

PROVERBS

Author Solomon, Agur, and Lemuel, according to Jewish tradition
Date Written Uncertain, perhaps around 960 B.C., early in Solomon's reign
Content Knowledge is good, but wisdom is even better. Knowledge can help you pass tests and accomplish tasks, but wisdom will guide you through the most important decisions in life. The book of Proverbs was written by Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived. It contains hundreds of short, simple statements about how to live wisely and an assortment of longer passages that express wisdom with a bit more detail. These proverbs, however, are more than just wise sayings of the sort we find in most cultures. They are not a haphazard collection of commonsense directives. These proverbs expressly state, "Fear of the LORD is the foundation of wisdom" (9:10). Respect for God is the foundation for these wise sayings. They help the reader to distinguish between two paths: the way of the wise and the way of the fool. They deal with almost all the major areas of life, including growing up, parenting, social justice, wise speech, work, marriage, sexuality, and money.

The Purpose of Proverbs

- 1 These are the proverbs of Solomon, David's son, king of Israel.
- 2 Their purpose is to teach people wisdom and discipline, to help them understand the insights of the wise.
- 3 Their purpose is to teach people to live disciplined and successful lives, to help them do what is right, just, and fair.
- 4 These proverbs will give insight to the simple, knowledge and discernment to the young.
- 5 Let the wise listen to these proverbs and become even wiser.
- 6 Let those with understanding receive guidance by exploring the meaning in these proverbs and parables, the words of the wise and their riddles.
- 7 Fear of the LORD is the foundation of true knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

A Father's Exhortation: Acquire Wisdom

- 8 My child,* listen when your father corrects you. Don't neglect your mother's instruction.
- 9 What you learn from them will crown you with grace and be a chain of honor around your neck.
- 10 My child, if sinners entice you, turn your back on them!
- 11 They may say, "Come and join us. Let's hide and kill someone! Just for fun, let's ambush the innocent!"
- 12 Let's swallow them alive, like the grave*;^{1:12} let's swallow them whole, like those who go down to the pit of death.
- 13 Think of the great things we'll get! We'll fill our houses with all the stuff we take.
- 14 Come, throw in your lot with us; we'll all share the loot."
- 15 My child, don't go along with them! Stay far away from their paths.
- 16 They rush to commit evil deeds. They hurry to commit murder.
- 17 If a bird sees a trap being set, it knows to stay away.

1:8 Hebrew *My son*; also in 1:10, 15. 1:12 Hebrew *like Sheol*.

- 18 But these people set an ambush for themselves; they are trying to get themselves killed.
- 19 Such is the fate of all who are greedy for money; it robs them of life.

Wisdom Shouts in the Streets

- 20 Wisdom shouts in the streets. She cries out in the public square.
- 21 She calls to the crowds along the main street, to those gathered in front of the city gate:
- 22 "How long, you simpletons, will you insist on being simpleminded? How long will you mockers relish your mocking? How long will you fools hate knowledge?"
- 23 Come and listen to my counsel. I'll share my heart with you and make you wise.
- 24 "I called you so often, but you wouldn't come. I reached out to you, but you paid no attention.
- 25 You ignored my advice and rejected the correction I offered.
- 26 So I will laugh when you are in trouble! I will mock you when disaster overtakes you—
- 27 when calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster engulfs you like a cyclone, and anguish and distress overwhelm you.
- 28 "When they cry for help, I will not answer. Though they anxiously search for me, they will not find me.
- 29 For they hated knowledge and chose not to fear the LORD.
- 30 They rejected my advice and paid no attention when I corrected them.
- 31 Therefore, they must eat the bitter fruit of living their own way, choking on their own schemes.
- 32 For simpletons turn away from me—to death. Fools are destroyed by their own complacency.
- 33 But all who listen to me will live in peace, untroubled by fear of harm."

Benefits of Wisdom

- 2 My child,* listen to what I say, and treasure my commands.
- 3 Tune your ears to wisdom, and concentrate on understanding.
- 4 Cry out for insight, and ask for understanding.
- 5 Search for them as you would for silver; seek them like hidden treasures.
- 6 Then you will understand what it means to fear the LORD, and you will gain knowledge of God.
- 7 For the LORD grants wisdom! From his mouth come knowledge and understanding.
- 8 He grants a treasure of common sense to the honest. He is a shield to those who walk with integrity.
- 9 He guards the paths of the just and protects those who are faithful to him.
- 10 Then you will understand what is right, just, and fair, and you will find the right way to go.
- 11 For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will fill you with joy.
- 12 Wise choices will watch over you. Understanding will keep you safe.
- 13 Wisdom will save you from evil people, from those whose words are twisted.
- 14 These men turn from the right way to walk down dark paths.
- 15 They take pleasure in doing wrong, and they enjoy the twisted ways of evil.
- 16 Their actions are crooked, and their ways are wrong.
- 17 Wisdom will save you from the immoral woman, from the seductive words of the promiscuous woman.
- 18 She has abandoned her husband and ignores the covenant she made before God.
- 19 Entering her house leads to death; it is the road to the grave.*
- 20 The man who visits her is doomed. He will never reach the paths of life.
- 21 Follow the steps of good men instead, and stay on the paths of the righteous.
- 22 For only the godly will live in the land, and those with integrity will remain in it.
- 23 But the wicked will be removed from the land, and the treacherous will be uprooted.

Trusting in the LORD

- 3 My child,* never forget the things I have taught you. Store my commands in your heart.
- 2 If you do this, you will live many years, and your life will be satisfying.
- 3 Never let loyalty and kindness leave you! Tie them around your neck as a reminder. Write them deep within your heart.
- 4 Then you will find favor with both God and people, and you will earn a good reputation.
- 5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding.
- 6 Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.

Hebrew *My son*. 2:18 Hebrew *to the spirits of the dead*. 3:1 Hebrew *as his children*. Compare Heb 12:6. 3:34 Greek version reads

Benefits of Wisdom

- 2 My child,* listen to what I say,
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and concentrate on understanding.
Cry out for insight,
and ask for understanding.
Search for them as you would for silver;
seek them like hidden treasures.
Then you will understand what it means to fear
the LORD,
and you will gain knowledge of God.
For the LORD grants wisdom!
From his mouth come knowledge and
understanding.
He grants a treasure of common sense to the honest.
He is a shield to those who walk with integrity.
He guards the paths of the just
and protects those who are faithful to him.
Then you will understand what is right, just, and fair,
and you will find the right way to go.
For wisdom will enter your heart,
and knowledge will fill you with joy.
These choices will watch over you.
Understanding will keep you safe.
Wisdom will save you from evil people,
from those whose words are twisted.
These men turn from the right way
to walk down dark paths.
They take pleasure in doing wrong,
and they enjoy the twisted ways of evil.
Their actions are crooked,
and their ways are wrong.
Wisdom will save you from the immoral woman,
from the seductive words of the promiscuous
woman.
She has abandoned her husband
and ignores the covenant she made before God.
Entering her house leads to death;
it is the road to the grave.*
The man who visits her is doomed.
He will never reach the paths of life.
Follow the steps of good men instead,
and stay on the paths of the righteous.
For only the godly will live in the land,
and those with integrity will remain in it.
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Then you will find favor with both God and people,
and you will earn a good reputation.
Trust in the LORD with all your heart;
do not depend on your own understanding.
Seek his will in all you do,
and he will show you which path to take.

Hebrew My son. 2:18 Hebrew to the spirits of the dead. 3:1 Hebrew My son; also in 3:11, 21. 3:12 Greek version reads And he punishes those he
his children. Compare Heb 12:6. 3:34 Greek version reads The LORD opposes the proud, but favors the humble. Compare Jas 4:6; 1 Pet 5:5.

- 7 Don't be impressed with your own wisdom.
Instead, fear the LORD and turn away from evil.
8 Then you will have healing for your body
and strength for your bones.
9 Honor the LORD with your wealth
and with the best part of everything you produce.
10 Then he will fill your barns with grain,
and your vats will overflow with good wine.
11 My child, don't reject the LORD's discipline,
and don't be upset when he corrects you.
12 For the LORD corrects those he loves,
just as a father corrects a child in whom
he delights.*
13 Joyful is the person who finds wisdom,
the one who gains understanding.
14 For wisdom is more profitable than silver,
and her wages are better than gold.
15 Wisdom is more precious than rubies;
nothing you desire can compare with her.
16 She offers you long life in her right hand,
and riches and honor in her left.
17 She will guide you down delightful paths;
all her ways are satisfying.
18 Wisdom is a tree of life to those who embrace her;
happy are those who hold her tightly.
19 By wisdom the LORD founded the earth;
by understanding he created the heavens.
20 By his knowledge the deep fountains of the earth
burst forth,
and the dew settles beneath the night sky.
21 My child, don't lose sight of common sense and
discernment.
Hang on to them,
22 for they will refresh your soul.
They are like jewels on a necklace.
23 They keep you safe on your way,
and your feet will not stumble.
24 You can go to bed without fear;
you will lie down and sleep soundly.
25 You need not be afraid of sudden disaster
or the destruction that comes upon the wicked,
26 for the LORD is your security.
He will keep your foot from being caught in a trap.
27 Do not withhold good from those who deserve it
when it's in your power to help them.
28 If you can help your neighbor now, don't say,
"Come back tomorrow, and then I'll help you."
29 Don't plot harm against your neighbor,
for those who live nearby trust you.
30 Don't pick a fight without reason,
when no one has done you harm.
31 Don't envy violent people
or copy their ways.
32 Such wicked people are detestable to the LORD,
but he offers his friendship to the godly.
33 The LORD curses the house of the wicked,
but he blesses the home of the upright.
34 The LORD mocks the mockers
but is gracious to the humble.*
35 The wise inherit honor,
but fools are put to shame!

A Father's Wise Advice

- 4** ¹ My children,* listen when your father corrects you.
² Pay attention and learn good judgment.
³ Don't turn away from my instructions.
⁴ For I, too, was once my father's son,
tenderly loved as my mother's only child.
⁵ My father taught me,
"Take my words to heart.
Follow my commands, and you will live.
Get wisdom; develop good judgment.
Don't forget my words or turn away from them.
Don't turn your back on wisdom, for she will protect you.
Love her, and she will guard you.
Getting wisdom is the wisest thing you can do!
And whatever else you do, develop good judgment.
If you prize wisdom, she will make you great.
Embrace her, and she will honor you.
She will place a lovely wreath on your head;
she will present you with a beautiful crown."
¹⁰ My child,* listen to me and do as I say,
and you will have a long, good life.
¹¹ I will teach you wisdom's ways
and lead you in straight paths.
¹² When you walk, you won't be held back;
when you run, you won't stumble.
¹³ Take hold of my instructions; don't let them go.
Guard them, for they are the key to life.
¹⁴ Don't do as the wicked do,
and don't follow the path of evildoers.
¹⁵ Don't even think about it; don't go that way.
Turn away and keep moving.
¹⁶ For evil people can't sleep until they've done their
evil deed for the day.
They can't rest until they've caused someone
to stumble.
¹⁷ They eat the food of wickedness
and drink the wine of violence!
¹⁸ The way of the righteous is like the first gleam
of dawn,
which shines ever brighter until the full light
of day.
¹⁹ But the way of the wicked is like total darkness.
They have no idea what they are stumbling over.
²⁰ My child, pay attention to what I say.
Listen carefully to my words.
²¹ Don't lose sight of them.
Let them penetrate deep into your heart,
²² for they bring life to those who find them,
and healing to their whole body.
²³ Guard your heart above all else,
for it determines the course of your life.
²⁴ Avoid all perverse talk;
stay away from corrupt speech.
²⁵ Look straight ahead,
and fix your eyes on what lies before you.
²⁶ Mark out a straight path for your feet;
stay on the safe path.
²⁷ Don't get sidetracked;
keep your feet from following evil.

4:1 Hebrew My sons. 4:10 Hebrew My son; also in 4:20. 5:5 Hebrew to Sheol. 5:15 Hebrew Drink water from your own cistern, / flowing water from your own well. 5:16 Hebrew Why spill your springs in the streets, / your streams in the city squares? 6:1 Hebrew My son.

Avoid Immoral Women

- 5** ¹ My son, pay attention to my wisdom;
listen carefully to my wise counsel.
² Then you will show discernment,
and your lips will express what you've learned.
³ For the lips of an immoral woman are as sweet as honey
and her mouth is smoother than oil.
⁴ But in the end she is as bitter as poison,
as dangerous as a double-edged sword.
⁵ Her feet go down to death;
her steps lead straight to the grave.*
⁶ For she cares nothing about the path to life.
She staggers down a crooked trail and doesn't realize it.
⁷ So now, my sons, listen to me.
Never stray from what I am about to say:
⁸ Stay away from her!
Don't go near the door of her house!
⁹ If you do, you will lose your honor
and will lose to merciless people all you have achieved.
¹⁰ Strangers will consume your wealth,
and someone else will enjoy the fruit of your labor.
¹¹ In the end you will groan in anguish
when disease consumes your body.
¹² You will say, "How I hated discipline!
If only I had not ignored all the warnings!
¹³ Oh, why didn't I listen to my teachers?
Why didn't I pay attention to my instructors?"
¹⁴ I have come to the brink of utter ruin,
and now I must face public disgrace."
¹⁵ Drink water from your own well—
share your love only with your wife.*
¹⁶ Why spill the water of your springs in the streets,
having sex with just anyone?*
¹⁷ You should reserve it for yourselves.
Never share it with strangers.
¹⁸ Let your wife be a fountain of blessing for you.
Rejoice in the wife of your youth.
¹⁹ She is a loving deer, a graceful doe.
Let her breasts satisfy you always.
May you always be captivated by her love.
²⁰ Why be captivated, my son, by an immoral woman,
or fondle the breasts of a promiscuous woman?
²¹ For the LORD sees clearly what a man does,
examining every path he takes.
²² An evil man is held captive by his own sins;
they are ropes that catch and hold him.
²³ He will die for lack of self-control;
he will be lost because of his great foolishness.

Lessons for Daily Life

- 6** ¹ My child,* if you have put up security for
a friend's debt
or agreed to guarantee the debt of a stranger—
² if you have trapped yourself by your agreement
and are caught by what you said—
³ follow my advice and save yourself,
for you have placed yourself at your friend's mercy.
Now swallow your pride;
go and beg to have your name erased.
⁴ Don't put it off; do it now!
Don't rest until you do.
⁵ Save yourself like a gazelle escaping from a hunter,
like a bird fleeing from a net.

- ⁶ Take a lesson from the ants, you lazybones.
Learn from their ways and become wise!
⁷ Though they have no prince
or governor or ruler to make them work,
they labor hard all summer,
gathering food for the winter.
⁸ But you, lazybones, how long will you sleep?
When will you wake up?
⁹ A little extra sleep, a little more slumber,
a little folding of the hands to rest—
then poverty will pounce on you like a bandit;
scarcity will attack you like an armed robber.
¹⁰ What are worthless and wicked people like?
They are constant liars,
signaling their deceit with a wink of the eye,
a nudge of the foot, or the wiggle of fingers.
¹¹ Their perverted hearts plot evil,
and they constantly stir up trouble.
¹² But they will be destroyed suddenly,
broken in an instant beyond all hope of healing.
¹³ There are six things the LORD hates—
no, seven things he detests:
¹⁴ haughty eyes,
a lying tongue,
hands that kill the innocent,
¹⁵ a heart that plots evil,
feet that race to do wrong,
¹⁶ a false witness who pours out lies,
a person who sows discord in a family.
¹⁷ My son, obey your father's commands,
and don't neglect your mother's instruction.
¹⁸ Keep their words always in your heart.
Tie them around your neck.
¹⁹ When you walk, their counsel will lead you.
When you sleep, they will protect you.
When you wake up, they will advise you.
²⁰ For their command is a lamp
and their instruction a light;
their corrective discipline
is the way to life.
²¹ It will keep you from the immoral woman,
from the smooth tongue of a promiscuous woman.
²² Don't lust for her beauty.
Don't let her coy glances seduce you.
²³ For a prostitute will bring you to poverty,*
but sleeping with another man's wife will cost
you your life.
²⁴ Can a man scoop a flame into his lap
and not have his clothes catch on fire?
²⁵ Can he walk on hot coals
and not blister his feet?
²⁶ So it is with the man who sleeps with another
man's wife.
He who embraces her will not go unpunished.
²⁷ Excuses might be found for a thief
who steals because he is starving.
²⁸ But if he is caught, he must pay back seven times
what he stole,
even if he has to sell everything in his house.
²⁹ But the man who commits adultery is an utter fool
for he destroys himself.
³⁰ He will be wounded and disgraced.
His shame will never be erased.
³¹ For the woman's jealous husband will be furious
and will not spare her.
³² Can a man take a loaf of bread
and not be caught?
Can he steal a silver vessel or a gold vessel
and not be caught?
³³ As a thief is caught and punished,
so the adulterer is caught and punished.
³⁴ The woman who commits adultery is foolish
and self-destructive.
She destroys her life and brings ruin
on her family.
³⁵ Her path is crooked and slippery,
and she is hated by the LORD.
³⁶ Her path is crooked and slippery,
and she is hated by the LORD.

6:26 Hebrew to a loaf of bread. 7:2 Hebrew as the pupil of your son.

Women

Pay attention to my wisdom;
 carefully to my wise counsel.
 show discernment,
 and you will express what you've learned.
 An immoral woman is as sweet as honey,
 but her mouth is smoother than oil.
 In the end she is as bitter as poison,
 and she is as double-edged as a sword.
 She leads you down to death;
 she leads you straight to the grave.*
 She knows nothing about the path to life.
 She goes down a crooked trail and doesn't realize
 her path leads to ruin.
 Listen to me.
 From what I am about to say,
 you will learn her!
 Near the door of her house!
 She will lose your honor
 and to merciless people all you have achieved.
 She will consume your wealth,
 and she will enjoy the fruit of your labor.
 She will groan in anguish
 and she will consume your body.
 How I hated discipline!
 I did not ignore all the warnings!
 I did not listen to my teachers.
 I paid attention to my instructors,
 but I was on the brink of utter ruin,
 and I must face public disgrace.
 I learned from my own well—
 I love only with my wife.*
 I saw the water of your springs in the streets,
 and I drank with just anyone.*
 I served it for yourselves.
 I shared it with strangers.
 I was a fountain of blessing for you,
 and I was the wife of your youth.
 I was a deer, a graceful doe.
 I was always satisfied by you always.
 I was always captivated by her love.
 I was seduced, my son, by an immoral woman,
 and I was seduced by the breasts of a promiscuous woman.
 I know clearly what a man does,
 and I know every path he takes.
 I was held captive by his own sins;
 I was seduced by those that catch and hold him.
 I lack self-control;
 I was seduced because of his great foolishness.

Life

If you have put up security for
 a debt
 and guarantee the debt of a stranger—
 you have trapped yourself by your agreement
 and you are bound by what you said—
 you will be caught and save yourself,
 and you will place yourself at your friend's mercy.
 Do not have your name erased.
 Do it now!
 Until you do.
 Like a gazelle escaping from a hunter,
 you will be caught from a net.
 Do not drink water from your own cistern,
 / flowing water from the well.

6:1 Hebrew My son.

Take a lesson from the ants, you lazybones.
 Learn from their ways and become wise!
 Though they have no prince
 or governor or ruler to make them work,
 they labor hard all summer,
 gathering food for the winter.
 But you, lazybones, how long will you sleep?
 When will you wake up?
 A little extra sleep, a little more slumber,
 a little folding of the hands to rest—
 then poverty will pounce on you like a bandit;
 scarcity will attack you like an armed robber.
 What are worthless and wicked people like?
 They are constant liars,
 repaying their deceit with a wink of the eye,
 a nudge of the foot, or the wiggle of fingers.
 Their perverted hearts plot evil,
 and they constantly stir up trouble.
 But they will be destroyed suddenly,
 broken in an instant beyond all hope of healing.
 There are six things the LORD hates—
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 1. haughty eyes,
 2. a lying tongue,
 3. hands that kill the innocent,
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 5. feet that race to do wrong,
 6. a false witness who pours out lies,
 7. a person who sows discord in a family.
 My son, obey your father's commands,
 and don't neglect your mother's instruction.
 Keep their words always in your heart.
 Tie them around your neck.
 When you walk, their counsel will lead you.
 When you sleep, they will protect you.
 When you wake up, they will advise you.
 For their command is a lamp
 and their instruction a light;
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 you your life.
 Can a man scoop a flame into his lap
 and not have his clothes catch on fire?
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 and not blister his feet?
 So it is with the man who sleeps with another
 man's wife.
 He who embraces her will not go unpunished.
 Excuses might be found for a thief
 who steals because he is starving.
 But if he is caught, he must pay back seven times
 what he stole,
 even if he has to sell everything in his house.
 But the man who commits adultery is an utter fool,
 for he destroys himself.
 He will be wounded and disgraced.
 His shame will never be erased.
 For the woman's jealous husband will be furious,

Hebrew to a loaf of bread. 7:2 Hebrew as the pupil of your eye. 7:20 Hebrew until the moon is full. 7:27 Hebrew to Sheol.

and he will show no mercy when he takes revenge.
 He will accept no compensation,
 nor be satisfied with a payoff of any size.

Another Warning about Immoral Women

- 1 Follow my advice, my son;
 always treasure my commands.
- 2 Obey my commands and live!
 Guard my instructions as you guard your own eyes.*
- 3 Tie them on your fingers as a reminder.
 Write them deep within your heart.
- 4 Love wisdom like a sister;
 make insight a beloved member of your family.
- 5 Let them protect you from an affair with an immoral
 woman,
 from listening to the flattery of a promiscuous
 woman.
- 6 While I was at the window of my house,
 looking through the curtain,
 7 I saw some naive young men,
 and one in particular who lacked common sense.
- 8 He was crossing the street near the house of an
 immoral woman,
 strolling down the path by her house.
- 9 It was at twilight, in the evening,
 as deep darkness fell.
- 10 The woman approached him,
 seductively dressed and sly of heart.
- 11 She was the brash, rebellious type,
 never content to stay at home.
- 12 She is often in the streets and markets,
 soliciting at every corner.
- 13 She threw her arms around him and kissed him,
 and with a brazen look she said,
 14 "I've just made my peace offerings
 and fulfilled my vows.
- 15 You're the one I was looking for!
 I came out to find you, and here you are!"
- 16 My bed is spread with beautiful blankets,
 with colored sheets of Egyptian linen.
- 17 I've perfumed my bed
 with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.
- 18 Come, let's drink our fill of love until morning.
 Let's enjoy each other's caresses,
- 19 for my husband is not home.
 He's away on a long trip.
- 20 He has taken a wallet full of money with him
 and won't return until later this month.*
- 21 So she seduced him with her pretty speech
 and enticed him with her flattery.
- 22 He followed her at once,
 like an ox going to the slaughter.
 He was like a stag caught in a trap,
 23 awaiting the arrow that would pierce its heart.
 He was like a bird flying into a snare,
 little knowing it would cost him his life.
- 24 So listen to me, my sons,
 and pay attention to my words.
- 25 Don't let your hearts stray away toward her.
 Don't wander down her wayward path.
- 26 For she has been the ruin of many;
 many men have been her victims.
- 27 Her house is the road to the grave.*
 Her bedroom is the den of death.

Wisdom Calls for a Hearing

- 8¹ Listen as Wisdom calls out!
Hear as understanding raises her voice!
- ² On the hilltop along the road,
she takes her stand at the crossroads.
- ³ By the gates at the entrance to the town,
on the road leading in, she cries aloud,
- ⁴ "I call to you, to all of you!
I raise my voice to all people.
- ⁵ You simple people, use good judgment.
You foolish people, show some understanding.
- ⁶ Listen to me! For I have important things to tell you.
Everything I say is right,
- ⁷ for I speak the truth
and detest every kind of deception.
- ⁸ My advice is wholesome.
There is nothing devious or crooked in it.
- ⁹ My words are plain to anyone with understanding,
clear to those with knowledge.
- ¹⁰ Choose my instruction rather than silver,
and knowledge rather than pure gold.
- ¹¹ For wisdom is far more valuable than rubies.
Nothing you desire can compare with it.
- ¹² "I, Wisdom, live together with good judgment.
I know where to discover knowledge and discernment.
- ¹³ All who fear the LORD will hate evil.
Therefore, I hate pride and arrogance,
corruption and perverse speech.
- ¹⁴ Common sense and success belong to me.
Insight and strength are mine.
- ¹⁵ Because of me, kings reign,
and rulers make just decrees.
- ¹⁶ Rulers lead with my help,
and nobles make righteous judgments.*
- ¹⁷ "I love all who love me.
Those who search will surely find me.
- ¹⁸ I have riches and honor,
as well as enduring wealth and justice.
- ¹⁹ My gifts are better than gold, even the purest gold,
my wages better than sterling silver!
- ²⁰ I walk in righteousness,
in paths of justice.
- ²¹ Those who love me inherit wealth.
I will fill their treasuries.
- ²² "The LORD formed me from the beginning,
before he created anything else.
- ²³ I was appointed in ages past,
at the very first, before the earth began.
- ²⁴ I was born before the oceans were created,
before the springs bubbled forth their waters.
- ²⁵ Before the mountains were formed,
before the hills, I was born—
- ²⁶ before he had made the earth and fields
and the first handfuls of soil.
- ²⁷ I was there when he established the heavens,
when he drew the horizon on the oceans.
- ²⁸ I was there when he set the clouds above,
when he established springs deep in the earth.
- ²⁹ I was there when he set the limits of the seas,
so they would not spread beyond their boundaries.
- ³⁰ And when he marked off the earth's foundations,
I was the architect at his side.

8:16 Some Hebrew manuscripts and Greek version read *and nobles are judges over the earth*. 8:32 Hebrew *my sons*. 9:18 Hebrew in *Sheol*. 10:1 Hebrew *son*; also in 10:1b.

- I was his constant delight,
rejoicing always in his presence.
- ³¹ And how happy I was with the world he created;
how I rejoiced with the human family!
- ³² "And so, my children,* listen to me,
for all who follow my ways are joyful.
- ³³ Listen to my instruction and be wise.
Don't ignore it.
- ³⁴ Joyful are those who listen to me,
watching for me daily at my gates,
waiting for me outside my home!
- ³⁵ For whoever finds me finds life
and receives favor from the LORD.
- ³⁶ But those who miss me injure themselves.
All who hate me love death."

- 9¹ Wisdom has built her house;
she has carved its seven columns.
- ² She has prepared a great banquet,
mixed the wines, and set the table.
- ³ She has sent her servants to invite everyone to come.
She calls out from the heights overlooking the city.
- ⁴ "Come in with me," she urges the simple.
To those who lack good judgment, she says,
- ⁵ "Come, eat my food,
and drink the wine I have mixed.
- ⁶ Leave your simple ways behind, and begin to live;
learn to use good judgment."
- ⁷ Anyone who rebukes a mocker will get an insult in return.
Anyone who corrects the wicked will get hurt.
- ⁸ So don't bother correcting mockers;
they will only hate you.
But correct the wise,
and they will love you.
- ⁹ Instruct the wise,
and they will be even wiser.
Teach the righteous,
and they will learn even more.
- ¹⁰ Fear of the LORD is the foundation of wisdom.
Knowledge of the Holy One results in good judgment.
- ¹¹ Wisdom will multiply your days
and add years to your life.
- ¹² If you become wise, you will be the one to benefit.
If you scorn wisdom, you will be the one to suffer.

Folly Calls for a Hearing

- ¹³ The woman named Folly is brash.
She is ignorant and doesn't know it.
- ¹⁴ She sits in her doorway
on the heights overlooking the city.
- ¹⁵ She calls out to men going by
who are minding their own business.
- ¹⁶ "Come in with me," she urges the simple.
To those who lack good judgment, she says,
- ¹⁷ "Stolen water is refreshing;
food eaten in secret tastes the best!"
- ¹⁸ But little do they know that the dead are there.
Her guests are in the depths of the grave.*

The Proverbs of Solomon

10 The proverbs of Solomon:

- A wise child* brings joy to a father;
a foolish child brings grief to a mother.

- Tainted wealth has no lasting value,
but right living can save your life.
- The LORD will not let the godly go hungry,
but he refuses to satisfy the craving of the wicked.
- Lazy people are soon poor;
hard workers get rich.
- A wise youth harvests in the summer,
but one who sleeps during harvest is a disgrace.
- The godly are showered with blessings;
the words of the wicked conceal violent intent.
- We have happy memories of the godly,
but the name of a wicked person rots away.
- The wise are glad to be instructed,
but babbling fools fall flat on their faces.
- People with integrity walk safely,
but those who follow crooked paths will slip and fall.
- People who wink at wrong cause trouble,
but a bold reproof promotes peace.*
- The words of the godly are a life-giving fountain;
the words of the wicked conceal violent intent.
- Hatred stirs up quarrels,
but love makes up for all offenses.
- Wise words come from the lips of people with understanding,
but those lacking sense will be beaten with a rod.
- Wise people treasure knowledge,
but the babbling of a fool invites disaster.
- The wealth of the rich is their fortress;
the poverty of the poor is their destruction.
- The earnings of the godly enhance their lives,
but evil people squander their money on sin.
- People who accept discipline are on the pathway to life,
but those who ignore correction will go astray.
- Adding hatred makes you a liar;
slandering others makes you a fool.
- Too much talk leads to sin.
Be sensible and keep your mouth shut.
- The words of the godly are like sterling silver;
the heart of a fool is worthless.
- The words of the godly encourage many,
but fools are destroyed by their lack of common sense.
- The blessing of the LORD makes a person rich,
and he adds no sorrow with it.
- Doing wrong is fun for a fool,
but living wisely brings pleasure to the sensible.
- The fears of the wicked will be fulfilled;
the hopes of the godly will be granted.
- When the storms of life come, the wicked are whirled away,
but the godly have a lasting foundation.
- Many people irritate their employers,
like vinegar to the teeth or smoke in the eyes.
- The fear of the LORD lengthens one's life,
but the years of the wicked are cut short.
- The hopes of the godly result in happiness,
but the expectations of the wicked come to nothing.
- *Greek version; Hebrew reads *but babbling fools fall flat on their faces*.

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but the years of the wicked are cut short.
The hopes of the godly result in happiness,
but the expectations of the wicked come to nothing.

* Greek version; Hebrew reads *but babbling fools fall flat on their faces*.

- 29 The way of the LORD is a stronghold to those with integrity,
but it destroys the wicked.
 - 30 The godly will never be disturbed,
but the wicked will be removed from the land.
 - 31 The mouth of the godly person gives wise advice,
but the tongue that deceives will be cut off.
 - 32 The lips of the godly speak helpful words,
but the mouth of the wicked speaks perverse words.
- 11** ¹ The LORD detests the use of dishonest scales,
but he delights in accurate weights.
- ² Pride leads to disgrace,
but with humility comes wisdom.
 - ³ Honesty guides good people;
dishonesty destroys treacherous people.
 - ⁴ Riches won't help on the day of judgment,
but right living can save you from death.
 - ⁵ The godly are directed by honesty;
the wicked fall beneath their load of sin.
 - ⁶ The godliness of good people rescues them;
the ambition of treacherous people traps them.
 - ⁷ When the wicked die, their hopes die with them,
for they rely on their own feeble strength.
 - ⁸ The godly are rescued from trouble,
and it falls on the wicked instead.
 - ⁹ With their words, the godless destroy their friends,
but knowledge will rescue the righteous.
 - ¹⁰ The whole city celebrates when the godly succeed;
they shout for joy when the wicked die.
 - ¹¹ Upright citizens are good for a city and make it prosper,
but the talk of the wicked tears it apart.
 - ¹² It is foolish to belittle one's neighbor;
a sensible person keeps quiet.
 - ¹³ A gossip goes around telling secrets,
but those who are trustworthy can keep
a confidence.
 - ¹⁴ Without wise leadership, a nation falls;
there is safety in having many advisers.
 - ¹⁵ There's danger in putting up security for
a stranger's debt;
it's safer not to guarantee another person's debt.
 - ¹⁶ A gracious woman gains respect,
but ruthless men gain only wealth.
 - ¹⁷ Your kindness will reward you,
but your cruelty will destroy you.
 - ¹⁸ Evil people get rich for the moment,
but the reward of the godly will last.
 - ¹⁹ Godly people find life;
evil people find death.
 - ²⁰ The LORD detests people with crooked hearts,
but he delights in those with integrity.
 - ²¹ Evil people will surely be punished,
but the children of the godly will go free.
 - ²² A beautiful woman who lacks discretion
is like a gold ring in a pig's snout.

- 23 The godly can look forward to a reward,
while the wicked can expect only judgment.
- 24 Give freely and become more wealthy;
be stingy and lose everything.
- 25 The generous will prosper;
those who refresh others will themselves
be refreshed.
- 26 People curse those who hoard their grain,
but they bless the one who sells in time of need.
- 27 If you search for good, you will find favor;
but if you search for evil, it will find you!
- 28 Trust in your money and down you go!
But the godly flourish like leaves in spring.
- 29 Those who bring trouble on their families inherit
the wind.
The fool will be a servant to the wise.
- 30 The seeds of good deeds become a tree of life;
a wise person wins friends.*
- 31 If the righteous are rewarded here on earth,
what will happen to wicked sinners?*

12 ¹ To learn, you must love discipline;
it is stupid to hate correction.

- ² The LORD approves of those who are good,
but he condemns those who plan wickedness.
- ³ Wickedness never brings stability,
but the godly have deep roots.
- ⁴ A worthy wife is a crown for her husband,
but a disgraceful woman is like cancer in his bones.
- ⁵ The plans of the godly are just;
the advice of the wicked is treacherous.
- ⁶ The words of the wicked are like a murderous
ambush,
but the words of the godly save lives.
- ⁷ The wicked die and disappear,
but the family of the godly stands firm.
- ⁸ A sensible person wins admiration,
but a warped mind is despised.
- ⁹ Better to be an ordinary person with a servant
than to be self-important but have no food.
- ¹⁰ The godly care for their animals,
but the wicked are always cruel.
- ¹¹ A hard worker has plenty of food,
but a person who chases fantasies has no sense.
- ¹² Thieves are jealous of each other's loot,
but the godly are well rooted and bear their
own fruit.
- ¹³ The wicked are trapped by their own words,
but the godly escape such trouble.
- ¹⁴ Wise words bring many benefits,
and hard work brings rewards.
- ¹⁵ Fools think their own way is right,
but the wise listen to others.
- ¹⁶ A fool is quick-tempered,
but a wise person stays calm when insulted.

11:30 Or and those who win souls are wise. 11:31 Greek version reads If the righteous are barely saved, / what will happen to godless sinners? Compare 1 Pet 4:18. 12:26 Or The godly are cautious in friendship; or The godly are freed from evil. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. 13:1 Hebrew son accepts his father's discipline. 13:15 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads the way of the treacherous is lasting.

- 17 An honest witness tells the truth;
a false witness tells lies.
- 18 Some people make cutting remarks,
but the words of the wise bring healing.
- 19 Truthful words stand the test of time,
but lies are soon exposed.
- 20 Deceit fills hearts that are plotting evil;
joy fills hearts that are planning peace!
- 21 No harm comes to the godly,
but the wicked have their fill of trouble.
- 22 The LORD detests lying lips,
but he delights in those who tell the truth.
- 23 The wise don't make a show of their knowledge,
but fools broadcast their foolishness.
- 24 Work hard and become a leader;
be lazy and become a slave.
- 25 Worry weighs a person down;
an encouraging word cheers a person up.
- 26 The godly give good advice to their friends,*
the wicked lead them astray.
- 27 Lazy people don't even cook the game they catch,
but the diligent make use of everything they find.
- 28 The way of the godly leads to life;
that path does not lead to death.

13 ¹ A wise child accepts a parent's discipline,*
a mocker refuses to listen to correction.

- ² Wise words will win you a good meal,
but treacherous people have an appetite for violence.
- ³ Those who control their tongue will have a long life
opening your mouth can ruin everything.
- ⁴ Lazy people want much but get little,
but those who work hard will prosper.
- ⁵ The godly hate lies;
the wicked cause shame and disgrace.
- ⁶ Godliness guards the path of the blameless,
but the evil are misled by sin.
- ⁷ Some who are poor pretend to be rich;
others who are rich pretend to be poor.
- ⁸ The rich can pay a ransom for their lives,
but the poor won't even get threatened.
- ⁹ The life of the godly is full of light and joy,
but the light of the wicked will be snuffed out.
- ¹⁰ Pride leads to conflict;
those who take advice are wise.
- ¹¹ Wealth from get-rich-quick schemes quickly disappears;
wealth from hard work grows over time.
- ¹² Hope deferred makes the heart sick,
but a dream fulfilled is a tree of life.
- ¹³ People who despise advice are asking for trouble;
those who respect a command will succeed.
- ¹⁴ The instruction of the wise is like a life-giving fountain;
those who accept it avoid the snares of death.
- ¹⁵ A person with good sense is respected;
a treacherous person is headed for destruction.*

- * Wise people think before they act;
fools don't—and even brag about their foolishness.
- * An unreliable messenger stumbles into trouble;
but a reliable messenger brings healing.
- * If you ignore criticism, you will end in poverty
and disgrace;
if you accept correction, you will be honored.
- * It is pleasant to see dreams come true,
but fools refuse to turn from evil to attain them.
- * Walk with the wise and become wise;
associate with fools and get in trouble.
- * Trouble chases sinners,
while blessings reward the righteous.
- * Good people leave an inheritance to their
grandchildren,
but the sinner's wealth passes to the godly.
- * A poor person's farm may produce much food,
but injustice sweeps it all away.
- * Those who spare the rod of discipline hate their
children.
Those who love their children care enough to
discipline them.
- * The godly eat to their hearts' content,
but the belly of the wicked goes hungry.

14 ¹ A wise woman builds her home,
but a foolish woman tears it down with her
own hands.

- * Those who follow the right path fear the LORD;
those who take the wrong path despise him.
- * A fool's proud talk becomes a rod that beats him,
but the words of the wise keep them safe.
- * Without oxen a stable stays clean,
but you need a strong ox for a large harvest.
- * An honest witness does not lie;
a false witness breathes lies.
- * A mocker seeks wisdom and never finds it,
but knowledge comes easily to those with
understanding.
- * Stay away from fools,
for you won't find knowledge on their lips.
- * The prudent understand where they are going,
but fools deceive themselves.
- * Fools make fun of guilt,
but the godly acknowledge it and seek reconciliation.
- * Each heart knows its own bitterness,
and no one else can fully share its joy.
- * The house of the wicked will be destroyed,
but the tent of the godly will flourish.
- * There is a path before each person that seems right,
but it ends in death.
- * A mocker can conceal a heavy heart,
but when the laughter ends, the grief remains.
- * Fools consider what they deserve;
good people receive their reward.
- * Simpletons believe everything they're told!
The prudent carefully consider their steps.
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 and no one else can fully share its joy.
- 11 The house of the wicked will be destroyed,
 but the tent of the godly will flourish.
- 12 There is a path before each person that seems right,
 but it ends in death.
- 13 Laughter can conceal a heavy heart,
 but when the laughter ends, the grief remains.
- 14 Backsliders get what they deserve;
 good people receive their reward.
- 15 Only simpletons believe everything they're told!
 The prudent carefully consider their steps.

14:16 Hebrew The wise fear. 14:18 Or inherit foolishness. 14:33 As in Greek and Syriac versions; Hebrew lacks not. 15:5 Hebrew father's.

- 16 The wise are cautious* and avoid danger;
 fools plunge ahead with reckless confidence.
- 17 Short-tempered people do foolish things,
 and schemers are hated.
- 18 Simpletons are clothed with foolishness,*
 but the prudent are crowned with knowledge.
- 19 Evil people will bow before good people;
 the wicked will bow at the gates of the godly.
- 20 The poor are despised even by their neighbors,
 while the rich have many "friends."
- 21 It is a sin to belittle one's neighbor;
 blessed are those who help the poor.
- 22 If you plan to do evil, you will be lost;
 if you plan to do good, you will receive unfailing
 love and faithfulness.
- 23 Work brings profit,
 but mere talk leads to poverty!
- 24 Wealth is a crown for the wise;
 the effort of fools yields only foolishness.
- 25 A truthful witness saves lives,
 but a false witness is a traitor.
- 26 Those who fear the LORD are secure;
 he will be a refuge for their children.
- 27 Fear of the LORD is a life-giving fountain;
 it offers escape from the snares of death.
- 28 A growing population is a king's glory;
 a prince without subjects has nothing.
- 29 People with understanding control their anger;
 a hot temper shows great foolishness.
- 30 A peaceful heart leads to a healthy body;
 jealousy is like cancer in the bones.
- 31 Those who oppress the poor insult their Maker,
 but helping the poor honors him.
- 32 The wicked are crushed by disaster,
 but the godly have a refuge when they die.
- 33 Wisdom is enshrined in an understanding heart;
 wisdom is not* found among fools.
- 34 Godliness makes a nation great,
 but sin is a disgrace to any people.
- 35 A king rejoices in wise servants
 but is angry with those who disgrace him.

15 ¹ A gentle answer deflects anger,
 but harsh words make tempers flare.

- 2 The tongue of the wise makes knowledge appealing,
 but the mouth of a fool belches out foolishness.
- 3 The LORD is watching everywhere,
 keeping his eye on both the evil and the good.
- 4 Gentle words are a tree of life;
 a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit.
- 5 Only a fool despises a parent's* discipline;
 whoever learns from correction is wise.
- 6 There is treasure in the house of the godly,
 but the earnings of the wicked bring trouble.
- 7 The lips of the wise give good advice;
 the heart of a fool has none to give.

- 8 The LORD detests the sacrifice of the wicked,
but he delights in the prayers of the upright.
- 9 The LORD detests the way of the wicked,
but he loves those who pursue godliness.
- 10 Whoever abandons the right path will be severely
disciplined;
whoever hates correction will die.
- 11 Even Death and Destruction* hold no secrets
from the LORD.
How much more does he know the human heart!
- 12 Mockers hate to be corrected,
so they stay away from the wise.
- 13 A glad heart makes a happy face;
a broken heart crushes the spirit.
- 14 A wise person is hungry for knowledge,
while the fool feeds on trash.
- 15 For the despondent, every day brings trouble;
for the happy heart, life is a continual feast.
- 16 Better to have little, with fear for the LORD,
than to have great treasure and inner turmoil.
- 17 A bowl of vegetables with someone you love
is better than steak with someone you hate.
- 18 A hot-tempered person starts fights;
a cool-tempered person stops them.
- 19 A lazy person's way is blocked with briers,
but the path of the upright is an open highway.
- 20 Sensible children bring joy to their father;
foolish children despise their mother.
- 21 Foolishness brings joy to those with no sense;
a sensible person stays on the right path.
- 22 Plans go wrong for lack of advice;
many advisers bring success.
- 23 Everyone enjoys a fitting reply;
it is wonderful to say the right thing at the
right time!
- 24 The path of life leads upward for the wise;
they leave the grave* behind.
- 25 The LORD tears down the house of the proud,
but he protects the property of widows.
- 26 The LORD detests evil plans,
but he delights in pure words.
- 27 Greed brings grief to the whole family,
but those who hate bribes will live.
- 28 The heart of the godly thinks carefully before speaking;
the mouth of the wicked overflows with evil words.
- 29 The LORD is far from the wicked,
but he hears the prayers of the righteous.
- 30 A cheerful look brings joy to the heart;
good news makes for good health.
- 31 If you listen to constructive criticism,
you will be at home among the wise.
- 32 If you reject discipline, you only harm yourself;
but if you listen to correction, you grow in
understanding.
- 33 Fear of the LORD teaches wisdom;
humility precedes honor.

15:11 Hebrew Sheol and Abaddon. 15:24 Hebrew Sheol.

- 16¹ We can make our own plans,
but the LORD gives the right answer.
- 2 People may be pure in their own eyes,
but the LORD examines their motives.
- 3 Commit your actions to the LORD,
and your plans will succeed.
- 4 The LORD has made everything for his own purposes,
even the wicked for a day of disaster.
- 5 The LORD detests the proud;
they will surely be punished.
- 6 Unfailing love and faithfulness make atonement
for sin.
By fearing the LORD, people avoid evil.
- 7 When people's lives please the LORD,
even their enemies are at peace with them.
- 8 Better to have little, with godliness,
than to be rich and dishonest.
- 9 We can make our plans,
but the LORD determines our steps.
- 10 The king speaks with divine wisdom;
he must never judge unfairly.
- 11 The LORD demands accurate scales and balances;
he sets the standards for fairness.
- 12 A king detests wrongdoing,
for his rule is built on justice.
- 13 The king is pleased with words from righteous lips;
he loves those who speak honestly.
- 14 The anger of the king is a deadly threat;
the wise will try to appease it.
- 15 When the king smiles, there is life;
his favor refreshes like a spring rain.
- 16 How much better to get wisdom than gold,
and good judgment than silver!
- 17 The path of the virtuous leads away from evil;
whoever follows that path is safe.
- 18 Pride goes before destruction,
and haughtiness before a fall.
- 19 Better to live humbly with the poor
than to share plunder with the proud.
- 20 Those who listen to instruction will prosper;
those who trust the LORD will be joyful.
- 21 The wise are known for their understanding,
and pleasant words are persuasive.
- 22 Discretion is a life-giving fountain to those who
possess it,
but discipline is wasted on fools.
- 23 From a wise mind comes wise speech;
the words of the wise are persuasive.
- 24 Kind words are like honey—
sweet to the soul and healthy for the body.
- 25 There is a path before each person that seems right,
but it ends in death.
- 26 It is good for workers to have an appetite;
an empty stomach drives them on.
- 27 Scoundrels create trouble;
their words are a destructive blaze.

- A troublemaker plants seeds of strife;
gossip separates the best of friends.
- Violent people mislead their companions,
leading them down a harmful path.
- With narrowed eyes, people plot evil;
with a smirk, they plan their mischief.
- Gray hair is a crown of glory;
it is gained by living a godly life.
- Better to be patient than powerful;
better to have self-control than to conquer a city.
- We may throw the dice,*
but the LORD determines how they fall.

- 17¹ Better a dry crust eaten in peace
than a house filled with feasting—and conflict.
- A wise servant will rule over the master's disgraceful
and will share the inheritance of the master's
children.
- Fire tests the purity of silver and gold,
but the LORD tests the heart.
- Wrongdoers eagerly listen to gossip;
liars pay close attention to slander.
- Those who mock the poor insult their Maker;
those who rejoice at the misfortune of others will
be punished.
- Grandchildren are the crowning glory of the aged;
parents* are the pride of their children.
- Eloquent words are not fitting for a fool;
even less are lies fitting for a ruler.
- A bribe is like a lucky charm;
whoever gives one will prosper!
- Love prospers when a fault is forgiven,
but dwelling on it separates close friends.
- A single rebuke does more for a person of
understanding
than a hundred lashes on the back of a fool.
- And people are eager for rebellion,
but they will be severely punished.
- It is safer to meet a bear robbed of her cubs
than to confront a fool caught in foolishness.
- If you repay good with evil,
evil will never leave your house.
- Starting a quarrel is like opening a floodgate,
so stop before a dispute breaks out.
- Acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent—
both are detestable to the LORD.
- It is senseless to pay tuition to educate a fool,
since he has no heart for learning.
- A friend is always loyal,
and a brother is born to help in time of need.
- It is poor judgment to guarantee another person's debt
or put up security for a friend.
- Anyone who loves to quarrel loves sin;
anyone who trusts in high walls invites disaster.
- The crooked heart will not prosper;
the lying tongue tumbles into trouble.

17:11 Hebrew We may cast lots. 17:6 Hebrew fathers. 17:25 Hebrew A fool.

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- 25 Fire tests the purity of silver and gold,
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- 26 Tongue-dwellers eagerly listen to gossip;
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but they will be severely punished.
- 34 It is safer to meet a bear robbed of her cubs
than to confront a fool caught in foolishness.
- 35 If you repay good with evil,
evil will never leave your house.
- 36 Starting a quarrel is like opening a floodgate,
so stop before a dispute breaks out.
- 37 Accusing the guilty and condemning the innocent—
both are detestable to the LORD.
- 38 It is senseless to pay tuition to educate a fool,
since he has no heart for learning.
- 39 A friend is always loyal,
and a brother is born to help in time of need.
- 40 Poor judgment to guarantee another person's debt
or put up security for a friend.
- 41 Anyone who loves to quarrel loves sin;
anyone who trusts in high walls invites disaster.
- 42 The crooked heart will not prosper;
the lying tongue tumbles into trouble.

Hebrew We may cast lots. 17:6 Hebrew fathers. 17:25 Hebrew A foolish son. 18:18 Hebrew Casting lots.

- 21 It is painful to be the parent of a fool;
there is no joy for the father of a rebel.
- 22 A cheerful heart is good medicine,
but a broken spirit saps a person's strength.
- 23 The wicked take secret bribes
to pervert the course of justice.
- 24 Sensible people keep their eyes glued on wisdom,
but a fool's eyes wander to the ends of the earth.
- 25 Foolish children* bring grief to their father
and bitterness to the one who gave them birth.
- 26 It is wrong to punish the godly for being good
or to flog leaders for being honest.
- 27 A truly wise person uses few words;
a person with understanding is even-tempered.
- 28 Even fools are thought wise when they keep silent;
with their mouths shut, they seem intelligent.

- 18 ¹ Unfriendly people care only about themselves;
they lash out at common sense.

- 2 Fools have no interest in understanding;
they only want to air their own opinions.
- 3 Doing wrong leads to disgrace,
and scandalous behavior brings contempt.
- 4 Wise words are like deep waters;
wisdom flows from the wise like a bubbling brook.
- 5 It is not right to acquit the guilty
or deny justice to the innocent.
- 6 Fools' words get them into constant quarrels;
they are asking for a beating.
- 7 The mouths of fools are their ruin;
they trap themselves with their lips.
- 8 Rumors are dainty morsels
that sink deep into one's heart.
- 9 A lazy person is as bad as
someone who destroys things.
- 10 The name of the LORD is a strong fortress;
the godly run to him and are safe.
- 11 The rich think of their wealth as a strong defense;
they imagine it to be a high wall of safety.
- 12 Haughtiness goes before destruction;
humility precedes honor.
- 13 Spouting off before listening to the facts
is both shameful and foolish.
- 14 The human spirit can endure a sick body,
but who can bear a crushed spirit?
- 15 Intelligent people are always ready to learn.
Their ears are open for knowledge.
- 16 Giving a gift can open doors;
it gives access to important people!
- 17 The first to speak in court sounds right—
until the cross-examination begins.
- 18 Flipping a coin* can end arguments;
it settles disputes between powerful opponents.
- 19 An offended friend is harder to win back than
a fortified city.

Arguments separate friends like a gate locked with bars.

- 20 Wise words satisfy like a good meal; the right words bring satisfaction.
- 21 The tongue can bring death or life; those who love to talk will reap the consequences.
- 22 The man who finds a wife finds a treasure, and he receives favor from the LORD.
- 23 The poor plead for mercy; the rich answer with insults.
- 24 There are "friends" who destroy each other, but a real friend sticks closer than a brother.

19 ¹ Better to be poor and honest than to be dishonest and a fool.

- ² Enthusiasm without knowledge is no good; haste makes mistakes.
- ³ People ruin their lives by their own foolishness and then are angry at the LORD.
- ⁴ Wealth makes many "friends"; poverty drives them all away.
- ⁵ A false witness will not go unpunished, nor will a liar escape.
- ⁶ Many seek favors from a ruler; everyone is the friend of a person who gives gifts!
- ⁷ The relatives of the poor despise them; how much more will their friends avoid them! Though the poor plead with them, their friends are gone.
- ⁸ To acquire wisdom is to love oneself; people who cherish understanding will prosper.
- ⁹ A false witness will not go unpunished, and a liar will be destroyed.
- ¹⁰ It isn't right for a fool to live in luxury or for a slave to rule over princes!
- ¹¹ Sensible people control their temper; they earn respect by overlooking wrongs.
- ¹² The king's anger is like a lion's roar, but his favor is like dew on the grass.
- ¹³ A foolish child* is a calamity to a father; a quarrelsome wife is as annoying as constant dripping.
- ¹⁴ Fathers can give their sons an inheritance of houses and wealth, but only the LORD can give an understanding wife.
- ¹⁵ Lazy people sleep soundly, but idleness leaves them hungry.
- ¹⁶ Keep the commandments and keep your life; despising them leads to death.
- ¹⁷ If you help the poor, you are lending to the LORD—and he will repay you!
- ¹⁸ Discipline your children while there is hope. Otherwise you will ruin their lives.
- ¹⁹ Hot-tempered people must pay the penalty. If you rescue them once, you will have to do it again.

19:13 Hebrew son; also in 19:27. 20:10 Hebrew A stone and a stone, an ephah and an ephah. 20:16 An alternate reading in the Masoretic Text is for a promiscuous woman.

- ²⁰ Get all the advice and instruction you can, so you will be wise the rest of your life.
- ²¹ You can make many plans, but the LORD's purpose will prevail.
- ²² Loyalty makes a person attractive. It is better to be poor than dishonest.
- ²³ Fear of the LORD leads to life, bringing security and protection from harm.
- ²⁴ Lazy people take food in their hand but don't even lift it to their mouth.
- ²⁵ If you punish a mocker, the simpleminded will learn a lesson; if you correct the wise, they will be all the wiser.
- ²⁶ Children who mistreat their father or chase away their mother are an embarrassment and a public disgrace.
- ²⁷ If you stop listening to instruction, my child, you will turn your back on knowledge.
- ²⁸ A corrupt witness makes a mockery of justice; the mouth of the wicked gulps down evil.
- ²⁹ Punishment is made for mockers, and the backs of fools are made to be beaten.

20 ¹ Wine produces mockers; alcohol leads to brawls. Those led astray by drink cannot be wise.

- ² The king's fury is like a lion's roar; to rouse his anger is to risk your life.
- ³ Avoiding a fight is a mark of honor; only fools insist on quarreling.
- ⁴ Those too lazy to plow in the right season will have no food at the harvest.
- ⁵ Though good advice lies deep within the heart, a person with understanding will draw it out.
- ⁶ Many will say they are loyal friends, but who can find one who is truly reliable?
- ⁷ The godly walk with integrity; blessed are their children who follow them.
- ⁸ When a king sits in judgment, he weighs all the evidence, distinguishing the bad from the good.
- ⁹ Who can say, "I have cleansed my heart; I am pure and free from sin"?
- ¹⁰ False weights and unequal measures*—the LORD detests double standards of every kind.
- ¹¹ Even children are known by the way they act, whether their conduct is pure, and whether it is right.
- ¹² Ears to hear and eyes to see—both are gifts from the LORD.
- ¹³ If you love sleep, you will end in poverty. Keep your eyes open, and there will be plenty to eat.
- ¹⁴ The buyer haggles over the price, saying, "It's worthless," then brags about getting a bargain!
- ¹⁵ Wise words are more valuable than much gold and many rubies.
- ¹⁶ Get security from someone who guarantees a stranger's debt. Get a deposit if he does it for foreigners.*

- ¹⁷ Stolen bread tastes sweet, but it turns to gravel in the mouth.
 - ¹⁸ Plans succeed through good counsel; don't go to war without wise advice.
 - ¹⁹ A gossip goes around telling secrets, so don't hang around with chatterers.
 - ²⁰ If you insult your father or mother, your light will be snuffed out in total darkness.
 - ²¹ An inheritance obtained too early in life is not a blessing in the end.
 - ²² Don't say, "I will get even for this wrong." Wait for the LORD to handle the matter.
 - ²³ The LORD detests double standards; he is not pleased by dishonest scales.
 - ²⁴ The LORD directs our steps, so why try to understand everything along the way?
 - ²⁵ Don't trap yourself by making a rash promise to God and only later counting the cost.
 - ²⁶ A wise king scatters the wicked like wheat, then runs his threshing wheel over them.
 - ²⁷ The LORD's light penetrates the human spirit,* exposing every hidden motive.
 - ²⁸ Unfailing love and faithfulness protect the king; his throne is made secure through love.
 - ²⁹ The glory of the young is their strength; the gray hair of experience is the splendor of the old.
 - ³⁰ Physical punishment cleanses away evil;* such discipline purifies the heart.
- 21** ¹ The king's heart is like a stream of water directed by the LORD; he guides it wherever he pleases.
- ² People may be right in their own eyes, but the LORD examines their heart.
 - ³ The LORD is more pleased when we do what is right and just than when we offer him sacrifices.
 - ⁴ Haughty eyes, a proud heart, and evil actions are all sin.
 - ⁵ Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity, but hasty shortcuts lead to poverty.
 - ⁶ Wealth created by a lying tongue is a vanishing mist and a deadly trap.*
 - ⁷ The violence of the wicked sweeps them away, because they refuse to do what is just.
 - ⁸ The guilty walk a crooked path; the innocent travel a straight road.
 - ⁹ It's better to live alone in the corner of an attic than with a quarrelsome wife in a lovely home.
 - ¹⁰ Evil people desire evil; their neighbors get no mercy from them.
 - ¹¹ If you punish a mocker, the simpleminded become wiser; if you instruct the wise, they will be all the wiser.
 - ¹² The Righteous One* knows what is going on in the homes of the wicked; he will bring disaster on them.

20:17 Or The human spirit is the LORD's light. 20:30 The meaning of the Hebrew word is unclear. 21:12 Or The righteous man.

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21:17 Or The righteous man.

20:30 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

13 Those who shut their ears to the cries of the poor
will be ignored in their own time of need.
14 A secret gift calms anger;
a bribe under the table pacifies fury.
15 Justice is a joy to the godly,
but it terrifies evildoers.
16 The person who strays from common sense
will end up in the company of the dead.
17 Those who love pleasure become poor;
those who love wine and luxury will never be rich.
18 The wicked are punished in place of the godly,
and traitors in place of the honest.
19 It's better to live alone in the desert
than with a quarrelsome, complaining wife.
20 The wise have wealth and luxury,
but fools spend whatever they get.
21 Whoever pursues righteousness and unfailing love
will find life, righteousness, and honor.
22 The wise conquer the city of the strong
and level the fortress in which they trust.
23 Watch your tongue and keep your mouth shut,
and you will stay out of trouble.
24 Mockers are proud and haughty;
they act with boundless arrogance.
25 Despite their desires, the lazy will come to ruin,
for their hands refuse to work.
26 Some people are always greedy for more,
but the godly love to give!
27 The sacrifice of an evil person is detestable,
especially when it is offered with wrong motives.
28 A false witness will be cut off,
but a credible witness will be allowed to speak.
29 The wicked bluff their way through,
but the virtuous think before they act.
30 No human wisdom or understanding or plan
can stand against the LORD.
31 The horse is prepared for the day of battle,
but the victory belongs to the LORD.

22 Choose a good reputation over great riches;
being held in high esteem is better than silver
or gold.
2 The rich and poor have this in common:
The LORD made them both.
3 A prudent person foresees danger and takes
precautions.
The simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the
consequences.
4 True humility and fear of the LORD
lead to riches, honor, and long life.
5 Corrupt people walk a thorny, treacherous road;
whoever values life will avoid it.
6 Direct your children onto the right path,
and when they are older, they will not leave it.
7 Just as the rich rule the poor,
so the borrower is servant to the lender.

21:6 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads mist for those who

- ⁸ Those who plant injustice will harvest disaster, and their reign of terror will come to an end.*
- ⁹ Blessed are those who are generous, because they feed the poor.
- ¹⁰ Throw out the mocker, and fighting goes, too. Quarrels and insults will disappear.
- ¹¹ Whoever loves a pure heart and gracious speech will have the king as a friend.
- ¹² The LORD preserves those with knowledge, but he ruins the plans of the treacherous.
- ¹³ The lazy person claims, "There's a lion out there! If I go outside, I might be killed!"
- ¹⁴ The mouth of an immoral woman is a dangerous trap; those who make the LORD angry will fall into it.
- ¹⁵ A youngster's heart is filled with foolishness, but physical discipline will drive it far away.
- ¹⁶ A person who gets ahead by oppressing the poor or by showering gifts on the rich will end in poverty.

Sayings of the Wise

- ¹⁷ Listen to the words of the wise; apply your heart to my instruction.
- ¹⁸ For it is good to keep these sayings in your heart and always ready on your lips.
- ¹⁹ I am teaching you today—yes, you—so you will trust in the LORD.
- ²⁰ I have written thirty sayings* for you, filled with advice and knowledge.
- ²¹ In this way, you may know the truth and take an accurate report to those who sent you.
- ²² Don't rob the poor just because you can, or exploit the needy in court.
- ²³ For the LORD is their defender. He will ruin anyone who ruins them.
- ²⁴ Don't befriend angry people or associate with hot-tempered people, or you will learn to be like them and endanger your soul.
- ²⁶ Don't agree to guarantee another person's debt or put up security for someone else.
- ²⁷ If you can't pay it, even your bed will be snatched from under you.
- ²⁸ Don't cheat your neighbor by moving the ancient boundary markers set up by previous generations.
- ²⁹ Do you see any truly competent workers? They will serve kings rather than working for ordinary people.

- 23** ¹ While dining with a ruler, pay attention to what is put before you.
- ² If you are a big eater, put a knife to your throat;
- ³ don't desire all the delicacies, for he might be trying to trick you.
- ⁴ Don't wear yourself out trying to get rich. Be wise enough to know when to quit.
- ⁵ In the blink of an eye wealth disappears,

^{22:8} The Greek version includes an additional proverb: *God blesses a man who gives cheerfully, / but his worthless deeds will come to an end.* Compare 2 Cor 9:7. ^{22:20} Or *excellent sayings*; the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. ^{23:7} The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. ^{23:11} Or *redeemer*. ^{23:14} Hebrew *from Sheol*. ^{23:15} Hebrew *My son*; also in 23:19. ^{23:24} Hebrew *to have a wise son*.

- for it will sprout wings and fly away like an eagle.
- ⁶ Don't eat with people who are stingy; don't desire their delicacies.
- ⁷ They are always thinking about how much it costs.* "Eat and drink," they say, but they don't mean it.
- ⁸ You will throw up what little you've eaten, and your compliments will be wasted.
- ⁹ Don't waste your breath on fools, for they will despise the wisest advice.
- ¹⁰ Don't cheat your neighbor by moving the ancient boundary markers; don't take the land of defenseless orphans.
- ¹¹ For their Redeemer* is strong; he himself will bring their charges against you.
- ¹² Commit yourself to instruction; listen carefully to words of knowledge.
- ¹³ Don't fail to discipline your children. They won't die if you spank them.
- ¹⁴ Physical discipline may well save them from death.*
- ¹⁵ My child,* if your heart is wise, my own heart will rejoice!
- ¹⁶ Everything in me will celebrate when you speak what is right.
- ¹⁷ Don't envy sinners, but always continue to fear the LORD.
- ¹⁸ You will be rewarded for this; your hope will not be disappointed.
- ¹⁹ My child, listen and be wise: Keep your heart on the right course.
- ²⁰ Do not carouse with drunkards or feast with gluttons,
- ²¹ for they are on their way to poverty, and too much sleep clothes them in rags.
- ²² Listen to your father, who gave you life, and don't despise your mother when she is old.
- ²³ Get the truth and never sell it; also get wisdom, discipline, and good judgment.
- ²⁴ The father of godly children has cause for joy. What a pleasure to have children who are wise.*
- ²⁵ So give your father and mother joy! May she who gave you birth be happy.
- ²⁶ O my son, give me your heart. May your eyes take delight in following my ways.
- ²⁷ A prostitute is a dangerous trap; a promiscuous woman is as dangerous as falling into a narrow well.
- ²⁸ She hides and waits like a robber, eager to make more men unfaithful.
- ²⁹ Who has anguish? Who has sorrow? Who is always fighting? Who is always complaining? Who has unnecessary bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes?
- ³⁰ It is the one who spends long hours in the taverns, trying out new drinks.
- ³¹ Don't gaze at the wine, seeing how red it is, how it sparkles in the cup, how smoothly it goes down.
- ³² For in the end it bites like a poisonous snake; it stings like a viper.

- ³ You will see hallucinations, and you will say crazy things.
- ⁴ You will stagger like a sailor tossed at sea, clinging to a swaying mast.
- ⁵ And you will say, "They hit me, but I didn't feel it. I didn't even know it when they beat me up. When will I wake up so I can look for another drink?"

- 24** ¹ Don't envy evil people or desire their company. For their hearts plot violence, and their words always stir up trouble.
- ² A house is built by wisdom and becomes strong through good sense.
- ³ Through knowledge its rooms are filled with all sorts of precious riches and valuables.
- ⁴ The wise are mightier than the strong,* and those with knowledge grow stronger and stronger.
- ⁵ So don't go to war without wise guidance; victory depends on having many advisers.
- ⁶ Wisdom is too lofty for fools. Among leaders at the city gate, they have nothing to say.
- ⁷ A person who plans evil will get a reputation as a troublemaker. The schemes of a fool are sinful; everyone detests a mocker.
- ⁸ If you fail under pressure, your strength is too small.
- ⁹ Rescue those who are unjustly sentenced to die; save them as they stagger to their death.
- ¹⁰ Don't excuse yourself by saying, "Look, we didn't know." For God understands all hearts, and he sees you. He who guards your soul knows you knew. He will repay all people as their actions deserve.
- ¹¹ My child,* eat honey, for it is good, and the honeycomb is sweet to the taste. In the same way, wisdom is sweet to your soul. If you find it, you will have a bright future, and your hopes will not be cut short.
- ¹² Don't wait in ambush at the home of the godly, and don't raid the house where the godly live. The godly may trip seven times, but they will get up again.
- ¹³ But one disaster is enough to overthrow the wicked.
- ¹⁴ Don't rejoice when your enemies fall; don't be happy when they stumble. For the LORD will be displeased with you and will turn his anger away from them.
- ¹⁵ Don't fret because of evildoers; don't envy the wicked.
- ¹⁶ For evil people have no future; the light of the wicked will be snuffed out.
- ¹⁷ My child, fear the LORD and the king. Don't associate with rebels, for disaster will hit them suddenly. Who knows what punishment will come from the LORD and the king?

^{24:13} Greek version; Hebrew reads *A wise man is strength*. ^{24:13} Hebrew *My son*.

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 people who are stingy;
 their delicacies.
 thinking about how much it costs.
 "Link," they say, but they don't mean it.
 up what little you've eaten,
 compliments will be wasted.
 our breath on fools,
 despise the wisest advice.
 our neighbor by moving the ancient
 markers;
 the land of defenseless orphans.
 "emer" is strong;
 will bring their charges against you.
 self to instruction;
 fully to words of knowledge.
 discipline your children.
 die if you spank them.
 line
 ve them from death.*
 our heart is wise,
 art will rejoice!
 me will celebrate
 peak what is right.
 ners,
 continue to fear the Lord.
 varded for this;
 will not be disappointed.
 and be wise:
 heart on the right course.
 with drunkards
 gluttons,
 their way to poverty,
 ch sleep clothes them in rags.
 father, who gave you life,
 despise your mother when she is old
 and never sell it;
 dom, discipline, and good judgment
 dly children has cause for joy.
 sure to have children who are wise*
 ther and mother joy!
 o gave you birth be happy.
 me your heart.
 es take delight in following my way
 a dangerous trap;
 us woman is as dangerous as falling
 well.
 waits like a robber,
 e more men unfaithful.
 sh? Who has sorrow?
 s fighting? Who is always complaining
 necessary bruises? Who has blood
 spends long hours in the tavern
 w drinks.
 e wine, seeing how red it is,
 es in the cup, how smoothly it goes
 bites like a poisonous snake
 a viper.
 worthless deeds will come to an end. Compare
 the Hebrew is uncertain. 23:11 Or

- You will see hallucinations,
 and you will say crazy things.
 You will stagger like a sailor tossed at sea,
 clinging to a swaying mast.
 And you will say, "They hit me, but I didn't feel it.
 I didn't even know it when they beat me up.
 When will I wake up
 so I can look for another drink?"

- 24** Don't envy evil people
 or desire their company.
 For their hearts plot violence,
 and their words always stir up trouble.
 A house is built by wisdom
 and becomes strong through good sense.
 Through knowledge its rooms are filled
 with all sorts of precious riches and valuables.
 The wise are mightier than the strong*
 and those with knowledge grow stronger
 and stronger.
 So don't go to war without wise guidance;
 victory depends on having many advisers.
 Wisdom is too lofty for fools.
 Among leaders at the city gate, they have
 nothing to say.
 A person who plans evil
 will get a reputation as a troublemaker.
 The schemes of a fool are sinful;
 everyone detests a mocker.
 If you fail under pressure,
 your strength is too small.
 Rescue those who are unjustly sentenced to die;
 save them as they stagger to their death.
 Don't excuse yourself by saying, "Look, we didn't know."
 For God understands all hearts, and he sees you.
 He who guards your soul knows you knew.
 He will repay all people as their actions deserve.
 A child,* eat honey, for it is good,
 and the honeycomb is sweet to the taste.
 The same way, wisdom is sweet to your soul.
 If you find it, you will have a bright future,
 and your hopes will not be cut short.
 Don't wait in ambush at the home of the godly,
 and don't raid the house where the godly live.
 The godly may trip seven times, but they will get
 up again.
 But one disaster is enough to overthrow
 the wicked.
 Rejoice when your enemies fall;
 don't be happy when they stumble.
 The Lord will be displeased with you
 and will turn his anger away from them.
 Don't fret because of evildoers;
 don't envy the wicked.
 Evil people have no future;
 the light of the wicked will be snuffed out.
 A child, fear the Lord and the king.
 Don't associate with rebels,
 for disaster will hit them suddenly.
 Knows what punishment will come
 from the Lord and the king?

More Sayings of the Wise

Here are some further sayings of the wise:

- It is wrong to show favoritism when passing judgment.
24 A judge who says to the wicked, "You are innocent,"
 will be cursed by many people and denounced by
 the nations.
25 But it will go well for those who convict the guilty;
 rich blessings will be showered on them.
26 An honest answer
 is like a kiss of friendship.
27 Do your planning and prepare your fields
 before building your house.
28 Don't testify against your neighbors without cause;
 don't lie about them.
29 And don't say, "Now I can pay them back for what
 they've done to me!
 I'll get even with them!"
30 I walked by the field of a lazy person,
 the vineyard of one with no common sense.
31 I saw that it was overgrown with nettles.
 It was covered with weeds,
 and its walls were broken down.
32 Then, as I looked and thought about it,
 I learned this lesson:
33 A little extra sleep, a little more slumber,
 a little folding of the hands to rest—
34 then poverty will pounce on you like a bandit,
 scarcity will attack you like an armed robber.

More Proverbs of Solomon

25 These are more proverbs of Solomon, collected by
 the advisers of King Hezekiah of Judah.

- 2** It is God's privilege to conceal things
 and the king's privilege to discover them.
3 No one can comprehend the height of heaven, the depth
 of the earth,
 or all that goes on in the king's mind!
4 Remove the impurities from silver,
 and the sterling will be ready for the silversmith.
5 Remove the wicked from the king's court,
 and his reign will be made secure by justice.
6 Don't demand an audience with the king
 or push for a place among the great.
7 It's better to wait for an invitation to the head table
 than to be sent away in public disgrace.
 Just because you've seen something,
8 don't be in a hurry to go to court.
 For what will you do in the end
 if your neighbor deals you a shameful defeat?
9 When arguing with your neighbor,
 don't betray another person's secret.
10 Others may accuse you of gossip,
 and you will never regain your good reputation.
11 Timely advice is lovely,
 like golden apples in a silver basket.
12 To one who listens, valid criticism
 is like a gold earring or other gold jewelry.
13 Trustworthy messengers refresh like snow
 in summer.
 They revive the spirit of their employer.

Greek version; Hebrew reads *A wise man is strength.* 24:13 Hebrew *My son*; also in 24:21.

- 14 A person who promises a gift but doesn't give it is like clouds and wind that bring no rain.
- 15 Patience can persuade a prince, and soft speech can break bones.
- 16 Do you like honey?
Don't eat too much, or it will make you sick!
- 17 Don't visit your neighbors too often, or you will wear out your welcome.
- 18 Telling lies about others is as harmful as hitting them with an ax, wounding them with a sword, or shooting them with a sharp arrow.
- 19 Putting confidence in an unreliable person in times of trouble is like chewing with a broken tooth or walking on a lame foot.
- 20 Singing cheerful songs to a person with a heavy heart is like taking someone's coat in cold weather or pouring vinegar in a wound.*
- 21 If your enemies are hungry, give them food to eat. If they are thirsty, give them water to drink.
- 22 You will heap burning coals of shame on their heads, and the LORD will reward you.
- 23 As surely as a north wind brings rain, so a gossiping tongue causes anger!
- 24 It's better to live alone in the corner of an attic than with a quarrelsome wife in a lovely home.
- 25 Good news from far away is like cold water to the thirsty.
- 26 If the godly give in to the wicked, it's like polluting a fountain or muddying a spring.
- 27 It's not good to eat too much honey, and it's not good to seek honors for yourself.
- 28 A person without self-control is like a city with broken-down walls.

26¹ Honor is no more associated with fools than snow with summer or rain with harvest.

- 2 Like a fluttering sparrow or a darting swallow, an undeserved curse will not land on its intended victim.
- 3 Guide a horse with a whip, a donkey with a bridle, and a fool with a rod to his back!
- 4 Don't answer the foolish arguments of fools, or you will become as foolish as they are.
- 5 Be sure to answer the foolish arguments of fools, or they will become wise in their own estimation.
- 6 Trusting a fool to convey a message is like cutting off one's feet or drinking poison!
- 7 A proverb in the mouth of a fool is as useless as a paralyzed leg.
- 8 Honoring a fool is as foolish as tying a stone to a slingshot.
- 9 A proverb in the mouth of a fool is like a thorny branch brandished by a drunk.
- 10 An employer who hires a fool or a bystander is like an archer who shoots at random.

25:20 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *pouring vinegar on soda*. 26:23 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *Burning*. 26:25 Hebrew *seven evils*

- 11 As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his foolishness.
- 12 There is more hope for fools than for people who think they are wise.
- 13 The lazy person claims, "There's a lion on the road! Yes, I'm sure there's a lion out there!"
- 14 As a door swings back and forth on its hinges, so the lazy person turns over in bed.
- 15 Lazy people take food in their hand but don't even lift it to their mouth.
- 16 Lazy people consider themselves smarter than seven wise counselors.
- 17 Interfering in someone else's argument is as foolish as yanking a dog's ears.
- 18 Just as damaging as a madman shooting a deadly weapon is someone who lies to a friend and then says, "I was only joking."
- 20 Fire goes out without wood, and quarrels disappear when gossip stops.
- 21 A quarrelsome person starts fights as easily as hot embers light charcoal or fire lights wood.
- 22 Rumors are dainty morsels that sink deep into one's heart.
- 23 Smooth* words may hide a wicked heart, just as a pretty glaze covers a clay pot.
- 24 People may cover their hatred with pleasant words, but they're deceiving you.
- 25 They pretend to be kind, but don't believe them. Their hearts are full of many evils.*
- 26 While their hatred may be concealed by trickery, their wrongdoing will be exposed in public.
- 27 If you set a trap for others, you will get caught in it yourself. If you roll a boulder down on others, it will crush you instead.
- 28 A lying tongue hates its victims, and flattering words cause ruin.

27¹ Don't brag about tomorrow, since you don't know what the day will bring.

- 2 Let someone else praise you, not your own mouth—a stranger, not your own lips.
- 3 A stone is heavy and sand is weighty, but the resentment caused by a fool is even heavier.
- 4 Anger is cruel, and wrath is like a flood, but jealousy is even more dangerous.
- 5 An open rebuke is better than hidden love!
- 6 Wounds from a sincere friend are better than many kisses from an enemy.
- 7 A person who is full refuses honey, but even bitter food tastes sweet to the hungry.
- 8 A person who strays from home is like a bird that strays from its nest.

- * The heartfelt counsel of a friend is as sweet as perfume and incense.
- * Never abandon a friend—either yours or your father's. When disaster strikes, you won't have to ask your brother for assistance. It's better to go to a neighbor than to a brother who lives far away.
- * Be wise, my child,* and make my heart glad. Then I will be able to answer my critics.
- * A prudent person foresees danger and takes precautions. The simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences.
- * Get security from someone who guarantees a stranger's debt. Get a deposit if he does it for foreigners.*
- * A loud and cheerful greeting early in the morning will be taken as a curse!
- * A quarrelsome wife is as annoying as constant dripping on a rainy day. Stopping her complaints is like trying to stop the wind or trying to hold something with greased hands.
- * Iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.
- * Workers who tend a fig tree are allowed to eat the fruit, so workers who protect their employer's interests will be rewarded.
- * As a face is reflected in water, so the heart reflects the real person.
- * Just as Death and Destruction* are never satisfied, so human desire is never satisfied.
- * Fire tests the purity of silver and gold, but a person is tested by being praised.*
- * You cannot separate fools from their foolishness, even though you grind them like grain with mortar and pestle.
- * Know the state of your flocks, and put your heart into caring for your herds, for riches don't last forever, and the crown might not be passed to the next generation.
- * After the hay is harvested and the new crop appears and the mountain grasses are gathered in, your sheep will provide wool for clothing, and your goats will provide the price of a field, and you will have enough goats' milk for yourself, your family, and your servant girls.
- 28**¹ The wicked run away when no one is chasing them, but the godly are as bold as lions.
- * When there is moral rot within a nation, its government topples easily. But wise and knowledgeable leaders bring stability.
- * A poor person who oppresses the poor is like a pounding rain that destroys the crops.

27:13 As in Greek and Latin versions (see also 20:16). 27:21 Or by flattery. 28:7 Hebrew *their father*. 28:14 Or *the*

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- 4 To reject the law is to praise the wicked;
to obey the law is to fight them.
- 5 Evil people don't understand justice,
but those who follow the LORD understand
completely.
- 6 Better to be poor and honest
than to be dishonest and rich.
- 7 Young people who obey the law are wise;
those with wild friends bring shame to their
parents.*
- 8 Income from charging high interest rates
will end up in the pocket of someone who is kind
to the poor.
- 9 God detests the prayers
of a person who ignores the law.
- 10 Those who lead good people along an evil path
will fall into their own trap,
but the honest will inherit good things.
- 11 Rich people may think they are wise,
but a poor person with discernment can see right
through them.
- 12 When the godly succeed, everyone is glad.
When the wicked take charge, people go into hiding.
- 13 People who conceal their sins will not prosper,
but if they confess and turn from them, they will
receive mercy.
- 14 Blessed are those who fear to do wrong,*
but the stubborn are headed for serious trouble.
- 15 A wicked ruler is as dangerous to the poor
as a roaring lion or an attacking bear.
- 16 A ruler with no understanding will oppress his people,
but one who hates corruption will have a long life.
- 17 A murderer's tormented conscience will drive him into
the grave.
Don't protect him!
- 18 The blameless will be rescued from harm,
but the crooked will be suddenly destroyed.
- 19 A hard worker has plenty of food,
but a person who chases fantasies ends
up in poverty.
- 20 The trustworthy person will get a rich reward,
but a person who wants quick riches will get
into trouble.
- 21 Showing partiality is never good,
yet some will do wrong for a mere piece of bread.
- 22 Greedy people try to get rich quick
but don't realize they're headed for poverty.
- 23 In the end, people appreciate honest criticism
far more than flattery.
- 24 Anyone who steals from his father and mother
and says, "What's wrong with that?"
is no better than a murderer.
- 25 Greed causes fighting;
trusting the LORD leads to prosperity.
- 26 Those who trust their own insight are foolish,
but anyone who walks in wisdom is safe.

Hebrew *my son*. 27:13 As in Greek and Latin versions (see also 20:16); Hebrew reads *for a promiscuous woman*. 27:20 Hebrew *Sheol* and
27:21 Or *by flattery*. 28:7 Hebrew *their father*. 28:14 Or *those who fear the LORD*; Hebrew reads *those who fear*.

- 27 Whoever gives to the poor will lack nothing,
but those who close their eyes to poverty will
be cursed.
- 28 When the wicked take charge, people go into hiding.
When the wicked meet disaster, the godly
flourish.

29 ¹ Whoever stubbornly refuses to accept criticism
will suddenly be destroyed beyond recovery.

- ² When the godly are in authority, the people rejoice.
But when the wicked are in power, they groan.
- ³ The man who loves wisdom brings joy to his father,
but if he hangs around with prostitutes, his wealth is
wasted.
- ⁴ A just king gives stability to his nation,
but one who demands bribes destroys it.
- ⁵ To flatter friends
is to lay a trap for their feet.
- ⁶ Evil people are trapped by sin,
but the righteous escape, shouting for joy.
- ⁷ The godly care about the rights of the poor;
the wicked don't care at all.
- ⁸ Mockers can get a whole town agitated,
but the wise will calm anger.
- ⁹ If a wise person takes a fool to court,
there will be ranting and ridicule but no satisfaction.
- ¹⁰ The bloodthirsty hate blameless people,
but the upright seek to help them.*
- ¹¹ Fools vent their anger,
but the wise quietly hold it back.
- ¹² If a ruler pays attention to liars,
all his advisers will be wicked.
- ¹³ The poor and the oppressor have this in common—
the LORD gives sight to the eyes of both.
- ¹⁴ If a king judges the poor fairly,
his throne will last forever.
- ¹⁵ To discipline a child produces wisdom,
but a mother is disgraced by an undisciplined
child.
- ¹⁶ When the wicked are in authority, sin flourishes,
but the godly will live to see their downfall.
- ¹⁷ Discipline your children, and they will give you peace of
mind
and will make your heart glad.
- ¹⁸ When people do not accept divine guidance, they
run wild.
But whoever obeys the law is joyful.
- ¹⁹ Words alone will not discipline a servant;
the words may be understood, but they are
not heeded.
- ²⁰ There is more hope for a fool
than for someone who speaks without thinking.
- ²¹ A servant pampered from childhood
will become a rebel.
- ²² An angry person starts fights;
a hot-tempered person commits all kinds of sin.

29:10 Or *The bloodthirsty hate blameless people, / and they seek to kill the upright*; Hebrew reads *The bloodthirsty hate blameless people; / as for those they seek their life.* 30:1a Or *son of Jakeh from Massa*; or *son of Jakeh, an oracle.* 30:1b The Hebrew can also be translated *The man declares that / to Ishiel and to Ucal.* 30:15 Hebrew *two daughters who cry out, "Give, give!"* 30:16 Hebrew *Sheol.*

- 23 Pride ends in humiliation,
while humility brings honor.
- 24 If you assist a thief, you only hurt yourself.
You are sworn to tell the truth, but you dare not test.
- 25 Fearing people is a dangerous trap,
but trusting the LORD means safety.
- 26 Many seek the ruler's favor,
but justice comes from the LORD.
- 27 The righteous despise the unjust;
the wicked despise the godly.

The Sayings of Agur

30 The sayings of Agur son of Jakeh contain this
sage.*

- I am weary, O God;
I am weary and worn out, O God.*
- ² I am too stupid to be human,
and I lack common sense.
- ³ I have not mastered human wisdom,
nor do I know the Holy One.
- ⁴ Who but God goes up to heaven and comes back down?
Who holds the wind in his fists?
Who wraps up the oceans in his cloak?
Who has created the whole wide world?
What is his name—and his son's name?
Tell me if you know!
- ⁵ Every word of God proves true.
He is a shield to all who come to him for protection.
- ⁶ Do not add to his words,
or he may rebuke you and expose you as a liar.
- ⁷ O God, I beg two favors from you;
let me have them before I die.
Second, give me neither poverty nor riches!
Give me just enough to satisfy my needs.
- ⁹ For if I grow rich, I may deny you and say, "Who is
the LORD?"
And if I am too poor, I may steal and thus insult
your holy name.
- ¹⁰ Never slander a worker to the employer,
or the person will curse you, and you will pay for it.
- ¹¹ Some people curse their father
and do not thank their mother.
- ¹² They are pure in their own eyes,
but they are filthy and unwashed.
- ¹³ They look proudly around,
casting disdainful glances.
- ¹⁴ They have teeth like swords
and fangs like knives.
They devour the poor from the earth
and the needy from among humanity.
- ¹⁵ The leech has two suckers
that cry out, "More, more!"*
- There are three things that are never satisfied—
no, four that never say, "Enough!":
- ¹⁶ the grave,*
the barren womb,
the thirsty desert,
the blazing fire.

The eye that mocks a father
and despises a mother's instructions
will be plucked out by ravens of the valley
and eaten by vultures.

There are three things that amaze me—
no, four things that I don't understand:
how an eagle glides through the sky,
how a snake slithers on a rock,
how a ship navigates the ocean,
how a man loves a woman.

An adulterous woman consumes a man,
then wipes her mouth and says, "What's wrong
with that?"

There are three things that make the earth tremble,
no, four it cannot endure:
an overbearing fool who prospers,
a bitter woman who finally gets a husband,
a servant girl who supplants her mistress.

There are four things on earth that are small but
unusually wise:

ants—they aren't strong,
but they store up food all summer.

oxen*—they aren't powerful,
but they make their homes among the rocks.

moats—they have no king,
but they march in formation.

birds—they are easy to catch,
but they are found even in kings' palaces.

There are three things that walk with stately stride,
no, four that strut about:

the lion, king of animals, who won't turn aside
for anything,

the strutting rooster,
the male goat,

a king as he leads his army.

How have been a fool by being proud or plotting
to cover your mouth in shame.

The beating of cream yields butter
and striking the nose causes bleeding,
so stirring up anger causes quarrels.

Sayings of King Lemuel

The sayings of King Lemuel contain this
message which his mother taught him.

¹ O son of my womb,
do not waste your strength on women,

nor those who ruin kings.

Do not drink for kings, O Lemuel, to guzzle wine.
Kings should not crave alcohol.

If they drink, they may forget the law
and not give justice to the oppressed.

Is for the dying,
and wine for those in bitter distress.

Or *Rock badgers.* 31:1 Or *of Lemuel, king of Massa*,
whose name begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

ends in humiliation,
while humility brings honor.
You assist a thief, you only hurt yourself.
You are sworn to tell the truth, but you dare not testify.
Trusting people is a dangerous trap,
but trusting the Lord means safety.
You seek the ruler's favor,
but justice comes from the Lord.
The righteous despise the unjust;
the wicked despise the godly.

Sayings of Agur

The sayings of Agur son of Jakeh contain this message.*

How weary, O God;
how weary and worn out, O God.*
I am too stupid to be human,
and I lack common sense.
I have not mastered human wisdom,
nor do I know the Holy One.

But God goes up to heaven and comes back down.
Who holds the wind in his fists?
Who wraps up the oceans in his cloak?
Who has created the whole wide world?
What is his name—and his son's name?
Tell me if you know!

My word of God proves true.
He is a shield to all who come to him for protection.
He does not add to his words,
he may rebuke you and expose you as a liar.

I beg two favors from you;
do not have them before I die.
Do not help me never to tell a lie.
Do not condemn, give me neither poverty nor riches!
Do not leave me just enough to satisfy my needs.
I grow rich, I may deny you and say, "Who is the Lord?"

But if I am too poor, I may steal and thus insult the holy name.

Do not slander a worker to the employer,
the person will curse you, and you will pay for it.

Do not let people curse their father
and do not thank their mother.
Do not let people be pure in their own eyes,
they are filthy and unwashed.

Do not look proudly around,
giving disdainful glances.
Do not have teeth like swords
and fangs like knives.

Do not devour the poor from the earth
and take the needy from among humanity.

Each has two suckers
and cry out, "More, more!"*

There are three things that are never satisfied—
four that never say, "Enough!":

The barren womb,
the thirsty desert,
the blazing fire.

The bloodthirsty hate blameless people; / as for the wicked,
the Hebrew can also be translated *The man declares the*
Hebrew Sheol.

The eye that mocks a father
and despises a mother's instructions
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Bees—they aren't powerful,
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Crabs—they have no king,
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Geckos—they are easy to catch,
but they are found even in kings' palaces.

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no, four that strut about:

The lion, king of animals, who won't turn aside
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The strutting rooster,
the male goat,

A king as he leads his army.

You have been a fool by being proud or plotting evil,
cover your mouth in shame.

The beating of cream yields butter
and striking the nose causes bleeding,
so stirring up anger causes quarrels.

Sayings of King Lemuel

The sayings of King Lemuel contain this message,*
which his mother taught him.

My son, O son of my womb,
O son of my vows,
do not waste your strength on women,
on those who ruin kings.

It is not for kings, O Lemuel, to guzzle wine.
Rulers should not crave alcohol.

If they drink, they may forget the law
and not give justice to the oppressed.

Alcohol is for the dying,
and wine for those in bitter distress.

*Or Conys, or Rock badgers. 31:1 Or of Lemuel, king of Massa; or of King Lemuel, an oracle. 31:10 Verses 10-31 comprise a Hebrew acrostic
verse begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. 31:21 As in Greek and Latin versions; Hebrew reads scarlet.*

Let them drink to forget their poverty
and remember their troubles no more.

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves;
ensure justice for those being crushed.

Yes, speak up for the poor and helpless,
and see that they get justice.

A Wife of Noble Character

Who can find a virtuous and capable wife?
She is more precious than rubies.

Her husband can trust her,
and she will greatly enrich his life.

She brings him good, not harm,
all the days of her life.

She finds wool and flax
and busily spins it.

She is like a merchant's ship,
bringing her food from afar.

She gets up before dawn to prepare breakfast for
her household
and plan the day's work for her servant girls.

She goes to inspect a field and buys it;
with her earnings she plants a vineyard.

She is energetic and strong,
a hard worker.

She makes sure her dealings are profitable;
her lamp burns late into the night.

Her hands are busy spinning thread,
her fingers twisting fiber.

She extends a helping hand to the poor
and opens her arms to the needy.

She has no fear of winter for her household,
for everyone has warm* clothes.

She makes her own bedspreads.
She dresses in fine linen and purple gowns.

Her husband is well known at the city gates,
where he sits with the other civic leaders.

She makes belted linen garments
and sashes to sell to the merchants.

She is clothed with strength and dignity,
and she laughs without fear of the future.

When she speaks, her words are wise,
and she gives instructions with kindness.

She carefully watches everything in her household
and suffers nothing from laziness.

Her children stand and bless her.
Her husband praises her:

"There are many virtuous and capable women
in the world,
but you surpass them all!"

Charm is deceptive, and beauty does not last;
but a woman who fears the Lord will be greatly
praised.

Reward her for all she has done.
Let her deeds publicly declare her praise.

is in humiliation,
humility brings honor.
sist a thief, you only hurt yourself.
re sworn to tell the truth, but you dare not test
people is a dangerous trap,
usting the LORD means safety.
ek the ruler's favor,
justice comes from the LORD.
teous despise the unjust;
cked despise the godly.

Sayings of Agur
Sayings of Agur son of Jakeh contain this me-

ry, O God;
eary and worn out, O God.*
stupid to be human,
ack common sense.
t mastered human wisdom,
I know the Holy One.

God goes up to heaven and comes back down
olds the wind in his fists?
ps up the oceans in his cloak?
as created the whole wide world?
is name—and his son's name?
e if you know!

rd of God proves true.
shield to all who come to him for protection.
ld to his words,
may rebuke you and expose you as a liar.

eg two favors from you;
have them before I die.
me never to tell a lie.
d, give me neither poverty nor riches!
e just enough to satisfy my needs.
ow rich, I may deny you and say, "Who is
LORD?"

I am too poor, I may steal and thus insult God
y name.

nder a worker to the employer,
person will curse you, and you will pay for it.

ple curse their father
not thank their mother.
pure in their own eyes,
are filthy and unwashed.

pridefully around,
disdainful glances.
teeth like swords
ngs like knives.

our the poor from the earth
e needy from among humanity.

has two suckers
y out, "More, more!"*

three things that are never satisfied—
r that never say, "Enough!"

ren womb,
sty desert,
zing fire.

The bloodthirsty hate blameless people; / as for the
Hebrew can also be translated *The man declares* . . .
Sheol.

The eye that mocks a father
and despises a mother's instructions
will be plucked out by ravens of the valley
and eaten by vultures.

There are three things that amaze me—
no, four things that I don't understand:

How an eagle glides through the sky,
how a snake slithers on a rock,
how a ship navigates the ocean,
how a man loves a woman.

An adulterous woman consumes a man,
then wipes her mouth and says, "What's wrong
with that?"

There are three things that make the earth tremble—
no, four it cannot endure:

a slave who becomes a king,
an overbearing fool who prospers,
a bitter woman who finally gets a husband,
a servant girl who supplants her mistress.

There are four things on earth that are small but
unusually wise:

Ants—they aren't strong,
but they store up food all summer.

Beavers*—they aren't powerful,
but they make their homes among the rocks.

Locusts—they have no king,
but they march in formation.

Lizards—they are easy to catch,
but they are found even in kings' palaces.

There are three things that walk with stately stride—
no, four that strut about:

the lion, king of animals, who won't turn aside
for anything,

the strutting rooster,
the male goat,
a king as he leads his army.

If you have been a fool by being proud or plotting evil,
cover your mouth in shame.

As the beating of cream yields butter
and striking the nose causes bleeding,
so stirring up anger causes quarrels.

The Sayings of King Lemuel

The sayings of King Lemuel contain this message,*
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18 She makes sure her dealings are profitable;
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and opens her arms to the needy.

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for everyone has warm* clothes.

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She dresses in fine linen and purple gowns.

23 Her husband is well known at the city gates,
where he sits with the other civic leaders.

24 She makes belted linen garments
and sashes to sell to the merchants.

25 She is clothed with strength and dignity,
and she laughs without fear of the future.

26 When she speaks, her words are wise,
and she gives instructions with kindness.

27 She carefully watches everything in her household
and suffers nothing from laziness.

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Her husband praises her:

29 "There are many virtuous and capable women
in the world,
but you surpass them all!"

30 Charm is deceptive, and beauty does not last;
but a woman who fears the LORD will be greatly
praised.

31 Reward her for all she has done.
Let her deeds publicly declare her praise.

ECCLESIASTES

Author Solomon, according to Jewish tradition
Date Written Uncertain, perhaps around 935 B.C., late in Solomon's reign
Content There are few experiences in life that are more universal than disappointment. It seems as if everyone has experienced a broken promise, an unfulfilled expectation, or a shattered dream.

The "Teacher" in the book of Ecclesiastes recorded his own experiences with disappointment as he tried to find peace apart from God. In the book, the Teacher uses a series of examples—wealth, wisdom, popularity, pleasure—and shows how each of them ultimately ends in disappointment if it becomes the sole reason for one's existence. After pondering this dilemma for several chapters, the author finally comes to this conclusion: "Fear God and obey his commands, for this is everyone's duty" (12:13). It appears that the Teacher abandoned any hope in worldly pursuits and decided that glorifying God provides the only lasting meaning in life.

1 These are the words of the Teacher,* King David's son, who ruled in Jerusalem.

Everything Is Meaningless

²"Everything is meaningless," says the Teacher, "completely meaningless!"

³What do people get for all their hard work under the sun? ⁴Generations come and generations go, but the earth never changes. ⁵The sun rises and the sun sets, then hurries around to rise again. ⁶The wind blows south, and then turns north. Around and around it goes, blowing in circles. ⁷Rivers run into the sea, but the sea is never full. Then the water returns again to the rivers and flows out again to the sea. ⁸Everything is wearisome beyond description. No matter how much we see, we are never satisfied. No matter how much we hear, we are not content.

⁹History merely repeats itself. It has all been done before. Nothing under the sun is truly new. ¹⁰Sometimes people say, "Here is something new!" But actually it is old; nothing is ever truly new. ¹¹We don't remember what happened in the past, and in future generations, no one will remember what we are doing now.

The Teacher Speaks: The Futility of Wisdom

¹²I, the Teacher, was king of Israel, and I lived in Jerusalem. ¹³I devoted myself to search for understanding and to explore by wisdom everything being done under heaven. I soon discovered that God has dealt a tragic existence to the human race. ¹⁴I observed everything going on under the sun, and really, it is all meaningless—like chasing the wind.

¹⁵ What is wrong cannot be made right.
What is missing cannot be recovered.

¹⁶I said to myself, "Look, I am wiser than any of the kings who ruled in Jerusalem before me. I have greater wisdom and knowledge than any of them." ¹⁷So I set out to learn everything from wisdom to madness and folly. But I learned firsthand that pursuing all this is like chasing the wind.

¹⁸ The greater my wisdom, the greater my grief.
To increase knowledge only increases sorrow.

The Futility of Pleasure

2 I said to myself, "Come on, let's try pleasure. Let's look for the 'good things' in life." But I found that this, too, was meaningless. ²So I said, "Laughter is silly. What good

does it do to seek pleasure?" ³After much thought, I decided to cheer myself with wine. And while still seeking wisdom, I clutched at foolishness. In this way, I tried to experience the only happiness most people find during their brief life in this world.

⁴I also tried to find meaning by building huge homes for myself and by planting beautiful vineyards. ⁵I made gardens and parks, filling them with all kinds of fruit trees. ⁶I built reservoirs to collect the water to irrigate my many flourishing groves. ⁷I bought slaves, both men and women, and others were born into my household. I also owned large herds and flocks, more than any of the kings who had lived in Jerusalem before me. ⁸I collected great sums of silver and gold, the treasure of many kings and provinces. I hired wonderful singers, both men and women, and had many beautiful cubicles. I had everything a man could desire!

⁹So I became greater than all who had lived in Jerusalem before me, and my wisdom never failed me. ¹⁰Anything I wanted, I would take. I denied myself no pleasure. I even found great pleasure in hard work, a reward for all my labors. ¹¹But as I looked at everything I had worked so hard to accomplish, it was all so meaningless—like chasing the wind. There was nothing really worthwhile anywhere.

The Wise and the Foolish

¹²So I decided to compare wisdom with foolishness and madness (for who can do this better than I, the king?) I thought, "Wisdom is better than foolishness, just as light is better than darkness. ¹⁴For the wise can see where they are going, but fools walk in the dark." Yet I saw that the wise and the foolish share the same fate. ¹⁵Both will die. So I said to myself, "Since I will end up the same as the fool, what is the value of all my wisdom? This is all so meaningless!" ¹⁶For the wise and the foolish both die. The wise will not be remembered any longer than the fool. In the days to come, both will be forgotten.

¹⁷So I came to hate life because everything done here under the sun is so troubling. Everything is meaningless—like chasing the wind.

The Futility of Work

¹⁸I came to hate all my hard work here on earth, for I leave to others everything I have earned. ¹⁹And who can tell whether my successors will be wise or foolish? Yet I must control everything I have gained by my skill and hard work.

the sun. How meaningless! ²⁰So I gave up reasoning the value of all my hard work in this life. ²¹Some people work wisely with knowledge and leave the fruit of their efforts to someone who does not deserve it. This, too, is meaningless, a great tragedy. ²²Do people get in this life for all their hard work? ²³Their days of labor are filled with pain and grief, and their minds cannot rest. It is all meaningless. ²⁴So I decided there is nothing better than to eat and drink and to find satisfaction in work. Then I realized these pleasures are from the hand of God. ²⁵Can we enjoy anything apart from him? ²⁶God gives wisdom, knowledge, and joy to those who please him. He becomes wealthy, God takes the wealth from those who please themselves. He gives wisdom to those who please him. This, too, is meaningless—like chasing the wind.

Time for Everything

³ For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven. ⁴A time to be born and a time to die. ⁵A time to plant and a time to harvest. ⁶A time to kill and a time to heal. ⁷A time to tear down and a time to build up. ⁸A time to cry and a time to laugh. ⁹A time to grieve and a time to dance. ¹⁰A time to scatter stones and a time to gather stones. ¹¹A time to embrace and a time to turn away. ¹²A time to search and a time to quit searching. ¹³A time to keep and a time to throw away. ¹⁴A time to tear and a time to mend. ¹⁵A time to be quiet and a time to speak. ¹⁶A time to love and a time to hate. ¹⁷A time for war and a time for peace.

¹⁸What do people really get for all their hard work under the sun? ¹⁹Between the burden God has placed on us all. ²⁰Yet God makes everything beautiful for its own time. He has put the fear of God in the human heart, but even so, people cannot understand the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end. ²¹For there is nothing better than to be happy and to enjoy the fruits of their labor, for these are the things God gives.

²²And I know that whatever God does is final. No one can add to it or taken from it. God's purpose will stand, and no one should fear him. ²³What is happening now has happened before, and what will happen in the future has happened before, because God makes the same things happen over and over again.

Justices of Life

¹ I noticed that under the sun there is evil in the world. ²Yes, even the courts of law are corrupt! ³I said to myself, "The season God will judge everyone, both good and bad, for all their deeds."

⁴ I also thought about the human condition—how people share the same fate—both breathe* and both die. ⁵People have no real advantage over the animals. ⁶Both go to the same place—they come and they return to dust. ⁷For who can prove that the spirit goes up and the spirit of animals goes down?

⁸ So I saw that there is nothing better for people than to eat and drink and to find satisfaction in their work. ⁹ For this is what God gives to all the people, to all those who are before them. ¹⁰ I know that this is the end of the matter. ¹¹ I know that this is the end of the matter. ¹² I know that this is the end of the matter. ¹³ I know that this is the end of the matter. ¹⁴ I know that this is the end of the matter. ¹⁵ I know that this is the end of the matter. ¹⁶ I know that this is the end of the matter. ¹⁷ I know that this is the end of the matter. ¹⁸ I know that this is the end of the matter. ¹⁹ I know that this is the end of the matter. ²⁰ I know that this is the end of the matter. ²¹ I know that this is the end of the matter. ²² I know that this is the end of the matter. ²³ I know that this is the end of the matter. ²⁴ I know that this is the end of the matter. ²⁵ I know that this is the end of the matter. ²⁶ I know that this is the end of the matter. ²⁷ I know that this is the end of the matter. ²⁸ I know that this is the end of the matter. ²⁹ I know that this is the end of the matter. ³⁰ I know that this is the end of the matter. ³¹ I know that this is the end of the matter. ³² I know that this is the end of the matter. ³³ I know that this is the end of the matter. ³⁴ I know that this is the end of the matter. ³⁵ I know that this is the end of the matter. ³⁶ I know that this is the end of the matter. ³⁷ I know that this is the end of the matter. ³⁸ I know that this is the end of the matter. ³⁹ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁴⁰ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁴¹ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁴² I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁴³ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁴⁴ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁴⁵ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁴⁶ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁴⁷ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁴⁸ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁴⁹ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁵⁰ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁵¹ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁵² I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁵³ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁵⁴ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁵⁵ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁵⁶ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁵⁷ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁵⁸ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁵⁹ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁶⁰ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁶¹ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁶² I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁶³ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁶⁴ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁶⁵ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁶⁶ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁶⁷ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁶⁸ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁶⁹ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁷⁰ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁷¹ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁷² I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁷³ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁷⁴ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁷⁵ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁷⁶ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁷⁷ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁷⁸ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁷⁹ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁸⁰ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁸¹ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁸² I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁸³ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁸⁴ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁸⁵ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁸⁶ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁸⁷ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁸⁸ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁸⁹ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁹⁰ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁹¹ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁹² I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁹³ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁹⁴ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁹⁵ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁹⁶ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁹⁷ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁹⁸ I know that this is the end of the matter. ⁹⁹ I know that this is the end of the matter. ¹⁰⁰ I know that this is the end of the matter.

1:1 Hebrew *Qohaleth*; this term is rendered "the Teacher" throughout this book.

2:12 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

the sun. How meaningless! ²⁰So I gave up in despair, mourning the value of all my hard work in this world. Some people work wisely with knowledge and skill, then leave the fruit of their efforts to someone who hasn't earned it. This, too, is meaningless, a great tragedy. ²²So people get in this life for all their hard work and anxiety. Their days of labor are filled with pain and grief; even their minds cannot rest. It is all meaningless. I decided there is nothing better than to enjoy food and drink and to find satisfaction in work. Then I realized these pleasures are from the hand of God. ²⁵For who can enjoy anything apart from him? ²⁶God gives wisdom, knowledge, and joy to those who please him. But if a person becomes wealthy, God takes the wealth away and gives it to those who please him. This, too, is meaningless—like chasing the wind.

Time for Everything

For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven. There is a time to be born and a time to die. There is a time to plant and a time to harvest. There is a time to kill and a time to heal. There is a time to tear down and a time to build up. There is a time to cry and a time to laugh. There is a time to grieve and a time to dance. There is a time to scatter stones and a time to gather stones. There is a time to embrace and a time to turn away. There is a time to search and a time to quit searching. There is a time to keep and a time to throw away. There is a time to tear and a time to mend. There is a time to be quiet and a time to speak. There is a time to love and a time to hate. There is a time for war and a time for peace.

What do people really get for all their hard work? ¹⁰I noticed the burden God has placed on us all. ¹¹Yet God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He has planted wisdom in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end. ¹²So I concluded there is nothing better than to be happy and enjoy ourselves as long as we can. ¹³And people should eat and enjoy the fruits of their labor, for these are gifts from God.

I know that whatever God does is final. Nothing is added to it or taken from it. God's purpose is that people should fear him. ¹⁵What is happening now has happened before, and what will happen in the future has happened before, because God makes the same things happen over and over again.

Justices of Life

I noticed that under the sun there is evil in the court. Yes, even the courts of law are corrupt! ¹⁷I said to myself, "In due season God will judge everyone, both good and bad for all their deeds."

I also thought about the human condition—how God has made people that they are like animals. ¹⁹For people and animals share the same fate—both breathe* and both must die. People have no real advantage over the animals. How meaningless! ²⁰Both go to the same place—they came from the dust and they return to dust. ²¹For who can prove that the human spirit goes up and the spirit of animals goes down into the earth? ²²So I saw that there is nothing better for people

*Greek and Syriac versions: Hebrew reads *apart from me*? ^{3:19} Or *both have the same spirit*. ^{4:15} Hebrew *the second youth*. ^{4:16} Hebrew *and to all the people, to all those who are before them*. ^{5:1} Verse 5:1 is numbered 4:17 in Hebrew text. ^{5:2} Verses 5:2-20 are numbered 4:18-37 in Hebrew text.

than to be happy in their work. That is why we are here! No one will bring us back from death to enjoy life after we die.

4 Again, I observed all the oppression that takes place under the sun. I saw the tears of the oppressed, with no one to comfort them. The oppressors have great power, and their victims are helpless. ²So I concluded that the dead are better off than the living. ³But most fortunate of all are those who are not yet born. For they have not seen all the evil that is done under the sun.

⁴Then I observed that most people are motivated to success because they envy their neighbors. But this, too, is meaningless—like chasing the wind.

⁵ "Fools fold their idle hands, leading them to ruin."

⁶And yet,

"Better to have one handful with quietness than two handfuls with hard work and chasing the wind."

The Advantages of Companionship

⁷I observed yet another example of something meaningless under the sun. ⁸This is the case of a man who is all alone, without a child or a brother, yet who works hard to gain as much wealth as he can. But then he asks himself, "Who am I working for? Why am I giving up so much pleasure now?" It is all so meaningless and depressing.

⁹Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. ¹⁰If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. ¹¹Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone? ¹²A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.

The Futility of Political Power

¹³It is better to be a poor but wise youth than an old and foolish king who refuses all advice. ¹⁴Such a youth could rise from poverty and succeed. He might even become king, though he has been in prison. ¹⁵But then everyone rushes to the side of yet another youth* who replaces him. ¹⁶Endless crowds stand around him,* but then another generation grows up and rejects him, too. So it is all meaningless—like chasing the wind.

Approaching God with Care

5 ¹*As you enter the house of God, keep your ears open and your mouth shut. It is evil to make mindless offerings to God. ²*Don't make rash promises, and don't be hasty in bringing matters before God. After all, God is in heaven, and you are here on earth. So let your words be few.

³ Too much activity gives you restless dreams; too many words make you a fool.

⁴When you make a promise to God, don't delay in following through, for God takes no pleasure in fools. Keep all the promises you make to him. ⁵It is better to say nothing than to make a promise and not keep it. ⁶Don't let your mouth make you sin. And don't defend yourself by telling the Temple messenger that the promise you made was a mistake. That would make God angry, and he might wipe out everything you have achieved.

Of Work

I ate all my hard work here on earth, for I have enjoyed everything I have earned. ¹⁹And who can tell if my successors will be wise or foolish? Yet I have gained nothing I have gained by my skill and hard work. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

⁷Talk is cheap, like daydreams and other useless activities. Fear God instead.

The Futility of Wealth

⁸Don't be surprised if you see a poor person being oppressed by the powerful and if justice is being miscarried throughout the land. For every official is under orders from higher up, and matters of justice get lost in red tape and bureaucracy. ⁹Even the king milks the land for his own profit!

¹⁰Those who love money will never have enough. How meaningless to think that wealth brings true happiness! ¹¹The more you have, the more people come to help you spend it. So what good is wealth—except perhaps to watch it slip through your fingers!

¹²People who work hard sleep well, whether they eat little or much. But the rich seldom get a good night's sleep.

¹³There is another serious problem I have seen under the sun. Hoarding riches harms the saver. ¹⁴Money is put into risky investments that turn sour, and everything is lost. In the end, there is nothing left to pass on to one's children. ¹⁵We all come to the end of our lives as naked and empty-handed as on the day we were born. We can't take our riches with us.

¹⁶And this, too, is a very serious problem. People leave this world no better off than when they came. All their hard work is for nothing—like working for the wind. ¹⁷Throughout their lives, they live under a cloud—frustrated, discouraged, and angry.

¹⁸Even so, I have noticed one thing, at least, that is good. It is good for people to eat, drink, and enjoy their work under the sun during the short life God has given them, and to accept their lot in life. ¹⁹And it is a good thing to receive wealth from God and the good health to enjoy it. To enjoy your work and accept your lot in life—this is indeed a gift from God. ²⁰God keeps such people so busy enjoying life that they take no time to brood over the past.

6 There is another serious tragedy I have seen under the sun, and it weighs heavily on humanity. ²God gives some people great wealth and honor and everything they could ever want, but then he doesn't give them the chance to enjoy these things. They die, and someone else, even a stranger, ends up enjoying their wealth! This is meaningless—a sickening tragedy.

³A man might have a hundred children and live to be very old. But if he finds no satisfaction in life and doesn't even get a decent burial, it would have been better for him to be born dead. ⁴His birth would have been meaningless, and he would have ended in darkness. He wouldn't even have had a name, ⁵and he would never have seen the sun or known of its existence. Yet he would have had more peace than in growing up to be an unhappy man. ⁶He might live a thousand years twice over but still not find contentment. And since he must die like everyone else—well, what's the use?

⁷All people spend their lives scratching for food, but they never seem to have enough. ⁸So are wise people really better off than fools? Do poor people gain anything by being wise and knowing how to act in front of others?

⁹Enjoy what you have rather than desiring what you don't have. Just dreaming about nice things is meaningless—like chasing the wind.

The Future—Determined and Unknown

¹⁰Everything has already been decided. It was known long ago what each person would be. So there's no use arguing with God about your destiny.

5:9 The meaning of the Hebrew in verses 8 and 9 is uncertain. 7:18 Or will follow them both.

¹¹The more words you speak, the less they mean. So what good are they?

¹²In the few days of our meaningless lives, who knows how our days can best be spent? Our lives are like a shadow. Who can tell what will happen on this earth after we are gone?

Wisdom for Life

7 ¹A good reputation is more valuable than costly perfume.

And the day you die is better than the day you are born.

²Better to spend your time at funerals than at parties. After all, everyone dies—so the living should take this to heart.

³Sorrow is better than laughter, for sadness has a refining influence on us.

⁴A wise person thinks a lot about death, while a fool thinks only about having a good time.

⁵Better to be criticized by a wise person than to be praised by a fool.

⁶A fool's laughter is quickly gone, like thorns crackling in a fire. This also is meaningless.

⁷Extortion turns wise people into fools, and bribes corrupt the heart.

⁸Finishing is better than starting. Patience is better than pride.

⁹Control your temper, for anger labels you a fool.

¹⁰Don't long for "the good old days." This is not wise.

¹¹Wisdom is even better when you have money. Both are a benefit as you go through life.

¹²Wisdom and money can get you almost anything, but only wisdom can save your life.

¹³Accept the way God does things, for who can straighten what he has made crooked?

¹⁴Enjoy prosperity while you can, but when hard times strike, realize that both come from God. Remember that nothing is certain in this life.

The Limits of Human Wisdom

¹⁵I have seen everything in this meaningless life, including the death of good young people and the long life of wicked people. ¹⁶So don't be too good or too wise! Why destroy yourself? ¹⁷On the other hand, don't be too wicked either. Don't be a fool! Why die before your time? ¹⁸Pay attention to these instructions, for anyone who fears God will avoid both extremes.*

¹⁹One wise person is stronger than ten leading citizens of a town!

²⁰Not a single person on earth is always good and never sins.

²¹Don't eavesdrop on others—you may hear your servant curse you. ²²For you know how often you yourself have cursed others.

²³I have always tried my best to let wisdom guide my thoughts and actions. I said to myself, "I am determined to be wise." But it didn't work. ²⁴Wisdom is always distant and difficult to find. ²⁵I searched everywhere, determined to

find wisdom and to understand the reason for things. I determined to prove to myself that wickedness is stupid and foolishness is madness.

²⁶I discovered that a seductive woman* is a trap more than death. Her passion is a snare, and her soft hands are snares. Those who are pleasing to God will escape her, but those who are not will be caught in her snare.

²⁷This is my conclusion," says the Teacher. "I discovered after looking at the matter from every possible angle. Though I have searched repeatedly, I have not found wisdom looking for. Only one out of a thousand men is wise, but not one woman! ²⁸But I did find this: God creates people to be virtuous, but they have each turned to their own downward path."

8 How wonderful to be wise, to analyze and interpret things. Wisdom lights up a person's face, softening its harshness.

Obedience to the King

¹Obey the king since you vowed to God that you would. Don't try to avoid doing your duty, and don't stand against him. Those who plot evil, for the king can do whatever he wants. His command is backed by great power. No one can question it. ²Those who obey him will not be punished. Those who are wise will find a time and a way to do what is right, ³for there is a time and a way for everything, when a person is in trouble.

Indeed, how can people avoid what they don't know is going to happen? ⁴None of us can hold back our spirit from departing. None of us has the power to prevent the day of our death. There is no escaping that obligation, that battle. And in the face of death, wickedness will certainly not rescue the wicked.

The Wicked and the Righteous

¹I have thought deeply about all that goes on here under the sun, where people have the power to hurt each other. I have seen wicked people buried with honor. Yet they are the very ones who frequented the Temple and are buried* in the same city where they committed crimes! This, too, is meaningless. ²When a crime is punished quickly, people feel it is safe to do wrong. Even though a person sins a hundred times and still lives a long time, I know that those who fear God will be better off. ³The wicked will not prosper, for they do not fear God. Their days will never grow long like the evening shadow. ⁴And this is not all that is meaningless in our world. In this life, good people are often treated as though they are wicked, and wicked people are often treated as though they are good. This is so meaningless!

⁵So I recommend having fun, because there is nothing better for people in this world than to eat, drink, and enjoy life. That way they will experience some happiness along with all the hard work God gives them under the sun.

⁶In my search for wisdom and in my observation of the burdens here on earth, I discovered that there is no rest, no activity, day and night. ⁷I realized that no one discovers everything God is doing under the sun. Not even the wisest people discover everything, no matter what they claim.

Death Comes to All

9 This, too, I carefully explored: Even though the actions of godly and wise people are in God's hands, no one can escape death. ²For all people share the same fate. ³As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Greek versions and Latin Vulgate; Hebrew lacks or bad. ⁴9:10 Hebrew to

words you speak, the less they mean. So the days of our meaningless lives, who can best be spent? Our lives are like a shadow. What will happen on this earth after we die?

Life

Reputation is more valuable than costly perfume. The day you die is better than the day you are born. Spend your time at funerals than at parties. All, everyone dies—living should take this to heart. It is better than laughter, for wisdom has a refining influence on us. A person thinks a lot about death, but a fool thinks only about having a good time.

Do not be criticized by a wise person or be praised by a fool. Laughter is quickly gone, and tears crackling in a fire, so is meaningless. It turns wise people into fools, and it corrupts the heart. It is better than starting, and it is better than pride. Control your temper, and anger labels you a fool. Remember for “the good old days,” but it is not wise. It is even better when you have money. It is a benefit as you go through life. Wisdom can save your life.

The way God does things, no one can straighten what he has made crooked. Prosperity while you can, when hard times strike, realize that both come from God. Remember that nothing is certain in this life.

Of Human Wisdom

Everything in this meaningless life, including good young people and the long life of old people, don't be too good or too wise! Why? On the other hand, don't be too wicked either. Why die before your time? Pay attention to the words, for anyone who fears God will avoid disaster.

A person is stronger than ten leading cities. A single person on earth is always good and wise. Do not shedrop on others—you may hear your secret. For you know how often you yourself have been tried my best to let wisdom guide my actions. I said to myself, “I am determined it didn't work.” Wisdom is always distant. I searched everywhere, determined to find wisdom and to understand the reason for things. I was determined to prove to myself that wickedness is stupid and foolishness is madness.

I discovered that a seductive woman* is a trap more bitter than death. Her passion is a snare, and her soft hands are snares. Those who are pleasing to God will escape her, but those who are not will be caught in her snare.

This is my conclusion,” says the Teacher. “I discovered after looking at the matter from every possible angle. Though I have searched repeatedly, I have not found what I was looking for. Only one out of a thousand men is virtuous, but not one woman! But I did find this: God created people to be virtuous, but they have each turned to follow their own downward path.”

How wonderful to be wise, to analyze and interpret things. Wisdom lights up a person's face, softening its harshness.

Obedience to the King

Remember the king since you vowed to God that you would not try to avoid doing your duty, and don't stand with those who plot evil, for the king can do whatever he wants. His command is backed by great power. No one can resist or question it. Those who obey him will not be punished. Those who are wise will find a time and a way to do what is right, for there is a time and a way for everything, even when a person is in trouble. Indeed, how can people avoid what they don't know is going to happen? None of us can hold back our spirit from obeying. None of us has the power to prevent the day of death. There is no escaping that obligation, that dark day. And in the face of death, wickedness will certainly not rescue the wicked.

The Wicked and the Righteous

I have thought deeply about all that goes on here under the sun, where people have the power to hurt each other. I have seen wicked people buried with honor. Yet they were once ones who frequented the Temple and are now in the same city where they committed their crimes. This, too, is meaningless. When a crime is not punished quickly, people feel it is safe to do wrong. But though a person sins a hundred times and still lives a long time, I know that those who fear God will be better off. The wicked will not prosper, for they do not fear God. Their days will never grow long like the evening shadows. And this is not all that is meaningless in our world. In our life, good people are often treated as though they were wicked, and wicked people are often treated as though they were good. This is so meaningless!

I recommend having fun, because there is nothing better for people in this world than to eat, drink, and enjoy life. That way they will experience some happiness along with the hard work God gives them under the sun. In my search for wisdom and in my observation of people here on earth, I discovered that there is ceaseless activity, day and night. I realized that no one can know everything God is doing under the sun. Not even the wisest people discover everything, no matter what they claim.

Wisdom Comes to All

This, too, I carefully explored: Even though the actions of the godly and wise people are in God's hands, no one

can know a woman. 8:10 As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Greek version; many Hebrew manuscripts read *and are forgotten*. 9:2 As in Greek and Latin Vulgate; Hebrew lacks *or bad*. 9:10 Hebrew to *Sheol*.

knows whether God will show them favor. The same destiny ultimately awaits everyone, whether righteous or wicked, good or bad,* ceremonially clean or unclean, religious or irreligious. Good people receive the same treatment as sinners, and people who make promises to God are treated like people who don't.

It seems so tragic that everyone under the sun suffers the same fate. That is why people are not more careful to be good. Instead, they choose their own mad course, for they have no hope. There is nothing ahead but death anyway. There is hope only for the living. As they say, “It's better to be a live dog than a dead lion!”

The living at least know they will die, but the dead know nothing. They have no further reward, nor are they remembered. Whatever they did in their lifetime—loving, hating, envying—is all long gone. They no longer play a part in anything here on earth. So go ahead. Eat your food with joy, and drink your wine with a happy heart, for God approves of this! Wear fine clothes, with a splash of cologne!

Live happily with the woman you love through all the meaningless days of life that God has given you under the sun. The wife God gives you is your reward for all your earthly toil. Whatever you do, do well. For when you go to the grave,* there will be no work or planning or knowledge or wisdom.

I have observed something else under the sun. The fastest runner doesn't always win the race, and the strongest warrior doesn't always win the battle. The wise sometimes go hungry, and the skillful are not necessarily wealthy. And those who are educated don't always lead successful lives. It is all decided by chance, by being in the right place at the right time.

People can never predict when hard times might come. Like fish in a net or birds in a trap, people are caught by sudden tragedy.

Thoughts on Wisdom and Folly

Here is another bit of wisdom that has impressed me as I have watched the way our world works. There was a small town with only a few people, and a great king came with his army and besieged it. A poor, wise man knew how to save the town, and so it was rescued. But afterward no one thought to thank him. So even though wisdom is better than strength, those who are wise will be despised if they are poor. What they say will not be appreciated for long.

- 17 Better to hear the quiet words of a wise person than the shouts of a foolish king.
- 18 Better to have wisdom than weapons of war, but one sinner can destroy much that is good.

10 ¹ As dead flies cause even a bottle of perfume to stink, so a little foolishness spoils great wisdom and honor.

- 2 A wise person chooses the right road; a fool takes the wrong one.
- 3 You can identify fools just by the way they walk down the street!
- 4 If your boss is angry at you, don't quit! A quiet spirit can overcome even great mistakes.

The Ironies of Life

There is another evil I have seen under the sun. Kings and rulers make a grave mistake when they give great authority

to a woman. 8:10 As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Greek version; many Hebrew manuscripts read *and are forgotten*. 9:2 As in Greek and Latin Vulgate; Hebrew lacks *or bad*. 9:10 Hebrew to *Sheol*.

seed in the morning and keep busy all day.
don't know if profit will come from one act
—or maybe both.

Young and Old

how pleasant to see a new day dawning
ple live to be very old, let them rejoice in even
let them also remember there will be many
anything still to come is meaningless.

ple,* it's wonderful to be young! Enjoy every
to everything you want to do; take it all in.
at you must give an account to God for every
10 So refuse to worry, and keep your youth
remember that youth, with a whole life before
gless.

et the excitement of youth cause you to tremble
reator. Honor him in your youth before you
ay, "Life is not pleasant anymore." 2 Remember
e light of the sun, moon, and stars is dimming
and rain clouds continually darken your day
him before your legs—the guards of your life
to tremble; and before your shoulders—
toop. Remember him before your teeth—
g servants—stop grinding; and before you
en looking through the windows—see dimming
him before the door to life's opportunities
ound of work fades. Now you rise at the dawn
e birds, but then all their sounds will grow
f him before you become fearful of taking
ut danger in the streets; before your hair turns
lmond tree in bloom, and you drag along with
a dying grasshopper, and the caper beetle
e sexual desire. Remember him before you
your everlasting home, when the mourning
ur funeral.

ember your Creator now while you are young
er cord of life snaps and the golden bowl
wait until the water jar is smashed at the
pulley is broken at the well. 7 For then you
to the earth, and the spirit will return to the

Thoughts about the Teacher

meaningless," says the Teacher, "comparing
n mind: The Teacher was considered
the people everything he knew. He
ny proverbs, studying and classifying them
ought to find just the right words to express

of the wise are like cattle prods—paraphrasing
collected sayings are like a nail-studded
epherd* drives the sheep.

ld,* let me give you some further advice
ng books is endless, and much study
hole story. Here now is my final conclusion
bey his commands, for this is even
udge us for everything we do, much
g, whether good or bad.

ow your bread on the waters, / for after many days
as you cannot understand how breath comes
and true. 12:11 Or one shepherd. 12:12

SONG OF SONGS

Author Solomon, according to Jewish tradition

Written Uncertain, perhaps around 960 B.C., early in Solomon's reign

Content Popular sexual behavior today is a sad distortion of God's plan established in the Garden of Eden. Contrary to God's design, it has become a freely traded commodity rather than an exclusive, private treasure shared between a committed husband and wife. God values romantic love and sexual union, and the Song of Songs expresses the beauty of this love as God intended it. This poetic book describes several scenes involving Solomon, a young woman, and possibly another young man. It is a song about love, courtship, and marriage, using many vivid metaphors to describe these things. These poetic verses describe a couple's desire for one another, the struggles they overcome, the tender feelings that love awakens in them, and the joy they find in being together. The "young women of Jerusalem" also add some observations of their own. Many scholars believe this poem should also be understood as an illustration of Christ's love for the church.

This is Solomon's song of songs, more wonderful than any other.

Young Woman*

Kiss me and kiss me again,
for your love is sweeter than wine.
How fragrant your cologne;
your name is like its spreading fragrance.
We wonder all the young women love you!
Take me with you; come, let's run!
The king has brought me into his bedroom.

Young Women of Jerusalem

How happy we are for you, O king.
We praise your love even more than wine.

Young Woman

How right they are to adore you.

How dark but beautiful,
O women of Jerusalem—
as the tents of Kedar,
as the curtains of Solomon's tents.

I stare at me because I am dark—
the sun has darkened my skin.
My brothers were angry with me;
they forced me to care for their vineyards,
and I couldn't care for myself—my own vineyard.

And now, my love, where are you leading your flock today?

Where will you rest your sheep at noon?
Why should I wander like a prostitute*
among your friends and their flocks?

Young Man

I don't know, O most beautiful woman,
follow the trail of my flock,
and graze your young goats by the shepherds' tents.

How are you as exciting, my darling,
as a mare among Pharaoh's stallions.

How lovely are your cheeks;
your earrings set them afire!

How lovely is your neck,
enhanced by a string of jewels.

11 We will make for you earrings of gold
and beads of silver.

Young Woman

12 The king is lying on his couch,
enchanted by the fragrance of my perfume.

13 My lover is like a sachet of myrrh
lying between my breasts.

14 He is like a bouquet of sweet henna blossoms
from the vineyards of En-gedi.

Young Man

15 How beautiful you are, my darling,
how beautiful!
Your eyes are like doves.

Young Woman

16 You are so handsome, my love,
pleasing beyond words!
The soft grass is our bed;
17 fragrant cedar branches are the beams
of our house,
and pleasant smelling firs are the rafters.

Young Woman

2 I am the spring crocus blooming on the Sharon
Plain,*
the lily of the valley.

Young Man

2 Like a lily among thistles
is my darling among young women.

Young Woman

3 Like the finest apple tree in the orchard
is my lover among other young men.
I sit in his delightful shade
and taste his delicious fruit.

4 He escorts me to the banquet hall;
it's obvious how much he loves me.

5 Strengthen me with raisin cakes,
refresh me with apples,
for I am weak with love.

6 His left arm is under my head,
and his right arm embraces me.

Footnotes identifying the speakers are not in the original text, though the Hebrew usually gives clues by means of the gender of the person speaking.
*Like a veiled woman. 2:1 Traditionally rendered I am the rose of Sharon. Sharon Plain is a region in the coastal plain of Palestine.

- 7 Promise me, O women of Jerusalem,
by the gazelles and wild deer,
not to awaken love until the time is right.*
- 8 Ah, I hear my lover coming!
He is leaping over the mountains,
bounding over the hills.
- 9 My lover is like a swift gazelle
or a young stag.
Look, there he is behind the wall,
looking through the window,
peering into the room.
- 10 My lover said to me,
"Rise up, my darling!
Come away with me, my fair one!
and the rains are over and gone.
- 11 Look, the winter is past,
and the rains are over and gone.
- 12 The flowers are springing up,
the season of singing birds* has come,
and the cooing of turtledoves fills the air.
- 13 The fig trees are forming young fruit,
and the fragrant grapevines are blossoming.
Rise up, my darling!
Come away with me, my fair one!"

Young Man

- 14 My dove is hiding behind the rocks,
behind an outcrop on the cliff.
Let me see your face;
let me hear your voice.
For your voice is pleasant,
and your face is lovely.

Young Women of Jerusalem

- 15 Catch all the foxes,
those little foxes,
before they ruin the vineyard of love,
for the grapevines are blossoming!

Young Woman

- 16 My lover is mine, and I am his.
He browses among the lilies.
- 17 Before the dawn breezes blow
and the night shadows flee,
return to me, my love, like a gazelle
or a young stag on the rugged mountains.*

Young Woman

- 3¹ One night as I lay in bed, I yearned for my lover.
I yearned for him, but he did not come.
- 2 So I said to myself, "I will get up and roam the city,
searching in all its streets and squares.
I will search for the one I love."
So I searched everywhere but did not find him.
- 3 The watchmen stopped me as they made their rounds,
and I asked, "Have you seen the one I love?"
- 4 Then scarcely had I left them
when I found my love!
I caught and held him tightly,
then I brought him to my mother's house,
into my mother's bed, where I had been conceived.
- 5 Promise me, O women of Jerusalem,
by the gazelles and wild deer,
not to awaken love until the time is right.*

Young Women of Jerusalem

- 6 Who is this sweeping in from the wilderness
like a cloud of smoke?

2:7 Or not to awaken love until it is ready. 2:12 Or the season of pruning vines.
ready. 3:11 Hebrew of Zion. 4:2 Hebrew Not one is missing; each has a twin.

Who is it, fragrant with myrrh and frankincense
and every kind of spice?

- 7 Look, it is Solomon's carriage,
surrounded by sixty heroic men,
the best of Israel's soldiers.
- 8 They are all skilled swordsmen,
experienced warriors.
Each wears a sword on his thigh,
ready to defend the king against an attack
in the night.
- 9 King Solomon's carriage is built
of wood imported from Lebanon.
- 10 Its posts are silver,
its canopy gold;
its cushions are purple.
It was decorated with love
by the young women of Jerusalem.

Young Woman

- 11 Come out to see King Solomon,
young women of Jerusalem.*
He wears the crown his mother gave him on his
wedding day,
his most joyous day.

Young Man

- 4¹ You are beautiful, my darling,
beautiful beyond words.
Your eyes are like doves
behind your veil.
Your hair falls in waves,
like a flock of goats winding down the slopes
of Gilead.
- 2 Your teeth are as white as sheep,
recently shorn and freshly washed.
Your smile is flawless,
each tooth matched with its twin.*
- 3 Your lips are like scarlet ribbon;
your mouth is inviting.
Your cheeks are like rosy pomegranates
behind your veil.
- 4 Your neck is as beautiful as the tower of David,
jeweled with the shields of a thousand heroes.
- 5 Your breasts are like two fawns,
twin fawns of a gazelle grazing among the lilies.
- 6 Before the dawn breezes blow
and the night shadows flee,
I will hurry to the mountain of myrrh
and to the hill of frankincense.
- 7 You are altogether beautiful, my darling,
beautiful in every way.
- 8 Come with me from Lebanon, my bride,
come with me from Lebanon.
Come down* from Mount Amanah,
from the peaks of Senir and Hermon,
where the lions have their dens
and leopards live among the hills.
- 9 You have captured my heart,
my treasure,* my bride.
You hold it hostage with one glance of your eyes,
with a single jewel of your necklace.
- 10 Your love delights me,
my treasure, my bride.
Your love is better than wine,
your perfume more fragrant than spices.

2:17 Or on the hills of Bethel. 3:5 Or not to awaken love until it is
ready. 4:8 Or Look down. 4:9 Hebrew my sister; also in 4:10, 12.

Your lips are as sweet as nectar, my bride.

Honey and milk are under your tongue.
Your clothes are scented
like the cedars of Lebanon.

You are my private garden, my treasure, my bride,
a secluded spring, a hidden fountain.

Your thighs shelter a paradise of pomegranates
with rare spices—

nard with nard,
nard and saffron,
fragrant calamus and cinnamon,
with all the trees of frankincense, myrrh, and aloes,
and every other lovely spice.

You are a garden fountain,
a well of fresh water
streaming down from Lebanon's mountains.

Young Woman

Wake, north wind!
Rise up, south wind!
Blow on my garden
and spread its fragrance all around.
Come into your garden, my love;
taste its finest fruits.

Young Man

I have entered my garden, my treasure,*
my bride!
I gather myrrh with my spices
and eat honeycomb with my honey.
I drink wine with my milk.

Women of Jerusalem

Over and beloved, eat and drink!
Yes, drink deeply of your love!

Young Woman

Awake, but my heart was awake,
when I heard my lover knocking and calling:
Open to me, my treasure, my darling,
my dove, my perfect one.
My head is drenched with dew,
my hair with the dampness of the night."

I responded,
Have taken off my robe.
Should I get dressed again?
Have washed my feet.
Should I get them soiled?"

Over tried to unlatch the door,
and my heart thrilled within me.
I rushed up to open the door for my love,
and my hands dripped with perfume.
I pulled back the bolt.

I opened to my lover,
but he was gone!
My heart sank.
I searched for him
but could not find him anywhere.

I called to him,
but there was no reply.
The night watchmen found me
as they made their rounds.
They beat and bruised me
and stripped off my veil,
those watchmen on the walls.

4:9 Hebrew my sister; also in 5:2. 6:6 Hebrew Not one is missing; each has a twin.

Who is it, fragrant with myrrh and frankincense
and every kind of spice?
Look, it is Solomon's carriage,
surrounded by sixty heroic men,
the best of Israel's soldiers.
They are all skilled swordsmen,
experienced warriors.
Each wears a sword on his thigh,
ready to defend the king against an attack
in the night.
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your mouth is inviting.
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twin fawns of a gazelle grazing among the lilies.
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Honey and milk are under your tongue.
Your clothes are scented
like the cedars of Lebanon.
You are my private garden, my treasure, my bride,
a secluded spring, a hidden fountain.
Your thighs shelter a paradise of pomegranates
with rare spices—
nard, with nard,
sard and saffron,
fragrant calamus and cinnamon,
all the trees of frankincense, myrrh, and aloes,
and every other lovely spice.
You are a garden fountain,
a well of fresh water
streaming down from Lebanon's mountains.

Woman

Wake, north wind!
Rise up, south wind!
Blow on my garden
and spread its fragrance all around.
Come into your garden, my love;
Taste its finest fruits.

Man

I have entered my garden, my treasure,*
my bride!
I gather myrrh with my spices
and eat honeycomb with my honey.
I drink wine with my milk.

Women of Jerusalem

Over and beloved, eat and drink!
Drink deeply of your love!

Woman

But my heart was awake,
when I heard my lover knocking and calling:
Come to me, my treasure, my darling,
my dove, my perfect one.
My head is drenched with dew,
my hair with the dampness of the night."

I responded,
I have taken off my robe.
Should I get dressed again?
I have washed my feet.
Should I get them soiled?"

I never tried to unlatch the door,
and my heart thrilled within me.
I jumped up to open the door for my love,
and my hands dripped with perfume.
My fingers dripped with lovely myrrh
as I pulled back the bolt.
I opened to my lover,
but he was gone!
My heart sank.
I searched for him
but could not find him anywhere.
I called to him,
but there was no reply.
Night watchmen found me
and made their rounds.
They beat and bruised me
and stripped off my veil,
and watchmen on the walls.

also in 5:2. 6:6 Hebrew Not one is missing; each has a twin.

8 Make this promise, O women of Jerusalem—
If you find my lover,
tell him I am weak with love.

Young Women of Jerusalem

9 Why is your lover better than all others,
O woman of rare beauty?
What makes your lover so special
that we must promise this?

Young Woman

10 My lover is dark and dazzling,
better than ten thousand others!
11 His head is finest gold,
his wavy hair is black as a raven.
12 His eyes sparkle like doves
beside springs of water;
they are set like jewels
washed in milk.
13 His cheeks are like gardens of spices
giving off fragrance.
His lips are like lilies,
perfumed with myrrh.
14 His arms are like rounded bars of gold,
set with beryl.
His body is like bright ivory,
glowing with lapis lazuli.
15 His legs are like marble pillars
set in sockets of finest gold.
His posture is stately,
like the noble cedars of Lebanon.
16 His mouth is sweetness itself;
he is desirable in every way.
Such, O women of Jerusalem,
is my lover, my friend.

Young Women of Jerusalem

6 ¹ Where has your lover gone,
O woman of rare beauty?
Which way did he turn
so we can help you find him?

Young Woman

2 My lover has gone down to his garden,
to his spice beds,
to browse in the gardens
and gather the lilies.
3 I am my lover's, and my lover is mine.
He browses among the lilies.
Young Man
4 You are beautiful, my darling,
like the lovely city of Tirzah.
Yes, as beautiful as Jerusalem,
as majestic as an army with billowing
banners.
5 Turn your eyes away,
for they overpower me.
Your hair falls in waves,
like a flock of goats winding down the slopes
of Gilead.
6 Your teeth are as white as sheep
that are freshly washed.
Your smile is flawless,
each tooth matched with its twin.*
7 Your cheeks are like rosy pomegranates
behind your veil.

- 8 Even among sixty queens
and eighty concubines
and countless young women,
9 I would still choose my dove, my perfect one—
the favorite of her mother,
dearly loved by the one who bore her.
The young women see her and praise her;
even queens and royal concubines sing
her praises:
10 "Who is this, arising like the dawn,
as fair as the moon,
as bright as the sun,
as majestic as an army with billowing banners?"

Young woman

- 11 I went down to the grove of walnut trees
and out to the valley to see the new spring growth,
to see whether the grapevines had budded
or the pomegranates were in bloom.
12 Before I realized it,
my strong desires had taken me to the chariot
of a noble man.*

Young Women of Jerusalem

- 13*Return, return to us, O maid of Shulam.
Come back, come back, that we may see you again.

Young Man

Why do you stare at this young woman of Shulam,
as she moves so gracefully between two lines of
dancers?*

- 7¹* How beautiful are your sandaled feet,
O queenly maiden.
Your rounded thighs are like jewels,
the work of a skilled craftsman.
2 Your navel is perfectly formed
like a goblet filled with mixed wine.
Between your thighs lies a mound of wheat
bordered with lilies.
3 Your breasts are like two fawns,
twin fawns of a gazelle.
4 Your neck is as beautiful as an ivory tower.
Your eyes are like the sparkling pools in Heshbon
by the gate of Bath-rabbim.
Your nose is as fine as the tower of Lebanon
overlooking Damascus.
5 Your head is as majestic as Mount Carmel,
and the sheen of your hair radiates royalty.
The king is held captive by its tresses.
6 Oh, how beautiful you are!
How pleasing, my love, how full of delights!
7 You are slender like a palm tree,
and your breasts are like its clusters of fruit.
8 I said, "I will climb the palm tree
and take hold of its fruit."
May your breasts be like grape clusters,
and the fragrance of your breath like apples.
9 May your kisses be as exciting as the best wine,
flowing gently over lips and teeth.*

Young Woman

- 10 I am my lover's,
and he claims me as his own.

6:12 Or to the royal chariots of my people, or to the chariots of Amminadab. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. 6:13a Verse 6:13 is numbered in the Hebrew text. 6:13b Or as you would at the movements of two armies? or as you would at the dance of Mahanaim? The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. 7:1 Verses 7:1-13 are numbered 7:2-14 in Hebrew text. 7:9 As in Greek and Syriac versions and Latin Vulgate; Hebrew reads over lips of sleepers in the villages. 8:2 Or there she will teach me; or there she bore me. 8:4 Or not to awaken love until it is ready. 8:6a Or its passion. 8:6b Hebrew as Sheol.

- 11 Come, my love, let us go out to the fields
and spend the night among the wildflowers.*
12 Let us get up early and go to the vineyards
to see if the grapevines have budded,
if the blossoms have opened,
and if the pomegranates have bloomed.
There I will give you my love.
13 There the mandrakes give off their fragrance,
and the finest fruits are at our door,
new delights as well as old,
which I have saved for you, my lover.

Young Woman

- 8¹ Oh, I wish you were my brother,
who nursed at my mother's breasts.
Then I could kiss you no matter who was
watching,
and no one would criticize me.
2 I would bring you to my childhood home,
and there you would teach me.*
I would give you spiced wine to drink,
my sweet pomegranate wine.
3 Your left arm would be under my head,
and your right arm would embrace me.
4 Promise me, O women of Jerusalem,
not to awaken love until the time is right.*

Young Women of Jerusalem

- 5 Who is this sweeping in from the desert,
leaning on her lover?

Young Woman

- I aroused you under the apple tree,
where your mother gave you birth,
where in great pain she delivered you.
6 Place me like a seal over your heart,
like a seal on your arm.
For love is as strong as death,
its jealousy* as enduring as the grave.*
Love flashes like fire,
the brightest kind of flame.
7 Many waters cannot quench love,
nor can rivers drown it.
If a man tried to buy love
with all his wealth,
his offer would be utterly scorned.

The Young Woman's Brothers

- 8 We have a little sister
too young to have breasts.
What will we do for our sister
if someone asks to marry her?
9 If she is a virgin, like a wall,
we will protect her with a silver tower.
But if she is promiscuous, like a swinging door,
we will block her door with a cedar bar.

Young Woman

- 10 I was a virgin, like a wall;
now my breasts are like towers.
When my lover looks at me,
he is delighted with what he sees.
11 Solomon has a vineyard at Baal-hamon,
which he leases out to tenant farmers.

Each of them pays a thousand pieces of silver*
for harvesting its fruit.
But my vineyard is mine to give,
and Solomon need not pay a thousand pieces
of silver.
But I will give two hundred pieces
to those who care for its vines.
Hebrew 1,000 shekels of silver.

my love, let us go out to the fields
and spend the night among the wildflowers.*
Get up early and go to the vineyards
and see if the grapevines have budded,
and the blossoms have opened,
and the pomegranates have bloomed.
Then I will give you my love,
the mandrakes give off their fragrance,
the finest fruits are at our door,
delights as well as old,
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Young Man

I wish you were my brother,
who nursed at my mother's breasts.
I could kiss you no matter who was
watching,
no one would criticize me.
I'd bring you to my childhood home,
there you would teach me.*
I'd give you spiced wine to drink,
sweet pomegranate wine.
Your left arm would be under my head,
and your right arm would embrace me.

Awake, O women of Jerusalem,
to awaken love until the time is right.*

Women of Jerusalem

Is this sweeping in from the desert,
leaving no sign of her lover?

Young Man

I kissed you under the apple tree,
where your mother gave you birth,
where in great pain she delivered you.
I came like a seal over your heart,
and a seal on your arm.
My love is as strong as death,
my jealousy* as enduring as the grave.*
My flames like fire,
the brightest kind of flame.
Waters cannot quench love,
nor can rivers drown it.
I have tried to buy love
with all his wealth,
but my offer would be utterly scorned.

Young Woman's Brothers

Have a little sister
young to have breasts.
What will we do for our sister
if someone asks to marry her?
She is a virgin, like a wall,<
I will protect her with a silver tower.
She is promiscuous, like a swinging door,
I will block her door with a cedar bar.

Young Man

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my breasts are like towers.
When my lover looks at me,
he is delighted with what he sees.

He has a vineyard at Baal-hamon,
which he leases out to tenant farmers.

The Hebrew is uncertain. 6:13a Verse 6:13 is numbered
as *Dance of Mahanaim*? The meaning of the Hebrew is
uncertain and Latin Vulgate: Hebrew reads *over tips of sleepers*.
Love until it is ready. 8:6a Or its passion. 8:6b

Each of them pays a thousand pieces of silver*
for harvesting its fruit.
But my vineyard is mine to give,
and Solomon need not pay a thousand pieces
of silver.
But I will give two hundred pieces
to those who care for its vines.
I drew 1,000 shekels of silver.

Young Man

¹³ O my darling, lingering in the gardens,
your companions are fortunate to hear your voice.
Let me hear it, too!

Young Woman

¹⁴ Come away, my love! Be like a gazelle
or a young stag on the mountains of spices.

ISAIAH

- Author** Isaiah or his followers
- Date Written** The events of chapters 1–39 occurred during Isaiah’s ministry, so they were probably written around 700 B.C. Chapters 40–66, however, may have been written near the end of his life, around 681 B.C.
- Content** Isaiah’s long ministry lasted almost 60 years and covered the reigns of four kings, including Hezekiah. The prophecies of Isaiah were primarily given to the people of Judah, although his messages applied to the northern kingdom of Israel as well. Isaiah lived through the dark days of the civil war between Israel and Judah (734–732 B.C.) and saw the destruction of Israel by Assyria in 722 B.C. Isaiah used the grim lesson of Israel’s fall to teach King Hezekiah of Judah to trust in the Lord. Isaiah also spoke about events that took place after his own time, including the coming exile of Judah to Babylon and the deliverance that God would provide afterward. Isaiah also warned the nations surrounding Israel and Judah that they, too, would be judged for their actions. In the end, however, Isaiah offered a message of hope and comfort for Judah, promising that God would restore them after their punishment was completed. Isaiah’s messages, like those of most prophets, made him few friends during his lifetime. Nevertheless, he faithfully continued to bring God’s message to the world.

1 These are the visions that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. He saw these visions during the years when Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah were kings of Judah.*

A Message for Rebellious Judah

- 2** Listen, O heavens! Pay attention, earth!
This is what the LORD says:
“The children I raised and cared for
have rebelled against me.
- 3** Even an ox knows its owner,
and a donkey recognizes its master’s care—
but Israel doesn’t know its master.
My people don’t recognize my care for them.”
- 4** Oh, what a sinful nation they are—
loaded down with a burden of guilt.
They are evil people,
corrupt children who have rejected the LORD.
They have despised the Holy One of Israel
and turned their backs on him.
- 5** Why do you continue to invite punishment?
Must you rebel forever?
Your head is injured,
and your heart is sick.
- 6** You are battered from head to foot—
covered with bruises, welts, and infected wounds—
without any soothing ointments or bandages.
- 7** Your country lies in ruins,
and your towns are burned.
Foreigners plunder your fields before your eyes
and destroy everything they see.
- 8** Beautiful Jerusalem* stands abandoned
like a watchman’s shelter in a vineyard,
like a lean-to in a cucumber field after the harvest,
like a helpless city under siege.
- 9** If the LORD of Heaven’s Armies
had not spared a few of us,*
we would have been wiped out like Sodom,
destroyed like Gomorrah.

1:1 These kings reigned from 792 to 686 B.C. 1:8 Hebrew *The daughter of Zion*. 1:9 Greek version reads *a few of our children*. Compare Rom 9:25.

- 10** Listen to the LORD, you leaders of “Sodom.”
Listen to the law of our God, people of “Gomorrah.”
- 11** “What makes you think I want all your sacrifices?”
says the LORD.
“I am sick of your burnt offerings of rams
and the fat of fattened cattle.”
I get no pleasure from the blood
of bulls and lambs and goats.
- 12** When you come to worship me,
who asked you to parade through my courts with all
your ceremony?
- 13** Stop bringing me your meaningless gifts;
the incense of your offerings disgusts me!
As for your celebrations of the new moon and the
Sabbath
and your special days for fasting—
they are all sinful and false.
I want no more of your pious meetings.
- 14** I hate your new moon celebrations and your annual
festivals.
They are a burden to me. I cannot stand them!
- 15** When you lift up your hands in prayer, I will
not look.
Though you offer many prayers, I will not listen.
for your hands are covered with the blood of
innocent victims.
- 16** Wash yourselves and be clean!
Get your sins out of my sight.
Give up your evil ways.
- 17** Learn to do good.
Seek justice.
Help the oppressed.
Defend the cause of orphans.
Fight for the rights of widows.
- 18** “Come now, let’s settle this,”
says the LORD.
“Though your sins are like scarlet,
I will make them as white as snow.
Though they are red like crimson,

I will make them as white as wool.
If you will only obey me,
you will have plenty to eat.
But if you turn away and refuse to listen,
you will be devoured by the sword of your ene-
my, the LORD, have spoken!”

Unfaithful Jerusalem

- 2** See how Jerusalem, once so faithful,
has become a prostitute.
Once the home of justice and righteousness,
she is now filled with murderers.
- 3** Once like pure silver,
you have become like worthless slag.
Once so pure,
you are now like watered-down wine.
- 4** Your leaders are rebels,
the companions of thieves.
All of them love bribes
and demand payoffs,
but they refuse to defend the cause of orphans
or fight for the rights of widows.
- 5** Therefore, the Lord, the LORD of Heaven’s Armies,
the Mighty One of Israel, says,
I will take revenge on my enemies
and pay back my foes!
- 6** I will raise my fist against you.
I will melt you down and skim off your slag.
I will remove all your impurities.
- 7** Then I will give you good judges again
and wise counselors like you used to have.
Then Jerusalem will again be called the Home of Justice
and the Faithful City.”
- 8** Zion will be restored by justice;
those who repent will be revived by righteousness.
But rebels and sinners will be completely destroyed,
and those who desert the LORD will be consumed.
- 9** You will be ashamed of your idol worship
in groves of sacred oaks.
You will blush because you worshiped
in gardens dedicated to idols.
You will be like a great tree with withered leaves,
like a garden without water.
- 10** The strongest among you will disappear like straw;
their evil deeds will be the spark that sets it on fire.
They and their evil works will burn up together,
and no one will be able to put out the fire.

The LORD’s Future Reign

- 2** This is a vision that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concern-
ing Judah and Jerusalem:
- 3** In the last days, the mountain of the LORD’s house
will be the highest of all—
the most important place on earth.
It will be raised above the other hills,
and people from all over the world will stream there
to worship.
- 4** People from many nations will come and say,
“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the house of Jacob’s God.
He will teach us his ways,
and we will walk in his paths.”
- 5** The LORD’s teaching will go out from Zion;
his word will go out from Jerusalem.
Every ship of Tarshish.

I will make them as white as wool.
 you will only obey me,
 you will have plenty to eat.
 if you turn away and refuse to listen,
 you will be devoured by the sword of your enemies.
 the LORD, have spoken!"

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 to the house of Jacob's God.
 There he will teach us his ways,
 and we will walk in his paths."
 For the LORD's teaching will go out from Zion;
 his word will go out from Jerusalem.

every ship of Tarshish.

4 The LORD will mediate between nations
 and will settle international disputes.
 They will hammer their swords into plowshares
 and their spears into pruning hooks.
 Nation will no longer fight against nation,
 nor train for war anymore.

A Warning of Judgment

- 5 Come, descendants of Jacob,
 let us walk in the light of the LORD!
- 6 For the LORD has rejected his people,
 the descendants of Jacob,
 because they have filled their land with practices
 from the East
 and with sorcerers, as the Philistines do.
 They have made alliances with pagans.
- 7 Israel is full of silver and gold;
 there is no end to its treasures.
 Their land is full of warhorses;
 there is no end to its chariots.
- 8 Their land is full of idols;
 the people worship things they have made
 with their own hands.
- 9 So now they will be humbled,
 and all will be brought low—
 do not forgive them.
- 10 Crawl into caves in the rocks.
 Hide in the dust
 from the terror of the LORD
 and the glory of his majesty.
- 11 Human pride will be brought down,
 and human arrogance will be humbled.
 Only the LORD will be exalted
 on that day of judgment.
- 12 For the LORD of Heaven's Armies
 has a day of reckoning.
 He will punish the proud and mighty
 and bring down everything that is exalted.
- 13 He will cut down the tall cedars of Lebanon
 and all the mighty oaks of Bashan.
- 14 He will level all the high mountains
 and all the lofty hills.
- 15 He will break down every high tower
 and every fortified wall.
- 16 He will destroy all the great trading ships*
 and every magnificent vessel.
- 17 Human pride will be humbled,
 and human arrogance will be brought down.
 Only the LORD will be exalted
 on that day of judgment.
- 18 Idols will completely disappear.
- 19 When the LORD rises to shake the earth,
 his enemies will crawl into holes in the ground.
 They will hide in caves in the rocks
 from the terror of the LORD
 and the glory of his majesty.
- 20 On that day of judgment they will abandon the gold
 and silver idols
 they made for themselves to worship.
 They will leave their gods to the rodents and bats,
 while they crawl away into caverns
 and hide among the jagged rocks in the cliffs.
 They will try to escape the terror of the LORD
 and the glory of his majesty
 as he rises to shake the earth.

I will make them as white as wool.
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 I will raise my fist against you.
 I will melt you down and skim off your slag.
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 Then I will give you good judges again
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 Then Jerusalem will again be called the Home of Justice
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 You will be restored by justice;
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 People from many nations will come and say,
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 to the house of Jacob's God.
 There he will teach us his ways,
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 For the LORD's teaching will go out from Zion;
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 with their own hands.
 9 So now they will be humbled,
 and all will be brought low—
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 Hide in the dust
 from the terror of the LORD
 and the glory of his majesty.
 11 Human pride will be brought down,
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 Only the LORD will be exalted
 on that day of judgment.
 12 For the LORD of Heaven's Armies
 has a day of reckoning.
 He will punish the proud and mighty
 and bring down everything that is exalted.
 13 He will cut down the tall cedars of Lebanon
 and all the mighty oaks of Bashan.
 14 He will level all the high mountains
 and all the lofty hills.
 15 He will break down every high tower
 and every fortified wall.
 16 He will destroy all the great trading ships*
 and every magnificent vessel.
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 and human arrogance will be brought down.
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 18 Idols will completely disappear.
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 and the glory of his majesty.
 20 On that day of judgment they will abandon the gold
 and silver idols
 they made for themselves to worship.
 They will leave their gods to the rodents and bats,
 while they crawl away into caverns
 and hide among the jagged rocks in the cliffs.
 They will try to escape the terror of the LORD
 and the glory of his majesty
 as he rises to shake the earth.

- 22 Don't put your trust in mere humans.
They are as frail as breath.
What good are they?

Judgment against Judah

- 3** The Lord, the LORD of Heaven's Armies,
will take away from Jerusalem and Judah
everything they depend on:
every bit of bread
and every drop of water,
2 all their heroes and soldiers,
judges and prophets,
fortune-tellers and elders,
3 army officers and high officials,
advisers, skilled craftsmen, and astrologers.
4 I will make boys their leaders,
and toddlers their rulers.
5 People will oppress each other—
man against man,
neighbor against neighbor.
Young people will insult their elders,
and vulgar people will sneer at the honorable.
6 In those days a man will say to his brother,
"Since you have a coat, you be our leader!
Take charge of this heap of ruins!"
7 But he will reply,
"No! I can't help.
I don't have any extra food or clothes.
Don't put me in charge!"
8 For Jerusalem will stumble,
and Judah will fall,
because they speak out against the LORD and refuse
to obey him.
They provoke him to his face.
9 The very look on their faces gives them away.
They display their sin like the people of Sodom
and don't even try to hide it.
They are doomed!
They have brought destruction upon themselves.
10 Tell the godly that all will be well for them.
They will enjoy the rich reward they have earned!
11 But the wicked are doomed,
for they will get exactly what they deserve.
12 Childish leaders oppress my people,
and women rule over them.
O my people, your leaders mislead you;
they send you down the wrong road.
13 The LORD takes his place in court
and presents his case against his people!
14 The LORD comes forward to pronounce judgment
on the elders and rulers of his people:
"You have ruined Israel, my vineyard.
Your houses are filled with things stolen from
the poor."
15 How dare you crush my people,
grinding the faces of the poor into the dust?"
demands the Lord, the LORD of Heaven's Armies.

A Warning to Jerusalem

- 16 The LORD says, "Beautiful Zion* is haughty;
craning her elegant neck,
flirting with her eyes,

- walking with dainty steps,
tinkling her ankle bracelets.
17 So the Lord will send scabs on her head;
the LORD will make beautiful Zion bald."
18 On that day of judgment
the Lord will strip away everything that makes
her beautiful:
ornaments, headbands, crescent necklaces,
19 earrings, bracelets, and veils;
20 scarves, ankle bracelets, sashes,
perfumes, and charms;
21 rings, jewels,
22 party clothes, gowns, capes, and purses;
23 mirrors, fine linen garments,
head ornaments, and shawls.
24 Instead of smelling of sweet perfume, she will stink.
She will wear a rope for a sash,
and her elegant hair will fall out.
She will wear rough burlap instead of rich robes.
Shame will replace her beauty.*
25 The men of the city will be killed with the sword,
and her warriors will die in battle.
26 The gates of Zion will weep and mourn.
The city will be like a ravaged woman,
huddled on the ground.

- 4** In that day so few men will be left that seven women
fight for each man, saying, "Let us all marry you! We
provide our own food and clothing. Only let us take your
name so we won't be mocked as old maids."

A Promise of Restoration

- 2 But in that day, the branch* of the LORD
will be beautiful and glorious;
the fruit of the land will be the pride and glory
of all who survive in Israel.
3 All who remain in Zion
will be a holy people—
those who survive the destruction of Jerusalem
and are recorded among the living.
4 The Lord will wash the filth from beautiful Zion*
and cleanse Jerusalem of its bloodstains
with the hot breath of fiery judgment.
5 Then the LORD will provide shade for
Mount Zion
and all who assemble there.
He will provide a canopy of cloud during the day
and smoke and flaming fire at night,
covering the glorious land.
6 It will be a shelter from daytime heat
and a hiding place from storms and rain.

A Song about the LORD's Vineyard

- 5** Now I will sing for the one I love
a song about his vineyard:
My beloved had a vineyard
on a rich and fertile hill.
2 He plowed the land, cleared its stones,
and planted it with the best vines.
In the middle he built a watchtower
and carved a winepress in the nearby rocks.
Then he waited for a harvest of sweet grapes,
but the grapes that grew were bitter.

- Now, you people of Jerusalem and Judah,
you judge between me and my vineyard.
What more could I have done for my vineyard
that I have not already done?
When I expected sweet grapes,
why did my vineyard give me bitter grapes?
Now let me tell you
what I will do to my vineyard:
I will tear down its hedges
and let it be destroyed.
I will break down its walls
and let the animals trample it.
I will make it a wild place
where the vines are not pruned and the ground
is not hoed,
a place overgrown with briars and thorns.
I will command the clouds
to drop no rain on it.
The nation of Israel is the vineyard of the LORD
of Heaven's Armies.
The people of Judah are his pleasant garden.
He expected a crop of justice,
but instead he found oppression.
He expected to find righteousness,
but instead he heard cries of violence.

Judah's Guilt and Judgment

- What sorrow for you who buy up house after house
and field after field,
until everyone is evicted and you live alone
in the land.
But I have heard the LORD of Heaven's Armies
swear a solemn oath:
"Many houses will stand deserted;
even beautiful mansions will be empty.
Ten acres* of vineyard will not produce even six
gallons* of wine.
Ten baskets of seed will yield only one basket*
of grain."
What sorrow for those who get up early in the morning
looking for a drink of alcohol
and spend long evenings drinking wine
to make themselves flaming drunk.
They furnish wine and lovely music at their grand
parties—
lyre and harp, tambourine and flute—
but they never think about the LORD
or notice what he is doing.
So my people will go into exile far away
because they do not know me.
Those who are great and honored will starve,
and the common people will die of thirst.
The grave* is licking its lips in anticipation,
opening its mouth wide.
The great and the lowly
and all the drunken mob will be swallowed up.
Humanity will be destroyed, and people brought down;
even the arrogant will lower their eyes in
humiliation.
But the LORD of Heaven's Armies will be exalted by
his justice.
The holiness of God will be displayed by his
righteousness.

3:16 Or *The women of Zion* (with corresponding changes to plural forms through verse 24); Hebrew reads *The daughters of Zion*; also in 3:17. 3:24 As the Dead Sea Scrolls; Masoretic Text reads *robes / because instead of beauty*. 4:2 Or *the Branch*. 4:4 Or *from the women of Zion*; Hebrew reads *from the daughters of Zion*. Hebrew *A ten yoke*, that is, the area of land plowed by ten teams of oxen in one day (5 bushels or 182 liters) of seed will yield only an *ephah* (20 quarts or 2.2 liters) of grain and strangers.

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Hebrew A ten yoke, that is, the area of land plowed by ten teams of oxen in one day. 5:10b Hebrew a bath (21 liters). 5:10c Hebrew
3 bushels or 182 liters of seed will yield only an ephah (20 quarts or 22 liters). 5:14 Hebrew Sheol. 5:17 As in Greek version; Hebrew

- 17 In that day lambs will find good pastures,
and fattened sheep and young goats* will feed among
the ruins.
- 18 What sorrow for those who drag their sins
behind them
with ropes made of lies,
who drag wickedness behind them like a cart!
- 19 They even mock God and say,
"Hurry up and do something!
We want to see what you can do.
Let the Holy One of Israel carry out his plan,
for we want to know what it is."
- 20 What sorrow for those who say
that evil is good and good is evil,
that dark is light and light is dark,
that bitter is sweet and sweet is bitter.
- 21 What sorrow for those who are wise in their
own eyes
and think themselves so clever.
- 22 What sorrow for those who are heroes at
drinking wine
and boast about all the alcohol they can hold.
- 23 They take bribes to let the wicked go free,
and they punish the innocent.
- 24 Therefore, just as fire licks up stubble
and dry grass shrivels in the flame,
so their roots will rot
and their flowers wither.
For they have rejected the law of the LORD of Heaven's
Armies;
they have despised the word of the Holy One
of Israel.
- 25 That is why the LORD's anger burns against his
people,
and why he has raised his fist to crush them.
The mountains tremble,
and the corpses of his people litter the streets
like garbage.
But even then the LORD's anger is not satisfied.
His fist is still poised to strike!
- 26 He will send a signal to distant nations far away
and whistle to those at the ends of the earth.
They will come racing toward Jerusalem.
- 27 They will not get tired or stumble.
They will not stop for rest or sleep.
Not a belt will be loose,
not a sandal strap broken.
- 28 Their arrows will be sharp
and their bows ready for battle.
Sparks will fly from their horses' hooves,
and the wheels of their chariots will spin like
a whirlwind.
- 29 They will roar like lions,
like the strongest of lions.
Growling, they will pounce on their victims and carry
them off,
and no one will be there to rescue them.
- 30 They will roar over their victims on that day
of destruction
like the roaring of the sea.
If someone looks across the land,
only darkness and distress will be seen;
even the light will be darkened by clouds.

Isaiah's Cleansing and Call

6 It was in the year King Uzziah died* that I saw the Lord. He was sitting on a lofty throne, and the train of his robe filled the Temple. ²Attending him were mighty seraphim, each having six wings. With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. ³They were calling out to each other,

"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of Heaven's Armies!
The whole earth is filled with his glory!"

⁴Their voices shook the Temple to its foundations, and the entire building was filled with smoke.

⁵Then I said, "It's all over! I am doomed, for I am a sinful man. I have filthy lips, and I live among a people with filthy lips. Yet I have seen the King, the LORD of Heaven's Armies."

⁶Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. ⁷He touched my lips with it and said, "See, this coal has touched your lips. Now your guilt is removed, and your sins are forgiven."

⁸Then I heard the LORD asking, "Whom should I send as a messenger to this people? Who will go for us?"

I said, "Here I am. Send me."

⁹And he said, "Yes, go, and say to this people,

'Listen carefully, but do not understand.

Watch closely, but learn nothing.'

¹⁰ Harden the hearts of these people.

Plug their ears and shut their eyes.

That way, they will not see with their eyes,

nor hear with their ears,

nor understand with their hearts

and turn to me for healing."*

¹¹Then I said, "Lord, how long will this go on?"

And he replied,

"Until their towns are empty,
their houses are deserted,
and the whole country is a wasteland;

¹² until the LORD has sent everyone away,
and the entire land of Israel lies deserted.

¹³ If even a tenth—a remnant—survive,
it will be invaded again and burned.

But as a terebinth or oak tree leaves a stump when
it is cut down,
so Israel's stump will be a holy seed."

A Message for Ahaz

7 When Ahaz, son of Jotham and grandson of Uzziah, was king of Judah, King Rezin of Syria* and Pekah son of Remaliah, the king of Israel, set out to attack Jerusalem. However, they were unable to carry out their plan.

²The news had come to the royal court of Judah: "Syria is allied with Israel* against us!" So the hearts of the king and his people trembled with fear, like trees shaking in a storm.

³Then the LORD said to Isaiah, "Take your son Shear-jashub* and go out to meet King Ahaz. You will find him at the end of the aqueduct that feeds water into the upper pool, near the road leading to the field where cloth is washed.* ⁴Tell him to stop worrying. Tell him he doesn't need to fear the fierce anger of those two burned-out em-

bers, King Rezin of Syria and Pekah son of Remaliah. ⁵Ye the kings of Syria and Israel are plotting against him, saying, ⁶'We will attack Judah and capture it for ourselves. Then we will install the son of Tabeel as Judah's king.' ⁷But this is what the Sovereign LORD says:

"This invasion will never happen;
it will never take place;

⁸ for Syria is no stronger than its capital, Damascus,
and Damascus is no stronger than its king, Rezin.

As for Israel, within sixty-five years

it will be crushed and completely destroyed.

⁹ Israel is no stronger than its capital, Samaria,
and Samaria is no stronger than its king, Pekah son of Remaliah.

Unless your faith is firm,
I cannot make you stand firm."

The Sign of Immanuel

¹⁰Later, the LORD sent this message to King Ahaz: ¹¹"Ask the LORD your God for a sign of confirmation, Ahaz. Make it as difficult as you want—as high as heaven or as deep as the place of the dead."

¹²But the king refused. "No," he said, "I will not test the LORD like that."

¹³Then Isaiah said, "Listen well, you royal family of David! Isn't it enough to exhaust human patience? Must you exhaust the patience of my God as well? ¹⁴All right then, the LORD himself will give you the sign. Look! The virgin* will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel (which means 'God is with us'). ¹⁵By the time this child is old enough to choose what is right and reject what is wrong, he will be eating yogurt* and honey. ¹⁶For before the child is old, the lands of the two kings you fear so much will both be deserted.

¹⁷Then the LORD will bring things on you, your nation and your family unlike anything since Israel broke away from Judah. He will bring the king of Assyria upon you!"

¹⁸In that day the LORD will whistle for the army of southern Egypt and for the army of Assyria. They will swarm around you like flies and bees. ¹⁹They will come in vast hordes and settle in the fertile areas and also in the desolate valleys, caves and thorny places. ²⁰In that day the LORD will hire a "razor" from beyond the Euphrates River*—the king of Assyria—and use it to shave off everything: your land, your crops, and your people.

²¹In that day a farmer will be fortunate to have a cow and two sheep or goats left. ²²Nevertheless, there will be enough milk for everyone because so few people will be left in the land. They will eat their fill of yogurt and honey. ²³In that day the lush vineyards, now worth 1,000 pieces of silver, will become patches of briars and thorns. ²⁴The entire land will become a vast expanse of briars and thorns, a hilly ground overrun by wildlife. ²⁵No one will go to the hillsides where the gardens once grew, for briars and thorns will cover them. Cattle, sheep, and goats will graze there.

The Coming Assyrian Invasion

8 Then the LORD said to me, "Make a large signboard and clearly write this name on it: Maher-shalal-hash-baz. ²I asked Uriah the priest and Zechariah son of Jeberechiah both known as honest men, to witness my doing this.

³Then I slept with my wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. And the LORD said, "Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz. ⁴For before this child is old enough to say 'Papa' or 'Mama,' the king of Assyria will carry away both the abundance of Damascus and the riches of Samaria."

⁵Then the LORD spoke to me again and said, ⁶"My car for the people of Judah is like the gently flowing waters of Shiloah, but they have rejected it. They are rejoicing over what will happen to* King Rezin and King Pekah. ⁷Therefore, the LORD will overwhelm them with a mighty flood from the Euphrates River*—the king of Assyria and all his glory. This flood will overflow all its channels and sweep into Judah until it is chin deep. It will spread its wings, submerging your land from one end to the other, Immanuel.

⁸ Huddle together, you nations, and be terrified.
Listen, all you distant lands.

Prepare for battle, but you will be crushed!

Yes, prepare for battle, but you will be crushed!

Call your councils of war, but they will be worthless.

Develop your strategies, but they will not succeed.

For God is with us!"*

Call to Trust the LORD

The LORD has given me a strong warning not to think like everyone else does. He said,

"Don't call everything a conspiracy, like they do,

and don't live in dread of what frightens them.

Make the LORD of Heaven's Armies holy in your life.

He is the one you should fear.

He is the one who should make you tremble.

He will keep you safe.

But to Israel and Judah

he will be a stone that makes people stumble,

a rock that makes them fall.

And for the people of Jerusalem

he will be a trap and a snare.

Many will stumble and fall,

never to rise again.

They will be snared and captured."

Observe the teaching of God;

entrust his instructions to those who follow me.

I will wait for the LORD,

who has turned away from the descendants of Jacob.

I will put my hope in him.

And the children the LORD has given me serve as signs

and warnings to Israel from the LORD of Heaven's Armies

as he dwells in his Temple on Mount Zion.

Someone may say to you, "Let's ask the mediums and

spirits who consult the spirits of the dead. With their

utterings and mutterings, they will tell us what to do." But

don't people ask God for guidance? Should the living

seek guidance from the dead?

Look to God's instructions and teachings! People who

reject his word are completely in the dark. ²¹They will

move from one place to another, weary and hungry. And be-

cause they are hungry, they will rage and curse their king

and God. They will look up to heaven ²²and down at the

earth, but wherever they look, there will be trouble and an-

guish and dark despair. They will be thrown out into the

6:1 King Uzziah died in 740 B.C. 6:9-10 Greek version reads *And he said, "Go and say to this people, / "When you hear what I say, you will not understand. When you see what I do, you will not comprehend." / For the hearts of these people are hardened, / and their ears cannot hear, and they have closed their eyes— / so their eyes cannot see, / and their hearts cannot understand, / and they will not turn to me and let me heal them.* Compare Matt 13:14-15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; Acts 28:26-27. 7:1 Hebrew *Aram*; also in 7:2, 4, 5, 8. 7:2 Hebrew *Ephraim*, referring to the northern kingdom of Israel; also in 7:5, 8, 9, 17. 7:3a *Shear-jashub* means "A remnant will return." 7:3b Or *bleached*. 7:11 Hebrew *as deep as Sheol*. 7:14 Or *young woman*. 7:15 Or *curds*; also in 7:22. 7:20a Hebrew *the river*. 7:20b Hebrew *shave off the head, the hair of the legs, and the beard*. 7:23 Hebrew *1,000 shekels of silver*, about 25 pounds or 11.4 kilograms in weight. 8:1 *Mahe-shalal-hash-baz* means "Swift to plunder and quick to carry away."

8:23 In Hebrew text. 9:2a Verses 9:2-21 are numbered 9:1-20 in Hebrew. 9:6 Or *Wonderful, Counselor*. 9:9 Hebrew of *Ephraim*, referring to the northern kingdom of Israel.

of Syria and Pekah son of Remaliah. Syria and Israel are plotting against him, to capture Judah and capture it for ourselves. The son of Tabeel as Judah's king. ⁷But this sign the LORD says:

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Faith is firm,
and you stand firm."

Immanuel

The LORD sent this message to King Ahaz: ¹¹"Ask for a sign of confirmation, Ahaz. Make me want—as high as heaven or as deep as hell."
Ahaz refused. "No," he said, "I will not test the LORD."

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The LORD will bring things on you, your nation, unlike anything since Israel broke away from Egypt. The LORD will bring the king of Assyria upon you. The LORD will whistle for the army of southern Syria, the army of Assyria. They will swarm around you. ¹⁹They will come in vast hordes and settle in the desolate valleys, caves, and ruins. In that day the LORD will hire a "razor" from the king of Assyria—the king of Assyria—and use it to trim your land, your crops, and your people. A farmer will be fortunate to have a cow and a goat left. ²²Nevertheless, there will be enough left because so few people will be left in the land. They will eat their fill of yogurt and honey. ²³In the vineyards, now worth 1,000 pieces of silver, there will be briers and thorns. ²⁴The entire land will be a vast expanse of briers and thorns, a hunting ground for wildlife. ²⁵No one will go to the vineyards once they grow, for briers and thorns. Cattle, sheep, and goats will graze there.

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¹⁴Hebrew off the head, the hair of the legs, and the beard. ¹⁵Hebrew hash-baz means "Swift to plunder and quick to kill."

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¹⁷who has turned away from the descendants of Jacob.

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¹⁹And the children the LORD has given me serve as signs

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²¹He dwells in his Temple on Mount Zion.

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²³who consult the spirits of the dead. With their

²⁴whisperings and mutterings, they will tell us what to do." But

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²⁸reject his word are completely in the dark. ²⁹They will

³⁰move from one place to another, weary and hungry. And be-

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³²and their God. They will look up to heaven ³³and down at the

³⁴earth, but wherever they look, there will be trouble and an-

³⁵guish and dark despair. They will be thrown out into the

³⁶openness.

³⁷They are rejoicing because of. ^{8:6b} Hebrew and the son of Remaliah. ^{8:7} Hebrew the river. ^{8:10} Hebrew Immanuel! ^{9:1} Verse 9:1 is

^{8:23} in Hebrew text. ^{9:2a} Verses 9:2-21 are numbered 9:1-20 in Hebrew text. ^{9:2b} Greek version reads a land where death casts its shadow.

^{9:6} Or Wonderful, Counselor. ^{9:9} Hebrew of Ephraim, referring to the northern kingdom of Israel. ^{9:12} Hebrew Arameans.

Hope in the Messiah

⁹Nevertheless, that time of darkness and despair will not go on forever. The land of Zebulun and Naphtali will be humbled, but there will be a time in the future when Galilee of the Gentiles, which lies along the road that runs between the Jordan and the sea, will be filled with glory.

^{2*}The people who walk in darkness

will see a great light.

For those who live in a land of deep darkness,*

a light will shine.

³You will enlarge the nation of Israel,

and its people will rejoice.

They will rejoice before you

as people rejoice at the harvest

and like warriors dividing the plunder.

⁴For you will break the yoke of their slavery and lift the heavy burden from their shoulders.

You will break the oppressor's rod,

just as you did when you destroyed the army

of Midian.

⁵The boots of the warrior

and the uniforms bloodstained by war

will all be burned.

They will be fuel for the fire.

⁶For a child is born to us,

a son is given to us.

The government will rest on his shoulders.

And he will be called:

Wonderful Counselor,* Mighty God,

Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷His government and its peace

will never end.

He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne

of his ancestor David

for all eternity.

The passionate commitment of the LORD of Heaven's

Armies

will make this happen!

The LORD's Anger against Israel

⁸The LORD has spoken out against Jacob;

his judgment has fallen upon Israel.

⁹And the people of Israel* and Samaria,

who spoke with such pride and arrogance,

will soon know it.

¹⁰They said, "We will replace the broken bricks of our

ruins with finished stone,

and replant the felled sycamore-fig trees with

cedars."

¹¹But the LORD will bring Rezin's enemies against Israel

and stir up all their foes.

¹²The Syrians* from the east and the Philistines from

the west

will bare their fangs and devour Israel.

But even then the LORD's anger will not be satisfied.

His fist is still poised to strike.

¹³For after all this punishment, the people will still not

repent.

They will not seek the LORD of Heaven's Armies.

¹⁴Therefore, in a single day the LORD will destroy both the

head and the tail,

the noble palm branch and the lowly reed.

- 15 The leaders of Israel are the head,
and the lying prophets are the tail.
16 For the leaders of the people have misled them.
They have led them down the path of destruction.
17 That is why the Lord takes no pleasure in the young men
and shows no mercy even to the widows and orphans.
For they are all wicked hypocrites,
and they all speak foolishness.
But even then the Lord's anger will not be satisfied.
His fist is still poised to strike.
18 This wickedness is like a brushfire.
It burns not only briars and thorns
but also sets the forests ablaze.
Its burning sends up clouds of smoke.
19 The land will be blackened
by the fury of the Lord of Heaven's Armies.
The people will be fuel for the fire,
and no one will spare even his own brother.
20 They will attack their neighbor on the right
but will still be hungry.
They will devour their neighbor on the left
but will not be satisfied.
In the end they will even eat their own children.*
21 Manasseh will feed on Ephraim,
Ephraim will feed on Manasseh,
and both will devour Judah.
But even then the Lord's anger will not be satisfied.
His fist is still poised to strike.

10¹ What sorrow awaits the unjust judges and those who issue unfair laws.

- 2 They deprive the poor of justice
and deny the rights of the needy among my people.
They prey on widows
and take advantage of orphans.
3 What will you do when I punish you,
when I send disaster upon you from a distant land?
To whom will you turn for help?
Where will your treasures be safe?
4 You will stumble along as prisoners
or lie among the dead.
But even then the Lord's anger will not be satisfied.
His fist is still poised to strike.

Judgment against Assyria

- 5 "What sorrow awaits Assyria, the rod of my anger.
I use it as a club to express my anger.
6 I am sending Assyria against a godless nation,
against a people with whom I am angry.
Assyria will plunder them,
trampling them like dirt beneath its feet.
7 But the king of Assyria will not understand that he
is my tool;
his mind does not work that way.
His plan is simply to destroy,
to cut down nation after nation.
8 He will say,
'Each of my princes will soon be a king.
9 We destroyed Calno just as we did Carchemish.
Hamath fell before us as Arpad did.
And we destroyed Samaria just as we did Damascus.
10 Yes, we have finished off many a kingdom
whose gods were greater than those in Jerusalem
and Samaria.

- 11 So we will defeat Jerusalem and her gods,
just as we destroyed Samaria with hers."

¹²After the Lord has used the king of Assyria to accomplish his purposes on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, he will turn against the king of Assyria and punish him—for his proud and arrogant. ¹³He boasts,

"By my own powerful arm I have done this.
With my own shrewd wisdom I planned it.
I have broken down the defenses of nations
and carried off their treasures.
I have knocked down their kings like a bull.

- 14 I have robbed their nests of riches
and gathered up kingdoms as a farmer gathers eggs.
No one can even flap a wing against me
or utter a peep of protest."

- 15 But can the ax boast greater power than the person
who uses it?

Is the saw greater than the person who saws?
Can a rod strike unless a hand moves it?
Can a wooden cane walk by itself?

- 16 Therefore, the Lord, the Lord of Heaven's Armies,
will send a plague among Assyria's proud troops
and a flaming fire will consume its glory.

- 17 The Lord, the Light of Israel, will be a fire;
the Holy One will be a flame.

He will devour the thorns and briars with fire,
burning up the enemy in a single night.

- 18 The Lord will consume Assyria's glory
like a fire consumes a forest in a fruitful land;
it will waste away like sick people in a plague.

- 19 Of all that glorious forest, only a few trees will survive—
so few that a child could count them!

Hope for the Lord's People

- 20 In that day the remnant left in Israel,
the survivors in the house of Jacob,
will no longer depend on allies
who seek to destroy them.
But they will faithfully trust the Lord,
the Holy One of Israel.
21 A remnant will return;*
yes, the remnant of Jacob will return to the
Mighty God.
22 But though the people of Israel are as numerous
as the sand of the seashore,
only a remnant of them will return.
The Lord has rightly decided to destroy his people.
23 Yes, the Lord, the Lord of Heaven's Armies,
has already decided to destroy the entire land.*

²⁴So this is what the Lord, the Lord of Heaven's Armies, says: "O my people in Zion, do not be afraid of the Assyrians when they oppress you with rod and club as the Egyptians did long ago. ²⁵In a little while my anger against you will subside, and then my anger will rise up to destroy them." ²⁶The Lord of Heaven's Armies will lash them with his whip, as he did when Gideon triumphed over the Midianites at the rock of Oreb, or when the Lord's staff was raised to destroy the Egyptian army in the sea.

- 27 In that day the Lord will end the bondage of his people.
He will break the yoke of slavery
and lift it from their shoulders.*

Look, the Assyrians are now at Aiath.
They are passing through Migron
and are storing their equipment at Micmethah.
They are crossing the pass
and are camping at Geba.
Fear strikes the town of Ramah.
All the people of Gibeah, the hometown of Benjamin,
are running for their lives.
Scream in terror,
you people of Gallim!
Shout out a warning to Laishah.
Oh, poor Anathoth!
There go the people of Madmenah, all fleeing!
The citizens of Gebim are trying to hide.
The enemy stops at Nob for the rest of that day.
He shakes his fist at beautiful Mount Zion,
mountain of Jerusalem.
But look! The Lord, the Lord of Heaven's Armies,
will chop down the mighty tree of Assyria
with a great power!
He will cut down the proud,
that lofty tree will be brought down.
He will cut down the forest trees with an ax.
Lebanon will fall to the Mighty One.*

Branch from David's Line

¹¹Out of the stump of David's family* will grow a shoot—
yes, a new Branch bearing fruit from the old.
The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.
He will delight in obeying the Lord.
He will not judge by appearance
nor make a decision based on hearsay.
He will give justice to the poor
and make fair decisions for the exploited.
The earth will shake at the force of his word,
and one breath from his mouth will destroy
the wicked.
He will wear righteousness like a belt
and truth like an undergarment.
In that day the wolf and the lamb will live together,
the leopard will lie down with the baby goat.
The calf and the yearling will be safe with the lion,
and a little child will lead them all.
The cow will graze near the bear.
The cub and the calf will lie down together.
The lion will eat hay like a cow.
The baby will play safely near the hole of a cobra,
yes, a little child will put its hand in a nest of snakes
without harm.
Nothing will hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain
as the waters fill the sea,
for the earth will be filled with people who know
the Lord.

In that day the heir to David's throne*
will be a banner of salvation to all the world.
The nations will rally to him,
and the land where he lives will be a glorious
place.*

9:20 Or eat their own arms. 10:21 Hebrew *Shear-jashub*; see 7:3; 8:18. 10:22-23 Greek version reads *only a remnant of them will be saved*. 11:10b Greek version reads *In that day the heir to David's throne will carry out his sentence quickly and with finality and righteousness; / for God will carry out his sentence upon all the world with finality*. Compare Rom 9:27-28. 10:27 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *The yoke will be broken, / for you have grown so fat*.

11:10a Greek version reads *the nations will rally to him*. 11:11a Greek version reads *the nations will rally to him*. 11:11b Greek version reads *the nations will rally to him*. 11:11c Greek version reads *the nations will rally to him*. 11:11d Greek version reads *the nations will rally to him*. 11:11e Greek version reads *the nations will rally to him*. 11:11f Greek version reads *the nations will rally to him*. 11:11g Greek version reads *the nations will rally to him*. 11:11h Greek version reads *the nations will rally to him*. 11:11i Greek version reads *the nations will rally to him*. 11:11j Greek version reads *the nations will rally to him*. 11:11k Greek version reads *the nations will rally to him*. 11:11l Greek version reads *the nations will rally to him*. 11:11m Greek version reads *the nations will rally to him*. 11:11n Greek version reads *the nations will rally to him*. 11:11o Greek version reads *the nations will rally to him*. 11:11p Greek version reads *the nations 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we will defeat Jerusalem and her gods,
just as we destroyed Samaria with hers."

After the Lord has used the king of Assyria to accomplish his purposes on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, he will punish the king of Assyria and punish him—for his pride and arrogant. ¹³He boasts,

"With my own powerful arm I have done this.
With my own shrewd wisdom I planned it.
I have broken down the defenses of nations
and carried off their treasures.
I have knocked down their kings like a bull.
I have robbed their nests of riches
and gathered up kingdoms as a farmer gathers eggs.
No one can even flap a wing against me
or utter a peep of protest."

Can the ax boast greater power than the person who uses it?

Is the saw greater than the person who saws?
Can a rod strike unless a hand moves it?

Can a wooden cane walk by itself?
Therefore, the Lord, the Lord of Heaven's Armies,
will send a plague among Assyria's proud troops,
and a flaming fire will consume its glory.

The Lord, the Light of Israel, will be a fire;
the Holy One will be a flame.

He will devour the thorns and briars with fire,
burning up the enemy in a single night.

The Lord will consume Assyria's glory
like a fire consumes a forest in a fruitful land.

It will waste away like sick people in a plague.
Of all that glorious forest, only a few trees will survive—
so few that a child could count them!

For the LORD's People

On that day the remnant left in Israel,
the survivors in the house of Jacob,
will no longer depend on allies
who seek to destroy them.

But they will faithfully trust the Lord,
the Holy One of Israel.

The remnant will return;*
yes, the remnant of Jacob will return to the
Mighty God.

Although the people of Israel are as numerous
as the sand of the seashore,
only a remnant of them will return.

The Lord has rightly decided to destroy his people,
yes, the Lord, the Lord of Heaven's Armies,
has already decided to destroy the entire land.*

So this is what the Lord, the Lord of Heaven's Armies,
says: "O my people in Zion, do not be afraid of the Assyrians,
for they oppress you with rod and club as the Egyptians
long ago. ²⁵In a little while my anger against you will rise up,
and then my anger will rise up to destroy them." ²⁶The Lord of
Heaven's Armies will lash them with his whip, as the Lord
Gideon triumphed over the Midianites at the rock of Oreb,
or when the Lord's staff was raised to drown the Egyptian
army in the sea.

In that day the Lord will end the bondage of his people.
He will break the yoke of slavery
and lift it from their shoulders.*

²⁷Greek version reads *only a remnant of them will be saved*. ²⁸He will
carry out his sentence upon all the world with finality. Compare
Isaiah 41:11 for you have grown so fat.

Look, the Assyrians are now at Aiath.
They are passing through Migron
and are storing their equipment at Micmash.

They are crossing the pass
and are camping at Geba.
They are striking the town of Ramah.

All the people of Gibeath, the hometown of Saul,
are running for their lives.

Scream in terror,
you people of Gallim!

Shout out a warning to Laishah.
Oh, poor Anathoth!

There go the people of Madmenah, all fleeing.
The citizens of Gebim are trying to hide.

The enemy stops at Nob for the rest of that day.
He shakes his fist at beautiful Mount Zion, the
mountain of Jerusalem.

But look! The Lord, the Lord of Heaven's Armies,
will chop down the mighty tree of Assyria with
great power!

He will cut down the proud.
That lofty tree will be brought down.

He will cut down the forest trees with an ax.
Lebanon will fall to the Mighty One.*

Branch from David's Line

¹¹ Out of the stump of David's family* will grow
a shoot—

yes, a new Branch bearing fruit from the old root.

And the Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,

the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.
He will delight in obeying the Lord.

He will not judge by appearance
nor make a decision based on hearsay.

He will give justice to the poor
and make fair decisions for the exploited.

The earth will shake at the force of his word,
and one breath from his mouth will destroy
the wicked.

He will wear righteousness like a belt
and truth like an undergarment.

On that day the wolf and the lamb will live together;
the leopard will lie down with the baby goat.

The calf and the yearling will be safe with the lion,
and a little child will lead them all.

The cow will graze near the bear.
The cub and the calf will lie down together.

The lion will eat hay like a cow.
The baby will play safely near the hole of a cobra.

Yes, a little child will put its hand in a nest of deadly
snakes without harm.

Nothing will hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain,
for as the waters fill the sea,
so the earth will be filled with people who know
the Lord.

On that day the heir to David's throne*
will be a banner of salvation to all the world.

The nations will rally to him,
and the land where he lives will be a glorious
place.*

Or with an ax / as even the mighty trees of Lebanon fall. ^{11:1} Hebrew the stump of the line of Jesse. Jesse was King David's father. ^{11:10a} Hebrew
of Jesse. ^{11:10b} Greek version reads *In that day the heir to David's throne (literally the root of Jesse) will come, / and he will rule over the Gentiles.*

will place their hopes on him. Compare Rom 15:12. ^{11:11a} Hebrew in Pathros, Cush. ^{11:11b} Hebrew in Shinar. ^{11:13} Hebrew Ephraim,
referring to the northern kingdom of Israel. ^{11:15a} Hebrew will destroy the tongue of the sea of Egypt. ^{11:15b} Hebrew the river. ^{12:6} Hebrew Zion.

¹¹ In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second
time

to bring back the remnant of his people—
those who remain in Assyria and northern Egypt;
in southern Egypt, Ethiopia,* and Elam;

in Babylonia,* Hamath, and all the distant coastlands.

¹² He will raise a flag among the nations
and assemble the exiles of Israel.

He will gather the scattered people of Judah
from the ends of the earth.

¹³ Then at last the jealousy between Israel* and Judah
will end.

They will not be rivals anymore.

¹⁴ They will join forces to swoop down on Philistia
to the west.

Together they will attack and plunder the nations
to the east.

They will occupy the lands of Edom and Moab,
and Ammon will obey them.

¹⁵ The Lord will make a dry path through the gulf of the
Red Sea.*

He will wave his hand over the Euphrates River,*
sending a mighty wind to divide it into seven streams
so it can easily be crossed on foot.

¹⁶ He will make a highway for the remnant of his people,
the remnant coming from Assyria,
just as he did for Israel long ago
when they returned from Egypt.

Songs of Praise for Salvation

¹² In that day you will sing:

"I will praise you, O Lord!

You were angry with me, but not any more.

Now you comfort me.

² See, God has come to save me.

I will trust in him and not be afraid.

The Lord God is my strength and my song;

he has given me victory."

³ With joy you will drink deeply
from the fountain of salvation!

⁴ In that wonderful day you will sing:

"Thank the Lord! Praise his name!

Tell the nations what he has done.

Let them know how mighty he is!

⁵ Sing to the Lord, for he has done wonderful things.

Make known his praise around the world.

⁶ Let all the people of Jerusalem* shout his praise
with joy!

For great is the Holy One of Israel who lives
among you."

A Message about Babylon

¹³ Isaiah son of Amoz received this message concerning
the destruction of Babylon:

² "Raise a signal flag on a bare hilltop.
Call up an army against Babylon.

Wave your hand to encourage them
as they march into the palaces of the high and
mighty.

³ I, the Lord, have dedicated these soldiers for this task.

Yes, I have called mighty warriors to express my anger,
and they will rejoice when I am exalted."

^{11:10a} Hebrew of Jesse. ^{11:10b} Greek version reads *In that day the heir to David's throne (literally the root of Jesse) will come, / and he will rule over the Gentiles.*

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referring to the northern kingdom of Israel. ^{11:15a} Hebrew will destroy the tongue of the sea of Egypt. ^{11:15b} Hebrew the river. ^{12:6} Hebrew Zion.

- 4 Hear the noise on the mountains!
Listen, as the vast armies march!
It is the noise and shouting of many nations.
The Lord of Heaven's Armies has called this army together.
- 5 They come from distant countries,
from beyond the farthest horizons.
They are the Lord's weapons to carry out his anger.
With them he will destroy the whole land.
- 6 Scream in terror, for the day of the Lord has arrived—
the time for the Almighty to destroy.
- 7 Every arm is paralyzed with fear.
Every heart melts,
and people are terrified.
Pangs of anguish grip them,
like those of a woman in labor.
They look helplessly at one another,
their faces aflame with fear.
- 9 For see, the day of the Lord is coming—
the terrible day of his fury and fierce anger.
The land will be made desolate,
and all the sinners destroyed with it.
- 10 The heavens will be black above them;
the stars will give no light.
The sun will be dark when it rises,
and the moon will provide no light.
- 11 "I, the Lord, will punish the world for its evil
and the wicked for their sin.
I will crush the arrogance of the proud
and humble the pride of the mighty.
- 12 I will make people scarcer than gold—
more rare than the fine gold of Ophir.
- 13 For I will shake the heavens.
The earth will move from its place
when the Lord of Heaven's Armies displays his wrath
in the day of his fierce anger."
- 14 Everyone in Babylon will run about like a hunted gazelle,
like sheep without a shepherd.
They will try to find their own people
and flee to their own land.
- 15 Anyone who is captured will be cut down—
run through with a sword.
- 16 Their little children will be dashed to death before their eyes.
Their homes will be sacked, and their wives will be raped.
- 17 "Look, I will stir up the Medes against Babylon.
They cannot be tempted by silver
or bribed with gold.
- 18 The attacking armies will shoot down the young men
with arrows.
They will have no mercy on helpless babies
and will show no compassion for children."
- 19 Babylon, the most glorious of kingdoms,
the flower of Chaldean pride,
will be devastated like Sodom and Gomorrah
when God destroyed them.
- 20 Babylon will never be inhabited again.
It will remain empty for generation after generation.
Nomads will refuse to camp there,

14:1 Hebrew *the house of Jacob*. The names "Jacob" and "Israel" are often interchanged throughout the Old Testament, referring sometimes to the patriarch and sometimes to the nation. 14:4 As in Dead Sea Scrolls; the meaning of the Masoretic Text is uncertain. 14:9 Hebrew *Sheol*; also in 14:11 Hebrew *were brought down to Sheol*. 14:13 Or *on the heights of Zaphon*.

- and shepherds will not bed down their sheep.
- 21 Desert animals will move into the ruined city,
and the houses will be haunted by howling creatures.
Owls will live among the ruins,
and wild goats will go there to dance.
- 22 Hyenas will howl in its fortresses,
and jackals will make dens in its luxurious palaces.
Babylon's days are numbered;
its time of destruction will soon arrive.

A Taunt for Babylon's King

14 But the Lord will have mercy on the descendants of Jacob. He will bring them back to settle once again in their own land. And people from many different nations will come and join them there and unite with the people of Israel.* 2 The nations of the world will help the Lord's people to return, and those who come to live in their land will serve them. Those who captured Israel will themselves be captured, and Israel will rule over its enemies.

3 In that wonderful day when the Lord gives his people rest from sorrow and fear, from slavery and chains, you will taunt the king of Babylon. You will say,

"The mighty man has been destroyed.

Yes, your insolence* is ended.

5 For the Lord has crushed your wicked power
and broken your evil rule.

6 You struck the people with endless blows of rage
and held the nations in your angry grip
with unrelenting tyranny.

7 But finally the earth is at rest and quiet.
Now it can sing again!

8 Even the trees of the forest—
the cypress trees and the cedars of Lebanon—
sing out this joyous song:

'Since you have been cut down,
no one will come now to cut us down!'

9 "In the place of the dead* there is excitement
over your arrival.

The spirits of world leaders and mighty kings
long dead
stand up to see you.

10 With one voice they all cry out,

'Now you are as weak as we are!

11 Your might and power were buried with you.*
The sound of the harp in your palace has ceased.

Now maggots are your sheet,
and worms your blanket.'

12 "How you are fallen from heaven,
O shining star, son of the morning!

You have been thrown down to the earth,
you who destroyed the nations of the world.

13 For you said to yourself,

'I will ascend to heaven and set my throne above
God's stars.

I will preside on the mountain of the gods
far away in the north.*

14 I will climb to the highest heavens
and be like the Most High.'

15 Instead, you will be brought down to the place
of the dead,
down to its lowest depths.

16 Everyone there will stare at you and ask,

Can this be the one who shook the earth
and made the kingdoms of the world tremble?
Is this the one who destroyed the world
and made it into a wasteland?
Is this the king who demolished the world's
greatest cities
and had no mercy on his prisoners?'

17 The kings of the nations lie in stately glory,
each in his own tomb,
but you will be thrown out of your grave
like a worthless branch.

18 Like a corpse trampled underfoot,
you will be dumped into a mass grave
with those killed in battle.

19 You will descend to the pit.

20 You will not be given a proper burial,
for you have destroyed your nation
and slaughtered your people.

21 The descendants of such an evil person
will never again receive honor.
22 Kill this man's children!

23 Let them die because of their father's sins!
They must not rise and conquer the earth,
filling the world with their cities."

24 This is what the Lord of Heaven's Armies says:
"I myself, have risen against Babylon!
I will destroy its children and its children's
children,"

says the Lord.

25 I will make Babylon a desolate place of owls,
filled with swamps and marshes.

26 I will sweep the land with the broom of destruction.
The Lord of Heaven's Armies, have spoken!"

Message about Assyria

The Lord of Heaven's Armies has sworn this oath:

"It will all happen as I have planned.
It will be as I have decided.

2 I will break the Assyrians when they are in Israel;
I will trample them on my mountains.

3 I will make people will no longer be their slaves
nor bow down under their heavy loads.

4 I have a plan for the whole earth,
a plan of judgment upon all the nations.

5 The Lord of Heaven's Armies has spoken—
who can change his plans?

6 When his hand is raised,
who can stop him?"

Message about Philistia

A message came to me the year King Ahaz died:*

"Your voice, you Philistines,

2 I will break the rod that struck you is broken—
the king who attacked you is dead.

3 I will make that snake a more poisonous snake will
be born.

4 I will send a serpent to destroy you!

5 I will lie down in peace;
I will lie down in peace.

6 I will wipe you out with famine
and destroy the few who remain.

7 I will break the gates! Weep in the cities!
Weep with fear, you Philistines!

14:32 Hebrew *Zion*. 15:9 As in Dead Sea Scrolls.

- 6 We have heard about proud Moab—
about its pride and arrogance and rage.
But all that boasting has disappeared.
- 7 The entire land of Moab weeps.
Yes, everyone in Moab mourns
for the cakes of raisins from Kir-hareseth.
They are all gone now.
- 8 The farms of Heshbon are abandoned;
the vineyards at Sibmah are deserted.
The rulers of the nations have broken down Moab—
that beautiful grapevine.
Its tendrils spread north as far as the town of Jazer
and trailed eastward into the wilderness.
Its shoots reached so far west
that they crossed over the Dead Sea.*
- 9 So now I weep for Jazer and the vineyards of Sibmah;
my tears will flow for Heshbon and Elealeh.
There are no more shouts of joy
over your summer fruits and harvest.
- 10 Gone now is the gladness,
gone the joy of harvest.
There will be no singing in the vineyards,
no more happy shouts,
no treading of grapes in the winepresses.
I have ended all their harvest joys.
- 11 My heart's cry for Moab is like a lament on a harp.
I am filled with anguish for Kir-hareseth.*
- 12 The people of Moab will worship at their pagan shrines,
but it will do them no good.
They will cry to the gods in their temples,
but no one will be able to save them.

¹³The LORD has already said these things about Moab in the past. ¹⁴But now the LORD says, "Within three years, counting each day,* the glory of Moab will be ended. From its great population, only a few of its people will be left alive."

A Message about Damascus and Israel

17 This message came to me concerning Damascus:

- "Look, the city of Damascus will disappear!
It will become a heap of ruins.
- 2 The towns of Areror will be deserted.
Flocks will graze in the streets and lie down
undisturbed,
with no one to chase them away.
- 3 The fortified towns of Israel* will also be destroyed,
and the royal power of Damascus will end.
All that remains of Syria*
will share the fate of Israel's departed glory,"
declares the LORD of Heaven's Armies.
- 4 "In that day Israel's* glory will grow dim;
its robust body will waste away.
- 5 The whole land will look like a grainfield
after the harvesters have gathered the grain.
It will be desolate,
like the fields in the valley of Rephaim after
the harvest.
- 6 Only a few of its people will be left,
like stray olives left on a tree after the harvest.
Only two or three remain in the highest branches,
four or five scattered here and there on the limbs,"
declares the LORD, the God of Israel.

^{16:8} Hebrew the sea. ^{16:11} Hebrew Kir-hares, a variant spelling of Kir-hareseth. ^{16:14} Hebrew Within three years, as a servant bound by contract would count them. ^{17:3a} Hebrew of Ephraim, referring to the northern kingdom of Israel. ^{17:3b} Hebrew Aram. ^{17:4} Hebrew Jacob's. See note on 14:1. ^{17:9} As in Greek version; Hebrew reads like places of the wood and the highest bough. ^{18:1a} Hebrew Cush. ^{18:1b} Or land of many locusts. Hebrew reads land of whirring wings.

- 7 Then at last the people will look to their Creator
and turn their eyes to the Holy One of Israel.
- 8 They will no longer look to their idols for help
or worship what their own hands have made.
They will never again bow down to their Asherah poles
or worship at the pagan shrines they have built.
- 9 Their largest cities will be like a deserted forest,
like the land the Hivites and Amorites abandoned*
when the Israelites came here so long ago.
It will be utterly desolate.
- 10 Why? Because you have turned from the God who
can save you.
You have forgotten the Rock who can hide you.
So you may plant the finest grapevines
and import the most expensive seedlings.
- 11 They may sprout on the day you set them out;
yes, they may blossom on the very morning you
plant them,
but you will never pick any grapes from them.
Your only harvest will be a load of grief and
unrelieved pain.
- 12 Listen! The armies of many nations
roar like the roaring of the sea.
Hear the thunder of the mighty forces
as they rush forward like thundering waves.
- 13 But though they thunder like breakers on a beach,
God will silence them, and they will run away.
They will flee like chaff scattered by the wind,
like a tumbleweed whirling before a storm.
- 14 In the evening Israel waits in terror,
but by dawn its enemies are dead.
This is the just reward of those who plunder us,
a fitting end for those who destroy us.

A Message about Ethiopia

18 ¹Listen, Ethiopia*—land of fluttering sails*
that lies at the headwaters of the Nile,
² that sends ambassadors
in swift boats down the river.

- Go, swift messengers!
Take a message to a tall, smooth-skinned people,
who are feared far and wide
for their conquests and destruction,
and whose land is divided by rivers.
- 3 All you people of the world,
everyone who lives on the earth—
when I raise my battle flag on the mountain, look!
When I blow the ram's horn, listen!
- 4 For the LORD has told me this:
"I will watch quietly from my dwelling place—
as quietly as the heat rises on a summer day,
or as the morning dew forms during the
harvest."
- 5 Even before you begin your attack,
while your plans are ripening like grapes,
the LORD will cut off your new growth with pruning
shears.
He will snip off and discard your spreading branches.
- 6 Your mighty army will be left dead in the fields
for the mountain vultures and wild animals.
The vultures will tear at the corpses all summer.
The wild animals will gnaw at the bones all winter.

At that time the LORD of Heaven's Armies will
receive gifts
from this land divided by rivers,
from this tall, smooth-skinned people,
who are feared far and wide for their conquest
and destruction.
They will bring the gifts to Jerusalem,*
where the LORD of Heaven's Armies dwells.

A Message about Egypt

19 This message came to me concerning Egypt:
Look! The LORD is advancing against Egypt
riding on a swift cloud.
The idols of Egypt tremble.
The hearts of the Egyptians melt with fear.
I will make Egyptian fight against Egyptian—
brother against brother,
neighbor against neighbor,
city against city,
province against province.
The Egyptians will lose heart,
and I will confuse their plans.
They will plead with their idols for wisdom
and call on spirits, mediums, and those who
consult the spirits of the dead.
I will hand Egypt over
to a hard, cruel master.
A fierce king will rule them,"
says the LORD, the LORD of Heaven's Armies.
The waters of the Nile will fail to rise and flood
the fields.
The riverbed will be parched and dry.
The canals of the Nile will dry up,
and the streams of Egypt will stink
with rotting reeds and rushes.
The greenery along the riverbank
and all the crops along the river
will dry up and blow away.
The fishermen will lament for lack of work.
Those who cast hooks into the Nile will groan,
and those who use nets will lose heart.
There will be no flax for the harvesters,
no thread for the weavers.
They will be in despair,
and all the workers will be sick at heart.
What fools are the officials of Zoan!
Their best counsel to the king of Egypt is stupid
and wrong.
Will they still boast to Pharaoh of their wisdom?
Will they dare brag about all their wise
ancestors?
Where are your wise counselors, Pharaoh?
Let them tell you what God plans,
what the LORD of Heaven's Armies is going to do
to Egypt.
The officials of Zoan are fools,
and the officials of Memphis* are deluded.
The leaders of the people
have led Egypt astray.
The LORD has sent a spirit of foolishness on them,
so all their suggestions are wrong.
They cause Egypt to stagger
like a drunk in his vomit.

^{19:13} Hebrew to Mount Zion. ^{19:18} Or will
Hebrew Cush; also in 20:5. ^{20:4} Hebrew Cushites. ^{21:1} Hel

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 n forward like thundering waves.
 ey thunder like breakers on a beach.
 lence them, and they will run away.
 like chaff scattered by the wind,
 leweed whirling before a storm.
 g Israel waits in terror,
 m its enemies are dead.
 at reward of those who plunder us,
 d for those who destroy us.

out Ethiopia

thiopia*—land of fluttering sails*
 es at the headwaters of the Nile,
 assadors
 ats down the river.

engers!
 ge to a tall, smooth-skinned people.
 ared far and wide
 quests and destruction,
 land is divided by rivers.
 e of the world,
 ho lives on the earth—
 ny battle flag on the mountain, look!
 the ram's horn, listen!
 as told me this:
 quietly from my dwelling place—
 s the heat rises on a summer day,
 orning dew forms during the

u begin your attack,
 lars are ripening like grapes,
 ut off your new growth with pruning

off and discard your spreading branches
 my will be left dead in the fields
 ntain vultures and wild animals.
 ll tear at the corpses all summer.
 mals will gnaw at the bones all winter.

within three years, as a servant bound by contract
 Hebrew Aram. 17:4 Hebrew Jacob's. See note on
 Hebrew Cush. 18:1b Or land of many locusts

At that time the LORD of Heaven's Armies will
 receive gifts
 from this land divided by rivers,
 from this tall, smooth-skinned people,
 who are feared far and wide for their conquests
 and destruction.
 They will bring the gifts to Jerusalem,*
 where the LORD of Heaven's Armies dwells.

A Message about Egypt

19 This message came to me concerning Egypt:

Look! The LORD is advancing against Egypt,
 riding on a swift cloud.
 The idols of Egypt tremble.

The hearts of the Egyptians melt with fear.

I will make Egyptian fight against Egyptian—
 brother against brother,
 neighbor against neighbor,
 city against city,
 province against province.
 The Egyptians will lose heart,
 and I will confuse their plans.

They will plead with their idols for wisdom
 and call on spirits, mediums, and those who
 consult the spirits of the dead.

I will hand Egypt over
 to a hard, cruel master.

A fierce king will rule them,"
 says the LORD, the LORD of Heaven's Armies.

The waters of the Nile will fail to rise and flood
 the fields.

The riverbed will be parched and dry.

The canals of the Nile will dry up,
 and the streams of Egypt will stink
 with rotting reeds and rushes.

All the greenery along the riverbank
 and all the crops along the river
 will dry up and blow away.

The fishermen will lament for lack of work.
 Those who cast hooks into the Nile will groan,
 and those who use nets will lose heart.

There will be no flax for the harvesters,
 no thread for the weavers.

They will be in despair,
 and all the workers will be sick at heart.

What fools are the officials of Zoan!

Their best counsel to the king of Egypt is stupid
 and wrong.

Why still boast to Pharaoh of their wisdom?
 Will they dare brag about all their wise
 ancestors?

Where are your wise counselors, Pharaoh?

Let them tell you what God plans,
 what the LORD of Heaven's Armies is going to do
 to Egypt.

The officials of Zoan are fools,
 and the officials of Memphis* are deluded.

The leaders of the people
 have led Egypt astray.

The LORD has sent a spirit of foolishness on them,
 so all their suggestions are wrong.

They cause Egypt to stagger
 like a drunk in his vomit.

Hebrew to Mount Zion. 19:13 Hebrew Noph. 19:18 Or will be the City of Destruction. 20:1 Ashdod was captured by Assyria in 711 B.C.
 Hebrew Cush; also in 20:5. 20:4 Hebrew Cushites. 21:1 Hebrew concerning the desert by the sea.

15 There is nothing Egypt can do.

All are helpless—
 the head and the tail,
 the noble palm branch and the lowly reed.

16 In that day the Egyptians will be as weak as women.
 They will cower in fear beneath the upraised fist of the LORD
 of Heaven's Armies. **17** Just to speak the name of Israel will
 terrorize them, for the LORD of Heaven's Armies has laid out
 his plans against them.

18 In that day five of Egypt's cities will follow the LORD of
 Heaven's Armies. They will even begin to speak Hebrew, the
 language of Canaan. One of these cities will be Heliopolis,
 the City of the Sun.*

19 In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the heart
 of Egypt, and there will be a monument to the LORD at its
 border. **20** It will be a sign and a witness that the LORD of
 Heaven's Armies is worshiped in the land of Egypt. When
 the people cry to the LORD for help against those who op-
 press them, he will send them a savior who will rescue them.
21 The LORD will make himself known to the Egyptians. Yes,
 they will know the LORD and will give their sacrifices and of-
 ferings to him. They will make a vow to the LORD and will
 keep it. **22** The LORD will strike Egypt, and then he will bring
 healing. For the Egyptians will turn to the LORD, and he will
 listen to their pleas and heal them.

23 In that day Egypt and Assyria will be connected by a
 highway. The Egyptians and Assyrians will move freely be-
 tween their lands, and they will both worship God. **24** And Is-
 rael will be their ally. The three will be together, and Israel
 will be a blessing to them. **25** For the LORD of Heaven's Ar-
 mies will say, "Blessed be Egypt, my people. Blessed be As-
 syria, the land I have made. Blessed be Israel, my special
 possession!"

A Message about Egypt and Ethiopia

20 In the year when King Sargon of Assyria sent his
 commander in chief to capture the Philistine city of
 Ashdod,* **2** the LORD told Isaiah son of Amoz, "Take off the
 burlap you have been wearing, and remove your sandals." **3**
 Isaiah did as he was told and walked around naked and
 barefoot.

3 Then the LORD said, "My servant Isaiah has been walk-
 ing around naked and barefoot for the last three years.
 This is a sign—a symbol of the terrible troubles I will bring
 upon Egypt and Ethiopia.* **4** For the king of Assyria will take
 away the Egyptians and Ethiopians* as prisoners. He will
 make them walk naked and barefoot, both young and old,
 their buttocks bared, to the shame of Egypt. **5** Then the Phi-
 listines will be thrown into panic, for they counted on the
 power of Ethiopia and boasted of their allies in Egypt!
6 They will say, 'If this can happen to Egypt, what chance do
 we have? We were counting on Egypt to protect us from
 the king of Assyria.'"

A Message about Babylon

21 This message came to me concerning Babylon—the
 desert by the sea*:

Disaster is roaring down on you from the desert,
 like a whirlwind sweeping in from the Negev.

2 I see a terrifying vision:

I see the betrayer betraying,
 the destroyer destroying.

Go ahead, you Elamites and Medes,
 attack and lay siege.

- I will make an end
to all the groaning Babylon caused.
- 3 My stomach aches and burns with pain.
Sharp pangs of anguish are upon me,
like those of a woman in labor.
I grow faint when I hear what God is planning;
I am too afraid to look.
- 4 My mind reels and my heart races.
I longed for evening to come,
but now I am terrified of the dark.
- 5 Look! They are preparing a great feast.
They are spreading rugs for people to sit on.
Everyone is eating and drinking.
But quick! Grab your shields and prepare for battle.
You are being attacked!
- 6 Meanwhile, the Lord said to me,
"Put a watchman on the city wall.
Let him shout out what he sees.
- 7 He should look for chariots
drawn by pairs of horses,
and for riders on donkeys and camels.
Let the watchman be fully alert."
- 8 Then the watchman* called out,
"Day after day I have stood on the watchtower,
my lord.
Night after night I have remained at my post.
- 9 Now at last—look!
Here comes a man in a chariot
with a pair of horses!"
Then the watchman said,
"Babylon is fallen, fallen!
All the idols of Babylon
lie broken on the ground!"
- 10 O my people, threshed and winnowed,
I have told you everything the LORD of Heaven's
Armies has said,
everything the God of Israel has told me.

A Message about Edom

11 This message came to me concerning Edom*:

- Someone from Edom* keeps calling to me,
"Watchman, how much longer until morning?
When will the night be over?"
- 12 The watchman replies,
"Morning is coming, but night will soon return.
If you wish to ask again, then come back
and ask."

A Message about Arabia

13 This message came to me concerning Arabia:

- O caravans from Dedan,
hide in the deserts of Arabia.
- 14 O people of Tema,
bring water to these thirsty people,
food to these weary refugees.
- 15 They have fled from the sword,
from the drawn sword,
from the bent bow
and the terrors of battle.
- 16 The Lord said to me, "Within a year, counting each
day,* all the glory of Kedar will come to an end. 17 Only a few

21:8 As in Dead Sea Scrolls and Syriac version; Masoretic Text reads a lion. 21:11a Hebrew *Dumah*, which means "silence" or "stillness." It is a wordplay on the word *Edom*. 21:11b Hebrew *Seir*, another name for Edom. 21:16 Hebrew *Within a year, as a servant bound by contract would count it*. Some ancient manuscripts read *Within three years*, as in 16:14. 22:1 Hebrew *concerning the Valley of Vision*. 22:8 Hebrew *to the House of the Forest*; see 1 Kgs 7:2-5. 22:9 Hebrew *the city of David*.

of its courageous archers will survive. I, the LORD, the God of Israel, have spoken!"

A Message about Jerusalem

22 This message came to me concerning Jerusalem—the Valley of Vision*:

- What is happening?
Why is everyone running to the rooftops?
- 2 The whole city is in a terrible uproar.
What do I see in this reveling city?
Bodies are lying everywhere,
killed not in battle but by famine and disease.
- 3 All your leaders have fled.
They surrendered without resistance.
The people tried to slip away,
but they were captured, too.
- 4 That's why I said, "Leave me alone to weep;
do not try to comfort me.
Let me cry for my people
as I watch them being destroyed."
- 5 Oh, what a day of crushing defeat!
What a day of confusion and terror
brought by the Lord, the LORD of Heaven's Armies,
upon the Valley of Vision!
The walls of Jerusalem have been broken,
and cries of death echo from the mountainsides.
- 6 Elamites are the archers,
with their chariots and charioteers.
The men of Kir hold up the shields.
- 7 Chariots fill your beautiful valleys,
and charioteers storm your gates.
- 8 Judah's defenses have been stripped away.
You run to the armory* for your weapons.
- 9 You inspect the breaks in the walls of Jerusalem.*
You store up water in the lower pool.
- 10 You survey the houses and tear some down
for stone to strengthen the walls.
- 11 Between the city walls, you build a reservoir
for water from the old pool.
But you never ask for help from the One who did
all this.
You never considered the One who planned this
long ago.
- 12 At that time the Lord, the LORD of Heaven's Armies,
called you to weep and mourn.
He told you to shave your heads in sorrow for your sin
and to wear clothes of burlap to show your remorse.
- 13 But instead, you dance and play;
you slaughter cattle and kill sheep.
You feast on meat and drink wine.
You say, "Let's feast and drink,
for tomorrow we die!"
- 14 The LORD of Heaven's Armies has revealed this to me: "The
day you die, you will never be forgiven for this sin." This
is the judgment of the Lord, the LORD of Heaven's Armies.

A Message for Shebna

15 This is what the Lord, the LORD of Heaven's Armies, said
to me: "Confront Shebna, the palace administrator, and give
him this message:

- 16 "Who do you think you are,
and what are you doing here,

aiding a beautiful tomb for yourself—
a monument high up in the rock?
For the LORD is about to hurl you away, mighty
He is going to grab you,
trample you into a ball,
and toss you away into a distant, barren land.
There you will die,
and your glorious chariots will be broken and
You are a disgrace to your master!

"Yes, I will drive you out of office," says the LORD.
I will bring you down from your high position. 20 And then
I will appoint a servant Eliakim son of Hilkiah to replace you. 21
He will wear your royal robes and will give him your title
and authority. And he will be a father to the people of
Judah. 22 I will give him the key to the house of David.
He will be able to close them; when he closes doors
no one will be able to open them. 23 He will bring honor to
his house, for I will drive him firmly in place like a nail in
the wall. They will give him great responsibility, and he will
bring honor to even the lowliest members of his family.*
24 But the LORD of Heaven's Armies also says: "I will
come when I will pull out the nail that seemed
secure. It will come out and fall to the ground. Everything
built on it will fall with it. I, the LORD, have spoken!"

A Message about Tyre

23 This message came to me concerning Tyre:

Weep, O ships of Tarshish,
for the harbor and houses of Tyre are gone!
The rumors you heard in Cyprus*
are all true.

24 Mourning in silence, you people of the coast
and you merchants of Sidon.
Your traders crossed the sea,
sailing over deep waters.
They brought you grain from Egypt*
and harvests from along the Nile.
You were the marketplace of the world.

25 But now you are put to shame, city of Sidon,
for Tyre, the fortress of the sea, says,
"Now I am childless;
I have no sons or daughters."
26 When Egypt hears the news about Tyre,
there will be great sorrow.
Send word now to Tarshish!
Wail, you people who live in distant lands!
Is this silent ruin all that is left of your once joyous
city? What a long history was yours!
Think of all the colonists you sent to distant places!

27 Who has brought this disaster on Tyre,
that great creator of kingdoms?
Her traders were all princes,
her merchants were nobles.
The LORD of Heaven's Armies has done it
to destroy your pride
and bring low all earth's nobility.
Come, people of Tarshish,
sweep over the land like the flooding Nile,
for Tyre is defenseless.*
28 The LORD held out his hand over the sea
and shook the kingdoms of the earth.

22:4 Hebrew *They will hang on him all the glory of his father's house*.
22:5 Hebrew *Kittim*; also in 23:12. 23:3 Hebrew *from Shihor*, a branch
of the Nile. 23:13 Or *Chaldea*.

rchers will survive. I, the LORD, the God of Israel!"

Jerusalem

ge came to me concerning Jerusalem—
Vision*:

ng?

ne running to the rooftops?
in a terrible uproar.

in this revelling city?

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means "silence" or "stillness." It is a word

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2:8 Hebrew to the House of the Forest.

ilding a beautiful tomb for yourself—
a monument high up in the rock?

For the LORD is about to hurl you away, mighty man.

He is going to grab you,

—smple you into a ball,

and toss you away into a distant, barren land.

There you will die,

and your glorious chariots will be broken and useless.

You are a disgrace to your master!

"Yes, I will drive you out of office," says the LORD. "I will

you down from your high position. ²⁰And then I will call

servant Eliakim son of Hilkiah to replace you. ²¹I will dress

in your royal robes and will give him your title and your

city. And he will be a father to the people of Jerusalem

udah. ²²I will give him the key to the house of David—the

est position in the royal court. When he opens doors, no

will be able to close them; when he closes doors, no one

will be able to open them. ²³He will bring honor to his family

ne, for I will drive him firmly in place like a nail in the wall.

They will give him great responsibility, and he will bring

to even the lowliest members of his family.*"

But the LORD of Heaven's Armies also says: "The time

come when I will pull out the nail that seemed so firm.

will come out and fall to the ground. Everything it sup-

will fall with it. I, the LORD, have spoken!"

Message about Tyre

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for the harbor and houses of Tyre are gone!

The rumors you heard in Cyprus*

are all true.

Mourn in silence, you people of the coast

and you merchants of Sidon.

Your traders crossed the sea,

sailing over deep waters.

They brought you grain from Egypt*

and harvests from along the Nile.

You were the marketplace of the world.

But now you are put to shame, city of Sidon,

for Tyre, the fortress of the sea, says,

"Now I am childless;

I have no sons or daughters."

When Egypt hears the news about Tyre,

there will be great sorrow.

Send word now to Tarshish!

Wail, you people who live in distant lands!

This silent ruin all that is left of your once joyous city?

What a long history was yours!

Think of all the colonists you sent to distant places.

Who has brought this disaster on Tyre,

that great creator of kingdoms?

Her traders were all princes,

her merchants were nobles.

The LORD of Heaven's Armies has done it

to destroy your pride

and bring low all earth's nobility.

Come, people of Tarshish,

sweep over the land like the flooding Nile,

for Tyre is defenseless.*

The LORD held out his hand over the sea

and shook the kingdoms of the earth.

²⁰Hebrew They will hang on him all the glory of his father's house: its offspring and offshoots, all its lesser vessels, from the bowls to all the jars.

²¹Hebrew Kittim; also in 23:12. ^{23:3}Hebrew from Shihor, a branch of the Nile River. ^{23:10}The meaning of the Hebrew in this verse is uncertain.

^{23:13}Hebrew Canaan. ^{23:13}Or Chaldea.

He has spoken out against Phoenicia,*

ordering that her fortresses be destroyed.

¹²He says, "Never again will you rejoice;

O daughter of Sidon, for you have been crushed.

Even if you flee to Cyprus,

you will find no rest."

¹³Look at the land of Babylonia*—

the people of that land are gone!

The Assyrians have handed Babylon over

to the wild animals of the desert.

They have built siege ramps against its walls,

torn down its palaces,

and turned it to a heap of rubble.

¹⁴Wail, O ships of Tarshish,

for your harbor is destroyed!

¹⁵For seventy years, the length of a king's life, Tyre will be

forgotten. But then the city will come back to life as in the

song about the prostitute:

¹⁶Take a harp and walk the streets,

you forgotten harlot.

Make sweet melody and sing your songs

so you will be remembered again.

¹⁷Yes, after seventy years the LORD will revive Tyre. But

she will be no different than she was before. She will again

be a prostitute to all kingdoms around the world. ¹⁸But in

the end her profits will be given to the LORD. Her wealth will

not be hoarded but will provide good food and fine clothing

for the LORD's priests.

Destruction of the Earth

24 Look! The LORD is about to destroy the earth

and make it a vast wasteland.

He devastates the surface of the earth

and scatters the people.

²Priests and laypeople,

servants and masters,

maids and mistresses,

buyers and sellers,

lenders and borrowers,

bankers and debtors—none will be spared.

³The earth will be completely emptied and looted.

The LORD has spoken!

⁴The earth mourns and dries up,

and the crops waste away and wither.

Even the greatest people on earth waste away.

⁵The earth suffers for the sins of its people,

for they have twisted God's instructions,

violated his laws,

and broken his everlasting covenant.

⁶Therefore, a curse consumes the earth.

Its people must pay the price for their sin.

They are destroyed by fire,

and only a few are left alive.

⁷The grapevines waste away,

and there is no new wine.

All the merry-makers sigh and mourn.

⁸The cheerful sound of tambourines is stilled;

the happy cries of celebration are heard

no more.

The melodious chords of the harp are silent.

⁹Gone are the joys of wine and song;

alcoholic drink turns bitter in the mouth.

- 10 The city writhes in chaos;
every home is locked to keep out intruders.
- 11 Mobs gather in the streets, crying out for wine.
Joy has turned to gloom.
Gladness has been banished from the land.
- 12 The city is left in ruins,
its gates battered down.
- 13 Throughout the earth the story is the same—
only a remnant is left,
like the stray olives left on the tree
or the few grapes left on the vine after harvest.
- 14 But all who are left shout and sing for joy.
Those in the west praise the LORD's majesty.
- 15 In eastern lands, give glory to the LORD.
In the lands beyond the sea, praise the name of the
LORD, the God of Israel.
- 16 We hear songs of praise from the ends of the earth,
songs that give glory to the Righteous One!
- But my heart is heavy with grief.
Weep for me, for I wither away.
Deceit still prevails,
and treachery is everywhere.
- 17 Terror and traps and snares will be your lot,
you people of the earth.
- 18 Those who flee in terror will fall into a trap,
and those who escape the trap will be caught
in a snare.
- Destruction falls like rain from the heavens;
the foundations of the earth shake.
- 19 The earth has broken up.
It has utterly collapsed;
it is violently shaken.
- 20 The earth staggers like a drunk.
It trembles like a tent in a storm.
It falls and will not rise again,
for the guilt of its rebellion is very heavy.
- 21 In that day the LORD will punish the gods in
the heavens
and the proud rulers of the nations on earth.
- 22 They will be rounded up and put in prison.
They will be shut up in prison
and will finally be punished.
- 23 Then the glory of the moon will wane,
and the brightness of the sun will fade,
for the LORD of Heaven's Armies will rule on
Mount Zion.
He will rule in great glory in Jerusalem,
in the sight of all the leaders of his people.

Praise for Judgment and Salvation

- 25** O LORD, I will honor and praise your name,
for you are my God.
You do such wonderful things!
You planned them long ago,
and now you have accomplished them.
- 2 You turn mighty cities into heaps of ruins.
Cities with strong walls are turned to rubble.
Beautiful palaces in distant lands disappear
and will never be rebuilt.
- 3 Therefore, strong nations will declare your glory;
ruthless nations will fear you.
- 4 But you are a tower of refuge to the poor, O LORD,
a tower of refuge to the needy in distress.

25:6 Hebrew *On this mountain*; also in 25:10. 25:8 Greek version reads *Death is swallowed up in victory*. Compare 1 Cor 15:54.

- You are a refuge from the storm
and a shelter from the heat.
For the oppressive acts of ruthless people
are like a storm beating against a wall,
or like the relentless heat of the desert.
- 5 But you silence the roar of foreign nations.
As the shade of a cloud cools relentless heat,
so the boastful songs of ruthless people are stilled.
- 6 In Jerusalem,* the LORD of Heaven's Armies
will spread a wonderful feast
for all the people of the world.
It will be a delicious banquet
with clear, well-aged wine and choice meat.
- 7 There he will remove the cloud of gloom,
the shadow of death that hangs over the earth.
- 8 He will swallow up death forever!†
The Sovereign LORD will wipe away all tears.
He will remove forever all insults and mockery
against his land and people.
The LORD has spoken!
- 9 In that day the people will proclaim,
"This is our God!
We trusted in him, and he saved us!
This is the LORD, in whom we trusted.
Let us rejoice in the salvation he brings!"
- 10 For the LORD's hand of blessing will rest on Jerusalem.
But Moab will be crushed.
It will be like straw trampled down and left to rot.
- 11 God will push down Moab's people
as a swimmer pushes down water with his hands.
He will end their pride
and all their evil works.
- 12 The high walls of Moab will be demolished.
They will be brought down to the ground,
down into the dust.

A Song of Praise to the LORD

- 26** In that day, everyone in the land of Judah will
sing this song:
- Our city is strong!
We are surrounded by the walls of God's salvation.
- 2 Open the gates to all who are righteous;
allow the faithful to enter.
- 3 You will keep in perfect peace
all who trust in you,
all whose thoughts are fixed on you!
- 4 Trust in the LORD always,
for the LORD GOD is the eternal Rock.
- 5 He humbles the proud
and brings down the arrogant city.
He brings it down to the dust.
- 6 The poor and oppressed trample it underfoot,
and the needy walk all over it.
- 7 But for those who are righteous,
the way is not steep and rough.
You are a God who does what is right,
and you smooth out the path ahead of them.
- 8 LORD, we show our trust in you by obeying
your laws;
our heart's desire is to glorify your name.
- 9 All night long I search for you;
in the morning I earnestly seek for God.
For only when you come to judge the earth
will people learn what is right.

- Your kindness to the wicked
does not make them do good.
Although others do right, the wicked keep doing wrong
and take no notice of the LORD's majesty.
- 10 LORD, they pay no attention to your upraised fist.
Show them your eagerness to defend your people.
Then they will be ashamed.
Let your fire consume your enemies.
- 11 LORD, you will grant us peace;
all we have accomplished is really from you.
- 12 LORD our God, others have ruled us,
but you alone are the one we worship.
Those we served before are dead and gone.
Their departed spirits will never return!
You attacked them and destroyed them,
and they are long forgotten.
- 13 LORD, you have made our nation great;
yes, you have made us great.
You have extended our borders,
and we give you the glory!
- 14 LORD, in distress we searched for you.
We prayed beneath the burden of your discipline.
Just as a pregnant woman
writhes and cries out in pain as she gives birth,
so were we in your presence, LORD.
- 15 We too, writhe in agony,
but nothing comes of our suffering.
We have not given salvation to the earth,
nor brought life into the world.
But those who die in the LORD will live;
their bodies will rise again!
Those who sleep in the earth
will rise up and sing for joy!
For your life-giving light will fall like dew
on your people in the place of the dead!

Restoration for Israel

- In that day, everyone in the land of Judah will
sing this song:
- Our city is strong!
We are surrounded by the walls of God's salvation.
- 2 Open the gates to all who are righteous;
allow the faithful to enter.
- 3 You will keep in perfect peace
all who trust in you,
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and you smooth out the path ahead of them.
- 8 LORD, we show our trust in you by obeying
your laws;
our heart's desire is to glorify your name.
- 9 All night long I search for you;
in the morning I earnestly seek for God.
For only when you come to judge the earth
will people learn what is right.

27:12 Hebrew *the river*. 28:1 Hebrew *What sorrow awaits*. 28:1 Hebrew *What sorrow awaits*. 28:1 Hebrew *What sorrow awaits*. 28:3 Hebrew *The crowning glory of the dr*.

in the storm
in the heat.
acts of ruthless people
eating against a wall,
ess heat of the desert.
oar of foreign nations.
cloud cools relentless heat,
ngs of ruthless people are stilled.

ORD of Heaven's Armies
derful feast
of the world.
banquet
ed wine and choice meat.
e the cloud of gloom,
ath that hangs over the earth.
eath forever!*

ORD will wipe away all tears.
er all insults and mockery
and people.
ken!
e will proclaim,
e, and he saved us!
whom we trusted.
e salvation he brings!"
of blessing will rest on Jerusalem.
crushed.
w trampled down and left to rot.
Moab's people
hes down water with his hands.
de
works.
bab will be demolished.
ght down to the ground,
t.

the LORD
yone in the land of Judah will see

ed by the walls of God's salvation.
who are righteous;
to enter.
ect peace

u,
s are fixed on you!
ays,
is the eternal Rock.
d
the arrogant city.
to the dust.

sed trample it underfoot,
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p and rough.
es what is right,
ut the path ahead of them.
ust in you by obeying

is to glorify your name.
n for you;
arnestly seek for God.
me to judge the earth
what is right.

compare 1 Cor 15:54.

Your kindness to the wicked
does not make them do good.
Although others do right, the wicked keep doing wrong
and take no notice of the LORD's majesty.
O LORD, they pay no attention to your upraised fist.
Show them your eagerness to defend your people.
Then they will be ashamed.
Let your fire consume your enemies.

O LORD, you will grant us peace;
all we have accomplished is really from you.

O LORD our God, others have ruled us,
but you alone are the one we worship.
Those we served before are dead and gone.
Their departed spirits will never return!
You attacked them and destroyed them,
and they are long forgotten.

O LORD, you have made our nation great;
yes, you have made us great.
You have extended our borders,
and we give you the glory!

O LORD, in distress we searched for you.
We prayed beneath the burden of your discipline.

Just as a pregnant woman
writhes and cries out in pain as she gives birth,
so were we in your presence, LORD.

We too, writhe in agony,
but nothing comes of our suffering.

We have not given salvation to the earth,
nor brought life into the world.

But those who die in the LORD will live;
their bodies will rise again!

Those who sleep in the earth
will rise up and sing for joy!

For your life-giving light will fall like dew
on your people in the place of the dead!

Restoration for Israel

Go home, my people,
and lock your doors!
Hide yourselves for a little while
until the LORD's anger has passed.
Look! The LORD is coming from heaven
to punish the people of the earth for their sins.
The earth will no longer hide those who have
been killed.
They will be brought out for all to see.

27 In that day the LORD will take his terrible, swift sword
and punish Leviathan,* the swiftly moving serpent,
the writhing serpent. He will kill the dragon of the

In that day,
sing about the fruitful vineyard.

The LORD, will watch over it,
watering it carefully.

Day and night I will watch so no one can harm it.
My anger will be gone.

I will find briars and thorns growing,
I will attack them;

I will burn them up—
unless they turn to me for help.

Let them make peace with me;

yes, let them make peace with me."

*The identification of Leviathan is disputed, ranging from an earthly creature to a mythical sea monster in ancient literature. 27:9 Hebrew *Jacob's*. See
27:12 Hebrew *the river*. 28:1 Hebrew *What sorrow awaits the crowning glory of the drunks of Ephraim*, referring to Samaria, capital of
kingdom of Israel. 28:3 Hebrew *The crowning glory of the drunks of Ephraim*; see note on 28:1.

6 The time is coming when Jacob's descendants will
take root.

Israel will bud and blossom
and fill the whole earth with fruit!

7 Has the LORD struck Israel
as he struck her enemies?
Has he punished her
as he punished them?

8 No, but he exiled Israel to call her to account.
She was exiled from her land
as though blown away in a storm from the east.

9 The LORD did this to purge Israel's* wickedness,
to take away all her sin.
As a result, all the pagan altars will be crushed to dust.
No Asherah pole or pagan shrine will be left standing.

10 The fortified towns will be silent and empty,
the houses abandoned, the streets overgrown
with weeds.

Calves will graze there,
chewing on twigs and branches.

11 The people are like the dead branches of a tree,
broken off and used for kindling beneath the
cooking pots.

Israel is a foolish and stupid nation,
for its people have turned away from God.

Therefore, the one who made them
will show them no pity or mercy.

12 Yet the time will come when the LORD will gather them
together like handpicked grain. One by one he will gather
them—from the Euphrates River* in the east to the Brook
of Egypt in the west. **13** In that day the great trumpet will
sound. Many who were dying in exile in Assyria and Egypt
will return to Jerusalem to worship the LORD on his holy
mountain.

A Message about Samaria

28 **1** What sorrow awaits the proud city of Samaria—
the glorious crown of the drunks of Israel.*

It sits at the head of a fertile valley,
but its glorious beauty will fade like a flower.
It is the pride of a people
brought down by wine.

2 For the LORD will send a mighty army against it.
Like a mighty hailstorm and a torrential rain,
they will burst upon it like a surging flood
and smash it to the ground.

3 The proud city of Samaria—
the glorious crown of the drunks of Israel*—
will be trampled beneath its enemies' feet.

4 It sits at the head of a fertile valley,
but its glorious beauty will fade like a flower.
Whoever sees it will snatch it up,
as an early fig is quickly picked and eaten.

5 Then at last the LORD of Heaven's Armies
will himself be Israel's glorious crown.
He will be the pride and joy
of the remnant of his people.

6 He will give a longing for justice
to their judges.
He will give great courage
to their warriors who stand at the gates.

7 Now, however, Israel is led by drunks
who reel with wine and stagger with alcohol.

- The priests and prophets stagger with alcohol
and lose themselves in wine.
They reel when they see visions
and stagger as they render decisions.
- 8 Their tables are covered with vomit;
filth is everywhere.
- 9 "Who does the LORD think we are?" they ask.
"Why does he speak to us like this?
Are we little children,
just recently weaned?"
- 10 He tells us everything over and over—
one line at a time,
one line at a time,
a little here,
and a little there!"
- 11 So now God will have to speak to his people
through foreign oppressors who speak a strange
language!
- 12 God has told his people,
"Here is a place of rest;
let the weary rest here.
This is a place of quiet rest."
But they would not listen.
- 13 So the LORD will spell out his message for them again,
one line at a time,
one line at a time,
a little here,
and a little there,
so that they will stumble and fall.
They will be injured, trapped, and captured.
- 14 Therefore, listen to this message from the LORD,
you scoffing rulers in Jerusalem.
- 15 You boast, "We have struck a bargain to cheat death
and have made a deal to dodge the grave.*
The coming destruction can never touch us,
for we have built a strong refuge made of lies
and deception."
- 16 Therefore, this is what the Sovereign LORD says:
"Look! I am placing a foundation stone in Jerusalem,*
a firm and tested stone.
It is a precious cornerstone that is safe to build on.
Whoever believes need never be shaken.*
- 17 I will test you with the measuring line of justice
and the plumb line of righteousness.
Since your refuge is made of lies,
a hailstorm will knock it down.
Since it is made of deception,
a flood will sweep it away.
- 18 I will cancel the bargain you made to cheat death,
and I will overturn your deal to dodge the grave.
When the terrible enemy sweeps through,
you will be trampled into the ground.
- 19 Again and again that flood will come,
morning after morning,
day and night,
until you are carried away."
- This message will bring terror to your people.
20 The bed you have made is too short to lie on.
The blankets are too narrow to cover you.
- 21 The LORD will come as he did against the Philistines
at Mount Perazim
and against the Amorites at Gibeon.

28:15 Hebrew *Sheol*; also in 28:18. 28:16a Hebrew in *Zion*. 28:16b Greek version reads *Look! I am placing a stone in the foundation of Jerusalem* (literally *Zion*), / a precious cornerstone for its foundation, chosen for great honor. / Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced. Compare Rom 9:33. 1 Pet 2:6. 29:1 Ariel sounds like a Hebrew term that means "hearth" or "altar." 29:7 Hebrew *Ariel*.

- He will come to do a strange thing;
he will come to do an unusual deed:
- 22 For the LORD, the LORD of Heaven's Armies,
has plainly said that he is determined to crush
the whole land.
So scoff no more,
or your punishment will be even greater.
- 23 Listen to me;
listen, and pay close attention.
- 24 Does a farmer always plow and never sow?
Is he forever cultivating the soil and never planting?
- 25 Does he not finally plant his seeds—
black cumin, cumin, wheat, barley, and emmer wheat—
each in its proper way,
and each in its proper place?
- 26 The farmer knows just what to do,
for God has given him understanding.
- 27 A heavy sledge is never used to thresh black cumin;
rather, it is beaten with a light stick.
A threshing wheel is never rolled on cumin;
instead, it is beaten lightly with a flail.
- 28 Grain for bread is easily crushed,
so he doesn't keep on pounding it.
He threshes it under the wheels of a cart,
but he doesn't pulverize it.
- 29 The LORD of Heaven's Armies is a wonderful teacher
and he gives the farmer great wisdom.

A Message about Jerusalem

- 29 "What sorrow awaits Ariel,* the City of David.
Year after year you celebrate your feasts.
- 2 Yet I will bring disaster upon you,
and there will be much weeping and sorrow.
For Jerusalem will become what her name Ariel means—
an altar covered with blood.
- 3 I will be your enemy,
surrounding Jerusalem and attacking its walls.
I will build siege towers
and destroy it.
- 4 Then deep from the earth you will speak;
from low in the dust your words will come.
Your voice will whisper from the ground
like a ghost conjured up from the grave.
- 5 "But suddenly, your ruthless enemies will be crushed
like the finest of dust.
Your many attackers will be driven away
like chaff before the wind.
Suddenly, in an instant,
- 6 I, the LORD of Heaven's Armies, will act for you
with thunder and earthquake and great noise,
with whirlwind and storm and consuming fire.
- 7 All the nations fighting against Jerusalem*
will vanish like a dream!
Those who are attacking her walls
will vanish like a vision in the night.
- 8 A hungry person dreams of eating
but wakes up still hungry.
A thirsty person dreams of drinking
but is still faint from thirst when morning comes.
So it will be with your enemies,
with those who attack Mount Zion."
- 9 Are you amazed and incredulous?
Don't you believe it?

- Then go ahead and be blind.
You are stupid, but not from wine!
You stagger, but not from liquor!
For the LORD has poured out on you a spirit of
deep sleep.
He has closed the eyes of your prophets and
visionaries.
- "All the future events in this vision are like a seal
on a book. When you give it to those who can read,
they can't read it because it is sealed." 12 When
those who cannot read, they will say, "We do
not read."
- And so the LORD says,
"These people say they are mine.
They honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.
and their worship of me
is nothing but man-made rules learned by rote.
Because of this, I will once again astound these
hypocrites
with amazing wonders.
The wisdom of the wise will pass away,
and the intelligence of the intelligent will disappear.
What sorrow awaits those who try to hide their
face from the LORD,
who do their evil deeds in the dark!
The LORD can't see us," they say.
"He doesn't know what's going on!"
How foolish can you be?
He is the Potter, and he is certainly greater than
the clay!
Should the created thing say of the one who made
it, "He didn't make me?"
Does a jar ever say,
"The potter who made me is stupid?"
—and it will not be very long—
the forests of Lebanon will become a fertile field,
and the fertile field will yield bountiful crops.
That day the deaf will hear words read from a book,
and the blind will see through the gloom and
darkness.
The humble will be filled with fresh joy from the LORD.
The poor will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.
The scoffer will be gone,
the arrogant will disappear,
and those who plot evil will be killed.
Those who convict the innocent
by their false testimony will disappear.
A similar fate awaits those who use trickery to
pervert justice
and who tell lies to destroy the innocent.
- Why the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, says
of Israel,*
"The people will no longer be ashamed
or turn pale with fear.
When they see their many children
and all the blessings I have given them,
they will recognize the holiness of the Holy One
of Israel.
They will stand in awe of the God of Jacob.
The wayward will gain understanding,
and complainers will accept instruction."

29:13 Greek version reads *Their worship is a farce, / for they teach me*. 29:17 Hebrew *Rahab* who sits still. *Rahab* is the name of a poetic name for Egypt.

He will come to do a strange thing;
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Don't you believe it?

Hebrew version reads Look! I am placing a stone in the foundation of Jerusalem. / Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced. Compare Rom. 9:33.
29:7 Hebrew Ariel.

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to them. When you give it to those who can read, they will
say, "We can't read it because it is sealed." 32 When you give
it to those who cannot read, they will say, "We don't know
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33 And so the LORD says,
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The poor will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.
38 The scoffer will be gone,
the arrogant will disappear,
and those who plot evil will be killed.
39 Those who convict the innocent
by their false testimony will disappear.
A similar fate awaits those who use trickery to
pervert justice
and who tell lies to destroy the innocent.
40 This is why the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, says to the
people of Israel,*
41 "My people will no longer be ashamed
or turn pale with fear.
42 When they see their many children
and all the blessings I have given them,
they will recognize the holiness of the Holy One
of Israel.
43 They will stand in awe of the God of Jacob.
44 Then the wayward will gain understanding,
and complainers will accept instruction.

Hebrew version reads Their worship is a farce, / for they teach man-made ideas as commands from God. Compare Mark 7:7. 29:22 Hebrew of Jacob. / 30:7 Hebrew Rahab who sits still. Rahab is the name of a mythical sea monster that represents chaos in ancient literature. The name is also a poetic name for Egypt.

Judah's Worthless Treaty with Egypt

30 "What sorrow awaits my rebellious children,"
says the LORD.
"You make plans that are contrary to mine.
You make alliances not directed by my Spirit,
thus piling up your sins.
2 For without consulting me,
you have gone down to Egypt for help.
You have put your trust in Pharaoh's protection.
You have tried to hide in his shade.
3 But by trusting Pharaoh, you will be humiliated,
and by depending on him, you will be
disgraced.
4 For though his power extends to Zoan
and his officials have arrived in Hanes,
5 all who trust in him will be ashamed.
He will not help you.
Instead, he will disgrace you."
6 This message came to me concerning the animals in the
Negev:

The caravan moves slowly
across the terrible desert to Egypt—
donkeys weighed down with riches
and camels loaded with treasure—
all to pay for Egypt's protection.
They travel through the wilderness,
a place of lionesses and lions,
a place where vipers and poisonous snakes live.
All this, and Egypt will give you nothing in return.
7 Egypt's promises are worthless!
Therefore, I call her Rahab—
the Harmless Dragon.*

A Warning for Rebellious Judah

8 Now go and write down these words.
Write them in a book.
They will stand until the end of time
as a witness.
9 that these people are stubborn rebels
who refuse to pay attention to the LORD's instructions.
10 They tell the seers,
"Stop seeing visions!"
They tell the prophets,
"Don't tell us what is right.
Tell us nice things.
Tell us lies.
11 Forget all this gloom.
Get off your narrow path.
Stop telling us about your
'Holy One of Israel.'"
12 This is the reply of the Holy One of Israel:
"Because you despise what I tell you
and trust instead in oppression and lies,
13 calamity will come upon you suddenly—
like a bulging wall that bursts and falls.
In an instant it will collapse
and come crashing down.
14 You will be smashed like a piece of pottery—
shattered so completely that
there won't be a piece big enough
to carry coals from a fireplace
or a little water from the well."

29:22 Hebrew of Jacob.

- ¹⁵ This is what the Sovereign LORD,
the Holy One of Israel, says:
"Only in returning to me
and resting in me will you be saved.
In quietness and confidence is your strength.
But you would have none of it."
¹⁶ You said, "No, we will get our help from Egypt.
They will give us swift horses for riding into battle."
But the only swiftness you are going to see
is the swiftness of your enemies chasing you!
¹⁷ One of them will chase a thousand of you.
Five of them will make all of you flee.
You will be left like a lonely flagpole on a hill
or a tattered banner on a distant mountaintop."

Blessings for the LORD's People

- ¹⁸ So the LORD must wait for you to come to him
so he can show you his love and compassion.
For the LORD is a faithful God.
Blessed are those who wait for his help.
¹⁹ O people of Zion, who live in Jerusalem,
you will weep no more.
He will be gracious if you ask for help.
He will surely respond to the sound of
your cries.
²⁰ Though the LORD gave you adversity for food
and suffering for drink,
he will still be with you to teach you.
You will see your teacher with your own eyes.
²¹ Your own ears will hear him.
Right behind you a voice will say,
"This is the way you should go,"
whether to the right or to the left.
²² Then you will destroy all your silver idols
and your precious gold images.
You will throw them out like filthy rags,
saying to them, "Good riddance!"
²³ Then the LORD will bless you with rain at planting time.
There will be wonderful harvests and plenty of pastureland
for your livestock. ²⁴ The oxen and donkeys that till
the ground will eat good grain, its chaff blown away by the wind.
²⁵ In that day, when your enemies are slaughtered and the
towers fall, there will be streams of water flowing down
every mountain and hill. ²⁶ The moon will be as bright as the
sun, and the sun will be seven times brighter—like the light
of seven days in one! So it will be when the LORD begins to
heal his people and cure the wounds he gave them.
²⁷ Look! The LORD is coming from far away,
burning with anger,
surrounded by thick, rising smoke.
His lips are filled with fury;
his words consume like fire.
²⁸ His hot breath pours out like a flood
up to the neck of his enemies.
He will sift out the proud nations for destruction.
He will bridle them and lead them away to ruin.
²⁹ But the people of God will sing a song of joy,
like the songs at the holy festivals.
You will be filled with joy,
as when a flutist leads a group of pilgrims
to Jerusalem, the mountain of the LORD—
to the Rock of Israel.
³⁰ And the LORD will make his majestic voice heard.
He will display the strength of his mighty arm.
It will descend with devouring flames,
with cloudbursts, thunderstorms, and huge hailstones.

- ³¹ At the LORD's command, the Assyrians will be
shattered.
He will strike them down with his royal scepter.
³² And as the LORD strikes them with his rod of
punishment,
his people will celebrate with tambourines and harp.
Lifting his mighty arm, he will fight the Assyrians.
³³ Topheth—the place of burning—
has long been ready for the Assyrian king;
the pyre is piled high with wood.
The breath of the LORD, like fire from a volcano,
will set it ablaze.

The Futility of Relying on Egypt

- 31** ¹ What sorrow awaits those who look to Egypt for
help,
trusting their horses, chariots, and charioteers
and depending on the strength of human armies
instead of looking to the LORD,
the Holy One of Israel.
² In his wisdom, the LORD will send great disaster;
he will not change his mind.
He will rise against the wicked
and against their helpers.
³ For these Egyptians are mere humans, not God!
Their horses are puny flesh, not mighty spirits!
When the LORD raises his fist against them,
those who help will stumble,
and those being helped will fall.
They will all fall down and die together.

⁴ But this is what the LORD has told me:

- "When a strong young lion
stands growling over a sheep it has killed,
it is not frightened by the shouts and noise
of a whole crowd of shepherds.
In the same way, the LORD of Heaven's Armies
will come down and fight on Mount Zion.
⁵ The LORD of Heaven's Armies will hover over Jerusalem
and protect it like a bird protecting its nest.
He will defend and save the city;
he will pass over it and rescue it."

⁶ Though you are such wicked rebels, my people,
and return to the LORD. ⁷ I know the glorious day will
come when each of you will throw away the gold idols and silver
images your sinful hands have made.

- ⁸ "The Assyrians will be destroyed,
but not by the swords of men.
The sword of God will strike them,
and they will panic and flee.
The strong young Assyrians
will be taken away as captives.
⁹ Even the strongest will quake with terror,
and princes will flee when they see your battle flag.
says the LORD, whose fire burns in Zion,
whose flame blazes from Jerusalem.

Israel's Ultimate Deliverance

- 32** ¹ Look, a righteous king is coming!
And honest princes will rule under him.
² Each one will be like a shelter from the wind
and a refuge from the storm,
like streams of water in the desert
and the shadow of a great rock in a parched land.
³ Then everyone who has eyes will be able to see
the truth,

and everyone who has ears will be able to hear!
Even the hotheads will be full of sense and
understanding.
Those who stammer will speak out plainly.
In that day ungodly fools will not be heroes.
Scoundrels will not be respected.
For fools speak foolishness
and make evil plans.
They practice ungodliness
and spread false teachings about the LORD.
They deprive the hungry of food
and give no water to the thirsty.
The smooth tricks of scoundrels are evil.
They plot crooked schemes.
They lie to convict the poor,
even when the cause of the poor is just.
But generous people plan to do what is generous,
and they stand firm in their generosity.
Listen, you women who lie around in ease.
Listen to me, you who are so smug.
In a short time—just a little more than a year—
you careless ones will suddenly begin to care.
For your fruit crops will fail,
and the harvest will never take place.
Tremble, you women of ease;
throw off your complacency.
Strip off your pretty clothes,
and put on burlap to show your grief.
Bare your breasts in sorrow for your bountiful farms
and your fruitful grapevines.
For your land will be overgrown with thorns and briers.
Your joyful homes and happy towns will be gone.
The palace and the city will be deserted,
and busy towns will be empty.
Wild donkeys will frolic and flocks will graze
in the empty forts* and watchtowers
until at last the Spirit is poured out
on us from heaven.
Then the wilderness will become a fertile field,
and the fertile field will yield bountiful crops.
Justice will rule in the wilderness
and righteousness in the fertile field.
This righteousness will bring peace.
Yes, it will bring quietness and confidence
forever.
Our people will live in safety, quietly at home.
They will be at rest.
If the forest should be destroyed
and the city torn down,
the LORD will greatly bless his people.
Wherever they plant seed, bountiful crops will
spring up.
Their cattle and donkeys will graze freely.

Message about Assyria

33 ¹ What sorrow awaits you, Assyrians, who have
destroyed others*
but have never been destroyed yourselves.
You have never been betrayed,
but you have never been betrayed.
You are done destroying,
but you will be destroyed.
You are done betraying,
but you will be betrayed.

^{33:1} Hebrew: What sorrow awaits you, O destroyer.
^{33:5} Hebrew: Zion; also in 33:14. ^{33:8} As in Dead Sea Scrolls.

command, the Assyrians will be
d.
ke them down with his royal scepter.
RD strikes them with his rod of
ment,
will celebrate with tambourines and harp.
mighty arm, he will fight the Assyrians
place of burning—
en ready for the Assyrian king;
piled high with wood.
the LORD, like fire from a volcano,
blaze.

Relying on Egypt

row awaits those who look to Egypt for

their horses, chariots, and charioteers
g on the strength of human armies
looking to the LORD,
ne of Israel.

the LORD will send great disaster;
change his mind.

ainst the wicked

their helpers.

otions are mere humans, not God!
es are puny flesh, not mighty spirits!

raises his fist against them,

help will stumble,

ng helped will fall.

I fall down and die together.

the LORD has told me:

ng young lion

ving over a sheep it has killed,

ened by the shouts and noise

crowd of shepherds.

y, the LORD of Heaven's Armies

own and fight on Mount Zion.

Heaven's Armies will hover over Jerusalem

it like a bird protecting its nest.

and save the city;

over it and rescue it."

re such wicked rebels, my people

LORD. "I know the glorious day will

will throw away the gold idols and

hands have made.

will be destroyed,

swords of men.

d will strike them,

panic and flee.

Assyrians

way as captives.

it will quake with terror,

ll flee when they see your battle

se fire burns in Zion,

izes from Jerusalem.

Deliverance

ous king is coming!

princes will rule under him.

is a shelter from the wind

n the storm,

r in the desert

f a great rock in a parched land

has eyes will be able to see

and everyone who has ears will be able to hear it.

Even the hotheads will be full of sense and understanding.

Those who stammer will speak out plainly.

In that day ungodly fools will not be heroes.

Scoundrels will not be respected.

For fools speak foolishness

and make evil plans.

They practice ungodliness

and spread false teachings about the LORD.

They deprive the hungry of food

and give no water to the thirsty.

The smooth tricks of scoundrels are evil.

They plot crooked schemes.

They lie to convict the poor,

even when the cause of the poor is just.

But generous people plan to do what is generous,

and they stand firm in their generosity.

Listen, you women who lie around in ease.

Listen to me, you who are so smug.

In a short time—just a little more than a year—

you careless ones will suddenly begin to care.

For your fruit crops will fail,

and the harvest will never take place.

Tremble, you women of ease;

throw off your complacency.

Strip off your pretty clothes,

and put on burlap to show your grief.

Beat your breasts in sorrow for your bountiful farms

and your fruitful grapevines.

For your land will be overgrown with thorns and briars.

Your joyful homes and happy towns will be gone.

The palace and the city will be deserted,

and busy towns will be empty.

Wild donkeys will frolic and flocks will graze

in the empty forts* and watchtowers

until at last the Spirit is poured out

on us from heaven.

Then the wilderness will become a fertile field,

and the fertile field will yield bountiful crops.

Justice will rule in the wilderness

and righteousness in the fertile field.

And this righteousness will bring peace.

Yes, it will bring quietness and confidence

forever.

My people will live in safety, quietly at home.

They will be at rest.

Even if the forest should be destroyed

and the city torn down,

the LORD will greatly bless his people.

Wherever they plant seed, bountiful crops will

spring up.

Their cattle and donkeys will graze freely.

Message about Assyria

33 What sorrow awaits you Assyrians, who have

destroyed others*

but have never been destroyed yourselves.

You betray others,

but you have never been betrayed.

When you are done destroying,

you will be destroyed.

When you are done betraying,

you will be betrayed.

33:1 Hebrew *the Ophel*. 33:1 Hebrew *What sorrow awaits you, O destroyer*. The Hebrew text does not specifically name Assyria as the object of the message in this chapter. 33:5 Hebrew *Zion*; also in 33:14. 33:8 As in Dead Sea Scrolls; Masoretic Text reads *care nothing for the cities*.

2 But LORD, be merciful to us,

for we have waited for you.

Be our strong arm each day

and our salvation in times of trouble.

3 The enemy runs at the sound of your voice.

When you stand up, the nations flee!

4 Just as caterpillars and locusts strip the fields

and vines,

so the fallen army of Assyria will be stripped!

5 Though the LORD is very great and lives in heaven,

he will make Jerusalem* his home of justice and

righteousness.

6 In that day he will be your sure foundation,

providing a rich store of salvation, wisdom, and

knowledge.

The fear of the LORD will be your treasure.

7 But now your brave warriors weep in public.

Your ambassadors of peace cry in bitter

disappointment.

8 Your roads are deserted;

no one travels them anymore.

The Assyrians have broken their peace treaty

and care nothing for the promises they made

before witnesses.*

They have no respect for anyone.

9 The land of Israel wilts in mourning.

Lebanon withers with shame.

The plain of Sharon is now a wilderness.

Bashan and Carmel have been plundered.

10 But the LORD says: "Now I will stand up.

Now I will show my power and might.

11 You Assyrians produce nothing but dry grass

and stubble.

Your own breath will turn to fire and consume you.

12 Your people will be burned up completely,

like thornbushes cut down and tossed in a fire.

13 Listen to what I have done, you nations far away!

And you that are near, acknowledge my might!"

14 The sinners in Jerusalem shake with fear.

Terror seizes the godless.

"Who can live with this devouring fire?" they cry.

"Who can survive this all-consuming fire?"

15 Those who are honest and fair,

who refuse to profit by fraud,

who stay far away from bribes,

who refuse to listen to those who plot murder,

who shut their eyes to all enticement to

do wrong—

16 these are the ones who will dwell on high.

The rocks of the mountains will be their fortress.

Food will be supplied to them,

and they will have water in abundance.

17 Your eyes will see the king in all his splendor,

and you will see a land that stretches into the

distance.

18 You will think back to this time of terror, asking,

"Where are the Assyrian officers

who counted our towers?

Where are the bookkeepers

who recorded the plunder taken from our

fallen city?"

19 You will no longer see these fierce, violent people

with their strange, unknown language.

- ²⁰ Instead, you will see Zion as a place of holy festivals.
You will see Jerusalem, a city quiet and secure.
It will be like a tent whose ropes are taut
and whose stakes are firmly fixed.
- ²¹ The LORD will be our Mighty One.
He will be like a wide river of protection
that no enemy can cross,
that no enemy ship can sail upon.
- ²² For the LORD is our judge,
our lawgiver, and our king.
He will care for us and save us.
- ²³ The enemies' sails hang loose
on broken masts with useless tackle.
Their treasure will be divided by the people of God.
Even the lame will take their share!
- ²⁴ The people of Israel will no longer say,
"We are sick and helpless,"
for the LORD will forgive their sins.

A Message for the Nations

- 34** ¹ Come here and listen, O nations of the earth.
Let the world and everything in it hear my words.
- ² For the LORD is enraged against the nations.
His fury is against all their armies.
He will completely destroy* them,
dooming them to slaughter.
- ³ Their dead will be left unburied,
and the stench of rotting bodies will fill the land.
The mountains will flow with their blood.
- ⁴ The heavens above will melt away
and disappear like a rolled-up scroll.
The stars will fall from the sky
like withered leaves from a grapevine,
or shriveled figs from a fig tree.
- ⁵ And when my sword has finished its work
in the heavens,
it will fall upon Edom,
the nation I have marked for destruction.
- ⁶ The sword of the LORD is drenched with blood
and covered with fat—
with the blood of lambs and goats,
with the fat of rams prepared for sacrifice.
Yes, the LORD will offer a sacrifice in the city
of Bozrah.
He will make a mighty slaughter in Edom.
- ⁷ Even men as strong as wild oxen will die—
the young men alongside the veterans.
The land will be soaked with blood
and the soil enriched with fat.
- ⁸ For it is the day of the LORD's revenge,
the year when Edom will be paid back for all it did to
Israel.*
- ⁹ The streams of Edom will be filled with burning pitch,
and the ground will be covered with fire.
- ¹⁰ This judgment on Edom will never end;
the smoke of its burning will rise forever.
The land will lie deserted from generation to
generation.
No one will live there anymore.
- ¹¹ It will be haunted by the desert owl and the
screech owl,
the great owl and the raven.*

34:2 The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering; similarly in 34:5. 34:8 Hebrew *to Zion*. 34:11 The identification of some of these birds is uncertain. 34:12 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. 34:14 Hebrew *Liith*, possibly a reference to a mythical demon of the night.

- For God will measure that land carefully;
he will measure it for chaos and destruction.
- ¹² It will be called the Land of Nothing,
and all its nobles will soon be gone.*
- ¹³ Thorns will overrun its palaces;
nettles and thistles will grow in its forts.
The ruins will become a haunt for jackals
and a home for owls.
- ¹⁴ Desert animals will mingle there with hyenas,
their howls filling the night.
Wild goats will bleat at one another among the ruins
and night creatures* will come there to rest.
- ¹⁵ There the owl will make her nest and lay her eggs.
She will hatch her young and cover them with
her wings.
And the buzzards will come,
each one with its mate.
- ¹⁶ Search the book of the LORD,
and see what he will do.
Not one of these birds and animals will be missing,
and none will lack a mate,
for the LORD has promised this.
His Spirit will make it all come true.
- ¹⁷ He has surveyed and divided the land
and deeded it over to those creatures.
They will possess it forever,
from generation to generation.

Hope for Restoration

- 35** ¹ Even the wilderness and desert will be glad in
those days.
The wasteland will rejoice and blossom with spring
crocuses.
- ² Yes, there will be an abundance of flowers
and singing and joy!
The deserts will become as green as the mountains
of Lebanon,
as lovely as Mount Carmel or the plain of Sharon.
There the LORD will display his glory,
the splendor of our God.
- ³ With this news, strengthen those who have tired hands
and encourage those who have weak knees.
- ⁴ Say to those with fearful hearts,
"Be strong, and do not fear,
for your God is coming to destroy your enemies.
He is coming to save you."
- ⁵ And when he comes, he will open the eyes of the blind
and unplug the ears of the deaf.
- ⁶ The lame will leap like a deer,
and those who cannot speak will sing for joy!
Springs will gush forth in the wilderness,
and streams will water the wasteland.
- ⁷ The parched ground will become a pool,
and springs of water will satisfy the thirsty land.
Marsh grass and reeds and rushes will flourish
where desert jackals once lived.
- ⁸ And a great road will go through that once deserted land.
It will be named the Highway of Holiness.
Evil-minded people will never travel on it.
It will be only for those who walk in God's ways;
fools will never walk there.
- ⁹ Lions will not lurk along its course,
nor any other ferocious beasts.

There will be no other dangers.
Only the redeemed will walk on it.
Those who have been ransomed by the LORD will return.
They will enter Jerusalem* singing,
crowned with everlasting joy.
Sorrow and mourning will disappear,
and they will be filled with joy and gladness.

Assyria Invades Judah

36 In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah's reign,
King Sennacherib of Assyria came to attack the for-
tified towns of Judah and conquered them. ² Then the king
of Assyria sent his chief of staff* from Lachish with a huge
army to confront King Hezekiah in Jerusalem. The Assyrian
chief of staff took up a position beside the aqueduct that feeds water
to the upper pool, near the road leading to the field where
the king is washed.*

³ These are the officials who went out to meet with them:
Eliakim son of Hilkiah, the palace administrator; Shebna the
secretary; and Joah son of Asaph, the royal historian.

Sennacherib Threatens Jerusalem

Then the Assyrian king's chief of staff told them to give this
message to Hezekiah:

"This is what the great king of Assyria says: What are
you trusting in that makes you so confident? ² Do you
think that mere words can substitute for military skill
and strength? Who are you counting on, that you have
rebelled against me? ³ On Egypt? If you lean on Egypt,
it will be like a reed that splinters beneath your weight
and pierces your hand. Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, is
completely unreliable!

⁴ But perhaps you will say to me, 'We are trusting in
the LORD our God!' But isn't he the one who was insulted
by Hezekiah? Didn't Hezekiah tear down his shrines
and altars and make everyone in Judah and Jerusalem
worship only at the altar here in Jerusalem?

⁵ I'll tell you what! Strike a bargain with my master,
the king of Assyria. I will give you 2,000 horses if you
can find that many men to ride on them! ⁶ With your
tiny army, how can you think of challenging even the
weakest contingent of my master's troops, even with the
help of Egypt's chariots and charioteers? ⁷ What's more,
do you think we have invaded your land without the
LORD's direction? The LORD himself told us, 'Attack this
land and destroy it!'"

Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah said to the Assyrian
chief of staff, "Please speak to us in Aramaic, for we under-
stand it well. Don't speak in Hebrew,* for the people on the
wall will hear."

But Sennacherib's chief of staff replied, "Do you think
my master sent this message only to you and your master?
He wants all the people to hear it, for when we put this city
under siege, they will suffer along with you. They will be so
hungry and thirsty that they will eat their own dung and
drink their own urine."

Then the chief of staff stood and shouted in Hebrew to
the people on the wall, "Listen to this message from the
great king of Assyria! ¹⁴ This is what the king says: Don't let
Hezekiah deceive you. He will never be able to rescue you.
Don't let him fool you into trusting in the LORD by saying,
The LORD will surely rescue us. This city will never fall into
the hands of the Assyrian king!"

¹⁵ Don't listen to Hezekiah! These are the terms the king

36:1 The fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign was 701 B.C. 36:2 Hebrew *Zion*. 36:3 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. 36:4 Or the *rabshakeh*; also

measure that land carefully;
treasure it for chaos and destruction.
The Land of Nothing,
nobles will soon be gone.*
They will overrun its palaces;
thistles will grow in its forts.
It will become a haunt for jackals
and a den for owls.

Wild animals will mingle there with hyenas,
and birds will fill the night.

Wild creatures will come there to rest,
and birds will make her nest and lay her eggs.
She will hatch her young and cover them with
wings.

Wild animals will come,
and birds will mate with their mates.

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These are the officials who went out to meet with them: Eliakim son of Hilkiah, the palace administrator; Shebna the court secretary; and Joah son of Asaph, the royal historian.

Sennacherib Threatens Jerusalem

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"But perhaps you will say to me, 'We are trusting in the LORD our God!' But isn't he the one who was insulted by Hezekiah? Didn't Hezekiah tear down his shrines and altars and make everyone in Judah and Jerusalem worship only at the altar here in Jerusalem?"

"I'll tell you what! Strike a bargain with my master, the king of Assyria. I will give you 2,000 horses if you find that many men to ride on them! ⁵With your army, how can you think of challenging even the weakest contingent of my master's troops, even with the horses of Egypt's chariots and charioteers? ⁶What's more, do you think we have invaded your land without the king's direction? The LORD himself told us, 'Attack this land and destroy it!'"

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But Sennacherib's chief of staff replied, "Do you think your master sent this message only to you and your master? He wants all the people to hear it, for when we put this city under siege, they will suffer along with you. They will be so hungry and thirsty that they will eat their own dung and drink their own urine."

Then the chief of staff stood and shouted in Hebrew to the people on the wall, "Listen to this message from the king of Assyria! ¹⁴This is what the king says: Don't let anyone deceive you. He will never be able to rescue you. Let him fool you into trusting in the LORD by saying, 'The LORD will surely rescue us. This city will never fall into the hands of the Assyrian king!'"

Don't listen to Hezekiah! These are the terms the king

of Assyria has set for you. **36:1** The fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign was 701 B.C.

36:2a Or the *rabshakeh*; also in 36:4, 11, 12, 22. **36:2b** Or *bleached*.

36:3 Or the *rabshakeh*; also in 36:4, 11, 12, 22. **36:4** Or the *rabshakeh*; also in 37:8. **36:5** Or the *rabshakeh*; also in 37:8. **36:6** Or the *rabshakeh*; also in 37:8. **36:7** Or the *rabshakeh*; also in 37:8. **36:8** Or the *rabshakeh*; also in 37:8. **36:9** Or the *rabshakeh*; also in 37:8. **36:10** Or the *rabshakeh*; also in 37:8. **36:11** Or the *rabshakeh*; also in 37:8. **36:12** Or the *rabshakeh*; also in 37:8. **36:13** Or the *rabshakeh*; also in 37:8. **36:14** Or the *rabshakeh*; also in 37:8. **36:15** Or the *rabshakeh*; also in 37:8. **36:16** Or the *rabshakeh*; also in 37:8. **36:17** Or the *rabshakeh*; also in 37:8. **36:18** Or the *rabshakeh*; also in 37:8. **36:19** Or the *rabshakeh*; also in 37:8. **36:20** Or the *rabshakeh*; also in 37:8. **36:21** Or the *rabshakeh*; also in 37:8. **36:22** Or the *rabshakeh*; also in 37:8. **36:23** Or the *rabshakeh*; also in 37:8. **36:24** Or the *rabshakeh*; also in 37:8. **36:25** Or the *rabshakeh*; also in 37:8. **36:26** Or the *rabshakeh*; 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