

those who hate and persecute you. ⁸Then you will again obey the LORD and keep all his commands that I am giving you today.

⁹The LORD your God will then make you successful in everything you do. He will give you many children and numerous livestock, and he will cause your fields to produce abundant harvests, for the LORD will again delight in being good to you as he was to your ancestors. ¹⁰The LORD your God will delight in you if you obey his voice and keep the commands and decrees written in this Book of Instruction, and if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and soul.

The Choice of Life or Death

¹¹"This command I am giving you today is not too difficult for you to understand, and it is not beyond your reach. ¹²It is not kept in heaven, so distant that you must ask, 'Who will go up to heaven and bring it down so we can hear it and obey?' ¹³It is not kept beyond the sea, so far away that you must ask, 'Who will cross the sea to bring it to us so we can hear it and obey?' ¹⁴No, the message is very close at hand; it is on your lips and in your heart so that you can obey it.

¹⁵"Now listen! Today I am giving you a choice between life and death, between prosperity and disaster. ¹⁶For I command you this day to love the LORD your God and to keep his commands, decrees, and regulations by walking in his ways. If you do this, you will live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you and the land you are about to enter and occupy.

¹⁷"But if your heart turns away and you refuse to listen, and if you are drawn away to serve and worship other gods, ¹⁸then I warn you now that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live a long, good life in the land you are crossing the Jordan to occupy.

¹⁹"Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your descendants might live! ²⁰You can make this choice by loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and committing yourself firmly to him. This* is the key to your life. And if you love and obey the LORD, you will live long in the land the LORD swore to give your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

Joshua Becomes Israel's Leader

31 When Moses had finished giving these instructions* to all the people of Israel, ²he said, "I am now 120 years old, and I am no longer able to lead you. The LORD has told me, 'You will not cross the Jordan River.' ³But the LORD your God himself will cross over ahead of you. He will destroy the nations living there, and you will take possession of their land. Joshua will lead you across the river, just as the LORD promised.

⁴"The LORD will destroy the nations living in the land, just as he destroyed Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites. ⁵The LORD will hand over to you the people who live there, and you must deal with them as I have commanded you. ⁶So be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid and do not panic before them. For the LORD your God will personally go ahead of you. He will neither fail you nor abandon you."

⁷Then Moses called for Joshua, and as all Israel watched, he said to him, "Be strong and courageous! For you will lead these people into the land that the LORD swore to their ancestors he would give them. You are the one who will divide it among them as their grants of land. ⁸Do not be afraid or

discouraged, for the LORD will personally go ahead of you. He will be with you; he will neither fail you nor abandon you."

Public Reading of the Book of Instruction

⁹So Moses wrote this entire body of instruction in a book and gave it to the priests, who carried the Ark of the LORD's Covenant, and to the elders of Israel. ¹⁰Then Moses gave them this command: "At the end of every seventh year, the Year of Release, during the Festival of Shelters, ¹¹you must read this Book of Instruction to all the people of Israel when they assemble before the LORD your God at the place he chooses. ¹²Call them all together—men, women, children and the foreigners living in your towns—so they may hear this Book of Instruction and learn to fear the LORD your God and carefully obey all the terms of these instructions. ¹³Do this so that your children who have not known these instructions will hear them and will learn to fear the LORD your God. Do this as long as you live in the land you are crossing the Jordan to occupy."

Israel's Disobedience Predicted

¹⁴Then the LORD said to Moses, "The time has come for you to die. Call Joshua and present yourselves at the Tabernacle,* so that I may commission him there." So Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves at the Tabernacle. ¹⁵And the LORD appeared to them in a pillar of cloud that stood at the entrance to the sacred tent.

¹⁶The LORD said to Moses, "You are about to die and join your ancestors. After you are gone, these people will begin to worship foreign gods, the gods of the land where they are going. They will abandon me and break my covenant that I have made with them. ¹⁷Then my anger will blaze forth against them. I will abandon them, hiding my face from them, and they will be devoured. Terrible trouble will come down on them, and on that day they will say, 'These disasters have come down on us because God is no longer among us.' ¹⁸At that time I will hide my face from them on account of all the evil they commit by worshiping other gods."

¹⁹So write down the words of this song, and teach it to the people of Israel. Help them learn it, so it may serve as a witness for me against them. ²⁰For I will bring them into the land I swore to give their ancestors—a land flowing with milk and honey. There they will become prosperous, eat all the food they want, and become fat. But they will begin to worship other gods; they will despise me and break my covenant. ²¹And when great disasters come down on them, this song will stand as evidence against them, for it will never be forgotten by their descendants. I know the intentions of these people, even now before they have entered the land I swore to give them."

²²So that very day Moses wrote down the words of this song and taught it to the Israelites.

²³Then the LORD commissioned Joshua son of Nun with these words: "Be strong and courageous, for you must bring the people of Israel into the land I swore to give them. I will be with you."

²⁴When Moses had finished writing this entire body of instruction in a book, ²⁵he gave this command to the Levites who carried the Ark of the LORD's Covenant: ²⁶"Take this Book of Instruction and place it beside the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD your God, so it may remain there as a witness against the people of Israel. ²⁷For I know how rebellious and stubborn you are. Even now, while I am still alive and am here with you, you have rebelled against the LORD. How much more rebellious will you be after my death!

^{30:20} Or *He*. ^{31:1} As in Dead Sea Scrolls and Greek version; Masoretic Text reads *Moses went and spoke*. ^{31:14} Hebrew *Tent of Meeting*; also in 31:14. ^{32:8} The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. ^{32:8} As in Dead Sea Scrolls; Hebrew reads *the number of the angels of God*; Masoretic Text reads *the number of the shepherds*. ^{32:22} Hebrew *of Sheol*. ^{32:31} The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

²⁸Now summon all the elders and officials of your tribes that I can speak to them directly and call heaven and earth to witness against them. ²⁹I know that after my death you will become utterly corrupt and will turn from the way I commanded you to follow. In the days to come you will come down on you, for you will do what is evil in the LORD's sight, making him very angry with your actions."

The Song of Moses

³⁰Moses recited this entire song publicly to the assembly of Israel:

32 ¹ "Listen, O heavens, and I will speak!

Hear, O earth, the words that I say!
 Let my teaching fall on you like rain;
 Let my speech settle like dew.
 Let my words fall like rain on tender grass,
 like gentle showers on young plants.
 I will proclaim the name of the LORD;
 how glorious is our God!
 He is the Rock; his deeds are perfect.
 Everything he does is just and fair.
 He is a faithful God who does no wrong;
 how just and upright he is!
 But they have acted corruptly toward him;
 when they act so perversely,
 are they really his children?
 They are a deceitful and twisted generation.
 Is this the way you repay the LORD,
 you foolish and senseless people?
 Isn't he your Father who created you?
 Has he not made you and established you?
 Remember the days of long ago;
 think about the generations past.
 Ask your father, and he will inform you.
 Inquire of your elders, and they will tell you.
 When the Most High assigned lands to the nations,
 when he divided up the human race,
 he established the boundaries of the peoples
 according to the number in his heavenly court.*
 For the people of Israel belong to the LORD;
 Jacob is his special possession.
 He found them in a desert land,
 in an empty, howling wasteland.
 He surrounded them and watched over them;
 he guarded them as he would guard his own eyes.*
 Like an eagle that rouses her chicks
 and hovers over her young,
 so he spread his wings to take them up
 and carried them safely on his pinions.
 The Lord alone guided them;
 they followed no foreign gods.
 He let them ride over the highlands
 and feast on the crops of the fields.
 He nourished them with honey from the rock
 and olive oil from the stony ground.
 He fed them yogurt from the herd
 and milk from the flock,
 together with the fat of lambs.
 He gave them choice rams from Bashan, and goats,
 together with the choicest wheat.
 You drank the finest wine,
 made from the juice of grapes.
 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. ^{32:8} As in Dead Sea Scrolls; Hebrew reads *the number of the angels of God*; Masoretic Text reads *the number of the shepherds*. ^{32:22} Hebrew *of Sheol*. ^{32:31} The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.



the LORD will personally go ahead of you. He will neither fail you nor abandon you.

g of the Book of Instruction

the entire body of instruction in a book of priests, who carried the Ark of the LORD to the elders of Israel. ¹⁰Then Moses said: "At the end of every seventh year, during the Festival of Shelters, ¹¹you must instruct to all the people of Israel what the LORD your God at the place has all together—men, women, children living in your towns—so they may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, all the terms of these instructions. ¹²For children who have not known these will hear them and will learn to fear the LORD as long as you live in the land you have to occupy."

edience Predicted

said to Moses, "The time has come for you and present yourselves at the Tabernacle to commission him there." So Moses and presented themselves at the Tabernacle, appeared to them in a pillar of cloud that came to the sacred tent.

aid to Moses, "You are about to die and after you are gone, these people will begin to worship other gods, the gods of the land where they abandon me and break my covenant with them. ¹⁷Then my anger will blaze and I will abandon them, hiding my face from them. They will be devoured. Terrible trouble will come on that day they will say, 'These disasters are on us because God is no longer among us.' I will hide my face from them on account of their sins, for they have committed by worshiping other gods.

own the words of this song, and teach Israel. Help them learn it, so it may serve as a warning against them. ²⁰For I will bring them into their ancestors—a land flowing with milk and honey. There they will become prosperous, abundant, and become fat. But they will begin to worship other gods; they will despise me and break my covenant. When great disasters come down on them, it is evidence against them, for it will never be forgotten. I know the intentions of men now before they have entered the land."

day Moses wrote down the words of this song to the Israelites.

Commissioned Joshua son of Nun, strong and courageous, for you must lead into the land I swore to give them.

had finished writing this entire book, ²⁵he gave this command to the Ark of the Lord's Covenant to instruct and place it beside the Ark. ²⁶Command the people of Israel, "For I know that you are stubborn. Even now, while I am with you, you have rebelled against me. More rebellious will you be when

²⁶Now summon all the elders and officials of your tribes, that I can speak to them directly and call heaven and earth to witness against them. ²⁷I know that after my death you will become utterly corrupt and will turn from the way I have commanded you to follow. In the days to come, disaster will come down on you, for you will do what is evil in the LORD's sight, making him very angry with your actions."

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Moses recited this entire song publicly to the assembly of Israel:

32 ¹ "Listen, O heavens, and I will speak! Hear, O earth, the words that I say! Let my teaching fall on you like rain; let my speech settle like dew. Let my words fall like rain on tender grass, like gentle showers on young plants. I will proclaim the name of the LORD; how glorious is our God! He is the Rock; his deeds are perfect. Everything he does is just and fair. He is a faithful God who does no wrong; how just and upright he is!

But they have acted corruptly toward him; when they act so perversely, are they really his children?* They are a deceitful and twisted generation. Is this the way you repay the LORD, you foolish and senseless people? Is this the way your Father who created you? Has he not made you and established you? Remember the days of long ago; think about the generations past. Ask your father, and he will inform you. Inquire of your elders, and they will tell you. When the Most High assigned lands to the nations, when he divided up the human race, he established the boundaries of the peoples according to the number in his heavenly court.*

The people of Israel belong to the LORD; Jacob is his special possession. He found them in a desert land, in an empty, howling wasteland. He surrounded them and watched over them; he guarded them as he would guard his own eyes.*

Like an eagle that rouses her chicks and hovers over her young, he spread his wings to take them up and carried them safely on his pinions. The LORD alone guided them; they followed no foreign gods. He let them ride over the highlands and feast on the crops of the fields. He nourished them with honey from the rock and olive oil from the stony ground. He fed them yogurt from the herd and milk from the flock, together with the fat of lambs. He gave them choice rams from Bashan, and goats, together with the choicest wheat. He drank the finest wine, made from the juice of grapes.

*The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. 32:8 As in Dead Sea Scrolls, which read the number of the sons of God, and Greek version, which reads the angels of God; Masoretic Text reads the number of the sons of Israel. 32:10 Hebrew as the pupil of his eye. 32:15 Hebrew Jeshurun, a term for Israel. 32:22 Hebrew of Sheol. 32:31 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. Greek version reads our enemies are fools.

¹⁵ "But Israel* soon became fat and unruly; the people grew heavy, plump, and stuffed! Then they abandoned the God who had made them; they made light of the Rock of their salvation.

¹⁶ They stirred up his jealousy by worshiping foreign gods; they provoked his fury with detestable deeds.

¹⁷ They offered sacrifices to demons, which are not God, to gods they had not known before, to gods only recently arrived, to gods their ancestors had never feared.

¹⁸ You neglected the Rock who had fathered you; you forgot the God who had given you birth.

¹⁹ "The LORD saw this and drew back, provoked to anger by his own sons and daughters.

²⁰ He said, 'I will abandon them; then see what becomes of them. For they are a twisted generation, children without integrity.'

²¹ They have roused my jealousy by worshiping things that are not God; they have provoked my anger with their useless idols.

Now I will rouse their jealousy through people who are not even a people;

I will provoke their anger through the foolish Gentiles.

²² For my anger blazes forth like fire and burns to the depths of the grave.*

It devours the earth and all its crops and ignites the foundations of the mountains.

²³ I will heap disasters upon them and shoot them down with my arrows.

²⁴ I will weaken them with famine, burning fever, and deadly disease.

I will send the fangs of wild beasts and poisonous snakes that glide in the dust.

²⁵ Outside, the sword will bring death, and inside, terror will strike both young men and young women, both infants and the aged.

²⁶ I would have annihilated them, wiping out even the memory of them.

²⁷ But I feared the taunt of Israel's enemy, who might misunderstand and say, "Our own power has triumphed! The LORD had nothing to do with this!"

²⁸ "But Israel is a senseless nation; the people are foolish, without understanding.

²⁹ Oh, that they were wise and could understand this! Oh, that they might know their fate!

³⁰ How could one person chase a thousand of them, and two people put ten thousand to flight, unless their Rock had sold them, unless the LORD had given them up?

³¹ But the rock of our enemies is not like our Rock, as even they recognize.*

³² Their vine grows from the vine of Sodom, from the vineyards of Gomorrah.

Their grapes are poison, and their clusters are bitter.

³³ Their wine is the venom of serpents, the deadly poison of cobras.

³⁴ "The LORD says, 'Am I not storing up these things, sealing them away in my treasury?
³⁵ I will take revenge; I will pay them back. In due time their feet will slip. Their day of disaster will arrive, and their destiny will overtake them.'

³⁶ "Indeed, the LORD will give justice to his people, and he will change his mind about* his servants, when he sees their strength is gone and no one is left, slave or free.
³⁷ Then he will ask, 'Where are their gods, the rocks they fled to for refuge?' Where now are those gods, who ate the fat of their sacrifices and drank the wine of their offerings? Let those gods arise and help you! Let them provide you with shelter!
³⁸ Look now; I myself am here! There is no other god but me! I am the one who kills and gives life; I am the one who wounds and heals; no one can be rescued from my powerful hand!
⁴⁰ Now I raise my hand to heaven and declare, 'As surely as I live, when I sharpen my flashing sword and begin to carry out justice, I will take revenge on my enemies and repay those who reject me.
⁴¹ I will make my arrows drunk with blood, and my sword will devour flesh—the blood of the slaughtered and the captives, and the heads of the enemy leaders.'

⁴³ "Rejoice with him, you heavens, and let all of God's angels worship him.* Rejoice with his people, you nations, and let all the angels be strengthened in him.* For he will avenge the blood of his servants; he will take revenge against his enemies. He will repay those who hate him* and cleanse the land for his people."

⁴⁴ So Moses came with Joshua* son of Nun and recited all the words of this song to the people.

⁴⁵ When Moses had finished reciting all these words to the people of Israel, ⁴⁶ he added: "Take to heart all the words of warning I have given you today. Pass them on as a command to your children so they will obey every word of these instructions. ⁴⁷ These instructions are not empty words—they are your life! By obeying them you will enjoy a long life in the land you will occupy when you cross the Jordan River."

Moses' Death Foretold

⁴⁸ That same day the LORD said to Moses, ⁴⁹ "Go to Moab, to the mountains east of the river,* and climb Mount Nebo, which is across from Jericho. Look out across the land of Canaan, the land I am giving to the people of Israel as their own special possession. ⁵⁰ Then you will die there on the mountain. You will join your ancestors, just as Aaron, your brother, died on Mount Hor and joined his ancestors. ⁵¹ For both of

^{32:36} Or will take revenge for. ^{32:43a} As in Dead Sea Scrolls and Greek version; Masoretic Text lacks the first two lines. Compare Heb 1:6. ^{32:43b} As in Greek version; Hebrew text lacks this line. ^{32:43c} As in Dead Sea Scrolls and Greek version; Masoretic Text lacks this line. ^{32:44} Hebrew Hoshea, a variant name for Joshua. ^{32:49} Hebrew the mountains of Abarim. ^{32:51} Hebrew waters of Meribah-kadesh. ^{33:2a} As in Greek and Syriac versions; Hebrew reads upon them. ^{33:2b} Or came from myriads of holy ones, from the south, from his mountain slopes. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. ^{33:3} As in Greek version; Hebrew reads Indeed, lover of the peoples. ^{33:4} Hebrew of Jacob. The names "Jacob" and "Israel" are often interchanged throughout the Old Testament, referring sometimes to the individual patriarch and sometimes to the nation. ^{33:5} Hebrew in Jeshurun, a term of endearment for Israel. ^{33:6} Hebrew lacks Moses said this about the tribe of Reuben. ^{33:8} As in Greek version; Hebrew lacks the Levites.

you betrayed me with the Israelites at the waters of Meribah at Kadesh* in the wilderness of Zin. You failed to demonstrate my holiness to the people of Israel there. ⁵² So you will see the land from a distance, but you may not enter the land I am giving to the people of Israel."

Moses Blesses the People

33 This is the blessing that Moses, the man of God, gave to the people of Israel before his death:

² "The LORD came from Mount Sinai and dawned upon us* from Mount Seir; he shone forth from Mount Paran and came from Meribah-kadesh with flaming fire at his right hand.*
³ Indeed, he loves his people;* all his holy ones are in his hands. They follow in his steps and accept his teaching.
⁴ Moses gave us the LORD's instruction, the special possession of the people of Israel.*
⁵ The LORD became king in Israel*—when the leaders of the people assembled, when the tribes of Israel gathered as one."

⁶ Moses said this about the tribe of Reuben:
⁷ "Let the tribe of Reuben live and not die out, though they are few in number."

⁷ Moses said this about the tribe of Judah:

"O LORD, hear the cry of Judah and bring them together as a people. Give them strength to defend their cause; help them against their enemies!"

⁸ Moses said this about the tribe of Levi:

"O LORD, you have given your Thummim and Urim—the sacred lots—to your faithful servants the Levites.* You put them to the test at Massah and struggled with them at the waters of Meribah.

⁹ The Levites obeyed your word and guarded your covenant. They were more loyal to you than to their own parents. They ignored their relatives and did not acknowledge their own children.
¹⁰ They teach your regulations to Jacob; they give your instructions to Israel. They present incense before you and offer whole burnt offerings on the altar.
¹¹ Bless the ministry of the Levites, O LORD, and accept all the work of their hands. Hit their enemies where it hurts the most; strike down their foes so they never rise again."

¹² Moses said this about the tribe of Benjamin:

"The people of Benjamin are loved by the LORD and live in safety beside him. He surrounds them continuously and preserves them from every harm."

Moses said this about the tribes of Joseph:

"May their land be blessed by the LORD with the precious gift of dew from the heavens and water from beneath the earth; with the rich fruit that grows in the sun, and the rich harvest produced each month; with the finest crops of the ancient mountains, and the abundance from the everlasting hills; with the best gifts of the earth and its bounty, and the favor of the one who appeared in the burning bush."

May these blessings rest on Joseph's head, crowning the brow of the prince among his brothers. Joseph has the majesty of a young bull; he has the horns of a wild ox. He will gore distant nations, driving them to the ends of the earth. This is my blessing for the multitudes of Ephraim and the thousands of Manasseh."

¹³ Moses said this about the tribes of Zebulun and Issachar*:
¹⁴ "May the people of Zebulun prosper in their travels. May the people of Issachar prosper at home in their tents."

They summon the people to the mountain to offer proper sacrifices there. They benefit from the riches of the sea and the hidden treasures in the sand."

¹⁵ Moses said this about the tribe of Gad:

"Blessed is the one who enlarges Gad's territory! Gad is poised there like a lion to tear off an arm or a head."

The people of Gad took the best land for themselves; a leader's share was assigned to them. When the leaders of the people were assembled, they carried out the LORD's justice and obeyed his regulations for Israel."

¹⁶ Moses said this about the tribe of Dan:

"Dan is a lion's cub, leaping out from Bashan."

¹⁷ Moses said this about the tribe of Naphtali:

"O Naphtali, you are rich in favor and full of the LORD's blessings; may you possess the west and the south."

¹⁸ Moses said this about the tribe of Asher:

"May Asher be blessed above other sons; may he be esteemed by his brothers;

¹⁹ Hebrew lacks and Issachar. ^{33:26} Hebrew of Jeshurun, a term of endearment for Israel. Samaritan Pentateuch and some Greek manuscripts read They buried him.

Israelites at the waters of Meribah of Zin. You failed to demonstrate the people of Israel there. ⁵²So you will not be able to enter the land of Israel."

People
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at his right hand.*

people.*
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ad's instruction,
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ng in Israel*—
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the tribe of Reuben:
en live and not die out,
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o defend their cause;
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the tribe of Levi:
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Moses said this about the tribes of Joseph:

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³with the finest crops of the ancient mountains, and the abundance from the everlasting hills;
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JOSHUA

Author Joshua, according to Jewish tradition (except for the ending, possibly written by Phinehas the high priest)

Date Written 1380 B.C.

Content The book of Joshua is about leadership—more specifically, about Joshua's leadership of the Israelites. At the opening of the book, Moses had already died, and Joshua had been appointed his successor. While the Israelites waited on the plains of Moab, Joshua prepared them for battle. Once they were ready, Joshua led them across the Jordan River to begin their conquest of the land God had promised them. The Israelites then fought three campaigns: (1) one in the central region, (2) one in the south, and (3) one in the north. After the initial victories, Joshua and his people divided the land among the tribes of Israel. As the book comes to an end, Joshua is old and close to death, and he urges the Israelites to follow the LORD their God.

The LORD's Charge to Joshua

1 After the death of Moses the LORD's servant, the LORD spoke to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' assistant. He said, "Moses my servant is dead. Therefore, the time has come for you to lead these people, the Israelites, across the Jordan River into the land I am giving them. **3** I promise you what I promised Moses: 'Wherever you set foot, you will be on land I have given you—**4** from the Negev wilderness in the south to the Lebanon mountains in the north, from the Euphrates River in the east to the Mediterranean Sea* in the west, including all the land of the Hittites.' **5** No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. For I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not fail you or abandon you.

6 Be strong and courageous, for you are the one who will lead these people to possess all the land I swore to their ancestors I would give them. **7** Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the instructions Moses gave you. Do not deviate from them, turning either to the right or to the left. Then you will be successful in everything you do. **8** Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do. **9** This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

Joshua's Charge to the Israelites

10 Joshua then commanded the officers of Israel, **11** "Go through the camp and tell the people to get their provisions ready. In three days you will cross the Jordan River and take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you."

12 Then Joshua called together the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. He told them, **13** "Remember what Moses, the servant of the LORD, commanded you: 'The LORD your God is giving you a place of rest. He has given you this land.' **14** Your wives, children, and livestock may remain here in the land Moses assigned to you on the east side of the Jordan River. But your strong warriors, fully armed, must lead the other tribes across the Jordan to help them conquer their territory. Stay with them **15** until the LORD gives them rest, as he has given you rest, and until they, too, possess the land the LORD your God is giving them. Only then may you return and settle here on the east side of the Jordan River in the land that Moses, the servant of the LORD, assigned to you."

16 They answered Joshua, "We will do whatever you com-

mand us, and we will go wherever you send us. **17** We will obey you just as we obeyed Moses. And may the LORD your God be with you as he was with Moses. **18** Anyone who rebels against your orders and does not obey your words and everything you command will be put to death. So be strong and courageous!"

Rahab Protects the Spies

2 Then Joshua secretly sent out two spies from the Israelite camp at Acacia Grove.* He instructed them, "Scout out the land on the other side of the Jordan River, especially around Jericho." So the two men set out and came to the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there that night.

3 But someone told the king of Jericho, "Some Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land." **4** So the king of Jericho sent orders to Rahab: "Bring out the men who have come into your house, for they have come here to spy out the whole land."

5 Rahab had hidden the two men, but she replied, "Yes, the men were here earlier, but I didn't know where they were from. **6** They left the town at dusk, as the gates were about to close. I don't know where they went. If you hunt for them, you can probably catch up with them." **7** (Actually, she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them beneath bundles of flax she had laid out.) **8** So the king's men went looking for the spies along the road leading to the shallow crossings of the Jordan River. And as soon as the king's men had left, the gate of Jericho was shut.

9 Before the spies went to sleep that night, Rahab went on the roof to talk with them. **10** "I know the LORD has given you this land," she told them. "We are all afraid of you. Everyone in the land is living in terror. **11** For we have heard how the LORD made a dry path for you through the Red Sea when you left Egypt. And we know what you did to Sihon and Og, the two Amorite kings east of the Jordan River, whose people you completely destroyed.* **12** No wonder our hearts have melted in fear! No one has the courage to fight after hearing such things. For the LORD your God is the supreme God of the heavens above and the earth below."

13 "Now swear to me by the LORD that you will be kind to me and my family since I have helped you. Give me some guarantee that **14** when Jericho is conquered, you will let me live, along with my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all their families."

14 "We offer our own lives as a guarantee for your safety."

1:4 Hebrew *the Great Sea*. **2:1** Hebrew *Shittim*. **2:10a** Hebrew *sea of reeds*. **2:10b** The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering.

the men agreed. "If you don't betray us, we will keep our promise and be kind to you when the LORD gives us the land."

15 Then, since Rahab's house was built into the town wall, she let them down by a rope through the window. **16** "Escape to the hill country," she told them. "Hide there for three days from the men searching for you. Then, when they have returned, you can go on your way."

17 Before they left, the men told her, "We will be bound by the oath we have taken only if you follow these instructions. **18** When we come into the land, you must leave this scarlet rope hanging from the window through which you let us down. And all your family members—your father, mother, brothers, and all your relatives—must be here inside the house. **19** If they go out into the street and are killed, it will not be our fault. But if anyone lays a hand on people inside this house, we will accept the responsibility for their death. **20** If you betray us, however, we are not bound by this oath in any way."

21 "I accept your terms," she replied. And she sent them on their way, leaving the scarlet rope hanging from the window.

22 The spies went up into the hill country and stayed there three days. The men who were chasing them searched everywhere along the road, but they finally returned without success.

23 Then the two spies came down from the hill country, crossed the Jordan River, and reported to Joshua all that had happened to them. **24** "The LORD has given us the whole land," they said, "for all the people in the land are terrified of us."

The Israelites Cross the Jordan

3 Early the next morning Joshua and all the Israelites left Acacia Grove* and arrived at the banks of the Jordan River, where they camped before crossing. **4** Three days later Israelite officers went through the camp, giving these instructions to the people: "When you see the Levitical priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD your God, move from your positions and follow them. **5** Since you have traveled this way before, they will guide you. Stay about half a mile* behind them, keeping a clear distance between you and the Ark. Make sure you don't come any closer."

6 Then Joshua told the people, "Purify yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do great wonders among you."

7 In the morning Joshua said to the priests, "Lift up the Ark of the Covenant and lead the people across the river." **8** So they started out and went ahead of the people.

The LORD told Joshua, "Today I will begin to make you a great leader in the eyes of all the Israelites. They will know I am with you, just as I was with Moses. **9** Give this command to the priests who carry the Ark of the Covenant: When you reach the banks of the Jordan River, take a few steps into the river and stop there."

10 So Joshua told the Israelites, "Come and listen to what the LORD your God says. **11** Today you will know that the living God is among you. He will surely drive out the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Gergashites, Amorites, and Jebusites ahead of you. **12** Look, the Ark of the Covenant, which belongs to the Lord of the whole earth, will lead you across the Jordan River! **13** Now choose twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one from each tribe. **14** The priests will carry the Ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth. As soon as their feet touch the water, the flow of water will be cut off upstream, and the river will stand up like a wall."

15 So the people left their camp to cross the Jordan, and the priests who were carrying the Ark of the Covenant went ahead of them. **16** It was the harvest season, and the Jordan

1:4 Hebrew *Shittim*. **3:4** Hebrew *about 2,000 cubits* (920 meters). **3:16** Hebrew

3:16 This day in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in late March, April, or

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Rahab had hidden the two men, but she replied, "I was here earlier, but I didn't know where they were. They left the town at dusk, as the gates were closed. I don't know where they went. If you hurry, you'll probably catch up with them." ⁶(Actually, she ran up to the roof and hidden them beneath the floorboards, where she had laid out.) So the king's men went after the spies along the road leading to the small town of the Jordan River. And as soon as the king's men reached the gate of Jericho was shut.

When the spies went to sleep that night, Rahab went to talk with them. ⁹"I know the LORD has given the land," she told them. "We are all afraid that the land is living in terror. ¹⁰For we have heard that the LORD made a dry path for you through the Red Sea when you left Egypt. And we know what you did to the two Amorite kings east of the Jordan. You completely destroyed them. ¹¹No woman we melted in fear! No one has the courage to bring such things. For the LORD your God is the God of the heavens above and the earth below. I swear to me by the LORD that you will be my family since I have helped you. Give me a promise that ¹³when Jericho is conquered, you will share with my father and mother, my brothers, and all their families."

offer our own lives as a guarantee for you."

Hebrew term used here refers to the complete destruction of a city.

The men agreed. "If you don't betray us, we will keep our promise and be kind to you when the LORD gives us the land."

¹²Then, since Rahab's house was built into the town wall, she let them down by a rope through the window. ¹³"Escape the hill country," she told them. "Hide there for three days from the men searching for you. Then, when they have returned, you can go on your way."

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So the people left their camp to cross the Jordan, and the priests who were carrying the Ark of the Covenant went with them. ¹⁵It was the harvest season, and the Jordan

was overflowing its banks. But as soon as the feet of the priests who were carrying the Ark touched the water at the river's edge, ¹⁶the water above that point began backing up a great distance away at a town called Adam, which is near Zarethan. And the water below that point flowed on to the Dead Sea* until the riverbed was dry. Then all the people crossed over near the town of Jericho.

¹⁷Meanwhile, the priests who were carrying the Ark of the LORD's Covenant stood on dry ground in the middle of the riverbed as the people passed by. They waited there until the whole nation of Israel had crossed the Jordan on dry ground.

Memorials to the Jordan Crossing

⁴When all the people had crossed the Jordan, the LORD said to Joshua, ²"Now choose twelve men, one from each tribe. ³Tell them, 'Take twelve stones from the very place where the priests are standing in the middle of the Jordan. Carry them out and pile them up at the place where you will camp tonight.'

⁴So Joshua called together the twelve men he had chosen—one from each of the tribes of Israel. ⁵He told them, "Go into the middle of the Jordan, in front of the Ark of the LORD your God. Each of you must pick up one stone and carry it out on your shoulder—twelve stones in all, one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel. ⁶We will use these stones to build a memorial. In the future your children will ask you, 'What do these stones mean?' ⁷Then you can tell them, 'They remind us that the Jordan River stopped flowing when the Ark of the LORD's Covenant went across.' These stones will stand as a memorial among the people of Israel forever."

⁸So the men did as Joshua had commanded them. They took twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan River, one for each tribe, just as the LORD had told Joshua. They carried them to the place where they camped for the night and constructed the memorial there.

⁹Joshua also set up another pile of twelve stones in the middle of the Jordan, at the place where the priests who carried the Ark of the Covenant were standing. And they are there to this day.

¹⁰The priests who were carrying the Ark stood in the middle of the river until all of the LORD's commands that Moses had given to Joshua were carried out. Meanwhile, the people hurried across the riverbed. ¹¹And when everyone was safely on the other side, the priests crossed over with the Ark of the LORD as the people watched.

¹²The armed warriors from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh led the Israelites across the Jordan, just as Moses had directed. ¹³These armed men—about 40,000 strong—were ready for battle, and the LORD was with them as they crossed over to the plains of Jericho.

¹⁴That day the LORD made Joshua a great leader in the eyes of all the Israelites, and for the rest of his life they revered him as much as they had revered Moses.

¹⁵The LORD had said to Joshua, ¹⁶"Command the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant* to come up out of the riverbed." ¹⁷So Joshua gave the command. ¹⁸As soon as the priests carrying the Ark of the LORD's Covenant came up out of the riverbed and their feet were on high ground, the water of the Jordan returned and overflowed its banks as before.

¹⁹The people crossed the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month.* Then they camped at Gilgal, just east of Jericho. ²⁰It was there at Gilgal that Joshua piled up the twelve stones taken from the Jordan River.

²¹Then Joshua said to the Israelites, "In the future your

3:4 Hebrew about 2,000 cubits (920 meters). 3:16 Hebrew the sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea. 4:16 Hebrew Ark of the Testimony.

3:1 Hebrew in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in late March, April, or early May.

children will ask, 'What do these stones mean?' ²²Then you can tell them, 'This is where the Israelites crossed the Jordan on dry ground.' ²³For the Lord your God dried up the river right before your eyes, and he kept it dry until you were all across, just as he did at the Red Sea* when he dried it up until we had all crossed over. ²⁴He did this so all the nations of the earth might know that the Lord's hand is powerful, and so you might fear the Lord your God forever."

5 When all the Amorite kings west of the Jordan and all the Canaanite kings who lived along the Mediterranean coast* heard how the Lord had dried up the Jordan River so the people of Israel could cross, they lost heart and were paralyzed with fear because of them.

Israel Reestablishes Covenant Ceremonies

²At that time the Lord told Joshua, "Make flint knives and circumcise this second generation of Israelites.*" ³So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the entire male population of Israel at Gibeath-ha-aráloth.*

⁴Joshua had to circumcise them because all the men who were old enough to fight in battle when they left Egypt had died in the wilderness. ⁵Those who left Egypt had all been circumcised, but none of those born after the Exodus, during the years in the wilderness, had been circumcised. ⁶The Israelites had traveled in the wilderness for forty years until all the men who were old enough to fight in battle when they left Egypt had died. For they had disobeyed the Lord, and the Lord vowed he would not let them enter the land he had sworn to give us—a land flowing with milk and honey. ⁷So Joshua circumcised their sons—those who had grown up to take their fathers' places—for they had not been circumcised on the way to the Promised Land. ⁸After all the males had been circumcised, they rested in the camp until they were healed.

⁹Then the Lord said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the shame of your slavery in Egypt." So that place has been called Gilgal* to this day.

¹⁰While the Israelites were camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, they celebrated Passover on the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month.* ¹¹The very next day they began to eat unleavened bread and roasted grain harvested from the land. ¹²No manna appeared on the day they first ate from the crops of the land, and it was never seen again. So from that time on the Israelites ate from the crops of Canaan.

The Lord's Commander Confronts Joshua

¹³When Joshua was near the town of Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with sword in hand. Joshua went up to him and demanded, "Are you friend or foe?"

¹⁴"Neither one," he replied. "I am the commander of the Lord's army."

At this, Joshua fell with his face to the ground in reverence. "I am at your command," Joshua said. "What do you want your servant to do?"

¹⁵The commander of the Lord's army replied, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did as he was told.

The Fall of Jericho

6 Now the gates of Jericho were tightly shut because the people were afraid of the Israelites. No one was allowed to go out or in. ²But the Lord said to Joshua, "I have given you

^{4:23} Hebrew sea of reeds. ^{5:1} Hebrew along the sea. ^{5:2} Or circumcise the Israelites a second time. ^{5:3} Gibeath-ha-aráloth means "hill of foreskins." ^{5:9} Gilgal sounds like the Hebrew word galal, meaning "to roll." ^{5:10} This day in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in late March, April, or early May. ^{6:17} The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the Lord, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering; similarly in 6:18, 21.

Jericho, its king, and all its strong warriors. ³You and your fighting men should march around the town once a day for six days. ⁴Seven priests will walk ahead of the Ark, each carrying a ram's horn. On the seventh day you are to march around the town seven times, with the priests blowing the horns. ⁵When you hear the priests give one long blast on the rams' horns, have all the people shout as loud as they can. Then the walls of the town will collapse, and the people can charge straight into the town."

⁶So Joshua called together the priests and said, "Take up the Ark of the Lord's Covenant, and assign seven priests to walk in front of it, each carrying a ram's horn." ⁷Then he gave orders to the people: "March around the town, and the armed men will lead the way in front of the Ark of the Lord."

⁸After Joshua spoke to the people, the seven priests with the rams' horns started marching in the presence of the Lord, blowing the horns as they marched. And the Ark of the Lord's Covenant followed behind them. ⁹Some of the armed men marched in front of the priests with the horns and some behind the Ark, with the priests continually blowing the horns. ¹⁰"Do not shout; do not even talk," Joshua commanded. "Not a single word from any of you until I tell you to shout. Then shout!" ¹¹So the Ark of the Lord was carried around the town once that day, and then everyone returned to spend the night in the camp.

¹²Joshua got up early the next morning, and the priests again carried the Ark of the Lord. ¹³The seven priests with the rams' horns marched in front of the Ark of the Lord, blowing their horns. Again the armed men marched both in front of the priests with the horns and behind the Ark of the Lord. All this time the priests were blowing their horns. ¹⁴On the second day they again marched around the town once and returned to the camp. They followed this pattern for six days.

¹⁵On the seventh day the Israelites got up at dawn and marched around the town as they had done before. But this time they went around the town seven times. ¹⁶The seventh time around, as the priests sounded the long blast on the horns, Joshua commanded the people, "Shout! For the Lord has given you the town!" ¹⁷Jericho and everything in it must be completely destroyed* as an offering to the Lord. Only Rahab the prostitute and the others in her house will be spared, for she protected our spies.

¹⁸"Do not take any of the things set apart for destruction or you yourselves will be completely destroyed, and you will bring trouble on the camp of Israel. ¹⁹Everything made from silver, gold, bronze, or iron is sacred to the Lord and must be brought into his treasury."

²⁰When the people heard the sound of the rams' horns, they shouted as loud as they could. Suddenly, the walls of Jericho collapsed, and the Israelites charged straight into the town and captured it. ²¹They completely destroyed everything in it with their swords—men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep, goats, and donkeys.

²²Meanwhile, Joshua said to the two spies, "Keep your promise. Go to the prostitute's house and bring her and all her family along with all her family."

²³The men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, mother, brothers, and all the other relatives who were with her. They moved her whole family to a safe place near the camp of Israel.

²⁴Then the Israelites burned the town and everything in it.

Only the things made from silver, gold, bronze, or iron were

kept for the treasury of the Lord's house. ²⁵So Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute and her relatives who were with her in the house, because she had hidden the spies Joshua sent to Jericho. And she lives among the Israelites to this day.

²⁶At that time Joshua invoked this curse:

"May the curse of the Lord fall on anyone who tries to rebuild the town of Jericho.

At the cost of his firstborn son, he will lay its foundation.

At the cost of his youngest son, he will set up its gates."

²⁷So the Lord was with Joshua, and his reputation spread throughout the land.

Defeats the Israelites

7 But Israel violated the instructions about the things set apart for the Lord.* A man named Achan had stolen some of these dedicated things, so the Lord was very angry with the Israelites. Achan was the son of Carmi, a descendant of Zimri* son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah.

⁸Joshua sent some of his men from Jericho to spy out the town of Ai, east of Bethel, near Beth-aven. ⁹When they returned, they told Joshua, "There's no need for all of us to go there; it won't take more than two or three thousand men to attack Ai. Since there are so few of them, don't make all people struggle to go up there."

¹⁰So approximately 3,000 warriors were sent, but they were soundly defeated. The men of Ai chased the Israelites to the town gate as far as the quarries,* and they killed about thirty-six who were retreating down the slope. The Israelites were paralyzed with fear at this turn of events, and their courage melted away.

¹¹Joshua and the elders of Israel tore their clothing in distress; they threw dust on their heads, and bowed face down to the ground before the Ark of the Lord until evening. ¹²Then Joshua cried out, "Oh, Sovereign Lord, why did you bring us across the Jordan River if you are going to let the Amorites defeat us? If only we had been content to stay on the other side! ¹³Lord, what can I say now that Israel has fled from its enemies? ¹⁴For when the Canaanites and all the other people living in the land hear about it, they will surround us and wipe us off the face of the earth. And then what will happen to the honor of your great name?"

¹⁵But the Lord said to Joshua, "Get up! Why are you lying on your face like this? ¹⁶Israel has sinned and broken my covenant! They have stolen some of the things that I commanded must be set apart for me. And they have not only lied about it and hidden the things I commanded them but have lied about it and hidden the things of their own belongings. ¹⁷That is why the Israelites are being destroyed. For now Israel itself has been set apart for destruction. I will not remain with you longer unless you destroy the things among you that were set apart for destruction."

¹⁸Get up! Command the people to purify themselves in preparation for tomorrow. For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: Hidden among you, O Israel, are things set apart for the Lord. You will never defeat your enemies unless you remove these things from among you.

¹⁹In the morning you must present yourselves by tribes, and the Lord will point out the tribe to which the guilty man belongs. That tribe must come forward with its clans, and the Lord will point out the guilty clan. That clan will then

²⁰The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the Lord, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering; similarly in 7:11, 12, 13, 15. ^{7:1b} As in parallel text at 1 Chr 2:6; Hebrew reads ^{7:1b} Hebrew Shinar. ^{7:21b} Hebrew 200 shekels of silver, about 5 pounds or 2.3 kilograms in weight. ^{7:26} Hebrew valley of Achor.

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⁴⁷In the morning you must present yourselves by tribes, and the Lord will point out the tribe to which the guilty man belongs. That tribe must come forward with its clans, and the Lord will point out the guilty clan. That clan will then

come forward, and the Lord will point out the guilty family. Finally, each member of the guilty family must come forward one by one. ⁴⁸The one who has stolen what was set apart for destruction will himself be burned with fire, along with everything he has, for he has broken the covenant of the Lord and has done a horrible thing in Israel."

Achan's Sin

⁴⁹Early the next morning Joshua brought the tribes of Israel before the Lord, and the tribe of Judah was singled out.

⁵⁰Then the clans of Judah came forward, and the clan of Zerah was singled out. Then the families of Zerah came forward, and the family of Zimri was singled out. ⁵¹Every member of Zimri's family was brought forward person by person, and Achan was singled out.

⁵²Then Joshua said to Achan, "My son, give glory to the Lord, the God of Israel, by telling the truth. Make your confession and tell me what you have done. Don't hide it from me."

⁵³Achan replied, "It is true! I have sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel. ⁵⁴Among the plunder I saw a beautiful robe from Babylon,* 200 silver coins,* and a bar of gold weighing more than a pound.* I wanted them so much that I took them. They are hidden in the ground beneath my tent, with the silver buried deeper than the rest."

⁵⁵So Joshua sent some men to make a search. They ran to the tent and found the stolen goods hidden there, just as Achan had said, with the silver buried beneath the rest. ⁵⁶They took the things from the tent and brought them to Joshua and all the Israelites. Then they laid them on the ground in the presence of the Lord.

⁵⁷Then Joshua and all the Israelites took Achan, the silver, the robe, the bar of gold, his sons, daughters, cattle, donkeys, sheep, goats, tent, and everything he had, and they brought them to the valley of Achor. ⁵⁸Then Joshua said to Achan, "Why have you brought trouble on us? The Lord will now bring trouble on you." And all the Israelites stoned Achan and his family and burned their bodies. ⁵⁹They piled a great heap of stones over Achan, which remains to this day. That is why the place has been called the Valley of Trouble* ever since. So the Lord was no longer angry.

The Israelites Defeat Ai

8 Then the Lord said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid or discouraged. Take all your fighting men and attack Ai, for I have given you the king of Ai, his people, his town, and his land. ²You will destroy them as you destroyed Jericho and its king. But this time you may keep the plunder and the livestock for yourselves. Set an ambush behind the town."

³So Joshua and all the fighting men set out to attack Ai. Joshua chose 30,000 of his best warriors and sent them out at night ⁴with these orders: "Hide in ambush close behind the town and be ready for action. ⁵When our main army attacks, the men of Ai will come out to fight as they did before, and we will run away from them. ⁶We will let them chase us until we have drawn them away from the town. For they will say, 'The Israelites are running away from us as they did before.' Then, while we are running from them, ⁷you will jump up from your ambush and take possession of the town, for the Lord your God will give it to you. ⁸Set the town on fire, as the Lord has commanded. You have your orders."

⁹So they left and went to the place of ambush between Bethel and the west side of Ai. But Joshua remained among

^aHebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the Lord, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering.

^bThat is, in 7:11, 12, 13, 15. ^{7:1b}As in parallel text at 1 Chr 2:6; Hebrew reads *Zabdi*. Also in 7:17, 18. ^{7:5}Or as far as *Shebarim*.

^{7:21b}Hebrew 200 shekels of silver, about 5 pounds or 2.3 kilograms in weight. ^{7:21c}Hebrew 50 shekels, about 20 ounces in weight. ^{7:26}Hebrew *valley of Achor*.

the people in the camp that night.¹⁰ Early the next morning Joshua roused his men and started toward Ai, accompanied by the elders of Israel.¹¹ All the fighting men who were with Joshua marched in front of the town and camped on the north side of Ai, with a valley between them and the town.¹² That night Joshua sent 5,000 men to lie in ambush between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of the town.¹³ So they stationed the main army north of the town and the ambush west of the town. Joshua himself spent that night in the valley.

¹⁴ When the king of Ai saw the Israelites across the valley, he and all his army hurried out early in the morning and attacked the Israelites at a place overlooking the Jordan Valley.* But he didn't realize there was an ambush behind the town.¹⁵ Joshua and the Israelite army fled toward the wilderness as though they were badly beaten.¹⁶ Then all the men in the town were called out to chase after them. In this way, they were lured away from the town.¹⁷ There was not a man left in Ai or Bethel* who did not chase after the Israelites, and the town was left wide open.

¹⁸ Then the Lord said to Joshua, "Point the spear in your hand toward Ai, for I will hand the town over to you." Joshua did as he was commanded.¹⁹ As soon as Joshua gave this signal, all the men in ambush jumped up from their position and poured into the town. They quickly captured it and set it on fire.

²⁰ When the men of Ai looked behind them, smoke from the town was filling the sky, and they had nowhere to go. For the Israelites who had fled in the direction of the wilderness now turned on their pursuers.²¹ When Joshua and all the other Israelites saw that the ambush had succeeded and that smoke was rising from the town, they turned and attacked the men of Ai.²² Meanwhile, the Israelites who were inside the town came out and attacked the enemy from the rear. So the men of Ai were caught in the middle, with Israelite fighters on both sides. Israel attacked them, and not a single person survived or escaped.²³ Only the king of Ai was taken alive and brought to Joshua.

²⁴ When the Israelite army finished chasing and killing all the men of Ai in the open fields, they went back and finished off everyone inside.²⁵ So the entire population of Ai, including men and women, was wiped out that day—12,000 in all.²⁶ For Joshua kept holding out his spear until everyone who had lived in Ai was completely destroyed.*²⁷ Only the livestock and the treasures of the town were not destroyed, for the Israelites kept these as plunder for themselves, as the Lord had commanded Joshua.²⁸ So Joshua burned the town of Ai,* and it became a permanent mound of ruins, desolate to this very day.

²⁹ Joshua impaled the king of Ai on a sharpened pole and left him there until evening. At sunset the Israelites took down the body, as Joshua commanded, and threw it in front of the town gate. They piled a great heap of stones over him that can still be seen today.

The Lord's Covenant Renewed

³⁰ Then Joshua built an altar to the Lord, the God of Israel, on Mount Ebal.³¹ He followed the commands that Moses the Lord's servant had written in the Book of Instruction: "Make me an altar from stones that are uncut and have not been shaped with iron tools."*³² Then on the altar they presented burnt offerings and peace offerings to the Lord.³³ And as the Israelites watched, Joshua copied onto the stones of the altar* the instructions Moses had given them.

³³ Then all the Israelites—foreigners and native-born

^{8:14} Hebrew *the Arabah*. ^{8:17} Some manuscripts lack *or Bethel*. ^{8:26} The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the Lord, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering. ^{8:28} Ai means "ruin." ^{8:31} Exod 20:25; Deut 27:5-6. ^{8:32} Hebrew *the stones*. ^{9:1a} Hebrew *the Shephelah*. ^{9:1b} Hebrew *the Great Sea*.

alike—along with the elders, officers, and judges, were divided into two groups. One group stood in front of Mount Gerizim, the other in front of Mount Ebal. Each group faced the other, and between them stood the Levitical priests carrying the Ark of the Lord's Covenant. This was all done according to the commands that Moses, the servant of the Lord, had previously given for blessing the people of Israel.

³⁴ Joshua then read to them all the blessings and curses Moses had written in the Book of Instruction.³⁵ Every word of every command that Moses had ever given was read to the entire assembly of Israel, including the women and children and the foreigners who lived among them.

The Gibeonites Deceive Israel

9 Now all the kings west of the Jordan River heard about what had happened. These were the kings of the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites who lived in the hill country, in the western foothills,* and along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea* as far north as the Lebanon mountains.² These kings combined their armies to fight as one against Joshua and the Israelites.

³ But when the people of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai,⁴ they resorted to deception to save themselves. They sent ambassadors to Joshua, loading their donkeys with weathered saddlebags and old, patched wineskins.⁵ They put on worn-out, patched sandals and ragged clothes. And the bread they took with them was dry and moldy.⁶ When they arrived at the camp of Israel at Gilgal, they told Joshua and the men of Israel, "We have come from a distant land to ask you to make a peace treaty with us."

⁷ The Israelites replied to these Hivites, "How do we know you don't live nearby? For if you do, we cannot make a treaty with you."

⁸ They replied, "We are your servants."

⁹ "But who are you?" Joshua demanded. "Where do you come from?"

¹⁰ They answered, "Your servants have come from a very distant country. We have heard of the might of the Lord, your God and of all he did in Egypt.¹¹ We have also heard what he did to the two Amorite kings east of the Jordan River—King Sihon of Heshbon and King Og of Bashan (who lived in Ashtaroth).¹² So our elders and all our people instructed us, 'Take supplies for a long journey. Go meet with the people of Israel and tell them, "We are your servants. Please make a treaty with us."'

¹³ This bread was hot from the ovens when we left our homes. But now, as you can see, it is dry and moldy.¹⁴ These wineskins were new when we filled them, but now they are old and split open. And our clothing and sandals are worn out from our very long journey."

¹⁵ So the Israelites examined their food, but they did not consult the Lord.¹⁶ Then Joshua made a peace treaty with them and guaranteed their safety, and the leaders of the community ratified their agreement with a binding oath.

¹⁷ Three days after making the treaty, they learned that these people actually lived nearby!¹⁸ The Israelites set out once to investigate and reached their towns in three days. The names of these towns were Gibeon, Kephirah, Beeroth, and Kiriath-jearim.¹⁹ But the Israelites did not attack these towns, for the Israelite leaders had made a vow to them in the name of the Lord, the God of Israel.

²⁰ The people of Israel grumbled against their leaders because of the treaty.²¹ But the leaders replied, "Since we have sworn an oath in the presence of the Lord, the God of Israel,"

²² we cannot touch them.²³ This is what we must do. We must let them live, for divine anger would come upon us if we broke our oath.²⁴ Let them live." So they made them woodcutters and water carriers for the entire community, as the Israelite leaders directed.

²⁵ Joshua called together the Gibeonites and said, "Why did you lie to us? Why did you say that you live in a distant land when you live right here among us?²⁶ May you be cursed! From now on you will always be servants who cut wood and carry water for the house of my God."

²⁷ They replied, "We did it because we—your servants—were clearly told that the Lord your God commanded his servant Moses to give you this entire land and to destroy all the people living in it. So we feared greatly for our lives because of you. That is why we have done this.²⁸ Now we are at your mercy—do to us whatever you think is right."

²⁹ So Joshua did not allow the people of Israel to kill them. But that day he made the Gibeonites the woodcutters and water carriers for the community of Israel and for the altar of the Lord—wherever the Lord would choose to build it. And that is what they do to this day.

Israel Defeats the Southern Armies

10 Adoni-zedek, king of Jerusalem, heard that Joshua had captured and completely destroyed* Ai and killed its king, just as he had destroyed the town of Jericho and killed its king. He also learned that the Gibeonites had made peace with Israel and were now their allies.² He and his people became very afraid when they heard all this because Gibeon was a large town—as large as the royal cities of Ai and larger than Ai. And the Gibeonite men were strong warriors.

³ So King Adoni-zedek of Jerusalem sent messengers to other kings: Hoham of Hebron, Piram of Jarmuth, Japhia of Lachish, and Debir of Eglon.⁴ "Come and help me defend Gibeon," he urged them, "for they have made peace with Joshua and the people of Israel."⁵ So these five Amorite kings combined their armies for a united attack. They moved all their troops into place and attacked Gibeon.

⁶ The men of Gibeon quickly sent messengers to Joshua in his camp in Gilgal. "Don't abandon your servants now!" they pleaded. "Come at once! Save us! Help us! For all the Amorite kings who live in the hill country have joined forces to attack us."

⁷ So Joshua and his entire army, including his best warriors, left Gilgal and set out for Gibeon.⁸ "Do not be afraid of them," the Lord said to Joshua, "for I have given you victory over them. Not a single one of them will be able to stand up to you."

⁹ Joshua traveled all night from Gilgal and took the Amorite armies by surprise.¹⁰ The Lord threw them into a panic, and the Israelites slaughtered great numbers of them at Gibeah. Then the Israelites chased the enemy along the road to Beeroth, killing them all along the way to Azekah and Kiriath-jearim.¹¹ As the Amorites retreated down the road from Beeroth, the Lord destroyed them with a terrible hailstorm from heaven that continued until they reached Azekah. The hail killed more of the enemy than the Israelites did with the sword.

¹² On the day the Lord gave the Israelites victory over the Amorites, Joshua prayed to the Lord in front of all the people of Israel. He said,

"Let the sun stand still over Gibeon,
and the moon over the valley of Ajalon."

¹³ The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the Lord, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering. ^{10:13a} Or *The Book of the Upright*. ^{10:13b} Or *the people*

town and killed everyone in it, including its king, leaving no survivors. They did the same thing to all of its surrounding villages. And just as he had done at Eglon, he completely destroyed the entire population.

³⁸Then Joshua and the Israelites turned back and attacked Debir. ³⁹He captured the town, its king, and all of its surrounding villages. He completely destroyed everyone in it, leaving no survivors. He did to Debir and its king just what he had done to Hebron and to Libnah and its king.

⁴⁰So Joshua conquered the whole region—the kings and people of the hill country, the Negev, the western foothills,* and the mountain slopes. He completely destroyed everyone in the land, leaving no survivors, just as the Lord, the God of Israel, had commanded. ⁴¹Joshua slaughtered them from Kadesh-barnea to Gaza and from the region around the town of Goshen up to Gibeon. ⁴²Joshua conquered all these kings and their land in a single campaign, for the Lord, the God of Israel, was fighting for his people.

⁴³Then Joshua and the Israelite army returned to their camp at Gilgal.

Israel Defeats the Northern Armies

11 When King Jabin of Hazor heard what had happened, he sent messages to the following kings: King Jobab of Madon; the king of Shimron; the king of Acshaph; ²all the kings of the northern hill country; the kings in the Jordan Valley south of Galilee*; the kings in the Galilean foothills*, the kings of Naphoth-dor on the west; ³the kings of Canaan, both east and west; the kings of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites in the hill country, and the Hivites in the towns on the slopes of Mount Hermon in the land of Mizpah.

⁴All these kings came out to fight. Their combined armies formed a vast horde. And with all their horses and chariots, they covered the landscape like the sand on the seashore. ⁵The kings joined forces and established their camp around the water near Merom to fight against Israel.

⁶Then the Lord said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid of them. By this time tomorrow I will hand all of them over to Israel as dead men. Then you must cripple their horses and burn their chariots."

⁷So Joshua and all his fighting men traveled to the water near Merom and attacked suddenly. ⁸And the Lord gave them victory over their enemies. The Israelites chased them as far as Greater Sidon and Misrephoth-maim, and eastward into the valley of Mizpah, until not one enemy warrior was left alive. ⁹Then Joshua crippled the horses and burned all the chariots, as the Lord had instructed.

¹⁰Joshua then turned back and captured Hazor and killed its king. (Hazor had at one time been the capital of all these kingdoms.) ¹¹The Israelites completely destroyed* every living thing in the city, leaving no survivors. Not a single person was spared. And then Joshua burned the city.

¹²Joshua slaughtered all the other kings and their people, completely destroying them, just as Moses, the servant of the Lord, had commanded. ¹³But the Israelites did not burn any of the towns built on mounds except Hazor, which Joshua burned. ¹⁴And the Israelites took all the plunder and livestock of the ravaged towns for themselves. But they killed all the people, leaving no survivors. ¹⁵As the Lord had commanded his servant Moses, so Moses commanded Joshua. And Joshua did as he was told, carefully obeying all the commands that the Lord had given to Moses.

^{10:40} Hebrew *the Shephelah*. ^{11:2a} Hebrew *in the Arabah south of Kinnereth*. ^{11:2b} Hebrew *the Shephelah*; also in 11:16. ^{11:11} The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the Lord, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering; also in 11:12, 20. ^{11:16} Hebrew *the Shephelah, the Arabah*. ^{12:1} Hebrew *the Arabah*; also in 12:3, 8. ^{12:3} Hebrew *from the Sea of Kinnereth to the Sea of the Arabah*, which is the Salt Sea. ^{12:8} Hebrew *the Shephelah*.

¹⁶So Joshua conquered the entire region—the hill country, the entire Negev, the whole area around the town of Goshen, the western foothills, the Jordan Valley,* the mountains of Israel, and the Galilean foothills. ¹⁷The Israelite territory now extended all the way from Mount Halak, which leads up to Seir in the south, as far north as Baal-gad at the foot of Mount Hermon in the valley of Lebanon. Joshua killed all the kings of those territories. ¹⁸Waging war for a long time to accomplish this, ¹⁹No one in this region made peace with the Israelites except the Hivites of Gibeon. All the others were defeated. ²⁰For the Lord hardened their hearts and caused them to fight the Israelites. So they were completely destroyed without mercy, as the Lord had commanded Moses.

²¹During this period Joshua destroyed all the descendants of Anak, who lived in the hill country of Hebron, Debir, Anat, and the entire hill country of Judah and Israel. He killed them all and completely destroyed their towns. ²²None of the descendants of Anak were left in all the land of Israel, though some still remained in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod.

²³So Joshua took control of the entire land, just as the Lord had instructed Moses. He gave it to the people of Israel as their special possession, dividing the land among the tribes. So the land finally had rest from war.

Kings Defeated East of the Jordan

12 These are the kings east of the Jordan River who had been killed by the Israelites and whose land was taken. Their territory extended from the Arnon Gorge to Mount Hermon and included all the land east of the Jordan Valley.*

²King Sihon of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon, was defeated. His kingdom included Aroer, on the edge of the Arnon Gorge, and extended from the middle of the Arnon Gorge to the Jabbok River, which serves as a border for the Ammonites. This territory included the southern half of the territory of Gilead. ³Sihon also controlled the Jordan Valley and regions to the east—from as far north as the Sea of Galilee to as far south as the Dead Sea,* including the road to Beth-jeshimoth and southward to the slopes of Pisgah.

⁴King Og of Bashan, the last of the Rephaites, lived at Ashtaroth and Edrei. ⁵He ruled a territory stretching from Mount Hermon to Salecah in the north and to all of Bashan in the east, and westward to the borders of the kingdoms of Geshur and Maacah. This territory included the northern half of Gilead, as far as the boundary of King Sihon of Heshbon.

⁶Moses, the servant of the Lord, and the Israelites had destroyed the people of King Sihon and King Og. And Moses gave their land as a possession to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh.

Kings Defeated West of the Jordan

⁷The following is a list of the kings that Joshua and the Israelite armies defeated on the west side of the Jordan, from Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon to Mount Halak, which leads up to Seir. (Joshua gave this land to the tribes of Israel as their possession, ⁸including the hill country, the western foothills,* the Jordan Valley, the mountain slopes, the Judean wilderness, and the Negev. The people who lived in this region were the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.) These are the kings Israel defeated:

- * The king of Jericho
- The king of Ai, near Bethel
- The king of Jerusalem
- The king of Hebron
- The king of Jarmuth
- The king of Lachish
- The king of Eglon
- The king of Gezer
- The king of Debir
- The king of Geder
- The king of Hormah
- The king of Arad
- The king of Libnah
- The king of Adullam
- The king of Makzedek
- The king of Bethel
- The king of Tappuah
- The king of Hepher
- The king of Aphek
- The king of Lasharon
- The king of Madon
- The king of Hazor
- The king of Shimron-meron
- The king of Ashshaph
- The king of Taanach
- The king of Megiddo
- The king of Kedes
- The king of Jokneam in Carmel
- The king of Dor in the town of Naphoth-dor*
- The king of Goyim in Gilgal*
- The king of Tirzah.

⁹all thirty-one kings were defeated.

The Land Yet to Be Conquered

13 When Joshua was an old man, the Lord said to him, "You are growing old, and much land remains to be conquered. ²This is the territory that remains: all the regions of the Philistines and the Geshurites, ³and the larger territory of the Canaanites, extending from the stream of Egypt on the border of Egypt, northward to the boundary of Gilead. It includes the territory of the five Philistine rulers of Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron. The land of the Amorites ⁴in the south also remains to be conquered. In the following area has not yet been conquered: all the land of the Canaanites, including Mearah (which belongs to the Sidonians), stretching northward to Aphek on the border of the Amorites; ⁵the land of the Gebalites and all the Lebanon mountain area to the east, from Baal-gad Mount Hermon to Lebo-hamath; ⁶and all the hill country from Lebanon to Misrephoth-maim, including all the land of the Sidonians.

⁷I myself will drive these people out of the land ahead of you. So be sure to give this land to Israel as a special possession, just as I have commanded you. ⁸Include all this territory as Israel's possession when you divide this land among the nine tribes and the half-tribe of Manasseh."

The Land Divided East of the Jordan

⁹The tribe of Manasseh and the tribes of Reuben and Gad had already received their grants of land on the east side of the Jordan, for Moses, the servant of the Lord, had previously assigned this land to them.

¹⁰Their territory extended from Aroer on the edge of the Arnon Gorge (including the town in the middle of the Jordan) to Hebrew Naphoth-dor, a variant spelling of Naphoth-dor. ^{12:23b} Greek version Hebrew *Li-debir*, apparently a variant spelling of Lo-debar (compare 2 Sam 9:4; 1

conquered the entire region—the hill country, the whole area around the town of Bethel, the Jordan Valley,* the mountains and foothills. ¹⁷The Israelite tribes all the way from Mount Halak, which is south, as far north as Baal-gad at the Jordan in the valley of Lebanon. Joshua took all of those territories, ¹⁸waging war to accomplish this. ¹⁹No one in this region made any resistance except the Hivites of Gibeon. All were defeated. ²⁰For the Lord hardened their hearts to fight the Israelites. So they were put to death without mercy, as the Lord had commanded.

After this Joshua destroyed all the descendants of Anak in the hill country of Hebron, Debir, Anab, the hill country of Judah and Israel. He completely destroyed their towns. ²²None of the Anak were left in all the land of Israel. They remained in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod. He took control of the entire land, just as the Lord had commanded Moses. He gave it to the people of Israel in possession, dividing the land among them. They finally had rest from war.

East of the Jordan

The kings east of the Jordan River who were by the Israelites and whose land territory extended from the Arnon Gorge included all the land east of the Jordan. The Amorites, who lived in Heshbon, also included Aroer, on the edge of the Jordan, which extends from the middle of the Jordan River, which serves as a border for the territory included in the southern half. ³Sihon also controlled the Jordan Valley east—from as far north as the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea,* including the land southward to the slopes of Pisgah, the last of the Rephaeites, Israel. ⁵He ruled a territory stretching from Salechah in the north and to all of the land toward the borders of the kingdom of Edom. This territory included the land as the boundary of King Sihon of Edom.

The possession of the Lord, and the Israelites gave King Sihon and King Og. And the possession to the tribes of Reuben and Manasseh.

West of the Jordan

The kings that Joshua and the Israelites controlled on the west side of the Jordan Valley of Lebanon to Mount Halak. Joshua gave this land to the tribes of Manasseh, including the hill country, the Jordan Valley, the mountain slopes, the Negev. The people who lived in the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, and the Jebusites. These tribes received their grants of land on the east side of the Jordan, for Moses, the servant of the Lord, had assigned this land to them.

The territory extended from Aroer on the edge of the Jordan Gorge (including the town in the middle of the Jordan) to the Sea of Kinnereth to the Sea of Galilee.

The king of Jericho
The king of Ai, near Bethel.
The king of Jerusalem
The king of Hebron
The king of Jarmuth
The king of Lachish
The king of Eglon
The king of Gezer
The king of Debir
The king of Geder
The king of Hormah
The king of Arad
The king of Libnah
The king of Adullam
The king of Makkedah
The king of Bethel
The king of Tappuah
The king of Hepher
The king of Aphek
The king of Lasharon
The king of Madon
The king of Hazor
The king of Shimron-meron
The king of Achshaph
The king of Taanach
The king of Megiddo
The king of Kedesh
The king of Jokneam in Carmel
The king of Dor in the town of Naphoth-dor*
The king of Goyim in Gilgal*
The king of Tirzah.

thirty-one kings were defeated.

Land Yet to Be Conquered

3 When Joshua was an old man, the Lord said to him, "You are growing old, and much land remains to be conquered. ²This is the territory that remains: all the regions of the Philistines and the Geshurites, ³and the larger part of the Canaanites, extending from the stream of Egypt, northward to the boundary of Sidon. ⁴It includes the territory of the five Philistine rulers of Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron. The land of the Philistines to the south also remains to be conquered. In the following area has not yet been conquered: all of the Canaanites, including Mearah (which became Sidonians), stretching northward to Aphek on the border of the Amorites; the land of the Gebalites and all the Lebanon mountain area to the east, from Baal-gad to Mount Hermon to Lebo-hamath; ⁶and all the hill country of Lebanon to Misrephoth-maim, including all of the Sidonians.

"I will drive these people out of the land ahead of you. So be sure to give this land to Israel as a special possession, just as I have commanded you. ⁷Include all this land in Israel's possession when you divide this land among the nine tribes and the half-tribe of Manasseh."

Divided East of the Jordan

The tribe of Manasseh and the tribes of Reuben and Gad already received their grants of land on the east side of the Jordan, for Moses, the servant of the Lord, had assigned this land to them.

The territory extended from Aroer on the edge of the Jordan Gorge (including the town in the middle of the Jordan) to the Sea of Kinnereth to the Sea of Galilee.

^{12:23b} Greek version reads Goyim in Galilee. ^{13:25} Hebrew in front of.

^{12:23b} Greek version reads Goyim in Galilee. ^{13:25} Hebrew in front of.

^{13:27} Hebrew Sea of Kinnereth.

the gorge) to the plain beyond Medeba, as far as Dibon. ¹⁰It also included all the towns of King Sihon of the Amorites, who had reigned in Heshbon, and extended as far as the borders of Ammon. ¹¹It included Gilead, the territory of the kingdoms of Geshur and Maacah, all of Mount Hermon, all of Bashan as far as Salechah, ¹²and all the territory of King Og of Bashan, who had reigned in Ashtaroth and Edrei. King Og was the last of the Rephaeites, for Moses had attacked them and driven them out. ¹³But the Israelites failed to drive out the people of Geshur and Maacah, so they continue to live among the Israelites to this day.

An Allotment for the Tribe of Levi

¹⁴Moses did not assign any allotment of land to the tribe of Levi. Instead, as the Lord had promised them, their allotment came from the offerings burned on the altar to the Lord, the God of Israel.

The Land Given to the Tribe of Reuben

¹⁵Moses had assigned the following area to the clans of the tribe of Reuben.

¹⁶Their territory extended from Aroer on the edge of the Arnon Gorge (including the town in the middle of the gorge) to the plain beyond Medeba. ¹⁷It included Heshbon and the other towns on the plain—Dibon, Barnoth-baal, Beth-baal-meon, ¹⁸Jahaz, Kedemoth, Mephaath, ¹⁹Kiriathaim, Sibmah, Zereth-shahar on the hill above the valley, ²⁰Beth-peor, the slopes of Pisgah, and Beth-jeshimoth.

²¹The land of Reuben also included all the towns of the plain and the entire kingdom of Sihon. Sihon was the Amorite king who had reigned in Heshbon and was killed by Moses along with the leaders of Midian—Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba—princes living in the region who were allied with Sihon. ²²The Israelites had also killed Balaam son of Beor, who used magic to tell the future. ²³The Jordan River marked the western boundary for the tribe of Reuben. The towns and their surrounding villages in this area were given as a homeland to the clans of the tribe of Reuben.

The Land Given to the Tribe of Gad

²⁴Moses had assigned the following area to the clans of the tribe of Gad.

²⁵Their territory included Jazer, all the towns of Gilead, and half of the land of Ammon, as far as the town of Aroer just west of Rabbah. ²⁶It extended from Heshbon to Ramath-mizpeh and Betonim, and from Mahanaim to the territory of Lo-debar.* ²⁷In the valley were Beth-haram, Beth-nimrah, Succoth, Zaphon, and the rest of the kingdom of King Sihon of Heshbon. The western boundary ran along the Jordan River, extended as far north as the tip of the Sea of Galilee,* and then turned eastward. ²⁸The towns and their surrounding villages in this area were given as a homeland to the clans of the tribe of Gad.

The Land Given to the Half-Tribe of Manasseh

²⁹Moses had assigned the following area to the clans of the half-tribe of Manasseh.

³⁰Their territory extended from Mahanaim, including all of Bashan, all the former kingdom of King Og, and the

sixty towns of Jair in Bashan.³¹ It also included half of Gilead and King Og's royal cities of Ashtaroth and Edrei. All this was given to the clans of the descendants of Makir, who was Manasseh's son.

³²These are the allotments Moses had made while he was on the plains of Moab, across the Jordan River, east of Jericho. ³³But Moses gave no allotment of land to the tribe of Levi, for the Lord, the God of Israel, had promised that he himself would be their allotment.

The Land Divided West of the Jordan

14 The remaining tribes of Israel received land in Canaan as allotted by Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and the tribal leaders. ²These nine and a half tribes received their grants of land by means of sacred lots, in accordance with the Lord's command through Moses. ³Moses had already given a grant of land to the two and a half tribes on the east side of the Jordan River, but he had given the Levites no such allotment. ⁴The descendants of Joseph had become two separate tribes—Manasseh and Ephraim. And the Levites were given no land at all, only towns to live in with surrounding pasturelands for their livestock and all their possessions. ⁵So the land was distributed in strict accordance with the Lord's commands to Moses.

Caleb Requests His Land

⁶A delegation from the tribe of Judah, led by Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite, came to Joshua at Gilgal. Caleb said to Joshua, "Remember what the Lord said to Moses, the man of God, about you and me when we were at Kadesh-barnea. ⁷I was forty years old when Moses, the servant of the Lord, sent me from Kadesh-barnea to explore the land of Canaan. I returned and gave an honest report, ⁸but my brothers who went with me frightened the people from entering the Promised Land. For my part, I wholeheartedly followed the Lord my God. ⁹So that day Moses solemnly promised me, 'The land of Canaan on which you were just walking will be your grant of land and that of your descendants forever, because you wholeheartedly followed the Lord my God.'

¹⁰Now, as you can see, the Lord has kept me alive and well as he promised for all these forty-five years since Moses made this promise—even while Israel wandered in the wilderness. Today I am eighty-five years old. ¹¹I am as strong now as I was when Moses sent me on that journey, and I can still travel and fight as well as I could then. ¹²So give me the hill country that the Lord promised me. You will remember that as scouts we found the descendants of Anak living there in great, walled towns. But if the Lord is with me, I will drive them out of the land, just as the Lord said."

¹³So Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh and gave Hebron to him as his portion of land. ¹⁴Hebron still belongs to the descendants of Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite because he wholeheartedly followed the Lord, the God of Israel. ¹⁵(Previously Hebron had been called Kiriat-arba. It had been named after Arba, a great hero of the descendants of Anak.)

And the land had rest from war.

The Land Given to the Tribe of Judah

15 The allotment for the clans of the tribe of Judah reached southward to the border of Edom, as far south as the wilderness of Zin.

¹The southern boundary began at the south bay of the Dead Sea,²ran south of Scorpion Pass³ into the

^{15:2} Hebrew *the Salt Sea*; also in 15:5. ^{15:3} Hebrew *Akrabbim*. ^{15:4a} Hebrew *the sea*; also in 15:11. ^{15:4b} Hebrew *your*. ^{15:9} Or *the spring of* *Me-nephtoah*. ^{15:12} Hebrew *the Great Sea*; also in 15:47. ^{15:18} Some Greek manuscripts read *he urged her*.

wilderness of Zin, and then went south of Kades-barnea to Hebron. Then it went up to Addar, where it turned toward Karka. ⁴From there it passed to Azmon until it finally reached the Brook of Egypt, which it followed to the Mediterranean Sea.* This was their* southern boundary.

⁵The eastern boundary extended along the Dead Sea to the mouth of the Jordan River.

The northern boundary began at the bay where the Jordan River empties into the Dead Sea, ⁶went up from there to Beth-hoglah, then proceeded north of Beth-arabah to the Stone of Bohan. (Bohan was Reuben's son.) ⁷From that point it went through the valley of Achor to Debir, turning north toward Gilgal, which is across from the slopes of Adummim on the south side of the valley. From there the boundary extended to the springs at En-shemesh and on to En-rogel. ⁸The boundary then passed through the valley of Ben-Hinnom, along the southern slopes of the Jebusites, where the city of Jerusalem is located. Then it went west to the top of the mountain above the valley of Hinnom, and on up to the northern end of the valley of Rephaim. ⁹From there the boundary extended from the top of the mountain to the spring at the waters of Neptah,^{*} and from there to the towns on Mount Ephron. Then it turned toward Baalah (that is, Kiriath-jearim). ¹⁰The boundary circled west of Baalah to Mount Seir, passed along to the town of Kesalon on the northern slope of Mount Jearim, and went down to Beth-shemesh and on to Timnah. ¹¹The boundary then proceeded to the slope of the hill north of Ebron, where it turned toward Shikkeron and Mount Baalah. It passed Jabneel and ended at the Mediterranean Sea.

¹²The western boundary was the shoreline of the Mediterranean Sea.*

These are the boundaries for the clans of the tribe of Judah.

The Land Given to Caleb

¹³The Lord commanded Joshua to assign some of Judah's territory to Caleb son of Jephunneh. So Caleb was given the town of Kiriat-arba (that is, Hebron), which had been named after Anak's ancestor. ¹⁴Caleb drove out the three groups of Anakites—the descendants of Sheshai, Ahiman and Talmai, the sons of Anak.

¹⁵From there he went to fight against the people living in the town of Debir (formerly called Kiriat-sepher). ¹⁶Caleb said, "I will give my daughter Acsah in marriage to the one who attacks and captures Kiriat-sepher." ¹⁷Othniel, son of Caleb's brother Kenaz, was the one who conquered so Acsah became Othniel's wife.

¹⁸When Acsah married Othniel, she urged him* to ask her father for a field. As she got down off her donkey, Caleb asked her, "What's the matter?"

¹⁹She said, "Give me another gift. You have already given me land in the Negev; now please give me springs of water too." So Caleb gave her the upper and lower springs.

The Towns Allotted to Judah

²⁰This was the homeland allocated to the clans of the tribe of Judah.

²¹The towns of Judah situated along the borders of Edom in the extreme south were Kabzeel, Eder, Jagur,²²Kinah, Dimonah, Adadah,²³Kedes, Hazor, Ithnan,²⁴Ziph, Telern, Bealoth,²⁵Hazor-hadattah, Kerioth-

hebron (that is, Hazor), ²⁶Amam, Shema, Moladah,²⁷Hazar-gaddah, Heshmon, Beth-pelet,²⁸Hazar-shual, Beersheba, Biziothiah,²⁹Baalah, Iim, Ezem,³⁰Eltolad, Kesil, Hormah,³¹Ziklag, Madmannah, Sansannah,³²Lebaoth, Shilhim, Ain, and Rimmon—twenty-nine towns with their surrounding villages.

³³The following towns situated in the western foothills* were also given to Judah: Eshtoal, Zorah,³⁴Ashnah,³⁵Zanoah, En-gannim, Tappuah, Enam,³⁶Adummim, Adullam, Socoh, Azekah,³⁷Shaaraim, Adithaim, Gederah, and Gederothaim—fourteen towns with their surrounding villages.

³⁸Also included were Zenan, Hadashah, Migdal-gad,³⁹Dilean, Mizpeh, Joktheel,⁴⁰Lachish, Bozath, Egion,⁴¹Cabbon, Lahman, Kitish,⁴²Gederoth, Beth-dagon, Naamah, and Makkedah—sixteen towns with their surrounding villages.

⁴³Besides these, there were Libnah, Ether, Ashan,⁴⁴Iptah, Ashnah, Nezib,⁴⁵Keilah, Aczib, and Mareshah—nine towns with their surrounding villages.

⁴⁶The territory of the tribe of Judah also included Ekron and its surrounding settlements and villages.

⁴⁷From Ekron the boundary extended west and included the towns near Ashdod with their surrounding villages.

⁴⁸It also included Ashdod with its surrounding settlements and villages and Gaza with its settlements and villages, as far as the Brook of Egypt and along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

⁴⁹Judah also received the following towns in the hill country: Shamir, Jattir, Socoh,⁵⁰Dannah, Kiriath-sannah (that is, Debir), ⁵¹Anab, Eshtemoah, Anim,⁵²Goshen, Hollow, and Giloh—eleven towns with their surrounding villages.

⁵³Also included were the towns of Arab, Dumah,⁵⁴Eshan,⁵⁵Janim, Beth-tappuah, Aphekah,⁵⁶Humtah, Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron), and Zior—nine towns with their surrounding villages.

⁵⁷Besides these, there were Maon, Carmel, Ziph,⁵⁸Juttah,⁵⁹Jezerel, Jokdeam, Zanoah,⁶⁰Kain, Gibeah, and Timnah—ten towns with their surrounding villages.

⁶¹In addition, there were Halhul, Beth-zur, Gedor,⁶²Maarah, Beth-anoth, and Eltekon—six towns with their surrounding villages.

⁶³There were also Kiriath-baal (that is, Kiriath-jearim) and Rabbah—two towns with their surrounding villages.

⁶⁴In the wilderness there were the towns of Beth-abrah, Middin, Secacah,⁶⁵Nibshan, the City of Salt, and En-gedi—six towns with their surrounding villages.

⁶⁵But the tribe of Judah could not drive out the Jebusites, who lived in the city of Jerusalem, so the Jebusites live there among the people of Judah to this day.

Land Given to Ephraim and West Manasseh

16 The allotment for the descendants of Joseph extended from the Jordan River near Jericho, east of the springs of Jericho, through the wilderness and into the hill country of Bethel. ²From Bethel (that is, Luz)* it went over to Ataroth in the territory of the Arkites. ³Then it descended westward to the territory of the Japhletites far as Lower Beth-horon, then to Gezer and over to the Mediterranean Sea.*

⁴It was the homeland allocated to the families of Joseph's sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

⁵Hebrew *the Shephelah*. ^{16:2} As in Greek version (also see 18:13); Hebrew reads *From the sea*; also in 17:10.

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¹¹The following towns within the territory of Issachar and Asher, however, were given to Manasseh: Beth-shan,* Ibleam, Dor (that is, Naphoth-dor),* Endor, Taanach, and Megiddo, each with their surrounding settlements.

¹²But the descendants of Manasseh were unable to occupy these towns. They could not drive out the Canaanites who continued to live there.¹³Later, however, when the Israelites became strong enough, they forced the Canaanites to work as slaves. But they did not drive them out of the land.

¹⁴The descendants of Joseph came to Joshua and asked, "Why have you given us only one portion of land as our homeland when the Lord has blessed us with so many people?"

¹⁵Joshua replied, "If there are so many of you, and if the hill country of Ephraim is not large enough for you, clear out land for yourselves in the forest where the Perizzites and Rephaites live."

¹⁶The descendants of Joseph responded, "It's true that the hill country is not large enough for us. But all the Canaanites in the lowlands have iron chariots, both those in Beth-shan and its surrounding settlements and those in the valley of Jezreel. They are too strong for us."

¹⁷Then Joshua said to the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, the descendants of Joseph, "Since you are so large and strong, you will be given more than one portion.¹⁸The forests of the hill country will be yours as well. Clear as much of the land as you wish, and take possession of its farthest corners. And you will drive out the Canaanites from the valleys, too, even though they are strong and have iron chariots."

The Allotments of the Remaining Land

18 Now that the land was under Israelite control, the entire community of Israel gathered at Shiloh and set up the Tabernacle.* ²But there remained seven tribes who had not yet been allotted their grants of land.

³Then Joshua asked them, "How long are you going to wait before taking possession of the remaining land the Lord, the God of your ancestors, has given to you? ⁴Select three men from each tribe, and I will send them out to explore the land and map it out. They will then return to me with a written report of their proposed divisions of their new homeland. ⁵Let them divide the land into seven sections, excluding Judah's territory in the south and Joseph's territory in the north. ⁶And when you record the seven divisions of the land and bring them to me, I will cast sacred lots in the presence of the Lord our God to assign land to each tribe.

⁷The Levites, however, will not receive any allotment of land. Their role as priests of the Lord is their allotment. And the tribes of Gad, Reuben, and the half-tribe of Manasseh won't receive any more land, for they have already received their grant of land, which Moses, the servant of the Lord, gave them on the east side of the Jordan River."

⁸As the men started on their way to map out the land, Joshua commanded them, "Go and explore the land and write a description of it. Then return to me, and I will assign the land to the tribes by casting sacred lots here in the presence of the Lord at Shiloh." ⁹The men did as they were told and mapped the entire territory into seven sections, listing the towns in each section. They made a written record and then returned to Joshua in the camp at Shiloh. ¹⁰And there at Shiloh, Joshua cast sacred lots in the presence of the Lord to determine which tribe should have each section.

^{17:11a} Hebrew *Beth-shean*, a variant spelling of *Beth-shan*; also in 17:16. ^{17:11b} The meaning of the Hebrew here is uncertain. ^{18:1} Hebrew *Ten* Meeting. ^{18:15a} Or *from there it went to Mozah*. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. ^{18:15b} Or *the spring at Me-nephtha*. ^{18:18} Hebrew *overlooking the Arabah, or overlooking Beth-arabah*. ^{18:19} Hebrew *Salt Sea*. ^{18:28} Some Greek manuscripts read *Kiriath-jearim*.

The Land Given to Benjamin

¹¹The first allotment of land went to the clans of the tribe of Benjamin. It lay between the territory assigned to the tribes of Judah and Joseph.

¹²The northern boundary of Benjamin's land began at the Jordan River, went north of the slope of Jericho, then west through the hill country and the wilderness of Beth-aven. ¹³From there the boundary went south to (that is, Bethel) and proceeded down to Ataroth-addar on the hill that lies south of Lower Beth-horon.

¹⁴The boundary then made a turn and swung south along the western edge of the hill facing Beth-horon, ending at the village of Kiriath-baal (that is, Kiriath-jearim), a town belonging to the tribe of Judah. This was the western boundary.

¹⁵The southern boundary began at the outskirts of Kiriath-jearim. From that western point it ran* to the spring at the waters of Nephaoth,¹⁶ and down to the base of the mountain beside the valley of Ben-Hinnom at the northern end of the valley of Rephaim. From there it went down the valley of Hinnom, crossing some of the slope where the Jebusites lived, and continued down to En-rogel. ¹⁷From En-rogel the boundary proceeded in a northerly direction and came to En-shemesh and on to Geliloth (which is across from the slopes of Adummim). Then it went down to the Stone of Bohan. (Bohan was Reuben's son.) ¹⁸From there it passed along the north side of the slope overlooking Jordan Valley.* The border then went down into the valley, ¹⁹ran past the north slope of Beth-hoglah, and ended at the north bay of the Dead Sea,* which is the southern end of the Jordan River. This was the southern boundary.

²⁰The eastern boundary was the Jordan River.

These were the boundaries of the homeland allocated to the clans of the tribe of Benjamin.

The Towns Given to Benjamin

²¹These were the towns given to the clans of the tribe of Benjamin.

Jericho, Beth-hoglah, Emek-keziz, ²²Beth-arabah, Zemaraim, Bethel, ²³Awim, Parah, Ophrah, ²⁴Kepharammoni, Ophni, and Geba—twelve towns with their surrounding villages. ²⁵Also Gibeon, Ramah, Beeroth, ²⁶Mizpah, Kephirah, Mozah, ²⁷Rekem, Irpeel, Tarai, ²⁸Zela, Haeleph, Jebus (that is, Jerusalem), Gibeath, and Kiriath*—fourteen towns with their surrounding villages.

This was the homeland allocated to the clans of the tribe of Benjamin.

The Land Given to Simeon

19 The second allotment of land went to the clans of the tribe of Simeon. Their homeland was surrounding Judah's territory.

²Simeon's homeland included Beersheba, Sheba, Moladah, ³Hazar-shual, Balah, Ezem, ⁴Eltolad, Beth-Hormah, ⁵Ziklag, Beth-marcaboth, Hazar-susah, ⁶Beth-lebaoth, and Sharuhen—thirteen towns with their surrounding villages. ⁷It also included Ain, Rimmon, Ether, and Ashan—four towns with their villages.

This was the homeland allocated to the clans of the tribe of Simeon.

The Land Given to Naphtali

⁸The sixth allotment of land went to the clans of the tribe of

⁹Including all the surrounding villages as far south as Bealath-beer (also known as Ramah of the Negev).

¹⁰It was the homeland allocated to the clans of the tribe of Naphtali. ¹¹Their allocation of land came from part of what had been given to Judah because Judah's territory was too large for them. So the tribe of Simeon received an allocation from the territory of Judah.

The Land Given to Zebulun

¹²The third allotment of land went to the clans of the tribe of Zebulun.

The boundary of Zebulun's homeland started at Sarid.

¹³From there it went west, going past Maralah, touching Dabbeseth, and proceeding to the brook east of Sarearm. ¹⁴In the other direction, the boundary went east from Sarid to the border of Kisloth-tabor, and from there to Daberath and up to Japhia. ¹⁵Then it continued east to Gath-hepher, Eth-kazin, and Rimmon and turned toward Neah. ¹⁶The northern boundary of Zebulun included Hannathon and ended at the valley of Iphtah-el. ¹⁷The towns in these areas included Kattath, Nahalal, ¹⁸Sharon, Idalah, and Bethlehem—twelve towns with their surrounding villages.

This was the homeland allocated to the clans of the tribe of Zebulun. ¹⁹It included these towns and their surrounding villages.

The Land Given to Issachar

²⁰The fourth allotment of land went to the clans of the tribe of Issachar.

²¹Its boundaries included the following towns: Jezreel, ²²Shullo, Shunem, ²³Hapharaim, Shion, Anaharath, ²⁴Abith, Kishion, Ebez, ²⁵Remeth, En-gannim, En-shemesh, and Beth-pazzez. ²⁶The boundary also touched ²⁷Shahazumah, and Beth-shemesh, ending at the River—sixteen towns with their surrounding villages.

This was the homeland allocated to the clans of the tribe of Issachar. ²⁸It included these towns and their surrounding villages.

The Land Given to Asher

²⁹The fifth allotment of land went to the clans of the tribe of Asher.

³⁰Its boundaries included these towns: Helkath, Hali, ³¹Acshaph, ³²Allammelech, Amad, and Mishal. The boundary on the west touched Carmel and Shihor, ³³then it turned east toward Beth-dagon, and ³⁴as far as Zebulun in the valley of Iphtah-el, going to Beth-emek and Neiel. It then continued north to Cabul, ³⁵Abdon,* Rehob, Hammom, Kanah, and as far as Greater Sidon. ³⁶Then the boundary turned toward Ramah and the fortress of Tyre, where it turned toward Hosah and came to the Mediterranean Sea.* ³⁷The territory also included Mehebel, Aczib, ³⁸Ummah, ³⁹Yaphia, and Rehob—twenty-two towns with their surrounding villages.

This was the homeland allocated to the clans of the tribe of Asher. ⁴⁰It included these towns and their surrounding villages.

The Land Given to Naphtali

⁴¹The sixth allotment of land went to the clans of the tribe of

⁴²Naphtali. ⁴³Its boundaries included some Hebrew manuscripts (see also 21:30); most Hebrew manuscripts read ⁴⁴in some Hebrew manuscripts (see also 21:30); most Hebrew manuscripts read ⁴⁵in some Hebrew manuscripts (see also 21:30); most Hebrew manuscripts read ⁴⁶in some Hebrew manuscripts (see also 21:30); most Hebrew manuscripts read ⁴⁷in some Hebrew manuscripts (see also 21:30); most Hebrew manuscripts read ⁴⁸in some Hebrew manuscripts (see also 21:30); most Hebrew manuscripts read ⁴⁹After the death of Moses, the Israelites gathered together to the Jordan River to receive the inheritance of the Promised Land. ⁵⁰The Israelites gathered together to the Jordan River to receive the inheritance of the Promised Land. ⁵¹The Israelites gathered together to the Jordan River to receive the inheritance of the Promised Land. ⁵²The Israelites gathered together to the Jordan River to receive the inheritance of the Promised Land. ⁵³The Israelites gathered together to the Jordan River to receive the 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including all the surrounding villages as far south as Beth-beer (also known as Ramah of the Negev). This was the homeland allocated to the clans of the tribe of Benjamin. Their allocation of land came from part of what was given to Judah because Judah's territory was too small for them. So the tribe of Simeon received an allocation of the territory of Judah.

Land Given to Zebulun

The third allotment of land went to the clans of the tribe of Zebulun.

The boundary of Zebulun's homeland started at Sarid. From there it went west, going past Maralah, touching Abeseth, and proceeding to the brook east of Esdraelon. ¹²In the other direction, the boundary went from Sarid to the border of Kisloth-tabor, and from there to Daberath and up to Japhia. ¹³Then it continued to Gath-hepher, Eth-kazin, and Rimmon and turned toward Neah. ¹⁴The northern boundary of Zebulun ended at Hannathon and ended at the valley of Iphtah-el. The towns in these areas included Kattath, Nahalal, Idalah, and Bethlehem—twelve towns with their surrounding villages.

The homeland allocated to the clans of the tribe of Zebulun included these towns and their surrounding villages.

Land Given to Issachar

The fourth allotment of land went to the clans of the tribe of Issachar.

The boundaries included the following towns: Jezreel, Jokneam, Shunem, ¹⁹Hapharaim, Shion, Anaharath, Kishion, Ebez, ²¹Remeth, En-gannim, En-hesed, and Beth-pazzez. ²²The boundary also touched Shahazumah, and Beth-shemesh, ending at the Jordan River—sixteen towns with their surrounding villages.

The homeland allocated to the clans of the tribe of Issachar included these towns and their surrounding villages.

Land Given to Asher

The fifth allotment of land went to the clans of the tribe of Asher.

The boundaries included these towns: Helkath, Hali, Achshaph, ²⁶Allammelech, Amad, and Mishal. The boundary on the west touched Carmel and Shihor-lod. ²⁷Then it turned east toward Beth-dagon, and then toward Zebulun in the valley of Iphtah-el, going past Beth-emek and Neiel. It then continued north to Abdon, ²⁸Rehob, Hammom, Kanah, and as far as Sidon. ²⁹Then the boundary turned toward Ramah and the fortress of Tyre, where it turned toward Hosah and came to the Mediterranean Sea. ³⁰The boundary also included Mehebel, Aczib, ³⁰Ummah, and Rehob—twenty-two towns with their surrounding villages.

The homeland allocated to the clans of the tribe of Asher included these towns and their surrounding villages.

Land Given to Naphtali

The sixth allotment of land went to the clans of the tribe of Naphtali.

³³Its boundary ran from Heleph, from the oak at Zaanannim, and extended across to Adami-nekeb, Jabneel, and as far as Lakkum, ending at the Jordan River. ³⁴The western boundary ran past Aznoth-tabor, then to Hukkok, and touched the border of Zebulun in the south, the border of Asher on the west, and the Jordan River* on the east. ³⁵The fortified towns included in this territory were Ziddim, Zer, Hammath, Rakkath, Kinnereth, ³⁶Adamah, Ramah, Hazor, ³⁷Kedesh, Edrei, En-hazor, ³⁸Yiron, Migdal-el, Horem, Beth-anath, and Beth-shemesh—nineteen towns with their surrounding villages.

³⁹The homeland allocated to the clans of the tribe of Naphtali included these towns and their surrounding villages.

The Land Given to Dan

⁴⁰The seventh allotment of land went to the clans of the tribe of Dan.

⁴¹The land allocated as their homeland included the following towns: Zorah, Eshtaoel, Ir-shemesh, ⁴²Shaalabbin, Ajalon, Ithlah, ⁴³Elon, Timnah, Ekron, ⁴⁴Eltekeh, Gibbethon, Baalath, ⁴⁵Jehud, Bene-berak, Gath-rimmon, ⁴⁶Me-jarkon, Rakkon, and the territory across from Joppa.

⁴⁷But the tribe of Dan had trouble taking possession of their land,* so they attacked the town of Laish.* They captured it, slaughtered its people, and settled there. They renamed the town Dan after their ancestor.

⁴⁸The homeland allocated to the clans of the tribe of Dan included these towns and their surrounding villages.

The Land Given to Joshua

⁴⁹After all the land was divided among the tribes, the Israelites gave a piece of land to Joshua as his allocation. ⁵⁰For the LORD had said he could have any town he wanted. He chose Timnath-serah in the hill country of Ephraim. He rebuilt the town and lived there.

⁵¹These are the territories that Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and the tribal leaders allocated as grants of land to the tribes of Israel by casting sacred lots in the presence of the LORD at the entrance of the Tabernacle* at Shiloh. So the division of the land was completed.

The Cities of Refuge

20 The LORD said to Joshua, ²Now tell the Israelites to designate the cities of refuge, as I instructed Moses. ³Anyone who kills another person accidentally and unintentionally can run to one of these cities; they will be places of refuge from relatives seeking revenge for the person who was killed.

⁴Upon reaching one of these cities, the one who caused the death will appear before the elders at the city gate and present his case. They must allow him to enter the city and give him a place to live among them. ⁵If the relatives of the victim come to avenge the killing, the leaders must not release the slayer to them, for he killed the other person unintentionally and without previous hostility. ⁶But the slayer must stay in that city and be tried by the local assembly, which will render a judgment. And he must continue to live in that city until the death of the high priest who was in office at the time of the accident. After that, he is free to return to his own home in the town from which he fled.

⁷The following cities were designated as cities of refuge:

¹Some Hebrew manuscripts (see also 21:30); most Hebrew manuscripts read Ebron. ^{19:29} Hebrew *the sea*. ^{19:34} Hebrew *and Judah at the sea*. ^{47a} Or *had trouble holding on to their land*. ^{19:47b} Hebrew *Leshem*, a variant spelling of Laish. ^{19:51} Hebrew *Tent of Meeting*.

Kedesh of Galilee, in the hill country of Naphtali; Shechem, in the hill country of Ephraim; and Kiriat-arba (that is, Hebron), in the hill country of Judah. ⁸On the east side of the Jordan River, across from Jericho, the following cities were designated: Bezer, in the wilderness plain of the tribe of Reuben; Ramoth in Gilead, in the territory of the tribe of Gad; and Golan in Bashan, in the land of the tribe of Manasseh. ⁹These cities were set apart for all the Israelites as well as the foreigners living among them. Anyone who accidentally killed another person could take refuge in one of these cities. In this way, they could escape being killed in revenge prior to standing trial before the local assembly.

The Towns Given to the Levites

21 Then the leaders of the tribe of Levi came to consult with Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and the leaders of the other tribes of Israel. ²They came to them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan and said, "The Lord commanded Moses to give us towns to live in and pasturelands for our livestock." ³So by the command of the Lord the people of Israel gave the Levites the following towns and pasturelands out of their own grants of land.

⁴The descendants of Aaron, who were members of the Kohathite clan within the tribe of Levi, were allotted thirteen towns that were originally assigned to the tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin. ⁵The other families of the Kohathite clan were allotted ten towns from the tribes of Ephraim, Dan, and the half-tribe of Manasseh.

⁶The clan of Gershon was allotted thirteen towns from the tribes of Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and the half-tribe of Manasseh in Bashan.

⁷The clan of Merari was allotted twelve towns from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Zebulun.

⁸So the Israelites obeyed the Lord's command to Moses and assigned these towns and pasturelands to the Levites by casting sacred lots.

⁹The Israelites gave the following towns from the tribes of Judah and Simeon ¹⁰to the descendants of Aaron, who were members of the Kohathite clan within the tribe of Levi, since the sacred lot fell to them first: ¹¹Kiriat-arba (that is, Hebron), in the hill country of Judah, along with its surrounding pasturelands. (Arba was an ancestor of Anak.) ¹²But the open fields beyond the town and the surrounding villages were given to Caleb son of Jephunneh as his possession.

¹³The following towns with their pasturelands were given to the descendants of Aaron the priest: Hebron (a city of refuge for those who accidentally killed someone), Libnah, ¹⁴Jattir, Eshtemoa, ¹⁵Holon, Debir, ¹⁶Ain, Juttah, and Beth-shemesh—nine towns from these two tribes.

¹⁷From the tribe of Benjamin the priests were given the following towns with their pasturelands: Gibeon, Geba, ¹⁸Anathoth, and Almon—four towns. ¹⁹So in all, thirteen towns with their pasturelands were given to the priests, the descendants of Aaron.

²⁰The rest of the Kohathite clan from the tribe of Levi was allotted the following towns and pasturelands from the tribe of Ephraim: ²¹Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim (a city of refuge for those who accidentally killed someone), Gezer, ²²Kibzaim, and Beth-horon—four towns.

²³The following towns and pasturelands were allotted to the priests from the tribe of Dan: Eltekeh, Gibbethon, ²⁴Aijalon, and Gath-rimmon—four towns.

²⁵The half-tribe of Manasseh allotted the following towns with their pasturelands to the priests: Taanach and Gath-rimmon—two towns. ²⁶So in all, ten towns with their pasturelands were given to the rest of the Kohathite clan.

21:36 Hebrew *Jahzah*, a variant spelling of *Jahaz*.

²⁷The descendants of Gershon, another clan within the tribe of Levi, received the following towns with their pasturelands from the half-tribe of Manasseh: Golan in Bashan (a city of refuge for those who accidentally killed someone) and Be-eshterah—two towns.

²⁸From the tribe of Issachar they received the following towns with their pasturelands: Kishiof, Daberath, ²⁹Jarmuth, and En-gannim—four towns.

³⁰From the tribe of Asher they received the following towns with their pasturelands: Mishal, Abdon, ³¹Helkath, and Rehob—four towns.

³²From the tribe of Naphtali they received the following towns with their pasturelands: Kedesh in Galilee (a city of refuge for those who accidentally killed someone), Hammoth-dor, and Kartan—three towns. ³³So in all, thirteen towns with their pasturelands were allotted to the tribe of Gershon.

³⁴The rest of the Levites—the Merari clan—were given the following towns with their pasturelands from the tribe of Zebulun: Jokneam, Kartah, ³⁵Dimnah, and Nahalal—four towns.

³⁶From the tribe of Reuben they received the following towns with their pasturelands: Bezer, Jahaz, ³⁷Kedemah, and Mephaath—four towns.

³⁸From the tribe of Gad they received the following towns with their pasturelands: Ramoth in Gilead (a city of refuge for those who accidentally killed someone), Mahanaim, ³⁹Heshbon, and Jazer—four towns. ⁴⁰So in all, twelve towns were allotted to the clan of Merari.

⁴¹The total number of towns and pasturelands within the Levite territory given to the Levites came to forty-eight. ⁴²Every one of these towns had pasturelands surrounding it.

⁴³So the Lord gave to Israel all the land he had sworn to give their ancestors, and they took possession of it and settled there. ⁴⁴And the Lord gave them rest on every side, as he had solemnly promised their ancestors. None of their enemies could stand against them, for the Lord helped them conquer all their enemies. ⁴⁵Not a single one of all the good promises the Lord had given to the family of Israel was left unfulfilled; everything he had spoken came true.

The Eastern Tribes Return Home

22 Then Joshua called together the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. ²He told them, "You have done as Moses, the servant of the Lord, commanded you, and you have obeyed every order I have given you. ³During all this time you have not deserted the tribes. You have been careful to obey the commands of the Lord your God right up to the present day. ⁴And now the Lord your God has given the other tribes rest, as he promised them. So go back home to the land that Moses, the servant of the Lord, gave you as your possession on the east side of the Jordan River. ⁵But be very careful to obey all the commands and the instructions that Moses gave to you. Love the Lord your God, walk in all his ways, obey his commands, hold firmly to him, and serve him with all your heart and all your soul." ⁶So Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they went home.

⁷Moses had given the land of Bashan, east of the Jordan River, to the half-tribe of Manasseh. (The other half of the tribe was given land west of the Jordan.) As Joshua sent them away and blessed them, ⁸he said to them, "Go back to your homes with the great wealth you have taken from your enemies—the vast herds of livestock, the silver, gold, bronze, and iron, and the large supply of clothing. Share the spoils with your relatives."

⁹So the men of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh left the rest of Israel at Shiloh in the land of Canaan. They started the journey back to their own land of Gilead, the territory that belonged to them according to the Lord's command through Moses.

The Eastern Tribes Build an Altar

But while they were still in Canaan, and when they came to a place called Gilelith* near the Jordan River, the men of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh stopped to build a large and imposing altar.

The rest of Israel heard that the people of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh had built an altar at Gilelith on the edge of the land of Canaan, on the west side of the Jordan River. ¹²So the whole community of Israel gathered at Shiloh and prepared to go to war against them. ¹³First, however, they sent a delegation led by Phinehas son of Eleazar, priest, to talk with the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. ¹⁴In this delegation were ten leaders of Israel, one from each of the ten tribes, and each the head of his family within the clans of Israel.

When they arrived in the land of Gilead, they said to the people of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, ¹⁶The community of the Lord demands to know why you are serving the God of Israel. How could you turn away from the Lord and build an altar for yourselves in rebellion against him? ¹⁷Was our sin at Peor not enough? To this day we are not cleansed of it, even after the plague that struck the entire community of the Lord. ¹⁸And yet today you are turning away from the Lord. If you rebel against the Lord today, he will be angry with all of us tomorrow.

If you need the altar because the land you possess is barren, then join us in the Lord's land, where the Tabernacle of the Lord is situated, and share our land with us. But do not rebel against the Lord or against us by building an altar like this, which is not even the one true altar of the Lord our God. ²⁰Didn't the anger fall on the entire community of Israel when a member of the clan of Zerah, sinned by stealing the cattle set apart for the Lord? He was not the only one who sinned because of his sin."

Then the people of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh answered the heads of the clans of Israel: ²²The Mighty One, is God! The Lord, the Mighty One, is he who knows the truth, and may Israel know it, too! We have not built the altar in treacherous rebellion against the Lord. If we have done so, do not spare our lives this day. ²³If we have built an altar for ourselves to turn away from the Lord to offer burnt offerings or grain offerings or peace offerings, may the Lord himself punish us.

The truth is, we have built this altar because we fear what your descendants will say to ours, 'What do you have to worship the Lord, the God of Israel?' The Lord has placed the Jordan River as a barrier between you and your people of Reuben and Gad. You have no access to the Lord. So your descendants may prevent our descendants from worshiping the Lord.

If we decided to build the altar, not for burnt offerings or grain offerings, ²⁷but as a memorial. It will remind our descendants and your descendants that we, too, have the right to offer the Lord at his sanctuary with our burnt offerings, grain offerings, and peace offerings. Then your descendants will be able to say to ours, 'You have no claim to the Lord.' If they say this, our descendants can reply, 'Look at this memorial altar that our ancestors made. It is not for burnt offerings or sacrifices; it is a reminder of the relationship between the circle of stones; similarly in 22:11. ^{22:20} The Hebrew term used here refers to the act of destroying them or by giving them as an offering. ^{22:34} Some manuscripts lack the word 'circle'.

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The LORD's Covenant Renewed

24 Then Joshua summoned all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, including their elders, leaders, judges, and officers. So they came and presented themselves to God.

⁵Joshua said to the people, "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: Long ago your ancestors, including Terah, the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the Euphrates River,* and they worshiped other gods. ⁶But I took your ancestor Abraham from the land beyond the Euphrates and led him into the land of Canaan. I gave him many descendants through his son Isaac. ⁷To Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. To Esau I gave the mountains of Seir, while Jacob and his children went down into Egypt.

⁸"Then I sent Moses and Aaron, and I brought terrible plagues on Egypt; and afterward I brought you out as a free people. ⁹But when your ancestors arrived at the Red Sea,* the Egyptians chased after you with chariots and chariooteers. ¹⁰When your ancestors cried out to the Lord, I put darkness between you and the Egyptians. I brought the sea crashing down on the Egyptians, drowning them. With your very own eyes you saw what I did. Then you lived in the wilderness for many years.

¹¹Finally, I brought you into the land of the Amorites on the east side of the Jordan. They fought against you, but I destroyed them before you. I gave you victory over them, and you took possession of their land. ¹²Then Balak son of Zipor, king of Moab, started a war against Israel. He summoned Balaam son of Beor to curse you, ¹³but I would not listen to him. Instead, I made Balaam bless you, and so I rescued you from Balak.

¹⁴"When you crossed the Jordan River and came to Jericho, the men of Jericho fought against you, as did the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Gergashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. But I gave you victory over them. ¹⁵And I sent terror* ahead of you to drive out the two kings of the Amorites. It was not your swords or bows that brought you victory. ¹⁶I gave you land you had not worked on, and I gave you towns you did not build—the towns where you are now living. I gave you vineyards and olive groves for food, though you did not plant them.

¹⁷"So fear the Lord and serve him wholeheartedly. Put away forever the idols your ancestors worshiped when they lived beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord alone. ¹⁸But if you refuse to serve the Lord, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live? But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord."

¹⁹The people replied, "We would never abandon the Lord and serve other gods. ²⁰For the Lord our God is the

one who rescued us and our ancestors from slavery in the land of Egypt. He performed mighty miracles before our very eyes. As we traveled through the wilderness among our enemies, he preserved us. ²¹It was the Lord who drove out the Amorites and the other nations living here in the land. So we, too, will serve the Lord, for he alone is our God."

²²Then Joshua warned the people, "You are not able to serve the Lord, for he is a holy and jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion and your sins. ²³If you abandon the Lord and serve other gods, he will turn against you and destroy you, even though he has been so good to you."

²⁴But the people answered Joshua, "No, we will serve the Lord!"

²⁵"You are a witness to your own decision," Joshua said. "You have chosen to serve the Lord."

²⁶"Yes," they replied, "we are witnesses to what we have said."

²⁷"All right then," Joshua said, "destroy the idols among you, and turn your hearts to the Lord, the God of Israel."

²⁸The people said to Joshua, "We will serve the Lord God. We will obey him alone."

²⁹So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day at Shechem, committing them to follow the decrees and regulations of the Lord. ³⁰Joshua recorded these things in the Book of God's Instructions. As a reminder of their agreement, he took a huge stone and rolled it beneath the terebinth tree beside the Tabernacle of the Lord.

³¹Joshua said to all the people, "This stone has heard everything the Lord said to us. It will be a witness to testify against you if you go back on your word to God."

³²Then Joshua sent all the people away to their homelands.

Leaders Buried in the Promised Land

²⁹After this, Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died at the age of 110. ³⁰They buried him in the land he had been allocated, at Timnath-serah in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash.

³¹The people of Israel served the Lord throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him, those who had personally experienced all that the Lord had done for Israel.

³²The bones of Joseph, which the Israelites had brought along with them when they left Egypt, were buried at Shechem, in the parcel of ground Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor for 100 pieces of silver.* This land was allotted to the descendants of Joseph.

³³Eleazar son of Aaron also died. He was buried in the country of Ephraim, in the town of Gibeah, which had been given to his son Phinehas.

^{24:2} Hebrew *the river*; also in 24:3, 14, 15. ^{24:6} Hebrew *sea of reeds*. ^{24:12} Often rendered *the hornet*. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

^{24:32} Hebrew *100 kesitahs*; the value or weight of the kesitah is no longer known.

JUDGES

Author Samuel, according to Jewish tradition
Written Uncertain, perhaps around 1000 B.C.

Content Often the greatest heroes appear in the midst of the book of Judges, where true heroes and heroes after the people have fallen into sin. After Joshua of Israel settled their allotted portions of land, they served as their king. But this required that the people rarely existed during this period. The people soon the ways of their pagan neighbors. To punish them he raised up various leaders among them to drive judges. They not only defeated their enemies and Israelites' hearts back to God. But time after time their oppressive neighbors, they lost their zeal for

Judah and Simeon Conquer the Land

¹After the death of Joshua, the Israelites asked the Lord, "Which tribe should go first to attack the Canaanites?" The Lord answered, "Judah, for I have given them victory over the land."

²The men of Judah said to their relatives from the tribe of Simeon, "Join with us to fight against the Canaanites living in the territory allotted to us. Then we will help you conquer your territory." So the men of Simeon went with Judah.

³When the men of Judah attacked, the Lord gave them victory over the Canaanites and Perizzites, and they killed 1000 enemy warriors at the town of Bezek. ⁴While at Bezek they encountered King Adoni-bezek and fought against him, and the Canaanites and Perizzites were defeated. ⁵Adoni-bezek escaped, but the Israelites soon captured him and cut off his thumbs and big toes.

⁶Adoni-bezek said, "I once had seventy kings with their thumbs and big toes cut off, eating scraps from under my table. ⁷Now God has paid me back for what I did to them." They took him to Jerusalem, and he died there.

⁸The men of Judah attacked Jerusalem and captured all its people and setting the city on fire. ⁹Then they went down to fight the Canaanites living in the hill country, the Negev, and the western foothills.* ¹⁰Judah fought against the Canaanites in Hebron (formerly called Kiriath-arba), defeating the forces of Sheshai, Ahiman, and

¹¹Asah. ¹²From there they went to fight against the people living in the town of Debir (formerly called Kiriath-sepher). ¹³Othniel said, "I will give my daughter Acsah in marriage to the one who attacks and captures Kiriath-sepher." ¹⁴Othniel, son of Caleb's younger brother, Kenaz, was the one who conquered it, so Acsah became Othniel's wife.

¹⁵When Acsah married Othniel, she urged him* to ask her for a field. As she got down off her donkey, Caleb said, "What's the matter?"

¹⁶Caleb said, "Let me have another gift. You have already given me land in the Negev; now please give me springs of water too." So Caleb gave her the upper and lower springs.

¹⁷When the tribe of Judah left Jericho—the city of the Kenites, who were descendants of Moses' brother-in-law, traveled with them into the wilderness of Ju-

¹⁸the Shephelah. ^{1:14} Greek version and Latin Vulgate read *he urged her*. ^{1:17a} The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. ^{1:17b} Hebrew *Beth-shean*, a variant spelling of Beth-shan.

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³²Instead, the people of Asher moved in among the Canaanites, who controlled the land, for they failed to drive them out.

³³Likewise, the tribe of Naphtali failed to drive out the residents of Beth-shemesh and Beth-anath. Instead, they moved in among the Canaanites, who controlled the land. Nevertheless, the people of Beth-shemesh and Beth-anath were forced to work as slaves for the people of Naphtali.

³⁴As for the tribe of Dan, the Amorites forced them back into the hill country and would not let them come down into the plains. ³⁵The Amorites were determined to stay in Mount Heres, Aijalon, and Shaalbim, but when the descendants of Joseph became stronger, they forced the Amorites to work as slaves. ³⁶The boundary of the Amorites ran from Scorpion Pass* to Sela and continued upward from there.

The LORD's Messenger Comes to Bokim

2 The angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal to Bokim and said to the Israelites, "I brought you out of Egypt into this land that I swore to give your ancestors, and I said I would never break my covenant with you. ²For your part, you were not to make any covenants with the people living in this land; instead, you were to destroy their altars. But you disobeyed my command. Why did you do this? ³So now I declare that I will no longer drive out the people living in your land. They will be thorns in your sides,* and their gods will be a constant temptation to you."

⁴When the angel of the LORD finished speaking to all the Israelites, the people wept loudly. ⁵So they called the place Bokim (which means "weeping"), and they offered sacrifices there to the LORD.

The Death of Joshua

⁶After Joshua sent the people away, each of the tribes left to take possession of the land allotted to them. ⁷And the Israelites served the LORD throughout the lifetime of Joshua and the leaders who outlived him—those who had seen all the great things the LORD had done for Israel.

⁸Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of 110. ⁹They buried him in the land he had been allocated, at Timnath-serah* in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash.

Israel Disobeys the LORD

¹⁰After that generation died, another generation grew up who did not acknowledge the LORD or remember the mighty things he had done for Israel.

¹¹The Israelites did evil in the LORD's sight and served the images of Baal. ¹²They abandoned the LORD, the God of their ancestors, who had brought them out of Egypt. They went after other gods, worshiping the gods of the people around them. And they angered the LORD. ¹³They abandoned the LORD to serve Baal and the images of Ashtoreth. ¹⁴This made the LORD burn with anger against Israel, so he handed them over to raiders who stole their possessions. He turned them over to their enemies all around, and they were no longer able to resist them. ¹⁵Every time Israel went out to battle, the LORD fought against them, causing them to be defeated, just as he had warned. And the people were in great distress.

The LORD Rescues His People

¹⁶Then the LORD raised up judges to rescue the Israelites from their attackers. ¹⁷Yet Israel did not listen to the judges but prostituted themselves by worshiping other gods. How

quickly they turned away from the path of their ancestors who had walked in obedience to the LORD's commands.

¹⁸Whenever the LORD raised up a judge over Israel, he was with that judge and rescued the people from their enemies throughout the judge's lifetime. For the LORD took pity on his people, who were burdened by oppression and suffering. ¹⁹But when the judge died, the people returned to their corrupt ways, behaving worse than those who had lived before them. They went after other gods, serving and worshiping them. And they refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways.

²⁰So the LORD burned with anger against Israel. He said, "Because these people have violated my covenant, which I made with their ancestors, and have ignored my command, ²¹I will no longer drive out the nations that Joshua left unconquered when he died." ²²I did this to test Israel—to see whether or not they would follow the ways of the LORD or their ancestors did." ²³That is why the LORD left those nations in place. He did not quickly drive them out or allow Joshua to conquer them all.

The Nations Left in Canaan

3 These are the nations that the LORD left in the land to test those Israelites who had not experienced the ways of Canaan. ²He did this to teach warfare to generations of Israelites who had no experience in battle. ³These are the nations: the Philistines (those living under the five Philistine rulers), all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites living in the mountains of Lebanon from Mount Baal-hermon to Lebo-hamath. ⁴These people were left to test the Israelites—to see whether they would obey the commands the LORD had given to their ancestors through Moses.

⁵So the people of Israel lived among the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, and they intermarried with them. Israelite sons married their daughters, and Israelite daughters were given in marriage to the sons. And the Israelites served their gods.

Othniel Becomes Israel's Judge

⁶The Israelites did evil in the LORD's sight. They forgot about the LORD their God, and they served the images of Baal and the Asherah poles. ⁸Then the LORD burned with anger against Israel, and he turned them over to King Cushan-rishathaim of Aram-naharaim.* And the Israelites served Cushan-rishathaim for eight years.

⁹But when the people of Israel cried out to the LORD for help, the LORD raised up a rescuer to save them. His name was Othniel, the son of Caleb's younger brother, Kenaz. ¹⁰The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he became Israel's judge. He went to war against King Cushan-rishathaim of Aram, and the LORD gave Othniel victory over him. ¹¹There was peace in the land for forty years. Then Othniel died in Kenaz.

Ehud Becomes Israel's Judge

¹²Once again the Israelites did evil in the LORD's sight. ¹³The LORD gave King Eglon of Moab control over Israel as a cause of their evil. ¹⁴Eglon enlisted the Ammonites and the Moabites as allies, and then he went out and defeated Israel, taking possession of Jericho, the city of palms. ¹⁵And the Israelites served Eglon of Moab for eighteen years.

¹⁶But when the people of Israel cried out to the LORD for help, the LORD again raised up a rescuer to save them. His name was Ehud son of Gera, a left-handed man of the tribe of Benjamin. The Israelites sent Ehud to deliver their tribute money to King Eglon of Moab. ¹⁷So Ehud made a double-edged dagger that was about a foot* long, and he strapped it to his right thigh, keeping it hidden under his clothing. ¹⁸He brought the tribute money to Eglon, who was very fat.

¹⁹After delivering the payment, Ehud started home with those who had helped carry the tribute. ²⁰But when Ehud reached the stone idols near Gilgal, he turned back. He came to Eglon and said, "I have a secret message for you."

So the king commanded his servants, "Be quiet!" and he sent them all out of the room.

²¹Ehud walked over to Eglon, who was sitting alone in a cool upstairs room. And Ehud said, "I have a message from God for you!" As King Eglon rose from his seat, ²²Ehud reached with his left hand, pulled out the dagger strapped to his right thigh, and plunged it into the king's belly. ²³The dagger went so deep that the handle disappeared beneath the king's fat. So Ehud did not pull out the dagger, and the king's bowels emptied.* ²⁴Then Ehud closed and locked the doors of the room and escaped down the latrine.*

²⁵After Ehud was gone, the king's servants returned and found the doors to the upstairs room locked. They thought he might be using the latrine in the room, ²⁶so they waited. ²⁷When the king didn't come out after a long delay, they became concerned and got a key. And when they opened the doors, they found their master dead on the floor.

²⁸While the servants were waiting, Ehud escaped, passing the stone idols on his way to Seirah. ²⁹When he arrived in the hill country of Ephraim, Ehud sounded a call to arms. ³⁰Then he led a band of Israelites down from the hills.

³¹"Follow me," he said, "for the LORD has given you victory over Moab your enemy." So they followed him. And the Israelites took control of the shallow crossings of the Jordan river across from Moab, preventing anyone from crossing. ³²They attacked the Moabites and killed about 10,000 of the strongest and most able-bodied warriors. Not one of them escaped. ³³So Moab was conquered by Israel that day, and there was peace in the land for eighty years.

Shamgar Becomes Israel's Judge

³⁴After Ehud's death, the Israelites again did evil in the LORD's sight. ³⁵So the LORD turned them over to King of Hazor, a Canaanite king. The commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth-haggoiyim. ³⁶Sisera had 900 iron chariots, ruthlessly oppressed the Israelites for twenty years. Then the people of Israel cried out to the LORD for help.

³⁷Deborah, the wife of Lappidoth, was a prophet who was from Israel at that time. ³⁸She would sit under the Palm of Deborah, between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites would go to her for judgment. ³⁹One day she sent for Barak son of Abinoam, who lived in Kishon, in the land of Naphtali. She said to him, "This is the LORD, the God of Israel, commands you: Call out 10,000 warriors from the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulon at Tabor. ⁴⁰And I will call out Sisera, commander of his army, along with his chariots and warriors, to the Kishon River. There I will give you victory over him."

⁴¹Barak told her, "I will go, but only if you go with me." ⁴²"Very well," she replied, "I will go with you. But you will have no honor in this venture, for the LORD's victory over Sisera gomed, the length of which is uncertain. ⁴³:22 Or and it came out behind him."

⁴⁴Deborah said to Barak, "Go, for I will go with you." ⁴⁵So Deborah went with Barak to Kishon, and he defeated Sisera.

⁴⁶But Sisera fled on foot, and Deborah sent Barak after him.

⁴⁷Barak pursued Sisera to Harosheth-haggoiyim, where he found Sisera lying dead on an ox-goad.

⁴⁸Deborah said to Barak, "Blessed is the LORD, who has delivered your enemies into your hands."

⁴⁹Barak said to Deborah, "Blessed is the LORD, who has given you honor today."

⁵⁰Deborah said to Barak, "I have a son, and he is your brother-in-law."

⁵¹Barak said, "I will not go with you unless you go with me."

⁵²Deborah said, "I will go with you, but I will not go with you to the battle."

⁵³Barak said, "I will not go with you unless you go with me."

⁵⁴Deborah said, "I will go with you, but I will not go with you to the battle."

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⁸⁴Deborah said, "I will go with you, but I will not go with you to the battle."

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¹³²Deborah said, "I will go with you, but I will not go with you to the battle."

¹³³Barak said, "I will not go with you unless you go with me."

¹³⁴Deborah said, "I will go with you, but I will not go with you to the battle."

¹³⁵Barak said, "I will not go with you unless you go with me."

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¹³⁷Barak said, "I will not go with you unless you go with me."

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¹⁴³Barak said, "I will not go with you unless you go with me."

¹⁴⁴Deborah said, "I will go with you, but I will not go with you to the battle."

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¹⁵⁸Deborah said, "I will go with you, but I will not go with you to the battle."

from the path of their ancestors to the Lord's commands. He raised up a judge over Israel who rescued the people from their enemies' lifetime. For the Lord took pity on the people burdened by oppression and judge died, the people returned, living worse than those who went after other gods, serving and they refused to give up their ways.

with anger against Israel. He said, "I have violated my covenant, which you have broken, and have ignored my commandments, but the nations that Joshua left you. ²²I did this to test Israel to see if they would follow the ways of the Lord. That is why the Lord left those nations in the land to quickly drive them out of the land."

Canaan

It is that the Lord left in the land those who had not experienced the Lord's teaching or warfare to generations. ³These are the ones living under the five Philistine kings, the Sidonians, and the Hivites in Lebanon from Mount Baal-her. The people were left to test the people to see if they would obey the commandments of their ancestors through Moses.

Shamgar Becomes Israel's Judge

In the Lord's sight. They forgot the Lord and served the images of Baal. ⁴When the Lord burned with anger, he turned them over to King Cushan-rishathaim.* And the Israelites lived in the land for eight years.

The people of Israel cried out to the Lord for a rescuer to save them. ⁵King Caleb's younger brother, Othniel, came upon him, and he became the rescuer in the war against King Cushan-rishathaim. The Lord gave Othniel victory over the Moabites and for forty years. Then Othniel died.

Othniel's Judge

The Israelites did evil in the Lord's sight. ⁶King Moab controlled the land of Edom. ⁷When he enlisted the Ammonites and Moabites, he went out and defeated the city of Edom, the city of palms. ⁸He ruled over Moab for eighteen years.

The people of Israel cried out to the Lord for a rescuer to save them.

Gera, a left-handed man, came to the Lord.

at Josh 24:30; Hebrew reads Tamar. Tamar is located between the Euphrates and the Tigris rivers, the length of which is uncertain.

3:22 Or and it came out behind. 3:23 Or and went out through the porch; the meaning of the word is uncertain.

4:11 Or father-in-law.

⁹Benjamin. The Israelites sent Ehud to deliver their tribute money to King Eglon of Moab. ¹⁰So Ehud made a double-edged dagger that was about a foot* long, and he strapped it to his right thigh, keeping it hidden under his clothing. ¹¹He brought the tribute money to Eglon, who was very fat.

¹²After delivering the payment, Ehud started home with those who had helped carry the tribute. ¹³But when Ehud reached the stone idols near Gilgal, he turned back. He came to Eglon and said, "I have a secret message for you."

¹⁴So the king commanded his servants, "Be quiet!" and he sent them all out of the room.

¹⁵Ehud walked over to Eglon, who was sitting alone in a upstairs room. And Ehud said, "I have a message from the Lord for you." As King Eglon rose from his seat, ¹⁶Ehud reached with his left hand, pulled out the dagger strapped to his right thigh, and plunged it into the king's belly. ¹⁷The dagger went so deep that the handle disappeared beneath the king's fat. So Ehud did not pull out the dagger, and the king's bowels emptied.* ¹⁸Then Ehud closed and locked the doors of the room and escaped down the latrine.*

¹⁹After Ehud was gone, the king's servants returned and found the doors to the upstairs room locked. They thought he might be using the latrine in the room, ²⁰so they waited. When the king didn't come out after a long delay, they became concerned and got a key. And when they opened the doors, they found their master dead on the floor.

²¹While the servants were waiting, Ehud escaped, passing more idols on his way to Seirah. ²²When he arrived in the hill country of Ephraim, Ehud sounded a call to arms. ²³He led a band of Israelites down from the hills. "Follow me," he said, "for the Lord has given you victory over your enemy." So they followed him. And the Israelites took control of the shallow crossings of the Jordan, across from Moab, preventing anyone from crossing. ²⁴They attacked the Moabites and killed about 10,000 of the strongest and most able-bodied warriors. Not one of them escaped. ²⁵So Moab was conquered by Israel that day, and there was peace in the land for eighty years.

Shamgar Becomes Israel's Judge

²⁶After Ehud's death, the Israelites again did evil in the Lord's sight. ²⁷So the Lord turned them over to King Jabin, a Canaanite king. The commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth-haggoym. ²⁸Sisera, with 900 iron chariots, ruthlessly oppressed the Israelites for twenty years. Then the people of Israel cried out to the Lord for help.

²⁹Deborah, the wife of Lappidoth, was a prophet who was serving Israel at that time. ³⁰She would sit under the Palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites would go to her for judgment. ³¹She sent for Barak son of Abinoam, who lived in Kedesh in the land of Naphtali. She said to him, "This is the Lord, the God of Israel, commands you: Call out 3,000 warriors from the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun to Mount Tabor. ³²And I will call out Sisera, commander of his army, along with his chariots and warriors, to the Kishon River. There I will give you victory over him."

³³He told her, "I will go, but only if you go with me." "Very well," she replied, "I will go with you. But you will bring no honor in this venture, for the Lord's victory over Sisera will be at the hands of a woman." So Deborah went with Barak to Kedesh. ³⁴At Kedesh, Barak called together the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali, and 10,000 warriors went up with him. Deborah also went with him.

³⁵Now Heber the Kenite, a descendant of Moses' brother-in-law* Hobab, had moved away from the other members of his tribe and pitched his tent by the oak of Zaanannim near Kedesh.

³⁶When Sisera was told that Barak son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor, ³⁷he called for all 900 of his iron chariots and all of his warriors, and they marched from Harosheth-haggoym to the Kishon River.

³⁸Then Deborah said to Barak, "Get ready! This is the day the Lord will give you victory over Sisera, for the Lord is marching ahead of you." So Barak led his 10,000 warriors down the slopes of Mount Tabor into battle. ³⁹When Barak attacked, the Lord threw Sisera and all his chariots and warriors into a panic. Sisera leaped down from his chariot and escaped on foot. ⁴⁰Then Barak chased the chariots and the enemy army all the way to Harosheth-haggoym, killing all of Sisera's warriors. Not a single one was left alive.

⁴¹Meanwhile, Sisera ran to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, because Heber's family was on friendly terms with King Jabin of Hazor. ⁴²Jael went out to meet Sisera and said to him, "Come into my tent, sir. Come in. Don't be afraid." So he went into her tent, and she covered him with a blanket.

⁴³"Please give me some water," he said. "I'm thirsty." So she gave him some milk from a leather bag and covered him again.

⁴⁴"Stand at the door of the tent," he told her. "If anybody comes and asks you if there is anyone here, say no."

⁴⁵But when Sisera fell asleep from exhaustion, Jael quietly crept up to him with a hammer and tent peg in her hand. Then she drove the tent peg through his temple and into the ground, and so he died.

⁴⁶When Barak came looking for Sisera, Jael went out to meet him. She said, "Come, and I will show you the man you are looking for." So he followed her into the tent and found Sisera lying there dead, with the tent peg through his temple.

⁴⁷So on that day Israel saw God defeat Jabin, the Canaanite king. ⁴⁸And from that time on Israel became stronger and stronger against King Jabin until they finally destroyed him.

The Song of Deborah

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

2 "Israel's leaders took charge,
and the people gladly followed.
Praise the Lord!"

3 "Listen, you kings!
Pay attention, you mighty rulers!
For I will sing to the Lord.
I will make music to the Lord, the God of Israel."

4 "Lord, when you set out from Seir
and marched across the fields of Edom,
the earth trembled,
and the cloudy skies poured down rain.
5 The mountains quaked in the presence of the Lord,
the God of Mount Sinai—
in the presence of the Lord,
the God of Israel.

4:11 Or father-in-law.

6 "In the days of Shamgar son of Anath,
and in the days of Jael,
people avoided the main roads,
and travelers stayed on winding pathways.

7 There were few people left in the villages of Israel*—
until Deborah arose as a mother for Israel.

8 When Israel chose new gods,
war erupted at the city gates.
Yet not a shield or spear could be seen
among forty thousand warriors in Israel!

9 My heart is with the commanders of Israel,
with those who volunteered for war.
Praise the Lord!

10 "Consider this, you who ride on fine donkeys,
you who sit on fancy saddle blankets,
and you who walk along the road.

11 Listen to the village musicians*
gathered at the watering holes.
They recount the righteous victories of the Lord
and the victories of his villagers in Israel.
Then the people of the Lord
marched down to the city gates.

12 "Wake up, Deborah, wake up!
Wake up, wake up, and sing a song!
Arise, Barak!
Lead your captives away, son of Abinoam!

13 "Down from Tabor marched the few against the
nobles.
The people of the Lord marched down against
mighty warriors.

14 They came down from Ephraim—
a land that once belonged to the Amalekites;
they followed you, Benjamin, with your troops.
From Makir the commanders marched down;
from Zebulun came those who carry a commander's
staff.

15 The princes of Issachar were with Deborah and Barak.
They followed Barak, rushing into the valley.
But in the tribe of Reuben
there was great indecision.

16 Why did you sit at home among the sheepfolds—
to hear the shepherds whistle for their flocks?
Yes, in the tribe of Reuben
there was great indecision.

17 Gilead remained east of the Jordan.
And why did Dan stay home?
Asher sat unmoved at the seashore,
remaining in his harbors.

18 But Zebulun risked his life,
as did Naphtali, on the heights of the battlefield.

19 "The kings of Canaan came and fought,
at Taanach near Megiddo's springs,
but they carried off no silver treasures.

20 The stars fought from heaven.
The stars in their orbits fought against Sisera.

21 The Kishon River swept them away—
that ancient torrent, the Kishon.
March on with courage, my soul!

22 Then the horses' hooves hammered the ground,
the galloping, galloping of Sisera's mighty steeds.

23 'Let the people of Meroz be cursed,' said the angel of the
Lord.
'Let them be utterly cursed.'

5:7 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. 5:11 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

because they did not come to help the Lord—
to help the Lord against the mighty warriors.'

24 "Most blessed among women is Jael,
the wife of Heber the Kenite.
May she be blessed above all women who live in
tents.

25 Sisera asked for water,
and she gave him milk.
In a bowl fit for nobles,
she brought him yogurt.

26 Then with her left hand she reached for a tent peg,
and with her right hand for the workman's hammer.
She struck Sisera with the hammer, crushing his head.
With a shattering blow, she pierced his temples.

27 He sank, he fell,
he lay still at her feet.
And where he sank,
there he died.

28 "From the window Sisera's mother looked out.
Through the window she watched for his return,
saying,
'Why is his chariot so long in coming?
Why don't we hear the sound of chariot wheels?'

29 "Her wise women answer,
and she repeats these words to herself:
30 They must be dividing the captured plunder—
with a woman or two for every man.
There will be colorful robes for Sisera,
and colorful, embroidered robes for me.
Yes, the plunder will include
colorful robes embroidered on both sides.'

31 "Lord, may all your enemies die like Sisera!
But may those who love you rise like the sun in all its
power!"

Then there was peace in the land for forty years.

Gideon Becomes Israel's Judge

6 The Israelites did evil in the Lord's sight. So the Lord handed them over to the Midianites for seven years.
2 The Midianites were so cruel that the Israelites made hiding places for themselves in the mountains, caves, and strongholds. 3 Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, marauders from Midian, Amalek, and the people of the east would attack Israel, 4 camping in the land and destroying crops as far away as Gaza. They left the Israelites with nothing to eat, taking all the sheep, goats, cattle, and donkeys. 5 These enemy hordes, coming with their livestock in their tents, were as thick as locusts; they arrived on droves, camels too numerous to count. And they stayed until the land was stripped bare. 6 So Israel was reduced to starvation by the Midianites. Then the Israelites cried out to the Lord for help.

7 When they cried out to the Lord because of Midian, the Lord sent a prophet to the Israelites. He said, "This is the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of slavery in Egypt. 9 I rescued you from the Egyptians and from those who oppressed you. I drove out your enemies and gave them their land. 10 I told you, 'I am the Lord your God. You must not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you now live.' But you have not listened to me."

11 Then the angel of the Lord came and sat beneath the great tree at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash of the clan of Abiezer. Gideon son of Joash was threshing wheat at

bottom of a winepress to hide the grain from the Midianites. 12 The angel of the Lord appeared to him and said, "Mighty hero, the Lord is with you!" 13 "Sir," Gideon replied, "if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? And where are all the miracles our ancestors told us about? Didn't they say, 'The Lord brought us out of Egypt?' But now the Lord has abandoned us and handed us over to the Midianites."

14 Then the Lord turned to him and said, "Go with the strength you have, and rescue Israel from the Midianites. I am sending you!" 15 "But Lord," Gideon replied, "how can I rescue Israel? My family is the weakest in the whole tribe of Manasseh, and I am the least in my entire family!" 16 The Lord said to him, "I will be with you. And you will destroy the Midianites as if you were fighting against one man."

17 Gideon replied, "If you are truly going to help me, show me a sign to prove that it is really the Lord speaking to me. 18 Don't go away until I come back and bring my offering to you."

19 He answered, "I will stay here until you return." 20 Gideon hurried home. He cooked a young goat, and with a basket* of flour he baked some bread without yeast. Then carrying the meat in a basket and the broth in a pot, he brought them out and presented them to the angel, who was under the great tree. 21 The angel of God said to him, "Place the meat and the leavened bread on this rock, and pour the broth over it." 22 Gideon did as he was told. 23 Then the angel of the Lord picked up the meat and bread with the tip of the staff in his hand, and fire flamed up from the rock and consumed all he had brought. And the angel of the Lord disappeared. 24 When Gideon realized that it was the angel of the Lord, he cried out, "Oh, Sovereign Lord, I'm doomed! I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face!" 25 "It is all right," the Lord replied. "Do not be afraid. You will not die." 26 And Gideon built an altar to the Lord there and named it Yahweh-Shalom (which means "the Lord is safe"). The altar remains in Ophrah in the land of the clan of Abiezer to this day.

27 That night the Lord said to Gideon, "Take the second bull from your father's herd, the one that is seven years old. 28 Kill your father's altar to Baal, and cut down the Asherah pole standing beside it. 29 Then build an altar to the Lord God here on this hilltop sanctuary, laying the stones carefully. Sacrifice the bull as a burnt offering on the altar, and as fuel the wood of the Asherah pole you cut down." 30 So Gideon took ten of his servants and did as the Lord commanded. But he did it at night because he was afraid of the other members of his father's household and of the people of the town.

31 Early the next morning, as the people of the town began to search for the altar of Baal, they discovered that the altar of the Lord had been torn down and that the Asherah pole beside it had been cut down. In their place a new altar had been built, and on it the remains of the bull that had been sacrificed. 32 The people said to each other, "Who did this?" And after asking around and making a careful search, they learned that it was the son of Joash.

33 "Bring out your son," the men of the town demanded of Joash. "He must die for destroying the altar of Baal and for cutting down the Asherah pole."

34 But Joash shouted to the mob that confronted him, "Are you defending Baal? Will you argue his case? 35 Hebrew an ephah [20 quarts or 22 liters]. 7:3 Hebrew may leave Mount Gilead. This is another name for Mount Gilboa.

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and above all women who live in
the land.
She had a tent peg
and a hammer,
and she reached for a tent peg,
hand for the workman’s hammer,
and she pierced his head
with the hammer, crushing his
nose. She struck him down,
and he died.

“Sir,” Gideon replied, “if the LORD is with us, why has all happened to us? And where are all the miracles our ancestors told us about? Didn’t they say, ‘The LORD brought us out of Egypt?’ But now the LORD has abandoned us and handed us over to the Midianites.”

Whoever pleads his case will be put to death by morning! If Baal truly is a god, let him defend himself and destroy the one who broke down his altar.”³² From then on Gideon was called Jerub-baal, which means “Let Baal defend himself,” because he broke down Baal’s altar.

Gideon Asks for a Sign

³³Soon afterward the armies of Midian, Amalek, and the people of the east formed an alliance against Israel and crossed the Jordan, camping in the valley of Jezreel. ³⁴Then the Spirit of the Lord took possession of Gideon. He blew a ram's horn as a call to arms, and the men of the clan of Abiezer came to him. ³⁵He also sent messengers throughout Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, summoning their warriors, and all of them responded.

"Then Gideon said to God, 'If you are truly going to use me to rescue Israel as you promised,³⁷ prove it to me in this way. I will put a wool fleece on the threshing floor tonight. If the fleece is wet with dew in the morning but the ground is dry, then I will know that you are going to help me rescue Israel as you promised.'³⁸ And that is just what happened. When Gideon got up early the next morning, he squeezed the fleece and wrung out a whole bowlful of water.
³⁹ Then Gideon said to God, 'Please show me a sign that you will rescue Israel through me.'

³⁹Then Gideon said to God, "Please don't be angry with me, but let me make one more request. Let me use the fleece or one more test. This time let the fleece remain dry while the ground around it is wet with dew." ⁴⁰So that night God did as Gideon asked. The fleece was dry in the morning, but the ground was covered with dew.

ideon Defeats the Midianites

So Jerub-baal (that is, Gideon) and his army got up early and went as far as the spring of Harod. The armies of dian were camped north of them in the valley near the of Moreh.² The LORD said to Gideon, "You have too many rriors with you. If I let all of you fight the Midianites, the elites will boast to me that they saved themselves by ir own strength.³ Therefore, tell the people, 'Whoever is id or afraid may leave this mountain* and go home.'" So 000 of them went home, leaving only 10,000 who were ling to fight.

But the Lord told Gideon, "There are still too many! Bring them down to the spring, and I will test them to determine who will go with you and who will not." 5When Gideon took his warriors down to the water, the Lord told him, "Divide the men into two groups. In one group put all those who water in their hands and lap it up with their tongues like dogs. In the other group put all those who kneel down and drink with their mouths in the stream." 6Only 300 of the Israelites drank from their hands. All the others got down on their knees and drank with their mouths in the stream.

The Lord told Gideon, "With these 300 men I will rescue you and give you victory over the Midianites. Send all the others home." So Gideon collected the provisions and the horns of the other warriors and sent them home. But he kept the 300 men with him.

The Midianite camp was in the valley just below Gideon. That night the Lord said, "Get up! Go down into the Midian camp, for I have given you victory over them!"¹⁰ But if you are afraid to attack, go down to the camp with your servant Jephthah. "Listen to what the Midianites are saying, and you will be greatly encouraged. Then you will be eager to attack."

Gideon took Purah and went down to the edge of the camp.¹² The armies of Midian, Amalek, and the people of the east had settled in the valley like a swarm of bees; and he said to them, "Arise, men of Gilead, for I will be eager to attack."

locusts. Their camels were like grains of sand on the seashore—too many to count!¹³ Gideon crept up just as a man was telling his companion about a dream. The man said, “I had this dream, and in my dream a loaf of barley bread came tumbling down into the Midianite camp. It hit a tent, turned it over, and knocked it flat!”

¹⁴ His companion answered, “Your dream can mean only one thing—God has given Gideon son of Joash, the Israelite, victory over Midian and all its allies!”

¹⁵ When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, he bowed in worship before the Lord.* Then he returned to the Israelite camp and shouted, “Get up! For the Lord has given you victory over the Midianite hordes!” ¹⁶ He divided the 300 men into three groups and gave each man a ram’s horn and a clay jar with a torch in it.

¹⁷ Then he said to them, “Keep your eyes on me. When I come to the edge of the camp, do just as I do. ¹⁸ As soon as I and those with me blow the rams’ horns, blow your horns, too, all around the entire camp, and shout, ‘For the Lord and for Gideon!’”

¹⁹ It was just after midnight,* after the changing of the guard, when Gideon and the 100 men with him reached the edge of the Midianite camp. Suddenly, they blew the rams’ horns and broke their clay jars. ²⁰ Then all three groups blew their horns and broke their jars. They held the blazing torches in their left hands and the horns in their right hands, and they all shouted, “A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!”

²¹ Each man stood at his position around the camp and watched as all the Midianites rushed around in a panic, shouting as they ran to escape. ²² When the 300 Israelites blew their rams’ horns, the Lord caused the warriors in the camp to fight against each other with their swords. Those who were not killed fled to places as far away as Beth-shittah near Zererah and to the border of Abel-meholah near Tabbath.

²³ Then Gideon sent for the warriors of Naphtali, Asher, and Manasseh, who joined in chasing the army of Midian. ²⁴ Gideon also sent messengers throughout the hill country of Ephraim, saying, “Come down to attack the Midianites. Cut them off at the shallow crossings of the Jordan River at Beth-barah.”

So all the men of Ephraim did as they were told. ²⁵ They captured Oreb and Zeeb, the two Midianite commanders, killing Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb at the winepress of Zeeb. And they continued to chase the Midianites. Afterward the Israelites brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon, who was by the Jordan River.

Gideon Kills Zebah and Zalmunna

8 Then the people of Ephraim asked Gideon, “Why have you treated us this way? Why didn’t you send for us when you first went out to fight the Midianites?” And they argued heatedly with Gideon.

² But Gideon replied, “What have I accomplished compared to you? Aren’t even the leftover grapes of Ephraim’s harvest better than the entire crop of my little clan of Abiezzer? ³ God gave you victory over Oreb and Zeeb, the commanders of the Midianite army. What have I accomplished compared to that?” When the men of Ephraim heard Gideon’s answer, their anger subsided.

⁴ Gideon then crossed the Jordan River with his 300 men, and though exhausted, they continued to chase the enemy. ⁵ When they reached Succoth, Gideon asked the leaders of the town, “Please give my warriors some food.

^{7:15} As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *he bowed*. ^{7:19} Hebrew at the beginning of the second watch. ^{8:8} Hebrew *Penuel*, a variant spelling of *Peniel*. ^{8:26} Hebrew 1,700 shekels (19.4 kilograms).

They are very tired. I am chasing Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian.”

⁶ But the officials of Succoth replied, “Catch Zebah and Zalmunna first, and then we will feed your army.”

⁷ So Gideon said, “After the Lord gives me victory over Zebah and Zalmunna, I will return and tear your flesh with the thorns and briars from the wilderness.”

⁸ From there Gideon went up to Peniel* and again asked for food, but he got the same answer. ⁹ So he said to the people of Peniel, “After I return in victory, I will tear down this tower.”

¹⁰ By this time Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor with 15,000 warriors—all that remained of the allied armies of the east, for 120,000 had already been killed. ¹¹ Gideon circled around by the caravan route east of Nobah and Joggehah, taking the Midianite army by surprise. ¹² Zebah and Zalmunna, the two Midianite kings, fled, but Gideon chased them down and captured all their warriors.

¹³ After this, Gideon returned from the battle by way of Heres Pass. ¹⁴ There he captured a young man from Succoth and demanded that he write down the names of all the seventy-seven officials and elders in the town. ¹⁵ Gideon then returned to Succoth and said to the leaders, “Here are Zebah and Zalmunna. When we were here before, you taunted me, saying, ‘Catch Zebah and Zalmunna first, and then we will feed your exhausted army.’” ¹⁶ Then Gideon took the elders of the town and taught them a lesson, punishing them with thorns and briars from the wilderness. ¹⁷ He also tore down the tower of Peniel and killed all the men in the town.

¹⁸ Then Gideon asked Zebah and Zalmunna, “The men you killed at Tabor—what were they like?”

“Like you,” they replied. “They all had the look of a king’s son.”

¹⁹ “They were my brothers, the sons of my own mother,” Gideon exclaimed. “As surely as the Lord lives, I would kill you if you hadn’t killed them.”

²⁰ Turning to Jether, his oldest son, he said, “Kill them.” But Jether did not draw his sword, for he was only a boy and was afraid.

²¹ Then Zebah and Zalmunna said to Gideon, “Be a man! Kill us yourself!” So Gideon killed them both and took their royal ornaments from the necks of their camels.

Gideon’s Sacred Ephod

²² Then the Israelites said to Gideon, “Be our ruler! You are our son and your grandson will be our rulers, for you have rescued us from Midian.”

²³ But Gideon replied, “I will not rule over you, nor will my son. The Lord will rule over you!” ²⁴ However, I do have one request—that each of you give me an earring from the plunder you collected from your fallen enemies.” (The enemies being Ishmaelites, all wore gold earrings.)

²⁵ “Gladly!” they replied. They spread out a cloak, and each one threw in a gold earring he had gathered from the plunder. ²⁶ The weight of the gold earrings was forty-three pounds,* not including the royal ornaments and pendants—the purple clothing worn by the kings of Midian, or the chains around the necks of their camels.

²⁷ Gideon made a sacred ephod from the gold and purple clothing he had gathered from the Midianites. He brought it to Ophrah, his hometown. But soon all the Israelites prostituted themselves by worshiping it, and it became a trap for Gideon and his family.

²⁸ That is the story of how the people of Israel defeated Midian, which never recovered. Throughout the rest of Gideon’s lifetime—about forty years—there was peace in the land.

²⁹ Then Gideon* son of Joash returned home. ³⁰ He had seventy sons born to him, for he had many wives. ³¹ He also had a concubine in Shechem, who gave birth to a son, whom he named Abimelech. ³² Gideon died when he was very old, and he was buried in the grave of his father, Joash, at Ophrah in the land of the clan of Abiezzer.

³³ As soon as Gideon died, the Israelites prostituted themselves by worshiping the images of Baal, making Baal-berith their god. ³⁴ They forgot the Lord their God, who had rescued them from all their enemies surrounding them. ³⁵ Nor did they show any loyalty to the family of Jerub-baal (that is, Gideon), despite all the good he had done for Israel.

Abimelech Rules over Shechem

9 One day Gideon’s* son Abimelech went to Shechem to visit his uncles—his mother’s brothers. He said to them and to the rest of his mother’s family, ² Ask the leading citizens of Shechem whether they want to be ruled by all seven of Gideon’s sons or by one man. And remember that I am your own flesh and blood!”

³ So Abimelech’s uncles gave his message to all the citizens of Shechem on his behalf. And after listening to this proposal, the people of Shechem decided in favor of Abimelech because he was their relative. ⁴ They gave him seventy coins from the temple of Baal-berith, which he used to hire some reckless troublemakers who agreed to follow him. ⁵ He went to his father’s home at Ophrah, and there, on the spot, they killed all seventy of his half brothers, the sons of Gideon.* But the youngest brother, Jotham, escaped.

⁶ Then all the leading citizens of Shechem and Beth-millo met at a meeting under the oak beside the pillar* at Shechem and made Abimelech their king.

Jotham’s Parable

⁷ Jotham heard about this, he climbed to the top of Mount Gerizim and shouted,

“Listen to me, citizens of Shechem! Listen to me if you want God to listen to you! Once upon a time the trees decided to choose a king. First they said to the olive tree, ‘Be our king!’

But the olive tree refused, saying, ‘Should I quit producing olive oil that blesses both God and people, just to wave back and forth over the trees?’

⁸ Then they said to the fig tree, ‘You be our king!’

But the fig tree also refused, saying, ‘Should I quit producing my sweet fruit just to wave back and forth over the trees?’

⁹ Then they said to the grapevine, ‘You be our king!’

But the grapevine also refused, saying, ‘Should I quit producing the wine that cheers both God and people, just to wave back and forth over the trees?’

¹⁰ Then all the trees finally turned to the thornbush and said,

“Come, you be our king!” And the thornbush replied to the trees, “If you truly want to make me your king,

¹¹ Hebrew *Jerub-baal*; see 6:32. ^{9:1} Hebrew *Jerub-baal’s* (see 6:32); also in 9:2, 24. ^{9:28} Hebrew *Who is Shechem?* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. ^{9:28} Hebrew *Who is Shechem?* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. ^{9:29} As it reads in *Tormah*; compare 9:41. ^{9:37a} Or *the center of the land*. ^{9:37b} Hebrew

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'Be our king!'

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that blesses both God and people,
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³⁹Then all the trees finally turned to the thornbush and
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Come, you be our king!"

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³⁸Then Zebul turned on him and asked, "Now where is that big mouth of yours? Wasn't it you that said, 'Who is Abimelech, and why should we be his servants?' The men you mocked are right outside the city! Go out and fight them!"

³⁹So Gaal led the leading citizens of Shechem into battle against Abimelech. ⁴⁰But Abimelech chased him, and many of Shechem's men were wounded and fell along the road as they retreated to the city gate. ⁴¹Abimelech returned to Arumah, and Zebul drove Gaal and his brothers out of Shechem.

⁴²The next day the people of Shechem went out into the fields to battle. When Abimelech heard about it, ⁴³he divided his men into three groups and set an ambush in the fields. When Abimelech saw the people coming out of the city, he and his men jumped up from their hiding places and attacked them. ⁴⁴Abimelech and his group stormed the city gate to keep the men of Shechem from getting back in, while Abimelech's other two groups cut them down in the fields. ⁴⁵The battle went on all day before Abimelech finally captured the city. He killed the people, leveled the city, and scattered salt all over the ground.

⁴⁶When the leading citizens who lived in the tower of Shechem heard what had happened, they ran and hid in the temple of Baal-berith.* ⁴⁷Someone reported to Abimelech that the citizens had gathered in the temple, ⁴⁸so he led his forces to Mount Zalmon. He took an ax and chopped some branches from a tree, then put them on his shoulder. "Quick, do as I have done!" he told his men. ⁴⁹So each of them cut down some branches, following Abimelech's example. They piled the branches against the walls of the temple and set them on fire. So all the people who had lived in the tower of Shechem died—about 1,000 men and women.

⁵⁰Then Abimelech attacked the town of Thebez and captured it. ⁵¹But there was a strong tower inside the town, and all the men and women—the entire population—fled to it. They barricaded themselves in and climbed up to the roof of the tower. ⁵²Abimelech followed them to attack the tower. But as he prepared to set fire to the entrance, ⁵³a woman on the roof dropped a millstone that landed on Abimelech's head and crushed his skull.

⁵⁴He quickly said to his young armor bearer, "Draw your sword and kill me! Don't let it be said that a woman killed Abimelech!" So the young man ran him through with his sword, and he died. ⁵⁵When Abimelech's men saw that he was dead, they disbanded and returned to their homes.

⁵⁶In this way, God punished Abimelech for the evil he had done against his father by murdering his seventy brothers. ⁵⁷God also punished the men of Shechem for all their evil. So the curse of Jotham son of Gideon was fulfilled.

Tola Becomes Israel's Judge

10 After Abimelech died, Tola son of Puah, son of Dodo, was the next person to rescue Israel. He was from the tribe of Issachar but lived in the town of Shamir in the hill country of Ephraim. ²He judged Israel for twenty-three years. When he died, he was buried in Shamir.

Jair Becomes Israel's Judge

³After Tola died, Jair from Gilead judged Israel for twenty-two years. ⁴His thirty sons rode around on thirty donkeys, and they owned thirty towns in the land of Gilead, which are still called the Towns of Jair.* ⁵When Jair died, he was buried in Kamon.

The Ammonites Oppress Israel

⁶Again the Israelites did evil in the LORD's sight. They served the images of Baal and Ashtoreth, and the gods of

Aram, Sidon, Moab, Ammon, and Philistia. They abandoned the LORD and no longer served him at all. ⁷So the LORD burned with anger against Israel, and he turned them over to the Philistines and the Ammonites, ⁸who began to oppress them that year. For eighteen years they oppressed all the Israelites east of the Jordan River in the land of the Ammonites (that is, in Gilead). ⁹The Ammonites also crossed the west side of the Jordan and attacked Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim.

The Israelites were in great distress. ¹⁰Finally, they cried out to the LORD for help, saying, "We have sinned against you because we have abandoned you as our God and have served the images of Baal."

¹¹The Lord replied, "Did I not rescue you from the Egyptians, the Amorites, the Ammonites, the Philistines, ¹²the Sidonians, the Amalekites, and the Maonites? When they oppressed you, you cried out to me for help, and I rescued you. ¹³Yet you have abandoned me and served other gods. So I will not rescue you anymore. ¹⁴Go and cry out to the gods you have chosen! Let them rescue you in your hour of distress!"

¹⁵But the Israelites pleaded with the LORD and said, "We have sinned. Punish us as you see fit, only rescue us today from our enemies." ¹⁶Then the Israelites put aside their foreign gods and served the LORD. And he was grieved by their misery.

¹⁷At that time the armies of Ammon had gathered for war and were camped in Gilead, and the people of Israel assembled and camped at Mizpah. ¹⁸The leaders of Gilead said to each other, "Whoever attacks the Ammonites first will become ruler over all the people of Gilead."

Jephthah Becomes Israel's Judge

11 Now Jephthah of Gilead was a great warrior. He was the son of Gilead, but his mother was a prostitute. ²Gilead's wife also had several sons, and when these half-brothers grew up, they chased Jephthah off the land. "You will not get any of our father's inheritance," they said, "for you are the son of a prostitute." ³So Jephthah fled from his brothers and lived in the land of Tob. Soon he had a band of worthless rebels following him.

⁴At about this time, the Ammonites began their war against Israel. ⁵When the Ammonites attacked, the elders of Gilead sent for Jephthah in the land of Tob. The elders said, "Come and be our commander! Help us fight the Ammonites!"

⁷But Jephthah said to them, "Aren't you the ones who hated me and drove me from my father's house? Why did you come to me now when you're in trouble?"

⁸"Because we need you," the elders replied. "If you lead us in battle against the Ammonites, we will make you ruler over all the people of Gilead."

⁹Jephthah said to the elders, "Let me get this straight. If the LORD is our witness," the elders replied. "I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering."

¹⁰"The LORD is our witness," the elders replied. "I promise to do whatever you say."

¹¹So Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the LORD gave him victory. ¹²He crushed the Ammonites, people made him their ruler and commander of the army, ¹³vastating about twenty towns from Aroer to an area near At Mizpah, in the presence of the LORD, Jephthah repeated ¹⁴and as far away as Abel-keramim. In this way Israel defeated the Ammonites.

¹⁵Then Jephthah sent messengers to the king of Ammon asking, "Why have you come out to fight against my land?"

¹⁶The king of Ammon answered Jephthah's messenger, "Joy. She was his one and only child; he had no other sons

"When the Israelites came out of Egypt, they stole my last daughters. ¹⁷When he saw her, he tore his clothes in anger.

from the Arnon River to the Jabbok River and all the way to the Jordan. Now then, give back the land peacefully."

¹⁸Jephthah sent this message back to the Ammonite king:

¹⁹"This is what Jephthah says: Israel did not steal any land from Moab or Ammon. ²⁰When the people of Israel arrived at Kadesh on their journey from Egypt after crossing the Red Sea,* ²¹they sent messengers to the king of Edom asking for permission to pass through his land. But their request was denied. Then they asked the king of Moab for similar permission, but he wouldn't let them pass through either. So the people of Israel stayed in Kadesh.

²²"Finally, they went around Edom and Moab through the wilderness. They traveled along Moab's eastern border and camped on the other side of the Arnon River. But they never once crossed the Arnon River into Moab, for the Arnon was the border of Moab.

²³"Then Israel sent messengers to King Sihon of the Amorites, who ruled from Heshbon, asking for permission to cross through his land to get to their destination. ²⁴But King Sihon didn't trust Israel to pass through his land. Instead, he mobilized his army at Jahaz and attacked them. ²⁵But the LORD, the God of Israel, gave his people victory over King Sihon. So Israel took control of all the land of the Amorites, who lived in that region, ²⁶from the Arnon River to the Jabbok River, and from the eastern wilderness to the Jordan.

²⁷"So you see, it was the LORD, the God of Israel, who took away the land from the Amorites and gave it to Israel. Why, then, should we give it back to you? ²⁸You keep whatever your god Chemosh gives you, and we will keep whatever the LORD our God gives us. ²⁹Are you any better than Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he try to make a case against Israel for disputed land? Did he go to war against them?"

³⁰"Israel has been living here for 300 years, inhabiting Heshbon and its surrounding settlements, all the way to Aroer and its settlements, and in all the towns along the Arnon River. Why have you made no effort to recover it before now? ³¹Therefore, I have not sinned against you. Rather, you have wronged me by attacking me. Let the LORD, who is judge, decide today which of us is right—Israel or Ammon."

³²But the king of Ammon paid no attention to Jephthah's message.

Jephthah's Vow

³³At that time the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, and he went throughout the land of Gilead and Manasseh, including Mizpah in Gilead, and from there he led an army against the Ammonites. ³⁴And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD. He said, "If you give me victory over the Ammonites, come with you and if the LORD gives me victory over the Ammonites, will you really make me ruler over all the people?" ³⁵He met me when I return in triumph. I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering."

³⁶So Jephthah led his army against the Ammonites, and the LORD gave him victory. ³⁷He crushed the Ammonites, ³⁸vastating about twenty towns from Aroer to an area near At Mizpah, in the presence of the LORD, Jephthah repeated ³⁹and as far away as Abel-keramim. In this way Israel defeated the Ammonites.

⁴⁰When Jephthah returned home to Mizpah, his daughter came out to meet him, playing on a tambourine and dancing

⁴¹The king of Ammon answered Jephthah's messenger, "Joy. She was his one and only child; he had no other sons

"When the Israelites came out of Egypt, they stole my last daughters. ⁴²When he saw her, he tore his clothes in anger.

⁴³He took her and sacrificed her on an altar. ⁴⁴When he returned home, he was greatly grieved.

⁴⁵He said, "I have sinned greatly against the LORD. I have brought trouble on Israel by my foolish action."

⁴⁶He took a heavy load of stones and made a pile of them.

⁴⁷He said, "This is a monument to me and my family. I have brought trouble on Israel."

⁴⁸He named the place Aroer, and it is still there.

⁴⁹He lived in Gilead for the rest of his life.

⁵⁰He died and was buried in Gilead.

⁵¹He was buried in Gilead.

⁵²He was buried in Gilead.

⁵³He was buried in Gilead.

⁵⁴He was buried in Gilead.

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mon, and Philistia. They abandoned him, and he served him at all. ⁷So the Lord against Israel, and he turned them over to the Ammonites, ⁸who began to oppress them. For eighteen years they oppressed all the Jordan River in the land of the Ammonites. ⁹The Ammonites also crossed the Jordan and attacked Judah, Benjamin, and the tribes of the南方.

10 Finally, they cried out for help, saying, "We have sinned against you, and you have abandoned us as our God and have Baal."

11 "Did I not rescue you from the Egyptian? I rescued you from the Ammonites, the Philistines, ¹²the Sabeans, and the Maonites? When they cried out to me for help, and I rescued them, they abandoned me and served other gods you anymore. ¹⁴Go and cry out to the Lord! Let them rescue you in your hour of need."

15 They pleaded with the Lord and said, "We trust you as you see fit, only rescue us today!"

16 Then the Israelites put aside their fear of the Lord. And he was grieved by the

17 armies of Ammon had gathered for battle at Gilead, and the people of Israel assembled at Mizpah. ¹⁸The leaders of Gilead said, "If we attacks the Ammonites first will the people of Gilead."

19 Jephthah became Israel's Judge

20 Jephthah of Gilead was a great warrior. He was born in Gilead, but his mother was a prostitute. He had several sons, and when these men chased Jephthah off the land, "You are not fit to inherit my father's inheritance," they said. "You are a prostitute." ²²So Jephthah fled from Gilead to the land of Tob. Soon he had a band of followers following him.

23 At that time, the Ammonites began their attack. The Ammonites attacked, the elders of Gilead said, "Jephthah in the land of Tob. The elders said, "Jephthah is a commander! Help us fight the Ammonites!"

24 Jephthah said to them, "Aren't you the ones who have driven me from my father's house? Why do you bring me when you're in trouble?"

25 "We have heard you," the elders replied. "If you will lead us against the Ammonites, we will make you ruler over us."

26 Jephthah said to the elders, "Let me get this straight. If the Lord gives me victory over the Ammonites, I will really make me ruler over all the people of Israel as your witness," the elders replied. "We will do whatever you say."

27 Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and they sent messengers to the king of Ammon. "If you come out to fight against us, we will meet you at the Jordan River in the presence of the Lord, Jephthah said to the elders.

28 Jephthah sent messengers to the king of Ammon. "If you come out to fight against us, we will meet you at the Jordan River in the presence of the Lord, Jephthah said to the elders.

29 From the Arnon River to the Jabbok River and all the way to the Jordan. Now then, give back the land peaceably."

30 Jephthah sent this message back to the Ammonite king:

31 "This is what Jephthah says: Israel did not steal any land from Moab or Ammon. ³²When the people of Israel arrived at Kadesh on their journey from Egypt after crossing the Red Sea, ³³they sent messengers to the king of Edom asking for permission to pass through his land. But their request was denied. Then they asked the king of Moab for similar permission, but he wouldn't let them pass through either. So the people of Israel stayed in Kadesh.

34 "Finally, they went around Edom and Moab through the wilderness. They traveled along Moab's eastern border and camped on the other side of the Jordan River. But they never once crossed the Arnon River into Moab, for the Arnon was the border of Moab.

35 "Then Israel sent messengers to King Sihon of the Amorites, who ruled from Heshbon, asking for permission to cross through his land to get to their destination. ³⁶But King Sihon didn't trust Israel to pass through his land. Instead, he mobilized his army at Hazor and attacked them. ³⁷But the Lord, the God of Israel, gave his people victory over King Sihon. So Israel took control of all the land of the Amorites, who lived in that region, ³⁸from the Arnon River to the Jabbok River, and from the eastern wilderness to the Jordan.

39 "So you see, it was the Lord, the God of Israel, who took away the land from the Amorites and gave it to Israel. Why, then, should we give it back to you? ⁴⁰You will keep whatever your god Chemosh gives you, and we will keep whatever the Lord our God gives us. ⁴¹Are you better than Balak son of Zipor, king of Moab? Did he not make a case against Israel for disputed land? Did he not go to war against them?

42 Israel has been living here for 300 years, inhabiting Heshbon and its surrounding settlements, all the way to Bezer and its settlements, and in all the towns along the Jordan River. Why have you made no effort to recover it before now? ⁴³Therefore, I have not sinned against you. Rather, you have wronged me by attacking me. Let the Lord, who is judge, decide today which of us is right—Israel or Ammon."

44 The king of Ammon paid no attention to Jephthah's message.

Jephthah's Vow

45 At that time the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah, and he went throughout the land of Gilead and Manasseh, including Mizpah in Gilead, and from there he led an army against the Ammonites. ⁴⁶And Jephthah made a vow to the Lord: "If you give me victory over the Ammonites, I will give to the Lord whatever comes out of my house to me when I return in triumph. I will sacrifice it as a offering."

47 Jephthah led his army against the Ammonites, and the Lord gave him victory. ⁴⁸He crushed the Ammonites, about twenty towns from Aroer to an area near Rabbah and as far away as Abel-keramim. In this way Israel defeated the Ammonites.

49 When Jephthah returned home to Mizpah, his daughter came out to meet him, playing on a tambourine and dancing in the streets. She was his one and only child; he had no other sons or daughters. ⁵⁰When he saw her, he tore his clothes in anger.

51 "Oh, my daughter!" he cried out. "You have completely destroyed me! You've brought disaster on me! For I have made a vow to the Lord, and I cannot take it back."

52 And she said, "Father, if you have made a vow to the Lord, you must do to me what you have vowed, for the Lord has given you a great victory over your enemies, the Ammonites. ⁵³But first let me do this one thing: Let me go up and roam in the hills and weep with my friends for two months, because I will die a virgin."

54 "You may go," Jephthah said. And he sent her away for two months. She and her friends went into the hills and wept because she would never have children. ⁵⁵When she returned home, her father kept the vow he had made, and she died a virgin.

56 So it has become a custom in Israel ⁵⁷for young Israelite women to go away for four days each year to lament the fate of Jephthah's daughter.

Ephraim Fights with Jephthah

12 Then the people of Ephraim mobilized an army and crossed over the Jordan River to Zaphon. They sent this message to Jephthah: "Why didn't you call for us to help you fight against the Ammonites? We are going to burn down your house with you in it!"

2 Jephthah replied, "I summoned you at the beginning of the dispute, but you refused to come! You failed to help us in our struggle against Ammon. ³So when I realized you weren't coming, I risked my life and went to battle without you, and the Lord gave me victory over the Ammonites. So why have you now come to fight me?"

4 The people of Ephraim responded, "You men of Gilead are nothing more than fugitives from Ephraim and Manasseh." So Jephthah gathered all the men of Gilead and attacked the men of Ephraim and defeated them.

5 Jephthah captured the shallow crossings of the Jordan River, and whenever a fugitive from Ephraim tried to go back across, the men of Gilead would challenge him. "Are you a member of the tribe of Ephraim?" they would ask. If the man said, "No, I'm not," they would tell him to say "Shibboleth." If he was from Ephraim, he would say "Sibboleth," because people from Ephraim cannot pronounce the word correctly. Then they would take him and kill him at the shallow crossings of the Jordan. In all, 42,000 Ephraimites were killed at that time.

6 Jephthah judged Israel for six years. When he died, he was buried in one of the towns of Gilead.

Ibzan Becomes Israel's Judge

7 After Jephthah died, Ibzan from Bethlehem judged Israel. ⁸He had thirty sons and thirty daughters. He sent his daughters to marry men outside his clan, and he brought in thirty young women from outside his clan to marry his sons. Ibzan judged Israel for seven years. ⁹When he died, he was buried at Bethlehem.

Elon Becomes Israel's Judge

10 After Ibzan died, Elon from the tribe of Zebulun judged Israel for ten years. ¹¹When he died, he was buried at Ajalon in Zebulun.

Abdon Becomes Israel's Judge

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

The Birth of Samson

13 Again the Israelites did evil in the Lord's sight, so the Lord handed them over to the Philistines, who oppressed them for forty years.

²In those days a man named Manoah from the tribe of Dan lived in the town of Zorah. His wife was unable to become pregnant, and they had no children. ³The angel of the Lord appeared to Manoah's wife and said, "Even though you have been unable to have children, you will soon become pregnant and give birth to a son. ⁴So be careful; you must not drink wine or any other alcoholic drink nor eat any forbidden food." ⁵You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and his hair must never be cut. For he will be dedicated to God as a Nazirite from birth. He will begin to rescue Israel from the Philistines."

⁶The woman ran and told her husband, "A man of God appeared to me! He looked like one of God's angels, terrifying to see. I didn't ask where he was from, and he didn't tell me his name. ⁷But he told me, 'You will become pregnant and give birth to a son. You must not drink wine or any other alcoholic drink nor eat any forbidden food. For your son will be dedicated to God as a Nazirite from the moment of his birth until the day of his death.'"

⁸Then Manoah prayed to the Lord, saying, "Lord, please let the man of God come back to us again and give us more instructions about this son who is to be born."

⁹God answered Manoah's prayer, and the angel of God appeared once again to his wife as she was sitting in the field. But her husband, Manoah, was not with her. ¹⁰So she quickly ran and told her husband, "The man who appeared to me the other day is here again!"

¹¹Manoah ran back with his wife and asked, "Are you the man who spoke to my wife the other day?"

"Yes," he replied, "I am."

¹²So Manoah asked him, "When your words come true, what kind of rules should govern the boy's life and work?"

¹³The angel of the Lord replied, "Be sure your wife follows the instructions I gave her. ¹⁴She must not eat grapes or raisins, drink wine or any other alcoholic drink, or eat any forbidden food."

¹⁵Then Manoah said to the angel of the Lord, "Please stay here until we can prepare a young goat for you to eat."

¹⁶"I will stay," the angel of the Lord replied, "but I will not eat anything. However, you may prepare a burnt offering as a sacrifice to the Lord." (Manoah didn't realize it was the angel of the Lord.)

¹⁷Then Manoah asked the angel of the Lord, "What is your name? For when all this comes true, we want to honor you."

¹⁸"Why do you ask my name?" the angel of the Lord replied. "It is too wonderful for you to understand."

¹⁹Then Manoah took a young goat and a grain offering and offered it on a rock as a sacrifice to the Lord. And as Manoah and his wife watched, the Lord did an amazing thing. ²⁰As the flames from the altar shot up toward the sky, the angel of the Lord ascended in the fire. When Manoah and his wife saw this, they fell with their faces to the ground.

²¹The angel did not appear again to Manoah and his wife. Manoah finally realized it was the angel of the Lord, ²²and he said to his wife, "We will certainly die, for we have seen God!"

²³But his wife said, "If the Lord were going to kill us, he wouldn't have accepted our burnt offering and grain offering. He wouldn't have appeared to us and told us this wonderful thing and done these miracles."

²⁴When her son was born, she named him Samson. And the Lord blessed him as he grew up. ²⁵And the Spirit of the

Lord began to stir him while he lived in Mahaneh-dan, which is located between the towns of Zorah and Eshtaol.

Samson's Riddle

14 One day when Samson was in Timnah, one of the Philistine women caught his eye. ²When he returned home, he told his father and mother, "A young Philistine woman in Timnah caught my eye. I want to marry her. Get her for me."

³His father and mother objected. "Isn't there even one woman in our tribe or among all the Israelites you could marry?" they asked. "Why must you go to the pagan Philistines to find a wife?"

But Samson told his father, "Get her for me! She looks good to me." ⁴His father and mother didn't realize the Lord was at work in this, creating an opportunity to work against the Philistines, who ruled over Israel at that time.

⁵As Samson and his parents were going down to Timnah, a young lion suddenly attacked Samson near the vineyards of Timnah. ⁶At that moment the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon him, and he ripped the lion's jaws apart with his bare hands. He did it as easily as if it were a young goat. But he didn't tell his father or mother about it. ⁷When Samson arrived in Timnah, he talked with the woman and was very pleased with her.

⁸Later, when he returned to Timnah for the wedding, he turned off the path to look at the carcass of the lion. And he found that a swarm of bees had made some honey in the carcass. ⁹He scooped some of the honey into his hands and ate it along the way. He also gave some to his father and mother, and they ate it. But he didn't tell them he had taken the honey from the carcass of the lion.

¹⁰As his father was making final arrangements for the marriage, Samson threw a party at Timnah, as was the custom for elite young men. ¹¹When the bride's parents* saw him, they selected thirty young men from the town to be his companions.

¹²Samson said to them, "Let me tell you a riddle. If you solve my riddle during these seven days of the celebration, I will give you thirty fine linen robes and thirty sets of festive clothing. ¹³But if you can't solve it, then you must give me thirty fine linen robes and thirty sets of festive clothing."

"All right," they agreed, "let's hear your riddle."

¹⁴So he said:

"Out of the one who eats came something to eat;
out of the strong came something sweet."

Three days later they were still trying to figure it out. ¹⁵On the fourth* day they said to Samson's wife, "Entice your husband to explain the riddle for us, or we will burn down your father's house with you in it. Did you invite us to this party just to make us poor?"

¹⁶So Samson's wife came to him in tears and said, "You don't love me; you hate me! You have given my people a defeat, but you haven't told me the answer."

"I haven't even given the answer to my father or mother," he replied. "Why should I tell you?" ¹⁷So she cried whenever she was with him and kept it up for the rest of the celebration. At last, on the seventh day he told her the answer because she was tormenting him with her nagging. Then he explained the riddle to the young men.

¹⁸So before sunset of the seventh day, the men of the town came to Samson with their answer:

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

¹⁹He replied, "I will tell you what is sweeter than honey and stronger than a lion."

²⁰He said, "From a lion's jawbone I have won my strength."

²¹He said, "With the jawbone of a donkey I have won my strength."

²²He said, "With the jawbone of a donkey I have won my strength."

²³He said, "With the jawbone of a donkey I have won my strength."

²⁴He said, "With the jawbone of a donkey I have won my strength."

²⁵He said, "With the jawbone of a donkey I have won my strength."

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¹⁵³He said, "With the jawbone of a donkey I have won my strength."

he lived in Mahaneh-dan
of Zorah and Eshtaol.

as in Timnah, one of
his eye. When he returned
other. A young Philistine
I want to marry her. Get
ted. Isn't there even one
the Israelites you could
you go to the pagan Philis-

Get her for me! She looks
she didn't realize the
opportunity to work against
rael at that time.

were going down to Timnah.
Samson near the vineyard.
the Spirit of the Lord came
upped the lion's jaws
easily as if it were a young
or mother about it. When
alked with the woman and
mnah for the wedding
carrass of the lion. And he
made some honey in the
honey into his hands and
e some to his father and
dn't tell them he had
the lion.

inal arrangements for
at Timnah, as was the
n the bride's parents.
en from the town to be

me tell you a riddle. In
days of the celebration
es and thirty sets of festi-
it, then you must give
sets of festive clothing
near your riddle."

something to eat
hething sweet."

trying to figure it out.
on's wife, "Entice your
or we will burn down
l you invite us to the

im in tears and said
have given my people
answer."

er to my father or mother?"
"So she cried when
for the rest of the day
he told her the answer
with her nagging. Then
men.

enth day, the men
answer:

Samson replied, "If you hadn't plowed with my heifer,
I wouldn't have solved my riddle!"

Then the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon him.
went down to the town of Ashkelon, killed thirty men,
their belongings, and gave their clothing to the men
had solved his riddle. But Samson was furious about
had happened, and he went back home to live with his
and mother. So his wife was given in marriage to
man who had been Samson's best man at the wedding.

Samson's Vengeance on the Philistines

15 Later on, during the wheat harvest, Samson took a young goat as a present to his wife. He said, "I'm going into my wife's room to sleep with her," but her father didn't let him in.

"I truly thought you must hate her," her father explained, "so I gave her in marriage to your best man. But her younger sister is even more beautiful than she is. Marry her instead."

Samson said, "This time I cannot be blamed for everything I am going to do to you Philistines." Then he went out and caught 300 foxes. He tied their tails together in pairs, fastened a torch to each pair of tails. Then he lit the torches and let the foxes run through the grain fields of the Philistines. He burned all their grain to the ground, including the sheaves and the uncut grain. He also destroyed their vineyards and olive groves.

"Who did this?" the Philistines demanded. "Samson," was the reply, "because his father-in-law from the Philistines gave Samson's wife to be married to his best man." The Philistines went and got the woman and her father burned them to death.

"Because you did this," Samson vowed, "I won't rest until I have my revenge on you!" So he attacked the Philistines with great fury and killed many of them. Then he went to a cave in the rock of Etam.

The Philistines retaliated by setting up camp in Judah and spreading out near the town of Lehi. The men of Judah asked the Philistines, "Why are you attacking us?"

The Philistines replied, "We've come to capture Samson. Come to pay him back for what he did to us."

More than 3,000 men of Judah went down to get Samson at the rock of Etam. They said to Samson, "Don't you realize the Philistines rule over us? What are you doing to us?"

Samson replied, "I only did to them what they did to

the men of Judah told him, "We have come to tie and hand you over to the Philistines."

"I won't," Samson said. "But promise that you won't kill yourselves."

"We will only tie you up and hand you over to the Philistines," they replied. "We won't kill you." So they tied him up and new ropes and brought him up from the rock.

Samson arrived at Lehi, the Philistines came shouting triumph. But the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon Samson, and he snapped the ropes on his arms as if they were burnt strands of flax, and they fell from his wrists.

He found the jawbone of a recently killed donkey. He picked it up and killed 1,000 Philistines with it. Then Samson said,

"With the jawbone of a donkey, I have killed 1,000 Philistines.
I have piled them in heaps!
With the jawbone of a donkey, I have killed 1,000 Philistines.
I have killed a thousand men!"

Samson lived in Ramath-Jehi. 15:19 Hebrew *En-hakkore*. 16:2 As in Greek and Syriac versions and Latin Vulgate; Hebrew lacks *Word soon spread*. 16:3-14 As in Greek version and Latin Vulgate; Hebrew lacks *I would become as weak as anyone else. / So while he slept, Delilah wove the seven braids of his hair into the fabric. Then she tightened it with the loom shuttle.*

17 When he finished his boasting, he threw away the jawbone; and the place was named Jawbone Hill.*

18 Samson was now very thirsty, and he cried out to the Lord, "You have accomplished this great victory by the strength of your servant. Must I now die of thirst and fall into the hands of these pagans?" 19 So God caused water to gush out of a hollow in the ground at Lehi, and Samson was revived as he drank. Then he named that place "The Spring of the One Who Cried Out,"* and it is still in Lehi to this day.

20 Samson judged Israel for twenty years during the period when the Philistines dominated the land.

Samson Carries Away Gaza's Gates

16 One day Samson went to the Philistine town of Gaza and spent the night with a prostitute. 2 Word soon spread* that Samson was there, so the men of Gaza gathered together and waited all night at the town gates. They kept quiet during the night, saying to themselves, "When the light of morning comes, we will kill him."

3 But Samson stayed in bed only until midnight. Then he got up, took hold of the doors of the town gate, including the two posts, and lifted them up, bar and all. He put them on his shoulders and carried them all the way to the top of the hill across from Hebron.

Samson and Delilah

4 Some time later Samson fell in love with a woman named Delilah, who lived in the valley of Sorek. 5 The rulers of the Philistines went to her and said, "Entice Samson to tell you what makes him so strong and how he can be overpowered and tied up securely. Then each of us will give you 1,100 pieces* of silver."

6 So Delilah said to Samson, "Please tell me what makes you so strong and what it would take to tie you up securely."

7 Samson replied, "If I were tied up with seven new bowstrings that have not yet been dried, I would become as weak as anyone else."

8 So the Philistine rulers brought Delilah seven new bowstrings, and she tied Samson up with them. 9 She had hidden some men in one of the inner rooms of her house, and she cried out, "Samson! The Philistines have come to capture you!" But Samson snapped the bowstrings as a piece of string snaps when it is burned by a fire. So the secret of his strength was not discovered.

10 Afterward Delilah said to him, "You've been making fun of me and telling me lies! Now please tell me how you can be tied up securely."

11 Samson replied, "If I were tied up with brand-new ropes that had never been used, I would become as weak as anyone else."

12 So Delilah took new ropes and tied him up with them. The men were hiding in the inner room as before, and again Delilah cried out, "Samson! The Philistines have come to capture you!" But again Samson snapped the ropes from his arms as if they were thread.

13 Then Delilah said, "You've been making fun of me and telling me lies! Now tell me how you can be tied up securely."

14 Samson replied, "If you were to weave the seven braids of my hair into the fabric on your loom and tighten it with the loom shuttle, I would become as weak as anyone else."

So while he slept, Delilah wove the seven braids of his hair into the fabric. 15 Then she tightened it with the loom shuttle.* Again she cried out, "Samson! The Philistines have

15:19 Hebrew *En-hakkore*. 16:2 As in Greek and Syriac versions and Latin Vulgate; Hebrew lacks *Word soon spread*. 16:3-14 As in Greek version and Latin Vulgate; Hebrew lacks *I would become as weak as anyone else. / So while he slept, Delilah wove the seven braids of his hair into the fabric. Then she tightened it with the loom shuttle.*

come to capture you!" But Samson woke up, pulled back the loom shuttle, and yanked his hair away from the loom and the fabric.

¹⁵Then Delilah pouted, "How can you tell me, 'I love you,' when you don't share your secrets with me? You've made fun of me three times now, and you still haven't told me what makes you so strong!" ¹⁶She tormented him with her nagging day after day until he was sick to death of it.

¹⁷Finally, Samson shared his secret with her. "My hair has never been cut," he confessed, "for I was dedicated to God as a Nazirite from birth. If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become as weak as anyone else."

¹⁸Delilah realized he had finally told her the truth, so she sent for the Philistine rulers. "Come back one more time," she said, "for he has finally told me his secret." So the Philistine rulers returned with the money in their hands. ¹⁹Delilah lulled Samson to sleep with his head in her lap, and then she called in a man to shave off the seven locks of his hair. In this way she began to bring him down,* and his strength left him.

²⁰Then she cried out, "Samson! The Philistines have come to capture you!"

When he woke up, he thought, "I will do as before and shake myself free." But he didn't realize the Lord had left him.

²¹So the Philistines captured him and gouged out his eyes. They took him to Gaza, where he was bound with bronze chains and forced to grind grain in the prison.

²²But before long, his hair began to grow back.

Samson's Final Victory

²³The Philistine rulers held a great festival, offering sacrifices and praising their god, Dagon. They said, "Our god has given us victory over our enemy Samson!"

²⁴When the people saw him, they praised their god, saying, "Our god has delivered our enemy to us! The one who killed so many of us is now in our power!"

²⁵Half drunk by now, the people demanded, "Bring out Samson so he can amuse us!" So he was brought from the prison to amuse them, and they had him stand between the pillars supporting the roof.

²⁶Samson said to the young servant who was leading him by the hand, "Place my hands against the pillars that hold up the temple. I want to rest against them." ²⁷Now the temple was completely filled with people. All the Philistine rulers were there, and there were about 3,000 men and women on the roof who were watching as Samson amused them.

²⁸Then Samson prayed to the Lord, "Sovereign Lord, remember me again. O God, please strengthen me just one more time. With one blow let me pay back the Philistines for the loss of my two eyes." ²⁹Then Samson put his hands on the two center pillars that held up the temple. Pushing against them with both hands, ³⁰he prayed, "Let me die with the Philistines." And the temple crashed down on the Philistine rulers and all the people. So he killed more people when he died than he had during his entire lifetime.

³¹Later his brothers and other relatives went down to get his body. They took him back home and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol, where his father, Manoah, was buried. Samson had judged Israel for twenty years.

Micah's Idols

17 There was a man named Micah, who lived in the hill country of Ephraim. ²One day he said to his mother, "I heard you place a curse on the person who stole 1,100

^{16:19} Or she began to torment him. Greek version reads He began to grow weak. ^{17:2} Hebrew 1,100 shekels, about 28 pounds or 12.5 kilograms in weight. ^{18:7} The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

pieces* of silver from you. Well, I have the money. I was ¹ place west of Kiriath-jearim in Judah, which is called ² Mahaneh-dan* to this day. ³Then they went on from there ⁴the hill country of Ephraim and came to the house of ⁵ Micah.

⁶The five men who had scouted out the land around ⁷La ⁸ explained to the others, "These buildings contain a ⁹ sacred ephod, as well as some household idols, a carved image, ¹⁰ a cast idol. What do you think you should do?" ¹¹Then ¹²the five men turned off the road and went over to Micah's ¹³ house, where the young Levite lived, and greeted him kindly. ¹⁴As the 600 armed warriors from the tribe of Dan stood at ¹⁵ the entrance of the gate, ¹⁶the five scouts entered the shrine ¹⁷ removed the carved image, the sacred ephod, the ¹⁸ household idols, and the cast idol. Meanwhile, the priest was ¹⁹ standing at the gate with the 600 armed warriors.

²⁰When the priest saw the men carrying all the sacred ²¹ objects out of Micah's shrine, he said, "What are you doing?" ²²Be quiet and come with us," they said. "Be a father and ²³ a son to all of us. Isn't it better to be a priest for an entire ²⁴ tribe and clan of Israel than for the household of just one ²⁵ man?"

²⁶The young priest was quite happy to go with them, so he ²⁷ took along the sacred ephod, the household idols, and the ²⁸ carved image. ²⁹They turned and started on their way again, ³⁰ leading their children, livestock, and possessions in front of ³¹ Micah's sons.

³²When the people from the tribe of Dan were quite a ³³ distance from Micah's house, the people who lived near Mi- ³⁴ chael came chasing after them. ³⁵They were shouting as they ³⁶ caught up with them. The men of Dan turned around and ³⁷ ran to Micah, "What's the matter? Why have you called ³⁸ these men together and chased after us like this?"

³⁹What do you mean, 'What's the matter?'" Micah re- ⁴⁰ sponded. "You've taken away all the gods I have made, and my ⁴¹ sons, and I have nothing left!"

⁴²The men of Dan said, "Watch what you say! There are ⁴³ short-tempered men around here who might get angry ⁴⁴ with you and your family." ⁴⁵So the men of Dan continued ⁴⁶ their way. When Micah saw that there were too many of ⁴⁷ them for him to attack, he turned around and went home.

⁴⁸Then, with Micah's idols and his priest, the men of Dan ⁴⁹ came to the town of Laish, whose people were peaceful and ⁵⁰ quiet. They attacked with swords and burned the town to ⁵¹ the ground. ⁵²There was no one to rescue the people, for ⁵³ they lived a great distance from Sidon and had no allies ⁵⁴ to help. This happened in the valley near Beth-rehob.

⁵⁵Then the people of the tribe of Dan rebuilt the town and ⁵⁶ there. ⁵⁷They renamed the town Dan after their ances- ⁵⁸ tor, Israel's son, but it had originally been called Laish.

⁵⁹Then they set up the carved image, and they appointed ⁶⁰ an Israelite son of Gershon, son of Moses,* as their priest. This ⁶¹ continued as priests for the tribe of Dan until the Ex- ⁶² odus. ⁶³So Micah's carved image was worshiped by the tribe of ⁶⁴ Dan as long as the Tabernacle of God remained at Shiloh.

The Levite and His Concubine

19 Now in those days Israel had no king. There was a ¹ man from the tribe of Levi living in a remote area of ² the hill country of Ephraim. One day he brought home a ³ woman from Bethlehem in Judah to be his concubine. ⁴But ⁵ he became angry with her* and returned to her father's ⁶ home in Bethlehem.

⁷After about four months, ⁸her husband set out for Bethle- ⁹ hem to speak personally to her and persuade her to come ¹⁰ back.

¹¹So 600 men from the tribe of Dan, armed with weap- ¹² ons of war, set out from Zorah and Eshtaol. ¹³They camped ¹⁴ ¹⁵ Mahaneh-dan means "the camp of Dan." ¹⁶As in an ancient Hebrew tradition, the name of the camp was derived from the name of the tribe that settled there. ¹⁷Manasseh. ¹⁸Or she was unfaithful to him. ¹⁹As in Greek version; Hebrew reads now I'm going to the Tabernacle of the Lord.

from you. Well, I have the money. I was to
less you for admitting it," his mother replied.
the money to her, and she said, "I now dedi-
cated my son to the LORD. In honor of my son, I will have
and an idol cast."

He returned the money to his mother, she
and gave them to a silversmith, who made
an image and an idol. And these were placed
in Micah's shrine for the idol, and the ephod and some household idols. Then
his sons as his personal priest.

Israel had no king; all the people did
right in their own eyes.
young Levite, who had been living in Beth-
lehem, arrived in that area. He had left Bethlehem
another place to live, and as he traveled, he
passed through the hill country of Ephraim. He happened to stop at
the town where the young Levite lived, and greeted him kindly.

"I am a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah.
I am looking for a place to live."

"Micah said, 'and you can be
with me,' Micah said, 'and you can be
with me. I will give you ten pieces* of silver
in exchange of clothes and your food.' " The Levite
and the young man became like one
another.

installed the Levite as his personal priest
in Micah's house. "I know the Lord will bless
you," Micah said, "because I have a Levite serving
me."

The Tribe of Dan

those days Israel had no king. And the people
were trying to find a place where they could
settle, but had not yet moved into the land assigned to
them. The land was divided among the tribes of Israel.
An Levite chose from their clans five capable
men of Zorah and Eshtaol to scout out a
place to live.

These warriors arrived in the hill country of Ephraim
and went to Micah's house and spent the night
there. They recognized the young Levite.
They went over and asked him, "Who brought
you here? What are you doing in this place? Why
are you here?" The Levite told them about his agreement with
Micah, who had been hired as Micah's personal priest.

"Ask God whether or not our journey
will be safe," the priest replied. "For the Lord
will be with us on our journey."

The men went on to the town of Laish, where
the people were living carefree lives, like the
people in the land of Canaan. The land was
peaceful and secure.* The people were
content with their land, and the land was very fertile. And the
people of Sidon had no allies nearby.

The men returned to Zorah and Eshtaol, the
Levite and his wife, and asked them, "What did you find?"

The Levite replied, "Come on, let's attack them.
The land is very good. What are you waiting
for? Go and take possession of it. You
will find the people living carefree
in a spacious and fertile land, lacking
men from the tribe of Dan, armed with
nothing but from Zorah and Eshtaol. " They
left with 1100 shekels, about 28 pounds or 12.5 kilograms.
The Hebrew word for shekel is uncertain.

They west of Kiriath-jearim in Judah, which is called
"Dan* to this day. Then they went on from there
to the hill country of Ephraim and came to the house of
Micah.

The five men who had scouted out the land around La-
shon* explained to the others, "These buildings contain a sac-
red ephod, as well as some household idols, a carved image,
and a cast idol. What do you think you should do?" Then the
five men turned off the road and went over to Micah's
house, where the young Levite lived, and greeted him kindly.
The 600 armed warriors from the tribe of Dan stood at
the entrance of the gate, and the five scouts entered the shrine
and removed the carved image, the sacred ephod, the
household idols, and the cast idol. Meanwhile, the priest was
standing at the gate with the 600 armed warriors.

When the priest saw the men carrying all the sacred ob-
jects of Micah's shrine, he said, "What are you doing?"
They said, "Be quiet and come with us," they said. "Be a father and
a leader to all of us. Isn't it better to be a priest for an entire
tribe and clan of Israel than for the household of just one
man?"

The young priest was quite happy to go with them, so he
carried the sacred ephod, the household idols, and the
carved image. They turned and started on their way again,
leaving their children, livestock, and possessions in front of
Micah's house.

When the people from the tribe of Dan were quite a
distance from Micah's house, the people who lived near Mi-
cah were chasing after them. They were shouting as they
ran up with them. The men of Dan turned around and
asked Micah, "What's the matter? Why have you called
us together and chased after us like this?"

"What do you mean, 'What's the matter?'" Micah re-
plied. "You've taken away all the gods I have made, and my
son and I have nothing left!"

The men of Dan said, "Watch what you say! There are
short-tempered men around here who might get angry
with you and your family." So the men of Dan continued
on their way. When Micah saw that there were too many of
them to attack, he turned around and went home.

Then, with Micah's idols and his priest, the men of Dan
arrived at the town of Laish, whose people were peaceful and
content. They attacked with swords and burned the town to
the ground. There was no one to rescue the people, for
they had moved a great distance from Sidon and had no allies
nearby. This happened in the valley near Beth-rehob.

The people of the tribe of Dan rebuilt the town and
lived there. They renamed the town Dan after their ances-
tor's son, but it had originally been called Laish.
They set up the carved image, and they appointed
Gershom, son of Moses,* as their priest. This
continued as priests for the tribe of Dan until the Ex-
odus. Micah's carved image was worshiped by the tribe of Dan
as long as the Tabernacle of God remained at Shiloh.

Levite and His Concubine

Now those days Israel had no king. There was a
Levite from the tribe of Levi living in a remote area of
the hill country of Ephraim. One day he brought home a
woman from Bethlehem in Judah to be his concubine. But
she became angry with him* and returned to her father's
house in Bethlehem.

About four months later, her husband set out for Beth-
lehem personally to her and persuade her to come
back. He took with him a servant and a pair of donkeys.
When he arrived at her father's house, her father saw him
and welcomed him. Her father urged him to stay awhile, so he
stayed three days, eating, drinking, and sleeping there.

On the fourth day the man was up early, ready to leave, but the woman's father said to his son-in-law, "Have something to eat before you go." So the two men sat down together and had something to eat and drink. Then the woman's father said, "Please stay another night and enjoy yourself." The man got up to leave, but his father-in-law kept urging him to stay, so he finally gave in and stayed the night.

On the morning of the fifth day he was up early again, ready to leave, and again the woman's father said, "Have something to eat; then you can leave later this afternoon." So they had another day of feasting. Later, as the man and his concubine and servant were preparing to leave, his father-in-law said, "Look, it's almost evening. Stay the night and enjoy yourself. Tomorrow you can get up early and be on your way."

But this time the man was determined to leave. So he took his two saddled donkeys and his concubine and headed in the direction of Jebus (that is, Jerusalem). It was late in the day when they neared Jebus, and the man's servant said to him, "Let's stop at this Jebusite town and spend the night there."

"No," his master said, "we can't stay in this foreign town where there are no Israelites. Instead, we will go on to Gibeah. Come on, let's try to get as far as Gibeah or Ramah, and we'll spend the night in one of those towns." So they went on. The sun was setting as they came to Gibeah, a town in the land of Benjamin, so they stopped there to spend the night. They rested in the town square, but no one took them in for the night.

That evening an old man came home from his work in
the fields. He was from the hill country of Ephraim, but he
was living in Gibeah, where the people were from the tribe
of Benjamin. When he saw the travelers sitting in the town
square, he asked them where they were from and where
they were going.

"We have been in Bethlehem in Judah," the man re-
plied. "We are on our way to a remote area in the hill country of Ephraim, which is my home. I traveled to Bethlehem, and now I'm returning home.* But no one has taken us in for the
night, even though we have everything we need. We have straw and feed for our donkeys and plenty of bread and
wine for ourselves."

"You are welcome to stay with me," the old man said. "I
will give you anything you might need. But whatever you do,
don't spend the night in the square." So he took them
home with him and fed the donkeys. After they washed
their feet, they ate and drank together.

While they were enjoying themselves, a crowd of
troublemakers from the town surrounded the house. They
began beating at the door and shouting to the old man, "Bring
out the man who is staying with you so we can have sex with
him."

The old man stepped outside to talk to them. "No, my
brothers, don't do such an evil thing. For this man is a guest in
my house, and such a thing would be shameful. Here, take
my virgin daughter and this man's concubine. I will bring
them out to you, and you can abuse them and do whatever
you like. But don't do such a shameful thing to this man."

But they wouldn't listen to him. So the Levite took hold
of his concubine and pushed her out the door. The men of
the town abused her all night, taking turns raping her until
she died.

18:30 As in an ancient Hebrew tradition, some Greek manuscripts, and Latin Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads
19:2 Or she was unfaithful to him. 19:3 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads When she brought him to. 19:18 As in Greek version (see
Hebrew reads now I'm going to the Tabernacle of the LORD.)

morning. Finally, at dawn they let her go.²⁶ At daybreak the woman returned to the house where her husband was staying. She collapsed at the door of the house and lay there until it was light.

²⁷ When her husband opened the door to leave, there lay his concubine with her hands on the threshold.²⁸ He said, "Get up! Let's go!" But there was no answer.* So he put her body on his donkey and took her home.

²⁹ When he got home, he took a knife and cut his concubine's body into twelve pieces. Then he sent one piece to each tribe throughout all the territory of Israel.

³⁰ Everyone who saw it said, "Such a horrible crime has not been committed in all the time since Israel left Egypt. Think about it! What are we going to do? Who's going to speak up?"

Israel's War with Benjamin

20 Then all the Israelites were united as one man, from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south, including those from across the Jordan in the land of Gilead. The entire community assembled in the presence of the Lord at Mizpah.² The leaders of all the people and all the tribes of Israel—400,000 warriors armed with swords—took their positions in the assembly of the people of God.³ (Word soon reached the land of Benjamin that the other tribes had gone up to Mizpah.) The Israelites then asked how this terrible crime had happened.

⁴ The Levite, the husband of the woman who had been murdered, said, "My concubine and I came to spend the night in Gibeah, a town that belongs to the people of Benjamin.⁵ That night some of the leading citizens of Gibeah surrounded the house, planning to kill me, and they raped my concubine until she was dead.⁶ So I cut her body into twelve pieces and sent the pieces throughout the territory assigned to Israel, for these men have committed a terrible and shameful crime. Now then, all of you—the entire community of Israel—must decide here and now what should be done about this!"

⁸ And all the people rose to their feet in unison and declared, "None of us will return home! No, not even one of us!⁹ Instead, this is what we will do to Gibeah; we will draw lots to decide who will attack it.¹⁰ One-tenth of the men* from each tribe will be chosen to supply the warriors with food, and the rest of us will take revenge on Gibeah* of Benjamin for this shameful thing they have done in Israel."¹¹ So all the Israelites were completely united, and they gathered together to attack the town.

¹² The Israelites sent messengers to the tribe of Benjamin, saying, "What a terrible thing has been done among you!¹³ Give up those evil men, those troublemakers from Gibeah, so we can execute them and purge Israel of this evil."

But the people of Benjamin would not listen.¹⁴ Instead, they came from their towns and gathered at Gibeah to fight the Israelites.¹⁵ In all, 26,000 of their warriors armed with swords arrived in Gibeah to join the 700 elite troops who lived there.¹⁶ Among Benjamin's elite troops, 700 were left-handed, and each of them could sling a rock and hit a target within a hairsbreadth without missing.¹⁷ Israel had 400,000 experienced soldiers armed with swords, not counting Benjamin's warriors.

¹⁸ Before the battle the Israelites went to Bethel and asked God, "Which tribe should go first to attack the people of Benjamin?"

The Lord answered, "Judah is to go first."

¹⁹ So the Israelites left early the next morning and

¹⁹⁻²⁸ Greek version adds for she was dead. ^{20:10a} Hebrew 10 men from every hundred, 100 men from every thousand, and 1,000 men from every 10,000. ^{20:10b} Hebrew Geba, in this case a variant spelling of Gibeah; also in 20:33. ^{20:33} As in Greek and Syriac versions and Latin Vulgate; Hebrew reads hiding in the open space.

camped near Gibeah.²⁰ Then they advanced toward Gibeah to attack the men of Benjamin.²¹ But Benjamin's warriors who were defending the town, came out and killed 22,000 Israelites on the battlefield that day.

²² But the Israelites encouraged each other and took their positions again at the same place they had fought the previous day.²³ For they had gone up to Bethel and wept in the presence of the Lord until evening. They had asked the Lord, "Should we fight against our relatives from Benjamin again?"

And the Lord had said, "Go out and fight against them."

²⁴ So the next day they went out again to fight against the men of Benjamin,²⁵ but the men of Benjamin killed another 18,000 Israelites, all of whom were experienced with swords.

²⁶ Then all the Israelites went up to Bethel and wept in the presence of the Lord and fasted until evening. They also brought burnt offerings and peace offerings to the Lord.²⁷ The Israelites went up seeking direction from the Lord. (In those days the Ark of the Covenant of God was in Bethel,²⁸ and Phinehas son of Eleazar and grandson of Aaron was the priest.) The Israelites asked the Lord, "Should we fight against our relatives from Benjamin again, or should we stop?"

The Lord said, "Go! Tomorrow I will hand them over to you."

²⁹ So the Israelites set an ambush all around Gibeah.

³⁰ They went out on the third day and took their positions in the same place as before.³¹ When the men of Benjamin came out to attack, they were drawn away from the town. And as they had done before, they began to kill the Israelites. About thirty Israelites died in the open fields and along the roads, one leading to Bethel and the other leading back to Gibeah.

³² Then the warriors of Benjamin shouted, "We're defeating them as we did before!" But the Israelites had planned to advance to run away so that the men of Benjamin would chase them along the roads and be drawn away from town.

³³ When the main group of Israelite warriors reached Baal-tamar, they turned and took up their positions. Meanwhile, the Israelites hiding in ambush to the west* of Gibeah jumped up to fight.³⁴ There were 10,000 elite Israelite troops who advanced against Gibeah. The fighting was so heavy that Benjamin didn't realize the impending disaster.³⁵ So the Lord helped Israel defeat Benjamin, and the Israelites killed 25,100 of Benjamin's warriors, all of whom were experienced swordsmen.³⁶ Then the men of Benjamin saw that they were beaten.

The Israelites had retreated from Benjamin's warriors in order to give those hiding in ambush more room to maneuver against Gibeah.³⁷ Then those who were hiding rushed from all sides and killed everyone in the town.³⁸ They arranged to send up a large cloud of smoke from the town as a signal.³⁹ When the Israelites saw the smoke, they turned and attacked Benjamin's warriors.

By that time Benjamin's warriors had killed about 30,000 Israelites, and they shouted, "We're defeating them as we did in the first battle!"⁴⁰ But when the warriors of Benjamin looked behind them and saw the smoke rising into the air from every part of the town,⁴¹ the men of Israel turned and attacked. At this point the men of Benjamin became terrified, because they realized disaster was close at hand.⁴² They turned around and fled before the Israelites toward

wilderness. But they couldn't escape the battle, and the people who came out of the nearby towns were also killed.* The Israelites surrounded the men of Benjamin and chased them relentlessly, finally overtaking them east of Gibeah.*⁴⁴ That day 18,000 of Benjamin's strongest warriors died in battle.⁴⁵ The survivors fled into the wilderness toward the rock of Rimmon, but Israel killed 5,000 of them along the road. They continued the chase until they had killed another 2,000 near Gidom.

⁴⁶ So that day the tribe of Benjamin lost 25,000 strong warriors armed with swords,⁴⁷ leaving only 600 men who escaped to the rock of Rimmon, where they lived for four months.⁴⁸ And the Israelites returned and slaughtered everything in all the towns—the people, the livestock, and everything they found. They also burned down all the towns they came to.

Israel Provides Wives for Benjamin

21 The Israelites had vowed at Mizpah, "We will never give our daughters in marriage to a man from the tribe of Benjamin." Now the people went to Bethel and sat under the presence of God until evening, weeping loudly and bitterly.³ "O Lord, God of Israel," they cried out, "why has this happened in Israel? Now one of our tribes is missing from Israel!"

⁴ Early the next morning the people built an altar and presented their burnt offerings and peace offerings on it. Then they said, "Who among the tribes of Israel did not come to Mizpah when we held our assembly in the presence of the Lord?" At that time they had taken a solemn oath in the Lord's presence, vowing that anyone who refused to come would be put to death.

⁵ The Israelites felt sorry for their brother Benjamin and said, "Today one of the tribes of Israel has been cut off. Can we find wives for the few who remain, since we have sworn by the Lord not to give them our daughters in marriage?"

⁶ So they asked, "Who among the tribes of Israel did not come to Mizpah when we assembled in the presence of the Lord?" And they discovered that no one from Jabesh-gilead attended the assembly.⁷ For after they counted all the tribes, no one from Jabesh-gilead was present.

⁸ So the assembly sent 12,000 of their best warriors to Jabesh-gilead with orders to kill everyone there, including

²³ Or battle, for the people from the nearby towns also came out and killed them. ²⁵ This refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the Lord, either

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es went up to Bethel and wept and fasted until evening. They also made peace offerings to the Lord seeking direction from the Covenant of God was in Benjamin. ²Now the people went to Bethel and sat in the presence of God until evening, weeping loudly and crying. ³ "O Lord, God of Israel," they cried out, "why has this happened in Israel? Now one of our tribes is missing from Benjamin again, or should we wait until tomorrow?"

et an ambush all around Gibeah on the third day and took their positions. ³¹When the men of Benjamin were drawn away from the Israelites before they began to kill the Israelites died in the open fields and those who fled to Bethel and the other leading cities of Benjamin shouted, "We're here!"

But the Israelites had planned that the men of Benjamin would be drawn away from the roads and be drawn away from the assembly.

group of Israelite warriors went and took up their positions in ambush to the west. ³³There were 10,000 elite warriors against Gibeah. The fighting didn't realize the impending defeat of Benjamin, and 4,000 of Benjamin's warriors were swordsmen. ³⁴Then the Israelites beat them from Benjamin's camp in ambush more easily when those who were hiding killed everyone in the town. A large cloud of smoke from the Israelites saw the smoke, Benjamin's warriors.

Benjamin's warriors had killed and routed, "We're defeating them!" ⁴²But when the warriors of Israel saw the smoke rising from the town, ⁴³the men of Israel realized disaster was close at hand and fled before the Israelites. ⁴⁴They were 4,000, and 1,000 men, and Syriac versions and Latin versions

wilderness. But they couldn't escape the battle, and the people who came out of the nearby towns were also killed. ⁴⁵The Israelites surrounded the men of Benjamin and chased them relentlessly, finally overtaking them east of Gibeah. ⁴⁶That day 18,000 of Benjamin's strongest warriors died in battle. ⁴⁷The survivors fled into the wilderness toward the rock of Rimmon, but Israel killed 5,000 of them along the road. They continued the chase until they had killed another 2,000 near Gidom.

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The assembly sent 12,000 of their best warriors to Jabesh-gilead with orders to kill everyone there, including the people from the nearby towns who also came out and killed them. ²⁰⁻²³The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. ^{21:11}The Hebrew word refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the Lord, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering.

women and children. ¹¹"This is what you are to do," they said. "Completely destroy* all the males and every woman who is not a virgin." ¹²Among the residents of Jabesh-gilead they found 400 young virgins who had never slept with a man, and they brought them to the camp at Shiloh in the land of Canaan.

¹³The Israelite assembly sent a peace delegation to the remaining people of Benjamin who were living at the rock of Rimmon. ¹⁴Then the men of Benjamin returned to their homes, and the 400 women of Jabesh-gilead who had been spared were given to them as wives. But there were not enough women for all of them.

¹⁵The people felt sorry for Benjamin because the Lord had made this gap among the tribes of Israel. ¹⁶So the elders of the assembly asked, "How can we find wives for the few who remain, since the women of the tribe of Benjamin are dead?" ¹⁷There must be heirs for the survivors so that an entire tribe of Israel is not wiped out. ¹⁸But we cannot give them our own daughters in marriage because we have sworn with a solemn oath that anyone who does this will fall under God's curse."

¹⁹Then they thought of the annual festival of the Lord held in Shiloh, south of Lebonah and north of Bethel, along the east side of the road that goes from Bethel to Shechem. ²⁰They told the men of Benjamin who still needed wives, "Go and hide in the vineyards. ²¹When you see the young women of Shiloh come out for their dances, rush out from the vineyards, and each of you can take one of them home to the land of Benjamin to be your wife! ²²And when their fathers and brothers come to us in protest, we will tell them, 'Please be sympathetic. Let them have your daughters, for we didn't find wives for all of them when we destroyed Jabesh-gilead. And you are not guilty of breaking the vow since you did not actually give your daughters to them in marriage.'"

²³So the men of Benjamin did as they were told. Each man caught one of the women as she danced in the celebration and carried her off to be his wife. They returned to their own land, and they rebuilt their towns and lived in them.

²⁴Then the people of Israel departed by tribes and families, and they returned to their own homes.

²⁵In those days Israel had no king; all the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes.

her fields. Stay right behind the young women working in my field. ⁹See which part of the field they are harvesting, and then follow them. I have warned the young men not to treat you roughly. And when you are thirsty, help yourself to water they have drawn from the well."

Ruth fell at his feet and thanked him warmly. "What have I done to deserve such kindness?" she asked. "I am only a foreigner."

"Yes, I know," Boaz replied. "But I also know about the work you have done for your mother-in-law since the day of your husband. I have heard how you left your father and mother and your own land to live here among complete strangers. ¹²May the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge, reward you fully for what you have done."

"I hope I continue to please you, sir," she replied. "You have comforted me by speaking so kindly to me, even though I am not one of your workers."

At mealtime Boaz called to her, "Come over here, and sit down to some food. You can dip your bread in the wine." So she sat with his harvesters, and Boaz gave her roasted grain to eat. She ate all she wanted and still had some left over.

When Ruth went back to work again, Boaz ordered his men, "Let her gather grain right among the sheaves without stopping her." ¹⁶And pull out some heads of barley and the bundles and drop them on purpose for her. Let her then turn up, and don't give her a hard time!"

Ruth gathered barley there all day, and when she gathered the grain that evening, it filled an entire basket. ¹⁸She carried it back into town and showed it to her mother-in-law. Ruth also gave her the roasted grain that was left over from her meal.

"Where did you gather all this grain today?" Naomi asked. "Where did you work? May the LORD bless the one who has helped you!"

Ruth told her mother-in-law about the man in whose field she had worked. She said, "The man I worked with today is named Boaz."

"May the LORD bless him!" Naomi told her daughter-in-law. "He is showing his kindness to us as well as to your dead husband. That man is one of our closest relatives, one of our family redeemers."

Ruth* said, "What's more, Boaz even told me to go back and stay with his harvesters until the entire harvest is completed."

"Naomi exclaimed, "Do as he said, my daughter. Go pick up the stalks of grain that the young women right through the whole harvest. You won't be harassed in other fields, but you'll be safe with us."

Ruth worked alongside the women in Boaz's fields, gathering grain with them until the end of the barley harvest. Then she continued working with them through the harvest in early summer. And all the while she was with her mother-in-law.

At the Threshing Floor

Naomi said to Ruth, "My daughter, it's time that you find a permanent home for you, so that you will be safe."

"Boaz is a close relative of ours, and he's been letting you gather grain with his young women. He will be winnowing barley at the threshing floor.

"I tell you—take a bath and put on perfume and your nicest clothes. Then go to the threshing floor, and Boaz see you until he has finished eating and

drinking. ⁴Be sure to notice where he lies down; then go and uncover his feet and lie down there. He will tell you what to do."

"I will do everything you say," Ruth replied. "So she went down to the threshing floor that night and followed the instructions of her mother-in-law.

After Boaz had finished eating and drinking and was in good spirits, he lay down at the far end of the pile of grain and went to sleep. Then Ruth came quietly, uncovered his feet, and lay down. ⁸Around midnight Boaz suddenly woke up and turned over. He was surprised to find a woman lying at his feet! ⁹"Who are you?" he asked.

"I am your servant Ruth," she replied. "Spread the corner of your covering over me, for you are my family redeemer."

"¹⁰The LORD bless you, my daughter!" Boaz exclaimed. "You are showing even more family loyalty now than you did before, for you have not gone after a younger man, whether rich or poor. ¹¹Now don't worry about a thing, my daughter. I will do what is necessary, for everyone in town knows you are a virtuous woman. ¹²But while it's true that I am one of your family redeemers, there is another man who is more closely related to you than I am. ¹³Stay here tonight, and in the morning I will talk to him. If he is willing to redeem you, very well. Let him marry you. But if he is not willing, then as surely as the LORD lives, I will redeem you myself! Now lie down here until morning."

¹⁴So Ruth lay at Boaz's feet until the morning, but she got up before it was light enough for people to recognize each other. For Boaz had said, "No one must know that a woman was here at the threshing floor." ¹⁵Then Boaz said to her, "Bring your cloak and spread it out." He measured six scoops* of barley into the cloak and placed it on her back. Then he* returned to the town.

¹⁶When Ruth went back to her mother-in-law, Naomi asked, "What happened, my daughter?"

Ruth told Naomi everything Boaz had done for her, ¹⁷and she added, "He gave me these six scoops of barley and said, 'Don't go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed.'"

¹⁸Then Naomi said to her, "Just be patient, my daughter, until we hear what happens. The man won't rest until he has settled things today."

Boaz Marries Ruth

4 Boaz went to the town gate and took a seat there. Just then the family redeemer he had mentioned came by, so Boaz called out to him, "Come over here and sit down, friend. I want to talk to you." So they sat down together. ²Then Boaz called ten leaders from the town and asked them to sit as witnesses. ³And Boaz said to the family redeemer, "You know Naomi, who came back from Moab. She is selling the land that belonged to our relative Elimelech. ⁴I thought I should speak to you about it so that you can redeem it if you wish. If you want the land, then buy it here in the presence of these witnesses. But if you don't want it, let me know right away, because I am next in line to redeem it after you."

The man replied, "All right, I'll redeem it."

⁵Then Boaz told him, "Of course, your purchase of the land from Naomi also requires that you marry Ruth, the Moabite widow. That way she can have children who will carry on her husband's name and keep the land in the family."

"⁶Then I can't redeem it," the family redeemer replied, "because this might endanger my own estate. You redeem the land; I cannot do it."

⁷Now in those days it was the custom in Israel for anyone transferring a right of purchase to remove his sandal and

2:19 Hebrew about an ephah (20 quarts or 22 liters). 2:20 Hebrew to the living and to the dead. 2:21 Hebrew Ruth the Moabite. 3:15a Hebrew an unknown quantity. 3:15b Most Hebrew manuscripts read he; many Hebrew manuscripts, Syriac version, and Latin Vulgate read she.

hand it to the other party. This publicly validated the transaction.⁸ So the other family redeemer drew off his sandal as he said to Boaz, "You buy the land."

⁹ Then Boaz said to the elders and to the crowd standing around, "You are witnesses that today I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelech, Kilion, and Mahlon.¹⁰ And with the land I have acquired Ruth, the Moabite widow of Mahlon, to be my wife. This way she can have a son to carry on the family name of her dead husband and to inherit the family property here in his hometown. You are all witnesses today."

¹¹ Then the elders and all the people standing in the gate replied, "We are witnesses! May the Lord make this woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, from whom all the nation of Israel descended! May you prosper in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem.¹² And may the Lord give you descendants by this young woman who will be like those of our ancestor Perez, the son of Tamar and Judah."

The Descendants of Boaz

¹³ So Boaz took Ruth into his home, and she became his wife. When he slept with her, the Lord enabled her to become

^{4:20} As in some Greek manuscripts (see also 4:21); Hebrew reads *Salma*.

pregnant, and she gave birth to a son.¹⁴ Then the women in the town said to Naomi, "Praise the Lord, who has now provided a redeemer for your family! May this child be famous in Israel.¹⁵ May he restore your youth and care for you in your old age. For he is the son of your daughter-in-law who loves you and has been better to you than seven sons!"

¹⁶ Naomi took the baby and cuddled him to her breast. And she cared for him as if he were her own.¹⁷ The neighbor women said, "Now at last Naomi has a son again!" And they named him Obed. He became the father of Jesse and the grandfather of David.

¹⁸ This is the genealogical record of their ancestor Perez:

Perez was the father of Hezron.

¹⁹ Hezron was the father of Ram.

Ram was the father of Amminadab.

²⁰ Amminadab was the father of Nahshon.

Nahshon was the father of Salmon.*

²¹ Salmon was the father of Boaz.

Boaz was the father of Obed.

²² Obed was the father of Jesse.

Jesse was the father of David.

1 SAMUEL

Author Uncertain; some have suggested Samuel and

Written Uncertain, perhaps around 1000 B.C.

Content The choices people make say a lot about their choices—some good and some bad. The first a woman who was unable to have children. She her prayer and granted her request. Grateful child, Samuel, to the Lord from the time he was the Tabernacle, and eventually he himself became life, the Israelites rejected Samuel's sons as judges over them. Samuel warned the Israelites that have one anyway. Thus began the history of Israel's man named Saul to be Israel's first king. At first But soon he began to make some very bad choices. David, a shepherd from Bethlehem, was chosen on David's life; but by the end of the book, Saul become the next king.

Elkanah and His Family

¹ There was a man named Elkanah who lived in Ramah in the region of Zuph* in the hill country of Ephraim. He was the son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah did not.

² Each year Elkanah would travel to Shiloh to worship and sacrifice to the Lord of Heaven's Armies at the Tabernacle. The priests of the Lord at that time were the two sons of Eliophni and Phinehas.³ On the days Elkanah presented sacrifice, he would give portions of the meat to Peninnah and each of her children.⁴ And though he loved Hannah, he would give her only one choice portion* because the Lord had given her no children.⁵ So Peninnah would taunt Hannah and make fun of her because the Lord had kept her from having children.⁶ Year after year it was the same—Peninnah would taunt Hannah as they went to the Tabernacle.

⁷ Each time, Hannah would be reduced to tears and not even eat.

⁸ "Why are you crying, Hannah?" Elkanah would ask. "Are you not eating? Why be downhearted just because you have no children? You have me—isn't that better than ten sons?"

Hannah's Prayer for a Son

⁹ After a sacrificial meal at Shiloh, Hannah got up and to pray. Eli the priest was sitting at his customary place the entrance of the Tabernacle.*¹⁰ Hannah was in anguish, crying bitterly as she prayed to the Lord. She made this vow: "O Lord of Heaven's Armies, if I will look upon my sorrow and answer my prayer and give me a son, then I will give him back to you. He will be for his entire lifetime, and as a sign that he has been given to the Lord, his hair will never be cut."¹¹

¹² As she was praying to the Lord, Eli watched her, her lips moving but hearing no sound, he thought

*Greek version; Hebrew reads *in Ramathaim-zophim*; compare 1:19. The Hebrew is uncertain. 1:7 Hebrew *the house of the Lord*; also in 1:24. 1:19 Hebrew *neither wine nor intoxicants*. 1:20 Samuel sounds like the Hebrew term for a Nazirite for all time. 1:24a As in Dead Sea Scrolls, Greek and Syriac versions; Hebrew reads *two marts or 22 liters*. 1:28 Hebrew *he*.

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birth to a son.¹⁴ Then the women said, "Praise the LORD, who has now given you a family! May this child be famous in your youth and care for you, the son of your daughter-in-law who is better to you than seven sons!"

They cuddled him to her breast, as if he were her own.¹⁷ The neighbor said, "Naomi has a son again!" And they all came the father of Jesse and the

ancestral record of their ancestor Perez, of Hebron.

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Hannah's Prayer of Praise

2 Then Hannah prayed:

"My heart rejoices in the LORD!
The Lord has made me strong.*
Now I have an answer for my enemies;
I rejoice because you rescued me.
2 No one is holy like the LORD!
There is no one besides you;
there is no Rock like our God.
3 "Stop acting so proud and haughty!
Don't speak with such arrogance!
For the Lord is a God who knows what you have done;
he will judge your actions.
4 The bow of the mighty is now broken,
and those who stumbled are now strong.
5 Those who were well fed are now starving,
and those who were starving are now full.
The childless woman now has seven children,
and the woman with many children wastes away.
6 The Lord gives both death and life;
he brings some down to the grave* but raises
others up.
7 The Lord makes some poor and others rich;
he brings some down and lifts others up.
8 He lifts the poor from the dust
and the needy from the garbage dump.
He sets them among princes,
placing them in seats of honor.
For all the earth is the Lord's,
and he has set the world in order.
9 "He will protect his faithful ones,
but the wicked will disappear in darkness.
No one will succeed by strength alone.
10 Those who fight against the Lord will be shattered.
He thunders against them from heaven;
the Lord judges throughout the earth.
He gives power to his king;
he increases the strength* of his anointed one."

11 Then Elkanah returned home to Ramah without Samuel. And the boy served the Lord by assisting Eli the priest.

Eli's Wicked Sons

12 Now the sons of Eli were scoundrels who had no respect for the Lord¹³ or for their duties as priests. Whenever anyone offered a sacrifice, Eli's sons would send over a servant with a three-pronged fork. While the meat of the sacrificed animal was still boiling,¹⁴ the servant would stick the fork into the pot and demand that whatever it brought up be given to Eli's sons. All the Israelites who came to worship at Shiloh were treated this way.¹⁵ Sometimes the servant would come even before the animal's fat had been burned on the altar. He would demand raw meat before it had been boiled so that it could be used for roasting.

16 The man offering the sacrifice might reply, "Take as much as you want, but the fat must be burned first." Then the servant would demand, "No, give it to me now, or I'll take it by force."¹⁷ So the sin of these young men was very serious in the Lord's sight, for they treated the Lord's offerings with contempt.

18 But Samuel, though he was only a boy, served the Lord.

2:1 Hebrew has exalted my horn. 2:6 Hebrew to Sheol. 2:10 Hebrew he exalts the horn. 2:18 Hebrew He wore a linen ephod. 2:20 As in Dead Sea Scrolls and Greek version; Masoretic Text reads this one he requested of the Lord. 2:22 Hebrew Tent of Meeting. Some manuscripts lack this entire sentence. 2:25 Or the judges. 2:27 As in Greek and Syriac versions; Hebrew reads Did I reveal myself? 2:28a Hebrew your father. 2:28b Hebrew ephod. 2:30 Hebrew that your house and your father's house. 2:33 As in Dead Sea Scrolls, which read die by the sword; Masoretic Text reads die like mortals. 3:3 Hebrew the Temple of the Lord.

He wore a linen garment like that of a priest.¹⁹ Each year his mother made a small coat for him and brought it to him when she came with her husband for the sacrifice.²⁰ Before they returned home, Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife and say, "May the Lord give you other children to take the place of this one she gave to the Lord."²¹ And the Lord gave Hannah three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile Samuel grew up in the presence of the Lord.

22 Now Eli was very old, but he was aware of what his sons were doing to the people of Israel. He knew, for instance, that his sons were seducing the young women who assisted at the entrance of the Tabernacle.²³ Eli said to them, "I have been hearing reports from all the people about the wicked things you are doing. Why do you keep sinning?²⁴ You must stop, my sons! The reports I hear among the Lord's people are not good.²⁵ If someone sins against another person, God* can mediate for the guilty party. But if someone sins against the Lord, who can intercede?" But Eli's sons wouldn't listen to their father, for the Lord was already planning to put them to death.

26 Meanwhile, the boy Samuel grew taller and grew in favor with the Lord and with the people.

A Warning for Eli's Family

27 One day a man of God came to Eli and gave him this message from the Lord: "I revealed myself* to your ancestors when the people of Israel were slaves in Egypt.²⁸ I chose your ancestor Aaron²⁹ from among all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer sacrifices on my altar, to burn incense and to wear the priestly vest* as he served me. And I signed the sacrificial offerings to you priests.³⁰ So why do you scorn my sacrifices and offerings? Why do you give your sons more honor than you give me—for you and the people have become fat from the best offerings of my people Israel?"

30 "Therefore, the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I promise that your branch of the tribe of Levi* would always be priests. But I will honor those who honor me, and I will despise those who think lightly of me.³¹ The time is coming when I will put an end to your family, so it will no longer serve as my priests. All the members of your family will die before their time. None will reach old age.³² You will want with envy as I pour out prosperity on the people of Israel. But no members of your family will ever live out their days.³³ Those who survive will live in sadness and grief, and their children will die a violent death."³⁴ And to prove that what he had said will come true, I will cause your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, to die on the same day!"

35 "Then I will raise up a faithful priest who will serve me and do what I desire. I will establish his family, and they will be priests to my anointed kings forever.³⁶ Then all of your surviving family will bow before him, begging for more and food. 'Please,' they will say, 'give us jobs among your priests so we will have enough to eat.'"

The Lord Speaks to Samuel

3 Meanwhile, the boy Samuel served the Lord by assisting Eli. Now in those days messages from the Lord were very rare, and visions were quite uncommon.

One night Eli, who was almost blind by now, had gone to bed.³ The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was sleeping in the Tabernacle* near the Ark of God.⁴ Suddenly the Lord called out, "Samuel!"

"Yes?" Samuel replied. "What is it?"⁵ He got up and ran to Eli. "Here I am. Did you call me?" "I didn't call you," Eli replied. "Go back to bed." So he did.⁶ Then the Lord called out again, "Samuel!" Again Samuel got up and went to Eli. "Here I am. Did you call me?" "I didn't call you, my son," Eli said. "Go back to bed."⁷ Samuel did not yet know the Lord because he had never had a message from the Lord before.⁸ So the Lord called a third time, and once more Samuel got up and went to Eli. "Here I am. Did you call me?"

Then Eli realized it was the Lord who was calling the boy. He said to Samuel, "Go and lie down again, and if someone calls again, say, 'Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.'" Samuel went back to bed.

And the Lord came and called as before, "Samuel! Sam-

uel!" Samuel replied, "Speak, your servant is listening." Then the Lord said to Samuel, "I am about to do a great thing in Israel.¹² I am going to carry out all my judgments against Eli and his family, from beginning to end.¹³ I have warned him that judgment is coming upon his family, because his sons are blaspheming God* and he has disciplined them.¹⁴ So I have vowed that the sins of his sons will never be forgiven by sacrifices or offerings."

Samuel Speaks for the Lord

Samuel stayed in bed until morning, then got up and opened the doors of the Tabernacle* as usual. He was afraid to tell Eli what the Lord had said to him.¹⁶ But Eli called out, "Samuel, my son."

"Here I am," Samuel replied. "What did the Lord say to you? Tell me everything. And God strike you and even kill you if you hide anything from me!"¹⁸ So Samuel told Eli everything; he didn't hold anything back. "It is the Lord's will," Eli replied. "Let him do what he thinks best."

As Samuel grew up, the Lord was with him, and everything Samuel said proved to be reliable.²⁰ And all Israel, from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south, knew that Samuel was confirmed as a prophet of the Lord.²¹ The Lord commanded him to appear at Shiloh and gave messages to Samuel at the Tabernacle.^{4:1} And Samuel's words went out to the people of Israel.

Philistines Capture the Ark

At that time Israel was at war with the Philistines. The Israelite army was camped near Ebenezer, and the Philistines were at Aphek.² The Philistines attacked and defeated the army of Israel, killing 4,000 men.³ After the battle was over, the troops retreated to their camp, and the men of Israel asked, "Why did the Lord allow us to be defeated by the Philistines?" Then they said, "Let's bring the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord from Shiloh. If we carry it into battle with us, it* will save us from our enemies."

So they sent men to Shiloh to bring the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord of Heaven's Armies, who is enthroned between the cherubim. Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli, were also there with the Ark of the Covenant of God.⁵ When the Israelites saw the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord coming into the camp, their shout of joy was so loud it made the ground shake!

"What's going on?" the Philistines asked. "What's all the noise about in the Hebrew camp?" When they were told because the Ark of the Lord had arrived,⁷ they panic-

2:18 Hebrew he exalts the horn. 2:22 Hebrew Tent of Meeting. Some manuscripts lack this entire sentence. 2:25 Or the judges. 2:27 As in Greek and Syriac versions; Hebrew reads Did I reveal myself? 2:28a Hebrew your father. 2:28b Hebrew ephod. 2:30 Hebrew that your house and your father's house. 2:33 As in Dead Sea Scrolls, which read die by the sword; Masoretic Text reads die like mortals. 3:3 Hebrew the Temple of the Lord.

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of a priest.* ¹⁹Each year he and brought it to him for the sacrifice. ²⁰Before Elkanah and his wife other children to take the LORD.** ²¹And the LORD's daughters. Meanwhile the LORD was aware of what his son Eli knew, for instance young women who assisted * ²³Eli said to them, "I have people about the wicked keep sinning? ²⁴You are among the Lord's people against another person. But if someone deserves?" But Eli's son for the Lord was already grew taller and grew in people.

Eli and gave him this myself* to your ancestors slaves in Egypt. ²⁵bring all the tribes of Israel to my altar, to burn incense he served me. And I am your priests. ²⁶So what offerings? Why do you give me—for you and offerings of my people Israel, says I promise Levi* would always honor me, and I will be me. ³¹The time is come family, so it will no longer be of your family until old age. ³²You will live on the people of Israel will ever live out their sadness and grief, and ³³And to prove that use your two sons. This day!

Philistines Capture the Ark ¹At that time Israel was at war with the Philistines. The Philistines army was camped near Ebenezer, and the Philistines were at Aphek. ²The Philistines attacked and defeated the army of Israel, killing 4,000 men. ³After the battle over, the troops retreated to their camp, and the Israel asked, "Why did the Lord allow us to be defeated by the Philistines?" Then they said, "Let's bring the Covenant of the Lord from Shiloh. If we carry it with us, it* will save us from our enemies." ⁴They sent men to Shiloh to bring the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord of Heaven's Armies, who is enthroned between the cherubim. Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli, were there with the Ark of the Covenant of God. ⁵When the Israelites saw the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord coming into the camp, their shout of joy was so loud it made the ground shake!

"What's going on?" the Philistines asked. "What's all the noise about in the Hebrew camp?" When they were told because the Ark of the Lord had arrived, ⁷they pan-

icked. "The gods have* come into their camp!" they cried. "This is a disaster! We have never had to face anything like this before! ⁸Help! Who can save us from these mighty gods of Israel? They are the same gods who destroyed the Egyptians with plagues when Israel was in the wilderness. ⁹Fight as never before, Philistines! If you don't, we will become the Hebrews' slaves just as they have been ours! Stand up like men and fight!"

¹⁰So the Philistines fought desperately, and Israel was defeated again. The slaughter was great; 30,000 Israelite soldiers died that day. The survivors turned and fled to their tents. ¹¹The Ark of God was captured, and Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli, were killed.

The Death of Eli

¹²A man from the tribe of Benjamin ran from the battlefield and arrived at Shiloh later that same day. He had torn his clothes and put dust on his head to show his grief. ¹³Eli was waiting beside the road to hear the news of the battle, for his heart trembled for the safety of the Ark of God. When the messenger arrived and told what had happened, an outcry resounded throughout the town.

¹⁴"What is all the noise about?" Eli asked.

The messenger rushed over to Eli, ¹⁵who was ninety-eight years old and blind. ¹⁶He said to Eli, "I have just come from the battlefield—I was there this very day."

"What happened, my son?" Eli demanded.

¹⁷"Israel has been defeated by the Philistines," the messenger replied. "The people have been slaughtered, and your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were also killed. And the Ark of God has been captured."

¹⁸When the messenger mentioned what had happened to the Ark of God, Eli fell backward from his seat beside the gate. He broke his neck and died, for he was old and overweight. He had been Israel's judge for forty years.

¹⁹Eli's daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant and near her time of delivery. When she heard that the Ark of God had been captured and that her father-in-law and husband were dead, she went into labor and gave birth. ²⁰She died in childbirth, but before she passed away the midwives tried to encourage her. "Don't be afraid," they said. "You have a baby boy!" But she did not answer or pay attention to them.

²¹She named the child Ichabod (which means "Where is the glory?"), for she said, "Israel's glory is gone." She named him this because the Ark of God had been captured and because her father-in-law and husband were dead. ²²Then she said, "The glory has departed from Israel, for the Ark of God has been captured."

The Ark in Philistia

5 After the Philistines captured the Ark of God, they took it from the battleground at Ebenezer to the town of Ashdod. ²They carried the Ark of God into the temple of Dagon and placed it beside an idol of Dagon. ³But when the citizens of Ashdod went to see it the next morning, Dagon had fallen with his face to the ground in front of the Ark of the Lord! So they took Dagon and put him in his place again. ⁴But the next morning the same thing happened—Dagon had fallen face down before the Ark of the Lord again. This time his head and hands had broken off and were lying in the doorway. Only the trunk of his body was left intact. ⁵That is why to this day neither the priests of Dagon nor anyone who enters the temple of Dagon in Ashdod will step on its threshold.

3:15 Hebrew the house of the LORD. 4:3 Or he. 4:7 Or A god has.

“Then the Lord’s heavy hand struck the people of Ash-dod and the nearby villages with a plague of tumors.* When the people realized what was happening, they cried out, “We can’t keep the Ark of the God of Israel here any longer! He is against us! We will all be destroyed along with Dagon, our god.” So they called together the rulers of the Philistine towns and asked, “What should we do with the Ark of the God of Israel?”

The rulers discussed it and replied, “Move it to the town of Gath.” So they moved the Ark of the God of Israel to Gath. But when the Ark arrived at Gath, the Lord’s heavy hand fell on its men, young and old; he struck them with a plague of tumors, and there was a great panic.

So they sent the Ark of God to the town of Ekron, but when the people of Ekron saw it coming they cried out, “They are bringing the Ark of the God of Israel here to kill us, too!”¹¹ The people summoned the Philistine rulers again and begged them, “Please send the Ark of the God of Israel back to its own country, or it* will kill us all.” For the deadly plague from God had already begun, and great fear was sweeping across the town. Those who didn’t die were afflicted with tumors; and the cry from the town rose to heaven.

The Philistines Return the Ark

6 The Ark of the Lord remained in Philistine territory seven months in all.¹² Then the Philistines called in their priests and diviners and asked them, “What should we do about the Ark of the Lord? Tell us how to return it to its own country.”

“Send the Ark of the God of Israel back with a gift,” they were told. “Send a guilt offering so the plague will stop. Then, if you are healed, you will know it was his hand that caused the plague.”

“What sort of guilt offering should we send?” they asked.

And they were told, “Since the plague has struck both you and your five rulers, make five gold tumors and five gold rats, just like those that have ravaged your land. Make these things to show honor to the God of Israel. Perhaps then he will stop afflicting you, your gods, and your land. Don’t be stubborn and rebellious as Pharaoh and the Egyptians were. By the time God was finished with them, they were eager to let Israel go.”

“Now build a new cart, and find two cows that have just given birth to calves. Make sure the cows have never been yoked to a cart. Hitch the cows to the cart, but shut their calves away from them in a pen.¹³ Put the Ark of the Lord on the cart, and beside it place a chest containing the gold rats and gold tumors you are sending as a guilt offering. Then let the cows go wherever they want. If they cross the border of our land and go to Beth-shemesh, we will know it was the Lord who brought this great disaster upon us. If they don’t, we will know it was not his hand that caused the plague. It came simply by chance.”

So these instructions were carried out. Two cows were hitched to the cart, and their newborn calves were shut up in a pen.¹⁴ Then the Ark of the Lord and the chest containing the gold rats and gold tumors were placed on the cart.¹⁵ And sure enough, without veering off in other directions, the cows went straight along the road toward Beth-shemesh, lowing as they went. The Philistine rulers followed them as far as the border of Beth-shemesh.

The people of Beth-shemesh were harvesting wheat in

the valley, and when they saw the Ark, they were overjoyed.¹⁶ The cart came into the field of a man named Joshua and stopped beside a large rock. So the people broke up the wood of the cart for a fire and killed the cows and sacrificed them to the Lord as a burnt offering.¹⁷ Several men of the tribe of Levi lifted the Ark of the Lord and the chest containing the gold rats and gold tumors from the cart and placed them on the large rock. Many sacrifices and burn offerings were offered to the Lord that day by the people of Beth-shemesh.¹⁸ The five Philistine rulers watched all this and then returned to Ekron that same day.

The five gold tumors sent by the Philistines as a guilt offering to the Lord were gifts from the rulers of Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron.¹⁹ The five gold rats represented the five Philistine towns and their surrounding villages, which were controlled by the five rulers. The large rock at Beth-shemesh, where they set the Ark of the Lord, still stands in the field of Joshua as a witness to what happened there.

The Ark Moved to Kiriath-Jearim

But the Lord killed seventy men* from Beth-shemesh because they looked into the Ark of the Lord. And the people mourned greatly because of what the Lord had done.²⁰ Who is able to stand in the presence of the Lord, this holy God?” they cried out. “Where can we send the Ark from here?”

So they sent messengers to the people at Kiriath-jearim and told them, “The Philistines have returned the Ark of the Lord. Come here and get it!”

7 So the men of Kiriath-jearim came to get the Ark of the Lord. They took it to the hillside home of Abinadab and ordained Eleazar, his son, to be in charge of it.²¹ The Ark remained in Kiriath-jearim for a long time—twenty years in all. During that time all Israel mourned because it seemed the Lord had abandoned them.

Samuel Leads Israel to Victory

Then Samuel said to all the people of Israel, “If you are really serious about wanting to return to the Lord, get rid of your foreign gods and your images of Ashtoreth. Determine to obey only the Lord; then he will rescue you from the Philistines.” So the Israelites got rid of their images of Baal and Ashtoreth and worshiped only the Lord.

Then Samuel told them, “Gather all of Israel to Mizpah and I will pray to the Lord for you.” So they gathered at Mizpah and, in a great ceremony, drew water from a well and poured it out before the Lord. They also went without food all day and confessed that they had sinned against the Lord. (It was at Mizpah that Samuel became Israel’s judge.)

When the Philistine rulers heard that Israel had gathered at Mizpah, they mobilized their army and advanced. The Israelites were badly frightened when they learned that the Philistines were approaching.²² “Don’t stop pleading with the Lord our God to save us from the Philistines!” begged Samuel. So Samuel took a young lamb and offered it to the Lord as a whole burnt offering. He pleaded with the Lord to help Israel, and the Lord answered him.

Just as Samuel was sacrificing the burnt offering, the Philistines arrived to attack Israel. But the Lord spoke with a mighty voice of thunder from heaven that day, and the Philistines were thrown into such confusion that the Israelites defeated them.²³ The men of Israel chased them from

Mizpah to a place below Beth-car, slaughtering them all along the way.

Samuel then took a large stone and placed it between the towns of Mizpah and Jeshanah.* He named it Ebenezer (which means “the stone of help”), for he said, “Up to this point the Lord has helped us!”

So the Philistines were subdued and didn’t invade Israel again for some time. And throughout Samuel’s lifetime, the Lord’s powerful hand was raised against the Philistines. The Israelite villages near Ekron and Gath that the Philistines had captured were restored to Israel, along with the rest of the territory that the Philistines had taken. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites in those days.

Samuel continued as Israel’s judge for the rest of his life.²⁴ Each year he traveled around, setting up his court first at Bethel, then at Gilgal, and then at Mizpah. He judged the people of Israel at each of these places.²⁵ Then he would return to his home at Ramah, and he would hear cases there. And Samuel built an altar to the Lord at Ramah.

Samuel Requests a King

As Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons to be judges over Israel. ²⁶ Joel and Abijah, his oldest sons, held court at Beersheba. ²⁷ But they were not like their father, for they were greedy for money. They accepted bribes and perverted justice.

Finally, all the elders of Israel met at Ramah to discuss the matter with Samuel.²⁸ “Look,” they told him, “you are now old, and your sons are not like you. Give us a king to judge us all the other nations have.”

Samuel was displeased with their request and went to the Lord for guidance.²⁹ “Do everything they say to you,” the Lord replied, “for it is me they are rejecting, not you. They don’t want me to be their king any longer. Ever since I brought them from Egypt they have continually abandoned me and followed other gods. And now they are giving you the same treatment. Do as they ask, but solemnly warn them about the way a king will reign over them.”

Samuel Warns against a Kingdom

Samuel passed on the Lord’s warning to the people who were asking him for a king.³⁰ “This is how a king will reign over you,” Samuel said. “The king will draft your sons and assign them to his chariots and his charioteers, making them before his chariots.³¹ Some will be generals and captains in his army,* some will be forced to plow in his fields and harvest his crops, and some will make his weapons and chariot equipment.³² The king will take your daughters from you to force them to cook and bake and make perfumes for him.³³ He will take away the best of your fields and vineyards, a tenth of your grain and your grape harvest and distribute it among his officers and attendants.³⁴ He will take your and female slaves and demand the finest of your cattle* for his own use.³⁵ He will demand a tenth of your flocks, and you will be his slaves.³⁶ When that day comes you will beg for relief from this king you are demanding, but then the Lord will not help you.”

But the people refused to listen to Samuel’s warning, so, we still want a king,” they said.³⁷ “We want to be like the nations around us. Our king will judge us and lead us in battle.”

So Samuel repeated to the Lord what the people had said, and the Lord replied, “Do as they say, and give them a king.” Then Samuel agreed and sent the people home.

* In Greek and Syriac versions; Hebrew reads Shen. 8:12 Hebrew commanders of the army; Hebrew reads young men. 9:8 Hebrew ¼ shekel of silver, about 0.1 ounces or 3 grams we

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Kiriath-Jearim

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Israel to Victory

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He was sacrificing the burnt offering to attack Israel. But the Lord spoke from heaven that day, and the men into such confusion that the Israelites were throughout the city. ^{5:11} Or the text should be understood to read the Lord said,

to a place below Beth-car, slaughtering them all along the way.

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*Greek and Syriac versions; Hebrew reads *Shen*. ^{8:12} Hebrew *commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties*. ^{8:16} As in Greek version; Hebrew *young men*. ^{9:8} Hebrew $\frac{1}{4}$ shekel of silver, about 0.1 ounces or 3 grams in weight.

Saul Meets Samuel

9 There was a wealthy, influential man named Kish from the tribe of Benjamin. He was the son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Becorath, son of Aphiah, of the tribe of Benjamin. ²His son Saul was the most handsome man in Israel—he was taller than anyone else in the land.

³One day Kish's donkeys strayed away, and he told Saul, "Take a servant with you, and go look for the donkeys." ⁴So Saul took one of the servants and traveled through the hill country of Ephraim, the land of Shalishah, the Shaalim area, and the entire land of Benjamin, but they couldn't find the donkeys anywhere.

⁵Finally, they entered the region of Zuph, and Saul said to his servant, "Let's go home. By now my father will be more worried about us than about the donkeys!"

⁶But the servant said, "I've just thought of something! There is a man of God who lives here in this town. He is held in high honor by all the people because everything he says comes true. Let's go find him. Perhaps he can tell us which way to go."

⁷"But we don't have anything to offer him," Saul replied. "Even our food is gone, and we don't have a thing to give him."

⁸"Well," the servant said, "I have one small silver piece.* We can at least offer it to the man of God and see what happens!" ⁹(In those days if people wanted a message from God, they would say, "Let's go and ask the seer," for prophets used to be called seers.)

¹⁰"All right," Saul agreed, "let's try it!" So they started into the town where the man of God lived.

¹¹As they were climbing the hill to the town, they met some young women coming out to draw water. So Saul and his servant asked, "Is the seer here today?"

¹²"Yes," they replied. "Stay right on this road. He is at the town gates. He has just arrived to take part in a public sacrifice up at the place of worship. ¹³Hurry and catch him before he goes up there to eat. The guests won't begin eating until he arrives to bless the food."

¹⁴So they entered the town, and as they passed through the gates, Samuel was coming out toward them to go up to the place of worship.

¹⁵Now the Lord had told Samuel the previous day,

¹⁶"About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin. Anoint him to be the leader of my people, Israel. He will rescue them from the Philistines, for I have looked down on my people in mercy and have heard their cry."

¹⁷When Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said, "That's the man I told you about! He will rule my people."

¹⁸Just then Saul approached Samuel at the gateway and asked, "Can you please tell me where the seer's house is?"

¹⁹"I am the seer!" Samuel replied. "Go up to the place of worship ahead of me. We will eat there together, and in the morning I'll tell you what you want to know and send you on your way. ²⁰And don't worry about those donkeys that were lost three days ago, for they have been found. And I am here to tell you that you and your family are the focus of all Israel's hopes."

²¹Saul replied, "But I'm only from the tribe of Benjamin, the smallest tribe in Israel, and my family is the least important of all the families of that tribe! Why are you talking like this to me?"

²²Then Samuel brought Saul and his servant into the hall and placed them at the head of the table, honoring them above the thirty special guests. ²³Samuel then instructed the cook to bring Saul the finest cut of meat, the piece that had

been set aside for the guest of honor.²⁴ So the cook brought in the meat and placed it before Saul. "Go ahead and eat it," Samuel said. "I was saving it for you even before I invited these others!" So Saul ate with Samuel that day.

²⁵ When they came down from the place of worship and returned to town, Samuel took Saul up to the roof of the house and prepared a bed for him there.²⁶ At daybreak the next morning, Samuel called to Saul, "Get up! It's time you were on your way." So Saul got ready, and he and Samuel left the house together.²⁷ When they reached the edge of town, Samuel told Saul to send his servant on ahead. After the servant was gone, Samuel said, "Stay here, for I have received a special message for you from God."

Samuel Anoints Saul as King

10 Then Samuel took a flask of olive oil and poured it over Saul's head. He kissed Saul and said, "I am doing this because the Lord has appointed you to be the ruler over Israel, his special possession."² When you leave me today, you will see two men beside Rachel's tomb at Zelzah, on the border of Benjamin. They will tell you that the donkeys have been found and that your father has stopped worrying about them and is now worried about you. He is asking, 'Have you seen my son?'

³ When you get to the oak of Tabor, you will see three men coming toward you who are on their way to worship God at Bethel. One will be bringing three young goats, another will have three loaves of bread, and the third will be carrying a wineskin full of wine.⁴ They will greet you and offer you two of the loaves, which you are to accept.

⁵ When you arrive at Gibeath of God,⁵ where the garrison of the Philistines is located, you will meet a band of prophets coming down from the place of worship. They will be playing a harp, a tambourine, a flute, and a lyre, and they will be prophesying.⁶ At that time the Spirit of the Lord will come powerfully upon you, and you will prophesy with them. You will be changed into a different person.⁷ After these signs take place, do what must be done, for God is with you.⁸ Then go down to Gilgal ahead of me. I will join you there to sacrifice burnt offerings and peace offerings. You must wait for seven days until I arrive and give you further instructions."

Samuel's Signs Are Fulfilled

⁹ As Saul turned and started to leave, God gave him a new heart, and all Samuel's signs were fulfilled that day.¹⁰ When Saul and his servant arrived at Gibeath, they saw a group of prophets coming toward them. Then the Spirit of God came powerfully upon Saul, and he, too, began to prophesy.¹¹ When those who knew Saul heard about it, they exclaimed, "What? Is even Saul a prophet? How did the son of Kish become a prophet?"

¹² And one of those standing there said, "Can anyone become a prophet, no matter who his father is?"¹³ So that is the origin of the saying "Is even Saul a prophet?"

¹³ When Saul had finished prophesying, he went up to the place of worship.¹⁴ "Where have you been?" Saul's uncle asked him and his servant.

"We were looking for the donkeys," Saul replied, "but we couldn't find them. So we went to Samuel to ask him where they were."

¹⁵ "Oh? And what did he say?" his uncle asked.

¹⁶ "He told us that the donkeys had already been found,"

9:25 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *and talked with him there*. 10:1 Greek version reads *over Israel. And you will rule over the Lord's people and save them from their enemies around them. This will be the sign to you that the Lord has appointed you to be leader over his special possession.* 10:5 Hebrew *Gibeath-elohim.* 10:12 Hebrew said, "Who is their father?" 10:27 This paragraph, which is not included in the Masoretic Text, is found in Dead Sea Scrolls. 11:1 As in Greek version; Hebrew lacks *About a month later.*

Saul replied. But Saul didn't tell his uncle what Samuel said about the kingdom.

Saul Is Acclaimed King

¹⁷ Later Samuel called all the people of Israel to meet before the Lord at Mizpah.¹⁸ And he said, "This is what the Lord the God of Israel, has declared: I brought you from Egypt and rescued you from the Egyptians and from all of the nations that were oppressing you.¹⁹ But though I have rescued you from your misery and distress, you have rejected your God today and have said, 'No, we want a king instead!' Now, therefore, present yourselves before the Lord by tribes and clans."

²⁰ So Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel before the Lord, and the tribe of Benjamin was chosen by lot.²¹ Then he brought each family of the tribe of Benjamin before the Lord, and the family of the Matrites was chosen. And finally Saul son of Kish was chosen from among them. But when they looked for him, he had disappeared!²² So they asked the Lord, "Where is he?"

And the Lord replied, "He is hiding among the baggage."²³ So they found him and brought him out, and he stood head and shoulders above anyone else.

²⁴ Then Samuel said to all the people, "This is the man the Lord has chosen as your king. No one in all Israel is like him!"

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

²⁵ Then Samuel told the people what the rights and duties of a king were. He wrote them down on a scroll and placed before the Lord. Then Samuel sent the people home again.

²⁶ When Saul returned to his home at Gibeath, a group of men whose hearts God had touched went with him.²⁷ But there were some scoundrels who complained, "How can this man save us?" And they scorned him and refused to bring him gifts. But Saul ignored them.

[Nahash, king of the Ammonites, had been grievously oppressing the people of Gad and Reuben who lived east of the Jordan River. He gouged out the right eye of each of the Israelites living there, and he didn't allow anyone to come and rescue them. In fact, of all the Israelites east of the Jordan there wasn't a single one whose right eye Nahash had gouged out. But there were 7,000 men who had escaped from the Ammonites, and they had settled in Jabesh-gilead.]*

Saul Defeats the Ammonites

11 About a month later,¹ King Nahash of Ammon led his army against the Israelite town of Jabesh-gilead. But all the citizens of Jabesh asked for peace. "Make a treaty with us, and we will be your servants," they pleaded.

² "All right," Nahash said, "but only on one condition. I will gouge out the right eye of every one of you as a disgrace to Israel!"

³ "Give us seven days to send messengers throughout Israel," replied the elders of Jabesh. "If no one comes to save us, we will agree to your terms."

⁴ When the messengers came to Gibeath of Saul and told the people about their plight, everyone broke into tears.⁵ Saul had been plowing a field with his oxen, and when he returned to town, he asked, "What's the matter? Why is everyone crying?" So they told him about the message from Jabesh.

⁶ Then the Spirit of God came powerfully upon Saul, and he became very angry.⁷ He took two oxen and cut them into pieces and sent the messengers to carry them through the land.

⁸ But when you were afraid of Nahash, the king of Ammon, you came to me and said that you wanted a king to

Israel with this message: "This is what will happen to the men of anyone who refuses to follow Saul and Samuel into battle!" And the Lord made the people afraid of Saul's anger, and all of them came out together as one. ⁹ When Saul mobilized them at Bezek, he found that there were 300,000 men from Israel and 30,000* men from Judah.

¹⁰ So Saul sent the messengers back to Jabesh-gilead to say, "We will rescue you by noontime tomorrow!" There was great joy throughout the town when that message arrived!

¹¹ The men of Jabesh then told their enemies, "Tomorrow we will come out to you, and you can do to us whatever you wish."¹² But before dawn the next morning, Saul arrived, having divided his army into three detachments. He launched a surprise attack against the Ammonites and slaughtered them the whole morning. The remnant of their army was so badly scattered that no two of them were left together.

¹³ Then the people exclaimed to Samuel, "Now where are those men who said, 'Why should Saul rule over us?' Bring them here, and we will kill them!"

¹⁴ But Saul replied, "No one will be executed today, for to the Lord has rescued Israel!"

¹⁵ Then Samuel said to the people, "Come, let us all go to Gilgal to renew the kingdom."¹⁶ So they all went to Gilgal, and in a solemn ceremony before the Lord they made Saul king. Then they offered peace offerings to the Lord, and all the Israelites were filled with joy.

Samuel's Farewell Address

12 Then Samuel addressed all Israel: "I have done as you asked and given you a king.¹ Your king is now your master. I stand here before you—an old, gray-haired man. My sons serve you. I have served as your leader from the time I was a boy to this very day.² Now testify against me in the presence of the Lord and before his anointed one. Those ox or donkey have I stolen? Have I ever cheated any of you? Have I ever oppressed you? Have I ever taken a bribe or perverted justice? Tell me and I will make right whatever I have done wrong."

³ "No," they replied, "you have never cheated or oppressed any of us, and you have never taken even a single bribe."

⁴ The Lord and his anointed one are my witnesses to what I say," Samuel declared, "that my hands are clean."

⁵ "Yes, he is a witness," they replied.

⁶ "It was the Lord who appointed Moses and Aaron," Samuel continued. "He brought your ancestors out of the land of Egypt.⁷ Now stand here quietly before the Lord as I remind you of all the great things the Lord has done for you and your ancestors.

⁸ When the Israelites were* in Egypt and cried out to the Lord, he sent Moses and Aaron to rescue them from Egypt and bring them into this land.⁹ But the people soon forgot the Lord their God, so he handed them over to Sisera, commander of Hazor's army, and also to the Philistines and to the king of Moab, who fought against them.

¹⁰ Then they cried to the Lord again and confessed, "We sinned by turning away from the Lord and worshiping the images of Baal and Ashtoreth. But we will worship you alone if you will rescue us from our enemies."¹¹ Then the Lord sent Gideon,* Bedan,* Jephthah, and Samson to save you, and you lived in safety.

¹² But when you were afraid of Nahash, the king of Ammon, you came to me and said that you wanted a king to

12:8 Hebrew *When Jacob was the* Dead Sea Scrolls and Greek version read 70,000. 12:8 Hebrew *When Jacob was the* Testament, referring sometimes to the individual patriarch and sometimes to the nation. 12:11b Greek and Syriac versions read *Barak.* 12:11c Greek and Syriac versions read *is missing in the Hebrew.* 13:1b Hebrew *reigned . . . and two;* the number is incorporated in the Greek versions; Hebrew reads 30,000.

Continued

13

¹ Saul and his anointed one are my witnesses to what I say.

² Saul and his anointed one are my witnesses to what I say.

³ Saul and his anointed one are my witnesses to what I say.

⁴ Saul and his anointed one are my witnesses to what I say.

⁵ Saul and his anointed one are my witnesses to what I say.

⁶ Saul and his anointed one are my witnesses to what I say.

⁷ Saul and his anointed one are my witnesses to what I say.

⁸ Saul and his anointed one are my witnesses to what I say.

⁹ Saul and his anointed one are my witnesses to what I say.

¹⁰ Saul and his anointed one are my witnesses to what I say.

¹¹ Saul and his anointed one are my witnesses to what I say.

¹² Saul and his anointed one are my witnesses to what I say.

¹³ Saul and his anointed one are my witnesses to what I say.

¹⁴ Saul and his anointed one are my witnesses to what I say.

¹⁵ Saul and his anointed one are my witnesses to what I say.

¹⁶ Saul and his anointed one are my witnesses to what I say.

¹⁷ Saul and his anointed one are my witnesses to what I say.

¹⁸ Saul and his anointed one are my witnesses to what I say.

¹⁹ Saul and his anointed one are my witnesses to what I say.

²⁰ Saul and his anointed one are my witnesses to what I say.

²¹ Saul and his anointed one are my witnesses to what I say.

²² Saul and his anointed one are my witnesses to what I say.

²³ Saul and his anointed one are my witnesses to what I say.

²⁴ Saul and his anointed one are my witnesses to what I say.

²⁵ Saul and his anointed one are my witnesses to what I say.

Samuel had instructed him earlier, but Samuel still didn't come. Saul realized that his troops were rapidly slipping away. "So he demanded, 'Bring me the burnt offering and the peace offerings!' And Saul sacrificed the burnt offering himself.

¹⁰Just as Saul was finishing with the burnt offering, Samuel arrived. Saul went out to meet and welcome him, ¹¹but Samuel said, "What is this you have done?"

Saul replied, "I saw my men scattering from me, and you didn't arrive when you said you would, and the Philistines are at Micmash ready for battle. ¹²So I said, 'The Philistines are ready to march against us at Gilgal, and I haven't even asked for the Lord's help! So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering myself before you came.'

¹³"How foolish!" Samuel exclaimed. "You have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you. Had you kept it, the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. ¹⁴But now your kingdom must end, for the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart. The Lord has already appointed him to be the leader of his people, because you have not kept the Lord's command."

Israel's Military Disadvantage

¹⁵Samuel then left Gilgal and went on his way, but the rest of the troops went with Saul to meet the army. They went up from Gilgal to Gibeath in the land of Benjamin.* When Saul counted the men who were still with him, he found only 600 were left! ¹⁶Saul and Jonathan and the troops with them were staying at Geba in the land of Benjamin. The Philistines set up their camp at Micmash. ¹⁷Three raiding parties soon left the camp of the Philistines. One went north toward Ophrah in the land of Shual, ¹⁸another went west to Bethhoron, and the third moved toward the border above the valley of Zeboim near the wilderness.

¹⁹There were no blacksmiths in the land of Israel in those days. The Philistines wouldn't allow them for fear they would make swords and spears for the Hebrews. ²⁰So whenever the Israelites needed to sharpen their plowshares, picks, axes, or sickles,* they had to take them to a Philistine blacksmith. ²¹(The charges were as follows: a quarter of an ounce of silver* for sharpening a plowshare or a pick, and an eighth of an ounce* for sharpening an ax, a sickle, or an ox goad.) ²²So on the day of the battle none of the people of Israel had a sword or spear, except for Saul and Jonathan.

²³The pass at Micmash had meanwhile been secured by a contingent of the Philistine army.

Jonathan's Daring Plan

14 One day Jonathan said to his armor bearer, "Come on, let's go over to where the Philistines have their outpost." But Jonathan did not tell his father what he was doing.

Meanwhile, Saul and his 600 men were camped on the outskirts of Gibeath, around the pomegranate tree* at Migron. ³Among Saul's men was Ahijah the priest, who was wearing the ephod, the priestly vest. Ahijah was the son of Ichabod's brother Ahitub, son of Phinehas, son of Eli, the priest of the Lord who had served at Shiloh.

No one realized that Jonathan had left the Israelite camp. ⁴To reach the Philistine outpost, Jonathan had to go down between two rocky cliffs that were called Bozez and Seneh. ⁵The cliff on the north was in front of Micmash, and the one on the south was in front of Geba. ⁶"Let's go across to the outpost of those pagans," Jonathan said to his armor bearer.

13:15 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *Samuel then left Gilgal and went to Gibeath in the land of Benjamin.* 13:20 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *plowshares.* 13:21a Hebrew *1 pim* (8 grams). 13:21b Hebrew *½ of a shekel* (4 grams). 14:2 Or *around the rock of Rimmon*; compare *Judg 20:45*. 21:13. 14:14 Hebrew *half a yoke*; a "yoke" was the amount of land plowed by a pair of yoked oxen in one day. 14:18 As in some Greek manuscripts Hebrew reads *"Bring the Ark of God."* For at that time the Ark of God was with the Israelites. 14:19 Hebrew *Withdraw your hand.* 14:27 Or *his eyes* brightened; similarly in 14:29.

"Perhaps the Lord will help us, for nothing can hinder the Lord. He can win a battle whether he has many warriors or only a few!"

⁷"Do what you think is best," the armor bearer replied. "I'm with you completely, whatever you decide."

⁸"All right then," Jonathan told him. "We will cross over and let them see us. ⁹If they say to us, 'Stay where you are or we'll kill you,' then we will stop and not go up to them. ¹⁰But if they say, 'Come on up and fight,' then we will go up. That will be the Lord's sign that he will help us defeat them."

¹¹When the Philistines saw them coming, they shouted. "Look! The Hebrews are crawling out of their holes!" ¹²The men from the outpost shouted to Jonathan, "Come on up here, and we'll teach you a lesson!"

"Come on, climb right behind me," Jonathan said to his armor bearer, "for the Lord will help us defeat them!"

¹³So they climbed up using both hands and feet, and the Philistines fell before Jonathan, and his armor bearer killed those who came behind them. ¹⁴They killed some twenty men in all, and their bodies were scattered over about half an acre.*

¹⁵Suddenly, panic broke out in the Philistine army, both in the camp and in the field, including even the outposts and raiding parties. And just then an earthquake struck, and everyone was terrified.

Israel Defeats the Philistines

¹⁶Saul's lookouts in Gibeath of Benjamin saw a strange sight—the vast army of Philistines began to melt away in every direction. ¹⁷"Call the roll and find out who's missing," Saul ordered. And when they checked, they found that Jonathan and his armor bearer were gone.

¹⁸Then Saul shouted to Ahijah, "Bring the ephod here! For at that time Ahijah was wearing the ephod in front of the Israelites.* ¹⁹But while Saul was talking to the priest, the confusion in the Philistine camp grew louder and louder. Saul said to the priest, "Never mind; let's get going!"*

²⁰Then Saul and all his men rushed out to the battle and found the Philistines killing each other. There was terrible confusion everywhere. ²¹Even the Hebrews who had previously gone over to the Philistine army revolted and joined with Saul, Jonathan, and the rest of the Israelites. ²²Likewise, the men of Israel who were hiding in the hill country of Ephraim joined the chase when they saw the Philistines running away. ²³So the Lord saved Israel that day, and the battle continued to rage even beyond Beth-aven.

Saul's Foolish Oath

²⁴Now the men of Israel were pressed to exhaustion that day, because Saul had placed them under an oath, saying, "Let a curse fall on anyone who eats before evening—before I have full revenge on my enemies." So no one ate anything all day, ²⁵even though they had all found honeycomb on the ground in the forest. ²⁶They didn't dare touch the honey, because they all feared the oath they had taken.

²⁷But Jonathan had not heard his father's command. He dipped the end of his stick into a piece of honeycomb and ate the honey. After he had eaten it, he felt refreshed. ²⁸But one of the men saw him and said, "Your father made the army take a strict oath that anyone who eats food will be cursed. That is why everyone is weary and faint."

²⁹"My father has made trouble for us all!" Jonathan claimed. "A command like that only hurts us. See how

I am now that I have eaten this little bit of honey. If the men had been allowed to eat freely from the food we found among our enemies, think how many more Philistines we could have killed!"

³⁰They chased and killed the Philistines all day from Micmash to Ajalon, growing more and more faint. ³²Then they rushed for the battle plunder and butchered sheep, goats, cattle, and calves, but they ate them without washing the blood. ³³Someone reported to Saul, "Look, the men are sinning against the Lord by eating meat that still has blood in it."

"That is very wrong," Saul said. "Find a large stone and roll over here. ³⁴Then go out among the troops and tell them, 'Bring the cattle, sheep, and goats here to me. Kill them here, and drain the blood before you eat them. Do not sin against the Lord by eating meat with the blood still in it.'

³⁵So that night all the troops brought their animals and slaughtered them there. ³⁶Then Saul built an altar to the Lord. ³⁷Then Saul said, "Let's chase the Philistines all night and

³⁸Then men replied, "We'll do whatever you think is best." But the priest said, "Let's ask God first."

³⁹So Saul asked God, "Should we go after the Philistines? Will you help us defeat them?" But God made no reply that

⁴⁰Then Saul said to the leaders, "Something's wrong! I call all my army commanders to come here. We must find what sin was committed today. ³⁹I vow by the name of the Lord who rescued Israel that the sinner will surely die, if it is my own son Jonathan!" But no one would tell him the trouble was.

⁴¹Then Saul said, "Jonathan and I will stand over here, and you stand over there."

⁴²And the people responded to Saul, "Whatever you think only."

⁴³Then Saul prayed, "O Lord, God of Israel, please show who is guilty and who is innocent.*" Then they cast lots, and Jonathan and Saul were chosen as the guilty and the people were declared innocent.

⁴⁴Then Saul said, "Now cast lots again and choose between me and Jonathan." And Jonathan was shown to be the one.

⁴⁵Tell me what you have done," Saul demanded of Jonathan.

⁴⁶Tasted a little honey," Jonathan admitted. "It was only a bit on the end of my stick. Does that deserve death?"

⁴⁷"Yes, Jonathan," Saul said, "you must die! May God me and even kill me if you do not die for this."

⁴⁸But the people broke in and said to Saul, "Jonathan has this great victory for Israel. Should he die? Far from it! as the Lord lives, not one hair on his head will be

⁴⁹reduced, for God helped him do a great deed today." So the

⁵⁰Then Saul called back the army from chasing the Philistines and the Philistines returned home.

Saul's Military Successes

⁵¹When Saul had secured his grasp on Israel's throne, he fought against his enemies in every direction—against Ammon, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines. And wherever he turned, he was victorious.* ⁴⁸He per-

⁵²He Greek version adds *If the fault is with me or my son Jonathan, respond with Uriah.* ⁵³He Greek version; Hebrew reads *he acted wickedly.* ⁵⁴He term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the Lord.

⁵⁵15, 18, 20, 21.

will help us, for nothing can hinder the battle whether he has many warriors or not. I think is best," the armor bearer replied. "Jonathan told him, "We will cross over. If they say to us, 'Stay where you are, we will stop and not go up to them. Then we will go up and fight; then we will go up. That sign that he will help us defeat them." The Philistines saw them coming, they shouted, "They are crawling out of their holes!" The outpost shouted to Jonathan, "Come on and teach you a lesson!"

"I am right behind me," Jonathan said to him. "The LORD will help us defeat them!" He stood up using both hands and feet, and before Jonathan, and his armor bearer killed them behind them. They killed some twenty bodies were scattered over about half the field, including even the outposts and just then an earthquake struck. It

The Philistines

In Gibeath of Benjamin saw a crowd of Philistines began to melt away. "Call the roll and find out who's missing," when they checked, they found that the armor bearer were gone. He shouted to Ahijah, "Bring the ephod." Ahijah was wearing the ephod in front of him while Saul was talking to the priest. The Philistine camp grew louder and louder. "Never mind; let's get going!" And all his men rushed out to the battle lines killing each other. There was terrible here. Even the Hebrews who had joined the Philistine army revolted and turned to the rest of the Israelites. Like those who were hiding in the hill country, when they saw the Philistines, the LORD saved Israel that day, and the battle even beyond Beth-aven.

Death

of Israel were pressed to exhaustion. He had placed them under an oath, "anyone who eats before evening—on my enemies." So no one ate although they had all found honeycomb. They didn't dare touch the honey, for the oath they had taken. He had not heard his father's command to his stick into a piece of honeycomb. After he had eaten it, he felt rather ill. Men saw him and said, "Your father's strict oath that anyone who eats fruit is why everyone is weary and famished and like that only hurts us. See

13:20 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *and the rock of Rimon*; compare 1 Kings 19:8. 14:18 As in some Greek manuscripts; Hebrew reads *Withdraw your hand*. 14:27 Or *and*

I am now that I have eaten this little bit of honey. The men had been allowed to eat freely from the food found among our enemies, think how many more Philistines we could have killed!"

"They chased and killed the Philistines all day from Aijalon, growing more and more faint. Then they rushed for the battle plunder and butchered sheep, goats, cattle, and calves, but they ate them without the blood. Someone reported to Saul, "Look, the men are sinning against the LORD by eating meat that still

blood is in it." That is very wrong," Saul said. "Find a large stone and roll it here. Then go out among the troops and tell them, 'Kill the cattle, sheep, and goats here to me. Kill them here, drain the blood before you eat them. Do not sin against the LORD by eating meat with the blood still in it.'"

That night all the troops brought their animals and slaughtered them there. Then Saul built an altar to the LORD. Then Saul said, "Let's chase the Philistines all night and kill them until sunrise. Let's destroy every last one of

men replied, "We'll do whatever you think is best." The priest said, "Let's ask God first." Saul asked God, "Should we go after the Philistines? Will you help us defeat them?" But God made no reply that

Then Saul said to the leaders, "Something's wrong! I call my army commanders to come here. We must find out what sin was committed today. I vow by the name of the one who rescued Israel that the sinner will surely die, if it is my own son Jonathan!" But no one would tell him the trouble was.

Then Saul said, "Jonathan and I will stand over here, and you stand over there." The people responded to Saul, "Whatever you think

Then Saul prayed, "O LORD, God of Israel, please show us who is guilty and who is innocent." Then they cast lots, and Jonathan and Saul were chosen as the guilty and the people were declared innocent.

Then Saul said, "Now cast lots again and choose between me and Jonathan." And Jonathan was shown to be the

one who had sinned. "Tell me what you have done," Saul demanded of Jonathan.

"I have eaten a little honey," Jonathan admitted. "It was only a bit on the end of my stick. Does that deserve death?" "Jonathan," Saul said, "you must die! May God strike me and even kill me if you do not die for this." The people broke in and said to Saul, "Jonathan has great victory for Israel. Should he die? Far from it! As the LORD lives, not one hair on his head will be plucked for God helped him do a great deed today." So the people rescued Jonathan, and he was not put to death. Then Saul called back the army from chasing the Philistines. The Philistines returned home.

Military Successes

When Saul had secured his grasp on Israel's throne, he fought against his enemies in every direction—against Ammon, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines. Wherever he turned, he was victorious.* He performed

version adds *If the fault is with me or my son Jonathan, respond with Urim; but if the men of Israel are at fault, respond with Thummim.*

14:49 Hebrew Ishvi, a variant name for Ishboseth; also known as Esh-baal. 15:3 The word *holy* used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering; also

formed great deeds and conquered the Amalekites, saving Israel from all those who had plundered them.

Saul's sons included Jonathan, Ishboseth, and Malki-shua. He also had two daughters: Merab, who was older, and Michal. *Saul's wife was Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz. The commander of Saul's army was Abner, the son of Saul's uncle Ner. *Saul's father, Kish, and Abner's father, Ner, were both sons of Abiel.

⁵²The Israelites fought constantly with the Philistines throughout Saul's lifetime. So whenever Saul observed a young man who was brave and strong, he drafted him into his army.

Saul Destroys the Amalekites

15 One day Samuel said to Saul, "It was the LORD who told me to anoint you as king of his people, Israel. Now listen to this message from the LORD! ²This is what the Lord of Heaven's Armies has declared: I have decided to settle accounts with the nation of Amalek for opposing Israel when they came from Egypt. ³Now go and completely destroy* the entire Amalekite nation—men, women, children, babies, cattle, sheep, goats, camels, and donkeys."

⁴Saul mobilized his army at Telaim. There were 200,000 soldiers from Israel and 10,000 men from Judah. ⁵Then Saul and his army went to a town of the Amalekites and lay in wait in the valley. ⁶Saul sent this warning to the Kenites: "Move away from where the Amalekites live, or you will die with them. For you showed kindness to all the people of Israel when they came up from Egypt." So the Kenites packed up and left.

⁷Then Saul slaughtered the Amalekites from Havilah all the way to Shur, east of Egypt. ⁸He captured Agag, the Amalekite king, but completely destroyed everyone else. ⁹Saul and his men spared Agag's life and kept the best of the sheep and goats, the cattle, the fat calves, and the lambs—everything, in fact, that appealed to them. They destroyed only what was worthless or of poor quality.

The LORD Rejects Saul

¹⁰Then the LORD said to Samuel, ¹¹"I am sorry that I ever made Saul king, for he has not been loyal to me and has refused to obey my command." Samuel was so deeply moved when he heard this that he cried out to the LORD all night.

¹²Early the next morning Samuel went to find Saul. Someone told him, "Saul went to the town of Carmel to set up a monument to himself; then he went on to Gilgal."

¹³When Samuel finally found him, Saul greeted him cheerfully. "May the LORD bless you," he said. "I have carried out the LORD's command!"

¹⁴Then what is all the bleating of sheep and goats and the lowing of cattle I hear?" Samuel demanded.

¹⁵"It's true that the army spared the best of the sheep, goats, and cattle," Saul admitted. "But they are going to sacrifice them to the LORD your God. We have destroyed everything else."

¹⁶Then Samuel said to Saul, "Stop! Listen to what the LORD told me last night!"

"What did he tell you?" Saul asked.

¹⁷And Samuel told him, "Although you may think little of yourself, are you not the leader of the tribes of Israel? The LORD has anointed you king of Israel. ¹⁸And the LORD sent you on a mission and told you, 'Go and completely destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, until they are all dead.' ¹⁹Why

haven't you obeyed the LORD? Why did you rush for the plunder and do what was evil in the LORD's sight?"

²⁰"But I did obey the LORD," Saul insisted. "I carried out the mission he gave me. I brought back King Agag, but I destroyed everyone else. ²¹Then my troops brought in the best of the sheep, goats, cattle, and plunder to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal."

²²But Samuel replied,

"What is more pleasing to the LORD:
your burnt offerings and sacrifices
or your obedience to his voice?"

Listen! Obedience is better than sacrifice,
and submission is better than offering the fat
of rams.

²³Rebellion is as sinful as witchcraft,
and stubbornness as bad as worshiping idols.
So because you have rejected the command of the LORD,
he has rejected you as king."

Saul Pleads for Forgiveness

²⁴Then Saul admitted to Samuel, "Yes, I have sinned. I have disobeyed your instructions and the LORD's command, for I was afraid of the people and did what they demanded. ²⁵But now, please forgive my sin and come back with me so that I may worship the LORD."

²⁶But Samuel replied, "I will not go back with you! Since you have rejected the LORD's command, he has rejected you as king of Israel."

²⁷As Samuel turned to go, Saul tried to hold him back and tore the hem of his robe. ²⁸And Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to someone else—one who is better than you. ²⁹And he who is the Glory of Israel will not lie, nor will he change his mind, for he is not human that he should change his mind!"

³⁰Then Saul pleaded again, "I know I have sinned. But please, at least honor me before the elders of my people and before Israel by coming back with me so that I may worship the LORD your God." ³¹So Samuel finally agreed and went back with him, and Saul worshiped the LORD.

Samuel Executes King Agag

³²Then Samuel said, "Bring King Agag to me." Agag arrived full of hope, for he thought, "Surely the worst is over, and I have been spared!" ³³But Samuel said, "As your sword has killed the sons of many mothers, now your mother will be childless." And Samuel cut Agag to pieces before the Lord at Gilgal.

³⁴Then Samuel went home to Ramah, and Saul returned to his house at Gibeah of Saul. ³⁵Saul never went to meet with Saul again, but he mourned constantly for him. And the Lord was sorry he had ever made Saul king of Israel.

Samuel Anoints David as King

16 Now the Lord said to Samuel, "You have mourned long enough for Saul. I have rejected him as king of Israel, so fill your flask with olive oil and go to Bethlehem. Find a man named Jesse who lives there, for I have selected one of his sons to be my king."

But Samuel asked, "How can I do that? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me."

"Take a heifer with you," the Lord replied, "and say that you have come to make a sacrifice to the Lord. ³Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you which of his sons to anoint for me."

15:32 Dead Sea Scrolls and Greek version read Agag arrived hesitantly, for he thought, "Surely this is the bitterness of death."

16:9 Hebrew Shammah

a variant spelling of Shimea; compare 1 Chr 2:13; 20:7. 16:14 Or an evil spirit; also in 16:15, 16, 23.

"So Samuel did as the Lord instructed. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town came trembling to meet him. "What's wrong?" they asked. "Do you come in peace?"

"Yes," Samuel replied. "I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Purify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice. Then Samuel performed the purification rite for Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice, too."

When they arrived, Samuel took one look at Eliab and thought, "Surely this is the Lord's anointed!"

"But the Lord said to Samuel, "Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The Lord doesn't judge things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

⁴Then Jesse told his son Abinadab to step forward and walk in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, "This is not the one the Lord has chosen." ⁵Next Jesse summoned Shimron, but Samuel said, "Neither is this the one the Lord has chosen." ⁶In the same way all seven of Jesse's sons were presented to Samuel. But Samuel said to Jesse, "The Lord has not chosen any of these." ⁷Then Samuel asked, "Are these all the sons you have?"

"There is still the youngest," Jesse replied. "But he's out in the fields watching the sheep and goats."

"Send for him at once," Samuel said. "We will not down to eat until he arrives."

⁸So Jesse sent for him. He was dark and handsome, with beautiful eyes.

And the Lord said, "This is the one; anoint him."

⁹So as David stood there among his brothers, Samuel filled the flask of olive oil he had brought and anointed David with the oil. And the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David from that day on. Then Samuel returned to Ramah.

David Serves in Saul's Court

¹⁰Now the Spirit of the Lord had left Saul, and the LORD sent a tormenting spirit* that filled him with depression and fear.

¹¹Some of Saul's servants said to him, "A tormenting spirit from God is troubling you. ¹²Let us find a good man to play the harp whenever the tormenting spirit troubles you. He will play soothing music, and you will soon be well again."

¹³All right," Saul said. "Find me someone who plays well and bring him here."

¹⁴One of the servants said to Saul, "One of Jesse's sons from Bethlehem is a talented harp player. Not only that—is a brave warrior, a man of war, and has good judgment. He is also a fine-looking young man, and the Lord is with him."

¹⁵So Saul sent messengers to Jesse to say, "Send me my son David, the shepherd." ¹⁶Jesse responded by sending David to Saul, along with a young goat, a donkey loaded with bread, and a wineskin full of wine.

¹⁷So David went to Saul and began serving him. Saul loved David very much, and David became his armor bearer.

¹⁸Then Saul sent word to Jesse asking, "Please let David remain in my service, for I am very pleased with him."

¹⁹And whenever the tormenting spirit from God troubled Saul, David would play the harp. Then Saul would feel better, and the tormenting spirit would go away.

Goliath Challenges the Israelites

17 The Philistines now mustered their army for battle and camped between Socoh in Judah and Azekah in Ephes-dammim. ²Saul countered by gathering his Is-

raelites near the valley of Elah. ³So the Philistines and Israelites faced each other on opposite hills, with the valley between them.

⁴Then Goliath, a Philistine champion from Gath, came out of the Philistine ranks to face the forces of Israel. He was nine feet* tall! ⁵He wore a bronze helmet, and his bronze coat of mail weighed 125 pounds.* ⁶He also wore bronze leg armor, and he carried a bronze javelin on his shoulder. ⁷The shaft of his spear was as heavy and thick as a beam, tipped with an iron spearhead that weighed 16 pounds.* His armor bearer walked ahead of him carrying a shield.

⁸Goliath stood and shouted a taunt across to the Israelites. "Why are you all coming out to fight?" he called. "I am a Philistine champion, but you are only the servants of Saul. Choose one man to come down here and fight me! ⁹If you kill me, then we will be your slaves. But if I kill him, you will be our slaves! ¹⁰Defy the armies of Israel today! Send me a man who will fight me!" ¹¹When Saul and the Israelites heard this, they were terrified and deeply shaken.

Sends David to Saul's Camp

¹²David was the son of a man named Jesse, an Ephrathite from Bethlehem in the land of Judah. Jesse was an old man at that time, and he had eight sons. ¹³Jesse's three oldest sons—Eliab, Abinadab, and Shimea*—had already joined David's army to fight the Philistines. ¹⁴David was the youngest of David's three oldest brothers. Stayed with Saul's army, ¹⁵David went back and forth so he could help his father tend the sheep in Bethlehem.

¹⁶For forty days, every morning and evening, the Philistine champion strutted in front of the Israelite army.

¹⁷One day Jesse said to David, "Take this basket* of grain and these ten loaves of bread, and carry them

¹⁸to your brothers. ¹⁹And give these ten cuts of cheese

²⁰to your brothers. ²¹And bring back a report on how they are doing." ²²David's

²³brothers were with Saul and the Israelite army at the valley of Elah, fighting against the Philistines.

²⁴David left the sheep with another shepherd and set

²⁵early the next morning with the gifts, as Jesse had directed him. He arrived at the camp just as the Israelite army

²⁶was leaving for the battlefield with shouts and battle cries.

²⁷The Israelite and Philistine forces stood facing each other.

²⁸One of the Philistines said to Saul, "One of Jesse's sons from Bethlehem is a talented harp player. Not only that—is a brave warrior, a man of war, and has good judgment. He is also a fine-looking young man, and the Lord is with him."

²⁹So Saul sent messengers to Jesse to say, "Send me my son David, the shepherd." ³⁰Jesse responded by sending David to Saul, along with a young goat, a donkey loaded with bread, and a wineskin full of wine.

³¹So as the Israelite army saw him, they began to run in fright. ³²"Have you seen the giant?" the men asked.

³³As he was talking with them, Goliath, the Philistine champion from Gath, came out from the Philistine camp.

³⁴Then David heard him shout his usual taunt to the Israelites.

³⁵As soon as the Israelite army saw him, they began to run in fright. ³⁶"Have you seen the giant?" the men asked.

³⁷David asked the soldiers standing nearby, "What will a reward for killing this Philistine and ending his defiance of God?"

³⁸Who is this pagan Philistine anyway, that he is allowed to defy the armies of the living God?"

³⁹And these men gave David the same reply. They said, "That is the reward for killing him."

⁴⁰But when David's oldest brother, Eliab, heard David speaking to the men, he was angry. "What are you doing

⁴¹to meet out in the field and pull him and

⁴²so you and a s

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⁴⁴to meet out in the field and pull him and

⁴⁵and him and

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the valley of Elah. ³So the Philistines and Israelites faced each other on opposite hills, with the valley between them.

Then Goliath, a Philistine champion from Gath, came from the Philistine ranks to face the forces of Israel. He was six feet* tall. ⁵He wore a bronze helmet, and his coat of mail weighed 125 pounds.* ⁶He also wore bronze leg armor, and he carried a bronze javelin on his shoulder. ⁷The shaft of his spear was as heavy and thick as a beam, tipped with an iron spearhead that weighed 15 pounds.* His armor bearer walked ahead of him carrying his shield.

Goliath stood and shouted a taunt across to the Israelites. ⁹"Are you all coming out to fight?" he called. "I am a Philistine champion, but you are only the servants of David. Choose one man to come down here and fight me! ¹⁰If he beats me, then we will be your slaves. But if I kill him, you will be our slaves! ¹¹I defy the armies of Israel today! Send me a man who will fight me!" ¹²When Saul and the Israelites heard this, they were terrified and deeply shaken.

the Israelites now mustered their army between Socoh in Judah and all countered by gathering themness of death." 16:9 Hebrew *army* and 1 span [which totals about 9.75 feet or 3 meters; Deut. 17:15 Hebrew 5,000 shekels (57 kilograms). 17:17 Hebrew *ephah* [20 qua-

around here anyway?" he demanded. "What about those few sheep you're supposed to be taking care of? I know about your pride and deceit. You just want to see the battle!"

²⁹"What have I done now?" David replied. "I was only asking a question!" ³⁰He walked over to some others and asked them the same thing and received the same answer. ³¹Then David's question was reported to King Saul, and the king sent for him.

David Kills Goliath

³²"Don't worry about this Philistine," David told Saul. "I'll go fight him!"

³³"Don't be ridiculous!" Saul replied. "There's no way you can fight this Philistine and possibly win! You're only a boy, and he's been a man of war since his youth."

³⁴But David persisted. "I have been taking care of my father's sheep and goats," he said. "When a lion or a bear comes to steal a lamb from the flock, ³⁵I go after it with a club and rescue the lamb from its mouth. If the animal turns on me, I catch it by the jaw and club it to death. ³⁶I have done this to both lions and bears, and I'll do it to this pagan Philistine, too, for he has defied the armies of the living God! ³⁷The LORD who rescued me from the claws of the lion and the bear will rescue me from this Philistine!"

Saul finally consented. "All right, go ahead," he said. "And may the LORD be with you!"

³⁸Then Saul gave David his own armor—a bronze helmet and a coat of mail. ³⁹David put it on, strapped the sword over it, and took a step or two to see what it was like, for he had never worn such things before.

"I can't go in these," he protested to Saul. "I'm not used to them." So David took them off again. ⁴⁰He picked up five smooth stones from a stream and put them into his shepherd's bag. Then, armed only with his shepherd's staff and sling, he started across the hill.

slung, he started across the valley to fight the Philistine. ⁴¹Goliath walked out toward David with his shield bearer ahead of him, ⁴²sneering in contempt at this ruddy-faced boy. ⁴³"Am I a dog," he roared at David, "that you come at me with a stick?" And he cursed David by the names of his gods. ⁴⁴"Come over here, and I'll give your flesh to the birds and wild animals!" Goliath yelled.

⁴⁵David replied to the Philistine, "You come to me with sword, spear, and javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of Heaven's Armies—the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. ⁴⁶Today the Lord will conquer you, and I will kill you and cut off your head. And then I will give the dead bodies of your men to the birds and wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel! ⁴⁷And everyone assembled here will know that the Lord rescues his people, but not with sword and spear. This is the Lord's battle, and he will give you to us!"

⁴⁸As Goliath moved closer to attack, David quickly ran out to meet him. ⁴⁹Reaching into his shepherd's bag and taking out a stone, he hurled it with his sling and hit the Philistine in the forehead. The stone sank in, and Goliath stumbled and fell face down on the ground.

Israel Routs the Philistines

Then the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they turned and ran.⁵² Then the men of Israel and Judah gave a

17:5 Hebrew 5,000 shekels [57 kilograms]. 17:7 Hebrew 600 shekels [6.8 kilograms]. 17:13 Hebrew *Shammah*, a variant compare 1 Chr 2:13; 20:7. 17:17 Hebrew *ephah* [20 quarts or 22 liters]. 17:18 Hebrew *and take their pledge*.

is my family in Israel that I should be?" David exclaimed. "My father Saul sent troops to watch David's house. They were to kill David when he came out the next morning. But Michal, David's wife, warned him, 'If you don't escape tonight, you will be dead by morning.'" ¹²So she helped him climb out through a window, and he fled and escaped. Then she took an idol* and put it in his bed, covered it with blankets, and put a cushion of goat's hair at its head.

"When the troops came to arrest David, she told them he was sick and couldn't get out of bed.

"But Saul sent the troops back to get David. He ordered, 'Bring him to me in his bed so I can kill him!'" ¹⁶But when they came to carry David out, they discovered that it was only Michal in the bed with a cushion of goat's hair at its head.

"'Why have you betrayed me like this and let my enemy capture me?' Saul demanded of Michal.

"'I had to,' Michal replied. "He threatened to kill me if I didn't help him."

¹⁵So David escaped and went to Ramah to see Samuel, who told him all that Saul had done to him. Then Samuel sent David with him to live at Naioth. ¹⁹When the report reached Saul that David was at Naioth in Ramah, ²⁰he sent troops to capture him. But when they arrived and saw Samuel leading a group of prophets who were prophesying, the Spirit of God came upon Saul's men, and they also began to prophesy. ²¹When Saul heard what had happened, he sent more troops, but they, too, prophesied! The same thing happened a third time. ²²Finally, Saul himself went to Ramah and arrived at the great well in Secu. "Where are Samuel and David?" he demanded.

"They are at Naioth in Ramah," someone told him.

"But on the way to Naioth in Ramah the Spirit of God even upon Saul, and he, too, began to prophesy all the way to Naioth! ²⁴He tore off his clothes and lay naked on the ground all day and all night, prophesying in the presence of all. The people who were watching exclaimed, 'What? Is Saul a prophet?'

20 Jonathan Helps David

²⁰David now fled from Naioth in Ramah and found Jonathan. "What have I done?" he exclaimed. "What have I done? How have I offended your father that he is so determined to kill me?"

"That's not true!" Jonathan protested. "You're not going to tell me everything he's going to do, even little things. I know my father wouldn't hide something from me. It just isn't so!"

Then David took an oath before Jonathan and said, "My father knows perfectly well about our friendship, so I swear to him, 'I won't tell Jonathan—why should I tell him? But I swear to you that I am only a step away from telling him the truth! I swear it by the Lord and by your own soul!'"

Then David told Jonathan what he can do to help him. "Jonathan replied, "Tomorrow we celebrate the new moon. I've always eaten with the king on this occasion, but I'll hide in the field and stay there until the evening of the third day. If your father asks where I am, tell him I have permission to go home to Bethlehem for an annual sacrifice. If he says, 'Fine!' you will know all is well. If he is angry and loses his temper, you will know he intended to kill me. Show me this loyalty as my sworn brother. We made a solemn pact before the Lord—or kill yourself if I have sinned against your father. But please tell me to him!"

Then Jonathan exclaimed, "You know that if I had the power to do it, I would kill Saul!"

David replied, "Tomorrow we celebrate the new moon. I'll hide in the field and stay there until the evening of the third day. If your father asks where I am, tell him I have permission to go home to Bethlehem for an annual sacrifice. If he says, 'Fine!' you will know all is well. If he is angry and loses his temper, you will know he intended to kill me. Show me this loyalty as my sworn brother. We made a solemn pact before the Lord—or kill yourself if I have sinned against your father. But please tell me to him!"

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slightest notion my father was planning to kill you, I would tell you at once."

¹⁰Then David asked, "How will I know whether or not your father is angry?"

"Come out to the field with me," Jonathan replied. And they went out there together. ¹²Then Jonathan told David, "I promise by the Lord, the God of Israel, that by this time tomorrow, or the next day at the latest, I will talk to my father and let you know at once how he feels about you. If he speaks favorably about you, I will let you know. ¹³But if he is angry and wants you killed, may the Lord strike me and even kill me if I don't warn you so you can escape and live. May the Lord be with you as he used to be with my father. ¹⁴And may you treat me with the faithful love of the Lord as long as I live. But if I die, ¹⁵treat my family with this faithful love, even when the Lord destroys all your enemies from the face of the earth."

¹⁶So Jonathan made a solemn pact with David,* saying, "May the Lord destroy all your enemies!" ¹⁷And Jonathan made David reaffirm his vow of friendship again, for Jonathan loved David as he loved himself.

¹⁸Then Jonathan said, "Tomorrow we celebrate the new moon festival. You will be missed when your place at the table is empty. ¹⁹The day after tomorrow, toward evening, go to the place where you hid before, and wait there by the stone pile.* ²⁰I will come out and shoot three arrows to the side of the stone pile as though I were shooting at a target. ²¹Then I will send a boy to bring the arrows back. If you hear me tell him, 'They're on this side,' then you will know, as surely as the Lord lives, that all is well, and there is no trouble. ²²But if I tell him, 'Go farther—the arrows are still ahead of you,' then it will mean that you must leave immediately, for the Lord is sending you away. ²³And may the Lord make us keep our promises to each other, for he has witnessed them."

²⁴So David hid himself in the field, and when the new moon festival began, the king sat down to eat. ²⁵He sat at his usual place against the wall, with Jonathan sitting opposite him* and Abner beside him. But David's place was empty. ²⁶Saul didn't say anything about it that day, for he said to himself, "Something must have made David ceremonially unclean." ²⁷But when David's place was empty again the next day, Saul asked Jonathan, "Why hasn't the son of Jesse been here for the meal either yesterday or today?"

²⁸Jonathan replied, "David earnestly asked me if he could go to Bethlehem. ²⁹He said, 'Please let me go, for we are having a family sacrifice. My brother demanded that I be there. So please let me get away to see my brothers.' That's why he isn't here at the king's table."

³⁰Saul boiled with rage at Jonathan. "You stupid son of a whore!"* he swore at him. "Do you think I don't know that you want him to be king in your place, shaming yourself and your mother? ³¹As long as that son of Jesse is alive, you'll never be king. Now go and get him so I can kill him!"

³²"But why should he be put to death?" Jonathan asked his father. "What has he done?" ³³Then Saul hurled his spear at Jonathan, intending to kill him. So at last Jonathan realized that his father was really determined to kill David.

³⁴Jonathan left the table in fierce anger and refused to eat on that second day of the festival, for he was crushed by his father's shameful behavior toward David.

³⁵The next morning, as agreed, Jonathan went out into the field and took a young boy with him to gather his arrows.

³⁶"Start running," he told the boy, "so you can find the arrows as I shoot them." So the boy ran, and Jonathan shot an arrow beyond him. ³⁷When the boy had almost reached the

* cymbals is uncertain. ¹⁸

¹⁹raphim; also in 19:16. ^{20:16} Hebrew with the house of David. ^{20:19} Hebrew the stone Ezel. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. ^{20:30} Hebrew You son of a perverse and rebellious woman.