met them. ²¹ David had just said, "I guarded everything that belonged to this man in the wilderness for nothing. He was not missing anything, yet he paid me back evil for good. ²² May God punish me^l and do so severely if I let any of his males^m survive until morning."

²³ When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off the donkey and knelt down with her face to the ground and paid homage to David. ²⁴ She knelt at his feet and said, "The guilt is mine, my lord, but please let your servant speak to you directly. Listen to the words of your servant. ²⁵ My lord should pay no attention to this worthless fool Nabal, for he lives up to his name:ⁿ His name means 'stupid,' and stupidity is all he knows.^o I, your servant, didn't see my lord's young men whom you sent. ²⁶ Now my lord, as surely as the LORD lives and as you yourself live—it is the LORD who kept you from participating in bloodshed and avenging yourself by your own hand—may your enemies and those who

^a24:19 Lit go on a good way ^b24:20 Or will flourish ^c25:1 LXX reads to Maon ^d25:5 Or Nabal, ask him for peace

^e25:6 Lit To life ^f25:7 Lit you have shearers ^g25:8 Lit good ^h25:9 Lit name ⁱ25:9 LXX reads and he became arrogant

^j25:17 Lit Now know and see ^k25:18 Lit sheep, five seahs ^l25:22 LXX; MT reads David's enemies ^m25:22 Lit of those of

his who are urinating against the wall ⁿ25:25 Lit for as is his name is, so he is ^o25:25 Lit and foolishness is with him

intend to harm my lord be like Nabal. ²⁷ Let this gift your servant has brought to my lord be given to the young men who follow my lord. ²⁸ Please forgive your servant's offense, for the LORD is certain to make a lasting dynasty for my lord because he fights the LORD's battles. Throughout your life, may evil^a not be found in you.

²⁹ "Someone is pursuing you and intends to take your life. My lord's life is tucked safely in the place^b where the LORD your God protects the living, but he is flinging away your enemies' lives like stones from a sling. ³⁰ When the LORD does for my lord all the good he promised you and appoints you ruler over Israel, ³¹ there will not be remorse or a troubled conscience for my lord because of needless bloodshed or my lord's revenge. And when the LORD does good things for my lord, may you remember me your servant."

³² Then David said to Abigail, "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, who sent you to meet me today! ³³ May your discernment be blessed, and may you be blessed. Today you kept me from participating in bloodshed and avenging myself by my own hand. ³⁴ Otherwise, as surely as the LORD God of Israel lives, who prevented me from harming you, if you had not come quickly to meet me, Nabal wouldn't have had any males^c left by morning light." ³⁵ Then David accepted what she had brought him and said, "Go home in peace. See, I have heard what you said and have granted your request."

³⁶ Then Abigail went to Nabal, and there he was in his house, holding a feast fit for a king. Nabal's heart was cheerful,^d and he was very drunk, so she didn't say anything^e to him until morning light.

³⁷ In the morning when Nabal sobered up,^f his wife told him about these events. His heart died^g and he became a stone. ³⁸ About ten days later, the LORD struck Nabal dead.

³⁹ When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "Blessed be the LORD who championed my cause against Nabal's insults and restrained his servant from doing evil. The LORD brought Nabal's evil deeds back on his own head."

Then David sent messengers to speak to Abigail about marrying him. ⁴⁰ When David's servants came to Abigail at Carmel, they said

to her, "David sent us to bring you to him as a wife."

⁴¹ She stood up, paid homage with her face to the ground, and said, "Here I am, your servant, a slave to wash the feet of my lord's servants."

⁴² Then Abigail got up quickly, and with her five female servants accompanying her, rode on the donkey following David's messengers. And so she became his wife.

⁴³ David also married Ahinoam of Jezreel, and the two of them became his wives. ⁴⁴ But Saul gave his daughter Michal, David's wife, to Palti son of Laish, who was from Gallim.

DAVID AGAIN SPARES SAUL

26 Then the Ziphites came to Saul at Gibeath saying, "David is hiding on the hill of Hachilah opposite Jeshimon." ² So Saul, accompanied by three thousand of the fit young men of Israel, went immediately to the Wilderness of Ziph to search for David there. ³ Saul camped beside the road at the hill of Hachilah opposite Jeshimon. David was living in the wilderness and discovered Saul had come there after him. ⁴ So David sent out spies and knew for certain that Saul had come. ⁵ Immediately, David went to the place where Saul had camped. He saw the place where Saul and Abner son of Ner, the commander of his army, were lying down. Saul was lying inside the inner circle of the camp with the troops camped around him. ⁶ Then David asked Ahimelech the Hethite and Joab's brother Abishai son of Zeruiah, "Who will go with me into the camp to Saul?" "I'll go with you," answered Abishai.

⁷ That night, David and Abishai came to the troops, and Saul was lying there asleep in the inner circle of the camp with his spear stuck in the ground by his head. Abner and the troops were lying around him. ⁸ Then Abishai said to David, "Today God has delivered your enemy to you. Let me thrust the spear through him into the ground just once. I won't have to strike him twice!"

⁹ But David said to Abishai, "Don't destroy him, for who can lift a hand against the LORD's anointed and be innocent?" ¹⁰ David added, "As the LORD lives, the LORD will certainly strike him down: either his day will come and he will die, or he will go into battle and perish. ¹¹ However, because of the LORD, I will never lift my hand against the LORD's anointed."

^a25:28 Or trouble ^b25:29 Lit bundle ^c25:34 Lit had anyone urinating against a wall ^d25:36 Lit Nabal's heart was good on him ^e25:36 Lit anything at all ^f25:37 Lit when the wine had gone out of Nabal ^g25:37 Lit Then his heart died within him

Instead, take the spear and the water jug by his head, and let's go."

¹² So David took the spear and the water jug by Saul's head, and they went their way. No one saw them, no one knew, and no one woke up; they all remained asleep because a deep sleep from the LORD came over them.

¹³ David crossed to the other side and stood on top of the mountain at a distance; there was a considerable space between them. ¹⁴ Then David shouted to the troops and to Abner son of Ner: "Aren't you going to answer, Abner?"

"Who are you who calls to the king?" Abner asked.

¹⁵ David called to Abner, "You're a man, aren't you? Who in Israel is your equal? So why didn't you protect your lord the king when one of the people came to destroy him?" ¹⁶ What you have done is not good. As the LORD lives, all of you deserve to die^a since you didn't protect your lord, the LORD's anointed. Now look around; where are the king's spear and water jug that were by his head?"

¹⁷ Saul recognized David's voice and asked, "Is that your voice, my son David?"

"It is my voice, my lord and king," David said. ¹⁸ Then he continued, "Why is my lord pursuing his servant? What have I done? What crime have I committed?" ¹⁹ Now, may my lord the king please hear the words of his servant: If it is the LORD who has incited you against me, then may he accept an offering. But if it is people, may they be cursed in the presence of the LORD, for today they have banished me from sharing in the inheritance of the LORD saying, 'Go and worship other gods.'²⁰ So don't let my blood fall to the ground far from the LORD's presence, for the king of Israel has come out to search for a single flea, like one who pursues a partridge in the mountains."

²¹ Saul responded, "I have sinned. Come back, my son David, I will never harm you again because today you considered my life precious. I have been a fool! I've committed a grave error."

²² David answered, "Here is the king's spear; have one of the young men come over and get it. ²³ The LORD will repay every man for his righteousness and his loyalty. I wasn't willing to lift my hand against the LORD's anointed, even though the LORD handed you over to me today. ²⁴ Just as I considered your life valuable

today, so may the LORD consider my life valuable and rescue me from all trouble."

²⁵ Saul said to him, "You are blessed, my son David. You will certainly do great things and will also prevail." Then David went on his way, and Saul returned home.

DAVID FLEES TO ZIKLAG

27 David said to himself, "One of these days I'll be swept away by Saul. There is nothing better for me than to escape immediately to the land of the Philistines. Then Saul will give up searching for me everywhere in Israel, and I'll escape from him." ² So David set out with his six hundred men and went over to Achish son of Maach, the king of Gath. ³ David and his men stayed with Achish in Gath. Each man had his family with him, and David had his two wives: Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail of Carmel, Nabal's widow. ⁴ When it was reported to Saul that David had fled to Gath, he no longer searched for him.

⁵ Now David said to Achish, "If I have found favor with you, let me be given a place in one of the outlying towns, so I can live there. Why should your servant live in the royal city with you?" ⁶ That day Achish gave Ziklag to him, and it still belongs to the kings of Judah today. ⁷ The length of time that David stayed in Philistine territory amounted to a year and four months.

⁸ David and his men went up and raided the Geshurites, the Girzites,⁸ and the Amalekites. From ancient times they had been the inhabitants of the region through Shur as far as the land of Egypt. ⁹ Whenever David attacked the land, he did not leave a single person alive, either man or woman, but he took flocks, herds, donkeys, camels, and clothing. Then he came back to Achish, ¹⁰ who inquired, "Where did you raid today?"^c

David replied, "The south country of Judah," "The south country of the Jerahmeelites," or "The south country of the Kenites."

¹¹ David did not let a man or woman live to be brought to Gath, for he said, "Or they will inform on us and say, 'This is what David did.'" This was David's custom during the whole time he stayed in the Philistine territory. ¹² So Achish trusted David, thinking, "Since he has made himself repulsive to his people Israel, he will be my servant forever."

^a26:16 Lit you are sons of death ^b27:8 Alt Hb tradition reads Gezerites ^c27:10 Some Hb mss, Syr, Tg; LXX, Vg, DSS read "Against whom did you raid today?"

SAUL AND THE MEDIUM

28 At that time, the Philistines gathered their military units into one army to fight against Israel. So Achish said to David, "You know, of course, that you and your men must march out in the army^a with me."

² David replied to Achish, "Good, you will find out what your servant can do."

So Achish said to David, "Very well, I will appoint you as my permanent bodyguard."

³ By this time Samuel had died, all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in Ramah, his city, and Saul had removed the mediums and spiritists from the land. ⁴ The Philistines gathered and camped at Shunem. So Saul gathered all Israel, and they camped at Gilboa. ⁵ When Saul saw the Philistine camp, he was afraid and his heart pounded. ⁶ He inquired of the LORD, but the LORD did not answer him in dreams or by the Urim or by the prophets. ⁷ Saul then said to his servants, "Find me a woman who is a medium, so I can go and consult her."

His servants replied, "There is a woman at En-dor who is a medium."

⁸ Saul disguised himself by putting on different clothes and set out with two of his men. They came to the woman at night, and Saul said, "Consult a spirit for me. Bring up for me the one I tell you."

⁹ But the woman said to him, "You surely know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the mediums and spiritists from the land. Why are you setting a trap for me to get me killed?"

¹⁰ Then Saul swore to her by the LORD: "As surely as the LORD lives, no punishment will come to you^b from this."

¹¹ "Who is it that you want me to bring up for you?" the woman asked.

"Bring up Samuel for me," he answered.

¹² When the woman saw Samuel, she screamed, and then she asked Saul, "Why did you deceive me? You are Saul!"

¹³ But the king said to her, "Don't be afraid. What do you see?"

"I see a spirit form^c coming up out of the earth," the woman answered.

¹⁴ Then Saul asked her, "What does he look like?"

"An old man is coming up," she replied. "He's wearing a robe." Then Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he knelt low with his face to the ground and paid homage.

¹⁵ "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" Samuel asked Saul.

"I'm in serious trouble," replied Saul. "The Philistines are fighting against me and God has turned away from me. He doesn't answer me anymore, either through the prophets or in dreams. So I've called on you to tell me what I should do."

¹⁶ Samuel answered, "Since the LORD has turned away from you and has become your enemy, why are you asking me?" ¹⁷ The LORD has done^d exactly what he said through me: The LORD has torn the kingship out of your hand and given it to your neighbor David. ¹⁸ You did not obey the LORD and did not carry out his burning anger against Amalek; therefore the LORD has done this to you today. ¹⁹ The LORD will also hand Israel over to the Philistines along with you. Tomorrow you and your sons will be with me,^e and the LORD will hand Israel's army over to the Philistines."

²⁰ Immediately, Saul fell flat on the ground. He was terrified by Samuel's words and was also weak because he had not eaten anything all day and all night. ²¹ The woman came over to Saul, and she saw that he was terrified and said to him, "Look, your servant has obeyed you. I took my life in my hands and did what you told me to do. ²² Now please listen to your servant. Let me set some food in front of you. Eat and it will give you strength so you can go on your way."

²³ He refused, saying, "I won't eat," but when his servants and the woman urged him, he listened to them. He got up off the ground and sat on the bed.

²⁴ The woman had a fattened calf at her house, and she quickly slaughtered it. She also took flour, kneaded it, and baked unleavened bread. ²⁵ She served it to Saul and his servants, and they ate. Afterward, they got up and left that night.

PHILISTINES REJECT DAVID

29 The Philistines brought all their military units together at Aphek while Israel was camped by the spring in Jezreel. ² As the Philistine leaders were passing in review with their units of hundreds and thousands, David and his men were passing in review behind them with Achish. ³ Then

^a28:1 DSS, LXX read battle ^b28:10 Or lives, you will not incur guilt ^c28:13 Or a god, or a divine being ^d28:17 Some Hb, some LXX mss, Vg read done to you ^e28:19 LXX reads sons will fall

the Philistine commanders asked, "What are these Hebrews doing here?"

Achish answered the Philistine commanders, "That is David, servant of King Saul of Israel. He has been with me a considerable period of time.^a From the day he defected until today, I've found no fault with him."

⁴ The Philistine commanders, however, were enraged with Achish and told him, "Send that man back and let him return to the place you assigned him. He must not go down with us into battle only to become our adversary during the battle. What better way could he ingratiate himself with his master than with the heads of our men? ⁵ Isn't this the David they sing about during their dances:

Saul has killed his thousands,
but David his tens of thousands?"

⁶ So Achish summoned David and told him, "As the LORD lives, you are an honorable man. I think it is good^b to have you fighting^c in this unit with me, because I have found no fault in you from the day you came to me until today. But the leaders don't think you are reliable. ⁷ Now go back quietly and you won't be doing anything the Philistine leaders think is wrong."

⁸ "But what have I done?" David replied to Achish. "From the first day I entered your service until today, what have you found against your servant to keep me from going to fight against the enemies of my lord the king?"

⁹ Achish answered David, "I'm convinced that you are as reliable as an angel of God. But the Philistine commanders have said, 'He must not go into battle with us.'¹⁰ So get up early in the morning, you and your masters' servants who came with you. ^d When you've all gotten up early, go as soon as it's light." ¹¹ So David and his men got up early in the morning to return to the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

DAVID'S DEFEAT OF THE AMALEKITES

30 David and his men arrived in Ziklag on the third day. The Amalekites had raided the Negev and attacked and burned Ziklag. ² They also had kidnapped the women and everyone^e in it from youngest to oldest. They had killed no one but had carried them off as they went on their way.

³ When David and his men arrived at the town, they found it burned. Their wives, sons, and daughters had been kidnapped. ⁴ David and the troops with him wept loudly until they had no strength left to weep. ⁵ David's two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelite and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite, had also been kidnapped. ⁶ David was in an extremely difficult position because the troops talked about stoning him, for they were all very bitter over the loss of their sons and daughters. But David found strength in the LORD his God.

⁷ David said to the priest Abiathar son of Ahimelech, "Bring me the ephod." So Abiathar brought it to him, ⁸ and David asked the LORD: "Should I pursue these raiders? Will I overtake them?"

The LORD replied to him, "Pursue them, for you will certainly overtake them and rescue the people."

⁹ So David and the six hundred men with him went. They came to the Wadi Besor, where some stayed behind. ¹⁰ David and four hundred of the men continued the pursuit, while two hundred stopped because they were too exhausted to cross the Wadi Besor.

¹¹ David's men found an Egyptian in the open country and brought him to David. They gave him some bread to eat and water to drink. ¹² Then they gave him some pressed figs and two clusters of raisins. After he ate he revived, for he hadn't eaten food or drunk water for three days and three nights.

¹³ Then David said to him, "Who do you belong to? Where are you from?"

"I'm an Egyptian, the slave of an Amalekite man," he said. "My master abandoned me when I got sick three days ago. ¹⁴ We raided the south country of the Cherethites, the territory of Judah, and the south country of Caleb, and we burned Ziklag."

¹⁵ David then asked him, "Will you lead me to these raiders?"

He said, "Swear to me by God that you won't kill me or turn me over to my master, and I will lead you to them."

¹⁶ So he led him, and there were the Amalekites, spread out over the entire area, eating, drinking, and celebrating because of the great amount of plunder they had taken from the land of the Philistines and the land of Judah.

^a29:3 Hb obscure ^b29:6 Lit *It was good in my eyes* ^c29:6 Lit *you going out and coming in* ^d29:10 LXX adds *and go to the place I appointed you to. Don't take this evil matter to heart, for you are good before me.* ^e30:2 LXX; MT omits *and everyone*

¹⁷David slaughtered them from twilight until the evening of the next day. None of them escaped, except four hundred young men who got on camels and fled.

¹⁸David recovered everything the Amalekites had taken; he also rescued his two wives. ¹⁹Nothing of theirs was missing from the youngest to the oldest, including the sons and daughters, and all the plunder the Amalekites had taken. David got everything back. ²⁰He took all the flocks and herds, which were driven ahead of the other livestock, and the people shouted, "This is David's plunder!"

²¹When David came to the two hundred men who had been too exhausted to go with him and had been left at the Wadi Besor, they came out to meet him and to meet the troops with him. When David approached the men, he greeted them, ²²but all the corrupt and worthless men among those who had gone with David argued, "Because they didn't go with us, we will not give any of the plunder we recovered to them except for each man's wife and children. They may take them and go."

²³But David said, "My brothers, you must not do this with what the LORD has given us. He protected us and handed over to us the raiders who came against us. ²⁴Who can agree to your proposal? The share of the one who goes into battle is to be the same as the share of the one who remains with the supplies. They will share equally." ²⁵And it has been so from that day forward. David established this policy^a as a law and an ordinance for Israel and it still continues today.

²⁶When David came to Ziklag, he sent some of the plunder to his friends, the elders of Judah, saying, "Here is a gift for you from the plunder of the LORD's enemies." ²⁷He sent gifts^b to those in Bethel, in Ramoth of the Negev, and in Jattir; ²⁸to those in Aroer, in Siphmoth, and in Eshtemoa; ²⁹to those in Racal, in the towns of the Jerahmeelites, and in the towns of the Kenites; ³⁰to those in Hormah, in Bor-ashan, and in Athach; ³¹to those in Hebron, and to

those in all the places where David and his men had roamed.

THE DEATH OF SAUL AND HIS SONS

31 The Philistines fought against Israel, and Israel's men fled from them and were killed on Mount Gilboa. ²The Philistines pursued Saul and his sons and killed his sons, Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua. ³When the battle intensified against Saul, the archers found him and severely wounded him. ⁴Then Saul said to his armor-bearer, "Draw your sword and run me through with it, or these uncircumcised men will come and run me through and torture me!" But his armor-bearer would not do it because he was terrified. Then Saul took his sword and fell on it. ⁵When his armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his own sword and died with him. ⁶So on that day, Saul died together with his three sons, his armor-bearer, and all his men.

⁷When the men of Israel on the other side of the valley and on the other side of the Jordan saw that Israel's men had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they abandoned the cities and fled. So the Philistines came and settled in them.

⁸The next day when the Philistines came to strip the slain, they found Saul and his three sons dead on Mount Gilboa. ⁹They cut off Saul's head, stripped off his armor, and sent messengers throughout the land of the Philistines to spread the good news in the temples of their idols and among the people. ¹⁰Then they put his armor in the temple of the Ashtoreths and hung his body on the wall of Beth-shan.

¹¹When the residents of Jabesh-gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, ¹²all their brave men set out, journeyed all night, and retrieved the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan. When they arrived at Jabesh, they burned the bodies there. ¹³Afterward, they took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree in Jabesh and fasted seven days.

^a30:25 this policy supplied for clarity ^b30:27 He sent gifts supplied for clarity ^c31:3 LXX reads and he was wounded under the ribs

2 SAMUEL

RESPONSES TO SAUL'S DEATH

1 After the death of Saul, David returned from defeating the Amalekites and stayed at Ziklag two days. ² On the third day a man with torn clothes and dust on his head came from Saul's camp. When he came to David, he fell to the ground and paid homage. ³ David asked him, "Where have you come from?"

He replied to him, "I've escaped from the Israelite camp."

⁴ "What was the outcome? Tell me," David asked him.

"The troops fled from the battle," he answered. "Many of the troops have fallen and are dead. Also, Saul and his son Jonathan are dead."

⁵ David asked the young man who had brought him the report, "How do you know Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?"

⁶ "I happened to be on Mount Gilboa," he replied, "and there was Saul, leaning on his spear. At that very moment the chariots and the cavalry were closing in on him. ⁷ When he turned around and saw me, he called out to me, so I answered: I'm at your service. ⁸ He asked me, 'Who are you?' I told him: I'm an Amalekite. ⁹ Then he begged me, 'Stand over me and kill me, for I'm mortally wounded, ^a but my life still lingers.' ¹⁰ So I stood over him and killed him because I knew that after he had fallen he couldn't survive. I took the crown that was on his head and the armband that was on his arm, and I've brought them here to my lord."

¹¹ Then David took hold of his clothes and tore them, and all the men with him did the same. ¹² They mourned, wept, and fasted until the evening for those who died by the sword — for Saul, his son Jonathan, the LORD's people, and the house of Israel.

¹³ David inquired of the young man who had brought him the report, "Where are you from?"

"I'm the son of a resident alien," he said. "I'm an Amalekite."

¹⁴ David questioned him, "How is it that you were not afraid to lift your hand to destroy the LORD's anointed?" ¹⁵ Then David summoned

one of his servants and said, "Come here and kill him!" The servant struck him, and he died.

¹⁶ For David had said to the Amalekite, "Your blood is on your own head because your own mouth testified against you by saying, 'I killed the LORD's anointed.'"

¹⁷ David sang the following lament for Saul and his son Jonathan, ¹⁸ and he ordered that the Judahites be taught The Song of the Bow. It is written in the Book of Jashar:^b

¹⁹ The splendor of Israel lies slain
on your heights.
How the mighty have fallen!
²⁰ Do not tell it in Gath,
don't announce it in the marketplaces
of Ashkelon,
or the daughters of the Philistines
will rejoice,
and the daughters
of the uncircumcised will celebrate.

²¹ Mountains of Gilboa,
let no dew or rain be on you,
or fields of offerings,^c
for there the shield of the mighty
was defiled —
the shield of Saul, no longer anointed
with oil.

²² Jonathan's bow never retreated,
Saul's sword never returned
unstained,^d
from the blood of the slain,
from the flesh^e of the mighty.

²³ Saul and Jonathan,
loved and delightful,
they were not parted in life or in death.
They were swifter than eagles,
stronger than lions.

²⁴ Daughters of Israel, weep for Saul,
who clothed you in scarlet,
with luxurious things,
who decked your garments
with gold ornaments.

²⁵ How the mighty have fallen in the thick
of battle!

Jonathan lies slain on your heights.

²⁶ I grieve for you, Jonathan, my brother.
You were such a friend to me.

^a1:9 LXX reads for terrible darkness has taken hold of me ^b1:18 Or of the Upright ^c1:21 LXX reads firstfruits ^d1:22 Lit empty ^e1:22 Lit fat

Your love for me was more wondrous
than the love of women.

- ²⁷ How the mighty have fallen
and the weapons of war have perished!

DAVID, KING OF JUDAH

2 Some time later, David inquired of the LORD: "Should I go to one of the towns of Judah?" The LORD answered him, "Go." Then David asked, "Where should I go?" "To Hebron," the LORD replied.

² So David went there with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelite and Abigail, the widow of Nabal the Carmelite. ³ In addition, David brought the men who were with him, each one with his family, and they settled in the towns near Hebron. ⁴ Then the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. They told David: "It was the men of Jabesh-gilead who buried Saul."

⁵ David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh-gilead and said to them, "The LORD bless you, because you have shown this kindness to Saul your lord when you buried him. ⁶ Now, may the LORD show kindness and faithfulness to you, and I will also show the same goodness to you because you have done this deed. ⁷ Therefore, be strong^a and valiant, for though Saul your lord is dead, the house of Judah has anointed me king over them."

⁸ Abner son of Ner, commander of Saul's army, took Saul's son Ish-bosheth^{b,c} and moved him to Mahanaim. ⁹ He made him king over Gilead, Asher, Jezreel, Ephraim, Benjamin — over all Israel. ¹⁰ Saul's son Ish-bosheth was forty years old when he became king over Israel; he reigned for two years. The house of Judah, however, followed David. ¹¹ The length of time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

¹² Abner son of Ner and soldiers of Ish-bosheth son of Saul marched out from Mahanaim to Gibeon. ¹³ So Joab son of Zeruiah and David's soldiers marched out and met them by the pool of Gibeon. The two groups took up positions on opposite sides of the pool.

¹⁴ Then Abner said to Joab, "Let's have the young men get up and compete in front of us." "Let them get up," Joab replied.

¹⁵ So they got up and were counted off — twelve for Benjamin and Ish-bosheth son of Saul, and twelve from David's soldiers. ¹⁶ Then

each man grabbed his opponent by the head and thrust his sword into his opponent's side so that they all died together. So this place, which is in Gibeon, is named Field of Blades.^d

¹⁷ The battle that day was extremely fierce, and Abner and the men of Israel were defeated by David's soldiers. ¹⁸ The three sons of Zeruiah were there: Joab, Abishai, and Asahel. Asahel was a fast runner, like one of the wild gazelles. ¹⁹ He chased Abner and did not turn to the right or the left in his pursuit of him. ²⁰ Abner glanced back and said, "Is that you, Asahel?" "Yes it is," Asahel replied.

²¹ Abner said to him, "Turn to your right or left, seize one of the young soldiers, and take whatever you can get from him." But Asahel would not stop chasing him. ²² Once again, Abner warned Asahel, "Stop chasing me. Why should I strike you to the ground? How could I ever look your brother Joab in the face?"

²³ But Asahel refused to turn away, so Abner hit him in the stomach with the butt of his spear. The spear went through his body, and he fell and died right there. As they all came to the place where Asahel had fallen and died, they stopped, ²⁴ but Joab and Abishai pursued Abner. By sunset, they had gone as far as the hill of Ammah, which is opposite Giah on the way to the wilderness of Gibeon.

²⁵ The Benjaminites rallied to Abner; they formed a unit and took their stand on top of a hill. ²⁶ Then Abner called out to Joab: "Must the sword devour forever? Don't you realize this will only end in bitterness? How long before you tell the troops to stop pursuing their brothers?"

²⁷ "As God lives," Joab replied, "if you had not spoken up, the troops wouldn't have stopped pursuing their brothers until morning." ²⁸ Then Joab blew the ram's horn, and all the troops stopped; they no longer pursued Israel or continued to fight. ²⁹ So Abner and his men marched through the Arabah all that night. They crossed the Jordan, marched all morning,^e and arrived at Mahanaim.

³⁰ When Joab had turned back from pursuing Abner, he gathered all the troops. In addition to Asahel, nineteen of David's soldiers were missing, ³¹ but they had killed 360 of the Benjaminites and Abner's men. ³² Afterward, they carried Asahel to his father's tomb in Bethlehem and buried him. Then Joab and

^a2:7 Lit Therefore, strengthen your hands ^b2:8 Some LXX mss read Ishbaal; 1Ch 8:33; 9:39 ^c2:8 = Man of Shame ^d2:16 Or Helkath-hazzurim ^e2:29 Or marched through the Bithron

his men marched all night and reached Hebron at dawn.

CIVIL WAR

3 During the long war between the house of Saul and the house of David, David was growing stronger and the house of Saul was becoming weaker.

² Sons were born to David in Hebron:

His firstborn was Amnon,
by Ahinoam the Jezreelite;

³ his second was Chileab,
by Abigail, the widow of Nabal
the Carmelite;

the third was Absalom,
son of Maacah the daughter
of King Talmai of Geshur;

⁴ the fourth was Adonijah,
son of Haggith;
the fifth was Shephatiah,
son of Abital;

⁵ the sixth was Ithream,
by David's wife Eglah.

These were born to David in Hebron.

⁶ During the war between the house of Saul and the house of David, Abner kept acquiring more power in the house of Saul. ⁷ Now Saul had a concubine whose name was Rizpah daughter of Aiah, and Ish-bosheth questioned Abner, "Why did you sleep with my father's concubine?"

⁸ Abner was very angry about Ish-bosheth's accusation. "Am I a dog's head^a who belongs to Judah?" he asked. "All this time I've been loyal to the family of your father Saul, to his brothers, and to his friends and haven't betrayed you to David, but now you accuse me of wrongdoing with this woman!" ⁹ May God punish Abner and do so severely if I don't do for David what the LORD swore to him: ¹⁰ to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul and establish the throne of David over Israel and Judah from Dan to Beer-sheba." ¹¹ Ish-bosheth did not dare respond to Abner because he was afraid of him.

¹² Abner sent messengers as his representatives to say to David, "Whose land is it? Make your covenant with me, and you can be certain I am on your side to turn all Israel over to you."

¹³ David replied, "Good, I will make a covenant with you. However, there's one thing I require of you: You will not see my face unless

you first bring Saul's daughter Michal when you come to see me."

¹⁴ Then David sent messengers to say to Ish-bosheth son of Saul, "Give me back my wife, Michal. I was engaged to her for the price of a hundred Philistine foreskins."

¹⁵ So Ish-bosheth sent someone to take her away from her husband, Paltiel son of Laish.

¹⁶ Her husband followed her, weeping all the way to Bahurim. Abner said to him, "Go back." So he went back.

THE ASSASSINATION OF ABNER

¹⁷ Abner conferred with the elders of Israel: "In the past you wanted David to be king over you. ¹⁸ Now take action, because the LORD has spoken concerning David: 'Through my servant David I will save my people Israel from the power of the Philistines and the power of all Israel's enemies.'"

¹⁹ Abner also informed the Benjaminites and went to Hebron to inform David about all that was agreed on by Israel and the whole house of Benjamin. ²⁰ When Abner and twenty men came to David at Hebron, David held a banquet for him and his men.

²¹ Abner said to David, "Let me now go and I will gather all Israel to my lord the king. They will make a covenant with you, and you will reign over all you desire." So David dismissed Abner, and he went in peace.

²² Just then David's soldiers and Joab returned from a raid and brought a large amount of plundered goods with them. Abner was not with David in Hebron because David had dismissed him, and he had gone in peace. ²³ When Joab and his whole army arrived, Joab was informed, "Abner son of Ner came to see the king, the king dismissed him, and he went in peace."

²⁴ Joab went to the king and said, "What have you done? Look here, Abner came to you. Why did you dismiss him? Now he's getting away."

²⁵ You know that Abner son of Ner came to deceive you and to find out about your military activities^b and everything you're doing."

²⁶ Then Joab left David and sent messengers after Abner. They brought him back from the well^c of Sirah, but David was unaware of it. ²⁷ When Abner returned to Hebron, Joab pulled him aside to the middle of the city gate, as if to speak to him privately, and there Joab stabbed him in the stomach. So Abner died

^a3:8 = a despised person ^b3:25 Lit your going out and your coming in ^c3:26 Or cistern

in revenge for the death of Asahel,^a Joab's brother.

²⁸ David heard about it later and said: "I and my kingdom are forever innocent before the LORD concerning the blood of Abner son of Ner. ²⁹ May it hang over Joab's head and his father's whole family, and may the house of Joab never be without someone who has a discharge or a skin disease, or a man who can only work a spindle,^b or someone who falls by the sword or starves." ³⁰ Joab and his brother Abishai killed Abner because he had put their brother Asahel to death in the battle at Gibeon.

³¹ David then ordered Joab and all the people who were with him, "Tear your clothes, put on sackcloth, and mourn over Abner." And King David walked behind the coffin.^c

³² When they buried Abner in Hebron, the king wept aloud at Abner's tomb. All the people wept, ³³ and the king sang a lament for Abner: Should Abner die as a fool dies?

³⁴ Your hands were not bound,
your feet not placed in bronze shackles.
You fell like one who falls victim
to criminals.

And all the people wept over him even more.

³⁵ Then they came to urge David to eat food while it was still day, but David took an oath: "May God punish me and do so severely if I taste bread or anything else before sunset!"

³⁶ All the people took note of this, and it pleased them. In fact, everything the king did pleased them. ³⁷ On that day all the troops and all Israel were convinced that the king had no part in the killing of Abner son of Ner.

³⁸ Then the king said to his soldiers, "You must know that a great leader has fallen in Israel today. ³⁹ As for me, even though I am the anointed king, I have little power today. These men, the sons of Zeruiah, are too fierce for me. May the LORD repay the evildoer according to his evil!"

THE ASSASSINATION OF ISH-BOSHETH

4 When Saul's son Ish-bosheth heard that Abner had died in Hebron, he gave up,^d and all Israel was dismayed. ² Saul's son had two men who were leaders of raiding parties: one named Baanah and the other Rechab, sons of Rimmon the Beerothite of the Benjaminites. Beeroth is also considered part of Benjamin,

³ and the Beerothites fled to Gittaim and still reside there as aliens today.

⁴ Saul's son Jonathan had a son whose feet were crippled. He was five years old when the report about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel. His nanny^e picked him up and fled, but as she was hurrying to flee, he fell and became lame. His name was Mephibosheth.

⁵ Rechab and Baanah, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, set out and arrived at Ish-bosheth's house during the heat of the day while the king was taking his midday nap. ⁶ They entered the interior of the house as if to get wheat and stabbed him in the stomach. Then Rechab and his brother Baanah escaped. ⁷ They had entered the house while Ish-bosheth was lying on his bed in his bedroom and stabbed and killed him. They removed his head, took it, and traveled by way of the Arabah all night. ⁸ They brought Ish-bosheth's head to David at Hebron and said to the king, "Here's the head of Ish-bosheth son of Saul, your enemy who intended to take your life. Today the LORD has granted vengeance to my lord the king against Saul and his offspring."

⁹ But David answered Rechab and his brother Baanah, sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, "As the LORD lives, the one who has redeemed my life from every distress, ¹⁰ when the person told me, 'Look, Saul is dead,' he thought he was a bearer of good news, but I seized him and put him to death at Ziklag. That was my reward to him for his news! ¹¹ How much more when wicked men kill a righteous man in his own house on his own bed! So now, should I not require his blood from you and purge you from the earth?"

¹² So David gave orders to the young men, and they killed Rechab and Baanah. They cut off their hands and feet and hung their bodies by the pool in Hebron, but they took Ish-bosheth's head and buried it in Abner's tomb in Hebron.

DAVID, KING OF ISRAEL

5 All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, "Here we are, your own flesh and blood." ² Even while Saul was king over us, you were the one who led us out to battle and brought us back. The LORD also said to you, 'You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will be ruler over Israel.'

^a3:27 Lit And he died for the blood of Asahel ^b3:29 LXX reads who uses a crutch ^c3:31 Or the bier; lit the bed ^d4:1 Lit his hands dropped ^e4:4 Lit His nurse ^f5:1 Lit your bone and your flesh

³ So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron. King David made a covenant with them at Hebron in the LORD's presence, and they anointed David king over Israel.

⁴ David was thirty years old when he began his reign; he reigned forty years. ⁵ In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah.

⁶ The king and his men marched to Jerusalem against the Jebusites who inhabited the land. The Jebusites had said to David: "You will never get in here. Even the blind and lame can repel you" thinking, "David can't get in here."

⁷ Yet David did capture the stronghold of Zion, that is, the city of David. ⁸ He said that day, "Whoever attacks the Jebusites must go through the water shaft to reach the lame and the blind who are despised by David."^a For this reason it is said, "The blind and the lame will never enter the house."^b

⁹ David took up residence in the stronghold, which he named the city of David. He built it up all the way around from the supporting terraces inward. ¹⁰ David became more and more powerful, and the LORD God of Armies was with him. ¹¹ King Hiram of Tyre sent envoys to David; he also sent cedar logs, carpenters, and stonemasons, and they built a palace for David. ¹² Then David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel and had exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel.

¹³ After he arrived from Hebron, David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, and more sons and daughters were born to him. ¹⁴ These are the names of those born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, ¹⁵ Ibhaz, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, ¹⁶ Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

¹⁷ When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over Israel, they all went in search of David, but he heard about it and went down to the stronghold. ¹⁸ So the Philistines came and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim.

¹⁹ Then David inquired of the LORD: "Should I attack the Philistines? Will you hand them over to me?"

The LORD replied to David, "Attack, for I will certainly hand the Philistines over to you."

²⁰ So David went to Baal-perazim and defeated them there and said, "Like a bursting

flood, the LORD has burst out against my enemies before me." Therefore, he named that place The Lord Bursts Out. ^c ²¹ The Philistines abandoned their idols there, and David and his men carried them off.

²² The Philistines came up again and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim. ²³ So David inquired of the LORD, and he answered, "Do not attack directly, but circle around behind them and come at them opposite the balsam trees. ²⁴ When you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, act decisively, for then the LORD will have gone out ahead of you to strike down the army of the Philistines." ²⁵ So David did exactly as the LORD commanded him, and he struck down the Philistines all the way from Geba to Gezer.

DAVID MOVES THE ARK

6 David again assembled all the fit young men in Israel: thirty thousand. ² He and all his troops set out to bring the ark of God from Baale-judah. ^d The ark bears the Name, the name of the LORD of Armies who is enthroned between the cherubim. ³ They set the ark of God on a new cart and transported it from Abinadab's house, which was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, ^e sons of Abinadab, were guiding the cart ⁴ and brought it with the ark of God from Abinadab's house on the hill. Ahio walked in front of the ark. ⁵ David and the whole house of Israel were dancing before the LORD with all kinds of fir wood instruments, ^f lyres, harps, tambourines, sistrums, ^g and cymbals.

⁶ When they came to Nacon's threshing floor, Uzzah reached out to the ark of God and took hold of it because the oxen had stumbled. ⁷ Then the LORD's anger burned against Uzzah, and God struck him dead on the spot for his irreverence, and he died there next to the ark of God. ⁸ David was angry because of the LORD's outburst against Uzzah, so he named that place Outburst Against Uzzah, ^h as it is today. ⁹ David feared the LORD that day and said, "How can the ark of the LORD ever come to me?" ¹⁰ So he was not willing to bring the ark of the LORD to the city of David; instead, he diverted it to the house of Obed-edom of Gath. ¹¹ The ark of the LORD remained in his house three months, and the LORD blessed Obed-edom and his whole family.

^a5:8 Alt Hb tradition, LXX, Tg, Syr read *who despise David* ^b5:8 Or *temple, or palace* ^c5:20 Or *Baal-perazim*; 2Sm 6:8; 1Ch

13:11 ^d6:2 = Kiriath-jearim in 1Sm 7:1; 1Ch 13:6; 2Ch 1:4 ^e6:3 Or *And his brothers* ^f6:5 DSS, LXX read *with tuned instruments*

with strength, with songs; 1Ch 13:8 ^g6:5 = an Egyptian percussion instrument ^h6:8 Or *Perez-uzzah*; 2Sm 5:20

¹² It was reported to King David: "The LORD has blessed Obed-edom's family and all that belongs to him because of the ark of God." So David went and had the ark of God brought up from Obed-edom's house to the city of David with rejoicing. ¹³ When those carrying the ark of the LORD advanced six steps, he sacrificed an ox and a fattened calf. ¹⁴ David was dancing^a with all his might before the LORD wearing a linen ephod. ¹⁵ He and the whole house of Israel were bringing up the ark of the LORD with shouts and the sound of the ram's horn. ¹⁶ As the ark of the LORD was entering the city of David, Saul's daughter Michal looked down from the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD, and she despised him in her heart.

¹⁷ They brought the ark of the LORD and set it in its place inside the tent David had pitched for it. Then David offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings in the LORD's presence. ¹⁸ When David had finished offering the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of Armies. ¹⁹ Then he distributed a loaf of bread, a date cake, and a raisin cake to each one in the entire Israelite community, both men and women. Then all the people went home.

²⁰ When David returned home to bless his household, Saul's daughter Michal came out to meet him. "How the king of Israel honored himself today!" she said. "He exposed himself today in the sight of the slave girls of his subjects like a vulgar person would expose himself."

²¹ David replied to Michal, "It was before the LORD who chose me over your father and his whole family to appoint me ruler over the LORD's people Israel. I will dance before the LORD, ²² and I will dishonor myself and humble myself even more. ^{b,c} However, by the slave girls you spoke about, I will be honored." ²³ And Saul's daughter Michal had no child to the day of her death.

THE LORD'S COVENANT WITH DAVID

7 When the king had settled into his palace and the LORD had given him rest on every side from all his enemies, ² the king said to the prophet Nathan, "Look, I am living in a cedar house while the ark of God sits inside tent curtains."

³ So Nathan told the king, "Go and do all that is on your mind, for the LORD is with you."

⁴ But that night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: ⁵ "Go to my servant David and say, 'This is what the LORD says: Are you to build me a house to dwell in?' ⁶ From the time I brought the Israelites out of Egypt until today I have not dwelt in a house; instead, I have been moving around with a tent as my dwelling. ⁷ In all my journeys with all the Israelites, have I ever spoken a word to one of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, asking: 'Why haven't you built me a house of cedar?'

⁸ "So now this is what you are to say to my servant David: 'This is what the LORD of Armies says: I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, to be ruler over my people Israel. ⁹ I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have destroyed all your enemies before you. I will make a great name for you like that of the greatest on the earth. ¹⁰ I will designate a place for my people Israel and plant them, so that they may live there and not be disturbed again. Evildoers will not continue to oppress them as they have done ¹¹ ever since the day I ordered judges to be over my people Israel. I will give you rest from all your enemies.

"The LORD declares to you: The LORD himself will make a house for you. ¹² When your time comes and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up after you your descendant, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He is the one who will build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will discipline him with a rod of men and blows from mortals. ¹⁵ But my faithful love will never leave him as it did when I removed it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. ¹⁶ Your house and kingdom will endure before me^d forever, and your throne will be established forever."

¹⁷ Nathan reported all these words and this entire vision to David.

DAVID'S PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

¹⁸ Then King David went in, sat in the LORD's presence, and said,

Who am I, Lord God, and what is my house that you have brought me this far?

^a6:14 Or *whirling* ^b6:22 LXX reads *more and I will be humble in your eyes* ^c6:22 Lit *more and I will be humble in my own eyes* ^d7:16 Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr; other Hb mss read *you*

¹⁹ What you have done so far^a was a little thing to you, Lord God, for you have also spoken about your servant's house in the distant future. And this is a revelation^b for mankind, Lord God. ²⁰ What more can David say to you? You know your servant, Lord God. ²¹ Because of your word and according to your will, you have revealed all these great things to your servant.

²² This is why you are great, Lord God. There is no one like you, and there is no God besides you, as all we have heard confirms. ²³ And who is like your people Israel? God came to one nation on earth in order to redeem a people for himself, to make a name for himself, and to perform for them^c great and awesome acts,^d driving out nations and their gods before your people you redeemed for yourself from Egypt. ²⁴ You established your people Israel to be your own people forever, and you, LORD, have become their God.

²⁵ Now, LORD God, fulfill the promise forever that you have made to your servant and his house. Do as you have promised, ²⁶ so that your name will be exalted forever, when it is said, "The LORD of Armies is God over Israel." The house of your servant David will be established before you ²⁷ since you, LORD of Armies, God of Israel, have revealed this to your servant when you said, "I will build a house for you." Therefore, your servant has found the courage to pray this prayer to you. ²⁸ Lord God, you are God; your words are true, and you have promised this good thing to your servant. ²⁹ Now, please bless your servant's house so that it will continue before you forever. For you, Lord God, have spoken, and with your blessing your servant's house will be blessed forever.

DAVID'S VICTORIES

8 After this, David defeated the Philistines, subdued them, and took Metheg-ammah^e from Philistine control. ^f ² He also defeated the Moabites, and after making them lie down on the ground, he measured them off with a

cord. He measured every two cord lengths of those to be put to death and one full length of those to be kept alive. So the Moabites became David's subjects and brought tribute.

³ David also defeated Hadadezer son of Rehob, king of Zobah, when he went to restore his control at the Euphrates River. ⁴ David captured seventeen hundred horsemen^g and twenty thousand foot soldiers from him, and he hamstrung all the horses and kept a hundred chariots.^h

⁵ When the Arameans of Damascus came to assist King Hadadezer of Zobah, David struck down twenty-two thousand Aramean men.

⁶ Then he placed garrisons in Aram of Damascus, and the Arameans became David's subjects and brought tribute. The LORD made David victorious wherever he went.

⁷ David took the gold shields of Hadadezer's officers and brought them to Jerusalem. ⁸ King David also took huge quantities of bronze from Betahⁱ and Berothai, Hadadezer's cities.

⁹ When King Toi of Hamath heard that David had defeated the entire army of Hadadezer, ¹⁰ he sent his son Joram to King David to greet him and to congratulate him because David had fought against Hadadezer and defeated him, for Toi and Hadadezer had fought many wars. Joram had items of silver, gold, and bronze with him. ¹¹ King David also dedicated these to the LORD, along with the silver and gold he had dedicated from all the nations he had subdued — ¹² from Edom,^j Moab, the Ammonites, the Philistines, the Amalekites, and the spoil of Hadadezer son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

¹³ David made a reputation for himself when he returned from striking down eighteen thousand Edomites^k in Salt Valley.^l ¹⁴ He placed garrisons throughout Edom, and all the Edomites were subject to David. The LORD made David victorious wherever he went.

¹⁵ So David reigned over all Israel, administering justice and righteousness for all his people.

¹⁶ Joab son of Zeruiah was over the army; Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was court historian;

¹⁷ Zadok son of Ahitub and Ahimelech son of Abiathar were priests; Seraiah was court secretary;

^a7:19 Lit *Yet this* ^b7:19 Or *custom, or instruction* ^c7:23 Some Hb mss, Tg, Vg, Syr; other Hb mss read *you* ^d7:23 LXX; MT reads *acts for your land* ^e8:1 Or *took control of the mother city*; Hb obscure ^f8:1 LXX reads *them, and David took tribute out of the hand of the Philistines* ^g8:4 LXX, DSS read *1,000 chariots and 7,000 horsemen* ^h8:4 Or *chariot horses* ⁱ8:8 Some LXX mss, Syr read *Tebah* ^j8:12 Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr; other Hb mss read *Aram*; 1Ch 18:11 ^k8:13 Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr; other Hb mss read *Arameans*; 1Ch 18:12 ^l8:13 = the Dead Sea region

- ¹⁸ Benaiah son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's sons were chief officials.^A

DAVID'S KINDNESS TO MEPHIBOSHETH

9 David asked, "Is there anyone remaining from the family of Saul I can show kindness to for Jonathan's sake?" ² There was a servant of Saul's family named Ziba. They summoned him to David, and the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?"

"I am your servant," he replied.

³ So the king asked, "Is there anyone left of Saul's family that I can show the kindness of God to?"

Ziba said to the king, "There is still Jonathan's son who was injured in both feet."

⁴ The king asked him, "Where is he?"

Ziba answered the king, "You'll find him in Lo-debar at the house of Machir son of Ammiel." ⁵ So King David had him brought from the house of Machir son of Ammiel in Lo-debar.

⁶ Mephibosheth son of Jonathan son of Saul came to David, fell facedown, and paid homage. David said, "Mephibosheth!"

"I am your servant," he replied.

⁷ "Don't be afraid," David said to him, "since I intend to show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all your grandfather Saul's fields, and you will always eat meals at my table."

⁸ Mephibosheth paid homage and said, "What is your servant that you take an interest in a dead dog like me?"

⁹ Then the king summoned Saul's attendant Ziba and said to him, "I have given to your master's grandson all that belonged to Saul and his family. ¹⁰ You, your sons, and your servants are to work the ground for him, and you are to bring in the crops so your master's grandson will have food to eat. But Mephibosheth, your master's grandson, is always to eat at my table." Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.

¹¹ Ziba said to the king, "Your servant will do all my lord the king commands."

So Mephibosheth ate at David's ⁸ table just like one of the king's sons. ¹² Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Mica. All those living in Ziba's house were Mephibosheth's servants. ¹³ However, Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem because he always ate at the king's table. His feet had been injured.

WAR WITH THE AMMONITES

10 Some time later, the king of the Ammonites died, and his son Hanun became king in his place. ² Then David said, "I'll show kindness to Hanun son of Nahash, just as his father showed kindness to me."

So David sent his emissaries to console Hanun concerning his father. However, when they arrived in the land of the Ammonites, ³ the Ammonite leaders said to Hanun their lord, "Just because David has sent men with condolences for you, do you really believe he's showing respect for your father? Instead, hasn't David sent his emissaries in order to scout out the city, spy on it, and demolish it?" ⁴ So Hanun took David's emissaries, shaved off half their beards, cut their clothes in half at the hips, and sent them away.

⁵ When this was reported to David, he sent someone to meet them, since they were deeply humiliated. The king said, "Stay in Jericho until your beards grow back; then return."

⁶ When the Ammonites realized they had become repulsive to David, they hired twenty thousand foot soldiers from the Arameans of Beth-rehob and Zobah, one thousand men from the king of Maacah, and twelve thousand men from Tob.

⁷ David heard about it and sent Joab and all the elite troops. ⁸ The Ammonites marched out and lined up in battle formation at the entrance to the city gate while the Arameans of Zobah and Rehob and the men of Tob and Maacah were in the field by themselves. ⁹ When Joab saw that there was a battle line in front of him and another behind him, he chose some of Israel's finest young men and lined up in formation to engage the Arameans. ¹⁰ He placed the rest of the forces under the command of his brother Abishai. They lined up in formation to engage the Ammonites.

¹¹ "If the Arameans are too strong for me," Joab said, "then you will be my help. However, if the Ammonites are too strong for you, I'll come to help you. ¹² Be strong! Let's prove ourselves strong for our people and for the cities of our God. May the LORD's will be done."^C

¹³ Joab and his troops advanced to fight against the Arameans, and they fled before him. ¹⁴ When the Ammonites saw that the Arameans had fled, they too fled before Abishai and entered the city. So Joab withdrew from

^A8:18 LXX; MT reads *were priests*; 1Ch 18:17 ^B9:11 LXX; Syr reads *the king's*; Vg reads *your*; MT reads *my* ^C10:12 Lit *the LORD do what is good in his eyes*

the attack against the Ammonites and went to Jerusalem.

¹⁵ When the Arameans saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they regrouped. ¹⁶ Hadadezer sent messengers to bring the Arameans who were beyond the Euphrates River, and they came to Helam with Shobach, commander of Hadadezer's army, leading them.

¹⁷ When this was reported to David, he gathered all Israel, crossed the Jordan, and went to Helam. Then the Arameans lined up to engage David in battle and fought against him. ¹⁸ But the Arameans fled before Israel, and David killed seven hundred of their chariot-eers and forty thousand foot soldiers. ^a He also struck down Shobach commander of their army, who died there. ¹⁹ When all the kings who were Hadadezer's subjects saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they made peace with Israel and became their subjects. After this, the Arameans were afraid to ever help the Ammonites again.

DAVID'S ADULTERY WITH BATHSHEBA

11 In the spring when kings march out to war, David sent Joab with his officers and all Israel. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah, but David remained in Jerusalem.

² One evening David got up from his bed and strolled around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing — a very beautiful woman. ³ So David sent someone to inquire about her, and he said, "Isn't this Bathsheba, daughter of Eliam and wife of Uriah the Hethite?" ^b

⁴ David sent messengers to get her, and when she came to him, he slept with her. Now she had just been purifying herself from her uncleanness. Afterward, she returned home. ⁵ The woman conceived and sent word to inform David: "I am pregnant."

⁶ David sent orders to Joab: "Send me Uriah the Hethite." So Joab sent Uriah to David. ⁷ When Uriah came to him, David asked how Joab and the troops were doing and how the war was going. ⁸ Then he said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." So Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the king followed him. ⁹ But Uriah slept at the door of the palace with all his master's servants; he did not go down to his house.

¹⁰ When it was reported to David, "Uriah didn't go home," David questioned Uriah, "Haven't you just come from a journey? Why didn't you go home?"

¹¹ Uriah answered David, "The ark, Israel, and Judah are dwelling in tents, and my master Joab and his soldiers^c are camping in the open field. How can I enter my house to eat and drink and sleep with my wife? As surely as you live and by your life, I will not do this!"

¹² "Stay here today also," David said to Uriah, "and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah stayed in Jerusalem that day and the next. ¹³ Then David invited Uriah to eat and drink with him, and David got him drunk. He went out in the evening to lie down on his cot with his master's servants, but he did not go home.

URIAH'S DEATH ARRANGED

¹⁴ The next morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. ¹⁵ In the letter he wrote: Put Uriah at the front of the fiercest fighting, then withdraw from him so that he is struck down and dies.

¹⁶ When Joab was besieging the city, he put Uriah in the place where he knew the best enemy soldiers were. ¹⁷ Then the men of the city came out and attacked Joab, and some of the men from David's soldiers fell in battle; Uriah the Hethite also died.

¹⁸ Joab sent someone to report to David all the details of the battle. ¹⁹ He commanded the messenger, "When you've finished telling the king all the details of the battle — ²⁰ if the king's anger gets stirred up and he asks you, 'Why did you get so close to the city to fight? Didn't you realize they would shoot from the top of the wall?' ²¹ At Thebez, who struck Abimelech son of Jerubbesheth?^{d,e} Didn't a woman drop an upper millstone on him from the top of the wall so that he died? Why did you get so close to the wall?' — then say, 'Your servant Uriah the Hethite is dead also.'" ²² Then the messenger left.

When he arrived, he reported to David all that Joab had sent him to tell. ²³ The messenger reported to David, "The men gained the advantage over us and came out against us in the field, but we counterattacked right up to the entrance of the city gate. ²⁴ However, the archers shot down on your servants from the top of the wall, and some of the king's

^a10:18 Some LXX mss; MT reads *horsemen*; 1Ch 19:18 ^b11:3 DSS add *Joab's armor-bearer* ^c11:11 Lit *servants* ^d11:21 LXX reads *Jerubbaal* ^e11:21 = Gideon

servants died. Your servant Uriah the Hethite is also dead."

²⁵ David told the messenger, "Say this to Joab: 'Don't let this matter upset you because the sword devours all alike. Intensify your fight against the city and demolish it.' Encourage him."

²⁶ When Uriah's wife heard that her husband Uriah had died, she mourned for him.^A

²⁷ When the time of mourning ended, David had her brought to his house. She became his wife and bore him a son. However, the LORD considered what David had done to be evil.

NATHAN'S PARABLE AND DAVID'S REPENTANCE

12 So the LORD sent Nathan to David. When he arrived, he said to him:

There were two men in a certain city, one rich and the other poor.² The rich man had very large flocks and herds,³ but the poor man had nothing except one small ewe lamb that he had bought. He raised her, and she grew up with him and with his children. From his meager food she would eat, from his cup she would drink, and in his arms she would sleep. She was like a daughter to him.⁴ Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man could not bring himself to take one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for his guest.⁸

⁵ David was infuriated with the man and said to Nathan: "As the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die!⁶ Because he has done this thing and shown no pity, he must pay four lambs for that lamb."

⁷ Nathan replied to David, "You are the man! This is what the LORD God of Israel says: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I rescued you from Saul.⁸ I gave your master's house to you and your master's wives into your arms,^c and I gave you the house of Israel and Judah, and if that was not enough, I would have given you even more.⁹ Why then have you despised the LORD's command by doing what I consider^d evil? You struck down Uriah the Hethite with the sword and took his wife as your own wife — you murdered him with the Ammonite's sword.¹⁰ Now therefore, the sword will never leave your house because you despised me

and took the wife of Uriah the Hethite to be your own wife.'

¹¹ "This is what the LORD says, 'I am going to bring disaster on you from your own family: I will take your wives and give them to another^e before your very eyes, and he will sleep with them in broad daylight.^f' ¹² You acted in secret, but I will do this before all Israel and in broad daylight.'^g

¹³ David responded to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."

Then Nathan replied to David, "And the LORD has taken away your sin; you will not die.¹⁴ However, because you treated^h the LORD with such contempt in this matter, the son born to you will die."¹⁵ Then Nathan went home.

THE DEATH OF BATHSHEBA'S SON

The LORD struck the baby that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and he became deathly ill.¹⁶ David pleaded with God for the boy. He fasted, went home, and spent the night lying on the ground.¹⁷ The elders of his house stood beside him to get him up from the ground, but he was unwilling and would not eat anything with them.

¹⁸ On the seventh day the baby died. But David's servants were afraid to tell him the baby was dead. They said, "Look, while the baby was alive, we spoke to him, and he wouldn't listen to us. So how can we tell him the baby is dead? He may do something desperate."

¹⁹ When David saw that his servants were whispering to each other, he guessed that the baby was dead. So he asked his servants, "Is the baby dead?"

"He is dead," they replied.

²⁰ Then David got up from the ground. He washed, anointed himself, changed his clothes, went to the LORD's house, and worshiped. Then he went home and requested something to eat. So they served him food, and he ate.

²¹ His servants asked him, "Why have you done this? While the baby was alive, you fasted and wept, but when he died, you got up and ate food."

²² He answered, "While the baby was alive, I fasted and wept because I thought, 'Who knows? The LORD may be gracious to me and let him live.'²³ But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I'll go to him, but he will never return to me."

^A11:26 Lit her husband ^B12:4 Lit for the man who had come to him ^C12:8 Lit bosom ^D12:9 Alt Hb tradition reads what he considers ^E12:11 Or to your neighbor ^F12:11 Lit in the eyes of this sun ^G12:12 Lit and before the sun ^H12:14 Alt Hb tradition, one LXX ms; MT reads treated the enemies of; DSS read treated the word of

THE BIRTH OF SOLOMON

²⁴ Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba; he went to her and slept with her. She gave birth to a son and named ^a him Solomon. ^b The LORD loved him, ²⁵ and he sent a message through the prophet Nathan, who named ^c him Jedidiah, ^d because of the LORD.

CAPTURE OF THE CITY OF RABBAH

²⁶ Joab fought against Rabbah of the Ammonites and captured the royal fortress. ²⁷ Then Joab sent messengers to David to say, "I have fought against Rabbah and have also captured its water supply. ²⁸ Now therefore, assemble the rest of the troops, lay siege to the city, and capture it. Otherwise I will be the one to capture the city, and it will be named after me." ²⁹ So David assembled all the troops and went to Rabbah; he fought against it and captured it. ³⁰ He took the crown from the head of their king, ^e and it was placed on David's head. The crown weighed seventy-five pounds ^f of gold, and it had a precious stone in it. In addition, David took away a large quantity of plunder from the city. ³¹ He removed the people who were in the city and put them to work with saws, iron picks, and iron axes, and to labor at brickmaking. He did the same to all the Ammonite cities. Then he and all his troops returned to Jerusalem.

AMNON RAPES TAMAR

13 Some time passed. David's son Absalom had a beautiful sister named Tamar, and David's son Amnon was infatuated with her. ² Amnon was frustrated to the point of making himself sick over his sister Tamar because she was a virgin, but it seemed impossible to do anything to her. ³ Amnon had a friend named Jonadab, a son of David's brother Shimeah. Jonadab was a very shrewd man, ⁴ and he asked Amnon, "Why are you, the king's son, so miserable every morning? Won't you tell me?"

Amnon replied, "I'm in love with Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister."

⁵ Jonadab said to him, "Lie down on your bed and pretend you're sick. When your father comes to see you, say to him, 'Please let my sister Tamar come and give me something to eat. Let her prepare a meal in my presence so I can watch and eat from her hand.'"

⁶ So Amnon lay down and pretended to be sick. When the king came to see him, Amnon said to him, "Please let my sister Tamar come and make a couple of cakes in my presence so I can eat from her hand."

⁷ David sent word to Tamar at the palace: "Please go to your brother Amnon's house and prepare a meal for him."

⁸ Then Tamar went to his house while Amnon was lying down. She took dough, kneaded it, made cakes in his presence, and baked them. ⁹ She brought the pan and set it down in front of him, but he refused to eat. Amnon said, "Everyone leave me!" And everyone left him. ¹⁰ "Bring the meal to the bedroom," Amnon told Tamar, "so I can eat from your hand." Tamar took the cakes she had made and went to her brother Amnon's bedroom. ¹¹ When she brought them to him to eat, he grabbed her and said, "Come sleep with me, my sister!"

¹² "Don't, my brother!" she cried. "Don't disgrace me, for such a thing should never be done in Israel. Don't commit this outrage! ¹³ Where could I ever go with my humiliation? And you — you would be like one of the outrageous fools in Israel! Please, speak to the king, for he won't keep me from you." ¹⁴ But he refused to listen to her, and because he was stronger than she was, he disgraced her by raping her.

¹⁵ So Amnon hated Tamar with such intensity that the hatred he hated her with was greater than the love he had loved her with. "Get out of here!" he said.

¹⁶ "No," she cried, "sending me away is much worse than the great wrong you've already done to me!"

But he refused to listen to her. ¹⁷ Instead, he called to the servant who waited on him: "Get this away from me, throw her out, and bolt the door behind her!" ¹⁸ Amnon's servant threw her out and bolted the door behind her. Now Tamar was wearing a long-sleeved garment, because this is what the king's virgin daughters wore. ¹⁹ Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the long-sleeved garment she was wearing. She put her hand on her head and went away crying out.

²⁰ Her brother Absalom said to her: "Has your brother Amnon been with you? Be quiet for now, my sister. He is your brother. Don't take this thing to heart." So Tamar lived as a

^a12:24 Alt Hb tradition reads *he named* ^b12:24 In Hb, the name *Solomon* sounds like "peace." ^c12:25 Or *prophet* to name ^d12:25 = Beloved of the LORD ^e12:30 LXX reads of *Milcom*; some emend to *Molech*; 1Kg 11:5,33 ^f12:30 Lit a talent ^g13:11 Lit said to her ^h13:16 Lit she said to him ⁱ13:18 Or an ornamented; Gn 37:3

desolate woman in the house of her brother Absalom.

ABSALOM MURDERS AMNON

²¹ When King David heard about all these things, he was furious.^a ²² Absalom didn't say anything to Amnon, either good or bad, because he hated Amnon since he disgraced his sister Tamar.

²³ Two years later, Absalom's sheepshearers were at Baal-hazor near Ephraim, and Absalom invited all the king's sons.²⁴ Then he went to the king and said, "Your servant has just hired sheepshearers. Will the king and his servants please come with your servant?"

²⁵ The king replied to Absalom, "No, my son, we should not all go, or we would be a burden to you." Although Absalom urged him, he wasn't willing to go, though he did bless him.

²⁶ "If not," Absalom said, "please let my brother Amnon go with us."

The king asked him, "Why should he go with you?" ²⁷ But Absalom urged him, so he sent Amnon and all the king's sons.^b

²⁸ Now Absalom commanded his young men, "Watch Amnon until he is in a good mood from the wine. When I order you to strike Amnon, then kill him. Don't be afraid. Am I not the one who has commanded you? Be strong and valiant!" ²⁹ So Absalom's young men did to Amnon just as Absalom had commanded. Then all the rest of the king's sons got up, and each fled on his mule.

³⁰ While they were on the way, a report reached David: "Absalom struck down all the king's sons; not even one of them survived!" ³¹ In response the king stood up, tore his clothes, and lay down on the ground, and all his servants stood by with their clothes torn.

³² But Jonadab, son of David's brother Shim-eah, spoke up: "My lord must not think they have killed all the young men, the king's sons, because only Amnon is dead. In fact, Absalom has planned this^c ever since the day Amnon disgraced his sister Tamar.³³ So now, my lord the king, don't take seriously the report that says all the king's sons are dead. Only Amnon is dead."

³⁴ Meanwhile, Absalom had fled. When the young man who was standing watch looked

up, there were many people coming from the road west of him from the side of the mountain.^d ³⁵ Jonadab said to the king, "Look, the king's sons have come! It's exactly like your servant said."³⁶ Just as he finished speaking, the king's sons entered and wept loudly. Then the king and all his servants also wept very bitterly.³⁷ But Absalom fled and went to Talmai son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. And David mourned for his son^e every day.

³⁸ After Absalom had fled to Geshur and had been there three years, ³⁹ King David^f longed to go to Absalom, for David had finished grieving over Amnon's death.

ABSALOM RESTORED TO DAVID

14 Joab son of Zeruiah realized that the king's mind was on Absalom. ² So Joab sent someone to Tekoa to bring a wise woman from there. He told her, "Pretend to be in mourning: dress in mourning clothes and don't put on any oil. Act like a woman who has been mourning for the dead for a long time.³ Go to the king and speak these words to him." Then Joab told her exactly what to say.⁶

⁴ When the woman from Tekoa came^g to the king, she fell facedown to the ground, paid homage, and said, "Help me, Your Majesty!"

⁵ "What's the matter?" the king asked her.

"Sadly, I am a widow; my husband died," she said. ⁶ "Your servant had two sons. They were fighting in the field with no one to separate them, and one struck the other and killed him. ⁷ Now the whole clan has risen up against your servant and said, 'Hand over the one who killed his brother so we may put him to death for the life of the brother he murdered. We will eliminate the heir!' They would extinguish my one remaining ember by not preserving my husband's name or posterity on earth."

⁸ The king told the woman, "Go home. I will issue a command on your behalf."

⁹ Then the woman of Tekoa said to the king, "My lord the king, may any blame be on me and my father's family, and may the king and his throne be innocent."

¹⁰ "Whoever speaks to you," the king said, "bring him to me. He will not trouble you again!"

¹¹ She replied, "Please, may the king invoke the LORD your God, so that the avenger of blood

^a13:21 LXX, DSS add but he did not grieve the spirit of Amnon his son, for he loved him because he was his firstborn; 1Kg 1:6

^b13:27 LXX adds And Absalom prepared a feast like a royal feast. ^c13:32 Lit In fact, it was established on the mouth of

Absalom ^d13:34 LXX adds And the watchman came and reported to the king saying, "I see men on the Horonaim road on the side of the mountain." ^e13:37 Probably Amnon ^f13:39 DSS, LXX, Tg read David's spirit ^g14:3 Lit Joab put the words into her mouth

^h14:4 Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Tg, Vg; other Hb mss read spoke

will not increase the loss, and they will not eliminate my son!"

"As the LORD lives," he vowed, "not a hair of your son will fall to the ground."

¹² Then the woman said, "Please, may your servant speak a word to my lord the king?"

"Speak," he replied.

¹³ The woman asked, "Why have you devised something similar against the people of God? When the king spoke as he did about this matter, he has pronounced his own guilt. The king has not brought back his own banished one. ¹⁴ We will certainly die and be like water poured out on the ground, which can't be recovered. But God would not take away a life; he would devise plans so that the one banished from him does not remain banished.

¹⁵ "Now therefore, I've come to present this matter to my lord the king because the people have made me afraid. Your servant thought: I must speak to the king. Perhaps the king will grant his servant's request. ¹⁶ The king will surely listen in order to keep his servant from the grasp of this man who would eliminate both me and my son from God's inheritance. ¹⁷ Your servant thought: May the word of my lord the king bring relief, for my lord the king is able to discern the good and the bad like the angel of God. May the LORD your God be with you."

¹⁸ Then the king answered the woman, "I'm going to ask you something; don't conceal it from me!"

"Let my lord the king speak," the woman replied.

¹⁹ The king asked, "Did Joab put you up to all this?"

The woman answered. "As you live, my lord the king, no one can turn to the right or left from all my lord the king says. Yes, your servant Joab is the one who gave orders to me; he told your servant exactly what to say. ²⁰ Joab your servant has done this to address the issue indirectly, ^c but my lord has wisdom like the wisdom of the angel of God, knowing everything on earth."

²¹ Then the king said to Joab, "I hereby grant this request. Go, bring back the young man Absalom."

²² Joab fell with his face to the ground in homage and blessed the king. "Today," Joab said, "your servant knows I have found favor

with you, my lord the king, because the king has granted the request of your servant."

²³ So Joab got up, went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. ²⁴ However, the king added, "He may return to his house, but he may not see my face." So Absalom returned to his house, but he did not see the king.^d

²⁵ No man in all Israel was as handsome and highly praised as Absalom. From the sole of his foot to the top of his head, he did not have a single flaw. ²⁶ When he shaved his head — he shaved it at the end of every year because his hair got so heavy for him that he had to shave it off — he would weigh the hair from his head and it would be five pounds^e according to the royal standard.

²⁷ Three sons were born to Absalom, and a daughter named Tamar, who was a beautiful woman. ²⁸ Absalom resided in Jerusalem two years but never saw the king. ²⁹ Then Absalom sent for Joab in order to send him to the king, but Joab was unwilling to come to him. So he sent again, a second time, but he still would not come. ³⁰ Then Absalom said to his servants, "See, Joab has a field right next to mine, and he has barley there. Go and set fire to it!" So Absalom's servants set the field on fire.^f

³¹ Then Joab came to Absalom's house and demanded, "Why did your servants set my field on fire?"

³² "Look," Absalom explained to Joab, "I sent for you and said, 'Come here. I want to send you to the king to ask: Why have I come back from Geshur? I'd be better off if I were still there.' So now, let me see the king. If I am guilty, let him kill me."

³³ Joab went to the king and told him. So David summoned Absalom, who came to the king and paid homage with his face to the ground before him. Then the king kissed Absalom.

ABSALOM'S REVOLT

15 After this, Absalom got himself a chariot, horses, and fifty men to run before him.

² He would get up early and stand beside the road leading to the city gate. Whenever anyone had a grievance to bring before the king for settlement, Absalom called out to him and asked, "What city are you from?" If he replied, "Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel," ³ Absalom said to him, "Look, your claims are good and right, but the king does not have

^a14:19 Lit "Is the hand of Joab in" ^b14:19 Lit he put all these words into the mouth of your servant ^c14:20 Lit to go around the face of the matter ^d14:24 Lit king's face ^e14:26 Lit 200 shekels ^f14:30 DSS, LXX add So Joab's servants came to him with their clothes torn and said, "Absalom's servants have set the field on fire!"

anyone to listen to you.”⁴ He added, “If only someone would appoint me judge in the land. Then anyone who had a grievance or dispute could come to me, and I would make sure he received justice.”⁵ When a person approached to pay homage to him, Absalom reached out his hand, took hold of him, and kissed him.⁶ Absalom did this to all the Israelites who came to the king for a settlement. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

⁷ When four^a years had passed, Absalom said to the king, “Please let me go to Hebron to fulfill a vow I made to the LORD.”⁸ For your servant made a vow when I lived in Geshur of Aram, saying: If the LORD really brings me back to Jerusalem, I will worship the LORD in Hebron.”^b

⁹ “Go in peace,” the king said to him. So he went to Hebron.

¹⁰ Then Absalom sent agents throughout the tribes of Israel with this message: “When you hear the sound of the ram’s horn, you are to say, ‘Absalom has become king in Hebron!’ ”

¹¹ Two hundred men from Jerusalem went with Absalom. They had been invited and were going innocently, for they did not know the whole situation.¹² While he was offering the sacrifices, Absalom sent for David’s adviser Ahithophel the Gilonite, from his city of Giloh. So the conspiracy grew strong, and the people supporting Absalom continued to increase.

¹³ Then an informer came to David and reported, “The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom.”

¹⁴ David said to all the servants with him in Jerusalem, “Get up. We have to flee, or we will not escape from Absalom! Leave quickly, or he will overtake us quickly, heap disaster on us, and strike the city with the edge of the sword.”

¹⁵ The king’s servants said to the king, “Whatever my lord the king decides, we are your servants.”¹⁶ Then the king set out, and his entire household followed him. But he left behind ten concubines to take care of the palace.¹⁷ So the king set out, and all the people followed him. They stopped at the last house¹⁸ while all his servants marched past him. Then all the Cherethites, the Pelethites, and the people of Gath— six hundred men who came with him from there — marched past the king.

¹⁹ The king said to Ittai of Gath, “Why are you also going with us? Go back and stay with the

new king since you’re both a foreigner and an exile from your homeland.²⁰ Besides, you only arrived yesterday; should I make you wander around with us today while I go wherever I can? Go back and take your brothers with you. May the LORD show you^c kindness and faithfulness.”

²¹ But in response, Ittai vowed to the king, “As the LORD lives and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king is, whether it means life or death, your servant will be there!”

²² “March on,” David replied to Ittai. So Ittai of Gath marched past with all his men and the dependents who were with him.²³ Everyone in the countryside was weeping loudly while all the people were marching out of the city. As the king was crossing the Kidron Valley, all the people were marching past on the road that leads to the wilderness.

²⁴ Zadok was also there, and all the Levites with him were carrying the ark of the covenant of God. They set the ark of God down, and Abiathar offered sacrifices^d until the people had finished marching past.²⁵ Then the king instructed Zadok, “Return the ark of God to the city. If I find favor with the LORD, he will bring me back and allow me to see both it and its^e dwelling place.²⁶ However, if he should say, ‘I do not delight in you,’ then here I am — he can do with me whatever pleases him.”^f

²⁷ The king also said to the priest Zadok, “Look,^g return to the city in peace and your two sons with you: your son Ahimaaz and Abiathar’s son Jonathan.²⁸ Remember, I’ll wait at the fords^h of the wilderness until word comes from you to inform me.”²⁹ So Zadok and Abiathar returned the ark of God to Jerusalem and stayed there.

³⁰ David was climbing the slope of the Mount of Olives, weeping as he ascended. His head was covered, and he was walking barefoot. All of the people with him covered their heads and went up, weeping as they ascended.

³¹ Then someone reported to David: “Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom.” “LORD,” David pleaded, “please turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness!”

³² When David came to the summit where he used to worship God, Hushai the Archite was there to meet him with his robe torn and dust on his head.³³ David said to him, “If you go away with me, you’ll be a burden to me,³⁴ but if you

^a15:7 Some LXX mss, Syr, Vg; other LXX mss, MT read 40 ^b15:8 Some LXX mss; MT omits in Hebron ^c15:20 LXX; MT omits Lit May the LORD show you ^d15:24 Or Abiathar went up ^e15:25 Or his ^f15:26 Lit me what is good in his eyes ^g15:27 LXX; MT reads Are you a seer? ^h15:28 Alt Hb tradition reads plains

return to the city and tell Absalom, 'I will be your servant, Your Majesty! Previously, I was your father's servant, but now I will be your servant,' then you can counteract Ahithophel's counsel for me.³⁵ Won't the priests Zadok and Abiathar be there with you? Report everything you hear from the palace to the priests Zadok and Abiathar.³⁶ Take note: their two sons are there with them—Zadok's son Ahimaaz and Abiathar's son Jonathan. Send them to tell me everything you hear."³⁷ So Hushai, David's personal adviser, entered Jerusalem just as Absalom was entering the city.

ZIBA HELPS DAVID

16 When David had gone a little beyond the summit,^a Ziba, Mephibosheth's servant, was right there to meet him. He had a pair of saddled donkeys loaded with two hundred loaves of bread, one hundred clusters of raisins, one hundred bunches of summer fruit, and a clay jar of wine.² The king said to Ziba, "Why do you have these?"

Ziba answered, "The donkeys are for the king's household to ride, the bread and summer fruit are for the young men to eat, and the wine is for those to drink who become exhausted in the wilderness."

³ "Where is your master's grandson?" the king asked.

"Why, he's staying in Jerusalem," Ziba replied to the king, "for he said, 'Today, the house of Israel will restore my grandfather's kingdom to me.'"

⁴ The king said to Ziba, "All that belongs to Mephibosheth is now yours!"

"I bow before you," Ziba said. "May I find favor with you, my lord the king!"

SHIMEI CURSES DAVID

⁵ When King David got to Bahurim, a man belonging to the family of the house of Saul was just coming out. His name was Shimei son of Gera, and he was yelling curses as he approached.⁶ He threw stones at David and at all the royal^b servants, the people and the warriors on David's right and left.⁷ Shimei said as he cursed: "Get out, get out, you man of bloodshed, you wicked man!"⁸ The LORD has paid you back for all the blood of the house of Saul in whose place you became king, and

the LORD has handed the kingdom over to your son Absalom. Look, you are in trouble because you're a man of bloodshed!"

⁹ Then Abishai son of Zeruiah said to the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over and remove his head!"

¹⁰ The king replied, "Sons of Zeruiah, do we agree on anything? He curses me this way because the LORD^c told him, 'Curse David!' Therefore, who can say, 'Why did you do that?'"¹¹ Then David said to Abishai and all his servants, "Look, my own son, my own flesh and blood,^d intends to take my life—how much more now this Benjaminite! Leave him alone and let him curse me; the LORD has told him to.¹² Perhaps the LORD will see my affliction^e and restore goodness to me instead of Shimei's curses today."¹³ So David and his men proceeded along the road as Shimei was going along the ridge of the hill opposite him. As Shimei went, he cursed David, threw stones at him, and kicked up dust.¹⁴ Finally, the king and all the people with him arrived^f exhausted, so they rested there.

ABSALOM'S ADVISERS

¹⁵ Now Absalom and all the Israelites came to Jerusalem. Ahithophel was also with him.

¹⁶ When David's friend Hushai the Archite came to Absalom, Hushai said to Absalom, "Long live the king! Long live the king!"

¹⁷ "Is this your loyalty to your friend?" Absalom asked Hushai. "Why didn't you go with your friend?"

¹⁸ "Not at all," Hushai answered Absalom. "I am on the side of the one that the LORD, this people, and all the men of Israel have chosen. I will stay with him.¹⁹ Furthermore, whom will I serve if not his son? As I served in your father's presence, I will also serve in yours."

²⁰ Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, "Give me your advice. What should we do?"

²¹ Ahithophel replied to Absalom, "Sleep with your father's concubines whom he left to take care of the palace. When all Israel hears that you have become repulsive to your father, everyone with you will be encouraged."²² So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof, and he slept with his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.

²³ Now the advice Ahithophel gave in those days was like someone asking about a word

^a16:1 = Mount of Olives ^b16:6 Lit all King David's ^c16:10 Alt Hb tradition reads *If he curses, and if the LORD* ^d16:11 Lit son who came from my belly ^e16:12 Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Vg; one Hb tradition reads *iniquity*; alt Hb tradition reads *eyes*; another Hb tradition reads *will look with his eye* ^f16:14 LXX adds *at the Jordan* ^g16:21 Lit father, the hands of everyone with you will be strong

from God — such was the regard that both David and Absalom had for Ahithophel's advice. ¹Ahithophel said to Absalom, **17** "Let me choose twelve thousand men, and I will set out in pursuit of David tonight. ²I will attack him while he is weary and discouraged, ^a throw him into a panic, and all the people with him will scatter. I will strike down only the king ³ and bring all the people back to you. When everyone returns except the man you're looking for, all ^b the people will be at peace." ⁴ This proposal seemed right to Absalom and all the elders of Israel.

⁵ Then Absalom said, "Summon Hushai the Archite also. Let's hear what he has to say as well."

⁶ So Hushai came to Absalom, and Absalom told him: "Ahithophel offered this proposal. Should we carry out his proposal? If not, what do you say?"

⁷ Hushai replied to Absalom, "The advice Ahithophel has given this time is not good."

⁸ Hushai continued, "You know your father and his men. They are warriors and are desperate like a wild bear robbed of her cubs. Your father is an experienced soldier who won't spend the night with the people. ⁹ He's probably already hiding in one of the caves ^c or some other place. If some of our troops fall ^d first, someone is sure to hear and say, 'There's been a slaughter among the people who follow Absalom.' ¹⁰ Then, even a brave man with the heart of a lion will lose heart ^e because all Israel knows that your father and the valiant men with him are warriors. ¹¹ Instead, I advise that all Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba — as numerous as the sand by the sea — be gathered to you and that you personally go into battle. ¹² Then we will attack David wherever we find him, and we will descend on him like dew on the ground. Not even one will be left — neither he nor any of the men with him. ¹³ If he retreats to some city, all Israel will bring ropes to that city, and we will drag its stones ^f into the valley until not even a pebble can be found there." ¹⁴ Since the LORD had decreed that Ahithophel's good advice be undermined in order to bring about Absalom's ruin, Absalom and all the men of Israel said, "The advice of Hushai the Archite is better than Ahithophel's advice."

DAVID INFORMED OF ABSALOM'S PLANS

¹⁵ Hushai then told the priests Zadok and Abiathar, "This is what ^g Ahithophel advised Absalom and the elders of Israel, and this is what ^h I advised. ¹⁶ Now send someone quickly and tell David, 'Don't spend the night at the wilderness ford, ⁱ but be sure to cross over the Jordan, ^j or the king and all the people with him will be devoured.'"

¹⁷ Jonathan and Ahimaaz were staying at En-rogel, where a servant girl would come and pass along information to them. They in turn would go and inform King David, because they dared not be seen entering the city. ¹⁸ However, a young man did see them and informed Absalom. So the two left quickly and came to the house of a man in Bahurim. He had a well in his courtyard, and they climbed down into it. ¹⁹ Then his wife took the cover, placed it over the mouth of the well, and scattered grain on it so nobody would know anything.

²⁰ Absalom's servants came to the woman at the house and asked, "Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan?"

"They passed by toward the water," ^k the woman replied to them. The men searched but did not find them, so they returned to Jerusalem.

²¹ After they had gone, Ahimaaz and Jonathan climbed out of the well and went and informed King David. They told him, "Get up and immediately ford the river, for Ahithophel has given this advice against you." ²² So David and all the people with him got up and crossed the Jordan. By daybreak, there was no one who had not crossed the Jordan. ²³ When Ahithophel realized that his advice had not been followed, he saddled his donkey and set out for his house in his hometown. He set his house in order and hanged himself. So he died and was buried in his father's tomb.

²⁴ David had arrived at Mahanaim by the time Absalom crossed the Jordan with all the men of Israel. ²⁵ Now Absalom had appointed Amasa over the army in Joab's place. Amasa was the son of a man named Ithra ^l the Israelite; ^m Ithra had married Abigail daughter of Nahash. ⁿ Abigail was a sister to Zeruiah, Joab's mother. ²⁶ And Israel and Absalom camped in the land of Gilead. ²⁷ When David

^a17:2 Lit *and weak of hands* ^b17:3 LXX reads *to you as a bride returns to her husband. You seek the life of only one man, and all* ^c17:9 Or *pits, or ravines* ^d17:9 Lit *And it will be when a falling on them at* ^e17:10 Lit *melt* ^f17:13 Lit *drag it* ^g17:15 Lit *"Like this and like this* ^h17:15 Lit *and like this and like this* ⁱ17:16 Some Hb mss; MT reads *plains* ^j17:16 the Jordan supplied for clarity ^k17:20 Or *brook*; Hb obscure ^l17:25 Or *Jether* ^m17:25 Some LXX mss read *Ishmaelite* ⁿ17:25 Some LXX mss read *Jesse*

came to Mahanaim, Shobi son of Nahash from Rabbah of the Ammonites, Machir son of Ammiel from Lo-debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim ²⁸ brought beds, basins, ^a and pottery items. They also brought wheat, barley, flour, roasted grain, beans, lentils, ^{8 29} honey, curds, sheep, goats, and cheese ^c from the herd for David and the people with him to eat. They had reasoned, "The people must be hungry, exhausted, and thirsty in the wilderness."

ABSALOM'S DEFEAT

18 David reviewed his troops and appointed commanders of thousands and of hundreds over them. ² He then sent out the troops, a third under Joab, a third under Joab's brother Abishai son of Zeruiah, and a third under Ittai of Gath. The king said to the troops, "I must also march out with you."

³ "You must not go!" the people pleaded. "If we have to flee, they will not pay any attention to us. Even if half of us die, they will not pay any attention to us because you are worth ^d ten thousand of us. Therefore, it is better if you support us from the city."

⁴ "I will do whatever you think is best," the king replied to them. So he stood beside the city gate while all the troops marched out by hundreds and thousands. ⁵ The king commanded Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, "Treat the young man Absalom gently for my sake." All the people heard the king's orders to all the commanders about Absalom.

⁶ Then David's forces marched into the field to engage Israel in battle, which took place in the forest of Ephraim. ⁷ Israel's army was defeated by David's soldiers, and the slaughter there was vast that day — twenty thousand dead. ⁸ The battle spread over the entire area, and that day the forest claimed more people than the sword.

ABSALOM'S DEATH

⁹ Absalom was riding on his mule when he happened to meet David's soldiers. When the mule went under the tangled branches of a large oak tree, Absalom's head was caught fast in the tree. The mule under him kept going, so he was suspended in midair. ^{e 10} One of the

men saw him and informed Joab. He said, "I just saw Absalom hanging in an oak tree!"

¹¹ "You just saw him!" Joab exclaimed. ^f "Why didn't you strike him to the ground right there? I would have given you ten silver pieces ^g and a belt!"

¹² The man replied to Joab, "Even if I had the weight of a thousand pieces of silver ^h in my hand, I would not raise my hand against the king's son. For we heard the king command you, Abishai, and Ittai, 'Protect the young man Absalom for me.' ^{i 13} If I had jeopardized my own ^j life — and nothing is hidden from the king — you would have abandoned me."

¹⁴ Joab said, "I'm not going to waste time with you!" He then took three spears in his hand and thrust them into Absalom's chest. While Absalom was still alive in the oak tree, ¹⁵ ten young men who were Joab's armor-bearers surrounded Absalom, struck him, and killed him. ¹⁶ Joab blew the ram's horn, and the troops broke off their pursuit of Israel because Joab restrained them. ¹⁷ They took Absalom, threw him into a large pit in the forest, and raised up a huge mound of stones over him. And all Israel fled, each to his tent.

¹⁸ When he was alive, Absalom had taken a pillar and raised it up for himself in the King's Valley, since he thought, "I have no son to preserve the memory of my name." So he named the pillar after himself. It is still called Absalom's Monument today.

¹⁹ Ahimaaz son of Zadok said, "Please let me run and tell the king the good news that the LORD has vindicated him by freeing him from his enemies."

²⁰ Joab replied to him, "You are not the man to take good news today. You may do it another day, but today you aren't taking good news, because the king's son is dead." ²¹ Joab then said to a Cushite, "Go tell the king what you have seen." The Cushite bowed to Joab and took off running.

²² However, Ahimaaz son of Zadok persisted and said to Joab, "No matter what, please let me also run behind the Cushite!"

Joab replied, "My son, why do you want to run since you won't get a reward?" ^k

²³ "No matter what, I want to run!"

"Then run!" Joab said to him. So Ahimaaz ran by way of the plain and outran the Cushite.

^a17:28 LXX reads *brought 10 embroidered beds with double coverings, 10 vessels* ^b17:28 LXX, Syr; MT adds *roasted grain*

^c17:29 Hb obscure ^d18:3 Some Hb mss, LXX, Vg; other Hb mss read *because there would now be about* ^e18:9 Lit was

between heaven and earth ^f18:11 Lit *Joab said to the man who told him* ^g18:11 About four ounces of silver ^h18:12 About

25 pounds of silver ⁱ18:12 Some Hb mss, LXX, Tg, Vg; other Hb mss read *'Protect, whoever, the young man Absalom'*; Hb obscure

^j18:13 Alt Hb tradition reads *jeopardized his* ^k18:22 Or *you have no good news?*

²⁴ David was sitting between the city gates when the watchman went up to the roof of the city gate and over to the wall. The watchman looked out and saw a man running alone. ²⁵ He called out and told the king.

The king said, "If he's alone, he bears good news."

As the first runner came closer, ²⁶ the watchman saw another man running. He called out to the gatekeeper, "Look! Another man is running alone!"

"This one is also bringing good news," said the king.

²⁷ The watchman said, "The way the first man runs looks to me like the way Ahimaaz son of Zadok runs."

"This is a good man; he comes with good news," the king commented.

²⁸ Ahimaaz called out to the king, "All is well," and paid homage to the king with his face to the ground. He continued, "Blessed be the LORD your God! He delivered up the men who rebelled against my lord the king."

²⁹ The king asked, "Is the young man Absalom all right?"

Ahimaaz replied, "When Joab sent the king's servant and your servant, I saw a big disturbance, but I don't know what it was."

³⁰ The king said, "Move aside and stand here." So he stood to one side.

³¹ Just then the Cushite came and said, "May my lord the king hear the good news: The LORD has vindicated you today by freeing you from all who rise against you!"

³² The king asked the Cushite, "Is the young man Absalom all right?"

The Cushite replied, "I wish that the enemies of my lord the king, along with all who rise up against you with evil intent, would become like that young man."

³³ The king was deeply moved and went up to the chamber above the city gate and wept. As he walked, he cried, "My son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you, Absalom, my son, my son!"

DAVID'S KINGDOM RESTORED

19 It was reported to Joab, "The king is weeping. He's mourning over Absalom." ² That day's victory was turned into mourning for all the troops because on that day the troops heard, "The king is grieving over his son." ³ So

they returned to the city quietly that day like troops come in when they are humiliated after fleeing in battle. ⁴ But the king covered his face and cried loudly, "My son Absalom! Absalom, my son, my son!"

⁵ Then Joab went into the house to the king and said, "Today you have shamed all your soldiers — those who saved your life as well as your sons, your wives, and your concubines — ⁶ by loving your enemies and hating those who love you! Today you have made it clear that the commanders and soldiers mean nothing to you. In fact, today I know that if Absalom were alive and all of us were dead, it would be fine with you!" ^a

⁷ "Now get up! Go out and encourage^b your soldiers, for I swear by the LORD that if you don't go out, not a man will remain with you tonight. This will be worse for you than all the trouble that has come to you from your youth until now!"

⁸ So the king got up and sat in the city gate, and all the people were told: "Look, the king is sitting in the city gate." Then they all came into the king's presence.

Meanwhile, each Israelite had fled to his tent. ⁹ People throughout all the tribes of Israel were arguing among themselves, saying, "The king rescued us from the grasp of our enemies, and he saved us from the grasp of the Philistines, but now he has fled from the land because of Absalom." ¹⁰ But Absalom, the man we anointed over us, has died in battle. So why do you say nothing about restoring the king?"

¹¹ King David sent word to the priests Zadok and Abiathar: "Say to the elders of Judah, 'Why should you be the last to restore the king to his palace? The talk of all Israel has reached the king at his house. ¹² You are my brothers, my flesh and blood. ^c So why should you be the last to restore the king?' ¹³ And tell Amasa, 'Aren't you my flesh and blood?' ^d May God punish me and do so severely if you don't become commander of my army from now on instead of Joab!'"

¹⁴ So he won over^e all the men of Judah, and they unanimously sent word to the king: "Come back, you and all your servants." ¹⁵ Then the king returned. When he arrived at the Jordan, Judah came to Gilgal to meet the king and escort him across the Jordan.

^a19:6 Lit be right in your eyes ^b19:7 Lit speak to the heart of flesh? ^c19:14 Lit he turned the heart of

^d19:12 Lit my bone and my flesh ^e19:13 Lit my bone and my

¹⁶ Shimei son of Gera, the Benjaminite from Bahurim, hurried down with the men of Judah to meet King David. ¹⁷ There were a thousand men from Benjamin with him. Ziba, an attendant from the house of Saul, with his fifteen sons and twenty servants also rushed down to the Jordan ahead of the king. ¹⁸ They forded the Jordan to bring the king's household across and do whatever the king desired.^a

When Shimei son of Gera crossed the Jordan, he fell facedown before the king¹⁹ and said to him, "My lord, don't hold me guilty, and don't remember your servant's wrongdoing on the day my lord the king left Jerusalem. May the king not take it to heart. ²⁰ For your servant knows that I have sinned. But look! Today I am the first one of the entire house of Joseph to come down to meet my lord the king."

²¹ Abishai son of Zeruiah asked, "Shouldn't Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD's anointed?"

²² David answered, "Sons of Zeruiah, do we agree on anything? Have you become my adversary today? Should any man be killed in Israel today? Am I not aware that today I'm king over Israel?" ²³ So the king said to Shimei, "You will not die." Then the king gave him his oath.

²⁴ Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson, also went down to meet the king. He had not taken care of his feet, trimmed his mustache, or washed his clothes from the day the king left until the day he returned safely. ²⁵ When he came from Jerusalem to meet the king, the king asked him, "Mephibosheth, why didn't you come with me?"

²⁶ "My lord the king," he replied, "my servant Ziba betrayed me. Actually your servant said: 'I'll saddle the donkey for myself^b so that I may ride it and go with the king' — for your servant is lame. ²⁷ Ziba slandered your servant to my lord the king. But my lord the king is like the angel of God, so do whatever you think best. ^c ²⁸ For my grandfather's entire family deserves death from my lord the king, but you set your servant among those who eat at your table. So what further right do I have to keep on making appeals to the king?"

²⁹ The king said to him, "Why keep on speaking about these matters of yours? I hereby declare: you and Ziba are to divide the land."

³⁰ Mephibosheth said to the king, "Instead, since my lord the king has come to his palace safely, let Ziba take it all!"

³¹ Barzillai the Gileadite had come down from Rogelim and accompanied the king to the Jordan River to see him off at the Jordan.

³² Barzillai was a very old man — eighty years old — and since he was a very wealthy man, he had provided for the needs of the king while he stayed in Mahanaim.

³³ The king said to Barzillai, "Cross over with me, and I'll provide for you^d at my side in Jerusalem."

³⁴ Barzillai replied to the king, "How many years of my life are left that I should go up to Jerusalem with the king? ³⁵ I'm now eighty years old. Can I discern what is pleasant and what is not? Can your servant taste what he eats or drinks? Can I still hear the voice of male and female singers? Why should your servant be an added burden to my lord the king? ³⁶ Since your servant is only going with the king a little way across the Jordan, why should the king repay me with such a reward? ³⁷ Please let your servant return so that I may die in my own city near the tomb of my father and mother. But here is your servant Chimham: let him cross over with my lord the king. Do for him what seems good to you."^e

³⁸ The king replied, "Chimham will cross over with me, and I will do for him what seems good to you, and whatever you desire from me I will do for you." ³⁹ So all the people crossed the Jordan, and then the king crossed. The king kissed Barzillai and blessed him, and Barzillai returned to his home.

⁴⁰ The king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went with him. All the troops of Judah and half of Israel's escorted the king. ⁴¹ Suddenly, all the men of Israel came to the king. They asked him, "Why did our brothers, the men of Judah, take you away secretly and transport the king and his household across the Jordan, along with all of David's men?"

⁴² All the men of Judah responded to the men of Israel, "Because the king is our relative. Why does this make you angry? Have we ever eaten anything of the king's or been honored at all?"^f

⁴³ The men of Israel answered the men of Judah: "We have ten shares in the king, so we have a greater claim to David than you. Why

^a19:18 Lit do what is good in his eyes ^b19:26 LXX, Syr, Vg read said to him, 'Saddle the donkey for me' ^c19:27 Lit do what is good in your eyes ^d19:33 LXX reads for your old age; Ru 4:15 ^e19:37 Lit what is good in your eyes, also in v. 38 ^f19:42 LXX reads king's or has he given us a gift or granted us a portion

then do you despise us? Weren't we the first to speak of restoring our king?" But the words of the men of Judah were harsher than those of the men of Israel.

SHEBA'S REVOLT

20 Now a wicked man, a Benjaminite named Sheba son of Bichri, happened to be there. He blew the ram's horn and shouted:

We have no portion in David,
no inheritance in Jesse's son.

Each man to his tent,^a Israel!

² So all the men of Israel deserted David and followed Sheba son of Bichri, but the men of Judah from the Jordan all the way to Jerusalem remained loyal to their king.

³ When David came to his palace in Jerusalem, he took the ten concubines he had left to take care of the palace and placed them under guard. He provided for them, but he was not intimate with them. They were confined until the day of their death, living as widows.

⁴ The king said to Amasa, "Summon the men of Judah to me within three days and be here yourself."⁵ Amasa went to summon Judah, but he took longer than the time allotted him. ⁶ So David said to Abishai, "Sheba son of Bichri will do more harm to us than Absalom. Take your lord's soldiers and pursue him, or he will find fortified cities and elude us."⁸

⁷ So Joab's men, the Cherethites, the Pelethites, and all the warriors marched out under Abishai's command;^c they left Jerusalem to pursue Sheba son of Bichri. ⁸ They were at the great stone in Gibeon when Amasa joined them. Joab was wearing his uniform and over it was a belt around his waist with a sword in its sheath. As he approached, the sword fell out. ⁹ Joab asked Amasa, "Are you well, my brother?" Then with his right hand Joab grabbed Amasa by the beard to kiss him. ¹⁰ Amasa was not on guard against the sword in Joab's hand, and Joab stabbed him in the stomach with it and spilled his intestines out on the ground. Joab did not stab him again, and Amasa died.

Joab and his brother Abishai pursued Sheba son of Bichri. ¹¹ One of Joab's young men had stood over Amasa saying, "Whoever favors Joab and whoever is for David, follow Joab!" ¹² Now Amasa had been writhing

in his blood in the middle of the highway, and the man had seen that all the troops stopped. So he moved Amasa from the highway to the field and threw a garment over him because he realized that all those who encountered Amasa were stopping. ¹³ When he was removed from the highway, all the men passed by and followed Joab to pursue Sheba son of Bichri.

¹⁴ Sheba passed through all the tribes of Israel to Abel of Beth-maacah. All the Berites^d came together and followed him. ¹⁵ Joab's troops came and besieged Sheba in Abel of Beth-maacah. They built a siege ramp against the outer wall of the city. While all the troops with Joab were battering the wall to make it collapse, ¹⁶ a wise woman called out from the city, "Listen! Listen! Please tell Joab to come here and let me speak with him."

¹⁷ When he had come near her, the woman asked, "Are you Joab?"

"I am," he replied.

"Listen to the words of your servant," she said to him.

He answered, "I'm listening."

¹⁸ She said, "In the past they used to say, 'Seek counsel in Abel,' and that's how they settled disputes. ¹⁹ I am one of the peaceful and faithful in Israel, but you're trying to destroy a city that is like a mother in Israel. Why would you devour the LORD's inheritance?"

²⁰ Joab protested: "Never! I would never devour or demolish!" ²¹ That is not the case. There is a man named Sheba son of Bichri, from the hill country of Ephraim, who has rebelled against King David. Deliver this one man, and I will withdraw from the city."

The woman replied to Joab, "Watch! His head will be thrown over the wall to you." ²² The woman went to all the people with her wise counsel, and they cut off the head of Sheba son of Bichri and threw it to Joab. So he blew the ram's horn, and they dispersed from the city, each to his own tent. Joab returned to the king in Jerusalem.

²³ Joab commanded the whole army of Israel;

Benaiah son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and Pelethites;

²⁴ Adoram^e was over forced labor;

Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was court historian;

^a20:1 Alt Hb tradition reads *gods* ^b20:6 Lit and snatch away our eyes ^c20:7 Lit out following him ^d20:14 LXX, Vg read *Bichrites* ^e20:24 Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr read *Adoniram*; 1Kg 4:6; 5:14

- ²⁵ Sheva was court secretary;
Zadok and Abiathar were priests;
²⁶ and in addition, Ira the Jairite was
David's priest.

JUSTICE FOR THE GIBEONITES

21 During David's reign there was a famine for three successive years, so David inquired^a of the LORD. The LORD answered, "It is due to Saul and to his bloody family, because he killed the Gibeonites."

² The Gibeonites were not Israelites but rather a remnant of the Amorites. The Israelites had taken an oath concerning them, but Saul had tried to kill them in his zeal for the Israelites and Judah. So David summoned the Gibeonites and spoke to them. ³ He asked the Gibeonites, "What should I do for you? How can I make atonement so that you will bring a blessing on^b the LORD's inheritance?"

⁴ The Gibeonites said to him, "We are not asking for silver and gold from Saul or his family, and we cannot put anyone to death in Israel."

"Whatever you say, I will do for you," he said.

⁵ They replied to the king, "As for the man who annihilated us and plotted to destroy us so we would not exist within the whole territory of Israel, ⁶ let seven of his male descendants be handed over to us so we may hang^c them in the presence of the LORD at Gibeah of Saul, the LORD's chosen."

The king answered, "I will hand them over."

⁷ David spared Mephibosheth, the son of Saul's son Jonathan, because of the oath of the LORD that was between David and Jonathan, Saul's son. ⁸ But the king took Armoni and Mephibosheth, who were the two sons whom Rizpah daughter of Aiah had borne to Saul, and the five sons whom Merab^d daughter of Saul had borne to Adriel son of Barzillai the Meholahtite ⁹ and handed them over to the Gibeonites. They hanged^e them on the hill in the presence of the LORD; the seven of them died together. They were executed in the first days of the harvest at the beginning of the barley harvest.^f

THE BURIAL OF SAUL'S FAMILY

¹⁰ Rizpah, Aiah's daughter, took sackcloth and spread it out for herself on the rock from the

beginning of the harvest^g until the rain poured down from heaven on the bodies. She kept the birds of the sky from them by day and the wild animals by night.

¹¹ When it was reported to David what Saul's concubine Rizpah daughter of Aiah had done, ¹² he went and got the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan from the citizens of Jabesh-gilead. They had stolen them from the public square of Beth-shan where the Philistines had hung the bodies the day the Philistines killed Saul at Gilboa. ¹³ David had the bones brought from there. They gathered up the bones of Saul's family who had been hanged ¹⁴ and buried the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan at Zela in the land of Benjamin in the tomb of Saul's father Kish. They did everything the king commanded. After this, God was receptive to prayer for the land.

THE PHILISTINE GIANTS

¹⁵ The Philistines again waged war against Israel. David went down with his soldiers, and they fought the Philistines, but David became exhausted. ¹⁶ Then Ishbi-benob, one of the descendants of the giant,^h whose bronze spear weighed about eight poundsⁱ and who wore new armor, intended to kill David. ¹⁷ But Abishai son of Zeruiah came to his aid, struck the Philistine, and killed him. Then David's men swore to him: "You must never again go out with us to battle. You must not extinguish the lamp of Israel."

¹⁸ After this, there was another battle with the Philistines at Gob. At that time Sibbecai the Hushathite killed Saph, who was one of the descendants of the giant.

¹⁹ Once again there was a battle with the Philistines at Gob, and Elhanan son of Jaare-oregim the Bethlehemite killed^j Goliath of Gath. The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam.

²⁰ At Gath there was still another battle. A huge man was there with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot — twenty-four in all. He, too, was descended from the giant. ²¹ When he taunted Israel, Jonathan, son of David's brother Shimei, killed him.

²² These four were descended from the giant in Gath and were killed by David and his soldiers.

^a21:1 Lit *sought the face of* ^b21:3 Lit *will bless* ^c21:6 Or *impale*, or *expose* ^d21:8 Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Tg; other Hb mss read *Michal* ^e21:9 Or *impaled*, or *exposed*, also in v. 13 ^f21:9 = March–April ^g21:10 = April to October ^h21:16 Or *Raphah*, also in vv. 18, 20, 22 ⁱ21:16 Lit *300* (shekels) ^j21:19 1Ch 20:5 adds *the brother of*

DAVID'S SONG OF THANKSGIVING

22 David spoke the words of this song to the LORD on the day the LORD rescued him from the grasp of all his enemies and from the grasp of Saul. ² He said:

- The LORD is my rock, my fortress,
and my deliverer,
³ my God, ^a my rock where I seek refuge.
My shield, the horn of my salvation,
my stronghold, my refuge,
and my Savior, you save me
from violence.
- ⁴ I called to the LORD, who is worthy
of praise,
and I was saved from my enemies.
- ⁵ For the waves of death engulfed me;
the torrents of destruction terrified me.
- ⁶ The ropes of Sheol entangled me;
the snares of death confronted me.
- ⁷ I called to the LORD in my distress;
I called to my God.
From his temple he heard my voice,
and my cry for help reached his ears.
- ⁸ Then the earth shook and quaked;
the foundations of the heavens ^b
trembled;
they shook because he burned
with anger.
- ⁹ Smoke rose from his nostrils,
and consuming fire came
from his mouth;
coals were set ablaze by it. ^c
- ¹⁰ He bent the heavens and came down,
total darkness beneath his feet.
- ¹¹ He rode on a cherub and flew,
soaring ^d on the wings of the wind.
- ¹² He made darkness a canopy around him,
a gathering ^e of water and thick clouds.
- ¹³ From the radiance of his presence,
blazing coals were ignited.
- ¹⁴ The LORD thundered from heaven;
the Most High made his voice heard.
- ¹⁵ He shot arrows and scattered them;
he hurled lightning bolts
and routed them.
- ¹⁶ The depths of the sea became visible,
the foundations of the world
were exposed
at the rebuke of the LORD,
at the blast of the breath of his nostrils.
- ¹⁷ He reached down from on high
and took hold of me;
he pulled me out of deep water.
- ¹⁸ He rescued me
from my powerful enemy
and from those who hated me,
for they were too strong for me.
- ¹⁹ They confronted me in the day
of my calamity,
but the LORD was my support.
- ²⁰ He brought me out to a spacious place;
he rescued me because he delighted
in me.
- ²¹ The LORD rewarded me
according to my righteousness;
he repaid me
according to the cleanness
of my hands.
- ²² For I have kept the ways of the LORD
and have not turned from my God
to wickedness.
- ²³ Indeed, I let all his ordinances
guide me ^f
and have not disregarded his statutes.
- ²⁴ I was blameless before him
and kept myself from my iniquity.
- ²⁵ So the LORD repaid me
according to my righteousness,
according to my cleanness ^g in his sight.
- ²⁶ With the faithful
you prove yourself faithful,
with the blameless
you prove yourself blameless,
- ²⁷ with the pure
you prove yourself pure;
but with the crooked
you prove yourself shrewd.
- ²⁸ You rescue an oppressed people,
but your eyes are set
against the proud —
you humble them.
- ²⁹ LORD, you are my lamp;
the LORD illuminates my darkness.
- ³⁰ With you I can attack a barricade, ^h
and with my God I can leap over a wall.
- ³¹ God — his way is perfect;
the word of the LORD is pure.
He is a shield to all who take refuge
in him.

^a22:3 LXX, Ps 18:2 read *my God*; MT reads *God of* ^b22:8 Some Hb mss, Syr, Vg read *mountains*; Ps 18:7 ^c22:9 Or *him*

^d22:11 Some Hb mss; other Hb mss, Syr, Tg read *he was seen* ^e22:12 Or *sieve, or mass*; Hb obscure ^f22:23 Lit *Indeed, all his ordinances have been in front of me* ^g22:25 LXX, Syr, Vg read *to the cleanness of my hands*; Ps 18:24 ^h22:30 Or *a ridge, or raiders*

- 32 For who is God besides the LORD?
And who is a rock? Only our God.
- 33 God is my strong refuge;^a
he makes my way perfect.^b
- 34 He makes my feet like the feet of a deer
and sets me securely on the^c heights.^d
- 35 He trains my hands for war;
my arms can bend a bow of bronze.
- 36 You have given me the shield
of your salvation;
your help^e exalts me.
- 37 You make a spacious place beneath me
for my steps,
and my ankles do not give way.
- 38 I pursue my enemies and destroy them;
I do not turn back until they are
wiped out.
- 39 I wipe them out and crush them,
and they do not rise;
they fall beneath my feet.
- 40 You have clothed me with strength
for battle;
you subdue my adversaries
beneath me.
- 41 You have made my enemies retreat
before me;^f
I annihilate those who hate me.
- 42 They look, but there is no one
to save them —
they look to the LORD, but he does not
answer them.
- 43 I pulverize them like dust of the earth;
I crush them and trample them
like mud in the streets.
- 44 You have freed me from the feuds
among my people;
you have preserved me as head
of nations;
a people I had not known serve me.
- 45 Foreigners submit to me cringing;
as soon as they hear, they obey me.
- 46 Foreigners lose heart
and come trembling
from their fortifications.
- 47 The LORD lives — blessed be my rock!
God, the rock of my salvation,
is exalted.
- 48 God — he grants me vengeance
and casts down peoples under me.

- 49 He frees me from my enemies.
You exalt me above my adversaries;
you rescue me from violent men.
- 50 Therefore I will give thanks to you
among the nations, LORD;
I will sing praises about your name.
- 51 He is a tower of salvation for^g his king;
he shows loyalty to his anointed,
to David and his descendants forever.

DAVID'S LAST WORDS

- 23** These are the last words of David:
The declaration of David
son of Jesse,
the declaration of the man
raised on high,^h
the one anointed by the God of Jacob.
This is the most delightful
of Israel's songs.
- 2 The Spirit of the LORD spoke
through me,
his word was on my tongue.
- 3 The God of Israel spoke;
the Rock of Israel said to me,
"The one who rules the people
with justice,
who rules in the fear of God,
4 is like the morning light when the sun
rises
on a cloudless morning,
the glisten of rain on sprouting grass."
- 5 Is it not true my house is with God?
For he has established
a permanent covenant with me,
ordered and secured in every detail.
Will he not bring about
my whole salvation
and my every desire?
- 6 But all the wicked are like thorns
raked aside;
they can never be picked up by hand.
- 7 The man who touches them
must be armed with iron and the shaft
of a spear.
They will be completely burned up
on the spot.

EXPLOITS OF DAVID'S WARRIORS

- ⁸ These are the names of David's warriors:

^a22:33 DSS, some LXX mss, Syr, Vg read *God clothes me with strength*; Ps 18:32 ^b22:33 Some LXX mss, Syr; MT reads *he sets free the blameless his way*; Hb obscure ^c22:34 LXX; some Hb mss read *my*; other Hb mss read *his* ^d22:34 Or *on my high places* ^e22:36 LXX reads *humility*; Ps 18:35 ^f22:41 Lit *you gave me the neck of my enemies* ^g22:51 DSS read *he gives great victory to* ^h23:1 Or *raised up by the high God*

Josheb-basshebeth the Tahchemonite was chief of the officers.^a He wielded his spear^b against eight hundred men that he killed at one time.

⁹ After him, Eleazar son of Dodo son of an Ahohite was among the three warriors with David when they defied the Philistines. The men of Israel retreated in the place they had gathered for battle,¹⁰ but Eleazar stood his ground and attacked the Philistines until his hand was tired and stuck to his sword. The LORD brought about a great victory that day. Then the troops came back to him, but only to plunder the dead.

¹¹ After him was Shammah son of Agee the Hararite. The Philistines had assembled in formation where there was a field full of lentils. The troops fled from the Philistines,¹² but Shammah took his stand in the middle of the field, defended it, and struck down the Philistines. So the LORD brought about a great victory.

¹³ Three of the thirty leading warriors went down at harvest time and came to David at the cave of Adullam, while a company of Philistines was camping in the Valley of Rephaim.

¹⁴ At that time David was in the stronghold, and a Philistine garrison was at Bethlehem.

¹⁵ David was extremely thirsty^c and said, "If only someone would bring me water to drink from the well at the city gate of Bethlehem!"

¹⁶ So three of the warriors broke through the Philistine camp and drew water from the well at the gate of Bethlehem. They brought it back to David, but he refused to drink it. Instead, he poured it out to the LORD.¹⁷ David said, "LORD, I would never do such a thing! Is this not the blood of men who risked their lives?" So he refused to drink it. Such were the exploits of the three warriors.

¹⁸ Abishai, Joab's brother and son of Zeruiah, was leader of the Three.^d He wielded his spear against three hundred men and killed them, gaining a reputation among the Three.

¹⁹ Was he not more honored than the Three? He became their commander even though he did not become one of the Three.

²⁰ Benaiah son of Jehoiada was the son of a brave man from Kabzeel, a man of many exploits. Benaiah killed two sons^e of Ariel^f of Moab, and he went down into a pit on a snowy day and killed a lion.²¹ He also killed an Egyptian, an impressive man. Even though the Egyptian had a spear in his hand, Benaiah

went down to him with a club, snatched the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and then killed him with his own spear.²² These were the exploits of Benaiah son of Jehoiada, who had a reputation among the three warriors.²³ He was the most honored of the Thirty, but he did not become one of the Three. David put him in charge of his bodyguard.

²⁴ Among the Thirty were

Joab's brother Asahel,
Elhanan son of Dodo of Bethlehem,

²⁵ Shammah the Harodite,
Elika the Harodite,

²⁶ Helez the Paltite,
Ira son of Ikkes the Tekoite,

²⁷ Abiezer the Anathothite,
Mebunnai the Hushathite,

²⁸ Zalmon the Ahohite,
Maharai the Netophathite,

²⁹ Heleb son of Baanah the Netophahite,
Ittai son of Ribai from Gibeah

of the Benjaminites,

³⁰ Benaiah the Pirathonite,
Hiddai from the wadis of Gaash,^g

³¹ Abi-albon the Arbathite,
Azmaveth the Barhumite,

³² Eliahba the Shaalbonite,
the sons of Jashen,
Jonathan son of^h ³³ Shammah

the Hararite,
Ahiam son of Sharar the Hararite,

³⁴ Eliphelet son of Ahasbai
son of the Maacathite,
Eliam son of Ahithophel the Gilonite,

³⁵ Hezro the Carmelite,
Paarai the Arbite,

³⁶ Igal son of Nathan from Zobah,
Bani the Gadite,

³⁷ Zelek the Ammonite,
Naharai the Beerothite,
the armor-bearer for Joab
son of Zeruiah,

³⁸ Ira the Ithrite,
Gareb the Ithrite,

³⁹ and Uriah the Hethite.

There were thirty-seven in all.

DAVID'S MILITARY CENSUS

24 The LORD's anger burned against Israel again, and he stirred up David against them to say: "Go, count the people of Israel and Judah."

^a23:8 Some Hb mss, LXX read *Three* ^b23:8 Some Hb mss; other Hb mss, LXX read *He was Adino the Eznite* ^c23:15 Lit *And David craved* ^d23:18 Some Hb mss, Syr read *the Thirty* ^e23:20 LXX; MT omits *sons* ^f23:20 Or *two warriors* ^g23:30 Or *from Nahale-gaash* ^h23:32 Some LXX mss; MT omits *son of*; 1Ch 11:34

² So the king said to Joab, the commander of his army, "Go through all the tribes of Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba and register the troops so I can know their number."

³ Joab replied to the king, "May the LORD your God multiply the troops a hundred times more than they are — while my lord the king looks on! But why does my lord the king want to do this?"

⁴ Yet the king's order prevailed over Joab and the commanders of the army. So Joab and the commanders of the army left the king's presence to register the troops of Israel.

⁵ They crossed the Jordan and camped in Aroer, south of the town in the middle of the valley, and then proceeded toward Gad and Jazer. ⁶ They went to Gilead and to the land of the Hittites^a and continued on to Dan-jaan and around to Sidon. ⁷ They went to the fortress of Tyre and all the cities of the Hivites and Canaanites. Afterward, they went to the Negev of Judah at Beer-sheba.

⁸ When they had gone through the whole land, they returned to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days. ⁹ Joab gave the king the total of the registration of the troops. There were eight hundred thousand valiant armed men^b from Israel and five hundred thousand men from Judah.

¹⁰ David's conscience troubled him after he had taken a census of the troops. He said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I've done. Now, LORD, because I've been very foolish, please take away your servant's guilt."

DAVID'S PUNISHMENT

¹¹ When David got up in the morning, the word of the LORD had come to the prophet Gad, David's seer: ¹² "Go and say to David, 'This is what the LORD says: I am offering you three choices. Choose one of them, and I will do it to you.'"

¹³ So Gad went to David, told him the choices, and asked him, "Do you want three^c years of famine to come on your land, to flee from your foes three months while they pursue you, or to have a plague in your land three days? Now, consider carefully^d what answer I should take back to the one who sent me."

¹⁴ David answered Gad, "I have great anxiety. Please, let us fall into the LORD's hands

because his mercies are great, but don't let me fall into human hands."

¹⁵ So the LORD sent a plague on Israel from that morning until the appointed time, and from Dan to Beer-sheba seventy thousand men died. ¹⁶ Then the angel extended his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, but the LORD relented concerning the destruction and said to the angel who was destroying the people, "Enough, withdraw your hand now!" The angel of the LORD was then at the threshing floor of Araunah^e the Jebusite.

¹⁷ When David saw the angel striking the people, he said to the LORD, "Look, I am the one who has sinned; I am the one^f who has done wrong. But these sheep, what have they done? Please, let your hand be against me and my father's family."

DAVID'S ALTAR

¹⁸ Gad came to David that day and said to him, "Go up and set up an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite." ¹⁹ David went up in obedience to Gad's command, just as the LORD had commanded. ²⁰ Araunah looked down and saw the king and his servants coming toward him, so he went out and paid homage to the king with his face to the ground.

²¹ Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?"

David replied, "To buy the threshing floor from you in order to build an altar to the LORD, so the plague on the people may be halted."

²² Araunah said to David, "My lord the king may take whatever he wants^g and offer it. Here are the oxen for a burnt offering and the threshing sledges and ox yokes for the wood. ²³ Your Majesty, Araunah gives everything here to the king." Then he said to the king, "May the LORD your God accept you."

²⁴ The king answered Araunah, "No, I insist on buying it from you for a price, for I will not offer to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing." David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for twenty ounces^h of silver. ²⁵ He built an altar to the LORD there and offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then the LORD was receptive to prayer for the land, and the plague on Israel ended.

^a24:6 LXX; MT reads of *Tahtim-hodshi*; Hb obscure ^b24:9 Lit *men of valor drawing the sword* ^c24:13 LXX; MT reads *seven*; 1Ch 21:12 ^d24:13 Lit *Now, know and see* ^e24:16 = Ornan in 1Ch 21:15-28; 2Ch 3:1 ^f24:17 LXX reads *shepherd* ^g24:22 Lit *take what is good in his eyes* ^h24:24 Lit *50 shekels*

1 KINGS

DAVID'S LAST DAYS

1 Now King David was old and advanced in age. Although they covered him with bedclothes, he could not get warm. ² So his servants said to him: "Let us^a search for a young virgin for my lord the king. She is to attend the king and be his caregiver. She is to lie by your side so that my lord the king will get warm." ³ They searched for a beautiful girl throughout the territory of Israel; they found Abishag the Shunammite^b and brought her to the king. ⁴ The girl was of unsurpassed beauty, and she became the king's caregiver. She attended to him, but he was not intimate with^c her.

ADONIJAH'S BID FOR POWER

⁵ Adonijah son of Haggith kept exalting himself, saying, "I will be king!" He prepared chariots, cavalry, and fifty men to run ahead of him.^d ⁶ But his father had never once infuriated him by asking, "Why did you do that?" In addition, he was quite handsome and was born after Absalom. ⁷ He conspired^e with Joab son of Zeruiah and with the priest Abiathar. They supported Adonijah, ⁸ but the priest Zadok, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, the prophet Nathan, Shimei, Rei, and David's royal guard^f did not side with Adonijah.

⁹ Adonijah sacrificed sheep, goats, cattle, and fattened cattle near the stone of Zoheleth, which is next to En-rogel. He invited all his royal brothers and all the men of Judah, the servants of the king, ¹⁰ but he did not invite the prophet Nathan, Benaiah, the royal guard, or his brother Solomon.

NATHAN'S AND BATHSHEBA'S APPEALS

¹¹ Then Nathan said to Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, "Have you not heard that Adonijah son of Haggith has become king and our lord David does not know it? ¹² Now please come and let me advise you. Save your life and the life of your son Solomon. ¹³ Go, approach King David and say to him, 'My lord the king, did you not swear to your servant: Your son Solomon is to become king after me, and he is the one

who is to sit on my throne? So why has Adonijah become king?' ¹⁴ At that moment, while you are still there speaking with the king, I'll come in after you and confirm your words."

¹⁵ So Bathsheba went to the king in his bedroom. Since the king was very old, Abishag the Shunammite was attending to him. ¹⁶ Bathsheba knelt low and paid homage to the king, and he asked, "What do you want?"

¹⁷ She replied, "My lord, you swore to your servant by the LORD your God, 'Your son Solomon is to become king after me, and he is the one who is to sit on my throne.' ¹⁸ Now look, Adonijah has become king. And, ⁶ my lord the king, you didn't know it. ¹⁹ He has lavishly sacrificed oxen, fattened cattle, and sheep. He invited all the king's sons, the priest Abiathar, and Joab the commander of the army, but he did not invite your servant Solomon. ²⁰ Now, my lord the king, the eyes of all Israel are on you to tell them who will sit on the throne of my lord the king after him. ²¹ Otherwise, when my lord the king rests with his fathers, I and my son Solomon will be regarded as criminals."

²² At that moment, while she was still speaking with the king, the prophet Nathan arrived, ²³ and it was announced to the king, "The prophet Nathan is here." He came into the king's presence and paid homage to him with his face to the ground.

²⁴ "My lord the king," Nathan said, "did you say, 'Adonijah is to become king after me, and he is the one who is to sit on my throne'? ²⁵ For today he went down and lavishly sacrificed oxen, fattened cattle, and sheep. He invited all the sons of the king, the commanders of the army, and the priest Abiathar. And look! They're eating and drinking in his presence, and they're saying, 'Long live King Adonijah!' ²⁶ But he did not invite me — me, your servant — or the priest Zadok or Benaiah son of Jehoiada or your servant Solomon. ²⁷ I'm certain my lord the king would not have let this happen without letting your servant^h know who will sit on my lord the king's throne after him."

^a1:2 Lit *them* ^b1:3 Shunem was a town in the hill country of Issachar at the foot of Mt. Moreh; Jos 19:17-18. ^c1:4 Lit *he did not know* ^d1:5 Heralds announcing his procession ^e1:7 Lit *His words were* ^f1:8 Lit *David's warriors* ^g1:18 Some Hb mss, LXX, Vg, Syr; other Hb mss read *And now* ^h1:27 Some Hb mss, LXX; alt Hb tradition reads *servants*

SOLOMON CONFIRMED KING

²⁸ King David responded by saying, "Call in Bathsheba for me." So she came into the king's presence and stood before him. ²⁹ The king swore an oath and said, "As the LORD lives, who has redeemed my life from every difficulty, ³⁰ just as I swore to you by the LORD God of Israel: Your son Solomon is to become king after me, and he is the one who is to sit on my throne in my place, that is exactly what I will do this very day."

³¹ Bathsheba knelt low with her face to the ground, paying homage to the king, and said, "May my lord King David live forever!"

³² King David then said, "Call in the priest Zadok, the prophet Nathan, and Benaiah son of Jehoiada for me." So they came into the king's presence. ³³ The king said to them, "Take my servants with you, have my son Solomon ride on my own mule, and take him down to Gihon. ³⁴ There, the priest Zadok and the prophet Nathan are to anoint him as king over Israel. You are to blow the ram's horn and say, 'Long live King Solomon!' ³⁵ You are to come up after him, and he is to come in and sit on my throne. He is the one who is to become king in my place; he is the one I have commanded to be ruler over Israel and Judah."

³⁶ "Amen," Benaiah son of Jehoiada replied to the king. "May the LORD, the God of my lord the king, so affirm it. ³⁷ Just as the LORD was with my lord the king, so may he^a be with Solomon and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord King David."

³⁸ Then the priest Zadok, the prophet Nathan, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, the Cherethites, and the Pelethites went down, had Solomon ride on King David's mule, and took him to Gihon. ³⁹ The priest Zadok took the horn of oil from the tabernacle and anointed Solomon. Then they blew the ram's horn, and all the people proclaimed, "Long live King Solomon!" ⁴⁰ All the people went up after him, playing flutes and rejoicing with such a great joy that the earth split open from the sound.^b

ADONIJAH HEARS OF SOLOMON'S CORONATION

⁴¹ Adonijah and all the invited guests who were with him heard the noise as they finished eating. Joab heard the sound of the ram's horn and said, "Why is the town in such an uproar?"

⁴² He was still speaking when Jonathan son of Abiathar the priest, suddenly arrived. Adonijah said, "Come in, for you are an important man, and you must be bringing good news."

⁴³ "Unfortunately not," Jonathan answered him. "Our lord King David has made Solomon king. ⁴⁴ And with Solomon, the king has sent the priest Zadok, the prophet Nathan, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and they have had him ride on the king's mule. ⁴⁵ The priest Zadok and the prophet Nathan have anointed him king in Gihon. They have gone up from there rejoicing. The town has been in an uproar; that's the noise you heard. ⁴⁶ Solomon has even taken his seat on the royal throne."

⁴⁷ "The king's servants have also gone to congratulate our lord King David, saying, 'May your God make the name of Solomon more well known than your name, and may he make his throne greater than your throne.' Then the king bowed in worship on his bed. ⁴⁸ And the king went on to say this: 'Blessed be the LORD God of Israel! Today he has provided one to sit on my throne, and I am a witness.'"^c

⁴⁹ Then all of Adonijah's guests got up trembling and went their separate ways. ⁵⁰ Adonijah was afraid of Solomon, so he got up and went to take hold of the horns of the altar.

⁵¹ It was reported to Solomon: "Look, Adonijah fears King Solomon, and he has taken hold of the horns of the altar, saying, 'Let King Solomon first^d swear to me that he will not kill his servant with the sword.'"

⁵² Then Solomon said, "If he is a man of character, not a single hair of his will fall to the ground, but if evil is found in him, he dies."

⁵³ So King Solomon sent for him, and they took him down from the altar. He came and paid homage to King Solomon, and Solomon said to him, "Go to your home."

DAVID'S DYING INSTRUCTIONS TO SOLOMON

2 As the time approached for David to die, he ordered his son Solomon, ² "As for me, I am going the way of all of the earth. Be strong and be a man, ³ and keep your obligation to the LORD your God to walk in his ways and to keep his statutes, commands, ordinances, and decrees. This is written in the law of Moses, so that you will have success in everything you do and wherever you turn, ⁴ and so that

^a1:37 Alt Hb tradition reads *so he will* ^b1:40 LXX reads *the land resounded with their noise* ^c1:48 Lit and my eyes are seeing ^d1:51 Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Vg read *today*

the LORD will fulfill his promise that he made to me: 'If your sons guard their way to walk faithfully before me with all their heart and all their soul, you will never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.'

⁵ "You also know what Joab son of Zeruiah did to me and what he did to the two commanders of Israel's army, Abner son of Ner and Amasa son of Jether. He murdered them in a time of peace to avenge blood shed in war. He spilled that blood on his own waistband and on the sandals of his feet. ^a⁶ Act according to your wisdom, and do not let his gray head descend to Sheol in peace.

⁷ "Show kindness to the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite and let them be among those who eat at your table because they supported me when I fled from your brother Absalom.

⁸ "Keep an eye on Shimei son of Gera, the Benjaminite from Bahurim who is with you. He uttered malicious curses against me the day I went to Mahanaim. But he came down to meet me at the Jordan River, and I swore to him by the LORD: 'I will never kill you with the sword.' ⁹ So don't let him go unpunished, for you are a wise man. You know how to deal with him to bring his gray head down to Sheol with blood."

¹⁰ Then David rested with his fathers and was buried in the city of David. ¹¹ The length of time David reigned over Israel was forty years: he reigned seven years in Hebron and thirty-three years in Jerusalem. ¹² Solomon sat on the throne of his father David, and his kingship was firmly established.

ADONIJAH'S FOOLISH REQUEST

¹³ Now Adonijah son of Haggith came to Bathsheba, Solomon's mother. She asked, "Do you come peacefully?"

"Peacefully," he replied, ¹⁴ and then asked, "May I talk with you?" ^b

"Go ahead," she answered.

¹⁵ "You know the kingship was mine," he said. "All Israel expected me to be king, but then the kingship was turned over to my brother, for the LORD gave it to him. ¹⁶ So now I have just one request of you; don't turn me down." ^c

She said to him, "Go on."

¹⁷ He replied, "Please speak to King Solomon since he won't turn you down. Let him give me Abishag the Shunammite as a wife."

¹⁸ "Very well," Bathsheba replied. "I will speak to the king for you."

¹⁹ So Bathsheba went to King Solomon to speak to him about Adonijah. The king stood up to greet her, bowed to her, sat down on his throne, and had a throne placed for the king's mother. So she sat down at his right hand.

²⁰ Then she said, "I have just one small request of you. Don't turn me down."

"Go ahead and ask, mother," the king replied, "for I won't turn you down."

²¹ So she said, "Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to your brother Adonijah as a wife."

²² King Solomon answered his mother, "Why are you requesting Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? Since he is my elder brother, you might as well ask the kingship for him, for the priest Abiathar, and for Joab son of Zeruiah." ^d ²³ Then King Solomon took an oath by the LORD: "May God punish me and do so severely if Adonijah has not made this request at the cost of his life. ²⁴ And now, as the LORD lives — the one who established me, seated me on the throne of my father David, and made me a dynasty as he promised — I swear Adonijah will be put to death today!" ²⁵ Then King Solomon dispatched Benaiah son of Jehoiada, who struck down Adonijah, and he died.

ABIATHAR'S BANISHMENT

²⁶ The king said to the priest Abiathar, "Go to your fields in Anathoth. Even though you deserve to die, I will not put you to death today, since you carried the ark of the Lord God in the presence of my father David and you suffered through all that my father suffered."

²⁷ So Solomon banished Abiathar from being the LORD's priest, and it fulfilled the LORD's prophecy he had spoken at Shiloh against Eli's family.

JOAB'S EXECUTION

²⁸ The news reached Joab. Since he had supported Adonijah but not Absalom, Joab fled to the LORD's tabernacle and took hold of the horns of the altar.

²⁹ It was reported to King Solomon: "Joab has fled to the LORD's tabernacle and is now beside the altar." Then Solomon sent ^e Benaiah son of Jehoiada and told him, "Go and strike him down!"

^a2:5 LXX, Old Lat read on my waistband and . . . my feet; v. 31 ^b2:14 Lit then said, "I have a word for you." ^c2:16 Lit don't make me turn my face ^d2:22 LXX, Vg, Syr read kingship for him, and on his side are Abiathar the priest and Joab son of Zeruiah ^e2:29 LXX adds Joab a message: "What is the matter with you, that you have fled to the altar?" And Joab replied,

"Because I feared you, I have fled to the Lord." And Solomon the king sent

³⁰ So Benaiah went to the tabernacle and said to Joab, "This is what the king says: 'Come out!'"

But Joab said, "No, for I will die here."

So Benaiah took a message back to the king, "This is what Joab said, and this is how he answered me."

³¹ The king said to him, "Do just as he says. Strike him down and bury him in order to remove from me and from my father's family the blood that Joab shed without just cause."

³² The LORD will bring back his own blood on his head because he struck down two men more righteous and better than he, without my father David's knowledge. With his sword, Joab murdered Abner son of Ner, commander of Israel's army, and Amasa son of Jether, commander of Judah's army. ³³ The responsibility for their deaths will come back to Joab and to his descendants^a forever, but for David, his descendants, his dynasty, and his throne, there will be peace from the LORD forever."

³⁴ Benaiah son of Jehoiada went up, struck down Joab, and put him to death. He was buried at his house in the wilderness. ³⁵ Then the king appointed Benaiah son of Jehoiada in Joab's place over the army, and he appointed the priest Zadok in Abiathar's place.

SHIMEI'S BANISHMENT AND EXECUTION

³⁶ Then the king summoned Shimei and said to him, "Build a house for yourself in Jerusalem and live there, but don't leave there and go anywhere else. ³⁷ On the day you do leave and cross the Kidron Valley, know for sure that you will certainly die. Your blood will be on your own head."

³⁸ Shimei said to the king, "The sentence is fair; your servant will do as my lord the king has spoken." And Shimei lived in Jerusalem for a long time.

³⁹ But then, at the end of three years, two of Shimei's slaves ran away to Achish son of Maacah, king of Gath. Shimei was informed, "Look, your slaves are in Gath." ⁴⁰ So Shimei saddled his donkey and set out to Achish at Gath to search for his slaves. He went and brought them back from Gath.

⁴¹ It was reported to Solomon that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath and had returned. ⁴² So the king summoned Shimei and said to him, "Didn't I make you swear

by the LORD and warn you, saying, 'On the day you leave and go anywhere else, know for sure that you will certainly die'? And you said to me, 'The sentence is fair; I will obey.'"

⁴³ So why have you not kept the LORD's oath and the command that I gave you?" ⁴⁴ The king also said, "You yourself know all the evil that you did to my father David. Therefore, the LORD has brought back your evil on your head, ⁴⁵ but King Solomon will be blessed, and David's throne will remain established before the LORD forever."

⁴⁶ Then the king commanded Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and he went out and struck Shimei down, and he died. So the kingdom was established in Solomon's hand.

THE LORD APPEARS TO SOLOMON

3 Solomon made an alliance^b with Pharaoh king of Egypt by marrying Pharaoh's daughter. Solomon brought her to the city of David until he finished building his palace, the LORD's temple, and the wall surrounding Jerusalem. ² However, the people were sacrificing on the high places, because until that time a temple for the LORD's name had not been built. ³ Solomon loved the LORD by walking in the statutes of his father David, but he also sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.

⁴ The king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there because it was the most famous high place. He offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. ⁵ At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream at night. God said, "Ask. What should I give you?"

⁶ And Solomon replied, "You have shown great and faithful love to your servant, my father David, because he walked before you in faithfulness, righteousness, and integrity.^c You have continued this great and faithful love for him by giving him a son to sit on his throne, as it is today.

⁷ "LORD my God, you have now made your servant king in my father David's place. Yet I am just a youth with no experience in leadership.^d ⁸ Your servant is among your people you have chosen, a people too many to be numbered or counted. ⁹ So give your servant a receptive heart to judge your people and to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of yours?"

^a2:33 Lit *Their blood will return on the head of Joab and on the head of his seed* ^b3:1 Lit *Solomon made himself a son-in-law*

^c3:6 Lit *and uprightness of heart with you* ^d3:7 Lit *am a little youth and do not know to go out or come in*

¹⁰ Now it pleased the Lord that Solomon had requested this. ¹¹ So God said to him, "Because you have requested this and did not ask for long life^a or riches for yourself, or the death^b of your enemies, but you asked discernment for yourself to administer justice, ¹² I will therefore do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has never been anyone like you before and never will be again. ¹³ In addition, I will give you what you did not ask for: both riches and honor, so that no king will be your equal during your entire life. ¹⁴ If you walk in my ways and keep my statutes and commands just as your father David did, I will give you a long life."

¹⁵ Then Solomon woke up and realized it had been a dream. He went to Jerusalem, stood before the ark of the Lord's covenant, and offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then he held a feast for all his servants.

SOLOMON'S WISDOM

¹⁶ Then two women who were prostitutes came to the king and stood before him. ¹⁷ One woman said, "Please, my lord, this woman and I live in the same house, and I had a baby while she was in the house. ¹⁸ On the third day after I gave birth, she also had a baby and we were alone. No one else^c was with us in the house; just the two of us were there. ¹⁹ During the night this woman's son died because she lay on him. ²⁰ She got up in the middle of the night and took my son from my side while your servant was asleep. She laid him in her arms, and she put her dead son in my arms. ²¹ When I got up in the morning to nurse my son, I discovered he was dead. That morning, when I looked closely at him I realized that he was not the son I gave birth to."

²² "No," the other woman said. "My son is the living one; your son is the dead one."

The first woman said, "No, your son is the dead one; my son is the living one." So they argued before the king.

²³ The king replied, "This woman says, 'This is my son who is alive, and your son is dead,' but that woman says, 'No, your son is dead, and my son is alive.'"²⁴ The king continued, "Bring me a sword." So they brought the sword to the king. ²⁵ And the king said, "Cut the living boy in two and give half to one and half to the other."

²⁶ The woman whose son was alive spoke to the king because she felt great compassion^d

for her son. "My lord, give her the living baby," she said, "but please don't have him killed!"

But the other one said, "He will not be mine or yours. Cut him in two!"

²⁷ The king responded, "Give the living baby to the first woman, and don't kill him. She is his mother."²⁸ All Israel heard about the judgment the king had given, and they stood in awe of the king because they saw that God's wisdom was in him to carry out justice.

SOLOMON'S OFFICIALS

4 King Solomon reigned over all Israel,² and these were his officials:

Azariah son of Zadok, priest;

³ Elihoreph and Ahijah the sons of Shisha, secretaries;

Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud, court historian;

⁴ Benaiah son of Jehoiada, in charge of the army;

Zadok and Abiathar, priests;

⁵ Azariah son of Nathan, in charge of the deputies;

Zabud son of Nathan, a priest and adviser to the king;

⁶ Ahishar, in charge of the palace; and Adoniram son of Abda, in charge of forced labor.

⁷ Solomon had twelve deputies for all Israel. They provided food for the king and his household; each one made provision for one month out of the year. ⁸ These were their names:

Ben-hur, in the hill country of Ephraim;

⁹ Ben-deker, in Makaz, Shaalbim, Beth-shemesh, and Elon-beth-hanan;

¹⁰ Ben-hesed, in Arubboth (he had Socoh and the whole land of Hephher);

¹¹ Ben-abinadab, in all Naphath-dor (Taphath daughter of Solomon was his wife);

¹² Baana son of Ahilud, in Taanach, Megiddo, and all Beth-shean which is beside Zarethan below Jezreel, from Beth-shean to Abel-meholah, as far as the other side of Jokmeam;

¹³ Ben-geber, in Ramoth-gilead (he had the villages of Jair son of Manasseh, which are in Gilead, and he had the region of Argob, which is in Bashan, sixty great cities with walls and bronze bars);

¹⁴ Ahinadab son of Iddo, in Mahanaim;

^a3:11 Lit for many days ^b3:11 Lit life ^c3:18 Lit No stranger ^d3:26 Lit because her compassion grew hot

¹⁵ Ahimaaz, in Naphtali (he also had married a daughter of Solomon — Basemath);

¹⁶ Baana son of Hushai, in Asher and Bealoth;

¹⁷ Jehoshaphat son of Paruah, in Issachar;

¹⁸ Shimei son of Ela, in Benjamin;

¹⁹ Geber son of Uri, in the land of Gilead, the country of King Sihon of the Amorites and of King Og of Bashan.

There was one deputy in the land of Judah.^A

SOLOMON'S PROVISIONS

²⁰ Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand by the sea; they were eating, drinking, and rejoicing. ²¹ Solomon ruled all the kingdoms from the Euphrates River to the land of the Philistines and as far as the border of Egypt. They offered tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life.

²² Solomon's provisions for one day were 150 bushels^B of fine flour and 300 bushels^C of meal, ²³ ten fattened cattle, twenty range cattle, and a hundred sheep and goats, besides deer, gazelles, roebucks, and pen-fed poultry.^D ²⁴ for he had dominion over everything west of the Euphrates from Tiphshah to Gaza and over all the kings west of the Euphrates. He had peace on all his surrounding borders. ²⁵ Throughout Solomon's reign, Judah and Israel lived in safety from Dan to Beer-sheba, each person under his own vine and his own fig tree. ²⁶ Solomon had forty thousand^E stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen. ²⁷ Each of those deputies for a month in turn provided food for King Solomon and for everyone who came to King Solomon's table. They neglected nothing. ²⁸ Each man brought the barley and the straw for the chariot teams and the other horses to the required place according to his assignment.^F

SOLOMON'S WISDOM AND LITERARY GIFTS

²⁹ God gave Solomon wisdom, very great insight, and understanding as vast as the sand on the seashore. ³⁰ Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the people of the East, greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. ³¹ He was wiser than anyone — wiser than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, Calcol, and Darda, sons of Mahol. His reputation extended to all the surrounding nations.

³² Solomon spoke 3,000 proverbs, and his songs numbered 1,005. ³³ He spoke about trees, from the cedar in Lebanon to the hyssop growing out of the wall. He also spoke about animals, birds, reptiles, and fish. ³⁴ Emissaries of all peoples, sent by every king on earth who had heard of his wisdom, came to listen to Solomon's wisdom.

HIRAM'S BUILDING MATERIALS

5 King Hiram of Tyre sent his emissaries to Solomon when he heard that he had been anointed king in his father's place, for Hiram had always been friends with David.

² Solomon sent this message to Hiram: ³ "You know my father David was not able to build a temple for the name of the LORD his God. This was because of the warfare all around him until the LORD put his enemies under his feet. ⁴ The LORD my God has now given me rest on every side; there is no enemy or crisis. ⁵ So I plan to build a temple for the name of the LORD my God, according to what the LORD promised my father David: 'I will put your son on your throne in your place, and he will build the temple for my name.'

⁶ "Therefore, command that cedars from Lebanon be cut down for me. My servants will be with your servants, and I will pay your servants' wages according to whatever you say, for you know that not a man among us knows how to cut timber like the Sidonians."

⁷ When Hiram heard Solomon's words, he rejoiced greatly and said, "Blessed be the LORD today! He has given David a wise son to be over this great people!" ⁸ Then Hiram sent a reply to Solomon, saying, "I have heard your message; I will do everything you want regarding the cedar and cypress timber. ⁹ My servants will bring the logs down from Lebanon to the sea, and I will make them into rafts to go by sea to the place you indicate. I will break them apart there, and you can take them away. You then can meet my needs by providing my household with food."

¹⁰ So Hiram provided Solomon with all the cedar and cypress timber he wanted, ¹¹ and Solomon provided Hiram with one hundred thousand bushels^G of wheat as food for his household and one hundred ten thousand gallons^H of oil from crushed olives. Solomon did this for Hiram year after year.

^A4:19 LXX; MT omits of Judah ^B4:22 Lit 30 cors ^C4:22 Lit 60 cors ^D4:23 Hb obscure ^E4:26 2Ch 9:25 reads 4,000 stalls

^F4:28 Lit judgment ^G5:11 Lit 20,000 cors ^H5:11 LXX reads 20,000 baths; MT reads 20 cors

¹² The LORD gave Solomon wisdom, as he had promised him. There was peace between Hiram and Solomon, and the two of them made a treaty.

SOLOMON'S WORKFORCE

¹³ Then King Solomon drafted forced laborers from all Israel; the labor force numbered thirty thousand men. ¹⁴ He sent ten thousand to Lebanon each month in shifts; one month they were in Lebanon, two months they were at home. Adoniram was in charge of the forced labor. ¹⁵ Solomon had seventy thousand porters and eighty thousand stonecutters in the mountains, ¹⁶ not including his thirty-three hundred^a deputies in charge of the work. They supervised the people doing the work. ¹⁷ The king commanded them to quarry large, costly stones to lay the foundation of the temple with dressed stones. ¹⁸ So Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders, along with the Gebalites, quarried the stone and prepared the timber and stone for the temple's construction.

BUILDING THE TEMPLE

6 Solomon began to build the temple for the LORD in the four hundred eightieth year after the Israelites came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of his reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month.^b ² The temple that King Solomon built for the LORD was ninety feet^c long, thirty feet^d wide, and forty-five feet^e high. ³ The portico in front of the temple sanctuary was thirty feet long extending across the temple's width, and fifteen feet deep^f in front of the temple. ⁴ He also made windows with beveled frames^g for the temple.

⁵ He then built a chambered structure^h along the temple wall, encircling the walls of the temple, that is, the sanctuary and the inner sanctuary. And he made side chambersⁱ all around. ⁶ The lowest chamber was 7½ feet^j wide, the middle was 9 feet^k wide, and the third was 10½ feet^l wide. He also provided offset ledges for the temple all around the outside so that nothing would be inserted into the temple walls. ⁷ The temple's construction used finished stones cut at the quarry so that

no hammer, chisel, or any iron tool was heard in the temple while it was being built.

⁸ The door for the lowest^m side chamber was on the right side of the temple. Theyⁿ went up a stairway^o to the middle chamber, and from the middle to the third. ⁹ When he finished building the temple, he paneled it with boards and planks of cedar. ¹⁰ He built the chambers along the entire temple, joined to the temple with cedar beams; each story was 7½ feet high.

¹¹ The word of the LORD came to Solomon: ¹² "As for this temple you are building — if you walk in my statutes, observe my ordinances, and keep all my commands by walking in them, I will fulfill my promise to you, which I made to your father David. ¹³ I will dwell among the Israelites and not abandon my people Israel."

¹⁴ When Solomon finished building the temple,^o ¹⁵ he paneled the interior temple walls with cedar boards; from the temple floor to the surface of the ceiling he overlaid the interior with wood. He also overlaid the floor with cypress boards. ¹⁶ Then he lined thirty feet of the rear of the temple with cedar boards from the floor to the surface of the ceiling,^p and he built the interior as an inner sanctuary, the most holy place. ¹⁷ The temple, that is, the sanctuary in front of the most holy place,^q was sixty feet^r long. ¹⁸ The cedar paneling inside the temple was carved with ornamental gourds and flower blossoms. Everything was cedar; not a stone could be seen.

¹⁹ He prepared the inner sanctuary inside the temple to put the ark of the LORD's covenant there. ²⁰ The interior of the sanctuary was thirty feet long, thirty feet wide, and thirty feet high; he overlaid it with pure gold. He also overlaid the cedar altar. ²¹ Next, Solomon overlaid the interior of the temple with pure gold, and he hung^s gold chains across the front of the inner sanctuary and overlaid it with gold. ²² So he added the gold overlay to the entire temple until everything was completely finished, including the entire altar that belongs to the inner sanctuary.

²³ In the inner sanctuary he made two cherubim 15 feet^t high out of olive wood. ²⁴ One wing of the first cherub was 7½ feet long, and the other wing was 7½ feet long. The

^a5:16 Some LXX mss read 3,600; 2Ch 2:2,18 ^b6:1 April–May ^c6:2 Lit 60 cubits ^d6:2 Lit 20 cubits, also in vv. 3,16,20

^e6:2 Lit 30 cubits ^f6:3 Lit 10 cubits wide ^g6:4,8 Hb obscure ^h6:5 Lit built the temple of chamber ⁱ6:5 Lit made ribs or sides ^j6:6 Lit five cubits, also in vv. 10,24 ^k6:6 Lit six cubits ^l6:6 Lit seven cubits ^m6:8 LXX, Tg; MT reads middle

ⁿ6:8 = People ^o6:11–14 LXX omits these vv. ^p6:16 LXX; MT omits of the ceiling; 1Kg 6:15 ^q6:17 Lit front of me; Hb obscure

^r6:17 Lit 40 cubits ^s6:21 Lit he caused to pass across ^t6:23 Lit 10 cubits, also in vv. 24,25,26

wingspan was 15 feet from tip to tip.²⁵ The second cherub also was 15 feet; both cherubim had the same size and shape.²⁶ The first cherub's height was 15 feet and so was the second cherub's.²⁷ Then he put the cherubim inside the inner temple. Since their wings were spread out, the first one's wing touched one wall while the second cherub's wing touched the other^a wall, and in the middle of the temple their wings were touching wing to wing.²⁸ He also overlaid the cherubim with gold.

²⁹ He carved all the surrounding temple walls with carved engravings — cherubim, palm trees, and flower blossoms — in the inner and outer sanctuaries.³⁰ He overlaid the temple floor with gold in both the inner and the outer sanctuaries.

³¹ For the entrance of the inner sanctuary, he made olive wood doors. The pillars of the doorposts were five-sided.^b ³² The two doors were made of olive wood. He carved cherubim, palm trees, and flower blossoms on them and overlaid them with gold, hammering gold over the cherubim and palm trees.³³ In the same way, he made four-sided^c olive wood doorposts for the sanctuary entrance.³⁴ The two doors were made of cypress wood; the first door had two folding sides, and the second door had two folding panels.³⁵ He carved cherubim, palm trees, and flower blossoms on them and overlaid them with gold applied evenly over the carving.³⁶ He built the inner courtyard with three rows of dressed stone and a row of trimmed cedar beams.

³⁷ The foundation of the LORD's temple was laid in Solomon's fourth year in the month of Ziv.³⁸ In his eleventh year in the month of Bul, which is the eighth month,^c the temple was completed in every detail and according to every specification. So he built it in seven years.

SOLOMON'S PALACE COMPLEX

7 Solomon completed his entire palace complex after thirteen years of construction.² He built the House of the Forest of Lebanon. It was one hundred fifty feet^d long, seventy-five feet^e wide, and forty-five feet^f high on four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams on

top of the pillars.³ It was paneled above with cedar at the top of the chambers that rested on forty-five pillars, fifteen per row.⁴ There were three rows of window frames, facing each other^g in three tiers.⁵ All the doors and doorposts had rectangular frames, the openings facing each other^h in three tiers.⁶ He made the hall of pillars seventy-five feet long and forty-five feet wide. A portico was in front of the pillars, and a canopy with pillarsⁱ was in front of them.⁷ He made the Hall of the Throne where he would judge — the Hall of Judgment. It was paneled with cedar from the floor to the rafters.^j ⁸ Solomon's own palace where he would live, in the other courtyard behind the hall, was of similar construction. And he made a house like this hall for Pharaoh's daughter, his wife.^k

⁹ All of these buildings were of costly stones, cut to size and sawed with saws on the inner and outer surfaces, from foundation to coping and from the outside to the great courtyard.¹⁰ The foundation was made of large, costly stones twelve and fifteen feet^l long.¹¹ Above were also costly stones, cut to size, as well as cedar wood.¹² Around the great courtyard, as well as the inner courtyard of the LORD's temple and the portico of the temple, were three rows of dressed stone and a row of trimmed cedar beams.

¹³ King Solomon had Hiram^m brought from Tyre.¹⁴ He was a widow's son from the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a bronze craftsman. Hiram had great skill, understanding, and knowledge to do every kind of bronze work. So he came to King Solomon and carried out all his work.

THE BRONZE PILLARS

¹⁵ He cast two bronze pillars, each 27 feetⁿ high and 18 feet^o in circumference.^p ¹⁶ He also made two capitals of cast bronze to set on top of the pillars; 7 ½ feet^q was the height of the first capital, and 7 ½ feet was also the height of the second capital.¹⁷ The capitals on top of the pillars had gratings of latticework, wreaths^r made of chainwork — seven for the first capital and seven for the second.

¹⁸ He made the pillars with two encircling rows of pomegranates on the one grating to

^a6:27 Lit the second ^b6:31,33; 7:6 Hb obscure ^c6:38 = October–November ^d7:2 Lit 100 cubits ^e7:2 Lit 50 cubits, also in v.6 ^f7:2 Lit 30 cubits, also in vv.6,23 ^g7:4 Lit frames, window to window ^h7:4 Lit three times; = at 3 different places, also in v.5 ⁱ7:5 Lit frames, opposing window to window ^j7:7 Syr,Vg; MT reads floor ^k7:8 Lit daughter he had taken ^l7:10 Lit ten cubits and eight cubits ^m7:13 = Hiram in 2Ch 4:11 ⁿ7:15 Lit 18 cubits ^o7:15 Lit 12 cubits ^p7:15 LXX adds and the thickness of the pillar was four fingers hollowed and similarly the second pillar ^q7:16 Lit five cubits, also in v.23 ^r7:17 Lit tassels

cover the capital on top; he did the same for the second capital. ¹⁹ And the capitals on top of the pillars in the portico were shaped like lilies, six feet ^a high. ²⁰ The capitals on the two pillars were also immediately above the rounded surface next to the grating, and two hundred pomegranates were in rows encircling each ^b capital. ²¹ He set up the pillars at the portico of the sanctuary: he set up the right pillar and named it Jachin; ^c then he set up the left pillar and named it Boaz. ^d ²² The tops of the pillars were shaped like lilies. Then the work of the pillars was completed.

THE BASIN

²³ He made the cast metal basin, ^e 15 feet ^f from brim to brim, perfectly round. It was 7 ½ feet high and 45 feet in circumference. ²⁴ Ornamental gourds encircled it below the brim, ten every half yard, ^g completely encircling the basin. The gourds were cast in two rows when the basin was cast. ²⁵ It stood on twelve oxen, three facing north, three facing west, three facing south, and three facing east. The basin was on top of them and all their hindquarters were toward the center. ²⁶ The basin was three inches ^h thick, and its rim was fashioned like the brim of a cup or of a lily blossom. It held eleven thousand gallons. ⁱ

THE BRONZE WATER CARTS

²⁷ Then he made ten bronze water carts. ^j Each water cart was 6 feet long, 6 feet wide, and 4 ½ feet ^k high. ²⁸ This was the design of the carts: They had frames; the frames were between the cross-pieces, ²⁹ and on the frames between the cross-pieces were lions, oxen, and cherubim. On the cross-pieces there was a pedestal above, and below the lions and oxen were wreaths of hanging ^l work. ³⁰ Each cart had four bronze wheels with bronze axles. Underneath the four corners of the basin were cast supports, each next to a wreath. ³¹ And the water cart's opening inside the crown on top was eighteen inches ^m wide. The opening was round, made as a pedestal twenty-seven inches ⁿ wide. On it were carvings, but their frames were square, not round. ³² There were four wheels under the frames, and the wheel axles were part of the water cart; each wheel was twenty-seven inches ^o tall. ³³ The wheels'

design was similar to that of chariot wheels: their axles, rims, spokes, and hubs were all of cast metal. ³⁴ Four supports were at the four corners of each water cart; each support was one piece with the water cart. ³⁵ At the top of the cart was a band nine inches ^p high encircling it; also, at the top of the cart, its braces and its frames were one piece with it. ³⁶ He engraved cherubim, lions, and palm trees on the plates of its braces and on its frames, wherever each had space, with encircling wreaths. ³⁷ In this way he made the ten water carts using the same casting, dimensions, and shape for all of them.

BRONZE BASINS AND OTHER UTENSILS

³⁸ Then he made ten bronze basins — each basin held 220 gallons ^q and each was six feet wide — one basin for each of the ten water carts. ³⁹ He set five water carts on the right side of the temple and five on the left side. He put the basin near the right side of the temple toward the southeast. ⁴⁰ Then Hiram made the basins, the shovels, and the sprinkling basins.

COMPLETION OF THE BRONZE WORKS

So Hiram finished all the work that he was doing for King Solomon on the LORD's temple: ⁴¹ two pillars; bowls for the capitals that were on top of the two pillars; the two gratings for covering both bowls of the capitals that were on top of the pillars; ⁴² the four hundred pomegranates for the two gratings (two rows of pomegranates for each grating covering both capitals' bowls on top of the pillars); ⁴³ the ten water carts; the ten basins on the water carts; ⁴⁴ the basin; the twelve oxen underneath the basin; ⁴⁵ and the pots, shovels, and sprinkling basins. All the utensils that Hiram made for King Solomon at the LORD's temple were made of burnished bronze. ⁴⁶ The king had them cast in clay molds in the Jordan Valley between Succoth and Zarethan. ⁴⁷ Solomon left all the utensils unweighed because there were so many; the weight of the bronze was not determined.

COMPLETION OF THE GOLD FURNISHINGS

⁴⁸ Solomon also made all the equipment in the LORD's temple: the gold altar; the gold table that the Bread of the Presence was placed on;

^a7:19 Lit four cubits, also in vv. 27, 38 ^b7:20 Lit encircling the second ^c7:21 = He Will Establish ^d7:21 = In Him Is Strength
^e7:23 Lit sea ^f7:23 Lit 10 cubits ^g7:24 Lit 10 per cubit ^h7:26 Lit a handbreadth ⁱ7:26 Lit 2,000 baths ^j7:27 Lit bronze stands
^k7:27 Lit three cubits ^l7:29 Or hammered-down ^m7:31 Lit a cubit ⁿ7:31 Lit one and a half cubits ^o7:32 Lit was one and a half cubits ^p7:35 Lit half a cubit ^q7:38 Lit 40 baths

⁴⁹ the pure gold lampstands in front of the inner sanctuary, five on the right and five on the left; the gold flowers, lamps, and tongs; ⁵⁰ the pure gold ceremonial bowls, wick trimmers, sprinkling basins, ladles, ^a and firepans; and the gold hinges for the doors of the inner temple (that is, the most holy place) and for the doors of the temple sanctuary.

⁵¹ So all the work King Solomon did in the LORD's temple was completed. Then Solomon brought in the consecrated things of his father David — the silver, the gold, and the utensils — and put them in the treasuries of the LORD's temple.

SOLOMON'S DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE

8 At that time Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, all the tribal heads and the ancestral leaders of the Israelites before him at Jerusalem in order to bring the ark of the LORD's covenant from the city of David, that is Zion. ² So all the men of Israel were assembled in the presence of King Solomon in the month of Ethanim, which is the seventh month, ³ at the festival.

³ All the elders of Israel came, and the priests picked up the ark. ⁴ The priests and the Levites brought the ark of the LORD, the tent of meeting, and the holy utensils that were in the tent. ⁵ King Solomon and the entire congregation of Israel, who had gathered around him and were with him in front of the ark, were sacrificing sheep, goats, and cattle that could not be counted or numbered, because there were so many. ⁶ The priests brought the ark of the LORD's covenant to its place, into the inner sanctuary of the temple, to the most holy place beneath the wings of the cherubim. ⁷ For the cherubim were spreading their wings over ^c the place of the ark, so that the cherubim covered the ark and its poles from above. ⁸ The poles were so long that their ends were seen from the holy place in front of the inner sanctuary, but they were not seen from outside the sanctuary; they are still there today. ⁹ Nothing was in the ark except the two stone tablets that Moses had put there at Horeb, ^d where the LORD made a covenant with the Israelites when they came out of the land of Egypt.

¹⁰ When the priests came out of the holy place, the cloud filled the LORD's temple, ¹¹ and because of the cloud, the priests were not able

to continue ministering, for the glory of the LORD filled the temple.

¹² Then Solomon said:

The LORD said that he would dwell in total darkness.

¹³ I have indeed built an exalted temple for you, a place for your dwelling forever.

¹⁴ The king turned around and blessed the entire congregation of Israel while they were standing. ¹⁵ He said:

Blessed be the LORD God of Israel! He spoke directly to my father David, and he has fulfilled the promise by his power.

He said,

¹⁶ "Since the day I brought my people Israel out of Egypt, I have not chosen a city to build a temple in among any of the tribes of Israel, so that my name would be there. But I have chosen David to rule my people Israel."

¹⁷ My father David had his heart set on building a temple for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel.

¹⁸ But the LORD said to my father David, "Since your heart was set on building a temple for my name, you have done well to have this desire. ^e

¹⁹ Yet you are not the one to build it; instead, your son, your own offspring, will build it for my name."

²⁰ The LORD has fulfilled what he promised. I have taken the place of my father David, and I sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised.

I have built the temple for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel.

²¹ I have provided a place there for the ark, where the LORD's covenant is that he made with our ancestors when he brought them out of the land of Egypt.

SOLOMON'S PRAYER

²² Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in front of the entire congregation of Israel and spread out his hands toward heaven. ²³ He said:

^a7:50 Or dishes, or spoons ; lit palms ^b8:2 = September–October ^c8:7 LXX; MT reads toward ^d8:9 = Sinai ^e8:18 Lit well because it was with your heart

LORD God of Israel,
there is no God like you
in heaven above or on earth below,
who keeps the gracious covenant
with your servants who walk
before you
with all their heart.

24 You have kept what you promised
to your servant, my father David.
You spoke directly to him
and you fulfilled your promise
by your power
as it is today.

25 Therefore, LORD God of Israel,
keep what you promised
to your servant, my father David:
You will never fail to have a man
to sit before me on the throne of Israel,
if only your sons take care to walk
before me
as you have walked before me.

26 Now LORD^a God of Israel,
please confirm what you promised
to your servant, my father David.

27 But will God indeed live on earth?
Even heaven, the highest heaven,
cannot contain you,
much less this temple I have built.

28 Listen^b to your servant's prayer
and his petition,
LORD my God,
so that you may hear the cry
and the prayer
that your servant prays
before you today,

29 so that your eyes may watch over
this temple night and day,
toward the place where you said,
"My name will be there,"
and so that you may hear the prayer
that your servant prays
toward this place.

30 Hear the petition of your servant
and your people Israel,
which they pray toward this place.
May you hear in your dwelling place
in heaven.
May you hear and forgive.

31 When a man sins against his neighbor
and is forced to take an oath,^c

and he comes to take an oath
before your altar in this temple,
32 may you hear in heaven and act.
May you judge your servants,
condemning the wicked man
by bringing
what he has done on his own head
and providing justice for the righteous
by rewarding him according to
his righteousness.

33 When your people Israel are defeated
before an enemy,
because they have sinned against you,
and they return to you and praise
your name,
and they pray and plead with you
for mercy in this temple,
34 may you hear in heaven
and forgive the sin
of your people Israel.
May you restore them to the land
you gave their ancestors.

35 When the skies are shut and there is
no rain,
because they have sinned against you,
and they pray toward this place
and praise your name,
and they turn from their sins
because you are afflicting them,
36 may you hear in heaven
and forgive the sin of your servants
and your people Israel,
so that you may teach them
the good way
they should walk in.
May you send rain on your land
that you gave your people
for an inheritance.

37 When there is famine in the land,
when there is pestilence,
when there is blight or mildew, locust
or grasshopper,
when their enemy besieges them
in the land and its cities,^d
when there is any plague or illness,
38 every prayer or petition
that any person or that all
your people Israel may have —
they each know their own affliction^e —

^a8:26 Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Tg, Vg, 2Ch 6:16; other Hb mss omit LORD ^b8:28 Lit Turn ^c8:31 Lit and he lifts a curse against him to curse him ^d8:37 Lit land of its gates ^e8:38 Lit know in his heart of a plague

- as they spread out their hands
toward this temple,
39 may you hear in heaven,
your dwelling place,
and may you forgive, act, and give to
everyone
according to all their ways,
since you know each heart,
for you alone know every human heart,
40 so that they may fear you
all the days they live on the land
you gave our ancestors.
- 41 Even for the foreigner who is not
of your people Israel
but has come from a distant land
because of your name —
42 for they will hear of your great name,
strong hand, and outstretched arm,
and will come and pray
toward this temple —
43 may you hear in heaven,
your dwelling place,
and do according to all
the foreigner asks.
Then all peoples of earth will know
your name,
to fear you as your people Israel do
and to know that this temple
I have built
bears your name.
- 44 When your people go out to fight
against their enemies,^a
wherever you send them,
and they pray to the LORD
in the direction of the city
you have chosen
and the temple I have built
for your name,
45 may you hear their prayer and petition
in heaven
and uphold their cause.
- 46 When they sin against you —
for there is no one who does not sin —
and you are angry with them
and hand them over to the enemy,
and their captors deport them
to the enemy's country —
whether distant or nearby —
47 and when they come to their senses^b

- in the land where they were deported
and repent and petition you
in their captors' land:
“We have sinned and done wrong;
we have been wicked,”
48 and when they return to you
with all their heart and all their soul
in the land of their enemies
who took them captive,
and when they pray to you
in the direction of their land
that you gave their ancestors,
the city you have chosen,
and the temple I have built
for your name,
49 may you hear in heaven,
your dwelling place,
their prayer and petition and uphold
their cause.
- 50 May you forgive your people
who sinned against you
and all their rebellions^c against you,
and may you grant them compassion
before their captors,
so that they may treat them
compassionately.
- 51 For they are your people
and your inheritance;
you brought them out of Egypt,
out of the middle of an iron furnace.
- 52 May your eyes be open
to your servant's petition
and to the petition
of your people Israel,
listening to them whenever they call
to you.
- 53 For you, Lord GOD, have set them apart
as your inheritance
from all peoples of the earth,
as you spoke
through your servant Moses
when you brought our ancestors
out of Egypt.

SOLOMON'S BLESSING

- ⁵⁴ When Solomon finished praying this entire
prayer and petition to the LORD, he got up from
kneeling before the altar of the LORD, with
his hands spread out toward heaven, ⁵⁵ and
he stood and blessed the whole congregation
of Israel with a loud voice: ⁵⁶ “Blessed be the
LORD! He has given rest to his people Israel

^a8:44 Some Hb mss, some ancient versions, 2Ch 6:34; other Hb mss read *enemy* ^b8:47 Lit *they return to their heart* ^c8:50 Lit *rebellions that they have rebelled*

according to all he has said. Not one of all the good promises he made through his servant Moses has failed.⁵⁷ May the LORD our God be with us as he was with our ancestors. May he not abandon us or leave us⁵⁸ so that he causes us to be devoted^a to him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commands, statutes, and ordinances, which he commanded our ancestors.⁵⁹ May my words with which I have made my petition before the LORD be near the LORD our God day and night. May he uphold his servant's cause and the cause of his people Israel, as each day requires.⁶⁰ May all the peoples of the earth know that the LORD is God. There is no other!⁶¹ Be wholeheartedly devoted to the LORD our God to walk in his statutes and to keep his commands, as it is today."

⁶² The king and all Israel with him were offering sacrifices in the LORD's presence.

⁶³ Solomon offered a sacrifice of fellowship offerings to the LORD: twenty-two thousand cattle and one hundred twenty thousand sheep and goats. In this manner the king and all the Israelites dedicated the LORD's temple.

⁶⁴ On the same day, the king consecrated the middle of the courtyard that was in front of the LORD's temple because that was where he offered the burnt offering, the grain offering, and the fat of the fellowship offerings since the bronze altar before the LORD was too small to accommodate the burnt offerings, the grain offerings, and the fat of the fellowship offerings.

⁶⁵ Solomon and all Israel with him — a great assembly, from the entrance of Hamath^b to the Brook of Egypt — observed the festival at that time in the presence of the LORD our God, seven days, and seven more days — fourteen days.^c ⁶⁶ On the fifteenth day^d he sent the people away. So they blessed the king and went to their homes^e rejoicing and with happy hearts for all the goodness that the LORD had done for his servant David and for his people Israel.

THE LORD'S RESPONSE

9 When Solomon finished building the temple of the LORD, the royal palace, and all that Solomon desired to do,² the LORD appeared to Solomon a second time just as he had appeared to him at Gibeon.³ The LORD said to him:

I have heard your prayer and petition you have made before me. I have consecrated this temple you have built, to put^f my name there forever; my eyes and my heart will be there at all times.

⁴ As for you, if you walk before me as your father David walked, with a heart of integrity and in what is right, doing everything I have commanded you, and if you keep my statutes and ordinances,⁵ I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever, as I promised your father David: You will never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.

⁶ If you or your sons turn away from following me and do not keep my commands — my statutes that I have set before you — and if you go and serve other gods and bow in worship to them,⁷ I will cut off Israel from the land I gave them, and I will reject^g the temple I have sanctified for my name. Israel will become an object of scorn and ridicule among all the peoples.⁸ Though this temple is now exalted,^h everyone who passes by will be appalled and will scoff.ⁱ They will say: Why did the LORD do this to this land and this temple? ⁹ Then they will say: Because they abandoned the LORD their God who brought their ancestors out of the land of Egypt. They held on to other gods and bowed in worship to them and served them. Because of this, the LORD brought all this ruin on them.

KING HIRAM'S TWENTY TOWNS

¹⁰ At the end of twenty years during which Solomon had built the two houses, the LORD's temple and the royal palace — ¹¹ King Hiram of Tyre having supplied him with cedar and cypress logs and gold for his every wish — King Solomon gave Hiram twenty towns in the land of Galilee.¹² So Hiram went out from Tyre to look over the towns that Solomon had given him, but he was not pleased with them.¹³ So he said, "What are these towns you've given me, my brother?" So he called them the Land of Cabul,^j as they are still called today.¹⁴ Now Hiram had sent the king nine thousand pounds^k of gold.

^a8:58 Lit *causes our hearts to be inclined* ^b8:65 Or *from Lebo-hamath* ^c8:65 Temple dedication lasted seven days, and the Festival of Shelters lasted seven days. ^d8:66 Lit *the eighth day* ^e8:66 Lit *tents* ^f9:3 Or *by putting* ^g9:7 Lit *send from my presence* ^h9:8 Some ancient versions read *temple will become a ruin* ⁱ9:8 Lit *hiss* ^j9:13 = *Like Nothing* ^k9:14 Lit *120 talents*

SOLOMON'S FORCED LABOR

¹⁵ This is the account of the forced labor that King Solomon had imposed to build the LORD's temple, his own palace, the supporting terraces, the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer. ¹⁶ Pharaoh king of Egypt had attacked and captured Gezer. He then burned it, killed the Canaanites who lived in the city, and gave it as a dowry to his daughter, Solomon's wife. ¹⁷ Then Solomon rebuilt Gezer, Lower Beth-horon, ¹⁸ Baalath, Tamar^{A,B} in the Wilderness of Judah, ¹⁹ all the storage cities that belonged to Solomon, the chariot cities, the cavalry cities, and whatever Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, Lebanon, or anywhere else in the land of his dominion.

²⁰ As for all the peoples who remained of the Amorites, Hethites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, who were not Israelites — ²¹ their descendants who remained in the land after them, those whom the Israelites were unable to destroy completely — Solomon imposed forced labor on them; it is still this way today. ²² But Solomon did not consign the Israelites to slavery; they were soldiers, his servants, his commanders, his captains, and commanders of his chariots and his cavalry. ²³ These were the deputies who were over Solomon's work: 550 who supervised the people doing the work.

SOLOMON'S OTHER ACTIVITIES

²⁴ Pharaoh's daughter moved from the city of David to the house that Solomon had built for her; he then built the terraces.

²⁵ Three times a year Solomon offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings on the altar he had built for the LORD, and he burned incense with them in the LORD's presence. So he completed the temple.

²⁶ King Solomon put together a fleet of ships at Ezion-geber, which is near Eloth on the shore of the Red Sea in the land of Edom. ²⁷ With the fleet, Hiram sent his servants, experienced seamen, along with Solomon's servants. ²⁸ They went to Ophir and acquired gold there — sixteen tons^C — and delivered it to Solomon.

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA

10 The queen of Sheba heard about Solomon's fame connected with the name of the LORD and came to test him with riddles. ² She came to Jerusalem with a very large

entourage, with camels bearing spices, gold in great abundance, and precious stones. She came to Solomon and spoke to him about everything that was on her mind. ³ So Solomon answered all her questions; nothing was too difficult for the king to explain to her. ⁴ When the queen of Sheba observed all of Solomon's wisdom, the palace he had built, ⁵ the food at his table, his servants' residence, his attendants' service and their attire, his cupbearers, and the burnt offerings he offered at the LORD's temple, it took her breath away.

⁶ She said to the king, "The report I heard in my own country about your words and about your wisdom is true. ⁷ But I didn't believe the reports until I came and saw with my own eyes. Indeed, I was not even told half. Your wisdom and prosperity far exceed the report I heard. ⁸ How happy are your men. ⁹ How happy are these servants of yours, who always stand in your presence hearing your wisdom. ⁹ Blessed be the LORD your God! He delighted in you and put you on the throne of Israel, because of the LORD's eternal love for Israel. He has made you king to carry out justice and righteousness."

¹⁰ Then she gave the king four and a half tons^E of gold, a great quantity of spices, and precious stones. Never again did such a quantity of spices arrive as those the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

¹¹ In addition, Hiram's fleet that carried gold from Ophir brought from Ophir a large quantity of almug^F wood and precious stones. ¹² The king made the almug wood into steps for the LORD's temple and the king's palace and into lyres and harps for the singers. Never before did such almug wood arrive, and the like has not been seen again.

¹³ King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba her every desire — whatever she asked — besides what he had given her out of his royal bounty. Then she, along with her servants, returned to her own country.

SOLOMON'S WEALTH

¹⁴ The weight of gold that came to Solomon annually was twenty-five tons,^G ¹⁵ besides what came from merchants, traders' merchandise, and all the Arabian kings and governors of the land.

^A9:18 Alt Hb traditions, LXX, Syr, Tg, Vg read *Tadmor*; 2Ch 8:4 ^B9:18 Tamar was a city in southern Judah; Ezk 47:19; 48:28.

^C9:28 Lit 420 talents ^D10:8 LXX, Syr read *your wives* ^E10:10 Lit 120 talents ^F10:11 = algum in 2Ch 2:8; 9:10-11 ^G10:14 Lit 666 talents

¹⁶ King Solomon made two hundred large shields of hammered gold; fifteen pounds^a of gold went into each shield. ¹⁷ He made three hundred small shields of hammered gold; nearly four pounds^b of gold went into each shield. The king put them in the House of the Forest of Lebanon.

¹⁸ The king also made a large ivory throne and overlaid it with fine gold. ¹⁹ The throne had six steps; there was a rounded top at the back of the throne, armrests on either side of the seat, and two lions standing beside the armrests. ²⁰ Twelve lions were standing there on the six steps, one at each end. Nothing like it had ever been made in any other kingdom.

²¹ All of King Solomon's drinking cups were gold, and all the utensils of the House of the Forest of Lebanon were pure gold. There was no silver, since it was considered as nothing in Solomon's time, ²² for the king had ships of Tarshish at sea with Hiram's fleet, and once every three years the ships of Tarshish would arrive bearing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks.^c

²³ King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the world in riches and in wisdom. ²⁴ The whole world wanted an audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom that God had put in his heart. ²⁵ Every man would bring his annual tribute: items^d of silver and gold, clothing, weapons,^e spices, and horses and mules.

²⁶ Solomon accumulated 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen and stationed them in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem. ²⁷ The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedar as abundant as sycamore in the Judean foothills. ²⁸ Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt and Kue.^f The king's traders bought them from Kue at the going price. ²⁹ A chariot was imported from Egypt for fifteen pounds^g of silver, and a horse for nearly four pounds.^h In the same way, they exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and to the kings of Aram through their agents.

SOLOMON'S UNFAITHFULNESS TO GOD

11 King Solomon loved many foreign women in addition to Pharaoh's daughter: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women² from the nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, "You must

not intermarry with them, and they must not intermarry with you, because they will turn your heart away to follow their gods." To these women Solomon was deeply attachedⁱ in love. ³ He had seven hundred wives who were princesses and three hundred who were concubines, and they turned his heart away.

⁴ When Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away to follow other gods. He was not wholeheartedly devoted to the LORD his God, as his father David had been. ⁵ Solomon followed Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, and Milcom, the abhorrent idol of the Ammonites. ⁶ Solomon did what was evil in the LORD's sight, and unlike his father David, he did not remain loyal to the LORD.

⁷ At that time, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh, the abhorrent idol of Moab, and for Milcom,^j the abhorrent idol of the Ammonites, on the hill across from Jerusalem. ⁸ He did the same for all his foreign wives, who were burning incense and offering sacrifices to their gods.

⁹ The LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. ¹⁰ He had commanded him about this, so that he would not follow other gods, but Solomon did not do what the LORD had commanded.

¹¹ Then the LORD said to Solomon, "Since you have done this^k and did not keep my covenant and my statutes, which I commanded you, I will tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant. ¹² However, I will not do it during your lifetime for the sake of your father David; I will tear it out of your son's hand. ¹³ Yet I will not tear the entire kingdom away from him. I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem that I chose."

SOLOMON'S ENEMIES

¹⁴ So the LORD raised up Hadad the Edomite as an enemy against Solomon. He was of the royal family in Edom. ¹⁵ Earlier, when David was in Edom, Joab, the commander of the army, had gone to bury the dead and had struck down every male in Edom. ¹⁶ For Joab and all Israel had remained there six months, until he had killed every male in Edom. ¹⁷ Hadad fled to Egypt, along with some Edomites from his father's servants. At the time Hadad was a small boy.

^a10:16 Lit 600 (shekels) ^b10:17 Lit three minas ^c10:22 Or baboons ^d10:25 Or vessels, or weapons ^e10:25 Or fragrant

balsam ^f10:28 = Cilicia ^g10:29 Lit 600 shekels ^h10:29 Lit 150 shekels ⁱ11:2 Lit Solomon clung ^j11:7 Lit Molech

^k11:11 Lit "Since this was with you"

¹⁸ Hadad and his men set out from Midian and went to Paran. They took men with them from Paran and went to Egypt, to Pharaoh king of Egypt, who gave Hadad a house, ordered that he be given food, and gave him land. ¹⁹ Pharaoh liked Hadad so much ^a that he gave him a wife, the sister of his own wife, Queen Tahpenes. ²⁰ Tahpenes's sister gave birth to Hadad's son Genubath. Tahpenes herself weaned him in Pharaoh's palace, and Genubath lived there along with Pharaoh's sons.

²¹ When Hadad heard in Egypt that David rested with his fathers and that Joab, the commander of the army, was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, "Let me leave, so I may go to my own country."

²² But Pharaoh asked him, "What do you lack here with me for you to want to go back to your own country?"

"Nothing," he replied, "but please let me leave."

²³ God raised up Rezon son of Eliada as an enemy against Solomon. Rezon had fled from his master King Hadadezer of Zobah ²⁴ and gathered men to himself. He became leader of a raiding party when David killed the Zobaites. He ^b went to Damascus, lived there, and became king in Damascus. ²⁵ Rezon was Israel's enemy throughout Solomon's reign, adding to the trouble Hadad had caused. He reigned over Aram ^c and loathed Israel.

²⁶ Now Solomon's servant, Jeroboam son of Nebat, was an Ephraimite from Zeredah. His widowed mother's name was Zeruah. Jeroboam rebelled against Solomon, ²⁷ and this is the reason he rebelled against the king: Solomon had built the supporting terraces and repaired the opening in the wall of the city of his father David. ²⁸ Now the man Jeroboam was capable, and Solomon noticed the young man because he was getting things done. So he appointed him over the entire labor force of the house of Joseph.

²⁹ During that time, the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite met Jeroboam on the road as Jeroboam came out of Jerusalem. Now Ahijah had wrapped himself with a new cloak, and the two of them were alone in the open field. ³⁰ Then Ahijah took hold of the new cloak he had on, tore it into twelve pieces, ³¹ and said to Jeroboam, "Take ten pieces for yourself, for this is what the LORD God of Israel says:

'I am about to tear the kingdom out of Solomon's hand. I will give you ten tribes, ³² but one tribe will remain his for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city I chose out of all the tribes of Israel. ³³ For they have abandoned me; they have bowed down to Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, to Chemosh, the god of Moab, and to Milcom, the god of the Ammonites. They have not walked in my ways to do what is right in my sight and to carry out my statutes and my judgments as his father David did.

³⁴ "However, I will not take the whole kingdom from him but will let him be ruler all the days of his life for the sake of my servant David, whom I chose and who kept my commands and my statutes. ³⁵ I will take ten tribes of the kingdom from his son and give them to you. ³⁶ I will give one tribe to his son, so that my servant David will always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem, the city I chose for myself to put my name there. ³⁷ I will appoint you, and you will reign as king over all you want, and you will be king over Israel.

³⁸ "After that, if you obey all I command you, walk in my ways, and do what is right in my sight in order to keep my statutes and my commands as my servant David did, I will be with you. I will build you a lasting dynasty just as I built for David, and I will give you Israel. ³⁹ I will humble David's descendants, because of their unfaithfulness, but not forever." ^d

⁴⁰ Therefore, Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, but he fled to Egypt, to King Shishak of Egypt, where he remained until Solomon's death.

SOLOMON'S DEATH

⁴¹ The rest of the events of Solomon's reign, along with all his accomplishments and his wisdom, are written in the Book of Solomon's Events. ⁴² The length of Solomon's reign in Jerusalem over all Israel totaled forty years. ⁴³ Solomon rested with his fathers and was buried in the city of his father David. His son Rehoboam became king in his place.

THE KINGDOM DIVIDED

12 Then Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone to Shechem to make him king. ² When Jeroboam son of Nebat heard about it, he stayed in Egypt, where he had

^a11:19 Lit *Hadad found much favor in Pharaoh's eyes* ^b11:24 LXX; Hb reads *They* ^c11:25 Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr read *Edom*

^d11:38-39 LXX omits *and I will give . . . but not forever*

fled from King Solomon's presence. Jeroboam stayed in Egypt.^a ³ But they summoned him, and Jeroboam and the whole assembly of Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam: ⁴ "Your father made our yoke harsh. You, therefore, lighten your father's harsh service and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you."

⁵ Rehoboam replied, "Go away for three days and then return to me." So the people left. ⁶ Then King Rehoboam consulted with the elders who had served his father Solomon when he was alive, asking, "How do you advise me to respond to this people?"

⁷ They replied, "Today if you will be a servant to this people and serve them, and if you respond to them by speaking kind words to them, they will be your servants forever."

⁸ But he rejected the advice of the elders who had advised him and consulted with the young men who had grown up with him and attended him. ⁹ He asked them, "What message do you advise that we send back to this people who said to me, 'Lighten the yoke your father put on us'?"

¹⁰ Then the young men who had grown up with him told him, "This is what you should say to this people who said to you, 'Your father made our yoke heavy, but you, make it lighter on us!' This is what you should tell them: 'My little finger is thicker than my father's waist! ¹¹ Although my father burdened you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke; my father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with barbed whips.'"^b

¹² So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day, as the king had ordered: "Return to me on the third day."¹³ Then the king answered the people harshly. He rejected the advice the elders had given him¹⁴ and spoke to them according to the young men's advice: "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with barbed whips."

¹⁵ The king did not listen to the people, because this turn of events came from the LORD to carry out his word, which the LORD had spoken through Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam son of Nebat. ¹⁶ When all Israel saw that the king had not listened to them, the people answered him:

What portion do we have in David?

We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse.

Israel, return to your tents;

David, now look after your own house!

So Israel went to their tents,¹⁷ but Rehoboam reigned over the Israelites living in the cities of Judah.

¹⁸ Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram,^c who was in charge of forced labor, but all Israel stoned him to death. King Rehoboam managed to get into the chariot and flee to Jerusalem. ¹⁹ Israel is still in rebellion against the house of David today.

REHOBAM IN JERUSALEM

²⁰ When all Israel heard that Jeroboam had come back, they summoned him to the assembly and made him king over all Israel. No one followed the house of David except the tribe of Judah alone. ²¹ When Rehoboam arrived in Jerusalem, he mobilized one hundred eighty thousand fit young soldiers from the entire house of Judah and the tribe of Benjamin to fight against the house of Israel to restore the kingdom to Rehoboam son of Solomon. ²² But the word of God came to Shemaiah, the man of God: ²³ "Say to Rehoboam son of Solomon, king of Judah, to the whole house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the rest of the people, ²⁴ 'This is what the LORD says: You are not to march up and fight against your brothers, the Israelites. Each of you return home, for this situation is from me.'"

So they listened to the word of the LORD and went back according to the word of the LORD.

JEROBOAM'S IDOLATRY

²⁵ Jeroboam built Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim and lived there. From there he went out and built Penuel. ²⁶ Jeroboam said to himself, "The kingdom might now return to the house of David. ²⁷ If these people regularly go to offer sacrifices in the LORD's temple in Jerusalem, the heart of these people will return to their lord, King Rehoboam of Judah. They will kill me and go back to the king of Judah."²⁸ So the king sought advice.

Then he made two golden calves, and he said to the people, "Going to Jerusalem is too difficult for you. Israel, here are your gods^d who brought you up from the land of Egypt."

²⁹ He set up one in Bethel, and put the other

^a12:2 LXX, Vg read *Jeroboam returned from Egypt*; 2Ch 10:2 ^b12:11 Lit *with scorpions*, also in v. 14 ^c12:18 LXX reads *Adoniram*; 1Kg 4:6; 5:14 ^d12:28 Or *here is your God, or here is your god*

in Dan. ³⁰This led to sin; the people walked in procession before one of the calves all the way to Dan.^a

³¹Jeroboam also made shrines^b on the high places and made priests from the ranks of the people who were not Levites. ³²Jeroboam made a festival in the eighth month on the fifteenth day of the month, like the festival in Judah. He offered sacrifices on the altar; he made this offering in Bethel to sacrifice to the calves he had made. He also stationed the priests in Bethel for the high places he had made. ³³He offered sacrifices on^c the altar he had set up in Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month. He chose this month on his own. He made a festival for the Israelites, offered sacrifices on the altar, and burned incense.

JUDGMENT ON JEROBOAM

13 A man of God came, however, from Judah to Bethel by the word of the LORD while Jeroboam was standing beside the altar to burn incense. ²The man of God cried out against the altar by the word of the LORD: "Altar, altar, this is what the LORD says, 'A son will be born to the house of David, named Josiah, and he will sacrifice on you the priests of the high places who are burning incense on you. Human bones will be burned on you.'" ³He gave a sign that day. He said, "This is the sign that the LORD has spoken: 'The altar will now be ripped apart, and the ashes that are on it will be poured out.'"

⁴When the king heard the message that the man of God had cried out against the altar at Bethel, Jeroboam stretched out his hand from the altar and said, "Arrest him!" But the hand he stretched out against him withered, and he could not pull it back to himself. ⁵The altar was ripped apart, and the ashes poured from the altar, according to the sign that the man of God had given by the word of the LORD.

⁶Then the king responded to the man of God, "Plead for the favor of the LORD your God and pray for me so that my hand may be restored to me." So the man of God pleaded for the favor of the LORD, and the king's hand was restored to him and became as it had been at first.

⁷Then the king declared to the man of God, "Come home with me, refresh yourself, and I'll give you a reward."

⁸But the man of God replied, "If you were to give me half your house, I still wouldn't go with you, and I wouldn't eat food or drink water in this place, ⁹for this is what I was commanded by the word of the LORD: 'You must not eat food or drink water or go back the way you came.'" ¹⁰So he went another way; he did not go back by the way he had come to Bethel.

THE OLD PROPHET AND THE MAN OF GOD

¹¹Now a certain old prophet was living in Bethel. His son^b came and told him all the deeds that the man of God had done that day in Bethel. His sons also told their father the words that he had spoken to the king. ¹²Then their father asked them, "Which way did he go?" His sons had seen^c the way taken by the man of God who had come from Judah. ¹³Then he said to his sons, "Saddle the donkey for me." So they saddled the donkey for him, and he got on it. ¹⁴He followed the man of God and found him sitting under an oak tree. He asked him, "Are you the man of God who came from Judah?" "I am," he said.

¹⁵Then he said to him, "Come home with me and eat some food."

¹⁶But he answered, "I cannot go back with you or accompany you; I will not eat food or drink water with you in this place. ¹⁷For a message came to me by the word of the LORD: 'You must not eat food or drink water there or go back by the way you came.'"

¹⁸He said to him, "I am also a prophet like you. An angel spoke to me by the word of the LORD: 'Bring him back with you to your house so that he may eat food and drink water.'" The old prophet deceived him, ¹⁹and the man of God went back with him, ate food in his house, and drank water.

²⁰While they were sitting at the table, the word of the LORD came to the prophet who had brought him back, ²¹and the prophet cried out to the man of God who had come from Judah, "This is what the LORD says: 'Because you rebelled against the LORD's command and did not keep the command that the LORD your God commanded you — ²²but you went back and ate food and drank water in the place that he said to you, "Do not eat food and do not drink water" — your corpse will never reach the grave of your fathers.'"

^a12:30 Some LXX mss read *calves to Bethel and the other to Dan* ^b12:31 Lit a house ^c12:33 Or *He went up to*

^b13:11 Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Vg read *sons* ^c13:12 LXX, Syr, Tg, Vg read *sons showed him*

²³ So after he had eaten food and after he had drunk, the old prophet saddled the donkey for the prophet he had brought back. ²⁴ When he left, ^a a lion attacked ^b him along the way and killed him. His corpse was thrown on the road, and the donkey was standing beside it; the lion was standing beside the corpse too.

²⁵ There were men passing by who saw the corpse thrown on the road and the lion standing beside it, and they went and spoke about it in the city where the old prophet lived. ²⁶ When the prophet who had brought him back from his way heard about it, he said, "He is the man of God who disobeyed the LORD's command. The LORD has given him to the lion, and it has mauled and killed him, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke to him."

²⁷ Then the old prophet instructed his sons, "Saddle the donkey for me." They saddled it, ²⁸ and he went and found the corpse thrown on the road with the donkey and the lion standing beside the corpse. The lion had not eaten the corpse or mauled the donkey. ²⁹ So the prophet lifted the corpse of the man of God and laid it on the donkey and brought it back. The old prophet came into the city to mourn and to bury him. ³⁰ Then he laid the corpse in his own grave, and they mourned over him: "Oh, my brother!"

³¹ After he had buried him, he said to his sons, "When I die, bury me in the grave where the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones, ³² for the message that he cried out by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel and against all the shrines of the high places in the cities of Samaria is certain to happen."

³³ Even after this, Jeroboam did not repent of his evil way but again made priests for the high places from the ranks of the people. He ordained whoever so desired it, and they became priests of the high places. ³⁴ This was the sin that caused the house of Jeroboam to be cut off and obliterated from the face of the earth.

DISASTER ON THE HOUSE OF JEROBOAM

14 At that time Abijah son of Jeroboam became sick. ² Jeroboam said to his wife, "Go disguise yourself, so they won't know that you're Jeroboam's wife, and go to Shiloh. The prophet Ahijah is there; it was he who told about me becoming king over this

people. ³ Take with you ten loaves of bread, some cakes, and a jar of honey, and go to him. He will tell you what will happen to the boy."

⁴ Jeroboam's wife did that: she went to Shiloh and arrived at Ahijah's house. Ahijah could not see; he was blind ^c due to his age. ⁵ But the LORD had said to Ahijah, "Jeroboam's wife is coming soon to ask you about her son, for he is sick. You are to say such and such to her. When she arrives, she will be disguised."

⁶ When Ahijah heard the sound of her feet entering the door, he said, "Come in, wife of Jeroboam! Why are you disguised? I have bad news for you. ⁷ Go tell Jeroboam, 'This is what the LORD God of Israel says: I raised you up from among the people, appointed you ruler over my people Israel, ⁸ tore the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it to you. But you were not like my servant David, who kept my commands and followed me with all his heart, doing only what is right in my sight. ⁹ You behaved more wickedly than all who were before you. In order to anger me, you have proceeded to make for yourself other gods and cast images, but you have flung me behind your back. ¹⁰ Because of all this, I am about to bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam:

I will wipe out all of Jeroboam's males, ^d both slave and free, ^e in Israel;

I will sweep away the house of Jeroboam as one sweeps away dung until it is all gone!

¹¹ Anyone who belongs to Jeroboam and dies in the city, the dogs will eat, and anyone who dies in the field, the birds ^f will eat, for the LORD has spoken!'

¹² "As for you, get up and go to your house. When your feet enter the city, the boy will die.

¹³ All Israel will mourn for him and bury him. He alone out of Jeroboam's house will be given a proper burial because out of the house of Jeroboam something favorable to the LORD God of Israel was found in him. ¹⁴ The LORD will raise up for himself a king over Israel, who will wipe out the house of Jeroboam. This is the day, yes, ^g even today! ¹⁵ For the LORD will strike Israel so that they will ^h shake as a reed

^a13:23-24 LXX reads *donkey, and he turned* ²⁴and left, and ^b13:24 Lit met ^c14:4 Lit see, for his eyes stood; 1Sm 4:15

^d14:10 Lit eliminate Jeroboam's one who urinates against the wall ^e14:10 Or males, even the weak and impaired; Hb obscure

^f14:11 Lit birds of the sky ^g14:14 Hb obscure ^h14:15 so that they will supplied for clarity

shakes in water. He will uproot Israel from this good soil that he gave to their ancestors. He will scatter them beyond the Euphrates because they made their Asherah poles, angering the LORD.¹⁶ He will give up Israel because of Jeroboam's sins that he committed and caused Israel to commit."

¹⁷Then Jeroboam's wife got up and left and went to Tirzah. As she was crossing the threshold of the house, the boy died.¹⁸ He was buried, and all Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the LORD he had spoken through his servant the prophet Ahijah.

¹⁹As for the rest of the events of Jeroboam's reign, how he waged war and how he reigned, note that they are written in the Historical Record of Israel's Kings.²⁰ The length of Jeroboam's reign was twenty-two years. He rested with his fathers, and his son Nadab became king in his place.

JUDAH'S KING REHOBOAM

²¹Now Rehoboam, Solomon's son, reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he became king; he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city where the LORD had chosen from all the tribes of Israel to put his name. Rehoboam's mother's name was Naamah the Ammonite.

²²Judah did what was evil in the LORD's sight. They provoked him to jealous anger more than all that their ancestors had done with the sins they committed.²³ They also built for themselves high places, sacred pillars, and Asherah poles on every high hill and under every green tree;²⁴ there were even male cult prostitutes in the land. They imitated all the detestable practices of the nations the LORD had dispossessed before the Israelites.

²⁵In the fifth year of King Rehoboam, King Shishak of Egypt went to war against Jerusalem.²⁶ He seized the treasuries of the LORD's temple and the treasuries of the royal palace. He took everything. He took all the gold shields that Solomon had made.²⁷ King Rehoboam made bronze shields to replace them and committed them into the care of the captains of the guards^a who protected the entrance to the king's palace.²⁸ Whenever the king entered the LORD's temple, the guards would carry the shields, then they would take them back to the armory.^b

²⁹The rest of the events of Rehoboam's reign, along with all his accomplishments, are written about in the Historical Record of Judah's Kings.³⁰ There was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam throughout their reigns.³¹ Rehoboam rested with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David. His mother's name was Naamah the Ammonite. His son Abijam^c became king in his place.

JUDAH'S KING ABIJAM

15 In the eighteenth year of Israel's King Jeroboam son of Nebat, Abijam became king over Judah,² and he reigned three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Maacah daughter^d of Abishalom.

³Abijam walked in all the sins his father before him had committed, and he was not wholeheartedly devoted to the LORD his God as his ancestor David had been.⁴ But for the sake of David, the LORD his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem by raising up his son after him and by preserving Jerusalem.⁵ For David did what was right in the LORD's sight, and he did not turn aside from anything he had commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hethite.

⁶There had been war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of Rehoboam's life.⁷ The rest of the events of Abijam's reign, along with all his accomplishments, are written in the Historical Record of Judah's Kings. There was also war between Abijam and Jeroboam.⁸ Abijam rested with his fathers and was buried in the city of David. His son Asa became king in his place.

JUDAH'S KING ASA

⁹In the twentieth year of Israel's King Jeroboam, Asa became king of Judah,¹⁰ and he reigned forty-one years in Jerusalem. His grandmother's^e name was Maacah daughter of Abishalom.

¹¹Asa did what was right in the LORD's sight, as his ancestor David had done.¹² He banished the male cult prostitutes from the land and removed all of the idols that his fathers had made.¹³ He also removed his grandmother^f Maacah from being queen mother because she had made an obscene image of Asherah. Asa chopped down her obscene image and

^a14:27 *Lit the runners* ^b14:28 *Lit the chamber of the runners*
in v. 10; 2Ch 13:2 ^c15:10 *Lit mother's* ^d15:13 *Lit mother*

^e14:31 = Abijah in 2Ch 13 ^f15:2 Possibly granddaughter, also

burned it in the Kidron Valley.¹⁴ The high places were not taken away, but Asa was wholeheartedly devoted to the LORD his entire life.¹⁵ He brought his father's consecrated gifts and his own consecrated gifts into the LORD's temple: silver, gold, and utensils.

¹⁶ There was war between Asa and King Baasha of Israel throughout their reigns.¹⁷ Israel's King Baasha went to war against Judah. He built Ramah in order to keep anyone from leaving or coming to King Asa of Judah.¹⁸ So Asa withdrew all the silver and gold that remained in the treasuries of the LORD's temple and the treasuries of the royal palace and gave it to his servants. Then King Asa sent them to Ben-hadad son of Tabrimmon son of Hezion king of Aram who lived in Damascus, saying,¹⁹ "There is a treaty between me and you, between my father and your father. Look, I have sent you a gift of silver and gold. Go and break your treaty with King Baasha of Israel so that he will withdraw from me."

²⁰ Ben-hadad listened to King Asa and sent the commanders of his armies against the cities of Israel. He attacked Ijon, Dan, Abel-beth-maacah, all Chinnereth, and the whole land of Naphtali.²¹ When Baasha heard about it, he quit building Ramah and stayed in Tirzah.²² Then King Asa gave a command to everyone without exception in Judah, and they carried away the stones of Ramah and the timbers Baasha had built it with. Then King Asa built Geba of Benjamin and Mizpah with them.

²³ The rest of all the events of Asa's reign, along with all his might, all his accomplishments, and the cities he built, are written in the Historical Record of Judah's Kings. But in his old age he developed a disease in his feet.²⁴ Then Asa rested with his fathers and was buried in the city of his ancestor David. His son Jehoshaphat became king in his place.

ISRAEL'S KING NADAB

²⁵ Nadab son of Jeroboam became king over Israel in the second year of Judah's King Asa; he reigned over Israel two years.²⁶ Nadab did what was evil in the LORD's sight and walked in the ways of his father and the sin he had caused Israel to commit.

²⁷ Then Baasha son of Ahijah of the house of Issachar conspired against Nadab, and Baasha struck him down at Gibbethon of the Philistines while Nadab and all Israel were

besieging Gibbethon.²⁸ In the third year of Judah's King Asa, Baasha killed Nadab and reigned in his place.

²⁹ When Baasha became king, he struck down the entire house of Jeroboam. He did not leave Jeroboam any survivors but^a destroyed his family according to the word of the LORD he had spoken through his servant Ahijah the Shilonite.³⁰ This was because Jeroboam had angered^b the LORD God of Israel by the sins he had committed and had caused Israel to commit.

³¹ The rest of the events of Nadab's reign, along with all his accomplishments, are written in the Historical Record of Israel's Kings.³² There was war between Asa and King Baasha of Israel throughout their reigns.

ISRAEL'S KING BAASHA

³³ In the third year of Judah's King Asa, Baasha son of Ahijah became king over all Israel, and he reigned in Tirzah twenty-four years.³⁴ He did what was evil in the LORD's sight and walked in the ways of Jeroboam and the sin he had caused Israel to commit.

16 Now the word of the LORD came to Jehu son of Hanani against Baasha:² "Because I raised you up from the dust and made you ruler over my people Israel, but you have walked in the ways of Jeroboam and have caused my people Israel to sin, angering me with their sins,³ take note: I will eradicate Baasha and his house, and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam son of Nebat:

⁴ Anyone who belongs to Baasha
and dies in the city,
the dogs will eat,
and anyone who is his and dies
in the field,
the birds^c will eat."

⁵ The rest of the events of Baasha's reign, along with all his accomplishments and might, are written in the Historical Record of Israel's Kings.⁶ Baasha rested with his fathers and was buried in Tirzah. His son Elah became king in his place.⁷ But through the prophet Jehu son of Hanani the word of the LORD also had come against Baasha and against his house because of all the evil he had done in the LORD's sight. His actions angered the LORD, and Baasha's house became like the house of Jeroboam, because he had struck it down.

^a15:29 Lit *Jeroboam anyone breathing until he* ^b15:30 Lit *provoked in the provocation of* ^c16:4 Lit *birds of the sky*

ISRAEL'S KING ELAH

⁸ In the twenty-sixth year of Judah's King Asa, Elah son of Baasha became king over Israel, and he reigned in Tirzah two years.

⁹ His servant Zimri, commander of half his chariots, conspired against him while Elah was in Tirzah getting drunk in the house of Arza, who was in charge of the household at Tirzah.

¹⁰ In the twenty-seventh year of Judah's King Asa, Zimri went in, struck Elah down, killing him. Then Zimri became king in his place.

¹¹ When he became king, as soon as he was seated on his throne, Zimri struck down the entire house of Baasha. He did not leave a single male,^a including his kinsmen and his friends.

¹² So Zimri destroyed the entire house of Baasha, according to the word of the LORD he had spoken against Baasha through the prophet Jehu.

¹³ This happened because of all the sins of Baasha and those of his son Elah, which they committed and caused Israel to commit, angering the LORD God of Israel with their worthless idols.

¹⁴ The rest of the events of Elah's reign, along with all his accomplishments, are written in the Historical Record of Israel's Kings.

ISRAEL'S KING ZIMRI

¹⁵ In the twenty-seventh year of Judah's King Asa, Zimri became king for seven days in Tirzah. Now the troops were encamped against Gibbethon of the Philistines. ¹⁶ When these troops heard that Zimri had not only conspired but had also struck down the king, then all Israel made Omri, the army commander, king over Israel that very day in the camp. ¹⁷ Omri along with all Israel marched up from Gibbethon and besieged Tirzah. ¹⁸ When Zimri saw that the city was captured, he entered the citadel of the royal palace and burned it down over himself. He died ¹⁹ because of the sin he committed by doing what was evil in the LORD's sight and by walking in the ways of Jeroboam and the sin he caused Israel to commit.

²⁰ The rest of the events of Zimri's reign, along with the conspiracy that he instigated, are written in the Historical Record of Israel's Kings. ²¹ At that time the people of Israel were divided: half the people followed Tibni son of Ginath, to make him king, and half followed Omri. ²² However, the people who followed Omri proved stronger than those who followed Tibni son of Ginath. So Tibni died and Omri became king.

ISRAEL'S KING OMRI

²³ In the thirty-first year of Judah's King Asa, Omri became king over Israel, and he reigned twelve years. He reigned six years in Tirzah,

²⁴ then he bought the hill of Samaria from Shemer for 150 pounds^b of silver, and he built up the hill. He named the city he built Samaria^c based on the name Shemer, the owner of the hill.

²⁵ Omri did what was evil in the LORD's sight; he did more evil than all who were before him.

²⁶ He walked in all the ways of Jeroboam son of Nebat in every respect and continued in his sins that he caused Israel to commit, angering the LORD God of Israel with their worthless idols.

²⁷ The rest of the events of Omri's reign, along with his accomplishments and the might he exercised, are written in the Historical Record of Israel's Kings. ²⁸ Omri rested with his fathers and was buried in Samaria. His son Ahab became king in his place.

ISRAEL'S KING AHAB

²⁹ Ahab son of Omri became king over Israel in the thirty-eighth year of Judah's King Asa; Ahab son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years. ³⁰ But Ahab son of Omri did what was evil in the LORD's sight more than all who were before him. ³¹ Then, as if following the sin of Jeroboam son of Nebat were not enough, he married Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and then proceeded to serve Baal and bow in worship to him. ³² He set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal that he had built in Samaria. ³³ Ahab also made an Asherah pole. Ahab did more to anger the LORD God of Israel than all the kings of Israel who were before him.

³⁴ During his reign, Hiel the Bethelite built Jericho. At the cost of Abiram his firstborn, he laid its foundation, and at the cost of Segub his youngest, he finished its gates, according to the word of the LORD he had spoken through Joshua son of Nun.

ELIJAH ANNOUNCES FAMINE

17 Now Elijah the Tishbite, from the Gilead settlers,^d said to Ahab, "As the LORD God of Israel lives, in whose presence I stand, there will be no dew or rain during these years except by my command!"

² Then the word of the LORD came to him:

³ "Leave here, turn eastward, and hide at the

^a16:11 Lit *leave him one who urinates against the wall* ^b16:24 Lit *for two talents* ^c16:24 = Belonging to Shemer's Clan

^d17:1 LXX reads *from Tishbe of Gilead*

Wadi Cherith where it enters the Jordan. ⁴ You are to drink from the wadi. I have commanded the ravens to provide for you there."

⁵ So he proceeded to do what the LORD commanded. Elijah left and lived at the Wadi Cherith where it enters the Jordan. ⁶ The ravens kept bringing him bread and meat in the morning and in the evening, and he would drink from the wadi. ⁷ After a while, the wadi dried up because there had been no rain in the land.

ELIJAH AND THE WIDOW

⁸ Then the word of the LORD came to him: ⁹ "Get up, go to Zarephath that belongs to Sidon and stay there. Look, I have commanded a woman who is a widow to provide for you there." ¹⁰ So Elijah got up and went to Zarephath. When he arrived at the city gate, there was a widow gathering wood. Elijah called to her and said, "Please bring me a little water in a cup and let me drink." ¹¹ As she went to get it, he called to her and said, "Please bring me a piece of bread in your hand."

¹² But she said, "As the LORD your God lives, I don't have anything baked — only a handful of flour in the jar and a bit of oil in the jug. Just now, I am gathering a couple of sticks in order to go prepare it for myself and my son so we can eat it and die."

¹³ Then Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid; go and do as you have said. But first make me a small loaf from it and bring it out to me. Afterward, you may make some for yourself and your son, ¹⁴ for this is what the LORD God of Israel says, 'The flour jar will not become empty and the oil jug will not run dry until the day the LORD sends rain on the surface of the land.'"

¹⁵ So she proceeded to do according to the word of Elijah. Then the woman, Elijah, and her household ate for many days. ¹⁶ The flour jar did not become empty, and the oil jug did not run dry, according to the word of the LORD he had spoken through ^a Elijah.

THE WIDOW'S SON RAISED

¹⁷ After this, the son of the woman who owned the house became ill. His illness got worse until he stopped breathing. ¹⁸ She said to Elijah, "Man of God, why are you here? Have you come to call attention to my iniquity so that my son is put to death?"

¹⁹ But Elijah said to her, "Give me your son." So he took him from her arms, brought him up to the upstairs room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed. ²⁰ Then he cried out to the LORD and said, "LORD my God, have you also brought tragedy on the widow I am staying with by killing her son?" ²¹ Then he stretched himself out over the boy three times. He cried out to the LORD and said, "LORD my God, please let this boy's life come into him again!"

²² So the LORD listened to Elijah, and the boy's life came into him again, and he lived. ²³ Then Elijah took the boy, brought him down from the upstairs room into the house, and gave him to his mother. Elijah said, "Look, your son is alive."

²⁴ Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know you are a man of God and the LORD's word from your mouth is true."

ELIJAH'S MESSAGE TO AHAB

18 After a long time, the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year: "Go and present yourself to Ahab. I will send rain on the surface of the land." ² So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab.

The famine was severe in Samaria. ³ Ahab called for Obadiah, who was in charge of the palace. Obadiah was a man who greatly feared the LORD ⁴ and took a hundred prophets and hid them, fifty men to a cave, and provided them with food and water when Jezebel slaughtered the LORD's prophets. ⁵ Ahab said to Obadiah, "Go throughout the land to every spring and to every wadi. Perhaps we'll find grass so we can keep the horses and mules alive and not have to destroy any cattle." ⁶ They divided the land between them in order to cover it. Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went the other way by himself.

⁷ While Obadiah was walking along the road, Elijah suddenly met him. When Obadiah recognized him, he fell facedown and said, "Is it you, my lord Elijah?"

⁸ "It is I," he replied. "Go tell your lord, 'Elijah is here!'" ^b

⁹ But Obadiah said, "What sin have I committed, that you are handing your servant over to Ahab to put me to death? ¹⁰ As the LORD your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my lord has not sent someone to search for you. When they said, 'He is not here,' he

^a17:16 Lit by the hand of ^b18:8 The Hb words translated 'Elijah is here' also mean 'Look, my God is the LORD'

made that kingdom or nation swear they had not found you.

¹¹ "Now you say, 'Go tell your lord, "Elijah is here!"' ¹² But when I leave you, the Spirit of the LORD may carry you off to some place I don't know. Then when I go report to Ahab and he doesn't find you, he will kill me. But I, your servant, have feared the LORD from my youth. ¹³ Wasn't it reported to my lord what I did when Jezebel slaughtered the LORD's prophets? I hid a hundred of the prophets of the LORD, fifty men to a cave, and I provided them with food and water. ¹⁴ Now you say, 'Go tell your lord, "Elijah is here!"' He will kill me!"

¹⁵ Then Elijah said, "As the LORD of Armies lives, in whose presence I stand, today I will present myself to Ahab."

¹⁶ Obadiah went to meet Ahab and told him. Then Ahab went to meet Elijah. ¹⁷ When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, "Is that you, the one ruining Israel?"

¹⁸ He replied, "I have not ruined Israel, but you and your father's family have, because you have abandoned the LORD's commands and followed the Baals. ¹⁹ Now summon all Israel to meet me at Mount Carmel, along with the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah who eat at Jezebel's table."

ELIJAH AT MOUNT CARMEL

²⁰ So Ahab summoned all the Israelites and gathered the prophets at Mount Carmel. ²¹ Then Elijah approached all the people and said, "How long will you waver between two opinions?^a If the LORD is God, follow him. But if Baal, follow him." But the people didn't answer him a word.

²² Then Elijah said to the people, "I am the only remaining prophet of the LORD, but Baal's prophets are 450 men. ²³ Let two bulls be given to us. They are to choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and place it on the wood but not light the fire. I will prepare the other bull and place it on the wood but not light the fire. ²⁴ Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD. The God who answers with fire, he is God."

All the people answered, "That's fine."

²⁵ Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Since you are so numerous, choose for yourselves one bull and prepare it first. Then call on the name of your god but don't light the fire."

²⁶ So they took the bull that he gave them, prepared it, and called on the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, "Baal, answer us!" But there was no sound; no one answered. Then they danced^b around the altar they had made.

²⁷ At noon Elijah mocked them. He said, "Shout loudly, for he's a god! Maybe he's thinking it over; maybe he has wandered away;^c or maybe he's on the road. Perhaps he's sleeping and will wake up!" ²⁸ They shouted loudly, and cut themselves with knives and spears, according to their custom, until blood gushed over them. ²⁹ All afternoon they kept on raving until the offering of the evening sacrifice, but there was no sound; no one answered, no one paid attention.

³⁰ Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near me." So all the people approached him. Then he repaired the LORD's altar that had been torn down: ³¹ Elijah took twelve stones — according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, "Israel will be your name" — ³² and he built an altar with the stones in the name of the LORD. Then he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold about four gallons.^{d,e} ³³ Next, he arranged the wood, cut up the bull, and placed it on the wood. He said, "Fill four water pots with water and pour it on the offering to be burned and on the wood." ³⁴ Then he said, "A second time!" and they did it a second time. And then he said, "A third time!" and they did it a third time. ³⁵ So the water ran all around the altar; he even filled the trench with water.

³⁶ At the time for offering the evening sacrifice, the prophet Elijah approached the altar and said, "LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, today let it be known that you are God in Israel and I am your servant, and that at your word I have done all these things. ³⁷ Answer me, LORD! Answer me so that this people will know that you, the LORD, are God and that you have turned their hearts back."

³⁸ Then the LORD's fire fell and consumed the burnt offering, the wood, the stones, and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. ³⁹ When all the people saw it, they fell facedown and said, "The LORD, he is God! The LORD, he is God!"

⁴⁰ Then Elijah ordered them, "Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let even one of them

^a18:21 Lit you hobble on two crutches? ^b18:26 Or hobbled ^c18:27 Or has turned aside; possibly to relieve himself

^d18:32 LXX reads trench containing two measures of seed ^e18:32 Lit altar corresponding to a house of two seahs of seed

escape." So they seized them, and Elijah brought them down to the Wadi Kishon and slaughtered them there. ⁴¹Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a rainstorm."

⁴²So Ahab went to eat and drink, but Elijah went up to the summit of Carmel. He bent down on the ground and put his face between his knees. ⁴³Then he said to his servant, "Go up and look toward the sea."

So he went up, looked, and said, "There's nothing."

Seven times Elijah said, "Go back."

⁴⁴On the seventh time, he reported, "There's a cloud as small as a man's hand coming up from the sea."

Then Elijah said, "Go and tell Ahab, 'Get your chariot ready and go down so the rain doesn't stop you.'"

⁴⁵In a little while, the sky grew dark with clouds and wind, and there was a downpour. So Ahab got in his chariot and went to Jezreel.

⁴⁶The power of the LORD was on Elijah, and he tucked his mantle under his belt and ran ahead of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

ELIJAH'S JOURNEY TO HOREB

19 Ahab told Jezebel everything that Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. ²So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "May the gods punish me and do so severely if I don't make your life like the life of one of them by this time tomorrow!"

³Then Elijah became afraid^a and immediately ran for his life. When he came to Beer-sheba that belonged to Judah, he left his servant there, ⁴but he went on a day's journey into the wilderness. He sat down under a broom tree and prayed that he might die. He said, "I have had enough! LORD, take my life, for I'm no better than my fathers." ⁵Then he lay down and slept under the broom tree.

Suddenly, an angel touched him. The angel told him, "Get up and eat." ⁶Then he looked, and there at his head was a loaf of bread baked over hot stones, and a jug of water. So he ate and drank and lay down again. ⁷Then the angel of the LORD returned for a second time and touched him. He said, "Get up and eat, or the journey will be too much for you." ⁸So he got up, ate, and drank. Then on the strength from that food, he walked forty days and forty nights

to Horeb, the mountain of God. ⁹He entered a cave there and spent the night.

ELIJAH'S ENCOUNTER WITH THE LORD

Suddenly, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

¹⁰He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of Armies, but the Israelites have abandoned your covenant, torn down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are looking for me to take my life."

¹¹Then he said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the LORD's presence."

At that moment, the LORD passed by. A great and mighty wind was tearing at the mountains and was shattering cliffs before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. ¹²After the earthquake there was a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire there was a voice, a soft whisper. ¹³When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

Suddenly, a voice came to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

¹⁴"I have been very zealous for the LORD God of Armies," he replied, "but the Israelites have abandoned your covenant, torn down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they're looking for me to take my life."

¹⁵Then the LORD said to him, "Go and return by the way you came to the Wilderness of Damascus. When you arrive, you are to anoint Hazael as king over Aram. ¹⁶You are to anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel and Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel-meholah as prophet in your place. ¹⁷Then Jehu will put to death whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death whoever escapes the sword of Jehu. ¹⁸But I will leave seven thousand in Israel — every knee that has not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him."

ELISHA'S APPOINTMENT AS ELIJAH'S SUCCESSOR

¹⁹Elijah left there and found Elisha son of Shaphat as he was plowing. Twelve teams of oxen were in front of him, and he was with

^a19:3 Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Vg; other Hb mss read *He saw*

the twelfth team. Elijah walked by him and threw his mantle over him. ²⁰ Elisha left the oxen, ran to follow Elijah, and said, "Please let me kiss my father and mother, and then I will follow you."

"Go on back," he replied, "for what have I done to you?"

²¹ So he turned back from following him, took the team of oxen, and slaughtered^a them. With the oxen's wooden yoke and plow, he cooked the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he left, followed Elijah, and served him.

VICTORY OVER BEN-HADAD

20 Now King Ben-hadad of Aram assembled his entire army. Thirty-two kings, along with horses and chariots, were with him. He marched up, besieged Samaria, and fought against it. ² He sent messengers into the city to King Ahab of Israel and said to him, "This is what Ben-hadad says: ³ 'Your silver and your gold are mine! And your best wives and children are mine as well!'"

⁴ Then the king of Israel answered, "Just as you say, my lord the king: I am yours, along with all that I have."

⁵ The messengers then returned and said, "This is what Ben-hadad says: 'I have sent messengers to you, saying: You are to give me your silver, your gold, your wives, and your children. ⁶ But at this time tomorrow I will send my servants to you, ⁸ and they will search your palace and your servants' houses. They will lay their hands on and take away whatever is precious to you.'"

⁷ Then the king of Israel called for all the elders of the land and said, "Recognize^c that this one is only looking for trouble, for he demanded my wives, my children, my silver, and my gold, and I didn't turn him down."

⁸ All the elders and all the people said to him, "Don't listen or agree."

⁹ So he said to Ben-hadad's messengers, "Say to my lord the king, 'Everything you demanded of your servant the first time, I will do, but this thing I cannot do.' " So the messengers left and took word back to him.

¹⁰ Then Ben-hadad sent messengers to him and said, "May the gods punish me and do so severely if Samaria's dust amounts to a handful for each of the people who follow me."

¹¹ The king of Israel answered, "Say this: 'Don't let the one who puts on his armor boast like the one who takes it off.'"

¹² When Ben-hadad heard this response, while he and the kings were drinking in their quarters,^b he said to his servants, "Take your positions." So they took their positions against the city.

¹³ A prophet approached King Ahab of Israel and said, "This is what the LORD says: 'Do you see this whole huge army? Watch, I am handing it over to you today so that you may know that I am the LORD.'"

¹⁴ Ahab asked, "By whom?"

And the prophet said, "This is what the LORD says: 'By the young men of the provincial leaders.'"

Then he asked, "Who is to start the battle?" He said, "You."

¹⁵ So Ahab mobilized the young men of the provincial leaders, and there were 232. After them he mobilized all the Israelite troops: 7,000. ¹⁶ They marched out at noon while Ben-hadad and the thirty-two kings who were helping him were getting drunk in their quarters. ¹⁷ The young men of the provincial leaders marched out first. Then Ben-hadad sent out scouts, and they reported to him, saying, "Men are marching out of Samaria."

¹⁸ So he said, "If they have marched out in peace, take them alive, and if they have marched out for battle, take them alive."

¹⁹ The young men of the provincial leaders and the army behind them marched out from the city,²⁰ and each one struck down his opponent. So the Arameans fled and Israel pursued them, but King Ben-hadad of Aram escaped on a horse with the cavalry. ²¹ Then the king of Israel marched out and attacked the cavalry and the chariots. He inflicted a severe slaughter on Aram.

²² The prophet approached the king of Israel and said to him, "Go and strengthen yourself, then consider carefully^e what you should do, for in the spring the king of Aram will attack you."

²³ Now the king of Aram's servants said to him, "Their gods are gods of the hill country. That's why they were stronger than we were. Instead, we should fight with them on the plain; then we will certainly be stronger than they are. ²⁴ Also do this: remove each

^a19:21 Or sacrificed ^b20:6 Lit take all the delight of your eyes ^c20:7 Lit "Know and see" ^d20:12 Lit booths, also in v.16
^e20:22 Lit then know and see

king from his position and appoint captains in their place.²⁵ Raise another army for yourself like the army you lost — horse for horse, chariot for chariot — and let's fight with them on the plain; and we will certainly be stronger than they are." The king listened to them and did it.

²⁶ In the spring, Ben-hadad mobilized the Arameans and went up to Aphek to battle Israel. ²⁷ The Israelites mobilized, gathered supplies, and went to fight them. The Israelites camped in front of them like two little flocks of goats, while the Arameans filled the landscape.

²⁸ Then the man of God approached and said to the king of Israel, "This is what the LORD says: 'Because the Arameans have said: The LORD is a god of the mountains and not a god of the valleys, I will hand over all this whole huge army to you. Then you will know that I am the LORD.'"

²⁹ They camped opposite each other for seven days. On the seventh day, the battle took place, and the Israelites struck down the Arameans — one hundred thousand foot soldiers in one day.³⁰ The ones who remained fled into the city of Aphek, and the wall fell on those twenty-seven thousand remaining men.

Ben-hadad also fled and went into an inner room in the city.³¹ His servants said to him, "Consider this: we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings. So let's put sackcloth around our waists and ropes around our heads, and let's go out to the king of Israel. Perhaps he will spare your life."

³² So they dressed with sackcloth around their waists and ropes around their heads, went to the king of Israel, and said, "Your servant Ben-hadad says, 'Please spare my life.'"

So he said, "Is he still alive? He is my brother."

³³ Now the men were looking for a sign of hope, so they quickly picked up on this^a and responded, "Yes, it is your brother Ben-hadad."

Then he said, "Go and bring him."

So Ben-hadad came out to him, and Ahab had him come up into the chariot.³⁴ Then Ben-hadad said to him, "I restore to you the cities that my father took from your father, and you may set up marketplaces for yourself in Damascus, like my father set up in Samaria."

Ahab responded, "On the basis of this treaty, I release you." So he made a treaty with him and released him.

AHAB REBUKED BY THE LORD

³⁵ One of the sons of the prophets said to his fellow prophet by the word of the LORD, "Strike me!" But the man refused to strike him.

³⁶ He told him, "Because you did not listen to the LORD, mark my words: When you leave me, a lion will kill you." When he left him, a lion attacked and killed him.

³⁷ The prophet found another man and said to him, "Strike me!" So the man struck him, inflicting a wound.³⁸ Then the prophet went and waited for the king on the road. He disguised himself with a bandage over his eyes.³⁹ As the king was passing by, he cried out to the king and said, "Your servant marched out into the middle of the battle. Suddenly, a man turned aside and brought someone to me and said, 'Guard this man! If he is ever missing, it will be your life in place of his life, or you will weigh out seventy-five pounds^b of silver.'"

⁴⁰ But while your servant was busy here and there, he disappeared."

The king of Israel said to him, "That will be your sentence; you yourself have decided it."

⁴¹ He quickly removed the bandage from his eyes. The king of Israel recognized that he was one of the prophets.⁴² The prophet said to him, "This is what the LORD says: 'Because you released from your hand the man I had set apart for destruction, it will be your life in place of his life and your people in place of his people.'"⁴³ The king of Israel left for home resentful and angry, and he entered Samaria.

AHAB AND NABOTH'S VINEYARD

21 Some time passed after these events. Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard; it was in Jezreel next to the palace of King Ahab of Samaria.² So Ahab spoke to Naboth, saying, "Give me your vineyard so I can have it for a vegetable garden, since it is right next to my palace. I will give you a better vineyard in its place, or if you prefer, I will give you its value in silver."

³ But Naboth said to Ahab, "I will never give my fathers' inheritance to you."

⁴ So Ahab went to his palace resentful and angry because of what Naboth the Jezreelite had told him. He had said, "I will not give you my fathers' inheritance." He lay down on his bed, turned his face away, and didn't eat any food.

^a20:33 Some Hb mss, alt Hb tradition, LXX; other Hb mss read *they hastened and caught hold*; "Is this it?" ^b20:39 Lit a talent

⁵ Then his wife Jezebel came to him and said to him, "Why are you so upset that you refuse to eat?"

⁶ "Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite," he replied. "I told him: Give me your vineyard for silver, or if you wish, I will give you a vineyard in its place. But he said, 'I won't give you my vineyard!'"

⁷ Then his wife Jezebel said to him, "Now, exercise your royal power over Israel. Get up, eat some food, and be happy. For I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite."⁸ So she wrote letters in Ahab's name and sealed them with his seal. She sent the letters to the elders and nobles who lived with Naboth in his city.⁹ In the letters, she wrote:

Proclaim a fast and seat Naboth at the head of the people.¹⁰ Then seat two wicked men opposite him and have them testify against him, saying, "You have cursed God and the king!" Then take him out and stone him to death.

¹¹ The men of his city, the elders and nobles who lived in his city, did as Jezebel had sent word to them, just as it was written in the letters she had sent them.¹² They proclaimed a fast and seated Naboth at the head of the people.¹³ The two wicked men came in and sat opposite him. Then the wicked men testified against Naboth in the presence of the people, saying, "Naboth has cursed God and the king!" So they took him outside the city and stoned him to death with stones.¹⁴ Then they sent word to Jezebel: "Naboth has been stoned to death."

¹⁵ When Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned to death, she said to Ahab, "Get up and take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite who refused to give it to you for silver, since Naboth isn't alive, but dead."

¹⁶ When Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, he got up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite to take possession of it.

THE LORD'S JUDGMENT ON AHAB

¹⁷ Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite: ¹⁸ "Get up and go to meet King Ahab of Israel, who is in Samaria. He's in Naboth's vineyard, where he has gone to take possession of it. ¹⁹ Tell him, 'This is what the LORD says: Have you murdered and also taken

possession?' Then tell him, 'This is what the LORD says: In the place where the dogs licked up Naboth's blood, the dogs will also lick up your blood!'"

²⁰ Ahab said to Elijah, "So, my enemy, you've found me, have you?"

He replied, "I have found you because you devoted yourself to do what is evil in the LORD's sight. ²¹ This is what the LORD says: ^a I am about to bring disaster on you and will eradicate your descendants:

I will wipe out all of Ahab's males,^b
both slave and free,^c in Israel;

²² I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam son of Nebat and like the house of Baasha son of Ahijah, because you have angered me and caused Israel to sin.' ²³ The LORD also speaks of Jezebel: 'The dogs will eat Jezebel in the plot of land^d at Jezreel:

²⁴ Anyone who belongs to Ahab and dies
in the city, the dogs will eat,
and anyone who dies in the field,
the birds^e will eat.'

²⁵ Still, there was no one like Ahab, who devoted himself to do what was evil in the LORD's sight, because his wife Jezebel incited him. ²⁶ He committed the most detestable acts by following idols as the Amorites had, whom the LORD had dispossessed before the Israelites.

²⁷ When Ahab heard these words, he tore his clothes, put sackcloth over his body, and fasted. He lay down in sackcloth and walked around subdued. ²⁸ Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite: ²⁹ "Have you seen how Ahab has humbled himself before me? I will not bring the disaster during his lifetime, because he has humbled himself before me. I will bring the disaster on his house during his son's lifetime."

JEHOSHAPHAT'S ALLIANCE WITH AHAB

22 There was a lull of three years without war between Aram and Israel. ² However, in the third year, King Jehoshaphat of Judah went to visit the king of Israel. ³ The king of Israel had said to his servants, "Don't you know that Ramoth-gilead is ours, but we're doing nothing to take it from the king of Aram?" ⁴ So he asked Jehoshaphat, "Will you go with me to fight Ramoth-gilead?"

^a21:21 LXX; MT omits *This is what the LORD says* ^b21:21 Lit eliminate Ahab's one who urinates against the wall ^c21:21 Or males, even the weak and impaired; Hb obscure ^d21:23 Some Hb mss, Syr, Tg, Vg, 2Kg 9:36; other Hb mss, LXX read *the rampart* ^e21:24 Lit birds of the sky

Jehoshaphat replied to the king of Israel, "I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses."⁵ But Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "First, please ask what the LORD's will is."

⁶ So the king of Israel gathered the prophets, about four hundred men, and asked them, "Should I go against Ramoth-gilead for war or should I refrain?"

They replied, "March up, and the Lord will hand it over to the king."

⁷ But Jehoshaphat asked, "Isn't there a prophet of the LORD here anymore? Let's ask him."

⁸ The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "There is still one man who can inquire of the LORD, but I hate him because he never prophesies good about me, but only disaster. He is Micaiah son of Imlah."

"The king shouldn't say that!" Jehoshaphat replied.

⁹ So the king of Israel called an officer and said, "Hurry and get Micaiah son of Imlah!"

¹⁰ Now the king of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah, clothed in royal attire, were each sitting on his own throne. They were on the threshing floor at the entrance to the gate of Samaria, and all the prophets were prophesying in front of them. ¹¹ Then Zedekiah son of Chenaanah made iron horns and said, "This is what the LORD says: 'You will gore the Arameans with these until they are finished off.'"¹² And all the prophets were prophesying the same: "March up to Ramoth-gilead and succeed, for the LORD will hand it over to the king."

MICAHIAH'S MESSAGE OF DEFEAT

¹³ The messenger who went to call Micaiah instructed him, "Look, the words of the prophets are unanimously favorable for the king. So let your words be like theirs, and speak favorably."

¹⁴ But Micaiah said, "As the LORD lives, I will say whatever the LORD says to me."

¹⁵ So he went to the king, and the king asked him, "Micaiah, should we go to Ramoth-gilead for war, or should we refrain?"

Micaiah told him, "March up and succeed. The LORD will hand it over to the king."

¹⁶ But the king said to him, "How many times must I make you swear not to tell me anything but the truth in the name of the LORD?"

¹⁷ So Micaiah said:

I saw all Israel scattered on the hills
like sheep without a shepherd.
And the LORD said,
"They have no master;
let everyone return home in peace."

¹⁸ So the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Didn't I tell you he never prophesies good about me, but only disaster?"

¹⁹ Then Micaiah said, "Therefore, hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and the whole heavenly army was standing by him at his right hand and at his left hand. ²⁰ And the LORD said, 'Who will entice Ahab to march up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?' So one was saying this and another was saying that."

²¹ "Then a spirit came forward, stood in the LORD's presence, and said, 'I will entice him.'"

²² "The LORD asked him, 'How?'"

"He said, 'I will go and become a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.'"

"Then he said, 'You will certainly entice him and prevail. Go and do that.'"

²³ "You see, the LORD has put a lying spirit into the mouth of all these prophets of yours, and the LORD has pronounced disaster against you."

²⁴ Then Zedekiah son of Chenaanah came up, hit Micaiah on the cheek, and demanded, "Did^a the Spirit of the LORD leave me to speak to you?"

²⁵ Micaiah replied, "You will soon see when you go to hide in an inner chamber on that day."

²⁶ Then the king of Israel ordered, "Take Micaiah and return him to Amon, the governor of the city, and to Joash, the king's son,²⁷ and say, 'This is what the king says: Put this guy in prison and feed him only a little bread and water^b until I come back safely.'"

²⁸ But Micaiah said, "If you ever return safely, the LORD has not spoken through me." Then he said, "Listen, all you people!"^c

AHAB'S DEATH

²⁹ Then the king of Israel and Judah's King Jehoshaphat went up to Ramoth-gilead. ³⁰ But the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself and go into battle, but you wear your royal attire." So the king of Israel disguised himself and went into battle.

³¹ Now the king of Aram had ordered his thirty-two chariot commanders, "Do not fight with anyone at all^d except the king of Israel."

^a22:24 Lit "Which way did" ^b22:27 Lit him on bread of oppression and water of oppression ^c22:28 LXX omits Then he said, "Listen, all you people!" ^d22:31 Lit with small or with great

³² When the chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat, they shouted, "He must be the king of Israel!" So they turned to fight against him, but Jehoshaphat cried out. ³³ When the chariot commanders saw that he was not the king of Israel, they turned back from pursuing him.

³⁴ But a man drew his bow without taking special aim and struck the king of Israel through the joints of his armor. So he said to his charioteer, "Turn around and take me out of the battle,^a for I am badly wounded!" ³⁵ The battle raged throughout that day, and the king was propped up in his chariot facing the Arameans. He died that evening, and blood from his wound flowed into the bottom of the chariot. ³⁶ Then the cry rang out in the army as the sun set, declaring:

Each man to his own city,
and each man to his own land!

³⁷ So the king died and was brought to Samaria. They buried the king in Samaria. ³⁸ Then someone washed the chariot at the pool of Samaria. The dogs licked up his blood, and the prostitutes bathed in it, according to the word of the LORD that he had spoken.

³⁹ The rest of the events of Ahab's reign, along with all his accomplishments, including the ivory palace he built, and all the cities he built, are written in the Historical Record of Israel's Kings. ⁴⁰ Ahab rested with his fathers, and his son Ahaziah became king in his place.

JUDAH'S KING JEHOSEPHAT

⁴¹ Jehoshaphat son of Asa became king over Judah in the fourth year of Israel's King Ahab.

⁴² Jehoshaphat was thirty-five years old when

he became king; he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Azubah daughter of Shilhi. ⁴³ He walked in all the ways of his father Asa; he did not turn away from them but did what was right in the LORD's sight. However, the high places were not taken away;^b the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places. ⁴⁴ Jehoshaphat also made peace with the king of Israel.

⁴⁵ The rest of the events of Jehoshaphat's reign, along with the might he exercised and how he waged war, are written in the Historical Record of Judah's Kings. ⁴⁶ He eradicated from the land the rest of the male cult prostitutes who were left from the days of his father Asa. ⁴⁷ There was no king in Edom; a deputy served as king. ⁴⁸ Jehoshaphat made ships of Tarshish to go to Ophir for gold, but they did not go because the ships were wrecked at Ezion-geber. ⁴⁹ At that time, Ahaziah son of Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "Let my servants go with your servants in the ships," but Jehoshaphat was not willing. ⁵⁰ Jehoshaphat rested with his fathers and was buried with them in the city of his ancestor David. His son Jehoram became king in his place.

ISRAEL'S KING AHASIAH

⁵¹ Ahaziah son of Ahab became king over Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Judah's King Jehoshaphat, and he reigned over Israel two years. ⁵² He did what was evil in the LORD's sight. He walked in the ways of his father, in the ways of his mother, and in the ways of Jeroboam son of Nebat, who had caused Israel to sin. ⁵³ He served Baal and bowed in worship to him. He angered the LORD God of Israel just as his father had done.

^a22:34 LXX; MT reads *camp* ^b22:43 LXX, Syr, Vg read *he did not remove the high places*

2 KINGS

HAZIAH'S SICKNESS AND DEATH

1 After Ahab's death, Moab rebelled against Israel. ² Ahaziah had fallen through the latticed window of his upstairs room in Samaria and was injured. So he sent messengers, instructing them, "Go inquire of Baal-zebub,^a the god of Ekron, whether I will recover from this injury."

³ But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, "Go and meet the messengers of the king of Samaria and say to them, 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron?' ⁴ Therefore, this is what the LORD says: You will not get up from your sickbed; you will certainly die.'" Then Elijah left.

⁵ The messengers returned to the king, who asked them, "Why have you come back?"

⁶ They replied, "A man came to meet us and said, 'Go back to the king who sent you and declare to him: This is what the LORD says: Is it because there is no God in Israel that you're sending these men to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore, you will not get up from your sickbed; you will certainly die.'"

⁷ The king asked them, "What sort of man came up to meet you and spoke those words to you?"

⁸ They replied, "A hairy man with a leather belt around his waist."

He said, "It's Elijah the Tishbite."

⁹ So King Ahaziah sent a captain with his fifty men to Elijah. When the captain went up to him, he was sitting on top of the hill. He announced, "Man of God, the king declares, 'Come down!'"

¹⁰ Elijah responded to the captain, "If I am a man of God, may fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men." Then fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty men.

¹¹ So the king sent another captain with his fifty men to Elijah. He took in the situation^b and announced, "Man of God, this is what the king says: 'Come down immediately!'"

¹² Elijah responded, "If I am a man of God, may fire come down from heaven and consume

you and your fifty men." So a divine fire^c came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty men.

¹³ Then the king sent a third captain with his fifty men. The third captain went up and fell on his knees in front of Elijah and begged him, "Man of God, please let my life and the lives of these fifty servants of yours be precious to you. ¹⁴ Already fire has come down from heaven and consumed the first two captains with their companies, but this time let my life be precious to you."

¹⁵ The angel of the LORD said to Elijah, "Go down with him. Don't be afraid of him." So he got up and went down with him to the king.

¹⁶ Then Elijah said to King Ahaziah, "This is what the LORD says: 'Because you have sent messengers to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron — is it because there is no God in Israel for you to inquire of his will? — you will not get up from your sickbed; you will certainly die.'"

¹⁷ Ahaziah died according to the word of the LORD that Elijah had spoken. Since he had no son, Joram^b became king in his place. This happened in the second year of Judah's King Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat.^e ¹⁸ The rest of the events of Ahaziah's reign, along with his accomplishments, are written in the Historical Record of Israel's Kings.^f

ELIJAH IN THE WHIRLWIND

2 The time had come for the LORD to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind. Elijah and Elisha were traveling from Gilgal, ² and Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here; the LORD is sending me on to Bethel."

But Elisha replied, "As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel.

³ Then the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel came out to Elisha and said, "Do you know that the LORD will take your master away from you today?"

He said, "Yes, I know. Be quiet."

⁴ Elijah said to him, "Elisha, stay here; the LORD is sending me to Jericho."

^a1:2 = Lord of the Flies ^b1:11 Lit *He answered* ^c1:12 Lit *a fire of God* ^d1:17 Lit *Jehoram*; 2Kg 8:16 ^e1:17 LXX omits *in the second year . . . Jehoshaphat* ^f1:18 LXX adds 4 more vv. here similar to 2Kg 3:1-3.

But Elisha said, "As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they went to Jericho.

⁵ Then the sons of the prophets who were in Jericho came up to Elisha and said, "Do you know that the LORD will take your master away from you today?"

He said, "Yes, I know. Be quiet."

⁶ Elijah said to him, "Stay here; the LORD is sending me to the Jordan."

But Elisha said, "As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two of them went on.

⁷ Fifty men from the sons of the prophets came and stood observing them at a distance while the two of them stood by the Jordan.

⁸ Elijah took his mantle, rolled it up, and struck the water, which parted to the right and left. Then the two of them crossed over on dry ground. ⁹ When they had crossed over, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me what I can do for you before I am taken from you."

So Elisha answered, "Please, let me inherit two shares of your spirit."

¹⁰ Elijah replied, "You have asked for something difficult. If you see me being taken from you, you will have it. If not, you won't."

¹¹ As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire with horses of fire suddenly appeared and separated the two of them. Then Elijah went up into heaven in the whirlwind.

¹² As Elisha watched, he kept crying out, "My father, my father, the chariots and horsemen of Israel!"

ELISHA SUCCEEDS ELIJAH

When he could see him no longer, he took hold of his own clothes, tore them in two, ¹³ picked up the mantle that had fallen off Elijah, and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. ¹⁴ He took the mantle Elijah had dropped, and he struck the water. "Where is the LORD God of Elijah?" he asked. He struck the water himself, and it parted to the right and the left, and Elisha crossed over.

¹⁵ When the sons of the prophets from Jericho who were observing saw him, they said, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha." They came to meet him and bowed down to the ground in front of him.

¹⁶ Then the sons of the prophets said to Elisha, "Since there are fifty strong men here with your servants, please let them go and search for your master. Maybe the Spirit of the LORD has carried him away and put him

on one of the mountains or into one of the valleys."

He answered, "Don't send them."

¹⁷ However, they urged him to the point of embarrassment, so he said, "Send them." They sent fifty men, who looked for three days but did not find him. ¹⁸ When they returned to him in Jericho where he was staying, he said to them, "Didn't I tell you not to go?"

¹⁹ The men of the city said to Elisha, "My lord can see that even though the city's location is good, the water is bad and the land unfruitful."

²⁰ He replied, "Bring me a new bowl and put salt in it."

After they had brought him one, ²¹ Elisha went out to the spring, threw salt in it, and said, "This is what the LORD says: 'I have healed this water. No longer will death or unfruitfulness result from it.'" ²² Therefore, the water still remains healthy today according to the word that Elisha spoke.

²³ From there Elisha went up to Bethel. As he was walking up the path, some small boys came out of the city and jeered at him, chanting, "Go up, baldy! Go up, baldy!" ²⁴ He turned around, looked at them, and cursed them in the name of the LORD. Then two female bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of the children. ²⁵ From there Elisha went to Mount Carmel, and then he returned to Samaria.

ISRAEL'S KING JORAM

3 Joram son of Ahab became king over Israel in Samaria during the eighteenth year of Judah's King Jehoshaphat, and he reigned twelve years. ² He did what was evil in the LORD's sight, but not like his father and mother, for he removed the sacred pillar of Baal his father had made. ³ Nevertheless, Joram clung to the sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit. He did not turn away from them.

MOAB'S REBELLION AGAINST ISRAEL

⁴ King Mesha of Moab was a sheep breeder. He used to pay the king of Israel one hundred thousand lambs and the wool of one hundred thousand rams, ⁵ but when Ahab died, the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel. ⁶ So King Joram marched out from Samaria at that time and mobilized all Israel. ⁷ Then he sent a message to King Jehoshaphat of Judah: "The king of Moab has rebelled against me. Will you go with me to fight against Moab?"

Jehoshaphat said, "I will go. I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses."

⁸ He asked, "Which route should we take?" He replied, "The route of the Wilderness of Edom."

⁹ So the king of Israel, the king of Judah, and the king of Edom set out. After they had traveled their indirect route for seven days, they had no water for the army or the animals with them.

¹⁰ Then the king of Israel said, "Oh no, the LORD has summoned these three kings, only to hand them over to Moab."

¹¹ But Jehoshaphat said, "Isn't there a prophet of the LORD here? Let's inquire of the LORD through him."

One of the servants of the king of Israel answered, "Elisha son of Shaphat, who used to pour water on Elijah's hands, is here."

¹² Jehoshaphat affirmed, "The word of the LORD is with him." So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went to him.

¹³ However, Elisha said to King Joram of Israel, "What do we have in common? Go to the prophets of your father and your mother!"

But the king of Israel replied, "No, because it is the LORD who has summoned these three kings to hand them over to Moab."

¹⁴ Elisha responded, "By the life of the LORD of Armies, before whom I stand: If I did not have respect for King Jehoshaphat of Judah, I wouldn't look at you; I would not take notice of you. ¹⁵ Now, bring me a musician."

While the musician played, the LORD's hand came on Elisha. ¹⁶ Then he said, "This is what the LORD says: 'Dig ditch after ditch in this wadi.' ¹⁷ For the LORD says, 'You will not see wind or rain, but the wadi will be filled with water, and you will drink — you and your cattle and your animals.' ¹⁸ This is easy in the LORD's sight. He will also hand Moab over to you. ¹⁹ Then you will attack every fortified city and every choice city. You will cut down every good tree and stop up every spring. You will ruin every good piece of land with stones."

²⁰ About the time for the grain offering the next morning, water suddenly came from the direction of Edom and filled the land.

²¹ All Moab had heard that the kings had come up to fight against them. So all who could bear arms, from the youngest to the oldest, were summoned and took their stand at the

border. ²² When they got up early in the morning, the sun was shining on the water, and the Moabites saw that the water across from them was red like blood. ²³ "This is blood!" they exclaimed. "The kings have crossed swords^A and their men have killed one another. So, to the spoil, Moab!"

²⁴ However, when the Moabites came to Israel's camp, the Israelites attacked them, and they fled from them. So Israel went into the land attacking the Moabites. ²⁵ They would destroy the cities, and each of them would throw a stone to cover every good piece of land. They would stop up every spring and cut down every good tree. This went on until only the buildings of Kir-hareseth were left. Then men with slings surrounded the city and attacked it.

²⁶ When the king of Moab saw that the battle was too fierce for him, he took seven hundred swordsmen with him to try to break through to the king of Edom, but they could not do it. ²⁷ So he took his firstborn son, who was to become king in his place, and offered him as a burnt offering on the city wall. Great wrath was on the Israelites, and they withdrew from him and returned to their land.

THE WIDOW'S OIL MULTIPLIED

4 One of the wives of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha, "Your servant, my husband, has died. You know that your servant feared the LORD. Now the creditor is coming to take my two children as his slaves."

² Elisha asked her, "What can I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house?"

She said, "Your servant has nothing in the house except a jar of oil."

³ Then he said, "Go out and borrow empty containers from all your neighbors. Do not get just a few. ⁴ Then go in and shut the door behind you and your sons, and pour oil into all these containers. Set the full ones to one side." ⁵ So she left.

After she had shut the door behind her and her sons, they kept bringing her containers, and she kept pouring. ⁶ When they were full, she said to her son, "Bring me another container."

But he replied, "There aren't any more." Then the oil stopped.

⁷ She went and told the man of God, and he said, "Go sell the oil and pay your debt; you and your sons can live on the rest."

^A3:23 Or *have been laid waste*

THE SHUNAMMITE WOMAN'S HOSPITALITY

⁸ One day Elisha went to Shunem. A prominent woman who lived there persuaded him to eat some food. So whenever he passed by, he stopped there to eat. ⁹ Then she said to her husband, "I know that the one who often passes by here is a holy man of God, ¹⁰ so let's make a small, walled-in upper room and put a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp there for him. Whenever he comes, he can stay there."

THE SHUNAMMITE WOMAN'S SON

¹¹ One day he came there and stopped at the upstairs room to lie down. ¹² He ordered his attendant Gehazi, "Call this Shunammite woman." So he called her and she stood before him.

¹³ Then he said to Gehazi, "Say to her, 'Look, you've gone to all this trouble for us. What can we do for you? Can we speak on your behalf to the king or to the commander of the army?'"

She answered, "I am living among my own people."

¹⁴ So he asked, "Then what should be done for her?"

Gehazi answered, "Well, she has no son, and her husband is old."

¹⁵ "Call her," Elisha said. So Gehazi called her, and she stood in the doorway. ¹⁶ Elisha said, "At this time next year you will have a son in your arms."

Then she said, "No, my lord. Man of God, do not lie to your servant."

¹⁷ The woman conceived and gave birth to a son at the same time the following year, as Elisha had promised her.

THE SHUNAMMITE'S SON RAISED

¹⁸ The child grew and one day went out to his father and the harvesters. ¹⁹ Suddenly he complained to his father, "My head! My head!"

His father told his servant, "Carry him to his mother." ²⁰ So he picked him up and took him to his mother. The child sat on her lap until noon and then died. ²¹ She went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, shut him in, and left.

²² She summoned her husband and said, "Please send me one of the servants and one of the donkeys, so I can hurry to the man of God and come back again."

²³ But he said, "Why go to him today? It's not a New Moon or a Sabbath."

She replied, "Everything is all right."

²⁴ Then she saddled the donkey and said to her servant, "Go fast; don't slow the pace

for me unless I tell you." ²⁵ So she came to the man of God at Mount Carmel.

When the man of God saw her at a distance, he said to his attendant Gehazi, "Look, there's the Shunammite woman." ²⁶ Run out to meet her and ask, 'Are you all right? Is your husband all right? Is your son all right?'"

And she answered, "Everything's all right."

²⁷ When she came up to the man of God at the mountain, she clung to his feet. Gehazi came to push her away, but the man of God said, "Leave her alone — she is in severe anguish, and the LORD has hidden it from me. He hasn't told me."

²⁸ Then she said, "Did I ask my lord for a son? Didn't I say, 'Do not lie to me?'"

²⁹ So Elisha said to Gehazi, "Tuck your mantle under your belt, take my staff with you, and go. If you meet anyone, don't stop to greet him, and if a man greets you, don't answer him. Then place my staff on the boy's face."

³⁰ The boy's mother said to Elisha, "As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So he got up and followed her.

³¹ Gehazi went ahead of them and placed the staff on the boy's face, but there was no sound or sign of life, so he went back to meet Elisha and told him, "The boy didn't wake up."

³² When Elisha got to the house, he discovered the boy lying dead on his bed. ³³ So he went in, closed the door behind the two of them, and prayed to the LORD. ³⁴ Then he went up and lay on the boy: he put mouth to mouth, eye to eye, hand to hand. While he bent down over him, the boy's flesh became warm. ³⁵ Elisha got up, went into the house, and paced back and forth. Then he went up and bent down over him again. The boy sneezed seven times and opened his eyes.

³⁶ Elisha called Gehazi and said, "Call the Shunammite woman." He called her and she came. Then Elisha said, "Pick up your son."

³⁷ She came, fell at his feet, and bowed to the ground; she picked up her son and left.

THE DEADLY STEW

³⁸ When Elisha returned to Gilgal, there was a famine in the land. The sons of the prophets were sitting before him. He said to his attendant, "Put on the large pot and make stew for the sons of the prophets."

³⁹ One went out to the field to gather herbs and found a wild vine from which he gathered as many wild gourds as his garment would hold. Then he came back and cut them up