

arrow, Jonathan shouted, "The arrow is still ahead of you. ³⁸Hurry, hurry, don't wait." So the boy quickly gathered up the arrows and ran back to his master. ³⁹He, of course, suspected nothing; only Jonathan and David understood the signal. ⁴⁰Then Jonathan gave his bow and arrows to the boy and told him to take them back to town.

⁴¹As soon as the boy was gone, David came out from where he had been hiding near the stone pile.* Then David bowed three times to Jonathan with his face to the ground. Both of them were in tears as they embraced each other and said good-bye, especially David.

⁴²At last Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, for we have sworn loyalty to each other in the LORD's name. The LORD is the witness of a bond between us and our children forever." Then David left, and Jonathan returned to the town.*

David Runs from Saul

21 ¹David went to the town of Nob to see Ahimelech the priest. Ahimelech trembled when he saw him. "Why are you alone?" he asked. "Why is no one with you?"

²"The king has sent me on a private matter," David said. "He told me not to tell anyone why I am here. I have told my men where to meet me later. ³Now, what is there to eat? Give me five loaves of bread or anything else you have."

⁴"We don't have any regular bread," the priest replied. "But there is the holy bread, which you can have if your young men have not slept with any women recently."

⁵"Don't worry," David replied. "I never allow my men to be with women when they are on a campaign. And since they stay clean even on ordinary trips, how much more on this one!"

⁶Since there was no other food available, the priest gave him the holy bread—the Bread of the Presence that was placed before the LORD in the Tabernacle. It had just been replaced that day with fresh bread.

⁷Now Doeg the Edomite, Saul's chief herdsman, was there that day, having been detained before the LORD.*

⁸David asked Ahimelech, "Do you have a spear or sword? The king's business was so urgent that I didn't even have time to grab a weapon!"

⁹"I only have the sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the valley of Elah," the priest replied. "It is wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. Take that if you want it, for there is nothing else here."

¹⁰"There is nothing like it!" David replied. "Give it to me!"

¹¹So David escaped from Saul and went to King Achish of Gath. ¹²But the officers of Achish were unhappy about his being there. "Isn't this David, the king of the land?" they asked. "Isn't he the one the people honor with dances, singing,

"Saul has killed his thousands,
and David his ten thousands?"

¹³David heard these comments and was very afraid of what King Achish of Gath might do to him. ¹⁴So he pretended to be insane, scratching on doors and drooling down his beard.

¹⁵Finally, King Achish said to his men, "Must you bring me a madman? ¹⁶We already have enough of them around here! Why should I let someone like this be my guest?"

David at the Cave of Adullam

22 So David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. Soon his brothers and all his other relatives joined him there. ²Then others began coming—men who

20:41 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *near the south edge*. 20:42 This sentence is numbered 21:1 in Hebrew text. 21:1 Verses 21:1-15 are numbered 21:2-16 in Hebrew text. 21:7 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. 22:7 Hebrew *commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds*?

were in trouble or in debt or who were just discontented—until David was the captain of about 400 men.

³Later David went to Mizpeh in Moab, where he asked the king, "Please allow my father and mother to live here with you until I know what God is going to do for me." ⁴So David and his parents stayed in Moab with the king during the entire time David was living in his stronghold.

⁵One day the prophet Gad told David, "Leave the stronghold and return to the land of Judah." So David went to the forest of Hereth.

⁶The news of his arrival in Judah soon reached Saul and his officers. At the time, the king was sitting beneath the tamarisk tree on the hill at Gibeah, holding his spear and surrounded by his officers.

⁷"Listen here, you men of Benjamin!" Saul shouted to his officers when he heard the news. "Has that son of Jesse promised every one of you fields and vineyards? Has he promised to make you all generals and captains in his army?" ⁸Is that why you have conspired against me? For one of you told me when my own son made a solemn pact with the son of Jesse. You're not even sorry for me. Think about it! My own son—encouraging him to kill me, as he is trying to do this very day!"

⁹Then Doeg the Edomite, who was standing there with Saul's men, spoke up. "When I was at Nob," he said, "I saw the son of Jesse talking to the priest, Ahimelech son of Ahimelech. ¹⁰And will Saul actually come as I have heard? O LORD, him food and the sword of Goliath the Philistine."

The Slaughter of the Priests

¹¹King Saul immediately sent for Ahimelech and all his family, who served as priests at Nob. ¹²When they arrived, Saul shouted at him, "Listen to me, you son of Ahitub!"

"What is it, my king?" Ahimelech asked.

¹³"Why have you and the son of Jesse conspired against me?" Saul demanded. "Why did you give him food and sword? Why have you consulted God for him? Why did you encourage him to kill me, as he is trying to do this very day?"

¹⁴"But sir," Ahimelech replied, "is anyone among all your servants as faithful as David, your son-in-law? Why, he is the captain of your bodyguard and a highly honored member of your household! ¹⁵This was certainly not the first time I consulted God for him! May the king not accuse me and my family in this matter, for I knew nothing at all of any pact against you."

¹⁶"You will surely die, Ahimelech, along with your entire family!" the king shouted. ¹⁷And he ordered his bodyguard to "Kill these priests of the LORD, for they are allies and conspirators with David! They knew he was running away from me, but they didn't tell me!" But Saul's men refused to kill the LORD's priests.

¹⁸Then the king said to Doeg, "You do it." So Doeg the Edomite turned on them and killed them that day, eight of them. ¹⁹Then he went to Nob, the town of the priests, and killed the priests' families—men and women, children and babies—and all the cattle, donkeys, sheep, and goats.

²⁰Only Abiathar, one of the sons of Ahimelech, escaped and fled to David. ²¹When he told David that Saul had killed the priests of the LORD, ²²David exclaimed, "I knew it! When I saw Doeg the Edomite there that day, I knew he was sure to tell Saul. Now I have caused the death of all your father's family. ²³Stay here with me, and don't be afraid. I will protect you with my own life, for the same person wants to kill us both."

David Protects the Town of Keilah

23 One day news came to David that the Philistines were at Keilah stealing grain from the threshing floors. ²David asked the LORD, "Should I go and attack them?"

"Yes, go and save Keilah," the LORD told him. ³But David's men said, "We're afraid even here in Judah. We certainly don't want to go to Keilah to fight the whole Philistine army!"

⁴So David asked the LORD again, and again the LORD replied, "Go down to Keilah, for I will help you conquer the Philistines."

⁵So David and his men went to Keilah. They slaughtered the Philistines and took all their livestock and rescued the people of Keilah. ⁶Now when Abiathar son of Ahimelech brought David to Keilah, he brought the ephod with him.

⁷Saul soon learned that David was at Keilah. "Good!" he exclaimed. "We've got him now! God has handed him over to me, for he has trapped himself in a walled town!" ⁸So Saul gathered his entire army to march to Keilah and besiege David and his men.

⁹But David learned of Saul's plan and told Abiathar the priest to bring the ephod and ask the LORD what he should do.

¹⁰Then David prayed, "O LORD, God of Israel, I have heard that Saul is planning to come and destroy Keilah because I am here. ¹¹Will the leaders of Keilah betray me to tub. ¹²And will Saul actually come as I have heard? O LORD, God of Israel, please tell me."

¹³And the LORD said, "He will come." ¹⁴Again David asked, "Will the leaders of Keilah betray me and my men to Saul?"

¹⁵And the LORD replied, "Yes, they will betray you."

David Hides in the Wilderness

¹⁶So David and his men—about 600 of them now—left Keilah and began roaming the countryside. Word soon reached Saul that David had escaped, so he didn't go to Keilah after you encouraged him to kill me, as he is trying to do this very day?" ¹⁷So Saul hunted him day after day in the hill country of Ziph. Saul hunted him day after day, but God didn't let Saul find him.

¹⁸One day near Horeh, David received the news that Saul was on the way to Ziph to search for him and kill him. ¹⁹Jonathan went to find David and encouraged him to stay strong in his faith in God. ²⁰"Don't be afraid," Jonathan reassured him. "My father will never find you! You are going to be the king of Israel, and I will be next to you, as my father, Saul, is now." ²¹So the two of them renewed their solemn pact at Horeh.

²²Now the men of Ziph went to Saul in Gibeah and began to tell him, "We know where David is hiding," they said. "He is in the strongholds of Horeh on the hill of Hakilah, which is in the southern part of Jeshimon. ²³Come down and we will catch him and hand him over to you!"

²⁴The LORD bless you," Saul said. "At last someone is doing what I've dreamed about me! ²⁵Go and check again to be sure of where he is staying and who has seen him there, for I know you are very crafty. ²⁶Discover his hiding places, and come and tell me when you are sure. Then I'll go with you. And if he is in the hills at all, I'll track him down, even if I have to search the whole land for his hiding place in Judah!" ²⁷So the men of Ziph returned ahead of Saul.

²⁸Meanwhile, David and his men had moved into the wilderness of Maon in the Arabah Valley south of Jeshimon. ²⁹Some manuscripts lack the first sentence of 23:11. 23:28 Hebrew *Sela-han*. 24:1-22 are numbered 24:2-23 in Hebrew text.

in debt or who were just discontented—the captain of about 400 men.

went to Mizpeh in Moab, where he asked the LORD what God is going to do for me.”⁴ So David fled to Moab with the king during the entire time in his stronghold.

prophet Gad told David, “Leave the stronghold and go to the land of Judah.” So David went to the land of Judah.

his arrival in Judah soon reached Saul. Saul was sitting beneath the tamarisk tree in the wilderness, holding his spear and surrounded by his men.

you men of Benjamin!” Saul shouted to his men. “I have heard the news. ‘Has that son of Jesse done one of you fields and vineyards? Has he made you all generals and captains in the army? Why have you conspired against me? For my sake when my own son made a solemn pact with me, you are trying to kill me, as he is trying to encourage me to kill me, as he is trying to encourage me to kill me.’”

the Edomite, who was standing there with him, said, “When I was at Nob,” he said, “I saw David talking to the priest, Ahimelech son of Ahimelech. He consulted the LORD for him. Then he gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.”

of the Priests

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you and the son of Jesse conspired against me. Why did you give him food and drink? Why did you consult God for him? Why didn’t you tell me, as he is trying to do this to me?”

Ahimelech replied, “Is anyone among all the men in the land as faithful as David, your son-in-law? Why, he has a bodyguard and a highly honored membership in the king’s household. This was certainly not the first time I consulted God for him! May the king not accuse me for anything, for I knew nothing at all of any of this.”

surely die, Ahimelech, along with your sons and the priests. And he ordered his bodyguards to kill them. But they refused to do so, for they are allies and brothers of the king. So he said to them, ‘I will not tell you!’” But Saul’s men refused to do so.

ing said to Doeg, “You do it.” So Doeg went to the king and told him what he had done. Then he killed them that day, all still wearing their priestly garments. He also killed the king’s sons, the king’s wives, the king’s concubines—men and women, children and infants, and the king’s cattle, donkeys, sheep, and goats.

har, one of the sons of Ahimelech, fled to Nob, the town of the priests, and told the king what he had done. Then the king said to Doeg, “You have done well. You have caused the death of all your father’s sons. Now you are safe. Do not be afraid. I will protect you, for the same person wants to kill us now as he did then.”

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But David learned of Saul’s plan and told Abiathar the priest to bring the ephod and ask the LORD what he should do. Then David prayed, “O LORD, God of Israel, I have heard that Saul is planning to come and destroy Keilah because I am here. Will the leaders of Keilah betray me to Saul? And will Saul actually come as I have heard? O LORD, God of Israel, please tell me.”

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David Hides in the Wilderness

David and his men—about 600 of them now—left Keilah and began roaming the countryside. Word soon reached Saul that David had escaped, so he didn’t go to Keilah after him. David now stayed in the strongholds of the wilderness in the hill country of Ziph. Saul hunted him day after day, but God didn’t let Saul find him.

One day near Horesh, David received the news that Saul was on the way to Ziph to search for him and kill him.¹⁶ Jonathan went to find David and encouraged him to stay strong in his faith in God.¹⁷ “Don’t be afraid,” Jonathan reassured him. “My father will never find you! You are going to be the king of Israel, and I will be next to you, as my father, Saul, is aware.”¹⁸ So the two of them renewed their solemn pact before the LORD. Then Jonathan returned home, while David stayed at Horesh.

Now the men of Ziph went to Saul in Gibeah and betrayed David to him. “We know where David is hiding,” they said. “He is in the strongholds of Horesh on the hill of Hakilah, which is in the southern part of Jeshimon. Come down and catch him whenever you’re ready, O king, and we will catch him and hand him over to you!”

“The LORD bless you,” Saul said. “At last someone is telling me about me! Go and check again to be sure of where he is staying and who has seen him there, for I know he is very crafty. Discover his hiding places, and come and tell me when you are sure. Then I’ll go with you. And if he is in the wilderness at all, I’ll track him down, even if I have to search for him in every place in Judah!”²⁴ So the men of Ziph returned to Saul.

Meanwhile, David and his men had moved into the wilderness of Maon in the Arabah Valley south of Jeshimon.

manuscripts lack the first sentence of 23:11. 23:28 Hebrew *Sela-hammahlekoth*. 23:29 Verse 23:29 is numbered 24:1 in Hebrew text. 24:1-22 are numbered 24:2-23 in Hebrew text.

25 When David heard that Saul and his men were searching for him, he went even farther into the wilderness to the great rock, and he remained there in the wilderness of Maon. But Saul kept after him in the wilderness.

26 Saul and David were now on opposite sides of a mountain. Just as Saul and his men began to close in on David and his men, 27 an urgent message reached Saul that the Philistines were raiding Israel again. 28 So Saul quit chasing David and returned to fight the Philistines. Ever since that time, the place where David was camped has been called the Rock of Escape.* 29 David then went to live in the strongholds of En-gedi.

David Spares Saul’s Life

24 1* After Saul returned from fighting the Philistines, he was told that David had gone into the wilderness of En-gedi. 2 So Saul chose 3,000 elite troops from all Israel and went to search for David and his men near the rocks of the wild goats.

3 At the place where the road passes some sheepfolds, Saul went into a cave to relieve himself. But as it happened, David and his men were hiding farther back in that very cave!

4 “Now’s your opportunity!” David’s men whispered to him. “Today the LORD is telling you, ‘I will certainly put your enemy into your power, to do with as you wish.’” So David crept forward and cut off a piece of the hem of Saul’s robe.

5 But then David’s conscience began bothering him because he had cut Saul’s robe. 6 “The LORD knows I shouldn’t have done that to my lord the king,” he said to his men. “The LORD forbid that I should do this to my lord the king and attack the LORD’s anointed one, for the LORD himself has chosen him.” 7 So David restrained his men and did not let them kill Saul.

After Saul had left the cave and gone on his way, 8 David came out and shouted after him, “My lord the king!” And when Saul looked around, David bowed low before him.

9 Then he shouted to Saul, “Why do you listen to the people who say I am trying to harm you? 10 This very day you can see with your own eyes it isn’t true. For the LORD placed you at my mercy back there in the cave. Some of my men told me to kill you, but I spared you. For I said, ‘I will never harm the king—he is the LORD’s anointed one.’ 11 Look, my father, at what I have in my hand. It is a piece of the hem of your robe! I cut it off, but I didn’t kill you. This proves that I am not trying to harm you and that I have not sinned against you, even though you have been hunting for me to kill me.

12 “May the LORD judge between us. Perhaps the LORD will punish you for what you are trying to do to me, but I will never harm you. 13 As that old proverb says, ‘From evil people come evil deeds.’ So you can be sure I will never harm you. 14 Who is the king of Israel trying to catch anyway? Should he spend his time chasing one who is as worthless as a dead dog or a single flea? 15 May the LORD therefore judge which of us is right and punish the guilty one. He is my advocate, and he will rescue me from your power!”

16 When David had finished speaking, Saul called back, “Is that really you, my son David?” Then he began to cry. 17 And he said to David, “You are a better man than I am, for you have repaid me good for evil. 18 Yes, you have been amazingly kind to me today, for when the LORD put me in a place where you could have killed me, you didn’t do it. 19 Who else would let his enemy get away when he had him in his power? May the LORD reward you well for the kindness you have shown me today. 20 And now I realize that you are surely going to be king, and that the kingdom of Israel

1 in Hebrew text. 21:1 Verses 21:1-15 are numbered 21:1-15 in Hebrew text. 21:16-22 are numbered 21:16-22 in Hebrew text.

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will flourish under your rule. ²¹Now swear to me by the LORD that when that happens you will not kill my family and destroy my line of descendants!"

²²So David promised this to Saul with an oath. Then Saul went home, but David and his men went back to their stronghold.

The Death of Samuel

25 Now Samuel died, and all Israel gathered for his funeral. They buried him at his house in Ramah.

Nabal Angers David

Then David moved down to the wilderness of Maon.* ²There was a wealthy man from Maon who owned property near the town of Carmel. He had 3,000 sheep and 1,000 goats, and it was sheep-shearing time. ³This man's name was Nabal, and his wife, Abigail, was a sensible and beautiful woman. But Nabal, a descendant of Caleb, was crude and mean in all his dealings.

⁴When David heard that Nabal was shearing his sheep, he sent ten of his young men to Carmel with this message for Nabal: "Peace and prosperity to you, your family, and everything you own! ⁷I am told that it is sheep-shearing time. While your shepherds stayed among us near Carmel, we never harmed them, and nothing was ever stolen from them. ⁸Ask your own men, and they will tell you this is true. So would you be kind to us, since we have come at a time of celebration? Please share any provisions you might have on hand with us and with your friend David." ⁹David's young men gave this message to Nabal in David's name, and they waited for a reply.

¹⁰"Who is this fellow David?" Nabal sneered to the young men. "Who does this son of Jesse think he is? There are lots of servants these days who run away from their masters. ¹¹Should I take my bread and my water and my meat that I've slaughtered for my shearers and give it to a band of outlaws who come from who knows where?"

¹²So David's young men returned and told him what Nabal had said. ¹³"Get your swords!" was David's reply as he strapped on his own. Then 400 men started off with David, and 200 remained behind to guard their equipment.

¹⁴Meanwhile, one of Nabal's servants went to Abigail and told her, "David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master, but he screamed insults at them. ¹⁵These men have been very good to us, and we never suffered any harm from them. Nothing was stolen from us the whole time they were with us. ¹⁶In fact, day and night they were like a wall of protection to us and the sheep. ¹⁷You need to know this and figure out what to do, for there is going to be trouble for our master and his whole family. He's so ill-tempered that no one can even talk to him!"

¹⁸Abigail wasted no time. She quickly gathered 200 loaves of bread, two wineskins full of wine, five sheep that had been slaughtered, nearly a bushel* of roasted grain, 100 clusters of raisins, and 200 fig cakes. She packed them on donkeys ¹⁹and said to her servants, "Go on ahead. I will follow you shortly." But she didn't tell her husband Nabal what she was doing.

²⁰As she was riding her donkey into a mountain ravine, she saw David and his men coming toward her. ²¹David had just been saying, "A lot of good it did to help this fellow. We protected his flocks in the wilderness, and nothing he owned was lost or stolen. But he has repaid me evil for good. ²²May God strike me and kill me* if even one man of his household is still alive tomorrow morning!"

25:1 As in Greek version (see also 25:2); Hebrew reads *Paran*. 25:18 Hebrew *5 seahs* [30 liters]. 25:22 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *May God strike me and kill the enemies of David*. 25:25 The name *Nabal* means "fool." 25:37 Hebrew *his heart failed him*.

Abigail Intercedes for Nabal

²³When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed low before him. ²⁴She fell at his feet and said, "I accept all blame in this matter, my lord. Please listen to what I have to say. ²⁵I know Nabal is a wicked and ill-tempered man; please don't pay any attention to him. He is a fool, just as his name suggests.* But I never even saw the young men you sent.

²⁶"Now, my lord, as surely as the LORD lives and as surely as you yourself live, since the LORD has kept you from murdering and taking vengeance into your own hands, let all your enemies and those who try to harm you be as cursed as Nabal is. ²⁷And here is a present that I, your servant, have brought to you and your young men. ²⁸Please forgive me if I have offended you in any way. The LORD will surely reward you with a lasting dynasty, for you are fighting the LORD's battles. And you have not done wrong throughout your entire life.

²⁹"Even when you are chased by those who seek to kill you, your life is safe in the care of the LORD your God, secured in his treasure pouch! But the lives of your enemies will disappear like stones shot from a sling! ³⁰When the LORD has done all he promised and has made you leader of Israel, ³¹don't let this be a blemish on your record. Then your conscience won't have to bear the staggering burden of needless bloodshed and vengeance. And when the LORD has done these great things for you, please remember me, your servant!"

³²David replied to Abigail, "Praise the LORD, the God of Israel, who has sent you to meet me today! ³³Thank God for your good sense! Bless you for keeping me from murdering and from carrying out vengeance with my own hands. ³⁴For I swear by the LORD, the God of Israel, who has kept me from hurting you, that if you had not hurried out to meet me, not one of Nabal's men would still be alive tomorrow morning. ³⁵Then David accepted her present and told her, "Return home in peace. I have heard what you said. We will not harm your husband."

³⁶When Abigail arrived home, she found that Nabal was throwing a big party and was celebrating like a king. He was very drunk, so she didn't tell him anything about her meeting with David until dawn the next day. ³⁷In the morning when Nabal was sober, his wife told him what had happened. As a result he had a stroke,* and he lay paralyzed in his bed like a stone. ³⁸About ten days later, the LORD struck him, and he died.

David Marries Abigail

³⁹When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "Praise the LORD, who has avenged the insult I received from Nabal and has kept me from doing it myself. Nabal has received the punishment for his sin." Then David sent messengers to Abigail to ask her to become his wife.

⁴⁰When the messengers arrived at Carmel, they told Abigail, "David has sent us to take you back to marry him."

⁴¹She bowed low to the ground and responded, "I, your servant, would be happy to marry David. I would even be willing to become a slave, washing the feet of his servants. ⁴²Quickly getting ready, she took along five of her servant girls as attendants, mounted her donkey, and went with David's messengers. And so she became his wife. ⁴³David also married Ahinoam from Jezreel, making both of them his wives. ⁴⁴Saul, meanwhile, had given his daughter Michal, David's wife, to a man from Gallim named Palti son of Laish.

David Spares Saul Again

26 Now some men from Ziph came to Saul at Gibeath to tell him, "David is hiding on the hill of Hakilah, which overlooks Jeshimon."

³So Saul took 3,000 of Israel's elite troops and went to hunt him down in the wilderness of Ziph. ⁴Saul camped along the road beside the hill of Hakilah, near Jeshimon, where David was hiding. When David learned that Saul had come after him into the wilderness, ⁵he sent out spies to verify the report of Saul's arrival.

⁶David slipped over to Saul's camp one night to look around. Saul and Abner son of Ner, the commander of his army, were sleeping inside a ring formed by the slumbering warriors. ⁷"Who will volunteer to go in there with me?" David asked Ahimelech the Hittite and Abishai son of Zeruiah, David's brother.

⁸"I'll go with you," Abishai replied. ⁹So David and Abishai went right into Saul's camp and found him asleep, with his spear stuck in the ground beside his head. Abner and the warriors were lying asleep around him.

¹⁰"God has surely handed your enemy over to you this night!" Abishai whispered to David. "Let me pin him to the ground with one thrust of the spear; I won't need to strike twice!"

¹¹"No!" David said. "Don't kill him. For who can remain innocent after attacking the LORD's anointed one? ¹²Surely the LORD will strike Saul down someday, or he will die of old age in battle. ¹³The LORD forbid that I should kill the one he has anointed! But take his spear and that jug of water beside his head, and then let's get out of here!"

¹⁴So David took the spear and jug of water that were near Saul's head. Then he and Abishai got away without anyone seeing them or even waking up, because the LORD had put Saul's men into a deep sleep.

¹⁵David climbed the hill opposite the camp until he was at a safe distance. ¹⁶Then he shouted down to the soldiers and to Abner son of Ner, "Wake up, Abner!"

"Who is it?" Abner demanded.

¹⁷"Well, Abner, you're a great man, aren't you?" David shouted. "Where in all Israel is there anyone as mighty? So why haven't you guarded your master the king when someone came to kill him? ¹⁸This isn't good at all! I swear by the LORD that you and your men deserve to die, because you failed to protect your master, the LORD's anointed! Look around! Where are the king's spear and the jug of water that were beside his head?"

¹⁹Saul recognized David's voice and called out, "Is that my son David?"

And David replied, "Yes, my lord the king. ²⁰Why are you chasing me? What have I done? What is my crime? ²¹But now let my lord the king listen to his servant. If the LORD has spared you up against me, then let him accept my offering. For if this is simply a human scheme, then may those involved be cursed by the LORD. For they have driven me from home, so I can no longer live among the LORD's people, and they have said, 'Go, worship pagan gods.' ²²Must I die on foreign soil, far from the presence of the LORD? Why has the king of Israel come out to search for a single flea? Why does he hunt me down like a partridge on the mountains?"

²³Then Saul confessed, "I have sinned. Come back home, my son, and I will no longer try to harm you, for you valued your life today. I have been a fool and very, very wrong."

²⁴"Here is your spear, O king," David replied. "Let one of your young men come over and get it. ²⁵The LORD gives his reward for doing good and for being loyal, and I re-

Hebrew by Urim.

instead of his royal robes. Then he went to the woman's home at night, accompanied by two of his men.

"I have to talk to a man who has died," he said. "Will you call up his spirit for me?"

"Are you trying to get me killed?" the woman demanded. "You know that Saul has outlawed all the mediums and all who consult the spirits of the dead. Why are you setting a trap for me?"

¹⁰But Saul took an oath in the name of the LORD and promised, "As surely as the LORD lives, nothing bad will happen to you for doing this."

¹¹Finally, the woman said, "Well, whose spirit do you want me to call up?"

"Call up Samuel," Saul replied.

¹²When the woman saw Samuel, she screamed, "You've deceived me! You are Saul!"

¹³"Don't be afraid!" the king told her. "What do you see?"

"I see a god* coming up out of the earth," she said.

¹⁴"What does he look like?" Saul asked.

"He is an old man wrapped in a robe," she replied. Saul realized it was Samuel, and he fell to the ground before him.

¹⁵"Why have you disturbed me by calling me back?" Samuel asked Saul.

"Because I am in deep trouble," Saul replied. "The Philistines are at war with me, and God has left me and won't reply by prophets or dreams. So I have called for you to tell me what to do."

¹⁶But Samuel replied, "Why ask me, since the LORD has left you and has become your enemy? ¹⁷The LORD has done just as he said he would. He has torn the kingdom from you and given it to your rival, David. ¹⁸The LORD has done this to you today because you refused to carry out his fierce anger against the Amalekites. ¹⁹What's more, the LORD will hand you and the army of Israel over to the Philistines tomorrow, and you and your sons will be here with me. The LORD will bring down the entire army of Israel in defeat."

²⁰Saul fell full length on the ground, paralyzed with fright because of Samuel's words. He was also faint with hunger, for he had eaten nothing all day and all night.

²¹When the woman saw how distraught he was, she said, "Sir, I obeyed your command at the risk of my life. ²²Now do what I say, and let me give you a little something to eat so you can regain your strength for the trip back."

²³But Saul refused to eat anything. Then his advisers joined the woman in urging him to eat, so he finally yielded and got up from the ground and sat on the couch.

²⁴The woman had been fattening a calf, so she hurried out and killed it. She took some flour, kneaded it into dough and baked unleavened bread. ²⁵She brought the meal to Saul and his advisers, and they ate it. Then they went out into the night.

The Philistines Reject David

29 The entire Philistine army now mobilized at Aphek, and the Israelites camped at the spring in Jezreel. ²As the Philistine rulers were leading out their troops in groups of hundreds and thousands, David and his men marched at the rear with King Achish. ³But the Philistine commanders demanded, "What are these Hebrews doing here?"

And Achish told them, "This is David, the servant of King Saul of Israel. He's been with me for years, and I've never found a single fault in him from the day he arrived until today."

⁴But the Philistine commanders were angry. "Send him

back to the town you've given him!" they demanded. "He can't go into the battle with us. What if he turns against us in battle and becomes our adversary? Is there any better way for him to reconcile himself with his master than by handing our heads over to him? ⁵Isn't this the same David about whom the women of Israel sing in their dances,

'Saul has killed his thousands,
and David his ten thousands?'

⁶So Achish finally summoned David and said to him, "I swear by the LORD that you have been a trustworthy ally. I think you should go with me into battle, for I've never found a single flaw in you from the day you arrived until today. But the other Philistine rulers won't hear of it. ⁷Please don't upset them, but go back quietly."

⁸"What have I done to deserve this treatment?" David demanded. "What have you ever found in your servant, that I can't go and fight the enemies of my lord the king?"

⁹But Achish insisted, "As far as I'm concerned, you're as perfect as an angel of God. But the Philistine commanders are afraid to have you with them in the battle. ¹⁰Now get up early in the morning, and leave with your men as soon as it gets light."

¹¹So David and his men headed back into the land of the Philistines, while the Philistine army went on to Jezreel.

David Destroys the Amalekites

30 Three days later, when David and his men arrived home at their town of Ziklag, they found that the Amalekites had made a raid into the Negev and Ziklag. They had crushed Ziklag and burned it to the ground. ²They had carried off the women and children and everyone else without killing anyone.

³When David and his men saw the ruins and realized what had happened to their families, ⁴they wept until they could weep no more. ⁵David's two wives, Ahinoam from Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal from Carmel, were among those captured. ⁶David was now in great danger because all his men were very bitter about losing their sons and daughters, and they began to talk of stoning him. But David found strength in the LORD his God.

⁷Then he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring me the ephod!" So Abiathar brought it. ⁸Then David asked the LORD, "Should I chase after this band of raiders? Will I catch them?"

And the LORD told him, "Yes, go after them. You will surely recover everything that was taken from you!"

⁹So David and his 600 men set out, and they came to the brook Besor. ¹⁰But 200 of the men were too exhausted to cross the brook, so David continued the pursuit with 400 men.

¹¹Along the way they found an Egyptian man in a field and brought him to David. They gave him some bread and water to drink. ¹²They also gave him part of a fig cake and two clusters of raisins, for he hadn't had anything to eat or drink for three days and nights. Before long his strength returned.

¹³"To whom do you belong, and where do you come from?" David asked him.

"I am an Egyptian—the slave of an Amalekite," he replied. "My master abandoned me three days ago because I was sick. ¹⁴We were on our way back from raiding the Kenites in the Negev, the territory of Judah, and the land of Gilead, and we had just burned Ziklag."

¹⁵"Will you lead me to this band of raiders?" David asked

The young man replied, "If you take an oath in God's name that you will not kill me or give me back to my master, I will guide you to them."

¹⁶So he led David to them, and they found the Amalekites spread out across the fields, eating and drinking and dancing with joy because of the vast amount of plunder they had taken from the Philistines and the land of Judah. ¹⁷David and his men rushed in among them and slaughtered them throughout that night and the entire next day until evening. ¹⁸None of the Amalekites escaped except 400 young men who hid on camels. ¹⁹David got back everything the Amalekites had taken, and he rescued his two wives. ²⁰Nothing was missing: small or great, son or daughter, nor anything that had been taken. David brought everything back. ²¹He also recovered all the flocks and herds, and his men drove them ahead of the other livestock. "This plunder belongs to David!" they said.

²²Then David returned to the brook Besor and met up with the 200 men who had been left behind because they were too exhausted to go with him. They went out to meet him and his men, and David greeted them joyfully. ²³But some evil troublemakers among David's men said, "They don't go with us, so they can't have any of the plunder we recovered. Give them their wives and children, and tell them to go home."

²⁴But David said, "No, my brothers! Don't be selfish with the LORD has given us. He has kept us safe and helped us defeat the band of raiders that attacked us. ²⁵Who will listen when you talk like this? We share and share alike—who go to battle and those who guard the equipment." ²⁶Then on David made this a decree and regulation for Israel, and it is still followed today.

²⁷When he arrived at Ziklag, David sent part of the plunder to the elders of Judah, who were his friends. "Here is a present for you, taken from the LORD's enemies," he said.

²⁸The gifts were sent to the people of the following towns that David had visited: Bethel, Ramoth-negev, Jattir, ²⁹Aroer, Siphon, Eshtemoa, ³⁰Racal,* the towns of the Jerahmeelites, the

*Greek version reads Carmel.

“You’ve given him!” they demanded. “He will be with us. What if he turns against us as your adversary? Is there any better way for himself with his master than by handing him over to us? Isn’t this the same David about whom the men of Israel sing in their dances, ‘David has slain thousands, and Goliath has slain thousands?’”

David summoned David and said to him, “What do you have been a trustworthy ally with me into battle, for I’ve never found fault with you from the day you arrived until today. But rulers won’t hear of it. Please don’t speak quietly.”

“Do you deserve this treatment?” David asked. “Have you ever found in your servant, David, the enemies of my lord the king?”

“As far as I’m concerned, you are a man of God. But the Philistine commander fought with them in the battle. Now get up and leave with your men as soon as possible. Your men headed back into the land of the Philistines, and the Philistine army went on to Jezreel.”

The Amalekites

Later, when David and his men arrived in the town of Ziklag, they found that the Philistines had raided into the Negev and Ziklag and burned it to the ground. They had taken the women and children and everyone else and left.

When his men saw the ruins and reached home to their families, they wept until they were dry. David’s two wives, Ahinoam from Jezreel and Abigail the widow of Nabal from Carmel, wept with him. David was now in great danger, for his men were very bitter about losing their wives and children. They began to talk of stoning him, but David trusted in the LORD his God.

David sent Abiathar the priest, “Bring me the ephod.” He brought it. Then David asked the LORD, “Should I pursue this band of raiders? Will I catch them?”

He answered him, “Yes, go after them. For I have given you into their hands. Nothing that was taken from you will be recovered. A force of 600 men set out, and they caught the band of raiders. 200 of the men were too exhausted to continue, so David continued the pursuit with the 400 men who were left.

They found an Egyptian man in the camp. David gave him some bread and water. They also gave him part of a fig cake and raisins, for he hadn’t had anything to eat for three days and nights. Before long his strength was renewed. “To which of your masters do you belong, and where do you live?” David asked him.

“I am the slave of an Amalekite,” he answered. “I was taken from my home three days ago because I was on my way back from raiding the territory of Judah, and the Amalekites burned Ziklag.”

“What did you do to this band of raiders?” David asked.

The young man replied, “If you take an oath in God’s name that you will not kill me or give me back to my master, I will guide you to them.”

So he led David to them, and they found the Amalekites scattered out across the fields, eating and drinking and dancing with joy because of the vast amount of plunder they had taken from the Philistines and the land of Judah. David and his men rushed in among them and slaughtered them throughout that night and the entire next day until evening. The Amalekites escaped except 400 young men who were hiding on camels. David got back everything the Amalekites had taken, and he rescued his two wives. Nothing was missing: small or great, son or daughter, nor anything that had been taken. David brought everything back to the king. He also recovered all the flocks and herds, and his men went ahead of the other livestock. “This plunder belongs to David!” they said.

When David returned to the brook Besor and met up with the 200 men who had been left behind because they were too exhausted to go with him. They went out to meet David and his men, and David greeted them joyfully. But the evil troublemakers among David’s men said, “They didn’t go with us, so they can’t have any of the plunder we recovered. Give them their wives and children, and tell them to go.”

But David said, “No, my brothers! Don’t be selfish with the LORD has given us. He has kept us safe and helped us defeat the band of raiders that attacked us. Who will be with you when you talk like this? We share and share alike—who goes to battle and those who guard the equipment.”

Then on David made this a decree and regulation for his men, and it is still followed today.

When he arrived at Ziklag, David sent part of the plunder to the elders of Judah, who were his friends. “Here is a gift for you, taken from the LORD’s enemies,” he said.

The gifts were sent to the people of the following towns that David had visited: Bethel, Ramoth-negev, Jattir, Aroer, Siphai, and Gath. *The towns of the Jerahmeelites, the Kenites, Hormah, Bor-ashan, Athach, Hebron, and all the other places David and his men had visited.

The Death of Saul

Now the Philistines attacked Israel, and the men of Israel fled before them. Many were slaughtered on the slopes of Mount Gilboa. The Philistines closed in on Saul and his sons, and they killed three of his sons—Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malkishua. The fighting grew very fierce around Saul, and the Philistine archers caught up with him and wounded him severely.

Saul groaned to his armor bearer, “Take your sword and kill me before these pagan Philistines come to run me through and taunt and torture me.”

But his armor bearer was afraid and would not do it. So Saul took his own sword and fell on it. When his armor bearer realized that Saul was dead, he fell on his own sword and died beside the king. So Saul, his three sons, his armor bearer, and his troops all died together that same day.

When the Israelites on the other side of the Jezreel Valley and beyond the Jordan saw that the Israelite army had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they abandoned their towns and fled. So the Philistines moved in and occupied their towns.

The next day, when the Philistines went out to strip the dead, they found the bodies of Saul and his three sons on Mount Gilboa. So they cut off Saul’s head and stripped off his armor. Then they proclaimed the good news of Saul’s death in their pagan temple and to the people throughout the land of Philistia. They placed his armor in the temple of the Ashtoreths, and they fastened his body to the wall of the city of Beth-shan.

But when the people of Jabesh-gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, all their mighty warriors traveled through the night to Beth-shan and took the bodies of Saul and his sons down from the wall. They brought them to Jabesh, where they burned the bodies. Then they took their bones and buried them beneath the tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and they fasted for seven days.



2 SAMUEL

Author Uncertain; some have suggested Nathan's son Zabud and the prophets Nathan and Gad
Date Written 930 B.C., soon after David's reign (1050–970 B.C.)

Content Among the godly men and women mentioned in the Bible, King David stands as one of the most prominent. The prophet Samuel had said that God wanted "a man after his own heart," and David was that man. The book of 2 Samuel tells King David's story, covering a period of approximately forty years—the bulk of David's reign as king. It begins with David's being proclaimed king of Israel. Soon after his inauguration, David consolidated his position against rivals to the throne. After conquering Jerusalem, David made it his capital and brought the sacred Ark of the Covenant there. Then he defeated the Philistines—neighbors who had harassed the Israelites for hundreds of years. But 2 Samuel also describes the darker side of David's career as well, including his affair with Bathsheba and the rebellion led by his son Absalom. The book comes to a close near the end of David's long reign.

David Learns of Saul's Death

1 After the death of Saul, David returned from his victory over the Amalekites and spent two days in Ziklag. ²On the third day a man arrived from Saul's army camp. He had torn his clothes and put dirt on his head to show that he was in mourning. He fell to the ground before David in deep respect.

³"Where have you come from?" David asked.

"I escaped from the Israelite camp," the man replied.

⁴"What happened?" David demanded. "Tell me how the battle went."

The man replied, "Our entire army fled from the battle. Many of the men are dead, and Saul and his son Jonathan are also dead."

⁵"How do you know Saul and Jonathan are dead?" David demanded of the young man.

⁶The man answered, "I happened to be on Mount Gilboa, and there was Saul leaning on his spear with the enemy chariots and charioteers closing in on him. ⁷When he turned and saw me, he cried out for me to come to him. 'How can I help?' I asked him.

⁸"He responded, 'Who are you?'

"I am an Amalekite," I told him.

⁹"Then he begged me, 'Come over here and put me out of my misery, for I am in terrible pain and want to die.'

¹⁰"So I killed him," the Amalekite told David, "for I knew he couldn't live. Then I took his crown and his armband, and I have brought them here to you, my lord."

¹¹David and his men tore their clothes in sorrow when they heard the news. ¹²They mourned and wept and fasted all day for Saul and his son Jonathan, and for the LORD's army and the nation of Israel, because they had died by the sword that day.

¹³Then David said to the young man who had brought the news, "Where are you from?"

And he replied, "I am a foreigner, an Amalekite, who lives in your land."

¹⁴"Why were you not afraid to kill the LORD's anointed one?" David asked.

¹⁵Then David said to one of his men, "Kill him!" So the man thrust his sword into the Amalekite and killed him.

¹⁶"You have condemned yourself," David said, "for you yourself confessed that you killed the LORD's anointed one."

1:18 Or *The Book of the Upright*. 1:21 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

David's Song for Saul and Jonathan

¹⁷Then David composed a funeral song for Saul and Jonathan, ¹⁸and he commanded that it be taught to the people of Judah. It is known as the Song of the Bow, and it is recorded in *The Book of Jashar*.*

¹⁹Your pride and joy, O Israel, lies dead on the hills!

Oh, how the mighty heroes have fallen!

²⁰Don't announce the news in Gath, don't proclaim it in the streets of Ashkelon, or the daughters of the Philistines will rejoice and the pagans will laugh in triumph.

²¹O mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew or rain upon you, nor fruitful fields producing offerings of grain.* For there the shield of the mighty heroes was defiled; the shield of Saul will no longer be anointed with oil.

²²The bow of Jonathan was powerful, and the sword of Saul did its mighty work. They shed the blood of their enemies and pierced the bodies of mighty heroes.

²³How beloved and gracious were Saul and Jonathan! They were together in life and in death.

They were swifter than eagles,

stronger than lions.

²⁴O women of Israel, weep for Saul, for he dressed you in luxurious scarlet clothing, in garments decorated with gold.

²⁵Oh, how the mighty heroes have fallen in battle! Jonathan lies dead on the hills.

²⁶How I weep for you, my brother Jonathan!

Oh, how much I loved you!

And your love for me was deep, deeper than the love of women!

²⁷Oh, how the mighty heroes have fallen! Stripped of their weapons, they lie dead.

David Anointed King of Judah

2 After this, David asked the LORD, "Should I move back to one of the towns of Judah?"

"Yes," the LORD replied.

Then David asked, "Which town should I go to?"

"To Hebron," the LORD answered.

David's two wives were Ahinoam from Jezreel and Abigail the widow of Nabal from Carmel. So David and his wives and his men and their families all moved to Judah, and they settled in the villages near Hebron. ⁴Then the men of Judah came to David and anointed him king over the people of Judah.

When David heard that the men of Jabesh-gilead had buried Saul, ⁵he sent them this message: "May the LORD bless you for being so loyal to your master Saul and giving him a decent burial. ⁶May the LORD be loyal to you in return and reward you with his unfailing love! And I, too, will reward you for what you have done. ⁷Now that Saul is dead, I want you to be my strong and loyal subjects like the people of Judah, who have anointed me as your new king."

Ishbosheth Proclaimed King of Israel

Abner son of Ner, the commander of Saul's army, had already gone to Mahanaim with Saul's son Ishbosheth.* There he proclaimed Ishbosheth king over Gilead, Jezreel, Benjamin, the land of the Ashurites, and all the rest of Israel.

Ishbosheth, Saul's son, was forty years old when he became king, and he ruled from Mahanaim for two years. Meanwhile, the people of Judah remained loyal to David. David made Hebron his capital, and he ruled as king of Judah for seven and a half years.

Battle between Israel and Judah

One day Abner led Ishbosheth's troops from Mahanaim to Gibeon. ¹³About the same time, Joab son of Zeruiah led David's troops out and met them at the pool of Gibeon. The two groups sat down there, facing each other from opposite sides of the pool.

Then Abner suggested to Joab, "Let's have a few of our warriors fight hand to hand here in front of us."

"All right," Joab agreed. ¹⁵So twelve men were chosen to fight from each side—twelve men of Benjamin representing Ishbosheth son of Saul, and twelve representing David. Each one grabbed his opponent by the hair and thrust his sword into the other's side so that all of them died. So this place at Gibeon has been known ever since as the Field of Swords.*

A fierce battle followed that day, and Abner and the rest of Israel were defeated by the forces of David.

The Death of Asahel

Abishai, and Asahel—the three sons of Zeruiah—were among David's forces that day. Asahel could run like a gazelle. ¹⁹and he began chasing Abner. He pursued him relentlessly, not stopping for anything. ²⁰When Abner looked back and saw him coming, he called out, "Is that you, Asahel?"

"Yes, it is," he replied.

"Go fight someone else!" Abner warned. "Take on one of the younger men, and strip him of his weapons." But Asahel kept right on chasing Abner.

Again Abner shouted to him, "Get away from here! I don't want to kill you. How could I ever face your brother again?"

But Asahel refused to turn back, so Abner thrust the butt end of his spear through Asahel's stomach, and the spear came out through his back. He stumbled to the ground and died there. And everyone who came by that place

Ishbosheth is another name for Esh-baal. 2:16 Hebrew *Helkath-hazzurim*. 2:22 meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. 3:3 As in parallel text at 1 Chr 3:1 (see also 2 Chr 3:1). Hebrew reads *Kileab*. 3:7 *Ishbosheth* is another name for Esh-baal.

"To Hebron," the LORD answered.

David's two wives were Ahinoam from Jezreel and Abigail the widow of Nabal from Carmel. So David and his men and their families all moved to Judah, and they settled in the villages near Hebron. Then the men of Judah came to David and anointed him king over the people of Judah.

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Ishbosheth, Saul's son, was forty years old when he became king, and he ruled from Mahanaim for two years. While the people of Judah remained loyal to David, David made Hebron his capital, and he ruled as king of Judah for seven and a half years.

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But Asahel refused to turn back, so Abner thrust the point end of his spear through Asahel's stomach, and the man came out through his back. He stumbled to the ground and died there. And everyone who came by that

place is another name for Esh-baal. **2:16** Hebrew *Helkath-hazzurim*. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. **3:3** As in parallel text at 1 Chr 3:1 (see also Greek version, which reads *Dalua*, and Dead Sea Scrolls, which read *Kileab*). **3:7** *Ishbosheth* is another name for Esh-baal.

spot stopped and stood still when they saw Asahel lying there.

When Joab and Abishai found out what had happened, they set out after Abner. The sun was just going down as they arrived at the hill of Ammah near Giah, along the road to the wilderness of Gibeon. Abner's troops from the tribe of Benjamin regrouped there at the top of the hill to take a stand.

Abner shouted down to Joab, "Must we always be killing each other? Don't you realize that bitterness is the only result? When will you call off your men from chasing their Israelite brothers?"

Then Joab said, "God only knows what would have happened if you hadn't spoken, for we would have chased you all night if necessary." So Joab blew the ram's horn, and his men stopped chasing the troops of Israel.

All that night Abner and his men retreated through the Jordan Valley. They crossed the Jordan River, traveling all through the morning, and didn't stop until they arrived at Mahanaim.

Meanwhile, Joab and his men also returned home. When Joab counted his casualties, he discovered that only 19 men were missing in addition to Asahel. But 360 of Abner's men had been killed, all from the tribe of Benjamin. Joab and his men took Asahel's body to Bethlehem and buried him there in his father's tomb. Then they traveled all night and reached Hebron at daybreak.

3 That was the beginning of a long war between those who were loyal to Saul and those loyal to David. As time passed David became stronger and stronger, while Saul's dynasty became weaker and weaker.

David's Sons Born in Hebron

These are the sons who were born to David in Hebron:

The oldest was Amnon, whose mother was Ahinoam from Jezreel.

The second was Daniel, whose mother was Abigail, the widow of Nabal from Carmel.

The third was Absalom, whose mother was Maacah, the daughter of Talmi, king of Geshur.

The fourth was Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith.

The fifth was Shephatiah, whose mother was Abital.

The sixth was Ithream, whose mother was Eglah, David's wife.

These sons were all born to David in Hebron.

Abner Joins Forces with David

As the war between the house of Saul and the house of David went on, Abner became a powerful leader among those loyal to Saul. One day Ishbosheth, Saul's son, accused Abner of sleeping with one of his father's concubines, a woman named Rizpah, daughter of Aiah.

Abner was furious. "Am I some Judean dog to be kicked around like this?" he shouted. "After all I have done for your father, Saul, and his family and friends by not handing you over to David, is this my reward—that you find fault with me about this woman? May God strike me and even kill me if I don't do everything I can to help David get what the LORD has promised him! I'm going to take Saul's kingdom and give it to David. I will establish the throne of David over Israel as well as Judah, all the way from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south." Ishbosheth didn't dare say another word because he was afraid of what Abner might do.

2:29a Hebrew *the Arabah*. **2:29b** Or *continued on through the Bithron*. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. **3:3** As in parallel text at 1 Chr 3:1 (see also Greek version, which reads *Dalua*, and Dead Sea Scrolls, which read *Kileab*).

¹²Then Abner sent messengers to David, saying, "Doesn't the entire land belong to you? Make a solemn pact with me, and I will help turn over all of Israel to you."

¹³"All right," David replied, "but I will not negotiate with you unless you bring back my wife Michal, Saul's daughter, when you come."

¹⁴David then sent this message to Ishbosheth, Saul's son: "Give me back my wife Michal, for I bought her with the lives* of 100 Philistines."

¹⁵So Ishbosheth took Michal away from her husband, Palti* son of Laish. ¹⁶Palti followed along behind her as far as Bahurim, weeping as he went. Then Abner told him, "Go back home!" So Palti returned.

¹⁷Meanwhile, Abner had consulted with the elders of Israel. "For some time now," he told them, "you have wanted to make David your king. ¹⁸Now is the time! For the LORD has said, 'I have chosen David to save my people Israel from the hands of the Philistines and from all their other enemies.'" ¹⁹Abner also spoke with the men of Benjamin. Then he went to Hebron to tell David that all the people of Israel and Benjamin had agreed to support him.

²⁰When Abner and twenty of his men came to Hebron, David entertained them with a great feast. ²¹Then Abner said to David, "Let me go and call an assembly of all Israel to support my lord the king. They will make a covenant with you to make you their king, and you will rule over everything your heart desires." So David sent Abner safely on his way.

Joab Murders Abner

²²But just after David had sent Abner away in safety, Joab and some of David's troops returned from a raid, bringing much plunder with them. ²³When Joab arrived, he was told that Abner had just been there visiting the king and had been sent away in safety.

²⁴Joab rushed to the king and demanded, "What have you done? What do you mean by letting Abner get away? ²⁵You know perfectly well that he came to spy on you and find out everything you're doing!"

²⁶Joab then left David and sent messengers to catch up with Abner, asking him to return. They found him at the well of Sirah and brought him back, though David knew nothing about it. ²⁷When Abner arrived back at Hebron, Joab took him aside at the gateway as if to speak with him privately. But then he stabbed Abner in the stomach and killed him in revenge for killing his brother Asahel.

²⁸When David heard about it, he declared, "I vow by the LORD that I and my kingdom are forever innocent of this crime against Abner son of Ner. ²⁹Joab and his family are the guilty ones. May the family of Joab be cursed in every generation with a man who has open sores or leprosy* or who walks on crutches* or dies by the sword or begs for food!"

³⁰So Joab and his brother Abishai killed Abner because Abner had killed their brother Asahel at the battle of Gibeon.

David Mourns Abner's Death

³¹Then David said to Joab and all those who were with him, "Tear your clothes and put on burlap. Mourn for Abner." And King David himself walked behind the procession to the grave. ³²They buried Abner in Hebron, and the king and all the people wept at his graveside. ³³Then the king sang this funeral song for Abner:

"Should Abner have died as fools die?

³⁴ Your hands were not bound;

^{3:14} Hebrew the foreskins. ^{3:15} As in 1 Sam 25:44; Hebrew reads Paltiel, a variant spelling of Palti. ^{3:29a} Or a contagious skin disease. The Hebrew word used here can describe various skin diseases. ^{3:29b} Or who is effeminate; Hebrew reads who handles a spindle. ^{4:1} Ishbosheth is another name for Esh-baal. ^{4:4} Mephibosheth is another name for Merib-baal. ^{4:6} As in Greek version; Hebrew reads So they went into the house pretending to fetch wheat, but they stabbed him in the stomach. Then Recab and Baanah escaped. ^{4:7} Hebrew the Arabah. ^{5:2} Or For some time.

your feet were not chained. No, you were murdered—the victim of a wicked plot."

All the people wept again for Abner. ³⁵David had refused to eat anything on the day of the funeral, and now everyone begged him to eat. But David had made a vow, saying, "May God strike me and even kill me if I eat anything before sundown."

³⁶This pleased the people very much. In fact, everything the king did pleased them! ³⁷So everyone in Judah and all Israel understood that David was not responsible for Abner's murder.

³⁸Then King David said to his officials, "Don't you realize that a great commander has fallen today in Israel? ³⁹And even though I am the anointed king, these two sons of Zeruah—Joab and Abishai—are too strong for me to control. So may the LORD repay these evil men for their evil deeds."

The Murder of Ishbosheth

4 When Ishbosheth,* Saul's son, heard about Abner's death at Hebron, he lost all courage, and all Israel became paralyzed with fear. ²Now there were two brothers, Baanah and Recab, who were captains of Ishbosheth's raiding parties. They were sons of Rimmon, a member of the tribe of Benjamin who lived in Beeroth. The town of Beeroth is now part of Benjamin's territory ³because the original people of Beeroth fled to Gittaim, where they still live as foreigners.

⁴(Saul's son Jonathan had a son named Mephibosheth who was crippled as a child. He was five years old when the report came from Jezreel that Saul and Jonathan had been killed in battle. When the child's nurse heard the news, she picked him up and fled. But as she hurried away, she dropped him, and he became crippled.)

⁵One day Recab and Baanah, the sons of Rimmon from Beeroth, went to Ishbosheth's house around noon as he was taking his midday rest. ⁶The doorkeeper, who had been sitting wheat, became drowsy and fell asleep. So Recab and Baanah slipped past her. ⁷They went into the house and found Ishbosheth sleeping on his bed. They struck and killed him and cut off his head. Then, taking his head with them, they fled across the Jordan Valley* through the night. ⁸When they arrived at Hebron, they presented Ishbosheth's head to David. "Look!" they exclaimed to the king. "Here is the head of Ishbosheth, the son of your enemy Saul who tried to kill you. Today the LORD has given my lord the king revenge on Saul and his entire family!"

⁹But David said to Recab and Baanah, "The LORD who saves me from all my enemies, is my witness. ¹⁰Someone once told me, 'Saul is dead,' thinking he was bringing me good news. But I seized him and killed him at Ziklag. That's the reward I gave him for his news! ¹¹How much more should I reward evil men who have killed an innocent man in his own house and on his own bed? Shouldn't I hold them responsible for his blood and rid the earth of you?"

¹²So David ordered his young men to kill them, and they did. They cut off their hands and feet and hung their bodies beside the pool in Hebron. Then they took Ishbosheth's head and buried it in Abner's tomb in Hebron.

David Becomes King of All Israel

5 Then all the tribes of Israel went to David at Hebron and told him, "We are your own flesh and blood. ²From this time on, we will be loyal to you. ³So now, when Saul was our king, you were the one who

led the forces of Israel. And the LORD told you, 'You will be the shepherd of my people Israel. You will be Israel's leader.'"

³So there at Hebron, King David made a covenant before the LORD with all the elders of Israel. And they anointed him king of Israel.

⁴David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years in all. ⁵He had reigned over Judah from Hebron for seven years and six months, and from Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah for thirty-three years.

David Captures Jerusalem

⁶David then led his men to Jerusalem to fight against the Jebusites, the original inhabitants of the land who were living there. The Jebusites taunted David, saying, "You'll never get in here! Even the blind and lame could keep you out!" For the Jebusites thought they were safe. ⁷But David captured the fortress of Zion, which is now called the City of David.

⁸On the day of the attack, David said to his troops, "I hate those 'lame' and 'blind' Jebusites.* Whoever attacks them should strike by going into the city through the water tunnel.* ⁹That is the origin of the saying, 'The blind and the lame may not enter the house.'"

¹⁰So David made the fortress his home, and he called it the City of David. He extended the city, starting at the supporting terraces* and working inward. ¹¹And David became more and more powerful, because the LORD God of Heaven's Armies was with him.

¹²Then King Hiram of Tyre sent messengers to David, along with cedar timber and carpenters and stonemasons, and they built David a palace. ¹³And David realized that the LORD had confirmed him as king over Israel and had blessed his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel.

¹⁴After moving from Hebron to Jerusalem, David married more concubines and wives, and they had more sons and daughters. ¹⁵These are the names of David's sons who were born in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, ¹⁶Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

David Conquers the Philistines

¹When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king of Israel, they mobilized all their forces to capture him. ²But David was told they were coming, so he went into the stronghold. ³The Philistines arrived and spread out across the valley of Rephaim. ⁴So David asked the LORD, "Should I go out to fight the Philistines? Will you hand them over to me?" ⁵The LORD replied to David, "Yes, go ahead. I will certainly hand them over to you."

⁶So David went to Baal-perazim and defeated the Philistines there. "The LORD did it!" David exclaimed. "He burst through my enemies like a raging flood!" So he named that place Baal-perazim (which means "the Lord who bursts through"). ⁷The Philistines had abandoned their idols, so David and his men confiscated them.

⁸But after a while the Philistines returned and again spread out across the valley of Rephaim. ⁹And again David asked the LORD what to do. "Do not attack them straight on," the LORD replied. "Instead, circle around behind and attack them near the poplar* trees. ¹⁰When you hear a sound like marching feet in the tops of the poplar trees, be on the alert! ¹¹That will be the signal that the LORD is moving ahead of you

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to strike down the Philistine army.” ²⁵So David did what the
 LORD commanded, and he struck down the Philistines all
 the way from Gibeon* to Gezer.

Moving the Ark to Jerusalem

⁶Then David again gathered all the elite troops in Israel,
 30,000 in all. ²He led them to Baalah of Judah* to bring
 back the Ark of God, which bears the name of the LORD of
 Heaven’s Armies,* who is enthroned between the cherubim.
³They placed the Ark of God on a new cart and brought it
 from Abinadab’s house, which was on a hill. Uzzah and Ahio,
 Abinadab’s sons, were guiding the cart as it left the house,
⁴carrying the Ark of God. Ahio walked in front of the Ark. ⁵Da-
 vid and all the people of Israel were celebrating before the
 LORD, singing songs* and playing all kinds of musical instru-
 ments—lyres, harps, tambourines, castanets, and cymbals.

⁶But when they arrived at the threshing floor of Nacon,
 the oxen stumbled, and Uzzah reached out his hand and
 steadied the Ark of God. ⁷Then the LORD’s anger was
 aroused against Uzzah, and God struck him dead because
 of this.* So Uzzah died right there beside the Ark of God.

⁸David was angry because the LORD’s anger had burst out
 against Uzzah. He named that place Perez-uzzah (which
 means “to burst out against Uzzah”), as it is still called today.

⁹David was now afraid of the LORD, and he asked, “How
 can I ever bring the Ark of the LORD back into my care?” ¹⁰So
 David decided not to move the Ark of the LORD into the City
 of David. Instead, he took it to the house of Obed-edom of
 Gath. ¹¹The Ark of the LORD remained there in Obed-
 edom’s house for three months, and the LORD blessed Obed-
 edom and his entire household.

¹²Then King David was told, “The LORD has blessed Obed-
 edom’s household and everything he has because of the Ark
 of God.” So David went there and brought the Ark of God
 from the house of Obed-edom to the City of David with a
 great celebration. ¹³After the men who were carrying the
 Ark of the LORD had gone six steps, David sacrificed a bull
 and a fattened calf. ¹⁴And David danced before the LORD
 with all his might, wearing a priestly garment.* ¹⁵So David
 and all the people of Israel brought up the Ark of the LORD
 with shouts of joy and the blowing of rams’ horns.

Michal’s Contempt for David

¹⁶But as the Ark of the LORD entered the City of David, Michal,
 the daughter of Saul, looked down from her window.
 When she saw King David leaping and dancing before the
 LORD, she was filled with contempt for him.

¹⁷They brought the Ark of the LORD and set it in its place
 inside the special tent David had prepared for it. And David
 sacrificed burnt offerings and peace offerings to the LORD.
¹⁸When he had finished his sacrifices, David blessed the
 people in the name of the LORD of Heaven’s Armies. ¹⁹Then
 he gave to every Israelite man and woman in the crowd a loaf
 of bread, a cake of dates,* and a cake of raisins. Then all the
 people returned to their homes.

²⁰When David returned home to bless his own family,
 Michal, the daughter of Saul, came out to meet him. She said
 in disgust, “How distinguished the king of Israel looked to-
 day, shamelessly exposing himself to the servant girls like
 any vulgar person might do!”

²¹David retorted to Michal, “I was dancing before the
 LORD, who chose me above your father and all his family! He

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on to everything else, you speak of giving
lasting dynasty! Do you deal with
ay, O Sovereign LORD?*

re can I say to you? You know what your
like, Sovereign LORD. ²¹Because of your
ording to your will, you have done all
gs and have made them known to your

are, O Sovereign LORD! There is
We have never even heard of another
What other nation on earth is like you
What other nation, O God, have you
slavery to be your own people? You
ame for yourself when you redeemed
m Egypt. You performed awesome
rove out the nations and gods that stood
You made Israel your very own people
u, O LORD, became their God.

O LORD God, I am your servant; do as you
concerning me and my family. Confirm
that will last forever. ²⁶And may your name
ever so that everyone will say, "The LORD
is God over Israel!" And may the
servant David continue before you forever.
of Heaven's Armies, God of Israel, I have
ugh to pray this prayer to you because you
all this to your servant, saying, "I will build
—a dynasty of kings!" ²⁸For you are God,
LORD. Your words are truth, and you have
be good things to your servant. ²⁹And now
you to bless the house of your servant.
continue forever before you. For you have
when you grant a blessing to your servant,
LORD, it is an eternal blessing!"

Victories

David defeated and subdued the Philistines
ing Gath, their largest town.* ²David also
and of Moab. He made the people lie down
a row, and he measured them off in groups.
He measured off two groups to be
one group to be spared. The Moabites who
ame David's subjects and paid him tribute

destroyed the forces of Hadadezer son of
Zobah, when Hadadezer marched
control along the Euphrates River. ⁴David
ariots, 7,000 charioteers,* and 20,000
pled all the chariot horses except enough

means from Damascus arrived to help
id killed 22,000 of them. ⁶Then he
rriots in Damascus, the Aramean
ans became David's subjects and paid
So the LORD made David victorious wherever

ght the gold shields of Hadadezer's
along with a large amount of bronze
ns of Tebah* and Berothai.

Toi of Hamath heard that David
ire army of Hadadezer, ¹⁰he sent
atulate King David for his successful

ext reads before you. ^{7:19} Or *This is your memorial
made a great name for yourself and performed
ations and their gods.* ^{8:1} Hebrew *by counting*
e money taken from it. Compare 1 Chr 18:1. ^{8:8}
teers. ^{8:8} As in some Greek manuscripts (see

Hadadezer and Toi had been enemies and were
at war. Joram presented David with many gifts of
gold, and bronze.

King David dedicated all these gifts to the LORD, as he
with the silver and gold from the other nations he had
eated—¹²from Edom,* Moab, Ammon, Philistia, and Am-
—and from Hadadezer son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

So David became even more famous when he re-
med from destroying 18,000 Edomites* in the Valley of
He placed army garrisons throughout Edom, and all
Edomites became David's subjects. In fact, the LORD
David victorious wherever he went.

So David reigned over all Israel and did what was just
right for all his people. ¹⁶Joab son of Zeruiah was com-
mander of the army. Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was the
historian. ¹⁷Zadok son of Ahitub and Ahimelech son of
Eliab were the priests. Seraiah was the court secretary.
Benaiah son of Jehoiada was captain of the king's body-
guard.* And David's sons served as priestly leaders.*

David's Kindness to Mephibosheth

One day David asked, "Is anyone in Saul's family still
alive—anyone to whom I can show kindness for Jona-
than's sake?" ²He summoned a man named Ziba, who had
been one of Saul's servants. "Are you Ziba?" the king asked.
"Yes sir, I am," Ziba replied.

The king then asked him, "Is anyone still alive from
Saul's family? If so, I want to show God's kindness to them."
Ziba replied, "Yes, one of Jonathan's sons is still alive. He
is crippled in both feet."

"Where is he?" the king asked.
"In Lo-debar," Ziba told him, "at the home of Makir son of
Benei."

David sent for him and brought him from Makir's
home. His name was Mephibosheth*; he was Jonathan's
grandson. When he came to David, he bowed
to the ground in deep respect. David said, "Greetings,
Mephibosheth."

Mephibosheth replied, "I am your servant."
"Don't be afraid!" David said. "I intend to show kindness
to you because of my promise to your father, Jonathan. I will
give you all the property that once belonged to your grand-
father Saul, and you will eat here with me at the king's table!"
Mephibosheth bowed respectfully and exclaimed,
"I am your servant, that you should show such kindness
to a dog like me?"

Then the king summoned Saul's servant Ziba and said, "I
have given your master's grandson everything that belonged
to him and his family. ¹⁰You and your sons and servants are
to remain in the land for him to produce food for your master's
grandson.* But Mephibosheth, your master's grandson,
will eat here at my table." (Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty
servants.)

Ziba replied, "Yes, my lord the king; I am your servant,
and I will do all that you have commanded." And from that
time on, Mephibosheth ate regularly at David's table,* like
one of the king's own sons.

Mephibosheth had a young son named Mica. From
that time on, all the members of Ziba's household were Mephib-
osheth's servants. ¹³And Mephibosheth, who was crippled
in both feet, lived in Jerusalem and ate regularly at the king's

table. ¹⁴David had a few Hebrew manuscripts and Greek and Syriac versions (see also 8:14; 1 Chr 18:11); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Aram*. ^{8:13} As in a few
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reads *the first day of the year*. The first day of the year in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in March or April.

David Defeats the Ammonites

10 Some time after this, King Nahash* of the Ammon-
ites died, and his son Hanun became king. ²David
said, "I am going to show loyalty to Hanun just as his father,
Nahash, was always loyal to me." So David sent ambassadors
to express sympathy to Hanun about his father's death.

But when David's ambassadors arrived in the land of Am-
mon, ³the Ammonite commanders said to Hanun, their
master, "Do you really think these men are coming here to
honor your father? No! David has sent them to spy out the
city so they can come in and conquer it!" ⁴So Hanun seized
David's ambassadors and shaved off half of each man's
beard, cut off their robes at the buttocks, and sent them
back to David in shame.

When David heard what had happened, he sent messen-
gers to tell the men, "Stay at Jericho until your beards grow
out, and then come back." For they felt deep shame because
of their appearance.

When the people of Ammon realized how seriously they
had angered David, they sent and hired 20,000 Aramean
foot soldiers from the lands of Beth-rehob and Zobah,
1,000 from the king of Maacah, and 12,000 from the land
of Tob. ⁷When David heard about this, he sent Joab and all
his warriors to fight them. ⁸The Ammonite troops came out
and drew up their battle lines at the entrance of the city gate,
while the Arameans from Zobah and Rehob and the men
from Tob and Maacah positioned themselves to fight in the
open fields.

When Joab saw that he would have to fight on both the
front and the rear, he chose some of Israel's elite troops and
placed them under his personal command to fight the Ara-
means in the fields. ¹⁰He left the rest of the army under
the command of his brother Abishai, who was to attack the Am-
monites. ¹¹"If the Arameans are too strong for me, then
come over and help me," Joab told his brother. "And if the
Ammonites are too strong for you, I will come and help you."
¹²Be courageous! Let us fight bravely for our people and the
cities of our God. May the LORD's will be done."

When Joab and his troops attacked, the Arameans be-
gan to run away. ¹⁴And when the Ammonites saw the Ara-
means running, they ran from Abishai and retreated into the
city. After the battle was over, Joab returned to Jerusalem.

The Arameans now realized that they were no match
for Israel. So when they regrouped, ¹⁶they were joined by
additional Aramean troops summoned by Hadadezer from
the other side of the Euphrates River.* These troops arrived
at Helam under the command of Shobach, the commander
of Hadadezer's forces.

When David heard what was happening, he mobilized
all Israel, crossed the Jordan River, and led the army to
Helam. The Arameans positioned themselves in battle for-
mation and fought against David. ¹⁸But again the Arameans
fled from the Israelites. This time David's forces killed
700 charioteers and 40,000 foot soldiers,* including Sho-
bach, the commander of their army. ¹⁹When all the kings
allied with Hadadezer saw that they had been defeated by
Israel, they surrendered to Israel and became their subjects.
After that, the Arameans were afraid to help the Ammonites.

David and Bathsheba

11 In the spring of the year,* when kings normally go out
to war, David sent Joab and the Israelite army to fight

the Philistines. ²David had a few Hebrew manuscripts and Greek and Syriac versions (see also 8:14; 1 Chr 18:11); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Aram*. ^{8:13} As in a few
Greek manuscripts and Greek and Syriac versions (see also 8:14; 1 Chr 18:12); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Arameans*. ^{8:18a} Hebrew of the *Kerethites*
and *Gittites*. ^{8:18b} Hebrew *David's sons were priests*; compare parallel text at 1 Chr 18:17. ^{9:6} *Mephibosheth* is another name for Merib-baal.
Hebrew reads *my table*. ^{10:1} As in parallel text at 1 Chr 19:1; ^{10:16} Hebrew reads *the king*. ^{10:18} As in some Greek manuscripts (see also 1 Chr 19:18); Hebrew reads *charioteers*. ^{11:1} Hebrew
reads *the first day of the year*. The first day of the year in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in March or April.

the Ammonites. They destroyed the Ammonite army and laid siege to the city of Rabbah. However, David stayed behind in Jerusalem.

²Late one afternoon, after his midday rest, David got out of bed and was walking on the roof of the palace. As he looked out over the city, he noticed a woman of unusual beauty taking a bath. ³He sent someone to find out who she was, and he was told, "She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite." ⁴Then David sent messengers to get her; and when she came to the palace, he slept with her. She had just completed the purification rites after having her menstrual period. Then she returned home. ⁵Later, when Bathsheba discovered that she was pregnant, she sent David a message, saying, "I'm pregnant."

⁶Then David sent word to Joab: "Send me Uriah the Hittite." So Joab sent him to David. ⁷When Uriah arrived, David asked him how Joab and the army were getting along and how the war was progressing. ⁸Then he told Uriah, "Go on home and relax." ⁹David even sent a gift to Uriah after he had left the palace. ¹⁰But Uriah didn't go home. He slept that night at the palace entrance with the king's palace guard.

¹¹When David heard that Uriah had not gone home, he summoned him and asked, "What's the matter? Why didn't you go home last night after being away for so long?"

¹²Uriah replied, "The Ark and the armies of Israel and Judah are living in tents,* and Joab and my master's men are camping in the open fields. How could I go home to wine and dine and sleep with my wife? I swear that I would never do such a thing."

¹³"Well, stay here today," David told him, "and tomorrow you may return to the army." So Uriah stayed in Jerusalem that day and the next. ¹⁴Then David invited him to dinner and got him drunk. But even then he couldn't get Uriah to go home to his wife. Again he slept at the palace entrance with the king's palace guard.

David Arranges for Uriah's Death

¹⁵So the next morning David wrote a letter to Joab and gave it to Uriah to deliver. ¹⁶The letter instructed Joab, "Station Uriah on the front lines where the battle is fiercest. Then pull back so that he will be killed." ¹⁷So Joab assigned Uriah to a spot close to the city wall where he knew the enemy's strongest men were fighting. ¹⁸And when the enemy soldiers came out of the city to fight, Uriah the Hittite was killed along with several other Israelite soldiers.

¹⁹Then Joab sent a battle report to David. ²⁰He told his messenger, "Report all the news of the battle to the king. ²¹But he might get angry and ask, 'Why did the troops go so close to the city? Didn't they know there would be shooting from the walls?' ²²Wasn't Abimelech son of Gideon* killed at Thebez by a woman who threw a millstone down on him from the wall? Why would you get so close to the wall?" Then tell him, "Uriah the Hittite was killed, too."

²³So the messenger went to Jerusalem and gave a complete report to David. ²⁴The enemy came out against us in the open fields," he said. "And as we chased them back to the city gate, ²⁵the archers on the wall shot arrows at us. Some of the king's men were killed, including Uriah the Hittite."

²⁶"Well, tell Joab not to be discouraged," David said. "The sword devours this one today and that one tomorrow! Fight harder next time, and conquer the city!"

²⁷When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. ²⁸When the period of mourning was over, David sent for her and brought her to the palace, and

11:8 Hebrew and wash your feet, an expression that may also have a connotation of ritualistic washing. 11:11 Or at Succoth. 11:21 Hebrew son of Jerub-besheth. Jerub-besheth is a variation on the name Jerub-baal, which is another name for Gideon; see Judg 6:32. 12:14 As in Dead Sea Scrolls; Masoretic Text reads the Lord's enemies. 12:20 Hebrew anointed himself.

she became one of his wives. Then she gave birth to a son. But the LORD was displeased with what David had done.

Nathan Rebukes David

12 So the LORD sent Nathan the prophet to tell David this story: "There were two men in a certain town. One was rich, and one was poor. ²The rich man owned great many sheep and cattle. ³The poor man owned nothing but one little lamb he had bought. He raised that little lamb and it grew up with his children. It ate from the man's plate and drank from his cup. He cuddled it in his arms like a baby daughter. ⁴One day a guest arrived at the home of a rich man. But instead of killing an animal from his flock or herd, he took the poor man's lamb and killed it and prepared it for his guest."

⁵David was furious. "As surely as the LORD lives," he vowed, "any man who would do such a thing deserves to die. ⁶He must repay four lambs to the poor man for the one he stole and for having no pity."

⁷Then Nathan said to David, "You are that man! The LORD the God of Israel, says: I anointed you king of Israel and saved you from the power of Saul. ⁸I gave you your master's house and his wives and the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. And if that had not been enough, I would have given you much, much more. ⁹Why, then, have you despised the word of the LORD and done this horrible deed? For you have murdered Uriah the Hittite with the sword of the Ammonites and stolen his wife. ¹⁰From this time on, your family will be by the sword because you have despised me by taking Uriah's wife to be your own."

¹¹"This is what the LORD says: Because of what you have done, I will cause your own household to rebel against you. I will give your wives to another man before your very eyes and he will go to bed with them in public view. ¹²You did this secretly, but I will make this happen to you openly in the sight of all Israel."

David Confesses His Guilt

¹³Then David confessed to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."

Nathan replied, "Yes, but the LORD has forgiven you, and you won't die for this sin. ¹⁴Nevertheless, because you have shown utter contempt for the LORD* by doing this, your child will die."

¹⁵After Nathan returned to his home, the LORD sent him a deadly illness to the child of David and Uriah's wife. ¹⁶David begged God to spare the child. He went without food and all night on the bare ground. ¹⁷The elders of his household pleaded with him to get up and eat with them, but he refused.

¹⁸Then on the seventh day the child died. David's advisers were afraid to tell him. "He wouldn't listen to reason when the child was ill," they said. "What drastic thing will he do when we tell him the child is dead?"

¹⁹When David saw them whispering, he realized what had happened. "Is the child dead?" he asked.

"Yes," they replied, "he is dead."

²⁰Then David got up from the ground, washed himself, put on lotions,* and changed his clothes. He went to the Tabernacle and worshiped the LORD. After that, he returned to the palace and was served food and ate.

²¹His advisers were amazed. "We don't understand you," they told him. "While the child was still living, you wept and refused to eat. But now that the child is dead, you have stopped your mourning and are eating again."

David replied, "I fasted and wept while the child was alive for I said, 'Perhaps the LORD will be gracious to me and let the child live.' ²³But why should I fast when he is dead? I will bring him back again? I will go to him one day, but he will not return to me."

²⁴Then David comforted Bathsheba, his wife, and slept with her. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son, and David named him Solomon. The LORD loved the child and sent word through Nathan the prophet that they should name him Jedidiah (which means "beloved of the LORD"), as the LORD had commanded.*

David Captures Rabbah

²⁵Meanwhile, Joab was fighting against Rabbah, the capital of Ammon, and he captured the royal fortifications.* ²⁶Joab sent messengers to tell David, "I have fought against Rabbah and captured its water supply." ²⁷Now bring the rest of the Ammonite army and capture the city. Otherwise, I will capture it and take credit for the victory."

²⁸So David gathered the rest of the army and went to Rabbah and he fought against it and captured it. ²⁹David retook the crown from the king's head,* and it was placed on his own head. The crown was made of gold and set with precious stones and it weighed seventy-five pounds.* ³⁰David took a vast amount of plunder from the city. ³¹He also made slaves of the people of Rabbah and forced them to labor with* saws, picks, and iron axes, and to work in the brick kilns.* ³²This is how he dealt with the people of all the Ammonite cities. Then David and all the army returned to Jerusalem.

The Rape of Tamar

13 Now David's son Absalom had a beautiful sister named Tamar. And Amnon, her half brother, fell desperately in love with her. ²Amnon became so obsessed with her that he became ill. She was a virgin, and Amnon thought he could never have her.

³But Amnon had a very crafty friend—his cousin Jonadab, who was the son of David's brother Shimea.* ⁴One day Jonadab said to Amnon, "What's the trouble? ⁵One day the son of a king look so dejected morning after morning?"

So Amnon told him, "I am in love with Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister."

⁶"Well," Jonadab said, "I'll tell you what to do. Go back to your father and pretend you are ill. When your father comes to see you, ask him to let Tamar come and prepare some food for you. Tell him you'll feel better if she prepares it as you watch her feed you with her own hands."

⁷So Amnon lay down and pretended to be sick. And when the king came to see him, Amnon asked him, "Please let my daughter Tamar come and cook my favorite dish* as I watch. ⁸I can eat it from her own hands." ⁹So David agreed and told Tamar to go to Amnon's house to prepare some food for him.

¹⁰When Tamar arrived at Amnon's house, she went to the place where he was lying down so he could watch her mix the dough. Then she baked his favorite dish for him. ¹¹But when she set the serving tray before him, he refused to eat. ¹²"Get everyone out of here," Amnon told his servants. So they all left.

¹³Then he said to Tamar, "Now bring the food into my room and feed it to me here." So Tamar took his favorite dish to him. ¹⁴But as she was feeding him, he grabbed her and demanded, "Come to bed with me, my darling sister."

13:4 Hebrew he; an alternate Hebrew reading and some Hebrew manuscripts read she. 13:5 Or the royal city. 12:27 Or captured the city of water. 12:30a Or from the head of the god of the Ammonites. 12:30b Hebrew 1 talent [34 kilograms]. 12:31a Or 300. 12:31b Or and he made them pass through the brick kilns. 13:3 Hebrew Shimeah (also spelled Shimea). 13:8 Or a couple of cakes; also in 13:8, 10. 13:18 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:19 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:20 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:21 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:22 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:23 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:24 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:25 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:26 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:27 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:28 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:29 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:30 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:31 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:32 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:33 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:34 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:35 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:36 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:37 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:38 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:39 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:40 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:41 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:42 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:43 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:44 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:45 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:46 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:47 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:48 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:49 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:50 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:51 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:52 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:53 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:54 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:55 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:56 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:57 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:58 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:59 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:60 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:61 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:62 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:63 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:64 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:65 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:66 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:67 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:68 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:69 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:70 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:71 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:72 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:73 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:74 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:75 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:76 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:77 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:78 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:79 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:80 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:81 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:82 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:83 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:84 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:85 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:86 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:87 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:88 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:89 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:90 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:91 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:92 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:93 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:94 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:95 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:96 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:97 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:98 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:99 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash. 13:100 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamental sash.

of his wives. Then she gave birth to a son who was displeased with what David had done.

David

The LORD sent Nathan the prophet to tell David. "There were two men in a certain town, and one was poor. The rich man owned sheep and cattle. The poor man owned nothing but a little lamb he had bought. He raised that little lamb with his children. It ate from the man's own table and drank from his cup. He cuddled it in his arms. One day a guest arrived at the home of the rich man. Instead of killing an animal from his own flock, he took the poor man's lamb and killed it for his guest."

David was furious. "As surely as the LORD lives," said the LORD, "no man who would do such a thing deserves to live. I will give four lambs to the poor man for the one he took, but he will have no pity."

David said to David, "You are that man! The LORD says: I anointed you king of Israel and took away the power of Saul. I gave you your masters' wives and the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. But that has not been enough, I would have given you more. Why, then, have you despised the LORD's command and done this horrible deed? For you have murdered Hittite with the sword of the Ammonites and taken his wife. From this time on, your family will be torn apart because you have despised me by taking the LORD's name in vain and your own."

David said to the LORD says: Because of what you have done, I will tear your own household to rebel against you. I will give your wives to another man before your very eyes, and they will be bed with them in public view. You will be disgraced and will make this happen to you openly in the eyes of all Israel.

Confesses His Guilt

David confessed to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD. Yes, but the LORD has forgiven you and your sin. Nevertheless, because you have despised the LORD* by doing this, you will have trouble."

When David returned to his home, the LORD sent the child of David and Uriah's wife. David compared the child. He went without food and lay on bare ground. The elders of his household urged him to get up and eat with them, but he refused. On the seventh day the child died. David's advisers told him, "He wouldn't listen to reason with you, but he said, 'What drastic thing will the LORD do when the child is dead?'"

When David saw them whispering, he realized what they were saying. "Is the child dead?" he asked. They replied, "he is dead."

David got up from the ground, washed himself, and changed his clothes. He went to the temple and worshiped the LORD. After that, he returned home and was served food and ate.

David's advisers were amazed. "We don't understand what the LORD has done. While the child was still living, you were mourning, but now that the child is dead, you are burning and are eating again."

11:11 Or at Succoth. 11:21 Hebrew son of David. 12:10 Or he was angry with you. 12:14 As in Dead Sea Scrolls; Masorah; Septuagint; Vulgate; and Greek version add But he did not punish his son Amnon, because he loved him, for he was his firstborn. 13:21 Dead Sea Scrolls; Vulgate; and Greek version add But he did not punish his son Amnon, because he loved him, for he was his firstborn. 13:27 As in Greek and Latin versions; Vulgate; and Greek version add But he did not punish his son Amnon, because he loved him, for he was his firstborn.

David replied, "I fasted and wept while the child was alive for I said, 'Perhaps the LORD will be gracious to me and let the child live.' But why should I fast when he is dead? I will bring him back again? I will go to him one day, but he will not return to me."

Then David comforted Bathsheba, his wife, and slept with her. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son, and David named him Solomon. The LORD loved the child and sent word through Nathan the prophet that they should name him Jedidiah (which means "beloved of the LORD") as the LORD had commanded.*

David Captures Rabbah

At the same time, Joab was fighting against Rabbah, the capital of the Ammonites, and he captured the royal fortifications.* 27 Joab sent messengers to tell David, "I have fought against Rabbah and captured its water supply.* 28 Now bring the rest of the Ammonites and capture the city. Otherwise, I will capture it and give credit for the victory."

So David gathered the rest of the army and went to Rabbah and he fought against it and captured it. 30 David removed the crown from the king's head,* and it was placed on his own head. The crown was made of gold and set with precious stones and it weighed seventy-five pounds.* David took a vast amount of plunder from the city. 31 He also made slaves of the people of Rabbah and forced them to labor with* saws, picks, and iron axes, and to work in the brick kilns.* 32 This is how he dealt with the people of all the Ammonite cities. Then David and all the army returned to Jerusalem.

The Rape of Tamar

Now David's son Absalom had a beautiful sister named Tamar. And Amnon, her half brother, fell deeply in love with her. 2 Amnon became so obsessed with her that he became ill. She was a virgin, and Amnon thought he could never have her.

But Amnon had a very crafty friend—his cousin Jonadab. Jonadab was the son of David's brother Shimea.* 4 One day Jonadab said to Amnon, "What's the trouble? Why should you, a king's son, look so dejected morning after morning?"

Amnon told him, "I am in love with Tamar, my brother's sister."

"Well," Jonadab said, "I'll tell you what to do. Go back to your father and pretend you are ill. When your father comes to see you, ask him to let Tamar come and prepare some food for you. Tell him you'll feel better if she prepares it as you watch her feed you with her own hands."

So Amnon lay down and pretended to be sick. And when his father came to see him, Amnon asked him, "Please let my daughter Tamar come and cook my favorite dish* as I watch her. I can eat it from her own hands." 7 So David agreed and let Tamar go to Amnon's house to prepare some food for him.

When Tamar arrived at Amnon's house, she went to the place where he was lying down so he could watch her mix the dough. Then she baked his favorite dish for him. 9 But when she set the serving tray before him, he refused to eat. 10 "Get out of here," Amnon told his servants. So they got her out.

Then he said to Tamar, "Now bring the food into my room and feed it to me here." So Tamar took his favorite dish to him. 11 But as she was feeding him, he grabbed her and commanded, "Come to bed with me, my darling sister."

12 Tamar said to him, "No, my brother! Don't do this to me! Such wicked things aren't done in Israel. 13 Where could I go in my shame? And you would be called one of the greatest fools in Israel. Please, just speak to the king about it, and he will let you marry me."

14 But Amnon wouldn't listen to her, and since he was stronger than she was, he raped her. 15 Then suddenly Amnon's love turned to hate, and he hated her even more than he had loved her. "Get out of here!" he snarled at her.

16 "No, no!" Tamar cried. "Sending me away now is worse than what you've already done to me."

But Amnon wouldn't listen to her. 17 He shouted for his servant and demanded, "Throw this woman out, and lock the door behind her!"

18 So the servant put her out and locked the door behind her. She was wearing a long, beautiful robe,* as was the custom in those days for the king's virgin daughters. 19 But now Tamar tore her robe and put ashes on her head. And then, with her face in her hands, she went away crying.

20 Her brother Absalom saw her and asked, "Is it true that Amnon has been with you? Well, my sister, keep quiet for now, since he's your brother. Don't you worry about it." So Tamar lived as a desolate woman in her brother Absalom's house.

21 When King David heard what had happened, he was very angry.* 22 And though Absalom never spoke to Amnon about this, he hated Amnon deeply because of what he had done to his sister.

12 "No, my brother!" she cried. "Don't be foolish! Don't do this to me! Such wicked things aren't done in Israel. 13 Where could I go in my shame? And you would be called one of the greatest fools in Israel. Please, just speak to the king about it, and he will let you marry me."

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Absalom's Revenge on Amnon

Two years later, when Absalom's sheep were being sheared at Baal-hazor near Ephraim, Absalom invited all the king's sons to come to a feast. 24 He went to the king and said, "My sheep-shearers are now at work. Would the king and his servants please come to celebrate the occasion with me?"

25 The king replied, "No, my son. If we all came, we would be too much of a burden on you." Absalom pressed him, but the king would not come, though he gave Absalom his blessing.

26 "Well, then," Absalom said, "if you can't come, how about sending my brother Amnon with us?"

"Why Amnon?" the king asked. 27 But Absalom kept on pressing the king until he finally agreed to let all his sons attend, including Amnon. So Absalom prepared a feast fit for a king.*

28 Absalom told his men, "Wait until Amnon gets drunk; then at my signal, kill him! Don't be afraid. I'm the one who has given the command. Take courage and do it!" 29 So at Absalom's signal they murdered Amnon. Then the other sons of the king jumped on their mules and fled.

30 As they were on the way back to Jerusalem, this report reached David: "Absalom has killed all the king's sons; not one is left alive!" 31 The king got up, tore his robe, and threw himself on the ground. His advisers also tore their clothes in horror and sorrow.

32 But just then Jonadab, the son of David's brother Shimea, arrived and said, "No, don't believe that all the king's sons have been killed! It was only Amnon! Absalom has been plotting this ever since Amnon raped his sister Tamar. 33 No, my lord the king, your sons aren't all dead! It was only Amnon." 34 Meanwhile Absalom escaped.

Then the watchman on the Jerusalem wall saw a great

12:25 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads because of the LORD. 12:27 Or captured the city of water. 12:30a Or from the head of Milcom (as in Greek version). Milcom, also called Molech, was the god of the Ammonites. 12:30b Hebrew 1 talent (34 kilograms). 12:31a Or He also brought out the people of Rabbah and put them under. 12:31b Or and he made them pass through the brick kilns. 13:3 Hebrew Shimeah (also in 13:32), a variant spelling of Shimea; compare 1 Chr 2:13. 13:3 Or a couple of cakes; also in 13:8, 10. 13:18 Or a robe with sleeves, or an ornamented robe. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. 13:21 Dead Sea Scrolls; Vulgate; and Greek version add But he did not punish his son Amnon, because he loved him, for he was his firstborn. 13:27 As in Greek and Latin versions; Vulgate; and Greek version add But he did not punish his son Amnon, because he loved him, for he was his firstborn.

crowd coming down the hill on the road from the west. He ran to tell the king, "I see a crowd of people coming from the Horonaim road along the side of the hill."*

35"Look!" Jonadab told the king. "There they are now! The king's sons are coming, just as I said."

36They soon arrived, weeping and sobbing, and the king and all his servants wept bitterly with them. 37And David mourned many days for his son Amnon.

Absalom fled to his grandfather, Talmi son of Ammihud, the king of Geshur. 38He stayed there in Geshur for three years. 39And King David,* now reconciled to Amnon's death, longed to be reunited with his son Absalom.*

Joab Arranges for Absalom's Return

14 Joab realized how much the king longed to see Absalom. 2So he sent for a woman from Tekoa who had a reputation for great wisdom. He said to her, "Pretend you are in mourning; wear mourning clothes and don't put on lotions.* Act like a woman who has been mourning for the dead for a long time. 3Then go to the king and tell him the story I am about to tell you." Then Joab told her what to say.

4When the woman from Tekoa approached the king, she bowed with her face to the ground in deep respect and cried out, "O king! Help me!"

5"What's the trouble?" the king asked.

6"Alas, I am a widow!" she replied. "My husband is dead. My two sons had a fight out in the field. And since no one was there to stop it, one of them was killed. 7Now the rest of the family is demanding, 'Let us have your son. We will execute him for murdering his brother. He doesn't deserve to inherit his family's property.' They want to extinguish the only coal I have left, and my husband's name and family will disappear from the face of the earth."

8"Leave it to me," the king told her. "Go home, and I'll see to it that no one touches him."

9"Oh, thank you, my lord the king," the woman from Tekoa replied. "If you are criticized for helping me, let the blame fall on me and on my father's house, and let the king and his throne be innocent."

10"If anyone objects," the king said, "bring him to me. I can assure you he will never complain again!"

11Then she said, "Please swear to me by the LORD your God that you won't let anyone take vengeance against my son. I want no more bloodshed."

12"Please allow me to ask one more thing of my lord the king," she said.

13"Go ahead and speak," he responded.

14She replied, "Why don't you do as much for the people of God as you have promised to do for me? You have convicted yourself in making this decision, because you have refused to bring home your own banished son. 14All of us must die eventually. Our lives are like water spilled out on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. But God does not just sweep life away; instead, he devises ways to bring us back when we have been separated from him.

15I have come to plead with my lord the king because people have threatened me. I said to myself, 'Perhaps the king will listen to me 16and rescue us from those who would cut us off from the inheritance* God has given us. 17Yes, my lord the king will give us peace of mind again.' I know that you are like an angel of God in discerning good from evil. May the LORD your God be with you."

18"Go ahead and speak," he responded.

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18"I must know one thing," the king replied, "and tell me the truth."

19"Did Joab put you up to this?"

20And the woman replied, "My lord the king, how can I deny it? Nobody can hide anything from you. Yes, Joab sent me and told me what to say. 20He did it to place the man before you in a different light. But you are as wise as an angel of God, and you understand everything that happens among us!"

21So the king sent for Joab and told him, "All right, go and bring back the young man Absalom."

22Joab bowed with his face to the ground in deep respect and said, "At last I know that I have gained your approval, my lord the king, for you have granted me this request!"

23Then Joab went to Geshur and brought Absalom back to Jerusalem. 24But the king gave this order: "Absalom may go to his own house, but he must never come into my presence." So Absalom did not see the king.

Absalom Reconciled to David

25Now Absalom was praised as the most handsome man in all Israel. He was flawless from head to foot. 26He cut his hair only once a year, and then only because it was so heavy. When he weighed it out, it came to five pounds! 27He had three sons and one daughter. His daughter's name was Tamar, and she was very beautiful.

28Absalom lived in Jerusalem for two years, but he never got to see the king. 29Then Absalom sent for Joab to ask him to intercede for him, but Joab refused to come. Absalom sent for him a second time, but again Joab refused to come.

30So Absalom said to his servants, "Go and set fire to Joab's barley field, the field next to mine." So they set his field on fire, as Absalom had commanded.

31Then Joab came to Absalom at his house and demanded, "Why did your servants set my field on fire?"

32And Absalom replied, "Because I wanted you to ask the king why he brought me back from Geshur if he didn't want to see me. I might as well have stayed there. Let me hear the king; if he finds me guilty of anything, then let him do what he wants."

33So Joab told the king what Absalom had said. Then the king why he brought me back from Geshur if he didn't want to see me. I might as well have stayed there. Let me hear the king; if he finds me guilty of anything, then let him do what he wants."

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promised to sacrifice to the LORD in Hebron* if he would bring me back to Jerusalem."

10But while he was there, he secret messengers to all the tribes of Israel to stir up a rebellion against the king. "As soon as you hear the ram's horn," his message read, "you are to say, 'Absalom has been crowned king in Hebron.'" 11He took 200 men from Jerusalem with him as guests, but they knew nothing of his intention. 12While Absalom was offering the sacrifices, he sent Ahithophel, one of David's counselors who lived in Gath. Soon many others also joined Absalom, and the conspiracy gained momentum.

13Then the king turned and said to Ittai, a leader of the Gathites, "Why are you coming with us? Go on back to Jerusalem, for you are a guest in Israel, a foreigner in the land. You arrived only recently, and should I force you to wander with us? I don't even know where we will go. Show your unfailing love and faithfulness to the king." 14But Ittai said to the king, "I vow by the LORD and by your life that I will go wherever my lord the king goes, whatever happens—whether it means life or death."

15David replied, "All right, come with us." So Ittai and all the Gathites and their families went along.

16Everyone cried loudly as the king and his followers moved by. They crossed the Kidron Valley and then went toward the wilderness.

17Zadok and all the Levites also came along, carrying the Ark of the Covenant of God. They set down the Ark of God, and Abiathar offered sacrifices* until everyone had passed the city.

18Then the king instructed Zadok to take the Ark of God into the city. "If the LORD sees fit," David said, "he will bring me back to see the Ark and the Tabernacle* again. If he is through with me, then let him do what seems best to him."

19The king also told Zadok the priest, "Look,* here is my son Ahimaaz and Abiathar's son Jonathan. 20I will send them to the shallows of the Jordan River* and wait there for a sign of mourning. And the people who were with him should bow before him and wept as they climbed the hill."

21David walked up the road to the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went. His head was covered and his feet were bare as a sign of mourning. And the people who were with him bowed before him and wept as they climbed the hill.

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13:34 As in Greek version; Hebrew lacks this sentence. 13:39a Dead Sea Scrolls and Greek version read *And the spirit of the king*. 13:39b Or *no longer felt a need to go out after Absalom*. 14:2 Hebrew *don't anoint yourself with oil*. 14:16 Or *the property; or the people*. 14:26 Hebrew *200 shekels* (2.3 kilograms) by the royal standard. 15:7 As in Greek and Syriac versions; Hebrew reads *forty years*. 15:18 Hebrew the *Kereteth* (Hebrew *unfailing love and faithfulness go with you*). 15:24 Or *Abiathar went up*. 15:25 Hebrew reads *Are you a seer? or Do you see?* 15:27b Hebrew lacks *and Abiathar*, compare *Abiathar* is another name for Merib-baal. 16:11 Hebrew *this Benjaminite*.

¹⁴The king and all who were with him grew weary along the way, so they rested when they reached the Jordan River.*

Ahithophel Advises Absalom

¹⁵Meanwhile, Absalom and all the army of Israel arrived at Jerusalem, accompanied by Ahithophel. ¹⁶When David's friend Hushai the Arkite arrived, he went immediately to see Absalom. "Long live the king!" he exclaimed. "Long live the king!"

¹⁷"Is this the way you treat your friend David?" Absalom asked him. "Why aren't you with him?"

¹⁸"I'm here because I belong to the man who is chosen by the Lord and by all the men of Israel," Hushai replied. ¹⁹"And anyway, why shouldn't I serve you? Just as I was your father's adviser, now I will be your adviser!"

²⁰Then Absalom turned to Ahithophel and asked him, "What should I do next?"

²¹Ahithophel told him, "Go and sleep with your father's concubines, for he has left them here to look after the palace. Then all Israel will know that you have insulted your father beyond hope of reconciliation, and they will throw their support to you." ²²So they set up a tent on the palace roof where everyone could see it, and Absalom went in and had sex with his father's concubines.

²³Absalom followed Ahithophel's advice, just as David had done. For every word Ahithophel spoke seemed as wise as though it had come directly from the mouth of God.

17 Now Ahithophel urged Absalom, "Let me choose 12,000 men to start out after David tonight. ²I will catch up with him while he is weary and discouraged. He and his troops will panic, and everyone will run away. Then I will kill only the king, ³and I will bring all the people back to you as a bride returns to her husband. After all, it is only one man's life that you seek.* Then you will be at peace with all the people." ⁴This plan seemed good to Absalom and to all the elders of Israel.

Hushai Counters Ahithophel's Advice

⁵But then Absalom said, "Bring in Hushai the Arkite. Let's see what he thinks about this." ⁶When Hushai arrived, Absalom told him what Ahithophel had said. Then he asked, "What is your opinion? Should we follow Ahithophel's advice? If not, what do you suggest?"

⁷"Well," Hushai replied to Absalom, "this time Ahithophel has made a mistake. ⁸You know your father and his men; they are mighty warriors. Right now they are as enraged as a mother bear who has been robbed of her cubs. And remember that your father is an experienced man of war. He won't be spending the night among the troops. ⁹He has probably already hidden in some pit or cave. And when he comes out and attacks and a few of your men fall, there will be panic among your troops, and the word will spread that Absalom's men are being slaughtered. ¹⁰Then even the bravest soldiers, though they have the heart of a lion, will be paralyzed with fear. For all Israel knows what a mighty warrior your father is and how courageous his men are.

¹¹"I recommend that you mobilize the entire army of Israel, bringing them from as far away as Dan in the north and Beersheba in the south. That way you will have an army as numerous as the sand on the seashore. And I advise that you personally lead the troops. ¹²When we find David, we'll fall on him like dew that falls on the ground. Then neither he nor any of his men will be left alive. ¹³And if David were to

escape into some town, you will have all Israel there at your command. Then we can take ropes and drag the walls of the town into the nearest valley until every stone is torn down.

¹⁴Then Absalom and all the men of Israel said, "Hushai's advice is better than Ahithophel's." For the Lord had determined to defeat the counsel of Ahithophel, which really was the better plan, so that he could bring disaster on Absalom.

Hushai Warns David to Escape

¹⁵Hushai told Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, what Ahithophel had said to Absalom and the elders of Israel and what he himself had advised instead. ¹⁶"Quick!" he told them. "Find David and urge him not to stay at the shallows of the Jordan River* tonight. He must go across at once into the wilderness beyond. Otherwise he will die and his entire army with him."

¹⁷Jonathan and Ahimaaz had been staying at En-rogel, as not to be seen entering and leaving the city. Arrangements had been made for a servant girl to bring them the message they were to take to King David. ¹⁸But a boy spotted them at En-rogel, and he told Absalom about it. So the quickly escaped to Bahurim, where a man hid them down inside a well in his courtyard. ¹⁹The man's wife put a cloth over the top of the well and scattered grain on it to dry in the sun; so no one suspected they were there.

²⁰When Absalom's men arrived, they asked her, "Have you seen Ahimaaz and Jonathan?"

The woman replied, "They were here, but they crossed over the brook." Absalom's men looked for them without success and returned to Jerusalem.

²¹Then the two men crawled out of the well and hurried on to King David. "Quick!" they told him, "cross the Jordan tonight!" And they told him how Ahithophel had advised that he be captured and killed. ²²So David and all the people with him went across the Jordan River during the night, and they were all on the other bank before dawn.

²³When Ahithophel realized that his advice had not been followed, he saddled his donkey, went to his hometown, and his affairs in order, and hanged himself. He died there and was buried in the family tomb.

²⁴David soon arrived at Mahanaim. By now, Absalom had mobilized the entire army of Israel and was leading his troops across the Jordan River. ²⁵Absalom had appointed Amasa as commander of his army, replacing Joab, who had been commander under David. (Amasa was Joab's cousin. His father was Jether,* an Ishmaelite.* His mother, Abigail, daughter of Nahash, was the sister of Joab's mother, Zeruah.) ²⁶Absalom and the Israelite army set up camp in the land of Gilead.

²⁷When David arrived at Mahanaim, he was warmly greeted by Shobi son of Nahash, who came from Rabbah of the Ammonites, and by Makir son of Ammiel from Lo-debar and by Barzillai of Gilead from Rogelim. ²⁸They brought sleeping mats, cooking pots, serving bowls, wheat and barley, flour and roasted grain, beans, lentils, ²⁹honey, butter, sheep, goats, and cheese for David and those who were with him. For they said, "You must all be very hungry and tired and thirsty after your long march through the wilderness."

Absalom's Defeat and Death

18 David now mustered the men who were with him and appointed generals and captains* to lead them. ²He sent the troops out in three groups, placing one group under Joab, one under Joab's brother Abishai son of Zeruiah, and

one under Ittai, the man from Gath. The king told his troops, "I am going out with you."

But his men objected strongly. "You must not go," they said. "If we have to turn and run—and even if half of us die—it will make no difference to Absalom's troops; they will be looking only for you. You are worth 10,000 of us,* and it is better that you stay here in the town and send help to us if we need it."

"If you think that's the best plan, I'll do it," the king answered. So he stood alongside the gate of the town as all the troops marched out in groups of hundreds and of thousands.

³And the king gave this command to Joab, Abishai, and Ittai: "For my sake, deal gently with young Absalom." And all the troops heard the king give this order to his commanders.

⁴So the battle began in the forest of Ephraim, and the Israelite troops were beaten back by David's men. There was a great slaughter that day, and 20,000 men laid down their lives. ⁵The battle raged all across the countryside, and more died because of the forest than were killed by the sword.

⁶During the battle, Absalom happened to come upon one of David's men. He tried to escape on his mule, but as he rode beneath the thick branches of a great tree, his hair* caught in the tree. His mule kept going and left him dangling in the air. ⁷One of David's men saw what had happened and told Joab, "I saw Absalom dangling from a tree."

"What?" Joab demanded. "You saw him there and didn't kill him? I would have rewarded you with ten pieces of silver* and a hero's belt!"

"I would not kill the king's son for even a thousand pieces of silver,*" the man replied to Joab. "We all heard the king say to you and Abishai and Ittai, 'For my sake, please spare young Absalom.' ¹³And if I had betrayed the king by killing his son—and the king would certainly find out who did it—you yourself would be the first to abandon me."

"Enough of this nonsense," Joab said. Then he took three daggers and plunged them into Absalom's heart as he dangled, still alive, in the great tree. ¹⁵Ten of Joab's young archers then surrounded Absalom and killed him.

¹⁶Then Joab blew the ram's horn, and his men returned to chasing the army of Israel. ¹⁷They threw Absalom's body into a deep pit in the forest and piled a great heap of stones over it. And all Israel fled to their homes.

¹⁸During his lifetime, Absalom had built a monument to himself in the King's Valley, for he said, "I have no son to carry on my name." He named the monument after himself, and it is known as Absalom's Monument to this day.

David Mourns Absalom's Death

¹Then Zadok's son Ahimaaz said, "Let me run to the king and tell him the good news that the Lord has rescued him from his enemies."

"No," Joab told him, "it wouldn't be good news to the king that his son is dead. You can be my messenger another time, but not today."

Then Joab said to a man from Ethiopia,* "Go tell the king what you have seen." The man bowed and ran off.

But Ahimaaz continued to plead with Joab, "Whatever happens, please let me go, too."

"Why should you go, my son?" Joab replied. "There will be no reward for your news."

^{16:14} As in Greek version (see also 17:16); Hebrew reads *when they reached their destination*. ^{17:3} As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *like the return of a man whom you seek*. ^{17:16} Hebrew *at the crossing points of the wilderness*. ^{17:25a} Hebrew *Ithra*, a variant spelling of Jether. ^{17:25b} As in some Greek manuscripts (see also 1 Chr 2:17); Hebrew reads *an Israelite*. ^{18:1} Hebrew *appointed commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds*.

^{18:11} Hebrew *10 shekels of silver*, about 4 ounces or 114 grams in weight. ^{18:21} Hebrew *from Cush*; similarly in 18:23, 31, 32. ^{18:33} Verse 18:33-44 in Hebrew text.

into some town, you will have all Israel there at our command. Then we can take ropes and drag the walls of the town into the nearest valley until every stone is torn down. Then Absalom and all the men of Israel said, "Hushai is better than Ahithophel's." For the LORD had decreed to defeat the counsel of Ahithophel, which really was a better plan, so that he could bring disaster on Absalom.

Hushai Warns David to Escape

Hushai told Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, what Ahithophel had said to Absalom and the elders of Israel and what Hushai himself had advised instead. ¹⁶"Quick!" he told them. "Do not let David and his men stay at the shallows of the Jordan River tonight. He must go across at once into the wilderness beyond. Otherwise he will die and his army will be scattered with him."

Hushai and Ahimaaz had been staying at En-rogel. They had been seen entering and leaving the city. Arrangements had been made for a servant girl to bring them to the place they were to take to King David. ¹⁸But a boy spotted them at En-rogel, and he told Absalom about it. So they quickly escaped to Bahurim, where a man hid them in a well in his courtyard. ¹⁹The man's wife put a millstone on the top of the well and scattered grain on it to dry it, so no one suspected they were there.

When Absalom's men arrived, they asked her, "Have you seen Ahimaaz and Jonathan?" She answered them and they went back to Absalom. ²⁰When the woman replied, "They were here, but they crossed the brook." Absalom's men looked for them without success and returned to Jerusalem.

Then the two men crawled out of the well and hurried to King David. "Quick!" they told him, "cross the Jordan tonight! And they told him how Ahithophel had advised that he be captured and killed. ²²So David and all the people of Israel went across the Jordan River during the night, and they were all on the other bank before dawn.

When Ahithophel realized that his advice had not been followed, he saddled his donkey, went to his hometown, and made his affairs in order, and hanged himself. He died there and was buried in the family tomb.

David soon arrived at Mahanaim. By now, Absalom had gathered the entire army of Israel and was leading it across the Jordan River. ²⁵Absalom had appointed Amasa as commander of his army, replacing Joab, who had been commander under David. (Amasa was Joab's cousin; his father was Jether,* an Ishmaelite.* His mother, Abigail, was the sister of Joab's mother.) ²⁶So Absalom and the Israelite army set up camp in the plain of Gilead.

When David arrived at Mahanaim, he was warned by Shobi son of Nahash, who came from Ramoth-gilead, Ammonites, and by Makir son of Ammiel from Lo-debar, Gilead, and by Barzillai of Gilead from Rogelim. ²⁸They brought mats, cooking pots, serving bowls, wheat and barley, flour and roasted grain, beans, lentils, ²⁹honey, butter, milk, goats, and cheese for David and those who were with him. For they said, "You must all be very hungry and thirsty after your long march through the wilderness."

Absalom's Defeat and Death

David now mustered the men who were with him and appointed generals and captains* to lead them. He divided the troops out in three groups, placing one group under each of his three sons: Abinadab son of Ner, Amasa son of Joab, and Amasai son of Amasai.

David also appointed commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds.

Under Ittai, the man from Gath. The king told his troops, "I will go with you." So he went out with you."

But his men objected strongly. "You must not go," they said. "If we have to turn and run—and even if half of us die—we will make no difference to Absalom's troops; they are looking only for you. You are worth 10,000 of us.* It is better that you stay here in the town and send help to the king."

"If you think that's the best plan, I'll do it," the king answered. So he stood alongside the gate of the town as all the troops marched out in groups of hundreds and of thousands.

Then the king gave this command to Joab, Abishai, and Amasai: "For my sake, deal gently with young Absalom." And all the troops heard the king give this order to his commanders.

The battle began in the forest of Ephraim, and the Israelite troops were beaten back by David's men. There was a great slaughter that day, and 20,000 men laid down their lives. The battle raged all across the countryside, and more men died because of the forest than were killed by the sword.

During the battle, Absalom happened to come upon one of David's men. He tried to escape on his mule, but as he ran beneath the thick branches of a great tree, his hair* caught in the tree. His mule kept going and left him hanging in the air. ¹⁰One of David's men saw what had happened and told Joab, "I saw Absalom dangling from a tree."

"What?" Joab demanded. "You saw him there and didn't kill him? I would have rewarded you with ten pieces of silver* and a hero's belt!"

"I would not kill the king's son for even a thousand pieces of silver,*" the man replied to Joab. "We all heard the king's command to you and Abishai and Ittai, 'For my sake, please deal gently with young Absalom.' ¹³And if I had betrayed the king by killing his son—and the king would certainly find out who you yourself would be the first to abandon me."

"Enough of this nonsense," Joab said. Then he took three arrows and plunged them into Absalom's heart as he hung there, still alive, in the great tree. ¹⁵Ten of Joab's young archers then surrounded Absalom and killed him.

Then Joab blew the ram's horn, and his men returned to the king, raising the army of Israel. ¹⁷They threw Absalom's body into a deep pit in the forest and piled a great heap of stones over it. And all Israel fled to their homes.

During his lifetime, Absalom had built a monument to himself in the King's Valley, for he said, "I have no son to carry on my name." He named the monument after himself, and it is known as Absalom's Monument to this day.

David Mourns Absalom's Death

Zadok's son Ahimaaz said, "Let me run to the king and tell him the good news that the LORD has rescued him from his enemies."

Joab told him, "It wouldn't be good news to the king if his son is dead. You can be my messenger another time, but not today."

Then Joab said to a man from Ethiopia,* "Go tell the king what you have seen." The man bowed and ran off.

Ahimaaz continued to plead with Joab, "Whatever you please let me go, too."

"Why should you go, my son?" Joab replied. "There will be no reward for your news."

Two Hebrew manuscripts and some Greek and Latin manuscripts; most Hebrew manuscripts read *Now there are 10,000 like us*. ^{18:9} Hebrew reads *10 shekels of silver*, about 4 ounces or 114 grams in weight. ^{18:12} Hebrew *1,000 shekels*, about 25 pounds or 11.4 kilograms in weight. ^{18:21} Hebrew *from Cush*; similarly in 18:23, 31, 32. ^{18:33} Verse 18:33 is numbered 19:1 in Hebrew text. ^{19:1} Verses 19:1-43 are numbered 19:1-43 in Hebrew text.

²³"Yes, but let me go anyway," he begged.

Joab finally said, "All right, go ahead." So Ahimaaz took the less demanding route by way of the plain and ran to Mahanaim ahead of the Ethiopian.

²⁴While David was sitting between the inner and outer gates of the town, the watchman climbed to the roof of the gateway by the wall. As he looked, he saw a lone man running toward them. ²⁵He shouted the news down to David, and the king replied, "If he is alone, he has news."

As the messenger came closer, ²⁶the watchman saw another man running toward them. He shouted down, "Here comes another one!"

The king replied, "He also will have news."

²⁷"The first man runs like Ahimaaz son of Zadok," the watchman said.

"He is a good man and comes with good news," the king replied.

²⁸Then Ahimaaz cried out to the king, "Everything is all right!" He bowed before the king with his face to the ground and said, "Praise to the LORD your God, who has handed over the rebels who dared to stand against my lord the king."

²⁹"What about young Absalom?" the king demanded. "Is he all right?"

Ahimaaz replied, "When Joab told me to come, there was a lot of commotion. But I didn't know what was happening."

³⁰"Wait here," the king told him. So Ahimaaz stepped aside.

³¹Then the man from Ethiopia arrived and said, "I have good news for my lord the king. Today the LORD has rescued you from all those who rebelled against you."

³²"What about young Absalom?" the king demanded. "Is he all right?"

And the Ethiopian replied, "May all of your enemies, my lord the king, both now and in the future, share the fate of that young man!"

³³*The king was overcome with emotion. He went up to the room over the gateway and burst into tears. And as he went, he cried, "O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you! O Absalom, my son, my son!"

Joab Rebukes the King

19¹*Word soon reached Joab that the king was weeping and mourning for Absalom. ²As all the people heard of the king's deep grief for his son, the joy of that day's victory was turned into deep sadness. ³They crept back into the town that day as though they were ashamed and had deserted in battle. ⁴The king covered his face with his hands and kept on crying, "O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!"

⁵Then Joab went to the king's room and said to him, "We saved your life today and the lives of your sons, your daughters, and your wives and concubines. Yet you act like this, making us feel ashamed of ourselves. ⁶You seem to love those who hate you and hate those who love you. You have made it clear today that your commanders and troops mean nothing to you. It seems that if Absalom had lived and all of us had died, you would be pleased. ⁷Now go out there and congratulate your troops, for I swear by the LORD that if you don't go out, not a single one of them will remain here tonight. Then you will be worse off than ever before."

⁸So the king went out and took his seat at the town gate, and as the news spread throughout the town that he was there, everyone went to him.

Meanwhile, the Israelites who had supported Absalom fled to their homes. ⁹And throughout all the tribes of Israel there was much discussion and argument going on. The people were saying, "The king rescued us from our enemies and saved us from the Philistines, but Absalom chased him out of the country. ¹⁰Now Absalom, whom we anointed to rule over us, is dead. Why not ask David to come back and be our king again?"

¹¹Then King David sent Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, to say to the elders of Judah, "Why are you the last ones to welcome back the king into his palace? For I have heard that all Israel is ready. ¹²You are my relatives, my own tribe, my own flesh and blood! So why are you the last ones to welcome back the king?" ¹³And David told them to tell Amasa, "Since you are my own flesh and blood, like Joab, may God strike me and even kill me if I do not appoint you as commander of my army in his place."

¹⁴Then Amasa* convinced all the men of Judah, and they responded unanimously. They sent word to the king, "Return to us, and bring back all who are with you."

David's Return to Jerusalem

¹⁵So the king started back to Jerusalem. And when he arrived at the Jordan River, the people of Judah came to Gilgal to meet him and escort him across the river. ¹⁶Shimei son of Gera, the man from Bahurim in Benjamin, hurried across with the men of Judah to welcome King David. ¹⁷A thousand other men from the tribe of Benjamin were with him, including Ziba, the chief servant of the house of Saul, and Ziba's fifteen sons and twenty servants. They rushed down to the Jordan to meet the king. ¹⁸They crossed the shallows of the Jordan to bring the king's household across the river, helping him in every way they could.

David's Mercy to Shimei

As the king was about to cross the river, Shimei fell down before him. ¹⁹"My lord the king, please forgive me," he pleaded. "Forget the terrible thing your servant did when you left Jerusalem. May the king put it out of his mind. ²⁰I know how much I sinned. That is why I have come here today, the very first person in all Israel* to greet my lord the king."

²¹Then Abishai son of Zeruiah said, "Shimei should die, for he cursed the LORD's anointed king!"

²²"Who asked your opinion, you sons of Zeruiah!" David exclaimed. "Why have you become my adversary* today? This is not a day for execution but for celebration! Today I am once again the king of Israel!" ²³Then, turning to Shimei, David vowed, "Your life will be spared."

David's Kindness to Mephibosheth

²⁴Now Mephibosheth,* Saul's grandson, came down from Jerusalem to meet the king. He had not cared for his feet, trimmed his beard, or washed his clothes since the day the king left Jerusalem. ²⁵"Why didn't you come with me, Mephibosheth?" the king asked him.

²⁶Mephibosheth replied, "My lord the king, my servant Ziba deceived me. I told him, 'Saddle my donkey* so I can go with the king.' For as you know I am crippled. ²⁷Ziba has slandered me by saying that I refused to come. But I know that my lord the king is like an angel of God, so do what you think is best. ²⁸All my relatives and I could expect only death from you, my lord, but instead you have honored me by allowing me to eat at your own table! What more can I ask?"

^{19:14} Or David; Hebrew reads he. ^{19:20} Hebrew in the house of Joseph. ^{19:22} Or my prosecutor. ^{19:24} Mephibosheth is another name for Merib-baal. ^{21:16a} Or a descendant of the Rapha; also in 21:18, 20, 22. ^{21:16b} Hebrew 30

²⁹"You've said enough," David replied. "I've decided that you and Ziba will divide your land equally between you."

³⁰"Give him all of it," Mephibosheth said. "I am content just to have you safely back again, my lord the king!"

David's Kindness to Barzillai

³¹Barzillai of Gilead had come down from Rogelim to escort the king across the Jordan. ³²He was very old, about eighty, and very wealthy. He was the one who had provided food for the king during his stay in Mahanaim. ³³"Come across with me and live in Jerusalem," the king said to Barzillai. "I will take care of you there."

³⁴"No," he replied, "I am far too old to go with the king to Jerusalem. ³⁵I am eighty years old today, and I can no longer enjoy anything. Food and wine are no longer tasty, and I can not hear the singers as they sing. I would only be a burden to my lord the king. ³⁶Just to go across the Jordan River with the king is all the honor I need! ³⁷Then let me return again to die in my own town, where my father and mother are buried. But here is your servant, my son Kimham. Let him go with my lord the king and receive whatever you want to give him."

³⁸"Good," the king agreed. "Kimham will go with me. I will help him in any way you would like. And I will do for you anything you want." ³⁹So all the people crossed the Jordan with the king. After David had blessed Barzillai and kissed him, Barzillai returned to his own home.

⁴⁰The king then crossed over to Gilgal, taking Kimham with him. All the troops of Judah and half the troops of Israel escorted the king on his way.

An Argument over the King

⁴¹But all the men of Israel complained to the king, "The men of Judah stole the king and didn't give us the honor of helping take you, your household, and all your men across the Jordan."

⁴²The men of Judah replied, "The king is one of our kinsmen. Why should this make you angry? We have eaten any of the king's food or received any special favor from him."

⁴³"But there are ten tribes in Israel," the others replied. "So we have ten times as much right to the king as you do. What right do you have to treat us with such contempt? Weren't we the first to speak of bringing him back to be king again?" The argument continued back and forth as the men of Judah spoke even more harshly than the men of Israel.

The Revolt of Sheba

20 There happened to be a troublemaker there named Sheba son of Bicri, a man from the tribe of Benjamin. Sheba blew a ram's horn and began to chant:

"Down with the dynasty of David!

We have no interest in the son of Jesse.

Come on, you men of Israel, back to your homes!"

²⁵So all the men of Israel deserted David and followed Sheba son of Bicri. But the men of Judah stayed with the king and escorted him from the Jordan River to Jerusalem.

²⁶When David came to his palace in Jerusalem, he took ten concubines he had left to look after the palace and placed them in seclusion. Their needs were provided for, but he no longer slept with them. So each of them lived there a widow until she died.

²⁷Then the king told Amasa, "Mobilize the army of Judah

in three days, and report back at that time." ²⁸So Amasa went out to notify Judah, but it took him longer than the time he had been given.

²⁹Then David said to Abishai, "Sheba son of Bicri is going to hurt us more than Absalom did. Quick, take my troops and chase after him before he gets into a fortified town where we can't reach him."

³⁰So Abishai and Joab,* together with the king's bodyguard and all the mighty warriors, set out from Jerusalem to chase after Sheba. ³¹As they arrived at the great stone in Gibeon, Amasa met them. Joab was wearing his military tunic with a dagger strapped to his belt. As he stepped forward to greet Amasa, he slipped the dagger from its sheath.*

"How are you, my cousin?" Joab said and took him by the hand with his right hand as though to kiss him. ³²Amasa didn't notice the dagger in his left hand, and Joab stabbed him in the stomach with it so that his insides gushed out onto the ground. Joab did not need to strike again, and Amasa soon died. Joab and his brother Abishai left him lying there and continued after Sheba.

³³One of Joab's young men shouted to Amasa's troops, "If you are for Joab and David, come and follow Joab." ³⁴But Amasa lay in his blood in the middle of the road, and Joab's men saw that everyone was stopping to stare at him. So he pulled him off the road into a field and threw a cloak over him. ³⁵With Amasa's body out of the way, everyone went on with Joab to capture Sheba son of Bicri.

³⁶Meanwhile, Sheba traveled through all the tribes of Israel and eventually came to the town of Abel-beth-maacah. All the members of his own clan, the Bicrites,* assembled for battle and followed him into the town. ³⁷When Joab's men arrived, they attacked Abel-beth-maacah and began building a ramp against the town's fortifications and began battering down the wall. ³⁸But a wise woman in the town called out to Joab, "Listen to me, Joab. Come over here so I can talk to you." ³⁹As he approached, the woman asked, "Are you

David's man?"

"I am," he replied.

So she said, "Listen carefully to your servant."

"I'm listening," he said.

⁴⁰Then she continued, "There used to be a saying, 'If you want to settle an argument, ask advice at the town of Abel.' You are the one who is peace loving and faithful in Israel. But you are destroying an important town in Israel.* Why do you want to devour what belongs to the LORD?"

⁴¹And Joab replied, "Believe me, I don't want to devour or destroy your town! That's not my purpose. All I want is a man named Sheba son of Bicri from the hill country of Benjamin, who has revolted against King David. If you hand over this one man to me, I will leave the town in peace."

⁴²"All right," the woman replied, "we will throw his head over the wall to you." ⁴³Then the woman went to all the people with her wise advice, and they cut off Sheba's head and threw it out to Joab. So he blew the ram's horn and called his troops back from the attack. They all returned to their homes, and Joab returned to the king at Jerusalem.

⁴⁴Now Joab was the commander of the army of Israel. Benaiah son of Jehoiada was captain of the king's bodyguard. Ishmaiah* was in charge of the labor force. Jehoshaphat* was the royal historian. ⁴⁵Sheva was the court secretary. Zadok and Abiathar were the priests. ⁴⁶And Ira, a descendant of Jair, was David's personal priest.

⁴⁷These were the names of the officials who served King David.

⁴⁸These were the names of the officials who served King David.

⁴⁹These were the names of the officials who served King David.

⁵⁰These were the names of the officials who served King David.

⁵¹These were the names of the officials who served King David.

⁵²These were the names of the officials who served King David.

⁵³These were the names of the officials who served King David.

⁵⁴These were the names of the officials who served King David.

⁵⁵These were the names of the officials who served King David.

⁵⁶These were the names of the officials who served King David.

⁵⁷These were the names of the officials who served King David.

⁵⁸These were the names of the officials who served King David.

⁵⁹These were the names of the officials who served King David.

⁶⁰These were the names of the officials who served King David.

⁶¹These were the names of the officials who served King David.

⁶²These were the names of the officials who served King David.

⁶³These were the names of the officials who served King David.

⁶⁴These were the names of the officials who served King David.

⁶⁵These were the names of the officials who served King David.

⁶⁶These were the names of the officials who served King David.

⁶⁷These were the names of the officials who served King David.

⁶⁸These were the names of the officials who served King David.

enough," David replied. "I've decided to divide your land equally between you." "I am content with my share," Mephibosheth said. "I am content to live safely back again, my lord the king!"

Barzillai

Barzillai had come down from Rogelim to escort David across the Jordan. He was very old, about eighty years old. He was the one who had provided food for David and his men when they stayed in Mahanaim. "Come across with me to Jerusalem," the king said to Barzillai. "I will reward you."

Barzillai replied, "I am far too old to go with the king. I am eighty years old today, and I can no longer enjoy food and wine any more. My teeth are as stones, and my strength is as the strength of a stone. I would only be a burden to the king. Just let me go across the Jordan River to my own home. Let me return again to my own home, where my father and mother are. Let me be buried in the tomb of my fathers, and let me receive whatever you want to give me."

Barzillai agreed. "Kimham will go with me and do whatever you would like. And I will do whatever you want." So all the people crossed the Jordan River. After David had blessed Barzillai, he returned to his own home. Kimham crossed over to Gilgal, taking the troops of Judah and half the troops of Benjamin on his way.

King and the Gibeonites

The king of Israel complained to the king of the Gibeonites and didn't give us the honor of our household, and all your men across the Jordan River.

The king of Israel replied, "The king is one of our people. How could this make you angry? We have given you food and received your special favor. You are ten tribes in Israel, the others regard you as much right to the king as we do. You have to treat us with such contempt. Let us speak of bringing him back to his own home. My argument continued back and forth, and he spoke even more harshly than the man before me."

Sheba

Sheba opened to be a troublemaker there. He was a man from the tribe of Benjamin, and he began to chant against the dynasty of David!

He had an interest in the son of Jesse, the king of Israel, and he wanted to overthrow the dynasty of David!

But the men of Judah stayed with him from the Jordan River to Jerusalem. When he came to his palace in Jerusalem, he had left to look after the palace. His men had left to look after the palace. Their needs were provided for. They slept with them. So each of them was satisfied.

Amasa, "Mobilize the army of Israel. Mephibosheth is another name for Merib-baal."

three days, and report back at that time." So Amasa went out to notify Judah, but it took him longer than the time he had been given.

Then David said to Abishai, "Sheba son of Bicri is going to stir up more trouble than Absalom did. Quick, take my troops and chase after him before he gets into a fortified town where we can't reach him."

So Abishai and Joab,* together with the king's bodyguards and all the mighty warriors, set out from Jerusalem after Sheba. As they arrived at the great stone in Gibeon, Amasa met them. Joab was wearing his military tunic with a dagger strapped to his belt. As he stepped forward to greet Amasa, he slipped the dagger from its sheath.*

"How are you, my cousin?" Joab said and took him by the neck with his right hand as though to kiss him. Amasa didn't notice the dagger in his left hand, and Joab stabbed him in the stomach with it so that his insides gushed out onto the ground. Joab did not need to strike again, and Amasa died. Joab and his brother Abishai left him lying there and continued after Sheba.

One of Joab's young men shouted to Amasa's troops, "If you are for Joab and David, come and follow Joab." But they lay in his blood in the middle of the road, and Joab's men saw that everyone was stopping to stare at him. So he turned him off the road into a field and threw a cloak over him. With Amasa's body out of the way, everyone went on to capture Sheba son of Bicri.

Meanwhile, Sheba traveled through all the tribes of Israel and eventually came to the town of Abel-beth-maacah. He gathered the members of his own clan, the Bicitrites,* assembled his men, and followed him into the town. When Joab's men arrived, they attacked Abel-beth-maacah. They built a ramp against the town's fortifications and began battering down the wall. But a wise woman in the town called out to Joab, "Listen to me, Joab. Come over here so I can talk to you." As he approached, the woman asked, "Are you here to devour what belongs to the LORD?"

Joab replied, "Listen carefully to your servant." "I am listening," he said.

Then she continued, "There used to be a saying, 'If you want to settle an argument, ask advice at the town of Abel.' You are a man who is peace loving and faithful in Israel. But you are destroying an important town in Israel. Why do you want to devour what belongs to the LORD?"

Joab replied, "Believe me, I don't want to devour or destroy your town! That's not my purpose. All I want is a woman who has revolted against King David. If you hand me this one man to me, I will leave the town in peace."

"All right," the woman replied, "we will throw his head to you." Then the woman went to all the people with her wise advice, and they cut off Sheba's head and brought it out to Joab. So he blew the ram's horn and called his men back from the attack. They all returned to their tents, and Joab returned to the king at Jerusalem.

Joab was the commander of the army of Israel. Benaiah son of Jehoiada was captain of the king's bodyguard. Dothan was in charge of the labor force. Jehoshaphat was the royal historian. Sheva was the court secretary. Zadok and Abiathar were the priests. And Ira, a servant of Jair, was David's personal priest.

So Joab's men. 20:7b Hebrew the Kerethites and Pelethites; also in 20:23. 20:8 Hebrew As he stepped forward, it fell out. 20:14 As in some versions; Hebrew reads All the Berites. 20:19 Hebrew a town that is a mother in Israel. 20:24 As in Greek version (see also 1 Kgs 4:6; Hebrew reads Adoram. 21:6 As in Greek version (see also 21:9); Hebrew reads at Gibeon of Saul, the chosen of the LORD. 21:7 Mephibosheth is another name for Merib-baal. 21:8 As in a few Hebrew and Greek manuscripts and Syriac version (see also 1 Sam 18:19); most Hebrew manuscripts read 21:16a Or a descendant of the Raphai; also in 21:18, 20, 22. 21:16b Hebrew 300 shekels (3.4 kilograms).

David Avenges the Gibeonites

There was a famine during David's reign that lasted for three years, so David asked the LORD about it. And the LORD said, "The famine has come because Saul and his family are guilty of murdering the Gibeonites."

So the king summoned the Gibeonites. They were not part of Israel but were all that was left of the nation of the Amorites. The people of Israel had sworn not to kill them, but Saul, in his zeal for Israel and Judah, had tried to wipe them out. David asked them, "What can I do for you? How can I make amends so that you will bless the LORD's people again?"

"Well, money can't settle this matter between us and the family of Saul," the Gibeonites replied. "Neither can we demand the life of anyone in Israel."

"What can I do then?" David asked. "Just tell me and I will do it for you."

Then they replied, "It was Saul who planned to destroy us, to keep us from having any place at all in the territory of Israel. So let seven of Saul's sons be handed over to us, and we will execute them before the LORD at Gibeon, on the mountain of the LORD."

"All right," the king said, "I will do it." The king spared Jonathan's son Mephibosheth,* who was Saul's grandson, because of the oath David and Jonathan had sworn before the LORD. But he gave them Saul's two sons Armoni and Mephibosheth, whose mother was Rizpah daughter of Aiah. He also gave them the five sons of Saul's daughter Merab,* the wife of Adriel son of Barzillai from Meholah. The men of Gibeon executed them on the mountain before the LORD. So all seven of them died together at the beginning of the barley harvest.

Then Rizpah daughter of Aiah, the mother of two of the men, spread burlap on a rock and stayed there the entire harvest season. She prevented the scavenger birds from tearing at their bodies during the day and stopped wild animals from eating them at night. When David learned what Rizpah, Saul's concubine, had done, he went to the people of Jabesh-gilead and retrieved the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan. (When the Philistines had killed Saul and Jonathan on Mount Gilboa, the people of Jabesh-gilead stole their bodies from the public square of Beth-shan, where the Philistines had hung them.) So David obtained the bones of Saul and Jonathan, as well as the bones of the men the Gibeonites had executed.

Then the king ordered that they bury the bones in the tomb of Kish, Saul's father, at the town of Zela in the land of Benjamin. After that, God ended the famine in the land.

Battles against Philistine Giants

Once again the Philistines were at war with Israel. And when David and his men were in the thick of battle, David became weak and exhausted. Ishbi-benob was a descendant of the giants*; his bronze spearhead weighed more than seven pounds,* and he was armed with a new sword. He had cornered David and was about to kill him. But Abishai son of Zeruiah came to David's rescue and killed the Philistine. Then David's men declared, "You are not going out to battle with us again! Why risk snuffing out the light of Israel?"

After this, there was another battle against the Philistines at Gob. As they fought, Sibbecai from Hushah killed Saph, another descendant of the giants.

20:7b Hebrew the Kerethites and Pelethites; also in 20:23. 20:8 Hebrew As he stepped forward, it fell out. 20:14 As in some versions; Hebrew reads All the Berites. 20:19 Hebrew a town that is a mother in Israel. 20:24 As in Greek version (see also 1 Kgs 4:6; Hebrew reads Adoram. 21:6 As in Greek version (see also 21:9); Hebrew reads at Gibeon of Saul, the chosen of the LORD. 21:7 Mephibosheth is another name for Merib-baal. 21:8 As in a few Hebrew and Greek manuscripts and Syriac version (see also 1 Sam 18:19); most Hebrew manuscripts read 21:16a Or a descendant of the Raphai; also in 21:18, 20, 22. 21:16b Hebrew 300 shekels (3.4 kilograms).

¹⁹During another battle at Gob, Elhanan son of Jair* from Bethlehem killed the brother of Goliath of Gath.* The handle of his spear was as thick as a weaver's beam!

²⁰In another battle with the Philistines at Gath, they encountered a huge man with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, twenty-four in all, who was also a descendant of the giants. ²¹But when he defied and taunted Israel, he was killed by Jonathan, the son of David's brother Shimea.*

²²These four Philistines were descendants of the giants of Gath, but David and his warriors killed them.

David's Song of Praise

22 David sang this song to the LORD on the day the LORD rescued him from all his enemies and from Saul. ²He sang:

¹"The LORD is my rock, my fortress, and my savior;
³ my God is my rock, in whom I find protection.
He is my shield, the power that saves me,
and my place of safety.

He is my refuge, my savior,
the one who saves me from violence.

⁴ I called on the LORD, who is worthy of praise,
and he saved me from my enemies.

⁵ "The waves of death overwhelmed me;
floods of destruction swept over me.

⁶ The grave* wrapped its ropes around me;
death laid a trap in my path.

⁷ But in my distress I cried out to the LORD;
yes, I cried to my God for help.

He heard me from his sanctuary;
my cry reached his ears.

⁸ "Then the earth quaked and trembled.
The foundations of the heavens shook;
they quaked because of his anger.

⁹ Smoke poured from his nostrils;
fierce flames leaped from his mouth.
Glowing coals blazed forth from him.

¹⁰ He opened the heavens and came down;
dark storm clouds were beneath his feet.

¹¹ Mounted on a mighty angelic being,* he flew,
soaring* on the wings of the wind.

¹² He shrouded himself in darkness,
veiling his approach with dense rain clouds.

¹³ A great brightness shone around him,
and burning coals* blazed forth.

¹⁴ The LORD thundered from heaven;
the voice of the Most High resounded.

¹⁵ He shot arrows and scattered his enemies;
his lightning flashed, and they were confused.

¹⁶ Then at the command of the LORD,
at the blast of his breath,
the bottom of the sea could be seen,
and the foundations of the earth were laid bare.

¹⁷ "He reached down from heaven and rescued me;
he drew me out of deep waters.

¹⁸ He rescued me from my powerful enemies,
from those who hated me and were too strong
for me.

¹⁹ They attacked me at a moment when I was in distress
but the LORD supported me.

²⁰ He led me to a place of safety;
he rescued me because he delights in me.

²¹ The LORD rewarded me for doing right;
he restored me because of my innocence.

²² For I have kept the ways of the LORD;
I have not turned from my God to follow evil.

²³ I have followed all his regulations;
I have never abandoned his decrees.

²⁴ I am blameless before God;
I have kept myself from sin.

²⁵ The LORD rewarded me for doing right.
He has seen my innocence.

²⁶ "To the faithful you show yourself faithful;
to those with integrity you show integrity.

²⁷ To the pure you show yourself pure,
but to the wicked you show yourself hostile.

²⁸ You rescue the humble,
but your eyes watch the proud and humiliate them.

²⁹ O LORD, you are my lamp.
The LORD lights up my darkness.

³⁰ In your strength I can crush an army;
with my God I can scale any wall.

³¹ "God's way is perfect.
All the LORD's promises prove true.
He is a shield for all who look to him for protection.

³² For who is God except the LORD?
Who but our God is a solid rock?

³³ God is my strong fortress,
and he makes my way perfect.

³⁴ He makes me as surefooted as a deer,
enabling me to stand on mountain heights.

³⁵ He trains my hands for battle;
he strengthens my arm to draw a bronze bow.

³⁶ You have given me your shield of victory;
your help* has made me great.

³⁷ You have made a wide path for my feet
to keep them from slipping.

³⁸ "I chased my enemies and destroyed them;
I did not stop until they were conquered.

³⁹ I consumed them;
I struck them down so they did not get up;
they fell beneath my feet.

⁴⁰ You have armed me with strength for the battle;
you have subdued my enemies under my feet.

⁴¹ You placed my foot on their necks.
I have destroyed all who hated me.

⁴² They looked for help, but no one came to their rescue.
They even cried to the LORD, but he refused to answer.

⁴³ I ground them as fine as the dust of the earth;
I trampled them* in the gutter like dirt.

⁴⁴ "You gave me victory over my accusers.
You preserved me as the ruler over nations;
people I don't even know now serve me.

⁴⁵ Foreign nations cringe before me;
as soon as they hear of me, they submit.

⁴⁶ They all lose their courage
and come trembling* from their strongholds.

21:19a As in parallel text at 1 Chr 20:5; Hebrew reads *son of Jaare-oregim*. 21:19b As in parallel text at 1 Chr 20:5; Hebrew reads *killed Goliath of Gath*. 21:21 As in parallel text at 1 Chr 20:7; Hebrew reads *Shimei*, a variant spelling of Shimea. 22:6 Hebrew *Sheol*. 22:11a Hebrew *a cherub*. 22:11b As in some Hebrew manuscripts (see also Ps 18:10); other Hebrew manuscripts read *appearing*. 22:13 Or *and lightning bolts*. 22:36 As in Dead Sea Scrolls and also Ps 18:35; Masoretic Text reads *your answering*. 22:43 As in Dead Sea Scrolls (see also Ps 18:42); Masoretic Text reads *I crushed and trampled them*. 22:46 As in parallel text at Ps 18:45; Hebrew reads *come girding themselves*.

The LORD lives! Praise to my Rock!
Way God, the Rock of my salvation, be exalted!
You are the God who pays back those who harm me;
you bring down the nations under me
and delivers me from my enemies.
You hold me safe beyond the reach of my enemies;
you save me from violent opponents.
For this, O LORD, I will praise you among the nations;
I will sing praises to your name.
You give great victories to your king;
you show unfailing love to your anointed,
to David and all his descendants forever."

David's Last Words

23 These are the last words of David:

"David, the son of Jesse, speaks—
David, the man who was raised up so high,
David, the man anointed by the God of Jacob,
David, the sweet psalmist of Israel.*

The Spirit of the LORD speaks through me;
his words are upon my tongue.

The God of Israel spoke.

The Rock of Israel said to me:

"The one who rules righteously,
who rules in the fear of God,
is like the light of morning at sunrise,
like a morning without clouds,
like the gleaming of the sun
on new grass after rain."

"It is not my family God has chosen?
Yes, he has made an everlasting covenant with me.
His agreement is arranged and guaranteed in every
detail.

He will ensure my safety and success.
But the godless are like thorns to be thrown away,
for they tear the hand that touches them.
We must use iron tools to chop them down;
they will be totally consumed by fire."

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 You are the God who pays back those who harm me;
 You bring down the nations under me
 and delivers me from my enemies.
 You hold me safe beyond the reach of my enemies;
 You save me from violent opponents.
 O LORD, I will praise you among the nations;
 I will sing praises to your name.
 You give great victories to your king;
 You show unfailing love to your anointed,
 O David and all his descendants forever."

23 Last Words

These are the last words of David:
 "David, the son of Jesse, speaks—
 David, the man who was raised up so high,
 the man anointed by the God of Jacob,
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 The Rock of Israel said to me:
 "The one who rules righteously,
 who rules in the fear of God,
 like the light of morning at sunrise,
 like a morning without clouds,
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 The LORD is my family God has chosen?
 He has made an everlasting covenant with me.
 The agreement is arranged and guaranteed in every
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 He will ensure my safety and success.
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23 Mightiest Warriors

These are the names of David's mightiest warriors. The
 Ishobeam the Hacmonite,* who was leader of the
 three mightiest warriors among David's men.
 He used his spear to kill 800 enemy warriors in a single
 rank among the Three was Eleazar son of Dodai,
 a descendant of Ahoah. Once Eleazar and David stood to-
 gether against the Philistines when the entire Israelite army
 fled. He killed Philistines until his hand was too tired
 to hold a sword, and the LORD gave him a great victory that
 the rest of the army did not return until it was time to
 plunder!
 In a rank was Shammah son of Agee from Harar.
 When the Philistines gathered at Lehi and attacked the
 Israelites in a field full of lentils. The Israelite army fled,
 but Shammah* held his ground in the middle of the field
 and struck back the Philistines. So the LORD brought about a

¹³Once during the harvest, when David was at the cave of
 Adullam, the Philistine army was camped in the valley of
 Rephaim. The Three (who were among the Thirty—an elite
 group among David's fighting men) went down to meet him
 there. ¹⁴David was staying in the stronghold at the time, and a
 Philistine detachment had occupied the town of Bethlehem.

¹⁵David remarked longingly to his men, "Oh, how I would
 love some of that good water from the well by the gate in
 Bethlehem." ¹⁶So the Three broke through the Philistine
 lines, drew some water from the well by the gate in Bethle-
 hem, and brought it back to David. But he refused to drink it.
 Instead, he poured it out as an offering to the LORD. ¹⁷"The
 LORD forbid that I should drink this!" he exclaimed. "This
 water is as precious as the blood of these men* who risked
 their lives to bring it to me." So David did not drink it. These
 are examples of the exploits of the Three.

David's Thirty Mighty Men

¹⁸Abishai son of Zeruah, the brother of Joab, was the leader
 of the Thirty.* He once used his spear to kill 300 enemy
 warriors in a single battle. It was by such feats that he be-
 came as famous as the Three. ¹⁹Abishai was the most fa-
 mous of the Thirty* and was their commander, though he
 was not one of the Three.

²⁰There was also Benaiah son of Jehoiada, a valiant war-
 rior* from Kabzeel. He did many heroic deeds, which in-
 cluded killing two champions* of Moab. Another time, on a
 snowy day, he chased a lion down into a pit and killed it.
²¹Once, armed only with a club, he killed a great Egyptian
 warrior who was armed with a spear. Benaiah wrenched the
 spear from the Egyptian's hand and killed him with it.
²²Deeds like these made Benaiah as famous as the Three
 mightiest warriors. ²³He was more honored than the other
 members of the Thirty, though he was not one of the Three.
 And David made him captain of his bodyguard.

²⁴Other members of the Thirty included:

- Asahel, Joab's brother;
- Elhanan son of Dodo from Bethlehem;
- 25 Shammah from Harod;
- Elika from Harod;
- 26 Helez from Pelon*;
- Ira son of Ikkesh from Tekoa;
- 27 Abiezer from Anathoth;
- Sibbecai* from Hushah;
- 28 Zalmon from Ahoah;
- Maharai from Netophah;
- 29 Heled* son of Baanah from Netophah;
- Ithai* son of Ribai from Gibeah (in the land of
 Benjamin);
- 30 Benaiah from Pirathon;
- Hurai* from Nahale-gaash*;
- 31 Abi-albon from Arabah;
- Azmaveth from Bahurim;
- 32 Eliahba from Shaalbon;
- the sons of Jashen;
- Jonathan ³³son of Shagee* from Harar;
- Ahiam son of Sharar from Harar;
- 34 Eliphelet son of Ahasbai from Maacah;
- Eliam son of Ahithophel from Giloh;

*The subject of the songs of Israel; or the favorite of the Strong One of Israel. 23:8a As in parallel text at 1 Chr 11:11; Hebrew reads *Josheb-*
beam the Hacmonite. 23:8b As in Greek and Latin versions (see also 1 Chr 11:11); the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. 23:8c As in some Greek
 versions (see 1 Chr 11:11); the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain, though it might be rendered *the Three*. It was *Adino the Ezrite who killed 800 men*
 (see 1 Chr 11:27). 23:12 Hebrew *he*. 23:17 Hebrew *Shall I drink the blood of these men?* 23:18 As in a few Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac version; most
 manuscripts read *the Three*. 23:19 As in Syriac version; Hebrew reads *the Three*. 23:20a Or *son of Jehoiada, son of Ish-hai*. 23:20b Hebrew *two*
 (see also 1 Chr 11:27). 23:21 As in some Greek manuscripts (see also 1 Chr 11:30); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Heleb*. 23:29b As in
 some Greek manuscripts (see also 1 Chr 11:31); Hebrew reads *Ittai*. 23:30a As in some Greek manuscripts (see also 1 Chr 11:32); Hebrew reads *Hiddai*. 23:30b Or *from the*
 (see also 1 Chr 11:31); Hebrew reads *Jonathan, Shammah*; some Greek manuscripts read *Jonathan son of Shammah*.

1 KINGS

Author Uncertain; some have suggested Jeremiah or a group of prophets
Written Uncertain, possibly shortly after King Jehoiachin's release in 562 B.C.

Content Effective leadership often has more to do with character than with accomplishments. At least that seems to be the case in the book of 1 Kings. The books of 1 and 2 Kings form one book in the Hebrew Bible, covering the period when kings ruled Israel after David's reign. First Kings opens with the death of David, followed by the reign of Solomon and the building of the Temple in Jerusalem. The book then records Solomon's death and the division of the kingdom into northern and southern halves (Israel and Judah). This division resulted from a foolish decision by Solomon's heir, Rehoboam. Despite wise advice from his older advisers, Rehoboam chose to follow a policy of harsh rule, and the northern tribes rebelled. First Kings then begins a chronicle of each king who ruled Israel or Judah, giving him a rating of either good or bad, depending on his faithfulness to God and the covenant. The book closes with a great conflict between Elijah the prophet and Ahab, king of Israel.

David in His Old Age

King David was now very old, and no matter how many blankets covered him, he could not keep warm. ²So his servants told him, "Let us find a young virgin to wait on you and look after you, my lord. She will lie in your arms and keep you warm."

So they searched throughout the land of Israel for a beautiful girl, and they found Abishag from Shunem and brought her to the king. ⁴The girl was very beautiful, and she looked after the king and took care of him. But the king had no sexual relations with her.

Adonijah Claims the Throne

About that time David's son Adonijah, whose mother was Bathsheba, began boasting, "I will make myself king." So he gathered fifty men to run in front of him. ⁶Now his father, King David, had never disciplined him at any time, even by rebuke. ⁷"Why are you doing that?" Adonijah had been born to King David after Absalom, and he was very handsome.

Adonijah took Joab son of Zeruiah and Abiathar the priest into his confidence, and they agreed to help him become king. ⁸But Zadok the priest, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, the prophet, Shimei, Rei, and David's personal bodyguard refused to support Adonijah.

Adonijah went to the Stone of Zoheleth* near the spring of Rogel, where he sacrificed sheep, cattle, and fattened oxen. He invited all his brothers—the other sons of King David—and all the royal officials of Judah. ¹⁰But he did not invite Nathan the prophet or Benaiah or the king's bodyguard or his brother Solomon.

Then Nathan went to Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, and asked her, "Haven't you heard that Haggith's son, Adonijah, has made himself king, and our lord David doesn't know about it? ¹²If you want to save your own life and the life of your son Solomon, follow my advice. ¹³Go at once to King David and say to him, 'My lord the king, didn't you make a vow and say to me, "Your son Solomon will surely be king and will sit on my throne"? Why then has Adonijah become king?' ¹⁴And while you are still talking to him, I will come and confirm everything you have said." ¹⁵So Bathsheba went into the king's bedroom. (He was lying down now, and Abishag was taking care of him.) ¹⁶Bathsheba bowed down before the king.

"What can I do for you?" he asked her.

¹⁷She replied, "My lord, you made a vow before the LORD your God when you said to me, 'Your son Solomon will surely be the next king and will sit on my throne.' ¹⁸But instead, Adonijah has made himself king, and my lord the king does not even know about it. ¹⁹He has sacrificed many cattle, fattened calves, and sheep, and he has invited all the king's sons to attend the celebration. He also invited Abiathar the priest and Joab, the commander of the army. But he did not invite your servant Solomon. ²⁰And now, my lord the king, all Israel is waiting for you to announce who will become king after you. ²¹If you do not act, my son Solomon and I will be treated as criminals as soon as my lord the king has died."

²²While she was still speaking with the king, Nathan the prophet arrived. ²³The king's officials told him, "Nathan the prophet is here to see you."

Nathan went in and bowed before the king with his face to the ground. ²⁴Nathan asked, "My lord the king, have you decided that Adonijah will be the next king and that he will sit on your throne? ²⁵Today he has sacrificed many cattle, fattened calves, and sheep, and he has invited all the king's sons to attend the celebration. He also invited the commanders of the army and Abiathar the priest. They are feasting and drinking with him and shouting, 'Long live King Adonijah!' ²⁶But he did not invite me or Zadok the priest or Benaiah or your servant Solomon. ²⁷Has my lord the king really done this without letting any of his officials know who should be the next king?"

David Makes Solomon King

²⁸King David responded, "Call Bathsheba!" So she came back in and stood before the king. ²⁹And the king repeated his vow: "As surely as the LORD lives, who has rescued me from every danger, ³⁰your son Solomon will be the next king and will sit on my throne this very day, just as I vowed to you before the LORD, the God of Israel."

³¹Then Bathsheba bowed down with her face to the ground before the king and exclaimed, "May my lord King David live forever!"

³²Then King David ordered, "Call Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah son of Jehoiada." When they came into the king's presence, ³³the king said to them, "Take Solomon and my officials down to Gihon Spring. Solomon is to ride on my own mule. ³⁴There Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet are to anoint him king over Israel. Blow the

*The name of the Stone of Zoheleth is uncertain; the Greek version supports reading Zoheleth as a proper name.

ram's horn and shout, 'Long live King Solomon!' ³⁵Then escort him back here, and he will sit on my throne. He will succeed me as king, for I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and Judah."

³⁶"Amen!" Benaiah son of Jehoiada replied. "May the LORD, the God of my lord the king, decree that it happen. ³⁷And may the LORD be with Solomon as he has been with you, my lord the king, and may he make Solomon's reign even greater than yours!"

³⁸So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and the king's bodyguard* took Solomon down to Gihon Spring, with Solomon riding on King David's own mule. ³⁹There Zadok the priest took the flask of olive oil from the sacred tent and anointed Solomon with the oil. Then they sounded the ram's horn and all the people shouted, "Long live King Solomon!" ⁴⁰And all the people followed Solomon into Jerusalem, playing flutes and shouting for joy. The celebration was so joyous and noisy that the earth shook with the sound.

⁴¹Adonijah and his guests heard the celebrating and shouting just as they were finishing their banquet. When Joab heard the sound of the ram's horn, he asked, "What's going on? Why is the city in such an uproar?"

⁴²And while he was still speaking, Jonathan son of Abiathar the priest arrived. "Come in," Adonijah said to him, "for you are a good man. You must have good news."

⁴³"Not at all!" Jonathan replied. "Our lord King David has just declared Solomon king! ⁴⁴The king sent him down to Gihon Spring with Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah son of Jehoiada, protected by the king's bodyguard. They had him ride on the king's own mule. ⁴⁵and Zadok and Nathan have anointed him at Gihon Spring as the new king. They have just returned, and the whole city is celebrating and rejoicing. That's what all the noise is about. ⁴⁶What's more, Solomon is now sitting on the royal throne as king. ⁴⁷And all the royal officials have gone to King David and congratulated him, saying, 'May your God make Solomon's reign even greater than your own, and may Solomon's reign be even greater than yours!' Then the king bowed his head in worship as he lay in his bed. ⁴⁸and he said, 'Praise the LORD, the God of Israel, who today has chosen a successor to sit on my throne while I am still alive to see it.'"

⁴⁹Then all of Adonijah's guests jumped up in panic from the banquet table and quickly scattered. ⁵⁰Adonijah was afraid of Solomon, so he rushed to the sacred tent and grabbed on to the horns of the altar. ⁵¹Word soon reached Solomon that Adonijah had seized the horns of the altar in fear, and that he was pleading, "Let King Solomon swear today that he will not kill me!"

⁵²Solomon replied, "If he proves himself to be loyal, not a hair on his head will be touched. But if he makes trouble, he will die." ⁵³So King Solomon summoned Adonijah, and they brought him down from the altar. He came and bowed respectfully before King Solomon, who dismissed him, saying, "Go on home."

David's Final Instructions to Solomon

2 As the time of King David's death approached, he gave this charge to his son Solomon:

²I am going where everyone on earth must someday go. Take courage and be a man. ³Observe the requirements of the LORD your God, and follow all his ways. Keep the decrees, commands, regulations, and laws written in the Law of Moses so that you will be successful in all you do and

^{1:38} Hebrew the Kerethites and Pelethites; also in 1:44. ^{2:5a} Or He murdered them during a time of peace as revenge for deaths they had caused in war. ^{2:5b} As in some Greek and Old Latin manuscripts; Hebrew reads with the blood of war. ^{2:6} Hebrew don't let his white head go down to Sheol in peace. ^{2:9} Hebrew how to bring his white head down to Sheol in blood.

wherever you go. ⁴If you do this, then the LORD will keep the promise he made to me. He told me, 'If your descendants live as they should and follow me faithfully with all the heart and soul, one of them will always sit on the throne of Israel.'

⁵And there is something else. You know what Joab son of Zeruiah did to me when he murdered my two army commanders, Abner son of Ner and Amasa son of Jether. He pretended that it was an act of war, but it was done in a time of peace,* staining his belt and sandals with innocent blood. ⁶Do with him what you think best, but don't let him grow old and go to his grave in peace.*

⁷Be kind to the sons of Barzillai of Gilead. Make them permanent guests at your table, for they took care of me when I fled from your brother Absalom.

⁸And remember Shimei son of Gera, the man from Beer-sheva in Benjamin. He cursed me with a terrible curse as I was fleeing to Mahanaim. When he came down to meet me at the Jordan River, I swore by the LORD that I would not kill him. ⁹But that oath does not make him innocent. You are a wise man, and you will know how to arrange a bloody death for him.*

¹⁰Then David died and was buried with his ancestors in the City of David. ¹¹David had reigned over Israel for forty years, seven of them in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem. ¹²Solomon became king and sat on the throne of David his father, and his kingdom was firmly established.

Solomon Establishes His Rule

¹³One day Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith, came to Bathsheba, Solomon's mother. "Have you come with peaceful intentions?" she asked him.

"Yes," he said, "I come in peace. ¹⁴In fact, I have a favor to ask of you."

"What is it?" she asked.

¹⁵He replied, "As you know, the kingdom was rightfully mine; all Israel wanted me to be the next king. But the tables were turned, and the kingdom went to my brother instead for that is the way the LORD wanted it. ¹⁶So now I have one favor to ask of you. Please don't turn me down."

"What is it?" she asked.

¹⁷He replied, "Speak to King Solomon on my behalf. I know he will do anything you request. Ask him to let me marry Abishag, the girl from Shunem."

¹⁸"All right," Bathsheba replied. "I will speak to the king for you."

¹⁹So Bathsheba went to King Solomon to speak on Adonijah's behalf. The king rose from his throne to meet her, and he bowed down before her. When he sat down on his throne again, the king ordered that a throne be brought for his mother, and she sat at his right hand.

²⁰"I have one small request to make of you," she said. "I hope you won't turn me down."

"What is it, my mother?" he asked. "You know I won't refuse you."

²¹"Then let your brother Adonijah marry Abishag, the girl from Shunem," she replied.

²²"How can you possibly ask me to give Abishag to Adonijah?" King Solomon demanded. "You might as well ask me to give him the kingdom! You know that he is my older brother, and that he has Abiathar the priest and Joab son of Zeruiah on his side."

²³Then King Solomon made a vow before the LORD: "If God strike me and even kill me if Adonijah has not

sworn with this request. ²⁴The LORD has confirmed me and placed me on the throne of my father, David; he has established my dynasty as he promised. So as surely as the LORD lives, Adonijah will die this very day!" ²⁵So King Solomon ordered Benaiah son of Jehoiada to execute him, and Adonijah was put to death.

²⁶Then the king said to Abiathar the priest, "Go back to your home in Anathoth. You deserve to die, but I will not kill you now, because you carried the Ark of the Sovereign LORD from David my father and you shared all his hardships." ²⁷So the king deposed Abiathar from his position as priest of the LORD, thereby fulfilling the prophecy the LORD had spoken at Shiloh concerning the descendants of Eli.

Joab had not joined Absalom's earlier rebellion, but he had joined Adonijah's rebellion. So when Joab heard about Adonijah's death, he ran to the sacred tent of the LORD and grabbed on to the horns of the altar. ²⁹When this was reported to King Solomon, he sent Benaiah son of Jehoiada to execute him.

Benaiah went to the sacred tent of the LORD and said to the king, "The king orders you to come out!"

But Joab answered, "No, I will die here."

So Benaiah returned to the king and told him what Joab had said.

"Do as he said," the king replied. "Kill him there beside the altar and bury him. This will remove the guilt of Joab's senseless murders from me and from my father's family. The LORD will repay him* for the murders of two men who were more righteous and better than he. For my father knew about the deaths of Abner son of Ner, commander of the army of Israel, and of Amasa son of Jether, commander of the army of Judah. ³³May their blood be on Joab and on his descendants forever, and may the LORD grant peace to David, his descendants, his dynasty, and his kingdom."

So Benaiah son of Jehoiada returned to the sacred tent and killed Joab, and he was buried at his home in the wilderness. ³⁵Then the king appointed Benaiah to command the army in place of Joab, and he installed Zadok the priest to replace the place of Abiathar.

The king then sent for Shimei and told him, "Build a house here in Jerusalem and live there. But don't step out of the city to go anywhere else. ³⁷On the day you so much as cross the Kidron Valley, you will surely die; and your blood will be on your own head."

Shimei replied, "Your sentence is fair; I will do whatever my lord the king commands." So Shimei lived in Jerusalem for a long time.

But three years later two of Shimei's slaves ran away to Achish son of Maacah of Gath. When Shimei learned of their escape, ⁴⁰he saddled his donkey and went to Gath to search for them. When he found them, he brought them back to Jerusalem.

Solomon heard that Shimei had left Jerusalem and had returned to Gath and returned. ⁴²So the king sent for Shimei and demanded, "Didn't I make you swear by the LORD and warn you not to go anywhere else or you would surely die? And you replied, 'The sentence is fair; I will do as you say.' ⁴³Then why haven't you kept your oath to the LORD and obeyed my command?"

The king also said to Shimei, "You certainly remember the wicked things you did to my father, David. May the LORD now bring that evil on your own head. ⁴⁵But may I, Solomon, receive the LORD's blessings, and may one of my descendants always sit on this throne in the presence of the LORD. I will return his blood on his own head."

is, then the LORD will keep me. If your descendants follow me faithfully with all their hearts, they will always sit on the throne of Israel.

15 You know what Joab son of Achish did to me. He murdered my two army commanders—Abner son of Nechbi and Amasa son of Jether. He did this to me, but it was done in a time of peace. I washed my sandals with innocent blood, but don't let him grow old.

16 Barzillai of Gilead. Make them able, for they took care of me when I was in flight from Absalom.

17 I have made a vow before the LORD that I would not let me make him innocent. You must now arrange a bloody atonement for him.

18 He was buried with his ancestors in the City of David. He reigned over Israel for forty years and thirty-three in Jerusalem. Now he sat on the throne of David, and his kingdom was firmly established.

Rule

19 His mother was Haggith, came from Gath. "Have you come with peace?"

20 "In fact, I have a favor to ask of you."

21 "What is it?"

22 "The kingdom was divided between me and my brother Adonijah. I wanted it. So now I have a favor to ask of you. Don't turn me down."

23 "I will speak to the king on your behalf. He will do what you request. Ask him to let you live in Shunem."

24 "I will speak to the king on your behalf. He will do what you request. Ask him to let you live in Shunem."

25 "I will speak to the king on your behalf. He will do what you request. Ask him to let you live in Shunem."

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38 "I will speak to the king on your behalf. He will do what you request. Ask him to let you live in Shunem."

39 "I will speak to the king on your behalf. He will do what you request. Ask him to let you live in Shunem."

40 "I will speak to the king on your behalf. He will do what you request. Ask him to let you live in Shunem."

24 The LORD has confirmed me and placed me on the throne of my father, David; he has established my dynasty as he promised. So as surely as the LORD lives, Adonijah will die this very day!" 25 So King Solomon ordered Benaiah son of Jehoiada to execute him, and Adonijah was put to death.

26 Then the king said to Abiathar the priest, "Go back to your home in Anathoth. You deserve to die, but I will not kill you, because you carried the Ark of the Sovereign LORD with David my father and you shared all his hardships." 27 So Solomon deposed Abiathar from his position as priest of the LORD, thereby fulfilling the prophecy the LORD had spoken at Shiloh concerning the descendants of Eli.

28 Joab had not joined Absalom's earlier rebellion, but he had sided with Adonijah's rebellion. So when Joab heard about Absalom's death, he ran to the sacred tent of the LORD and stood on the horns of the altar. 29 When this was reported to King Solomon, he sent Benaiah son of Jehoiada to kill him.

30 Benaiah went to the sacred tent of the LORD and said to the king, "The king orders you to come out!"

31 Joab answered, "No, I will die here."

32 Benaiah returned to the king and told him what Joab had said.

33 "Do as he said," the king replied. "Kill him there beside the altar and bury him. This will remove the guilt of Joab's sins from me and from my father's family. The LORD will repay him* for the murders of two men who were more righteous and better than he. For my father knew about the deaths of Abner son of Ner, commander of the army of Israel, and of Amasa son of Jether, commander of the army of Judah. 34 May their blood be on Joab and on his descendants forever, and may the LORD grant peace to David, his descendants, his dynasty, and his kingdom."

35 Benaiah son of Jehoiada returned to the sacred tent of the LORD, and he was buried at his home in the wilderness. 36 Then the king appointed Benaiah to command the army in place of Joab, and he installed Zadok the priest to succeed Abiathar.

37 The king then sent for Shimei and told him, "Build a house here in Jerusalem and live there. But don't step out of the city to go anywhere else. 38 On the day you so much as leave the Kidron Valley, you will surely die; and your blood will be on your own head."

39 Shimei replied, "Your sentence is fair; I will do whatever the king commands." So Shimei lived in Jerusalem a long time.

40 Three years later two of Shimei's slaves ran away to Gath to the Cushite son of Maacah of Gath. When Shimei learned of this, he saddled his donkey and went to Gath to get them. When he found them, he brought them back to Jerusalem.

41 When Solomon heard that Shimei had left Jerusalem and had returned to Gath, he sent for Shimei and said, "Didn't I make you swear by the LORD and warn you not to go anywhere else or you would surely die? And now you have broken the oath. The sentence is fair; I will do as you say." 42 Then Solomon said to Shimei, "You kept your oath to the LORD and obeyed my commands."

43 The king also said to Shimei, "You certainly remember the things you did to my father, David. May the LORD bring that evil on your own head. 44 But may I, Solomon, receive the LORD's blessings, and may one of my descendants always sit on this throne in the presence of the LORD, and may he return his blood on his own head."

45 Then, at the king's command, Benaiah son of Jehoiada took Shimei outside and killed him.

46 So the kingdom was now firmly in Solomon's grip.

Solomon Asks for Wisdom

3 Solomon made an alliance with Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and married one of his daughters. He brought her to live in the City of David until he could finish building his palace and the Temple of the LORD and the wall around the city. 2 At that time the people of Israel sacrificed their offerings at local places of worship, for a temple honoring the name of the LORD had not yet been built.

3 Solomon loved the LORD and followed all the decrees of his father, David, except that Solomon, too, offered sacrifices and burned incense at the local places of worship. 4 The most important of these places of worship was at Gibeon, so the king went there and sacrificed 1,000 burnt offerings. 5 That night the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream, and God said, "What do you want? Ask, and I will give it to you!"

6 Solomon replied, "You showed faithful love to your servant my father, David, because he was honest and true and faithful to you. And you have continued your faithful love to him today by giving him a son to sit on his throne."

7 "Now, O LORD my God, you have made me king instead of my father, David, but I am like a little child who doesn't know his way around. 8 And here I am in the midst of your own chosen people, a nation so great and numerous they cannot be counted! 9 Give me an understanding heart so that I can govern your people well and know the difference between right and wrong. For who by himself is able to govern this great people of yours?"

10 The LORD was pleased that Solomon had asked for wisdom. 11 So God replied, "Because you have asked for wisdom in governing my people with justice and have not asked for a long life or wealth or the death of your enemies— 12 I will give you what you asked for! I will give you a wise and understanding heart such as no one else has had or ever will have! 13 And I will also give you what you did not ask for—riches and fame! No other king in all the world will be compared to you for the rest of your life! 14 And if you follow me and obey my decrees and my commands as your father, David, did, I will give you a long life."

15 Then Solomon woke up and realized it had been a dream. He returned to Jerusalem and stood before the Ark of the Lord's Covenant, where he sacrificed burnt offerings and peace offerings. Then he invited all his officials to a great banquet.

Solomon Judges Wisely

16 Some time later two prostitutes came to the king to have an argument settled. 17 "Please, my lord," one of them began, "this woman and I live in the same house. I gave birth to a baby while she was with me in the house. 18 Three days later this woman also had a baby. We were alone; there were only two of us in the house."

19 "But her baby died during the night when she rolled over on it. 20 Then she got up in the night and took my son from beside me while I was asleep. She laid her dead child in my arms and took mine to sleep beside her. 21 And in the morning when I tried to nurse my son, he was dead! But when I looked more closely in the morning light, I saw that it wasn't my son at all."

22 Then the other woman interrupted, "It certainly was your son, and the living child is mine."

"No," the first woman said, "the living child is mine, and

the dead one is yours." And so they argued back and forth before the king.

²³Then the king said, "Let's get the facts straight. Both of you claim the living child is yours, and each says that the dead one belongs to the other. ²⁴All right, bring me a sword." So a sword was brought to the king.

²⁵Then he said, "Cut the living child in two, and give half to one woman and half to the other!"

²⁶Then the woman who was the real mother of the living child, and who loved him very much, cried out, "Oh no, my lord! Give her the child—please do not kill him!"

But the other woman said, "All right, he will be neither yours nor mine; divide him between us!"

²⁷Then the king said, "Do not kill the child, but give him to the woman who wants him to live, for she is his mother!"

²⁸When all Israel heard the king's decision, the people were in awe of the king, for they saw the wisdom God had given him for rendering justice.

Solomon's Officials and Governors

4 King Solomon now ruled over all Israel, ²and these were his high officials:

- Azariah son of Zadok was the priest.
 - ³ Elihoreph and Ahijah, the sons of Shisha, were court secretaries.
 - Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was the royal historian.
 - ⁴ Benaiah son of Jehoiada was commander of the army. Zadok and Abiathar were priests.
 - ⁵ Azariah son of Nathan was in charge of the district governors.
 - Zabud son of Nathan, a priest, was a trusted adviser to the king.
 - ⁶ Ahishar was manager of the palace property. Adoniram son of Abda was in charge of the labor force.
- ⁷Solomon also had twelve district governors who were over all Israel. They were responsible for providing food for the king's household. Each of them arranged provisions for one month of the year. ⁸These are the names of the twelve governors:

- Ben-hur, in the hill country of Ephraim.
- ⁹ Ben-deker, in Makaz, Shaalvim, Beth-shemesh, and Elon-bethhanan.
- ¹⁰ Ben-hesed, in Arubboth, including Socoh and all the land of Hephher.
- ¹¹ Ben-abinadab, in all of Naphtali-dor.* (He was married to Taphath, one of Solomon's daughters.)
- ¹² Baana son of Ahilud, in Taanach and Megiddo, all of Beth-shan* near Zarethan below Jezreel, and all the territory from Beth-shan to Abel-meholah and over to Jokmeam.
- ¹³ Ben-geber, in Ramoth-gilead, including the Towns of Jair (named for Jair of the tribe of Manasseh*) in Gilead, and in the Argob region of Bashan, including sixty large fortified towns with bronze bars on their gates.
- ¹⁴ Ahinadab son of Iddo, in Mahanaim.
- ¹⁵ Ahimaaz, in Naphtali. (He was married to Basemath, another of Solomon's daughters.)
- ¹⁶ Baana son of Hushai, in Asher and in Aloth.
- ¹⁷ Jehoshaphat son of Paruah, in Issachar.

4:11 Hebrew *Naphath-dor*, a variant spelling of Naphtali-dor. 4:12 Hebrew *Beth-shean*, a variant spelling of Beth-shan; also in 4:12b. 4:13 Hebrew *Jair son of Manasseh*; compare 1 Chr 2:22. 4:19a Greek version reads *Gad*; compare 4:13. 4:19b As in some Greek manuscripts; Hebrew lacks *Judah*. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. 4:21a Verses 4:21-34 are numbered 5:1-14 in Hebrew text. 4:21b Hebrew *the river*; also in 4:24. 4:22 Hebrew *30 cors* [5.5 kiloliters] of choice flour and *60 cors* [11 kiloliters] of meal. 4:23 Or *and fattened geese*. 4:25 Hebrew *each family lives in its own grapevine and under its own fig tree*. 4:26a As in some Greek manuscripts (see also 2 Chr 9:25); Hebrew reads *40,000*. 4:26b Or *12,000 charioteers*. 5:1 Verses 5:1-18 are numbered 5:15-32 in Hebrew text.

- ¹⁸ Shimei son of Ela, in Benjamin.
 - ¹⁹ Geber son of Uri, in the land of Gilead,* including the territories of King Sihon of the Amorites and King Heshbon of Bashan.
- There was also one governor over the land of Judah.*

Solomon's Prosperity and Wisdom

²⁰The people of Judah and Israel were as numerous as sand on the seashore. They were very contented, with plenty to eat and drink. ²¹Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates River* in the north to the land of the Philistines and the border of Egypt in the south. The conquered peoples of those lands sent tribute money to Solomon and continued to serve him throughout his lifetime.

²²The daily food requirements for Solomon's palace were 150 bushels of choice flour and 300 bushels of meal, ²³also 10 oxen from the fattening pens, 20 pasture-cattle, 100 sheep or goats, as well as deer, gazelles, roe deer and choice poultry.*

²⁴Solomon's dominion extended over all the kingdoms west of the Euphrates River, from Tiphseh to Gaza, and there was peace on all his borders. ²⁵During the lifetime of Solomon, all of Judah and Israel lived in peace and safety. And from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south, every family had its own home and garden.*

²⁶Solomon had 4,000* stalls for his chariot horses, and he had 12,000 horses.*

²⁷The district governors faithfully provided food for King Solomon and his court; each made sure nothing was lacking during the month assigned to him. ²⁸They also brought the necessary barley and straw for the royal horses in the stables.

²⁹God gave Solomon very great wisdom and understanding, and knowledge as vast as the sands of the seashore. ³⁰In fact, his wisdom exceeded that of all the wise men of the East and the wise men of Egypt. ³¹He was wiser than anyone else, including Ethan the Ezrahite and the wise men of Mahol—Heman, Calcol, and Darda. His fame spread throughout all the surrounding nations. ³²He composed some 3,000 proverbs and wrote 1,005 songs. ³³He could speak with authority about all kinds of plants, from the cedar of Lebanon to the tiny hyssop that grows from cracks in a wall. He could also speak about animals, birds, and reptiles, and fish. ³⁴And kings from every nation sent ambassadors to listen to the wisdom of Solomon.

Preparations for Building the Temple

5 ¹*King Hiram of Tyre had always been a loyal friend of David. When Hiram learned that David's son Solomon was the new king of Israel, he sent ambassadors to congratulate him.

²Then Solomon sent this message back to Hiram:

³"You know that my father, David, was not able to build a Temple to honor the name of the LORD his God because of the many wars waged against him by the surrounding nations. He could not build until the LORD gave him victory over all his enemies. ⁴But now the LORD my God has given me peace on every side; I have no enemies, and all is well. ⁵So I am planning to build a Temple to honor the name of the LORD my God, just as he had instructed my father, David. For the LORD

has said, "Your son, whom I will place on your throne, will build the Temple to honor my name."

"Therefore, please command that cedars from Lebanon be cut for me. Let my men work alongside yours, and I will pay your men whatever wages you ask. ⁷For you know, there is no one among us who can cut cedar like you Sidonians!"

When Hiram received Solomon's message, he was very pleased and said, "Praise the LORD today for giving David a son to be king of the great nation of Israel." ⁸Then he sent his men to reply to Solomon:

"I have received your message, and I will supply all the cedar and cypress timber you need. ⁹My servants will be cutting the logs from the Lebanon mountains to the Mediterranean Sea* and make them into rafts and float them along the coast to whatever place you choose. ¹⁰When we will break the rafts apart so you can carry the logs away. You can pay me by supplying me with food for my household."

Hiram supplied as much cedar and cypress timber as Solomon desired. ¹¹In return, Solomon sent him an annual payment of 100,000 bushels* of wheat for his household and 110,000 gallons* of pure olive oil. ¹²So the LORD gave wisdom to Solomon, just as he had promised. And Hiram and Solomon made a formal alliance of peace.

Then King Solomon conscripted a labor force of 10,000 men from all Israel. ¹⁴He sent them to Lebanon in groups of 10,000 every month, so that each man would be one month in Lebanon and two months at home. Adoniram was in charge of this labor force. ¹⁵Solomon also had 10,000 common laborers, 80,000 quarry workers in the hill country, ¹⁶and 3,600* foremen to supervise the work. ¹⁷At the king's command, they quarried large blocks of high-quality stone and shaped them to make the foundation of the Temple. ¹⁸Men from the city of Gebal helped Solomon's and Hiram's builders prepare the timber and stone for the Temple.

Solomon Builds the Temple

¹It was in midspring, in the month of Ziv,* during the fourth year of Solomon's reign, that he began to construct the Temple of the LORD. This was 480 years after the people of Israel were rescued from their slavery in the land of Egypt.

The Temple that King Solomon built for the LORD was 60 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 45 feet high.* ³The entry at the front of the Temple was 30 feet* wide, running across the entire width of the Temple. It projected outward from the front of the Temple. ⁴Solomon also made recessed windows throughout the Temple.

He built a complex of rooms against the outer walls of the Temple, all the way around the sides and rear of the Temple. ⁶The complex was three stories high, the bottom story being 7½ feet wide, the second floor 9 feet wide, and the top floor 10½ feet wide.* The rooms were connected to the walls of the Temple by beams resting on ledges built out from the wall. So the beams were not inserted into the walls themselves.

5:11a Hebrew *20,000 cors* [3,640 kiloliters]. 5:11b As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *20 cors*, about 800 gallons or 3.6 kiloliters in volume. 5:16 As in some Greek versions; Hebrew reads *It was in the month of Ziv, which is the second month*. This month of the ancient calendar is the month of the year. 5:20 Hebrew *60 cubits* [27.6 meters] long, *20 cubits* [9.2 meters] wide, and *30 cubits* [13.7 meters] high. 5:21 Hebrew *10 cubits* [4.6 meters]. 5:22 Hebrew *the bottom floor being 7 cubits* [3.2 meters] wide. 5:23 Hebrew *the top floor being 10 cubits* [4.6 meters] wide. 5:24 Hebrew *the bottom floor being 7 cubits* [3.2 meters] wide. 5:25 Hebrew *the top floor being 10 cubits* [4.6 meters] wide. 5:26 Hebrew *the bottom floor being 7 cubits* [3.2 meters] wide. 5:27 Hebrew *the top floor being 10 cubits* [4.6 meters] wide. 5:28 Hebrew *the bottom floor being 7 cubits* [3.2 meters] wide. 5:29 Hebrew *the top floor being 10 cubits* [4.6 meters] wide. 5:30 Hebrew *the bottom floor being 7 cubits* [3.2 meters] wide. 5:31 Hebrew *the top floor being 10 cubits* [4.6 meters] wide. 5:32 Hebrew *the bottom floor being 7 cubits* [3.2 meters] wide. 5:33 Hebrew *the top floor being 10 cubits* [4.6 meters] wide. 5:34 Hebrew *the 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Your son, whom I will place on your throne, will build the Temple to honor my name.⁷

⁸Therefore, please command that cedars from Lebanon be cut for me. Let my men work alongside yours, and I will pay your men whatever wages you ask. You know, there is no one among us who can cut timber like you Sidonians!⁹

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5:11a Hebrew 20,000 cors [3,640 kiloliters]. 5:11b As in Greek version, which reads 20,000 baths [420 kiloliters] (see also 2 Chr 2:25). Hebrew reads 20 cors, about 800 gallons or 3.6 kiloliters in volume. 5:16 As in some Greek manuscripts (see also 2 Chr 2:2, 18); Hebrew reads 3,300. It was in the month of Ziv, which is the second month. This month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar usually occurs within the months of April and May. 6:2 Hebrew 60 cubits [27.6 meters] long, 20 cubits [9.2 meters] wide, and 30 cubits [13.8 meters] high. 6:3a Hebrew 20 cubits [9.2 meters]; 6:3b Hebrew 10 cubits [4.6 meters]. 6:6 Hebrew the bottom floor being 5 cubits [2.3 meters] wide, the second floor 6 cubits [2.8 meters]; the top floor 7 cubits [3.2 meters] wide. 6:8 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads middle floor. 6:10 Hebrew 5 cubits [2.3 meters]. 6:17 Hebrew 18.4 meters. 6:20 Or overlaid the altar with cedar. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. 6:21 Or to draw curtains across. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. 6:23a Or pine; Hebrew reads oil tree; also in 6:31, 33. 6:23b Hebrew 10 cubits [4.6 meters]; also in 6:24, 25. 6:24 Hebrew 40,000. 4:26b Or 70,000.

The stones used in the construction of the Temple were finished at the quarry, so there was no sound of hammer, ax, or any other iron tool at the building site.

⁸The entrance to the bottom floor* was on the south side of the Temple. There were winding stairs going up to the second floor, and another flight of stairs between the second and third floors.⁹ After completing the Temple structure, Solomon put in a ceiling made of cedar beams and planks.¹⁰ As already stated, he built a complex of rooms on three sides of the building, attached to the Temple walls by cedar timbers. Each story of the complex was 7½ feet* high.

¹¹Then the LORD gave this message to Solomon:¹² "Concerning this Temple you are building, if you keep all my decrees and regulations and obey all my commands, I will fulfill through you the promise I made to your father, David. I will live among the Israelites and will never abandon my people Israel."

The Temple's Interior

¹⁴So Solomon finished building the Temple.¹⁵ The entire inside, from floor to ceiling, was paneled with wood. He paneled the walls and ceilings with cedar, and he used planks of cypress for the floors.¹⁶ He partitioned off an inner sanctuary—the Most Holy Place—at the far end of the Temple. It was 30 feet deep and was paneled with cedar from floor to ceiling.¹⁷ The main room of the Temple, outside the Most Holy Place, was 60 feet* long.¹⁸ Cedar paneling completely covered the stone walls throughout the Temple, and the paneling was decorated with carvings of gourds and open flowers.

¹⁹He prepared the inner sanctuary at the far end of the Temple, where the Ark of the LORD's Covenant would be placed.²⁰ This inner sanctuary was 30 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 30 feet high. He overlaid the inside with solid gold. He also overlaid the altar made of cedar.*²¹ Then Solomon overlaid the rest of the Temple's interior with solid gold, and he made gold chains to protect the entrance* to the Most Holy Place.²² So he finished overlaying the entire Temple with gold, including the altar that belonged to the Most Holy Place.

²³He made two cherubim of wild olive* wood, each 15 feet* tall, and placed them in the inner sanctuary.²⁴ The wingspan of each of the cherubim was 15 feet, each wing being 7½ feet* long.²⁵ The two cherubim were identical in shape and size;²⁶ each was 15 feet tall.²⁷ He placed them side by side in the inner sanctuary of the Temple. Their outspread wings reached from wall to wall, while their inner wings touched at the center of the room.²⁸ He overlaid the two cherubim with gold.

²⁹He decorated all the walls of the inner sanctuary and the main room with carvings of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers.³⁰ He overlaid the floor in both rooms with gold.

³¹For the entrance to the inner sanctuary, he made double doors of wild olive wood with five-sided doorposts.*³² These double doors were decorated with carvings of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers. The doors, including the decorations of cherubim and palm trees, were overlaid with gold.

³³Then he made four-sided doorposts of wild olive wood

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for the entrance to the Temple. ³⁴There were two folding doors of cypress wood, and each door was hinged to fold back upon itself. ³⁵These doors were decorated with carvings of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers—all overlaid evenly with gold.

³⁶The walls of the inner courtyard were built so that there was one layer of cedar beams between every three layers of finished stone.

³⁷The foundation of the LORD's Temple was laid in midspring, in the month of Ziv,* during the fourth year of Solomon's reign. ³⁸The entire building was completed in every detail by midautumn, in the month of Bul,* during the eleventh year of his reign. So it took seven years to build the Temple.

Solomon Builds His Palace

7 Solomon also built a palace for himself, and it took him thirteen years to complete the construction.

²One of Solomon's buildings was called the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon. It was 150 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high.* There were four rows of cedar pillars, and great cedar beams rested on the pillars. ³The hall had a cedar roof. Above the beams on the pillars were forty-five side rooms,* arranged in three tiers of fifteen each. ⁴On each end of the long hall were three rows of windows facing each other. ⁵All the doorways and doorposts* had rectangular frames and were arranged in sets of three, facing each other.

⁶Solomon also built the Hall of Pillars, which was 75 feet long and 45 feet wide.* There was a porch in front, along with a canopy supported by pillars.

⁷Solomon also built the throne room, known as the Hall of Justice, where he sat to hear legal matters. It was paneled with cedar from floor to ceiling.* ⁸Solomon's living quarters surrounded a courtyard behind this hall, and they were constructed the same way. He also built similar living quarters for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had married.

⁹From foundation to eaves, all these buildings were built from huge blocks of high-quality stone, cut with saws and trimmed to exact measure on all sides. ¹⁰Some of the huge foundation stones were 15 feet long, and some were 12 feet* long. ¹¹The blocks of high-quality stone used in the walls were also cut to measure, and cedar beams were also used. ¹²The walls of the great courtyard were built so that there was one layer of cedar beams between every three layers of finished stone, just like the walls of the inner courtyard of the LORD's Temple with its entry room.

Furnishings for the Temple

¹³King Solomon then asked for a man named Hiram* to come from Tyre. ¹⁴He was half Israelite, since his mother was a widow from the tribe of Naphtali, and his father had been a craftsman in bronze from Tyre. Hiram was extremely skillful and talented in any work in bronze, and he came to do all the metal work for King Solomon.

¹⁵Hiram cast two bronze pillars, each 27 feet tall and 18 feet in circumference.* ¹⁶For the tops of the pillars he

cast bronze capitals, each 7½ feet* tall. ¹⁷Each capital decorated with seven sets of latticework and interwoven chains. ¹⁸He also encircled the latticework with two rows of pomegranates to decorate the capitals over the pillars. ¹⁹The capitals on the columns inside the entry room were shaped like water lilies, and they were six feet* tall. ²⁰The capitals on the two pillars had 200 pomegranates in two rows around them, beside the rounded surface next to the latticework. ²¹Hiram set the pillars at the entrance of the Temple, one toward the south and one toward the north. He named the one on the south Jakin, and the one on the north Boaz. ²²The capitals on the pillars were shaped like water lilies. And so the work on the pillars was finished.

²³Then Hiram cast a great round basin, 15 feet across from rim to rim, called the Sea. It was 7½ feet deep and about 45 feet in circumference.* ²⁴It was encircled just below its rim by two rows of decorative gourds. There were about six gourds per foot* all the way around, and they cast as part of the basin.

²⁵The Sea was placed on a base of twelve bronze oxen all facing outward. Three faced north, three faced west, three faced south, and three faced east, and the Sea rested on them. ²⁶The walls of the Sea were about three inches thick, and its rim flared out like a cup and resembled a lily blossom. It could hold about 11,000 gallons* of water.

²⁷Hiram also made ten bronze water carts, each 6 feet long, 6 feet wide, and 4½ feet tall.* ²⁸They were constructed with side panels braced with crossbars. ²⁹Both the panels and the crossbars were decorated with carved lions, oxen, and cherubim. Above and below the lions and oxen were wreath decorations. ³⁰Each of these carts had four bronze wheels and bronze axes. There were supporting posts at the bronze basins at the corners of the carts; these supports were decorated on each side with carvings of wreaths. ³¹The top of each cart had a rounded frame for the basin. It projected 1½ feet* above the cart's top like a round pedestal, and its opening was 2¼ feet* across; it was decorated on the outside with carvings of wreaths. The panels of the cart were square, not round. ³²Under the panels were five wheels that were connected to axles that had been cast as one unit with the cart. The wheels were 2¼ feet in diameter and were similar to chariot wheels. The axles, spokes, and hubs were all cast from molten bronze.

³³There were handles at each of the four corners of the carts, and these, too, were cast as one unit with the cart. ³⁴Around the top of each cart was a rim nine inches wide. The corner supports and side panels were cast as one unit with the cart. ³⁵Carvings of cherubim, lions, and palm trees decorated the panels and corner supports wherever there was room, and there were wreaths all around. ³⁶All ten water carts were the same size and were made alike, for each cast from the same mold.

³⁷Hiram also made ten smaller bronze basins, one for each cart. Each basin was six feet across and could hold 220 gallons* of water. ³⁸He set five water carts on the south side of the Temple and five on the north side. The bronze basin called the Sea was placed near the south

side of the Temple. ³⁹He also made the necessary washbasins, shovels, and bowls.

⁴⁰At last Hiram completed everything King Solomon had assigned him to make for the Temple of the LORD:

- the two pillars;
- the two bowl-shaped capitals on top of the pillars;
- the two networks of interwoven chains that decorated the capitals;
- the 400 pomegranates that hung from the chains on the capitals (two rows of pomegranates for each of the chain networks that decorated the capitals on top of the pillars);
- the ten water carts holding the ten basins;
- the Sea and the twelve oxen under it;
- the ash buckets, the shovels, and the bowls.

⁴¹Hiram made all these things of burnished bronze for the Temple of the LORD, just as King Solomon had directed. ⁴²The king had them cast in clay molds in the Jordan Valley between Succoth and Zarethan. ⁴³Solomon did not weigh all these things because there were so many; the weight of the bronze could not be measured.

⁴⁴Solomon also made all the furnishings of the Temple of the LORD:

- the gold altar;
- the gold table for the Bread of the Presence;
- the lampstands of solid gold, five on the south and five on the north, in front of the Most Holy Place;
- the flower decorations, lamps, and tongues—all of gold;
- the small bowls, lamp snuffers, bowls, dishes, and incense burners—all of solid gold;
- the doors for the entrances to the Most Holy Place and the main room of the Temple, with their fronts overlaid with gold.

⁴⁵When King Solomon finished all his work on the Temple of the LORD, then he brought all the gifts his father, David, had gathered—the silver, the gold, and the various articles—and stored them in the treasuries of the LORD's Temple.

Ark Brought to the Temple

¹When King Solomon then summoned to Jerusalem the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes—the leaders of the ancestral families of the Israelites. They were to bring the Ark of the LORD's Covenant to the Temple from its location in the City of David, also known as Zion. ²So all the men of Israel assembled before King Solomon at the annual Festival of Tabernacles, which is held in early autumn in the month of Ethanim.*

³When all the elders of Israel arrived, the priests picked up the Ark of the LORD. ⁴The priests and Levites brought up the Ark of the LORD along with the special tent* and all the sacred articles that had been in it. ⁵There, before the Ark, King Solomon and the entire community of Israel sacrificed so many goats, and cattle that no one could keep count! ⁶Then the priests carried the Ark of the LORD's Covenant into the inner sanctuary of the Temple—the Most Holy Place—and placed it beneath the wings of the cherubim. ⁷The cherubim spread their wings over the Ark, forming a canopy over the Ark and its carrying poles. ⁸These poles were so long that their ends could be seen from the Temple's main room—the Holy Place—but not from the outside. ⁹Nothing was in the Ark except the two stone tablets that Moses had placed in it at Horeb.

¹⁰Nothing was in the Ark except the two stone tablets that Moses had placed in it at Horeb at the festival in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month. The Festival of Tabernacles occurred in late September, October, or early November in the Hebrew lunar calendar. This day occurred in late September, October, or early November in the Hebrew lunar calendar. ¹¹8:9 Hebrew at Horeb, another name for Sinai. ¹²8:13 Some of

6:37 Hebrew was laid in the month of Ziv. This month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar usually occurs within the months of April and May. 6:38 Hebrew by the month of Bul, which is the eighth month. This month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar usually occurs within the months of October and November. 7:2 Hebrew 100 cubits [46 meters] long, 50 cubits [23 meters] wide, and 30 cubits [13.5 meters] high. 7:3 Or 45 rafters, or 45 beams, or 45 pillars. The architectural details in 7:2-6 can be interpreted in many different ways. 7:5 Greek version reads windows. 7:6 Hebrew 50 cubits [23 meters] long and 30 cubits [13.5 meters] wide. 7:7 As in Syriac version and Latin Vulgate; Hebrew reads from floor to floor. 7:10 Hebrew 10 cubits [4.6 meters] ... 8 cubits [3.7 meters]. 7:13 Hebrew Hiram (also in 7:40, 45); compare 2 Chr 2:13. This is not the same person mentioned in 5:1. 7:15 Hebrew 18 cubits [8.3 meters] tall and 12 cubits [5.5 meters] in circumference. 7:16 Hebrew 5 cubits [2.3 meters]. 7:19 Hebrew 4 cubits [1.8 meters] deep and 30 cubits [13.8 meters] in circumference. 7:24 Or 20 gourds per meter; Hebrew reads 10 per cubit. 7:25 Hebrew 12 oxen; compare 2 Kgs 16:17, which specifies bronze oxen. 7:26a Hebrew a handbreadth [8 centimeters]. 7:26b Hebrew 2,000 baths [42 kiloliters]. 7:27 Hebrew 4 cubits [1.8 meters] long, 4 cubits wide, and 3 cubits [1.4 meters] high. 7:31a Hebrew a cubit [46 centimeters]. 7:31b Hebrew 1½ cubits [69 centimeters]. 7:32 Hebrew half a cubit wide [23 centimeters]. 7:38 Hebrew 40 baths [840 liters].

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each 7½ feet* tall. ¹⁷Each capital was made of latticework and interwoven chains. The latticework was on two rows and the capitals over the pillars. ¹⁸The capitals inside the entry room were shaped like water lilies. They were six feet* tall. ¹⁹The capitals had 200 pomegranates in two rows on the rounded surface next to the latticework. The pillars at the entrance of the Temple had one toward the north. He named them Kin and the one on the north side. The pillars were shaped like water lilies. The pillars were finished.

²⁰He made a great round basin, 15 feet across and 7½ feet deep. It was 7½ feet deep. ²¹It was encircled with a row of decorative gourds. There were gourds all the way around, and they were on a base of twelve bronze wheels. Three faced north, three faced east, and three faced south, and the Sea was about three feet out like a cup and resembled a wheel. It held about 11,000 gallons* of water. ²²He made ten bronze water carts, each 7½ feet tall. ²³They were constructed with crossbars. ²⁴Both the panels and the sides were decorated with carved lions and oxen. Each of these carts had four wheels. There were supporting posts at the corners of the carts; these supported the side with carvings of wreaths. ²⁵The cart had a rounded frame for the basin. The cart's top like a round platform was 7½ feet* across; it was decorated with wreaths. The panels of the cart and the wheels were 2¼ feet in diameter like chariot wheels. The axes were cast from molten bronze.

²⁶At each of the four corners of the cart were cast as one unit with the cart's side panels were cast as panels of cherubim, lions, and palm trees. ²⁷The cart's corner supports were wreaths all around. ²⁸All the carts were made alike.

²⁹He made ten smaller bronze basins. Each was six feet across and five feet deep. ³⁰He set five water carts on the north side and five on the south side. The Sea was placed near the south side.

of the Temple. ⁴⁰He also made the necessary washbasins, shovels, and bowls. ⁴¹At last Hiram completed everything King Solomon assigned him to make for the Temple of the LORD: the two pillars; the two bowl-shaped capitals on top of the pillars; the two networks of interwoven chains that decorated the capitals; the 400 pomegranates that hung from the chains on the capitals (two rows of pomegranates for each of the chains networks that decorated the capitals on top of the pillars); the ten water carts holding the ten basins; the Sea and the twelve oxen under it; the ash buckets, the shovels, and the bowls. ⁴²He made all these things of burnished bronze for the Temple of the LORD, just as King Solomon had directed. ⁴³The king had them cast in clay molds in the Jordan Valley between Succoth and Zarethan. ⁴⁴Solomon did not weigh all these things because there were so many; the weight of the things could not be measured. ⁴⁵King Solomon also made all the furnishings of the Temple of the LORD: the gold altar; the gold table for the Bread of the Presence; the lampstands of solid gold, five on the south and five on the north, in front of the Most Holy Place; the flower decorations, lamps, and tongs—all of gold; the small bowls, lamp snuffers, bowls, dishes, and incense burners—all of solid gold; the doors for the entrances to the Most Holy Place and the main room of the Temple, with their fronts overlaid with gold.

⁴⁶When King Solomon finished all his work on the Temple of the LORD, then he brought all the gifts his father, David, had given him—the silver, the gold, and the various articles—and placed them in the treasuries of the LORD's Temple.

Gifts Brought to the Temple

¹King Solomon then summoned to Jerusalem the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes—the leaders of the families of the Israelites. They were to bring the LORD's Covenant to the Temple from its location at Hebron, also known as Zion. ²So all the men of Israel assembled before King Solomon at the annual Festival of Shelters, which is held in early autumn in the month of Tishri. ³When all the elders of Israel arrived, the priests picked up the Ark of the LORD. ⁴The priests and Levites brought up the Ark of the LORD along with the special tent* and all the sacred vessels that had been in it. ⁵There, before the Ark, King Solomon and the entire community of Israel sacrificed so many oxen, sheep, and cattle that no one could keep count! ⁶Then the priests carried the Ark of the LORD's Covenant into the inner sanctuary of the Temple—the Most Holy Place—and placed it beneath the wings of the cherubim. ⁷The cherubim spread their wings over the Ark, forming a canopy over the Ark and its carrying poles. ⁸These poles were so long that their ends could be seen from the Temple's main room—the Holy Place—but not from the outside. ⁹They are still there to this day. ¹⁰Nothing was in the Ark except the two stone tablets that Moses had placed in it at Horeb.

Mount Sinai,* where the LORD made a covenant with the people of Israel when they left the land of Egypt. ¹⁰When the priests came out of the Holy Place, a thick cloud filled the Temple of the LORD. ¹¹The priests could not continue their service because of the cloud, for the glorious presence of the LORD filled the Temple.

Solomon Praises the LORD

¹²Then Solomon prayed, "O LORD, you have said that you would live in a thick cloud of darkness. ¹³Now I have built a glorious Temple for you, a place where you can live forever!"

¹⁴Then the king turned around to the entire community of Israel standing before him and gave this blessing: ¹⁵"Praise the LORD, the God of Israel, who has kept the promise he made to my father, David. For he told my father, ¹⁶'From the day I brought my people Israel out of Egypt, I have never chosen a city among any of the tribes of Israel as the place where a Temple should be built to honor my name. But I have chosen David to be king over my people Israel.'" ¹⁷Then Solomon said, "My father, David, wanted to build this Temple to honor the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. ¹⁸But the LORD told him, 'You wanted to build the Temple to honor my name. Your intention is good, ¹⁹but you are not the one to do it. One of your own sons will build the Temple to honor me.' ²⁰And now the LORD has fulfilled the promise he made, for I have become king in my father's place, and I now sit on the throne of Israel, just as the LORD promised. I have built this Temple to honor the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. ²¹And I have prepared a place there for the Ark, which contains the covenant that the LORD made with our ancestors when he brought them out of Egypt."

Solomon's Prayer of Dedication

²²Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in front of the entire community of Israel. He lifted his hands toward heaven, ²³and he prayed.

"O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you in all of heaven above or on the earth below. You keep your covenant and show unfailing love to all who walk before you in wholehearted devotion. ²⁴You have kept your promise to your servant David, my father. You made that promise with your own mouth, and with your own hands you have fulfilled it today. ²⁵And now, O LORD, God of Israel, carry out the additional promise you made to your servant David, my father. For you said to him, 'If your descendants guard their behavior and faithfully follow me as you have done, one of them will always sit on the throne of Israel.' ²⁶Now, O God of Israel, fulfill this promise to your servant David, my father. ²⁷'But will God really live on earth? Why, even the highest heavens cannot contain you. How much less this Temple I have built! ²⁸Nevertheless, listen to my prayer and my plea, O LORD my God. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is making to you today. ²⁹May you watch over this Temple night and day, this place where you have said, 'My name will be there.' May you always hear the prayers I make toward this place. ³⁰May you hear the humble and earnest requests from me and your people Israel when we pray toward this place. Yes, hear us from heaven where you live, and when you hear, forgive.

³¹At the festival in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month. The Festival of Shelters began on the fifteenth day of the seventh month of the lunar calendar. This day occurred in late September, October, or early November. ³²4 Hebrew the Tent of Meeting, i.e., the tent mentioned in Ex 25:9 and 1 Chr 16:1. ³³8:9 Hebrew at Horeb, another name for Sinai. ³⁴8:13 Some Greek texts add the line *is this not written in the Book of Jasher?*

³¹If someone wrongs another person and is required to take an oath of innocence in front of your altar in this Temple, ³²then hear from heaven and judge between your servants—the accuser and the accused. Punish the guilty as they deserve. Acquit the innocent because of their innocence.

³³If your people Israel are defeated by their enemies because they have sinned against you, and if they turn to you and acknowledge your name and pray to you here in this Temple, ³⁴then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel and return them to this land you gave their ancestors.

³⁵If the skies are shut up and there is no rain because your people have sinned against you, and if they pray toward this Temple and acknowledge your name and turn from their sins because you have punished them, ³⁶then hear from heaven and forgive the sins of your servants, your people Israel. Teach them to follow the right path, and send rain on your land that you have given to your people as their special possession.

³⁷If there is a famine in the land or a plague or crop disease or attacks of locusts or caterpillars, or if your people's enemies are in the land besieging their towns—whatever disaster or disease there is—³⁸and if your people Israel pray about their troubles, raising their hands toward this Temple, ³⁹then hear from heaven where you live, and forgive. Give your people what their actions deserve, for you alone know each human heart. ⁴⁰Then they will fear you as long as they live in the land you gave to our ancestors.

⁴¹In the future, foreigners who do not belong to your people Israel will hear of you. They will come from distant lands because of your name, ⁴²for they will hear of your great name and your strong hand and your powerful arm. And when they pray toward this Temple, ⁴³then hear from heaven where you live, and grant what they ask of you. In this way, all the people of the earth will come to know and fear you, just as your own people Israel do. They, too, will know that this Temple I have built honors your name.

⁴⁴If your people go out where you send them to fight their enemies, and if they pray to the LORD by turning toward this city you have chosen and toward this Temple I have built to honor your name, ⁴⁵then hear their prayers from heaven and uphold their cause.

⁴⁶If they sin against you—and who has never sinned?—you might become angry with them and let their enemies conquer them and take them captive to their land far away or near. ⁴⁷But in that land of exile, they might turn to you in repentance and pray, 'We have sinned, done evil, and acted wickedly.' ⁴⁸If they turn to you with their whole heart and soul in the land of their enemies and pray toward the land you gave to their ancestors—toward this city you have chosen, and toward this Temple I have built to honor your name—⁴⁹then hear their prayers and their petition from heaven where you live, and uphold their cause. ⁵⁰Forgive your people who have sinned against you. Forgive all the offenses they have committed against you. Make their captors merciful to them, ⁵¹for they are your people—your special possession—whom you brought out of the iron-smelting furnace of Egypt.

⁵²May your eyes be open to my requests and to the requests of your people Israel. May you hear and answer them whenever they cry out to you. ⁵³For when you

brought our ancestors out of Egypt, O Sovereign LORD, you told your servant Moses that you had set Israel apart from all the nations of the earth to be your own special possession."

The Dedication of the Temple

⁵⁴When Solomon finished making these prayers and petitions to the LORD, he stood up in front of the altar of the LORD, where he had been kneeling with his hands raised toward heaven. ⁵⁵He stood and in a loud voice blessed the entire congregation of Israel:

⁵⁶"Praise the LORD who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the wonderful promises he gave through his servant Moses. ⁵⁷May the LORD our God be with us as he was with our ancestors, may he never leave us or abandon us. ⁵⁸May he give us the desire to do his will in everything and to obey all the commands, decrees, and regulations that he gave our ancestors. ⁵⁹And may these words that I have prayed in the presence of the LORD be before him constantly, day and night, so that the LORD our God may give justice to me and to his people Israel according to each day's needs. ⁶⁰Then people all over the earth will know that the LORD alone is God and there is no other. ⁶¹And may you be completely faithful to the LORD our God. May you always obey his decrees and commands as you are doing today."

⁶²Then the king and all Israel with him offered sacrifices to the LORD. ⁶³Solomon offered to the LORD a peace offering of 22,000 cattle and 120,000 sheep and goats. And so the king and all the people of Israel dedicated the Temple of the LORD.

⁶⁴That same day the king consecrated the central area of the courtyard in front of the LORD's Temple. He offered burnt offerings, grain offerings, and the fat of peace offerings there, because the bronze altar in the LORD's presence was too small to hold all the burnt offerings, grain offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings.

⁶⁵Then Solomon and all Israel celebrated the Festival of Shelters* in the presence of the LORD our God. A large congregation had gathered from as far away as Lebo-hamath to the north and the Brook of Egypt in the south. The celebration went on for fourteen days in all—seven days for the dedication of the altar and seven days for the Festival of Shelters.* ⁶⁶After the festival was over,* Solomon sent the people home. They blessed the king and went to their homes joyful and glad because the LORD had been good to his servant David and to his people Israel.

The LORD's Response to Solomon

9 So Solomon finished building the Temple of the LORD as well as the royal palace. He completed everything he had planned to do. ²Then the LORD appeared to Solomon a second time, as he had done before at Gibeon. ³The LORD said to him,

"I have heard your prayer and your petition. I have seen this Temple apart to be holy—this place you have built where my name will be honored forever. I will always watch over it, for it is dear to my heart.

⁴As for you, if you will follow me with integrity and godliness, as David your father did, obeying all my commands, decrees, and regulations, ⁵then I will establish the throne of your dynasty over Israel forever. For I made this promise to your father, David: 'One of your descendants will always sit on the throne of Israel'

"But if you or your descendants abandon me and do not obey the commands and decrees I have given you, and if you serve and worship other gods, ⁷then I will blot out Israel from this land that I have given them. ⁸I will reject this Temple that I have made holy to honor my name. I will make Israel an object of mockery and ridicule among the nations. ⁹And though this Temple is impressive now, all who pass by will be appalled and will shake their heads in amazement. They will ask, 'Why did the LORD do such terrible things to this land and to this Temple?'

¹⁰And the answer will be, 'Because his people abandoned the LORD their God, who brought them out of Egypt, and they worshiped other gods instead and bowed down to them. That is why the LORD brought all these disasters on them.'"

Solomon's Agreement with Hiram

¹King Solomon twenty years to build the LORD's Temple and his own royal palace. At the end of that time, ¹¹he gave Hiram towns in the land of Galilee to King Hiram of Tyre. Hiram had previously provided all the cedar and cypress timber and gold that Solomon had requested.) ¹²But when Hiram came from Tyre to see the towns Solomon had given him, he was not at all pleased with them. ¹³"What kind of towns are these, my brother?" he asked. So Hiram called that town Cabul (which means "worthless"), as it is still known to this day. ¹⁴Nevertheless, Hiram paid* Solomon 9,000 pounds*

Solomon's Many Achievements

¹This is the account of the forced labor that King Solomon conscripted to build the LORD's Temple, the royal palace, the supporting terraces,* the wall of Jerusalem, and the cities of Megiddo, and Gezer. ²(Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, had attacked and captured Gezer, killing the Canaanite population and burning it down. He gave the city to his daughter as a wedding gift when she married Solomon. ³So Solomon built the city of Gezer.) He also built up the towns of Lower Galilee—⁴Baalath, and Tamar* in the wilderness within a day's ride. ⁵He built towns as supply centers and constructed stables where his chariots and horses* could be stationed. ⁶He built everything he desired in Jerusalem and Lebanon throughout his entire realm.

⁷There were still some people living in the land who were not Israelites, including Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. ⁸These were descendants of the nations whom the people of Israel had not completely destroyed.* ⁹So Solomon conscripted them for his labor force, and they were in the labor force to this day. ¹⁰But Solomon did not conscript any of the Israelites for forced labor. Instead, he conscripted them to serve as fighting men, government officials, officers and captains in his army, commanders of his chariots, and charioteers. ¹¹Solomon appointed 550 of them to supervise the people working on his various projects.

¹²Solomon moved his wife, Pharaoh's daughter, from the city of David to the new palace he had built for her. Then he constructed the supporting terraces.

¹³Three times each year Solomon presented burnt offerings and peace offerings on the altar he had built for the LORD.

8:65a Hebrew *the festival*; see note on 8:2. 8:65b Hebrew *seven days and seven days, fourteen days*; compare parallel text at 2 Chr 7:8-10. 8:66 Hebrew *On the eighth day*, probably referring to the day following the seven-day Festival of Shelters; compare parallel text at 2 Chr 7:9-10. 9:1 Or *For Hiram had paid*. 9:14b Hebrew *120 talents* (4,000 kilograms). 9:19 Hebrew *Tadmor*. 9:19 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:20 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:21 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:22 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:23 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:24 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:25 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:26 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:27 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:28 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:29 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:30 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:31 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:32 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:33 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:34 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:35 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:36 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:37 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:38 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:39 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:40 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:41 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:42 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:43 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:44 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:45 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:46 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:47 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:48 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:49 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:50 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:51 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:52 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:53 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:54 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:55 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:56 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:57 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:58 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:59 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:60 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:61 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:62 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:63 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:64 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:65 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:66 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:67 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:68 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:69 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:70 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:71 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:72 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:73 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:74 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:75 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:76 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:77 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:78 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:79 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:80 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:81 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:82 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:83 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:84 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:85 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:86 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:87 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:88 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:89 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:90 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:91 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:92 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:93 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:94 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:95 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:96 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:97 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:98 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 9:99 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 10:10 Hebrew *120 talents* (4,000 kilograms). 10:11 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 10:12 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 10:13 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 10:14 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 10:15 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*. 10:16 Hebrew *600 [shekels] of gold* (6.8 kilograms). 10:17 Hebrew *the name of the LORD*.

bring our ancestors out of Egypt, O Sovereign LORD, your servant Moses that you had set Israel apart from all the nations of the earth to be your own special possession."

Dedication of the Temple

Solomon finished making these prayers and in the presence of the LORD, he stood up in front of the altar of the LORD where he had been kneeling with his hands raised to heaven. ⁵⁵He stood and in a loud voice blessed the congregation of Israel:

"Praise the LORD who has given rest to his people Israel, as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the promises he gave through his servant Moses. ⁵⁶May our God be with us as he was with our ancestors, may he never leave us or abandon us. ⁵⁸May he give us his will in everything and to obey all the commands, decrees, and regulations that he gave our ancestors when he said these words that I have prayed in the presence of the LORD: 'Be before him constantly, day and night, so that he may give justice to me and to his people according to each day's needs. ⁶⁰Then people all over the world will know that the LORD alone is God and there is no other. And may you be completely faithful to the LORD your God, so that you always obey his decrees and commands, and do everything he is doing today.'

On the same day the king and all Israel with him offered sacrifices to the LORD. ⁶³Solomon offered to the LORD a peace offering of 120,000 cattle and 120,000 sheep and goats. And the king and all the people of Israel dedicated the Temple to the LORD.

On the same day the king consecrated the central courtyard in front of the LORD's Temple. He offered burnt offerings, grain offerings, and the fat of peace offerings, because the bronze altar in the LORD's presence was too small to hold all the burnt offerings, grain offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings.

Solomon and all Israel celebrated the Festival of Weeks in the presence of the LORD our God. A large assembly had gathered from as far away as Lebo-hamathi in the north and the Brook of Egypt in the south. The celebration lasted for fourteen days in all—seven days for the dedication of the altar and seven days for the Festival of Weeks. ⁶⁶After the festival was over, Solomon went back to Jerusalem. They blessed the king and went to their homes, joyful and glad because the LORD had been with King David and to his people Israel.

LORD's Response to Solomon

Solomon finished building the Temple of the LORD as well as the royal palace. He completed everything he had planned to do. ²Then the LORD appeared to Solomon at Gibeon, as he had done before at Gibeon. ³The LORD said to him, "I have heard your prayer and your petition. I have made the Temple apart to be holy—this place you have built for my name will be honored forever. I will always be with you, for it is dear to my heart. ⁴As for you, if you will follow me with integrity and honesty, as David your father did, obeying all my commands, decrees, and regulations, ⁵then I will establish the throne of your dynasty over Israel forever, as I made this promise to your father, David: 'One of your descendants will always sit on the throne of Israel.'

⁶But if you or your descendants abandon me and do not obey the commands and decrees I have given you, and if you serve and worship other gods, ⁷then I will blot out Israel from this land that I have given them. ⁸I will reject this Temple that I have made holy to honor my name. I will make Israel an object of mockery and ridicule among the nations. ⁹And though this Temple is impressive now, all who pass by will be appalled and will shake their heads in amazement. They will ask, 'Why has the LORD done such terrible things to this land and to this Temple?' ¹⁰And the answer will be, 'Because his people have abandoned the LORD their God, who brought their ancestors out of Egypt, and they worshiped other gods instead and bowed down to them. That is why the LORD has brought all these disasters on them.'"

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¹⁶King Solomon also built a fleet of ships at Ezion-geber, a port near Elath* in the land of Edom, along the shore of the Red Sea.* ¹⁷Hiram sent experienced crews of sailors to sail the ships with Solomon's men. ¹⁸They sailed to Ophir and brought back to Solomon some sixteen tons* of gold.

Solomon's Agreement with Hiram

Solomon twenty years to build the LORD's Temple and his own royal palace. At the end of that time, ¹¹he gave towns in the land of Galilee to King Hiram of Tyre. Hiram had previously provided all the cedar and cypress wood and gold that Solomon had requested.) ¹²But when Hiram came from Tyre to see the towns Solomon had given him, he was not at all pleased with them. ¹³"What kind of towns are these, my brother?" he asked. So Hiram called that town Cabul (which means "worthless"), as it is still known today. ¹⁴Nevertheless, Hiram paid* Solomon 9,000 pounds* of gold.

Solomon's Many Achievements

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Solomon moved his wife, Pharaoh's daughter, from the city of Gezer to the new palace he had built for her. Then he conscripted the supporting terraces.

Three times each year Solomon presented burnt offerings and peace offerings on the altar he had built for the LORD.

^{9:14b} Hebrew 120 talents [4,000 kilograms]. ^{9:15} Hebrew *the millo*; also in 9:24. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. ^{9:18} An alternate reading in the Masoretic Text reads *Tadmor*. ^{9:19} Or *and charioteers*. ^{9:21} The Hebrew term used here refers to the conscription of things or people to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering. ^{9:26a} As in Greek version (see also 2 Chr 2:16-17). ^{9:26b} Hebrew reads *Elath*, a variant spelling of Elath. ^{9:28} Hebrew sea of reeds. ^{9:28} Hebrew 420 talents [14 metric tons]. ^{10:1} Or *because due to the name of the LORD*. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. ^{10:6} Hebrew *your words*. ^{10:8} Greek and Syriac versions and Latin Vulgate read *your wives*. ^{10:10} Hebrew 120 talents [4,000 kilograms]. ^{10:11} Hebrew *almug wood*; also in 10:12. ^{10:14} Hebrew 666 talents [26,640 kilograms]. ^{10:16} Hebrew 600 [shekels] of gold [6.8 kilograms]. ^{10:17} Hebrew 3 minas [1.8 kilograms].

LORD. He also burned incense to the LORD. And so he finished the work of building the Temple.

²⁶King Solomon also built a fleet of ships at Ezion-geber, a port near Elath* in the land of Edom, along the shore of the Red Sea.* ²⁷Hiram sent experienced crews of sailors to sail the ships with Solomon's men. ²⁸They sailed to Ophir and brought back to Solomon some sixteen tons* of gold.

Visit of the Queen of Sheba

10 When the queen of Sheba heard of Solomon's fame, which brought honor to the name of the LORD,* she came to test him with hard questions. ²She arrived in Jerusalem with a large group of attendants and a great caravan of camels loaded with spices, large quantities of gold, and precious jewels. When she met with Solomon, she talked with him about everything she had on her mind. ³Solomon had answers for all her questions; nothing was too hard for the king to explain to her. ⁴When the queen of Sheba realized how very wise Solomon was, and when she saw the palace he had built, ⁵she was overwhelmed. She was also amazed at the food on his tables, the organization of his officials and their splendid clothing, the cup-bearers, and the burnt offerings Solomon made at the Temple of the LORD.

⁶She exclaimed to the king, "Everything I heard in my country about your achievements* and wisdom is true! ⁷I didn't believe what was said until I arrived here and saw it with my own eyes. In fact, I had not heard the half of it! Your wisdom and prosperity are far beyond what I was told. ⁸How happy your people* must be! What a privilege for your officials to stand here day after day, listening to your wisdom! ⁹Praise the LORD your God, who delights in you and has placed you on the throne of Israel. Because of the LORD's eternal love for Israel, he has made you king so you can rule with justice and righteousness."

¹⁰Then she gave the king a gift of 9,000 pounds* of gold, great quantities of spices, and precious jewels. Never again were so many spices brought in as those the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

¹¹(In addition, Hiram's ships brought gold from Ophir, and they also brought rich cargoes of red sandalwood* and precious jewels. ¹²The king used the sandalwood to make railings for the Temple of the LORD and the royal palace, and to construct lyres and harps for the musicians. Never before or since has there been such a supply of sandalwood.)

¹³King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba whatever she asked for, besides all the customary gifts he had so generously given. Then she and all her attendants returned to their own land.

Solomon's Wealth and Splendor

¹⁴Each year Solomon received about 25 tons* of gold. ¹⁵This did not include the additional revenue he received from merchants and traders, all the kings of Arabia, and the governors of the land.

¹⁶King Solomon made 200 large shields of hammered gold, each weighing more than fifteen pounds.* ¹⁷He also made 300 smaller shields of hammered gold, each weighing nearly four pounds.* The king placed these shields in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon.

¹⁸Then the king made a huge throne, decorated with

¹⁵ Hebrew 25 talents [833 kilograms]. ¹⁶ Hebrew 300 shields. ¹⁷ Hebrew 300 shields. ¹⁸ Hebrew 300 shields. ¹⁹ Hebrew 300 shields. ²⁰ Hebrew 300 shields. ²¹ Hebrew 300 shields. ²² Hebrew 300 shields. ²³ Hebrew 300 shields. ²⁴ Hebrew 300 shields. ²⁵ Hebrew 300 shields. ²⁶ Hebrew 300 shields. ²⁷ Hebrew 300 shields. ²⁸ Hebrew 300 shields. ²⁹ Hebrew 300 shields. ³⁰ Hebrew 300 shields. ³¹ Hebrew 300 shields. ³² Hebrew 300 shields. ³³ Hebrew 300 shields. ³⁴ Hebrew 300 shields. ³⁵ Hebrew 300 shields. ³⁶ Hebrew 300 shields. ³⁷ Hebrew 300 shields. ³⁸ Hebrew 300 shields. ³⁹ Hebrew 300 shields. ⁴⁰ Hebrew 300 shields. ⁴¹ Hebrew 300 shields. ⁴² Hebrew 300 shields. ⁴³ Hebrew 300 shields. ⁴⁴ Hebrew 300 shields. ⁴⁵ Hebrew 300 shields. ⁴⁶ Hebrew 300 shields. ⁴⁷ Hebrew 300 shields. ⁴⁸ Hebrew 300 shields. ⁴⁹ Hebrew 300 shields. ⁵⁰ Hebrew 300 shields. ⁵¹ Hebrew 300 shields. ⁵² Hebrew 300 shields. ⁵³ Hebrew 300 shields. ⁵⁴ Hebrew 300 shields. ⁵⁵ Hebrew 300 shields. ⁵⁶ Hebrew 300 shields. ⁵⁷ Hebrew 300 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ivory and overlaid with fine gold. ¹⁹The throne had six steps and a rounded back. There were armrests on both sides of the seat, and the figure of a lion stood on each side of the throne. ²⁰There were also twelve other lions, one standing on each end of the six steps. No other throne in all the world could be compared with it!

²¹All of King Solomon's drinking cups were solid gold, as were all the utensils in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon. They were not made of silver, for silver was considered worthless in Solomon's day!

²²The king had a fleet of trading ships* that sailed with Hiram's fleet. Once every three years the ships returned, loaded with gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks.*

²³So King Solomon became richer and wiser than any other king on earth. ²⁴People from every nation came to consult him and to hear the wisdom God had given him. ²⁵Year after year everyone who visited brought him gifts of silver and gold, clothing, weapons, spices, horses, and mules.

²⁶Solomon built up a huge force of chariots and horses.* He had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horses. He stationed some of them in the chariot cities and some near him in Jerusalem. ²⁷The king made silver as plentiful in Jerusalem as stone. And valuable cedar timber was as common as the sycamore-fig trees that grow in the foothills of Judah.* ²⁸Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt* and from Cilicia*; the king's traders acquired them from Cilicia at the standard price. ²⁹At that time chariots from Egypt could be purchased for 600 pieces of silver,* and horses for 150 pieces of silver.* They were then exported to the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Aram.

Solomon's Many Wives

11 Now King Solomon loved many foreign women. Besides Pharaoh's daughter, he married women from Moab, Ammon, Edom, Sidon, and from among the Hittites. ²The LORD had clearly instructed the people of Israel, "You must not marry them, because they will turn your hearts to their gods." Yet Solomon insisted on loving them anyway. ³He had 700 wives of royal birth and 300 concubines. And in fact, they did turn his heart away from the LORD.

⁴In Solomon's old age, they turned his heart to worship other gods instead of being completely faithful to the LORD his God, as his father, David, had been. ⁵Solomon worshiped Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molech,* the detestable god of the Ammonites. ⁶In this way, Solomon did what was evil in the LORD's sight; he refused to follow the LORD completely, as his father, David, had done.

⁷On the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem,* he even built a pagan shrine for Chemosh, the detestable god of Moab, and another for Molech, the detestable god of the Ammonites. ⁸Solomon built such shrines for all his foreign wives to use for burning incense and sacrificing to their gods.

⁹The LORD was very angry with Solomon, for his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. ¹⁰He had warned Solomon specifically about worshiping other gods, but Solomon did not listen to the LORD's command. ¹¹So now the LORD said to him, "Since you have not kept my covenant and have disobeyed my decrees, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your servants. ¹²But for the sake of your father, David, I will not do this while you are still alive. I will take the

kingdom away from your son. ¹³And even so, I will not tear away the entire kingdom; I will let him be king of one tribe for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem, my chosen city."

Solomon's Adversaries

¹⁴Then the LORD raised up Hadad the Edomite, a member of Edom's royal family, to be Solomon's adversary. ¹⁵Years before, David had defeated Edom. Joab, his army commander, had stayed to bury some of the Israelite soldiers who had died in battle. While there, they killed every male in Edom. ¹⁶Joab and the army of Israel had stayed there for months, killing them.

¹⁷But Hadad and a few of his father's royal officials escaped and headed for Egypt. (Hadad was just a boy at the time.) ¹⁸They set out from Midian and went to Paran, where others joined them. Then they traveled to Egypt and went to Pharaoh, who gave them a home, food, and some land. ¹⁹Pharaoh grew very fond of Hadad, and he gave him his wife's sister in marriage—the sister of Queen Tahpenes. ²⁰She bore him a son named Genubath. Tahpenes raised him* in Pharaoh's palace among Pharaoh's own sons.

²¹When the news reached Hadad in Egypt that David and his commander Joab were both dead, he said to Pharaoh, "Let me return to my own country."

²²"Why?" Pharaoh asked him. "What do you lack here that makes you want to go home?"

"Nothing," he replied. "But even so, please let me return home."

²³God also raised up Rezon son of Eliada as Solomon's adversary. Rezon had fled from his master, King Hadadzezer, and had become the leader of a gang of rebels. Rezon and his men fled to Damascus, where he became king. ²⁵Rezon was Israel's fiercest adversary for the rest of Solomon's reign, and he made much trouble, just as Hadad did. Rezon hated Israel intensely and continued to reign in Aram.

Jeroboam Rebels against Solomon

²⁶Another rebel leader was Jeroboam son of Nebat, one of Solomon's own officials. He came from the town of Zarephath in Ephraim, and his mother was Zeruah, a widow.

²⁷This is the story behind his rebellion. Solomon was building the supporting terraces* and repairing the walls of the city of his father, David. ²⁸Jeroboam was a very capable young man, and when Solomon saw how industrious he was, he put him in charge of the labor force from the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, the descendants of Joseph.

²⁹One day as Jeroboam was leaving Jerusalem, a prophet Ahijah from Shiloh met him along the way. Ahijah was wearing a new cloak. The two of them were alone in the field, and Ahijah took hold of the new cloak he was wearing and tore it into twelve pieces. ³¹Then he said to Jeroboam, "Take ten of these pieces, for this is what the LORD God of Israel says: 'I am about to tear the kingdom from the hand of Solomon, and I will give ten of the tribes to you. ³²But I will leave him one tribe for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen for all the tribes of Israel. ³³For Solomon has* abandoned me and worshiped Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh, the god of Moab; and Molech, the god of the Ammonites. He has not followed my ways and done what

is right in my sight. He has not obeyed my decrees and regulations as David his father did.

³⁴But I will not take the entire kingdom from Solomon at this time. For the sake of my servant David, the one whom I have chosen and who obeyed my commands and decrees, I will leave Solomon as leader for the rest of his life. ³⁵But I will tear the kingdom away from his son and give ten of the tribes to you. ³⁶His son will have one tribe so that the descendants of David my servant will continue to reign, shining like a star in Jerusalem, the city I have chosen to be the place for my name. ³⁷And I will place you on the throne of Israel, and you will rule over all that your heart desires. ³⁸If you listen to what I tell you and follow my ways and do whatever I command you to be right, and if you obey my decrees and commands, I will be with you as I was with your father David, and I will establish an enduring dynasty for you as I did for David, and I will give Israel to you. ³⁹Because of Solomon's sin I will punish the descendants of David—though not forever."

⁴⁰Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, but he fled to King Shishak of Egypt and stayed there until Solomon died.

Summary of Solomon's Reign

The rest of the events in Solomon's reign, including all his deeds and his wisdom, are recorded in *The Book of the Acts of Solomon*. ⁴²Solomon ruled in Jerusalem over all Israel for 40 years. ⁴³When he died, he was buried in the City of David named for his father. Then his son Rehoboam became the next king.

The Northern Tribes Revolt

12 Rehoboam went to Shechem, where all Israel had gathered to make him king. ²When Jeroboam son of Nebat heard of this, he returned from Egypt,* for he had fled to Egypt to escape from King Solomon. ³The leaders of the tribes summoned him, and Jeroboam and the whole assembly of Israel went to speak with Rehoboam. ⁴"Your father made us a hard master," they said. "Lighten the harsh labor demands and heavy taxes that your father imposed on us. We will be your loyal subjects."

Rehoboam replied, "Give me three days to think this over. Then come back for my answer." So the people went home.

Then King Rehoboam discussed the matter with the older men who had counseled his father, Solomon. "What is your advice?" he asked. "How should I answer these people?"

The older counselors replied, "If you are willing to be a servant to these people today and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your loyal subjects."

But Rehoboam rejected the advice of the older men and asked the opinion of the young men who had grown up with him and were now his advisers. ⁹"What is your advice?" he asked them. "How should I answer these people who want me to lighten the burdens imposed by my father?" The young men replied, "This is what you should tell the complainers who want a lighter burden: 'My little fin will be thicker than my father's waist! ¹¹Yes, my father laid heavy burdens on you, but I'm going to make them even lighter. My father beat you with whips, but I will beat you with scorpions!'"

Three days later Jeroboam and all the people returned to Rehoboam's decision, just as the king had ordered. Rehoboam spoke harshly to the people, for he rejected the advice of the older counselors ¹⁴and followed the coun-

10:22a Hebrew fleet of ships of Tarshish. 10:22b Or and baboons. 10:26 Or charioteers; also in 10:26b. 10:27 Hebrew the Shephelah. 10:28a Possibly Mazur, a district near Cilicia; also in 10:29. 10:28b Hebrew Kue, probably another name for Cilicia. 10:29a Hebrew 600 (shekels) silver, about 15 pounds or 6.8 kilograms in weight. 10:29b Hebrew 150 (shekels), about 3.8 pounds or 1.7 kilograms in weight. 11:5 Hebrew Milca, a variant spelling of Molech; also in 11:33. 11:7 Hebrew On the mountain east of Jerusalem. 11:20 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads weaned him. 11:27 Hebrew the millo. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. 11:33 As in Greek, Syriac, and Latin Vulgate; Hebrew reads For they have.

of Shelters in Judah. There at Bethel he himself offered sacrifices to the calves he had made, and he appointed priests for the pagan shrines he had made. ³³So on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, a day that he himself had designated, Jeroboam offered sacrifices on the altar at Bethel. He instituted a religious festival for Israel, and he went up to the altar to burn incense.

A Prophet Denounces Jeroboam

13 At the LORD's command, a man of God from Judah went to Bethel, arriving there just as Jeroboam was approaching the altar to burn incense. ²Then at the LORD's command, he shouted, "O altar, altar! This is what the LORD says: A child named Josiah will be born into the dynasty of David. On you he will sacrifice the priests from the pagan shrines who come here to burn incense, and human bones will be burned on you." ³That same day the man of God gave a sign to prove his message. He said, "The LORD has promised to give this sign: This altar will split apart, and its ashes will be poured out on the ground."

⁴When King Jeroboam heard the man of God speaking against the altar at Bethel, he pointed at him and shouted, "Seize that man!" But instantly the king's hand became paralyzed in that position, and he couldn't pull it back. ⁵At the same time a wide crack appeared in the altar, and the ashes poured out, just as the man of God had predicted in his message from the LORD.

⁶The king cried out to the man of God, "Please ask the LORD your God to restore my hand again!" So the man of God prayed to the LORD, and the king's hand was restored and he could move it again.

⁷Then the king said to the man of God, "Come to the palace with me and have something to eat, and I will give you a gift."

⁸But the man of God said to the king, "Even if you gave me half of everything you own, I would not go with you. I would not eat or drink anything in this place. ⁹For the LORD gave me this command: 'You must not eat or drink anything while you are there, and do not return to Judah by the same way you came.'" ¹⁰So he left Bethel and went home another way.

¹¹As it happened, there was an old prophet living in Bethel, and his sons* came home and told him what the man of God had done in Bethel that day. They also told their father what the man had said to the king. ¹²The old prophet asked them, "Which way did he go?" So they showed their father* which road the man of God had taken. ¹³"Quick, saddle the donkey," the old man said. So they saddled the donkey for him, and he mounted it.

¹⁴Then he rode after the man of God and found him sitting under a great tree. The old prophet asked him, "Are you the man of God who came from Judah?"

"Yes, I am," he replied.

¹⁵Then he said to the man of God, "Come home with me and eat some food."

¹⁶"No, I cannot," he replied. "I am not allowed to eat or drink anything here in this place. ¹⁷For the LORD gave me this command: 'You must not eat or drink anything while you are there, and do not return to Judah by the same way you came.'"

¹⁸But the old prophet answered, "I am a prophet, too, just as you are. And an angel gave me this command from the LORD: 'Bring him home with you so he can have something to eat and drink.'" But the old man was lying to him. ¹⁹So they went back together, and the man of God ate and drank at the prophet's home.

²⁰Then while they were sitting at the table, a command

13:11 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *son*. 13:12 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *They had seen*.

from the LORD came to the old prophet. ²¹He cried out to the man of God from Judah, "This is what the LORD says: You have defied the word of the LORD and have disobeyed his command. The LORD your God gave you. ²²You came back to this place and ate and drank where he told you not to eat or drink. Because of this, your body will not be buried in the grave of your ancestors."

²³After the man of God had finished eating and drinking, the old prophet saddled his own donkey for him, ²⁴and the man of God started off again. But as he was traveling, a lion came out and killed him. His body lay there on the road with the donkey and the lion standing beside it. ²⁵People who passed by saw the body lying in the road and the lion standing beside it, and they went and reported it in Bethel where the old prophet lived.

²⁶When the prophet heard the report, he said, "It is the man of God who disobeyed the LORD's command. The LORD has fulfilled his word by causing the lion to attack and kill him."

²⁷Then the prophet said to his sons, "Saddle a donkey for me." So they saddled a donkey, ²⁸and he went out and found the body lying in the road. The donkey and lion were standing there beside it, for the lion had not eaten the man nor attacked the donkey. ²⁹So the prophet laid the body of the man of God on the donkey and took it back to the town to mourn over him and bury him. ³⁰He laid the body in his own grave, crying out in grief, "Oh, my brother!"

³¹Afterward the prophet said to his sons, "When I am buried in the grave where the man of God is buried, lay my bones beside his bones. ³²For the message the LORD took to proclaim against the altar in Bethel and against the pagan shrines in the towns of Samaria will certainly come true."

³³But even after this, Jeroboam did not turn from his ways. He continued to choose priests from the common people. He appointed anyone who wanted to become a priest for the pagan shrines. ³⁴This became a great sin, resulting in the utter destruction of Jeroboam's dynasty and the face of the earth.

Ahijah's Prophecy against Jeroboam

14 At that time Jeroboam's son Abijah became very sick. ²So Jeroboam told his wife, "Disguise yourself so no one will recognize you as my wife. Then go to the prophet Ahijah at Shiloh—the man who told me I would be king. ³Take him a gift of ten loaves of bread, some cakes, a jar of honey, and ask him what will happen to the boy."

⁴So Jeroboam's wife went to Ahijah's home at Shiloh, where the old man now and could no longer see. ⁵But the old man had told Ahijah, "Jeroboam's wife will come here, pretending to be someone else. She will ask you about her son, and you will say, 'He is very sick. Give her the answer I give you.'"

⁶So when Ahijah heard her footsteps at the door, he called out, "Come in, wife of Jeroboam! Why are you pretending to be someone else?" Then he told her, "I have news for you. ⁷Give your husband, Jeroboam, this message from the LORD, the God of Israel: 'I promoted you from a common man to a king, and I made you ruler over the people of Israel. ⁸I ripped the kingdom away from the hands of David and gave it to you. But you have not been like a servant of David, who obeyed my commands and followed with all his heart and always did whatever I wanted. You have done more evil than all who lived before you. You have made other gods for yourself and have made me furious with your gold calves. And since you have turned your back on me, ⁹I will bring disaster on your dynasty and will destroy every one of your male descendants, slave and

anywhere in Israel. I will burn up your royal dynasty as I burn up trash until it is all gone. ¹¹The members of Jeroboam's family who die in the city will be eaten by dogs, and those who die in the field will be eaten by vultures. I, the LORD, have spoken."

¹²Then Ahijah said to Jeroboam's wife, "Go on home, and do not enter the city, for the child will die. ¹³All Israel will mourn for him and bury him. He is the only member of your family who will have a proper burial, for this child is the only one who has seen the LORD, the God of Israel, in the entire family of Jeroboam."

¹⁴In addition, the LORD will raise up a king over Israel who will destroy the family of Jeroboam. This will happen even now! ¹⁵Then the LORD will shake Israel like a reed whipped about in a stream. He will uproot the people of Israel from this good land that he gave their ancestors and will scatter them beyond the Euphrates River,* for they have angered the LORD with the Asherah poles they have set up for worship. ¹⁶He will abandon Israel because Jeroboam and his sons have made Israel sin along with him."

¹⁷So Jeroboam's wife returned to Tirzah, and the child died. She buried him as she walked through the door of her home. ¹⁸And Ahijah buried him and mourned for him, as the LORD had promised through the prophet Ahijah.

The rest of the events in Jeroboam's reign, including all his wars and how he ruled, are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Israel*. ²⁰Jeroboam reigned in Israel for forty-two years. When Jeroboam died, his son Nadab became the next king.

Rehoboam Rules in Judah

While Rehoboam son of Solomon was king in Judah, he was forty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city the LORD had chosen from among all the tribes of Israel as the place to put his name. Rehoboam's mother was Naamah, an Ammonite woman.

During Rehoboam's reign, the people of Judah did what was in the LORD's sight, provoking his anger with their sins. It was even worse than that of their ancestors. ²³For they also built for themselves pagan shrines and set up sacred pillars and Asherah poles on every high hill and under every green tree. ²⁴There were even male and female shrine prostitutes throughout the land. The people imitated the detestable practices of the pagan nations the LORD had driven from the land ahead of the Israelites.

In the fifth year of King Rehoboam's reign, King Shishak of Egypt came up and attacked Jerusalem. ²⁶He ransacked the treasuries of the LORD's Temple and the royal palace. ²⁷He stole everything, including all the gold shields Solomon had made. ²⁸King Rehoboam later replaced them with bronze shields as substitutes, and he entrusted them to the hands of the commanders of the guard who protected the entrance to the royal palace. ²⁹Whenever the king went to the Temple of the LORD, the guards would also take the shields and then return them to the guardroom.

The rest of the events in Rehoboam's reign and everything he did are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Judah*. ³⁰There was constant war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam. ³¹When Rehoboam died, he was buried in the City of David. His mother was Naamah, an Ammonite woman. Then his son Abijah* became the next king.

14:2 Hebrew *the river*. 14:31 Also known as *Abijah*. 15:1 Also known as *Abijah*. Compare 2 Chr 11:20. 15:6 As in a few Hebrew and Greek manuscripts; most read *The queen mother*; Hebrew reads *His mother* (also in 15:13); compare 15:2. 15:19 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *There is a treaty*.

anywhere in Israel. I will burn up your royal dynasty as you burn up trash until it is all gone. ¹¹The members of Jeroboam's family who die in the city will be eaten by dogs, and those who die in the field will be eaten by vultures. I, the LORD, have spoken."

¹²Then Ahijah said to Jeroboam's wife, "Go on home, and when you enter the city, the child will die. ¹³All Israel will mourn for him and bury him. He is the only member of your family who will have a proper burial, for this child is the only thing that the LORD, the God of Israel, sees in the entire family of Jeroboam.

¹⁴In addition, the LORD will raise up a king over Israel who will destroy the family of Jeroboam. This will happen even now! ¹⁵Then the LORD will shake Israel like a reed whipped about in a stream. He will uproot the people of Israel from this good land that he gave their ancestors and will scatter them beyond the Euphrates River," for they had angered the LORD with the Asherah poles they have set up for worship. ¹⁶He will abandon Israel because Jeroboam had made Israel sin along with him."

¹⁷So Jeroboam's wife returned to Tirzah, and the child died just as she walked through the door of her home. ¹⁸And Ahijah buried him and mourned for him, as the LORD had promised through the prophet Ahijah.

The rest of the events in Jeroboam's reign, including all the wars and how he ruled, are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Israel*. ²⁰Jeroboam reigned in Israel twenty-two years. When Jeroboam died, his son Nadab became the next king.

Rehoboam Rules in Judah

Meanwhile, Rehoboam son of Solomon was king in Judah. He was forty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city the LORD had chosen from among all the tribes of Israel as the place to put his name. Rehoboam's mother was Naamah, an Ammonite woman.

During Rehoboam's reign, the people of Judah did what was pleasing in the LORD's sight, provoking his anger with their idols. It was even worse than that of their ancestors. ²³For they had built for themselves pagan shrines and set up sacred pillars and Asherah poles on every high hill and under every green tree. ²⁴There were even male and female shrine prostitutes throughout the land. The people imitated the detestable practices of the pagan nations the LORD had banished from the land ahead of the Israelites.

²⁵In the fifth year of King Rehoboam's reign, King Shishak of Egypt came up and attacked Jerusalem. ²⁶He ransacked the treasuries of the LORD's Temple and the royal palace. He stole everything, including all the gold shields Solomon had made. ²⁷King Rehoboam later replaced them with bronze shields as substitutes, and he entrusted them to the commanders of the guard who protected the entrance to the royal palace. ²⁸Whenever the king went to the Temple of the LORD, the guards would also take the shields and then return them to the guardroom.

The rest of the events in Rehoboam's reign and everything he did are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Judah*. ³⁰There was constant war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam. ³¹When Rehoboam died, he was buried in the City of David. His mother was an Ammonite woman. Then his son Abijam* became the next king.

^{14:31} Also known as Abijah. ^{15:1} Also known as Abijah. ^{15:2} Hebrew *Abishalom* (also in 15:10), a variant spelling of *Abshalom*; compare 2 Chr 11:20. ^{15:6} As in a few Hebrew and Greek manuscripts; most Hebrew manuscripts read *between Rehoboam and Jeroboam*. ^{15:12} The Hebrew term (literally *round things*) probably alludes to

Abijam Rules in Judah

15 Abijam* began to rule over Judah in the eighteenth year of Jeroboam's reign in Israel. ²He reigned in Jerusalem three years. His mother was Maacah, the daughter of Absalom.*

³He committed the same sins as his father before him, and he was not faithful to the LORD his God, as his ancestor David had been. ⁴But for David's sake, the LORD his God allowed his descendants to continue ruling, shining like a lamp, and he gave Abijam a son to rule after him in Jerusalem. ⁵For David had done what was pleasing in the LORD's sight and had obeyed the LORD's commands throughout his life, except in the affair concerning Uriah the Hittite.

⁶There was war between Abijam and Jeroboam* throughout Abijam's reign. ⁷The rest of the events in Abijam's reign and everything he did are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Judah*. There was constant war between Abijam and Jeroboam. ⁸When Abijam died, he was buried in the City of David. Then his son Asa became the next king.

Asa Rules in Judah

Asa began to rule over Judah in the twentieth year of Jeroboam's reign in Israel. ¹⁰He reigned in Jerusalem forty-one years. His grandmother* was Maacah, the daughter of Absalom.

¹¹Asa did what was pleasing in the LORD's sight, as his ancestor David had done. ¹²He banished the male and female shrine prostitutes from the land and got rid of all the idols* his ancestors had made. ¹³He even deposed his grandmother Maacah from her position as queen mother because she had made an obscene Asherah pole. He cut down her obscene pole and burned it in the Kidron Valley. ¹⁴Although the pagan shrines were not removed, Asa's heart remained completely faithful to the LORD throughout his life. ¹⁵He brought into the Temple of the LORD the silver and gold and the various items that he and his father had dedicated.

¹⁶There was constant war between King Asa of Judah and King Baasha of Israel. ¹⁷King Baasha of Israel invaded Judah and fortified Ramah in order to prevent anyone from entering or leaving King Asa's territory in Judah.

¹⁸Asa responded by removing all the silver and gold that was left in the treasuries of the Temple of the LORD and the royal palace. He sent it with some of his officials to Ben-hadad son of Tabrimmon, son of Hezion, the king of Aram, who was ruling in Damascus, along with this message:

¹⁹"Let there be a treaty* between you and me like the one between your father and my father. See, I am sending you a gift of silver and gold. Break your treaty with King Baasha of Israel so that he will leave me alone."

²⁰Ben-hadad agreed to King Asa's request and sent the commanders of his army to attack the towns of Israel. They conquered the towns of Ijon, Dan, Abel-beth-maacah, and all Kinnereth, and all the land of Naphtali. ²¹As soon as Baasha of Israel heard what was happening, he abandoned his project of fortifying Ramah and withdrew to Tirzah. ²²Then King Asa sent an order throughout Judah, requiring that everyone, without exception, help to carry away the building stones and timbers that Baasha had been using to fortify Ramah. Asa used these materials to fortify the town of Geba in Benjamin and the town of Mizpah.

²³The rest of the events in Asa's reign—the extent of his power, everything he did, and the names of the cities he

^{15:1} Also known as Abijah. ^{15:2} Hebrew *Abishalom* (also in 15:10), a variant spelling of *Abshalom*; compare 2 Chr 11:20. ^{15:6} As in a few Hebrew and Greek manuscripts; most Hebrew manuscripts read *between Rehoboam and Jeroboam*. ^{15:12} The Hebrew term (literally *round things*) probably alludes to

^{15:19} As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *There is a treaty*.

built—are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Judah*. In his old age his feet became diseased. ²⁴When Asa died, he was buried with his ancestors in the City of David.

Then Jehoshaphat, Asa's son, became the next king.

Nadab Rules in Israel

²⁵Nadab son of Jeroboam began to rule over Israel in the second year of King Asa's reign in Judah. He reigned in Israel two years. ²⁶But he did what was evil in the LORD's sight and followed the example of his father, continuing the sins that Jeroboam had led Israel to commit.

²⁷Then Baasha son of Ahijah, from the tribe of Issachar, plotted against Nadab and assassinated him while he and the Israelite army were laying siege to the Philistine town of Gibbethon. ²⁸Baasha killed Nadab in the third year of King Asa's reign in Judah, and he became the next king of Israel.

²⁹He immediately slaughtered all the descendants of King Jeroboam, so that not one of the royal family was left, just as the LORD had promised concerning Jeroboam by the prophet Ahijah from Shiloh. ³⁰This was done because Jeroboam had provoked the anger of the LORD, the God of Israel, by the sins he had committed and the sins he had led Israel to commit.

³¹The rest of the events in Nadab's reign and everything he did are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Israel*.

Baasha Rules in Israel

³²There was constant war between King Asa of Judah and King Baasha of Israel. ³³Baasha son of Ahijah began to rule over all Israel in the third year of King Asa's reign in Judah. Baasha reigned in Tirzah twenty-four years. ³⁴But he did what was evil in the LORD's sight and followed the example of Jeroboam, continuing the sins that Jeroboam had led Israel to commit.

16 This message from the LORD was delivered to King Baasha by the prophet Jehu son of Hanani: ²"I lifted you out of the dust to make you ruler of my people Israel, but you have followed the evil example of Jeroboam. You have provoked my anger by causing my people Israel to sin. ³So now I will destroy you and your family, just as I destroyed the descendants of Jeroboam son of Nebat. ⁴The members of Baasha's family who die in the city will be eaten by dogs, and those who die in the field will be eaten by vultures."

⁵The rest of the events in Baasha's reign and the extent of his power are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Israel*. ⁶When Baasha died, he was buried in Tirzah. Then his son Elah became the next king.

⁷The message from the LORD against Baasha and his family came through the prophet Jehu son of Hanani. It was delivered because Baasha had done what was evil in the LORD's sight (just as the family of Jeroboam had done), and also because Baasha had destroyed the family of Jeroboam. The LORD's anger was provoked by Baasha's sins.

Elah Rules in Israel

⁸Elah son of Baasha began to rule over Israel in the twenty-sixth year of King Asa's reign in Judah. He reigned in the city of Tirzah for two years.

⁹Then Zimri, who commanded half of the royal chariots, made plans to kill him. One day in Tirzah, Elah was getting drunk at the home of Arza, the supervisor of the palace. ¹⁰Zimri walked in and struck him down and killed him. This happened in the twenty-seventh year of King Asa's reign in Judah. Then Zimri became the next king.

16:24 Hebrew for 2 talents (68 kilograms) of silver.

¹¹Zimri immediately killed the entire royal family of Baasha, leaving him not even a single male child. He even destroyed distant relatives and friends. ¹²So Zimri destroyed the dynasty of Baasha as the LORD had promised through the prophet Jehu. ¹³This happened because of all the sins Baasha and his son Elah had committed, and because of the sins they led Israel to commit. They provoked the anger of the LORD, the God of Israel, with their worthless idols.

¹⁴The rest of the events in Elah's reign and everything he did are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Israel*.

Zimri Rules in Israel

¹⁵Zimri began to rule over Israel in the twenty-seventh year of King Asa's reign in Judah, but his reign in Tirzah lasted only seven days. The army of Israel was then attacking the Philistine town of Gibbethon. ¹⁶When they heard that Zimri had committed treason and had assassinated the king, that very day they chose Omri, commander of the army, as the new king of Israel. ¹⁷So Omri led the entire army of Israel up from Gibbethon to attack Tirzah, Israel's capital. ¹⁸When Zimri saw that the city had been taken, he went into the citadel of the palace and burned it down on himself and died in the flames. ¹⁹For he, too, had done what was evil in the LORD's sight. He followed the example of Jeroboam in all the sins he had committed and led Israel to commit.

²⁰The rest of the events in Zimri's reign and his conspiracy are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Israel*.

Omri Rules in Israel

²¹But now the people of Israel were split into two factions. Half the people tried to make Tibni son of Ginath their king, while the other half supported Omri. ²²But Omri's supporters defeated the supporters of Tibni. So Tibni was killed and Omri became the next king.

²³Omri began to rule over Israel in the thirty-first year of King Asa's reign in Judah. He reigned twelve years in all of them in Tirzah. ²⁴Then Omri bought the hill now known as Samaria from its owner, Shemer, for 150 pounds of silver. ²⁵He built a city on it and called the city Samaria in honor of Shemer.

²⁶But Omri did what was evil in the LORD's sight, even more than any of the kings before him. ²⁷He followed the example of Jeroboam son of Nebat in all the sins he had committed and led Israel to commit. The people provoked the anger of the LORD, the God of Israel, with their worthless idols.

²⁸The rest of the events in Omri's reign, the extent of his power, and everything he did are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Israel*. ²⁹When Omri died, he was buried in Samaria. Then his son Ahab became the next king.

Ahab Rules in Israel

²⁹Ahab son of Omri began to rule over Israel in the eighth year of King Asa's reign in Judah. He reigned in Samaria twenty-two years. ³⁰But Ahab son of Omri did what was evil in the LORD's sight, even more than any of the kings before him. ³¹And as though it were not enough to follow the example of Jeroboam, he married Jezebel, the daughter of King Ethbaal of the Sidonians, and he began to bow down in worship of Baal. ³²First Ahab built a temple and altar for Baal in Samaria. ³³Then he set up an Asherah pole did more to provoke the anger of the LORD, the God of Israel than any of the other kings of Israel before him.

³⁴It was during his reign that Hiel, a man from Bethel,

rebuilt Jericho. When he laid its foundations, it cost him the life of his oldest son, Abiram. And when he completed it and set up its gates, it cost him the life of his youngest son, Segub. ³⁵This all happened according to the message from the LORD concerning Jericho spoken by Joshua son of Nun.

Elijah Fed by Ravens

17 Now Elijah, who was from Tishbe in Gilead, told King Ahab, "As surely as the LORD, the God of Israel, lives—the God I serve—there will be no dew or rain during the next four years until I give the word!"

²Then the LORD said to Elijah, ³"Go to the east and hide by the brook, near where it enters the Jordan River. ⁴"Drink from the brook and eat what the ravens bring you, for I have commanded them to bring you food."

⁵So Elijah did as the LORD told him and camped beside the brook, east of the Jordan. ⁶The ravens brought him bread and meat each morning and evening, and he drank from the brook. ⁷But after a while the brook dried up, for there was no rainfall anywhere in the land.

The Widow at Zarephath

⁸Then the LORD said to Elijah, ⁹"Go and live in the village of Zarephath, near the city of Sidon. I have instructed a widow there to feed you."

¹⁰So he went to Zarephath. As he arrived at the gates of the village, he saw a widow gathering sticks, and he asked her, "Would you please bring me a little water in a cup?" ¹¹As she was going to get it, he called to her, "Bring me a bite of bread, too."

¹²But she said, "I swear by the LORD your God that I don't have a single piece of bread in the house. And I have only a handful of flour left in the jar and a little cooking oil in the jug. I was just gathering a few sticks to cook my last meal, and then my son and I will die."

¹³But Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid! Go ahead and do what you've said, but make a little bread for me first. Then use what's left to prepare a meal for yourself and your son."

¹⁴For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: There will always be flour and olive oil left in your containers until the time when the LORD sends rain and the crops grow again.

¹⁵So she did as Elijah said, and she and Elijah and her son continued to eat for many days. ¹⁶There was always enough flour and olive oil left in the containers, just as the LORD had promised through Elijah.

¹⁷Some time later the woman's son became sick. He grew weaker and worse, and finally he died. ¹⁸Then she said to Elijah, "O man of God, what have you done to me? Have you brought me here to point out my sins and kill my son?"

¹⁹But Elijah replied, "Give me your son." And he took the child's body from her arms, carried him up the stairs to the room where he was staying, and laid the body on his bed. ²⁰Then Elijah cried out to the LORD, "O LORD my God, why have you brought tragedy to this widow who has opened her life to me, causing her son to die?"

²¹And he stretched himself out over the child three times and cried out to the LORD, "O LORD my God, please let this child's life return to him." ²²The LORD heard Elijah's prayer, and the life of the child returned, and he revived! ²³Then Elijah brought him down from the upper room and gave him to his mother. "Look!" he said. "Your son is alive!"

²⁴Then the woman told Elijah, "Now I know for sure that you are a man of God, and that the LORD truly speaks through you."

²⁵The ancient Hebrew scribal tradition reads *He killed his oldest son when he laid its body on his bed*. The Hebrew who eat at Jezebel's table.

ly killed the entire royal family of Israel, even a single male child. He even killed his wives and friends. ¹²So Zimri destroyed the kingdom as the LORD had promised through the prophets. This all happened because of all the sins that Zimri had committed, and because of the sins of the people who provoked the anger of the LORD with their worthless idols.

Events in Elah's reign and everything that happened are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Israel*.

Over Israel in the twenty-seventh year of the reign of King Jehoram of Judah, but his reign in Tirzah was only two years. ¹⁵Then Omri, commander of the army of Israel, was then attacking the city of Gibbethon. ¹⁶When they heard that Omri had committed treason and had assassinated King Zimri, they chose Omri, commander of the army of Israel. ¹⁷So Omri led the army to Gibbethon to attack Tirzah. ¹⁸When Omri saw that the city had been taken, he built a palace and burned it down with the flames. ¹⁹For he, too, had committed many sins in the eyes of the LORD. He followed the example of the kings of Israel before him.

Events in Zimri's reign and his conquests are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Israel*.

Israel were split into two factions. One faction supported Omri, and the other supported Tibni. ²²But Omri's supporters were stronger than Tibni's. So Tibni was killed, and Omri became the next king.

Over Israel in the thirty-first year of the reign of King Jehoram of Judah. He reigned twelve years in all. ²³Then Omri bought the hill Samaria from the owner, Shemer, for 150 pounds of silver. He built a city on the hill and called the city Samaria.

It was evil in the LORD's sight, even more than the sins of the kings of Israel before him. ²⁶He followed the example of the kings of Israel in all the sins he had committed. The people provoked the anger of the LORD with their worthless idols.

Events in Omri's reign, the extent of his conquests, and the things he did are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Israel*. ²⁸When Omri died, he was buried in Samaria, and his son Ahab became the next king.

He began to rule over Israel in the third year of the reign of King Jehoram of Judah. He reigned forty-two years. ³⁰But Ahab son of Omri did more evil in the eyes of the LORD than any of the kings of Israel before him, though it were not enough to condemn him. He married Jezebel, the daughter of the king of Sidonians, and he began to bow down to Baal. ³¹First Ahab built a temple and altar for Baal in Samaria. ³²Then he set up an Asherah pole in Samaria. ³³He provoked the anger of the LORD, the God of Israel, more than any of the kings of Israel before him.

Events in Hiel, a man from Bethel,

at Jericho. When he laid its foundations, it cost him the life of his oldest son, Abiram. And when he completed it and opened its gates, it cost him the life of his youngest son, Segub. ²This all happened according to the message from the LORD concerning Jericho spoken by Joshua son of Nun.

Fed by Ravens

¹Now Elijah, who was from Tishbe in Gilead, told King Ahab, "As surely as the LORD, the God of Israel, lives—the God I serve—there will be no dew or rain during the next three years until I give the word!"

²Then the LORD said to Elijah, ³"Go to the east and hide by the Brook, near where it enters the Jordan River. ⁴Drink from the brook and eat what the ravens bring you, for I have commanded them to bring you food."

⁵So Elijah did as the LORD told him and camped beside the Brook, east of the Jordan. ⁶The ravens brought him meat each morning and evening, and he drank from the brook. ⁷But after a while the brook dried up, for there was no rainfall anywhere in the land.

The Widow at Zarephath

⁸Then the LORD said to Elijah, ⁹"Go and live in the village of Zarephath, near the city of Sidon. I have instructed a widow there to feed you."

¹⁰So he went to Zarephath. As he arrived at the gates of the village, he saw a widow gathering sticks, and he asked her, "Would you please bring me a little water in a cup?" ¹¹As she was going to get it, he called to her, "Bring me a bite of bread, too."

¹²But she said, "I swear by the LORD your God that I don't have a single piece of bread in the house. And I have only a handful of flour left in the jar and a little cooking oil in the jug. I was just gathering a few sticks to cook a little meal, and then my son and I will die."

¹³But Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid! Go ahead and do what you've said, but make a little bread for me first. Use what's left to prepare a meal for yourself and your son."

¹⁴For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: There will always be flour and olive oil left in your containers until the time when the LORD sends rain and the crops grow again.

¹⁵So she did as Elijah said, and she and Elijah and her son continued to eat for many days. ¹⁶There was always flour and olive oil left in the containers, just as the LORD had promised through Elijah.

¹⁷Some time later the woman's son became sick. He grew worse and worse, and finally he died. ¹⁸Then she said to Elijah, "Man of God, what have you done to me? Have you brought here to point out my sins and kill my son?"

¹⁹But Elijah replied, "Give me your son." And he took the body from her arms, carried him up the stairs to the place where he was staying, and laid the body on his bed.

²⁰Then Elijah cried out to the LORD, "O LORD my God, why have you brought tragedy to this widow who has opened her heart to me, causing her son to die?"

²¹And he stretched himself out over the child three times and cried out to the LORD, "O LORD my God, please let this child's life return to him." ²²The LORD heard Elijah's prayer, and the life of the child returned, and he revived! ²³Then Elijah brought him down from the upper room and gave him to his mother. "Look!" he said. "Your son is alive!"

²⁴Then the woman told Elijah, "Now I know for sure that you are a man of God, and that the LORD truly speaks through you."

The ancient Hebrew scribal tradition reads *He killed his oldest son when he laid its foundations, and he killed his youngest son when he set up its gates. He was the man who ate at Jezebel's table.*

The Contest on Mount Carmel

¹Later on, in the third year of the drought, the LORD said to Elijah, "Go and present yourself to King Ahab. Tell him that I will soon send rain!" ²So Elijah went to appear before Ahab.

Meanwhile, the famine had become very severe in Samaria. ³So Ahab summoned Obadiah, who was in charge of the palace. (Obadiah was a devoted follower of the LORD. ⁴Once when Jezebel had tried to kill all the LORD's prophets, Obadiah had hidden 100 of them in two caves. He put fifty prophets in each cave and supplied them with food and water.) ⁵Ahab said to Obadiah, "We must check every spring and valley in the land to see if we can find enough grass to save at least some of my horses and mules." ⁶So they divided the land between them. Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.

⁷As Obadiah was walking along, he suddenly saw Elijah coming toward him. Obadiah recognized him at once and bowed low to the ground before him. "Is it really you, my lord Elijah?" he asked.

⁸"Yes, it is," Elijah replied. "Now go and tell your master, 'Elijah is here.'"

⁹"Oh, sir," Obadiah protested, "what harm have I done to you that you are sending me to my death at the hands of Ahab? ¹⁰For I swear by the LORD your God that the king has searched every nation and kingdom on earth from end to end to find you. And each time he was told, 'Elijah isn't here,' King Ahab forced the king of that nation to swear to the truth of his claim. ¹¹And now you say, 'Go and tell your master, 'Elijah is here.'"¹²But as soon as I leave you, the Spirit of the LORD will carry you away to who knows where. When Ahab comes and cannot find you, he will kill me. Yet I have been a true servant of the LORD all my life. ¹³Has no one told you, my lord, about the time when Jezebel was trying to kill the LORD's prophets? I hid 100 of them in two caves and supplied them with food and water. ¹⁴And now you say, 'Go and tell your master, 'Elijah is here.'"¹⁵ Sir, if I do that, Ahab will certainly kill me."

¹⁶But Elijah said, "I swear by the LORD Almighty, in whose presence I stand, that I will present myself to Ahab this very day."

¹⁷So Obadiah went to tell Ahab that Elijah had come, and Ahab went out to meet Elijah. ¹⁸When Ahab saw him, he exclaimed, "So, is it really you, you troublemaker of Israel?"

¹⁹"I have made no trouble for Israel," Elijah replied. "You and your family are the troublemakers, for you have refused to obey the commands of the LORD and have worshiped the images of Baal instead. ²⁰Now summon all Israel to join me at Mount Carmel, along with the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah who are supported by Jezebel."

²¹So Ahab summoned all the people of Israel and the prophets to Mount Carmel. ²²Then Elijah stood in front of them and said, "How much longer will you waver, hobbling between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him! But if Baal is God, then follow him!" But the people were completely silent.

²³Then Elijah said to them, "I am the only prophet of the LORD who is left, but Baal has 450 prophets. ²⁴Now bring two bulls. The prophets of Baal may choose whichever one they wish and cut it into pieces and lay it on the wood of their altar, but without setting fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and lay it on the wood on the altar, but not set fire to it. ²⁵Then call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD. The god who answers by setting fire to the wood is the true God!" And all the people agreed.

²⁵Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "You go first, for there are many of you. Choose one of the bulls, and prepare it and call on the name of your god. But do not set fire to the wood."

²⁶So they prepared one of the bulls and placed it on the altar. Then they called on the name of Baal from morning until noontime, shouting, "O Baal, answer us!" But there was no reply of any kind. Then they danced, hobbling around the altar they had made.

²⁷About noontime Elijah began mocking them. "You'll have to shout louder," he scoffed, "for surely he is a god! Perhaps he is daydreaming, or is relieving himself.* Or maybe he is away on a trip, or is asleep and needs to be wakened!"

²⁸So they shouted louder, and following their normal custom, they cut themselves with knives and swords until the blood gushed out. ²⁹They raved all afternoon until the time of the evening sacrifice, but still there was no sound, no reply, no response.

³⁰Then Elijah called to the people, "Come over here!" They all crowded around him as he repaired the altar of the LORD that had been torn down. ³¹He took twelve stones, one to represent each of the tribes of Israel,* ³²and he used the stones to rebuild the altar in the name of the LORD. Then he dug a trench around the altar large enough to hold about three gallons.* ³³He piled wood on the altar, cut the bull into pieces, and laid the pieces on the wood.

Then he said, "Fill four large jars with water, and pour the water over the offering and the wood."

³⁴After they had done this, he said, "Do the same thing again!" And when they were finished, he said, "Now do it a third time!" So they did as he said, ³⁵and the water ran around the altar and even filled the trench.

³⁶At the usual time for offering the evening sacrifice, Elijah the prophet walked up to the altar and prayed, "O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,* prove today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant. Prove that I have done all this at your command. ³⁷O LORD, answer me! Answer me so these people will know that you, O LORD, are God and that you have brought them back to yourself."

³⁸Immediately the fire of the LORD flashed down from heaven and burned up the young bull, the wood, the stones, and the dust. It even licked up all the water in the trench! ³⁹And when all the people saw it, they fell face down on the ground and cried out, "The LORD—he is God! Yes, the LORD is God!"

⁴⁰Then Elijah commanded, "Seize all the prophets of Baal. Don't let a single one escape!" So the people seized them all, and Elijah took them down to the Kishon Valley and killed them there.

Elijah Prays for Rain

⁴¹Then Elijah said to Ahab, "Go get something to eat and drink, for I hear a mighty rainstorm coming!"

⁴²So Ahab went to eat and drink. But Elijah climbed to the top of Mount Carmel and bowed low to the ground and prayed with his face between his knees.

⁴³Then he said to his servant, "Go and look out toward the sea."

The servant went and looked, then returned to Elijah and said, "I didn't see anything."

Seven times Elijah told him to go and look. ⁴⁴Finally the seventh time, his servant told him, "I saw a little cloud about the size of a man's hand rising from the sea."

Then Elijah shouted, "Hurry to Ahab and tell him, 'Climb

into your chariot and go back home. If you don't hurry, the rain will stop you!"

⁴⁵And soon the sky was black with clouds. A heavy wind brought a terrific rainstorm, and Ahab left quickly for Jezreel. ⁴⁶Then the LORD gave special strength to Elijah. He tucked his cloak into his belt* and ran ahead of Ahab's chariot all the way to the entrance of Jezreel.

Elijah Flees to Sinai

19 When Ahab got home, he told Jezebel everything Elijah had done, including the way he had killed all the prophets of Baal. ²So Jezebel sent this message to Elijah: "May the gods strike me and even kill me if by this time tomorrow I have not killed you just as you killed them."

³Elijah was afraid and fled for his life. He went to Beersheba, a town in Judah, and he left his servant there. ⁴Then he went on alone into the wilderness, traveling all day. He sat down under a solitary broom tree and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life, for I am no better than my ancestors who have already died."

⁵Then he lay down and slept under the broom tree. But while he was sleeping, an angel touched him and told him, "Get up and eat!" ⁶He looked around and there beside his head was some bread baked on hot stones and a jar of water! So he ate and drank and lay down again.

⁷Then the angel of the LORD came again and touched him and said, "Get up and eat some more, or the journey ahead will be too much for you."

⁸So he got up and ate and drank, and the food gave him enough strength to travel forty days and forty nights to Mount Sinai,* the mountain of God. ⁹There he came to a cave, where he spent the night.

The LORD Speaks to Elijah

But the LORD said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

¹⁰Elijah replied, "I have zealously served the LORD God Almighty. But the people of Israel have broken their covenant with you, torn down your altars, and killed every one of your prophets. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me, too."

¹¹"Go out and stand before me on the mountain," the LORD told him. And as Elijah stood there, the LORD passed by, and a mighty windstorm hit the mountain. It was such a terrible blast that the rocks were torn loose, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. ¹²And after the earthquake there was a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire there was the sound of a gentle whisper.

¹³When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

And a voice said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

¹⁴He replied again, "I have zealously served the LORD God Almighty. But the people of Israel have broken their covenant with you, torn down your altars, and killed every one of your prophets. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me, too."

¹⁵Then the LORD told him, "Go back the same way you came, and travel to the wilderness of Damascus. When you arrive there, anoint Hazael to be king of Aram. ¹⁶Then anoint Jehu grandson of Nimshi* to be king of Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from the town of Abel-meholah to replace you as my prophet. ¹⁷Anyone who escapes from Hazael will be killed by Jehu, and those who escape Jehu will be killed by Elisha."

^{18:27} Or is busy somewhere else, or is engaged in business. ^{18:31} Hebrew each of the tribes of the sons of Jacob to whom the LORD had said, "Your name will be Israel." ^{18:32} Hebrew 2 seahs [12 liters] of seed. ^{18:36} Hebrew and Israel. The names "Jacob" and "Israel" are often interchanged throughout the Old Testament, referring sometimes to the individual patriarch and sometimes to the nation. ^{18:46} Hebrew He bound up his loins. ^{19:8} Hebrew another name for Sinai. ^{19:16} Hebrew descendant of Nimshi; compare to 2 Kgs 9:2, 14.

by Elisha! ¹⁸Yet I will preserve 7,000 others in Israel who have never bowed down to Baal or kissed him!"

The Call of Elisha

¹Then Elijah went and found Elisha son of Shaphat plowing a field. There were twelve teams of oxen in the field, and Elijah was plowing with the twelfth team. Elijah went over to him and threw his cloak across his shoulders and then walked away. ²Elisha left the oxen standing there, ran after him, and said to him, "First let me go and kiss my father and mother good-bye, and then I will go with you!"

³Elijah replied, "Go on back, but think about what I have said to you."

⁴So Elisha returned to his oxen and slaughtered them. He used the wood from the plow to build a fire to roast their meat. He passed around the meat to the townspeople, and they all ate. Then he went with Elijah as his assistant.

Ben-Hadad Attacks Samaria

20 About that time King Ben-hadad of Aram mobilized his army, supported by the chariots and horses of twenty-two allied kings. They went to besiege Samaria, the capital of Israel, and launched attacks against it. ²Ben-hadad sent his messengers into the city to relay this message to King Ahab of Israel: "This is what Ben-hadad says: ³'Your silver and gold are mine, and so are your wives and the best of your children!'"

⁴All right, my lord the king," Israel's king replied. "All that I have is yours!"

⁵Soon Ben-hadad's messengers returned again and said, "This is what Ben-hadad says: 'I have already demanded that you give me your silver, gold, wives, and children. ⁶But about this time tomorrow I will send my officials to search your palace and the homes of your people. They will take away everything you consider valuable!'"

Then Ahab summoned all the elders of the land and said to them, "Look how this man is stirring up trouble! I already gave him my silver and gold."

⁸"Don't give in to any more demands," all the elders and the people advised.

⁹So Ahab told the messengers from Ben-hadad, "Say this to the king: 'I will give you everything you asked for the first time, but I cannot accept this last demand of yours.'" So the messengers returned to Ben-hadad with that response.

¹⁰Then Ben-hadad sent this message to Ahab: "May the LORD strike me and even kill me if there remains enough silver and gold from Samaria to provide even a handful for each of my men."

¹¹The king of Israel sent back this answer: "A warrior fighting on his sword for battle should not boast like a warrior who has already won."

¹²Ahab's reply reached Ben-hadad and the other kings as they were drinking in their tents.* ¹³"Prepare to attack!" Ben-hadad commanded his officers. So they prepared to attack Samaria.

Ahab's Victory over Ben-Hadad

¹Then a certain prophet came to see King Ahab of Israel and told him, "This is what the LORD says: Do you see all the enemy forces? Today I will hand them all over to you. ²And you will know that I am the LORD."

Ahab asked, "How will he do it?"

And the prophet replied, "This is what the LORD says: The provincial commanders will do it."

^{20:16} Hebrew Succoth; also in 20:16. ^{20:22} Hebrew at the turn of the year; similarly in March or April.

and go back home. If you don't hurry, the sky was black with clouds. A heavy rainstorm, and Ahab left quickly for Jezreel. The LORD gave special strength to Elijah, and he ran into his belt* and ran ahead of Ahab's chariot to the entrance of Jezreel.

Sinai

Ahab got home, he told Jezebel everything that had happened, including the way he had killed all the prophets of Baal. So Jezebel sent this message to Elijah: "Strike me and even kill me if by this time you haven't killed me just as you killed them." Elijah fled and fled for his life. He went to Beersheba in Judah, and he left his servant there. He went into the wilderness, traveling all day under a solitary broom tree and prayed that he would die. "Enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life from me, like the lives of my ancestors who have already died." He lay down and slept under the broom tree. Suddenly an angel touched him and told him, "Get up and eat and drink, for there beside his head were hot stones and a jar of water! So he ate and drank, and the journey was not too hard for you." He ate and drank, and the food gave him strength to travel forty days and forty nights to the mountain of God. There he came to the mountain and spent the night.

Message to Elijah

Ahab said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He replied, "I have zealously served the LORD, and the people of Israel have broken their covenants, they have torn down your altars, and killed every one of your prophets except the only one left, and now they are standing before me on the mountain. And as Elijah stood there, the LORD passed by in a windstorm that hit the mountain. It was such a strong wind that the rocks were torn loose, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake there was a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire there was the sound of a gentle wind. When he heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and hid at the entrance of the cave. He said, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' He replied, 'I have zealously served the LORD, and the people of Israel have broken their covenants, they have torn down your altars, and killed every one of your prophets except the only one left, and now they are standing before me on the mountain.'

The LORD told him, "Go back the same way to the wilderness of Damascus. When Hazael becomes king of Aram, he will appoint Hazael to be king of Aram. 16 The LORD will appoint a king from the town of Nimshi* to be king of Israel, and he will be a good king. 17 Anyone who escapes from the hands of Jezebel, and those who escape Jezebel will be the ones of Jacob to whom the LORD had said, 'Your name will be Israel' and 'Israel' are often interchanged throughout the Bible. 19:8 Hebrew He bound up his loins.

by Elisha! 18 Yet I will preserve 7,000 others in Israel who have never bowed down to Baal or kissed him!"

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Ben-hadad's messengers returned again and said, "This is what Ben-hadad says: 'I have already demanded that you give me your silver, gold, wives, and children. 6 But about tomorrow I will send my officials to search your palace and the homes of your people. They will take away anything you consider valuable!'" Ahab summoned all the elders of the land and said to them, "Look how this man is stirring up trouble! I already agreed with his demand that I give him my wives and children and silver and gold."

"Don't give in to any more demands," all the elders and the people advised. Ahab told the messengers from Ben-hadad, "Say this to the king: 'I will give you everything you asked for the first time, but I cannot accept this last demand of yours.'" So the messengers returned to Ben-hadad with that response.

Ben-hadad sent this message to Ahab: "May the LORD strike me and even kill me if there remains enough silver and gold in Samaria to provide even a handful for each of my people."

The king of Israel sent back this answer: "A warrior leaning on his sword for battle should not boast like a warrior who has already won."

Ben-hadad's reply reached Ben-hadad and the other kings as they were drinking in their tents. "Prepare to attack!" Ben-hadad commanded his officers. So they prepared to attack Samaria.

Victory over Ben-Hadad

A certain prophet came to see King Ahab of Israel and said to him, "This is what the LORD says: Do you see all the enemy forces? Today I will hand them all over to you. You will know that I am the LORD."

Ahab asked, "How will he do it?" The prophet replied, "This is what the LORD says: The LORD will send the provincial commanders to do it."

20:22 Hebrew at the turn of the year; similarly in 20:26. The first day of the year in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar was the first day of the month of Nisan, which is the month of March or April.

"Should we attack first?" Ahab asked.

"Yes," the prophet answered.

So Ahab mustered the troops of the 232 provincial commanders. Then he called out the rest of the army of Israel, some 7,000 men. 16 About noontime, as Ben-hadad and the thirty-two allied kings were still in their tents drinking themselves into a stupor, 17 the troops of the provincial commanders marched out of the city as the first contingent.

As they approached, Ben-hadad's scouts reported to him, "Some troops are coming from Samaria."

"Take them alive," Ben-hadad commanded, "whether they have come for peace or for war."

But Ahab's provincial commanders and the entire army had now come out to fight. 20 Each Israelite soldier killed his Aramean opponent, and suddenly the entire Aramean army panicked and fled. The Israelites chased them, but King Ben-hadad and a few of his charioteers escaped on horses. 21 However, the king of Israel destroyed the other horses and chariots and slaughtered the Arameans.

Afterward the prophet said to King Ahab, "Get ready for another attack. Begin making plans now, for the king of Aram will come back next spring."

Ben-Hadad's Second Attack

After their defeat, Ben-hadad's officers said to him, "The Israelite gods are gods of the hills; that is why they won. But we can beat them easily on the plains. 24 Only this time replace the kings with field commanders! 25 Recruit another army like the one you lost. Give us the same number of horses, chariots, and men, and we will fight against them on the plains. There's no doubt that we will beat them." So King Ben-hadad did as they suggested.

The following spring he called up the Aramean army and marched out against Israel, this time at Aphek. 27 Israel then mustered its army, set up supply lines, and marched out for battle. But the Israelite army looked like two little flocks of goats in comparison to the vast Aramean forces that filled the countryside!

Then the man of God went to the king of Israel and said, "This is what the LORD says: The Arameans have said, 'The LORD is a god of the hills and not of the plains.' So I will defeat this vast army for you. Then you will know that I am the LORD."

The two armies camped opposite each other for seven days, and on the seventh day the battle began. The Israelites killed 100,000 Aramean foot soldiers in one day. 30 The rest fled into the town of Aphek, but the wall fell on them and killed another 27,000. Ben-hadad fled into the town and hid in a secret room.

Ben-hadad's officers said to him, "Sir, we have heard that the kings of Israel are merciful. So let's humble ourselves by wearing burlap around our waists and putting ropes on our heads, and surrender to the king of Israel. Then perhaps he will let you live."

So they put on burlap and ropes, and they went to the king of Israel and begged, "Your servant Ben-hadad says, 'Please let me live!'"

The king of Israel responded, "Is he still alive? He is my brother!"

The men took this as a good sign and quickly picked up on his words. "Yes," they said, "your brother Ben-hadad!"

"Go and get him," the king of Israel told them. And when Ben-hadad arrived, Ahab invited him up into his chariot.

Ben-hadad told him, "I will give back the towns my

father took from your father, and you may establish places of trade in Damascus, as my father did in Samaria."

Then Ahab said, "I will release you under these conditions." So they made a new treaty, and Ben-hadad was set free.

A Prophet Condemns Ahab

³⁵Meanwhile, the LORD instructed one of the group of prophets to say to another man, "Hit me!" But the man refused to hit the prophet. ³⁶Then the prophet told him, "Because you have not obeyed the voice of the LORD, a lion will kill you as soon as you leave me." And when he had gone, a lion did attack and kill him.

³⁷Then the prophet turned to another man and said, "Hit me!" So he struck the prophet and wounded him.

³⁸The prophet placed a bandage over his eyes to disguise himself and then waited beside the road for the king. ³⁹As the king passed by, the prophet called out to him, "Sir, I was in the thick of battle, and suddenly a man brought me a prisoner. He said, 'Guard this man; if for any reason he gets away, you will either die or pay a fine of seventy-five pounds* of silver!' ⁴⁰But while I was busy doing something else, the prisoner disappeared!"

"Well, it's your own fault," the king replied. "You have brought the judgment on yourself."

⁴¹Then the prophet quickly pulled the bandage from his eyes, and the king of Israel recognized him as one of the prophets. ⁴²The prophet said to him, "This is what the LORD says: Because you have spared the man I said must be destroyed,* now you must die in his place, and your people will die instead of his people." ⁴³So the king of Israel went home to Samaria angry and sullen.

Naboth's Vineyard

21 Now there was a man named Naboth, from Jezreel, who owned a vineyard in Jezreel beside the palace of King Ahab of Samaria. ²One day Ahab said to Naboth, "Since your vineyard is so convenient to my palace, I would like to buy it to use as a vegetable garden. I will give you a better vineyard in exchange, or if you prefer, I will pay you for it."

³But Naboth replied, "The LORD forbid that I should give you the inheritance that was passed down by my ancestors."

⁴So Ahab went home angry and sullen because of Naboth's answer. The king went to bed with his face to the wall and refused to eat!

⁵"What's the matter?" his wife Jezebel asked him. "What's made you so upset that you're not eating?"

⁶"I asked Naboth to sell me his vineyard or trade it, but he refused!" Ahab told her.

⁷"Are you the king of Israel or not?" Jezebel demanded. "Get up and eat something, and don't worry about it. I'll get you Naboth's vineyard!"

⁸So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, sealed them with his seal, and sent them to the elders and other leaders of the town where Naboth lived. ⁹In her letters she commanded: "Call the citizens together for fasting and prayer, and give Naboth a place of honor. ¹⁰And then seat two scoundrels across from him who will accuse him of cursing God and the king. Then take him out and stone him to death."

¹¹So the elders and other town leaders followed the instructions Jezebel had written in the letters. ¹²They called for a fast and put Naboth at a prominent place before the people. ¹³Then the two scoundrels came and sat down across from him. And they accused Naboth before all the people,

^{20:39} Hebrew 1 talent [34 kilograms]. ^{20:42} 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. ^{21:17} Hebrew *Elijah the Tishbite*; also in 21:28. ^{21:23} As in several Hebrew manuscripts, Syriac and Latin Vulgate (see also 2 Kgs 9:26, 36); most Hebrew manuscripts read *at the city wall*. ^{21:26} The Hebrew term (literally *round things*) probably alludes to dung.

saying, "He cursed God and the king." So he was dragged out side the town and stoned to death. ¹⁴The town leaders then sent word to Jezebel, "Naboth has been stoned to death."

¹⁵When Jezebel heard the news, she said to Ahab, "I know the vineyard Naboth wouldn't sell you? Well, you have it now! He's dead!" ¹⁶So Ahab immediately went down to the vineyard of Naboth to claim it.

¹⁷But the LORD said to Elijah,* ¹⁸"Go down to meet King Ahab of Israel, who rules in Samaria. He will be at Naboth's vineyard in Jezreel, claiming it for himself. ¹⁹Give him this message: 'This is what the LORD says: Wasn't it enough for you that you killed Naboth? Must you rob him, too? Because you have done this, dogs will lick your blood at the very place where they licked the blood of Naboth!'"

²⁰"So, my enemy, you have found me!" Ahab exclaimed to Elijah.

"Yes," Elijah answered, "I have come because you have sold yourself to what is evil in the LORD's sight. ²¹So now the LORD says, 'I will bring disaster on you and consume you; I will destroy every one of your male descendants, slave and free alike, anywhere in Israel! ²²I am going to destroy your family as I did the family of Jeroboam son of Nebat and the family of Baasha son of Ahijah, for you have made me angry and have led Israel into sin.'

²³"And regarding Jezebel, the LORD says, 'Dogs will devour Jezebel's body at the plot of land in Jezreel.'"

²⁴The members of Ahab's family who die in the city will be eaten by dogs, and those who die in the field will be eaten by vultures."

²⁵(No one else so completely sold himself to what was evil in the LORD's sight as Ahab did under the influence of his wife Jezebel. ²⁶His worst outrage was worshiping idols* as the Amorites had done—the people whom the LORD driven out from the land ahead of the Israelites.)

²⁷But when Ahab heard this message, he tore his clothes, dressed in burlap, and fasted. He even slept in burlap and went about in deep mourning.

²⁸Then another message from the LORD came to Elijah. ²⁹"Do you see how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he has done this, I will not do what I promised during his lifetime. It will happen to his sons; I will destroy his dynasty."

Jehoshaphat and Ahab

22 For three years there was no war between Aram and Israel. ²Then during the third year, King Jehoshaphat of Judah went to visit King Ahab of Israel. ³During his visit, the king of Israel said to his officials, "Do you realize that the town of Ramoth-gilead belongs to us? And yet we have done nothing to recapture it from the king of Aram!"

⁴Then he turned to Jehoshaphat and asked, "Will you come in battle to recover Ramoth-gilead?"

Jehoshaphat replied to the king of Israel, "Why not, of course! You and I are as one. My troops are your troops, and my horses are your horses." ⁵Then Jehoshaphat added, "First let's find out what the LORD says."

⁶So the king of Israel summoned the prophets, and there were many suggestions, ⁷and finally a spirit appeared to the LORD and said, "I can do it!"

"How will you do this?" the LORD asked.

And the spirit replied, "I will go out and inspire all of the prophets to speak lies."

"You will succeed," said the LORD. "Go ahead and do it." ¹⁰So you see, the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouths of all your prophets. For the LORD has pronounced judgment on Ahab.

Then Zedekiah son of Kenaanah walked up to Micaiah and slapped him across the face. "Since when did the Spirit of the LORD leave me to speak to you?" he demanded.

And Micaiah replied, "You will find out soon enough if you are trying to hide in some secret room!"

"Arrest him!" the king of Israel ordered. "Take him to Amon, the governor of the city, and to my son Joash. Give them this order from the king: 'Put this man in prison, and feed him nothing but bread and water until I return safely from the battle!'"

But Micaiah replied, "If you return safely, it will mean that these people have no master." ^{22:34} Hebrew *Turn your hand*. ^{22:38} Hebrew *armor*. ^{22:43} Verses 22:43b-53 are numbered 22:44-54 in Hebrew text.

"The king of Israel replied to Jehoshaphat, "There is one more man who could consult the LORD for us, but I hate him. He never prophesies anything but trouble for me! His name is Micaiah son of Imlah."

Jehoshaphat replied, "That's not the way a king should behave! Let's hear what he has to say."

So the king of Israel called one of his officials and said, "Quick! Bring Micaiah son of Imlah."

Micaiah Prophesies against Ahab

King Ahab of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah, dressed in their royal robes, were sitting on thrones at the washing floor near the gate of Samaria. All of Ahab's prophets were prophesying there in front of them. ¹¹One of them, Zedekiah son of Kenaanah, made some iron horns and proclaimed, "This is what the LORD says: With these horns you will gore the Arameans to death!"

All the other prophets agreed. "Yes," they said, "go up to Ramoth-gilead and be victorious, for the LORD will give the king victory!"

Meanwhile, the messenger who went to get Micaiah said to him, "Look, all the prophets are promising victory for the king. Be sure that you agree with them and promise success."

But Micaiah replied, "As surely as the LORD lives, I will only say what the LORD tells me to say."

When Micaiah arrived before the king, Ahab asked him, "Micaiah, should we go to war against Ramoth-gilead, or should we hold back?"

Micaiah replied sarcastically, "Yes, go up and be victorious for the LORD will give the king victory!"

But the king replied sharply, "How many times must I demand that you speak only the truth to me when you speak for the LORD?"

Then Micaiah told him, "In a vision I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, like sheep without a shepherd. And the LORD said, 'Their master has been killed.* Send them home in peace.'"

"Didn't I tell you?" the king of Israel exclaimed to Jehoshaphat. "He never prophesies anything but trouble for me!"

Then Micaiah continued, "Listen to what the LORD says! The LORD sitting on his throne with all the armies of heaven around him, on his right and on his left. ²⁰And the LORD said, 'Who can entice Ahab to go into battle against Ramoth-gilead so he can be killed?'"

There were many suggestions, ²¹and finally a spirit appeared to the LORD and said, "I can do it!"

"How will you do this?" the LORD asked.

And the spirit replied, "I will go out and inspire all of the prophets to speak lies."

"You will succeed," said the LORD. "Go ahead and do it."

So you see, the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouths of all your prophets. For the LORD has pronounced judgment on Ahab.

Then Zedekiah son of Kenaanah walked up to Micaiah and slapped him across the face. "Since when did the Spirit of the LORD leave me to speak to you?" he demanded.

And Micaiah replied, "You will find out soon enough if you are trying to hide in some secret room!"

"Arrest him!" the king of Israel ordered. "Take him to Amon, the governor of the city, and to my son Joash. Give them this order from the king: 'Put this man in prison, and feed him nothing but bread and water until I return safely from the battle!'"

But Micaiah replied, "If you return safely, it will mean that these people have no master." ^{22:34} Hebrew *Turn your hand*. ^{22:38} Hebrew *armor*. ^{22:43} Verses 22:43b-53 are numbered 22:44-54 in Hebrew text.

The king of Israel replied to Jehoshaphat, "There is one man who could consult the LORD for us, but I hate him. He never prophesies anything but trouble for me! His name is Micaiah son of Imlah."

Prophesies against Ahab

King Ahab of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah, in their royal robes, were sitting on thrones at the dining floor near the gate of Samaria. All of Ahab's prophets were prophesying there in front of them. One of them, Zedekiah son of Kenaanah, made some iron horns and proclaimed, "This is what the LORD says: With these horns you will gore the Arameans to death!" The other prophets agreed. "Yes," they said, "go up to Ramoth-gilead and be victorious, for the LORD will give the king victory!"

Meanwhile, the messenger who went to get Micaiah said, "Look, all the prophets are promising victory for the king. Be sure that you agree with them and promise success." Micaiah replied, "As surely as the LORD lives, I will tell you what the LORD tells me to say."

When Micaiah arrived before the king, Ahab asked Micaiah, should we go to war against Ramoth-gilead, should we hold back?" Micaiah replied sarcastically, "Yes, go up and be victorious. The LORD will give the king victory!"

The king replied sharply, "How many times must I tell you that you speak only the truth to me when you speak to the LORD?"

Then Micaiah told him, "In a vision I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, like sheep without a shepherd. And the LORD said, 'Their master has been killed.* Send them back to their homes in peace.'" "Aren't I tell you?" the king of Israel exclaimed to Jehoshaphat. "He never prophesies anything but trouble for me!"

Micaiah continued, "Listen to what the LORD says! The LORD sitting on his throne with all the armies of heaven around him, on his right and on his left. And the LORD said, 'Who can entice Ahab to go into battle against Ramoth-gilead so he can be killed?'"

There were many suggestions, and finally a spirit appeared to the LORD and said, "I can do it!" "How will you do this?" the LORD asked. "The spirit replied, 'I will go out and inspire all of the prophets to speak lies.'"

"You will succeed," said the LORD. "Go ahead and do it." "As you see, the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouths of all your prophets. For the LORD has pronounced this oath."

Then Zedekiah son of Kenaanah walked up to Micaiah and struck him across the face. "Since when did the Spirit of the LORD leave me to speak to you?" he demanded.

Micaiah replied, "You will find out soon enough. You are trying to hide in some secret room!"

"Interest him!" the king of Israel ordered. "Take him to the governor of the city, and to my son Joash. Give them this order from the king: 'Put this man in prison and feed him nothing but bread and water until I return safely from the battle!'"

Micaiah replied, "If you return safely, it will mean that the LORD has spoken through me!"

Then he added to those standing around, "Everyone mark my words!"

The Death of Ahab

So King Ahab of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah led their armies against Ramoth-gilead. The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "As we go into battle, I will disguise myself so no one will recognize me, but you wear your royal robes." So the king of Israel disguised himself, and they went into battle.

Meanwhile, the king of Aram had issued these orders to his thirty-two chariot commanders: "Attack only the king of Israel. Don't bother with anyone else!" So when the Aramean chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat in his royal robes, they went after him. "There is the king of Israel!" they shouted. But when Jehoshaphat called out, the chariot commanders realized he was not the king of Israel, and they stopped chasing him.

An Aramean soldier, however, randomly shot an arrow at the Israelite troops and hit the king of Israel between the joints of his armor. "Turn the horses* and get me out of here!" Ahab groaned to the driver of his chariot. "I'm badly wounded!"

The battle raged all that day, and the king remained propped up in his chariot facing the Arameans. The blood from his wound ran down to the floor of his chariot, and as evening arrived he died. Just as the sun was setting, the cry ran through his troops: "We're done for! Run for your lives!"

So the king died, and his body was taken to Samaria and buried there. Then his chariot was washed beside the pool of Samaria, and dogs came and licked his blood at the place where the prostitutes bathed,* just as the LORD had promised.

The rest of the events in Ahab's reign and everything he did, including the story of the ivory palace and the towns he built, are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Israel*. So Ahab died, and his son Ahaziah became the next king.

Jehoshaphat Rules in Judah

Jehoshaphat son of Asa began to rule over Judah in the fourth year of King Ahab's reign in Israel. Jehoshaphat was thirty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-five years. His mother was Azubah, the daughter of Shilhi.

Jehoshaphat was a good king, following the example of his father, Asa. He did what was pleasing in the LORD's sight. During his reign, however, he failed to remove all the pagan shrines, and the people still offered sacrifices and burned incense there. Jehoshaphat also made peace with the king of Israel.

The rest of the events in Jehoshaphat's reign, the extent of his power, and the wars he waged are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Judah*. He banished from the land the rest of the male and female shrine prostitutes, who still continued their practices from the days of his father, Asa.

(There was no king in Edom at that time, only a deputy.)

Jehoshaphat also built a fleet of trading ships* to sail to Ophir for gold. But the ships never set sail, for they met with disaster in their home port of Ezion-geber. At one time Ahaziah son of Ahab had proposed to Jehoshaphat, "Let my men sail with your men in the ships." But Jehoshaphat refused the request.

When Jehoshaphat died, he was buried with his ancestors in the City of David. Then his son Jehoram became the next king.

*These people have no master. 22:34 Hebrew Turn your hand. 22:38 Or his blood, and the prostitutes bathed (in it); or his blood, and they bathed. 22:43 Verses 22:43b-53 are numbered 22:44-54 in Hebrew text. 22:48 Hebrew fleet of ships of Tarshish.

Ahaziah Rules in Israel

⁵¹Ahaziah son of Ahab began to rule over Israel in the seventh year of King Jehoshaphat's reign in Judah. He reigned in Samaria two years. ⁵²But he did what was evil in the LORD's

sight, following the example of his father and mother and the example of Jeroboam son of Nebat, who had led Israel in sin. ⁵³He served Baal and worshiped him, provoking the anger of the LORD, the God of Israel, just as his father had done

2 KINGS

Author Uncertain; some have suggested Jeremiah or another prophet.

Date Written Uncertain, possibly shortly after King Jehoiah's death.

Content If you have ever seen a salmon struggling to escape a net, you know how difficult it is to be a good king in Israel or Judah. In 2 Kings, the current of evil. Only a handful struggle to resist immorality, and complacency that surrounds wickedness, the prophets often take center stage to warn of the consequences of sin. Ultimately, however, the tragedies that changed the face of Israel's history—its destruction by the Assyrians, and in 586 B.C. by the Babylonians. As in the book of 1 Kings, all the result of the idolatry and wickedness that per-

Elijah Confronts King Ahaziah

¹After King Ahab's death, the land of Moab rebelled against Israel.

²One day Israel's new king, Ahaziah, fell through the roof of an upper room at his palace in Samaria and was seriously injured. So he sent messengers to the temple of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, to ask whether he would recover.

³But the angel of the LORD told Elijah, who was from Tishbe, "Go and confront the messengers of the king of Samaria and ask them, 'Is there no God in Israel? Why are you going to Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, to ask whether the king will recover?' ⁴Now, therefore, this is what the LORD says: You will never leave the bed you are lying on; you will surely die.'" So Elijah went to deliver the message.

⁵When the messengers returned to the king, he asked them, "Why have you returned so soon?"

⁶They replied, "A man came up to us and told us to go back to the king and give him this message. 'This is what the LORD says: Is there no God in Israel? Why are you sending your king to Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, to ask whether you will recover? Therefore, because you have done this, you will never leave the bed you are lying on; you will surely die.'" ⁷"What sort of man was he?" the king demanded. "What did he look like?"

⁸They replied, "He was a hairy man,* and he wore a leather belt around his waist."

⁹"Elijah from Tishbe!" the king exclaimed.

¹⁰Then he sent an army captain with fifty soldiers to arrest him. They found him sitting on top of a hill. The captain said to him, "Man of God, the king has commanded you to come down with us."

¹¹But Elijah replied to the captain, "If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and destroy you and your men!" Then fire fell from heaven and killed them all.

¹²So the king sent another captain with fifty men. The captain said to him, "Man of God, the king demands that you come down at once."

¹³Elijah replied, "If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and destroy you and your fifty men!" And again fire of God fell from heaven and killed them all.

¹⁴Once more the king sent a third captain with fifty men. This time the captain went up the hill and fell to his knees before Elijah. He pleaded with him, "O man of God, spare my life and the lives of these, your fifty ser-

*He was wearing clothing made of hair. 1:17 Hebrew Jehoram, a variant spelling

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2 KINGS

Author Uncertain; some have suggested Jeremiah or a group of prophets

Written Uncertain, possibly shortly after King Jehoiachin's release in 562 B.C.

Content If you have ever seen a salmon struggling to swim upstream, you have an idea of what it was like to be a good king in Israel or Judah. In 2 Kings, most of the kings simply go along with the current of evil. Only a handful struggle to follow the God of Israel, rejecting the idolatry, immorality, and complacency that surrounds them. In order to counter this widespread wickedness, the prophets often take center stage in 2 Kings, warning kings and others about the consequences of sin. Ultimately, however, wickedness prevails, and 2 Kings describes two tragedies that changed the face of Israel's history. In 722 B.C. the northern kingdom of Israel was destroyed by the Assyrians, and in 586 B.C. the southern kingdom of Judah was dismantled by the Babylonians. As in the book of 1 Kings, all these events are interpreted as being the direct result of the idolatry and wickedness that pervaded the nations of Israel and Judah.

Confronts King Ahaziah

After King Ahab's death, the land of Moab rebelled against Israel.

One day Israel's new king, Ahaziah, fell through the eaves of an upper room at his palace in Samaria and was seriously injured. So he sent messengers to the temple of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, to ask whether he would recover.

The angel of the LORD told Elijah, who was from Tishbe, to go and confront the messengers of the king of Samaria and ask them, "Is there no God in Israel? Why are you going to Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, to ask whether the king will recover?"

"Now, therefore, this is what the LORD says: You will leave the bed you are lying on; you will surely die." So he went to deliver the message.

When the messengers returned to the king, he asked them, "Why have you returned so soon?"

They replied, "A man came up to us and told us to go and tell the king and give him this message. 'This is what the LORD says: Is there no God in Israel? Why are you sending messengers to Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, to ask whether you will recover?' Therefore, because you have done this, you will leave the bed you are lying on; you will surely die."

"What sort of man was he?" the king demanded. "What did he look like?"

They replied, "He was a hairy man,* and he wore a leather belt around his waist."

"Elijah from Tishbe!" the king exclaimed.

So he sent an army captain with fifty soldiers to arrest him. They found him sitting on top of a hill. The captain said to him, "Man of God, the king has commanded you to come down with us."

But Elijah replied to the captain, "If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and destroy you and your fifty men!" Then fire fell from heaven and killed them all.

Then the king sent another captain with fifty men. The captain said to him, "Man of God, the king demands that you come down at once."

Elijah replied, "If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and destroy you and your fifty men!" And again fire fell from heaven and killed them all.

Then the king sent a third captain with fifty men.

When the captain went up the hill and fell to his knees before Elijah, he pleaded with him, "O man of God, spare my life and the lives of these, your fifty ser-

vants. ¹⁴See how the fire from heaven came down and destroyed the first two groups. But now please spare my life!"

¹⁵Then the angel of the LORD said to Elijah, "Go down with him, and don't be afraid of him." So Elijah got up and went with him to the king.

¹⁶And Elijah said to the king, "This is what the LORD says: Why did you send messengers to Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, to ask whether you will recover? Is there no God in Israel to answer your question? Therefore, because you have done this, you will never leave the bed you are lying on; you will surely die."

¹⁷So Ahaziah died, just as the LORD had promised through Elijah. Since Ahaziah did not have a son to succeed him, his brother Joram* became the next king. This took place in the second year of the reign of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah.

¹⁸The rest of the events in Ahaziah's reign are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Israel*.

Elijah Taken into Heaven

2 When the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were traveling from Gilgal. ²And Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, for the LORD has told me to go to Bethel."

But Elisha replied, "As surely as the LORD lives and you yourself live, I will never leave you!" So they went down together to Bethel.

³The group of prophets from Bethel came to Elisha and asked him, "Did you know that the LORD is going to take your master away from you today?"

"Of course I know," Elisha answered. "But be quiet about it."

⁴Then Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, for the LORD has told me to go to Jericho."

But Elisha replied again, "As surely as the LORD lives and you yourself live, I will never leave you." So they went on together to Jericho.

⁵Then the group of prophets from Jericho came to Elisha and asked him, "Did you know that the LORD is going to take your master away from you today?"

"Of course I know," Elisha answered. "But be quiet about it."

⁶Then Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, for the LORD has told me to go to the Jordan River."

But again Elisha replied, "As surely as the LORD lives and you yourself live, I will never leave you!"

*wearing clothing made of hair. 1:17 Hebrew *Jehoram*, a variant spelling of Joram.

you yourself live, I will never leave you." So they went on together.

⁷Fifty men from the group of prophets also went and watched from a distance as Elijah and Elisha stopped beside the Jordan River. ⁸Then Elijah folded his cloak together and struck the water with it. The river divided, and the two of them went across on dry ground!

⁹When they came to the other side, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me what I can do for you before I am taken away."

And Elisha replied, "Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit and become your successor."

¹⁰"You have asked a difficult thing," Elijah replied. "If you see me when I am taken from you, then you will get your request. But if not, then you won't."

¹¹As they were walking along and talking, suddenly a chariot of fire appeared, drawn by horses of fire. It drove between the two men, separating them, and Elijah was carried by a whirlwind into heaven. ¹²Elisha saw it and cried out, "My father! My father! I see the chariots and charioteers of Israel!" And as they disappeared from sight, Elisha tore his clothes in distress.

¹³Elisha picked up Elijah's cloak, which had fallen when he was taken up. Then Elisha returned to the bank of the Jordan River. ¹⁴He struck the water with Elijah's cloak and cried out, "Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?" Then the river divided, and Elisha went across.

¹⁵When the group of prophets from Jericho saw from a distance what happened, they exclaimed, "Elijah's spirit rests upon Elisha!" And they went to meet him and bowed to the ground before him. ¹⁶"Sir," they said, "just say the word and fifty of our strongest men will search the wilderness for your master. Perhaps the Spirit of the LORD has left him on some mountain or in some valley."

"No," Elisha said, "don't send them." ¹⁷But they kept urging him until they shamed him into agreeing, and he finally said, "All right, send them." So fifty men searched for three days but did not find Elijah. ¹⁸Elisha was still at Jericho when they returned. "Didn't I tell you not to go?" he asked.

Elisha's First Miracles

¹⁹One day the leaders of the town of Jericho visited Elisha. "We have a problem, my lord," they told him. "This town is located in pleasant surroundings, as you can see. But the water is bad, and the land is unproductive."

²⁰Elisha said, "Bring me a new bowl with salt in it." So they brought it to him. ²¹Then he went out to the spring that supplied the town with water and threw the salt into it. And he said, "This is what the LORD says: I have purified this water. It will no longer cause death or infertility." ²²And the water has remained pure ever since, just as Elisha said.

²³Elisha left Jericho and went up to Bethel. As he was walking along the road, a group of boys from the town began mocking and making fun of him. "Go away, baldy!" they chanted. "Go away, baldy!" ²⁴Elisha turned around and looked at them, and he cursed them in the name of the LORD. Then two bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of them. ²⁵From there Elisha went to Mount Carmel and finally returned to Samaria.

War between Israel and Moab

3 Ahab's son Joram* began to rule over Israel in the eighteenth year of King Jehoshaphat's reign in Judah. He reigned in Samaria twelve years. ²He did what was evil in the LORD's sight, but not to the same extent as his father and mother. He at least tore down the sacred pillar of Baal that

his father had set up. ³Nevertheless, he continued in the same way that Jeroboam son of Nebat had committed and led the people of Israel to commit.

⁴King Mesha of Moab was a sheep breeder. He used to pay the king of Israel an annual tribute of 100,000 lambs and the wool of 100,000 rams. ⁵But after Ahab's death, the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel. ⁶So King Joram promptly mustered the army of Israel and marched from Samaria. ⁷On the way, he sent this message to King Jehoshaphat of Judah: "The king of Moab has rebelled against me. Will you join me in battle against him?"

And Jehoshaphat replied, "Why, of course! You and I are as one. My troops are your troops, and my horses are your horses." ⁸Then Jehoshaphat asked, "What route will we take?"

"We will attack from the wilderness of Edom," Joram replied.

⁹The king of Edom and his troops joined them, and three armies traveled along a roundabout route through the wilderness for seven days. But there was no water for men or their animals.

¹⁰"What should we do?" the king of Israel cried out. "The LORD has brought the three of us here to let the king of Moab defeat us."

¹¹But King Jehoshaphat of Judah asked, "Is there a prophet of the LORD with us? If there is, we can ask the LORD what to do through him."

One of King Joram's officers replied, "Elisha son of Saphat is here. He used to be Elijah's personal assistant."

¹²Jehoshaphat said, "Yes, the LORD speaks through him. So the kings of Israel, Judah, and Edom went to consult Elisha.

¹³"Why are you coming to me?" Elisha asked the king of Israel. "Go to the pagan prophets of your father's mother!"

But King Joram of Israel said, "No! For it was the LORD who called us three kings here—only to be defeated by the king of Moab!"

¹⁴Elisha replied, "As surely as the LORD Almighty lives, whom I serve, I wouldn't even bother with you except for respect for King Jehoshaphat of Judah. ¹⁵Now bring me someone who can play the harp."

While the harp was being played, the power* of the LORD came upon Elisha, ¹⁶and he said, "This is what the LORD says: This dry valley will be filled with pools of water! ¹⁷You will see neither wind nor rain, says the LORD, but this valley will be filled with water. You will have plenty for yourselves and your cattle and other animals. ¹⁸But this is only a sign for the LORD, for he will make you victorious over the army of Moab! ¹⁹You will conquer the best of their towns, even the fortified ones. You will cut down all their groves, stop up all their springs, and ruin all their good land with stones."

²⁰The next day at about the time when the morning sacrifice was offered, water suddenly appeared! It was flowing from the direction of Edom, and soon there was water everywhere.

²¹Meanwhile, when the people of Moab heard about the three armies marching against them, they mobilized every man who was old enough to strap on a sword, and they lined themselves up along their border. ²²But when they awoke the next morning, the sun was shining across the valley, making it appear red to the Moabites—like blood. ²³"The blood!" the Moabites exclaimed. "The three armies have

attacked and killed each other! Let's go, men of Moab, and collect the plunder!"

But when the Moabites arrived at the Israelite camp, the army of Israel rushed out and attacked them until they fled and ran. The army of Israel chased them into the land of Moab, destroying everything as they went. ²⁵They destroyed the towns, covered their good land with stones, stopped up all the springs, and cut down all the good trees. Only Kir-hareseth and its stone walls were left, but they were with slings surrounded and attacked it.

²⁶When the king of Moab saw that he was losing the battle, he led 700 of his swordsmen in a desperate attempt to break through the enemy lines near the king of Edom, but he failed. ²⁷Then the king of Moab took his oldest son, who would have been the next king, and sacrificed him as a burnt offering on the wall. So there was great anger against Israel,* and the Israelites withdrew and returned to their own land.

Elisha Helps a Poor Widow

One day the widow of a member of the group of prophets came to Elisha and cried out, "My husband who loved you is dead, and you know how he feared the LORD. Now a creditor has come, threatening to take my two sons as slaves."

"What can I do to help you?" Elisha asked. "Tell me, what do you have in the house?"

"Nothing at all, except a flask of olive oil," she replied.

And Elisha said, "Borrow as many empty jars as you can from your friends and neighbors. ⁴Then go into your house with your sons and shut the door behind you. Pour olive oil from your flask into the jars, setting each one aside when it is full."

So she did as she was told. Her sons kept bringing jars to her, and she filled one after another. ⁶Soon every container was full to the brim!

"Bring me another jar," she said to one of her sons. "There aren't any more!" he told her. And then the olive oil stopped flowing.

When she told the man of God what had happened, he said to her, "Now sell the olive oil and pay your debts, and your sons can live on what is left over."

Elisha and the Woman from Shunem

One day Elisha went to the town of Shunem. A wealthy woman lived there, and she urged him to come to her home for a meal. After that, whenever he passed that way, he would stop there for something to eat.

One day she said to her husband, "I am sure this man who stops here from time to time is a holy man of God. ¹⁰Let's build a small room for him on the roof and furnish it with a bed, a chair, and a lamp. Then he will have a place to stay whenever he comes by."

One day Elisha returned to Shunem, and he went up to the room to rest. ¹²He said to his servant Gehazi, "Tell the woman from Shunem I want to speak to her." When she came, ¹³Elisha said to Gehazi, "Tell her, 'We appreciate your concern you have shown us. What can we do for you? Can we put in a good word for you to the king or to the commander of the army?'"

"No," she replied, "my family takes good care of me."

Then Elisha asked Gehazi, "What can we do for her?"

Gehazi replied, "She doesn't have a son, and her husband is an old man."

"Call her back again," Elisha told him. When the woman came, Elisha said to her as she stood in the doorway,

¹⁶"Next year arms!"

"No, my lord and get my horse!"

¹⁷But sure And at that time sha had said.

¹⁸One day his father, who he cried out,

His father's his mother."

²⁰So the ser on her lap. Bu up and laid hi door and left band: "Send o hurry to the m

²³"Why go festival nor a

But she said

²⁴So she s "Hurry! Don't"

²⁵As she ap Elisha saw her

woman from a ask her, 'Is eve your child?'"

"Yes," the w

²⁷But when she fell to the feet. Gehazi h

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²⁹Then Elis my staff and

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³⁶Then Elis mother!" he sa

take your son! overwhelmed

arms and carri

Miracles dur

³⁸Elisha now r land. One day

2:21 Or *to make the land unproductive*; Hebrew reads *or barrenness*. 3:1 Hebrew *Jehoram*, a variant spelling of Joram; also in 3:6. 3:11 Hebrew *He* to pour water on the hands of Elijah. 3:13 Hebrew *What is there in common between you and me?* 3:15 Hebrew *the hand*.

up. Nevertheless, he continued in the
of Nebat had committed and led the
commit.

of Moab was a sheep breeder. He used
Israel an annual tribute of 100,000 lambs
100,000 rams. But after Ahab's death,
belled against the king of Israel. So King
mustered the army of Israel and marched
On the way, he sent this message to King
lah: "The king of Moab has rebelled against
me in battle against him?"

what replied, "Why, of course! You and
os are your troops, and my horses are
Jehoshaphat asked, "What route will
me in battle against him?"

ck from the wilderness of Edom," Joram
Edom and his troops joined them, and
eled along a roundabout route through
even days. But there was no water for
imals.

ld we do?" the king of Israel cried out.
ht the three of us here to let the king
phoshaphat of Judah asked, "Is there
ord with us? If there is, we can ask the
gh him."

oram's officers replied, "Elisha son of
used to be Elijah's personal assistant."
said, "Yes, the Lord speaks through him."
Israel, Judah, and Edom went to consult

ou coming to me?"* Elisha asked the king
the pagan prophets of your father

m of Israel said, "No! For it was the
ree kings here—only to be defeated

ed. "As surely as the Lord Almighty
ouldn't even bother with you except
g Jehoshaphat of Judah. Now bring
n play the harp."

p was being played, the power* of the
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One day Elisha returned to Shunem, and he went up to
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the woman from Shunem I want to speak to her." When she
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Gehazi replied, "She doesn't have a son, and her husband
is an old man."

So Elisha called her back again, Elisha told him. When the woman
came, Elisha said to her as she stood in the doorway,
"The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. 3:27 Or So Israel's anger was great. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. 4:29 Hebrew Bind

16"Next year at this time you will be holding a son in your
arms!"

"No, my lord!" she cried. "O man of God, don't deceive me
and get my hopes up like that."

17But sure enough, the woman soon became pregnant.
And at that time the following year she had a son, just as Eli-
sha had said.

18One day when her child was older, he went out to help
his father, who was working with the harvesters. Suddenly
he cried out, "My head hurts! My head hurts!"

His father said to one of the servants, "Carry him home to
his mother."

20So the servant took him home, and his mother held him
on her lap. But around noontime he died. 21She carried him
up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, then shut the
door and left him there. 22She sent a message to her hus-
band: "Send one of the servants and a donkey so that I can
hurry to the man of God and come right back."

23"Why go today?" he asked. "It is neither a new moon
festival nor a Sabbath."

But she said, "It will be all right."
24So she saddled the donkey and said to the servant,
"Hurry! Don't slow down unless I tell you to."

25As she approached the man of God at Mount Carmel,
Elisha saw her in the distance. He said to Gehazi, "Look, the
woman from Shunem is coming. 26Run out to meet her and
ask her, 'Is everything all right with you, your husband, and
your child?'"

"Yes," the woman told Gehazi, "everything is fine."

27But when she came to the man of God at the mountain,
she fell to the ground before him and caught hold of his
feet. Gehazi began to push her away, but the man of God
said, "Leave her alone. She is deeply troubled, but the Lord
has not told me what it is."

28Then she said, "Did I ask you for a son, my lord? And
didn't I say, 'Don't deceive me and get my hopes up?'"

29Then Elisha said to Gehazi, "Get ready to travel*; take
my staff and go! Don't talk to anyone along the way. Go
quickly and lay the staff on the child's face."

30But the boy's mother said, "As surely as the Lord lives
and you yourself live, I won't go home unless you go with
me." So Elisha returned with her.

31Gehazi hurried on ahead and laid the staff on the
child's face, but nothing happened. There was no sign of
life. He returned to meet Elisha and told him, "The child is
still dead."

32When Elisha arrived, the child was indeed dead, lying
there on the prophet's bed. 33He went in alone and shut the
door behind him and prayed to the Lord. 34Then he lay
down on the child's body, placing his mouth on the child's
mouth, his eyes on the child's eyes, and his hands on the
child's hands. And as he stretched out on him, the child's
body began to grow warm again! 35Elisha got up, walked
back and forth across the room once, and then stretched
himself out again on the child. This time the boy sneezed
seven times and opened his eyes!

36Then Elisha summoned Gehazi. "Call the child's
mother!" he said. And when she came in, Elisha said, "Here,
take your son!" 37She fell at his feet and bowed before him,
overwhelmed with gratitude. Then she took her son in her
arms and carried him downstairs.

Miracles during a Famine

38Elisha now returned to Gilgal, and there was a famine in the
land. One day as the group of prophets was seated before

spelling of Joram; also in 3:6. 3:11 Hebrew
3:15 Hebrew the hand.

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him, he said to his servant, "Put a large pot on the fire, and make some stew for the rest of the group."

³⁹One of the young men went out into the field to gather herbs and came back with a pocketful of wild gourds. He shredded them and put them into the pot without realizing they were poisonous. ⁴⁰Some of the stew was served to the men. But after they had eaten a bite or two they cried out, "Man of God, there's poison in this stew!" So they would not eat it.

⁴¹Elisha said, "Bring me some flour." Then he threw it into the pot and said, "Now it's all right; go ahead and eat." And then it did not harm them.

⁴²One day a man from Baal-shalishah brought the man of God a sack of fresh grain and twenty loaves of barley bread made from the first grain of his harvest. Elisha said, "Give it to the people so they can eat."

⁴³"What?" his servant exclaimed. "Feed a hundred people with only this?"

But Elisha repeated, "Give it to the people so they can eat, for this is what the LORD says: Everyone will eat, and there will even be some left over!" ⁴⁴And when they gave it to the people, there was plenty for all and some left over, just as the LORD had promised.

The Healing of Naaman

5 The king of Aram had great admiration for Naaman, the commander of his army, because through him the LORD had given Aram great victories. But though Naaman was a mighty warrior, he suffered from leprosy.*

²At this time Aramean raiders had invaded the land of Israel, and among their captives was a young girl who had been given to Naaman's wife as a maid. ³One day the girl said to her mistress, "I wish my master would go to see the prophet in Samaria. He would heal him of his leprosy."

⁴So Naaman told the king what the young girl from Israel had said. ⁵"Go and visit the prophet," the king of Aram told him. "I will send a letter of introduction for you to take to the king of Israel." So Naaman started out, carrying as gifts 750 pounds of silver, 150 pounds of gold,* and ten sets of clothing. ⁶The letter to the king of Israel said: "With this letter I present my servant Naaman. I want you to heal him of his leprosy."

⁷When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes in dismay and said, "This man sends me a leper to heal! Am I God, that I can give life and take it away? I can see that he's just trying to pick a fight with me."

⁸But when Elisha, the man of God, heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes in dismay, he sent this message to him: "Why are you so upset? Send Naaman to me, and he will learn that there is a true prophet here in Israel."

⁹So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and waited at the door of Elisha's house. ¹⁰But Elisha sent a messenger out to him with this message: "Go and wash yourself seven times in the Jordan River. Then your skin will be restored, and you will be healed of your leprosy."

¹¹But Naaman became angry and stalked away. "I thought he would certainly come out to meet me!" he said. "I expected him to wave his hand over the leprosy and call on the name of the LORD his God and heal me! ¹²Aren't the rivers of Damascus, the Abana and the Pharpar, better than any of the rivers of Israel? Why shouldn't I wash in them and be healed?" So Naaman turned and went away in a rage.

¹³But his officers tried to reason with him and said, "Sir,* if the prophet had told you to do something very difficult,

wouldn't you have done it? So you should certainly obey him when he says simply, 'Go and wash and be cured!'" ¹⁴So Naaman went down to the Jordan River and dipped himself seven times, as the man of God had instructed him. And his skin became as healthy as the skin of a young child's, and he was healed!

¹⁵Then Naaman and his entire party went back to find the man of God. They stood before him, and Naaman said, "Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel. So please accept a gift from your servant."

¹⁶But Elisha replied, "As surely as the LORD lives, whom I serve, I will not accept any gifts." And though Naaman urged him to take the gift, Elisha refused.

¹⁷Then Naaman said, "All right, but please allow me to load two of my mules with earth from this place, and I will take it back home with me. From now on I will never again offer burnt offerings or sacrifices to any other god except the LORD. ¹⁸However, may the LORD pardon me in this one thing: When my master the king goes into the temple of the god Rimmon to worship there and leans on my arm, may the LORD pardon me when I bow, too."

¹⁹"Go in peace," Elisha said. So Naaman started home again.

The Greed of Gehazi

²⁰But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, the man of God, said to himself, "My master should not have let this Aramean go away without accepting any of his gifts. As surely as the LORD lives, I will chase after him and get something from him." ²¹So Gehazi set off after Naaman.

When Naaman saw Gehazi running after him, he climbed down from his chariot and went to meet him. "Is everything all right?" Naaman asked.

²²"Yes," Gehazi said, "but my master has sent me to tell you that two young prophets from the hill country of Ephraim have just arrived. He would like 75 pounds* of silver and two sets of clothing to give to them."

²³"By all means, take twice as much* silver," Naaman insisted. He gave him two sets of clothing, tied up the money in two bags, and sent two of his servants to carry the gifts to Gehazi. ²⁴But when they arrived at the citadel,* Gehazi took the gifts from the servants and sent the men back. Then he went and hid the gifts inside the house.

²⁵When he went in to his master, Elisha asked him, "Where have you been, Gehazi?"

"I haven't been anywhere," he replied.

²⁶But Elisha asked him, "Don't you realize that I was in spirit when Naaman stepped down from his chariot to meet you? Is this the time to receive money and clothing, olive groves and vineyards, sheep and cattle, and male and female servants? ²⁷Because you have done this, you and your descendants will suffer from Naaman's leprosy forever. When Gehazi left the room, he was covered with leprosy, and his skin was white as snow."

The Floating Ax Head

6 One day the group of prophets came to Elisha and told him, "As you can see, this place where we meet with you is too small. ²Let's go down to the Jordan River, where there are plenty of logs. There we can build a new place for us to meet."

"All right," he told them, "go ahead."

³"Please come with us," someone suggested.

"I will," he said. ⁴So he went with them.

When they arrived at the Jordan, they began cutting down trees. ⁵But as one of them was cutting a tree, his ax head fell into the river. "Oh, sir!" he cried. "It was a borrowed

"Where did it fall?" the man of God asked. When he showed him the place, Elisha cut a stick and threw it into the water at that spot. Then the ax head floated to the surface. "Grab it," Elisha said. And the man reached out and grabbed it.

Elisha Traps the Arameans

When the king of Aram was at war with Israel, he would confer with his officers and say, "We will mobilize our forces at such and such a place."

But immediately Elisha, the man of God, would warn the king of Israel, "Do not go near that place, for the Arameans are planning to mobilize their troops there." ¹⁰So the king of Israel would send word to the place indicated by the man of God. Time and again Elisha warned the king, so that he would be on the alert there.

The king of Aram became very upset over this. He called his officers together and demanded, "Which of you is the traitor? Who has been informing the king of Israel of my plans?"

"It's not us, my lord the king," one of the officers replied. "Elisha, the prophet in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words you speak in the privacy of your bedroom!"

"Go and find out where he is," the king commanded, "so I can send troops to seize him."

And the report came back: "Elisha is at Dothan." ¹⁴So one day the king of Aram sent a great army with many chariots and horses to surround the city.

When the servant of the man of God got up early the next morning and went outside, there were troops, horses, and chariots everywhere. "Oh, sir, what will we do now?" the man cried to Elisha.

"Don't be afraid!" Elisha told him. "For there are more chariots here than on theirs!" ¹⁷Then Elisha prayed, "O LORD, open his eyes and let him see!" The LORD opened the young man's eyes, and when he looked up, he saw that the hillside around Elisha was filled with horses and chariots of fire.

When the Aramean army advanced toward him, Elisha prayed, "O LORD, please make them blind." So the LORD struck them with blindness as Elisha had asked.

When Elisha went out and told them, "You have come the wrong way! This isn't the right city! Follow me, and I will lead you to the man you are looking for." And he led them to the city of Samaria.

As soon as they had entered Samaria, Elisha prayed, "Now open their eyes and let them see." So the LORD opened their eyes, and they discovered that they were in the city of Samaria.

When the king of Israel saw them, he shouted to Elisha, "Father, should I kill them? Should I kill them?"

"Of course not!" Elisha replied. "Do we kill prisoners of war?"

"Give them food and drink and send them home again to their master."

So the king made a great feast for them and then sent them home to their master. After that, the Aramean raiders did not come away from the land of Israel.

5:1 Or from a contagious skin disease. The Hebrew word used here and throughout this passage can describe various skin diseases. 5:5 Hebrew 10 talents [340 kilograms] of silver, 6,000 shekels [68 kilograms] of gold. 5:13 Hebrew My father. 5:22 Hebrew 1 talent [34 kilograms]. 5:23 Hebrew take 2 talents [68 kilograms]. 5:24 Hebrew the Ophel.

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15 Then Naaman and his entire party went back to find the man of God. They stood before him, and Naaman said, "Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel. Please accept a gift from your servant."

16 Elisha replied, "As surely as the LORD lives, whom I worship, I will not accept any gifts." And though Naaman urged them to take the gift, Elisha refused.

17 Then Naaman said, "All right, but please allow me to take a gift of my mules with earth from this place, and I will bring it back home with me. From now on I will never again offer burnt offerings or sacrifices to any other god except the LORD. 18 However, may the LORD pardon me in this matter. When my master the king goes into the temple of the Arameans to worship there and leans on my arm, may the LORD pardon me when I bow, too."

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6 When he went in to his master, Elisha asked him, "How have you been, Gehazi?"

7 "I haven't been anywhere," he replied.

8 Then Elisha asked him, "Don't you realize that I was healed when Naaman stepped down from his chariot? Is this the time to receive money and clothing, silver and vineyards, sheep and cattle, and male and female servants? 27 Because you have done this, you and your descendants will suffer from Naaman's leprosy forever." 9 When Gehazi left the room, he was covered with leprosy, and his skin became as white as snow.

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7 When they arrived at the Jordan, they began cutting down trees. 8 But as one of them was cutting a tree, his ax head fell into the river. "Oh, sir!" he cried. "It was a borrowed ax head. Where did it fall?" the man of God asked. When he showed him the place, Elisha cut a stick and threw it into the river at that spot. Then the ax head floated to the surface.

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10 "Don't be afraid!" Elisha told him. "For there are more troops on our side than on theirs!" 11 Then Elisha prayed, "O LORD, open the eyes of the young man and let him see!" The LORD opened the young man's eyes, and when he looked up, he saw that the hillside was filled with horses and chariots of fire.

12 When the Aramean army advanced toward him, Elisha cried, "O LORD, please make them blind." So the LORD made them with blindness as Elisha had asked.

13 Then Elisha went out and told them, "You have come the wrong way! This isn't the right city! Follow me, and I will lead you to the man you are looking for." And he led them to the city of Samaria.

14 As soon as they had entered Samaria, Elisha prayed, "Now open their eyes and let them see." So the LORD opened their eyes, and they discovered that they were in the city of Samaria.

15 When the king of Israel saw them, he shouted to Elisha, "What should I do? Should I kill them? Should I kill them?"

16 "Of course not!" Elisha replied. "Do we kill prisoners of war? We should give them food and drink and send them home again to their master."

17 Then the king made a great feast for them and then sent them home to their master. After that, the Aramean raiders did not come away from the land of Israel.

18 The passage can describe various skin diseases. 5:5 Hebrew 10 talents (63 kilograms). 5:22 Hebrew 1 talent (34 kilograms). 5:23 Hebrew 1 talent (34 kilograms).

19 The Hebrew word used here and throughout this passage can describe various skin diseases. 7:6 Possibly and the people of Muzur, a district in the land of Israel.

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Ben-Hadad Besieges Samaria

1 Some time later, however, King Ben-hadad of Aram mustered his entire army and besieged Samaria. 2 As a result, there was a great famine in the city. The siege lasted so long that a donkey's head sold for eighty pieces of silver, and a cup of dove's dung sold for five pieces* of silver.

3 One day as the king of Israel was walking along the wall of the city, a woman called to him, "Please help me, my lord the king!"

4 He answered, "If the LORD doesn't help you, what can I do? I have neither food from the threshing floor nor wine from the press to give you." 5 But then the king asked, "What is the matter?"

6 She replied, "This woman said to me: 'Come on, let's eat your son today, then we will eat my son tomorrow.' 7 So we cooked my son and ate him. Then the next day I said to her, 'Kill your son so we can eat him,' but she has hidden her son."

8 When the king heard this, he tore his clothes in despair. And as the king walked along the wall, the people could see that he was wearing burlap under his robe next to his skin. 9 "May God strike me and even kill me if I don't separate Elisha's head from his shoulders this very day," the king vowed.

10 Elisha was sitting in his house with the elders of Israel when the king sent a messenger to summon him. But before the messenger arrived, Elisha said to the elders, "A murderer has sent a man to cut off my head. When he arrives, shut the door and keep him out. We will soon hear his master's steps following him."

11 While Elisha was still saying this, the messenger arrived. And the king* said, "All this misery is from the LORD! Why should I wait for the LORD any longer?"

12 Elisha replied, "Listen to this message from the LORD!

13 This is what the LORD says: By this time tomorrow in the markets of Samaria, five quarts of choice flour will cost only one piece of silver,* and ten quarts of barley grain will cost only one piece of silver.*"

14 The officer assisting the king said to the man of God, "That couldn't happen even if the LORD opened the windows of heaven!"

15 But Elisha replied, "You will see it happen with your own eyes, but you won't be able to eat any of it!"

Lepers Visit the Enemy Camp

1 Now there were four men with leprosy* sitting at the entrance of the city gates. "Why should we sit here waiting to die?" they asked each other. 2 "We will starve if we stay here, but with the famine in the city, we will starve if we go back there. So we might as well go out and surrender to the Aramean army. If they let us live, so much the better. But if they kill us, we would have died anyway."

3 So at twilight they set out for the camp of the Arameans. But when they came to the edge of the camp, no one was there! 4 For the LORD had caused the Aramean army to hear the clatter of speeding chariots and the galloping of horses and the sounds of a great army approaching. "The king of Israel has hired the Hittites and Egyptians* to attack us!" they cried to one another. 5 So they panicked and ran into the night, abandoning their tents, horses, donkeys, and everything else, as they fled for their lives.

6 When the lepers arrived at the edge of the camp, they

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went into one tent after another, eating and drinking wine; and they carried off silver and gold and clothing and hid it. ⁹Finally, they said to each other, "This is not right. This is a day of good news, and we aren't sharing it with anyone! If we wait until morning, some calamity will certainly fall upon us. Come on, let's go back and tell the people at the palace."

¹⁰So they went back to the city and told the gatekeepers what had happened. "We went out to the Aramean camp," they said, "and no one was there! The horses and donkeys were tethered and the tents were all in order, but there wasn't a single person around!" ¹¹Then the gatekeepers shouted the news to the people in the palace.

Israel Plunders the Camp

¹²The king got out of bed in the middle of the night and told his officers, "I know what has happened. The Arameans know we are starving, so they have left their camp and have hidden in the fields. They are expecting us to leave the city, and then they will take us alive and capture the city."

¹³One of his officers replied, "We had better send out scouts to check into this. Let them take five of the remaining horses. If something happens to them, it will be no worse than if they stay here and die with the rest of us."

¹⁴So two chariots with horses were prepared, and the king sent scouts to see what had happened to the Aramean army. ¹⁵They went all the way to the Jordan River, following a trail of clothing and equipment that the Arameans had thrown away in their mad rush to escape. The scouts returned and told the king about it. ¹⁶Then the people of Samaria rushed out and plundered the Aramean camp. So it was true that five quarts of choice flour were sold that day for one piece of silver, and ten quarts of barley grain were sold for one piece of silver, just as the LORD had promised. ¹⁷The king appointed his officer to control the traffic at the gate, but he was knocked down and trampled to death as the people rushed out.

So everything happened exactly as the man of God had predicted when the king came to his house. ¹⁸The man of God had said to the king, "By this time tomorrow in the markets of Samaria, five quarts of choice flour will cost one piece of silver, and ten quarts of barley grain will cost one piece of silver."

¹⁹The king's officer had replied, "That couldn't happen even if the LORD opened the windows of heaven!" And the man of God had said, "You will see it happen with your own eyes, but you won't be able to eat any of it!" ²⁰And so it was, for the people trampled him to death at the gate!

The Woman from Shunem Returns Home

8 Elisha had told the woman whose son he had brought back to life, "Take your family and move to some other place, for the LORD has called for a famine on Israel that will last for seven years." ²So the woman did as the man of God instructed. She took her family and settled in the land of the Philistines for seven years.

³After the famine ended she returned from the land of the Philistines, and she went to see the king about getting back her house and land. ⁴As she came in, the king was talking with Gehazi, the servant of the man of God. The king had just said, "Tell me some stories about the great things Elisha has done." ⁵And Gehazi was telling the king about the time Elisha had brought a boy back to life. At that very moment, the mother of the boy walked in to make her appeal to the king about her house and land.

"Look, my lord the king!" Gehazi exclaimed. "Here is the

8:11a Hebrew *He stared at him.* 8:11b The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. 8:13 Hebrew *a dog.* 8:21a Hebrew *Joram*, a variant spelling of Jehoram; also in 8:23, 24. 8:21b Greek version reads *Seir.* 8:21c Or *he went out and escaped.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

woman now, and this is her son—the very one Elisha brought back to life!"

⁶"Is this true?" the king asked her. And she told him the story. So he directed one of his officials to see that everything she had lost was restored to her, including the value of any crops that had been harvested during her absence.

Hazael Murders Ben-Hadad

⁷Elisha went to Damascus, the capital of Aram, where Ben-hadad lay sick. When someone told the king that the man of God had come, ⁸the king said to Hazael, "Take a gift to the man of God. Then tell him to ask the LORD, 'Will I recover from this illness?'"

⁹So Hazael loaded down forty camels with the fine products of Damascus as a gift for Elisha. He went to him and said, "Your servant Ben-hadad, the king of Aram, sent me to ask, 'Will I recover from this illness?'"

¹⁰And Elisha replied, "Go and tell him, 'You will surely die!'" ¹¹Elisha stared at Hazael* with a fixed gaze, and Hazael became uneasy.* Then the man of God started weeping.

¹²"What's the matter, my lord?" Hazael asked him.

Elisha replied, "I know the terrible things you will do to the people of Israel. You will burn their fortified cities, their young men with the sword, dash their little children to the ground, and rip open their pregnant women!"

¹³Hazael responded, "How could a nobody like me accomplish such great things?"

Elisha answered, "The LORD has shown me that you will be the king of Aram."

¹⁴When Hazael left Elisha and went back, the king asked him, "What did Elisha tell you?"

And Hazael replied, "He told me that you will surely die."

¹⁵But the next day Hazael took a blanket, soaked it in water, and held it over the king's face until he died. Then Hazael became the next king of Aram.

Jehoram Rules in Judah

¹⁶Jehoram son of King Jehoshaphat of Judah began to rule over Judah in the fifth year of the reign of Joram son of Ahab, king of Israel. ¹⁷Jehoram was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years. ¹⁸But Jehoram followed the example of the king of Israel and was as wicked as King Ahab, for he had married one of Ahab's daughters. So Jehoram did what was evil in the LORD's sight. ¹⁹But the LORD did not want to destroy Judah for he had made a covenant with David and promised that his descendants would continue to rule, shining like a star forever.

²⁰During Jehoram's reign, the Edomites revolted against Judah and crowned their own king. ²¹So Jehoram* went with all his chariots to attack the town of Zair.* The Edomites surrounded him and his chariot commanders, but he went out at night and attacked them* under cover of darkness. But Jehoram's army deserted him and fled to their homes. ²²So Edom has been independent from Judah to this day. The town of Libnah also revolted about that same time.

²³The rest of the events in Jehoram's reign and everything he did are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Judah.* ²⁴When Jehoram died, he was buried with his ancestors in the City of David. Then his son Ahaziah became the next king.

Ahaziah Rules in Judah

¹Ahaziah son of Jehoram began to rule over Judah in the seventh year of the reign of Joram son of Ahab, king of Israel. Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem one year. His mother was Jezebel, a granddaughter of King Omri of Israel. ²Ahaziah followed the evil example of King Ahab's family. He did what was evil in the LORD's sight, just as Ahab's family had done. ³But he was related by marriage to the family of Ahab. Ahaziah joined Joram son of Ahab, the king of Israel, in his wars against King Hazael of Aram at Ramoth-gilead. ⁴When the Arameans wounded King Joram in the battle, ⁵he sent messengers to Jezreel to recover from the wounds he had received at Ramoth.* Because Joram was wounded, King Ahaziah of Judah went to Jezreel to visit him.

Ahaziah Anointed King of Israel

¹While Elisha the prophet had summoned a member of the group of prophets, "Get ready to travel,"* he said, "and take this flask of olive oil with you. Go to Ramoth-gilead, and find Jehu son of Jehoshaphat, son of Nimshi. Call him into a private room away from his friends, and pour the oil over his head. Say to him, 'This is what the LORD says: I anoint you to be the king over Israel.' Then open the door and run for your life!"

The young prophet did as he was told and went to Ramoth-gilead. ²When he arrived there, he found Jehu sitting around with the other army officers. "I have a message for you, Commander," he said.

"Which one of us?" Jehu asked.

"You, Commander," he replied.

Jehu left the others and went into the house. Then the young prophet poured the oil over Jehu's head and said, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I anoint you to be the LORD's people, Israel. ²You are to destroy the family of Ahab, your master. In this way, I will avenge the blood of my prophets and all the LORD's servants who were killed by Jezebel. ³The entire family of Ahab must be wiped out. I will destroy every one of his male descendants, slave and free alike, anywhere in Israel. ⁴I will destroy the family of Baasha son of Ahijah. ⁵Dogs will eat Ahab's wife Jezebel on the plot of land in Jezreel, and no one will bury her." ⁶When the young prophet opened the door and ran, Jehu went back to his fellow officers, and one of them asked him, "What did that madman want? Is everything all right?"

"You know how a man like that babbles on," Jehu replied. "You're hiding something," they said. "Tell us."

Jehu told them, "He said to me, 'This is what the LORD says: I have anointed you to be king over Israel.'"

Then they quickly spread out their cloaks on the bare ground and blew the ram's horn, shouting, "Jehu is king!"

Jezebel Kills Joram and Ahaziah

¹Jehu son of Jehoshaphat, son of Nimshi, led a conspiracy against King Joram. (Now Joram had been with the army at Ramoth-gilead, defending Israel against the forces of Hazael of Aram. ²But King Joram* was wounded in the battle and returned to Jezreel to recover from his wounds.) So Jehu told the men with him, "If you want me to do this, don't let anyone leave town and go to Jezreel to tell them what we have done."

Then Jehu got into a chariot and rode to Jezreel to find King Joram, who was lying there wounded. King Ahaziah of

Judah was also there. Jehu shot arrows at them from his chariot. ²Jezebel, a variant spelling of Ramoth. 9:1 Hebrew *Bind up your loins.* 9:15 Hebrew *and he reigned in Jerusalem one year.* 9:23 Hebrew *turned his hands.* 9:31 See 1 Kgs 16:9-10, where Zimri killed his ma-

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Anointed King of Israel

Meanwhile, Elisha the prophet had summoned a member of the group of prophets. "Get ready to travel," he said, "and take this flask of olive oil with you. Go to Ramoth-gilead, and find Jehu son of Jehoshaphat, son of Nimshi. Call him into a private room away from his friends, and pour the oil over his head. Say to him, 'This is what the LORD says: I anoint you to be the king over Israel.' Then open the door and run for your life!" The young prophet did as he was told and went to Ramoth-gilead. When he arrived there, he found Jehu sitting around with the other army officers. "I have a message for you, Commander," he said. "Which one of us?" Jehu asked. "I anoint you, Commander," he replied. Jehu left the others and went into the house. Then the young prophet poured the oil over Jehu's head and said, "What the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I anoint you to be the LORD's people, Israel. You are to destroy the family of Ahab, your master. In this way, I will avenge the death of my prophets and all the LORD's servants who were killed by Jezebel. The entire family of Ahab must be wiped out. I will destroy every one of his male descendants, slave or free alike, anywhere in Israel. I will destroy the family of Nabath son of Ahijah. Dogs will eat Ahab's wife Jezebel. I will destroy the plot of land in Jezreel, and no one will bury her." Then the young prophet opened the door and ran.

Jehu went back to his fellow officers, and one of them said, "What did that madman want? Is everything all right?" "I don't know how a man like that babbles on," Jehu replied. "He was hiding something," they said. "Tell us." "I anoint you," he said to them, "He said to me, 'This is what the LORD says: I have anointed you to be king over Israel.'" Then they quickly spread out their cloaks on the bare ground and blew the ram's horn, shouting, "Jehu is king!"

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Then Jehu got into a chariot and rode to Jezreel to find King Joram, who was lying there wounded. King Ahaziah of

Judah was there, too, for he had gone to visit him. The watchman on the tower of Jezreel saw Jehu and his company approaching, so he shouted to Joram, "I see a company of troops coming!"

"Send out a rider to ask if they are coming in peace," King Joram ordered.

"So a horseman went out to meet Jehu and said, 'The king wants to know if you are coming in peace.'"

Jehu replied, "What do you know about peace? Fall in behind me!"

The watchman called out to the king, "The messenger has met them, but he's not returning."

"So the king sent out a second horseman. He rode up to them and said, 'The king wants to know if you come in peace.'"

Again Jehu answered, "What do you know about peace? Fall in behind me!"

"The watchman exclaimed, 'The messenger has met them, but he isn't returning either! It must be Jehu son of Nimshi, for he's driving like a madman.'"

"Quick! Get my chariot ready!" King Joram commanded.

Then King Joram of Israel and King Ahaziah of Judah rode out in their chariots to meet Jehu. They met him at the plot of land that had belonged to Naboth of Jezreel. King Joram demanded, "Do you come in peace, Jehu?"

Jehu replied, "How can there be peace as long as the idolatry and witchcraft of your mother, Jezebel, are all around us?"

Then King Joram turned the horses around and fled, shouting to King Ahaziah, "Treason, Ahaziah!" But Jehu drew his bow and shot Joram between the shoulders. The arrow pierced his heart, and he sank down dead in his chariot.

Jehu said to Bidkar, his officer, "Throw him into the plot of land that belonged to Naboth of Jezreel. Do you remember when you and I were riding along behind his father, Ahab? The LORD pronounced this message against him: 'I solemnly swear that I will repay him here on this plot of land, says the LORD, for the murder of Naboth and his sons that I saw yesterday.' So throw him out on Naboth's property, just as the LORD said."

When King Ahaziah of Judah saw what was happening, he fled along the road to Beth-haggan. Jehu rode after him, shouting, "Shoot him, too!" So they shot Ahaziah in his chariot at the Ascent of Gur, near Ibleam. He was able to go on as far as Megiddo, but he died there. His servants took him by chariot to Jerusalem, where they buried him with his ancestors in the City of David. Ahaziah had become king over Judah in the eleventh year of the reign of Joram son of Ahab.

The Death of Jezebel

When Jezebel, the queen mother, heard that Jehu had come to Jezreel, she painted her eyelids and fixed her hair and sat at a window. When Jehu entered the gate of the palace, she shouted at him, "Have you come in peace, you murderer? You're just like Zimri, who murdered his master!"

Jehu looked up and saw her at the window and shouted, "Who is on my side?" And two or three eunuchs looked out at him. "Throw her down!" Jehu yelled. So they threw her out the window, and her blood splattered against the wall and on the horses. And Jehu trampled her body under his horses' hooves.

Then Jehu went into the palace and ate and drank. Afterward he said, "Someone go and bury this cursed woman, for she is the daughter of a king." But when they

9:1 Hebrew *Joram*, a variant spelling of the Hebrew is uncertain.

9:15 Hebrew *Jehoram*, a variant spelling of Joram; also in 9:17, 21, 22.

9:31 See 1 Kgs 16:9-10, where Zimri killed his master, King Elah.