

English: Unlocked Literal Bible for 2 Chronicles

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2 Chronicles

¹ Solomon son of David was strengthened in his rule, and Yahweh his God was with him and made him very powerful.

² Solomon spoke to all Israel, to the commanders of thousands and of hundreds, and to the judges, and to every prince in all Israel, the heads of the fathers' houses.³ So Solomon and all the assembly with him went to the high place that was at Gibeon, for there was the tent of meeting of God, which Moses the servant of Yahweh, had made in the wilderness.⁴ But David had brought up the ark of God from Kiriath Jearim to the place that he had prepared for it, for he had pitched a tent for it in Jerusalem.⁵ In addition, the bronze altar made by Bezalel son of Uri son of Hur was there before the tabernacle of Yahweh; Solomon and the assembly went to it. ¹

⁶ Solomon went up there to the bronze altar before Yahweh, which was at the tent of meeting, and offered one thousand burnt offerings on it.

⁷ God appeared to Solomon that night and said to him, "Ask! What should I give you?"

⁸ Solomon said to God, "You have shown great covenant faithfulness to David my father, and have made me king in his place.⁹ Now, Yahweh God, let your promise to David my father be carried out, for you have made me king over a people as numerous as the dust of the earth.¹⁰ Now give me wisdom and knowledge, so that I may lead this people, for who can judge your people, who are so many in number?"¹¹ God said to Solomon, "Because this was in your heart, and because you have not asked for riches, wealth, or honor, nor for the life of those who hate you, nor for long life for yourself, but you have asked for wisdom and knowledge for yourself, so that you might rule my people, over whom I have made you king, this is what I will do.

¹² I will now give you wisdom and knowledge. I will also give you riches, wealth, and honor, as none of the kings had before you, and none after you will have."¹³ So Solomon came to Jerusalem from the high place that was at Gibeon, from before the tent of meeting; he reigned over Israel.

¹⁴ Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen, and he had 1,400 chariots and twelve thousand horsemen that he placed in the chariot cities, and with himself, the king in Jerusalem.¹⁵ The king made silver and gold as common in Jerusalem as the stones, and he made cedar wood as common as the sycamore trees that are in the lowlands.

¹⁶ As for the importation of horses from Egypt and Kue for Solomon, the king's merchants bought them from Kue at a price.¹⁷ They imported a chariot from Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for 150 shekels. They also exported them to the kings of the Hittites and the Arameans.

¹ Some of the ancient Hebrew copies have, the bronze altar made by Bezalel son of Uri son of Hur, he placed there before the tabernacle of Yahweh, where he refers to David.

² Now Solomon commanded the building of a house for Yahweh's name and the building of a palace for his kingdom.

³ Solomon assigned seventy thousand men to carry loads, and eighty thousand men as stonecutters in the mountains, and 3,600 men to supervise them.⁴ Solomon sent a message to Hiram, the king of Tyre, saying, "As you did with David my father, sending him cedar logs to build a house to live in, do the same with me.

⁵ See, I am about to build a house for the name of Yahweh my God, to set it apart to him, to burn incense of sweet spices before him, to set out the bread of the presence, and for the burnt offerings morning and evening, on the Sabbaths and on the new moons, and on the appointed feasts for Yahweh our God. This is forever, for Israel.⁶ The house that I will build will be very large, for our God is greater than all other gods.

⁷ But who is able to build God a house, since the entire universe and even heaven itself cannot contain him? Who am I to build him a house, except to burn sacrifices before him?⁸ So send me a man who is skilled at work in gold, silver, bronze, iron, and in purple, crimson, and blue wool, a man who knows how to make all kinds of engraved wood. He will be with the skilled men who are with me in Judah and Jerusalem, whom David my father provided.

⁹ Send me also cedar, cypress, and algum trees from Lebanon, for I know that your servants know how to cut timber in Lebanon. See, my servants will be with your servants,¹⁰ in order to prepare for me timber in abundance, for the house which I am about to build will be great and marvelous.¹¹ See, I will give to your servants, the men who will cut the timber, twenty thousand cors of ground wheat, twenty thousand cors of barley, twenty thousand baths of wine, and twenty thousand baths of oil." ¹

¹² Then Hiram, the king of Tyre, answered in writing, which he sent to Solomon: "Because Yahweh loves his people, he has made you king over them."

¹³ In addition, Hiram said, "Blessed be Yahweh, the God of Israel, who made heaven and earth, who has given to David the king a wise son, gifted with prudence and understanding, who will build a house for Yahweh and a royal palace for himself.

¹⁴ Now I have sent a skillful man, Hiram-Abi, who is gifted with understanding.¹⁵ He is the son of a woman of the daughters of Dan. His father was a man from Tyre. He is skilled at work in gold, silver, bronze, iron, stone, and in timber, and in

purple, blue, and crimson wool, and fine linen. He is also skilled in making any kind of engraving and in making any kind of design. Let a place be made for him among your skilled workers, and with those of my master, David, your father.

¹⁵Now then, the wheat and the barley, the oil and the wine, of which my master has spoken, let him send these things to his servants.¹⁶We will cut wood from Lebanon, as much wood as you need. We will take it to you as rafts by sea to Joppa, and you will carry it up to Jerusalem."

¹⁷Solomon counted all the foreigners who were in the land of Israel, following the method that David, his father, had counted them. They were found to be 153,600.¹⁸He assigned seventy thousand of them to carry loads, eighty thousand to be stonecutters in the mountains, and 3,600 to be supervisors to put the people to work.

¹Some translations compare this section with 1 Kings 5:11 where the Hebrew reads: twenty thousand cors of wheat as food .

3 ¹Then Solomon began to build the house of Yahweh at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where Yahweh had appeared to David his father. He prepared the place that David had planned for it, at the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.²He began to build on the second day of the second month, in the fourth year of his reign.³Now these are the dimensions of the foundation that Solomon laid for the house of God. Using the old style cubit, the length was sixty cubits, and the width was twenty cubits.

⁴The length of the portico at the front of the house was twenty cubits, matching the building's width. Its height was also twenty cubits, and Solomon overlaid its interior with pure gold.⁵He fashioned the ceiling of the main hall with cypress, which he overlaid with fine gold, and which he carved with palm trees and chains.

⁶He decorated the house with precious stones; the gold was gold from Parvaim.⁷He also overlaid its beams, thresholds, walls, and doors with gold; he carved cherubim on its walls.

⁸He built the most holy place. Its length matched the house's width, twenty cubits, and its width was also twenty cubits. He overlaid it with fine gold, amounting to six hundred talents.⁹The weight of the nails was fifty shekels of gold. He overlaid its high surfaces with gold.

¹⁰He made two images of cherubim for the most holy place; craftsmen overlaid them with gold. ¹¹The wings of the cherubim were twenty cubits long all together; the wing of one cherub was five cubits long, reaching to the wall of the room, and the other wing was five cubits, reaching to the wing of the other cherub. ¹²The wing of the other cherub was also five cubits, reaching to the wall of the room; its other wing was also five cubits, touching the wing of the first cherub. ¹³The wings of these cherubim spread a total of twenty cubits. The cherubim stood on their feet, with their faces toward the main hall. ¹⁴He made the curtain of blue, purple, and crimson wool and fine linen, and he fashioned cherubim on it.

¹⁵Solomon also made two pillars, each thirty-five cubits high, for in front of the house; the capitals that were on the top of them were five cubits high.¹⁶He made chains for the pillars and put them on top of them; he also made one hundred pomegranates and joined them to the chains.¹⁷He set up the pillars in front of the temple, one on the right hand, and the other on the left; he named the pillar on the right Jakin, and the pillar on the left Boaz.

¹The copies of the ancient Hebrew texts can be rendered in two ways. Some translate as: two forged metal images of cherubim ; and another as: two carved wooden images of cherubim.

4 ¹Moreover he made an altar of bronze; its length was twenty cubits, and its width was twenty cubits. Its height was ten cubits.²He also made the round sea of cast metal, ten cubits from brim to brim. Its height was five cubits, and the sea was thirty cubits in circumference.³Under the brim encircling the sea were bulls, ten to each cubit, cast in one piece with the sea when the sea itself was cast.

⁴The large basin known as "The Sea" was set upon twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, three looking toward the west, three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east. "The Sea" was set on top of them, and all their hindquarters were toward the inside.⁵"The Sea" was as thick as the width of a hand, and its brim was forged like the brim of a cup, like a lily blossom. "The Sea" held three thousand baths of water.⁶He made also ten basins for washing things; he put five on the south side, and five on the north; items used in performing the burnt offering were to be washed in them. The large basin known as "The Sea" was used by the priests for them to wash.

⁷He made the ten lampstands of gold that were made from the instructions for their design; he placed them in the temple, five on the right hand, and five on the left.⁸He made ten tables and placed them in the temple, five on the right side, and five on the left. He made one hundred basins of gold.

⁹Furthermore he made the courtyard of the priests, and the great court and the doors for the court and overlaid their doors with bronze.¹⁰He placed the basin known as "The Sea" on the east side of the temple, facing toward the south.

¹¹Huram made the pots, the shovels, and the sprinkling bowls. So Hiram finished the work that he did for King Solomon in the house of God:

¹²the two pillars, the bowl-like capitals that were on top of the two pillars, and the two sets of decorative latticework to cover the two bowl-like capitals that were on top of the pillars.

¹³He had made the four hundred pomegranates for the two sets of decorative latticework: two rows of pomegranates for each set of latticework to cover the two bowl-like capitals that were on the pillars.

¹⁴He also made the stands and the basins to go on the stands;

¹⁵one sea and the twelve bulls under it,

¹⁶also the pots, shovels, meat forks, and all the other implements that Hiram-Abi made of polished bronze for King Solomon, for the house of Yahweh. ¹

¹⁷The king had cast them in the plain of the Jordan, in the clay ground between Sukkoth and Zarethan. ¹⁸Thus Solomon made all these vessels in great abundance; indeed, the weight of the bronze could not be known.

¹⁹Solomon made all the furnishings that were in the house of God, the golden altar also, and the tables on which the bread of the presence was to be placed;

²⁰the lampstands with their lamps, that were designed to burn before the inner room—these were made of pure gold;

²¹and the flowers, the lamps, and the tongs, of gold, pure gold.

²²Also the lamp trimmers, basins, spoons, and incense burners were all made of pure gold. As for the entrance into the house, its inner doors into the most holy place and the doors of the house, that is, of the temple, were made of gold.

¹Instead of meat forks, some modern translations have bowls, which follows 1 Kings 7:45.

5 ¹When all the work that Solomon did for the house of Yahweh was completed, Solomon brought in the things that David, his father, had set apart for this purpose, including the silver, the gold, and all the furnishings—he placed them into the treasuries of the house of God.

²Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, all the heads of the tribes, and the leaders of the families of the people of Israel, in Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of Yahweh from the city of David, that is, Zion. ³All the men of Israel assembled before the king at the feast, which was in the seventh month.

⁴All the elders of Israel came, and the Levites took up the ark. ⁵They brought up the ark, the tent of meeting, and all the holy furnishings that were in the tent. The priests who were of the tribe of Levi brought these things up. ⁶King Solomon and all the assembly of Israel came together before the ark, sacrificing sheep and cattle that could not be counted.

⁷The priests brought in the ark of the covenant of Yahweh to its place, into the inner room of the house, to the most holy place, under the wings of the cherubim. ⁸For the cherubim spread out their wings over the place of the ark, and they covered the ark and the poles by which it was carried.

⁹The poles that extended from the ark were so long that their ends were seen from the holy place in front of the inner room, but they could not be seen from outside. They are there to this day. ¹⁰There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets that Moses had put there at Horeb, when Yahweh made a covenant with the people of Israel, when they came out of Egypt.

¹¹It came about that the priests came out of the holy place. All the priests who were present had consecrated themselves to Yahweh, regardless of their divisions. ¹²Also the Levites who were the singers, all of them, including Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, and their sons and brothers, clothed in fine linen and playing cymbals, lutes and harps, stood at the east end of the altar. With them were 120 priests blowing trumpets.

¹³It came about that the trumpeters and singers made music together, making one sound to be heard for praising and thanking Yahweh. They raised their voices with the trumpets and cymbals and other instruments, and they praised Yahweh. They sang, "For he is good, for his covenant loyalty endures forever." Then the house, the house of Yahweh, was filled with a cloud. ¹⁴The priests could not stand in order to serve because of the cloud, for the glory of Yahweh filled his house.

6 ¹Then Solomon said, "Yahweh has said that he would live in thick darkness,² but I have built you a lofty residence, a place for you to live in forever."³ Then the king turned around and blessed all the assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel was standing.

⁴He said, "May Yahweh, the God of Israel, be praised, who spoke to David my father, and has fulfilled it with his own hands, saying,⁵ 'Since the day that I brought my people out of the land of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel

in which to build a house, in order for my name to be there. Neither did I choose any man to be prince over my people Israel.⁶ However, I have chosen Jerusalem, so that my name might be there, and I have chosen David to be over my people Israel.'

⁷Now it was in the heart of David my father, to build a house for the name of Yahweh, the God of Israel.⁸ But Yahweh said to David my father, 'In that it was in your heart to build a house for my name, you did well for it to be in your heart.

⁹Nevertheless, you are not to build the house; instead, your son, one who will come from your loins, will build the house for my name.'

¹⁰Yahweh has carried out the word that he had said, for I have arisen in the place of David my father, and I sit on the throne of Israel, as Yahweh promised. I have built the house for the name of Yahweh, the God of Israel.¹¹ I have placed the ark there, in which is Yahweh's covenant, which he made with the people of Israel."

¹²Solomon stood before the altar of Yahweh in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands.¹³ For he had made a bronze platform, five cubits long, five cubits wide, and three cubits high. He had placed it in the middle of the courtyard. He stood on it and knelt down before all the assembly of Israel, and then he spread out his hands toward the heavens.

¹⁴He said, "Yahweh, God of Israel, there is no God like you in the heavens or on the earth, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with your servants who walk before you with all their heart;¹⁵ you who have kept with your servant David my father, what you promised him. Yes, you spoke with your mouth and have fulfilled it with your hand, as it is today.

¹⁶Now then, Yahweh, God of Israel, carry out what you have promised to your servant David my father, when you said, 'You will not fail to have a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel, if only your descendants are careful to walk in my law, as you have walked before me.'¹⁷ Now then, Yahweh, God of Israel, let your word be confirmed, which you have spoken to your servant David.

¹⁸But will God actually live with mankind on the earth? Look, the entire universe and heaven itself cannot contain you—how much less can this temple that I have built!¹⁹ Yet please respect this prayer of your servant and his plea, Yahweh my God; listen to the cry and prayer that your servant prays before you.²⁰ May your eyes be open toward this temple day and night, the place where you promised to put your name. May you listen to the prayer your servant prays toward this place.²¹ So listen to the pleas of your servant and of your people Israel when we pray toward this place. Yes, listen from the place where you live, from the heavens; and when you listen, forgive.

²²If a man sins against his neighbor and is required to swear an oath, and if he comes and swears an oath before your altar in this house,²³ listen from the heavens and act. Judge your servants, condemning the wicked and bringing what he has done upon his own head. Declare the innocent not guilty and give to him according to his righteousness.

²⁴When your people Israel are defeated by an enemy because they have sinned against you, if they turn back to you, confess your name, pray, and seek favor before you in this temple—²⁵ then please listen from the heavens and forgive the sin of your people Israel; bring them back to the land that you gave to them and to their ancestors.

²⁶When the skies are shut up and there is no rain because the people have sinned against you—if they pray toward this place, confess your name, and turn from their sin when you have afflicted them—²⁷ then listen in heaven and forgive the sin of your servants and of your people Israel, when you direct them to the good way in which they should walk. Send rain on your land, which you have given to your people as an inheritance.

²⁸Suppose there is famine in the land, or suppose that there is disease, blight or mildew, locusts or caterpillars; or suppose that its enemies attack the city gates in their land, or that there is any plague or sickness—²⁹ and suppose then that prayers and pleas are made by a person or by all your people Israel—each knowing the plague and sorrow in his own heart as he spreads out his hands toward this temple.³⁰ Then listen from heaven, the place where you live; forgive, and reward every person for all his ways; you know his heart, because you and you only know the hearts of human beings.³¹ Do this so that they may fear you, so that they may walk in your ways all the days that they live on the land that you gave to our ancestors.

³²As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel, but who—because of your great name, your mighty hand, and your outstretched arm—comes and prays toward this house,³³ then please listen from heaven, the place where you live, and do all that the foreigner asks of you, so that all the people of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your own people Israel, and that they might know that this house I have built is called by your name.

³⁴Suppose that your people go out to battle against their enemies, by whatever way you may send them, and suppose that they pray to you toward this city that you have chosen, and toward the house that I have built for your name.³⁵ Then listen from the heavens to their prayer, their request, and help their cause.

³⁶Suppose they sin against you—since there is no one who does not sin—and suppose that you are angry with them and hand them over to the enemy, so that the enemy carries them away and takes them as captives to their land, whether distant or near.³⁷Then suppose they realize they are in the land where they have been exiled, and suppose that they repent and seek favor from you in the land of their captivity. Suppose that they say, 'We have acted perversely and sinned. We have behaved wickedly.'³⁸Suppose that they return to you with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, where they took them as captives, and suppose that they pray toward their land, which you gave to their ancestors, and toward the city that you chose, and toward the house that I have built for your name.³⁹Then listen from the heavens, the place where you live, to their prayer and to their pleas, and help their cause. Forgive your people, who have sinned against you.

⁴⁰Now, my God, I beg you, let your eyes be open, and let your ears be attentive to the prayer that is made in this place.

⁴¹Now then arise, Yahweh God, to your resting place, you and the ark of your strength. Let your priests, Yahweh God, be clothed with salvation, and let your faithful ones rejoice in your goodness.⁴²Yahweh God, do not turn the face of your anointed away from you. Keep in mind your acts of covenant loyalty for David, your servant."

7 ¹Now when Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offerings and sacrifices, and the glory of Yahweh filled the house.²The priests could not enter the house of Yahweh, because his glory filled his house.³When all the people of Israel saw the fire come down and the glory of Yahweh over the house, they bowed down with their faces to the ground on the stone pavement and worshiped and gave thanks to Yahweh. They said, "For he is good, for his covenant loyalty endures forever."

⁴So the king and all the people offered sacrifices to Yahweh.⁵King Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty-two thousand head of cattle and 120,000 sheep and goats. So the king and all the people dedicated the house of God.⁶The priests stood, each standing where they serve; the Levites also with instruments of music of Yahweh, which David the king had made to give thanks to Yahweh in the song, "For his covenant faithfulness endures for ever." All the priests sounded trumpets before them, and all Israel stood.

⁷Solomon set apart the middle of the courtyard in front of the house of Yahweh. There he offered the burnt offerings and the fat of the fellowship offerings, because the bronze altar that he had made was not able to hold the burnt offerings, the grain offerings, and the fat.

⁸So Solomon held the festival at that time for seven days, and all Israel with him, a very great assembly, from Lebo Hamath to the brook of Egypt.⁹On the eighth day they held a solemn assembly, for they kept the dedication of the altar for seven days, and the feast for seven days.¹⁰On the twenty-third day of the seventh month, Solomon sent the people away to their tents with glad and joyful hearts because of the goodness that Yahweh had shown to David, Solomon, and Israel, his people.

¹¹Thus Solomon finished the house of Yahweh and the king's house. Everything that came into Solomon's heart to make in the house of Yahweh and in his own house, he successfully carried out.¹²Yahweh appeared to Solomon by night and said to him, "I have heard your prayer, and I have chosen this place for myself as a house of sacrifice.

¹³Suppose that I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send plague among my people,¹⁴then if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land.¹⁵Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers that are made in this place.

¹⁶For I have now chosen and set apart this house that my name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will be there every day.¹⁷As for you, if you walk before me as David your father walked, obeying all that I have commanded you and keeping my statutes and my decrees,¹⁸then I will establish the throne of your kingdom, as I said in a covenant with David your father, when I said, 'A descendant of yours will never fail to be ruler in Israel.'

¹⁹But if you turn away, and abandon my statutes and my commandments that I have placed before you, and if you go worship other gods and bow down to them,²⁰then I will uproot them from out of my ground that I have given them. This house that I have set apart for my name, I will cast away from before me, and I will make it a proverb and a joke among all the peoples.

²¹Even though this temple is so lofty now, everyone who passes by it will be appalled and will hiss. They will ask, 'Why has Yahweh done this to this land and to this house?'²²Others will answer, 'Because they abandoned Yahweh, their God, who had brought their ancestors out of the land of Egypt, and they laid hold of other gods and bowed down to them and worshiped them. That is why Yahweh has brought all this disaster on them.'"

⁸ ¹It came about at the end of twenty years, during which Solomon had built the house of Yahweh and his own house,
²that Solomon rebuilt the towns that Hiram had given to him, and he settled the people of Israel in them.

³Solomon attacked Hamath Zobah and defeated it.⁴He built Tadmor in the wilderness, and all the storage cities, which he built in Hamath.

⁵Also he built Beth Horon the Upper and Beth Horon the Lower, cities fortified with walls, gates, and bars.⁶Solomon built Baalath and all the storage cities that he possessed, and all the cities for his chariots and the cities for his horsemen, and whatever he wished to build for his pleasure in Jerusalem, in Lebanon, and in all the lands under his rule.

⁷As for all the people who were left of the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, who did not belong to Israel,⁸their descendants who were left after them in the land, whom the people of Israel had not destroyed—Solomon made them into forced laborers, which they are to this day.

⁹However, Solomon did not make slaves of the people of Israel for his work. Instead, they were soldiers, commanders of his officers, and commanders of his chariots and horsemen.¹⁰These were also the chief officers managing the supervisors who belonged to King Solomon, 250 of them, who ruled over the people who did the work.

¹¹Solomon brought the daughter of Pharaoh out of the city of David to the house that he had built for her, for he said, "My wife must not live in the house of David king of Israel, because wherever the ark of Yahweh has come is holy."

¹²Then Solomon offered burnt offerings to Yahweh on his altar that he had built in front of the portico.¹³He offered sacrifices just as the daily schedule required; he offered them, following the directions found in the commandment of Moses, on the Sabbath days, the new moons, and on the set festivals three times every year: the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the Festival of Weeks, and the Festival of Shelters.

¹⁴In keeping with the decrees of his father David, Solomon appointed the divisions of the priests to their work, and the Levites to their positions, in order to praise God and to serve before the priests, as the daily schedule required. He also appointed the gatekeepers by their divisions to every gate, for David, the man of God, had also commanded this.¹⁵These people did not deviate from the commands of the king to the priests and Levites concerning any matter, or concerning the storerooms.

¹⁶All the work ordered by Solomon was completed, from the day the foundation of the house of Yahweh was laid until it was finished. The house of Yahweh was completed.

¹⁷Then Solomon went to Ezion Geber and then to Elath on the coast, in the land of Edom.¹⁸Hiram sent him ships commanded by his own officers, men who knew the sea, and with the servants of Solomon they went to Ophir and they took from there 450 talents of gold and brought it to King Solomon.

9 ¹When the queen of Sheba heard the report about Solomon, she came to Jerusalem to test him with hard questions. She came with a very long caravan, with camels loaded with spices, much gold, and many precious gemstones. When she had come to Solomon, she told him all that was in her heart.²Solomon answered her all her questions; nothing was too difficult for Solomon; there was no question that he did not answer.

³When the queen of Sheba saw Solomon's wisdom and the palace that he had built,⁴the food on his table, the seating of his servants, the work of his servants and their clothing, also his cupbearers and their clothing, and the burnt offerings he made at ¹ the house of Yahweh, there was no more breath in her.

⁵She said to the king, "It is true, the report that I heard in my own land of your words and your wisdom.⁶I did not believe what I heard until I came here, and now my eyes have seen it. Not half was told me about the greatness of your wisdom and wealth! You have exceeded the report that I heard.

⁷How blessed are your men, and how blessed are your servants who constantly stand before you, because they hear your wisdom. ² ⁸Blessed be Yahweh your God, who has taken pleasure in you, who placed you on his throne, to be king for Yahweh your God. Because your God loved Israel, in order to establish them forever, he had made you king over them, for you to do justice and righteousness!"

⁹She gave the king 120 talents of gold and a large amount of spices and precious stones. There had never been such spices as these that the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

¹⁰The servants of Hiram and the servants of Solomon, who brought gold from Ophir, also brought algum wood and precious stones.¹¹With the algum wood, the king made steps for the house of Yahweh and for his house, as well as harps and lutes for the musicians. No wood like this had been seen before in the land of Judah.¹²King Solomon gave to the queen

of Sheba everything she desired and whatever she asked for; he gave her more than what she had brought to the king. So she left and went back to her own land, she and her servants.

¹³Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was 666 talents of gold,¹⁴ besides the gold that the traders and merchants brought. All the kings of Arabia and the governors in the country also brought gold and silver to Solomon.

¹⁵King Solomon made two hundred large shields of beaten gold. Six hundred shekels of gold went into each one.¹⁶ He also made three hundred shields of beaten gold. Three minas of gold went into each shield; the king put them into the House of the Forest of Lebanon.

¹⁷Then the king made a great throne of ivory and overlaid it with pure gold.¹⁸ There were six steps to the throne, and a footstool of gold was attached to the throne. On each side of the throne there were armrests with two lions standing beside each of them.

¹⁹Twelve lions stood on the steps, one on each side of each of the six steps. There was no throne like it in any other kingdom.²⁰ All King Solomon's drinking cups were gold, and all the drinking cups in the House of the Forest of Lebanon were of pure gold. None were silver because silver was not considered valuable in Solomon's days.²¹ The king had at sea a fleet of ships of Tarshish, along with the servants of Hiram. Once every three years the ships of Tarshish brought gold, silver, and ivory, as well as apes and baboons.

²²So King Solomon exceeded all the kings of the world in riches and in wisdom.²³ All the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon in order to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart.²⁴ Those who visited brought tribute, vessels of silver and of gold, clothes, weapons, and spices, as well as horses and mules, year after year.

²⁵Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, which he stationed in the chariot cities and with himself in Jerusalem.²⁶ He ruled over all the kings from the Euphrates River to the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt.

²⁷The king had silver in Jerusalem, as much as the stones on the ground. He made cedar wood to be as abundant as the sycamore fig trees that are in the lowlands.²⁸ They brought horses for Solomon from Egypt and from all the lands.

²⁹As for the other matters concerning Solomon, first and last, are they not written in The History of Nathan the Prophet, in The Prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in The Visions of Iddo the Seer (which also had information about Jeroboam son of Nebat)?³⁰ Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel for forty years.³¹ He lay down with his ancestors and the people buried him in the city of David his father. Rehoboam, his son, became king in his place.

¹Some scholars suggest an alternative reading of the phrase the burnt offerings he made at to say, the ascent by which he went up to .

²Some translations have: How blessed are your wives , following 1 Kings 10:8. The spelling of "men" and "wives" is very close in Hebrew.

10 ¹Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel was coming to Shechem to make him king.² When Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard this (for he was in Egypt, where he had fled from King Solomon), he returned from Egypt.

³So they sent and called him, and Jeroboam and all Israel came; they spoke to Rehoboam and said,⁴ "Your father made our yoke difficult. Now therefore, make your father's hard work easier, and lighten the heavy yoke that he put on us, and we will serve you."⁵ Rehoboam said to them, "Come again to me after three days." So the people left.

⁶King Rehoboam consulted with the old men who had stood before Solomon his father while he was alive; he said, "How would you advise me to bring an answer to these people?"⁷ They spoke to him and said, "If you are good to this people and please them, and say good words to them, then they will always be your servants."

⁸But Rehoboam ignored the advice of the old men that they had given him, and consulted with the young men who had grown up with him, who stood before him.⁹ He said to them, "What advice do you give me, so that we may answer the people who spoke to me and said, 'Lighten the yoke that your father put on us'?"

¹⁰The young men who had grown up with Rehoboam spoke to him, saying, "This is how you should speak to the people who told you that your father Solomon made their yoke heavy, but that you must make it lighter. This is what you should say to them, 'My little finger is thicker than my father's waist.'¹¹ So now, although my father burdened you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke. My father punished you with whips, but I will punish you with scorpions."

¹²So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day, as the king said, "Come back to me on the third day."¹³ King Rehoboam spoke to them harshly, ignoring the advice of the old men.¹⁴ He spoke to them following the advice of the young men, saying, "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to it. My father punished you with whips, but I will punish you with scorpions."

¹⁵So the king did not listen to the people, for it was a turn in events brought about by God, that Yahweh might carry out his word that Ahijah the Shilonite had spoken to Jeroboam son of Nebat.

¹⁶When all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered him and said, "What share do we have in

David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse! Each of you should go back to his tent, Israel. Now see to your own house, David." So all Israel returned to their tents.

¹⁷But as for the people of Israel who lived in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.¹⁸Then King Rehoboam sent Adoniram, who was over the forced laborers, but the people of Israel stoned him to death with stones. King Rehoboam fled quickly in his chariot to Jerusalem.¹⁹So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day.

11 ¹When Rehoboam arrived in Jerusalem, he assembled the house of Judah and Benjamin, 180,000 chosen men who were soldiers, to fight against Israel, to restore the kingdom to Rehoboam.

²But the word of Yahweh came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying, ³"Say to Rehoboam son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin, ⁴"Yahweh says this, "You must not attack or make war against your brothers. Everyone must return to his own house, for I have caused this to happen." ⁵So they obeyed the words of Yahweh and turned back from attacking Jeroboam.

⁶Rehoboam lived in Jerusalem and built cities in Judah for defense.⁷He built Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa,⁸Beth Zur, Soko, Adullam,⁹Gath, Mareshah, Ziph,¹⁰Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah,¹¹Zorah, Aijalon, and Hebron. These are fortified cities in Judah and Benjamin.

¹²He fortified the fortresses and put commanders in them, with stores of food, oil, and wine.¹³He put shields and spears in all the cities and made them very strong. So Judah and Benjamin belonged to him.

¹⁴The priests and the Levites who were in all Israel went over to him from within their borders.¹⁵For the Levites left their pasturelands and property in order to come to Judah and Jerusalem, for Jeroboam and his sons had driven them away, so that they could no longer act as the priests of Yahweh.¹⁶Jeroboam appointed for himself priests for the high places and the goat and calf idols he had made.

¹⁷People from all the tribes of Israel came after them, those who set their hearts to seek Yahweh, the God of Israel; they came to Jerusalem to sacrifice to Yahweh, the God of their fathers.¹⁸So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah and made Rehoboam son of Solomon strong during three years, and they walked for three years in the way of David and Solomon.

¹⁹Rehoboam took a wife for himself: Mahalath, the daughter of Jerimoth, David's son, and of Abihail, the daughter of Eliab, Jesse's son.²⁰She bore him sons: Jeush, Shemariah, and Zerah.

²¹After Mahalath, Rehoboam took Maakah, Absalom's daughter; she bore him Abijah, Attai, Ziza, and Shelomith.

²²Rehoboam loved Maakah, Absalom's daughter, more than all his other wives and his concubines (he took eighteen wives and sixty concubines, and became the father of twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters).

²³Rehoboam appointed Abijah son of Maakah to be chief, a leader among his brothers; he had the thought of making him king.²⁴Rehoboam ruled wisely; he scattered all his sons throughout all the land of Judah and Benjamin to every fortified city. He also gave them food in abundance and looked for many wives for them.

12 ¹It came about, when Rehoboam's reign was established and he was strong, that he abandoned the law of Yahweh—and all Israel with him.

²It happened in the fifth year of King Rehoboam, that Shishak, king of Egypt, came up against Jerusalem, because the people had been unfaithful to Yahweh.³He came with twelve hundred chariots and sixty thousand horsemen. Soldiers without number came with him from Egypt: Libyans, Sukkites, and Cushites.⁴He captured the fortified cities that belonged to Judah and came to Jerusalem.

⁵Now Shemaiah the prophet came to Rehoboam and to the leaders of Judah who had gathered together to Jerusalem because of Shishak. Shemaiah said to them, "This is what Yahweh says: You have abandoned me, so I have also given you over into Shishak's hand."⁶Then the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves and said, "Yahweh is righteous."

⁷When Yahweh saw that they had humbled themselves, the word of Yahweh came to Shemaiah, saying, "They have humbled themselves. I will not ruin them; I will deliver them to some extent, and my anger will not pour out on Jerusalem by means of Shishak's hand.⁸Nevertheless, they will be his servants, so that they may understand what it is to serve me and to serve the rulers of the other countries."

⁹So Shishak, king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem and took away the treasures in the house of Yahweh, and the treasures in the king's house. He took everything away; he also took the shields of gold that Solomon had made.¹⁰King Rehoboam made shields of bronze in their place and entrusted them into the hands of the commanders of the guard, who guarded the doors to the king's house.

¹¹It happened that whenever the king entered the house of Yahweh, the guards would carry them; then they would bring them back into the guards' room.¹²When Rehoboam humbled himself, Yahweh's anger turned away from him, so as not to destroy him completely; besides, there was still some good to be found in Judah.

¹³So King Rehoboam made his kingship strong in Jerusalem, and thus he reigned. Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned for seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city that Yahweh had chosen from all the tribes of Israel so that he might put his name there. His mother's name was Naamah the Ammonite woman.¹⁴He did what was evil, because he did not fix his heart to seek Yahweh.

¹⁵As for the other matters concerning Rehoboam, first and last, are they not written in the writings of Shemaiah the prophet and of Iddo the seer, which also have records of genealogies and the constant wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam?¹⁶Rehoboam lay down with his ancestors and was buried in the city of David; Abijah his son became king in his place.

13 ¹In the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam, Abijah began to reign over Judah.²He reigned for three years in Jerusalem; his mother's name was Macaiah, the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah. There was war between Abijah and Jeroboam.

³Abijah went into battle with an army of strong, courageous warriors, 400,000 chosen men. Jeroboam placed battle lines against him with 800,000 chosen men, mighty warriors.

⁴Abijah stood on Mount Zemaraim, which is in the hill country of Ephraim, and said, "Listen to me, Jeroboam and all Israel!⁵Do you not know that Yahweh the God of Israel gave the dominion over Israel to David and his descendants forever by a covenant of salt?

⁶Yet Jeroboam son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon son of David, rose up and rebelled against his master.⁷Worthless men, base fellows, gathered to him. They came against Rehoboam son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and timid at heart, and they were too strong for him.

⁸So now you plan to resist the kingdom of Yahweh that is held within the hand of the descendants of David, because you are a large army, and you have the golden calves that Jeroboam made to be your gods.⁹But did you not drive out the priests of Yahweh, the descendants of Aaron, and the Levites, and make priests of your own in the same way as the people of other lands do? Whoever comes to serve as a priest, sacrificing a young bull and seven rams, he becomes a priest of what are not gods.

¹⁰But as for us, Yahweh is our God, and we have not abandoned him. We have priests, descendants of Aaron, serving Yahweh, and the Levites, who are at their work.¹¹Every morning and evening they burn for Yahweh burnt offerings and sweet incense. They also arrange the bread of the presence on the pure table; they also tend the lampstand of gold with its lamps, for them to burn every evening. We keep the commandments of Yahweh, our God, but you have abandoned him.

¹²See, God is with us at our head, and his priests are here with the trumpets to sound an alarm against you. Sons of Israel, do not fight against Yahweh, the God of your ancestors, for you will not succeed."

¹³But Jeroboam prepared an ambush behind them; his army was in front of Judah, and the ambush was behind them.

¹⁴When Judah looked back, behold, the fighting was both in front of them and behind them. They cried out to Yahweh, and the priests blew the trumpets.¹⁵Then the men of Judah gave a shout; as they shouted, it came about that God struck Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah.

¹⁶The people of Israel fled before Judah, and God gave them into the hand of Judah.¹⁷Abijah and his army killed them with great slaughter; 500,000 chosen men of Israel fell dead.¹⁸In this way, the people of Israel were subdued at that time; the people of Judah won because they relied on Yahweh, the God of their ancestors.

¹⁹Abijah pursued Jeroboam; he took cities from him: Bethel with its villages, Jeshanah with its villages, and Ephron with its villages.²⁰Jeroboam never recovered power again during the days of Abijah; Yahweh struck him, and he died.²¹But Abijah became powerful; he took fourteen wives for himself and became the father of twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters.²²The rest of Abijah's deeds, his behavior, and words are written in the history of the prophet Iddo.

14 ¹Abijah lay down with his ancestors, and they buried him in the city of David. Asa, his son, became king in his place.

In his days the land was quiet ten years.²Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of Yahweh his God,³for he took away the foreign altars and the high places. He broke down the stone pillars and cut down the Asherah poles.⁴He commanded Judah to seek Yahweh, the God of their ancestors, and to carry out the law and the commandments.

⁵Also he took away the high places and the incense altars from all the cities of Judah. The kingdom had rest under him.⁶He built fortified cities in Judah, for the land was quiet, and he had no war in those years, because Yahweh had given him peace.

⁷For Asa said to Judah, "Let us build these cities and make walls around them, and towers, gates, and bars; the land is still ours because we have sought Yahweh our God. We have sought him, and he has given us peace on every side." So they built and succeeded.⁸Asa had an army that carried shields and spears; from Judah he had 300,000 men, and from Benjamin, 280,000 men who carried shields and drew bows. All of these were mighty warriors.

⁹Zerah the Cushite came against them with an army of one million soldiers and three hundred chariots; he came to Mareshah.¹⁰ Then Asa went out to meet him, and they set the battle lines in order in the Valley of Zephathah at Mareshah.

¹¹Asa cried to Yahweh, his God, and said, "Yahweh, there is no one but you to help one who has no strength when he is facing many. Help us, Yahweh our God, for we rely on you, and in your name we have come against this vast number. Yahweh, you are our God; do not let man defeat you."

¹²So Yahweh struck the Cushites before Asa and Judah; the Cushites fled.¹³Asa and the soldiers with him pursued them to Gerar. So many Cushites fell that they could not recover, for they were completely destroyed before Yahweh and his army. The army carried away very much plunder.

¹⁴The army destroyed all the villages around Gerar, for terror of Yahweh had come on the inhabitants. The army plundered all the villages, and there was much booty in them.¹⁵The army also destroyed the tents of those who owned livestock; they carried away sheep in abundance, as well as camels, and then they returned to Jerusalem.

15 ¹The Spirit of God came on Azariah son of Oded.²He went out to meet Asa and said to him, "Listen to me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: Yahweh is with you, while you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you abandon him, he will abandon you.

³Now for a long period, Israel was without the true God, without a teaching priest, and without the law.⁴But when in their distress they turned to Yahweh, the God of Israel, and sought him, he was found by them.⁵In those times there was no peace for him who went out or for him who came in, for there were great disturbances on all the inhabitants of the lands.

⁶They were broken in pieces, nation against nation, and city against city, for God troubled them with all kinds of suffering.⁷But be strong, and do not let your hands be weak, for your work will be rewarded."

⁸When Asa heard these words, the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage and drove away the disgusting figures from all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and from the cities that he had captured from the hill country of Ephraim, and he rebuilt Yahweh's altar, which was in front of the portico of the house of Yahweh.⁹He gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and those who stayed with them—people from Ephraim and Manasseh, and from Simeon. For they came from Israel to him in great numbers, when they saw that Yahweh his God was with him.

¹⁰So they gathered together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of Asa's reign.¹¹They sacrificed to Yahweh in that day some of the plunder that they had brought: seven hundred head of cattle and seven thousand sheep and goats.

¹²They entered into a covenant to seek Yahweh, the God of their ancestors, with all their heart and with all their soul.

¹³They agreed that whoever refused to seek Yahweh, the God of Israel, should be put to death, whether the person was small or great, whether man or woman.

¹⁴They swore to Yahweh with a loud voice, with shouting, and with trumpets and rams' horns.¹⁵All Judah rejoiced at the oath, for they had sworn with all their heart, and they sought God with their whole desire, and he was found by them. Yahweh gave them peace all around them.

¹⁶King Asa also removed Maakah, his grandmother, from being queen mother because she had made a disgusting figure out of an Asherah pole. He cut down the disgusting figure, crushed it to dust, and burned it at the Kidron Brook.¹⁷But the high places were not taken out of Israel. Nevertheless, Asa's heart was completely devoted all his days.

¹⁸He brought into the house of God his father's sacred gifts and his own sacred gifts, silver and gold and utensils.¹⁹There was no more war until the thirty-fifth year of Asa's reign.

16 ¹In the thirty-sixth year of Asa's reign, Baasha, king of Israel, acted aggressively against Judah and built up Ramah, so that he might not allow anyone to leave or enter into the land of Asa, king of Judah.

²Then Asa brought the silver and gold out of the storerooms in the house of Yahweh and of the king's house, and sent it to Ben-Hadad king of Aram, who lived in Damascus. He said,³"Let there be a covenant between me and you, as there was between my father and your father. Look, I have sent to you silver and gold. Break your covenant with Baasha, king of Israel, so that he may leave me alone."

⁴Ben-Hadad listened to King Asa and sent the commanders of his armies against the cities of Israel. They attacked Ijon, Dan, Abel Maimon, and all the storage cities of Naphtali.⁵It came about that when Baasha heard this, he stopped building up Ramah and let his work cease.⁶Then Asa the king took all Judah with him. They carried away the stones and timbers of Ramah with which Baasha had been building up the city. Then King Asa used that building material to build up Geba and Mizpah.

⁷At that time Hanani the seer went to Asa, king of Judah, and said to him, "Because you have relied on the king of Aram, and have not relied on Yahweh your God, the army of the king of Aram has escaped out of your hand.⁸Were not the Cushites and the Libyans a huge army, with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet, because you relied on Yahweh, he gave you victory over them.

⁹For the eyes of Yahweh run everywhere throughout the whole earth, so that he might show himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are perfect toward him. But you have acted foolishly in this matter. From now on, you will have war."¹⁰Then Asa was angry with the seer; he put him into prison, for he was enraged with him over this matter. At the same time, Asa oppressed some of the people.

¹¹Behold, the deeds of Asa, from first to last, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel.¹²In the thirty-ninth year of his reign, Asa was afflicted with a disease in his feet. Though his disease was very severe, he did not seek help from Yahweh, but only from the healers.

¹³So Asa lay down with his ancestors, dying in the forty-first year of his reign.¹⁴They buried him in his own tomb, which he had dug out for himself in the city of David. They laid him on a bier that was filled with sweet odors and various kinds of spices prepared by skilled perfumers. Then they made a very great fire in his honor.

¹The place named Abel Maim is the same as Abel Beth Maakah. See 2 Samuel 20:14-15.

17 ¹Jehoshaphat son of Asa became king in his place. Jehoshaphat strengthened himself against Israel.²He placed forces in all the fortified cities of Judah, and set garrisons in the land of Judah and in the cities of Ephraim, which Asa his father had captured.

³Yahweh was with Jehoshaphat because he walked in the earlier ways of his father David, and did not seek the Baals.

⁴Instead, he relied on the God of his father, and walked in his commandments, not according to the practices of Israel.

⁵So Yahweh established the rule in his hand; all Judah brought tribute to Jehoshaphat. He had riches and honor in abundance.⁶His heart was committed to Yahweh's ways. He also removed the high places and the Asherah poles from Judah.

⁷In the third year of his reign he sent his officials Ben-Hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Micaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah.⁸With them were Levites: Shemaiah, Nathaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah, and Tob-Adonijah; and with them were the priests Elishama and Jehoram.⁹They taught in Judah, having the book of the law of Yahweh with them. They went about throughout all the cities of Judah and taught among the people.

¹⁰Terror of Yahweh fell on all the kingdoms of the lands that were around Judah, so that they made no war against Jehoshaphat.¹¹Some of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents, and silver as tribute. Arabians also brought him flocks, 7,700 rams, and 7,700 goats.

¹²Jehoshaphat became very powerful. He built fortresses and storage cities in Judah.¹³He had many supplies in the cities of Judah, and soldiers—mighty warriors—in Jerusalem.

¹⁴These were their divisions listed by the name of their fathers' houses: From Judah, the commanders of thousands; Adnah the commander, and with him 300,000 mighty warriors;

¹⁵next to him Jehohanan the commander, and with him 280,000 men;

¹⁶next to him Amasiah son of Zikri, who volunteered to serve Yahweh; and with him 200,000 mighty warriors.

¹⁷From Benjamin: Eliada, a mighty warrior, and with him 200,000 armed with bows and shields;

¹⁸next to him Jehozabad, and with him 180,000 ready prepared for war.

¹⁹These were those who served the king, besides those whom the king put in the fortified cities throughout all Judah.

¹Some ancient copies do not have David, therefore, some modern translations leave it out.

18 ¹Now Jehoshaphat had great riches and honor; he allied himself with Ahab by having one of his family marry his daughter.²After some years, he went down to Ahab in Samaria. Ahab killed many sheep and cattle for him and the people who were with him. Ahab also persuaded him to attack Ramoth Gilead with him.³Ahab, king of Israel, said to Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, "Will you go with me to Ramoth Gilead?" Jehoshaphat answered him, "I am like you, and my people are like your people. We will be with you in the war."

⁴Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "Please first seek the word of Yahweh for your answer."⁵Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, four hundred men, and said to them, "Should we go to Ramoth Gilead to battle, or should I not?" They said, "Attack, for God will give it into the hand of the king."

⁶But Jehoshaphat said, "Is there not here still another prophet of Yahweh with whom we might seek advice?"⁷The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "There is still one man by whom we may seek the advice of Yahweh, Micaiah son of Imlah, but I hate him because he never prophesies good concerning me, but always evil." But Jehoshaphat said, "The king should not say that."⁸Then the king of Israel called an officer and said, "Quickly bring Micaiah son of Imlah."

⁹Now Ahab the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah were sitting each on a throne, clothed in their robes, on a threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria, and all the prophets were prophesying before them.¹⁰Zedekiah son of Kenaanah made himself horns of iron and said, "Yahweh says this: With these you will push the Arameans until they are consumed."¹¹All the prophets prophesied the same, saying, "Attack Ramoth Gilead and win, for Yahweh has given it into the hand of the king."

¹²The messenger who went to summon Micaiah said to him, "Look, the words of the prophets with one mouth are favorable to the king. Let your words agree with theirs, and speak favorably."¹³Micaiah replied, "As Yahweh lives, it is what God says that I will say."¹⁴When he came to the king, the king said to him, "Micaiah, should we go to Ramoth Gilead for battle, or not?" Micaiah answered him, "Attack and be victorious! For it will be a great victory."

¹⁵Then the king said to him, "How many times must I require you to swear to tell me nothing but the truth in the name of Yahweh?"¹⁶So Micaiah said, "I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, like sheep who have no shepherd, and Yahweh said, 'These have no shepherd. Let every man return to his house in peace.'"

¹⁷So the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Did I not tell you that he would not prophesy good concerning me, but only disaster?"¹⁸Then Micaiah said, "Therefore all of you should hear the word of Yahweh: I saw Yahweh sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven were standing on his right hand and on his left."

¹⁹Yahweh said, 'Who will entice Ahab, king of Israel, so that he may go up and fall at Ramoth Gilead?' One said this and another that.

²⁰Then a spirit came forward and it stood before Yahweh and said, 'I will entice him.' Yahweh said to him, 'How?'²¹The spirit replied, 'I will go out and I will become a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' Yahweh replied, 'You will entice him, and you will also be successful. Go now and do so.'

²²Now see, Yahweh has put a lying spirit in the mouth of these prophets of yours, and Yahweh has decreed disaster for you."

²³Then Zedekiah son of Kenaanah, came up, slapped Micaiah on the cheek, and said, "Which way did the Spirit of Yahweh take to go from me to speak to you?"²⁴Micaiah said, "Look, you will know that on that day, when you run into some inner room to hide."

²⁵The king of Israel said to some servants, "You people seize Micaiah and take him to Amon, the governor of the city, and to Joash, my son."²⁶You people will say to him, 'The king says: Put this man in prison and feed him with only a little bread and only a little water, until I return safely.'"²⁷Then Micaiah said, "If you return safely, then Yahweh has not spoken by me." Then he added, "Listen to this, all you people."

²⁸So Ahab, the king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, went up against Ramoth Gilead.²⁹The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself and go into the battle, but you put on your royal robes." So the king of Israel disguised himself, and they went into the battle.³⁰Now the king of Aram had commanded the captains of his chariots, saying, "Fight with neither small nor great, but only with the king of Israel."

³¹It came about that when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat they said, "That is the king of Israel." They turned around to attack him, but Jehoshaphat cried out, and Yahweh helped him. God turned them away from him.³²It came about that when the commanders of the chariots saw that it was not the king of Israel, they turned back from pursuing him.

³³But a certain man drew his bow at random and shot the king of Israel between the joints of his armor. Then Ahab said to the driver of his chariot, "Turn around and carry me out of the battle, for I am badly wounded."³⁴The battle grew worse that day, and the king of Israel was held up in his chariot facing the Arameans until the evening. About the time that the sun was going down, he died.

19 ¹Jehoshaphat the king of Judah safely returned to his house in Jerusalem.²Then Jehu son of Hanani, the seer, went out to meet him and said to King Jehoshaphat, "Should you be helping the wicked? Should you be loving those who hate Yahweh? For this deed, anger from Yahweh is on you.³However, there is some good to be found in you, in that you have taken the Asherah poles out of the land, and you have fixed your heart to seek God."

⁴Jehoshaphat lived in Jerusalem; and he went out again among the people from Beersheba to the hill country of Ephraim and brought them back to Yahweh, the God of their fathers.⁵He placed judges in the land throughout all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city.

⁶He said to the judges, "Consider what you should do, because you are not judging for man, but for Yahweh; he is with you in the act of judging. Now then, let the fear of Yahweh be upon you. Be careful when you judge, for there is no iniquity with Yahweh our God, nor is there any favoritism or bribe taking."

⁸Moreover, in Jerusalem Jehoshaphat appointed some of the Levites and the priests, and some of the heads of the families

of Israel, for carrying out judgment for Yahweh, and for the sake of disputes. They lived in Jerusalem.⁹He instructed them, saying, "You must serve in reverence for Yahweh, faithfully, and with your whole heart.

¹⁰Whenever any dispute comes to you from your brothers who live in their cities, whether concerning bloodshed, whether about laws and commands, statutes or decrees, you must warn them, so they do not become guilty before Yahweh, or anger will come toward you and toward your brothers. If you do this, you will not be guilty.

¹¹See, Amariah the chief priest is over you in all the matters of Yahweh. Zebadiah son of Ishmael, the leader of the house of Judah, is in charge of all the matters of the king. Also, the Levites will be officers serving you. Be strong and obey your instructions, and may Yahweh be with those who are good."

20 ¹It came about after this, that the people of Moab and Ammon, and with them some Meunites came against Jehoshaphat to do battle. ²Then some came who told Jehoshaphat, saying, "A large multitude is coming against you from beyond the Dead Sea, from Edom. See, they are in Hazezon Tamar," that is, En Gedi. ³

³Jehoshaphat became afraid and set himself to seek Yahweh. He proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.⁴Judah gathered together to seek Yahweh; they came to seek Yahweh from all the cities of Judah.

⁵Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, at the house of Yahweh, in front of the new courtyard.⁶He said, "Yahweh, the God of our ancestors, are you not God in heaven? Are you not the ruler over all the kingdoms of the nations? Power and might are in your hand, so no one is able to resist you.⁷Our God, did you not drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel, and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham?

⁸They lived in it and built you a holy place in it for your name, saying, "If disaster comes on us—the sword, judgment, or plague, or famine—we will stand before this house, and before you (for your name is in this house), and we will cry to you in our distress, and you will hear us and save us." ⁹

¹⁰See now, here are the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir whom you would not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt; so, Israel turned away from them and did not destroy them.¹¹See how they are rewarding us; they are coming to drive us out of your land that you have given us to inherit.

¹²Our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power against this great army that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you."

¹³All Judah stood before Yahweh, with their little ones, wives, and children.

¹⁴Then in the middle of the assembly the Spirit of Yahweh came on Jahaziel, son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son of Mattaniah, a Levite and a descendant of Asaph.¹⁵Jahaziel said, "Listen, all Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and King Jehoshaphat. This is what Yahweh says to you, 'Do not fear; do not be discouraged because of this great army, for the battle does not belong to you, but to God.

¹⁶You must go down against them tomorrow. See, they are coming up by way of the pass of Ziz. You will find them at the end of the valley, before the wilderness of Jeruel.¹⁷You will not need to fight in this battle. Stand in your positions, stand still, and see the rescue of Yahweh with you, Judah and Jerusalem. Do not fear nor be discouraged. Go out against them tomorrow, for Yahweh is with you.'"

¹⁸Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground. All Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before Yahweh, worshiping him.¹⁹The Levites, those of the descendants of the Kohathites and Korahites, stood up to praise Yahweh, the God of Israel, with a very loud voice.

²⁰Early in the morning they arose and went out into the wilderness of Tekoa. As they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Listen to me, Judah, and you inhabitants of Jerusalem! Trust in Yahweh your God, and you will be supported. Trust in his prophets, and you will succeed."²¹After he consulted with the people, he appointed those who sang to Yahweh and who praised him for his majestic splendor as they went out before the army, saying, "Give thanks to Yahweh, for his covenant faithfulness endures forever."

²²When they began to sing and to praise, Yahweh set men in ambush against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who were coming against Judah. They were defeated.²³For the people of Ammon and Moab rose to fight the inhabitants of Mount Seir, in order to completely kill them and destroy them. When they had finished with the inhabitants of Mount Seir, they all helped to destroy each other.

²⁴When Judah came to a place overlooking the wilderness, they looked out on the army. Behold, they were dead, fallen to the ground; none had escaped.

²⁵When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take plunder from them, they found among them abundant goods, clothing, and valuable articles, which they took for themselves, more than they could carry away. It took them three days to carry off the plunder, there was so much of it. ²⁶⁴On the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Berakah. There they praised Yahweh, so the name of that place is the "Valley of Berakah" to this day.

²⁷Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat in their lead, to go again to Jerusalem with joy, for Yahweh had made them rejoice over their enemies.²⁸They came to Jerusalem and to the house of Yahweh with lutes and harps and trumpets.

²⁹The terror of God was on all the kingdoms of the nations when they heard that Yahweh had fought against Israel's enemies.³⁰So Jehoshaphat's kingdom was quiet, for his God gave him peace all around him.

³¹Jehoshaphat reigned over Judah: He was thirty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem for twenty-five years. His mother's name was Azubah, the daughter of Shilhi.³²He walked in the ways of Asa, his father; he did not turn away from them; he did what was right in the eyes of Yahweh.³³However, the high places were not taken away. The people still had not directed their hearts to the God of their ancestors.

³⁴As for the other matters concerning Jehoshaphat, first and last, behold, they are written in the history of Jehu son of Hanani, which is recorded in the book of the kings of Israel.

³⁵After this Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, allied himself with Ahaziah, king of Israel, who committed much wickedness.³⁶He allied himself with him to build ships to go to Tarshish. They built the ships at Ezion Geber.³⁷Then Eliezer son of Dodavahu of Mareshah, prophesied against Jehoshaphat; he said, "Because you have allied yourself with Ahaziah, Yahweh has destroyed your works." The ships were wrecked so that they could not go to Tarshish.

¹The reading Meunites represents a correction to the Hebrew text, as was suggested by the ancient Greek translation. The ancient Hebrew copies read: Ammonites. Most modern translations agree that Meunites was original.

²Instead of Edom, the ancient Greek and Latin translations and some modern translations read Aram.

³Instead of judgment, some ancient and modern translations read flood.

⁴Instead of among them, some ancient and modern translations read cattle. Instead of clothing, some ancient and modern translations read dead bodies.

21 ¹Jehoshaphat lay down with his ancestors and was buried with them in the city of David; Jehoram, his son, became king in his place.²Jehoram had brothers, sons of Jehoshaphat: Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azariahu, Michael, and Shephatiah. All these were sons of Jehoshaphat, king of Israel.³Their father had given them large gifts of silver, gold, and other precious things, and also fortified cities in Judah, but he gave the kingdom to Jehoram.

⁴Now when Jehoram had risen up over his father's kingdom and had firmly established himself as king, he killed all his brothers with the sword, and also various other leaders of Israel.⁵Jehoram was thirty-two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned for eight years in Jerusalem.

⁶He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, as the house of Ahab was doing, for he had Ahab's daughter as his wife, and he did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh.⁷However, Yahweh did not wish to destroy the house of David, because of the covenant that he had made with David; he had promised that he would always give a lamp to him and his descendants.

⁸In Jehoram's days, Edom rebelled against the control of Judah, and they set a king to reign over themselves.⁹Then Jehoram crossed over with his commanders and all his chariots. It was night when he rose up and fought against the Edomites who had surrounded him and his chariot commanders.¹⁰So Edom has been in rebellion from the control of Judah to this present day. Libnah also revolted at the same time from his control, because Jehoram had abandoned Yahweh, the God of his ancestors.

¹¹In addition, Jehoram had also built high places in the mountains of Judah and he made the inhabitants of Jerusalem to live like prostitutes, and he led Judah astray.

¹²A letter from the prophet Elijah came to Jehoram. It said, "This is what Yahweh, the God of David, your ancestor, says: Because you have not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat, your father, nor in the ways of Asa, king of Judah,¹³but have walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and have made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to act like a prostitute, as the house of Ahab did—and because you have also killed your brothers in your father's house, men who were better than yourself—¹⁴see, Yahweh will strike your people, your children, your wives, and all your possessions with a heavy blow.

¹⁵You yourself will have much sickness with a disease in your intestines, until the disease causes your intestines to come out, and this will continue day after day."

¹⁶Yahweh stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines and of the Arabians who were near the Cushites.¹⁷They attacked Judah, invaded it, and carried away all the wealth that was found in the king's house. They also carried away his sons and his wives. No son was left to him except Jehoahaz, his youngest son.

¹⁸After all this, Yahweh struck him in his intestines with an incurable disease.¹⁹It came about in due time, at the end of two years, that his intestines fell out because of his sickness, and that he died of severe disease. His people made no fire in his honor as they had done for his ancestors.²⁰He had begun to reign when he was thirty-two years old; he reigned in

Jerusalem for eight years, and when he departed no one mourned him. They buried him in the city of David, but not in the royal tombs.

22 ¹The inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah, Jehoram's youngest son, king in his place, for the marauding band that came with the Arabians into the camp had killed all his older sons. So Ahaziah son of Jehoram, king of Judah, became king.²Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he began to reign; he reigned for one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Athaliah; she was the daughter of Omri.³He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab for his mother was his advisor in doing wicked things.

⁴Ahaziah did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh, as the house of Ahab was doing, for they were his advisors after the death of his father, to his destruction.⁵He also followed their advice; he went with Joram son of Ahab, king of Israel, to fight against Hazael, king of Aram, at Ramoth Gilead. The Arameans wounded Joram.

⁶Joram returned to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds that they had given him at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael, king of Aram. So Ahaziah son of Jehoram, king of Judah, went down to Jezreel to see Joram son of Ahab, because Joram had been wounded.

⁷Now the destruction of Ahaziah was brought about by God through Ahaziah's visit to Joram. When he had arrived, he went with Jehoram to attack Jehu son of Nimshi, whom Yahweh had anointed to destroy the house of Ahab.⁸It came about, when Jehu was carrying out God's judgment on the house of Ahab, that he found the leaders of Judah and the sons of Ahaziah's brothers serving Ahaziah. Jehu killed them.

⁹Jehu looked for Ahaziah; they caught him hiding in Samaria, brought him to Jehu, and killed him. Then they buried him, for they said, "He is a son of Jehoshaphat, who sought Yahweh with all his heart." So the house of Ahaziah had no more power to rule the kingdom.

¹⁰Now when Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, saw that her son was dead, she arose and killed all the royal children in the house of Judah.¹¹But Jehosheba, ¹a daughter of the king, secretly took Joash son of Ahaziah away from the king's sons who were about to be killed. She put him and his nurse into a bedroom. So Jehosheba, a daughter of King Jehoram, the wife of Jehoiada the priest (for she was the sister of Ahaziah), hid him from Athaliah, so that Athaliah did not kill him.¹²He was with them, hidden in the house of God for six years, while Athaliah reigned over the land.

¹Jehosheba may be spelled differently in other translations, as: Jehoshaba .

23 ¹In the seventh year, Jehoiada showed his strength and entered into a covenant with the commanders of hundreds, Azariah son of Jeroham, Ishmael son of Jehohanan, Azariah son of Obed, Maaseiah son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat son of Zikri.²They went about in Judah and gathered the Levites from all the cities of Judah, as well as the heads of the families of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem.³All the assembly made a covenant with the king in the house of God. Jehoiada said to them, "See, the king's son will reign, as Yahweh has said concerning the descendants of David.

⁴This is what you must do: A third of you priests and Levites who come to serve on the Sabbath will be guards at the doors.⁵Another third will be at the king's house, and the other third will be at the Foundation Gate. All the people will be in the courtyard of the house of Yahweh.

⁶Allow no one to come into the house of Yahweh, except for the priests and the Levites who are serving. They may enter because they are consecrated. But all the other people must obey the commands of Yahweh.⁷The Levites must surround the king on all sides, every man with his weapons in his hand. Whoever comes into the house, let him be killed. Stay with the king when he comes in and when he goes out."

⁸So the Levites and all Judah served in every way in the manner in which Jehoiada the priest commanded. Each one took his men, those who were to come in to serve on the Sabbath, and those who were to leave off serving on the Sabbath, for Jehoiada the priest had not dismissed any of their divisions.⁹Then Jehoiada the priest brought to the commanders spears and small and large shields that had been King David's that were in the house of God.

¹⁰Jehoiada placed all the soldiers, each man with his weapon in his hand, from the right side of the temple to the left side of the temple, along by the altar and the temple, surrounding the king.¹¹Then they brought out the king's son, put the crown on him, and gave him the covenant decrees. Then they made him king, and Jehoiada and his sons anointed him. Then they said, "Long live the king."

¹²When Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and praising the king, she came to the people in the house of Yahweh,¹³ and she looked, and, behold, the king was standing by his pillar at the entrance, and the commanders and the trumpeters were by the king. All the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets, and the singers were playing musical instruments and leading the singing of praise. Then Athaliah tore her clothes and shouted, "Treason! Treason!"

¹⁴Then Jehoiada the priest brought out the commanders of hundreds who were over the army and said to them, "Bring her out between the ranks; anyone who follows her, let him be killed with the sword." For the priest had said, "Do not kill her in the house of Yahweh."¹⁵So they seized her as she went into the entrance of the Horse Gate of the king's house, and there they killed her.

¹⁶Then Jehoiada made a covenant between himself, all the people, and the king, that they should be Yahweh's people.¹⁷So all the people went to the house of Baal and tore it down. They smashed Baal's altars and his images to pieces, and they killed Mattan, the priest of Baal, in front of those altars.

¹⁸Jehoiada appointed officers for the house of Yahweh under the hand of the priests, who were Levites, whom David had assigned to the house of Yahweh, to offer the burnt offerings to Yahweh, as it was written in the law of Moses, together with rejoicing and singing, as David had given direction.¹⁹Jehoiada set guards at the gates of the house of Yahweh, so that no one that was unclean in any way should enter.

²⁰Jehoiada took with him the commanders of hundreds, the noblemen, the rulers of the people, and all the people of the land. He brought down the king from the house of Yahweh; the people came through the Upper Gate to the king's house and sat the king on the throne of the kingdom. ¹²¹So all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was quiet. As for Athaliah, they had killed her with the sword.

¹Some modern translations have, they brought down the king .

24 ¹Joash was seven years old when he began to reign; he reigned for forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zibiah, of Beersheba.²Joash did what was right in the eyes of Yahweh all the days of Jehoiada, the priest.³Jehoiada took for him two wives, and he became the father of sons and daughters.

⁴It came about after this, that Joash decided to restore the house of Yahweh.⁵He gathered together the priests and the Levites, and he said to them, "Go out every year to the cities of Judah and gather from all Israel money to repair the house of your God. Make sure that you start right away." The Levites did nothing at first.

⁶So the king called for Jehoiada the high priest and said to him, "Why have you not required the Levites to bring in from Judah and Jerusalem the tax levied by Moses the servant of Yahweh and by the assembly of Israel for the tent of the covenant decrees?"⁷For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken up the house of God and had given all the holy things of the house of Yahweh to the Baals.

⁸So the king commanded, and they made a chest and placed it outside at the entrance to the house of Yahweh.⁹Then they made a proclamation through Judah and Jerusalem, for the people to bring in for Yahweh the tax that Moses the servant of God levied on Israel in the wilderness.¹⁰All the leaders and all the people rejoiced and brought money in and put it into the chest until they finished filling it.

¹¹It happened that whenever the chest was brought to the king's officials by the hand of the Levites, and whenever they saw that there was much money in it, the king's scribe and the high priest's official would come, empty the chest, and take it and carry it back to its place. They did this day after day, gathering large amounts of money.¹²The king and Jehoiada gave the money to those who did the work of serving in the house of Yahweh. These men hired stonemasons and carpenters to restore the house of Yahweh, and also those who worked in iron and bronze.

¹³So the workmen labored, and the work of repairing went forward in their hands; they set up the house of God in its original design and strengthened it.¹⁴When they finished, they brought the rest of the money to the king and Jehoiada. This money was used to make furnishings for the house of Yahweh, utensils with which to serve and make offerings—spoons and utensils of gold and silver. They offered burnt offerings in the house of Yahweh continually for all the days of Jehoiada.

¹⁵Jehoiada grew old and was full of days, and then he died; he was 130 years old when he died.¹⁶They buried him in the city of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, toward God, and to the house of God.

¹⁷Now after the death of Jehoiada, the leaders of Judah came and did honor to the king. Then the king listened to them.

¹⁸They abandoned the house of Yahweh, the God of their ancestors, and worshiped the Asherah gods and the idols. God's anger came on Judah and Jerusalem for this guilt of theirs.¹⁹Yet he sent prophets to them to bring them again to himself, Yahweh; the prophets testified against the people, but they refused to listen.

²⁰The Spirit of God clothed Zechariah son of Jehoiada, the priest; Zechariah stood above the people and said to them, "God says this: Why do you transgress the commandments of Yahweh, so that you cannot prosper? Since you have abandoned Yahweh, he has also abandoned you."²¹But they plotted against him; at the king's command, they stoned him with stones in the courtyard of the house of Yahweh.²²Joash the king, did not remember the kindness that Jehoiada, Zechariah's

father, had done to him, and so he killed Jehoiada's son. As Zechariah was dying, he said, "May Yahweh see this and call you to account."

²³It came about at the end of the year, that the army of Aram came up against Joash. They came to Judah and Jerusalem; they destroyed all the leaders of the people and sent all the plunder from them to the king of Damascus.²⁴ Although the army of the Arameans had come with only a few soldiers, Yahweh gave them victory over a very great army, because Judah had abandoned Yahweh, the God of their ancestors. In this way the Arameans brought judgment on Joash.

²⁵By the time that the Arameans had gone, Joash had been severely wounded. His own servants plotted against him because of the blood of the sons of Jehoiada, the priest. They killed him in his bed, and he died; they buried him in the city of David, but not in the tombs of the kings.²⁶ These were the persons who plotted against him: Zabad son of Shimeath, an Ammonite woman; and Jehozabad son of Shimrith, a Moabite woman.

²⁷Now the accounts about his sons, the important prophecies that were spoken about him, and the rebuilding of the house of God, see, they are written in the commentary on the book of the kings. Amaziah his son became king in his place.

25 ¹Amaziah was twenty-five years old when he began to reign; he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jehoaddan, of Jerusalem.² He did what was right in the eyes of Yahweh, but not with a whole heart.

³It came about that as soon as his rule was well established, he killed the servants who had murdered his father, the king.

⁴But he did not put their children to death, according to what was written in the law, in the book of Moses, as Yahweh had commanded, "The fathers must not be put to death for their children, and children must not be put to death for their fathers. But, each one must die for his own sin."

⁵Moreover, Amaziah gathered Judah together, and registered them by their ancestors' houses, under commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds—all of Judah and Benjamin. He numbered them from twenty years old and upward, and found them to be 300,000 chosen men, able to go to war, who could handle spear and shield.⁶ He hired also 100,000 mighty warriors from Israel for one hundred talents of silver.

⁷But a man of God came to him and said, "King, do not let the army of Israel go with you, for Yahweh is not with Israel—none of the people of Ephraim.⁸ But even if you do go and are courageous and strong in battle, God will throw you down before the enemy, for God has power to help, and power to throw down."

⁹Amaziah said to the man of God, "But what will we do about the one hundred talents that I have given to the army of Israel?" The man of God answered, "Yahweh is able to give you much more than that."¹⁰ So Amaziah separated the army that had come to him from Ephraim; he sent them home again. So their anger was greatly kindled against Judah, and they returned home in fierce anger.

¹¹Amaziah took courage and led his people to go out to the Valley of Salt; there he defeated ten thousand men of Seir.¹² The army of Judah carried away alive another ten thousand. They took them to the top of the cliff and threw them down from there, so that they were all broken in pieces.

¹³But the men of the army which Amaziah sent back, so that they should not go with him to battle, attacked the cities of Judah from Samaria to Beth Horon. They struck down three thousand of the people and took much plunder.

¹⁴Now it came about, after that Amaziah had returned from the slaughter of the Edomites, that he brought the gods of the people of Seir, and set them up to be his own gods. He bowed down before them and burned incense to them.¹⁵ So Yahweh's anger was kindled against Amaziah. He sent a prophet to him, who said, "Why have you sought after the gods of a people who did not even save their own people from your hand?"

¹⁶It came about that as the prophet was speaking with him, the king said to him, "Have we made you an advisor to the king? Stop! Why should you be killed?" Then the prophet stopped and said, "I know that God has decided to destroy you because you have done this deed and have not listened to my advice."

¹⁷Then Amaziah king of Judah consulted with advisors and sent messengers to Jehoash son of Jehoahaz son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, "Come, let us meet each other face to face in battle."

¹⁸But Jehoash the king of Israel sent messengers back to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, "A thistle that was in Lebanon sent a message to a cedar in Lebanon, saying, 'Give your daughter to my son for a wife,' but a wild beast in Lebanon walked by and trampled down the thistle.¹⁹ You have said, 'See, I have struck down Edom,' and your heart has lifted you up. Take pride in your victory, but stay at home, for why should you cause yourself trouble and fall, both you and Judah with you?"

²⁰But Amaziah would not listen, because this event was from God, so he might put the people of Judah into the hand of their enemies, because they had sought advice from the gods of Edom.²¹ So Jehoash, king of Israel, attacked; he and Amaziah, king of Judah, met each other face to face at Beth Shemesh, which belongs to Judah.²² Judah was struck down before Israel, and every man fled to his tent.

²³Jehoash, king of Israel, captured Amaziah son of Jehoash son of Ahaziah, king of Judah, at Beth Shemesh. He brought him to Jerusalem and tore down the wall of Jerusalem from the Ephraim Gate to the Corner Gate, four hundred cubits in distance.²⁴ He took all the gold and silver, all the objects that were found in the house of God with Obed-Edom, and the valuable things in the king's house, with hostages also, and returned to Samaria.

²⁵Amaziah son of Joash, king of Judah, lived fifteen years after the death of Jehoash, son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel.²⁶ As for the other matters concerning Amaziah, first and last, behold, are they not written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel?

²⁷Now from the time that Amaziah turned away from following Yahweh, they began to make a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem. He fled to Lachish, but they sent men after him to Lachish and killed him there.²⁸ They brought him back on horses and buried him with his ancestors in the city of Judah.

26 ¹All the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king in place of his father Amaziah.² It was he who rebuilt Elath and restored it to Judah. After that the king lay down with his ancestors.³ Uzziah was sixteen years old when he began to reign. He reigned for fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jekoliah; she was from Jerusalem.

⁴He did what was right in the eyes of Yahweh, just as his father Amaziah had done.⁵ He set himself to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who taught him to honor God. ¹ As long as he sought Yahweh, God made him prosper.

⁶Uzziah went out and fought against the Philistines. He broke down the city walls of Gath, Jabneh, and Ashdod; he built cities in the country of Ashdod and among the Philistines.⁷ God helped him against the Philistines, against the Arabians who lived in Gurbaal, and against the Meunites.⁸ The Ammonites paid tribute to Uzziah, and his fame spread, even to the entrance of Egypt, because he was becoming more powerful.

⁹In addition, Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate, at the Valley Gate, and at the turning of the wall, and fortified them.¹⁰ He built watchtowers in the wilderness and dug many cisterns, for he had many herds in the lowlands and in the plains. He had farmers and vine growers in the hill country and in the fruitful fields, for he loved the soil.

¹¹In addition, Uzziah had an army of fighting men who went out to war in groups which were organized by their number that were counted by Jeiel, the scribe, and Maaseiah, the officer, under the authority of Hananiah, one of the king's commanders.¹² The whole number of the leaders of the families who led the mighty warriors was 2,600.¹³ Under their hand was an army of 307,500 men that made war with mighty power to help the king against the enemy.

¹⁴Uzziah prepared for them—for all the army—shields, spears, helmets, body armor, bows, and stones for slinging.¹⁵ In Jerusalem he built machines that were designed by skillful men to be on the towers and on the battlements to shoot arrows and large stones. His fame spread to distant lands, for he was greatly helped and so he became very powerful.

¹⁶But when Uzziah had become powerful, his heart was lifted up so that he acted corruptly; he acted faithlessly against Yahweh, his God, for he went into the temple of Yahweh to burn incense on the altar of incense.¹⁷ Azariah, the priest, went in after him, and with him eighty priests of Yahweh, who were brave men.¹⁸ They confronted Uzziah the king, and said to him, "It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to Yahweh, but for the priests, the descendants of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Go out of the holy place, for you have been unfaithful and you will not be honored by Yahweh God."

¹⁹Then Uzziah became angry. He was holding a censer in his hand to burn incense. While he was enraged against the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead before the priests in the house of Yahweh, beside the altar of incense.²⁰ Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and, behold, he had become leprous on his forehead. They quickly drove him out of there. Indeed, he hurried to go out, because Yahweh had struck him.

²¹Uzziah, the king, was a leper to the day of his death and lived in a separate house since he was a leper, for he was cut off from the house of Yahweh. Jotham, his son, was over the king's house and ruled the people of the land.

²²The other matters concerning Uzziah, from first to last, were recorded by the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz.²³ So Uzziah lay down with his ancestors; they buried him with his ancestors in a burial ground that belonged to the kings, for they said, "He is a leper." Jotham, his son, became king in his place.

¹The copies of the ancient Hebrew text can be read either, to honor God, or in the fear of God or in seeing God. Scholars are divided.

27 ¹Jotham was twenty-five years old when he began to reign; he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jerushah; she was the daughter of Zadok.² He did what was right in the eyes of Yahweh, just as his father Uzziah had done. He also refrained from going into the temple of Yahweh. But the people were still behaving corruptly.

³He built the upper gate of the house of Yahweh, and on the hill of Ophel he built much.⁴ Moreover he built cities in the hill country of Judah, and in the forests he built fortresses and towers.

⁵He fought also with the king of the people of Ammon and defeated them. In that same year, the people of Ammon gave him one hundred talents of silver, ten thousand measures of wheat, and ten thousand measures of barley. The people of Ammon gave him the same in the second and third years.

⁶So Jotham became powerful because he walked firmly before Yahweh his God.⁷As for the other matters concerning Jotham, all his wars, and his ways, see, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.

⁸He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign; he reigned for sixteen years in Jerusalem.⁹Jotham lay down with his ancestors, and they buried him in the city of David. Ahaz, his son, became king in his place.

28 ¹Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. He did not do what was right in the eyes of Yahweh, as David his ancestor had done.²Instead, he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel; he also made cast metal figures for the Baals.

³In addition, he burned incense in the Valley of Ben Hinnom and he caused his children to pass through the fire, according to the idolatrous practices of the people that Yahweh forced out of their land before the people of Israel.⁴He sacrificed and burned incense at the high places and on the hills and under every green tree.

⁵Therefore Yahweh the God of Ahaz gave him into the hand of the king of Aram. The Arameans defeated him and carried away from him a great crowd of captives, bringing them to Damascus. Ahaz was also given into the hand of the king of Israel who defeated him in a great slaughter.⁶For Pekah son of Remaliah in one day killed 120,000 soldiers in Judah and all of them were powerful men, because they had abandoned Yahweh the God of their ancestors.

⁷Zikri, a powerful man from Ephraim, killed Maaseiah the king's son, Azrikam, the official over the palace, and Elkanah, who was next to the king.⁸The army of Israel took captive from their relatives 200,000 wives, sons, and daughters. They also took much plunder, which they carried back to Samaria.

⁹But a prophet of Yahweh was there, his name was Oded. He went out to meet the army coming into Samaria. He said to them, "Because Yahweh, the God of your ancestors, was angry with Judah, he gave them into your hand. But you have slaughtered them in a rage that reached up to heaven."¹⁰And now you, people of Judah and Jerusalem, intend to make them your male slaves and female slaves. But are you not guilty of sins of your own against Yahweh your God?¹¹Now then, listen to me: Send the captives back, those whom you have captured of your own brothers, for Yahweh's burning anger is on you."

¹²Then certain leaders of the people of Ephraim—Azariah son of Jehohanan, Berekiah son of Meshillemoth, Jehizkiah son of Shallum, and Amasa son of Hadlai, stood up against those who came back from the war.¹³They said to them, "You must not bring the captives here, for you intend something that will bring on us sin against Yahweh, to add to our sins and trespasses, for our trespass is great, and there is burning anger against Israel."

¹⁴So the armed men left the captives and the plunder before the leaders and all the assembly.¹⁵The men who were assigned by name got up and took the captives, and clothed all who were naked among them with the plunder. They clothed them and gave them sandals. They gave them food to eat and drink. They anointed them and put the weak ones on donkeys. They took them back to their families in Jericho, (called the City of Palms). Then they returned to Samaria.

¹⁶At that time King Ahaz sent messengers to the kings of Assyria to ask them to help him.¹⁷For once again the Edomites had come and attacked Judah, carrying captives away.¹⁸The Philistines also invaded the cities of the lowlands and of the Negev of Judah. They took Beth Shemesh, Aijalon, Gederoth, Soko with its villages, Timnah with its villages, and also Gimzo with its villages. They went to live in those places.

¹⁹For Yahweh humbled Judah because of Ahaz, king of Israel; for he had acted wickedly in Judah and had been very faithless against Yahweh.²⁰Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, came to him and troubled him instead of strengthening him.

²¹For Ahaz plundered the house of Yahweh and the houses of the king and the leaders, to give the valuable things to the kings of Assyria. But doing this did not benefit him.

²²This same King Ahaz became even more faithless against Yahweh in his time of suffering.²³For he sacrificed to the gods of Damascus, gods that had defeated him. He said, "Because the gods of the kings of Aram helped them, I will sacrifice to them, so that they might help me." But they were the ruin of him and of all Israel.

²⁴Ahaz gathered together the furnishings of the house of God and cut them to pieces. He shut the doors of the house of Yahweh and he made for himself altars in every corner of Jerusalem.²⁵In every city of Judah he made high places to burn sacrifices to other gods. He provoked Yahweh, the God of his ancestors, to anger.

²⁶Now the rest of his deeds, and all his ways, first and last, see, they are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel.²⁷Ahaz lay down with his ancestors, and they buried him in the city, in Jerusalem, but they did not bring him into the tombs of the kings of Israel. Hezekiah, his son, became king in his place.

¹Hezekiah began to reign when he was twenty-five years old; he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Abijah; she was the daughter of Zechariah.²He did what was right in the eyes of Yahweh, just as David his father had done.

³In the first year of his reign, in the first month, Hezekiah opened the doors of the house of Yahweh and repaired them.

⁴He brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them together into the courtyard on the east side.⁵He said to them, "Listen to me, you Levites! Consecrate yourselves, and consecrate the house of Yahweh, the God of your ancestors, and carry away the filthiness from the holy place.

⁶For our ancestors were faithless and did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh our God; they abandoned him, turned away their faces from the place where Yahweh lives, and turned their backs on it.⁷Also they shut up the doors of the porch and put out the lamps; they did not burn incense or offer burnt offerings in the holy place to the God of Israel.

⁸Therefore the wrath of Yahweh had fallen on Judah and Jerusalem, and he has made them to be an object of terror, of horror, and of scorn, as you can see with your own eyes.⁹This is why our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons, our daughters, and our wives are in captivity for this.

¹⁰Now it is in my heart to make a covenant with Yahweh, the God of Israel, so that his burning anger may turn away from us.¹¹My sons, do not be lazy now, for Yahweh has chosen you to stand before him, to worship him, and that you should be his servants and burn incense."

¹²Then the Levites arose: Mahath son of Amasai, and Joel son of Azariah, of the people of the Kohathites; and of the people of Merari, Kish son of Abdi, and Azariah son of Jehallelel; and of the Gershonites, Joah son of Zimmah, and Eden son of Joah;

¹³of the descendants of Elizaphan, Shimri and Jeuel; and of the descendants of Asaph, Zechariah and Mattaniah;

¹⁴of the descendants of Heman, Jehuel and Shimei; and of the descendants of Jeduthun, Shemaiah and Uzziel.

¹⁵They gathered their brothers, they consecrated themselves, and they went in, as the king commanded, following the words of Yahweh, to cleanse the house of Yahweh.¹⁶The priests went in to the inner part of the house of Yahweh to cleanse it; they brought out everything unclean that they found in the temple of Yahweh into the courtyard of the house. The Levites took it to carry it out to the Kidron Brook.¹⁷Now they began the consecration on the first day of the first month. By the eighth day of the month they reached the porch of Yahweh. Then for eight more days they consecrated the house of Yahweh. On the sixteenth day of the first month they finished.

¹⁸Then they went to Hezekiah, the king, inside the palace and said, "We have cleansed all the house of Yahweh, the altar for burnt offerings with all its implements, and the table of the bread of the presence, with all its implements.¹⁹So we have prepared and we have consecrated all the items that King Ahaz removed when he acted unfaithfully during his reign. See, they are in front of the altar of Yahweh."

²⁰Then Hezekiah the king rose early in the morning and gathered the leaders of the city; he went up to the house of Yahweh.²¹They brought seven bulls, seven rams, seven lambs, and seven male goats as a sin offering for the kingdom, for the sanctuary, and for Judah. He commanded the priests, the descendants of Aaron, to offer them on the altar of Yahweh.

²²So they killed the bulls, and the priests received the blood and sprinkled it on the altar. Then they killed the rams and sprinkled their blood on the altar; and they also killed the lambs and sprinkled their blood on the altar.²³They brought the male goats for the sin offering before the king and the assembly; they laid their hands on them.²⁴The priests killed them, and they made a sin offering with their blood on the altar to make atonement for all Israel, for the king had commanded that a burnt offering and a sin offering should be made for all Israel.

²⁵Hezekiah placed the Levites in the house of Yahweh with cymbals, lutes and harps, arranging them by the command of David, Gad, the king's seer, and Nathan, the prophet, for the command was from Yahweh by means of his prophets.²⁶The Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets.

²⁷Hezekiah commanded them to offer the burnt offering on the altar. When the burnt offering began, the song of Yahweh began also, with the trumpets, together with the instruments of David, king of Israel.²⁸All the assembly worshiped, the singers sang, and the trumpeters played; all this continued until the burnt offering was finished.

²⁹When they had finished the offerings, the king and all who were present with him bowed and worshiped.³⁰Moreover, Hezekiah, the king, and the leaders commanded the Levites to sing praises to Yahweh with the words of David and of Asaph, the seer. They sang praises with gladness, and they bowed down and worshiped.

³¹Then Hezekiah said, "Now you have consecrated yourselves to Yahweh. Come here and bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of Yahweh." The assembly brought sacrifices and thank offerings, and all who had a willing heart brought burnt offerings.

³²The number of the burnt offerings that the assembly brought was seventy bulls, one hundred rams, and two hundred male lambs. All these were for a burnt offering to Yahweh.³³The consecrated offerings were six hundred oxen and three thousand sheep.

³⁴But the priests were too few to skin all the burnt offerings, so their brothers, the Levites, helped them until the work was done, and until the priests could consecrate themselves, for the Levites had been more careful to consecrate themselves than the priests.

³⁵In addition, there were very many burnt offerings; they were performed with the fat of the fellowship offerings, and there were drink offerings for every burnt offering. So the service of the house of Yahweh was set in order.³⁶ Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people also, because of what God had prepared for the people, for the work had been done quickly.

30 ¹Hezekiah sent messengers to all Israel and Judah, and also wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of Yahweh in Jerusalem, to celebrate the Passover to Yahweh, the God of Israel.²For the king, his leaders, and all the assembly in Jerusalem had consulted together, deciding to celebrate the Passover in the second month.³They could not celebrate at the regular time, because not enough priests had consecrated themselves for the celebration and the people had not gathered together in Jerusalem.

⁴This proposal seemed right in the eyes of the king and of all the assembly.⁵So they agreed to make a proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, that the people should come to celebrate the Passover to Yahweh, the God of Israel, in Jerusalem. For they had not observed it with large numbers of people according to what was written.⁶So couriers went with the letters from the king and his leaders throughout all Israel and Judah, by the command of the king. They said, "You people of Israel, turn back to Yahweh, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, so that he may turn back to the remnant of you who have escaped from the hand of the kings of Assyria.

⁷Do not be like your ancestors or your brothers, who were faithless against Yahweh, the God of their ancestors, so that he made them an object of horror, as you see.⁸Now do not stiffen your necks, as your ancestors did; instead, give yourselves to Yahweh and come into his holy place, which he has consecrated forever, and worship Yahweh your God, so that his burning anger may turn away from you.⁹For if you turn back to Yahweh, your brothers and children will find compassion before those who led them away as prisoners, and they will come back into this land. For Yahweh your God, is gracious and merciful, and will not turn his face away from you, if you return to him."

¹⁰So the couriers passed from city to city throughout the regions of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the way to Zebulun, but the people laughed at them and mocked them.¹¹However, certain men of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem.¹²The hand of God also came on Judah, to give them one heart, to carry out the command of the king and leaders by the word of Yahweh.

¹³Many people, a very great assembly, gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread in the second month.¹⁴They rose and took away the altars that were in Jerusalem, and all the altars for incense; they threw them into the Kidron Brook.¹⁵Then they killed the Passover lambs on the fourteenth day of the second month. The priests and Levites were ashamed, so they consecrated themselves and brought burnt offerings into the house of Yahweh.

¹⁶They stood in their place by their divisions, following the directions given in the law of Moses, the man of God. The priests sprinkled the blood that they received from the hand of the Levites.¹⁷For there were many in the assembly who had not consecrated themselves. Therefore the Levites slaughtered the Passover lambs for everyone who was not purified and could not consecrate their sacrifice to Yahweh.

¹⁸For a great many of the people, many of them from Ephraim and Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun, had not purified themselves, yet they ate the Passover meal, against the written instructions. For Hezekiah had prayed for them, saying, "May the good Yahweh pardon everyone¹⁹ who sets his heart to seek God, Yahweh, the God of his ancestors, even though he is not purified by the purification standards of the holy place."²⁰So Yahweh listened to Hezekiah and healed the people.²¹The people of Israel who were present in Jerusalem kept the Festival of Unleavened Bread for seven days with great joy. The Levites and the priests praised Yahweh day after day, singing with loud instruments to Yahweh.²²Hezekiah spoke encouragingly to all the Levites who understood the service of Yahweh. So they ate throughout the festival for the seven days, offering sacrifices of fellowship offerings, and making confession to Yahweh, the God of their ancestors.

²³The whole assembly then decided to celebrate for another seven days, and they did so with joy.²⁴For Hezekiah king of Judah gave the assembly one thousand bulls and seven thousand sheep as an offering; and the leaders gave to the assembly one thousand bulls and ten thousand sheep and goats. A large number of priests consecrated themselves.

²⁵All the assembly of Judah, with the priests and the Levites, and all the people who came together from Israel, as well as the foreigners who came from the land of Israel and those who lived in Judah—they all rejoiced.²⁶So there was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the time of Solomon son of David, king of Israel, there had not been anything like it in Jerusalem.

²⁷Then the priests, the Levites, rose and blessed the people. Their voice was heard, and their prayer went up to heaven, the holy place where God lives.

31 ¹Now when all this was finished, all the people of Israel who were there went out to the cities of Judah and broke to pieces the stone pillars and they cut down the Asherah poles, and they broke down the high places and the altars in

all of Judah and Benjamin, and in Ephraim and Manasseh, until they had destroyed them all. Then all the people of Israel returned, every one to his own possession and his own city.

²Hezekiah assigned the divisions of the priests and the Levites organized by their divisions, each man assigned to his work, both the priests and the Levites. He assigned them to make the burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, to serve, to give thanks, and to praise at the gates of the house of Yahweh.³He also assigned the king's portion for the burnt offerings from his own possessions, that is, for the morning and evening burnt offerings, and the burnt offerings for the Sabbath days, the new moons, and the fixed festivals, as it was written in the law of Yahweh.

⁴Moreover, he commanded the people who lived in Jerusalem to give the portion for the priests and the Levites, so that they might concentrate on obeying the law of Yahweh.⁵As soon as the command was sent out, the people of Israel generously gave the firstfruits of grain, new wine, oil, honey, and from all their harvest of the field. They brought in a tithe of everything, which was a great quantity.

⁶The people of Israel and Judah who lived in the cities of Judah also brought in the tithe of cattle and sheep, and the tithe of the holy things that were set apart to Yahweh their God, and they piled them up in heaps.⁷It was in the third month when they began piling up their contribution in heaps, and they finished in the seventh month.⁸When Hezekiah and the leaders came and saw the heaps, they blessed Yahweh and his people Israel.

⁹Then Hezekiah questioned the priests and the Levites about the heaps.¹⁰Azariah, the chief priest, of the house of Zadok, answered him and said, "Since the people began to bring the offerings into the house of Yahweh, we have eaten and had enough, and have plenty left over, for Yahweh has blessed his people. What was left over is this large amount here."

¹¹Then Hezekiah commanded storerooms to be prepared in the house of Yahweh, and they prepared them.¹²Then they faithfully brought in the offerings, the tithes and the things that belonged to Yahweh. Konaniah the Levite was the manager in charge of them, and his brother Shimei was second to him.¹³Jehiel, Azariah, Nahath, Asahel, Jerimoth, Jozabad, Eliel, Ismakiah, Mahath, and Benaiah were managers under the hand of Konaniah and Shimei his brother, by appointment of Hezekiah, the king, and Azariah, the official over the house of God.

¹⁴Kore son of Imnah the Levite, the porter at the east gate, was over the freewill offerings of God, in charge of distributing the offerings to Yahweh and the most holy offerings.¹⁵Under him were Eden, Miniamin, Jeshua, Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shekaniah, in the cities of the priests. They filled offices of trust, in order to give these offerings to their brothers division by division, to both the important and the unimportant.

¹⁶They also gave to those males three years old and up, who were recorded in the genealogies of their ancestors who entered the house of Yahweh, as required by the daily schedule, to do the work in their offices and their divisions. ¹

¹⁷They distributed to the priests who were recorded in the genealogies of their ancestors, and the same to the Levites twenty years old and more, according to their offices and their divisions.¹⁸They recorded in the genealogy all their little ones, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, through the whole community, for they were faithful in keeping themselves holy.¹⁹For the priests, the descendants of Aaron, who were in the fields of the villages belonging to their cities, or in every city, there were men assigned by name to give portions to all the males among the priests, and to all who were recorded in the genealogies of their ancestors as being among the Levites.

²⁰Hezekiah did this throughout all Judah. He accomplished what was good, right, and faithful before Yahweh, his God.²¹In every work that he began in the service of the house of God, the law, and the commandments, to seek his God, he performed it with all his heart, and he succeeded.

¹Instead of males three years old and up , some modern translations have males thirty years old and up .

32 ¹After these things and these acts of faithfulness, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came and entered Judah. He camped to attack the fortified cities, which he intended to capture for himself.

²When Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come and that he intended to fight against Jerusalem,³he consulted with his leaders and his powerful men to stop up the waters of the springs that were outside the city; they helped him do so.⁴So many people gathered together and stopped up all the springs and the stream that was flowing through the middle of the land. They said, "Why should the kings of Assyria come and find a lot of water?"

⁵Hezekiah took courage and built up all the wall that was broken down. He built the towers higher, and also the other wall outside. He also strengthened the Millo in the city of David, and he made large amounts of weapons and shields. ¹

⁶He placed military commanders over the people. He gathered them together to him in the broad place at the city gate and spoke to their hearts. He said, "Be strong and of good courage. Do not be afraid or dismayed because of the king of Assyria and all the army that is with him, for someone is with us who is greater than those with him.⁸With him is only an arm of flesh, but with us is Yahweh, our God, to help us, and to fight our battles." Then the people comforted themselves with the words of Hezekiah, king of Judah.

⁹After this, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, sent his servants to Jerusalem (now he was in front of Lachish, and all his army was with him), to Hezekiah, king of Judah, and to all of Judah who were in Jerusalem. He said,¹⁰"This is what Sennacherib, king of Assyria, says: What are you trusting in so you can endure a siege in Jerusalem?"

¹¹Is not Hezekiah misleading you, that he may give you over to die by famine and by thirst, when he tells you, 'Yahweh our God will rescue us from the hand of the king of Assyria'?¹²Has not this same Hezekiah taken away his high places and his altars and commanded Judah and Jerusalem, 'On one altar you must worship, and on it you must burn your sacrifices'?

¹³Do you not know what I and my ancestors have done to all the peoples of the other lands? Were the gods of the peoples of the surrounding lands able in any way to rescue their land from my power?¹⁴Among all the gods of those nations that my ancestors completely destroyed, was there any god who could rescue his people out of my hand? Why should your God be able to rescue you from my power?¹⁵Now do not let Hezekiah deceive you or persuade you in this way. Do not believe him, for no god of any nation or kingdom has been able to rescue his people out of my hand, or out of the hand of my ancestors. How much less will your God rescue you from my hand?"

¹⁶Sennacherib's servants spoke even more against Yahweh God and against his servant Hezekiah.¹⁷Sennacherib also wrote letters in order to mock Yahweh, the God of Israel, and to speak against him. He said, "As the gods of the nations of the lands have not rescued their people out of my hand, so the God of Hezekiah will not rescue his people out of my hand."

¹⁸They cried out in the language of the Jews to the people of Jerusalem who were on the wall, to frighten them and trouble them, in order that they might capture the city.¹⁹They spoke of the God of Jerusalem as they had spoken of the gods of the other peoples of the earth, which are merely the work of men's hands.

²⁰Hezekiah, the king, and Isaiah son of Amoz, the prophet, prayed because of this matter and he cried out to heaven.

²¹Yahweh sent an angel, who killed the mighty warriors, the commanders, and the officers of the king of Assyria in the camp. So Sennacherib returned to his own land with shame on his face. When he had gone into the house of his god, some of his own children killed him there with the sword.

²²In this way, Yahweh saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, and from the hand of all others, and gave them rest on every side.²³Many were bringing offerings to Yahweh in Jerusalem, and precious gifts to Hezekiah king of Judah, so that he was lifted up in the eyes of all nations from that time forward.

²⁴In those days Hezekiah was sick to the point of dying. He prayed to Yahweh, who spoke to him and gave him a sign that he would be healed.²⁵But Hezekiah did not pay back Yahweh for the help given to him, for his heart was lifted up. So anger came on him, and on Judah and Jerusalem.²⁶Nevertheless, Hezekiah later humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that Yahweh's anger did not come on them during Hezekiah's days.

²⁷Hezekiah had very many riches and much honor. He provided himself with storerooms for silver, gold, precious stones, and for spices, as well as for shields and for all kinds of valuable objects.²⁸He also had storehouses for the harvest of grain, new wine, and oil, and stalls for various kinds of livestock. He also had flocks in their pens.²⁹In addition, he provided himself with cities and possessions of flocks and herds in abundance, for God had given him very much wealth.³

³⁰It was this same Hezekiah who also stopped up the upper spring of the waters of Gihon, and who brought them straight down on the west side of the city of David. Hezekiah succeeded in all his works.³¹However, in the matter of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent to him to ask questions of those who knew, about the miraculous sign that had been done in the land, God left him to himself, in order to test him, and to know all that was in his heart.

³²As for the other matters concerning Hezekiah, including his actions of covenant loyalty, you can see that they are written in the vision of the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz, and in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel.³³Hezekiah lay down with his ancestors, and they buried him on the hill of the tombs of the descendants of David. All Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem honored him at his death. Manasseh his son became king in his place.

¹Instead of He built the towers higher, some ancient and modern translations have, he built towers on it, that is, on the wall.

²Instead of gave them rest on every side, some ancient and modern translations have guided them on every side. The original reading is uncertain.

³Instead of cities, some modern translations have donkeys, and some other modern translations leave out the word entirely.

33 ¹Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign; he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem.²He did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh, like the disgusting things of the nations whom Yahweh had driven out before the people of Israel.³For he rebuilt the high places that his father Hezekiah had torn down, and he built altars for the Baals, he made Asherah poles, and he bowed down to all the host of heaven and worshiped them.

⁴Manasseh built altars in the house of Yahweh, although Yahweh had commanded, "It is in Jerusalem that my name will be forever."⁵He built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courtyards of the house of Yahweh.⁶In the Valley of Ben

Hinnom he caused his sons to pass through the fire. He practiced sorcery, divination and he read omens, and he consulted with sorcerers and spiritists. Manasseh did much evil in the sight of Yahweh, and he provoked him to anger.

⁷The carved figure he had made, he placed it in the house of God. It was about this house that God had spoken to David and Solomon his son; he had said, "It is in this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen from all the tribes of Israel, that I will put my name forever.⁸I will not move the people of Israel any more out of the land that I assigned to their ancestors, if they will only be careful to keep all that I have commanded them, following all the law, statutes, and decrees which I gave them through Moses."⁹Manasseh led Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to do evil even more than the nations that Yahweh had destroyed before the people of Israel.

¹⁰Yahweh spoke to Manasseh, and to his people, but they paid no attention.¹¹So Yahweh brought on them the commanders of the army of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh in chains, bound him with fetters, and took him off to Babylon.

¹²When Manasseh was in distress, he implored Yahweh, his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his ancestors.¹³He prayed to him; and God was moved by his plea, and God heard his humble request and brought him back to Jerusalem, into his kingship. Then Manasseh knew that Yahweh was God.

¹⁴After this, Manasseh built an outer wall to the city of David, on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, to the entrance at the Fish Gate. He surrounded the hill of Ophel with it and raised the wall up to a very great height. He put courageous commanders in all the fortified cities of Judah.¹⁵He took away the foreign gods, the idol out of the house of Yahweh, and all the altars that he had built on the mount of the house of Yahweh and in Jerusalem, and threw them out of the city.

¹⁶He rebuilt the altar of Yahweh and offered on it sacrifices of fellowship offerings and thank offerings; he commanded Judah to serve Yahweh, the God of Israel.¹⁷However, the people still sacrificed at the high places, but only to Yahweh, their God.

¹⁸As to the other matters concerning Manasseh, his prayer to his God, and the words of the seers who spoke to him in the name of Yahweh, the God of Israel, behold, they are written among the deeds of the kings of Israel.¹⁹In that account there is history of his prayer, and how God was moved by his plea. There is also an account of all his sin and his trespasses, and the places where he had built high places and set up the Asherah poles and the carved figures, before he humbled himself—they are written about in the Chronicles of the Seers. ²⁰So Manasseh lay down with his ancestors, and they buried him in his own house. Amon, his son, became king in his place.

²¹Amon was twenty-two years old when he began to reign; he reigned two years in Jerusalem.²²He did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh, as Manasseh, his father, had done. Amon sacrificed to all the carved figures that Manasseh his father had made, and he worshiped them.²³He did not humble himself before Yahweh, as Manasseh his father had done. Instead, Amon trespassed more and more.

²⁴His servants conspired against him and put him to death in his own house.²⁵But the people of the land killed all those who had conspired against King Amon, and they made Josiah, his son, king in his place.

¹Some modern translations have the Chronicles of Hozai, which is the reading of the original text. But many modern translations correct it to read the Chronicles of the Seers. Also, a few modern translations have the Chronicles of his seers.

34 ¹Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign; he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem.²He did what was right in the eyes of Yahweh, and walked in the ways of David his ancestor, and did not turn away either to the right or to the left.³For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek after the God of David, his ancestor. In the twelfth year, he began to cleanse Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, the Asherah poles, and the carved figures and the cast metal figures.

⁴The people broke down the altars of the Baals in his presence; he cut apart the incense altars that were above them. He broke the Asherah poles and the carved figures. He crushed the cast metal figures to dust and scattered the dust on the graves of those who had sacrificed to them.⁵He burned the bones of their priests on their altars. In this way, he cleansed Judah and Jerusalem.

⁶He did the same in the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, all the way to Naphtali, and in the ruins that surrounded them.⁷He broke down the altars, crushed the Asherah poles and the carved images into powder, and cut apart all the incense altars throughout all the land of Israel. Then he returned to Jerusalem.

⁸Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, after Josiah had cleansed the land and the temple, he sent Shaphan son of Azaliah, Maaseiah, the governor of the city, and Joah son of Joahaz the secretary, to repair the house of Yahweh his God.

⁹They went to Hilkiah, the high priest, and entrusted to him the money that had been brought into the house of God, that the Levites, the guards of the doors, had gathered from Manasseh and Ephraim, from all the remnant of Israel, from all Judah and Benjamin, and from the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

¹⁰They entrusted the money to the men who supervised the work on the temple of Yahweh. These men paid the workers who repaired and restored the temple.¹¹They paid it to the carpenters and builders to buy cut stone and timber for braces, and to make beams for the structures that some kings of Judah had allowed to become ruined.

¹²The men did the work faithfully. Their supervisors Jahath and Obadiah, the Levites, of the sons of Merari; and Zechariah and Meshullam, from the sons of the Kohathites. Other Levites, all of whom were very good musicians, closely directed the workmen.¹³These Levites supervised those who carried building material and all other men who worked in any way. There were also Levites who were secretaries, administrators, and gate guards.

¹⁴When they brought out the money that was brought into the house of Yahweh, Hilkiah the priest found the book of the law of Yahweh that had been given through Moses.¹⁵Hilkiah said to Shaphan the scribe, "I have found the book of the law in the house of Yahweh." Hilkiah brought the book to Shaphan.¹⁶Shaphan took the book to the king, and also reported to him, saying, "Your servants are doing everything that has been entrusted to them.

¹⁷They have emptied out the money that was found in the house of Yahweh, and they gave it into the hand of the supervisors and to the workmen."¹⁸Shaphan the scribe told the king, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." Then Shaphan read in it to the king.¹⁹It came about that when the king had heard the words of the law, he tore his clothes.

²⁰The king commanded Hilkiah, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Abdon son of Micah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah, his own servant, saying,²¹"Go and ask Yahweh's will for me, and for those who are left in Israel and in Judah, because of the words of the book that has been found. For it is great, the anger of Yahweh that has been poured out on us. ¹ It is great, because our ancestors have not listened to the words of this book so as to obey all that was written in it."

²²So Hilkiah, and those whom the king had commanded, went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum son of Tokhath son of Hasrah, keeper of the wardrobe (she lived in Jerusalem in the Second District), and they spoke with her in this way.

²³She said to them, "This is what Yahweh, the God of Israel, says: Tell the man who sent you to me,²⁴"This is what Yahweh says: See, I am about to bring disaster on this place and on its inhabitants, all the curses that have been written in the book that they have read before the king of Judah.²⁵This will happen because they have abandoned me and have burned incense to other gods, and they have provoked me to anger by all the works of their hands. Therefore, my anger will be poured out on this place, and it will not be extinguished.'

²⁶But to the king of Judah, who sent you to ask Yahweh what he should do, this is what you will say to him, 'Yahweh, the God of Israel says this: About the words that you heard,²⁷because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before God when you heard his words against this place and its inhabitants, and because you have humbled yourself before me and have torn your clothes and wept before me, I also have listened to you—this is Yahweh's declaration—²⁸see, I will gather you to your ancestors. You will be gathered to your grave in peace, and your eyes will not see any of the disaster I will bring on this place and its inhabitants.'" The men took this message back to the king.

²⁹Then the king sent messengers and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem.³⁰Then the king went up to the house of Yahweh, and all the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests, Levites, and all the people, from great to small. He then read in their hearing all the words of the book of the Covenant that had been found in the house of Yahweh.

³¹The king stood in his place and made a covenant before Yahweh, to walk after Yahweh, and to keep his commandments, his regulations, and his statutes, with all his heart and all his soul, to obey the words of the covenant that were written in this book.³²He caused all who were found in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand by the covenant. The inhabitants of Jerusalem acted in obedience to the covenant of God, the God of their ancestors.

³³Josiah took away all the disgusting things from the lands that belonged to the people of Israel. He made everyone in Israel worship Yahweh, their God. For all of his days, they did not turn away from following Yahweh, the God of their ancestors.

¹Instead of that has been poured out on us , which is followed by most modern translations, some translations follow another rendering of the Hebrew, to read: that has been kindled against us .

35 ¹Josiah kept a Passover to Yahweh in Jerusalem, and they killed the Passover lambs on the fourteenth day of the first month.²He placed the priests in their positions and encouraged them in the service of the house of Yahweh.

³He said to the Levites who taught all Israel and who were set apart to Yahweh, "Put the holy ark in the house that Solomon son of David, king of Israel built. It will be a burden on your shoulders no longer. Now worship Yahweh your God, and serve his people Israel.⁴Organize yourselves by your clans and your divisions, following the written instructions of David, king of Israel, and those of Solomon, his son.

⁵Stand in the holy place, taking your position with your divisions within the clans of your brothers, the descendants of the people, and taking your places with your divisions within the clans of the Levites.⁶Kill the Passover lambs, consecrate

yourselves, prepare the lambs for your brothers, to do according to the word of Yahweh that was given by the hand of Moses."

⁷Josiah gave thirty thousand lambs and kids from flocks for the Passover offerings to all the people who were present, and he also gave three thousand head of cattle—all of these were from the king's own possessions.⁸His leaders gave a freewill offering to the people, priests, and Levites. Hilkiah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, the officials in charge of the house of God, gave to the priests 2,600 Passover offerings and three hundred head of cattle.⁹Also Konaniah, and Shemaiah and Nethanel, his brothers, and Hashabiah, Jeiel, and Jozabad, the chiefs of the Levites, gave five thousand Passover offerings to the Levites and five hundred head of cattle.

¹⁰So the service was prepared, and the priests stood in their places, with the Levites by their divisions, in response to the king's command.¹¹They killed the Passover lambs, and the priests sprinkled the blood that they received from the Levites' hand, and the Levites skinned the lambs.¹²They removed the burnt offerings, in order to distribute them to the divisions of the clans of the people, to offer them to Yahweh, as it is written in the Book of Moses. They did the same with the cattle.¹³They roasted the Passover lambs with fire following the instructions. As for the consecrated offerings, they boiled them in pots, cauldrons, and pans, and they quickly carried them to all the people.¹⁴They later prepared offerings for themselves and for the priests, because the priests, the descendants of Aaron, were occupied in offering the burnt offerings and the fat until nightfall, so the Levites prepared the offerings for themselves and for the priests, the descendants of Aaron.

¹⁵The singers, the descendants of Asaph, were in their place, according to the command of David, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun the king's seer, and the guards were at every gate. They did not have to leave their labors because their brothers the Levites made preparations for them.

¹⁶So, at that time the entire service of Yahweh was carried out for the celebration of the Passover and to offer burnt offerings on the altar of Yahweh, as King Josiah commanded.¹⁷The people of Israel who were present kept the Passover at that time, and then the Festival of Unleavened Bread for seven days.

¹⁸Such a Passover celebration had never been held in Israel from the days of the prophet Samuel, nor had any of the other kings of Israel ever celebrated such a Passover as Josiah did, along with the priests, Levites, and all the people of Judah and Israel who were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.¹⁹This Passover was kept in the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah.

²⁰After all this, after Josiah had set the temple in order, Necho, king of Egypt, went up to fight against Carchemish at the Euphrates River, and Josiah went to fight against him.²¹But Necho sent ambassadors to him, saying, "What have I to do with you, king of Judah? I am not coming against you today, but against the house with which I am making war. God has commanded me to hurry, so refrain from interfering with God, who is with me, or he might destroy you."

²²However, Josiah refused to turn away from him. He disguised himself in order to fight with him. He did not listen to the words of Necho that had come from the mouth of God; so he went to fight in the Valley of Megiddo.

²³Archers shot King Josiah, and the king said to his servants, "Take me away, for I am badly wounded."²⁴So his servants took him out of the chariot, and put him in his extra chariot. They took him to Jerusalem, where he died. He was buried in the tombs of his ancestors. All Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.

²⁵Jeremiah lamented for Josiah; all the male and female singers lament about Josiah to this day. These songs became customary in Israel; behold, they are written in the songs of lament.

²⁶As for the other matters concerning Josiah, and his good deeds done in obedience to what is written in the law of Yahweh—²⁷his deeds, from beginning to end, are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel.

36 ¹Then the people of the land took Jehoahaz son of Josiah, and made him king in his father's place in Jerusalem.

²Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem.

³The king of Egypt removed him at Jerusalem, and forced him to pay a fine on the land of one hundred talents of silver and one talent of gold.⁴The king of Egypt made Eliakim, who was the brother of Jehoahaz, king over Judah and Jerusalem (and changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim). Then Necho took Eliakim's brother Jehoahaz and brought him to Egypt.

⁵Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. He did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh his God.⁶Then Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, attacked him and bound him in chains to lead him away to Babylon.⁷Nebuchadnezzar also carried some of the objects in the house of Yahweh to Babylon, and put them in his palace at Babylon.

⁸As for the other matters concerning Jehoiakim, the disgusting things that he did, and what was found against him, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. Then Jehoiachin, his son, became king in his place.

⁹Jehoiachin was eight years old when he began to reign; he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem. He did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh.¹⁰In the spring of the year, King Nebuchadnezzar sent men and brought him to Babylon, with the valuable things from the house of Yahweh, and made Zedekiah, his relative, king over Judah and Jerusalem.

¹¹Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he began to reign; he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem.¹²He did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh his God. He did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, who spoke from the mouth of Yahweh.

¹³Zedekiah also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear loyalty to him by God. But Zedekiah stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to Yahweh, the God of Israel.¹⁴Moreover, all the leaders of the priests and the people were extremely unfaithful, and they followed the disgusting practices of the nations. They polluted the house of Yahweh which he had consecrated in Jerusalem.

¹⁵Yahweh, the God of their ancestors, sent word to them by his messengers again and again, because he had compassion on his people and on the place where he lives.¹⁶But they mocked God's messengers, despised his words, and scoffed at his prophets, until the wrath of Yahweh arose against his people, until there was no help for it.

¹⁷So God brought on them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with the sword in the sanctuary, and had no compassion on young men or virgins, old men or the gray-haired. God gave them all into his hand.

¹⁸All the furnishings of the house of God, great and small, the treasures of the house of Yahweh, and the treasures of the king and his officials—all these he took to Babylon.¹⁹They burned down the house of God, broke down the wall of Jerusalem, burned all its palaces, and destroyed all the valuable things in it.

²⁰The king carried away to Babylon those who had escaped the sword. They became servants for him and his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia.²¹This happened to fulfill the word of Yahweh by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land should have enjoyed its Sabbath rests. It observed its Sabbath for all the time of its desolation so that it might pass seventy years in this way.

²²Now in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, so that the word of Yahweh by the mouth of Jeremiah might be carried out, Yahweh motivated the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing. He said,

²³"This is what Cyrus, king of Persia, says: Yahweh, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth. He has commanded me to build a house for him in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you from all his people, may Yahweh your God, be with you. Let him go up to the land."

^jJehoahaz is written in Hebrew as Joahaz, but refers to the same person.