

and sprinkled it on the altar. Next they killed the rams and sprinkled their blood on the altar. And finally, they did the same with the male lambs. ²³The male goats for the sin offering were then brought before the king and the assembly of people, who laid their hands on them. ²⁴The priests then killed the goats as a sin offering and sprinkled their blood on the altar to make atonement for the sins of all Israel. The king had specifically commanded that this burnt offering and sin offering should be made for all Israel.

²⁵King Hezekiah then stationed the Levites at the Temple of the LORD with cymbals, lyres, and harps. He obeyed all the commands that the LORD had given to King David through Gad, the king's seer, and the prophet Nathan. ²⁶The Levites then took their positions around the Temple with the instruments of David, and the priests took their positions with the trumpets.

²⁷Then Hezekiah ordered that the burnt offering be placed on the altar. As the burnt offering was presented, songs of praise to the LORD were begun, accompanied by the trumpets and other instruments of David, the former king of Israel. ²⁸The entire assembly worshiped the LORD as the singers sang and the trumpets blew, until all the burnt offerings were finished. ²⁹Then the king and everyone with him bowed down in worship. ³⁰King Hezekiah and the officials ordered the Levites to praise the LORD with the psalms written by David and by Asaph the seer. So they offered joyous praise and bowed down in worship.

³¹Then Hezekiah declared, "Now that you have consecrated yourselves to the LORD, bring your sacrifices and thanksgiving offerings to the Temple of the LORD." So the people brought their sacrifices and thanksgiving offerings, and all whose hearts were willing brought burnt offerings, too. ³²The people brought to the LORD 70 bulls, 100 rams, and 200 male lambs for burnt offerings. ³³They also brought 600 cattle and 3,000 sheep and goats as sacred offerings.

³⁴But there were too few priests to prepare all the burnt offerings. So their relatives the Levites helped them until the work was finished and more priests had been purified, for the Levites had been more conscientious about purifying themselves than the priests had been. ³⁵There was an abundance of burnt offerings, along with the usual liquid offerings, and a great deal of fat from the many peace offerings.

So the Temple of the LORD was restored to service. ³⁶And Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced because of what God had done for the people, for everything had been accomplished so quickly.

Preparations for Passover

30 King Hezekiah now sent word to all Israel and Judah, and he wrote letters of invitation to the people of Ephraim and Manasseh. He asked everyone to come to the Temple of the LORD at Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover of the LORD, the God of Israel. ²The king, his officials, and all the community of Jerusalem decided to celebrate Passover a month later than usual. ³They were unable to celebrate it at the prescribed time because not enough priests could be purified by then, and the people had not yet assembled at Jerusalem.

⁴This plan for keeping the Passover seemed right to the king and all the people. ⁵So they sent a proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba in the south to Dan in

the north, inviting everyone to come to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover of the LORD, the God of Israel. The people had not been celebrating it in great numbers as required in the Law.

⁶At the king's command, runners were sent throughout Israel and Judah. They carried letters that said:

"O people of Israel, return to the LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel,* so that he will return to the few of us who have survived the conquest of the Assyrian kings. ⁷Do not be like your ancestors and relatives who abandoned the LORD, the God of their ancestors, and became an object of derision, as you yourselves can see. ⁸Do not be stubborn, as they were, but submit yourselves to the LORD. Come to his Temple which he has set apart as holy forever. Worship the LORD your God so that his fierce anger will turn away from you.

⁹For if you return to the LORD, your relatives and your children will be treated mercifully by their captors and they will be able to return to this land. For the LORD your God is gracious and merciful. If you return to him he will not continue to turn his face from you."

Celebration of Passover

¹⁰The runners went from town to town throughout Ephraim and Manasseh and as far as the territory of Zebulun. But most of the people just laughed at the runners and made fun of them. ¹¹However, some people from Asher, Manasseh and Zebulun humbled themselves and went to Jerusalem.

¹²At the same time, God's hand was on the people in the land of Judah, giving them all one heart to obey the orders of the king and his officials, who were following the word of the LORD. ¹³So a huge crowd assembled at Jerusalem in the middle of the month* to celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread. ¹⁴They set to work and removed the pagan altars from Jerusalem. They took away all the incense altars and threw them into the Kidron Valley.

¹⁵On the fourteenth day of the second month, one month later than usual,* the people slaughtered the Passover lamb. This shamed the priests and Levites, so they purified themselves and brought burnt offerings to the Temple of the LORD. ¹⁶Then they took their places at the Temple as prescribed in the Law of Moses, the man of God. The Levites brought the sacrificial blood to the priests, who then sprinkled it on the altar.

¹⁷Since many of the people had not purified themselves, the Levites had to slaughter their Passover lamb for them and set them apart for the LORD. ¹⁸Most of those who came from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun had not purified themselves. But King Hezekiah prayed for them, and they were allowed to eat the Passover meal anyway, even though this was contrary to the requirements of the Law. For Hezekiah said, "May the LORD, who is good, pardon those who decide to follow the LORD, the God of their ancestors, even though they are not properly cleansed for the ceremony." ¹⁹And the LORD listened to Hezekiah's prayer and healed the people.

²⁰So the people of Israel who were present in Jerusalem joyously celebrated the Festival of Unleavened Bread for seven days. Each day the Levites and priests sang to the LORD, accompanied by loud instruments.* ²¹Hezekiah encouraged all the Levites regarding the skill they displayed as they served the LORD. The celebration continued for seven

days. Peace offerings were sacrificed, and the people gave thanks to the LORD, the God of their ancestors.

²²The entire assembly then decided to continue the festival another seven days, so they celebrated joyfully for another week. ²³King Hezekiah gave the people 1,000 oxen and 7,000 sheep and goats for offerings, and the officials offered 1,000 bulls and 10,000 sheep and goats. ²⁴While many more priests purified themselves.

²⁵The entire assembly of Judah rejoiced, including the priests, the Levites, all who came from the land of Israel, and foreigners who came to the festival, and all those who lived in Judah. ²⁶There was great joy in the city, for Jerusalem had not seen a celebration like this one since the days of King Hezekiah's father, King David's son. ²⁷Then the priests and Levites stood and blessed the people, and God heard their prayer from his holy dwelling in heaven.

Hezekiah's Religious Reforms

31 When the festival ended, the Israelites who attended went to all the towns of Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh, and they smashed all the sacred pillars, and the Asherah poles, and removed the pagan shrines and altars. After this, the Israelites returned to their towns and homes.

Hezekiah then organized the priests and Levites into divisions to offer the burnt offerings and peace offerings, and to worship and give thanks and praise to the LORD at the Temple. ²The king also made a personal contribution of animals for the daily morning and evening burnt offerings, the weekly Sabbath festivals, the monthly new moon festivals, and the annual festivals as prescribed in the Law of the LORD. ³In addition, he required the people in Jerusalem to bring a portion of their goods to the priests and Levites, so they could devote themselves fully to the Law of the LORD.

⁴When the people of Israel heard these requirements, they responded generously by bringing the first share of their grain, new wine, olive oil, honey, and all the produce of their fields. They brought a large quantity—a tithe of all they produced. ⁵The people who had moved to Judah from Israel and the people of Judah themselves, brought in the tithes of their cattle, sheep, and goats and a tithe of the things that had been dedicated to the LORD their God, and they piled them into great heaps. ⁶They began piling them up in late spring, and the heaps continued to grow until early autumn.* ⁷When Hezekiah and his officials came and saw these huge heaps, they thanked the LORD and his people Israel!

⁸"Where did all this come from?" Hezekiah asked the priests and Levites.

⁹And Azariah the high priest, from the family of Zadok, answered, "Since the people began bringing their gifts to the Temple, we have had enough to eat and plenty to spare. The LORD has blessed his people, and all this is left over."

Hezekiah ordered that storerooms be prepared in the Temple of the LORD. When this was done, ¹²the people brought all the tithes and gifts to the Temple. ¹³The Levite was put in charge, assisted by his brothers Shimei. ¹⁴The supervisors under them were Jehiel, Nahath, Asahel, Jerimoth, Jozabad, Eliel, Ismakiah, and Benaiah. These appointments were made by Hezekiah and Azariah, the chief official in the Temple.

¹⁵Uzzi the son of Imnah the Levite, who was the gatekeeper of the East Gate, was put in charge of distributing the volun-

^{30:2} Hebrew in the second month. Passover was normally observed in the first month (of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar). ^{30:6} Israel is the name God gave to Jacob. ^{30:13} Hebrew in the second month. The second month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar usually occurs within the months of April and May. ^{30:15} Hebrew On the fourteenth day of the second month. Passover normally began on the fourteenth day of the first month (see Lev 23:5).

^{30:21} Or sang to the LORD with all their strength.

^{30:21} Hebrew in the third month... until the seventh month. The third month of the Hebrew calendar is the month of Sivan, and the seventh month usually occurs within September and October.

orth, inviting everyone to come to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover of the LORD, the God of Israel. The people had not been celebrating it in great numbers as required by the Law.

At the king's command, runners were sent throughout Judah and Benjamin. They carried letters that said:

"People of Israel, return to the LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel,* so that he will return to us. A few of us who have survived the conquest of the Assyrian kings. 7Do not be like your ancestors and relatives who abandoned the LORD, the God of their fathers, and became an object of derision, as you yourselves can see. 8Do not be stubborn, as they were. Submit yourselves to the LORD. Come to his Temple in Jerusalem. He has set apart as holy forever. Worship the LORD your God so that his fierce anger will turn away from you.

"For if you return to the LORD, your relatives and children will be treated mercifully by their captors. They will be able to return to this land. For the LORD your God is gracious and merciful. If you return to him, he will not continue to turn his face from you."

Preparation of Passover

Runners went from town to town throughout Ephraim, Manasseh and as far as the territory of Zebulun. The people just laughed at the runners and made fun of them. 11However, some people from Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun humbled themselves and went to Jerusalem. At the same time, God's hand was on the people of Judah, giving them all one heart to obey the LORD and his officials, who were following the Law of Moses. 13So a huge crowd assembled at Jerusalem to celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread. They set to work and removed the pagan altars from the land. They took away all the incense altars and threw them into the Kidron Valley.

On the fourteenth day of the second month, one month after the usual,* the people slaughtered the Passover lamb. They called the priests and Levites, so they purified themselves and brought burnt offerings to the Temple of the LORD. Then they took their places at the Temple as prescribed in the Law of Moses, the man of God. The Levites brought the sacrificial blood to the priests, who then sprinkled it on the altar.

Because many of the people had not purified themselves, the priests had to slaughter their Passover lamb for them. They set apart for the LORD. 18Most of those who came from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun had not purified themselves. But King Hezekiah prayed for them, and they were allowed to eat the Passover meal anyway, even though it was contrary to the requirements of the Law. For Hezekiah said, "May the LORD, who is good, pardon those who do not follow the LORD, the God of their ancestors, because they are not properly cleansed for the ceremonial purposes. The LORD listened to Hezekiah's prayer and healed them."

Hezekiah invited all the people of Israel who were present in Jerusalem to celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread. Each day the Levites and priests sang with harps, accompanied by loud instruments.* 22Hezekiah invited all the Levites regarding the skill they displayed in serving the LORD. The celebration continued for seven days.

On the eighth day, the king's son, Shebna, the chief of the palace, was put in charge of distributing the burnt offerings.

On the ninth day, the king's son, Shebna, the chief of the palace, was put in charge of distributing the burnt offerings.

On the tenth day, the king's son, Shebna, the chief of the palace, was put in charge of distributing the burnt offerings.

On the eleventh day, the king's son, Shebna, the chief of the palace, was put in charge of distributing the burnt offerings.

On the twelfth day, the king's son, Shebna, the chief of the palace, was put in charge of distributing the burnt offerings.

On the thirteenth day, the king's son, Shebna, the chief of the palace, was put in charge of distributing the burnt offerings.

On the fourteenth day, the king's son, Shebna, the chief of the palace, was put in charge of distributing the burnt offerings.

On the fifteenth day, the king's son, Shebna, the chief of the palace, was put in charge of distributing the burnt offerings.

On the sixteenth day, the king's son, Shebna, the chief of the palace, was put in charge of distributing the burnt offerings.

On the seventeenth day, the king's son, Shebna, the chief of the palace, was put in charge of distributing the burnt offerings.

On the eighteenth day, the king's son, Shebna, the chief of the palace, was put in charge of distributing the burnt offerings.

On the nineteenth day, the king's son, Shebna, the chief of the palace, was put in charge of distributing the burnt offerings.

On the twentieth day, the king's son, Shebna, the chief of the palace, was put in charge of distributing the burnt offerings.

On the twenty-first day, the king's son, Shebna, the chief of the palace, was put in charge of distributing the burnt offerings.

On the twenty-second day, the king's son, Shebna, the chief of the palace, was put in charge of distributing the burnt offerings.

On the twenty-third day, the king's son, Shebna, the chief of the palace, was put in charge of distributing the burnt offerings.

On the twenty-fourth day, the king's son, Shebna, the chief of the palace, was put in charge of distributing the burnt offerings.

On the twenty-fifth day, the king's son, Shebna, the chief of the palace, was put in charge of distributing the burnt offerings.

Peace offerings were sacrificed, and the people gave thanks to the LORD, the God of their ancestors.

The entire assembly then decided to continue the festival for another seven days, so they celebrated joyfully for another week. 24King Hezekiah gave the people 1,000 bulls and 7,000 sheep and goats for offerings, and the officials offered 1,000 bulls and 10,000 sheep and goats. Meanwhile, many more priests purified themselves.

The entire assembly of Judah rejoiced, including the Levites, all who came from the land of Israel, the foreigners who came to the festival, and all those who lived in Judah. 26There was great joy in the city, for Jerusalem had never seen a celebration like this one since the days of Solomon, King David's son. 27Then the priests and Levites praised and blessed the people, and God heard their prayer from his holy dwelling in heaven.

Hezekiah's Religious Reforms

31 When the festival ended, the Israelites who attended went to all the towns of Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, Manasseh, and they smashed all the sacred pillars, cut down the Asherah poles, and removed the pagan shrines and altars. After this, the Israelites returned to their own towns and homes.

Hezekiah then organized the priests and Levites into divisions to offer the burnt offerings and peace offerings, and to worship and give thanks and praise to the LORD at the Temple. 3The king also made a personal contribution of animals for the daily morning and evening burnt offerings, the weekly Sabbath festivals, the monthly new moon festivals, and the annual festivals as prescribed in the Law of the LORD. 4In addition, he required the people in Jerusalem to bring a portion of their goods to the priests and Levites so they could devote themselves fully to the Law of the LORD.

When the people of Israel heard these requirements, they responded generously by bringing the first share of their grain, new wine, olive oil, honey, and all the produce of the fields. They brought a large quantity—a tithe of all they had.

6The people who had moved to Judah from Israel, the people of Judah themselves, brought in the tithes of their grain, sheep, and goats and a tithe of the things that had been dedicated to the LORD their God, and they piled them in great heaps. 7They began piling them up in late spring, and the heaps continued to grow until early autumn. 8Hezekiah and his officials came and saw these huge heaps. They thanked the LORD and his people Israel! 9Where did all this come from?" Hezekiah asked the Levites.

10Azariah the high priest, from the family of Zadok, answered, "Since the people began bringing their gifts to the Temple, we have had enough to eat and plenty to spare. The LORD has blessed his people, and all this is left over."

Hezekiah ordered that storerooms be prepared in the Temple of the LORD. When this was done, 12the people brought all the tithes and gifts to the Temple. 13The Levite was put in charge, assisted by his brothers Shimei. 14The supervisors under them were Jehiel, Uzziah, Nahath, Asahel, Jerimoth, Jozabab, Eiel, Ismakiah, and Benaiah. These appointments were made by Hezekiah and Azariah, the chief official in the Temple.

15The son of Imnah the Levite, who was the gatekeeper of the Temple Gate, was put in charge of distributing the voluntary offerings.

16The son of Imnah the Levite, who was the gatekeeper of the Temple Gate, was put in charge of distributing the voluntary offerings.

17The son of Imnah the Levite, who was the gatekeeper of the Temple Gate, was put in charge of distributing the voluntary offerings.

18The son of Imnah the Levite, who was the gatekeeper of the Temple Gate, was put in charge of distributing the voluntary offerings.

19The son of Imnah the Levite, who was the gatekeeper of the Temple Gate, was put in charge of distributing the voluntary offerings.

20The son of Imnah the Levite, who was the gatekeeper of the Temple Gate, was put in charge of distributing the voluntary offerings.

21The son of Imnah the Levite, who was the gatekeeper of the Temple Gate, was put in charge of distributing the voluntary offerings.

22The son of Imnah the Levite, who was the gatekeeper of the Temple Gate, was put in charge of distributing the voluntary offerings.

23The son of Imnah the Levite, who was the gatekeeper of the Temple Gate, was put in charge of distributing the voluntary offerings.

24The son of Imnah the Levite, who was the gatekeeper of the Temple Gate, was put in charge of distributing the voluntary offerings.

25The son of Imnah the Levite, who was the gatekeeper of the Temple Gate, was put in charge of distributing the voluntary offerings.

26The son of Imnah the Levite, who was the gatekeeper of the Temple Gate, was put in charge of distributing the voluntary offerings.

27The son of Imnah the Levite, who was the gatekeeper of the Temple Gate, was put in charge of distributing the voluntary offerings.

28The son of Imnah the Levite, who was the gatekeeper of the Temple Gate, was put in charge of distributing the voluntary offerings.

29The son of Imnah the Levite, who was the gatekeeper of the Temple Gate, was put in charge of distributing the voluntary offerings.

30The son of Imnah the Levite, who was the gatekeeper of the Temple Gate, was put in charge of distributing the voluntary offerings.

31The son of Imnah the Levite, who was the gatekeeper of the Temple Gate, was put in charge of distributing the voluntary offerings.

32The son of Imnah the Levite, who was the gatekeeper of the Temple Gate, was put in charge of distributing the voluntary offerings.

tary offerings given to God, the gifts, and the things that had been dedicated to the LORD. 15His faithful assistants were Eden, Miniamin, Jeshua, Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shecaniah. They distributed the gifts among the families of priests in their towns by their divisions, dividing the gifts fairly among old and young alike. 16They distributed the gifts to all males three years old or older, regardless of their place in the genealogical records. The distribution went to all who would come to the LORD's Temple to perform their daily duties according to their divisions. 17They distributed gifts to the priests who were listed by their families in the genealogical records, and to the Levites twenty years old or older who were listed according to their jobs and their divisions. 18Food allotments were also given to the families of all those listed in the genealogical records, including their little babies, wives, sons, and daughters. For they had all been faithful in purifying themselves.

19As for the priests, the descendants of Aaron, who were living in the open villages around the towns, men were appointed by name to distribute portions to every male among the priests and to all the Levites listed in the genealogical records.

20In this way, King Hezekiah handled the distribution throughout all Judah, doing what was pleasing and good in the sight of the LORD his God. 21In all that he did in the service of the Temple of God and in his efforts to follow God's laws and commands, Hezekiah sought his God wholeheartedly. As a result, he was very successful.

Assyria Invades Judah

32 After Hezekiah had faithfully carried out this work, King Sennacherib of Assyria invaded Judah. He laid siege to the fortified towns, giving orders for his army to break through their walls. 2When Hezekiah realized that Sennacherib also intended to attack Jerusalem, 3he consulted with his officials and military advisers, and they decided to stop the flow of the springs outside the city. 4They organized a huge work crew to stop the flow of the springs, cutting off the brook that ran through the fields. For they said, "Why should the kings of Assyria come here and find plenty of water?"

5Then Hezekiah worked hard at repairing all the broken sections of the wall, erecting towers, and constructing a second wall outside the first. He also reinforced the supporting terraces* in the City of David and manufactured large numbers of weapons and shields. 6He appointed military officers over the people and assembled them before him in the square at the city gate. Then Hezekiah encouraged them by saying: 7"Be strong and courageous! Don't be afraid or discouraged because of the king of Assyria or his mighty army, for there is a power far greater on our side! 8He may have a great army, but they are merely men. We have the LORD our God to help us and to fight our battles for us!" Hezekiah's words greatly encouraged the people.

Sennacherib Threatens Jerusalem

9While King Sennacherib of Assyria was still besieging the town of Lachish, he sent his officers to Jerusalem with this message for Hezekiah and all the people in the city:

10"This is what King Sennacherib of Assyria says: What are you trusting in that makes you think you can survive my siege of Jerusalem? 11Hezekiah has said, 'The LORD our God will rescue us from the king of Assyria.' Surely Hezekiah is misleading you, sentencing you to death by

*The third month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar usually occurs within the months of March and April.

*The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

famine and thirst! ¹²Don't you realize that Hezekiah is the very person who destroyed all the LORD's shrines and altars? He commanded Judah and Jerusalem to worship only at the altar at the Temple and to offer sacrifices on it alone.

¹³Surely you must realize what I and the other kings of Assyria before me have done to all the people of the earth! Were any of the gods of those nations able to rescue their people from my power? ¹⁴Which of their gods was able to rescue its people from the destructive power of my predecessors? What makes you think your God can rescue you from me? ¹⁵Don't let Hezekiah deceive you! Don't let him fool you like this! I say it again—no god of any nation or kingdom has ever yet been able to rescue his people from me or my ancestors. How much less will your God rescue you from my power!"

¹⁶And Sennacherib's officers further mocked the LORD God and his servant Hezekiah, heaping insult upon insult. ¹⁷The king also sent letters scorning the LORD, the God of Israel. He wrote, "Just as the gods of all the other nations failed to rescue their people from my power, so the God of Hezekiah will also fail." ¹⁸The Assyrian officials who brought the letters shouted this in Hebrew* to the people gathered on the walls of the city, trying to terrify them so it would be easier to capture the city. ¹⁹These officers talked about the God of Jerusalem as though he were one of the pagan gods, made by human hands.

²⁰Then King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz cried out in prayer to God in heaven. ²¹And the LORD sent an angel who destroyed the Assyrian army with all its commanders and officers. So Sennacherib was forced to return home in disgrace to his own land. And when he entered the temple of his god, some of his own sons killed him there with a sword.

²²That is how the LORD rescued Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem from King Sennacherib of Assyria and from all the others who threatened them. So there was peace throughout the land. ²³From then on King Hezekiah became highly respected among all the surrounding nations, and many gifts for the LORD arrived at Jerusalem, with valuable presents for King Hezekiah, too.

Hezekiah's Sickness and Recovery

²⁴About that time Hezekiah became deathly ill. He prayed to the LORD, who healed him and gave him a miraculous sign. ²⁵But Hezekiah did not respond appropriately to the kindness shown him, and he became proud. So the LORD's anger came against him and against Judah and Jerusalem. ²⁶Then Hezekiah humbled himself and repented of his pride, as did the people of Jerusalem. So the LORD's anger did not fall on them during Hezekiah's lifetime.

²⁷Hezekiah was very wealthy and highly honored. He built special treasury buildings for his silver, gold, precious stones, and spices, and for his shields and other valuable items. ²⁸He also constructed many storehouses for his grain, new wine, and olive oil; and he made many stalls for his cattle and pens for his flocks of sheep and goats. ²⁹He built many towns and acquired vast flocks and herds, for God had given him great wealth. ³⁰He blocked up the upper spring of Gihon and brought the water down through a tunnel to the west side of the City of David. And so he succeeded in everything he did.

³¹However, when ambassadors arrived from Babylon to ask about the remarkable events that had taken place in the

land, God withdrew from Hezekiah in order to test him and to see what was really in his heart.

Summary of Hezekiah's Reign

³²The rest of the events in Hezekiah's reign and his acts of devotion are recorded in *The Vision of the Prophet Isaiah Son of Amoz*, which is included in *The Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel*. ³³When Hezekiah died, he was buried in the upper area of the royal cemetery, and all Judah and Jerusalem honored him at his death. And his son Manasseh became the next king.

Manasseh Rules in Judah

33 Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-five years. ²He did what was evil in the LORD's sight, following the detestable practices of the pagan nations that the LORD had driven from the land ahead of the Israelites. ³He rebuilt the pagan shrines his father, Hezekiah, had broken down. He constructed altars for the images of Baal and set up Asherah poles. He also bowed before all the powers of the heavens and worshiped them.

⁴He built pagan altars in the Temple of the LORD, the place where the LORD had said, "My name will remain in Jerusalem forever." ⁵He built these altars for all the powers of the heavens in both courtyards of the LORD's Temple. ⁶Manasseh sacrificed his own sons in the fire* in the valley of Ben Hinnom. He practiced sorcery, divination, and witchcraft, and he consulted with mediums and psychics. He did what was evil in the LORD's sight, arousing his anger.

⁷Manasseh even took a carved idol he had made and set up in God's Temple, the very place where God had told David and his son Solomon: "My name will be honored forever in this Temple and in Jerusalem—the city I have chosen from among all the tribes of Israel. ⁸If the Israelites will be careful to obey my commands—all the laws, decrees, and regulations given through Moses—I will not send them into exile from this land that I set aside for your ancestors." ⁹But Manasseh led the people of Judah and Jerusalem to do even more evil than the pagan nations that the LORD had destroyed when the people of Israel entered the land.

¹⁰The LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they ignored all his warnings. ¹¹So the LORD sent the commanders of the Assyrian armies, and they took Manasseh prisoner. They put a ring through his nose, bound him in bronze chains, and led him away to Babylon. ¹²But while in captivity, Manasseh sought the LORD his God and sincerely humbled himself before the God of his ancestors. ¹³When he prayed, the LORD listened to him and was moved by his request. So the LORD brought Manasseh back to Jerusalem and to his kingdom. Then Manasseh finally realized that the LORD alone is God!

¹⁴After this Manasseh rebuilt the outer wall of the City of David, from west of the Gihon Spring in the Kidron Valley to the Fish Gate, and continuing around the hill of Ophel. He built the wall very high. And he stationed his military officers in all of the fortified towns of Judah. ¹⁵Manasseh removed the foreign gods and the idol from the Temple. He tore down all the altars he had built on the hill where the Temple stood and all the altars that were in the towns of Judah, and he dumped them outside the city. ¹⁶Then he restored the altar of the LORD and sacrificed peace offerings and thanksgiving offerings on it. He also encouraged the people of Judah to worship the LORD, the God of Israel. ¹⁷However, the people still sacrificed at the pagan altars, though only to the LORD their God.

¹⁸The rest of the events of Manasseh's reign, his prayer to the LORD, and the words the seers spoke to him in the name of the LORD, the God of Israel, are recorded in *The Book of the Kings of Israel*. ¹⁹Manasseh's prayer, the account of his devotion to the LORD, and an account of all his sins and acts of unfaithfulness are recorded in *The Record of the Seers*. ²⁰Manasseh made a list of the locations where he built pagan altars and set up Asherah poles and idols before he humbled himself and repented. ²¹When Manasseh died, he was buried in the palace. Then his son Amon became the next king.

Amon Rules in Judah

Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem two years. ²²He did what was evil in the LORD's sight, just as his father, Manasseh, had done. He worshiped and sacrificed to all the idols his father had made. ²³But unlike his father, he did not humble himself before the LORD. Instead, Amon sinned even more. ²⁴Then Amon's own officials conspired against him and assassinated him in his palace. ²⁵But the people of the land did not turn away from the idols their fathers had made. His son Josiah the next king.

Josiah Rules in Judah

34 Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem thirty-one years. ²He did what was pleasing in the LORD's sight and followed the commands of his ancestor David. He did not turn away from the LORD, and he did what was right.

³During the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, Josiah began to seek the God of his ancestor David. ⁴In the twelfth year he began to purify Judah and Jerusalem, destroying all the pagan shrines, the Asherah poles, the carved idols and cast images. ⁵He ordered that the altars of Baal be demolished and that the incense altars that stood above them be broken down. He also made the Asherah poles, the carved idols, and the cast images be smashed and scattered over the graves of the people who had sacrificed to them. ⁶He burned the bones of the people who had sacrificed on their own altars, and so he purified Judah and Jerusalem.

⁷He did the same thing in the towns of Manasseh, Ephraim, Simeon, even as far as Naphtali, and in the region around them. ⁸He destroyed the pagan altars and the Asherah poles, and he crushed the idols into dust. He carried away all the incense altars throughout the land of Israel, and he returned to Jerusalem.

⁹In the eighteenth year of his reign, after he had purified the Temple and the Temple, Josiah appointed Shaphan son of Azbub, Manasseh the governor of Jerusalem, and Joah son of Phobai the royal historian, to repair the Temple of the LORD. ¹⁰They gave Hilkiah the high priest the money that had been collected by the Levites who served as gatekeepers at the Temple of God. The gifts were brought by the Levites from Manasseh, Ephraim, and from all the remnant of the tribes of Israel, as well as from all Judah, Benjamin, and the people of Simeon.

¹¹He entrusted the money to the men assigned to supervise the restoration of the LORD's Temple. Then they paid the workers who did the repairs and renovation of the Temple. They hired carpenters and builders, who purchased stone for the walls and timber for the rafters and beams. They restored what earlier kings of Judah had allowed to fall into ruin.

¹²As in Syriac version. Hebrew reads in the parallel text at 2 Kgs 22:12; Hebrew reads *Abdon son of Micah*. ¹³As in parallel text at 2 Kgs 22:14; Hebrew reads son of T.

32:18 Hebrew in the dialect of Judah. 33:6 Or also made his sons pass through the fire.

God withdrew from Hezekiah in order to test him and see what was really in his heart.

Summary of Hezekiah's Reign

The rest of the events in Hezekiah's reign and his actual actions are recorded in *The Vision of the Prophet Isaiah of Amos*, which is included in *The Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel*.³³When Hezekiah died, he was buried in the upper area of the royal cemetery, and all Judah and Jerusalem honored him at his death. And his son Manasseh became the next king.

Manasseh Rules in Judah

Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-five years. He did what was evil in the LORD's sight, following the detestable practices of the pagan nations that the LORD had banished from the land ahead of the Israelites.³He rebuilt pagan shrines his father, Hezekiah, had broken down. He constructed altars for the images of Baal and set up Asherah poles. He also bowed before all the powers of the heavens and worshiped them.

He built pagan altars in the Temple of the LORD, the place the LORD had said, "My name will remain in Jerusalem forever."⁵He built these altars for all the powers of the heavens in both courtyards of the LORD's Temple.⁶Manasseh sacrificed his own sons in the fire* in the valley of Ben Hinnom. He practiced sorcery, divination, and witchcraft. He consulted with mediums and psychics. He did much that was evil in the LORD's sight, arousing his anger.

Manasseh even took a carved idol he had made and set it up in the Temple, the very place where God had told David his son Solomon: "My name will be honored forever in the Temple and in Jerusalem—the city I have chosen for my people, all the tribes of Israel. If the Israelites will be obedient to my commands—all the laws, decrees, and regulations given through Moses—I will not send them into exile from this land that I set aside for your ancestors." But Manasseh led the people of Judah and Jerusalem to do more evil than the pagan nations that the LORD had banished when the people of Israel entered the land.

The LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they did not listen to all his warnings.¹¹So the LORD sent the commander of the Assyrian armies, and they took Manasseh prisoner. They put a ring through his nose, bound him in bronze shackles, and led him away to Babylon.¹²But while in captivity, Manasseh sought the LORD his God and humbled himself before the God of his ancestors.¹³When he prayed, the LORD listened to him and was moved by his request. So the LORD brought Manasseh back to Jerusalem and to his kingdom. Then Manasseh finally realized that the LORD alone is God!

After this Manasseh rebuilt the outer wall of the Temple, from west of the Gihon Spring in the Kidron Valley to the Fish Gate, and continuing around the hill of Ophel to the wall very high. And he stationed his military in all of the fortified towns of Judah.¹⁵Manasseh had removed the foreign gods and the idol from the Temple. He tore down all the altars he had built on the hill, and he dumped them outside the city.¹⁶Then he built the altar of the LORD and sacrificed peace offerings and thanksgiving offerings on it. He also encouraged the people of Judah to worship the LORD, the God of their fathers, but the people still sacrificed at the pagan shrines only to the LORD their God.

The rest of the events of Manasseh's reign, his prayer to the LORD, and the words the seers spoke to him in the name of the LORD, the God of Israel, are recorded in *The Book of the Kings of Israel*.¹⁹Manasseh's prayer, the account of the way he answered him, and an account of all his sins and unrighteousness are recorded in *The Record of the Seers*.^{*} It includes a list of the locations where he built pagan shrines and set up Asherah poles and idols before he humbled himself and repented.²⁰When Manasseh died, he was buried in peace. Then his son Amon became the next king.

Amon Rules in Judah

Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem two years.²²He did what was evil in the LORD's sight, just as his father, Manasseh, had done. He worshiped and sacrificed to all the idols his father had made.²³But unlike his father, he did not humble himself before the LORD. Instead, Amon sinned even more. Then Amon's own officials conspired against him and assassinated him in his palace.²⁵But the people of the land did not all those who had conspired against King Amon, and they made his son Josiah the next king.

Josiah Rules in Judah

Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem thirty-one years.²He did what was pleasing in the LORD's sight and followed the example of his ancestor David. He did not turn away from the LORD, and what was right.

During the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, Josiah began to seek the God of his ancestor David. In the twelfth year he began to purify Judah and Jerusalem, destroying all the pagan shrines, the Asherah poles, the carved idols and cast images.⁴He ordered that the altars of Baal be demolished and that the incense altars that stood above them be broken down. He also made the Asherah poles, the carved idols, and the cast images were smashed and scattered over the graves of those who had sacrificed to them.⁵He burned the bones of the pagan priests on their own altars, and so he purified Judah and Jerusalem.

He did the same thing in the towns of Manasseh, Ephraim, Simeon, even as far as Naphtali, and in the regions* around them.⁷He destroyed the pagan altars and the Asherah poles, and he crushed the idols into dust. He cut down all the incense altars throughout the land of Israel. Then he returned to Jerusalem.

In the eighteenth year of his reign, after he had purified the land and the Temple, Josiah appointed Shaphan son of Azbub, Maaseiah the governor of Jerusalem, and Joah son of Nethaniah, the royal historian, to repair the Temple of the LORD for the LORD his God.⁹They gave Hilkiah the high priest the money that had been collected by the Levites who served as gatekeepers at the Temple of God. The gifts were brought by Shaphan from Manasseh, Ephraim, and from all the remnant of Judah, as well as from all Judah, Benjamin, and the people of Jerusalem.

He entrusted the money to the men assigned to supervise the restoration of the LORD's Temple. Then they paid the workers who did the repairs and renovation of the Temple. They hired carpenters and builders, who purchased stone for the walls and timber for the rafters and beams. They restored what earlier kings of Judah had allowed to fall into ruin.

The Record of Hozai. 34:6 As in Syriac version. Hebrew reads *in their temples, or in their ruins*. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. *34:22a* Or *the Second Quarter*, a newer section of Jerusalem. Hebrew reads *34:22b* As in parallel text at 2 Kgs 22:12; Hebrew reads *Abdon son of Micah*.

34:24 Hebrew *this place*; also in 34:27, 28.

¹²The workers served faithfully under the leadership of Jahath and Obadiah, Levites of the Merarite clan, and Zechariah and Meshullam, Levites of the Kohathite clan. Other Levites, all of whom were skilled musicians, were put in charge of the laborers of the various trades. Still others assisted as secretaries, officials, and gatekeepers.

Hilkiah Discovers God's Law

¹⁴While they were bringing out the money collected at the LORD's Temple, Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the LORD that was written by Moses.¹⁵Hilkiah said to Shaphan the court secretary, "I have found the Book of the Law in the LORD's Temple!" Then Hilkiah gave the scroll to Shaphan.

¹⁶Shaphan took the scroll to the king and reported, "Your officials are doing everything they were assigned to do. The money that was collected at the Temple of the LORD has been turned over to the supervisors and workmen." ¹⁸Shaphan also told the king, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a scroll." So Shaphan read it to the king.

¹⁹When the king heard what was written in the Law, he tore his clothes in despair.²⁰Then he gave these orders to Hilkiah, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Acbor son of Micaiah,* Shaphan the court secretary, and Asaiah the king's personal adviser: ²¹"Go to the Temple and speak to the LORD for me and for all the remnant of Israel and Judah. Inquire about the words written in the scroll that has been found. For the LORD's great anger has been poured out on us because our ancestors have not obeyed the word of the LORD. We have not been doing everything this scroll says we must do."

²²So Hilkiah and the other men went to the New Quarter* of Jerusalem to consult with the prophet Huldah. She was the wife of Shallum son of Tikvah, son of Harhas,* the keeper of the Temple wardrobe.

²³She said to them, "The LORD, the God of Israel, has spoken! Go back and tell the man who sent you, ²⁴"This is what the LORD says: I am going to bring disaster on this city* and its people. All the curses written in the scroll that was read to the king of Judah will come true. ²⁵For my people have abandoned me and offered sacrifices to pagan gods, and I am very angry with them for everything they have done. My anger will be poured out on this place, and it will not be quenched."

²⁶"But go to the king of Judah who sent you to seek the LORD and tell him: 'This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says concerning the message you have just heard: ²⁷You were sorry and humbled yourself before God when you heard his words against this city and its people. You humbled yourself and tore your clothing in despair and wept before me in repentance. And I have indeed heard you, says the LORD. ²⁸So I will not send the promised disaster until after you have died and been buried in peace. You yourself will not see the disaster I am going to bring on this city and its people.'"

So they took her message back to the king.

Josiah's Religious Reforms

²⁹Then the king summoned all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem.³⁰And the king went up to the Temple of the LORD with all the people of Judah and Jerusalem, along with the priests and the Levites—all the people from the greatest to the least. There the king read to them the entire Book of the Covenant that had been found in the LORD's Temple.

³¹The king took his place of authority beside the pillar and

renewed the covenant in the LORD's presence. He pledged to obey the LORD by keeping all his commands, laws, and decrees with all his heart and soul. He promised to obey all the terms of the covenant that were written in the scroll.³² And he required everyone in Jerusalem and the people of Benjamin to make a similar pledge. The people of Jerusalem did so, renewing their covenant with God, the God of their ancestors.

³³ So Josiah removed all detestable idols from the entire land of Israel and required everyone to worship the LORD their God. And throughout the rest of his lifetime, they did not turn away from the LORD, the God of their ancestors.

Josiah Celebrates Passover

35 Then Josiah announced that the Passover of the LORD would be celebrated in Jerusalem, and so the Passover lamb was slaughtered on the fourteenth day of the first month.* ² Josiah also assigned the priests to their duties and encouraged them in their work at the Temple of the LORD. ³ He issued this order to the Levites, who were to teach all Israel and who had been set apart to serve the LORD: "Put the holy Ark in the Temple that was built by Solomon son of David, the king of Israel. You no longer need to carry it back and forth on your shoulders. Now spend your time serving the LORD your God and his people Israel. ⁴ Report for duty according to the family divisions of your ancestors, following the directions of King David of Israel and the directions of his son Solomon.

⁵ Then stand in the sanctuary at the place appointed for your family division and help the families assigned to you as they bring their offerings to the Temple. ⁶ Slaughter the Passover lambs, purify yourselves, and prepare to help those who come. Follow all the directions that the LORD gave through Moses."

⁷ Then Josiah provided 30,000 lambs and young goats for the people's Passover offerings, along with 3,000 cattle, all from the king's own flocks and herds. ⁸ The king's officials also made willing contributions to the people, priests, and Levites. Hilkiyah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, the administrators of God's Temple, gave the priests 2,600 lambs and young goats and 300 cattle as Passover offerings. ⁹ The Levite leaders—Conaniah and his brothers Shemaiah and Nethanel, as well as Hashabiah, Jaiel, and Jozabad—gave 5,000 lambs and young goats and 500 cattle to the Levites for their Passover offerings.

¹⁰ When everything was ready for the Passover celebration, the priests and the Levites took their places, organized by their divisions, as the king had commanded. ¹¹ The Levites then slaughtered the Passover lambs and presented the blood to the priests, who sprinkled the blood on the altar while the Levites prepared the animals. ¹² They divided the burnt offerings among the people by their family groups, so they could offer them to the LORD as prescribed in the Book of Moses. They did the same with the cattle. ¹³ Then they roasted the Passover lambs as prescribed; and they boiled the holy offerings in pots, kettles, and pans, and brought them out quickly so the people could eat them.

¹⁴ Afterward the Levites prepared Passover offerings for themselves and for the priests—the descendants of Aaron—because the priests had been busy from morning till night offering the burnt offerings and the fat portions. The Levites took responsibility for all these preparations.

¹⁵ The musicians, descendants of Asaph, were in their assigned places, following the commands that had been given by David, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, the king's seer. The

gatekeepers guarded the gates and did not need to leave their posts of duty, for their Passover offerings were prepared for them by their fellow Levites.

¹⁶ The entire ceremony for the LORD's Passover was completed that day. All the burnt offerings were sacrificed on the altar of the LORD, as King Josiah had commanded. ¹⁷ All the Israelites present in Jerusalem celebrated Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread for seven days. ¹⁸ Never since the time of the prophet Samuel had there been such a Passover. None of the kings of Israel had ever kept a Passover as Josiah did, involving all the priests and Levites, all the people of Jerusalem, and people from all over Judah and Israel. ¹⁹ This Passover celebration took place in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign.

Josiah Dies in Battle

²⁰ After Josiah had finished restoring the Temple, King Neco of Egypt led his army up from Egypt to do battle at Carchemish on the Euphrates River, and Josiah and his army marched out to fight him.* ²¹ But King Neco sent messengers to Josiah with this message:

"What do you want with me, king of Judah? I have no quarrel with you today! I am on my way to fight another nation, and God has told me to hurry! Do not interfere with God, who is with me, or he will destroy you."

²² But Josiah refused to listen to Neco, to whom God had indeed spoken, and he would not turn back. Instead, he disguised himself and led his army into battle on the plain of Megiddo. ²³ But the enemy archers hit King Josiah with the arrows and wounded him. He cried out to his men, "Take me from the battle, for I am badly wounded!"

²⁴ So they lifted Josiah out of his chariot and placed him in another chariot. Then they brought him back to Jerusalem where he died. He was buried there in the royal cemetery. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for him. ²⁵ The prophet Jeremiah composed funeral songs for Josiah, and this day choirs still sing these sad songs about his death. These songs of sorrow have become a tradition and are recorded in *The Book of Laments*.

²⁶ The rest of the events of Josiah's reign and his acts of devotion (carried out according to what was written in the Law of the LORD), ²⁷ from beginning to end—all are recorded in *The Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah*.

Jehoahaz Rules in Judah

36 Then the people of the land took Josiah's son Jehoahaz and made him the next king in Jerusalem.

² Jehoahaz* was twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months.

³ Then he was deposed by the king of Egypt, who commanded that Judah pay 7,500 pounds of silver and 75 pounds of gold* as tribute.

Jehoiakim Rules in Judah

⁴ The king of Egypt then installed Eliakim, the brother of Jehoahaz, as the next king of Judah and Jerusalem, and changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim. Then Neco took Jehoahaz to Egypt as a prisoner.

⁵ Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD his God.

⁶ Then King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to Jerusalem and captured it, and he bound Jehoiakim in bronze chains and led him away to Babylon. ⁷ Nebuchadnezzar

took some of the treasures from the Temple and he placed them in his palace* in Babylon.

⁸ The rest of the events in Jehoiakim's reign and the evil things he did and everything found and recorded in *The Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah*. His son Jehoiachin became the next king.

Jehoiachin Rules in Judah

⁹ Jehoiachin was eighteen* years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months and ten days. He did what was evil in the LORD's sight.

¹⁰ In the spring of the year* King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon took Jehoiachin to Babylon. Many treasures from the Temple of the LORD were also taken to Babylon at that time. ¹¹ Zedekiah installed Jehoiachin's uncle,* Zedekiah, as the next king in Judah and Jerusalem.

Zedekiah Rules in Judah

¹² Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. ¹³ He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD his God, and he refused to listen to the prophet Jeremiah who spoke to him from the LORD. ¹⁴ He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, even though he had taken an oath in God's name. Zedekiah was a hard and stubborn man, refusing to turn to the LORD, the God of Israel.

¹⁵ Likewise, all the leaders of the priests and the people became more and more unfaithful. They followed the practices of the surrounding nations, desecrating the Temple of the LORD that had been consecrated in Israel.

¹⁶ The LORD, the God of their ancestors, repeated through his prophets to warn them, for he had compassion for his people and his Temple. ¹⁷ But the people mocked the messengers of God and despised their words. They

did not listen to the voice of the LORD their God, nor did they obey his commands. ¹⁸ As in one Hebrew manuscript, some Greek manuscripts, and the Latin Vulgate: ¹⁹ Hebrew reads *the turn of the year*. The first day of this year is the first day of the month. ²⁰ Hebrew reads *brother*, or *relative*. ²¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁴⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁴¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁴² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁴³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁴⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁴⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁴⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁴⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁴⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁴⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁵⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁵¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁵² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁵³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁵⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁵⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁵⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁵⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁵⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁵⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁶⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁶¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁶² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁶³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁶⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁶⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁶⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁶⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁶⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁶⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁷⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁷¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁷² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁷³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁷⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁷⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁷⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁷⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁷⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁷⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁸⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁸¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁸² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁸³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁸⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁸⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁸⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁸⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁸⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁸⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁹⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁹¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁹² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁹³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁹⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁹⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁹⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁹⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁹⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ⁹⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁰⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁰¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁰² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁰³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁰⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁰⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁰⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁰⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁰⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁰⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹¹⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹¹¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹¹² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹¹³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹¹⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹¹⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹¹⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹¹⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹¹⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹¹⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹²⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹²¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹²² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹²³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹²⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹²⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹²⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹²⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹²⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹²⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹³⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹³¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹³² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹³³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹³⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹³⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹³⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹³⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹³⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹³⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁴⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁴¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁴² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁴³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁴⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁴⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁴⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁴⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁴⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁴⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁵⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁵¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁵² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁵³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁵⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁵⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁵⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁵⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁵⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁵⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁶⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁶¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁶² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁶³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁶⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁶⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁶⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁶⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁶⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁶⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁷⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁷¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁷² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁷³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁷⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁷⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁷⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁷⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁷⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁷⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁸⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁸¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁸² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁸³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁸⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁸⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁸⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁸⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁸⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁸⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁹⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁹¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁹² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁹³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁹⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁹⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁹⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁹⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁹⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ¹⁹⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁰⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁰¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁰² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁰³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁰⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁰⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁰⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁰⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁰⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁰⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²¹⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²¹¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²¹² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²¹³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²¹⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²¹⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²¹⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²¹⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²¹⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²¹⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²²⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²²¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²²² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²²³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²²⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²²⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²²⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²²⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²²⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²²⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²³⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²³¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²³² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²³³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²³⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²³⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²³⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²³⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²³⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²³⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁴⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁴¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁴² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁴³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁴⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁴⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁴⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁴⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁴⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁴⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁵⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁵¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁵² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁵³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁵⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁵⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁵⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁵⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁵⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁵⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁶⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁶¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁶² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁶³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁶⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁶⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁶⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁶⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁶⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁶⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁷⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁷¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁷² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁷³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁷⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁷⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁷⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁷⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁷⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁷⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁸⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁸¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁸² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁸³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁸⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁸⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁸⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁸⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁸⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁸⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁹⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁹¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁹² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁹³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁹⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁹⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁹⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁹⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁹⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ²⁹⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁰⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁰¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁰² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁰³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁰⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁰⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁰⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁰⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁰⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁰⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³¹⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³¹¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³¹² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³¹³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³¹⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³¹⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³¹⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³¹⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³¹⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³¹⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³²⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³²¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³²² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³²³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³²⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³²⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³²⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³²⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³²⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³²⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³³⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³³¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³³² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³³³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³³⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³³⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³³⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³³⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³³⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³³⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁴⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁴¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁴² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁴³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁴⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁴⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁴⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁴⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁴⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁴⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁵⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁵¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁵² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁵³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁵⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁵⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁵⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁵⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁵⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁵⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁶⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁶¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁶² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁶³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁶⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁶⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁶⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁶⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁶⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁶⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁷⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁷¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁷² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁷³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁷⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁷⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁷⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁷⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁷⁸ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁷⁹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁸⁰ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁸¹ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁸² Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁸³ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁸⁴ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁸⁵ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁸⁶ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³⁸⁷ Hebrew reads *the uncle of Jehoiachin*. ³

keepers guarded the gates and did not need to be on duty, for their Passover offerings were prepared for them by their fellow Levites.

The entire ceremony for the LORD's Passover was held that day. All the burnt offerings were sacrificed in the presence of the LORD, as King Josiah had commanded. All the Israelites present in Jerusalem celebrated Passover. The Festival of Unleavened Bread for seven days began since the time of the prophet Samuel had been observed each Passover. None of the kings of Israel had ever celebrated Passover as Josiah did, involving all the priests and all the people of Jerusalem, and people from all over Judah and Israel. ¹⁹This Passover celebration took place in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign.

Dies in Battle

After Josiah had finished restoring the Temple, King Neco II led his army up from Egypt to do battle at Carchemish on the Euphrates River, and Josiah and his army went out to fight him. ²¹But King Neco sent messengers to Josiah with this message:

"What do you want with me, king of Judah? I have no quarrel with you today! I am on my way to fight another battle, and God has told me to hurry! Do not interfere with me, for God, who is with me, or he will destroy you."

But Josiah refused to listen to Neco, to whom God had spoken, and he would not turn back. Instead, he dressed himself and led his army into battle on the plain of Megiddo. ²³But the enemy archers hit King Josiah with arrows and wounded him. He cried out to his men, "Take me out of the battle, for I am badly wounded!"

They lifted Josiah out of his chariot and placed him in a chariot. Then they brought him back to Jerusalem, where he died. He was buried there in the royal cemetery in Jerusalem, and Jerusalem mourned for him.

After Josiah died, Jeremiah composed funeral songs for Josiah, and the people still sing these sad songs about his death. Songs of sorrow have become a tradition and are recorded in *The Book of Laments*.

The rest of the events of Josiah's reign and his actions are recorded according to what was written in the *Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah*, ²⁷from beginning to end—all are recorded in *The Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah*.

Joahaz Rules in Judah

Then the people of the land took Josiah's son Joahaz and made him the next king in Jerusalem. Joahaz was twenty-three years old when he became king and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. Then he was deposed by the king of Egypt, who demanded that Judah pay 7,500 pounds of silver and 1,000 pounds of gold* as tribute.

Eliakim Rules in Judah

The king of Egypt then installed Eliakim, the brother of Joahaz, as the next king of Judah and Jerusalem, and he changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim. Then Neco took Joahaz to Egypt as a prisoner.

Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. He did not do what was right in the sight of the LORD his God.

When King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to Jerusalem and captured it, and he bound Jehoiakim in bronze chains and led him away to Babylon. ⁷Nebuchadnezzar

did not go to meet him. ^{36:2} Hebrew *Joahaz*, a variant spelling of Joahaz (34 kilograms) of gold.

some of the treasures from the Temple of the LORD, and he placed them in his palace* in Babylon.

The rest of the events in Jehoiakim's reign, including all the evil things he did and everything found against him, are recorded in *The Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah*. Then the son Jehoiachin became the next king.

Jehoiachin Rules in Judah

Jehoiachin was eighteen* years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months and ten days. Jehoiachin did what was evil in the LORD's sight.

In the spring of the year* King Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin to Babylon. Many treasures from the Temple of the LORD were also taken to Babylon at that time. And Nebuchadnezzar installed Jehoiachin's uncle,* Zedekiah, as the next king in Judah and Jerusalem.

Zedekiah Rules in Judah

Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. ¹²He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD his God, and he refused to humble himself when the prophet Jeremiah spoke to him directly from the LORD. ¹³He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, even though he had taken an oath of loyalty to the LORD's name. Zedekiah was a hard and stubborn man, refusing to turn to the LORD, the God of Israel.

Like everyone else, all the leaders of the priests and the people became more and more unfaithful. They followed all the pagan practices of the surrounding nations, desecrating the Temple of the LORD that had been consecrated in Jerusalem.

The LORD, the God of their ancestors, repeatedly sent prophets to warn them, for he had compassion on his people and his Temple. ¹⁴But the people mocked these messengers of God and despised their words. They scoffed at

the prophets. ^{36:9} As in one Hebrew manuscript, some Greek manuscripts, and Syriac version (see also 2 Kgs 24:8); most Hebrew manuscripts read *eight*. ^{36:10b} As in parallel text at 2 Kgs 24:13; Hebrew reads *brother, or relative*. ^{36:17} Or *Chaldeans*. ^{36:19} Or *destroyed all the valuable articles from the Temple*. ^{36:22a} The first year of Cyrus's reign over Babylon was 538 B.C. ^{36:22b} See Jer 25:11-12; 29:10.

the prophets until the LORD's anger could no longer be restrained and nothing could be done.

The Fall of Jerusalem

¹⁷So the LORD brought the king of Babylon against them. The Babylonians* killed Judah's young men, even chasing after them into the Temple. They had no pity on the people, killing both young men and young women, the old and the infirm. God handed all of them over to Nebuchadnezzar.

¹⁸The king took home to Babylon all the articles, large and small, used in the Temple of God, and the treasures from both the LORD's Temple and from the palace of the king and his officials. ¹⁹Then his army burned the Temple of God, tore down the walls of Jerusalem, burned all the palaces, and completely destroyed everything of value. ²⁰The few who survived were taken as exiles to Babylon, and they became servants to the king and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power.

²¹So the message of the LORD spoken through Jeremiah was fulfilled. The land finally enjoyed its Sabbath rest, lying desolate until the seventy years were fulfilled, just as the prophet had said.

Cyrus Allows the Exiles to Return

²²In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia,* the LORD fulfilled the prophecy he had given through Jeremiah.* He stirred the heart of Cyrus to put this proclamation in writing and to send it throughout his kingdom:

²³"This is what King Cyrus of Persia says:

"The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth. He has appointed me to build him a Temple at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Any of you who are the LORD's people may go there for this task. And may the LORD your God be with you!"

The citizens of Lod, Hadid, and Ono 725

The citizens of Jericho 345

The citizens of Senaah 3,630

These are the priests who returned from exile:

The family of Jedaiah (through the line of Jeshua) 973

The family of Immer 1,052

The family of Pashhur 1,247

The family of Harim 1,017

These are the Levites who returned from exile:

The families of Jeshua and Kadmiel (descendants of Hodaviah) 74

The singers of the family of Asaph 128

The gatekeepers of the families of Shallum, Ater, Talmon, Akkub, Hatita, and Shobai 139

The descendants of the following Temple servants returned from exile:

Shema, Hasupha, Tabbaoth, Seros, Shaha, Padon, Shananah, Hagabah, Akkub, Hagab, Shalmal,* Hanan, Model, Gahar, Reaiah, Mezin, Nekoda, Gazzam, Lizza, Paseah, Besai, Meshah, Meunim, Nephusim, Meshuk, Hakupha, Harhur, Meshuth, Mehida, Harsha, Meshkos, Sisera, Temah, Meshiah, and Hatipha.

The descendants of these servants of King Solomon returned from exile:

Shema, Hassophereth, Peruda, Meshah, Darkon, Giddel, Shephatiah, Hattil, Pokereth-hazzebaim, and Ami.

All the Temple servants and the descendants of Solomon's servants numbered 392.

Another group returned at this time from the towns of Meshah, Tel-harsha, Kerub, Addan, and Immer. However, they could not prove that they or their families were descendants of Israel. ⁶⁰This group included the families of Meshah, Tobiah, and Nekoda—a total of 652 people.

Three families of priests—Hobaiah, Hakkoz, and Barzillai—also returned. (This Barzillai had married a woman who was a descendant of Barzillai of Gilead, and he had her family name.) ⁶²They searched for their names in genealogical records, but they were not found, so they were disqualified from serving as priests. ⁶³The governor permitted them not to eat the priests' share of food from the sacrifice until a priest could consult the LORD about the matter among the Urim and Thummim—the sacred lots.

A total of 42,360 people returned to Judah, ⁶⁵in addition to 7,337 servants and 200 singers, both men and women. ⁶⁶They took with them 736 horses, 245 mules, 2 camels, and 6,720 donkeys.

When they arrived at the Temple of the LORD in Jerusalem, some of the family leaders made voluntary offerings to the rebuilding of God's Temple on its original site,

⁶⁹and each leader gave as much as he could. The total of their gifts came to 61,000 gold coins,* 6,250 pounds* of silver, and 100 robes for the priests.

⁷⁰So the priests, the Levites, the singers, the gatekeepers, the Temple servants, and some of the common people settled in villages near Jerusalem. The rest of the people returned to their own towns throughout Israel.

The Altar Is Rebuilt

3 In early autumn,* when the Israelites had settled in their towns, all the people assembled in Jerusalem with a unified purpose. ²Then Jeshua son of Jehozadak* joined his fellow priests and Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel with his family in rebuilding the altar of the God of Israel. They wanted to sacrifice burnt offerings on it, as instructed in the Law of Moses, the man of God. ³Even though the people were afraid of the local residents, they rebuilt the altar at its old site. Then they began to sacrifice burnt offerings on the altar to the LORD each morning and evening.

⁴They celebrated the Festival of Shelters as prescribed in the Law, sacrificing the number of burnt offerings specified for each day of the festival. ⁵They also offered the regular burnt offerings and the offerings required for the new moon celebrations and the annual festivals as prescribed by the LORD. The people also gave voluntary offerings to the LORD. ⁶Fifteen days before the Festival of Shelters began,* the priests had begun to sacrifice burnt offerings to the LORD. This was even before they had started to lay the foundation of the LORD's Temple.

The People Begin to Rebuild the Temple

⁷Then the people hired masons and carpenters and bought cedar logs from the people of Tyre and Sidon, paying them with food, wine, and olive oil. The logs were brought down from the Lebanon mountains and floated along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea* to Joppa, for King Cyrus had given permission for this.

⁸The construction of the Temple of God began in midspring,* during the second year after they arrived in Jerusalem. The work force was made up of everyone who had returned from exile, including Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Jeshua son of Jehozadak and his fellow priests, and all the Levites. The Levites who were twenty years old or older were put in charge of rebuilding the LORD's Temple. ⁹The workers at the Temple of God were supervised by Jeshua with his sons and relatives, and Kadmiel and his sons, all descendants of Hodaviah.* They were helped in this task by the Levites of the family of Henadad.

¹⁰When the builders completed the foundation of the LORD's Temple, the priests put on their robes and took their places to blow their trumpets. And the Levites, descendants of Asaph, clashed their cymbals to praise the LORD, just as King David had prescribed. ¹¹With praise and thanks, they sang this song to the LORD:

"He is so good!
His faithful love for Israel endures forever!"

Then all the people gave a great shout, praising the LORD because the foundation of the LORD's Temple had been laid.

¹²But many of the older priests, Levites, and other leaders

and 430 B.C.
status. They do their deeds in relative
fact the lives of those who come after them.
ails the Israelites' return to the land of Judah
with the return of a large group of exiles and
Halfway through the book, we are introduced
the book records how Ezra dealt with the
Israelites and non-Israelites. After many
the project was finally completed and

Who Returned with Zerubbabel

re is the list of the Jewish exiles of the provinces who
urned from their captivity. King Nebuchadnezzar
ported them to Babylon, but now they returned to
h and the other towns in Judah where they originally
Their leaders were Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah,
Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispal, Bigvai, Rehum,
anah.

the number of the men of Israel who returned from

family of Parosh 2,172

family of Shephatiah 371

family of Arah 771

family of Pahath-moab (descendants of Jeshua and Joab) 1,287

family of Elam 1,000

family of Zattu 845

family of Zaccai 760

family of Bani 642

family of Bebai 601

family of Azgad 596

family of Adonikam 588

family of Bigvai 581

family of Adin 544

family of Ater (descendants of Hezekiah) 500

family of Bezai 496

family of Jorah 481

family of Hashum 475

family of Gibbar 464

people of Bethlehem 454

people of Netophah 444

people of Anathoth 434

people of Beth-azmaveth* 424

people of Kiriath-jearim,* Kephirah, and Beeroh 414

people of Ramah and Geba 404

people of Micmash 394

people of Bethel and Ai 384

citizens of Nebo 374

citizens of Magbish 364

citizens of West Elam* 354

citizens of Harim 344

1:10 1-8 Hebrew *Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah*.
reads *Azmaveth*. 2:25 As in some Hebrew manuscripts.

an alternate reading of the Masoretic Text (see also Neh 7:48); the other alternate reads *Shamlai*. 2:69a Hebrew *61,000 darics of gold*, about 61,000 or 500 kilograms in weight. 2:69b Hebrew *5,000 minas* (3,000 kilograms). 3:1 Hebrew *in the seventh month*. The year is not specified, but it has been during Cyrus's first year (538 B.C.) or second year (537 B.C.). The seventh month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred within the month of September/October 538 B.C. and October/November 537 B.C. 3:2 Hebrew *Jozadak*, a variant spelling of Jehozadak; also in 3:8. 3:6 Hebrew *in the seventh month*. This day in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in September or October. The Festival of Shelters began on the first day of the seventh month. 3:7 Hebrew *the sea*. 3:8 Hebrew *in the second month*. This month in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in the months of April and May 536 B.C. 3:9 Hebrew *sons of Judah* (i.e., *bene Yehudah*). *Bene* might also be read here as the proper name Binnui; it is probably another name for Hodaviah. Compare 2:40; Neh 7:43; 1 Esdras 5:58.

who had seen the first Temple wept aloud when they saw the new Temple's foundation. The others, however, were shouting for joy. ¹³The joyful shouting and weeping mingled together in a loud noise that could be heard far in the distance.

Enemies Oppose the Rebuilding

4 The enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard that the exiles were rebuilding a Temple to the LORD, the God of Israel. ²So they approached Zerubbabel and the other leaders and said, "Let us build with you, for we worship your God just as you do. We have sacrificed to him ever since King Esarhaddon of Assyria brought us here."

³But Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and the other leaders of Israel replied, "You may have no part in this work. We alone will build the Temple for the LORD, the God of Israel, just as King Cyrus of Persia commanded us."

⁴Then the local residents tried to discourage and frighten the people of Judah to keep them from their work. ⁵They bribed agents to work against them and to frustrate their plans. This went on during the entire reign of King Cyrus of Persia and lasted until King Darius of Persia took the throne.*

Later Opposition under Xerxes and Artaxerxes

⁶Years later when Xerxes* began his reign, the enemies of Judah wrote a letter of accusation against the people of Judah and Jerusalem.

⁷Even later, during the reign of King Artaxerxes of Persia,* the enemies of Judah, led by Bishlam, Mithredath, and Tabeel, sent a letter to Artaxerxes in the Aramaic language, and it was translated for the king.

⁸*Rehum the governor and Shimshai the court secretary wrote the letter, telling King Artaxerxes about the situation in Jerusalem. ⁹They greeted the king for all their colleagues—the judges and local leaders, the people of Tarpel, the Persians, the Babylonians, and the people of Erech and Susa (that is, Elam). ¹⁰They also sent greetings from the rest of the people whom the great and noble Ashurbanipal* had deported and relocated in Samaria and throughout the neighboring lands of the province west of the Euphrates River.* ¹¹This is a copy of their letter:

"To King Artaxerxes, from your loyal subjects in the province west of the Euphrates River.

¹²"The king should know that the Jews who came here to Jerusalem from Babylon are rebuilding this rebellious and evil city. They have already laid the foundation and will soon finish its walls. ¹³And the king should know that if this city is rebuilt and its walls are completed, it will be much to your disadvantage, for the Jews will then refuse to pay their tribute, customs, and tolls to you.

¹⁴"Since we are your loyal subjects* and do not want to see the king dishonored in this way, we have sent the king this information. ¹⁵We suggest that a search be made in your ancestors' records, where you will discover what a rebellious city this has been in the past. In fact, it was destroyed because of its long and troublesome history of revolt against the kings and countries who controlled it. ¹⁶We declare to the king that if this city is rebuilt and its walls are completed, the province west of the Euphrates River will be lost to you."

4:5 Darius reigned 521–486 B.C. 4:6 Hebrew *Ahasuerus*, another name for Xerxes. He reigned 486–465 B.C. 4:7 Artaxerxes reigned 465–424 B.C. 4:8 The original text of 4:8–6:18 is in Aramaic. 4:10a Aramaic *Osnappar*, another name for Ashurbanipal. 4:10b Aramaic *the province beyond the river* also in 4:11, 16, 17, 20. 4:14 Aramaic *Since we eat the salt of the palace*. 4:24 The second year of Darius's reign was 520 B.C. The narrative started in 4:1–5 is resumed at verse 24. 5:2 Aramaic *Jozadak*, a variant spelling of Jehozadak. 5:3 Aramaic *the province beyond the river*; also in 5:6.

¹⁷Then King Artaxerxes sent this reply:

"To Rehum the governor, Shimshai the court secretary and their colleagues living in Samaria and throughout the province west of the Euphrates River. Greetings.

¹⁸"The letter you sent has been translated and read to me. ¹⁹I ordered a search of the records and have found that Jerusalem has indeed been a hotbed of insurrection against many kings. In fact, rebellion and revolt are normal there! ²⁰Powerful kings have ruled over Jerusalem and the entire province west of the Euphrates River, receiving tribute, customs, and tolls. ²¹Therefore, issue orders to have these men stop their work. That can must not be rebuilt except at my express command.

²²Be diligent, and don't neglect this matter, for we must not permit the situation to harm the king's interests."

²³When this letter from King Artaxerxes was read to Rehum, Shimshai, and their colleagues, they hurried to Jerusalem. Then, with a show of strength, they forced the Jews to stop building.

The Rebuilding Resumes

²⁴So the work on the Temple of God in Jerusalem had stopped, and it remained at a standstill until the second year of the reign of King Darius of Persia.*

5 At that time the prophets Haggai and Zechariah son of Iddo prophesied to the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem. They prophesied in the name of the God of Israel who was over them. ²Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Jeshua son of Jehozadak* responded by starting again to rebuild the Temple of God in Jerusalem. And the prophets of God were with them and helped them.

³But Tattenai, governor of the province west of the Euphrates River,* and Shethar-bozenai and their colleagues soon arrived in Jerusalem and asked, "Who gave you permission to rebuild this Temple and restore this structure?" ⁴They also asked for the names of all the men working on the Temple. ⁵But because their God was watching over them, the leaders of the Jews were not prevented from building until a report was sent to Darius and he returned his decision.

Tattenai's Letter to King Darius

⁶This is a copy of the letter that Tattenai the governor, Shethar-bozenai, and the other officials of the province west of the Euphrates River sent to King Darius:

⁷"To King Darius. Greetings.

⁸"The king should know that we went to the construction site of the Temple of the great God in the province of Judah. It is being rebuilt with specially prepared stones, and timber is being laid in its walls. The work is going forward with great energy and success.

⁹"We asked the leaders, 'Who gave you permission to rebuild this Temple and restore this structure?' ¹⁰And we demanded their names so that we could tell you who the leaders were.

¹¹"This was their answer: 'We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and we are rebuilding the Temple that was built here many years ago by a great king of Israel. ¹²But because our ancestors angered the God of heaven, he abandoned them to King

Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon,* who destroyed this Temple and exiled the people to Babylonia. ¹³How King Cyrus of Babylon,* during the first year of his reign, issued a decree that the Temple of God should be rebuilt. ¹⁴King Cyrus returned the gold and silver that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Temple of God in Jerusalem and had placed in the temple of Babylon. These cups were taken from that temple and presented to a man named Sheshbazzar, whom King Cyrus appointed as governor of Judah. ¹⁵The king instructed him to return the cups to their place in Jerusalem and to rebuild the Temple of God there on its original site. ¹⁶So this Sheshbazzar came and laid the foundations of the Temple of God in Jerusalem. The people have been working on it ever since, though not yet completed."

¹⁷"Therefore, if it pleases the king, we request that a search be made in the royal archives of Babylon to discover whether King Cyrus ever issued a decree to rebuild God's Temple in Jerusalem. And then let the king send us his decision in this matter."

Darius Approves the Rebuilding

6 So King Darius issued orders that a search be made in the Babylonian archives, which were stored in the treasury. ²But it was at the fortress at Ecbatana in the province of Media that a scroll was found. This is what it said:

"Memorandum:

³"In the first year of King Cyrus's reign, a decree was sent out concerning the Temple of God at Jerusalem.

"Let the Temple be rebuilt on the site where Jews used to offer their sacrifices, using the original foundations. Its height will be ninety feet, and its width will be ninety feet.* ⁴Every three layers of specially prepared stones will be topped by a layer of timber. Expenses will be paid by the royal treasury. ⁵Furthermore, the gold and silver cups, which were taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar from the Temple of God in Jerusalem, must be returned to Jerusalem and put back where they belong. Let them be taken back to the Temple of God."

⁶So King Darius sent this message:

"Now therefore, Tattenai, governor of the province west of the Euphrates River,* and Shethar-bozenai, and your colleagues and other officials west of the Euphrates River—stay away from there! ²Do not disturb the construction of the Temple of God. Let it be rebuilt on its original site, and do not hinder the governor of Judah and the elders of the Jews in their work.

³Moreover, I hereby decree that you are to help the elders of the Jews as they rebuild this Temple of God. You must pay the full construction costs, without delay, from my taxes collected in the province west of the Euphrates River so that the work will not be interrupted.

⁴"Give the priests in Jerusalem whatever is needed for the way of young bulls, rams, and male lambs for the burnt offerings presented to the God of heaven. And without fail, provide them with as much wheat, salt,

6:2 Aramaic *Nebuchadnezzar the Chaldean*. 5:13 King Cyrus of Persia. 6:3 Aramaic *Its height will be 60 cubits* [27.6 meters]; amended to read: "Its height will be 30 cubits [45 feet, or 13.8 meters], its width will be 30 cubits [45 feet, or 13.8 meters]; compare 1 Kgs 6:2. The emendation regarding the height is also in 6:6b, 8, 13. 6:11 Aramaic *a dunghill*. 6:15 Aramaic *on the fourteenth day of the first month*, of the ancient Hebrew calendar. 7:1a Artaxerxes reigned 465–424 B.C. 7:1b Or *descendant*;

Then King Artaxerxes sent this reply:

To Rehum the governor, Shimshai the court secretary and their colleagues living in Samaria and throughout the province west of the Euphrates River. Greetings.

¹⁸The letter you sent has been translated and read to me. ¹⁹I ordered a search of the records and have found that Jerusalem has indeed been a hotbed of insurrection against many kings. In fact, rebellion and revolt are normal there! ²⁰Powerful kings have ruled over Jerusalem and the entire province west of the Euphrates River, receiving tribute, customs, and tolls. ²¹Therefore I issue orders to have these men stop their work. That must not be rebuilt except at my express command. ²²Be diligent, and don't neglect this matter, for we must not permit the situation to harm the king's interests.

When this letter from King Artaxerxes was read to Rehum, Shimshai, and their colleagues, they hurried to Jerusalem. Then, with a show of strength, they forced the Jews to stop building.

The Rebuilding Resumes

At the work on the Temple of God in Jerusalem stopped, and it remained at a standstill until the second year of the reign of King Darius of Persia.*

At that time the prophets Haggai and Zechariah son of Iddo prophesied to the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem. They prophesied in the name of the God of Israel who was with them. ²Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Jeshua son of Ozadak* responded by starting again to rebuild the Temple of God in Jerusalem. And the prophets of God were with them and helped them.

But Tattenai, governor of the province west of the Euphrates River,* and Shethar-bozenai and their colleagues arrived in Jerusalem and asked, "Who gave you permission to rebuild this Temple and restore this structure?" They also asked for the names of all the men working on the Temple. ⁸But because their God was watching over them, the leaders of the Jews were not prevented from building until a report was sent to Darius and he returned his decision.

Tattenai's Letter to King Darius

This is a copy of the letter that Tattenai the governor of the province west of the Euphrates River, and the other officials of the province west of the Euphrates River sent to King Darius:

To King Darius. Greetings.

¹The king should know that we went to the construction site of the Temple of the great God in the province of Judah. It is being rebuilt with specially prepared stones, and timber is being laid in its walls. The work is going forward with great energy and success.

²"We asked the leaders, 'Who gave you permission to rebuild this Temple and restore this structure?' ³They demanded their names so that we could tell you what the leaders were.

⁴"This was their answer: 'We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and we are rebuilding the Temple that was built here many years ago by a great king of Israel. ⁵But because our ancestors angered the God of heaven, he abandoned them to King

Artaxerxes. ⁶But now that we have returned to the land of our fathers, we are rebuilding the Temple of our God. ⁷Therefore we ask you, our king, to send us your decision.

Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon,* who destroyed this Temple and exiled the people to Babylonia. ¹³However, King Cyrus of Babylon,* during the first year of his reign, issued a decree that the Temple of God should be rebuilt. ¹⁴King Cyrus returned the gold and silver cups that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Temple of God in Jerusalem and had placed in the temple of Babylon. These cups were taken from that temple and presented to a man named Sheshbazzar, whom King Cyrus appointed as governor of Judah. ¹⁵The king instructed him to return the cups to their place in Jerusalem and to rebuild the Temple of God there on its original site. ¹⁶So this Sheshbazzar came and laid the foundations of the Temple of God in Jerusalem. The people have been working on it ever since, though it is not yet completed.'

¹⁷Therefore, if it pleases the king, we request that a search be made in the royal archives of Babylon to discover whether King Cyrus ever issued a decree to rebuild God's Temple in Jerusalem. And then let the king send us his decision in this matter."

Darius Approves the Rebuilding

¹So King Darius issued orders that a search be made in the Babylonian archives, which were stored in the treasury. ²But it was at the fortress at Ecbatana in the province of Media that a scroll was found. This is what it said:

Memorandum:

¹In the first year of King Cyrus's reign, a decree was issued concerning the Temple of God at Jerusalem.

²Let the Temple be rebuilt on the site where Jews used to offer their sacrifices, using the original foundations. Its height will be ninety feet, and its width will be ninety feet.* ⁴Every three layers of specially prepared stones will be topped by a layer of timber. All expenses will be paid by the royal treasury. ⁵Furthermore, the gold and silver cups, which were taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar from the Temple of God in Jerusalem, must be returned to Jerusalem and put back where they belong. Let them be taken back to the Temple of God."

King Darius sent this message:

¹Now therefore, Tattenai, governor of the province west of the Euphrates River,* and Shethar-bozenai, and your colleagues and other officials west of the Euphrates River—stay away from there! ²Do not disturb the construction of the Temple of God. Let it be rebuilt on its original site, and do not hinder the governor of Judah and the elders of the Jews in their work.

³Moreover, I hereby decree that you are to help these leaders of the Jews as they rebuild this Temple of God. ⁴They must pay the full construction costs, without delay, and I will not collect my taxes in the province west of the Euphrates River so that the work will not be interrupted.

⁵Give the priests in Jerusalem whatever is needed in the way of young bulls, rams, and male lambs for the burnt offerings presented to the God of heaven. And without fail, provide them with as much wheat, salt,

vine, and olive oil as they need each day. ¹⁰Then they will be able to offer acceptable sacrifices to the God of heaven and pray for the welfare of the king and his sons.

¹¹"Those who violate this decree in any way will have a beam pulled from their house. Then they will be tied to it and flogged, and their house will be reduced to a pile of rubble.* ¹²May the God who has chosen the city of Jerusalem as the place to honor his name destroy any king or nation that violates this command and destroys this Temple.

"I, Darius, have issued this decree. Let it be obeyed with all diligence."

The Temple's Dedication

¹³Tattenai, governor of the province west of the Euphrates River, and Shethar-bozenai and their colleagues complied at once with the command of King Darius. ¹⁴So the Jewish elders continued their work, and they were greatly encouraged by the preaching of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah son of Iddo. The Temple was finally finished, as had been commanded by the God of Israel and decreed by Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes, the kings of Persia. ¹⁵The Temple was completed on March 12,* during the sixth year of King Darius's reign.

¹⁶The Temple of God was then dedicated with great joy by the people of Israel, the priests, the Levites, and the rest of the people who had returned from exile. ¹⁷During the dedication ceremony for the Temple of God, 100 young bulls, 200 rams, and 400 male lambs were sacrificed. And 12 male goats were presented as a sin offering for the twelve tribes of Israel. ¹⁸Then the priests and Levites were divided into their various divisions to serve at the Temple of God in Jerusalem, as prescribed in the Book of Moses.

Celebration of Passover

¹⁹On April 21* the returned exiles celebrated Passover. ²⁰The priests and Levites had purified themselves and were ceremonially clean. So they slaughtered the Passover lamb for all the returned exiles, for their fellow priests, and for themselves. ²¹The Passover meal was eaten by the people of Israel who had returned from exile and by the others in the land who had turned from their immoral customs to worship the LORD, the God of Israel. ²²Then they celebrated the Festival of Unleavened Bread for seven days. There was great joy throughout the land because the LORD had caused the king of Assyria* to be favorable to them, so that he helped them to rebuild the Temple of God, the God of Israel.

Ezra Arrives in Jerusalem

¹Many years later, during the reign of King Artaxerxes of Persia,* there was a man named Ezra. He was the son* of Seraiah, son of Azariah, son of Hilkiah, ²son of Shallum, son of Zadok, son of Ahitub, ³son of Amariah, son of Azariah, son* of Meraioth, ⁴son of Zerahiah, son of Uzzi, son of Bukki, ⁵son of Abishua, son of Phinehas, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the high priest.* ⁶This Ezra was a scribe who was well versed in the Law of Moses, which the LORD, the God of Israel, had given to the people of Israel. He came up to Jerusalem

¹⁸Reigned 486–465 B.C. ^{4:7} Artaxerxes reigned 465–424 B.C. ¹⁹Called Ashurbanipal. ^{4:10b} Aramaic the province beyond the river. ²⁰Second year of Darius's reign was 520 B.C. The narrative started in 520 B.C. ²¹Aramaic the province beyond the river, also in 5:6.

¹³ King Cyrus of Persia is here identified as the king of Babylon because Persia had conquered the Babylonian Empire. ^{6:3} Aramaic Its height will be 60 cubits [27.6 meters], and its width will be 60 cubits. It is commonly held that this verse should be read: "Its height will be 30 cubits [45 feet, or 13.8 meters], its length will be 60 cubits [90 feet, or 27.6 meters], and its width will be 20 cubits [30 feet, or 9.2 meters];" compare 1 Kgs 6:2. The emendation regarding the width is supported by the Syriac version. ^{6:6} Aramaic the province beyond the river. ^{6:15} Aramaic a dunghill. ^{6:15} Aramaic on the third day of the month Adar, of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. A number of scholars can be cross-checked with dates in surviving Persian records and related accurately to our modern calendar. This day was March 12, 515 B.C. ^{6:15} On the fourteenth day of the first month, of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was April 21, 515 B.C.; also see note on 6:15. ^{7:1} Darius of Persia is here identified as the king of Assyria because Persia had conquered the Babylonian Empire, which included the earlier Assyrian Empire. ^{7:1a} Artaxerxes reigned 465–424 B.C. ^{7:1b} Or descendant; see 1 Chr 6:14. ^{7:3} Or descendant; see 1 Chr 6:6–10. ^{7:5} Or the first priest.

from Babylon, and the king gave him everything he asked for, because the gracious hand of the LORD his God was on him. ⁷Some of the people of Israel, as well as some of the priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers, and Temple servants, traveled up to Jerusalem with him in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes' reign.

⁸Ezra arrived in Jerusalem in August* of that year. ⁹He had arranged to leave Babylon on April 8, the first day of the new year,* and he arrived at Jerusalem on August 4,* for the gracious hand of his God was on him. ¹⁰This was because Ezra had determined to study and obey the Law of the LORD and to teach those decrees and regulations to the people of Israel.

Artaxerxes' Letter to Ezra

¹¹King Artaxerxes had given a copy of the following letter to Ezra, the priest and scribe who studied and taught the commands and decrees of the LORD to Israel:

¹²*"From Artaxerxes, the king of kings, to Ezra the priest, the teacher of the law of the God of heaven. Greetings.

¹³"I decree that any of the people of Israel in my kingdom, including the priests and Levites, may volunteer to return to Jerusalem with you. ¹⁴I and my council of seven hereby instruct you to conduct an inquiry into the situation in Judah and Jerusalem, based on your God's law, which is in your hand. ¹⁵We also commission you to take with you silver and gold, which we are freely presenting as an offering to the God of Israel who lives in Jerusalem.

¹⁶Furthermore, you are to take any silver and gold that you may obtain from the province of Babylon, as well as the voluntary offerings of the people and the priests that are presented for the Temple of their God in Jerusalem. ¹⁷These donations are to be used specifically for the purchase of bulls, rams, male lambs, and the appropriate grain offerings and liquid offerings, all of which will be offered on the altar of the Temple of your God in Jerusalem. ¹⁸Any silver and gold that is left over may be used in whatever way you and your colleagues feel is the will of your God.

¹⁹"But as for the cups we are entrusting to you for the service of the Temple of your God, deliver them all to the God of Jerusalem. ²⁰If you need anything else for your God's Temple or for any similar needs, you may take it from the royal treasury.

²¹"I, Artaxerxes the king, hereby send this decree to all the treasurers in the province west of the Euphrates River*: 'You are to give Ezra, the priest and teacher of the law of the God of heaven, whatever he requests of you. ²²You are to give him up to 7,500 pounds* of silver, 500 bushels* of wheat, 550 gallons of wine, 550 gallons of olive oil,* and an unlimited supply of salt. ²³Be careful to provide whatever the God of heaven demands for his Temple, for why should we risk bringing God's anger against the realm of the king and his sons? ²⁴I also decree that no priest, Levite, singer, gatekeeper, Temple servant, or other worker in this Temple of God will be required to pay tribute, customs, or tolls of any kind.'

²⁵"And you, Ezra, are to use the wisdom your God has given you to appoint magistrates and judges who know

your God's laws to govern all the people in the province west of the Euphrates River. Teach the law to anyone who does not know it. ²⁶Anyone who refuses to obey the law of your God and the law of the king will be punished immediately, either by death, banishment, confiscation of goods, or imprisonment."

Ezra Praises the LORD

²⁷Praise the LORD, the God of our ancestors, who made the king want to beautify the Temple of the LORD in Jerusalem. ²⁸And praise him for demonstrating such unending love to me by honoring me before the king, his council, and all his mighty nobles! I felt encouraged because the gracious hand of the LORD my God was on me. And I gathered some of the leaders of Israel to return with me to Jerusalem.

Exiles Who Returned with Ezra

8 Here is a list of the family leaders and the genealogies of those who came with me from Babylon during the reign of King Artaxerxes:

- 2 From the family of Phinehas: Gershom.
From the family of Ithamar: Daniel.
From the family of David: Hattush,^{3a} a descendant of Shecaniah.
From the family of Parosh: Zechariah and 150 other men were registered.
- 4 From the family of Pahath-moab: Eliehoenai son of Zerariah and 200 other men.
- 5 From the family of Zattu*: Shecaniah son of Jahaziel and 300 other men.
- 6 From the family of Adin: Ebed son of Jonathan and 50 other men.
- 7 From the family of Elam: Jeshaiiah son of Athaliah and 70 other men.
- 8 From the family of Shephatiah: Zebadiah son of Michai and 80 other men.
- 9 From the family of Joab: Obadiah son of Jehiel and 218 other men.
- 10 From the family of Bani*: Shelomith son of Josiphiah and 160 other men.
- 11 From the family of Bebai: Zechariah son of Bebai and 28 other men.
- 12 From the family of Azgad: Johanan son of Hakkatan and 110 other men.
- 13 From the family of Adonikam, who came later*: Eliphelet, Jeuel, Shemaiah, and 60 other men.
- 14 From the family of Bigvai: Uthai, Zaccur,* and 70 other men.

Ezra's Journey to Jerusalem

¹⁵I assembled the exiles at the Ahava Canal, and we camped there for three days while I went over the lists of the people and the priests who had arrived. I found that not one Levite had volunteered to come along. ¹⁶So I sent for Eliezer, Azbani, Meshullam, who were leaders of the people. I also sent for Joiarib and Elnathan, who were men of discernment. ¹⁷I sent them to Iddo, the leader of the Levites at Casiphia, to ask him and his relatives and the Temple servants to send ministers for the Temple of God at Jerusalem.

¹⁸Since the gracious hand of our God was on us, they sent us the following: ¹⁹Meremoth son of Uriah the priest and Jozabad son of Jeshaiiah, along with Jozabad son of Noadiah son of Binnui—both of whom were Levites. ²⁰Everything was accounted for by number and weighed, and the total weight was officially recorded. ²¹Then the exiles who had come out of captivity sacrificed burnt offerings to the God of Israel. They presented five bulls for all the people of Israel, as well as ninety-seven male goats as a sin offering. All this was given as an offering to the LORD. ²²The king's decrees were delivered to his highest officers and the governors of the province west of the Euphrates River,* who then cooperated in supporting the people and the Temple of God.

^{7:8} Hebrew in the fifth month. This month in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred within the months of August and September 458 B.C. ^{7:9a} Hebrew on the first day of the first month, of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was April 8, 458 B.C.; also see note on 6:15. ^{7:9b} Hebrew on the first day of the fifth month, of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was August 4, 458 B.C.; also see note on 6:15. ^{7:12} The original text of 7:12-26 is in Aramaic. ^{7:21} Aramaic the province beyond the river; also in 7:25. ^{7:22a} Aramaic 100 talents [3,400 kilograms]. ^{7:22b} Aramaic 100 cors [18.2 kiloliters]. ^{7:22c} Aramaic 100 baths [2.1 kiloliters] of wine, 100 baths of olive oil. ^{8:5} As in some Greek manuscripts (see also 1 Esdras 8:32); Hebrew lacks Zattu. ^{8:10} As in some Greek manuscripts (see also 1 Esdras 8:36); Hebrew lacks Bani. ^{8:13} Or who were the last of his family. ^{8:14} As in Greek and Syriac versions and an alternate reading of the Masoretic Text; the other alternate reads Zabud.

A man named Sherebiah, along with eighteen of his brothers. He was a very astute man and a descendant of Merari, who was a descendant of Levi son of Israel. ²³I also sent Hashabiah, together with Jeshaiiah from the descendants of Merari, and twenty of his sons and brothers, and 220 Temple servants. The Temple servants were appointed by King David and his officials. They were a name.

²⁴And there by the Ahava Canal, I gave orders to us to fast and humble ourselves before our God. I prayed that he would give us a safe journey and protect our children, and our goods as we traveled. ²⁵For I had named to ask the king for soldiers and horsemen to accompany us and protect us from enemies along the way. After all, we had told the king, "Our God's hand of power is on all who worship him, but his fierce anger is against those who abandon him." ²⁶So we fasted and earnestly prayed that our God would take care of us, and we heard our prayer.

²⁷I appointed twelve leaders of the priests—Sherebiah, and ten other priests—²⁸to be in charge of carrying the silver, the gold, the gold bowls, and the censers that the king, his council, his officials, and all the people of Israel had presented for the Temple of God. I weighed the treasure as I gave it to them and found that it was to be as follows:

- 24 tons* of silver,
- 7,500 pounds* of silver articles,
- 7,500 pounds of gold,
- 20 gold bowls, equal in value to 1,000 gold coins,*
- 2 fine articles of polished bronze, as precious as gold.

²⁹And I said to these priests, "You and these treasures have been set apart as holy to the LORD. This silver and gold are voluntary offerings to the LORD, the God of our ancestors. Guard these treasures well until you present them to the priests, the Levites, and the leaders of Israel, and weigh them at the storerooms of the LORD's Temple in Jerusalem." ³⁰So the priests and the Levites accepted the task of transporting these treasures of silver and gold to the Temple of our God in Jerusalem.

³¹We broke camp at the Ahava Canal on April 19* and started off to Jerusalem. And the gracious hand of our God protected us and saved us from enemies and bandits along the way. ³²So we arrived safely in Jerusalem, where we rested for three days.

³³On the fourth day after our arrival, the silver, gold, and other valuables were weighed at the Temple of our God and entrusted to Meremoth son of Uriah the priest and Jozabad son of Phinehas, along with Jozabad son of Jeshaiiah and Noadiah son of Binnui—both of whom were Levites. ³⁴Everything was accounted for by number and weighed, and the total weight was officially recorded.

³⁵Then the exiles who had come out of captivity sacrificed burnt offerings to the God of Israel. They presented five bulls for all the people of Israel, as well as ninety-seven male goats as a sin offering. All this was given as an offering to the LORD. ³⁶The king's decrees were delivered to his highest officers and the governors of the province west of the Euphrates River,* who then cooperated in supporting the people and the Temple of God.

^{8:22} Or charioteers. ^{8:26} Also in 8:26c. ^{8:27} Hebrew 1,000 darics; about 19 pounds of silver. ^{8:28} Also in 8:26c. ^{8:27} Hebrew 1,000 darics; about 19 pounds of silver. ^{8:28} Also in 8:26c. ^{8:27} Hebrew 1,000 darics; about 19 pounds of silver. ^{8:28} Also in 8:26c.

God's laws to govern all the people in the province of the Euphrates River. Teach the law to anyone who does not know it. ²⁶Anyone who refuses to obey the law of your God and the law of the king will be punished immediately, either by death, banishment, confiscation of goods, or imprisonment."

Praises the LORD

praise the LORD, the God of our ancestors, who made us want to beautify the Temple of the LORD in Jerusalem. I praise him for demonstrating such unflinching love in honoring me before the king, his council, and all the nobles! I felt encouraged because the gracious hand of the LORD my God was on me. And I gathered some of the exiles of Israel to return with me to Jerusalem.

Who Returned with Ezra

Here is a list of the family leaders and the genealogists of those who came with me from Babylon during the reign of Artaxerxes:

from the family of Phinehas: Gershom.
from the family of Ithamar: Daniel.
from the family of David: Hattush, ^{3a}a descendant of Shecaniah.
from the family of Parosh: Zechariah and 150 other men were registered.
from the family of Pahath-moab: Eliehoenai son of Zeremiah and 200 other men.
from the family of Zattu*: Shecaniah son of Jahaziel and 300 other men.
from the family of Adin: Ebed son of Jonathan and 50 other men.
from the family of Elam: Jeshaiiah son of Athaliah and 70 other men.
from the family of Shephatiah: Zebadiah son of Machabai and 80 other men.
from the family of Joab: Obadiah son of Jehiel and 218 other men.
from the family of Bani*: Shelomith son of Josiphath and 160 other men.
from the family of Bebai: Zechariah son of Bebai and 28 other men.
from the family of Azgad: Johanan son of Hakatan and 110 other men.
from the family of Adonikam, who came later*: Eliphelet, Jeuel, Shemaiah, and 60 other men.
from the family of Bigvai: Uthai, Zaccur,* and 70 other men.

Journey to Jerusalem

I assembled the exiles at the Ahava Canal, and we camped for three days while I went over the lists of the priests who had arrived. I found that not one had volunteered to come along. ¹⁶So I sent for Eliezer, Elnathan, Jarib, Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah, and Bani, who were leaders of the people. I also sent for Iddo, the leader of the Levites at Casiphia, and his relatives and the Temple servants to be assigned as workers for the Temple of God at Jerusalem.

Because of the gracious hand of our God was on us, they returned within the months of August and September 458 B.C. This day was April 8, 458 B.C.; also see note on 6:15. ^{7-9c} Hebrew text: August 4, 458 B.C.; also see note on 6:15. ⁷⁻¹² The original text: 2a Aramaic 100 talents (3,400 kilograms). ^{7-22b} Aramaic: olive oil. ⁸⁻⁵ As in some Greek manuscripts (see also Hebrew lacks Bani. ^{8:13} Or who were the last of the exiles. Other alternate reads Zabbud.

A man named Sherebiah, along with eighteen of his sons and brothers. He was a very astute man and a descendant of Merari, who was a descendant of Levi son of Israel.* ¹⁹They sent Hashabiah, together with Jeshaiiah from the descendants of Merari, and twenty of his sons and brothers, and 220 Temple servants. The Temple servants were assigned to the Levites—a group of Temple workers first instituted by King David and his officials. They were all listed by name.

And there by the Ahava Canal, I gave orders for all of us to fast and humble ourselves before our God. We decided that he would give us a safe journey and protect us, our children, and our goods as we traveled. ²²For I was determined to ask the king for soldiers and horsemen* to accompany us and protect us from enemies along the way. So I told the king, "Our God's hand of protection is on all who worship him, but his fierce anger rages against those who abandon him." ²³So we fasted and earnestly prayed that our God would take care of us, and he answered our prayer.

I appointed twelve leaders of the priests—Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten other priests—²⁵to be in charge of transporting the silver, the gold, the gold bowls, and the other articles that the king, his council, his officials, and all the people of Israel had presented for the Temple of God. ²⁶I weighed the treasure as I gave it to them and found the total to be as follows:

24 tons* of silver,
500 pounds* of silver articles,
500 pounds of gold,
10 gold bowls, equal in value to 1,000 gold coins,*
100 articles of polished bronze, as precious as gold.

And I said to these priests, "You and these treasures have been set apart as holy to the LORD. This silver and gold are voluntary offerings to the LORD, the God of our ancestors. Guard these treasures well until you present them to the priests, the Levites, and the leaders of Israel, who will weigh them at the storerooms of the LORD's Temple in Jerusalem." ³⁰So the priests and the Levites accepted the task of transporting these treasures of silver and gold to the Temple of our God in Jerusalem.

We broke camp at the Ahava Canal on April 19* and went off to Jerusalem. And the gracious hand of our God protected us and saved us from enemies and bandits along the way. ³²So we arrived safely in Jerusalem, where we camped for three days.

On the fourth day after our arrival, the silver, gold, and other valuables were weighed at the Temple of our God. Meremoth son of Uriah the priest and toadiah son of Binnui—both of whom were Levites. Everything was accounted for by number and weight, and the total weight was officially recorded.

Then the exiles who had come out of captivity sacrificed burnt offerings to the God of Israel. They presented bulls for all the people of Israel, as well as ninety-six rams and seventy-seven male lambs. They also offered seven male goats as a sin offering. All this was given as a burnt offering to the LORD. ³⁶The king's decrees were delivered to his highest officers and the governors of the province of the Euphrates River,* who then cooperated by returning the people and the Temple of God.

* is the name that God gave to Jacob. ^{8:22} Or charioteers. ^{8:26a} Hebrew 650 talents [22 metric tons]. ^{8:26b} Hebrew 100 talents [3,400 kilograms]. ^{8:27} Hebrew 1,000 *árics*, about 19 pounds or 8.6 kilograms in weight. ^{8:31} Hebrew on the twelfth day of the first month, according to the Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was April 19, 458 B.C.; also see note on 6:15. ^{8:36} Hebrew the province beyond the river.

Ezra's Prayer concerning Inter-marriage

When these things had been done, the Jewish leaders came to me and said, "Many of the people of Israel, and even some of the priests and Levites, have not kept themselves separate from the other peoples living in the land. They have taken up the detestable practices of the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians, and Amorites. ²For the men of Israel have married women from these people and have taken them as wives for their sons. So the holy race has become polluted by these mixed marriages. Worse yet, the leaders and officials have led the way in this outrage."

³When I heard this, I tore my cloak and my shirt, pulled hair from my head and beard, and sat down utterly shocked. ⁴Then all who trembled at the words of the God of Israel came and sat with me because of this outrage committed by the returned exiles. And I sat there utterly appalled until the time of the evening sacrifice.

⁵At the time of the sacrifice, I stood up from where I had sat in mourning with my clothes torn. I fell to my knees and lifted my hands to the LORD my God. ⁶I prayed,

"O my God, I am utterly ashamed; I blush to lift up my face to you. For our sins are piled higher than our heads, and our guilt has reached to the heavens. ⁷From the days of our ancestors until now, we have been steeped in sin. That is why we and our kings and our priests have been at the mercy of the pagan kings of the land. We have been killed, captured, robbed, and disgraced, just as we are today.

⁸But now we have been given a brief moment of grace, for the LORD our God has allowed a few of us to survive as a remnant. He has given us security in this holy place. Our God has brightened our eyes and granted us some relief from our slavery. ⁹For we were slaves, but in his unflinching love our God did not abandon us in our slavery. Instead, he caused the kings of Persia to treat us favorably. He revived us so we could rebuild the Temple of our God and repair its ruins. He has given us a protective wall in Judah and Jerusalem.

¹⁰And now, O our God, what can we say after all of this? For once again we have abandoned your commands! ¹¹Your servants the prophets warned us when they said, 'The land you are entering to possess is totally defiled by the detestable practices of the people living there. From one end to the other, the land is filled with corruption. ¹²Don't let your daughters marry their sons! Don't take their daughters as wives for your sons. Don't ever promote the peace and prosperity of those nations. If you follow these instructions, you will be strong and will enjoy the good things the land produces, and you will leave this prosperity to your children forever.'

¹³Now we are being punished because of our wickedness and our great guilt. But we have actually been punished far less than we deserve, for you, our God, have allowed some of us to survive as a remnant. ¹⁴But even so, we are again breaking your commands and intermarrying with people who do these detestable things. Won't your anger be enough to destroy us, so that even this little remnant no longer survives? ¹⁵O LORD, God of Israel, you are just. We come before you in our guilt as nothing but an escaped remnant, though in such a condition none of us can stand in your presence."

The People Confess Their Sin

10 While Ezra prayed and made this confession, weeping and lying face down on the ground in front of the Temple of God, a very large crowd of people from Israel—men, women, and children—gathered and wept bitterly with him. ²Then Shecaniah son of Jehiel, a descendant of Elam, said to Ezra, “We have been unfaithful to our God, for we have married these pagan women of the land. But in spite of this there is hope for Israel. ³Let us now make a covenant with our God to divorce our pagan wives and to send them away with their children. We will follow the advice given by you and by the others who respect the commands of our God. Let it be done according to the Law of God. ⁴Get up, for it is your duty to tell us how to proceed in setting things straight. We are behind you, so be strong and take action.”

⁵So Ezra stood up and demanded that the leaders of the priests and the Levites and all the people of Israel swear that they would do as Shecaniah had said. And they all swore a solemn oath. ⁶Then Ezra left the front of the Temple of God and went to the room of Jehohanan son of Eliashib. He spent the night* there without eating or drinking anything. He was still in mourning because of the unfaithfulness of the returned exiles.

⁷Then a proclamation was made throughout Judah and Jerusalem that all the exiles should come to Jerusalem. ⁸Those who failed to come within three days would, if the leaders and elders so decided, forfeit all their property and be expelled from the assembly of the exiles.

⁹Within three days, all the people of Judah and Benjamin had gathered in Jerusalem. This took place on December 19,* and all the people were sitting in the square before the Temple of God. They were trembling both because of the seriousness of the matter and because it was raining. ¹⁰Then Ezra the priest stood and said to them: “You have committed a terrible sin. By marrying pagan women, you have increased Israel’s guilt. ¹¹So now confess your sin to the LORD, the God of your ancestors, and do what he demands. Separate yourselves from the people of the land and from these pagan women.”

¹²Then the whole assembly raised their voices and answered, “Yes, you are right; we must do as you say!” ¹³Then they added, “This isn’t something that can be done in a day or two, for many of us are involved in this extremely sinful affair. And this is the rainy season, so we cannot stay out here much longer. ¹⁴Let our leaders act on behalf of us all. Let everyone who has a pagan wife come at a scheduled time, accompanied by the leaders and judges of his city, so that the fierce anger of our God concerning this affair may be turned away from us.”

¹⁵Only Jonathan son of Asahel and Jahzeiah son of Tikvah opposed this course of action, and they were supported by Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite.

¹⁶So this was the plan they followed. Ezra selected leaders to represent their families, designating each of the rep-

resentatives by name. On December 29,* the leaders went down to investigate the matter. ¹⁷By March 27, the first day of the new year,* they had finished dealing with all the men who had married pagan wives.

Those Guilty of Intermarriage

¹⁸These are the priests who had married pagan wives: From the family of Jeshua son of Jehozadak* and his brothers: Maaseiah, Eliezer, Jarib, and Gedaliah.

¹⁹They vowed to divorce their wives, and they each acknowledged their guilt by offering a ram as a guilt offering.

²⁰From the family of Immer: Hanani and Zebadiah.

²¹From the family of Harim: Maaseiah, Elijah, Shemaiah, Jehiel, and Uzziiah.

²²From the family of Pashhur: Elieoenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethanel, Jozabad, and Elasah.

²³These are the Levites who were guilty: Jozabad, Shimei, Kelaiah (also called Kelita), Pethahiah, Judah, and Eliezer.

²⁴This is the singer who was guilty: Eliashib.

These are the gatekeepers who were guilty: Shallum, Telem, and Uri.

²⁵These are the other people of Israel who were guilty:

From the family of Parosh: Ramiah, Izziah, Malkijah, Mijamin, Eleazar, Hashabiah,* and Benaiah.

²⁶From the family of Elam: Mattaniah, Zechariah, Jehiel, Abdi, Jeremoth, and Elijah.

²⁷From the family of Zattu: Elieoenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, Jeremoth, Zabad, and Aziza.

²⁸From the family of Bebai: Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai and Athlai.

²⁹From the family of Bani: Meshullam, Malluch, Adaiah, Jashub, Sheal, and Jeremoth.

³⁰From the family of Pahath-moab: Adna, Kelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah, Bezalel, Binnui, and Manasseh.

³¹From the family of Harim: Eliezer, Ishijah, Malkijah, Shemaiah, Shimeon, ³²Benjamin, Malluch, and Shemariah.

³³From the family of Hashum: Mattenai, Mattattah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh, and Shimei.

³⁴From the family of Bani: Maadai, Amram, Uel, ³⁵Benaiah, Bedeiah, Keluhi, ³⁶Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib, ³⁷Mattaniah, Mattenai, and Jaasu.

³⁸From the family of Binnui*: Shimei, ³⁹Shelemiah, Nathar, Adaiah, ⁴⁰Macnadebai, Shashai, Sharai, ⁴¹Azarel, Shelemiah, Shemariah, ⁴²Shallum, Amariah, and Joseph.

⁴³From the family of Nebo: Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Jaddai, Joel, and Benaiah.

⁴⁴Each of these men had a pagan wife, and some even had children by these wives.*

10:6 As in parallel text at 1 Esdras 9:2; Hebrew reads *He went*. 10:9 Hebrew on the twentieth day of the ninth month, of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was December 19, 458 B.C.; also see note on 6:15. 10:16 Hebrew On the first day of the tenth month, of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was December 29, 458 B.C.; also see note on 6:15. 10:17 Hebrew By the first day of the first month, of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was March 27, 457 B.C.; also see note on 6:15. 10:18 Hebrew *Jozadak*, a variant spelling of Jehozadak. 10:25 As in parallel text at 1 Esdras 9:26; Hebrew reads *Malkijah*. 10:37-38 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *Jaasu*, ³⁷*Bani*, *Binnui*. 10:44 Or *and they sent them away with their children*. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

NEHEMIAH

Author Possibly Ezra, although Nehemiah contributed to the book

Written Around 430 B.C.

Content It is easy to analyze, scrutinize, and people who will do something about such a person steps forward. The story distresses him: The city walls of Jerusalem, a small number of Jews who had returned desperately needed the walls to be obtained permission from the king in that situation and began to reconstruct Jerusalem, Nehemiah completed the work to the glory of God. Ezra also led the

¹ These are the memoirs of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah.

Nehemiah’s Concern for Jerusalem

In the late autumn, in the month of Kislev, in the twentieth year of the reign of King Artaxerxes,* I was at the fortress of Susa. ²One of my brothers, came to visit me with some of the Jews who had just arrived from Judah. I asked them about the Jews who had returned there from captivity and about how things were going in Jerusalem.

³They said to me, “Things are not going well for those who returned to the province of Judah. They are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem has been broken down, and the gates have been destroyed by fire.”

⁴When I heard this, I sat down and wept. In fact, for days I mourned, fasted, and prayed to the God of heaven. ⁵Then

“O LORD, God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps his covenant of unfailing love with those who love him and obey his commands, listen to my prayer! Look down and see me praying night and day for your people Israel. I confess that we have sinned against you. Yes, even my own family and I have sinned! ⁷We have sinned terribly by not obeying the commands, decrees, and regulations that you gave us through your servant Moses.

⁸Please remember what you told your servant Moses: If you are unfaithful to me, I will scatter you among the nations. ⁹But if you return to me and obey my commands and live by them, then even if you are exiled to the ends of the earth, I will bring you back to the place I have chosen for my name to be honored.’

¹⁰“The people you rescued by your great power and strong hand are your servants. ¹¹O Lord, please hear my prayer! Listen to the prayers of those of us who delight in honoring you. Please grant me success today by making the king favorable to me.* Put it into his heart to be kind to me.”

On those days I was the king’s cup-bearer.

* Hebrew *In the month of Kislev of the twentieth year*. A number of dates in the text are not given in our modern calendar. This month of the ancient Hebrew calendar was December 29, 446 B.C. The twentieth year probably refers to the reign of King Artaxerxes I. ² Hebrew *In the month of Nisan*. This month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar is the first month of the year, and is the month of the province beyond the river; also in 2:9. 2:9 Or *charioteers*.

representatives by name. On December 29,* the leaders were sent down to investigate the matter. ¹⁷By March 27, the first day of the new year,* they had finished dealing with all the men who had married pagan wives.

Those Guilty of Intermarriage

These are the priests who had married pagan wives: from the family of Jeshua son of Jehozadak* and his brothers: Maaseiah, Eliezer, Jarib, and Gedaliah.

¹⁹They vowed to divorce their wives, and they each acknowledged their guilt by offering a ram as a guilt offering.

From the family of Immer: Hanani and Zebadiah.

From the family of Harim: Maaseiah, Elijah, Shemaiah, Jehiel, and Uzziiah.

From the family of Pashhur: Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethanel, Jozabad, and Elasah.

These are the Levites who were guilty: Jozabad, Shimeon, Kelaiah (also called Kelita), Pethahiah, Judah, and Eliezer.

This is the singer who was guilty: Eliashib.

These are the gatekeepers who were guilty: Shallum, Telam, and Uri.

These are the other people of Israel who were guilty: from the family of Parosh: Ramiah, Izziah, Malkijah, Mijamin, Eleazar, Hashabiah,* and Benaiah.

From the family of Elam: Mattaniah, Zechariah, Jehiel, Abdi, Jeremoth, and Elijah.

From the family of Zattu: Elioenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, Jeremoth, Zabab, and Aziza.

From the family of Bebai: Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabab, and Athlai.

From the family of Bani: Meshullam, Malluch, Adaiah, Jashub, Sheal, and Jeremoth.

From the family of Pahath-moab: Adna, Kelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah, Bezalel, Binnui, and Manasseh.

From the family of Harim: Eliezer, Ishijah, Malkijah, Shemaiah, Shimeon, ³²Benjamin, Malluch, and Shemariah.

From the family of Hashum: Mattenai, Mattattah, Zabab, Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh, and Shimei.

From the family of Bani: Maadai, Amram, Uel, ³⁵Benaiah, Bedeiah, Keluhi, ³⁶Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib, ³⁷Mattaniah, Mattenai, and Jaasu.

From the family of Binnui*: Shimei, ³⁹Shelemiah, Nathaniah, Adaiah, ⁴⁰Macnadebai, Shashai, Sharai, ⁴¹Azarel, Shelemiah, Shemariah, ⁴²Shallum, Amariah, and Joseph.

From the family of Nebo: Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabab, Zebadiah, Jaddai, Joel, and Benaiah.

⁴⁴Each of these men had a pagan wife, and some even had children by these wives.*

⁴⁵On the twentieth day of the ninth month, of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar, I was in the city. ⁴⁶On the first day of the tenth month, of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar, this day was the first day of the month of Nisan. ⁴⁷On the first day of the month of Nisan, of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar, I was in the city. ⁴⁸On the first day of the month of Nisan, of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar, I was in the city. ⁴⁹On the first day of the month of Nisan, of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar, I was in the city. ⁵⁰On the first day of the month of Nisan, of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar, I was in the city.

NEHEMIAH

Author Possibly Ezra, although Nehemiah's words are written in first person, suggesting that he contributed to the book

Written Around 430 B.C.

Content It is easy to analyze, scrutinize, and talk about all the problems in the world, but we really need people who will do something about them. The book of Nehemiah shows what happens when such a person steps forward. The story begins as Nehemiah learns of a problem that greatly distresses him: The city walls of Jerusalem were broken down, and the city was defenseless. The small number of Jews who had returned to their homeland after decades of Babylonian captivity desperately needed the walls to be rebuilt. Nehemiah knew that the task could not wait, so he obtained permission from the king of Persia and traveled to Jerusalem. There he surveyed the situation and began to reconstruct the walls. Despite several setbacks from the enemies of Jerusalem, Nehemiah completed the task within a very short time, and the walls were dedicated to the glory of God. Ezra also led the people to recommit themselves to following God's laws.

These are the memoirs of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah.

Nehemiah's Concern for Jerusalem

¹In the autumn, in the month of Kislev, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes' reign,* I was at the fortress of Susa. ²Hachabai, one of my brothers, came to visit me with some other Jews who had just arrived from Judah. I asked them about the things who had returned there from captivity and about the things were going in Jerusalem.

³They said to me, "Things are not going well for those who returned to the province of Judah. They are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem has been torn down and the gates have been destroyed by fire."

⁴When I heard this, I sat down and wept. In fact, for days I fasted, and prayed to the God of heaven. ⁵Then I

⁶"O LORD, God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps his covenant of unfailing love with those who love him and obey his commands, ⁷listen to my prayer! Look down and see me praying night and day for your people Israel. I confess that we have sinned against you. Yes, even my own family and I have sinned! ⁸We have sinned terribly by not obeying the commands, decrees, and regulations that you gave us through your servant Moses.

⁹Please remember what you told your servant Moses: "If you are unfaithful to me, I will scatter you among the nations. ¹⁰But if you return to me and obey my commands and live by them, then even if you are exiled to the ends of the earth, I will bring you back to the land I have chosen for my name to be honored."

¹¹The people you rescued by your great power and strong hand are your servants. ¹²O Lord, please hear my prayer! Listen to the prayers of those of us who delight in honoring you. Please grant me success today by making the king favorable to me.* Put it into his heart to be kind to me."

On these days I was the king's cup-bearer.

¹³In the month of Kislev of the twentieth year. A number of dates in the book of Nehemiah can be cross-checked with dates in surviving Persian records and related accurately to our modern calendar. This month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred within the months of November and December 446 B.C. The twentieth year probably refers to the reign of King Artaxerxes I; compare 2:1; 5:14. ¹⁴1:11 Hebrew today in the sight of this man. ¹⁵In the month of Nisan. This month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred within the months of April and May 445 B.C. ¹⁶2:7 Hebrew beyond the river; also in 2:9. ¹⁷2:9 Or charioteers.

Nehemiah Goes to Jerusalem

¹⁸Early the following spring, in the month of Nisan,* during the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes' reign, I was serving the king his wine. I had never before appeared sad in his presence. ¹⁹So the king asked me, "Why are you looking so sad? You don't look sick to me. You must be deeply troubled."

²⁰Then I was terrified, ²¹but I replied, "Long live the king! How can I not be sad? For the city where my ancestors are buried is in ruins, and the gates have been destroyed by fire."

²²The king asked, "Well, how can I help you?"

²³With a prayer to the God of heaven, ²⁴I replied, "If it please the king, and if you are pleased with me, your servant, send me to Judah to rebuild the city where my ancestors are buried."

²⁵The king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked, "How long will you be gone? When will you return?" After I told him how long I would be gone, the king agreed to my request.

²⁶I also said to the king, "If it please the king, let me have letters addressed to the governors of the province west of the Euphrates River,* instructing them to let me travel safely through their territories on my way to Judah. ²⁷And please give me a letter addressed to Asaph, the manager of the king's forest, instructing him to give me timber. I will need it to make beams for the gates of the Temple fortress, for the city walls, and for a house for myself." And the king granted these requests, because the gracious hand of God was on me.

²⁸When I came to the governors of the province west of the Euphrates River, I delivered the king's letters to them. The king, I should add, had sent along army officers and horsemen* to protect me. ²⁹But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard of my arrival, they were very displeased that someone had come to help the people of Israel.

Nehemiah Inspects Jerusalem's Wall

³⁰So I arrived in Jerusalem. Three days later, ³¹I slipped out during the night, taking only a few others with me. I had not told anyone about the plans God had put in my heart

for Jerusalem. We took no pack animals with us except the donkey I was riding. ¹³After dark I went out through the Valley Gate, past the Jackal's Well,* and over to the Dung Gate to inspect the broken walls and burned gates. ¹⁴Then I went to the Fountain Gate and to the King's Pool, but my donkey couldn't get through the rubble. ¹⁵So, though it was still dark, I went up the Kidron Valley* instead, inspecting the wall before I turned back and entered again at the Valley Gate.

¹⁶The city officials did not know I had been out there or what I was doing, for I had not yet said anything to anyone about my plans. I had not yet spoken to the Jewish leaders—the priests, the nobles, the officials, or anyone else in the administration. ¹⁷But now I said to them, "You know very well what trouble we are in. Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire. Let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem and end this disgrace!" ¹⁸Then I told them about how the gracious hand of God had been on me, and about my conversation with the king.

They replied at once, "Yes, let's rebuild the wall!" So they began the good work.

¹⁹But when Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem the Arab heard of our plan, they scoffed contemptuously. "What are you doing? Are you rebelling against the king?" they asked.

²⁰I replied, "The God of heaven will help us succeed. We, his servants, will start rebuilding this wall. But you have no share, legal right, or historic claim in Jerusalem."

Rebuilding the Wall of Jerusalem

3 Then Eliashib the high priest and the other priests started to rebuild at the Sheep Gate. They dedicated it and set up its doors, building the wall as far as the Tower of the Hundred, which they dedicated, and the Tower of Hananel. ²People from the town of Jericho worked next to them, and beyond them was Zaccur son of Imri.

³The Fish Gate was built by the sons of Hassenaah. They laid the beams, set up its doors, and installed its bolts and bars. ⁴Meremoth son of Uriah and grandson of Hakkoz repaired the next section of wall. Beside him were Meshullam son of Berekiah and grandson of Meshezabel, and then Zadok son of Baana. ⁵Next were the people from Tekoa, though their leaders refused to work with the construction supervisors.

⁶The Old City Gate* was repaired by Joiada son of Paseah and Meshullam son of Besodeiah. They laid the beams, set up its doors, and installed its bolts and bars. ⁷Next to them were Melatiah from Gibeon, Jadon from Meronoth, people from Gibeon, and people from Mizpah, the headquarters of the governor of the province west of the Euphrates River.* ⁸Next was Uzziel son of Harhaiah, a goldsmith by trade, who also worked on the wall. Beyond him was Hananiah, a manufacturer of perfumes. They left out a section of Jerusalem as they built the Broad Wall.*

⁹Rephaiah son of Hur, the leader of half the district of Jerusalem, was next to them on the wall. ¹⁰Next Jedaiah son of Harumaph repaired the wall across from his own house, and next to him was Hattush son of Hashabneiah. ¹¹Then came Malkijah son of Harim and Hasshub son of Pahath-moab, who repaired another section of the wall and the Tower of the Ovens. ¹²Shallum son of Hallohesh and his daughters repaired the next section. He was the leader of the other half of the district of Jerusalem.

¹³The Valley Gate was repaired by the people from Zano-

ah, led by Hanun. They set up its doors and installed its bolts and bars. They also repaired the 1,500 feet* of wall to the Dung Gate.

¹⁴The Dung Gate was repaired by Malkijah son of Rechab, the leader of the Beth-hakkerem district. He rebuilt it, set up its doors, and installed its bolts and bars.

¹⁵The Fountain Gate was repaired by Shallum* son of Co-hoze, the leader of the Mizpah district. He rebuilt it, roofed it, set up its doors, and installed its bolts and bars. Then he repaired the wall of the pool of Siloam* near the king's garden and he rebuilt the wall as far as the stairs that descend from the City of David. ¹⁶Next to him was Nehemiah son of Azbub, the leader of half the district of Beth-zur. He rebuilt the wall from a place across from the tombs of David's family as far as the water reservoir and the House of the Warriors.

¹⁷Next to him, repairs were made by a group of Levites working under the supervision of Rehum son of Bani. Then came Hashabiah, the leader of half the district of Keilah, who supervised the building of the wall on behalf of his own district. ¹⁸Next down the line were his countrymen led by Binnui* son of Henadad, the leader of the other half of the district of Keilah.

¹⁹Next to them, Ezer son of Jeshua, the leader of Mizpah, repaired another section of wall across from the ascent to the army near the angle in the wall. ²⁰Next to him was Banaiah son of Zabbai, who zealously repaired an additional section from the angle to the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest. ²¹Meremoth son of Uriah and grandson of Hakkoz rebuilt another section of the wall extending from the door of Eliashib's house to the end of the house.

²²The next repairs were made by the priests from the surrounding region. ²³After them, Benjamin and Hasshub repaired the section across from their house, and Azariah son of Maaseiah and grandson of Ananiah repaired the section across from his house. ²⁴Next was Binnui son of Henadad, who rebuilt another section of the wall from Azariah's house to the angle and the corner. ²⁵Palai son of Uzai carried on the work from a point opposite the angle and the tower that projects up from the king's upper house beside the court of the guard. Next to him were Pedaiah son of Paros and Hakkoz rebuilt another section of the wall on the hill of Ophel, which repaired the wall as far as a point across from the Water Gate to the east and the projecting tower. ²⁷Then came the people of Tekoa, who repaired another section across from the great projecting tower and over to the wall of Ophel.

²⁸Above the Horse Gate, the priests repaired the wall. Each one repaired the section immediately across from his own house. ²⁹Next Zadok son of Immer also rebuilt the wall across from his own house, and beyond him was Sheamiah son of Shecaniah, the gatekeeper of the East Gate. ³⁰Next Hananiah son of Shelemiah and Hanun, the sixth son of Zalaph, repaired another section, while Meshullam son of Berekiah rebuilt the wall across from where he lived. ³¹Malkijah, one of the goldsmiths, repaired the wall as far as the housing for the Temple servants and merchants, across from the Inspection Gate. Then he continued as far as the upper room at the corner. ³²The other goldsmiths and merchants repaired the wall from that corner to the Sheep Gate.

Enemies Oppose the Rebuilding

4 ¹Sanballat was very angry when he learned that we were rebuilding the wall. He flew into a rage and mocked the Jews, ²saying in front of his friends and the Samaritan army

officers, "What does this bunch of poor, feeble people doing? Do they think they can build the wall by just offering a few sacrifices? Do they act as if they can make something of stones from a rubble and charred ones at that?"

³Tobiah the Ammonite, who was standing beside me, remarked, "That stone wall would collapse if it were not for me walking along the top of it!"

⁴Then I prayed, "Hear us, our God, for we are mocked. May their scoffing fall back on their own heads and may they themselves become captives in our hands. ⁵Do not ignore their guilt. Do not blot out their names, for they have provoked you to anger here in front of our builders."

⁶At last the wall was completed to half its length around the entire city, for the people had worked with enthusiasm.

⁷But when Sanballat and Tobiah and the Arabs, the Ammonites, and Ashdodites heard that the work was going on, and that the gaps in the wall of Jerusalem were being repaired, they were furious. ⁸They all made plans to fight against Jerusalem and throw us into confusion. ⁹So we prayed to our God and guarded the city day and night to protect ourselves.

¹⁰Then the people of Judah began to complain. "The workers are getting tired, and there is so much rubble to be removed. We will never be able to build the wall by our own strength."

¹¹Meanwhile, our enemies were saying, "Before we know what's happening, we will swoop down on them and end their work."

¹²The Jews who lived near the enemy came and stood guard again and again, "They will come from all directions to attack us!" ¹³So I placed armed guards behind the parts of the wall in the exposed areas. I stationed them to stand guard by families, armed with swords, spears, and bows.

¹⁴Then as I looked over the situation, I called together the nobles and the rest of the people and said to them, "Remember the enemy! Remember the Lord, who is glorious, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your wives, your wives, and your homes!"

¹⁵When our enemies heard that we knew of the Lord and that God had frustrated them, we all returned to work on the wall. ¹⁶But from then on, only half worked while the other half stood guard with shields, bows, and coats of mail. The leaders stationed themselves behind the people of Judah ¹⁷who were building the wall. The laborers carried on their work with one supporting their load and one hand holding a weapon. ¹⁸The builders had a sword belted to their side. The trumpet-blowers stayed with me to sound the alarm.

¹⁹Then I explained to the nobles and officials and to the people, "The work is very spread out, and we are wide apart from each other along the wall. ²⁰When you hear the blast of the trumpet, rush to wherever it is sounding. ²¹For God will fight for us!"

²²We worked early and late, from sunrise to sunset. ²³Half the men were always on guard. ²⁴I also told every one of our servants to stay in Jerusalem. That way their relatives could help with guard duty at night and during the day. ²⁵During this time, none of us—not I, nor my relatives, nor my servants, nor the guards who were with me—ever took off our clothes. We carried our weapons at all times, even when we went for water.*

2:13 Or *Serpent's Well*. 2:15 Hebrew *the valley*. 3:6 Or *The Mishneh Gate, or The Jeshanah Gate*. 3:7 Hebrew *the province beyond the river*. 3:8 Or *They fortified Jerusalem up to the Broad Wall*. 3:13 Hebrew *1,000 cubits [450 meters]*. 3:15a As in Syriac version; Hebrew reads *Shallum*. 3:15b Hebrew *pool of Shelah*, another name for the pool of Siloam. 3:18 As in a few Hebrew manuscripts, some Greek manuscripts, and Syriac version (see also 3:24; 10:9); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Bavvai*. 4:1 Verses 4:1-6 are numbered 3:33-38 in Hebrew text.

*2 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. 4:5 Or *for they have the*. 4:12 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. 4:23 Or *Each carried*. The Hebrew is uncertain. 5:14 That is, 445-433 B.C. 5:15 Hebrew

un. They set up its doors and installed its bolts and bars. They also repaired the 1,500 feet* of wall in the Beth-hakkerem district. He rebuilt it and installed its bolts and bars.

The main Gate was repaired by Shallum* son of Udder of the Mizpah district. He rebuilt it and installed its bolts and bars. Then he repaired the pool of Siloam* near the king's garden, the wall as far as the stairs that descend from it. 16 Next to him was Nehemiah son of Azbani, half the district of Beth-zur. He rebuilt the wall across from the tombs of David's family as far as the reservoir and the House of the Warriors.

Then repairs were made by a group of Levites under the supervision of Rehum son of Bani. Then Nehemiah, the leader of half the district of Keilah, and the building of the wall on behalf of his own half. The line were his countrymen led by Henadad, the leader of the other half of the district.

Then Ezer son of Jeshua, the leader of Meremoth's section of wall across from the ascent to the angle in the wall. 20 Next to him was Meshubai, who zealously repaired an additional section of wall to the door of the house of Eliashib the priest. Meremoth son of Uriah and grandson of Shashib's house to the end of the house.

Repairs were made by the priests from the ascent to the angle in the wall. 23 After them, Benjamin and Hassuthai repaired a section across from their house, and Azariah son of Binnui repaired the section across from the house of Ananiah. 24 Next was Binnui son of Henadad, another section of the wall from Azariah to the angle and the corner. 25 Palal son of Uzai repaired a section from a point opposite the angle and the tower up from the king's upper house beside the wall. Next to him were Pedaiah son of Phanai and the temple servants living on the hill of Ophel, who repaired the wall as far as a point across from the wall to the projecting tower. 27 Then came Shebana, who repaired another section across from the projecting tower and over to the wall of Ophel.

At the Horse Gate, the priests repaired the wall. 28 Next Zadok son of Immer also rebuilt the wall across from his own house, and beyond him was Shemaiah the gatekeeper of the East Gate. 29 Then repaired another section, while Meshullam son of Beselehu repaired the wall across from where he lived. 30 The goldsmiths repaired the wall as far as the Temple servants and merchants across from the corner. 32 The other goldsmiths and masons repaired the wall from that corner to the Sheep Gate.

Oppose the Rebuilding

Nehemiah was very angry when he learned that they were rebuilding the wall. He flew into a rage and mocked them in front of his friends and the Samaritan

3:7 Hebrew the province beyond the river.
3:15a As in Syriac version; Hebrew reads Shallum.
3:15b Some Greek manuscripts, and Syriac version read Henadad.
3:18 In Hebrew text.

officials, "What does this bunch of poor, feeble Jews think they are doing? Do they think they can build the wall in a single day just offering a few sacrifices? Do they actually think they can make something of stones from a rubbish heap—charred ones at that?"

Tobiah the Ammonite, who was standing beside him, remarked, "That stone wall would collapse if even a fox walked along the top of it!"

Then I prayed, "Hear us, our God, for we are being mocked. May their scoffing fall back on their own heads, and may they themselves become captives in a foreign land. Do not ignore their guilt. Do not blot out their sins, for they have provoked you to anger here in front of* the rulers."

At last the wall was completed to half its height around the entire city, for the people had worked with enthusiasm.

But when Sanballat and Tobiah and the Arabs, Ammonites and Ashdodites heard that the work was going ahead and that the gaps in the wall of Jerusalem were being repaired, they were furious. 8 They all made plans to come and attack against Jerusalem and throw us into confusion. 9 But I prayed to our God and guarded the city day and night to protect ourselves.

Then the people of Judah began to complain, "The workers are getting tired, and there is so much rubble to be removed. We will never be able to build the wall by ourselves."

Meanwhile, our enemies were saying, "Before they know what's happening, we will swoop down on them and kill them and end their work."

The Jews who lived near the enemy came and told us about it, and again, "They will come from all directions and attack us!" 13 So I placed armed guards behind the lowest part of the wall in the exposed areas. I stationed the people in guard by families, armed with swords, spears, and bows.

Then as I looked over the situation, I called together the nobles and the rest of the people and said to them, "Don't be afraid of the enemy! Remember the Lord, who is great and powerful, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes!"

When our enemies heard that we knew of their plans and that God had frustrated them, we all returned to our work on the wall. 16 But from then on, only half my men worked while the other half stood guard with spears, shields, bows, and coats of mail. The leaders stationed themselves behind the people of Judah 17 who were building the wall. The laborers carried on their work with one hand supporting their load and one hand holding a weapon. 18 All the builders had a sword belted to their side. The trumpeter stood with me to sound the alarm.

Then I explained to the nobles and officials and all the people, "The work is very spread out, and we are widely separated from each other along the wall. 20 When you hear the sound of the trumpet, rush to wherever it is sounding. Then the Lord will fight for us!"

We worked early and late, from sunrise to sunset. And the men were always on guard. 22 I also told everyone living outside the walls to stay in Jerusalem. That way they and their servants could help with guard duty at night and work during the day. 23 During this time, none of us—not I, nor my wives, nor my servants, nor the guards who were with me—ever took off our clothes. We carried our weapons with us at all times, even when we went for water.*

4:1 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. 4:5 Or for they have thrown insults in the face of. 4:7 Verses 4:7-23 are numbered 4:1-17 in Hebrew text. 4:8 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. 4:23 Or Each carried his weapon in his right hand. Hebrew reads Each his weapon the water. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. 5:14 That is, 445-433 B.C. 5:15 Hebrew 40 shekels (1 pound, or 456 grams).

Nehemiah Defends the Oppressed

About this time some of the men and their wives raised a cry of protest against their fellow Jews. 2 They were saying, "We have such large families. We need more food to survive."

Others said, "We have mortgaged our fields, vineyards, and homes to get food during the famine."

And others said, "We have had to borrow money on our fields and vineyards to pay our taxes. 5 We belong to the same family as those who are wealthy, and our children are just like theirs. Yet we must sell our children into slavery just to get enough money to live. We have already sold some of our daughters, and we are helpless to do anything about it, for our fields and vineyards are already mortgaged to others."

When I heard their complaints, I was very angry. 7 After thinking it over, I spoke out against these nobles and officials. I told them, "You are hurting your own relatives by charging interest when they borrow money!" Then I called a public meeting to deal with the problem.

At the meeting I said to them, "We are doing all we can to redeem our Jewish relatives who have had to sell themselves to pagan foreigners, but you are selling them back into slavery again. How often must we redeem them?" And they had nothing to say in their defense.

Then I pressed further, "What you are doing is not right! Should you not walk in the fear of our God in order to avoid being mocked by enemy nations? 10 I myself, as well as my brothers and my workers, have been lending the people money and grain, but now let us stop this business of charging interest. 11 You must restore their fields, vineyards, olive groves, and homes to them this very day. And repay the interest you charged when you lent them money, grain, new wine, and olive oil."

They replied, "We will give back everything and demand nothing more from the people. We will do as you say." Then I called the priests and made the nobles and officials swear to do what they had promised.

I shook out the folds of my robe and said, "If you fail to keep your promise, may God shake you like this from your homes and from your property!"

The whole assembly responded, "Amen," and they praised the Lord. And the people did as they had promised.

For the entire twelve years that I was governor of Judah—from the twentieth year to the thirty-second year of the reign of King Artaxerxes*—neither I nor my officials drew on our official food allowance. 15 The former governors, in contrast, had laid heavy burdens on the people, demanding a daily ration of food and wine, besides forty pieces* of silver. Even their assistants took advantage of the people. But because I feared God, I did not act that way.

I also devoted myself to working on the wall and refused to acquire any land. And I required all my servants to spend time working on the wall. 17 I asked for nothing, even though I regularly fed 150 Jewish officials at my table, besides all the visitors from other lands! 18 The provisions I paid for each day included one ox, six choice sheep or goats, and a large number of poultry. And every ten days we needed a large supply of all kinds of wine. Yet I refused to claim the governor's food allowance because the people already carried a heavy burden.

Remember, O my God, all that I have done for these people, and bless me for it.

Continued Opposition to Rebuilding

6 Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies found out that I had finished rebuilding the wall and that no gaps remained—though we had not yet set up the doors in the gates. ²So Sanballat and Geshem sent a message asking me to meet them at one of the villages* in the plain of Ono.

But I realized they were plotting to harm me, ³so I replied by sending this message to them: "I am engaged in a great work, so I can't come. Why should I stop working to come and meet with you?"

⁴Four times they sent the same message, and each time I gave the same reply. ⁵The fifth time, Sanballat's servant came with an open letter in his hand, ⁶and this is what it said:

"There is a rumor among the surrounding nations, and Geshem* tells me it is true, that you and the Jews are planning to rebel and that is why you are building the wall. According to his reports, you plan to be their king. ⁷He also reports that you have appointed prophets in Jerusalem to proclaim about you, 'Look! There is a king in Judah!'"

"You can be very sure that this report will get back to the king, so I suggest that you come and talk it over with me."

⁸I replied, "There is no truth in any part of your story. You are making up the whole thing."

⁹They were just trying to intimidate us, imagining that they could discourage us and stop the work. So I continued the work with even greater determination.*

¹⁰Later I went to visit Shemaiah son of Delaiah and grandson of Mehetabel, who was confined to his home. He said, "Let us meet together inside the Temple of God and bolt the doors shut. Your enemies are coming to kill you tonight."

¹¹But I replied, "Should someone in my position run from danger? Should someone in my position enter the Temple to save his life? No, I won't do it!" ¹²I realized that God had not spoken to him, but that he had uttered this prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. ¹³They were hoping to intimidate me and make me sin. Then they would be able to accuse and discredit me.

¹⁴Remember, O my God, all the evil things that Tobiah and Sanballat have done. And remember Noadiah the prophet and all the prophets like her who have tried to intimidate me.

The Builders Complete the Wall

¹⁵So on October 2* the wall was finished—just fifty-two days after we had begun. ¹⁶When our enemies and the surrounding nations heard about it, they were frightened and humiliated. They realized this work had been done with the help of our God.

¹⁷During those fifty-two days, many letters went back and forth between Tobiah and the nobles of Judah. ¹⁸For many in Judah had sworn allegiance to him because his father-in-law was Shecaniah son of Arah, and his son Jehohanan was married to the daughter of Meshullam son of Berekiah. ¹⁹They kept telling me about Tobiah's good deeds, and then they told him everything I said. And Tobiah kept sending threatening letters to intimidate me.

6:2 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *at Kephirim*. 6:6 Hebrew *Gashmu*, a variant spelling of Geshem. 6:9 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *But now to strengthen my hands*. 6:15 Hebrew *on the twenty-fifth day of the month Ethl*, of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was October 2, 445 B.C.; also see note on 1:1. 7:3 Or *Keep the gates of Jerusalem closed until the sun is hot*. 7:7a As in parallel text at Ezra 2:2; Hebrew reads *Azariah*. 7:7b As in parallel text at Ezra 2:2; Hebrew reads *Raamiah*. 7:7c As in parallel text at Ezra 2:2; Hebrew reads *Mispreth*. 7:7d As in parallel text at Ezra 2:2; Hebrew reads *Nehum*. 7:15 As in parallel text at Ezra 2:10; Hebrew reads *Binnui*. 7:24 As in parallel text at Ezra 2:18; Hebrew reads *Hariph*. 7:25 As in parallel text at Ezra 2:20; Hebrew reads *Gibeon*. 7:33 Or *of the other Nebo*. 7:34 Or *of the other Elam*.

7 After the wall was finished and I had set up the doors in the gates, the gatekeepers, singers, and Levites were appointed. ²I gave the responsibility of governing Jerusalem to my brother Hanani, along with Hananiah, the commander of the fortress, for he was a faithful man who feared God more than most. ³I said to them, "Do not leave the gates open during the hottest part of the day.* And even while the gatekeepers are on duty, have them shut and bar the doors. Appoint the residents of Jerusalem to act as guards, everyone on a regular watch. Some will serve at sentry posts and some in front of their own homes."

Nehemiah Registers the People

⁴At that time the city was large and spacious, but the population was small, and none of the houses had been rebuilt. ⁵So my God gave me the idea to call together all the nobles and leaders of the city, along with the ordinary citizens, for registration. I had found the genealogical record of those who had first returned to Judah. This is what was written there:

⁶Here is the list of the Jewish exiles of the provinces who returned from their captivity. King Nebuchadnezzar had deported them to Babylon, but now they returned to Jerusalem and the other towns in Judah where they originally lived. ⁷Their leaders were Zerubbabel, Jeshua Nehemiah, Seraiah,* Reelaiah,* Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar,* Bigvai, Rehum,* and Baanah.

This is the number of the men of Israel who returned from exile:

⁸ The family of Parosh	2,172
⁹ The family of Shephatiah	372
¹⁰ The family of Arah	652
¹¹ The family of Pahath-moab (descendants of Jeshua and Joab)	2,814
¹² The family of Elam	1,254
¹³ The family of Zattu	845
¹⁴ The family of Zaccai	760
¹⁵ The family of Bani*	648
¹⁶ The family of Bebai	628
¹⁷ The family of Azgad	2,322
¹⁸ The family of Adonikam	667
¹⁹ The family of Bigvai	2,067
²⁰ The family of Adin	652
²¹ The family of Ater (descendants of Hezekiah)	98
²² The family of Hashum	328
²³ The family of Bebai	324
²⁴ The family of Jorah*	111
²⁵ The family of Gibbar*	95
²⁶ The people of Bethlehem and Netophah	188
²⁷ The people of Anathoth	128
²⁸ The people of Beth-azmaveth	42
²⁹ The people of Kiriath-jearim, Kephirah, and Beeroth	742
³⁰ The people of Ramah and Geba	622
³¹ The people of Micmash	122
³² The people of Bethel and Ai	123
³³ The people of West Nebo*	52
³⁴ The citizens of West Elam*	1,254
³⁵ The citizens of Harim	320
³⁶ The citizens of Jericho	345

⁷² The citizens of Lod, Hadid, and Ono 723
⁷³ The citizens of Senaah 3,930

⁷⁴ These are the priests who returned from exile:
 The family of Jedaiah (through the line of Jeshua) 973
⁷⁵ The family of Immer 1,052
⁷⁶ The family of Pashhur 1,247
⁷⁷ The family of Harim 1,017

⁷⁸ These are the Levites who returned from exile:
 The families of Jeshua and Kadmiel (descendants of Hodaviah*) 74
⁷⁹ The singers of the family of Asaph 148
⁸⁰ The gatekeepers of the families of Shallum, Ater, Talmon, Akkub, Hatita, and Shobai 138

⁸¹ The descendants of the following Temple servants returned from exile:
 Ziha, Hasupha, Tabbaoth,
⁸² Keros, Siaha,* Padon,
⁸³ Lebanah, Hagabah, Shalmal,
⁸⁴ Hanan, Giddel, Gahar,
⁸⁵ Reaiah, Rezin, Nekoda,
⁸⁶ Gazzam, Uzza, Paseah,
⁸⁷ Besai, Meunim, Nephusim,*
⁸⁸ Bakbuk, Hakupha, Harhur,
⁸⁹ Bazluth,* Mehida, Harsha,
⁹⁰ Barkos, Sisera, Temah,
⁹¹ Nezhiah, and Hatipha.

⁹² The descendants of these servants of King Solomon returned from exile:
 Sotai, Hassophereth, Peruda,*
⁹³ Jaalah,* Darkon, Giddel,
⁹⁴ Shephatiah, Hattil, Pokereth-hazzebaim, and Ami.*

⁹⁵ In all, the Temple servants and the descendants of Solomon's servants numbered 392.

⁹⁶ Another group returned at this time from the towns of Tel-melah, Tel-harsha, Kerub, Addan,* and Immer. However, they could not prove that they or their families were descendants of Israel. ⁹⁷This group included the families of Delaiah, Tobiah, and Nekoda—a total of 642 people.

⁹⁸ Three families of priests—Hobaiah, Hakkoz, and Barzillai—also returned. (This Barzillai had married a woman who was a descendant of Barzillai of Gilead, and he had taken her family name.) ⁹⁹They searched for their names in the genealogical records, but they were not found, so they were disqualified from serving as priests. ¹⁰⁰The governor told them not to eat the priests' share of food from the sacrifices until a priest could consult the LORD about the matter by using the Urim and Thummim—the sacred lots.

¹⁰¹ So a total of 42,360 people returned to Judah, ¹⁰²in addition to 7,337 servants and 245 singers, both men and women. ¹⁰³They took with them 736 horses, 245 mules,* ¹⁰⁴9435 camels, and 6,720 donkeys.

43 As in parallel text at Ezra 2:40; Hebrew reads *Hodevah*. 7:47 As in parallel text at Ezra 2:41; Hebrew reads *Nephuseshim*. 7:54 As in parallel text at Ezra 2:52; Hebrew reads *Bazal*. 7:58 As in parallel text at Ezra 2:56; Hebrew reads *Jaala*. 7:59 As in parallel text at Ezra 2:57; Hebrew reads *Addon*. 7:68 As in some Hebrew manuscripts (see also Ezra 2:66-72 in Hebrew text). 7:70 Hebrew *1,000 darics of gold*, about 19 pounds or 8.6 kilograms in weight; also in 7:72. 7:71b Hebrew *2,200 minas of silver*, about 133 pounds or 60 kilograms in weight; also in 7:72. 7:73 Hebrew *in the seventh month*. This month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar was the month of Nisan, which began on the first day of the seventh month, of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar.

After the wall was finished and I had set up the doors and the gates, the gatekeepers, singers, and Levites were appointed. I gave the responsibility of governing Jerusalem to my brother Hanani, along with Hananiah, the commander of the fortress, for he was a faithful man who feared God more than most. I said to them, "Do not leave the gates during the hottest part of the day.* And even while the gatekeepers are on duty, have them shut and bar the doors so that the residents of Jerusalem to act as guards, even on a regular watch. Some will serve at sentry posts and some in front of their own homes."

Nehemiah Registers the People

At that time the city was large and spacious, but the population was small, and none of the houses had been rebuilt. God gave me the idea to call together all the nobles and elders of the city, along with the ordinary citizens, for consultation. I had found the genealogical record of those who first returned to Judah. This is what was written there:

Here is the list of the Jewish exiles of the provinces who returned from their captivity. King Nebuchadnezzar had deported them to Babylon, but now they returned to Jerusalem and the other towns in Judah where they originally lived. Their leaders were Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah,* Reelaiah,* Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar,* Bigvai, Rehum,* and Baanah.

This is the number of the men of Israel who returned from exile:

- The family of Parosh 217
- The family of Shephatiah 37
- The family of Arah 61
- The family of Pahath-moab (descendants of Jeshua and Joab) 281
- The family of Elam 125
- The family of Zattu 76
- The family of Zaccai 76
- The family of Bani* 64
- The family of Bebai 61
- The family of Azgad 231
- The family of Adonikam 61
- The family of Bigvai 206
- The family of Adin 61
- The family of Ater (descendants of Hezekiah) 61
- The family of Hashum 301
- The family of Bezai 31
- The family of Jorah* 31
- The family of Gibbar* 31
- The people of Bethlehem and Netophah 31
- The people of Anathoth 31
- The people of Beth-azmaveth 31
- The people of Kiriath-jearim, Kephirah, and Beeroth 31
- The people of Ramah and Geba 31
- The people of Micmash 31
- The people of Bethel and Ai 31
- The people of West Nebo* 31
- The citizens of West Elam* 31
- The citizens of Harim 31
- The citizens of Jericho 31

- The citizens of Lod, Hadid, and Ono 721
- The citizens of Senaah 3,930

- These are the priests who returned from exile:
 - The family of Jedaiah (through the line of Jeshua) 973
 - The family of Immer 1,052
 - The family of Pashhur 1,247
 - The family of Harim 1,017

- These are the Levites who returned from exile:
 - The families of Jeshua and Kadmiel (descendants of Hodaviah*) 74
 - The singers of the family of Asaph 148
 - The gatekeepers of the families of Shallum, Ater, Talmon, Akkub, Hatita, and Shobai 138

- The descendants of the following Temple servants returned from exile:
 - Ziha, Hasupha, Tabbaoth,
 - Keros, Siaha,* Padon,
 - Lebanah, Hagabah, Shalmai,
 - Hanan, Giddel, Gahar,
 - Reaiah, Rezin, Nekoda,
 - Gazzam, Uzza, Paseah,
 - Besai, Meunim, Nephusim,*
 - Bakbuk, Hakupha, Harhur,
 - Bazluth,* Mehida, Harsha,
 - Barkos, Sisera, Temah,
 - Nezhiah, and Hatipha.

- The descendants of these servants of King Solomon returned from exile:
 - Jaalah,* Darkon, Giddel,
 - Shephatiah, Hattil, Pokereth-hazzebaim, and Ami.*

In all, the Temple servants and the descendants of Solomon's servants numbered 392.

Another group returned at this time from the towns of Tel-melah, Tel-harsha, Kerub, Addan,* and Immer. However, they could not prove that they or their families were descendants of Israel. This group included the families of Delaiah, Tobiah, and Nekoda—a total of 42 people.

Three families of priests—Hobaiah, Hakkoz, and Barzillai—also returned. (This Barzillai had married a woman who was a descendant of Barzillai of Gilead, and she had taken her family name.) They searched for their names in the genealogical records, but they were not found, so they were disqualified from serving as priests. The governor told them not to eat the priests' share of food from the sacrifices until a priest could consult the LORD about the matter by using the Urim and Thummim—the sacred lots.

So a total of 42,360 people returned to Judah, in addition to 7,337 servants and 245 singers, both men and women. They took with them 736 horses, 245 mules,* 69435 camels, and 6,720 donkeys.

* parallel text at Ezra 2:40; Hebrew reads *Hodevah*. 7:47 As in parallel text at Ezra 2:44; Hebrew reads *Sia*. 7:52 As in parallel text at Ezra 2:50; Hebrew reads *Nephuseshim*. 7:54 As in parallel text at Ezra 2:52; Hebrew reads *Bazlith*. 7:57 As in parallel text at Ezra 2:55; Hebrew reads *Sotai*, *Sophereth*, and *Adon*. 7:58 As in parallel text at Ezra 2:56; Hebrew reads *Jaala*. 7:59 As in parallel text at Ezra 2:57; Hebrew reads *Sotai*, *Sophereth*, and *Adon*. 7:68 As in some Hebrew manuscripts (see also Ezra 2:66); most Hebrew manuscripts lack this verse. Verses 7:69-73 are numbered 7:70 in Hebrew text. 7:70 Hebrew 1,000 *darics of gold*, about 19 pounds or 8.6 kilograms in weight. 7:71a Hebrew 20,000 *darics of gold*, about 170 kilograms in weight; also in 7:72. 7:71b Hebrew 2,200 *minas* (1,300 kilograms). 7:72 Hebrew 2,000 *minas* (1,200 kilograms). 7:73 Hebrew *in the seventh month*. This month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred within the months of October and November 445 B.C. 7:74 Hebrew *on the first day of the seventh month*, of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was October 8, 445 B.C.; also see note on 1:1. 8:10 Hebrew *he*.

Some of the family leaders gave gifts for the work. The governor gave to the treasury 1,000 gold coins,* 50 gold basins, and 530 robes for the priests. The other leaders gave to the treasury a total of 20,000 gold coins* and some 2,750 pounds* of silver for the work. The rest of the people gave 20,000 gold coins, about 2,500 pounds* of silver, and 67 robes for the priests.

So the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, the Temple servants, and some of the common people settled near Jerusalem. The rest of the people returned to their own towns throughout Israel.

Ezra Reads the Law

In October,* when the Israelites had settled in their towns, all the people assembled with a unified purpose at the square just inside the Water Gate. They asked Ezra the scribe to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had given for Israel to obey.

So on October 8* Ezra the priest brought the Book of the Law before the assembly, which included the men and women and all the children old enough to understand. He faced the square just inside the Water Gate from early morning until noon and read aloud to everyone who could understand. All the people listened closely to the Book of the Law.

Ezra the scribe stood on a high wooden platform that had been made for the occasion. To his right stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah. To his left stood Pedaiah, Mishael, Malkijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam. Ezra stood on the platform in full view of all the people. When they saw him open the book, they all rose to their feet.

Then Ezra praised the LORD, the great God, and all the people chanted, "Amen! Amen!" as they lifted their hands. Then they bowed down and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground.

The Levites—Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabab, Hanan, and Pellaiah—then instructed the people in the Law while everyone remained in their places. They read from the Book of the Law of God and clearly explained the meaning of what was being read, helping the people understand each passage.

Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who were interpreting for the people said to them, "Don't mourn or weep on such a day as this! For today is a sacred day before the LORD your God." For the people had all been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law.

And Nehemiah* continued, "Go and celebrate with a feast of rich foods and sweet drinks, and share gifts of food with people who have nothing prepared. This is a sacred day before our Lord. Don't be dejected and sad, for the joy of the LORD is your strength!"

And the Levites, too, quieted the people, telling them, "Hush! Don't weep! For this is a sacred day." So the people went away to eat and drink at a festive meal, to share gifts of food, and to celebrate with great joy because they had heard God's words and understood them.

The Festival of Shelters

¹³On October 9* the family leaders of all the people, together with the priests and Levites, met with Ezra the scribe to go over the Law in greater detail. ¹⁴As they studied the Law, they discovered that the LORD had commanded through Moses that the Israelites should live in shelters during the festival to be held that month.* ¹⁵He had said that a proclamation should be made throughout their towns and in Jerusalem, telling the people to go to the hills to get branches from olive, wild olive,* myrtle, palm, and other leafy trees. They were to use these branches to make shelters in which they would live during the festival, as prescribed in the Law.

¹⁶So the people went out and cut branches and used them to build shelters on the roofs of their houses, in their courtyards, in the courtyards of God's Temple, or in the squares just inside the Water Gate and the Ephraim Gate. ¹⁷So everyone who had returned from captivity lived in these shelters during the festival, and they were all filled with great joy! The Israelites had not celebrated like this since the days of Joshua* son of Nun.

¹⁸Ezra read from the Book of the Law of God on each of the seven days of the festival. Then on the eighth day they held a solemn assembly, as was required by law.

The People Confess Their Sins

9 On October 31* the people assembled again, and this time they fasted and dressed in burlap and sprinkled dust on their heads. ²Those of Israelite descent separated themselves from all foreigners as they confessed their own sins and the sins of their ancestors. ³They remained standing in place for three hours* while the Book of the Law of the LORD their God was read aloud to them. Then for three more hours they confessed their sins and worshiped the LORD their God. ⁴The Levites—Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Kenani—stood on the stairway of the Levites and cried out to the LORD their God with loud voices.

⁵Then the leaders of the Levites—Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah—called out to the people: "Stand up and praise the LORD your God, for he lives from everlasting to everlasting!" Then they prayed:

"May your glorious name be praised! May it be exalted above all blessing and praise!

⁶You alone are the LORD. You made the skies and the heavens and all the stars. You made the earth and the seas and everything in them. You preserve them all, and the angels of heaven worship you.

⁷You are the LORD God, who chose Abram and brought him from Ur of the Chaldeans and renamed him Abraham. ⁸When he had proved himself faithful, you made a covenant with him to give him and his descendants the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Jebusites, and Girgashites. And you have done what you promised, for you are always true to your word.

⁹You saw the misery of our ancestors in Egypt, and you heard their cries from beside the Red Sea.*

¹⁰You displayed miraculous signs and wonders against Pharaoh, his officials, and all his people, for you knew

how arrogantly they were treating our ancestors. You have a glorious reputation that has never been forgotten. ¹¹You divided the sea for your people so they could walk through on dry land! And then you hurled their enemies into the depths of the sea. They sank like stones beneath the mighty waters. ¹²You led our ancestors by a pillar of cloud during the day and a pillar of fire at night so that they could find their way.

¹³You came down at Mount Sinai and spoke to them from heaven. You gave them regulations and instructions that were just, and decrees and commands that were good. ¹⁴You instructed them concerning your holy Sabbath. And you commanded them, through Moses your servant, to obey all your commands, decrees, and instructions.

¹⁵You gave them bread from heaven when they were hungry and water from the rock when they were thirsty. You commanded them to go and take possession of the land you had sworn to give them.

¹⁶But our ancestors were proud and stubborn, and they paid no attention to your commands. ¹⁷They refused to obey and did not remember the miracles you had done for them. Instead, they became stubborn and appointed a leader to take them back to their slavery in Egypt! But you are a God of forgiveness, gracious and merciful, slow to become angry, and rich in unending love. You did not abandon them, ¹⁸even when they made an idol shaped like a calf and said, "This is your god who brought you out of Egypt!" They committed terrible blasphemies.

¹⁹But in your great mercy you did not abandon them to die in the wilderness. The pillar of cloud still led them forward by day, and the pillar of fire showed them the way through the night. ²⁰You sent your good Spirit to instruct them, and you did not stop giving them manna from heaven or water for their thirst. ²¹For forty years you sustained them in the wilderness, and they lacked nothing. Their clothes did not wear out, and their feet did not swell!

²²Then you helped our ancestors conquer kingdoms and nations, and you placed your people in every corner of the land.* They took over the land of King Sihon of Heshbon and the land of King Og of Bashan. ²³You made their descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and brought them into the land you had promised to their ancestors.

²⁴They went in and took possession of the land. You subdued whole nations before them. Even the Canaanites, who inhabited the land, were powerless! Your people could deal with these nations and their kings as they pleased. ²⁵Our ancestors captured fortified cities and fertile land. They took over houses full of good things, with cisterns already dug and vineyards and olive groves and fruit trees in abundance. So they ate until they were full and grew fat and enjoyed themselves in all your blessings.

²⁶But despite all this, they were disobedient and rebelled against you. They turned their backs on your Law, they killed your prophets who warned them to return to you, and they committed terrible blasphemies. ²⁷So you handed them over to their enemies, who made them suffer. But in their time of trouble they cried to you, and you heard them from heaven. In your great

mercy, you sent them liberators who rescued them from their enemies.

²⁸But as soon as they were at peace, your people again committed evil in your sight, and once more their enemies conquer them. Yet whenever your people turned and cried to you again for help, you listened once more from heaven. In your wonderful mercy, you rescued them many times!

²⁹You warned them to return to your Law, but they became proud and obstinate and disobeyed your commands. They did not follow your regulations, which people will find life if only they obey. They stubbornly turned their backs on you and refused to listen. ³⁰In your love, you were patient with them for many years. You sent your Spirit, who warned them through the prophets. But still they wouldn't listen. So once again you allowed the peoples of the land to conquer them. ³¹But in your great mercy, you did not destroy them completely or abandon them forever. What a gracious and merciful God you are!

³²And now, our God, the great and mighty and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of unending love, do not let all the hardships we have suffered be insignificant to you. Great trouble has come upon us and upon our kings and leaders and priests and prophets and ancestors—all of your people—from days when the kings of Assyria first triumphed over us until now. ³³Every time you punished us you were being just. We have sinned greatly, and you gave us only what we deserved. ³⁴Our kings, leaders, priests, and ancestors did not obey your Law or listen to the warnings in your commands and laws. ³⁵Even while they had their own kingdom, they did not serve you, though you showered your goodness on them. You gave them a large, fertile land, but they refused to turn from their wickedness.

³⁶So now today we are slaves in the land of plenty that you gave our ancestors for their enjoyment! We are slaves here in this good land. ³⁷The lush produce of the land piles up in the hands of the kings whom you have set over us because of our sins. They have power over us and our livestock. We serve them at their pleasure, and we are in great misery."

The People Agree to Obey

The people responded, "In view of all this,* we are making a solemn promise and putting it in writing. On this sealed document are the names of our leaders and Levites and priests."

10 *The document was ratified and sealed with the following names:

The governor: Nehemiah son of Hacaliah, and also Zedekiah.

The following priests: Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah, ³Pashhur, Amariah, Maikijah, ⁴Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluch, ⁵Harim, Meremoth, ⁶Obadiah, ⁷Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch, ⁸Meshullam, ⁹Abijah, Mijamin, ¹⁰Maaziah, Bilgai, and Shemaiah. These were the priests.

The following Levites: Jeshua son of Azaniah, Binnui from the family of Henadad, Kadmiel, ¹⁰and their fellow Levites: Shebaniah, Hodiah, Kelita, Pellaiah, Hanan, ¹¹Mica,

8:13 Hebrew *On the second day*, of the seventh month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was October 9, 445 B.C.; also see notes on 1:1 and 8:2. 8:14 Hebrew *in the seventh month*. This month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar usually occurs within the months of September and October. See Lev 23:39-43. 8:15 Or *pine*; Hebrew *reads oil tree*. 8:17 Hebrew *Jeshua*, a variant spelling of Joshua. 9:1 Hebrew *On the twenty-fourth day of that same month*, the seventh month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was October 31, 445 B.C.; also see notes on 1:1 and 8:2. 9:3 Hebrew *for a quarter of a day*. 9:9 Hebrew *sea of reeds*. 9:22 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

10:1a Verse 9:38 is numbered 10:1 in Hebrew text. 9:38b Or *In spite of all*. 10:32 Hebrew *tax of 1/3 of a shekel* [4 grams].

arrogantly they were treating our ancestors. We have a glorious reputation that has never been forgotten. ¹¹You divided the sea for your people so that we could walk through on dry land! And then you hurled your enemies into the depths of the sea. They sank like stones beneath the mighty waters. ¹²You led our people by a pillar of cloud during the day and a pillar of fire at night so that they could find their way.

¹³You came down at Mount Sinai and spoke to them from heaven. You gave them regulations and instructions that were just, and decrees and commands that were righteous. ¹⁴You instructed them concerning your holy Law. And you commanded them, through Moses your servant, to obey all your commands, decrees, and regulations.

¹⁵You gave them bread from heaven when they were hungry and water from the rock when they were thirsty. You commanded them to go and take possession of the land you had sworn to give them.

¹⁶But our ancestors were proud and stubborn, and they paid no attention to your commands. ¹⁷They refused to listen and did not remember the miracles you had done for them. Instead, they became stubborn and appointed messengers to take them back to their slavery in Egypt! But you, O God of forgiveness, gracious and merciful, slow to become angry, and rich in unfailing love. You did not abandon them, ¹⁸even when they made an idol shaped like a calf and said, "This is your god who brought you out of Egypt!" They committed terrible blasphemies.

¹⁹But in your great mercy you did not abandon them in the wilderness. The pillar of cloud still led them by day, and the pillar of fire showed them the way through the night. ²⁰You sent your good Spirit to comfort them, and you did not stop giving them manna from heaven or water for their thirst. ²¹For forty years you sustained them in the wilderness, and they lacked nothing. Their clothes did not wear out, and their feet did not swell!

²²Then you helped our ancestors conquer kingdoms of nations, and you placed your people in every corner of the land.* They took over the land of King Sihon of Ammon and the land of King Og of Bashan. ²³You made their descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky, and you brought them into the land you had promised to our ancestors.

²⁴They went in and took possession of the land, and they subdued whole nations before them. Even the Canaanites, who inhabited the land, were powerless before them. No people could deal with these nations and their weapons as they pleased. ²⁵Our ancestors captured fortified cities and fertile land. They took over houses full of gold and silver, with cisterns already dug and vineyards and olive trees and fruit trees in abundance. So they ate until they were full and grew fat and enjoyed themselves in their blessings.

²⁶But despite all this, they were disobedient and rebelled against you. They turned their backs on your commands, they killed your prophets who warned them to return to you, and they committed terrible blasphemies against you. You handed them over to their enemies, who made them suffer. But in their time of trouble they cried to you, and you heard them from heaven. In your great

²⁷mercy, you sent them liberators who rescued them from their enemies.

²⁸But as soon as they were at peace, your people again committed evil in your sight, and once more you sent your enemies to conquer them. Yet whenever your people turned and cried to you again for help, you answered once more from heaven. In your wonderful mercy, you rescued them many times!

²⁹You warned them to return to your Law, but they became proud and obstinate and disobeyed your commands. They did not follow your regulations, by which people will find life if only they obey. They stubbornly turned their backs on you and refused to listen. ³⁰In your love, you were patient with them for many years. You sent your Spirit, who warned them through the prophets. But still they wouldn't listen! So once again you allowed the peoples of the land to conquer them. ³¹But in your great mercy, you did not destroy them completely or abandon them forever. What a gracious and merciful God you are!

³²And now, our God, the great and mighty and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of unfailing love, do not let all the hardships we have suffered seem insignificant to you. Great trouble has come upon us and upon our kings and leaders and priests and prophets and ancestors—all of your people—from the days when the kings of Assyria first triumphed over us until now. ³³Every time you punished us you were being just. We have sinned greatly, and you gave us only what we deserved. ³⁴Our kings, leaders, priests, and ancestors did not obey your Law or listen to the warnings in your commands and laws. ³⁵Even while they had their own kingdom, they did not serve you, though you showered your goodness on them. You gave them a large, fertile land, but they refused to turn from their wickedness.

³⁶So now today we are slaves in the land of plenty that you gave our ancestors for their enjoyment! We are slaves here in this good land. ³⁷The lush produce of this land and piles up in the hands of the kings whom you have set over us because of our sins. They have power over us and our livestock. We serve them at their pleasure, and we are in great misery."

The People Agree to Obey

The people responded, "In view of all this,* we are making a solemn promise and putting it in writing. On this document are the names of our leaders and Levites and priests."

¹⁰ The document was ratified and sealed with the following names:

The governor:

Shelemiah son of Hacaliah, and also Zedekiah.

The following priests:

Shelemiah, Azariah, Jeremiah, ³Pashhur, Amariah, Maikijah, ⁴Shaphan, Shebaniah, Malluch, ⁵Harim, Meremoth, ⁶Johanan, ⁷Obadiah, ⁸Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch, ⁹Meshullam, ¹⁰Shebaniah, Mijamin, ¹¹Maaziah, Bilgai, and Shemaiah. These were the priests.

The following Levites:

Jehoiada son of Azariah, Binnui from the family of Phinehas, ¹⁰and their fellow Levites:

Shebaniah, Hodiah, Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan, ¹¹Mica,

¹²Rehob, Hashabiah, ¹³Zaccur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah, ¹⁴Hodiah, Bani, and Beninu.

¹⁵The following leaders:

Parosh, Pahath-moab, Elam, Zattu, Bani, ¹⁵Bunni, Azgad, Bebai, ¹⁶Adonijah, Bigvai, Adin, ¹⁷Ater, Zezekiah, Azzur, ¹⁸Hodiah, Hashum, Bezai, ¹⁹Hariph, Anathoth, Nebai, ²⁰Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir, ²¹Meshezabel, Zadok, Jaddua, ²²Pelataiah, Hanan, Anaiah, ²³Hoshea, Hananiah, Hasshub, ²⁴Hallohesh, Pilha, Shobek, ²⁵Rehum, Hashabnah, Maaseiah, ²⁶Ahiah, Hanan, Anan, ²⁷Malluch, Harim, and Baanah.

The Vow of the People

²⁸Then the rest of the people—the priests, Levites, gatekeepers, singers, Temple servants, and all who had separated themselves from the pagan people of the land in order to obey the Law of God, together with their wives, sons, daughters, and all who were old enough to understand—²⁹joined their leaders and bound themselves with an oath. They swore a curse on themselves if they failed to obey the Law of God as issued by his servant Moses. They solemnly promised to carefully follow all the commands, regulations, and decrees of the LORD our Lord:

³⁰"We promise not to let our daughters marry the pagan people of the land, and not to let our sons marry their daughters.

³¹"We also promise that if the people of the land should bring any merchandise or grain to be sold on the Sabbath or on any other holy day, we will refuse to buy it. Every seventh year we will let our land rest, and we will cancel all debts owed to us.

³²"In addition, we promise to obey the command to pay the annual Temple tax of one-eighth of an ounce of silver* for the care of the Temple of our God. ³³This will provide for the Bread of the Presence; for the regular grain offerings and burnt offerings; for the offerings on the Sabbaths, the new moon celebrations, and the annual festivals; for the holy offerings; and for the sin offerings to make atonement for Israel. It will provide for everything necessary for the work of the Temple of our God.

³⁴"We have cast sacred lots to determine when—at regular times each year—the families of the priests, Levites, and the common people should bring wood to God's Temple to be burned on the altar of the LORD our God, as is written in the Law.

³⁵"We promise to bring the first part of every harvest to the LORD's Temple year after year—whether it be a crop from the soil or from our fruit trees. ³⁶We agree to give God our oldest sons and the firstborn of all our herds and flocks, as prescribed in the Law. We will present them to the priests who minister in the Temple of our God. ³⁷We will store the produce in the storerooms of the Temple of our God. We will bring the best of our flour and other grain offerings, the best of our fruit, and the best of our new wine and olive oil. And we promise to bring to the Levites a tenth of everything our land produces, for it is the Levites who collect the tithes in all our rural towns.

³⁸"A priest—a descendant of Aaron—will be with the Levites as they receive these tithes. And a tenth of all that is collected as tithes will be delivered by the Levites to the Temple of our God and placed in the storerooms. ³⁹The people and the Levites must bring these offerings

^{10:1} Verses 10:1-39 are numbered 10:2-40 in Hebrew text.

* This day was October 9, 445 B.C.; also see notes on 1:1 and 2:1. The event occurs within the months of September and October. See also the account of Joshua. 9:1 Hebrew *On the twenty-fourth day of the month*. 4:45 B.C.; also see notes on 1:1 and 8:2. 9:3 Hebrew *for a quantity*. 10:1 Hebrew *tax of 1/3 of a shekel* [4 grams].

of grain, new wine, and olive oil to the storerooms and place them in the sacred containers near the ministering priests, the gatekeepers, and the singers.

"We promise together not to neglect the Temple of our God."

The People Occupy Jerusalem

11 The leaders of the people were living in Jerusalem, the holy city. A tenth of the people from the other towns of Judah and Benjamin were chosen by sacred lots to live there, too, while the rest stayed where they were. ²And the people commended everyone who volunteered to re-settle in Jerusalem.

³Here is a list of the names of the provincial officials who came to live in Jerusalem. (Most of the people, priests, Levites, Temple servants, and descendants of Solomon's servants continued to live in their own homes in the various towns of Judah, ⁴but some of the people from Judah and Benjamin resettled in Jerusalem.)

From the tribe of Judah:

Athaiah son of Uzziah, son of Zechariah, son of Amariah, son of Shephatiah, son of Mahalalel, of the family of Perez. ⁵Also Maaseiah son of Baruch, son of Col-hozeh, son of Hazaiah, son of Adaiiah, son of Joiarib, son of Zechariah, of the family of Shelah. ⁶There were 468 descendants of Perez who lived in Jerusalem—all outstanding men.

From the tribe of Benjamin:

Sallu son of Meshullam, son of Joed, son of Pedaiiah, son of Kolaiah, son of Maaseiah, son of Ithiel, son of Jeshaiiah. ⁸After him were Gabbai and Sallai and a total of 928 relatives. ⁹Their chief officer was Joel son of Zicri, who was assisted by Judah son of Hassenuah, second-in-command over the city.

From the priests:

Jedaiah son of Joiarib; Jakin; ¹¹and Seraiah son of Hilkiyah, son of Meshullam, son of Zadok, son of Meraiioth, son of Ahitub, the supervisor of the Temple of God. ¹²Also 822 of their associates, who worked at the Temple. Also Adaiiah son of Jeroham, son of Pelaliah, son of Amzi, son of Zechariah, son of Pashhur, son of Malkijah, ¹³along with 242 of his associates, who were heads of their families. Also Amashsai son of Azarel, son of Ahzai, son of Meshillemoth, son of Immer, ¹⁴and 128 of his* outstanding associates. Their chief officer was Zabdiel son of Haggadolim.

From the Levites:

Shemaiah son of Hasshub, son of Azrikam, son of Hashabiah, son of Bunni. ¹⁶Also Shabbethai and Jozabad, who were in charge of the work outside the Temple of God. ¹⁷Also Mattaniah son of Mica, son of Zabdi, a descendant of Asaph, who led in thanksgiving and prayer. Also Bakbukiah, who was Mattaniah's assistant, and Abda son of Shammua, son of Galal, son of Jeduthun. ¹⁸In all, there were 284 Levites in the holy city.

From the gatekeepers:

Akkub, Talmon, and 172 of their associates, who guarded the gates.

²⁰The other priests, Levites, and the rest of the Israelites lived wherever their family inheritance was located in any of the towns of Judah. ²¹The Temple servants, however,

whose leaders were Ziha and Gishpa, all lived on the hill of Ophel.

²²The chief officer of the Levites in Jerusalem was Uzai son of Bani, son of Hashabiah, son of Mattaniah, son of Mica, a descendant of Asaph, whose family served as singers at God's Temple. ²³Their daily responsibilities were carried out according to the terms of a royal command.

²⁴Pethahiah son of Meshezabel, a descendant of Zerai son of Judah, was the royal adviser in all matters of public administration.

²⁵As for the surrounding villages with their open fields, some of the people of Judah lived in Kiriath-arba with its settlements, Dibon with its settlements, and Jekabzeel with its villages. ²⁶They also lived in Jeshua, Moladah, Beth-pelet, ²⁷Hazar-shual, Beersheba with its settlements, ²⁸Ziher, En-rimmon, Zorah, Jarmuth, ²⁹Zanoah, and Adullam with their surrounding villages. They also lived in Lachish with its nearby fields and Azekah with its surrounding villages. So the people of Judah were living all the way from Beersheba in the south to the valley of Hinnom.

³¹Some of the people of Benjamin lived at Gezer, Micmash, Aija, and Bethel with its settlements. ³²They also lived in Anathoth, Nob, Ananiah, ³³Hazor, Ramah, Gittaim, ³⁴Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat, ³⁵Lod, Ono, and the Valley of craftsmen.* ³⁶Some of the Levites who lived in Judah were sent to live with the tribe of Benjamin.

A History of the Priests and Levites

12 Here is the list of the priests and Levites who returned with Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the high priest:

- Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra,
- 2 Amariah, Malluch, Hattush,
- 3 Shecaniah, Harim,* Meremoth,
- 4 Iddo, Ginnethon,* Abijah,
- 5 Miniamin, Moadiah,* Bilgah,
- 6 Shemaiah, Joiarib, Jedaiah,
- 7 Sallu, Amok, Hilkiyah, and Jedaiah.

These were the leaders of the priests and their associates in the days of Jeshua.

⁸The Levites who returned with them were Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, and Mattaniah, who with their associates was in charge of the songs of thanksgiving. ⁹Their associates, Bakbukiah and Unni, stood opposite them during the service.

- 10 Jeshua the high priest was the father of Joiakim. Joiakim was the father of Eliashib. Eliashib was the father of Joiada.
- 11 Joiada was the father of Johanan.* Johanan was the father of Jaddua.

¹²Now when Joiakim was high priest, the family leaders of the priests were as follows:

- Meraiah was leader of the family of Seraiah.
- Hananiah was leader of the family of Jeremiah.
- 13 Meshullam was leader of the family of Ezra.
- Jehohanan was leader of the family of Amariah.
- 14 Jonathan was leader of the family of Malluch.*
- Joseph was leader of the family of Shecaniah.*
- 15 Adna was leader of the family of Harim.

Helkai was leader of the family of Meremoth.*
 Zechariah was leader of the family of Iddo.
 Meshullam was leader of the family of Ginnethon.
 Zicri was leader of the family of Abijah.
 There was also a* leader of the family of Miniamin.
 Piltai was leader of the family of Moadiah.
 Shammua was leader of the family of Bilgah.
 Jehonathan was leader of the family of Shemaiah.
 Mattenai was leader of the family of Joiarib.
 Uzzi was leader of the family of Jedaiah.
 Kallai was leader of the family of Sallu.*
 Eber was leader of the family of Amok.
 Hashabiah was leader of the family of Hilkiyah.
 Nethanel was leader of the family of Jedaiah.

²²A record of the Levite families was kept during the reign of Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua served as priests. Another record of the priests was kept during the reign of Darius the Persian.* ²³A record of the heads of the Levite families was kept in *The Book of History* during the days of Johanan, the grandson* of Eliashib.

³²These were the family leaders of the Levites: Hashabiah, Sherebiah, Jeshua, Binnui,* Kadmiel, and other associates who stood opposite them during the ceremonies of praise and thanksgiving, one section responding to the other as commanded by David, the man of God. ³³This section included Mattaniah, Bakbukiah, and Obadiah.

³⁴Meshullam, Talmon, and Akkub were the gatekeepers in charge of the storerooms at the gates. ³⁵These also served during the days of Joiakim son of Jeshua, son of Jehozadak,* in the days of Nehemiah the governor and of Ezra the priest and scribe.

Dedication of Jerusalem's Wall

After the dedication of the new wall of Jerusalem, the people throughout the land were asked to come to Jerusalem to assist in the ceremonies. They were to take part in the joyous occasion with their songs of thanksgiving and with the playing of cymbals, harps, and lyres. ²⁸The singers were to be gathered together from the region around Jerusalem and from the villages of the Netophathites. ²⁹They also carried with them Beth-gilgal and the rural areas near Geba and Azmota, for the singers had built their own settlements around Jerusalem. ³⁰The priests and Levites first purified themselves, then they purified the people, the gates, and the wall. ³¹They led the leaders of Judah to the top of the wall and ordered two large choirs to give thanks. One of the choirs proceeded southward* along the top of the wall to the Fountain Gate. ³²Hoshaiah and half the leaders of Judah followed them. ³³Along with Azariah, Ezra, Meshullam, ³⁴Jehoiada, Benjamin, Shemaiah, and Jeremiah. ³⁵Then came some of the men who played trumpets, including Zechariah son of Joiarib, son of Shemaiah, son of Mattaniah, son of Micaiah, son of Zaccur, a descendant of Asaph. ³⁶And Zechariah's colleagues were Shemaiah, Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai, Menehem, Mithath, Mithath, Judah, and Hanani. They used the musical instruments prescribed by David, the man of God. Ezra the scribe led this procession. ³⁷At the Fountain Gate they went up the steps on the ascent of the city wall toward the Water Gate of David. They passed the house of David and then entered the Water Gate on the east.

³⁸The second choir giving thanks went northward* along the top of the wall. ³⁹They followed the steps on the ascent of the city wall toward the Fountain Gate. ⁴⁰Half the leaders of Judah followed them. ⁴¹Along with Azariah, Ezra, Meshullam, ⁴²Jehoiada, Benjamin, Shemaiah, and Jeremiah. ⁴³Then came some of the men who played trumpets, including Zechariah son of Joiarib, son of Shemaiah, son of Mattaniah, son of Micaiah, son of Zaccur, a descendant of Asaph. ⁴⁴And Zechariah's colleagues were Shemaiah, Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai, Menehem, Mithath, Mithath, Judah, and Hanani. They used the musical instruments prescribed by David, the man of God. Ezra the scribe led this procession. ⁴⁵At the Fountain Gate they went up the steps on the ascent of the city wall toward the Water Gate of David. They passed the house of David and then entered the Water Gate on the east.

11:5 Hebrew son of the Shilonite. 11:14 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads their. 11:35 Or and Ge-harashim. 12:3 Hebrew Rehun; compare 12:15; Ezra 2:39. 12:4 As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Latin Vulgate (see also 12:16); most Hebrew manuscripts read Ginnethol. 12:5 Hebrew Mijamin, Maadiah; compare 12:17. 12:11 Hebrew Jonathan; compare 12:22. 12:14a As in Greek version (see also 10:4; 12:2); Hebrew reads Mithath. 12:14b As in many Hebrew manuscripts, some Greek manuscripts, and Syriac version (see also 12:3); most Hebrew manuscripts read Shebariah. 12:22 Darius the Persian is probably Darius II, who reigned 405-336 b.c. 12:10-11. 12:24 Hebrew son of (i.e., ben), which shows that Zechariah was the father of Jaddua. 12:26 Hebrew Jozadak, a variant spelling of Jehozadak. 12:31 See Deut 23:3-6. 13:6 King Artaxerxes of Persia reigned 465-424 b.c. The thirty-second year of Artaxerxes was 433 b.c.

se leaders were Ziha and Gishpa, all lived on the hill of
The chief officer of the Levites in Jerusalem was
of Bani, son of Hashabiah, son of Mattaniah, son of
descendant of Asaph, whose family served as singers
s Temple. ²³Their daily responsibilities were carried
according to the terms of a royal command.

Pethahiah son of Meshezabel, a descendant of Zerah
of Judah, was the royal adviser in all matters of public
administration.
As for the surrounding villages with their open fields
of the people of Judah lived in Kiriath-arba with its settle-
ments, Dibon with its settlements, and Jekabzeel with its
villages. ²⁶They also lived in Jeshua, Moladah, Beth-
²⁷Hazar-shual, Beersheba with its settlements, ²⁸Debi-
and Meconah with its settlements. ²⁹They also lived in
Gimmon, Zorah, Jarmuth, ³⁰Zanoah, and Adullam with
surrounding villages. They also lived in Lachish with
nearby fields and Azekah with its surrounding villages.
The people of Judah were living all the way from Be-
nia in the south to the valley of Hinnom.

Some of the people of Benjamin lived at Ge-
mash, Aija, and Bethel with its settlements. ³²They
lived in Anathoth, Nob, Ananiah, ³³Hazor, Ramah, Gibeon,
Judah, Zeboim, Neballat, ³⁴Lod, Ono, and the Valley of
Bethanien. ³⁵Some of the Levites who lived in Judah
to live with the tribe of Benjamin.

History of the Priests and Levites

Here is the list of the priests and Levites who re-
turned with Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Jeshua
the high priest:

Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra,
Seraiah, Malluch, Hattush,
Shecaniah, Harim,* Meremoth,
Iddo, Ginnethon,* Abijah,
Miniamin, Moadiah,* Bilgah,
Shemaiah, Joiarib, Jedaiah,
Sallu, Amok, Hilkiyah, and Jedaiah.
These were the leaders of the priests and their associates
in the days of Jeshua.

The Levites who returned with them were Jeshua
the high priest, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, and Mattaniah, who
were in charge of the songs of thanksgiving. Zebai,
Bakbukiah and Unni, stood opposite them in
the service.

Jeshua the high priest was the father of Joiakim.
Kadmiel was the father of Eliashib.
Sherebiah was the father of Joiada.
Joiada was the father of Johanan.*
Johanan was the father of Jaddua.

When Joiakim was high priest, the family leaders
of the priests were as follows:

Seraiah was leader of the family of Seraiah.
Jeremiah was leader of the family of Jeremiah.
Meshullam was leader of the family of Ezra.
Johanan was leader of the family of Amariah.
Jonathan was leader of the family of Malluch.*
Joseph was leader of the family of Shecaniah.*
Jehoiada was leader of the family of Harim.

^{12:15} Or *and Ge-harashim*. ^{12:13} Hebrew *Rehum*; compare *12:10*.
^{12:16} Most Hebrew manuscripts read *Ginnethoi*. ^{12:15} Hebrew
^{12:14} As in Greek version (see also 10:4; 12:2); Hebrew reads *Shecaniah*.
^{12:15} See also 12:3; most Hebrew manuscripts read *Shebaniah*.

Belkai was leader of the family of Meremoth.*
Zechariah was leader of the family of Iddo.
Meshullam was leader of the family of Ginnethon.
Ezri was leader of the family of Abijah.
There was also a* leader of the family of Miniamin.
Pitai was leader of the family of Moadiah.
Shamma was leader of the family of Bilgah.
Jonathan was leader of the family of Shemaiah.
Mattanai was leader of the family of Joiarib.
Jaddai was leader of the family of Jedaiah.
Sallu was leader of the family of Sallu.*
Amok was leader of the family of Amok.
Hashabiah was leader of the family of Hilkiyah.
Jehonai was leader of the family of Jedaiah.

A record of the Levite families was kept during the
reign of Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua served as
priest. Another record of the priests was kept during
the reign of Darius the Persian.* ²³A record of the heads of
the Levite families was kept in *The Book of History* down
to the days of Johanan, the grandson* of Eliashib.

These were the family leaders of the Levites: Hashabi-
ah, Sherebiah, Jeshua, Binnui,* Kadmiel, and other associ-
ates who stood opposite them during the ceremonies of
praise and thanksgiving, one section responding to the
other as commanded by David, the man of God. ²⁵This in-
cluded Mattaniah, Bakbukiah, and Obadiah.
Meshullam, Talmon, and Akkub were the gatekeepers in
charge of the storerooms at the gates. ²⁶These all served in
the days of Joiakim son of Jeshua, son of Jehozadak,* and
in the days of Nehemiah the governor and of Ezra the
scribe.

Dedication of Jerusalem's Wall

At the dedication of the new wall of Jerusalem, the Le-
vites throughout the land were asked to come to Jerusalem
to participate in the ceremonies. They were to take part in the joy-
ous occasion with their songs of thanksgiving and with the
use of cymbals, harps, and lyres. ²⁸The singers were
gathered together from the region around Jerusalem and
from the villages of the Netophathites. ²⁹They also came
from Beth-gilgal and the rural areas near Geba and Azma-
neah, for the singers had built their own settlements around
Jerusalem. ³⁰The priests and Levites first purified them-
selves, then they purified the people, the gates, and the wall.
They ordered the leaders of Judah to the top of the wall and or-
dered two large choirs to give thanks. One of the choirs
went southward* along the top of the wall to the
Fountain Gate. ³²Hoshaiah and half the leaders of Judah fol-
lowed them, ³³along with Azariah, Ezra, Meshullam, ³⁴Ju-
dah, Benjamin, Shemaiah, and Jeremiah. ³⁵Then came some
of the musicians who played trumpets, including Zechariah son of
Jonathan, son of Shemaiah, son of Mattaniah, son of Mica-
iah, son of Zaccur, a descendant of Asaph. ³⁶And Zechari-
ah's colleagues were Shemaiah, Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai,
Bethanai, Judah, and Hanani. They used the musical
instruments prescribed by David, the man of God. Ezra the
scribe led this procession. ³⁷At the Fountain Gate they went
up the steps on the ascent of the city wall toward
the Temple of David. They passed the house of David and then
went to the Water Gate on the east.
The second choir giving thanks went northward*

^{12:17} In some Greek manuscripts (see also 12:3); Hebrew reads *Meraioth*. ^{12:17} Hebrew lacks the name of this family leader. ^{12:20} Hebrew *Sallai*;
^{12:21} Compare 12:10-11. ^{12:22} *Darius the Persian* is probably Darius II, who reigned 423-404 B.C., or possibly Darius III, who reigned 336-331 B.C. ^{12:23} Hebrew
^{12:24} Compare 12:10-11. ^{12:24} Hebrew *son of* (i.e., *ben*), which should probably be read here as the proper name Binnui; compare Ezra 3:9 and the
^{12:26} Hebrew *Jozadak*, a variant spelling of Jehozadak. ^{12:31} Hebrew *to the right*. ^{12:38} Hebrew *to the left*. ^{12:39} Or *the Mishneh Gate*,
^{12:39} See Deut 23:3-6. ^{13:1} King Artaxerxes of Persia is here identified as the King of Babylon because Persia had conquered the
Babylonian Empire. The thirty-second year of Artaxerxes was 433 B.C.

around the other way to meet them. I followed them, to-
gether with the other half of the people, along the top of the
wall past the Tower of the Ovens to the Broad Wall, ³⁹then
past the Ephraim Gate to the Old City Gate,* past the Fish
Gate and the Tower of Hananel, and on to the Tower of the
Hundred. Then we continued on to the Sheep Gate and
stopped at the Guard Gate.

⁴⁰The two choirs that were giving thanks then proceeded
to the Temple of God, where they took their places. So did I,
together with the group of leaders who were with me. ⁴¹We
went together with the trumpet-playing priests—Eliakim,
Maaseiah, Miniamin, Micaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, and Hana-
niah—⁴²and the singers—Maaseiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar, Uzzi,
Jehohanan, Malkijah, Elam, and Ezer. They played and sang
loudly under the direction of Jezrahiah the choir director.

⁴³Many sacrifices were offered on that joyous day, for
God had given the people cause for great joy. The women
and children also participated in the celebration, and the joy
of the people of Jerusalem could be heard far away.

Provisions for Temple Worship

⁴⁴On that day men were appointed to be in charge of the
storerooms for the offerings, the first part of the harvest, and
the tithes. They were responsible to collect from the fields
outside the towns the portions required by the Law for the
priests and Levites. For all the people of Judah took joy in the
priests and Levites and their work. ⁴⁵They performed the ser-
vice of their God and the service of purification, as com-
manded by David and his son Solomon, and so did the singers
and the gatekeepers. ⁴⁶The custom of having choir directors
to lead the choirs in hymns of praise and thanksgiving to God
began long ago in the days of David and Asaph. ⁴⁷So now, in
the days of Zerubbabel and of Nehemiah, all Israel brought a
daily supply of food for the singers, the gatekeepers, and the
Levites. The Levites, in turn, gave a portion of what they re-
ceived to the priests, the descendants of Aaron.

Nehemiah's Various Reforms

13 On that same day, as the Book of Moses was being
read to the people, the passage was found that said no
Ammonite or Moabite should ever be permitted to enter the
assembly of God.* ²For they had not provided the Israelites
with food and water in the wilderness. Instead, they hired
Balaam to curse them, though our God turned the curse into
a blessing. ³When this passage of the Law was read, all those
of foreign descent were immediately excluded from the as-
sembly.

⁴Before this had happened, Eliashib the priest, who had
been appointed as supervisor of the storerooms of the Tem-
ple of our God and who was also a relative of Tobiah, ⁵had
converted a large storage room and placed it at Tobiah's dis-
posal. The room had previously been used for storing the
grain offerings, the frankincense, various articles for the
Temple, and the tithes of grain, new wine, and olive oil
(which were prescribed for the Levites, the singers, and the
gatekeepers), as well as the offerings for the priests.

⁶I was not in Jerusalem at that time, for I had returned to
King Artaxerxes of Babylon in the thirty-second year of his
reign,* though I later asked his permission to return.
⁷When I arrived back in Jerusalem, I learned about Elia-
shib's evil deed in providing Tobiah with a room in the
courtyards of the Temple of God. ⁸I became very upset and

^{12:17} Hebrew lacks the name of this family leader. ^{12:20} Hebrew *Sallai*;
^{12:21} Compare 12:10-11. ^{12:22} *Darius the Persian* is probably Darius II, who reigned 423-404 B.C., or possibly Darius III, who reigned 336-331 B.C. ^{12:23} Hebrew
^{12:24} Compare 12:10-11. ^{12:24} Hebrew *son of* (i.e., *ben*), which should probably be read here as the proper name Binnui; compare Ezra 3:9 and the
^{12:26} Hebrew *Jozadak*, a variant spelling of Jehozadak. ^{12:31} Hebrew *to the right*. ^{12:38} Hebrew *to the left*. ^{12:39} Or *the Mishneh Gate*,
^{12:39} See Deut 23:3-6. ^{13:1} King Artaxerxes of Persia is here identified as the King of Babylon because Persia had conquered the
Babylonian Empire. The thirty-second year of Artaxerxes was 433 B.C.

threw all of Tobiah's belongings out of the room. ⁹Then I demanded that the rooms be purified, and I brought back the articles for God's Temple, the grain offerings, and the frankincense.

¹⁰I also discovered that the Levites had not been given their prescribed portions of food, so they and the singers who were to conduct the worship services had all returned to work their fields. ¹¹I immediately confronted the leaders and demanded, "Why has the Temple of God been neglected?" Then I called all the Levites back again and restored them to their proper duties. ¹²And once more all the people of Judah began bringing their tithes of grain, new wine, and olive oil to the Temple storerooms.

¹³I assigned supervisors for the storerooms: Shelemiah the priest, Zadok the scribe, and Pedaiah, one of the Levites. And I appointed Hanan son of Zaccur and grandson of Mattaniah as their assistant. These men had an excellent reputation, and it was their job to make honest distributions to their fellow Levites.

¹⁴Remember this good deed, O my God, and do not forget all that I have faithfully done for the Temple of my God and its services.

¹⁵In those days I saw men of Judah treading out their winepresses on the Sabbath. They were also bringing in grain, loading it on donkeys, and bringing their wine, grapes, figs, and all sorts of produce to Jerusalem to sell on the Sabbath. So I rebuked them for selling their produce on that day. ¹⁶Some men from Tyre, who lived in Jerusalem, were bringing in fish and all kinds of merchandise. They were selling it on the Sabbath to the people of Judah—and in Jerusalem at that!

¹⁷So I confronted the nobles of Judah. "Why are you profaning the Sabbath in this evil way?" I asked. ¹⁸"Wasn't it just this sort of thing that your ancestors did that caused our God to bring all this trouble upon us and our city? Now you are bringing even more wrath upon Israel by permitting the Sabbath to be desecrated in this way!"

¹⁹Then I commanded that the gates of Jerusalem should be shut as darkness fell every Friday evening,* not to be opened until the Sabbath ended. I sent some of my own servants to guard the gates so that no merchandise could be

13:19 Hebrew on the day before the Sabbath.

brought in on the Sabbath day. ²⁰The merchants and tradesmen with a variety of wares camped outside Jerusalem once or twice. ²¹But I spoke sharply to them and said, "What are you doing out here, camping around the wall? If you do this again, I will arrest you!" And that was the last time they came on the Sabbath. ²²Then I commanded the Levites to purify themselves and to guard the gates in order to preserve the holiness of the Sabbath.

Remember this good deed also, O my God! Have compassion on me according to your great and unfailing love.

²³About the same time I realized that some of the men of Judah had married women from Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab. ²⁴Furthermore, half their children spoke the language of Ashdod or of some other people and could not speak the language of Judah at all. ²⁵So I confronted them and called down curses on them. I beat some of them and pulled out their hair. I made them swear in the name of God that they would not let their children intermarry with the pagan people of the land.

²⁶"Wasn't this exactly what led King Solomon of Israel into sin?" I demanded. "There was no king from any nation who could compare to him, and God loved him and made him king over all Israel. But even he was led into sin by his foreign wives. ²⁷How could you even think of committing this sinful deed and acting unfaithfully toward God by marrying foreign women?"

²⁸One of the sons of Joiada son of Eliashib the high priest had married a daughter of Sanballat the Horonite, so I banished him from my presence.

²⁹Remember them, O my God, for they have defiled the priesthood and the solemn vows of the priests and Levites.

³⁰So I purged out everything foreign and assigned tasks to the priests and Levites, making certain that each knew his work. ³¹I also made sure that the supply of wood for the altar and the first portions of the harvest were brought at the proper times.

Remember this in my favor, O my God.

ESTHER

Author Mordecai, according to tradition (although similarities in writing style)

Date Written Around 470 B.C.

Content With drama, intrigue, romance, and suspense, the story of Esther and her uncle lived in the land of Persia, insulted her husband, the king, and became a new queen. Esther was selected for the royal throne at the fortress of Susa. Meanwhile, a wicked man named Haman plotted the extermination of all Jews in the empire. Esther intervened, pleading, "Who knows if I will be saved?" (4:14). So Esther risked her life and appealed, and the Jews were saved, while Haman and his family were executed. Esther's uncle. This remarkable deliverance.

The King's Banquet

¹These events happened in the days of King Xerxes, who reigned over 127 provinces stretching from India to Ethiopia.* ²At that time Xerxes ruled his empire from the royal throne at the fortress of Susa. ³In the third year of his reign, he gave a banquet for all his nobles and officials. ⁴He invited all the military officers of Persia and Media and all the princes and nobles of the provinces. ⁵The celebration lasted 180 days—a tremendous display of the opulent wealth of his empire and the pomp and splendor of his monarchy.

⁶When it was all over, the king gave a banquet for all the people, from the greatest to the least, who were in the palace of Susa. It lasted for seven days and was held in the courtyard of the palace garden. ⁷The courtyard was beautifully decorated with white cotton curtains and blue hangings, which were fastened with white linen cords and purple ribbons to silver rings embedded in marble pillars. ⁸Gold and silver couches stood on a mosaic pavement of porphyry, marble, mother-of-pearl, and other costly stones.

⁹Drinks were served in gold goblets of many designs, and there was an abundance of royal wine, reflecting the king's generosity. ¹⁰By edict of the king, no limits were placed on the drinking, for the king had instructed all his palace officials to serve each man as much as he wanted.

¹¹At the same time, Queen Vashti gave a banquet for the women in the royal palace of King Xerxes.

Queen Vashti Deposed

¹On the seventh day of the feast, when King Xerxes was in high spirits because of the wine, he told the seven eunuchs who attended him—Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Parshandatha, Zethar, and Carcas—²to bring Queen Vashti to the king with the royal crown on her head. He wanted the nobles to all the other men to gaze on her beauty, for she was a beautiful woman. ³But when they conveyed the king's message to Queen Vashti, she refused to come. This made the king furious, and he burned with anger.

⁴He immediately consulted with his wise advisers, who knew all the Persian laws and customs, for he always asked for their advice. ⁵The names of these men were Carshena, Sheparshatha, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan—

*Xerxes was another name for Xerxes; also throughout the book of Esther he is called Ahasuerus, another name for Xerxes; also throughout the book of Esther he is called Ahasuerus, another name for Xerxes.

ESTHER

Author Mordecai, according to tradition (although some have suggested Ezra or Nehemiah, based on similarities in writing style)

Written Around 470 B.C.

Content With drama, intrigue, romance, and murder, the book of Esther tells of the near destruction of the Jewish people. It tells how a Jewish woman named Esther risked her life to save her people. Esther and her uncle lived in the land of Persia, where the Jews were in exile. After Vashti, queen of Persia, insulted her husband, the king, she was deposed, and the king began looking for a new queen. Esther was selected for her beauty, but she kept her Jewish nationality a secret. Meanwhile, a wicked man named Haman became the king's adviser and began plotting the extermination of all Jews in the empire. Esther's uncle learned of the plot and begged Esther to intervene, pleading, "Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?" (4:14). So Esther risked her life and approached the king about the matter. The king heard her plea, and the Jews were saved, while Haman was hanged on a gallows he had prepared for Esther's uncle. This remarkable deliverance of the Jews is celebrated by the Jewish feast of Purim.

The King's Banquet

These events happened in the days of King Xerxes,* who reigned over 127 provinces stretching from India to Ethiopia.* ²At that time Xerxes ruled his empire from a throne at the fortress of Susa. ³In the third year of his reign, he gave a banquet for all his nobles and officials. ⁴He invited all the military officers of Persia and Media as well as the princes and nobles of the provinces. ⁵The celebration lasted 180 days—a tremendous display of the opulence and wealth of his empire and the pomp and splendor of his kingdom.

When it was all over, the king gave a banquet for all the nobles, from the greatest to the least, who were in the fortress of Susa. It lasted for seven days and was held in the courtyard of the palace garden. ⁶The courtyard was beautifully decorated with white cotton curtains and blue hangings, which were fastened with white linen cords and gold ribbons to silver rings embedded in marble pillars. ⁷There were also silver couches stood on a mosaic pavement of porphyry, marble, mother-of-pearl, and other costly stones.

Drinks were served in gold goblets of many designs, and there was an abundance of royal wine, reflecting the king's generosity. ⁸By edict of the king, no limits were placed on drinking, for the king had instructed all his palace officials to serve each man as much as he wanted. ⁹At the same time, Queen Vashti gave a banquet for the nobles in the royal palace of King Xerxes.

Vashti Deposed

On the seventh day of the feast, when King Xerxes was in the palace because of the wine, he told the seven eunuchs who attended him—Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Parshata, Zethar, and Carcas—¹¹to bring Queen Vashti to the king and to have the other men to gaze on her beauty, for she was a beautiful woman. ¹²But when they conveyed the king's command to Queen Vashti, she refused to come. This made the king angry, and he burned with anger.

He immediately consulted with his wise advisers, who knew the Persian laws and customs, for he always asked their advice. ¹⁴The names of these men were Carshena, Sheparshata, Tharshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan—

seven nobles of Persia and Media. They met with the king regularly and held the highest positions in the empire.

¹⁵"What must be done to Queen Vashti?" the king demanded. "What penalty does the law provide for a queen who refuses to obey the king's orders, properly sent through his eunuchs?"

¹⁶Memucan answered the king and his nobles. "Queen Vashti has wronged not only the king but also every noble and citizen throughout your empire. ¹⁷Women everywhere will begin to despise their husbands when they learn that Queen Vashti has refused to appear before the king. ¹⁸Before this day is out, the wives of all the king's nobles throughout Persia and Media will hear what the queen did and will start treating their husbands the same way. There will be no end to their contempt and anger.

¹⁹"So if it please the king, we suggest that you issue a written decree, a law of the Persians and Medes that cannot be revoked. It should order that Queen Vashti be forever banished from the presence of King Xerxes, and that the king should choose another queen more worthy than she. ²⁰When this decree is published throughout the king's vast empire, husbands everywhere, whatever their rank, will receive proper respect from their wives!"

²¹The king and his nobles thought this made good sense, so he followed Memucan's counsel. ²²He sent letters to all parts of the empire, to each province in its own script and language, proclaiming that every man should be the ruler of his own home and should say whatever he pleases.*

Esther Becomes Queen

2 But after Xerxes' anger had subsided, he began thinking about Vashti and what she had done and the decree he had made. ²So his personal attendants suggested, "Let us search the empire to find beautiful young virgins for the king. ³Let the king appoint agents in each province to bring these beautiful young women into the royal harem at the fortress of Susa. Hegai, the king's eunuch in charge of the harem, will see that they are all given beauty treatments. ⁴After that, the young woman who most pleases the king will be made queen instead of Vashti." This advice was very appealing to the king, so he put the plan into effect.

⁵At that time there was a Jewish man in the fortress of Susa whose name was Mordecai son of Jair. He was from

*Xerxes, another name for Xerxes; also throughout the book of Esther. Xerxes reigned 486–465 B.C. 1:1b Hebrew to Cush. 1:22 Or and in the language of his own people.

brought in on the Sabbath day. ²⁰The merchants and traders with a variety of wares camped outside Jerusalem once or twice. ²¹But I spoke sharply to them and said, "What are you doing out here, camping around the wall? If you do this again, I will arrest you!" And that was the last time they came on the Sabbath. ²²Then I commanded the Levites to purify themselves and to guard the gates in order to preserve the holiness of the Sabbath.

Remember this good deed also, O my God! Have compassion on me according to your great and unfailing love.

²³About the same time I realized that some of the men of Judah had married women from Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab. ²⁴Furthermore, half their children spoke the language of Ashdod or of some other people and could not speak the language of Judah at all. ²⁵So I confronted them and called down curses on them. I beat some of them and pulled out their hair. I made them swear in the name of God that they would not let their children intermarry with the pagan people of the land.

²⁶"Wasn't this exactly what led King Solomon of Israel into sin?" I demanded. "There was no king from any nation who could compare to him, and God loved him and made him king over all Israel. But even he was led into sin by his foreign wives. ²⁷How could you even think of committing this sinful deed and acting unfaithfully toward God by marrying foreign women?"

²⁸One of the sons of Joiada son of Eliashib the high priest had married a daughter of Sanballat the Horonite, so I banished him from my presence.

²⁹Remember them, O my God, for they have defiled the priesthood and the solemn vows of the priests and Levites.

³⁰So I purged out everything foreign and assigned tasks to the priests and Levites, making certain that each knew his work. ³¹I also made sure that the supply of wood for the altars and the first portions of the harvest were brought in at the proper times.

Remember this in my favor, O my God.

the tribe of Benjamin and was a descendant of Kish and Shimei. ⁶His family* had been among those who, with King Jehoiachin* of Judah, had been exiled from Jerusalem to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar. ⁷This man had a very beautiful and lovely young cousin, Hadassah, who was also called Esther. When her father and mother died, Mordecai adopted her into his family and raised her as his own daughter.

⁸As a result of the king's decree, Esther, along with many other young women, was brought to the king's harem at the fortress of Susa and placed in Hegai's care. ⁹Hegai was very impressed with Esther and treated her kindly. He quickly ordered a special menu for her and provided her with beauty treatments. He also assigned her seven maids specially chosen from the king's palace, and he moved her and her maids into the best place in the harem.

¹⁰Esther had not told anyone of her nationality and family background, because Mordecai had directed her not to do so. ¹¹Every day Mordecai would take a walk near the courtyard of the harem to find out about Esther and what was happening to her.

¹²Before each young woman was taken to the king's bed, she was given the prescribed twelve months of beauty treatments—six months with oil of myrrh, followed by six months with special perfumes and ointments. ¹³When it was time for her to go to the king's palace, she was given her choice of whatever clothing or jewelry she wanted to take from the harem. ¹⁴That evening she was taken to the king's private rooms, and the next morning she was brought to the second harem,* where the king's wives lived. There she would be under the care of Shaashgaz, the king's eunuch in charge of the concubines. She would never go to the king again unless he had especially enjoyed her and requested her by name.

¹⁵Esther was the daughter of Abihail, who was Mordecai's uncle. (Mordecai had adopted his younger cousin Esther.) When it was Esther's turn to go to the king, she accepted the advice of Hegai, the eunuch in charge of the harem. She asked for nothing except what he suggested, and she was admired by everyone who saw her.

¹⁶Esther was taken to King Xerxes at the royal palace in early winter* of the seventh year of his reign. ¹⁷And the king loved Esther more than any of the other young women. He was so delighted with her that he set the royal crown on her head and declared her queen instead of Vashti. ¹⁸To celebrate the occasion, he gave a great banquet in Esther's honor for all his nobles and officials, declaring a public holiday for the provinces and giving generous gifts to everyone.

¹⁹Even after all the young women had been transferred to the second harem* and Mordecai had become a palace official,* ²⁰Esther continued to keep her family background and nationality a secret. She was still following Mordecai's directions, just as she did when she lived in his home.

Mordecai's Loyalty to the King

²¹One day as Mordecai was on duty at the king's gate, two of the king's eunuchs, Bighthana* and Teresh—who were guards at the door of the king's private quarters—became

2:6a Hebrew *He*. 2:6b Hebrew *Jeconiah*, a variant spelling of Jehoiachin. 2:14 Or: to another part of the harem. 2:16 Hebrew in the tenth month of Tebeth. A number of dates in the book of Esther can be cross-checked with dates in surviving Persian records and related accurately to our modern calendar. This month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred within the months of December 479 B.C. and January 478 B.C. 2:19a The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. 2:19b Hebrew and Mordecai was sitting in the gate of the king. 2:21 Hebrew *Bighthan*; compare 6:2. 3:7a Hebrew in the month, the month of Nisan. This month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred within the months of April and May 474 B.C.; also see note on 2:16. 3:7b As in 3:13, which reads the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar; Hebrew reads in the twelfth month, of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. The date selected was March 7, 473 B.C.; also see note on 2:16. 3:12 Hebrew On the thirteenth day of the first month, of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was April 17, 474 B.C.; also see note on 2:16. 3:13 Hebrew on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. The date selected was March 7, 473 B.C.; also see note on 2:16.

angry at King Xerxes and plotted to assassinate him. ²²Mordecai heard about the plot and gave the information to Queen Esther. She then told the king about it and gave Mordecai credit for the report. ²³When an investigation was made and Mordecai's story was found to be true, the men were impaled on a sharpened pole. This was also recorded in *The Book of the History of King Xerxes' Reign*.

Haman's Plot against the Jews

³Some time later King Xerxes promoted Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite over all the other nobles, making him the most powerful official in the empire. ⁴All the king's officials would bow down before Haman to show him respect whenever he passed by, for so the king had commanded. But Mordecai refused to bow down or show him respect.

⁵Then the palace officials at the king's gate asked Mordecai, "Why are you disobeying the king's command?" They spoke to him day after day, but still he refused to comply with the order. So they spoke to Haman about this to see if he would tolerate Mordecai's conduct, since Mordecai had told them he was a Jew.

⁶When Haman saw that Mordecai would not bow down or show him respect, he was filled with rage. ⁷He learned of Mordecai's nationality, so he decided it was enough to lay hands on Mordecai alone. Instead, he looked for a way to destroy all the Jews throughout the entire empire of Xerxes.

⁸So in the month of April,* during the twelfth year of King Xerxes' reign, lots were cast in Haman's presence (lots were called *purim*) to determine the best day and month to take action. And the day selected was March 7, nearly a year later.*

⁹Then Haman approached King Xerxes and said, "There is a certain race of people scattered through all the provinces of your empire who keep themselves separate from everyone else. Their laws are different from those of other people, and they refuse to obey the laws of the king; it is not in the king's interest to let them live. ¹⁰If it please the king, issue a decree that they be destroyed, and I will give 10,000 large sacks* of silver to the government administrators to be deposited in the royal treasury."

¹¹The king agreed, confirming his decision by removing his signet ring from his finger and giving it to Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. ¹²He said, "The money and the people are both yours to do with as you see fit."

¹³So on April 17* the king's secretaries were summoned and a decree was written exactly as Haman dictated. It was sent to the king's highest officers, the governors of the respective provinces, and the nobles of each province in their own scripts and languages. The decree was written in the name of King Xerxes and sealed with the king's signet ring.

¹⁴Dispatches were sent by swift messengers into all the provinces of the empire, giving the order that all Jews—young and old, including women and children—must be killed, slaughtered, and annihilated on a single day. This was scheduled to happen on March 7 of the next year.* The property of the Jews would be given to those who killed them.

A copy of this decree was to be issued as law in every province and proclaimed to all peoples, so that they would do their duty on the appointed day. ¹⁵At the king's command, the decree went out by swift messengers and also proclaimed in the fortress of Susa. Then the king sat down to drink, but the city of Susa was in confusion.

Mordecai Requests Esther's Help

¹When Mordecai learned about all that had been decreed, he tore his clothes, put on burlap and ashes, and went into the city, crying with a loud and bitter wail. ²He went to the gate of the palace, for no one was allowed to enter the palace gate while wearing clothes of mourning. ³News of the king's decree reached all the provinces, and there was great mourning among the Jews. They fasted, wept, and many people lay in burlap and ashes.

⁴When Queen Esther's maids and eunuchs came around about Mordecai, she was deeply distressed. She refused to let them try to replace the burlap, but he refused. ⁵Then Esther sent for Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs who had been appointed as her attendant. She ordered him to go to Mordecai and find out what was troubling him. ⁶He was in mourning. ⁷So Hathach went out to Mordecai in the square in front of the palace gate.

⁸Mordecai told him the whole story, including the amount of money Haman had promised to pay into the treasury for the destruction of the Jews. ⁹Mordecai gave Hathach a copy of the decree issued in Susa that called for the death of all Jews. He asked Hathach to show it to Esther and explain the situation to her. He also asked Hathach to go to the king to beg for mercy and plead for her life.

¹⁰So Hathach returned to Esther with Mordecai's message.

¹¹Then Esther told Hathach to go back and relay this message to Mordecai: ¹²"All the king's officials and everyone in the provinces know that anyone who appears before the king in his inner court without being invited is to die unless the king holds out his gold scepter to the king; he has not called for me to come to him for this time."

¹³So Hathach* gave Esther's message to Mordecai. ¹⁴Mordecai sent this reply to Esther: "Don't think for a moment that because you're in the palace you will escape death if other Jews are killed. ¹⁵If you keep quiet at a time like this, interference and relief for the Jews will arise from some other place, but you and your relatives will die. Who knows if you were made queen for just such a time as this?"

¹⁶Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: ¹⁷"Go together all the Jews of Susa and fast for me. Do not drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will do the same. And then, though it is against the law, I will go to see the king. If I must die, I must die." ¹⁸So Mordecai went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him to do.

Esther's Request to the King

¹On the third day of the fast, Esther put on her robes and entered the inner court of the palace, going from the king's hall. The king was sitting on his throne, facing the entrance. ²When he saw Queen Esther standing there in the inner court, he welcomed her and held out the gold scepter to her. So Esther approached and kissed the end of the scepter.

³Then the king asked her, "What do you want, Queen Esther? What is your request? I will give it to you, even if it is against the law of the kingdom!"

⁴And Esther replied, "If it please the king, let the king a

* Greek version; Hebrew reads *they*. 5:14 Hebrew 50 cubits [2.25 m].

at King Xerxes and plotted to assassinate him. Mordecai heard about the plot and gave the information to Esther. She then told the king about it and gave credit for the report. ²³When an investigation and Mordecai's story was found to be true, the king had the traitors impaled on a sharpened pole. This was recorded in *The Book of the History of King Xerxes' Reign*.

King's Plot against the Jews

Some time later King Xerxes promoted Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite over all the other nobles, making him the most powerful official in the empire. The king's officials would bow down before Haman to show respect whenever he passed by, for so the king had commanded. But Mordecai refused to bow down or show respect.

The palace officials at the king's gate asked Mordecai, "Why are you disobeying the king's command? You spoke to him day after day, but still he refused to bow down to the order. So they spoke to Haman about this, and he would not tolerate Mordecai's conduct, since Mordecai told them he was a Jew.

When Haman saw that Mordecai would not bow down to him, he was filled with rage. He decided it was not to lay hands on Mordecai alone. Instead, he looked for a way to destroy all the Jews throughout the entire empire of Xerxes.

In the month of April,* during the twelfth year of Xerxes' reign, lots were cast in Haman's presence to determine the best day and month for the action. And the day selected was March 7, nearly a year later.*

Then Haman approached King Xerxes and said, "There is a certain race of people scattered through all the provinces of your empire who keep themselves separate from everyone else. Their laws are different from those of all other people, and they refuse to obey the laws of the king. It is in the king's interest to let them live. If it pleases the king, I will give a decree that they be destroyed, and I will give large sacks* of silver to the government administration to be deposited in the royal treasury."

The king agreed, confirming his decision by removing the ring from his finger and giving it to Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. ¹¹The king's money and the people are both yours to do with as you see fit."

In April 17* the king's secretaries were summoned, and a decree was written exactly as Haman dictated. It was to be read to the king's highest officers, the governors of the provinces, and the nobles of each province in their own scripts and languages. The decree was written in the name of King Xerxes and sealed with the king's signet ring. Copies were sent by swift messengers into all the provinces of the empire, giving the order that all Jews—young and old, men, women and children—must be killed. Slaves were to be annihilated on a single day. This was scheduled to begin on March 7 of the next year.* The property of the dead was to be given to those who killed them.

Other part of the harem. ^{2:16} Hebrew in the tenth month, according to surviving Persian records and related accurately to our modern calendar, December 479 B.C. and January 478 B.C. ^{2:19a} The meaning is "in the months of April and May 474 B.C.," also see note on ^{2:16}. ^{2:21} Hebrew *Bigthan*; compare ^{6:2}. ^{3:7a} Hebrew in the twelfth month, of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar, about 375 tons or 340 metric tons in weight. ^{3:7b} This day was April 17, 474 B.C.; also see note on ^{2:16}. ^{3:7c} Hebrew lunar calendar. The date selected was March 7, 473 B.C.

A copy of this decree was to be issued as law in every province and proclaimed to all peoples, so that they would be required to do their duty on the appointed day. ¹⁵At the king's command, the decree went out by swift messengers, and it was proclaimed in the fortress of Susa. Then the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Susa fell into confusion.

Mordecai Requests Esther's Help

When Mordecai learned about all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on burlap and ashes, and went into the city, crying with a loud and bitter wail. ²He went to the gate of the palace, for no one was allowed to enter the palace gate while wearing clothes of mourning. ³And the news of the king's decree reached all the provinces, there was great mourning among the Jews. They fasted, wept, and tore their clothes, and many people lay in burlap and ashes.

When Queen Esther's maids and eunuchs came and told her about Mordecai, she was deeply distressed. She sent messengers to him to replace the burlap, but he refused it. Then Esther sent for Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs who had been appointed as her attendant. She ordered him to go to Mordecai and find out what was troubling him and what he was in mourning. ⁶So Hathach went out to Mordecai in the square in front of the palace gate.

Mordecai told him the whole story, including the exact amount of money Haman had promised to pay into the royal treasury for the destruction of the Jews. ⁸Mordecai gave Hathach a copy of the decree issued in Susa that called for the death of all Jews. He asked Hathach to show it to Esther and explain the situation to her. He also asked Hathach to direct her to go to the king to beg for mercy and plead for her people. ⁹So Hathach returned to Esther with Mordecai's message.

Then Esther told Hathach to go back and relay this message to Mordecai: ¹¹"All the king's officials and even the king in his inner court know that anyone who appears before the king in his inner court without being invited is doomed to die unless the king holds out his gold scepter. The king has not called for me to come to him for thirty days."

¹²So Hathach* gave Esther's message to Mordecai. ¹³Mordecai sent this reply to Esther: "Don't think for a moment that because you're in the palace you will escape when other Jews are killed. ¹⁴If you keep quiet at a time like this, tolerance and relief for the Jews will arise from some other source, but you and your relatives will die. Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?"

Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: ¹⁶"Go and gather together all the Jews of Susa and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will do the same. And then, though it is against the law, I will go to see the king. If I must die, I must die." ¹⁷So Mordecai went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him.

Esther's Request to the King

On the third day of the fast, Esther put on her royal robes and entered the inner court of the palace, just as she was facing the entrance. ²When he saw Queen Esther standing there in the inner court, he welcomed her and held out the gold scepter to her. So Esther approached and kissed the end of the scepter.

Then the king asked her, "What do you want, Queen Esther? What is your request? I will give it to you, even if it is to give up the kingdom!"

And Esther replied, "If it please the king, let the king and

Haman come today to a banquet I have prepared for the king."

⁵The king turned to his attendants and said, "Tell Haman to come quickly to a banquet, as Esther has requested." So the king and Haman went to Esther's banquet.

⁶And while they were drinking wine, the king said to Esther, "Now tell me what you really want. What is your request? I will give it to you, even if it is half the kingdom!"

⁷Esther replied, "This is my request and deepest wish. ⁸If I have found favor with the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my request and do what I ask, please come with Haman tomorrow to the banquet I will prepare for you. Then I will explain what this is all about."

Haman's Plan to Kill Mordecai

⁹Haman was a happy man as he left the banquet! But when he saw Mordecai sitting at the palace gate, not standing up or trembling nervously before him, Haman became furious. ¹⁰However, he restrained himself and went on home.

Then Haman gathered together his friends and Zeresh, his wife, ¹¹and boasted to them about his great wealth and his many children. He bragged about the honors the king had given him and how he had been promoted over all the other nobles and officials.

¹²Then Haman added, "And that's not all! Queen Esther invited only me and the king himself to the banquet she prepared for us. And she has invited me to dine with her and the king again tomorrow!" ¹³Then he added, "But this is all worth nothing as long as I see Mordecai the Jew just sitting there at the palace gate."

¹⁴So Haman's wife, Zeresh, and all his friends suggested, "Set up a sharpened pole that stands seventy-five feet* tall, and in the morning ask the king to impale Mordecai on it. When this is done, you can go on your merry way to the banquet with the king." This pleased Haman, and he ordered the pole set up.

The King Honors Mordecai

6 That night the king had trouble sleeping, so he ordered an attendant to bring the book of the history of his reign so it could be read to him. ²In those records he discovered an account of how Mordecai had exposed the plot of Bigthan and Teresh, two of the eunuchs who guarded the door to the king's private quarters. They had plotted to assassinate King Xerxes.

³"What reward or recognition did we ever give Mordecai for this?" the king asked.

His attendants replied, "Nothing has been done for him."

⁴"Who is that in the outer court?" the king inquired. As it happened, Haman had just arrived in the outer court of the palace to ask the king to impale Mordecai on the pole he had prepared.

⁵So the attendants replied to the king, "Haman is out in the court."

"Bring him in," the king ordered. ⁶So Haman came in, and the king said, "What should I do to honor a man who truly pleases me?"

Haman thought to himself, "Whom would the king wish to honor more than me?" ⁷So he replied, "If the king wishes to honor someone, ⁸he should bring out one of the king's own royal robes, as well as a horse that the king himself has ridden—one with a royal emblem on its head. ⁹Let the robes and the horse be handed over to one of the king's most noble officials. And let him see that the man whom the king wishes to honor is dressed in the king's robes and led through the city square on the king's horse. Have the official

* Greek version; Hebrew reads *they*. ^{5:14} Hebrew *50 cubits* [22.5 meters].

shout as they go, "This is what the king does for someone he wishes to honor!"

¹⁰"Excellent!" the king said to Haman. "Quick! Take the robes and my horse, and do just as you have said for Mordecai the Jew, who sits at the gate of the palace. Leave out nothing you have suggested!"

¹¹So Haman took the robes and put them on Mordecai, placed him on the king's own horse, and led him through the city square, shouting, "This is what the king does for someone he wishes to honor!" ¹²Afterward Mordecai returned to the palace gate, but Haman hurried home dejected and completely humiliated.

¹³When Haman told his wife, Zeresh, and all his friends what had happened, his wise advisers and his wife said, "Since Mordecai—this man who has humiliated you—is of Jewish birth, you will never succeed in your plans against him. It will be fatal to continue opposing him."

¹⁴While they were still talking, the king's eunuchs arrived and quickly took Haman to the banquet Esther had prepared.

The King Executes Haman

7 So the king and Haman went to Queen Esther's banquet. ²On this second occasion, while they were drinking wine, the king again said to Esther, "Tell me what you want, Queen Esther. What is your request? I will give it to you, even if it is half the kingdom!"

³Queen Esther replied, "If I have found favor with the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my request, I ask that my life and the lives of my people will be spared. ⁴For my people and I have been sold to those who would kill, slaughter, and annihilate us. If we had merely been sold as slaves, I could remain quiet, for that would be too trivial a matter to warrant disturbing the king."

⁵"Who would do such a thing?" King Xerxes demanded. "Who would be so presumptuous as to touch you?"

⁶Esther replied, "This wicked Haman is our adversary and our enemy." Haman grew pale with fright before the king and queen. ⁷Then the king jumped to his feet in a rage and went out into the palace garden.

Haman, however, stayed behind to plead for his life with Queen Esther, for he knew that the king intended to kill him. ⁸In despair he fell on the couch where Queen Esther was reclining, just as the king was returning from the palace garden.

The king exclaimed, "Will he even assault the queen right here in the palace, before my very eyes?" And as soon as the king spoke, his attendants covered Haman's face, signaling his doom.

⁹Then Harbona, one of the king's eunuchs, said, "Haman has set up a sharpened pole that stands seventy-five feet* tall in his own courtyard. He intended to use it to impale Mordecai, the man who saved the king from assassination."

"Then impale Haman on it!" the king ordered. ¹⁰So they impaled Haman on the pole he had set up for Mordecai, and the king's anger subsided.

A Decree to Help the Jews

8 On that same day King Xerxes gave the property of Haman, the enemy of the Jews, to Queen Esther. Then Mordecai was brought before the king, for Esther had told the king how they were related. ²The king took off his signet

7-9 Hebrew 50 cubits [22.5 meters]. 8-9a Hebrew on the twenty-third day of the third month, the month of Sivan, of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was June 25, 474 B.C.; also see note on 2:16. 8-9b Hebrew to Cush. 8-12 Hebrew the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. The date selected was March 7, 473 B.C.; also see note on 2:16. 9-1 Hebrew on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was March 7, 473 B.C.; also see note on 2:16.

ring—which he had taken back from Haman—and gave it to Mordecai. And Esther appointed Mordecai to be in charge of Haman's property.

³Then Esther went again before the king, falling down with his feet and begging him with tears to stop the evil plot devised by Haman the Agagite against the Jews. ⁴Again the king held out the gold scepter to Esther. So she rose and stood before him.

⁵Esther said, "If it please the king, and if I have found favor with him, and if he thinks it is right, and if I am pleasing to him, let there be a decree that reverses the orders of Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, who ordered that the Jews throughout all the king's provinces should be destroyed. ⁶For how can I endure to see my people and my family slaughtered and destroyed?"

⁷Then King Xerxes said to Queen Esther and Mordecai the Jew, "I have given Esther the property of Haman, and he has been impaled on a pole because he tried to destroy the Jews. ⁸Now go ahead and send a message to the Jews in the king's name, telling them whatever you want, and seal it with the king's signet ring. But remember that whatever has already been written in the king's name and sealed with the signet ring can never be revoked."

⁹So on June 25* the king's secretaries were summoned, and a decree was written exactly as Mordecai dictated. It was sent to the Jews and to the highest officers, the governors, and the nobles of all the 127 provinces stretching from India to Ethiopia.* The decree was written in scripts and languages of all the peoples of the empire, including that of the Jews. ¹⁰The decree was written in the name of King Xerxes and sealed with the king's signet ring. Mordecai sent the dispatches by swift messengers, who rode fast horses especially bred for the king's service.

¹¹The king's decree gave the Jews in every city authority to unite to defend their lives. They were allowed to slaughter, and annihilate anyone of any nationality or province who might attack them or their children and wives, and to take the property of their enemies. ¹²The day chosen for this event throughout all the provinces of King Xerxes was March 7 of the next year.*

¹³A copy of this decree was to be issued as law in every province and proclaimed to all peoples, so that the Jews would be ready to take revenge on their enemies on the appointed day. ¹⁴So urged on by the king's command, the messengers rode out swiftly on fast horses bred for a king's service. The same decree was also proclaimed in the fortress of Susa.

¹⁵Then Mordecai left the king's presence, wearing a royal robe of blue and white, the great crown of gold, and an outer cloak of fine linen and purple. And the people of Susa celebrated the new decree. ¹⁶The Jews were filled with joy and gladness and were honored everywhere. In every province and city, wherever the king's decree arrived, the Jews rejoiced and had a great celebration and declared a public festival and holiday. And many of the people of the land became Jews themselves, for they feared what the Jews might do to them.

The Victory of the Jews

9 So on March 7* the two decrees of the king went into effect. On that day, the enemies of the Jews hoped to overpower them, but quite the opposite happened. It was the Jews who overpowered their enemies. ²The

enemies gathered in their cities throughout all the king's provinces to attack anyone who tried to harm them. But no one could stand against them, for everyone was afraid of them. ³All the nobles of the provinces, the highest officers, the governors, and the royal officials helped the Jews for fear of Mordecai. ⁴For Mordecai had been promoted in the king's service and his fame spread throughout all the provinces and became more and more powerful.

⁵So the Jews went ahead on the appointed day and annihilated their enemies with the sword. They killed anyone who hated them. ⁶In the fortress of Susa itself, they killed 500 men. ⁷They also killed Parshandatha, Darius, Aspatha, ⁸Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha, ⁹Parmashtata, Aridai, and Vaizatha—¹⁰the ten sons of Haman son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews. But they did not take any plunder.

¹¹That very day, when the king was informed of the number of people killed in the fortress of Susa, ¹²he called for Queen Esther. He said, "The Jews have killed 500 men in the fortress of Susa alone, as well as Haman's ten sons. If they have done that here, what has happened in the rest of the provinces? But now, what more do you want? It will be granted to you; tell me and I will do it."

Esther responded, "If it please the king, give the Jews irrevocable permission to do again tomorrow as they have done today, and let the bodies of Haman's ten sons be impaled on a pole."

¹³So the king agreed, and the decree was announced in every province. And they impaled the bodies of Haman's ten sons. ¹⁴Then the Jews at Susa gathered together on March 8* and killed 300 more men, and again they took no plunder.

Meanwhile, the other Jews throughout the king's provinces had gathered together to defend their lives. They were relieved from all their enemies, killing 75,000 of those who hated them. But they did not take any plunder. ¹⁷This was done throughout the provinces on March 7, and on March 8 they rested,* celebrating their victory with a day of feasting and gladness. ¹⁸(The Jews at Susa killed their enemies on March 7 and again on March 8, then rested on March 9,* making that their day of feasting and gladness.) ¹⁹On this day, rural Jews living in remote villages celebrate an annual festival and holiday on the appointed day in late winter,* when they rejoice and send gifts of food to each other.

The Festival of Purim

Mordecai recorded these events and sent letters to the king near and far, throughout all the provinces of King Xerxes, ²¹calling on them to celebrate an annual festival on these two days.* ²²He told them to celebrate these days with

17-18 Hebrew the fourteenth day of the month of Adar, of the Hebrew lunar calendar. On the thirteenth day of the month of Adar, and on the fourteenth day they rested. 19 Hebrew killed their enemies on the thirteenth day and the fourteenth day, of the month of Adar. This day of the Hebrew lunar calendar is the thirteenth and fifteenth days of Adar, of the Hebrew lunar calendar.

which he had taken back from Haman—and gave it to Haman. And Esther appointed Mordecai to be in charge of Haman's property.

Then Esther went again before the king, falling down and begging him with tears to stop the evil plot against her by Haman the Agagite against the Jews. "Again she held out the gold scepter to Esther. So she rose and bowed before him.

Esther said, "If it please the king, and if I have found favor in his eyes, and if he thinks it is right, and if I am pleased in the king's eyes, let there be a decree that reverses the order of Hammedatha the Agagite, who ordered that throughout all the king's provinces should be done to the Jews. For how can I endure to see my people and my kindred slaughtered and destroyed?"

Then King Xerxes said to Queen Esther and Mordecai, "I have given Esther the property of Haman, and I have impaled on a pole because he tried to destroy you. Now go ahead and send a message to the Jews in the name, telling them whatever you want, and seal it with the king's signet ring. But remember that whatever has been written in the king's name and sealed with the king's ring can never be revoked."

Then in June 25* the king's secretaries were summoned, and a decree was written exactly as Mordecai dictated to the Jews and to the highest officers, the governors and the nobles of all the 127 provinces stretching from Media to Ethiopia.* The decree was written in the languages of all the peoples of the empire, and in the languages of the Jews. "The decree was written in the name of King Xerxes and sealed with the king's signet ring. And the dispatches by swift messengers on fast horses especially bred for the king's service.

The king's decree gave the Jews in every city authority to defend their lives. They were allowed to kill anyone, and annihilate anyone of any nationality or province who might attack them or their children and wives and the property of their enemies. "The day chosen for this was throughout all the provinces of King Xerxes was the first day of the next year.*

A copy of this decree was to be issued as law in every province and proclaimed to all peoples, so that the Jews would be ready to take revenge on their enemies on the appointed day. "So urged on by the king's command, the messengers rode out swiftly on fast horses bred for the king's service. The same decree was also proclaimed in the city of Susa.

Then Mordecai left the king's presence, wearing a robe of blue and white, the great crown of gold and a cloak of fine linen and purple. And the people celebrated the new decree. "The Jews were filled with joy and gladness and were honored everywhere in every province and city, wherever the king's decree had been proclaimed. "The Jews rejoiced and had a great celebration and a public festival and holiday. And many of the people of the land became Jews themselves, for they were afraid of what the Jews might do to them.

History of the Jews

On March 7* the two decrees of the king went into effect. On that day, the enemies of the Jews tried to overpower them, but quite the opposite happened. The Jews who overpowered their enemies. "The Jews

in the month of Sivan, of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar. "2:16. "9:1 Hebrew on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month. See note on 2:16.

in their cities throughout all the king's provinces to annihilate anyone who tried to harm them. But no one could stand against them, for everyone was afraid of them. "The nobles of the provinces, the highest officers, the governors, and the royal officials helped the Jews for fear of Mordecai. "For Mordecai had been promoted in the king's service and his fame spread throughout all the provinces as he became more and more powerful.

So the Jews went ahead on the appointed day and killed down their enemies with the sword. They killed and annihilated their enemies and did as they pleased with those who hated them. "In the fortress of Susa itself, the king killed 500 men. "They also killed Parshandatha, Dalai, Aspatha, "Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha, "Parmashta, Aridai, and Vaizatha—"the ten sons of Haman son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews. But they did not take any plunder.

That very day, when the king was informed of the number of people killed in the fortress of Susa, "he called for Queen Esther. He said, "The Jews have killed 500 men in the fortress of Susa alone, as well as Haman's ten sons. If they have done that here, what has happened in the rest of the provinces? But now, what more do you want? It will be done to you; tell me and I will do it."

Esther responded, "If it please the king, give the Jews in your permission to do again tomorrow as they have done today, and let the bodies of Haman's ten sons be impaled on a pole."

So the king agreed, and the decree was announced in every province. And they impaled the bodies of Haman's ten sons. "The Jews at Susa gathered together on March 8* and killed 300 more men, and again they took no plunder.

Meanwhile, the other Jews throughout the king's provinces had gathered together to defend their lives. They were given relief from all their enemies, killing 75,000 of those who hated them. But they did not take any plunder. "This was done throughout the provinces on March 7, and on March 8 they rested,* celebrating their victory with a day of feasting and gladness. "The Jews at Susa killed their enemies on March 7 and again on March 8, then rested on March 9,* making that their day of feasting and gladness.)

On this day, rural Jews living in remote villages celebrate an annual festival and holiday on the appointed day in late March* when they rejoice and send gifts of food to each other.

The Festival of Purim

Mordecai recorded these events and sent letters to the king near and far, throughout all the provinces of King Xerxes, "calling on them to celebrate an annual festival on two days.* "22He told them to celebrate these days with

Hebrew the fourteenth day of the month of Adar, of the Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was March 8, 473 B.C.; also see note on 2:16. "9:17 Hebrew the fourteenth day of the month of Adar, and on the fourteenth day they rested. These days were March 7 and 8, 473 B.C.; also see note on 2:16. "Hebrew killed their enemies on the thirteenth day and the fourteenth day, and then rested on the fifteenth day, of the Hebrew month of Adar. "Hebrew on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar. This day of the Hebrew lunar calendar occurs in February or March. "9:21 Hebrew on the thirteenth and fifteenth days of Adar, of the Hebrew lunar calendar.

feasting and gladness and by giving gifts of food to each other and presents to the poor. This would commemorate a time when the Jews gained relief from their enemies, when their sorrow was turned into gladness and their mourning into joy.

"23So the Jews accepted Mordecai's proposal and adopted this annual custom. "24Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews, had plotted to crush and destroy them on the date determined by casting lots (the lots were called *purim*). "25But when Esther came before the king, he issued a decree causing Haman's evil plot to backfire, and Haman and his sons were impaled on a sharpened pole. "26That is why this celebration is called Purim, because it is the ancient word for casting lots.

So because of Mordecai's letter and because of what they had experienced, "27the Jews throughout the realm agreed to inaugurate this tradition and to pass it on to their descendants and to all who became Jews. They declared they would never fail to celebrate these two prescribed days at the appointed time each year. "28These days would be remembered and kept from generation to generation and celebrated by every family throughout the provinces and cities of the empire. This Festival of Purim would never cease to be celebrated among the Jews, nor would the memory of what happened ever die out among their descendants.

"29Then Queen Esther, the daughter of Abihail, along with Mordecai the Jew, wrote another letter putting the queen's full authority behind Mordecai's letter to establish the Festival of Purim. "30Letters wishing peace and security were sent to the Jews throughout the 127 provinces of the empire of Xerxes. "31These letters established the Festival of Purim—an annual celebration of these days at the appointed time, decreed by both Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther. (The people decided to observe this festival, just as they had decided for themselves and their descendants to establish the times of fasting and mourning.) "32So the command of Esther confirmed the practices of Purim, and it was all written down in the records.

The Greatness of Xerxes and Mordecai

10 King Xerxes imposed a tribute throughout his empire, even to the distant coastlands. "2His great achievements and the full account of the greatness of Mordecai, whom the king had promoted, are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Media and Persia*. "3Mordecai the Jew became the prime minister, with authority next to that of King Xerxes himself. He was very great among the Jews, who held him in high esteem, because he continued to work for the good of his people and to speak up for the welfare of all their descendants.

JOB

Author Uncertain; Jewish tradition regards Moses as the author; others have suggested Job himself as the author

Date Written Uncertain, though some of the events recorded and vocabulary used suggest it was written during the time of the patriarchs, between 2000 and 1800 B.C.

Content The problem of human suffering is pondered by most everyone at some time or another. The book of Job addresses this ancient and difficult problem. It tells the story of Job, a godly man who endured an enormous amount of suffering while remaining faithful to God. The story begins with Job losing his children, his many possessions, and even his own health—all within a very short period of time. Only Job's wife escaped the ruin that Satan inflicted upon him. Then Job's three friends came to comfort him and to reflect on the purpose for his suffering. They each considered the basic question: Why must we endure suffering when God is powerful enough to do something about it? Job's wife simply declared it all unfair, advising Job, "Curse God and die" (2:9). Each of Job's three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, delivered speeches accounting for Job's misery. A young man, Elihu, tried to summarize the situation with yet another explanation. But all of them failed to provide Job with a satisfactory answer. Finally, God himself spoke directly to Job, asking him a long list of questions that forced him to recognize his finite understanding of life. Job realized that ultimately God is in charge and knows what he is doing. So Job remained silent and stood in awe of God's sovereignty. In the end, God restored Job's health, possessions, and family.

Prologue

1 There once was a man named Job who lived in the land of Uz. He was blameless—a man of complete integrity. He feared God and stayed away from evil. ²He had seven sons and three daughters. ³He owned 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 teams of oxen, and 500 female donkeys. He also had many servants. He was, in fact, the richest person in that entire area.

⁴Job's sons would take turns preparing feasts in their homes, and they would also invite their three sisters to celebrate with them. ⁵When these celebrations ended—sometimes after several days—Job would purify his children. He would get up early in the morning and offer a burnt offering for each of them. For Job said to himself, "Perhaps my children have sinned and have cursed God in their hearts." This was Job's regular practice.

Job's First Test

⁶One day the members of the heavenly court* came to present themselves before the LORD, and the Accuser, Satan,* came with them. ⁷"Where have you come from?" the LORD asked Satan.

Satan answered the LORD, "I have been patrolling the earth, watching everything that's going on."

⁸Then the LORD asked Satan, "Have you noticed my servant Job? He is the finest man in all the earth. He is blameless—a man of complete integrity. He fears God and stays away from evil."

⁹Satan replied to the LORD, "Yes, but Job has good reason to fear God. ¹⁰You have always put a wall of protection around him and his home and his property. You have made him prosper in everything he does. Look how rich he is! ¹¹But reach out and take away everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face!"

¹²"All right, you may test him," the LORD said to Satan. "Do whatever you want with everything he possesses, but don't harm him physically." So Satan left the LORD's presence.

1:6a Hebrew *the sons of God*. 1:6b Hebrew *and the satan*; similarly throughout this chapter. 2:1a Hebrew *the sons of God*. 2:1b Hebrew *and the satan*; similarly throughout this chapter.

¹³One day when Job's sons and daughters were feasting at the oldest brother's house, ¹⁴a messenger arrived at Job's home with this news: "Your oxen were plowing, with the donkeys feeding beside them, ¹⁵when the Sabeans raided us. They stole all the animals and killed all the farmhands. I am the only one who escaped to tell you."

¹⁶While he was still speaking, another messenger arrived with this news: "The fire of God has fallen from heaven and burned up your sheep and all the shepherds. I am the only one who escaped to tell you."

¹⁷While he was still speaking, a third messenger arrived with this news: "Three bands of Chaldean raiders have stolen your camels and killed your servants. I am the only one who escaped to tell you."

¹⁸While he was still speaking, another messenger arrived with this news: "Your sons and daughters were feasting at their oldest brother's home. ¹⁹Suddenly, a powerful wind swept in from the wilderness and hit the house on all sides. The house collapsed, and all your children are dead. I am the only one who escaped to tell you."

²⁰Job stood up and tore his robe in grief. Then he shaved his head and fell to the ground to worship. ²¹He said,

"I came naked from my mother's womb,
and I will be naked when I leave.
The LORD gave me what I had,
and the LORD has taken it away.
Praise the name of the LORD!"

²²In all of this, Job did not sin by blaming God.

Job's Second Test

2 One day the members of the heavenly court* came again to present themselves before the LORD, and the Accuser, Satan,* came with them. ²"Where have you come from?" the LORD asked Satan.

Satan answered the LORD, "I have been patrolling the earth, watching everything that's going on."

³Then the LORD asked Satan, "Have you noticed my

servant Job? He is the finest man in all the earth. He is blameless—a man of complete integrity. He fears God and stays away from evil. And he has maintained his integrity, though you urged me to harm him without cause."

Satan replied to the LORD, "Skin for skin! A man will give up everything he has to save his life. ⁵But reach out and touch his health, and he will surely curse you to your face."

"All right, do with him as you please," the LORD said to Satan. "But spare his life." ⁷So Satan left the LORD's presence, and he struck Job with terrible boils from head to foot.

Job scraped his skin with a piece of broken pottery as he sat among the ashes. ⁹His wife said to him, "Are you still trying to maintain your integrity? Curse God and die."

"But Job replied, "You talk like a foolish woman. Should we accept only good things from the hand of God and not the bad?" So in all this, Job said nothing wrong.

When three of Job's friends heard of the tragedy he had suffered, they got together and traveled from their homes to comfort and console him. Their names were Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite.

When they saw Job from a distance, they scarcely recognized him. Wailing loudly, they tore their robes and threw dust into the air over their heads to show their grief. ¹³They sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights. None said a word to Job, for they saw that his suffering was great for words.

Job's Three Friends Share His Anguish

When three of Job's friends heard of the tragedy he had suffered, they got together and traveled from their homes to comfort and console him. Their names were Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite.

When they saw Job from a distance, they scarcely recognized him. Wailing loudly, they tore their robes and threw dust into the air over their heads to show their grief. ¹³They sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights. None said a word to Job, for they saw that his suffering was great for words.

When three of Job's friends heard of the tragedy he had suffered, they got together and traveled from their homes to comfort and console him. Their names were Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite.

When they saw Job from a distance, they scarcely recognized him. Wailing loudly, they tore their robes and threw dust into the air over their heads to show their grief. ¹³They sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights. None said a word to Job, for they saw that his suffering was great for words.

When three of Job's friends heard of the tragedy he had suffered, they got together and traveled from their homes to comfort and console him. Their names were Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite.

When they saw Job from a distance, they scarcely recognized him. Wailing loudly, they tore their robes and threw dust into the air over their heads to show their grief. ¹³They sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights. None said a word to Job, for they saw that his suffering was great for words.

When three of Job's friends heard of the tragedy he had suffered, they got together and traveled from their homes to comfort and console him. Their names were Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite.

When they saw Job from a distance, they scarcely recognized him. Wailing loudly, they tore their robes and threw dust into the air over their heads to show their grief. ¹³They sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights. None said a word to Job, for they saw that his suffering was great for words.

When three of Job's friends heard of the tragedy he had suffered, they got together and traveled from their homes to comfort and console him. Their names were Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite.

When they saw Job from a distance, they scarcely recognized him. Wailing loudly, they tore their robes and threw dust into the air over their heads to show their grief. ¹³They sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights. None said a word to Job, for they saw that his suffering was great for words.

When three of Job's friends heard of the tragedy he had suffered, they got together and traveled from their homes to comfort and console him. Their names were Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite.

When they saw Job from a distance, they scarcely recognized him. Wailing loudly, they tore their robes and threw dust into the air over their heads to show their grief. ¹³They sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights. None said a word to Job, for they saw that his suffering was great for words.

When three of Job's friends heard of the tragedy he had suffered, they got together and traveled from their homes to comfort and console him. Their names were Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite.

When they saw Job from a distance, they scarcely recognized him. Wailing loudly, they tore their robes and threw dust into the air over their heads to show their grief. ¹³They sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights. None said a word to Job, for they saw that his suffering was great for words.

When three of Job's friends heard of the tragedy he had suffered, they got together and traveled from their homes to comfort and console him. Their names were Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite.

When they saw Job from a distance, they scarcely recognized him. Wailing loudly, they tore their robes and threw dust into the air over their heads to show their grief. ¹³They sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights. None said a word to Job, for they saw that his suffering was great for words.

When three of Job's friends heard of the tragedy he had suffered, they got together and traveled from their homes to comfort and console him. Their names were Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite.

When they saw Job from a distance, they scarcely recognized him. Wailing loudly, they tore their robes and threw dust into the air over their heads to show their grief. ¹³They sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights. None said a word to Job, for they saw that his suffering was great for words.

When three of Job's friends heard of the tragedy he had suffered, they got together and traveled from their homes to comfort and console him. Their names were Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite.

When they saw Job from a distance, they scarcely recognized him. Wailing loudly, they tore their robes and threw dust into the air over their heads to show their grief. ¹³They sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights. None said a word to Job, for they saw that his suffering was great for words.

When three of Job's friends heard of the tragedy he had suffered, they got together and traveled from their homes to comfort and console him. Their names were Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite.

When they saw Job from a distance, they scarcely recognized him. Wailing loudly, they tore their robes and threw dust into the air over their heads to show their grief. ¹³They sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights. None said a word to Job, for they saw that his suffering was great for words.

When three of Job's friends heard of the tragedy he had suffered, they got together and traveled from their homes to comfort and console him. Their names were Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite.

When they saw Job from a distance, they scarcely recognized him. Wailing loudly, they tore their robes and threw dust into the air over their heads to show their grief. ¹³They sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights. None said a word to Job, for they saw that his suffering was great for words.

When three of Job's friends heard of the tragedy he had suffered, they got together and traveled from their homes to comfort and console him. Their names were Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite.

When they saw Job from a distance, they scarcely recognized him. Wailing loudly, they tore their robes and threw dust into the air over their heads to show their grief. ¹³They sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights. None said a word to Job, for they saw that his suffering was great for words.

When three of Job's friends heard of the tragedy he had suffered, they got together and traveled from their homes to comfort and console him. Their names were Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite.

When they saw Job from a distance, they scarcely recognized him. Wailing loudly, they tore their robes and threw dust into the air over their heads to show their grief. ¹³They sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights. None said a word to Job, for they saw that his suffering was great for words.

When three of Job's friends heard of the tragedy he had suffered, they got together and traveled from their homes to comfort and console him. Their names were Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite.

When they saw Job from a distance, they scarcely recognized him. Wailing loudly, they tore their robes and threw dust into the air over their heads to show their grief. ¹³They sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights. None said a word to Job, for they saw that his suffering was great for words.

When three of Job's friends heard of the tragedy he had suffered, they got together and traveled from their homes to comfort and console him. Their names were Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite.

When they saw Job from a distance, they scarcely recognized him. Wailing loudly, they tore their robes and threw dust into the air over their heads to show their grief. ¹³They sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights. None said a word to Job, for they saw that his suffering was great for words.

When three of Job's friends heard of the tragedy he had suffered, they got together and traveled from their homes to comfort and console him. Their names were Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite.

When they saw Job from a distance, they scarcely recognized him. Wailing loudly, they tore their robes and threw dust into the air over their heads to show their grief. ¹³They sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights. None said a word to Job, for they saw that his suffering was great for words.

When three of Job's friends heard of the tragedy he had suffered, they got together and traveled from their homes to comfort and console him. Their names were Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite.

When they saw Job from a distance, they scarcely recognized him. Wailing loudly, they tore their robes and threw dust into the air over their heads to show their grief. ¹³They sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights. None said a word to Job, for they saw that his suffering was great for words.

When three of Job's friends heard of the tragedy he had suffered, they got together and traveled from their homes to comfort and console him. Their names were Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite.

When they saw Job from a distance, they scarcely recognized him. Wailing loudly, they tore their robes and threw dust into the air over their heads to show their grief. ¹³They sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights. None said a word to Job, for they saw that his suffering was great for words.

When three of Job's friends heard of the tragedy he had suffered, they got together and traveled from their homes to comfort and console him. Their names were Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite.

author; others have suggested Job himself and vocabulary used suggest it was written 1000 and 1800 B.C.

most everyone at some time or another. The problem. It tells the story of Job, a godly man while remaining faithful to God. The story possessions, and even his own health—all within the ruin that Satan inflicted upon him. and to reflect on the purpose for his suffering. must we endure suffering when God is powerful. simply declared it all unfair, advising Job, "Curse Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, delivered speeches, tried to summarize the situation with yet provide Job with a satisfactory answer. Finally, long list of questions that forced him to realized that ultimately God is in charge and stood in awe of God's sovereignty. In and family.

one day when Job's sons and daughters were feasting in the oldest brother's house, ^{14a} a messenger arrived at Job's house with this news: "Your oxen were plowing with the donkeys feeding beside them, ¹⁵ when the Sabaeans raided the farm, they stole all the animals and killed all the farmhands. I am the only one who escaped to tell you."

While he was still speaking, another messenger arrived with this news: "The fire of God has fallen from heaven and burned up your sheep and all the shepherds. I am the only one who escaped to tell you."

While he was still speaking, a third messenger arrived with this news: "Three bands of Chaldean raiders have taken your camels and killed your servants. I am the only one who escaped to tell you."

While he was still speaking, another messenger arrived with this news: "Your sons and daughters were feasting in the oldest brother's home. ¹⁹ Suddenly, a powerful wind came in from the wilderness and hit the house on all sides. The house collapsed, and all your children are dead. I am the only one who escaped to tell you."

Job stood up and tore his robe in grief. Then he fell to the ground and worshipped. ²¹ He said, "I came naked from my mother's womb, and I will be naked when I leave. The LORD gave me what I had, and the LORD has taken it away. I will praise the name of the LORD!"

All of this, Job did not sin by blaming God.

Job's Second Test

One day the members of the heavenly court came again to present themselves before the LORD. Satan, ^{*} came with them. ² "Where have you come from?" the LORD asked Satan.

Satan answered the LORD, "I have been patrolling the earth, watching everything that's going on."

Then the LORD asked Satan, "Have you noticed anything?"

Chapter. 2:1a Hebrew *the sons of God*. 2:1b Hebrew *and the LORD sent shivers up my spine*.

Job? He is the finest man in all the earth. He is blameless—a man of complete integrity. He fears God and stays away from evil. And he has maintained his integrity, even when you urged me to harm him without cause."

Satan replied to the LORD, "Skin for skin! A man will give up everything he has to save his life. ⁵ But reach out and take away his health, and he will surely curse you to your face!"

"All right, do with him as you please," the LORD said to Satan. "But spare his life." ⁷ So Satan left the LORD's presence, and he struck Job with terrible boils from head to foot. Job scraped his skin with a piece of broken pottery as he sat among the ashes. ⁹ His wife said to him, "Are you still trying to maintain your integrity? Curse God and die."

"But Job replied, "You talk like a foolish woman. Should I accept only good things from the hand of God and never accept bad?" So in all this, Job said nothing wrong.

Job's Three Friends Share His Anguish

When three of Job's friends heard of the tragedy he had suffered, they got together and traveled from their homes to comfort and console him. Their names were Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. When they saw Job from a distance, they scarcely recognized him. Wailing loudly, they tore their robes and threw dust into the air over their heads to show their grief. ¹³ Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights. No one said a word to Job, for they saw that his suffering was beyond words.

Job's First Speech

At last Job spoke, and he cursed the day of his birth. ² He said,

Let the day of my birth be erased,
and the night I was conceived.
Let that day be turned to darkness,
and let it be lost even to God on high,
and let no light shine on it.
Let the darkness and utter gloom claim that day
for its own.
Let a black cloud overshadow it,
and let the darkness terrify it.
Let that night be blotted off the calendar,
never again to be counted among the days of the year,
never again to appear among the months.
Let that night be childless.
Let it have no joy.
Let those who are experts at cursing—
whose cursing could rouse Leviathan*—
curse that day.
Let the morning stars remain dark,
and let me hope for light, but in vain;
let it never see the morning light.
Let that day for failing to shut my mother's womb,
letting me be born to see all this trouble.
Why wasn't I born dead?
Why didn't I die as I came from the womb?
Why was I laid on my mother's lap?
Why did she nurse me at her breasts?
Why did I die at birth, I would now be at peace.
I would be asleep and at rest.
I would rest with the world's kings and prime ministers,
whose great buildings now lie in ruins.
I would rest with princes, rich in gold,
whose palaces were filled with silver.

*The identification of Leviathan is disputed, ranging from an earthly creature to a mythical sea monster in ancient literature. 4:15a Or *wind*; also in 4:16.

¹⁶ Why wasn't I buried like a stillborn child,
like a baby who never lives to see the light?
¹⁷ For in death the wicked cause no trouble,
and the weary are at rest.
¹⁸ Even captives are at ease in death,
with no guards to curse them.
¹⁹ Rich and poor are both there,
and the slave is free from his master.
²⁰ "Oh, why give light to those in misery,
and life to those who are bitter?
²¹ They long for death, and it won't come.
They search for death more eagerly than for
hidden treasure.
²² They're filled with joy when they finally die,
and rejoice when they find the grave.
²³ Why is life given to those with no future,
those God has surrounded with difficulties?
²⁴ I cannot eat for sighing;
my groans pour out like water.
²⁵ What I always feared has happened to me.
What I dreaded has come true.
²⁶ I have no peace, no quietness.
I have no rest; only trouble comes."

Eliphaz's First Response to Job

4 Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied to Job:

² "Will you be patient and let me say a word?
For who could keep from speaking out?
³ "In the past you have encouraged many people;
you have strengthened those who were weak.
⁴ Your words have supported those who were falling;
you encouraged those with shaky knees.
⁵ But now when trouble strikes, you lose heart.
You are terrified when it touches you.
⁶ Doesn't your reverence for God give you confidence?
Doesn't your life of integrity give you hope?
⁷ "Stop and think! Do the innocent die?
When have the upright been destroyed?
⁸ My experience shows that those who plant trouble
and cultivate evil will harvest the same.
⁹ A breath from God destroys them.
They vanish in a blast of his anger.
¹⁰ The lion roars and the wildcat snarls,
but the teeth of strong lions will be broken.
¹¹ The fierce lion will starve for lack of prey,
and the cubs of the lioness will be scattered.
¹² "This truth was given to me in secret,
as though whispered in my ear.
¹³ It came to me in a disturbing vision at night,
when people are in a deep sleep.
¹⁴ Fear gripped me,
and my bones trembled.
¹⁵ A spirit* swept past my face,
and my hair stood on end.*
¹⁶ The spirit stopped, but I couldn't see its shape.
There was a form before my eyes.
In the silence I heard a voice say,
¹⁷ 'Can a mortal be innocent before God?
Can anyone be pure before the Creator?'
¹⁸ "If God does not trust his own angels
and has charged his messengers with foolishness,
¹⁹ how much less will he trust people made of clay!"

- They are made of dust, crushed as easily as a moth.
 20 They are alive in the morning but dead by evening,
 gone forever without a trace.
 21 Their tent-cords are pulled and the tent collapses,
 and they die in ignorance.

Eliphaz's Response Continues

- 5 ¹ "Cry for help, but will anyone answer you?
 Which of the angels* will help you?
 2 Surely resentment destroys the fool,
 and jealousy kills the simple.
 3 I have seen that fools may be successful for
 the moment,
 but then comes sudden disaster.
 4 Their children are abandoned far from help;
 they are crushed in court with no one to
 defend them.
 5 The hungry devour their harvest,
 even when it is guarded by brambles.*
 The thirsty pant after their wealth.
 6 But evil does not spring from the soil,
 and trouble does not sprout from the earth.
 7 People are born for trouble
 as readily as sparks fly up from a fire.
 8 "If I were you, I would go to God
 and present my case to him.
 9 He does great things too marvelous to understand.
 He performs countless miracles.
 10 He gives rain for the earth
 and water for the fields.
 11 He gives prosperity to the poor
 and protects those who suffer.
 12 He frustrates the plans of schemers
 so the work of their hands will not succeed.
 13 He traps the wise in their own cleverness
 so their cunning schemes are thwarted.
 14 They find it is dark in the daytime,
 and they grope at noon as if it were night.
 15 He rescues the poor from the cutting words
 of the strong,
 and rescues them from the clutches of the
 powerful.
 16 And so at last the poor have hope,
 and the snapping jaws of the wicked are shut.
 17 "But consider the joy of those corrected by God!
 Do not despise the discipline of the Almighty
 when you sin.
 18 For though he wounds, he also bandages.
 He strikes, but his hands also heal.
 19 From six disasters he will rescue you;
 even in the seventh, he will keep you from evil.
 20 He will save you from death in time of famine,
 from the power of the sword in time of war.
 21 You will be safe from slander
 and have no fear when destruction comes.
 22 You will laugh at destruction and famine;
 wild animals will not terrify you.
 23 You will be at peace with the stones of the field,
 and its wild animals will be at peace with you.
 24 You will know that your home is safe.
 When you survey your possessions, nothing will
 be missing.
 25 You will have many children;
 your descendants will be as plentiful as grass!

5:1 Hebrew the holy ones. 5:5 The meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain. 6:6 Or the tasteless juice of the mallow plant? 6:14 Or he might lose his fear of the Almighty. 6:27 Hebrew even gamble over an orphan.

- 26 You will go to the grave at a ripe old age,
 like a sheaf of grain harvested at the proper time!
 27 "We have studied life and found all this to be true.
 Listen to my counsel, and apply it to yourself."

Job's Second Speech: A Response to Eliphaz

- 6 Then Job spoke again:
 2 "If my misery could be weighed
 and my troubles be put on the scales,
 3 they would outweigh all the sands of the sea.
 That is why I spoke impulsively.
 4 For the Almighty has struck me down with his arrows
 Their poison infects my spirit.
 God's terrors are lined up against me.
 5 Don't I have a right to complain?
 Don't wild donkeys bray when they find no grass,
 and oxen bellow when they have no food?
 6 Don't people complain about unsalted food?
 Does anyone want the tasteless white of an egg?*
- 7 My appetite disappears when I look at it;
 I gag at the thought of eating it!
 8 "Oh, that I might have my request,
 that God would grant my desire.
 9 I wish he would crush me.
 I wish he would reach out his hand and kill me.
 10 At least I can take comfort in this:
 Despite the pain,
 I have not denied the words of the Holy One.
 11 But I don't have the strength to endure.
 I have nothing to live for.
 12 Do I have the strength of a stone?
 Is my body made of bronze?
 13 No, I am utterly helpless,
 without any chance of success.
 14 "One should be kind to a fainting friend,
 but you accuse me without any fear of the
 Almighty.*
 15 My brothers, you have proved as unreliable as
 a seasonal brook
 that overflows its banks in the spring
 16 when it is swollen with ice and melting snow.
 17 But when the hot weather arrives, the water disappears.
 The brook vanishes in the heat.
 18 The caravans turn aside to be refreshed,
 but there is nothing to drink, so they die.
 19 The caravans from Tema search for this water;
 the travelers from Sheba hope to find it.
 20 They count on it but are disappointed.
 When they arrive, their hopes are dashed.
 21 You, too, have given no help.
 You have seen my calamity, and you are afraid.
 22 But why? Have I ever asked you for a gift?
 Have I begged for anything of yours for myself?
 23 Have I asked you to rescue me from my enemies,
 or to save me from ruthless people?
 24 Teach me, and I will keep quiet.
 Show me what I have done wrong.
 25 Honest words can be painful,
 but what do your criticisms amount to?
 26 Do you think your words are convincing
 when you disregard my cry of desperation?
 27 You would even send an orphan into slavery*
 or sell a friend.

- Look at me!
 Would I lie to your face?
 Stop assuming my guilt,
 for I have done no wrong.
 Do you think I am lying?
 Don't I know the difference between right
 and wrong?

- 7 "Is not all human life a struggle?
 Our lives are like that of a hired hand,
 like a worker who longs for the shade,
 like a servant waiting to be paid.
 I, too, have been assigned months of futility,
 long and weary nights of misery.
 Lying in bed, I think, 'When will it be morning?'
 But the night drags on, and I toss till dawn.
 My body is covered with maggots and scabs.
 My skin breaks open, oozing with pus.

Job Cries Out to God

- 8 My days fly faster than a weaver's shuttle.
 They end without hope.
 9 God, remember that my life is but a breath,
 and I will never again feel happiness.
 You see me now, but not for long.
 You will look for me, but I will be gone.
 Like a cloud dissipates and vanishes,
 those who die* will not come back.
 They are gone forever from their home—
 never to be seen again.
 I cannot keep from speaking.
 I must express my anguish.
 My bitter soul must complain.
 I am like a sea monster or a dragon
 that you must place me under guard?
 I think, 'My bed will comfort me,
 and sleep will ease my misery.'
 But then you shatter me with dreams
 and terrify me with visions.
 I would rather be strangled—
 rather die than suffer like this.
 I hate my life and don't want to go on living.
 Oh, leave me alone for my few remaining days.
 What are people, that you should make so much of us,
 that you should think of us so often?
 You examine us every morning
 and test us every moment.
 Why won't you leave me alone,
 at least long enough for me to swallow!
 I have sinned, what have I done to you,
 O watcher of all humanity?
 Why make me your target?
 Am I a burden to you?
 Why not just forgive my sin
 and take away my guilt?
 Tomorrow I will lie down in the dust and die.
 When you look for me, I will be gone."

Job's First Response to Job

- 8 Then Bildad the Shuhite replied to Job:
 9 How long will you go on like this?
 How sound like a blustering wind.
 How God twist justice?
 How the Almighty twist what is right?

9:3 Or If God wanted to take someone to court.

you will go to the grave at a ripe old age,
like a sheaf of grain harvested at the proper time.
We have studied life and found all this to be true.
Listen to my counsel, and apply it to yourself."

Second Speech: A Response to Eliphaz

Then Job spoke again:

"If my misery could be weighed
and my troubles be put on the scales,
they would outweigh all the sands of the sea.
That is why I spoke impulsively.
For the Almighty has struck me down with his arrows.
Their poison infects my spirit.
God's terrors are lined up against me.
Don't I have a right to complain?
Don't wild donkeys bray when they find no grass
and oxen bellow when they have no food?
Don't people complain about unsalted food?
Does anyone want the tasteless white of an egg?
My appetite disappears when I look at it;
I gag at the thought of eating it!

But, that I might have my request,
that God would grant my desire,
I wish he would crush me.
I wish he would reach out his hand and kill me.
At least I can take comfort in this:
Despite the pain,
I have not denied the words of the Holy One.
I don't have the strength to endure.
I have nothing to live for.
Do I have the strength of a stone?
Is my body made of bronze?
I am utterly helpless,
without any chance of success.

But I should be kind to a fainting friend,
not that you accuse me without any fear of the
Almighty.*
Brothers, you have proved as unreliable as
a seasonal brook
that overflows its banks in the spring
when it is swollen with ice and melting snow.
When the hot weather arrives, the water disappears.
The brook vanishes in the heat.
Caravans turn aside to be refreshed,
but there is nothing to drink, so they die.
Caravans from Tema search for this water;
travelers from Sheba hope to find it.
I count on it but am disappointed.
When they arrive, their hopes are dashed.
I have given no help.
I have seen my calamity, and you are afraid.
Why? Have I ever asked you for a gift?
Did I begged for anything of yours for myself?
Did I asked you to rescue me from my enemies,
to save me from ruthless people?
I am me, and I will keep quiet.
Tell me what I have done wrong.
Your words can be painful,
but what do your criticisms amount to?
I think your words are convincing
and you disregard my cry of desperation?
Would you even send an orphan into slavery?
I will kill a friend.

6:14 Or: the tasteless juice of the mallow plant? 6:14 Or: from

Look at me!

Would I lie to your face?
Would I assume my guilt,
for I have done no wrong.
Do you think I am lying?
Don't I know the difference between right
and wrong?

Is not all human life a struggle?
Our lives are like that of a hired hand,
like a worker who longs for the shade,
like a servant waiting to be paid.
I have been assigned months of futility,
long and weary nights of misery.
Lying in bed, I think, 'When will it be morning?'
But the night drags on, and I toss till dawn.
My body is covered with maggots and scabs.
My skin breaks open, oozing with pus.

Cries Out to God

My days fly faster than a weaver's shuttle.
They end without hope.
O God, remember that my life is but a breath,
and I will never again feel happiness.
Don't you see me now, but not for long.
You will look for me, but I will be gone.
I am as a cloud dissipates and vanishes,
those who die* will not come back.
They are gone forever from their home—
never to be seen again.

I cannot keep from speaking.
I must express my anguish.
My bitter soul must complain.
Am I a sea monster or a dragon
that you must place me under guard?
I think, 'My bed will comfort me,
and sleep will ease my misery,'
but then you shatter me with dreams
and terrify me with visions.
I would rather be strangled—
rather die than suffer like this.
Don't take my life and don't want to go on living.
Oh, leave me alone for my few remaining days.

What are people, that you should make so much of us,
that you should think of us so often?
When you examine us every morning
and test us every moment.
Why won't you leave me alone,
at least long enough for me to swallow!
I have sinned, what have I done to you,
O watcher of all humanity?
Why make me your target?
Am I a burden to you?
Why not just forgive my sin
and take away my guilt?
For soon I will lie down in the dust and die.
When you look for me, I will be gone."

Bildad's First Response to Job

Then Bildad the Shuhite replied to Job:

"How long will you go on like this?
You sound like a blustering wind.
Does God twist justice?
Does the Almighty twist what is right?

6:27 Or: how do you go down to Sheol. 9:3 Or: If God wanted to take someone to court.

- 4 Your children must have sinned against him,
so their punishment was well deserved.
- 5 But if you pray to God
and seek the favor of the Almighty,
and if you are pure and live with integrity,
he will surely rise up and restore your happy home.
- 6 And though you started with little,
you will end with much.
- 8 "Just ask the previous generation.
Pay attention to the experience of our ancestors.
- 9 For we were born but yesterday and know nothing.
Our days on earth are as fleeting as a shadow.
- 10 But those who came before us will teach you.
They will teach you the wisdom of old.
- 11 "Can papyrus reeds grow tall without a marsh?
Can marsh grass flourish without water?
- 12 While they are still flowering, not ready to be cut,
they begin to wither more quickly than grass.
- 13 The same happens to all who forget God.
The hopes of the godless evaporate.
- 14 Their confidence hangs by a thread.
They are leaning on a spider's web.
- 15 They cling to their home for security, but it won't last.
They try to hold it tight, but it will not endure.
- 16 The godless seem like a lush plant growing in the
sunshine,
its branches spreading across the garden.
17 Its roots grow down through a pile of stones;
it takes hold on a bed of rocks.
- 18 But when it is uprooted,
it's as though it never existed!
- 19 That's the end of its life,
and others spring up from the earth to replace it.
- 20 "But look, God will not reject a person of integrity,
nor will he lend a hand to the wicked.
- 21 He will once again fill your mouth with laughter
and your lips with shouts of joy.
- 22 Those who hate you will be clothed with shame,
and the home of the wicked will be destroyed."

Job's Third Speech: A Response to Bildad

Then Job spoke again:

- 2 "Yes, I know all this is true in principle.
But how can a person be declared innocent
in God's sight?"
- 3 If someone wanted to take God to court,*
would it be possible to answer him even once
in a thousand times?
- 4 For God is so wise and so mighty.
Who has ever challenged him successfully?
- 5 "Without warning, he moves the mountains,
overturning them in his anger.
- 6 He shakes the earth from its place,
and its foundations tremble.
- 7 If he commands it, the sun won't rise
and the stars won't shine.
- 8 He alone has spread out the heavens
and marches on the waves of the sea.
- 9 He made all the stars—the Bear and Orion,
the Pleiades and the constellations of the
southern sky.
- 10 He does great things too marvelous to understand.
He performs countless miracles.

will say to God, 'Don't simply condemn me—
tell me the charge you are bringing against me.
What do you gain by oppressing me?
Why do you reject me, the work of your own hands,
while smiling on the schemes of the wicked?
Are your eyes like those of a human?
Do you see things only as people see them?
Is your lifetime only as long as ours?
Is your life so short
that you must quickly probe for my guilt
and search for my sin?
Although you know I am not guilty,
no one can rescue me from your hands.

You formed me with your hands; you made me
yet now you completely destroy me.
Remember that you made me from dust—
will you turn me back to dust so soon?
You guided my conception
and formed me in the womb.*
You clothed me with skin and flesh,
and you knit my bones and sinews together.
You gave me life and showed me your unfailing love.
My life was preserved by your care.

Yet your real motive—
your true intent—
was to watch me, and if I sinned,
you would not forgive my guilt.
I am guilty, too bad for me;
and even if I'm innocent, I can't hold my head high
because I am filled with shame and misery.
And if I hold my head high, you hunt me like a lion
and display your awesome power against me.
Gain and again you witness against me.
You pour out your growing anger on me
and bring fresh armies against me.

Why, then, did you deliver me from my mother's
womb?

Why didn't you let me die at birth?
I would be as though I had never existed,
going directly from the womb to the grave.
I have only a few days left, so leave me alone,
that I may have a moment of comfort
before I leave—never to return—
for the land of darkness and utter gloom.
It is a land as dark as midnight,
a land of gloom and confusion,
where even the light is dark as midnight."

Zophar's First Response to Job

Then Zophar the Naamathite replied to Job:
"Shouldn't someone answer this torrent of words?
Is a person proved innocent just by a lot of talking?
Could I remain silent while you babble on?
When you mock God, shouldn't someone make you
ashamed?
You claim, 'My beliefs are pure,'
and 'I am clean in the sight of God.'
Only God would speak;
if only he would tell you what he thinks!
Only he would tell you the secrets of wisdom,
for true wisdom is not a simple matter.
Even God is doubtless punishing you
far less than you deserve!

Job 9:20 Or he. 9:23 Or disaster

Can you solve the mysteries of God?
Can you discover everything about the Almighty?
Your knowledge is higher than the heavens—
and who are you?
Is there deeper than the underworld*—
what do you know?
Is there broader than the earth
and wider than the sea.
When God comes and puts a person in prison
or calls the court to order, who can stop him?
Who knows those who are false,
and he takes note of all their sins.
An empty-headed person won't become wise
any more than a wild donkey can bear a human
child.*

Only you would prepare your heart
and lift up your hands to him in prayer!
You are tired of your sins,
and leave all iniquity behind you.
Your face will brighten with innocence.
You will be strong and free of fear.
You will forget your misery;
You will be like water flowing away.
Your life will be brighter than the noonday.
Even darkness will be as bright as morning.
Your hope will give you courage.
You will be protected and will rest in safety.
You will lie down unafraid,
and many will look to you for help.
The wicked will be blinded.
They will have no escape.
Their only hope is death."

Fourth Speech: A Response to Zophar

Then Job spoke again:

"You people really know everything, don't you?
And when you die, wisdom will die with you!
I know a few things myself—
and you're no better than I am.
Who doesn't know these things you've been saying?
My friends laugh at me,
I call on God and expect an answer.
I am a just and blameless man,
and they laugh at me.
People who are at ease mock those in trouble.
They give a push to people who are stumbling.
Robbers are left in peace,
and those who provoke God live in safety—
though God keeps them in his power.

They ask the animals, and they will teach you.
They ask the birds of the sky, and they will tell you.
They ask the earth, and it will instruct you.
They ask the fish in the sea speak to you.
They all know
that my disaster* has come from the hand of the LORD.
The life of every living thing is in his hand,
and the breath of every human being.
The LORD tests the words it hears
as the mouth distinguishes between foods.
Wisdom belongs to the aged,
and understanding to the old.

The wisdom and power are found in God;
counsel and understanding are his.

Job 11:12 Or than a wild male donkey can bear a tame colt.

Job 12:9 Hebrew that this. 13:15 An alternate reading in the Masoretic

- 14 What he destroys cannot be rebuilt.
When he puts someone in prison, there is no escape.
15 If he holds back the rain, the earth becomes a desert.
If he releases the waters, they flood the earth.
16 Yes, strength and wisdom are his;
deceivers and deceived are both in his power.
17 He leads counselors away, stripped of good judgment;
wise judges become fools.
18 He removes the royal robe of kings.
They are led away with ropes around their waist.
19 He leads priests away, stripped of status;
he overthrows those with long years in power.
20 He silences the trusted adviser
and removes the insight of the elders.
21 He pours disgrace upon princes
and disarms the strong.
22 "He uncovers mysteries hidden in darkness;
he brings light to the deepest gloom.
23 He builds up nations, and he destroys them.
He expands nations, and he abandons them.
24 He strips kings of understanding
and leaves them wandering in a pathless wasteland.
25 They grope in the darkness without a light.
He makes them stagger like drunkards.

Job Wants to Argue His Case with God

- 13** ¹ "Look, I have seen all this with my own eyes
and heard it with my own ears, and now I
understand.
2 I know as much as you do.
You are no better than I am.
3 As for me, I would speak directly to the Almighty.
I want to argue my case with God himself.
4 As for you, you smear me with lies.
As physicians, you are worthless quacks.
5 If only you could be silent!
That's the wisest thing you could do.
6 Listen to my charge;
pay attention to my arguments.
7 "Are you defending God with lies?
Do you make your dishonest arguments for his sake?
8 Will you slant your testimony in his favor?
Will you argue God's case for him?
9 What will happen when he finds out what you are doing?
Can you fool him as easily as you fool people?
10 No, you will be in trouble with him
if you secretly slant your testimony in his favor.
11 Doesn't his majesty terrify you?
Doesn't your fear of him overwhelm you?
12 Your platitudes are as valuable as ashes.
Your defense is as fragile as a clay pot.
13 "Be silent now and leave me alone.
Let me speak, and I will face the consequences.
14 Yes, I will take my life in my hands
and say what I really think.
15 God might kill me, but I have no other hope.*
I am going to argue my case with him.
16 But this is what will save me—I am not godless.
If I were, I could not stand before him.
17 "Listen closely to what I am about to say.
Hear me out.
18 I have prepared my case;
I will be proved innocent.

19 Who can argue with me over this?
And if you prove me wrong, I will remain
silent and die.

Job Asks How He Has Sinned

20 "O God, grant me these two things,
and then I will be able to face you.
21 Remove your heavy hand from me,
and don't terrify me with your awesome
presence.
22 Now summon me, and I will answer!
Or let me speak to you, and you reply.
23 Tell me, what have I done wrong?
Show me my rebellion and my sin.
24 Why do you turn away from me?
Why do you treat me as your enemy?
25 Would you terrify a leaf blown by the wind?
Would you chase dry straw?
26 "You write bitter accusations against me
and bring up all the sins of my youth.
27 You put my feet in stocks.
You examine all my paths.
You trace all my footprints.
28 I waste away like rotting wood,
like a moth-eaten coat.

14 ¹ "How frail is humanity!
How short is life, how full of trouble!
2 We blossom like a flower and then wither.
Like a passing shadow, we quickly disappear.
3 Must you keep an eye on such a frail creature
and demand an accounting from me?
4 Who can bring purity out of an impure person?
No one!
5 You have decided the length of our lives.
You know how many months we will live,
and we are not given a minute longer.
6 So leave us alone and let us rest!
We are like hired hands, so let us finish
our work in peace.
7 "Even a tree has more hope!
If it is cut down, it will sprout again
and grow new branches.
8 Though its roots have grown old in the earth
and its stump decays,
9 at the scent of water it will bud
and sprout again like a new seedling.
10 "But when people die, their strength is gone.
They breathe their last, and then where are they?
11 As water evaporates from a lake
and a river disappears in drought,
12 people are laid to rest and do not rise again.
Until the heavens are no more, they will not
wake up
nor be roused from their sleep.
13 "I wish you would hide me in the grave*
and forget me there until your anger has passed.
But mark your calendar to think of me again!
14 Can the dead live again?
If so, this would give me hope through all my years of
struggle,
and I would eagerly await the release of death.
15 You would call and I would answer,
and you would yearn for me, your handiwork.

14:13 Hebrew in Sheol. 15:12 Or Why do your eyes flash with anger; Hebrew reads Why do your eyes blink. 15:15 Hebrew the holy ones.

16 For then you would guard my steps,
instead of watching for my sins.
17 My sins would be sealed in a pouch,
and you would cover my guilt.
18 "But instead, as mountains fall and crumble
and as rocks fall from a cliff,
19 as water wears away the stones
and floods wash away the soil,
so you destroy people's hope.
20 You always overpower them, and they pass from
the scene.
You disfigure them in death and send them away.
21 They never know if their children grow up in honor
or sink to insignificance.
22 They suffer painfully;
their life is full of trouble."

Eliphaz's Second Response to Job

15 Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied:
2 "A wise man wouldn't answer with such
empty talk!
You are nothing but a windbag.
3 The wise don't engage in empty chatter.
What good are such words?
4 Have you no fear of God,
no reverence for him?
5 Your sins are telling your mouth what to say.
Your words are based on clever deception.
6 Your own mouth condemns you, not I.
Your own lips testify against you.
7 "Were you the first person ever born?
Were you born before the hills were made?
8 Were you listening at God's secret council?
Do you have a monopoly on wisdom?
9 What do you know that we don't?
What do you understand that we do not?
10 On our side are aged, gray-haired men
much older than your father!
11 "Is God's comfort too little for you?
Is his gentle word not enough?
12 What has taken away your reason?
What has weakened your vision,*
13 that you turn against God
and say all these evil things?
14 Can any mortal be pure?
Can anyone born of a woman be just?
15 Look, God does not even trust the angels.*
Even the heavens are not absolutely pure in his sight.
16 How much less pure is a corrupt and sinful person
with a thirst for wickedness!
17 "If you will listen, I will show you.
I will answer you from my own experience.
18 And it is confirmed by the reports of wise men
who have heard the same thing from their fathers.
19 from those to whom the land was given
long before any foreigners arrived.
20 "The wicked writhe in pain throughout their lives.
Years of trouble are stored up for the ruthless.
21 The sound of terror rings in their ears,
and even on good days they fear the attack
of the destroyer.
22 They dare not go out into the darkness
for fear they will be murdered.

They wander around, saying, "Where can
They know their day of destruction is
That dark day terrifies them.
They live in distress and anguish,
like a king preparing for battle.
For they shake their fists at God,
defying the Almighty.
Holding their strong shields,
they defiantly charge against him.
These wicked people are heavy and pro
their waists bulge with fat.
But their cities will be ruined.
They will live in abandoned houses
that are ready to tumble down.
Their riches will not last,
and their wealth will not endure.
Their possessions will no longer spread
the horizon.
They will not escape the darkness.
The burning sun will wither their shoots
and the breath of God will destroy them.
Let them no longer fool themselves by trust
in empty riches,
for emptiness will be their only reward.
Like trees, they will be cut down in the prin
their branches will never again be green.
They will be like a vine whose grapes are ha
too early,
like an olive tree that loses its blossoms
the fruit can form.
For the godless are barren.
Their homes, enriched through bribery,
They conceive trouble and give birth to evil.
Their womb produces deceit."
Fifth Speech: A Response to Eliphaz
16 Then Job spoke again:
2 "I have heard all this before.
What miserable comforters you are!
Why do you ever stop blowing hot air?
What makes you keep on talking?
I could say the same things if you were in my
I could spout off criticism and shake my h
if it were me, I would encourage you.
I would try to take away your grief.
I would suffer if I defend myself,
and I suffer no less if I refuse to speak.
God, you have ground me down
and devastated my family.
I want to prove I have sinned, you've reduced me
and bones.
My gaunt flesh testifies against me.
You hate me and angrily tears me apart.
You snap his teeth at me
and pierces me with his eyes.
You leer and laugh at me.
They slap my cheek in contempt.
The mob gathers against me.
You handed me over to sinners.
You have tossed me into the hands of the wicked.
I was living quietly until he shattered me.
You took me by the neck and broke me in piec
You set me up as his target,
and you have appointed to be food for a vulture.

When you would guard my steps,
instead of watching for my sins.
Sins would be sealed in a pouch,
and you would cover my guilt.

Instead, as mountains fall and crumble
and as rocks fall from a cliff,
water wears away the stones
and floods wash away the soil,
you destroy people's hope.
They always overpower them, and they pass from
the scene.
You disfigure them in death and send them away;
they never know if their children grow up in honor
or sink to insignificance.
They suffer painfully;
their life is full of trouble."

Eliphaz's Second Response to Job

Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied:

"A wise man wouldn't answer with such
empty talk!
You are nothing but a windbag.
Wise don't engage in empty chatter.
What good are such words?
Do you no fear of God,
no reverence for him?
Your sins are telling your mouth what to say.
Your words are based on clever deception.
Your own mouth condemns you, not I.
Your own lips testify against you.

Are you the first person ever born?
Were you born before the hills were made?
Are you listening at God's secret council?
Do you have a monopoly on wisdom?
What do you know that we don't?
What do you understand that we do not?
Your side are aged, gray-haired men
much older than your father!

God's comfort too little for you?
His gentle word not enough?
What has taken away your reason?
What has weakened your vision,*
you turn against God
and say all these evil things?
Can any mortal be pure?
Can anyone born of a woman be just?
Can God does not even trust the angels.*
Even the heavens are not absolutely pure in his sight,
much less pure is a corrupt and sinful person
with a thirst for wickedness!

You will listen, I will show you.
I will answer you from my own experience.
It is confirmed by the reports of wise men
who have heard the same thing from their fathers—
those to whom the land was given
long before any foreigners arrived.

The wicked writhe in pain throughout their lives.
Years of trouble are stored up for the ruthless.
The sound of terror rings in their ears,
and even on good days they fear the attack
of the destroyer.
They dare not go out into the darkness
for fear they will be murdered.

15:15 Hebrew *the holy ones*.

They wander around, saying, "Where can I find bread?*"
They know their day of destruction is near.
That dark day terrifies them.
They live in distress and anguish,
like a king preparing for battle.
They shake their fists at God,
defying the Almighty,
holding their strong shields,
they defiantly charge against him.

These wicked people are heavy and prosperous;
their waists bulge with fat.
Their cities will be ruined.
They will live in abandoned houses
that are ready to tumble down.
Their riches will not last,
and their wealth will not endure.
Their possessions will no longer spread across
the horizon.

They will not escape the darkness.
The burning sun will wither their shoots,
and the breath of God will destroy them.
They no longer fool themselves by trusting
in empty riches,
for emptiness will be their only reward.
Like trees, they will be cut down in the prime of life;
their branches will never again be green.
They will be like a vine whose grapes are harvested
too early,
like an olive tree that loses its blossoms before
the fruit can form.
The godless are barren.
Their homes, enriched through bribery, will burn.
They conceive trouble and give birth to evil.
Their womb produces deceit."

Fifth Speech: A Response to Eliphaz

Then Job spoke again:

"I have heard all this before.
What miserable comforters you are!
Do you ever stop blowing hot air?
What makes you keep on talking?
I could say the same things if you were in my place.
I could spout off criticism and shake my head at you.
If it were me, I would encourage you.
I would try to take away your grief.
I suffer if I defend myself,
and I suffer no less if I refuse to speak.

God, you have ground me down
and devastated my family.
To prove I have sinned, you've reduced me to skin
and bones.

My gaunt flesh testifies against me.
It hates me and angrily tears me apart.
He snaps his teeth at me
and pierces me with his eyes.

They jeer and laugh at me.
They slap my cheek in contempt.
A mob gathers against me.
They have handed me over to sinners.
They have tossed me into the hands of the wicked.

I was living quietly until he shattered me.
He took me by the neck and broke me in pieces.
He set me up as his target,

16:13 Hebrew *my gall*. 17:13 Hebrew *to Sheol*; also in 17:16.

and now his archers surround me.
His arrows pierce me without mercy.
The ground is wet with my blood.*
Again and again he smashes against me,
charging at me like a warrior.
I wear burlap to show my grief.
My pride lies in the dust.
My eyes are red with weeping;
dark shadows circle my eyes.
Yet I have done no wrong,
and my prayer is pure.

"O earth, do not conceal my blood.
Let it cry out on my behalf.
Even now my witness is in heaven.
My advocate is there on high.
My friends scorn me,
but I pour out my tears to God.
I need someone to mediate between God and me,
as a person mediates between friends.
For soon I must go down that road
from which I will never return.

Job Continues to Defend His Innocence

17 ¹ "My spirit is crushed,
and my life is nearly snuffed out.
The grave is ready to receive me.
² I am surrounded by mockers.
I watch how bitterly they taunt me.
³ "You must defend my innocence, O God,
since no one else will stand up for me.
⁴ You have closed their minds to understanding,
but do not let them triumph.
⁵ They betray their friends for their own advantage,
so let their children faint with hunger.
⁶ "God has made a mockery of me among the people;
they spit in my face.
⁷ My eyes are swollen with weeping,
and I am but a shadow of my former self.
⁸ The virtuous are horrified when they see me.
The innocent rise up against the ungodly.
⁹ The righteous keep moving forward,
and those with clean hands become stronger
and stronger.

¹⁰ "As for all of you, come back with a better argument,
though I still won't find a wise man among you.
¹¹ My days are over.
My hopes have disappeared.
My heart's desires are broken.
¹² These men say that night is day;
they claim that the darkness is light.
¹³ What if I go to the grave*
and make my bed in darkness?
¹⁴ What if I call the grave my father,
and the maggot my mother or my sister?
¹⁵ Where then is my hope?
Can anyone find it?
¹⁶ No, my hope will go down with me to the grave.
We will rest together in the dust!"

Bildad's Second Response to Job

18 Then Bildad the Shuhite replied:
² "How long before you stop talking?
Speak sense if you want us to answer!

- 3 Do you think we are mere animals?
Do you think we are stupid?
- 4 You may tear out your hair in anger,
but will that destroy the earth?
Will it make the rocks tremble?
- 5 "Surely the light of the wicked will be snuffed out.
The sparks of their fire will not glow.
- 6 The light in their tent will grow dark.
The lamp hanging above them will be quenched.
- 7 The confident stride of the wicked will be shortened.
Their own schemes will be their downfall.
- 8 The wicked walk into a net.
They fall into a pit.
- 9 A trap grabs them by the heel.
A snare holds them tight.
- 10 A noose lies hidden on the ground.
A rope is stretched across their path.
- 11 "Terrors surrounded the wicked
and trouble them at every step.
- 12 Hunger depletes their strength,
and calamity waits for them to stumble.
- 13 Disease eats their skin;
death devours their limbs.
- 14 They are torn from the security of their homes
and are brought down to the king of terrors.
- 15 The homes of the wicked will burn down;
burning sulfur rains on their houses.
- 16 Their roots will dry up,
and their branches will wither.
- 17 All memory of their existence will fade from the earth;
no one will remember their names.
- 18 They will be thrust from light into darkness,
driven from the world.
- 19 They will have neither children nor grandchildren,
nor any survivor in the place where they lived.
- 20 People in the west are appalled at their fate;
people in the east are horrified.
- 21 They will say, This was the home of a wicked person,
the place of one who rejected God."

Job's Sixth Speech: A Response to Bildad

19

Then Job spoke again:

- 2 "How long will you torture me?
How long will you try to crush me with your words?
- 3 You have already insulted me ten times.
You should be ashamed of treating me so badly.
- 4 Even if I have sinned,
that is my concern, not yours.
- 5 You think you're better than I am,
using my humiliation as evidence of my sin.
- 6 But it is God who has wronged me,
capturing me in his net.*
- 7 "I cry out, 'Help!' but no one answers me.
I protest, but there is no justice.
- 8 God has blocked my way so I cannot move.
He has plunged my path into darkness.
- 9 He has stripped me of my honor
and removed the crown from my head.
- 10 He has demolished me on every side, and I am finished.
He has uprooted my hope like a fallen tree.
- 11 His fury burns against me;
he counts me as an enemy.
- 12 His troops advance.

19:6 Or for I am like a city under siege. 19:26 Or without my body I will see God. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

They build up roads to attack me.
They camp all around my tent.

- 13 "My relatives stay far away,
and my friends have turned against me.
- 14 My family is gone,
and my close friends have forgotten me.
- 15 My servants and maids consider me a stranger.
I am like a foreigner to them.
- 16 When I call my servant, he doesn't come;
I have to plead with him!
- 17 My breath is repulsive to my wife.
I am rejected by my own family.
- 18 Even young children despise me.
When I stand to speak, they turn their backs on me.
- 19 My close friends detest me.
Those I loved have turned against me.
- 20 I have been reduced to skin and bones
and have escaped death by the skin of my teeth.
- 21 "Have mercy on me, my friends, have mercy,
for the hand of God has struck me.
- 22 Must you also persecute me, like God does?
Haven't you chewed me up enough?
- 23 "Oh, that my words could be recorded.
Oh, that they could be inscribed on a monument
carved with an iron chisel and filled with lead,
engraved forever in the rock.
- 25 "But as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives,
and he will stand upon the earth at last.
- 26 And after my body has decayed,
yet in my body I will see God*!
- 27 I will see him for myself.
Yes, I will see him with my own eyes.
I am overwhelmed at the thought!
- 28 "How dare you go on persecuting me,
saying, 'It's his own fault?'
- 29 You should fear punishment yourselves,
for your attitude deserves punishment.
Then you will know that there is indeed
a judgment."

Zophar's Second Response to Job

20

Then Zophar the Naamathite replied:

- 2 "I must reply
because I am greatly disturbed.
- 3 I've had to endure your insults,
but now my spirit prompts me to reply.
- 4 "Don't you realize that from the beginning of time
ever since people were first placed on the earth
5 the triumph of the wicked has been short lived
and the joy of the godless has been only temporary?
- 6 Though the pride of the godless reaches to the
heavens
and their heads touch the clouds,
7 yet they will vanish forever,
thrown away like their own dung.
Those who knew them will ask,
'Where are they?'
- 8 They will fade like a dream and not be found.
They will vanish like a vision in the night.
- 9 Those who once saw them will see them no more
Their families will never see them again.
- 10 Their children will beg from the poor,

for they must give back their stolen riches.
Though they are young,
their bones will lie in the dust.

- 11 They enjoyed the sweet taste of wickedness,
letting it melt under their tongue.
- 12 They savored it,
holding it long in their mouths.
13 But suddenly the food in their bellies turns sour,
a poisonous venom in their stomach.
14 They will vomit the wealth they swallowed.
God won't let them keep it down.
- 15 They will suck the poison of cobras.
The viper will kill them.
- 16 They will never again enjoy streams of olive oil
or rivers of milk and honey.
- 17 They will give back everything they worked for.
Their wealth will bring them no joy.
- 18 They oppressed the poor and left them destitute.
They foreclosed on their homes.
- 19 They were always greedy and never satisfied.
Nothing remains of all the things they dreamed
about.
- 20 Nothing is left after they finish gorging themselves.
Therefore, their prosperity will not endure.
- 21 In the midst of plenty, they will run into trouble
and be overcome by misery.
- 22 God will give them a bellyful of trouble.
May God rain down his anger upon them.
- 23 When they try to escape an iron weapon,
a bronze-tipped arrow will pierce them.
24 The arrow is pulled from their back,
and the arrowhead glistens with blood.*
The terrors of death are upon them.
25 Their treasures will be thrown into deepest darkness.
Wildfire will devour their goods,
consuming all they have left.
- 26 The heavens will reveal their guilt,
and the earth will testify against them.
27 God will sweep away their house.
God's anger will descend on them in torrents.
28 This is the reward that God gives the wicked.
It is the inheritance decreed by God."

Seventh Speech: A Response to Zophar

Then Job spoke again:

- 2 "Listen closely to what I am saying.
That's one consolation you can give me.
3 Hear with me, and let me speak.
4 After I have spoken, you may resume mocking me.
5 My complaint is with God, not with people.
6 I have good reason to be so impatient.
7 Look at me and be stunned.
8 Put your hand over your mouth in shock.
9 When I think about what I am saying, I shudder.
10 My body trembles.
- 11 Why do the wicked prosper,
growing old and powerful?
12 They live to see their children grow up and
settle down,
and they enjoy their grandchildren.
13 Their homes are safe from every fear,
and God does not punish them.
14 Their bulls never fail to breed.

Hebrew with gall. 21:13 Hebrew to Sheol.

They build up roads to attack me.
 They camp all around my tent.
 My relatives stay far away,
 My friends have turned against me.
 My family is gone,
 My close friends have forgotten me.
 My servants and maids consider me a stranger.
 I am like a foreigner to them.
 When I call my servant, he doesn't come;
 I have to plead with him!
 My breath is repulsive to my wife.
 I am rejected by my own family.
 My young children despise me.
 When I stand to speak, they turn their backs on me.
 My close friends detest me.
 Those I loved have turned against me.
 I have been reduced to skin and bones
 And have escaped death by the skin of my teeth.
 Show me mercy on me, my friends, have mercy,
 The hand of God has struck me.
 You also persecute me, like God does?
 Haven't you chewed me up enough?
 What my words could be recorded,
 That they could be inscribed on a monument
 With an iron chisel and filled with lead,
 Carved forever in the rock.
 Show mercy for me, I know that my Redeemer lives,
 He will stand upon the earth at last.
 After my body has decayed,
 In my body I will see God*!
 I will see him for myself.
 I will see him with my own eyes.
 I am not overwhelmed at the thought!
 How dare you go on persecuting me,
 Saying, 'It's his own fault?'
 You should fear punishment yourselves,
 Your attitude deserves punishment.
 You will know that there is indeed
 Judgment."

Second Response to Job

When Zophar the Naamathite replied:
 "I must reply
 Because I am greatly disturbed.
 I must endure your insults,
 My spirit prompts me to reply.
 You realize that from the beginning of time
 Since people were first placed on the earth,
 The triumph of the wicked has been short lived
 The joy of the godless has been only temporary
 The pride of the godless reaches to the heavens
 Their heads touch the clouds,
 They will vanish forever,
 They are blown away like their own dung.
 Who knew them will ask,
 Where are they?
 They will fade like a dream and not be found.
 They will vanish like a vision in the night.
 Who once saw them will see them no more.
 Their families will never see them again.
 Their children will beg from the poor,
 Their names will be forgotten.
 The name of the Hebrew is uncertain.

For they must give back their stolen riches.
 Although they are young,
 Their bones will lie in the dust.

They enjoyed the sweet taste of wickedness,
 Letting it melt under their tongue.
 They savored it,
 Holding it long in their mouths.
 Suddenly the food in their bellies turns sour,
 A poisonous venom in their stomach.
 They will vomit the wealth they swallowed.
 God won't let them keep it down.
 They will suck the poison of cobras.
 The viper will kill them.
 They will never again enjoy streams of olive oil
 Or rivers of milk and honey.
 They will give back everything they worked for.
 Their wealth will bring them no joy.
 They oppressed the poor and left them destitute.
 They foreclosed on their homes.
 They were always greedy and never satisfied.
 Nothing remains of all the things they dreamed
 About.
 Nothing is left after they finish gorging themselves.
 Therefore, their prosperity will not endure.

In the midst of plenty, they will run into trouble
 And be overcome by misery.
 God give them a bellyful of trouble.
 May God rain down his anger upon them.
 When they try to escape an iron weapon,
 A bronze-tipped arrow will pierce them.
 The arrow is pulled from their back,
 And the arrowhead glistens with blood.*
 The terrors of death are upon them.
 Their treasures will be thrown into deepest darkness.
 Wildfire will devour their goods,
 Consuming all they have left.
 The heavens will reveal their guilt,
 And the earth will testify against them.
 Flood will sweep away their house.
 God's anger will descend on them in torrents.
 This is the reward that God gives the wicked.
 This is the inheritance decreed by God."

Seventh Speech: A Response to Zophar

Then Job spoke again:
 "Listen closely to what I am saying.
 That's one consolation you can give me.
 Talk with me, and let me speak.
 After I have spoken, you may resume mocking me.
 My complaint is with God, not with people.
 I have good reason to be so impatient.
 Don't mock at me and be stunned.
 Put your hand over your mouth in shock.
 When I think about what I am saying, I shudder.
 My body trembles.
 Why do the wicked prosper,
 Growing old and powerful?
 Why do they live to see their children grow up and
 Settle down,
 And they enjoy their grandchildren.
 Their homes are safe from every fear,
 And God does not punish them.
 Their bulls never fail to breed.

with gall. 21:13 Hebrew to Sheol.

Their cows bear calves and never miscarry.

- 11 They let their children frisk about like lambs.
Their little ones skip and dance.
- 12 They sing with tambourine and harp.
They celebrate to the sound of the flute.
- 13 They spend their days in prosperity,
then go down to the grave* in peace.
- 14 And yet they say to God, 'Go away.
We want no part of you and your ways.
- 15 Who is the Almighty, and why should we obey him?
What good will it do us to pray?'
16 (They think their prosperity is of their own doing,
but I will have nothing to do with that kind of
thinking.)
- 17 "Yet the light of the wicked never seems to be
extinguished.
Do they ever have trouble?
Does God distribute sorrows to them in anger?"
- 18 Are they driven before the wind like straw?
Are they carried away by the storm like chaff?
Not at all!
- 19 "Well, you say, 'at least God will punish their children!'
But I say he should punish the ones who sin,
so that they understand his judgment.
- 20 Let them see their destruction with their own eyes.
Let them drink deeply of the anger of the Almighty.
- 21 For they will not care what happens to their family
after they are dead.
- 22 "But who can teach a lesson to God,
since he judges even the most powerful?"
- 23 One person dies in prosperity,
completely comfortable and secure,
24 the picture of good health,
vigorous and fit.
- 25 Another person dies in bitter poverty,
never having tasted the good life.
- 26 But both are buried in the same dust,
both eaten by the same maggots.
- 27 "Look, I know what you're thinking.
I know the schemes you plot against me.
- 28 You will tell me of rich and wicked people
whose houses have vanished because of their sins.
- 29 But ask those who have been around,
and they will tell you the truth.
- 30 Evil people are spared in times of calamity
and are allowed to escape disaster.
- 31 No one criticizes them openly
or pays them back for what they have done.
- 32 When they are carried to the grave,
an honor guard keeps watch at their tomb.
- 33 A great funeral procession goes to the cemetery.
Many pay their respects as the body is laid to rest,
and the earth gives sweet repose.
- 34 "How can your empty clichés comfort me?
All your explanations are lies!"

Eliphaz's Third Response to Job

- Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied:
- 22** "Can a person do anything to help God?
 Can even a wise person be helpful to him?
 Is it any advantage to the Almighty if you are righteous?
 Would it be any gain to him if you were perfect?
 Is it because you're so pious that he accuses you

- and brings judgment against you?
 5 No, it's because of your wickedness!
 There's no limit to your sins.
- 6 "For example, you must have lent money to
 your friend
 and demanded clothing as security.
 Yes, you stripped him to the bone.
- 7 You must have refused water for the thirsty
 and food for the hungry.
- 8 You probably think the land belongs to the powerful
 and only the privileged have a right to it!
- 9 You must have sent widows away empty-handed
 and crushed the hopes of orphans.
- 10 That is why you are surrounded by traps
 and tremble from sudden fears.
- 11 That is why you cannot see in the darkness,
 and waves of water cover you.
- 12 "God is so great—higher than the heavens,
 higher than the farthest stars.
- 13 But you reply, 'That's why God can't see what
 I am doing!
 How can he judge through the thick darkness?'
 14 For thick clouds swirl about him, and he cannot
 see us.
 He is way up there, walking on the vault
 of heaven.'
- 15 "Will you continue on the old paths
 where evil people have walked?
 16 They were snatched away in the prime of life,
 the foundations of their lives washed away.
- 17 For they said to God, 'Leave us alone!
 What can the Almighty do to us?'
- 18 Yet he was the one who filled their homes with
 good things,
 so I will have nothing to do with that kind of
 thinking.
- 19 "The righteous will be happy to see the wicked
 destroyed,
 and the innocent will laugh in contempt.
- 20 They will say, 'See how our enemies have been
 destroyed.
 The last of them have been consumed in the fire.'
- 21 "Submit to God, and you will have peace;
 then things will go well for you.
- 22 Listen to his instructions,
 and store them in your heart.
- 23 If you return to the Almighty, you will be restored—
 so clean up your life.
- 24 If you give up your lust for money
 and throw your precious gold into the river,
 25 the Almighty himself will be your treasure.
 He will be your precious silver!
- 26 "Then you will take delight in the Almighty
 and look up to God.
- 27 You will pray to him, and he will hear you,
 and you will fulfill your vows to him.
- 28 You will succeed in whatever you choose to do,
 and light will shine on the road ahead of you.
- 29 If people are in trouble and you say, 'Help them,'
 God will save them.
- 30 Even sinners will be rescued;
 they will be rescued because your hands
 are pure."

Job's Eighth Speech: A Response to Eliphaz

- 23** Then Job spoke again:
 2 "My complaint today is still a bitter one,
 and I try hard not to groan aloud.
- 3 If only I knew where to find God,
 I would go to his court.
- 4 I would lay out my case
 and present my arguments.
- 5 Then I would listen to his reply
 and understand what he says to me.
- 6 Would he use his great power to argue with me?
 No, he would give me a fair hearing.
- 7 Honest people can reason with him,
 so I would be forever acquitted by my judge.
- 8 I go east, but he is not there.
 I go west, but I cannot find him.
- 9 I do not see him in the north, for he is hidden.
 I look to the south, but he is concealed.
- 10 "But he knows where I am going.
 And when he tests me, I will come out as pure as gold.
- 11 For I have stayed on God's paths;
 I have followed his ways and not turned aside.
- 12 I have not departed from his commands,
 but have treasured his words more than daily food.
- 13 But once he has made his decision, who can change
 his mind?
 Whatever he wants to do, he does.
- 14 So he will do to me whatever he has planned.
 He controls my destiny.
- 15 No wonder I am so terrified in his presence.
 When I think of it, terror grips me.
- 16 God has made me sick at heart;
 the Almighty has terrified me.
- 17 Darkness is all around me;
 thick, impenetrable darkness is everywhere.

Job Asks Why the Wicked Are Not Punished

- 24** "Why doesn't the Almighty bring the wicked
 to judgment?
 Why must the godly wait for him in vain?
 2 Evil people steal land by moving the boundary marker.
 They steal livestock and put them in their own
 pastures.
- 3 They take the orphan's donkey
 and demand the widow's ox as security for a loan.
- 4 The poor are pushed off the path;
 the needy must hide together for safety.
- 5 Like wild donkeys in the wilderness,
 the poor must spend all their time looking for food
 searching even in the desert for food for their
 children.
- 6 They harvest a field they do not own,
 and they glean in the vineyards of the wicked.
- 7 All night they lie naked in the cold,
 without clothing or covering.
- 8 They are soaked by mountain showers,
 and they huddle against the rocks for want of a home.
- 9 "The wicked snatch a widow's child from her breast,
 taking the baby as security for a loan.
- 10 The poor must go about naked, without any clothing.
 They harvest food for others while they themselves
 are starving.
- 11 They press out olive oil without being allowed to taste
 and they tread in the winepress as they suffer from
 thirst.

- 2 The groans of the dying rise from the city,
 and the wounded cry for help,
 yet God ignores their moaning.
- 3 "Wicked people rebel against the light.
 They refuse to acknowledge its ways
 or stay in its paths.
- 4 The murderer rises in the early dawn
 to kill the poor and needy;
 at night he is a thief.
- 5 The adulterer waits for the twilight,
 saying, 'No one will see me then.'
 He hides his face so no one will know him.
- 6 Thieves break into houses at night
 and sleep in the daytime.
 They are not acquainted with the light.
- 7 The black night is their morning.
 They ally themselves with the terrors of the night.
- 8 "But they disappear like foam down a river.
 Everything they own is cursed,
 and they are afraid to enter their own vineyard.
- 9 The grave* consumes sinners
 just as drought and heat consume snow.
- 10 Their own mothers will forget them.
 Maggots will find them sweet to eat.
 No one will remember them.
- 11 Wicked people are broken like a tree in the storm.
 They cheat the woman who has no son to help
 them.
 They refuse to help the needy widow.
- 12 "God, in his power, drags away the rich.
 They may rise high, but they have no assurance
 of life.
- 13 They may be allowed to live in security,
 but God is always watching them.
- 14 And though they are great now,
 in a moment they will be gone like all others,
 cut off like heads of grain.
- 15 Can anyone claim otherwise?
 Who can prove me wrong?"

Bildad's Third Response to Job

- 25** Then Bildad the Shuhite replied:
 2 "God is powerful and dreadful.
 He enforces peace in the heavens.
- 3 Who is able to count his heavenly army?
 Doesn't his light shine on all the earth?
- 4 How can a mortal be innocent before God?
 Can anyone born of a woman be pure?
- 5 God is more glorious than the moon;
 he shines brighter than the stars.
- 6 In comparison, people are maggots;
 we mortals are mere worms."

Job's Ninth Speech: A Response to Bildad

- 26** Then Job spoke again:
 2 "How you have helped the powerless!
 How you have saved the weak!
 3 How you have enlightened my stupidity!
 What wise advice you have offered!
- 4 Where have you gotten all these wise sayings?
 Whose spirit speaks through you?
- 5 "The dead tremble—
 those who live beneath the waters.

24:19 Hebrew *Sheol*. 26:6a Hebrew *Sheol*. 26:6b Hebrew *Abaddon*, a monster that represents chaos in ancient literature. 27:18 As in Greek.

Job's Speech: A Response to Eliphaz
Job spoke again:

My complaint today is still a bitter one,
I try hard not to groan aloud.
I know where to find God,
I will go to his court.
I will set out my case
and present my arguments.
I would listen to his reply
and understand what he says to me.
I would use his great power to argue with me?
I would give me a fair hearing.
I know people can reason with him,
I would be forever acquitted by my judge,
but he is not there.
I know best, but I cannot find him.
I would see him in the north, for he is hidden.
I would go to the south, but he is concealed.
I know I know where I am going.
When he tests me, I will come out as pure as
I have stayed on God's paths;
I have followed his ways and not turned aside.
I have departed from his commands,
I have treasured his words more than daily food.
I know he has made his decision, who can change
his mind?
I know whatever he wants to do, he does.
I will do to me whatever he has planned.
I know he controls my destiny.
I know I am so terrified in his presence.
I know I think of it, terror grips me.
I know I am made me sick at heart;
I know the Almighty has terrified me.
I know I am surrounded by
I know the impenetrable darkness is everywhere.

Why the Wicked Are Not Punished
Why doesn't the Almighty bring the wicked
to judgment?

Must the godly wait for him in vain?
I would steal land by moving the boundary marker,
I would steal livestock and put them in their own
pastures.
I would be the orphan's donkey
I would demand the widow's ox as security for a loan.
I would be pushed off the path;
I would be ready must hide together for safety.
I would be like donkeys in the wilderness,
I would labor must spend all their time looking for food,
I would be mining even in the desert for food for their
children.
I would harvest a field they do not own,
I would glean in the vineyards of the wicked.
I would lie naked in the cold,
I would be without clothing or covering.
I would be soaked by mountain showers,
I would huddle against the rocks for want of a home.
I would be snatched a widow's child from her breast,
I would be the baby as security for a loan.
I would be must go about naked, without any clothing,
I would be harvest food for others while they themselves
are starving.
I would be press out olive oil without being allowed to taste,
I would be they tread in the winepress as they suffer from
the first.

The groans of the dying rise from the city,
and the wounded cry for help,
yet God ignores their moaning.
Wicked people rebel against the light.
They refuse to acknowledge its ways
or stay in its paths.
The murderer rises in the early dawn
to kill the poor and needy;
at night he is a thief.
The adulterer waits for the twilight,
saying, 'No one will see me then.'
He hides his face so no one will know him.
Thieves break into houses at night
and sleep in the daytime.
They are not acquainted with the light.
The black night is their morning.
They ally themselves with the terrors of the darkness.
But they disappear like foam down a river.
Everything they own is cursed,
and they are afraid to enter their own vineyards.
The grave* consumes sinners
just as drought and heat consume snow.
Their own mothers will forget them.
Maggots will find them sweet to eat.
No one will remember them.
Wicked people are broken like a tree in the storm.
They cheat the woman who has no son to help her.
They refuse to help the needy widow.
God, in his power, drags away the rich.
They may rise high, but they have no assurance
of life.
They may be allowed to live in security,
but God is always watching them.
And though they are great now,
in a moment they will be gone like all others,
cut off like heads of grain.
Can anyone claim otherwise?
Who can prove me wrong?"

Bildad's Third Response to Job

Then Bildad the Shuhite replied:

25 ² "God is powerful and dreadful.
He enforces peace in the heavens.
Who is able to count his heavenly army?
Doesn't his light shine on all the earth?
How can a mortal be innocent before God?
Can anyone born of a woman be pure?
God is more glorious than the moon;
he shines brighter than the stars.
In comparison, people are maggots;
we mortals are mere worms."

Job's Ninth Speech: A Response to Bildad

Then Job spoke again:

26 ² "How you have helped the powerless!
How you have saved the weak!
How you have enlightened my stupidity!
What wise advice you have offered!
Where have you gotten all these wise sayings?
Whose spirit speaks through you?
The dead tremble—
those who live beneath the waters.

^{26:6a} Hebrew *Sheol*. ^{26:6a} Hebrew *Sheol*. ^{26:6b} Hebrew *Abaddon*. ^{26:9} Or *covers his throne*. ^{26:12} Hebrew *Rahab*, the name of a mythical sea monster that represents chaos in ancient literature. ^{27:18} As in Greek and Syriac versions (see also 8:14); Hebrew reads *a moth*.

⁶ The underworld* is naked in God's presence.
The place of destruction* is uncovered.
⁷ God stretches the northern sky over empty space
and hangs the earth on nothing.
⁸ He wraps the rain in his thick clouds,
and the clouds don't burst with the weight.
⁹ He covers the face of the moon,*
shrouding it with his clouds.
¹⁰ He created the horizon when he separated the waters;
he set the boundary between day and night.
¹¹ The foundations of heaven tremble;
they shudder at his rebuke.
¹² By his power the sea grew calm.
By his skill he crushed the great sea monster.*
¹³ His Spirit made the heavens beautiful,
and his power pierced the gliding serpent.
¹⁴ These are just the beginning of all that he does,
merely a whisper of his power.
Who, then, can comprehend the thunder of
his power?"

Job's Final Speech

Job continued speaking:

27 ² "I vow by the living God, who has taken away
my rights,
by the Almighty who has embittered my soul—
³ As long as I live,
while I have breath from God,
⁴ my lips will speak no evil,
and my tongue will speak no lies.
⁵ I will never concede that you are right;
I will defend my integrity until I die.
⁶ I will maintain my innocence without wavering.
My conscience is clear for as long as I live.
⁷ "May my enemy be punished like the wicked,
my adversary like those who do evil.
⁸ For what hope do the godless have when God cuts
them off
and takes away their life?
⁹ Will God listen to their cry
when trouble comes upon them?
¹⁰ Can they take delight in the Almighty?
Can they call to God at any time?
¹¹ I will teach you about God's power.
I will not conceal anything concerning the Almighty.
¹² But you have seen all this,
yet you say all these useless things to me.
¹³ "This is what the wicked will receive from God;
this is their inheritance from the Almighty.
¹⁴ They may have many children,
but the children will die in war or starve to death.
¹⁵ Those who survive will die of a plague,
and not even their widows will mourn them.
¹⁶ "Evil people may have piles of money
and may store away mounds of clothing.
¹⁷ But the righteous will wear that clothing,
and the innocent will divide that money.
¹⁸ The wicked build houses as fragile as a spider's web,*
as flimsy as a shelter made of branches.
¹⁹ The wicked go to bed rich
but wake to find that all their wealth is gone.
²⁰ Terror overwhelms them like a flood,
and they are blown away in the storms of the night.

- 21 The east wind carries them away, and they are gone.
It sweeps them away.
- 22 It whirls down on them without mercy.
They struggle to flee from its power.
- 23 But everyone jeers at them
and mocks them.

Job Speaks of Wisdom and Understanding

- 28** ¹ "People know where to mine silver
and how to refine gold.
² They know where to dig iron from the earth
and how to smelt copper from rock.
³ They know how to shine light in the darkness
and explore the farthest regions of the earth
as they search in the dark for ore.
⁴ They sink a mine shaft into the earth
far from where anyone lives.
They descend on ropes, swinging back
and forth.
⁵ Food is grown on the earth above,
but down below, the earth is melted as by fire.
⁶ Here the rocks contain precious lapis lazuli,
and the dust contains gold.
⁷ These are treasures no bird of prey can see,
no falcon's eye observe.
⁸ No wild animal has walked upon these treasures;
no lion has ever set his paw there.
⁹ People know how to tear apart flinty rocks
and overturn the roots of mountains.
¹⁰ They cut tunnels in the rocks
and uncover precious stones.
¹¹ They dam up the trickling streams
and bring to light the hidden treasures.
¹² "But do people know where to find wisdom?
Where can they find understanding?
¹³ No one knows where to find it,
for it is not found among the living.
¹⁴ 'It is not here,' says the ocean.
'Nor is it here,' says the sea.
¹⁵ It cannot be bought with gold.
It cannot be purchased with silver.
¹⁶ It's worth more than all the gold of Ophir,
greater than precious onyx or lapis lazuli.
¹⁷ Wisdom is more valuable than gold and crystal.
It cannot be purchased with jewels mounted
in fine gold.
¹⁸ Coral and jasper are worthless in trying to get it.
The price of wisdom is far above rubies.
¹⁹ Precious peridot from Ethiopia* cannot be
exchanged for it.
It's worth more than the purest gold.
²⁰ "But do people know where to find wisdom?
Where can they find understanding?
²¹ It is hidden from the eyes of all humanity.
Even the sharp-eyed birds in the sky cannot discover
it.
²² Destruction* and Death say,
'We've heard only rumors of where wisdom
can be found.'
²³ "God alone understands the way to wisdom;
he knows where it can be found,
²⁴ for he looks throughout the whole earth
and sees everything under the heavens.

28:19 Hebrew from Cush. 28:22 Hebrew Abaddon. 29:18 Hebrew after I have counted my days like sand.

- 25 He decided how hard the winds should blow
and how much rain should fall.
- 26 He made the laws for the rain
and laid out a path for the lightning.
- 27 Then he saw wisdom and evaluated it.
He set it in place and examined it thoroughly.
- 28 And this is what he says to all humanity:
'The fear of the Lord is true wisdom;
to forsake evil is real understanding.'

Job Speaks of His Former Blessings

- 29** Job continued speaking:
² "I long for the years gone by
when God took care of me,
³ when he lit up the way before me
and I walked safely through the darkness.
⁴ When I was in my prime,
God's friendship was felt in my home.
⁵ The Almighty was still with me,
and my children were around me.
⁶ My cows produced milk in abundance,
and my groves poured out streams of olive oil.
⁷ "Those were the days when I went to the city gate
and took my place among the honored leaders.
⁸ The young stepped aside when they saw me,
and even the aged rose in respect at my coming.
⁹ The princes stood in silence
and put their hands over their mouths.
¹⁰ The highest officials of the city stood quietly,
holding their tongues in respect.
¹¹ "All who heard me praised me.
All who saw me spoke well of me.
¹² For I assisted the poor in their need
and the orphans who required help.
¹³ I helped those without hope, and they blessed me.
And I caused the widows' hearts to sing for joy.
¹⁴ Everything I did was honest.
Righteousness covered me like a robe,
and I wore justice like a turban.
¹⁵ I served as eyes for the blind
and feet for the lame.
¹⁶ I was a father to the poor
and assisted strangers who needed help.
¹⁷ I broke the jaws of godless oppressors
and plucked their victims from their teeth.
¹⁸ "I thought, 'Surely I will die surrounded by
my family
after a long, good life.'
¹⁹ For I am like a tree whose roots reach the water,
whose branches are refreshed with the dew.
²⁰ New honors are constantly bestowed on me,
and my strength is continually renewed.'
²¹ "Everyone listened to my advice.
They were silent as they waited for me to speak.
²² And after I spoke, they had nothing to add,
for my counsel satisfied them.
²³ They longed for me to speak as people long for rain.
They drank my words like a refreshing spring rain.
²⁴ When they were discouraged, I smiled at them.
My look of approval was precious to them.
²⁵ Like a chief, I told them what to do.
I lived like a king among his troops
and comforted those who mourned.

Job Speaks of His Anguish

- 30** ¹ "But now I am mocked by people younger than I,
by young men whose fathers are not worthy to
run with my sheepdogs.
² A lot of good they are to me—
those worn-out wretches!
³ They are gaunt with hunger
and flee to the deserts,
to desolate and gloomy wastelands.
⁴ They pluck wild greens from among the bushes
and eat from the roots of broom trees.
⁵ They are driven from human society,
and people shout at them as if they were thieves.
⁶ So now they live in frightening ravines,
in caves and among the rocks.
⁷ They sound like animals howling among the bushes,
huddled together beneath the nettles.
⁸ They are nameless fools,
outcasts from society.
⁹ "And now they mock me with vulgar songs!
They taunt me!
¹⁰ They despise me and won't come near me,
except to spit in my face.
¹¹ For God has cut my bowstring.
He has humbled me,
so they have thrown off all restraint.
¹² These outcasts oppose me to my face.
They send me sprawling
and lay traps in my path.
¹³ They block my road
and do everything they can to destroy me.
They know I have no one to help me.
They come at me from all directions.
They jump on me when I am down.
¹⁴ I live in terror now.
My honor has blown away in the wind,
and my prosperity has vanished like a cloud.
¹⁵ "And now my life seeps away.
Depression haunts my days.
¹⁶ At night my bones are filled with pain,
which gnaws at me relentlessly.
¹⁷ With a strong hand, God grabs my shirt.
He grips me by the collar of my coat.
¹⁸ He has thrown me into the mud.
I'm nothing more than dust and ashes.
¹⁹ "I cry to you, O God, but you don't answer.
I stand before you, but you don't even look.
²⁰ You have become cruel toward me.
You use your power to persecute me.
²¹ You throw me into the whirlwind
and destroy me in the storm.
²² And I know you are sending me to my death—
the destination of all who live.
²³ "Surely no one would turn against the needy
when they cry for help in their trouble.
²⁴ Did I not weep for those in trouble?
Was I not deeply grieved for the needy?
²⁵ So I looked for good, but evil came instead.
I waited for the light, but darkness fell.
²⁶ My heart is troubled and restless.
Days of suffering torment me.
²⁷ I walk in gloom, without sunlight.
I stand in the public square and cry for help.
²⁸ Hebrew grind for. 31:12 Hebrew to Abaddon.

ded how hard the winds should blow
 how much rain should fall.
 e the laws for the rain
 aid out a path for the lightning.
 saw wisdom and evaluated it.
 it in place and examined it thoroughly.
 is what he says to all humanity:
 of the Lord is true wisdom;
 sake evil is real understanding.”

rs of His Former Blessings

continued speaking:
 long for the years gone by
 God took care of me,
 lit up the way before me
 walked safely through the darkness.
 was in my prime,
 friendship was felt in my home.
 ighty was still with me,
 y children were around me.
 produced milk in abundance,
 y groves poured out streams of olive oil.
 ere the days when I went to the city gate
 ok my place among the honored leaders.
 g stepped aside when they saw me,
 en the aged rose in respect at my coming
 ces stood in silence
 at their hands over their mouths.
 est officials of the city stood quietly,
 g their tongues in respect.
 heard me praised me.
 o saw me spoke well of me.
 sted the poor in their need
 e orphans who required help.
 hose without hope, and they blessed me.
 caused the widows' hearts to sing for joy.
 g I did was honest.
 ousness covered me like a robe,
 wore justice like a turban.
 s eyes for the blind
 et for the lame.
 ther to the poor
 sisted strangers who needed help.
 e jaws of godless oppressors
 icked their victims from their teeth.
 Surely I will die surrounded by
 family
 long, good life.*
 ke a tree whose roots reach the water,
 branches are refreshed with the dew.
 rs are constantly bestowed on me,
 strength is continually renewed.
 listened to my advice.
 ere silent as they waited for me to speak.
 I spoke, they had nothing to add,
 counsel satisfied them.
 ed for me to speak as people long for rain.
 rank my words like a refreshing spring rain.
 y were discouraged, I smiled at them.
 of approval was precious to them.
 ef, I told them what to do.
 ke a king among his troops
 nforted those who mourned.
 ys like sand.

Speaks of His Anguish

30 ¹ “But now I am mocked by people younger than I,
 by young men whose fathers are not worthy to
 run with my sheepdogs.
 lot of good they are to me—
 those worn-out wretches!
 ey are gaunt with hunger
 and flee to the deserts,
 to desolate and gloomy wastelands.
 ey pluck wild greens from among the bushes
 and eat from the roots of broom trees.
 ey are driven from human society,
 and people shout at them as if they were thieves.
 ow they live in frightening ravines,
 in caves and among the rocks.
 ey sound like animals howling among the bushes,
 huddled together beneath the nettles.
 ey are nameless fools,
 outcasts from society.
 nd now they mock me with vulgar songs!
 They taunt me!
 ey despise me and won't come near me,
 except to spit in my face.
 God has cut my bowstring.
 He has humbled me,
 so they have thrown off all restraint.
 ese outcasts oppose me to my face.
 They send me sprawling
 and lay traps in my path.
 ey block my road
 and do everything they can to destroy me.
 ey know I have no one to help me.
 They come at me from all directions.
 ey jump on me when I am down.
 I live in terror now.
 honor has blown away in the wind,
 and my prosperity has vanished like a cloud.
 nd now my life seeps away.
 Depression haunts my days.
 ight my bones are filled with pain,
 which gnaws at me relentlessly.
 th a strong hand, God grabs my shirt.
 He grips me by the collar of my coat.
 e has thrown me into the mud.
 I'm nothing more than dust and ashes.
 ry to you, O God, but you don't answer.
 I stand before you, but you don't even look.
 ou have become cruel toward me.
 You use your power to persecute me.
 ou throw me into the whirlwind
 and destroy me in the storm.
 nd I know you are sending me to my death—
 the destination of all who live.
 Surely no one would turn against the needy
 when they cry for help in their trouble.
 Did I not weep for those in trouble?
 Was I not deeply grieved for the needy?
 I looked for good, but evil came instead.
 I waited for the light, but darkness fell.
 y heart is troubled and restless.
 Days of suffering torment me.
 alk in gloom, without sunlight.
 I stand in the public square and cry for help.

¹ Hebrew *grind* for. 31:12 Hebrew to *Abaddon*.

- ²⁹ Instead, I am considered a brother to jackals
 and a companion to owls.
³⁰ My skin has turned dark,
 and my bones burn with fever.
³¹ My harp plays sad music,
 and my flute accompanies those who weep.

Job's Final Protest of Innocence

- 31 ¹ “I made a covenant with my eyes
 not to look with lust at a young woman.
² For what has God above chosen for us?
 What is our inheritance from the Almighty on high?
³ Isn't it calamity for the wicked
 and misfortune for those who do evil?
⁴ Doesn't he see everything I do
 and every step I take?
⁵ “Have I lied to anyone
 or deceived anyone?
⁶ Let God weigh me on the scales of justice,
 for he knows my integrity.
⁷ If I have strayed from his pathway,
 or if my heart has lusted for what my eyes
 have seen,
 or if I am guilty of any other sin,
⁸ then let someone else eat the crops I have planted.
 Let all that I have planted be uprooted.
⁹ “If my heart has been seduced by a woman,
 or if I have lusted for my neighbor's wife,
¹⁰ then let my wife belong to* another man;
 let other men sleep with her.
¹¹ For lust is a shameful sin,
 a crime that should be punished.
¹² It is a fire that burns all the way to hell.*
 It would wipe out everything I own.
¹³ “If I have been unfair to my male or female servants
 when they brought their complaints to me,
¹⁴ how could I face God?
 What could I say when he questioned me?
¹⁵ For God created both me and my servants.
 He created us both in the womb.
¹⁶ “Have I refused to help the poor,
 or crushed the hopes of widows?
¹⁷ Have I been stingy with my food
 and refused to share it with orphans?
¹⁸ No, from childhood I have cared for orphans
 like a father,
 and all my life I have cared for widows.
¹⁹ Whenever I saw the homeless without clothes
 and the needy with nothing to wear,
²⁰ did they not praise me
 for providing wool clothing to keep them
 warm?
²¹ “If I raised my hand against an orphan,
 knowing the judges would take my side,
²² then let my shoulder be wrenched out of place!
 Let my arm be torn from its socket!
²³ That would be better than facing God's judgment.
 For if the majesty of God opposes me, what hope
 is there?
²⁴ “Have I put my trust in money
 or felt secure because of my gold?
²⁵ Have I gloated about my wealth
 and all that I own?”

- 26 "Have I looked at the sun shining in the skies,
or the moon walking down its silver pathway,
27 and been secretly enticed in my heart
to throw kisses at them in worship?
28 If so, I should be punished by the judges,
for it would mean I had denied the God of heaven.
29 "Have I ever rejoiced when disaster struck my enemies,
or become excited when harm came their way?
30 No, I have never sinned by cursing anyone
or by asking for revenge.
31 "My servants have never said,
'He let others go hungry.'
32 I have never turned away a stranger
but have opened my doors to everyone.
33 "Have I tried to hide my sins like other people do,
concealing my guilt in my heart?
34 Have I feared the crowd
or the contempt of the masses,
so that I kept quiet and stayed indoors?
35 "If only someone would listen to me!
Look, I will sign my name to my defense.
Let the Almighty answer me.
Let my accuser write out the charges against me.
36 I would face the accusation proudly.
I would wear it like a crown.
37 For I would tell him exactly what I have done.
I would come before him like a prince.
38 "If my land accuses me
and all its furrows cry out together,
39 or if I have stolen its crops
or murdered its owners,
40 then let thistles grow on that land instead of wheat,
and weeds instead of barley."

Job's words are ended.

Elihu Responds to Job's Friends

32 Job's three friends refused to reply further to him because he kept insisting on his innocence.

²Then Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite, of the clan of Ram, became angry. He was angry because Job refused to admit that he had sinned and that God was right in punishing him. ³He was also angry with Job's three friends, for they made God* appear to be wrong by their inability to answer Job's arguments. ⁴Elihu had waited for the others to speak to Job because they were older than he. ⁵But when he saw that they had no further reply, he spoke out angrily. ⁶Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite said,

- "I am young and you are old,
so I held back from telling you what I think.
7 I thought, 'Those who are older should speak,
for wisdom comes with age.'
8 But there is a spirit* within people,
the breath of the Almighty within them,
that makes them intelligent.
9 Sometimes the elders are not wise.
Sometimes the aged do not understand justice.
10 So listen to me,
and let me tell you what I think.
11 "I have waited all this time,
listening very carefully to your arguments,
listening to you grope for words.

32:3 As in ancient Hebrew scribal tradition; the Masoretic Text reads *Job*. 32:8 Or *Spirit*; also in 32:18.

- 12 I have listened,
but not one of you has refuted Job
or answered his arguments.
13 And don't tell me, 'He is too wise for us.
Only God can convince him.'
14 If Job had been arguing with me,
I would not answer with your kind of logic!
15 You sit there baffled,
with nothing more to say.
16 Should I continue to wait, now that you are silent?
Must I also remain silent?
17 No, I will say my piece.
I will speak my mind.
18 For I am full of pent-up words,
and the spirit within me urges me on.
19 I am like a cask of wine without a vent,
like a new wineskin ready to burst!
20 I must speak to find relief,
so let me give my answers.
21 I won't play favorites
or try to flatter anyone.
22 For if I tried flattery,
my Creator would soon destroy me.

Elihu Presents His Case against Job

- 33** ¹"Listen to my words, Job;
pay attention to what I have to say.
2 Now that I have begun to speak,
let me continue.
3 I speak with all sincerity;
I speak the truth.
4 For the Spirit of God has made me,
and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.
5 Answer me, if you can;
make your case and take your stand.
6 Look, you and I both belong to God.
I, too, was formed from clay.
7 So you don't need to be afraid of me.
I won't come down hard on you.

- 8 "You have spoken in my hearing,
and I have heard your very words.
9 You said, 'I am pure; I am without sin;
I am innocent; I have no guilt.
10 God is picking a quarrel with me,
and he considers me his enemy.
11 He puts my feet in the stocks
and watches my every move.'
12 "But you are wrong, and I will show you why.
For God is greater than any human being.
13 So why are you bringing a charge against him?
Why say he does not respond to people's complaints?
14 For God speaks again and again,
though people do not recognize it.
15 He speaks in dreams, in visions of the night,
when deep sleep falls on people
as they lie in their beds.
16 He whispers in their ears
and terrifies them with warnings.
17 He makes them turn from doing wrong;
he keeps them from pride.
18 He protects them from the grave,
from crossing over the river of death.
19 "Or God disciplines people with pain on their sickbeds,
with ceaseless aching in their bones.

- They lose their appetite
for even the most delicious food.
Their flesh wastes away,
and their bones stick out.
They are at death's door;
the angels of death wait for them.
But if an angel from heaven appears—
a special messenger to intercede for a p
and declare that he is upright—
he will be gracious and say,
Rescue him from the grave,
for I have found a ransom for his life.
Then his body will become as healthy as a
firm and youthful again.
When he prays to God,
he will be accepted.
And God will receive him with joy
and restore him to good standing.
He will declare to his friends,
I sinned and twisted the truth,
but it was not worth it.*
God rescued me from the grave,
and now my life is filled with light.
Yes, God does these things
again and again for people.
He rescues them from the grave
so they may enjoy the light of life.
Mark this well, Job. Listen to me,
for I have more to say.
But if you have anything to say, go ahead.
Speak, for I am anxious to see you justified.
But if not, then listen to me.
Keep silent and I will teach you wisdom!

Elihu Accuses Job of Arrogance

- 34** Then Elihu said:
²"Listen to me, you wise men.
Pay attention, you who have knowledge.
3 Job said, 'The ear tests the words it hears
just as the mouth distinguishes between f
4 So let us discern for ourselves what is right;
let us learn together what is good.
5 For Job also said, 'I am innocent,
but God has taken away my rights.
6 I am innocent, but they call me a liar.
My suffering is incurable, though I have n
7 "Tell me, has there ever been a man like Job,
with his thirst for irreverent talk?
8 He chooses evil people as companions.
He spends his time with wicked men.
9 He has even said, 'Why waste time
trying to please God?'
10 "Listen to me, you who have understanding.
Everyone knows that God doesn't sin!
The Almighty can do no wrong.
11 He repays people according to their deeds.
He treats people as they deserve.
12 Truly, God will not do wrong.
The Almighty will not twist justice.
13 Did someone else put the world in his care?
Who set the whole world in place?
14 If God were to take back his spirit
and withdraw his breath,

33:27 Greek version reads *but he [God] did not punish me as my*

listened,
 not one of you has refuted Job
 answered his arguments.
 Don't tell me, 'He is too wise for us.'
 Why God can convince him.'
 I had been arguing with me,
 could not answer with your kind of logic!
 I am there baffled,
 I have nothing more to say.
 I will continue to wait, now that you are silent?
 I also remain silent?
 I will say my piece.
 I will speak my mind.
 I am full of pent-up words,
 the spirit within me urges me on.
 I have a cask of wine without a vent,
 I have a new wineskin ready to burst!
 I will speak to find relief,
 I will not give my answers.
 I will play favorites
 I will try to flatter anyone.
 I will avoid flattery,
 my creator would soon destroy me.

34 Accuses His Case against Job
 Listen to my words, Job;
 pay attention to what I have to say.
 I have begun to speak,
 do not let me continue.
 I will speak with all sincerity;
 I will not make the truth.
 The Spirit of God has made me,
 the breath of the Almighty gives me life.
 I will speak to you, if you can;
 I will state your case and take your stand.
 You and I both belong to God.
 I was formed from clay,
 I don't need to be afraid of me.
 It will come down hard on you.
 I have spoken in my hearing,
 you have heard your very words.
 I am pure; I am without sin;
 I am innocent; I have no guilt.
 I am not picking a quarrel with me,
 I do not consider me his enemy.
 I have my feet in the stocks
 he watches my every move.
 I am wrong, and I will show you why.
 My sin is greater than any human being.
 Why are you bringing a charge against him?
 Why does he not respond to people's complaints?
 Why does he speak again and again,
 why does he not recognize it.
 I am in dreams, in visions of the night,
 I am in deep sleep falls on people
 I lie in their beds.
 I have thorns in their ears
 I rebuffs them with warnings.
 They turn from doing wrong;
 I rebuffs them from pride.
 I rebuffs them from the grave,
 I rebuffs them crossing over the river of death.
 I rebuffs disciplines people with pain on their sickbeds,
 I rebuffs senseless aching in their bones.

32:18.

They lose their appetite
 for even the most delicious food.
 Their flesh wastes away,
 and their bones stick out.
 They are at death's door;
 the angels of death wait for them.
 But if an angel from heaven appears—
 a special messenger to intercede for a person
 and declare that he is upright—
 he will be gracious and say,
 Rescued him from the grave,
 for I have found a ransom for his life.'
 Then his body will become as healthy as a child's,
 firm and youthful again.
 When he prays to God,
 he will be accepted.
 God will receive him with joy
 and restore him to good standing.
 He will declare to his friends,
 I sinned and twisted the truth,
 but it was not worth it.*
 God rescued me from the grave,
 and now my life is filled with light.'

Yes, God does these things
 again and again for people.
 He rescues them from the grave
 so they may enjoy the light of life.
 Mark this well, Job. Listen to me,
 for I have more to say.
 But if you have anything to say, go ahead.
 Speak, for I am anxious to see you justified.
 But if not, then listen to me.
 Keep silent and I will teach you wisdom!"

34 Accuses Job of Arrogance
 Then Elihu said:
 2 "Listen to me, you wise men.
 Pay attention, you who have knowledge.
 I have said, 'The ear tests the words it hears
 just as the mouth distinguishes between foods.'
 So let us discern for ourselves what is right;
 let us learn together what is good.
 For Job also said, 'I am innocent,
 but God has taken away my rights.
 I am innocent, but they call me a liar.
 My suffering is incurable, though I have not sinned.'
 Tell me, has there ever been a man like Job,
 with his thirst for irreverent talk?
 He chooses evil people as companions.
 He spends his time with wicked men.
 He has even said, 'Why waste time
 trying to please God?'
 Listen to me, you who have understanding.
 Everyone knows that God doesn't sin!
 The Almighty can do no wrong.
 He repays people according to their deeds.
 He treats people as they deserve.
 Truly, God will not do wrong.
 The Almighty will not twist justice.
 Did someone else put the world in his care?
 Who set the whole world in place?
 If God were to take back his spirit
 and withdraw his breath,
 Greek version reads *but he [God] did not punish me as my sin deserved.*

15 all life would cease,
 and humanity would turn again to dust.
 16 "Now listen to me if you are wise.
 Pay attention to what I say.
 17 Could God govern if he hated justice?
 Are you going to condemn the almighty judge?
 18 For he says to kings, 'You are wicked,'
 and to nobles, 'You are unjust.'
 19 He doesn't care how great a person may be,
 and he pays no more attention to the rich than
 to the poor.
 He made them all.
 20 In a moment they die.
 In the middle of the night they pass away;
 the mighty are removed without human hand.
 21 "For God watches how people live;
 he sees everything they do.
 22 No darkness is thick enough
 to hide the wicked from his eyes.
 23 We don't set the time
 when we will come before God in judgment.
 24 He brings the mighty to ruin without asking anyone,
 and he sets up others in their place.
 25 He knows what they do,
 and in the night he overturns and destroys
 them.
 26 He strikes them down because they are wicked,
 doing it openly for all to see.
 27 For they turned away from following him.
 They have no respect for any of his ways.
 28 They cause the poor to cry out, catching God's
 attention.
 He hears the cries of the needy.
 29 But if he chooses to remain quiet,
 who can criticize him?
 When he hides his face, no one can find him,
 whether an individual or a nation.
 30 He prevents the godless from ruling
 so they cannot be a snare to the people.
 31 "Why don't people say to God, 'I have sinned,
 but I will sin no more?'
 32 Or 'I don't know what evil I have done—tell me.
 If I have done wrong, I will stop at once?'
 33 "Must God tailor his justice to your demands?
 But you have rejected him!
 The choice is yours, not mine.
 Go ahead, share your wisdom with us.
 34 After all, bright people will tell me,
 and wise people will hear me say,
 35 'Job speaks out of ignorance;
 his words lack insight.'
 36 Job, you deserve the maximum penalty
 for the wicked way you have talked.
 37 For you have added rebellion to your sin;
 you show no respect,
 and you speak many angry words against God."

Elihu Reminds Job of God's Justice

35 Then Elihu said:
 2 "Do you think it is right for you to claim,
 'I am righteous before God?'
 3 For you also ask, 'What's in it for me?
 What's the use of living a righteous life?'

- 4 "I will answer you and all your friends, too.
- 5 Look up into the sky, and see the clouds high above you.
- 6 If you sin, how does that affect God? Even if you sin again and again, what effect will it have on him?
- 7 If you are good, is this some great gift to him? What could you possibly give him?
- 8 No, your sins affect only people like yourself, and your good deeds also affect only humans.
- 9 "People cry out when they are oppressed. They groan beneath the power of the mighty.
- 10 Yet they don't ask, 'Where is God my Creator, the one who gives songs in the night?'
- 11 Where is the one who makes us smarter than the animals and wiser than the birds of the sky?'
- 12 And when they cry out, God does not answer because of their pride.
- 13 But it is wrong to say God doesn't listen, to say the Almighty isn't concerned.
- 14 You say you can't see him, but he will bring justice if you will only wait.*
- 15 You say he does not respond to sinners with anger and is not greatly concerned about wickedness.*
- 16 But you are talking nonsense, Job. You have spoken like a fool."

36 Elihu continued speaking:

- 2 "Let me go on, and I will show you the truth. For I have not finished defending God!
- 3 I will present profound arguments for the righteousness of my Creator.
- 4 I am telling you nothing but the truth, for I am a man of great knowledge.
- 5 "God is mighty, but he does not despise anyone! He is mighty in both power and understanding.
- 6 He does not let the wicked live but gives justice to the afflicted.
- 7 He never takes his eyes off the innocent, but he sets them on thrones with kings and exalts them forever.
- 8 If they are bound in chains and caught up in a web of trouble,
- 9 he shows them the reason. He shows them their sins of pride.
- 10 He gets their attention and commands that they turn from evil.
- 11 "If they listen and obey God, they will be blessed with prosperity throughout their lives. All their years will be pleasant.
- 12 But if they refuse to listen to him, they will be killed by the sword* and die from lack of understanding.
- 13 For the godless are full of resentment. Even when he punishes them, they refuse to cry out to him for help.
- 14 They die when they are young, after wasting their lives in immoral living.

35:13-14 These verses can also be translated as follows: ¹³Indeed, God doesn't listen to their empty plea; / the Almighty is not concerned. / ¹⁴How much less will he listen when you say you don't see him, / and that your case is before him and you're waiting for justice. 35:15 As in Greek and Latin versions; the meaning of this Hebrew word is uncertain. 36:12 Or they will cross the river (of death). 36:18 Or But don't let your anger lead you to mockery. 36:19 Or Could all your cries for help. 36:16-20 The meaning of the Hebrew in this passage is uncertain. 36:31 Or he governs. 36:33 Or even the cattle know when a storm is coming. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

- 15 But by means of their suffering, he rescues those who suffer. For he gets their attention through adversity.
- 16 "God is leading you away from danger, Job, to a place free from distress. He is setting your table with the best food.
- 17 But you are obsessed with whether the godless will be judged. Don't worry, judgment and justice will be upheld.
- 18 But watch out, or you may be seduced by wealth.* Don't let yourself be bribed into sin.
- 19 Could all your wealth* or all your mighty efforts keep you from distress?
- 20 Do not long for the cover of night, for that is when people will be destroyed.*
- 21 Be on guard! Turn back from evil, for God sent this suffering to keep you from a life of evil.

Elihu Reminds Job of God's Power

- 22 "Look, God is all-powerful. Who is a teacher like him?
- 23 No one can tell him what to do, or say to him, 'You have done wrong.'
- 24 Instead, glorify his mighty works, singing songs of praise.
- 25 Everyone has seen these things, though only from a distance.
- 26 "Look, God is greater than we can understand. His years cannot be counted.
- 27 He draws up the water vapor and then distills it into rain.
- 28 The rain pours down from the clouds, and everyone benefits.
- 29 Who can understand the spreading of the clouds and the thunder that rolls forth from heaven?
- 30 See how he spreads the lightning around him and how it lights up the depths of the sea.
- 31 By these mighty acts he nourishes* the people, giving them food in abundance.
- 32 He fills his hands with lightning bolts and hurls each at its target.
- 33 The thunder announces his presence; the storm announces his indignant anger.*

37 ¹ "My heart pounds as I think of this. It trembles within me.

- 2 Listen carefully to the thunder of God's voice as it rolls from his mouth.
- 3 It rolls across the heavens, and his lightning flashes in every direction.
- 4 Then comes the roaring of the thunder—the tremendous voice of his majesty. He does not restrain it when he speaks.
- 5 God's voice is glorious in the thunder. We can't even imagine the greatness of his power.
- 6 "He directs the snow to fall on the earth and tells the rain to pour down.
- 7 Then everyone stops working so they can watch his power.

- 8 The wild animals take cover and stay inside their dens.
- 9 The stormy wind comes from its chamber, and the driving winds bring the cold. God's breath sends the ice, freezing wide expanses of water.
- 10 He loads the clouds with moisture, and they flash with his lightning.
- 11 The clouds churn about at his direction. They do whatever he commands throughout the earth.
- 12 He makes these things happen either to punish people or to show his unfailing love.
- 13 "Pay attention to this, Job. Stop and consider the wonderful miracles of God!
- 14 Do you know how God controls the storm and causes the lightning to flash from his clouds?
- 15 Do you understand how he moves the clouds with wonderful perfection and skill?
- 16 When you are sweltering in your clothes and the south wind dies down and everything is still,
- 17 he makes the skies reflect the heat like a bronze mirror. Can you do that?
- 18 "So teach the rest of us what to say to God. We are too ignorant to make our own arguments.
- 19 Should God be notified that I want to speak? Can people even speak when they are confused?*
- 20 We cannot look at the sun, for it shines brightly in the sky when the wind clears away the clouds.
- 21 So also, golden splendor comes from the mountain of God.* He is clothed in dazzling splendor.
- 22 We cannot imagine the power of the Almighty; but even though he is just and righteous, he does not destroy us.
- 23 No wonder people everywhere fear him. All who are wise show him reverence."

The LORD Challenges Job

38 Then the LORD answered Job from the whirlwind:

- 2 "Who is this that questions my wisdom with such ignorant words? Brace yourself like a man, because I have some questions for you, and you must answer them.
- 3 "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me, if you know so much.
- 4 Who determined its dimensions and stretched out the surveying line?
- 5 What supports its foundations, and who laid its cornerstone
- 6 as the morning stars sang together and all the angels* shouted for joy?
- 7 "Who kept the sea inside its boundaries as it burst from the womb, and as I clothed it with clouds and wrapped it in thick darkness?
- 8 For I locked it behind barred gates, limiting its shores.
- 9 "20 Or speak without being swallowed up? 37:22 Or from the north; or from like folds in a robe.

of their suffering, he rescues those who suffer.

He attracts their attention through adversity, rescuing you away from danger, Job, and sets you free from distress.

He sets your table with the best food, but you are obsessed with whether the godless will be judged.

Worry, judgment and justice will be upheld, but you may be seduced by wealth.* You bribe yourself to be bribed into sin.

You boast about your wealth* and your mighty efforts to get you out of distress?

But you are not for the cover of night, when people will be destroyed.* Turn back from evil, and do not send this suffering upon you from a life of evil.

Gods Job of God's Power is all-powerful. Can he be a teacher like him? Tell him what to do, and he will tell him, 'You have done wrong.'

He glorifies his mighty works, and his songs of praise. He has seen these things, but only from a distance.

His power is greater than we can understand. His works cannot be counted. He lifts up the water vapor and distills it into rain.

He pours down from the clouds, and everyone benefits. He understands the spreading of the clouds and the thunder that rolls forth from heaven? He spreads the lightning around him and it lights up the depths of the sea.

His mighty acts he nourishes* the people, and he sends them food in abundance.

He strikes down with lightning bolts and kills each at its target.

He announces his presence, and he announces his indignant anger.*

My heart pounds as I think of this. I tremble within me.

I listen fully to the thunder of God's voice as it comes from his mouth.

He crosses the heavens, and lightning flashes in every direction. He hears the roaring of the thunder—and the tremendous voice of his majesty.

He does not restrain it when he speaks. He is glorious in the thunder. I cannot even imagine the greatness of his power.

He sends the snow to fall on the earth and the rain to pour down. No one stops working, and no one can watch his power.

plea; / the Almighty is not concerned. /¹⁴How much I desire for justice. 35:15 As in Greek and Latin versions. 36:18 Or But don't let your anger lead you to mock me. 36:33 Or even

The wild animals take cover and stay inside their dens.

The stormy wind comes from its chamber, and the driving winds bring the cold.

God's breath sends the ice, freezing wide expanses of water. He loads the clouds with moisture, and they flash with his lightning.

The clouds churn about at his direction. They do whatever he commands throughout the earth.

He makes these things happen either to punish people or to show his unfailing love.

Pay attention to this, Job. Stop and consider the wonderful miracles of God!

Do you know how God controls the storm and causes the lightning to flash from his clouds? Do you understand how he moves the clouds with wonderful perfection and skill?

When you are sweltering in your clothes and the south wind dies down and everything is still,

He makes the skies reflect the heat like a bronze mirror. Can you do that?

So teach the rest of us what to say to God. We are too ignorant to make our own arguments.

Should God be notified that I want to speak? Can people even speak when they are confused?*

We cannot look at the sun, for it shines brightly in the sky when the wind clears away the clouds.

He also, golden splendor comes from the mountain of God.* He is clothed in dazzling splendor.

We cannot imagine the power of the Almighty; but even though he is just and righteous, he does not destroy us.

Wonder people everywhere fear him. All who are wise show him reverence.*

LORD Challenges Job

38 Then the LORD answered Job from the whirlwind: 2 "Who is this that questions my wisdom with such ignorant words?"

Trace yourself like a man, because I have some questions for you, and you must answer them.

Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me, if you know so much.

Who determined its dimensions and stretched out the surveying line? What supports its foundations, and who laid its cornerstone

and the morning stars sang together and all the angels* shouted for joy?

Who kept the sea inside its boundaries as it burst from the womb, and as I clothed it with clouds and wrapped it in thick darkness?

Who locked it behind barred gates, limiting its shores.

Or speak without being swallowed up? 37:22 Or from the north; or from the abode. 38:7 Hebrew the sons of God. 38:14 Or its features stand

in a robe.

11 I said, 'This far and no farther will you come. Here your proud waves must stop!'

12 "Have you ever commanded the morning to appear and caused the dawn to rise in the east?"

13 Have you made daylight spread to the ends of the earth, to bring an end to the night's wickedness?

14 As the light approaches, the earth takes shape like clay pressed beneath a seal; it is robed in brilliant colors.*

15 The light disturbs the wicked and stops the arm that is raised in violence.

16 "Have you explored the springs from which the seas come? Have you explored their depths?"

17 Do you know where the gates of death are located? Have you seen the gates of utter gloom?

18 Do you realize the extent of the earth? Tell me about it if you know!

19 "Where does light come from, and where does darkness go?"

20 Can you take each to its home? Do you know how to get there?

21 But of course you know all this! For you were born before it was all created, and you are so very experienced!

22 "Have you visited the storehouses of the snow or seen the storehouses of hail?"

23 (I have reserved them as weapons for the time of trouble, for the day of battle and war.)

24 Where is the path to the source of light? Where is the home of the east wind?

25 "Who created a channel for the torrents of rain? Who laid out the path for the lightning?"

26 Who makes the rain fall on barren land, in a desert where no one lives?

27 Who sends rain to satisfy the parched ground and make the tender grass spring up?

28 "Does the rain have a father? Who gives birth to the dew?"

29 Who is the mother of the ice? Who gives birth to the frost from the heavens?"

30 For the water turns to ice as hard as rock, and the surface of the water freezes.

31 "Can you direct the movement of the stars—binding the cluster of the Pleiades or loosening the cords of Orion?"

32 Can you direct the sequence of the seasons or guide the Bear with her cubs across the heavens?"

33 Do you know the laws of the universe? Can you use them to regulate the earth?"

34 "Can you shout to the clouds and make it rain?"

35 Can you make lightning appear and cause it to strike as you direct?"

36 Who gives intuition to the heart and instinct to the mind? Who is wise enough to count all the clouds? Who can tilt the water jars of heaven

and the soil has hardened into clods?"

- 39 "Can you stalk prey for a lioness and satisfy the young lions' appetites as they lie in their dens or crouch in the thicket?"
- 40 Who provides food for the ravens when their young cry out to God and wander about in hunger?"

The LORD's Challenge Continues

- 39** ¹ "Do you know when the wild goats give birth? Have you watched as deer are born in the wild?"
- ² Do you know how many months they carry their young? Are you aware of the time of their delivery?
 - ³ They crouch down to give birth to their young and deliver their offspring.
 - ⁴ Their young grow up in the open fields, then leave home and never return.
 - ⁵ "Who gives the wild donkey its freedom? Who untied its ropes?"
 - ⁶ I have placed it in the wilderness; its home is the wasteland.
 - ⁷ It hates the noise of the city and has no driver to shout at it.
 - ⁸ The mountains are its pastureland, where it searches for every blade of grass.
 - ⁹ "Will the wild ox consent to being tamed? Will it spend the night in your stall?"
 - ¹⁰ Can you hitch a wild ox to a plow? Will it plow a field for you?"
 - ¹¹ Given its strength, can you trust it? Can you leave and trust the ox to do your work?"
 - ¹² Can you rely on it to bring home your grain and deliver it to your threshing floor?"
 - ¹³ "The ostrich flaps her wings grandly, but they are no match for the feathers of the stork.
 - ¹⁴ She lays her eggs on top of the earth, letting them be warmed in the dust.
 - ¹⁵ She doesn't worry that a foot might crush them or a wild animal might destroy them.
 - ¹⁶ She is harsh toward her young, as if they were not her own. She doesn't care if they die.
 - ¹⁷ For God has deprived her of wisdom. He has given her no understanding.
 - ¹⁸ But whenever she jumps up to run, she passes the swiftest horse with its rider.
 - ¹⁹ "Have you given the horse its strength or clothed its neck with a flowing mane?"
 - ²⁰ Did you give it the ability to leap like a locust? Its majestic snorting is terrifying!
 - ²¹ It paws the earth and rejoices in its strength when it charges out to battle.
 - ²² It laughs at fear and is unafraid. It does not run from the sword.
 - ²³ The arrows rattle against it, and the spear and javelin flash.
 - ²⁴ It paws the ground fiercely and rushes forward into battle when the ram's horn blows.
 - ²⁵ It snorts at the sound of the horn. It senses the battle in the distance.

40:15 The identification of Behemoth is disputed, ranging from an earthly creature to a mythical sea monster in ancient literature. 40:21 Or *bramble bushes*; also in 40:22.

It quivers at the captain's commands and the noise of battle.

- ²⁶ "Is it your wisdom that makes the hawk soar and spread its wings toward the south?"
- ²⁷ Is it at your command that the eagle rises to the heights to make its nest?"
- ²⁸ It lives on the cliffs, making its home on a distant, rocky crag.
- ²⁹ From there it hunts its prey, keeping watch with piercing eyes.
- ³⁰ Its young gulp down blood. Where there's a carcass, there you'll find it."

40 Then the LORD said to Job, ² "Do you still want to argue with the Almighty? You are God's critic, but do you have the answers?"

Job Responds to the LORD

- ³ Then Job replied to the LORD,
- ⁴ "I am nothing—how could I ever find the answers? I will cover my mouth with my hand.
- ⁵ I have said too much already. I have nothing more to say."

The LORD Challenges Job Again

⁶ Then the LORD answered Job from the whirlwind:

- ⁷ "Brace yourself like a man, because I have some questions for you, and you must answer them.
- ⁸ "Will you discredit my justice and condemn me just to prove you are right?"
- ⁹ Are you as strong as God? Can you thunder with a voice like his?"
- ¹⁰ All right, put on your glory and splendor, your honor and majesty.
- ¹¹ Give vent to your anger. Let it overflow against the proud.
- ¹² Humiliate the proud with a glance; walk on the wicked where they stand.
- ¹³ Bury them in the dust. Imprison them in the world of the dead.
- ¹⁴ Then even I would praise you, for your own strength would save you.
- ¹⁵ "Take a look at Behemoth,* which I made, just as I made you. It eats grass like an ox.
- ¹⁶ See its powerful loins and the muscles of its belly.
- ¹⁷ Its tail is as strong as a cedar. The sinews of its thighs are knit tightly together.
- ¹⁸ Its bones are tubes of bronze. Its limbs are bars of iron.
- ¹⁹ It is a prime example of God's handiwork, and only its Creator can threaten it.
- ²⁰ The mountains offer it their best food, where all the wild animals play.
- ²¹ It lies under the lotus plants,* hidden by the reeds in the marsh.
- ²² The lotus plants give it shade among the willows beside the stream.
- ²³ It is not disturbed by the raging river,

not concerned when the swelling Jordan rushes around it.

- ²⁴ No one can catch it off guard or put a ring in its nose and lead it away.

The LORD's Challenge Continues

- 41** ¹ "Can you catch Leviathan* with a hook or put a noose around its jaw?"
- ² Can you tie it with a rope through the nose or pierce its jaw with a spike?"
 - ³ Will it beg you for mercy or implore you for pity?"
 - ⁴ Will it agree to work for you, to be your slave for life?"
 - ⁵ Can you make it a pet like a bird, or give it to your little girls to play with?"
 - ⁶ Will merchants try to buy it to sell it in their shops?"
 - ⁷ Will its hide be hurt by spears or its head by a harpoon?"
 - ⁸ If you lay a hand on it, you will certainly remember the battle that follows. You won't try that again! It is useless to try to capture it. The hunter who attempts it will be knocked down, and since no one dares to disturb it, who then can stand up to me?"
 - ⁹ Who has given me anything that I need to pay back? Everything under heaven is mine.
 - ¹⁰ I want to emphasize Leviathan's limbs and its enormous strength and graceful form.
 - ¹¹ Who can strip off its hide, and who can penetrate its double layer of armor?"
 - ¹² Who could pry open its jaws? For its teeth are terrible! Its scales are like rows of shields tightly sealed together.
 - ¹³ They are so close together that no air can get between them. Each scale sticks tight to the next. They interlock and cannot be penetrated.
 - ¹⁴ When it sneezes, it flashes light! Its eyes are like the red of dawn. Lightning leaps from its mouth; flames of fire flash out.
 - ¹⁵ Smoke streams from its nostrils like steam from a pot heated over burning rushes.
 - ¹⁶ Its breath would kindle coals, for flames shoot from its mouth.
 - ¹⁷ The tremendous strength in Leviathan's neck strikes terror wherever it goes. Its flesh is hard and firm and cannot be penetrated.
 - ¹⁸ Its heart is hard as rock, hard as a millstone.
 - ¹⁹ When it rises, the mighty are afraid, gripped by terror.
 - ²⁰ No sword can stop it, no spear, dart, or javelin.
 - ²¹ Iron is nothing but straw to that creature, and bronze is like rotten wood.

Verses 41:1-8 are numbered 40:25-32 in Hebrew text. 41:1b The identification of Leviathan as a sea monster in ancient literature. 41:9 Verses 41:9-34 are numbered 42:1-11 in Hebrew text. 41:9 The value or weight of the kesitah is no longer known.

It quivers at the captain's commands and the noise of battle.

Is it your wisdom that makes the hawk soar and spread its wings toward the south? Is it at your command that the eagle rises to the heights to make its nest? It lives on the cliffs, making its home on a distant, rocky crag. From there it hunts its prey, keeping watch with piercing eyes. Its young gulp down blood. Where there's a carcass, there you'll find it."

10 Then the LORD said to Job, "Do you still want to argue with the Almighty? You are God's critic, but do you have the answers?"

Job Responds to the LORD

When Job replied to the LORD, "I am nothing—how could I ever find the answers? I will cover my mouth with my hand. I have said too much already. I have nothing more to say."

The LORD Challenges Job Again

When the LORD answered Job from the whirlwind:

Brace yourself like a man, because I have some questions for you, and you must answer them.

Will you discredit my justice and condemn me just to prove you are right? Are you as strong as God?

Can you thunder with a voice like his? All right, put on your glory and splendor, your honor and majesty. Give vent to your anger.

Let it overflow against the proud. Humiliate the proud with a glance; walk on the wicked where they stand.bury them in the dust.

Imprison them in the world of the dead. When even I would praise you, for your own strength would save you.

Take a look at Behemoth,* which I made, just as I made you. It eats grass like an ox.

See its powerful loins and the muscles of its belly. Its tail is as strong as a cedar.

The sinews of its thighs are knit tightly together.

Its bones are tubes of bronze.

Its limbs are bars of iron. It is a prime example of God's handiwork, and only its Creator can threaten it.

The mountains offer it their best food, where all the wild animals play. It lies under the lotus plants,*

hidden by the reeds in the marsh.

The lotus plants give it shade among the willows beside the stream.

It is not disturbed by the raging river,

mythical sea monster in ancient literature. 40:21 Or *bramne*

not concerned when the swelling Jordan rushes around it.

Can one can catch it off guard or put a ring in its nose and lead it away.

The LORD's Challenge Continues

41 "Can you catch Leviathan* with a hook or put a noose around its jaw?

Can you tie it with a rope through the nose or pierce its jaw with a spike?

Will it beg you for mercy

or implore you for pity?

Will it agree to work for you,

to be your slave for life?

Can you make it a pet like a bird,

or give it to your little girls to play with?

Will merchants try to buy it

to sell it in their shops?

Will its hide be hurt by spears

or its head by a harpoon?

If you lay a hand on it,

you will certainly remember the battle that follows. You won't try that again!

Is it useless to try to capture it.

The hunter who attempts it will be knocked down.

And since no one dares to disturb it,

who then can stand up to me?

Who has given me anything that I need to pay back?

Everything under heaven is mine.

I want to emphasize Leviathan's limbs

and its enormous strength and graceful form.

Who can strip off its hide,

and who can penetrate its double layer of armor?*

Who could pry open its jaws?

For its teeth are terrible!

Its scales are like rows of shields

tightly sealed together.

They are so close together

that no air can get between them.

Each scale sticks tight to the next.

They interlock and cannot be penetrated.

When it sneezes, it flashes light!

Its eyes are like the red of dawn.

Lightning leaps from its mouth;

flames of fire flash out.

Smoke streams from its nostrils

like steam from a pot heated over burning

rushes.

Its breath would kindle coals,

and its flames shoot from its mouth.

The tremendous strength in Leviathan's neck

strikes terror wherever it goes.

Its flesh is hard and firm

and cannot be penetrated.

Its heart is hard as rock,

hard as a millstone.

When it rises, the mighty are afraid,

groped by terror.

No sword can stop it,

no spear, dart, or javelin.

It is nothing but straw to that creature,

and bronze is like rotten wood.

Verses 41:1-8 are numbered 40:25-32 in Hebrew text. 41:1b The identification of Leviathan is disputed, ranging from an earthly creature to a

sea monster in ancient literature. 41:9 Verses 41:9-34 are numbered 41:1-26 in Hebrew text. 41:13 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads its

42:11 Hebrew a *kesitah*; the value or weight of the kesitah is no longer known.

28 Arrows cannot make it flee.

Stones shot from a sling are like bits of grass.

29 Clubs are like a blade of grass, and it laughs at the swish of javelins.

30 Its belly is covered with scales as sharp as glass. It plows up the ground as it drags through the mud.

31 "Leviathan makes the water boil with its commotion. It stirs the depths like a pot of ointment.

32 The water glistens in its wake, making the sea look white.

33 Nothing on earth is its equal, no other creature so fearless.

34 Of all the creatures, it is the proudest. It is the king of beasts."

Job Responds to the LORD

42 Then Job replied to the LORD:

2 "I know that you can do anything, and no one can stop you.

3 You asked, 'Who is this that questions my wisdom with such ignorance?'

It is I—and I was talking about things I knew nothing about, things far too wonderful for me.

4 You said, 'Listen and I will speak! I have some questions for you, and you must answer them.'

5 I had only heard about you before, but now I have seen you with my own eyes.

6 I take back everything I said, and I sit in dust and ashes to show my repentance."

Conclusion: The LORD Blesses Job

7 After the LORD had finished speaking to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite: "I am angry with you and your two friends, for you have not spoken accurately about me, as my servant Job has. 8 So take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and offer a burnt offering for yourselves. My servant Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer on your behalf. I will not treat you as you deserve, for you have not spoken accurately about me, as my servant Job has." 9 So Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite did as the LORD commanded them, and the LORD accepted Job's prayer.

10 When Job prayed for his friends, the LORD restored his fortunes. In fact, the LORD gave him twice as much as before! 11 Then all his brothers, sisters, and former friends came and feasted with him in his home. And they consoled him and comforted him because of all the trials the LORD had brought against him. And each of them brought him a gift of money* and a gold ring.

12 So the LORD blessed Job in the second half of his life even more than in the beginning. For now he had 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 teams of oxen, and 1,000 female donkeys. 13 He also gave Job seven more sons and three more daughters. 14 He named his first daughter Jemimah, the second Keziah, and the third Keren-happuch. 15 In all the land no women were as lovely as the daughters of Job. And their father put them into his will along with their brothers.

16 Job lived 140 years after that, living to see four generations of his children and grandchildren. 17 Then he died, an old man who had lived a long, full life.

PSALMS

Author According to Jewish tradition, David wrote seventy-three Psalms; Asaph wrote twelve; the sons of Korah wrote nine; Solomon wrote two; Heman (with the sons of Korah), Ethan, and Moses each wrote one; and fifty-one psalms are anonymous. The New Testament ascribes two of the anonymous psalms (Psalms 2 and 95) to David (see Acts 4:25; Hebrews 4:7).

Date Written Between the time of Moses (about 1440 B.C.) and the Babylonian captivity (586 B.C.)

Content Throughout our life, we all experience a wide range of emotions, such as joy, anger, peacefulness, frustration, despair, happiness, and anxiety. These feelings don't typically obey carefully scripted creeds. Music and poetry often seem to be the only way to express them fully. The book of Psalms speaks to this part of human experience through the poetic words of people who offered their feelings to God. Are you angry about something? The book of Psalms includes several prayers that express this same emotion (see Psalm 35). Are you afraid? So was David when he wrote Psalm 2. Are you frustrated by injustice? Psalm 79 laments this same situation. Likewise, Psalm 19 and Psalm 104 celebrate the incredible power of God as it is revealed in his creation. This collection of hymns and prayers seems to touch every corner of the human soul. As with the psalm writers themselves, these honest expressions of feeling will draw you closer to the God who made you.

BOOK ONE (Psalms 1–41)

- 1** Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers.
- 2** But they delight in the law of the LORD, meditating on it day and night.
- 3** They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do.
- 4** But not the wicked! They are like worthless chaff, scattered by the wind.
- 5** They will be condemned at the time of judgment. Sinners will have no place among the godly.
- 6** For the LORD watches over the path of the godly, but the path of the wicked leads to destruction.

- 2** Why are the nations so angry? Why do they waste their time with futile plans?
- 2** The kings of the earth prepare for battle; the rulers plot together against the LORD and against his anointed one.
- 3** "Let us break their chains," they cry, "and free ourselves from slavery to God."
- 4** But the one who rules in heaven laughs. The Lord scoffs at them.
- 5** Then in anger he rebukes them, terrifying them with his fierce fury.
- 6** For the Lord declares, "I have placed my chosen king on the throne in Jerusalem,* on my holy mountain."
- 7** The king proclaims the LORD's decree: "The LORD said to me, 'You are my son.* Today I have become your Father.*"

2:6 Hebrew on Zion. 2:7a Or Son; also in 2:12. 2:7b Or Today I reveal you as my son. 2:9 Greek version reads rule. Compare Rev 2:27. 2:12 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. 3:2 Hebrew *Selah*. The meaning of this word is uncertain, though it is probably a musical or literary term. It is rendered *interlude* throughout the Psalms.

- 8** Only ask, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance, the whole earth as your possession.
- 9** You will break* them with an iron rod and smash them like clay pots."
- 10** Now then, you kings, act wisely! Be warned, you rulers of the earth!
- 11** Serve the LORD with reverent fear, and rejoice with trembling.
- 12** Submit to God's royal son,* or he will become angry, and you will be destroyed in the midst of all your activities— for his anger flares up in an instant. But what joy for all who take refuge in him!

3 A psalm of David, regarding the time David fled from his son Absalom.

- 1** O LORD, I have so many enemies; so many are against me.
- 2** So many are saying, "God will never rescue him!"
- 3** But you, O LORD, are a shield around me; you are my glory, the one who holds my head high.
- 4** I cried out to the LORD, and he answered me from his holy mountain.
- 5** I lay down and slept, yet I woke up in safety, for the LORD was watching over me.
- 6** I am not afraid of ten thousand enemies who surround me on every side.
- 7** Arise, O LORD! Rescue me, my God! Slap all my enemies in the face! Shatter the teeth of the wicked!
- 8** Victory comes from you, O LORD. May you bless your people.

4 For the choir director: A psalm of David, to be accompanied by stringed instruments.

- Answer me when I call to you, O God who declares me innocent. Free me from my troubles. Have mercy on me and hear my prayer.
- How long will you people ruin my reputation? How long will you make groundless accusations? How long will you continue your lies? You can be sure of this: The LORD set apart the godly for himself. The LORD will answer when I call to him.
- Don't sin by letting anger control you. Think about it overnight and remain silent.
- Offer sacrifices in the right spirit, and trust the LORD.
- Many people say, "Who will show us better times?" Let your face smile on us, LORD.
- You have given me greater joy than those who have abundant harvests of grain and new wine. In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, O LORD, will keep me safe.

5 For the choir director: A psalm of David, to be accompanied by the flute.

- O LORD, hear me as I pray; pay attention to my groaning. Listen to my cry for help, my King and my God, for I pray to no one but you. Listen to my voice in the morning, LORD. Each morning I bring my requests to you and wait expectantly.
- O God, you take no pleasure in wickedness; you cannot tolerate the sins of the wicked. Therefore, the proud may not stand in your presence, for you hate all who do evil. You will destroy those who tell lies. The LORD detests murderers and deceivers.
- Because of your unfailing love, I can enter your house: I will worship at your Temple with deepest awe. Lead me in the right path, O LORD, or my enemies will conquer me. Wake your way plain for me to follow.
- My enemies cannot speak a truthful word. Their deepest desire is to destroy others. Their talk is foul, like the stench from an open grave. Their tongues are filled with flattery.* O God, declare them guilty. Let them be caught in their own traps. Drive them away because of their many sins, for they have rebelled against you.
- Let all who take refuge in you rejoice; let them sing joyful praises forever. Read your protection over them, that all who love your name may be filled with joy. For you bless the godly, O LORD; you surround them with your shield of love.

2:9 Greek version reads with lies. Compare Rom 3:13. 6: TITLE Hebrew with.

5 For the choir director: A psalm of David, to be accompanied by stringed instruments.

Answer me when I call to you,
O God who declares me innocent.
Free me from my troubles.
Have mercy on me and hear my prayer.
How long will you people ruin my reputation?
How long will you make groundless accusations?
How long will you continue your lies? *Interlude*
How can I be sure of this:
The LORD set apart the godly for himself.
The LORD will answer when I call to him.
Don't sin by letting anger control you.
Think about it overnight and remain silent. *Interlude*
Offer sacrifices in the right spirit,
and trust the LORD.
Many people say, "Who will show us better times?"
Let your face smile on us, LORD.
You have given me greater joy
than those who have abundant harvests of grain and
new wine.
In peace I will lie down and sleep,
for you alone, O LORD, will keep me safe.

6 For the choir director: A psalm of David, to be accompanied by the flute.

O LORD, hear me as I pray;
pay attention to my groaning.
Listen to my cry for help, my King and my God,
for I pray to no one but you.
Listen to my voice in the morning, LORD.
Each morning I bring my requests to you and
wait expectantly.
O God, you take no pleasure in wickedness;
you cannot tolerate the sins of the wicked.
Therefore, the proud may not stand in your
presence,
for you hate all who do evil.
You will destroy those who tell lies.
The LORD detests murderers and deceivers.
Because of your unfailing love, I can enter your house;
I will worship at your Temple with deepest awe.
Lead me in the right path, O LORD,
or my enemies will conquer me.
Make your way plain for me to follow.
My enemies cannot speak a truthful word.
Their deepest desire is to destroy others.
Their talk is foul, like the stench from an open grave.
Their tongues are filled with flattery.*
O God, declare them guilty.
Let them be caught in their own traps.
Drive them away because of their many sins,
for they have rebelled against you.
Let all who take refuge in you rejoice;
let them sing joyful praises forever.
Read your protection over them,
that all who love your name may be filled with joy.
You bless the godly, O LORD;
you surround them with your shield of love.

6 For the choir director: A psalm of David, to be accompanied by an eight-stringed instrument.*

O LORD, don't rebuke me in your anger
or discipline me in your rage.
Have compassion on me, LORD, for I am weak.
Heal me, LORD, for my bones are in agony.
I am sick at heart.
How long, O LORD, until you restore me?
Return, O LORD, and rescue me.
Save me because of your unfailing love.
For the dead do not remember you.
Who can praise you from the grave?*

I am worn out from sobbing.
All night I flood my bed with weeping,
drenching it with my tears.
My vision is blurred by grief;
my eyes are worn out because of all my enemies.
Go away, all you who do evil,
for the LORD has heard my weeping.
The LORD has heard my plea;
the LORD will answer my prayer.
May all my enemies be disgraced and terrified.
May they suddenly turn back in shame.

7 A psalm of David, which he sang to the LORD concerning Cush of the tribe of Benjamin.

I come to you for protection, O LORD my God.
Save me from my persecutors—rescue me!
If you don't, they will maul me like a lion,
tearing me to pieces with no one to rescue me.
O LORD my God, if I have done wrong
or am guilty of injustice,
if I have betrayed a friend
or plundered my enemy without cause,
then let my enemies capture me.
Let them trample me into the ground
and drag my honor in the dust. *Interlude*
Arise, O LORD, in anger!
Stand up against the fury of my enemies!
Wake up, my God, and bring justice!
Gather the nations before you.
Rule over them from on high.
The LORD judges the nations.
Declare me righteous, O LORD,
for I am innocent, O Most High!
End the evil of those who are wicked,
and defend the righteous.
For you look deep within the mind and heart,
O righteous God.
God is my shield,
saving those whose hearts are true and right.
God is an honest judge.
He is angry with the wicked every day.
If a person does not repent,
God* will sharpen his sword;
he will bend and string his bow.
He will prepare his deadly weapons
and shoot his flaming arrows.
The wicked conceive evil;
they are pregnant with trouble
and give birth to lies.

seventy-three Psalms; Asaph wrote twelve; the sons of
Heman (with the sons of Korah), Ethan, and Moses
anonymous. The New Testament ascribes two of the
David (see Acts 4:25; Hebrews 4:7).
B.C.) and the Babylonian captivity (586 B.C.)
wide range of emotions, such as joy, anger,
grief, and anxiety. These feelings don't typically obey
reason often seem to be the only way to express them
of human experience through the poetic words of people
angry about something? The book of Psalms includes
of emotion (see Psalm 35). Are you afraid? So was David
and by injustice? Psalm 79 laments this same situation.
of the incredible power of God as it is revealed in the
of the human soul seems to touch every corner of the human soul.
of honest expressions of feeling will draw you closer

3 A psalm of David, regarding the time David fled from his son Absalom.

O LORD, I have so many enemies;
so many are against me.
So many are saying,
"God will never rescue him!" *Interlude*
But you, O LORD, are a shield around me;
you are my glory, the one who holds my head high.
I cried out to the LORD,
and he answered me from his holy mountain. *Interlude*
I lay down and slept,
yet I woke up in safety,
for the LORD was watching over me.
I am not afraid of ten thousand enemies
who surround me on every side.
Arise, O LORD!
Rescue me, my God!
Slap all my enemies in the face!
Shatter the teeth of the wicked!
Victory comes from you, O LORD.
May you bless your people.

2:9 Greek version reads rule. Compare Rev 2:27. 2:12 The
text is uncertain, though it is probably a musical or literary term. It is rendered

Interlude version reads with lies. Compare Rom 3:13. 6: TITLE Hebrew with stringed instruments; according to the sheminiith. 6:5 Hebrew from Sheol?