

GENESIS

The book of Genesis outlines in broad detail the creation of the earth, the experiences of Adam and Eve, and the Flood of Noah. It then becomes more detailed and relates the interesting and very human story of Abraham and his son Isaac, and his grandson Jacob. Jacob's name was later changed by God to Israel and his twelve sons became the twelve tribes of Israel.

Genesis is the first of the five books of Moses. The others are Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. They are known to the Jews as the Torah (*'the Law'*), and to the Greeks as the Pentateuch (*'five books'*). The name Genesis is Greek and means *'origin.'* The Jews however, who name their books of scripture after the first word, call this book Bereshith, *'In the beginning'*.

AUTHOR

According to Jewish tradition the prophet Moses was the main author of Genesis, and also the other four books of the Torah. There is much evidence however that Moses drew on older writings for the early historic sections of the book of Genesis. There are duplicate accounts of some events and the writing style and names of God differ in certain passages.

Some of the five books of the Moses also contain clarifications by a later prophet, for example one such clarification that Moses was unlikely to have written himself is, *'Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth'* (Numbers 4:7). These later additions bear the style of Jeremiah. Inclusion of older writings and clarifications by later prophets are a feature of the Old Testament.

Then God said, **“Let us make man in our own image and likeness.”** So God formed Adam from the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the spirit of life and the man became a living being. Genesis 1:14-15.

CONTENTS

Chapter

First day of creation – day and night	1	Cain cursed by Lord	4
Second day – atmosphere	1	Family of Cain	4
Third day – plant life	1	Lamech and his family	4
Fourth day – signs, seasons and times	1	Adam has other sons and daughters	5
Fifth day – birds and fish	1	Adam dies aged 930 years	5
Sixth day – animals and insects	1	Descendants of Adam's son Seth	5
Adam is created	1	Enoch translated	5
Seeds and fruit food for man	1	Birth of Noah	5
Green plants food for other living creatures	1	Noah's three sons	5
Seventh day – God rests	1	Tall race of Nephilim	5
God blesses the seventh day to be holy	1	World filled with violence	5
Garden of Eden	2	Mankind corrupt and to be destroyed in 120 years....	5
River of Eden	2	Noah commanded to build an ark	5
Adam placed in garden of Eden to care for it	2	Flood to come upon the earth	5
Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil	2	Birds and animals to be saved	6
Adam not to eat from tree or he will die	2	Noah 600 years old when he enters ark	6
Eve created	2	Rain falls for forty days	6
Eve deceived by the serpent	3	All mountains covered	6
Eve eats forbidden fruit and gives some to Adam	3	After 150 days water begins to recede	6
Jehovah visits Adam and Eve	3	Ark rests on mountains of Ararat	6
Serpent cursed to crawl and eat dust	3	Noah releases a raven and then a dove	6
Women cursed with agony in child birth	3	The earth finally dries	6
Women cursed to be ruled over by men	3	God commands Noah to come out of the ark	6
Men cursed to till ground for food	3	Noah builds an altar and offers sacrifice	6
Adam and his wife Eve clothed with skins	3	Man given dominion over all creatures on earth	6
Adam and Eve banished from the garden	3	Eating of flesh now permitted but not blood	6
Cain and Abel born	4	All shedding of blood to be accounted for	6
Cain and Abel make offerings to Lord	4	Never again will a flood destroy the earth	6
Lord rejects Cain's offering	4	God's covenant of the rainbow	6
Cain murders his brother Abel	4	Noah becomes drunk	7

GENESIS

Ham mocks his father's nakedness	7	Abraham sees dense smoke rising	13
Noah curses Ham's son Canaan	7	Lot lies with his two daughters	13
Canaan's descendants to be lowly servants	7	Moab and Ammon descended from Lot's sons	13
Noah blesses his sons Shem and Japheth	7	King Abimelech takes Sarah as his wife	14
Origins of the nations	7	God warns Abimelech in a dream	14
The sons of Japheth	7	Abimelech rebukes Abraham	14
The sons of Shem	7	Abimelech enriches Abraham and returns Sarah	14
The sons of Ham	7	Abraham's son Isaac born	14
Tower of Babel	7	Sarah rejects Ishmael	14
The confusing of languages	7	Hagar and her son Ishmael sent away	14
People scatter over the earth	7	Hagar distressed as Ishmael lies dying of thirst	14
Generations to Abram (later Abraham)	8	Angel reveals water to Hagar	14
Abram and his nephew Lot born in Ur	8	Ishmael grows up in the desert	14
Abram's father Terah moves to Haran	8	God greatly tests Abraham	15
God calls Abram and makes a covenant	8	Commands him to sacrifice his son Isaac	15
Abram and his people travel to Canaan	8	Abraham and his son travel to Mount Moriah	15
Abram's descendants to be given land of Canaan	8	Lord stays Abraham's knife at last second	15
Abram goes to live in Egypt	8	Ram caught in the thicket is sacrificed	15
Abram tells his wife Sarai to say she is his sister	8	Lord again reaffirms his covenant	15
Pharaoh takes Sarai to be his wife	8	Sarah dies	15
Serious diseases inflicted on Pharaoh's household	8	Abraham buys a field and cave as burial site	15
Sarai returned to Abram	8	Servant sent to Haran to obtain a wife for Isaac	16
Abram now a wealthy man returns to Canaan	9	Servant prays for guidance	16
Lot separates from Abram	9	Abraham's niece Rebekah comes to draw water	16
Lot chooses Jordan river valley near Sodom	9	Rebekah waters servant's camels	16
Lord renews his covenant with Abram	9	Abraham's servant gives Rebekah gifts	16
Abram's descendants to be numerous	9	Rebekah's brother Laban invites servant home	16
Land of Canaan to be their inheritance	9	Laban and Bethuel give Rebekah as Isaac's wife	16
Lot captured by kings from north	9	Servant gives costly gifts	16
Abram rescues Lot	9	Servant departs next day with Rebekah	16
Abram pays tithe to Melchizedek	9	Isaac marries Rebekah	16
Abram refuses to keep any spoil for himself	8	Abraham remarries and bears six more sons	16
Lord promises Abram a son	10	Abraham sends his six sons away	16
Abram given a covenant sign by Lord	10	Abraham dies aged 175	16
His descendants to be slaves in Egypt 400 years	10	Family of Ishmael	17
Promised land's borders	10	Isaac's twin sons Jacob and Esau	17
Sarai barren	11	Esau a hunter, Jacob a quiet stay-at-home man	17
Sarai gives Abram her maid Hagar as a wife	11	Isaac favours Esau and Rebekah favours Jacob	17
Hagar conceives and treats Sarai with contempt	11	Esau sells Jacob his birthright	17
Sarai ill-treats Hagar who flees into desert	11	Lord reaffirms his covenant with Isaac	17
Angel speaks to Hagar	11	Isaac goes to live among Philistines	17
Hagar's son to be named Ishmael	11	Isaac pretends his wife Rebekah his sister	17
Ishmael's descendants to be numerous	11	King Abimelech rebukes Isaac for his deception	17
Ishmael to be a wild ass of a man	11	Isaac becomes wealthy and arouses envy	17
Lord reconfirms his covenant with Abram	11	Quarrels over water	17
Abram's name changed to Abraham	11	Isaac moves to Beersheba	17
Sign of the covenant – circumcision	11	Abimelech makes peace treaty with Isaac	17
Sarai's name changed to Sarah	11	Esau's two wives	18
Birth of Isaac foretold	11	Jacob induced to steal Esau's blessing	18
Ishmael also to become a great nation	11	Jacob deceives his father Isaac	18
Abraham and all his household circumcised	11	Isaac blesses Jacob with Isaac's blessing	18
Abraham visited by Jehovah and two angels	12	Esau returns from hunting	18
Abraham prepares food for his visitors	12	Esau weeps loudly when he hears what happened	18
Abraham told that Sarah will bear a son next year	12	Isaac's lesser blessing of Esau	18
Sarah overhears and laughs in disbelief	12	Esau plans to kill his brother Jacob	18
Sodom and Gomorrah	12	Rebekah warns Jacob to flee to her brother Laban	18
Abraham pleads for Sodom	12	Rebekah plans a way for Jacob to escape	19
Sodom to be saved if ten righteous people found	12	Esau marries a cousin to please his father	19
Two angels visit Sodom and stay with Lot	13	Jacob departs for Haran	19
Sexual deviants surround Lot's house at night	13	Jacob's dream of a stairway to heaven	19
Demand he bring out the angels	13	Lord reaffirms his covenant with Jacob	19
Lot offers his daughters instead	13	Jacob vows to God to pay a tithe	19
Men near Lot's door struck with blindness	13	Jacob arrives in Haran	19
Lot's family disbelieve Sodom will be destroyed	13	Jacob meets Laban's daughter Rachel	19
The angels lead Lot's household out of Sodom	13	Laban greets his nephew	19
Lot flees to town of Zoar	13	Jacob works seven years for Rachel	19
Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed	13	Laban deceives Jacob	19
Lot's wife lags behind to watch and is destroyed	13	Jacob required to marry both Leah and Rachel	19

Jacob agrees to another seven years of work	19	Joseph sold to Ishmaelite traders	24
Leah bears Jacob four sons but Rachel is barren	20	Reuben distressed when he finds Joseph gone	24
Rachel gives Jacob her maid Bilhah as a wife	20	Joseph's brothers deceive their father Israel	24
Bilhah bears Jacob two sons	20	Israel mourns his son Joseph many days	24
Leah also gives her maid Zilpah as a wife	20	Judah and his daughter-in-law Tamar	25
Zilpah bears Jacob two sons	20	Judah fails to keep his promise to Tamar	25
The mandrakes	20	Tamar deceives Judah by pretending to be a harlot ..	25
Leah bears Jacob two more sons and a daughter.....	20	Tamar conceives and has twin boys	25
Rachel bears Joseph	20	Joseph sold to Potiphar in Egypt	26
Jacob bargains with Laban	20	Lord gives Joseph success in everything	26
Jacob to own all speckled animals and black lambs ..	20	Joseph resists temptation of Potiphar's wife	26
Laban deceives Jacob	20	Potiphar's wife falsely accuses Joseph	26
Jacob's breeding methods	20	Joseph cast into prison by Potiphar	26
Jacob prospers	20	Joseph interprets dreams of two fellow prisoners ..	26
Laban's sons become jealous of Jacob	21	Dreams come to pass as Joseph foretold	26
Jacob consults with his wives	21	Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dream	27
Jacob told by Lord to return to own land	21	Seven years of great abundance in Egypt	27
Jacob secretly departs without informing Laban	21	Seven years of famine to follow	27
Rachel steals her father's household gods	21	Joseph gives wise counsel to Pharaoh	27
Laban pursues Jacob	21	Joseph made vizier over all Egypt	27
God speaks to Laban in a dream	21	Joseph marries and fathers two sons	27
Laban rebukes his son-in-law Jacob	21	The seven abundant years	27
Jacob accused of stealing Laban's gods.....	21	Seven years of famine begin	27
Laban told to search for the gods	21	Joseph's brothers come to Egypt to buy grain	28
Rachel conceals the gods by sitting on them	21	They do not recognise Joseph	28
Jacob becomes angry with his father-in-law	21	Joseph pretends to be a stranger	28
Laban and Jacob agree to make a covenant	21	Treats his brothers harshly	28
They build a pillar of stones and eat together	21	Joseph imprisons his brothers	28
Laban swears the covenant	21	Orders Benjamin be brought to Egypt.....	28
Laban returns home	21	Joseph weeps in secret	28
Jacob sends messengers to his brother Esau	22	Simeon chosen to remain in prison	28
Hears that Esau is coming with 400 men	22	Joseph hides each brother's silver in grain sacks ..	28
Jacob fears and divides his people	22	Brothers sent home	28
Jacob prays for protection from Esau	22	One brother finds his silver and their hearts sink ..	28
Prepares a gift for Esau	22	Israel distressed by what has happened	28
Moves his wives and sons to safety	22	Grain soon all eaten	28
Jacob wrestles an angel until daybreak	22	Israel reluctant to let his son Benjamin go	28
Jacob's name changed to Israel	22	Judah urges his father to agree	28
Bows to his brother Esau	22	Israel relents	28
Jacob and Esau reconciled	22	Silver to be returned and a gift taken	28
Esau declines Jacob's gift but Jacob insists	22	Brothers return to Egypt with Benjamin	28
Jacob declines Esau's offer to accompany him	22	Joseph orders his brothers taken to his house	29
Jacob buys land near town of Shechem	22	Brothers fearfully await Joseph's coming	29
Dinah raped by son of ruler of Shechem	23	Joseph weeps again in private	29
Dinah's brothers burn with anger	23	Joseph seats his brothers in order of birth	29
Ruler of Shechem visits Israel	23	Benjamin's food portion five times greater	29
Asks that Dinah be given to his son as wife	23	Joseph's silver cup hidden in Benjamin's sack	29
Dinah's brothers deceive in order to take revenge.....	23	Brothers depart for home	29
Demand that men of Shechem be circumcised.....	23	Joseph's steward sent after them	29
Every male in Shechem is circumcised	23	Brothers accused of theft	29
Dinah's two brothers kill all men of Shechem	23	Joseph's cup found in Benjamin's sack	29
Sons of Israel plunder Shechem	23	Brothers return to Joseph's house	29
God commands Israel to return to Bethel	23	Judah offers himself in place of Benjamin	29
Israel buries false gods and amulets of people	23	Joseph weeps loudly and reveals his identity	29
Israel returns to Bethel	23	Joseph kisses his brothers	29
Israel returns home to his father Isaac	23	Joseph sends for his father's household	29
On way Rachel gives birth to Benjamin but dies	23	Pharaoh offers best land in Egypt	29
Reuben commits adultery	23	Brothers return home with carts and gifts	29
Israel arrives home to his father Isaac	23	Israel overwhelmed that Joseph alive	29
Isaac dies soon afterward aged 180	23	Israel and all his household set out for Egypt	30
The twelve sons of Israel	24	God appears to Israel	30
Joseph and his coat of many colours	24	Joseph reunited with his father Israel	30
Joseph's dreams increase brothers' jealousy	24	Joseph presents his family to Pharaoh	30
Joseph sent out to his brothers in the fields	24	Israel blesses Pharaoh	30
Some of Joseph's brothers propose killing him	24	The Israelites settle in Goshen	30
Reuben tries to save Joseph	24	Joseph buys up all of Egypt	30
Joseph stripped of his coat and thrown in a pit	24	Pharaoh's land rented back to the people	30
Judah suggests they sell Joseph	24	Israel adopts Joseph's two sons	31

GENESIS 1

Ephraim to be greater than Manasseh	31
Ephraim's descendants to become many nations ...	31
Ephraim and Manasseh's' blessing	31
Israel gives Joseph the town of Shechem	31
Israel blesses the twelve tribes of Israel	31
Reuben's blessing, loses birthright	31
Simeon and Levis' blessing	31
Judah's blessing	31
Zebulun's blessing	31
Issachar's blessing	31
Dan's blessing	31

Gad's blessing	31
Asher's blessing	31
Naphtali's blessing	31
Joseph's blessing	31
Benjamin's blessing	31
Israel dies and is embalmed	31
Israel taken back to Canaan for burial	31
Joseph's brothers fear him and ask forgiveness	31
Joseph weeps and consoles his brothers	31
Joseph dies aged 110 years and is embalmed	31

Bold The Lord or an angel speaking.
Bold italics A prophet speaking under inspiration.

1

The first day of creation – day and night

¹In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and empty and darkness was upon the surface of the deep waters.

²The Spirit of God watched over^{F*} the waters, then God said, **“Let there be light.”** God saw that the light was good, and divided the light from the darkness.

³God called the light day, and the darkness night, and there was an evening and morning. This was the first day.^{F*}

The second day – atmosphere

⁴Then God said, **“Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, to separate water from water.”**

⁵So God separated the waters below the expanse from the waters above it.^{F*} He called the expanse the heavens. This was the second day.

The third day – plant life

⁶Then God said, **“Let the waters under the heavens be gathered into one place and dry land appear.”** God called the dry land Earth, and the gathered waters he called Sea.

⁷Then God said, **“Let the earth produce vegetation; plants bearing seed, and trees bearing fruit, with seed according to their kind.”** This was the third day.

The fourth day – signs, seasons and times

⁸Then God said, **“Let the lights in the expanse of the heavens that separate night from day serve as signs, to mark seasons, days, and years, and give light upon the earth.”**

⁹(God had made two great lights, the sun to govern the day, and the moon to govern the night, as also the stars.) This was the fourth day.

*2 'Watched over' is the translation of the Hebrew word *'rachaph'* which describes a broody mother hen, patiently hatching her eggs.

*3 Not necessarily a 24 hour day at this stage, as years and seasons are not organised until the fourth day (verse 8).

*5 Some bible scholars believe that these *'waters above the expanse'* (ie above the atmosphere) may have been the source of much of the water of the flood (see Genesis 6:7).



Our galaxy the Milky Way. The earth appears to have been a dark, water-covered planet when Genesis begins, see verse 1.

The fifth day – birds and fish

¹⁰Then God said, **“Let the waters teem with living creatures and let birds fly above the earth.”**

¹¹So God created the great creatures of the sea and all the living things with which the waters teem, each according to their kind, and all winged birds, according to their kind.

¹²God blessed them and commanded them saying, **“Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the seas, and let the birds increase upon the earth.”** This was the fifth day.

The sixth day – animals and insects

¹³Then God said, **“Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind, beasts, wild animals, and creatures that move along the ground, each according to its kind.”**

Adam is created

¹⁴Then God said, **“Let us^{F*} make man in our own image and likeness.”** ¹⁵So God formed Adam^{F*} from the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the spirit of life and the man became a living being.

*14 The use of the plural 'us' in this instance, also in Genesis 3:22, 7:16 and Micah 1:23 can be explained by the revelation of the apostle John, that God the Father created the earth through his son, the pre-mortal Jesus Christ (John 1:2, Hebrews 1:1).

*15 Adam is the Hebrew word for man, meaning *'to contain blood.'*

¹⁶God blessed Adam and commanded him saying, **“Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and take control over it. Rule over the fishes of the sea, the birds of the air, and every living creature that moves upon the ground.”**

Seeds and fruit to be food for man

¹⁷**“For your food I give you plants bearing seed, and trees bearing fruit.**

Green plants as food for other living creatures

¹⁸**“As food for the birds of the air and living creatures that move on the ground I give every green plant.”**

¹⁹God saw that all he had made was very good. This was the sixth day.

The seventh day – God rests and blesses that day to be holy

²⁰By the seventh day God had finished his work. So he rested and blessed the seventh day and made it holy.

2

The garden of Eden

¹This is the account of the creation of the heavens and the earth, before any plant of the ground had grown. ²For God had not yet caused it to rain on the earth, but there went up a mist from the earth and moistened the whole face of the ground.

³God planted a garden, eastward in Eden. He made all kinds of trees to grow in the garden that were pleasing to the eye and good for food.

⁴In the centre of the garden grew the Tree of Life, also the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

The river of Eden

⁵A river from Eden watered the garden. It flowed from four headwaters; the Pishon which wound through the land of Havilah where there was gold, aromatic resin, and onyx.^{F*} ⁶The Gihon which wound through the land of Cush. The Tigris which ran along the east side of Asshur, and the Euphrates.^{F*}

Adam placed in the garden of Eden to take care of it

⁷God took Adam and placed him in the garden of Eden to take care of it.

Adam commanded not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil or he will die

⁸Then he commanded him saying, **“You may eat fruit from any tree in the garden, but from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil^{F*} you must not eat, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”** ^{F*}

*5 Onyx is a translation of the Hebrew ‘shoham,’ which is believed to be a pale green gemstone or marble.

*6 Not the post-flood rivers that now bear these names.

*8 The name of this tree can also be translated ‘knowledge of Joy and Sorrow’ or ‘knowledge of Pleasure and Pain.’

*8 ie, they would become mortal.

Eve is created

⁹Now Jehovah^{F*} had brought all the animals of the field and birds of the air to the man to be named, but for Adam no suitable companion was found.

¹⁰Then God said, **“It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a companion for him.”**

¹¹So God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep and he took one of the man’s ribs and closed up the place with flesh. From the rib God created a woman and brought her to the man.

¹²The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man.”

¹³For this reason a man leaves his father and mother and joins to his wife and they become one flesh.

¹⁴The man and his wife were both naked but felt no shame.

3

Eve is deceived by the serpent

¹Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the creatures God had made. He spoke to the woman saying, “Did God say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”

²The woman replied, “We may eat fruit from any tree in the garden, except from the tree in the midst of the garden. If we do so we will surely die.”

³The serpent said, “You will not surely die. God knows that when you eat of that fruit your eyes will be opened, and you will become like God, knowing good and evil.”

Eve eats the forbidden fruit and gives some to Adam

⁴When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and desirable for gaining knowledge, she took some and ate.

⁵Then she gave some to her husband and he also ate.^{F*}

⁶Then their eyes were opened and they became aware of their nakedness.^{F*} So they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons.

*9 ‘Jehovah’ which means ‘Eternal’ is the english translation of ‘Yahweh’ (generally pronounced ‘ya-ha-wa’) which is the Hebrew name or title of God the Father. The name is normally written as ‘Lord’, ‘LORD’ or ‘LORD’ in most bibles, continuing the tradition of later Jewish teachers who believed the name too holy for frequent use. However the name ‘Yahweh’ appears frequently in the original Hebrew manuscripts. The name/title is also used by the Son of God, Jesus Christ who ‘comes in the name of Jehovah’ (Matt-Mark-Luke 25:22). Jesus Christ in his pre-mortal existence was the Old Testament God who appeared to Moses and spoke with the Old Testament prophets in the name of Jehovah. See also note on John 1:8.

*5 Paul the apostle in 1 Timothy 1:21 reveals that Adam was not deceived but ate knowing the consequences.

*6 Some bible scholars believe that it may have been necessary for Adam to ‘fall’ and lose his child-like innocence in order to obey the commandment to ‘multiply and fill the earth’ (Genesis 1:16). The reason for this would be that he, and we his descendants could only come to know real joy and goodness by first experiencing the opposite, ie by gaining knowledge of both good and evil (or joy and sorrow) as the name of the forbidden tree implies.

Jehovah visits Adam and Eve

⁷Then the man and his wife heard the voice of the Lord God Jehovah, walking in the garden in the cool of the evening, and they hid from him among the trees.

⁸The Lord God called to the man, “**Adam, where are you?**”

⁹Adam answered, “I heard you in the garden, and was afraid and hid, because I was naked.”

¹⁰God said, “**Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?**”

¹¹Adam said, “The woman you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I did eat.”

¹²God said to the woman, “**What is this you have done?**”

¹³The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I did eat.”

The serpent cursed to crawl and eat dust

¹⁴Jehovah said to the serpent, “**Because you have done this, cursed are you above all the creatures of the earth. On your belly you shall crawl, and eat dust all the days of your life.**”

¹⁵“**And I will place enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers. He shall bruise your head, and you shall strike his heel.**”

Women cursed with agony in child birth and to be ruled over by men

¹⁶To the woman he said, “**I will greatly increase your pain in child bearing. In agony you shall give birth to children. And your desire shall be to your husband, and he will rule over you.**”

Men cursed to till the ground for food

¹⁸To Adam he said, “**Because you heeded the voice of your wife and ate from the tree of which I commanded you not to, cursed is the ground for your sake. In toil you will eat of it, all the days of your life.**”

¹⁹“**Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth, and by the sweat of your brow you shall obtain your food, until you return to the ground from which you were taken.**”

²⁰“**For dust you are, and to dust you shall return.**”

Adam and Eve his wife clothed with skins then banished from the garden

²¹The Lord made garments of skin for Adam and his wife to clothe them.

²²Then he said, “**The man has become as one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to eat from the Tree of Life and live forever.**”

²³Therefore God banished Adam from the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he had been taken. ²⁴God set cherubim^{F*} and a flaming sword, flashing back and forth, to guard the way to the Tree of Life.

^{*}24 Cherubim are winged angels having varying facial features depicting human, animal and bird life. See Ezekiel 1:4-9 for a fuller description.

Cain and Abel are born

¹Adam named his wife Eve,^{F*} for she would be the mother of all living.

²Adam lay with Eve and she conceived and gave birth to Cain. Later she gave birth to his brother Abel.^{F*}

Cain and Abel make offerings to the Lord

³Cain tilled the ground and Abel kept flocks. In time Cain brought fruits of the soil as an offering to Jehovah, and Abel brought the fat portions of the firstborn of his flock.

The Lord rejects Cain's offering

⁴The Lord accepted Abel and his offering but Cain and his offering he did not accept. Therefore Cain became angry.

⁵The Lord said to Cain, “**Why are you angry and your face downcast? If you do what is right you will be accepted. Sin is lurking at your door and desires you, but you must master it.**”

Cain murders his brother Abel

⁶Cain however said to his brother Abel, “Let us go into the field.” While they were in the field Cain turned on Abel and killed him.

Cain is cursed by the Lord to be a fugitive and a wanderer

⁷The Lord said to Cain, “**Where is your brother Abel?**”

⁸Cain answered, “I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?”

⁹The Lord said, “**Your brother's blood cries to me from the ground.**”

¹⁰“**Now you are cursed and driven from the ground which received your brother's blood at your hand. When you till the earth it will no longer yield its strength for you. A fugitive and a wanderer you will be.**”

¹¹Cain said to the Lord, “My punishment is more than I can bear. I will be cut off from your presence, and whoever finds me may kill me.”

¹²The Lord said, “**If anyone kills you, he will suffer vengeance sevenfold.**” Then he put a mark on Cain so that anyone who came upon him would not kill him.

¹³Cain then went away from the Lord's presence and lived in the land of Nod,^{F*} east of Eden.

The family of Cain

¹⁴Cain lay with his wife^{F*} and she conceived, and gave birth to Enoch. Cain built a town and named it after his son.

¹⁵Enoch became the father of Irad. Irad was father of Mehujael. Mehujael was father of Methushael, and Methushael was father of Lamech.

Lamech and his family

¹⁶Lamech married two women, Adah and

^{*}1 Eve means 'life-giver.'

^{*}2 Not necessarily their first two children. Hebrew history tends to mention only historically significant persons.

^{*}13 Nod means 'wandering.'

^{*}14 It is generally accepted that the children of Adam and Eve intermarried.

Zillah. ¹⁷Adah gave birth to Jabal and Jubal. Jabal was father of those who live in tents and raise livestock. Jubal was the father of all who play the harp and flute. ¹⁸Zillah also bore Tubal- Cain, who forged tools out of bronze and iron.

¹⁹Lamech one day said to his wives, "I have killed a young man to my hurt. If Cain was to be avenged sevenfold then Lamech seventy-sevenfold."

5

Adam has other sons and daughters and then dies aged 930 years

¹When Adam had lived 130 years he had a son in his own likeness, and named him Seth.

²At that time men began to call on the name of the Lord Jehovah.

³After the birth of Seth, Adam lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters, and then died aged 930.

The descendants of Adam's son Seth

⁴Seth became father of Enosh at 105 years.^{F*} He also had other sons and daughters, and died aged 912.

⁵Enosh was father of Kenan, and died aged 905. Kenan was father of Mahalalel, and died aged 910.

⁶Mahalalel was father of Jared, and died aged 895.

⁷Jared was father of Enoch, and died aged 962.

Enoch is translated

⁸Enoch^{F*} was father of Methuselah. Enoch walked with God 300 years, and when he had lived to the age of 365, God took him away.^{F*}

⁹Methuselah was father of Lamech, and died aged 969 years.

The birth of Noah

¹⁰Lamech became father of Noah and said, "He will comfort us in the toil of the ground that Jehovah has cursed." Lamech died aged 777.

Noah's three sons

¹¹When Noah was 500 years old, he had become the father of Japheth, Shem, and Ham.

Righteous 'sons of God' marry wives outside godly line

¹²Now when men began to multiply upon the earth, the sons of God^{F*} saw how fair the daughters of men^{F*} were and chose wives from among them. ¹³They bore children to them. These were the mighty men of old, men of renown.

The tall race of Nephilim

¹⁴The Nephilim^{F*} were on the earth in those

*3 Not necessarily his first son. Hebrew genealogy is usually taken through the most prominent son.

*8 Not the Enoch of the line of Cain.

*8 Enoch was translated, a state where a righteous person is removed bodily from the earth. Moses and Elijah were also translated.

*12 The term 'sons of God' refers to male descendants of the righteous line of Seth.

*12 The term 'daughters of men' is believed to refer to women from other than the righteous line of Seth.

*14 The Nephilim were an exceptionally tall people, with heights of up to 9 feet. They were evidently preserved through Noah's

days, when the sons of God took wives of the daughters of men, and also afterward.

The world filled with violence

¹⁵Now the earth had become corrupt in God's sight and was filled with violence, and the hearts of the people were inclined toward evil continually.

¹⁶But Noah was a righteous man and walked with God.

Mankind corrupt and to be destroyed in 120 years time

¹⁷The Lord said, "My Spirit will not strive with man forever, for he is corrupt. His remaining days will be 120 years,^{F*} then I will destroy from the face of the earth mankind whom I have created. ¹⁸Also all the creatures that move on the surface of the ground and the birds of the air, for I am grieved that I have made them."

¹⁹But Noah found favour in the eyes of the Lord, so God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all mankind, for the earth is filled with violence."

Noah commanded to build an ark

²⁰"Therefore make for yourself an ark^{F*} of gopher wood,^{F*} 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high."^{F*}

²¹"Make rooms in it, and lower, middle and upper decks, and coat it with tar inside and out. Make a door in the side and a gap for daylight, one cubit above the walls."

A flood to come upon the earth

²²"I am going to bring floodwaters upon the earth to destroy every creature that has the breath of life, but with you I will make a covenant."

²³"You and your sons will enter the ark with your wives, And also with pairs of every kind of bird, animal, and creature that will come to you to be kept alive. ²⁴Take every kind of food and store it away."

family as they continue to be mentioned after the flood. They were later known as the Anakim 'long necks.' (Deuteronomy 2:2). Goliath and his brothers were of the Anakim.

*17 ie, until the flood.

*20 An ark is a lidded box or chest, therefore Noah's ark has traditionally been thought of as a large, rectangular, roofed barge. However petrified remains which are almost certainly those of the ark have been discovered at an altitude of 6200 feet on the mountains of Ararat and these reveal a typical ocean-going ship design with a prow and stern (see photo) and also a keel with heavy ballast. This is understandable as ship builders maintain that an unpowered, rectangular, fully laden flat-bottomed barge would not survive an ocean storm. Huge 350kg anchor stones, all identical, have been found in the vicinity of the ark and it has been conjectured that these were used as drogue anchors and trailed from the bow in the water to create drag and keep the ark facing into the wind and waves. Interestingly these anchor stones are hewn from a type of rock not found in the mountains of Ararat but on the American continent.

*20 There is no known tree called gopher. Hebrew scholars believe it is not a variety of tree but a laminating process using natural resins to greatly increase the strength of wood. This view is supported by the appearance of the petrified remains of the ark.

*20 Approx 156m by 26m and 16m high (512ft by 85ft and 51ft high) assuming that the longer royal Egyptian cubit of 520mm (20½") was used by Moses. The petrified remains of the ark on the mountain in Turkey measure 515ft in length. The ark was huge, half as long again as a typical football field which is 100m long, and about as wide as three average suburban streets. The height was about that of a modern six storey building.

GENESIS 6

²⁵So Noah built the ark as God had commanded him.^{F*}

6

Seven pairs each of birds and clean animals to be saved

¹Then God said to Noah, “Enter into the ark, you and your family, for I have found you righteous in this generation.”

²“Take with you seven pairs of all birds, and seven pairs of every kind of clean animal,^{F*} male and female, and one pair each of every unclean animal.”

³“Seven days from now I will send rain upon the earth for forty days and nights, and destroy from the surface of the earth every living creature I have made.”

Noah 600 years old when he enters the ark

⁴Noah was 600 years old when the floodwaters came upon the earth.

⁵Pairs of all creatures that move on the surface of the earth came to Noah and entered the ark.

⁶Then Noah and his three sons, Japheth, Shem, and Ham, together with their wives, entered the ark and the Lord shut them in.

Rain falls for forty days

⁷On the seventeenth day of the second month, the springs of the sea burst forth and the floodgates of the heavens were opened and rain fell for forty days and forty nights.

⁸The waters rose greatly and the ark floated on the surface of the waters, high above the earth.

All the mountains covered

⁹All of the mountains under the entire heavens were covered to a depth of more than fifteen cubits, and every living creature that moved upon the surface of the earth perished.

After 150 days the water begins to recede

¹⁰The waters flooded the earth for 150 days, then God sent a wind over the earth and the waters began to recede.

The ark rests on the mountains of Ararat

¹¹The ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat.^{F*}

¹²The waters continued to recede, and on the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains could be seen.

Noah releases a raven and then a dove

¹³After forty more days, Noah opened the window he had made in the ark and released a raven. But it kept flying back and forth. ¹⁴Then Noah sent out a dove, but the dove returned to him so he reached out his hand and took it back inside the ark.

¹⁵Noah waited seven more days and again sent out the dove. The dove returned to him at evening with a freshly plucked olive leaf in its beak. Then Noah knew that the water was receding from the ground.

¹⁶Noah waited seven more days and sent the dove out again. This time it did not return.

The earth finally dries

¹⁷On the first day of the first month, Noah removed the door from the ark and saw that the surface of the earth was almost dry. On the twenty-seventh day of the second month the earth was dry.^{F*}



The petrified hull of Noah's ark on the mountains of Ararat at 6200ft. The remains of the keel and ballast are further up the mountain.

God commands Noah to come out of the ark

¹⁸God said to Noah, “Come out of the ark, you and your sons and your wives, and bring out every living creature that is with you so they can again multiply upon the earth.”

Noah builds an altar and offers sacrifice

¹⁹Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and taking some of the clean animals and birds he offered them as a burnt sacrifice.

Man given dominion over all creatures on earth

²⁰The Lord was pleased with the aroma and he blessed Noah and his sons saying, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.”

²¹“I give you dominion over all creatures.”

Eating of flesh now permitted but not blood

²²“All that lives and moves will now be food for you. Just as I gave you plant life, I now give you everything, but you must not eat meat without first draining the blood.”

All shedding of blood to be accounted for

²³“I shall also demand an accounting for your own blood, and from every animal.”

²⁴“From every man I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man.

²⁵Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his own blood be shed, for in the image of God was man made.”

*²⁵ Noah had a period of time as long as 120 years in which to build the ark (Genesis 5:17).

*² Clean and unclean animals are explained in Leviticus chapter 3.

*¹¹ Mount Ararat itself is a comparatively recent snow capped volcano in Armenia 17,000 feet high. The keel of the ark was discovered on a nearby mountain at 6500 feet and the hull 300 feet lower where it had been swept and buried in a lava flow.

*¹⁷ Noah spent just over a year in the ark.

Never again will a flood destroy the earth

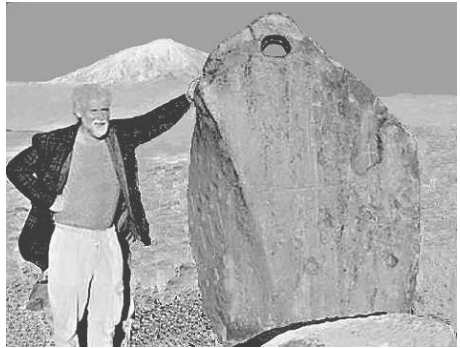
²⁶“I now make my covenant with you and your descendants, and with every living creature on earth. Never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.”

God’s covenant of the rainbow

²⁷“As a sign of the covenant I now make, I have set my rainbow in the cloud.^{F*} Whenever the rainbow appears I will see it, and remember my covenant.”



‘Rivet’ found near the remains of Noah’s Ark.



One of several huge anchor stones found in the vicinity of the petrified ark. The stone is not native to the area. Mount Ararat is in the background.

7

Noah becomes drunk

¹Now Noah was a man of the soil and he planted a vineyard. In time he drank of its wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent.

Ham mocks his father’s nakedness

²Ham saw his father’s nakedness and went and told his two brothers. But Shem, with Japheth, took a garment and walked into the tent backwards so they would not see, and covered their father’s nakedness.

Noah curses the descendants of Ham’s son Canaan to be the lowest of servants

³When Noah awoke from his wine and heard what his youngest son Ham had done, he said, **“Cursed be Canaan, son of Ham, the lowest of servants will he be to his brethren.”**^{F*}

Noah blesses his sons Shem and Japheth

⁴He also said, **“Blessed be my son Shem by Jehovah my God, let Canaan be his slave.”**

⁵**“May God enlarge my son Japheth and let him dwell in the tents of Shem. Canaan shall be his slave also.”**

*27 There was probably no rainbow seen prior to the flood due to the absence of rain (Genesis 2:2) and perhaps the influence of the ‘waters above the expanse’ (Genesis 1:4-5).

*3 Noah evidently showed disapproval of his youngest son Ham’s dishonourable behaviour by in turn dishonouring Ham’s own youngest son, Canaan.

The origins of the nations

⁶After the flood Noah lived 350 years, and then died at the age of 950.

⁷These are the descendants of Noah’s sons. From them the whole world was peopled after the flood:

The sons of Japheth

⁸The sons of Japheth: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras.

The sons of Shem

⁹The sons of Shem: Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Syria.^{F*}

The sons of Ham

¹⁰The sons of Ham: Cush, Egypt, Put, and Canaan. ¹¹(Cush was the father of Nimrod who grew to be a mighty warrior on the earth. His first kingdom was Babylon and from there he built Nineveh.)

The tower of Babel

¹²Now the whole world had one language, and as men moved eastward they settled on a plain in Babylonia.

¹³Then they said, “Let us make bricks, (they used bricks for stone and tar for mortar) and build ourselves a city with a tower that reaches high to the heavens, and make a name for ourselves, otherwise we shall be scattered over the face of the earth.”

God confuses the language of the people and scatters them over the earth

¹⁴Jehovah came down to see the city and the tower that the men were building.

¹⁵Then he said, **“If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them.”**

¹⁶**“Come, let us^{F*} go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.”**

¹⁷So Jehovah did so, and scattered the people from there to all over the earth, and they stopped building the city.

*9 The descendants of Shem were also called Shemites, later modified to Semites.

*16 Jehovah (God the Father) speaking to his Son the pre-mortal Jesus Christ who created the earth. See note on Genesis 1:14.

GENESIS 8

¹⁸The city was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world.



Claimed ruins of the Tower of Babel in Iraq.

8

The generations to Abram (later Abraham)

¹Shem lived 502 years after the flood, and died at the age of 600.

²His son Arphaxad lived 35 years and became father of Shelah, and died aged 438.

³Shelah lived 30 years and became father of Eber, and died aged 433.

⁴Eber was father of Peleg. ⁵He was named Peleg because in his days the nations were divided. ^{F*} Eber died aged 464.

⁶Peleg was father of Reu, and died aged 239.

⁷Reu was father of Serug, and died aged 437.

⁸Serug was father of Nahor, and died aged 230.

⁹Nahor was father of Terah, and died aged 148.

Abram and his nephew Lot are born in Ur

¹⁰Terah was father of three sons, Abram, ^{F*} Nahor, and Haran.

¹¹Haran became the father of Lot, but while his father Terah was still alive, Haran died in Ur of Babylonia, the land of his birth.

¹²Abram married Sarai, and Nahor married Milcah the daughter of Haran.

Abram's father Terah leaves Ur and settles in Haran

¹³Then Terah took his son Abram and his grandson Lot, and left Ur to go and live in Canaan. ^{F*} ¹⁴But when they came to the city of Haran they settled there instead, and Terah died there aged 205.

God calls Abram and makes a covenant

¹⁵Then Jehovah spoke to Abram saying, **"Leave your country, your people, and your father's household and go to the land I will show you."**

¹⁶**"I will bless you and make you a great**

nation, and make your name great. ¹⁷I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you, and all nations on earth shall be blessed through you."

Abram and his people travel to Canaan

¹⁸So Abram took his possessions, his nephew Lot, and all the people he had acquired, and set out for the land of Canaan.

¹⁹Abram was now 75 years old. He travelled through Canaan as far as the great oaks near Hebron. At that time the Canaanites dwelt in the land.

The descendants of Abram to be given the land of Canaan

²⁰There Jehovah appeared to him and said, **"To your offspring I will give this land."** So Abram built an altar there to the Lord.

²¹Then he moved on and pitched his tent among the hills near Bethel, ^{F*} and built another altar and called on the name of the Lord.

Abram goes to live in Egypt

²²Abram continued travelling south toward the desert, but there was a famine in the land so he journeyed down to Egypt to live.

Abram instructs his wife Sarai to tell the Egyptians that she is his sister

²³As he was about to enter Egypt he said to his wife Sarai, "You are a fine looking woman. When the Egyptians see you, they may kill me for you. ²⁴Therefore say to them that you are my sister, so my life will be spared and I will be treated well for your sake."

Pharaoh takes Sarai to be his wife

²⁵The Egyptians saw that Sarai was indeed a fine looking woman, and praised her to Pharaoh. So Pharaoh took her into his palace to be his wife.

²⁶Pharaoh treated Abram well for Sarai's sake, and Abram acquired sheep, cattle, donkeys, servants, and camels.

The Lord inflicts serious diseases on Pharaoh and his household

²⁷But the Lord inflicted serious diseases on Pharaoh and his household because of Sarai.

²⁸Pharaoh summoned Abram and said to him, "Why did you not tell me she was your wife? Why did you say that she was your sister so that I took her to be my wife?"

Sarai returned to Abram

²⁹"Here is your wife. Take her and go!"

9

Abram now a wealthy man returns to Canaan

¹So Abram returned to Bethel where he had built an altar and Lot went with him. ²Abram had now become very wealthy in flocks and herds, and silver and gold.

*5 Peleg means 'to divide.'

*10 The Lord later changed Abram's name to Abraham (Genesis 17:15). Noah died about two years before Abraham's birth.

*13 The land of Canaan became the future land of Israel.

*21 Bethel was known as Luz at this time. It was later renamed Bethel by Abram's grandson Jacob (Genesis 19:11).

Lot separates from Abram

³Lot also had flocks and herds. The land could not support them both and quarrelling arose between their herdsmen.

⁴Abram said to Lot, "Let us not quarrel, for we are kin. The whole land is before you. If you go left I will go right, if you go right I will go left."

Lot chooses the Jordan valley near Sodom

⁵So Lot chose the Jordan river valley which was well watered, and went down to live among the cities of the valley, near Sodom. ⁶(Now the men of Sodom were wicked and sinning greatly against the Lord.)

⁷Abram remained in the hills near Bethel.

The Lord renews his covenant with Abram – his descendants to be numerous and the land of Canaan to be theirs

⁸After Lot had departed, the Lord said to Abram, "Look north, south, east, and west. All the land you see I will give to you and your descendants."

⁹"I will make your descendants like the dust of the earth. Only if one could count the dust could your offspring be counted. ¹⁰Now go, walk throughout the length and breadth of the land I am giving to you."

¹¹So Abram moved his tents back to the oaks at Hebron and there he built an altar to Jehovah.

Lot captured by kings from the north

¹²At that time four kings from the north attacked the five kings of the Jordan valley, defeating them. ¹³Men fled to the hills and some fell into the tar pits.

¹⁴The four kings from the north seized captives, plunder, and food from the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. They also carried off Lot and his possessions.

Abram rescues Lot

¹⁵When Abram heard that Lot had been taken captive, he called out the 318 men born in his household and along with others who joined him he set out in pursuit.

¹⁶During the night Abram divided his men and attacked the enemy and routed them. ¹⁷He recovered all the plunder and brought back Lot and his possessions together with the other captives.

Abram pays a tithe to Melchizedek

¹⁸When Abram returned, the king of Sodom came out to meet him, also Melchizedek king of Salem,^{F*} bringing bread and wine.

¹⁹Melchizedek was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram saying, "**Blessed be Abram by God Most High, creator of the heavens and earth.** ²⁰**And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.**"

²¹Then Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of all the plunder he had recovered.

Abram refuses to keep any spoil for himself

²²The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me my people, but keep the rest of the spoil for yourself."

²³But Abram said, "I raise my hand to Jehovah, God Most High, creator of the heavens and earth, and take an oath that I will accept nothing belonging to you, not even a thong of a sandal, so that you can never say, 'I made Abram rich.'"

²⁴"I will accept only what my men have eaten, and the share that belongs to the allies who went with me; Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre.^{F*}"



Nomadic goat-hair tents, typical of the type used by Abraham.

10

The Lord promises Abram a son

¹After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision saying, "**Fear not Abram, for I will always be your shield and your reward shall be great.**"

²But Abram said, "O Lord, what will you give me, for I remain childless? My servant Eliezer of Damascus will be my heir."

³The Lord replied, "**He will not be your heir. Your own son will be your heir. Look toward the heavens and number the stars if you can. So shall your offspring be.**"

⁴Abram believed the Lord, and it was credited to him as righteousness.

Abram asks the Lord for a sign that the land of Canaan will be his

⁵Then the Lord said to Abram, "**I am Jehovah who brought you out of Ur of Babylonia to give you this land.**"

⁶Abram asked, "O Lord, what assurance may I have that this land will be mine?"

The Lord gives Abram a covenant sign

⁷The Lord said to him, "**Bring to me a heifer,^{F*} a goat, and a ram, each three years old, and a dove and a young pigeon.**"

⁸So Abram did so and slaughtered them. All except the birds he cut in half and arranged the halves opposite each other. ⁹Birds of prey

*18 Jewish scholars believe that Salem was the original name of Jerusalem.

*24 Probably local Canaanite chieftains who assisted Abram.

*7 A heifer is a young female cow.

GENESIS 11

swooped down on the carcasses, but Abram drove them away.

¹⁰As the sun was setting Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a terrifying darkness descended upon him.

Abram's descendants to be slaves in Egypt 400 years

¹¹Then the Lord said to Abram, “Your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own,^{F*} and will serve them as slaves and be afflicted 400 years.”

¹²“But I will punish the nation they serve, and in the fourth generation they will come out with great possessions.”

¹³“Only then will your descendants return here, for the wickedness of the Canaanites has not yet reached full measure.”

¹⁴“You however, will be gathered to your fathers in peace^{F*} and be buried at a good old age.”

The promised land's borders

¹⁵When night had fully fallen, a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces of the sacrifice.^{F*} ¹⁶Then the Lord made his covenant with Abram saying, “I give this land to your descendants, from the river of Egypt^{F*} to the great river Euphrates.” ¹⁷The land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites.”^{F*}

11

A barren Sarai gives Abram her maid Hagar as a wife

¹Now Sarai, Abram's wife was barren. After Abram had lived in Canaan ten years, Sarai said to him, “The Lord has kept me from having children. Lie with my maidservant Hagar. Perhaps I can obtain children through her.”

²So she gave Hagar, her Egyptian maidservant to her husband to be his wife.

Hagar conceives and treats Sarai with contempt

³Abram lay with Hagar and she conceived. But after she conceived Hagar began to treat her mistress Sarai with contempt.

Sarai ill-treats Hagar who flees into the desert

⁴Sarai said to Abram, “You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I placed my servant in your arms and now she despises me. May the Lord judge between you and me.”

⁵Abram said, “Your servant is in your hands. Do with her as you think best.”

*11 Egypt (Genesis chapter 30).

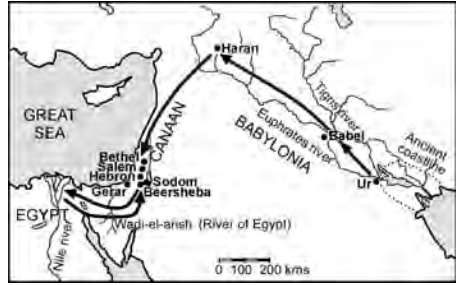
*14 Israelite belief was that after death, a person's spirit descended to Sheol (the spirit world of the dead) and dwelt with their ancestors (their fathers) while awaiting the resurrection of the body.

*15 In ancient times both parties to a covenant (or contract) walked between halves of a dead animal and called down upon themselves the fate of the victim should they break the covenant. In this case the blazing torch represented the Lord.

*16 The Wadi-el-arish, not the Nile.

*17 These ten tribes, then living in the land of Canaan, are usually referred to by the collective term Canaanites.

⁶So Sarai ill-treated Hagar and she fled from her into the desert.



Abram's travels.

An angel speaks to Hagar

⁷The angel of the Lord found Hagar near a spring and said to her, “Hagar, servant of Sarai, where are you going?”

⁸“I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai,” she answered.



Desert spring.

Hagar's son to be named Ishmael and his descendants to be numerous

⁹The angel said, “Return to your mistress and submit to her. I will^{F*} so increase your descendants that they will be too numerous to number.”

¹⁰“You will bear a son and name him Ishmael, for Jehovah has heard of your misery.”

Ishmael to be a wild ass of a man

¹¹“He will be a wild ass of a man.^{F*} His hand will be against everyone, and everyone's hand against him, yet he will live near his kinsmen.”

¹²So Hagar returned and bore Abram a son and he named him Ishmael. Abram was now 86 years old.

Lord reconfirms his covenant with Abram

¹³When Abram was 99 years old, the Lord appeared to him again. Abram fell face down

*9 Angels often speak as if the Lord himself were speaking.

*11 ie Freedom-loving and untameable.

and God said, **“I am God Almighty.^{F*} Walk before me and be blameless.”**

14[“]I now reconfirm my covenant with you and your descendants. I will greatly increase your numbers. You will be the father of many nations and kings shall come from you.”

Abram’s name changed to Abraham

15[“]No longer will you be called Abram, your name shall now be Abraham.”^{F*}

16[“]I will give to you and your descendants the whole land of Canaan as an everlasting possession, and I shall be your God. However, you must keep my covenant.”

The sign of the covenant – circumcision

17[“]This will be a sign of the covenant between us: For generations to come every male among you must be circumcised when eight days old, including those bought with money from foreigners, who are not your offspring.”

18[“]Any male not circumcised will be cut off from his people for he will have broken my covenant.”

Sarai’s name changed to Sarah

19[“]As for Sarai your wife, her name will now be Sarah.^{F*} She will become the mother of nations, and kings shall come from her.”

The birth of Isaac foretold

20[“]I will bless her and she will bear you a son.”

21Abraham fell on his face and rejoiced and said to himself, **“A son is to be born to a man aged a 100 years old, and Sarah is to bear a child at the age of 90!”**

22Then he said to God, **“O that Ishmael might also live under your blessing.”**

23God said, **“Sarah will bear you a son and you shall call him Isaac.^{F*} I will keep my covenant with him and his descendants after him.”**

Ishmael also to become a great nation

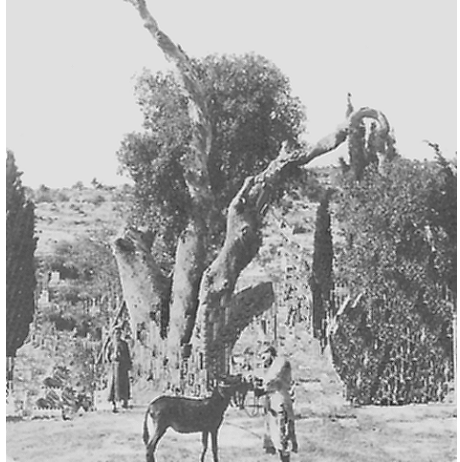
24[“]As for Ishmael, I will bless him also and make him fruitful. He will become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation. ²⁵But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year.”

Abraham and all the males in his household are circumcised

26That same day Abraham was himself circumcised, and he took his son Ishmael and all the males in his household and circumcised them as God had commanded.

Abraham visited by Jehovah and two angels

1The Lord appeared again to Abraham, near the oaks of Hebron while he was sitting at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. **2**Abraham looked up and saw three men^{F*} standing nearby.



Ancient oak near Hebron.

Abraham prepares food for the men

3He hurried to greet them and bowed to the ground before them and said, **“If I have found favour in your eyes my lords, do not pass your servant by. ⁴Let a little water be brought to wash your feet, then rest under this tree and let me bring you something to eat, so you can be refreshed and then go on your way.”**

5They answered, **“Very well, do as you say.”** So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said to her **“Quick, take three measures of fine flour and bake some bread!”** **6**Then he ran to the herd and selected a choice calf and gave it to a servant who hurried to prepare it.

7He brought cheese, milk, and the calf that had been prepared and set these before the men. While they ate he stood nearby under a tree.

Abraham told that Sarah will bear a son next year

8Then they said to him, **“Where is your wife Sarah?”**

Abraham replied, **“She is in the tent.”**

9Then Jehovah spoke and said, **“I will return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall bear a son.”**

Sarah overhears and laughs in disbelief

10Now Sarah was listening inside the tent. She laughed and said to herself, **“I am old and my husband is old, how can I now have this pleasure?”**

*13 The name God Almighty is ‘*El Shaddai*’ in Hebrew.

*15 Abraham means ‘father of multitudes.’ Abram meant ‘father of high status.’

*19 Sarah means ‘noble lady.’ Sarai meant ‘dominant.’

*23 Isaac means ‘to laugh.’

*2 Jehovah and the two angels (see following verses).

¹¹Jehovah said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh and say, ‘How can I have a child now that I am old?’ Is anything too hard for the Lord?”

¹²Sarah feared and called out, “I did not laugh.”

The Lord replied, “You did laugh.”

Sodom and Gomorrah

¹³Then the men arose to go down to Sodom. Abraham walked along with them to see them on their way. ¹⁴Jehovah said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? ¹⁵Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth shall be blessed through him. ¹⁶For I have chosen him, and he will direct his children after him to keep the way of Jehovah by doing what is right and just.”

¹⁷Then he said to Abraham, “The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous that I must go down to see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not I will know.”

¹⁸The two men^{F*} continued toward Sodom but Abraham stood with the Lord.

Abraham pleads for Sodom

¹⁹Then Abraham said to the Lord, “Will you destroy the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous people found in the city? Will you not spare the place for their sake. ²⁰Far be it from you to destroy the righteous with the wicked. Will not the judge of all the earth do right?”

²¹Jehovah said, “If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole city for their sake.”

Sodom will not be destroyed if ten righteous people can be found there

²²Then Abraham spoke up again saying, “Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes, what if the number of the righteous is five less than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city because of five people?”

²³“If I find forty-five righteous people there, I will not destroy it.” the Lord replied.

²⁴“What if only forty are found?”

“For the sake of forty I will not do it.”

²⁵“What if only twenty can be found there?”

“For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it.”

²⁶Then Abraham said, “May Jehovah not be angry. Let me speak just once more. What if only ten righteous people be found there?”

²⁷He answered, “For the sake of ten righteous people I will not destroy it.”

²⁸Then the Lord went his way and Abraham returned to his tent.

The two angels visit Sodom and stay with Lot

¹The two angels came to Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city.

²When Lot saw them he arose and bowed before them with his face to the ground and said, “My lords, turn aside to your servant’s house. Wash your feet and spend the night with me, and then go your way early in the morning.”

³They answered, “No, we will spend the night in the square.”

⁴But Lot insisted so strongly, that they went with him. He prepared a meal for them, baking bread without yeast and they ate.

Sexual deviants surround Lot’s house and demand he bring out the angels

⁵But that night, before they lay down, men from every part of Sodom, both young and old surrounded the house and shouted to Lot, “Bring out the men who came to you tonight, so we can have sex with them!”

Lot offers his daughters instead

⁶Lot went out to them and shut the door behind him and said, “No my brothers, do not do this wicked thing. ⁷I have two daughters who have never lain with a man, let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them, but do not do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof.”^{F*}

The men near Lot’s door struck with blindness

⁸But they said to him, “Out of our way!” and then said among themselves, “This fellow came here to live among us and now would be our judge. We will treat him worse than them.” And they moved forward to break down the door. ⁹But the angels inside reached out and pulled Lot back into the house and shut the door.

¹⁰Then they struck the men who were near the door of the house with a blindness so that they could not find the door.^{F*}

Lot’s family do not believe that Sodom is to be destroyed

¹¹The angels said to Lot, “If you have anyone else in the city who belongs to you, get them out. The outcry to Jehovah against this city is so great that he has sent us to destroy it.”

¹²So Lot went out to warn his sons-in-law who had married his other daughters. He said to them, “Flee the city now! The Lord is about to destroy it!”

¹³But they did not believe him.

The angels lead Lot’s household out of Sodom

¹⁴At dawn the angels urged Lot saying,

*7 To permit a male guest in your home to be dishonoured is an unforgivable offence in Middle-East culture.

*10 Probably a hallucinatory blindness such as that induced by a stage hypnotist. A similar blindness was inflicted on an entire Syrian army at the prayer of the prophet Elijah.

*18 These two men are referred to as angels from the time they arrive at Sodom. See verse 1 of the following chapter.

“Hurry. Take your wife and your two daughters who are here with you or you too will be destroyed when the city is punished.”

¹⁵Lot hesitated, but the angels grasped his hand and the hands of his wife and daughters and led them out of the city and said, **“Flee to the mountains. Do not look back, nor stop anywhere in the valley.”**

Lot flees to the town of Zoar

¹⁶Lot said, “You have shown kindness to me in sparing my life, but I cannot flee to the mountains lest the disaster overtake me and I die. ¹⁷Look, there is a town near enough to run to, and it is small. Let me flee there, then my life will be spared.”

¹⁸One of the angels replied, **“Very well, I will grant this request. We shall not destroy the town you speak of. But flee there quickly. We can do nothing until you reach it.”** The town was called Zoar.

Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed

¹⁹Then the Lord rained down burning sulphur on Sodom and Gomorrah, destroying the cities and all who lived in them, along with the entire plain and the vegetation in the land.

Lot’s wife lags behind to watch and is also destroyed

²⁰Lot’s wife was also destroyed, for she had lagged behind him to watch. She became a pillar of salt.^{F*}

Abraham sees the dense smoke rising

²¹Early next morning Abraham looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and saw dense smoke arising from the land.

Lot lies with his two daughters

²²Lot and his two daughters soon left Zoar, for Lot was afraid to stay there. They lived in a cave in the mountains.

²³One day the older daughter said to the younger, “Our father is old and there is no man around here to marry us as is the custom of the earth. ²⁴Let us get our father to drink wine and then lie with him, and so preserve our family through our father.”

²⁵So that night they made their father Lot drunk on wine, and the older daughter lay with him. He was not aware of when she lay down or when she got up. ²⁶The next night they again got their father drunk on wine, and the younger daughter lay with him.

The Moabites and the Ammonites descended from Lot’s sons

²⁷Both Lot’s daughters conceived by their father. The older daughter had a son named Moab, the father of the Moabites. ²⁸The younger daughter also had a son, Ben-Ammi, the father of the Ammonites.



One of many pillars of rock salt on the salt hills along the shore of the Dead Sea, near the original location of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

14

King Abimelech takes Sarah as his wife

¹Now Abraham moved on from Hebron, to Gerar, and there again said of his wife Sarah, “She is my sister.” So Abimelech, king of Gerar took her to be his wife.

God warns Abimelech in a dream

²But God appeared to Abimelech in a dream and said to him, **“You and all that belong to you are about to die, for the woman you have taken is another man’s wife.”**

³Now Abimelech had not lain with Sarah, so he said, “Lord, will you destroy an innocent people? Did he not say to me, ‘She is my sister,’ and did she not also say, ‘He is my brother?’ ⁴I have done this with a clear conscience and clean hands.”

⁵God replied, **“I know that You have done this with a clear conscience, that is why I did not let you touch her, and kept you from sinning against me. ⁶Now return the man’s wife, for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you will live. ⁷Otherwise, you and all that belong to you will die.”**

Abimelech rebukes Abraham

⁸So early the next morning Abimelech summoned his officials and told them all that had happened, and they feared.

⁹Abimelech sent for Abraham and said to him, “What wrong have I done to you that you have brought such great guilt upon me and my kingdom? What was your reason for doing this?”

¹⁰Abraham replied, “I said to myself, ‘There is no fear of God in this place. They may kill me because of my wife.’ ¹¹Besides, she really is my sister, the daughter of my father, though not of my mother.”

*20 ie She was buried alive by the falling sulphur.

GENESIS 15

Abimelech enriches Abraham and returns Sarah

¹²Abimelech gave Abraham sheep, cattle, and servants, and returned Sarah to him saying, "My land is before you, live wherever you choose."

¹³To Sarah he said, "I am giving your brother a thousand shekels of silver^{F*} to cover the offence against you."

¹⁴Then Abraham prayed and God healed the household of Abimelech, for God had closed every womb because of Sarah.

Isaac is born

¹⁵Now the Lord did for Sarah as he had promised and she conceived, and bore a son to Abraham in his old age. He named him Isaac.

¹⁶When Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him as God had commanded.

¹⁷Abraham was now a 100 years old.

Sarah rejects Ishmael

¹⁸The child grew and on the day he was weaned^{F*} Abraham held a feast. ¹⁹But Sarah saw Ishmael the son of Hagar teasing Isaac, so she said to Abraham, "Get rid of that slave woman and her son. He is not to share the inheritance with my son Isaac."

²⁰This distressed Abraham greatly, but God said to him, "**Be not distressed regarding Ishmael and your maidservant. Do as Sarah says. It will be through Isaac that your offspring will be named.**" ²¹However I will make Ishmael into a nation also, for he is your offspring."

Hagar and her son Ishmael sent away

²²So early next morning Abraham took food and a skin of water, and placing them on Hagar's shoulders sent her off with Ishmael. She went her way and wandered in the desert of Beersheba.

Hagar distressed as Ishmael lies dying of thirst in the desert

²³When the skin of water was all gone, Hagar left Ishmael lying under a bush and went off and sat down about a bow shot away saying to herself, "I cannot watch my son die."^{F*} Then she wailed and wept.

An angel speaks to Hagar from heaven and reveals water

²⁴But God heard the boy crying out and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "**Be not distressed Hagar. God has heard your son as he lies there.**" ²⁵**Lift him up by the hand, for God will make him into a great nation.**"

²⁶Then God opened Hagar's eyes and she saw a well of water. So she went and filled the skin with water and took it to her son.

Ishmael grows up in the desert

²⁷God was with Ishmael as he grew. He lived

in the desert and became an archer, and his mother Hagar took a wife for him from Egypt.



Water skins, made from tightly sewn skin of goats.

15

God greatly tests Abraham by commanding him to sacrifice Isaac

¹Some time later, God greatly tested Abraham. He said to him, "**Abraham, take your son Isaac whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain which I will show you.**"

Abraham and his son travel to Mount Moriah

²So early next morning, Abraham and his son Isaac cut wood for the burnt offering and then set out for Moriah.

³On the third day Abraham saw the mountain in the distance. He said to his two servants, "Remain here with the donkey while I and the boy go on to worship. Then we will return."

⁴Abraham loaded the wood for the burnt offering on his son Isaac's back. He himself carried the fire^{F*} and the knife.

⁵As they went up the mountain together Isaac said to Abraham, "Father, we have the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the offering?"

⁶Abraham answered, "God will provide the lamb my son."

Abraham prepares the sacrifice

⁷When they reached the spot that God had shown him,^{F*} Abraham built an altar and arranged the wood for the fire. ⁸Then he took his son Isaac and bound him, and laid him on top of the wood.

The Lord stays Abraham's knife at the last second

⁹But just as Abraham reached for the knife to slay his son the angel of the Lord called from

*13 One shekel of silver (about 9gms) was worth about a days wage for a labourer.

*18 Hebrew children were usually weaned between the age of two and three.

*23 Ishmael would have been about 14 years old.

*4 Live embers from a fire carried in an earthenware vessel.

*7 This spot is believed to be the later site of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem and very near the present day Islamic mosque 'The Dome of the Rock.'

heaven and said, **“Abraham, lay not a hand on the boy. Now I know that you revere God, for you have not withheld from me^{F*} your only son.”**

A ram caught in the thicket is sacrificed

¹⁰Abraham then saw a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. He took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering in place of his son.

The Lord again reaffirms his covenant with Abraham

¹¹The angel of the Lord called to Abraham again and said, **“Because you have not withheld your only son, I will bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the heavens, and as the sand on the seashore. ¹²Your descendants will possess the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth shall be blessed, for you have obeyed me.”**

Sarah dies

¹³Sarah lived to be 127 years old then she died, at Hebron in the land of Canaan.

Abraham buys a field and cave as a burial site

¹⁴Abraham wept over his wife. Then he arose from beside her and spoke to the Hittites saying, “I am a stranger among you. Sell me some land here so I can bury my dead.”

¹⁵The Hittites replied, “You are a prince of God among us. Bury your dead in the choicest of our tombs. None will refuse you.”

¹⁶Abraham bowed down before them and said, “Entreat for me Ephron, to sell me the cave at the end of his field.”

¹⁷Ephron who was sitting among his people replied to Abraham saying, “My lord, I will gift you the field and the cave that is in it. Bury your dead.”

¹⁸But Abraham said to Ephron, “I will pay the price of the field. Accept it from me.”

¹⁹Ephron answered, “The land is worth 400 shekels of silver,^{F*} but what is that between me and you? Bury your dead.”

²⁰Abraham weighed out for him the price he had named, then the field along with the cave and the trees was deeded in the presence of the Hittites who had assembled in the gate^{F*} of the city.

²¹Afterward Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave.

16

Abraham sends his servant back to Haran to obtain a wife for Isaac

¹Abraham was now well advanced in years and the Lord had blessed him in every way.

²He said to his chief servant,^{F*} “Put your hand under my thigh and swear by Jehovah, God of heaven and earth, that you will not take a wife for my son Isaac from among the daughters of the Canaanites, but will return to my own land, to my own people and there obtain a wife for him.”

³“The Lord will send his angel before you. If the girl is unwilling to come I release you from this oath, but do not take my son back there.”

⁴So the servant took ten camels and gifts from his master and set out for Haran where Abraham’s brother Nahor had lived.

The servant prays for guidance

⁵When the servant arrived in Haran^{F*} he knelt the camels down near the spring outside the town. It was toward evening, the time when women go out to draw water.

⁶Then he prayed, “O Jehovah, God of my master Abraham, give me success this day and show kindness to Abraham. ⁷See, I am standing beside this spring and the daughters of the town are coming out to draw water. ⁸May it be that when I say to a girl, ‘Please let down your jar that I may drink,’ and she replies, ‘Drink, and I will water your camels also,’ that she be the one you have chosen for Isaac.”



A typical middle east spring-fed well.

Abraham’s niece Rebekah comes out to draw water

⁹Before he had finished praying, Rebekah who was the grand-daughter of Abraham’s brother Nahor, came out with a jar on her shoulder. ¹⁰The girl was beautiful and a virgin. She went down to the spring and filled her jar.

¹¹When she came back up, the servant said to her, “Please give me a little water from your jar.”

¹²Rebekah replied, “Drink my lord,” and lowered the jar.

Rebekah waters the camels in answer to the servant’s prayer

¹³After he drank she said, “I will draw water for your camels also.” So she emptied her jar

*9 Angels, when conveying messages, often speak as if God himself were speaking.

*19 A shekel of silver was about one days wage for a labourer.

*20 The term gate refers to the courtyards and buildings constructed around the gateways of ancient middle east cities. They were commonly used as market places and for court hearings, business transactions and social gatherings.

*2 Probably Eliezer, see Genesis 10:2.

*5 About a month’s journey.

GENESIS 16

into the trough and hurried back down to the spring to draw more water for his camels.

The servant gives Rebekah gifts and asks to stay the night in her father's house

¹⁴While the camels were drinking, the servant took out a gold ring and two gold bracelets and said to the girl, "Whose daughter are you, and is there room in your father's house for us to spend the night?"

¹⁵She answered, "I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Nahor. We have plenty of straw and fodder and room for you to stay the night."

¹⁶The servant bowed to the ground and worshipped the Lord saying, "Praise be to Jehovah who has not abandoned his kindness to my master. He has led me to the house of my master's people."



Water jars similar to what Rachel would have carried,

Rebekah runs home and her brother Laban comes out and invites the servant home

¹⁷Then Rebekah ran home and told her family about these things.

¹⁸When her brother Laban saw the ring and bracelets on his sister and heard her tell what the servant had said, he went out to the spring and found the servant still standing by his camels.

¹⁹He said to him, "Come O blessed by Jehovah, why do you stand out here? I have prepared the house and a place for your camels."

²⁰So the servant went with Laban. The camels were unloaded and straw and fodder brought for them. Also water to wash the servant's feet and the feet of his men.

The servant refuses to eat until he has told his errand

²¹Then food was placed before the servant, but he said, "I will not eat until I have told my errand."

²²Laban replied, "Speak on."

²³The servant said, "I am Abraham's servant and the Lord has blessed my master abundantly. He has given him sheep, cattle, silver, gold, servants, camels, and donkeys."

²⁴"Sarah his wife has borne him a son in her old age and he is to inherit everything he owns."

²⁵My master made me swear an oath and said, 'Return to my father's people and obtain a wife for my son.'

²⁶Then he related all that had happened at the well.

Laban and Bethuel give Rebekah to be Isaac's wife

²⁷Laban and his father Bethuel replied, "This is from the Lord. Here is Rebekah. Take her. Let her become the wife of your master's son."

The servant gives costly gifts to Rebekah and her family

²⁸Then the servant brought out jewellery of gold and silver, and articles of clothing, and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave costly gifts to her brother and her mother.

²⁹Then the servant and the men who were with him ate and drank, and spent the night there.

The servant departs with Rebekah

³⁰The next morning the servant said, "Send me on my way to my master."

³¹Rebekah's brother and mother replied, "Let her remain about ten days, then you may go."

But he said, "Do not detain me."

³²They said, "Let us ask the girl." So they called Rebekah and asked her, "Will you go with this man?"

³³She said, "I will go." So they blessed her saying, "May you increase to thousands upon thousands and may your offspring possess the gates of their enemies."

³⁴Then Rebekah, along with her maids mounted their camels and departed with Abraham's servant and his men.

Isaac marries Rebekah

³⁵Now Isaac was out in the fields one evening when he looked up and saw the camels approaching. ³⁶Rebekah also saw him, and got down from her camel and said to the servant, "Who is that man coming to meet us?"

³⁷The servant answered, "He is my master's son." So Rebekah took her veil and covered herself.

³⁸The servant told Isaac all that he had done, then Isaac took Rebekah to be his wife and loved her, and thus Isaac was comforted after the death of his mother.

Abraham remarries and bears six more sons

³⁹Abraham also took another wife. Her name was Keturah, and she bore him six sons. But Abraham left all that he owned to Isaac.

Abraham sends his six sons away

⁴⁰Abraham gave gifts to his other sons and sent them away to the land of the east.

Abraham dies aged 175

⁴¹When Abraham had lived 175 years he breathed his last and died, an old man full of years, and was gathered to his fathers.^{F*} ⁴²His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him with his wife Sarah in the cave in the field of Ephron.

The family of Ishmael

⁴³Ishmael had twelve sons, and they settled east of Egypt. Ishmael lived 137 years then died in the presence of all his family and was gathered to his fathers.

17

Isaac fathers twin sons

Jacob (later renamed Israel) and Esau

¹Isaac was 40 years old when he married Rebekah. When he was 60 years old he prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, for she was barren. ²The Lord answered the prayer of Isaac and Rebekah conceived.

³Twin babies jostled each other within her womb. She said, "What is happening to me?" and inquired of the Lord.

⁴The Lord said to her, "**Two nations are within your womb. One will be stronger than the other. The elder will serve the younger.**"

⁵When Rebekah gave birth, the first boy to come out was red skinned and hairy, so they named him Esau.^{F*}

⁶When his brother came out, his hand was grasping Esau's heel, so he was named Jacob.^{F*}

Esau a hunter but Jacob a quiet, stay-at-home man

⁷The twin boys grew up. Esau became a skilful hunter, a man of the open country, but Jacob was a quiet man who stayed among the tents.

Isaac favours Esau and Rebekah favours Jacob

⁸Isaac, who had a taste for wild game favoured Esau, but his wife Rebekah favoured Jacob.

Esau sells Jacob his birthright

⁹One day Jacob was cooking lentil stew, when Esau came in from the open country famished. He said to Jacob, "Give me some of that red stew, I am starving!"

¹⁰Jacob replied, "First give me your birthright."^{F*}

¹¹Esau said, "I am about to die of hunger. What good is my birthright to me?"

¹²Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So Esau swore an oath to him, then Jacob gave him

some of the lentil stew and some bread. Esau therefore cared little for his birthright.

The Lord reaffirms his covenant with Isaac

¹³There arose a famine in the land and the Lord appeared to Isaac and said, "**Do not go down to Egypt. Remain in this land for a time. ¹⁴I shall be with you and will bless you, for I am giving you and your descendants all of this land to fulfil the oath I swore to your father Abraham to make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the heavens.**"

¹⁵"**By your descendants all nations on earth shall be blessed for Abraham obeyed me and kept my commandments.**"

Isaac goes to live among the Philistines and pretends his wife Rebekah is his sister

¹⁶So Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines in Gerar and stayed there.

¹⁷When the men of that place asked him about Rebekah, he feared and said, "She is my sister," for he thought, "The men of this place may kill me to obtain her, for she is a beautiful woman."

King Abimelech rebukes Isaac for deception

¹⁸When Isaac had been there a long time, Abimelech looked down from a window and saw Isaac fondling Rebekah.

¹⁹He summoned Isaac and said to him, "She is your wife. Why then did you say she was your sister? One of the men may have lain with her and you would have brought guilt upon us."

²⁰So the king announced to the people, "Anyone who touches this man or his wife shall be put to death."

Isaac becomes wealthy and arouses the Philistines envy

²¹Isaac planted crops in that land and reaped a hundred fold, for the Lord blessed him.

²²His wealth continued to grow. Soon he had so many flocks, herds, and servants that the Philistines envied him, and filled up his wells with earth.

²³Then Abimelech said to Isaac, "Move away from us, you have become too powerful."

Quarrels over water

²⁴Isaac moved a little way off to the valley of Gerar. There his servants dug and found water. But the herdsmen of Gerar quarrelled with the herdsmen of Isaac and said, "The water is ours."

²⁵So Isaac's servants dug another well and they quarrelled over that one also. So he moved on from there and dug a third well. This time no one quarrelled over it.

²⁶Isaac said, "Now Jehovah has given us room. We will flourish in the land."

Isaac moves to Beersheba

²⁷From there Isaac went to Beersheba, and the Lord appeared to him again. So he built an altar there and called upon the name of the Lord.

*41 Israelite belief was that after death, a person's spirit descended to Sheol (the spirit world of the dead) and dwelt with their ancestors (fathers) while awaiting the resurrection of the body.

*5 Esau means 'rough (to the touch).'

*6 Jacob means 'supplanter.' Later the Lord renamed him Israel meaning, 'to rule as God' (Genesis 22:16).

*10 The birthright was the superior inheritance rights of a first born son. It included a double portion of inherited property and higher social status.

GENESIS 18

Abimelech makes a peace treaty with Isaac

²⁸Then King Abimelech came to him from Gerar with his officials.

²⁹Isaac said to them, "Why have you come? You were hostile to me and sent me away."

³⁰They answered, "We see clearly now that Jehovah is with you, so we said, 'There ought to be a treaty between us'. Therefore let us make a treaty that you will do us no harm, just as we did you no harm."

³¹So Isaac made a feast for them, and they ate and drank. Early the next morning they swore an oath to each other, then Isaac sent them on their way and they left him in peace.



One of the wells dug by Isaac in Gerar.

18

Esau's two wives

¹When Isaac's firstborn son Esau was 40 years old, he married two local Canaanite women, but they were a source of grief to his father Isaac and his mother Rebekah.

Rebekah induces her son Jacob to steal his brother's blessing

²Isaac was now old and had become blind. One day he summoned Esau and said to him, "My son, I am now an old man and near the day of my death. ³Take your bow and go hunt wild game for me. Prepare the savoury food I love and bring it to me to eat. Then I will give you my blessing before I die."

⁴Now Rebekah was listening and when Esau had gone out to hunt she went and told her son Jacob what she had overheard.

⁵Then she said to Jacob, "My son, do as I say. Go to the flock and bring me two young goats so that I can prepare savoury food for your father, just the way he likes it. ⁶Then take the food into your father to eat so that he will give you his blessing before he dies."

⁷Jacob said to his mother, "But my brother Esau is a hairy man, and I am a man with smooth skin, if my father touches me I would appear to be mocking him and would bring

down a curse on myself rather than a blessing."

⁸His mother replied, "My son, let the curse fall on me. Just do as I say."

⁹Then Rebekah took clothes belonging to Esau which she had in the house and put them on Jacob. ¹⁰She also covered Jacob's hands and neck with skin from the goat, and handed him the savoury food she had prepared.

Jacob deceives his father

¹¹Jacob took the food into Isaac his father, and said, "My father."

His father replied, "Yes my son, who is it?"

¹²Jacob said, "I am Esau, your firstborn. I have done as you told me. Sit up and eat of my game, then give me your blessing."

¹³Isaac said, "How did you find it so quickly my son?"

Jacob replied, "Jehovah your God gave me success."

¹⁴Isaac said to Jacob, "Come near so I can touch you my son, to know whether you really are Esau."

¹⁵Jacob went close to his father who touched him and said, "The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau. ¹⁶Are you really my son Esau?"

Jacob replied, "I am."

¹⁷Isaac said, "My son, give me your game to eat." So Jacob gave it to him and he ate, and he brought him wine and he drank.

Isaac blesses Jacob with Isaac's blessing

¹⁸Then his father Isaac said to Jacob, "Come here my son and kiss me." Jacob went to him and kissed him.

¹⁹When Isaac caught the smell of his clothes he blessed him saying, "*Ah, the smell of my son is like the fragrance of a field that Jehovah has blessed.* ²⁰*May God give you heaven's rain and earth's richness, an abundance of grain and new wine.*"

²¹*"May nations serve you and bow down to you. Be lord over your brother's offspring and may they also bow down to you."*

²²*"May those who curse you be cursed, and those who bless you be blessed."*

Esau returns from hunting

²³Isaac finished his blessing and Jacob had scarcely left his father's presence when his brother Esau returned from hunting. He too prepared savoury food and brought it in to his father.

²⁴His father said to him, "Who are you?"

Esau replied, "I am Esau your firstborn."

²⁵Isaac trembled and said, "Who was it then that hunted game and brought it to me? I blessed him, and indeed he will be blessed." F*

Esau weeps loudly when he hears

²⁶When Esau heard his father's words he burst out with a loud and bitter cry and said to

*25 According to Hebrew belief a patriarchal blessing cannot be revoked.

his father, "Bless me too my father!"

²⁷But his father Isaac said, "Your brother came deceitfully and took your blessing."

²⁸Esau said, "Is he not rightly named Jacob? He has deceived me twice. He took my birthright and now he has taken my blessing!" Then he said, "Have you not a blessing for me too father?"

²⁹Isaac answered, "I have made him lord over you and your offspring. I have sustained him with grain and new wine. What then can I bless you with my son?"

³⁰Esau said, "Do you have only one blessing my father? Bless me too!" Then he wept loudly.

Isaac's lesser blessing of Esau

³¹So his father blessed Esau saying, "***Your dwelling shall be away from earth's richness, away from the rain of the heavens above.***"

³²***"You will live by the sword and serve your brother. But the day will come when you will throw off his yoke from your neck."***

Esau plans to kill his brother Jacob

³³Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing his father had given him, and he said to himself, "The days of mourning for my father are near. Then I will kill Jacob."

Rebekah warns Jacob to flee to her brother Laban

³⁴When Rebekah heard what Esau planned to do, she sent for Jacob and said to him, "Your brother Esau comforts himself with the thought of killing you. ³⁵Now then my son, flee at once to my brother Laban in Haran. Stay with him until your brother's anger subsides, then I will send for you to come back."

19

Rebekah plans a way for Jacob to escape

¹Then Rebekah said to her husband Isaac, "I am weary of life because of these Canaanite women. If Jacob also takes a wife from among the women of this land my life will not be worth living."

²So Isaac called for Jacob and commanded him saying, "Do not marry a Canaanite woman. Go at once to Haran and take a wife for yourself from among the daughters of Laban your uncle."

Esau marries a cousin to please his father

³When Esau realised that his Canaanite wives did not please his father, he married a daughter of his uncle Ishmael in addition to the two wives he already had.

Jacob departs for Haran

⁴So Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Haran. When the sun set he stopped for the night at the town of Luz, and placing a stone under his head he lay down to sleep.

Jacob's dream of a stairway to heaven

⁵That night he had a dream. He saw a stairway with its top reaching to heaven, and angels of

God ascending and descending upon it.

The Lord reaffirms his covenant with Jacob

⁶Above it stood the Lord who said to Jacob, "I am Jehovah, God of your fathers Abraham and Isaac. I am giving you and your descendants the land upon which you are lying. ⁷Your offspring will be as the dust of the earth, and will spread out to the west, east, north, and south."

⁸All peoples on earth shall be blessed through you and your offspring. ⁹I will be with you and watch over you and bring you back to this land."

¹⁰Jacob awoke and was afraid and thought, "How awesome is this place. Surely Jehovah is here. This is the house of God, the gate of heaven."

Jacob vows to God to pay a tithe and renames the town Bethel

¹¹The next morning Jacob took the stone he had placed under his head and set it up as a pillar. He poured oil upon it and renamed the town Bethel.^{F*}

¹²Then Jacob made a vow^{F*} saying, "O God, if you will be with me and watch over me on this journey, and give me food and clothing so that I can return safely to my father's house, Jehovah shall be my God. ¹³And where this stone is set up will be a place of God, and of all that you give me I will return to you a tenth."

Jacob arrives in Haran

¹⁴Jacob continued his journey and came to Haran in the land of the east. There he saw a well with a large stone over the mouth, and three flocks of sheep waiting near by. ¹⁵For only when all the flocks were gathered would the shepherds roll away the stone to water the sheep.

¹⁶Jacob said to the shepherds, "Where are you from my brothers?"

They replied, "From Haran."

¹⁷Jacob said, "Do you know Laban?"

They answered, "We do. His daughter Rachel comes now with his sheep."

Jacob meets Laban's daughter Rachel and tells her who he is

¹⁸When Jacob saw Rachel he went over and rolled away the stone from the well and watered her sheep. ¹⁹Then Jacob kissed Rachel and began to weep aloud. He told her that he was a nephew of her father Laban, the son of his sister Rebekah. So she ran home and told her father Laban.

Laban greets his nephew

²⁰When Laban heard, he hurried out to meet his nephew. He embraced Jacob and kissed him saying, "My own flesh and blood."

Jacob works seven years for Rachel

²¹After Jacob had stayed with him a month, Laban said to him, "Should you work for me for

*11 Bethel means 'house of God.'

*12 A vow is a favour asked of the Lord in return for which the asker agrees to make some kind of sacrifice.

GENESIS 20

nothing because you are a nephew of mine? Tell me what your wages should be.”

²²Now Laban had two daughters, Leah the elder had tender eyes, but Rachel was more shapely in body and beautiful. ²³Jacob loved Rachel so he replied, “I will work for you seven years in return for your daughter Rachel.”

²⁴So Jacob worked seven years for Rachel, but it seemed to him but a short time because of his love for her.



Bethel, where Jacob had his dream.

Laban deceives Jacob and he is required to marry both Leah and Rachel

²⁵Then Jacob said to Laban, “My time is completed. Give me my wife for I wish to lie with her.”

²⁶So Laban brought together all the people of the place and gave a wedding feast. ²⁷But when evening came, instead of Rachel he took his daughter Leah and gave her to Jacob, and Jacob lay with her.

²⁸When morning came and Jacob saw that it was Leah, he said to Laban, “What have you done? I served you for Rachel. You have deceived me.”

²⁹Laban replied, “It is not our custom to give the younger daughter in marriage before the elder. ³⁰Complete this week with Leah then I will give you Rachel also.

Jacob agrees to another seven years of work

³¹However you must agree to another seven years of work.” Jacob agreed to this, and he loved Rachel more than Leah.

20

Leah bears Jacob four sons but Rachel is barren

¹When the Lord saw that Leah was unloved he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren. ²Leah conceived and gave birth to a son and she named him Reuben^{F*} saying, “It is because the Lord has seen my misery. Surely my husband will love me now.”

³She conceived again and gave birth to Simeon, and said, “Because the Lord heard

that I am unloved he gave me this son also.”

⁴Again she conceived and gave birth to Levi and said, “Now at last my husband will love me, for I have borne him three sons.”

⁵Then she conceived again and gave birth to a fourth son and named him Judah.

Rachel gives Jacob her maid Bilhah as a wife

⁶Because Rachel was not bearing children, she envied her sister Leah and said to Jacob, “Give me children or I will die!”

⁷Jacob became angry with Rachel and said, “Am I God, who has kept you from having children?”

⁸Then Rachel said, “Here is Bilhah my maidservant, take her as a wife so she can bear children for me.”

Bilhah bears Jacob two sons

⁹Jacob did so,^{F*} and Bilhah conceived and bore a son. Rachel said, “God has vindicated me,” and she named him Dan.

¹⁰Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son, and Rachel named him Naphtali.

Leah also gives Jacob her maid Zilpah as a wife

¹¹When Leah saw that she had ceased bearing children, she also took her maidservant Zilpah, and gave her to Jacob as a wife.

Zilpah bears Jacob two sons

¹²Zilpah bore Jacob a son and Leah named him Gad. ¹³Then Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. Leah said, “How happy I am,” and she named him Asher.

The mandrakes

¹⁴During wheat harvest, Reuben found some mandrake plants out in the fields and brought them home to his mother Leah. ¹⁵When Rachel saw them she said to Leah, “May I have some of those mandrakes?”^{F*}

¹⁶But Leah replied, “You have taken my husband, will you also take my son’s mandrakes?”

¹⁷Rachel said, “Jacob can lie with you tonight if you give me your mandrakes.”

¹⁸So when Jacob came in from the fields that evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, “You are to lie with me tonight, for I have hired you with my son’s mandrakes.”

Bilhah bears Jacob two more sons and a daughter

¹⁹So Jacob lay with Leah and she conceived and bore him a fifth son. She named him Issachar saying, “God has rewarded me for giving my maidservant to my husband.”

²⁰Then Leah conceived again and bore a sixth son, and named him Zebulun saying, “Now my husband will treat me with honour, for I have borne him six sons.”

²¹Later she gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah.

*9 When a man married either a maid, a slave girl, or a war captive under such arrangements as these, she was regarded as having a lower social status than his other wives and was called a concubine.

*15 Mandrake plants were believed to promote fertility.

*2 Reuben means ‘behold, a son.’

Rachel bears Joseph

²²Then God remembered Rachel and opened her womb. She conceived and gave birth to a son and named him Joseph saying, “God has taken away my disgrace. May the Lord add to me yet another son.”

Jacob bargains with Laban

²³After the birth of his son Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, “Send me away so that I can return to my own land.”

²⁴But Laban said to him, “Stay, for I have learned by divination that Jehovah has blessed me because of you. Name your wages and I will pay them.”

²⁵Jacob said to him, “The little you had before I came has increased greatly, for the Lord has blessed you since I have been with you, but when may I provide for my own family?”

²⁶Laban said, “What shall I give you?”

Laban agrees to let Jacob have all the speckled animals and black lambs

²⁷Jacob replied, “Do not give me anything. I will tend your flocks as before, but let me have every speckled sheep and goat and every black lamb. They will be my wages. ²⁸Any animal in my possession that is not speckled, or any lamb that is not black will be considered stolen.”

“Agreed,” said Laban.

Laban deceives Jacob

²⁹But that same day, Laban went through his flocks and removed every speckled animal and black lamb and placed them in the care of his sons. ³⁰Then he put a three day journey between himself and Jacob, leaving Jacob to look after the remainder of his flocks.

Jacob’s breeding methods

³¹Jacob however took fresh cut branches from trees and made white stripes on them by peeling the bark. ³²Then he placed the peeled branches in the watering troughs. When the flocks were in heat and came to drink, they mated in front of the branches and bore young that were speckled.^{F*}

³³But only when the stronger females were in heat did Jacob place the branches in the troughs. So the weak animals went to Laban and the strong ones to Jacob.

Jacob prospers

³⁴In time Jacob grew exceedingly prosperous and came to own large flocks. Also many servants, camels and donkeys.

21

Laban’s sons become jealous of Jacob

¹One day Jacob heard that Laban’s sons were saying, “Jacob has taken everything our father owned. He has gained all his wealth from that which belonged to our father.” ²Jacob also

*32 Genesis 21:8 reveals the real reason for Jacob’s breeding success.

noticed that Laban did not regard him as favourably as before.

Jacob consults with his wives Rachel and Leah

³So Jacob sent word for Rachel and Leah to meet him out in the fields.

⁴When they came to him he said, “Your father’s attitude toward me is not as it was before. ⁵You know that I have worked for you with all my strength, yet he has cheated me by changing my wages ten times. ⁶If he said, ‘The speckled ones will be your wages,’ then all the flocks gave birth to speckled young.”

⁷“If he said, ‘Only the streaked ones will be your wages,’ then all the flocks bore streaked young. So God has taken away your father’s livestock and given them to me.”

Jacob relates the message of an angel

⁸“An angel of God has appeared to me in a dream and said, ‘See, only the speckled male goats are mating with the flock, for I have seen all that Laban has been doing to you.’”

Jacob told by Lord to return to his own land

⁹“I am the God of Bethel where you anointed a pillar and where you made a vow to me.^{F*} Now leave this land and return to your own land.”

Jacob secretly departs without informing Laban

¹⁰Rachel and Leah replied, “All the wealth that God took from our father belongs to us, and our children. Do what God has told you.”

¹¹So Jacob put his children and his wives on camels, and taking all the goods he had accumulated, drove his livestock ahead of him and set out from Haran and crossed the river^{F*} to return to his father Isaac in the land of Canaan.

¹²Laban had gone to shear his sheep. Jacob did not inform him he was leaving.

Rachel steals her father’s household gods

¹³Before she left, Rachel stole her father’s household gods.^{F*}

Laban pursues Jacob

¹⁴On the third day Laban was told, “Jacob has fled.” So taking his kinsmen with him Laban pursued Jacob for seven days.

God speaks to Laban in a dream

¹⁵Jacob had already pitched his tent for the night when Laban caught up with him in the hill country of Gilead. So Laban and his men made camp also.

¹⁶That night God appeared to Laban in a dream and said to him, “Be careful how you speak to Jacob. Do not be harsh.”

Laban rebukes his son-in-law Jacob

¹⁷The next morning Laban said to Jacob, “What have you done? You carried off my daughters like captives in war. Why did you run

*9 Angels often speak as if the Lord himself were speaking.

*11 The Euphrates.

*13 Little statues that were used for divination. These were passed down from father to son and whoever possessed them was regarded as the legitimate heir.

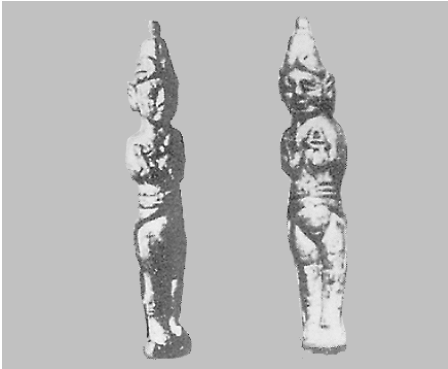
GENESIS 22

off secretly and deceive me? ¹⁸Why did you not tell me, so that I could send you away with joy, and singing to the music of tambourines and harps? ¹⁹You did not even let me kiss my grandchildren and daughters goodbye.”

²⁰“You have done a foolish thing. I have power to harm you, but last night the God of your father said to me, ‘Be careful how you speak to Jacob. Do not be harsh.’”

Laban accuses Jacob of stealing his household gods

²¹“You left because you longed to return to your father’s house, but why did you steal my household gods?”



Household god figurines of the type Rachel stole from her father.

Laban told to search for the gods

²²Now Jacob was unaware that Rachel had taken the gods. He answered Laban saying, “I feared that you would take your daughters away from me by force, but whoever you find with your gods shall die. ²³Search and see. If there is anything of yours here with me, take it.”

Rachel conceals her father’s gods by sitting on them

²⁴So Laban began to search the tents.

²⁵Now Rachel had hidden the gods inside her camel’s saddle and was sitting on them. Laban searched through her tent but found nothing. ²⁶Rachel said to her father, “Be not angry my lord that I cannot stand in your presence, for the way of women is upon me.”

²⁷So Laban did not find the gods.

Jacob becomes angry with his father-in-law

²⁸Then Jacob became angry with Laban and said to him, “What is my crime? What sin have I committed that you hunt me down? You have searched all my goods and what have you found that belongs to you? Put it here in front of your kinsmen and mine! Let them judge between us!”

²⁹“I have been with you for twenty years now. Your sheep and goats have not miscarried, nor have I eaten rams from your flocks. ³⁰I did not bring you animals torn by wild beasts, I bore

the loss myself. Yet you demanded payment from me for all that was stolen.”

³¹“Heat consumed me by day and cold by night. Sleep fled my eyes.”

³²“I worked fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flocks, and you changed my wages ten times! ³³If the God of my father Abraham had not been with me you would have sent me away empty-handed. But God has seen my hardship and last night he rebuked you.”

Laban and Jacob agree to make a covenant

³⁴Laban answered Jacob, “The women are my daughters, the children are my children, the flocks are my flocks. All you see is mine, yet what can I do. Come now, let us make a covenant, you and I.”

They build a pillar of stones and eat together

³⁵So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar. Then they gathered more stones and afterward they ate together by the pillar of stones.



Pillar of stones as a witness.

Laban swears the covenant

³⁶Laban said, “Today this pillar of stones is a witness between you and I. May Jehovah watch over us. ³⁷If you mistreat my daughters or take other wives, remember that God is a witness between you and me. ³⁸I will not pass beyond this pillar to your side to harm you, and you will not pass to my side to harm me. May the God of Abraham judge between us.”

³⁹Then Jacob offered sacrifice there.

Laban returns home

⁴⁰Early next morning, Laban kissed his grandchildren and his daughters and blessed them, then he left and returned home and Jacob resumed his journey.

22

Jacob sends messengers to his brother Esau

¹When Jacob reached the river Jordan he sent messengers ahead of him to the land of Edom to say to his brother Esau, “Your servant Jacob

says, 'I have been staying with Laban, and now have cattle, donkeys, sheep, goats, and servants. ²I send this message to my lord that I might find favour in your eyes.'

Jacob hears that Esau is coming with 400 men

³When the messengers returned they said to Jacob, "We went to your brother Esau and now he is coming to you with 400 men."

Jacob fears and divides his people

⁴When Jacob heard this he feared greatly. So he divided his people and his flocks and herds into two groups thinking, "If Esau attacks one group, the second group may escape."

Jacob prays for protection from Esau

⁵Then he prayed saying, "O God of my fathers Abraham and Isaac, who said to me, 'Return to your own land,' I am unworthy of all the kindness you have shown your servant. I had only my staff with me when I first crossed this Jordan, but now I have become two companies."

⁶"Save me from the hand of my brother Esau, for I fear he is coming to kill me and also the mothers with their children, but you have said, 'I will prosper you and make your descendants like the sand of the sea.'"

Jacob prepares a gift for Esau

⁷The next day Jacob prepared a gift for his brother Esau; 220 goats, 220 sheep, 30 female camels with their young, 50 cattle and 30 donkeys.

⁸He put each herd by itself and said to his servants, "Go on ahead and keep a space between the herds. When my brother Esau meets you and asks, 'To whom do these animals belong?' you are to say, 'They belong to your servant Jacob and are a gift sent to my lord Esau.'"

⁹For Jacob thought, "I will pacify Esau with this gift I am sending on ahead. Later when I see him, perhaps he will receive me."

Jacob moves his wives and sons for safety

¹⁰His servants set out with the gift while Jacob remained in the camp. However, during the night he arose and sent his wives and eleven sons across the ford of the Jabbok^{F*} for safety.

Jacob wrestles an angel until daybreak

¹¹When Jacob was alone an angel appeared, and wrestled with him until daybreak.

¹²When the angel saw that he could not overpower Jacob, he struck the socket of his hip, dislocating it. ¹³Then the angel said to Jacob, "Let me go, for it is daybreak."

Jacob's name is changed to Israel

¹⁴Jacob replied, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me."

¹⁵The angel said, "What is your name?"

"Jacob," he answered.

¹⁶The angel said, "Your name shall no

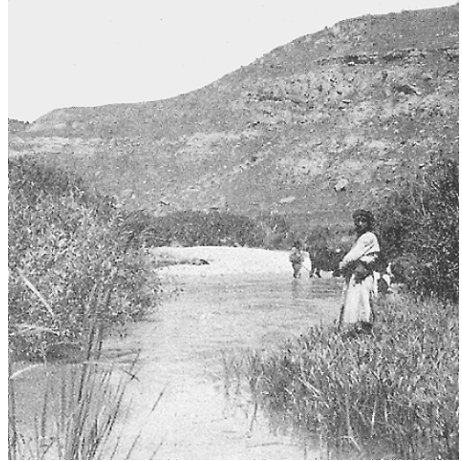
longer be Jacob, but Israel,^{F*} for you have striven with an angel, and with men, and have prevailed."

¹⁷Jacob said, "Tell me your name."

The angel replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him.

¹⁸Jacob called that place Peniel saying, "I have seen an angel face to face and my life was spared."

¹⁹Jacob limped because of his hip. That is why the Israelites do not eat the sinew of the hip.



The Jabbok river, a tributary of the Jordan.

Jacob bows to his brother Esau

²⁰The next day the sun had risen high when Jacob and his family crossed the Jordan river.

²¹When Jacob saw Esau coming with his 400 men, he divided his children. He put his maid-servant wives and their children in front, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph at the rear.

²²He himself went on ahead and bowed down to the ground seven times as he approached his brother.

Jacob and Esau are reconciled

²³But Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him. He threw his arms around his neck and kissed him and they wept together.

²⁴Then Esau saw the women and children and said, "Who are these with you?"

²⁵Jacob answered, "They are the children God has graciously given your servant." Then Jacob's wives and children approached Esau and bowed down.

Esau declines Jacob's gift but Jacob insists

²⁶Esau said, "What do you mean by all these herds I met?"

²⁷Jacob answered, "To find favour in your eyes my lord."

²⁸Esau said, "I already have plenty my

*10 The Jabbok is a tributary river flowing into the Jordan.

*16 Israel means 'to rule as God.'

GENESIS 23

brother, keep what you have for yourself.”

²⁹Jacob replied, “No, please. Accept this gift from me, for to see your face is like seeing the face of God now that you have received me favourably.” ³⁰And because Jacob insisted, Esau accepted the gift.

Jacob declines Esau's offer to accompany him

³¹Then Esau said, “Let us be on our way. I will accompany you.”

³²Jacob said to him, “Let my lord go on ahead while I move slowly at the pace of the herds before me, and that of the children, until I come to my lord in Edom.”

³³Esau said, “Then let me leave some of my men with you.”

³⁴Jacob answered, “Why do that? Just let me find favour in your eyes.” So that day Esau returned on his way back to Edom.^{F*}

Jacob buys land near Shechem

³⁵Jacob however journeyed to Succoth.

³⁶Then he moved near Shechem in Canaan and camped within sight of the town. For 100 shekels of silver^{F*} he bought a plot of land where he pitched his tent and set up an altar. He named the altar Almighty God of Israel.



The land of Canaan in the days of Abraham.

23

Dinah is raped by the ruler of Shechem's son

¹Now Dinah the daughter of Leah went to visit the women of Shechem.

²When the son of Hamor, the ruler of the town

saw her, he seized her and raped her, yet his heart was drawn to Dinah and he spoke tenderly to her.

³Afterward he said to his father, “Get me this girl as my wife.”

Dinah's brothers are angry

⁴When Israel^{F*} heard that his daughter had been defiled, he held his peace until his sons came in from the fields. ⁵When they heard what had happened they were indignant, and burned with anger.

Dinah's brothers demand that all the men of Shechem be circumcised, to take revenge

⁸Because Dinah had been defiled, Israel's sons replied deceitfully and said, “We cannot give our sister to a man who is uncircumcised. We will only give our consent if you become like us and circumcise all your males.”

The ruler of Shechem asks for Dinah to be given to his son as a wife

⁶Hamor came out with his son. He said to Israel, “My son longs for your daughter. Please give her to him as his wife. Intermarry with us and settle here. The land is open to you.”

⁷Then the son of Hamor spoke and said to Israel and his sons, “Let me find favour in your eyes and I will give you whatever you ask. Make the price for the bride and the gift as great as you like. I will pay whatever you ask.”

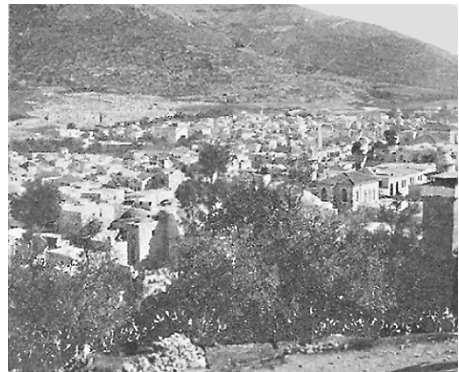
Every male in Shechem circumcised

⁹This proposal seemed good to Hamor and his son. So Hamor returned to speak to the men of Shechem.

¹⁰He said to them, “These men are friendly toward us. Let them live here and trade with us, and we can marry their daughters and they can marry ours. Then will not their livestock and property become ours?”

¹¹“But they will only consent to live with us on the condition that our males be circumcised, as they are themselves.”

¹²The men agreed with Hamor, so every male in Shechem was circumcised.



Shechem, where Dinah was raped.

*³⁴ Edom is a dry, rugged region south of the Dead Sea.

*³⁶ About four months wages for a labourer.

*⁴ From this point on in the Bible, Jacob is mostly referred to by his new name of Israel.

Dinah's brothers Simeon and Levi kill all the men of Shechem

¹³However three days later, while all the men of Shechem were sore, Simeon and Levi the brothers of Dinah took their swords and fell upon the town unawares. They killed every male, and took Dinah and left.

The sons of Israel plunder Shechem

¹⁴Then the sons of Israel plundered Shechem, seizing the flocks, herds, and donkeys. They carried off all the wealth, including the women and children.

¹⁵Israel said to Simeon and Levi, "You have brought trouble on me by making me odious to the people living in this land. We are few in number. If they join forces against us we will be destroyed."

¹⁶But they replied, "Should our sister be treated like a harlot?"

God commands Israel to return to Bethel

¹⁷Then God said to Israel, "Return to Bethel. There build an altar to God, who appeared to you when you were fleeing from Esau."

Israel purifies his people and buries their false gods and amulets

¹⁸So Israel said to all the people who had joined him, "Put away the foreign gods you have among you. Purify yourselves and change your clothes. We are going to Bethel. There I will build an altar to the God who answered me in the day of my distress."

¹⁹The people with Israel gave him their gods and also the amulets from their ears and Israel buried them under the oak tree at Shechem.

Israel returns to Bethel

²⁰As they set out for Bethel a fear of God fell upon the towns all around, therefore no one pursued them.

²¹So Israel camped at Bethel and there built an altar.

Israel returns home to his father Isaac

²²After a time, Israel left Bethel to return home to his father Isaac in Hebron.

Rachel gives birth to Benjamin but dies

²³On the journey, Rachel his wife began to give birth and had great difficulty.

²⁴As she breathed her last, for she was dying, she named her son Ben-oni, but Israel renamed him Benjamin.^{F*}

²⁵Rachel died and was buried there, near Bethlehem. Israel set up a pillar over her tomb then continued his journey.

Reuben commits adultery

²⁶At a camp on the way, Reuben lay with Bilhah^{F*} his father's concubine, and Israel got to hear of it.

Jacob comes home to his father Isaac who dies soon afterward aged 180

²⁷So Jacob came home to his father Isaac in Hebron. His father was now 180 years old.

²⁸Soon afterward his father Isaac died, and was gathered to his forefathers. He was old and full of years and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.



Tomb of Rachael near Bethlehem.

24

The twelve sons of Israel

¹These are the twelve sons of Israel: ²Born of Leah: Reuben (the firstborn), Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun.

³Born of Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin.

⁴Born of Bilhah: Dan and Naphtali.

⁵Born of Zilpah: Gad and Asher.

Joseph and his coat of many colours

⁶Now Israel loved Joseph more than his other sons because he had been born to him in his old age. And he made him a coat of many colours.

⁷When the older brothers of Joseph saw that their father loved him more than them, they hated Joseph and could not say a kind word to him.

Joseph's dreams arouse great jealousy in his brothers

⁸One night when Joseph was seventeen years of age, he had a dream and told it to his brothers. ⁹He said to them, "Hear this dream I had. We were binding sheaves of grain in the field when suddenly my sheaf arose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it."

¹⁰His brothers replied, "So you think to rule over us?" And they hated him all the more.

¹¹Then Joseph had another dream and again told it to his brothers. He said, "I have had another dream. This time the sun, moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me."

¹²When Joseph told the dream to his father Israel, he rebuked him and said, "What is this

^{*24} Ben-oni means 'son of my sorrow,' but Benjamin means 'son of the right hand,' (the right hand was a symbol of superior strength).

^{*26} Bilhah had been Rachel's maidservant (Genesis 20:8). A concubine was a wife of secondary rank. Reuben lost his superior status as 'first born son' because of this incident (Genesis 31:17-18).

GENESIS 25

dream you had? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed bow down before you?"

¹³Joseph's brothers were highly jealous of him, but his father pondered the dream in his mind.

Israel sends Joseph out to his brothers who are tending the flocks

¹⁴Now one day, when Joseph's brothers had gone to graze their father's flocks near Shechem, Israel said to Joseph, "Go and see if all is well with your brothers and with the flocks and bring back word to me."

¹⁵So Joseph went to Shechem. A man found him wandering there in the fields and asked him, "What are you looking for?"

¹⁶He replied, "I am looking for my brothers."

¹⁷The man answered, "They have moved on from here to Dothan." So Joseph went there.

Some of Joseph's brothers propose killing him

¹⁸When his brothers saw Joseph coming in the distance they said to one another, "Here comes the dreamer. Let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits and say that a wild animal has devoured him. Then we will see what becomes of his dreams."

Reuben tries to save Joseph

¹⁹But Reuben said, "Let us not shed blood, but just throw him into a pit." ²⁰He said this that he might later rescue Joseph and restore him to his father.

Joseph stripped of his coat and thrown in a pit

²¹So they stripped Joseph of his coat of many colours and threw him into a pit and left him there.

Judah suggests they sell Joseph to Ishmaelite traders

²²Later as the brothers were sitting down to eat, they saw a caravan of Ishmaelite traders approaching on their way down to Egypt, their camels laden with spices.

²³Judah said to his brothers, "What will we gain by killing our brother? Let us sell him to these Ishmaelites. After all he is our own flesh and blood." His brothers agreed.

Joseph is pulled out of the pit and sold to the Ishmaelites

²⁴So Joseph was pulled up out of the pit and sold to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver.^{F*}

Reuben distressed when he finds Joseph gone

²⁵When Reuben, who had been absent went to the pit and found that Joseph was not there, he tore his clothes^{F*} and returned to his brothers and said, "The boy is not there! Where can I turn now?"

Joseph's brothers deceive their father Israel

²⁶So they took a goat and killed it and dipped Joseph's coat in the blood. ²⁷Then they took

the coat back to their father and said, "We found this."

²⁸Israel said, "It is my son's coat! A wild animal has devoured him! Joseph has been torn to pieces!"



A caravan of Ishmaelite (Arab) traders.
Joseph was sold to a similar group.

Israel mourns his son Joseph many days

²⁹Then Israel tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and mourned Joseph for many days.

³⁰His sons and daughters^{F*} tried to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, "In mourning I shall go down to Sheol,^{F*} to my son."

25

Judah and his daughter-in-law Tamar

¹Soon after this, Judah left his brothers and went to live near Adullam.^{F*} There he married a Canaanite woman who bore him three sons, Er, Onan, and Shelah.

²His eldest son Er married a girl whose name was Tamar. But Er was wicked so the Lord took his life.

³Judah said to his second son Onan, "Marry your brother's wife and fulfil your duty to her as a brother-in-law to produce offspring for your brother."^{F*} ⁴But Onan knew that the children would not be his, so whenever he lay with Tamar he spilled his semen to keep from producing offspring for his brother.

⁵This displeased the Lord so he took the life of Onan also.

⁶Judah then said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Live as a widow until my youngest son Shelah grows up." But Judah thought, "He may die also."

Judah fails to keep his promise to Tamar

⁷So Tamar returned to live with her father in Timnah.

*30 Israel apparently had other daughters besides Dinah. She was only mentioned because of the shameful rape that occurred in Shechem. Genesis 30:1 also states that Israel had daughters and granddaughters.

*30 Sheol is the Hebrew name for the spirit world of the dead.

*1 Adullam was about 20 kms northwest of Hebron where Judah's father and brothers lived.

*3 This was the custom at that time and also later became a requirement of the Law of Moses (Deuteronomy 5:32).

*24 The price of a young slave.

*25 An Israelite expression of extreme grief or anger. Reuben being the eldest son knew his father would hold him responsible for the safety of Joseph.

⁸After many years, Judah's wife died. When Judah had recovered from his grief, he journeyed to Timnah to be with the men who were shearing his sheep. His friend Hirah went with him.

Tamar deceives Judah by pretending to be a harlot

⁹Tamar was told, "Your father-in-law is coming to Timnah to shear his sheep." ¹⁰So Tamar changed her widow's clothes, and covering herself with a veil to disguise herself she sat down at a place on the road leading to Timnah.

¹¹For although Judah's son Shelah was now grown up, Judah had not given Tamar to him as his wife.

¹²When Judah saw Tamar he did not recognise her, and thought she was a harlot for she had covered her face. So he went over to her and said, "Come, let me lie with you."

¹³She said, "What will you pay me?"

He replied, "I will send you a young goat."

¹⁴She said, "Then give me your sealing ring and its cord and the staff in your hand as a pledge until you send it." ¹⁵So Judah gave them to her and then lay with her, and she became pregnant by him.

¹⁶Later Judah sent a young goat by his friend Hirah to obtain his pledge back from the woman, but Hirah could not find her.

Tamar conceives and has twin boys

¹⁷About three months later Judah was told, "Your daughter-in-law Tamar is guilty of harlotry, for she is with child."

¹⁸Judah said, "Have her burned to death."

¹⁹But Tamar sent a message to her father-in-law Judah saying, "I am with child by the man who owns this sealing ring, cord, and staff.

²⁰Judah recognised them and said, "She is more righteous than I, since I did not give her to my son Shelah."

²¹When Tamar gave birth there were twin boys in her womb. One of them put out his hand, so the midwife took a scarlet thread and tied it on his wrist saying, "This one came out first." ²²But then he drew back his hand and his brother came out before him.

26

Joseph sold to Potiphar in Egypt

¹Meanwhile the Ishmaelites had sold Joseph in Egypt, to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard.

The Lord gives Joseph success in everything he does

²The Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in everything he did. So Potiphar put him in charge of his household and all that he owned. ³The Lord blessed the Egyptian because of Joseph, both in house and field.

Joseph resists the temptations of Potiphar's wife

⁴Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, and after a time Potiphar's wife said, "Come lie with me."

⁵But Joseph refused saying, "How can I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?"

⁶And although she tempted Joseph day after day, he refused to lie with her, or even to be with her.

⁷One day when none of the other servants were around, she caught Joseph by his outer garment and said, "Come lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand and fled out of the house.

Potiphar's wife falsely accuses Joseph

⁸At this Potiphar's wife called the other household servants and said to them, "My husband has brought this Hebrew* here to insult us. Look. He came in here to lie with me but I screamed for help, and he left his garment beside me and ran from the house."

⁹And she kept the garment beside her until her husband came home.



Egypt, where Joseph was sold as a slave. A dominant and wealthy nation in Joseph's day.

Joseph is cast into prison by Potiphar

¹⁰When Potiphar heard the story his wife told him, he was angry with Joseph and cast him into prison.

¹¹However the Lord was still with Joseph and granted him favour in the eyes of the prison warden. The warden put Joseph in charge of all the other prisoners.

Joseph interprets the dreams of two fellow prisoners

¹²Some time later, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker of Pharaoh king of Egypt offended their master. So he cast them both into prison, the same prison where Joseph was confined.

¹³After they had been there for some time, both men had a dream the same night. When Joseph came to them next morning he said, "Why are your faces dejected today?"

*8 Hebrew means 'from beyond' (the Euphrates river).

GENESIS 27

¹⁴They answered, “We both had dreams, but there is no one to interpret them.”

¹⁵Joseph said “Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me your dreams.”

¹⁶The cupbearer said, “In my dream I saw three clusters of grapes. I took the grapes and squeezed them into Pharaoh’s cup and put the cup in his hand.”

¹⁷Joseph said, ***“This is what it means: The three clusters are three days. Within three days Pharaoh will restore you to your position and you will put his cup in his hand as you did before.”***

¹⁸When all goes well with you, remember me. Mention me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison, for I have done nothing to deserve it.”

¹⁹Then the chief baker said to Joseph, “I too had a dream. On my head were three baskets of bread for Pharaoh. But the birds were eating them out of the top basket on my head.”

²⁰Joseph said, ***“The three baskets are also three days. Within three days Pharaoh will remove your head and hang you on a tree and the birds will eat your flesh.”***

The dreams come to pass as Joseph foretold

²¹Now the third day was Pharaoh’s birthday and he gave a feast for all of his officials. He restored the cupbearer to his former position, but hanged the baker just as Joseph had foretold.

²²The cupbearer however did not remember Joseph.

27

Joseph brought from prison to interpret Pharaoh’s dream

¹Two years passed, then Pharaoh also had a dream. In the morning his mind was troubled, so he sent for the magicians and wise men of Egypt, but none of them could interpret the dream for him.

²Then the chief cupbearer said to Pharaoh, “Today I am reminded of my guilt. Pharaoh was once angry with his servants and imprisoned myself and the chief baker. ³Both of us had a dream the same night. A young Hebrew was there with us and we told him our dreams. He interpreted them for us and everything came to pass exactly as he said. I was restored to my position and the other man was hanged.”

⁴So Pharaoh sent for Joseph and he was quickly brought from the prison. When he had shaved and changed his clothes he stood before Pharaoh.

⁵Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I had a dream and no one can interpret it. I am told that you can interpret dreams.”

⁶Joseph replied, “I myself cannot, but God can give Pharaoh the answer.”

⁷Pharaoh said to Joseph, “In my dream I was standing on the bank of the Nile, when up out of the river came seven cows, fat and sleek, and grazed among the reeds. ⁸After them,

seven other cows came up, scrawny and lean, and ate up the fat cows, but they looked just as lean as before.”

⁹“In my dream I also saw seven heads of grain, full and good, growing on a single stalk. After them, seven other heads of grain sprouted, but withered and thin, and swallowed up the seven good heads.”



Egyptian cows on the banks of the Nile.

Seven years of great abundance in Egypt followed by seven years of famine

¹⁰Joseph said to Pharaoh, ***“The dreams are one and the same. God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do.”***

¹¹***“The seven good cows and the seven good heads of grain are seven years. The seven lean cows that came up afterward and the seven withered heads of grain are seven years also, seven years of famine.”***

¹²***“Seven years of great abundance are coming throughout Egypt, but seven years of severe famine will follow, and the abundance will be forgotten. Famine will ravage the land.”***

¹³***“The dream being given in two forms signifies that the matter has been firmly decided by God and will soon come to pass.”***

Joseph gives wise counsel to Pharaoh

¹⁴***“Now let Pharaoh search for a wise man and put him in charge of Egypt. And let him appoint overseers to store a fifth of the harvest during the seven years of abundance to be used under the authority of Pharaoh during the seven years of famine.”***

Joseph made vizier over all Egypt

¹⁵This plan seemed good to Pharaoh and his officials and Pharaoh said to them, “Could we find anyone like this man, in whom is the Spirit of God?”

¹⁶So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has made all this known to you, I hereby place you in charge of the whole land of Egypt. ¹⁷All my

people are to submit to your authority. Only I will be greater than you.”

¹⁸Then Pharaoh took a ring from his own finger and put it on Joseph’s finger. ¹⁹He afterward arrayed him in a robe of fine linen and placing a gold chain around his neck had him ride in a chariot as his second in command. Men ran before him shouting, “Bow down!”

²⁰Joseph was now 30 years old, and he travelled throughout the land of Egypt.

Joseph marries and fathers two sons

²¹Pharaoh also gave him Asenath, daughter of Potiphera the priest to be his wife.

²²Before the years of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph. His firstborn he named Manasseh and the second Ephraim.

The seven abundant years

²³During the seven years of abundance the land produced plentifully, and Joseph stored up huge amounts of grain, like the sand of the sea.

²⁴There was so much that he stopped keeping records for it was beyond measure.

The seven years of famine begin

²⁵Then the seven years of famine began.

²⁶When Egypt began to feel the famine, Joseph opened his storehouses and sold grain to the Egyptians. ²⁷Other nations also came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph for the famine was severe all over the world.

28

Joseph’s brothers come to Egypt to buy grain

¹When Israel heard that there was grain in Egypt he said to his sons, “Go down to Egypt and buy grain for us lest we die.”

²So ten of Joseph’s brothers went to buy grain. Israel did not send Benjamin, Joseph’s younger brother for he was afraid that harm might come to him.

The brothers do not recognise Joseph

³Now Joseph was vizier* of Egypt and sold to all the people. Therefore when his brothers arrived they bowed down before him and did not recognise him.

Joseph pretends to be a stranger and treats his brothers harshly

⁴Joseph however recognised them and remembered his dreams about them. But he pretended to be a stranger and spoke harshly to them. ⁵“Where do you come from?” he demanded.

They replied, “From the land of Canaan, to buy food.”

⁶Joseph said, “You are spies!”

⁷They answered, “No my lord. Your servants have come to buy food. We are honest men not spies. We are twelve brothers, the youngest is still with our father, and one is no more.”

Joseph imprisons his brothers

⁸But Joseph said to them, “You will remain in prison until your words are tested for truth.” And he imprisoned them all.

⁹After three days he came to them and said, “Do this and you will live. Let one of your brothers remain here in prison while the rest of you take grain back to your households.”

Joseph orders that his younger brother Benjamin be brought to Egypt

¹⁰“But you must bring your youngest brother to me that your words may be verified, and you not die.”

Joseph weeps in secret

¹¹His brothers said to one another, “Surely we are being punished because of our brother. We saw how distressed he was when he pleaded with us for his life, but we did not listen.”

¹²Reuben said, “I told you not to sin against the boy. Now we must give an accounting for his blood.”

¹³They did not realise that Joseph could understand them, for he was using an interpreter. On hearing these words he turned away from them and wept, but soon turned back and spoke again.

Simeon chosen to remain in prison

¹⁴Joseph chose Simeon to remain behind in prison, and had him bound before their eyes.

Joseph hides each brother’s silver in his grain sack and then sends them home

¹⁵Then Joseph gave orders to fill their sacks with grain and to put each man’s silver back in his sack. After this was done the brothers loaded the grain on their donkeys and departed.

One brother finds his silver and all their hearts sink

¹⁶When they stopped for the night, one of them opened his sack to get feed for his donkey and discovered his silver in the mouth of the sack.

¹⁷Their hearts sank and they looked at each other trembling and said, “What is this that God has done to us?”

The brothers return home and are dismayed to find all of the silver in their sacks

¹⁸They returned to their father and emptied their sacks, and there in each man’s sack was his pouch of silver. They were all dismayed and told their father all that had happened in Egypt.

Israel is distressed over what has happened

¹⁹Israel said to them, “You have deprived me of my children. Joseph is no more, Simeon is no more, and now you want to take Benjamin. Everything is against me.”

²⁰Reuben said to his father, “You may put both my sons to death if I do not bring Benjamin back to you.”

²¹But Israel said, “My son will not go with you. His brother is dead and he is the only one left. If harm should come to him on the journey you

*3 The position of vizier is similar to that of Prime Minister under a Monarchy.

GENESIS 29

would send my grey head down to Sheol in sorrow.”

The grain is soon all eaten

²²Now the famine was still severe. When they had eaten the grain their father said to them, “Go back and buy more.”

Israel reluctant to let his son Benjamin go

²³But Judah replied, “The man said, ‘You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.’”

²⁴His father said, “Why did you bring this trouble on me by telling the man you had another brother?”

²⁵They replied, “The man questioned us closely about our family. How were we to know he would say, ‘Bring your brother down here?’”

Judah urges his father to agree

²⁶Judah said to his father, “Send the boy with me and we will go at once, that we not all die. I will guarantee his safety. ²⁷As it is, if we had not delayed we could have gone and returned twice.”

Israel relents and instructs his sons to return the silver and also to take gifts

²⁸Israel said to them, “If it must be so then do this. Take some of the best products of the land in your bags and give them to the man as gifts. ²⁹A little balm, honey, spices and myrrh, some pistachio nuts and almonds. ³⁰Take double the amount of silver with you, for you must return the silver that was put back into your sacks.

³¹Take Benjamin also and go at once. May God Almighty grant you mercy before the man so that he will let Simeon and Benjamin come back with you. ³²As for me, if I am bereaved I am bereaved.”

The brothers return to Egypt with Benjamin

³³So the brothers quickly returned to Egypt and presented themselves before Joseph.

29

Joseph orders his brothers taken to his house

¹When Joseph saw that Benjamin was with them, he said to his steward, “Take these men to my house. I will eat with them at noon.”

The brothers fearfully await Joseph’s coming at noon

²Now the brothers feared when they were taken to Joseph’s house. They thought, “We were brought here because of the silver that was put back into our sacks. He wants to seize us as slaves and steal our donkeys.”

³They said to Joseph’s steward, “We do not know who put the silver back in our sacks.”

⁴The steward replied, “I received your silver,” and he brought Simeon out to them. Then he gave them water to wash their feet and fodder for their donkeys.

⁵So they prepared their gifts and anxiously awaited Joseph’s arrival at noon.

Joseph weeps again in private then seats his brothers in order of birth

⁶When Joseph came they presented him the gifts they had brought and bowed down to the ground.

⁷Joseph asked, “How is your aged father?”

They replied, “Your servant our father is still alive and well,” and bowed again to pay him honour.

⁸Deeply moved at the sight of his brother Benjamin, Joseph hastened to his private room and wept. After composing himself, he washed his face and came back out again. ⁹“Serve the food,” he ordered. Then he seated his brothers by age, from firstborn to youngest.

Benjamin’s food portion five times greater

¹⁰The brothers looked at each other in astonishment. And when the food was served, Benjamin’s portion was five times as much as anyone else.

¹¹Joseph ate alone for Egyptians do not eat with Hebrews.

Joseph’s silver cup is hidden in Benjamin’s sack

¹²Afterwards Joseph said to his steward, “Fill the men’s sacks with as much grain as they can carry and put each man’s silver in the mouth of his sack. ¹³Also put my silver cup in the sack of the youngest.”

The brothers depart for home but Joseph’s steward is sent after them to accuse them of theft

¹⁴The next morning the brothers were sent on their way with their donkeys.

¹⁵They had not gone far from the city when Joseph said to his steward, “Go after those men at once and say to them, ‘Why have you repaid good with evil? Why have you stolen the cup my master drinks from and uses for divination?’”

¹⁶When the steward caught up with the brothers he repeated these words to them. But they said to him, “Why does my lord speak such words? ¹⁷Far be it from your servants to do such a thing. Did we not return the silver we found inside our sacks. Why would we steal from your master’s house?”

¹⁸“If one of us is found with the cup he shall die and the rest of us will become my lord’s slaves.”

The cup is found in Benjamin’s sack and the brothers return to Joseph’s house

¹⁹So the steward proceeded to search, beginning with the oldest and the cup was found in Benjamin’s sack. ²⁰At this the brothers tore their clothes in anguish. Then they reloaded their donkeys and returned to the city.

Judah offers himself in place of Benjamin

²¹Joseph was still in his house when they came. They threw themselves to the ground before him.

²²Judah pleaded with him saying, “What can we say my lord? How can we prove our innocence? God has uncovered our guilt. We are now your slaves.”

²³Joseph said, “Only the man who was found to have the cup will become my slave. The rest of you return to your father in peace.”

²⁴But Judah went up to him and said, “Please my lord, if the boy is not with us when we return, my father will die. Your servant guaranteed the boy’s safety. ²⁵Let me remain here as my lord’s slave in place of the boy. Let me not see the misery that would come upon my father.”

Joseph weeps out loud and reveals his identity

²⁶At these words Joseph could no longer control himself. “Leave my presence!” he commanded his Egyptian attendants. But he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him.

²⁷Then Joseph cried out to his brothers, “I am Joseph!”

²⁸His brothers could not say a word, so fearful were they in his presence.

²⁹But Joseph said to them, “Come close to me.” When they had done so he said, “Be not distressed for selling me here. It was not you who sent me, but God. ³⁰He has made me vizieer of all Egypt to save lives.”

Joseph weeps with and kisses all his brothers

³¹Then he threw his arms around Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him weeping also. Joseph kissed all his brothers and wept over them.

Joseph sends a message for his father’s household to come and live in Egypt

³²Then he said, “Now return and say to my father, ‘Your son Joseph says, “God has made me vizieer of all Egypt. Come down to me. You, your children, your grandchildren, your flocks and herds, all that are with you. ³³I will provide for you here, for five more years of famine are still to come.”’

Pharaoh offers the best land in Egypt for Joseph’s father’s family

³⁴When the news reached Pharaoh’s palace that Joseph’s brothers had come, Pharaoh and his officials were pleased. ³⁵Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Bring your father’s family to me and I will give them the best land of Egypt.”

Joseph’s brothers return home with donkeys, carts and gifts

³⁶Joseph gave his brothers carts and provisions for their journey. He also gave them each a set of clothes. But to Benjamin he gave 300 shekels of silver and five sets of clothes.

³⁷To his father he sent 20 donkeys loaded with the best things of Egypt.

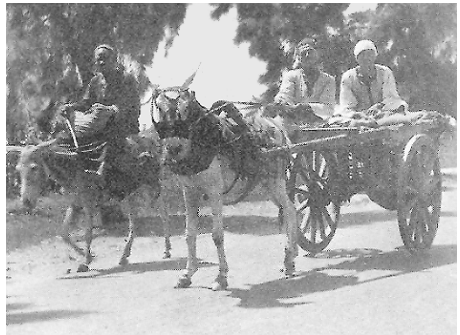
³⁸As his brothers were leaving he said to them, “Do not quarrel on the way.”

³⁹So Joseph’s brothers left Egypt and returned to their father in the land of Canaan.

Israel is overwhelmed at the news that Joseph is alive

⁴⁰When their father Israel was told, “Joseph is alive! He is vizieer of all Egypt!” he was overwhelmed and could not believe them.

⁴¹But when he saw the carts that Joseph had sent to carry him back he said, “I believe! My son Joseph is alive! I will go and see him before I die.”



Egyptian carts.

30

Israel and all his household set out for Egypt

¹So Israel set out for Egypt with all his sons and grandsons, and his daughters and granddaughters. He and the women and children rode in the wagons that Pharaoh had provided.

²The number of his direct descendants, not counting the wives of his sons, and with Joseph’s two sons was 70.

God appears to Israel

³When Israel reached Beersheba he offered a sacrifice. Then God appeared to him in a vision at night and said, “**Fear not to go down to Egypt, for I shall make you into a great nation there and will bring you back again.**

⁴**Joseph’s own hand will close your eyes in death.”**

Joseph is reunited with his father Israel

⁵When Joseph heard that his father was coming he ordered his chariot made ready and went out to meet him. He threw his arms around his father and wept for a long time.

⁶Israel said to his son, “Now I am ready to die.”

Joseph presents his family to Pharaoh

⁷Then Joseph said to his family, “I will now go before Pharaoh and say to him, ‘My father’s family have come to me.’”

⁸“When Pharaoh calls you in and asks, ‘What is your occupation?’ you should answer, ‘Your servants are shepherds, just as our fathers were.’ ⁹He will then allow you to settle in the district of Goshen, for shepherds work is disliked by the Egyptians.”

¹⁰Joseph chose five of his brothers and presented them before Pharaoh.

¹¹When Pharaoh heard that they were shepherds he said to Joseph, “The land of Egypt is before you. Settle your family in the best part of the land, in the district of Goshen.

GENESIS 31

¹²If there are any especially able among them, put them in charge of my own flocks.”

Israel blesses Pharaoh

¹³Then Joseph brought in his father Israel and presented him before Pharaoh. Pharaoh said to him, “What is your age?”

¹⁴Israel answered, “The years of my life have been 130. Difficult they have been and they do not equal the years of my fathers.”^{F*}

¹⁵Israel then blessed Pharaoh and went out from his presence.

The Israelites settle in Goshen

¹⁶So Joseph gave to his father and brothers land from among the best in Goshen.

Joseph buys up all of Egypt

¹⁷Now there was little food in the whole region because of the severity of the famine, and Egypt and Canaan wasted away.

¹⁸Joseph eventually collected all the silver that was to be found in Egypt and Canaan, in payment for grain and brought it to Pharaoh.

¹⁹When their silver was gone the people of Egypt came to Joseph and said, “Our silver is all gone.”

²⁰Joseph said, “Then bring your livestock. I will exchange food for your animals.” So Joseph exchanged food for their horses, cattle, donkeys, sheep and goats.

²¹They came to him the following year and said, “There is nothing left for our lord except our bodies and our land.

²²So Joseph bought up all the land in Egypt and the land became Pharaoh’s. ²³However he did not buy the land of the priests for they received a regular allowance of food from Pharaoh.

Pharaoh’s land rented back to the people in return for a fifth of the crops

²⁴Joseph then said to the people, “Now that I have bought you and your land for Pharaoh, here is seed for you to plant. But when the crop is harvested you must give one fifth of it to Pharaoh.

31

Israel asks Joseph to bury him back in Canaan

¹Meanwhile the Israelites in Goshen were fruitful and increased greatly in number.

²Israel lived in Egypt seventeen years and the time drew near for him to die.

³He called for his son Joseph and said to him, “Put your hand under my thigh and swear to me, that when I am gathered to my fathers you will carry me up out of Egypt and bury me in the cave in the field of Ephron the Hittite, where Abraham and his wife Sarah, and Isaac and his wife Rebekah are buried, and where I buried my wife Leah.”

⁴Joseph said, “I will do as you say.”

*14 Israel’s father Isaac lived to the age of 180, and his grand-father Abraham to 175. Israel himself eventually died aged 147.

Israel adopts Joseph’s two eldest sons Manasseh and Ephraim

⁵Israel was 147 years old when Joseph was told, “Your father is dying.” So he went to him taking with him his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim.



Goshen in Egypt where Joseph settled his family.

⁶Israel gathered his strength and sat up on his bed and said to Joseph, “God Almighty appeared to me at Bethel and blessed me, and said, ‘I will make of you many nations, and will give this land to your descendants forever.’ ⁷Now then, your two sons Ephraim and Manasseh are to be mine, just as Reuben and Simeon are mine. Any children born to you after them will be yours. Bring them to me that I may bless them.”^{F*}

Israel crosses his arms and blesses Ephraim to be greater than Manasseh

⁸Now Israel’s eyes were failing because of old age. Joseph brought his sons close to him and his father kissed them and embraced them.

⁹Then as Joseph bowed down, Israel reached out his right hand and put it on Ephraim’s head, though he was the younger, and crossing his arms put his left hand on Manasseh’s head.

¹⁰Seeing this, Joseph took hold of his father’s right hand to move it and said, “No father, Manasseh is the firstborn, put your right hand on his head.”

¹¹But his father refused saying, “I know my son, I know. He too will become a great nation, but his younger brother Ephraim will be greater than he. His descendants will become many nations.”^{F*}

Ephraim and Manasseh’s blessing

¹²Then Israel blessed them saying: “*May the God before whom Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all the days of my life, bless these boys.*”

*7 Reuben and Simeon were Israel’s first born sons. The first born son normally inherited a double share of his father’s inheritance and other privileges, however, because Reuben committed adultery he lost his superior rights as first born, as also did Israel’s second and third born sons because of their violent natures (see following verses 17-20). The birthright privilege was therefore bestowed instead upon Joseph and his son Ephraim (verses 10-11, 30-34), and also in this instance, a blessing of royalty upon Judah and his descendants (verses 21-22).

*11 Ephraim’s descendants became one of the two dominant tribes of Israel, (the other being Judah) and made up a large portion of the so called lost tribes of Israel, who are believed to have populated northern European countries after being exiled from northern Israel by the Assyrians in 722 BC.

13 *"May they be called after my name and the names of my fathers. May they increase greatly upon the earth, and my descendants pronounce this blessing: 'May God make you as Ephraim and Manasseh."*

Israel gives Joseph the town of Shechem

14 Then Israel said to Joseph, "I am about to die, but God will be with you, and will return you again to the land of your fathers."

15 "Now to you as one who is over your brothers, I give you Shechem, which was taken from the Canaanites by sword."

Israel blesses the twelve tribes of Israel

16 Then Israel called for his other sons and said to them, "Gather together that I may tell you what shall befall you in days to come. Listen O sons of Jacob, hear your father Israel.

Reuben's blessing, loses birthright

17 *"Reuben, my firstborn, my might, first fruit of my strength, excelling in honour, excelling in power, yet unstable as the sea."*

18 *"No longer will you excel, for you defiled your father's bed."*^{F*}

Simeon and Levi's blessing

19 *"Simeon and Levi are brothers of violence. My spirit will not unite with them, for they have killed men in their anger,^{F*} and hamstrung^{F*} oxen as they pleased."*

20 *"Cursed be their fierce anger and cruelty. I will disperse them in Israel."*

Judah's blessing

21 *"Judah, your brothers will honour you and bow down to you. You will control your enemies. Judah is a lion, who dares arouse him?"*

22 *"The sceptre will not depart from Judah until Messiah^{F*} comes, to whom it belongs."*

23 *"Judah will tether his donkeys to choice vines and wash his clothes in the juice of grapes. His eyes shall be darkened by wine and his teeth made white by milk."*

Zebulun's blessing

24 *"Zebulun shall dwell by the sea and become a haven for ships, with his border at Sidon."*

Issachar's blessing

25 *"Issachar is a strong donkey, lying down between two saddlebags. When he sees how pleasant is the land of his resting place, he will bend his back to the burden and willingly serve his masters."*

Dan's blessing

26 *"Dan will provide justice for his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. He shall be like a serpent by the roadside that bites the*

horse's heels, so that its rider tumbles backward."

God's blessing

27 *"God shall be attacked by raiders, but he will attack them at their heels."*

Asher's blessing

28 *"Asher's land will be rich in food. He will provide delicacies fit for a king."*

Naphtali's blessing

29 *"Naphtali is a doe set free, that bears beautiful fawns."*

Joseph's blessing

30 *"Joseph is a fruitful vine, near a spring, whose branches climb over a wall."*

31 *"Fierce enemies attack him, but his arm is made strong by the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel."*

32 *"God Almighty will bless him with the blessings of the heavens above and the earth beneath, blessings of the breast and womb."*

33 *"My blessing is added to the blessings of my fathers before me, and shall not cease, until He comes whom the everlasting hills await."*

34 *"Let all these blessings rest upon the head of Joseph, the prince among his brothers."*

Benjamin's blessing

35 *"Benjamin is a ravenous wolf, who devours his prey."*

Israel dies and is embalmed

36 Then Israel breathed his last and was gathered to his fathers. Joseph threw himself upon his father and wept over him, and kissed him. **37** Then he directed the physicians in his service to embalm his father.

Israel taken back to Canaan for burial

38 When the days of mourning had passed Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Go bury your father in the land of Canaan as he made you swear an oath to do."

39 So Joseph and his brothers journeyed to Canaan to bury their father. All of Pharaoh's officials accompanied them, with chariots and horsemen.

Joseph's brothers fear him and ask forgiveness

40 After they had returned, Joseph's brothers said among themselves, "What if Joseph now punishes us for all the wrong we did to him?"

41 So they sent word to Joseph saying, "Your father gave us this instruction before he died. 'Say to Joseph, 'Forgive your brothers their wrong in treating you so badly.'"

Joseph weeps and consoles his brothers

42 When this message came to him, Joseph wept. Then his brothers came and threw themselves down before him and said, "We are your servants."

43 But Joseph said to them, "Am I God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for

*18 Reuben committed adultery with Bilhah, one of his father's concubines. See Genesis 23:26.

*19 Simeon and Levi killed all the men of Shechem. See Genesis 23:13.

*19 To hamstring an animal is to cripple it by cutting the leg tendons so that it can walk only slowly and with difficulty.

*22 Messiah (or Shiloh) is the Hebrew term for the Christ.

GENESIS 31

good. So fear not, I will provide for you and your children,” and he spoke kindly to them.

Joseph dies aged 110 years and is embalmed

⁴⁴Joseph remained in Egypt, and saw the third generation of his children.

⁴⁵Then Joseph said to his people, “I am about to die, but God will come to your aid, and shall lead you up out of this land to the land he

promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”

⁶Joseph made them swear an oath and said, “When that time comes, you must carry my bones up with you.”

⁴⁷Then Joseph died, aged 110 years. They embalmed his body and kept it in a coffin in Egypt.

EXODUS

This book continues the story of Jacob's descendants who settled in Egypt while Joseph was vizier. They now refer to themselves as Israelites, following Jacob's name change (Genesis 22:16), but are known to the Egyptians as Hebrews, meaning 'from beyond' (the Euphrates river).

It is now about 400 years since Jacob moved his family to Egypt and the Israelites have increased rapidly to a nation of over two million people, and as prophesied by the Lord to Abraham (Genesis 10:11) they have become slaves to the Egyptians.

However an 80 year old Israelite fugitive named Moses, raised by Pharaoh's daughter is called by the Lord from a burning bush to lead the enslaved Israelites out of Egypt back to the promised land of Canaan, hence the name of the book Exodus which is a Greek word meaning 'going out.'

This book is full of interest and drama. There are confrontations with the hard-hearted Pharaoh, ten plagues, the parting of the sea, miraculous manna from heaven, the mighty voice of Jehovah thundering ten commandments from the heights of Mount Horeb or Sinai, the building of a transportable Temple known as the Tabernacle and the ordaining of Aaron and his four sons as priests.

In addition to the ten commandments spoken by the voice of Lord, which were more of an overview, Moses received about a hundred more detailed commandments. These are listed in chapters 12 through to 14 and have been grouped under appropriate subject headings such as love, marriage, sexual immorality, the occult, etc. These commandments, along with many others covering sacrifices and feast days became known as the Law.

In the following book of Deuteronomy, Moses clarified many of these commandments and added several more.

AUTHOR

Moses (see Deuteronomy 9:1), but with clarifications by later Israelite prophets.

"Moses stretched his staff over the sea and all that night the Lord drove the sea back with a strong east wind, and turned the sea bed into dry land as the Israelites passed through." Exodus 7:23.

CONTENTS

	Chapter		
Egyptians begin to fear the Israelites	1	Moses asks Lord his name	2
Israelites made slaves in Egypt	1	Moses told what to say to Pharaoh	2
Midwives told to kill Israelite boy babies	1	Egyptians to be struck with wonders	2
Midwives fear God and do not do so	1	Pharaoh's firstborn son to die	2
Midwives blessed with families of their own	1	Israelites will not leave Egypt empty-handed	2
Pharaoh orders Israelite baby boys drowned at birth... 1	1	Miraculous signs given Moses to prove authority	2
Moses born and hidden among the Nile weeds	1	Moses complains he lacks eloquence	2
Pharaoh's daughter discovers Moses	1	Lord becomes angry with Moses	2
Moses adopted by Pharaoh's daughter	1	Moses' brother Aaron can speak for him	2
Moses natural mother paid to nurse him	1	Moses meets his brother Aaron	2
Moses returned to Pharaoh's daughter when weaned 1	1	Moses now eighty years old	2
Moses sees Egyptian beating an Israelite	1	Moses returns to Egypt with his wife and two sons ... 3	3
Moses kills the Egyptian	1	Zipporah circumcises her son to save Moses' life ... 3	3
Flees to Midian	1	Moses and Aaron meet with the elders of Israel	3
Moses assists daughters of Jethro a priest	1	First meeting with Pharaoh	3
Moses marries Zipporah daughter of Jethro	1	Pharaoh rejects Moses and Aaron	3
Israelites begin to groan in their slavery	2	Israelites ordered to gather own straw	3
Lord appears to Moses in a burning bush	2	Israelite foremen appeal to Pharaoh	3
Moses called to lead Israelites out of Egypt	2	Moses complains to the Lord	3
Moses feels inadequate	2	Lord reaffirms he will free the Israelites	3
Lord reassures Moses	2	Aaron's staff turns into a snake	4
Moses to bring Israelites to Mount Horeb.....	2	Egyptian sorcerers also turn staffs into snakes	4

EXODUS 31

First plague – water turned to blood	4	Jehovah the Lord who heals diseases	9
Egyptian sorcerers also turn water to blood	4	Israelites camp at Elim oasis	9
Egyptians dig for their drinking water	4	Israelites set out and enter desert of Sin	9
Second plague – frogs	4	People complain for food	9
Pharaoh agrees to free Israel if the frogs die	4	Quail fly into camp that evening	9
Frogs die but Pharaoh hardens his heart	4	Next morning thin flakes cover the ground	9
Third plague – biting lice	4	Bread not to be kept overnight	9
Sorcerers fail to produce lice	4	No bread to be found on Sabbath day	9
Fourth plague – dense swarms of flies	4	Some go out to gather on Sabbath	9
Pharaoh agrees to let Israelites go to sacrifice	4	Bread called manna	9
Flies depart but Pharaoh hardens his heart	4	Taste and appearance of manna described	9
Fifth plague – Egyptian animals die	4	Some manna to be kept to show future generations	9
Sixth plague – festering boils	4	People complain for water	10
Sorcerers also afflicted with boils	4	Water flows from a rock at Horeb	10
Pharaoh warned of full force plagues to come	4	The place of rebellion called Massah	10
Pharaoh's life preserved to show Jehovah's power	4	Amalekites attack Israel	10
Seventh plague – heavy hail to fall	4	Israelites go to battle	10
Egyptians warned to shelter all animals	4	Israel prevails as long as Moses holds up staff	10
Severe hail storms destroy men, animals, crops	4	Israelites defeat Amalekites	10
Pharaoh again hardens his heart	4	Amalekites to be blotted out	10
Purpose of plagues	5	Lord spoke with Moses face to face	10
Eighth plague – locusts to come	5	Moses' assistant Joshua did not leave tent	10
Pharaoh's officials plead with him	5	Moses' father-in-law Jethro comes to visit	10
Israelite men only permitted to go	5	Jethro praises Jehovah and offers sacrifice	10
Severe plague of locusts invade Egypt	5	Jethro advises Moses to delegate	10
Pharaoh repents but hardens heart again	5	Israelites arrive at Mount Horeb/Sinai.....	11
Ninth plague – three days of thick darkness	5	Israelites will be a chosen people if obedient	11
Israelites can go but not their animals	5	Israelites to purify themselves	11
Pharaoh orders Moses out of his sight	5	Access boundary to mountain to be marked out	11
Tenth plague – first born males to die	5	Smoke, thunder, lightning and quaking from Horeb	11
Moses prophesies Pharaoh's officials will bow to him	5	Very loud trumpet blast sounds	11
Moses angrily leaves Pharaoh's presence	5	Moses leads people to foot of mountain	11
Passover feast and lamb	6	Lord speaks in voice of thunder	11
Lamb to be slaughtered at twilight	6	People warned not to break through boundary.....	11
Blood to be sprinkled on door frames	6	Ten Commandments spoken by Lord	11
Meat to be roasted with bitter herbs	6	All Israelites hear voice of Jehovah	11
None of lamb's bones to be broken	6	The Ten Commandments	11
Passover meal to be eaten in haste	6	The people tremble in fear at the Lord's voice	12
Meal also to be eaten in readiness for travel	6	People afraid they will die	12
Every firstborn male in Egypt to die	6	They ask Moses to relay commandments	12
Lord to pass over houses with lamb's blood on door	6	Moses receives other commandments	12
At midnight all firstborn males of Egypt die	6	Commandments on love	12
Loud wailing heard during night	6	Commandments on altars	12
Pharaoh commands Israelites to leave	6	Commandments on idolatry	12
Egyptians give silver, gold and clothing	6	Commandments on offerings, first fruits and tithes	12
Exodus of the Israelites	6	Commandments on the occult	12
They take with them the bones of Joseph	6	Commandments on the Sabbath	12
Passover to be celebrated each year	7	Commandments on festivals	12
Feast of Unleavened Bread	7	Commandments on age and authority	13
No uncircumcised male permitted to eat the bread	7	Commandments on physical injury	13
No yeast to be eaten during Passover week	7	Commandments on marriage	13
No work on first and last day of Passover week	7	Commandments on sexual immorality	13
All Israel must celebrate Passover	7	Sexual immorality defiles the land	13
All firstborn males now belong to Lord	7	Commandments on animals and property	14
Firstborn donkeys and men to be redeemed	7	Commandments on restitution	14
Jehovah leads Israelites in a pillar of cloud	7	Commandments on justice	14
Israelites told to turn aside to deceive Pharaoh	7	Commandments on slavery	14
Pharaoh pursues Israelites with his army	7	Commandments on food	14
Israelites are terrified	7	Commandments on breeding and sowing	14
Moses tells Israelites to stand firm	7	Commandment on clothing	14
The Red Sea parts	7	Moses to take Aaron and two sons up to Lord.....	15
Israelites pass through during the night	7	70 elders of Israel also to be taken up	15
Egyptians follow but chariot wheels get clogged	7	Moses writes down all commandments	15
Sea flows back over Egyptian army	7	Moses builds an altar and offers sacrifice	15
Drowned Egyptians washed up on shore	8	Moses reads out all commandments	15
Israelites sing and dance to the Lord	8	The Israelites covenant to obey them	15
Miriam leads women in singing and dancing	8	Aaron and his sons and 70 elders see Lord	15
Bitter water at Marah purified by a tree	9	Moses and Joshua go back up mountain	15

Lord to give Law on tablets of stone.....	15	If daily offerings made Lord will dwell among Israel ...	18
How the mountain looked to people below	16	The Sabbath sacrifice	18
Moses and Joshua stay 40 days with Lord	15	The monthly sacrifice	18
Materials to be donated to make a Tabernacle	16	Priest's prayer of blessing	18
The Tabernacle frame	16	Tax for care of Tabernacle	18
Interior curtains of fine linen	16	Craftsmen given skill to make Tabernacle	18
Outer curtains of woven goat hair	16	Moses given Law on two tablets of stone	18
Exterior to be covered with tanned skins	16	Israelites below ask Aaron to make them a god	19
The entrance curtain	16	Aaron makes a golden calf	19
The Ark	16	Israelites offer idolatrous sacrifice	19
The carrying poles of the Ark	16	The people indulge in merriment	19
Solid gold lid with winged angels to cover Ark	16	Lord angry, to destroy Israelites	19
Stone tablets of the Law to be kept in Ark	16	Moses pleads for lives of his people	19
Lord to appear to Moses above the Ark	16	Lord relents	19
Veil to screen Most Holy Place	16	Moses and Joshua go back down mountain	19
Seven branched gold lampstand	16	Moses' anger burns hot when he sees the calf	19
Seven gold oil lamps for stand	16	Smashes stone tablets	19
Lamps to burn every night until morning	16	Moses grinds up calf and scatters it on water	19
Table and carrying poles	16	Israelites made to drink the water	19
Jugs and bowls of gold	16	Moses angry with Aaron	19
Altar of incense and its carrying poles	16	Moses summons all who will follow Jehovah	19
Incense to be burned as lamps are tended	16	His fellow Levites kill about 3000 rebellious men ...	19
Outer courtyard	16	Tribe of Levi now set apart to Lord	19
Bronze altar for burnt offerings	16	Moses attempts to atone for people's sin	20
Bronze altar utensils	16	Guilty to be punished on day of judgement	20
Bronze washing basin for the priests	16	Lord no longer to accompany Israel	20
Perfumed anointing oil	16	Angel of Lord to lead the people instead	20
Fragrant incense	16	Canaanites to be completely destroyed	20
Aaron and his four sons to be priests	17	Health and long life promised if Israelites obedient ...	20
Priestly garments to be made	17	Canaanites to be destroyed little by little	20
Ephod for high priest	17	Boundaries of the promised land	20
Engraved stones for shoulder pieces	17	Israel mourns that Lord will not go with them	20
Breastplate of precious stones	17	Moses pleads with Lord to accompany them	20
Urim and Thummim	17	Lord agrees to do so for Moses' sake	20
The high priest's robe	17	Moses asks to see full glory of Lord	21
Tunic, turban and sash	17	Moses only able to endure back view of Lord	21
Aaron's sons'-garments	17	Moses told to make two new stone tablets	21
Priests to be anointed and purified	18	Moses sees glory of Jehovah	21
The anointing of priests	18	Jehovah proclaims his name	21
The purification of priests	18	Face of Moses shines	21
Purification of priestly garments	18	Moses veils his face	21
Wave offering	18	Israelites bring materials for Tabernacle	21
Breast and thigh of offered rams belong to priests	18	Lord commands Tabernacle to be erected	21
Sacrificed food to be eaten at Tabernacle	18	Moses erects and anoints the Tabernacle	21
Ordaining of priests to last seven days	18	Aaron and his sons consecrated as priests	21
The daily sacrifice	18	Glory of Lord fills Tabernacle	21

Bold The Lord or an angel speaking.
Bold italics A prophet speaking under inspiration.

1

The Egyptians begin to fear the rapidly increasing Israelites and make them slaves

¹A new Pharaoh who did not know Joseph came to power in Egypt. ²He said to his people, "The Israelites are becoming too numerous for us, we must deal shrewdly with them or in a time of war they may join our enemies and fight against us."

³So the Egyptians placed slave masters over

the Israelites and forced them to build cities. But the more the Israelites were oppressed the more they multiplied.

⁴At this the Egyptians began to fear the Israelites, and became ruthless and made their lives bitter with hard labour in bricks and mortar and in the fields.

EXODUS 1

Midwives ordered by Pharaoh to kill Israelite boy babies

⁵Then Pharaoh said to the two midwives who assisted the Israelite women, “When you attend the Hebrew^{F*} women in childbirth and see that it is a boy, kill him.

The midwives fear God and do not do so

⁶But the midwives feared God, and did not do as he asked. ⁷When the king summoned them and demanded, “Why have you let the boys live?” they answered, “Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women, they are vigorous and give birth before we arrive.”

The midwives blessed with families of their own

⁸So God blessed the midwives and gave them families of their own.

Pharaoh orders every Israelite baby boy to be drowned in the Nile at birth

⁹Then Pharaoh issued this decree, “Every boy born to the Hebrews is to be thrown in the Nile.”

Moses is born and hidden in a basket among the weeds

¹⁰Now an Israelite of the tribe of Levi married a Levite woman who bore a fine son. ¹¹She hid him for three months, but when she could not hide him any longer she laid him in a tar-coated papyrus basket and put it among the weeds along the bank of the Nile. ¹²The baby’s sister Miriam stood at a distance to see what would happen to him.

Pharaoh’s daughter discovers Moses

¹³Pharaoh’s daughter came down with her attendants to bathe in the Nile. She saw the basket as she walked along the bank and sent her slave girl to get it.

¹⁴When Pharaoh’s daughter opened it she saw the baby who was crying and felt sorry for him. She said, “This is one of the Hebrew babies.”

Pharaoh’s daughter adopts Moses and pays his natural mother to nurse him for her

¹⁵Then Miriam ran up to Pharaoh’s daughter and said, “Shall I get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?”

¹⁶She answered, “Yes, go,” and the girl went and brought her mother.

¹⁷Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Take this baby and nurse him for me and I will pay you.”

¹⁸So the mother took back her baby and nursed him.

Moses given to Pharaoh’s daughter when weaned

¹⁹However when the child was weaned she gave him back to Pharaoh’s daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses.^{F*}

Moses grows up and one day sees an Egyptian beating an Israelite

²⁰One day when Moses had grown up,^{F*} he walked among his own people watching them at their hard labour and saw an Egyptian beating one of them.

Moses kills the Egyptian

²¹Seeing no one else around, Moses killed the Egyptian^{F*} and buried him in the sand.

²²The next day Moses came across two Israelites fighting, so he said to the one in the wrong, “Why are you striking your fellow Israelite?”

²³The man answered, “Who made you a judge over us? Are you intending to kill me like you killed the Egyptian yesterday?”

²⁴When Moses heard this he feared and thought, “What I did must be known.”

Moses flees from Pharaoh to Midian

²⁵Pharaoh heard what Moses had done and attempted to put him to death, but Moses fled to Midian.^{F*} When he arrived he rested by a well.



Women bathing on the banks of the Nile.

Moses assists the daughters of Jethro a priest of Midian to water their father’s flock

²⁶As he sat there, seven daughters of Jethro, a priest of Midian came to water their father’s flock, but some shepherds drove them away.

²⁷Moses rose to their defence and watered the flock for them.

²⁸When the girls returned to their father and told him what happened he said, “Why did you leave him out there? Invite him back here to eat.”

Moses marries Zipporah, a daughter of Jethro the priest

²⁹They did so and Moses agreed to stay with Jethro, who gave him his daughter Zipporah in marriage. ³⁰So Moses became a shepherd for his father-in-law Jethro the priest of Midian.

*5 The Israelites were often referred to as Hebrews by non-Israelites meaning ‘from beyond’ (the Euphrates river).

*19 Moses is a common Egyptian name meaning ‘boy son.’ The Pharaoh at the time was named Ahmoses and the co-regent Thutmoses. It was Thutmoses’ daughter Neferu who adopted Moses. Thutmoses became Pharaoh about 12 years later.

*20 Moses was now about 40 years old (Acts 6:28).

*21 According to Jewish historians Moses at this time served as a general in the Egyptian army. There is also an empty unfinished royal tomb in the 18th family dynasty (tomb 353) believed intended for Moses under the name Thutmoses.

*25 A town and general region in Arabia on the eastern side of the Gulf of Aqaba arm of Red Sea.

2

The Israelites in Egypt begin to groan in their slavery

¹After a long time, the Israelites in Egypt groaned in their slavery and cried out to God for help. God heard their pleading and remembered his covenant with Abraham.

The Lord appears to Moses in a burning bush near Mount Horeb (Sinai)

²One day when Moses had led his flock to the far side of the desert near Mount Horeb, he saw a bush that appeared to be blazing, but did not burn up. He thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight."

³When he got near, the angel of Jehovah called to him from within the bush and said, "**Moses! Moses! Do not come any closer. Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground.**"

⁴Then he said, "**I am the God of your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.**" ⁵At these words Moses hid his face, afraid to look at God.^{F*}

Moses called to lead the Israelites out of Egypt to the promised land

⁶"I have seen the misery of the Israelites in Egypt and have heard them crying out and I have come down to rescue them and bring them into a good and spacious land. ⁷Into a land flowing with milk and honey, the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites."

⁸"Now go, I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people out of Egypt. The men who wanted to kill you are dead."

Moses feels inadequate

⁹Moses said to God, "Who am I to go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"

The Lord reassures Moses and tells him to bring the Israelites here to Mount Horeb

¹⁰God said, "**I will be with you. When you have brought the people out of Egypt, bring them here to worship God at this mountain.**"^{F*}

Moses asks the Lord his name

¹¹But Moses said to God, "If I say to the Israelites, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' What do I tell them?"

¹²The Lord replied, "**I am to be Jehovah.**"^{F*} ¹³**Therefore you shall say to the Israelites: Jehovah, the God of your fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob has sent me to you. This is the name by which I am to be remembered forever.**"

^{*5} The New Testament reveals that the angel who appeared to Moses in the bush, and also on numerous subsequent occasions was the pre-mortal Jesus Christ, speaking in the name and authority of Jehovah. See also Genesis 1:14 and note. For a fuller explanation see note on John 1:8.

^{*10} ie Mount Horeb also known as Mount Sinai.

^{*12} Jehovah means 'Eternal or 'Self-existent.' The Lord in the bush connected the verb 'hayay' ('to be') to the name Jehovah. The angel speaking is the pre-mortal Jesus Christ who was to come to earth in the name of his father Jehovah. Traditional Bibles usually translate verse 12 as "I Am who I Am."

Moses told what to say to Pharaoh

¹⁴"Now assemble the elders of Israel and repeat all the words I have spoken to you. ¹⁵Then you are to go before Pharaoh king of Egypt and say to him, 'Jehovah the God of the Hebrews has met with us. Allow us to take a three-day journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to our God.'"

The Egyptians to be struck with wonders

¹⁶"But he will not let you go unless a mighty hand compels him. ¹⁷Therefore I will stretch out my hand and strike the Egyptians with wonders. ¹⁸See that you perform before Pharaoh all the miracles I will give you power to do."

¹⁹"However I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go."

Pharaoh's firstborn son to die

²⁰"Then say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says Jehovah: Israel is my firstborn son. I commanded you, 'Let my son go to worship me,' but you refused. Therefore I will take the life of your firstborn son.'"

The Israelites will not leave Egypt empty-handed

²¹"After that he will let you go, and I will give the Israelites favour in the sight of the Egyptians. When you leave you will not leave empty-handed. ²²Every woman is to ask her Egyptian neighbour for articles of silver, gold and clothing, and so you will despoil the Egyptians."

Miraculous signs given Moses to prove his authority

²³Moses said, "What if they do not believe me?"

²⁴The Lord said, "**Throw down your staff on the ground.**" Moses did so, and immediately it turned into a snake and he drew back from it.

²⁵Then the Lord commanded Moses, "**Take it up by the tail.**" Moses grasped the snake by the tail and it turned back into a staff in his hand.

²⁶The Lord said, "**Now place your hand inside your cloak.**" Moses did so and when he took it out it was leprous, like snow. ²⁷The Lord said, "**Put it back into your cloak.**" Moses did this and it was restored again.

²⁸Then the Lord said, "**If they do not believe these two signs, take water from the Nile and pour it on the ground and it will turn to blood.**"

Moses complains to the Lord that he lacks eloquence

²⁹Moses said, "O Lord, I have never been eloquent. I am slow to find speech."

³⁰The Lord answered, "**Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf, dumb, seeing or blind? Is it not I? Now go! I will help you speak, and teach you what to say.**"

EXODUS 3

The Lord becomes angry with Moses and tells him his brother Aaron can speak for him

³¹But Moses said, “O Lord, please send someone else.”

³²At these words the Lord began to be angry with Moses. He said, “**Your brother Aaron can speak well. He is coming out to meet you. He will speak to the people for you. He shall be your mouth and you shall be as God to him. I will help both of you speak and teach you what to do.**”

Moses meets his brother Aaron

³³Now the Lord had said to Aaron the brother of Moses, “**Go out into the desert to meet Moses.**”

³⁴So Aaron met Moses at Mount Horeb and kissed him, then Moses told his brother all that the Lord had said.

Moses now eighty years old

³⁵Moses was now eighty years old, and Aaron was eighty-three.

3

Moses returns to Egypt with his wife and two sons

¹Moses returned to Jethro his father-in-law and said, “Let me return to Egypt to see if my people are still alive.”

²Jethro said, “Go in peace.” So Moses put his wife and two sons on a donkey and started back for Egypt.

Zipporah circumcises her son to save Moses' life

³At an inn on the way, the Lord appeared again to Moses and threatened to take his life. But his wife Zipporah took a flint knife and circumcised her son's foreskin and cast it at his feet and said to him, “Truly you are a husband of blood to me.” So the Lord spared Moses.^{F*}

Moses and Aaron meet with the elders of Israel

⁴When Moses arrived back in Egypt he and Aaron assembled the elders of Israel.

⁵Aaron repeated to them all that the Lord had said and Moses performed the miraculous signs. ⁶The elders believed and bowed down and worshipped Jehovah.

The first meeting with Pharaoh

⁷Then Moses and Aaron went and stood before Pharaoh the king of Egypt and said to him, “Jehovah the God of Israel says, **‘Let my people go, that they may sacrifice to me in the desert.’**”

Pharaoh rejects Moses and Aaron

⁸Pharaoh said, “Who is Jehovah that I should obey him? I will not let Israel go.”

⁹They said to him, “The God of the Hebrews has appeared to us. Therefore allow us to take a three-day journey into the desert to offer

sacrifices, lest he strike us with plagues or the sword.”

¹⁰But the king said, “Moses and Aaron, why are you taking the people away from their work? Get back to your labour!”

Pharaoh orders the Israelites to gather their own straw to work them harder

¹¹That same day Pharaoh said to his slave drivers, “You are no longer to supply the Hebrews with straw for making bricks. Let them gather their own straw, but require the same number of bricks as before. ¹²They are lazy, that is why they cry out, ‘Let us go and sacrifice to our God.’ Make them work harder so that they are too busy working to pay attention to lies.”

¹³So the Israelites scattered all over Egypt to gather straw, but the slave drivers kept pressing them saying, “Complete the required work each day, just as you did when you were supplied straw.”

The Israelite foremen appeal to Pharaoh

¹⁴The Israelite foremen went and appealed to Pharaoh but he said, “Get back to work! You will not be given straw!”

¹⁵When the foremen left Pharaoh's presence they found Moses and Aaron waiting to meet them. They said to them, “You have made us as a stench to Pharaoh.”



Making bricks from mud and straw in Egypt.

Moses complains to the Lord

¹⁶So Moses prayed to the Lord and said, “O Lord, why did you ever send me? ¹⁷Ever since I spoke to Pharaoh in your name he has brought trouble upon us. You have not rescued your people at all.”

The Lord reaffirms that he will free the Israelites and bring them to the promised land

¹⁸The Lord said to Moses, “**Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh. Because of my mighty hand he will drive this people out of Egypt.**”

*3 Evidently Moses had neglected to obey the commandment concerning his youngest son that all males be circumcised when 8 days old (Genesis 11:17).

19^a“I am Jehovah, I appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as God Almighty and did I not also make myself known to them by my name Jehovah?”

20^a“Therefore say to the Israelites, ‘I am Jehovah. I will free you from being slaves to the Egyptians. I will redeem you with outstretched arm and mighty acts of judgement.’”

21^a“I will take you as my own people and will be your God, and I will bring you to the land I promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”

22^aMoses repeated these words to the Israelites, but they were too discouraged to listen.

4

Aaron's staff turns into a snake in Pharaoh's presence

1^aThe Lord said to Moses, ^{F*} “Go again and command Pharaoh to let the Israelites go.”

2^aMoses said, “If the Israelites will not listen to me why should Pharaoh listen to me, and I speak falteringly?”

3^aThe Lord said, “This time Pharaoh will say to you, ‘Prove yourselves by a miraculous sign.’ Then say to Aaron, ‘Throw down your staff.’ It will turn into a snake.”

4^aSo Moses and Aaron went before Pharaoh as the Lord commanded and Aaron threw down the staff in front of Pharaoh and his officials, and it turned into a snake.

Egyptian sorcerers also turn staffs into snakes

5^aPharaoh however summoned Egyptian sorcerers who did the same thing by their secret arts. Each sorcerer threw down his staff and it turned into a snake, but Aaron's staff swallowed up the staffs of the sorcerers.^{F*}

6^aYet Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not listen, just as the Lord had said.

The first plague – water turned to blood

7^aThen the Lord said to Moses, “Wait on the bank of the Nile to meet Pharaoh in the morning. 8^aSay to him, ‘Jehovah the God of the Hebrews sent me to say to you, ‘Let my people go,’ but you did not obey. Therefore the Lord says, ‘By this you will know that I am Jehovah. The fish in the Nile will die and the river will stink. The Egyptians will not be able to drink its water.’”

9^a“Then command Aaron to take his staff and stretch it over all the waters of Egypt; the streams, canals, ponds and reservoirs, and they will all turn to blood, even the water in wooden buckets and stone jars.”

10^aMoses and Aaron did as the Lord

commanded and in the presence of Pharaoh and his officials all the water of Egypt was changed to blood.

11^aThe fish in the Nile died and the river stank so much that the Egyptians could not drink its water. Blood was everywhere in Egypt.

The Egyptian sorcerers also turn water to blood

12^aYet the Egyptian sorcerers did the same thing by their secret arts, so Pharaoh would not listen to Moses and Aaron, instead he turned and went back into his palace.

The Egyptians dig for their drinking water

13^aThe Egyptians dug along the Nile to get drinking water because they could not drink the water of the river.

The second plague – frogs

14^aSeven days passed, then the Lord said to Moses, “Return to Pharaoh and say, ‘Jehovah says, Let my people go. If you refuse I will plague your whole land with frogs. 15^aThe Nile will teem with frogs. They will come up into your palace, into your bedroom and leap on to your bed, and into the houses of your people, and into your ovens and kneading bowls.’”

16^aBut Pharaoh would not listen.

17^aThen the Lord said to Moses, “Command Aaron to stretch out his staff over the streams, canals and ponds and frogs shall come up on the land of Egypt.”

18^aAaron did so and frogs came up and covered the land. But the sorcerers also made frogs come up on the land of Egypt.

Pharaoh agrees to let the people go if the frogs are taken away

19^aHowever Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, “Pray to Jehovah to take the frogs away and I will let your people go to offer sacrifices to him.”

20^aMoses replied, “Set a time for me to pray that your houses be rid of the frogs.”

Pharaoh said, “Tomorrow.”

21^aMoses replied, “It will be as you say. Then you will know there is no one like Jehovah our God.”

The frogs die but Pharaoh hardens his heart

22^aThe Lord did as Moses asked. The frogs died in the houses, in the courtyards and out in the fields. They were piled into heaps and the land stank. 23^aBut when Pharaoh gained relief he hardened his heart again.

The third plague – biting lice

24^aThen the Lord said to Moses, “Command Aaron to stretch out his staff and strike the ground. Lice will come throughout Egypt.”

25^aAaron did as the Lord said and lice^{F*} came upon men and animals throughout the land of Egypt.

*1 It is generally understood that seer-prophets such as Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel hear the words of the Lord speaking to them audibly within their head, probably similar to the modern effect of wearing headphones.

*5 The apostle Paul reveals that there were two Egyptian sorcerers, named Jannes and Jambres (2 Timothy 2:11). Sorcerers obtain their power from evil occult forces.

*25 From the Hebrew *'kane'* meaning to 'fasten on,' describing a bloodsucking insect such as a flea or tick.

EXODUS 4

The sorcerers fail to produce lice

²⁶The sorcerers tried to produce lice by their secret arts but could not. They said to Pharaoh, "This is the hand of God."

²⁷But Pharaoh's heart was hard and he did not listen.

The fourth plague – dense swarms of flies

²⁸Then the Lord said to Moses, "Arise early in the morning and confront Pharaoh as he goes to the river and say to him, 'Jehovah says, "Let my people go. ²⁹If you do not obey I will send swarms of flies on you and your people. Your houses will be full of them and the land around them."

³⁰"But in the land of Goshen where my people live, no swarms of flies will be found. Thus I will make a distinction between my people and your people. This sign will occur tomorrow."

³¹The next day dense swarms of flies poured into Pharaoh's palace and the houses of Egypt.

Pharaoh agrees to let the Israelites sacrifice in the desert

³²Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "You may sacrifice to your God, but do it here in the land."

³³Moses replied, "The sacrifices we offer to our God are detestable to the Egyptians. ^{F*} Will they not stone us? We must take a three-day journey into the desert as Jehovah commands us."

³⁴Pharaoh said, "I will let you go into the desert, but you must not go far. Now pray for me."

³⁵Moses answered, "I will pray to the Lord and tomorrow the flies will leave Pharaoh and his people, only be sure that Pharaoh does not act deceitfully again."

The flies depart but Pharaoh again hardens his heart

³⁶Then Moses left Pharaoh and prayed to the Lord and the Lord did as Moses asked. The flies left Pharaoh and his people. Not one remained. ³⁷But again Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let the people go.

The fifth plague – Egyptian animals die

³⁸The Lord said to Moses, "Say to Pharaoh, 'As you refuse to let the people go, tomorrow Jehovah will bring a plague on your livestock in the fields. ³⁹But he will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and that of Egypt. No animal belonging to the Israelites will die."

⁴⁰The next day many animals out in the fields all over Egypt died, but not one animal belonging to the Israelites died. Yet Pharaoh's heart was unyielding and he would still not let the people go.

The sixth plague – festering boils

⁴¹Then the Lord said to Moses, "Take

handfuls of soot from a furnace and toss it into the air in the presence of Pharaoh. ⁴²It will become a fine dust over the land of Egypt and festering boils will break out on men and animals throughout the land."

⁴³So Moses took soot and standing before Pharaoh he tossed it into the air and festering boils broke out on men and household animals.

The sorcerers also afflicted with boils

⁴⁴The sorcerers could not stand before Moses because of the boils that were on them.

⁴⁵But Pharaoh would still not listen to Moses and Aaron.



Throne of Pharaoh.

Pharaoh warned of full force plagues to come

⁴⁶The Lord said to Moses, "Arise early in the morning to confront Pharaoh. Say to him, 'Thus says Jehovah, Let my people go or this time I will send the full force of my plagues against you and your people. That you may know there is no one like me in all the earth."

Pharaoh's life preserved for the purpose of displaying Jehovah's power

⁴⁷"By now I could have struck you and your people with a plague that would have wiped you off the land. ⁴⁸But I have preserved you for the purpose of displaying my power, that my name may be proclaimed throughout the earth."

The seventh plague – heavy hail to fall the next day

⁴⁹"You continue to set yourself against my

*³³ Certain animals were held by the Egyptians to be sacred, especially bull-calves.

people and will not let them go. Therefore at this time tomorrow I will send the heaviest hailstorms that have ever fallen on Egypt.”

The Egyptians warned to shelter all animals

⁵⁰“Give orders to bring in all animals out in the fields to shelter. The hail will fall on every man and animal still left out in the field and they will die.”

⁵¹The officials of Pharaoh who feared the Lord hurried to bring their slaves and livestock inside, but others did not.

Severe hail storms destroy men, animals and crops

⁵²The next day when Moses stretched his staff toward the sky, the Lord sent thunder and hail and lightning flashed back and forth.

⁵³Throughout Egypt hail storms struck every thing in the fields, both men and animals, and beat down everything growing and stripped every tree, and the flax and barley were destroyed.

⁵⁴The only place it did not hail was in the land of Goshen where the Israelites were.

Pharaoh agrees to let the people go but again hardens his heart

⁵⁵Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron and said, “This time I have sinned, Jehovah is in the right. We have had enough thunder and hail. I will let you go.”

⁵⁶Moses replied, “When I have gone out of the city I will lift up my hands in prayer to the Lord and the thunder will stop and it will hail no more. ⁵⁷But I perceive that you and your officials still do not fear God.”

⁵⁸When the rain, hail and thunder stopped, Pharaoh sinned again. He would not let the Israelites go.

5

The purpose of the plagues

¹Then the Lord said to Moses, “I have hardened Pharaoh’s heart and the hearts of his officials that I may perform these miraculous signs of mine among them. I did so that you may tell your children how I dealt harshly with the Egyptians and that you may know that I am Jehovah. Now return again to Pharaoh.”

The eighth plague – locusts if Pharaoh refuses to let the Israelites go

²So Moses returned to Pharaoh and said to him, “Jehovah the God of the Hebrews says, ‘How long will you refuse to humble yourself before me? If you refuse to let my people go I will bring locusts into your land tomorrow.’”

³“They will cover the face of the ground so that it cannot be seen. They will devour what little you have left after the hail including every tree that is growing in your fields.”

⁴“They will even fill your houses, something your forefathers never saw from the day they settled in Egypt.” Then Moses turned and left Pharaoh.

Pharaoh’s officials plead with him to let the people go

⁵Pharaoh’s officials said to him, “How long will you let this man torment us? Let the people go to worship their God. Do you not realise that Egypt is being ruined?”

Moses and Aaron brought back to Pharaoh

⁶So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh and he said, “If I let you go to worship your God, who will you take with you?”

⁷Moses answered, “We will take our young and our old, our flocks and our herds, for we are to celebrate a festival to the Lord.”

Only the Israelite men permitted to go

⁸Pharaoh said, “I will not let you take your women and children. Clearly you are bent on mischief. Only the men shall go and worship the Lord. That is what you have been asking.”

⁹Then Moses and Aaron were driven out of Pharaoh’s presence.

A severe plague of locusts invade Egypt

¹⁰The Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over Egypt and locusts will swarm over the land.”

¹¹So Moses stretched out his staff and the Lord made an east wind blow all that day and night, and in the morning came the locusts. They invaded all Egypt in great numbers.

¹²There had never been such a plague of locusts before. They covered the ground until it was black. ¹³They devoured everything growing in the fields and the fruit on the trees. Nothing green remained in all of Egypt.

Pharaoh repents but then hardens his heart again when the locusts are blown into the sea

¹⁴Pharaoh quickly called for Moses and Aaron and said, “I have sinned against Jehovah your God and against you. Now forgive my sin once more and take this deadly plague away from me.”

¹⁵So Moses prayed and the Lord changed the wind to a strong westerly, which caught up the locusts and carried them into the Red Sea.

¹⁶But the Lord again hardened Pharaoh’s heart and he would not let the Israelites go.

The ninth plague – three days of thick darkness

¹⁷The Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward the sky and darkness will spread over Egypt, darkness that can be felt.”

¹⁸So Moses stretched out his hand and thick darkness covered Egypt for three days. No one could see anyone else or move about for three days. Yet the Israelites had light.

Pharaoh agrees to the Israelites going but not their animals

¹⁹Afterward Pharaoh summoned Moses and said, “Go worship the Lord. Your women and

EXODUS 6

children may go with you, but leave your flocks and herds behind.”

²⁰Moses said, “Our livestock must go with us to offer as sacrifice in worshipping Jehovah.”

Pharaoh orders Moses out of his sight

²¹But Pharaoh was not willing to let the livestock go. He said to Moses, “Get out of my sight! Do not appear before me again or you will die!”

The tenth plague – first born males to die

²²However this word of the Lord came to Moses while he was still in the presence of Pharaoh, “I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt. After that he will drive you out. ²³About midnight I will pass throughout Egypt. Every firstborn male in Egypt will die, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh to the firstborn son of the slave girl at her hand mill, and the firstborn of all livestock as well. ²⁴There will be loud wailing throughout Egypt such as there has never been, nor ever will be again.”

²⁵“But among the Israelites not a dog will bark. Then you will know that Jehovah makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel. ²⁶Now go instruct the people to ask their neighbours for articles of silver and gold.”

Moses prophesies that Pharaoh’s officials will bow to him and say ‘go’ then he angrily leaves

²⁷Moses repeated to Pharaoh all that the Lord had said and then said to him, “As you have said, I will not come before you again, but the Lord has told me that all your officials will come to me bowing down and saying, ‘Go! You and all the people who follow you!’ After that I will leave.”

²⁸Then Moses, hot with anger left Pharaoh’s presence.



Swarm of locusts ‘blackening the ground.’

6

The Passover feast and lamb

¹The Lord said to Moses, “This month is to be the first month of your year.^{F*} Command all Israel that every year on the tenth day of this month, each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. ²If any household is too small for a whole lamb they can share one with their nearest neighbour. Determine this by the amount each person will eat.”

The Passover lamb to be a year old male without defect

³“The lamb he chooses must be a year old male without defect, or he may use a young male goat.”

The lamb to be slaughtered at twilight and some blood sprinkled on door frames

⁴“He is to keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when he must slaughter it at twilight and take some of the blood and apply it to the sides and tops of the door frame of the house where the lamb will be eaten.”

The lamb’s meat to be roasted with bitter herbs

⁵“That same night they are to eat the meat after roasting it over a fire, along with bitter herbs and bread made without yeast. ⁶Do not eat the meat raw or boiled in water but roast it over a fire, head, legs and inner parts.”

None of the lamb’s bones to be broken

⁷“Not one of its bones is to be broken.^{F*} Take none of the meat outside the house and do not leave any of it until morning. If some is left it must be burnt.”

The Passover meal to be eaten in haste and in readiness for travel

⁸“You are to eat it with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste, it is the Passover of Jehovah.”

Every firstborn male in Egypt to die

⁹“For on that night I will pass throughout Egypt and strike down every firstborn male, both men and livestock. I will bring judgement on the gods of Egypt.”

The Lord to pass over the houses with the lambs blood on the door frame

¹⁰“The blood will be a sign on the houses where you are. When I see the blood I will pass over you and not allow the destroyer to enter that house.”

Moses instructs the elders of Israel regarding the Passover

¹¹So Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go at once and select a

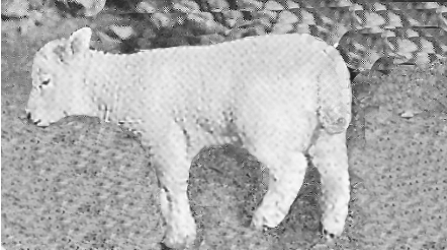
*1 The month of Nisan (Mar-April).

*7 The lamb symbolised Jesus Christ who was to die on the feast of a future Passover and who had none of his bones broken.

Passover lamb for your families and slaughter it. ¹²Take a bunch of hyssop^{F*} and dip it into the blood in a basin. Put blood on the top and both sides of the door frame of your house and do not go outside until morning.”

¹³“This will be a lasting ordinance for you and your descendants.”

¹⁴All the Israelites did exactly as the Lord had commanded.



The Passover lamb was symbolic of the Messiah or Christ.

At midnight all the firstborn males of Egypt die

¹⁵At midnight, the Lord struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh to the firstborn of the prisoners in the dungeon, and the firstborn of all livestock.

Loud wailing heard during the night

¹⁶Pharaoh and his officials and all the Egyptians arose during the night and loud wailing was heard, for there was not a house where one was not dead.

Pharaoh commands the Israelites to leave

¹⁷While it was still dark, Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said to them, “Leave my people, you and the Israelites. Take your flocks and herds and go, and also bless me.”

The Egyptians urge the Israelites to leave and give them silver, gold and clothing

¹⁸And when morning came the Egyptians also urged the Israelites to hurry and leave, for they said, “We may all die.”

¹⁹Before leaving, the Israelites did as the Lord commanded and asked the Egyptians for articles of silver and gold, and for clothing.

²⁰The Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, and Moses himself was highly respected by the people of Egypt so they gave the Israelites what they asked.

The exodus of the Israelites

²¹Then the Israelites set out from Rameses for Succoth. There were about 600,000 men on foot, besides women and children.^{F*}

²²A great crowd of mixed ancestry also went

*12 Hyssop is a tall cane-like plant with edible seed, also known as Jerusalem corn.

*21 Some find difficulty in believing that such a vast number of people were involved in the exodus from Egypt. However the numbers remain consistently large throughout the Exodus account and also in the Bible books that follow, which span many generations.

with them, as well as numerous flocks and herds of livestock.

²³The time the Israelites had stayed in Egypt and Canaan was 430 years, to the very day.^{F*}

²⁴The people took their bread dough without yeast and carried it on their shoulders in kneading troughs wrapped in clothing.

The Israelites take with them the bones of Joseph

²⁵They also took the bones of Joseph with them as their forefathers had sworn to do.

²⁶God led the people in battle array along the desert road leading toward the Red Sea.^{F*} He did not lead them by way of the shorter road through the Philistine country for he thought, “If they face war they may return to Egypt.”



Applying blood to the top and sides of a doorway in accordance with Passover requirements.

7

This day to be remembered forever by celebrating the Passover each year

¹The Lord said to Moses, “This is a day you are to remember forever. All generations to come must celebrate the Passover as a festival to Jehovah.”^{F*}

*23 The 430 years appears to date back to the day Israel, the first of the Israelites, was commanded to be sacrificed by his father Abraham on Mount Moriah (Genesis 15:1-12) and God reaffirmed his covenant with Abraham.

*26 The name Red Sea is taken from the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek, about 280 BC, in Egypt. The Hebrew term for this sea is ‘Yam Suph’ meaning ‘Sea of Seaweed sometimes translated Sea of Reeds.’ The word ‘suph’ refers to plants that grow in water and was used to describe the Nile river weed where Moses was laid as a baby and also the seaweed that draped around Jonah when he was cast overboard at sea. The non-Israelite term Red Sea includes the present Red Sea and both the Gulfs of Suez and Aqaba. The name comes from the reddish brown bloom that sometimes discolours its waters. Solomon’s ship building took place in the Gulf of Aqaba and his ocean voyages departed from there and that sea is also called ‘Yam Suph’ in the original Hebrew and translated Red Sea in most English bibles (1 Kings 21:20). The Red Sea is also designated by the Lord as the southernmost boundary of Israel (Exodus 20:14).

*1 The celebration of the Passover corresponds with the Christian Easter. Jesus the Christ died during the feast of the Passover. Christ is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word Messiah, (Jesus Christ translates literally as ‘Joshua the Messiah’). The slaughtering of the lamb was intended to

EXODUS 7

The feast of Unleavened Bread

²“Celebrate at the same time the feast of Unleavened Bread. For seven days in this first month you are to eat bread made without yeast, from the evening of the fourteenth day until the evening of the twenty-first day.”

No uncircumcised male permitted to eat the unleavened bread

³“No uncircumcised person is to eat of it, but a slave you have bought may eat of it after you have circumcised him.”

No yeast to be eaten during Passover week

⁴“Remove all yeast from your houses, for whoever eats anything with yeast during this time must be cut off from Israel.”

No work on first and last day of Passover week

⁵“On the first day hold a sacred assembly, and another on the seventh day. Do no work at all on these days except to prepare food.”

Every Israelite must celebrate the Passover

⁶“All the Israelites must celebrate. If a foreigner living among you wishes to celebrate the Passover he must have all the males in his household circumcised.”

All firstborn males, both men and animals from now on belong to the Lord

⁷The Lord said to Moses, “Consecrate to me every firstborn son among the Israelites. They will belong to me, also the firstborn of your animals.”

Every firstborn son and donkey to be redeemed

⁸“However you are to redeem the firstborn of your sons,^{F*} and every firstborn donkey is to be redeemed with a sheep.^{F*} If you do not redeem a donkey you must break its neck.”

⁹“In days to come when your son says to you, ‘What does this mean?’ say to him, ‘With a mighty hand Jehovah brought us out of Egypt. When Pharaoh refused to let us go, the Lord slew all the firstborn in Egypt, both man and animal.’”

Jehovah leads the Israelites day and night in a pillar of cloud

¹⁰From Succoth the Israelites journeyed to Etham and camped at the edge of the desert.^{F*}

foreshadow the death of Messiah. Most Israelites however do not believe that Jesus was the Messiah and still await the coming of another.

*8 To redeem means to ‘buy back’ and was normally done with silver, however the entire tribe of Levites were later substituted for the firstborn sons of the other tribes (Numbers 1:30).

*8 A donkey being an unclean animal could not be offered for sacrifice.

*10 This journey took longer than is generally realised. The distance to Etham on the Egyptian side of the Gulf of Aqaba arm of the Red Sea is about 200 miles. A large group with livestock can generally expect to cover only six miles a day, although as the next verse indicates, the Israelites probably travelled at night also. The Jewish Talmud reports that after the Egyptians had spent three days burying their dead they waited two more days expecting the Israelites to return. They then sent a delegation after them asking when they would return. When it became apparent to the delegation that the Israelites had no

¹¹By day Jehovah went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud and by night in a pillar of fire to guide them on their journey, so that they might travel by day or by night.^{F*}

The Lord commands the Israelites to change direction to deceive Pharaoh into pursuing them

¹²Then the Lord said to Moses, “Command the Israelites to turn and camp between Migdol^{F*} and the sea opposite Baal Zephon.^{F*} Pharaoh will think, ‘The Israelites are wandering about in confusion, hemmed in by the desert.’”

¹³“I will harden his heart and he will pursue you. I will gain glory for myself through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord.”

Pharaoh pursues the Israelites with his army of charioteers

¹⁴When Pharaoh was told that the Israelites were not returning, his heart was again hardened and he said, “What have we done? Why have we let them go and lost their labour.”

¹⁵So Pharaoh commanded that his chariot be made ready and gathered his army. He took his 600 best chariots, all his horsemen, and all the other chariots of Egypt.^{F*} ¹⁶They set out in pursuit of the Israelites who were marching out boldly and caught up with them as they camped by the Red Sea, opposite Baal Zephon.



Red Sea crossing-site beach at Migdol. The Egyptian army would have approached down the valley or wadi in the centre left of the photo.

The Israelites are terrified when they see the Egyptians coming

¹⁷When the Israelites saw the Egyptians in the

intention of coming back, they returned and reported this fact to Pharaoh who then proceeded to gather his armies together to pursue the Israelites. Exodus 9:1-6 indicates that the Israelites had travelled about three weeks before Pharaoh’s army caught up with them at the Red Sea. This would mean the Israelites had covered a rapid ten miles a day. The Lord may have been alluding to this speed in Exodus 11:2 when he says, “I carried you on the wings of eagles.”

*11 The appearance of fire from within the cloud at night would probably be the glory of the Lord shining through. It would not be so apparent in daylight.

*12 A double mountain range with a valley (wadi) between. The Jewish historian Josephus writes that the Israelites were ‘trapped between inaccessible precipices and the sea, for there was on each side mountains that terminated at the sea.’

*12 Believed to be temple shrine visible across the sea.

*15 Josephus reports that Pharaoh marched out after the Israelites with about 600 chariots, 50,000 horsemen and 200,000 foot soldiers. *Antiquities* 2:324

distance they were terrified and cried out to Moses saying, "What have you done to us? Was it because there were no burial places in Egypt that you brought us out here to die?"
¹⁸Did we not say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone, let us serve the Egyptians?'"

Moses tells the Israelites to stand firm

¹⁹Moses answered, "***Fear not! Stand firm, and today you will see the deliverance of the Lord. You will not see these Egyptians again.***"

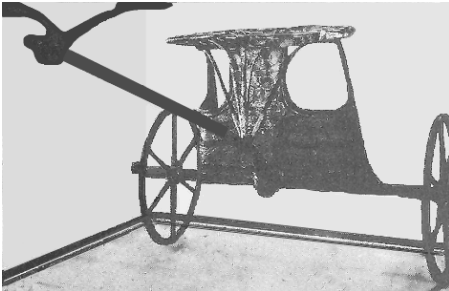
The Red Sea parts, and the Israelites pass through during the night

²⁰Then the Lord said to Moses, "***Why are you crying out to me? Tell the people to go forward. Stretch out your staff over the sea to divide the water so the Israelites can go through on dry ground.***"

²²***Afterward I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians and they will go in after them, and I will gain glory through Pharaoh and all his army.***"

²³The angel of God withdrew from in front of Israel and went behind them. The pillar of cloud stood between Israel and the armies of Egypt.
²⁴(The cloud brought darkness to one side and light to the other so that neither came any closer to the other all night long.)

²⁵Then Moses stretched his staff over the sea and all that night the Lord drove the sea back with a strong east wind, and turned the sea bed into dry land as the Israelites passed through. The waters were a wall to them on their left and right. F*



Egyptian chariot.

Egyptians follow but chariot wheels get clogged

²⁶Pharaoh's horses, chariots and chariot drivers pursued them into the midst of the sea. But just before dawn the Lord threw the Egyptian army into confusion. He caused the wheels of their chariots to become clogged so they had difficulty driving.

²⁷The Egyptians began shouting, "Let us get away from the Israelites! Jehovah is fighting for them!"

*²⁵ The Red Sea reaches a maximum depth of 250m at this comparatively shallow point of the Gulf of Aqaba. Surveys also show an unusual smoothness of gradient and absence of obstacles on the seabed. The distance across is about eight miles.

The sea flows back over the Egyptian army
²⁸Then the Lord said to Moses, "***Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters flow back over the Egyptians.***"

²⁹Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea flowed back to its place and met the retreating Egyptians. ³⁰They tried to flee from it but it covered the chariots, horses and drivers. Pharaoh's whole army who had followed the Israelites into the sea drowned. Not one survived.



Red Sea at night where the Israelites crossed.

8

Drowned Egyptians washed up on the shore

¹Later that day when the Israelites saw Egyptians lying dead on the shore, they revered the Lord and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant.

The Israelites sing and dance to the Lord

²Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord:

³"I will sing to Jehovah,
 he is highly exalted.
 The horse and its rider
 he drove into the sea."

⁴"The Lord is a warrior,
 his name is Jehovah.
 Pharaoh's chariots and army
 were drowned in the sea."

⁵"The waters covered them,
 like a stone in the deep.
 Your right hand O Jehovah,
 is majestic in power."

⁶"Your right hand O Lord,
 did destroy the enemy.
 The waters rose up,
 like a wall either side."

⁷"The enemy did boast
 'I will pursue.'
 But you sank them like lead

EXODUS 9

in the mighty sea.”
8“Who among gods
is like Jehovah?
Majestic in holiness,
wondrous in glory.”

9“Nations will hear,
all peoples will tremble.
The hearts of the Canaanites
will melt away.”

10“Sing to Jehovah,
he is highly exalted.
The Lord will reign
for evermore.”

Miriam leads the women in singing and dancing

11Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Moses and Aaron took a tambourine in her hand and sang the same song, and all the women followed her with tambourines and dancing.



One of numerous coral-encrusted remains of Egyptian chariot wheels on the bed of the Red Sea at crossing site.

9

The bitter water at Marah oasis purified by a tree

1Then Moses ordered Israel to set out from the Red Sea into the desert of Shur. 2For three days they travelled without finding water and when they came to Marah they could not drink the water for it was bitter. The people complained to Moses saying, “What are we to drink?”

3Moses enquired of the Lord and the Lord showed him a tree. He threw the tree into the water and the water was healed and purified.

Jehovah the Lord who heals diseases

4Then the Lord said to Moses, “Say to the people, ‘If you heed the voice of Jehovah your God, I will not bring upon you any of the diseases I brought upon the Egyptians, for I am the Lord who heals you.’”

The Israelites camp at Elim oasis

5Then they came to Elim where there were twelve springs and seventy palm trees and they camped there by the water.

The Israelites set out again and enter the desert of Sin

6Then the Israelites set out again and camped

on the shores of the Red Sea.^{F*} From there they entered the desert of Sin, 31 days after leaving Egypt.



Oasis on Exodus route to Mount Horeb.

The people complain for food in desert of Sin

7In the desert the people complained again to Moses and Aaron saying, “Would that we had died in Egypt. At least there we had all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to die by starvation.”^{F*}

8While Aaron was speaking with the people, they looked toward the desert and saw the glory of the Lord appearing in the cloud.

The Israelites to eat meat that evening

9The Lord said to Moses, “I have heard the complaining of the Israelites. Tell them, ‘At twilight you will eat meat.’”

Bread to rain down from heaven the next morning

10“**And in the morning you will be filled with bread. I will rain down bread from heaven.** 11Then you will know that I am Jehovah your God. 12The people are to go out each day and gather only enough bread for that day, but on the sixth day they are to gather twice as much. In this manner I will test them.”

13Moses and Aaron said to the people, “Who are we? You are not complaining against us, but against the Lord. 14Nevertheless you will see the glory of the Lord. Because he has heard your complaining against him he will give you meat to eat this evening, and all the bread you want in the morning.”

Quail fly into the camp that evening

15That evening quail came and covered the ground.

Next morning thin flakes cover the ground

16And in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the dew was gone, thin flakes appeared on the desert floor. The Israelites said to one another, “What is it?”

17Moses said to them, “It is the bread the Lord has given you to eat. Each one is to gather as much as he needs.”

*6 Because of the mountains that extend into the Red Sea from Arabia the Israelites after crossing the Red Sea followed wadis or valleys within the mountains which led them again out onto the Red Sea shore (Gulf of Aqaba) further south. From there they followed another wadi heading inland to the desert of Sinai and Rephidim.

*7 The Jewish Talmud reports that the Israelites only took 28 days of food with them.

¹⁸The Israelites did so, and each gathered as much as he wanted.

The bread not to be kept overnight

¹⁹Then Moses said to them, “No one is to keep any bread overnight.”

²⁰However some of them did and it became full of maggots and stank. Moses was angry with them.

²¹Each morning they gathered as much as they needed, and when the sun grew hot it melted away.

No bread to be found on the Sabbath day

²²On the sixth day they gathered twice as much. Moses said to the elders, “The Lord says, ‘Tomorrow is to be a day of rest, a holy Sabbath. Bake and boil what you want today but save what is left for tomorrow, for you will not find any on the ground in the morning.’”

²³So they saved it until morning and it did not stink or get maggots in it.

Some go out to gather on the Sabbath and are rebuked by the Lord

²⁴Nevertheless some of the people did go out to gather on the seventh day but found none.

²⁵The Lord said to Moses, “Say to the people, ‘How long will you refuse to keep my commands? I have given you the Sabbath, that is why on the sixth day I give you bread for two days. No one is to go out on the seventh day.’”

²⁶So the people rested on the seventh day.

The bread called manna

²⁷The people called the bread manna.^{F*} They ground it in a mill or crushed it in a mortar, then cooked it in a pot or made it into cakes.

The taste and appearance of manna described

²⁸It was white like coriander seed and tasted like wafers made with honey and olive oil.

Some manna to be kept to show future generations

²⁹The Lord said to Moses, “Take an omer^{F*} of manna and keep it for generations to come, so they too can see the bread I gave you to eat in the desert when I brought you out of Egypt.”

10

The people complain for water

¹The Israelites then moved on in stages from the desert of Sin and camped at Rephidim. But there was no water there. ²So they complained again to Moses saying, “Give us water to drink. Why did you bring us out of Egypt to have us and our children and livestock die of thirst?”

³Moses said to the people, “Why do you test the Lord?” Then he cried out to the Lord saying, “What am I to do with these people,

*27 Manna means ‘is it food?’ The Israelites were supplied with manna every day except the Sabbaths for the next 40 years.

*29 About 2 litres.

they are almost ready to stone me?”

Water flows out of a rock at Horeb

⁴The Lord answered Moses and said, “Walk on ahead of the people and take with you some of the elders of Israel. I will stand before you by the rock at Horeb.^{F*} ⁵Strike the rock with your staff and water will flow out of it.”

⁶Moses did this and water flowed out of the rock in the sight of the elders of Israel.



A large rock at Horeb, believed to be the one Moses struck with his staff and water flowed out.

The place of rebellion called Massah

⁷Moses called the place Massah^{F*} where the people tested the Lord by saying, “Is Jehovah among us or not?”

Amalekites attack Israel

⁸Then Amalekites^{F*} attacked the Israelites.

⁹Moses said to Joshua,^{F*} “Choose men to fight the Amalekites, and tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands.”

As long as Moses holds up his staff the Israelites prevail in battle

¹⁰So the next day Joshua fought the Amalekites while Moses, Aaron and Hur stood on top of the hill.

¹¹As long as Moses held up his hands the Israelites prevailed, but whenever he lowered the staff the Amalekites prevailed.

The Israelites defeat the Amalekites

¹²However the hands of Moses grew tired, so they took a stone and Moses sat on it while Aaron and Hur held his hands up, one on either side of him until sunset, when Joshua defeated the Amalekites with the sword.

The Amalekites to be blotted out

¹³Then the Lord said to Moses, “Write this on a scroll to be remembered and make sure

*4 Horeb was the name of the mountain to which Moses had been instructed to bring the Israelites, however the Israelites were at this stage on the other side of the mountain from where they were headed.

*7 Massah means ‘testing.’

*8 The Amalekites were a fierce, nomadic, marauding people of the Arabian desert.

*9 Joshua was of the tribe of Ephraim. He eventually succeeded Moses as leader of the Israelites.

EXODUS 11

Joshua hears it: 'I will completely blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.'^{F*}

The Lord spoke with Moses face to face

¹⁴Now Moses had pitched a tent outside the camp, some distance away. Anyone wishing to inquire of the Lord would go out to the tent.

¹⁵Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people would rise and stand by their tents watching him.

¹⁶As Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend to the entrance and Jehovah would speak with Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend.

Moses' assistant Joshua did not leave the tent

¹⁷Afterward Moses would return to the camp, but his assistant Joshua remained at the tent.

Moses' father-in-law Jethro comes to visit

¹⁸Now Jethro, the priest of Midian and father-in-law of Moses heard what God had done for Israel and came out to Moses in the desert, bringing with him Moses' two sons and his wife Zipporah.^{F*}

¹⁹Moses went out to meet Jethro and bowed down to him and kissed him. After greeting each other they went into the tent.

²⁰Moses told his father-in-law of all that the Lord had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians, and about the hardships they had met along the way.

Jethro praises Jehovah and offers sacrifice

²¹Jethro said, "Praise Jehovah. Now I know Jehovah is greater than all other gods."

²²Then he offered a burnt offering and other sacrifices to God. Aaron also came out with the elders of Israel to eat with Jethro.

Jethro advises Moses to delegate

²³The next day Moses took his seat as judge for the people. They stood around him from morning until night.

²⁴When his father-in-law saw what Moses was doing he said, "Why do you sit alone as judge while all these people stand around you from morning till night?"

²⁵Moses answered, "The people come to me to seek God's will. Whenever they have a dispute I decide between them and inform them of God's laws."

²⁶Jethro replied, "What you are doing is not wise, surely you will wear yourself out. ²⁷Hear my counsel. You must continue to represent the people before God and teach them his laws, but select able men who revere God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain and appoint them as officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. ²⁸Let them serve as judges for the people, and have them bring you

only the very difficult cases."

²⁹"If you do this, and if God so commands, it will lighten your load. You will stand the strain and the people will go home satisfied."

³⁰Moses heeded his father-in-law's advice and did everything he said. Then Jethro returned to his own land.



Map of exodus of Israelites from Egypt to Mount Horeb.

11

The Israelites arrive at Mount Horeb

¹In the third month after they left Egypt, to the very day, the Israelites entered the desert of Sinai and camped in front of Mount Horeb.^{F*}

The Israelites are to be a chosen people if they obey the Lord

²Moses went up the mountain. There the Lord spoke to him and said, "Say to the people of Israel, 'You have seen what I did to Egypt and how I carried you on the wings of eagles and brought you to myself.'"

³"Now if you will obey me fully, out of all the nations, you shall be my chosen people. Even though the whole earth is mine, you will be a kingdom of priests, a holy nation."

⁴So Moses went back down the mountain and summoned the elders of the people and repeated to them the words that the Lord had said.

⁵They in turn went away and spoke to the people, and the people responded, "We will do all that the Lord has said."

The Lord promises to speak to Moses in the hearing of the people

⁶Moses took their answer back to the Lord. Then the Lord said to Moses, "I will stand before you in a dense cloud. The people will hear my voice speak to you, then they will trust in you."

*13 The Lord many years later ordered king Saul to destroy the Amalekites for this unprovoked attack on Israel (Samuel 8:20). However Saul failed and is reported to have been eventually killed himself by an Amalekite (1 Kings 1:5-6). The Amalekites were finally annihilated during the reign of King Hezekiah (Isaiah 27:3).

*18 Although Zipporah and her sons had accompanied Moses to Egypt, they had evidently returned to Midian.

*1 This was the place the Lord appeared to Moses in the burning bush, and to where he commanded Moses to bring the Israelites (Exodus 2:2,10).

The Israelites to purify themselves in readiness for the third day

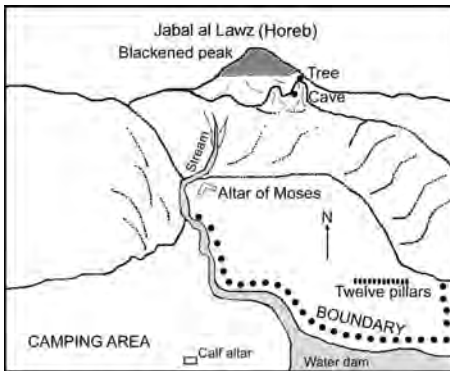
7⁷“Now return to the people and purify them, today and tomorrow. Have them wash their clothes and be ready by the third day. 8⁸On that day I will come down upon this mountain in the sight of all the people.”

Boundary to the mountain to be marked out

9⁹“You are to erect a boundary for the people at the base of the mountain and warn them, ‘Do not go up the mountain or touch the foot of it. 10¹⁰Whoever touches the mountain is to be put to death. He shall be stoned, or shot with arrows. No hand is to touch him. Whether man or animal he must die.”

11¹¹“Only when the ram’s horn sounds a long blast may they touch the mountain.”

12¹²Moses went back down to purify the people. He said to them, “Prepare yourselves for the third day by washing your clothes and abstaining from sexual relations.”



Mt Horeb (or Sinai) in Arabia where Moses led the Israelites and the Lord gave the commandments.

Smoke, thunder, lightning, and quaking from Mount Sinai and a very loud trumpet blast

13¹³On the morning of the third day there came a dense cloud over the mountain. Then came thunder and lightning, and a long trumpet blast, so loud that all in the camp trembled.

Moses leads the Israelites to the foot of the mountain

14¹⁴Then Moses led the people out to stand before God. They all stood at the foot of the mountain.

15¹⁵Smoke billowed up from Mount Sinai like

*15 From this point on Mount Horeb is also referred to as Mount Sinai, named after the surrounding area called the Desert of Sinai (Exodus 11:1). The traditional Mount Sinai is located in a rugged location in the Egyptian peninsula, now called Sinai and is said to have been revealed to Empress Helena the mother of Constantine in 330 AD. This barren site has long been seriously doubted by scholars as it does not fit the Biblical description of the site in any way, and is completely devoid of evidence of habitation and ancient traditions. There are also numerous other major problems, such as it being still within the borders of Egypt, virtually inaccessible by foot, not being the 'the highest of the mountains in the region of the city of Madiene (Midian)' (Josephus *Antiquities of the Jews*), no stream flowing down the

smoke from a furnace, for the Lord had descended on it in fire, and the mountain trembled violently. F* The sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder.

The Lord speaks in a voice of thunder and calls Moses up the mountain

16¹⁶Then Moses spoke to the Lord, and the voice of God answered him in thunder, and commanded him to come to the top of the mountain. So Moses left the people below and went up to the Lord.



Mount Horeb (Arabic 'Huraa') near Midian, Arabia where the Lord descended and gave the commandments to Moses and the Israelites. The blackened and charred top has the appearance of coal.

The people warned not to break through boundary to see the Lord

17¹⁷The Lord said to him, “Return down again and warn the people not to break through the boundary to see Jehovah or many of them will die. After I have spoken to the people, come back up again and bring Aaron up with you.”

The Ten Commandments spoken by the Lord in the hearing of the Israelites

18¹⁸Moses returned back down and again warned the people. Then God spoke these words in the hearing of all Israel:

19¹⁹“I am Jehovah your God who brought you out of Egypt. You shall have no other gods before me.”

20²⁰“You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above, or on the earth beneath, or in the waters below and bow down and worship it. For I Jehovah am a jealous God, punishing the descendants of those who sin to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing

mountain (Exodus 19:16), no cave (Elijah 4:15), no way to fence off access (Exodus 11:9), sheer rugged sides difficult for any but an experienced climber to climb (Exodus 15:8), and serious lack of camping space, water and pasture. It is also separated by the Red Sea and hundreds of miles of deserts and mountain ranges from Midian in Arabia where the Bible clearly states Moses lived and pastured his sheep, and received the message from the Lord in a burning bush at Horeb to bring the Israelites to that very spot (Exodus chapter 2). Jewish historians have always located Mount Horeb in Arabia rather than Egypt, as also does Paul in Galatians 4:25 (traditional Bible).

*15 Although some of the phenomena experienced by the Israelites is similar to that of a volcanic eruption, Mount Horeb is not volcanically active.

love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.”

21“**You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.**”

22“**Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day. Six days you shall labour and do your work, but on the seventh day you shall do no work, neither you, nor your children, your servants, your animals, nor the stranger living among you. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, but he rested on the seventh day and made it holy.**”

23“**Honour your father and your mother, that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.**”

24“**You shall not murder.**”

25“**You shall not commit adultery.**”

26“**You shall not steal.**”

27“**You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.**”

28“**You shall not covet your neighbour’s house, his wife, his servant, his ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.**”

12

The people tremble in fear at the Lord’s voice

¹The people trembled with fear at the sound of Jehovah’s voice and stayed at a distance.

The Israelites ask Moses to relay the commandments from the Lord to them himself lest they die

²Then they said to Moses, “You go near and hear all that God says, and then speak to us yourself and we will listen and obey. But do not have God speak to us any more lest we die.”

Moses receives other commandments

³So the people remained at a distance while Moses approached the thick cloud to speak with the Lord.

⁴The Lord said to Moses, “I have heard what the people said to you. O that there were such a heart in them that they would keep my commandments always, then it would go well with them and their children always.”

⁵“Now say to the people, ‘I am Jehovah your God. You must keep all my decrees and laws and follow them. You must not do as they do in Egypt and in the land of Canaan where I am bringing you.’”

⁶“Be careful to do everything I have commanded, for whoever obeys my laws will Live.” F*

⁷“These commandments you are also to give them:”

Commandments on love

⁸“**Love the Lord your God, and have reverence for my Tabernacle.**” F*

⁹“**Do not seek revenge or bear grudges against one another, but love your neighbour as yourself.**”

¹⁰“**Do not mistreat a foreigner or oppress him, you must love him as yourself, for you were once foreigners in Egypt.**”

¹¹“**Do not hate your brother in your heart.**”

¹²“**Do not mock the deaf, or put a stumbling block in front of the blind.**”

¹³“**Do not do anything that endangers your neighbour’s life.**”

¹⁴“**Do not take advantage of a widow or an orphan, for I will hear their cry. My anger will be aroused and I will take your life.** ¹⁵Your own wife will become a widow and your own children fatherless.”

¹⁶“**When you lend money to the poor among you, do not charge them interest.**”

¹⁷“**If you take your neighbour’s cloak as security, return it to him at sunset. His cloak may be the only covering he has to sleep in.** ¹⁸If he cries out to me I will hear him, for I am compassionate.”

¹⁹“**When you harvest your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings. Do not go over your vineyard a second time, leave what remains for the poor.**”

²⁰“**If you find the beast of your enemy wandering, return it to him, and if you see the donkey of someone who hates you fallen down under its load, help him with it.**”

Commandments on altars

²¹“**Make for me an altar of earth, on which to sacrifice your burnt offerings and I will come and bless you.**”

²²“**You may also make an altar of stones but do not build it with chiselled stones, for you defile it if you use a tool upon it.**”

²³“**Do not go up to my altar on steps lest your nakedness be exposed.**”

Commandments on idolatry

²⁴“**Do not invoke the names of other gods.**”

²⁵“**Do not turn to idols or make gods of metal for yourselves. You must not profane the name of your God.**”

²⁶“**Do not give any of your children to be sacrificed to Molech.** F* Anyone who sacrifices his child to Molech must

*6 The terms ‘will Live’ or ‘have Life’ or ‘have Eternal Life’ are used frequently throughout the Bible whenever God speaks to man, and mean to live forever after death in the presence of God the Father. See note on Revelation 2:13 for a fuller explanation.

*8 The Tabernacle was the transportable temple that would soon be constructed (see Exodus chapter 16).

*26 Molech was a demon god of the Canaanites whose worship involved gruesome orgies and child sacrifice.

be stoned to death by the people.”

- 27“Do not sacrifice to any other god. Whoever sacrifices to any god other than Jehovah must be destroyed.”

Commandments on offerings, first fruits and tithes

- 28“Do not offer a blood sacrifice with anything containing yeast, and do not keep the fat until morning.”

- 29“**You must give to me the firstborn of your sons, also the firstborn of your cattle and sheep. Let them stay with their mothers seven days, but bring them to me on the eighth day.**” F*

- 30“**Also bring to me the best of the first fruits of your ground.**”

- 31“**When you plant a fruit tree, the fruit must not be eaten for three years, and in the fourth year all its fruit is to be regarded as holy, an offering of praise to Jehovah.** 32**In the fifth year you may eat the fruit. In this way your harvest will be increased.**”

- 33 “**Do not hold back from Jehovah your God the tithes**F* **of your crops.**”

Commandments on the occult

- 34“**Do not consult a medium or fortune teller for you will be defiled by them. I will set my face against you and put you to death.**”

- 35“**Do not practice divination or sorcery. Any sorcerer, sorceress, medium or fortune teller among you must be put to death. You are to stone them.**”

- 36“**Do not cut your hair at the sides of your temples or shape the edges of your beard, or cut or tattoo your bodies.**”F*

Commandments on the Sabbath

- 37“**Observe my Sabbath day as a sign between me and you forever. Whoever does work on that day must be put to death.** 38**For six days work is to be done, but the seventh day is a holy day of rest, so that your ox, your donkey, and all your household may rest and be refreshed.** 39**Do not even light a fire in your dwellings.**”

- 40“**For six years you are to sow your fields and harvest your crops, but during the seventh year let the land lie fallow and unharvested, a Sabbath for Jehovah. Also your vineyard and olive grove so that the poor among**

you may eat of it. What they leave, the wild animals may eat. 41**I will send you such a blessing in the sixth year that the land will yield enough for three years.**”

- 42“**When you plant during the eighth year you will eat from the old crop and will continue to eat from it until the harvest of the ninth year comes in.**”



“Do not reap to the very edges of your field ... leave what remains for the poor,” Exodus 12:19.

Commandments on festivals

- 43“**Three times a year you are to celebrate a feast to the Lord. All the men are to appear before me, and no one is to come empty-handed.**”

- 44“**Celebrate the Passover and the feast of Unleavened Bread at the appointed time. For seven days eat bread without yeast.**”

- 45“**Celebrate the feast of Harvest**F* **when you gather in the first fruits of your crops.**”

- 46“**Celebrate the feast of Tabernacles**F* **when you have completed gathering your crops at the end of the season.**”

13

Commandments on age and authority

- 1“**Anyone who curses his father or mother is to be put to death.**”

- 2“**Show respect for the elderly and rise up in their presence.**”

- 3“**Do not scorn or curse the ruler of your people.**”

Commandments on physical injury

- 4“**Anyone who strikes his father or mother must be put to death.**”

- 5“**Anyone who deliberately strikes a man and kills him, shall be put to death. But if he has not done it deliberately**

*29 The Lord later substituted the tribe of the Levites and their livestock, for the firstborn sons and livestock of the other eleven tribes. See Numbers 1:30.

*33 To tithe is to pay a tenth of one's annual increase in wealth (see Leviticus 8:33) to the priests of God as an offering. It was not a new law for the Israelites as Abraham paid a tithe to the priest Melchizedek (Genesis 9:21) and Jacob also vowed to pay God a tithe (Genesis 19:13).

*36 Unusual hairstyles and tattooing were common customs among peoples who followed occult practices.

*45 The Feast of Harvest was celebrated in June, seven weeks after the Passover and was later known as Pentecost.

*46 The Feast of Tabernacles was held in October. It was also called The feast of Booths or Ingathering. For more details see Leviticus 7:5-6.

EXODUS 13

he is to flee to a place I will designate.”

6“Anyone who deliberately injures another must have the same done to him. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a limb for a limb.”

7“Anyone who kidnaps another must be put to death.”

8“If men quarrel and one injures the other, he must pay the injured man for the loss of his time and see that he is completely healed.”

9“If a man strikes a slave and destroys an eye or a tooth, he must let the slave go free to compensate for the loss.”

10“If a man beats his slave with a rod and the slave dies, he must be punished. But he is not to be punished if the slave recovers since the slave is his own property.”

11“If men are fighting and injure a pregnant woman and cause a miscarriage but no further injury, the offender must be fined whatever the woman’s husband demands and the court allows. ¹²But if there is serious injury you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth.”

13“**If a bull gores a person to death, the bull must be stoned and its meat not eaten. The owner will not be held responsible unless the bull was known to have a habit of goring and he had not kept it penned up. ¹⁴Then the owner must also be put to death. However he may redeem his life by paying whatever is demanded.**”

15“**If a bull gores a slave, the owner must pay thirty shekels of silver^{F*} to the master of the slave, and the bull must be stoned.**”

16“**If a man kills an animal belonging to another he must make full restitution.**”

17“**If a man fails to cover a pit and an ox or a donkey fall into it, he must pay for the loss. The dead animal will be his.**”

18“**If a bull kills the bull of another, the owners are to sell the live one and divide the money and the dead animal equally. ¹⁹But if it was known that the bull had a habit of goring and the owner had not kept it penned up, he must pay for the loss, and the dead animal will be his.**”

Commandments on marriage

20“**Do not marry any close relative.**”

21“**Do not marry your sister or step-sister, whether she was born in the same home or elsewhere. If a man marries his sister and lies with her they must**

both be put to death. It is shameful.”

22“**Do not marry your grand-daughter.**”

23“**Do not marry your daughter-in-law.**”

24“**Do not marry your father or your mother’s sister.**”

25“**Do not marry your wife’s sister and lie with her while your wife is still living.**”

26“**Do not marry both a woman and her daughter, or her grand-daughter. It is shameful. If a man marries both a woman and her daughter both he and they must be burned in fire.**”

27“**Do not marry your brother’s wife. If a man marries his brother’s wife he has dishonoured his brother. They will be childless.**” ^{F*}

28“**Do not lie with or uncover the nakedness of a woman during the uncleanness of her menstruation. ²⁹If a man lies with or uncovers the nakedness of a woman during her monthly menstruation he has exposed the source of her flow and she also has uncovered it. Both shall be cut off from Israel.**”

Commandments on sexual immorality

30“**Do not uncover the nakedness of any close relative.**

31“**Do not dishonour your father by lying with or uncovering the nakedness of your mother or step-mother.**”

32“**Do not dishonour your uncle by lying with or uncovering the nakedness of his wife.**”

33“**Do not uncover the nakedness of your father or mother’s sister.**

34“**Do not uncover the nakedness of your sister, the daughter of your father or of your mother, whether born in the same home or elsewhere.**

35“**Do not uncover the nakedness of your grand-daughter.**

36“**Do not uncover the nakedness of your daughter-in-law.**

37“**Do not uncover the nakedness of your brother’s wife.**

38“**Do not uncover the nakedness of both a woman and her daughter, nor her son’s daughter or her daughter’s daughter. It is wickedness.**

39“**If a man seduces a virgin and lies with her, he must pay the bride price and she shall be his wife. If her father refuses to give her to him, he must still pay the bride price.**”

40“**Do not degrade your daughter by making her a harlot. The land will become full of wickedness.**”

41“**Do not lie with another man’s wife and defile yourself with her. If a man**

^{*27} There is an exception to this commandment when a man dies without having fathered a son and his widow is still of child bearing age. A living brother has a duty to marry his brother’s widow for the purpose of raising up a son to inherit his brother’s name and estate (Deuteronomy 5:32).

^{*15} The price of a slave, about five weeks wages.

commits adultery with another man's wife, both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death. Their blood will be on their own heads."

42"Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman. That is an abomination. If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both men must be put to death."

43"Do not defile yourself sexually with an animal. Any man or woman who defiles himself by having sexual relations with an animal, must be put to death, and you must kill the animal. It is an abomination."

Sexual immorality defiles the land

44"Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways in the land which I am giving you. For that is how the nations that I am going to drive out before you became defiled.

45If you defile the land it will vomit you out just as it is to vomit out the nations before you. Anybody who does any of these detestable things must die."

14

Commandments on animals and property

1"If a man steals an ox or a sheep, and the animal is found alive in his possession, he must pay back double. 9If he slaughters it or sells it he must pay back five oxen for the ox, and four sheep for the sheep."

2"If a thief is caught breaking in at night and is struck so that he dies, the defender is not guilty of bloodshed, but if it happens during daylight he is guilty of bloodshed."

3"A thief must make restitution. If he has nothing to give he must be sold to pay for his theft."

4"If a man lets his livestock stray and they graze in another man's field, he must make restitution from the best of his own field."

5"If a fire breaks out and burns grain in a field, the one who started the fire must make restitution."

6"If a man gives his neighbour goods for safekeeping and they are stolen from the neighbour's house, the thief if caught must pay back double. 7But if the thief is not caught, the owner of the house must appear before the judges to determine whether he himself has stolen the other man's goods."

8"In all cases of disputed property where two say, 'This is mine,' both parties are to bring their case before the judges. The one whom the judges

declare guilty must pay back double to his neighbour."

9" If a man gives an animal to his neighbour for safekeeping and it is injured or dies, any dispute between them is to be settled by the taking of an oath before Jehovah that the neighbour did not harm the other person's animal. 10The owner is to accept this and no restitution is required. 11If it was destroyed by a wild animal he must bring in the remains as evidence. 12But if the animal was stolen from him he must make restitution."

13" If a man borrows an animal and it is injured or dies while the owner is not present, he must make restitution. But if the owner is with the animal the borrower will not have to pay. 14If the animal was hired the money paid for the hire covers the loss."

Commandments on restitution

15" When a person wrongs another, that person is to confess his sin and make full restitution to the person he has wronged, adding one fifth to it."

16" If the person who has been wronged has died and has no close relative to whom restitution can be made, the restitution belongs to the Lord and is to be given to the priests for their support."

Commandments on justice

17" Do not swear falsely in my name."

18" Do not lie or deceive one another in any way, and do not spread false rumours."

19" Do not defraud one another or use dishonest scales and weights."

20" Do not hold back overnight the wages of a hired man."

21" Do not assist a wicked man by being a dishonest witness."

22" Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe can blind the wise and twist the words of the honest."

23" When you give testimony at law do not pervert justice by siding with a majority in doing wrong."

24" Have nothing to do with a false charge, and do not put an innocent person to death."

25" Do not deny justice at law to the poor, and do not be lenient with a man just because he is poor."

26" Rebuke your neighbour frankly when he sins so you will not share in his guilt."

Commandments on slavery

27" If you buy an Israelite slave he is to

EXODUS

serve you for six years, but in the seventh year he is to go free.”

²⁸“If he has a wife when he comes to you, she is to go free with him. But if you as his master give him a wife and she bears him children, the woman and her children shall belong to you and only the man shall go free.”

²⁹“If a slave declares, ‘I love my master and my wife and children and I do not want to go free,’ then his master must take him to the door or door post, and there, before the judges, pierce his ear with an awl, and he will be his slave for life.”

³⁰“If an Israelite sells his daughter as a slave, she is not to go free as male slaves do. If she does not please her master he must sell her back to her father. He is not to sell her to foreigners.”

³¹“If a man chooses a slave as a wife for his son, he must grant her the rights of a daughter. If his son marries another woman he is not to deprive his first wife of food, clothing and marital rights. If he does not provide her with these things she is to go free without any payment of money.”

³²“If a man lies with a slave woman who is promised to another man, but has not been given her freedom, there must be due punishment, but they are not to be put to death because she had not been freed. ³³The man however must bring a ram to the altar as a guilt offering to make atonement for the sin committed.”

Commandments on food

³⁴“You are to be my holy people, therefore do not eat the meat of an animal torn by wild beasts. Throw it to the dogs.”

³⁵“Do not eat meat without first draining the blood.”

³⁶“Do not cook a young goat in its mother’s milk.”

Commandments on breeding and sowing

³⁷“Do not interbreed different kinds of animals.”

³⁸“Do not plant your field with two kinds of seed.”

Commandment on clothing

³⁹“Do not wear clothing woven of two kinds of material.”

you alone are to approach me. The others must not come near.”

Moses writes down all the commandments

²Moses then went back down the mountain and wrote down all the commandments the Lord had given him.

Moses builds an altar and offers sacrifice

³Early next morning Moses arose and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and set up twelve stone pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel.

⁴He directed young men to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice young bulls to the Lord. ⁵Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls, and the other half he sprinkled on the altar.

Moses reads out all the commandments and the Israelites covenant with blood to obey them

⁶Moses read out to the people the commandments he had written and the people responded, “We will obey everything Jehovah has said.”

⁷Moses took the blood that was in the bowls and sprinkled it on the people saying, “This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you.”

Aaron and his sons and seventy elders of Israel see the God of Israel

⁸Moses then took Aaron with his two eldest sons Nadab and Abihu, and seventy elders of Israel up the mountain.

⁹There they saw the God of Israel, and under his feet was what looked like a pavement of blue sapphire, clear as the sky.

¹⁰They saw God and yet they lived.

Moses and Joshua go back up the mountain to receive the tablets of stone

¹¹After they had gone back down the mountain, the word of the Lord came again to Moses saying, “Come up to me on the mountain and remain here, and I will give you tablets of stone on which I have written the Law.”

¹²So Moses took Joshua his aide and said to the elders of Israel, “Aaron and Hur are with you. Anyone with a dispute can go to them.”

¹³Then Moses and Joshua entered the cloud on Mount Sinai.

How the Lord’s glory on the mountain looked to the people below

¹⁴The cloud of the Lord had covered the mountain for six days now. To the people below, the glory of Jehovah looked like a fire on top of the mountain.

15

Moses to bring Aaron and his sons and seventy elders up the mountain

¹Then the Lord said to Moses, “Go down and bring up Aaron and his sons Nadab and Abihu, and seventy elders of Israel, but only

16

Moses and Joshua remain forty days with the Lord on the mountain

¹Moses and Joshua remained forty days and nights with the Lord on the mountain.

The people to donate materials to make a Tabernacle for the Lord

²There the Lord instructed Moses saying, "Receive these offerings from each person whose heart prompts him to give. Gold, silver, bronze, blue, purple and scarlet thread, fine linen, goat hair, tanned ram and goat skins, acacia wood, olive oil for lamps, spices for anointing oil and incense, onyx stones and other gems."

³"Then have the people make a Tabernacle as a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them."

The Tabernacle frame

⁴"Make 48 frames of acacia wood for the sides of the Tabernacle; 20 for each side, 6 for the western end and 1 each for the corners of the entrance at the eastern end. These are to be held in place by crossbars and also a centre bar, running end to end."

⁵"Make each frame 10 cubits^{F*} high and 1½ cubits wide and make silver bases for them to stand in; 2 bases for each frame."

⁶"Cover the frames and crossbars with gold overlay, and make gold clasps to hold the crossbars."

Interior curtains of fine linen

⁷"Make 10 curtains of fine linen, embroidered with cherubim^{F*} in blue, purple and scarlet thread by a skilled craftsman. All the curtains are to be 28 cubits long and 4 cubits wide."

⁸"Join the curtains together to make two sets of 5, and sew 50 loops of blue material along one side of each set, and make 50 gold clasps to fasten the other two sides together."

Outer curtains of woven goat hair

⁹"Make 11 outer curtains of goat hair the same width, with bronze clasps for a tent over the Tabernacle, but a cubit longer on both sides to cover it completely."

Exterior to be protected by tanned skins

¹⁰"Make an exterior tent covering of tanned skins."

The entrance curtain

¹¹"To screen the entrance to the tent, make another embroidered curtain and hang it by gold hooks from five posts of acacia wood overlaid with gold and standing in bronze bases."

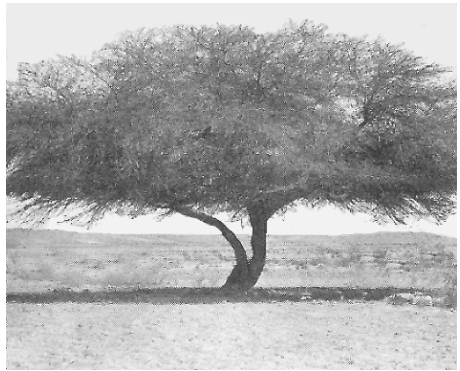
The Ark

¹²"Then make an Ark^{F*} of acacia wood, 2½ cubits long, 1½ wide and 1½ high. Overlay it with gold inside and out with a gold edging around it, and a gold clasp on each of the four feet."

*5 A cubit is the length of a man's forearm from the elbow to the outstretched fingers, generally found to be 450mm or 17½". There was also a longer cubit, the Egyptian royal cubit which was 520mm or 20½". The common shorter cubit is mostly used throughout the Old Testament.

*7 Cherubim are winged heavenly creatures and are described in Ezekiel 1:4-12.

*12 An ark is a wooden chest.



The Acacia tree. The beautiful wood of which was used in the construction of the Tabernacle.

The carrying poles of the Ark

¹³"Make two poles of acacia wood, overlaid with gold and insert them into the clasps on the feet to carry it by. The poles are to remain in place."

A solid gold lid with winged angels

¹⁴"Make a lid for the Ark, of solid gold with two cherubim of one piece with the lid, and facing each other at either end, their wings spreading upward."

The stone tablets of the Law to be kept in the Ark

¹⁵"Place the lid on the Ark, and place within the Ark the stone tablets of the Law which I will give you."

The Lord to appear to Moses above the Ark

¹⁶"There above the Ark, between the two cherubim, I will meet with you and give you my commandments for the Israelites."

A veil to screen the Most Holy Place

¹⁷"Make a veil of fine linen, embroidered with cherubim, and hung by gold hooks on four posts of acacia wood overlaid with gold, and standing in silver bases."

¹⁸"Place the Ark behind the veil. The veil will separate the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place."

The seven branched gold lampstand

¹⁹"Make a lampstand of solid gold with a base and shaft. Six branches are to extend out and upward from the main shaft, three on either side with cups like almond flowers atop each branch, all of one piece with the lampstand."

The seven gold oil lamps for the stand

²⁰"Then make seven oil lamps, with wick trimmers and trays of pure gold, and set them on the cups so that they throw light to the front. ²¹A talent^{F*} of gold is to be used for the lampstand."

*21 A talent weighed approx 34kg (75lbs).

EXODUS 16

The lamps to burn every night until morning

22“Command the Israelites to bring you clear olive oil to burn in the lamps. 23Aaron and his sons are to keep the lamps burning before me every evening until morning. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come.”

The table and carrying poles

24“Make a table of acacia wood, 2 cubits long, 1 cubit wide, and 1½ cubits high. Overlay it with gold and make a rim around the edge a handbreadth wide, with gold edging.”

25“Attach gold clasps to the four corners, for the poles used to carry the table. Make the poles of acacia wood overlaid with gold.”

Jugs and bowls of gold

26“Also make jugs and bowls of gold for the pouring out of offerings.”

The altar of incense and carrying poles

27“Make an altar of acacia wood overlaid with gold, for burning incense. It is to be 1 cubit square and 2 cubits high, with a gold edging around it and horns of one piece with it.”

28“Make gold clasps to hold the poles to carry it. Make the poles of acacia wood overlaid with gold.”



Artist's view of Aaron the high priest and Altar of Incense .

Incense to be burned as the lamps are tended every morning and evening

29“Place the altar in front of the veil that conceals the Ark. 30Aaron is to burn fragrant incense on this altar every morning when he tends the lamps, and again when he lights the lamps at twilight.”

The outer courtyard

31“Make a courtyard around the outside of the Tabernacle, 100 cubits long by 50 cubits wide. 32Use curtains of fine linen 5 cubits high, and support the curtains with silver hooks on 60 bronze posts standing in bronze bases.”

33“To screen the entrance to the courtyard,

make a curtain 20 cubits long embroidered with blue, purple and scarlet thread, supported on four bronze posts standing in bronze bases.”

All tent pegs to be bronze

34“All the tent pegs used to support the Tabernacle and courtyard are to be of bronze.”

The bronze altar for burnt offerings

35“Build an altar, 5 cubits square and 3 cubits high. Make it of acacia wood and carve a horn at each corner of one piece with the altar, and overlay the altar with bronze. 38Make the altar hollow as you were shown on the mountain.”

36“Make the fire grating of bronze, with a clasp at each corner. Two poles of acacia wood overlaid with bronze are to be inserted into the clasps when the altar is carried.”

The bronze altar utensils

37“All the altar utensils are to be made of bronze; the shovels to remove ashes, the sprinkling bowls, meat forks and firepans.”



An old stone relief of the seven branched lampstand or Menorah specified for the Tabernacle.

The bronze washing basin for the priests

38“Make a bronze basin and stand for washing, and place it at the entrance to the Tabernacle. 39Aaron and his sons are to wash their hands and feet with water from it whenever they enter the Tabernacle or approach the altar, so they will not die.”

The perfumed anointing oil

40“Have a perfumer take 500 shekels^{F*} of liquid myrrh, 250 shekels of cinnamon, 250 shekels of sweet cane, 500 shekels of cassia, and a hin^{F*} of olive oil and blend it into a fragrant anointing oil. 41Use it to anoint the Tabernacle, the Ark, the table and its articles, the lampstand, the altar of incense, the altar of burnt offering and its utensils, and the washing basin and its stand. 42Also anoint Aaron and his sons.”

43“Do not use the anointing oil for any

*40 A shekel weighed approx 12 gms (½ oz).

*40 One hin is approx 4 litres.

other purpose, it is sacred. Whoever makes a perfume like it and anoints anyone other than a priest, must die.”

The fragrant incense

44“Have a perfumer take fragrant spices; gum resin, onycha, galbanum and frankincense in equal amounts, and make incense to be burned in the Tabernacle.”

45“Do not make incense of this mixture for yourselves, it is holy to Jehovah.”

17

Aaron and his four sons to be priests

1“Aaron your brother and his four sons Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar are to serve me as priests.” F*

Priestly garments to be made

2“You are to make sacred garments for Aaron and his sons that they may serve me with dignity and honour. Choose men to whom I have given skill in such matters.”

3“For Aaron they are to make an ephod, F* a breastplate, a robe, a tunic, a turban and a sash.”

The ephod for the high priest

4“Make the ephod of fine linen with two shoulder pieces to fasten it, and a woven waistband of one piece with the ephod.”

5“Embroider the waistband with gold and with blue, purple and scarlet thread.”

Engraved stones for the shoulder pieces

6“Engrave on two onyx stones F* in order of birth, the names of the sons of Israel; six on each stone, then mount the two stones in gold on the shoulder pieces.”

The breastplate of precious stones

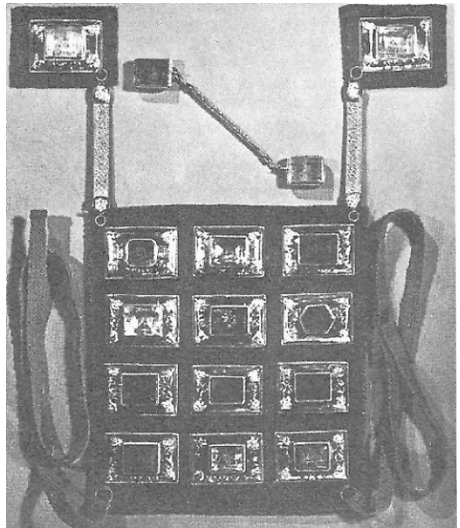
7“Make a breastplate for revelations. It is to be made like the ephod, of fine linen embroidered with gold, and with blue, purple and scarlet thread. 8Make it a span F* square and folded to form a pocket.”

9“Mount on it four rows of precious stones, in gold settings. The first row; a ruby, a topaz and a beryl. The second row; a turquoise, a sapphire and an emerald. 10The third row; a jacinth, an agate and an amethyst. The fourth row; a chrysolite, an onyx and a jasper.”

11“Each of the twelve stones to be engraved with the name of one of the tribes of Israel.”

12“Then make two braided chains with clasps of gold to join the upper corners of the breastplate to the shoulder pieces of the ephod.”

13“Tie the bottom corners of the breastplate to the waistband of the ephod with blue cord and gold rings, so that it will not swing out from the ephod.”



A replica of Aaron's breastplate in which the Urim and Thummim was kept.

The Urim and Thummim

14“Place the Urim and Thummim F* inside the pocket of the breastplate, so that Aaron will always bear the means of receiving revelation over his heart.”

The high priest's robe

15“Make for Aaron a robe of blue cloth with an opening for his head in the centre. Weave a collar around this opening so that it will not tear.”

16“Around the lower hem, embroider pomegranates of blue, purple and scarlet thread, with gold bells between them. 17The sound of the bells will be heard when Aaron enters the Holy Place before Jehovah so that he will not die.”

The tunic, turban, sash and plate of gold

18“Also make for Aaron, a tunic, turban and sash of fine linen, and embroider the sash.”

19“Engrave on a plate of pure gold the words HOLY TO JEHOVAH, and tie it to the front of the turban with a blue cord. It will be on Aaron's forehead and he will bear any guilt incurred in the sacred gifts that the people consecrate.”

Aaron's sons' garments and under-garments

20“For Aaron's sons, make tunics, sashes and headbands.”

*1 The senior priest, (in this first instance Aaron) was known as the high priest (Leviticus 6:1).

*3 An ephod was the priestly upper garment, with an attached breastplate of precious stones and a pouch containing the Urim and Thummim, which was used to obtain revelations from the Lord.

*6 Onyx is a high grade of quartz crystal.

*8 A hand span – about 230mm (9”).

*13 The Urim and Thummim (*Lights and Perfections*) was used by Aaron and subsequent high priests to inquire of and receive revelations from the Lord. It is no longer in existence and its origin and exact nature have long mystified scholars. It is generally understood to be a pair of transparent crystals.

EXODUS 18

21“For both Aaron and his sons, also make linen under-garments to cover their loins and thighs. These must be worn whenever they enter the Tabernacle.”

18

The priests to be anointed and purified

1“When you have clothed Aaron and his sons, anoint and purify them to serve me as priests.”

The anointing

2“Bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the Tabernacle. Wash them with water and clothe them in their sacred garments.”

3“Anoint Aaron first by pouring oil on his head, and then anoint his sons. The priesthood is to be theirs by an everlasting law.”

The purification

4“To purify them, take a young bull and two rams without defect. Also make bread and cakes of fine wheat flour and olive oil without yeast, and wafers spread with oil, and place them in a basket.”

5“Bring the bull to the entrance of the Tabernacle and have Aaron and his sons lay their hands on its head as it is slaughtered.”

6“Take some of the blood and put it on the horns of the altar with your finger. Pour out the rest at the base of the altar.”

7“Then take the fat from around the liver and both kidneys and burn it on the altar. 8Burn the rest of the bull outside the camp. It is a sin offering.”

A ram to be slaughtered and burnt as an offering

9“Take one of the rams and have Aaron and his sons lay their hands on its head as it is slaughtered. 10Sprinkle the blood against the altar on all sides and then cut the ram into pieces. 11After washing the pieces, burn the entire ram on the altar, an offering made to Jehovah by fire.”

A second ram to be slaughtered to purify the priests with blood

12“Take the other ram and slaughter it in the same manner. 13Put some of its blood on the right ear lobes of Aaron and his sons, and their right thumbs and large toes of their right feet. 14Then again sprinkle the blood against the altar on all sides.”

The purification of the priestly garments

15“Take some of the blood from the altar, and some anointing oil, and sprinkle it on the garments of Aaron and his sons. Then he and his sons and their garments will be purified.”

16“**The sacred garments are to be handed down to their descendants so they too can be anointed and ordained in them.**”

The wave offering

17“Then take the fat from the tail of the ram, and also the inner parts, the kidneys, and the right thigh, and from the basket take a loaf, a cake made with oil, and a wafer. 18Put all these in the hands of Aaron and his sons to wave before me as a wave offering.”

19“Afterward take them from their hands and burn them on the altar as a burnt offering, a pleasing aroma to Jehovah.”

The breast and thigh of animals offered in sacrifice to be given to the priests for food

20“**The breast and thigh of the ordination ram belong to Aaron and his sons.**^{F*} It is the contribution the Israelites are always to make from their peace offerings.”

Sacrificed food to be eaten at the Tabernacle

21“**The meat is to be boiled in a sacred place, then Aaron and his sons are to eat the meat and also the bread from the basket at the entrance to the Tabernacle.**”

22“**No one else may eat of it, for it is sacred. If any is left over until morning it must be burnt.**”

The ordaining of priests to last seven days

23“**Do for Aaron and his sons all that I have commanded you, taking seven days to ordain them.** 24Sacrifice a bull each day to atone for sin and to purify the altar, then the altar and all that touches it will be holy.”

The daily sacrifice

25“**From then on, every day you are to offer on the altar two lambs, each a year old. One in the morning and the other at twilight.**”

26“**With each lamb also offer an omer^{F*} of fine flour mixed with a quarter hin^{F*} of olive oil, and a quarter hin of wine for a drink offering.**”

If offerings made every day the Lord promises to dwell among and speak to the Israelites

27“**For generations to come, these burnt offerings are to be made every day at the entrance to the Tabernacle.** 28Then will I dwell among you and be your God and will meet with you there and speak to you. The Tabernacle shall be made holy by my glory.”

The Sabbath sacrifice

29“**On the Sabbath you are to offer a double sacrifice, identical to the daily sacrifice.**”

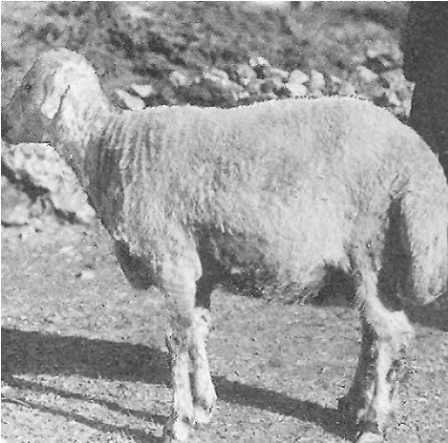
The monthly sacrifice

30“**On the first of every month, at each new moon you are also to present a burnt offering of two young bulls, one ram and seven male lambs, together with their grain and drink offering, and a male goat as a sin offering.**”

*20 To eat as their food.

*26 An omer is approx 2 litres.

*26 One hin is approx 4 litres.



The fat-tailed sheep of Israel. The fat from the tail was offered in sacrifice.

The priest's prayer of blessing

³¹“Afterward the priests are to bless the Israelites saying:

‘Jehovah bless you and keep you.’

‘May his face shine upon you.’

‘May he be gracious to you and give you peace.’

³²“So the priests will put my name upon the Israelites and I will bless them.”

The half shekel census tax for the care of the Tabernacle

³³The Lord said to Moses, “When you take a census of the Israelites, everyone 20 years old or more must pay a ransom of half a shekel of silver,^{F*} then no plague will come upon them when they are numbered.”^{F*}

³⁴“Use the money for the care of the Tabernacle.”

Craftsmen have been given skill by the Lord to make everything for the Tabernacle

³⁵The Lord said to Moses, “I have chosen Bezalel of the tribe of Judah and have filled him with the Spirit of God and with skill in craftsmanship, to work designs in gold, silver, bronze and wood and to cut and set stones.³⁶I have also appointed Oholiab of the tribe of Dan to assist him and have given skill to other craftsmen to make everything I have commanded.”

The Lord gives Moses the Law inscribed on two tablets of stone

³⁷When the Lord had finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him a copy of the Law, inscribed on both sides of two tablets of stone.

*33 A shekel of silver was worth about one days wages.

*33 The decision of an Israelite leader to take a census appears to have been regarded as a sin of pride by the Lord. A plague came upon Israel when King David took a census in later times (1 Kings chapter 14).

19

The Israelites below ask Aaron to make them a god

¹Meanwhile, the Israelites below saw that Moses was delayed many days in coming down from the mountain.^{F*} They gathered around Aaron and said to him, “Come, make us a god who will go before us, as for this Moses we do not know what has happened to him.”

Aaron makes a golden calf to represent Jehovah

²Aaron said to them, “Bring me your gold earrings.”

³So the people brought their gold earrings to Aaron and he melted them with fire and cast the gold into the form of a calf, and shaped it with a tool.

⁴Then the people said, “This is our God who brought us out of Egypt.”

The Israelites build an altar and offer idolatrous sacrifice and then indulge in merriment

⁵When Aaron heard this, he built an altar in front of the calf and announced, “Tomorrow will be a festival to Jehovah.”^{F*}

⁶The next day the people arose early and offered peace offerings and sacrifice by fire on the altar. Afterward they sat down to eat and drink and then rose up to indulge in merriment.^{F*}

The Lord is angry and tells Moses he will destroy the Israelites

⁷The Lord said to Moses, “Go down, for your people are corrupting themselves. They have been quick to turn aside from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol in the shape of a calf, and have bowed down and sacrificed to it and have said, ‘This is our God who brought us out of Egypt.’”

⁸“I see that these are an obstinate people. Now leave me alone that my anger may burn against them. I will destroy them and then I will make you into a great nation.”

Moses pleads with the Lord for the lives of his people

⁹But Moses pleaded with the Lord saying, “O Jehovah, do not let your anger burn against your people? Why should the Egyptians say, ‘It was with evil intent that he brought them out to kill them in the mountains.’¹⁰Turn from your fierce anger. Do not bring disaster on your people.”

¹¹“Remember Abraham, Isaac and Israel to whom you swore, ‘I will make you as numerous

*1 Moses and Joshua spent 40 days on the mountain.

*5 The calf evidently represented Jehovah and not a pagan god, nevertheless it was in direct violation of the second commandment (Exodus 11:20) spoken by the voice of Jehovah in the hearing of all the people just a few weeks earlier.

*6 The Israelites were apparently adapting the religious customs of the Egyptians to the worship of Jehovah.

EXODUS 20

as the stars in the sky, and will give your descendants all this land.”

The Lord relents

¹²So the Lord relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had spoken.

Moses and Joshua go back down the mountain

¹³Moses picked up the tablets of the Law then he and Joshua went back down the mountain.

Moses' anger burns hot when he sees the calf and he smashes the stone tablets

¹⁴When they heard the noise of people shouting Joshua said, “There is the sound of war in the camp.” Moses replied, “No, it is the sound of singing that I hear.”

¹⁵When Moses neared the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, his anger burned hot and he threw down the tablets, breaking them to pieces at the foot of the mountain.

Moses grinds up the golden calf and scatters it on the drinking water

¹⁶Moses seized the calf, and after burning it with fire, ground it to powder and scattered it on the water of the stream that ran down the mountain and made the Israelites drink it.



An Egyptian bull-calf idol, traditionally a symbol of God-like strength and vigour.

Moses angry with Aaron

¹⁷He said to Aaron, “What did the people do to you that you allowed such a great sin?”

¹⁸Aaron answered, “Be not angry my lord. You know how prone these people are to evil. They gave me gold which I cast with fire, and this calf is the result.”

Moses summons all who will follow Jehovah to come to him outside the camp

¹⁹Moses saw that Aaron had lost control of

the people and they were running wild, to the derision of their enemies. ²⁰So he stood at the entrance of the camp and sent word to all the people saying, “Whoever is for Jehovah come out to me.”

The Levites kill 3000 rebellious men who remain in the camp

²¹Then he said to the Levites who rallied to him,^{F*} “Jehovah the God of Israel says, ‘Each man strap a sword to his side. Go through the camp from one end to the other and kill those who will not come out, brother, friend and neighbour.’”

²²The Levites did as the Lord commanded, and that day about 3000 men died.

The tribe of Levi now blessed and set apart to the Lord

²³Moses said to the Levites, “Today you have been blessed and set apart to the Lord.”

20

Moses attempts to atone for the Israelites sin

¹The next day Moses said to the Israelites, “You have committed a great sin, but I will go before the Lord. Perhaps I can make atonement.”

²So Moses returned back up the mountain and said to the Lord, “The people have committed a great sin in making themselves a god of gold, but please forgive them their sin. But if not, then blot me out of the Book of the Lord.”

The guilty to be punished on the day of judgement

³The Lord replied to Moses, “Only those who have sinned against me will I blot out of my Book.^{F*} When the day of judgement comes I will punish them for their sin.”

The Lord no longer to accompany Israel to the promised land

⁴“Now go, lead the people up to the land flowing with milk and honey, but I will not go with you.”

⁵“Say to the Israelites, Jehovah says, ‘You are an obstinate people. If I should go with you I may destroy you on the way, now remove your ornaments while I decide what to do to you.’”

An angel of Lord to lead the people instead

⁶“My angel will go with you instead. Obey what he says and do not rebel against him, for he will not forgive your rebellion, for my name is in him.”

⁷“If you do what he says, and all that I say, I will oppose all who oppose you. My angel will take you into the land of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hivites and Jebusites and I will completely destroy them.”

*²¹ The Levites were Moses' own tribe.

*³ The Book of Life. See note on Revelation 2:36.

The Canaanites to be completely destroyed along with their idols

⁸“Do not make a treaty with them or follow their practices. Do not allow them to live in the land or they will cause you to sin against me.”

⁹“Do not worship their gods, you must demolish them and smash their altars and sacred stones to pieces, and cut down their Asherah poles.” F*

Health and long life promised if Israelites obedient to Jehovah

¹⁰“Worship Jehovah your God and my blessing will be upon your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you, and no woman will miscarry or be barren, and I will give you a full life span.”

The Canaanites to be destroyed little by little

¹¹“I will send terror ahead of you, and your enemies will turn their backs and run. ¹²But I will not destroy them in a single year or the land would become ruined and the wild animals too numerous for you. ¹³Little by little I will destroy them, until you have increased enough to take possession of the land.”

The boundaries of the promised land

¹⁴“I will establish your borders from the Red Sea to the Great Sea, F* and from the Desert to the River.” F*

The people mourn when they hear that the Lord will not go with them to the promised land

¹⁵When Moses went down and repeated these words to the people they mourned, for the Lord had said, “I will not go with you,” and no one wore ornaments from that time on.

Moses pleads with the Lord to accompany them to the promised land

¹⁶Moses returned to the Lord and said, “I do not know the angel you wish to send with us. You said you were pleased with me, therefore let your own presence come with us. Are we not your people?”

¹⁷“If your presence does not go with us, do not send us. How will anyone know you are pleased with me and your people unless you go with us? ¹⁸What else will distinguish your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?”

The Lord relents and agrees to accompany the Israelites for Moses' sake

¹⁹The Lord answered Moses, “Very well, I will do the thing you ask, for I am pleased with you and know you by name.”

21

Moses asks to see the full glory of the Lord

¹Then Moses said to the Lord, “Now I ask of

you, please show me your full glory.”

Moses only able to endure the back view of the Lord's full splendour

²The Lord replied, “I will cause my full splendour to pass in front of you and I will proclaim my name in your presence, but you cannot see my face, for no man can see the full glory of my face and live.” F*

³“I will place you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by in my glory. Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back, but my face must not be seen.”

Moses told to make two new stone tablets

⁴“But first, make two more stone tablets, and I will write on them the words that were on the first which you broke. ⁵Have them ready in the morning then come up again to me on top of the mountain.”

⁶“No one is to come with you or be seen anywhere on the mountain. Not even the flocks and herds may graze in front of the mountain.”

Moses sees the glory of Jehovah and hears him proclaim his name

⁷So that day Moses made two more stone tablets. Early next morning he went back up Mount Sinai.

⁸There the Lord passed by in front of Moses and revealed to him his full glory and proclaimed his name saying:

⁹“Jehovah, Jehovah, compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger. Abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands.”

¹⁰“Forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet punishing the unrepentant and their children to the third and fourth generation.”

¹¹Moses bowed to the ground and worshipped.

The face of Moses shines

¹²Moses stayed there with the Lord on the mountain another forty days and nights, neither eating nor drinking.

¹³When he came down with the two tablets of Law in his hands, his face shone, but he was unaware of it.

¹⁴When Aaron and the Israelites saw the face of Moses shining, they were afraid to go near him. ¹⁵But afterward they came to him and Moses repeated to the Israelites all the commandments that the Lord had given him on the mountain.

Moses veils his face

¹⁶When Moses had finished speaking to them he put a veil over his face.

¹⁷(Thereafter, whenever Moses entered the Lord's presence in the Tabernacle he would remove the veil until he came out and repeated

*9 A type of totem pole in honour of Asherah, a goddess whose worship involved immoral sexual acts.

*14 The Mediterranean.

*14 The Euphrates.

*2 Moses had seen the face of Jehovah previously (Exodus 10:16), probably many times, but the Lord had apparently withheld his full glory or brightness.

EXODUS 21

to the Israelites what the Lord had commanded, then he would put the veil back over his face.)

The Israelites bring Moses materials for the Tabernacle

¹⁸Now all the Israelites whose hearts were stirred and whose spirits were willing, brought to Moses offerings to be used for the Tabernacle; brooches, earrings, rings, gold, silver, bronze, yarn, fine linen, goats hair and tanned skins.

¹⁹They brought so much that the craftsmen said to Moses, "The people have brought much more than enough for all the work the Lord has commanded."

²⁰So Moses sent word throughout the camp that no man or woman need donate any more.

²¹When the Israelites had done all the work that the Lord had commanded for the Tabernacle, Moses inspected the workmanship and was well pleased, so he blessed them.

The Lord commands the Tabernacle to be erected and anointed

²²Then the Lord said to Moses, "Set up the Tabernacle on the first day of the first month according to the plan shown you on the mountain."

²³"Place the Ark behind the veil, and bring in the table and lay out what belongs on it. Then set up the lampstand and the gold altar of incense."

²⁴"Locate the bronze altar outside the entrance of the Tabernacle. Place the washing basin between the altar and the entrance, then erect the courtyard."

²⁵"Afterward take the anointing oil and anoint everything, and it will be holy."

²⁶"Then wash and dress Aaron and his sons in the sacred garments and anoint them to serve me as priests."

Moses erects and anoints the Tabernacle and consecrates Aaron and his sons as priests

²⁷Moses did everything the Lord commanded. In the first month of the second year he erected

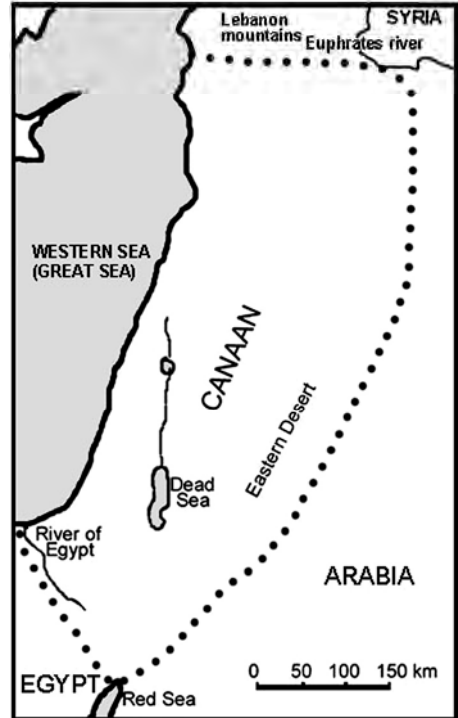
the Tabernacle and consecrated Aaron and his sons as priests and dressed them in the sacred garments.

²⁸The bull for the sin offering was sacrificed at the entrance and the Tabernacle was purified, and for twelve days the leaders of the tribes brought gifts for the dedication.

The glory of the Lord fills the Tabernacle

²⁹Then the cloud descended and the glory of Jehovah filled the Tabernacle.

³⁰The cloud of the Lord was over the Tabernacle by day, and fire was seen in the cloud by night.



The borders of the promised land.

LEVITICUS

The Israelites are still camped at Mount Sinai (they stayed there a whole year). The Tabernacle has been completed and dedicated, and Aaron has been ordained as the high priest and his four sons as priests. Aaron was a Levite, ie, from the tribe of Levi, hence the name of this book Leviticus, which means *'relating to the Levites.'*

Aaron's family was the only one from whom priests were to be ordained (Numbers 1:23). The duty of the other Levites was to assist the Aaronic priests and the ordinary people to offer sacrifices at the Tabernacle, and also to act as musicians. In return the tribe of Levi were to be supported by the tithes and offerings of the other eleven tribes.

Most of the book of Leviticus concerns the Lord's laws on Sacrifices, health rules, and feast cycles. These God-given laws offered a comforting and wholesome way of life, well suited to a pastoral society. They provided a stable rhythm of daily, weekly, yearly, seven-yearly, and fifty-yearly cycles of celebrations, festivals and events, including leaving crop land lying fallow every seventh year, and all rural land reverting to its original family owners every fiftieth year.

This book also includes a spectacular and awe inspiring display of Jehovah's glory to all of the Israelites, but with tragic results for Aaron whose two eldest sons died.

The book ends with the Lord promising the Israelites great blessings if his commandments are kept, but horrific curses if they are not. Later books in the Bible show that the Lord's commandments were not kept faithfully and these horrific curses were eventually poured out in full measure upon the Israelites.

However, the Lord in his love and constant willingness to forgive has given this promise to his chosen people: *"But if you will humble your hearts and confess your sins and the sins of your fathers, and your treachery toward me, and make amends for your sins, I will again remember my covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob"* (Leviticus 9:30).

AUTHOR

Moses, (Deuteronomy 9:1) with clarifications by later Israelite prophets.

Suddenly the glorious splendour of the Lord emerged from the Tabernacle and appeared to all the Israelites. Leviticus 2:3.

CONTENTS

	Chapter		
Sacrifice animals to be without defect	1	Aaron and surviving sons not permitted to mourn 2	
Animals to be over seven days old	1	Priests not to enter Tabernacle after drinking wine.... 2	
Offerer to lay hand on animal's head as slaughtered ..	1	Priests to die if they do so	2
Animals to be skinned and washed	1	Moses angry with Aaron and his sons	2
Priests to burn pieces on altar	1	Jehovah would speak to Moses from above Ark	2
Bird offerings	1	Aaron not to go behind the veil unless commanded .	2
Grain offerings	1	Day of Atonement	2
Only a portion of grain offerings to be burnt	1	Atonement for high priest and his household	2
Rest of offering to be given to priests	1	Atonement for Ark	2
No yeast or honey to be added to grain offerings	1	Atonement for the people	2
Altar fire to be always kept burning	1	Atonement for the Most Holy Place	2
Offerings for unintentional sins	1	Atonement for the Tabernacle	2
Occasions when a sin offering must be made	1	The scapegoat	2
Vow and peace offerings	1	Day of Atonement a day of fasting and no work	2
Animal fat not to be eaten	1	The Holy Bread	2
Blood not to be consumed	1	Clean and unclean animals	3
Sacrifices only to be offered at the Tabernacle	1	Clean and unclean fish	3
Sacrifices no longer to be offered to demons	1	Unclean birds	3
Jehovah to show himself to the Israelites	2	Clean and unclean insects	3
Jehovah appears in his glory	2	Eating of clean creatures found dead	3
The Israelites cry out and fall on their faces	2	Contamination by unclean creatures	3
Aaron's two eldest sons offer unlawful incense	2	Uncleanness from touching a dead person	3
Aaron's two eldest sons die	2	Uncleanness after birth of a son	3

LEVITICUS 1

Uncleanness after birth of a daughter	3	Land not to be sold permanently	7
Male discharge uncleanness	3	Houses in walled cities can be sold permanently	7
Sexual uncleanness	3	Poor to be assisted	7
Menstrual uncleanness	3	Israelite slaves to be treated kindly	7
Leprous skin infections	4	Israelite slaves to be freed in Jubilee year	7
Infectious sores	4	Non-Israelite slaves can be kept for life	7
Infectious persons to live outside camp	4	Non-Israelites slaves can be willed to children	7
Cleansing an infectious diseased person	4	Vows	8
Sin atonement to be made	4	Redeeming a person dedicated as a vow	8
Cleansing of contaminated clothing	5	Vowed animals not to be substituted	8
Cleansing of contaminated houses	5	Vowed houses and land	8
Preparing Water of Cleansing	5	Irrevocable vows	8
Cleansing a tent in which a person has died	5	The Nazirite vow	8
Cleansing a person who has become unclean	5	When a Nazirite vow is accidentally broken	8
He who will not purify himself to be cut off	5	At completion of Nazirite vow	8
Laws pertaining to a high priest	6	A test for suspected adultery	8
High priest must marry a Levite virgin	6	Law of tithing	8
Laws pertaining to priests	6	Blessings if Lord's commandments kept	9
Aaronic Levites with defects not to serve as priests ..	6	Curses if Lord's commandments not kept	9
Priests who become unclean not to eat holy food	6	Curses seven times over if disobedience continues	9
Feast of First fruits	7	Further seven times over if hostility to Lord remains ...	9
Feast of Trumpets	7	Israelites to be exiled	9
Feast of Tabernacles	7	Land to enjoy its Sabbath years	9
A case of blasphemy	7	Covenant remembered if Israelites become humble ...	9
Year of Jubilee every fiftieth year	7	Israelites must confess sins and make amends	9
Jubilee a time of rejoicing and rest	7	These commandments given to Moses on Mt Sinai	9
Family land to be reclaimed	7		

Bold The Lord speaking.

1

Sacrifice animals to be without defect

¹The Lord called Moses and spoke to him from the Tabernacle saying, “**Command the Israelites: Any animal you offer as a burnt offering to Jehovah is to be without defect.**”

Animals to be over seven days old

²“When a calf, lamb or goat is born it is to remain with its mother for seven days, and on the eighth day it will be acceptable as an offering to the Lord, but do not kill a mother and her young on the same day.”

The offerer's hand to be laid on animal's head as he slaughters it

³“Bring the animal to be offered to the altar at the entrance of the Tabernacle. Lay your hand on the head of the animal and slaughter it.”

Only the priests to sprinkle the blood

⁴“Aaron's sons the priests shall sprinkle the blood for you against the altar.”

The animal to be skinned and washed and the priests to burn the pieces on the altar

⁵“Then skin the animal and cut it into pieces. Wash the inner parts and legs with water. ⁶The priests are to burn all the pieces on the altar with wood as an entire burnt offering, a pleasing aroma to the Lord.”

Bird offerings

⁷“If the offering is a bird it is to be a dove or a young pigeon. The priest is to wring off its head and burn it on the altar and drain

the blood out on the side of the altar.”

⁸“He is to remove the crop^{F*} with its contents and throw it into the ashes by the side of the altar. Then he is to cut the bird open with its wings still attached and burn it on the altar.”

Grain offerings

⁹“A grain offering is to be of fine flour with olive oil poured upon it, and then incense laid on top. ¹⁰The priest shall take a handful of the offering together with all of the incense and burn it on the altar.”

¹¹“If you bring a grain offering already baked, it shall be cakes made without yeast and mixed with oil, or wafers spread with oil.”

¹²“A grain offering of first fruits is to be new grain, crushed and roasted, and offered with oil and incense.”

Only a portion of grain offerings to be burnt, the rest to be given to the priests

¹³“The priest is to take a portion of any grain offering and burn it on the altar.”

¹⁴“The rest of the grain offering belongs to the priests, and is to be eaten in a holy place, the courtyard of the Tabernacle.”

No yeast or honey to be added to grain offerings

¹⁵“Add salt to all your grain offerings by fire, but do not add yeast or honey.”

*8 The crop is a pouch inside the lower throat of a bird where food is temporarily stored and predigested.

The altar fire to be always kept burning

¹⁶The Lord said to Moses, "Give Aaron and his sons this command: The evening burnt offering is to remain on the altar throughout the night and the fire must be kept burning."

¹⁷"Every morning the priest is to put on his linen garments and remove the ashes of the burnt offering and place them beside the altar. ¹⁸Then he is to remove his sacred garments and put on his regular clothes to carry the ashes outside the camp."

¹⁹"Afterward he is to add more wood and prepare the morning offering. The fire must never go out."

The sin offering for a priest who sins unintentionally

²⁰"If a priest sins unintentionally, bringing guilt upon the people, he must offer to the Lord a young bull without defect as a sin offering for the sin he has committed."

The sin offering for a leader who sins unintentionally

²¹"If a leader sins unintentionally, and is made aware of his sin, he must offer a male goat without defect as atonement, and he will be forgiven."

The sin offering for an individual who sins unintentionally

²²"If any one in the community sins unintentionally, he must bring as his sin offering a female goat or lamb without defect."

The sin offering for a whole community which sins unintentionally

²³"If the whole Israelite community sins unintentionally, even though they be unaware of the matter, they are guilty."

²⁴"When they become aware of their sin, the whole assembly must bring a young bull as a sin offering, and the elders are to lay their hands on the bull's head as it is slaughtered."

Other occasions for a sin offering

²⁵"A person must also make a sin offering if he fails to speak up when he hears a public request to testify regarding something he is aware of. Also if he has made a rash oath, or has touched something unclean, whether the carcass of a dead creature or human uncleanness. ²⁶In all such matters he must first confess the manner in which he has defiled himself."

²⁷"If a person sins by cheating his neighbour, or by swearing falsely, or any other such sin, he must make restitution in full adding a fifth value to it and give it to his neighbour on the day that he presents his sin offering, a male lamb without defect."

²⁸"If he cannot afford a lamb, he is to offer two doves or young pigeons for his sin. If he cannot afford these, he is to offer an omer ^{F*} of fine flour."

Vow and peace offerings

²⁹"If anyone offers an animal to be sacrificed to Jehovah, either to fulfil a vow^{F*} or as a peace offering,^{F*} it must be a male without defect or blemish. ³⁰Do not offer a blind or injured animal, or one with warts or sores, or damaged testicles, it will not be accepted."

³¹"You may present an animal that is poorly proportioned, or stunted in growth as a peace offering, but it will not be accepted in fulfilment of a vow."

³²"When a peace offering is made, you must also bring a cake of fine flour mixed with oil. This is to be well-kneaded and without yeast. Also a cake of bread made with yeast. These will belong to the priest who makes the peace offering."

³³"The meat of the peace offering must be eaten on the same day it is offered. However if the offering is the result of a vow, anything left over may be eaten the next day. But on the third day it will not be accepted or credited to the one who offers it, the meat must be burned."

³⁴"Any meat that touches an unclean thing must also be burned. It is not to be eaten."

³⁵"And if anyone who is unclean eats the meat of a peace offering belonging to the Lord, he shall be cut off from his people."

Animal fat not to be consumed

³⁶"Do not eat the fat of cattle, sheep or goats, the fat is the Lord's. Anyone who eats the fat of an animal that can be offered in sacrifice, shall be cut off from his people."

³⁷"The fat of such an animal found dead may be used for other purposes, but you must not eat it."

Blood not to be eaten

³⁸"Anyone who kills any clean animal or bird to eat its meat, must first drain out its blood and cover it with earth, for the life of every creature is its blood."

³⁹"You must not consume the blood of any bird or animal. Anyone who consumes blood shall be cut off from his people."

⁴⁰"This shall be a law for all generations, wherever you live you shall not eat fat or blood."

Sacrifices only to be offered at the Tabernacle

⁴¹The Lord said to Moses, "Any Israelite who sacrifices an ox, lamb or goat in or outside the camp instead of bringing it to the priests at the Tabernacle for an offering to Jehovah, must die."

Sacrifices no longer to be offered to demons

⁴²"You must no longer offer sacrifices to demons and prostitute yourselves to them. This is a lasting ordinance for generations to come."

*29 A vow offering was made to obtain a special favour of the Lord.

*29 A peace offering was generally offered out of gratitude for a blessing or to ensure continued prosperity.

*28 An omer is about 2 litres.

Jehovah to show himself to the Israelites

¹On the eighth day after the ordaining of Aaron and his sons as priests, Moses summoned the elders of Israel and said, "Today Jehovah will appear to you."

²So all of the Israelites gathered and stood before the Tabernacle. Aaron offered a sacrifice then he and Moses entered the Tabernacle. When they came back out they blessed the people.

Jehovah appears before the Israelites in glory

³As they did so, the glorious splendour of Jehovah suddenly emerged from the Tabernacle and was seen by all of the Israelites.^{F*}

⁴Fire flared from the Lord's presence and consumed the burnt offering on the altar.

The Israelites cry out and fall on their faces

⁵All the Israelites cried out, and fell face down on the ground.

Aaron's two eldest sons die when they offer unlawful incense

⁶Then two of Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu put fire in their censers and offered incense before the Lord which he had not commanded.

⁷Therefore fire flared out from Jehovah and consumed them. They died there in his presence.

Aaron remains silent

⁸Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the Lord meant when he said, "Through those who approach me I will show my holiness. In the sight of all the people I will be revered." So Aaron remained silent.

Aaron and his two surviving sons not permitted to mourn

⁹Moses summoned Mishael and Elzaphan and said to them, "Carry your cousins outside the camp."

¹⁰Moses said to Aaron and his two remaining sons Eleazar and Ithamar, "Do not mourn or leave the entrance to the Tabernacle, or you will die, for Jehovah's anointing oil is upon you and he will be angry with the whole community. However the rest of Israel may mourn for those whom the Lord has destroyed by fire."

Priests will die if they drink wine before entering the Tabernacle

¹¹The Lord said to Aaron, "You and your sons are not to drink wine or other fermented drink before you enter the Tabernacle, or you will die."

Priests to teach Israelites the commandments

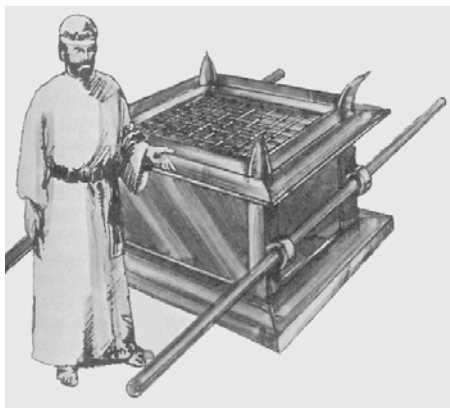
¹²"You must distinguish between the holy and the common, between the clean and unclean. And you must teach the Israelites all the commandments I have given them through Moses."

*3 The glory revealed to the Israelites on this occasion was unlikely to have been the full glory of Jehovah, as they would not have survived, see Exodus 21:1-14. The glory of the Lord was normally shielded from the Israelites by a cloud.

Moses becomes angry with Aaron and his sons for violating a commandment

¹³Later that day, when Moses inquired about the goat of the sin offering, he was angry to find that it had all been burned up. He said to Aaron's sons, "You should have eaten the sin offering in the sanctuary as I commanded."

¹⁴But Aaron replied, "With such things as have happened to me today, would the Lord have been pleased if we had eaten the sin offering?" When Moses heard this he was satisfied.



An artist's view of the altar of burnt offering of the portable Tabernacle.

Jehovah would speak to Moses from between the two cherubim on the Ark

¹⁵Now whenever Moses entered the Tabernacle to speak with the Lord, he would hear the voice of Jehovah speaking to him from between the two cherubim on the Ark.

Aaron not to go behind the veil unless commanded or he will die

¹⁶The Lord said to Moses, "Aaron is not to come behind the veil into the Most Holy Place in the Tabernacle whenever he chooses, or he will die, for I appear in the cloud over the Ark."

The Day of Atonement for sin

¹⁷The Lord said to Moses, "Each year on the tenth day of the seventh month^{F*} there is to be a Day of Atonement^{F*} for sin."

Atonement for the high priest and his household

¹⁸"Aaron is to sacrifice a young bull as a sin offering for himself and his household, and a ram for a burnt offering. ¹⁹Afterward he is to bathe himself with water and put on the sacred garments."

Atonement for the Ark

²⁰"Aaron is then to fill a censer with burning embers from the altar fire and take fragrant incense with him into the Most Holy

*17 Our October.

*17 The Day of Atonement is also known as 'Yom Kippur.'

Place. There he is to burn the incense before me. ²¹The smoke of the incense will conceal the top of the Ark and he will not die.”

²²“He is then to take some of the blood of the bull and with his finger sprinkle it seven times on the top of the Ark.”

Atonement for the people, the Most Holy Place and the Tabernacle

²³“Next he is to take from the people two male goats and cast lots over them. One is to be sacrificed to Jehovah, the other is to be the scapegoat.”

²⁴“Aaron is to slaughter the goat whose lot fell to Jehovah as a sin offering for the people. He is to take its blood behind the veil and sprinkle it on the Ark as he did the blood of the bull. ²⁵In this way he will purify and make atonement for the Most Holy Place and for the uncleanness and sins of the people. ²⁶He is to do the same for the Tabernacle and the altar.”

The scapegoat

²⁷“Aaron is then to bring forward the goat on whom the scapegoat lot fell. He is to lay both hands on the head of the goat and confess over it all the sins of the people and put them on the goat’s head.”

²⁸“Afterward he shall appoint a man to lead the goat to a lonely place and there release it. ²⁹The goat will carry away the sins of the people.”

The high priest and the man who released the scapegoat to bathe afterward

³⁰“Aaron is then to go back into the Tabernacle and remove the sacred garments and bathe himself with water and put on his regular clothes. ³¹The man who released the scapegoat must also wash his clothes and bathe himself.”

³²“High priests who succeed Aaron are also to make the atonement for you and wear the sacred garments.”

The Day of Atonement to be a day of fasting and no work

³³“The Day of Atonement is to be a lasting ordinance for you. On this day you must fast and not do any work.”

Holy Bread to be set out on the Tabernacle table

³⁴The Lord said to Moses, “Take fine flour and bake twelve loaves of bread. Place them in two rows on the table of gold in the Tabernacle.”

³⁵“Alongside each row place incense to represent the bread and to be offered to Jehovah by fire.”

³⁶“This bread is to be set out every Sabbath. It belongs to Aaron and his sons. They are to eat it in a holy place.”

³⁷Moses did all that the Lord commanded.

Clean and unclean animals

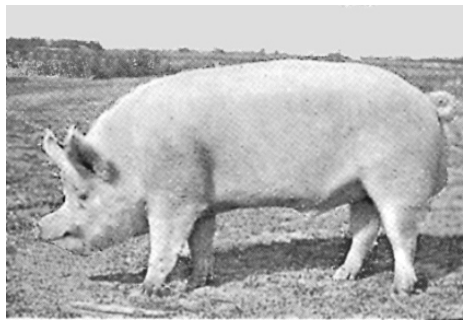
¹Then the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Say to the Israelites, ‘I am Jehovah your God, purify yourselves and be holy, for I am holy. ²You must distinguish between the clean and the unclean, between living creatures that may be eaten and those that may not be eaten.’”

³“Of all the animals that move on land these are the ones you may eat. Those that have a divided hoof and chew the cud.”

⁴“You must not eat those that have a divided hoof only, or chew the cud only.”

⁵“The camel and the rabbit chew the cud, but do not have a divided hoof, they are unclean for you.”

⁶“The pig, though it has a divided hoof does not chew the cud. It too is unclean. You must not eat its meat.”



The pig is one of the many animals designated as unclean by the Lord and not to be eaten.

Clean and unclean fish

⁷“Of all the creatures living in the seas and rivers, you may only eat those that have fins and scales.”

⁸“You must not eat those that do not have fins and scales. They are to be loathsome to you and you must loath their carcasses.”

Unclean birds

⁹“These are the unclean birds you must not eat. The eagle, the vulture, all kinds of hawks and other birds of prey, all kinds of owls, ravens and gulls, the cormorant, the stork, the heron and the bat.”

Clean and unclean insects

¹⁰“All creatures and insects that swarm or move on their belly or legs are to be loathsome to you. ¹¹However you may eat winged insects that have jointed legs for hopping on the ground, any kind of locust, katydid, cricket or grasshopper.”

Eating of clean creatures, found dead

¹²“Anyone who eats a clean creature found dead or torn by wild animals, must wash his clothes and bathe and will be unclean until

LEVITICUS 3

evening. ¹³If he fails to do so he will be held accountable.”

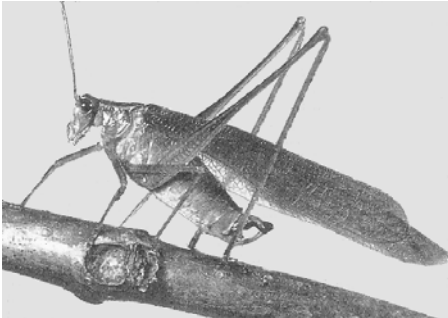
Contamination by unclean creatures

¹⁴“All reptiles and small animals are unclean for you. If one of them dies and falls onto something, that article will be unclean whether it be made of wood, cloth or hide. Immerse it in water and it will be clean by evening.”

¹⁵“If a reptile or small animal falls into a clay pot or oven, the pot or oven must be broken up and everything that was in it will be unclean. However a spring or a cistern for collecting water remains clean.”

¹⁶“Whoever touches the dead carcass of any clean or unclean creature will be unclean until evening. Whoever picks up a carcass must also wash their clothes and be unclean until evening.”

¹⁷“If a carcass falls on to seed that is to be planted, the seed remains clean, but if water has been put on the seed, it is unclean.”



The katydid, one of the few clean insects that could be eaten.

Uncleanness from touching a dead person

¹⁸“Whoever touches the body of a dead person will be unclean for seven days.”

¹⁹“When a person dies in a tent, anyone in the tent at the time or who enters it afterward, will be unclean for seven days, and every open container will be unclean.”

²⁰“Anyone out in the open who touches a person who has been killed or who has died a natural death, or anyone who touches a human bone or a tomb will be unclean for seven days.”

Uncleanness after the birth of a son

²¹“A woman who gives birth to a son will be unclean for seven days, just as she is unclean during her menstruation.”

²²“On the eighth day the boy is to be circumcised, then the woman must wait 33 days to be purified from her bleeding. ²³She must not touch anything holy or go near the Tabernacle until she is purified.”

Uncleanness after the birth of a daughter

²⁴“If a woman gives birth to a daughter she will be unclean for 14 days and must wait 66

days to be purified from her bleeding.”

²⁵“When the days of her purification are over she is to bring to the priest at the Tabernacle a year-old lamb for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or dove for a sin offering.”

²⁶“If she cannot afford a lamb she is to bring two doves, or two young pigeons.

²⁷The priest is to offer them before the Lord to make atonement for her and then she will be purified.”

Male discharge uncleanness

²⁸“When a man has a discharge from his penis, whether it continues to flow or becomes blocked, it will make him unclean.

²⁹Any bed he lies on, or anything he sits on will be unclean. ³⁰Anyone who touches him or these things must wash his clothes and bathe with water and be unclean until evening.”

³¹“Anyone he touches without first washing his hands, or anyone he spits on must also wash his clothes and bathe with water and be unclean until evening.”

³²“Any clay pot the man touches must be broken, and any wooden article is to be rinsed with water.”

³³“When a man is healed from his discharge he must wash his clothes and bathe himself, and on the eighth day he is to take two doves or two young pigeons to the priest who will offer them and make atonement for him.”

Sexual uncleanness

³⁴“When a man has an emission of semen he must bathe his whole body with water and will be unclean until evening.”

³⁵“Any clothing or leather that the semen has touched must be washed with water and will be unclean until evening.”

³⁶“When a man lies with a woman and there is an emission of semen, both must bathe with water and will be unclean until evening.”

Menstrual uncleanness

³⁷“When a woman menstruates, her impurity will last seven days and anyone who touches her or anything she lies on or sits on during that time will be unclean.”

³⁸“If a man sleeps with her and her monthly flow touches him, he will be unclean for seven days, and any bed he lies on will be unclean.”

³⁹“If a woman has a discharge of blood at a time other than her monthly menstruation, or a menstruation that continues beyond her normal time, she will be unclean for as long as she has the discharge and for seven days afterward.”

⁴⁰“On the eighth day she must take two doves or young pigeons to the priest at the Tabernacle who will offer them before the Lord and make atonement for her.”

4

Leprous skin infections

¹The Lord said to Moses, "When anyone has a swelling or shiny sore on his skin that appears to be infectious, he must be brought to the priest who will examine the sore."

²"If the sore is white, but does not appear to be deep, and the hair in it has not turned white, the priest is to isolate that person for seven days. On the seventh day the priest is to examine him again."

³"If he sees that the sore is unchanged and has not spread, he is to isolate him a further seven days. Then if the sore has faded or has not spread the priest shall pronounce him clean."

⁴"The person must wash his clothes and will be clean. ⁴But if the sore spreads afterwards he must appear before the priest again."

⁵"When a person appears before the priest and the hair in the sore has turned white, or there is raw flesh in the swelling and it appears to be more than skin deep, it is leprous, he shall pronounce him unclean."

⁶"When the leprosy has finally broken out and has turned all white, the priest shall pronounce him clean. But if ever raw flesh appears on him, he will again be unclean."

Infectious sores

⁷"If a man or woman has a sore on the head or chin, the priest is to examine the sore. If it does not appear to be deep and there is no yellow hair in it, the person is to be isolated seven days."

⁸"If on the seventh day the sore has not spread and there is no yellow hair in it, the person is to be shaved except for the diseased area, and isolated a further seven days. ⁹Then if it has not spread the priest shall pronounce that person clean."

¹⁰"However if a sore appears to be deep and the hair in it is yellow and thin, the priest shall pronounce that person unclean, it is infectious."

¹¹"If a man has lost his hair and has a reddish-white sore on his bald head or forehead, it is infectious, the man is unclean."

¹²"He must wear torn clothes, let his hair be dishevelled, cover his mouth and cry out 'Unclean! Unclean!' when approached."

Infectious persons to live outside the camp

¹³"As long as he has the infection he must live alone outside the camp."

¹⁴"Command the Israelites to send outside the camp anyone who has an infectious skin disease or a discharge of any kind, or anyone who is unclean because of a dead body."

¹⁵"Send away male and female alike so they will not defile the camp where I dwell among them."

Cleansing a person who has been infectious

¹⁶"To cleanse a person who has been infectious, the priest is to go outside the camp and examine him."

¹⁷"If he is found to be healed of his disease, the priest shall order that two clean birds, some cedar wood, scarlet thread and hyssop be brought out."

¹⁸"The priest is to have one of the birds killed over a clay pot of fresh water, then the priest is to dip the live bird, the cedar wood, the scarlet thread and the hyssop in the blood of the first bird and sprinkle the person to be cleansed seven times and pronounce him clean. ¹⁹He is then to release the live bird in the open fields."

²⁰"The person being cleansed must wash his clothes, shave off his hair, and bathe with water. After this he may come into the camp but he must remain outside his tent for seven days."

²¹"On the seventh day he must shave his entire head; hair, eyebrows and beard and when he has washed his clothes and bathed himself with water he will be clean."

Sin atonement to be made

²²"On the eighth day he is to bring to the Tabernacle two male lambs and one ewe lamb without defect, three omers of fine flour mixed with oil and one log^F of oil."

²³"If he is poor and cannot afford these, he may take just one male lamb and one omer of fine flour, and two doves or young pigeons. ²⁴The priest is to take these and make a sin offering of atonement before the Lord."

5

Cleansing of contaminated clothing

¹"If any garment becomes contaminated with green or red mould, it must be shown to the priest, who is to isolate the garment for seven days."

²"If after seven days the mould has spread, the garment is unclean and must be burned. But if the mould has not spread, he shall order the garment washed and isolate it a further seven days."

⁴"If the mould has not changed, the garment is unclean and must be burned. But if the mould has faded, he is to cut out the contaminated part, wash it again and it will be clean."

Cleansing of contaminated houses

⁵"When you enter the land of Canaan which I am giving you, and find a spreading mould on the walls inside a house, the owner of the house must tell the priest."

*22 A log is about a third of a litre.

LEVITICUS 6

6⁶“The priest is to order the house emptied before he examines the mould. If he finds the mould has green or red depressions that appear to be deeper than the surface of the wall, he shall close up the house for seven days.”

7⁷“Anyone who enters the house while it is closed up will be unclean until evening. And anyone who sleeps or eats there must also wash his clothes.”

8⁸“If after seven days the mould has spread he is to order the contaminated stones torn out and all the inside walls of the house scraped. The contaminated material is to be dumped at an unclean place outside the town.”

9⁹“Then replace the stones that have been removed with new stones, and replaster the house with new clay.”

10¹⁰“If the mould reappears, the house must be torn down, but if it does not reappear the priest shall purify the house by sprinkling it seven times with the blood of a bird, as for the cleansing of a person.”

16¹⁶“A man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and store them in a clean place outside the camp. ¹⁷They are to be kept for use in Water of Cleansing.”

Cleansing a tent in which a person has died

18¹⁸“To cleanse a tent in which a person has died, place some of the ashes of the heifer in a jar and pour fresh water over them.”

19¹⁹“Then a man who is clean is to take some hyssop, dip it in the water and sprinkle the tent and furnishings and all the people who were there when the person died.”

Cleansing a person who has become unclean

20²⁰“The Water of Cleansing is also to be sprinkled on anyone who has touched any dead person, a human bone or a tomb.”

21²¹“The unclean person is to be sprinkled on the third and seventh days. On the seventh day he must also wash his clothes and bathe with water and that evening he will be clean.”

22²²“The man who sprinkles the Water of Cleansing must also wash his clothes, and anyone who touches the Water of Cleansing will be unclean until evening.”

Any person who becomes unclean must purify himself or be cut off

23²³“If a person becomes unclean and does not purify himself, he shall be cut off from the people. He has defiled the Tabernacle of Jehovah.”

24²⁴“Everything an unclean person touches becomes unclean.”

6

Laws pertaining to a high priest

1¹“The Lord said to Moses, “Say to Aaron and his sons, ‘A high priest,^{f*} the one anointed and ordained to wear the sacred robe, must not let his hair become dishevelled, or tear his clothes. ²Nor must he enter a place where there is a dead body not even if it be his own father or mother.”

3³“He is to remain close to the Tabernacle for he has been dedicated by the anointing oil of his God.”

The high priest must marry a Levite virgin

4⁴“The woman he marries must be a virgin from his own tribe of Levi so that he will not defile his offspring.”

Laws pertaining to priests

5⁵“Nor is a regular priest to defile himself by touching the dead, except for his immediate family. He must remain holy for he presents the offerings made to Jehovah.”

6⁶“He must not marry a harlot or a divorced woman.”

7⁷“If the daughter of a priest defiles herself



A typical house of the period.

Preparing Water of Cleansing

11¹¹The Lord said to Moses, “Have the Israelites bring you a red heifer without blemish that has never been under a yoke. ¹²Give it to Eleazar the priest to take outside the camp and have it slaughtered.”

13¹³“He is to take some of the blood on his finger and sprinkle it seven times toward the Tabernacle.”

14¹⁴“Then while he watches, the entire heifer is to be burned with fire. He is also to take some cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet material and throw them onto the burning heifer.”

15¹⁵“Afterwards the priest must wash his clothes and bathe himself, then he may return to the camp but will be unclean until evening.”

*1 There was normally only one high priest at any given time and he was required to be a direct descendant of Aaron.

by becoming a harlot, she disgraces her father and must be burned to death by fire.”

Descendants of Aaron with bodily defects not to serve as priests

8“**No man of a priest’s family who has a defect may make offerings to God. Nor one who is blind, lame, disfigured, deformed, crippled in foot or hand, hunch-backed, dwarfed, has defective eyesight, or who has festering or running sores, or damaged testicles.**”

9“**He may eat the holy food, but because of his defect he must not approach the altar or go near the veil and so defile my Tabernacle.**”

A priest who becomes unclean not to eat the holy food until cleansed

10“**A priest who has become unclean may not eat the holy food until he is cleansed. Nor may a person who does not belong to the family of a priest. 11However, a slave whom a priest has bought, or who was born into his household may eat the holy food.**”

12“**If the daughter of a priest marries a man who is not a priest, she may no longer eat the holy food, but if she becomes a widow or divorced and has no children and returns to live in her father’s house, then she may eat her father’s food.**”

13“**If anyone should eat the holy food by mistake he must make restitution to the priest, plus one fifth of its value.**”

7

The Feast of First Fruits

1The Lord said to Moses, “**On the sixth day of the third month, when you offer the first fruits of your new grain, hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work.**” F*

2“**Present a burnt offering of two young bulls, one ram, and seven male lambs together with their grain and drink offerings, and a male goat to make atonement.**”

The Feast of Trumpets

3“**On the first day of the seventh month, hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. It is a day for you to sound trumpets throughout the land.**” F*

4“**Prepare a burnt offering of one young bull, one ram, and seven male lambs along with their grain and drink offerings, and a male goat to make atonement.**”

The Feast of Tabernacles

5“**On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, after you have gathered in the crops from your land, the Feast of Tabernacles is to begin. It is to last for seven days.**”

*1 This was called the Feast of First Fruits, and was held in June, fifty days after the Passover. It was later known as Pentecost.

*3 This was known as the Feast of Trumpets, or New Year’s Day. It marked the end of the agricultural year in October.

6“**During this time you are to live in booths^{F*} made from palm fronds, leafy branches, and poplars so your descendants will know that I had you live in booths when I brought you out of Egypt.**” F*

7“**The first day of the feast you are to do no work, but call a sacred assembly and rejoice before the Lord your God. Then for seven days rejoice and present offerings to Jehovah by fire.**”

8“**On the eighth day hold a closing sacred assembly and present another offering by fire. This day is also a day of rest. 9Celebrate this festival each year.**”

A case of blasphemy

10About this time, a man born of an Israelite mother but an Egyptian father quarrelled with another Israelite and blasphemed the Lord’s name in a curse. 11So they brought him to Moses who ordered him held in custody until the will of the Lord was made known.

12The Lord said to Moses, “**Take the man who has blasphemed, outside the camp. All who heard him blaspheme are to lay their hands on his head. Then the whole community is to stone him.**”

13“**Whoever blasphemes the name of Jehovah must be put to death.**”

14So Moses commanded the Israelites and they took the blasphemer outside the camp and stoned him to death.

A year of Jubilee every 50th year

15The Lord said to Moses, “**When you enter the land I am giving you, count off seven Sabbath years^{F*} to a period of 49 years, then on the Day of Atonement sound the trumpet everywhere throughout the land. 16Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim freedom. It shall be a Jubilee^{F*} for you.**”

Jubilee a time of rejoicing and rest

17“**The fiftieth year is to be a time of rejoicing for you. Do not sow or harvest, for the land is to have a year of rest.^{F*} 18Food for you and your animals is to be whatever grows of itself in the fields.**”

Family land to be reclaimed

19“**In this year of Jubilee, everyone is to return and reclaim his family land.**”

20“**When you buy or sell land to each other you are to do so on the basis of the number of years remaining to the Jubilee.**”

21“**When the years are many, you are to increase the price, and when the years are**

*6 Crude shelters made of branches, also called tabernacles.

*6 It is generally assumed that the Israelites lived in tents during the exodus from Egypt, but it is unlikely that many families of the house-dwelling Israelites would have possessed a tent, hence the need for booths until tents could be constructed, typically from goat skins.

*15 Every seventh year was a Sabbath year, during which the ground was to lie fallow.

*16 Jubilee means ‘time of rejoicing.’

*17 The Israelites started their counting beginning with a Sabbath year therefore the 50th year would be the Sabbath year, not the 49th.

LEVITICUS 8

few you are to reduce the price, according to the number of crops left before the land reverts to its original owner.”

Land not to be sold permanently for it belongs to the Lord

22“**The land must not be sold permanently, for it is mine and you are my tenants.**”

23**“If one of you becomes poor and sells some of his property, his nearest relative is to redeem what he has sold.”**

24**“If he has no one to redeem it for him, but prospers, he is to redeem it himself. But if he cannot, what he has sold will remain with the buyer until the year of Jubilee, then he can reclaim his property.”**

Houses in walled cities can be sold permanently except those owned by Levites

25**“If a man sells a house in a walled city he retains the right to redeem it for one year after the sale. If it is not redeemed in that time, the house will belong permanently to the buyer. It is not to be returned in the year of Jubilee.”**

26**“But houses in villages without walls are to be considered as open land and are to be returned in the year of Jubilee.”**

27**“However the Levites always have the right to redeem their houses in the cities, and they are to be returned to them in the Jubilee. 28Nor is their pasture land to be sold, it is their permanent possession.”**

The poor to be assisted

29**“If an Israelite becomes poor and unable to support himself, you are to give him assistance.”**

30**“Do not charge him interest on money you lend him or make a profit on food you sell him.”**

Israelite slaves to be treated kindly and freed in the year of Jubilee

31**“If a fellow Israelite sells himself to you as a slave, treat him as you would a hired worker. You must not rule over your fellow Israelites harshly. 32In the year of Jubilee he and his children are to go free and return to their family land.”**

33**“If an Israelite who is poor sells himself to a foreigner as a slave, one of his relatives can redeem him, or if he prospers he may redeem himself. 34The price for his release is to be the wages that would be paid to a hired man until the year of Jubilee.”**

35**“If he is not redeemed, you must ensure that his owner does not treat him harshly, and that he and his children are released in the year of Jubilee. 36For all the Israelites belong to me. They are my servants whom I brought out of Egypt.”**

Non-Israelites slaves can be kept for life and willed to children

37**“You may however buy slaves from the nations around you, or from the foreigners living among you. They will be your slaves**

for life and you can will them to your children.”

8

Vows

1**The Lord said to Moses, “When a person makes a vow^{F*} to Jehovah, he or she must not break their word.”**

2**“If a young woman still living in her father’s house makes a vow, and her father hears about it but says nothing, her vow will be binding. But if her father forbids it, her vow will not be binding and I will release her.”**

3**“Any vow made by a widow or divorced woman will be binding on her.”**

4**“If a woman living with her husband makes a vow and her husband does not forbid it, then her vow will be binding. However if he forbids it some time after he hears about it, then he will be responsible for her guilt.”**

Redeeming a person dedicated as a vow

5**“If anyone makes a vow to dedicate a person to Jehovah, set the redeeming value^{F*} of a male aged between twenty and sixty years at 50 shekels of silver^{F*} and a female at 30 shekels.”**

6**“For a young person aged five to twenty years, 20 shekels for a male and 10 shekels for a female.”**

7**“For a child aged one month to five years, 5 shekels for a male and 3 shekels for a female.”**

8**“For a person over sixty years, 15 shekels for a male and 10 shekels for a female.”**

9**“If someone making a vow is too poor to pay the fixed value, he is to present the person to the priest who will set a value according to what that person can afford.”**

Vowed animals not to be substituted

10**“If someone has vowed an animal, it becomes sacred. He must not substitute another, either better or worse. If he does, both animals become sacred.”**

11**“If what he vowed is an unclean animal, the animal must be presented to the priest who will set a value on it. If the owner wishes to redeem the animal he must add a fifth to its value.”**

Vowed houses and land

12**“If a man dedicates his house to the Lord, the priest is to judge its value. If the man wishes to redeem it he must pay a fifth more than its value and the house will again become his.”**

13**“If a man vows part of his land, its value**

*1 A vow is a favour asked of the Lord, in return for which the asker donates or sacrifices something of value, agrees to abstain from something, or performs a service.

*5 A person, animal, house, or land offered as a vow could be redeemed for money instead, unless vowed irrevocably, see verses 17-18.

*5 A shekel of silver was worth about one days wages.

is to be set by the amount of seed required to sow it until the year of Jubilee at 50 shekels of silver per homer^{F*} of barley seed."

¹⁴"If he does not redeem it, when the field is released in the year of Jubilee it will remain sacred and belong to the priests."

¹⁵"However if the land was not part of the man's own family land it will revert to the person whose land it was originally."

Irrevocable vows

¹⁶"No one may vow the firstborn of an animal, since the firstborn already belongs to the Lord."

¹⁷"Nothing that a man irrevocably vows to the Lord, whether a person, animal or land, may be sold or redeemed. Everything so devoted is most sacred."

¹⁸"No person irrevocably devoted to Jehovah can be redeemed, that person must be put to death."^{F*}

The Nazirite vow

¹⁹"If a man or woman desires to make a special vow of separation to Jehovah as a Nazirite,^{F*} he must abstain from wine and other fermented drink for as long as the vow is in force. He must not eat or drink anything that comes from the grapevine."

²⁰"Nor may a razor be used on his head, he is to let the hair of his head grow long."

²¹"He must remain holy until his separation to Jehovah is over. He is not to go near a dead body not even his own father or mother."

When a Nazirite vow is accidentally broken

²²"If someone should die suddenly in his presence, thus defiling the hair he has dedicated, he must shave his head and make atonement, for he was defiled by being in the presence of a dead body."

²³"Then he must rededicate himself for the period of his separation. The previous days do not count."

The Nazirite to shave off and burn his hair at the completion of his vow

²⁴"When the period of separation is over, he is to have the priest present to Jehovah a male lamb for a burnt offering, a ewe lamb for a sin offering, and a ram for a peace offering together with their grain and drink offerings."

²⁵"Then at the entrance to the Tabernacle the Nazirite must shave off the hair that he has dedicated and burn it in the fire with the peace offering. After doing so the Nazirite may drink wine."

*13 A homer is a full donkey load, about 220kg.
 *18 An account of an irrevocable vow in practice (perhaps made rashly) is found in Judges 8:25-30. Abraham was also willing to obey this law in respect of his son Isaac. The voluntary death of Jesus Christ may also have been a higher form of this law of sacrifice.
 *19 Samuel, Samson and John the Baptist were life-long Nazirites.

The test for suspected adultery

²⁶"If feelings of jealousy come over a man and he suspects that his wife has committed adultery with another man, he is to take his wife to the priest. He is also to take along a grain offering."

²⁷"The priest shall take some Water of Cleansing in a clay jar and pollute it by mixing in some dust from the Tabernacle floor. ²⁸Then he is to have the woman stand before the Lord, loosen her hair, and place in her hands the grain offering, while he holds the polluted water."

²⁹"Then the priest shall say to her, 'If no other man has lain with you, may this polluted water not harm you. But if you have defiled yourself by lying with a man other than your husband, may this water that brings a curse enter your bowels and cause your genitals to atrophy and your womb to abort.'"

³⁰"The woman is to answer, 'Amen. So be it.' The priest is then to write the curse on a scroll and wash it off into the polluted water. He is to take from her hands the grain offering and burn a handful on the altar."

³¹"Then he is to make the woman drink the water. If she has defiled herself it will bring her bitterness. Her genitals will atrophy and her womb abort and she will become accursed among her people."

³²"If however the woman has not defiled herself, she will be cleared of guilt and be able to bear children."

The law of tithing

³³"A tithe^{F*} of everything from the land whether livestock, grain or fruit belong to the Lord. ³⁴You must not pick out the good from the bad or make any substitution."

³⁵"If a man redeems any of his tithe he must add a fifth to its value."

9

Blessings promised by the Lord if his commandments are kept

¹"If you keep my commandments faithfully I will send you rain in its season. Your ground shall yield its crops and your fruit trees shall yield their fruit. ²You will still be eating of last year's harvest when you will need to move it out to make room for the new."

³"You will live in peace and safety and the sword shall not pass through your land."

⁴"I will remove savage beasts from the countryside."

⁵"You will pursue your enemies and they will fall by the sword before you. Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred shall chase ten thousand."

*33 A tithe is one tenth.

LEVITICUS 9

6“I will keep my covenant with you and shall make you fruitful and increase your numbers.”

7“I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be my people.”

8“I am Jehovah your God who brought you out of slavery in Egypt and allowed you to walk with your heads high.”

18“I will bring the sword upon you, and when you retreat into your cities I shall send a plague among you, and you will be given over to the hands of your enemy.”

19“I shall so diminish your supply of bread that ten women will bake their meagre loaves in one oven.”

Curses a further seven times over if Israelites still remain hostile to Lord

20“**If in spite of this you still remain hostile toward me, then in my anger I will punish you for your sins a further seven times over.**”

21“**You will eat the flesh of your own children.**”

22“**I will destroy your idolatrous shrines and altars and shall heap your dead bodies upon them and reject you.**”

23“**I shall lay waste your land and turn your cities into ruins so that even your enemies will be appalled.**”

24“**I will take no delight in the pleasing aroma of your offerings.**”

25“**I will scatter you among the nations and draw out my sword and pursue you.**”

26“**And I shall make the hearts of those who survive, so fearful in the lands of their enemies that the sound of a windblown leaf will put them to flight.**”

27“**They shall flee as though from the sword, and fall over each another when none pursue them.**”

28“**They will die in the lands of their enemies because of their sins and the sins of their fathers.**”

The promised land will enjoy the Sabbath years it did not have when the Israelites lived in it

29“**Then while you are exiled in the lands of your enemies, your land will enjoy its Sabbath years as it lies empty. The rest it did not have during the Sabbaths when you lived in it.**”

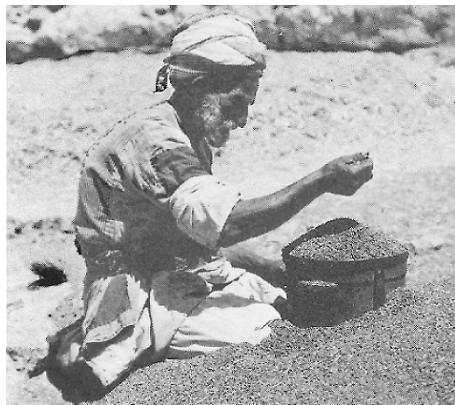
If exiled Israelites humble their hearts the Lord will remember his covenant

30“**But if you will humble your hearts and confess your sins and the sins of your fathers, and your treachery toward me, and make amends for your sins, I will again remember my covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.**”

31“**I shall not reject you completely. I am Jehovah your God.**”

These commandments were given to Moses on Mount Sinai

24These commandments the Lord gave to Moses on Mount Sinai.



A tithe (one tenth) of everything from the land was required.

Curses if the Lord's commandments are not kept

9“**But if you will not keep my commandments, and break my covenant I will do this to you:**”

10“**I will bring upon you wasting diseases that will dull your eyes and drain away your life.**”

11“**You shall plant seed in vain, for your enemies will eat of it.**”

12“**You shall be defeated by your enemies. Those who hate you will rule over you.**”

13“**You will flee, even when none pursue you.**”

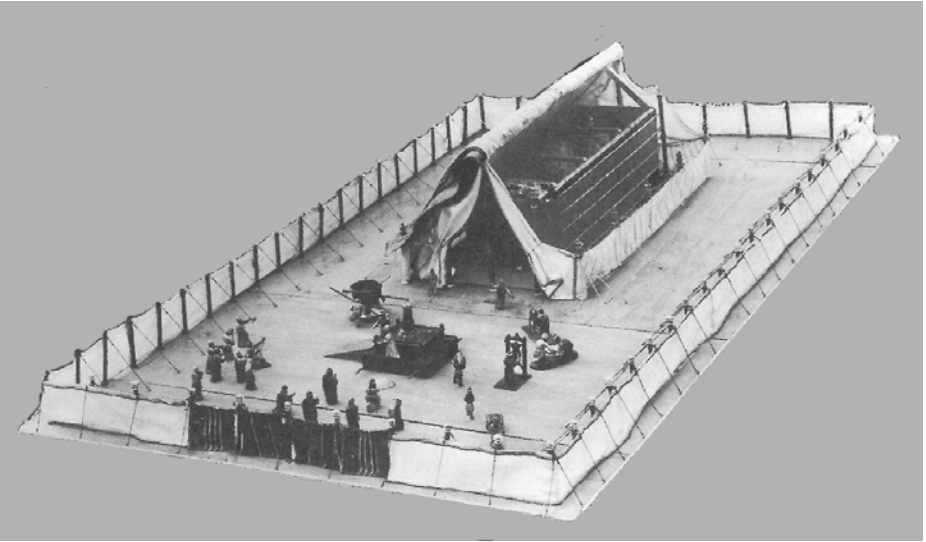
Curses seven times over if Israelites continue to disobey Lord

14“**If after all this you still will not obey me I shall punish your sins seven times over. I will break your stubborn pride and make the sky above you like iron and the ground beneath you like brass.**”

15“**Your soil shall not yield its crops nor shall your trees bear fruit.**”

16“**I will send savage beasts against you to rob you of your children and destroy your cattle.**”

17“**You shall become so few in number that your roads will be deserted.**”



An artist's conception of how the portable Tabernacle probably looked. The roof of the main tent would not of course be open as depicted here.

NUMBERS

The book of Numbers takes its name from a census of men able to go to war, recorded early in the book and a second similar census recorded at the end of the book. This was after the Israelite nation had completed a chastisement of wandering forty years in the desert. In between this first and last census the events recorded in the book of Numbers rival Exodus for interest, excitement and tragic drama.

The book begins with the celebration of the second Passover at Mount Sinai. It ends forty years later, with a chastened new generation of Israel encamped on the banks of the river Jordan, now ready to cross over and enter the promised land after having suffered much under the refining hand of Jehovah.

The Lord, knowing the rebellious nature of the Israelites had warned Moses what was likely to happen if he continued to accompany them to the promised land when he said, *“If I should go with you I may destroy you on the way”* (Exodus 20:5). The Lord had planned to send his angel with the Israelites instead.

Moses however pleaded with the Lord to continue to accompany the Israelites himself. For Moses’ sake the Lord relented and agreed to do so (Exodus:20:19). As a result, due to the constant murmuring and repeated acts of rebellion, none of the Israelite adult males counted in the first census at Sinai survived to enter the promised land of Canaan, with the exception of Caleb and Joshua the two faithful explorers of Canaan. Even Moses and Aaron in a moment of frustration succumbed to pride and felt the chastening hand of the Lord. They too were forbidden to enter the land. One of the original Levites (the only tribe not included in the first census) was also permitted to enter the promised land – Aaron’s son Eleazar, who took his father’s place as high priest (Deuteronomy 10:9).

However, even as this new generation got ready to enter the promised land the refining process was not yet over – the king of nearby Moab in his great fear of *“the horde of Israel”* hired a non-Israelite prophet of Jehovah named Balaam to curse Israel. Balaam is prevented from doing so by Jehovah and instead blesses them.

Nevertheless Balaam’s worldly advice to the nearby Midianites, to have their women seduce the Israelite men to join them in idolatry and sexual immorality is heeded. This results in the deaths of 24,000 Israelites as well as most of the Midianites themselves.

AUTHOR

Moses and later Israelite prophets.

“We explored the land, and it does flow with milk and honey. See, here is its fruit.”
Numbers 4:21

CONTENTS

	Chapter
Second Passover celebrated at Sinai	1
Some not able to celebrate the Passover	1
Unclean persons to celebrate the following month ...	1
Rules for foreigners who wish celebrate Passover ...	1
First census of men able to go to war	1
Total number of 603,550, excluding Levites	1
Levites to carry the Tabernacle	1
Camping arrangement of tribes	1
Marching order of tribes	1
Only Aaron and his sons to serve as priests	1
Levites to replace first-born Israelite males	1
Levites are counted – 22,000	1
Firstborn Israelite males counted – 22,273	1
Levites to take place of first born Israelite males	1
The 273 excess Israelites redeemed with silver	1
Rules for transporting Tabernacle	2
The Levites are purified	2
Levites begin work at Tabernacle	2
Only Levites aged 25 to 50 to serve	2
Two silver trumpets used for signalling	2
The Israelites set out from Sinai	3
Moses’ brother-in-law Hobab joins them	3
Lord leads Israel to desert of Paran	3
The people complain of hardship	3
Fire from Lord comes upon camp	3
The people crave meat and tasty food	3
Moses distressed and wants to die	3
Seventy elders called to assist Moses	3
Israelites to eat meat for a month until they loath it....	3
Moses doubts Lord can supply that much meat	3
Seventy elders prophesy	3
Moses rebukes Joshua’s jealousy for him	3
Huge flock of quail hover around camp	4
Israelites kill quail for two days and dry meat	4
Before meat all eaten a great plague strikes	4
Miriam and Aaron jealous of Moses	4

All three summoned to the Tabernacle	4	People complain about no water and the manna	9
Lord speaks with Moses face to face	4	Venomous snakes sent among Israelites	9
Miriam struck with leprosy	4	Many are bitten and die	9
Miriam to remain outside camp for seven days	4	Bronze snake made at Lord's command	9
Twelve leaders sent to explore land of Canaan	4	All who look up at the image live	9
Explorers return and report	4	40 years of wandering end	9
A land of milk and honey	4	Sihon an Amorite king attacks Israel	9
Cities large and fortified and people powerful	4	Sihon defeated and his cities occupied	9
The tall Anakim are there	4	The tall King Og defeated	9
Caleb and Joshua encourage the people	4	King Og's huge bed	9
The other explorers are fearful	4	Israelites camp by Jordan river	9
Many Israelites fear and want to return to Egypt	4	King Balak of Moab fears Israel	10
Caleb and Joshua threatened with stoning	5	King Balak sends for Balaam the prophet	10
Lord suddenly appears to all the people	5	God forbids Balaam to go	10
Lord to destroy the Israelites	5	King Balak promises Balaam a rich reward	10
Moses pleads for his people	5	God permits Balaam to go	10
People forgiven but cursed to wander 40 years	5	An angel sent to oppose Balaam	10
All the adult Israelites to die in desert	5	Balaam's donkey sees angel and turns aside	10
Caleb and Joshua will still enter promised land	5	Balaam beats donkey in anger	10
The ten fearful explorers die of plague	5	Balaam's donkey speaks	10
Some Israelites vainly try to enter Canaan	5	Balaam sees angel and is warned by him	10
Beaten back by Canaanites	5	King Balak goes out to meet Balaam	11
40 years of wandering in desert begins	6	Balaam's first prophecy	11
A Sabbath breaker stoned to death	6	The king displeased with Balaam	11
Israelite garments to have tassels with blue cord	6	Balaam's second prophecy	11
A reminder to obey the commandments	6	Balaam's third prophecy	12
Korah and 250 Levites jealous of Aaron	6	King angrily dismisses Balaam	12
Dathan and Abiram rebel against Moses and Aaron	6	Balaam prophesies regarding Moab	12
Jehovah to show Levites who is holy the next day ...	6	Balaam prophesies regarding other nations	12
Dathan and Abiram refuse to come to Moses	6	Midianite women seduce Israelite men	13
Next day Korah and Levites gather with censers	6	An angry Lord orders Israelite leaders killed	13
Lord appears before the assembly	6	Midianite woman brought into camp	13
Lord to destroy all the Israelites	6	Plague commences among the Israelites	13
Moses pleads again for his people	6	Phinehas the priest kills the man and woman	13
Earth swallows up Dathan and Abiram	6	Plague is halted	13
Fire consumes Korah and his followers	6	24,000 Israelites die in plague	13
The people murmur against Moses and Aaron	7	Phinehas commended by Lord	13
Lord again appears to the people	7	Phinehas promised a lasting priesthood	13
Lord again to destroy all the people	7	Second census of men able to go to war	14
A plague begins	7	Total number of 601,730 excluding Levites	14
Aaron halts plague but not before 14,700 die	7	Caleb and Joshua only ones alive of first census	14
Lord to give a sign of Aaron's priesthood	7	Male Levites a month old or more – 23,000	14
Aaron's staff blossoms	7	Zelophehad's five daughters	14
The Israelites greatly fear Lord	7	Laws concerning heiresses	14
Levites to bear guilt for sins against Tabernacle	7	Heiresses must marry within own tribe	14
Aaron and his sons given the priesthood as a gift ...	7	Vengeance to be taken on the Midianites	15
Levites to assist priests at the Tabernacle	7	Every man of Midianites killed	15
Offerings and first fruits belong to priests	7	Midianite woman and children taken captive	15
Tithes of people to be given to Levites	7	Balaam the prophet killed	15
Levites also to tithe and give it to the priests	7	Herds, flocks and goods taken as spoil	15
Only Levites to go near Tabernacle	7	Moses angrily orders all captives put to death	15
All firstborn males belong to Levites	7	Only Midianite virgin girls may be spared	15
Humans and unclean animals to be redeemed	7	Soldiers and spoil purified for seven days	15
Clean animals not to be redeemed	7	Lord commands spoil be divided fairly	16
Miriam dies	8	No Israelite deaths in battle	16
The people complain for water	8	Army commanders offer gold articles to Lord	16
Water to gush from a rock	8	Three tribes request land east of Jordan	16
Moses and Aaron exalt themselves	8	The tribes: Reuben, Gad and half of Manasseh	16
Water gushes from the rock	8	Moses displeased at their request	16
Place named Waters of Meribah	8	Second proposal accepted by Moses	16
Moses and Aaron punished for not honouring Lord ..	8	Canaanite places of idolatry to be destroyed	16
Edom refuses Israel passage	8	Great trouble if Canaanites not driven out	16
Aaron about to die	8	Towns and pasture lands for the Levites	16
Aaron's son Eleazar succeeds him as high priest ...	8	Cities of refuge	16
Aaron dies on Mount Hor aged 123	8	Laws regarding murderers	16
Israelites attacked by Canaanites	9	Bloodshed pollutes the land	16
Attackers destroyed	9	Atonement only by murderer's own blood	16

Bold The Lord or an angel speaking.
Bold italics A prophet speaking under inspiration.

1

The second Passover celebrated at Sinai

¹In the first month of the second year after coming out of Egypt, the Lord said to Moses in the Tabernacle, **“Have the Israelites celebrate the Passover at the appointed time, at twilight on the fourteenth day of this month.”**

²So there in the desert of Sinai the people celebrated the Passover.

Some of the Israelites not able to celebrate the Passover due to uncleanness

³But some of the people could not celebrate the Passover on that day for they had become unclean because of a dead body. ⁴They came to Moses and said, “We have become unclean, but why should we be kept from celebrating the Passover at the appointed time?”

⁵Moses said, “I will inquire of the Lord concerning you.”

Unclean persons can celebrate the Passover the following month

⁶The Lord answered Moses, **“When any of you are unclean because of a dead body or are away on a journey, you may celebrate the Passover on the fourteenth day of the following month. ⁷But a person who is clean and not on a journey who fails to celebrate the Passover shall be cut off from the people.”**

Foreigners must obey all rules and regulations to celebrate the Passover

⁸“If a foreigner living among you desires to celebrate the Passover, he must do so in full accordance with its rules and regulations.”

A census taken of all men able to go to war

⁹In the second month, the Lord said to Moses, **“Take a census of all men in Israel, twenty years of age and older who are able to go to war. List every man by name. One leader from each tribe is to assist you.”**

¹⁰That same day Moses and Aaron did as the Lord commanded.

A total number of 603,550 excluding the Levites

¹¹These are the numbers of the men twenty years and older:

From the tribe of Reuben, 46,500.
From the tribe of Simeon, 59,300.
From the tribe of Gad, 45,650.
From the tribe of Judah, 74,600.
From the tribe of Issachar, 54,400.
From the tribe of Zebulun, 57,400.
From the tribe of Ephraim, 40,500.
From the tribe of Manasseh, 32,200.
From the tribe of Benjamin, 35,400.

From the tribe of Dan, 62,700.

From the tribe of Asher, 41,500.

From the tribe of Naphtali, 53,400.

¹²The total number was 603,550.

The Levites to carry the Tabernacle

¹³The tribe of Levi was not counted for the Lord had said to Moses, **“Do not include the tribe of Levi in the census, instead appoint them to be in charge of the Tabernacle.”**

¹⁴“They are to carry the Tabernacle and its furnishings, and are to camp around about it so my wrath will not fall upon the Israelite community.”

¹⁵“Whenever the Tabernacle is to move, only the Levites are to take it down and set it up. Anyone else who goes near shall be put to death.”

Camping arrangement and marching order of the tribes

¹⁶“The other tribes are to camp a distance from the Tabernacle, each under their own ensign.”

¹⁷“On the east, the camps of Judah, Issachar and Zebulun. When you move camp they shall set out first.”

¹⁸“On the south, the camps of Reuben, Simeon and Gad. They will set out second.”

¹⁹“Then the Tabernacle and the camp of the Levites will set out. They are to be in the centre of the other camps.”

²⁰“On the west, the camps of Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin. They are to set out third.”

²¹“On the north, the camps of Dan, Asher and Naphtali. They will set out last.”

Only Aaron and his sons to serve as priests

²²“Now assign the tribe of Levi to Aaron the priest. They are to assist him and all the Israelites at the Tabernacle. ²³However only Aaron and his sons are to serve as priests. Anyone else who approaches the Sanctuary^{F*} must be put to death.”

The Levites to replace the first-born Israelite males

²⁴“I have taken the Levites in place of the firstborn Israelite males, for all the firstborn are to be mine. ²⁵From the time I struck down the firstborn in Egypt, I set apart for myself every firstborn in Israel, whether man or animal.”

The Levites are counted

²⁶“Now count every Levite male a month old or more.”

*23 The Sanctuary was the holy place behind the veil in the Tabernacle.

²⁷So Moses counted the Levites. The number of males a month old or more was 22,000.

Firstborn Israelite males counted

²⁸Then the Lord said to Moses, “Count all the firstborn Israelite males a month old or more.”

²⁹So Moses counted the firstborn of the Israelites and the number was 22,273.^{F*}

Levites taken in place of first born Israelites males

³⁰The Lord said to Moses, “Take the Levites in place of all the firstborn of Israel, and the livestock of the Levites in place of the firstborn of their livestock.”

The 273 Israelites who exceed the number of Levites to be redeemed with silver

³¹“To redeem the 273 firstborn Israelites who exceed the number of the Levites, collect five shekels of silver^{F*} for each one and give the money to Aaron and his sons.”

2

Rules for transporting the Tabernacle

¹The Lord said to Moses, “When the camp is to move, Aaron and his sons are to enter the Tabernacle and take down the veil and cover the Ark with it. They are to further protect the Ark with skins, and a blue cloth over the skins. Then they are to put the carrying poles in place.”

²“Over the table they are to lay a blue cloth and place upon it the utensils and the bread. Then they are to cover it all with a scarlet cloth and skins and put its poles in place.”

³“In the same manner they are to prepare the bronze altar, the gold altar, the lampstand and other utensils of the Tabernacle.”

⁴“When the camp is ready to move the Levites are to carry the Tabernacle, but are not to touch or see the holy things or they will die. ⁵Eleazar the priest is to have charge of the entire Tabernacle and everything in it.”

The Levites are purified and begin work at the Tabernacle

⁶The Lord said to Moses, “Take the Levites from among the Israelites and purify them.”

⁷“First sprinkle Water of Cleansing on them and have them shave their whole bodies and wash their clothes.”

⁸“Then have them take a young bull with its grain offering and a second young bull for a sin offering and assemble the Levites in front of the Tabernacle.”

⁹“Also assemble all the Israelite men, and have them each lay their hands on the Levites. ¹⁰Then the Levites are to lay their hands on the heads of the bulls after which

*29 This figure appears too low for the population. There may have been an upper age limit or restricted birth period not mentioned in the text.

*31 A shekel of silver was worth about a days wages.

the bulls are to be offered to make atonement for them.”

¹¹“When you have purified the Levites they are to begin their work at the Tabernacle.”

¹²“I have given the Levites to Aaron and his sons to do the work on behalf of the Israelites, and to make atonement for them so that no plague will strike the Israelites when they go near the Sanctuary.”

¹³So Moses purified the Levites as the Lord commanded and the Levites began their work at the Tabernacle under the supervision of Aaron and his sons.

Levites to retire from Tabernacle service at age 50

¹⁴The Lord said to Moses, “Count all the Levite men from 30 to 50 years of age who come to serve at the Tabernacle.” ¹⁵So Moses counted them and they numbered 8580.

¹⁶The Lord said, “Only Levite men 25 years or older may do the work at the Tabernacle and at the age of 50 they must retire from regular service. ¹⁷They may assist their brothers in their duties but they themselves must not do the work.”

Two silver trumpets to be used for signalling

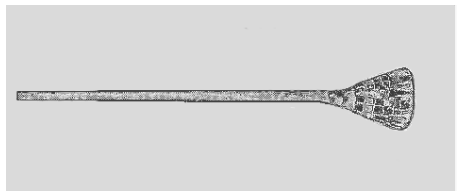
¹⁸The Lord said to Moses, “Make two silver trumpets to be used for calling the people together and for having the camps set out. ¹⁹The priests are to blow the trumpets.”

²⁰“When both trumpets are sounded, all the men are to assemble before you at the entrance of the Tabernacle.”

²¹“When one trumpet is sounded, only the leaders are to gather before you.”

²²“And when you go to battle against an enemy who is oppressing you, sound the trumpets. You will be remembered by Jehovah your God and be rescued from your enemies.”

²³“Also sound the trumpets at your times of rejoicing, at your appointed feasts and over your offerings.”



A silver trumpet of the period.

3

The Israelites set out from Sinai

¹On the twentieth day of the second month the cloud lifted from above the Tabernacle and the Israelites prepared to move from Sinai.

²The camps of Judah, Issachar and Zebulun set out first. Then the Tabernacle was taken

NUMBERS 4

down and the Levites who were appointed to carry it set out.

³The camps of Reuben, Simeon and Gad went next, followed by the Levites who were appointed to carry the holy things of the Tabernacle. (The Tabernacle was to be set up before they arrived.)

⁴Then the camps of Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin set out, and as the rear guard the camps of Dan, Asher and Naphtali.

Moses' brother-in-law Hobab joins Israel

⁵Before he went, Moses said to his brother-in-law Hobab, the son of Jethro, "We are setting out for the land which the Lord is giving us. Come with us, for Jehovah has promised good things to Israel."

⁶But Hobab answered, "I will return to my own land and my own people."

⁷Moses said, "Do not leave us. You know best how to camp in the desert. Come with us and we will share with you whatever good things the Lord gives us." So Hobab went with them.^{F*}

The cloud of the Lord goes above the people and leads them to the desert of Paran

⁸All Israel set out from Sinai with the cloud of the Lord above them and the Ark of God going before them.

⁹They travelled for three days until the cloud came to rest in the desert of Paran.

The people complain of hardship and bring fire from the Lord upon the camp

¹⁰But here the people began to complain about hardship and the Lord's anger was aroused. He sent fire among them and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp.

¹¹When the people cried out to Moses he prayed to the Lord and the fire abated.

The people crave meat and other tasty foods

¹²Then the rabble with them began to crave other food, and again the Israelites started complaining and said, "If only we had meat to eat. We remember the fish we ate in Egypt and the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks and onions and garlic. Now we never see any food but this manna."

Moses is distressed and asks the Lord to take his life

¹³Moses heard the people complaining and was distressed. He cried out to the Lord saying, "Why have you brought this trouble upon your servant and put the burden of all these people on me? Why do I have to carry them in my arms as a nurse carries a baby?"

¹⁴"Where can I get meat for all these people? They keep crying out to me, 'Give us meat to eat!'"

¹⁵"I cannot carry all these people myself, the burden is too heavy for me. If this is how you will treat me, take my life right now if I have found favour in your eyes, that I may not have to face this misery."

Seventy elders called to assist Moses

¹⁶The Lord said to Moses, "Bring to the Tabernacle the seventy elders who are known to you as leaders among the people. I will come down and take of the Spirit that is upon you and put it upon them also, and they will help you carry the burden of this people."

The Israelites to eat meat for a whole month until they loathe it

¹⁷"Now say to the people, 'Purify yourselves, for tomorrow you will eat meat. Jehovah has heard your complaining and will give you meat and you will eat it. ¹⁸Not just for one day, or two days, but for a whole month, until you loathe the smell of it in your nostrils. For you have rejected the Lord by saying, "Why did we ever leave Egypt?"'

Moses questions the Lord's ability to feed all the people with meat for a month

¹⁹Moses said to the Lord, "Here are 600,000 men and you say, 'I will give them meat to eat for a whole month.' There would not be enough if all the flocks and herds were slaughtered for them."

²⁰The Lord answered Moses, "Is the arm of the Lord too short? You will see whether or not what I say will come to pass."

The seventy elders prophesy

²¹So Moses told the people what the Lord had said and commanded the seventy elders to assemble at the Tabernacle.

²²Then the Lord came down in the cloud and took of the Spirit that was on Moses and put it on the seventy elders. ²³When the Spirit first rested on them they prophesied^{F*} but never did so again.

²⁴Two of the seventy elders had not yet come out to the Tabernacle, but the Spirit also rested on them, and they prophesied in the camp.

Moses rebukes Joshua's jealousy for him

²⁵A young man ran and said to Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp."

²⁶Joshua who had assisted Moses since a youth said, "Moses my lord, you must stop them."

²⁷But Moses replied, "Are you jealous for my sake Joshua? Would that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on all of them."

4

A huge flock of quail hover all around the camp

¹That night a wind drove a huge flock of quail in from the sea, and the next morning they were hovering two cubits^{F*} above the ground all around the camp, as far as a day's walk in any direction.

^{*23} To prophesy is to speak under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. It is not limited to foretelling the future and often includes praise of God.

^{*1} About one metre. A cubit is approx half a metre or 18 inches.

^{*7} Hobab's descendants were later known as the Kenites (Judges 3:12).

The Israelites kill quail for two days and dry the meat

²All that day and night, and all the next day, the Israelites went out and killed quail. No one gathered less than ten homers^{F*} and they spread them all around the camp to dry.

Before the meat all eaten a great plague strikes the Israelites

³However before the meat was all eaten, the anger of the Lord was kindled against the people and he struck them with a great plague.

⁴They place was named Kibroth-hattaavah^{F*} because there they buried the people who had craved other food.



Quail often migrate in enormous numbers.

Miriam and Aaron jealous of Moses

⁵From there the people travelled to Hazeroth. While there, Miriam^{F*} and Aaron began to criticise Moses because of his Ethiopian wife^{F*} for he had married an Ethiopian woman. They also said, “Has the Lord spoken only through you? Has he not also spoken through us?”

Moses, Aaron and Miriam summoned to the Tabernacle by the Lord

⁶At these words the Lord said to Moses, Aaron and Miriam, “**Come out to the Tabernacle, all three of you.**” So the three of them went out.

⁷(Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.)^{F*}

*2 A homer is a full donkey load, about 220kg.

*4 Kibroth-hattaavah means ‘graves of craving.’

*5 Miriam was the sister of Moses.

*5 Moses’ wife Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro was a Midianite (Exodus 1:29). The Ethiopian woman is believed to have been a second wife.

*7 This comment has obviously been added later by a writer other than Moses.

The Lord speaks to Moses face to face unlike other prophets

⁸The Lord came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the entrance of the Tabernacle.

⁹He commanded Aaron and Miriam to step forward and then spoke to them saying, “**Hear my words. When a prophet is among the people I give him revelations in visions or dreams, but not so my faithful servant Moses.** ¹⁰**With him I speak face to face clearly, and he sees the form of Jehovah.** ¹¹**Why then were you not fearful to speak against my servant Moses?”**

Miriam struck with leprosy

¹²When the cloud lifted from the Tabernacle, Miriam was white with leprosy.

¹³Aaron pleaded with Moses, “My lord, do not hold our foolish sin against us. Let not her flesh remain consumed with leprosy.”

¹⁴Moses cried out to the Lord, “O God, please heal her!”

Miriam to remain in disgrace outside the camp for seven days

¹⁵The Lord replied, “**If her father had spit in her face, would she not be in disgrace for seven days? Confine her outside the camp for seven days. After that she can be brought back.**”^{F*}

¹⁶So Miriam was confined outside the camp for seven days. The people did not move on until she was brought back.

Twelve leaders, one from each tribe sent to explore the promised land

¹⁷The people then left Hazeroth and encamped at Kadesh. There the Lord said to Moses, “**Send a leader from each tribe to explore the land of Canaan which I am giving to you.**”

¹⁸So Moses called twelve leaders to explore the land and said to them, “See what the land is like, if it is good or bad? See if the people who live there are strong or weak, few or many. Are the towns unwallled or fortified? ¹⁹How is the soil, fertile or poor? Are there trees or not? And try and bring back some of the fruit of the land.” So the leaders departed to explore the land.

The explorers report back to the people – a land of milk and honey

²⁰After forty days the explorers returned. Two of them carried a pole between them on which hung a branch bearing a large cluster of grapes, and there were also pomegranates and figs.

²¹They reported to Moses and the people and showed them the fruit of the land and gave this account: “We explored the land and it does flow with milk and honey. See, here is its fruit.”

The cities large and fortified and the tall Anakim are there

²²“But the people who live there are powerful,

*15 It is generally understood that Miriam was healed as Moses requested but that she was required to remain in disgrace outside the camp for seven days.

NUMBERS 5

and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw the Anakim^{F*} there.”

Caleb of Judah encourages the Israelites but some of the explorers are fearful

²³Then Caleb^{F*} said, “Let us go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.”

²⁴But some of the other leaders who had gone up with him said, “We cannot attack those people, they are stronger than us. The people we saw there are large of stature. We saw the Anakim there and felt like grasshoppers before them.”

Many of the people become fearful and want to return to Egypt

²⁵Then many of the people cried out in distress and wept, and some of the men complained saying, “If only we had died in Egypt, or in this desert. Why has Jehovah brought us to this land to let us fall by the sword? ²⁶Our wives and children will be taken captive. Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?”

²⁷And they murmured among themselves and said, “We should choose a leader and return to Egypt.”

5

Caleb and Joshua plead with the people but are threatened with stoning

¹At this Moses and Aaron fell face down in front of all the people gathered there.

²Caleb and Joshua^{F*} who had explored the land, tore their clothes and said to the people, “The land we explored is exceedingly good, a land of milk and honey. ³If Jehovah is pleased with us he will give it to us, only do not rebel against him, and do not fear the people of the land, their protection is gone. Jehovah is with us.”

⁴But the people talked of stoning them.

The glory of the Lord suddenly appears to all the people

⁵Suddenly the glory of the Lord appeared at the Tabernacle, in sight of all the Israelites.

The Lord intends to destroy the Israelites

⁶The Lord summoned Moses and said to him, “How long will these people treat me with contempt and refuse to believe in me despite the signs I have performed among them? How long will this wicked nation complain against me?”

⁷“I will strike them down with a plague and destroy them and make you into a nation greater and stronger than they.”

Moses asks the Lord to forgive his people

⁸But Moses pleaded with the Lord saying, “No Lord, for the Egyptians will hear of it and will tell the inhabitants of this land.”

⁹“They have already heard that you O Lord

*22 The Anakim, meaning ‘long necks’ were an exceptionally tall race of people, (see note on Genesis 5:14). Goliath who was over nine feet tall was of the Anakim.

*23 Caleb was the explorer-leader of the tribe of Judah.

*24 Joshua was the explorer-leader of the tribe of Ephraim.

are with these people and that they have seen you face to face, and that your cloud stays over them.”

¹⁰“If you put these people to death the nations will say, ‘Jehovah was not able to bring these people into the land he promised them, so he killed them in the desert.’”

¹¹“Now may the Lord’s strength be displayed, for you have declared, ‘**Jehovah is slow to anger, abounds in love, and forgives sin and rebellion, yet does not leave the guilty unpunished.**’”

¹²“Therefore in accordance with this great love, forgive the sin of this people just as you have forgiven them from the time they left Egypt until now.”

The Israelites forgiven but the disobedient will not see the promised land

¹³The Lord answered Moses, “**Very well, I will forgive them as you ask, however not one of the Israelites who have seen my glory and the signs I have performed and yet disobeyed me these ten times will ever see the promised land.**”

Caleb and Joshua will enter the promised land

¹⁴“But my servant Caleb has a different spirit, and follows me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land and his descendants will inherit it. ¹⁵Not one of you will enter the land except Caleb and Joshua.” ^{F*}

The Israelites cursed to wander 40 years in the desert until those over 20 years old have fallen

¹⁶Then the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “**Say to the people, ‘I will do to you the very things you feared. The bodies of every one of you, twenty years old or more who were included in the census and have complained against me, will fall in this desert.’**”

¹⁷“As for your children whom you said would be taken captive, I will bring them in to enjoy the land you have rejected.”

¹⁸“**But your bodies will fall in this desert, and your children will wander here for forty years, suffering for your unfaithfulness. One year for each of the forty days you explored the land, until the last of your bodies lies dead in the desert.**”

¹⁹“For forty years you will know what it is like to have me against you. So turn around tomorrow and return to the desert.”

All the explorers die of plague except Caleb and Joshua

²⁰When Moses reported this to the people they mourned bitterly.

²¹Then the leaders responsible for spreading the bad report about the land were struck down by the Lord and died of a plague. Of the twelve leaders who explored the land only Caleb and Joshua survived.

*15 Eleazar the priest (later the high priest) a Levite, was also exempted from this curse, (Joshua 7:17). Possibly all the Levites were exempted as they were not included in the census, see verse 16 following.

The Israelites try to enter the promised land but are beaten back by the Canaanites

²²Early the next morning the Israelites came to Moses and said, "We realise we have sinned. We are now ready to go into the land the Lord promised."

²³But Moses said, "Do not disobey the Lord's command. You will not succeed. Jehovah is not with you and you will be defeated by your enemies."

²⁴Nevertheless they entered the land, though neither Moses nor the Ark left the camp.

²⁵Then Canaanites who lived in the hill country attacked them, beating them back and defeating them.

6

The 40 years wandering in the desert begins

¹Thus for many years the Israelites wandered about, camping in various places in the desert and hills south of the Dead Sea. ²Their food was the manna sent from the Lord which fell with the dew of the night.

³Whenever the cloud lifted from above the Tabernacle, the Israelites would set out, and wherever the cloud settled the Israelites would camp.

⁴For as long as the cloud stayed over the Tabernacle, for two days, a month, or a year the Israelites would remain in camp, but when it lifted, whether by day or by night they would set out.



The desert near Edom, typical of the area where the Israelites wandered for 40 years.

A Sabbath breaker stoned to death

⁵During this time, while the Israelites were wandering in the desert a man was found gathering wood on the Sabbath day. Those who found him brought him before Moses and Aaron who held him in custody until it was clear as to what should be done with him.

⁶The Lord said to Moses, "The man must die. The people must stone him outside the camp."

⁷So they took the man outside the camp and stoned him to death.

Israelite garments to have tassels with blue cord to remind them to keep the commandments

⁸Then the Lord said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'You are to sew tassels on the edges of your garments, with a blue cord on each tassel to remind you to keep all the commandments of Jehovah, and not follow the lusts of your own hearts and eyes.'"

Korah and 250 Levites and Dathan and Abiram rebel against Moses and Aaron

⁹At another time, Korah the Levite along with 250 other Levites, and also Dathan and Abiram of the tribe of Reuben, rebelled against Moses and Aaron.

Korah and the Levites jealously confront Moses and Aaron and claim equal holiness

¹⁰Korah and his Levite followers came and stood before Moses and Aaron and said to them, "You have gone too far. All of the Levites are holy, every one of them and Jehovah is with them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above us?" F*

Moses bows down then replies that tomorrow Jehovah will show who is holy

¹¹When Moses heard these words he fell face down. Then he said to Korah and his followers, "Tomorrow Jehovah will show who belongs to him and who is holy."

The rebellious Levites are challenged to offer incense as do the priests

¹²"In the morning you and your followers are to bring censers. Put fire and incense in them and offer incense before the Lord. Aaron will offer incense also. The man Jehovah chooses will be the one who is holy." F*

¹³"You Levites have gone too far. It is against the Lord that you have banded together."

Moses accuses the Levites of trying to obtain Aaron's priesthood

¹⁴"Is it not enough that the God of Israel has chosen you from among the rest of the Israelites and brought you near to him to work at the Tabernacle and minister to the people?"

¹⁵"Now you are trying to get the priesthood also. What is Aaron that you complain against him?"

Moses sends for Dathan and Abiram but they refuse to come

¹⁶Then Moses sent for Dathan and Abiram, but they would not come. Instead they sent a message saying, "We will not come to you. Is it not enough that you have brought us out of Egypt to die in the desert? Now you also want to rule over us. ¹⁷Moreover you have not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, or given us fields and vineyards."

¹⁸At these words Moses was aroused to anger and said to the Lord, "Do not accept

*10 Moses and Aaron were also Levites but were priests.

*12 Only the priests (Aaron and his sons and future descendants) were authorised to offer incense before the Lord.

NUMBERS 7

their offerings. I have not wronged any of them.”

Next morning Korah and the Levites gather with censers

¹⁹The next morning Korah and the 250 Levites who followed him brought bronze censers and put fire and incense in them. Then they stood with Moses and Aaron and all the men assembled at the entrance to the Tabernacle.

The Lord suddenly appears before the assembly

²⁰Suddenly the glory of the Lord appeared before the assembly.

The Lord to destroy the Israelites

²¹The Lord commanded Moses and Aaron saying, **“Separate yourselves from this whole assembly so I can destroy them at once.”**

Moses pleads for the people

²²But Moses and Aaron fell face down and Moses cried out, “O God of the spirits of all mankind, will you be angry with the entire assembly when only one man sins?”

The earth swallows up Dathan and Abiram and their households and the household of Korah

²³The Lord said to Moses, **“Command the people to move away from the tents of Korah, Dathan and Abiram.”**

²⁴Moses hastened to the tents of Dathan and Abiram, followed by the elders of Israel and warned the people round about, “Move back from the tents of these wicked men!”

²⁵Dathan and Abiram came out and stood at the entrances to their tents with their wives and children.

²⁶Moses cried out, **“If these men die a natural death, then Jehovah has not sent me. But if the earth swallows them up with everything that belongs to them, and they go down alive to Sheol,^{F*} then you will know that these men have treated the Lord with contempt.”**

²⁷As soon as Moses said these words the ground under the tents of Dathan and Abiram split apart and swallowed them, along with all their households. ²⁸Korah’s tent and household was also swallowed up.^{F*} Then the earth closed up over them again and they perished.

²⁹Hearing their cries the people around them fled crying out, “The earth will swallow us too!”

Korah and his followers are consumed by fire

³⁰Then fire flared out from the Lord and consumed Korah and the 250 Levites with him who were offering incense.

³¹The Lord said to Moses, **“Have Aaron’s son Eleazar the priest take the censers out from the smouldering remains, for they have become holy at the cost of the lives of**

the men who sinned. ³²Have them hammered into bronze sheets to overlay the altar, as a sign to the Israelites.”

7

Next day the Israelites murmur against Moses and Aaron

¹The next day the Israelites gathered together and began to murmur against Moses and Aaron, saying to each other, “They have killed the Lord’s people.”

The Lord again appears to the people

²Immediately the cloud descended over the Tabernacle, and the glory of the Lord appeared again to the people. Moses and Aaron turned toward the Tabernacle.

The Lord again to destroy all the people

³The Lord said to Moses, **“Move away from these people. I will put an end to them at once.”**

A plague begins

⁴Moses fell face down and cried out to Aaron saying, “Quick! Take incense and fire from the altar and hurry among the people to make atonement for them. A plague has begun.”

Aaron halts the plague but not before 14,700 die

⁵Aaron did so and ran into the midst of the people and offered incense and made atonement for them.^{F*} He stood between the living and the dead and the plague was stopped, but not before 14,700 Israelites died.

The Lord causes Aaron’s staff to blossom as a sign of his priesthood authority

⁶The Lord said to Moses, **“I will rid myself of this constant murmuring by the Israelites against you and Aaron.”**

⁷**“Obtain twelve staffs, one from the leader of each tribe and write the name of each leader on his staff. On the staff of the tribe of Levi write Aaron’s name.”**

⁸**“Place all the staffs in the Tabernacle in front of the Ark where I meet with you. The staff belonging to the man I choose will sprout.”**

⁹Moses did as the Lord commanded and placed the twelve staffs in front of the Ark in the Tabernacle.

¹⁰The next day Moses saw that Aaron’s staff had not only sprouted, but had also blossomed and produced almonds.

¹¹Moses brought out the staffs and showed them to the people. They looked at them and each leader took his own staff.

¹²The Lord said to Moses, **“Keep Aaron’s staff in front of the Ark as a sign to the**

*²⁶ Sheol is the Hebrew name for the spirit world of the dead believed by the Israelites to be located under the earth.

*²⁸ As Korah was of the tribe of Levi, his tent and household would have been located in a different part of the camp. Korah himself was still at the Tabernacle.

*⁵ Normally a sacrifice would also need to be offered, but in this emergency it appears that sincere, prayer, and the offering of incense was sufficient. Incense represents the prayers of the people (Revelation 3:20).

rebellious. This will put an end to their murmuring against me, so they will not die.”



The fruit of the almond as would have been seen on Aaron's staff.

The Israelites greatly fear the Lord

¹³After the plague the Israelites said to Moses, “Are we all to die? Anyone who goes near the Tabernacle dies.”

The priests and Levites to now bear guilt for sins against priesthood and Tabernacle

¹⁴So the Lord said to Aaron, “The Levites are now to bear responsibility for sins against the Tabernacle. And you and your sons are to bear responsibility for sins against the priesthood, so that my wrath will not fall upon the Israelites again.”

Aaron and his sons given the priesthood as a gift

¹⁵“I have given you the priesthood as a gift. Only you and your sons can serve as priests at the altar and in the Sanctuary behind the veil.”

The Levites to assist the priests at the Tabernacle

¹⁶“The Levites are to assist you to minister at the Tabernacle and be responsible to you, but they must not go near the altar or Sanctuary or both you and they will die.”

Offerings and first fruits belong to the priests

¹⁷“I place you in charge of the offerings presented to me by the Israelites and give to you and your sons that portion of the offerings kept from the fire. They are to be eaten as something holy.”

¹⁸“I also give you the fine olive oil, the new wine and the grain which the people offer to Jehovah as the first fruits of their harvest, and all that they vow to the Lord.”

Tithes of the people to be given to Levites

¹⁹“You will have no inheritance of land for I am giving the Levites all the tithes of Israel as their inheritance, in return for the work they do in serving at the Tabernacle.”

The Levites also to tithe and give it to the priests

²⁰“However when the Levites receive tithes from the people, they too must give a tenth of that tithe as an offering to Jehovah.”

²¹“This is to be the best part, and is to be given to the priests, to you and your sons.”

²²“The Levites may retain the rest of the tithes as wages for their work at the Tabernacle.” F*

Only the Levites to go near the Tabernacle

²³From now on the Israelites must not go near the Tabernacle or they will die.”

All firstborn males belong to the Levites but humans and unclean animals are to be redeemed

²⁴“The firstborn male offspring of every womb, both man and animal is also yours but every firstborn human and every firstborn male of unclean animals you must redeem.” F*

Firstborn clean animals not to be redeemed

²⁵However you must not redeem the firstborn of an ox, a sheep, or a goat, for they are holy.”

²⁶“Sprinkle their blood on the altar and burn their fat as an offering by fire, an aroma pleasing to the Lord. Their meat is yours.”

8

Miriam dies

¹When the Israelites entered the Desert of Zin and stayed at Kadesh, Miriam the sister of Moses died and was buried.

The people complain for water

²Now there was no water in the Desert of Zin and the people again complained to Moses saying, “If only we had died when our brothers fell before the Lord. Did you bring us into this desert that we and our livestock should die here?”

³“This is a terrible place. It is no place for grain or figs, grapevines or pomegranates and there is no water to drink.”

Water to gush from the rock

⁴At these words Moses and Aaron fell face down at the entrance to the Tabernacle. ⁵The glory of the Lord appeared to them and the Lord said to Moses, “Take your staff, and you and Aaron gather the people together. Speak to the rock before their eyes and it will gush out water.”

Moses and Aaron exalt themselves

⁶So Moses and Aaron gathered the Israelites in front of the rock and Moses took the staff as

*22 Moses in his later summing up of the Law said that the tithes of the people were also to be used to support sojourners, the fatherless and widows (Deuteronomy 6:8).

*24 To redeem means to exchange for money in lieu of, see Exodus 13:13-14. First born humans for obvious reasons could not be accepted by the Levites, and first born unclean animals could not be eaten or sacrificed. Therefore the Levites would instead receive payment in silver from the human parents or owners of the first born.

NUMBERS 9

he had been commanded and said to them, "Hear us you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?"

Water gushes from rock

⁷Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out and the people and their livestock drank.

The place named Waters of Meribah

⁸The place was named Waters of Meribah.^{F*}

Moses and Aaron punished for failing to honour the Lord

⁹But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "**Because you failed to honour me in the eyes of the Israelites,^{F*} you will not bring this people into the land I am giving them.**"

Edom refuses Israel passage

¹⁰When the forty years of wandering was almost up, Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom saying, "Your brother Israel^{F*} asks that you allow us to pass through your land. We will not go through any field or vineyard, nor drink water from any well. We will travel along the king's highway until we have passed through your territory."

¹¹But the king of Edom answered, "You may not pass through. If you make an attempt to do so we will march out and attack you with the sword."

¹²Moses replied, "If we or our livestock drink any of your water we will pay for it. We only want to pass through."

¹³But again they answered, "You may not pass through," and they came out with a large and powerful army. So the Israelites turned away from them and set out for Mount Hor.

Aaron to die

¹⁴At Mount Hor the Lord said to Moses, "**Aaron is about to be gathered to his people. He will not enter the land I am giving the Israelites for you both dishonoured me at the Waters of Meribah.**"

Aaron's son Eleazar to succeed him as high priest

¹⁵"**Now take Aaron and his son Eleazar up Mount Hor and place Aaron's sacred robe on Eleazar, for Aaron will die there.**"

Aaron dies on Mount Hor aged 123

¹⁶Moses did as the Lord commanded and they started up Mount Hor in the sight of all the people.

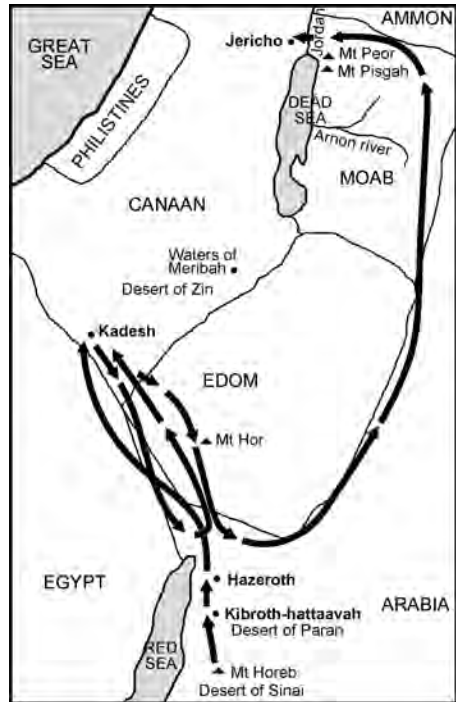
¹⁷Aaron died there, on top of the mountain on the first day of the fifth month of the fortieth year after the Israelites came out of Egypt. He was 123 years old.

¹⁸When the people learned that Aaron had died they mourned him 30 days.

*8 Meribah means 'complaining.'

*9 By rashly using the words, "Must we bring you water out of this rock?" Moses and Aaron took honour for the miracle themselves instead of giving the honour to the Lord. See also Psalms 83:23.

*10 The Edomites were the descendants of Esau who sold his birthright to his brother Jacob later renamed Israel.



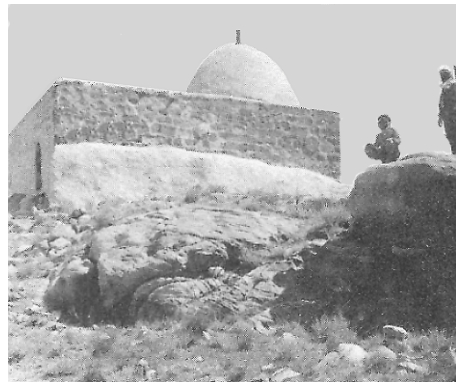
The travels and wanderings of the Israelites since leaving Mount Horeb (Sinai).

9

The Israelites attacked by Canaanites

¹Now a Canaanite king who lived in that region attacked the Israelites at this time and captured some of them. ²So Israel made this vow to the Lord, "If you deliver these Canaanites into our hands we will totally destroy their cities."

³The Lord heard Israel's vow and gave the Canaanites over to them. They completely destroyed them.



Aaron's tomb on Mount Hor.

**The people again complain
about lack of water and the manna**

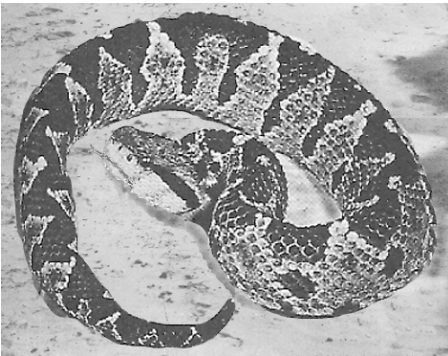
⁴The Israelites then travelled back southward from Mount Hor, along the road to the Red Sea to go around Edom.

⁵But the people grew discouraged on the way and complained again against God and against Moses saying, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt to die in this desert? There is no bread and no water, and we hate this miserable manna."

**Venomous snakes sent among the
Israelites and many are bitten and die**

⁶So the Lord sent venomous snakes among the Israelites. They bit the people and many died.

⁷The people said to Moses, "We sinned when we spoke against the Lord and against you. Pray that Jehovah will take the snakes away from us." So Moses prayed for the people.



The viper. A highly poisonous snake found in the middle east.

**The Lord tells Moses to make a bronze
image of a snake on a pole**

⁸The Lord said to Moses, "Make an image of a snake and put it up on a pole. Anyone who is bitten need only look up at it and they will live."

**All who were bitten and
looked up at the image lived**

⁹So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Whenever anyone was bitten by a snake, all they had to do was look up at the bronze snake and they lived.^{F*}

The 40 years of wandering end

¹⁰The Israelites then set out northward again, passing east of the Dead Sea until they came to the borders of the plains of Moab.

Sihon an Amorite king attacks Israel

¹¹There Israel sent messengers to Sihon, one

*9 The apostle John states in his gospel that this miracle foreshadowed the future lifting up on the cross of Jesus Christ, and typified the ease with which we can be forgiven of our sins if we but repent and believe in Jesus Christ (John 3:11). The snake or serpent is representative of sin in the Bible (see Genesis 3:13, Matt-Mark-Luke 19:32, Revelation 9:15). Probably with this in mind Paul later wrote, "God made Christ who was without sin, to become sin for us" (2 Corinthians 1:11).

of the Amorite^{F*} kings who dwell in the plains, asking permission to pass through his land.

¹²But Sihon would not let Israel pass through. Instead he mustered his entire army and they marched out and fought with Israel.

**The Israelites put the people of King Sihon
to the sword and occupy his cities**

¹³Israel however put them all to the sword, and took over Sihon's land. They occupied his cities from the Arnon river to the Jabbok river, but only as far as the Ammonites whose border was strongly fortified.

¹⁴After settling there for a time, the Israelites destroyed the Amorites in the surrounding settlements then marched toward the Amorite land of Bashan.

**Israel annihilates the army of the tall
King Og and takes over his land**

¹⁵Og, the king of Bashan and his whole army marched out to meet the Israelites in battle. The Lord said to Moses, "**Do not fear Og, for I have given him over to you with his whole army and his land. Do to him what you did to Sihon.**"

¹⁶So they struck Og down, together with his whole army, leaving no survivors and took possession of his land.

King Og's huge bed

¹⁷Now Og was a remnant of the Anakim. His bed was made of iron and measured nine cubits long by four cubits wide.^{F*}

**The Israelites camp by the Jordan river
across from the promised land**

¹⁸The Israelites then travelled across the plains of Moab and camped alongside the Jordan river, across from Jericho.

10

King Balak of Moab fears Israel

¹Now when Balak, king of Moab saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites he was filled with dread, for there were so many Israelites.

²The Moabites said, "This horde will lick up everything around us, as an ox licks up the grass of the field." ^{F*}

King Balak sends for Balaam the prophet

³So the king of Moab sent officials with money in their hand to summon Balaam the prophet who lived at Pethor near the River Euphrates.

⁴When the officials arrived Balaam said to them, "Stay the night and I will give you the answer Jehovah gives me."

God forbids Balaam to go

⁵That night God came to Balaam and asked, "**Who are these men with you?**"

*11 The Amorites were descended from Noah's grandson Canaan, and were widely spread throughout the northern countries.

*17 Approx 4 metres long by 2 metres wide (13 ft by 6ft 6"). King Og was one of the tall race of Anakim.

*2 The account of Balaam that follows was probably inserted after the death of Moses as the language is different.

NUMBERS 11

⁶Balaam said, “Balak king of Moab sent them to me with this message: ‘A people have come up out of Egypt and cover the face of the land. Come and curse them for me, that I may be able to defeat them and drive them out, for they are too powerful for me. ⁷I know that those you bless are blessed, and those you curse are cursed.’”

⁸God said to Balaam, “**Do not go with them. You must not curse those people for they are blessed.**”

⁹So the next morning Balaam said to the officials, “Return to your own land, for Jehovah has refused to let me go with you.”

King Balak again sends for Balaam and promises him a handsome reward

¹⁰When the king of Moab heard this, he sent other officials, more numerous and distinguished than the first.

¹¹They came to Balaam and said, “King Balak says, ‘I will reward you handsomely and do whatever you say. Come, put a curse on these people for me.’”

¹²But Balaam answered, “Even if Balak gave me his palace filled with silver and gold, I would have no power to go beyond the command of Jehovah my God. ¹³However, stay here tonight and I will inquire of the Lord again and find out what else he will tell me.”

God permits Balaam to go

¹⁴That night, God again came to Balaam and said, “**Very well, since these men have come to summon you, you may go with them, but you must only do what I tell you.**”

The angel of the Lord sent to oppose Balaam

¹⁵So Balaam arose in the morning and saddled his donkey and went with the officials of Moab.

¹⁶However the Lord was displeased that Balaam was so eager to go, and sent his angel to oppose him.

Balaam’s donkey sees the angel and turns aside

¹⁷As Balaam was riding along, his donkey saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road with a drawn sword in his hand, so she turned off the road into a field. Balaam beat the donkey to get her back on the road.

¹⁸Then the angel stood in a narrow path between two vineyards, with walls on either side. This time the donkey pressed close to the wall, crushing Balaam’s foot, so he beat her again.

The donkey lies down under Balaam who beats her in anger

¹⁹Then the angel stood in a very narrow place, where there was no room to get past. This time the donkey lay down under Balaam. He became very angry and beat her with his staff.

Balaam’s donkey speaks

²⁰Then the Lord opened the mouth of the donkey and she spoke to Balaam saying, “What have I done that you have beat me these three times?”

²¹Balaam answered, “You are making a fool of me! If I had a sword I would kill you right now!”

²²The donkey said to Balaam, “Have I been in the habit of doing this to you?”

“No,” he said.

Balaam sees the angel, who speaks to him

²³Then the Lord opened Balaam’s eyes and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road with his sword drawn. So he fell face down before him.

²⁴The angel said, “**Why have you beaten your donkey these three times? I have come here to oppose you because your path is headstrong before me.**” ²⁵Your donkey saw me and turned away from me these three times. If she had not turned away I would certainly have killed you by now, but would have spared her.”

Balaam warned by the angel to say only what the Lord tells him

²⁶Balaam said to the angel “I have sinned. I did not realise you were standing in the road to oppose me. If you are displeased I will go back.”

²⁷The angel said to Balaam, “**Go with the men, but speak only what I tell you.**” So Balaam continued on with the officials of Balak.



The donkey is still a common way to travel in biblical lands.

11

King Balak goes out to meet Balaam

¹When the king heard that Balaam was coming, he went out to meet him and said to him, “Why did you not come to me at first? Am I not able to reward you?”

²Balaam replied, “I have come to you now. But I must speak only what God puts in my mouth.”

Balaam’s first prophecy

³The next morning the king took Balaam up to a high place and from there he could see to the outmost parts of the Israelite camp.

⁴Balaam said to the king, “Build seven altars

*24 Angels often speak as if the Lord himself were speaking.

here and prepare seven bulls and seven rams.”

⁵The king did as Balaam said and they offered a bull and a ram on each altar.

⁶Then Balaam said to the king, “Wait here beside your offerings while I go aside. Perhaps Jehovah will come to meet with me, and he went off to a barren height.

⁷The Lord met with Balaam and said to him, **“Return to Balak and prophesy the words I will put in your mouth.”**

⁸So Balaam returned to the king who was still standing beside his offerings with all the officials of Moab. Then Balaam prophesied:

⁹***“Balak, king of Moab said, ‘Come, curse Israel for me.’***

¹⁰***“But how can I curse whom God has not cursed?”***

¹¹***“From the rocky peaks I see them, a people living apart.”***

¹²***“Who can number a fourth part of Israel?”***

¹³***“May I die the death of the righteous and my end be like theirs.”***

The king is displeased with Balaam

¹⁴The king said to Balaam, “What have you done? I brought you here to curse my enemies but you have blessed them!”

¹⁵Balaam answered, “I must speak what Jehovah puts in my mouth.”

Balaam’s second prophecy

¹⁶Then Balak said to him, “Come with me to another place where you can see them. You will only see part of them but curse them from there.”

¹⁷So he took him to a field on the heights of Mount Pisgah, and there he again built seven altars and offered a bull and a ram on each altar as before.

¹⁸The Lord again came to Balaam. When Balaam returned the king said to him, “What did Jehovah say?”

¹⁹Then Balaam prophesied:

²⁰***“God is not a man that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not fulfil?”***

²¹***“I have received a command to bless. He has blessed and I cannot revoke it.”***

²²***“Jehovah has brought them out of Egypt and is with Israel.”***

²³***“He gives them the strength of a wild ox. There is no prophecy against Israel.”***

²⁴***“It shall be said of Israel, ‘See what God has done!’”***

²⁵***“This people are rising like a lion who will not rest until he has devoured his prey.”***

²⁶The king said to Balaam, “If you cannot curse them, at least do not bless them.”

²⁷Balaam answered, “Did I not tell you I must do whatever Jehovah says?”

Balaam’s third prophecy

¹The king said, “Let me take you to another place. Perhaps it will please God to let you curse Israel from there.”

²So Balak took him to the top of Mount Peor. Again seven altars were built and sacrifices offered.

³This time Balaam did not turn aside as before, for as he looked out and saw Israel encamped tribe by tribe, the Spirit of God came upon him and he prophesied:

⁴***“The prophecy of Balaam who hears the words of God and sees visions from the Almighty.”***

⁵***“How beautiful are the tents of Israel, like gardens beside a river.”***

⁶***“Their king will be greater than Agag^{F*} and his kingdom exalted.”***

⁷***“May those who bless them be blessed, and those who curse them be cursed.”***

The king angrily dismisses Balaam

⁸At these words the kings anger burned against Balaam. He struck his hands together^{F*} and said to him, “I summoned you to curse my enemies, but you have blessed them three times. Depart at once. I said I would reward you but Jehovah has kept you from being rewarded.”

Balaam prophecies regarding Moab and other nations

⁹Balaam answered Balak, “Did I not tell the men you sent me, ‘Even if you gave me your palace filled with silver and gold I could not go beyond the command of the Lord.’”

¹⁰“Now I will return to my own people, but let me warn you of what this people will do to your people in days to come.” Then Balaam prophesied:

¹¹***“A sceptre will rise out of Israel and crush Moab.”***^{F*}

¹²***“Edom^{F*} too will be conquered, but Israel will grow strong.”***

¹³Then Balaam looked toward the Amalekites and prophesied:

¹⁴***“Amalek^{F*} was first among the nations, but he will come to ruin at last.”***

¹⁵Then he looked toward the Kenites^{F*} and prophesied:

¹⁶***“Your dwelling place is secure, set high in the rock. Yet you will be destroyed***

^{*6} Agag is believed to have been a great king among the Amalekites of that day.

^{*8} Striking the hands together was a sign of annulling an agreement.

^{*11} Balak was king of Moab.

^{*12} Edom had denied passage of the Israelites through their land.

^{*14} Amalekites had attacked Israel soon after they left Egypt.

^{*15} The Kenites were a Canaanite tribe who lived in a mountain stronghold.

NUMBERS 13

when Assyria takes you captive.”

¹⁷“*Then ships will come from Cyprus and subdue Assyria and Eber,^{F*} but Cyprus too shall come to ruin.”*

¹⁸Then Balaam returned home.^{F*}

13

Israelite men seduced into idolatry and sexual immorality by Midianite women

¹While Israel was encamped there, in the plains of Moab, Midianite women of Moab^{F*} invited some of the Israelite men to attend sacrifices to their god Baal.^{F*}

²So the Israelite men began to indulge in idolatry and sexual immorality with the Midianite women and ate and bowed down before Baal.

The Lord angrily commands that the guilty Israelite leaders be killed

³At this the Lord’s anger burned against Israel. He said to Moses, “**Take the leaders of the people and kill them. Hang them in broad daylight before Jehovah that my fierce anger may turn away from Israel.**”

⁴But Moses said to the judges of Israel, “Each of you quickly put to death those of your people who have joined in worshipping Baal.”

A Midianite woman brought into the camp

⁵Then Zimri, an Israelite man of the tribe of Simeon brought a Midianite woman into the camp, right before the eyes of Moses and the leaders of Israel who were weeping at the entrance to the Tabernacle.

Phinehas the priest kills the man and woman

⁶When Phinehas the priest, son of Eleazar the high priest saw this, he took a spear in his hand and followed Zimri into his tent and drove the spear through the man and the belly of the woman, killing them both.

⁷The name of the Midianite woman who was killed was Cozbi, the daughter of Zur a Midianite leader.

24,000 Israelites die from plague

⁸Then a plague which had commenced among the Israelites because of Baal, was halted.

⁹However the number of Israelites who died in the plague was 24,000.*^F

*17 Eber, which means ‘*beyond (the river Euphrates)*’ is thought to be the general Mesopotamian region of Babylon and Assyria, nowadays Iraq.

*18 Shortly afterward, Balaam evidently counseled the Midianites who lived among the Moabites, that the only way to defeat Israel was to seduce them into idolatry and sexual immorality (see Numbers 15:8). His advice was followed, as seen in the next chapter, eventually resulting in the deaths of 24,000 Israelites, along with most of the Midianites and also Balaam himself.

*1 The Midianites were a widespread people from the south. Moses’ wife Zipporah was a Midianite. Evidently several tribes of Midianites lived among the Moabites.

*1 Baal, which means ‘*master*’ is a general term for local demon gods, whose worship usually involved sexual immorality.

*9 Perhaps mostly from Zimri’s tribe of Simeon, for their second census total is less than half that of the first (Numbers 1:11 and 14:4).



A Baal idol.

Phinehas commended by the Lord

¹⁰The Lord said to Moses, “**Phinehas the priest has turned my anger away from the Israelites, for he was as zealous as I am for my honour among them.**”

Phinehas and his descendants promised a lasting priesthood

¹¹“**Therefore Phinehas and his descendants shall have a lasting priesthood, for he was zealous for the honour of his God and made atonement for the Israelites.**”

14

The second census of men able to go to war

¹The Lord said to Moses, “**Take a census of all Israelites twenty years of age or more who are able to go to war.** ²For the land I am bringing you into is to be allotted according to numbers. To a larger tribe is to be given a larger inheritance, and to a smaller tribe a smaller one. The land is to be divided by lot.”

³So on the plains of Moab, by the Jordan river across from Jericho, Moses and Eleazar the high priest took the census as the Lord commanded.

A total number of 601,730 excluding the Levites

⁴These are the numbers of the men twenty years and older:

From the tribe of Reuben, 43,730.

From the tribe of Simeon, 22,200.

From the tribe of Gad, 40,500.

From the tribe of Judah, 76,500.
 From the tribe of Issachar, 64,300.
 From the tribe of Zebulun, 60,500.
 From the tribe of Ephraim, 32,500.
 From the tribe of Manasseh, 52,700.
 From the tribe of Benjamin, 45,600.
 From the tribe of Dan, 64,400.
 From the tribe of Asher, 53,400.
 From the tribe of Naphtali, 45,400.
⁵The total number, excluding the Levites was 601,730.

None of the Israelites of the original census left alive except Caleb and Joshua

⁶Not one of the men counted was among those counted by Moses in the desert of Sinai, for the Lord had told those Israelites they would surely die in the desert. Not one of them was left except Caleb and Joshua.

The number of male Levites a month old or more – 23,000

⁷All the male Levites a month old or more numbered 23,000. They were not counted with the other Israelites because they inherited no land among them.

Zelophehad's five daughters seek an inheritance

⁸Then five daughters of Zelophehad of the tribe of Manasseh came to Moses and said, "Our father died in the desert and left no sons. Why should our father's name disappear from his tribe because he had no son? Give us property among our father's relatives."

The law concerning heiresses

⁹Moses took their case to the Lord and the Lord said to him, "**Zelophehad's daughters are in the right. Give their father's inheritance to them.**"

¹⁰"If ever a man dies and leaves no son, his inheritance is to be given to his daughter. If he has no daughter, give his inheritance to his nearest relative."

Heiresses must marry within their own tribe

¹¹But the elders of the tribe of Manasseh came to Moses and said, "If the daughters of Zelophehad marry men from other tribes, part of our inheritance will be taken away."

¹²The Lord said to Moses, "**What the elders of Manasseh say is valid. Zelophehad's daughters must marry within the tribe of their father.**"

¹³"No inheritance in Israel is to pass from tribe to tribe. Every daughter who inherits land must marry within her father's tribe."

15

The Lord commands Moses to take vengeance on the Midianites

¹Then the Lord said to Moses, "Take vengeance on the Midianites for what they

did to the Israelites. After that, you will be gathered to your people." ^{F*}

²So Moses commanded the Israelites saying, "Arm one thousand men from each tribe to go to war against the Midianites."

The Israelites kill every man of the Midianite army and also Balaam the prophet

³12,000 men armed themselves and marched off to fight against the Midianites. Phinehas the priest went also, taking with him articles from the Sanctuary and the trumpets for signalling.

⁴The Israelite army fought against the armies of the five Midianite kings and killed every man.

⁵They burned the Midianite towns and camps, captured their women and children and took all their herds, flocks and goods as spoil.

⁶They also killed Balaam the prophet.

Moses angrily orders all the Midianite captives put to death

⁷Moses, Eleazar the high priest and the elders of the people went out to meet the army as they returned from battle.

⁸When Moses saw the captive Midianite women he was angry with the officers of the army and demanded, "Why have you allowed the women to live? They were the ones who followed Balaam's advice and turned the Israelites away from Jehovah to Baal so that a plague struck the people."

⁹"You must put to death every male child and every woman who has lain with a man. You may however save for yourselves any girl who has never lain with a man."

The Israelite soldiers and their spoil to be purified for seven days

¹⁰"Now all of you who have killed anyone or touched a dead body must remain outside the camp for seven days, to purify yourselves and your captives."

¹¹Then Eleazar the high priest spoke to the soldiers saying, "Everything you have must be purified with Water of Cleansing, and anything that can withstand fire must also be put through fire."

¹²"On the seventh day wash your clothes and you will be clean and may enter the camp."

16

The Lord commands the spoil be divided fairly

¹The Lord said to Moses, "**Count the people and animals that were captured and divide the spoils evenly between the men who took part in the battle and the rest of the people.**"

²"From the fighting mens' share of the spoil, set apart one out of every 500,

*1 To be gathered to your people or fathers is an Israelite expression for death. Israelite belief was that the spirits of the dead were gathered to their extended families in Sheol, the spirit world of the dead where they await the resurrection of their physical bodies to live on earth again when the Messiah comes.

NUMBERS 16

whether persons, cattle, donkeys, sheep or goats, and give it to Eleazar the high priest as Jehovah's tribute."

³"From the peoples share of the spoil, set apart one out of every 50 and give it to the Levites."

⁴So Moses and Eleazar did as the Lord commanded. The total spoil that the Israelites took from the Midianites was, 1,012,500 sheep, 108,000 cattle, 91,000 donkeys, and 48,000 young women who had never lain with a man.

No Israelite deaths in the battle

⁵The army commanders came to Moses and said, "We have counted the men under our command and not one is missing."

The army commanders offer gold articles as tribute to the Lord

⁶Then the commanders said, "We have brought as an offering to Jehovah, the gold articles each of us acquired; armlets, bracelets, rings, earrings and necklaces to make atonement for ourselves."

⁷Moses and Eleazar accepted the gold from the commanders and placed it in the Tabernacle as a memorial before the Lord. The gold weighed 16,750 shekels.^{F*}

The tribes of Reuben and Gad request the lands east of the Jordan

⁸Now the tribes of Reuben and Gad had large herds and flocks. They came to Moses and said, "The lands of the Amorites that the Lord has subdued are suitable for livestock. ⁹Let this land be given to your servants as our possession. Do not take us across the Jordan."



Gold articles of the period.

Moses is displeased at their request

¹⁰Moses was displeased at this request and rebuked them saying, "You expect your countrymen to go to war while you sit here? You are discouraging them. ¹¹That is what your fathers did when I sent them to explore the land. They so aroused the Lord's anger against Israel that he made them wander in the desert for forty years until that whole generation was gone."

¹²"Now here you are, a brood of sinners standing in the place of your fathers to make the Lord even more angry with Israel. ¹³He will

again leave all this people in the desert and you will be the cause of their destruction."

A second proposal is accepted by Moses

¹⁴Later the men returned again to Moses and said, "We are ready to arm ourselves and cross the Jordan ahead of our fellow Israelites, but allow us first to build pens here for our livestock and fortified towns for our women and children."

¹⁵"We will not return until every other Israelite has received his inheritance on the other side of the Jordan."

Reuben, Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh allocated land east of the Jordan

¹⁶Moses said to them, "Very well, if all of you will go armed over the Jordan, then when the land is subdued you may return, and this land will be your possession. But if you fail to do this, you will be sinning against Jehovah."

¹⁷So Moses gave to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and also half the tribe of Manasseh, the lands and cities won from Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites.^{F*}

Canaanite places of idolatry to be destroyed

¹⁸The Lord said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'When you cross the Jordan into Canaan you must drive out all the inhabitants of the land. You must destroy all their engraved stones and idols and demolish all their high places of worship.'

What will occur if the Canaanites are not driven out of land

¹⁹"If you do not drive out all the inhabitants of the land, those you allow to remain will torment you. They will become like barbs in your eyes and thorns in your sides and I will punish you the same way I plan to punish them."



Map showing Gilead, the land that the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half of Manasseh inherited.

Towns and pasture lands for the Levites

²⁰"Now command the Israelites to assign the Levites 48 towns to live in, and pasture

*7 About 190kg (420lbs).

*17 This land was later known as Gilead.

lands around about their towns extending 1000 cubits^{F*} out from the town walls.”

²¹“Apportion many towns from a tribe that has many and few towns from a tribe that has few.”^{F*}

Cities of refuge

²²“Six of the Levite towns are to be cities of refuge, three on this side of the Jordan and three in Canaan.”

²³“These towns will be those to which a man who has unintentionally caused the death of another may flee, that he may not die before he is tried before his people.”

²⁴“The assembly of the people^{F*} must judge between him and the avenger of blood.^{F*} If he is innocent they are to protect him and after the trial return him to the city of refuge to which he fled.”

²⁵“He must remain there until the death of the high priest. ²⁶Do not accept a ransom for him and allow him to return and live on his own land before that time.”

²⁷“If the accused ever goes outside the city of refuge and the avenger of blood finds him

outside the city, the avenger of blood may kill him without being guilty of murder.”

Laws regarding murderers

²⁸“If a man deliberately strikes another with an object so that he dies, he is a murderer and shall be put to death. The avenger of blood may take his life.”

²⁹“However he is only to be put to death as a murderer on the testimony of two or more witnesses.”

³⁰“Do not accept a ransom for the life of a murderer. He must be put to death.”

Bloodshed pollutes the land and can only be atoned for by the blood of the murderer

³¹“You must not pollute the land where you are going, for bloodshed pollutes the land.”

³²“Atonement must be made for the land on which blood has been shed, by the blood of the person who shed it.”

*20 Approx half a kilometre.

*21 These would be towns formerly belonging to Canaanites.

*24 An assembly of the people was a formal gathering of the men of a community to decide important matters.

*24 The avenger of blood was usually the nearest male relative of the one killed.

DEUTERONOMY

After wandering for forty years the Israelites are now camped east of the river Jordan, preparing to enter the promised land of Canaan. Moses who has been forbidden to enter the promised land addresses the Israelites for the last time. In doing so he repeats and clarifies the commandments that the Israelites have received from the Lord and also introduces some new ones.

Deuteronomy means *'repetition of the Law.'* The Jews refer to the five books of Moses of which this book Deuteronomy is the last, as the Law or the Torah.

The book ends with the Lord choosing Joshua, the faithful assistant of Moses to succeed him as leader of the Israelites, and the death or translation of Moses (see note on Deuteronomy 10:30) on Mount Nebo, still in full vigour and health at 120 years of age.

AUTHOR

Moses (see Deuteronomy 9:1) with some clarifications by later Israelite prophets.

“Your clothes and sandals have not worn out, and your feet did not swell during those forty years.” Deuteronomy 1:32

CONTENTS

Chapter

Moses repeats Lord's commandments	1	Faint hearted men not to go into battle	4
Long life and increase if all commandments kept	1	Peace terms to be offered to non-Canaanite cities	4
Commandments to be taught to children	1	All that breathes in Canaanite cities to die	4
Reminders to be made	1	Fruit trees not to be cut down	4
Promised land described	1	Military camp hygiene	4
Houses, wells, vineyards, olive groves	1	Laws regarding captive women as wives	4
Streams, grains, fruit, milk, honey, iron, copper	1	Atoning for unsolved murder	4
Remember to praise Jehovah when settled	1	Rights of a firstborn son	5
Warning on pride	1	A rebellious son to be stoned to death	5
Destruction if God forgotten or tested	1	An executed man not to remain hanging overnight	5
Canaanites must be totally destroyed	1	Protective railing to be built around roofs	5
Treaties and intermarriage forbidden	1	Proof of virginity of a bride	5
Canaanites to be destroyed little by little	1	Remarrying a divorced wife forbidden	5
All Canaanite idols to be destroyed	1	Newly married men exempt from military one year	5
Israelites a chosen people	1	Penalties for rape	5
Health and prosperity if Lord's laws kept	1	Emasculated men excluded from assembly	5
40 years in the desert a time of humbling	1	Those born out of wedlock excluded from assembly	5
Food supplied and clothing did not wear out	1	Laws regarding foreigners	5
Canaanites strong and tall	2	A slave seeking refuge not to be handed over	5
Canaanites to be destroyed because of wickedness	2	Vows to Lord to be paid promptly	5
Israel a rebellious people	2	Mother birds not to be taken with young	5
Boundaries of promised land defined	2	Neighbour's produce can be eaten on spot	5
Promised land well watered by rain	2	Privacy of a man's home to be respected	5
Rain to cease if Israel worship other gods	2	Widow's millstone or cloak not to be taken	5
False prophets will arise to test the people	3	Women not to seize men by private parts	5
All Israelite idolaters to be put to death	3	A person to die for own crime only	5
Idolatrous Israelite towns to be put to sword	3	Forty lashes maximum for a crime	5
Priests and chief judge to decide difficult cases	3	Brother-in-law to marry a sonless widow	5
Kings to be chosen by Jehovah	3	Declaration when offering first fruits	6
A king not to acquire many horses	3	Tithes to be given to Levites and needy for food	6
A king not to take many wives	3	Israel to be exalted if Lord's laws obeyed	6
A king not to accumulate much silver and gold	3	Not to add or take from Moses' words	6
A king to write out the Law and read it often	3	Law to be inscribed on a monument	7
Levites can minister anywhere in Israel	3	Altar of uncut stones to be built	7
Child sacrifice and sorcery an abomination	3	Curses if commandments not obeyed	7
Consulting spirits of dead an abomination	3	Blessings if commandments obeyed	7
Prostitution forbidden	3	More curses if commandments not obeyed	7
Prophet like Moses to be raised up	4	Moses prophesies Israel's destruction	8
A false prophet must be put to death	4	Cannibalism during sieges prophesied	8
A sign of a true prophet	4	Exile among all nations prophesied	8

Future regathering of Israel prophesied	8	Moses permitted to view promised land	10
Moses summarises his address	8	Joshua chosen by Lord to succeed Moses	10
Moses writes down all the commandments	9	Moses instructs Joshua	10
Commandments to be kept with the Ark	9	Moses lays his hands on Joshua	10
Law to be read to the people every 7 years	9	Moses blesses the twelve tribes of Israel	10
Unfaithfulness of Israel foreseen by Lord	9	Moses disappears on Mount Nebo aged 120 years ..	10
The people taught a song from the Lord	9	No prophet has since arisen in Israel like Moses ...	10

Bold The Lord or an angel speaking.
Bold italics A prophet speaking under inspiration.

1

Moses repeats all the Lord's commandments to the Israelites

¹In the fortieth year after leaving Egypt, on the first day of the eleventh month in the desert east of the Jordan, Moses repeated to the Israelites all the commandments that the Lord had given them.

Long life and great increase promised if Lord's commandments kept

²Then Moses said to them, "These are the laws that Jehovah your God has directed me to teach you. Do not add or subtract from them. ³See that you keep them all in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess, that you may enjoy a long life and increase greatly and that all may go well with you."

Speak of the commandments and teach them to your children

⁴"Hear O Israel, Jehovah alone is our God. Love him with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."

⁵"Write his commandments upon your hearts, and teach them to your children. Speak of them when you sit at home and when you walk together along the road, and when you lie down and when you rise."

Reminders of commandments to be made

⁶"Tie reminders on your wrists and on your foreheads. Write them on the door frames of your houses and on your gates."

The promised land described - houses, wells, vineyards and olive groves

⁷"The Lord is bringing you into the land he swore to give your fathers, a land of large cities which you did not build, of houses filled with good things that you did not provide, with wells that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant."

Streams, springs grain, fruit, milk, honey, iron and copper

⁸"A land of streams and pools, with springs flowing in the valleys and hills. A land of wheat, barley, vines, fig trees and pomegranates, of olive oil, milk and honey. A land where bread is not scarce and you will lack for nothing. ⁹A land where the rocks contain iron ore and you can dig copper out of the hills."

Jehovah to be praised when people have prospered and settled down

¹⁰"When you have eaten and are satisfied, and have built fine houses and settled down, and your herds and flocks have grown large and your silver and gold has increased, then remember to praise the Lord for the good land he has given you."

Warning on pride

¹¹"Do not say to yourself, 'The strength of my own hand has produced this wealth for me,' but remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth."

¹²"Be careful that your hearts do not become proud and you forget Jehovah and fail to observe his commandments. Revere him and serve him only."

Do not forget God or try him - you will surely be destroyed

¹³"If you ever forget your God and worship other gods, I testify to you today that you will surely be destroyed just as the nations before you were destroyed."

¹⁴"Do not follow the gods of the nations around you, for Jehovah is a jealous God and his anger will burn against you. He will destroy you from the face of the land."

¹⁵"Do not try Jehovah your God as you did at Massah." F*

The Canaanite nations must be totally destroyed

¹⁶"When the Lord brings you into the land you are entering, he will drive before you, the Canaanites, Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. Seven nations larger and stronger than you. You must destroy them totally."

Treaties and intermarriage forbidden

¹⁷"Make no treaty with them, nor show them any mercy. Do not intermarry with them or they will turn your children away to serve other gods. Then the anger of the Lord will burn against you and he will destroy you.

Israelites to destroy Canaanites little by little

¹⁸"You may say to yourselves, 'These

*15 The Israelites complained bitterly about lack of water and questioned whether Jehovah was with them or not. (Exodus 10:1-7.)

DEUTERONOMY 2

nations are stronger than we are. How can we destroy them?' But remember what the Lord did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt, he will do the same to the people you now fear."

¹⁹"Moreover he will send the hornet among them until even the survivors who hide from you have perished."

²⁰"So do not be terrified by them. Jehovah your God is a great and awesome God. He will allow you to destroy these nations little by little. You will not destroy them all at once for then the wild animals would multiply in the land."

All Canaanite idols to be destroyed

²¹"You must destroy by fire the idols of their gods. Do not covet the silver and gold of them for they are abominable to the Lord your God, and do not take them into your houses or you too will be destroyed."

Israelites a chosen people

²²"You are a people holy to Jehovah. He has chosen you out of all the nations on earth. ²³He did not choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of peoples. But it was because he loved you and kept the covenant he swore to your forefathers."

Jehovah a faithful God

²⁴"Know therefore that Jehovah is a faithful God who will keep his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments. But those who hate him, he will destroy."

No disease or barrenness and great prosperity if the Lord's laws kept

²⁵"If you follow all his laws the Lord your God will love you and bless you and increase your numbers. ²⁶He will keep you free from disease. He will bless the fruit of your womb, the crops of your land, your grain, your new wine and oil, and your livestock."

²⁷"None of you will be childless, nor any of your livestock be without young. You will be blessed above all other nations."

The forty years of wandering in desert a time of humbling testing and disciplining

²⁸"Jehovah your God led you in the vast and dreadful desert forty years. To humble you and test you, to see whether or not you would keep his commandments."

²⁹"As a man disciplines his son so your God has disciplined you."

Your food and water was supplied and your clothing and sandals did not wear out

³⁰"He led you through waterless lands of venomous snakes and scorpions, and brought you water out of solid rock."

³¹"He caused you to hunger and then fed you with manna, to teach you that man does not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

³²"Your clothes and sandals have not worn out, and your feet did not swell during those forty years."

2

The Canaanites strong and tall

¹"You are now about to cross the Jordan and dispossess nations greater and stronger than you. Nations of large cities, and walls to the sky."

²"Their people are strong and tall and the Anakim^F are among them. You have heard it said, 'Who can stand against the Anakim?'"

³Be assured that Jehovah is going ahead of you. He will subdue them, and you will be able to drive them before you and annihilate them quickly."

The promised land given to Israel only because of the wickedness of the inhabitants

⁴"Do not say to yourselves, 'The Lord has brought us here because of our righteousness.' No, it is because of the wickedness of these nations that he is going to destroy them."

Israel a rebellious people

⁵"For you are a rebellious people. Remember this, and never forget how you provoked the Lord to anger in the desert."

⁶"From the day you left Egypt until the day you arrived here you have rebelled against him."

⁷"Therefore keep all the commandments I am giving you today, that you will have strength to take over the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess."

The boundaries of the promised land defined

⁸"Your territory will extend from the Lebanon down to the Desert, and from the Euphrates River to the Western Sea."^F*

The promised land well watered by rain

⁹"The land you are taking over is not like Egypt, where you planted your seed and irrigated by foot. This land is a land of mountains and valleys that drink rain from heaven. ¹⁰It is a land the Lord your God cares for. His eyes are continually on it from the beginning of the year to its end."

¹¹"If you faithfully obey his commandments and love him and serve him with all your heart, he will send the rains in their seasons, both the autumn and spring rains so that you may gather in your grain and your new wine and oil. ¹²He will provide grass in the fields for your livestock and you too will eat and be satisfied."

*32 The respected Jewish historian-scholar Rashi also claims that the clothes of the Israelite children grew along with them, keeping pace with their growth.

*2 The Anakim, meaning 'long necks' were an exceptionally tall race of people (see note on Genesis 5:14). Goliath who was over nine feet tall was an Anakim.

*8 The Mediterranean or Great Sea. See map in Exodus Chapter 21.

Rain to cease if Israelites worship other gods

¹³“But if you are enticed to worship other gods, then Jehovah’s anger will burn against you. ¹⁴He will shut up the heavens and it will not rain and you will soon perish from the good land he is giving you.”



Jordan river near where the Israelites were camped. The promised land of Canaan is on the horizon.

3

False prophets will arise to test the people

¹“If a prophet or one who dreams arises among you and announces a miraculous sign and the sign takes place, and then he says, ‘Let us follow other gods,’ you must not listen to his words. ²The Lord your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and soul.”

³That prophet or dreamer must be put to death for he has preached rebellion against the Lord. You must purge evil from among you.”

All idolaters, even family and close friends to be put to death

⁴“If your own brother or your son or daughter, or the wife you love, or your closest friend secretly entices you saying, ‘Let us go and worship other gods,’ Show no pity. Do not spare them.”

⁵“Your hand must be the first in putting them to death. Then all Israel will hear and be afraid and no one among you will do such an evil thing again.”

Any Israelite town practising idolatry to be put to the sword and burnt

⁶“If you hear it said about one of your towns that wicked men have arisen and led the people of that town to worship other gods, you must investigate it thoroughly.”

⁷“If it be true, you must put to the sword all who live in that town, both its people and its livestock. ⁸Then you are to gather all the possessions of that town into a heap in the middle of the square and burn them. A burnt offering to Jehovah.”

⁹“That town is to remain a ruin forever, never to be rebuilt.”

The priests and chief judge to decide difficult cases

¹⁰“If a case comes before your court that is too difficult for you to decide, you are to take it before the priests and the chief judge who rules at that time^F * and they will give you a verdict. You must act according to the decision they give you.”

¹¹If a man shows contempt for the priests or the judge he must be put to death. All the people will hear and be afraid and no one will dare act that way again.”

Kings to be chosen by Jehovah

¹²“When you have settled in the land the Lord is giving you and you say, ‘Let us set a king over us like the nations around us,’ be sure to appoint a king Jehovah chooses from among your own people. ¹³Do not place a foreigner over you.”

A king not to acquire many horses

¹⁴“Your king must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself, or have the people return to Egypt to buy horses, for the Lord has said, ‘You are not to return to Egypt.’”

A king not to take many wives or accumulate much silver and gold

¹⁵“Nor must your king take many wives for his heart will be led astray. Nor must he accumulate large amounts of silver and gold.”

A newly throned king to write out a copy of the Law and read it often

¹⁶“When the king takes the throne he is to write for himself a copy of the entire Law which he will obtain from the priests. ¹⁷He is to read it all the days of his life so that he will learn to honour Jehovah his God and follow carefully all his commandments, and not consider himself better than his fellow men. ¹⁸Then he and his descendants will reign long in Israel.”

Levites can minister anywhere in Israel

¹⁹“If a Levite moves anywhere in Israel that the Lord chooses, he may minister alongside his fellow Levites who serve there. ²⁰He is to share equally in their benefits, even if he has received money from the sale of family possessions.”

Child sacrifice, divination, sorcery, witchcraft, and consulting spirits of the dead are abominations

²¹“When you enter the land the Lord is giving you, do not follow the abominable practices of those nations.”

²²“Let no one among you burn his son or daughter in fire, or practice divination or sorcery, or interpret omens, engage in witchcraft, cast spells or become a medium

*10 The Israelites were ruled by judges prior to the reign of kings which began with Saul. Moses was the first judge followed by Joshua.

DEUTERONOMY 4

or spiritist who consults the dead.”

²³*“It is because of these abominable practices that the Lord is destroying these nations.”*

Prostitution forbidden

²⁴*“No woman is to become a harlot, nor a man a sodomite, nor must you bring the earnings of a harlot or a dog^F * to the Tabernacle of the Lord in payment of a vow.”*

4

Another prophet like Moses to be raised up

¹⁴*“Jehovah your God will raise up for you a prophet like me, from among your own people. You must listen to him.”^F **

²*“This is what you asked for at Sinai when you said, ‘Let us not hear the voice of Jehovah nor see this great fire any more, lest we die.’”*

³*“The Lord said to me, “What the people say is right. I will raise up a prophet like you from among them and I will put my words in his mouth and he will speak what I command him.”*

⁴*“Whoever does not heed the words that prophet speaks in my name, I myself will hold accountable.”*

A false prophet must be put to death

⁵*“And if any prophet speaks words in my name that I have not commanded, or speaks in the name of another god, he must be put to death.”*

A sign of a true prophet

⁶*“You may say to yourselves, ‘How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the Lord?’”*

⁷*“If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord does not come to pass, that is a message that the Lord has not spoken.”^F **

Faint hearted men not to go into battle

⁸*“Whenever you go to war and see an army greater than your own, do not fear for Jehovah will be with you.”*

⁹*“Before you go into battle the high priest shall come forward and say to the army, ‘Hear O Israel, today you are going into battle against your enemies. Be not faint hearted or fearful, nor give way to panic, for the Lord goes with you to fight your enemies and give you victory.’”*

¹⁰*“Then the officers shall say to their men, ‘Has anyone built a new house and not yet dedicated it? Has anyone planted a vineyard and not yet begun to enjoy it? Has anyone become betrothed to a woman and not yet married her? Let him return home.’”*

¹¹*“Is any man fearful or faint hearted? Let him return home that his comrades not become faint hearted also.”*

Peace terms to be first offered to distant cities that are not part of the promised land

¹²*“Before you attack a city that is afar off, one that is not part of the land the Lord is giving you, offer terms of peace to its people. If they accept and open their gates they shall be forced to labour for you. If they refuse to make peace, lay siege to that city.”*

¹³*“When the Lord delivers a city into your hand, put all the men to the sword but the women, children, livestock and everything else in the city you may take as spoil.”*

Every person must be put to death in cities within the promised land

¹⁴*“However in the cities of the land that Jehovah is giving you as an inheritance, you must not leave alive anyone who breathes, or they will eventually lead you to do the abominable things they do in worshipping their gods.”*

Fruit trees not to be cut down

¹⁵*“When you lay siege to a city, do not cut down fruit trees to build siege works, only cut down trees that do not bear fruit.”*

Military camp hygiene

¹⁶*“When you are encamped against your enemies you must keep yourselves pure.”*

¹⁷*“If a man becomes unclean due to an emission of semen during sleep, he is to go outside the camp and wash himself, and remain there until evening. After sunset he may return to camp.”*

¹⁸*“Designate a place outside the camp where you can go to relieve yourself and carry a stick with your weapons so that when you crouch to relieve yourself, you can dig a hole to cover your excrement.”*

¹⁹*“For Jehovah your God moves about in your camp to protect you, therefore your camp must be holy so that he will not see anything indecent among you.”*

Laws regarding captive women as wives

²⁰*“If when you go to war you see among the captives an attractive woman, and you desire her as a wife, bring her into your home and have her shave her head and pare her nails and put aside the clothes she was wearing when captured.”*

²¹*“Then when she has lived in your house and mourned her parents a full month, you may lie with her and be her husband.”^F **

²²*“If you become displeased with her, let her go free. You must not sell her or treat her as a slave.”*

*24 A dog is a male prostitute.

*1 The apostle Peter quoted this scripture with reference to Jesus Christ (Acts 3:15).

*7 Correctly predicting future events was not sufficient proof alone of a true prophet, what he said must also agree with the commandments, see first two verses of chapter 3.

*21 This would only apply to a non-Canaanite woman as all the women of Canaan were to be destroyed (see Deuteronomy 4:14).

Atoning for unsolved murder

²³“If a person is found slain in a field and it is not known who killed him, the elders of the nearest town shall take a heifer that has never been yoked and lead her to a valley that has never been plowed or planted and in which there is a flowing stream. ²⁴There they shall break the heifer’s neck, and the elders of the town shall wash their hands over the heifer in front of the priests and declare:”

²⁵“Our hands did not shed this blood nor did our eyes see it shed. Accept this atonement O Jehovah and do not hold us guilty for the blood of an innocent man.”

²⁶“And thus the bloodshed shall be atoned for. You will purge yourselves from the guilt of innocent blood.”

5

The rights of a firstborn son

¹“If a man has two wives and both bear him sons, when he wills his property he must not give the rights of the firstborn to the son of the wife he loves more, in preference to his actual firstborn.”

²“He must acknowledge the right of the firstborn by giving him a double share of all he has. ³A firstborn son is the first fruit of his father’s strength.”

A rebellious son to be stoned to death

⁴“If a man has a rebellious son who will not obey him or his mother, though they discipline him, they shall take him before the elders at the town gate and say to them, ‘This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey us and he is a glutton and a drunkard.’”

⁵“Then all the men of the town shall stone him to death. You must purge evil from among you. All Israel will hear of it and be afraid.”

An executed person not to remain hanging overnight

⁶“If a man convicted of a serious crime is put to death and hung on a tree, you must not leave his body on the tree overnight. Bury him that same day, for a hanging body is offensive to God.”

A protective railing to be built around the roofs of houses

⁷“When you build a house, also build a railing around your roof so that you will not incur the guilt of bloodshed on your house should someone fall from it.”^{F *}

Proof of virginity of a bride

⁸“If a man takes a wife and after lying with her rejects her and slanders her saying, ‘I married this woman but when I lay with her I did not find proof of her virginity.’”

⁹“Then the girl’s father and mother shall display the cloth^{F *} to the elders at the town gate as proof that she was a virgin and the elders shall fine the man a 100 shekels of silver^{F *} and give it to the girl’s father.”

¹⁰“She shall continue to be his wife, and he may not divorce her as long as he lives.”

¹¹“If however the charge is true and no proof of her virginity can be found, she shall be brought to the door of her father’s house, and there the men of her town are to stone her to death for being promiscuous while living in her father’s house.”

A man cannot remarry his divorced wife after she has been married to another man

¹²“If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because of some indecency in her and he writes her a certificate of divorce and sends her from his house, and she then remarries and her second husband also dislikes her and divorces her, or dies, then her first husband is not to marry her again, for she has been defiled. It is offensive in the eyes of the Lord.”

Newly married men exempt from military and other duty for one year

¹³“If a man has recently married, he must not be sent to war or have any other duty laid upon him. For one year he is to be free to stay at home and bring joy to his wife.”

Penalties for the rape of a betrothed woman

¹⁴“If a man seizes a betrothed virgin and lies with her, you shall take them both to the town gate and stone them to death. The girl because she did not scream for help, and the man because he violated another man’s betrothed wife.”

¹⁵“However if it happened out in the countryside only the man shall die, for although the betrothed girl may have screamed, there was no one to rescue her.”

A man who rapes an unbetrothed girl must marry her

¹⁶“If a man seizes a virgin who is not pledged to be married and lies with her, he shall pay the girl’s father 50 shekels of silver and he must marry the girl, for he has violated her and can never divorce her.”

Emasculated men excluded from the assembly

¹⁷“No man who has been emasculated may enter an assembly of the Lord.”^{F *}

Men born out of wedlock excluded from the assembly

¹⁸“No man born out of wedlock, nor any of his descendants may enter an assembly of the Lord, even down to the tenth generation.”

*9 A blood-marked bed sheet from the wedding week.

*9 One shekel of silver was worth about a days pay.

*17 The assembly was a formal gathering of the men of a community to decide important matters.

*7 The flat roofs of Middle East homes are often used as social gathering places of an evening.

DEUTERONOMY 6

Laws regarding foreign men

19 "No Ammonite or Moabite may enter an assembly of the Lord, even down to the tenth generation for they did not meet you with bread and water on your way when you came out of Egypt, and they hired Balaam to pronounce a curse on you. Do not seek a treaty of friendship with them."

20 "Do not despise an Edomite,^F for he is your brother, and do not despise an Egyptian for you lived as foreigners in his country. 21 The third generation of their children born among you may enter an assembly of the Lord."

A slave seeking refuge not to be handed over to his master

22 "If a slave has taken refuge among you, do not hand him over to his master or oppress him."

Vows to the Lord to be paid promptly

23 "Do not be slow to pay a vow to the Lord^F or you will be guilty of sin. Whatever vow your lips utter you must be sure to do."

A mother bird not to be killed with her young

24 "If you find a bird's nest and the mother sitting on the young or the eggs, do not take the mother with the young. You may take the young but let the mother go free."

A neighbour's produce can be eaten freely on his land but none to be carried away without payment
25 "If you enter your neighbour's vineyard or field, you may eat all you want, but do not put any in your basket."

Privacy of a neighbour's home to be respected

26 "When you make a loan to your neighbour do not go into his house to get his security. Let him bring it out to you."

A widow's millstone or cloak not to be taken as security

27 "Do not take a millstone or the cloak of a widow as security for a debt."

A woman not to aid a fighting husband by seizing his assailant by his private parts

28 "If two men are fighting and the wife of one comes to rescue her husband and seizes his assailant by his private parts, you shall cut off her hand. Show no mercy."

A person to die for his own crime only

29 "Fathers shall not be put to death for the crimes of their children, nor children for the crimes of their fathers, each person is to die for his own crime."

Forty lashes maximum for a crime

30 "If a man is guilty of a crime and deserves to be beaten, the judge shall have him flogged in his presence with the number of lashes his crime deserves, but

no more than forty. 31 If he is flogged more than forty times your brother will be degraded in your eyes."

Brother-in-law to marry a sonless widow

32 "When brothers live near to one another and a man dies without fathering a son, his brother shall marry his widow and fulfil the duty of a brother-in-law to her. 33 The first son she bears shall carry on the name of the dead brother so that his name will not be blotted out from Israel."

34 "If he refuses to marry her, she shall protest to the elders at the town gate. Then the elders shall reason with the man."

35 "If he persists in saying, 'I do not want to marry her,' she shall go up to him in the presence of the elders and pull off one of his sandals^F and spit in his face saying, 'This is what is done to a man who will not build up his brother's family.'"



A millstone (see Deuteronomy 5:27) was used to grind grain and was an essential household item.

6

Declaration when offering first fruits

1 "When you have settled in the land the Lord is giving you, place some of the first fruits of your ground in a basket and take them to the Tabernacle. Then you shall say to the priest:

2 "Today I acknowledge to Jehovah that I have come to the land he swore to give our forefathers."

3 "The priest shall take the basket from your hands and set it down in front of the altar and you shall declare before the Lord:"

4 "My father was a wandering Syrian.^F * He went down into Egypt with a few people and became a great nation, powerful and

*20 The Edomites were the descendants of Esau who sold his birthright to his brother Jacob.

*23 A vow is a favour asked of the Lord in return for which the asker agrees to make some kind of sacrifice.

*35 Removing a sandal was a sign of transference, usually involving property (see Ruth 3:6), in this case however the man's honour is being taken or transferred from him by the woman spitting in his face.

*4 Abraham was originally of Syrian descent.

numerous, but the Egyptians made us suffer putting us to hard labour.”

⁵“We cried out to Jehovah the God of our fathers and he heard our voice and saw our misery. He brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and miraculous signs and wonders. ⁶He brought us to this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. Now I bring the first fruits of the ground that you O Jehovah have given me.”

⁷“Then bow down before the Lord your God and rejoice in the good things he has given you.”



My father (Abraham) was a wandering Syrian (Deuteronomy 6:4).

Tithes to be given to Levites and needy for food

⁸“When you have set aside your tithe, a tenth of all you produce, you shall give it to the Levite, the sojourner,^F* the fatherless and the widow, that they may eat in your towns and be satisfied. Then declare before Jehovah:

⁹“I have set aside the sacred portion and have given it to the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless and the widow, according to your command.”

¹⁰“Now may you look down from your holy dwelling place and bless your people Israel and the land you have given us.”

Israel to be exalted if laws of the Lord obeyed

¹¹Then Moses said, “The Lord commands you this day to follow these laws with all your heart and with all your soul. ¹²He has declared that he will exalt you in fame and honour high above all other nations. You will be a holy people.”

Israel not to add or take away from Moses' words

¹³“You shall not add to the word which I have commanded you, nor take away from it.”

7

The Law to be inscribed in plaster on a monument

¹“When you have crossed the Jordan into the land the Lord is giving you, set up large rocks on Mount Ebal^F* and coat them with plaster. Write upon them every word of the Law.”

An altar of uncut stones to be built

²“Build there also an altar of stones, but do not use an iron tool on the stones. Offer burnt offerings on the altar to Jehovah your God.”



An altar of uncut stones like the one the Israelites were commanded to erect on Mount Ebal.

Curses if the commandments are not obeyed

³“Then the Levites shall recite these curses to all the people of Israel in a loud voice, and all the people shall respond, ‘Amen:’”

⁴“Cursed is the person who makes an idol.”

⁵“Cursed is the person who dishonours their father or mother.”

⁶“Cursed is he who moves a boundary stone.”

⁷“Cursed is the person who leads the blind astray on the road.”

⁸“Cursed is the person who withholds justice from the sojourner, the fatherless or the widow.”

⁹“Cursed is the man who lies with his father's wife.”

¹⁰“Cursed is the man who lies with his sister, the daughter of either his father or his mother.”

¹¹“Cursed is the man who lies with his mother-in-law.”

¹²“Cursed is the person who lies with any kind of animal.”

¹³“Cursed is the person who murders.”

¹⁴“Cursed is the man who accepts payment to kill an innocent person.”

*8 A sojourner is a person residing in an area temporarily.

*1 Mount Ebal is a 1025m high centrally located mountain near Shechem.

Blessings if all the commandments are obeyed

15 *"Then the tribes of Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph and Benjamin shall face Mount Gerizim^F * and pronounce these blessings upon the people, if they fully obey the Lord's commandments:"*

- 16 *"You will be raised high above all other nations on the earth."*
- 17 *"You will be blessed in the city and in the country."*
- 18 *"You will be blessed in the fruit of your womb."*
- 19 *"You will be blessed in your crops for the Lord shall send rain in season."*
- 20 *"You will be blessed in the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks."*
- 21 *"You will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out."*
- 22 *"You will lend to many nations and borrow from none."*
- 23 *"You will defeat those who rise up against you. They will come at you from one direction and flee in seven."*
- 24 *"All peoples on earth shall know that you are called by the name of Jehovah and will fear you."*
- 25 *"You will be the head and not the tail."*

More curses if commandments are not obeyed

26 *"Then the tribes of Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali are to face Mount Ebal and pronounce these curses that will come upon you if you do not obey Jehovah and keep his commandments."*

- 27 *"You will be cursed in the city and cursed in the countryside."*
- 28 *"You will be cursed in the fruit of your womb."*
- 29 *"You will be cursed in the crops of your land."*
- 30 *"You will be cursed in the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks."*
- 31 *"You will be cursed when you come in and cursed when you go out."*
- 32 *"The Lord will send confusion on all that you do."*
- 33 *"You will suffer diseases; fever and inflammation, the boils of Egypt, tumours, festering sores and the itch that cannot be cured."*
- 34 *"Your knees and legs will swell with painful boils that cannot be cured. They shall spread to the soles of your feet and the top of your head."*
- 35 *"You will be cursed with scorching heat and drought. The sky above you will be bronze and the ground beneath you iron, and the rain shall turn to dust."*
- 36 *"Your food will be cursed with blight and mildew until you perish."*

- 37 *"You will sow much seed but harvest little, for locusts shall devour it."*
- 38 *"You will plant vineyards but not drink the wine or gather the grapes, for worms shall eat them."*
- 39 *"You will have olive trees but not use the oil, for the olives will drop off."*
- 40 *"The foreigner who lives among you shall rise above you higher and higher, and you shall sink lower and lower."*
- 41 *"He will lend to you but you shall not lend to him. He will be the head and you shall be the tail."*
- 42 *"You will be defeated by your enemies. You shall attack them from one direction but flee in seven."*
- 43 *"Your corpses shall be food for the birds and animals."*
- 44 *"A people you know not shall eat what your toil produces, and you will be cruelly oppressed all your days."*
- 45 *"Your donkey will be taken from you and never returned."*
- 46 *"Your sheep will be driven off by your enemies and your ox slaughtered before your eyes."*
- 47 *"You will be betrothed to a woman but another will lie with her."*
- 48 *"You will build a house but not live in it, and plant a vineyard but not enjoy its fruit."*
- 49 *"You will be afflicted with madness, blindness and confusion of mind, for the sights you see will drive you mad."*
- 50 *"At midday you will grope about like a blind man in the dark, and day after day you shall be oppressed and robbed."*
- 51 *"Your sons and daughters shall be carried off to another nation and you will wear out your eyes watching for them, day after day."*
- 52 *"Then the Lord will drive you and your king to a foreign nation. There you shall worship gods of wood and stone."*
- 53 *"You shall become an object of horror and scorn in all nations where the Lord will drive you."*

8

Moses prophesies Israel's destruction by a nation from afar

¹Then Moses prophesied: *"All these curses will overtake you until you are destroyed, because you did not keep the commandments Jehovah gave you."*

²*"Because you did not serve him joyfully and gladly in the time of your prosperity, in hunger and thirst and nakedness and poverty you shall serve the enemies he sends against you. He will put an iron yoke*

*15 Mount Gerizim is a peak directly opposite Mount Ebal.

on your neck until he has destroyed you.”

³“The Lord will bring a nation against you from afar, from the ends of the earth like an eagle swooping down. A nation whose language you will not understand. A nation of fierce appearance, without pity for old or young.”

⁴“They will besiege your cities until the high walls in which you trust are broken down.”

Cannibalism during sieges prophesied

⁵“And because of your suffering during the siege you will eat the flesh of your own sons and daughters.”

⁶“Even the most sensitive man among you will refuse to share with the rest of his family the flesh of his child he is eating.”

⁷“Even the most gentle woman among you will begrudge her husband and children the afterbirth from her own womb, that she intends eating secretly. Such is the distress your enemy will inflict upon you during the siege of your cities.”

⁸“If you do not carefully obey all the words of the Law and honour the glorious and awesome name of Jehovah your God, he will send these fearful plagues and these harsh and prolonged disasters and severe and lingering diseases upon you and your descendants.”

Exile among all nations prophesied

⁹“You who were as numerous as the stars in the sky shall be but few in number. You will be uprooted from the land you are entering to possess and shall be scattered among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other.”

¹⁰“Among those nations you will find no ease and no rest, you will have an anxious mind and eyes weary with longing and a despairing heart.”

¹¹“You will live in constant suspense and dread, both night and day.”

¹²“In the morning you will say, ‘If only it were evening’ and in the evening you will say, ‘If only it were morning’ because of the fear that will fill your hearts and the sights your eyes will see.”

¹³“Some of you will be sent back in ships to Egypt and be there offered for sale to your enemies as slaves, but no one will buy you.”

The future regathering of Israel prophesied

¹⁴“When these curses come upon you and Jehovah disperses you among the nations, and you and your children return to him and obey him with all your heart, then the Lord your God will have compassion on you. He will gather you again and restore your fortunes.”

¹⁵“Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there he will gather you and bring you back and make you more prosperous and

numerous than before.”

¹⁶“You will again obey Jehovah and follow his commandments and he will again delight in you.”

Moses summarises his address

¹⁷“See, I set before you today life and prosperity, or death and destruction.”

¹⁸“Love the Lord and keep his commandments and he will bless you in the land you are entering to possess.”

¹⁹“Turn away and rebel and bow down to other gods and you will be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess.”

9

Moses writes all the commandments on a scroll

¹Moses wrote down on a scroll all the commandments the Lord had given him and gave it to the priests.

The book of the Law to be kept with the Ark

²Then Moses commanded the priests saying, “Take this book of the Law^F * and place it beside the Ark of Jehovah as a witness against you, for I know how rebellious and stiff-necked you are.”

³“If you have rebelled against the Lord while I have been with you, how much more will you rebel after I am gone.”

The Law to be read to the people every seven years

⁴“You shall read this Law to all the people at the end of each seven years, in the year of cancelling debts, during the Feast of Tabernacles when all Israel come to stand before the Lord.”

⁵“Assemble all the men, women and children and the foreigners living in your towns so they can listen and learn to revere Jehovah, and obey fully all the words of his Law.”

The unfaithfulness of Israel foreseen by the Lord

⁶Then the Lord said to Moses, “You are going to rest with your fathers, and this people will soon prostitute themselves to the foreign gods of the land they are entering.”

⁷“I know what they are disposed to do even before I bring them into the land I promised them.”

⁸“They will forsake me and break the covenant I made with them, so I will hide my face from them and they shall be destroyed.”

⁹Disasters and difficulties will befall them and they will say, ‘Have not these disasters come upon us because our God is not with us?’

¹⁰“Now, write down this song and teach it to the Israelites so that when disasters and difficulties come upon them this song will testify against them.”

*2 Although referred to as a book, the Law was in fact a scroll.

DEUTERONOMY 10

The people taught a song from the Lord

¹¹So Moses wrote down this song of the Lord that day and taught it to the Israelites:

¹²“Hear the words of my mouth O heavens and earth, let my words descend like abundant rain on tender grass.”

¹³“Proclaim the name of Jehovah. Praise the greatness of your God. He is your Rock, a faithful and just God who does no wrong. Upright and righteous is he.”

¹⁴“But you have acted corruptly toward him and are no longer his children, but a crooked generation. ¹⁵Is this the way you repay Jehovah O foolish and unwise people? Is he not your Father, your Creator, he who made and formed you?”

¹⁶“Remember the days of old when the Most High^{F*} divided mankind according to the numbers of the sons of God.^{F*} Jehovah’s choice portion was his people Israel.”

¹⁷“In a desert land he found them and shielded them, and cared for them like an eagle hovering over its young.”

¹⁸“Jehovah alone led Israel, no foreign god was with them. He nourished them with the fruit of the fields, with curds and milk, with fattened lambs and goats, with the finest kernels of wheat and the wine of the grape.”

¹⁹“But Israel grew fat and kicked. Filled with food he became heavy and sleek and abandoned the God who made him. He rejected his Rock and Saviour and made him jealous and angry by foreign gods and abominable idols. ²⁰Israel sacrificed to demons, gods that recently appeared, gods his fathers knew not. He deserted the Rock who fathered him.”

²¹“I will hide my face from them and see what their end becomes, for they are a perverse generation. They made me jealous by gods who were not gods, therefore I will stir them to jealousy by a people who are not a people, by a nation that has no understanding.”

²²“A fire has been kindled by my wrath. I will heap calamities upon them. I

shall send wasting famine against them and deadly plague. I will send the fangs of wild beasts and the venom of vipers that glide in the dust. ²³In the street the sword shall make them childless. In their homes terror will reign. Young men and women will perish, infants and grey-haired men.”

²⁴“I said, ‘I will scatter them and blot out their memory from mankind,’ but I dreaded the taunt of the enemy lest they boast and say, ‘Our hand has destroyed Israel. Jehovah has not done this.’”

²⁵“But the enemy is a nation without discernment. If they were wise they would understand. How can one man chase a thousand and two put ten thousand to flight, unless their Rock had sold them, unless Jehovah had given them up?”

²⁶“It is mine to avenge the enemy, I will repay. In due time the foot of the enemy will slip and their doom will rush in upon them.”

²⁷“Yet Jehovah will have compassion on his own when he sees their strength is gone. ²⁸I will say to them, ‘Now where are your gods, the rock you took refuge in, the gods who ate the fat of your sacrifices and drank the wine of your drink offerings?’ ²⁹See now, there is no God besides me. I put to death and I bring to life. I wound and I heal.”

³⁰“I lift my hand and declare, ‘As surely as I live forever, when my hand grasps my sword in judgement I will take vengeance on my enemies and repay those who hate me.’”

³¹“Honour Israel O nations, for Jehovah will avenge their blood and make atonement for his land and for his people.”

10

Moses permitted to view the promised land

¹When Moses had taught the words of this song to the people the Lord said to him, “The day of your death is near. Ascend Mount Nebo in Moab, across from Jericho and view the land I am giving the Israelites.

²There on the mountain you will be gathered to your people^{F*} as was your brother Aaron. ³For when the people rebelled at the Waters of Meribah both of you failed to honour me in their sight.”

*16 The term Most High is used interchangeably for Jehovah throughout the Old Testament.

*16 Traditional Israelite belief is that the spirits of all mankind had an existence prior to this mortal life as the offspring of God. These sons of God therefore may represent the spirits of all men born and also those yet to be born. See also Job 1:5, 7:4, Jeremiah 1:3, John 9:1 and 19:16.

*2 ‘Gathered to your people’ is an Israelite term for death.

Moses asks Jehovah to appoint a new leader

⁴Moses said to the Lord, "May Jehovah, the God of the spirits of all mankind appoint a man over this people who will lead them so they will not be like sheep without a shepherd."

Joshua chosen by Lord to succeed Moses

⁵The Lord said to Moses, "Bring Joshua, a man in whom is the Spirit, to the Tabernacle where I will commission him. ⁶Have him stand before Eleazar the high priest and all the people. Then lay your hands upon him and appoint him in their presence."

⁷"Eleazar the high priest will obtain revelations for him by inquiring of the Urim^F before Jehovah."

Moses instructs Joshua to lead the Israelites into the land

⁸So Moses said to all the Israelites, "I am no longer to lead you for the Lord has said to me, 'You shall not cross the Jordan.'"

⁹Then Moses called forth Joshua and said to him, "Be strong and courageous, for you must go with this people into the land and divide it among them. ¹⁰Jehovah himself will go before you and be with you and will not forsake you, so do not be fearful or discouraged."

Moses lays his hands on Joshua in the presence of the Lord and all the people

¹¹Then the Lord appeared in a pillar of cloud at the Tabernacle. ¹²Moses did as the Lord had commanded and laid his hands on Joshua and appointed him before all the people.

Moses blesses the tribes of Israel

¹³Afterward Moses blessed the tribes of Israel^F saying:

¹⁴"*Let Reuben live and his men increase.*"

¹⁵"*Hear O Lord the cry of Judah. Restore him to his place among the people.*"

¹⁶"*To Levi the tribe you favoured belongs the Urim and Thummim. You have proven him.*"

¹⁷*Levi watches over your word and guards your covenant and teaches your Law to Israel. He offers incense before you and burnt offerings on your altar.*

¹⁸*Bless all that Levi has O Jehovah and accept the work of his hands. Smite those who rise against him.*"

¹⁹"*Benjamin is loved of the Lord and rests secure, for he shields him all day long.*"

²⁰"*May the land of Joseph^F be blessed by Jehovah with the precious dew from the heavens above, with the best the sun and moon bring forth. With the finest yield of the earth and its fullness, and the favour of him who dwelt in the burning bush.*"

²¹"*Let all these rest upon the head of Joseph, the prince among his brothers.*"

²²"*In majesty he is like a firstborn bull. With his horns he will gore the nations, even those at the ends of the earth. Such are the ten thousands of Ephraim, such are the thousands of Manasseh.*"

²³"*Zebulun rejoices in his going out, and Issachar in his tents. They will summon peoples to the mountain and there offer sacrifices of righteousness. ²⁴They will feast on the abundance of the seas.*"

²⁵"*Blessed is he who enlarges Gad's domain. Gad lives there as a lion. He chose the best land for himself. The commanders portion is his, for he carried out the will of Jehovah.*"

²⁶"*Dan is a lion's cub.*"

²⁷"*Naphtali is abounding with plenty and the favour of the Lord. He will inherit southward to the lake.*"^F*

²⁸"*Most blessed of sons is Asher, let his brothers bathe his feet in oil. His strength will endure throughout his days.*"

Moses disappears on Mount Nebo aged 120 years

²⁹Then Moses climbed Mount Nebo and the Lord showed him all of the promised land.

³⁰Moses the servant of the Lord died there but to this day no one has found his tomb.^F*

³¹Moses was a 120 years old when he died, yet his eyes were not weak nor was his strength gone. The Israelites mourned him thirty days.

No prophet has since arisen in Israel like Moses

³²Since then no prophet has arisen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face.

³³No one has ever performed the awesome miracles that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.

*²⁰ The tribe of Joseph comprised the two tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh who were descended from the two sons of Joseph and adopted by their grandfather Israel (Genesis 31:4-7). These two dominant tribes and the eight other tribes associated with them were eventually lost to history after northern Israel was conquered and exiled by the Assyrians in 722 BC. They became the so called 'ten lost tribes of Israel.'

*²⁷ Naphtali's inheritance included the Lake of Galilee.

*³⁰ Moses is believed to have been translated, that is taken bodily from the earth as was Enoch and Elijah. This belief is reinforced by the appearance of Moses and Elijah hundreds of years later to Jesus and his three apostles, Peter, James and John at the time of the Transfiguration (Matt-Mark-Luke 17:23-25).

*⁷ The Urim and Thummim, a device used by the high priest to obtain revelations from the Lord. See note on Exodus 17:14.

*¹³ The tribe of Simeon is not mentioned. See note on Numbers 13:9 for a possible reason.

JOSHUA

In the Hebrew language of the Old Testament, Joshua means ‘*Jehovah saves*’ – the same name that is translated Jesus in the Greek of the New Testament.

Joshua was a faithful and worthy successor to Moses and had been his assistant for over forty years. He was a man of strong character and a warrior, and he had unwavering faith in the power of God.

He was with Moses upon the mountain when the Israelites built the golden calf. Had he remained below among the people it is difficult to imagine him allowing such a thing to happen.

This is an interesting book, full of action and impressive miracles. The Israelites under Joshua’s leadership are finally permitted by the Lord to enter the promised land. As they do so there immediately occurs a miracle – the Jordan river in full flood stops flowing the moment the feet of the priests carrying the Ark enter the water, and begins to flow again as soon as all Israel had crossed over.

More miracles follow in quick succession. The day following the Passover, manna from heaven ceases to fall. Shortly afterward the walls of the city of Jericho collapse at a mighty shout from the Israelite army. Later, giant hailstones destroy most of the men of a large combined Canaanite army, and the sun stands still for a whole day to allow the Israelites to complete the slaughter. The next seven years are spent under Joshua’s strong leadership, subduing and annihilating the Canaanites and then the promised land is divided up and allocated to the various tribes of Israel.

Some readers may regard the Lord’s command to annihilate all the men, women and children of Canaan as harsh and cruel, but when viewed from God’s eternal perspective it becomes an act of mercy. For death here on earth is only temporary and all who die will eventually be resurrected with a new body (Revelation 16:7), and then after facing judgement, will live forever in varying degrees of glory according to individual worthiness (see 1 Corinthians 8:24, Hebrews 4:27 and Revelation 18:10-11). The Lord ordered the Canaanites destroyed because of their great wickedness (Deuteronomy 2:4). For this very same reason he destroyed the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, otherwise future children born into such a corrupt and deviant society would grow up seriously contaminated and have a lesser hope of a glorious resurrection.

The idolatrous customs of the Canaanites which appealed strongly to the lusts of the flesh were contagious. Indeed, as forewarned by the Lord in Exodus 20:8 the surviving Canaanites who were never entirely destroyed, influenced later generations of Israel to widespread idolatry, bringing about their eventual destruction and the exile of survivors. It was an act of mercy for God to command an end to such a wicked society. A similar situation led to the destruction of virtually the entire population of the earth by the flood of Noah.

AUTHOR

Joshua and Eleazar (according to Jewish tradition), with clarifications by a later Israelite prophet.

“At the sound of the trumpet blast the armed men gave a mighty shout and immediately the walls of Jericho collapsed.” Joshua 3:15

CONTENTS

	Chapter		
Lord to be with Joshua as with Moses	1	Spies agree to her request	1
Joshua commanded to always study the Law	1	Spies report back to Joshua	1
Joshua told to prepare to cross the Jordan	1	Israelites move camp to banks of the Jordan	2
Two men sent to spy out the land	1	Priests carrying the Ark lead out.....	2
The spies stay with Rahab a harlot of Jericho	1	Lord to exalt Joshua in the eyes of all Israel	2
King of Jericho sends guards to arrest spies	1	Jordan stops flowing as Israel crosses	2
Rahab saves lives of spies	1	Memorial of twelve stones to be set up	2
Rahab asks that her family be spared	1	River runs in flood as before	2

Memorial stones set up at Gilgal	2	Galilean kings combine against Israel	7
Uncircumcised Israelite males circumcised	2	Joshua defeats the Galilean kings	7
Passover celebrated	2	Galilean cities put to sword	7
Manna from heaven stops	2	All Anakim destroyed except among Philistines	7
An angel appears to instruct Joshua	3	Still large areas of land to be taken over	7
Army marches around Jericho for seven days	3	Land assigned by lot	7
Walls of Jericho collapse at mighty shout	3	Tribe of Judah's inheritance	7
Rahab and her family rescued	3	Caleb claims his inheritance	7
Jericho burned	3	Land inheritances assigned by lot	7
Curse on man who rebuilds Jericho	3	Ephraim and Manasseh's inheritance	7
Anger of Lord aroused by theft	4	Ephraim and Manasseh ask for more land	7
Israelites beaten back by men of Ai	4	Tabernacle set up at Shiloh	8
Joshua mourns then prays to Lord	4	Remaining land surveyed	8
Lord replies that Israel has sinned	4	Joshua allocates remaining land by lot	8
Some devoted spoil of Jericho stolen	4	Benjamin's inheritance	8
Lord identifies Achan of Judah as guilty man	4	Simeon's inheritance	8
Achan confesses	4	Zebulun's inheritance	8
Stolen spoil recovered	4	Issachar's inheritance	8
Achan and all his household stoned to death	4	Asher's inheritance	8
City of Ai captured and burned	5	Naphtali's inheritance	8
Entire population of Ai put to sword	5	Dan's inheritance	8
Altar of uncut stones built on Mount Ebal	6	Joshua receives a town as his inheritance	8
Copy of Law inscribed on plastered rocks	6	Cities of refuge appointed	8
Joshua reads aloud entire Law on Mount Ebal	6	Levites receive their towns	8
Gibeonites deceive leaders of Israel	6	Eastern tribes return home to Gilead	9
Leaders do not bother to enquire of Lord	6	Eastern tribes erect a great altar at the Jordan	9
Peace covenant made with Gibeonites	6	Western tribes think it a sign of rebellion	9
Gibeonites found to be a Canaanite people	6	Western tribes prepare for war	9
Israelites march on Gibeon	6	Phinehas the priest speaks with eastern tribes	9
Joshua curses Gibeonites to be slaves	6	Altar built as a memorial only	9
Other kings combine to attack Gibeonites	6	Western tribes prepare for war	9
Gibeonites call on Joshua for protection	6	Joshua summons all Israel for his final address	10
Joshua attacks Gibeon by surprise	6	Israel not to associate with remaining Canaanites ..	10
Armies of the hill country kings flee in panic	6	Joshua and his family will serve the Lord	10
Large hailstones fall and kill many	6	Joshua repeats the laws and commandments	10
Joshua prays and the sun stands still	6	Joshua writes in book of Law	10
Hill country armies destroyed	6	Joshua sets up a stone as a witness	10
The five kings hide in a cave	6	Joshua dies and is buried	10
Joshua personally executes the five kings	6	Joseph's bones buried at Shechem	10
Seven more Canaanite cities destroyed	6	Eleazar the high priest dies	10

Bold The Lord or an angel speaking.
Bold italics A prophet speaking under inspiration.

1

The Lord to be with Joshua as with Moses

¹After the death of Moses the Lord said to Joshua, **"Moses my servant has died. As I was with Moses so shall I be with you. I will never leave you or forsake you."**

²**"Now be strong and courageous for you will be leading these people to inherit the land I swore to give their forefathers."**

Joshua commanded to study the Law day and night, then he will be successful in all he does

³**"Be careful to obey all the laws my servant Moses gave you. Let the book of the Law govern your speech. Study it day and night so you will be sure to do everything written in it. ⁴Then you will prosper and have success in all you do. No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life."**

Joshua told to prepare to cross the Jordan

⁵**"Now then, you and all these people, prepare to cross the Jordan river into the land I am about to give you."**

Two men sent to spy out the land

⁶So Joshua sent out two men as spies to look over the land and the city of Jericho.^{F*}

The spies stay with Rahab a harlot of Jericho

⁷The spies crossed the Jordan and entered Jericho and went to stay the night at the house of a harlot named Rahab.

The king of Jericho is warned and sends guards to Rahab to arrest the spies

⁸However the king of Jericho was told, "Some Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land." So the king sent guards to Rahab

*6 Jericho was the nearest Canaanite city across the Jordan.

JOSHUA 2

saying, "Bring out the men who came to you. They are spies."

Rahab deceives the guards and saves the lives of the spies

⁹Now Rahab had hidden the two spies among stalks of flax on her roof, so she said to the guards, "The men did come to me, but at sunset when it was time to close the city gate they left. I do not know which way they went. Go after them quickly and you may overtake them."

¹⁰So the guards set out in pursuit along the road that led to the ford of the Jordan.

Rahab informs the spies that the Israelites are held in dread by the Canaanites

¹¹Rahab then went up on the roof and said to the Israelite spies, "I know that your God Jehovah has given this land to you. A great dread of you has fallen on us. For we heard how Jehovah dried up the sea for you when you came out of Egypt and how you completely destroyed Sihon and Og the two kings of the Amorites."

¹²"When we heard of it our courage failed us, for Jehovah your God is indeed God in heaven above and on earth below."

Rahab asks that the Israelites spare her family

¹³"Now then, please swear to me that you will show kindness to my family and spare the lives of my father and mother and brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, for I have shown kindness to you."

The spies agree to her request if the red escape rope is tied in her window and her family gathered

¹⁴The men replied, "Our lives for your lives."

¹⁵So she let them down by a rope through the window of her house, which was built into the city wall.

¹⁶Then she said to them, "Flee to the hills so that your pursuers will not find you. Hide yourselves there three days until they return and then go on your way."

¹⁷The men said to her, "The oath you made us swear will not be binding upon us unless when we enter the city you have tied this crimson rope in the same window through which you let us down, and you have brought all of your family into your house. ¹⁸If any of them go outside your house into the street their blood will be upon their own heads."

¹⁹Rahab said, "Agreed." And as they departed she tied the crimson rope in the window.

The spies report back to Joshua

²⁰When the two men left they went up into the hills and hid. After three days they forded the Jordan and returned to Joshua and told him all that had happened. ²¹They said, "The Lord has surely given the whole land into our hands. The hearts of the people are melting in fear because of us."

Joshua orders the leaders to have the people prepare to enter the promised land

²²So Joshua commanded the leaders of the Israelites saying, "Go through the camp and have the people get ready. Three days from now we will cross the Jordan and take possession of the land the Lord our God is giving us."



Mount Nebo (in distance) from where Moses viewed the promised land, and where he was last seen.

2

The Israelites move camp to banks of the Jordan

¹Early next morning, on the seventh day of the first month the Israelites moved to the bank of the Jordan and camped there before crossing over.

The priests carrying the Ark lead out

²On the third day leaders went through the Israelite camp instructing the people saying, "Tomorrow when you see the priests carrying the Ark of the Lord you are to move out and follow it, but keep a distance of about 2000 cubits* between you and the Ark. Do not go near it."

³Joshua warned the people saying, "Purify yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonderful things among you."

⁴The next morning Joshua commanded the priests, "Take up the Ark of the Covenant and lead out ahead of the people."

The Lord to exalt Joshua in the eyes of all Israel

⁵Then the Lord said to Joshua, "Today I will begin to exalt you in the eyes of all Israel. They will know that I am with you as I was with Moses. ⁶Now command the priests who carry the Ark to go and stand in the river. As soon as they set foot in the Jordan its waters will stop flowing."

The Jordan stops flowing as the priests enter the water

⁷Now the Jordan was in flood as it always is during harvest season, yet as soon as the feet

*2 About 1 km.

of the priests who carried the Ark touched the water's edge, the water upstream stopped flowing. It piled up in a heap a great distance away at a town called Adam.^{F*}



The river Jordan in flood.

All Israel pass over the Jordan

⁸So the people crossed over opposite Jericho. The priests who carried the Ark stood firm on the river bed in the middle of the Jordan while all Israel passed by, until the whole nation had completed the crossing.

A memorial of twelve stones to be set up to commemorate the miracle

⁹Then the Lord said to Joshua, “Choose twelve men, one from each tribe. Have each man lift a large stone from the middle of the Jordan where the priests stood and carry it on his shoulder to be set up at the place where you will camp this night.”

¹⁰“In days to come when your children say to you, ‘What do these stones mean?’ Answer them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off from before the Ark of Jehovah. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever.”

¹¹Joshua chose men to do as the Lord commanded. He also set up twelve stones on the bed of the Jordan where the priests stood. Then he said to the priests, “Come up out of the Jordan.”

The river runs in flood as before

¹²As soon as the priests came up, the waters of the Jordan ran in flood as before.

¹³That day the Lord exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel and they honoured him all the days of his life just as they had honoured Moses.

¹⁴The people marched up from the Jordan and camped at Gilgal^{F*} on the east of Jericho.

The memorial stones set up at Gilgal

¹⁵That evening, when Joshua set up the twelve stones from the Jordan he said to the people, “When your children say, ‘What do these stones mean?’” answer them, “Jehovah our God did to the Jordan what he did to the Red Sea. He dried it up until we had crossed over.”

*7 Adam was about 30 km upstream. Blockages of the Jordan have been recorded in this area due to slumping of the steep high banks of the river.

*14 Gilgal was about 15 km from the Jordan and about 3 km from Jericho.

Uncircumcised Israelite males are circumcised

¹⁶Then the Lord said to Joshua, “Make flint knives and circumcise the Israelites.”

¹⁷For although all the males that came out of Egypt had been circumcised, those born in the desert had not.

¹⁸After the whole nation had been circumcised they remained at Gilgal until they were healed.

The Passover is celebrated

¹⁹On the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, while camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, the Israelites celebrated the Passover.^{F*}

The manna from heaven stops

²⁰The day after the Passover the Israelites ate food from the land of Canaan, unleavened bread and roasted grain. ²¹The manna stopped that day and from that day forward there was never any more. The Israelites ate the food of Canaan.

3

An angel appears to instruct Joshua

¹Now Joshua was standing near Jericho when he looked up and saw an angel standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. ²Joshua approached him and said, “Are you for us or for our enemies?”

³The angel answered, “I have come as a commander of the army of Jehovah.”

⁴Joshua fell face down to the ground in reverence, then he said to the angel, “What message does my lord have for his servant?”

⁵The angel replied, “Remove your sandals for the ground on which you stand is holy.” So Joshua did so.

⁶Then the angel said to Joshua, “I have delivered Jericho into your hands. Now march around the city with all the armed men and have seven priests sounding ram’s horn trumpets march in front of the Ark. Do this once a day for the next six days.”

⁷“On the seventh day you are to march around the city seven times. Then the priests blowing the trumpets are to sound a long blast and all the men are to give a great shout. ⁸The walls of Jericho will collapse and every man will go straight in.”

The army march around Jericho for seven days

⁹So Joshua commanded the Israelites and seven priests went forth sounding trumpets with the Ark followed them. All the armed men marched with the priests, both in front of them and behind them, and the trumpets were sounded continually.

¹⁰Now Jericho was tightly shut up because of the Israelites. No one went in or out. ¹¹That first day the armed men and the priests circled the city once and then returned to camp.

*19 There is no mention of the Passover being celebrated since the Israelites left Sinai 40 years ago. It is unlikely that it had been observed as uncircumcised males were forbidden to eat the unleavened bread (Exodus 7:6).

JOSHUA 4

¹²Early the next morning the priests again took up the Ark of the Lord and with the armed men marched around the city once more. They did this for six days.

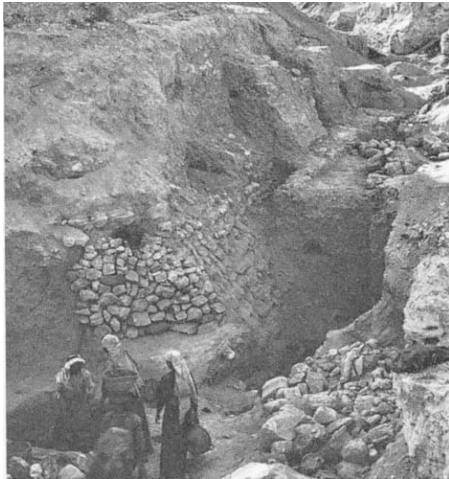
¹³On the seventh day they rose again at day break to march around the city, but this time they circled the city seven times.

The walls of Jericho collapse at the mighty shout of Israel

¹⁴The seventh time round the priests sounded a long trumpet blast. Now Joshua had commanded the men, "When you hear the long trumpet blast, shout! The Lord has given you the city."

¹⁵So at the sound of the trumpet blast the armed men gave a mighty shout and immediately the walls of Jericho collapsed and every man charged straight in.

¹⁶Then they began to put every living thing in the city to the sword, men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep and donkeys.



The excavated ruins of the collapsed walls of old Jericho.

Rahab and her family rescued

¹⁷Joshua said to the two young men who had spied out the land, "Go into Rahab the harlot's house and bring her out and all who belong to her, in accordance with your oath to her."

¹⁸So the two men went in and brought out Rahab along with her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her.

Jericho is burned

¹⁹Then the Israelites burned the entire city and everything in it, except the silver and gold and articles of bronze and iron which they put into the treasury of the Tabernacle of the Lord.

Joshua pronounces a curse on the man who rebuilds the walls of Jericho

²⁰Then Joshua pronounced this curse. ***"Cursed be the man who rebuilds the walls of Jericho. At the cost of his firstborn son***

will he lay the foundations. At the cost of his youngest son will he set up the gates."^{F*}

4

The anger of the Lord aroused by theft

¹Now one of the Israelite men had been unfaithful and kept some of the spoil of Jericho for himself, so the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel.

The men of Ai beat back the Israelites causing fear to come upon the Israelites

²Joshua next sent men to spy out the city of Ai east of Jericho.

³When the spies returned to Joshua they said, "Send 2000 or 3000 men to take it, for only a few men are there."

⁴So about 3000 men went up. But they were put to flight by the men of Ai and thirty-six Israelites were killed. At this the hearts of the Israelites became full of fear.

Joshua mourns then prays to the Lord

⁵Joshua tore his clothes and fell face down before the Ark and lay there until evening. The elders of Israel did the same with dust on their heads.^{F*}

⁶Then Joshua prayed saying, "O Lord what can I say, Israel has been put to flight by her enemies. Now the Canaanites will hear of this and will surround us and wipe us out. What then will you do for your great name?"

The Lord replies that Israel has sinned by stealing some of the devoted spoil of Jericho

⁷The Lord said to Joshua, "**Stand up. Why are you down on your face? Israel has sinned. They have violated my commandment and stolen some of the devoted^{F*} spoil of Jericho. They have lied and put devoted spoil among their own possessions. That is why they cannot stand against their enemies.**"

⁸"**Now command the people and say to them, 'Purify yourselves, and in the morning present yourselves before the Lord tribe by tribe. Whoever is found with the devoted things shall be destroyed by fire along with all that belongs to him. He has violated the covenant of the Lord.'**"

The guilty man, Achan of Judah is identified by the Lord

⁹Therefore early next morning Joshua had the men of Israel come forward tribe by tribe. Achan of the tribe of Judah was identified by the Lord as the guilty one.

Achan confesses

¹⁰Joshua said to Achan, "Give glory to the

^{*20} This curse fell upon a man by the name of Hiel during the time of King Ahab (Elijah 2:20).

^{*5} Sprinkling dust on the head was a sign of grief.

^{*7} Devoted means to be irrevocably given over to the Lord, either by destruction, or in the case of valuable metals, put into the Tabernacle treasury.

God of Israel and make confession to him. Tell me what you have done.”

¹¹Achan answered, “It is true. It is I who have sinned against the God of Israel. I saw among the spoil of Jericho a beautiful robe and 200 shekels^{F*} of silver and 50 shekels of gold. I coveted them and took them and buried them in the ground inside my tent.”

The stolen spoil is recovered

¹²Joshua sent messengers who ran to the tent of Achan and unearthed the buried items and brought them back and spread them out before Joshua.

¹³Joshua said to Achan, “Why have you brought this trouble upon us? The Lord will bring trouble on you today.”

Achan and all his household stoned and his possessions burned

¹⁴So they took Achan, the robe, the silver and gold, his sons and daughters, his cattle, donkeys and sheep, his tent and all that he had to the Valley of Achor. There all Israel stoned them and burned them with fire.

¹⁵Over the remains they heaped a large pile of rocks which remain to this day.^{F*} Then the Lord turned from his anger.



The Valley of Achor where Achan and his family were stoned to death.

5

The city of Ai taken by ambush

¹The Lord said to Joshua, “Take the whole army with you and go up and attack Ai. You shall do to Ai as you did to Jericho, except you may carry off the spoil and livestock for yourselves. Set an ambush behind the city.”

²So Joshua and the whole army went up to attack Ai. Joshua chose 30,000 of his best men and sent them out by night to conceal themselves behind the city. ³He said to them,

*¹¹ A shekel is approx 12gms. A shekel of silver was worth about a day's wages for a labourer.

*¹⁵ The phrase ‘which remain to this day’ is found several times in the book of Joshua. It refers to the day in which the book of Joshua was written.

“Tomorrow I and those with me will advance on the city. When the men of Ai come against us we will flee from them. They will say, ‘The Israelites are running from us as before’ and will pursue us.”

⁴“When we have drawn them away, rise up from your ambush and take the city and set it on fire.”

⁵So early next morning Joshua mustered his men and marched on the city. When the king of Ai saw them he and men of the city came out to meet them in battle.

⁶Joshua and his men pretended to flee before them toward the desert.

⁷At this all the men of Ai were called out to pursue them. Not one man remained behind in the city. They left the city open and went in pursuit of Israel.

⁸Then the Lord said to Joshua, “Hold out your sword toward Ai and I will deliver the city into your hands.” So Joshua held out his sword.

Ai burned

⁹As soon as he did this, the men concealed in ambush arose and entered the city. They captured it and set it on fire.

¹⁰The men of Ai saw the smoke rising in the sky but could not escape, for when Joshua saw the smoke he turned his men around to attack them.

¹¹The men of the ambush also came out of the city to assist them, so the men of Ai were caught in the middle with Israelites front and rear. Israel cut them down leaving no survivors except the king of Ai whom they brought to Joshua.

The entire population of 12,000 put to the sword

¹²Then they returned to the city and killed all who were in it. 12,000 fell that day, all the people of Ai. ¹³However Israel carried off the livestock and spoil of the city.

¹⁴Joshua killed the king of Ai and hung him on a tree, but at sunset he ordered his body taken down and thrown at the city gate. ¹⁵There they raised a large pile of rocks over him which remain to this day.

6

An altar of uncut stones built on Mount Ebal and a burnt offering made to the Lord

¹After this, Joshua built an altar of uncut stones on Mount Ebal as Moses had commanded and offered burnt offerings to the Lord.

A copy of the Law inscribed on plastered rocks

²There in the presence of all Israel, Joshua inscribed in plaster on large rocks a copy of the Law that Moses had written.

Joshua reads aloud the entire Law

³All of Israel, foreigners and citizens alike were standing on either side of the Ark. Half

JOSHUA 6

faced away to Mount Gerizim and half faced Mount Ebal, just as Moses had commanded. ⁴Then in the presence of all the people Joshua read out every word of the Law, including the blessings and the curses.

The Gibeonites deceive the leaders of Israel

⁵When the kings of Canaan heard what had happened to Jericho and Ai, they agreed to join together to war against Israel. But the people of the city of Gibeon resorted to cunning.

⁶Officials of Gibeon went as a delegation to Joshua with donkeys carrying worn-out sacks and old wineskins that were cracked and mended. ⁷They themselves wore old clothes and worn sandals on their feet and took with them bread that had gone dry and mouldy.

⁸They entered the Israelite camp at Gilgal and said to Joshua, "We have travelled from a very distant city to make a peace treaty with you."

⁹The men of Israel said to the Gibeonites, "You may be living in the land that has been given to us, how then can we make a peace treaty with you?"

¹⁰Joshua said to them, "Who are you and where do you come from?"

¹¹They answered, "Your servants have come from a very distant city because of the fame of Jehovah your God. We heard reports of him and all that he did in Egypt and to the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan. ¹²Our elders said to us, 'Take provisions for your journey and go and meet them and say to them, 'We are your servants. Make a peace treaty with us.' ¹³This bread of ours was still warm on the day we left, but see now how dry and mouldy it is. And these wineskins were new, but see how cracked they are. And our clothes and sandals are worn out by our long journey."*F*

The leaders of Israel do not bother to enquire of the Lord

¹⁴When the leaders of Israel saw how old their provisions were they did not bother to inquire of the Lord.

Joshua makes a peace covenant with the Gibeonites

¹⁵So Joshua made a peace covenant with the Gibeonites and the elders of Israel sealed the covenant with an oath.

The Israelites learn that the Gibeonites are a Canaanite people

¹⁶Three days later however the Israelites heard that the Gibeonites were nearby neighbours.

The Israelites march on Gibeon

¹⁷The Israelites set out and after two days came to the city of Gibeon and the towns round about it, but they did not attack for they had sworn a peace treaty with them.

¹⁸The Israelites murmured against their leaders but the leaders answered, "We have sworn an oath by Jehovah the God of Israel.

We cannot touch them or wrath will fall upon us for breaking the oath."

Joshua rebukes the Gibeonites and curses them to be slaves to Israel

¹⁹Joshua summoned the Gibeonite officials and said to them, "Why did you deceive us by saying, 'We live a long distance from you,' when you lived close by? You are now under a curse. You will never cease to serve as cutters of wood and carriers of water for all Israel and for the house of my God."

²⁰The Gibeonites answered Joshua, "We feared for our lives. Do with us whatever seems right to you."



Canaan during the time of Joshua.

Hill country kings combine to attack the Gibeonites

²¹When the king of Jerusalem heard that the Gibeonites had made a peace treaty with Israel he feared greatly, for Gibeon was a notable city, larger than Ai and their men were warriors.

²²So the king of Jerusalem sent to the king of Hebron and other kings of the hill country and said, "Combine with me to attack Gibeon, for they have made a peace treaty with the Israelites."

The Gibeonites call on Joshua for protection

²³When the men of Gibeon saw the armies of the other kings gathering against them they sent word to Joshua saying, "Come quickly and save us. The kings of the hill country have joined forces against us."

*13 The city of the Gibeonites was only about 30 km away from the Israelite camp at Gilgal, a two day journey.

Joshua marches his army all night to surprise the hill country kings

²⁴Joshua marched up from Gilgal that very night with his entire army to take them by surprise.

²⁵The Lord said to Joshua, “Do not fear them. I have given them into your hand.”

The hill country armies flee in panic and are slaughtered greatly

²⁶That day Joshua defeated the hill country armies in a great victory. They fled in panic before Israel and a great slaughter was inflicted upon them.

Large hailstones fall and kill many

²⁷As they fled, the Lord hurled large hailstones down on them from the sky. More died from the hailstones than were killed by the swords of the Israelites.

The sun and moon stand still in answer to Joshua’s prayer

²⁸That same day Joshua prayed to the Lord saying, “May the sun stand still over Gibeon, and the moon over the Valley of Ajalon.”

²⁹And the sun stood still and the moon stopped until the Israelites had destroyed their enemies.

³⁰The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down about a full day. There has never been a day like it before or since, a day when the Lord listened to a man.

The five kings hide in a cave

³¹Now the five kings had fled and hidden together in a cave. When Joshua was told this he said, “Roll large rocks against the mouth of the cave and post men to guard it, but do not stop pursuing your enemies. Do not let them reach their cities.”

³²So the Israelites destroyed the armies of the five kings, almost to a man, but some reached their cities.



The Valley of Ajalon near the city of Gibeon where the sun and moon stood still to enable Joshua and the Israelites to defeat the hill country kings.

Joshua personally executes the five kings

³³Then Joshua said, “Go open the cave and bring out the five kings.” So they brought out

the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon.

³⁴Joshua said to his army commanders, “Put your feet on the necks of these kings.” So they came forward and placed their feet on their necks.

³⁵Joshua said to them, “Fear not. Be strong and courageous. This is what the Lord will do to all the enemies you are going to fight.”

³⁶Then Joshua struck and killed the kings and hung them on five trees until evening.

³⁷At sunset they took them down from the trees and threw their bodies back into the cave, and blocked the entrance with large rocks which remain to this day.

Seven more cities destroyed

³⁸After this Joshua attacked and defeated the cities of Hebron, Lachish, Eglon, Libnah, Makkedah, Gezer and Debir leaving no survivors, then he returned with all Israel to the camp at Gilgal.

7

The northern Galilean kings combine against Israel

¹When the king of Hazor^{F*} heard what had happened he called on the other kings in the lake of Galilee region and they all combined forces to fight Israel. They came with a huge number of horses and chariots, a vast army as numerous as sand on the seashore.

²The Lord said to Joshua, “Do not fear them. By this time tomorrow I will hand them over to Israel slain. You are to hamstring^{F*} their horses and burn their chariots.”

Joshua defeats the Galilean kings

³Joshua and his whole army took them by surprise at the Waters of Merom,^{F*} defeating them and pursuing them until no survivors were left.

The cities of Galilee put to the sword

⁴Then Joshua took the cities of these kings, putting everyone to the sword, not sparing anything that breathed.

⁵Joshua waged war against these Galilean cities for a long time.

All Anakim destroyed except among Philistines

⁶So Joshua took all the southern and central hill country, all the Negeb,^{F*} the Arabah^{F*} and the mountains as far north as Mount Hermon.

⁷Nor were any Anakim^{F*} left in Israelite territory, only in the Philistine cities of Gaza, Gath and Ashdod. ⁸Joshua left nothing undone

*1 Hazor was the largest city of Canaan with an estimated population of 40,000. It was located north of the lake of Galilee.

*2 To hamstring an animal is to render it useless for work by cutting the main tendons in the back ankles.

*3 A marshy area along the Jordan river.

*6 The Negeb is the semi-desert, hilly, southern region that extends from the Dead Sea westward to the Mediterranean sea.

*6 The Arabah is the Jordan river valley that runs the full length of Israel, from the far north, down through the Dead Sea to the Red Sea in the distant south.

*7 The Anakim, meaning ‘long necks’ were an exceptionally tall race of people (see note on Genesis 5:14). Goliath who was over nine feet tall was of the Anakim.

JOSHUA 8

of all the Lord had commanded. ⁹Then the land had rest from war.^{F*}



Mount Hermon, in distance, the northernmost boundary of the land taken by Joshua.

Still large areas of land to be taken over

¹⁰Joshua was now well advanced in years and the Lord said to him, “**You are old and there still remains a large area of land to be taken over. The regions of the Philistines to the west and Lebanon to the north.** ¹¹**I will drive the inhabitants of the hill country of Lebanon before the Israelites. Be sure to allocate this land to Israel.**”

The land assigned by lot

¹²Joshua and the leaders of the tribes now began to assign the land by lot to the nine and a half tribes. ¹³Moses had already granted the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh land on the east of the Jordan.

¹⁴The Levites were to receive no share of the land but only towns to live in, with pasture lands for their livestock.

The tribe of Judah's inheritance

¹⁵The inheritance of the tribe of Judah was 29 towns in the Negeb, 39 towns in the western foothills, the fortified Philistine cities on the coastal plain with their surrounding settlements, 44 towns in the hill country including Hebron and 6 towns in the southern desert.

Caleb claims his inheritance

¹⁶Now Caleb of Judah had approached Joshua at the time they were camped at Gilgal and said to him, “I was forty years old when Moses sent me to explore this land, and I brought him back a good report. ¹⁷But my brethren who went up with me made the hearts of the people fearful. So on that day Moses swore to me, **‘The land on which your feet have walked will be your children's inheritance forever, for you have followed Jehovah wholeheartedly.’**”

¹⁸“So here I am today, eighty-five years old and still as strong as the day Moses sent me out.”

¹⁹“Now, allot me the hill country that the Lord promised me. ²⁰You have heard that the Anakim are there and their cities are large and

fortified, but with the Lord helping me I will drive them out just as he said.”^{F*}

²¹So Joshua blessed Caleb that day and gave him the city of Hebron as his inheritance.

Ephraim and Manasseh's inheritance

²²The inheritance of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh: Besides Manasseh's land east of the Jordan their territory began at the Jordan near Jericho and included the central hill country and all the towns as far as the Great Sea to the west. ²³There were towns belonging to Ephraim lying among the towns of Manasseh.^{F*}

Ephraim and Manasseh ask for more land

²⁴The men of Ephraim and half the tribe of Manasseh said to Joshua, “Why have you given us only one lot? We are a numerous people.”^{F*}

²⁵Joshua answered, “If you are so numerous and the hill country is not enough for you, go up into the forested country and clear land for yourselves.”

²⁶The men replied, “The hill country is not enough for us, but the Philistines who live on the coastal plain alongside the forested country have iron chariots.”

²⁷Joshua replied, “You are numerous and powerful. Take the forested hill country, clear it and its farthest limits will be yours. ²⁸Although the Philistines on the plains are strong and have iron chariots you can destroy them.”

²⁹(The tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh were not able to occupy all the towns allotted to them. However when they grew stronger they subjected the Canaanites to forced labour but did not destroy them completely.)

8

The Tabernacle set up at Shiloh

¹The Israelites had now gathered at Shiloh and set up the Tabernacle there.

²However there were still seven tribes who had not yet received their inheritances.

The remaining land is surveyed

³Joshua said to the Israelites, “How long will you wait before you take possession of the land Jehovah has given you? Appoint three men from each tribe and send them out to survey the land and write a description of it. ⁴Divide the land into seven parts and I will cast lots for you in the presence of the Lord.”

Joshua casts lots to allocate the land for the last seven tribes

⁵So the surveyors departed and travelled throughout the land and returned with written

*20 This conversation took place at Gilgal about seven years earlier, before Joshua's conquest of the land.

*23 It appears that the land was held in common at first but was later divided among these two tribes of Joseph.

*24 The total land area allotted Ephraim and Manasseh was in fact larger than that of any other tribe (see map), but it appears that the populated and developed portions of the land were comparatively less.

*9 Joshua's conquest of the land had taken about seven years.

descriptions of the land. Joshua then cast lots to allocate the land among the seven tribes.

Benjamin's inheritance

⁶The first lot fell to Benjamin. Their territory lay between the tribes of Judah, and Ephraim and Manasseh; 26 towns including Jericho and Jerusalem.

Simeon's inheritance

⁷The second lot fell to Simeon. Their inheritance lay inside the territory of Judah; 17 towns including Beersheba. ⁸The inheritance of Simeon was taken from the share of Judah for Judah's portion was more than they needed.

Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali and Dan's inheritances

⁹The third lot fell to Zebulun; 12 towns.

¹⁰The fourth lot fell to Issachar; 16 towns.

¹¹The fifth lot fell to Asher; 15 towns and the fortified city of Tyre.

¹²The sixth lot fell to Naphtali; 19 towns and fortified cities.

¹³The seventh lot fell to Dan; 18 districts and the seaport city of Joppa.

Joshua receives a town as an inheritance

¹⁴When they had finished dividing the land the Israelites gave Joshua the town he asked for, Timnath Serah in the hill country of Ephraim.

Cities of refuge appointed

¹⁵Then the Lord said to Joshua, **"Have the Israelites appoint cities of refuge as I instructed Moses, so that anyone who kills unintentionally may flee there and find protection from the avenger of blood."**

¹⁶So they set apart Kedesh in Galilee, Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim, and Hebron in the hill country of Judah.

¹⁷On the east side of the Jordan they set apart Bezer among the tribe of Reuben, Ramoth among the tribe of Gad, and Golan among the tribe of Manasseh.

The Levites receive their towns

¹⁸Then the Levites approached Eleazar the high priest and Joshua and said to them, "The Lord commanded Moses that you give us towns to live in with pasture lands for our livestock."

¹⁹So they gave the Levites who were descendants of Aaron 13 towns from among the tribes of Judah, Simeon and Benjamin.

²⁰The rest of the Levites were allotted towns among the other tribes. The total number of cities allotted to the Levites was 48, along with their pasture lands.

²¹So the Lord gave Israel all the land he had sworn to give their forefathers.

Manasseh and blessed them and said to them, "You have done all that Moses commanded and have not deserted your brothers."

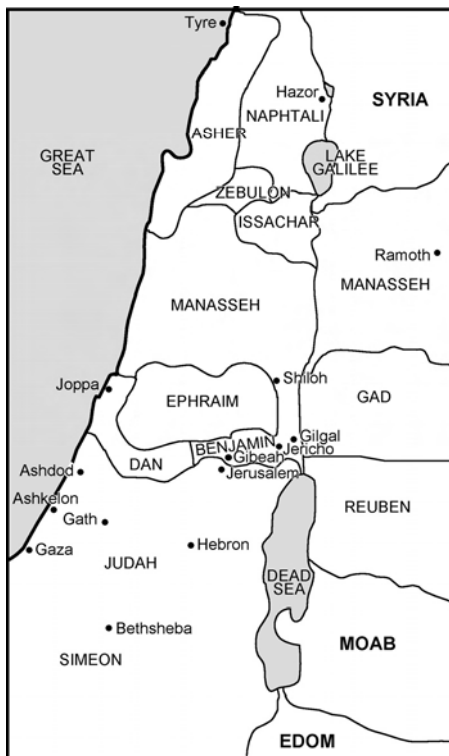
²⁴"Now return to your homes in Gilead on the east side of the Jordan with your great wealth, the spoil from your enemies, your large herds of livestock, your silver, gold, bronze and iron, and great quantity of clothing and divide it equally among yourselves."

³"But be very careful to keep all the commandments that Moses gave you. Love the Lord your God and serve him with all your heart and all your soul."

Eastern tribes erect a great altar at the Jordan

⁴So the men of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh left the Israelites in Shiloh in Canaan to return to Gilead their own land east of the Jordan.

⁵On the way they stopped and erected a large altar by the Jordan river.



The inheritances of the twelve tribes.

Western tribes think the altar a sign of rebellion and prepare for war

⁶When the Israelites in Canaan heard that the tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh had erected an altar, they were angered* and gathered at Shiloh to war against them.

*6 Large altars were normally used to offer burnt sacrifices, but sacrifices were only to be offered on the Tabernacle altar unless otherwise commanded by the Lord (Deuteronomy 1:39).

The eastern tribes return home to Gilead

¹Then Joshua summoned the tribes of Reuben and Gad and half the tribe of

JOSHUA 10

Phinehas the priest and other leaders first sent to speak with the Gilead tribes

⁷But first they sent Phinehas, son of Eleazar the high priest, and ten other leaders to the land of Gilead to speak with the eastern tribes.

The altar built as a memorial only

⁸When they reached Gilead they said, "How could you break faith with the God of Israel like this? How could you turn away from him and build an altar in rebellion against him?"

⁹But the leaders of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh answered, "Jehovah, God of gods, he knows. And let Israel know, if this was done in rebellion do not spare us. If we have built an altar to offer sacrifice to turn away from Jehovah, may he himself call us to account."

¹⁰"But no, we did it for fear that some day your descendants might say to ours, "What do you have to do with the God of Israel? Jehovah has made the Jordan a boundary between you and us. You have no share in the Lord."

¹¹So your descendants may cause ours to stop worshipping Jehovah. ¹²That is why we said, "Let us build an altar, not for burnt offerings or sacrifices, but as a witness between you and us, and the generations that follow that we will worship the Lord at his Tabernacle."

The western tribes are glad and talk no more of war

¹³When Phinehas the priest and the leaders of the Israelites heard what Reuben, Gad and Manasseh said, they were pleased and returned to Canaan and reported to the people.

¹⁴The men of Israel too, were glad to hear their report and spoke no more of going to war against their brothers.



Negev desert in the southern border of the land.

10

Joshua summons all Israel and gives them his final address

¹Now after the Lord had given Israel rest from their enemies for many days, Joshua summoned all Israel to the town of Shechem.

There he gathered the leaders of the people around him and said to them, "I am old and well advanced in years and am about to go the way of all the earth."

²"You have seen everything the Lord has done to these nations for your sake, and you have been allotted all the land of the nations that still remain. ³The Lord will drive them before you and you will be able to take possession of the whole land."

⁴"He has driven before you great and powerful nations. No one has been able to withstand you. One of you puts to flight a thousand because your God fights for you."

Israelites not to associate or intermarry with remaining Canaanites

⁵"Now be very careful to love Jehovah your God and to obey all that is written in the book of the Law of Moses. Do not associate or intermarry with the nations that remain among you. Do not invoke the names of their gods or bow down to them."

⁶"If you do, you may be sure that Jehovah your God will no longer drive them before you. Instead they will become whips to your backs and thorns in your sides until you perish."

Joshua declares that he and his family will serve the Lord

⁷"If you are unwilling to serve the Lord then choose this day whom you will serve. ⁸As for me and my family, we will serve the Lord."

⁹The people answered, "We too will serve the Lord."

Joshua repeats the laws and commandments and writes in the book of the Law

¹⁰On that day there at Shechem, Joshua made a covenant with the people. ¹¹He repeated all the laws and commandments they were to follow and wrote in the book of the Law all that took place.

Joshua sets up a stone as a witness

¹²Then he took a large stone and set it up under the oak tree at Shechem and said to all the people, "This stone will be a witness for it has heard the words that the Lord has given us. It will be a witness against you if you are unfaithful."

Joshua dies and is buried

¹³After these things, Joshua the servant of the Lord died at the age of 110. They buried him in the land of his inheritance at Timnath Serah.

Joseph's bones buried at Shechem

¹⁴Joseph's bones which the Israelites had brought up from Egypt were also buried at Shechem, in the same tract of land that Jacob bought for 100 pieces of silver from Hamor.

Eleazar the high priest dies

¹⁵Eleazar the high priest also died and was buried at Gibeah which had been allotted to his son Phinehas in the hill country of Ephraim.

JUDGES

Leaders of the Israelites from the time of Moses down to the time of the kings were called Judges, hence the name of this book.

Judges is a most interesting book but it covers a long 350 years of unsettled Israelite history in just a few pages and is therefore densely packed with detail, so it can be a little difficult to follow on first reading.

The book contains many colourful and heroic characters and also some tragic ones. There is the faithful Gideon, the ambitious and murderous king Abimelech, the brave Kenite woman Jael, the social outcast Jephthah, and the mighty Samson and his deceitful lover Delilah.

The book commences with the Israelite tribes attempting to destroy the remaining Canaanites, to complete the takeover of all their allotted inheritances. However in the absence of a strong leader of the calibre of Moses or Joshua, their faith and courage fail them.

The final blow to their hopes occurs when an angel appears with a message from the Lord stating that because they had been disobedient and not broken down the Canaanite altars as commanded, the Lord would no longer assist them to destroy the remaining Canaanites. At this dismaying news the Israelites wept aloud.

To make matters worse, the next generation of Israelites, in blatant disregard of the Law of Moses begin to intermarry with the Canaanites. This begins a continuing cycle of idolatry, defeat, suffering, repentance and eventual deliverance by a compassionate God. Later generations fail to learn the lessons of the past and the cycle reoccurs at approx 40 or 80 year intervals.

Judges ends tragically with a sordid case of sexual abuse of a concubine. This eventually leads to civil war and the almost complete annihilation of the tribe of Benjamin.

AUTHOR Samuel, with clarifications by later Israelite prophets.

The Lord said to Gideon, **“There are still too many men. Take them down to the spring to drink and I will sort them there.”** Judges 5:9.

CONTENTS

	Chapter
Western tribes go to occupy their lands	1
Judah and Simeon combine to destroy Canaanites .	1
Jerusalem set on fire	1
Caleb given city of Hebron	1
Othniel wins Caleb's daughter Acsah	1
Israelites unable to destroy the Philistines	1
City of Bethel taken by strategy	1
Israel fails to destroy all of the Canaanites	1
An angel rebukes Israel for disobedience	1
Lord to no longer drive out the Canaanites	1
The Israelites weep aloud	1
Israelites begin to intermarry with Canaanites	2
Israelites begin to worship Canaanite gods	2
Israel plundered and defeated	2
Israel in bondage eight years	2
Othniel becomes judge of Israel	2
Forty years of peace	2
Israelites again do evil	2
Israel subject to Moab for eighteen years	2
Ehud assassinates king of Moab	2
Ehud leads the Israelites and subdues Moab	2
Eighty years of peace	2
Shamgar judges Israel	2
Israelites again do evil	2
Israel oppressed 20 years by Jabin and Sisera	2
Deborah the prophetess judges Israel	3
Lord calls Barak to defeat Sisera	3
Barak refuses to go without Deborah	3
Deborah rebukes Barak's lack of faith	3
Lord gives Sisera's army into Barak's hands	3
Sisera flees to tent of Jael a Kenite woman	3
Jael kills Sisera with a tent peg	3
Song of victory by Deborah and Barak	3
Forty years of peace	3
Israelites again do evil	4
Israel oppressed by Midianites for seven years	4
Midianites ravage the land	4
Prophet sent to rebuke Israel for idolatry	4
Lord calls Gideon to save Israel	4
Gideon asks angel for a sign	4
Fire consumes Gideon's food offering	4
Gideon destroys altar of Baal	4
Men of the town demand Gideon's life	4
Gideon's father protects him	4
Midianites again invade Israel	5
Gideon gathers a 32,000 strong army	5

JUDGES

Gideon tests God with a wool fleece	5	Samson desires a Philistine girl for his wife	9
Lord reduces Gideon's army to 300	5	Samson kills a lion with his bare hands	9
Gideon's courage boosted by an enemy's dream	5	Finds honey in lion carcass	9
Gideon surrounds Midianite army at midnight	5	The wedding feast and the riddle	10
Gideon and his 300 men sound trumpets	5	Philistines threaten Samson's betrothed wife	10
Gideon's men hold up flaming torches and shout	5	Samson's betrothed wife pleads with him	10
The Midianites panic and fight one another	5	He finally reveals riddle to her	10
The Midianites flee into the darkness	5	Betrothed wife tells her people	10
Other Israelites called out to help	5	Samson angry with the Philistines	10
Ephraimites told to guard the Jordan fords	5	Strikes down thirty Philistines	10
Ephraimites angry they were not called at first	5	Samson later returns to claim his wife	10
Gideon placates Ephraimites anger	5	Finds she has been given to another	10
Succoth and Peniel refuse food to Gideon's men	5	Samson sets fire to crops of Philistines	10
Gideon captures the two remaining kings	5	Philistines burn Samson's wife to death	10
Gideon punishes men of Succoth and Peniel	5	Samson slaughters Philistines to avenge wife	10
Gideon executes the Midianite kings	5	The Philistines go to Judah to capture Samson	10
Gideon becomes judge of Israel	6	Men of Judah go out to Samson's cave	10
Gold earrings Gideon's share of spoil	6	Samson tied with new ropes and led out	10
Gideon makes a gold medallion	6	Samson snaps ropes	10
Forty years of peace	6	Samson kills a 1000 Philistines with a jaw bone	10
Gideon's wives bear him seventy sons	6	Samson cries to Lord for water	10
Israelites again turn to idolatry	6	A new spring flows	10
Gideon's son Abimelech desires to rule	6	Samson becomes judge of Israel	10
Abimelech murders all but one of his 70 brothers	6	Samson stays with a Philistine harlot in Gaza	11
Abimelech crowned ruler of Israel	6	Men of the city lie in wait to kill him	11
Abimelech's brother Jotham shouts a bitter fable	6	Samson uproots city gates at midnight	11
Jotham curses Abimelech and city Shechem	6	Samson falls in love with Delilah	11
Abimelech rules Israel for three years	7	Philistine rulers offer a bribe to Delilah	11
Ill feeling between men of Shechem and Abimelech	7	Delilah asks Samson to tell her his secret	11
Gaal brags he could destroy Abimelech	7	Samson snaps seven fresh bowstrings	11
Ruler of Shechem informs Abimelech	7	Samson snaps new ropes like threads	11
Abimelech sets an ambush	7	Delilah weaves Samson's hair into her loom	11
Abimelech puts Gaal and his followers to flight	7	Samson wearies of Delilah's nagging	11
Abimelech attacks Shechem	7	Samson reveals to Delilah that he is a Nazirite	11
1000 survivors burned alive in temple	7	Delilah sends word to Philistine rulers	11
City of Shechem razed and the crop land ruined	7	Delilah has Samson's hair cut off while he sleeps	11
Abimelech attacks nearby town of Thebez	7	Samson overcome and blinded by the Philistines	11
Abimelech tries to burn inhabitants alive	7	Samson put to work grinding at prison mill	11
Abimelech's skull crushed by a woman	7	Philistines celebrate in their temple	11
Abimelech has his armour-bearer kill him	7	Samson brought in to entertain Philistines	11
Tola judges Israel twenty three years	8	Samson prays for his strength to be restored	11
Jair judges Israel twenty-two years	8	Samson collapses the Philistine temple	11
Israelites again turn to idolatry	8	Samson and thousands of Philistines die	11
Ammonites oppress Israel eighteen years	8	Micah's silver plated image	12
Israelites repent	8	Micah appoints a young Levite to act as his priest	12
Jephthah called to lead Israelites of Gilead	8	Tribe of Dan search for a place to settle	12
Jephthah's message to Ammonite king	8	Five Danite explorers spend night with Micah	12
Jephthah makes a vow to the Lord	8	Explorers discover people of Laish	12
Ammonites defeated by Jephthah	8	600 armed men of Dan set out for Laish	12
Jephthah's daughter first to greet him	8	The explorers steal Micah's image and his priest	12
Jephthah's daughter weeps with her friends	8	Micah pursues Danites	12
Jephthah's daughter sacrificed	8	Danites too strong for Micah	12
Men of Ephraim threaten Jephthah	8	Danites put town of Laish to sword	12
Ephraimites mock men of Gilead	8	The Levite and his sons act as their priests	12
A battle begins and Ephraimites defeated	8	A Levite's concubine unfaithful to him	13
Survivors identified at Jordan by their speech	8	She returns to live with her father	13
42,000 Ephraimites fall	8	Her husband goes to see her to forgive her	13
Jephthah judges Israel six years	8	The man and his concubine depart for home	13
Ibzan judges Israel seven years	8	They spend night at town of Gibeah	13
Elon judges Israel ten years	8	An old man takes them into his house	13
Abdon judges Israel eight years	8	Evil men come to house that night	13
Philistines oppress Israel forty years	8	Demand sex with the Levite man	13
Angel appears to the barren wife of Manoah	9	The old man offers his virgin daughter	13
A son to be born and be a Nazirite	9	The Levite pushes his concubine outside to them	13
Angel appears a second time	9	The men rape concubine all night	13
Manoah offers a burnt sacrifice	9	Concubine dies in doorway	13
The angel ascends in the flame	9	The Levite dismembers his wife's body	13
Samson is born	9	Sends the parts throughout Israel	13

All Israel gather against men of Gibeah 13
 Benjamites support the men of Gibeah 13
 The Israelites enquire of the Lord 13
 Benjamites twice overpower the Israelites 13
 The Israelites fast and offer sacrifice 13
 The Israelites ambush Gibeah 13
 Benjamites are surrounded and 25,000 die 13
 600 Benjamites flee into desert 13
 People and towns of Benjamin destroyed 13
 Great sorrow for loss of tribe of Benjamin 14

Offerings presented to Lord 14
 Daughters forbidden by oath to marry Benjamites . 14
 Town of Jabesh had not assisted the Israelites 14
 Town of Jabesh to be put to sword 14
 400 virgin girls of Jabesh spared 14
 Held as wives for surviving Benjamites 14
 Peace offered to 600 Benjamites who fled 14
 Still insufficient wives for Benjamite survivors 14
 Benjamites permitted to capture girls from Shiloh .. 14
 Surviving Benjamites rebuild their towns 14

Bold The Lord or an angel speaking.
Bold italics A prophet speaking under inspiration.

1

The Lord is asked which of the western tribes should occupy their lands first

¹After the death of Joshua, the Israelites inquired of the Lord,^{F*} “Which tribe shall go first into their allotted territory to fight against the Canaanites?”

Judah and Simeon combine

²The Lord answered, “**Judah shall go first.**”

³The men of Judah said to the men of Simeon, “Come up with us into our allotted territory to destroy the Canaanites, and then we in turn will go with you into yours.”

⁴So the Simeonites went up with the men of Judah and the Lord gave the Canaanites into their hands.

Jerusalem set on fire

⁵They struck down 10,000 men at Bezek and attacked Jerusalem and took it, putting the city to the sword and setting it on fire.

⁶(However later on the Jebusites re-occupied the fortified part of the city and the Benjamites^{F*} were unable to dislodge them.)

Caleb given the city of Hebron

⁷After this they went down and fought the Canaanites who remained in the hill country and the Negev.

Othniel wins Caleb’s daughter Acsah

⁸From there they advanced against Debir. Caleb said, “I will give my daughter in marriage to the man who attacks and captures Debir.”

⁹Othniel, the son of his younger brother took the city, so Caleb gave his daughter Acsah to him in marriage.

Judah and Simeon unable to destroy all the Philistines from the coastal plain

¹⁰The men of Judah and Simeon took possession of all the hill country and also the Philistine cities of Gaza, Ashkelon and Ekron.
¹¹But they were unable to destroy all the Philistines from the plains as they had iron chariots.

*1 Inquiries of the Lord were made by the high priest using the Urim and Thummim (Deuteronomy 10:7).

*6 Jerusalem belonged to Benjamin but was located on the border of Judah’s allotment. Part of Jerusalem (Zion) was a natural fortress, built on a mountain ridge with sheer cliffs on three sides and very difficult to attack. It was not until the reign of King David that this part of the city was finally taken from the Jebusites who were one of the Canaanite tribes.

Ephraim and Manasseh take Bethel by strategy

¹²The house of Joseph (the tribe of Ephraim and half the tribe of Manasseh) prepared to attack the Canaanite city of Bethel.

¹³They first sent spies, who saw a Canaanite man coming out of the city and said to him, “Show us a way to get into the city and we will see that you are treated well.” So he showed them.

¹⁴They put all Bethel to the sword, but spared the man and his family. ¹⁵He went north among the Hittites and built a town and named it Luz.



Tomb of Joseph in Shechem.

Ephraim and Manasseh unable to destroy all the Canaanites from the lands of their inheritance

¹⁶But Ephraim and Manasseh could not destroy all the Canaanites from the lands of their inheritance. ¹⁷(However when Israel became strong^{F*} they put the Canaanites to forced labour.)

Other tribes also fail to destroy the Canaanites

¹⁸Neither were the tribes of Zebulun, Asher and Naphtali able to drive out all the Canaanites, but later on they also put them to forced labour.

¹⁹The tribe of Dan were confined by the Canaanites to the hill country. They would not allow them to occupy the plain. ²⁰Later the Danites attacked Laish in the far north and put the city to the sword and also settled there. They renamed it Dan.^{F*}

*17 ie, in the days of King David and his son Solomon.

*20 An account of this conquest by Dan is found in Judges 12:8-24. Dan was the northern-most city of Israel.

JUDGES 2

An angel sent to rebuke the Israelites for their disobedience

²¹Then the angel of Jehovah appeared at Bochim and said, "I brought you out of Egypt and led you into this land that I swore to give your forefathers. I commanded you not to make a covenant with the people of this land but to break down their altars. ²²Why have you disobeyed me?" ^{F*}

The Lord will not now drive the Canaanites before Israel

²³"Now I will not drive them before you. They will be thorns in your sides and their gods will be a snare to you."

The Israelites weep aloud

²⁴When the Israelites heard what the angel of the Lord had spoken at Bochim, they wept aloud and offered sacrifices to the Lord.

The nations that the Lord left to test the Israelites

²⁵These are the nations that the Lord left to test the Israelites, besides the Canaanites who had not been destroyed, the Philistines, the Sidonians and the Hivites living in the Lebanon mountains.^{F*}

2

A new generation of Israelites begin to intermarry with the Canaanites

¹After that generation of Israelites had been gathered to their fathers^{F*}, another generation grew up who had no regard for Jehovah, nor for what he had done for Israel.

²This generation did evil and took the sons and daughters of the Canaanites in marriage.

Israelites begin to worship the gods of the Canaanites

³They provoked the Lord to anger, for they forsook the God of their fathers who had brought them out of Egypt, and instead worshipped Baal and Ashtoreth.^{F*}

Israel plundered and defeated

⁴In his anger against Israel, the Lord handed them over to plunderers who ruined them. Whenever Israel went out to fight, the hand of Jehovah was against them to defeat them.

Israel in bondage eight years

⁵He also sold them into the hands of the king of Babylonia^{F*} to whom the Israelites were in bondage for eight years. They were in great distress.

*22 Angels when delivering messages often speak as if the Lord himself were speaking.

*25 These three nations occupied the Mediterranean coastal areas of Israel, and Lebanon to the north.

*1 Israelite belief was that after death, a person's spirit descended to Sheol (the spirit world of the dead) and dwelt with their ancestors (their fathers) while awaiting the resurrection of the body.

*3 Baal (male) and Ashtoreth (female) were demon gods of the Canaanites and Philistines and were worshipped with immoral rites.

*5 The area between the Euphrates and the Tigris rivers, to the far east of Israel, nowadays known as Iraq.

Caleb's nephew Othniel becomes judge of Israel

⁶Finally the Israelites cried out to the Lord and he raised up a deliverer for them, Othniel the son of Caleb's younger brother.

⁷The Spirit of the Lord came upon Othniel and he became Israel's judge and went to war. The Lord gave the king of Babylonia into his hands.



Ashtoreth the female demon moon goddess of the Canaanites who was worshipped with immoral rites.

Forty years of peace

⁸So the land had forty years of peace, until Othniel died.

The Israelites again do evil and are subject to Moab for eighteen years

⁹Once again the Israelites did evil and the Lord gave the king of Moab^{F*} power over Israel. He took possession of the City of Palms^{F*} near Jericho.

¹⁰The Israelites were subject to the king of Moab for eighteen years.

The left handed Ehud assassinates the king of Moab

¹¹Again the Israelites cried out to the Lord in their distress and he gave them a deliverer, Ehud a left-handed man of the tribe of Benjamin.

¹²The Israelites would send tribute by Ehud to the king of Moab. One day Ehud made a short, two-edged sword and strapped it to his right thigh under his clothing.

*9 The Moabites were descendants of Lot. Their land was east of the Dead Sea.

*9 A city built close to the ruins of Jericho and eventually called Jericho.

¹³When he next took tribute to the king of Moab, Ehud afterward dismissed the men who had carried it for him and returned to the king's palace and said, "I have a secret message for the king." So the king dismissed his attendants.

¹⁴Now the king of Moab was a very fat man, and he was sitting in the cool upper room of his summer palace at the City of Palms.

¹⁵Ehud went up to him and said, "I have a message from God for you." As the king arose from his seat, Ehud reached with his left hand and drew the sword from his right thigh and plunged it into the king's belly.

¹⁶Even the hilt went in after the blade, which came out his back. Then Ehud closed the door of the upper room behind him and locked it.

¹⁷After he had gone, the king's attendants returned and found the door locked. They said, "He must be relieving himself." ¹⁸They waited a long time, and when he still did not open the door they took a key and unlocked it and found their king lying dead on the floor.

Ehud leads the Israelites and subdues the Moabites

¹⁹When Ehud arrived back he blew a trumpet in the hill country of Ephraim and the Israelites gathered to him. He said, "Follow me, for Jehovah has given Moab into our hands."

²⁰So they followed Ehud and took control of the fords of the Jordan that led to Moab so that no Moabites could escape. ²¹That day they struck down about 10,000 Moabites. Not a man escaped.

Eighty years of peace

²²So Moab was subdued that day and the land had peace for eighty years.

Shamgar judges Israel

²³After Ehud came Shamgar, who killed 600 Philistines with an ox goad.^{F*} He too saved Israel.

3

The Israelites again do evil and are oppressed for twenty years by King Jabin and Sisera

¹The Israelites once again did evil, so the Lord sold them into the hands of Jabin, a Canaanite king who reigned in the city of Hazor.^{F*}

²The commander of Jabin's army was Sisera. He had 900 iron chariots and cruelly oppressed the Israelites for twenty years until they cried to the Lord for help.

Deborah the prophetess, the judge of Israel

³Deborah the prophetess, wife of Lappidoth was judging Israel at that time. She held court in the hill country of Ephraim and the Israelites came to her to have their disputes settled.

The Lord calls Barak to defeat Sisera

⁴She sent for Barak from the tribe of Naphtali

and said to him, "Jehovah, the God of Israel commands you, **'Take with you 10,000 men of Naphtali and Zebulun and assemble on Mount Tabor. 5¹ will lure Sisera with his chariots and his men to the Kishon River and give him into your hands.'**"

Barak refuses to go without Deborah

⁶But Barak said to her, "I will only go if you go with me."

Deborah rebukes Barak's lack of faith

⁷Deborah replied, "**Very well then, I will go with you, but this path you are following will not lead to your honour, the Lord will hand Sisera over to a woman.'**"

The Lord gives Sisera's army into Barak's hands

⁸When Sisera was told that Barak had gathered on Mount Tabor with 10,000 men, he mustered his 900 iron chariots and all his army.

⁹Then Deborah said to Barak, "**This day the Lord has given Sisera into your hands.'**"

¹⁰So Barak and his men marched down from Mount Tabor and the Lord threw Sisera's chariots and army into a panic before them.

¹¹Barak and his men pursued them and all the troops of Sisera fell by the sword. Not a man escaped.^{F*}



Mount Tabor.

Sisera flees on foot to the tent of Jael a Kenite woman

¹²Sisera abandoned his chariot and fled on foot to the tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite for there were friendly relations between the king of Hazor and the Kenites.^{F*}

¹³Jael went out to greet Sisera and said to him, "Come in my lord." So he entered her tent and lay down and she put a rug over him.

¹⁴Sisera said, "I thirst. Please give me some water." Jael opened a skin of milk and gave him a drink and then covered him back up again.

^{*11} From the words of the victory song that follows it would appear that the Lord sent a sudden storm to hinder Sisera's chariots by flooding the Kishon river.

^{*12} The tent-dwelling Kenites, a branch of the Midianites were descendants of Moses' brother-in-law Hobab (Numbers 3:7).

^{*23} An ox goad was a pole about two metres long tipped with an iron spike.

^{*1} Hazor was a large city north of the Lake of Galilee in the territory of Naphtali.

JUDGES 4

¹⁵Sisera said to Jael, "Remain in the doorway of the tent and if anyone comes by and asks you, 'Is anyone here?'" say 'No.'"

Jael kills Sisera with a tent peg

¹⁶But later, while Sisera lay in an exhausted sleep, Jael picked up a hammer and drove a tent peg into his temple until it went through into the ground below and he died.

¹⁷Then Barak came by in pursuit of Sisera. Jael went out to him and said, "Come and I will show you the man you are looking for."

A song of victory by Deborah and Barak

¹⁸That day Deborah and Barak sang this song:

¹⁹"I will sing to Jehovah I will sing and make music, to the Lord the God of all Israel."

²⁰"The earth did tremble and the Lord poured down water from the clouds upon high."

²¹"The heavens did fight Sisera's vast army. The river of Kishon swept them away."

²²"Most blessed of women is Jael wife of Heber, most blessed of all who dwell in tents."

²³"As Sisera slept she took up a tent peg. Her right hand reached for the workman's hammer."

²⁴"She struck Sisera and pierced his temple. He lay at her feet on the tent floor slain."

²⁵"Through a window watches Sisera's mother, 'Why is his chariot so long delayed?'"

²⁶"Her wise lady answers, 'Are they not still dividing the spoil?'"

²⁷"A girl or two for each of his warriors, and colourful garments embroidered and dyed."

²⁸"O Lord may all your enemies perish as Sisera."

²⁹"But those who love you be like the sun in its strength."



The Kishon river that flooded and swept away Sisera's chariots.

Forty years of peace

³⁰So that day God subdued Jabin the Canaanite king and the hand of the Israelites grew steadily stronger until they destroyed him.

³¹Then the land had peace for forty years.

4

The Israelites again do evil and are oppressed seven years by the Midianites

¹Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites and other peoples of the east. ²Their power was so oppressive, that the Israelites built hiding places for themselves in the mountains.

Midianites ravage the land and destroy crops

³Whenever the Israelites sowed crops the Midianites would invade and camp on the land, ruining the crops.

⁴They would not leave a living thing for Israel, neither sheep, cattle or donkey. They came up like swarms of locusts. It was impossible to count the men and camels as they invaded the land to ravage it.

⁵Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the Lord for help.

A prophet sent to rebuke Israel for idolatry

⁶The Lord sent them a prophet with this message, "Jehovah the God of Israel says, 'I brought you up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. I drove your enemies before you and gave you their land. I said to you, 'I am the Lord your God, do not worship the gods of the people in whose land you live.' But you have not heeded my voice.'"

Gideon to save Israel by an angel of the Lord

⁷Then the angel of Jehovah came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah. Gideon was threshing wheat there, in a winepress to hide it from the Midianites. The angel said to Gideon, "**Jehovah is with you, mighty warrior.**"

⁸Gideon said, "O my lord, if Jehovah is with us, why has all this happened to my people? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about? The Lord has abandoned us into the hand of the Midianites."

⁹The angel said, "**Go in your strength and save Israel from Midian's hand.**"

¹⁰Gideon replied, "But my lord, how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh and I am least in my family."

¹¹The angel answered, "**I will be with you. You shall strike down the Midianites.**"

Gideon asks the angel for a sign that it is the word of the Lord he speaks

¹²Gideon said, "If I have found favour in your eyes, give me a sign that it is the word of the Lord you speak, and please remain until I bring an offering and set it before you."

¹³The angel said, "**I will wait.**"

¹⁴Gideon quickly prepared a young goat, and made bread without yeast and offered them to the angel under the oak.

¹⁵The angel of God said to him, **“Place the food on this rock.”** Gideon did so.

The angel causes fire to consume Gideon’s food offering

¹⁶Then with the tip of a staff he held in his hand the angel touched the food. Immediately fire flared up from the rock and consumed it and the angel vanished.

¹⁷When Gideon realised that it was the angel of the Lord he had seen, he feared and prayed saying, **“O Jehovah God, I have seen the angel of Jehovah face to face!”**

¹⁸Then the word of the Lord came to him saying, **“Peace. Fear not. You shall not die.”**

¹⁹So Gideon built an altar to the Lord there.

Gideon destroys the altar of Baal

²⁰That same night, the word of the Lord came to Gideon again saying, **“Take your father’s bull, the one seven years old, and tear down your father’s altar to Baal, and cut down the Asherah pole^{F*} beside it. ²¹Build a stone altar to Jehovah your God in its place and then use the wood of the Asherah pole to offer the bull as a burnt offering.”**

²²So late that night Gideon took ten servants and did as the Lord commanded. He did it at night for he feared his family and the men of the town.

The men of the town demand Gideon’s life

²³In the morning the men of the town saw Baal’s altar demolished and the Asherah pole cut down and the remains of a bull sacrificed on a newly built altar.

²⁴When they were told, “Gideon did it.” The men of the town gathered and demanded of Gideon’s father, “Bring out your son. He must die.”

Gideon’s father protects him saying, ‘Let Baal take his own vengeance’

²⁵But Gideon’s father Joash replied, “If my son has offended Baal, let Baal strike him dead by tomorrow morning. If Baal is a god he can take his own vengeance on any man who breaks down his altar.”

5

The Midianites again invade Israel

¹Now at that time the Midianites and other eastern peoples had combined forces and crossed over the Jordan into Israel, and camped in the Valley of Jezreel.

Gideon gathers a 32,000 strong army

²Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon and he blew a trumpet to summon his clan to follow him. He also sent messengers throughout Manasseh and to the tribes of Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali, calling them to arms. 32,000 men gathered to him.

Gideon tests God with a wool fleece

³Then Gideon prayed to God saying, “I will place a wool fleece on the threshing floor. If in the morning there is dew only on the fleece and all around the ground is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand as you have said.”

⁴Gideon arose early next morning and the ground was dry, but he squeezed the fleece and wrung out a bowlful of water. But he prayed again to God saying, “Be not angry with me, but allow me one more test with the fleece. This time may the fleece be dry and the ground all around be covered with dew.”

⁵That night God did as Gideon asked, the fleece was dry and all the ground was covered with dew.

Gideon leads his men out near the valley where the Midianite army is camped

⁶So that morning Gideon led his men to the spring of Harod, which overlooks the valley where the Midianite army was camped.

The Lord reduces Gideon’s army from 32,000 to 300

⁷But the Lord said to Gideon, **“You have too many men for me to deliver Midian into their hands. Israel may boast that her own strength has saved her. Say now to the men, ‘Anyone who fears may turn back.’”**

⁸So 22,000 men left, while 10,000 remained.

⁹The Lord said to Gideon, **“There are still too many men. Take them down to the spring to drink and I will sort them there.”**

¹⁰So Gideon took the men down to the spring. There the Lord said to him, **“Separate those who take up water in their hands and lap like a dog, from those who kneel down to drink.”**

¹¹Only 300 men took up water with their hands and lapped, all the rest got down on their knees to drink.

¹²The Lord said, **“With the 300 men that took up water in their hands I will deliver you from the Midianites. Let all the other men return to camp.”**

¹³Gideon took jars and trumpets from the rest of the men and sent them back to their tents, but he kept the 300 men with him.

Gideon’s courage boosted by overhearing an account of a Midianite soldier’s dream

¹⁴Now the camp of the Midianites lay below them in the valley. During the night the Lord said to Gideon, **“Arise and attack the Midianite camp. I will give it into your hands. If you fear to attack, go down to the camp with your servant and hear what they are saying.”**

¹⁵So Gideon and his servant crept down to the outskirts of the camp. The Midianites and other eastern peoples were camped in the valley as thick as locusts and their camels were as numerous as the sand on the seashore.

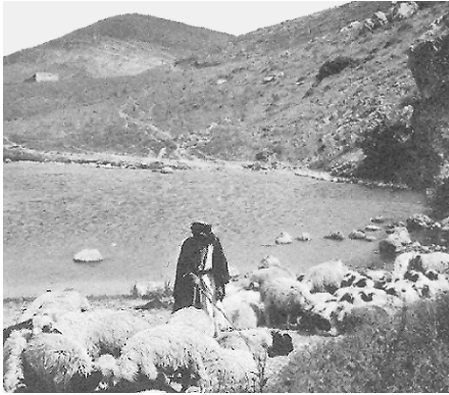
¹⁶Just as Gideon arrived he overheard one man telling a friend his dream. He was saying,

*20 An Asherah pole was similar to a totem pole and was believed to have been a phallic symbol. It was associated with the immoral worship of the fertility goddess Asherah.

JUDGES 5

"I had a dream. A small loaf of barley bread^{F*} came tumbling into the camp and struck our tent with such force that the tent overturned and collapsed."

¹⁷His friend replied, "That can only be the sword of Gideon the Israelite. God has given the camp into his hands."



The spring of Harod from which Gideon's men drank.

Gideon surrounds the Midianite army at midnight

¹⁸When Gideon heard this, he worshipped the Lord and returned and roused his 300 men. He said, "Arise, Jehovah has given the Midianite camp into our hands."

¹⁹Gideon divided the 300 men into three groups and placed in the hands of each man a trumpet and an empty jar with a lighted torch burning inside.

²⁰Then he said to them, "When we get to the edge of the camp you are to surround it and do exactly as I do. When I and my group sound our trumpets, you are to sound yours too from all around the camp and shout, 'A sword for Jehovah and for Gideon!'"

Gideon and his 300 men sound trumpets, hold up flaming torches and shout

²¹So Gideon and his men surrounded the camp at the beginning of the middle watch,^{F*} just after they had changed the guard. ²²When Gideon gave the signal, the 300 men sounded their trumpets and smashed the jars and held up the flaming torches in their left hands shouting, "A sword for Jehovah and for Gideon!"

The Midianites panic and begin to fight one another and then flee

²³Gideon's men held their positions surrounding the camp, but the Midianites ran about in confusion crying out.

²⁴Then the 300 Israelites sounded their trumpets again and in the confusion the Lord caused men throughout the camp to turn on

each other with their swords. Then the whole army fled in the darkness.

Other Israelites called out to pursue the Midianites

²⁵Israelites from Naphtali, Asher and all Manasseh were called out to pursue the Midianites.

The men of Ephraim told to seize the fords of the Jordan

²⁶Gideon also sent messengers throughout the hill country of Ephraim saying, "Come against the Midianites. Seize the fords of the Jordan ahead of them."

²⁷So the men of Ephraim took the fords of the Jordan. They captured and killed two of the Midianite kings and showed their heads to Gideon when he arrived at the Jordan.

The Ephraimites angry that they were not called out at first

²⁸But the men of Ephraim were angry with Gideon and said, "Why have you treated us like this? Why did you not call on us when you first went to fight Midian?"

Gideon placates the Ephraimite's anger

²⁹Gideon answered them, "What have I accomplished compared to you? God gave these two Midianite kings into your hands. What have I done compared to you?" At these words their anger subsided.

The men of Succoth and Peniel refuse food to Gideon's men

³⁰Gideon and his 300 men were exhausted, but they continued to pursue the Midianites and crossed the Jordan to Succoth.

³¹Gideon said to the men of Succoth,^{F*} "Give my men some bread, for they are weak with hunger and we are pursuing two of the kings of Midian."

³²But the men of Succoth said, "Do you already have these kings in your power that we should risk giving bread to your men?"

³³So Gideon went to the nearby town of Peniel and made the same request, but they answered as the men of Succoth had. ³⁴Therefore he said to the men of Peniel, "When I return in triumph I will tear down your tower."

Gideon captures the two remaining kings

³⁵Now the two Midianite kings had camped at Karkor with about 15,000 men, all that were left of their armies, for 120,000 had fallen.

³⁶Gideon went up by the route of the nomads and took the unsuspecting army by surprise. The two kings fled, but Gideon pursued them and captured them, routing their entire army.

Gideon punishes the men of Succoth and Peniel

³⁷On his return from battle Gideon saw a young man of Succoth and made him write down the names of seventy-seven leading men of Succoth.

³⁸When Gideon returned to Succoth he said

*16 Barley bread was a staple food of the Israelites.

*21 About midnight.

*31 Succoth was an Israelite town of the tribe of Gad.

to the men of that town, "Here are the two kings about whom you taunted me and refused to give bread to my men."

³⁹Then he took the leading men of the town and punished them by threshing their flesh with desert thorns. He also pulled down the tower of Peniel and killed all the men of that town.

Gideon executes the two Midianite kings

⁴⁰Afterward Gideon asked the two Midianite kings, "What kind of men did you kill at Tabor?"

⁴¹They answered, "Men like yourself, with the bearing of princes."

⁴²Gideon replied, "They were my brothers. If you had spared their lives I would not kill you."

⁴³Turning to Jether his eldest son he said, "Kill them." But Jether did not draw his sword, for he was only a boy and was afraid.

⁴⁴The two kings said, "Do it yourself." So Gideon killed them there and took the crescents off the necks of their camels.

6

Gideon becomes judge of Israel

¹After the victory the Israelites gathered around Gideon and said to him, "Rule over us, you and your sons, for you have saved us out of the hand of Midian."

²Gideon replied, "Very well, but I will not rule over you, nor will my sons rule over you, Jehovah will rule over you."

Gideon takes his share of the spoil as gold earrings and makes a medallion

³Then Gideon said, "I have a request. Each of you give me a gold earring from your share of the spoil." For it was the custom of eastern peoples to wear gold earrings.

⁴So they spread out a garment and each man threw an earring from his spoil onto it. The weight of the gold earrings came to 1700 shekels.^{F*}

⁵Gideon used the gold to make a large medallion which he placed in his home town. (Later Israel prostituted themselves by worshipping it, therefore it became a snare to Gideon and his family.)

Forty years of peace

⁶Thus Midian was subdued by the Israelites and during Gideon's lifetime the land enjoyed peace for forty years.

Gideon's wives bear him seventy sons

⁷Gideon returned home to Ophrah to live. He had seventy sons for he had many wives. ⁸His concubine in Shechem also bore him a son Abimelech, then he died at a good old age.

The Israelites again turn to idolatry

⁹After the death of Gideon, the Israelites again acted the harlot. They set up Baal as their god and forgot Jehovah who had rescued them from the hands of all their enemies.

Abimelech, Gideon's son to his concubine stirs up the leading men of Shechem to make him ruler

¹⁰The Israelites also failed to show kindness to the family of Gideon for all that he had done for them.

¹¹One day Abimelech, the son of Gideon's concubine went to his mother's family in Shechem and said to his kinsmen, "Go say to all the leading men of Shechem, 'Which is better for you, to have all seventy of Gideon's sons rule over you, or just myself? Remember I am your own flesh and blood.'"

¹²When his kinsmen repeated this to the leading men of Shechem, their hearts inclined to support Abimelech for they said, "He is our kin."

Abimelech murders all of his 70 brothers but one

¹³So they gave Abimelech seventy shekels of silver^{F*} from the temple of Baal and he used it to hire worthless men. With them he returned to Ophrah and murdered his seventy brothers on one stone. However Jotham the youngest escaped by hiding.

Abimelech is made ruler of Israel

¹⁴Then the people of Shechem gathered beside the great tree in Shechem and made Abimelech ruler of Israel.

Abimelech's surviving brother shouts a bitter tale to the citizens of Shechem

¹⁵When Jotham, the surviving brother was told of this, he stood on Mount Gerizim which overlooks Shechem and shouted these words down to the people:^{F*}

¹⁶"Hear me O citizens of Shechem. One day the trees went to anoint a king for themselves. They said to the olive tree, 'Be our king!'"

¹⁷"But the olive tree answered, 'Should I give up my oil by which gods and men are honoured, to rule over trees?'"

¹⁸"Next the trees said to the fig tree, 'Be our king!' But the fig tree replied, 'Should I give up my fruit, so sweet and delicious, to rule over trees?'"

¹⁹"Then the trees said to the grape vine, 'Be our king!' But the grape vine answered, 'Should I give up my wine which cheers great and small, to rule over trees?'"

²⁰"Finally the trees said to the thorn bush, 'Be our king!'"

²¹"The thorn bush said to the trees, 'If you want me to be your king, come and take refuge in my shade. But if not, then let fire come out from me and consume the cedars of Lebanon!'"^{F*}

Jotham curses Abimelech and the citizens of Shechem

²²"Now, if you acted honourably when you killed the sons of my father Gideon, who rescued you from the Midianites. And if you

*13 A shekel of silver was worth about a days wages.

*15 A crag over the town of Shechem acts as a natural pulpit.

*21 The fruit trees represented noble men and the thorn bush Abimelech.

*4 About 20kg (43 lbs).

JUDGES 7

acted honourably when you made Abimelech, the son of my father's slave woman your ruler, may Abimelech be your joy!"

²³"But if not, let fire come out from Abimelech and consume you O citizens of Shechem, and let fire come out from you and consume Abimelech!" F*

²⁴Then Jotham fled, for he was afraid of his brother Abimelech.



Shechem with Mount Gerizim in the background.

7

Abimelech rules Israel for three years but ill feeling arises between the citizens of Shechem and Abimelech

¹Abimelech ruled Israel for three years, but God sent an evil spirit between the citizens of Shechem and Abimelech, to avenge the crime against Gideon's seventy sons.

Gaal brags that he could destroy Abimelech

²A man by the name of Gaal moved with his brothers into Shechem and gained the confidence of the leading men.

³After the grape harvest the leading men held a festival in the temple of their god, and while they were eating and drinking they mocked Abimelech. ⁴Then Gaal said, "If this city were under my command I would depose Abimelech and destroy his army."

The ruler of Shechem informs Abimelech

⁵When the ruler of Shechem heard this he became angry and sent messengers to Abimelech who was living at Arumah saying, "Gaal and his brothers are stirring up Shechem against you. ⁶Now then, during the night you and your army should conceal yourselves outside the city in the fields. At sunrise, advance against the city. When Gaal and his men come out against you, do what is necessary."

Abimelech sets an ambush

⁷So Abimelech did as the ruler of Shechem suggested. Gaal was standing at the entrance to the city gate when Abimelech and his army came out from hiding. ⁸Gaal saw them and shouted to the ruler, "Companies of men are coming towards us!"

Abimelech puts Gaal and his followers to flight

⁹The ruler of Shechem replied, "Where is your mouth now? Are not these the men for whom you expressed contempt? Go out now and fight them!"

¹⁰So Gaal and his followers went out and fought Abimelech. But Abimelech put them to flight and many fell wounded all the way back to the gate of the city.

¹¹Abimelech then returned to the town of Arumah and the ruler drove Gaal and his brothers out of Shechem.

Abimelech attacks Shechem and kills most of the citizens

¹²The next day the men of Shechem went out to work the fields. This was reported to Abimelech, so during the night he again took his army and divided them into three companies and hid in the fields.

¹³In the morning when the men again came out of the city, Abimelech and his company rushed forward to capture the city gate. ¹⁴His other two companies fell upon the men in the fields and killed them all. ¹⁵Abimelech continued his attack on the city until he had captured it and killed most of the citizens.

1000 survivors burned alive in the temple

¹⁶The survivors gathered into the stronghold of the temple of El-Berith. But Abimelech led his men to the hills, and taking an axe he cut tree branches. Then he lifted them to his shoulders and said to his men, "Do as I do."

¹⁷So his men cut branches and carried them to the temple. They heaped them up against it and set it on fire. All the people in the temple, about a thousand men and women died.

Shechem razed and the crop land ruined

¹⁸Then Abimelech razed the city and sowed salt over the crop land.F*

Abimelech next attacks and captures Thebez

¹⁹Next Abimelech attacked the nearby city of Thebez and captured it. But the people fled into a strong tower in the city and locked themselves in, and gathered behind the battlements on the roof.

Abimelech's skull crushed by a millstone dropped by a woman as he tries to burn the people alive

²⁰Abimelech planned to burn the tower, but as he was at the door trying to set it on fire, a woman dropped a heavy millstone^{F*} on his head, which crushed his skull.

*18 Salt kills plant life and destroys the fertility of the soil.

*20 A millstone was a heavy circular stone used for grinding grain.

*23 This curse came to pass, see the following chapter.

Abimelech has his armour-bearer kill him

²¹As he lay there dying, he called to his armour-bearer and said, "Draw your sword and kill me, so they cannot say, "He died by the hand of a woman." So his servant ran him through with a sword and he died.

²²When his men saw that Abimelech was dead they returned home.

Abimelech's wickedness repaid

²³Thus God repaid the wickedness that Abimelech had done to his father by murdering his brothers. God also made the men of Shechem pay for their wickedness. The curse of Jotham, son of Gideon came upon them.



Millstones were heavy circular stones used to grind grain.

8

Tola judges Israel twenty three years

¹After Abimelech, Tola of the tribe of Issachar rose to save Israel. He lived in the hill country of Ephraim and judged Israel twenty-three years, then died.

Jair judges Israel twenty-two years

²He was followed by Jair of Gilead who judged Israel twenty-two years, then died. He had thirty sons who rode thirty donkeys.

The Israelites again turn to idolatry and the Ammonites oppress Israel eighteen years

³After Jair, the Israelites again did evil and served the gods of the nations around them. Because they forsook the Lord he sold them into the hands of the Ammonites^{F*} from the east.

⁴For eighteen years they oppressed the Israelites on the east side of the Jordan in Gilead, and often crossed the Jordan to raid Judah, Benjamin and Ephraim.

⁵Israel was in great distress and finally cried out to the Lord saying, "We have sinned against you."

⁶The Lord replied, "When nations oppressed you in the past and you cried to me for help, did I not save you? But you have

forsaken me and served other gods so I will no longer save you. ⁷Cry out to the gods you have chosen. Let them save you."

The Israelites repent of serving foreign gods

⁸The Israelites said to the Lord, "We have sinned. Do with us whatever you think best, but please rescue us now."

⁹Then they got rid of the foreign gods among them and served the Lord and he could bear Israel's misery no longer.

Jephthah called to lead the Israelites of Gilead

¹⁰The Ammonites again gathered for war and camped in Gilead, east of the Jordan. The Israelites in Gilead also assembled and camped close by.

¹¹The leaders of Gilead said, "Whoever leads the attack against the Ammonites will become ruler of all Israel living in Gilead."

¹²Now Jephthah of Gilead was a mighty warrior but his mother was a harlot, and his stepbrothers had driven him away from Gilead saying, "You will receive no inheritance in our family for you are the son of another woman."

¹³So Jephthah had settled in Syria^{F*} where a band of renegades had gathered around him.

¹⁴The elders of Gilead journeyed to Syria and said to Jephthah, "Come back and be our commander. Lead us to fight the Ammonites, then you will be ruler over all who live in Gilead."

¹⁵Jephthah said to them, "Did you not hate me and drive me from my father's house? Now you come to me when you are in trouble. If I lead you to fight the Ammonites, and Jehovah gives them to me, will I truly be your ruler?"

¹⁶The elders of Gilead replied, "The Lord is our witness." So Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead and became commander of the fighting men.

Jephthah's message to the Ammonite king

¹⁷Then Jephthah sent a message to the Ammonite king saying, "Why have you come against us?"

¹⁸The king of the Ammonites answered, "When Israel came up out of Egypt they took away my land. Now give it back peaceably."

¹⁹Jephthah sent back saying, "Israel did not take the land of the Ammonites when they came up out of Egypt. Jehovah the God of Israel gave Sihon king of the Amorites into Israel's hands and they took over all the land of the Amorites, the land you now claim."

²⁰"Possess what your god Chemosh has given you and we will possess what Jehovah our God has given us. ²¹For 300 years we have occupied this land, why did you not seek to retake it during that time?"

Jephthah vows to the Lord the first person who comes out of his house to greet his return

²²Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon

*3 The Ammonites were descendants of Lot (Genesis 13:27).

*13 Syria was to the north of Israel.

JUDGES 9

Jephthah and he advanced against the Ammonites.

²³At that time Jephthah made a vow^{F*} to the Lord saying, "If you give the Ammonites into my hands, then whoever first comes out of the door of my house to greet me when I return in triumph shall be the Lord's, and I will sacrifice him to you as a burnt offering."

The Lord gives the Ammonites into Jephthah's hands

²⁴The Lord gave the Ammonites into Jephthah's hands and he devastated twenty towns. Thus Israel subdued Ammon.

Jephthah's daughter the first to greet him

²⁵When Jephthah returned to his home in Gilead, his daughter was the first one to come out to greet him, dancing to the sound of tambourines. She was his only child.

Jephthah tears his clothes in grief

²⁶When he saw her, he tore his clothes with grief and cried out in anguish, "O my daughter! You have stricken me! I have made a vow to the Lord that I cannot break!"

Jephthah's daughter asks for two months to weep with her friends

²⁷She replied, "My father, if you have given your word to the Lord, do to me as you vowed, but grant me one request. Allow me two months to roam the hills and weep with my friends, for I will never marry."

²⁸Jephthah let her go for two months. She and her friends went into the hills and wept because she would never bear children.

Jephthah's daughter is sacrificed

²⁹After the two months she returned to her father and he did to her as he had vowed.

The young women of Israel mourn the daughter of Jephthah four days each year

³⁰From this comes the Israelite custom that each year, young women of Israel go out for four days to mourn the daughter of Jephthah.

Jephthah is threatened by the men of Ephraim

³¹Now when the men of Ephraim heard of the defeat of the Ammonites they called out their forces and crossed the Jordan and said to Jephthah, "Why did you not call on us to go and fight the Ammonites with you? We will burn your house over your head."

³²Jephthah answered, "I did call on you, but you did not come. When I saw that you would not help, I took my life in my hands and fought the Ammonites and Jehovah gave me the victory over them. Why then have you come today to fight me?"

The Ephraimites mock the men of Gilead and a battle begins

³³Then Jephthah called together the men of Gilead to fight against the Ephraimites, for the

men of Ephraim had mocked them saying, "You men of Gilead are refugees, living in territory that belongs to Ephraim and Manasseh."

The Ephraimites defeated and survivors identified at the Jordan by their speech

³⁴The Gileadites struck down the Ephraimites and captured the fords of the Jordan leading back to Ephraim ³⁵Whenever a survivor of Ephraim said, "Let me cross over," the men of Gilead would ask him, "Are you an Ephraimite?" If he replied, "No," they would say, "Say Shibboleth."

³⁶If he said Sibboleth, for Ephraimites could not pronounce the word correctly, they killed him.

42,000 Ephraimites fall

³⁷At that time 42,000 Ephraimites fell.

Jephthah judges Israel six years

³⁸Jephthah judged Israel six years then died.

Ibzan judges Israel seven years

³⁹Next, Ibzan judged Israel for seven years and then died. He had thirty sons and thirty daughters.

Elon judges Israel ten years

⁴⁰After him Elon from Zebulun judged Israel ten years and then died.

Abdon judges Israel for eight years

⁴¹After Elon, Abdon judged Israel for eight years and then died. He had forty sons and thirty grandsons who rode on seventy donkeys.

The Philistines oppress Israel for forty years

⁴²Then the Israelites again did evil, so the Lord delivered them into the hands of the Philistines^{F*} for forty years. ^{F*}

9

An angel appears to the barren wife of Manoah – a son to be born and he is to be a Nazirite

¹Now a man named Manoah of the tribe of Dan had a wife who was childless. One day the angel of the Lord appeared to her at Zorah and said, "You are about to conceive and bear a son. ²See that you drink no wine or other fermented drink and eat nothing that is unclean, for the boy is to be a Nazirite.^{F*} ³He is to be set apart to God from the day of his birth until the day of his death. No razor is ever to be used on his head."

⁴"He will begin the deliverance of Israel from the hands of the Philistines."

^{*42} The Philistines were the relatively advanced inhabitants of the five cities in the Mediterranean coastal plain region of Israel; Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekron. They were believed to have originally come from Crete. The modern term Palestine comes from the word Philistine.

^{*42} Eli the High Priest appears to have been judge of Israel during this 40 year period (see Samuel 3:16).

^{*2} A Nazirite is a man temporarily or permanently dedicated to the Lord. During the period of his dedication he must give up all grape products and fermented drink, strictly avoid any kind of uncleanness and never cut the hair of his head. See Leviticus 8:19-25.

^{*23} A vow is a favour asked of the Lord, in return for which the asker gives something of value, agrees to abstain from something or performs a service.

Manoah prays that the angel will return

⁵The woman told her husband Manoah of the angels appearance and the words that the angel had said. ⁶Then Manoah prayed to the Lord saying, “O Jehovah let the messenger you sent come again to instruct us further on how to raise the boy who is to be born.”

The angel appears a second time

⁷God heard Manoah’s prayer and the angel appeared again to his wife while she was out in the fields. She hurried to her husband and said, “He is here!”

⁸Manoah arose and followed his wife. When he came to the angel he said to him, “Are you the one who spoke to my wife?”

The angel replied, “**I am.**”

⁹Manoah asked, “What are we to do for the boy?”

¹⁰The angel answered, “**Your wife must do all that I commanded her. She must not eat anything that comes from the grapevine, nor drink any wine or other fermented drink, nor eat anything unclean.**”

Manoah offers a burnt sacrifice to Jehovah and the angel ascends in the flame

¹¹Manoah said to the angel, “Please remain here until we prepare a young goat for you.”

¹²The angel of the Lord replied, “**I will remain, but I will not eat of your food. If you desire to prepare a burnt offering, offer it to Jehovah.**”

¹³Manoah asked, “What is your name so that we may honour you when your word comes to pass?”

¹⁴The angel replied, “**Do not ask my name, it is beyond your understanding.**”

¹⁵Then Manoah took a young goat and together with a grain offering, sacrificed it on a rock to the Lord as a burnt offering. As the flame blazed up from the fire the angel ascended upward in the flame.

Manoah fears he will die

¹⁶Seeing this, Manoah and his wife fell with their faces to the ground, for they now knew for certain that the man who appeared was the angel of the Lord.

¹⁷Manoah said to his wife, “We will surely die for we have seen a god!”

¹⁸But his wife answered, “If Jehovah had intended to kill us, he would not have accepted our offering, nor have told us all these things.”

Samson is born

¹⁹In due course Manoah’s wife gave birth to a boy and she named him Samson. He grew to manhood and the Spirit of the Lord began to stir him.

Samson desires a Philistine girl for his wife

²⁰One day Samson visited the town of Timnah^{F*} and saw there a young Philistine woman. When he returned home to Zorah he said to his father and mother, “I have seen a

Philistine woman in Timnah. Get her for me as my wife.”

²¹But they replied, “Is there not a woman among our own people? Must you go to the uncircumcised Philistines to get a wife?”

²²But Samson insisted saying, “She is the right one for me.”

²³This was from the Lord, who was seeking an occasion to confront the Philistines for at that time they ruled over Israel.



Zorah, where Samson was raised.

Samson and his parents travel to Timnah

²⁴So his father and mother went with Samson to Timnah.

Samson kills a lion with his bare hands

²⁵While they were there, Samson was alone near the vineyards of Timnah when a young lion suddenly came roaring toward him. ²⁶The Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson with great power and he tore the lion apart with his bare hands, but he told no one what he had done.

Before the wedding Samson goes to look at the lion carcass and finds bees and honey

²⁷Some time later when they had returned again to Timnah for the marriage feast, Samson went off alone to look at the lion’s carcass and found a nest of bees inside it and some honey.

²⁸He scooped out the honey with his hands and ate some as he went along. When he rejoined his parents he gave them some also.

10

The wedding feast and the riddle

¹Now as was the custom for young men to do, Samson arranged a seven day wedding feast as part of the marriage ceremony. He was assigned thirty companions by the Philistines.

²Samson said to his companions, “I will put to you a riddle. If you can solve it within the seven days of the feast I will give each of you a full set of clothes, but if you fail to solve it you must each give me a full set of clothes.”

*20 Timnah was a Philistine town on the border of Judah.

JUDGES 10

³They answered, “Tell us your riddle.”

⁴Samson said,

“Out of the eater, something to eat.
Out of the strong, something sweet.”

The Philistines threaten Samson’s betrothed wife to find out the answer to the riddle

⁵For three days they could not give the answer. So on the fourth day they said to Samson’s betrothed wife,^{F*} “Coax him into explaining the riddle for us, or we will burn you and all in your father’s household to death. Did you invite us here to rob us?”

Samson’s betrothed wife pleads with him

⁶So Samson’s wife wept in front of him and said, “You must hate me. You do not love me. You have given my people a riddle and have not told me the answer.”

⁷Samson replied, “I have not even told my father or mother. Why then should I tell you?”

⁸But she wept beside him all the remaining days of the feast and continued to press him.

Samson finally reveals the answer to his betrothed wife and she tells her people

⁹Finally on the seventh day he told her the answer and she revealed it to her people.

¹⁰Before sunset on the seventh day the companions came to Samson and said, “What is sweeter than honey? What is stronger than a lion?”

Samson is angry with the Philistines

¹¹Samson burned with anger and said to them, “If you had not plowed with my heifer^{F*} you would not have solved my riddle.”

Samson strikes down thirty Philistines to obtain the clothes, then returns home in anger

¹²The Spirit of the Lord then came upon Samson in power and he went to Ashkelon^{F*} and struck down thirty Philistines. He took their possessions as spoil and gave clothes to those who had explained the riddle.

¹³Still burning with anger he returned to his home town Zorah, leaving his wife in the house of her father.

Samson later returns to claim his wife but finds she has been given to another

¹⁴Later at the time of the wheat harvest, Samson took a young goat and returned to Timnah to visit his wife in the house of her father.

¹⁵But her father would not let him into her room saying, “I thought you did not want her, so I gave her to the companion who attended you at the wedding. ¹⁶Is not her younger sister more attractive? Marry her instead.”

Samson uses 300 jackals to destroy crops of the Philistines by fire

¹⁷Samson replied, “This time I have a right to afflict the Philistines.”

¹⁸He went out and caught 300 jackals, and tying them tail to tail in pairs, he attached a flaming torch to each pair of tails and let them loose in the standing corn of the Philistines. ¹⁹He burned up corn, vineyards and olive groves.

The Philistines burn Samson’s wife and her father to death

²⁰When the Philistines asked, “Who did this?” they were told, “Samson, for his wife was given to another.” So the Philistines went and burned her and her father to death.

Samson slaughters Philistines greatly to avenge death of wife

²¹Then Samson said to the Philistines, “Since you have done this, I will not stop until I avenge you fully.” And he struck them down hip and thigh with great slaughter.

The Philistines march to Judah to capture Samson

²²After this, Samson went and stayed in a cave near Lehi in Judah. So the Philistines gathered and marched up to Judah and camped at Lehi.

²³The men of Judah came out and asked, “Why have you come against us?”

²⁴They answered, “We have come for Samson, to do to him as he did to us.”

3000 men from Judah go out to Samson’s cave to hand him over

²⁵So 3000 men from Judah went out to the cave and said to Samson, “Do you not realise that the Philistines rule over us?”

²⁶He answered, “I did to them what they did to me.”

²⁷The men from Judah said, “We have come to hand you over to the Philistines.”

Samson is tied with new ropes and led out to the Philistines

²⁸Samson said, “Swear to me that you will not kill me yourselves.” So they swore to him, and he allowed them to bind him with two new ropes, and they led him from the cave.

Samson snaps the ropes and then kills a thousand Philistines with a jaw bone

²⁹When the Philistines saw Samson they set up a loud roar and ran towards him.

³⁰Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson. He snapped the ropes on his arms as if they were charred flax. ³¹And seeing the jawbone of a donkey lying on the ground, he picked it up and struck down 1000 Philistines.

Samson cries to the Lord for water and a new spring flows

³²Afterwards he thirsted greatly and called out to the Lord saying, “You have given your servant this great victory, must I now die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?”

³³Then God split the rock near the cave at Lehi, and a spring of water flowed forth.

³⁴When Samson drank, his spirit revived and his strength returned. So the spring was called

*5 The actual marriage was not consummated until sunset on the final day of the feast.

*11 A heifer is a young female cow, a euphemism for Samson’s wife.

*12 A major Philistine coastal city about 40 km distant.

En-Hakkore^{F*} and is still there in Lehi.

Samson becomes judge of Israel

³⁵Samson became judge of Israel in the days of the Philistines.



The cave near Lehi where Samson stayed.

11

Samson stays with a Philistine harlot in Gaza

¹Once Samson went to Gaza,^{F*} where he saw a harlot and went in to stay with her.

Men of the city lie in wait to kill him

²The people of Gaza were told, “Samson is here.” So men lay in wait that night saying, “At the light of dawn we will kill him.”

Samson arises at midnight and uproots the city gates of Gaza

³But Samson arose to leave at midnight, and taking hold of the locked city gates, he tore them loose, bar and all, uprooting the posts, and carried them on his shoulders to the top of a nearby hill.



Gaza, a city in the land of the Philistines.

Samson falls in love with Delilah a Philistine woman

⁴Some time later, Samson fell in love with a Philistine woman whose name was Delilah.

The Philistine rulers offer a bribe to Delilah if she can find out the secret of Samson’s strength

⁵The rulers of the Philistines went to her and

said, “See if you can coax him into revealing the secret of his great strength, and how we can overpower him. If you do so, each one of us will give you 1100 shekels of silver.”

Delilah asks Samson to tell her the secret of his great strength

⁶So Delilah said to Samson, “Tell me the secret of your great strength, and how you could be tied up and subdued.”

⁷Samson answered her, “If anyone ties me with seven fresh bowstrings I will be as weak as any other man.”

Samson snaps seven fresh bowstrings

⁸So the rulers of the Philistines brought Delilah seven fresh bowstrings and she tied him up with them, then with men hiding in an inner room, she said to him, “Samson the Philistines are upon you!”

⁹But he snapped the bowstrings as easily as string snaps when it comes to a flame.

¹⁰Then Delilah said to Samson, “You are teasing me. Come now, tell me how you can be tied.”

Samson snaps new ropes like threads

¹¹Samson said, “If anyone ties me with new ropes that have never been used, I will become as weak as any other man.” ¹²So Delilah took new ropes and tied him up with them. But Samson snapped the ropes off his arms as if they were threads.

Delilah weaves Samson’s seven locks of hair into her loom

¹³Delilah then said to Samson, “You are still teasing me and telling lies. Tell me how you can be tied.”

¹⁴He replied, “If you weave the seven locks of my hair^{F*} into the web of your loom, I will become as weak as any other man.”

¹⁵So while Samson was sleeping, Delilah wove the seven locks of his hair into her loom. Again she said to him, “Samson, the Philistines are upon you!” ¹⁶But he awoke from his sleep and pulled up the whole loom.

Samson finally wearies and reveals to Delilah that he is a Nazirite

¹⁷Then Delilah said to him, “How can you say you love me when you will not confide in me? This is the third time you have mocked me.”

¹⁸And she nagged Samson continually, day after day, until he was weary to death. Finally he told her, “No razor has ever been used on my head, for I have been a Nazirite set apart to God since birth. ¹⁹If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me and I would become as any other man.”

Delilah sends word to the Philistine rulers and they come with their silver

²⁰When Delilah realised he had told her the truth, she sent word to the rulers of the Philistines, “Return once more. He has told me

*34 En-Hakkore means Caller’s Spring.

*1 Gaza was a major Philistine city near the coast.

*14 Being a Nazirite, Samson’s hair had never been cut from his birth and was woven into seven long locks.

JUDGES 12

everything.” So the rulers returned, with their silver in their hands.

Delilah has Samson’s braided hair locks cut off while he is asleep, breaking his Nazirite vow

²¹Delilah lulled Samson to sleep on her lap and had a man come in and cut off the seven braided locks of his hair. Then she said, “Samson, the Philistines are upon you!”

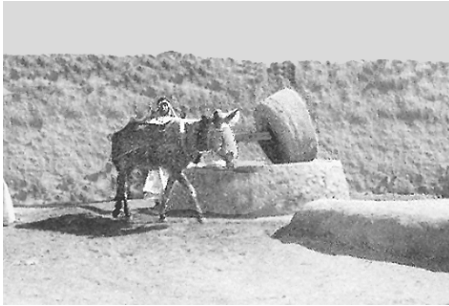
Samson is overpowered and blinded by the Philistines

²²Samson awoke from his sleep and the Philistines seized him. He tried to free himself as before, but his strength was gone, for the Lord had left him.^{F*}

²³The Philistines held him fast and gouged out his eyes.

Samson put to grinding at the prison mill

²⁴Then they took him to Gaza and secured him with bronze shackles and set him grinding at the mill in the prison.



An old style donkey powered wheat mill, probably similar to the type that Samson was forced to turn.

The Philistines celebrate in the temple of their god Dagon

²⁵Then the rulers of the Philistines assembled to offer a sacrifice to Dagon their god and to celebrate saying, “Our god has delivered Samson into our hands.”

Samson brought in to entertain the Philistines

²⁶When they were in high spirits they shouted, “Bring in Samson to entertain us.” So they brought Samson from the prison to mock him.

²⁷When the people saw Samson, they again praised their god saying, “Our god has delivered the enemy into our hands, the one who wasted our land and multiplied our slain.”

Samson prays to the Lord for his strength to be restored once more

²⁸Samson said to the servant who led him in, “Stand me where I can feel the pillars that support the temple, so I can lean against them.”

²⁹Now the temple was crowded with men and women. All the rulers of the Philistines were there and up on the balcony were about 3000 men and women watching Samson for entertainment.

*22 Samson had broken his Nazirite vow.

³⁰Samson prayed, “O Jehovah God, remember me. Please strengthen me just once more, and let me avenge the Philistines for my eyes.”

³¹Then Samson braced himself against the two central pillars which supported the temple, his right hand on one and his left hand on the other, and cried out, “Let me die with the Philistines!”

Samson collapses the temple killing himself and thousands of Philistines

³²Then he pushed with such force that the whole temple collapsed upon him, and upon the rulers and all the people in it. ³³The number of Philistines he killed at his death were more than Samson had killed during his whole lifetime.

Samson had judged Israel twenty years

³⁴Then his family went down and brought him back to Zorah and buried him in the tomb of his father.

³⁵Samson had judged Israel twenty years.

12

Micah’s silver plated image

¹There was a man named Micah, an Ephraimite, who confessed to his mother, “It was I who stole the 1100 shekels of silver from you and about which I heard you utter a curse. I will return it.”

²When Micah returned the silver to his mother she took 200 shekels of it and gave it to a maker of idols who made her a carved wooden image and overlaid it with the silver. ³Then she gave it to her son saying, “The Lord bless you my son. I have consecrated my silver to Jehovah as a gift for you and have made this carved image.^{F*} I now give it to you.”

⁴The image remained in Micah’s house as part of a shrine to God. He also made a medallion and some figurines as household gods and appointed one of his sons to be his priest.^{F*} For in those days every man did what was right in his own eyes.

Micah appoints Jonathan a young Levite to act as his priest

⁵Now a young Levite named Jonathan, descended from Moses, left Bethlehem in Judah in search of another place to live, and came to the house of Micah in the hill country of Ephraim.

⁶Micah said to him, “Stay and live with me and be my priest and I will give you ten shekels of silver a year, your clothes and your food.” So the Levite agreed.

⁷Micah said, “Now I know that Jehovah will bless me, since this Levite has become my priest.” ^{F*}

*3 The image probably represented Jehovah, nevertheless the making of images was forbidden by the Law.

*4 Only ordained Levites, directly descended from Aaron could legally act as priests. Micah’s son was descended from Ephraim.

*7 Even though Jonathan was a Levite, he could not become a legally ordained priest as he was not a direct descendant of Aaron.

The tribe of Dan search for a place to settle

⁸In those days the tribe of Dan were seeking a place to settle, for they had not been able to occupy the territory that had been allotted to them.

Five Danite explorers spend the night with Micah

⁹Five valiant men were sent out to explore the land. These men entered the hill country of Ephraim and came to the house of Micah and spent the night there.

¹⁰The men said to the young Levite, "Inquire of God as to whether our journey will be successful."

¹¹The priest answered them, "Your journey has the approval of Jehovah."



Hill country of Ephraim.

The explorers discover the people of Laish

¹²The explorers continued their journey northward and in time came to the Sidonian town of Laish. They saw that this town and its surrounding land lacked for nothing and that the people were prosperous. ¹³The people of Laish also lived a long distance from other Sidonians and had no ties with Syria.

The explorers return and again set out for Laish with 600 armed men of Dan

¹⁴So the explorers returned to their people to report. Then taking 600 men of Dan armed for battle they set out again for Laish.

The five explorers steal Micah's image and take the young Levite to be priest to the tribe of Dan

¹⁵On their way the five explorers entered Micah's house while the other 600 armed Danites waited at the town gate. ¹⁶They stole his silver image and the other household gods and the medallion.

¹⁷The young Levite said to them, "What are you doing?"

¹⁸They answered him, "Be silent. Come with us and be our priest. Is it not better for you to serve a whole tribe in Israel than just one man's household?" ¹⁹So the Levite went with them.

Micah pursues the Danites

²⁰When Micah discovered what had happened he gathered men who lived around him and pursued the Danites. ²¹He caught up with them and shouted at them saying, "You stole the gods I made and my priest!"

²²The Danites answered, "Do not argue with us or some of our hot-tempered men will kill you and your men." Then the Danites continued on their way.

The Danites too strong for Micah

²³Micah saw that they were too strong for him, so he turned around and went back home.

The Danites put the town of Laish to the sword and settle there

²⁴When the Danites reached the town of Laish they put it to the sword and burned it down, a peaceful and unsuspecting people. ²⁵Then they rebuilt the city and settled there, renaming it Dan.

The Danites set up Micah's image and the Levite and his sons act as priests

²⁶They also set up for themselves the image they had stolen from Micah.

²⁷Jonathan and his sons acted as priests for the tribe of Dan all the time the Ark of the Lord was at Shiloh* until the time of the captivity of the land.

13

A Levite's concubine is unfaithful to him and returns to live with her father

¹Now a Levite who lived in the hill country of Ephraim, married a concubine,^{F*} but she committed adultery against him and eventually returned to her father's house in Bethlehem, Judah.

Her husband goes to see her to forgive her

²After she had been there four months her husband went to see her to forgive her and take her back. Her father gladly welcomed him so he stayed there four days.

³On the morning of the fifth day when he arose to go the girl's father said, "Wait until afternoon." So the two men ate together.

The man and his concubine depart for home

⁴When the man and his concubine again arose to leave, the girl's father said, "It is almost evening. Spend the night here." But the man was unwilling to stay another night and departed on his journey with his concubine, along with his servant and two saddled donkeys.

They stop to spend the night at the Benjamite town of Gibeah

⁵When they neared Jerusalem the servant said to his master, "Let us stop at this city of the Jebusites^{F*} and spend the night."

⁶But his master replied, "No, we will not stay in a city whose people are not Israelites, we will continue on." ⁷So they continued on and as the sun was setting they arrived at Gibeah, a Benjamite town and stopped there to spend the night.

*27 Shiloh was an Ephraimite town about 30 km north of Jerusalem where Joshua had set up the Tabernacle.

*1 A concubine was a legal wife, but of inferior social status, often an ex-slave or war captive.

*5 The Israelites had not yet recaptured the well fortified city of Jerusalem from the Canaanite tribe of the Jebusites.

JUDGES 13

An old man takes them into his house

⁸They waited in the town square but no man offered to take them into his home for the night. ⁹But when it was dark an old man from the hill country of Ephraim who was living in Gibeah came in from his work out in the fields. He saw the travellers in the square and said to them, "Where are you going and where have you come from?"

¹⁰The Levite answered, "We are on our way from Bethlehem to the hill country of Ephraim where I live. No one has taken us into his house. We have fodder for our donkeys and bread and wine for ourselves."

¹¹The old man said, "You are welcome at my house. Do not spend the night in the square," and he took them to his house.

Evil men come to the house and demand sex with the Levite man

¹²After they had fed the donkeys they washed their feet and ate and drank. While they were thus refreshing themselves, some evil men of the town came to the house. ¹³They pounded on the door and shouted to the old man, "Bring out the man who came to your house, so we can have sex with him."

The old man offers his virgin daughter instead

¹⁴The old man went outside and said to them, "No my brothers, do not be so vile. This man is my guest. Do not do this vile thing. ¹⁵Here is my virgin daughter and the man's concubine. I will bring them out to you and you can do to them as you wish, but to this man do not do such a vile thing."F*

The Levite pushes his concubine outside to them

¹⁶But the evil men would not listen to him. So the Levite seized his concubine and pushed her outside to them.

The men rape and abuse the concubine throughout the night

¹⁷The men took the young woman and raped her and abused her throughout the night, until just before dawn when they let her go.

The concubine falls down and dies in the old man's doorway

¹⁸The young woman made her way back to the house where her husband was staying but fell down at the door and died, and lay there until daylight.

¹⁹When her husband opened the door that morning, there lay his concubine fallen in the doorway, with her hands on the step.

²⁰He said to her, "Arise. Let us go." But there was no answer. So he put her body on his donkey and set out for home.

The Levite dismembers his wife's body and sends the parts throughout Israel

²¹When the Levite reached home he took a knife and cut up his concubine, limb by limb

*15 To permit a male guest in your home to be dishonoured is an unforgivable offence in Middle-East culture. See also Genesis 13:1-7 for a similar situation.

into twelve parts and sent them throughout all Israel, with an account of what had happened.

²²All who saw and heard said, "Such a thing has never been done in Israel."

All Israel gathers against the men of Gibeah

²³Then all of the Israelites from Dan to BeershebaF* and from Gilead in the east came out and assembled at Mizpah,F* 400,000 warriors armed with swords.

²⁴They sent messengers throughout the tribe of Benjamin saying, "Surrender those evil men of Gibeah that we may put them to death and purge this outrage from Israel."



Beersheba, the southernmost town of Israel.

The Benjamites support the men of Gibeah

²⁵But the Benjamites would not listen to their fellow Israelites. Instead they mustered 26,000 men from their own towns and joined the 700 men of Gibeah.

The Israelites enquire of the Lord

²⁶So the Israelites went to BethelF* and inquired of the Lord as to who should be first to fight against the Benjamites? ²⁷At that time the high priest was Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron, and the Ark of God was at Bethel.F*

²⁸The Lord replied, "Judah shall go first."

The Benjamites twice overpower the Israelites

²⁹The next morning the men of Israel went out to fight the Benjamites but the Benjamites came out of Gibeah and cut down 22,000 Israelites on the battlefield.

³⁰The Israelites returned to Bethel and wept until evening and then again inquired of the Lord saying, "Shall we go up again to battle against the Benjamites our brothers?"

³¹The Lord answered, "Go up against them."

The second day the Benjamites cut down another 18,000 Israelites.

The Israelites fast and offer sacrifice

³²The Israelites again returned to Bethel and sat weeping. They fasted all that day until evening and presented burnt offerings to Jehovah. ³³Then they again inquired of the

*23 Dan and Beersheba were the northern and southernmost towns of Israel.

*23 Mizpah was a town near Gibeah.

*26 Bethel was about 4 km from Mizpah.

*27 Phinehas the high priest would normally be at Shiloh, 15 km north of Bethel (Judges 12:27) where the Tabernacle and the Ark were normally located. Phinehas probably journeyed to Bethel with the Ark for this occasion. The inquiry of the Lord would have been done by Phinehas using the Urim and Thummim.

Lord asking, "Shall we go again to battle with Benjamin our brother or not?"

³⁴The Lord responded, "Go, for tomorrow I will give them into your hands."

The Israelites ambush Gibeah

³⁵This time the Israelites set an ambush behind Gibeah. The Benjamites came out as before and began to inflict casualties on the Israelites but they were drawn away from the town. ³⁶About thirty men fell and the Benjamites said, "We are defeating them as before."

³⁷Then the Israelite ambush arose from hiding and 10,000 of Israel's finest men attacked Gibeah and put the whole town to the sword.

The Benjamites are surrounded and 25,000 die

³⁸The men of the ambush had arranged to send up a cloud of smoke from the town as a signal for the men of Israel to turn in battle. When the column of smoke began to rise the men of Israel turned on the men of Benjamin.

³⁹The Benjamites were terrified for they realised that disaster had come upon them. They fled before the Israelites in the direction of the desert but could not escape for the men of Israel had surrounded them.

⁴⁰On that day 25,000 Benjamites died, all of them valiant fighters.

600 Benjamites flee into the desert

⁴¹But 600 Benjamites fled into the desert, to the rock of Rimmon where they stayed four months.

The inhabitants and towns of Benjamin are destroyed

⁴²The men of Israel then put all the inhabitants of the towns of the Benjamites to the sword, including the animals, then they burnt the towns.

14

Great sorrow for the loss of the tribe of Benjamin

¹The Israelites again assembled at Bethel where they sat before God until evening.

²Then weeping bitterly they cried out in their grief saying, "O Jehovah, God of Israel why has this happened? Why should one tribe be missing from Israel today?"

Offerings presented to the Lord

³Early the next day the people built an altar and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings to the Lord.

An oath made previously forbade the giving of daughters in marriage to Benjamites

⁴Now the Israelites had taken this oath at Mizpah, "Cursed be anyone who gives his daughter in marriage to a Benjamite."

⁵However the Israelites now grieved for their brothers the Benjamites and said, "How can we provide wives for those who are left, for we have taken an oath by the Lord not to give them our daughters in marriage?"



Israel in the days of the Judges.

The town of Jabesh to be put to the sword for not assisting the Israelites

⁶Then the Israelites asked, "Who from all the tribes of Israel has failed to assemble before the Lord?" For they had also taken this solemn oath, "Anyone who fails to assemble at Mizpah will be put to death."

⁷They discovered that no man from the town of Jabesh in Gilead* had come to assist. So according to their oath, they sent 12,000 fighting men to put to the sword all those living in Jabesh.

The virgin girls of Jabesh spared as wives for the surviving Benjamites

⁸But they said, "Spare every woman who has never lain with a man." So they put Jabesh to the sword but spared the 400 virgin girls of Jabesh and brought them to the camp.

*7 Jabesh was a town belonging to the tribe of Manasseh.

JUDGES 14

An offer of peace sent to the 600 Benjamites who fled

⁹Then the whole assembly sent an offer of peace to the 600 Benjamites who had fled to the rock of Rimmon.

Insufficient wives for the 600 Benjamite survivors

¹⁰The Benjamites returned and were given the young women of Jabesh who had been spared, but there were not enough for all of them.

¹¹The elders of the assembly said, "How shall we provide wives for the men who are left? The Benjamite survivors must have heirs so that a tribe of Israel will not be wiped out.

Benjamites permitted to capture girls

¹²So they instructed the Benjamites saying, "Go hide in the vineyards of Shiloh. When the girls of Shiloh^{F*} come out to dance during the Festival to the Lord,^{F*} each of you seize a wife from among them and return to the land of Benjamin. ¹³When their fathers complain to us we will say to them, 'Do us a kindness by helping the Benjamites. You will be innocent since you did not give your daughters to them.'"

The surviving Benjamites rebuild their towns

¹⁴So that is what the Benjamites did. They returned and rebuilt their towns and settled in them.^{F*}

*12 Shiloh was predominantly of the tribe of Ephraim.

*12 Probably the Feast of Tabernacles (Exodus 12:46).

*14 Israel's first king Saul was a Benjamite from the rebuilt town of Gibeah (Samuel chapter 5).

RUTH

The book of Ruth is a delightful love story that gives an intriguing glimpse into the everyday customs of Israel during the rule of the judges. It concerns Ruth, a non-Israelite widow from Moab, who because of her good character and humility wins the heart of Boaz, a middle-aged, wealthy and kindly Israelite of Bethlehem.

Boaz appears to be an uncle of Ruth's deceased husband. He marries Ruth and a son is born to their union – Obed, the grandfather of King David.

AUTHOR Samuel with clarifications by a later prophet.

“Now my daughter, be not afraid, I will do for you all you ask. The men of the town know that you are a woman of noble character.” Ruth 2:25

CONTENTS

	Chapter
A famine in Israel	1
Elimelech and Naomi go to live in Moab	1
Elimelech and his two sons die	1
Naomi decides to return home to Israel	1
Ruth, her son's widow, begs to go with her	1
Naomi returns to Bethlehem with Ruth	1
Ruth gleanes in the barley field of Boaz	2
Boaz shows kindness to Ruth	2
Naomi sends Ruth to Boaz at night	2
Ruth asks Boaz to marry her	2
Boaz is pleased	2
The brother of Boaz has a greater right to Ruth	2
Boaz negotiates for Ruth at the town gate	3
Boaz marries Ruth	3
Ruth the great grandmother of David	3

1

A famine drives Elimelech and his wife Naomi from Bethlehem to Moab

¹In the days when the judges ruled Israel, there came a famine in the land, and a man named Elimelech from Bethlehem took his wife Naomi and his two sons and went to live in the land of Moab.^{F*}

Elimelech and his two sons die

²While living there, Elimelech died leaving his widow Naomi and his two sons. Both sons married Moabite women, however after about ten years his sons died also.

Naomi decides to return home to Israel

³Naomi heard that the famine had ended in Israel so she prepared to return home again.

Naomi sends her two Moabite daughters-in-law away

⁴She said to her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth who lived with her, “Return to your own families and may Jehovah bless you as you have blessed me, and may he find each of you another husband.” Then she kissed them.

⁵But they wept aloud and said, “Let us return with you to your people.”

⁶Naomi said, “Why come with me? Am I going to have more sons who could become your husbands? Return home my daughters, I am too old to take another husband.”

Ruth refuses to leave Naomi

⁷At this they wept again and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-bye, but Ruth clung to Naomi and said, “Where you go I will go. Your people will be my people and your God my God. ⁸May Jehovah deal with me severely if anything but death separates us.”

Naomi takes Ruth with her and returns to Bethlehem

⁹So Naomi took Ruth with her and departed to return to Bethlehem in Judah. They arrived just as the barley harvest was beginning.

The whole town is stirred at their coming

¹⁰The whole town was stirred because of them and the women exclaimed, “Can this be Naomi?”

¹¹But she told them, “Do not call me Naomi,^{F*} call me Bitter, for the Almighty has made my life bitter. I went away full but I have come back empty. Why call me Naomi?”

2

Ruth gleanes in the barley field of Boaz

¹Later, Ruth said to Naomi, “Let me go out to the fields and pick up the leftover grain.”

²Naomi said to her, “Go my daughter.” So Ruth went out and began to glean in a field behind the harvesters.

³Now Naomi had a relative on her husband's

*1 Moab was to the east of the Dead Sea. The Moabites were descendants of Lot and generally hostile towards Israel.

*11 Naomi means ‘my sweet one.’

RUTH 2

side, a man of standing whose name was Boaz, of the tribe of Judah. As it happened Ruth chose a field belonging to Boaz.

Boaz asks to whom the young woman belongs

⁴Soon afterward, Boaz arrived from Bethlehem and greeted his harvesters saying “Jehovah be with you!”

“May Jehovah bless you!” they called back.

⁵Then Boaz said to the foreman of his harvesters, “Whose young woman is that?”

⁶The foreman replied, “She is the Moabitess who came back with Naomi. She came to me and said, ‘Please let me glean behind the harvesters,’ and has worked steadily from morning until now except for a short rest in the shelter.”

Boaz shows kindness to Ruth

⁷Boaz went over to Ruth and said to her, “My daughter, do not glean in any other field. Stay here with my servant girls. I have commanded the young men not to touch you. When you are thirsty, drink from the water jars the men have filled.”

⁸At this Ruth bowed with her face to the ground and said, “Why have I found such favour in your eyes that you notice me, a foreigner?”

⁹Boaz replied, “I have been told of all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and how you left your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know. ¹⁰May you be richly rewarded by the God of Israel under whose wings you have taken refuge.”

¹¹When it came time to eat, Boaz said to her, “Come over here and have some bread and dip it in the vinegar.” When she went to sit with the harvesters he gave her roasted grain to eat and she saved some for Naomi.

¹²As Ruth arose again to glean, Boaz gave orders to his men saying, “Pull out stalks from the gathered bundles and leave them for her to pick up.”

Ruth returns home to Naomi with her barley

¹³Ruth gleaned until evening and then threshed the barley she had gathered. It amounted to about an ephah.^{F*}

¹⁴When she took the barley home and showed it to her mother-in-law, Naomi asked, “Where did you glean today?”

¹⁵“The name of the man with whom I worked today was Boaz,” Ruth replied.

¹⁶Naomi said, “The Lord bless him. He has never stopped showing kindness to the living and the dead. ¹⁷That man is a close relative of ours. It will be good for you to stay with his girls, for in someone else’s field you might be harmed.”

Naomi sends Ruth to Boaz at night

¹⁸After the harvest Naomi said to Ruth, “My daughter, should I not try to find a home for you where you will be well provided for? Is not Boaz

a relative of ours? ¹⁹Tonight he will be winnowing barley. Wash and perfume yourself and put on your best clothes, then go down to the threshing floor.^{F*} But do not let Boaz see you until he has finished eating and drinking. ²⁰When he lies to sleep, go and uncover his feet and lie down. He will tell you what to do.”

²¹When Boaz had finished eating and drinking and was in good spirits, he went over to sleep at the far end of the grain pile.^{F*} When he was asleep Ruth approached quietly, and uncovered his feet and lay down.



Women harvesting barley in the fields near Bethlehem.

Ruth asks Boaz to marry her

²²In the middle of the night Boaz awoke and discovered her lying at his feet. “Who are you?” he asked.

²³She answered, “I am your servant Ruth. Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are my next of kin.”^{F*}

Boaz is pleased with Ruth

²⁴Boaz said, “The Lord bless you my daughter. This kindness is greater than that which you showed earlier. You have not run after the younger men, whether rich or poor.”

The brother of Boaz has a greater right to Ruth

²⁵“Now my daughter, be not afraid, I will do for you all you ask. The men of the town know that you are a woman of noble character.”

²⁶“However, although it is true that I am your near kin, there is a brother nearer to you than I. If he wishes to claim you, well and good, let him do so. ²⁷But if he is not willing, as surely as Jehovah lives I will do it. Lie here until morning.”

Boaz sends Ruth home with a gift and then goes into town

²⁸So Ruth lay at his feet until morning. Boaz arose while it was still dark and said, “It must

*19 A threshing floor was an area of ground in a windy area, packed hard and smooth, where grain was first threshed and then winnowed.

*21 It was necessary to guard grain piles against thieves.

*23 Ruth’s action and words were a customary way of asking a man to fulfill his obligation to his brother who has died sonless, by marrying his widow and raising up a son to inherit his land. See Deuteronomy 5:32.

*13 An ephah is about 22 litres.

not be known that this woman came to the threshing floor.”

²⁹Then he said to Ruth, “Bring me the shawl you are wearing and hold it out.” When she did so he poured into it six measures of barley. Then Boaz went into town.

³⁰Ruth carried the barley back to her mother-in-law and told her everything Boaz had said.

³¹Naomi said, “That man will not rest until the matter is settled today.”



Barley threshing floor near Bethlehem.

3

Boaz negotiates for Ruth at the town gate

¹Meanwhile, Boaz went and sat at the town gate. When the brother who was nearer to Ruth came along, Boaz called to him saying, “Come over here and sit down.” ²Boaz also took ten of the elders of the town and said, “Sit here.” and they did so.

³Then he said to his brother, “Naomi who has returned from Moab has sold the piece of land that belonged to her husband, our brother Elimelech. I thought I should bring the matter to your attention and suggest that you redeem it,^{F*} for you have the first right and I am next in line.”

⁴“Very well, I will redeem it,” he said. ⁵Then Boaz said, “When you redeem the land that

belonged to Naomi, you also acquire our dead brother’s widow, Ruth the Moabitess in order to raise up an heir to the property.”

⁶At this his brother said, “Then I cannot redeem it as I might endanger my own estate. You redeem it yourself,” and he took off his sandal.^{F*}

Boaz agrees to redeem Naomi’s land and to marry Ruth

⁷Then Boaz said to the elders, “Today you are witnesses that I have acquired from Naomi all the property of Elimelech. I have also acquired Ruth the Moabitess, his son’s widow as my wife in order to maintain the name of the dead man with his property, so that his name will not disappear from among his family.”

⁸The elders said, “We are your witnesses. May Jehovah make this woman who is coming into your home be like Rachel and Leah who built up the house of Israel.”

Boaz marries Ruth

⁹So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife, and she conceived and gave birth to a son and Naomi cared for him.

Ruth becomes the great grandmother of King David

¹⁰They named the son Obed. He was the father of Jesse, who was the father of David.



Winnowing barley.

*3 Rural land could not be permanently sold in Israel. If it was not redeemed (purchased back by a relative) it reverted back to the original family owners in the year of Jubilee (Leviticus 7:19-24).

*6 Removing a sandal and handing it to another signified transference and was a traditional method of legalising property transactions.

SAMUEL

The book of Samuel like many in the Old Testament is named after the dominant prophet of the period. Samuel was one of Israel's greatest and most respected prophets. He was also their last judge.

This book spans Samuel's lifetime and is a masterpiece of literature. It is also an excellent study in human nature and rivals any book ever written for sheer human interest and drama. The personalities of Samuel, Saul, and David are vividly portrayed.

Within its pages are found the inspiring story of David and Goliath, the account of the deadly bubonic plague that afflicted the Philistines when they captured the Ark of the Lord, the two tests of obedience for King Saul both of which he failed, and the king's consequent jealousy toward David and his attempts to murder him.

Also found in the book are the accounts of the bravery of Saul's son Jonathan and his great love for David, the story of Abigail whose wisdom, beauty and humility win David's heart, and finally the account of the medium (or 'witch' as she is sometimes described) of Endor, who at King Saul's desperate urging, calls up the spirit of the dead prophet Samuel and receives a message that causes the king to fall to the floor in fear.

AUTHOR

The final compiler of this book is unnamed, but according to Jewish tradition it was written mostly by the prophet Samuel himself in a book called *The Record of Samuel the Seer*. However as this present version of the book transcends Samuel's lifetime, other historical records such as *The Annals of King David*, and *The Record of Gad the Seer* are thought to have been drawn on by a later prophet.

When Samuel saw Jesse's eldest son Eliab, he thought, "Surely he is the one." But the word of the Lord came to Samuel saying, "**Do not consider his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. Jehovah does not see as a man sees. Man looks upon the outward appearance, but the Lord looks upon the heart.**"

Samuel 9:8-9.

CONTENTS

	Chapter
Hannah the barren wife of Elkanah	1
Hannah makes a vow to the Lord	1
Hannah conceives and Samuel is born	1
Samuel left in the care of Eli the high priest	1
Hannah rewarded with more children	1
Eli's two sons wicked priests	1
Eli's sons take no notice of their father's rebuke	1
A prophet sent by the Lord to rebuke Eli	2
Descendants of Eli cursed to die young	2
A faithful priest to be raised up	2
Lord speaks to Samuel	2
Lord about to punish Israel and Eli's family	2
Samuel's reputation as a prophet grows	2
Israelites defeated by the Philistines	3
The Israelite army send for the Ark	3
Philistine army fear Ark	3
Philistine commanders encourage their men	3
Philistines slaughter 30,000 Israelites	3
Ark captured by the Philistines	3
Eli's two sons die in the battle	3
Eli the high priest dies when he hears the news	3
Eli's daughter-in-law dies giving birth	3
Ark put into temple of god Dagon	3
Next day Dagon found fallen to the ground	3
Dagon's head and hands broken off	3
Philistines suffer from severe plague	3
Philistine priests and diviners consulted	3
Ark to be returned to Israel	3
Gold images made of the tumours and rats	3
Ark to be returned on a cart pulled by cows	3
Cows pull Ark directly to Israel	4
Cart stops in a Levite field	4
Levites sacrifice the cows	4
Seventy Levites die for looking into Ark	4
Ark kept at Kiriath Jearim	4
The Israelites repent of idolatry	4
Samuel intercedes with the Lord	4
The people fast and confess their sins	4
The Philistines prepare to attack Israel again	4
Samuel cries to Lord for help	4
Philistines panicked by thunder from Lord	4
Israel pursues and slaughters the Philistines	4
Samuel judged Israel all his life	5
Samuel's two sons dishonest judges	5
The Israelites ask Samuel for a king	5
Samuel inquirers of the Lord	5
Samuel prophesies the disadvantages of a king	5
Elders persist in asking for a king	5
Lord tells Samuel to give Israel a king	5
Saul sent to search for his father's donkeys	5

Saul and his servant visit Samuel	5	David the youngest anointed to become king	9
Samuel tells Saul he is to be king of Israel	5	Spirit of Lord comes upon David	9
Saul anointed king by Samuel	5	King Saul tormented by an evil spirit	9
Samuel prophesies three signs for Saul	5	Saul's servants suggest a harpist be found	9
Signs are fulfilled and Saul prophesies	5	David enters Saul's service	9
Samuel gathers Israel to Mizpah	6	The Philistines again invade Israel	9
Israel rebuked by Lord for asking for king	6	Philistine warrior Goliath	9
Lord chooses Saul from among the people	6	Goliath's challenge	9
Saul hides in fear of people.....	6	David takes food to his older brothers in camp	10
Samuel explains rights and duties of a king	6	David hears Goliath's challenge	10
Some men support Saul but others despise him	6	King to reward slayer of Goliath	10
The Ammonites besiege city of Jabesh	6	David offers to fight Goliath	10
Messengers from Jabesh reach Saul in Gibeah	6	Saul gives David his own armour and sword	10
Saul cuts his oxen into pieces to summon men	6	David not used to armour and takes it off	10
Saul leads 370,000 men of Israel into battle	6	David goes out to fight Goliath with a sling	10
Saul slaughters the Ammonites	6	Goliath mocks David	10
Some want to kill those who despised Saul	6	David prophesies to Goliath	10
The people celebrate and reaffirm Saul as king	6	David's sling stone knocks Goliath unconscious	10
Samuel testifies of his own honesty	6	David kills and beheads Goliath	10
Samuel warns the people to follow Jehovah	6	Philistines flee and are pursued by Israel	10
Miracle of rain in dry season	6	Israelites plunder Philistine camp	10
Samuel warns people against idolatry	6	David and Jonathan become close friends	11
Saul chooses 3000 men for his standing army	7	Women of Israel sing David's praises	11
Jonathan provokes Philistines to attack	7	King Saul becomes jealous of David	11
All Israelite men again called out to fight	7	Saul hurls his spear at David	11
Philistine forces enormous	7	Saul plans to have David killed by Philistines	11
Israelite men flee and hide in fear	7	Saul's younger daughter Michal loves David	11
King Saul's obedience tested by the Lord	7	Michal's dowry – 100 Philistine foreskins	11
Saul in great anxiety offers unlawful sacrifice	7	David brings back 200 Philistine foreskins	11
Saul failed test – his kingship not to endure	7	David marries Michal	11
No steel weapons among Israelites	7	David the most successful commander in army	11
Jonathan and his armour bearer plan an attack	7	Saul finally orders David killed outright	11
Jonathan asks Lord for a sign	7	Jonathan intercedes for David	11
The sign is given	7	Saul vows to Jonathan he will not kill David	11
Jonathan and his armour-bearer kill 20 men	7	Saul again hurls his spear at David	11
Earthquake panics the Philistines	7	Michal assists David's escape	11
Saul and his men go out to battle	7	David flees to prophet Samuel	12
Israelites who had hid join the battle	7	Saul's men prophesy in Samuel's presence	12
Jonathan inadvertently violates Saul's oath	7	Saul also prophesies in Samuel's presence	12
Jonathan critical of his father's oath	7	David returns to his friend Jonathan	12
Exhausted soldiers eat meat with the blood	8	Jonathan agrees to test his father	12
Saul tells men to kill the animals properly	8	David to hide in fields and wait	12
Saul desires to pursue Philistines by night	8	Saul displays his true feelings to Jonathan	12
Saul first inquirers of Lord	8	Jonathan signals to David with an arrow	12
Lord does not answer Saul's inquiry	8	Jonathan and David weep together	12
Jonathan revealed as guilty person	8	Jonathan and David say farewell	12
Jonathan admits what he did	8	David flees to high priest at Nob	13
Saul vows to kill Jonathan	8	High priest gives David holy bread	13
The men save Jonathan from death	8	David is given Goliath's sword	13
Saul defeats all Israel's enemies	8	David flees to Philistines	13
Saul's mission to destroy the Amalekites	8	Philistines recognise David	13
Saul destroys the city of Amalek	8	David feigns madness to escape	13
In disobedience Saul spares best livestock	8	David returns to Israel and lives in a cave	13
Lord grieved with Saul's disobedience	8	David takes his parents to Moab for safety	13
Samuel pleads with the Lord for Saul	8	About 400 men gather to David	13
Saul tries to excuse his disobedience	8	David warned by a prophet to leave caves	13
To obey better than to sacrifice	8	Saul accuses his officials of conspiracy	13
Lord rejects Saul as king	8	Doeg tells how high priest helped David	13
Saul admits his sin and pleads for forgiveness	8	Saul summons the priests	13
Saul's kingdom given to a better man	8	High priest defends David	13
Samuel consents to honour Saul before elders	8	Saul orders his guards to kill all the priests	13
Samuel executes Agag, king of Amalekites	8	Saul's guards refuse	13
Samuel mourns for Saul	8	Doeg kills the priests	13
Samuel sent to anoint a son of Jesse king	9	Doeg puts the priest's town of Nob to sword	13
Samuel fears Saul's reaction	9	Abiathar flees to David with the ephod	13
Samuel goes to Bethlehem as commanded	9	Philistines attack Keilah	14
Lord does not look on outward appearance	9	David told by Lord to save Keilah	14
Seven of Jesse's sons rejected	9	David saves town of Keilah	14

SAMUEL 1

Saul goes to Keilah to besiege David	14
David and his 600 men flee to Ziph	14
Jonathan finds David	14
Philistine raid saves David from Saul	14
Saul again pursues David	14
Saul enters cave where David is hiding	14
David secretly cuts off part of Saul's robe	14
David feels guilty about what he has done	14
David prevents his men from killing Saul	14
David speaks to king outside cave	14
Saul weeps and admits David will be king	14
David promises not to wipe out Saul's family	14
Samuel the prophet dies	15
David and his men move to desert of Maon	15
The wealthy Nabal	15
Nabal's intelligent and beautiful wife Abigail	15
Nabal rejects David's men's request for food	15
David sets out to punish Nabal's family	15
Abigail warned of the approaching disaster	15
Abigail meets David and his men with food	15
Abigail appeases David's anger	15
Nabal drunk when Abigail returns home	15
Nabal's heart fails him	15
Nabal dies ten days later	15
David marries Abigail	15
David's other wife	15
Saul again pursues David	16
David sneaks into Saul's camp by night	16
David again spares Saul's life	16
Saul's spear and water jug taken	16
David taunts Saul's commander Abner	16
Saul confesses his sin and blesses David	16

David and his men live among the Philistines	16
Achish the Philistine king gives Ziklag to David	16
David survives by raiding non-Israelite tribes	16
David deceives the Philistine king	16
David ordered by Achish to fight against Israel	17
Philistine army commanders reject David	17
David and his men return home to Ziklag	17
Philistine army set up camp in Israel	17
Lord does not answer Saul's inquiry	17
Saul in desperation consults a woman medium	17
Saul asks the woman to bring up Samuel	17
Samuel prophesies defeat and Saul's death	17
The woman prepares food for Saul	17
David and his men find Ziklag burned	18
Their wives and children captured	18
David inquirers of the Lord	18
Lord answers – pursue and rescue	18
David and his men set out immediately	18
200 of David's men too exhausted to cross a river ..	18
David and his men assist a young Egyptian	18
Egyptian leads David to raider's camp	18
David defeats raiders	18
David recovers all that was taken and more	18
Spoil divided equally	18
David sends spoil to his friends in Judah	18
The Philistines attack and Israelites flee	19
Saul's three sons die in battle	19
Saul severely wounded by Philistine archers	19
Saul decides to take own life	19
Philistines occupy surrounding towns	19
Saul and his son's bodies hung on a city wall	19
Men of Jabesh bury Saul and his sons	19

Bold The Lord or an angel speaking.

Bold italics A prophet speaking under inspiration.

1

Hannah the barren wife of Elkanah

¹There was a man whose name was Elkanah, a Levite, who year after year went up to worship and sacrifice to the Lord at the Tabernacle at Shiloh.

²He had two wives, Peninnah who had children and Hannah who had none.

³Whenever Elkanah sacrificed at Shiloh he would give his barren wife Hannah a double portion of meat, for he loved her greatly.

⁴Peninnah his other wife however would tease and provoke Hannah because of her barrenness until she would weep and not eat. This went on year after year.

⁵Elkanah her husband would say to her, "Hannah why are you weeping? Why do you not eat? Am I not worth more to you than ten sons?"

Hannah makes a vow to the Lord that if given a son she will give him back to him as a Nazirite

⁶One year at Shiloh when they had finished eating and drinking, Hannah again wept much.

⁷Then she prayed before the Lord at the Tabernacle and made a vow^{F*} saying,

"Jehovah Almighty, if you will look upon my misery and grant me a son, then I will give him back to you all the days of his life. No razor will ever be used on his head." ^{F*}

Eli the high priest accuses Hannah of drunkenness

⁸As she prayed, Eli who was high priest at that time was watching her. He saw her lips moving but did not hear her voice and thought she was drunk.

⁹He said to her, "How long will you be drunken? Get rid of your wine."

¹⁰Hannah replied, "No my lord, I have not been drinking, I am a woman deeply troubled with great anguish and grief. I was pouring out my soul to the Lord."

Eli blesses Hannah that her prayer be answered

¹¹Eli answered, "Then go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant what you have asked of him."

¹²So Hannah rejoined her family and ate, and felt sorrowful no more.

*7 A vow is a favour asked of the Lord in return for which the asker agrees to make some kind of sacrifice.

*7 ie He would become a Nazirite (see Leviticus 8:19) as was Samson.

¹³Early next morning they arose, and after worshipping, returned to their home at Ramah.

Hannah conceives and a son Samuel is born

¹⁴Elkanah lay with Hannah his wife and the Lord remembered her vow and she conceived. In the course of time she gave birth to a son and named him Samuel."

When weaned Samuel is taken to Eli the high priest and left in his care

¹⁵After he was weaned, the parents took the boy, young as he was,^{F*} along with a bull, flour and a skin of wine, to the Tabernacle at Shiloh.

¹⁶When they had slaughtered the bull they brought the boy to Eli the high priest and Hannah said to him, "I am the woman who stood here in your presence, praying to the Lord. ¹⁷He has granted me what I asked. Now to fulfil my vow I give him to Jehovah. For his whole life he is to be given over to the Lord."

¹⁸Then Elkanah took his wife Hannah home and the boy Samuel remained under the care of Eli the high priest.

Hannah is rewarded with more children

¹⁹As Samuel grew he began ministering before the Lord, a young boy wearing a priest's tunic. Each year his mother would make him another little tunic and take it to him when she went up with her husband to offer the annual sacrifice.

²⁰Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife Hannah saying, "May Jehovah give you children by this woman because of the gift she gave to the Lord."

²¹The Lord was gracious to Hannah and she conceived and bore three more sons and two daughters.

Eli's two sons are wicked priests

²²Now Eli himself had two sons, Hophni and Phinehas who were priests, but they were wicked men and had no regard for the Lord.

Eli's sons would treat the Lord's offerings with contempt

²³It was the normal practice of priests that whenever the meat of a sacrifice was being boiled, a servant of the priest would plunge a three-pronged fork into the pot and whatever the fork brought up, the priest would keep for himself. ²⁴But with Eli's sons, even before the fat was burned, their servant would say to the man who was sacrificing, "Give the priest some raw meat to roast, he will not accept boiled meat."

²⁵If the man rightly replied, "Let the fat be burned first, then take whatever you want," the servant would answer, "Hand it over now, or I will take it by force."

²⁶This sin of Eli's sons was great in the Lord's eyes, for they were treating his offerings with contempt.

Sexual immorality with the women who served at the Tabernacle

²⁷Eli's sons also lay with the women who served at the entrance to the Tabernacle.

Eli rebukes his sons

²⁸Eli heard about the evil things his sons were doing, so he said to them, "Why do you do such things? If a man sins against a man, the Lord may intercede for him, but if a man sins against the Lord, who can intercede?"

Eli sons take no notice of their father's rebuke

²⁹Eli's sons took no notice of their father's rebuke. ³⁰But the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature, and in favour with the Lord and with men.

2

A prophet sent by the Lord to rebuke Eli

¹Now Eli was very old and one day a prophet came to him and said, "Jehovah says, 'I chose your forefather Aaron out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to attend my altar, to burn incense, and to wear an ephod^{F*} in my presence.'

²"I also gave your father's house all the offerings made with fire by the Israelites. Why then do you scorn my sacrifices and offerings and honour your sons more than me, by fattening yourselves on the choicest parts of the offerings made by my people?"

Descendants of Eli cursed to die young

³"I promised that your father's house would minister before me forever, but now, no more. I honour those who honour me but those who dishonour me are cursed."

⁴"I am breaking the strength of your house so that no man of your family will reach old age. The few I do not cut off from my altar will be spared only to weep out their eyes with tears and grief, for your descendants will die by the sword at a young age."

Eli's sons Hophni and Phinehas to both die on the same day

⁵"What befalls your two sons Hophni and Phinehas will be a sign of what is to come. They will both die on the same day."

A faithful priest to be raised up

⁶"I will raise up a faithful priest who will do what is in my heart and mind. I will firmly establish his house, and he will minister before my anointed king forever."

Eli's descendants to beg for a priestly office

⁷"Then whoever is left of your family will come and beg him for a piece of silver and a loaf of bread, and plead with him saying, 'Appoint me to some priestly office so I can have food to eat.'

The Lord speaks to Samuel

⁸Now in those days the word of the Lord was

*15 The time of weaning was normally around three years of age.

*1 The ephod was a priestly garment normally only worn by the high priest.

SAMUEL 3

rare, there were not many visions. ⁹One night while Eli was asleep in his usual place and Samuel was sleeping in the Tabernacle, the voice of the Lord called to Samuel. **“Samuel!”**

¹⁰Samuel ran to Eli and said, “You called me?” Eli said, “No I did not call you. Go back to sleep.” So Samuel went and lay down again.

¹¹Again the Lord called and Samuel got up and went to Eli, but he said, “My son I did not call you.”

¹²The Lord called Samuel a third time, and again Samuel went to Eli. Then Eli realised that the Lord was calling the boy so he said to Samuel, “Go and lie down. If he calls you again say, ‘Speak Lord, for your servant is listening.’”

¹³So Samuel went and lay down in his place. This time Lord came and stood before him, calling as before, **“Samuel! Samuel!”**

¹⁴Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant is listening.”

The Lord about to punish Israel and Eli’s family

¹⁵The Lord said to Samuel, **“I am about to do something in Israel that will cause all ears to tingle. I will also carry out against the family of Eli everything I spoke, for his sons did evil and he failed to restrain them. ¹⁶The guilt of Eli’s house will never be atoned for by sacrifice or offering.”**

Samuel tells Eli everything the Lord said

¹⁷Samuel lay until morning and then opened the doors of the Tabernacle. He was afraid to tell Eli the vision, but Eli called him and said, “What did the Lord say to you? Do not hide it from me.”

¹⁸So Samuel told him everything. Then Eli said, “Let Jehovah do what is good in his eyes.”

Samuel’s reputation as a prophet grows

¹⁹The Lord was with Samuel as he grew up, and he continued to reveal himself to Samuel at Shiloh, allowing none of his words to fail. All Israel knew that Samuel was a prophet of the Lord.

3

The Israelites are defeated by the Philistines

¹Now the Philistines mustered for war and the Israelites went out to fight them, but they were defeated. About 4000 Israelites died on the battlefield.

The Israelite army send for the Ark

²When the army returned to camp the elders of Israel asked, “Why has the Lord brought defeat upon us today? Let us bring the Ark from Shiloh so that it may go with us into battle and save us from our enemies.”

³So they sent to Shiloh, and Eli’s two sons came with the Ark.

The Philistines fear the Ark

⁴When the Ark was brought into the camp, the Israelites raised a shout so loud that the ground shook. The Philistines asked, “What does this

great shouting in the Israelite camp mean?”

⁵When they learned that the Ark of the Lord had come, the Philistines feared and said, “Who will deliver us from the hand of this mighty God? This is the God who struck the Egyptians with all kinds of plagues.”

The Philistine commanders encourage their men

⁶But their commanders said to them, “Be strong Philistines! Be men, or you will be subject to the Israelites as they have been subject to you. Be men and fight!”

The Philistines slaughter 30,000 Israelites and capture the Ark

⁷So the Philistines fought strongly and the Israelites were again defeated. Every man fled to his home. ⁸The slaughter was very great. Israel lost 30,000 men and the Ark of God was captured.

Eli’s two sons die in the battle

⁹Eli’s two sons Hophni and Phinehas who had carried the Ark also died in the battle.

Eli the high priest dies when he hears the news

¹⁰That same day a man ran from the battlefield to carry the news to Shiloh. His clothes were torn and there was dust on his head.^{F*} ¹¹The man entered the city and told what had happened and the whole city began to cry out.

¹²Eli was sitting on his chair out in the street waiting, for he feared greatly for the Ark of God. When he heard the outcry he called out, “What has happened?”

¹³The messenger hurried over to Eli who was now ninety-eight years old and blind and said, “Israel fled before the Philistines! There has been a great slaughter! ¹⁴Your two sons Hophni and Phinehas are dead and the Ark has been captured!”

¹⁵When he mentioned the Ark, Eli fell backward off his chair and broke his neck and died, for he was an old man and heavy.

¹⁶He had judged Israel forty years.

Eli’s daughter-in-law dies giving birth

¹⁷Eli’s daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas was pregnant and near the time of her delivery. When she too heard the news she went into labour and gave birth, but was overcome by her labour pains.

¹⁸As she lay dying, the women attending her said, “You have given birth to a son.” ¹⁹Before she died she named the boy Ichabod^{F*} saying, “The glory has departed from Israel, for the Ark of God has been captured.”

The Ark is put into the temple of the Philistine god Dagon

²⁰The Philistines took the Ark to their city of Ashdod, and carried it into the temple and set it beside the image of Dagon their god.

*10 Torn clothing and dust on the head are signs of extreme grief.

*19 Ichabod means ‘no glory.’

Next day Dagon found fallen to the ground

²¹However when the people of Ashdod arose the next morning, they found the image of Dagon fallen to the ground on his face before the Ark.

Dagon's head and hands broken off

²²They took Dagon and put him back in his place but the following morning they again found him fallen on his face. This time his head and hands had been broken off.

The Philistines suffer from severe plague because of the Ark

²³Jehovah's hand was heavy upon the people of Ashdod. He sent rats among them and brought plague upon them, afflicting them with tumours in the groin.^{F*} There was death and destruction throughout the city.

²⁴When the men of Ashdod saw what was happening, they called together the kings of the Philistines and said to them, "What shall we do with the Ark of the God of Israel?"

²⁵They answered, "Move the Ark to Gath."^{F*} But when they moved it to Gath, the Lord also afflicted the people of that city with an outbreak of tumours in the groin.

²⁶So they sent the Ark to Ekron, but as the Ark was entering that city the people of Ekron cried out, "They have brought the Ark of the God of Israel here to kill us."

²⁷They said to the kings of the Philistines, "Send the Ark back to Israel or it will kill us all." For the plague had started there also and the city was filled with panic.²⁸Those who did not die of the plague were afflicted with the tumours.

The Philistine priests and diviners are consulted

²⁹So the Philistine kings called for their priests and diviners and said, "How shall we send back the Ark of Jehovah?"

The Ark to be returned to Israel with a guilt offering

³⁰They answered, "Do not send away the Ark of the God of Israel empty, send with it a guilt offering and you may be healed."

Gold images of the tumours and the rats

³¹The kings asked, "What guilt offering should we send?"

³²They replied, "Make gold images of the tumours, and of the rats that are destroying the land and thus pay honour to Israel's God. Five gold tumours and five gold rats, according to the number of the Philistine kings.³³Perhaps he will lift his hand from you. Why harden your hearts as the Egyptians did?"

The Ark to be sent back on a cart pulled by two newly calved ox cows

³⁴"Then prepare a new cart and take two ox cows that have never been yoked and have just calved. Take their calves away from them

and pen them up. Hitch the cows to the cart and place the Ark of Jehovah on the cart.³⁵Put the gold objects you are sending as a guilt offering in a chest beside it. Then send the cart on its way."

³⁶"If the cows pull the cart toward Israel, then Jehovah has brought this great disaster on us. But if not, then it was just chance and not his hand that struck us."



An old stone relief of the Ark of the Lord found in Israel.

4

The cows pull the Ark directly to Israel

¹The Philistine kings did as their priests and diviners advised. They put the Ark on the cart along with a chest containing the gold objects and yoked the cows to the cart.

²The cows immediately started pulling the cart along the road leading toward Israel. They did not turn to the right or to the left and lowed all the way.

³The kings of the Philistines followed as far as Beth Shemesh, a Levite^{F*} town of Judah on the border of Israel.

⁴The Ark of the Lord had been in Philistine territory for seven months.

The cart stops in a Levite field

⁵The Levites of Beth Shemesh were harvesting their wheat when they looked up and saw the Ark coming toward them. They rejoiced at the sight. The cart stopped in the field of Joshua, beside a large rock.

The Levites sacrifice the cows

⁶The Levites lifted the Ark and the chest containing the gold objects off the cart and placed them on the rock.⁷Then they chopped

*23 Bubonic plague, which is spread by rat fleas.

*24 Gath was another of the five main cities of the Philistines.

*3 The priestly tribe of Levi had been allotted towns throughout Israel.

SAMUEL 5

up the wood of the cart and sacrificed the two ox cows as a burnt offering to the Lord.



Ox cart of the Middle East.

Seventy Levites die for looking into the Ark

⁸But God killed seventy of the men of Beth Shemesh because they looked inside the Ark.

⁹The people mourned because of the heavy blow the Lord had dealt them and sent messengers up to the people of the nearby town of Kiriath Jearim saying, “The Philistines have returned the Ark of the Lord. Come down and take it.”

The Ark kept at Kiriath Jearim

¹⁰So the men of Kiriath Jearim came and took the Ark of the Lord up to Abinadab’s house on the hill and consecrated Eleazar his son to guard it.

The Israelites mourn and repent of idolatry

¹¹The Ark remained at Kiriath Jearim twenty years, and all the people of Israel mourned and sought the Lord.

¹²Samuel said to the people, “If you are returning to the Lord with all your hearts, then rid yourselves of all foreign gods and serve Jehovah only and he will deliver you from the Philistines.” So the Israelites put away their Baals and Ashtoreths.*

Samuel calls all Israel together at Mizpah to intercede with the Lord for them

¹³Then Samuel commanded all Israel saying, “Assemble at Mizpah and I will intercede with the Lord for you.”

The people fast and confess their sins

¹⁴So all Israel assembled at Mizpah, fasting and confessing, “We have sinned against the Lord.”

The Philistines prepare to attack Israel again

¹⁵When the Philistines heard that all Israel had gathered at Mizpah they came up to attack them.

¹⁶The Israelites heard that the Philistines were coming and were afraid. They said to Samuel, “Cry out to the Lord for us, so he will save us from the Philistines.”

Samuel sacrifices a lamb and cries to the Lord for help

¹⁷So Samuel took a lamb and offered it up as a whole burnt offering to the Lord, then he cried out on Israel’s behalf and the Lord answered him.

The Philistines are thrown into a panic by loud thunder from the Lord

¹⁸As the Philistines drew near to fight, the Lord thundered with a loud thunder against them, which terrified them and threw them into a panic, and they fled.

The Israelites pursue and slaughter the Philistines

¹⁹Then the men of Israel arose and pursued them, slaughtering them all the way to the border.

²⁰Afterward Samuel set up a stone and named it Ebenezer* saying, “Jehovah has helped us.”

²¹So the Philistines were subdued at that time and did not renew their attack and the towns they had formerly taken from Israel were recaptured again.



The travels of the Ark of the Lord.

5

Samuel judged Israel all his life

¹Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. He went on a circuit year by year to Bethel, Gilgal and Mizpah and judged Israel in all these places. Then he would return to his home town of Ramah where he built an altar to the Lord.

Samuel appoints his two sons as judges but they are dishonest

²When Samuel grew old he appointed his two sons as judges. But his sons did not walk in his ways, they were dishonest and accepted bribes.

The Israelites ask Samuel for a king

³So the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah and said to him, “You are old and your sons do not walk in your ways. Appoint a king to lead us, such as the other nations have.”

*12 Baal and Ashtoreth were demon gods, whose worship usually involved sexual immorality.

*20 Ebenezer means ‘Stone of Help.’

Samuel enquires of the Lord

4This displeased Samuel, so he enquired of the Lord and the Lord answered, **“Do as the people ask, they have not rejected you but have rejected me as their king, as they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt. 5But warn them solemnly what the king who will reign over them will do.”**

Samuel prophesies of the disadvantages of a king

6So Samuel said to the elders who had asked him for a king, **“This is what the king who will reign over you will do: He will take your sons and make them serve in his army with his chariots and horses. He will assign others to make weapons of war and chariots. 7Still others he will have plough his ground and reap his harvest. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers.”**

8**“He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his officials. The best of your servants and your cattle and donkeys he will take for his own use, and he will also tax a tenth of your flocks and grain and wine to support his officials.”**

9**“Even you yourselves will become his servants, and when that day comes you will cry out to the Lord for relief from the king you have chosen, but Jehovah will not answer you.”**

The elders persist in asking for a king

10But the elders answered Samuel, “We want to be like the other nations and have a king to rule us and go out before us to fight our battles.”

The Lord tells Samuel to give Israel a king

11When Samuel heard this he again took it to the Lord. The Lord answered, **“Give them a king.”**

Saul sent to search for his father’s donkeys

12There was a Benjamite, a man of standing whose name was Kish. He had a son named Saul, a man of handsome appearance without equal among the Israelites and a head taller than any other man.

13Now some donkeys belonging to Kish became lost, so he sent his son Saul and a servant to search for them. They searched widely throughout the hill country of Ephraim but did not find them.

14Finally Saul said to the servant, “Let us return home or my father will cease worrying about the donkeys and begin to worry about us.”

Saul and his servant visit Samuel the prophet

15The servant replied, “A prophet of God lives in a nearby town. Everything he says comes to pass. Perhaps he will tell us where to find the donkeys.”

16Saul said, “But what have we to give the man? The food in our sacks is gone?”

17The servant answered, “I have a quarter of

a shekel of silver.^{F*} We can give that to the man of God.”

“Very well then, let us go,” Saul said.

18So they went to Ramah where Samuel the prophet lived. As they were going up the hill to the town they met some girls coming down to draw water, so they asked them, “Is the seer in the town?”

19They answered, “He is, if you hurry you will find him before he goes up to the high place to bless the sacrifice and eat.”

20So they hurried up the hill to the town. Just as they entered they saw the prophet Samuel coming toward them, on his way to the high place.



Ramah, the hill-top home town of the prophet Samuel.

Samuel tells Saul he is to become king of Israel

21Now the previous day the Lord had said to Samuel, **“About this time tomorrow I will send you a man of Benjamin. Anoint him king. He will deliver my people Israel from the hand of the Philistines for their cry has reached me.”**

22When Samuel saw Saul, the word of the Lord came to him again saying, **“This is the man of whom I spoke. He will rule my people.”**

23So Samuel said to Saul. **“Go up ahead of me to the high place. Today you will eat with me and tomorrow I will tell you whatever you wish to know. 24As for the donkeys you lost three days ago, they have been found. 25On whom is all the desire of Israel fixed, if not you and your family?”**

26Saul answered, “Am I not a Benjamite, the smallest tribe of Israel and my clan the least of the clans of Benjamin? Why then do you speak such words to me?”

Saul eats with Samuel and sleeps at his house

27When Samuel had blessed the sacrifice at the high place^{F*} he took Saul and his servant into the eating hall and seated them at the head of those who were invited, about thirty in number and they ate with him.

28After they had returned back down to the

*17 A shekel of silver was worth about a days wages.

*27 Sacrifice was normally only offered at the Tabernacle, but the town of Shiloh where the Tabernacle was located had recently been destroyed by the Philistines.

SAMUEL 6

town Samuel spoke with Saul on the roof of his house and Saul slept there that night.

Saul is anointed king by Samuel

²⁹Early next morning Saul left to return home. Samuel escorted him to the edge of the town and said to him, "Command your servant to go on ahead." And the servant did so.

³⁰Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on Saul's head and kissed him saying, "**Jehovah has anointed you king over Israel. You will reign over the people of the Lord and save them from their enemies.**"

Samuel prophesies three signs for Saul

³¹"**Now this shall be a sign to you: Today on your way home you will meet two men near Rachel's tomb. They will say to you, 'The donkeys you set out to look for have been found and now your father is worried about you.'**"

³²"**When you reach the great oak of Tabor, three men going to Bethel will meet you there. One will be carrying three young goats, another three loaves of bread and another a skin of wine.** ³³**They will greet you and offer you two loaves of bread which you shall accept from them.**"

The Spirit of the Lord to come upon Saul

³⁴"**As you approach your home town of Gibeah you will meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place, with lyres, tambourines, flutes and harps being played before them.**"

³⁵"**They will be prophesying^{F*} and the Spirit of the Lord will come upon you in power and you will prophesy with them.** ³⁶**You will be changed into a different person.**"

³⁷"**Once these signs are fulfilled, do whatever you feel is right, for God will be with you.**"

The signs are fulfilled and Saul prophesies

³⁸Saul left Samuel and that day all the signs were fulfilled. When he arrived at his home town of Gibeah a company of prophets met him and the Spirit of God came upon Saul and he joined in their prophesying.

³⁹When those who knew him, saw him prophesying with the prophets they said to each other, "What has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also a prophet?"

Saul is silent about his anointing

⁴⁰Saul's uncle said to him, "What did the prophet Samuel say to you?"

⁴¹Saul replied, "He told us that the donkeys had been found." He did not tell his uncle what Samuel had said about the kingship.

6

Samuel gathers Israel to Mizpah

¹Now the prophet Samuel sent a command

throughout the land, for all the Israelites to assemble at Mizpah.

Israel rebuked by the Lord for asking for a king

²When all Israel had gathered^{F*} Samuel said to the people, "Jehovah the God of Israel says, **'I brought Israel up out of Egypt and delivered you from the power of all the kingdoms that oppressed you. But you have now rejected your God who saves you and have said, 'Set a king over us.'**"

³"**Now, present yourselves before me, tribe by tribe.**"

The Lord chooses Saul from among the people

⁴The tribes of Israel presented themselves before the Lord and the tribe of Benjamin was chosen.

⁵Then Samuel had the tribe of Benjamin come forward clan by clan, and Saul the son of Kish was chosen.

Saul hides in fear of people

⁶But afterwards Saul could not be found. Samuel inquired of the Lord and was told, "**He has hidden himself among the baggage.**"

⁷So they ran and brought him out. As he stood among the people he was a head taller than any other man.

Samuel explains the rights and duties of a king

⁸Samuel said to the people, "Here is the man the Lord has chosen as king. There is no one like him in all Israel."

⁹The people shouted, "Long live the king!"

¹⁰Samuel then explained to the people the rights and duties of the kingship,^{F*} and wrote them in a book. Then he dismissed the people.

Some support Saul but others despise him

¹¹Saul also returned home to Gibeah, accompanied by valiant men whose hearts God had touched.

¹²But some troublemakers said, "How can this fellow save us?" and they despised Saul and brought him no gifts.

The Ammonites besiege the city of Jabesh

¹³Now the Ammonites had been seriously oppressing the Israelites in Gilead, east of the Jordan. They had gouged out the right eye of each one of them. ¹⁴No one was left whose right eye had not been gouged out, except the 7000 men of the city of Jabesh, and now the Ammonites had laid siege to the city of Jabesh.

¹⁵The men of Jabesh said to the Ammonites, "Make a treaty with us and we will be subject to you."

¹⁶But the Ammonites replied, "We will only make a treaty with you on the condition that we gouge out the right eye of each one of you."

¹⁷The elders of Jabesh said, "Allow us seven days, if no one comes to rescue us we will surrender to you."

*2 The Israelites east of the Jordan probably did not come due to war with the Ammonites. See verse 13.

*10 See also Deuteronomy 3:12-18 for Moses' commandments regarding the choosing of and the personal conduct of a king.

*35 To prophesy is to speak under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. It is not limited to foretelling the future and often includes praise of God.

Messengers from Jabesh reach Saul in Gibeah

¹⁸When messengers from Jabesh reached Gibeah, Saul was returning home from the fields, walking behind his oxen. He asked, "Why are you weeping?" Then they told him what the messengers from Jabesh had said.

Saul cuts his oxen into pieces and sends them throughout Israel to summon men to fight

¹⁹When Saul heard these words, the Spirit of God came upon him in power and he burned with anger. ²⁰He took two of his oxen and cut them into pieces and sent the pieces throughout Israel proclaiming, "This is what will be done to the oxen of any man who does not follow Saul and Samuel."



Plowing with oxen near Jerusalem.

Saul leads 370,000 men of Israel into battle

²¹300,000 men of Israel turned out, and 70,000 men of Judah, all prepared for battle. ²²Then Saul, accompanied by Samuel the prophet led the men of Israel toward Gilead and crossed the Jordan.

Saul slaughters the Ammonites

²³The next day Saul separated the men into three divisions, and during the last watch of the night^{F*} they attacked the camp of the Ammonites and slaughtered them until the heat of the day. ²⁴Those who survived were so scattered that no two of them were left together.

Some want to kill those who despised Saul

²⁵Then some said to Samuel, "Bring the men who said, 'How can this fellow Saul save us?' We will put them to death."

²⁶But Saul said, "No one shall be put to death this day, for Jehovah has rescued Israel."

The people celebrate and reaffirm Saul as king

²⁷Samuel the prophet said to the men of Israel, "Come, let us go to Gilgal and there reaffirm the kingship." So all the people went to Gilgal and confirmed Saul as king. ²⁸They sacrificed offerings before the Lord and held a great celebration.

Samuel the prophet testifies of his own honesty as judge

²⁹Then Samuel said to the people, "Now you have a king as your leader. As for me, I am old and grey and have been your judge from my youth until this day."

³⁰"Here I stand. Testify against me in the presence of the Lord and his anointed king. Whose ox or donkey have I taken? Whom have I cheated? From whose hand have I accepted a bribe? If I have done any of these things I will make it right."

³¹The people replied, "You have not cheated or oppressed us in any way."

Samuel warns the people and the king to follow Jehovah

³²Samuel said to them, "Very well then, hear me while I recount all the good things done by Jehovah for you and your fathers."

³³Samuel then repeated all that the Lord had done for Israel since he brought them up out of Egypt.

³⁴Then he said, "Here is the king the Lord has set over you. If both you and your king follow Jehovah, it will be well. But if you do not, his hand will be against you, as it was against your fathers."

The miracle of rain in the dry season

³⁵"Now watch this great sign that the Lord is about to do before your eyes. Is it not the season of wheat harvest? I will call upon Jehovah to send thunder and rain^{F*} as a sign that it was an evil thing you did in his eyes when you asked for a king."

³⁶Samuel then called upon the Lord and that same day the Lord sent thunder and rain. All the people stood in awe of the Lord and of Samuel.

Samuel comforts the Israelites but warns against idolatry

³⁷Then the people said to Samuel, "Pray for us that we will not die, for we have added to all our other sins by asking for a king."

³⁸Samuel replied, "Far be it from me that I should sin by failing to pray for you, or by not teaching you what is right. But fear not, for the sake of his great name Jehovah will not reject his people. ³⁹Only do not turn away from him to useless idols which cannot save you, but serve him with all your heart. If you persist in doing evil, both you and your king will be swept away."

7

King Saul chooses 3000 men for his standing army

¹Saul was forty years old when he began to reign. He chose 3000 men for his standing army. 2000 remained with him at Gilgal and 1000 went with his son Jonathan. ²The rest of the men he sent back to their homes.

*23 Between 2am and 6am.

*35 Rain is unheard of in Israel at wheat harvest time.

SAMUEL 7

Jonathan provokes the Philistines to attack Israel

³Jonathan took his men and attacked and destroyed a Philistine outpost at Geba, so the Philistines gathered to fight Israel.

⁴They camped near Gilgal at Michmash with 3000 chariots, 6000 charioteers, and soldiers as numerous as sand on the seashore.



Geba in Benjamin where Jonathan provoked the Philistines by destroying their outpost.

All the Israelite men again called out to fight

⁵So the men of Israel were again called out by Saul to join him at Gilgal to fight the Philistines.

The Israelite men flee and hide when they see the enormity of the Philistine forces

⁶However when the men of Israel came and saw the enormity of the Philistine forces, they fled, hiding in caves and thickets and among the rocks. Others crossed the Jordan to the land of Gilead.

King Saul's obedience tested by the Lord

⁷Saul remained at Gilgal with his army of 2000 who were also seized with fear. ⁸He waited there seven days, for Samuel the prophet had commanded him of the Lord saying, ***"After seven days I will surely come to you, to offer sacrifice and instruct you as to what you are to do."***

Saul's men begin deserting him

⁹Saul waited seven days and Samuel did not come and his men began to desert him.

Saul in great anxiety offers an unlawful sacrifice

¹⁰Finally Saul said, "Bring me the burnt offering," and he offered the sacrifice himself.*

¹¹Just as he finished, Samuel arrived and said to Saul, "What have you done?"

¹²Saul replied, "When I saw that the men were deserting me, and that you had not come at the appointed time, I thought, 'The Philistines will attack any time and I have not sought the Lord's favour.' I felt such anguish that I offered the burnt offering myself."

Because Saul failed his test his kingship not to endure

¹³Samuel said, ***"You have acted very foolishly. You did not keep my commandment from the Lord. If you had kept it, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time, but now your kingdom will not***

endure. ¹⁴***The Lord has chosen another man after his own heart to rule his people, for you did not obey his commandment."*** Then Samuel departed.

Only 600 men have not deserted Saul

¹⁵Saul counted the men who were still with him and they numbered about 600. Then he led his men to join his son Jonathan.

No steel weapons among the Israelites

¹⁶Now the Philistines had forbidden blacksmiths in the whole land of Israel for they did not want the Israelites to make swords and spears. The men of Israel had to go to the Philistines to have their ploughs, axes and other tools sharpened.

¹⁷Therefore as they prepared for battle, not one Israelite soldier had a sword or spear in his hand, only Saul and his son Jonathan.

Jonathan and his armour bearer plan an attack on the Philistine outpost

¹⁸Raiding parties were being sent out from the Philistine camp at Michmash, and an outpost of Philistines had pushed forward and secured the high pass at Michmash.

¹⁹Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armour, "Let us cross over to the Philistine outpost on the other side of the valley. Perhaps Jehovah will act for us."

²⁰His armour bearer replied, "I am with you heart and soul."

Jonathan asks the Lord for a sign

²¹Then Jonathan said, "As we cross the valley we will let the Philistines see us. If they call out to us, 'Stay there until we come down to you,' we will go no further. But if they say, 'Come up here,' we will climb up to them, for that will be a sign that the Lord has given them into our hands."

²²So the two young men crossed the valley and showed themselves to the men at the outpost. The Philistines said, "Look, the Israelites are crawling out of the holes they were hiding in."

The sign is given

²³And they shouted down to Jonathan and his armour-bearer, "Come up to us and we will teach you a lesson."

²⁴Jonathan said to his armour-bearer, "Climb up after me. The Lord has given them into our hands."

Jonathan and his armour-bearer kill about twenty men

²⁵So Jonathan climbed up the cliff face using his hands and feet, with his armour-bearer right behind him. ²⁶He immediately attacked the Philistines who fell before him, and his armour bearer slew behind him. Together they killed about twenty men.

An earthquake panics the Philistines

²⁷Then came an earthquake that shook the ground, and a great panic struck the whole Philistine army. It was a panic sent by God.

*10 Only priests were allowed to offer sacrifices.

²⁸Saul's lookouts saw the Philistine army fleeing in all directions. Saul said to his men, "Muster the forces. See who has left us."

²⁹They did so and found Jonathan and his armour-bearer missing.

Saul and his men go out to battle

³⁰Saul said to Ahijah the high priest, "Bring the ephod^{F*} of God here." But while Saul was still speaking to him the uproar in the Philistine camp increased more and more.

³¹Saul said to the priest, "Stay your hand."

³²Then Saul and all his men went out to battle. They found the Philistines in total confusion, striking each other with their swords.



The pass at Michmash showing the cliffs that Jonathan and his armour-bearer climbed to attack the Philistines.

Israelites who had defected or hid also join the battle

³³The Israelites who had defected to the Philistines rejoined the Israelites, and those who had hidden in the hills also joined the battle in hot pursuit.

Jonathan inadvertently violates Saul's fast

³⁴Now Saul had bound the army under an oath that day saying, "Cursed be any man who eats food before evening comes and I have avenged myself on my enemies." So none of the men tasted food.

³⁵When the army entered the woods they saw honey on the ground, but no man put his hand to his mouth for they feared the oath.

³⁶But Jonathan had not heard the oath of his father so he dipped his staff into the honeycomb and ate and his eyes brightened.

Jonathan critical of his father's oath

³⁷One of the soldiers said to him, "Your father bound us under an oath saying, 'Cursed be any man who eats food today.' That is why the men are weak."

³⁸Jonathan said, "My father has troubled the men. My strength was renewed by this honey. It would have been better if the men had eaten some of the spoil of their enemies. ³⁹Would not the slaughter of the Philistines have been even greater?"

8

The exhausted soldiers eat meat without first draining the blood

¹That evening, after the Israelites had struck down the Philistines, they were exhausted and hungry. They pounced on the spoil, and taking sheep, cattle and calves they slaughtered them on the ground and ate the meat without first draining the blood.

Saul orders the men to slaughter the animals properly

²Somebody told Saul, "The men are sinning against the Lord by eating meat with the blood still in it."

³Saul replied, "Roll a large stone over here at once. Now order the men to slaughter the animals properly on this stone before eating them. ⁴They must not sin against the Lord by eating meat without first draining out the blood."

Saul desires to pursue the Philistines by night

⁵Then Saul built an altar to the Lord. It was the first time he had done this.

⁶Afterward he said, "Let us go after the Philistines again this night and plunder them until dawn and leave not one of them alive."

Saul first enquires of the Lord

⁷But the high priest said, "Should we not first inquire of the Lord?"

⁸So Saul inquired of the Lord, saying, "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will you give them into Israel's hand?"

The Lord does not answer Saul's inquiry

⁹But the priest received no answer from the Lord. So Saul called the leaders of the army together and said, "Let us discover what sin has been committed today. That man must die, even if it is my son Jonathan." Not one of the men said a word.

Jonathan revealed as the guilty person

¹⁰Then Saul prayed unto the Lord saying, "Reveal to me by lot whether the guilt lies with me or my son, or with the men of Israel."

¹¹Lots were cast and Jonathan and Saul were chosen and the men cleared. Then Saul said, "Cast a lot between me and Jonathan." And Jonathan was chosen.

Jonathan admits what he did

¹²Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done." So Jonathan said, "I only tasted a little honey with the end of my staff. Must I now die?"

Saul vows to kill Jonathan

¹³Saul said, "May God deal with me severely if you do not die Jonathan."

*³⁰The ephod was the priestly garment with a breastplate of precious stones and a pouch containing the Urim and Thummim which was used to obtain revelations from the Lord.

SAMUEL 8

The men save Jonathan from death

¹⁴But the men said to Saul, "Shall Jonathan die? He who has brought about this great deliverance in Israel? Never! Not a hair of his head will fall to the ground, for he did this today with God's help."

¹⁵So the men saved Jonathan and he was not put to death.

The Philistines withdraw to their own land

¹⁶Saul did not pursue the Philistines and they withdrew to their own land.

Saul defeats all of Israel's enemies

¹⁷(After that victory, Saul fought valiantly against Israel's enemies on every side. Wherever he turned, he defeated them. ¹⁸All the days of Saul there was bitter war with the Philistines, and whenever Saul saw a mighty or brave man he took him into his army.)

Saul given a mission from the Lord to destroy the Amalekites

¹⁹The prophet Samuel came to Saul and commanded him saying, Jehovah Almighty says, "**I will punish the Amalekites for their attack against Israel when they came up from Egypt.** ²⁰Now go and totally destroy the city of the Amalekites and everything that belongs to them. Do not spare them, but put to death men, women, children, cattle, sheep, camels and donkeys."

Saul musters 210,000 men and destroys the city of Amalek

²¹So Saul mustered 210,000 men and marched to the city of Amalek. He set an ambush in the ravine and then attacked and destroyed the city.

In disobedience Saul spares the king and the best livestock

²²Saul put all the Amalekites in the city to the sword, but spared Agag the king of the Amalekites and the best of the livestock.

The Lord is grieved with Saul's disobedience

²³Then came the word of the Lord to Samuel, "**I am grieved that I have made Saul king, for he has again disobeyed my commandment.**"

Samuel pleads with the Lord for Saul

²⁴Samuel was troubled and pleaded with the Lord all that night. Early next morning he arose and went out to meet the king but was told, "Saul has gone to Carmel to set up a monument in his own honour."

Saul tries to excuse his disobedience

²⁵Samuel found Saul as he was returning from Carmel on his way to Gilgal. The king said to him, "Jehovah bless you. I have carried out the Lord's commandment."

²⁶But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears? What is this lowing of cattle I hear?"

²⁷Saul answered, "The soldiers spared the best of the sheep and cattle to sacrifice to Jehovah your God, but we totally destroyed the rest."

To obey is better than to sacrifice

²⁸Samuel said, "Cease this talk! Jehovah anointed you king over Israel, then sent you on a mission commanding you to completely destroy the wicked Amalekites. Why then did you disobey the Lord? Why did you keep the spoil?"

²⁹Saul answered, "But I did obey him, I completely destroyed the Amalekites* and brought back Agag their king. The soldiers took the best sheep and cattle to sacrifice to Jehovah your God at Gilgal."

³⁰Samuel replied, "Does the Lord delight in sacrifices as much as obedience to his word? ³¹To obey is better than to sacrifice. ³²"Rebellion is like the sin of sorcery, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry."

The Lord rejects Saul as king

³³"Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king."

Saul admits his sin and pleads for forgiveness

³⁴Then Saul admitted, "I have sinned. I did disobey the command of the Lord, for I feared the men and gave in to their wishes. ³⁵Now I beg you, please forgive my sin and return with me to Gilgal that I may worship the Lord."

No forgiveness for Saul – his kingdom given to a better man

³⁶Samuel said, "I will not return with you, for you have rejected the word of the Lord, and he has rejected you as king over Israel. ³⁷He who is the glory of Israel does not change his mind, for he is not a man."

³⁸Samuel turned to leave but Saul grabbed his robe and it tore. Samuel said to him, "The Lord has likewise torn the kingdom of Israel from you today, and given it to a better man."

Samuel consents to honour Saul before the elders

³⁹Saul replied, "I have sinned, but at least honour me before the elders of my people." So Samuel returned with Saul to Gilgal, and Saul worshipped the Lord.

Samuel executes Agag, king of the Amalekites

⁴⁰Then Samuel said, "Bring me Agag, king of the Amalekites."

⁴¹Agag stood before Samuel and spoke in a pleasing manner saying, "Surely the bitterness of death is past."

⁴²But Samuel said, "As your sword has made women childless, so will your mother be childless." And Samuel cut Agag to pieces at Gilgal.

Samuel mourns for Saul

⁴³Then Samuel returned to his home in Ramah, and Saul to his home in Gibeah.

⁴⁴Samuel did not go to see Saul again but mourned for him.

*²⁹ Only the chief city of the Amalekites was destroyed. The smaller settlements were not wiped out until the time of king Hezekiah (Samuel 18:1, Isaiah 27:3).

Samuel is sent to Bethlehem to anoint a son of Jesse king

¹The Lord said to Samuel the prophet, “How long will you mourn for Saul. I have rejected him as king over Israel. ²Now fill your horn with oil and be on your way, I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem, for I have chosen one of his sons to be king.” ^{F*}

Samuel fears Saul’s reaction

³Samuel said, “How can I go? Saul will kill me if he hears of it.”

⁴The Lord said, “Take a heifer^{F*} with you, and say that you have come to offer sacrifice to Jehovah. Invite Jesse to the sacrifice and I will tell you what to do.”

Samuel goes to Bethlehem as commanded

⁵Samuel did as the Lord commanded, he took a heifer with him and arrived at Bethlehem in Judah. The elders of the town came out to meet him.

⁶Samuel said to them, “Today I have come to offer sacrifice to the Lord. Purify yourselves and attend the sacrifice with me.” ⁷Then he invited Jesse and his sons to the sacrifice.

The Lord does not look upon the outward appearance of a man but upon the heart

⁸When Samuel saw Jesse’s eldest son Eliab, he thought, “Surely he is the one.” But the word of the Lord came to Samuel^{F*} saying, “Do not consider his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. ⁹Jehovah does not see as a man sees. Man looks upon the outward appearance, but the Lord looks upon the heart.”

Seven of Jesse’s sons rejected

¹⁰Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but the prophet said, “The Lord has not chosen any of these. Are they all the sons you have?”

¹¹“There is still David the youngest, but he is tending the sheep,” Jesse answered.

Samuel said, “Send for him.”

David the youngest anointed to become king and Spirit of Lord comes upon him

¹²So Jesse sent for David and had him brought in. David was rosy cheeked with clear eyes and handsome features.

¹³The Lord said to Samuel, “Anoint him. He is the one.”

¹⁴So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed David in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power.

King Saul tormented by an evil spirit

¹⁵Now the Spirit of the Lord had departed

*2 Jesse was of the tribe of Judah.

*4 A heifer is a young cow.

*8 It would appear in such instances as this that a prophet hears the voice of the Lord speak audibly within his mind.

from Saul, and Jehovah permitted an evil spirit to torment him.

Saul’s servants suggest a harpist be found

¹⁶Saul’s servants said to him, “Let us find one who can play the harp in your presence when the evil spirit comes upon you. Then you will feel better.”

¹⁷Saul replied, “Find someone who plays well and bring him to me.”

¹⁸One of his servants said, “David the son of Jesse of Bethlehem plays the harp. He is a brave man and a warrior. He speaks well and is fine-looking and the Lord is with him.”



The Jewish harp. David probably played a similar instrument.

David enters Saul’s service

¹⁹So the king sent for David and he entered his service. Saul liked David very much and made him one of his armour-bearers. ²⁰Whenever God permitted the evil spirit to come upon the king, David would play his harp and Saul would be soothed, and the evil spirit would depart.

The Philistines again invade Israel

²¹Now the Philistines again mustered their forces for war. Saul took his army and camped in the Valley of Elah and drew up a battle line to meet the Philistines. ²²The Philistines occupied one hill and the Israelites another, with a valley between them.

SAMUEL 10

The tall Philistine warrior Goliath

²³Then a warrior named Goliath came forth out of the Philistine ranks. He was six cubits and a hand span tall.^{F*}

²⁴He wore a bronze helmet and a bronze coat of mail armour weighing 5000 shekels.^{F*} ²⁵On his legs he wore bronze shin guards, and a bronze javelin was slung on his back. ²⁶The shaft of his spear was as thick as a weaver's beam^{F*} and its iron point weighed 600 shekels.^{F*} His shield bearer went before him.



A weaver's beam, the thickness of Goliath's spear.

Goliath's challenge

²⁷Goliath stood down in the valley and shouted to the men of Israel, "Choose a man and have him come down to me. If he is able to kill me, we will serve you, but if I kill him, you will serve us. ²⁸This day I challenge the ranks of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other."

²⁹On hearing these words Saul and all of his men were dismayed and fearful.

³⁰The Philistine came forth morning and evening and took his stand.

10

David takes food to his older brothers in camp

¹Now Jesse's three eldest sons had followed Saul to war but David went back and forth from Saul's service to tend his father's sheep.

²About this time Jesse said to David, "Take this roasted grain and these ten loaves of bread to your brothers out at the camp. Also give these ten cheeses to the commander of their unit, and bring back word as to how your brothers fare."

³So early the next morning David took the

*23 Approx 9 feet 6 inches tall (just under 3 metres). Goliath was a descendant of the tall race of Anakim (*long necks*) that had struck terror into the hearts of the Israelites when they spied out the promised land.

*24 About 57kg (125 lbs).

*26 A weaver's beam was about 75mm (3 inches) in diameter.

*26 About 7kg (15lbs).

food and set out. He reached the camp just as the army was again going out to form battle lines to face the Philistines.

David hears Goliath's challenge

⁴David left the food with the keeper of supplies and then ran out to the battle lines and greeted his brothers. ⁵As he was speaking with them, Goliath stepped out from his lines and shouted his usual defiance.

The king to reward the slayer of Goliath

⁶Now the Israelite soldiers had been saying, "The king will give great wealth to the man who kills Goliath. He will also give him his daughter in marriage, and exempt his father's family from taxes."

David offers to fight Goliath

⁷David said to the men standing near him, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

⁸Eliab, David's oldest brother heard him speaking this way and became angry with him and said, "Why have you come down here? Who is looking after the sheep? You only came down to watch the battle."

⁹David replied, "What have I done now? Can I not even speak?"

¹⁰However what David had said was reported to the king and Saul sent for him.

¹¹David said to the king, "Let no one fear this Philistine, your servant will go and fight him."

¹²But Saul replied, "You cannot defeat this Philistine. You are still a young man and he has been a warrior all his life."

¹³David said, "Your servant has killed both a lion and a bear while keeping his father's sheep. This uncircumcised Philistine will be as one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God. ¹⁴Jehovah who delivered me from the lion and the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."

Saul gives David his own armour and sword

¹⁵Saul said to David, "Go then, and may the Lord be with you." ¹⁶Then he dressed David in his own armour and placed a bronze helmet on his head. David also fastened on Saul's sword and tried walking around.

David is not used to armour and takes it off

¹⁷David said, "I cannot go in these. I am not used to them." So he took them off.

David goes out to fight Goliath with a sling

¹⁸David then chose five smooth stones^{F*} from the dry river bed and put them in his shepherd's bag. ¹⁹Then with his shepherd's staff in one hand and his sling in the other, he went down to meet the Philistine.

Goliath mocks David

²⁰Goliath moved closer to David to look him over. When he saw that he was only a young

*18 The stones used in slings ranged from the size of a billiard ball up to a tennis ball in diameter 50 to 125mm. They were effective up to 200 metres. The stone was normally directed at the head.

man and rosy cheeked and handsome, he despised him.

²¹He shouted to David, "Am I a dog that you come at me with a stick?" And he cursed David by his gods, then he said, "Come here! Let me give your flesh to the birds!"

David prophesies to Goliath

²²David shouted back to the Philistine, "*You come against me with sword, spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of Jehovah Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel whom you have defied.*"

²³"*This day Jehovah will hand you over to me and I will strike you down and take off your head.*"

²⁴"*This day Jehovah will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air, and the whole world will know there is a God in Israel.*"

David's sling stone knocks Goliath unconscious

²⁵Goliath moved closer to attack and David ran toward him. Then reaching into his bag David took out a stone and slung it. ²⁶The stone struck the Philistine on the forehead and embedded itself into his brow, and he fell face down on the ground.

David kills and beheads Goliath

²⁷David ran quickly to him and standing over him took the Philistine's sword from his scabbard and killed him and cut off his head.



A slinger in Israel.

The Philistines flee and are pursued by the Israelites

²⁸When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead they turned and ran. Then the army of Israel surged forward with a mighty roar and pursued the Philistines. ²⁹Their dead were strewn all along the road to Gath and Ekron.

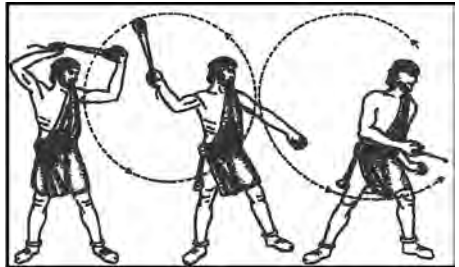
The Israelites plunder the Philistine camp

³⁰When the Israelites returned from pursuing the Philistines they plundered their camp.

³¹David kept the head and armour of Goliath.

Saul's son Jonathan and David become close friends

¹That day, Jonathan the son of Saul made a covenant of friendship with David for he loved him as himself. ²He gave David his robe and tunic and also his sword, bow and belt.



The method of slinging.

The women of Israel sing David's praises

³As the army was returning home, women came out from the towns of Israel to greet Saul with joyful songs and dancing and with tambourines and lutes.

⁴As they danced they sang:

"By Saul's hand, a thousand fell."

"By David's hand, ten thousand fell."

Saul is angry and becomes jealous of David

⁵Saul became angry when he heard this and thought, "What more can David get but the kingdom?"

⁶From that day on Saul kept a jealous eye on David and did not let him return any more to his father's house.

Saul hurls his spear at David

⁷The next day the evil spirit came forcefully upon Saul and he raved within his house with his spear in his hand. ⁸David was playing the harp when suddenly Saul hurled his spear at David, but he eluded it.

Saul plans to have David killed by the Philistines

⁹Saul feared David, for the Spirit of the Lord was with David but had departed from himself. So he gave him command of a 1000 men and sent him away on campaigns.

¹⁰But in everything David did, he had great success and Saul feared him all the more.

¹¹All Israel loved David, so Saul said to himself, "I shall not kill him, I will let the Philistines do it."

Saul promises his daughter Merab to David but then gives her to another man

¹²He said to David, "Here is my elder daughter Merab. I will give her to you in marriage if you serve me bravely and fight my battles."

¹³David said to the king, "Who am I and what is my family that I should become the king's

SAMUEL 12

son-in-law?"^{F*} But when the time came she was given in marriage to another man.

Saul's younger daughter Michal loves David

¹⁴Now it happened that Saul's younger daughter Michal loved David. When Saul heard about this he was pleased, and his servants said to David, "You have a second opportunity to become the king's son-in-law."

¹⁵David replied, "I am a poor man and insignificant."

Saul offers David his daughter Michal for a dowry of 100 Philistine foreskins

¹⁶Saul told his servants to say to David, "The king wants no other price for the bride than 100 Philistine foreskins." ¹⁷Saul's plan was to have David killed by the hands of the Philistines.

David brings back 200 Philistine foreskins

¹⁸However before the allotted time was up, David and his men went out and killed 200 Philistines and David brought their foreskins and presented them to the king.

David marries Michal

¹⁹So Saul gave David his daughter Michal in marriage, but he remained David's enemy the rest of his days.



Israel during reign of King Saul.

David the most successful commander in Saul's army

²⁰The Philistines continued to come out to battle and as often as they did, David met with more success than the rest of Saul's

*13 A modest reply when an honour is about to be conferred is customary in middle-eastern society. See also verse 15.

commanders, and his name became well known throughout Israel.

Saul finally orders David killed outright

²¹Finally Saul ordered his son Jonathan and all of his officials to kill David. But Jonathan warned David, so he went into hiding.

Jonathan intercedes for David

²²Jonathan then went to Saul his father and spoke well of David saying, "Let not the king do wrong to his servant, for he has not wronged you and has benefited you greatly. Why do you want to do an innocent man?"

Saul listens to Jonathan and promises on oath not to kill David

²³Saul listened to his son Jonathan and then made this oath, "David will not be put to death." So Jonathan brought David back to Saul and he served him as before.

Saul again hurls his spear at David

²⁴Once more war broke out and David went out and fought the Philistines. He struck them with such force that they fled before him.

²⁵Afterward the evil spirit came again upon Saul. He was sitting in his house with his spear in his hand and as usual David was playing the harp. ²⁶Once more Saul hurled his spear at David. But David again eluded it and the spear drove into the wall.

Michal assists David's escape by putting an image in his bed

²⁷That night Saul sent men to watch David's house, to kill him in the morning, but David's wife Michal warned him and let him down through a window and he escaped. ²⁸Then Michal took an image and laid it on David's bed. She covered it and put some goat's hair at the head.

²⁹The next morning, when the men entered the house to capture David, Michal said, "He is ill." So they departed.

³⁰But Saul sent the men back saying, "Bring him to me in his bed if necessary, that I may kill him." But when the men entered the bedroom, there was the image on the bed.

³¹Saul said to his daughter Michal, "Why did you deceive me like this?"

³²Michal answered, "He said to me, 'Help me get away or I will kill you.'"

12

David flees to the prophet Samuel

¹David fled to the prophet Samuel at Ramah and told him all that Saul had done. But word came to Saul, "David is at Ramah," so he sent men to capture him.

Saul and his men prophesy in Samuel's presence

²Saul's men met a company of prophets at Ramah, with Samuel as their leader and they were prophesying. Then the Spirit of God fell upon Saul's men and they began to prophesy also.

³So Saul sent more men, but they prophesied too. Finally he himself went to Ramah, and the Spirit of God came even upon him. He walked along prophesying until he came to where Samuel was. ⁴Then he laid aside his weapons and prophesied in Samuel's presence all that day and night.

David returns to his friend Jonathan

⁵David left Ramah and returned to Jonathan and asked, "How have I wronged your father that he is trying to kill me?"

⁶Jonathan replied, "He is not trying to kill you. My father does nothing without first confiding in me."

⁷David said, "Your father knows that I am your close friend. He has said to himself, 'Jonathan must not know of this, or he will be grieved.' But truly there is but a step between me and death."

Jonathan agrees to test his father

⁸Jonathan replied, "Whatever you want me to do I will do."

⁹David said, "Tomorrow is the New Moon festival and I would normally dine with the king. But I will hide out in the fields until the third evening of the festival. If your father asks about me, say to him, 'David asked my permission to go to Bethlehem for a sacrifice with his family.'"

¹⁰"If he says, 'Very well,' then I am safe, but if he becomes angry you can be sure that he is determined to harm me."

¹¹Jonathan said, "Come, let us walk in the fields." So they went out together.

¹²Then Jonathan said, "I will test my father at the festival. If he is favourably disposed toward you, I will send you word. If however he is inclined to harm you, I will see that you escape safely."

David to hide in the fields and await a sign from Jonathan with arrows

¹³"Now do this, during the second evening of the festival, hide by the mound of rocks in the field where you hid before, and wait there."

¹⁴"The next day I will come to you and shoot arrows to the side of it, as if I were shooting at a target. Then I will send a boy to find the arrows. If I call out to him, 'The arrows are on this near side of the rocks,' then come out of hiding, you are safe. ¹⁵But if I call to the boy, 'The arrows are on the far side of the rocks,' then you must leave here, for Jehovah has sent you away."

Saul's anger flares displaying his true feelings

¹⁶When the day of the New Moon festival came, the king sat down to eat in his customary place by the wall, opposite Jonathan. Abner the commander of his army sat next to him, but David's place was empty.

¹⁷Saul said nothing all that day thinking, "Perhaps he is not clean."

¹⁸The second day, David's place was again empty. Saul said to his son Jonathan, "Why has the son of Jesse not come to the meal

either yesterday or today?"

¹⁹Jonathan answered, "David asked my permission to go to Bethlehem to attend a sacrifice with his family."

²⁰At these words Saul's anger flared up at Jonathan and he said to him, "You son of a perverse and rebellious woman! Do I not know that you have sided with the son of Jesse? ²¹As long as he lives on this earth you will never be king! Now, bring him to me for he must die!"

²²Jonathan replied, "But why? What has he done?" At these words Saul brandished his spear at Jonathan, as if to kill him.

²³Jonathan rose from the table in fierce anger and did not eat all that day, for he was grieved at his father's shameful treatment of David.

Jonathan signals with an arrow to David hiding in the field

²⁴The next morning Jonathan went out to the mound of rocks for his meeting with David. He had a young boy with him and said to the boy, "Run and find the arrows I shoot." ²⁵As the boy ran he shot one arrow far ahead of him. Jonathan called out after him, "That arrow is on the far side of the rocks."

²⁶When the boy returned with the arrows Jonathan handed him his weapons and said, "Take them back to the town."

Jonathan and David weep together and say farewell

²⁷After the boy had gone, David emerged from his hiding place on the south side of the rocks and bowed down before Jonathan with his face to the ground. ²⁸Then they kissed each other and wept together.

²⁹Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the Lord."

13

David flees to the high priest at Nob and asks for food

¹David then fled to Nob,^{F*} to Ahimelech who was high priest at that time. Ahimelech feared when he saw David and asked, "Why is no one with you?"

²David answered, "The king has sent me on secret business and my men are waiting for me at a certain place.^{F*} Give me five loaves of bread or whatever you can find."

The high priest gives David and his men holy bread from the Tabernacle to eat

³The high priest answered David, "I do not have any ordinary bread on hand, but there is Holy Bread in the Tabernacle. You can have that, provided your men have kept themselves from women."

*1 Nob was a town not far away, near Jerusalem. The Tabernacle was located there at this time, although the Ark was still at Kirjath-Jearim.

*2 Jesus confirmed that David did have men with him (Matt-Mark-Luke 13:3).

SAMUEL 13

⁴David replied, "Even on ordinary missions, let alone one such as this we keep ourselves from women." So the priest gave him the holy bread from the Tabernacle.

David is given Goliath's sword

⁵David then asked, "Do you have a spear or a sword here? I did not bring my own as the king's business was urgent."

⁶The priest replied, "The sword of Goliath, the Philistine whom you slew is here."

David said, "There is none like it, give it to me."

⁷Now Doeg, Saul's head shepherd was at the Tabernacle that day and saw and heard all that took place.

David flees to the Philistines but is recognised

⁸That same day David fled Israel and went to live at Gath in the land of the Philistines.

⁹But servants of Achish the king of Gath recognised David. They took him before the king at the city gate saying, "Is this not David the commander of the Israelites, the one they sing about in their dances?"

David feigns madness to escape

¹⁰David feared when he heard these words so he pretended to be insane and acted like a madman. He scratched marks on the doors of the gate and let saliva run down his beard.

¹¹Achish said to his servants, "Look at the man. He is insane. Why bring him to me? Am I so short of madmen that you have to bring this fellow here to carry on like this?"

David returns to Israel and lives in a cave

¹²So David escaped from Gath and returned to Israel, and lived in the caves near Adullam.^{F*}



One of the caves near Adullam where David and his 400 men lived.

David takes his parents to the king of Moab for safety

¹³When David's father and mother and brothers heard where he was staying, they

went to him to stay with him. ¹⁴But David took his parents to the king of Moab and said, "Would you allow my father and mother to stay with you until I learn what God has in mind for me?"

¹⁵The king agreed so David left his parents in the king of Moab's care^{F*} and returned to the caves.

About 400 men gather to David

¹⁶In time, all who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered to David at his stronghold and he became their leader. About 400 men gathered to him.

Gad the prophet warns David to leave the caves

¹⁷Then the prophet Gad came to David and said to him, "**Do not stay any longer in the caves. Go into the forest land of Judah.**" So David left the caves and went to live in the forest of Hereth.

Saul accuses his officials of conspiring against him

¹⁸One day when Saul was seated under the tamarisk tree at Gibeah, with his spear in his hand and his officials around him, he said to his officials, "Men of Benjamin, will the son of Jesse give you fields and vineyards? Will he make you commanders?" ¹⁹Why then do you conspire against me and not tell me when my son makes a covenant with the son of Jesse. Are none of you concerned about me?"

Doeg tells Saul how the high priest helped David

²⁰Doeg the king's head shepherd who was standing with Saul's officials said, "I saw the son of Jesse come to the high priest Ahimelech at Nob. Ahimelech enquired of the Lord for him, and gave him food and the sword of Goliath."

Saul summons the priests

²¹So the king sent for Ahimelech the high priest and his extended family who were priests at Nob, and they all came to the king.

²²Saul said to them, "Why did you conspire against me by giving the son of Jesse bread and a sword, and inquiring of God for him so that he might rebel against me and lie in wait, as he is today?"

The high priest defends David

²³Ahimelech answered the king, "Who of all your servants is as loyal as David your son-in-law, captain of your bodyguard and honoured in your household?"

²⁴"That day was not the first time I inquired of God for him. Let not the king accuse your servant or any of his family of wrong doing, for we know nothing at all about this whole affair."

Saul orders his guards to kill all the priests

²⁵But Saul said, "You will surely die Ahimelech, you and your father's house."

²⁶Then he said to the guards at his side, "Kill these priests for they too have sided with David. They knew he was fleeing yet did not tell me."

*12 Adullam was a town of Judah about 20 kms west of Bethlehem.

*15 David's family was related to the Moabites through his great grandmother Ruth.

Saul's guards refuse

²⁷But the king's guards refused to strike down the priests of the Lord.

Doeg kills 85 priests and puts the entire town of Nob to the sword

²⁸The king then turned to his head shepherd Doeg and said, "You kill the priests!" So Doeg who was an Edomite^{F*} struck them down.

²⁹That day he killed 85 priests, and later, on Saul's orders he put to the sword the entire town of Nob, its men, women and children and its cattle, donkeys and sheep.

Abiathar a son of the high priest flees to David with the ephod

³⁰But Abiathar the priest, a son of Ahimelech escaped and fled to join David. He also took the ephod with him.

³¹When he told David what Saul had done, David said, "I knew that day when Doeg was there that he would tell Saul. I am responsible for the death of your father's family. ³²Stay with me and fear not, the man who is seeking your life is seeking mine also."

14

The Philistines attack Keilah

¹Now David was told, "The Philistines have attacked the town of Keilah and are plundering the grain."

David enquires of the Lord and is told to attack the Philistines

²So David inquired of the Lord^{F*} asking, "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?"

³The Lord answered, "**Attack the Philistines and save Keilah.**"

⁴But David's men said to him, "Here in Judah we are afraid, how much more if we go to Keilah against the Philistines."

⁵Once again David inquired of the Lord and he answered him, "**Go down to Keilah. I will give the Philistines into your hands.**"

David saves the town of Keilah

⁶So David and his men went to Keilah and defeated the Philistines. They inflicted heavy losses and carried off their livestock.

Saul goes to Keilah to besiege David

⁷When Saul was told that David was at Keilah he said, "God has handed him over to me. David has imprisoned himself by entering a town with gates and bars." So he called out his army and set out for Keilah to besiege David and his men.

⁸But David learned that Saul was coming and said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring the ephod."

⁹David inquired of the Lord saying, "O Jehovah, God of Israel, your servant has heard that Saul plans to come to Keilah and destroy

the town on account of me. Will Saul come down as your servant has heard?"

The Lord said, "**He will.**"

¹⁰Again David asked, "Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me and my men to Saul?"

The Lord answered, "**They will.**"

David and his 600 men flee to the Desert of Ziph

¹¹So David and his men, now about 600 in number fled from Keilah and kept moving from place to place among the hills of the Desert of Ziph. For days Saul searched but was unsuccessful.

Jonathan finds David

¹²However Saul's son Jonathan found David in the forest in the hills of Ziph and said to him, "Fear not, my father will not be able to harm you. You will yet be king over Israel and I will be second to you."

¹³Then Jonathan returned home but David remained in the hills of Ziph.

A Philistine raid saves David from Saul

¹⁴But the men of Ziph went to Saul at Gibeah and said, "David is hiding in the hills near us. Now O king come down and we will hand him over to you."

¹⁵Saul replied, "May Jehovah bless you for your concern for me. Now go and discover all the hiding places he uses so that when I come I will have definite information, for he is cunning. So the men returned to Ziph ahead of Saul.

¹⁶Saul and his men went to Ziph but David was warned in time and fled to the Desert of Maon. Saul heard of this and pursued David.

¹⁷Saul and his forces were closing in on David when a messenger came to Saul saying, "Come quickly! The Philistines are raiding the land." So Saul stopped his pursuit of David and went to fight the Philistines.

Saul again pursues David

¹⁸When Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines he was told, "David is in the Desert of En Gedi." So the king took his 3000 men and set out to look for David and his men near the Crags of the Wild Goats.

Saul enters the cave where David and his men are hiding to relieve himself

¹⁹While there, Saul went into a cave to relieve himself not knowing that David and his men were hiding far in the back of the cave.

David secretly cuts off part of Saul's robe

²⁰David's men said to him, "This day Jehovah has given your enemy into your hands. Do to him as you see fit." So David crept up unnoticed and cut off a corner of Saul's robe.

David feels guilty about what he has done

²¹But David felt guilty when he had done this and he returned to his men and said, "I should not have done such a thing to my master, for he is the Lord's anointed."

David prevents his men from killing Saul

²²With these words David held back his men

*28 The Edomites were descendants of Esau, the brother of Jacob, (later renamed Israel). Doeg was therefore not an Israelite.

*2 Through Abiathar the priest, using the ephod. See verse 8.

SAMUEL 15

and would not allow them to attack Saul, and the king left the cave to go his way.

David speaks to the king outside cave

²³David then arose, and went and stood outside the cave and called after him, “My lord the king!”

²⁴Saul turned around and David bowed down with his face to the ground. Then he said to Saul, “Why do you listen when men say, ‘David seeks to harm you?’” ²⁵This very day you have seen with your own eyes how Jehovah delivered you into my hands in the cave.”

²⁶“Some urged me to kill you, but I spared you. See my father, see this piece of your robe in my hand. I cut off the corner of your robe, but I did not kill you.”

²⁷“I have not wronged you, but you are hunting me down to take my life. May Jehovah judge between you and me, and avenge the wrongs you have done to me, but my hand will not touch you.”

Saul weeps aloud and admits David will be king

²⁸Saul replied, “Is that you David my son?” and he wept aloud. Then he said, “You are more righteous than I. May Jehovah reward you for the way you have treated me today. ²⁹Now I know that you will surely be king.”

David promises Saul that he will not wipe out his family

³⁰“Swear to me by Jehovah that you will not wipe out my family.” So David gave his oath to the king. Then Saul returned home.



Cave where David hid from Saul.

15

Samuel the prophet dies

¹Now the prophet Samuel died, and all Israel assembled and mourned for him and they buried him at his home in Ramah.

David and his men move to the desert of Maon

²After the death of Samuel, David and his men moved to the desert of Maon and lived there.

The wealthy Nabal and his intelligent and beautiful wife Abigail

³There was a certain man who owned land near by, a descendant of Caleb who was very wealthy. He had 1000 goats and 3000 sheep.

⁴His name was Nabal, and his wife was Abigail. She was intelligent and beautiful but Nabal was surly and mean.

Nabal rejects David's request for food

⁵One day David heard that Nabal was shearing his sheep at Carmel, so he sent ten of his young men to greet Nabal and say to him, “David says, ‘Long life and good health to you and your household. When your shepherds were among us we did not mistreat them and nothing of theirs went missing. Ask your servants and they will tell you.’” ⁶Therefore be favourable toward my young men, since they come at a festive time, and give your servants and your son David whatever you can find for them.”

⁷But Nabal answered, “Who is this David? Many servants are breaking away from their masters these days. Why should I take my bread and water and the meat I have slaughtered for my shearers and give it to men I do not know?”

David sets out to punish Nabal and his family

⁸When the young men reported to David what Nabal had said, David said to his men, “Strap on your swords! I watched over this fellow's property in the desert so that nothing of his went missing and now he repays me evil for good. ⁹May God deal with me severely if by morning I leave alive one male who belongs to him.”

¹⁰About 400 men went with David while 200 remained behind with the supplies.

Nabal's wife Abigail is warned of the approaching disaster

¹¹Now one of the shepherds had said to Nabal's wife Abigail, “David sent messengers from the desert to give our master his greetings, but he insulted them. ¹²Yet his men were good to us. Night and day they protected us while we were herding our sheep near by. ¹³You must do something, for disaster is hanging over our master and his whole household. He is so stubborn that no one can talk to him.”

Abigail goes to meet David and his men with food

¹⁴So Abigail hastened and took 200 loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five dressed sheep, five measures of roasted grain, 100 clusters of raisins and 200 cakes of pressed figs and loaded them on donkeys. ¹⁵Then she instructed her menservants, “Go ahead of me and I will follow behind you.” But she did not tell her husband Nabal.

¹⁶As Abigail and her menservants were passing through a mountain ravine, they saw David and his men coming down towards them.

Abigail appeases David's anger

¹⁷Abigail quickly got off her donkey and bowed to the ground before David and said to him, "My lord, let the blame rest on me alone. Please hear what your servant has to say. ¹⁸Pay no attention to that stupid man Nabal. He is just like his name.^{F*} But as for me your servant, I did not see the men you sent."

¹⁹"Now Jehovah has kept you my master, from bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hands."

²⁰"Let this food which your servant has brought to you, be given to your men. ²¹Please forgive my offence, and when Jehovah has appointed you king over Israel you will not have the burden of needless bloodshed on your conscience."

²²David said to Abigail, "Praise the Lord the God of Israel who has sent you today to meet me. May you be blessed for your good judgement and for keeping me from blood guilt, and from avenging myself with my own hands. ²³If you had not come to meet me, not one male belonging to Nabal would have been left alive by daybreak."

²⁴Then David accepted what she had brought him.

Nabal drunk when Abigail returns home

²⁵When Abigail returned home, Nabal was holding a feast like that of a king. He was in high spirits and very drunk so she told him nothing until daybreak.

Nabal's heart fails him when he is told what happened and he later dies

²⁶In the morning light, when the wine had gone from Nabal she told him all these things and his heart failed him. ²⁷He lay like a stone and about ten days later he died.

²⁸When David heard that Nabal was dead he said, "Praise Jehovah who has upheld my cause against Nabal for treating me with contempt. ²⁹He has kept me from doing wrong and has brought Nabal's wrongdoing down on his own head."

David marries Abigail

³⁰Then David sent messengers to Abigail asking her to become his wife. They went to her and said, "David has sent us to take you to him as his wife."

³¹Abigail bowed to the ground and said, "Your maidservant is ready to wash the feet of my master's servants."

³²Then she quickly got on a donkey and accompanied by her five maids, went with David's messengers and became his wife.

David's other wife

³³David had also married Ahinoam, for Saul had given his wife Michal to another man.

16

Saul again pursues David

¹One day the men of Ziph went again to Saul

and said, "David is hiding in the desert near Ziph."

²So Saul went with his 3000 men to search for David and made camp beside the road on the hill of Hakilah.

³David watched the camp and saw where Saul and Abner the commander of his army lay down to sleep.

David and Abishai sneak into Saul's camp by night

⁴Late that night, David and Abishai sneaked into the army camp, and there was Saul lying asleep with his spear stuck in the ground near his head. Abner and other soldiers were lying around him.

David again spares Saul's life

⁵Abishai said to David, "Today God has given your enemy into your hands. Let me pin him to the ground with one thrust of his spear."

⁶But David said to Abishai, "No, do not kill him. Who can lay a hand on the Lord's anointed and be guiltless? The Lord himself will strike him. Either his time will come naturally or he will go into battle and die."

Saul's spear and water jug taken

⁷"Take the spear and water jug that are near his head and let us go."

⁸No one awoke, for a deep sleep from the Lord had come upon them.

David taunts Saul's commander Abner

⁹Then David stood on a hilltop some distance away and shouted loudly in the hearing of all the camp, calling for Abner the commander. David cried out, "Are you going to answer me Abner?"

¹⁰Abner awoke and shouted back, "Who is it that calls me?"

¹¹David answered, "Who is like you in all Israel Abner? Why did you not guard your lord the king? Someone came to destroy him. ¹²You and your men deserve to die, for you did not guard the Lord's anointed. Where is the king's spear and the water jug that was near his head?"

Saul confesses his sin and blesses David

¹³Saul recognised David's voice and called out, "Is that you David my son?"

¹⁴David replied, "Yes it is my lord the king. Why is my lord pursuing his servant? What wrong have I done? The king of Israel has come out to look for a flea as one hunts a partridge in the mountains."

¹⁵Saul said, "I have sinned. Come back David my son, for you considered my life precious. I will not try to harm you again. Surely I have acted as a fool and have erred greatly."

¹⁶David answered, "The king's spear is here. Let one of your young men come over and get it."

¹⁷Then Saul said to David, "May you be blessed my son David. You will do great things and surely triumph."

¹⁸So David went on his way and Saul returned home.

*18 Nabal means 'stupid.'

David takes his men to live among the Philistines

¹⁹But David thought to himself, "One of these days I will be destroyed by the hand of Saul. The best thing I can do is escape to the land of the Philistines, then Saul will give up searching for me in Israel."

²⁰So David took his 600 men and left Israel and went again to Achish, king of Gath and stayed with him. ²¹Each of his men had his family with him and David had his two wives.

Achish the Philistine king gives Ziklag to David and his men

²²Then David said to Achish, "If I have found favour in your eyes, let a place be assigned to us in one of your country towns that we may live there. Why should your servant live here in the royal city with you?"

²³So Achish gave him Ziklag, and David and his men lived there. They stayed in Philistine territory for a year and four months.

David survives by raiding non-Israelite tribes

²⁴Now David and his men would go up and raid the Amalekites and other desert peoples that lived in the southern desert. ²⁵Whenever they raided an area they did not leave a man or woman alive, but took sheep, cattle, donkeys, camels and clothes.^{F*}

David deceives the Philistine king

²⁶When Achish would ask, "Where did you go raiding today?" David would say, "Against the towns of Israel."

²⁷Achish therefore trusted David and said to himself, "He has become so hated by his own people that he will be my servant forever."

17

David and his men ordered by Achish to accompany his army to fight against Israel

¹Now the Philistines again mustered their forces to attack Israel. Achish said to David, "You and your men will accompany my army."

²David replied, "Now you will see what your servant can do."

³Achish said, "If you do well, I will make you my bodyguard for life."

The Philistine army commanders reject David

⁴But as the Philistine army marched with their kings, the army commanders saw David and his men marching with Achish and asked, "Who are these Israelites?"

⁵Achish replied, "This is David who was a commander of Saul king of Israel. He has deserted and been with me for over a year. I have found no fault in him."

⁶But the Philistine commanders were angry with Achish and said, "Send him back. He may turn against us during the fighting. ⁷How better

could he regain his master's favour than by taking the heads of our own men. Is not this the David they sing about in their dances?"

David and his men return home to Ziklag

⁸So Achish called David and told what his men the commanders had said and then said to him, "Turn back and go in peace. Do nothing to displease the Philistine kings."

⁹David said, "But what have I done? Why can I not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?"

¹⁰Achish answered, "I know that you have been blameless in my sight, but the army commanders have said, 'He must not go with us into battle.'" So David and his men arose early next morning to return to Ziklag.

The Philistine army set up camp in Israel

¹¹The Philistine army then entered Israel and set up camp.

The Lord does not answer Saul's inquiry for guidance

¹²Saul in turn mustered the Israelites and set up camp at Gilboa. However when he saw the huge Philistine army he began to fear and inquired of the Lord for guidance.

¹³But no answer came to him, neither by dream nor by the high priest and Urim and Thummim, nor by a prophet.

Saul in desperation consults a woman medium

¹⁴Saul finally said to his officials, "Find me a woman who is a medium, that I may inquire of her."

¹⁵They replied, "There is a woman in Endor who is a medium."

¹⁶So Saul disguised himself by putting on other clothes and by night he and two officials went to the woman.

¹⁷Saul said to her, "Consult a spirit for me. Bring up the one I name."

The woman fears to act, but Saul promises her protection

¹⁸The woman replied, "Surely you know that Saul has forbidden all mediums in the land. Do not lay a snare to bring about my death."

¹⁹But Saul swore to her, "As surely as Jehovah lives you will not be punished for this."

Saul asks the woman to bring up the spirit of Samuel

²⁰The woman asked, "Whom shall I bring up for you?"

Saul said to her, "Bring up Samuel."

The medium discerns that Saul is the king

²¹When the woman saw Samuel she shrieked and cried out, "You have deceived me! You are Saul!"^{F*}

²²The king said to her, "Fear not. What did you see?" The woman said, "I saw a spirit like a god come up out of the earth."^{F*}

*25 The Amalekites were an idolatrous people, hostile to Israel. The Lord had originally commanded they be completely wiped out when Israel first settled in Canaan. See also Samuel 17:27.

*21 Samuel probably revealed this fact to the medium.

*22 The Israelites believed that Sheol, the spirit world of the dead was located under the earth.

²³Saul asked, "What does he look like?"

She replied, "He is an elderly man clothed in a robe."

²⁴Then Saul knew it was Samuel, and he bowed down with his face to the ground.

Samuel prophesies Israel's defeat and Saul's death

²⁵Samuel said to Saul,^{F*} "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?"

²⁶Saul said, "I am in great distress. The Philistines have come to war against me and God has turned away from me. He no longer answers me by prophet or by dream. So I have called on you to tell me what to do."

²⁷Samuel said, "***Why do you consult me? The Lord has done what he predicted through me. He has torn the kingdom out of your hands and given it to David, for you did not obey him in carrying out his fierce wrath against the Amalekites.***"

²⁸"***Jehovah will hand over both Israel and you to the Philistines. Tomorrow you and your sons will be with me.***"

Saul collapses on the floor in fear

²⁹Immediately Saul fell full length on the floor, filled with fear at Samuel's words. His strength was gone for he had eaten nothing all that day.

The woman prepares food for Saul

³⁰When the woman saw that Saul was greatly distressed she said to him, "Let me prepare food that you will have strength to go your way."

³¹Saul refused and said, "I will not eat." But his officials urged him and he got up from the floor and sat on the couch.

³²The woman had a fattened calf at the house which she slaughtered, and baked bread without yeast.

³³Then she set the food before Saul and his officials and they ate. Then they arose and left.



The village of Endor where Saul consulted the medium.

David and his men find Ziklag burned and their wives and children captured

¹When David and his men arrived back at Ziklag they discovered that Amalekites had raided the town and burned it, and taken their wives and children as captives.

David finds strength in the Lord and enquires of him

²David and his men wept aloud until they had no more strength to weep.

³Then the men became bitter and talked of stoning David because of the loss of their sons and daughters, but David found strength in the Lord his God.

⁴He said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring the ephod." Abiathar did so and David inquired of the Lord, and asked, "Shall I pursue this raiding party?"

The Lord answers, 'pursue and rescue' so they set out immediately

⁵The Lord answered, "Pursue them. You will overtake them and succeed in the rescue."

⁶So David and his 600 men set out immediately in pursuit.

200 of David's men too exhausted to cross a river

⁷When they came to the river Besor^{F*} 200 of his men remained behind, for they were too exhausted to cross. But David and 400 men crossed the river and continued in pursuit.

David and his men assist a young Egyptian

⁸They came across a young Egyptian in a field and gave him water to drink and figs and raisins to eat, for he had not eaten or drunk for three days.

⁹David asked him, "To whom do you belong and where do you come from?"

¹⁰He answered, "I am an Egyptian, the slave of an Amalekite. My master abandoned me when I became ill three days ago. We raided Judah and the Negev and burned Ziklag."

The Egyptian leads David to the raider's camp

¹¹David said to him, "Can you lead me to this raiding party?"

¹²The young man answered, "Swear to me before God that you will not kill me or hand me over to my master and I will lead you to them."

¹³David did so and the Egyptian led them to the raider's camp. They found them spread out widely, eating, drinking and revelling because of the great amount of spoil they had taken.

David defeats the raiders and recovers all that was taken and more

¹⁴David and his men fought the Amalekites from twilight until the evening of the next day. None escaped except 400 young men who fled on camels.

¹⁵David recovered everything the Amalekites

*25 Samuel would have spoken through the medium.

*7 Besor is a wadi, a river that dries up during the dry seasons of the year.

SAMUEL 19

had taken, including his two wives.

¹⁶He also kept all the flocks and herds as spoil and drove them before them as they returned.

David divides the spoil equally

¹⁷When they came to the 200 men waiting at the river who had been too exhausted to follow them, some worthless men among David's followers said, "Because they did not go with us we will not share with them the spoil we recovered. Each man may take his wife and children and go."

¹⁸But David replied, "No my brothers, we must not withhold what the Lord has given us. He has protected us and handed over to us the forces that came against us. All of us shall share alike."

¹⁹David made this a law of Israel from that day to this.

David sends some of the spoil to his friends in Judah

²⁰When they arrived back in Ziklag, David sent some of the spoil to his friends the elders of Judah who had befriended him in the places where he and his men had stayed.

19

The Philistines attack and the Israelites flee

¹Meanwhile the Philistines made their attack on Mount Gilboa, and the Israelites fled before them, and many fell slain.

Saul three sons die in battle

²The Philistines pressed hard after Saul and killed his three sons including Jonathan.

Saul is severely wounded by Philistine archers

³The fighting grew fierce around the king, then

the Philistine archers caught up with Saul and severely wounded him.

Saul decides to take his own life

⁴Saul said to his armour-bearer, "Run me through with your sword lest these uncircumcised Philistines make sport of me." But his armour-bearer would not do it. So Saul took his own sword and fell on it. ⁵When the armour-bearer saw that Saul was dead he too fell on his sword and died with him.^{F*} ⁶So Saul and his three sons and his armour-bearer died together that day.

The Philistines occupy the surrounding towns

⁷When the Israelites in the towns round about saw that the Israelite army had fled, and heard that Saul and his sons were dead they abandoned their towns and fled, and the Philistines occupied them.

Saul and his son's bodies hung on a city wall

⁸The next day when the Philistines came to strip the dead, they found Saul and cut off his head and sent messengers throughout the land of the Philistines to proclaim the news.

⁹They put Saul's armour in the temple of the goddess Astoreth, and hung his body and those of his sons on the wall of the city of Bethshan.^{F*}

The men of Jabesh bury Saul and his sons

¹⁰However when the people of Jabesh in Gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul and his sons, their valiant men crossed the Jordan and journeyed through the night to Bethshan. ¹¹They took down the bodies of Saul and his sons from the wall and carried them back across the Jordan to Jabesh and burned them there. Then they fasted seven days.

*5 If an account told to David in 1 Kings 1:4-6 is true, Saul did not die immediately but was put to death later by an Amalekite.

*9 A nearby city still controlled by Canaanites.

1 KINGS

This most interesting book covers the reigns of King David and his son King Solomon – a period of about 80 years. Under these two great kings, Israel reached her greatest height of fame, power and wealth – a golden age in which Solomon’s famous Temple was erected on the heights of Jerusalem, and distinguished visitors from all over the world came to hear King Solomon’s wisdom.

Solomon was a highly capable ruler by any standard, but his weakness for women led him into the serious sin of idolatry in later life, which eventually resulted in a divided kingdom. This tragedy highlights the great importance of studying and obeying the law of God, for despite Solomon’s great wisdom he offended God by condoning idolatry to please his foreign wives. The Law of Moses plainly forbade Israelites to marry foreigners for this very reason.

Had Solomon been more familiar with the Law (a king was supposed to write himself a copy and read it often, see Deuteronomy 3:16-18) and fully obeyed it, he no doubt would have been an even more illustrious king, and would have reaped the Lord’s conditional promise of a long reign (1 Kings 17:11), instead he appears to have died about age 60. Also his son Rehoboam and following descendants may have reigned for generations over an undivided Israel instead of suffering the ignominy of having all the tribes except Judah wrenched from their hands.

King David, the father of Solomon, also sinned seriously when he committed adultery with Bathsheba and then murdered her husband. David suffered intensely for this transgression, nevertheless, because of his basic underlying faithfulness to the Lord, plus his sincere repentance, he is still held up as the standard by which all kings of Israel are judged.

NOTE Additional details from the book of 1 Chronicles in the traditional Bible, written by Ezra, which contains a duplicate overview of this period have been incorporated in this Condensed Bible version of 1 Kings.

AUTHOR

According to Jewish tradition the compiler of this book was the prophet Jeremiah who lived 300 years after the death of Solomon. He appears to have drawn on many sources. Among those known to have been available in his day and covering this period are, *The Annals of King David*, *The Records of Gad the Seer*, *The Records of Samuel the Seer*, *The Records of Nathan the Prophet*, *The Acts of Solomon* and *The Annals of the Kings of Judah*.

“I will give you a wise and discerning mind, beyond all who have gone before you, or shall ever come after you.” 1 Kings 17:9.

(Lord speaking to Solomon, the newly crowned king.)

CONTENTS

Chapter

A young man brings David news of death of Saul..... 1	Abner calls for peace 1
The Amalekite claims he personally killed Saul 1	Both armies return home 1
David mourns for Saul and Jonathan 1	David grows stronger 2
The young news bearer put to death 1	Six sons born to David in Hebron 2
David composes ‘Lament of the Bow’ 1	Abner lies with Saul’s concubine 2
David and his men return to Israel 1	King Ish-Bosheth rebukes Abner 2
David anointed king of Judah 1	Abner vows to hand kingdom over to David 2
David blesses Jabeshites for burying Saul 1	Abner sends messengers to David 2
Saul’s son Ish-Bosheth made king of Israel 1	David asks for return of his wife Michal 2
Armies of Ish-Bosheth and David battle 1	Michal returned to David 2
David’s men defeat Ish-Bosheth’s men 1	Abner prepares to hand over the kingdom 2
Abner kills younger brother of Joab 1	David puts on a feast for Abner and his men 2
Joab and his men pursue Abner and his men 1	Joab angry at David making peace with Abner 2

1 KINGS 19

Joab murders Abner	2	David marries Bathsheba and a son is born	7
David curses Joab's family	2	The Lord is angered with David	7
David mourns Abner	2	Nathan the prophet sent to David	7
David admits his weakness regarding Joab	2	Parable of rich man and poor man's lamb	7
King Ish-Bosheth stabbed to death	2	Lord charges David with adultery and murder	7
The assassins take Ish-Bosheth's head to David	2	Lord curses David and his family	7
David has assassins of Ish-Bosheth killed	2	David's son to Bathsheba will die	7
David made king of all Israel	2	David pleads with God and lies on floor	7
David marches to Jebusite-held Jerusalem	3	David fasts seven days for his son	7
Jebusites taunt David	3	David's son dies	7
David challenges his men	3	David arises and worships the Lord	7
Joab successful at capturing the fortress	3	David explains his actions to his servants	7
David settles in Jerusalem	3	Solomon born to Bathsheba	7
Fortress area renamed The City of David	3	David captures royal city of the Ammonites	7
David becomes more and more powerful	3	David enslaves Ammonites	7
Hiram king of Tyre builds David a cedar palace	3	The Lord's curse on David's family begins	8
David marries more wives and concubines	3	Amnon lusts after his step-sister Tamar	8
David defeats the Philistines	3	Amnon advised by his shrewd cousin Jonadab	8
David defeats Philistines a second time	3	Amnon pretends to be ill and sends for Tamar	8
David prepares to bring the Ark to Jerusalem	3	Tamar prepares food in Amnon's house	8
The Ark transported by cart	3	Amnon has Tamar bring food to his room	8
Uzzah steadies the Ark and is struck dead	3	Amnon rapes Tamar	8
David afraid to take Ark into City of David	3	Amnon seized with intense loathing for Tamar	8
Obed-Edom's household blessed by the Ark	3	Tamar sent away weeping	8
David prepares a tent for the Ark	3	Tamar stays with her brother Absalom	8
All Israel invited to Jerusalem	3	Absalom plots to kill his brother Amnon	8
David assigns the Levites to carry the Ark	3	Amnon killed by Absalom's men	8
David dances before the Lord	3	David hears that all his sons have been killed	8
David's wife Michal disapproves of his dancing	3	David's sons come to him wailing loudly	8
Ark set up in tent in City of David	3	Absalom flees to his mother's family in Geshur	8
David blesses all present and gives each a gift	3	David longs for Absalom	8
Michal accuses David of undignified dancing	3	Joab uses guile to get Absalom home	8
David rebukes his wife Michal	3	David allows Absalom to return	8
Levites carry out their appointed roles	3	Absalom not to see king's face	8
Daily sacrifices at the Tabernacle in Gibeon	3	Absalom wants Joab to reconcile him to David	8
David subdues Philistines, Moab and Edom	4	Joab refuses to come to Absalom	8
Much gold and silver obtained	4	Absalom sets Joab's barley field on fire	8
The principle men of Israel	4	Joab reconciles David and Absalom	8
A three year famine in the land	4	Absalom a very handsome man	9
David inquires of Lord as to reason	4	Absalom conspires to be king of Israel	9
Saul had broken Joshua's covenant to Gibeonites	4	David's adviser Ahithophel joins the conspiracy	9
Saul's descendants killed as atonement	4	Absalom made king at Hebron	9
Saul's concubine protects her son's bodies	4	Messenger informs David	9
Jonathan's son Mephibosheth	4	David and all his supporters flee Jerusalem	9
David shows kindness to Mephibosheth	4	David watches his supporters march past him	9
Saul's servant Ziba to serve Mephibosheth	4	Ittai the Philistine and his men loyal to David	9
David desires to build a Temple to the Lord	4	Whole countryside weeps aloud	9
Nathan the prophet sent to David	4	David sends the priests and Ark back	9
David's name to be made great	4	David meets his friend Hushai	9
David's son to build the Temple	4	Hushai to remain and counter Ahithophel's advice	9
David prays in thanksgiving before Lord	4	Ziba provides donkeys and provisions	9
Ammonite king humiliates David's officials	5	Ziba accuses Mephibosheth of rebellion	9
Ammonites prepare for battle	5	Ziba rewarded for his support	9
Ammonites hire Syrians to assist them	5	Shimei a relative of Saul curses David	9
Both Ammonites and Syrians flee Israel	5	David prevents Abishai from killing Shimei	9
Syrians gather reinforcements	5	The king and his supporters reach the Jordan	9
Syrians again flee and are defeated	5	Hushai offers to advise Absalom	10
Syrians become subject to David	5	Absalom lies with David's concubines	10
Gold and bronze captured from Syrians	5	Ahithophel's counsel like that of a prophet	10
King of Hamath sends gifts to David	5	Ahithophel wants to destroy David that night	10
David commits adultery with Bathsheba	6	Hushai counters Ahithophel's counsel	10
Bathsheba conceives	6	Hushai sends warning message to David	10
David sends for Uriah husband of Bathsheba	6	Welcome provisions from David's friends	10
David tries to get Uriah to go home to his wife	6	Ahithophel returns home and takes own life	10
Uriah refuses to go to his house	6	Absalom and army set out to destroy David	10
David gets Uriah drunk but he will still not go home	6	David organises his men	10
David arranges for Uriah to be killed in battle	6	David's men march out to battle	10
Uriah shot dead by Ammonite archers	6	David gives orders that Absalom be unharmed	10

Absalom's army defeated by David's men	11	Exploits of David's mighty 'Three'	15
Absalom found wedged in large oak tree	11	The 'Three' risk their lives getting David water	15
Joab rebukes the finder for not killing Absalom	11	David pours the water out to Lord	15
Absalom killed by Joab and his men	11	Abishai's and Benaiah's exploits	15
Absalom's body thrown into a pit	11	Last psalm of David	15
Runners sent to David with the news	11	David becomes old and cannot keep warm	16
David grieves greatly for Absalom	11	Beautiful Abishag to warm and attend David	16
David's men shamed by the kings grief	11	David's son Adonijah conspires to be king	16
Joab threatens David with desertion	11	Adonijah proclaims himself king	16
David takes his seat to encourage his men	11	Nathan has Bathsheba inform David	16
The Israelites talk of having David back as king	12	Nathan confirms all Bathsheba has said	16
David suggests that Judah invite him back first	12	David orders that Solomon be anointed king	16
David replaces Joab with Amasa	12	Solomon rides to anointing on David's mule	16
People of Judah invite David back	12	Zadok anoints Solomon king of Israel	16
Men of Judah meet David at the Jordan	12	All Jerusalem rejoice and follow Solomon	16
Shimei begs for forgiveness	12	Adonijah and his guests hear the news and flee	16
Abishai again wants to put Shimei to death	12	Adonijah clings hold of horns of altar	16
David spares Shimei	12	Adonijah's life spared by Solomon	16
Mephibosheth tells his version of events	12	Lord's conditional covenant with David	16
David divides Saul's property between them	12	Always a descendant on throne of Israel	16
Barzillai invited to live with the king	12	David's last instructions to Solomon	16
Barzillai says he is too old	12	Joab to be put to death	16
Barzillai blessed by David	12	Kindness to be shown to the sons of Barzillai	16
The men of Israel jealous of Judah	12	Shimei to be put to death	16
Sheba a Benjamite incites rebellion	12	King David dies	16
The men of Israel desert David	12	Adonijah asks Solomon for Abishag as his wife	17
David's defiled concubines kept in confinement	13	Solomon angry at Adonijah's request	17
Amasa ordered to gather all the men of Judah	13	Adonijah put to death	17
Amasa delayed three days	13	Abiathar removed from his priesthood office	17
David sends Abishai to pursue Sheba	13	Joab takes refuge at altar	17
Joab and his warriors go with Abishai	13	Joab put to death at altar	17
Amasa and the men of Judah meet them	13	Shimei ordered never to leave Jerusalem	17
Joab murders Amasa	13	Shimei disobeys and is put to death	17
Men of Judah follow Joab	13	Solomon offers 1000 sacrifices at Gibeon	18
Sheba besieged in town of Abel	13	Lord appears to Solomon in a dream	18
A wise woman of Abel pleads with Joab	13	Solomon asked to choose whatever he wants	18
Joab asks that Sheba be handed over	13	Solomon asks wisdom in governing his people	18
Sheba beheaded by the citizens of Abel	13	Lord blesses Solomon with wisdom	18
Lord is angry with Israel	14	Solomon also blessed with riches and honour	18
Lord incites Satan to tempt David	14	Solomon blessed above all other kings	18
David tempted with pride	14	The two harlots and disputed baby	18
David orders Joab to count the fighting men	14	Solomon's wise judgement	18
Joab tries to dissuade David	14	All Israel hold Solomon in awe	18
1,300,000 fighting men counted	14	Solomon wiser than any other man	18
David is conscience-stricken	14	Solomon's proverbs, music and knowledge	18
David asks the Lord to forgive him	14	Solomon's vast kingdom	18
David to choose from three penalties	14	Solomon marries daughter of Pharaoh	18
David chooses three days plague	14	Solomon's daily household provisions	18
Plague begins and 70,000 die in Israel	14	King Hiram provides timber for Temple	19
Jerusalem spared the plague	14	Hiram also sends Huram a man of great skill	19
David sees the destroying angel	14	Wheat and olive oil from Israel as payment	19
David prays that his family suffer instead	14	Canaanites used as labourers for Temple	19
Gad the prophet sent to David	14	Solomon begins to build the Temple	19
David commanded to build an altar	14	Dimensions of the Temple	19
David goes out and buys the threshing floor	14	Stone blocks of the Temple	19
David builds an altar and offers sacrifice	14	Steps and entrance to the Temple	19
Lord answers with fire from heaven	14	Side rooms on three floors of the Temple	19
Temple to be built on that site	14	Floors of the Temple	19
David's son Solomon to build the Temple	14	Roof of the Temple	19
David summons leaders of Israel	14	The inner Sanctuary	19
Leaders of Israel provide materials for Temple	14	The two cherubim	19
The people rejoice and offer sacrifices	14	Doors and veil of the Sanctuary	19
David gives Solomon plans for the Temple	14	Inner and outer courtyards of the Temple	19
David instructs Solomon regarding the Temple	14	A conditional covenant from the Lord	19
How priests and Levites are to serve	14	If Solomon faithful Jehovah will dwell in Temple	19
David almost killed in battle due to exhaustion	15	Two bronze pillars either side of entrance	19
David no longer to go into battle	15	The bronze altar for sacrifices	19
Exploits of David's thirty mighty warriors	15	Large bronze basin on backs of twelve oxen	19

1 KINGS 1

Wheeled bronze basins	19	Solomon rebuilds and settles the towns	21
Smaller bronze objects also made	19	King Solomon builds ships	21
Gold altar, table, lamps, bowls etc	19	Treasures brought back from distant lands	21
Treasures of David placed in the Temple	19	Solomon's trade in chariots and horses	21
All Israel attend dedication of Temple	20	Solomon's magnificent throne	21
The Ark carried up to Temple	20	Solomon's annual gold revenues	21
Tabernacle brought from Gibeon	20	Silver considered of little value	21
Thousands of sheep and cattle sacrificed	20	Visitors with gifts from all over the world	21
Ark put beneath wings of Cherubim	20	Queen of Sheba visits Solomon to test him	21
Music and singing by priests and Levites	20	Queen of Sheba is overwhelmed	21
Temple filled with the glory of the Lord	20	King Solomon's many wives and concubines	22
Solomon kneels and prays before the people	20	Solomon's foreign wives lead him into idolatry	22
Solomon prays for his successors to the throne	20	Solomon builds shrines to foreign gods	22
A temple cannot contain the Lord	20	Lord angry with Solomon's idolatry	22
May Lord answer Israel's prayers	20	Kingdom to be torn away from Solomon	22
May justice always be done	20	David's descendants still to rule over Judah	22
May Israel's sins be forgiven when they repent	20	Lord raises two enemies against Solomon	22
May afflictions be removed from the land	20	Hadad of Edom and Rezon of Syria	22
May the foreigner's prayer also be answered	20	Solomon's capable official Jeroboam	22
Hear prayers of Israel in war and in exile	20	Ahijah the prophet sent to Jeroboam	22
King Solomon ends his prayer	20	Jeroboam chosen to be king over ten tribes	22
Fire from heaven consumes the burnt offering	20	Solomon's son still to rule over Judah	22
The people see Lord's glory on Temple	20	Jeroboam promised a long dynasty if faithful	22
Glory too bright for priests to enter	20	Solomon tries to kill Jeroboam	22
Soloboam blesses the people	20	Jeroboam flees to Egypt	22
14 days of peace offerings and celebration	20	Solomon dies	22
142,000 animals sacrificed	20	Solomon's son Rehoboam becomes king	22
Solomon builds his palace	21	Leaders of Israel visit Rehoboam	22
Solomon's other buildings	21	Ask for their heavy yoke to be lightened	22
Pharaoh's daughter's palace	21	Rehoboam's older officials advise kind words	22
All buildings constructed from high-grade stone	21	Rehoboam's younger men advise harshness	22
Lord again appears to Solomon in a dream	21	Rehoboam answers leaders harshly	22
David's covenant confirmed to Solomon	21	Rehoboam rejected as king by other tribes	22
Solomon warned against idolatry	21	Jeroboam made king over Israel except Judah	22
Temple to become a ruin if other gods served	21	Rehoboam prepares to fight for the kingdom	22
Solomon rebuilds many towns	21	Lord forbids Rehoboam to fight	22
Solomon gives Hiram twenty towns in Galilee	21	Rehoboam obeys the word of the Lord	22
King Hiram displeased with the towns	21		

Bold The Lord or an angel speaking.

Bold italics A prophet speaking under inspiration.

1

A young man brings David news of the death of Saul

¹On the third day after the death of Saul, a young man arrived in Ziklag with his clothes torn and dust on his head. He came to David and bowed to pay him honour.

²David asked, "Where have you come from?"

³He answered, "I escaped from the Israelite camp. The men fled from the battle and many of them died. Saul and his son Jonathan are dead."

The Amalekite claims that he personally killed Saul

⁴"How do you know they are dead?" David said.

⁵The young man replied, "I was on Mount Gilboa when I saw Saul leaning on his spear with the chariots and riders closing in on him. He saw me and called out, 'Who are you?' I answered, 'An Amalekite.'"

⁶Then he said to me, "Kill me! I am in the throes of death but still alive.' So I killed him for I could see that he would not survive, and I took the crown from his head and the band from his arm and brought them here to my lord."

David mourns for Saul and Jonathan

⁷Then David and all the men with him tore their clothes and wept and fasted until evening for Saul and Jonathan, and for the army of Israel.

The news bearer put to death

⁸Then David said to the young Amalekite who brought him the report, "Why were you not afraid to kill the Lord's anointed? Your blood be upon your own head for your own mouth has testified against you."

⁹David called one of his men and said, "Strike him down!" So he struck him down and he died.

David composes the 'Lament of the Bow' in honour of Saul and Jonathan

¹⁰Then David composed this Lament of the Bow over Saul and his son Jonathan, and ordered that it be taught to the men of Judah.

¹¹"Your glory O Israel, lies slain on your heights. O how the mighty have fallen."

¹²"Tell it not in Gath or Ashkelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice."

¹³"O mountain of Gilboa, may you have neither dew nor rain, for there the shield of Saul was defiled."

¹⁴"There Jonathan lay slain on your heights."

¹⁵"Saul and Jonathan, in life you were gracious and loved, swifter than eagles, stronger than lions.

¹⁶"And in death you were not parted."

¹⁷"O how the mighty have fallen."

¹⁸"I grieve for you Jonathan my brother, your love for me was surpassing."

¹⁹"More surpassing than the love of women."

David and his men return to Israel

²⁰In time David inquired of the Lord, "Shall I return to Judah?"

²¹The Lord answered, "**Go up to Hebron.**" So David took his two wives, and the men with him took their families and they settled in Hebron.

David anointed king of Judah at Hebron

²²Then the men of Judah came to Hebron and anointed David king over the tribe of Judah.^{F*} David was thirty years old when he became king.

David blesses the men of Jabesh for burying Saul

²³David then sent messengers to the men of Jabesh of Gilead saying, "Jehovah bless you for showing kindness to Saul your king by burying him. For this I too will show you kindness. ²⁴Now then, be strong and brave, for Saul is dead and the tribe of Judah have anointed me king over them."

Saul's remaining son Ish-Bosheth made king of all Israel except Judah

²⁵Meanwhile Abner the commander of Saul's army had taken Ish-Bosheth, the remaining son of Saul, to Gilead and made him king over all Israel.

²⁶Ish-Bosheth was forty years old and reigned two years. The house of Judah however, followed David.

Chosen young men of Ish-Bosheth and David fight hand to hand

²⁷In time, Abner assembled an army of Benjamites^{F*} and crossed the Jordan and marched to Gibeon.

²⁸Joab, the commander of David's men also marched his men out and they met at the pool of Gibeon. The two armies sat down, one on each side of the pool.

²⁹Abner said to Joab, "Let us choose young men to arise and fight this battle^{F*} hand to hand, in front of us."

³⁰So they counted off twelve young men of Benjamin for King Ish-Bosheth, and twelve for King David, and they closed in to fight. ³¹Each young man grabbed his opponent by the head and thrust his dagger into his opponent's side, and they all fell down together.

David's men defeat Ish-Bosheth's men

³²At this a fierce battle erupted as both companies of men arose and fought. But David's men defeated Abner and the men of Ish-Bosheth and they fled before him.

Abner kills the younger brother of Joab

³³All three sons of Zeruah^{F*} were among David's men that day; Joab, Abishai and Asahel.

³⁴Now Asahel, the younger brother of Joab was as fleet-footed as a gazelle and he chased Abner the commander of Ish-Bosheth's forces.

³⁵Abner looked behind him as he ran and called out, "Is that you Asahel?"

He answered, "It is!"

³⁶Abner cried out, "Turn aside and take on one of the young men." But Asahel kept on chasing him.

³⁷Again Abner called out to Asahel, "Cease chasing me! I do not want to kill you! How could I face your brother Joab?"

³⁸But Asahel refused to stop his pursuit, so Abner thrust the rear end of his spear backwards into Asahel's stomach as he ran, and it came out through his back. Asahel fell and died on the spot.

Joab and his men pursue Abner and his men

³⁹Joab and Abishai pursued Abner and his men and caught up with him just as the sun was setting. Abner rallied the men of Benjamin around him and took his stand on the top of a hill.

Abner calls for peace

⁴⁰He called out to Joab, "Must the sword devour forever? When will you order your men to stop pursuing their brothers?"

⁴¹Joab answered, "Had you not spoken my men would have pursued their brothers until morning."

Both armies return home

⁴²So Joab sounded the trumpet and David's men no longer pursued their fellow Israelites and that same night Abner and his men returned to Gilead.

⁴³When Joab numbered David's men, nineteen were found missing besides Asahel, but they had killed 360 of the Benjamites who were with Abner.

⁴⁴They buried Asahel in his father's tomb at Bethlehem, then marched all night and arrived back in Hebron at daybreak.

*²⁹ The army of Abner represented king Ish-Bosheth, and the army of Joab, king David. Both kings were contending for power over all Israel.

*³³ Zeruah was David's step-sister. Her three sons were notable warriors.

*²² David was of the tribe of Judah.

*²⁷ Saul's family were Benjamites.

2

David grows stronger

¹The war between the house of Saul and the house of David lasted a long time, but David grew stronger while the house of Saul grew weaker.

David marries again and six sons are born in Hebron

²During this time David took more wives, and six sons were born to him in Hebron. They were Amnon (his first born) the son of his wife Ahinoam. Daniel the son of Abigail. Absalom the son of Maacah, daughter of the king of Geshur of Syria. Adonijah the son of Haggith. Shephatiah the son of Abital, and Ithream the son of Eglah.



The city of Hebron where David first reigned as king.

To strengthen his position Abner lies with a concubine who had belonged to Saul

³Now Abner had been strengthening his own position in the house of Saul and Ish-Bosheth heard that he had lain with a concubine who had belonged to his father Saul.

King Ish-Bosheth rebukes Abner

⁴Ish-Bosheth rebuked Abner saying, “Why did you lie with my father’s concubine?”

Abner becomes angry and vows to hand the kingdom over to David

⁵Abner became angry at these words and answered, “I have become a dog in the eyes of Judah by remaining loyal to the house of your father, and now you charge me with an offence involving this woman! ⁶May God deal with me severely if I do not do what Jehovah promised David on oath, and transfer the kingdom to him.”

⁷Ish-Bosheth did not reply for he feared Abner.

Abner sends messengers to David

⁸Abner then sent messengers to David

saying, “Make an agreement with me and I will bring all Israel over to you.”

David requires the return of his wife Michal before negotiating with Abner

⁹David replied, “I will make an agreement but before I speak with you face to face I require the return of my wife Michal, daughter of Saul.”

¹⁰Then David sent messengers to King Ish-Bosheth saying, “Return my wife Michal.”

Ish-Bosheth returns Michal

¹¹So Ish-Bosheth had Michal taken away from her husband Paltiel and sent to David. Paltiel followed her weeping, but Abner commanded him saying “Go back home!” So he went back.

Abner prepares to hand the kingdom over to David

¹²Then Abner spoke with the Benjamites and the other elders of Israel saying, “For some time now you have wanted David to be your king, so do it, for Jehovah approved him when he said, **‘By my servant David I will rescue my people Israel from the hand of the Philistines.’** ¹³Then Abner travelled to Hebron to meet with David.

David puts on a feast for Abner and his men

¹⁴David prepared a feast for Abner and his men and after the feast Abner said to David, “I will go at once and assemble all Israel for my lord the king that you may rule over them.” Then he left in peace.

Joab is angry at David making peace with Abner

¹⁵However soon afterward, Joab the commander of David’s men returned from a raid. When Joab was told that Abner had come to the king and had been sent away in peace he went to the king and said, “Why did you let Abner escape? He came only to deceive you and as a spy!”

Joab calls Abner back and murders him

¹⁶Joab then secretly sent messengers after Abner asking him to return.

¹⁷When Abner returned, Joab took him aside into the gateway as though to speak with him privately, and there, to avenge the blood of his younger brother Asahel, Joab stabbed him in the stomach and he died.

David curses Joab’s family

¹⁸When David heard of it he cursed Joab and said, “I and my kingdom are innocent of the blood of Abner. His blood be upon the head of Joab. ¹⁹May Joab’s house never be without one who has a running sore, or leprosy, or leans on a crutch, or falls by the sword, or lacks food.”

David mourns Abner

²⁰David then summoned Joab and the men he had command over and said to them, “Tear your clothes and put on sackcloth and walk in mourning in front of Abner at his funeral.”

²¹David himself walked behind the bier and wept aloud at Abner’s tomb and sang a lament.

He also fasted that day until sunset.

²²All the people took note of what David did and were pleased. Indeed everything the king did pleased them.

²³So all Israel knew that David had no part in the murder of Abner.

**David admits his weakness
in face of ruthlessness of Joab**

²⁴Then the king said to his officials, "A great man has fallen in Israel this day. Today I am weak, even though I am the anointed king. These sons of Zeruiah^{F*} are too ruthless for me. May the Lord repay Joab according to his deeds."

²⁵When Ish-Bosheth the son of Saul heard that Abner had been killed in Hebron, he lost courage and all Israel became alarmed.

King Ish-Bosheth is stabbed to death

²⁶Now Ish-Bosheth had two men who were commanders of raiding bands, Baanah and his brother Recab. ²⁷They went to the house of Ish-Bosheth in the heat of the day while he was taking his noonday rest and entered the inner part of his house pretending to get some wheat. There they stabbed the king in the stomach as he was lying on his bed in his bedroom.

The assassins take the king's head to David

²⁸They then cut off his head and taking it with them travelled all night to Hebron.

²⁹The next day they took the head of Ish-Bosheth to David and said to the king, "Here is the head of Ish-Bosheth, the son of Saul your enemy who tried to take your life. This day Jehovah has avenged you against Saul and his offspring."

David has the assassins of Ish-Bosheth killed

³⁰David answered Recab and Baanah saying, "When a man told me, 'Saul is dead,' and thought he was bringing me good news, I put him to death in Ziklag. That was the reward I gave him for his news. ³¹How much more now, when wicked men have killed an innocent man in his own house and on his own bed. I shall require his blood from your hands, and rid the earth of you!"

³²David commanded his men and they killed them both, and cut off their hands and feet and hung the bodies by the pool in Hebron.

³³They took the head of Ish-Bosheth and buried it in Abner's tomb at Hebron.

David made king of all Israel

³⁴Then all the elders of Israel came to David at Hebron and anointed him king over all Israel.

3

**David marches to take the Jebusites-controlled
fortress area of Jerusalem**

¹Soon afterward, David and his men marched to Jerusalem, to attack the Jebusites who still controlled the fortified part of the city.

The Jebusites taunt David

²When they arrived at the fortress the Jebusites taunted David, calling down to him saying, "You will not get in here! Even the blind and the lame will ward you off!"

David challenges his men

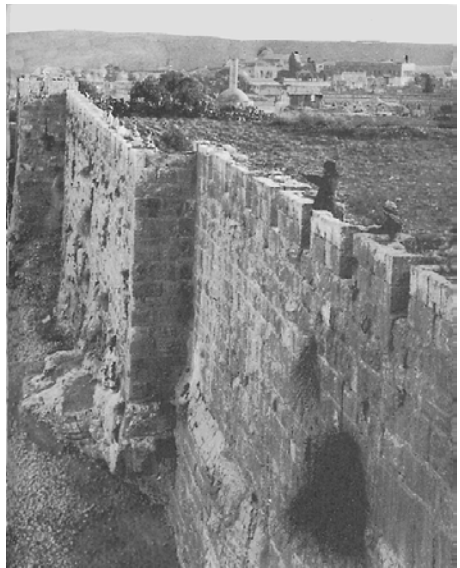
³David said to his men, "The only way to conquer these 'blind and the lame' Jebusites, is to go up through the water tunnel. Whoever leads a successful assault will become army commander of all Israel."

Joab successful at capturing the fortress

⁴Joab was successful, therefore David made him commander-in-chief, and he captured the fortress of Zion.

**David moves into the fortress area of Jerusalem
and renames it the City of David**

⁵The king then moved his residence to the fortress of Zion and it was called the City of David. He built up the city within the fortress while Joab restored the rest of Jerusalem.



Walls protecting the fortress area of Jerusalem.

David becomes more and more powerful

⁶As time went on David became more and more powerful because the Lord God Almighty was with him, for the sake of his people Israel.

Hiram king of Tyre builds David a cedar palace

⁷In time, Hiram king of Tyre^{F*} sent cedar logs and carpenters and stonemasons, who built a palace for David in Jerusalem.

**David marries more wives and concubines and
eleven more sons born to him in Jerusalem**

⁸David also took more wives and concubines in Jerusalem and more sons and daughters

*24 Joab and Abishai.

*7 A Phoenician coastal city in southern Lebanon.

1 KINGS 3

were born to him. ⁹These are the names of the eleven sons born to David in Jerusalem, Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, Ibhaz, Elishua, Nephthi, Japhia, Elishama, Eliada and Eliphelet.

David defeats the Philistines

¹⁰When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over all Israel, they went up in full force to search for him and camped in the Valley of the Giants.

¹¹David inquired of the Lord^{F*} and asked, "Shall I go and attack the Philistines?"

The Lord answered him, "**Go! I will hand the Philistines over to you.**"

¹²So David attacked and defeated them and the Philistines fled, abandoning their idols. David and his men carried them off.

David defeats the Philistines a second time

¹³But again the Philistines came up and camped in the Valley of the Giants.

¹⁴David once more inquired of the Lord and the Lord answered, "**Circle around behind them and attack them in front of the Balsam trees. When you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the trees, move quickly, for that will mean Jehovah has gone out in front of you to strike the Philistine army.**"

¹⁵David did as the Lord said, and again the Philistines were defeated.

David prepares to bring the Ark to Jerusalem

¹⁶After the battle David conferred with his commanders and then said to the army of Israel, "If it seems good to you, and if it is the will of the Lord our God, let us send for the rest of our brethren throughout Israel and bring the Ark of our God to Jerusalem, for we did not inquire of it during the reign of Saul."

¹⁷The army agreed to this so David summoned all Israel, and choosing 30,000 men set out for Kiriath Jearim, to the house of Abinadab on the hill.

The Ark is transported by cart

¹⁸They set the Ark of God on a new cart and started on the road to Jerusalem. Two of the sons of Abinadab, Uzzah and Ahio were guiding the cart. Ahio was walking in front of it.

The people celebrate with music

¹⁹David and the other Israelites followed, celebrating with songs and with harps, lyres, tambourines, castanets and cymbals.

Uzzah steadies the Ark and is struck dead

²⁰When they neared the threshing floor of Nacon, one of the oxen stumbled and Uzzah reached out his hand to steady the Ark of God.

²¹But the anger of the Lord burned against Uzzah for putting his hand to the Ark. He struck him down and he died there beside the Ark.^{F*}

David afraid to take the Ark into the City of David

²²David was angry, and afraid of the Lord that day and said, "How can the Ark of Jehovah come into my care?" ²³He was not willing to take the Ark into the City of David, instead he took it aside to the house of Obed-Edom in Jerusalem, who was a Levite.

Obed-Edom's household blessed by the Ark

²⁴The Ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obed-Edom for three months and the Lord blessed him and his entire household.

²⁵The king was told, "The Lord has blessed the household of Obed-Edom because of the Ark of God."

David prepares a tent for the Ark

²⁶So David prepared a tent for the Ark in the City of David.

All Israel invited to Jerusalem

²⁷Then he invited all Israel to Jerusalem, to witness the bringing up of the Ark of the Lord to the place he had prepared for it.

David assigns the Levites to carry the Ark the way the Lord commanded

²⁸David said, "No one but the Levites are to carry the Ark, for the Lord has chosen them to minister before him forever."

²⁹He summoned Zadok and Abiathar the high priests^{F*} and said to them, "You and your fellow Levites are to purify yourselves and bring up the Ark to the place I have prepared. ³⁰It was because the Levites did not bring it up first time that Jehovah broke out in anger against us. We did not inquire of him as to the proper way."

³¹David also had the priests appoint Levite singers to sing joyful songs accompanied by musical instruments, lyres, harps and cymbals.

³²When the priests and Levites had purified themselves they began to carry the Ark of God with the poles on their shoulders, as Moses had instructed. ³³When they had taken six steps David sacrificed a bull and a fattened calf.

David dances before the Lord

³⁴So David and the entire house of Israel brought up the Ark from the house of Obed-Edom into the City of David, with shouts and rejoicing, dancing, and the sound of trumpets.

³⁵David wore a short sleeveless tunic of linen and danced before the Lord with all his might.

David's wife Michal disapproves of his dancing

³⁶As the Ark was entering the city, David's wife Michal, the daughter of Saul was watching from a window. When she saw David leaping and dancing she despised him.

The Ark set up inside a tent in the City of David

³⁷They set the Ark inside the tent that David had prepared and David offered sacrifices to the Lord.

*11 Probably through the high priest and the Urim and Thummim.

*21 The main reason for the Lord's anger was that the Ark was being transported in a way contrary to commandment, see verse 30.

*29 Normally there was only one high priest, but Zadok served at the Tabernacle in Gibeon, and Abiathar before the Ark in Jerusalem (1 Kings 3:42-43).

David blesses all present and gives each a gift

³⁸Afterward David blessed the people and gave all who were present a loaf of bread, a cake of dates and a cake of raisins. Then all the people returned home.

Michal accuses David of undignified dancing

³⁹As David returned to the palace to bless his family, Michal came out to meet him and said, "How the king of Israel distinguished himself today, exposing his body in the sight of the slave girls, as a common man might do!"

David rebukes his wife Michal

⁴⁰David said to Michal, "It was before Jehovah that I danced, who chose me rather than your father. For his sake I am prepared to be even more undignified in your eyes, but in the eyes of these slave girls you spoke of I will be held in honour."

⁴¹Michal bore no child to David to the day of her death.

The Levite priests carry out their appointed roles

⁴²David appointed Abiathar the high priest, and Asaph and his fellow Levite priests to prophesy, and minister before the Ark in Jerusalem, according to each day's requirements.

Daily sacrifice still offered to the Lord at the Tabernacle in Gibeon

⁴³Zadok the high priest and his fellow priests were appointed to the Tabernacle, which was at that time located at the high place in Gibeon.

⁴⁴There they presented burnt offerings to the Lord on the altar, morning and evening in accordance with the Law.

4

David subdues the Philistines, Moab and Edom

¹In the course of time David defeated the Philistines and subdued them.

²He also defeated the Moabites. He made them lie down on the ground and measured them off with a length of cord. Every two lengths were put to death, but those of the third length were allowed to live. So the Moabites became subject to David and brought tribute.

³David struck down 18,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt, and put garrisons throughout Edom. So the Edomites also became subject to him.

Much gold and silver obtained

⁴The Lord gave David victory wherever he turned and he obtained much gold and silver from the nations he subdued; the Edomites, the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Philistines and the Amalekites. All nations feared David.

The principle men of Israel

⁵David reigned over all Israel, doing what was just for his people. Joab was commander over the army and Benaiah commander over the king's bodyguards. ⁶Jehoshaphat was keeper of the records, Seraiah was secretary, Zadok

and Abiathar were the high priests and David's sons were the royal ministers.

David inquires of the Lord as to the reason for a three year famine

⁷Then there came a famine in the land. It lasted for three years, so David inquired of the Lord as to the reason.

Saul had broken Joshua's covenant to the Gibeonites

⁸The Lord replied, "It is on account of Saul. He put the Gibeonites to death."

⁹Now the Gibeonites were not a part of Israel but were survivors of the Canaanites. Joshua had sworn by the Lord to spare them, but King Saul in his zeal had tried to annihilate them.

Seven of Saul's descendants put to death by the Gibeonites as atonement

¹⁰David summoned the Gibeonite elders and said to them, "How can I make amends so that you will bless the Lord's people?"

¹¹The Gibeonites answered, "We have no claim to silver or gold from Saul's family, but as for this man who tried to destroy us, let seven of his male descendants be given to us to be put to death and exposed before Jehovah at Gibeah, the home town of Saul."

¹²The king said, "I will give them to you." So he took the two sons of Saul's concubine Rizpah, and the five sons of Saul's daughter Merab and handed them over to the Gibeonites, who put them to death and exposed them on a hill at Gibeah, during the first days of the barley harvest.

Saul's concubine protects the bodies of her sons

¹³Saul's concubine Rizpah took sackcloth and spread it out for herself on a rock, and from the beginning of the harvest until the rains poured down on the bodies, she did not let the birds touch them by day, or the wild animals by night.

¹⁴When David was told what Saul's concubine had done, he had the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan brought from Jabesh in Gilead, and also took the bones of those who had been killed and exposed, and buried them all in the tomb of Saul's father Kish.

¹⁵After that God again answered prayers on behalf of the land.

David shows kindness to Jonathan's son Mephibosheth

¹⁶David then asked, "Is there anyone left of the family of Saul to whom I can show kindness, for Jonathan's sake?"

¹⁷Ziba, a former servant of Saul's household answered the king and said, "There is Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, who is lame in both feet."

¹⁸(Now Mephibosheth was about five years old when news came about the death of Jonathan his father. His nurse picked him up and fled, but they both fell together and he became crippled in both feet.)

¹⁹So David ordered Mephibosheth brought to

1 KINGS 5

him and he came and bowed down to the king to pay him honour.

²⁰“David said to him, Fear not, I intend to show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table.”

²¹Mephibosheth bowed again and said, “What is your servant that you should care about a dead dog such as I?”

Saul’s servant Ziba to serve Mephibosheth

²²Then the king summoned Ziba and said to him, “I have given Mephibosheth everything that belonged to your master Saul. You and your sons and your servants are to work the land for Mephibosheth and bring in the crops that he may be well provided for.”

²³Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. He said to the king, “Your servant will do as my lord the king commands.”

²⁴So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem and ate at the king’s table like one of the king’s sons. He also had a young son named Mica.

David desires to build a Temple to the Lord

²⁵When the Lord had given David rest from all his enemies, David said to Nathan the prophet, “Here I am living in a palace of cedar while the Ark of God stays in a tent.”

Nathan the prophet tells David to go ahead

²⁶Nathan replied to the king, “Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for Jehovah is with you.”

The word of the Lord comes to David through Nathan the prophet

²⁷But that night the word of the Lord came to Nathan saying, “**Say to my servant David, Jehovah says, ‘I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt. To this day I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling.**”²⁸Yet I have never said to any of the rulers who shepherded my people, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?”

²⁹“I took you from pasturing sheep to be ruler over my people Israel and have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies.”

David’s name to be made great

³⁰“Now I will make your name great, like the names of the great men of the earth. And I will provide a place for my people so they can have a homeland of their own and no longer be oppressed by wicked men.”

One of David’s sons to build a Temple

³¹“When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up one of your sons to succeed you. ³²He is the one who will build a house for my name and I will establish his throne forever.”

³³“I will be his father and when he does wrong I will punish him with the rod of men, but my love for him will never be taken

away as it was from Saul. ³⁴Your house and throne will endure forever.”

David prays in thanksgiving before the Lord

³⁵When Nathan reported these words to the king, David went into the tent of the Ark and prayed before the Lord saying, “Who am I, O Lord Jehovah and what is my family that you have brought me this far? ³⁶And as if this were not enough you have also spoken of the future of the house of your servant. Is this your usual way of dealing with men O Lord?”

³⁷“How great you are O Lord! There is none like you, and no God but you as we have heard with our own ears. ³⁸And who is like your people Israel, the only nation on earth that you redeemed, to make a name for yourself. And in so doing you performed awesome wonders by driving out nations and their gods from before your people.”

³⁹“And now O Lord God, keep forever the covenant you have made concerning your servant and his house. Do as you have promised that your name will be great forever.”

5

A new king of the Ammonites humiliates David’s officials

¹In time, Nahash the king of the Ammonites died and his son Hanun became king.

²David thought, “I will show kindness to Hanun just as his father showed kindness to me.” So David sent officials to express his sympathy to Hanun concerning his father.

³But some Ammonite officials said to the new king, “Is David really honouring your father by sending these men to express sympathy? Has he not rather sent them to spy out the city to overthrow it?”

⁴So Hanun seized David’s officials and shaved off each man’s beard and cut off their garments in the middle exposing their buttocks, and sent them home.

⁵When David was told, he sent messengers to meet his officials who were greatly humiliated and to say to them, “Stay at Jericho until your beards have grown and then return home.”

The Ammonites prepare for battle and hire Syrians to assist them

⁶When the Ammonites realised they had offended David, they hired 33,000 Syrians to assist them and prepared for battle.

⁷On hearing this, David sent Joab out with his entire army.

⁸The Ammonites drew up in battle formation outside the gate to their city, while the Syrians waited out in the open country.

The Ammonites and Syrians flee before Israel

⁹When Joab saw the battle lines both in front and behind him, he selected the best troops to go with him against the Syrians, and placed the rest of the men under the command of Abishai his brother to go against the Ammonites.

¹⁰Joab said, “If the Syrians are too strong for me, come to my rescue, and if the Ammonites are too strong for you I will come to your rescue. ¹¹Be strong and let us fight bravely for our families and the cities of our God. The Lord will do what is good in his sight.”

¹²Then Joab advanced against the Syrians and they fled before him. When the Ammonites saw the Syrians flee, they too fled before Abishai and retreated inside their city. ¹³So Joab and Abishai returned to Jerusalem.

The Syrians gather reinforcements

¹⁴However the Syrians gathered reinforcements and regrouped and the king of Syria brought even more men from the northern kingdoms beyond the River^{F*} and they all mustered at Helam on the border of Gilead.

The Syrians again flee and are defeated

¹⁵When David was told of this, he gathered all the men of Israel, and crossed the Jordan and marched to Helam. ¹⁶The Syrians formed their battle lines and began to fight, but again they fled before Israel and David killed 700 charioteers and 40,000 horsemen.

The Syrians become subject to David

¹⁷When the Syrians saw that they had been defeated by Israel they made peace and became subject to David.

Gold shields and bronze captured from the Syrians

¹⁸David captured gold shields from the Syrians and brought them to Jerusalem with great quantities of bronze.

The king of Hamath sends silver, gold and bronze to David in gratitude

¹⁹When the king of Hamath in the far north heard that David had defeated the Syrians, he sent his son to David with articles of silver, gold and bronze to congratulate him on his victory, for Hamath had been at war with the Syrians.

²⁰David dedicated these articles to the Lord as he had done with all the other silver and gold.

6

David commits adultery with Bathsheba

¹In the spring, at the time when kings go out to war, David sent Joab out with the army to lay waste the land of the Ammonites and to besiege their royal city, but David remained behind in Jerusalem.

²Late one afternoon, David arose from his couch and walked around on the roof of his palace. As he did so he saw a beautiful woman bathing herself. David inquired about her and was told, “She is Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite.”

³David sent for her and she came to him and he lay with her. Then she returned home.

Bathsheba conceives

⁴However she conceived and sent word to David saying, “I am with child.”

David sends for Uriah, Bathsheba’s husband who is away with the army

⁵So David sent a message to Joab saying, “Send me Uriah the Hittite.”^{F*}

David tries to get Uriah to go home to his wife but he refuses

⁶When Uriah was sent to him, David asked him how the soldiers were and how the campaign was going. ⁷Then David said to Uriah, “Go down to your house and wash your feet.” So Uriah left the palace and a gift of food from the king’s table was sent after him. ⁸But Uriah did not go home but slept at the entrance to the palace with the king’s servants.

⁹When David was told this, he said to Uriah, “Why did you not go down to your house after your journey?”

¹⁰Uriah answered saying, “The Ark and my commander Joab and the king’s men are camped out in the open fields. How can I go to my house to eat and drink and lie with my wife? I will not do such a thing.”

¹¹David said to him, “Remain one more day and tomorrow I will send you back.”

David gets Uriah drunk but he still does not go to his house

¹²Later that day at David’s invitation, Uriah ate and drank with him and David made him drunk. But that evening Uriah again slept on his mat among the servants and would not go to his house.

David arranges for Uriah to be killed in battle

¹³In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. In it he wrote:

“Put Uriah in the front where the fighting is fiercest, then withdraw from him so that he will be struck down and die.”

Uriah shot dead by Ammonite archers

¹⁴Therefore, while Joab was besieging the Ammonite city he placed Uriah at a place where he knew the strongest defenders were.

¹⁵When the archers of the city shot at them, some of the Israelites fell, including Uriah the Hittite.

¹⁶Joab sent David a full account of the battle and instructed the messenger, “When you have finished giving the king this account, his anger may rise and he may ask you, ‘Why did you get so close to the city to fight? Did you not know they would shoot arrows from the wall?’”

¹⁷Then say to him, ‘Also your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead.’”

¹⁸The messenger returned and told David everything Joab had sent him to say. David said to the messenger, “Say to Joab, ‘Let not this matter trouble you, the sword devours one

*²⁵ Uriah was a soldier in David’s army who were away fighting the Ammonites. Uriah was not an Israelite but a Hittite, a race that originated from the far north in present day Turkey and noted as warriors.

*¹⁴ The Euphrates.

1 KINGS 7

as well as another. Press the attack against the city and destroy it.”

7

David marries Bathsheba and a son is born

¹When Bathsheba heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him.

²After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house and she became his wife and bore him a son.

The Lord angered with David sends Nathan the prophet to him

³But what David had done angered the Lord, and he sent the prophet Nathan to him.

The parable of the rich man and the poor man's lamb

⁴Nathan said to David, *“There were two men in a certain town, one very rich and the other poor. ⁵The rich man had great flocks of sheep but the poor man had none, except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it and it grew up with him and his children. ⁶It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him.”*

⁷“Now there came a traveller to the rich man, but the rich man would not take one of his own sheep to prepare a meal for the traveller, instead he stole the little lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared that for the guest who had come to him.”

⁸When David heard this, his anger arose and he said, “That man deserves to die!”

The Lord charges David with adultery and murder

⁹Nathan said to David, *“You are that man.”*

¹⁰*“Jehovah, God of Israel says, ‘I anointed you king over Israel and delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave his house to you and put his wives into your arms.’”*

¹¹*“I gave you all the house of Israel, and if that had not been enough I would have given you even more. ¹²So why did you despise the word of Jehovah by doing what is evil in his eyes? You put Uriah to death by the Ammonites and took his wife to be your own.”*

The Lord curses David and his family

¹³*“Now therefore the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah to be your own.”*

¹⁴*“Out of your own household I will bring distress upon you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will lie with them in broad daylight. ¹⁵You did this in secret, but I will do it in broad daylight before all Israel.”*

David's son to Bathsheba to die

¹⁶David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.”

¹⁷Nathan replied, *“Jehovah has been provoked to anger by your sin. However you will not die, but as you have utterly scorned Jehovah, the son born to you will die.”*

¹⁸Nathan returned to his house and the Lord struck the child that Bathsheba had borne to David and he became ill.

David pleads with God and lies on the floor and fasts seven days for his son

¹⁹David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and spent the nights lying on the floor.

²⁰His servants tried to get him up off the floor but he refused and would not eat any food.

David's son dies

²¹On the seventh day the child died. The king's servants were afraid to tell him for they thought, “How can we tell him the child is dead? He may do something desperate.”

²²David noticed his servants whispering among themselves and asked, “Is he dead?”

“He is dead,” they replied.

David arises and worships the Lord and eats again

²³David arose from the floor, washed, applied scented oil, changed his clothes and went to the tent of the Lord and worshipped. Then he returned to his palace and ate.

David explains his actions to his servants

²⁴His servants said to him, “Why are you acting this way? While the child was alive you fasted and wept, but now that he is dead you arise and eat.”

²⁵David answered, “While the child was still alive I fasted and wept, for I thought, ‘Perhaps the Lord may be gracious to me and let my son live. But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again?’”

²⁶“I will go to him, but he cannot return to me.”

Solomon is born to Bathsheba

²⁷David comforted his wife Bathsheba. (In time she gave birth to another son and they named him Solomon.)

David captures the royal city of the Ammonites

²⁸Meanwhile Joab sent messengers to David saying, “I have captured the water supply of the royal city of the Ammonites. Now muster the rest of the men and come and capture it, otherwise I will take the city myself and receive the glory.”

²⁹So David mustered the rest of the men and they marched out and attacked and captured the city.

³⁰David took a great quantity of spoil and kept the gold crown of the king for himself. It weighed a talent of gold^{F*} and was set with precious stones.

David enslaves the Ammonites

³¹David also enslaved the people, consigning them to labour with saws, iron picks and axes,

*30 An enormously heavy crown, a talent weighed about 34kg (75lbs).

and to make bricks. He did this to all the Ammonite towns round about.

8

The Lord's curse on David's family begins – David's son Amnon lusts after his sister Tamar

¹Time passed, and then Amnon the firstborn son of David lusted after Tamar, the beautiful sister of his half-brother Absalom. ²Amnon became frustrated to the point of ill health because of his lust for Tamar, for she was a virgin and it seemed impossible for him to do anything to her.

Amnon is advised by his shrewd cousin Jonadab

³Now Amnon had a cousin named Jonadab, who was very shrewd. When he saw how haggard Amnon was every morning, he said to him, "Lie on your bed and pretend to be ill and then ask your father to send your sister Tamar to prepare food for you in your house. Have her feed it to you with her hand."

Amnon pretends to be ill and sends for Tamar to prepare food for him

⁴So Amnon lay down and then sent word to his father as his cousin had suggested. ⁵David sent a message to Tamar saying, "Go to the house of your brother Amnon and prepare food for him."

Tamar prepares food in Amnon's house

⁶So Tamar went to the house of Amnon and baked cakes. When she served the cakes, Amnon refused to arise from his bed and eat, instead he said, "Send everyone out of the house." So everyone left.

Amnon has Tamar bring the food to his room

⁷Then he called to Tamar, "Bring the food here into my room that I may eat it from your hand." So Tamar took the cakes to her brother in his bedroom.

Amnon rapes Tamar

⁸But Amnon immediately seized her and said, "Lie with me my sister."

⁹But she said to him. "No my brother! Such a thing is not done in Israel! Do not do this vile thing. How could I ever rid myself of shame? ¹⁰And what of you? You would be seen as a wicked man in Israel. Speak to the king, he will not keep me from marrying you." ^{F*}

¹¹But Amnon would not listen to her and forcibly raped her.

Amnon is seized with intense loathing for Tamar and orders her out of his house

¹²Immediately afterward, Amnon was seized with an intense loathing for Tamar, even greater than the lust he had felt for her. He said to her, "Up, and get out!"

¹³She said to him, "No! Sending me away would be a greater wrong than what you have already done to me."

¹⁴But Amnon called his personal servant and said to him, "Get this woman out of my house and bolt the door after her." So his servant put her out and bolted the door.

Tamar goes away weeping and stays thereafter with her brother Absalom

¹⁵Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the long ornamented robe that the virgin daughters of the king wear, and went away weeping aloud with her hand on her head.

¹⁶Thereafter she stayed in her brother Absalom's house, a grief-stricken and forlorn woman.

Absalom plots to kill his brother Amnon

¹⁷When David heard what had happened, he was greatly distressed, for Amnon was his firstborn son. ^{F*}

¹⁸Absalom never spoke to his brother Amnon again. He hated him for disgracing his sister Tamar.

¹⁹Two years later, at sheep shearing time Absalom invited his father David and his officials, and all his brothers to a feast.

²⁰But the king replied, "No my son, all of us would be a burden to you." Absalom urged him, but he still refused to go.

²¹Then Absalom said, "At least allow Amnon to come."

²²David said, "Why would you want him to come?" Nevertheless at his urging he sent Amnon and the rest of his sons.

²³Then Absalom said to his men, "When Amnon is drunk with wine, and I command you, 'Strike him down. Kill him. Do not fear.'"

Amnon is killed by Absalom's men

²⁴So when Absalom gave the order his men killed Amnon. Then all the king's sons mounted their mules and fled.

David hears that all his sons have been killed

²⁵The report came to David, "Absalom has struck down all the king's sons!" The king tore his clothes and lay on the floor and all his officials stood by with their clothes torn.

²⁶But David's nephew Jonadab said, "My lord should not think that Absalom has killed all your sons. Only Amnon will be dead, for that has been Absalom's intention ever since the day Amnon forced his sister Tamar."

David's sons come to him wailing loudly

²⁷Soon afterward the king's sons came in, wailing loudly, and the king and all his officials wept bitterly.

Absalom flees to his mother's family in Geshur

²⁸Absalom fled to his grandfather, the king of Geshur ^{F*} and stayed there three years. David mourned for his sons Amnon and Absalom.

David longs for Absalom

²⁹After David was consoled concerning Amnon's death, he longed for Absalom.

*¹⁷The firstborn son was natural heir to the throne.

*²⁸Absalom's mother was the daughter of the king of Geshur, a Syrian kingdom north of Israel.

*¹⁰Tamar's statement may have been a ploy, the Law of Moses clearly prohibited such a marriage (Exodus 13:21).



A mule, the offspring of a donkey and a horse. These animals were ridden by king's sons from the time of David.

Joab uses guile and a wise woman to persuade the king to allow Absalom to return

³⁰Joab knew of the king's desire, so he sent for a wise woman and said to her, "Pretend you are in mourning, then we will go in to the king and you are to speak these words I will tell you."

³¹When the woman went before David she bowed to pay him honour and said, "Help me O king. My husband died, leaving me two sons, but they fought with each other in a field and one killed the other. ³²Now my people want me to hand over my surviving son to put him to death for the life of his brother. ³³They would quench the only live ember I have left, leaving my husband no descendant upon the face of the earth."

³⁴David said to the woman, "Return home and I will issue an order on your behalf."

³⁵The woman asked, "Is the king able to prevent the avenger of blood^{F*} from destroying my son?"

³⁶David replied, "Not a hair of your son's head will be harmed."

³⁷The wise woman said, "When the king says this, does he not convict himself? For the king has not brought back his banished son."

David discerns Joab's hand behind all this

³⁸David said, "Is not the hand of Joab behind all this?"

³⁹The woman answered, "It was indeed your servant Joab that put these words into my mouth. My lord the king has wisdom like that of an angel of God."

David allows Absalom to return

⁴⁰David then turned to Joab and said to him, "Very well, I will do it. Go and bring back my son Absalom."

⁴¹Joab bowed with his face to the ground to pay the king honour. Then he went to Geshur and brought Absalom back to Jerusalem.

Absalom not to see the king's face

⁴²But David said, "He must go to his own house and not see my face."

⁴³So Absalom lived two years in Jerusalem without seeing his father's face.

Absalom tries in vain to get Joab to reconcile him to David

⁴⁴Absalom sent for Joab twice to have him take a message to the king, but Joab refused to come.

Absalom finally sets Joab's barley field on fire

⁴⁵Then Absalom said to his servants, "Go set the barley field of Joab on fire."

⁴⁶Joab came to Absalom's house and demanded, "Why did your servants set my field on fire?"

⁴⁷Absalom said to Joab, "I sent for you to ask the king, 'Why have you brought me from Geshur? It would be better for me if I were still there. ⁴⁸I want to see the king's face. If I am guilty of anything let him put me to death.'"

Joab speaks to the king and David is reconciled to his son Absalom

⁴⁹So Joab went to the king and told him this. David sent for Absalom and he came in and bowed to the ground before the king, and David kissed his son Absalom.

9

David's son Absalom a very handsome man

¹Now in all Israel there was no man so handsome in appearance as Absalom. From the top of his head to the sole of his foot there was no blemish in him, and when he cut his hair at the end of each year when it became too heavy, its weight was about 200 shekels.^{F*}

Absalom conspires to be king

²In time Absalom provided for himself a chariot and horses, and fifty men to run ahead of him.

³He would arise early in the morning and stand by the road leading to the city gate. Whenever anyone came with a matter to be decided by the king, Absalom would speak with him and say, "Your claims are just, but there is no judge appointed by the king to hear you." Then he would add, "If I were appointed judge in the land I would see that everybody gets justice."

⁴If any man went to bow before him, Absalom would reach out his arms and embrace him, and kiss him. So in this manner Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

⁵Absalom also erected a pillar in the King's Valley as a monument to himself.

Absalom made king at Hebron

⁶At the end of four years Absalom said to his father David, "Allow me to go to Hebron to fulfil a vow I made to Jehovah."

The king said, "Go in peace."

⁷Then Absalom sent secret messengers throughout the tribes of Israel to say, "As soon

*³⁵ Under the Mosaic law of a life for a life, if a man was killed, the avenger of blood (any near relative) was expected to take the life of the man responsible for the killing.

*¹ About 2.5kg (5 lbs).

as you hear the sound of the trumpets, cry out, 'Absalom is king in Hebron.'

⁸And so Absalom was made king by the men of Israel.

Ahithophel, David's adviser joins the conspiracy

⁹Absalom also sent for Ahithophel, David's adviser to come from his home town Giloh, and so the conspiracy gained strength. The followers of Absalom kept increasing.



The pillar of Absalom at Jerusalem

A messenger informs David

¹⁰Then a messenger came and said to David, "The men of Israel have made Absalom king."

David and all his supporters flee Jerusalem

¹¹David said to his officials, "We must leave Jerusalem immediately or Absalom will attack the city and put it to the sword, and none of us will escape."

¹²So the king set out with his entire household, and all of his men, but left ten concubines* to take care of the palace.

David stops at the last house and watches as his supporters march past him

¹³David halted at the last house of the city and watched as his officials and people marched past him.

David tells Ittai the Philistine and his 600 men to return to Jerusalem

¹⁴The king saw Ittai the Philistine with his 600 men and said to him, "Why should you come with us? Return with your men and their families and stay with King Absalom. ¹⁵You are an exile from your homeland and came from Gath only yesterday. Why should I make you wander with us, when I do not know where I am going?"

Ittai pledges his loyalty to David

¹⁶Ittai replied, "Wherever my lord the king may be, in life or death, there will your servant be."

¹⁷David said to Ittai, "March on!" So Ittai marched on with his men and their families and all the other men and their families that had followed David.

The whole countryside weeps aloud

¹⁸The whole countryside wept aloud as the people of Jerusalem passed by. They crossed the Kidron brook and moved toward the desert.



The Kidron brook near Jerusalem which David and his people crossed fleeing from Absalom.

The high priests and Levites sent back to Jerusalem with the Ark

¹⁹Zadok and Abiathar, the high priests also come out along with the Levites, carrying the Ark of God. ²⁰They set down the Ark and Abiathar offered sacrifices until all the people had finished leaving the city.

²¹Then David said to Zadok and Abiathar, "Return the Ark of God to the city. If I find favour in the Lord's eyes he will bring me back and let me see it again. But if he is not pleased with me, let him do whatever seems good to him. ²²I will wait at the ford in the desert until I receive word from you."

²³So Zadok and Abiathar took the Ark of God back to Jerusalem and stayed there. But David continued up the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went. ²⁴His head was covered and he walked barefoot, and all the people with him also covered their heads and wept.

David's adviser Hushai to remain in Jerusalem to counter Ahithophel's advice

²⁵Now David had been told, "Ahithophel your adviser is among the conspirators with Absalom." So David prayed saying, "O Lord, turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness."

²⁶When David reached the summit of the Mount of Olives, Hushai his friend and adviser was there to meet him. His robe was torn and there was dust on his head.

²⁷David said to him, "If you go with me you will be a burden to me, but if you return to the city and say to Absalom, 'I will be your servant O king, as I was your father's servant,' then you can help me by frustrating Ahithophel's advice. ²⁸Zadok and Abiathar the high priests will be there with you. Tell them what you hear in the palace and have them send their two sons to me at the ford with anything you hear."

*12 A concubine was a wife of inferior social status.

1 KINGS 10

²⁹So Hushai returned to Jerusalem, arriving just as Absalom was entering the city.

Ziba provides donkeys and provisions

³⁰When David had gone a short distance beyond the summit, there was Ziba the steward of Jonathan's son Mephibosheth waiting to meet him. ³¹He had a string of donkeys saddled and loaded with 200 loaves of bread, 100 cakes of raisins, 100 cakes of figs and a skin of wine.

³²Ziba said to David, "The donkeys are for the king's household to ride on. The bread and fruit are for the men to eat, and the wine is to revive those who become weary in the desert."

Ziba accuses Jonathan's son Mephibosheth of rebellion against David

³³David asked, "Where is Mephibosheth?"

Ziba replied, "He is remaining in Jerusalem, for he thinks, 'Today I may get back my grandfather's kingdom.'"

Ziba rewarded for his support

³⁴The king said to Ziba, "All that belonged to Mephibosheth is now yours."

Shimei a relative of Saul curses David

³⁵A little further on, a man named Shimei, a Benjamite from the same clan as Saul, came out from the town of Bahurim. Cursing he pelted David and his officials with stones, even though the troops and the special guard surrounded the king.

³⁶As he cursed David he shouted, "Get out, get out, you man of blood! You scoundrel! Jehovah has repaid you for the blood shed in the house of Saul in whose place you have reigned. ³⁷He has handed the kingdom over to your son Absalom and you have come to ruin, for you are a man of blood!"

David prevents Abishai from killing Shimei

³⁸Abishai said to David, "Why should this dog curse my lord the king! Let me go over there and take off his head!"

³⁹But the king said, "Will you never cease you sons of Zeruiah? He may be cursing me because the Lord said to him, 'Curse David! Who can know?'"

⁴⁰David then said to all the men of his bodyguard, "My son who is my own flesh is trying to take my life. How much more then this Benjamite. Leave him alone and let him curse. ⁴¹It may be that Jehovah will see my distress and repay me with good for the cursing I am receiving today."

⁴²So David and his men continued along the road, while Shimei walked along the hillside opposite, cursing the king and throwing stones at him and showering him with dirt.

The king and his supporters reach the Jordan

⁴³Later that day the king and all the people with him arrived at the ford of the Jordan, exhausted, and there refreshed themselves.^{F*}

10

Hushai offers to act as adviser to Absalom

¹Meanwhile Absalom and his men occupied Jerusalem, and Ahithophel was with him as adviser.

²David's friend and adviser Hushai went to Absalom and said to him, "Long live the king!"

³Absalom replied, "Is this the loyalty you show to my father, who is your friend? Why did you not go with him?"

⁴Hushai said, "I belong to the one chosen by Jehovah and by all the men of Israel. Should I not serve the son as I served the father?"

On Ahithophel's counsel Absalom lies with David's concubines in a tent on the roof of the palace

⁵Then Absalom turned to Ahithophel and said, "Give us your counsel. What should we do next?"

⁶Ahithophel answered, "Lie with your father's concubines whom he left to take care of the palace. When all Israel hears how offensive you have made yourself to your father, the hand of everyone with you will be strengthened."

⁷So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof of the palace, and he lay with his father David's concubines, in broad daylight in the sight of all Israel.^{F*}

Ahithophel's counsel like that of a prophet of God

⁸Now in those days the counsel that Ahithophel gave was like that of a prophet of God and was esteemed both by David and by his son Absalom.

Ahithophel wants to take 12,000 men and destroy David that night

⁹Later that day Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Let me choose 12,000 men and set out tonight in pursuit of David. I will attack him while he is weary and weak. I will strike him with terror and all the people with him will flee. ¹⁰But I will only strike down the king and bring all the other people back to you, as a bride comes to her husband."

¹¹This plan seemed good to Absalom and to the elders of Israel with him. But Absalom said, "Call Hushai and let us hear his advice."

Hushai counters Ahithophel's counsel

¹²When Hushai came to him Absalom said, "Should we do as Ahithophel counsels? If not, give us your opinion."

¹³Hushai replied, "The counsel Ahithophel has given is not good this time. You know your father and his men, they are warriors and as fierce as a wild bear robbed of her cubs. ¹⁴Besides, your father is skilled in warfare and will not spend the night in the open with his army. Even now he is hidden in a cave or some other place."

¹⁵"And when some of our men fall at the first attack, whoever hears about it will say, 'There

*7 This was in fulfilment of the curse of the Lord through Nathan the prophet (1 Kings 7:14-15).

*43 The distance travelled would have been about 35 km.

has been a slaughter among the men who follow Absalom.' Then even the heart of the bravest soldier will melt with fear, for all Israel knows that your father and his men are mighty warriors."

Hushai counsels Absalom to raise a vast army and personally lead an attack on David

¹⁶"My counsel is this, 'Let all Israel from Dan to Beersheba, as numerous as the sand on the seashore, be gathered to you with you yourself leading them into battle. ¹⁷Then we will attack him wherever he may be found and fall on him as dew settles on the ground."

¹⁸"Neither he nor any of his men will be left alive. If he withdraws into a city then all Israel will bring ropes to that city and demolish it."

¹⁹Absalom and the men of Israel said, "The advice of Hushai is better than that of Ahithophel."

Hushai sends a warning message to David

²⁰Then Hushai went and informed the high priests of what had taken place and said to them, "Have your sons take this message quickly to David and warn him, 'Do not spend the night at the ford in the desert. Cross over without fail or the king and all the people with him may be destroyed."

²¹So the two young sons of the priests departed to warn David. When they arrived late that night they said to him, "Cross the river at once, for Ahithophel has counselled such and such against you."

David and his people cross the Jordan that night and next day travel on to Mahanaim

²²So that night David and all the people with him crossed the Jordan, and by daybreak they had all crossed over.

²³The next day David and his people travelled to Mahanaim in Gilead,^{F*} a Levite town of refuge. They were exhausted when they arrived.

Welcome provisions from David's friends

²⁴However David's friends Barzillai, Shobi and Makir met them there with bedding, basins, earthen vessels, wheat, barley, flour, roasted grain, beans, lentils, honey, curds, sheep and cheese made from cow's milk for David and his people to eat. ²⁵For they said, "The people have become hungry, tired and thirsty in the desert."

Ahithophel returns home and takes his own life

²⁶Meanwhile, when Ahithophel saw that his advice had not been followed, he saddled his donkey and set out for his home town. He put his house in order and then hanged himself.

Absalom musters an army and crosses the Jordan to destroy David

²⁷Absalom appointed Amasa, a cousin of Joab as commander over his army. ²⁸Then Absalom mustered men from all over Israel and crossed the Jordan to destroy David.

David organises his men but does not go with them

²⁹David in turn mustered all the men who had followed him, and appointed commanders of thousands and hundreds and sent them out. One third under the command of Joab, one third under his brother Abishai, and one third under Ittai the Philistine.

³⁰David had said to his men, "I will march out with you." But his men replied, "You must not do so. If we are forced to flee they will not care about us. Your life to them is worth ten thousand of us. Give us support from the town."

David's men march out to battle

³¹So David stood by the gate of Mahanaim while his men marched out to the battle in units of hundreds and thousands.

David gives orders that Absalom be unharmed

³²The king commanded Joab, Abishai and Ittai saying, "Be gentle with young Absalom for my sake."

³³All the troops heard the king giving this instruction concerning Absalom to each of his commanders.

11

David's men defeat Absalom's army

¹The battle took place in the forest of Ephraim. There the army of Absalom was defeated by David's men and the slaughter was great, 20,000 men fell that day.

²The battle spread out over the whole countryside and more men became lost in the forest than fell by the sword.

Absalom found hanging alive with his head wedged in a large oak tree

³Now as Absalom was riding his mule through the forest, his head got wedged in the branches of a large oak tree and he was left hanging in mid-air when his mule ran off.

⁴One of David's men found him and told Joab, "Absalom is hanging alive in an oak tree!"

Joab rebukes the finder for not killing Absalom

⁵Joab said, "Why did you not strike him to the ground? I would have given you ten shekels^{F*} of silver and a warrior's belt."

⁶But the man replied, "Even for a thousand shekels I would not lift my hand against the king's son, for I heard the king say to you, 'Protect young Absalom for my sake.' ⁷If I had killed him the king would learn of it, and you would not support me."

Absalom is killed by Joab and his men

⁸Joab said, "I will not waste time like this with you." So he took three spears in his hand and went and hurled them at Absalom's heart while he was still hanging alive in the oak tree. ⁹Then ten of his men surrounded Absalom and struck him and killed him.

¹⁰Then Joab sounded the trumpet and

*23 Mahanaim was about 35 kms north-east of the Jordan.

*5 A shekel of silver was worth about a days wages.

1 KINGS 12

David's army stopped pursuing the army of Absalom.

Absalom's body thrown into a pit

¹¹They threw Absalom's body into a pit in the forest and piled rocks over him. Meanwhile all the Israelites who had followed Absalom fled to their homes.

An Ethiopian and the high priest's son run with the news to David

¹²Then Ahimaaz, the young son of Zadok the high priest said to Joab, "Let me run and take the news to the king."

¹³Joab replied, "You are not the one to take this news. The king's son is dead." ¹⁴Then Joab turned to an Ethiopian and said, "Go tell the king what you have seen." The Ethiopian bowed before Joab and ran off.

¹⁵The son of Zadok came again to Joab and said, "Come what may, let me run behind the Ethiopian."

¹⁶Joab replied, "My son, why do you want to go? You have no news that will bring you a reward."

¹⁷"Come what may, I want to run." he said.

¹⁸"Very well then, run!" said Joab, and the son of Zadok ran by way of the plain and outran the Ethiopian.

The watchman sees the runners at a distance

¹⁹David was sitting in the gateway of Mahanaim when the watchman on the wall reported a man running alone. Then the watchman reported another man running, and said, "The first one runs like young Ahimaaz, son of Zadok the priest."

²⁰David said, "He is a good man, he must bring good news."

David hears the news

²¹As Ahimaaz neared he called out to the king, "All is well!" Then he ran up and bowed down and said, "Praise be to Jehovah who has delivered my lord the king from the men who lifted their hands against him."

²²David asked, "Is young Absalom safe?"

Ahimaaz answered, "I saw great confusion but I do not know what it was."

²³Then the Ethiopian arrived and said, "My lord the king, hear the good news. Jehovah has delivered you today from all who rose up against you."

²⁴David asked the Ethiopian, "Is young Absalom safe?"

²⁵He replied, "May all who rise up to harm you be like that young man."

David grieves greatly for Absalom

²⁶David was deeply shaken and went immediately up to the room over the gateway, covering his face and sobbing loudly as he went and crying out, "O my son Absalom! My son! My son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you! O Absalom, my son, my son!"^{F*}

David's men shamed by the kings grief

²⁷When Joab arrived he was told, "The king is weeping and mourning for Absalom." So the victory that day was turned into mourning. David's army stole into the city like men shamed after fleeing from battle.

Joab rebukes David harshly

²⁸Joab went into the room where David was and said to him, "Today you have humiliated the men who saved your life and the lives of your family. You love those who hate you and hate those who love you. ²⁹You have made it clear today that the commanders and men mean nothing to you. I see that you would be pleased if Absalom were alive and all of us were dead."

Joab threatens David with desertion

³⁰"Now go out and encourage your men. I swear by Jehovah if you do not go out, not a man will be left with you by nightfall, and it will be worse for you than all the calamities that have come upon you from your youth until now!"

David again takes his seat in the gateway to encourage his men

³¹So David arose to encourage his men and took his seat in the gateway, and the men were told, "The king is sitting in the gateway." Then they all came and stood before him.

12

All Israel talk of accepting David back as king

¹Meanwhile, throughout all Israel the people were debating with one another saying, "King David was the one who rescued us from the Philistines, and Absalom whom we anointed to rule over us has died in battle. So what do you think? Should we bring David back?"

David suggests the elders of Judah be the first to invite him back

²When David heard what was being said he sent this message to Zadok and Abiathar the high priests in Jerusalem, "Say to the elders of Judah, 'You are my brothers, my own flesh and bone, why should you be the last tribe to bring the king back to his palace. The talk of all Israel has reached my ears.'"

David appoints Amasa his army commander in place of Joab

³"Say to Amasa, 'Are you not also my own flesh and bone? From now on you will be commander of my army in place of Joab.'"

⁴When Amasa heard this, he swayed the hearts of the people so the elders of Judah sent word to the king, "Return, you and all your men."

The men of Judah meet David at the Jordan

⁵So David set out and travelled to the ford of the Jordan. The men of Judah went down to meet the king and bring him over the river.

*26 David's grief was no doubt greatly intensified by the knowledge that it was punishment for his own sin that led to the death of his son (1 Kings 7:13).



The river Jordan

Shimei begs for forgiveness

⁶Shimei the Benjamite who had cursed and thrown stones at David was also there to meet the king, along with a thousand Benjamites.

⁷Shimei crossed the Jordan and fell prostrate before David and said, "May my lord not remember how your servant did wrong on the day the king left Jerusalem. For I know that I have sinned."

Abishai again wants to put Shimei to death but David spares Shimei

⁸Abishai said, "Should not Shimei be put to death, for he cursed the Lord's anointed?"

⁹David replied, "What do you and I have in common you sons of Zeruiah? * You have become my enemies. Should anyone be put to death in Israel today?"

¹⁰The king said to Shimei, "You shall not die."

Mephibosheth tells his version of events

¹¹Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan also went down to meet the king. He had not washed, or trimmed his beard from the day the king left.

¹²David asked him, "Why did you not go with me Mephibosheth?"

¹³He replied, "My lord, since I your servant am lame I gave the order, 'Have my donkey saddled and I will ride on it and go with the king.' But Ziba my servant betrayed me and lied about me. ¹⁴My lord the king is like an angel of God, so do whatever pleases you. All my grandfather Saul's descendants deserved nothing but death, but you gave your servant a place among those who sat at your table, so what right do I have to make any more appeals to the king?"

David divides Saul's property between Ziba and Mephibosheth

¹⁵The king said to him, "I have decided that you and Ziba are to divide the property."

¹⁶Mephibosheth said, "Let him take everything, now that my lord the king has arrived home safely."

Barzillai invited to live with the king

¹⁷Barzillai, David's friend had accompanied him to the Jordan to send him on his way. He had provided for the king during his stay in Mahanaim, for he was very wealthy.

¹⁸David said to Barzillai, "Stay with me in Jerusalem and I will provide for you."

Barzillai says he is too old at 80 to enjoy the king's pleasures

¹⁹But Barzillai was an old man and he answered, "How many more years will I live? I am now eighty years old. Can I taste what I eat and drink? Can I still hear the voices of men and women singers? Why should your servant be an added burden to my lord the king?"

²⁰"I will cross the Jordan with the king for a short distance, but let me return to die in my own town, near the tomb of my father and mother."

Barzillai is blessed by David

²¹The king said, "Anything you desire from me I will do for you," and he kissed Barzillai and gave him his blessing.

The men of Israel are jealous of Judah

²²Then the king crossed over the Jordan, led by the elders of Judah.

²³However the other men of Israel started asking, "Why did the men of Judah bring the king across the Jordan?"

²⁴The men of Judah answered, "We did this because the king is closely related to us. Why are you angry about it?"

²⁵They answered, "We have ten shares in the king and therefore a greater claim on David than you. Why do you treat us with contempt? Were we not the first to speak of bringing back our king?"

²⁶But the men Judah of responded fiercely.

The men of Israel follow Sheba and desert David

²⁷Then a troublemaker named Sheba, a Benjamite sounded a trumpet and shouted:

"We have no share in David!"

"Every man to his tent O Israel!"

²⁸So all the men of Israel except the men of Judah deserted David.

13

David's defiled concubines kept in confinement

¹When David arrived back at his palace, he took the ten concubines that Absalom had lain with and put them in a house under guard. ²He provided for them but did not lie with them again. They were kept in confinement until the day of their death, living as widows.

Amasa ordered to gather all the men of Judah within three days

³Then the king said to Amasa, "Gather all the men of Judah to me within three days."

*9 Zeruiah was David's older sister and mother of his two aggressive army commanders Joab and Abishai.

Amasa delayed so David sends Abishai and his men to pursue Sheba

⁴But Amasa had not returned after three days, so David said to Abishai, “Sheba the Benjamite may do us more harm than Absalom did. Take your men and pursue him, or he will escape from us.”

Joab and his warriors go with Abishai

⁵So Abishai and his men went out to pursue Sheba. Joab and his men followed after him, all the mighty warriors.

Amasa and the men of Judah meet them

⁶When they reached the great rock in Gibeon they met Amasa and the men of Judah.

Joab murders Amasa

⁷Now Joab was wearing a belt with a dagger in its sheath. He stepped forward and said to Amasa, “How are you my brother?” Then he took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him. ⁸Amasa was not aware of the dagger in Joab’s left hand and Joab plunged it into Amasa’s belly and he died.

⁹Amasa lay in his blood in the middle of the road and all the men stopped to look at him, so one of Joab’s men dragged him off the road into a field and threw a garment over him.

The men of Judah follow Joab

¹⁰Then all the men of Judah followed Joab and Abishai to pursue Sheba.

Sheba besieged in the town of Abel

¹¹Now Sheba had passed northward through Israel to the fortified town of Abel, gathering men as he went.

¹²Then Joab and his army came and besieged Abel. They built a mound against the town wall and began battering it down.

A wise woman of Abel pleads with Joab

¹³But a wise woman called down to Joab from the wall and said, “We are a peaceful and faithful people. Why are you trying to destroy a town that is a mother in Israel?”

Joab asks that Sheba be handed over

¹⁴Joab replied, “That is not the case. A Benjamite named Sheba has rebelled against the king. Hand over this one man and I will withdraw from the town.”

¹⁵The woman said to Joab, “His head shall be thrown to you from the wall.”

Sheba is beheaded by the citizens of Abel

¹⁶Then the woman went to the people with her wise advice and they seized Sheba and cut off his head and threw it down to Joab. ¹⁷So Joab sounded the trumpet and his men withdrew and returned to their homes, and Joab returned to the king in Jerusalem.

14

The Lord is angry with Israel and permits Satan to tempt David

¹Now the anger of the Lord was again kindled

against Israel^{F*} and he permitted Satan to tempt David by saying, “Take a census of all the men of Israel and Judah.”

David is tempted to pride and orders Joab to count all his nation’s fighting men

²David said to Joab, “Go throughout all the tribes of Israel and register the fighting men, that I may know their number.”

Joab tries to dissuade David but is unsuccessful

³But Joab replied, “May Jehovah your God multiply your troops a hundred times over. Why does my lord the king want to do such a thing?”

⁴But David’s will prevailed, so Joab and the army commanders departed to register all the fighting men of Israel.

1,300,000 fighting men excluding the Levites and Benjaminites

⁵After ten months they had gone throughout the entire land and returned to Jerusalem.

⁶Joab reported to the king that there were 800,000 able-bodied men in Israel who could handle a sword, and in Judah, 500,000.

⁷However Joab did not include the tribe of Benjamin or the Levites in the numbering, for the command of the king displeased him.

David is conscience-stricken and asks the Lord to forgive his sin

⁸David was conscience-stricken after he had numbered the fighting men and he prayed to the Lord saying, “O Jehovah, I have sinned greatly in what I have done. Please forgive your servant, I have done a very foolish thing.”^{F*}

David asked to choose from three penalties to come upon Israel

⁹That same evening this word of the Lord came to Gad the prophet, David’s seer, “**Say to David, ‘Jehovah says, I give you three choices. Choose one of them. ‘10**Shall there come three years of famine in your land? Or three months of fleeing from your enemies while they pursue you? Or three days of plague?’”

David chooses the three day plague

¹¹David said to Gad, “I am in deep distress, nevertheless let us fall into the hands of the Lord, for his mercy is great, do not let us fall into the hands of men.”

The plague begins and 70,000 die in Israel

¹²So the Lord sent a plague on Israel, beginning that morning and 70,000 people died, from Dan to Beersheba.

The Lord stays the hand of the destroying angel and Jerusalem is spared the plague

¹³However when the angel of the Lord who

*1 Probably because of the widespread acceptance of Absalom as king and the rejection of the divinely anointed David. This view is further strengthened by the fact that David’s family and Jerusalem were spared the plague, see verses 13-15.

*8 By taking a census to determine the size of his fighting forces, presumably to compare his glory with that of other great kings, David was guilty of pride. However it appears that the Lord’s intention was to create an opportunity to purge Israel of the rebellious elements, possibly to ensure a peaceful reign for Solomon as he promises David in the following verse 28.

was striking down the people came to afflict Jerusalem, the Lord relented and said to the angel, **“Enough! Stay your hand!”**

David sees the destroying angel

¹⁴David, who was wearing sackcloth and ashes looked up toward the threshing floor of Araunah on Mount Moriah and saw the destroying angel standing between earth and heaven, with a drawn sword in his hand stretched over Jerusalem.

David prays that the people of Jerusalem be spared and that he and his family suffer instead

¹⁵Then David prayed to the Lord saying, “I am the one who has sinned and done wrong. The people are but sheep, what have they done? ¹⁶Let your hand fall upon me and my family.”

David commanded by Gad the prophet to build an altar on the threshing floor

¹⁷Then the angel commanded Gad the prophet to go to David and say to him, **“Go up and build an altar to Jehovah on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jesubite on Mount Moriah.”** F*



Threshing floor where grain is separated from the sheaves by yoked oxen dragging a heavy wooden sled.

David goes out and buys the threshing floor

¹⁸Now Araunah the Jesubite had been threshing wheat and had seen the angel of the Lord. His four sons had hidden themselves but Araunah continued to thresh wheat.

¹⁹When he saw the king and his men coming up to him, Araunah went out and bowed before the king and said, “Why has my lord the king come to his servant?”

²⁰David answered, “I have come to buy your threshing floor to build an altar to the Lord, that the plague will cease upon the people.”

²¹Araunah said to David, “Let my lord the king take whatever pleases him and offer it up. Here are oxen for the burnt offering, and here are threshing sledges and yokes for the wood.”

²²David replied, “I shall pay full price. I will not sacrifice to the Lord that which cost me nothing.”

*17 Mount Moriah was within the confines of Jerusalem and later became the site of the temple. It was also the place where the Lord had commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac over 1000 years earlier (Genesis 15:1-10).

²³So David bought the threshing floor for 600 shekels of gold^{F*} and the oxen for 50 shekels of silver.

David builds an altar and sacrifices

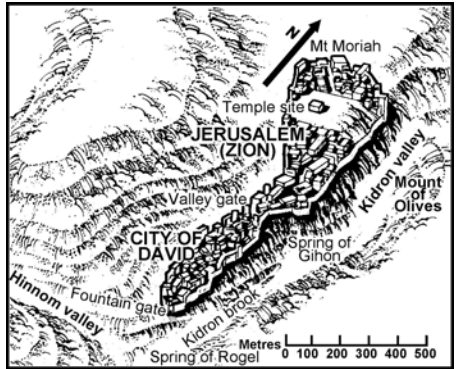
²⁴Then David built an altar to the Lord there and sacrificed burnt offerings.

The Lord answers with fire from heaven

²⁵The Lord answered with fire from heaven, and commanded the angel to put his sword back into its sheath.

The future Temple to be built on that site

²⁶David said, **“The house of the Lord is to be built here.”**



Jerusalem during the reign of David and Solomon. The city later expanded out westward to the left.

David's son Solomon to build the Temple

²⁷After this David summoned to Jerusalem all the officials, commanders, warriors, and mighty men of Israel.

²⁸In their presence he said to his son Solomon, “My son, I had it in my heart to build a house for the name of Jehovah my God, but the word of the Lord came to me saying, **“You are not to build a house for my name, for you have shed much blood on the earth and have fought many wars. ²⁹But you shall have a son who will be a man of peace. His name is to be Solomon and I will grant Israel peace during his reign. He is the one to build a house for my name. ³⁰He shall be my son and I shall be his father, and I will establish his throne in Israel forever.”**

³¹“Now my son, the Lord be with you and may you have success and build the house of Jehovah your God. ³²May he give you discretion and understanding when he places you in command over Israel, so that you may keep all his commandments. Be strong and courageous.”

David challenges the leaders of Israel to provide materials for the Temple

³³David then addressed those assembled and said, “My son Solomon is young and inexperienced, and the house to be built for the

*23 About 7kg.

1 KINGS 15

Lord must be of great magnificence and fame and splendour in the sight of all nations. Therefore I have made preparations for it.”

³⁴“From my own treasure I have provided for the Temple of the Lord, 3000 talents of gold and 7000 talents of silver. Who else will also offer willingly to the Lord?”

³⁵Then the leaders present agreed to give willingly toward the Temple of God; 5000 talents of gold, 10,000 talents of silver, 10,000 talents of bronze, and 100,000 talents of iron.

³⁶The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders. David the king rejoiced also and praised the Lord, and all the people bowed low before Jehovah and the king.

The people rejoice and offer sacrifices

³⁷The next day the people offered sacrifices, 1000 bulls, 1000 rams, 1000 male lambs and other sacrifices in abundance. They ate and drank with great joy that day.

David gives Solomon the plans for the Temple

³⁸Then David gave Solomon the plans for the Temple, its side rooms, courts and the inner sanctuary, all that the Spirit had put in his mind.

David instructs Solomon regarding the Temple

³⁹He said to Solomon, “I have taken great pains to provide for the Temple of the Lord. 100,000 talents^{F*} of gold, 1,000,000 talents^{F*} of silver, and quantities of bronze and iron too great to be weighed, and wood and stone. You may add to them.”

⁴⁰“You have craftsmen beyond number; stone-cutters, masons, carpenters, and men skilled in working gold, silver, bronze and iron. ⁴¹Now begin the work and may the Lord be with you.”

⁴²David also provided more cedar logs than could be counted, for the Sidonians and men of Tyre had brought large numbers of them to David.

Solomon also instructed regarding the priests and Levites

⁴³He also gave Solomon instructions as to how the priests and Levites were to serve in the Temple, and the articles that were to be used in its service.

15

David almost killed in battle due to exhaustion

¹Once again the Philistines came to war against Israel, and David went out with his men to fight. But during the battle he became exhausted and Ishbi-benob, a descendant of the Anakim^{F*} who was of great height and whose bronze spearhead weighed 300 shekels^{F*} was about to kill him.

David no longer to go into battle

²Abishai came to David's rescue and struck the Philistine down and killed him. ³David's

men said to him, “Never again must you go out with us to battle. The lamp of Israel must not be extinguished.”

The exploits of David's thirty mighty warriors

⁴During other battles with the Philistines, David's warrior Sibbecai killed Saph, and Elhanan killed the brother of Goliath. Both were descendants of the Anakim.

⁵In another battle at Gath, there was a huge man with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot. He too was descended from the Anakim. ⁶When he taunted Israel, Jonathan the brother of David killed him.

The names and exploits of David's mighty 'Three'

⁷The names of David's three mightiest warriors were, Jashobeam who was chief of the three. He raised his spear against 800 men whom he killed in one encounter.

⁸Next to him was Eleazar. He was with David when they taunted the Philistines and then retreated. But he stood his ground and struck down the Philistines until his hand could not unclasp his sword. David's men returned to Eleazar, but only to strip the dead.

⁹Next was Shammah. When the Philistines banded together in a field of lentils, Israel's troops fled, but Shammah took his stand in the middle of the field and struck the Philistines down, and the Lord brought about a great victory.”

How the 'Three' risked their lives getting water for David

¹⁰Once during harvest time, these three of David's thirty chief warriors were with him at the stronghold in the caves near Adullam. The Philistines were encamped in the Valley of the Giants near Bethlehem.

¹¹David longed for water and said, “O that I could drink water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem.”

¹²So these three mighty men broke through the Philistine lines and drew water from the well and carried it back to David.

David refused to drink the water and poured it out to the Lord

¹³But David refused to drink it. Instead he poured it out to the Lord saying, “Far be it from me O Jehovah to drink this water. Is it not the blood of these men who went at the peril of their lives? Far be it from me to drink it.”

¹⁴Such were the exploits of David's three mightiest men.

Abishai's exploits

¹⁵Abishai the brother of Joab was commander of David's men. He raised his spear against 300 men whom he killed at one time, and so became as famous as the three.

Benaiah's exploits

¹⁶Benaiah was also a valiant warrior who performed great exploits. He struck down two of Moab's best men, and once he went down into a pit on a snowy day and killed a lion.

*39 About 3,500 tonnes.

*39 About 34,000 tonnes.

*1 A very tall race now extinct. Goliath was an Anakim.

*1 About 3.5kg (8lbs).

¹⁷He also struck down an Egyptian of great height, five cubits tall.^{F*} The Egyptian had a spear in his hand and Benaiah had only a club.
¹⁸He wrested the Egyptian's own spear from his hand and killed him with it.

¹⁹Benaiah too was as famous as the three mighty men. He was held in more honour than any of the thirty, but was not included among the three. David later put him in charge of his bodyguard.

The last psalm of David

²⁰This is the last psalm^{F*} of David. Hear the words of David son of Jesse, a man exalted by the Most High, a man anointed by the God of Israel, a composer of sweet psalms.

²¹*"The Spirit of Jehovah came upon me, the God of Israel spoke:"*

²²*"When one rules over men with justice and reverence for God, he is like the light of sunrise on a cloudless morning."*

²³*"He is like the freshness of rain that brings forth grass from the earth."*

²⁴*"But godless men are cast aside like thorns, and are burned up where they lie."*

16

King David becomes old and cannot keep warm

¹Now David became old and could not keep warm, even with covers over him.

A beautiful girl Abishag found to warm and attend the king

²His officials said, "Let us find a young virgin to nurse and attend the king and lie beside him to keep him warm."

³So they searched Israel for a beautiful girl and found Abishag. She attended and served the king, but he did not know her sexually.

David's son Adonijah conspires to be king

⁴Now Adonijah was David's fourth son. He was born after Absalom and was also very handsome.

⁵He said to himself, "I will be king."^{F*} So he prepared for himself a chariot and horsemen and fifty men to run ahead of him.

⁶Joab, the commander of the army and Abiathar the high priest supported him, but Zadok the high priest, Benaiah the commander of the king's bodyguard and Nathan the prophet remained loyal to David.

Adonijah proclaims himself king

⁷Adonijah offered sacrifice on a stone at the Spring of Rogel, just outside Jerusalem and held a feast. He invited all of his brothers except Solomon and many of the royal officials to the feast, and there he proclaimed himself king of Israel.

*18 About 7ft 6" tall.

*20 A psalm is a sacred song. Most of the psalms in the book of Psalms were composed by David.

*5 David's second born son Daniel, (to Abigail) is not mentioned again after his birth and may have died. The eldest surviving son was normally heir to the throne. Adonijah was about 35 years old at this time.

Nathan the prophet has Solomon's mother Bathsheba inform David

⁸While this was happening, Nathan the prophet went to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon and said, "Adonijah has been proclaimed king of Israel without David knowing it. ⁹To save your own life and the life of your son Solomon, go in at once to David and speak the words I tell you."

¹⁰So Bathsheba went into the aged king in his room where his nurse Abishag was attending him and bowed low before him. David said, "What do you wish?"

¹¹Bathsheba answered, "My lord, you swore to me that Solomon would be king after you, but now Adonijah has become king and my lord does not know about it. The eyes of all Israel are upon you to hear who will sit on the throne of my lord the king after him."

Nathan enters and confirms all that Bathsheba has said

¹²While she was still speaking, Nathan the prophet entered the room and bowed with his face to the floor and confirmed what Bathsheba had said.

David orders that Solomon be anointed king

¹³David immediately summoned Benaiah the commander of his bodyguard and said to him, "Set Solomon my son on my own mule and take him out to the Spring of Gihon.^{F*} ¹⁴There Zadok the high priest and Nathan the prophet are to anoint him king over Israel. Sound a trumpet and shout, 'Long live King Solomon!' ¹⁵Then you are to bring him back to sit on my throne and reign in my place."

¹⁶Benaiah said, "As Jehovah was with my lord the king may he also be with your son Solomon. May he make his throne even greater than the throne of David."

Solomon escorted to the Spring of Gihon on David's mule and there anointed king of Israel

¹⁷So Benaiah and all of the king's bodyguard along with Zadok the high priest and Nathan the prophet, put Solomon on David's mule and escorted him to the Spring of Gihon. There Zadok the high priest took the horn of oil from the sacred tent and anointed Solomon king over Israel.

¹⁸Then they sounded a trumpet and shouted, "Long live King Solomon!"

All Jerusalem gather and rejoice and follow Solomon back to the palace

¹⁹All of Jerusalem gathered, and followed them back up to the palace, playing flutes and rejoicing so greatly that the ground shook with the sound.

Adonijah and his guests hear the news and flee

²⁰Adonijah and the guests who were with him heard the noise just as they were finishing their feast. Joab asked, "What is the meaning of the noise in the city?"

*13 The Spring of Gihon was located just outside Jerusalem.

1 KINGS 17

²¹Even as he spoke, Jonathan son of Abiathar the high priest arrived and announced, "King David has made Solomon king! That is the noise you hear!"

²²At these words all of Adonijah's guests arose trembling and fled.

Adonijah clings hold of the horns of the altar in fear of Solomon

²³Adonijah also was in great fear of his brother Solomon and went to the tent of the Lord and took hold of the horns of the altar.^{F*}

²⁴Solomon was told, "Adonijah fears you and is clinging to the horns of the altar saying, 'Let King Solomon swear to me that he will not put his servant to death.'"

²⁵Solomon replied, "If he proves himself to be a righteous man he will not be harmed, but if evil is found in him he will die."

Adonijah's life spared by Solomon

²⁶So Adonijah was brought before Solomon and bowed down to him. Solomon said, "Return to your house."

The Lord's conditional covenant to David to always have a descendant on the throne of Israel

²⁷When the time drew near for David to die, he called for Solomon and said, "I am about to go the way of all the earth, so be strong and show yourself a man. ²⁸Do what Jehovah your God requires. Walk in all his ways and keep his commandments, so that you will prosper in all you do."

²⁹"Then the Lord will keep his covenant to me for he has said, '**If your descendants walk faithfully before me with all their heart and soul, you will never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.**'"

David's last instructions to Solomon Joab to be put to death

³⁰"Now you are aware how Joab murdered Abner and Amasa, two commanders of Israel's armies. Deal with him according to your wisdom. Let not his grey head go down to Sheol^{F*} in peace."

Kindness to be shown to the sons of Barzillai

³¹"But show kindness to the sons of Barzillai of Gilead. Let them be among those who eat at your table, for he stood by me when I fled from your brother Absalom."

Shimei to be put to death

³²"Remember Shimei the Benjamite, who called down terrible curses on me the day I left Jerusalem. I swore that I would not put him to death, but do not hold him guiltless. ³³You are a man of wisdom and will know what to do with him. Send his grey head down to Sheol in blood."

King David dies

³⁴Then David died and was buried in the City

of David.^{F*} He had reigned forty years over Israel.^{F*}



Exterior of David's tomb in Jerusalem.

17

Adonijah has Bathsheba ask Solomon to give him Abishag as his wife

¹After the death of David, Adonijah went to Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon and said to her, "As you know, the kingdom was mine. All Israel looked to me as their king, but the kingdom has gone to my brother, for it came to him from the Lord. ²Now, I have a request to make of you, please ask King Solomon to give Abishag to me as my wife."

³Bathsheba replied, "I will speak to the king for you." So she went in to speak to the king.

⁴Solomon stood from the throne and bowed down to his mother, then he ordered a seat brought in for her and she sat at his right hand.

⁵She said, "I have a small request to make of you."

⁶Solomon replied, "Ask it my mother. I will not refuse you."

⁷So she said, "Let Abishag be given in marriage to your brother Adonijah."

Solomon is angry at Adonijah's request

⁸Solomon answered, "You request Abishag for Adonijah? You may as well request the kingdom for him also, and for Abiathar and

*23 The altar was a place of refuge affording protection until a person could be tried for an alleged crime.

*30 Sheol is the Hebrew name for the spirit world of the dead.

*34 The City of David was the fortress area of Jerusalem.

*34 As David was aged 30 when he became king, he would have been about 70 when he died (1 Kings 1:22).

Joab. He is after all my older brother.” F*

Adonijah is put to death

⁹Then Solomon made a vow saying, “May God deal with me severely if Adonijah does not pay with his life for this scheme he has devised.” So the king gave the order and Benaiah went out and struck down Adonijah and he died.



Interior of David's tomb.

Abiathar the high priest is removed from his priesthood office

¹⁰The king then summoned Abiathar the high priest and said to him, “Return to your fields in Anathoth. You deserve to die but I will not put you to death, for you carried the Ark of Jehovah and shared in my father’s hardships.”

¹¹So Solomon removed Abiathar from the priesthood, fulfilling the word the Lord spoke regarding the house of Eli, and Zadok was put in his place.

Joab takes refuge at the altar

¹²When the news of all this reached Joab, he fled to the tent of the Lord and took hold of the horns of the altar, but Solomon ordered Benaiah saying, “Take him outside and strike him down.”

¹³Benaiah entered the tent of the Lord and said to Joab, “The king says, ‘Come out!’”

Joab answered, “I will die here!”

¹⁴Benaiah reported to Solomon what Joab had said and the king replied, “Very well, do as he says. Strike him down there and clear my father’s house of the guilt of innocent blood. Both Abner and Amasa whom he murdered were more upright men than he.”

Joab is put to death at the altar

¹⁵So Benaiah killed Joab at the altar and buried him on his land in the desert. ¹⁶Solomon appointed Benaiah as commander of the army in his place.

Shimei the Benjamite ordered never to leave Jerusalem

¹⁷Then Solomon sent for Shimei the Benjamite and said to him, “Build yourself a house and live here in Jerusalem. The day you cross the Kidron brook and leave Jerusalem you die. Your blood will be upon your own head.”

*8 Marrying David’s wife Abishag, combined with his seniority and popularity, would greatly strengthen Adonijah’s claim to the throne.

¹⁸“Your servant will do as my lord has said,” Shimei answered the king.

Shimei leaves Jerusalem and is put to death

¹⁹However three years later, two of Shimei’s slaves ran off to Gath. Shimei saddled his donkey and went after them and brought them back.

²⁰Solomon summoned Shimei and said to him, “Did I not have you swear by the Lord and warn you, ‘On the day you leave Jerusalem you will die?’ Why then did you not keep your oath to the Lord?”

²¹So the king gave the order and Benaiah took him out and put him to death.

18

Solomon offers 1000 sacrifices near the Tabernacle in Gibeon

¹Solomon’s kingdom was now firmly established, for the Lord was with him and made him very great.

²Then the king went up to Gibeon with all the leaders of Israel to offer sacrifices at the Tabernacle. Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on the bronze altar that Bezalel son of Uri had made which was near the Tabernacle.

The Lord appears to Solomon in a dream and asks him to choose what he wants

³While Solomon was at Gibeon the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Ask what I should give you.”

Solomon asks for wisdom in governing his people

⁴Solomon answered the Lord, “You have shown great kindness to my father David for he was faithful to you and upright in heart. ⁵Now O Jehovah my God, you have made me king in place of my father David, but I am like a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. ⁶Your servant is king of a great people, too numerous to number, so give me a discerning heart to govern them well and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?”

The Lord blesses Solomon with wisdom, riches and honour above all other kings

⁷The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this and said to him, “Because you have not asked for long life or wealth, nor for the death of your enemies, but for understanding to discern what is right, I will do what you have asked.”

⁸“I will give you a wise and discerning mind, beyond all who have gone before you, or shall ever come after you.”

⁹“I will also give you what you did not ask for, riches and honour all your life, no other king will compare with you. ¹⁰And if you walk in my ways and obey my commandments, as did David your father, I will lengthen your life.”

1 KINGS 19

¹¹After this Solomon returned to Jerusalem and sacrificed burnt offerings before the Ark.

The two harlots and the disputed baby— Solomon's wise judgement

¹²Now two harlots were brought before Solomon and one of them said, "My lord, this woman and I live in the same house. I had a son while she was there with me, and three days later this woman also had a son. There was no one else in the house."

¹³"During the night this woman's son died, because she lay on him. So she arose in the middle of the night and took my baby from my side while I slept, and put her dead son in his place. The next morning when I looked at him closely, I saw that it was not my son."

¹⁴The other woman said, "No, the living baby is my son, the dead baby is yours."

¹⁵But the first insisted, "No! The dead one is yours. The living one is mine." And so they argued before the king.

¹⁶Solomon said, "This one says, 'My son is alive and your son is dead,' while the other one says, 'Your son is dead and mine is alive. Bring me a sword!'" So they brought a sword to the king.

¹⁷Then he gave an order, "Cut the living child in two. Give half to one, and half to the other."

¹⁸But the woman whose baby was alive was filled with compassion for her son and said to the king, "No my lord, give her the living baby! Do not kill him!"

¹⁹But the other woman said, "Neither I nor you shall have him. Cut him in two!"

²⁰Then Solomon gave his ruling, "Give the living child to the first woman. She is his mother."

All Israel hold Solomon in awe

²¹When all Israel heard the decision, they held the king in awe, for they saw that he had been given wisdom from God.

Solomon wiser than any other man

²²God gave Solomon great wisdom and insight, and breadth of understanding as vast as the sand on the seashore. ²³Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of the men of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. He was wiser than any other man and his fame spread to the surrounding nations.

Solomon's proverbs, music and knowledge

²⁴Solomon spoke 3000 proverbs and composed 1005 songs. He would speak of trees, from the cedars of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls, and of animals, birds, reptiles and fish. ²⁵Men of all nations came to listen to Solomon's wisdom.

Solomon's vast kingdom

²⁶King Solomon ruled over all Israel and all his people were happy and lived in safety, every man under his vine, and his fig tree.

²⁷Furthermore he ruled over all the kings west of the Euphrates River and as far south as the

border of Egypt (except for the land of Sidon and the Philistines) and these kingdoms brought tribute and served Solomon all his life.

²⁸He also made an alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt and married his daughter and brought her to Jerusalem to live.

Solomon's daily household provisions

²⁹Solomon's daily household provisions were thirty homers^{F*} of fine flour, sixty homers of meal, ten head of stall-fed cattle, twenty head of pasture-fed cattle, and a hundred sheep and goats, as well as deer, gazelles, roebucks and choice fowl.

³⁰Solomon had twelve officials appointed, who each in his month, supplied provisions for his table and barley and straw for his horses. They saw to it that nothing was lacking.

19

King Hiram asked to provide timber for the Temple

¹When Hiram, king of Tyre heard that Solomon had succeeded his father David, he sent envoys to him, for he had always been a friend of David.

²Solomon sent back this message to Hiram, "Because of wars my father David could not build a Temple for Jehovah his God. But now Jehovah has given me rest on every side and I intend to build a Temple for his name in Jerusalem."

³"Now we all know there are none so skilled at cutting timber as you Sidonians, so give orders that cedars of Lebanon be cut for me. My men will work with yours and I will pay your woodcutters 20,000 homers of ground wheat, 20,000 homers of barley, 20,000 baths^{F*} of wine, and 20,000 baths of olive oil, or whatever wages you set."



Extracting olive oil by crushing with a stone.

Hiram pleased to provide timber to Solomon

⁴When Hiram heard Solomon's message he

*29 A homer is a full donkey load, about 220kg.

*3 A bath was approx 22 litres.

was greatly pleased and said, “Jehovah be praised, for he has given David a wise son to rule over this great nation.”

⁵Hiram sent word back to Solomon saying, “I will do all you want in providing cedar and pine. My men will also haul them down from Lebanon and float them in rafts by sea to Joppa where you can take them up to Jerusalem. In return, you can provide food for my royal household.”

Hiram also sending Hiram, a man of great skill

⁶“I am also sending you Hiram, the son of a Danite woman whose father is a Tyrian. He is a man of great skill, trained to work in gold, silver, bronze, iron, stone and wood, and with purple, blue, and crimson yarn and fine linen. He is experienced in all kinds of engraving and can execute any design given to him. He will work with your craftsmen.”

Wheat and olive oil from Israel as payment

⁷So Hiram supplied Solomon with all the cedar and pine he wanted, and each year Solomon gave Hiram 20,000 homers of wheat and 20,000 baths of pressed olive oil for his household, and the two of them made a treaty.

Canaanites conscripted as labourers

⁸Solomon then took a census of all the Canaanite men whom the Israelites had been unable to destroy completely from the land, and they numbered 153,600. ⁹From among these he conscripted 30,000 labourers and sent them off to Lebanon in shifts of 10,000 a month. They spent one month in Lebanon and two months at home.

¹⁰From among them Solomon also conscripted 80,000 stonecutters to cut and dress large blocks of high grade stone in the quarry up in the hills. These were for the foundation and walls of the Temple. ¹¹He also conscripted 70,000 carriers to transport the stone to the city and assigned 3300 foremen to direct the work force.

Solomon begins to build the Temple

¹²480 years after Israel had come out of Egypt, in the fourth year of his reign, Solomon began to build the Temple of the Lord in Jerusalem. It took seven years to complete.

The dimensions of the Temple

¹³The size of the Temple was 60 cubits long, 20 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high.^{F*}

The stone blocks of the Temple

¹⁴During the building of the Temple, only blocks of stone dressed at the quarry were used. No hammer, chisel or any other iron tool was heard at the Temple site.

¹⁵The foundation was laid with large stones of high quality, some measuring ten cubits across.

The steps and entrance to the Temple

¹⁶The entrance to the Temple was at the southern end. Ten steps led up to a covered porch in which were double pine doors, overlaid with gold.



Solomon's kingdom.

*¹³ About 28 metres long by 9 metres wide and 13.5 metres high (90ft by 30ft by 45ft). A cubit is approx half a metre (18 inches). The temple did not need to be large as only the priests were permitted to enter the temple proper and the walled inner courtyard around it. The people were restricted to the outer courtyard which was vast in comparison to the size of the temple.

1 KINGS 19

The interior of the Temple – side rooms on all three floors

¹⁷Inside the entrance to the Temple a stairway led up to the second and third floors. ¹⁸And on all three floors, along the side and rear walls, were rooms, with narrow windows for light. The height of each room was five cubits.

The floors of the Temple

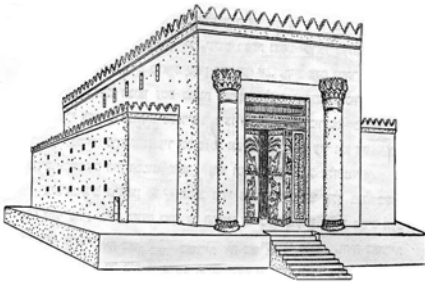
¹⁹The floors of the Temple were made of pine, overlaid with gold. No stone was seen anywhere.

The roof of the Temple

²⁰The roof was constructed with wooden beams and covered in cedar planking.

The inner Sanctuary

²¹The rear part of the Temple was the inner Sanctuary, the Most Holy Place for the Ark of the Lord. ²²This room was a cube, 20 cubits long, wide and high. It was panelled with cedar from floor to ceiling and carved with cherubim,^{F*} palm trees, open flowers and overlaid in gold.



An artist's view of Solomon's Temple.

The hall of the Temple

²³The hall leading to the Sanctuary was forty cubits long. The walls of the hall were also panelled in cedar and carved with cherubim, palm trees, open flowers and overlaid with gold.

²⁴Solomon used 600 talents^{F*} of gold inside the Temple, even the nails were gold.

The two cherubim

²⁵Solomon made two cherubim for the inner Sanctuary, from olive wood overlaid with gold. Each cherubim was ten cubits high and ten cubits wide, from wing tip to wing tip.

²⁶They stood inside the Sanctuary side by side, facing the entrance with their wings spread out. Their inner wings touched each other and their outer wings touched the walls on both sides of the Sanctuary.

The doors and veil of the Sanctuary

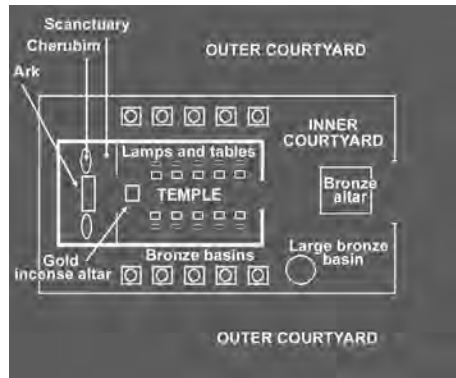
²⁷Solomon made two doors of olive wood for the entrance to the Sanctuary, each with carved designs and overlaid with gold.

²⁸He also made a veil of fine linen,

*22 Cherubim are winged angels, having varying facial features depicting human, animal and bird life. See Ezekiel chapter 1 for a fuller description.

*24 Approx 21 tonnes.

embroidered with cherubim in blue, purple and crimson thread to conceal the Sanctuary from view. He hung the veil across the entrance on a gold chain.



Groundplan of Solomon's Temple.
The rooms on the two upper floors are not shown.

The inner and outer courts of the Temple

²⁹Around the exterior of the Temple, Solomon built inner and outer walled courtyards, using dressed stones. He covered the stones in both courts with cedar planking.

A conditional promise from the Lord – if Solomon is faithful the Lord will dwell among the people

³⁰During the building of the Temple, this word of the Lord came to Solomon, “As for this Temple you are building, if you keep all my commandments and obey them, I will fulfil the covenant I made with David your father^{F*} and will dwell among the Israelites and not abandon my people.”

The two bronze pillars either side of the entrance to the Temple

³¹Now Hiram, whom the king of Tyre had sent was highly skilled in all kinds of bronze work. He cast two bronze pillars to stand either side of the entrance to the Temple, each eighteen cubits high and twelve cubits around.

³²He also cast two capitals,^{F*} each in the likeness of a lily, five cubits high, to sit on top of each pillar. A hundred clusters of flower garlands decorated the base of each capital.

The bronze altar for sacrifices

³³He made a bronze altar twenty cubits long twenty cubits wide and ten cubits high.

A large bronze basin on the backs of twelve oxen

³⁴Hiram then cast a large basin, measuring ten cubits from rim to rim, and five cubits deep, with the likeness of a flower wreath in two rows encircling the rim. ³⁵The walls of the basin were a hand-width in thickness and its rim curved out

*30 To have a descendant of David on the throne of Israel forever (1 Kings 14:29).

*32 A capital is the decorative headpiece of a column or pillar.

like the rim of a cup. It held 2000 baths^{F*} and was used by the priests to wash in.

³⁶The basin stood on the backs of twelve bronze oxen, three facing north, three facing west, three facing south and three facing east, their hindquarters toward the centre.



A replica of the large bronze basin. It had a capacity of about 44,000 litres of water.

Wheeled bronze basins

³⁷Huram also made ten bronze basins, four cubits in diameter, with a capacity of forty baths. ³⁸These basins were supported in bronze stands, three cubits high, with a handle on each corner and four bronze wheels like chariot wheels, each a cubit and a half in diameter.

³⁹Huram engraved cherubim, lions, wreaths, and palm trees on every available space.

⁴⁰These basins were to rinse the meat for the burnt offerings.^{F*}

Smaller bronze objects also made

⁴¹All the objects Huram made were of burnished bronze, cast in clay moulds. He also made many smaller objects; basins, shovels, and sprinkling bowls.

Gold altar, table, lamps, bowls etc

⁴²Solomon made the following out of pure gold: The altar, the table for the holy bread, ten lampstands and their lamps (five for each side of the hall leading to the Sanctuary), gold basins, sprinkling bowls, plates, censers and gold sockets for the doors of the Sanctuary.

All the treasures of David placed in the Temple

⁴³When the Temple was completed, Solomon placed in it all the treasures his father David had dedicated.

20

All Israel invited to Jerusalem for the dedication of the Temple

¹When it came time for the Feast of Tabernacles, Solomon invited all Israel to Jerusalem to witness the bringing up of the Ark from the City of David. ²All Israel came to Jerusalem, a vast assembly of people.

The Ark and Tabernacle carried up to the Temple

³The priests and Levites took the Ark from the tent in the City of David and carried it by its poles up to the Temple.

⁴They also brought the Tabernacle from Gibeon and all its sacred furnishings, and carried them up to the Temple of the Lord.

Thousands of sheep and cattle sacrificed

⁵King Solomon and the men of Israel sacrificed so many sheep and cattle that day they could not be counted.

The priests place the Ark in the Sanctuary beneath the wings of the Cherubim

⁶Then the priests who had purified themselves carried the Ark into its place in the Sanctuary of the Temple, beneath the wings of the cherubim.

⁷There was nothing in the Ark except the two tablets of stone that Moses had placed there.

Music and singing by the priests and Levites

⁸Asaph and his kinsmen who were Levite singers and musicians, stood by the Temple dressed in fine linen and playing cymbals, harps and lyres.

⁹They were accompanied by 120 priests sounding trumpets. The singers and trumpeters joined as one voice to give praise and thanks to the Lord.

¹⁰They raised their voices in praise to Jehovah singing:

“Give thanks to the Lord, he is good.”
“His love endures forever.”

The Temple filled with the glory of the Lord

¹¹When the song was raised, the glory of Jehovah descended and filled the house of God.

Solomon kneels and prays before the people

¹²Then Solomon knelt on a bronze platform before the altar of the Lord and in the presence of all the men of Israel lifted his hands to heaven and prayed these words:

The king prays that his descendants will continue to sit on the throne of Israel

¹³“O Jehovah, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven or on earth. You honour your covenant of love with those who keep your commandments. ¹⁴Keep now for your servant the covenant you made to David my father when you promised him he would never lack a successor to sit on the throne of Israel, if his children walked before you as he did.”

Solomon acknowledges that the Temple cannot contain the Lord

¹⁵“But will God really dwell with man on earth? All the heavens, even the highest heaven cannot contain you, how much less this Temple I have built. ¹⁶Yet hear your servant’s prayer and his plea O Lord. May your eyes be turned toward this Temple night and day, this house which bears your name.”

*³⁴ About 44,000 litres.

*⁴⁰ All the bronze items, the altar for sacrifices, the large bronze basin (or sea as it is traditionally known) and the ten bronze basins on wheels were located outside the temple in the inner courtyard.

May the prayers of your people Israel be heard and answered and justice be done

¹⁷“Hear the prayers of your people Israel, when they pray toward this house. Hear from heaven your dwelling place and when you hear, forgive them.”

¹⁸“However, if a man has wronged his neighbour and swears his innocence falsely before your altar at this Temple, hear from heaven and act. Condemn that guilty man and bring down on his head the guilt of his deeds.”

¹⁹“But when an innocent man comes before your altar, declare him not guilty and prove his innocence.”

May the sins of Israel be forgiven when they repent

²⁰“And when your people Israel have been defeated by an enemy because they have sinned against you, and they turn back to you, praying and pleading with you in this Temple, then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your people. Restore them again to the inheritance you gave their fathers.”

May afflictions be removed from the land

²¹“When the heavens are closed and there is no rain because your people have sinned against you, and they pray toward this Temple and turn from their sins, then forgive your people Israel and send rain again on the land.”

²²“When famine or plague afflict the land, or blight or locusts, or caterpillar, or an enemy besieges them, and a plea is made by your people, lifting their hands toward this Temple, each aware of the suffering of his own heart, then hear from heaven and forgive them O Lord. Deal with each man according to his actions and his heart.”

May the foreigner’s prayer also be answered

²³“Also heed the prayer of the foreigner who comes from a distant land to this Temple, for men will hear of your great name. Do whatever he asks of you so that all the peoples of the earth may honour you, as do your own people Israel. Then they will know that this house I have built bears your name.”

Hear the prayers of Israel in war and in exile

²⁴“When your people go to war against their enemies and pray to Jehovah toward Jerusalem and this Temple, uphold their cause O Lord.”

²⁵“And when your people sin against you, for we all sin, and you become angry with them and hand them over to an enemy who takes them captive to his own land, and there they repent with all their heart and soul, and pray to you toward the land you gave their fathers, then forgive them, and cause their conquerors to show them mercy.”

²⁶“O Lord, may you heed your servant’s plea and the pleas of your people and hear them when they cry out to you.”

Fire from heaven consumes the burnt offering

²⁷When Solomon finished his prayer, fire

came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering on the altar.

All the Israelites see the fire come down and the glory of Jehovah on the Temple

²⁸When the Israelites saw the fire come down and saw the glory of the Lord on the Temple, they fell down and knelt with their faces to the ground and worshipped and gave thanks to the Lord saying, “The Lord is good, his love endures forever.”

The priests unable to enter the Temple because of the brightness of the glory

²⁹The priests were unable to enter the Temple because of the brightness of the glory of the Lord that filled it.

Solomon blesses the people

³⁰Then Solomon stood and blessed the people in a loud voice saying, “Praise to the Lord who has given rest to his people Israel, just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses.”

³¹“May Jehovah be with us as he was with our fathers. May he never leave us or forsake us. May our hearts be sure to walk in his ways and keep all of the commandments he gave to our fathers.”

Fourteen days of peace offerings and celebration

³²Then the king and all Israel offered more peace offerings^{F*} and continued to celebrate before the Lord for fourteen days.

142,000 animals sacrificed

³³Altogether they offered 22,000 cattle and 120,000 sheep and goats.

³⁴Solomon consecrated the centre area of the inner courtyard in front of the Temple for burnt offerings, for the bronze altar was too small to hold them all.

³⁵On the fifteenth day the king sent the people home. They blessed their king and went away joyful and glad in heart.

21

Solomon builds his palace and other buildings

¹Solomon then built his own palace and other buildings. These took thirteen years to complete.

Solomon’s other buildings

²He built a large hall, 100 cubits long, 50 cubits wide and 30 cubits high^{F*} and named it, The House of the Forest of Lebanon. ³The roof of this hall was supported internally by cedar rafters, on four rows of cedar columns. The windows were placed high, in sets of three.

⁴He built the Hall of Pillars. This hall was 50 cubits long and 30 cubits wide, with a row of columns in front, supporting an overhanging roof.

*32 A peace offering was generally offered in thanksgiving for a blessing or to ensure continued prosperity.

*2 About 46 metres long by 23 metres wide and 13.5 metres high (150ft by 75ft by 45ft).

⁵He built the Hall of the Throne where he sat in judgement. The walls of this hall were panelled in cedar from floor to ceiling.

⁶Solomon's palace, in the courtyard at the back of this hall was also panelled floor to ceiling in cedar.



Cedars of Lebanon, used in the construction of Solomon's Temple and other buildings.

Pharaoh's daughter's palace

⁷Solomon also built a palace like this hall for Pharaoh's daughter, for he said, "This wife of mine shall not live in the palace of King David, for the places to which the Ark of the Lord have come are holy."

All buildings constructed from blocks of high-grade stone

⁸All of these buildings were constructed from blocks of high-grade stone, cut to size and trimmed with a saw on the inner and outer faces, and they were located within the outer courtyard of the Temple.

The Lord again appears to Solomon in a dream

⁹When Solomon had finished building all that he desired, the Lord appeared to him a second time in a dream and said to him, "I have heard the prayer you made before me, and have consecrated the Temple which you have built. My name, my eyes and my heart will always be there."

David's conditional covenant confirmed to Solomon

¹⁰"As for you, if you walk before me in integrity of heart and uprightness as did David your father, and obey all my commandments and observe my laws, I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever. ¹¹You will never fail to have a descendant on the throne of Israel."

Solomon warned that if he or his descendants serve other gods Israel will be cut off

¹²"But if you or your descendants turn away from me and serve other gods, then I

will cut off Israel from the land I have given them and will reject this Temple."

The Temple will become a ruin

¹³"Israel will become a hiss and a byword among all nations, and this Temple will be a ruin. ¹⁴All who pass by will be appalled and say, 'Why has Jehovah done such a thing to this Temple and this land?'"

¹⁵"Others will answer, 'It is because they forsook Jehovah their God and served other gods. That is why all this disaster is upon them.'"

Solomon rebuilds many towns

¹⁶When Solomon had finished building the Temple and his own house, he gave twenty towns in Galilee to Hiram, king of Tyre, for Hiram had supplied him with all the cedar and pine and gold he wanted.

King Hiram displeased with towns Solomon gave him

¹⁷Hiram went to inspect the towns, but he was displeased with them and pronounced them worthless.

Solomon rebuilds the towns

¹⁸So Solomon rebuilt the towns and settled his own people in them. He also rebuilt Gezer.^{F*}

¹⁹Now Pharaoh, king of Egypt had attacked Gezer and put to death its Canaanite inhabitants, and set it on fire. He then gave the town as a wedding gift to his daughter, Solomon's wife.

King Solomon builds ships

²⁰Solomon built ships at Ezion Geber on the tip of the Red Sea, and Hiram king of Tyre sent sailors who knew the sea, to man the fleet with Solomon's men.

Treasures brought back from distant lands

²¹Every three years the fleet returned, carrying gold, silver, ivory, monkeys and peacocks.

²²They also sailed to Ophir^{F*} and brought back almu wood,^{F*} precious stones, and 420 talents of gold^{F*} which they delivered to King Solomon.

²³The king used the almu wood to make pedestals for use in the Temple and in his royal palace, and to make harps and lyres for the musicians.

²⁴He used the gold to make 200 large shields and 300 smaller shields of hammered gold, and put them in his palace.

Solomon's trade in chariots and horses

²⁵Solomon would import chariots from Egypt and horses from Cilicia,^{F*} and then export them to the northern kings. ²⁶He received 600 shekels of silver^{F*} for a chariot, and 150 shekels for a horse.

*18 A Canaanite town west of Jerusalem near the land of the Philistines.

*22 Saudi Arabia at the southern tip of the Red Sea.

*22 Scented, ruby red wood that takes a high polish.

*22 About 14.5 tonnes.

*25 Cilicia is now part of Turkey.

*26 A shekel of silver was worth about a days wages.

1 KINGS 21

²⁶Solomon himself had 1400 chariots, 4000 stalls for his chariot horses, and 12,000 horses.



The region of Ezion Geber on the Red Sea where Solomon built ships.

Solomon's magnificent throne

²⁷Solomon also made a great throne, inlaid with ivory and overlaid with fine gold. It had six steps leading up to it. ²⁸Two lions stood on each step, one either side, twelve lions in all. A lion also stood either side of the throne. The back was circular. ²⁹Nothing like it had ever been made for any other king.

Solomon's gold revenues

³⁰The weight of gold that Solomon received each year was 666 talents,^{F*} not including the revenues from merchants and traders and from all the Arabian kings and the governors of the land.

Silver considered of little value in Solomon's day

³¹All the king's drinking goblets and all the household articles in the palace were of pure gold. ³²Nothing was made of silver for it was considered of little value in Solomon's day.

³³King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth.

Visitors with gifts from all over the world

³⁴The whole world sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart. ³⁵Year after year, all who came brought gifts. Articles of gold and silver, robes, weapons, spices, horses, and mules.

³⁶The king made silver and gold as common in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar as plentiful as sycamore.

The queen of Sheba visits Solomon to test him

³⁷The queen of Sheba^{F*} heard of the fame of Solomon and came to test him with hard questions.

³⁸She arrived at Jerusalem with a great caravan of camels carrying spices, 120 talents of gold,^{F*} and many precious stones.

³⁹She spoke with Solomon about all that she had on her mind and he answered all her questions. No question was too hard for him to answer.

The queen of Sheba is overwhelmed

⁴⁰When the queen of Sheba heard the wisdom of Solomon, and saw the palace he

had built, the food on his table, his officials and attending servants in their robes, his cup-bearers, and the sacrifices he made at the Temple of the Lord, she was overwhelmed.

⁴¹She said to the king, "The report I heard in my own land about you is true, but I did not believe it until I came and saw with my own eyes. Not even half was told me. ⁴²In wisdom and wealth you far exceed the report I heard. How fortunate are your officials to continually stand before you and hear your wisdom. ⁴³I praise Jehovah your God who has placed you on the throne of Israel."

⁴⁴King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba all she desired, even more than she had brought to him, and she returned with her retinue to her own country.

21

King Solomon's many wives and concubines

¹King Solomon however married many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter. Women from nations about which the Lord had said, "**You must not intermarry with them, for they will surely turn your hearts after their gods.**"

²Solomon had 700 wives of royal status and 300 concubines.^{F*}

Solomon's foreign wives lead him into idolatry

³But as Solomon grew older, his wives turned his heart toward other gods. He was not as faithful to Jehovah his God as was his father David.

Solomon builds his wives hilltop shrines to foreign gods

⁴On a hilltop near Jerusalem, Solomon built a shrine for Chemosh, the detestable god of Moab, and for Molech, the abominable god of the Ammonites. ⁵He also did the same for his other foreign wives who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their gods.

The Lord becomes angry with Solomon's idolatry and decides to tear the kingdom away from him

⁶The Lord therefore became angry with Solomon, for his heart had turned away from him, yet he had appeared to him twice.

⁷He sent this word to Solomon: "**Since you have not kept my commandments, I will tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your officials. ⁸Nevertheless for the sake of David your father I will not do it during your lifetime. However I will tear it out of the hand of your son.**"

David's descendants still to rule over Judah

⁹"**Yet I will not tear the whole kingdom from your son. He will rule over one tribe for the sake of David and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen.**"

The Lord raises up two enemies against Solomon

¹⁰Then the Lord raised up two enemies

*30 Approx 23 tonnes.

*37 Modern day Yemen.

*38 About 4 tonnes.

*2 A concubine was a wife of inferior social status.

against Solomon; Hadad of Edom and Rezon of Syria.

Hadad of Edom

¹¹In earlier years, when David was fighting with Edom, Joab had struck down all the men in Edom, but Hadad who was still only a young man fled to Egypt. Pharaoh was pleased with Hadad and gave him a sister of his own wife in marriage. ¹²When Hadad heard of the deaths of David and Joab he left Egypt and returned to Edom.

Rezon of Syria

¹³Rezon had fled from his master, the king of Syria and become leader of a band of rebels. When David destroyed the forces of Syria, he and the rebels went to Damascus and took control of Syria.

¹⁴Rezon was Israel's enemy as long as Solomon lived. He reigned over Syria and despised Israel, adding to the trouble caused by Hadad.

Solomon's capable official Jeroboam

¹⁵Now Jeroboam, an Ephraimite was a very capable young man. When Solomon was building terraces to fill in the gap in the wall of the city, he saw how well the young man worked and made him one of his officials. He put Jeroboam in charge of the labour force of the northern tribes.

Ahijah the prophet sent to Jeroboam

¹⁶One day when Jeroboam was walking alone out in the country, he met Ahijah the prophet who was wearing a new cloak. Ahijah took off the new cloak and tore it into twelve pieces.

Jeroboam to be king over ten tribes

¹⁷Then Ahijah said to Jeroboam, "Take ten pieces for yourself, for Jehovah the God of Israel says, 'I am about to tear the kingdom out of Solomon's hand and give you ten tribes.'^{F*} ¹⁸I will do this because he has forsaken me and worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Molech the god of the Ammonites. He has not walked in my ways and kept my commandments."

Solomon's son still to rule over Judah

¹⁹"But for the sake of my servant David, and the city of Jerusalem, a son of Solomon will still rule over one tribe, that the house of David may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem, the city where I chose to put my name."

Jeroboam promised a long dynasty if faithful

²⁰"As for yourself, you will rule over all that your heart desires and be king over Israel. ²¹If you keep my commandments and walk in my ways as David my servant did, I will be with you and will build you a dynasty as enduring as the one I promised David, and I will give Israel to you."

²²"I will punish David's descendants, but not forever."

Solomon tries to kill Jeroboam who flees to Egypt

²³When Jeroboam rebelled against the king, Solomon tried to kill him, so Jeroboam fled to Egypt.

King Solomon dies and his son Rehoboam becomes king

²⁴Solomon reigned over all Israel for forty years, then he rested with his fathers and was buried in Jerusalem and Rehoboam his son became king.

²⁵When Jeroboam heard of this, he returned from Egypt.

The leaders of Israel visit Rehoboam and ask for their heavy yoke to be lightened

²⁶The leaders of Israel visited King Rehoboam and said to him, "Your father Solomon put a heavy yoke upon us,^{F*} now lighten the heavy yoke he put upon us and we will serve you."

²⁷Rehoboam answered, "Return in three days for my answer." So the leaders went away.

Rehoboam consults his older officials who advise kind words

²⁸Rehoboam consulted with the older officials who had served his father Solomon and said to them, "How would you advise me to answer these people?"

²⁹They replied, "If you will serve these people, and speak kind words when you answer them, they will always be your servants."

Rehoboam's consults his younger officials

³⁰Rehoboam then consulted with the younger men who had grown up with him^{F*} and said to them, "What is your advice?"

Rehoboam's younger men advise harshness

³¹The younger men replied, "Say to these people, 'My little finger is thicker than my father's waist. My father made your yoke heavy, I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips, I will scourge you with scorpions.'^{F*}

Rehoboam answers the leaders of Israel harshly

³²Three days later when the leaders of Israel returned, Rehoboam answered them harshly. He followed the advice of the younger men and said, "My father made your yoke heavy, I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips, I will scourge you with scorpions."

Rehoboam rejected as king by other tribes

³³When the leaders of Israel heard this they answered:

"What share do we have in David?"

"To your tents, O Israel!"

"Rule over your own house Rehoboam!"

³⁴So the Israelites rejected Rehoboam as king and returned home. This was from the Lord to

*17 There were twelve tribes in Israel. Solomon was to retain one and Jeroboam have ten. The unassigned tribe would be the Levites who belonged to the Lord and were dispersed throughout Israel.

*26 Probably taxes on food and wealth.

*30 Rehoboam was about 40 years old at this time.

*31 A scorpion is believed to have been a leather lash containing metal spikes.

1 KINGS 21

fulfil the word he had spoken through Ahijah the prophet.

Jeroboam made king over all Israel except Judah

³⁵The leaders of Israel heard that Jeroboam had returned from Egypt, so they sent for him and made him king over all Israel. ³⁶Only the tribe of Judah remained loyal to the house of David.

Rehoboam prepares to fight for the kingdom

³⁷When Rehoboam the king went out with his official who was in charge of forced labour, the Israelites stoned his official to death. However the king managed to get into his chariot and escape back to Jerusalem.

³⁸Then Rehoboam mustered all the men of Judah and the Benjamites living in the region, 180,000 fighting men, to war against the house of Israel and regain the kingdom.

The Lord forbids Rehoboam to fight

³⁹But the word of the Lord came to Shemaiah the prophet saying, "**Say to Rehoboam and the house of Judah and the Benjamites, 'Do not fight against your brothers. Return home every one of you, for this is my doing.'**"

Rehoboam obeys the word of the Lord

⁴⁰So they obeyed the word of the Lord and returned home as the Lord commanded.

SONG OF SOLOMON

King Solomon is said to have composed 1005 songs (1 Kings 18:24) and this beautiful, sensuous and mildly erotic love song is held by the Jews to be the finest of all. It tells the Cinderella type story of the courtship of a lovely country girl to whom Solomon is betrothed.

There was evidently some controversy among Jewish Rabbis in 100 AD when the Hebrew Bible (our Old Testament) was being compiled, as to whether this song was suitable for inclusion. However some scholars argued successfully that the song was an allegory of God's love for his people and should therefore be included.

This allegory view is not widely held nowadays, in fact the book does not mention God at all. However the song is truly beautiful and edifying in the way it captures the wonder and beauty of young love.

AUTHOR Solomon, king of Israel.

"Arise my dearest, my beautiful one. Come with me. The rains have ended and the flowers are appearing. The season of singing has begun." Song of Solomon 2:3

1

Betrothed Maiden ¹"Kiss me with the kisses of your mouth, for your love is more delightful than wine. ²Oh how pleasing is your fragrance. No wonder the maidens love you. Take me away with you, let us hurry!"

³"The king has brought me into his palace. I am dark yet lovely, dark like the tents of the Arabians. ⁴Do not stare at me O daughters of Jerusalem because I am darkened by the sun. My brothers forced me to take care of the vineyards and I have not cared for my own vineyard." F*

King Solomon ⁵"You attract me my love, as a mare harnessed to a chariot of Pharaoh." F*

⁶"How lovely is your hair upon your cheeks, falling softly around your neck like strings of jewels. I will make for you ornaments of gold, inlaid with silver."

Maiden ⁷"While the king reclined upon his couch, his perfume spread its fragrance. O my beloved, you are to me like a sachet of myrrh, resting between my breasts, like a cluster of henna blossoms from the vineyards of En Gedi."

King Solomon ⁸"How beautiful you are my love. How lovely, and your eyes are gentle like doves."

Maiden ⁹"And how handsome you are my

beloved, and how charming. ¹⁰Will you look upon me as a rose of Sharon, as a lily of the valley?"

King Solomon ¹¹"Like a lily among thorns is my dearest among the maidens."

Maiden ¹²"Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest, is my lover among the young men. How I delight to sit in your shade. And your fruit is sweet to my taste. Refresh me with apples for I am faint with love."

2

Maiden ¹"Listen! It is my beloved! He is coming. Bounding over the hills. My beloved is like a young stag. ²There he stands behind our wall, gazing through the lattice. My beloved speaks. He calls to me."

King Solomon ³"Arise my dearest, my beautiful one. Come with me. The rains have ended and the flowers are appearing. The season of singing has begun. The song of the dove is heard. ⁴The fig trees are forming their fruit and blossoming vines are spreading their fragrance. Arise my beautiful one, come with me."

Maiden ⁵"My beloved is mine and I am his. We roam among the flowers until the shadows lengthen in the cool of the day. ⁶Time to depart my beloved. Be like a young stag on the hills."

*3 ie Her own body.

*5 Normally only stallions were used to pull Egyptian chariots.

SONG OF SOLOMON 3

- ⁷"All night long on my bed, my heart desired the one I loved. So I said, 'I will arise and search for him in the streets and squares of the city.'"
- ⁸"I searched, but did not find him. The watchmen found me as they made their rounds in the city. 'Have you seen the one my heart loves?'"
- ⁹"Then I found the one I loved. I held him and would not let him go until I had brought him to my mother's house, to the room of her who conceived me."

3

- Maiden** ¹"Here he comes, up from the desert, fragrant with incense from the spices of the merchant. It is Solomon in his carriage, escorted by sixty warriors, the noblest of Israel, all experienced in battle and each with his sword at his side."
- ²"King Solomon made his carriage of wood from Lebanon. Its posts he made of silver, the roof of gold, the seat of ivory, upholstered in purple cloth."
- ³"Come you daughters of Jerusalem, look upon King Solomon, wearing the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of our betrothal, the day his heart rejoiced."
- King Solomon** ⁴"How beautiful you are my true love. O how beautiful."
- ⁵"Your eyes behind your veil are like doves. Your hair is like a flock of goats descending from Mount Gilead."
- ⁶"Your teeth are white, and evenly matched, like a flock of sheep just shorn."
- ⁷"Your mouth is lovely, and your shapely lips red, like scarlet ribbon."
- ⁸"Your cheeks glow within your veil, like two halves of a pomegranate."
- ⁹"Your neck is like the tower of David, smooth and elegant, bejewelled with a thousand shields."
- ¹⁰"Your breasts are like two graceful fawns, that browse among the lilies."
- ¹¹"All beautiful you are my dearest, there is no flaw in you."
- ¹²"You have captured my heart my bride, you have stolen my heart with one glance of your eyes. How delightful is your love. More pleasing is your love than wine, and the fragrance of your perfume than any spice."
- ¹³"Your lips are sweet as the honeycomb. Milk and honey is on your tongue."
- ¹⁴"The fragrance of your clothing is like the fragrance of Mount Lebanon."
- ¹⁵"You are a hedged garden, with its own spring my bride. Your plants are pomegranates with choice fruits, henna, spikenard, saffron, calamus and cinnamon and every kind of incense

tree, with myrrh, aloes and all the finest spices."

Maiden ¹⁶"Awaken O wind. Send a breeze upon my garden. Let the fragrance be wafted to my beloved. Let him come to his garden and taste its choice fruits."

King Solomon ¹⁷"I have come into my garden my bride. I have gathered my myrrh and my spice. I have eaten my honeycomb. I have drunk my wine and my milk."

4

- Maiden** ¹"I slept, but my heart dreamed that my beloved was knocking."
- King Solomon** ²"Open to me my darling, my dove, my flawless one. My hair is wet with the dew of the night."
- Maiden** ³"I have removed my robe. Must I put it on again? I have washed my feet. Must I soil them again?"
- ⁴"My beloved thrust his hand through the latch-opening. My heart began to pound for him. I arose to open the door for my lover. I opened the door but he was not there."
- ⁵"My heart sank. I called him but he did not answer. I went to find him. The watchmen found me as they made their rounds in the city. They hit me and bruised me and took away my cloak."

5

- Maiden** ¹"My beloved is radiant and rosy cheeked, outstanding among ten thousand men."
- ²"His countenance is golden brown, his hair is wavy and black as a raven."
- ³"His eyes are like doves, washed in milk and mounted like jewels."
- ⁴"His lips are like lilies dripping with myrrh."
- ⁵"His arms are rods of gold and his body polished ivory."
- ⁶"His legs are pillars of marble with feet of gold."
- ⁷"His appearance is like Mount Lebanon, and choice as the cedars. He is altogether delightful. He is my beloved. He is my friend."
- ⁸"My beloved has gone down to his garden to gather flowers. I belong to my beloved and he is mine."
- King Solomon** ⁹"You are beautiful my dearest, as lovely as Jerusalem, as majestic as troops with banners. Avert your gaze for your eyes overwhelm me."
- ¹⁰"Sixty queens there be, and eighty concubines, but you my dove, my perfect one, are unique."

6

Maiden ¹"I went down to the nut orchard, to look at the blossoms and to see whether the vines had budded, and if the pomegranates were in bloom. ²Before I knew it my beloved had set me in his royal chariot."

King Solomon ³"Your sandalled feet are beautiful, O queenly maiden."

⁴"Your curvaceous thighs are like the work of a craftsman's hands."

⁵"Your navel is a delicately shaped wine goblet."

⁶"Your waist, a mound of wheat, encircled by lilies."

⁷"Your breasts are twin fawns."

⁸"Your neck is an ivory tower."

⁹"Your eyes are deep and clear, like the pools of Heshbon."

¹⁰"Your nose is noble, as a peak of Mount Lebanon."

¹¹"Your head crowns you, like Mount Carmel."

¹²"Your flowing hair is like royal tapestry. The king is held captive by its tresses."

¹³"How graceful and fair and full of delights you are."

¹⁴"Your stature is stately, like the palm. How I desire to climb the palm tree and take hold of its fruit."

¹⁵"Your breasts are full, like clustered grapes."

¹⁶"Your breath is fragrant, like apple nectar."

¹⁷"Your lips are sweet, like fine wine and soft to the caress of my kiss."

Maiden ¹⁸"Come my beloved, let us go out to the countryside and lodge the night in a village. We will rise early and stroll among the vineyards, and see whether the blossoms have opened and if the pomegranates are in bloom. There I will give you the love I have stored up for you."

¹⁹"O if only you were my brother. Then I could kiss you openly and nobody would tease me. Then I would take you home to my mother's house and give you my spiced pomegranate wine to drink."

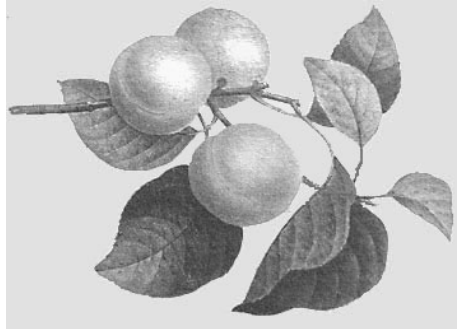
²⁰"O my apple tree, you awakened my love, there in the palace where your mother conceived you and gave you birth.

²¹Seal me to your heart, for love is as strong as death. Many waters cannot quench love, rivers cannot wash it away. If one offered all the wealth of his house for love it would be scorned."

²²"My brothers once said of me, 'We have a young sister and her breasts are ripening. What shall we do when a man comes to claim her? If she be a wall we will build towers of silver on her. If she be a door we will bar her with planks of cedar.'"

²³"Now I am a wall, and my breasts are like the towers, and I have brought contentment to your eyes."

²⁴"You O Solomon have vineyards in Baal Hamon and let them out to tenants for a thousand shekels of silver. ²⁵My own vineyard is also mine to give, and you O Solomon may have the thousand shekels. Come away my beloved, be like a young stag on the spice-laden mountains."



Pomegranate. A shapely, apple-sized fruit with a sweet juice.

ECCLESIASTES

Ecclesiastes means ‘The Teacher’ a title by which King Solomon was apparently known.

With his life largely behind him the famous king takes stock of his great achievements and life in general. He comes to the disenchanted conclusion that all man’s achievements during his mortal life on earth are vanity (in the sense of being futile and worthless) and that life has many sorrows, especially for sinners. He concludes that the best a man can do is to be content with his lot in life, to do good, enjoy his food and drink, love his wife, love his work, and obey God.

The book of Ecclesiastes is occasionally negative in tone and many scholars have questioned its place in the Bible, however it should be remembered that Solomon, though blessed with wisdom from God to govern well, was not a prophet. He did not see the glorious visions of the future such as the golden age of the future millennium (Isaiah chapter 11) or the eventual new earth and ultimate glory of the New Jerusalem (Revelation chapter 17) as did the prophet Isaiah and the apostle John. Nor do Solomon’s words reveal a personal intimacy with God as do the Psalms of his father David. Therefore the book of Ecclesiastes like the book of Proverbs is classed by Jewish Rabbis as wisdom literature, not sacred inspired writing.

Nevertheless, Ecclesiastes is full of wise advice and encourages a godly way of life. It is widely quoted from and is a rich addition to the world’s classical literature.

AUTHOR King Solomon.

Naked a man came from his mother’s womb and naked he will depart.

Ecclesiastes 3:17

CONTENTS

Chapter

Man’s labour on earth vanity	1	Hoarded wealth often lost	3
Nothing new under the sun	1	Wealth and honour cannot always be enjoyed	3
Man’s lot not a happy one	1	A stillborn child better off than a dishonoured man	3
With much knowledge comes much sorrow	1	Fools sometimes put in high positions	3
Pleasures and worldly possessions all vanity	1	Sorrow good for the heart	3
Wisdom better than foolishness	1	Righteousness no guarantee of long life	4
Eat, drink and find satisfaction in work	1	Solomon unable to find true wisdom	4
Sinners gather wealth for the upright	1	Only one upright man in a thousand	4
A time and a season for every purpose	2	Hypocrites praised by men	4
Everything beautiful in its time	2	The righteous rewarded on the day of judgement	4
Nothing better than to be content and do good	2	Eat, drink, be content and enjoy your work	4
God to judge every person at the appointed time	2	No man able to comprehend all things	4
Men die the same as the animals	2	Both righteous and wicked join the dead	4
Nothing better than for a man to enjoy his work	2	The dead soon forgotten	4
Happier are those not yet born	3	It pleases God that you enjoy your food and wine	4
All achievement springs from male rivalry	3	Enjoy life with your wife whom you love	4
Better one handful with peace than two with trouble	3	Work with all your might	4
Two people better than one	3	The race is not to the swift	4
Words need only be few when praying to God	3	A poor man’s wisdom is despised	4
Fulfil a vow without delay	3	Proverbs of Solomon on wisdom	5
God will eventually right all injustice	3	Solomon’s advice to young men	5
Riches permit no restful sleep	3	Solomon was wise and wrote many proverbs	6
Naked we come and naked we depart	3	No end to the making of books	6
Enjoyment of wealth a gift of God	3	Conclusion	6

1

The words of Solomon

¹The words of Solomon son of David, king in Jerusalem.

Man's labour on earth vanity

²Vanity! Vanity! All is vanity!^{F*}

³What does a man gain from his labour as he toils under the sun?

Nothing new under the sun

⁴Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever.

⁵The sun rises, the sun sets, then hastens back to rise again.

⁶The wind blows to the south and turns to the north. Round and round it goes, ever returning on its course.

⁷All streams flow to the sea, yet the sea is never full. The water returns again to the streams.

⁸What has been will be again, there is nothing new under the sun.

Man's lot not a happy one

⁹I was king over Israel in Jerusalem. I devoted myself to study, and to explore by wisdom all that is done under heaven, and it is an unhappy lot that God has laid on men.

With much knowledge comes much sorrow

¹⁰I have seen the things men do under the sun. They are vanity, a chasing after the wind.

¹¹I said to myself, "I have acquired great knowledge, more than any man who ruled over Jerusalem before me." But I learned that this too, is chasing after wind, for with much knowledge comes much sorrow.

Pleasures and worldly possessions all vanity

¹²So I said in my heart, "I will test pleasure to find out if that is good."

¹³But that also proved to be vanity. Laughter is foolish, and what does pleasure accomplish?

¹⁴I tried cheering myself with wine and embracing folly, my mind still guiding me with wisdom.

¹⁵I undertook great projects. I built houses for myself, and planted vineyards.

¹⁶I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them, and created ponds to water them.

¹⁷I acquired many male and female slaves.

¹⁸I owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me.

¹⁹I amassed silver and gold.

²⁰I acquired singers and a harem, the delights of a man's heart.

²¹I denied myself nothing my eyes desired. I refused myself no pleasure. I became greater by far than any man in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me.

²²Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was vanity, a futile chasing after the

*2 Vanity is used in the sense of being 'futile and worthless.'

wind. ²³Nothing was gained under the sun. What more can my successor do?

Wisdom better than foolishness

²⁴Then I pondered wisdom, and also foolishness. I concluded that wisdom is better than foolishness, as light is better than darkness. For the wise man has eyes that see, while the fool walks in darkness. But I saw that the same fate overtakes both.

²⁵Then I thought in my heart, "The fate of the fool will overtake me also. What then have I gained by being wise? For the wise man like the fool will be forgotten in days to come."

²⁶So I wearied of life. All the things I had toiled for under the sun became meaningless to me, for I must leave them to another who comes after me, and who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool? This too is vanity.

Nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in work

²⁷What then does a man gain for all his toil and anxious striving under the sun?

²⁸There is nothing better for a man, than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work.

²⁹This I see is from the hand of God, and without him, who can eat or find enjoyment?

Sinners gather wealth for the upright

³⁰To the man who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and joy.

³¹But to the sinner, God gives the task of gathering wealth to hand over to the man who pleases him. This too is a chasing after the wind.

2

A time and a season for every purpose

¹There is a time and a season for every purpose under heaven.

²A time to be born and a time to die.

³A time to plant and a time to uproot.

⁴A time to destroy and a time to heal.

⁵A time to break down and a time to build up.

⁶A time to weep and a time to laugh.

⁷A time to mourn and a time to dance.

⁸A time to scatter and a time to gather.

⁹A time to embrace and a time to refrain.

¹⁰A time to find and a time to lose.

¹¹A time to keep and a time to discard.

¹²A time to rend and a time to sew.

¹³A time to be silent and a time to speak.

¹⁴A time to love and a time to hate.

¹⁵A time for war and a time for peace.

Everything beautiful in its time

¹⁶I have seen the burden God has laid on men, yet he has made everything beautiful in its time.

God has placed eternity in the heart of man

¹⁷God has also placed eternity in the heart of man.

Nothing better than to be content and do good

¹⁸Therefore, there is nothing better for a man than to be content, and do good while he lives,

ECCLESIASTES 3

that he may eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work. ¹⁹This is the gift of God, and all that God does will endure forever, and nothing can be added or taken from it.

God to judge every person at the appointed time

²⁰I saw something else under the sun, in the place of judgement, wickedness. But I thought, 'God will judge both the righteous and the wicked, for he has appointed a time for every purpose.'

Men die the same as animals

²¹I also thought, 'God's purpose is to test men,' but I also saw that men are like the animals, for the same fate awaits them both; from the dust they come, and to dust they return. ²²And who knows if the spirit of man rises upward, and if the spirit of the animal goes down into the earth.

Nothing better than for a man to enjoy his work

²³So I saw that there is nothing better for a man to do than to enjoy his work, for he cannot see ahead and know what will happen to him after he dies.



Carpenter at work in Israel. "There is nothing better for a man to do than to enjoy his work" (Ecclesiastes 2:23).

3

Happier are those not yet born

¹Again I looked, and saw oppression under the sun. I saw the tears of the oppressed, and that they had no comforter. Power was on the side of the oppressor. ²And I declared, "The dead are happier than the living, but happier are they who are not yet born, who have not yet seen the evil that is done under the sun."

All achievement springs from male rivalry

³I also saw that all achievement springs from man's rivalry with his neighbour. This too is vanity, a chasing after the wind.

Better one handful with peace than two handfuls with trouble

⁴Better one handful with peace than two handfuls with trouble and chasing after wind.

Two people better than one

⁵Again I saw something vain under the sun, a man all alone. He had neither son nor brother, yet there was no end to his toil. He was not content with his wealth.

⁶For whom was he toiling, and why was he depriving himself of pleasure?

⁷Two are better than one, for they obtain a better wage for their labour, and if one falls down, his friend can help him up. Also, if two lie down together they can keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone?

⁸Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of multiple strands is not easily broken.

Words need only be few when praying

⁹Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go to listen, rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools who know not they do wrong.

¹⁰Do not rashly pour out all that is in your heart. God sees all from heaven, so your words need only be few. Many words are vanity, rather revere God.

Fulfil a vow without delay

¹¹When you make a vow to God, fulfil it without delay. He has no pleasure in foolish men who make false promises.

¹²It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfil it. Why let your mouth lead you into sin?

¹³Would you say to the angel of God, "My vow was a mistake?" God would be angry at your words and may destroy your possessions.

God will eventually right all injustice

¹⁴If you see the poor oppressed and justice denied, be not over troubled by such things, for as one official is ruled over by a higher one, and another higher still, so above them all rules the King of the whole earth.

Riches permit no restful sleep

¹⁵Whoever loves money never has enough. This too is vanity. As your possessions increase, so do those who seek to devour them. So of what benefit are they to you, except to look upon?

¹⁶The sleep of a labourer is sweet, whether he eats little or much, but the abundance of a rich man allows him no restful sleep.

Naked we come from the womb and naked we depart

¹⁷Naked a man came from his mother's womb and naked he will depart.

¹⁸He will take nothing from his labour that he can carry in his hand.

¹⁹How then does it profit a man to toil for the wind, with frustration and troubles?

Enjoyment of wealth a gift of God

²⁰It is best therefore, that a man eat and drink and enjoy satisfaction in his work under the sun during the few days of life God has given him, for this is his lot. ²¹If God should give a man wealth and possessions, and allow him to enjoy them, he should accept this as a gift of God.

Hoarded wealth often lost

²²I have seen an evil under the sun; wealth hoarded to the harm of its owner and then lost through misfortune. There was nothing left for his son.

Wealth and honour cannot always be enjoyed

²³I have seen another evil under the sun; God gives a man both wealth and honour, but does not allow him to enjoy them. A stranger enjoys them instead.

A stillborn child better off than a long-lived man who has many children but is poor and dishonoured

²⁴A man may have a hundred children and live a long life, yet if he cannot enjoy life's good things, and receives not an honourable burial, I say that a stillborn child is better off than he. ²⁵Though the child never saw the sun or knew anything, it has more rest than does that man. Do not all go to the same place?

Fools sometimes put in high positions

²⁶There are other evils I have seen under the sun. Fools are put in high positions while the noble occupy low ones. I have seen slaves on horseback while princes go on foot.

Sorrow good for the heart

²⁷A good name is better than fine perfume, and the day of death better than the day of birth.

²⁸It is better for a man to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for death is the destiny of every man, and the living should take this to heart.

²⁹Sorrow is better than laughter, for sadness is good for the heart.

³⁰The heart of the wise will be found in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools will be found in the house of pleasure.

4

Righteousness no guarantee of long life

¹In this vain life of mine I have seen both of these: A righteous man perishing in his righteousness, and a wicked man living long in his wickedness.

²Therefore, put not your trust in being over-righteous, neither be over-wise. Neither be wicked or foolish, why die before your time?

³The man who reveres God will come forth in the end.

Solomon unable to find true wisdom

⁴I desired to test all things by wisdom, so I said, "I will acquire wisdom," but I could not acquire true wisdom. Wherever wisdom may

be, it is far off and very deep. Who can find it?

⁵So I turned my mind to knowledge, to search out the truth of things, and I saw the stupidity of wickedness. ⁶I also saw that a wicked woman is more bitter than death. Her heart is a snare and her hands are chains. A man of God will avoid her.

Only one upright man in a thousand

⁷While I was searching, I found only one upright man among a thousand, and not one upright woman among them all. ⁸This also I found; God made mankind upright, but they have gone astray along many paths.

Hypocrites praised by men

⁹I saw wicked men buried, yet they were men who had regularly attended the Temple and received praise in the city. This too is vanity.

The righteous rewarded on the day of judgement

¹⁰There is another vanity that occurs on earth; righteous men who get what the wicked deserve, and wicked men who get what the righteous deserve.

¹¹Although a wicked man commit a hundred crimes and still live a long life, I know it will go better with men who revere God, on the day of judgement.

Eat, drink, be content and enjoy your work

¹²So I commend the enjoyment of life, for nothing is better for a man than to eat and drink and be content. Then joy will accompany him in his work all the days God has given him under the sun.

No man able to comprehend all that goes on under the sun

¹³When I applied my mind to know truth I saw that no one can comprehend all that goes on under the sun. Despite his efforts to search it out a man cannot discover its meaning.

Both the righteous and the wicked destined to join the dead

¹⁴Even if a wise man claims he knows, he cannot truly comprehend it. So I reflected on this and concluded that both the righteous and the wicked, those who offer sacrifice and those who do not, have the same destiny, they join the dead.

The dead soon forgotten

¹⁵But he who is among the living has hope, for he knows that he will die, but the dead know nothing of what lies ahead. Even the memory of them is soon forgotten. They no longer have a part in anything that happens under the sun.

It pleases God that you enjoy your food and wine

¹⁶So eat your food with gladness, and drink your wine with a joyful heart, for it pleases God that you do this. Be clothed in white and anoint your head with oil.

Enjoy life with your wife whom you love

¹⁷Enjoy life with your wife whom you love all the days of this vain life that God has given you, for this is your lot.

ECCLESIASTES 5

Work with all your might

¹⁸And whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in Sheol^{F*} where you are going there is no work, nor planning, nor wisdom.

The race is not to the swift

¹⁹Again I saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither food to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding, nor favour to the learned, but time and chance happen to all.

²⁰No man knows what time will bring. As fish are caught in a net, so are men trapped by evil times that fall unexpectedly upon them.

A poor man's wisdom is despised

²¹I also saw under the sun this example of wisdom that impressed me: There was once a small city, and a powerful king came against it. He surrounded it and built siege works against it.

²²Now there lived in that city a poor but wise man, and he saved the city by his wisdom. Yet nobody remembered that poor man.

²³So I said, "Wisdom is better than strength. The quiet words of the wise are more to be heeded than the shouts of a foolish ruler. But a poor man's wisdom is despised."

Remember the days of darkness to come

²⁴Light is sweet and it pleases the eyes to see the sun. So let a man enjoy his years under the sun, but let him remember the vain days of darkness that lie ahead, for they will be many.^{F*}

5

Proverbs of Solomon on wisdom

¹It is better to hear a wise man's rebuke than to hear the laughter of fools. Like the crackling of thorns under the pot is the laughter of fools.

²Wisdom is good, and benefits those who live under the sun. Wisdom is a shelter, like money and preserves the life of its possessor.

³Wisdom can make one man more powerful than ten princes in a city.

⁴Wisdom brightens a man's face and softens its hard appearance.

⁵Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good.

⁶As dead flies give fine perfume a bad smell, so a little foolishness spoils wisdom and honour.

⁷The heart of the wise inclines to the right, but the heart of the fool to the left.^{F*}

⁸Do not ask, "Why were the old days better than these?" It is foolish to ask such a question.

⁹When times are good, be happy. When times are bad, remember that God has made the one as well as the other.

¹⁰There is not a righteous man on earth who always does good and never sins.

¹¹Do not listen to every word people say, you may hear your servant speak ill of you. For you know in your heart that many times you yourself have spoken ill of others.

¹²When sentencing for a crime is not quickly carried out, the hearts of the people are filled with schemes to do wrong.

¹³If a ruler's anger rises against you, do not leave your post, calmness can lay great errors to rest.

¹⁴Whoever quarries stones or splits logs may be injured by them.

¹⁵If the axe is dull, more strength is needed, but skill will bring success.

¹⁶At the beginning a fool's words are mere foolishness, at the end they are wicked madness.

¹⁷A fool's work wearies him, he can hardly find his way back to town.

¹⁸Woe to you O nation, whose king was once a servant and whose princes feast in the morning.

¹⁹Blessed are you O nation, whose king is of noble birth, and whose princes eat at the proper time, for strength and not with drunkenness.

²⁰If a man is lazy the rafters sag and his house leaks.

²¹Food is made to cheer, and wine to gladden, but money answers every need.

²²Do not curse the king, even in your bedroom, for a bird of the air may carry your words and report what you say.

²³Cast your bread upon the waters and after many days you will find it again. Give portions to others, for you know not when disaster may befall you.

²⁴Whoever awaits the wind will not sow. Whoever observes the clouds will not reap.

²⁵As you know not how the spirit enters the child being formed in a mother's womb, so you cannot understand the works of God.

*18 The spirit world of the dead. Sheol was believed to be located under the earth and therefore hidden from the sun. The Hebrew conception of the afterlife was that of a restless but shadowy existence in the spirit realm of Sheol, awaiting the time of the resurrection and judgement when the righteous spirits would again reunite with their physical body and live again on earth under the reign of the Messiah.

*24 See note on verse 18 above regarding the Israelite concept of Sheol, the spirit world of the dead (Hades in the new Testament). However compare the parable of the rich man and Lazarus told by Jesus in Matt-Mark-Luke 21:26-36 and also Revelation 5:5-12 and 12:2.

*7 In Israelite tradition the right hand often symbolises good and the left hand evil. See also Elijah 7:21 and Matt-Mark-Luke 29:23-29.

²⁶Sow your seed in the morning, and at evening let not your hands be idle, for you do not know what will succeed, whether this or that, or whether both will do equally well.

Solomon's advice to young men

²⁷Be happy young man, and let your heart give you joy in the days of your youth. Follow the ways of your heart, but remember that in all things you do, God will judge you.

²⁸Banish anxiety from your heart, for youth and vigour are fleeting.

²⁹Remember your Creator before the years come when you will say, "I have no pleasure in them." The years when men arise to the sound of birds but hear their songs only faintly. When they are afraid of heights and dangers in the streets, and desire is no longer stirred. ³⁰For all must go to their eternal home and their mourners walk the streets.

³¹So remember God, before the silver cord is severed and your body returns to the dust from whence it came, and your spirit returns to God who gave it.

Solomon was wise and wrote many proverbs

¹The teacher said, "All man's labour is vanity." He was wise and imparted knowledge to the people. ²He pondered and searched out and wrote many proverbs. He searched to find the right words and wrote what was upright and true.

³The sayings of the wise are like goads,^{F*} like firmly embedded nails.

No end to the making of books

⁴Think not of adding to these sayings, for of the making of many books there is no end and much study wears the body.

Conclusion

⁵Now all has been heard and here is the conclusion of the matter: Revere God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.

⁶God will judge you for every deed and nothing is hidden from him, whether good or evil.

*3 Goads are sharp pointed sticks used to urge on cattle.

ELIJAH

This book begins the history of the newly separated northern kingdom of Israel (later known as Samaria) and in particular the reign of the wicked but very human King Ahab, and his evil wife Jezebel. It also covers the life of Elijah, a great prophet after whom the book is named (see note below).

Elijah performed spectacular miracles and was eventually, like Moses, taken up bodily into heaven. This is known as being translated and appears to be necessary when a future appearance on earth is required. For 900 years later both Elijah and Moses appeared to Jesus and his apostles Peter, James and John on a mountain near Galilee. This appearance took place during what is traditionally known as ‘The Transfiguration of Jesus’ (Matt-Mark-Luke 17:23-31).

NOTE In order to maintain continuity in this Condensed Bible, the history of the short-lived kingdom of northern Israel has been separated out from that of the southern kingdom of Judah. The history of both kingdoms is combined in traditional Bibles (in the books 1st and 2nd Kings) and there is a continuous shifting back and forth between the two kingdoms which can be very confusing due to the differing kings and prophets.

The separate history of northern Israel is followed for 250 years until the nation is exiled by the Assyrians and disappears in history. It was this disappearance that gave rise to the expression ‘The Lost Tribes of Israel.’ The history of Judah is then picked up again, in 2 Kings beginning with the reign of Solomon’s son Rehoboam.

This separating out of the history of northern Israel has necessitated two additional books in this Condensed Bible and in accordance with biblical tradition they have been named after the two dominant prophets of the period, Elijah and Elisha.

AUTHOR

According to Jewish tradition the prophet Jeremiah was the compiler of this material. As Jeremiah lived about 250 years after the events described he would have needed to have drawn on previously written records. Two records known to have been available in his day and covering this period were “*The Annals of the Kings of Israel*” and “*The Annals of Jehu* (a prophet) *son of Hanani*.”

So the widow went home and did as Elijah had told her. Thereafter there was food every day for a year for Elijah and the woman and her son. The jar of flour never emptied and the jug of oil never ran dry, as the Lord had spoken by Elijah.

Elijah 2:29-30

CONTENTS

Chapter

King Jeroboam reigns over Israel from Shechem1	The king cursed for his idolatry1
He fears his people will revert to Judah1	King Jeroboam’s family to die unburied1
Jeroboam sins by setting up golden calf idols1	Jeroboam’s ill son to die1
The people forbidden to worship in Jerusalem1	Northern Israel’s eventual exile foretold1
King Jeroboam appoints non-Levite priests1	King Jeroboam’s son dies1
Jeroboam prepares to offer incense himself1	Jeroboam dies1
A prophet from Judah curses the false priests1	Nadab son of Jeroboam becomes king2
Jeroboam’s raised hand freezes in place1	Baasha kills Nadab and all Jeroboam’s family2
The Lord heals the king’s hand1	King Baasha angers the Lord2
Judean prophet’s obedience tested.....1	War between Judah and Israel2
The prophet from Judah disobeys the Lord1	Lord curses Baasha by Jehu the prophet2
Lord curses the prophet from Judah1	King Baasha dies and Elah his son reigns2
Prophet from Judah killed by a lion1	King Elah killed by Zimri the chariot commander2
The old prophet buries the Judean prophet1	Zimri kills Baasha’s entire family2
Old prophet mourns deeply1	Army make their commander Omri king2
Jeroboam does not change his sinful ways1	Zimri burns palace around himself2
King Jeroboam’s son becomes ill1	Half of Israel want Tibni as king2
Jeroboam sends his wife to enquire of a prophet1	Tibni killed and Omri made sole king2
Jeroboam’s wife goes in disguise1	Omri builds royal city of Samaria2
The prophet Ahijah is not deceived1	Omri dies and Ahab his son reigns2

Ahab the most wicked king yet	2	Over 100,000 Syrian casualties	5
Marries Jezebel a Sidonian woman	2	Ben-Hadad hides and pleads for mercy	5
Jericho rebuilt and the curse falls	2	Ahab spares Ben-Hadad's life	5
Elijah prophesies no rain for next few years	2	Prophet's attendant destroyed for disobedience	5
Elijah hides and is fed by ravens	2	Ahab's life to be taken for sparing Ben-Hadad	5
Elijah sent to a non-Israelite widow in Sidon	2	Ahab sullen and resentful at message	5
Miracle of the never failing flour and oil	2	Naboth refuses to sell Ahab his vineyard	6
The widow's young son dies	2	Ahab returns to Samaria depressed	6
Elijah prays and widow's son restored to life	2	Jezebel arranges murder of Naboth	6
In third year of drought Elijah sent again to Ahab	3	Naboth stoned to death	6
Faithful Obadiah who hid 100 prophets	3	Ahab goes to take possession of vineyard	6
King Ahab and Obadiah search for pasture	3	Elijah sent by Lord to meet Ahab in vineyard	6
Elijah asks Obadiah to bring Ahab to him	3	Ahab and Jezebel cursed for murder of Naboth	6
Elijah tells Ahab to gather all Israel to Mount Carmel	3	King Ahab's character	6
Elijah challenges the 450 prophets of Baal	3	Ahab humbles himself	6
Prophets of Baal fail to call down fire	3	Lord postpones Ahab's curse	6
Elijah taunts prophets of Baal	3	King of Judah comes to visit Ahab	7
Prophets of Baal shout and cut themselves	3	Ahab plans to recapture Ramoth	7
Elijah builds up Jehovah's ruined altar	3	Ahab's 400 prophets predict success	7
Offering, wood and altar drenched with water	3	King Jehoshaphat feels uneasy	7
Elijah prays for fire from Lord	3	Micaiah the prophet is summoned	7
Fire blazes down from heaven	3	Micaiah at first speaks sarcastically	7
The people acknowledge Jehovah as God	3	Micaiah prophesies death of Ahab	7
Prophets of Baal put to the sword	3	Lying spirit has deceived the other prophets	7
Elijah predicts rain that very day	4	Zedekiah the prophet angered by Micaiah's words	7
Heavy rain falls	4	Micaiah put in prison	7
Elijah outruns Ahab's chariot	4	Both kings go into battle	7
Jezebel swears to kill Elijah within 24 hours	4	King Jehoshaphat at first mistaken for Ahab	7
Elijah flees into desert	4	King Ahab shot at random by an archer	7
Elijah fed bread and water by an angel	4	Ahab bleeds all day and dies at sunset	7
Elijah travels 40 days to Mount Horeb (Sinai)	4	Dogs lick up king's blood	7
Elijah complains of persecution to the Lord	4	Ahab's achievements	7
Lord reveals his peaceful voice to Elijah	4	Ahab's son Ahaziah becomes king	8
Elijah sent to anoint two kings	4	Ahaziah falls through a lattice and injures himself	8
Elisha to succeed him as prophet	4	Ahaziah sends to consult Philistine god Zebub	8
Still 7000 in Israel who have not bowed to Baal	4	Lord rebukes king through Elijah	8
Elijah calls Elisha to succeed him	4	Elijah calls down fire on captains and fifty men	8
Elisha gives a feast then follows Elijah	4	Third captain humbles himself before Elijah	8
King Ben-Hadad of Syria attacks Samaria	5	Elijah goes to Ahaziah and prophesies his death	8
Ahab's agrees to Ben-Hadad's first demand	5	Ahaziah dies and his brother Joram becomes king	8
Ben-Hadad demands more	5	Joram gets rid of his father's image of Baal	8
Ahab refuses second demand	5	Elijah the prophet to be taken to heaven	8
Ben-Hadad swears to destroy Samaria	5	Elisha refuses to leave Elijah's side	8
Lord promises to defeat Ben-Hadad	5	Elijah and Elisha go to Jericho	8
Syrians flee before Ahab's young men	5	Waters of Jordan divide for Elijah	8
Heavy losses inflicted on Syrians	5	Elisha asks for a double portion of Elijah's power	8
Syrians to re-attack next spring	5	Chariot of fire separates Elijah and Elisha	8
Ben-Hadad plans next attack	5	Elijah carried upward in whirlwind	8
Ben-Hadad invades Israel with vast army	5	Jordan divides for Elisha	8
Lord to defeat the Syrians	5	Spirit of Elijah upon Elisha	8

Bold The Lord or an angel speaking.
Bold italics A prophet speaking under inspiration.

1

King Jeroboam reigns over Israel from Shechem

¹King Jeroboam fortified the city of Shechem, in the northern hill country of Ephraim and reigned over Israel from there.

Jeroboam fears that his people will revert to Judah if they continue to offer sacrifice at Jerusalem

²However Jeroboam thought to himself, "If the Israelites from the northern tribes continue to offer sacrifices at the Temple in Jerusalem, the kingdom shall again revert to Rehoboam

king of Judah. They will kill me and return to the house of David."

Jeroboam sins by setting up two golden calf idols to represent Jehovah

³So after seeking counsel, the king made two golden calves, one he set up in Bethel and the other in Dan.

The people forbidden to worship in Jerusalem

⁴Then he commanded his people saying,

ELIJAH 1

"You are no longer to go to Jerusalem to worship. These are your gods O Israel, the same God who brought you up out of Egypt."^{F*}

⁵This thing became a sin to the people as they began to worship the calves.

Jeroboam appoints non-Levite priests

⁶Jeroboam also made shrines on hilltops and appointed priests who were not Levites.

Jeroboam calls a festival and prepares to offer incense himself

⁷On the fifteenth day of the eighth month, a time of his own choosing, Jeroboam called a festival for the Israelites and went up to the altar he had built at Bethel to offer incense.

A prophet comes from Judah and curses the false priests

⁸But a prophet of God from Judah came to Jeroboam as he was standing by the altar at Bethel and cried out saying, "O altar, altar! Hear what Jehovah says, 'A son named Josiah will be born to the house of David.^{F*} On you he will sacrifice and burn the bones of the priests of the high places who now make offerings here.'"

⁹"As a sign, this altar will now split apart and the ashes upon it will be poured out."

Jeroboam's raised hand freezes in place

¹⁰When the king heard these words he raised his hand and pointed toward the prophet and said, "Seize him!"

¹¹But the hand of Jeroboam froze in place so that he could not bring it back to his side. ¹²At the same time the altar split apart as spoken by the prophet and its ashes poured out on the ground.

The Lord heals the king's hand

¹³Jeroboam pleaded with the prophet saying, "Pray for me that the use of my hand be restored." So the prophet prayed and the king's hand was restored.

The king invites the prophet home but he refuses

¹⁴Then Jeroboam said to the prophet, "Come home with me and eat and I will give you a gift."

¹⁵But the prophet answered the king, "Even if you give me half your possessions I cannot go with you, for the Lord commanded me saying, 'You must not eat bread or drink water nor return the way you came.'"

An old prophet tests the obedience of the prophet from Judah

¹⁶Now there was an old prophet living in Bethel whose sons told him all that the prophet from Judah had done that day.

¹⁷He said to his sons, "Saddle the donkey for me." So they saddled the donkey for him and he rode off after the prophet.

¹⁸He found him resting under an oak tree and said to him, "Are you the prophet who came from Judah?"

He answered, "I am."

¹⁹The old prophet said, "Come home with me and eat."

²⁰The prophet from Judah said, "I cannot, for I was commanded by the Lord 'You must not eat bread or drink water, nor return the way you came.'"

²¹The old prophet said, "I too am a prophet as you are. An angel spoke the word of the Lord to me saying, 'Bring him back with you to your house that he may eat bread and drink water.'" (But he was deceiving him.)

The prophet from Judah disobeys the Lord

²²So the prophet from Judah returned to Bethel with the old prophet and ate and drank in his house.

The Lord curses the prophet from Judah with a dishonourable death

²³While they were sitting at the table, the word of the Lord came to the old prophet and he cried out against the prophet from Judah saying, "Hear what Jehovah says: 'You have defied the word of the Lord your God and have not kept the command I gave you.'

²⁴You ate bread and drank water in the place where Jehovah told you not to. Therefore your body will not be buried in the tomb of your fathers.'"

The prophet of Judah is killed by a lion

²⁵When the prophet from Judah finished eating and drinking he went on his way, but a lion met him on the road and killed him. ²⁶His body lay there on the road, with his donkey and the lion standing beside it.

The old prophet buries the Judean prophet in his own tomb and mourns him deeply

²⁷Some people who passed by reported it in Bethel. When the old prophet heard he said to his sons, "It is the prophet who defied the word of the Lord. Saddle the donkey for me."

²⁸He went out and found the body of the prophet still lying on the road, with the donkey and lion standing beside it. The lion had neither eaten the body nor mauled the donkey.

²⁹So he picked up the prophet's body and laid it on the donkey and brought him back to Bethel to bury him. He laid him in his own tomb and mourned him saying, "O my brother."

³⁰Then he said to his sons, "When I die lay my bones beside his bones."

Jeroboam does not change his sinful ways

³¹Even after all this, Jeroboam did not change his sinful ways. He continued to appoint priests who were not Levites, and anyone who wished to become a priest he would consecrate for the hilltop shrines.

Jeroboam sends his wife in disguise to enquire of the prophet Ahijah regarding their ill son

³²Now a son of Jeroboam became ill, so the

*4 The calves represented Jehovah, nevertheless this type of worship was forbidden by the second of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 11:20).

*8 Josiah did not reign until many generations later. He was a righteous king of Judah who emptied the tombs and burned the bones of the false priests on that same altar (Nahum 1:11-12).

king said to his wife, "Disguise yourself so as to not be recognised as the queen and go to Ahijah the prophet in Shiloh, the one who told me I would become king. ³³Take ten loaves of bread with you and some cakes and a jar of honey and inquire of him as to what will happen to our son."

The prophet Ahijah is not deceived

³⁴Now the prophet Ahijah could no longer see clearly as his eyes were dimmed from old age. The Lord said to him, "**The wife of Jeroboam is on her way to you to enquire about her son for he is ill. When she arrives she will pretend to be somebody else.**"

³⁵When Jeroboam's wife arrived she pretended to be another woman, but when Ahijah heard her footsteps at his door he called out, "Come in wife of Jeroboam. Why this pretence?"

Lord curses Jeroboam's family to die unburied because of his idolatry

³⁶Jeroboam's wife entered and sat down. Ahijah said to her, "I have bitter news. Tell Jeroboam, the God of Israel says, '**I raised you up and made you king over my people Israel. I tore the kingdom away from the house of David and gave it to you.**' ³⁷**But you have not been like my servant David who kept my commandments and followed me with all his heart.**"

³⁸"You have done more wrong than all who were before you. You have made gods of metal and provoked me to anger and turned your back on me."

³⁹"Because of this I will bring disaster on your family. I will cut off from your house every last male and burn up the house of Jeroboam as one burns up dung until it is all gone. ⁴⁰**Dogs will eat those of your family who die in the city, and the birds of the air will feed on those who die in the country. Jehovah has spoken.**"

Jeroboam's ill son to die

⁴¹Then Ahijah prophesied, "**As for you wife of Jeroboam, when you set foot in your house your son will die and all Israel will mourn for him.**" ⁴²**He is the only one belonging to Jeroboam who will be buried, for he is the only one in whom the Lord has found anything good."**

Northern Israel's eventual exile foretold

⁴³"**The Lord will raise up for himself a new king over Israel, one who will cut off the family of Jeroboam.**" ⁴⁴**And in time the Lord will uproot Israel from this good land and scatter them beyond the River,^{F*} for they will provoke the Lord to anger by making Asherah poles.**" ^{F*}

⁴⁵"**He will give Israel up because of the sins Jeroboam has committed and will cause Israel to commit.**"

*44 The Euphrates.

*44 A type of totem pole. Asherah was a goddess whose worship involved sexual acts.

Jeroboam's son dies

⁴⁶Jeroboam's wife arose and returned home. As soon as she entered the palace her son died.

Jeroboam dies and his son Nadab becomes king

⁴⁷Then Jeroboam died and his son Nadab became king. Jeroboam had reigned over Israel for twenty-two years.

⁴⁸The other events of Jeroboam's reign, his wars and how he ruled are written in the Annals of the Kings of Israel.

2

Baasha kills Nadab and the rest of Jeroboam's family

¹Nadab the son of Jeroboam reigned over Israel two years. He did evil in the eyes of the Lord just as his father had done.

²Then Baasha of the tribe of Issachar plotted against Nadab and killed him while he was besieging a town of the Philistines, and became king in his place.

³As soon as Baasha began to reign he killed Jeroboam's entire family, as prophesied by the word of the Lord.

King Baasha also angers the Lord

⁴But Baasha also did wrong in the eyes of the Lord, walking in the ways of Jeroboam.

War between Judah and Israel during Baasha's reign

⁵There was war between Judah and Israel during the years of Baasha's reign.

Lord curses Baasha through prophet Jehu

⁶Then the word of the Lord came to the prophet Jehu, against Baasha saying, "**I lifted you up from the dust and made you king over my people Israel, but you walked in the ways of Jeroboam and caused my people Israel to sin and to provoke me to anger.**"

⁷**So I am about to consume you and your family. I will make your house like that of Jeroboam."**

Baasha dies and Elah his son becomes king

⁸So Baasha died, and his son Elah became king. Baasha had reigned over Israel twenty-four years.

Elah killed by Zimri his chariot commander

⁹Elah reigned in Tirzah two years, then Zimri who had command over half his chariots, plotted against him and killed him when he was drunk. Then Zimri succeeded him as king.

Zimri kills Baasha's entire family but only reigns seven days

¹⁰As soon as Zimri began to reign he killed Baasha's entire family as prophesied by the Lord.

¹¹Zimri reigned in Tirzah only seven days. The army was at that time encamped near a Philistine town.

The army make their commander Omri king

¹²When the army heard that Zimri had

ELIJAH 2

murdered the king, they made Omri the commander of the army king over Israel, right there in the camp.

Zimri burns the palace around himself

¹³Then Omri and all the army with him came and took the city Tirzah. When Zimri saw that the city was taken he set the palace on fire around himself and died.

Half of Israel want Tibni as king

¹⁴Then the people of Israel split into two factions. Half wanted Tibni for king, and half wanted Omri.

Tibni killed and Omri made sole king

¹⁵But Omri's followers proved stronger, so Tibni was killed and Omri became the sole king.

Omri builds the royal city of Samaria

¹⁶Omri reigned six years in Tirzah then purchased the hill of Samaria for two talents of silver. He built a city on the hill and called it Samaria.

Omri dies and Ahab his son reigns

¹⁷But Omri sinned more than all those before him. He reigned twelve years and then died and was buried in Samaria and Ahab his son became king.

Ahab the most wicked king yet marries Jezebel a Sidonian woman

¹⁸Ahab did more evil than any of the kings before him. He also married Jezebel, daughter of the king of the Sidonians and began to worship Baal. He even built a temple to Baal in the city of Samaria.

¹⁹Ahab also made an Asherah pole and provoked the God of Israel to more anger than did all the kings of Israel before him.



The royal city of Samaria (in distance) built by Omri.

Jericho rebuilt and the curse falls

²⁰In Ahab's reign a man by the name of Hiel rebuilt the walls of Jericho. He laid the foundations at the cost of his firstborn son Abiram, and set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son Segub, in accordance with the word of the Lord as spoken by Joshua.^{F*}

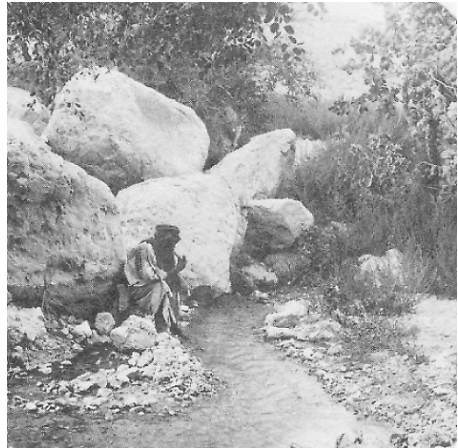
Elijah prophesies to Ahab no rain for next few years

²¹Then Elijah the prophet came from Gilead and prophesied these words to Ahab, "**As Jehovah the God of Israel lives whom I serve, there will be no rain during the next few years except at my word.**"

Elijah hides and is fed by ravens

²²Then this word of the Lord came to Elijah: "**Leave here and go hide at the brook Kerith east of the Jordan. You are to drink from the brook and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.**"

²³So Elijah did as the Lord commanded and the ravens brought him bread and meat morning and evening.



The brook Kerith by which Elijah lived.

Elijah sent to a non-Israelite widow in Sidon

²⁴After a time the brook dried up, for there was no rain in the land. Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah again saying, "**Go at once to Zarephath in the land of Sidon. There a widow will feed you.**"

²⁵So Elijah journeyed to Zarephath. When he arrived at the town gate he saw a widow gathering sticks. He called to her and said, "Would you please bring me a little water and a piece of bread."

²⁶She replied, "As surely as Jehovah your God lives I do not have any bread, only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am gathering sticks to take home to make a last meal for myself and my young son that we may eat and then die."

The miracle of the never failing flour and oil

²⁷Elijah said to the widow, "Do not fear, return home and do as you have said, but first bake a small cake of bread from what you have and bring it here to me. Then make something for yourself and your son. ²⁸For the God of Israel says, **'The jar of flour will not empty and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day**

*20 This prophecy is found in Joshua 3:20.

Jehovah brings rain again on the land.”

²⁹So the widow went home and did as Elijah said. Thereafter there was food every day for a year for Elijah and the woman and her son.
³⁰The jar of flour never emptied and the jug of oil never ran dry as the Lord had spoken by Elijah.

The widow’s young son dies

³¹Some time later the widow’s young son became ill and grew steadily worse, then he died.

³²The widow said to Elijah, “What have you against me man of God? Did you come just to remind me of my sin and to kill my son?”

Elijah prays and the widow’s son is brought back to life

³³Elijah said to her, “Give me your son.” He took the boy from her arms and carried him to the upper room where he slept and laid the boy on his bed.

³⁴Then he prayed crying out, “O Jehovah my God, must you bring tragedy upon this widow I am staying with by causing her son to die?”

³⁵Then he stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried out, “O Lord, let this boy’s life return to him!” And the boy’s life returned.

³⁶Elijah carried the boy back down to his mother and said to her, “Your son lives.”

³⁷The woman said to Elijah, “Now I know for sure you are a man of God.”

3

**In third year of drought
Elijah sent again to Ahab**

¹In the third year of the drought the Lord said to Elijah, “**Go present yourself again to King Ahab in Samaria and I will send rain upon the land.**”

The faithful Obadiah who hid 100 prophets

²Now a man named Obadiah who was a devout believer in the Lord was in charge of Ahab’s palace. While Jezebel the wife of Ahab was killing off the Lord’s prophets, Obadiah had hidden a hundred prophets in two caves and supplied them with food and water.

King Ahab and Obadiah search for pasture to keep the horses alive

³The famine was severe in Samaria and Ahab had said to Obadiah, “Let us go through the land and check all the springs and valleys. Maybe we can find enough grass to keep the horses alive.” F*

⁴So they divided the land they were to search, Ahab went in one direction and Obadiah the other.

Elijah meets Obadiah and asks him to bring Ahab to him

⁵As Obadiah was searching, Elijah met him. Obadiah recognised him and bowed down and said, “Is it really you my lord?”

⁶Elijah replied, “It is, now go say to your master ‘Elijah is here.’”

Obadiah fears that Elijah will disappear again

⁷Obadiah answered, “There is no place my master has not sent to look for you. I know not where the Spirit of the Lord may carry you when I leave you. If Ahab comes and finds you gone he may kill me.”

⁸Elijah said, “As the Lord lives I will present myself to Ahab today.” So Obadiah went and found Ahab and brought him to Elijah.

Elijah tells Ahab to gather all Israel and the prophets of Baal to Mount Carmel

⁹When Ahab saw Elijah he said to him, “Is that you, troubler of Israel?”

¹⁰Elijah replied, “It is not I who trouble Israel, but you and your father’s family. You have abandoned Jehovah and followed Baal.”

¹¹“Now, go summon all Israel to come to me on Mount Carmel. Also bring with you the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah who eat at Jezebel’s table.”

¹²So Ahab sent word throughout Israel and all the people assembled on Mount Carmel.

Elijah challenges the 450 prophets of Baal

¹³Elijah stood before the people and cried out, “How long will you waver between two opinions? If Jehovah is God, follow him! If Baal is God, follow him!”

¹⁴The people remained silent. Elijah continued, “I am the only one of Jehovah’s prophets among you, but Baal has 450 prophets here today. ¹⁵Therefore, obtain two bulls for us. Let the prophets of Baal choose one for themselves and cut it into pieces. Let them lay the pieces on wood but not set fire to it. I will do the same with the other bull.

¹⁶Then have them call on the name of Baal and I will call on the name of Jehovah. The god who answers by fire will be the true God.”

¹⁷The people replied, “Well spoken.”

The prophets of Baal fail to call down fire

¹⁸So the prophets of Baal took the bull given them and prepared it that morning.

¹⁹Then they called on the name of Baal crying out, “O Baal, answer us!” But there was no response. So they danced around the altar they had made.

Elijah taunts the prophets of Baal

²⁰At noon Elijah began to taunt them. He called out to them, “Shout louder! Perhaps Baal is deep in thought, or busy, or travelling! Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened!”

The prophets of Baal shout louder and cut themselves but still no response

²¹So they shouted louder and cut themselves with knives and swords as was their custom, until their blood flowed.

²²All afternoon they continued their raving until the time for the evening sacrifice drew near, but there was no response.

*3 King Ahab had a large force of chariots.



Mount Carmel where Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal.

Elijah builds up Jehovah's ruined altar

²³Then Elijah called to the people saying, "Come here to me." So they gathered to where he stood by the altar of the Lord which was in ruins.

²⁴Elijah took twelve stones and built up the altar, and then he dug a trench around it. He arranged wood on the altar and cut the bull into pieces and laid the pieces on top of the wood.

The offering, wood and altar drenched with water

²⁵He said to the people, "Fill four large jars with water and pour it over the offering and the wood." And they did so.^{F*}

²⁶Then he said, "Do it again," and they did it again. "Do it a third time," he ordered, and they did it a third time. The water ran down the altar and filled the trench.

Elijah prays for fire from the Lord

²⁷Now the time of the evening sacrifice had come. Elijah prayed saying, "O Jehovah, God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, let it be known today that you are God in Israel, and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command."

²⁸"Answer me O Lord, that these people will know that you O Jehovah are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again."

Fire blazes down from heaven

²⁹At these words fire from the Lord blazed down from heaven and burnt up the sacrifice. Also the wood, the stones, the soil and even the water in the trench.

The people acknowledge Jehovah as God

³⁰When the people saw the fire they fell face down on the ground crying out, "Jehovah, he is God! Jehovah, he is God!"

The prophets of Baal put to the sword

³¹Elijah commanded the people, "Seize the prophets of Baal. Do not let any escape!"

³²The people seized them and Elijah had them taken down to the Kishon river in the valley and put to the sword.

Elijah predicts rain that very day

¹Then Elijah said to Ahab, "Go back up, eat and drink now for there is a storm of rain coming."

²So the king went up to eat and drink while Elijah and his attendant climbed to the top of Mount Carmel. Elijah bowed on the ground with his face between his knees.

³He commanded his servant saying, "Go and look toward the sea." So his servant went and looked and came back and said, "I see nothing."

⁴Seven times Elijah said, "Go back." The seventh time the servant reported, "A cloud as small as a man's hand is rising from the sea."

⁵Elijah said, "Go say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot and return home before the rain stops you.'"

Heavy rain falls

⁶Meanwhile the sky grew black with clouds and the wind rose and a heavy rain began to fall. Ahab rode off to Jezreel in his chariot.

Elijah outruns Ahab's chariot

⁷Then the power of the Lord came upon Elijah and tucking his garment into his belt he ran ahead of Ahab, all the way to Jezreel.^{F*}

Jezebel swears to kill Elijah within 24 hours

⁸When Ahab arrived home he told Jezebel his wife everything Elijah had done and how he had put all the prophets of Baal to the sword.

⁹Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, "May the gods deal with me severely if by this time tomorrow I do not take your life also."

Elijah flees into the desert

¹⁰Elijah feared when he heard this and fled from Jezreel. He went to Beersheba in Judah and then travelled a day's journey into the desert alone.

Elijah fed bread and water by an angel

¹¹Elijah came to a broom tree and sat under it and prayed to die saying, "I cannot take any more Lord. Take my life. Is it not better for me to be with my fathers," and he lay down and fell asleep.

¹²Then an angel touched him, awakening him and said, "**Arise and eat.**" Elijah looked around and saw by his head a loaf of bread baked over hot stones, and a jar of water.

¹³He ate some of the bread and drank and lay down again.

¹⁴The angel of the Lord returned a second time and touched him and said, "**Sit up and eat more or your journey will be too much for you.**"

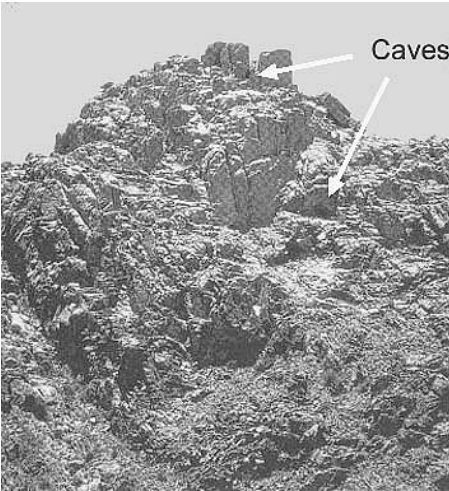
Elijah walks 40 days to Mount Horeb (Sinai)

¹⁵So Elijah ate and drank, and strengthened by that food he walked forty days until he reached Mount Horeb, the mountain of God^{F*} and went into a cave to spend the night.

*7 A distance of about 30 kms (18 miles).

*15 Mount Horeb or Sinai was the place where the Lord spoke to the Israelites and gave Moses the commandments. It would have been a journey of about 400 km (250 miles).

*25 The Kishon river runs by Mount Carmel.



The two caves on Mount Horeb (or Sinai) in one of which Elijah spent the night. Note also the shattered rocks, see verse 18.

Elijah complains of persecution to the Lord

¹⁶There the word of the Lord came to him saying, “**What are you doing here Elijah?**”

¹⁷Elijah replied, “I have been zealous for Jehovah God Almighty but the Israelites have rejected your covenant and broken down your altars and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left and now they are trying to kill me too.”

The Lord reveals his still, quiet voice to Elijah

¹⁸The Lord said, “**Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of Jehovah for I am about to pass by.**” ¹⁹Immediately there came a powerful wind on the mountain that shattered rocks, but the Lord was not in the wind.

²⁰Then came an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake.

²¹Then came fire, but the Lord was not in the fire.

²²Then came the still quiet voice of the Lord. Elijah covered his face with his cloak and went outside the cave and stood on the mountain.

Elijah sent to appoint two kings and to call Elisha to succeed him as prophet

²³The voice of the Lord asked him again, “**What are you doing here Elijah?**” Elijah answered the same as before.

²⁴Then the Lord said, “**Return the way you came back through the desert and go to Damascus in Syria. There appoint Hazael to be king over Syria. ²⁵Also anoint Jehu to be king over Israel, and anoint Elisha to succeed you as prophet.**” F*

*²⁵ Elijah anointed Elisha to be his successor, but it was Elisha who eventually appointed Hazael king over Syria and anointed Jehu king over Israel (see Elisha chapter 6).

Still 7000 in Israel who have not bowed to Baal

²⁶“**Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael. Yet I will spare the 7000 in Israel whose knees have not bowed to Baal.**”

Elijah calls Elisha to succeed him

²⁷Elijah returned to Israel and found Elisha helping men plough a field. He was driving the twelfth yoke of oxen. Elijah went up to him and threw his mantle^{F*} around him.

²⁸Elisha left his oxen and ran after Elijah and said to him, “Let me first kiss my father and mother good-bye, then I will come with you.”

²⁹Elijah replied, “Go back, I have completed my errand.”

Elisha gives a feast then follows Elijah

³⁰Elisha left him and went back. He took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them and burned the wooden plough to cook the meat and gave a feast for the people there.

³¹After that he set out to follow Elijah and become his assistant.



Ploughing with a yoke of oxen.

5

King Ben-Hadad of Syria and 32 other kings attack the city of Samaria

¹Now Ben-Hadad king of Syria, along with 32 other kings mustered their armies and with horses and chariots invaded the land of Israel to attack the city of Samaria.

Ahab's agrees to Ben-Hadad's demand for his silver and gold and wives and children

²Ben-Hadad sent messengers into the city to say to Ahab, “Ben-Hadad says, ‘Your silver and gold are mine and the fairest of your wives and children.’”

³Ahab answered them, “Say to Ben-Hadad, ‘As you demand my lord.’” And the messengers left.

Ben-Hadad next demands the possessions of Ahab and his officials

⁴However they returned again to Ahab and said, “Ben-Hadad says, ‘About this time tomorrow I will also send my officials to search your palace and the houses of your officials and take whatever they please.’”

*²⁷ A type of cloak.

Ahab refuses the second demand

⁵At this Ahab summoned the elders of Samaria and said to them, "See how this man seeks trouble. I have already consented to him taking my wives and children and my silver and gold."

⁶The elders replied, "Do not agree to his demands."

⁷So Ahab said to the messengers, "Say to Ben-Hadad, 'Your servant will do as you first demanded, but this second demand I will not meet.'"

Ben-Hadad swears to destroy Samaria

⁸Then Ben-Hadad sent this message, "May the gods deal with me severely if I do not thrash Samaria to dust. I have enough warriors to carry it away a handful each."

⁹Ahab answered, "One who puts on armour should not boast as one who takes it off."

¹⁰Ben-Hadad received this message as he and the kings with him were drinking in his royal tent. He immediately issued the order, "Take your positions!"

The Lord promises to defeat Ben-Hadad

¹¹Then a prophet came to Ahab and announced, "Jehovah says, 'You see this vast army, today I will give it into your hand, then you will know I am the Lord.'"

¹²Ahab said, "But who will do it?"

The prophet replied, "The Lord says, 'Your young officials will do it, and you are to begin the battle.'"

The Syrians flee before Ahab's young men

¹³So Ahab summoned his young officials, 232 men and then assembled the rest of the men, 7,000 in all. ¹⁴And at noon, while Ben-Hadad and the 32 kings with him were in their tents getting drunk, the young officials marched out of the city with the army of Ahab behind them.

¹⁵Ben-Hadad's scouts reported, "Men are advancing from Samaria."

Ben-Hadad replied, "Take them alive!"

¹⁶However each young Israelite official struck down his opponent. Then the Syrians began to flee before them with the Israelites in pursuit.

Ahab's men inflict heavy losses on the Syrians

¹⁷Ahab's men overpowered the horses and chariots of the Syrians and inflicted heavy losses, but Ben-Hadad escaped on horseback with some of his horsemen.

The Syrians to re-attack next spring

¹⁸After the victory the prophet came again to Ahab and warned him by the word of the Lord saying, "Strengthen your positions. Next spring the king of Syria will attack you again."

Ben-Hadad plans his next attack

¹⁹Meanwhile the officials of Ben-Hadad advised him saying, "Israel's gods are gods of the hills, that is why they were too strong for us. If we fight them on the plains we will be stronger than them. ²⁰Also, remove the kings from their commands and replace them with

army officers. Raise another army like the one you lost, horse for horse, chariot for chariot, then surely we will be stronger than they." Ben-Hadad agreed and acted accordingly.

Ben-Hadad again invades Israel with a vast army

²¹The next spring Ben-Hadad again invaded Israel and camped at Aphek.^{F*}

²²The Israelites marched out to meet them. The Israelite army looked like two small flocks of goats, while the Syrians covered the countryside.

The Lord to defeat the Syrians for saying that he was not a God of the plains

²³The prophet of the Lord came and said to Ahab, "Jehovah says, 'Because the Syrians have said, 'Jehovah is a god of the hills not of the plains,' I will deliver this vast army into your hands and you will know that I am the Lord.'"

Over 100,000 Syrian casualties

²⁴On the seventh day the battle began. The Israelites inflicted 100,000 casualties on the Syrian foot soldiers that day. ²⁵The rest of the Syrians, 27,000 of them fled into the city of Aphek, but the walls collapsed on them.

Ben-Hadad hides and pleads for mercy

²⁶Ben-Hadad also fled into the city and hid. His officials said to him, "The kings of Israel are merciful. Let us go to Ahab, perhaps he will spare your life."

²⁷So wearing sackcloth around their waists, and ropes around their heads, the officials went to the king of Israel and said, "Your servant Ben-Hadad says, 'Please let me live.'"

²⁸Ahab replied, "Bring him to me."

Ahab spares Ben-Hadad's life and makes a treaty with him

²⁹When Ben-Hadad came out of hiding, Ahab had him come up into his chariot.

³⁰Ben-Hadad said to Ahab, "I will return the cities my father captured from your father and will allow you to set up markets in Damascus."

³¹So Ahab made a treaty with Ben-Hadad and set him free. However this displeased the Lord.

A prophet's attendant is destroyed for disobeying an instruction in the name of the Lord

³²One of the prophets said to his assistant, "In the name of the Lord, strike me with your weapon," but his assistant refused.

³³The prophet said, "Because you have not obeyed the Lord a lion will take your life." Shortly afterward a lion killed him.

³⁴The prophet found another man and said, "In the name of the Lord, strike me with your weapon." So the man struck him and wounded him.

The prophet gives the Lord's message to Ahab

³⁵Then the prophet disguised himself with a head band over his eyes and stood by the road waiting for Ahab. ³⁶As the king passed by the

*21 A city on the coastal plain, suited to chariot warfare.

prophet called out to him saying, “Your servant went into the thick of battle, and one came to me with a captive and said, ‘Guard this man. If he escapes it will cost you your life or you must pay a talent of silver.’ But while I was busy the man escaped.”

³⁷Ahab said, “Then you know your sentence.”

King Ahab's own life to be taken for sparing Ben-Hadad's life

³⁸The prophet snatched the head band from his eyes and Ahab recognised him as one of the prophets. ³⁹The prophet said to the king, “Jehovah says, ‘You have set free a man I had determined should die. Therefore it is your life for his life, your people for his people.’”

Ahab is sullen and resentful at the message

⁴⁰So Ahab returned to his palace in Samaria, sullen and resentful.

6

Naboth refuses to sell Ahab his vineyard

¹Some time later, Ahab went to a man named Naboth in Jezreel and said to him, “Let me have your vineyard to use as a vegetable garden since it is close to my palace here in Jezreel. I will give you a better vineyard or pay you for it.”

²But Naboth replied, “Jehovah forbids that I should give you an inheritance of my fathers.”

Ahab returns to Samaria sullen and angry

³Ahab returned home to his palace in Samaria, sullen and angry and lay on his bed with his face to the wall and refused to eat.

⁴His wife Jezebel came in and said to him, “Why will you not eat?”

⁵He answered her, “Naboth refuses to sell me his vineyard.”

⁶Jezebel replied, “Is this how the king of Israel should act? Arise and eat. I will obtain for you the vineyard of Naboth.”

Jezebel arranges the murder of Naboth

⁷So Jezebel wrote letters in Ahab's name, and placing his seal upon them sent them to the elders who lived in Jezreel.

⁸This is what she wrote:

“Call a day of fasting and seat Naboth in a prominent place among the people. Seat two scoundrels opposite him and have them testify that he cursed both God and king. Then take him out and stone him to death.”

The elders of Jezreel stone Naboth and his sons to death

⁹The elders who lived in Naboth's city did as Jezebel had written. They sent word to Jezebel saying, “Naboth has been stoned and is dead and his sons with him.”

Ahab goes to Jezreel to take possession of the vineyard

¹⁰Jezebel said to Ahab, “Go to Jezreel and

take possession of Naboth's vineyard for he is no longer alive.” So the king arose and went to Jezreel.

Elijah sent by the Lord to meet Ahab in the vineyard

¹¹While he was taking possession of Naboth's vineyard Elijah the prophet came to him.

¹²Ahab said to him, “So you have found me my enemy.”

Ahab and Jezebel cursed by the Lord for the murder of Naboth and his sons

¹³Elijah replied, “I have found you, and Jehovah says, ‘Yesterday I saw the blood of Naboth and his sons. Have you not murdered a man and seized his property?’”

¹⁴“I will surely make you pay for this. On this plot of ground and in the place where the dogs licked up Naboth's blood, dogs will lick up your blood also. ¹⁵I shall bring disaster on you and cut off from your family every last male. I will make your house like that of Jeroboam and of Baasha, for you have provoked me to anger and have caused Israel to sin.”

¹⁶“As for your wife Jezebel, dogs will devour her in Jezreel.”

King Ahab's character

¹⁷There never was a man like Ahab who did so much evil in the eyes of the Lord, and he was urged on by Jezebel his wife. ¹⁸He also behaved abominably in going after idols, just like the Canaanites whom the Lord destroyed in the land.

Ahab humbles himself

¹⁹Nevertheless when Ahab heard these words of the Lord, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and fasted. He even slept in sackcloth and went around meekly.

The Lord sees Ahab's repentance and postpones the curse

²⁰Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah, “Have you seen how Ahab has humbled himself before me. Because he has humbled himself I will not bring this disaster on his house in his days, but will bring it in the days of his son.”

7

Jehoshaphat king of Judah comes to visit Ahab

¹For three years there was no war between Syria and Israel. In the third year Jehoshaphat, king of Judah came to visit Ahab king of Israel.

Ahab plans to recapture Ramoth

²Now Ahab had said to his officials, “Does not Ramoth in Gilead belong to us and yet we are doing nothing to retake it from the king of Syria.”

³So Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, “Will you join with me to fight against the Syrians who hold Ramoth?”

⁴Jehoshaphat agreed to do so but said to Ahab, “Let us first inquire of the Lord.”

King Ahab's 400 prophets predict success

⁵So Ahab brought together the prophets, about 400 men^{F*} and enquired of them, "Shall I go to war against Ramoth or shall I refrain?"

⁶They answered, "Go! Jehovah will give the city into the king's hand."

King Jehoshaphat feels uneasy

⁷But Jehoshaphat king of Judah was uneasy and asked, "Is there not a prophet of Jehovah here of whom we can inquire?"

⁸Ahab answered, "There is Micaiah, but I dislike him. He never prophesies anything good about me."

⁹Jehoshaphat replied, "A king should not speak that way."

Micaiah the prophet is summoned

¹⁰So Ahab called one of his officials and said, "Bring Micaiah at once."

¹¹Both kings were dressed in their royal robes and sitting on thrones by the gate of Samaria. The prophets were prophesying before them.

¹²The prophet Zedekiah had made iron horns and was declaring, "Jehovah says, 'With these you will gore the Syrians until they are destroyed.'"

¹³All the other prophets were prophesying the same thing, "Attack Ramoth and be victorious. The Lord will give it into the king's hand."

Micaiah advised to prophesy the same as the other prophets

¹⁴The messenger who had gone to summon Micaiah said to him, "All the other prophets are prophesying success for the king. Let your word agree with theirs and speak favourably to the king."

¹⁵Micaiah said, "I can only prophesy what Jehovah tells me."

Micaiah at first speaks sarcastically

¹⁶When Micaiah arrived, Ahab said to him, "Micaiah, shall I go to war against Ramoth or shall I refrain?"

¹⁷Micaiah answered sarcastically and said, "Attack and be victorious. The Lord will give it into the king's hand."

¹⁸The king said to him, "How many times must I make you swear to tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord?"

Micaiah prophesies the death of Ahab

¹⁹Then Micaiah prophesied, "*I saw all Israel scattered on the hills like sheep without a shepherd. Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 'These people have no master. Let each one go home in peace.'*"

²⁰Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "Did I not tell you he never prophesies anything good about me?"

A lying spirit permitted to deceive the other prophets

²¹Micaiah continued his prophesy, "*I saw Jehovah sitting on his throne with all the*

host of the heavens standing around, those to his right and those to his left."^{F*}

²²*Jehovah said, 'Who will entice Ahab into attacking Ramoth, and going to his death there?'*

²³*"One suggested this and another that. Finally a spirit stood before the Lord and said, 'I will entice him by being a lying spirit in the mouths of his prophets.'*"^{F*}

²⁴*"Jehovah said, 'You will succeed in enticing him, go do it.'*"

²⁵*"So Jehovah has permitted a lying spirit to influence all these prophets of yours. He has decreed disaster for you."*

Zedekiah the prophet angered by Micaiah's words

²⁶At these words, Zedekiah the prophet went up and slapped Micaiah on the cheek and said, "Who did the lying spirit go to when he left me? To you?"

²⁷Micaiah replied, "*You will find out on the day you hide in an inner room.*"

Micaiah put in prison

²⁸Then Ahab ordered, "Put Micaiah in prison and feed him on reduced rations of bread and water until I return safely."

²⁹Micaiah declared, "If you return safely the Lord has not spoken through me."

Both kings go into battle

³⁰So the king of Israel and the king of Judah went to Ramoth. Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "I will go to battle in disguise, but you wear your royal robes." So the king of Israel disguised himself and went into battle.

Syrian chariot commanders ordered to kill Ahab

³¹Now the king of Syria had ordered his chariot commanders who were defending the city, "Do not fight with anyone except Ahab the king of Israel."

King Jehoshaphat at first mistaken for Ahab

³²When the chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat they thought, "Surely this is the king of Israel." So they turned to attack him, but when Jehoshaphat shouted out, they realised he was not the king of Israel and stopped pursuing him.

King Ahab shot at random by an archer

³³But an archer drew his bow at random and his arrow hit Ahab the king of Israel between the sections of his armour.

³⁴Ahab ordered his chariot driver, "Wheel around and get me out of the fighting. I have been wounded."

Ahab bleeds all day and dies at sunset

³⁵All day the battle raged while Ahab stood

*21 Those to the left of the Lord are generally regarded as being Satan and his spirit followers.

*23 The lying spirit may have been one of Satan's spirit followers, probably one of the host to the left of Jehovah (see verse 21 above). The book of Job reveals that Satan has access to the Lord, at least in the heavenly realms above the earth and is more than willing to carry out any assignment that afflicts mankind.

*5 Probably the 400 prophets of Asherah mentioned in Elijah 3:11. These prophets would prophesy by occult powers.

propped up in his chariot facing the Syrians. The blood from his wound ran down into his chariot and as the sun set he died. ³⁶At this a cry spread throughout the army, "Every man to his home!"

³⁷So Ahab died and was brought to Samaria and buried there.

Dogs lick up the king's blood

³⁸They washed his chariot at a pool in Samaria where harlots bathed and the dogs licked up his blood as the Lord had spoken. ^{F*}

Ahab's achievements

³⁹As for the other events of Ahab's reign including all he did, the palace he built inlaid with ivory, and the cities he fortified, ^{F*} they are written in the book, The Annals of the Kings of Israel.

8

Ahab's son Ahaziah becomes king

¹After Ahab died in battle, Ahaziah his son became king. He also did evil, walking in the ways of his father and mother.

Ahaziah falls through a lattice and injures himself

²One day Ahaziah fell through the latticework of an upper room in his palace in Samaria and injured himself.

Ahaziah sends to consult the Philistine god Zebub

³He sent messengers to Ekron in the land of the Philistines to consult the god Zebub, to see if he would recover from his injury.

The Lord rebukes the king through Elijah the prophet for consulting a foreign god

⁴The angel of the Lord said to Elijah the prophet, "**Go meet the messengers of Ahaziah and say to them, 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to consult Zebub?'** ⁵**Therefore say to Ahaziah, 'Jehovah says you will not leave the bed you are lying on and will surely die.'**"

⁶Elijah met the messengers and told them what the Lord had said. They immediately returned to the king and gave him the message from the Lord.

Elijah wore a hair garment and a leather belt around his waist

⁷Ahaziah asked, "What kind of man told you this?"

⁸They replied, "He was a man wearing a hair garment ^{F*} and a leather belt around his waist." The king said, "That was Elijah the prophet."

Elijah twice calls down fire on a captain and fifty men

⁹So the king sent a captain and fifty men to

bring Elijah to him. The captain went to Elijah who was sitting on the top of a hill and said to him, "Man of God, the king says, 'Come down.'"

¹⁰Elijah answered, "***If I am a man of God, may fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men.***" Then fire blazed down from heaven and consumed the captain and his men.

¹¹At this Ahaziah sent another captain with his fifty men. The captain said to Elijah, "Man of God, the king says, 'Come down at once!'"

¹²But fire again fell from heaven and consumed both him and his fifty men.

A third captain humbles himself before Elijah

¹³The king sent a third captain with his fifty men. This captain fell on his knees before Elijah and pleaded, "Man of God, please have respect for my life and the lives of these fifty men, your servants."

¹⁴The angel of the Lord said to Elijah, "**Go down with him.**"

Elijah again prophesies Ahaziah death

¹⁵So Elijah went with him and said to the king, "Jehovah says, '**Because you sent messengers to consult Zebub you will surely die.**'"

Ahaziah dies and his brother Joram becomes king

¹⁶So Ahaziah son of Ahab died. He had reigned over Israel two years.

¹⁷Ahaziah had no son so Joram his younger brother became king. Now Joram did evil in the eyes of the Lord, but not as his father Ahab and mother Jezebel had done.

Joram gets rid of his father's image of Baal

¹⁸He got rid of the image of Baal that his father had made, nevertheless he clung to the sin Jeroboam had caused Israel to commit. ^{F*}

Elijah the prophet to be taken to heaven

¹⁹Now the Lord was about to take Elijah the prophet to heaven in a whirlwind. Elijah said to his assistant Elisha, "Remain here at Gilgal, for the Lord has sent me to Bethel."

Elisha refuses to leave Elijah's side

²⁰But Elisha said, "I will not leave you." So they went together to Bethel.

²¹At Bethel, prophets from the school of the prophets came out and said to Elisha, "Do you know that the Lord is going to take your master today?"

²²Elisha replied, "Yes I do know, be silent."

²³Then Elijah said, "Remain here Elisha, the Lord has sent me to Jericho."

²⁴But he replied, "I will not leave you."

Elijah and Elisha go to Jericho

²⁵At Jericho, prophets from the school there also said to Elisha, "Do you know that the Lord is going to take your master from you today?"

²⁶Then Elijah said, "Remain here Elisha, the Lord has sent me to the Jordan."

²⁷Again Elisha replied, "I will not leave you."

*38 The original curse was that Ahab's blood also be licked up by dogs in the vineyard of Naboth in Jezreel (Elijah 6:14), however, because of Ahab's repentance the curse was postponed and fell on his son Joram whose body was thrown into the vineyard of Naboth (see Elisha 6:41).

*39 Politically Ahab was one of the strongest kings of Israel. During his reign northern Israel was recognised as a major power in that part of the world.

*8 Probably woven camel or goats hair.

*18 The worshipping of calves at Bethel and Dan.

ELIJAH 8

So the two of them walked out to the Jordan. Fifty men of the school of the prophets watched from a distance.

The waters of the Jordan divide for Elijah

²⁸When they reached the Jordan, Elijah took his mantle, rolled it up and struck the water with it. The water divided to the right and to the left, and the two men crossed over and walked on.

Elisha asks for a double portion of Elijah's power

²⁹Then Elijah said to Elisha, "What can I do for you, before I am taken from you?"

³⁰Elisha replied, "Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit."

³¹Elijah said, "You have asked a difficult thing. However, if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be granted you."

A chariot of fire separates Elijah and Elisha

³²They continued walking and talking when suddenly a chariot and horses of fire appeared, and separated them.

Elijah is carried upward in a whirlwind

³³Then Elijah was carried upward in a whirlwind.

³⁴Elisha saw him taken up and cried out, "My father! My father! The chariot and horsemen of Israel!" until he could see him no longer.

³⁵Then Elisha tore his garments in grief.

The Jordan divides for Elisha

³⁶Elisha picked up the mantle that had fallen from Elijah and returned to the banks of the Jordan.

³⁷He took the mantle and struck the water saying, "Where is Jehovah the God of Elijah?" The water divided to the right and to the left and he crossed over.

The spirit of Elijah upon Elisha

³⁸The prophets from Jericho who were watching said, "The spirit of Elijah is upon Elisha," and they went to meet him and bowed to the ground before him.

Elijah not found

³⁹Then they said to him, "We have fifty able men, let us send them to look for your master."

Perhaps the Spirit of the Lord has set him down on some mountain or in some valley."

⁴⁰Elisha replied, "Do not send them."

⁴¹But they persisted so he finally said, "Very well, send them."

⁴²The fifty men searched for three days but did not find Elijah.



Elijah's journey to Mount Horeb.

ELISHA

The miracles of the prophet Elisha are the most spectacular of any prophet in the Old Testament. Elisha boldly asked of his mentor Elijah a double portion of his spirit (Elijah 8:30) and apparently received it.

Elisha raised a boy from the dead, healed a leper, fed a hundred men with a few small loaves of bread, multiplied a jar of olive oil, saw and heard events at distant locations, mass hypnotised an entire army, caused an axe head to float in water, purified poisoned soup, and permanently healed bad water. Even after his death, his bones brought a man back to life. Elisha's curses also came to pass immediately and dramatically.

Elisha appears to have been a somewhat gruff but caring person and would go out of his way to help people. He could speak his mind strongly when the occasion demanded. At one time Elisha strongly rebuked the king of Israel in front of two other kings (Elisha 2:12-13). Afterwards he called for a harpist to play music to soothe his mind so that he could receive revelation from the Lord.

AUTHOR The prophet Jeremiah, (see introduction to Elijah).

So Naaman went down and immersed himself in the Jordan seven times as Elisha had said, and his flesh became clear like that of a young boy. Elisha 4:14

CONTENTS

Chapter

Elisha heals the bad water of Jericho	1	Elisha summons Naaman to his house	4
Elisha mocked by young boys	1	Elisha sends out a message to him by Gehazi	4
Boys clawed by two she bears	1	Naaman walks away angry at message	4
Moab rebels at paying tribute to Israel	2	Naaman's servants reason with him	4
Israel prepares to attack Moab	2	Naaman dips himself in the Jordan and is healed	4
Israel invites Judah to join with them	2	Naaman proclaims Jehovah as only true God	4
Edom also joins Israel and Judah	2	Elisha refuses a gift from Naaman	4
Armies run out of water in desert	2	Naaman asks for some soil of Israel to worship on ..	4
Jehoshaphat asks if there is a prophet among them ...	2	Naaman asks approval to bow to the god Rimmon ..	4
Elisha harshly rebukes king Joram	2	Gehazi greedy for gain runs after Naaman	4
Elisha calls for a harpist to soothe him	2	Gehazi lies to Naaman	4
Elisha obtains revelation from the Lord	2	Naaman gives Gehazi silver and clothing	4
Lord promises that water will fill the wadi	2	Gehazi lies to Elisha	4
Moab to be spoiled	2	Elisha punishes Gehazi with Naaman's leprosy	4
Water flows into the wadi	2	The floating axe head	4
Moabites think the water is stained with blood	2	Elisha would warn Israel's king of Syria's plans	5
Moabites come out to plunder the camp	2	King of Syria sends an army to capture Elisha	5
Moabites flee and their towns are destroyed	2	Elisha's servant sees the hills full of chariots of fire ..	5
Royal city of Moab is besieged	2	Lord blinds Syrian army to reality	5
King of Moab sacrifices his son	2	Elisha leads Syrian army to the royal city	5
Great fury comes upon Israel	2	Elisha tells the king to feed the Syrian army	5
Miracle of the widow's oil	3	Syria later besieges the city of Samaria	5
Elisha shown hospitality by a woman of Shunem	3	Great famine in the city	5
Room built on their roof for Elisha	3	Report of cannibalism horrifies and angers king	5
Woman blessed by conceiving a son	3	King orders Elisha beheaded	5
The woman's son dies	3	Elisha aware of execution order	5
The woman sets off to find Elisha	3	King angry at Lord's lack of deliverance	5
Elisha sees her coming and sends Gehazi	3	Elisha prophesies abundant food tomorrow	5
The woman reveals her sorrow only to Elisha	3	King's officer skeptical	5
Gehazi sent ahead to try and revive boy	3	Four lepers find Syrian camp deserted	5
Elisha restores boy to life	3	Syrians had heard sound of a vast army	5
Elisha heals poisonous soup	3	The lepers begin to loot the camp	5
Miracle of 20 small loaves feeding 100 men	3	Lepers decide to report news to city	5
Naaman the Syrian army commander	4	The king is suspicious	5
Naaman goes to Israel to be healed of leprosy	4	Men sent to investigate	5
Naaman comes with gifts and letter from his king	4	Road strewn with discarded clothing	5
King of Israel angry at the letter	4	The people go out and plunder Syrian camp	5

ELISHA 1

Doubling king's officer trampled to death	5	Heads of Ahab's 70 sons sent to Jezreel	7
Elisha goes to Syria to appoint Hazael king	6	Jehu has them placed overnight by the city gate	7
Ben-Hadad the king of Syria ill	6	Jehu addresses people of Jezreel	7
Sends Hazael to Elisha to ask if he will recover	6	Jehu kills all Ahab's family in Jezreel	7
Elisha reveals that Ben-Hadad will be murdered	6	Ahab's officials, friends and priests also killed	7
Hazael will be king of Syria	6	Visiting relatives from Judah also put to death	7
Hazael murders the king	6	Jehu deceives the ministers of Baal	7
Hazael becomes king of Syria	6	Temple of Baal packed full	7
Jehu the army commander to be king of Israel	6	Eighty guards wait outside	7
Elisha sends a young prophet to anoint Jehu	6	All ministers of Baal put to death	7
Jehu reveals his anointing to his officers	6	Baal idol burned	7
The officers rejoice and sound a trumpet	6	Baal temple turned into a latrine	7
Jehu departs for Jezreel to kill Joram	6	Lord rewards Jehu	7
King Joram recovering from battle wounds	6	Land of Gilead lost to Syria	8
Ahaziah, king of Judah visiting Joram	6	King Jehu dies	8
Lookout at Jezreel sees Jehu coming	6	His son Jehoahaz becomes king	8
Joram sends out horsemen who do not return	6	Israel under the power of Syria	8
King Joram and Ahaziah go out in their chariots	6	Israel delivered from Syria	8
Jehu kills Joram with an arrow	6	Israel's army almost totally destroyed	8
Joram's body thrown on Naboth's field	6	Calf worship still practiced	8
King Ahaziah of Judah also killed	6	King Jehoahaz dies	8
Jezebel thrown from a window	7	His son Jehoash becomes king	8
Jezebel trampled to death	7	King Jehoash visits Elisha who is dying	8
Jezebel's body eaten by dogs	7	Elisha prophesies using a bow and arrows	8
Jehu writes challenging the elders of Samaria	7	Syria to be partially defeated	8
Elders of Samaria terrified of Jehu	7	Elisha's bones bring a man back to life	8
Jehu asks elders to behead Ahab's sons	7	Jehoash defeats king of Syria three times	8

Bold The Lord or an angel speaking.

Bold italics A prophet speaking under inspiration.

1

Elisha heals the bad water of Jericho

¹After the Lord took Elijah, the prophet Elisha stayed in Jericho. The men of that city came to him and said, "Our lord, this town is well located as you can see, but the water is bad and our women miscarry."

²Elisha said, "Bring me a new bowl with salt in it." So they did as he asked.

³Elisha went out to the spring and threw the salt into it saying, "Jehovah says, ***'I have healed this water. Never again will it cause death or miscarriage.'***"

⁴The water has remained wholesome to this day.

Elisha is mocked by young boys

⁵After this Elisha went up to Bethel. As he was walking along the road leading into the city, a large group of young boys from the city began to jeer at him shouting, "Go away baldhead! Go away baldhead!"

The boys clawed by two she-bears

⁶Elisha turned round and cursed them in the name of the Lord. Then two she-bears came out of the forest and clawed forty-two of the boys.

2

Moab rebels at paying tribute to Israel

¹Now the land of Moab raised sheep, and each year the king of Moab paid tribute to Israel of 100,000 lambs, and the wool of

100,000 rams. ²However after Ahab died the king of Moab rebelled against Israel.

³Therefore Joram who succeeded his father Ahab as king, mustered the army of Israel to attack and subdue Moab.

Israel invites Judah to join them in the attack on Moab

⁴Joram also sent this message to Jehoshaphat, king of Judah: "The king of Moab has rebelled against me. Will you join with me to fight against Moab?"

He replied, "We will go with you."

⁵Joram said, "By what route should we attack?"

Jehoshaphat answered, "From the south through the desert of Edom."

Edom also joins Israel and Judah

⁶So the armies of Israel and Judah set out. They were also joined on the way by the army of the king of Edom.^{F*}

The armies run out of water in the desert

⁷However after marching for seven days through the desert, the three armies and the animals with them ran out of water.

⁸Joram the king of Israel said, "Has Jehovah brought we three kings together only to hand us over to Moab?"

*6 Edom was subject to Israel at this time.



Route the Israelites took to attack Moab.

Jehoshaphat asks if there is a prophet among them to enquire of the Lord

⁹King Jehoshaphat of Judah replied, "Is there a prophet among us by whom we can inquire of the Lord?"

An officer answered, "Elisha is with us."

Elisha harshly rebukes Joram

¹⁰So the three kings went to Elisha. But Elisha spoke harshly to Joram, king of Israel saying, "Go to the prophets of your father and mother."

¹¹Joram answered, "I will not! Now inquire from Jehovah as to why he has brought we three kings together only to allow us to fall into the hands of Moab."

¹²Elisha replied, "Were it not for my respect for Jehoshaphat king of Judah I would not even look at you."

Elisha calls for a harpist to soothe him in order to obtain revelation from the Lord

¹³Then Elisha called for a harpist, and as the harpist played, the word of the Lord came to him.

The Lord promises that water will fill the wadi

¹⁴Elisha said, "Jehovah says, 'You will see neither wind nor rain, yet this wadi* will fill with water and you and your animals will drink.'

Moab to be spoiled

¹⁵Then Elisha prophesied, "*This is an easy thing in the eyes of the Lord. He will also hand Moab over to you. You shall cut down every good tree, stop up all the springs, and spoil every good field with stones.*"

Water flows into the wadi

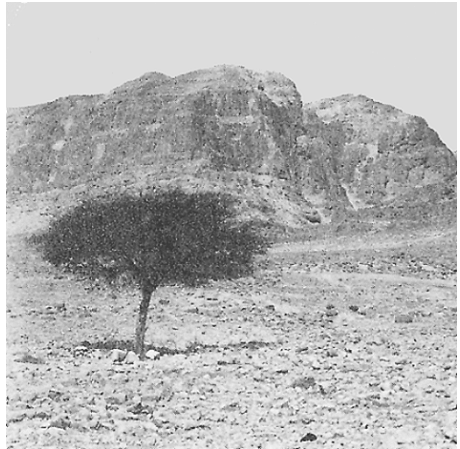
¹⁶The next morning the wadi filled with water. It came flowing through the desert from the direction of Edom.

The Moabites think the water stained with blood from infighting and come to plunder the camp

¹⁷Now the Moabites had heard that the kings were marching to fight against them. Therefore all their men, young and old who could bear weapons were encamped on the border waiting. ¹⁸When they arose early that morning the sun was shining on the water down in the

valley. To the Moabites at a distance the water looked red, like blood.

¹⁹They said, "There is blood in the water. The kings must have fought and slaughtered each other. To the spoils Moab!"



Dry wadi in the desert.

The Moabites flee and their towns are destroyed

²⁰But when the Moabites reached the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and fought them until they fled.

²¹Then they invaded the towns of Moab and slaughtered the Moabites. Whenever they destroyed a town, each man would throw stones on every good field until it was covered. They also stopped up the springs and cut down every good tree.



The land of Moab, looking eastward across the northern tip of the Dead Sea

The royal city of Moab is besieged

²²Soon only the royal city of Kir Hareseth remained to be taken. Men armed with slings surrounded the walls and attacked it.

The king of Moab sacrifices his son

²³However when the king of Moab saw that the battle was going against him, he took his firstborn son who was to succeed him as king and offered him as a sacrifice* on the city wall.

*14 A wadi is a river bed that is dry most of the time.

*23 Probably to the Moabite demon god Chemosh.

ELISHA 3

Great fury comes upon Israel and they return home

²⁴Then great fury came against Israel. They abandoned their siege and returned to their own land. F*

3

The miracle of the widow's oil

¹One day a widow whose husband had belonged to the school of the prophets came to Elisha in great distress and cried out, "My husband has died, and now a creditor is coming to take my two young sons as his slaves."

²Elisha said to her, "What do you have of value in your house?"

She answered, "Nothing, except a jar of oil."

³Elisha said, "Go and gather empty jars from all your neighbours. Obtain as many as you can. Then go inside your house and shut the door behind you and pour oil into all the jars."

⁴The widow did as Elisha said. Her young sons brought the jars to her and the oil kept pouring. When all the jars were full, the flow of oil stopped.

⁵Then she went out and told Elisha what had happened. He said to her, "Go sell the oil and pay your debts. You and your sons can live on what is left."

Elisha shown hospitality by a woman of Shunem

⁶On another day, when Elisha was in the town of Shunem, a wealthy woman urged him to stop at her home for a meal. From that day, whenever Elisha went to Shunem he stopped there to eat.

The woman and her husband build a room on their roof for Elisha

⁷The woman said to her husband, "This man who comes often, is a holy man of God. Let us build him a small room on the roof and put into it a bed, a table, a chair and a lamp. Then he can stay there whenever he comes to us." So they did so.

Elisha rewards the woman by blessing her to conceive a son

⁸One day when Elisha came, he went up to his room and lay down. Then he said to his servant Gehazi, "This woman has gone to all this trouble for us. What can we do for her?"

⁹Gehazi said, "She has no son, and her husband is elderly."

¹⁰Elisha said, "Call her." So Gehazi called the woman and she came and stood in the doorway.

¹¹Elisha said to her, "**About this time next year you will hold a son in your arms.**"

¹²She said, "O man of God, do not raise my hopes." But she conceived, and the next year gave birth to a son just as Elisha had foretold.

The woman's son dies

¹³The child grew, but one day he went out to his father who was with the reapers in the fields

and said to him, "My head! My head!"

¹⁴His father called a servant and said, "Carry him home to his mother." The servant carried the boy home to his mother who nursed him on her lap until noon, and then he died.



The village of Shunem where Elisha often stayed.

The woman lays her dead son on Elisha's bed and sets off on a donkey to find Elisha

¹⁵The woman carried the boy up to Elisha's room and laid him on the bed and closed the door. Then she had a donkey saddled and set out to find Elisha who was at Mount Carmel. ¹⁶She said to her servant who was with her, "Urge the donkey on. Do not slow down unless I tell you." F*

Elisha sees her coming and sends Gehazi to find out the problem

¹⁷Elisha saw her coming in the distance and said to his servant Gehazi, "Run to meet her. Ask her if everything is all right."

¹⁸The woman said to Gehazi, "Everything is all right."

The woman reveals her sorrow only to Elisha

¹⁹But when she reached the prophet Elisha, she fell down and took hold of his feet. Gehazi came to push her away but Elisha said, "Leave her alone. She is in great distress and the Lord has hidden the reason from me."

²⁰She said to Elisha, "My lord, did I ask you for a son? Did I not say 'Do not raise my hopes?'"

Gehazi sent ahead to try and revive the boy

²¹Elisha said to Gehazi, "Quickly! Tuck your garment into your belt. Take my staff in your hand and run and lay my staff on the boy's face."

²²But the woman said to Elisha, "I will not leave here without you." So Elisha went with her.

²³Gehazi ran on ahead and laid Elisha's staff on the boy's face, but there was no response. He went back to meet Elisha and said, "The boy has not awakened."

*24 This 'great fury' is generally attributed to the power of the demon god Chemosh. There appears to be a law of sacrifice at work here that we do not fully understand.

*16 From Shunem to Mount Carmel was about 40 kms (25 miles).

Elisha restores the boy to life

²⁴When Elisha reached the house he saw the boy lying dead on his bed. He went in to the room alone and closed the door and prayed to the Lord. ²⁵Then he lay upon the boy, mouth to mouth, eyes to eyes, hands to hands, and as he stretched himself out upon him the boy's body grew warm.

²⁶Elisha arose, paced back and forth in the room and then again stretched himself upon the boy. ²⁷The boy sneezed seven times then opened his eyes.

The woman gratefully receives her son

²⁸Elisha summoned Gehazi and said, "Call the woman." When the boy's mother came in he said to her, "Take your son."

²⁹She bowed to the ground at his feet, then took up her son and went out.

The poisonous soup

³⁰When Elisha returned to Gilgal there was a famine in the region. As he sat with the school of the prophets he said to his servant, "Put the large pot on and make some soup for these men."

³¹While the soup was cooking one of the prophets went out into the fields to gather herbs. He found a wild vine and gathered some of its fruit in the fold of his garment. ³²When he returned, he cut them up into the pot of soup. Nobody knew what they were.

³³The soup was poured out for the prophets, but as soon as they tasted it they cried out, "There is death in the pot!" and they could not eat it.

Elisha heals the soup

³⁴Elisha said, "Bring some flour." He stirred the flour into the pot of soup and said to his servant, "Serve it to the men to eat." And the bitter taste was gone.

The miracle of 20 small loaves feeding 100 men

³⁵Later a man brought twenty small loaves of barley bread to Elisha. Elisha said to his servant, "Give them to the men to eat."

³⁶His servant replied, "How can these feed a 100 men?"

³⁷Elisha answered, "Jehovah says, 'They will eat and have some left over.'"

³⁸So his servant set the loaves before them and they all ate and had some left over, according to the word of the Lord.

4

Naaman the Syrian army commander desires to go to Israel to be healed of his leprosy

¹Now Naaman the commander of the armies of the king of Syria was a valiant soldier and highly regarded by his master, but he had leprosy.

²The Syrians had taken captive a young girl from Israel and she served Naaman's wife. One day she said to her mistress, "If my

master went to the prophet Elisha in Israel, he could cure him of his leprosy."

³Naaman's wife told her husband what the girl had said, so Naaman went to the king and asked permission to go to Israel.

⁴The king of Syria replied, "Go then. I will write a letter for you to give to the king of Israel."

Naaman sets out with gifts and a letter from his king

⁵So Naaman set out with horses and chariots taking with him ten talents of silver,^{F*} 6000 shekels of gold,^{F*} and ten sets of clothing.

⁶The letter he took from the king of Syria said:

"I am sending my servant Naaman to you to be cured of his leprosy."

The king of Israel is angered by the letter

⁷When Joram the king of Israel read the letter he tore his robes and said, "Am I God? Why does this fellow send me a man to be cured of leprosy? He is trying to provoke a quarrel with me."

Elisha the prophet summons Naaman to his house

⁸When Elisha heard that the king had torn his robes he sent him this message, "Have the man come to me and he will know there is a prophet in Israel."

⁹So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and stopped outside Elisha's house.

Elisha sends out a message to him by Gehazi

¹⁰Elisha sent his servant out to him with this message: "**Go immerse yourself seven times in the Jordan and your flesh will be restored.**"

Naaman walks away angry at the message and Elisha's refusal to come out to him

¹¹Naaman became angry at this and said, "I thought he would at least come out to me and call on the name of Jehovah his God, and pass his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy. ¹²Are not the rivers of Damascus better than the rivers of Israel? Could I not immerse myself in them and be cured?" And he turned and walked off in anger.

Naaman's servants reason with him

¹³But his servants said to him, "My lord, if the prophet had told you to perform some great feat, would you not have done it? How much more then, when all he tells you to do is 'Immerse yourself in the Jordan.'"

Naaman dips himself in the Jordan and is healed

¹⁴So Naaman went down and immersed himself in the Jordan seven times as Elisha had said, and his flesh became clear like that of a young boy.

Naaman returns to Elisha and proclaims Jehovah as the only true God

¹⁵Then Naaman returned with all his

*5 About 340kg. (750 lbs)

*5 About 70kg. (150 lbs)

ELISHA 5

attendants to Elisha's house and stood before Elisha. ¹⁶He said, "Now I know there is no God in all the world except in Israel. Please accept a gift."

Elisha refuses a gift from Naaman

¹⁷Elisha answered, "As surely as Jehovah lives whom I serve, I will not accept a thing." And even though Naaman urged him, he refused.

Naaman asks for two mule loads of Israelite soil to worship Jehovah on

¹⁸So Naaman said, "Well then, please let me have two mules loads of soil. I will never again make offerings to any other god but Jehovah."^{F*}

Naaman receives approval to bow to the god Rimmon in the course of duty

¹⁹"But may Jehovah forgive me this one thing: When my master the king enters the temple of Rimmon to bow down to his god, and he is leaning on my arm and I bow down with him, may Jehovah forgive your servant for this?"

²⁰Elisha replied, "Go in peace."

Gehazi is greedy for gain and runs after Naaman

²¹After Naaman had left, Gehazi the servant of Elisha said to himself, "My master was too easy on this Syrian. I will run after him and get something from him."

²²So Gehazi hurried after Naaman. When Naaman saw him running toward him he stepped down from his chariot to meet him and asked, "Is everything all right?"

Gehazi lies to Naaman

²³Gehazi answered, "Everything is all right, but my master sent me to say, 'Two young men from the school of the prophets have just arrived. Please give them a talent of silver and two sets of clothing.'"

Naaman gives Gehazi silver and clothing

²⁴Naaman said, "Certainly, take two talents." And he tied up the talents of silver in two bags along with the sets of clothing and gave them to two of his servants and they carried them back for Gehazi.^{F*}

²⁵When they neared Elisha's house, Gehazi took the load from the servants and sent them on their way. Then he hid the silver and clothing in the house and went in and stood before his master Elisha.

Gehazi lies to Elisha

²⁶Elisha said to him, "Where have you been Gehazi?"

He answered, "I have not been anywhere."

Gehazi and his descendants punished with Naaman's leprosy

²⁷Elisha said to Gehazi, "*I was present in spirit when Naaman got down from his chariot to meet you. Is this a time to take money or accept clothes? Naaman's leprosy*

*18 Idolatrous belief was that the god of a land could only be worshipped on the soil of that land.

*24 A talent of silver weighed about 34kg (75lbs) and was worth about 10 years wages of a labourer.

will cling to you and your descendants forever."²⁸And Gehazi went out from Elisha's presence white with leprosy.

The floating axe head

²⁹One day the prophets said to Elisha, "The place where we meet with you is too small for us. Allow us to go down to the Jordan and cut timber to build a bigger place."

Elisha said, "Go!"

³⁰He also went with them, and they began to cut down trees. As one of them did so, an iron axe head flew off and landed in the river.

³¹He cried out, "O my lord! It was borrowed!"

Elisha said, "Where did it land?"

³²When they showed him the place in the river, Elisha cut a stick and threw it into the water. The iron axe head floated to the surface and they took it up again.

5

Elisha would warn Israel's king of Syria's plans

¹Once when the king of Syria was at war with Israel, he conferred with his officers and said, "We will set up camp in such and such a place."

²But Elisha the prophet warned the king of Israel of the plans of the Syrian king so that he was prepared for him. This happened time and time again.

³The king of Syria became enraged at this and summoned his officers and demanded of them, "Which one of you is a spy for the king of Israel?"

⁴One of his officers replied, "None of us my lord the king. It is Elisha the prophet in Israel. He knows every word you speak in private and reveals your plans to the king of Israel."



The river Jordan where Elisha caused the axe head to float to the surface.

The king of Syria sends an army to capture Elisha

⁵The king commanded his officers saying, "Find out where he is and I will send men and capture him." The report came back. "He is in Dothan."

⁶So the king of Syria sent a strong army to Dothan by night, and they surrounded the town.

**Servant of Elisha sees the hills
full of chariots of fire**

⁷When the servant of Elisha arose early in the morning he saw the Syrian army with horses and chariots surrounding the town. He cried out to Elisha and said, "My lord, what shall we do?"

⁸Elisha answered, "Fear not. Those who are with us are more than those who are with them."

⁹Then Elisha prayed saying, "O Jehovah, open his eyes so he may see." Then the Lord opened the eyes of Elisha's servant and he saw the hills round about full of horses and chariots of fire.

The Lord blinds the Syrian army to reality

¹⁰As the Syrian army entered the town Elisha prayed, "O Lord strike these men with blindness of understanding."

¹¹So the Lord closed the eyes of their understanding as Elisha had asked.

Elisha leads the Syrian army to the royal city

¹²Then Elisha said to the Syrian officers, "You are not in the right town. Follow me and I will lead you to the man you are looking for." And he led them to the royal city of Samaria.^{F*}

¹³When they entered the gates of the city, Elisha prayed, "Lord, open the understanding of these men again, so they can see." ¹⁴Then the Syrian army realised they were inside the walls of Samaria.^{F*}

Elisha tells the king to feed the Syrian army

¹⁵When the king of Israel^{F*} saw them he said to Elisha, "Shall I kill them my father?"

¹⁶He answered, "Should you kill men you did not capture with your own sword or bow? Rather, set food and water before them so they can eat and drink and then allow them to return to their master."

¹⁷So the king prepared a feast for them and sent them home. So the Syrians ceased to raid Israel for a time.

Syria later besieges the city of Samaria

¹⁸However some time later Ben-Hadad the king of Syria mobilised his entire army and marched into Israel and laid siege to the city of Samaria.

Great famine in the city

¹⁹The siege lasted so long it caused a great famine in the city. A donkey's head sold for eighty shekels of silver,^{F*} and a quarter of a cab^{F*} of dove droppings for five shekels.

**A report of cannibalism horrifies
and angers the king**

²⁰One day as the king of Israel was walking along the top of the wall, a woman cried out to him, "Help me my lord the king!" ²¹This woman said to me, 'Give up your son that we may eat him today, and tomorrow we will eat my son.'

²²So we cooked my son and ate him and the next day I said to her, 'Now give up your son so we may eat him,' but she has hidden him."

²³When the king heard these words he tore his robes in anguish. The people of the city saw that beneath his robes he wore sackcloth on his body.

The king orders Elisha beheaded

²⁴Then he swore an oath, "May God deal with me severely if the head of Elisha remains on his shoulders today!" So the king sent an executioner to kill Elisha.

Elisha aware of the execution order

²⁵Now Elisha was sitting in his house and some elders of the city were with him. Elisha said to the elders, "The murderer is sending someone to cut off my head. ²⁶When the executioner comes, hold the door shut against him, for the sound of his master's footsteps are close behind him."

**The king angry at the
Lord's lack of deliverance**

²⁷Even as he spoke the executioner arrived, and shortly afterward the king.

²⁸The king said to Elisha, "This disaster is from the Lord. Why should I wait on him any longer for deliverance?"

Elisha prophesies abundant food tomorrow

²⁹Elisha said, "Hear the word of Jehovah, 'This time tomorrow a seah^{F*} of flour or two seahs of barley will sell for one shekel in the market place.'

The king's officer is sceptical

³⁰The officer on whose arm the king was leaning said to Elisha, "Even if Jehovah should open the windows of heaven, this could not happen."

³¹Elisha prophesied to him saying, "*You will see it with your own eyes but will not eat any of it.*"

Four lepers find the Syrian camp deserted

³²Now there were four men with leprosy living outside the city gates. That same day they said to each other, "Why should we sit here until we die? Let us go over to the camp of the Syrians and surrender. If they spare us we live, if they kill us then we die."

³³The lepers arrived at the Syrian camp that night but found it deserted, not a man was to be seen anywhere.

**The Syrians were caused by the Lord to hear
the sound of a vast army and had fled**

³⁴For at sunset the Lord had caused the Syrians to hear the sound of chariots and

*12 Samaria was about 20 km (12 miles) from Dothan.

*14 This miracle is believed to have been achieved by a divine means of mass hypnosis.

*15 The king of Israel is not named in this account, nor in the account of the famine which follows, but is believed to be Joram.

*19 About 13 weeks wages. The flesh of a donkey being an unclean animal would not normally be eaten by Israelites, especially not its head.

*19 A cab is approx one litre.

*29 A seah is about 7 litres.

ELISHA 6

horses of a vast army, so that they shouted out to one another, "The king of Israel has hired the Hittite and Egyptian kings to attack us!"³⁵And they all fled for their lives in the darkness, abandoning their tents and their animals.

The lepers begin to loot the camp but then decide to report the news to the city

³⁶The lepers entered two of the tents and ate and drank and took some of the silver and gold and clothes and hid them.

³⁷But then they said to one another, "We are not doing right. This is a time of good news and we are keeping it to ourselves. If we wait until morning, punishment may overtake us. Let us report this now in the city."

The king hears the news that night

³⁸So they went and cried out to the city watchmen saying, "We went into the Syrian camp but not a man was there, only the tents, tethered horses and donkeys."

³⁹The watchmen relayed the news and it was reported to the palace.

The king is suspicious

⁴⁰The king arose in the night and said to his officers, "The Syrians are hiding in the countryside thinking to lure us out and get into the city."

Men sent to investigate

⁴¹One of his officers answered, "We are all about to die anyway. Have men take two of the five horses we have left and go find out what happened."

The road to the Jordan strewn with discarded clothing

⁴²So the king sent out men in two chariots. They followed the trail of the Syrians as far as the Jordan and found the whole road strewn with clothing and equipment the Syrians had discarded in their flight.

The people go out and plunder the Syrian camp for food

⁴³When the people of Samaria heard, they rushed out and plundered the camp of the Syrians. So a seah of flour, or two seahs of barley sold for a shekel as the Lord had foretold.

The doubting officer trampled to death

⁴⁴The officer who had doubted the word of the Lord was put in charge of the gate, but the people trampled him to death in their rush through the gateway, fulfilling the prophecy of Elisha.

6

Elisha goes to Syria to appoint Hazael king

¹Elisha went to Damascus to appoint Hazael king of Syria, as the Lord had commanded Elijah. Ben-Hadad the king of Syria was ill at the time.

King Ben-Hadad sends Hazael to Elisha to enquire if he will recover from his illness

²When Ben-Hadad was told, "Elisha is in the

land," he said to Hazael who was one of his officials, "Go to meet this man of God. Take a gift with you and enquire of Jehovah through him to see if I will recover from my illness."

³So Hazael went to meet Elisha and took as a gift 40 camel loads of the finest products of Damascus.

⁴He said to Elisha, "Ben-Hadad king of Syria has sent me to ask if he will recover from his illness."

Elisha reveals that the king Ben-Hadad will be murdered and Hazael become king

⁵Elisha answered, "Say to him, '*You would certainly recover.*' Then he said, '*However Jehovah has revealed to me that he shall certainly die.*'"

⁶Elisha looked upon Hazael with a fixed gaze until Hazael was embarrassed then Elisha wept.

⁷Hazael asked, "Why is my lord weeping?"

Elisha answered, "*I see in vision the harm you will do to Israel. You will burn their towns, kill their young men with the sword, dash their little children to the ground and rip open their pregnant women.*"

⁸Hazael replied, "What is your servant but a mere dog, that he should do such great things."

⁹Elisha said, "*Jehovah has shown me that you will become king of Syria.*"

Hazael suffocates Ben-Hadad and becomes king of Syria

¹⁰Hazael left Elisha and returned to the king.

¹¹Ben-Hadad asked him, "What did Elisha say?"

Hazael replied, "He said, 'You would certainly recover.'"

¹²But the next day Hazael took the bed cover, dipped it in water and held it over the king's face until he suffocated and died. Then Hazael became king in his place.

Elisha sends a young prophet to anoint Jehu the army commander king of Israel

¹³When Elisha returned to Israel he called a young prophet from the school and said to him, "Take this flask of oil and go to Ramoth in Gilead, to Jehu the army commander. ¹⁴Take him into an inner room away from his men and pour this oil on his head and declare, 'Jehovah says, '*I anoint you king over Israel.*'" Then depart quickly."

¹⁵When the young prophet arrived in Ramoth he found the army officers sitting together. He said to Jehu, "I have a message for you commander."

¹⁶Jehu arose and went with the prophet into an inner room. There the young prophet poured the oil on Jehu's head and declared, "Jehovah the God of Israel says, '*I anoint you king over Israel.*' ¹⁷*You are to destroy the whole house of Ahab to avenge the blood of my prophets and servants shed by Jezebel.* ¹⁸*As for Jezebel, dogs will devour her in Jezreel and no one shall bury her.*" Then the young prophet departed.

Jehu reveals his anointing to his officers

¹⁹When Jehu returned to his officers one of them asked, "What did that madman want?"

²⁰Jehu replied, "You know his type and the way they talk."

²¹But they said, "That will not do. Tell us what he said."

Jehu said, "He anointed me king over Israel."

The officers rejoice and sound a trumpet

²²At once the officers took their cloaks and spread them under Jehu on the bare steps. Then they sounded a trumpet and shouted, "Jehu is king!"

Jehu departs for Jezreel to kill Joram the king

²³Jehu said, "Allow no one to leave here to tell the news in Jezreel." Then he prepared chariots, and taking men with him he crossed the Jordan and drove furiously to Jezreel.

The lookout at Jezreel sees Jehu coming

²⁴The lookout on the tower at Jezreel saw Jehu and his men approaching and cried out to Joram the king, "I see chariots coming."

King Joram sends out horsemen who do not return

²⁵Joram ordered, "Send a horseman to ask if they bring news of peace."

²⁶So a horseman rode out to meet Jehu and said to him "The king asks, 'Is it peace?'"

²⁷Jehu replied, "What does he have to do with peace? Fall in behind me."

²⁸The lookout reported to Joram, "The horseman has reached them but he is not coming back."

²⁹So the king sent out a second horseman and the same thing happened.

³⁰The lookout reported to Joram, "He also has reached them and is not returning either."

³¹The driving is like that of Jehu. He drives like a madman."

Ahaziah, king of Judah had come to visit Joram

³²Now Joram the king was recovering from wounds he had received in battle, and Ahaziah king of Judah had come to Jezreel to visit him.

The two kings Joram and Ahaziah go out in their chariots to meet Jehu

³³Joram ordered, "Hitch up my chariot!" When it was hitched up, both he and Ahaziah the king of Judah rode out to meet Jehu, each in his own chariot.

³⁴The two kings met Jehu and his men near the plot of ground that had belonged to Naboth, whom Jezebel had ordered stoned to death.

³⁵King Joram asked, "Have you brought news of peace Jehu?"

³⁶Jehu answered, "How can there be peace while the idolatry and witchcraft of your mother Jezebel abound?"

Jehu kills Joram with an arrow

³⁷At these words Joram reined his chariot about and began to flee crying out to Ahaziah, "Treachery Ahaziah!"

³⁸But Jehu drew his bow and shot Joram in the back between his shoulders. The arrow pierced his heart and the king slumped down in his chariot and died.

³⁹Joram had ruled Israel eleven years.

Joram's body thrown on Naboth's field

⁴⁰Jehu said to his chariot officer, "Do you not recall how when we were with Ahab his father the Lord made this prophecy about him through Elijah: **'Yesterday I saw the blood of Naboth and his sons. I will surely make you pay for it on this plot of ground.'**"

⁴¹"Throw Ahab's son on the field that belonged to Naboth, in accordance with the word of the Lord."

King Ahaziah of Judah also killed

⁴²Now Ahaziah king of Judah had fled also, but Jehu chased after him shouting, "Kill him too!"^{F*}

⁴³They severely wounded Ahaziah in his chariot, however he escaped to nearby Megiddo but he died there. ⁴⁴His servants took him back to Jerusalem and buried him in the City of David. He had reigned one year in Judah.

7

Jezebel thrown from a window and trampled to death

¹Jehu next entered the city of Jezreel. When Jezebel heard what had happened she shadowed her eyes, adorned her hair and sat in an upper window of the palace.

²As Jehu drove by she shouted down to him, "Is it peace, murderer of your master?"

³Jehu looked up and called out, "Who is on my side?" Two eunuchs looked down at him.

⁴Jehu ordered, "Throw her down!"

⁵So the eunuchs picked up Jezebel and threw her down, and her blood spattered the wall as the chariot horses trampled her to death.

Jezebel's body eaten by dogs

⁶Jehu then went into the palace and ate and drank. Afterward he said, "Go and bury that accursed woman, she is after all a king's daughter."

⁷But when they went out to bury Jezebel they found nothing except her skull, hands and feet, for the dogs had devoured her.

Jehu writes to the elders of Samaria asking them to choose a descendant of Ahab as king and fight

⁸There were seventy sons^{F*} of the house of Ahab living in the royal city of Samaria, so Jehu wrote letters to the elders of that city saying, "Choose the most fitting of Ahab's sons and set him on his father's throne, then fight for your master's house."

^{*42} Although Ahaziah was a king of Judah he was related to Ahab. His mother Athaliah was Ahab's daughter and it was Athaliah who had introduced idolatrous practices into Judah (2 Kings 4:17-38).

^{*8} The Hebrew word used here for sons 'ben' includes grandsons.

ELISHA 8

The elders are terrified of Jehu

⁹But the elders greatly feared Jehu and said, "If two kings could not resist him, how can we?" So they wrote back saying, "We are your servants. We will not appoint anyone else as king. Do what you think is best."

Jehu asks the elders to heed the descendants of Ahab

¹⁰Jehu wrote them a second letter saying, "If you will obey me, bring the heads of Ahab's sons to me in Jezreel by this time tomorrow."

The heads of Ahab's 70 sons are sent to Jezreel and placed overnight by the gate

¹¹When the letter arrived the elders took Ahab's sons and slaughtered all seventy of them. They put their heads in baskets and sent them to Jehu in Jezreel.

¹²Jehu said, "Put them in two piles at the city gate until tomorrow morning."

Jehu addresses the people of Jezreel

¹³The next morning Jehu went out to the gate and stood before the people of Jezreel and said, "It was I who conspired against my master and killed him, but who killed all these?"

¹⁴Know then, that not a word the Lord has spoken against the house of Ahab will fail."

Jehu kills all Ahab's family, officials, friends and priests in Jezreel

¹⁵Then Jehu put to death all in Jezreel who remained of the family of Ahab. He also put to death all those who had been his officials, his close friends and his priests. F*

Relatives of Ahab from Judah also put to death

¹⁶Jehu then set out for the city of Samaria. On the way he met a group of forty-two men travelling from Judah and said to them, "Who are you?"

¹⁷They replied, "We are relatives of Ahaziah the king and have come to greet Joram king of Israel and the queen mother Jezebel."

¹⁸Jehu ordered, "Take them alive." So they took them alive and then slaughtered them by a well. F*

¹⁹When Jehu arrived in Samaria, he put to death all who were left there of Ahab's family.

Jehu deceives the ministers of Baal

²⁰Then Jehu called all the people of Samaria together and said to them, "Ahab served Baal a little, but Jehu will serve him much.

²¹Now summon all the prophets and priests of Baal to his temple. See that none of them are missing. I am about to hold a great sacrifice to Baal. Any who fail to come will die." ²²(But Jehu was acting deceptively in order to destroy the ministers of Baal.)

The temple of Baal packed full

²³Jehu also sent the same word throughout Israel, and all the ministers of Baal came, not one stayed away. They crowded into the temple of Baal until it was full from one end to the other.

Eighty guards wait outside

²⁴Now Jehu had posted eighty guards outside the temple with this warning, "If any of you let one of these men escape, it will be your life for his."

²⁵Then Jehu entered the temple and said to the keeper of the wardrobe, "Bring out robes for all the priests of Baal." ²⁶He also said, "Search to see that no worshippers of Jehovah are in here with you."

All the ministers of Baal put to death

²⁷When the sacrifice had been offered, Jehu went out and ordered the guards, "Go in now! Kill them all! Let not one escape!"

²⁸So all who were in the temple were put to the sword, and they dragged their bodies outside.

The Baal idol burned and the temple turned into a latrine

²⁹They entered the inner shrine of the temple and brought out the idol and burned it. ³⁰Then they tore down the temple of Baal and turned it into a latrine.

³¹So Jehu destroyed Baal worship in Israel, but he did not turn away from the sin of Jeroboam, the worship of the golden calves at Bethel and Dan.

The Lord rewards Jehu

³²The Lord said to Jehu, "Because you have done well in carrying out all that I had in mind to do to the house of Ahab your descendants will sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation."



Typical ancient temple of a demon god such as Baal.

8

The land of Gilead lost to Syria

¹In those days the Lord reduced the size of Israel. Hazael king of Syria overpowered the Israelites east of the Jordan in the land of Gilead.

*15 Jehu evidently went beyond the commandment of the Lord in killing those who were not of Ahab's family, nor idolaters (see Hosea 1:3).

*18 By being related to king Ahaziah of Judah, who was Ahab's grandson, this group also came under the edict of the Lord to destroy Ahab's entire family.

Jehu dies and his son Jehoahaz becomes king

²Then Jehu rested with his fathers and was buried in Samaria. He had reigned over Israel twenty-eight years. ³The rest of the acts of Jehu are written in the book The Annals of the Kings of Israel.

⁴Jehoahaz his son became king. He also did wrong in the eyes of the Lord by continuing the calf worship of Jeroboam.

Israel under the power of Syria

⁵So the Lord's anger burned against Israel, and for a long time he kept them under the power of Hazael, king of Syria.

Israel delivered from Syria

⁶But Jehoahaz pleaded with the Lord and the Lord listened to him, for Syria was severely oppressing Israel.

⁷So the Lord provided a deliverer for Israel^{F*} and they escaped from the power of Syria. The Israelites dwelt again in their own homes.

Israel's army almost totally destroyed by war

⁸However the army of Jehoahaz had been destroyed by Syria. All that was left were 50 horsemen, 10 chariots^{F*} and 10,000 foot soldiers.

Calf worship still practised

⁹However the people still did not turn away from the calf worship, and an Asherah pole^{F*} remained standing in Samaria.

Jehoahaz dies and his son Jehoash becomes king

¹⁰Then Jehoahaz rested with his fathers and was buried in Samaria. He had reigned over Israel seventeen years.

¹¹Jehoash his son became king. He also continued the calf worship.

King Jehoash visits dying Elisha

¹²Now at this time Elisha the prophet was suffering from the illness from which he was to die.

¹³Jehoash the king went to see him and wept over him crying, "My father. My father."

Elisha prophesies three defeats of Syria using a bow and arrows

¹⁴Elisha said to the king, "Bring a bow and some arrows," and Jehoash did so.

¹⁵Then Elisha commanded him, "Take the bow in your hands." As the king did so Elisha put his hands on the king's hands and said, "Open the east window." ^{F*}

¹⁶The king opened it. Elisha ordered "Shoot!" and Jehoash shot.

¹⁷Elisha prophesied, "***Jehovah's arrow of victory over Syria! You will defeat the Syrians at Aphek.***"

¹⁸Then Elisha said, "Strike the floor with the arrows." The king struck the floor three times.

¹⁹Elisha was angry with him and said, "***You should have struck the floor five or six times, then you would have completely destroyed Syria. Now you will only defeat Syria three times.***"

Elisha dies

²⁰After this Elisha died and was buried in a tomb.

Elisha's bones bring a man back to life

²¹Once, when some Israelites were burying a man, they saw a band of raiders from Moab coming, so they quickly threw the man's body into Elisha's tomb. ²²When the man's body touched Elisha's bones, the man came back to life and stood on his feet.

Jehoash defeats Syria three times as prophesied

²³Hazael the king of Syria died and his son Ben-Hadad became king.

²⁴Jehoash recaptured from Ben-Hadad the towns that had been taken in battle from his father Jehoahaz.

²⁵Three times Jehoash defeated Ben-Hadad, as predicted by the prophet Elisha.

*7 Probably the Assyrian ruler Adadnirari, who attacked Syria in 806BC and again in 804BC.

*8 Ahab originally had 2000 chariots according to ancient inscriptions.

*9 A type of totem pole in honour of Asherah, a goddess whose worship involved sexual acts.

*15 ie, toward Gilead which was in the power of Syria.

JONAH

This interesting book tells of the experiences of Jonah the prophet, including him being swallowed by a huge fish or whale.

The book has two important messages – first, we cannot run away from the Lord, second, the Lord is compassionate and cares for all of his children whether they be Israelite or non-Israelite.

Another message of the book of Jonah is the willingness of the non-Israelite people of Nineveh to repent. This along with other biblical accounts of the faith of non-Israelites show that great faith can be found among all peoples.

Two sea creatures are found in the Mediterranean Sea large enough to swallow a man. They are the sperm whale and the white shark. The one that swallowed Jonah would most likely be the air-breathing sperm whale which has a throat diameter of up to 2½ metres (8 feet). Jonah would nevertheless have almost certainly required divine protection to survive.

Jesus vouched for the truth of this story when he said, *“For as Jonah was three days and nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and nights in the heart of the earth.”* (Matt-Mark-Luke 13:23).

NOTE Jonah is one of the twelve ‘Minor Prophets.’ They are so termed by the Jews because their books are short, not because they lack importance. The others are Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. In traditional Bibles the books of these twelve prophets are grouped together at the end of the Old Testament. However in this Condensed Bible they have been relocated to the chronological periods in which they prophesied.

AUTHOR

According to Jewish tradition the story was originally recorded by Jonah himself, however the biblical account is told in the third person and is highly condensed. The style of the book is similar to that of the accounts of Elijah and Elisha which are believed to have been compiled, condensed, and rewritten in their present form by the prophet Jeremiah and his scribe Buruch. Jeremiah would have had access to the writings of the earlier prophets and was known to have written extensively.

Now the sea was raging higher and higher, so they cried out to Jonah, “What can we do to make the sea calm down for us?” Jonah 1:13.

CONTENTS

	Chapter		
King Jehoash dies	1	A huge fish swallows Jonah	1
His son Jeroboam becomes king	1	Jonah prays to Lord in gratitude	1
Israel’s former boundaries restored	1	Jonah vomited onto dry land	1
The prophet Jonah called to warn the city Nineveh ..	1	Lord again calls Jonah to preach to Nineveh	2
Jonah is fearful and flees to Tarshish	1	Nineveh a very large city	2
A terrible storm arises at sea	1	Jonah begins to prophesy destruction of Nineveh	2
Jonah admits he is running away from Jehovah	1	Ninevites believe and repent	2
Sailors ask Jonah what they should do	1	Lord decides not to destroy Nineveh	2
Jonah tells sailors to cast him into the sea	1	Jonah angry at Lord’s compassion	2
Sailors finally throw Jonah overboard	1	God gives Jonah a lesson in love	2

Bold The Lord speaking.

Bold italics A prophet speaking under inspiration.

1

Jeroboam becomes king

¹Jehoash reigned over Israel sixteen years then was gathered to his fathers and his son

Jeroboam became king in Samaria.

²Jeroboam also did wrong in the eyes of the

Lord, just like the kings before him by not turning away from the calf worship.

Israel's former boundaries restored

³However Jeroboam F* regained the towns captured by the Syrians and restored again the original boundaries of Israel.F* ⁴This was in accordance with the word of the Lord to the prophet Jonah.F*

The prophet Jonah called by the Lord to warn the city of Nineveh

⁵Now the word of the Lord came to the prophet Jonah saying, **“Go to the great city of NinevehF* and preach against it, for its wickedness has come up before me.”**

Jonah is fearful and flees to Tarshish

⁶But Jonah feared and fled to Joppa where he boarded a ship and sailed for Tarshish.F*

A terrible storm arises at sea

⁷But a terrible storm arose at sea and the sailors feared greatly. Each one cried out to his god and they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship.

⁸Jonah had gone below deck and fallen into a deep sleep, but the captain awoke him and said, “How can you sleep? Up and call on your god that we not perish.”

⁹Then the sailors said to one another, “Let us cast lots and find out who is responsible for this calamity.” So they cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah.

¹⁰They asked him, “What have you done to bring this trouble upon us?”

Jonah admits to the sailors he is running away from Jehovah

¹¹Jonah answered, “I am an Israelite and worship Jehovah the God of heaven who made the sea and the land. I am running away from him.”

¹²This made the sailors even more fearful.

The sailors ask Jonah what they should do

¹³Now the sea was raging higher and higher so they cried out to Jonah, “What can we do to make the sea calm down?”

Jonah tells the sailors to cast him into the sea

¹⁴Jonah answered, “Cast me into the sea and it will become calm. I am the cause of this great storm.”

¹⁵However the men rowed hard to try and bring the ship back to land, but they could not and the sea grew even wilder.

The sailors finally throw Jonah overboard

¹⁶So they cried out, “O Jehovah do not hold

us guilty for drowning an innocent man.” Then they picked up Jonah and threw him overboard and the huge seas at once ceased raging. ¹⁷At this the men greatly feared Jehovah and they offered a sacrifice and made vows to him.

A huge fish swallows Jonah

¹⁸Meanwhile Jonah in his distress in the water called upon the Lord and the Lord provided a huge fish to swallow him.

Jonah prays to Lord in gratitude

¹⁹Inside the fish, Jonah prayed in gratitude saying:

²⁰“In my distress I called to the Lord. From the depths of SheolF* I called and you heard my cry.”

²¹“I was hurled into the heart of the sea. The currents swirled about and the waves swept over me.”

²²“The engulfing waters buried me and seaweed wrapped around my head.”

²³“I said, ‘I have been banished from your sight, will I ever look again toward your holy Temple?’”

²⁴“To Sheol I sank down, but you brought my life back up from the Pit.”

²⁵“With a song of thanksgiving I will sacrifice to you O Jehovah. What I have vowed I will do.”

Jonah vomited onto dry land

²⁶Jonah was inside the fish for three days and nights, then the Lord commanded the fish and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.



The sperm whale is easily large enough to swallow a man.

2

The Lord again calls Jonah to preach to Nineveh

¹The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time saying, **“Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim the message I will give you.”** ²This time Jonah obeyed the Lord and went to Nineveh.

Nineveh a very large city

³Now Nineveh was a very large city. To walk through it took three days.

Jonah begins to prophesy destruction of Nineveh

⁴On his first day in the city Jonah began to

*3 Jeroboam was also the name of the first king of the northern tribes of Israel.

*3 This restoration of lost territory was mainly due to the Assyrian defeat of Syria. The growing empire of Assyria was to play a major role in the region during coming years.

*4 This revelation is not recorded in the Bible.

*5 Nineveh was the ancient and great capital city of Assyria (modern Iraq) to the far north east of Israel, on the banks of the Tigris River. A journey for Jonah of about 900 km (550 miles).

*6 Tarshish was a coastal city of Spain, in the opposite direction of Nineveh.

*19 Sheol is the Hebrew name for the spirit world of the dead.

JONAH 2

preach saying, “Forty more days and Nineveh will be destroyed.”

The Ninevites believe and fast and repent

⁵The Ninevites believed God and declared a fast. All of them from the greatest to the least began to put on sackcloth. ⁶And when the news reached the king of Nineveh, he also arose from his throne, took off his royal robes, clothed himself with sackcloth and sat in the dust.

⁷Then the king of Nineveh issued this proclamation: “No man or beast is to eat or drink, but every man and beast is to be covered with sackcloth. Let all call on God and give up their evil ways and their violence. ⁸God may yet turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish.”

The Lord decides not to destroy Nineveh

⁹When God saw how the Ninevites turned from their evil ways he had compassion on them. He did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened.

Jonah is angry at the Lord’s compassion

¹⁰But Jonah was displeased at this^{F*} and became angry. He prayed to the Lord saying, “O Jehovah, is this not what I feared in the beginning? Is this not why I fled? ¹¹I knew that you were a gracious and loving God, slow to anger. A God who relents from sending calamity. ¹²Now take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live.”

¹³But the Lord said, “Have you reason for your anger?”

God gives Jonah a lesson in love

¹⁴Now Jonah had made a camp outside of Nineveh waiting to see what would happen to the city.

¹⁵That day the Lord made a vine grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head and ease his discomfort. Jonah was very pleased with the vine.

¹⁶But at dawn the next day a worm chewed through the vine so that it withered away. And when the sun arose there came a hot east wind and the sun blazed down on Jonah’s head so that he grew faint. He said, “It would be better for me to die.”

¹⁷Then God said to Jonah, “Have you reason to be angry about the vine?”

¹⁸Jonah replied, “I am angry enough to die.”

¹⁹The Lord said, “You loved and felt concern for this vine, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight.”

²⁰“Nineveh has more than a 120,000 children,^{F*} and many cattle as well. How much more do I feel love and concern for them?”



Location of the city of Nineveh in Assyria (modern Iraq).

*10 Jonah’s ego was deflated because his prophesied destruction did not occur.

*20 The population of Nineveh may well have approached a million people. An inscription of one of the city’s kings, Ashur-Nasir-Pal II tells of 70,000 guests attending his palace dedication banquet.

HOSEA

During the days of the prophet Hosea, idolatry was widespread in the northern kingdom of Israel. Worship of the demon fertility god Baal and his female consort Asherah involved drunkenness and ritual fornication. Crime and adultery were rampant and even the worship of Jehovah was corrupted by calf worship. The people were rapidly ripening for destruction and the end of the kingdom by the hand of the Assyrians was only about thirty years away.

Through Hosea the Lord likens Israel to an unfaithful wife and his angry words spoken through the prophet are vivid and powerful. Yet underlying them as always is the glorious vision of the millennium when Israel will again be gathered and enjoy peace and splendour.

AUTHOR Hosea the prophet.

“There is no faithfulness, no love, no knowledge of God in the land, only cursing, lying, murder, stealing and adultery. Bloodshed follows bloodshed.”

Hosea 2:1

CONTENTS

	Chapter		
Hosea commanded to marry an unfaithful woman ...	1	Israel's leaders inflamed with wine	2
Hosea marries Gomer who bears him a son	1	Men of intrigue and anger	2
Lord to punish the house of Jehu	1	Israel's days of punishment at hand	2
Lord to put an end to the kingdom of Israel	1	No respect for prophets	2
Israel to be unloved by the Lord	1	Harlotry, wine and idolatry	2
Lord still to show love for Judah	1	Lord desires mercy and knowledge not sacrifice	2
Judah and Israel to be reunited in the latter days	1	Lord's anger burns against the calf idols	2
Israel like an unfaithful wife	1	Samaria's calf idol to be carried to Assyria	2
Israel to suffer until she returns to the Lord	1	Israel to be destroyed by sword and fire	3
Days of peace and happiness in the millennium	1	Survivors to wander among the nations	3
Hosea to take back his adulterous wife	1	Punishment to continue in exile	3
Israel to return to Lord and David in millennium	1	A promise to those who sow righteousness	3
Sins of Israel causing wasting of the land	2	Judah also to be punished	3
Israel's priests reject knowledge	2	Israelites like stubborn heifers	3
Priests and the people to be punished	2	Lord's anger will not last forever	3
Israel's sins recorded	2	Israel to be gathered again in latter days	3
The abominable sins of Israel – robbery, murder	2	Israel must also return to Lord in heart	3
Deception, burglary, adultery, lust, harlotry, idolatry	2	The wise shall understand these things	3

Bold The Lord or an angel speaking.

Bold italics A prophet speaking under inspiration.

1

Hosea the prophet commanded to marry an unfaithful woman

¹The word of the Lord came to the prophet Hosea during the reign of Jeroboam king of Israel saying, **“Go take for yourself an adulterous wife, for Israel is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from Jehovah.”**

Hosea marries Gomer who bears him a son

²So the prophet Hosea took to wife Gomer, and she conceived and bore him a son.

The Lord to punish the house of Jehu

³The Lord said to Hosea, **“Call your son Jezreel, for I will soon punish the house**

of Jehu for the massacre at Jezreel.^{F*}

The Lord to put an end to the kingdom of Israel

⁴**“I will also put an end to the kingdom of Israel, in the valley of Jezreel.”**

Israel to be unloved by the Lord

⁵Gomer conceived again and gave birth to a daughter.

⁶The Lord said to Hosea, **“Call her Unloved, for no longer will I show love to the house of Israel and forgive them.”**

^{*}3 Jehu went beyond the bounds of the Lord's commandment to destroy the family of Ahab when he also put to death his friends and officials in Jezreel (Elisha 7:15).

HOSEA 2

Lord still to show love for Judah

7“Yet I will still show love to the house of Judah, and save them.”

Judah and Israel to be reunited in the millennium

8After Gomer had weaned Unloved, she bore another son.

9The Lord said to Hosea, “Call him Not My People, for you are not my people and I am not your God.”

10“Yet the day will come when Israel will become like the sand on the seashore, here in the place where I said to you, ‘You are not my people.’”

11“**In that day you will be called the sons of the living God. For Judah and Israel will be gathered together under one leader and take possession of the land and great will be that day for your son Jezreel.**”

12“**He will rename his brother, ‘My people,’ and his sister, ‘My loved one.’**”

Israel like an unfaithful wife

13“**But for now Jezreel must plead with his mother, who is Israel, for she is unfaithful to me and I will no longer be her husband.**”

14“**Let her remove the adulterous look from her face and the harlot’s heart from between her breasts, otherwise I will strip her naked and make her like a desert.**”

15“**Nor will I love her children, for they are children of adultery and harlotry and have been conceived in disgrace.**”

16“**She has said, ‘I will go after my lovers who give me my food and drink, my wool and linen and oil.’ Yet it was I who gave Israel her grain, her new wine and oil and lavished on her silver and gold. The silver and gold which she used for Baal.**”

Israel to suffer until she returns to the Lord

17“**I will block her way with thorn bushes. She will chase after her lovers but not find them. I will put an end to all her yearly festivals, all her feasts and her Sabbath days.**”

18“**I will ruin her vines and her fig trees and make them a thicket. Wild animals will devour them.**”

19“**Israel will be punished for the days she burned incense to the Baals, and decked herself with jewellery and went after her lovers.** 20Then she will say, ‘I will return to my husband for I was better off then than now.’”

Days of peace and happiness to come in the millennium

21“**In that day I will allure her and speak tenderly to her. Her despair will change to hope. Then she will sing, as in the days of her youth, as in the days when she came up out of Egypt.** 22Then she will call me ‘my husband’ and no longer go after Baal.”

23“**In that day I will make peace between my people and the beasts of the field and**

the birds of the air, all living creatures. 24I will abolish war from the land so that all may live in safety, and I will take you for my wife forever.”

25“**And the soil of the earth will respond with abundant grain, and new wine and oil.**”

Hosea to take back his adulterous wife

26The Lord then said to Hosea, “**Go show love to your wife again, even though she has taken another lover and is an adulteress. Love her as Jehovah loves the Israelites, even though they have turned to other gods.**”

27So I bought Gomer back from her lover for fifteen shekels of silver^{F*} and a homer of barley. Then I said to her, “You are to live with me from now on. No longer are you to play the harlot with another man.”

Israel will return trembling to the Lord and to David their king in the millennium

28“**For the Israelites will live many days without a king, without sacrifice or sacred stones, without ephod or idol.**”

29“**But afterward they will return and again seek the Lord their God and David their king. In the latter days they will come trembling to Jehovah and his blessings.**”

2

The sins of Israel causing the wasting of the land

1Hear the word of Jehovah you Israelites, “There is no faithfulness, no love, no knowledge of God in the land, only cursing, lying, murder, stealing and adultery. Bloodshed follows bloodshed.”

2“Because of this the land mourns and all who live in it are wasting away, the beasts of the field and the birds of the air. Even the fish are dying.”

Israel’s priests reject knowledge

3“You stumble day and night and the priests stumble with you. My people are being destroyed through lack of knowledge for the priests have rejected knowledge.”

The priests and the people to be punished

4“Therefore I reject the priests, for they have ignored my laws.

They have exchanged their glory for that which is disgraceful and they love wickedness. For this I will punish both priests and people and repay them for their deeds.”

5“Hear my words you priests! Hear my words you Israelites! Listen O royal house! This judgement is against you. Israel is corrupt. I will discipline all of you.”

Your sins are recorded

6“**I wrote for you my commandments, but**

*27 About half the cost of a slave (Exodus 13:14).

you regard them as something alien. The guilt of Ephraim^{F*} is stored up. Your sins are recorded.”

The abominable sins of Israel – robbery, murder, deception, burglary, adultery, harlotry, idolatry

⁷“I would restore the fortunes of my people but their sins keep coming up before me.”

⁸“Gilead is full of wicked men, stained with blood. Robbers lie in ambush, so do bands of priests. They murder on the road, committing shameful crimes.”

⁹“I have seen abominable things in the house of Israel. They lie and practice deception. The merchant uses dishonest scales. ¹⁰Thieves break into houses, bandits rob in the streets.”

¹¹“There are adulterers, burning with lust. I will no longer punish your daughters when they turn to harlotry or commit adultery, for the men themselves consort with harlots and shrine prostitutes.”

Leaders of Israel inflamed with wine, men of intrigue and anger

¹²“On the days of festivals the leaders of the people become inflamed with wine and mock. And the king joins hands with the mockers.”

¹³“Men approach the king with intrigue. Their anger smoulders all night and in the morning it blazes like a flaming fire. The people devour their rulers. Their kings fall, and none of them calls upon me.”

¹⁴“They set up kings without my approval.”

Israel’s days of punishment at hand

¹⁵“The days of Israel’s punishment are at hand, for your sins are so many.”

No respect for prophets

¹⁶“The prophet is considered a fool. The man with the Spirit of God is called a madman. ¹⁷The prophet is my watchman over Israel, yet hostility awaits him wherever he goes.”

Harlotry, wine and idolatry

¹⁸“You have deserted Jehovah your God to give yourselves to harlotry and to wine. A spirit of harlotry leads you astray.”

¹⁹“You consult wooden idols and are unfaithful to your God. You sacrifice on hilltops and under trees where the shade is pleasant. With silver and gold you have made idols for yourselves, to your own destruction. ²⁰You have built altars for sin offerings, but they have become altars for sinning.”

The Lord desires mercy and knowledge of God not sacrifice

²¹“You offer sacrifices to me and eat the meat, but I the Lord am not pleased with them.”

²²“I desire mercy not sacrifice, knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.”

The Lord’s anger burns against the calf idols

²³“You offer human sacrifice, and kiss the calf-idols. Throw out your calf-idol Samaria! My anger burns against it! It is not God, a craftsman has made it.”

Samaria’s calf idol to be carried to Assyria

²⁴“It will be carried to Assyria as tribute for the great king. You will mourn over it and so will its idolatrous priests.”

²⁵“Your high places of wickedness will be destroyed. Thorns and thistles will grow up and cover your altars.”

3

Israel to be destroyed by sword and fire

¹“I will punish your sins O Israel. The roar of battle is coming against you. Swords will flash and I shall burn your cities! I will destroy your fortresses!”

²“The people of Samaria will bear their guilt for they have rebelled against their God. They will fall by the sword. Their little ones will be dashed to the ground and their pregnant women ripped open. ³On that day the king of Israel shall be completely destroyed.”

Survivors to be exiled and wander among the nations

⁴“Ephraim’s glory will fly away like a bird. Samaria and its king will float away, like a twig on the waters.”

⁵“You will not remain in the Lord’s land. You will become wanderers among the nations. You shall return to Egypt. You shall eat unclean food in Assyria.”

⁶“What then will you do on the days of your appointed feasts to the Lord?”

Punishment to continue in exile

⁷“I will give your women wombs that miscarry and breasts that are dry. And if they do rear children I will bereave them. Woe to Ephraim when I turn away!”

⁸“Destruction to Israel! They have rebelled against me!”

⁹“I long to redeem them, but they speak lies against me. They cry not to me from their hearts but wail upon their beds.”

A promise to those who sow righteousness

¹⁰“They sow the wind and reap the whirlwind. ¹¹Sow righteousness and you shall reap the fruit of unfailing love. ¹²Seek the Lord and he shall come and shower righteousness upon you.”

Judah also to be punished

¹³“Judah also stumbles with you. When Judah goes to seek Jehovah they shall not find him. ¹⁴Their leaders are like those who move boundary stones. In time I will pour out my wrath upon them also.”

*6 The ten northern tribes of Israel were sometimes referred to as Ephraim, after the dominant tribe.

HOSEA 3

¹⁵“I shall be like a lion to both Ephraim and Judah. I will tear them to pieces and carry them off with no one to rescue them.”

¹⁶“Then shall I return to my own place until they admit their guilt, until in their misery they earnestly seek after me.”



Samaria in Northern Israel.

Ephraim and Judah like stubborn heifers

¹⁷“What can I do with you Ephraim? What can I do with you Judah? Your love is like the morning dew that soon disappears.”

¹⁸“How can I pasture you like lambs in a meadow when you are like stubborn heifers?”

The Lord’s anger will not last forever

¹⁹“But I will not give you up forever Israel. For it was I who taught you to walk, taking

you by the arms. I led you with kindness and with love.”

²⁰“My heart will soon change within me. My compassion will be aroused and I shall no longer execute my fierce anger.”

Israel to be gathered again in the latter days

²¹“Jehovah will roar like a lion and his children will come trembling from the west, like birds from Egypt, like doves from the lands of the north and I will again settle them in their homes.”

Israel must also return to the Lord in heart

²²“But you must return to me in your hearts, and maintain love and justice, then I will heal you and love you freely.”

²³“I will be like the dew of the morning to Ephraim and he shall blossom as the rose. ²⁴He shall send down roots and young shoots will grow and flourish. His splendour will be like an olive tree and his fragrance like a cedar of Lebanon. Men will again dwell in his shade.”

The wise shall understand these things

²⁵“Who is wise? Who is discerning? He shall understand these things. ²⁶The ways of the Lord are right and the righteous walk in them.”

AMOS

The prophet Amos prophesied in the northern kingdom of Israel, but was originally from the southern kingdom of Judah where he had worked as a shepherd before being called as a prophet.

Amos prophesied against eight different nations but was called more particularly to prophesy against northern Israel.

Northern Israel was decadent at this time. There was idolatrous worship involving prostitution, oppression of the poor, excessive drinking, unstable government with frequent assassinations, injustice in court, bribes, lying, stealing. Prophets were even forbidden to prophesy. Amos tells of one of the false priests saying to him, “Go away you seer! Return to the land of Judah. Do your prophesying there” (Amos 2:17).

The prophecies of Amos and his fellow prophet Hosea (see previous book) eventually came to pass. Assyria first conquered and exiled the far north and east of Israel, and then about 20 years later they returned and besieged the royal city of Samaria. The city fell after a three year siege and the survivors were taken into exile.

These exiles of northern Israel were eventually lost to history and became the so called ‘Lost Tribes of Israel’ fulfilling the word of the Lord “I will sift Israel among all nations” (Amos 2:29). Nevertheless the Lord has promised that lost Israel will be gathered again in the latter days.

The people of the southern kingdom of Judah (later known as the Jews) whose history is picked up again in the following book (2 Kings) were also exiled, but not until about 150 years later, this time by the Babylonians. Unlike the northern Israelites the Jews were given a second chance and many of their descendants returned to their homeland after 70 years of exile.

However about 600 years later, in 70 AD the Jews were exiled again, this time by the Romans and like the northern Israelites before them, they were scattered among all nations. They also are to be gathered again in the latter days, especially following the return of Jesus Christ (see the visions and revelations of Isaiah chapters 11-13).

AUTHOR

Chapters one and two – Amos the prophet with some clarifications by a later Israelite prophet.

Chapter three is taken from the book of 2 Kings in the traditional Bible, which is believed to have been written by the prophet Jeremiah. It covers the destruction and exile of Israel by the Assyrians and concludes the history of the northern kingdom.

“Hate evil and love good, maintain justice in your courts. Perhaps then I will have mercy on the remnant of Israel.” Amos 2:8.

CONTENTS

	Chapter		
Prophecies of Amos the prophet	1	Lord warned Israel with famine, drought and blight .. 2	
Prophecy regarding Syria	1	Also locusts, plagues and sword	2
Prophecy regarding the Philistines	1	Lament of the Lord	2
Prophecy regarding Tyre	1	Plea from the Lord	2
Prophecy regarding Edom	1	Visions of Amos	2
Prophecy regarding Ammon	1	Vision of a locust swarm	2
Prophecy regarding Moab	1	Vision of judgement by fire	2
Prophecy regarding Judah	1	Vision of Lord with plumb line in his hand	2
Prophecy regarding Israel	1	Israel to be spared no longer	2
Lord does nothing without revealing it to a prophet ..	1	A priest of Bethel complains about Amos	2
An enemy to overrun Israel	1	Amos prophesies regarding the priest	2
The sins of Israel – lies, stealing, bribes, injustice	1	Bodies to be strewn everywhere	2
Prophets forbidden to prophesy	1	Dishonest merchants condemned	2
Israel's offerings and festivals detestable to Lord	1	A powerful earthquake coming	2
Sinful women of Samaria to be led away by hooks ..	1	Famine of the word of the Lord coming	2
Rich men of Samaria to be first to go into exile	1	Bethel altar worshippers to be destroyed	2

AMOS 1

Israel no different from other peoples2
 Survivors of Israel to be sifted among all nations2
 Israel to one day be restored again2
 Fertility and abundance of the land in millennium2
 Israel never again to be uprooted2
 Jeroboam dies, his son Zechariah becomes king3
 Zechariah assassinated by Shallum3
 Shallum becomes king3
 Shallum assassinated by Menahem3
 Menahem becomes king3
 King of Assyria invades the land3
 Assyria appeased with a huge amount of silver3
 The silver exacted from the wealthy men of Israel3
 Menahem dies and Pekahiah his son becomes king ..3
 Pekahiah killed by Pekah who becomes king3

North and east Israel conquered by the Assyrians ...3
 North and east Israel taken into exile3
 Pekah remains as king in Samaria but pays tribute ..3
 Pekah assassinated by Hoshea who becomes king .3
 Hoshea stops paying tribute to Assyria3
 City of Samaria besieged three years by Assyria3
 Samaria captured by Assyria3
 Survivors of Israel taken into exile3
 Why Israel was exiled3
 Other peoples settled in Israel3
 Lions begin to kill the new settlers3
 An Israelite priest sent from exile3
 Teaches new settlers how to worship Jehovah3
 Idolatry also practiced by new settlers3

Bold The Lord or an angel speaking.
Bold italics A prophet speaking under inspiration.

1

Prophecies and visions of Amos the prophet

¹The word of the Lord and the visions that came to the prophet Amos, a shepherd of Tekoa^{F*} two years before the earthquake,^{F*} during the reign of Jeroboam king of Israel.

A prophecy regarding Syria

²Jehovah says, "I will punish the sins of Syria, for she threatened the land of Gilead. I will burn the fortresses of Damascus and the house of Hazael the king."

³"The people of Syria will go into exile to Kir."^{F*}

A prophecy regarding the Philistines

⁴"I will punish the sins of the Philistines, for they took captive whole towns and sold them to Edom. I will send fire upon their fortresses and destroy their cities until the last of the Philistines is dead, says the Lord."

A prophecy regarding Tyre

⁵"I will punish the sins of Tyre, for she too sold whole towns of captives to Edom. I will consume her fortresses."

A prophecy regarding Edom

⁶"I will punish the sins of Edom, for he pursued his brother^{F*} with a sword and his anger raged continually. I will send fire on his fortresses."

A prophecy regarding Ammon

⁷"I will punish the sins of Ammon, for she ripped open the pregnant women of Gilead in order to extend her borders. ⁸I will consume her fortresses. Amid war cries on a day of battle her king and officials will go into exile."

A prophecy regarding Moab

⁹"I will punish the sins of Moab, for she

burned to lime the bones of Edom's king. I will send fire upon Moab and destroy her ruler and all her leading men with him."

A prophecy regarding Judah

¹⁰"I will punish the sins of Judah, for they have rejected the law of Jehovah and have not kept my commandments. They have gone astray after false gods, so I will burn the fortress of Jerusalem."

A prophecy regarding Israel

¹¹"I will punish the sins of Israel, for they trample on the poor and deny justice to the oppressed."

¹²"Father and son lie with the same woman beside every altar, on garments taken in pledge from the poor. And in the house of their god they drink wine bought with fines they have imposed."

¹³"So I will crush you to the ground, as a cart wheel crushes when loaded with grain. The swift will not escape nor will the warrior save his life."



Nations surrounding Israel in the days of Amos.

*1 A town about 15 km south of Jerusalem. Amos was therefore a Judean prophet.

*1 This earthquake is prophesied in Amos 2:23.

*3 Kir is believed to be part of Assyria near Elam. The Syrians originally came from Kir (Amos 2:28).

*6 The Edomites were descendants of Esau the brother of Jacob and were therefore related to the Israelites.

The Lord does nothing without first revealing it to his prophets

¹⁴"Hear the word Jehovah has spoken O people of Israel that I brought up out of

Egypt, for the Lord God does nothing without first revealing it to his servants the prophets.”

An enemy to overrun Israel

15“An enemy will overrun this land and pull down your strongholds. As a shepherd saves from the lion’s mouth only two bones, or a piece of an ear, so only will Israel be saved.”

16“On that day when I punish Israel for her sins, I will destroy the altars of Bethel, and your fine houses adorned with ivory will also be destroyed.”



“...your fine houses adorned with ivory will also be destroyed.” Wealthy home interior in Samaria.

The sins of Israel – lies, stealing from poor, bribes, injustice in court

17“**You despise him who tells the truth. You trample on the poor man and force him to give you grain. You take bribes and deprive the poor of justice in the courts. Therefore the prudent man holds his tongue for the times are evil.**”

18“**Hear the word I have spoken against you Israel. I brought you up out of Egypt and destroyed the Canaanite before you, though he was tall as the cedars.**”

Nazirites defiled and prophets forbidden to prophesy

19“**I raised up prophets and Nazirites from among your young men, but you made the Nazirites drink wine and forbade the prophets to prophesy.**”

Israel’s offerings and festivals detestable to the Lord because of sin

20“**You bring me offerings but I accept them not. I hate and despise your religious festivals. I cannot stand your assemblies.** 21**Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps.**”

The sinful women of Samaria to be led away by hooks

22“**Hear this you women of Samaria, who**

oppress the poor and say to your husbands, ‘Bring us wine.’ 23**The time will come when you will be led away by hooks, through breaks in the city wall.**”

24“**Go to Bethel and sin. Go to Gilgal and sin yet more, for this is what you love to do.**”

The complacent rich men of Samaria

first to go into exile because of their many sins

25“**Woe to you, leading men of Samaria, who are complacent and feel secure, to whom the people of Israel come. You lie on beds inlaid with ivory and lounge on your couches. You dine on choice lambs and fattened calves.**”

26“**You strum and play on your harps like David, and improvise on musical instruments. You drink wine from bowls and use the finest lotions, but you do not grieve over the wickedness of Israel.**”

27“**Therefore you will be among the first to go into exile. Your feasting and lounging will end.**”

28“**Though you have built mansions you will not live in them. Though you have planted lush vineyards you will not drink their wine.** 29**For I know how many are your sins. I will stir up a nation against you.**”

2

Lord warned Israel with famine, drought, blight, locusts, plagues and sword

1“**I gave you empty stomachs and lack of bread in every city and town, yet you did not return to me. I withheld the rain and people went from town to town for water, but did not get enough to drink, yet you did not return to me.**”

2“**I struck your gardens and vineyards with blight and mildew. Locusts devoured your trees. I sent plagues among you as I did to Egypt. I killed your young men with the sword, yet you did not return to me.**”

A lament of the Lord

3“**Hear this lament concerning you O house of Israel:**

4“**Fallen is virgin Israel, unable to rise again, deserted in her own land with no one to lift her up.**”

5“**The city that marched out a thousand strong will have only a hundred left. The town that marched out a hundred strong will have only ten left.**”

A plea from the Lord

6“**Turn to me and live. Do not turn to Gilgal or Bethel. For Gilgal will go into exile and Bethel be reduced to nothing. Seek Jehovah your God and live, or he will sweep through you like a fire.**”

7“**Let justice roll on like a river, a never-failing stream. Seek good, not evil. Then the**

AMOS 2

Lord will be with you, just as you now say he is.”

⁸“Hate evil and love good, maintain justice in your courts. Perhaps then I will have mercy on the remnant of Israel.”



Israel in the days of the prophet Amos

Amos sees a vision of a locust swarm

⁹The Lord showed me in vision swarms of locusts as the main crop was to be harvested. They stripped the land clean.

¹⁰I cried out, “O Lord, forgive! How can Israel survive?”

¹¹So the Lord relented and said, “This shall not be.”

Amos sees a vision of judgement by fire

¹²Then the Lord showed me judgement by fire. It dried up the underground water and burned the land. But again I cried out, “O Lord I beg you, stop! How can Israel survive?” So again the Lord relented.

A vision of the Lord with a plumb line in his hand
¹³Then I saw the Lord standing by a wall that had been built true, with a plumb line in his hand. ¹⁴The Lord said to me, “What do you see Amos?”

I replied, “A plumb line.”

Israel to be spared no longer

¹⁵The Lord said, “I am setting a plumb line to my people Israel and will spare them no longer. The high places and shrines of Israel will be destroyed. My sword will rise up against the house of Jeroboam.”

A priest of Bethel complains about Amos

¹⁶Then a priest of Bethel sent this message about me to Jeroboam king of Israel, “Amos is raising a conspiracy against you. He is prophesying ‘*Jeroboam will die by the sword and Israel will surely go into exile.*’”

¹⁷Then the priest said to me, “Go away you seer! Return to the land of Judah to earn your bread. Do your prophesying there and do not prophesy any more at Bethel.”

Amos formerly a shepherd

¹⁸I answered him, “I was neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, but was a shepherd. The Lord took me from tending the flock and said to me, ‘Go prophesy to my people Israel.’”

Amos prophesies about the priest of Bethel

¹⁹“Now then, hear the word of Jehovah. You say to me, ‘Do not prophesy any more against Israel,’ therefore the Lord says to you, ‘Your wife will become a harlot in the city and your sons and daughters will fall by the sword. You yourself will die in a foreign land and Israel will certainly go into exile.’”

Bodies to be strewn everywhere

²⁰The Lord showed me a basket of ripe fruit and said, “What do you see Amos?”

I answered, “A basket of ripe fruit.”

²¹The Lord said, “My people Israel are ripe for destruction. I will spare them no longer. The day is coming when the songs in the palace will turn to shrieking. There will be bodies strewn everywhere, then silence.”

Dishonest merchants condemned

²²“Hear this you merchants who oppress the poor and say, ‘When will the Sabbath be over that we may again sell grain, skimping the measure, boosting the price, and cheating with dishonest scales, selling even the sweepings with the wheat.’”

A powerful earthquake coming

²³“I will not forget what you have done. An earthquake will come upon the land for this and all will mourn. The whole land will rise and be shaken and then sink. On that day I will bring darkness over the earth at noon.”

A famine of the word of the Lord coming upon the earth

²⁴“The days are also coming when I will send a famine throughout the land, not a famine of food or water, but a famine of hearing the word of the Lord. ²⁵Men will travel from sea to sea, and wander from north to east searching for the word of Jehovah, but will not find it.”

All Bethel altar worshippers to be destroyed

²⁶I saw in vision the Lord standing by the altar at Bethel, and he said, “**Strike the pillars! Bring them down on the heads of the people! Those who survive I will kill with the sword! None will escape!**” ²⁷“**Though they hide I will hunt them down. Though they go into exile my sword will slay them there.**”

Israel no different from other peoples

²⁸“**Are not you Israelites the same to me as the Ethiopians? Did I not bring Israel up from Egypt as I brought the Philistines from Crete and the Syrians from Kir?**”

Survivors of Israel to be sifted among all nations

²⁹“**The eyes of Jehovah are upon this sinful kingdom and I will destroy it. Yet not totally, for I will sift Israel among all nations.**”

³⁰“**However the sinners among my people will all die by the sword.**”

Israel to one day be restored again

³¹“**But the day will come when I will restore David’s fallen tent, and build it as it used to be. Israel will again rule over Edom and all the nations that bear my name.**”

Fertility and abundance of the land during millennium

³²“**In those days the reaper will be overtaken by the ploughman, and the planter by the one treading grapes.**” ³³“**The hills will drip with new wine, and I will bring back my exiled people Israel and they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant gardens and orchards and eat their fruit.**”

Israel never again to be uprooted

³⁴“**I will restore Israel to their own land never again to be uprooted says Jehovah your God.**”

EXILE OF NORTHERN ISRAEL

3

Jeroboam dies and his son Zechariah becomes king

¹Jeroboam, king of Israel reigned forty-one years and then rested with his fathers and Zechariah his son became king. ²This fulfilled the word of the Lord spoken to Jehu, “**Your descendants will sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation.**”

Zechariah assassinated by Shallum who becomes king

³Zechariah did wrong in the eyes of the Lord, just as his fathers had done. When he had reigned for six months Shallum conspired against him. He attacked him in front of the people and assassinated him and became king.

Shallum assassinated by Menahem who becomes king

⁴Shallum reigned in Samaria one month then Menahem assassinated him and became king.

⁵Menahem brought destruction on the town of

Tiphshah^{F*} because they refused to let him enter. He attacked the city and ripped open all the pregnant women. ⁶He also did evil in the eyes of the Lord and did not turn away from the calf worship.

The king of Assyria invades the land and is appeased with a huge amount of silver

⁷Then Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria invaded the land, but Menahem gave him a thousand talents of silver^{F*} to buy his protection, and to strengthen his own hold on the kingdom.

The silver exacted from the wealthy men of Israel

⁸Menahem exacted this money from the wealthy men of Israel. Each had to contribute fifty shekels of silver.^{F*} So the king of Assyria withdrew from Israel.

King Menahem dies and Pekahiah his son becomes king

⁹Menahem reigned ten years then rested with his fathers and Pekahiah his son became king. He also continued the sin of calf worship.

Pekahiah assassinated by Pekah who becomes king

¹⁰After two years Pekah, one of Pekahiah’s chief officers conspired against him and assassinated him in the royal palace at Samaria and became king. ¹¹He also continued the calf worship, the sin that Jeroboam caused Israel to commit.

The north and east of Israel conquered by the Assyrians and taken into exile

¹²During Pekah’s reign, Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria again invaded the land and captured all of Gilead east of the Jordan and Galilee to the north^{F*} and exiled the Israelites from these regions to Assyria.

Pekah remains as king in Samaria but pays tribute

¹³Pekah continued to rule over Samaria and the cities round about, but paid tribute to the king of Assyria each year.

Pekah assassinated by Hoshea who becomes king

¹⁴Then Hoshea assassinated Pekah and became king. Pekah had reigned for twenty years. The other events of Pekah’s reign are written in the Annals of the Kings of Israel.

¹⁵Hoshea did evil in the eyes of the Lord, but not like the kings of Israel before him.

Hoshea stops paying tribute to Assyria

¹⁶Assyria again invaded Israel during his reign, for the king of Assyria heard that Hoshea had sent messengers to seek help from Egypt and Israel had stopped paying tribute to Assyria.

*5 A town of northern Israel.

*7 About 34 tonnes.

*8 About 60,000 men would have needed to contribute the equivalent of about eight weeks wages for a labourer.

*12 The brutal Assyrians at this time 701 BC also conquered all of Syria, and the Sidonian cities of Tyre and Sidon.

AMOS 3

Samaria besieged for three years then captured by Assyria and the survivors taken into exile

¹⁷Assyria besieged the royal city of Samaria for three years.

¹⁸The city fell In the ninth year of Hoshea's reign and the Assyrians took him captive and exiled the survivors of Israel to Assyria.^{F*}

Why Israel was exiled

¹⁹All this took place because the Israelites had sinned against the Lord their God. They worshipped other gods and followed the practices of the nations the Lord had driven out before them.

²⁰The Lord warned Israel through his prophets but they would not listen. They forsook the commandments of God and made for themselves two calf idols and an Asherah pole. They bowed down to the sun, moon and stars, and worshipped Baal. They sacrificed their children in fire and practiced divination and sorcery.

²¹Therefore the Lord was angry with Israel and removed them from his presence as he had warned through his prophets. The people of Israel were exiled into Assyria and have never returned.^{F*}

²²Only the people of Judah were left in the land, and even they were not keeping the commandments of the Lord their God. Judah was following the practices that Israel had introduced.

Other peoples settled in Israel

²³The king of Assyria brought people from Babylon and other Mesopotamian cities he had conquered and settled them in Samaria and in the other cities and towns round about to replace the exiled Israelites.^{F*}

Lions begin to kill the new settlers

²⁴At first these people did not worship Jehovah, however lions increased among them and killed some of them.

An Israelite priest sent from exile to teach the new settlers how to worship Jehovah

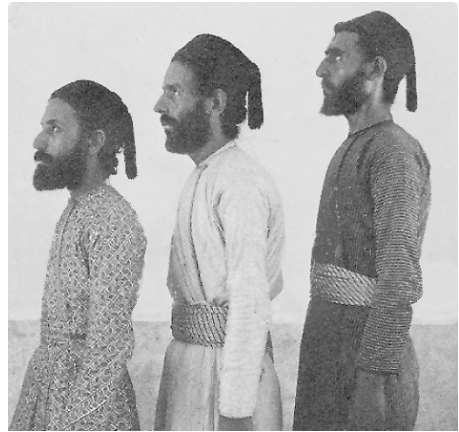
²⁵This was reported to the king of Assyria, so he gave this order, "Have one of the priests you took captive go back to live in Israel and teach the people what the god of the land requires."

²⁶So one of the priests returned to live in Bethel and taught the people how to worship the Lord.

Idolatry also practised by new settlers

²⁷Nevertheless these people also made idols according to the gods and customs of the nations from which they had been brought and set them up in the shrines the Israelites had made at the high places.

²⁸But they also feared Jehovah and appointed priests from among themselves to sacrifice to the Lord.



Samaritans, conquered Mesopotamians exiled to Northern Israel by the king of Assyria. These peoples interbred with the remaining poor Israelite land workers of the countryside.

*18 Assyrian records report that 27,290 inhabitants of Samaria were taken captive at this time.

*21 These exiles and those of the earlier exile from Gilead and Galilee comprise what is known as the 'Ten Lost Tribes of Israel' and have been the subject of much speculation. It is generally believed that after the fall of Assyria the majority migrated northward into Europe.

*23 The poorer agricultural workers of the countryside were not normally taken into exile by Assyrians. These remaining Israelites interbred with the new settlers and became the Samaritans of the New Testament, a people despised by the Jews.

2 KINGS

This book of 2 Kings goes back and picks up the history of the people of the southern kingdom of Judah (later known as the Jews) soon after they split from the northern kingdom of Israel. It begins with the reign of King Rehoboam, son of Solomon.

The reigns of eight Judean kings are covered, and it can be clearly seen how the degree of personal righteousness of each king, along with his courage to do what the Law of God requires, largely determines the welfare of his people.

Righteous kings who trusted in the Lord brought about prosperity and protection for Judah despite the tendency of the people to lapse into idolatry, whereas unrighteous kings brought war and poverty on their people.

Jehoshaphat was an example of a righteous king. When he heard that three vast armies were on their way to invade Judah he called a nation-wide fast. Then, although he had an army of over a million men, he offered a humble prayer to the Lord asking for his protection. In response to this prayer the Lord caused the three invading armies to turn on each other and annihilate themselves. The Judean army marched out only to see the bodies of hundreds of thousands (perhaps more than a million) enemy soldiers lying dead on the desert floor. It took three days to gather all the spoil, more than all the men could carry home (see 2 Kings chapter 3).

Unfortunately however the people of Judah had tasted the forbidden pleasures of idolatrous worship, and despite the efforts of several righteous kings and the high priest Jehoiada, their hearts were never fully faithful to the Lord for long. Ultimately only a 70 year exile would cure them.

AUTHOR

According to Jewish tradition the compiler of this book was the prophet Jeremiah, who lived 300 years after Solomon. He appears to have drawn on many sources. Some of those sources known to have been available in his day and covering this period are: 'The Records of Jehu son of Hanani' 'The Annals of the Kings of Judah' 'The Annals of the Kings of Israel' 'The Records of the Prophet Shemaiah' and 'The Records of the Seer Iddo.'

NOTE: The books of 1 and 2 Chronicles in the traditional Bible, which were authored by Ezra contain an overview of the history of both the peoples of Israel and Judah up until just before the return of Judah from exile. As these two books duplicate material already in the Bible they are not included in this Condensed Version, however any additional facts found in these two books have been incorporated into the text.

When the men of Judah arrived at a place that overlooked the desert they looked for the invading armies but saw only vast numbers of dead men lying on the ground, not one of them left alive. 2 Kings 3:28.

CONTENTS

Chapter

Rehoboam son of Solomon, king of Judah	1	The records of Judah	1
Rehoboam 41 years old when made king	1	Battle between Judah and Israel	1
Priests and Levites from Israel gather to Judah	1	King Abijah addresses Israel before the battle	1
Faithful northern Israelites also move to Judah	1	Abijah accuses Israel of rebellion	1
Judah abandons the Law of God after three years ...	1	Judah still observe requirements of the Lord	1
Judah turns to idolatry	1	Abijah warns Israel they will not succeed if they fight	1
Egypt invades Judah	1	Israel flees before Judah	1
Lord abandons Judah to Egyptians	1	500,000 men of Israel slain	1
King and elders of Judah humble themselves	1	Abijah dies and his son Asa becomes king	1
Lord grants some deliverance	1	Asa a righteous king	2
Treasures of Temple and palace taken to Egypt	1	Asa removes foreign altars Solomon erected	2
Bronze shields made to replace gold ones	1	Peace and prosperity	2
Rehoboam dies and his son Abijah becomes king ...	1	A million strong Ethiopian army invades Judah	2

2 KINGS 1

King Asa prays to the Lord for help	2	Edom rebels and puts army of Judah to flight	4
1,000,000 Ethiopians killed by Asa's army	2	Jehoram receives a letter from Elijah the prophet	4
Huge amount of spoil captured	2	Jehoram and his family cursed by Lord	4
Prophecy of the prophet Azariah	2	Raiders carry off Jehoram's family and possessions	4
King Asa removes all idols from Judah	2	Jehoram dies in agony from bowel disease	4
Asa deposes queen mother because of idolatry	2	The people do not honour Jehoram in death	4
Silver and gold Temple articles replaced	2	Ahaziah his son made king	4
Asa summons all Judah to Jerusalem to sacrifice	2	Ahaziah follows evil ways of his mother Athaliah	4
All Judah joyfully make a covenant to serve Lord	2	Ahaziah's mother a daughter of Ahab	4
Baasha king of Israel declares war on Judah	2	Ahaziah put to death by Jehu in Israel	4
Asa goes to Syria for help instead of to Lord	2	Athaliah kills her grandsons	4
Syria attacks Israel as Asa the king asked	2	Ahaziah's son Joash saved and hidden	4
Baasha withdraws from Ramah	2	Athaliah rules Judah as queen mother	4
Lord rebukes Asa by Hanani the prophet	2	Jehoiada the priest prepares to make Joash king	4
Asa casts the prophet Hanani into prison	2	Joash anointed king in Temple court	4
Asa afflicted with a foot disorder	2	Athaliah hears the noise and goes to the Temple	4
Asa does not seek help from the Lord	2	Athaliah put to death	4
Asa dies and Jehoshaphat his son becomes king	2	Temple of Baal torn down and its priest killed	4
Jehoshaphat given wealth and honour	3	Joash a righteous king while Jehoiada alive	5
Jehoshaphat rids Judah of male shrine prostitutes	3	Joash decides to restore Temple	5
Jehoshaphat teaches people the Law	3	Levites sent out to collect the Temple tax	5
Jehoshaphat grows in power, wealth and honour	3	The Levites slow to act	5
Jehoshaphat's great army of 1,160,000 men	3	Joash questions Jehoiada	5
Jehoshaphat allies himself with Ahab	3	The people pay tax into a chest at the Temple	5
Jehoshaphat later visits Ahab	3	The Temple restored as before	5
Jehoshaphat agrees to go into battle with Ahab	3	Burnt offerings again offered regularly	5
King Ahab killed in the battle	3	Jehoiada the high priest dies aged 130	5
Jehoshaphat rebuked by Jehu the prophet	3	Judah again goes astray after other gods	5
Vast army on the way to invade Judah	3	Officials stone son of Jehoiada to death	5
Jehoshaphat calls a nation-wide fast	3	Syrians attack Jerusalem and kill officials	5
King and people pray to Lord for help	3	King Joash killed by his servants	5
Jahaziel the Levite speaks by the Spirit of God	3	His son Amaziah becomes king	5
Lord promises to save Judah	3	Amaziah hires 100,000 soldiers from Israel	5
The people bow in worship	3	A prophet warns Amaziah not to use these soldiers	5
The Levites loudly praise the Lord	3	The hired soldiers from Israel are sent home	5
Men of Judah march out next day	3	In anger the soldiers raid Judean towns on the way	5
Invading armies turn and destroy each other	3	Amaziah kills 20,000 Edomites	5
Vast numbers of men found lying dead	3	Brings back Edomite idols and worships them	5
Immense amount of spoil gathered over three days	3	Lord angry with Amaziah's idolatry	5
Men of Judah return joyfully to praise the Lord	3	King orders the prophet to cease speaking	5
Fear of God comes upon surrounding nations	3	Amaziah to be destroyed for silencing prophet	5
Hearts of Judah still not set fully on Lord	3	Amaziah challenges Israel to battle	5
An alliance with the king of Israel condemned	4	Amaziah accused of pride and arrogance by Israel	5
A fleet of trading ships destroyed	4	Judah defeated by Israel	5
Jehoshaphat dies and son Jehoram becomes king	4	Israel take treasures of the Temple and palace	5
Jehoram an evil king, kills his six brothers	4	King Amaziah killed by his own officials	5

Bold The Lord or an angel speaking.

Bold italics A prophet speaking under inspiration.

1

Rehoboam son of Solomon 41 years old when he became king of Judah

¹Rehoboam the son of Solomon was forty-one years old when he became king of Judah.

The priests and Levites from northern Israel gather to live in Judah

²After the kingdoms of Judah and Israel divided, the priests and Levites living in the northern kingdom of Israel abandoned their pasture lands and property and came to live in Judah.

³This was because Jeroboam the king of Israel rejected them as servants of the Lord. He

appointed his own priests for the high places and calf idols he had made.

Faithful northern Israelites also move to Judah

⁴Israelites from other tribes in Israel who set their heart on seeking Jehovah also followed the Levites to Jerusalem in order to offer sacrifices to the Lord. ⁵They strengthened the kingdom of Judah and supported Rehoboam son of Solomon for the three years he walked in the ways of David and Solomon.

After three years Judah abandons the Law of the Lord and turns to idolatry

⁶However in the fourth year of Rehoboam's reign, when his position as king became strong, he and all Judah abandoned the Law of the Lord.

⁷They built high places and pillars and Asherah poles on every high hill and under every green tree.^{F*} There were also male shrine prostitutes in the land.

⁸Judah committed the abominations of the nations who were in the land before them.



An Asherah pole is believed to be a type of totem pole. Worship of the god Asherah involved lewd and unnatural sexual practices.

Egypt invades Judah

⁹Therefore, because Judah had been unfaithful, in the fifth year Shishak the king of Egypt attacked Jerusalem. He came with 1200 chariots, 60,000 horsemen and innumerable troops of Libyans and Ethiopians.

¹⁰He captured the fortified cities of Judah and came as far as Jerusalem.

The Lord abandons Judah to the Egyptians

¹¹Then the prophet Shemaiah came to Rehoboam and said, "Jehovah says, 'As you have abandoned me, I now abandon you to Shishak.'"

The king and elders of Judah humble themselves

¹²At these words the king and elders of Judah humbled themselves and said, "The Lord is just."

*7 The stone pillars were called 'sun pillars' and the wooden Asherah poles were a kind of totem pole in honour of Asherah, a fertility goddess whose worship involved deviant sexual acts.

The Lord grants some deliverance

¹³When the Lord saw this, he said to the prophet Shemaiah, "Since they have humbled themselves I will grant them some deliverance. ¹⁴They will however still become subject to Shishak so they may learn the difference between serving me and serving the kings of other lands."

Treasures of the Temple and palace taken to Egypt

¹⁵Then Shishak king of Egypt entered Jerusalem and carried off the treasures of the Temple and the royal palace. He took everything including the gold shields Solomon had made and carried it all back to Egypt.

Rehoboam makes bronze shields to replace the gold ones that were taken

¹⁶King Rehoboam made bronze shields to replace those that were taken. Thereafter whenever he went to the Temple his guards went with him, carrying the shields. Afterwards they returned them to the guardroom.

Rehoboam dies and his son Abijah becomes king

¹⁷Rehoboam reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem. He had eighteen wives and sixty concubines, twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters.

¹⁸Then he rested with his fathers and was buried in the City of David^{F*} and Abijah his son became king.

The records of Judah

¹⁹The events of Rehoboam's reign and his warfare with Jeroboam king of Israel are written in the Annals of the Kings of Judah and in the records of the prophet Shemaiah and the seer Iddo.

A battle between Judah and Israel

²⁰The hostility between Judah and Israel continued during the reign of Abijah, son of Rehoboam. He marched against King Jeroboam of Israel with a force of 400,000 men, but Jeroboam mustered 800,000 men.

King Abijah addresses Israel before the battle accusing them of rebellion

²¹However before the battle began, Abijah the king stood on a hilltop and cried out to the opposing army, "Jeroboam and all Israel, hear me! As you well know, the Lord has given the kingship of Israel to David and his descendants forever by covenant. Yet Jeroboam has rebelled against his master. ²²Worthless men opposed my father Rehoboam, son of Solomon when he was young and not strong enough to resist them."

²³"Now you again plan to resist the kingdom of Jehovah which is in the hands of David's descendants. You are indeed a vast army, and have with you the two golden calves that Jeroboam has made to be your gods. But did you not drive out the sons of Aaron and the Levites and appoint priests of your own?"

*18 The City of David was the fortress area of Jerusalem where the temple and king's palace were located.

2 KINGS 2

Abijah claims the priests of Judah still observe the requirements of the Lord

²⁴“As for us, Jehovah is our God and we have not forsaken him. The priests who serve him at the Temple in Jerusalem are the sons of Aaron, and the Levites assist them. ²⁵Every morning and evening they present offerings and fragrant incense to the Lord. They set out the holy bread and light the lamps on the gold lampstand every evening. ²⁶We are observing the requirements of the Lord our God but you have forsaken him.”

Abijah warns Israel they will not succeed if they fight

²⁷“God is with us, and his priests will soon sound their trumpets to battle against you. Men of Israel do not fight against Jehovah for you will not succeed.”

Israel flees before Judah

²⁸Now the king of Israel had sent troops around to the rear of Judah. When Judah turned and saw they were about to be attacked both front and rear, they cried out to the Lord and the priests blew their trumpets. ²⁹Then the men of Judah raised the battle cry. At the sound of the battle cry God struck fear into the Israelites and they fled before Judah.

500,000 men of Israel slain

³⁰Judah inflicted huge losses on Israel, so that 500,000 men were slain. They also captured the towns of Bethel and Ephron.

³¹The men of Judah were victorious because they relied on Jehovah, the God of their fathers.

Abijah dies and his son Asa becomes king

³²King Abijah of Judah had fourteen wives, twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters, but his heart was not devoted to the Lord as the heart of his forefather David had been.

³³Then Abijah rested with his fathers. He had reigned three years in Jerusalem, and Asa his son became king.

2

Asa a righteous king, removes the idolatrous altars, pillars and poles

¹Asa did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, he put away the male shrine prostitutes and removed the foreign altars that Solomon had erected in the high places. He smashed the stone pillars and cut down the Asherah poles.

²He also commanded the people to seek Jehovah the God of their fathers and to obey his commandments.

Peace and prosperity

³No one was at war with Judah during Asa's early years. The whole kingdom was at peace. He rebuilt the fortified cities of Judah and put walls around them. He built and prospered.

⁴Asa had an army of 300,000 men equipped with large shields and spears, and 280,000 Benjamites armed with small shields and bows. All these were brave fighting men.



Stone worship pillars (2 Kings 2:1).

A million strong Ethiopian army invades Judah

⁵Then Zerah the Ethiopian invaded Judah with a vast army of 1,000,000 men and 300 chariots.

King Asa prays to the Lord for help

⁶Asa king of Judah marched out with his army to meet him. Then he prayed to the Lord saying, “Help us O Jehovah our God, for we trust in you. In your name we have come against this vast army.”

1,000,000 Ethiopians killed by Asa's army

⁷When Asa had said this prayer the Ethiopians began to flee from Judah. Asa and his army pursued them as far as Gerar.* The Ethiopians fell before them until there were no survivors.

Huge amount of spoil captured

⁸Then the men of Judah carried off a huge amount of spoil. They also destroyed the towns around Gerar and obtained more spoil, and from the camps of the herdsmen they captured herds of sheep, goats and camels. Then they started back to Jerusalem.

The prophecy of the prophet Azariah

⁹As they neared the city the Spirit of God came upon the prophet Azariah and he went out to meet Asa. He prophesied to the king and the men with him saying, “*Hear me Asa and all you men of Judah and Benjamin. Jehovah is with you when you are with him. If you seek him you will find him. But if you forsake him he will forsake you.* ¹⁰*Now take courage, be strong and endure and your works will be rewarded.*”

King Asa removes all idols from Judah

¹¹When Asa heard this prophecy he took courage and removed the loathsome idols from the whole land of Judah and from the towns he had captured from Israel.

Asa deposes the queen mother because of her idolatry

¹²He also deposed his grandmother Maacah as queen mother, for she had made an Asherah

*7 Gerar was the southernmost city of the Philistines.

pole. Asa cut the pole down and broke it up and burned it in the Kidron Valley.

The silver, gold and articles of the Temple replaced and the altar renovated

¹³Asa replaced the silver and gold and the articles that had been taken from the Temple and renovated the altar in front of the Temple.

Asa summons all Judah to Jerusalem to offer sacrifice

¹⁴Then he summoned all Judah to Jerusalem, and also those of Israel who had settled among them for large numbers had come to him from all over Israel when they heard that the Lord was with him.

¹⁵They gathered at Jerusalem in the fifteenth year of his reign and sacrificed to the Lord 700 head of cattle and 7000 sheep and goats from the spoils they had captured.

All Judah joyfully make a covenant to serve the Lord

¹⁶Then they took an oath with loud acclamation, shouting and trumpet blasts and entered into a covenant to serve Jehovah the God of their fathers with all their heart and soul. ¹⁷And if any did not continue to serve the Lord they were to be put to death, whether small or great, man or woman.

¹⁸All Judah rejoiced over the oath they had made, because they had sworn it with all their hearts. So the Lord gave them rest on every side.

Baasha king of Israel declares war on Judah

¹⁹However in the sixteenth year of Asa's reign, Baasha king of Israel declared war against Judah and began fortifying the town of Ramah* to prevent anyone from leaving or entering Judah.

Asa goes to Syria for help instead of to the Lord

²⁰Asa took all the silver and gold from the Lord's house and also from his own palace and sent it to Ben-Hadad, king of Syria who was ruling in Damascus, with this message, "Let there be a treaty between us as there was between my father and your father."

²¹"I am sending you silver and gold, therefore attack Baasha king of Israel so he will withdraw from me."

Syria attacks Israel as Asa asked and King Baasha withdraws from Ramah

²²Ben-Hadad did as Asa asked and sent his forces against the towns of Israel. When Baasha heard of this he stopped fortifying Ramah and withdrew his forces.

²³So Asa brought the men of Judah to Ramah and they carried away the stones and timber Baasha had been using and used them to build up other towns.

The Lord rebukes Asa by Hanani the prophet

²⁴Then Hanani the prophet came to Asa and said to him, "**Had you trusted in Jehovah**

your God, instead of the king of Syria the army of Syria would have been in your hands."

²⁵"Were not the Ethiopians a mighty army? Yet when you trusted in Jehovah he delivered them into your hands. ²⁶For the eyes of Jehovah range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are committed to him."

²⁷"You have done a foolish thing, from now on you will be at war."

Asa casts the prophet Hanani into prison

²⁸Asa was angry with Hanani the prophet because of these words and cast him into prison. At the same time he inflicted cruelty on some of the people.

Asa afflicted with severe foot disorder, does not seek help from the Lord

²⁹In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa was afflicted with a disease in his feet. The disorder was severe, but he did not seek help from the Lord, only from his physicians.

Asa dies and Jehoshaphat his son becomes king

³⁰Two years later Asa died and rested with his fathers. They buried him in a tomb he had cut out for himself in the City of David in Jerusalem. ³¹They laid him on a bier covered with spices and blended perfumes and burned a huge fire in his honour.

³²His son Jehoshaphat became king.

3

Jehoshaphat given wealth and honour

¹Jehoshaphat was thirty five years old when he became king and the Lord was with him, for he walked in the ways of the early years of his forefather David. ²Therefore the Lord strengthened his hold on the kingdom and all Judah brought gifts to him so that he had great wealth and honour.

Jehoshaphat rids all Judah of male shrine prostitutes

³Jehoshaphat's heart was courageous in the ways of the Lord, he removed every Asherah pole from the high places throughout Judah and rid the whole land of male shrine prostitutes.

Jehoshaphat teaches the people the Law

⁴In the third year of his reign Jehoshaphat sent priests and Levites out to teach in the towns of Judah. They took with them the book of the Law and taught the people.

Jehoshaphat grows in power, wealth and honour

⁵All of the surrounding kingdoms feared Jehovah, so they did not dare make war with Jehoshaphat. ⁶Some of the Philistines brought gifts and silver as tribute and the Arabs brought him flocks, 7700 rams and 7700 goats.

⁷Jehoshaphat became more and more powerful and gained great wealth and honour.

*19 Ramah was a strategic town on the border of Judah and the northern kingdom of Israel.

2 KINGS 3

Jehoshaphat's great army of 1,160,000 men

⁸Jehoshaphat also had an army of mighty warriors numbering 1,160,000 soldiers stationed in Jerusalem, besides those in the fortified cities throughout Judah.

Jehoshaphat allies himself with Ahab king of Israel by marriage

⁹However Jehoshaphat allied himself with the wicked Ahab, king of Israel, by marriage.

Jehoshaphat later visits Ahab and agrees to go into battle with him

¹⁰Some years later he went to visit Ahab in Samaria. Ahab slaughtered many sheep and oxen for him and those who had come up with him.

¹¹Then Ahab asked Jehoshaphat, "Will you go with me to recover the city of Ramoth in Gilead?"

¹²Jehoshaphat replied, "I will go with you."

King Ahab killed in the battle

¹³So Ahab the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went to battle the Syrian defenders to recover Ramoth. ¹⁴But a Syrian archer drew his bow at random and pierced Ahab between sections of his armour. At sunset that day the king died in his chariot.

When Jehoshaphat returns he is rebuked by Jehu the prophet for helping the wicked

¹⁵King Jehoshaphat returned to Jerusalem. The prophet Jehu, son of Hanani the prophet went out to meet him and prophesied to the king saying, "*Should you help the wicked and make alliances with those who hate Jehovah?* ¹⁶*Because of this the wrath of the Lord is upon you. However some good is in you for you have rid the land of all the Asherah poles and have set your heart to seek God.*"

A vast army on the way to invade Judah

¹⁷Soon after this, Jehoshaphat was told, "A vast army is coming toward us from the other side of the Dead Sea. They have reached En Gedi." ^{F*}

Jehoshaphat calls a nation-wide fast

¹⁸Jehoshaphat was greatly alarmed at this report. He called on all Judah to fast and resolved to inquire of the Lord. People from all over Judah gathered at the Temple to seek the help of the Lord.

King and people pray to the Lord for help

¹⁹As the men of Judah stood with their wives and children in the courtyard of the Temple, Jehoshaphat stood before them and prayed these words:

²⁰"O Jehovah, God of our fathers who rules over all the kingdoms on earth, we have built this Temple for your name saying, 'If calamity comes upon us, whether by sword, plague or famine, we will stand in your presence before this Temple and cry out to you in our distress, and you will hear us and save us.'"

²¹"Now we hear that there are armies from Ammon, Moab and Edom coming to drive us out of the land you have given us. O our God, we are powerless to face this vast army. We look to you to help us for we know not what to do."

The Spirit comes upon the Levite Jahaziel and the Lord promises to save Judah

²²When the king had prayed these words the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel, a Levite, as he stood in the assembly and he said, "Hear what Jehovah says: **Do not fear this vast army, for the battle is not yours but mine. Tomorrow march out against them, you will find them at the end of the gorge in the desert of Jeruel.** ²³**Stand firm and you will see the deliverance Jehovah will give you.**"

The people bow in worship

²⁴At these words Jehoshaphat and all the people bowed down in worship before the Lord. Then some of the Levites stood and praised Jehovah with very loud voices.

The men of Judah march out next morning led by Levites singing praises to the Lord

²⁵Early next morning the men of Judah prepared to set out, but before they did so Jehoshaphat the king stood and said, "Hear me Judah, have faith in Jehovah your God and in his prophets and you will be successful."

²⁶Jehoshaphat then appointed Levites to march at the head of the army and sing praises to the Lord. As they marched they sang:

"Give thanks to the Lord.
His love endures forever."

The Lord causes the invading armies to turn and destroy each other

²⁷While the men of Judah were marching out to the desert of Jeruel with singing and praising, the Lord caused the armies of Ammon and Moab to turn on the army of Edom and kill them all. Then the armies of Ammon and Moab began to kill each other.

The men of Judah see vast numbers of dead men lying on the ground

²⁸When the men of Judah arrived at a place that overlooked the desert they looked for the invading armies but saw only vast numbers of dead men lying on the ground, not one of them left alive.

Immense amount of spoil gathered

²⁹So Jehoshaphat and his men went down to gather the spoil. They found livestock in great numbers and immense amounts of equipment, clothing and articles of value.

³⁰It took them three days to collect it all and there was more than they could carry away.

The men of Judah return joyfully and praise the Lord

³¹The men of Judah then returned joyfully to Jerusalem and assembled at the Temple with harps and lutes and trumpets to give praise to the Lord.

*17 En-Gedi was a town of Judah on the west shore of the Dead Sea.

Fear of God comes upon surrounding nations

³²Fear of God came upon all the nations round about when they heard what had happened.

³³Then the kingdom of Jehoshaphat was at peace, for God gave him rest on every side because he did what was right in his eyes.

The hearts of the people of Judah still not set fully on the Lord

³⁴However the people of Judah had still not set their hearts fully on the God of their fathers. The high places were not removed and the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there.

4

A fleet of trading ships destroyed

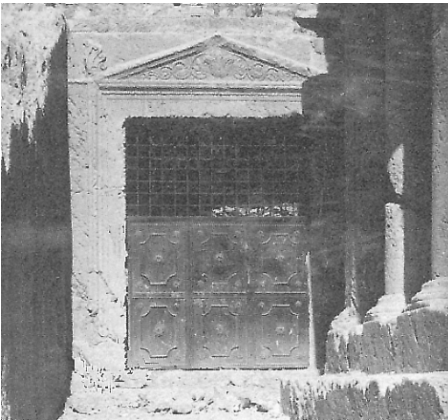
¹Later Jehoshaphat king of Judah made an alliance with Ahaziah, king of Israel who was the son of Ahab and also guilty of wickedness. He agreed with him to build a fleet of trading ships to sail to Ophir^{F*} for gold.

²However after these were built at Ezion Geber on the tip of the Red Sea, the prophet Eliezer came to Jehoshaphat and prophesied against him saying, **“Because you have made an alliance with Ahaziah, the Lord will destroy what you have made.”**

³And the ships were wrecked at Ezion Geber and unable to set sail.

Jehoshaphat dies and his son Jehoram becomes king

⁴When he had reigned twenty-five years, Jehoshaphat rested with his fathers and Jehoram his son became king.



The tomb of Jehoshaphat in the Kidron Valley

Jehoram, an evil king, kills his six brothers

⁵Jehoram was thirty-two years old when he became king and he walked in the evil ways of the kings of Israel, for he had married a daughter of Ahab.

⁶When he had firmly established himself as king, he put his six brothers to the sword and some of the princes also.

⁷But the Lord did not destroy his royal house, for he had promised to maintain a lamp for David and his descendants forever.

Edom rebels and puts the army of Judah to flight

⁸However Edom rebelled against Judah and set up its own king.^{F*}

⁹So Jehoram went against them with all his chariots, however the Edomites surrounded his army but he managed to break out by night and fled back to Jerusalem.

¹⁰The city of Libnah^{F*} also rebelled at the same time, for Jehoram had forsaken the Lord.

Jehoram and his family cursed by the Lord in a letter from Elijah the prophet

¹¹Then a letter came to Jehoram from Elijah the prophet^{F*} which said:

“Jehovah the God of your forefather David says, **‘You have not walked in the ways of your father Jehoshaphat but have walked in the ways of the kings of Israel. You have led Judah to be unfaithful to me, just as the house of Ahab did. ¹²You have also murdered your own brothers, men who were better than you.’**

¹³**‘So now Jehovah is about to strike your sons, also your wives and your possessions, and you yourself will suffer a lingering disease of the bowels until your bowels fall out.’**

Raiders carry off Jehoram’s family and possessions

¹⁴The Lord then aroused the hostility of the Philistines and the Arabs of the south. They raided Judah and carried off all the possessions of Jehoram’s palace. They also took his sons and wives, only Ahaziah his youngest son was left to him.

Jehoram dies in agony from an incurable bowel disease

¹⁵After all this the Lord afflicted Jehoram with an incurable disease of the bowels. At the end of the second year his bowels fell out because of the disease and he died in great agony.

The people do not honour Jehoram in death

¹⁶No one regretted his death and the people made no fire in his honour as they had for his father.

¹⁷Jehoram had reigned in Jerusalem eight years and was buried in the City of David, but not in the tombs of the kings.

Ahaziah his son made king

¹⁸The people of Jerusalem then made Ahaziah, Jehoram’s youngest son, king in his

*8 Edom had been under Judah’s rule since the time of David.

*10 Libnah was a Canaanite city on the Philistine border, also previously under Judah’s rule

*11 Elijah was a prophet of the northern kingdom of Israel.

*1 Saudia Arabia.

2 KINGS 5

place. He was twenty-two years old when he became king.

¹⁹His mother was Athaliah who was a daughter of Ahab and Jezebel of Israel.

Ahaziah follows the evil ways of his mother Athaliah a daughter of Ahab

²⁰But Ahaziah also did evil. He walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother Athaliah encouraged him in doing wrong, and men from the house of Ahab were his advisers.

²¹He also followed their advice when he supported Joram king of Israel, a son of Ahab, to war against Syria at Ramoth.

Kings Ahaziah put to death by Jehu in Israel

²²The Syrians wounded Joram king of Israel, so he returned to Jezreel to recover from his wounds, and sometime later Ahaziah the king of Judah travelled to Jezreel to visit him.

²³While he was there he went out in his chariot with Joram, the king of Israel to meet Jehu, whom the Lord had anointed to destroy the house of Ahab, and he was put to death by Jehu along with Joram.

Ahaziah's mother Athaliah kills her grandsons

²⁴When Athaliah his mother saw that her son Ahaziah was dead, she set about to kill the entire royal family of the house of Judah.

Ahaziah's newly born son Joash saved and kept hidden in the Temple

²⁵But Joash, the newly born son of Ahaziah was stolen away from among his brothers who were about to be murdered and hidden with his nurse in a bedroom.

Athaliah rules Judah as queen mother

²⁶This was done by Ahaziah's sister who was the wife of Jehoiada the high priest.

²⁷Jehoiada kept Joash hidden in the house of the Lord for six years while Athaliah ruled Judah as queen mother.

After six years Jehoiada the priest executes a plan to make the child Joash king of Judah

²⁸In the seventh year, Jehoiada the high priest took courage and made a plan with five of the army commanders. They went out and gathered the Levites and elders of Judah from all the towns and returned and assembled them at the Temple in Jerusalem.

²⁹Jehoiada said to them, "The young son of the king must reign, for he is a descendant of David. Now this is what you must do: A third of you Levites who are due to go on duty on the Sabbath are to keep watch outside the Temple gates, a third of you keep watch at the royal palace, and a third at the Foundation Gate. ³⁰All the other men are to remain here in the courtyard of the Temple."

Joash anointed king in the Temple court

³¹"No one is to come into the inner Temple court except the priests and Levites who minister here. They are to position themselves around the young boy, each man with a weapon in his hand. ³²They are to put to death anyone

who enters the Temple and must stay close to the king wherever he goes."

³³Jehoiada issued the army commanders spears and shields that belonged to the Temple then he and his sons brought out Joash.

³⁴They anointed him and placed the crown on his head and a copy of the Law in his hand and shouted, "Long live the king!"

Athaliah the queen mother hears the noise and goes out to the Temple

³⁵When Athaliah the queen mother heard the noise of people running and cheering, she went up to the Temple of the Lord to see what was happening.

³⁶She saw the young king standing by his pillar at the entrance and all the people rejoicing and sounding trumpets, and singers with musical instruments leading the praises.

³⁷Athaliah tore her robes and shouted, "Treason! Treason!" and fled back to the palace.

Athaliah put to death

³⁸Now Jehoiada the high priest had said to the army commanders, "Do not put her to death in the house of the Lord." So they waited until she reached the Horse Gate on the palace grounds and there they seized her and put her to death.

³⁹All the people of Judah rejoiced because Athaliah had been slain with the sword.

The temple of Baal torn down and its priest killed

⁴⁰Jehoiada then made a covenant with the new king and the people, that they would follow Jehovah.

⁴¹Afterward they went to the temple of Baal and tore it down. The people smashed the altars and idols and killed Mattan the priest of Baal.

5

Joash a righteous king while Jehoiada alive

¹Joash was seven years old when he became king of Judah, and for as long as Jehoiada the high priest was alive he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord.

²In time Jehoiada chose two wives for him and he had sons and daughters.

Joash decides to restore the Temple

³Now the children of the evil queen mother Athaliah had broken into the Temple of the Lord and taken its sacred objects for use in the temple of Baal, therefore Joash the king decided to renovate and restore the Temple.

The Levites sent out to collect the Temple tax but are slow to act

⁴He called together the priests and Levites and said to them, "Go immediately among the people of Judah and collect the tax money due annually to repair the Temple."

The king questions Jehoiada

⁵But the Levites were slow to act, so the king summoned Jehoiada and said to him, “Why have you not required the Levites to collect the tax imposed by Moses for the upkeep of the house of the Lord?”

The people pay the Temple upkeep tax into a chest at the Temple

⁶Finally, at the king’s command, a chest was made and placed outside the Temple. A proclamation was then issued throughout Judah that the people should bring to the Lord the tax that Moses had required of Israel for the upkeep of the Lord’s house.

⁷The people brought their tax gladly, dropping the silver into the chest until it was full. Then the royal secretary and the assistant to the high priest would empty the chest and carry it back to its place. ⁸They did this regularly and collected a great amount of money.

The Temple restored as before

⁹The king and the high priest then used the money to pay workmen to renovate the Temple. They hired masons and carpenters, and also workers in iron and bronze.

¹⁰They restored the Temple of God according to its original design and when they had finished, the rest of the money was used to make dishes and other objects of gold and silver.

Burnt offerings again offered regularly

¹¹Burnt offerings were offered regularly all the days of Jehoiada the high priest.

Jehoiada the high priest dies aged 130

¹²Now Jehoiada became very old and full of years and died at the age of 130. He was buried with the kings in the City of David because of all the good he had done.

Judah again goes astray after other gods

¹³After the death of Jehoiada, the officials of Joash began to advise him and he listened to them.

¹⁴As a result, Judah abandoned the Temple of the Lord and again worshipped Asherah poles and idols, ^{F*} bringing God’s anger upon Judah.

The officials stone the son of Jehoiada to death

¹⁵Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah, son of Jehoiada the high priest and he proclaimed to the people, “The Lord says, **‘Why do you disobey my commandments? You will not prosper in this. Because you have forsaken Jehovah, he has forsaken you.’**”

¹⁶However the officials by order of Joash the king stoned Zechariah to death in the courtyard of the Temple. Joash did not remember the kindness of Jehoiada but killed his son.

¹⁷As Zechariah lay dying he said, “May the Lord see this and call you to account.”

A small Syrian army attacks Jerusalem and kills the officials

¹⁸At the end of that year an army from Syria invaded Jerusalem. They killed the officials of the city and took spoil back to Damascus.

¹⁹Although this Syrian army had few men, the Lord delivered Judah into their hands because they had forsaken him.

King Joash is killed by his servants and his son Amaziah becomes king

²⁰When the Syrians withdrew they left Joash the king severely wounded. Then two servants of Joash conspired against him for murdering the son of Jehoiada and killed him on his bed.

²¹He was buried in the City of David in Jerusalem, but not in the tombs of the kings. He had reigned forty years.

⁹Amaziah his son succeeded him as king.

Amaziah hires 100,000 soldiers from Israel

²²Amaziah was twenty-five years old when he became king. He did right in the eyes of the Lord but not wholeheartedly.

²³When Amaziah the king had control of the kingdom he decided to attack Edom, so he mustered all the men twenty years and older who were skilled in battle, 300,000 men and also hired 100,000 soldiers from Israel at the cost of 100 talents of silver.

A prophet warns Amaziah not to use the soldiers from Israel

²⁴But a prophet of God came to him and said, **“O king, these Ephraimites from Israel must not march with you, for Jehovah is not with Israel. Even if you fight courageously in battle, God will overthrow you.”**

²⁵Amaziah said to the prophet, “But I have paid 100 talents for these fighting men!” ^{F*}

²⁶The prophet replied, **“The Lord can give you much more than that.”**

The hired soldiers from Israel are sent home and in anger raid Judean towns on the way

²⁷So Amaziah dismissed the men he had hired from Israel. ²⁷They were furious because of this and left in a great rage. On the way home they raided Judean towns and killed 3000 people and carried off a great quantity of spoil.

Amaziah kills 20,000 Edomites

²⁸Meanwhile Amaziah led his army to the Valley of Salt where he killed 10,000 men of Edom. He threw a further 10,000 off a high cliff so that they were dashed to pieces.

Amaziah brings back Edomite idols and worships them

²⁹However when Amaziah returned from slaughtering the Edomites he brought back idols of Edom and set them up as his own gods, bowing down to them and burning sacrifices to them.

*14 The worship of the fertility goddess Asherah involved sexual practices and a freedom from restrictions that would have contrasted sharply with the discipline of the Law of Moses.

*13 100 talents (3½ tonnes) of silver was a large sum of money. One talent comprised about 3000 shekels of silver and each shekel was worth about a four days wage for a foot soldier.

2 KINGS 5

The Lord is angry with Amaziah's idolatry

³⁰The Lord was angry with Amaziah for this and sent a prophet to him who said, "**Why do you worship Edom's gods who could not save their own people?**"

The prophet ordered by the king to cease speaking

³¹While the prophet was still speaking the king interrupted him and said, "Who appointed you a royal counsellor? Cease now or you will be struck down."

The king to be destroyed for not hearing the prophet's words

³²The prophet ceased speaking but said, "**God will destroy you for not hearing my words.**"

Amaziah challenges Israel to battle

³³After this, Amaziah sent a challenge to the king of Israel saying, "Come meet me face to face in battle."

Amaziah accused of pride and arrogance

³⁴But the king of Israel replied, "A thistle sent a message to a cedar in Lebanon saying, 'Give your daughter to my son in marriage.' Then a wild beast happened along and trampled the thistle underfoot."

³⁵"You have defeated Edom and are now arrogant and proud. But stay at home. Why provoke trouble and bring about your own downfall and that of Judah also."

Judah defeated by Israel

³⁶Amaziah however would not listen, so Jehoash king of Israel came against him and Judah was defeated by Israel. Every man fled to his home.

Israel takes the treasures from the Temple and palace as spoil

³⁷Jehoash then broke down a 400 cubit^{F*} section of the wall of Jerusalem and took the gold, silver and articles from the treasury of the Temple. He also took the palace treasures and some hostages and returned to Samaria.

King Amaziah killed by his own officials

³⁸Amaziah reigned twenty-nine years as king in Jerusalem then his officials conspired against him and he fled to Lachish. But they sent men after him and killed him there. He was brought back by horse and buried with his fathers.

*23 400 cubits is about 200 metres.

JOEL

A severe locust invasion has just devastated the land of Judah. The Lord appropriately chooses this time to inform his people through the prophet Joel of the *'the great and dreadful day of the Lord'* (Joel 2:5), an event which is yet to occur and is also known as the second coming of Jesus Christ.

This dramatic event of the last days, or more correctly latter days, as the earth continues on afterward, and the events leading up to and following it are touched on by almost every prophet from this point on in the Bible. It is however dealt with more fully by Joel, Isaiah, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Obadiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah and Malachi. Also by Jesus Christ in the gospels, Paul in some of his letters and the apostle John in the book of Revelation.

In this book of Joel, the Lord likens the sudden devastation of the locust invasion to that of a vast army that is to invade Israel in the latter days, just prior to the second coming of Jesus Christ (Isaiah chapter 7 and Ezekiel chapter 13). This event is also known as the battle of Armageddon.

The picture painted of this invasion and of all the other spectacular events of the last days are remarkably similar in all the prophetic books of the Bible.

Below is a brief overview of these events as best can be determined by Bible prophecy.

Overview of the events of the last days

The last days begin in earnest with a terrifying seven years known as the 'Great Tribulation' (Revelation chapter 5). The first three and a half years of this unpleasant period commence with what appears to be a cosmic collision, for the apostle John describes his first vision of these events as *"hail and fire falling on the earth and a huge blazing mountain being cast into the sea"* (Revelation 6:6-9).

Whatever the cause of this phenomena, it creates a great upheaval of the sea, the earth and the sky – ie, huge roaring waves, meteorite hail, burnt vegetation, famine, contaminated water, darkened sun, red moon,^{F*} etc. (Matt-Mark-Luke 28:24 and Revelation chapter 6).

These upheavals will result in the deaths of billions of people, for speaking of these days the Lord says to Isaiah, *"I shall make man scarcer than gold"* (Isaiah 8:5, also Micah 4:8 and Isaiah 7:4). Over one third of the world's population will die by war during the final months of this first period, perhaps fought over food resources (Revelation 6:32). Two prophets with great powers, including that of withholding rain and other plagues will prophesy from Jerusalem throughout this three and a half year period (Revelation 7:13-15).

The rule of the Beast or Antichrist

After the physical upheaval of the earth has settled down, then comes the second half of the tribulation, a harsh three and half year rule by a Satan-controlled, world dictator known scripturally as the Beast or Antichrist.

This ruler, along with a false prophet who performs miraculous signs, will persecute *'the saints'* who are the faithful followers of Jesus Christ. He will also prevent anyone from buying and selling unless his mark or number is in their right hand or forehead^{F*} (see Revelation chapter 10). He will put to death the two prophets in Jerusalem, and *'people from all nations will gaze upon their bodies'* lying dead in the street for three days (probably through the power of television) to much rejoicing. However terror strikes the hearts of the people when in full view they come back to life and rise up into the sky in a cloud (Revelation 7:16-21), just as Jesus did. Earthquakes, horrific plagues, massive 30kg hailstones, a dying sea, and a scorching sun torment the wicked during this second three and a half year period. Faithful followers of Jesus Christ appear to be offered a place of refuge *'in the wilderness'* (Revelation 8:13, 20-21).

* The moon takes on a distinctive red hue when viewed through atmospheric smoke at night. (See Joel 2:5.)

* Perhaps a cashless financial system reliant on cellphone cash or credit cards with pin numbers (remembered in the head and entered by hand?). It is unlikely that entire populations would submit to an enforced chip implant as is sometimes conjectured.

The return of Jesus Christ in great glory

Finally, as depicted by Joel, there comes an invasion of Israel, now *'a land of unwallied cities'* (Ezekiel 13:8) by a vast, multi-nation army, led by Gog who appears to be the Beast himself (Ezekiel chapter 13).

During the final attack and capture of Jerusalem (Zechariah 5:15) and after the death of two thirds of the population of Israel (Zechariah 5:8), Jesus returns in great glory *'in the clouds of the heavens'* accompanied by his Father (see note on Matt-Mark-Luke 32:7) and all the armies and hosts of heaven, and loud music (Isaiah 7:26:289) and stands on the Mount of Olives near Jerusalem. The invading army then turn upon themselves and destroy each other *'every man shall turn his sword against his brother'* as *'torrential rain, hailstones and blazing sulphur'* rain down upon them (Ezekiel 13:14).

After this comes a massive earthquake which destroys the cities of the world, *"The mountains shall be broken up and the cliffs will crumble, and every wall will fall to the ground"* (Ezekiel 13:11, Revelation 12:28).

Just prior to this return of Jesus in his glory there takes place what appears to be a preliminary judgement (the final day of judgement is still over 1000 years in the future) by the 'Ancient of Days' (see Daniel 5:10-12 and 16-17) perhaps to decide who is worthy of taking part in the first resurrection.

The first resurrection

At the same time that Jesus appears in his glory, the righteous dead are to be resurrected. To be resurrected means that our spirit is again united with, and will give life to our former earthly body which will be reconstituted from the elements of the earth and be made perfect, see Ezekiel chapter 12.

Then all those who have been resurrected, plus all the righteous people worldwide who are still alive, are lifted up by the power of God to be with the Lord above the earth. This power to apparently defy gravity is well attested to in the Bible, Elijah was carried up in a whirlwind, Elisha made an axe head float, Jesus was carried to the highest point of the Temple and both Jesus and Peter walked on water. Later Jesus rose into the sky from the Mount of Olives in full view of his apostles, and Philip was carried away by the Spirit after baptising the eunuch.

While the righteous remain lifted above the earth the *"birds gorge themselves on the flesh"* of the fallen army (Revelation 15:20), then the rest of the wicked who remain alive on earth are burned (I Thessalonians 2:13-14). The earth at this time also becomes more level and fertile (Isaiah 13:2-3, Zechariah 5:23, Amos 2:32-33) and the heavens (or sky) as we know it will be changed, *"I will create new heavens and a new earth"* (Isaiah 11:16, 2 Peter 2:7).

The millennium

Following the burning, the righteous again descend to the earth where the wicked become *'ashes under their feet'* (Malachi 3:22-23). Then begins the millennium, a time when Satan is bound for a thousand years and Jesus Christ reigns over the earth from a rebuilt, mountain-top Jerusalem as described in Ezekiel chapter 17.

Conditions on earth become like the garden of Eden, at least in Israel see Isaiah chapter 14, but probably elsewhere also. However some lands remain cursed with barrenness, and the sun is seven times brighter (Isaiah 13:7).

All Israel is then gathered and exalted as the world's leading nation. A resurrected David again becomes their king (Jeremiah 18:5). Meat-eating animals now eat grass like the ox and formerly dangerous creatures become harmless, even to little children (Isaiah 11:22).

Satan freed again for a limited time

At the end of this 1000 year millennial period begins a time of testing, when Satan is set free to gather his angels and to tempt and try those who have been born during the millennium. It is unlikely that Jesus will continue to reign on earth during this testing period, the prophecy is that his reign will be only for a thousand years (Revelation 16:4). This freeing of the devil eventually results in great evil again on earth culminating in a second massive invasion of Israel which ends with the death of the invading army by fire from heaven (Revelation 16:8-11).

The final resurrection

Now occurs the final resurrection, this time including the unrighteous dead whose spirits have by now suffered for their sins (see parable of Jesus, Matt-Mark-Luke 21:29-30). These unrighteous spirits are those who had the opportunity to repent but did not do so during their lifetimes. They did not take advantage of the free forgiveness made available by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Then comes the great and final day of judgement (Revelation 16:13-19). There is also a complete renewal of the earth and the heavens, and there is no longer any sea (Revelation 17:1).

The New Jerusalem

Following this final day of judgement, a glorious city referred to as the New Jerusalem, of colossal size – 2200 kms long and wide, and glowing clear as golden crystal, descends down from heaven to earth (Revelation 17:9-32).

In this city the resurrected righteous will live eternally in the presence of the Father and the Son, ie they will have Eternal Life and ‘*shine like the sun*’ (Matt-Mark-Luke 14:39) while the less faithful will dwell on a paradise earth outside the city, in varying degrees of glory (1 Corinthians 8:24) but deprived of the presence of God the Father which is termed the Second Death.

In effect heaven ultimately comes to us, rather than us going to heaven.

“Then after those days I will pour out my Spirit upon all mankind. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams and your young men will see visions.” Joel 2:4.

AUTHOR The prophet Joel.

CONTENTS

	Chapter
Judah suffers a severe locust invasion	1
Word of the Lord comes to the prophet Joel	1
Lord reveals severity of the damage	1
people told to declare a holy fast	1
The locust invasion likened to last days	1
Vast army to invade Judah before coming of Lord	1
Fast and repent and return to Jehovah	1
Lord will take pity on his people in last days	1
The vast invading army to be destroyed	1
A great stench from the dead	1
Pleasant conditions after coming of the Lord	2
Spirit of God to be poured out upon all mankind	2
Signs of the last days	2
Blood, fire and columns of smoke	2
Sun will be darkened and the moon turn red	2
All who call on the name of the Lord will be saved	2
Nations to be punished in valley of Jehoshaphat	2
Wrongs of the surrounding nations	2
Surrounding nations challenged to invade Israel	2
Jehovah a refuge for his people Israel	2
Jerusalem never to be invaded again	2
Judah to be a land of wine, milk and flowing water	2
Water to flow out from under the new Temple	2
Egypt to be ruined and Edom become a desert	2

Bold The Lord speaking.

1

The word of the Lord to the prophet Joel following a severe locust invasion of Judah

¹The word of the Lord that came to the prophet Joel following a severe locust invasion of Judah.

²**“Hear this you elders, has a locust invasion like this ever happened in your days, or in the days of your forefathers? Tell it to your children and to their children, and to the next generation.”**

³**“What the crawling locust left, the swarming locust has eaten, and what the swarming locust left, the hopping locust**

has eaten, and what the hopping locust left, the ravaging locust has eaten.”^{F*}

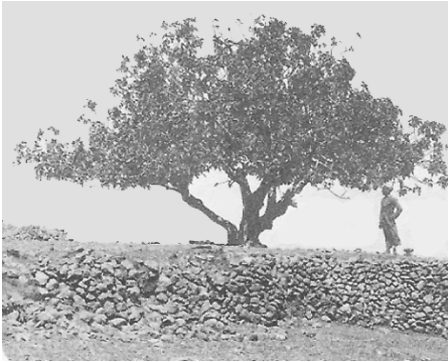
The Lord reveals the severity of the damage
⁴**“Wake up you drunkards and weep. Wail all you drinkers of wine, for the new wine has been snatched from your lips. ⁵A multitude without number has invaded my land. They have laid waste my vines and ruined my fig trees, stripping the bark and**

*3 These terms refer to the various stages the locust passes through before becoming a flying insect.

JOEL 1

leaving their branches white.”

6“Grain and drink offerings are cut off from the house of the Lord. The priests are in mourning. The fields are ruined, the grain is destroyed, the olive oil fails.”



A fig tree at Jerusalem.



The same fig tree fifteen minutes after a locust invasion.

7“Despair you farmers. Wail you vine growers. Grieve for the wheat and the barley. How the cattle moan. The herds mill about for they have no pasture. Even the flocks of sheep are suffering.”

8“**The pomegranate, the palm and the apple tree, all the trees of the field are stripped bare. Surely the joy of mankind is gone and gladness from the Temple.**”

The people told to declare a holy fast

9“**Put on sackcloth O priests. Declare a holy fast. Call a sacred assembly. Summon all who live in the land to the Temple of your God and cry out to me.**”

The locust invasion likened to the great army invasion of Israel before coming of Lord

10“**For the great day of the Lord is surely coming. It too will come as this destruction from the Almighty.**”

11“**Sound the alarm on Zion my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the**

day of the Lord is coming, a day of darkness and gloom.”

A large and mighty army to come

12“**Like blackness spreading across the mountains, a large and mighty army will come,**^{F*} such as never was seen of old. 13**Before them fire devours, behind them a flame blazes. Ahead of them the land is like the garden of Eden, to their rear a desert waste.**”

14“**Like locusts they have the appearance of horses,**^{F*} With a roar like that of fire they fly over the mountains. At the sight of them, the people are in anguish and every face pales. 15**They burst through the defences and are not halted. They advance in line, unswerving in their course.**”

16“**They leap upon the city and run along walls and enter houses like thieves. The earth before them shakes, the sun and moon are darkened and the stars no longer shine.**”

The Lord to come with his own mighty army

17“**Then will the Lord thunder at the head of his own mighty army.**

18“**The day of the Lord will be great and dreadful. Who can endure it?**”

Fast and repent and return to Jehovah

19“**So return to me with all your heart, with fasting, weeping and mourning. Rend your hearts not your garments.** 20**Return to Jehovah your God for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. He relents from sending calamity. Who can foresee? He may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing.**”

21“**Declare a holy fast. Call a sacred assembly and purify the people. Let the priests weep and cry out to me saying, ‘Spare your people O Lord. Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn, a byword among the nations.’**”

The Lord to take pity on his people in the last days

22“**Then Jehovah will be jealous for his land and take pity on his people. Then I will say to them, ‘I am sending you grain, new wine and oil. Never again will I make you an object of scorn to the nations.’**”

The vast invading army of last days to be destroyed and create a great stench

23“**I will drive the vast northern army from you, pushing it into the desert with its front columns to the Dead Sea and the rear to the Western Sea,**^{F*} and the stench of their dead will arise.”

*12 See Ezekiel chapter 13 and Isaiah chapters 7 and 8 for a fuller description of this great invasion of the last days.

*14 See Revelation 6:21 where horse/locust-like creatures are to invade and torment Israel in latter days.

*23 The Mediterranean.

2

The pleasant conditions of Israel after the coming of the Lord

¹“Fear not O soil. Fear not O animals. Be glad and rejoice, for the Lord is doing great things. The open pastures are becoming green. The trees are bearing their fruit, the fig tree and vine are yielding their riches.”

²“Rejoice in the Lord your God O people of Jerusalem, for he is giving you both autumn and spring rains as before. The threshing floors shall be filled with grain and the vats will overflow with new wine and oil.”

³“I will repay you for the years the locusts ate. You will have plenty to eat until you are full, and you will praise the name of Jehovah your God who has dealt wondrously with you. Never again will my people be shamed.”

The Spirit of God to be poured out upon all mankind

⁴“Then after those days I will pour out my Spirit upon all mankind. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams and your young men will see visions.”

Signs of the last days – smoke to darken the sun and redden the moon

⁵“But before those days I will show great signs in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be darkened and the moon turn red as blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.”

All who call on the name of the Lord shall be saved

⁶“But all who call on the name of the Lord will be saved, for in Jerusalem there will be deliverance.”

Surrounding nations to be punished in the valley of Jehoshaphat

⁷“In those days when I restore the fortunes of Judah, I will gather all the surrounding nations and bring them to the valley of Jehoshaphat.^{F*} ⁸There I will punish them on account of my people Israel, for they scattered my people among the nations and divided up my land. They cast lots for my people, and traded boys for harlots, and sold girls for wine.”

The wrongs of surrounding nations

⁹“Tyre, Sidon, and the regions of the Philistines, I will swiftly return on your own heads what you have done. You took my silver and gold and carried off my treasures to your temples. You sold the people of Judah to the Greeks. ¹⁰Therefore I will sell your sons and daughters to the people of Judah, and they will sell them to Sheba, a nation far away.”^{F*}

Surrounding nations challenged to invade Israel

¹¹“Say to the nations on every side, ‘Prepare for war! Rouse your warriors! Beat your plough blades into swords and your pruning hooks into spears. ¹²Come quickly and assemble in the valley of Jehoshaphat, for there shall I sit to punish the neighbouring nations.”

¹³“Swing the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come trample the grapes for the winepress is full and the vats overflow and great is their wickedness. ¹⁴Multitudes in the valley of Jehoshaphat, for the day of the Lord comes. The sun and moon are darkened and the stars can no longer be seen.”

Jehovah a refuge for his people Israel

¹⁵“The Lord thunders from Jerusalem and the earth and heavens shake, but Jehovah is a refuge for his people Israel.”

¹⁶“In that day you will know that I Jehovah your God dwell in Zion, my holy mountain.”

Jerusalem never to be invaded again

¹⁷“Jerusalem shall be holy and never again will foreigners invade her.”

Judah a land of wine, milk and flowing water after the coming of the Lord

¹⁸“In that day the hills shall drip sweet wine and flow with milk and all the stream beds of Judah will flow with water.”

Water to flow out from under the new Temple

¹⁹“A fountain will spring forth from under the Lord’s Temple^{F*} and water the valley of Acacia trees.”^{F*}

Egypt to be ruined in last days

²⁰“But Egypt will be ruined and Edom become a desert because of the violence done to the people of Judah in whose land they shed innocent blood.^{F*}

²¹“But Judah will be inhabited for all time, for I will pardon their blood guilt.”

*10 Sheba is modern day Yemen.

*19 For a fuller description of this new temple and the fountain see Ezekiel chapters 14 to 17.

*19 Believed to be the Kidron valley. See also Ezekiel 17:1-10.

*20 Despite the destruction of Egypt in the last days, the people of Egypt will eventually repent and worship Jehovah during the millennium, see Isaiah 10:5-18.

*7 The Valley of Jehoshaphat is not clearly identified in the Bible but is generally believed to be the Kidron valley east of Jerusalem. Jehoshaphat means ‘judgement.’

MICAH

Micah was a Judean prophet, but he also prophesied to the Israelites in Samaria the main city of northern Israel before it fell to Assyria.

Micah was a contemporary of the prophet Isaiah and an early vision and prophecy of Isaiah is included in this book.

Micah's prophecies follow the usual pattern of the Lord – first an exposing of the sins of his people, next the punishment to follow if they do not repent, and finally an encouraging but brief glimpse into Israel's future glorious destiny.

Micah is noted for his prophecy that the Messiah (or Christ of the New Testament) was to be born in Bethlehem (Micah 4:1). This prophecy was so familiar to the Pharisees of Jesus' day that when they heard Jesus was from the despised town of Nazareth in Galilee they assumed he was born there and immediately dismissed any further thought of him as being the Messiah. When Nicodemus, one of their number tried to defend Jesus they sneered at him and said, "Are you from Galilee too? Search the scriptures, you will find that no prophet is to rise from Galilee" (John 7:34). Such is the result of prejudice and superficial judgement.

NOTE In this book of Micah and some of the prophetic books that follow, a number of short, interrelated prophecies have occasionally been combined into one, in order to portray a clearer picture of the social evils of the day being condemned and the punishment to follow if the people do not repent.

AUTHOR

Chapter one provides the political background to Micah's prophecies and is taken from the book of 2 Chronicles written by Ezra and also part of the book of Isaiah written by Isaiah himself.

Chapters two and three are by Micah the prophet.

"And you Bethlehem, though you are little among the towns of Judah, out of you will come the one who is to rule over Israel, whose origins are from the very beginning, from ancient times." Micah 4:1.

CONTENTS

Chapter

King Amaziah of Judah is killed by Jehu of Israel1	Israel will not listen to true prophets2
Uzziah his son made king of Judah1	False prophets lead the people astray2
King Uzziah becomes very powerful1	Visions and revelation soon to cease2
Uzziah loved the soil1	Widespread theft defiling the land2
Uzziah's army, fortifications and weapons1	Micah prophesies to corrupt leaders of Jerusalem ...3
Uzziah unlawfully enters the Temple1	Violence and bribery in Jerusalem3
Uzziah cursed with leprosy1	Distrust, rebellion and family breakdown3
Uzziah dies a leper1	A plea from the Lord for justice, mercy and humility ...3
Jotham his son becomes king1	Judah to be exiled3
Jotham a righteous king but the people disobedient ...1	Jerusalem to become a heap of rubble3
Isaiah the prophet sees Lord1	Judah's exile will come to an end3
Winged cherubim in attendance with Lord1	Jerusalem eventually to rule the nations3
Isaiah's lips cleansed by live ember1	Messiah of Israel to be born in Bethlehem4
Hearts of people of Judah hardened1	Israel to be abandoned by Lord from Messiah's day ...4
People cursed with blindness of understanding1	Scattered Israel to be gathered in latter days4
Judah to be sent into exile1	Messiah to come again in last days4
Jotham becomes powerful because he is faithful1	Scattered Israelites to become like young lions4
The vision and prophecy of Micah2	All things of war and idolatry to be destroyed4
Micah prophesies of second coming of the Lord2	Earth to be almost empty of people in last days4
All Israel to be punished2	Israel's borders to expand during millennium4
Both Samaria and Jerusalem to be punished2	Nations will come to Israel trembling with fear4
The sins of Israel2	Micah's prayer of gratitude4

Bold The Lord or an angel speaking.

Bold italics A prophet speaking under inspiration.

1

King Amaziah of Judah is killed and his sixteen year old son Uzziah made king

¹After the death of Amaziah king of Judah by the hand of Jehu of Israel, the people took his son Uzziah who was sixteen years old and made him king.

²Uzziah did what was right in the eyes of the Lord.

King Uzziah of Judah becomes very powerful

³He made war against the Philistines, breaking down the walls of their cities and building garrison towns close by. ⁴Also the Ammonites brought tribute to Uzziah king of Judah for his fame had spread and he became very powerful.

Uzziah loved the soil

⁵Uzziah dug many cisterns as he had much livestock, and his servants worked his fields and vineyards for he loved the soil.

Uzziah's army, fortifications and weapons

⁶Uzziah had an army of 307,500 men and provided them with shields, spears, helmets, breastplates, bows and slings.

⁷He built fortified towers in the walls of Jerusalem, and also out in the desert, and built machines in Jerusalem designed by skilful men for use on the towers to shoot arrows and hurl large stones.

Uzziah cursed with leprosy for unlawfully entering the Temple

⁸But pride led to Uzziah's downfall. One day he entered the sanctuary of the Lord's Temple to burn incense on the altar.

⁹Azariah the high priest and eighty other brave priests followed him in and confronted him and said to him, "It is not for you O King Uzziah to burn incense to Jehovah. ¹⁰Only those who are descended from Aaron and have been consecrated as priests may do that. Leave the sanctuary at once. You will not be honoured by the Lord."

¹¹At these words, the king who held a censer in his hand ready to burn incense, turned in anger on the priests. But as he did so, leprosy broke out on his forehead.

¹²When the priests saw the leprosy they hurried him out, and Uzziah himself was eager to leave.

Uzziah dies a leper

¹³Uzziah remained a leper until the day he died and lived in a separate house. Jotham his son had charge of the palace and governed the people.

¹⁴The other events of Uzziah's reign are recorded by the prophet Isaiah.

¹⁵Then Uzziah rested with his fathers and was buried near them, but not in the royal tombs, for they said, "He is a leper." He had reigned 52 years in Jerusalem.

Jotham his son becomes king and is righteous but the people are still disobedient

¹⁶Jotham his son became king. He was twenty-five years old and did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, but the people continued to offer sacrifice and burn incense at the hill top shrines.

Isaiah the prophet sees the Lord

¹⁷In that same year, a vision and the word of the Lord came to Isaiah the prophet in the Temple. ¹⁸He wrote, "In the year Uzziah the king died I saw Jehovah seated on a throne, high and exalted and his train^{F*} filled the Temple."

Winged cherubim in attendance with Lord

¹⁹"Above him were cherubim,^{F*} each with six wings. With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew, and one called to another saying, 'Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah Almighty. The whole earth is full of his glory.'

²⁰"The Temple shook at the sound of their voices and was filled with smoke."

²¹I cried out "Woe is me! I am doomed! For I am a man of unclean lips and live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, Jehovah Almighty."

Isaiah's lips cleansed by a live ember

²²"When I said these words, one of the cherubs flew to me with a live ember in his hand which he had taken with tongs from the altar and with it he touched my mouth and said, "Your guilt is taken away, your sin is atoned for."

The people of Judah are hard hearted and are to be cursed with blindness of understanding

²³"Then I heard the voice of Jehovah saying, "Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?"

"I said, 'Send me.'"

²⁴"The Lord said to me, 'Go to this people and say, "You will hear but never understand. You will see but never perceive."^{F*}

²⁵"For the hearts of this people are hardened and their ears are dull and their eyes unseeing, otherwise they would understand and repent and be healed."

Judah to be sent into exile

²⁶"Then I said, 'For how long O Lord?'"

"He answered, "Until their cities and fields lie deserted and ruined and I have sent them far away in exile. And though a tenth remain in the land it will again be laid waste. Yet the remnant will be as a holy seed in the land."

*18 Train, from the Hebrew 'shuwil' meaning 'that which hangs down.' Probably referring to the cherubim and their wheels below the throne. Ezekiel's described similar visions, see Ezekiel chapters 1 and 3.

*19 Cherubim are winged heavenly creatures, normally with human-like form but possessing variable facial features depicting human, animal or bird life. See Ezekiel 1:4-9 for a fuller description.

*24 Probably meaning that the people of Judah were now past being saved and were to be cursed with a total lack of understanding and eventual exile.

King Jotham becomes powerful because he is faithful to the Lord

²⁷King Jotham did extensive work on the city wall in Jerusalem and built towns in the Judean hills, and forts in the forested areas.

²⁸He also made war on the Ammonites and conquered them. For three years the Ammonites paid an annual tribute to Judah of 100 talents^{F*} of silver and 10,000 homers^{F*} of wheat and barley.

²⁹Jotham grew powerful because he was faithful to the Lord his God.

2

The vision and prophecy of Micah

¹During the reign of Jotham this word of the Lord came through the prophet Micah concerning both Samaria and Jerusalem: *“Hear O peoples of the earth, nations far and near, the Lord Jehovah witnesses against you from his holy Temple.”*

Micah prophesies second coming of Lord

²*“For he is coming down from his dwelling place, and will stand upon the high places of the earth. ³The mountains will melt beneath the Lord like wax before the fire. All this for the sins of the house of Israel.”*

Both Samaria and Jerusalem to be punished

⁴*“Now hear the word of Jehovah: ‘What is Israel’s sin? Is it not Samaria?^{F*} Is it not Jerusalem? Therefore I will make Samaria a heap of rubble. I will break her idols in pieces, idols built by the hire of harlots. ⁵Her wound will be incurable and will reach to Judah, even to Jerusalem itself.”*

The sins of Israel

⁶*“Woe to men who plan evil on their beds and at morning’s light carry it out. They covet fields and houses and by fraud take them from their fellow man.”*

⁷*“Therefore I am planning disaster against Israel from which you will be unable to save yourselves. You will no longer walk proudly for it will be a time of calamity.”*

Israel will not listen to true prophets

⁸*“You say, ‘Do not prophesy about such things. Disgrace will not overtake us. Jehovah is not so easily offended. He does not do such things.”*

⁹*“If a deceiver were to come and say ‘I will preach to you of wine and strong drink’ he would be the right preacher for this people!”*

False prophets lead the people astray

¹⁰*“As for the prophets who lead my people astray, if someone feeds them they prophesy ‘all is well,’ but if no one feeds them they prophesy harsh words.”*

*28 About 3½ tonnes. One talent weighs about 34kgs.

*28 A homer is a full donkey load, about 220 kgs.

*4 Samaria was the royal city of the northern kingdom of Israel, the equivalent of Jerusalem in Judah.

Visions and revelations soon to cease

¹¹*“Therefore the night is coming when you will be without visions and revelation. Your seers shall be ashamed and will cover their faces for there shall be no answer from God.”*

Widespread theft defiling the land

¹²*“My words are good to those whose ways are righteous, but you who are my people rise up against each other like enemies. ¹³You steal robes from those who pass by, without a thought, like men returning from battle. You drive women from their homes and dishonour their children forever.”*

¹⁴*“Up and away with you! This land is no longer your resting place for it is defiled, ruined beyond all remedy!”*

3

Micah prophesies to the corrupt leaders of Jerusalem

¹*“Now listen you rulers of Jerusalem, for I am filled with the Spirit of the Lord to declare all Israel’s sins. Hear the words of Jehovah:”*

²*“You despise justice. You distort all that is right. You build Jerusalem with bloodshed. Her priests teach for silver and her prophets prophesy for money. ³Yet you say, ‘The Lord is among us. Disaster will not come upon us.”*

⁴*“Jerusalem’s rich men are violent and her people are liars. Shall I acquit a man with dishonest scales, with a bag of false weights?”*

⁵*“Therefore I have begun to destroy you, to ruin you because of your sins. You will store up but save nothing. You will plant but not harvest. You will crush grapes but not drink the wine.”*

Violence and bribery in Jerusalem

⁶*“You have followed the evil of Ahab’s house,^{F*} therefore I will give you over to ruin. You will bear the scorn of the nations.”*

⁷*“The godly are no more in the land, not one upright man remains. Men lie in wait to shed blood. Each hunts his brother. ⁸The ruler demands gifts. The judge accepts bribes. The powerful conspire together.”*

Distrust, rebellion and family breakdown

⁹*“You cannot trust a neighbour, nor can you can put confidence in a friend. Even with the woman who lies in your embrace you are careful of your words.”*

¹⁰*“A son dishonours his father. A daughter rebels against her mother. A man’s enemies are those of his own household.”*

A plea from the Lord for justice, mercy and humility

¹¹*“My people what have I done to you?”*

*6 Ahab was a former evil king of northern Israel.

How have I burdened you? Answer me. I brought you up out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery.”

¹²“You say, ‘With what shall I come before the Lord? Shall I come with burnt offerings? Will he be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression?’”

¹³“This is what the Lord requires of you: To act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.”

Judah to be exiled and Jerusalem to become a heap of rubble

¹⁴“Because of your sins, Zion shall be plowed as a field,^{F*} Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble and the Temple hill a mound overgrown with thickets.”

¹⁵“Writhe in agony O Jerusalem, like a woman in labour, for you will be exiled to Babylon.”



Zion the Temple mount of Jerusalem. As prophesied in Micah 3:14 it was literally plowed up by the Romans in 134 AD.

Judah's exile will come to an end

¹⁶“But you will be rescued. The day will come when Jehovah will save you from the hand of your enemies.”

¹⁷“But for now, the nations are gathering against you. They say, ‘Let Jerusalem be defiled. Let us gloat over her.’”

¹⁸“But they know not the thoughts of the Lord. They understand not my plan.”

Jerusalem to eventually rule the nations

¹⁹“You will rise O daughter of Zion and break to pieces the nations, and devote their ill-gotten wealth to the Lord of all the earth.”

4

The Messiah of Israel to be born in Bethlehem

¹“And you Bethlehem, though you are little among the towns of Judah, out of you will come the one who is to rule over Israel, whose origins are from the very beginning, from ancient times.” ^{F*}

Israel to be abandoned by Lord from

Messiah's day until gathered in the latter days

²“But from the time of his birth Israel shall be abandoned, until the time when the rest of his brethren shall return to the land.”

Messiah to come again in last days and shepherd his flock

³“Then he shall come again and shepherd his flock in the strength of Jehovah, in the majesty of the name of his God. ⁴And Israel will live securely, for his fame will be great and reach to the ends of the earth. He shall be their peace.”

The scattered Israelites to become like young lions

⁵“In those days the remnants of Israel shall be among all nations, like dew from the Lord, as young lions among flocks of sheep.”

⁶“Then shall your hands be lifted up in triumph over your enemies and your foes be destroyed.”

All things of war and idolatry to be destroyed in that day

⁷“In that day I will demolish horses and chariots. I will destroy cities and tear down strongholds. I shall destroy witchcraft, images and idols and uproot Asherah poles.”

The earth to be almost empty of people in last days

⁸“I will take vengeance in anger upon the nations that have not obeyed me. The earth will become empty of its inhabitants because of their deeds.”

Israel's borders to expand in millennium

⁹“Yet it will be a day for extending your borders. People will come to you from Assyria and from Egypt, from sea to sea and I will show them my wonders as in the days when you came out of Egypt.”

Nations will come to Israel trembling with fear

¹⁰“Nations will see and be ashamed. They will lick the dust like a snake. Deprived of all their power they will come to you trembling.”

¹¹“They will turn in fear to Jehovah your God and will fear you also.”

Micah's prayer of gratitude

¹²“Who is a God like you O Lord, who pardons sin and ceases to remain angry forever but delights to show mercy?”

¹³“You will again have compassion on us and hurl our sins into the sea.”

¹⁴“You will be faithful to Israel as you promised Abraham in days long ago.”

*14 Zion was the hill in Jerusalem where the temple and king's palace were located. It was literally plowed up by the Romans in 134 AD.

*1 This ruler is known to the Jews as 'Messiah' ('anointed of Jehovah'). Christians believe him to be Jesus Christ, who is to return again as prophesied in the verses that follow. Traditional Jews reject this belief and still await the birth of Messiah.

ISAIAH

Isaiah's writings are recognised as the greatest of the Old Testament prophets, and with good reason, his prophecies are majestic and eloquent and full of rich imagery. Many of them still lie in the future and pertain to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (the Messiah) and his one thousand year reign on earth which is to follow.

This thousand year period of peace, known as the millennium is a time during which *'The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat grass as the ox'* (Isaiah 11:22), and Jerusalem is to become a, *'peaceful city of broad rivers and streams'* (Isaiah 13:12-13).

For greater clarity in this Condensed Bible these 'latter days' prophecies of Isaiah have been grouped together in chapters 7 through to 17. They paint a vivid and stimulating picture of what awaits the earth.

Isaiah also prophesied the first coming of Jesus Christ. These prophecies are found in chapter 26 and were fulfilled to the letter, ie *'He will go like a lamb to the slaughter'* (Isaiah 26:13).

Little is known about Isaiah's background except that he prophesied during the reigns of five Judean kings, especially during the rule of the righteous King Hezekiah.

According to Jewish tradition Isaiah was put to death by being sawn in two during the early evil years of the young King Manasseh.

AUTHOR

Isaiah the prophet with some editing by a later prophet, possibly Jeremiah. The political background of the book has been taken from 2 Kings, believed to have been written by the prophet Jeremiah and 2 Chronicles which was written by Ezra.

"Who is this coming from the east with his garments stained crimson, robed in splendour and travelling in the greatness of his strength?" Isaiah 11:1.

CONTENTS

	Chapter
King Jotham dies and his son Ahaz becomes king ...1	Prayers of Judah not heeded by Lord2
Ahaz leads Judah back into idolatry1	Cease to do evil, care for the poor2
Ahaz even sacrificed his sons in fire1	Judah's scarlet sins can become white as snow2
Syria and Israel join forces to invade Judah1	Jerusalem like a harlot2
Isaiah and his son sent by Lord to speak to Ahaz1	Jerusalem will be purged of her impurity2
Ahaz will withstand invasion if he not lose courage ..1	Isaiah's song of the Lord's vineyard2
Isaiah tells Ahaz to ask the Lord for a sign1	Lord's vineyard to become a wasteland2
The two invading nations will soon be deserted1	Lord's vineyard is the whole house of Israel2
Judah to be afflicted by swarms of flies1	Nine sins of Judah2
Judah to be 'shaven' by Assyria1	Judah to suffer crop failure2
Ahaz unable to withstand the invasion1	Eventually all will die or go into exile2
Israel kill 120,000 men of Judah1	The haughty women of Jerusalem2
Israel take 200,000 women and children captive1	Fate of women of Jerusalem and their finery2
Oded the prophet orders the captives returned1	A shortage of men coming2
King Ahaz becomes even more unfaithful1	Isaiah's son to be named as a sign3
Ahaz bribes Assyria to attack Syria1	Assyria soon to invade Samaria3
Assyria conquers Syria and exiles Damascus1	Isaiah told not to fear his people3
Judah attacked by Edom and the Philistines1	Isaiah and his children trust in the Lord3
Assyria to invade Judah also1	Why consult the dead through mediums3
Ahaz travels to Syria to meet king from Assyria1	Ahaz dies and his son Hezekiah becomes king4
Ahaz sends back to Jerusalem plans of an altar1	Prophecy against the Philistines4
High priest told to build the altar1	Hezekiah a righteous king4
Ahaz replaces Lord's altar with the new one1	Hezekiah reopens the Temple and ends idol worship ..4
Ahaz removes Temple basins and furnishings1	Hezekiah the most faithful of all the kings of Judah ..4
Ahaz closes the Temple1	Priests and Levites instructed to purify the Temple ..4
Altars erected on street corners of Jerusalem1	Hezekiah to make a covenant with the Lord4
Judah afflicted for spurning Lord2	The Temple is purified4
Judah deserted from the invasions2	Sacrifices and singing to the Lord4
Judah's offerings meaningless to Lord2	3600 animals offered in sacrifice4

Too few priests purified so Levites help out	4	Moab's fugitives to flee in latter days	9
The people rejoice for it all happened so quickly	4	Judah the lion to come upon the fugitives	9
Hezekiah invites all Judah and Israel to Passover	4	Tribute to be paid to Jerusalem	9
Northern Israel mock Hezekiah's invitation	4	A king of the house of David to be enthroned	9
A very large assembly gather in Jerusalem	5	Moab's fate in Isaiah's day	9
People remove the idolatrous street altars	5	Edom doomed to total destruction in latter days	9
The Passover begins	5	Soil of Edom to be set ablaze	9
Levites kill Passover lambs for those not purified	5	Damascus to be a heap of ruins in latter days	9
Those still unpurified unlawfully eat the Passover	5	Some gleanings to remain and be glorified	9
King Hezekiah prays for their pardon	5	Survivors will turn to the Holy One of Israel	9
Passover celebrated another seven days	5	Multi-nation army to be destroyed in a night	9
More animals provided by king and officials	5	Prophecy concerning Ethiopia in latter days	10
People destroy the remaining idolatrous sites	5	Ethiopian destruction after the grapes blossom	10
The people begin to tithe again	5	A remnant to come to Jerusalem bearing gifts	10
Priests and Levites have enough to eat	5	Civil war in Egypt	10
Surplus tithes distributed to other towns	5	A fierce king to rule over Egypt in latter days	10
King Hezekiah prospers in all he undertakes	5	The Nile to dry up	10
Samaria soon to be thrown to the ground	5	Egyptians to fear Judah in latter days	10
Remnant of Israel to be saved in latter days	5	Egypt to turn to Lord after he delivers them	10
Assyria begins siege of Samaria	6	Egyptian cities to worship Lord during millennium ..	10
Word of the Lord to Samaria	6	Highway from Assyria to Egypt when Lord returns ..	10
The Lord spurring Samaria's enemies on	6	Egypt, Assyria and Israel to be centres of worship ..	10
Northern Israel to be cut off without pity	6	Wealth of Egypt and Ethiopia to come to Jerusalem ..	10
Woe also to the king of Assyria because of pride	6	Plea from the Lord to all idolatrous nations	10
Assyrian army to be eventually punished.....	6	Every knee shall bow to Jehovah	10
A plague to be sent on Assyrian warriors.....	6	Isaiah's vision of the coming of the Lord	11
Israel has continually provoked the Lord	6	Lord's garments to be red	11
People to pay for their sins	6	Isaiah's prayer of praise	11
Isaiah pleads with the house of Israel to repent	6	Israel to bud and blossom during millennium	11
Israel full of superstition and divination	6	Lost exiles will return to worship at Jerusalem	11
Treasures and no end of horses and chariots	6	The Lord Jehovah coming in power	11
Samaria falls after a three year siege	6	The Lord to tend his flock as a shepherd	11
Survivors exiled to Assyria	6	Jehovah to be seen by all when he comes	11
Isaiah prophesies stripped and barefoot	6	Lord has not rejected Israel	11
Assyria to take stripped captives from Egypt	6	New heavens and a new earth to be created	11
No deliverance of Judah from Assyria by Egypt	6	No more will weeping be heard in Jerusalem	11
Lord to devastate whole earth in latter days	7	People will again live long lives	11
Few people on earth will be left alive	7	Prayers to be answered immediately	11
Isaiah's vision of latter days	7	Meat-eating animals will eat grass	11
Dead bodies to be like refuse in streets	7	A great feast in Jerusalem when Lord returns	11
Faithful descendants of Israelites will sing for joy	7	All tears to be wiped away	11
Distant nations to invade Israel in latter days	7	A song to be sung in that day	11
Invaders will roar like the sea	7	The dead of the Lord resurrected in that day	11
Clouds will darken the light	7	All war will end when Lord returns.....	12
Jerusalem to be besieged and brought low	7	The humble and contrite esteemed by the Lord	12
The Lord to suddenly come and save Jerusalem	7	Those who despise the faithful to be put to shame	12
Pride of men to be brought low when Lord comes	7	Wine, milk freely given to those who come to Lord	12
Men will flee from brightness of the Lord	7	The Lord will make a covenant of love with you	12
Lord's majestic voice will be heard raging in anger ..	7	He will endow you with splendour	12
The armies besieging Jerusalem to be destroyed	7	Seek the Lord while he is near	12
The valley of Hinnom prepared for the battle	7	Lord will freely pardon	12
Lord to hover over Jerusalem like a bird	7	Lord's thoughts higher than man's thoughts	12
Armies to fall by a sword not of man	7	Blessed are those who keep the commandments ..	12
All armies on earth destroyed when Lord comes	7	Foreigners and eunuchs accepted by Lord	12
Stars to fall from sky in latter days	7	Jerusalem's day of joy coming	12
The great army of the latter days	8	Nations will come praising Jehovah	12
Men's hearts will melt with terror	8	Flocks will be gathered for offerings	12
Sinners of the world to be destroyed	8	Riches will be brought to Jerusalem	12
Darkness to come upon the earth	8	Lord to adorn his glorious Temple	12
Men to be scarcer than gold	8	Descendants of exiles to fly home in ships	12
Great floods and earthquakes in latter days	8	Foreigners to serve Israel	12
A day of reckoning for Satan and his angels	8	Israelites to be the pride and joy of world	12
A day of reckoning for the kings of the earth	8	Mountains to be made low	13
Satan to be punished and the Antichrist destroyed ..	8	All mankind will see glory of the Lord	13
Those left alive on earth will shout for joy	8	Food will be rich and plentiful	13
Israel in latter days will settle in their own land	8	Streams of water everywhere	13
Israel to be served by other nations	8	Sun and moon to be seven times brighter	13
Moab's cities to be destroyed in a night	9	Your eyes shall see the king in his beauty	13

ISAIAH

Abundant spoil from former enemies	13	Jerusalem's current warfare completed	19
Jerusalem to be a peaceful city of broad rivers	13	King Hezekiah's steward cursed	20
Desert will burst into bloom	13	Jerusalem soon to be a wasteland	20
The highway of Holiness	13	Exiles to eventually return from Babylon	20
All infirmity to be healed	13	King Hezekiah becomes ill	20
No more sickness	13	Hezekiah told by Isaiah he is about to die	20
A country will be born in a day when Lord comes	14	Hezekiah prays and weeps bitterly	20
Jerusalem to overflow with abundance	14	Lord to heal Hezekiah	20
Lord to come with fury and flames of fire	14	Hezekiah granted 15 more years of life	20
Survivors to be sent out to all nations to teach	14	Sun's shadow goes back ten degrees as a sign	20
Survivors to gather Israelites from all nations	14	Poultice of figs heals the king's tumour	20
All nations will stream to Temple of Lord	15	Hezekiah's writes in gratitude for his healing	20
All mankind will bow down to the Lord	15	King Hezekiah grows proud because of his riches	20
All animals to eat grass during the millennium	15	Messengers from Babylon visit Hezekiah	20
Peaceful conditions during the millennium	15	Lord prophesies exile of Judah to Babylon	20
Glory of Jehovah to replace the sun	15	Hezekiah and Jerusalem repent of pride	20
All who live in Israel will be righteous in that day	15	Jerusalem's leaders to flee before city captured.....	21
Israelites to be gathered and live in glory	15	Fruit harvests of Jerusalem to fail	21
Jealousy between Judah and Ephraim to vanish	15	Isaiah sees the Babylonian capture of Jerusalem	21
Euphrates to dry up into seven small streams	15	The people ignored Lord's warning to repent	21
The women of Jerusalem to be cleansed	15	Those who trust in the Lord will soar as eagles	21
A canopy of bright cloud to extend over Jerusalem.....	15	Glory of man withers like grass	21
Judah to become like the garden of Eden	16	Fear not mortal men who are but grass	21
Bubbling springs and abundant trees	16	Who is the equal of the Lord?	21
Lord to reign over entire earth when he comes	16	Lost ones of Israel to eventually return	22
Before that day the heavens will vanish	16	Jehovah Israel's only Saviour	22
People will die like flies	16	Jehovah the Rock of Israel	22
Jerusalem's cup of wrath to be taken away	16	Lord's challenge to worthless Idols	22
Jerusalem's wrath to be given to her tormentors	16	He who chooses idols an abomination to Lord	22
Jerusalem to be redeemed	16	Those who make idols are blind and ignorant	22
Shouts of joy when Lord returns to save Jerusalem.....	16	The foolishness of making and worshipping idols	22
All nations to witness saving of Jerusalem	16	All Israel to be consigned to scorn because of sin	22
Jerusalem likened to childless widow	16	Israel to be healed in latter days	22
Jerusalem to receive husband and many children.....	16	Jehovah will redeem Israel	22
The Lord will not be angry with Israel again	16	Lord to stir up a servant from the north-east.....	22
The beautiful New Jerusalem of the future	16	This servant will restore justice to the nations	22
Isaiah's prophecies like a sealed book to Judah.....	17	Jehovah's former prophecies have come to pass	22
Hearts of the people far from the Lord	17	The Lord to do all he pleases through Cyrus	23
Isaiah's prophecies to be understood in latter days....	17	Lord will honour Cyrus for Israel's sake	23
Isaiah instructed to write his vision in a book	17	Yet Cyrus will not acknowledge the Lord	23
Isaiah's prophecies a witness for days to come.....	17	Cyrus to free Judean exiles to rebuild Jerusalem	23
Judah want only to hear pleasant prophecies	17	A prophecy against Babylon	23
Jerusalem's priests and rulers befuddled with wine	17	Babylon to show no mercy toward Judean exiles	23
Words of Isaiah scoffed at	17	Sorcerers and astrologers will not save her	23
God will therefore speak to Judah with foreign lips	17	Babylon to become a widow and lose her children	23
Messiah to be a cornerstone in Zion	17	Lord's past prophecies have come to pass	23
Judah's chains heavier if they not cease mocking....	17	A new prophecy from the Lord	23
Only repentance will bring help of Lord	17	Cyrus will overthrow Babylon	23
Lord longs to show Judah compassion	17	Peace and plenty if Judah had kept commandments.....	23
Assyria captures many cities of Judah	18	No peace for the wicked	23
Jerusalem prepares to be attacked also	18	Isaiah's prophecy regarding Babylon	23
King Hezekiah encourages his people	18	Great brutality of the Medes toward Babylon	23
Hezekiah pays Assyrians a ransom to withdraw.....	18	A taunt against the king of Babylon	24
Assyrians come again against Jerusalem	19	Tyre soon to be a harbour no more	24
Assyrian commander taunts Hezekiah	19	Tyre will no longer be the food market of nations	24
Assyrians blaspheme Jehovah	19	Jehovah to humble the pride of Tyre and Sidon	24
Commander intimidates the men of Judah	19	Tyre to revive after seventy years	24
Men of Judah encouraged to surrender	19	Tyre's riches will go to Jerusalem in millennium	24
Men of Judah remain silent	19	Isaiah called as Lord's servant before he was born.....	25
Hezekiah seeks guidance from the Lord	19	Isaiah despised by his people	25
Lord to cause Assyrian king to return home	19	An eloquent tongue given to Isaiah	25
There he will be cut down with the sword	19	Isaiah mocked by his people	25
Assyrian king again blasphemes the Lord	19	Who but God can declare Isaiah a wrongdoer	25
Hezekiah prays to Lord for deliverance	19	None obey Isaiah's word	25
Lord rebukes Sennacherib king of Assyria	19	All walk in the light of their own lamps	25
185,000 Assyrian soldiers die during the night	19	Isaiah a light for the Gentiles also	25
Sennacherib returns home	19	Isaiah to apportion inheritances when Lord returns	25
Sennacherib put to sword by his sons	19	The Lord to shepherd his returning people	25

Isaiah to act wisely in that day and be exalted	25	King Hezekiah dies	27
Israel to gather from the north, west and south	25	His twelve year old son Manasseh becomes king ..	27
Lord's love for Israel like a mother's love	25	Manasseh does much evil	27
Israel too small for her children during millennium ..	25	Lord rebukes Manasseh and the officials	27
Gentiles to assist in gathering Israel in latter days ..	25	The righteous die to be spared from evil	27
The Lord to come as the Messiah	25	A brood of rebels	27
The Messiah to preach good news on earth	25	Judah's idolatry likened to adultery	27
Foreigners to rebuild Israel during millennium	25	The Lord with those who are contrite and humble ..	27
Foreigners to work the fields and vineyards	25	No rest for the wicked	27
Isaiah greatly rejoices in the Lord	25	The sinful people seem eager to know Lord's ways...	27
Jerusalem to be a crown of splendour	25	Unrighteous fasting not acceptable to the Lord	27
Messiah (Christ) to come from Galilee	26	Fasting that pleases the Lord	27
Messiah to be descended of David	26	Blessings of righteous living	27
Messiah to be a man of sorrows	26	Disaster to come upon Manasseh and Judah	28
Messiah to be pierced	26	Jerusalem attacked by Assyria	28
Messiah to be arrested, tried and slaughtered	26	King Manasseh taken prisoner to Babylon	28
Messiah's tomb to be with the rich	26	Manasseh repents and is restored to his throne	28
Messiah to be resurrected	26	Manasseh abandons idolatry and worships Lord	28
Messiah to see the fruit of his suffering	26	Manasseh dies and Amon his son becomes king	28
Messiah to eventually slay the wicked on earth	26	Amon does evil and is assassinated	28
Messiah to pardon many and bear their sins	26	Josiah the son of Amon made king	28
Messiah to be given a place among the great.....	26		

Bold The Lord or an angel speaking.
Bold italics A prophet speaking under inspiration.

1

King Jotham dies and his son Ahaz becomes king

¹Jotham, king of Judah reigned in Jerusalem sixteen years, then rested with his fathers and Ahaz his son became king.

Ahaz leads Judah back into idolatry

²Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king and did not do right in the eyes of the Lord. He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel and made idols to worship Baal.

Ahaz even sacrificed his sons in fire

³He even sacrificed his sons in fire, following the abominable ways of the nations that the Lord had driven out before the Israelites.

Syria and Israel join forces to invade Judah

⁴Then Pekah, king of Israel, and Rezin, king of Syria joined forces and marched on Judah.
⁵The hearts of Ahaz king of Judah and the people of Jerusalem feared greatly.

The Lord sends Isaiah with his son to speak to Ahaz

⁶Then the Lord said to the prophet Isaiah, "Go out with your son to meet Ahaz at the end of the aqueduct of the Upper Pool. Say to him, 'Do not fear these two smouldering stubs of firebrands Ephraim^{F*} and Syria.'
⁷"They have plotted your ruin saying, 'We will invade Judah and divide it up among ourselves.' But this shall not happen. And within sixty-five years Ephraim shall be too scattered to be a people."

⁸"They have plotted your ruin saying, 'We will invade Judah and divide it up among ourselves.' But this shall not happen. And within sixty-five years Ephraim shall be too scattered to be a people."

King Ahaz able to withstand the invasion if he does not lose courage

⁸"However if you lose courage now, you will be unable to withstand them and will be invaded."

Isaiah tells Ahaz to ask the Lord for a sign

⁹Isaiah went out and spoke these words to Ahaz, and then said to the king, "Ask the Lord for a sign."

¹⁰Ahaz replied, "I will not put Jehovah to the test."

¹¹Isaiah said, "It is enough that you try the patience of men, will you try the patience of God also?"

Within a few years the two invading nations will be deserted

¹²"Nevertheless, the Lord shall give you a sign, '*See, the young woman is with child, and will give birth to a son and shall name him Immanuel. When he is old enough to reject wrong and choose right,*^{F*} *he will be living on curds and honey.*^{F*} ¹³*But before he attains that age the lands of these two kings you dread will be deserted.*"^{F*}

Judah will also be afflicted, by swarms of flies and then 'shaven' by Assyria

¹⁴"*The Lord is also bringing on you and your people a time of distress, unlike any since Ephraim broke away from Judah.*"

¹⁵"*In that day the Lord shall bring swarms*

*6 The northern kingdom of Israel was sometimes referred to as Ephraim, after the dominant tribe.

*12 Generally regarded as 12 years of age.
*12 A diet associated with difficult times, such as when the land is not able to be farmed due to invasion or siege (see verse 17 following). Curd is coagulated milk, like cottage cheese.
*13 Within 12 years both Syria and northern Israel were defeated and exiled by the Assyrians (Isaiah 1:30 and 6:18).

ISAIAH 1

of flies from the distant streams of Egypt, and bees from the land of Assyria. They will settle in the crevices of the rocks and on all the thorn bushes and at all the water holes."

¹⁶*"Then the Lord will shave you with a razor from beyond the Euphrates; the king of Assyria."*^{F*}

¹⁷*"In that day a man will only be able to keep alive a young cow or two goats, and will live on curds and wild honey."*¹⁸*Where once grew a thousand good vines there will grow briars and thorns."*

King Ahaz loses courage and is unable to withstand the invasion of Syria and Israel

¹⁹Despite the word of the Lord, the courage of Ahaz failed and he was not able to withstand the invasion.

Israel kill 120,000 men of Judah and take 200,000 women and children captive

²⁰The king of Syria took many people of Judah prisoner to Damascus, and Pekah the king of Israel killed 120,000 men of Judah and captured 200,000 women and children and took them back to Samaria along with a great amount of spoil.

Judean captives returned by Israel at the command of Oded the prophet

²¹But Oded, a prophet of the Lord in Samaria went out to meet Pekah's army as it returned. He said to them, *"Because Jehovah was angry with Judah he gave them into your hand."*²²*But you have slaughtered them in an outrage that reaches to heaven. Now you intend to make these captives of Judah your slaves."*

²³*"But are you not also guilty of sins against the Lord your God? Therefore send back these captives you have taken from your brothers, for the Lord's fierce anger is upon you."*

²⁴Some of the leading men of Samaria also said, "Do not bring those prisoners here. Our guilt is already great."

²⁵So the soldiers handed over the women and children to the leaders of Samaria who took charge of them and gave them clothes, sandals, and food and drink from the spoil.²⁶Then they put those who were weak on donkeys and returned them all to Judah.

King Ahaz does not repent and becomes even more unfaithful

²⁷So the Lord humbled Judah, for Ahaz the king had promoted wickedness and had been unfaithful to the Lord.

²⁸Yet in his time of trouble, Ahaz became even more unfaithful to the Lord. He offered sacrifices to the gods of Syria for he thought, "They may help me as they have helped the Syrians."

Ahaz bribes Assyria to attack Syria

²⁹During the invasion of Judah, Ahaz had taken treasures from the Temple of the Lord and from his royal palace, and from his officials and sent them to Tiglath-Pileser the king of Assyria saying, "Save me from the kings of Israel and Syria who are attacking me."

Assyria conquers Syria and exiles the people of Damascus

³⁰In due course Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria complied. He attacked Syria, killing Rezin the king and exiling the inhabitants of Damascus.

Judah attacked by Edom and the Philistines

³¹While this was happening, Judah was again attacked, this time by Edom who carried away more prisoners. Also the Philistines came and captured towns in the foothills and desert regions of Judah.



Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria.

Assyria to invade Judah also

³²Then the Lord said to Isaiah, *"Because the people of Judah rejoiced over the fate of Rezin the king of Syria, I will bring the king of Assyria against them also."*³³*Like the mighty floodwaters of the Euphrates, he will sweep on into Judah, swirling over her and reaching up to her neck."*

Ahaz travels to Syria to meet Tiglath-Pileser the conquering king from Assyria

³⁴Later Ahaz the king travelled to Syria to meet Tiglath-Pileser, the king of Assyria.

Ahaz sends back to Jerusalem plans of an altar for the high priest to build

³⁵While Ahaz was there he saw an altar in Damascus and sent a sketch of it back to Uriah the high priest in Jerusalem, with detailed plans for its construction.³⁶So Uriah built the altar and finished it before Ahaz returned.

*16 Judah paid a crippling ransom of silver and gold to have the Assyrians withdraw from attacking Jerusalem (Isaiah 18:9-10).

On arriving back Ahaz replaces the Lord's altar with the new one

³⁷When Ahaz arrived back in Jerusalem he removed the bronze altar of the Lord from its place in front of the Temple and put the new altar there instead.

³⁸Then he said to Uriah the high priest, "From now on offer the morning and evening sacrifice and the sacrifices of the people on the large new altar. I will use the bronze altar for divination." F*

Ahaz removes the basins and furnishings and closes the Temple and locks the door

³⁹At that time Ahaz also removed the great bronze basin from the bulls that supported it and set it on a stone base.

⁴⁰He also took the bronze basins off their wheeled stands. Finally the king removed the furnishings from the Lord's Temple and locked the doors.

Ahaz erects altars on the street corners of Jerusalem

⁴¹Ahaz then erected altars on the street corners of Jerusalem. He also built high places to burn sacrifices to other gods throughout the towns of Judah.

2

Judah afflicted because they have spurned the Lord

¹The word of the Lord concerning Judah received through the prophet Isaiah: "I reared children and raised them up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knows his master and the donkey his manger, but Israel knows me not."

²"Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with guilt, a brood of evildoers. You have spurned the Holy One of Israel. Why do you persist in rebellion? ³Your whole body is afflicted. From the sole of your foot to the top of your head are wounds, welts and open sores."

Judah deserted from the invasions

⁴"Your land is deserted, your cities are burned with fire, your fields have been stripped by foreigners. Jerusalem the daughter of Zion^{F*} is left like a hut in a vineyard, like a city under siege."

Judah's offerings meaningless to Lord

⁵"The multitude of your sacrifices, what are they to me? I have more than enough. Cease bringing me meaningless offerings. New Moons! Sabbaths! I can no longer bear your evil assemblies. They have become a burden to me."

The prayers of Judah not heeded by the Lord

⁶"When you lift your hands in prayer I hide my eyes from you, even when you offer

*38 Possibly by the idolatrous method of seeking omens by examining the entrails of sacrificed animals.

*4 Zion is the hill in Jerusalem where the temple and palace of the king were located. Zion can also represent all of Jerusalem or all of the Jews.

many prayers, for your hands are full of blood."

Cease to do evil, care for the poor

⁷"Cleanse yourselves. Remove your evil deeds from my sight. Cease to do wrong. Learn to do right. Seek justice. Care for the oppressed and fatherless. Plead the case of the widow."

Judah's scarlet sins can become white as snow

⁸"Come now, let us reason together. Though your sins are red like scarlet, they can be white as snow."

⁹"If you are willing and obedient you will eat the best of the land. But if you resist and rebel you will be devoured by the sword, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it."

Jerusalem has become a harlot but will be purged of her impurity

¹⁰"See how the Faithful City^{F*} has become a harlot. She who was once full of justice is now full of murderers. ¹¹Your rulers are rebels, friends of thieves. Everyone loves a bribe and runs after gifts. They care not for the fatherless and widows."

¹²"Therefore I Jehovah, the mighty one of Israel will thoroughly purge away your impurity. I will restore your judges as in days of old. You shall be called the City of Righteousness, the Faithful City."

Isaiah's song of the Lord's vineyard

¹³Then Isaiah said, "I will sing a song about the vineyard of him whom I love."

"His vineyard lay on a fertile hill."

"He dug it and cleared it of stones."

"Planted it with choice vines."

"And looked for an abundant crop."

"But it yielded for him wild grapes."

The Lord's vineyard to become a wasteland

¹⁴"Now hear the word of Jehovah, 'You dwellers in Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. What more could have I have done for it? When I looked for good grapes, why did it yield only wild grapes?'"

¹⁵"Here is what I will do to my vineyard. I shall take away its hedge and break down its wall and allow it to be trampled. I will make it a wasteland of briars and thorns, and command the clouds not to rain on it."

The Lord's vineyard is the whole house of Israel

¹⁶Then Isaiah prophesied, "*The vineyard of Jehovah is the whole house of Israel, and the men of Judah are the garden of his delight. He looked for justice but saw bloodshed, for righteousness and heard cries of distress.*"

Nine sins of Judah

¹⁷"*Woe to you who accumulate house after house and field after field until nothing is left for others.*"

*10 Jerusalem.

ISAIAH 3

¹⁸“Woe to you who say, ‘Let God hasten his work that we might see it.’”

¹⁹“Woe to you who call evil good and good evil.”

²⁰“Woe to you who are wise in your own eyes.”

²¹“Woe to you who rise early in the morning to run after drink and stay up late at night inflamed with wine.”

²²“Woe to you who have harps and lyres at your banquets, tambourines and flutes, but no respect for the Lord.”

²³“Woe to you who are champions at drinking wine and mixing drinks.”

²⁴“Woe to you who acquit the guilty for a bribe and deny justice to the innocent.”

²⁵“Woe to you who reject the commandments of the Lord.”

Judah to suffer crop failure and eventually all will die or go into exile

²⁶“The Lord declares, ‘Your fine mansions will be left without occupants. A ten yoke vineyard^{F*} will produce only a little wine, and a homer^{F*} of seed only ten homers of grain.’”

²⁷“Then you will go into exile. Your men of rank will die of hunger and masses shall be parched with thirst. ²⁸Sheol^{F*} will open its mouth without limit and down will descend the nobles and multitudes, all the brawlers and revellers. ²⁹Sheep will graze among the ruined mansions of the rich.”

The haughty women of Jerusalem

³⁰“The Lord says, ‘The women of Jerusalem are haughty, walking along with their heads high, flirting with their eyes, tripping along with mincing steps, ornaments jingling on their ankles. ³¹Therefore I will bring sores on their heads and make their scalps bald.’”

Fate of the women of Jerusalem

³²Then Isaiah prophesied, “*The day is coming when the Lord will snatch away their finery, their bangles and headbands, their crescent necklaces, earrings and bracelets. Their veils, head-dresses, ankle chains and sashes. Their perfume bottles, charms, rings and fine robes. Their purses, mirrors, tiaras and shawls.*”

³³“*Instead of perfume there shall be a stench. Instead of well-set hair, baldness. Instead of fine clothing, sackcloth. Instead of beauty, shame.*”

A shortage of men coming

³⁴“*Your men will fall by the sword. Destitute you will sit on the ground and mourn. In that day seven women shall take hold of one man and say, ‘We will eat our own food and provide our own clothes, only let us be called by your name. Take away our shame!’*”

*26 The area ploughed by ten pair of oxen in one day, about ten acres.

*26 A homer is a full donkey load, about 220kg.

*28 Sheol is the Hebrew name for the spirit world of the dead.

3

Isaiah's son to be named as a sign of the forthcoming Assyrian invasion of northern Israel

¹Then Isaiah lay with his wife and she conceived and gave birth to a son, and the Lord said to Isaiah, “Name him ‘Quick to the Spoil.’ For before the boy knows how to say ‘My father’ or ‘My mother’ the wealth of Samaria^{F*} will be carried off by the king of Assyria.”

Isaiah told not to fear his people

²“The Lord spoke to me with his strong hand upon me, warning me not to fear or follow the ways of this people. ³He said, ‘Do not fear these people. Jehovah Almighty is the one you are to fear and to regard as holy. To you he will be a sanctuary, but for both houses of Israel he will be a rock that causes men to stumble.’”

Isaiah and his children trust in the Lord

⁴“Therefore I put my trust in the Lord, I and the children he has given me. We are signs and symbols from the Lord Almighty.”

Why consult the dead through mediums?

⁵“Other men say, ‘Consult mediums with familiar spirits who whisper and mutter,’ but should not a people inquire of their God? ⁶Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? Compare what they say to the written Law of God. There is no light in their words.”

4

King Ahaz dies and his son Hezekiah becomes king

¹Now Ahaz king of Judah died and was buried in the city of Jerusalem, but not in the tombs of the kings. He had reigned for sixteen years. Hezekiah his son became king.

A prophecy against the Philistines

²A prophecy of Isaiah the year Ahaz died: “Do not rejoice O Philistines that the rod which struck you is broken. From the broken rod will spring a viper.”

³“My poor will find food, and shall lie down in safety, but you Philistines I will destroy by famine and sword.”

⁴“Howl O Philistines! See! Invaders come from the north like a cloud, and not a straggler in the ranks.”^{F*}

Hezekiah a righteous king

⁵Hezekiah was twenty-five years old when he became king. He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, just as his forefather David had done.

Hezekiah reopens the Temple and ends idol worship

⁶In the first year of his reign he reopened the

*1 Samaria was the royal city of northern Israel.

*4 The Philistines were soon to suffer at the hands of the Assyrians.

doors of the Temple. He removed the high places of worship, smashed the sacred stones, and cut down the Asherah poles.

⁷He also broke into pieces the bronze snake that Moses had made in the desert, for the people had been burning incense to it.

Hezekiah the most faithful of all the kings of Judah

⁸Hezekiah trusted in Jehovah the God of Israel. There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, either before him or after him.

⁹He was faithful to the Lord and kept all the commandments the Lord had given Moses. And because the Lord was with him he was successful in whatever he undertook.

The priests and Levites instructed to purify the Temple

¹⁰Hezekiah assembled the priests and the Levites in the court of the Temple and said to them, "Purify yourselves, and then purify the Temple of the Lord. Remove all defilement from the Sanctuary."

¹¹"Our fathers were unfaithful and forsook the house of the Lord. Therefore his anger has fallen upon Judah and he has made us an object of horror and scorn as you can see with your own eyes. ¹²Our fathers have fallen by the sword and our wives and children are in captivity."

Hezekiah to make a covenant with the Lord

¹³"Now I intend to make a covenant with Jehovah so that his anger will turn away from us. My sons do not be negligent."

The Temple is purified

¹⁴So the Levites purified themselves and set to work. The priests went into the Temple and brought out into the court every unclean thing they found. The Levites carried it all away and threw it into the Kidron Valley. ¹⁵By the sixteenth day they had completed their work.

Sacrifices and singing to the Lord

¹⁶The following morning Hezekiah gathered the city officials together at an early hour. Then they, along with the people went up to the Temple of the Lord. There they sacrificed seven bulls, seven rams, seven male lambs and seven male goats, as a sin offering for the kingdom.

¹⁷As the offering began, the Levites sung to the Lord, accompanied by trumpets, cymbals, harps and lyres, in the manner prescribed by David. ¹⁸The whole assembly bowed in worship as the singers sang and the music played. This continued until the sacrifice of the burnt offering was completed.

¹⁹The king and everyone present then knelt down and worshipped and the Levites again sang praises to the Lord with gladness, the words of David and of Asaph the seer.

3600 animals offered in sacrifice

²⁰Then all whose hearts were willing offered

their own sacrifices and peace offerings.^{F*} 600 bulls and 3000 sheep and goats were offered as sacrifice.

Too few priests purified so the Levites help out

²¹The priests however were too few in number to skin all the offerings, so the Levites helped out until more priests had purified themselves. For the Levites had been more conscientious than the priests at purifying themselves.

The people rejoice for it all happened so quickly

²²So the service of the Temple of the Lord was once again established and Hezekiah and the people rejoiced, for it had all happened so quickly.

Hezekiah invites all of Judah and Israel to celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem

²³Then Hezekiah sent couriers with letters to all Israel and Judah from Dan to Beersheba,^{F*} inviting them to come to Jerusalem and celebrate the Passover. This is what he wrote:

²⁴"People of Israel, return to Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that he may return to you who have escaped from the hand of Assyria."

²⁵"Be not like your fathers and brothers, who were unfaithful to the Lord so that he made them an object of horror. Submit to the Lord and come to the Temple which he has consecrated that his fierce anger turn away from you."

²⁶"If you return to the Lord, then your brothers and children in exile^{F*} will come back to this land, for Jehovah is a compassionate God. He will not turn his face from you if you return to him."

Northern Israel mock Hezekiah's invitation

²⁷The couriers went from town to town throughout Israel, but the people scorned and mocked them.

²⁸Nevertheless the men of Judah, and some of the men of Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, Asher and Zebulun humbled themselves and went to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover.

5

A very large assembly gather in Jerusalem

¹Now the king had decided to celebrate the Passover in the second month, as not enough priests had purified themselves and the people had not yet assembled in Jerusalem.^{F*} ²So in the second month a very large assembly of people gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. Also included were foreigners from throughout Israel and Judah.

*²⁰ A peace offering was a sacrifice offered out of gratitude for a blessing or to ensure continued prosperity.

*²³ Dan and Beersheba were the northern and southernmost cities of all Israel.

*²⁶ Not the main Assyrian exile of the northern kingdom of Israel, which was still to come.

*¹ Normally the Passover is celebrated on the 14th day of Nisan (early April), the first month of the Jewish religious year. It often coincides with the Christian Easter celebration.

ISAIAH 6

The people remove the idolatrous street altars

³The people first of all removed all the idolatrous altars in Jerusalem and threw them into the Kidron Valley.

The Passover begins

⁴On the fourteenth day, the priests and Levites, after having been shamed, purified themselves and took up their prescribed positions. The priests then began to sprinkle the blood of the slaughtered lambs that the Levites passed to them from the people.

The Levites kill the Passover lambs for those who are not purified

⁵However many men in the crowd had not purified themselves so the Levites had to kill the Passover lambs for them.^{F*}

Those still unpurified unlawfully eat the Passover

⁶Also those who were still unclean ate the Passover, contrary to what was written in the Law.

King Hezekiah prays for their pardon

⁷But Hezekiah the king prayed for them saying, "May Jehovah pardon every man who sets his heart on seeking the Lord."

⁸The Lord heard Hezekiah's prayer and no harm befell the people.

The Passover celebrated an extra seven days

⁹The Israelites celebrated the Passover for seven days, with great rejoicing and Hezekiah spoke encouragingly to all the Levites who showed good understanding of the service of the Lord.

¹⁰Then all the people agreed to celebrate the festival for seven more days.

Further sacrificial animals provided by the king and officials

¹¹The king provided for the people 1000 bulls and 7000 sheep and goats, and the officials provided a further 1000 bulls and 10,000 sheep and goats.

¹²There was great joy in Jerusalem for there had been nothing like this since the days of Solomon.

The people destroy the remaining idolatrous sites throughout Judah

¹³Afterwards all the people went out to the towns of Judah and destroyed the remaining sacred stones, Asherah poles, and altars.

The people begin to tithe again

¹⁴When all the assembly had returned to their homes, Hezekiah ordered the people living in Jerusalem to give the tenth due to the priests and Levites, so they could devote themselves fully to the Law of the Lord.

¹⁵The people gave generously; a tithe of everything, and the firstfruits of their grain, new wine, oil and honey. Those who lived in the towns of Judah also brought a tithe of their herds and flocks.

The priests and Levites have enough to eat and plenty to spare

¹⁶When Hezekiah and his officials saw the huge heap of tithes they praised the Lord and blessed the people. ¹⁷Azariah the high priest said to the king, "Since the people began bringing their tithes to the Temple, we have had enough to eat and plenty to spare. This great amount you see is left over."

Surplus tithes distributed to priests and Levites in other towns

¹⁸So Hezekiah gave orders to prepare storerooms in the Temple, and men were appointed to distribute the tithes to the Levites and priests who lived on the farmlands around the towns.

King Hezekiah prospers in everything he undertakes

¹⁹So Hezekiah did what was good and right before the Lord. In everything he undertook he sought guidance from his God, and then worked wholeheartedly and he prospered.

Samaria soon to be thrown to the ground

²⁰A prophecy of Isaiah concerning Samaria: "**Woe to Samaria, the proud wreath of Ephraim's ^{F*} drunkards, set on the heads of those bloated with rich food!**"

²¹"**The Lord has one who is powerful and strong who will throw you forcefully to the ground. Your drunkards will be trampled underfoot.**"

The remnant of northern Israel to be saved in latter days

²²"**But the day will come when Jehovah Almighty will be a glorious crown and a source of strength for the remnant of his people.**"

6

Assyria begins a siege of Samaria

¹In Hezekiah's fourth year, Shalmaneser king of Assyria marched against the northern kingdom of Israel and began a siege of the royal city of Samaria. For Hoshea king of Israel had ceased to pay him tribute.

The word of the Lord to Samaria during the three year siege by the Assyrians

²The word of the Lord through the prophet Isaiah against the people of Samaria and Israel. "**You say with arrogance, 'The bricks have fallen down but we shall rebuild with dressed stone. The fig trees have been felled but we shall replace them with cedars.'**"

The Lord is spurring Samaria's enemies on

³"**But I Jehovah have spurred your enemies on. Assyria is devouring Israel. Yet for all this my anger is not turned away, for the people have not returned to me.**"

^{*}20 Ephraim was the dominant tribe of the northern kingdom of Israel of which Samaria was the main city.

^{*}5 Normally the heads of families would kill the Passover lamb.

Northern Israel to be cut off without pity

⁴“So I will cut off both head and tail from Israel in a single day. The elders are the head, and the prophets who speak lies are the tail. Those who guide the people lead them astray.”

⁵“Nor will I pity the young men or the fatherless and widows, for everyone is ungodly, every mouth speaks vileness. Wickedness burns like a fire.”

⁶“Woe to those who make unjust laws to deprive the poor of their rights. What will you do on the day of reckoning when disaster comes? Where will you leave your riches? ⁷Nothing will remain but to cringe among the captives or fall among the slain.”

Woe also to the king of Assyria because of pride

⁸“Woe also to the king of Assyria, the rod of my anger. I have sent him against a godless nation to trample them down like mud in the streets, but that is not what he has in mind. ⁹His purpose is to put an end to many nations. He says, ‘I will deal next with Jerusalem, just as I have dealt with Samaria.’”

The Assyrian army to be eventually punished by a devastating plague

¹⁰“Therefore when I the Lord have finished my work against Jerusalem I will punish the king of Assyria for the pride of his heart, for he says, ‘By the strength of my own hand I have done this.’”

¹¹“Is the axe superior to him who swings it? Therefore I the Lord will send a devastating plague upon his sturdy warriors.^{F*} ¹²Under his pride a fire will be kindled and in a single day it shall burn and consume his splendour.”

Israel has continually provoked the Lord and is full of hypocrisy

¹³“To this nation Israel that did not call upon my name, I said, ‘Here am I.’ All day long I held out my hands to an obstinate people who walk in evil ways. A people who continually provoke me to my very face.”

¹⁴“A people who offer sacrifices in groves, who frequent tombs, and spend their nights in secret places, who eat the flesh of pigs^{F*} and then say to foreigners, “Do not come near me, I am too sacred for you.”

The people to pay for their sins

¹⁵“Such people are like smoke in my nostrils. I will not keep silent but will pay you back in full for both your sins and the sins of your fathers says the Lord.”

Israel full of superstition, divination, idolatry, treasures and no end of horses and chariots

¹⁶“O Lord, you have abandoned your

people for they are full of superstitions from the east, and practice divination. Their land is full of treasures and silver and gold. Horses are everywhere and there is no end to their chariots.”



The winged bull, a symbol of Assyria (modern day Northern Iraq).

¹⁷“*The land is full of idolatry, for they bow down to what their hands have made. Therefore all the people are debased. Do not forgive them O Lord.*”

Samaria falls after a three year siege and the survivors are exiled to Assyria

¹⁸At the end of three years Sargon^{F*} king of Assyria took the city of Samaria and exiled the survivors to Assyria.

¹⁹This happened because Israel had not kept the commandments of Jehovah their God and had followed the practices of the nations that the Lord had driven out before them.

Isaiah stripped and barefoot prophesies that Assyria will take stripped captives from Egypt

²⁰In the year that the Assyrians captured the Philistine city of Ashdod, the Lord spoke to Isaiah who was wearing sackcloth. ²¹He said to him, “Remove the sackcloth from your body and the sandals from your feet.” And Isaiah did so.

²²Then the Lord said, “Just as my servant Isaiah is stripped and barefoot, in three years from now the king of Assyria will lead away stripped and barefoot Egyptian and

*11 This prophecy was dramatically fulfilled when 185,000 Assyrian soldiers died overnight from a plague (see Isaiah 19:33).

*13 Pigs are among the forbidden unclean animals (see Leviticus 3:6).

*18 Sargon was successor to Shalmaneser king of Assyria (Isaiah 6:1) who died during the siege of Samaria.

ISAIAH 7

Ethiopian captives, young and old with buttocks bared to their shame.”

No deliverance of Judah from Assyria by Egypt

²³“In that day the people who live in Judah will say, ‘See what has happened to Egypt and Ethiopia to whom we looked for deliverance from Assyria? How then can we escape?’”

7

The Lord to come and devastate the whole earth in the last days

¹A prophecy of Isaiah concerning the last days: “*The day is coming when the Lord will come and devastate the earth. He will twist its surface and scatter its inhabitants, therefore hear the words of Jehovah.*”

²“The earth will mourn and wither and the proud and mighty shall be laid low. For the earth is defiled by its people. ³They have disobeyed my commandments and broken the everlasting covenant.”

Few people on earth will be left alive

⁴“Therefore a curse shall ravage the earth, and its people will suffer for their guilt, until few are left.”

⁵“The merrymakers will mourn. The gaiety of the tambourines will be stilled and the joyful harp be silenced. The noise of revellers shall cease.”

Isaiah’s vision of earth in last days

⁶“*The ruined cities lie empty, the doorways of houses are barred. In the streets people cry out for lack of wine. All joy has turned to gloom. Gaiety is banished from the earth. So will it be among the nations.*”

⁷“*Woe is me!*” the earth cries out, “*I waste away for I am full of treacherous betrayal!*”

Dead bodies like refuse in streets

⁸“*The Lord’s anger shall burn against his people, the mountains will shake and dead bodies will lie like refuse in the streets. Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away. His hand is still upraised.*”

Faithful descendants of Israelites will sing for joy in latter days

⁹“But I will not destroy you all, I shall bring forth descendants of Israel who will possess my mountain.^{F*} ¹⁰But as for you who forsake me, I will destine you for the sword, for I called but you did not answer. You chose what displeased me. ¹¹You shall cry out in anguish and I will put you to death.”

¹²“But my servants will sing for joy and be blessed, and the hardships of the past shall be forgotten.”

Distant nations to invade Israel in last days

¹³“*The Lord shall lift up a banner for distant nations. He shall whistle for those at*

the ends of the earth. Here they come, swiftly and speedily. ¹⁴*Not one of them grows tired or stumbles. Not a belt is loosened nor a sandal thong broken.*”

¹⁵*Their arrows are sharp, their bows are strung, their horses’ hoofs seem like flint, their chariot wheels like a whirlwind. They roar like young lions and growl as they seize their prey and carry it off with no one to rescue.*”

The invaders to roar like the sea and clouds darken the light

¹⁶“*In that day they shall roar over Israel like the roaring of the sea. Distress shall be everywhere. Even the light will be darkened by clouds.*”

Jerusalem to be besieged and brought low

¹⁷“Woe to you Jerusalem, the city where David lived. Your festivals continue, yet I will besiege you and bring you low. You will speak from the ground, out of the dust your speech will whisper.”

The Lord to suddenly come and save besieged Jerusalem

¹⁸“Yet the day is coming when your many enemies will be like chaff before the wind. Suddenly in an instant, Jehovah Almighty will come, with thunder and earthquake and storm of roaring wind, in a flame of devouring fire.”

¹⁹“Then for the hordes of the nations that have gathered against Jerusalem, their distress will be like that of a hungry man who dreams he is eating, but awakens and finds his hunger remains.”

The pride of men to be brought low when the Lord comes

²⁰“*Jehovah Almighty has a day in store for all the proud, for all those like the cedars of Lebanon, the high towers and stately ships.*”

²¹“*The pride of men shall be brought low. Jehovah alone will be exalted in that day, and all idols shall disappear.*”

Men will flee from the splendour and brightness of the Lord when he comes

²²“*Flee into caves, hide underground from the brightness of the splendour of the Lord!*”

²³“*Men will cast away their idols of silver and gold and flee to caves in the rocks and to overhanging crags, to hide from the brilliance of his glory, when the Lord comes to shake the earth.*”

Men to hear the Lord’s majestic voice raging in anger

²⁴“*See, the Lord comes from afar with burning anger and dense clouds of smoke, his tongue a consuming fire. He shakes the nations in the sieve of destruction.*”

²⁵“*Men will hear his majestic voice, with raging anger and consuming fire, with cloudburst, thunderstorm and hail.*”

*9 The city of Jerusalem, which is built on a mountain ridge.

**The armies besieging Jerusalem
to be destroyed**

²⁶“The voice of the Lord will shatter Assyria.^{F*} Every stroke the Lord lays on her shall be to the music of tambourines and harps.”

The valley of Hinnom prepared for the battle

²⁷“Topheth in the valley of Hinnom^{F*} has long been prepared. It has been made ready for the king. Its fire pit has been made deep and wide, with an abundance of fire and wood. The breath of Jehovah shall set it ablaze.”

**The Lord to hover over
Jerusalem like a bird**

²⁸“The Lord Almighty will come down to do battle on the heights of Mount Zion in Jerusalem. Like a bird hovering overhead he will shield the city and shall pass over and rescue it.”

The armies to fall by a sword not of man

²⁹“The Assyrians shall fall by a sword that is not of man and will flee, and their young men shall be distressed declares the Lord whose fire is in Zion.”

**All armies on earth to be
destroyed when the Lord comes**

³⁰“Hear you peoples of the earth. The Lord is enraged with all the nations. His wrath is upon all their armies and he has pronounced doom upon them. ³¹The day is coming when he will slaughter them. Their slain shall send up a stench and the mountains will be soaked with their blood.”

Stars to fall from the sky in the last days

³²“In that day the heavenly bodies will vanish and the sky roll up like a scroll and stars shall fall from the sky like withered leaves from a vine.”

8

The great army of the last days

¹“Listen, the roar of a great multitude! Jehovah Almighty is mustering an army for war. They come from faraway lands with the weapon of his wrath, to destroy the whole earth.”

Men’s hearts will melt with terror

²“Wail, for the day of the Lord is coming. All hands will go limp, men’s hearts shall fail them. Terror, pain, and anguish shall grip them. They will look aghast at each other.”

*²⁶ This prophecy would seem to indicate that a resurgent Assyria (modern day Iraq) will be foremost among the vast army of nations who will invade Jerusalem in the latter days (see following verses 27 and 29 and Ezekiel chapter 13. However it may be that the Assyria of Isaiah’s day, which suffered a sudden divine destruction of 185,000 soldiers (Isaiah 19:33) is a type, and therefore symbolic of the fate to befall the entire multi-nation army that is to invade Jerusalem in the latter days. Nevertheless a repentant Assyria appears to feature prominently during the peaceful millennium era following the destruction of Jerusalem (Isaiah 10:16-17, Micah 4:9.)

*²⁷ The Valley of Hinnom runs along the south of Jerusalem.

Sinners of the world to be destroyed

³“See, a cruel day of wrath is coming to empty the earth, to destroy the sinners upon it.

Darkness to come upon the earth

⁴“The rising sun shall be darkened and the moon will not shed its light, and the stars of the heavens will not be seen.”

Men to be scarcer than gold

⁵Jehovah Almighty says, “I will punish the world for its evil. I will put an end to the pride of the arrogant. I shall make man scarcer than gold.”

⁶“I will make the heavens tremble and the earth shake in the day of my burning anger.”

Great floods and earthquakes in last days

⁷“Terror awaits you O people of the earth. Whoever flees will fall into a pit, whoever climbs out will be caught in a snare.”

⁸“The floodgates of the heavens will open in that day and the foundations of the earth shall shake and split asunder. The earth will reel like a drunkard and sway like a hut in the wind.”

**A day of reckoning for Satan and his
angels and the kings of the earth**

⁹“That day shall be a time of reckoning for the hosts of the heavens^{F*} and for the kings of the earth. They will be herded together like captives in a dungeon, for many days.”

**Satan to be punished and the
Antichrist to be destroyed**

¹⁰“In the days to come the Lord will punish with his sword the fleeing serpent, and slay the Beast of the sea.”^{F*}

Those left alive on earth will shout for joy

¹¹“Then those who are left alive on earth shall raise their voices and shout for joy. Looking from the west they will see the majesty of Jehovah.”

¹²“From the ends of the earth shall be heard singing, ‘Glory to the Righteous One’ for Jehovah Almighty is coming to reign gloriously on Mount Zion in Jerusalem.”

**Israel in the latter days will settle in their
own land and be served by other nations**

¹³“In that day the Lord shall have compassion on Jacob^{F*} and will once again settle Israel in their own land. ¹⁴Other nations will also unite with the house of Israel and shall serve them as menservants and maidservants.”

¹⁵“Israel will make captives of their captors and rule over their oppressors.”

*⁹ Probably Satan and his angels (see Revelation 15:27-30).

*¹⁰ The identities of the serpent and Beast are revealed in Revelation 8:9,15 and 9:1-9.

*¹³ Jacob is an alternative name for Israel. It was the name of the patriarch before the Lord changed it, see Genesis 22:16.

**Moab's cities to be destroyed in a night
in the last days**

¹A prophecy of Isaiah concerning Moab:^{F*} *"We have heard of Moab's pride and insolence, but her boasts are empty for Jehovah says: 'The cities of Moab shall be ruined, destroyed in a night. Every head shaved, every beard cut off.^{F*} ²In the streets they will wear sackcloth. On the roofs and in the public squares the people will wail and lie on the ground weeping. ³My heart laments for Moab like a harp."*

Moab's fugitives to flee

⁴"The armed men of Moab cry out. Their hearts are faint. Her fugitives flee, weeping as they go. Joy and gladness are taken away."

⁵"In the orchards no one sings or shouts for joy. In the vineyards no one treads wine at the presses, for I have put an end to their shouting."

Judah the lion to come upon the fugitives

⁶"The waters of Nimrim are dried up and the grass is withered. Nothing green is left. Dimon's waters are full of blood. ⁷But I will bring still more upon you. A lion^{F*} shall come upon the fugitives of Moab and those who remain in the land."

⁸"Like fluttering birds pushed from the nest will be the women of Moab at the fords of the Arnon river."



The Arnon river which runs through Moab and empties into the Dead Sea.

Tribute to be paid to Jerusalem

⁹"Therefore, send lambs as tribute to the ruler of the land, across the desert to the

*1 Modern day Jordan.

*1 Self-inflicted signs of mourning.

*7 Judah was called a lion in the ancient blessing given by the patriarch Israel to his sons (Genesis 31:21). Jesus is also called the Lion of Judah in Revelation 3:15.

mountain of Jerusalem. Say to them, 'Let our fugitives stay with you, shelter them from the destroyer.'

¹⁰"For your destroyer will come to an end and destruction will cease."

A king of the house of David to be enthroned

¹¹"Then, in steadfast love a throne shall be established, and a faithful one of the house of David shall sit upon it as king.^{F*} One who is swift to do right."

Moab's fate in Isaiah's day

¹²"*That was the word the Lord spoke concerning Moab in days to come. But now Jehovah says, 'Within three years Moab will be shorn of her splendour and her many people shall be despised. Her survivors will be few and feeble.'*"

**Edom doomed to total destruction
in the last days**

¹³"When my sword has drunk its fill in the heavens,^{F*} it will descend in judgement on Edom,^{F*} the people I have doomed to total destruction."

¹⁴"The sword of Jehovah will be bathed in blood for I have a great slaughter in Edom, and their cattle will fall with them. The land shall be drenched with blood and the dust soaked with fat."

The soil of Edom to be set ablaze

¹⁵"Edom's streams shall be turned to pitch and her soil to sulphur and her land set ablaze. From generation to generation it shall lie empty and none shall pass through it. ¹⁶Thorns and brambles will overrun her cities. Edom will become the haunt of jackals and wild goats, a home for owls and ravens."

**Damascus to become a heap of ruins
in the last days**

¹⁷A prophecy concerning Damascus:^{F*} *"The day will come when Damascus shall no longer be a city, but will become a heap of ruins. Animals will graze there with none to disturb them."*

Some gleanings to remain and be glorified

¹⁸"Yet the Lord Almighty declares, 'The survivors of Syria will be like the Israelites. ¹⁹For on the day when the glory of Israel is brought low, some gleanings will remain, as when an olive tree is beaten, leaving two or three olives on the topmost branches.'

Survivors will turn to the Holy One of Israel

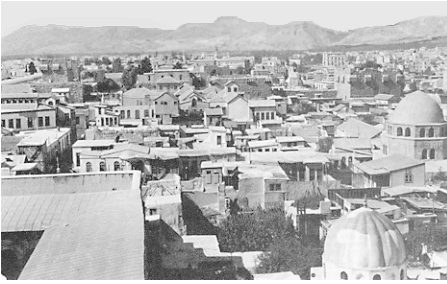
²⁰"*In that day they will turn their eyes to the Holy One of Israel and look no more to their altars and idols, the work of their own hands.*"

*11 This prophecy must still relate to the future as the Judean monarchy ended soon afterward with the last king Zedekiah (Jeremiah chapter 22). There has not been another king of the house of David in Israel since.

*13 See Isaiah 8:9.

*13 Edom is part of modern day Jordan.

*17 Damascus is the principle city of Syria.



Damascus in Syria. One day to become a heap of deserted ruins.

The multi-nation invading army of the last days to be destroyed in a night

²¹“O the roaring of many nations. They will come with a roar like the raging sea. But when Jehovah rebukes them they shall flee like chaff before the wind. ²²In the evening will come a sudden terror and at dawn they shall be no more.”

10

A prophecy concerning Ethiopia in the last days

¹A prophecy concerning Ethiopia: “Ah, land of whirring wings, who send ambassadors down the Nile in papyrus boats to the sea. A people tall and bronzed, feared far and wide. A conquering nation of strange speech whose land is divided by the Nile.”

Ethiopians to be cut down after the grapes have blossomed

²“When the trumpet sounds, all the people of the earth will hear it.^{F*} And in that same year before the harvest, when the blossom is over and the flower becomes a ripening grape, this people will be cut down, as branches cut down with pruning knives. ³Their bodies will be food for the birds of prey through the summer and for wild animals in winter.”

A remnant to come to Jerusalem bearing gifts

⁴“Then a remnant of these tall, bronzed people will come to Jerusalem, bearing gifts for Jehovah Almighty.”

Civil war in Egypt

⁵A prophecy concerning Egypt: “The Lord Almighty declares, ‘I will stir up Egyptian to fight against Egyptian, every man against his brother.’”

A fierce king to rule over Egypt in last days

⁶“The spirit of the Egyptians shall be broken and I will bring their plans to nothing, though they consult with their idols and spirits of the dead. ⁷I will hand

them over to the power of a fierce king who will rule over them.”

The Nile to dry up

⁸“Then the waters of the Nile will dry up and the riverbed become dry. The canals will stink and dry up, and the reeds and rushes wither. The sown fields along the Nile shall blow away.”

⁹“Fishermen will mourn and weavers of linen from flax will despair. All the wage earners shall be sick at heart.”

The Egyptians to fear Judah in last days

¹⁰“The wise counsellors of Pharaoh will give senseless advice, for the Lord shall put into them a spirit of confusion. They will make Egypt stagger in all that she does, as a drunkard staggers around in his vomit.”

¹¹“In that day the Egyptians will be like women. They will shake with fear at the hand that Jehovah raises against them.”

¹²“The land of Judah will become a terror to the Egyptians. The very mention of Judah will strike fear in their hearts, because of what the Lord shall bring against them.”

Egypt to turn to the Lord after he delivers them from oppressors

¹³“The Lord will smite Egypt with oppressors, but then he shall respond to their pleas and send a great saviour and deliver them, and they will turn to the Lord.”

Five cities in Egypt to worship Jehovah during the millennium

¹⁴“In that day, five cities in Egypt will swear loyalty to Jehovah Almighty. One of these shall be called the City of the Sun.”

¹⁵“There will be an altar to Jehovah in the heart of Egypt and they shall worship with sacrifices and offerings. They will make vows to the Lord and keep them.”

A highway from Assyria to Egypt when the Lord returns

¹⁶“In that day there shall be a highway from Assyria to Egypt, and the Assyrians will go to Egypt and the Egyptians to Assyria and shall worship together.”

Egypt, Assyria and Israel to be centres of worship of Jehovah

¹⁷“In that day Israel will a blessing on the earth, along with Egypt and Assyria. Jehovah Almighty will bless all three saying, “Blessed be Egypt my people, Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my inheritance.”

The wealth of Egypt and Ethiopia to come to Jerusalem

¹⁸The Lord says, “The day shall come when the wealth of Egypt and Ethiopia will be brought to Jerusalem by captives in chains, and they shall bow down before you saying, ‘Surely God is with you.’”

*2 Heavenly trumpet blasts are to herald the great destructions and other events of the last days (Revelation chapter 6, Isaiah 11:9).

A plea from the Lord to all idolatrous nations

19“*In that day, all makers of idols everywhere shall be put to shame, and Israel will be saved by Jehovah, never to be dishonoured again.*”

20“*I did not create the earth to be empty but to be inhabited. 21So come you fugitives from the nations who have no knowledge and carry about wooden idols and pray to a god who cannot save. 22Turn to me and be saved, for I am the only true God. There is no other.*”

Every knee shall bow to Jehovah

23“*Before me every knee shall bow and every tongue confess, ‘In Jehovah alone is righteousness and strength.’*”

24“*All who have opposed me will be dishonoured, but through me all Israel will be justified and honoured.*”



Assyria, Israel and Egypt are to become major centres of worship of the Lord during the millennium (Isaiah 10:14-17).

11

Isaiah's vision of the coming of the Lord

1“*Who is this coming from the east with his garments stained crimson, robed in splendour and travelling in the greatness of his strength?*”

2“*It is I, who speak righteousness and am mighty to save,*’ says the Lord.”

The Lord's garments to be red

3“*Why are your garments red, like those of one treading the winepress?*”

4“*I have trodden the winepress of the nations. I trampled them in my anger and their blood has stained my garments. For this day of vengeance was in my heart and has now come.*”

5“*I looked and there was no one to help me, but my wrath sustained me, so I trampled the nations alone in my anger and poured out their blood on the ground.*”

Isaiah's prayer of praise

6“*O Jehovah my God, I exalt and praise your holy name, for you have done marvellous things, things planned long ago. You*

have turned cities into heaps of rubble, therefore strong and ruthless nations will honour you. 7Yet you have been a refuge for the poor and the needy in their distress, a shelter from the storm.”

Israel to bud and blossom during the millennium

8“*In that day Israel will bud and blossom and fill the world with fruit.*”

Lost exiles will return to worship at Jerusalem

9“*In that day a great trumpet will sound, and they who were lost in exile shall return, and worship the Lord on his holy mountain in Jerusalem.*”

The Lord Jehovah coming in power to tend his flock as a shepherd

10“*Good tidings to the towns of Judah and to Jerusalem. Lift up your voice with a shout! See, the Lord Jehovah is coming with power and his reward is with him.*”

11“*He will tend his flock as a shepherd and gather his lambs in his arms and carry them close to his heart.*”



“He will gather his lambs in his arms and carry them close to his heart” Isaiah 12:11.

Jehovah to be seen and heard by all when he comes

12“*Although Jehovah has given you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, your teacher will hide himself no more.*”

13“*With your own eyes you shall see him, and with your own ears you will hear him. 11Then you will deface your idols of silver and gold and cast them away as you would a menstrual cloth.*”

The Lord has not rejected Israel

14Hear the word of Jehovah: “*O Israel whom I have chosen. Descendants of Abraham my friend. You whom I took from the ends of the earth, I have not rejected you.*”

15“*So fear not, for I am your God and will strengthen you and help you. All who rage against you shall surely be disgraced and*

perish. Though you search for your enemies you will not find them.”

New heavens and a new earth to be created

16“*I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things shall not be seen, nor will they come to mind.*”

No more will weeping be heard in Jerusalem

17“*I will create Jerusalem to be a delight, and its people a joy. The sound of weeping shall be heard in her no more.*”

People will again live long lives

18“*Never again will there be an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years. He who dies at a hundred will be regarded as a young man. 19For as are the years of a tree^{F*} so will be the years of my people in that day.*”

Prayers to be answered immediately

20“*My chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands. They shall be a people blessed by the Lord. 21Before they call I shall answer. While they are still praying I will hear.*”

Meat-eating animals will eat grass

22“*The wolf and the lamb shall feed together and the lion will eat grass as the ox, but dust shall be the serpent’s food.^{F*} 23None will hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain says the Lord.*”

A great feast in Jerusalem when Lord returns

24“*On his holy mountain Jehovah will prepare a feast of rich food and choice wines, for all peoples.*”

All tears to be wiped away

25“*He will swallow up death forever and wipe away the tears from all faces. He shall remove the shame of his people. 26In that day they shall say, ‘This is our God. We trusted in him and he saved us.’*”

A song to be sung in Judah that day

27“*In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah:*

28“*Lord, you have given us peace. All that we have has come from you.*”

29“*You have enlarged our nation and extended our borders.*”

30“*Other rulers have ruled us, but your name alone we honour.*”

31“*They are now dead, and their departed spirits have not risen.*”^{F*}

The dead of the Lord will be resurrected in that day

32“*But your dead O Lord will live, and together with my body shall they arise. Awake and shout for joy you who dwell in the dust, for the earth will give birth to her dead.*”

*19 Some trees live for more than a thousand years.

*22 Perhaps as the earthworm of today.

*31 The unrighteous are not resurrected until after the millennium (Revelation 16:7).

33“*Go my people, enter your rooms and shut your doors. Hide for a little while until the wrath is past. For the Lord is coming to punish the people of the earth for their sins. 34Then the earth will conceal her dead no longer.*”

12

All war will end when the Lord returns

1“*Jehovah will judge the nations and they shall beat their swords into plough blades and their spears into pruning hooks. 2Nation will never again take up the sword against nation, nor shall they prepare any more for war.*”

The humble and contrite esteemed by the Lord

3The Lord says, “*Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool. My hand has made all these things.*”

4“*This is the one I esteem, he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.*”

5“*But they who choose their own way, and whose souls delight in abominations will be punished. I will bring upon them what they dread.*”

Those who despise the faithful will be put to shame

6“*Hear the word of the Lord you who tremble at my word. Your brothers despise you and exclude you because of my name, yet they will be put to shame.*”

Wine and milk freely given to those who come to the Lord

7“*Come all you who are thirsty and have no money. Come, obtain wine and milk without cost. Why spend money on that which does not satisfy? Hear me and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of food.*”

The Lord will make a covenant of love if you come to him and endow you with splendour

8“*Come to me that your soul may live, and I will renew my everlasting covenant with you. Just as in my faithful love I covenanted with David, and made him a leader to the nations. 9Nations that you know not of shall hasten to you, for the Lord your God will endow you with splendour.*”

Seek the Lord while he is near and he will freely pardon

10“*Seek the Lord while he is near. Let the wicked forsake their evil thoughts and turn to the Lord. He will have mercy on them, for he freely pardons.*”

Lord’s thoughts higher than man’s thoughts

11“*As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts,’ says the Lord.*”

**Blessed are those who keep
the commandments**

¹²“Maintain justice and do what is right, for my salvation is to be revealed. ¹³Blessed is the man who does this, who keeps the Sabbath day holy and stays his hand from doing wrong.”

**Foreigners and eunuchs who keep the
commandments will be accepted by Lord**

¹⁴“Let not any foreigner who has bound himself to Jehovah say, ‘The Lord will exclude me from his people,’ nor let any eunuch say, ‘I am just a dry tree.’”

¹⁵“For Jehovah says, ‘To foreigners and eunuchs who love me and keep my covenant, and bind themselves to serve me and worship me, and keep the Sabbath without profaning it, these I will bring to my holy city and give them joy in my Temple, and a name better than sons and daughters.’”

¹⁶“Their offerings shall be accepted on my altar, for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.”

¹⁷“For I the Lord Jehovah declare, ‘I will gather others to Israel besides those already gathered.’”

Jerusalem’s day of joy is coming

¹⁸“Arise, shine Jerusalem, for the day of your light is coming. Darkness covers the earth, but the glory of Jehovah will appear above you. Then shall you be radiant, and your heart throb and swell with joy.”

Nations will come praising Jehovah

¹⁹“Nations will come to your light proclaiming the praise of Jehovah. Your sons and daughters will come from afar.”

Flocks will be gathered for offerings

²⁰“Flocks will be gathered to you for offerings on my holy altar.” ^F*

**Riches will be brought to Jerusalem
for the Lord to adorn his glorious Temple**

²¹“The riches of the nations shall come: silver, gold and incense, and I will adorn my glorious Temple.”

Descendants of exiles to fly home in ships

²²“Who are these that fly along like clouds, like doves to their nests? Ships bringing your sons from afar, with their silver and gold to the honour of the Lord your God.”

Foreigners to serve Israel

²³“Foreigners shall rebuild your walls and their rulers will serve you. Your gates shall be open day and night so that men may bring you the wealth of the nations. ²⁴For the nation that will not serve you shall perish.”

²⁵“The sons of your oppressors shall come, bowing before you and will call

Jerusalem the City of Jehovah, Zion of the Holy One of Israel.”

Israelites to be the pride and joy of world

²⁶“Although you have been forsaken and hated, I will make you the pride and joy of all generations forever. You shall drink the milk of nations and be nursed at royal breasts. Then you will know that I the Lord am your Saviour.”

²⁷“No longer will violence be in your land.”

13

Mountains to be made low

¹“A voice shall cry out in the desert, ‘Prepare the way of the Lord. Make straight the way of our God.’ ²For every valley shall be raised up, and every mountain and hill made low^F * and rugged places become a plain.”

All mankind will see the glory of the Lord

³“And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all mankind will see it together. The mouth of Jehovah has spoken it.”

Food will be rich and plentiful

⁴“Then shall he send you rain for the seed you sow in the ground, and the food that grows will be rich and plentiful. ⁵In that day your cattle will graze in broad meadows and your oxen and donkeys will eat plentiful grain.”

Streams of water everywhere

⁶“After the day of great slaughter when the dead lie in heaps, streams of water shall flow on every hill.”

Sun and moon to be seven times brighter

⁷“The moon will shine like the sun, and the sun will be seven times brighter as the Lord heals the wounds he inflicted. ⁸And you shall sing as on the night of a holy festival and your hearts will rejoice.”

Your eyes shall see the king in his beauty

⁹“Your eyes shall see the king in his beauty, and you shall view a land that stretches afar. Only in your mind will you recall the former terror.”

Abundant spoil from former enemies

¹⁰“Those arrogant people are no more, those people of obscure speech and strange tongue. ¹¹Now an abundance of spoil shall be divided. Even the lame will carry off plunder.”

**Jerusalem to be a peaceful city
of broad rivers and streams**

¹²“Look upon Jerusalem, the city of our festivals. Your eyes will see a peaceful

*2The word translated 'mountain' throughout the Old Testament means in Hebrew 'a range of hills' and the word translated 'hill' means 'convex' depicting a stand alone hill. They are however occasionally used interchangeably. Height is not indicated unless prefixed by an adjective such as 'high'.

*20 For a description of the millennial temple which contains provision for animal sacrifice, see Ezekiel chapter 14.

abode, like a tent with stakes never to be pulled up. ¹³A place of broad rivers and streams. For Jehovah is our judge, our lawgiver and our king."

The desert will burst into bloom

¹⁴"Streams will gush forth in the desert. The burning sands shall become pools of water and bubbling springs. ¹⁵The desert shall rejoice and blossom like the rose. It will burst into bloom and shout for joy."

¹⁶"All shall see the splendour of our God."



Jerusalem – to become a beautiful city of broad rivers and streams during the millennium (Isaiah 13:12-13).

The highway of Holiness

¹⁷"A new highway will be there and shall be called the Way of Holiness. The unclean shall not journey on it, only the redeemed will walk there."

¹⁸"On it the ransomed of the Lord shall return. They will enter Jerusalem with singing. Everlasting joy will crown their heads. ¹⁹Gladness shall overtake them and all sorrow shall flee away."

All infirmity to be healed

²⁰"Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then shall the lame leap like a deer and the tongue of the dumb shout for joy."

No more sickness

²¹"In that day no one living in Zion will say, 'I am sick' and the sins of those who dwell there shall be forgiven."

14

A country will be born in a day when the Lord comes

¹"Listen! An uproar from the city. It is the sound of the Lord repaying his enemies all they deserve. Who has seen such things?"

²"Can a country be born in a day? Yet no sooner is Jerusalem in labour than she gives birth to her children."

Jerusalem to overflow with abundance

³The Lord says, "Rejoice with Jerusalem, all you who love her and mourn over her. For you will suck and be satisfied at her comforting breasts. You will delight in her overflowing abundance."

⁴"I will bring peace to her like a river. The

wealth of nations shall flow to her like a flooding stream."

⁵"As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort Jerusalem."

The Lord to come with fury and flames of fire

⁶"See, the Lord is coming with fire. His chariots are like the whirlwind. He will bring down his anger with fury and flames of fire. ⁷For with fire and his sword Jehovah shall execute judgement upon all men and many will be slain."

⁸"For the Lord declares, 'Those who go into the groves^{F*} and those who eat the flesh of pigs and rats and other abominable things, will meet their end together.'

Survivors to be sent out to all nations to teach the people and gather Israelites

⁹"I will come and gather all nations and they shall see my glory."

¹⁰"I will set a sign among them and shall send survivors to the nations and to the distant islands that have not heard of my fame or seen my glory. ¹¹They will proclaim my glory and will bring your brothers from all the nations to my holy mountain in Jerusalem, in chariots and wagons and on horses and camels, says the Lord."

¹²"And I will select some of them also, to be priests and Levites."

15

All nations will stream to Jerusalem and bow down to Lord

¹What the prophet Isaiah saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in days to come: "In the last days, the mountain of the Lord's house will be the highest of the mountains^{F*} and all nations shall stream unto it. ²People will say, 'Let us go up to the Temple of the God of Israel and he will teach us his ways, so that we can walk in his paths.' For the law will go out from Jerusalem."

³"O house of Israel, let us walk in the light of the Lord."

⁴"The Lord says, 'From one New Moon to another, from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me, and they shall go out and look upon the loathsome dead bodies of those who rebelled against me.' ^{F*}

All animals to eat grass during the millennium

⁵"In that day the wolf shall live in peace with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid. The lion will eat grass as the ox, and the calf and the lion shall browse together with a little child to lead them. ⁶The

* Groves were places of idolatrous prostitution and were usually located beneath oak trees.

*1 Although the land of Israel is to become a plain at the coming of the Lord (Isaiah chapter 13), the city of Jerusalem will be located on a high mountain (Ezekiel 14:2, Zechariah 5:23).

*3 It is to take Israel more than seven months to bury all the dead (Ezekiel 13:22).

ISAIAH 16

cow will feed at pasture with the bear, and their young shall lie down together.”

Peaceful conditions during the millennial reign of Messiah

⁷“In that day the infant shall play safely near the hole of the cobra, and the young child will put his hand into the viper’s nest.”

⁸“They will not harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”



Meat eating animals like the lion will eat grass during the millennium (Isaiah 15:5.)

Glory of Jehovah to replace the sun

⁹“The sun will no longer be your light by day, nor will the moon shine on you, for Jehovah will be your light.” F*

All who live in Israel shall be righteous in that day

¹⁰“Then shall all your people be righteous and they shall possess the land always. For you are the work of my hands for the display of my splendour.”

¹¹“The least of you will become a thousand, the smallest a mighty nation. In its time I will do this swiftly.”

Israelites to be gathered and live in glory

¹²“In that day the root of Jesse^{F*} shall stand as an ensign and nations shall gather to it and his place of abode will be glorious.”

¹³“And the Lord shall reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the scattered people of Judah and the remnant of the exiles of Israel from the four quarters of the earth.”

Jealousy between Judah and Ephraim to vanish

¹⁴“Ephraim’s jealousy will vanish. Ephraim will no longer be jealous of Judah, nor

*9 This may only apply to the city of Jerusalem during the millennium, see verses 19-20 of this chapter, or the prophecy may be looking ahead to the New Jerusalem which will descend to earth after the millennium (Revelation 17:23-24).

*12 Some scholars believe the ‘root of Jesse’ is the Messiah, others that he is a latter day prophet responsible for gathering and uniting both factions of Israel (Judah and Ephraim), see following verses. On the basis of Isaiah 25:10-12 he may be the resurrected Isaiah himself.

Judah hostile to Ephraim.” F*

¹⁵“Together they will take spoil from the people of the west and the east, and Ammon^{F*} will be subject to them.”

The Euphrates river to dry up into seven small streams

¹⁶“Jehovah will dry up the tongue of the Red Sea, and with a scorching wind break up the Euphrates river into seven small streams so that men can walk across in sandals. ¹⁷A path through the water for the remnant of his people from Assyria,^{F*} as there was a path through the water for Israel when they came up from Egypt.”

The women of Jerusalem to be cleansed

¹⁸“In that day the Lord will wash away the filth of the women of Jerusalem, and cleanse the bloodstains from the city by judgement and fire.”

A protective canopy of bright cloud to extend over Jerusalem

¹⁹“Then will he create over Jerusalem a cloud, as a shade from the heat of the day and a glow of flaming fire by night. ²⁰It will serve as a canopy, a shelter from storm and rain.”

²¹“Shout and sing for joy people of Jerusalem, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you.”



The Euphrates river which is to become seven small streams in the latter days (Isaiah 15:16).

16

Judah to become like the garden of Eden

¹“The time is coming when Jehovah will comfort Jerusalem and look with compassion on her ruins. ²He will make her deserts like the garden of Eden.”

Bubbling springs and abundant trees

³“For Jehovah says, ‘The day is coming when I will make streams flow on what were

*14 It appears that all Israel is to be gathered in the latter days under the heads of the two dominant tribes, Judah (the Jews), and Ephraim (the ten lost tribes). Many believe that the lost tribes are among the forbears of northern European peoples.

*15 Modern day Jordan.

*17 Modern day Iraq.

barren heights, and springs bubble up in the valleys, and I will turn the desert into pools of water.”

“Where there was once desert, trees will grow, the cedar, the acacia, the myrtle, the olive, the fir and the cypress. Nations will see and know that the hand of the Lord has done this.”

The Lord to reign over entire earth when he comes

“Hear me O my people says the Lord, the law will go out from me as a light to the nations. My salvation is coming. I will bring justice to the entire world.”

Before that day the heavens will vanish and people die like flies

“But before that day, the heavens will vanish like smoke, and the earth shall come apart like an old garment and its people will die like flies, but my salvation shall last forever.”

Jerusalem’s cup of wrath to be taken away and given to her tormentors

“Awake, awake! Rise up O Jerusalem you who have drunk the cup of the Lord’s wrath, you who have drained it to the dregs. Calamities, destruction, famine and sword have come upon you.”

“Your sons lie helpless at the head of every street, like antelope caught in a net.”

“Therefore hear this you afflicted one, I have taken out of your hand the cup of my wrath that made you stagger. You will never drink of it again. I shall put it into the hands of your tormentors.”

Jerusalem to be redeemed

“Awake, awake O Jerusalem, clothe yourself with strength. Put on your garments of splendour O Holy City. The defiled shall not enter you again.”

“Shake off your dust, free yourself from the chains of your neck O captive daughter of Zion. You were sold for naught, and without money you will be redeemed.”

“For the Lord says, ‘Assyria has oppressed them. Those who rule them mock and all day long my name is blasphemed. In that day they will know that it is I who foretold it.’”

Shouts for joy when the Lord returns to save Jerusalem

“How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good tidings, who proclaim peace and say to Jerusalem, ‘Your God reigns.’”

“Your watchmen shall lift up their voices and shout for joy when Jehovah returns to Jerusalem. They will see it with their own eyes.”

“Burst into songs of joy you ruins of Jerusalem, for the Lord has comforted his people.”

All nations to witness the saving of Jerusalem

“The Lord will bare his holy arm in the sight of all nations. All the earth shall see the salvation of our God.”

Jerusalem likened to a childless widow who suddenly receives a husband and children

“The Lord says, ‘Sing O barren woman, you who never bore a child. Burst into song and shout for joy. For more are the children of the childless woman than of she who has a husband.’”

“Enlarge your tent, lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes, for you will spread to the right and to the left. Your children shall dispossess nations and settle in their empty cities.”

“You will forget the shame of your youth and the disgrace of your widowhood. For your maker is your husband. Jehovah Almighty is his name, the Holy One of Israel, your Redeemer, the God of all the earth.”

The Lord will not be angry with Israel again

“In a surge of anger I hid my face from you. For a brief moment I abandoned you. But with everlasting kindness I will bring you back.”

“Like the days of Noah when I swore that the waters would never again cover the earth, now I swear not to be angry with you again. My covenant of peace will not be removed.”

The beautiful New Jerusalem of the future

“O afflicted city, I am going to replace your stones with turquoise, your foundations with sapphires. I will make your pinnacles of rubies, your gates of rounded gemstones, and your walls of precious jewels.”^{F*}

“Your sons shall be taught by the Lord and great shall be their prosperity.”

“This will be the heritage of the servants of the Lord.”

17

Isaiah’s prophecies like a sealed book to Judah

“The Lord has brought over you a spirit of deep sleep. He has blinded your eyes. This whole vision is to you like the words of a sealed book.”

The hearts of the people far from the Lord

“For the Lord says, ‘This people draw near to me with their lips but their hearts are far from me. Their fear toward me is taught by the traditions of men.’”

“Therefore I will astound these people with marvellous wonders and the wisdom of their wise shall vanish.”

^{*}22 This description fits the vast New Jerusalem, a beautiful, glowing, bejewelled city, 2200 kms long and wide that is to descend from heaven to the new earth following the millennium. The resurrected righteous will dwell there in the presence of the Father and the Son. See Revelation chapter 17.

ISAIAH 18

⁴“Woe to those who go to great lengths to hide their evil deeds, who sin in darkness and think, ‘Who will know?’”

⁵“You turn things upside down. You are like the clay saying to the potter, ‘You did not make me.’”

Isaiah’s prophecies will be understood when the great day of the Lord comes

⁶“Yet, when the great day of the Lord comes, the deaf shall hear the words of this sealed book and the eyes of the blind shall see.”

⁷“Once more the humble will rejoice in the Lord. The ruthless will vanish, the mockers will disappear and all who speak falsehoods or have an eye for evil shall be destroyed.”

⁸“Therefore the Lord says, ‘No longer in that day will Jacob be ashamed when he looks upon his children, the work of my hands. ⁹They will keep my name holy, and they who err in spirit will gain understanding and accept instruction.’”

Isaiah instructed to write this vision in a book as a witness for days to come

¹⁰“Go now, inscribe this vision in a book that it may be a witness for the days to come.”

Rebellious Judah want only to hear pleasant prophecies

¹¹“But woe to these obstinate children who carry out plans that are not mine. These are a rebellious people, unwilling to listen to instruction of the Lord. ¹²They say to the prophets, ‘Give us no more visions of what is right. Speak to us of pleasant things, prophesy illusions. Cease confronting us with the Holy One of Israel.’”

¹³“Therefore the Holy One of Israel says, ‘Because you have rejected my message and depend upon deceit, this sin will become for you like a high wall, cracked and bulging, that suddenly collapses upon you.’”

Jerusalem’s priests and rulers befuddled with wine

¹⁴“Woe to Jerusalem. Your priests and rulers stagger from strong drink and are befuddled with wine. All your tables are covered with vomit. There is not a spot without filth.”

Words of Isaiah scoffed at

¹⁵“You scoff and say to me, ‘Who is Isaiah trying to teach? Are we little children? Do this! Do that! Rule after rule!’”

God will therefore speak to Judah with foreign lips

¹⁶“Very well then, with foreign lips God shall speak to you. It shall still be, ‘Do this. Do that. Rule after rule. But it will not bring rest to the weary but will cause you to fall backward, to be injured and snared and captured.’”

¹⁷“When the overwhelming scourge comes

you shall be beaten down by it. As often as it comes it will carry you away. Morning after morning it will bring terror.”

The Messiah to be a cornerstone in Zion

¹⁸“Hear the word of Jehovah you scoffers who rule this people in Jerusalem: ‘I will lay a stone in Zion, a chosen cornerstone for a sure foundation. He who trusts in him shall never be put to shame.’”

Judah’s chains to become heavier if they do not cease mocking

¹⁹“Now cease your mocking or your chains will become heavier, for the Lord has revealed to me the destruction decreed against this whole land.”

Only repentance will bring the help of the Lord

²⁰“The Lord says, ‘In repentance is your salvation, in trust is your strength.’ But you would have none of it. You said, ‘No, we will flee on horses.’ ²¹Therefore you shall flee. But your pursuers will be swifter. And a thousand of you shall flee at the threat of one.”

The Lord longs to show Judah compassion

²²“Yet the Lord longs to show you compassion. For Jehovah is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him.”

²³“O people of Jerusalem, how gracious he will be in that day when you cry for help. As soon as he hears he will answer you.”

18

Assyria captures many cities of Judah

¹In the fourteenth year of the reign of Hezekiah king of Judah, Sennacherib king of Assyria marched against Judah and attacked the fortified cities, capturing them.

Jerusalem prepares to be attacked also

²When Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib also intended to come against Jerusalem, he blocked off the springs and stream outside the city saying, “Why should the Assyrians come and find plenty of water?”

³He repaired the broken sections of the city wall and built towers upon it, and then built another wall outside that one and reinforced the terraces of the City of David. ⁴He also made many weapons and shields.

King Hezekiah encourages his people

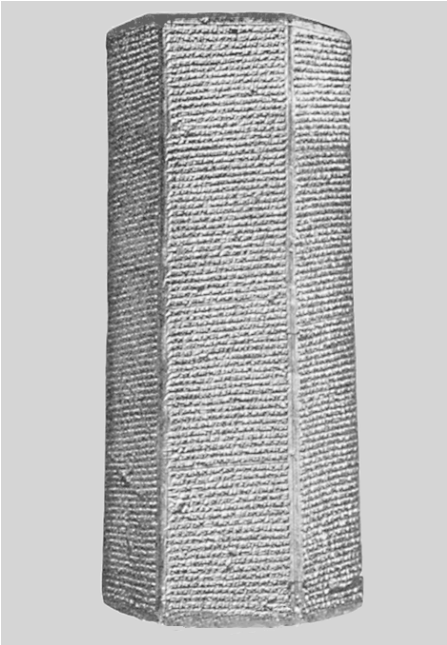
⁵The king appointed army officers over the people and assembled them in the square at the city gate and encouraged them with these words, “Be strong and courageous. Do not fear the king of Assyria and his vast army, for there is a greater power with us than with him. ⁶We have Jehovah our God to help us and to fight our battles.”

⁷The army officers gained confidence from the words spoken by Hezekiah the king of Judah.

Hezekiah pays the Assyrians a huge ransom of gold and silver to withdraw

⁸Hezekiah then sent a message to the king of Assyria saying, “I have done wrong. Withdraw from me and I will pay whatever you demand.”

⁹So Sennacherib, king of Assyria exacted from Hezekiah 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold.^{F*} All the silver and gold from the treasuries of the Temple and the royal palace. ¹⁰King Hezekiah even had to strip gold from the doors of the Temple. The king of Assyria took the gold and silver and withdrew from Jerusalem.



A clay record of Sennacherib in which he boasts of his victory over Hezekiah the Jew.

19

The Assyrians come again against Jerusalem

¹Later that same year, when the king of Assyria was besieging Lachish,^{F*} he sent his chief commander with a large army against Jerusalem a second time.

The Assyrian commander taunts Hezekiah

²The Assyrian commander led his army to the city gates and shouted for the king Hezekiah.

³Three of Hezekiah's officials went out to meet him. Then the commander cried out to them in a loud voice, “Tell Hezekiah, the great king of Assyria says, ‘On what are you basing this confidence of yours, that you remain in Jerusalem to rebel against me? ⁴You say you

have military strength, but you speak empty words. Come now, make a bargain with me. I will give you 2000 horses if you can put riders on them!”

The Assyrians blaspheme Jehovah

⁵“On whom then are you depending? Are you depending on Egypt, that splintered reed which pierces a man's hand if he leans on it!”

⁶“Are you depending on Jehovah your God? Is not he the one whose high places and altars you have removed? ⁷Furthermore, Jehovah himself told me to march against this land and destroy it.”

The Assyrian commander intimidates the men of Judah sitting on the wall

⁸Hezekiah's officials said to the Assyrian commander, “Speak in Assyrian since we understand it. Do not speak in Hebrew in the hearing of the men on the wall.”

⁹But the commander cried out, “Was it only to your king that I was sent to say these words, and not to the men sitting on the wall, who like you will have to eat their own dung and drink their own urine.”

¹⁰Then he again shouted in Hebrew, “Hear the words of the great king of Assyria! ‘Do not let Hezekiah deceive you! He cannot deliver you from my hand! ¹¹Do not let him persuade you to trust in Jehovah! You will die of hunger and thirst!”

The men of Judah encouraged to surrender

¹²“Come out to me! Then every one of you will continue to eat from your own vine and fig tree, and drink from your own cistern until I come and take you to a land like your own, a land of grain and new wine, a land of vineyards, olive trees and honey!”

¹³“Choose life, not death! Do not listen to Hezekiah when he says Jehovah will deliver you! ¹⁴Has the god of any nation delivered his people from the hand of the king of Assyria? Was Samaria delivered? How then can Jehovah deliver Jerusalem from my hand?”

The men of Judah remain silent

¹⁵But the men were silent, for Hezekiah the king had commanded them, “Do not answer him.”

Hezekiah seeks guidance from the Lord

¹⁶The officials went back to Hezekiah with their clothes torn^{F*} and told him what the Assyrian commander had said.

¹⁷The king tore his clothes also and put on sackcloth and went up to the Temple of the Lord. ¹⁸Then he sent his officials and priests to consult the prophet Isaiah.

The Lord to cause the Assyrian king to return home and be cut down with the sword

¹⁹Isaiah said to them, “The Lord says, ‘Do not fear the words with which the underlings of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. I will put such a spirit into the

*23 About 10 tonnes of silver and one tonne of gold.

*1 A Canaanite city about 40 km south west of Jerusalem.

*16 A sign of grief or frustration.

ISAIAH 20

king of Assyria that when he hears a certain report he will return to his own land. There he shall be cut down by the sword.”

The king of Assyria sends another blasphemous message to Hezekiah

²⁰Soon after this the king of Assyria heard a report that the king of Egypt was marching against him. So he sent a letter to Hezekiah with these words:

²¹“Let not the God you depend on deceive you when he says, ‘Jerusalem will not be handed over to the king of Assyria.’ You have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to other nations, they destroyed them completely.”

²²“Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, the king of Sepharvaim, or of Hena, or Ivvah?”

Hezekiah prays to the Lord for deliverance

²³Hezekiah received the letter and read it. Then he went up to the Temple and spread it out before the Lord and prayed, “O Jehovah, God of Israel, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. ²⁴See the words that Sennacherib, king of Assyria has sent to insult the living God.”

²⁵“It is true O Lord that the Assyrian kings have laid waste other nations, and burnt their gods with fire. But they were not gods, only wood and stone fashioned by men’s hands.”

²⁶“Now O Lord deliver us from his hand, that all the kingdoms on earth may know that you alone are God.”

The Lord rebukes the king of Assyria

²⁷Then the Lord sent this message to Hezekiah by Isaiah the prophet: “The God of Israel says, ‘I have heard your prayer concerning Sennacherib, king of Assyria. He will not enter Jerusalem nor shoot an arrow here. ²⁸I will defend this city and save it for my sake and for the sake of David my servant.’”

²⁹“Now this is the word the Lord has spoken against Sennacherib, ‘The virgin daughter of Jerusalem mocks you. She tosses her head as you flee. Who is it you have insulted and blasphemed? Against whom have you lifted your eyes in pride? Against the Holy One of Israel.’”

³⁰“By your messengers you have heaped insults on Jehovah. You have said, ‘With my many chariots have I ascended the mountain heights to cut down its tallest cedars.’”

³¹“Have you not heard? Long ago I planned all this. That you turn fortified cities into piles of stone, and I have brought it to pass. ³²Now because you rage against me, and your insolence has reached my ears, I will put my hook in your nose and make you return the way you came.”

185,000 Assyrian soldiers die during the night

³³That night the angel of the Lord went out and put to death 185,000 men in the Assyrian camp. When those who were left alive arose the next morning there were dead bodies everywhere.

Sennacherib king of Assyria returns home and is put to the sword by his sons

³⁴So Sennacherib, king of Assyria returned to Nineveh,^{F*} and while he was worshipping in the temple of his god Nisroch, two of his sons killed him with the sword.

Jerusalem’s current warfare completed

³⁵Then the Lord said to the prophet Isaiah, “Comfort my people. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem and proclaim that her warfare has been completed. Her sin has been atoned for.”

20

King Hezekiah’s steward cursed

¹The Lord said to Isaiah, “Go say to Shebna, the steward of Hezekiah the king who is in charge of the palace, ‘Who gave you permission to chisel out a fine tomb for yourself in the rock?’”

²“Jehovah is about to take hold of you and hurl you into a large foreign country. There you will die, and they shall possess your splendid chariots, you disgrace to your master’s house.”

³“I will depose you from office and clothe my servant Eliakim with your robe and hand your authority over to him. ⁴He shall be a father to those who live in Jerusalem, and I shall give him the key to the house of David, and will drive him like a peg into a firm place.”

⁵“But the day will come when the peg shall give way and fall. The Lord has spoken.”

Jerusalem soon to be a wasteland

⁶“Mourn for this city of revelry, for the palace will be abandoned and the populous city deserted. It shall become a wasteland, a pasture for flocks, until the Spirit is again poured upon you from on high.”

Judean exiles to eventually return from Babylon

⁷“Then you my people shall return^{F*} and live again in secure homes. You will be blessed, sowing your seed by every stream and letting your cattle and donkeys range free.”

King Hezekiah becomes ill and is told by Isaiah he is about to die

⁸Now Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah went to him and said, “The Lord says, ‘Put your house in order for you are about to die.’”

*34 Nineveh was the royal city of Assyria, the same large city to which Jonah was sent. It no longer exists.

*7 Descendants of the exiles of Jerusalem returned home from Babylonian exile after about 70 years.

Hezekiah prays and weeps bitterly

⁹But Hezekiah prayed saying, “Remember O Lord how I have walked before you faithfully and have done what is good in your eyes.” And he wept bitterly.^{F*}

The Lord to heal Hezekiah and grant him 15 more years of life

¹⁰Before Isaiah had left the middle court, the word of the Lord came to him again saying, “**Return to Hezekiah and say to him, ‘The Lord says, “I have heard your prayer and have seen your tears, so I will heal you. ¹¹On the third day from now you shall go up to the Temple of the Lord, and I will add fifteen years to your life.’**”

The sun’s shadow goes back ten degrees as a sign

¹²Hezekiah asked Isaiah, “What shall be the sign that the Lord will heal me?”

¹³Isaiah answered, “***Shall the shadow of the sun go forward ten degrees, or back ten degrees?***”

¹⁴Hezekiah replied, “It is a simple matter for the shadow to go forward. Rather have it return ten degrees.”

¹⁵So Isaiah called upon Jehovah and the Lord made the shadow cast by the sun return ten degrees on the sundial of Ahaz.

A poultice of figs heals the king’s tumour

¹⁶Then Isaiah said, “***Prepare a poultice of figs.***” They did so and applied it to the tumour and the king recovered.

Hezekiah’s writes in gratitude for his healing

¹⁷A writing of Hezekiah king of Judah after his illness and recovery:

“I said, ‘Why in the prime of my life must I go through the gates of Sheol^{F*} and be robbed of the rest of my years? I shall not see the Lord in the land of the living and will no longer look upon those who now dwell in this world.’”

¹⁸“I wept and moaned like a dove and I prayed, ‘O Jehovah, come to my aid.’”

¹⁹“Then Lord, you restored me to health. What can I say? I will walk humbly all my remaining years because of this anguish of my soul. Surely it was for my good that I suffered such anguish.”

²⁰“For Sheol does not thank you Lord. Those who go down to the Pit^{F*} do not receive your fellowship. It is the living that praise you, as I am doing today.”

King Hezekiah grows proud because of his riches

²¹But afterward, the heart of Hezekiah the king grew proud, for he had great riches; silver, gold,^{F*} jewels, spices, shields, all kinds of

valuables and great numbers of flocks and herds, for God had blessed him.

Messengers from Babylon visit Hezekiah

²²Now the prince of the king of Babylon^{F*} sent Hezekiah messengers with a letter and a gift, for he had heard of Hezekiah’s illness and the miraculous sign that had occurred in the land.^{F*} ²³Hezekiah entertained the messengers and showed them his great wealth. There was nothing in his palace and kingdom that he hid from them.

²⁴Then Isaiah the prophet went to the king and said, “Where did those men come from?”

Hezekiah replied, “They came from Babylon,”

²⁵The prophet asked, “What did they see?”

Hezekiah said, “They saw all. There was nothing among my treasures that I did not show them.”

Isaiah prophesies exile of Judah to Babylon

²⁶Then Isaiah said, “Hear the word of Jehovah, ‘**The time will come when everything in your palace will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left. ²⁷Some of your own children shall also be taken away and become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.**”

²⁸Hezekiah replied, “Whatever the Lord says is good. At least there will be peace in my lifetime.”

Hezekiah and Jerusalem repent of pride

²⁹So Hezekiah repented of his pride and the people of Jerusalem did also, and the Lord’s anger did not come upon them during the days of Hezekiah.

21

Jerusalem’s leaders to flee before the Babylonian capture and exile of Jerusalem

¹A prophecy of the Lord concerning Jerusalem: “**What troubles you, that you have all gone up on the roofs?**”

²“**O city full of shouting and commotion, your slain did not die in battle, for your leaders fled from the enemy but they were captured even though they fled far away.^{F*}**”

³“**Now you who remain alive will be captured and sent into exile.**”

⁴“**Turn away from me and let me weep bitterly over the distress of my people.**”

The fruit harvests of Jerusalem to fail

⁵“**You women of Jerusalem, who are so secure and complacent, hear my words. In little more than a year the grape harvest will fail and the fruit harvest will not come.**”

⁶“**Tremble you complacent women, strip off your clothes and wear sackcloth around your waists. Beat your breasts for the pleasant fields and fruitful vines, for this**

*9 Hezekiah was only about 38 years old and appears to have had no male heir.

*17 Sheol is the Hebrew name for the spirit world of the dead.

*20 The Pit is an alternative name for Sheol.

*21 Hezekiah may have recovered the huge silver and gold ransom he paid the Assyrians (Isaiah 18:9-10) when the 185,000 soldiers died (Isaiah 19:33).

*22 Babylon was on the rise to becoming a major world power and would soon conquer Assyria.

*23 The sun’s shadow returning ten degrees.

*24 For an account of this fleeing by the king and his guards during the siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, see Jeremiah 22:3.

ISAIAH 22

land of my people will become a land overgrown with thorns and briars."

Isaiah's vision of the Babylonian capture and exile of Jerusalem

⁷"The Lord Almighty has a day of trampling and terror for Jerusalem, a day of battering down walls and crying out."

⁸"Your valleys are full of chariots, horsemen gather at the city gates. The defences of Judah are stripped away. The City of David has breaches in its defences. You have torn down houses to strengthen the wall."

⁹"You built a reservoir between the walls for the water of the Old Pool, but you looked not to the one who made it long ago."



Globe thistle, typical of the 'thorns and briars' that Isaiah prophesied would overgrow the cultivated land in Israel (Isaiah 21:6).

The people ignored the Lord's warning to repent

¹⁰"The Lord called you before that day, to weep and put on sackcloth, but rather there was joy and revelry, eating of meat and drinking of wine. You said, 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.'"

¹¹"But the Lord Almighty says, 'Until your dying day this sin will not be atoned for.'"

Those who trust in the Lord will soar as an eagle

¹²"Why do you complain O Israel and say, 'My prayers are disregarded by my God'?"

¹³"Do you not know that Jehovah is the creator of the whole earth? He does not grow tired and his intelligence is beyond understanding."

¹⁴"He gives strength to the weary and empowers the weak. Even young men grow weary, but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. ¹⁵They shall soar on wings like eagles. They will run and not be weary, walk and not faint."

The glory of man withers like grass

¹⁶"A voice said to me, 'Cry out!'"

"I asked, 'What shall I cry?'"

¹⁷"All men are but grass, their glory withers and dies, but the word of God stands forever."

Fear not mortal men who are but grass

¹⁸"Hear me, you who know what is right. Fear not men nor their insults, for the worms will soon devour them, but my goodness shall last forever. I am he who comforts you."

¹⁹"Why should you fear mortal men who are but grass, and forget your maker who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth."

Who is the equal of the Lord?

²⁰"Who is my equal? Lift up your eyes to the starry heavens. Who created all these, and calls each by name? Because of my great power not one of them is missing."

22

The lost ones of Israel to eventually return

¹The word of the Lord received through the prophet Isaiah: "Fear not O Israel, for I have redeemed you. You are mine. I am Jehovah your God, the Holy One of Israel your Saviour, and because I love you I will give other nations in exchange for you; Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sheba."

²"Be not afraid, I will return your children from the east, and gather you from the west. I will say to the north, 'Give them up' and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' I shall bring my sons and daughters from the ends of the earth."

³"Who has foretold this, or former things? Let them bring their witnesses to prove they were right."

Jehovah is Israel's only Saviour

⁴"You are my witnesses that I am God. There was no foreign god before me, nor will there be in times to come. For I am Jehovah and apart from me you have no Saviour. ⁵It is I that have revealed and saved and not some foreign god among you. You are my witnesses that I am God."

Jehovah the Rock of Israel

⁶"Thus says Jehovah, the King of Israel and her redeemer, the Lord of Hosts. I am the first and the last, you have no God apart from me."

⁷"For who is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him foretell what is to come. You are my witnesses. Do you have any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock."

The Lord's challenge to worthless idols

⁸"Present your case. Have your idols declare things to come. Have them predict what the future holds so we may know they are gods, or have them do something terrible, to fill us with fear."

**He who chooses idols is
an abomination to Lord**

⁹“But your idols are less than nothing. Their works are worthless. He who chooses them is an abomination to me.”

Those who make idols are blind and ignorant

¹⁰“Those who make idols are nothing, and the idols they make are worthless. Those who say otherwise are blind and ignorant, to their own shame.”

**The foolishness of making
and worshipping idols**

¹¹“The carpenter cuts down a tree. Half of the wood he burns to warm himself and prepare his meal. From the rest he makes a god, his idol. ¹²He measures and marks an outline. He roughs it out with a chisel and then carves it in the form of a man. Then he bows down and worships it. He prays to it and says, ‘Save me, you are my god.’”

¹³“My people know nothing. They lack understanding. Their eyes are plastered over so they cannot see. Their minds are closed so they cannot understand.”

**All Israel to be consigned to scorn
because of sin**

¹⁴“You have not called upon me O Israel. You have not honoured me with your sacrifices. But you have burdened me with your sins. ¹⁵I am ever blotting out Israel’s sins for my name’s sake. So now I will consign you to scorn.”

Israel to be healed in latter days

¹⁶“But hear O Israel whom I have chosen, hear the Lord who formed you in the womb.”

¹⁷“Fear not, for the day will come when I shall pour water on your thirsty land, and pour out my Spirit upon your descendants. Then will they spring up like grass in a meadow, like poplar trees by a flowing stream.”

Jehovah will redeem Israel

¹⁸“*Sing for joy O heavens! Shout aloud O earth! Burst into song you mountains and forests! For Jehovah has redeemed Israel.*”

**The Lord to stir up a servant
from the north-east**

¹⁹“I will stir up one from the north, a servant from the direction of the rising sun whom I shall summon by name. He shall tread on rulers, victory will meet his every step.” ^{F*}

²⁰“Who has told you of this before so you can say in that day, ‘He was right?’ No one has. I am the first to tell Jerusalem the good tidings.”

²¹“See, your idols are all false. Their deeds amount to nothing.”

This servant will restore justice to the nations

²²“I will put my Spirit on this servant in whom I am well pleased, and he shall restore justice to the nations. He shall not shout or cry out, but in quiet faithfulness will go forth and not be discouraged until he establishes justice on earth.”

Jehovah’s former prophecies have come to pass

²³“I am Jehovah. That is my name. I will not give my glory or praise to idols. My former prophecies have come to pass, and I shall declare new things before they spring into being.”

23

**The Lord to accomplish all he pleases
through his servant Cyrus**

¹“I am the Lord who made all things, who stretched out the heavens and spread out the earth. I foil the signs of false prophets and make fools of diviners. ²I overthrow the learning of the wise and turn it into nonsense. I fulfil the predictions of my prophets, and say to the waters, ‘Be dry’ and they dry up. ³I say of Cyrus, ^{F*} ‘He is my servant. He will accomplish all that I please.’”

**The Lord will honour Cyrus for Israel’s sake yet
Cyrus will not acknowledge the Lord**

⁴“I the Lord say to my anointed servant Cyrus who shall subdue nations, ‘I will go before you and bring low the pride of the great. I will break down gates of bronze and cut through bars of iron.’”

⁵“I shall give you treasures stored in secret places so that you will know it is I, Jehovah the God of Israel who calls you by name, and strengthens you and bestows honour upon you for the sake of Israel, though you acknowledge me not.”

⁶“I Jehovah bring prosperity, and I create disaster.”

**Cyrus to free Judean exiles
to rebuild Jerusalem**

⁷“I will raise up Cyrus in righteousness and will make his ways straight. He shall rebuild my city and set my exiles free.”

A prophecy against Babylon

⁸“Sit in the dust O city of Babylon. No more will you be called tender or delicate. Take millstones and grind flour. Remove your veil. ⁹Lift up your skirts and wade through streams so that your nakedness is exposed, for I shall take vengeance on you and will spare no one. ¹⁰No more will you be called Queen of the Kingdoms.”

**Babylon to show no mercy
toward Judean exiles**

¹¹“I was angry with my people and exiled

*19 Cyrus the Great (see Isaiah 23:1-7), a righteous king who in about 150 years time would overthrow Babylon, create the Persian Empire and allow the exiled Jews to return to Jerusalem (Haggai 1:1-3). He was from the east (the rising sun) but because of the topography of the land, all invasions from that quarter approached Israel from the north.

*3 Cyrus the Great was born over 100 years after this prophecy.

ISAIAH 24

them into your hands,^{F*} and you showed them no mercy. Even on the aged you laid a heavy yoke.”

Babylon's sorcerers and astrologers will not save her from widowhood

¹²You said, 'I will continue forever as the eternal queen. I will never be a widow, nor shall I suffer the loss of my children.'

¹³'Hear this you lover of pleasure, lounging in your security, both those tragedies shall overtake you in a single day.'

¹⁴'They shall come upon you in full measure, despite your many sorceries and spells. You trust in your wickedness. Your wisdom and knowledge mislead you.'

¹⁵'Carry on then with your magic spells and many sorceries. Perhaps you will succeed.'

¹⁶'Let your astrologers who divide the heavens and make predictions month by month, save you from what is coming. ¹⁷But then, they cannot even save themselves. Each one of them goes on in his error. Not one of them can save you.'

The Lord's past prophecies have come to pass

¹⁸'Hear this O house of Israel, who come from the line of Judah, who invoke the God of Israel but not in truth or righteousness, who call yourselves citizens of the Holy City. ¹⁹I foretold things long ago and they came to pass. Before they happened I announced them to you, so you could not say, 'My idols did them.' Is this not true?'

A new prophecy from the Lord

²⁰'Now I will tell you of a new thing to come. You have not heard it before, so you cannot say, 'I knew of it.'

²¹'But from old your ear has not been open. Well do I know your treachery for you were a rebel from birth. ²²But for my name's sake I have delayed my wrath and have refined you with affliction, for how can I let my name be defamed?'

Cyrus will overthrow Babylon

²³'Now hear this all of you, which of the idols has foretold this? Jehovah's chosen servant will capture Babylon.^{F*} I have called him and he shall succeed in his mission.'

Peace and plenty if only Judah had kept Lord's commandments

²⁴'I am Jehovah your God who teaches you what is best for you.'

²⁵'If only you had kept my commandments your peace would have been like a river. Your descendants would have been like the countless grains of sand and never would be cut off from before me.'

*11 The Lord is speaking prophetically. The exile of Judah to Babylon was still about 100 years away.

*23 Cyrus the Great. The defenders of Babylon were so displeased with their corrupt king Belshazzar (see Daniel chapter 7) that they opened the gates for Cyrus and his armies. The great city gradually dwindled and died about 200 years later, after the reign of Alexander the Great.

No peace for the wicked

²⁶'But there is no peace for the wicked, says the Lord.'

Isaiah's prophecy regarding Babylon

²⁷A vision that Isaiah saw concerning Babylon: "*Babylon, the jewel of kingdoms shall be overthrown by God, like Sodom and Gomorrah.*"

²⁸"*She will never be inhabited again. Jackals will roam her deserted houses and luxurious palaces. In them owls shall dwell and wild goats leap about.*"

²⁹"*Her time is near at hand. Her days will not be prolonged.*"



The ruins of ancient Babylon, destroyed as prophesied by the Lord through Isaiah.

Great brutality of the Medes toward Babylon

³⁰"*So announce this to the ends of the earth, 'Flee from Babylon!'*"

³¹"*Like sheep without a shepherd the foreign workers shall flee with their families, back to their native lands. Whoever is found shall be thrust through by the sword.*"

³²"*Their infants shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes, their wives will be raped and their possessions taken from them.*"

³³"*For the Lord says, 'I will stir up the Medes^{F*} who care not for silver and have no delight in gold. Their weapons will strike down the young men. They will have no mercy on infants or children.'*"

24

A taunt against the king of Babylon

¹"*On the day the Lord gives Judah relief from suffering and hard labour in serving the Babylonians, you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon:*"

²"*How the oppressor has come to an end. How his fury has ended. Jehovah has broken the sceptre of the king who conquered nations with relentless aggression. ³Now all the earth is peacefully resting and is breaking into song.*"

*33 The Medes (of Media, formerly part of modern Iran) were a warlike people who lived north-east of Babylon. They afflicted the Babylonians for nearly half a century until they themselves were defeated by Cyrus, the king of Persia (modern Iran) who made them part of his Persian empire.

4“*Sheol*^{F*} below is all astir to meet you. At your coming the spirits of the dead rise to greet you. They who were also kings on the earth will arise from their thrones and say to you, ‘You too have lost your power as have we. ⁵All your pomp has been brought down to Sheol along with the music of your harps. Maggots are now the covering of your body.’”

6“*How you have fallen from heaven O morning star! You who once laid low the nations! Who said in your heart, ‘I will raise my throne above the tops of the clouds. I will make myself like the Most High God.’* ⁷But you are brought down to Sheol, to the depths of the Pit.”

8“*Those who see you, stare and say, ‘Is this the man who made kingdoms tremble and made the world like a desert, who overthrew cities and would not let his captives return home?’*”

Tyre soon to be a harbour no more

⁹A prophecy of Isaiah concerning the city of Tyre: “*Wail O ships of Tarshish, for Tyre will be left without house or harbour. Mourn you men of Cyprus who sail the seas, and you merchants of Sidon whom the sea has enriched.*”

Tyre will no longer be the food market of the nations

10“*From over the sea flows the grain harvest of the Nile. Tyre has become the food market of the nations, therefore Egypt will be in anguish at the report from Tyre.*”

11“*Wail and return home you men of Tarshish. Till your own soil, as does Egypt for you no longer have your harbour.*”

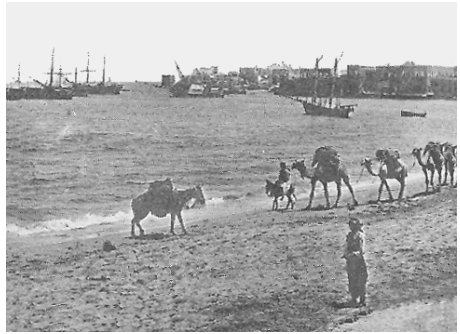
Jehovah to humble the pride of Tyre and Sidon by Babylon

12“*Who planned this against Tyre, the ancient city of revelry, whose traders are renowned in the world? Jehovah Almighty planned it, to humble those who are great upon the earth.* ¹³The Lord has given an order concerning the whole land of the Phoenicians; her fortresses are to be destroyed.”

14“*No more of your revelling O Sidon. Look not to the Assyrians for you are to be crushed by Babylon, and they shall turn Tyre into a ruin.*”

Tyre to revive after seventy years

15“*Tyre shall be forgotten for seventy years, the span of a king’s life. But at the end of seventy years she will return to play the harlot once more, and ply her trade with the kingdoms of the earth.*”



The seaport of Tyre, once afflicted by the Babylonians for 70 years (Isaiah 24:9-15).

Tyre’s riches will go to Jerusalem during the millennium

16“*Yet the day will come when Tyre’s riches shall be for the Lord. They shall not be stored up or hoarded. They will pay for abundant food and fine clothes for the people of Zion^{F*} who live faithful to the Lord.*”

25

Isaiah called to be the Lord’s servant before he was born

1“Hear this you distant nations, before I was born the Lord called me to be his servant,^{F*} to gather Israel back to him. He made my mouth like a sharpened sword.”

Isaiah despised by his people

2“He said to me, ‘You are my servant to Israel, in whom I will be glorified.’”

3“But I said, ‘I have laboured in vain. I have spent my strength for nothing. I am despised by the nation. Yet my reward is with my God for I am honoured in your eyes.’”

Isaiah given an eloquent tongue with which to teach

4“The Lord God has given me an eloquent tongue. He awakens me each morning to teach the words that sustain the weary, and I have not been rebellious, I have not withheld.”

Isaiah mocked by his people

5“I give my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pull out my beard. I hide not my face from the mocking and spitting.”

6“Because the Lord God helps me, I have not been disgraced. I set my face like flint and know that I will not be put to shame.”

Who but God can declare Isaiah a wrongdoer

7“Who will bring charges against me? Who are my accusers? Let them confront me. It is only the Lord God who can declare me guilty. All others will wear out like a garment.”

*16 Zion is sometimes used as an alternative name for Jerusalem.

*1 Traditional Jewish belief is that the spirits of all mankind existed before the creation of the earth (see Ecclesiastes 5:31, John 9:1, Job 1:5 and note, Job 7:4 and Jeremiah 1:3).

*4 The spirit world of the dead.

ISAIAH 25

None obey Isaiah's word but all walk in the light of their own lamps

⁸“Who among you reveres the Lord and obeys the word of his servant? Who relies on his God for light? None, for you all light your own lamps.”

⁹“Very well then, walk in the light of your own lamps, but this prophecy you shall have from me: *‘You will lie down in torment.’*”

Isaiah a light for the Gentiles also

¹⁰“Then the Lord said to me, ‘It is too light a thing that you be my servant to restore the survivors of Israel, I will also give you as a light to the Gentiles,^{F*} to bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.’”

Isaiah to be an apportioner of inheritances to gathered Israel when the Lord returns

¹¹“For thus says Jehovah, to he who is despised by his people, kings shall bow down to you because of the Holy One of Israel who has chosen you.”

¹²“In the great day of my salvation you will be a director for the people, to apportion the empty inheritances of Israel. You will say to the returning captives, ‘Be free!’ And they shall find pasture where there once was a barren hill.”

The Lord to comfort and shepherd his returning people

¹³“They shall neither hunger nor thirst, nor will scorching wind or sun afflict them. For I their shepherd will guide them and lead them beside springs of water, and I will level my mountains into pathways.”

Isaiah to act wisely and be exalted

¹⁴“Behold, in that day my servant will act wisely. He will be raised up and highly exalted.”

¹⁵“Just as many were once appalled at him, his appearance was so disfigured,^{F*} so he will startle many nations. Kings shall stand speechless because of him, for that which they had not heard they will see.”

Israel to gather from the north, west and south

¹⁶“*See, they come from afar, from the north, from the west, some from the south. Shout for joy, rejoice O heavens! Burst into song O earth, for the Lord will comfort his people!*”

The Lord's love for Israel like a mother's love

¹⁷“But Zion has said, ‘Jehovah has forsaken me. My Lord has forgotten me.’”

¹⁸“Can a mother forget the baby at her breast, the child of her womb? Though she may forget, I shall not forget you.”

Israel will be too small for her lost children during the millennium

¹⁹“Your sons shall return, and those who

laid you waste shall depart. You will lift up your eyes O Zion and rejoice as all your sons return to you.²⁰Though your land was devastated, now it will be too small for all your people. The children you had lost will say to you, ‘This place is too small for us. Give us more room to live in.’”

²¹“Then you will say in your heart, ‘I was exiled and rejected. I was left all alone. Where have all these people come from?’”

The Gentiles to assist with the gathering in the latter days

²²“See, I will beckon to the Gentiles, and they will bring your lost sons and daughters to you. Kings will be your foster fathers and queens your nursing mothers.²³They shall bow down before you with their faces to the ground. Then you will know that I am Jehovah. Those who trust in me will not be disappointed.”

²⁴“I shall make your oppressors eat their own flesh and be drunk with their own blood. Then all mankind will know that I am your Saviour and your Redeemer.”

The Lord to come as the Messiah to preach good news on earth

²⁵“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, for he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor, to heal the broken hearted, to proclaim release for the prisoners and to declare the year of Jehovah's^{F*} favour and the day of vengeance of our God.”

²⁶“To comfort all who mourn and bestow on Zion a crown of beauty instead of ashes, a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.”

Foreigners to rebuild Israel and work the fields and vineyards during the millennium

²⁷“In that day you shall rebuild the ancient ruins.”

²⁸“Foreigners will shepherd your flocks and work your fields and vineyards.”

²⁹“You shall be called priests of the Lord, and all who see you will acknowledge that you are a people the Lord has blessed. You will feed on the wealth of the nations.³⁰For I the Lord love justice and will faithfully recompense you.”

Isaiah greatly rejoices in the Lord

³¹“*I will greatly rejoice in Jehovah. I shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me in the garments of salvation.*³²*For Jerusalem's*

*25 This verse was quoted by Jesus and applied to himself (Matt-Mark-Luke 5:8). The name-title Jehovah (which means 'Eternal') applies to both the Father and the Son, (the Son also being known as the Messiah or Christ). Paul reveals that the God of the Old Testament who appeared face to face with Moses and others by the name of Jehovah, was the pre-mortal Christ, not God the Father (1 Corinthians 4:13). The pre-mortal Christ appeared and spoke as Jehovah because the Father had given him his name (John 5:29, 12:12, 15:22). Prophets such as Isaiah and Jeremiah who prophesied extensively, speaking in the first person of Jehovah, did so by direct revelation, ie they were told what to say by the Holy Spirit, who can speak on behalf of both God the Father and the Son (John 14:32, 41-42, 1 Corinthians 1:25-26).

*10 The term Gentiles normally refers to all non-Israelite peoples.

*15 Jewish tradition says that Isaiah was eventually sawn in two, down the middle, during the evil reign of the young King Manasseh.

sake I will not remain silent until her righteousness shines like the dawn.³³ Then all nations shall see her glory and she will be called by a new name, bestowed by the mouth of the Lord.”

Jerusalem to become a crown of splendour
³⁴“Jerusalem will be a crown of splendour in the Lord’s hand, a royal diadem.”

26

The Messiah^F* (Christ) to come from Galilee

¹“In times past the Lord has brought Galilee into contempt, but in a day to come he will honour the region of the lake.”

²“For a child shall be born and the power to rule shall rest upon his shoulders.”

³“He will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

⁴“Of his increase in power and peace there shall be no end, and he will establish David’s throne in righteousness forever.”

The Messiah to be descended of David

⁵“For a shoot will spring up from the stump of Jesse,^{F*} A branch will blossom and one shall be born in whom is the Spirit of Jehovah, the Spirit of wisdom, knowledge, and power.”

⁶“With justice he will stand for the meek of the earth.”

The Messiah to be a man of sorrows

⁷“He shall grow like a tender shoot out of dry ground. He will have no beauty that we should desire him.⁸ He will be despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, familiar with suffering.”

⁹“He will heal our sicknesses and remove our pains, yet he will be considered as one stricken by God and afflicted.”

The Messiah to be pierced

¹⁰“He will be pierced for our sins, the punishment that brings peace will be borne by him.¹¹ By his wounds we shall be healed.”

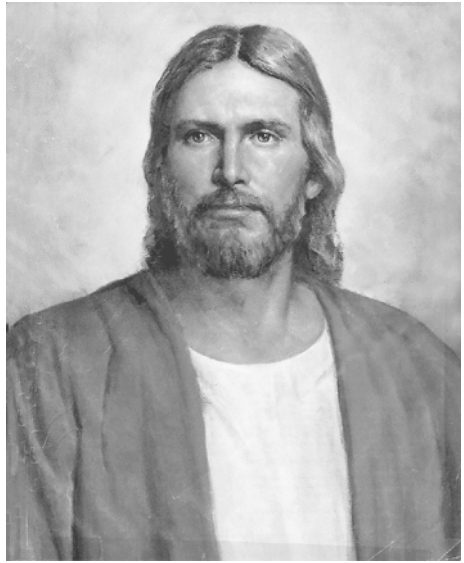
¹²“God will lay on him the guilt of us all.”

The Messiah to be arrested, judged and go like a lamb to the slaughter

¹³“He shall be oppressed and afflicted yet not open his mouth. He will go like a lamb to the slaughter.¹⁴ After arrest and judgement he shall be led away and no one will speak of his descendants, for he shall be cut off from the land of the living.¹⁵ He will pour out his life unto death, and be numbered among the transgressors.”

* HEADER CHAPTER 26. This future ruler is known as ‘the Messiah’ (‘anointed of Jehovah’) by the Jews, or ‘the Christ’ which is the New Testament Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word Messiah. Christians believe him to be Jesus. Traditional Jews reject this belief and still await the birth of Messiah.

⁵ The ‘stump of Jesse’ is the fallen, royal David-Judean line of which Zedekiah was the last king. Mary the mother of Jesus was descended of this line. Jesse was the father of David.



Isaiah prophesied of the coming of the Messiah, known as the Christ in the New Testament (Isaiah chapter 6). (Painting by Del Parson.)

The Messiah’s tomb to be with the rich

¹⁶“He will die in the midst of the wicked and his tomb will be with the rich, yet he shall have done no wrong nor spoken any falsehood.”

¹⁷“But it is God’s will that he suffer and offer his life as a guilt offering.”

The Messiah to be resurrected and see the fruit of his suffering

¹⁸“Yet shall he continue his days, and after the anguish of his soul he will see the fruit of the seed of his suffering and receive his reward.”

The Messiah to eventually slay the wicked on earth

¹⁹“He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth. With the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked.²⁰ Righteousness and faithfulness shall be his girdle.”

The Messiah to pardon many and bear their sins and be given a place among the great

²¹“For the Lord God says, ‘By his suffering, my Righteous One shall pardon many and bear their sins. Therefore I will give him a place among the great.’”

27

King Hezekiah dies and his twelve year old son Manasseh becomes king

¹King Hezekiah rested with his fathers and was buried on the hill among the tombs of David’s descendants, and Manasseh his son became king.

²Hezekiah had reigned twenty-nine years and all Judah honoured him when he died.

ISAIAH 27

³The other events of Hezekiah's reign, how he made the pool in Jerusalem and the tunnel by which water was brought to the pool, and how 500 men of Simeon wiped out the remaining Amalekites in the hill country of Seir and settled there, are written in the Annals of the Kings of Judah.

Manasseh does much evil

⁴Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king. He did much evil in the eyes of the Lord and provoked him to anger.

⁵He rebuilt the high places his father Hezekiah had destroyed and erected altars to Baal, and set up Asherah poles and idols.

⁶In both courts of the Temple he built altars to the sun and moon, and he erected a carved Asherah pole inside the Temple of the Lord. ⁷He even sacrificed his own sons by fire and practiced sorcery and consulted mediums.

⁸Manasseh also shed so much innocent blood that he filled Jerusalem from end to end.^{F*}

The Lord rebukes Manasseh and the officials of the people through the prophet Isaiah

⁹Through the prophet Isaiah the Lord spoke these words to Manasseh and the people, but they paid no attention: ¹⁰**“Israel's watchmen are blind and lack knowledge. They are like dogs who cannot bark, who lie around and dream and love to sleep.”**

¹¹**“They are shepherds who lack understanding. Each one seeks his own gain. They cry, ‘Come, let us drink wine, for tomorrow will be like today or better.’”**

The righteous die to be spared from evil

¹²**“The righteous die and no one understands that they are taken away to be spared from evil. ¹³For those who walk uprightly enter into peace when they die.”**

A brood of rebels

¹⁴**“But as for you, you sons of a sorceress, you offspring of adulterers and harlots. Whom are you mocking? At whom do you sneer and stick out your tongue?”**

¹⁵**“Are you not a brood of rebels, the offspring of liars? You burn with lust among the oaks.^{F*} You sacrifice your children in the valleys.”**

¹⁶**“The idols in the valleys are your lot. To them you have made offerings. Why should I spare you?”**

Judah's idolatry likened to adultery

¹⁷**“In your homes you place your evil symbols. Forsaking me you share your bed with the gods you love, and look upon their nakedness.”**

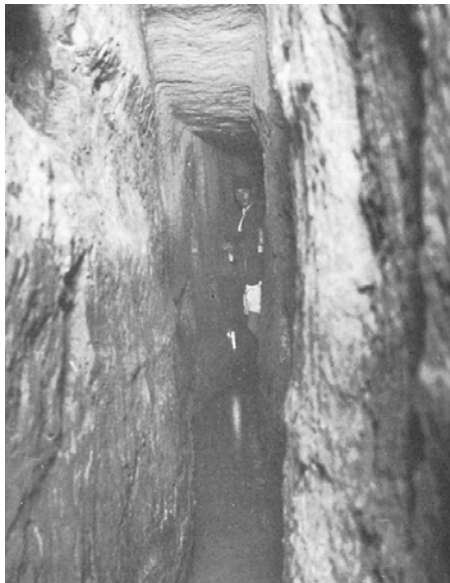
¹⁸**“Whom have you feared, that you have been false to me? Is it because I have been long silent that you do not revere me?”**

¹⁹**“When you cry out for help, let your idols save you. But a mere breath of wind will blow them away.”**

The Lord is with those who are contrite and humble in spirit

²⁰**“Yet, the man who makes me his refuge will inherit the land and possess my Holy City.”**

²¹**“I live in a high and holy place, but I am with him who is contrite and humble in spirit.”**



The half km long, water tunnel built by King Hezekiah to bring water to the Pool of Siloam in Jerusalem.

No rest for the wicked

²²**“But the wicked are like the tossing sea which cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and mud. There is no rest for the wicked.”**

Despite their sins the people seem eager to know the Lord's ways

²³The Lord said to the prophet Isaiah, **“Raise your voice like a trumpet and declare to my people their sins. ²⁴For day after day they seek me out. They seem eager to know my ways, as if they were a righteous nation that had not forsaken their God.”**

²⁵**“They say, ‘We humbled ourselves and fasted and the Lord did not notice.’”**

Unrighteous fasting not acceptable to the Lord

²⁶**“Yet on the day of your fasting you pursued your own business and exploited your workers. Your fasting ended in quarrelling and strife and in striking each other with fists. ²⁷Can you fast this way and expect your voice to be heard on high?”**

²⁸**“Or is the fasting that pleases me only a**

*8 Manasseh is also reputed to have eventually martyred the prophet Isaiah.

*15 Oak trees or 'groves' were often places of idolatrous worship involving prostitution.

day when a man bows his head like a reed and lies on sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call an acceptable fast to the Lord?"

Fasting that pleases the Lord

²⁹"This is the fasting I choose: To put right injustice, to free the oppressed, to do away with the pointed finger and malicious talk."

³⁰"To share your food with the hungry, to shelter the homeless, to clothe the naked, to turn not your back on your own kin."

³¹"To call the Sabbath a delight, a holy day of the Lord and to honour it, and not use it for your own pleasure, or for idle talk."

The blessings of righteous living

³²"Then will your light break forth like the dawn and your healing shall quickly appear."

³³"Then when you call, the Lord shall answer you. When you cry for help he will say, 'Here I am!'"

³⁴"You shall be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail."

³⁵"Then you shall find joy in Jehovah and shall ride on the heights of the land and feast on the inheritance of your fathers."

³⁶"The mouth of the Lord has spoken."

28

Disaster to come upon Manasseh and Judah

¹The Lord said through his prophet Isaiah, "Manasseh, king of Judah has done more evil in the land than the Canaanites who preceded him, and has led Judah into sin with his idols. ²Therefore I am going to bring such a disaster on Judah that the ears of all who hear will tingle."

³"I shall wipe out Jerusalem as one wipes a dish and turns it upside down. I will forsake my inheritance and they shall be plundered by their enemies. ⁴For they have done evil and provoked me to anger from the day their forefathers came out of Egypt, until this day."

Jerusalem attacked by Assyria and Manasseh taken prisoner to Babylon

⁵Then the Lord brought the army of Assyria against Jerusalem. They took Manasseh the king prisoner, put a hook in his nose, bound him with bronze shackles and took him to Babylon.^{F*}

King Manasseh repents and is restored to his throne in Jerusalem

⁶In his distress in captivity, Manasseh prayed to Jehovah his God and humbled himself greatly. ⁷The Lord was moved by his plea and brought him back to Jerusalem, and to his kingdom.

Manasseh abandons idolatry and worships the Lord

⁸Manasseh then got rid of the foreign gods and all the altars he had built in Jerusalem and removed the Asherah pole from the Temple.

⁹He restored the altar of the Lord and sacrificed peace offerings, and commanded all Judah to serve the God of Israel. Nevertheless the people still sacrificed at the high places but only to Jehovah their God.

¹⁰He also rebuilt and heightened the walls of the City of David in Jerusalem.

Manasseh dies and his son Amon becomes king

¹¹Manasseh reigned for fifty-five years in Jerusalem. Then he rested with his fathers and was buried in his palace and his son Amon became king.

Amon does evil and is assassinated

¹²Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king. He did evil in the eyes of the Lord as his father Manasseh had done. ¹³But unlike his father, he did not repent and humble himself before the Lord. Rather Amon increased his guilt.

¹⁴When he had reigned for two years, his officials conspired against him and killed him in his palace.

Josiah the son of Amon made king

¹⁵Then the people of Judah put to death all who had plotted against Amon and made his son Josiah king in his place.



A complete scroll of the book of Isaiah, seven metres long, found among the Dead Sea Scrolls.

*⁵ Babylon was still a vassal of Assyria at this stage, however Babylon's influence increased and about 50 years later they rebelled against Assyria and eventually burned Nineveh the Assyrian's royal city. Babylon then became the dominant power in the region with Nebuchadnezzar as king.

NAHUM

In this short but interesting book, the prophet Nahum prophesies the imminent destruction of the ancient city of Nineveh by the Medes and Babylonians. This vast city of Nineveh was the seat of the Assyrian empire and the same city that Jonah had called to repentance some 200 years before.

There was little love lost on the Assyrians by those who had suffered from their brutality, and there is therefore a degree of rejoicing by Nahum at his vision of their destruction.

Nothing is known of the prophet Nahum's background however his brief but inspired writing equals that of Isaiah. In fact the vividness and rush of his language is unsurpassed in the Bible as he describes his prophetic vision of the destruction of Nineveh – *“The crack of whips! The clatter of wheels! Galloping horses! Jolting chariots! Charging horsemen! Flashing swords and glittering spears! Dead bodies heaped up without number. Those who flee stumble over corpses”* (Nahum 2:14-15).

Nahum prophesied during the reign of the righteous young King Josiah. The reforms of Josiah were sweeping, especially after the Book of the Law was found in the Temple. Nevertheless the later writings of the prophet Jeremiah reveal that the king's righteousness and genuine zeal were not matched in sincerity by his people.

It would take seventy years of Babylonian exile to permanently purge the eagerness for idolatrous practices from the hearts of the people of Judah.

AUTHOR

Chapter one, which provides the political background has been relocated from the books of 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles. Chapter two is by the prophet Nahum.

“I Jehovah have decreed concerning you Nineveh, you will have no descendants to bear your name, and I will destroy your carved images and cast idols that are in the temples of your gods.” Nahum 2:8.

CONTENTS

Chapter

Josiah only eight years old when made king	1	Josiah reads Book of the Law to the people	1
Josiah at 20 begins to purge Judah of idolatry	1	Josiah and the people covenant to obey the Lord	1
Idolatrous articles removed from the Temple	1	Passover once again celebrated	1
Male prostitute quarters torn down	1	Josiah and his officials provide the people animals ..	1
King Manasseh's altars demolished	1	41,400 animals provided for sacrifice	1
The Valley of Hinnom defiled	1	Priests, Levites and musicians perform their roles	1
The land rid of mediums, sorcerers	1	No Passover like this since Samuel's day	1
The land rid of household gods and hilltop shrines ...	1	Word of the Lord comes to prophet Nahum	2
Calf altar at Bethel in Israel demolished	1	Lord punishes the guilty	2
Tombs of the prophets left undisturbed	1	Lord cares for those who trust in him	2
Towns of northern Israel also purged	1	The Assyrians will no longer afflict Judah	2
Book of the Law found in Temple	1	Assyrian capital Nineveh to be destroyed	2
The Law read to Josiah the king.....	1	Nahum's vision of invasion of Nineveh	2
Josiah tears his robes and weeps	1	Nineveh to be plundered and survivors exiled	2
Josiah asks high priest to enquire of the Lord	1	Dead bodies heaped up without number	2
High priest goes to the prophetess Huldah	1	Jehovah to shame Nineveh	2
Lord affirms the disaster coming upon Judah	1	Nineveh's wound fatal	2
Faithful Josiah to be spared the disaster	1	All nations to rejoice at Nineveh's fall	2

Bold The Lord or an angel speaking.

Bold italics A prophet speaking under inspiration.

1

Josiah only eight years old when made king

¹Josiah was eight years old when he became king. He did what was right in the eyes of the

Lord, walking in the ways of his forefather David.

When 20 years old Josiah begins to purge Judah of idolatry

²In the eighth year of his reign he began to seek God, and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah of idolatry.

Idolatrous articles removed from the Temple

³He ordered Hilkiah the high priest to remove from the Temple all articles used to worship the gods Baal, Asherah, and the sun, moon and stars.

⁴Hilkiah and the other priests did so and burned them in the Kidron Valley. But the Asherah pole they ground to dust and scattered it over the graves of the common people.

Male prostitute quarters torn down

⁵The king also ordered the rooms of the male prostitutes that were in the Temple of the Lord to be torn down.

King Manasseh's altars demolished

⁶Josiah demolished the altars that Manasseh had built in the courtyards of the Temple and threw the rubble into the Kidron Valley.

⁷Then he removed from the entrance to the Temple the horse images that had been dedicated to the sun.

The Valley of Hinnom defiled

⁸He also defiled the Valley of Hinnom so that no man could use it to sacrifice his children by fire to the god Molech.

The land rid of mediums, sorcerers, household gods and hilltop shrines

⁹Josiah rid the land of mediums, sorcerers, household gods, and all other detestable things.

¹⁰He defiled the hilltop shrines that Solomon had built for his wives to worship their gods; Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of Moab and Molech the god of Ammon. He covered the sites with human bones.

The calf altar at Bethel in Israel defiled then demolished

¹¹Josiah then went to Bethel to demolish the calf altar made by Jeroboam, who first caused Israel to sin.

¹²When he arrived he saw tombs on the hillside nearby, so he had the bones removed from them and burned on the altar to defile it, fulfilling the words of the prophet of God who had foretold these things.^{F*}

The tombs of the prophets left undisturbed

¹³Afterward the king asked, "Whose tomb is this I see?"

¹⁴The men of Bethel replied, "It is the tomb of the prophet of God who came from Judah and prophesied against the altar of Bethel the very things you have done to it."

¹⁵Josiah said, "Let no one disturb his bones." So they spared his bones and those of the prophet from Samaria.

Towns of northern Israel also purged

¹⁶Josiah also purged towns in Israel belonging to Manasseh, Ephraim and Simeon, as far north as Naphtali.^{F*}

The Book of the Law found by the high priest in the Temple

¹⁷In the eighteenth year of his reign Josiah ordered Hilkiah the high priest to organise workmen to restore the Temple of the Lord, using money that had been collected by the Levites.

¹⁸While Hilkiah was doing this, he found a copy of the Book of the Law in the Temple and gave it to the Secretary to read.

The Law read to Josiah the king

¹⁹The Secretary read the book and then took it to the king and read from it in his presence.

King Josiah tears his robes and weeps

²⁰When Josiah the king heard the words of the Book of the Law he tore his robes and wept.

Josiah asks Hilkiah the high priest to enquire of the Lord

²¹Then he summoned Hilkiah the high priest and said to him, "Inquire of the Lord about what is written in this book. Great must be Jehovah's anger for our fathers have not obeyed all that is written here."

Hilkiah goes to the prophetess Huldah

²²So Hilkiah went to the prophetess Huldah, the wife of Shallum and she enquired of the Lord.^{F*}

The Lord affirms through Huldah the disaster coming upon Judah

²³Huldah declared, "Jehovah the God of Israel says, 'I am going to bring disaster on Judah and its people, according to all that is written in the book the king of Judah has read. ²⁴They have forsaken me and burned incense to other gods and provoked me to anger with idols. Therefore my anger will burn against this land.'

The faithful Josiah to be spared witnessing the disaster

²⁵"But say to the king of Judah, 'Because your heart was responsive and you tore your robes and wept when you heard what I had spoken against this nation, I will gather you to your fathers in peace. ²⁶Your eyes shall not see the disaster I am going to bring.'

Josiah reads the Book of the Law to the people

²⁷When the king heard the words of this prophecy he summoned all the people of Judah to the Temple. There in their hearing he read

^{*16} Most of the original Israelites of these towns would have been exiled by the Assyrians 70 years earlier. In due course exiles from other conquered lands were transplanted in their place by the Assyrians. These foreign peoples intermarried with the remaining Israelites (usually only the poorer land workers were left) and eventually became the despised (to the Jews) Samaritans.

^{*22} Normally it would be the high priest himself who enquired of the Lord, through the Urim and Thummim (Deuteronomy 10:7).

^{*12} This prophecy is found in Elijah 1:8.

NAHUM 2

all the words of the Book of the Law which had been found in the house of the Lord.

Josiah and the people make a covenant to obey the Lord's commandments

²⁸Afterward Josiah made a covenant that he would follow the Lord and obey his commandments with all his heart and soul. The people also covenanted with the Lord.^{F*}

The Passover once again celebrated

²⁹The king then commanded the people, "Celebrate the Passover as it is written in the Book of the Law."

³⁰To the Levites he said, "Place the holy Ark in the Temple. You do not need to carry it about on your shoulders any more. ³¹Then you are to purify yourselves and be ready to stand in the holy place and skin the Passover lambs for the people as the Lord commanded through Moses."

³²So in the eighteenth year of Josiah king of Judah, on the fourteenth day of the first month, the Passover was once again celebrated in Jerusalem.

Josiah and his officials provide the people 41,400 animals to be sacrificed

³³Josiah and his officials provided for the people 37,600 lambs and goats for the Passover offerings, and 3800 cattle for sacrifice.

The priests, Levites and musicians perform their roles

³⁴The lambs were slaughtered and the priests sprinkled the blood as it was handed to them, while the Levites skinned the animals.

³⁵They roasted the animals over a fire as prescribed, and boiled the holy offerings in pots, then served them to all the people.

³⁶The musicians were also in their places as prescribed by David.

No Passover like this since Samuel's day

³⁷The Israelites celebrated the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days.

³⁸The Passover had not been observed like this in Israel since the days of the prophet Samuel. None of the kings of Israel had ever celebrated such a Passover as did Josiah.

2

The word of the Lord comes to the prophet Nahum

¹During the reign of Josiah, this word of the Lord came to the prophet Nahum concerning the Assyrian city of Nineveh.^{F*}

*28 From subsequent events recorded in the book of Jeremiah, it appears that the reforms that followed were due more to the zeal of king Josiah than to a genuine change in the hearts of the people (Jeremiah 3:4).

*1 The city of Nineveh was the seat of the Assyrian empire and one of the largest and oldest cities in the world. It was founded by Nimrod (Genesis 7:11) the great-grandson of Noah and was located on the east bank of the Tigris river in what is today Iraq. The Assyrians were a war-like people, noted for their extreme cruelty in battle. By aggressive warfare they had recently amassed a considerable empire, but within a few years of Nahum's prophecy, their main city Nineveh was destroyed by the Babylonians and the Medes and most of their conquered

The Lord punishes the guilty but cares for those who trust in him

²"*Jehovah is slow to anger but great in power. He does not leave the guilty unpunished. The whole earth trembles at his presence. Who can endure his fierce anger?*"

³"*With an overwhelming flood he makes an end to his enemies. He pursues them into darkness.* ⁴*Whatever they plot against him he will bring to an end. They shall not do it a second time.*"

⁵"*Yet the Lord is good. He is a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him.*"

The Assyrians will no longer afflict Judah

⁶"*From the city of Nineveh came one who plotted evil against the Lord. Therefore Jehovah says, Though the Assyrians have allies and are numerous, they will be cut off and pass away.*"

⁷"*I have allowed them to afflict you O Judah, but now I will break their yoke from your neck.*"

The Assyrian capital Nineveh to be destroyed

⁸"*I Jehovah have decreed concerning you Nineveh, you will have no descendants to bear your name, and I will destroy your carved images and cast idols that are in the temples of your gods.*"

⁹"*Celebrate your festivals O Judah. No more will this wicked nation invade you. They will be completely destroyed.*"

Nahum's vision of the invasion of Nineveh

¹⁰"*The warriors invading Nineveh are clad in scarlet, their spears are brandished and their chariots flash as they race through the streets and squares. They dart about like lightning.*"

Nineveh to be plundered and the survivors exiled

¹¹"*I see the river gates thrown open. The palace collapses. The city is doomed to exile. Slave girls moan like doves and beat upon their breasts. Nineveh is like a pool with its water draining away.*"

¹²"*Cease! they cry, but no warrior turns back. Plunder the silver! Plunder the gold! The spoil is endless. Everywhere desolation and ruin.*"

¹³"*Hearts melt! Knees give way! Bodies tremble! Every face grows pale.*"

Dead bodies heaped up without number

¹⁴"*Woe to the city of blood, full of lies, full of captured spoil! The crack of whips! The clatter of wheels! Galloping horses! Jolting chariots!* ¹⁵*Charging horsemen! Flashing swords and glittering spears! Dead bodies*

land absorbed within the new Babylonian empire. The city of Nineveh was never rebuilt. The palace of Sennacherib, the king who lost 185,000 warriors by divine action when attacking Jerusalem (Isaiah chapters 18-19), has been located and excavated. This magnificent building contains more than 70 rooms and over 3 km of walls sculptured with elegant designs.

heaped up without number. Those who flee stumble over corpses."

¹⁶"All this because of the lust of a harlot. A mistress of sorceries who enslaved nations by her harlotry and witchcraft."

Jehovah to shame Nineveh

¹⁷"I Jehovah Almighty am against you Nineveh. I will lift your skirts over your face and let the nations see your nakedness to shame you. ¹⁸I shall treat you with contempt and make you a spectacle. All who see will shrink and say, 'Nineveh is in ruins. Who will mourn for her?'"

Nineveh's wound fatal

¹⁹"Save water for the siege O Nineveh. Strengthen your defences. Work your clay and repair your brick walls. But all in vain. Fire will devour you and the sword shall cut you down."

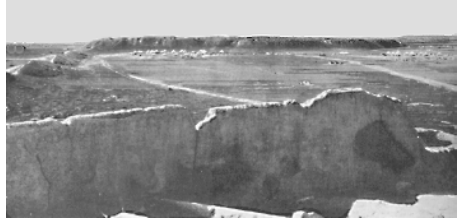
²⁰"You increased the number of your merchants more than the stars of the sky,

but now O king of Assyria your rulers are dead. Your nobles lie in the dust and your people are scattered with no one to gather them."

²¹"Nothing can heal your wound, your injury is fatal."

All nations to rejoice at Nineveh's fall

²²"All who hear about you rejoice, for who has not felt your cruelty?"



Site of ancient Nineveh, once one of the largest cities in the world.

ZEPHANIAH

The prophet Zephaniah was the great grandson of King Hezekiah and also a contemporary of the prophets Nahum, Habakkuk, and Jeremiah.

Zephaniah prophesied during the reign of King Josiah and warned Judah of the forthcoming Babylonian invasions that would soon lay waste the whole region. These invasions began four years after the death of Josiah.

Like the other prophets of his time, he also received revelations regarding ‘the great day of the Lord’ or the second coming of Jesus Christ.

AUTHOR The prophet Zephaniah.

“Therefore wait, for the day is coming when I shall rise up in judgement against all nations. In that day I will gather the nations of the world together and pour out my fierce anger upon them.” Zephaniah 2:1.

CONTENTS

Chapter

Lord to uproot land of Judah	1	Great day of the Lord coming in the last days	2
All the wicked to be cut off	1	A day of wrath, distress and anguish	2
Great distress coming on Jerusalem	1	Whole earth to be consumed	2
Land of the Philistines to be abandoned	1	A plea from Zephaniah for Judah to repent	2
Moab, Ammon and Ethiopia to be punished	1	Lips of survivors of last days to be purified	2
Assyria and Nineveh also to be destroyed	1	Only the meek and humble will be left	2
The sins of Jerusalem	1	Never again will Jerusalem fear	2
Jerusalem will not learn	1	Israel to be gathered and honoured in millennium	2

Bold The Lord speaking.

Bold italics A prophet speaking under inspiration.

1

The Lord to uproot the land of Judah

¹The word of the Lord that came to the prophet Zephaniah during the reign of Josiah king of Judah.

²**I Jehovah will uproot everything from this land. I will uproot both men and their idols. Even animals, birds and fish will die when I cut off the wicked from this land.”**

All the idolatrous and godless to be cut off from Judah

³“When I stretch out my hand against Judah and Jerusalem I will cut off every person who has worshipped Baal, and those who have bowed down on their roofs to the sun, the moon and the stars.”

⁴“Also they who swear by Jehovah, but also swear by Molech. And they who have turned away from Jehovah and neither seek nor inquire of me.”

⁵“The day is coming when I will punish the officials and the king’s sons who practice foreign customs and do violence and deceit.”

Great distress coming upon Jerusalem

⁶“On that day a great cry will go up from the Fish Gate. It shall be bitter and the shouting of warriors will be heard. ⁷Loud

wailing will arise from the New Quarter and echo from the hills. Wail also you market district. Your merchants will be wiped out.”

⁸“I will search Jerusalem and punish those who are complacent, and think to themselves ‘The Lord will do nothing.’ ⁹Their wealth will be plundered and their houses demolished. They will not drink the wine of vineyards they have planted.”

The land of the Philistines to be abandoned

¹⁰“*The land of the Philistines will also be uprooted. It too will be abandoned and left in ruins.* ¹¹*Woe to you Philistines who live by the sea, hear the word of the Lord against you. Jehovah declares, “I will destroy you and none will be left.”*

¹²“*The land of the Philistines will become a place for shepherds and sheep. The remnants of Judah shall find pasture there, and in the evenings they will sleep in the abandoned houses of the Philistines.* ¹³*For the Lord their God will remember them and restore their fortunes.”*

Moab, Ammon and Ethiopia to be punished

¹⁴“I have heard the insults of Moab and the

taunts of the Ammonites against my people. Therefore as surely as I Jehovah Almighty, the God of Israel live, Moab will become like Sodom, and the Ammonites like Gomorrah, a wasteland of weeds and salt pits.”

¹⁵“You too O Ethiopians will be slain by my sword.”^{F*}



The Damascus Gate of Jerusalem, believed to be the Fish Gate of Zephaniah's day.

Assyria and Nineveh also to be destroyed

¹⁶“The Lord will also destroy Assyria, leaving Nineveh deserted and barren. ¹⁷Desert owls will roost among her ruins. Rubble will be in doorways and roof beams exposed.”

The sins of Jerusalem

¹⁸“Woe to Jerusalem, the city of oppressors. Rebellious and defiled she obeys no one and accepts no correction. She trusts not in her Lord.”

¹⁹“Her rulers are ravening wolves. Her prophets are arrogant and her priests profane the Temple and violate the law.”

Jerusalem will not learn

²⁰“Jehovah says, ‘I have in times past cut off entire nations and left their cities destroyed and their streets deserted. Not one person has been left in them.’”

²¹“So I said to my city Jerusalem, ‘Surely now you will honour me and accept correction, that my punishments come not upon you.’ But they are still eager as ever to act corruptly.”

2

The great day of the Lord coming in the last days

¹“Therefore wait, for the day is coming when I will rise up in judgement against all

nations. In that day I shall gather the nations of the world together and pour out my fierce anger upon them.”

²“The whole earth shall be consumed by the fire of my jealous anger.”

A day of wrath, distress and anguish

³“The great day of the Lord approaches and is hastening fast. That day will be a day of wrath, distress and anguish, a day of trouble and ruin, darkness and gloom. A day of trumpet blasts and battle cry against fortified cities.”

⁴“I will bring distress upon all peoples, for they have sinned against the Lord. Their blood shall be poured out like dust and their flesh rot like dung on the ground.”

The whole earth to be consumed

⁵“Their silver and gold will not save them on the day of the Lord's wrath. The whole earth shall be consumed. He will make a terrible end for the inhabitants of the earth.”

A plea from Zephaniah for Judah to repent

⁶“Therefore seek the Lord O shameful nation. Seek Jehovah before the appointed time arrives. Seek righteousness and humility. Perhaps you will be saved on the day of his anger.”

Lips of the survivors of last days to be purified

⁷“Then will I purify the lips of the remnant peoples. All of them shall call on the name of the Lord and serve me shoulder to shoulder.”

Only the meek and humble will be left

⁸“Jerusalem no longer will be shamed for the wrongs done to me, for I will remove from her midst all the proud. But I shall leave the meek and the humble who trust in the name of the Lord.”

⁹“Those who remain of Israel will do no wrong. No deceit will be found in their mouths. They will eat and lie down and not fear.”

Never again will Jerusalem fear

¹⁰“Sing O Jerusalem. Shout aloud O Israel. Be glad. Rejoice with all your heart. Jehovah the King of Israel is with you. Never again will you fear.”

Israel to be gathered and honoured in the millennium

¹¹“In that day I shall deal with all who oppressed you, and bring home to you those who have been scattered. My dispersed people will bring me offerings, even from beyond the rivers of Ethiopia.”

¹²“I shall change your shame to honour. I will give you praise and renown among all the peoples of the earth O Israel, when I restore your fortunes says Jehovah.”

*¹⁵ The Babylonian invasion conquered all the surrounding nations.

HABAKKUK

The prophet Habakkuk was a contemporary of the prophets Nahum, Zephaniah and Jeremiah. All four prophesied during the thirty-one years of the reign of King Josiah.

In this very short book, Habakkuk questions the Lord about a matter that concerns him greatly. He asks the Lord why *“justice never prevails.”*

He is answered that the Babylonians will soon invade the land to punish Judah and the surrounding nations.

Habakkuk then inquires of the Lord as to how, in his purity he could *“allow a wicked nation (the Babylonians) to swallow up those more righteous than themselves.”*

Again the Lord answers Habakkuk.

AUTHOR Habakkuk the prophet.

Then the Lord answered me and said, **“Write down the former revelation and make it plain. Though it seem slow in coming it will surely come to pass.”**

Habakkuk 1:12.

CONTENTS

Chapter

Habakkuk complains to the Lord about injustice1	Habakkuk asks Lord why he uses a wicked nation ...1
The Lord answers Habakkuk1	Babylonians will in time be punished themselves1
The Babylonians soon to invade the land1	Habakkuk waits for Babylonians to be punished1
A fearsome, dreaded people gathering prisoners1	Habakkuk’s song of his trust in the Lord1

Bold The Lord speaking.

1

Habakkuk complains to the Lord about injustice

¹The words of the prophet Habakkuk. “I cried out to the Lord and said, ‘How long O Jehovah must I call for help and you not hear me? ²Why must I look upon injustice? Destruction and violence is all about me. The wicked oppress the righteous and justice never prevails.”

The Lord answers Habakkuk, the Babylonians soon to invade the land

³The Lord answered me, **“Watch and be amazed, for I will do something in your days you would not have believed. I am arousing the Babylonians, that ruthless and impetuous nation to sweep across the earth and seize lands not their own.”**

The Babylonians a fearsome and dreaded people gathering prisoners like sand

⁴**“A fearsome and dreaded people, with horses swift as leopards, more menacing than wolves at dusk. They come like the eagle, swooping to devour, and gather prisoners like sand.”**

⁵**“They scoff at kings and their fortified cities. They heap up earthen ramps and capture them, then sweep on like the wind.”**

⁶**“Unrighteous men whose god is their own might.”**

Habakkuk asks the Lord how he can allow a wicked nation to punish Judah

⁷“O Jehovah our rock, are you not everlasting? Shall we perish by the Babylonians to whom you have appointed judgement?”

⁸“Your eyes are too pure to behold evil. You cannot tolerate wrong. How then can you allow a wicked nation to swallow up those more righteous than themselves?”

⁹“Must these wicked men cast their net and rejoice. Surely they will worship their net, for by it they live in luxury.”

¹⁰“Shall they continue to destroy nations without mercy?”

¹¹“I await the answer my Lord gives to my complaint.”

The Lord answers that the Babylonians will in time be punished themselves

¹²“The Lord answered me and said, **‘Write down the former revelation and make it plain. Though it seem slow in coming it will surely come to pass.’**

¹³“The Babylonians are puffed up with pride and will perish, but the righteous shall live by faith. As wine deceives the drinker, so shall all the proud be deceived.”

¹⁴“The Chaldeans^{F*} are arrogant and greedy. Like death they are never satisfied. They take captive many nations.”

¹⁵“Yet these same nations shall reproach them saying, ‘Woe to him who gathers riches by extortion. How long can this continue? Will not enemies arise against you also?’”

¹⁶“Because you have plundered many nations, the nations who remain will plunder you.”

**Habakkuk waits quietly for
Babylonians to be punished**

¹⁷“My heart pounded and my legs trembled at these words. But now I shall wait quietly for the

day of calamity to come upon them who will attack us.”

Habakkuk’s song of his trust in the Lord

¹⁸Though the fig tree fail to bud
and the vine bear no grapes.

¹⁹Though the olive trees fail
and the fields are barren.

²⁰Though the sheep pen be empty
and no cattle in the stalls.

²¹Yet will I rejoice in my Saviour,
for the Lord is my strength.

²²He makes my feet sure,
like the foot of a deer.

* The Chaldeans is another name for the Babylonians.

JEREMIAH

Jeremiah was called to be a prophet by the Lord at a young age, perhaps as young as fourteen. He was born into a priestly family and would therefore have been a Levite and a direct descendant of Aaron.

Jeremiah prophesied faithfully to a rebellious Judah for over forty years, and also from time to time, to other nations. He had the thankless task of announcing the destruction of Judah and other surrounding nations by the Babylonians.

Jeremiah tried to get his own people to repent of their idolatry and immorality, but Judah had been hopelessly corrupted by the evil, early reign of King Manasseh. Reforms had been carried out by the righteous King Josiah, but the hearts of the people were not sincere.

The arrogant attitude of Judah's leaders in Jeremiah's day is vividly depicted in the scene of King Jehoiakim, sitting in his chamber on a winter's day, surrounded by his attendants and contemptuously cutting off sections of Jeremiah's scroll with a knife as they were read to him then throwing them into a fire pot burning before him (Jeremiah 13:17-18).

Jeremiah was therefore primarily a prophet of doom, and it was because of his mostly negative message that he suffered the constant rejection and mockery of his people. He aroused murderous hostility in his fellow priests and false prophets whom he denounced.

Judah in Jeremiah's day had been lulled into a false sense of security, firstly by the superficial religious reforms of Josiah, reinforced by the soothing words of false prophets. Secondly by the defence pacts made first with Babylon and then with Egypt, both of whom eventually turned on Judah.

Jeremiah witnessed the two part exile of Judah by the Babylonians. The first exile took the best of the people, including the soon to be called prophet Ezekiel, also King Jehoiachin and his officials and Judah's 7000 man army – about 10,000 persons in all. At this time the king of Babylon installed a vassal king of Judah – Zedekiah.

The second and final exile of Judah took place about twenty years later when King Zedekiah, after having negotiated a defence pact with Egypt, rebelled against Babylon. So the Babylonians came again, this time determined to stamp out this rebellious kingdom and began a siege of Jerusalem.

Egypt duly sent an army to help Judah, but it was repelled by the Babylonians and the siege of Jerusalem was again renewed.

During this siege, Jeremiah was arrested for treason because of his call for the people to surrender to the Babylonians. He was beaten and imprisoned by the city officials.

The year long siege resulted in scenes of horror in Jerusalem. Thousands died of plague and starvation, and some people resorted to cannibalism. Finally the Babylonians broke through the city wall and most of the survivors were put to the sword. Then the Temple, palace and houses were looted and burned by the Babylonian soldiers and the city walls broken down.

Only 832 survivors remained alive to be taken into exile (and most of these were defectors) from a kingdom that once boasted an army of 580,000 men (2 Kings 2:4).

Some of the poorest people were left to till the land, but even these soon fled to Egypt because of treachery from their own people. They took Jeremiah along with them and the land of Judah became entirely deserted as prophesied by the Lord.

Jeremiah was a frank and open man who did not hesitate to voice his human fears and frustrations to the Lord. His frank and honest writings clearly portray the reality of what it is like to be a genuine prophet and to be sent to call a rebellious people to repentance. His daily rejection, mocking, persecution and threats would have been intolerable without the support of the Lord.

With his usual vivid imagery, the Lord revealed to Jeremiah exactly what to say to the people, and sometimes instructed him to use symbols to dramatise his prophecies, ie, smashing a jar, wearing a wooden yoke, burying stones, etc.

Jeremiah’s life must have been a lonely one, for even his own family turned on him. The Lord had commanded Jeremiah not to marry and have children as all the children of his generation were to die of plague, famine or sword. His closest companion appears to have been his scribe Baruch.

According to Jewish tradition, Jeremiah was stoned to death in Egypt by his own people. However later generations of Jews held him in high esteem and he is now regarded as one of their greatest prophets.

NOTE Although Jeremiah’s material is clearly dated by the reigns of the kings of his day, it is not presented in chronological order in traditional Bibles. In this Condensed Bible it has been arranged chronologically for greater clarity.

AUTHOR

The prophet Jeremiah, however some sections of the book are written in the third person and were probably recorded by Jeremiah’s scribe Baruch. In this Condensed Bible the political background has been enriched by additional detail from the parallel accounts in the books of 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles.

“If at any time I declare that a nation is to be uprooted or destroyed, and that nation repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned.” Jeremiah 9:16.

CONTENTS

Chapter

Jeremiah a prophet during the reigns of five kings ... 1	Wicked men have become rich by evil deeds 4
Jeremiah set apart as prophet before he was born .. 1	Prophet and priest alike practice deception 4
Jeremiah feels inadequate because of his youth 1	They are not ashamed of their loathsome conduct ... 4
Lord orders Jeremiah to do as he commands 1	Beautiful and delicate Jerusalem to be destroyed 4
Jeremiah not to fear the people 1	Jeremiah complains to Lord that no one listens 4
Jeremiah a prophet to other nations besides Judah . 1	Jeremiah told to speak to the children 4
Jeremiah’s vision of an almond tree branch 1	An army from the north will show no mercy 4
Jeremiah’s vision of a cauldron of boiling water 1	King Josiah goes out to fight Neco king of Egypt 5
Cauldron a symbol of disaster from the north 1	Neco warns Josiah off but he does not listen 5
Jeremiah not to fear to speak Lord’s words 1	Josiah dies of an archery wound 5
If so he will be humiliated before the people 1	Josiah one of the great kings of Judah 5
People of Judah will turn against Jeremiah 1	Jehoahaz made king 5
What fault did Israel find in the Lord? 2	Neco deposes Jehoahaz and makes Jehoiakim king . 5
The Lord charges Judah with idolatry 2	Neco paid a tribute of silver and gold 5
What other nation has ever changed its gods? 2	Jehoahaz taken in exile to Egypt 5
Judah bringing punishment upon themselves 2	Jehoiakim also an evil king 5
Judah like a lustful harlot 2	Lord willing to hold off disaster if people repent 6
Judah to be shamed by Egypt 2	Lord pleads for genuine reform 6
Spring rains withheld 2	Judah to suffer fate of Israel if they do not repent ... 6
Judah still has brazen look of a harlot 2	Jeremiah seized by the priests and false prophets ... 6
Northern kingdom of Israel divorced by the Lord 3	Jeremiah threatened with death 6
Judah her sister has also played the whore 3	Jeremiah defends himself before king’s officials 6
Judah’s apparent return to Lord only a pretence 3	Officials and people support Jeremiah 6
Lord asks exiled northern Israel to admit guilt 3	Uriah the prophet put to death by Jehoiakim 6
A few of Israel will return from exile with Judah 3	Jeremiah not to pray for the people any longer 6
No Ark in Israel in days to come 3	The idolatrous practices of Judah 6
Jerusalem to be renamed in millennium 3	Severe punishment coming upon Jerusalem 6
All nations will gather to her to honour the Lord 3	The written law changed by lying scribes 6
Judah and Israel to one day be reunited 3	Jeremiah’s lament over a vision 6
Bitter disaster coming from the north 3	Dead bodies to lie like cut grain behind the reaper ... 6
Jeremiah sees a vision of destruction of Judah 3	Lord delights in kindness, justice and righteousness ... 6
Jeremiah distressed by the vision 3	The foolishness of worshipping man-made idols 6
Jeremiah sees the towns of Judah in ruins 3	Jehovah is the true God 6
Whole region to be ruined and deserted 3	Covenant of the forefathers has been broken 7
Judah’s former lovers to destroy her 3	Judah once a thriving olive tree 7
Jeremiah unable to find one truth-seeking person 4	Judah has provoked the Lord to anger by idolatry 7
Why should Lord forgive the people of Judah? 4	Lord reveals plot against life of Jeremiah 7
Jeremiah’s words to be like fire to wood 4	The plotters and their families soon to be destroyed ... 7
A distant nation to devour Judah 4	Jeremiah asks for the wicked to be punished now ... 7
Judah’s sins keeping away the rains 4	Jeremiah asks Lord how long the drought will last ... 7

JEREMIAH

Jeremiah's weariness rebuked by the Lord	7	Judah also to return from exile	11
Sword soon coming to devour Judah	7	Babylon to destroy the Philistines	11
Assyrians who invaded Israel also to be uprooted	7	Babylon to lay waste and exile Moab	11
However they will return to their own lands	7	Moab to be ashamed of their god Chemosh	11
Nations who worship Lord share Israel's blessing	7	Moab's fortunes to be restored in the latter days	11
Jeremiah told to wear a linen belt	7	Babylon to scatter and exile the Ammonites	11
Jeremiah to hide the linen belt in a damp place	7	The Ammonites to return from exile	11
The belt ruined	7	Innocent Dedanites in Edom warned to flee	11
The belt symbolic of Judah's pride	7	Edom to become small and despised	11
Jeremiah sent to king and queen mother	7	Babylon to defeat Damascus of Syria	11
The leopard cannot change its spots	7	Arabian kingdoms to be attacked by Babylon	11
Neither can they who are always doing evil do good ...	7	Eventual capture of Babylon described	12
Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon invades the land	8	Babylon to be repaid as she did to others	12
King Jehoiakim pays him tribute for three years	8	City of Babylon to become uninhabited forever	12
Jeremiah prays for an end to the drought	8	Faithful exiles of Israel and Judah to return	12
Jeremiah told that the people are past praying for	8	Israel devoured like lost sheep	12
False prophets are lying to the people	8	A remnant of Israel to return	12
Jeremiah to prophesy a vision of sword and famine ..	8	Spared of Israel and Judah to have sins forgiven ...	12
Jeremiah makes a final plea to the Lord for mercy ...	8	Jeremiah told to write his prophecies on a scroll	13
Moses and Samuel could not change Lord's heart ...	8	Jeremiah's scribe Baruch writes the prophecies	13
Plague, starvation, sword and exile await Judah	8	Baruch told to read the words to the people	13
Judah to be a horror to all kingdoms of the earth	8	Jeremiah banned from speaking at the Temple	13
The Lord weary of relenting	8	Baruch becomes sorrowful and weary	13
The people have not changed their ways	8	Lord promises to protect Baruch's life	13
Widows to be as numerous as sands of the sea	8	Micaiah a city official hears the words of the scroll ..	13
Jeremiah complains of being cursed by the people ..	8	City officials have Baruch read the scroll to them ...	13
Jeremiah asks Lord for vengeance	8	Officials alarmed at the prophecies	13
Jeremiah ordered to repent of such talk	8	Officials take the scroll into Jehoiakim	13
The people will oppose Jeremiah but not prevail	8	The king listens but burns the scroll piece by piece ...	13
Jeremiah not to marry and have children	8	Baruch and Jeremiah ordered to be arrested	13
Jeremiah not to show sympathy or joy	8	Baruch and Jeremiah cannot be found	13
Why the Lord is bringing disaster on Judah	8	Jeremiah told by Lord to make another scroll	13
Cursed is he who trusts in man	9	King Jehoiakim and his sons cursed by the Lord	13
Blessed is he who trusts in the Lord	9	Many other words added to the new scroll	13
Unjustly obtained riches are lost in mid-life	9	King Jehoiakim given commands and a warning	14
Jeremiah asks Lord to hasten the disaster	9	Judean exiles will never see their native land again ...	14
People are mocking Jeremiah's words	9	Jehoiakim rebuked for building a larger palace	14
Jeremiah to teach keeping the Sabbath day holy	9	All went well with Josiah his father	14
Jerusalem to be inhabited forever if Sabbath kept	9	King Josiah defended the poor and needy	14
Israel like clay in hands of the potter to the Lord	9	Jehoiakim to suffer the shameful burial of a donkey ...	14
Lord will relent of a disaster if a nation repents	9	The Recabite family to be offered wine to drink	14
The people want to rid themselves of Jeremiah	9	The Recabites refuse to drink the wine	14
The people prefer to listen to their false prophets	9	Lord commends the faithfulness of the Recabites ...	14
The people plot against Jeremiah	9	Recabites blessed to serve the Lord for all time	14
Jeremiah pleads with Lord for vengeance	9	Jehoiakim rebels against king Nebuchadnezzar	15
Jeremiah told to buy a clay jar	9	Jerusalem besieged by the Babylonians	15
Jeremiah to take leaders out to valley of Hinnom	9	Jehoiakim dies during the siege	15
The valley a place of idolatry and child sacrifice	9	Jehoiachin made king but also does evil	15
The valley to be filled with the dead of Jerusalem ...	9	Jehoiachin and his mother cursed to die in Babylon ..	15
People to eat their children during the siege	9	Judah's uncaring shepherds to be punished	15
Jeremiah to smash the clay jar	9	Righteous shepherds to be appointed in future	15
The jar a symbol of the fate of Judah	9	The Messiah to be raised up from David's line	15
Pashhur the priest strikes Jeremiah	9	Jeremiah's heart broken by wickedness around him ..	15
Pashhur puts Jeremiah in the stocks	9	Judah still parched and more disaster to come	15
Jeremiah prophesies regarding fate of Pashhur	9	Jerusalem's false prophets worse than Samaritans ...	15
Jeremiah's sorrowful prayer	9	Jerusalem's false prophets spread ungodliness	15
Judah has not listened to Lord's prophets	10	The people warned not to listen to false prophets ...	15
Nebuchadnezzar coming to invade the land	10	Dreams and lies of false prophets not from Lord	15
Judah and surrounding nations to be ruined	10	True word of the Lord like fire	15
The nations to serve Babylon for seventy years	10	King Jehoiachin surrenders to king of Babylon	15
Afterward the Babylonians also to be ruined	10	Treasures taken from the Temple and palace	15
Jeremiah to warn other nations	10	Nobles, skilled craftsmen and army taken into exile ...	15
Disaster to come first upon Jerusalem as a sign	10	Nebuchadnezzar appoints Zedekiah king of Judah ...	15
In last days all the guilty on earth to be slain	10	Zedekiah an unrighteous king	16
Egyptian army defeated by Babylon	11	Jeremiah's vision of the good and bad figs	16
The Lord derides Egypt	11	Good figs are those who have gone into exile	16
Babylon to invade and exile Egypt	11	Bad figs are rest of people of Judah	16
Egypt to eventually return from exile	11	Soon no one will be left in Judah	16

The false prophets prophesy lies	16	Jeremiah confined in guard's quarters	20
Remaining Temple treasures also to be taken	16	Officials seek Jeremiah's death for treason	20
Jeremiah to wear a wooden yoke	16	King fears to oppose his officials	20
Yoke a sign when prophesying to visiting envoys ..	16	Jeremiah left to die in muddy water cistern	20
Jehovah made the earth and all on it	16	Ethiopian eunuch rescues Jeremiah	20
All surrounding nations handed over to Babylon ..	16	Lord rewards Ethiopian with his life	20
Surrounding nations can escape total exile	16	Babylonian armies return to the siege	21
But only if they serve the king of Babylon	16	Jeremiah buys a field off his cousin	21
False prophecy of the prophet Hananiah	16	The property deed a sign to the people	21
Predictions of a true prophet will come true	16	Daily life in Judah will one day return to normal ..	21
Hananiah breaks Jeremiah's wooden yoke	16	Babylonians to destroy homes of idolaters	21
Nebuchadnezzar to be like a yoke of iron	16	The abominations of Israel and Judah	21
Lord curses Hananiah the false prophet	16	Jerusalem to be surely gathered again	21
Hananiah dies	16	Judah to be restored again as it was before	21
Jeremiah writes to the exiles	17	Messiah to spring up from David's line	21
Build houses and settle down in Babylon	17	Great glory for Israel in the millennium	21
Pray for and help prosper Babylon	17	David's royal line to continue in millennium	21
Ahab and Zedekiah false prophets	17	Levite priesthood to continue in millennium	21
Ahab and Zedekiah will be burnt to death	17	David's descendants to be as numberless as sand ..	21
Fate of those remaining in Judah	17	Levites to be as numberless as sand	21
Exiles to return from Babylon in seventy years ..	17	Zedekiah summons Jeremiah privately	21
Returned exiles will find the Lord	17	King's surrender will save Jerusalem from fire	21
If they seek him with all their heart	17	King Zedekiah fears to surrender	21
Shemaiah a false prophet in exile	17	If Zedekiah refuses he and his family will suffer ..	21
Shemaiah sends a letter to Jerusalem	17	And Jerusalem shall burn	21
Shemaiah tries to have Jeremiah silenced	17	Jeremiah remains in prison	21
Shemaiah punished by Lord	17	Severe starvation in Jerusalem	22
Jeremiah sends a prophesy by Seraiah to Babylon ..	17	Babylonian army break through the city wall	22
Seraiah to read the prophesy in Babylon	17	Babylonians begin putting survivors to sword	22
Seraiah then to throw it into the Euphrates	17	Zedekiah and city guards escape by night	22
Jeremiah told to write all his words in a book	18	Babylonians pursue Zedekiah and capture him	22
The book for those of future generations	18	Zedekiah's sons slaughtered before his eyes	22
A message from the Lord to all nations of earth ..	18	Zedekiah blinded and taken to Babylon	22
The fearful day of the coming of the Lord	18	Babylonian army plunder Jerusalem	22
David to lead gathered Israel during millennium ..	18	Temple, palace and houses burned	22
All the wicked to be destroyed in last days	18	832 survivors taken into exile	22
Israel to be gathered from ends of the earth	18	Some of poorest people left to till the land	22
The people to shout for joy	18	Babylonian commander frees Jeremiah	22
Dancing and gladness in Israel	18	Gedaliah to govern the few poor who remain	22
People only to be punished for own sins	18	Jeremiah remains with Gedaliah in Judah	22
A new covenant to be made with house of Israel ..	18	Escaped guards return to Gedaliah	23
A message from the Lord to scattered Israel	18	Gedaliah assigns guards to harvesting	23
Israel to dance and sing with joy	18	Jews from other nations also come to Gedaliah ..	23
Israel no longer to be despised	18	Gedaliah disbelieves warning of plot on his life ..	23
Zedekiah rebels against Babylon	19	Gedaliah assassinated by Ishmael	23
People of Judah now even more unfaithful	19	Ishmael slaughters seventy others	23
Nebuchadnezzar's armies besiege Jerusalem	19	Ishmael takes captives and departs for Ammon ..	23
Zedekiah asks Jeremiah to inquire of Lord	19	Johanan the chief guard and his men pursue him ..	23
Only sword, famine and plague lie ahead	19	Johanan rescues the captives	23
Those who surrender will escape with their lives ..	19	Johanan and the people decide to flee to Egypt ..	23
Zedekiah told he shall die peacefully in Babylon ..	19	They ask Jeremiah for confirmation from Lord	23
Two other cities of Judah also being besieged	19	Lord counsels the people to stay in Judah	23
Egypt comes to help Judah	19	If they flee to Egypt they shall die	23
Babylonian army temporarily withdraw	19	The people disobey Lord and flee to Egypt	23
Babylonians to return and burn Jerusalem	19	Jeremiah and all living in Judah taken to Egypt ..	23
Zedekiah orders all Israelite slaves to be freed ..	19	Jeremiah buries stones in front of palace	23
The people free their slaves with a covenant	19	King Nebuchadnezzar to invade Egypt	23
The people later enslave them again	19	The king to set up his throne over these stones ..	23
Lord curses slave owners of Jerusalem	19	The temples of Egypt to be burned	23
Slave owners to become a horror to all nations ..	19	Empty land of Judah begins its Sabbath rest	23
Bodies of the slave owners to lie unburied	19	Jews in Egypt warned to repent of their idolatry ..	24
Babylonians coming to burn the cities of Judah ..	19	If they do not repent they will be destroyed	24
Jeremiah attempts to leave Jerusalem	20	Jewish women choose to continue their idolatry ..	24
Jeremiah arrested for treason	20	The Queen of Heaven worshipped	24
Jeremiah beaten and imprisoned in a dungeon	20	Troubles started when worship of her ceased	24
Jeremiah consulted by Zedekiah the king	20	Jeremiah corrects their belief	24
Jeremiah pleads with the king	20	Jews to perish by sword and famine in Egypt	24
Does not want to go back to dungeon	20	Pharaoh's overthrow will be a sign to Jews	24

Bold The Lord speaking.

Bold italics A prophet speaking under inspiration.

1

Jeremiah a prophet during the reigns of five kings of Judah

¹The words of Jeremiah the prophet, of the priests in Anathoth,^{F*} to whom the word of the Lord came in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah king of Judah. ²And also in the days of Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Jehoiachin, kings of Judah, until the eleventh year of Zedekiah, son of Josiah when the people of Judah were exiled to Babylon.

Jeremiah set apart as a prophet before he was born

³“The word of the Lord came to me saying, ‘Before I formed you in the womb I knew you. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you a prophet to the nations.’”

Jeremiah feels inadequate because of his youth

⁴“I said ‘O Lord God, I do not know how to speak to men, I am only a youth.’”^{F*}

Jeremiah ordered to do as the Lord commands and not to fear the people

⁵“But the Lord said to me, ‘Do not say, ‘I am only a youth.’ You shall go to whoever I send you, and speak to them whatever I command you. ⁶Fear them not for I will be with you and shall protect you.’”

Jeremiah set as a prophet over other nations besides Judah

⁷“Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth and said, ‘Now I have put my words into your mouth. ⁸Today I set you over nations, to tear down and destroy, to build up and plant.’”

Jeremiah’s vision of an almond tree branch

⁹“The word of the Lord came to me again saying, ‘What do you see Jeremiah?’”

¹⁰“I replied, “I see the branch of an almond tree, with the buds open.”

¹¹“The Lord said, ‘You have seen correctly. My eyes too are open, watching to see that my word comes to pass.’”

Jeremiah’s vision of a cauldron of boiling water symbolising disaster from the north

¹²“Then the Lord asked, ‘What do you see now?’”

“I answered, ‘I see a cauldron of boiling water, tipping from the north.’”

¹³“The Lord said, ‘Yes, and from the north disaster will come and be poured out upon all who live in this land. Kingdoms from the north^{F*} shall attack and overthrow Jerusalem and all the towns of Judah.’”

¹⁴“This is my judgement upon my people for their wickedness in forsaking me and worshipping other gods.”

Jeremiah not to fear to speak the Lord’s words or he will be humiliated before the people

¹⁵“Now, prepare yourself to stand and speak to the people of Judah. Fear them not or I will humiliate you before them. You are to say the words I command you.”

The people of Judah will turn against Jeremiah but shall not overcome him

¹⁶“I will make you strong, like a bronze wall, to stand up to the kings and priests of Judah and the people of the land. ¹⁷They shall turn against you but not succeed, for I am with you.”

2

What fault did Israel find in the Lord?

¹“The word of the Lord came to me saying, ‘Proclaim these words in the hearing of Jerusalem: Jehovah says, ‘I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the desert.’”

²“Israel was holy to the Lord, the first fruits of his harvest. All who harmed her were held guilty and disaster overtook them.”

³“Therefore what fault did your fathers find in me that they strayed so far from me and followed worthless idols, and so became worthless themselves?”

The Lord charges Judah with idolatry

⁴“I brought you into a fertile land to eat fruit and rich food but you defiled it. ⁵Your priests did not ask, ‘Where is Jehovah?’ and your leaders rebelled against me. Your prophets prophesied by Baal and followed worthless idols.”

⁶“I bring charges against you, and will bring charges against your children’s children.”

What other nation has ever changed its gods?

⁷“Cross to the coasts of Cyprus. Look to the Arabs of the desert. Has anything like this ever happened before? Has a nation ever changed its gods, even though they are not gods at all?”

⁸“But my people have exchanged their Glory for worthless idols. Be appalled O heavens! Shudder with horror! My people have forsaken me!”

*1 Jeremiah was born into a priestly family in Anathoth, a town about 4 km north east of Jerusalem.

*4 Jeremiah may have been only about 14 years old at this time.

*13 The Babylonian empire.

Judah has brought the coming punishment upon themselves

⁹“Is Israel a slave by birth? Why then is he to be plundered! Why is his land to be wasted and his towns burned and deserted? ¹⁰Have you not brought this upon yourselves, by forsaking the Lord your God?”

Judah like a lustful harlot

¹¹“You said to me, ‘I shall not serve you!’ And on every high hill and under every spreading tree you lay down and played the harlot.”

¹²“I planted you like a choice vine, how then did you turn into a corrupt wild vine? ¹³Though you wash yourself with soap the stain of your guilt is still before me.”

¹⁴“You are like a wild she-donkey, sniffing the wind in her craving. In her heat who can restrain her lust? Any males that seek her need not tire themselves, for she will find them. ¹⁵For you have said, ‘I love foreign gods and must go after them.’”

¹⁶“How skilled you are at pursuing love. Even the worst harlot could learn from your ways. Look to the hill tops, where you have not been lain with?” ^{F*}

Judah to be shamed by Egypt

¹⁷“As a thief is shamed when caught, so shall the house of Israel be shamed. You have as many gods as you have towns O Judah.”

¹⁸“In vain I punished you, but you did not repent. Your sword devoured the prophets, and you have the blood of the innocent poor on your clothes, though you did not catch them breaking in.”

¹⁹“In spite of all this you say, ‘I am innocent. I have not sinned.’”

²⁰“Therefore you shall be put to shame by Egypt^{F*} as you were put to shame by Assyria.”

Spring rains withheld

²¹“If a man divorces his wife and she becomes another man’s, will he return to her again? Would she not be as land that is defiled? ²²You too have defiled the land, with your harlotry and unfaithfulness, therefore the spring rains have been withheld.”

Judah still has the brazen look of a harlot

²³“Yet you still have the brazen look of a harlot. You refuse to blush with shame.”

²⁴“You say to me, ‘O my father, my friend from my youth, will you always be angry with me?’ This is how you pray to me, but you continue to do all the evil you can.”

Northern Israel divorced by the Lord

¹“The Lord said to me in the days of Josiah, ‘Did you hear what faithless Israel did? She went up on every high hill and under every spreading tree and played the whore.’”

²“I thought she would return to me, but she did not. So I gave Israel a certificate of divorce and sent her away.” ^{F*}

Judah the unfaithful sister of Israel has also played the whore

³“Judah her unfaithful sister saw what I had done, yet she did not fear me. She too went out and played the whore. She too defiled the land and committed adultery with stone and wood.”

Judah’s apparent return to the Lord only a pretence

⁴“Judah has returned to me only in pretence, not with all her heart. Faithless Israel was less guilty than unfaithful Judah.”

Lord asks exiled northern Israel to admit guilt

⁵“So proclaim this message toward the north: ‘Return faithless Israel and I will frown on you no longer, for I am merciful and shall not be angry forever. Only acknowledge your guilt. Admit that you have rebelled against your God and given your favours to foreign gods.’”

A few of Israel will return from exile with Judah

⁶“Return O faithless people, for I am your husband, and will gather you, one from a town and two from a clan and bring you to Jerusalem.”

⁷“Then I shall give you shepherds after my own heart. Shepherds who will lead you with knowledge and understanding.”

No Ark in Israel in days to come

⁸“In those days when your numbers will increase greatly in the land, Israel shall no longer have the Ark of the Covenant, nor will it be missed or another made.” ^{F*}

Jerusalem to be renamed in the millennium and all nations will gather to her to honour the Lord

⁹“And in days to come they will call Jerusalem ‘The Throne of Jehovah’ and all nations shall gather to her to honour the name of the Lord. No longer will my people follow the stubbornness of their evil hearts.”

*2 The Lord is referring to the northern kingdom of Israel which had been exiled by the Assyrians about 90 years earlier.

*8 The Lord here appears to be speaking of the millennium (see following verses). The Ark may possibly be uncovered again before that time. It went missing prior to the Babylonian destruction of the temple in Jerusalem (Jeremiah 22:9-12) and has not been seen since. Jewish tradition is that it was hidden by Jeremiah and the priests in a sealed cave on Mount Nebo along with the Altar of Incense and the original tent Tabernacle (2 Maccabees 2:4-5 Catholic Bible). Another tradition claims that the sealed cave is within the city of Jerusalem.

*16 The hilltops of Judah were the sites of idolatrous shrines whose worship involved sexual immorality.

*20 This prophecy was soon fulfilled. See Jeremiah chapter 5.

JEREMIAH 4

The houses of Judah and Israel to one day be reunited

10[“]In those days the house of Judah will reunite with the house of Israel. Together they will return from northern lands to the land I gave their forefathers.”

Bitter disaster coming on Judah from the north

11[“]The word of the Lord came to me saying, ‘Announce in Jerusalem and throughout Judah: “Sound the trumpet throughout the land! Cry aloud! Flee to the fortified cities! Jehovah is bringing disaster from the north, even terrible destruction.”

12[“]A lion has come out of his lair. A destroyer of nations is marching toward you to lay waste your land. Your towns will become ruins without inhabitant. 13^{Put} on sackcloth, lament and wail, for the fierce anger of the Lord is against you.”

14[“]In that day the king and his officials will lose heart, the priests will be horrified and the prophets shall be appalled.”

15[“]Your own actions are bringing this upon you. This is your punishment. How bitter it is. How it pierces to the heart.”

Jeremiah distressed by a vision of the destruction of Judah

16[“]*O my anguish, my anguish. O the agony of my heart. It pounds within me. I cannot keep silent. I have heard the sound of the trumpet. I have heard the battle cry. I have seen disaster follow disaster. The whole land lies in ruins.*”

17[“]*My people are fools. They do not know the Lord. They are senseless children. They have no understanding. They are skilled in doing evil and know not how to do good.*”

Jeremiah sees the towns of Judah in ruins

18[“]*I saw the land and it was empty and dark. I saw the mountains and they were quaking. I looked and there were no people. Even the birds had fled. The fruitful land was like a desert. All the towns of Judah lay in ruins before the fierce anger of the Lord.*”

The whole region to be ruined and deserted

19[“]The Lord declares, ‘The whole land shall be ruined, though I will not destroy it completely. The land will mourn and the sky above grow dark. For I have spoken and will not relent.’

20[“]At the sound of horsemen every town shall take flight. People will flee into thickets, some will hide among rocks. All the towns shall be deserted.”

Judah's former lovers to destroy her

21[“]What are you doing O devastated one? Why do you dress in scarlet and put on your gold and jewellery? Why do you shade your eyes with paint? You adorn yourself in vain. Your lovers now despise you and seek your life.”

22[“]I hear a cry, as of a woman in labour,

the cry of the Daughter of Zion,^{F*} gasping for breath and saying, ‘Alas! My life is being taken by murderers.’”



Anathoth, birth place of Jeremiah.

4

Jeremiah unable to find one honest, truth-seeking person in Jerusalem

1[“]The Lord said to me, ‘Go up and down the streets of Jerusalem. Search through her squares. If you can find one person who deals honestly and seeks the truth I shall forgive this city.’”

2[“]I thought to myself, ‘In the streets are only the poor, who lack knowledge and know not the way of the Lord, I shall go instead to the leaders of the city and speak to them. Surely they know the requirements of their God.’”

3[“]But I found that with one accord they too had broken off the yoke of the Lord.”

The Lord asks why he should forgive the people of Judah

4[“]The Lord said to me, ‘Why should I forgive them? They have forsaken me and sworn by gods that are not gods. I supplied all their needs, yet they committed adultery and thronged to the houses of harlots. 5^{They} are like well-fed, lusty stallions each neighing for another man’s wife. The house of Israel and the house of Judah have been utterly unfaithful to me.’”

Jeremiah's words to be like a fire to wood

6[“]They say, ‘Jehovah will do nothing. No harm shall come to us. We will not see sword or famine. The prophets speak only wind.’”

7[“]Because the people have said this, I will make my words a fire in your mouth and these people the wood it consumes.”

A distant nation to devour Judah

8[“]I am bringing a distant nation against Judah, a people whose language they know

*22 The daughter of Zion is the city of Jerusalem. Zion is the hill where the temple and king’s palace were located.

not. All are mighty warriors who will devour their food, their sons and daughters, their flocks and herds, their vines and fig trees and destroy with the sword the fortified cities in which they trust.”

⁹“Yet I will not destroy them completely. Afterward survivors will ask, ‘Why has the Lord our God done all this to us?’ ¹⁰Say to them, ‘Because you served foreign gods in your own land you shall now serve foreigners in a land not your own.’”

Judah’s sins keeping away the rains

¹¹“Announce this to Judah: ‘Hear this you senseless people who have eyes but see not, who have ears but hear not. Jehovah says, You have stubborn and rebellious hearts and have turned away from me. ¹²You do not say to yourselves, ‘Let us honour Jehovah our God who gives us the rains in season and brings us the harvest.’ Your sins have kept these away.”

Wicked men have become rich by evil deeds

¹³“Among you are wicked men who lie in wait for people, like those who trap birds. Their houses are full of treachery and they have become rich. ¹⁴They have grown fat and sleek and their evil deeds know no limit. They defend not the rights of the needy.”

¹⁵“As a well keeps its water fresh, so Jerusalem keeps her wickedness fresh. Shall I not avenge myself on such a nation as this?”

Prophet and priest alike practice deception

¹⁶“The prophets prophesy lies, the priests rule by their own authority and my people want it this way. From the least to the greatest all are greedy for unjust gain.”

¹⁷“Prophet and priest alike deal falsely. They treat the wound of my people as though it were not serious. ‘Peace. Peace,’ they say, when there is no peace.”

Prophets and priests not ashamed of their loathsome conduct

¹⁸“They are not ashamed of their loathsome conduct. They do not even know how to blush.”

They will be among the fallen when I punish them. For disaster looms from the north even terrible destruction.”

Beautiful and delicate Jerusalem to be destroyed

¹⁹“I will destroy Jerusalem, so beautiful and delicate. Trees shall be cut down and siege ramps built against her. ²⁰This city is to be punished for it is filled with oppression and violence. Her sickness is ever before me.”

²¹“Take warning O Jerusalem and change your ways, or I will make your land so deserted that no one will live in it.”

Jeremiah complains to the Lord that no one listens to him any more

²²“I said to the Lord, ‘To whom can I speak and give warning? No one listens to me any more. Their ears are closed. The word of the Lord is offensive to them. ²³Yet I am so full of the words of your wrath I cannot hold them in.’”

Jeremiah told to speak to the children

²⁴“The Lord said to me, ‘Pour out my words upon the children in the street and upon the youth who gather together. Then their fathers and their mothers and the elderly shall get to hear of it.’”

²⁵“For houses, fields and wives will be turned over to others when I stretch out my hand against those who live in the land says Jehovah.”

An army from the north will show no mercy

²⁶“Say to the people, ‘Jehovah says, Ask for the ancient path. Ask where the righteous way is and walk in it, then you will find rest for your souls.’”

²⁷“But you have said, ‘We shall not walk in it.’ Therefore an army is coming from the north^{F*} armed with bow and spear. They are cruel and show no mercy. They roar like the sea as they ride their horses to attack you.”

²⁸“Go not out in the fields or walk on the roads when they come, for the enemy has a sword and there will be terror on every side.”

5

King Josiah goes out to fight Pharaoh Neco king of Egypt

¹Now at this time, Pharaoh Neco king of Egypt marched his army northward to assist the Assyrians against the Babylonians. So Josiah king of Judah marched out to meet him in battle.^{F*}

Neco warns Josiah off

²Neco sent messengers to Josiah saying, “It is not you I am at war with O king of Judah. Hinder me not or God who is with me and who has told me to hasten will destroy you.”

Josiah does not listen to Neco and dies of an archery wound

³Josiah however did not listen to what Neco said at God’s command, but disguised himself and engaged him in battle on the plain of Megiddo.

⁴Josiah was wounded by archers so they took him out of his war chariot and put him in his other chariot and took him back to Jerusalem.

⁵But he died and was buried in the tombs of his fathers and all Judah mourned him.

Josiah one of the great kings of Judah

⁶Jeremiah the prophet composed laments for Josiah and to this day singers remember him.

*27 Babylon was located north east of Jerusalem but would attack from the north.

*1 At this stage Judah was an ally of Babylon.

JEREMIAH 6

⁷Josiah had reigned thirty one years.^{F*} There was not a king like him, neither before nor after who turned so fully to the Lord with all his heart, soul, and strength, according to all the Law of Moses.

⁸Nevertheless the Lord did not revoke his anger against Judah because of all the evil that King Manasseh had done.

Jehoahaz made king

⁹The people of Judah took Jehoahaz, the twenty-three year old son of Josiah and made him king.

Pharaoh Neco deposes Jehoahaz and makes Jehoiakim king

¹⁰But Jehoahaz did evil in the eyes of the Lord as his forefathers had done, and after three months Pharaoh Neco came and dethroned him in Jerusalem and put him in chains.

¹¹Neco then chose Eliakim, another son of Josiah to be king and changed his name to Jehoiakim.^{F*}

Neco paid a tribute of silver and gold

¹²Pharaoh Neco also demanded tribute from Judah, 100 talents of silver and a talent of gold.^{F*} Jehoiakim paid Neco the silver and gold by taxing the people of Judah.

Jehoahaz taken in exile to Egypt

¹³Neco took Jehoahaz the dethroned king with him to his camp at Riblah in Syria, and then afterward back to Egypt where he died.

Jehoiakim also an evil king

¹⁴Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king. He also did evil in the eyes of the Lord his God.

6

The Lord willing to relent of bringing disaster on Judah if the people repent

¹Early in the reign of Jehoiakim, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Jeremiah saying, **“Stand in the courtyard of the Temple and speak to the people from the towns of Judah who come to worship.”**

²**“Tell them everything I command you. Do not omit a word. Perhaps they will repent of their evil ways, then I will relent and not bring upon them the disaster I am planning.”**

The Lord pleads for genuine reform

³**“Say to the people, ‘Hear the word of Jehovah you people of Judah who enter these gates to worship him.’”**

⁴**“Reform your ways and I will let you live in this land. Deal justly and oppress not the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow. Do not shed innocent blood or follow other gods. ⁵Then shall I let you live forever in this land that I gave your forefathers.”**

*7 Josiah was 39 years old when he died.

*11 Changing the name of a king demonstrated a conquering leader's authority over him.

*12 A talent was about 34kg (75lbs).

⁶**“Why do you continue stealing and murdering and committing adultery and lying, and worshipping Baal and other gods and then come and stand before me in my house and say, ‘We are safe!’”**

If Judah does not repent both the Temple and Jerusalem shall suffer the fate of Shiloh and Israel

⁷**“Go to Shiloh where I first established my house in this land. See what I did there because of the wickedness of my people.” ^{F*}**

⁸**“If you do not follow my law and heed the words of my prophets whom I have sent to you again and again, though you have not listened, I shall make this Temple a ruin like Shiloh. And this city will become deserted and an object of scorn among the nations of the earth.”**

⁹**“Then shall I thrust you from my presence, just as I did your brothers the people of Ephraim.” ^{F*}**

Jeremiah seized by the priests and false prophets and threatened with death

¹⁰However when the priests and false prophets heard Jeremiah speak these words of the Lord they seized him and said, **“You shall die! Why have you prophesied in Jehovah's name that this Temple shall be like Shiloh and this city become deserted?”** And all the people crowded around Jeremiah in the courtyard of the Temple.

The priests and false prophets condemn Jeremiah before the king's officials

¹¹When the king's officials heard these things they came up^{F*} from the royal palace to the Temple and took their seats at the New Gate.

¹²The priests and false prophets said to the officials and to the people, **“This man should be put to death. He has prophesied against the city.”**

Jeremiah defends himself before the king's officials

¹³But Jeremiah answered saying, **“*Jehovah sent me to prophesy against this Temple and this city. Therefore reform your ways and obey the Lord your God then he will relent and not bring the disaster he has pronounced upon you.*”**

¹⁴**“As for me, I am in your hands. Do with me whatever you think right. Only know for certain that if you put me to death you will bring the guilt of innocent blood upon yourselves and this city.”**

The officials and people support Jeremiah

¹⁵At these words the officials and people said to the priests and the prophets, **“This man should not be sentenced to death just because he has spoken to us in the name of the Lord our God.”**

*7 Shiloh was a town north of Jerusalem where Joshua first located the Tabernacle when the Israelites took possession of the promised land. It was a total ruin in the days of Jeremiah.

*9 The exiled northern kingdom of Israel was sometimes called Ephraim, after the dominant tribe.

*11 The temple was at a higher elevation than the palace.

¹⁶One of the elders also stepped forward and said, “Micah the prophet who prophesied in the days of King Hezekiah said, ‘*Jehovah says, “Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble and the Temple hill a mound overgrown with thickets.”*’

¹⁷Did Hezekiah put him to death? Did not Hezekiah revere the Lord and seek his favour? And did not the Lord relent so that he did not bring the disaster he pronounced against them? We may be about to bring a terrible disaster upon ourselves.”

¹⁸Ahikam the secretary also stood up for Jeremiah, so he was not handed over to be put to death.

Uriah the prophet put to death by Jehoiakim

¹⁹Now there had been another prophet of the Lord who prophesied the same things as Jeremiah. His name was Uriah. When Jehoiakim the king heard his words he had tried to put him to death, but Uriah fled to Egypt.

²⁰However Jehoiakim sent men after him and they brought Uriah back to the king who then had him struck down with a sword.

Jeremiah not to pray for the people any longer

²¹The word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah: “Pray no more for this people, nor plead for them for I will no longer listen to you.”

²²“From the time your forefathers left Egypt until now, again and again I sent my servants the prophets to warn them. But they did not listen and did more evil than their forefathers. Nor do they listen to you.”

The idolatrous practices of Judah

²³“Do you see what they are doing? The children gather wood, the fathers light the fire, and the mothers knead dough to make cakes for the Queen of Heaven.^F * They also offer drink offerings to other gods to provoke me to anger.”

²⁴“Shave your head and mourn O Judah for I Jehovah have rejected this generation. You have done evil in my eyes. You have set up abominable idols in the house that bears my name and defiled it. You have burned your sons and daughters in fire in the valley of Hinnom.”

Severe punishment coming upon Jerusalem

²⁵“I will bring an end to the sounds of joy, to the voice of bride and bridegroom in the towns of Judah and streets of Jerusalem.”

²⁶“The land will become empty and the bones of the kings, priests, false prophets and people of Jerusalem will lie unburied, like dung on the ground exposed to the sun and moon and stars of the heavens which

they loved and worshipped.”

²⁷“And the survivors of this evil nation whom I shall exile will prefer death to life.”

²⁸“Why does Jerusalem always turn away and refuse to return? They cling to deceit. I have listened attentively but they say not what is right. ²⁹No one repents of his wickedness. Each pursues his own course heedlessly, like a horse charging into battle.”

The written law changed by the lying pens of scribes

³⁰“Even the stork and the swift observe the time of their migration, but my people know not the requirements of their Lord. They say, ‘We are wise for we have the written law of Jehovah.’ ³¹But the lying pens of the scribes have even turned my words into falsehoods.”

Jeremiah laments over a vision he saw of the exile of Judah

³²“*Sorrow saddens my heart, for I hear my people weeping in a land of exile far away. They cry out, ‘Is the Lord no longer in Jerusalem?’*”

³³“*Why did they provoke him to anger with their worthless foreign idols? The harvest is past, the summer has ended and they are not saved.*”

³⁴“*Since my people are crushed, I too am crushed. I mourn and dismay has taken hold of me. Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is there no healing for my people?*”

³⁵“*O that my head were a spring of water and my eyes a fountain of tears. I would weep day and night for the slain of my people. ³⁶I will weep and wail for the mountains and pastures, for they are deserted. The lowing of cattle is not heard and the birds have fled.*”

Dead bodies to lie like cut grain behind the reaper

³⁷“*For Jehovah has said, “I will punish and refine my people, for what else can I do? I will make Jerusalem a heap of ruins, a haunt of jackals and I shall lay waste the towns of Judah so that no one can live there.”*”

³⁸“The dead bodies of men will lie in the open fields, like cut grain behind the reaper, with no one to gather them.”

The Lord delights in kindness, justice and righteousness

³⁹“*The Lord has also said, “Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength, nor the rich man of his riches. ⁴⁰But let him who boasts boast that he knows me and that he acts in kindness, justice and righteousness, for in these things I delight.”*”

*²³ The Queen of Heaven was the Babylonian name for Ashoreth (also known as Ishtar), a goddess of fertility and sometimes of war. She was worshipped throughout Mesopotamia, Egypt and Caran. Worship rites often involved prostitution. Women offered star-shaped cakes in her honour.

*³⁴ The lush region of Gilead, east of the river Jordan was famous for a tree resin used as a healing balm.

JEREMIAH 7

The foolishness of worshipping man-made idols

⁴¹“Hear what the Lord says to you O house of Israel: ‘Follow not the ways of other nations, for they are worthless. They cut a tree from the forest and a craftsman shapes an idol with his chisel. ⁴²He adorns it with silver and gold and then fastens it with a hammer and nails so it will not totter.”



The grim reaper – vivid imagery taken from Jeremiah 6:38.

⁴³“Like scarecrows in a field their idols cannot speak and they must be carried for they are unable to walk. Fear them not for they can do no harm, nor can they do any good.”

Jeremiah exalts Jehovah as the only true God

⁴⁴“No one is like you O Lord, your name is mighty in power. Among all the wise men of the nations there is none like you. All believe foolish doctrines and worship worthless wooden idols which have no life in them.”

⁴⁵“Jehovah is the true God, the Eternal King. When he is angry the earth trembles and nations cannot abide his wrath.”

7

Israel and Judah have broken the covenant of their forefathers

¹The word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah: “Say to the people of Judah and Jerusalem, ‘Cursed is the man who breaks the covenant I made with your forefathers when I brought them out of Egypt.”

²“I said to your forefathers, ‘If you obey my commandments you will be my people and I shall give you a land flowing with milk and honey, the land you possess today. But you returned to the sins of your forefathers.”

³“Both the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken the covenant I made with their forefathers.”

Judah once a thriving olive tree

⁴“You were once a thriving olive tree with well formed fruit, but now with the roar of a mighty storm I am coming to break your branches off and burn them.”

Judah has provoked the Lord to anger by idolatry

⁵“I Jehovah Almighty who planted you has decreed disaster, for you have done evil and provoked me to anger by burning incense to Baal.”

The Lord reveals a plot against the life of Jeremiah

⁶“The Lord revealed to me a plot against my life by the men of my home town Anathoth. ⁷I had been going like a lamb to the slaughter and did not know they were plotting my death saying, “We will cut him off from the land of the living.”

⁸“O Lord, you who judge righteously, let me see your vengeance upon them for in your hands I have placed my life.”

The plotters and their families soon to be destroyed

⁹“The Lord said to me, ‘I will punish them in time. Their sons shall die by the sword and their son’s children by famine. Not a remnant of these men of Anathoth who seek your life saying, “Prophecy no more in the name of the Lord or you will die by our hands” will be left when I bring disaster in the year of punishment.”

Jeremiah asks the Lord to punish the wicked immediately

¹⁰“I said to the Lord, ‘You are always righteous O Lord when I bring a case before you, but why are you still allowing the wicked to prosper and live in ease? Your name is ever on their lips but far from their hearts. ¹¹Drag them off like sheep to be slaughtered”

Jeremiah asks the Lord how long the drought will last

¹²“And how long will the land lie parched and withered because of wickedness? The animals and birds are dying. Moreover the people are saying, ‘God does not care what happens to us.”

Jeremiah’s weariness is rebuked by the Lord

¹³“The Lord answered me saying, ‘If running against men has wearied you, how will you contend with horses? ^F* Even your own family will deal treacherously with you and be in full cry after you.”

*13 ie There is worse to come. Soon Jeremiah will be persecuted by his own family and by kings and their officials.

The sword is soon coming to devour Judah

14“I have given the beloved of my heart into the hands of her enemies, for my shepherds have destroyed my vineyard.”

15“My sword shall devour from one end of the land to the other. No one shall be safe from the fierce anger of the Lord.”

Assyrians who invaded Israel also to be uprooted

16“As for the evil neighbours who invaded Israel, I am about to uproot them also from their lands.”

However Judah’s neighbours will eventually return to their own lands

17“However after I have plucked Judah from among them I shall have compassion on them also, and return them again to their own lands.”

Nations who worship the Lord will share the future blessings of Israel

18“And if they learn the ways of my people and swear by my name saying, ‘As surely as Jehovah lives,’ even as they once taught my people to swear by their god Baal, they shall dwell in the midst of my people.”

19“**But if any nation heeds not my word I will completely uproot and destroy them.**”

Jeremiah told to wear a linen belt then hide it in a damp place

20“**The Lord said to me, ‘Buy a linen belt and wear it around your waist but do not get it wet.’** So I bought a belt and wore it around my waist.”

21“**Then the Lord spoke to me saying, ‘Hide the belt in a crevice of the rocks by the wadi at Parath.’** F* So I went and did as the Lord told me.”



Wadi, a stream bed that only contains water when it rains.

Jeremiah’s belt ruined

22“**Many days later the Lord said to me, ‘Go now and get the belt I told you to hide.’** So I went and took the belt from where I had hidden it, but it was ruined.”

The ruined belt a symbol of Judah’s soon to be ruined pride

23“**Then the word of the Lord came to me**

*21 This wadi (an intermittent stream) near Jeremiah’s home town of Anathoth was called Parath, a common alternative name for the Euphrates river which ran through Babylon, probably symbolising the place of Judah’s exile.

saying, ‘In this same way I shall ruin the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem.’”

24“**These evil people who go after other gods will be like this belt, completely ruined. For as a belt is bound around a man’s waist, so I bound the whole house of Israel to me that they might be my people, for my renown, praise and honour. But they have not listened.**”

Jeremiah sent to prophesy before Jehoiakim the king and the queen mother

25“**Go now before the king and queen mother and say, ‘Take lowly seats, for your crowns shall fall from your heads. Judah is to be carried into exile far away. Invaders are coming from the north.’**”

26“**Where then will your flock be? What then will you say when Jehovah sets as head over you those whom you looked to as allies? Shall not pain grip you like that of a woman in labour?**”

As the leopard cannot change its spots neither can those accustomed to doing evil do good

27“**If you ask, ‘Why has this happened?’ It is because of your many sins. Can the leopard change its spots? Neither can you do good who are accustomed to doing evil.**”

28“**I will scatter you like chaff driven by the desert wind, for you have forgotten me and trusted in false gods. I have seen your shameless harlotry on the hills.**”

8

Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon invades the land

1During the third year of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar prince of Babylon invaded the land.F*

King Jehoiakim pays him tribute for three years

2Jehoiakim made a treaty with him and paid tribute to him for three years.

Jeremiah prays for an end to the drought

3A prayer to the Lord by Jeremiah concerning the drought: “O Lord, Judah mourns and Jerusalem wails. They go to the cisterns but find no water. They return in despair with their jars unfilled.”

4“**The ground is cracked. The farmers are dismayed. Even the doe in the wilderness abandons her new-born fawn for lack of grass. Wild donkeys stand on barren hills and pant, their eyesight failing for lack of pasture.**”

5“**Though our sins testify against us, act O Jehovah for your name’s sake. We are calling you by name, do not forsake us.**”

*1 Although not recorded here, during this invasion Nebuchadnezzar took into exile some of the Judean nobles, probably as hostages. Among these was Daniel (see Daniel 1:1). Nebuchadnezzar (sometimes spelled Nebuchadrezzar) was only a prince at the time but was crowned king of Babylon following the death of his father when he returned home in 605 BC.

JEREMIAH 8

The Lord tells Jeremiah the people are past praying for

⁶“The Lord said to me, ‘Truly this people love to go astray, therefore I do not accept them. I will remember their sins and punish them.’”

⁷“Do not pray for the welfare of this people. Though they fast I will not heed their cry. Though they offer sacrifice I shall not accept them. Instead I will destroy them with sword, famine and plague.”

False prophets are lying to the people

⁸“I said to the Lord, ‘O Lord Jehovah, the prophets are saying to the people, ‘You shall not see the sword or suffer famine. You will have lasting peace in this land.’”

⁹“The Lord replied, ‘The prophets are prophesying lies in my name. I have not appointed them nor spoken to them. They prophesy false visions and the imaginations of their mind.’”

¹⁰“The prophets shall perish by sword and famine. They and the people to whom they prophesy shall lie dead in the streets of Jerusalem, victims of sword and famine, and there will be no one to bury them. I shall pour out upon them the calamity they deserve.”

Jeremiah told to prophesy a vision of sword and famine to the people

¹¹“Now go speak this prophecy to the people: ‘Jehovah says, “My eyes overflow with tears night and day without ceasing, for my people are struck a crushing blow. ¹²In the fields I see those slain by the sword. In the city I see the ravages of famine. For both prophet and priest are without knowledge.’”

Jeremiah makes a final plea to the Lord for mercy

¹³“I said to the Lord, ‘Have you completely rejected Judah? Is there no healing for us? We acknowledge our wickedness O Lord, for we have sinned against you. ¹⁴Do not spurn us, for your name’s sake. Can idols bring rain? No, only you O Jehovah our God.’”

Even Moses and Samuel could not change the Lord’s heart

¹⁵“The Lord said to me, ‘Even if Moses and Samuel were to plead before me, my heart would not go out to this people. I am sending them away from my presence.’”

Plague, starvation, sword and exile await Judah

¹⁶“If the people say to you, ‘Where are we going?’ answer them, ‘Jehovah says, Those destined for plague, to plague, those for starvation, to starvation, those for the sword, to the sword, those for exile, to exile.’”

Judah to be a horror to all kingdoms of the earth

¹⁷“Those who are slain shall be devoured

by the birds of the air and the animals of the earth. I will make Judah a horror to all kingdoms of the earth because of what Manasseh did in Jerusalem.”

The Lord weary of relenting for the people have not changed their ways

¹⁸“I shall bring bereavement and destruction on my people, for they have not changed their ways. I am weary of relenting.”

Widows to be more numerous than the sands of the sea

¹⁹“I will make their widows as numerous as the sands of the sea. The mother of seven shall grow faint and die, her sun shall set while it is still day. She will be disgraced and humiliated and her children put to the sword.”

Jeremiah complains of being cursed by the people and asks for vengeance

²⁰“Woe is me my mother that you gave me birth, for I am a man with whom the whole land contends. I have neither lent nor borrowed yet all of them curse me.”

²¹“O Lord you understand, remember me and bring vengeance on the heads of my persecutors. It is for your sake that I suffer these insults. For when your words came I tasted them and they became a joy, a delight to my heart.”

²²“I never sat in company with revellers nor made merry with them, I sat alone, for your hand was upon me. Why then are my troubles unending? Do not be to me like a spring that fails.”

The Lord orders Jeremiah to repent of such talk

²³“The Lord replied, ‘Repent of such talk, and you may serve me still. Only if you speak worthy and not worthless words will you continue to be my spokesman.’”

The people will oppose Jeremiah but not prevail

²⁴“It is this people who must turn to you, not you who must turn to them. This people will oppose you but they shall not prevail, for I am with you. I shall save you from the hands of the cruel.”

Jeremiah not to marry nor have children

²⁵“This word of the Lord came to me: ‘You are not to take a wife nor have children in this land. For sons and daughters born in this land shall die of plague, famine and sword and will not be mourned or buried. ²⁶Their bodies will lie on the ground like dung and become food for the birds and animals of the earth.’”

Jeremiah not to show sympathy or joy

²⁷“Nor are you to enter a house where one has died to mourn or to show sympathy, for I have withdrawn my pity from this people.”

²⁸“And do not enter a house where there is feasting, for in your days I will bring an end to the sounds of joy and gladness.”

Why the Lord is bringing disaster on Judah

²⁹“When the people say to you, ‘Why has the Lord decreed such disaster against us? What wrong have we done?’ ³⁰Answer them, ‘Jehovah says it is because your fathers forsook me and worshipped other gods and did not keep my commandments, and you have acted even more wickedly than your fathers.’”

³¹“And here you are still following your stubborn will and refusing to listen to me. So I will hurl you out of this land into a land neither you nor your fathers have known. There you shall serve other gods day and night.”

9

Cursed is he who trusts in man

¹“The Lord says, ‘Cursed is he who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength. He shall be like a stunted shrub in the desert and will not see prosperity.’”

Blessed is he who trusts in the Lord

²“Blessed is he who trusts in the Lord. He shall be like a tree planted beside water, sending its roots into the stream. He will never fail to bear fruit.”

Unjustly obtained wealth will be lost in mid-life

³“Like a bird hatching eggs it did not lay is the man who gains wealth by unjust means. When his life is half gone his riches will desert him.”

⁴“For I Jehovah search the heart of a man and reward him according to what his deeds deserve.”

Jeremiah asks the Lord to intensify the coming disaster for the people are mocking his words

⁵“I said to the Lord, ‘O Jehovah, men keep mocking me saying, ‘What has happened to the word of the Lord? We are waiting for it to come to pass.’”

⁶“I have not run from being your shepherd, therefore keep me from humiliation. Let my persecutors be put to shame. Let them be terrified. Bring on them the day of disaster with double destruction.”

Jeremiah sent to call on the people to keep the Sabbath day holy

⁷“The Lord said to me, ‘Go and stand in the People’s Gate by which the kings of Judah go in and out, and also all the other gates of Jerusalem and proclaim these words to the people.’”

⁸“Hear the word of Jehovah O king of Judah, and all you people of Judah, ‘Carry no load through these gates nor do any work on the Sabbath day, but keep the Sabbath day holy. ⁹This commandment I gave to your forefathers but they obeyed it not.”

Jerusalem to be inhabited forever if Sabbath kept

¹⁰“If you obey me, then the kings who sit on David’s throne will pass through the gates of this city with their officials, riding in chariots and on horses and this city will continue to be inhabited.”

¹¹“People will continue to come from the towns of Judah and Benjamin bringing offerings and sacrifices to the house of the Lord.”

¹²“But if you do not keep the Sabbath day holy I will kindle an unquenchable fire that will devour Jerusalem.”

Israel like clay in the hands of the potter to the Lord

¹³“The word of the Lord came to me saying, ‘Go down to the potter and there I will give you my word.’”

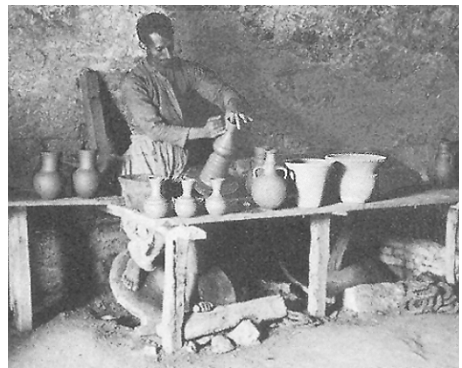
¹⁴“So I went down to the potter’s house and watched him working at his wheel. The pot he was shaping from clay turned out wrong so he formed it into a different kind of pot, as seemed best to him.”

¹⁵“Then the word of the Lord came to me, ‘O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter does? Like clay in the hand of the potter are you to me.’”

The Lord will relent of a threatened disaster if a nation repents

¹⁶“If at any time I declare that a nation is to be uprooted or destroyed, and that nation repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned.”

¹⁷“If at another time I announce that a nation is to be built up, and that nation does wrong in my eyes and obeys me not, then I will reconsider the good I had intended.”



A potter at his wheel in Israel.

¹⁸“O people of Judah, hear the word of Jehovah. I am preparing a disaster for you. So repent of your evil and reform your ways.”

¹⁹“But they will reply, ‘We shall continue with our own plans, according to the stubbornness of our evil hearts.’”

JEREMIAH 9

20“Therefore their land will be laid waste, an object of horror. All who pass by shall be appalled and will shake their heads.”

The people want to rid themselves of Jeremiah and listen to their false prophets

21“Then the people said, ‘Let us rid ourselves of Jeremiah. We have our priests to teach us the Law and the wise to counsel us and the word from our prophets.’”

22“Let us bring charges against this man and silence him. Then we will no longer have to hear his words.”

Jeremiah pleads with the Lord for vengeance on the people plotting against him

23“Hear what my accusers are saying O Lord. They have dug a pit for me. Should good be repaid with evil? 24Remember that I once prayed for you to turn your wrath away from them.”

25“But now give their children over to famine, and hand them over to the sword. Let their wives be made widows and their sons be slain in battle.”

26“*You know of their plots to kill me. Do not forgive them O Lord. Deal with them in the day of your anger.*”

Jeremiah told to buy a clay jar and take some leaders out to Valley of Hinnom

27“*The Lord said to me, ‘Go buy a clay jar from the potter. Then take some of the elders and priests with you and go out to the valley of Hinnom.’* There proclaim these words in their hearing:”

The valley of Hinnom a place of idolatry and child sacrifice

28“*Hear the word of Jehovah Almighty the God of Israel. I am going to bring such a disaster on this place that it shall make the ears of all who hear tingle.*”

29“*For you have forsaken me and made this valley a place of foreign gods and have filled it with the blood of innocent children. 30You have burned your children in fire to Molech, something I did not command nor did it ever enter my mind.*”

The valley of Hinnom to be filled with the dead of Jerusalem

31“*Therefore the days are coming when this valley will no longer be called the valley of Hinnom, but the valley of Slaughter.*”

32“*For the bodies of the people who fall by the sword in Jerusalem shall be dragged here by their enemies and they will bury them until there is no more room. 33Then they will leave the unburied carcasses to become food for the birds of the air and animals of the earth and there shall be no one to frighten them away.*” F*

*27 The valley of Hinnom was just outside the walls of Jerusalem.

*33 This prophecy came to pass during the Babylonian overthrow of Jerusalem. Years later the valley of Hinnom became a continually burning refuse dump of Jerusalem and was known during New Testament times as Gehenna,

Jeremiah to smash the jar a symbol of the fate of Judah

36“*Then you are to break the clay jar before the eyes of those who are with you and say to them, ‘Jehovah Almighty says, ‘As this jar is smashed beyond repair, so will I smash this city and nation.’*”

Pashhur the priest strikes Jeremiah and puts him in the stocks

37So Jeremiah took some of the elders and priests and did all that the Lord commanded him. Afterward he returned to the courtyard of the Temple and began again to prophesy of the disaster to come upon Judah.

38Pashhur the priest in charge of the Temple heard Jeremiah prophesying so he struck the prophet. Then he placed him in the stocks at the Upper Gate of the Temple.



The valley of Hinnom, later known as Gehenna (Hell) and used by Jesus to symbolise the emotional torment of the wicked after death.

Jeremiah prophesies regarding Pashhur

39The next day when Pashhur released him from the stocks, Jeremiah said to him, “*Jehovah has a new name for you Pashhur, it is ‘Man of Terror.’* 40*For he says, ‘I will send terror on you and all your friends. With your own eyes you will see them fall by the sword.’*”

41“*I will hand all Judah over to the king of Babylon and he shall put them to the sword or carry them into exile.*”

42“*All the wealth of this city will also be carried away as spoil to Babylon, and you Pashhur and all your household will go there into exile and shall die there and be buried, along with those to whom you have prophesied falsely.*”

Jeremiah’s sorrowful prayer

43“O Lord, you persuaded me to prophesy and prevailed, but I am ridiculed all day long. They mock me saying, ‘Terror all around! Terror all around!’ And I hear threats. ‘Report him! Report him!’”

(translated Hell in some Bibles). Jesus used the burning dump, with its horrific history to symbolise the emotional torment of the wicked after death.

44“Even my former friends wait for me to slip saying, “Perhaps he will trip himself in his words then we can take our revenge on him.”

45“All I prophesy is violence and destruction. Therefore your words bring me insults and reproach all day long. 46But if I say to myself, ‘I will no longer speak in the name of the Lord,’ your word becomes like fire in my bones and I cannot hold it in.”

47“*But you O Lord are with me, like a mighty warrior, so my persecutors will not succeed. They will be eternally dishonoured.*”

48“*O Lord Almighty, you who see and test the hearts and minds of the righteous, let me see your vengeance upon them.*”

49“*Sing to the Lord! Praise the Lord, for he delivers the needy from evildoers.*”

50“*O cursed be the day I was born. Cursed be the man who brought my father the glad news saying, ‘A son is born to you.*

51“*Why did I ever come out of the womb only to see trouble and sorrow and to spend my days in shame?*”



Ancient stocks

10

Judah has not listened to Jeremiah and others of the Lord’s prophets

1In the fourth year of Jehoiakim king of Judah, and the first year of Nebuchadnezzar^{F*} king of Babylon, Jeremiah the prophet proclaimed these words to the people of Judah: 2“*For twenty-three years from the thirteenth year of King Josiah until this very day, I have prophesied the word of the Lord to you, but you have not listened.*”

3“*The Lord has also sent other prophets to you but you have not heeded them.*”

Therefore Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon is coming to invade the land

4“*Therefore Jehovah Almighty says this to you: ‘Because you have not listened to my words I will summon the people of the north, even my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and bring him against this land and all the surrounding nations.’*”

*1 Nebuchadnezzar was a brilliant king who reigned over the Babylonian empire for 43 years. He was noted for his military exploits and the splendour of his buildings and gardens in the city of Babylon.

5“*I shall ruin them and make them an object of horror and scorn, never to be forgotten.*”

Judah and surrounding nations to be ruined and to serve Babylon for seventy years

6“*I shall banish from them the sounds of joy and gladness, the voice of bride and bridegroom, the sound of millstones and the light of the lamp.*”

7“*This whole region shall become an empty wasteland, and the nations of this land will serve the king of Babylon seventy years.*”

Afterward the Babylonians also to be ruined

8“*Then when the seventy years are fulfilled, I will punish the king of Babylon and his people for their guilt, and will turn his city into a desert for all time.*”

9“*The Babylonians shall be enslaved by other nations, for I will repay them according to their deeds.*”

Jeremiah to warn the other nations

10“*Then the Lord said to me, ‘Take from my hand this winecup of my anger^{F*} and have the nations to which I command you to send my word, drink of it.’*”

11“*First to Judah, to make them a ruin and an object of horror and scorn.*”

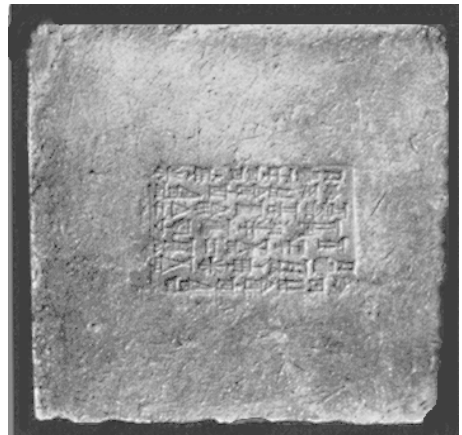
12“*Then to Pharaoh king of Egypt and all his people.*”

13“*Then to the kings of the east, to Edom, Moab and Ammon.*”

14“*Then to the kings of the Philistines and the kings of Tyre and Sidon and those of the coastal lands across the sea.*”

15“*Then to the kings of Arabia and the kings of Media, Elam, and Zimri and all the kings of the north, both near and far, one after the other.*”

16“*And after them you shall give it to the king of Babylon to drink.*”



A brick from Babylon inscribed with the name and titles of Nebuchadnezzar.

*10 ‘this winecup of my anger’ is a symbolic figure of speech for the prophecies Jeremiah was about to receive.

JEREMIAH 11

Disaster to come first upon Jerusalem as a sign

¹⁷“Say to them all, ‘Jehovah the God of Israel says, You will drink from the winecup of my anger. You shall become drunk, vomit, and fall helpless to the ground for I am sending a sword among you.’”

¹⁸“If they reject your words say to them, ‘Jehovah says, You shall indeed drink of it. See, I am about to bring disaster on the city that bears my name, so will you go unpunished?’”

¹⁹“You shall not go unpunished for I am sending a sword among all the nations.”

The guilty of the whole earth to be slain by Lord in the last days

²⁰“Then prophesy these words against them: ‘The day is coming when Jehovah will thunder mightily from his holy dwelling against all the inhabitants of earth. He shall judge all mankind and the guilty will be put to the sword.’”

²¹“A mighty tempest will stir from the distant parts of the earth and spread from nation to nation. Those slain by Jehovah on that day will extend from one end of the earth to the other.”

²²“They shall not be mourned or buried but lie as dung on the ground.”

11

Egyptian army defeated at Carchemish when attacking Babylon

¹The word of the Lord against the army of Pharaoh Neco, king of Egypt, who was defeated at Carchemish in the north near the Euphrates, by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon in the fourth year of Jehoiaquim king of Judah.

The Lord derides Egypt

²“Prepare your shields for battle! Mount your steeds! Take your battle positions! Sharpen your spears! Put on your helmets and armour!”

³“But what do I see? They are retreating, fleeing in terror without looking back. In the north by the Euphrates they fall.”

⁴“Who was it that rose up like the Nile and said ‘I shall go out and conquer the earth! I shall destroy cities!’”

⁵“This day belongs to Jehovah Almighty. It is my day of vengeance. The sword will devour until it is satisfied, until it has quenched its thirst with blood. For I Jehovah shall offer sacrifice in the land of the north by the river Euphrates.”

⁶“Go to Gilead and get balm^{F*} O Egypt, but in vain for there is no healing for you. The whole earth will hear of your shame.”

Babylon to invade and exile Egypt

⁷The word of the Lord concerning the invasion

of Egypt by Babylon. “Get ready O Egypt, for the sword is coming to devour you. Apis^{F*} your bull shall not stand for I Jehovah will push him down.”

⁸“Pack your belongings for exile, for Memphis will be laid waste and lie in ruins without inhabitant. Egypt is a beautiful heifer, but a gadfly is coming against her from the north.”

⁹“The enemy advances in force. They come against you with axes, like men who cut down trees. More numerous than locusts they cannot be counted. ¹⁰Egypt shall be put to shame and handed over to the king of Babylon.”

Egypt to eventually return from exile

¹¹“I shall punish Egypt and her gods and her king, but after a time Egypt will again be inhabited as in times past declares Jehovah.”

Judah also to return from exile

¹²“And you too O Judah, I am going to save your descendants from the land of their exile. You shall return and again enjoy peace and security. Fear no more, for I am with you.”

¹³“I shall make an end of all the peoples among whom I have banished you, but I shall not make an end of you. However I will not leave you unpunished.”

Babylon to destroy the Philistines

¹⁴The word of the Lord concerning the Philistines. “See how the waters are rising in the north. They shall soon become an overflowing torrent and flood the nations.”

¹⁵“All who dwell in the land of the Philistines will wail. Soon will come the sound of galloping hooves of stallions and the rumble of chariot wheels. ¹⁶Parents hands will hang limp, unable to help their children. For the day has come to destroy all the Philistines, to cut off all who could help Tyre and Sidon.”

Babylon to lay waste and exile Moab

¹⁷The word of the Lord concerning Moab.^{F*} “Moab will be broken. Her little ones shall cry out. Anguished cries will be heard. Flee! Run for your lives!”

¹⁸“Your countryside will be laid waste and your towns become deserted. No one will live in them.”

¹⁹“Your finest young men shall be slaughtered. A curse on him who is lax in doing the work of the Lord and keeps his sword from blood.”

²⁰“They who flee will fall into a pit. Whoever escapes the pit will be caught in a snare.”

²¹“Since you trusted in your own might and your riches, you will be captured and go into exile, along with your god Chemosh

*7 Apis was an Egyptian god worshipped in the form of a bull.

*17 Moab is now part of modern day Jordan.

*6 See note on Jeremiah 6:34.

and his priests. ²²I shall put an end to those who burn incense to their gods declares Jehovah.”

Moab to be ashamed of their god Chemosh

²³“Joy and gladness shall flee from Moab’s orchards and fields. The flow of wine will cease from her presses. ²⁴Moab will be cut down and become ashamed of her god Chemosh as Israel became ashamed of Bethel.” F*

²⁵“Moab will become an object of ridicule, for was not Israel an object of your ridicule?”

Moab’s fortunes to be restored in the latter days

²⁶“Moab will be destroyed as a nation in the year of her punishment, for she defied Jehovah. Yet I shall restore the fortunes of Moab in the latter days.”

Babylon to scatter and exile the Ammonites

²⁷The word of the Lord concerning the Ammonites. “The days are coming when I shall sound a battle cry against Rabbah the city of the Ammonites. It shall become a ruin and its surrounding towns will be burned with fire.”

²⁸“Wail O citizens of Rabbah. Put on sackcloth and mourn. Rush here and there inside your walls.”

²⁹“Your god Molech shall go into exile, along with his priests and attendants and every one of you will be scattered.”

The Ammonites to return from exile

³⁰“You boast of your fruitful valleys and trust in your riches and say, ‘Who will attack me?’ I shall bring terror on you, declares Jehovah Almighty. ³¹Yet afterward I will restore the fortunes of the Ammonites.”

Innocent Dedanites living in Edom warned to flee

³²The word of the Lord concerning Edom. “Flee and hide in deep caves you Dedanites, F* for I am bringing disaster on Esau F* to punish him. ³³When thieves come during the night they steal only as much as they want, but I will strip Edom bare.”

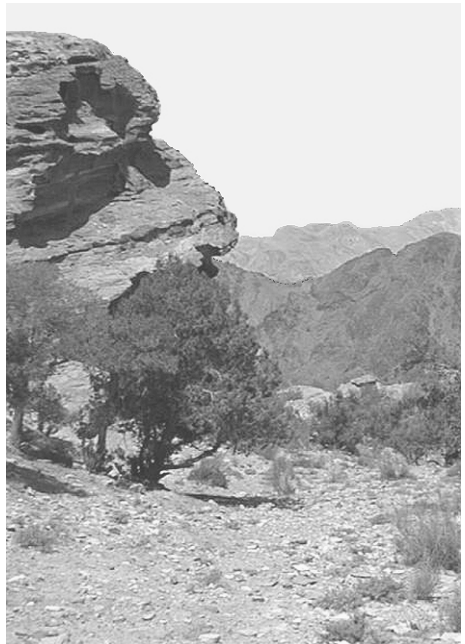
³⁴“Esau’s children shall perish and he will be no more, but I shall spare the lives of your orphans and widows. ³⁵For if others who do not deserve to drink of my winecup must drink it, should you go entirely unpunished? You shall not go entirely unpunished.”

Edom to become small and despised

³⁶“The city of Bozrah will become a ruin,

an object of cursing, and its surrounding towns shall be ruins forever. I shall make you small among the nations O Edom, and despised among men.”

³⁷“You who live high in the clefts of the rocks, your pride and the terror you inspire will be of no avail. ³⁸Though you have built your city as high as the eagles nest, I shall bring you down declares Jehovah. ³⁹In that day the hearts of your warriors shall be as the heart of a woman in labour.”



“You who live high in the clefts of the rock” (Jeremiah 11:37). The rugged kingdom of Edom.

The people of Jerusalem to eat the flesh of their children during the Babylonian siege

³⁴“I will devastate Jerusalem and make it an object of scorn. All who pass by shall be appalled. ³⁵During the siege by your enemies you will eat one another’s flesh and the flesh of your children.”

Babylon to defeat Damascus of Syria

⁴⁰The word of the Lord concerning Syria. “The cities of Hamath and Arpad are dismayed. They have heard dread news.”

⁴¹“Damascus has turned to flee. Panic, anguish and pain have seized her. Why has the famous city, this city of gaiety not been abandoned?”

⁴²“Therefore all her soldiers will fall in the squares, in the day when I kindle a fire at the walls of Damascus.”

Arabian kingdoms of the eastern desert to be attacked by Babylon

⁴³The word of the Lord concerning the eastern

*24 Bethel was the former site of calf worship by the exiled northern kingdom of Israel.

*32 The Dedanites were an Arabian tribe who lived among the Edomites.

*32 The Edomites were descendants of Esau, the twin brother of Jacob.



Nations prophesied against by Jeremiah

kingdoms of Kedar and Hazor. "Rise up O king of Babylon and attack Kedar. Destroy the people of the east. Their tents and flocks shall be spoil for you along with all their possessions and camels."

⁴⁴"Flee quickly and hide in deep caves you who live in Hazor, for Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon plans to come against you too. Your camels and large herds shall become spoil."

⁴⁵"Arise O king and attack this nation at ease, that lives secure without gates or bars."

⁴⁶"Hazor will become a deserted place, a haunt of jackals. No one will live there again."

12

Eventual capture of Babylon described

¹The word of the Lord concerning Babylon and the land of the Babylonians. "Announce to the nations, 'Babylon shall be taken. Her gods Bel and Marduk shall be put to shame.'"

²"The Lord has stirred up the kings of the Medes,^{F*} for his purpose is to destroy Babylon in vengeance for his Temple."

³"A mighty nation and many kings are stirring from the furthestmost parts of the earth. They are coming to plunder Babylon, armed with bows and spears and without mercy. ⁴They sound like the roar of the sea

*2 The Medes (of Media, formerly part of modern Iran) were a warlike people who lived north east of Babylon. They afflicted the Babylonians for nearly half a century until defeated by Cyrus the king of Persia (modern Iran) prior to his capturing Babylon.

as they ride their horses to attack."^{F*}

⁵"The king of Babylon has received a report of their coming. His hands hang limp. Anguish grips him. Messengers follow one another saying 'The city is taken at one end,' 'The river crossings are seized,' 'The marshes are set on fire.' ⁶His soldiers are terrified, they have given up fighting."

⁷"Raise a shout! She has surrendered! This is the vengeance of the Lord, to do to her as she has done to others. The workers of the fields shall flee to their own lands."

Babylon to have done to her as she has done to others

⁸"For the Lord says:

'A sword against the Babylonians!

'A sword against her officials and wise men!

'A sword against her false prophets!

⁹'A sword against her warriors!

'A sword against her horses and chariots!

'A sword against her treasures!"

¹⁰"You who live by the river and are rich in treasures, your end has come. Your high gates are set on fire. ¹¹All who plunder the land of Babylon will have their fill. They will do to her as she has done to others."

City of Babylon to become uninhabited forever

¹²"Wail over Babylon for she cannot be healed. Her guilt reaches to the skies. She

*4 The first invasion of Babylon was by the Persian emperor Cyrus the Great, who allowed Jews who wished to return to Judah to do so (Haggai 1:1-2). About 200 years later Babylon was invaded a second time, this time by the Greek emperor Alexander the Great, who occupied Babylon and made the city his empire headquarters. According to historic accounts, in both instances the Babylonians surrendered and opened the city gates to their conquerors. Babylon dwindled and died after the death of Alexander the Great who died of fever in the city.

shall be greatly ashamed and become the least of cities.”

¹³“Her canals shall dry up and she will become a dry desert, for she has sinned against Jehovah.”

¹⁴“No one will live in her, both men and animals shall flee away. Only desert creatures and hyenas will live there. The city shall never again be inhabited from generation to generation.”

¹⁵“All who pass by will be appalled and hiss because of her wounds.”



An artist's view of the splendour of old Babylon based on the ruins.



The main street of Babylon today.

Faithful exiles of Israel and Judah to return to Judah after the fall of Babylon

¹⁶“In those days exiles of Israel and Judah shall seek the Lord their God in tears. They shall ask the way to Jerusalem and will return and join themselves to me in an everlasting covenant.”

¹⁷“You of my people who have escaped the sword, leave, do not linger. Remember Jehovah in distant Jerusalem. Flee from Babylon!”

Israel devoured like lost sheep

¹⁸“My people have been as lost sheep. Their shepherds have led them astray and

caused them to wander. Whoever found them devoured them.”

¹⁹“The first to devour them was the king of Assyria, and now the king of Babylon is to gnaw on their bones. ²⁰He will say, ‘We are not guilty, for they sinned against Jehovah the God of their fathers.’”

²⁰“Therefore I will punish the king of Babylon and his land as I punished the king of Assyria.”

A remnant of Israel to return

²¹“But I will bring a remnant of Israel back to their own pasture and their appetite shall be satisfied on the hills of Ephraim and Gilead.”

The spared of Israel and Judah to have their sins forgiven

²²“There shall be no more guilt, for I will forgive the sins of the remnant of Israel and Judah that I have spared.”

13

Jeremiah told to write his prophecies on a scroll to remind Judah, who may repent

¹In the fourth year of Jehoiakim king of Judah this word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: “Write on a scroll all the words I have spoken concerning Judah and the other nations, from the time I first began speaking to you.”

²“Perhaps when the people of Judah are reminded of all the disasters I plan to inflict upon them, they will turn from their wicked ways so that I can forgive them.”

Jeremiah's scribe Baruch writes the words

³So Jeremiah called for his scribe Baruch and dictated all that the Lord had spoken to him and Baruch wrote the words on a scroll.

Jeremiah tells Baruch to read the words to the people as he is banned from speaking

⁴Then Jeremiah said to Baruch, “I am no longer permitted to speak at the Lord's Temple. You go there on the next fast day and read to the people from the scroll you wrote. ⁵Perhaps they will turn from their wicked ways, for the wrath pronounced against them by the Lord is great.”

⁶So Baruch did as Jeremiah asked.

Baruch becomes sorrowful and weary

⁷Afterward Baruch said to Jeremiah, “Woe is me. I have a heavy heart. Jehovah adds sorrow upon sorrow to me. I am weary and can find no rest.”

The Lord promises to protect Baruch's life

⁸Jeremiah replied, “Jehovah says to you Baruch, ‘I am about to uproot what I have planted in this land. Do not seek honour for yourself for distress is coming upon all people, nevertheless I will protect your life.’”

Micaiah a city official hears the words of the scroll

⁹In the ninth month of the fifth year of Jehoiakim a fast day was proclaimed for the

JEREMIAH 14

people in Jerusalem. So Baruch took the scroll and again went to read the words of Jeremiah to the people in the courtyard of the Temple.

¹⁰When Micaiah one of the city officials heard the words of the scroll he went down to the secretary and city officials at the palace and told them of the things he had heard from the scroll.

The city officials send for Baruch and have him read the scroll to them

¹¹The officials sent for Baruch saying, "Bring with you the scroll which you read to the people."

¹²When Baruch came they said to him, "Sit down and read it to us." So he read it to them.

The city officials are alarmed at the prophecies

¹³When the officials heard the prophecies they looked at one other in alarm and said, "We must report these words to the king."

¹⁴Then they said to Baruch, "How did you come to write all this?"

¹⁵Baruch replied, "Jeremiah dictated the words and I wrote them in ink on the scroll."

The officials take the scroll into the king

¹⁶The officials said to Baruch, "You and Jeremiah go into hiding." Then they took the scroll into the king.

King Jehoiakim listens but burns the scroll piece by piece

¹⁷King Jehoiakim ordered his aid Jehudi to read the words of the scroll to him in the presence of his attendants.

¹⁸The king was sitting in his winter apartment with a fire burning in a brazier before him. Whenever Jehudi read three or four columns of the scroll, the king would cut them off with a knife and throw them in the fire until the entire scroll was burned.

¹⁹The king and his attendants showed no fear, nor did they tear their clothes. Even though the secretary and the two officials with him urged the king not to burn the scroll he did not listen to them.

Baruch and Jeremiah ordered to be arrested but cannot be found

²⁰Instead the king ordered that Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet be arrested. But they could not be found.

Jeremiah told by the Lord to make another scroll

²¹Then this word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: "Take another scroll and write on it the words that were on the first which Jehoiakim king of Judah burned in the fire."

King Jehoiakim and his sons cursed by the Lord

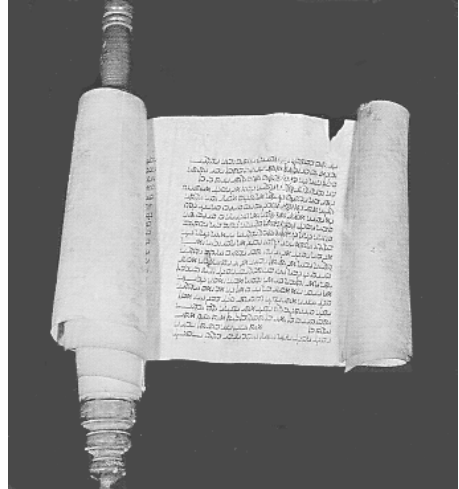
²²"Then go and say to Jehoiakim, 'Jehovah says, You have dared to burn this scroll, therefore you will not have a son to sit on the throne of David. Furthermore your dead body will be thrown out of Jerusalem and

exposed to the heat of the day and the frost of night.'"^{F*}

²³"I will punish you and your children and your attendants for their wickedness. I shall bring upon them and the people of Judah every disaster I threatened against them, for they have not listened to me."

Many other words added to the new scroll

²⁴So Jeremiah took another scroll and Baruch wrote on it all the words of the former scroll and many other words were also added.



An old ink-written scroll found in Israel.

14

Jeremiah sent to give Jehoiakim commandments and a warning

¹The Lord said to Jeremiah, "Go to the palace of Jehoiakim king of Judah and proclaim this message: 'Hear the word of Jehovah O king of Judah, you who sit on David's throne, you and your officials. ²"Do what is just and right. Defend the oppressed. Do no wrong to the foreigner, the fatherless, or the widow and do not shed innocent blood."

³"If you keep these commandments then kings who sit on David's throne will continue to pass through the gates of this palace, riding in chariots and on horses and accompanied by their officials."

⁴"But if you do not obey these commands destroyers will come and burn your fine cedar panelling and your palace and this city will become a ruin."

⁵"Travellers passing by will say to one another, 'Why has Jehovah done such a thing to this great city?'"

*22 See note on Jeremiah 15:3 for the fulfilment of this prophecy.

Judean exiles will never see their native land again

⁶“Weep not for the dead king O travellers, weep for those who have been exiled for they shall never see their native land again. F*
⁷“Jehoahaz king of Judah has already gone from this place and shall never return.” F*

King Jehoiakim rebuked for building a larger palace

⁸“Woe to you Jehoiakim, you who have built your palace in unrighteousness, making your countrymen work and not paying them for their labour.”

⁹“You said, ‘I shall build myself a larger palace with spacious upper rooms.’ So you built it with large windows and panelled it with cedar and decorated it in crimson.”

All went well with king Jehoiakim’s father Josiah because he defended the poor and needy

¹⁰“Does it make you a better king O Jehoiakim, to have more and more cedar? Did not your father Josiah have food and drink and do what was right and just?”

¹¹“He defended the poor and needy so all went well with him. Is that not what it means to know me?”

King Jehoiakim to suffer the shameful burial of a donkey

¹²“But your heart is set on dishonest gain, on shedding innocent blood and on oppression and extortion.”

¹³“I warned you when you felt secure, but you said, ‘I will not listen.’ This has been your way from your youth, you have not obeyed me.”

¹⁴“Therefore your people will not mourn you. You shall have the burial of a donkey, dragged away and thrown outside the gates of Jerusalem.”

The Recabite family to be offered wine

¹⁵“Then this word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: ‘Go to the Recabite family and invite them into one of the rooms of the Temple. There offer them wine to drink.’”

¹⁶“So I went to Jaazaniah and his brothers and all his sons, the whole family of the Recabites^{F*} and took them into an upper room of the house of the Lord.^{F*} There I set cups of wine before them and said to them, ‘Drink some wine.’”

The Recabite’s refuse to drink the wine

¹⁷“But they replied, ‘We do not drink wine. Our forefather Jonadab, son of Recab gave us

this command: ‘Neither you nor your descendants must ever drink wine.’¹⁸Also you must never build houses, sow seed, or plant vineyards, but must always live in tents. Then you will live many days in the land where you are staying.”

¹⁹“We have obeyed all that our forefather commanded us. Neither we nor our wives, nor our children have ever drunk wine or built houses or had vineyards, fields or crops.”

²⁰“We have lived in tents. But when Nebuchadnezzar invaded the land we came here to Jerusalem to escape the Babylonian armies.”

The Lord commends the faithfulness of the Recabites

²¹Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah. “Go say to the people of Judah, ‘Jehovah says, Will you not learn a lesson from the Recabites? Jonadab son of Recab commanded his sons not to drink wine and this command has been kept to this day.

²²But I have commanded you again and again and you have not obeyed me.”

²³“Therefore I am going to bring on Judah every disaster I pronounced against them, for I spoke to them but they did not listen.”

The Recabites blessed to serve the Lord for all time

²⁴“But the descendants of Jonadab son of Recab shall never lack a man in my service for all time.” F*

15

After three years Jehoiakim rebels against Nebuchadnezzar

¹After paying tribute for three years, Jehoiakim the king rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.

Jerusalem besieged by a Babylonian army

²So the king of Babylon sent an army to attack Judah and lay siege to Jerusalem.

King Jehoiakim dies during the siege

³During the siege Jehoiakim died.^{F*} He had reigned eleven years in Jerusalem.

Jehoiachin becomes king but also does evil

⁴His eighteen year old son Jehoiachin became king. He also did evil in the eyes of the Lord, just as his father had done.

Jehoiachin and his mother

cursed by Lord to die in Babylon

⁵This word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: “Say to Jehoiachin king of Judah, ‘Jehovah says, As surely as I live, even if you were a ring on my right hand I would still pull you off.’”

*6 In Jeremiah 12:16 the Lord promised that the exiles should eventually return to Jerusalem, however 70 years were to elapse (Jeremiah 10:27 and all the adults he is addressing would die in exile and not see Jerusalem again, only their children would return.

*7 Jehoahaz was exiled to Egypt by Pharaoh Neco (Jeremiah 5:13).

*16 The Recabites, also known as Kenites were descendants of Moses’ brother-in-law Hobab (Numbers 3:5-7). They were therefore not full blooded Israelites.

*16 This room would have been located in the outer courtyard of the temple. Only priests were permitted to enter the temple proper, and then normally only to burn incense.

*24 According to Jewish tradition the Recabites were later given special duties in the rebuilt temple following the return from Babylonian exile.

*3 According to Jewish tradition the body of Jehoiakim was dragged outside the gates of Jerusalem and left unburied, perhaps to appease the besieging Babylonians. Such disrespectful treatment of a dead king was unheard of in Judah and indicates that he was hated by his people.

JEREMIAH 15

⁶“I will hurl you and your mother into another land and there you shall both die. You will never return here. I am handing you over to those whom you fear, even Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon.”

⁷“This man Jehoiachin is a despised broken pot, a man who shall not prosper in his days. Record him as childless for none of his sons will prosper and none will sit on the throne of David.”

The Lord to punish Judah’s uncaring and wicked shepherds

⁸“Woe to the shepherds who are scattering my sheep. I Jehovah the God of Israel say to the shepherds who tend my people, ‘Because you have scattered my flock and not cared for them, I shall punish you for your wickedness.’”

The Lord to appoint righteous shepherds when he restores his people

⁹“The days are coming when I will gather a remnant of my flock from the nations where I have driven them, and bring them back to their pasture.”

¹⁰“I will place shepherds over them who will tend them and they will no longer fear, nor shall any be lost.”

A righteous King (the Messiah) to be raised up from David’s line

¹¹“And the day will surely come when I shall raise up from David a righteous branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the earth.” ^{F*}

¹²“In his day Judah and Israel will be saved and live in safety. The name by which he will be called is Jehovah the Righteous.” ^{F*}

¹³“In that day people will no longer say, ‘As surely as Jehovah lives who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt’ but shall say ‘As surely as Jehovah lives who brought the descendants of Israel from the lands of the north and out of all the countries where he had banished them.’ ^{F*}

Jeremiah’s heart broken by the wickedness around him

¹⁴“My heart is broken within me and my bones tremble. The prophets follow an evil course and use their power unjustly and the land is full of adulterers.”

Judah still parched and more disaster to come

¹⁵“Because of the curse the land lies parched and withered. For the Lord says, ‘Both prophet and priest are godless. Even in my Temple I find wickedness. Therefore I shall bring disaster on them in the year they are punished.’”

*11 This prophecy is believed to refer to the Messiah (Jesus Christ) who was a descendant of David through Mary his mother. During the 1000 year millennium he will reign as ‘King of kings’ over the entire earth and a resurrected David will reign as king over a reunited Israel (Ezekiel 11:20).

*12 Both Jesus Christ and God the Father share the name/title Jehovah. See note on Genesis 2:9 for fuller explanation.

*13 The main gathering of Israel is to take place after the second coming of Jesus Christ (see introduction to Joel).

The false prophets of Jerusalem worse than those who were of Samaria

¹⁶“The prophets of Samaria prophesied by Baal and led my people Israel astray. But I see even worse wickedness in the prophets of Jerusalem. They commit adultery and live a lie, so that no one turns from his wickedness. All have become like Sodom and Gomorrah to me.”

Jerusalem’s false prophets have spread ungodliness throughout the land

¹⁷“Therefore I will punish the false prophets of Jerusalem, for from them ungodliness has spread throughout the land.”

The people warned not to listen to the dreams and lies of false prophets

¹⁸“Do not listen to what they prophesy to you. They fill you with false hope. They speak visions from their own minds, not from my mouth. They say ‘No harm will come to you.’”

¹⁹“But which of them has stood in the council of Jehovah to hear his word? If they had stood in my council they would have proclaimed my words to my people and would have turned them from their evil ways.”

²⁰“I have heard what these prophets say who prophesy lies in my name. ‘I had a dream. I had a dream.’ They plan to make my people forget my name by their dreams, just as their fathers forgot my name for Baal.”

The true word of the Lord like fire

²¹“Let the prophet who has a dream tell his dream, but let the one who has my word speak it faithfully. ²²For what has straw in common with wheat? Is not my word like fire. Is it not like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?”

²³“I am also against prophets who steal my words from another, or use their own words to declare falsely.”

²⁴“Therefore I will surely cast all of you and this city away from my presence and shall bring upon you lasting disgrace.”

Jehoiachin surrenders to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon

²⁵While the army officers of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon were besieging the city, King Nebuchadnezzar himself came up to Jerusalem.

²⁶Then Jehoiachin king of Judah surrendered to him and Nebuchadnezzar took him prisoner. He had reigned in Jerusalem three months and ten days.

Nebuchadnezzar takes treasures from the Temple and palace

²⁷Nebuchadnezzar removed treasures from the Temple of the Lord and afterward took them back to Babylon and put them in his Temple there. He also carried away treasures from the royal palace.

THE FIRST EXILE
The nobles, skilled craftsmen and
army taken into exile

²⁸Nebuchadnezzar then exiled to Babylon the king Jehoiachin and his mother, and his wives. Also his officials, the nobles of the land, 1000 skilled craftsmen and the entire army of 7000 fighting men, a total of 10,000 persons.

Nebuchadnezzar appoints Zedekiah king of Judah
²⁹Nebuchadnezzar chose the uncle of Jehoiachin to be king in his place. His name was Mattaniahin but Nebuchadnezzar changed it to Zedekiah.^{F*}

16

Zedekiah an unrighteous king

¹Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king and he did wrong in the eyes of the Lord just as Jehoiakim had done. ²He did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet or heed the words the Lord spoke through him. Neither did his officials or the remaining people of the land.

³King Zedekiah did however send a priest to Jeremiah with this message: "Please pray to Jehovah our God for us."

Jeremiah's vision of the good and bad figs

⁴"After the king Jehoiachin and the nobles and craftsmen of Judah had been carried into exile to Babylon, the Lord showed me two baskets of figs. One basket had very good figs and the other basket had bad figs."

⁵"The Lord said to me, 'What do you see Jeremiah?'"

⁶"I answered. 'Figs. The good ones are very good but the bad ones are so rotten they cannot be eaten.'

The good figs represent those who have gone into exile

⁷"Then the Lord said, 'The exiles from Judah whom I sent away to the land of the Babylonians are like these good figs.^{F*} My eyes shall watch over them for their good, and I shall bring them back to this land.'

⁸"I will give them a heart to know that I am the Lord. They shall be my people for they shall return to me with all their heart."

The bad figs are the rest of the people of Judah

⁹"But Zedekiah and his officials and the people who remain in Judah, and those who live in Egypt^{F*} are like the bad figs which are so rotten they cannot be eaten."

Soon no one will be left in Judah

¹⁰"I will make them abhorrent to all the kingdoms of the earth, an object of ridicule and cursing wherever I banish them, and I will send the sword, famine and plague

against them until none are left in this land I gave to their fathers."

The false prophets prophesy lies

¹¹"So I went and declared to the priests and people of Jerusalem, 'Jehovah says, Heed not the false prophets who say, "Very soon now the treasures from the Temple will be brought back from Babylon." They prophesy lies to you. ¹²Serve the king of Babylon and you will live. Why should Jerusalem become a ruin?'"

Remaining Temple treasures also to be taken to Babylon

¹³"Furthermore the bronze pillars, the large bronze basin and twelve oxen, the wheeled stands and other vessels that remain in the house of the Lord, which the king of Babylon did not take away, will also be taken to Babylon. ¹⁴They shall remain there until the day I restore them to this place."

Jeremiah to wear a wooden yoke and prophesy to visiting envoys

¹⁵"Early in the reign of Zedekiah the Lord said to me, 'Make a yoke out of straps and wooden crossbars. Wear it on your neck as you give this message to the envoys of the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon as they come to Jerusalem to visit Zedekiah king of Judah.'

Jehovah the God of Israel made the earth and all that is on it

¹⁶"Jehovah Almighty the God of Israel says, Tell this to your masters: 'With my great power I made this earth and its people and the animals thereon, and I give it to whoever I please.'

Lord has handed over all surrounding nations to Babylon

¹⁷"I have now handed over your land to my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. All the nations of this region shall serve him, and also his son and his grandson until the time of his own land is fulfilled. ¹⁸Then other nations and kings will overthrow Babylon."^{F*}

Surrounding nations can escape exile if they serve the king of Babylon

¹⁹"If you refuse to serve Nebuchadnezzar, I will punish you with the sword, famine and plague until I destroy you by his hand."

²⁰"So heed not your prophets, your diviners, your interpreters of dreams, your mediums or your sorcerers when they say to you, 'You will not serve the king of Babylon.' ²¹They are prophesying lies that will only cause you to be exiled far from your lands, where you will perish."

*18 Babylon was overthrown by the combined armies of the Persian empire under the leadership of Cyrus the Great, about 55 years after this prophecy, and again about 200 years later by the combined armies of the Greek or Hellenistic empire under Alexander the Great.

*29 Zedekiah was the last king of David's line.

*7 The future prophet Ezekiel was among these exiles.

*9 Many Jews had fled to Egypt for safety.

JEREMIAH 17

²²“But if you will bow your neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him, I shall let you remain in your own land and till it.”

The false prophecy of the prophet Hananiah

²³In the fifth month of that same year, early in the reign of Zedekiah, as Jeremiah was wearing the wooden yoke, he heard the prophet Hananiah prophesy in the house of the Lord in the presence of the priests and the people.

²⁴Hananiah said, “Jehovah the God of Israel says, ‘I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon and within two years I will bring back to this Temple all the treasures that Nebuchadnezzar took to Babylon. ²⁵I shall also bring back Jehoiachin king of Judah and all the other exiles from Judah who went to Babylon.’”

Predictions of a true prophet come to pass

²⁶Jeremiah said to the prophet Hananiah, “May the Lord do so. Nevertheless, a prophet who prophesies peace will be known as one sent by the Lord only if his prediction comes to pass.”

Hananiah breaks Jeremiah’s wooden yoke

²⁷At these words Hananiah seized the wooden yoke from the neck of Jeremiah and broke it and said, “Jehovah says, ‘In this same way will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar from the neck of the nations, within two years.’”

Nebuchadnezzar to be like a yoke of iron on the nations

²⁸Shortly after Hananiah had broken the wooden yoke this word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, “Go and say to Hananiah, ‘Jehovah says, You have broken a wooden yoke, but in its place shall come a yoke of iron. ²⁹I will put an iron yoke on the necks of the nations and make them serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.’”

The Lord curses Hananiah the false prophet and he dies

³⁰Then Jeremiah said to Hananiah, “*Jehovah has not sent you. You have persuaded this nation to trust in lies. Therefore Jehovah says, ‘This very year you will die for you have preached rebellion against me.’*”

³¹In the following month Hananiah the prophet died.

17

Jeremiah writes to the exiles

^{1A} letter proclaiming the word of the Lord that Jeremiah sent to the exiles who had been carried into Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar:

Build houses and settle down in Babylon

²“Jehovah the God of Israel says to all whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ‘Build houses and settle down. Plant gardens and eat what they produce.’”

³“Marry and have children. Find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage so they too may have children. Increase in number, do not decrease.”

Pray for and help prosper Babylon

⁴“Seek for the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have exiled you. Pray to Jehovah for Babylon, for if Babylon prospers you too will prosper.”

The false prophets Ahab and Zedekiah will be burnt to death

⁵“Let not false prophets and diviners among you deceive you. Heed not their lies and their dreams. I have not sent them.”

⁶“Ahab and Zedekiah^{F*} are prophesying lies to you in my name.”

⁷“Therefore the king of Babylon will put them to death by fire before your very eyes.”

⁸“Moreover you will use this as a curse: ‘May the Lord treat you like Ahab and Zedekiah whom the king of Babylon burned in the fire.’”

⁹“For they are guilty of outrageous things. They have committed adultery with other men’s wives, and in my name they have spoken lies.”

The fate of those remaining in Judah

¹⁰“As for Zedekiah the king and all the people who did not go with you into exile, I will send famine and plague and the sword against them, and make them like rotten figs that are so bad they cannot be eaten.”

¹¹“I will make the remnant who survive, objects of cursing and horror among the nations where I drive them. For they did not listen to my words, and you exiles did not listen either.”

Exiles to return from Babylon in seventy years

¹²“Nevertheless when the seventy years are fulfilled for Babylon, I will bring you back to Jerusalem. For my plan is to prosper you and not to harm you. To give you hope and a future.”

Returned exiles will find the Lord if they seek him with all their heart

¹³“Then you will pray to me and I shall hear you. Then you will find me, if you seek me with all your heart.”

Shemaiah a false prophet in exile sends a letter to Jerusalem to have Jeremiah silenced

¹⁴When the prophet Shemaiah who was among the exiles in Babylon read the letter Jeremiah had sent, he wrote to Zephaniah the priest in charge of the Temple in Jerusalem, saying:

*6 Ahab and Zedekiah (not the king) were two false prophets among the exiles.

15“Jehovah has appointed you to be in charge of the Temple, and to put any madman who acts like a prophet into the stocks. Why then have you not punished Jeremiah who poses as a prophet among you?”

16“He has sent us a letter saying that we will be exiled here in Babylon a long time, and that we should build houses and settle down and plant gardens.”

Shemaiah cursed by the Lord to have no descendants

17Zephaniah however read the letter to Jeremiah.

18Then this word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: “Send a letter to the exiles saying, ‘Jehovah says, “Shemaiah has prophesied lies to you. I did not send him.”’

19“Therefore I will punish Shemaiah. Neither he nor his sons shall live to see the good things I will do for my people, for he has preached rebellion against me.”

Jeremiah sends his Babylonian prophecies to Babylon by Seraiah one of Zedekiah’s officials

20In the fourth year of the reign of Zedekiah, the prophet Jeremiah wrote on a scroll all the disasters recorded concerning Babylon. Then he gave the scroll to Seraiah, one of the king’s officials who was to accompany the king on a trip to Babylon.

Seraiah to read the prophesy in Babylon then throw it into the Euphrates

21Jeremiah said to him, “When you get to Babylon see that you read all these words aloud. 22Then you are to tie a stone to the scroll and throw it into the Euphrates and cry out, ‘So will Babylon sink, to rise no more.’”

18

Jeremiah commanded to write all his words in a book for future generations

1The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: “Write in a book these words and all the other words I have spoken to you, for the day shall come when I will restore the fortunes of both Israel and Judah, and bring them back to the land I gave their forefathers to possess.”

A message from the Lord to all nations of the earth

2“Hear the word of Jehovah O nations of the earth. ‘The day shall come when I who scattered Israel will gather them again and watch over my flock like a shepherd. 3I will ransom Jacob^{F*} and redeem him from a hand stronger than his.”

The fearful day of the coming of the Lord

4“In that day cries of fear shall be heard.

*3 Jacob was the original name of Israel, the father of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Strong men shall be like women in labour, their faces a deathly pale.”

5“**How terrible that day will be. None will be like it. It shall also be a time of trouble for Israel, but Israel will be rescued.**”

David to be leader of gathered Israel during millennium

6“**In that day scattered Israel will no longer be servants to foreigners, instead they will serve Jehovah their God, and David whom I shall raise up for them. They shall be my people and I will be their God.**”

All the wicked to be destroyed from the earth in the last days

7“**In that day the storm of Jehovah shall burst upon the heads of the wicked of the earth. My fierce anger will not turn back until I fully accomplish the purposes of my heart. In those days you will understand this.**”

8“**Jerusalem shall be rebuilt on her ruins and the royal palace will stand in its rightful place.**”

Israel to be gathered from the very ends of the earth

9“**I will gather Israel from the lands of the north and from the very ends of the earth. The blind, the lame, women with children and expectant mothers. A great company shall return.**”

10“**They shall come weeping and praying and I will lead them beside streams of water on level paths where they will not stumble.**

11**For I am Israel’s father, and Ephraim^{F*} is my firstborn son, the child in whom I delight. Though I often speak against him my heart yearns for him.**”

The people to shout for joy

12“**They shall come and shout for joy on the heights of Zion.^{F*} They shall rejoice in the grain, the new wine and the oil, the young of the flocks and herds. 13Israel shall be like a well-watered garden and will sorrow no more.**”

Dancing and gladness in Israel

14“**Maidens will dance and be joyful, the young men and elderly as well. I will turn mourning into gladness. I shall give them comfort and joy instead of sorrow. 15Just as I watched over them to uproot and destroy, so shall I watch over them to build and to plant.**”

People to be punished only for own sins

16“**In those days people will no longer say, ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children’s teeth are set on edge.’ Instead each person will be punished for his own sins.**”

*11 Ephraim was the dominant tribe of the so called ‘lost tribes of Israel’ those exiled from the northern kingdom and lost to history. The vast majority of these Israelites will probably not be gathered until after the return of Christ. (See introduction to Joel.)

*12 Zion is the hill in Jerusalem where the Temple and king’s palace were located.

A new covenant to be made with the house of Israel

16“**For the time is coming when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel.**”

17“**It shall not be like the covenant of old that I made with their forefathers when I led them out of Egypt, for they broke that covenant.** 18**This time I will put my law in their minds and write it upon their hearts.**”

19“**No longer will it be needful for a man to teach another to know the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least to the greatest.**”

A message from the Lord to scattered Israel

20“**O Israel, though I completely destroy all the nations among which I scatter you, I shall not completely destroy you, but will discipline you with justice.**”

21“**I will punish you as do the cruel, for your guilt is great, but all who devour you shall be devoured.** 22**Then I will at last heal your wounds, for you will have been called outcasts for whom no one cares.**”

Virgin Israel to dance and sing with joy

23“**O virgin Israel, again you shall take up your tambourines and go out to dance with joy. Songs of thanksgiving will be heard.**”

Israel no longer to be despised

24“**Again you shall plant vineyards on the hills of Samaria and enjoy their fruit. I will bring you honour. You will no longer be despised.**”

19

Zedekiah rebels against the king of Babylon

1In the ninth year of Zedekiah’s reign he hardened his heart and rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar,^{F*} even though the king of Babylon had made him take an oath in God’s name. Nor did he turn to Jehovah the God of Israel.

The people of Judah now even more unfaithful

2Furthermore the leaders of the priests and the people of Judah had become more and more unfaithful, following all the abominable practices of the nations and defiling the Temple of the Lord.^{F*}

3The Lord had sent word to them again and again through his prophet Jeremiah, but they mocked him until the wrath of the Lord was so aroused against his people there was no remedy.

Nebuchadnezzar’s armies come and besiege Jerusalem

4So on the tenth day of the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon marched against Judah with his armies. They camped outside Jerusalem and built siege works all around the city.

*1 Zedekiah felt confident in doing so as he had negotiated a defence agreement with Egypt (see verse 16).

*2 Some of these idolatrous practices that took place in the temple were shown to Ezekiel the prophet who was at this time exiled in Babylon (see Ezekiel chapter 3).

King Zedekiah asks Jeremiah to inquire of the Lord

5Zedekiah sent Zephaniah the priest to Jeremiah to say, “Inquire of the Lord for us. Perhaps Jehovah will perform wonders for us as in times past so that Nebuchadnezzar will withdraw.”

Only sword, famine and plague lie ahead

6But Jeremiah answered, “Tell Zedekiah, ‘Jehovah the God of Israel says, “**I will turn against you the very swords you are using to fight the Babylonians who are outside the wall besieging you.**”

7“**I myself will fight against you in anger and fury. I shall strike both men and animals in this city and they will die of plague.**”

8“**After that I shall hand over Zedekiah and those who survive the sword, famine and plague, to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. He shall put the people to the sword and show them no mercy.**”

Those who surrender to the Babylonians will escape with their lives

9“**However, even now I set before you a way of life and a way of death. Whoever stays in this city shall die by the sword, famine or plague. But whoever goes out and surrenders to the Babylonians will escape with his life.**”

10“**I have decreed this city harm. It shall be given into the hands of the king of Babylon and he will destroy it with fire.**”

Zedekiah told he will die peacefully in Babylon

11During the besieging of Jerusalem by the king of Babylon and the armies of the nations he ruled, this word of the Lord also came to Jeremiah: 12“**Go to Zedekiah king of Judah, and say to him, ‘Jehovah says, I have handed this city over to the king of Babylon and he will burn it down.’**”

13“**You shall not escape but will be captured and handed over to him. You shall see the king of Babylon face to face and he will speak with you, and you will go to Babylon.**”

14“**Yet hear this word O Zedekiah, ‘You shall not die by the sword but will die peacefully. As people made a funeral fire in honour of your father Josiah, so shall they make a fire in your honour.’**”

Two other cities of Judah also being besieged

15Two other cities of Judah were also holding out against the army of Babylon; Lachish and Azekah. These were the only fortified cities left in Judah.

Egypt comes to help Judah and the Babylonian army temporarily withdraw

16While the Babylonians were besieging Jerusalem, Pharaoh’s army marched out of Egypt to support Judah. The Babylonians heard the report and withdrew from Jerusalem.

The Lord reveals that the Babylonians will return and burn Jerusalem

¹⁷Then Zedekiah sent a message to Jeremiah the prophet to inquire of the Lord.

¹⁸Jeremiah sent back this reply: "Jehovah says, 'Pharaoh's army which set out to help you shall return to Egypt. Then the Babylonians will return and capture this city and burn it down.'"

¹⁹"Do not deceive yourselves thinking, 'The Babylonians will surely leave us.' For they shall not go away. ²⁰Even if you were to defeat the entire Babylonian army and only wounded men were left, they would still come and burn this city down."

Zedekiah orders all Israelite slaves to be freed

²¹Then Zedekiah made this proclamation to the people in Jerusalem: "Everyone is to free his Israelite slaves, both male and female. No one is to hold a fellow Israelite in slavery."

The people free their slaves with a covenant but later enslave them again

²²So the people agreed to free their slaves and even entered into a covenant in the Temple to do so.

²³But later they changed their minds and took their slaves back again.

The Lord curses the slave owners of Jerusalem to become a horror to all nations

²⁴This word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, "Say to the people, When I brought your forefathers out of Egypt I commanded them saying, 'Every seventh year you must free any fellow Israelite who has sold himself to you.'"

²⁵"Your fathers did not pay any attention to me. However recently you repented and did what was right in my sight. You even made a covenant before me in the house that bears my name."

²⁶"But now each of you have turned around and mocked my name. You have forced those you released to become your slaves again."

²⁷"As you have not obeyed me, I now proclaim a release for you. A release to fall by the sword, famine and plague. You will become a horror to all nations on earth."

The dead bodies of the slave owners who violated the covenant to lie unburied

²⁸"And the men who violated the covenant they made, I will hand over to the army of the king of Babylon who has withdrawn for a time. ²⁹Their dead bodies shall become food for the birds of the air and wild animals of the earth."

The Babylonians coming back to burn the cities of Judah

³⁰"I have given the order to bring the Babylonians back to this city. They shall fight against it and burn it down. I will lay waste the towns of Judah so that no one will live in them."

Jeremiah arrested for treason as he attempts to leave Jerusalem

¹During the time the Babylonian armies had withdrawn from Jerusalem because of Pharaoh's army, Jeremiah went to leave Jerusalem to go to his home town Anathoth to divide some property.

²But when he got to the Benjamin Gate the captain of the guard arrested him and said, "You are deserting to the Babylonians!"

³Jeremiah replied, "I am not deserting to the Babylonians." But the captain would not listen and took him before the officials.

Jeremiah beaten and imprisoned in a dungeon

⁴They too were angry with Jeremiah and had him beaten and imprisoned in a dungeon.

Jeremiah consulted by Zedekiah

⁵Zedekiah sent for him and had him brought to the palace and said to him privately, "Is there any word from the Lord?"

⁶Jeremiah replied, "There is, 'You will be handed over to the king of Babylon.'"

Jeremiah pleads with the king not to send him back to the dungeon

⁷Then Jeremiah said to the king, "What crime have I committed that you keep me in prison? Where are the prophets who prophesied that the king of Babylon would not come against you? ⁸Hear my plea O lord my king, do not send me back to the dungeon or I will die there." F*

Jeremiah removed from the dungeon and confined in the guard's quarters

⁹So Zedekiah gave orders for Jeremiah to be confined in the quarters of the guards and to be given a small loaf of bread from the bakers each day while the bread in the city lasted.

The king's officials seek Jeremiah's death for treason

¹⁰Now the king's officials had heard what Jeremiah had been telling the people when he said, "Jehovah says, 'Whoever stays in this city shall die by the sword, famine or plague, but whoever goes out to the Babylonians will escape with his life.'"

¹¹The officials said to the king, "This man should be put to death for he is discouraging the guards who are defending the city, as well as all the people."

The king fears to oppose his officials

¹²Zedekiah answered, "He is in your hands," for he feared to oppose them.

Jeremiah left to die in a muddy underground water cistern

¹³So they took Jeremiah and lowered him down by ropes into an underground water cistern near the quarters of the guard. It had no water in it, only mud and Jeremiah sank into the mud.

*8 Jeremiah was now about 55 years old.

JEREMIAH 21

An Ethiopian eunuch rescues Jeremiah

¹⁴But Ebed-Melech, an Ethiopian eunuch in the royal palace went to the king who was sitting at the Benjamin Gate and said to him, "My lord the king, these men have acted wickedly in what they have done to Jeremiah the prophet. They have put him into a cistern where he will starve to death."

¹⁵The king replied, "Very well, take three men from here and lift him out of the cistern before he dies."

¹⁶So Ebed-Melech took some men with him and they pulled Jeremiah up with ropes and he remained confined in the quarters of the guard.

The Lord rewards the Ethiopian with his life

¹⁷Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, "Say to Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian: 'Jehovah says, I am about to fulfil my words against this city, but I shall rescue you on that day. ¹⁸You shall not fall by the sword but will escape with your life, because of your faithfulness.'"



The top view of a typical underground water cistern where Jeremiah was left to die.

21

The Babylonian armies return to the siege

¹In the tenth year of Zedekiah^{F*} the armies of the king of Babylon returned and again besieged Jerusalem.

Jeremiah buys a field off his cousin

²The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet who was still confined in the quarters of the guard in the royal palace of Judah, 'Hanamel your cousin is coming to you and will say, 'Buy my field at Anathoth, for as nearest kin it is your duty to buy it.'"

³"My cousin Hanamel came to me in the quarters of the guard and spoke these words as the Lord said, so I bought the field from my cousin. ⁴I signed the deed and had both copies witnessed and then weighed out for him seventeen shekels of silver^{F*} on the scales."

The property deed a sign to the people that daily life in Judah will one day return to normal

⁵"I gave the copies of the deed to Baruch in the presence of my cousin and of all the Jews^{F*} sitting in the quarters of the guard."

⁶"Then I gave Baruch these instructions: 'Jehovah the God of Israel says, "Take these deeds, both the sealed copy and the open copy and put them in a clay jar so they will last a long time. For houses, fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land.'"

The Babylonians to destroy the homes of those who worshipped other gods

⁷"The Babylonians who are attacking this city shall break through and set it on fire. They will destroy the houses where the people provoked me to anger by worshipping other gods on their roofs."

The abominations of Israel and Judah

⁸"The people of Israel and the people of Judah have done nothing but evil in my sight, from their youth. And from the day it was built this city has so aroused my anger that I must remove it from my sight."

⁹"They even set up their abominable idols in the house that bears my name and defiled it. They offered up their sons and daughters to Molech in the valley of Hinnom."

Jerusalem to be surely gathered again

¹⁰"But I will surely gather the people of this city again from all the lands where I drove them in my great wrath. They shall be my people and I shall be their God."

Judah and Jerusalem will one day be restored as they were before

¹¹While Jeremiah was imprisoned this word of the Lord came to him: "I who made the earth and whose name is Jehovah say, 'The houses and royal palace of this city that are being torn down to defend against the siege ramps will soon be filled with the corpses of men I will slay in my anger.'"

¹²"Nevertheless, even though the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem shall become a deserted wasteland empty of men and animals, the day will come when there shall be heard once more the sounds of joy and gladness. ¹³The voice of bride and bridegroom and the voices of those who bring offerings to the house of the Lord. For I shall restore the fortunes of this land as they were before."

The Messiah to spring up from David's line

¹⁴"The day shall also surely come when I will fulfil the promise I made to the house of Israel to cause a righteous branch to spring up from David's line.^{F*} He shall do what is just and right in the earth."

*1 The Babylonians had first arrived in the ninth year of Zedekiah.

*4 A shekel of silver was worth about a days wages.

*5 The term Jews at this stage referred to the people of Judah, later the term came to refer to Israelites of any tribe who returned to Israel after the Babylonian exile.

*14 The Messiah or Christ (see Isaiah 26:5-6 and note).

THE SECOND AND FINAL EXILE

22

Great glory for Israel in the millennium

¹⁵“In those days Judah and Jerusalem will live in safety and the nation shall be called ‘The land of Jehovah the Righteous.’”

David’s royal line and the Levite priesthood to continue throughout the millennium

¹⁶“David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel, nor will the Levite priests ever fail to have a man to stand before me to offer sacrifices.”^{F*}

Descendants of David and the Levites to become as numberless as sand on the seashore

¹⁷“I shall make the descendants of my servant David and the Levites who minister before me as countless as the stars of the sky and the sand on the seashore.”

Zedekiah summons Jeremiah privately and asks him for the word of the Lord

¹⁸At this time Zedekiah summoned Jeremiah privately to a room in the third gate of the Temple and said to him, “What message do you have for me from the Lord? Do not hide anything.”

¹⁹Jeremiah replied, “If I told you, you would put me to death, and you would not heed it.”

²⁰The king swore an oath to Jeremiah saying, “As Jehovah lives I shall neither kill you nor hand you over to those who are seeking your life.”

Zedekiah told that if he surrenders to Babylon he will save Jerusalem from fire

²¹Jeremiah said, “Jehovah the God of Israel says to you: ‘If you surrender to the officers of the king of Babylon your life and the lives of your family will be spared and this city shall not be burned.’”

King Zedekiah fears to surrender

²²Zedekiah replied, “I fear the Jews who have defected to the Babylonians. If I am handed over to them they will harm me.”

If Zedekiah refuses he and his family will suffer and the city will burn

²³Jeremiah prophesied, “*The Babylonians shall not hand you over. Obey Jehovah by doing what he says and it will go well with you.*”

²⁴“*But if you refuse to surrender, the Lord has shown me by vision that all your wives and children will be captured by the Babylonians. You too shall be seized by the king of Babylon and this city shall be burned.*”

²⁵The king said to Jeremiah, “Let no one know of this conversation or you may die.”

Jeremiah remains in prison until Jerusalem captured

²⁶Jeremiah remained imprisoned in the quarters of the guard until the day that Jerusalem was captured.

Severe starvation in Jerusalem during siege

¹Jerusalem withstood the siege until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. By the fourth month of that year the famine in the city was severe. There was no food at all for the people to eat.^{F*}

The Babylonian army break through the city wall and begin putting the survivors to the sword

²That same month the city wall was broken through and the Babylonian army began putting the survivors of Jerusalem to the sword. They did not pity the young men or young women, nor the aged. God handed them all over to Nebuchadnezzar.

Zedekiah and the city guards escape by night

³However that same night, even though the Babylonians still surrounded the city, Zedekiah and the city guards fled. ⁴They escaped through a gate between the two walls near the king’s garden and fled toward the Jordan river valley.

The Babylonians pursue Zedekiah and capture him

⁵The Babylonians pursued Zedekiah and captured him near Jericho. The city guards had deserted him and scattered. The king and his sons and officials were taken to the king of Babylon who was then at Riblah in Syria.

Zedekiah’s sons slaughtered before his eyes

⁶There at Riblah, Nebuchadnezzar slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his very eyes, and killed all of his officials.

Zedekiah blinded and taken to Babylon

⁷Then Nebuchadnezzar blinded Zedekiah’s eyes and bound him with bronze shackles and took him to Babylon where he kept him in prison until the day of his death.

⁸He had reigned in Jerusalem eleven years.

The Babylonian army plunder Jerusalem

⁹The commander of the Babylonian army returned to Jerusalem and carried off to Babylon all the remaining gold, silver and bronze articles from the Temple; the censers, sprinkling bowls, wick trimmers and dishes. ^{F*}

¹⁰He broke up the bronze pillars that stood at the entrance to the Temple. Also the wheeled stands and the large bronze basin and the twelve bronze bulls under it.

¹¹The bronze was carried back to Babylon. It was more than could be weighed.

The Temple, palace and houses burned

¹²Then he burned the Temple. He also burned the royal palace and destroyed every important building and house in Jerusalem and broke down the city walls.

*1 This last siege lasted a whole year. In Jeremiah’s book of Lamentations he speaks of mothers eating their own children (Lamentations 2:4), this was also prophesied by the Lord (Jeremiah 9:34 and Leviticus 9:21).

*9 There is no mention of the Ark. See note on Jeremiah 3:8.

*16 See note on sacrifices in the future, Ezekiel 14:14.

JEREMIAH 23

The few survivors of Judah taken into exile

¹³Then the commander exiled to Babylon the people who had defected to him and those who were left in the city, 832 people.

Some of the poorest people left to till the land

¹⁴However he left behind some of the poorest people of the land who had nothing and gave them vineyards and fields.

The Babylonian commander frees Jeremiah

¹⁵Now during the siege of Jerusalem the king of Babylon had given this order to his commander: "Do not harm Jeremiah but do for him whatever he asks."

¹⁶The Babylonian commander found Jeremiah at Ramah^{F*} bound in chains among the captives from Judah who were being exiled to Babylon.

¹⁷The commander released Jeremiah and said to him, "Jehovah your God decreed disaster for this land and now he has done it. All this happened because your people did not obey him."

Gedaliah appointed to govern the few poor who remain in Judah

¹⁸"Today I am freeing you from the chains on your wrists. Come with me to Babylon and I will look after you, or go to Gedaliah^{F*} whom the king of Babylon has appointed to govern the few poor people who remain in Judah and live with him, or go anywhere else you please."

Jeremiah remains with Gedaliah in Judah

¹⁹Then the commander gave Jeremiah food and a gift and let him go. So Jeremiah went to Gedaliah and stayed with him at Mizpah^{F*} among the poor people who were left behind in the land.

23

The escaped guards return to Gedaliah

¹When the guards who had escaped from Jerusalem into the desert heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah as governor over the land, they came to him at Mizpah.

The guards assigned to harvesting

²Gedaliah reassured them and then said, "Stay in the land and serve the king of Babylon and it shall go well with you. I will stay here at Mizpah to represent you before the Babylonians, but you go out and organise the summer harvesting and the storage of the wine, fruit and oil in the towns in which you choose to live."

Jews from surrounding nations also come to Gedaliah

³Jews who had been driven to Moab, Ammon, Edom and other surrounding nations also came to Gedaliah at Mizpah, and took part in harvesting the abundance of wine and summer fruit.

*16 A town about 8 kms north of Jerusalem.

*18 Gedaliah was a Judean official of high rank.

*19 A town about 10 kms north of Jerusalem.

Gedaliah disbelieves a warning of a plot on his life

⁴Then Johanan along with other captains of the men who had been guards in Jerusalem came to Gedaliah and said to him, "The king of the Ammonites has plotted with Ishmael to take your life. Therefore allow me to kill Ishmael. Why should he take your life and cause the remnant of Judah to perish?"

⁵Gedaliah replied, "You must not do such a thing. What you say about Ishmael is untrue."

Gedaliah assassinated by Ishmael a former royal official

⁶But in the seventh month, Ishmael who was of royal descent through David and had been one of Zedekiah's officials came with ten men to Gedaliah at Mizpah.

⁷While they were eating together they struck down Gedaliah with the sword. They also killed all the Jews and Babylonian soldiers who were with him.

Ishmael slaughters seventy others

⁸The next day before anyone knew of the deaths, eighty men arrived at Mizpah from the northern towns of Samaria. They were in mourning and on their way to Jerusalem with grain offerings and incense to present before the Lord at his Temple.^{F*}

⁹Ishmael went out to meet them weeping as he went. Then he said to them, "Come and greet Gedaliah." But when they entered the town, Ishmael and the men with him arose and began to slaughter them.

¹⁰But ten of them said to Ishmael, "Do not kill us! We have wheat, barley, oil and honey hidden in a field." So he did not kill them with the others.

¹¹They threw the bodies of the seventy who were slain into a large water cistern.

Ishmael takes captives with him and departs for Ammon

¹²Ishmael took captive all the rest of the people who were in Mizpah, including Jeremiah and the king's daughters whom the commander of the Babylonian army had left in Gedaliah's care. Then he set out for the land of the Ammonites.

Johanan the chief guard and his men pursue him and rescue the captives

¹³When Johanan and his men heard of the crimes Ishmael had committed, they pursued him and caught up with him near the pool in Gibeon and rescued the captives. But Ishmael and eight of his followers escaped to the Ammonites.

Johanan and the people decide to flee to Egypt but ask Jeremiah for confirmation from the Lord

¹⁴Johanan and his men thought it best to take the captives and flee to Egypt for they were afraid of the Babylonians after what Ishmael had done. ¹⁵However while stopped near

*8 The temple was now a burned out ruin but these men were probably unaware of the full extent of the damage.

Bethlehem they said to Jeremiah the prophet, "Pray to Jehovah your God that he will tell us what we should do. We will obey the Lord so that all will go well with us."

The Lord counsels the people to stay in Judah

¹⁶Jeremiah said to them, "Very well, I will pray to Jehovah your God as you request."

¹⁷Ten days later the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah. He called the people together and said to them, "Jehovah the God of Israel says, 'If you stay in Judah I shall build you up and not tear you down, for I am grieved over the disaster I have inflicted upon you.'

¹⁸"Do not fear the king of Babylon for I am with you and will deliver you from his hands. He shall have compassion on you and restore you to your land."

If they flee to Egypt they will die

¹⁹Then Jeremiah said, "If you disobey the Lord your God and say, 'We will go instead and live in Egypt where we shall not see war or be hungry for bread,' this is what the Lord says: 'If you are determined to go to Egypt, then the sword you fear and the famine you dread will follow you there, and you shall die.'

²⁰"All who go to Egypt shall die by the sword, famine and plague. No one who flees there will survive the disaster I am bringing upon them. You will never see Judah again."

The people disobey the Lord and flee to Egypt

²¹At these words, Johanan and the arrogant men with him said to Jeremiah, "You are lying. Jehovah our God has not sent you to say we must not go to Egypt to settle there. ²²Baruch^{F*} is inciting you against us to hand us over to the Babylonians so they will kill us, or carry us into exile to Babylon."

Jeremiah and all who remained in Judah also taken to Egypt

²³So Johanan and all the people disobeyed the Lord's command to stay in Judah.

²⁴They took with them to Egypt, Jeremiah the prophet, Baruch, the king's daughters and also all the Jews who had come back to live in the land of Judah from the surrounding nations.

²⁵They entered Egypt in disobedience and stayed at Tahpanhes.

Jeremiah told to bury stones at Pharaoh's palace entrance

²⁶While at Tahpanhes this word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: "While the Jews are watching you, take some large stones and bury them under the brick pavement at the entrance to Pharaoh's palace in Tahpanhes."

Nebuchadnezzar to invade Egypt and set up his throne over these stones

²⁷"Then proclaim these words, 'Jehovah the God of Israel says, I will send for my

servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall set up his throne over these stones that are buried here."

²⁸"He shall come to attack Egypt, bringing the sword to those destined for the sword, and exile to those destined for exile."

The temples of Egypt to be burned

²⁹"He will demolish the sacred pillars in the temple of the sun and burn all the temples of Egypt and carry away their gods."



Egypt, also fell to the Babylonians.

Empty land of Judah begins its Sabbath rest

³⁰In the twenty-third year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar sent the commander of his guard to the land of Judah and exiled the remaining 745 Jews. ^{F*}

³¹Then the empty land began its seventy year Sabbath rest, in fulfillment of the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah.

24

The Lord warns the Jews living in Egypt to repent of their idolatry or be destroyed

¹The word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah in Egypt concerning the Jews living in that land: "You saw the great disaster I brought upon Jerusalem and upon all the towns of Judah. ²Today they lie deserted and in ruins, for they provoked me to anger by worshipping other gods."

³"Again and again I sent my servants the prophets, but they would not listen and turn from their wickedness. ⁴Therefore my fierce anger was poured out against Jerusalem and the towns of Judah. I made them the empty ruins they are today."

⁵"Now why are you bringing further disaster upon yourselves by cutting off from Judah even the remnant? Why are you provoking me to anger by burning incense to the gods of Egypt, where you have come to live? ⁶You will destroy yourselves and

*22 Baruch was Jeremiah's scribe.

*30 Perhaps as a reprisal for the murder of Gedaliah and Babylonian soldiers, see Jeremiah 23:7.

JEREMIAH 24

become an object of cursing among the nations of the earth.”

⁷“All the remnant of Judah who were determined to go to Egypt will perish in Egypt. They shall fall by the sword or die from famine. None shall return to Judah except a few fugitives.”

The Jewish women choose to continue worshipping the Queen of Heaven

⁸Then all the men whose wives burnt incense to the Queen of Heaven^{F*} and all the women who were present said to Jeremiah, “We do not believe the message you have spoken to us in the name of Jehovah. ⁹We shall continue to burn incense to the Queen of Heaven, just as we and our fathers and our kings and officials did in Judah.”

The people blame their troubles on neglecting the worship of the Queen of Heaven

¹⁰“When we did so we had plenty of food and were prosperous and suffered no harm. But ever since we stopped worshipping the Queen of Heaven we have become poor and have been perishing by sword and famine.”

Jeremiah corrects the people’s belief

¹¹Jeremiah answered the people saying, “*It is because you worshipped the Queen of Heaven and obeyed not the law of Jehovah that this disaster has come upon you.*”

The Jews will perish by sword and famine if they continue worshipping the Queen of Heaven

¹²“*Now hear the word of the Lord all you men of Judah in Egypt: ‘You and your wives have made it clear that you intend to continue worshipping the Queen of Heaven. Very well then, do so.’*”

¹³“*But I swear by my great name that you Judeans living in Egypt will perish by the sword and famine until you are all destroyed.*”

¹⁴“*Those who escape the sword and return to Judah shall be very few. Then you shall*

know whose word will stand, mine or yours.”

Pharaoh Hophra’s overthrow will be a sign to the Jews

¹⁵“This shall be the sign to you that I will punish you in this place: I shall hand Pharaoh Hophra king of Egypt over to the king of Babylon, just as I handed over Zedekiah king of Judah.”



Ashtoreth also known as Ishtar and Astarte, the goddess worshipped widely as the Queen of Heaven.

*⁸ Ashtoreth, also known as Ishtar and Astarte. See note on Jeremiah 6:23.

OBADIAH

Obadiah the prophet was called by the Lord to strongly rebuke the nation of Edom. It seems that Judah's old enemy had gloated over and taken advantage of their destruction by the Babylonians.

The Edomites were descendants of Esau, the brother of Jacob and were therefore related to the Israelites. They lived in the high mountainous area south of the Dead sea (part of modern day Jordan).

Edom appears to have incurred a heavy curse of the Lord, dooming them to annihilation as a nation. They were eventually scattered and disappeared from history after the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. King Herod who tried to kill the infant Jesus was an Edomite (Idumean in Greek).

Nothing is known about the personal life of the prophet Obadiah.

AUTHOR The prophet Obadiah.

"You should not have looked down and gloated over your brother Judah on the day of his destruction." Obadiah 1:6.

CONTENTS

Chapter

Obadiah prophesies the downfall of Edom	1	Both houses of Israel to be reunited in millennium ...	1
Edom rebuked for gloating over fall of Jerusalem	1	But Edom shall be annihilated	1
The great day of the Lord coming	1	Israel to possess Edom during millennium	1
Jerusalem shall become holy	1		

Bold The Lord or an angel speaking.

Bold italics A prophet speaking under inspiration.

1

Obadiah prophesies the downfall of Edom

¹The vision of Obadiah the prophet concerning Edom.

²**The Lord God says, I shall make you small and utterly despised among the nations. The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rocks and make your home on the heights.** ³**You say to yourself, 'Who can bring me down to the ground?' I shall bring you down."**

⁴**"In that day your warriors will be terrified. Every man of them in Esau's mountains will be slain. You shall be shamed because of your slaughter and violence against your brother Israel." F***

Edom rebuked for gloating over the fall of Jerusalem

⁵**"You stood aloof while strangers entered the gates of Jerusalem and carried off your brother's wealth. You too were like them."**

⁶**"You should not have looked down and gloated over your brother Judah on the day of his destruction."**

⁷**"You should not have looted his goods,**

neither should you have waited at the cross-roads to cut down the fugitives and hand over survivors in his day of trouble."

The great day of the Lord coming

⁸**"For the great day of the Lord is coming upon all nations of the earth. And as you have done, so shall it be done to you. Your deeds will return upon your own head."**

Jerusalem shall become holy

⁹**"But in Jerusalem shall be deliverance. Jerusalem shall become holy and the house of Israel will possess its inheritance."**

Both houses of Israel to be reunited during millennium but Edom shall be annihilated

¹⁰**"The house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph^{F*} a flame in that day, but the house of Esau shall be stubble.**

¹¹**There shall be no survivors from the house of Esau. I Jehovah have spoken."**

*10 Joseph was the father of Ephraim and Manasseh, and from these two sons the two tribes of these names descended. Ephraim became the dominant tribe of the ten tribes of the northern kingdom of Israel (which included Manasseh). Consequently the ten are often referred to collectively under the name of Ephraim or the house of Joseph (see Ezekiel 12:12-16). These ten tribes, now exiled and lost to history are to be gathered again when the Lord returns and will reunite with the house of Judah.

*4 The Edomites were descendants of Esau, the brother of Jacob and were therefore related to the Israelites.

OBADIAH 1

Israel to possess Edom during millennium

¹²“Israelites from the Negev^{F*} will take possession of the mountains of Esau. Benjamin shall possess Gilead, and those from the foothills will possess the land of the Philistines.”

¹³“Those who are saved on Mount Zion shall rule the mountains of Esau, and the whole kingdom shall be the Lord’s.”



Ruggedness typical of the land of Edom.

*11 The Negev was the dry region in southern Judah.

EZEKIEL

The prophet Ezekiel was a Levite priest who had been deported from Jerusalem to Babylon during the first exile. This was when King Jehoiachin and his officials and Judah's 7000 man army – about 10,000 persons in all, were exiled. Ezekiel was therefore a contemporary of Jeremiah.

Ezekiel was called to prophesy to his fellow exiles in Babylon about six years before the second exile and destruction of Jerusalem. Through him, the Lord prophesied vividly of the coming destruction of Judah and the surrounding nations, using graphic symbolism.

Like his contemporary Jeremiah, Ezekiel was not taken seriously as a prophet until he was proved right by the destruction of Jerusalem and the 'all is well' false prophets were proven wrong.

This is a most interesting book. Ezekiel was a highly gifted prophet, who like Moses saw the Lord in person and spoke with him face to face. His writings are noted for their clarity and orderliness. Typically he describes the appearance of the Lord in detail, ie *"Seated on the throne was a figure, in the likeness of a man. From his waist up he glowed like molten bronze as if full of fire. From his waist down he was enveloped in fire. A brilliant radiance surrounded him, with all the colours of a rainbow, in the likeness of the glory of Jehovah"* (Ezekiel 1:17-18).

Ezekiel also gives a detailed description of the Lord's mode of travel – a glorious, sapphire blue throne, supported by bright, winged cherubs.

Ezekiel wrote clear descriptions of all that he saw and experienced. On one occasion he was carried away in the spirit to Jerusalem 900 kms away to witness for himself scenes of idolatry taking place within the confines of the Temple.

Ezekiel's revelations add much to our understanding of the future conditions of Israel during the coming thousand year reign of Jesus Christ on the earth known as the millennium.

On one memorable occasion, Ezekiel was taken to a valley full of dry bones and watched in amazement as the bones were resurrected back into an army of living men. Later he was taken by an angel on a detailed tour of the yet to be built millennial Temple of Israel. The future millennial boundaries of the gathered tribes of Israel were also revealed to Ezekiel.

Ezekiel further prophesied of Gog, who is to lead a latter day, multi-nation invasion of Israel, bringing about the great battle commonly known as Armageddon just prior to the second coming of Jesus Christ.

AUTHOR The prophet Ezekiel.

"For seven months men of Israel shall be fully employed burying the dead in order to cleanse the land." Ezekiel 13:22. (Following the battle of Armageddon.)

CONTENTS

Chapter

Ezekiel a priest among the exiles in Babylonia	1	Ezekiel given scroll with words of woe to eat	1
Ezekiel called as a prophet	1	House of Israel will not be willing to listen	1
Ezekiel sees visions of God	1	Ezekiel transported by the Spirit	1
Heavenly cherubim described	1	Ezekiel sits overwhelmed for seven days	1
Each cherub had four faces	1	Word of Lord comes to Ezekiel	2
A man, a lion, an ox and an eagle	1	Ezekiel to be a watchman for Israel	2
The wings of the cherubs	1	Ezekiel accountable if he does not warn the wicked ..	2
Brightly glowing bodies full of eyes	1	Righteousness not remembered if a man sins	2
The sparkling intersecting wheels	1	The glory of Jehovah appears to Ezekiel again	2
Sapphire blue throne of God on a crystal expanse ...	1	Ezekiel's tongue to be bound for his protection	2
Ezekiel sees God as a man enveloped in fire	1	Ezekiel still able to speak messages from Lord	2
God speaks to Ezekiel	1	Ezekiel to enact coming siege of Jerusalem	2
Ezekiel to be a prophet to Israel	1	Ezekiel to lie in public on his left side for 390 days ...	2

EZEKIEL

Then on his right side for 40 days	2	Jerusalem to eventually be forgiven	5
Ezekiel to continually prophesy against Jerusalem ...	2	Sodom and Samaria to be given her as daughters ...	5
Ezekiel to eat starvation rations	2	Parable of two eagles	6
Human dung to be used as fuel	2	Parable concerns Babylon, Jerusalem and Egypt	6
Ezekiel objects and is allowed to use cow dung	2	Zedekiah broke a covenant by enlisting Egypt's aid ..	6
People to be appalled at one others appearance	2	Egyptian army will be of no help to Judah	6
The rations a sign of what is to come in Jerusalem ..	2	A righteous leader in Jerusalem during millennium ...	6
Ezekiel to shave his hair and divide it three ways.....	2	Persons will Die for own sins not those of parents ...	6
Ezekiel's hair to symbolise fate of people	2	A righteous man defined	6
Only a few people of Jerusalem to be spared	2	An unrighteous man defined	6
Jerusalem more rebellious than surrounding nations...2		The wicked son of a righteous man shall Die	6
Parents to eat own children during siege	2	A righteous son of a wicked man will be saved	6
People to die of plague, famine and sword	2	Past sins not remembered when a person repents ...	6
Faces to be covered with shame	2	Lord pleased when the wicked repent	6
Those in the countryside also to die	2	Righteousness not remembered if a man sins	6
Foreigners to take Judah's silver and gold as spoil ..	2	Lord to judge every person according to their ways...6	
Calamity upon calamity until Lord's anger appeased ...	2	Lord takes no pleasure in death of anyone	6
Ruin of Jerusalem to be a warning to the nations.....	2	Ezekiel told to draw on the ground a fork in the road...7	
Judah to suffer because of her idolatry	2	Nebuchadnezzar to seek an omen	7
Some survivors to be scattered among the nations ..	2	The king of Babylon to take the road to Jerusalem ...	7
Ezekiel taken in spirit to Temple in Jerusalem	3	Royal throne of David to be overturned	7
He sees an idol in a Temple gateway	3	Until Messiah comes in the last days	7
Ezekiel enters a closed room in the Temple	3	Sins of Jerusalem that anger the Lord	7
Sees the idolatry of seventy elders	3	Wicked Israelites to be cast into Jerusalem	7
Sees women mourning for the god Tammuz	3	There they will be melted as dross in a furnace	7
Sees men worshipping the sun	3	Ezekiel told that the siege of Jerusalem had begun ..	7
Lord calls for destroying angels	3	Ezekiel's wife to be suddenly taken from him	7
The righteous to be marked on their foreheads	3	Ezekiel not to show any sign of mourning.....	7
The wicked symbolically slaughtered	3	Ezekiel's wife dies	7
Ezekiel pleads for the people of Judah	3	Exiles likewise not to mourn loss of the Temple	7
Symbolic fire scattered over Jerusalem	3	Ezekiel to regain his speech when news arrives.....	7
Ezekiel told to prophesy against the leaders	3	Lord to pull Egypt the crocodile out of Nile	8
The Spirit comes upon Ezekiel and he prophesies ...	3	Egypt a staff that splinters like a reed	8
Descendants of exiled Judah to be gathered	3	Egypt to be put to sword and exiled	8
The Spirit returns Ezekiel to Babylon	3	Egypt to become an empty wasteland	8
Ezekiel tells exiles all that he saw	3	Egypt to be gathered again after forty years	8
Ezekiel to act out going into exile	4	Egypt to never again rule over the nations	8
Enactment concerns Zedekiah and his people	4	Ammonites rejoiced over Jerusalem's downfall	8
The king will flee Jerusalem	4	Therefore the Ammonites to be destroyed	8
He will be caught, blinded and brought to Babylon ...	4	Moab also to be punished	8
Zedekiah to die in Babylon	4	The people of Edom to fall by the sword	8
A few of Judah will be spared the sword	4	The Philistines to be destroyed	8
So that other nations will know of their abominations...4		Tyre rejoiced over fate of Jerusalem	9
Ezekiel to tremble as if in fear when he eats	4	Therefore Tyre to be besieged by the Babylonians ..	9
Jerusalem to eat and drink in fear and despair	4	The people of Tyre to be put to the sword	9
Prophecies of Judah's destruction nearing fulfilment ...	4	The city to be demolished and cast into the sea	9
Destruction of Judah not in distant future	4	The people to dwell in Sheol	9
False prophets of Israel to be disinherited	4	Island of Tyre to become a bare rock	9
False prophecies like whitewash over a flimsy wall ..	4	Pride and wealth of the king of Tyre	9
Woe to women fortune-tellers	4	King of Tyre to die at hands of foreigners	9
Lord will not be enquired of by idolaters	4	A lament to the fall of king of Tyre	9
Both prophet and idolater will be destroyed	4	Tyre likened to a beautiful ship	9
Idolaters called upon to repent	4	Tyre to be shipwrecked	9
The righteous can only save themselves	5	Sidon to be punished by plague and sword	10
Four judgements to come upon Jerusalem	5	Egypt and her allies to be destroyed by Babylon	10
Conduct of survivors will justify the Lord's anger	5	Nile to no longer be muddied by hooves of cattle ...	10
Jerusalem likened to a baby girl abandoned at birth ..	5	The hordes of Egypt to go down to Sheol	10
The Lord takes Jerusalem as his bride	5	Word arrives in Babylon that Jerusalem has fallen ..	11
Jerusalem becomes beautiful and famous	5	Ezekiel recovers his full powers of speech	11
But later she becomes a harlot	5	Fugitives hiding in the land of Judah also to die ...	11
Jerusalem turns to idolatry	5	Judah to become an empty wasteland	11
Jerusalem slaughters her own children	5	Exiles listen to Ezekiel but do not heed his words ...	11
Her promiscuity worsens	5	Exiles greedy for unjust gain	11
Jerusalem to be stripped naked in front of her lovers...5		Ezekiel like a singer of love songs to the people ...	11
Jerusalem's lovers to hack her to pieces	5	Shepherds of Israel only take care of themselves ...	11
Then Lord's anger will subside	5	Lord to remove Israel's shepherds	11
Jerusalem like her uncaring mother	5	The Lord himself to become Israel's shepherd	11
Jerusalem like her sisters Sodom and Samaria	5	The fat and strong sheep to be destroyed	11

The Lord to be a just shepherd	11	Ezekiel to describe Temple to house of Israel	15
David to again be king of Israel during millennium .	11	The whole mountain top to be holy	15
Israel to be greatly blessed in millennium	11	Measurements of altar of sacrifice	15
Ezekiel taken by Spirit to a valley of dry bones	12	How the altar is to be purified	15
Ezekiel told to command the bones to come alive...	12	The daily sacrifice	15
Flesh and skin cover the bones	12	Outer east gate to remain shut	15
Spirits enter the bodies and they stand up alive	12	No unworthy foreigner to enter Temple area	15
Lord to resurrect the dead of Israel	12	Only Levites may serve at the Temple	15
Then return them to their own land	12	Only Levites descended of Zadok can be priests	15
Stick of Judah and stick of Ephraim	12	Only priests permitted to offer sacrifices	15
The two sticks to be joined as one	12	Priests to wear linen garments in inner court	15
A sign that all Israel will be reunited in millennium .	12	Priests not to drink wine before entering inner court ..	15
David to be king over all Israel in millennium	12	Grooming and marriage laws for priests	15
Lord to put his Temple in Israel forever	12	Priests to remain undefiled	15
Gog to lead a mighty army of many nations	13	Priests to be supported by donations of the people. 15	
Gog's army to advance against Israel in last days ..	13	Priests to serve as judges	15
Israelites will have gathered from many nations	13	Israel to be allotted inheritances in millennium	16
Israel to be a land of unwalled towns	13	A sacred Temple district to be set aside.....	16
A great earthquake will break up Israel	13	The Levites to live around the Temple	16
Gog's armies will turn on each other	13	The Holy City	16
Hail and fire to be poured down on Gog's army	13	Borders of sacred district to be used to grow food ..	16
Gog armies to fall on the mountains of Israel	13	The food for those who serve in the Holy City	16
Fire to fall on the northern nations and coastlands .	13	King to be also allocated land	16
Holy name of Jehovah to be vindicated at last	13	All people of Israel to give offerings	16
Abandoned weaponry to provide fuel for 7 years ..	13	Offerings to be of grain, oil and sheep	16
Seven months to bury the dead	13	Offerings to be given to the king	16
Birds and wild animals to eat flesh of slain	13	King to furnish offerings for appointed feasts	16
Lord to reveal his face to Israel	13	Passover to be observed	16
Lord to pour out his Spirit upon them	13	Inner east gate to be opened each Sabbath.....	16
Ezekiel taken to high mountain in Israel	14	Only the king permitted to worship in east gate.....	16
Ezekiel sees a future millennial city.....	14	The people to worship outside the gate	16
Ezekiel sees an angel with a measuring rod	14	King's Sabbath sacrifice, six lambs and a ram	16
Angel measures Temple walls and gates.....	14	People to use north and south gates alternately	16
Outer courtyard of the Temple	14	King to attend appointed feasts with the people.....	16
Animal sacrifices to continue	14	Water to flow eastward from Temple	17
Inner courtyard wall and gateways	14	River lakes to form	17
Inner courtyard of the Temple	14	River to flow into and freshen the Dead Sea	17
Other buildings around the Temple proper	14	Swarms of fish to live in the Dead Sea	17
Priests to wear holy garments	14	Fruit trees to grow along the river banks	17
The altar of sacrifice and the Temple proper	14	Trees to bear fruit every month	17
Ezekiel taken inside the Temple proper	14	The millennial borders of Israel	17
The outer sanctuary	14	Foreigners also to receive inheritances	17
The inner sanctuary	14	New tribal boundaries for Israel	17
The side rooms	14	The Holy City to have twelve gates	17
Paneled walls, engravings and veiled windows	14	Gates to be named after the twelve tribes of Israel ..	17
Ezekiel sees Lord approaching in glory	15	Holy City to be named City of Jehovah	17
Lord enters Temple through the east gates.....	15	Siege of Tyre exhausting for Babylonian armies	17
Temple to become place of the Lord's throne	15	Spoils of Egypt to be given to Nebuchadnezzar	17
Lord to dwell among a cleansed Israel for ever.....	15	Israel to begin to recover in that day	17

Bold The Lord or an angel speaking.
Bold italics A prophet speaking under inspiration.

1

Ezekiel, a priest in exile called as a prophet in Babylonia

1The word of the Lord that came to Ezekiel the priest who lived among the exiles by the Kebar River^{F*} in the land of the Babylonians.

Ezekiel sees visions of God

2["]In my thirtieth year, which was the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin,^{F*} the heavens

were opened to me and I saw visions of God."

3["]I looked up and saw coming from the north a large storm cloud, surrounded by a glow of light, and lightning flashing from within. The centre of the cloud shone brightly, like polished bronze."

Heavenly cherubim described

4["]In the midst of the brightness I saw four

*1 The Kebar River is believed to have been a man-made canal, connecting the Euphrates and Tigris rivers south of Babylon.

*2 Approximately six years before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians.

EZEKIEL 1

cherubim,^{F*} in appearance like men but each had four faces and four wings.”

5“Their legs were straight and their feet were like those of a calf, and they shone like polished bronze.”

6“Under their wings I could see that they had the hands of a man.”

Each cherub had four faces – a man, a lion, an ox and an eagle

7“Each cherub had the face of a man looking outward, the face of a lion looking to the right, the face of an ox looking to the left, and the face of an eagle looking rearward.”

8“Their human faces looked outward in all four directions, so they could go directly forward without turning as they went, wherever the Spirit of God chose to go.”

The wings of the cherubs

9“Each cherub had four wings. Two wings spread upward, touching the wings of the cherub on either side, and two wings covered their bodies.”

10“Whenever the cherubim moved I heard the sound of their wings, like the roar of rushing waters, as the voice of God Almighty when he speaks.”

Brightly glowing bodies full of eyes

11“Their bodies were full of eyes all over, and also on their hands and wings.”

12“The cherubim glowed like burning torches and bright fire flashed between them continually, like lightning. They also darted back and forth like flashes of lightning.”

The sparkling intersecting wheels

13“I saw beneath each cherub four intersecting wheels, sparkling like golden crystal.

14As the cherubim moved, the wheels would move with them, and when they arose from the ground the wheels arose also.”

15“The rims of the wheels were high and awesome and full of eyes all around. I heard them called, “the whirling wheels.”

A sapphire blue throne of God upon a crystal expanse

16“Above the heads of the cherubim I saw an expanse of sparkling crystal, awesome in appearance, and upon the expanse I saw a throne of blue sapphire.”

Ezekiel sees God as a glowing man seated on the throne enveloped in fire

17“Seated on the throne was a being, in the likeness of a man. From his waist up he glowed like molten bronze as if full of fire. From his waist down he was enveloped in fire.”

18“A brilliant radiance surrounded him, with all the colours of a rainbow, in the likeness of the glory of Jehovah.”

God speaks to Ezekiel

19“When I saw him I fell face down on the

ground. 20Then I heard a voice speak to me saying, ‘**Son of man, stand on your feet and I will speak with you.**’”



An artist's view of what Ezekiel saw.

21“As he spoke, the Spirit of God entered into me and raised me to my feet.”

Ezekiel to be a prophet to Israel

22“**Son of man,**^{F*} I am sending you to the people of Israel, a nation that has rebelled against me. A people who are obstinate and stubborn. 23**Speak to them what I the Lord God speak to you, and fear them not for they shall soon know there has been a prophet among them.**”

The Lord gives Ezekiel a scroll containing words of woe to eat

24“**Now, open your mouth and eat what I give you.**”

25“I saw a hand stretched out to me and in it was a scroll, which was unrolled before me. On both sides of the scroll were written words of woe.”

26“**So I ate it and in my mouth it tasted sweet as honey.**”

The house of Israel not willing to listen to Lord's words

27“Then the Lord said to me, ‘**Son of man, go now to the house of Israel and speak my words to them.**’”

28“**You are not being sent to foreigners whose language you do not understand. If I**

*4 Cherubim (plural of cherub) are an order of winged angels with human-like form and intelligence, but possessing facial features depicting human, animal, or bird life. They appear to be throne attendants of God.

*22 Literally 'son of Adam' (Hebrew 'ben adam').

sent you to foreigners they would listen to me, but the house of Israel is not willing to listen for they are hardened and obstinate. ²⁹But I will make you as unyielding as they are, harder than flint, so fear them not.”

³⁰“Go now to your exiled countrymen and prepare to speak my words to them saying, ‘Thus says the Lord God,’ whether they listen or not.”

Ezekiel transported by the Spirit

³¹“Then the Spirit lifted me up and bore me away. And as the glory of the Lord arose, I heard behind me the sound of a great rushing. It was the sound of the wings of the cherubim.”

³²“I felt wrath within my spirit, for the strong hand of the Lord was upon me.”^{F*}

Ezekiel sits overwhelmed for seven days

³³“I came to the exiles who lived at Tel Abib, near the Kebar River and there I sat among them for seven days, overwhelmed by my vision.”

2

The word of the Lord comes to Ezekiel – he is to be a watchman for Israel

¹“At the end of seven days the word of the Lord came to me saying, ‘Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel, so speak my words of warning to them.’”

Ezekiel to be held accountable if he does not warn the wicked

²“When I say to you of a wicked man ‘He will die’ and you do not warn him to turn from his evil ways to save his life, that man will die in his sins, but I will hold you accountable for his blood.”

³“But if you warn the wicked man and he does not heed you, he will still die for his sins, but you will not be held accountable.”

If a righteous man turns to evil his righteous deeds will not be remembered

⁴“If a righteous man turns and does evil, he will die in his sins, and his righteous deeds shall not be remembered.”

⁵“And if you do not warn him I shall hold you accountable for his blood.”

The glory of Jehovah appears to Ezekiel again

⁶“Now arise, go out to the plain. There I will speak to you as I did before.”

⁷“So I went out to the plain and the glory of Jehovah appeared before me again and I fell face down.”

Ezekiel’s tongue to be bound for his protection except to speak messages from Lord

⁸“The Spirit raised me to my feet and the Lord said to me, ‘Go and shut yourself inside your house or the people will tie you with ropes to prevent you from going out among them.’”

⁹“I shall make your tongue cleave to the

roof of your mouth so that you cannot rebuke them.”

¹⁰“However when I speak to you, I shall open your mouth and you will be able to speak my words to them.”

Ezekiel to enact the coming siege of Jerusalem

¹¹“Now son of man, take a clay brick and draw the city of Jerusalem upon it. Then erect siege works against it. Build a ramp and put battering rams in place and set up camps round about.”

¹²“Take an iron plate and place it as an iron wall between you and the city, and then set your face against the city, as if besieging it. This will be a sign to the house of Israel.”^{F*}

Ezekiel to lie on his left side in the sight of the people for 390 days

¹³“Then lie on your left side, in the sight of the people^{F*} and take upon you the sins of the house of Israel. Do this for 390 days, one day for each year they have sinned against me.”

Then on his right side for 40 days

¹⁴“When those days are completed, lie down again in their presence, this time on your right side and bear the sins of the house of Judah. ¹⁵Do this for 40 days, a day for each year they have sinned.”

Ezekiel to continually prophesy against Jerusalem

¹⁶“Continue to set your face toward the depicted siege of Jerusalem and with your arm bared prophesy against her.”

¹⁷“I will bind you so you cannot turn from one side to the other until you have finished the days of your siege.”

Ezekiel to eat starvation rations as a sign of what is to come in Jerusalem

¹⁸“During the 390 days that you lie on your left side, you are to make bread for yourself from a flour of wheat, barley, millet and beans.”

¹⁹“Store the flour in a jar and weigh out twenty shekels^{F*} each day and eat it at set times. Also measure out a sixth of a hin of water^{F*} and drink it at set times.”

Human dung to be used as fuel

²⁰“Bake the bread in the sight of the people using human dung for fuel, as a sign that Israel will eat defiled food among the nations where I will drive them.”

Ezekiel objects and is allowed to use cow dung

²¹“But I said, ‘O Lord, I have never defiled

*12 These symbols depicted the forthcoming siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, with Ezekiel representing the Lord. The iron plate probably symbolised the barrier between the Lord and the people of Jerusalem and his refusal to be moved by pleading (Jeremiah 8:15).

*13 This was probably done in a public place during the busy period of each day.

*19 The flour would be about 230 gms weight and would have an energy value of about 800 calories, typical of a severely rationed supply.

*19 About two thirds of a litre.

*32 See verse 29 above where the Lord said that he would make Ezekiel ‘unyielding and hard’ also verses 8-9 in the next chapter.

EZEKIEL 3

myself from my youth until now.”

²²“He replied, ‘Very well, I will allow you to bake your bread over cow dung.’”

The people of Jerusalem will be appalled at the gaunt appearance of one another

²³“Son of man, I am going to cut off the supply of food in Jerusalem. The people will eat rationed food in anxiety. ²⁴Because of their sins they shall waste away and be appalled at the appearance of one another.”

Ezekiel to shave his hair

²⁵“Now son of man, take a sharp sword and use it as a razor to shave off your hair and your beard. Then take a balance and weigh the hair into three equal parts.”

Ezekiel’s hair to symbolise the fate of the people in Jerusalem

²⁶“When the days of your enacted siege of Jerusalem come to an end, burn one third of the hair inside the city that you have drawn on the clay brick.”

²⁷“Strike another third of it with the sword, all around inside the city.”

²⁸“Then scatter a third to the wind and immediately pursue it with a drawn sword.”

Only a few people to be spared

²⁹“But keep some strands of hair aside and tuck them away in the folds of your garment.”

³⁰“Again take a few of these and throw them into a fire.”

Jerusalem more rebellious than the cities of the surrounding nations

³¹“Then say to the house of Israel, ‘Jehovah says, This is Jerusalem, which I set in the centre with nations all around her. But she has rebelled against my laws, more so than all the nations about her.’”

³²“Therefore I am against you O Jerusalem, and I will inflict punishment on you in the sight of all these nations.”

Parents to eat their own children during the siege

³³“Because of your abominable idols I will do to you what I have never done before and never shall do again. ³⁴In your midst parents shall eat their own children and children shall eat their own parents.”

The people to die of plague, famine and sword

³⁵“A third of your people shall die of plague or famine, a third shall fall by the sword, and a third I will scatter to the winds and pursue with a drawn sword.”

Faces to be covered with shame

³⁶“Every hand shall be limp and every knee as weak as water. Your faces shall be covered with shame and your heads shaved in grief.”

Those in the countryside also to die

³⁷“Those out in the countryside will also die by the sword, and they who escape shall

hide in the mountains, moaning like doves because of their sins.”

Foreigners to take Judah’s silver and gold as spoil

³⁸“Your silver and gold will not save you. It will not fill your stomachs. ³⁹You are proud of your beautiful jewellery and use it to make idols, but I will hand it over as spoil to foreigners.”

Calamity upon calamity until the Lord’s anger is appeased

⁴⁰“When the terror comes you shall seek peace, but there shall be none. Calamity upon calamity will come as I vent my fury upon you.”

⁴¹“Then my anger against you will be appeased. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.”

The ruin of Jerusalem to be a warning to the nations

⁴²“You shall be a ruin and a warning, an object of horror to the nations around you.”

Judah to suffer because of idolatry and defilement of Temple

⁴³“The word of the Lord came to me, ‘Son of man, face the mountains of Judah and prophesy against them saying, ‘Jehovah says, I am about to bring a sword against you O mountains and valleys of Judah.’”

⁴⁴“I will destroy your high places and your spreading trees and leafy oaks where your people offered fragrant incense to their idols.”

⁴⁵“Your altars shall be smashed and I will slay your people in front of their idols and scatter their bones around your altars.”

⁴⁶“Because you have defiled my Temple with your abominations, I shall have no pity. I will inflict severe punishment on you O Jerusalem.”

Some survivors will escape and be scattered among the nations

⁴⁷“Those of you who escape the sword will be scattered among the nations. Then you will remember how I was grieved by your adulterous hearts which lusted after idols.”

⁴⁸“Then you will loathe yourselves for your abominable practices. Then you will know that I did not threaten in vain to bring this disaster upon you.”

3

Ezekiel taken in spirit to the Temple in Jerusalem

¹“In the sixth year, while I was sitting in my house with the exiled elders of Judah, the hand of Jehovah came upon me and he appeared before me. ²From his waist up he glowed as bright as molten bronze and from his waist down he was like fire.”

³“He stretched out his hand and took hold of the hair of my head and I was lifted above the

earth in the spirit, and taken to Jerusalem.” F*
 44“I was set down at the north gate entrance to the inner courtyard of the Temple.”

Ezekiel sees an idol in a Temple gateway

54“I saw before me the glorified God of Israel as in the vision I had seen in the plain.”

64“He said to me, ‘**Son of man, do you see what they are doing? The abominations that the house of Israel is committing here that drive me far from my Temple?**’”

74“I looked and saw standing in the entrance of the altar gateway the idol that provokes the Lord to jealousy.” F*

8The Lord said, ‘**You will see things that are even more abominable.**’

Ezekiel sees idolatry by seventy elders taking place in a closed Temple room

94“Then he took me into the gateway^{F*} and I saw an opening appear in the wall. The Lord said to me, ‘**Son of man, enter the wall.**’ So I entered the wall and saw a room there.”

104“He said to me, ‘**Enter the room and see the wicked things they are doing.**’”

114“So I entered the room and saw portrayed on the wall all kinds of crawling things and unclean animals, and all the idols of the house of Israel.”

124“Before them stood seventy elders of the people and I recognised Jaazaniah standing among them. 13Each had a censer in his hand and a cloud of incense was rising.” F*

144“The Lord said to me, ‘**Have you seen what the elders of Israel do in secret? They say, “Jehovah does not see us, for he has forsaken the land.”**’

154“Again he said, ‘**You will see them doing things that are even more abominable.**’”

Ezekiel sees women mourning for the god Tammuz

164“Then he took me into the entrance of the north gate of the Temple. I saw women sitting there, mourning for Tammuz.” F*

174“**Do you see this, son of man? You will see things that are even more detestable than this.**”

Ezekiel sees men worshipping the sun

184“He then took me into the inner courtyard. There between the porch and the altar I saw about twenty-five men bowing down to the sun in the east, with their backs to the Temple.”

194“The Lord said, ‘**Is it a trivial matter son of man for the house of Judah to do the**

*3 This visit took place about six years before the destruction of Jerusalem.

*7 Believed to be Asherah, the Canaanite god of fertility.

*9 The temple area gateways were long, wide passages with rooms on either side and were used as gathering places. The temple proper was a small, separate building located in the inner courtyard of the temple complex. Only the priests were normally permitted to enter the inner courtyard and temple.

*13 Ezekiel was in the spirit (the inner body that gives life to the outer physical) and therefore would not have been seen by those present. This also enabled him to pass through the wall.

*16 Tammuz was a Babylonian god of fertility. His mythical death was said to cause the onset of winter, hence the annual mourning by women.

detestable things they are doing here? Must they also fill the land with violence and continually provoke me to anger?”

204“**Look at them putting the branch to their nose!**” F*

214“**Therefore I will act in wrath! I shall have no pity! Though they cry out to me I will not listen!**”

The Lord calls for the destroying angels

224“Then I heard the Lord cry out in a loud voice, ‘**Bring forth the destroyers of the city!**’”

234“^I saw six angels approaching from the north, each with a weapon of slaughter in his hand. 24With them was an angel clothed in white who had a writing kit at his side. They came and stood beside the bronze altar in front of the Temple.”

254“^{The} Lord moved from the cherubim where he had been and stood at the doorway of the Temple. The courtyard was full of the radiance of the glory of Jehovah.”



Scale model of Solomon's Temple at Jerusalem to which Ezekiel was taken in spirit).

The righteous in Jerusalem to be marked on their foreheads

264“^{He} commanded the angel with the writing kit saying, ‘**Go throughout the city of Jerusalem and mark a taw^{F*} on the foreheads of those who grieve over the abominable things that are done in the city.**’”

The wicked symbolically slaughtered

274“^{Then} he said to the destroying angels, ‘**Follow him through the city and kill without pity. Defile the Temple and fill the courtyards with the slain.**’”

284“**Slaughter elderly men, young men, maidens, women and children, but do not touch any person who has the mark. Begin at my sanctuary. Go!**”

294“^{So} they began by slaughtering the elders who were in front of the Temple.” F*

Ezekiel pleads for the people of Judah

304“^{While} they were killing, I fell face down and

*20 Believed to be an act of nature worship.

*26 A taw is the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet. In Ezekiel's day it looked like an x.

*29 This action would have been symbolic, for at this stage the destruction of Jerusalem was still about six years away.

EZEKIEL 4

cried out, 'O Lord Jehovah are you going to destroy all of Judah in this outpouring of your wrath on Jerusalem?'"

³¹"He answered me, 'The sin of the house of Judah is exceedingly great. The land abounds in bloodshed and the city is full of injustice.'

Symbolic fire scattered over Jerusalem

³²"Then the angel in white brought back word saying, 'I have done as you commanded.'

³³"The Lord said to the angel, 'Go in among the wheels beneath the cherubim. Take fire and scatter it over the city.'

³⁴"The angel went and stood beside a wheel and one of the cherubim took some of the fire that was among them and put it into the hands of the angel. He took it and went out."

³⁵"The sound of the wings of the cherubim could be heard, like the voice of God Almighty when he speaks."

Ezekiel told to prophesy against the leaders of Jerusalem

³⁶"Then the Spirit took me to the east gate of the Temple. There at the gate were twenty-five men and I recognised Jaazaniah and Pelatiah, leaders of the people."

³⁷"The Lord said to me, 'Son of man these are the men who plot evil and give wicked advice in this city, therefore prophesy against them.'

The Spirit comes upon Ezekiel and he prophesies

³⁸"Then the Spirit of God came upon me and I prophesied saying, 'Jehovah says, You have put to the sword many people in this city, therefore the sword is what I will bring against you. ³⁹I shall inflict punishment upon you and drive you out of Jerusalem and hand you over to foreigners. Then you will know that I am the Lord.'

Descendants of exiled Judah to be gathered

⁴⁰"As I was prophesying, Pelatiah died. I fell face down and cried out in a loud voice, 'O Lord, will you completely destroy Israel?'"

⁴¹"The Lord answered, 'Son of man, your brothers in exile, those of whom the people of Jerusalem have said, 'They are far away from the Lord,' these shall I gather from the nations where I have scattered them and bring them back the land of Israel again. ⁴²They shall return and remove all the vile images and idols.'

⁴³"I will put a new spirit in them and remove from them their hearts of stone and give them hearts of flesh. ⁴⁴Then they will keep my commandments and shall be my people and I shall be their God."

The Spirit returns Ezekiel to Babylon and he tells the exiles all that he saw

⁴⁵"The cherubim spread their wings and the glory of Jehovah went up from the city and hovered above the Mount of Olives to the east."

⁴⁶"Then the Spirit lifted me up and returned me to the exiles in Babylonia and I told them everything the Lord had shown me."

4

Ezekiel to act out going into exile

¹"The word of the Lord came to me, 'Son of man, you are living among a rebellious people. They have eyes to see but see not, ears to hear but hear not.'

²"Therefore, in the daytime as they watch, pack your baggage as if for exile, and then at dusk while they are still watching, dig through the wall of your house, lift the baggage to your shoulder and carry it out into the darkness, like those who are going into exile."

³"And cover your face so that you cannot see the land. Perhaps they will understand."

Ezekiel's acted out prophesy concerns Zedekiah and the people of Jerusalem

⁴"I did as I was commanded, and the next morning this word of the Lord came to me, 'Son of man, that rebellious house of Israel has said to you, "What are you doing?'"

⁵"Therefore say to them, 'This prophesy concerns the king in Jerusalem,^{F*} and the people there. As I have done, so shall they do. They will go into exile as captives.'

The king will flee Jerusalem but be caught and blinded and be brought to Babylon to die

⁶"Even the king himself will put his baggage on his shoulder at nightfall and leave through an opening in the wall, and shall cover his face so he cannot see the land."^{F*}

⁷"However I will spread a net for him and he shall be caught, and I will bring him here to the land of Babylon, but he shall not see it^{F*} and here he will die."

A few of Judah will be spared the sword so that other nations can know of their abominations

⁸"I shall scatter to the winds all those around him, his officials and all his guards and shall pursue them with a drawn sword."

⁹"But I shall spare from the plague, famine and sword, a few of Judah so that the nations where they go can know of all their abominable practices."

Ezekiel to tremble as if in fear when he eats

¹⁰"The word of the Lord came to me, 'Son of man, tremble as if in fear as you eat your food and drink your water.'

Jerusalem to eat and drink in fear and despair

¹¹"Then say to the exiles, 'Jehovah says, Those living in Judah and Jerusalem will

*5 King Zedekiah.

*6 Probably in order not to be recognised.

*7 King Zedekiah was blinded by Nebuchadnezzar before being taken to Babylon (Jeremiah 22:7).

eat their food and drink their water in fear and despair, for their land will be laid waste because of the violence of all who live there."

The prophecies of Judah's destruction nearing fulfilment

12⁴"The word of the Lord came to me, 'Son of man, this proverb is quoted concerning the land of Israel, 'The days go by and every warning prophecy comes to nothing.'"

13⁴"Therefore say to the people, 'Jehovah says, I am going to put an end to this proverb. The days are near when every prophecy shall be fulfilled. There shall be no more false visions and prophecy among the people of Israel.'"

Destruction of Judah not in distant future

14⁴"The word of the Lord came to me, 'Son of man, the people are saying about you, 'The visions he sees are for many years from now. He prophesies about the distant future.'"

15⁴"Therefore say to them, 'Jehovah says, None of my words will be delayed any longer.'"

False prophets to be disinherited

16⁴"The word of the Lord came to me, 'Son of man, prophesy against the false prophets of Israel who prophesy out of their own imagination.'"

17⁴"Say to them, 'Jehovah says, Woe to the foolish prophets who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing. Their visions are false and their prophecies a lie.'"

18⁴"They say, 'Jehovah says' when I have not sent them, yet they expect their words to be fulfilled.'"

19⁴"My hand is against prophets who see false visions and utter lying prophecies. They will not be listed in the records of the house of Israel, nor will they have an inheritance in the land of Israel. 20⁴For they lead my people astray saying, 'Peace' when there is no peace."

False prophecies like whitewash over a flimsy wall

21⁴"They cover a flimsy wall with whitewash. But I am about to tear down that wall and level it to the ground. 22⁴When it falls, the false prophets of Israel will be destroyed with it. Then they will know that I am the Lord."

Woe to women fortune-tellers

23⁴"Now son of man, prophesy against the daughters of your people, those who prophesy falsely out of their own imagination."

24⁴"Say to them, 'Jehovah says, Woe to the women who sew magic amulets for their arms and wear long head veils to ensnare my people.'"

25⁴"You ensnare the lives of my people and profane me, for a handful of barley and a piece of bread."

26⁴"You dishearten the righteous with your lies, and warn not the wicked to turn from their evil ways and save their lives. 27⁴By your lies, those who should die live, and those who should live die."

28⁴"I am against your magic amulets and veils and will tear them off you. 29⁴The people will no longer fall prey to your power. You shall no longer see false visions or practice divination."

The Lord will not be enquired of by idolaters

30⁴"Some of the elders of Israel came to me to enquire of the Lord, and this word of Jehovah came to me: 'Son of man, these men are idolaters at heart. Why should I let them inquire of me?'"

31⁴"Therefore say to them, 'Jehovah says, When an Israelite who is an idolater at heart goes to enquire of a prophet, I Jehovah will answer him in keeping with his idolatry. 32⁴I shall set my face against that man and make him an example and cut him off from my people.'"

If a prophet enticed to prophesy for an idolater both shall be destroyed

33⁴"And should he entice the prophet to utter a prophecy, I the Lord will destroy them both. The prophet shall be as guilty as the one who consults him."

Idolaters called upon to repent

34⁴"Therefore repent and turn from your idols. Renounce your abominable practices. 35⁴Then you will no longer defile yourselves with your sins. You shall be my people and I will be your God."

5

The righteous can only save themselves by their righteousness

1⁴"The word of the Lord came to me, 'Son of man, if a nation sins against me by being unfaithful and I cut off its food supply, or send a plague, or the sword to kill its men and their animals, even if these three men, Noah, Danel,^{F*} and Job were in it, they could save only themselves by their righteousness.'"

2⁴"They could not even save their own sons or daughters. They alone would be saved."

Four judgements to come upon Jerusalem

3⁴"Therefore how terrible shall it be when I send against Jerusalem four judgements; sword, famine, wild beasts and plague to kill its people and its animals?"

The conduct of the survivors will justify the Lord's anger

4⁴"Yet there will be a few survivors who shall be exiled out of her to you. When you see their conduct you will know that I have not done this without good reason."

*1 Danel was a wise judge of the past whose Solomon-like judgements were glorified in the literature of Ezekiel's day.

EZEKIEL 5

Jerusalem likened to a baby Canaanite girl abandoned at birth

5⁴"The word of the Lord came to me, 'Son of man, confront Jerusalem with her abominable practices.'"

6⁴"Say to her, 'Jehovah says to the city of Jerusalem, "Your birth was in the land of the Canaanites. Your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite." F*

7⁴"On the day you were born, your cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water and rubbed with salt, nor were you wrapped in swaddling cloth. 8⁴No one loved you. Rather you were despised and thrown in a field."

9⁴"I passed by and saw you lying there kicking in your blood. I said to you, 'Live!' and I made you grow like a plant of the field."

10⁴"You grew up and your breasts began to form, yet you were still naked and bare."

The Lord takes Jerusalem as his bride and marries her

11⁴"Later I passed by and saw that you were old enough for love, so I entered into a marriage covenant with you, and you became mine."

12⁴"I washed the blood^{F*} from you and clothed you with fine embroidered clothing. I adorned you with gold and silver; rings, earrings, and bracelets on your arms, and a beautiful crown upon your head."

Jerusalem becomes beautiful and famous

13⁴"Your food was choice flour, honey, and olive oil. You became exceedingly beautiful, fit to be a queen. Your fame spread among the nations."

But later she becomes a harlot

14⁴"But then you used your beauty and fame to become a harlot. You lavished your favours on anyone who passed by and your beauty became theirs."

Jerusalem turns to idolatry

15⁴"You also took the fine jewellery I had given you and made yourself male idols, and engaged in prostitution with them and offered my oil and incense to them."

Jerusalem slaughters her own children

16⁴"You took the sons and daughters whom you bore to me and sacrificed them to idols. Was your harlotry not enough? Did you have to slaughter my children and sacrifice them to idols?"

17⁴"In all your abominable practices you did not remember the days of your youth, when you were naked and bare, kicking about in your blood."

Her promiscuity worsens

18⁴"Woe to you Jerusalem, for in addition to all your other wickedness you built shrines

in every public square and offered your body with increasing promiscuity to anyone who passed by."

19⁴"Then you engaged in prostitution with the Egyptians, so I reduced your territory and gave you over to the Philistines who were shocked by your lewd conduct."

20⁴"Then you engaged in prostitution with the Assyrians for you were insatiable. And even after that you increased your promiscuity to include Babylonia, the land of merchants, acting like a brazen harlot."

21⁴"But you were unlike a harlot for you scorned payment. Every harlot receives a fee, but you gave gifts to your lovers, bribing them to come to you from everywhere for your illicit favours."

22⁴"You adulterous wife! You prefer strangers to your own husband!"

Jerusalem to be stripped naked in front of her lovers

23⁴"Therefore O harlot, hear the word of Jehovah: 'Because you exposed your nakedness and poured out your wealth to your lovers. And because of your abominable idols, and because you gave them your children's blood, I am going to gather all your lovers with whom you found pleasure, and strip you naked in front of them. They will all see your nakedness together.'"

Jerusalem's lovers to hack her to pieces

24⁴"I will bring upon you the blood vengeance of my jealous anger. I shall hand you over to your lovers and they will tear down your shrines and strip you of your clothes and fine jewellery and leave you naked and bare."

25⁴"Then they shall stone you, and hack you to pieces with their swords. They shall burn down your houses and inflict punishment upon you in the sight of many women. I shall put a stop to your harlotry."

Then the Lord's anger will subside

26⁴"Then my wrath against you will subside. Then I will be calm and no longer angry."

Jerusalem like her uncaring mother and her sisters Sodom and Samaria

27⁴"All who quote proverbs will quote this about you: 'Like mother, like daughter.' You are a true daughter of your mother, who despised her husband and children, and you are a true sister of your sisters."

28⁴"Your older sister was Samaria who lived to the north of you, and your younger sister was Sodom who lived to the south. 29⁴You not only followed their abominable practices but soon became more depraved than they. Your sister Sodom never did what you have done."

30⁴"Your sister Sodom was arrogant, overfed and unconcerned. She did not help the poor and needy and did abominable

*6 The Amorites and Hittites were the former Canaanite inhabitants of Jerusalem.

*12 Generally believed to mean menstrual blood.

things, therefore I did away with her as you have seen.”

³¹“Samaria did not commit half the sins you did. You have made your sisters appear righteous by all the things you have done.”

Jerusalem to eventually be forgiven and be given Sodom and Samaria as daughters

³²“However I will restore the fortunes of Sodom and of Samaria, and your fortunes along with them. You will return to what you were before.”

³³“But first I will deal with you as you deserve, for you despised me by breaking the covenant I made with you in the days of your youth.”

³⁴“Yet I will remember the covenant I made, and will renew an everlasting covenant with you.”

³⁵“Then will you recall your ways and be ashamed when you receive your sisters, she who is older than you and she who is younger.”

³⁶“For I shall give them to you as daughters when I forgive you for what you have done, and you will know that I am the Lord.”

6

The parable of two eagles

¹“The word of the Lord came to me, ‘Son of man repeat this parable to the house of Israel: ‘A great eagle with powerful wings flew to a mountain and with his talons broke off the top of a cedar and carried it away to a land of merchants.’”

²“Then he came back and took a seedling and planted it in fertile soil. It grew and became a spreading tree and its branches turned toward the eagle.”

³“But there was another great eagle with powerful wings who lived in the south, so the tree turned and stretched out its branches to him for water. Yet it had been planted in good soil by abundant water.”

⁴“Will it thrive? Or will not the first eagle return and pull it up by the roots? And even if it is transplanted, shall it not wither when the hot east wind strikes it?”

The parable concerns Babylon Jerusalem and Egypt

⁵“Say to this rebellious house, ‘Here is what the parable means: The king of Babylon^{F*} went to Jerusalem and carried off her king^{F*} and her nobles and leading men.”

King Zedekiah broke his covenant by enlisting Egypt’s aid

⁶“Then he enthroned a son of the royal family as king^{F*} and made a covenant with him, putting him under oath.”

*5 Nebuchadnezzar (Jeremiah 15:26).

*5 Jehoiachin (Jeremiah 15:26).

*6 Zedekiah (Jeremiah 15:29).

⁷“But the new king rebelled by sending envoys to Egypt to obtain horses and a large army.”

⁸“Will he who does such a thing succeed? Will he who broke his covenant yet escape?”

The Egyptian army will be of no help to Judah

⁹“As surely as I live declares Jehovah, he shall die in Babylon, in the land of the king who put him on the throne and whose covenant he broke.”

¹⁰“Pharaoh and his mighty army will be of no help to him.”

The Lord God to plant a righteous leader in Jerusalem during the millennium

¹¹“Yet the day will come when I the Lord God will take a shoot from the top of a cedar and plant it on a mountain height of Israel. ¹²It shall produce branches and bear fruit and become a splendid tree. Birds of every kind will nest in it and find shelter in the shade of its branches.”

¹³“For I Jehovah bring down the tall tree and make the low tree tall. I dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish. I the Lord have spoken and will surely do it.”

Persons will Die for own sins not those of parents

¹⁴“The word of the Lord came to me, ‘Why does the house of Israel quote this proverb? ‘The parents eat sour grapes and the children’s teeth are set on edge.’”

¹⁵“You are no longer to quote this proverb in Israel, for the life of every person belongs to me. Both the life of the parent and the life of the child.”

¹⁶“It is only the person who sins who will Die.”^{F*}

A righteous man defined

¹⁷“Suppose there is a man who does what is just and right, he does not eat at the shrines or worship idols. He does not lie with his neighbour’s wife, nor with his own wife during her monthly impurity.”

¹⁸“He does not oppress anyone, or steal, but gives his food to the hungry and clothes the poorly clad.”

¹⁹“He does not lend at excessive interest and judges fairly and faithfully keeps my commandments.”

²⁰“That man is righteous. He will surely Live.”^{F*}

*16 This discourse (verses 14-31) on the death of the wicked, and the living of the righteous, if taken literally may refer specifically to the coming punishment of Judah and other such similar periods in history when wickedness exceeds certain bounds (ie Noah’s day, and Sodom) and a cleansing is required. However the Hebrew words for ‘Die’ and ‘Live’ as used in this discourse are often used figuratively and can refer to the eternal state of a person after death. If this is the meaning as appears likely here, to Die means to be cut off from the presence of God, and to Live means to have Eternal Life, ie to live forever in the presence of God. (See also note on Revelation 2:13.) Under normal circumstances there appears to be little if any difference between the mortal life span of righteous and unrighteous persons, judgement being reserved for the second coming of Jesus Christ or the great Day of Judgement following the final resurrection (Revelation 16:14).

*20 Probably meaning Eternal Life. See note on verse 16.

An unrighteous man defined

21“However suppose he has a violent son who sheds blood. A son who eats at the mountain shrines, and worships idols, and lies with his neighbour’s wife. 22A son who oppresses the poor and commits robbery, and lends at excessive interest. Shall such a man Live?”

The wicked son of a righteous man shall Die

23“He shall not! Because he has done all these abominable things he shall surely Die, and his blood will be upon his own head.”

A righteous son of a wicked man will be saved

24“But suppose this son has a son who sees all the sins his father commits, yet he does not do such things and is careful to keep all my commandments. 25That righteous son will not die for his father’s sins, he will surely Live.”

26“The soul who sins is the one who shall Die. The son shall not share the guilt of the father nor the father share the guilt of the son.”

Past sins not remembered when a person fully repents

27“Should a wicked man turn away from all the sins he has committed and keep all my commandments and do what is just and right, he shall surely Live.”

28“None of the sins he has committed will be remembered against him.”

The Lord pleased when the wicked repent

29“Do I take pleasure in the Death of the wicked? Am I not pleased when they repent of their wicked ways and Live?”

Righteousness not remembered when a righteous man turns to sin

30“But if a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits sin, none of the righteous deeds he has done will be remembered.”

31“Because of his unfaithfulness and the sins he has committed, he shall Die.”

The Lord’s ways are just and he will judge every person according to their ways

32“Yet the house of Israel says, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’”

33“Are my ways unjust O house of Israel? Is it not your ways that are unjust? I will judge each one of you according to your ways.”

34“Therefore repent and turn away from all your sins. Get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. Why should you Die?”

The Lord takes no pleasure in the spiritual death of anyone

35“**I take no pleasure in the Death of anyone. Repent and Live!**”

7

Ezekiel told to draw on the ground a fork in the road

1“**The word of the Lord came to me, ‘Son of man, draw on the ground a fork in the road.’**”

2“**One road is for the king of Babylon to take to march against Rabbah of the Ammonites with his sword. The other road is for him to take to march against Jerusalem in Judah.**”

Nebuchadnezzar to seek an omen

3“**For Nebuchadnezzar will stop at the junction of two roads to seek an omen. He will cast lots with arrows, consult his idols, and examine the liver of an animal.**”

King of Babylon to take the road to Jerusalem

4“**The lot shall fall for Jerusalem and he shall raise the battle cry and give the command to set up battering rams against the gates, and to build a ramp and erect siege towers.**”

5“**It will seem like a false omen to those who are with him, but Nebuchadnezzar shall remind them of the guilt of Jerusalem.**”

Royal throne of David to be overturned until Messiah comes in last days

6“**O wicked king of Judah, your time of final punishment has come. Remove your crown. Things shall not remain as they are. 7The proud are to be brought low and the humble exalted.**”

8“**I shall overturn your throne and it will not be restored until he comes to whom it rightfully belongs.**”

Sins of Jerusalem that anger the Lord

9“**The word of the Lord came to me, ‘Son of man, prophesy these words against Jerusalem, the city of bloodshed: ‘Jehovah says, O city that has brought upon herself doom, you have become guilty by the blood you have shed and the idols you have made.’**”

10“**In you, father and mother are treated with contempt. Foreigners and the fatherless and widows are oppressed and mistreated.**”

11“**In you my holy things are despised, and my Sabbaths desecrated.**”

12“**In you are lying men, eager to shed blood.**”

13“**In you are those who worship at mountain shrines and commit lewd acts.**”

14“**In you are those who dishonour their fathers’ bed.” F***

15“**In you are men who lie with women during their monthly impurity.**”

16“**In you are men who lie with their neighbour’s wives, and with their daughters-in-law, and with their own sisters.**”

* To commit adultery with a wife of their father, as did Reuben, see Genesis 31:18 and footnote.

17“In you are men who accept payment to shed blood.”

18“In you are those who take excessive interest and make gain by extortion.”

19“**And you have forgotten me, says the Lord God.**”

20“**I strike my hands together in anger at your dishonest gain and the blood you have shed!**”

All the wicked Israelites to be cast into Jerusalem and melted as dross in a furnace

21“**The word of the Lord came to me, ‘Son of man, the house of Israel has become dross to me, all of them.’**”

22“**Therefore I the Lord God say to them, ‘Because you have all become dross I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem as one casts metals into a furnace, and in my anger I will blast you with fire, and melt you as silver is melted in a furnace.’**”

23**You shall know that it is I Jehovah who have poured out my wrath upon you.”**

Ezekiel told that the siege of Jerusalem had begun

24“**In the ninth year, in the tenth month on the tenth day, the word of the Lord came to me saying, ‘Son of man record this date, for the king of Babylon has begun a siege of Jerusalem this very day.’**”

25“**The time has come for me to act. I shall not hold back nor have pity, nor will I relent.**”

Ezekiel’s wife to be suddenly taken from him

26“**The Lord also said to me, ‘Son of man, I am about to suddenly take away from you your wife, the delight of your eyes.’**”

Ezekiel not to show any sign of mourning

27“**You are not to lament or weep aloud, nor let your tears run down. Show no sign of mourning. Keep your head covered and your feet shod.**”

Ezekiel wife dies that evening

28“**So I prophesied as usual to the people in the morning and that evening my wife died.**”

29“**The next morning I acted as the Lord had commanded me.**”

The exiles likewise not to mourn the loss of the Temple and the destruction of Jerusalem

30“**The people said to me, ‘What has this to do with us?’**”

31“**Then this word of the Lord came to me, ‘Say to the people, ‘Jehovah says, I am about to desecrate my Temple, the delight of your eyes and object of your affection, the house in which you take so much pride.**”

32**And the sons and daughters you left behind in Jerusalem will fall by the sword.**”

33“**Ezekiel is a sign to you, and you must do just as he has done; you must not mourn nor weep, but languish silently in your sins and groan within yourselves.**”

34“**When you hear the report of it, you will know that I am the Lord.**”

Ezekiel to regain his speech when

a fugitive from Jerusalem arrives with the news

35“**And you, son of man, when I take from them their joy and glory, a fugitive from Jerusalem shall arrive and tell you the news.**”

36“**On that day your mouth will be opened again and you shall speak freely as before. No longer will you be restricted in your speech. So you too will be a sign to them.**”^{F*}

8

The Lord to pull Egypt the crocodile out of the Nile

1“**At the end of the tenth year the word of the Lord came to me saying, ‘Son of man, prophesy against Pharaoh king of Egypt.’**”

2“**Say to him, ‘The Lord Jehovah says, I am against you Pharaoh king of Egypt, you great crocodile lying in your river. You say, ‘The Nile is my own.’ But I shall put hooks in your jaws and pull you out with all your fish^{F*} attached to your scales.’**”

3“**I shall leave you aground in the desert as food for the animals and birds of the earth.**”

Egypt a staff that splinters like a reed

4“**For you proved to be a staff made of reed for the people of Israel. When they leaned on you, you splintered.**”

Egypt to be put to the sword and exiled and become an empty wasteland

5“**Therefore I will bring a sword against you and kill your men and their animals. Egypt will become an empty wasteland, as far as the border of Ethiopia. No human or animal foot shall pass through it.**”

6“**And I will disperse you among the nations. Your cities shall lie empty forty years. Then all Egypt will know that I am Jehovah.**”

Egypt to be gathered again after forty years

7“**Yet at the end of forty years I will gather you back from captivity and return you again to the land of your ancestry.**”

Egypt never again to rule over the nations

8“**But you shall remain a lowly kingdom. Egypt will never again rule over the nations.**”

9**You shall no longer be a source of strength for the people of Israel, but will be a reminder of their sin in turning to you for help.**”

The Ammonites to be destroyed for rejoicing over Jerusalem’s downfall

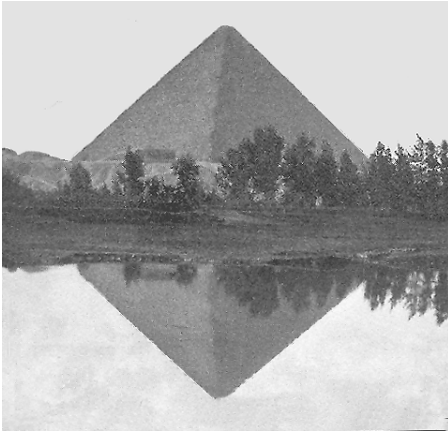
10“**The word of the Lord came to me, ‘Son of man, prophesy against the Ammonites.’**”^{F*}

11“**Say to them, ‘Hear the word of the Lord God. Because you clapped your hands and**

*36 Ezekiel’s tongue had been bound so that he could only speak revelations from the Lord, see Ezekiel 2:8-10.

*2 Meaning perhaps the cities of Egypt or the three nations allied with Egypt, see Ezekiel 10:9.

*10 The Ammonites were descended from Lot (Genesis 13:28).



The once powerful Egypt has been cursed to "never again rule over the nations."

stamped your feet and rejoiced with malice when my house was desecrated and the land of Judah was laid waste, I am going to give you over to the people of the east."

¹²"They will pitch their tents among you and eat your fruit and drink your milk."

¹³"I shall turn your city Rabbah into a pasture for camels and Ammon into a resting place for sheep. I shall destroy you, then you will know that I am Jehovah."

Moab also to be punished

¹⁴"Because Moab said, 'Judah has now become like all the other nations,' I will also give Moab to the people of the east. ¹⁵I shall inflict punishment on Moab then they will know that I am Jehovah."

The people of Edom to fall by the sword

¹⁶"Edom has grievously sinned by taking revenge on the house of Judah. Therefore I will lay Edom waste and cut off from her all people and animals. They shall fall by the sword."

¹⁷"I shall take vengeance on Edom in my anger by the hand of my people Israel says Jehovah."

The Philistines to be destroyed

¹⁸"Because the Philistines acted in vengeance and have of old sought to destroy Judah, I am about to destroy the Philistines and those along the sea coast."

¹⁹"I will carry out great vengeance on them and punish them in my wrath. They shall know that I am Jehovah."

9

Tyre to be destroyed for rejoicing over the fate of Jerusalem

¹"The word of the Lord came to me, 'Son of man, the city of Tyre rejoiced and said of Jerusalem, 'The gateway to the south lies in

ruins, her wealth will now revert to me and I shall prosper."

²"Therefore the Lord God says to Tyre, 'I will hurl against you many nations, as the sea hurls its waves.'" F*

Tyre to be besieged by the Babylonians

³"I will bring against you Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, king of kings, with horses and chariots and a great army."

⁴"He shall ravage your daughter towns on the coastland and will set up a siege against you and build a causeway to your walls."

⁵"His war horses shall be so many they will cover you with dust. Your walls will tremble at the noise of the horses and chariots as they enter your gates."

The people of Tyre to be put to the sword and the city demolished and cast into the sea

⁶"The hooves of his horses shall trample your streets and he shall put your people to the sword. He will destroy your walls and towers and demolish your fine houses, and cast your stones and timber into the sea."

⁷"I shall put an end to your songs. The music of your harps will be heard no more."

The people to dwell in Sheol

⁸"You shall become an empty city when I cast you into the deep and send you down to those in Sheol. F* to people of long ago."

⁹"You shall dwell in the world below and will not again return to the land of the living."

The island of Tyre to become a bare rock

¹⁰"I shall scour the soil from your island and make you a bare rock in the midst of the sea, a place for spreading nets. ¹¹You will never be rebuilt. Then you will know that I am Jehovah."

The pride and wealth of the king of Tyre

¹²"The word of the Lord came to me, 'Son of man, prophesy against the king of Tyre, the gateway to the sea and merchant to the coastal nations.'"

¹³"Say to him, 'The Lord God says, In the pride of your heart you say, 'I am like a god for I sit on a throne in the heart of the sea.' ¹⁴But you are a mortal not a god, though you think you are as wise as a god."

¹⁴"You are indeed wiser than Danel, F* no secret is hidden from you. By your wisdom you have gained wealth for yourself and amassed gold and silver, but because of your wealth your heart has grown proud."

King of Tyre to die at hands of foreigners

¹⁵"Therefore you will die the death of the uncircumcised at the hands of foreigners. I Jehovah have spoken."

*2 The city of Tyre was built on an island a little way offshore.

*8 Sheol is the spirit world of the dead.

*14 Danel was a wise judge of the past whose Solomon-like judgements were glorified in the literature of Ezekiel's day.

A lament to the fall of the king of Tyre

16^a“The word of the Lord came to me, ‘Son of man, take up this lament concerning the king of Tyre.’”^{F*}

17^a“Jehovah says, ‘You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God and every precious stone adorned you.’”

18^a“I ordained and anointed you one of the guarding cherubim, for you were on the holy Mount of God and walked among the fiery stones.”

19^a“You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, until iniquity was found in you. 20^aSo I drove you in disgrace from the Mount of God, for your heart had become proud on account of your beauty, and you had corrupted your wisdom because of your splendour. 21^aI cast you down to earth to make you a spectacle before kings.”

22^a“Now by your many sins and dishonest trade you have desecrated your city, so I will consume you and reduce you to ashes in the sight of all who are watching. All the nations who knew you shall be appalled.”

Tyre likened to a beautiful ship

23^a“The word of the Lord came to me, ‘Son of man, take up this lament against the city of Tyre.’”

24^a“You are perfect in beauty O Tyre, like a ship of the ocean. Your builders have made your timbers of pine from Mount Hermon and your mast from cedar of Lebanon. 25^aYour oars are oak of Bashan and your decks fine cypress wood, inlaid with ivory.”

26^a“Your sail and banner are fine embroidered linen from Egypt and your cabin is upholstered with blue and purple fabric from Cyprus.”

27^a“Men of Sidon and Arvad^{F*} are your oarsmen, and your own skilled men O Tyre are your seamen.”

28^a“Craftsmen of Byblos caulk your seams, and all the ships of the sea come alongside to trade for your wares.”

29^a“Men of Persia, Lydia and Libya serve you as soldiers, bringing you wealth. Men of Arvad and Cilicia man your battlements, hanging their shields around your sides to bring your beauty to perfection.”

30^a“Tarshish trades with you, bringing silver, iron, tin and lead. Greece, Tubal and Meshech bring slaves and articles of bronze. Armenians trade horses and mules.”

31^a“Ivory tusks and ebony are brought to you from Rhodes. Syria brings turquoise, purple fabric, embroidered work, fine linen, coral and rubies. From Judah and Israel you obtain wheat, figs, honey, olive oil and balm.”

32^a“Damascus trades wine and Syrian wool.

*16 The King of Tyre (and Sidon) at this time was Ethbaal II, a descendant of Ethbaal I, father of the notorious Jezebel.

*27 Arvad was an island city off the north coast of Sidon,

Greeks bring wrought iron, cassia and calamus.^{F*} Dedan trades saddle blankets. Arabia does business with you in lambs, rams and goats.”

33^a“The merchants of Sheba and Raamah exchange the finest of spices and precious stones and gold. Haran, Canneh, Eden, Asshur and Kilmad trade beautiful garments, blue fabric, embroidered work and multi-coloured rugs.”

Tyre to be shipwrecked

34^a“You are filled with heavy cargo in the heart of the sea O Tyre, but your wealth, your merchandise, your seamen, your merchants, your soldiers and everyone else on board will be cast into the heart of the sea on the day of your shipwreck.”

All Tyre's traders will lament

35^a“The coastlands will quake when you cry out. All the seamen who traded with you will abandon their ships and stand on the shore.

36^aThey will weep over you with anguish of soul and take up this lament concerning you, ‘Who was ever destroyed like Tyre, surrounded by the sea?’”

10

Sidon to be punished by plague and sword

1^a“The word of the Lord came to me, ‘Son of man prophesy against Sidon.’”

2^a“Say to her, ‘The Lord God says, I am against you O Sidon and shall gain glory from you. When I punish you, you will know that I am Jehovah.’”

3^a“I shall send plague and a sword upon you. Blood shall flow in your streets. No longer will the people of Israel have a piercing thorn for a neighbour.”



Sidon, “a piercing thorn” of Israel (verse 3) and prophesied against through Ezekiel.

Egypt and her allies to be destroyed by Babylon

4^a“The word of the Lord came to me, ‘Son of man, prophesy against Egypt.’”

5^a“Say to her, ‘I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Nor has it been bound in a splint to heal so that he can continue to wield a sword.’”

6^a“I am against the king of Egypt and shall

*32 Cassia and calamus were aromatic plants.

EZEKIEL 11

break both his arms and make his sword fall from his hands.”

⁷“Furthermore I shall put my sword in the hand of the king of Babylon. He and the armies with him, the most ruthless of nations shall destroy the land and fill Egypt with her slain, and they shall scatter the Egyptians among the nations. ⁸All Egypt’s wealth will be carried away.”

⁹“Her allies, Ethiopia, Libya and Arabia will also fall, all the people of the covenant land. The whole land will become empty and the cities shall lie in ruins.”

The Nile to be no longer muddied by hooves of cattle

¹⁰“I shall also destroy all the cattle. Egypt’s abundant water will no longer be stirred by the foot of man or muddied by the hooves of cattle. The river shall settle and flow clear.”

¹¹“I will dry up the canals of the Nile and lay waste the land and everything in it.”

¹²“I shall destroy their idols and there will no longer be a king in Egypt.”

¹³“I will put an end to the hordes of Egypt by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. Then shall they know that it is I Jehovah who speak.”

The hordes of Egypt to go down to Sheol the spirit world of the dead

¹⁴“The word of the Lord came to me, ‘Son of man, mourn for the hordes of Egypt and consign her and the other mighty nations to Sheol below. ¹⁵Say to them, ‘Are you more favoured than others? Go down and rest among the uncircumcised.’” F*

¹⁶“From within Sheol the mighty leaders shall say of Egypt and her allies, ‘They have come down to the uncircumcised and those killed by the sword. ¹⁷Assyria’s vast army is also here. All who spread terror in the land of the living have fallen by the sword.’”

11

Word arrives in Babylon that Jerusalem has fallen

¹“In the twelfth year of our exile a man who had escaped from Jerusalem came to me and said, ‘The city has fallen!’”

Ezekiel recovers his full powers of speech

²“Now the previous evening the hand of the Lord had come upon me and he had opened my mouth so I was able to speak.” F*

*1 Circumcision was originally a covenant sign (Genesis 11:17) and was practiced by the Israelites, Arabians, Edomites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians and Phoenicians, but not by the Assyrians, Babylonians, Philistines, or Canaanites. These latter peoples were therefore sometimes referred to by the mildly derogatory term ‘the uncircumcised.’

*2 Ezekiel had formally been able only to speak revelations from the Lord. He had been struck dumb for normal speech, partly for his own protection and partly as a sign (Ezekiel 2:8-10 and 7:36).

The fugitives hiding in the land of Judah to die for their sins

³“The word of the Lord came to me, ‘Son of man, the fugitives hiding among the ruins in the land of Judah are saying, ‘Surely the land has been left to us.’”

⁴“Therefore say to them, ‘The Lord Jehovah says, ‘Since you eat meat with the blood still in it, and worship your idols and shed blood, should you possess this land? ⁵You rely on your sword and do abominable things and lie with your neighbour’s wives.’”

⁶“As surely as I live, those who are hiding in the ruins shall fall by the sword, and those out in the country shall be devoured by wild animals, and those in the caves will die of disease.”

Judah to become an empty wasteland

⁷“I will make Judah an empty wasteland. Then they shall know that I am the Lord.”

The exiles listen to Ezekiel but are greedy for unjust gain and do not heed his words

⁸“As for you son of man, the people say to one another, ‘Come and hear the word of the Lord.’”

⁹“My people sit before you and listen to your words, but they do not heed them.

¹⁰“With their lips they draw near to me, but their hearts are set on unjust gain.”

Ezekiel like a singer of love songs

¹¹“To them you are like one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays a musical instrument well.”

¹²“However when all my words have come to pass, they will know that a prophet has been in the midst of them.”

The shepherds of Israel only take care of themselves

¹³“The word of the Lord came to me, ‘Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel.’”

¹⁴“Say to them, ‘The Lord Jehovah says, Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves. You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool, and slaughter the choice animals but you do not take care of the flock. ¹⁵Should not shepherds care for their flock?’”

¹⁶“You do not strengthen the weak or heal the sick, nor bind up the injured. You do not bring back the strays or search for the lost. Rather you treat them all brutally.”

The Lord to remove Israel’s shepherds

¹⁷“So my flock have become scattered, for there are no caring shepherds. They have become food for wild animals.”

¹⁸“Therefore hear the word of Jehovah you shepherds of Israel. I will hold you accountable for my flock, and remove you as shepherds. You will no longer feed yourselves.”

The Lord himself to become Israel's shepherd

19^{"I myself will search for my sheep, to look after them and rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of gloom."}

20^{"I shall gather them from the nations and bring them into their own land. There they will lie down and feed in rich pasture among streams on the hills of Israel."}

The fat and strong sheep to be destroyed

21^{"I shall search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy."}

The Lord to be a just shepherd

22^{"I will shepherd my flock with justice and judge between one sheep and another, and between the rams and the goats. 23For is it not enough that they feed on rich pasture? Must some of them also trample the rest of the pasture?"}

24^{"And is it not enough that they drink clear water? Must some of them muddy the water with their feet? 25Should the rest of my flock feed on what they have trampled and drink water they have muddied?"}

26^{"Therefore I shall judge between the fat and the lean sheep. For the fat rams butt the lean sheep with their horns and drive them away."}

27^{"I will save my flock and they shall no longer be oppressed. I shall judge between one sheep and another."}

David to be king of Israel during the millennium

28^{"I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David and he shall tend them. I Jehovah will be their God and my servant David shall be their king.^{F*} I the Lord have spoken."}

Israel to be greatly blessed during millennium

29^{"I will make a covenant of peace, and rid the land of wild animals that my people may live in the wilderness and sleep in the forests in safety."}

30^{"I shall bless them and all the land surrounding my holy mountain, and send down showers in season, and also showers of blessings."}

31^{"The trees shall yield them fruit and the land provide them abundant crops. And my people shall no longer bear the scorn of the nations nor be plundered by them, but will live secure in their land."}

32^{"They will know that I am the Lord when I rescue them. For you are my sheep and I am your God says the Lord God."}

Ezekiel taken by the Spirit to a valley of dry bones

1^{"The hand of the Lord came upon me and he transported me by the Spirit and set me down in the midst of a valley that was full of bones."}

2^{"He led me back and forth among the bones and I saw a great many on the floor of the valley and they were very dry."}

3^{"The Lord said to me, 'Son of man, can these bones live?'"}

"I said, 'O Lord God, you alone know.'"

Ezekiel told to command the bones to come alive

4^{"He said to me, 'Prophecy to these bones. Say to them, "Dry bones, hear the word of Jehovah. Let tendons attach to you and flesh come upon you and cover you with skin. Let spirits enter into you and come alive."}

Flesh and skin cover the bones

5^{"So I prophesied as I was commanded, and even as I spoke there came a rattling noise and the bones assembled together, bone to bone. And as I watched, flesh appeared upon them and skin covered them. But there was no life in them."}

Spirits enter the bodies and they stand up alive on their feet

6^{"Then the Lord said to me, 'Prophecy to the spirits son of man. Say, "The Lord Jehovah commands, Come from the four winds O spirits and enter into these slain, that they may live."}

7^{"So I prophesied as the Lord commanded me and their spirits came and entered into them, and they became alive and stood on their feet, a vast army."}

The Lord to resurrect all the dead of Israel from their graves and return them to their own land

8^{"The Lord said to me, 'Son of man, these bones represent the whole house of Israel. They say, "We are like dried up bones for all our hope is gone."}

9^{"Therefore prophesy to them saying, 'The Lord Jehovah says, O my people, I am going to open your graves and raise you up from them and bring you back to the land of Israel."}

10^{"Then my people shall know that I am Jehovah when I open your graves and raise you up."}

11^{"And I shall put my Spirit within you and you shall have Eternal Life."}

The stick of Judah and the stick of Ephraim

12^{"The word of the Lord came to me, 'Son of man, take a stick of wood and write upon it, 'Judah and the Israelites with him."}

13^{"Then take another stick of wood and}

*28 Three other prophecies in the Old Testament also testify of a resurrected David leading the reunited Israel as king during the millennium: Hosea 1:29, Jeremiah 18:6, and Ezekiel 12:17.

EZEKIEL 13

write upon it, 'Ephraim^{F*} and all the house of Israel with him.'

The two sticks to be joined as one – a sign that all Israel will be reunited in the millennium

14“Then join them together so they become one stick in your hand. When your countrymen say to you, ‘What is the meaning of this?’ answer them, “Jehovah says, The day will come when I shall take Ephraim and the tribes with him and join them to Judah and they shall become one in my hand.”

15“Then hold up the two sticks you have written on and joined together and say to them, ‘Jehovah says, In that day I will gather the Israelites out of all the nations where they have gone and bring them back to their own land.’”

16“I shall make them one nation on the hills of Israel and there shall be one king over them all, and they will never again be divided. I will save them from their sinful ways and cleanse them.”

David to be king over all Israel during millennium

17“They will be my people, and I shall be their God, and my servant David will be king over them. They will follow my laws and keep my commandments.”

18“**They and their children and their children’s children shall live there forever,**^{F*} and David my servant will be their prince forever.”

The Lord to put his Temple in Israel forever

19“**I will make an everlasting covenant of peace with them and will bless them and multiply their numbers, and I will put my Temple among them forever. My dwelling place shall be with them and I shall be their God.**”

13

Gog to lead a mighty army of many nations against Israel in last days

1“**The word of the Lord came to me, ‘Son of man, prophesy these words against Gog^{F*} of Magog, chief prince of the nations of Meshech and Tubal:**^{F*}

2“**The Lord God says, ‘I am against you O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal.**

*13 The combined tribes of the exiled northern kingdom of Israel were often referred to as Ephraim, after the dominant tribe.

*18 The Hebrew word *olam* here translated ‘forever’ (and in other places in the Old Testament) means ‘the concealed future’ or ‘as far into the future as can be seen’ not necessarily the whole of eternity. The utopian conditions depicted here and elsewhere in the Bible will last throughout the thousand year millennium (Revelation 15:29), but there will be further dramatic changes after the end of that period (Revelation chapter 17).

*1 There has never been an historic king by the name of Gog, neither before nor since this prophecy, and some believe him to be a demon. Moreover Gog and the Beast of the book of Revelation appear to be one and the same person (see Revelation chapters 9,10, and 12). Magog is also an obscure term but is believed to be a loosely defined region around and south of the Black Sea, nowadays south Russia and Turkey.

*1 Northern nations around the Black Sea.

3Be prepared to take command of all the nations about you, for in the last days you and the many other nations with you in the far north will advance against my people Israel like a cloud that covers the land. 4A great horde of horses and horsemen all in full armour, with shields and brandishing swords.”

5“**Persia,**^{F*} Ethiopia and Libya shall join with you; a mighty army, for you are the one I have spoken of in former days by the prophets of Israel.”^{F*}

Israelites from many nations will have gathered to Israel in the last days

6“**In the last days you shall be called to invade a land that has recovered from war, a land whose people have gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate. Now they live there in safety.**”

7“**You shall advance like a storm, like a cloud covering the ground.**”

Israel to be a land of unwallled towns

8“**For evil thoughts shall come into your mind and you will devise a plan saying, ‘I shall invade this land of unwallled cities, this peaceful people living without walls and gates. I will plunder the resettled wilderness and the people gathered from the nations, rich in livestock and goods and living in the heart of the land.’**

A great earthquake will break up Israel

10“**In the day Gog attacks Israel my hot anger will be aroused and there shall come a great earthquake in the land of Israel.**”



Modern Israel, ‘a land of unwallled cities.’

11“**The mountains shall be thrown down and the cliffs will crumble and every wall shall fall to the ground. 12Every person and living creature on the face of the earth will tremble.**”^{F*}

*5 Persia geographically encompasses modern day Iraq and Iran bounded by the Caspian sea in the north and the Persian gulf in the south.

*5 See Isaiah chapters 7 and 8 for further prophesies of this great invasion of Israel in the last days.

*11 This massive earthquake which is world-wide (see verse 12) is also spoken of in Revelation 12:26.

Gog's armies will panic and turn on each other
 13^a“I will send a great panic upon the armies of Gog. Every man shall turn his sword against his brother.”

Hail and fire to be poured down on Gog's army
 14^a“I shall execute my judgement with plague and bloodshed. I will pour down torrential rain, hailstones and blazing sulphur on Gog and the armies of the many nations with him.”

Gog armies to fall on the mountains and fields of Israel

15^a“On the mountains and open fields of Israel you shall fall O Gog, you and all your armies. I will give you as food to the birds and wild animals.”

Fire to fall on the northern nations and coastlands

16^a“And I shall send fire on the land of Magog and on those in the coastlands, and so I will show my greatness in the sight of all nations.”

The holy name of Jehovah to be vindicated at last

17^a“No longer will my holy name be profaned. All nations shall know that I am Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel.”

Abandoned weaponry to provide Israel fuel for seven years

18^a“It is coming. It will surely take place. This is the great day of which I have spoken.”

19^a“After that day, those who live in the towns of Israel will go out and burn the weaponry.”

20^a“For seven years they shall not need to gather wood, for the weapons will provide them with fuel.”

Seven months to bury the dead

21^a“In that day the burial place of Gog and all his hordes will be in a valley east of the Dead Sea. It shall be renamed the valley of the Hordes of Gog.”

22^a“For seven months men of Israel shall be fully employed burying the dead in order to cleanse the land. 23^aA town called Hordes will be built in the valley.”

24^a“At the end of seven months they shall begin a search throughout the land to bury those that still remain upon the ground. 25^aWhen a searcher sees a human bone he will set up a marker beside it until the grave diggers come to bury it in the valley of the Hordes of Gog.”

Birds and wild animals to eat the flesh of the slain

26^a“Son of man, cry out to the birds and the wild animals saying, ‘Come together to the sacrifice I am preparing for you on the mountains of Israel.’”

27^a“There you will eat the flesh of mighty men and drink the blood of the leaders of the earth. 28^aYou shall eat fat until you are

glutted and drink blood until you are drunk.”

The Lord to reveal his face to Israel and pour out his Spirit upon them

29^a“Then I shall no longer hide my face from the house of Israel and I will pour out my Spirit upon them.”

14

Ezekiel is taken to a high mountain in Israel and sees a future millennial city

1^a“At the beginning of the twenty-fifth year of our exile, fourteen years after the fall of Jerusalem, the hand of the Lord came upon me and I was taken in a vision of God to the land of Israel. 2^aI was set down on a high mountain which had on its south slope the appearance of a city.” F*

Ezekiel sees an angel with a measuring rod and cord

3^a“I saw an angel before me standing in the gateway of the city. He glowed like polished bronze and held a measuring rod and cord in his hand. The length of the rod was six long cubits.” F*

4^a“The angel said to me, ‘Son of man, pay attention to everything I am going to show you, and describe to the house of Israel all that you see.’”

The angel measures the Temple walls and gateways

5^a“I saw a wall surrounding the Temple area of the city and as I watched, the angel measured the wall. 6^aIt was 6 cubits thick, 6 cubits high, and 500 cubits long on each side.” F*

7^a“Then he went to the gateway facing east that led through the wall. He climbed the seven steps and measured the width of the gateway. It was 6 cubits wide.”

8^a“Inside the gate was a passageway, 13 cubits wide and 25 cubits deep, with three open guard rooms on either side, each 6 cubits square. 9^aEach room was separated by a column 5 cubits wide. In front of the guard rooms was a low wall, a cubit high.”

10^a“The passageway led to an entrance hall 25 cubits square, which opened into the outer courtyard of the Temple.”

11^a“The entrance hall had windows that narrowed inwards. The walls and columns of the hall were decorated with palm trees.”

The courtyard of the Temple

12^a“The angel then led me out into the open courtyard in which the walled inner courtyard and the Temple itself stood.”

13^a“The distance across the large outer courtyard to the inner courtyard walls was 100 cubits on the east, north and south.”

*1 This city appears to be the future rebuilt Jerusalem or Holy City of the millennium (see Ezekiel 16:5 and 17:20 and note on 17:22).

*3 The long cubit, an older measure, was about 520mm (20½”).

*5 About 3m thick by 3m high by 270m along each side.

EZEKIEL 14

14¹⁴“I also saw a pavement around the outer edge of the courtyard, and there were thirty rooms built into the outside walls we had passed through.”

15¹⁵“There were two other gateways in the outside wall, on the north and the south. These were of the same dimensions as the eastern gate through which we had entered.”

Animal sacrifices to continue

16¹⁶“The angel led me around the outer courtyard and I saw in each corner, smaller enclosed courts, each 40 cubits long and 30 cubits wide, and around the inside of each one was a ledge of stone with fireplaces beneath.”

17¹⁷“The angel said to me, **“These are the kitchens where the Levites who minister at the Temple will cook the sacrifices of the people.”** F*

The inner courtyard wall and gateways

18¹⁸“Then he led me up eight steps to one of the three gateways that led through the inner wall into the inner courtyard of the Temple area, measuring as he went.”

19¹⁹“The passages and halls of the inner gates were of the same dimensions as those of the outer gates; 25 cubits wide and 50 cubits long, but faced the other way. The guard rooms were at the inner courtyard end.” F*

20²⁰“In each of the three inner gateways there was a room where burnt offerings were washed. In the passageways that opened into the inner courtyard and also outside the openings, were tables on which the animals to be offered were slaughtered.”

21²¹“The tables were of dressed stone, each a cubit and a half square and a cubit high. On them were laid the instruments for slaughtering. Double-pronged hooks were attached to the walls nearby.”

22²²“There were also rooms within the inner courtyard for the singers, by the gateway.”

The inner courtyard of the Temple area

23²³“The angel then measured the inner courtyard where the Temple was located. It was 100 cubits square, and at the western end stood the Temple.”

24²⁴“At the north and south entrances to the inner courtyard were two buildings. The angel said to me, **“The building facing south is for the priests who have charge of the Temple, and the one facing north is for the priests who have charge of the altar.”**

*17 It appears unlikely that this temple of the latter days will be built until after the second coming of Christ, for Ezekiel 17:1-10 speaks of a river of water to flow out from under the temple to bring life to the Dead Sea, and of fruit trees bearing fruit every month. The animal sacrifices mentioned in this verse (see also Zechariah 5:30) to be offered in this new temple during the millennium will probably be commemorative in nature, ie looking back to Jesus Christ's perfect sacrifice, rather than looking forward to it as in past temples. This is probably to allow the Levites the right to redeem themselves and do what they failed to do in earlier times (see Ezekiel 15:28 and Malachi 3:5). Animal sacrifice will not continue after the millennium as there is no temple in the glorious New Jerusalem nor is there any more physical death (Revelation chapter 17).

*19 Probably to ensure that the people did not enter the inner courtyard. Only ordained Levite priests were permitted to enter the inner courtyard of the temple.

25²⁵“**These are to be the descendants of Zadok who are the only Levites who may approach Jehovah to minister before him.**” F*

Other buildings around about the Temple

26²⁶“Behind the Temple was a building 70 cubits wide and 90 cubits long.” F*

27²⁷“To the right of the Temple (on the north) was a building 100 cubits long and 50 cubits wide, and three stories high, its side forming part of the northern wall of the courtyard. 28²⁸On the south side of the Temple was another identical building.”

29²⁹The angel said to me, **“The buildings on the north and south of the inner courtyard are holy. There the priests who approach the Lord will eat the most holy offerings.”**

Priests to wear holy garments

30³⁰“**Once the priests have entered the inner courtyard, they are not to go back out into the outer courtyard wearing the garments in which they minister, for these are holy.**

31³¹**They are to put on other clothes before they enter the area where the people gather.**”

The altar of sacrifice and the Temple proper

32³²“Before the Temple I saw a high altar, and beyond the altar, ten steps that led up to the Temple doors.”

33³³“Two pillars, each 5 cubits wide stood either side of the Temple doors.”

Ezekiel is taken inside the Temple proper

34³⁴“Then the angel led me up the steps to the entrance of the Temple. The main entrance porch was 14 cubits wide and the porch walls projected out 3 cubits on either side.”

35³⁵“The doors of the Temple opened into an entrance hall, 20 cubits wide and 12 cubits deep.”

36³⁶“At the rear of the entrance hall I saw double doors leading into the outer sanctuary.”

37³⁷“On either side of the double doors stood two columns, each measuring 6 cubits wide.”

The outer sanctuary

38³⁸“The angel led me through the doors into the outer sanctuary and measured it. It was 40 cubits long and 20 cubits wide.”

39³⁹“In front of the doors concealing the inner sanctuary was a wooden table, 2 cubits square and 3 cubits high.”

40⁴⁰“The angel said to me, **“This is the table that is before Jehovah.”**

The inner sanctuary

41⁴¹“The angel entered the inner sanctuary and measured it. It was twenty cubits square. He said to me, **“This is the Most Holy Place.”**

The side rooms

42⁴²“Then he measured the outside walls of the

*25 Zadok was a descendant of Aaron who served as a faithful high priest under David. He loyally upheld David's son Solomon to be king and did not rebel against David as did Abiathar his fellow high priest.

*26 The purpose of this rear building is not explained.

Temple. They were six cubits thick and contained many side rooms, four cubits wide.”

43“The side rooms were on three levels, one above another, thirty on each level and deeper at each successive level. F* And stairs went up from the lowest floor.”

44“The Temple had a terrace around the outside providing the foundation for the side rooms.” F*

Wood panelled walls, engravings and veiled windows

45“All the walls inside the Temple were panelled with wood and engraved with cherubim and palm trees.”

46“The cherubim showed two faces, that of a man facing the palm tree on one side and that of a lion facing the palm tree on the other.”

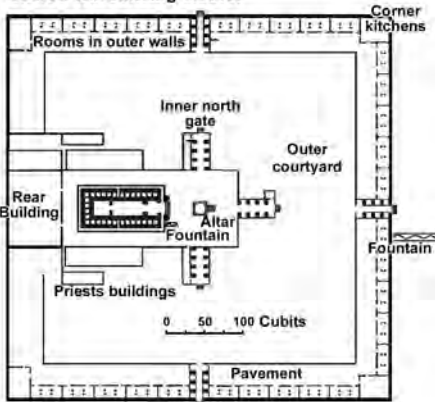
47“The narrow windows in the outer walls were veiled.”

15

Ezekiel sees the Lord approaching in glory

1“The angel returned me to the outside east gate, and then I saw the glory of the God of Israel, approaching from the east.”

Sacred surrounding district



The plan of the millennial Temple as seen and described by Ezekiel.

2“His voice was like the roar of rushing waters and the land shone with his glory. The vision was like the vision I had seen at the Kebar River and I fell face down.”

*43 These side rooms were all supported from beneath therefore less space was required for the supports of each succeeding floor, allowing the rooms on the next higher floor to be deeper. Traditionally temple side rooms have been used for storing treasure.

*44 No overall dimensions are given for the temple proper but it appears to have been about 83 cubits long and 32 cubits wide (45m x 26m), and therefore larger than Solomon’s temple which was 60 by 20 short cubits (28m x 9m). Both were three storied. There is no mention of a large basin on the backs of twelve oxen, an incense altar, lamp stands, or the Ark of the Covenant as with Solomon’s temple. The dimensions of the whole temple complex, including both the inner and outer courtyards was 500 cubits (270m) square.

The Lord enters the Temple complex through the east gates

3“‘The glory of the Lord entered the Temple area through the east gates.’”

The Temple to become the place of the Lord’s throne

4“Then the Spirit lifted me up and carried me again into the inner courtyard and the glory of the Lord filled the Temple area.”

5“‘The angel stood beside me and I heard the voice of Jehovah speaking to me from inside the Temple.’”

6“‘He said, ‘Son of man, this is the place of my throne and for the soles of my feet. Here I will live among the Israelites in days to come.’”

The Lord to dwell among a cleansed Israel for ever

7“‘The house of Israel shall never again defile my holy name with lifeless idols. Because they defiled my holy name by their abominable practices, I destroyed them in my anger.’”

8“‘Now let them put away their idolatry, and put far away from the vicinity of my Temple the tombs of their dead kings, and I shall live among them always.’”

Ezekiel to describe the Temple to the house of Israel

9“‘Son of man, describe the Temple to the house of Israel. Write down all the details so they will be faithful to its design and ordinances.’”

The whole mountain top to be most holy

10“‘The whole surrounding district on top of this mountain shall be most holy.’”

Measurements of the altar of sacrifice

11“‘Now these are the measurements of the altar on which to offer burnt offerings and against which to sprinkle blood.’”

12“‘It shall stand 6 cubits high. The fireplace is to be 12 cubits square with four horns projecting upward a cubit at each corner. 13There is to be a ledge around the fire place 14 cubits square, with a raised rim around the edge. The steps of the altar shall face east.’”

How the altar is to be purified

14“‘On the day when it is erected, a young bull for a sin offering is to be given to the Levite priests who are descendants of Zadok.’”

15“‘They are to slaughter it and put some of its blood on the four horns of the altar and all around the edges, and so purify the altar.’”

16“‘The bull is then to be burned in the appointed part of the Temple, outside the sacred area.’”

17“‘On the second day you are to offer a male goat without blemish as you did the bull. Then you are to offer a young bull and ram without blemish. 18The priests are to

EZEKIEL 16

sprinkle salt on them and sacrifice them on the altar as a burnt offering to Jehovah.”

¹⁹“Do this for seven days to purify the altar.”

²⁰“From the eighth day, the priests may offer the offerings of the people on the altar, then I shall accept you, declares the Lord God.”

The daily sacrifice

²¹“Every morning you are to offer a year-old lamb without blemish, a burnt offering to Jehovah, and a grain offering with oil to moisten the flour.”

The outer east gate to remain closed

²²“Then the angel took me to the outer east gate of the Temple and I saw that it was closed.”

²³“The Lord said to me, ‘The inner and outer east gates are to remain closed. No one may pass through them for Jehovah the God of Israel has entered by way of them.’”

²⁴“Only the king himself because he is a prince may sit inside the inner gate, to eat in the presence of the Lord. But he is to enter and leave by way of the outer courtyard.”

No unworthy foreigners permitted to enter the Temple grounds

²⁵“Then the angel returned me by way of the north gate to the front of the Temple. I saw the glory of the Lord filling the Temple and I fell face down.”

²⁶“The Lord said to me, ‘Son of man, say to the rebellious house of Israel. “Jehovah says, Enough of your abominations O house of Israel. In addition to all your detestable practices you admitted foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and flesh to my Temple, defiling it and breaking my covenant.”’

²⁷“Therefore says the Lord God, no foreigner, uncircumcised in heart and flesh is to enter my Temple.^{F*} Not even those who live among you.”

Only Levites may serve at the Temple

²⁸“And only the Levites, who strayed far from me and so must bear the consequences of their sin, may serve at my Temple and have charge of the gateways. They are to serve the people and slaughter the sacrifices for them.”

Because of idolatry only Levites descended through Zadok may serve as priests

²⁹“But because the Levites served the people in their idolatry, they can no longer serve me as priests, or come near any of my holy things. Yet they may carry out their other Temple duties.”

³⁰“Only the Levites who are descendants of Zadok, who remained faithful when the Israelites went astray, may stand before me

as priests to offer sacrifices of fat and blood.”

Priests to wear linen garments

³¹“When the priests enter the inner courtyard they are to wear linen turbans on their heads and linen undergarments around their loins.”

³²“They must not wear any woollen garment or one that makes them perspire.”

Priests not to drink wine before they enter the inner courtyard

³³“Nor is a priest to drink wine before he enters the inner courtyard.”

Grooming and marriage laws for priests

³⁴“The priests are not to shave their heads nor let their hair grow long, but are to keep their hair trimmed.”

³⁵“They must not marry widows or divorced women, only virgins of Israelite descent, or widows of priests.”

Priests to remain undefiled

³⁶“A priest must not defile himself by going near a dead person. However if the dead person is his father or mother, son or daughter, brother or unmarried sister then he may defile himself.”

³⁷“However, after he is cleansed he must wait seven days.”

³⁸“The priests shall obey my laws and my appointed feasts and keep my Sabbaths holy.

The priests to be supported by the donations of the people

³⁹“I am to be the only inheritance the priests have. They are not to possess land in Israel. They are to eat the grain offerings and the first fruits and other offerings of the people to the Lord.”

⁴⁰“Everything in Israel offered to the Lord shall belong to them, but they must not eat flesh found dead or torn by wild animals.”

Priests to serve as judges

⁴¹“The priests shall teach my people how to distinguish between clean and unclean, and in any dispute they are to serve as judges and decide according to my laws.”

16

A sacred Temple district to be set aside when Israel's inheritances allotted in millennium

¹“When Israel is allotted her inheritance, a portion of the land 25,000 cubits square^{F*} is to be set aside as a sacred district.”

The Levites to live around the Temple

²“Within this district, a section 500 cubits square is to be for the Temple area with 50 cubits around it for open land.”

³“A division of the sacred district, 10,000 cubits wide by 25,000 cubits long contain-

*27 Meaning the outer courtyard and gateways of the temple complex, for even Israelites in good standing were not permitted into the inner courtyard areas unless ordained as priests.

*1 About 13.5 km square.

ing the Temple area, will be for the priests who minister before me. It shall be a place for their houses as well as for the Temple.”

⁴“A second division of the same size alongside of it, will belong to the rest of the Levites who serve at the Temple.”

The Holy City

⁵“Adjoining this is to be a third division, 5,000 cubits wide by 25,000 cubits long with the Holy City at the centre of it. The city shall be 4,500 cubits square^{F*} with a 250 cubit border around it.”

East and west borders of the sacred district for growing food

⁶“The remaining 10,000 cubits on the east and west shall supply food for those who serve in the Holy City. ⁷Those who serve will be from all the tribes of Israel.”

The king to be also allocated land

⁸“The land on either side of the sacred district extending as far as the east and west boundaries of Israel is to be given as an inheritance to the king.”

⁹“If the king should make a gift from his inheritance to one of his servants, that servant may keep it until the year of freedom^{F*} then it will revert to the king.”

¹⁰For the king's inheritance belongs to his sons only.”

¹¹“Nor must the king take any land off the people. He is to give his sons their inheritance out of his own property.”

All the people of Israel must give offerings of grain, oil and sheep

¹²“You shall have just balances. And this is the sacrifice offering which all the people of Israel shall make. A fifteenth part of all grain and a tenth part of all oil. ¹³Also one sheep from every flock of 200 from the well-watered pastures of Israel.”

The offerings to be given to the king who is in turn to furnish the offerings for appointed feasts

¹⁴“These offerings are to be given to the king of Israel. ¹⁵It shall be his duty to furnish all the offerings for the appointed feasts of the house of Israel and for the atonement of the people.”

The Passover to be observed

¹⁶“In the first month, on the fourteenth day you are to observe the Passover for seven days. During that time you are to eat bread made without yeast.”

¹⁷“Each day the king is to provide a bull, a ram without defect, and a male goat as a sin offering for himself and for all the people of the land.”

The inner east gate to be opened on each Sabbath and New Moon

¹⁸“On the Sabbath day and on the day of

the New Moon, the east gateway to the inner courtyard of the Temple is to be opened.”

Only the king permitted to worship inside the east gateway

¹⁹“The king shall enter and worship inside the gateway as the priests sacrifice his offerings in the inner court.”

The people to worship outside the gate in the outer courtyard

²⁰The people shall bow down and worship outside the gate in the outer courtyard.”

The king's Sabbath sacrifice – six lambs and a ram

²¹“The burnt offering the king is to offer every Sabbath is six lambs and a ram, all without blemish.”

²²“Then the king is to withdraw from inside the east gateway, but the gate shall not be closed until evening.”

²³“The gate is to remain closed on the six working days of each week.”

²⁴“However, should the king desire at other times to offer a freewill offering to Jehovah, the inner east gate can be opened for him and he may make his offering as he does on the Sabbath day.”

People to come and go to the Temple by the outer north and south gates alternately

²⁵“When the people come to the Temple to worship at the appointed feasts, whoever enters by the north gate is to go out by the south gate, and whoever enters by the south gate is to go out by the north gate.”

The king is to attend and depart appointed feasts with the people

²⁶“And when they come for the appointed feasts, the king is to come with them, and when they depart he is to depart with them.”

²⁷“No one is to return through the gate by which he entered.” ^{F*}

17

Water to flow eastward from the Temple

¹“Then the angel led me back to the Temple and I saw a fountain of water issuing from under the front of the Temple and flowing toward the east, for the Temple doors faced east.”

²“He then took me out through the north gate and led me around to the outer gate facing east. I saw that the water continued to flow as a river, eastward.”

³“Then the angel walked eastward with the measuring line in his hand and measured off 1000 cubits.^{F*} He led me across the water and it was ankle-deep.”

River lakes to form

⁴“He then measured off 2000 cubits and the

*²⁷ Probably to ensure that both gates are used equally to minimise crowd congestion at festival times. There was no west gate at the rear of the temple complex and the outer east gate remained closed permanently (Ezekiel 15:23).

*³ About half a kilometre.

*⁵ About 2.4 km square.

*⁹ Probably equivalent to the year of Jubilee. See Leviticus 7:15-21.

EZEKIEL 17

river was knee-deep. At 3000 cubits it was up to my waist. At 5000 cubits it was too deep to cross so he led me back to the bank."

The river to flow into and freshen the Dead Sea

5 "The angel said to me, 'This river will flow toward the east and go down into the Jordan river valley where it will enter the Dead Sea and the water in the Dead Sea shall become fresh.'

Swarms of fish to live in the Dead Sea

6 "Swarms of fish of many kinds will live there^{F*} as varied as in the Great Sea,^{F*} and fishermen will cast their nets along the shore."

7 "But the marshes shall not become fresh, they will be left for harvesting salt."

Fruit trees to grow along the river banks

8 "I saw growing on the banks a great number of trees, on both sides of the river."

9 "The angel said to me, 'Fruit trees of all kinds will grow along the banks of the river. Their leaves shall not wither, nor will their fruit fail.'

The trees to bear fruit every month

10 "Every month they shall bear fruit, for water from the Temple flows to them. Their fruit shall be for food and their leaves for healing."

The millennial borders of Israel

11 "The word of the Lord came to me, 'These are the boundaries by which the land is to be equally divided for an inheritance among the twelve tribes of Israel, with two portions for Joseph.'^{F*}

12 "The west border: The Great Sea."

13 "The north border: From the Great Sea at a point level with the Hethlon road to Lebo, and then eastward to the border of Syria."

14 "The east border: The Syrian border south to the upper Jordan at Bashan and then following the Jordan river as far south as Tamar, south of the Dead Sea."

15 "The south border: From Tamar, south west to the Wadi of Egypt then west to the Great Sea."

Foreigners also to receive inheritances

16 "You are to allot the land as an inheritance for yourselves and for the foreigners who will settle among you and who have children. You are to consider them as native-born Israelites."

17 "In whatever tribe the foreigner settles, there you are to give him his inheritance."

New tribal boundaries for Israel

18 "At the northern boundary Dan shall have his inheritance, from east to west."

19 "Next shall be Asher and then in turn, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, Reuben and Judah."

*6 No fish can survive in the Dead Sea at present.

*6 The Mediterranean.

*11 The tribe of Joseph consisted of the two tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh who were descended from Joseph's sons. This makes thirteen tribes in total, however the Levites had no land of their own.

20 "Bordering Judah will be the sacred district, 25,000 cubits square that you are to set aside for the Temple and the Holy City."

21 "The land extending to the east and west of the sacred district is to belong to the king."

22 "As for the rest of the tribes, Benjamin will have the next portion, then in turn, Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun and Gad."^{F*}



The new borders of gathered Israel in the latter days.

The twelve gates of the Holy City to be named after the twelve tribes of Israel

23 "The gates of the Holy City are to be named after the tribes of Israel."

24 "The three gates on the north side will be, Reuben, Judah, and Levi. On the east, Joseph, Benjamin, and Dan. On the south, Simeon, Issachar, and Zebulun, and on the west, Gad, Asher, and Naphtali."

The Holy City to be named The City of Jehovah

25 "The distance all around the city shall be 18,000 cubits.^{F*} 26 The name of the city from that time on will be The City of Jehovah."

*22 Present day Israel is mostly mountainous and these new boundaries would be impractical, however other prophecies speak of the mountains of the world being broken up and becoming plains and rolling fertile hills at the second coming of the Lord (Micah 2:3, Isaiah 13:2 and 25:13, Revelation 4:14). But the temple and Holy City area are seen in vision as being very elevated, on a mountain top (Isaiah 15:1). The whole land of Israel is also to become fertile, with bubbling springs and pools of water (Joel 2:18, Isaiah 13:14 and 16:3-4).

*25 About 9.7 kms.

18

**Siege of Tyre exhausting
for Nebuchadnezzar's armies**

¹“In the twenty-seventh year this word of the Lord came to me, ‘**Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon exhausted his armies in the campaign against Tyre. Every head was rubbed bare and every shoulder made raw.**’^{F*} ²And neither he nor his army got any spoil from Tyre as recompense for the labour expended.”^{F*}

**The spoils of Egypt to be
given to Nebuchadnezzar as recompense**

³“Therefore I am going to give Nebuchadnezzar the land of Egypt as a reward for what he and his army did for me. He shall plunder the land and carry off its wealth and obtain pay for his army.”

Israel to begin to recover in that day

⁴“On that day new life shall begin to grow from the stump of Israel, and you son of man will speak out in their midst. Then they shall know that I am the Lord.”



The tomb of Ezekiel in Babylonia (now Iraq).

*1 From carrying earth and rubble for siege works while attempting to build a causeway through the sea.

*2 The siege of Tyre lasted 13 years and appears to have failed. Alexander the Great finally fulfilled the prophecy of her destruction.

LAMENTATIONS

Lamentations is a collection of laments (grief poems) that paint a graphic picture of the horrors that occurred in the city of Jerusalem during the Babylonian siege.

Jeremiah who wrote them was present in Jerusalem throughout the siege, and although confined in the guards quarters toward the end, he was able to provide an eyewitness account. It is believed that he wrote the laments soon afterward while exiled in Egypt.

These laments were originally written in acrostic verse – ie, each verse beginning with a succeeding letter of the 22 character Hebrew alphabet.

AUTHOR The prophet Jeremiah.

“Our eyes failed, ever watching for help. We watched in vain for a nation (Egypt) that could not save.” Lamentations 1:21.

CONTENTS

Chapter

Jerusalem sits deserted weeping like a widow 1	Jehovah has done what he decreed 1
Jerusalem sinned greatly and became unclean 1	Jeremiah laments horrors of the siege 1
Jerusalem speaks of her suffering 1	False prophets and sinful priests to blame 1
Horrors of the Babylonian siege 1	False prophets and priests now suffering in exile 1
Children died of thirst and hunger 1	The daily shame of exile 1
Skin of the people shrivelled black on their bones 1	Lord shut out our prayers 1
Mothers boiled and ate their own children for food ... 1	Judah the laughing stock of nations 1
Eyes watched in vain for Egypt to come and help 1	Yet because of Lord's great love we have hope 1
No one to comfort Jerusalem 1	Shoulder your yoke from the Lord patiently 1
Lord has destroyed his city and holy house 1	Let us examine our ways and return to the Lord 1
Jeremiah the prophet speaks to Jerusalem 1	A prayer to the Lord for restoration 1

1

Jerusalem sits deserted weeping like a widow

¹How deserted sits Jerusalem, once so full of people. Like a widow has she become, she who was once great among the nations. The queen has become a slave.

²How bitterly she weeps at night, with tears upon her cheeks, for she has no one to comfort her.

³No one comes to her appointed feasts. All her gateways are empty. Her children have been exiled. ⁴The Lord has brought her to grief, because of her many sins.

Jerusalem sinned greatly and became unclean

⁵Jerusalem sinned greatly and became unclean. All who honoured her now despise her, for they have seen her nakedness.

⁶She herself groans and turns her face away, for filthiness clung to her skirts.

⁷All her treasures have been stolen. Foreign nations entered her Temple sanctuary.

Jerusalem speaks of her suffering

⁸“Look and see all you who pass by me, is there any sorrow like the sorrow Jehovah has inflicted upon me in the day of his fierce anger?”

⁹“My sins have been made into a yoke and put upon my neck. He handed me over to those

whom I could not withstand.”

¹⁰“The Lord has trodden the daughter of Judah as in a winepress.”

The horrors of the Babylonian siege

¹¹“Look upon my suffering all you peoples. My young men and maidens have been exiled. My priests and elders perished for lack of food.”

¹²“My eyes fail from weeping. My heart is in torment, for I have been most rebellious.

¹³My people are destroyed. In both streets and houses the sword brought death.”

¹⁴“My chastisement was greater than the punishment of Sodom, which was overthrown in a day.”

Children died of thirst and hunger

¹⁵“Because of thirst the infant's tongue clung to the roof of its mouth. Children begged for bread but no one gave them any.”

¹⁶“Their lives ebbed away in their mothers' arms as they cried out, ‘Where is my bread and drink?’”

The once fair skin of the people shrivelled on their bones like black dry wood

¹⁷“They who were raised in wealth and once feasted on delicacies, lay on ash heaps.”

18“Their skin, once whiter than milk, with cheeks as red as rubies, became dark as soot. Their skin shrivelled on their bones like dry wood.”

19“Those who died by the sword were better off than those racked with hunger who died of famine.”

Mothers boiled and ate own children for food

20“With their own hands mothers even boiled and ate their own children.”

Eyes watched in vain for Egypt to come and help

21“Our eyes failed, ever watching for help. We watched in vain for a nation that could not save us.”

No one to comfort Jerusalem

22“This is why I weep. My eyes flow rivers of tears. I stretch out my hands but no one comforts me.”

23“*I have become an unclean thing. Jehovah my Lord is righteous yet I rebelled against him.*”

24“O Lord, people hear my groaning but no one comforts me, they rejoice at what you have done.”

25“Hasten the day you have announced against the nations, that they too may become like me.”

The Lord has destroyed his city and his holy house

26“*My Lord Jehovah is like an enemy. He has swallowed up Israel.*”

27“*He has destroyed all her palaces and her strongholds. He has laid waste his city and destroyed his holy house.*”

28“*The enemy raised a shout in the Temple, as on the day of a feast.*”

Jeremiah the prophet speaks to Jerusalem

29“*What can I say to you O Jerusalem that I may comfort you? For your wound is as deep as the sea. Who can heal you?*”

30“*The visions of your prophets were false. They did not expose your sins to ward off your captivity.*”

31“*Now all who pass your way mock and shake their heads and say, ‘Is this the city that was once called the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth?’*”

32“*Your enemies gloat and say, ‘We have devoured her. This was the day we longed for and now we have seen it.’*”

Jehovah has done what he decreed

33“*Jehovah has done what he decreed long ago. He has overthrown Jerusalem without pity.*”

34“*O daughter of Zion, let your tears flow like a river, night and day. Give yourself no relief. Give your eyes no rest.*”

35“*Arise and cry out in the night, pour out your heart like a river to the Lord.*”

36“*Lift up your hands to him for the lives of your children who died from hunger in every street.*”

Jeremiah laments the horrors of the siege of Jerusalem

37“O Lord whom have you ever treated like

this? Should women eat their own children?”

38“*Should priest and prophet be slaughtered in the house of the Lord?*”

39“*Should young men and maidens and the elderly lie together in the dust of the streets, slain by the sword.*”

40“*You have slaughtered us without pity. You summoned against us terror on every side. In the day of your anger no one escaped.*”

False prophets and sinful priests to blame

41The Lord gave full vent to his wrath. He kindled a fire in Jerusalem that consumed her foundations.

42The kings of the earth did not believe that enemies could enter the gates of Jerusalem, but it happened because of the sins of our prophets and priests.

False prophets and priests now suffering in exile

43Now these prophets and priests wander aimlessly through foreign streets, so defiled with blood that no one dare touch them.

44Men cry out to them, “Away with you! Touch us not! You are unclean!”

45When they flee elsewhere they are soon told, “You can stay here no longer.”

46Jehovah himself has scattered them and no longer watches over them. They are shown no honour.

The daily shame of exile

47“Remember O Lord what has happened to us. Look and see our disgrace.”

48“*Our women were ravished and defiled in Jerusalem and in the towns around. Princes were hung up by their hands.*”

49“*We now have become orphans. We must pay for our firewood and even the water we drink. Slaves rule over us.*”

50“*Elders are shown no respect. Young men toil at millstones and boys stagger under loads of wood.*”

51“*Joy is gone from our hearts. Our dancing has turned to mourning. Young men have ceased their music.*”

52“*Mount Zion^{F*} sits deserted. Wild jackals prowl over it.*”

Lord shut out our prayers

53Woe to us, for we have sinned. Because of these things our eyes grow dim.

54Even when we cried out for help, the Lord shut out our prayers.

55He drew his bow and pierced our hearts with arrows from his quiver.

Judah the laughing stock of the nations

56We have become the laughing stock of the nations. They mock us in song all day long.

57Jehovah has broken our teeth with gravel and trampled us in the dust.

58We have been deprived of peace and have forgotten what prosperity is.

*52 Mount Zion is the hill in Jerusalem where the temple and king's palace were located.

LAMENTATIONS 1

⁵⁹Our splendour is gone and all that we had hoped for from the Lord.

Yet because of the Lord's great love we have hope

⁶⁰Yet, because of the Lord's great love we have hope. For his compassion never fails. Great is his faithfulness.

⁶¹The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him and who seek him.

Shoulder your yoke from the Lord patiently

⁶²It is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord. It is good for a man to bear a yoke in his youth.

⁶³Let him shoulder it patiently, for the Lord has laid it upon him.

⁶⁴Let him bow his face to the earth and offer his cheek to the one who would strike him.

⁶⁵There is yet hope. The Lord will not reject forever.

⁶⁶For although the Lord brings grief he is also compassionate.

⁶⁷Great is his unfailing love. He does not willingly afflict and bring grief to the children of men.

Let us examine our ways and return to the Lord

⁶⁸Why should we complain when punished for our sins? Rather let us examine our ways and return to the Lord.

⁶⁹Let us lift up our hearts and hands to God in heaven and say, "We have rebelled and sinned and you did not forgive us. Therefore we have suffered terror, ruin and destruction."

A prayer to the Lord for restoration

⁷⁰"O Lord who reigns forever, why have you forsaken us so long?"

⁷¹"Restore us to yourself O Jehovah, that we may return. Renew our days as of old."

⁷²"Have you totally rejected us? Is your anger that great toward us?"

DANIEL

The book of Daniel has long been one of the favourites of the Old Testament, and understandably so – its stirring stories are full of courage and faith.

These include the account of Daniel in the lion's den, Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the blazing furnace, the disembodied hand writing on the wall at King Belshazzar's idolatrous banquet, also the stimulating visions and prophecies of the future as revealed to Daniel by angels.

Daniel was an exiled Jew who lived in Babylon. He was a man of strong character and great faith. His distinguished career in the royal courts of Babylonia spanned 66 years.

NOTE: For greater clarity some chapters of Daniel in this Condensed Bible have been re-ordered from those in the Traditional Bible to maintain chronological sequence.

AUTHOR

The third person accounts of Daniel's life in the first part of this book were written by an unnamed author, probably one of the later Old Testament prophets. The second half of the book contains the writings of Daniel himself and includes the future prophecies revealed to Daniel by the angels who visited him.

Suddenly the fingers of a man's hand appeared, and began writing on the plaster of the wall of the banquet room, next to the lampstand. Daniel 7:4.

CONTENTS

	Chapter
Daniel among those first exiled to Babylon	1
Daniel and three others chosen for special training ..	1
Daniel refuses to defile himself with unclean food	1
Daniel's guard agrees to test him and companions ..	1
They eat only vegetarian food for ten days	1
They look healthier than those eating king's food	1
God blesses the four young men with great wisdom ...	1
Daniel blessed with insight	1
After three years they enter the king's service	1
Ten times wiser than other wise men	1
King Nebuchadnezzar has a dream	2
Wise men of Babylon summoned to interpret it	2
King decrees that they tell him the dream first	2
The wise men cannot do as king asks	2
King angrily orders all the wise men executed	2
Executioners sent to find Daniel and his friends	2
Daniel asks king for time	2
Daniel and his companions pray for revelation	2
That night God reveals the dream to Daniel	2
Daniel taken before the king	2
The king's dream – a huge dazzling statue	2
A head of gold, chest of silver and thighs of bronze ..	2
Legs of iron and feet of iron and clay	2
Statue smashed by a rock cut out of a mountain	2
The rock grows and fills the whole earth	2
Daniel interprets the dream	2
Nebuchadnezzar the head of gold	2
Three more empires to arise	2
A strong fourth empire to arise and break the others ..	2
The fourth empire shall become divided	2
God to establish a kingdom during the fourth empire ..	2
Kingdom of God the rock that will fill the world	2
King Nebuchadnezzar bows down to Daniel	2
Daniel placed as head over all the wise men	2
Daniel's companions made administrators	2
Daniel a counsellor to kings of Babylon 66 years	2
King Nebuchadnezzar makes a huge idol	3
All Babylonian officials invited to dedication	3
All present ordered to bow and worship the idol	3
Daniel's three companions refuse to worship the idol ..	3
The king is informed	3
King threatens to throw them into a blazing furnace ..	3
Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego refuse to worship ...	3
The king becomes enraged	3
Orders the furnace heated seven times hotter	3
The heat kills the guards who carry the tied up men ..	3
Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego fall into the furnace ..	3
An angel protects the three men	3
Amazed king calls the three men out	3
No sign or smell of burning on the three men	3
King issues a decree honouring the God of Israel	3
Nebuchadnezzar's letter explaining his insanity	4
Nebuchadnezzar's second dream	4
Daniel asked to interpret the dream	4
Nebuchadnezzar's dream – an enormous tree	4
The tree to be cut down and given mind of animal ...	4
Daniel distressed at meaning of the dream	4
King to become insane and eat grass like an animal ..	4
His kingdom to eventually be restored	4
Daniel's advises king to repent and be kind to poor ..	4
Nebuchadnezzar's moment of pride	4
Nebuchadnezzar's insanity	4
King's sanity is restored	4
Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges the power of God ..	4
Nebuchadnezzar restored as king	4
Becomes even greater than before	4
Daniel sees vision of four great beasts	5
A winged lion and a bear	5
A four-headed winged leopard	5
A powerful iron-toothed beast	5

DANIEL 1

Ten horns on the head of the beast	5	Jerusalem to be rebuilt for 434 years	9
New boastful horn arises	5	Messiah to be put to death	9
Court of judgement of millions by Ancient of Days	5	The Messiah to be disowned by the people	9
Boastful horn destroyed	5	Jerusalem and the Temple to be destroyed	9
Son of Man comes in the clouds of the heavens	5	Jews to suffer war until end of age	9
Son of Man given authority over all peoples	5	A Desolator to arise during last seven years	9
Daniel asks meaning of the visions	5	An abomination again set up in Jerusalem	9
The four beasts are four emperors of the earth	5	Daniel humbles himself for three weeks	10
Ten kingdoms to arise from fourth beast	5	A glorious being appears to Daniel	10
Blasphemous ruler to arise in the last days	5	Those with Daniel flee trembling	10
God's people to suffer much at his hands	5	Daniel overcome and faints	10
God's people to one day rule all kingdoms on earth ..	5	Daniel is awakened and stands trembling	10
Daniel deeply troubled by his thoughts	5	The being delayed by opposing angel of Persia	10
Daniel has another vision	6	Israel's future to be revealed	10
A two-horned ram	6	Daniel unable to speak	10
A single-horned goat	6	Daniel strengthened by an angel	10
Goat's power is divided four ways	6	Michael the protecting angel of Israel	10
Holy Land to be oppressed and Temple defiled	6	A warrior king to arise in Greece	10
Temple to be reconsecrated after 1150 days	6	His empire to be divided four ways	10
Gabriel helps Daniel understand the vision	6	The king of the south (Egypt) to become strong	10
Ram is the Persian empire	6	The king of the north (Syria) to become stronger ...	10
Goat is the Greek empire	6	Egypt and Syria to make a short lived alliance	10
A bold faced king to arise	6	Egypt to attack Syria in vengeance	10
He will cause great devastation	6	Later Syria to retaliate but unsuccessfully	10
Will prosper by deceit and destroy the Jews	6	Syria more successful a second time	10
Daniel exhausted by his vision	6	Syria to capture the city of Sidon	10
King Belshazzar gives a great banquet	7	A marriage plan to overthrow Egypt's king will fail ..	10
Goblets from Lord's Temple used to drink wine	7	Syria will invade Asia Minor but be rebuffed	10
Fingers appear and begin to write on the wall	7	A new Syrian king will tax Israel	10
The wise men cannot read the writing	7	A contemptible, deceitful Syrian king to arise	10
Queen mother tells the king to call in Daniel	7	Deceitful Syrian king to attack Egypt	10
Daniel brought in	7	Deceitful plots will bring down Egyptian king	10
Daniel rebukes Belshazzar for his arrogance	7	Both kings will sit and lie to each other	10
Daniel interprets the writing	7	Roman ships will foil a second invasion of Egypt	10
The Babylonian empire given over to the Persians ...	7	Syrian king to vent his fury on the Jews	10
Belshazzar slain and Babylon overthrown that night ...	7	Will send an army to occupy Jerusalem	10
Darius appoints Daniel an administrator	8	The Temple will be desecrated	10
Jealousy when Daniel to become sole administrator ...	8	Those who know God will firmly resist	10
Plan devised to destroy Daniel	8	The righteous who die will become spotless	10
The administrators beguile King Darius	8	The mighty king of the last days	11
He issues a decree forbidding prayer for 30 days	8	He will be successful until wrath is completed	11
Daniel's daily prayer habits	8	Power and wealth will be his god	11
Daniel reported to the king for praying	8	He will storm against Egypt from the north	11
King tries in vain to save Daniel	8	He will invade many lands en route like a flood	11
Daniel thrown into the lions' den	8	Egypt will not escape	11
King Darius fasts for Daniel	8	Reports will bring him back for destruction	11
An angel sent to protect Daniel from the lions	8	He and his armies to be destroyed near Jerusalem ..	11
Daniel's accusers thrown to the lions	8	A time of great tribulation for Israel and all nations ..	11
Darius issues a decree supporting God of Daniel	8	First resurrection at second coming of Christ	11
Daniel prospers during the reign of Darius	8	Rest of the truth sealed until the latter days	11
Daniel fasts and prays for Jerusalem	9	The great tribulation to last three and a half years ..	11
Angel Gabriel comes to answer Daniel's prayer	9	Only the wise will understand the prophecy	11
Messiah to come after 490 years	9	Tribulation to commence when sacrifice abolished ..	11
A high priest in Jerusalem after 49 years	9	Daniel to be resurrected at end of the age	11

Bold The Lord or an angel speaking.

Bold italics A prophet speaking under inspiration.

1

Daniel among those first exiled to Babylon

¹When Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon first came to Jerusalem and besieged it in the reign of Jehoiakim, the Lord delivered the city into his hands and he took captive some of the nobles and carried them back to Babylon.

Daniel and three other young men chosen for special training

²There the king ordered his chief official to choose from among the nobles, young men without defect who were handsome and showed aptitude for learning. Such as could serve in the king's palace.

2

³They were to be trained for three years in the language and literature of the Babylonians, and then afterward to enter the king's service.

⁴These young men were also to be assigned a daily portion of the royal meat and wine from the king's table.

⁵Among those chosen were four young men^{F*} of Judah; Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. But the king's official gave them new names; Belteshazzar,^{F*} Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

Daniel resolves not to defile himself with the king's unclean food

⁶However Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal meat and wine. So he asked the king's official for permission not to defile himself in this way.^{F*}

⁷The official refused saying, "If my lord the king should see you looking worse than the other young men he may remove my head."

Daniel's guard agrees to test he and his companions ten days with vegetarian food

⁸But Daniel said to the guard whom the king's official had appointed over them, "Test us for ten days. ⁹Give us nothing but sown food^{F*} to eat, and water to drink, then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal meat."

After ten days the four young men look healthier than those eating the king's food

¹⁰The guard agreed to this, and at the end of ten days the four young men looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. ¹¹So the guard took away their meat and wine and gave them sown foods instead.

God blesses the four young men with great wisdom and Daniel with insight

¹²To these four young men God gave knowledge and skill in all kinds of learning and wisdom, and Daniel was given insight into visions and dreams.

After three years they enter the king's service

¹³At the end of the three years when the king's official presented all the young men before the king, he found none of them equal in wisdom to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. So they entered his service.

The four young men ten times wiser than all the other wise men

¹⁴In every matter of wisdom in which Nebuchadnezzar the king enquired of these four young men, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.

King Nebuchadnezzar has a dream

¹Now during the second year of his reign^{F*} Nebuchadnezzar had a dream. It troubled his mind so much that he could not sleep.

The wise men of Babylon summoned to interpret the dream

²So he summoned his magicians, enchanters, sorcerers, and astrologers and said to them, "I have had a dream that troubles me and desire to know what it means."

³The wise men answered the king, "O king, live forever. tell us the dream and we will interpret it."

The king decrees that the wise men must tell him the dream before interpreting it

⁴The king answered, "This is my firm decree: First tell me what my dream was, and then interpret it. If you cannot do this I will have you all torn limb from limb and your houses turned into piles of rubble."

⁵"However if you first tell me the dream and then interpret it, I will give you gifts and great honour."

The wise men cannot do as the king asks

⁶But the wise men said a second time, "Let the king first tell his servants the dream then we can give him the interpretation."

⁷The king replied, "You will conspire to tell me lying and misleading words. First tell me the dream then I will know you can interpret it correctly."

⁸The wise men answered, "There is not a man on earth who can do what the king asks. No king, however great and mighty has ever asked such a thing. What the king asks is too difficult. No one could reveal it except the gods, and they do not live among men."

Nebuchadnezzar angrily orders all the wise men executed

⁹This answer greatly angered the king, therefore he issued a decree ordering the execution of all the wise men of Babylon.

Executioners sent to find Daniel and his companions

¹⁰Executioners were also sent to put Daniel and his companions to death. But Daniel spoke to Arioch the chief executioner of the king with tact and then said to him, "Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?" and the commander explained the matter to Daniel.

Daniel asks the king for time

¹¹So Daniel went and stood before the king and asked for time that he might interpret the dream for him.

*5 Daniel was about 16 years old.

*5 Belteshazzar means 'Bel protect his life.' Bel (also known as Marduk) was an important Babylonian god. Daniel's original name meant 'my judge is God.'

*6 First portions of the king's meat and wine were usually offered to idols, also the meat would probably include the flesh of unclean animals such as the pig.

*9 ie Grains and vegetables.

*1 This would be the same year that Daniel and his companions entered his service. Although referred to as king, Nebuchadnezzar had only been a prince when he attacked Jerusalem and exiled the nobles. He was not crowned king until he arrived back home in Babylon, following his father's death. It was also an unusual Babylonian custom to count the number of years of a king's reign, beginning with the year after his accession year.

DANIEL 2

Daniel and his companions pray for revelation concerning the dream

¹²Then Daniel went to his three companions and urged them to pray for revelation from God concerning the dream so they would not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

God reveals the dream to Daniel

¹³That same night the dream was revealed to Daniel in a vision.

¹⁴Daniel said, "Praise the name of God, for he gives wisdom to the discerning and reveals deep and hidden things. I thank you O God of my fathers for you have given me wisdom and power, and made known to me what we asked of you."

Daniel taken before the king

¹⁵Then Daniel went to Arioch and said to him, "Do not execute the wise men. Take me before the king and I will interpret the dream for him."

¹⁶Arioch took Daniel before the king at once and said, "I have brought the young man from among the exiles of Judah. He can tell the king what his dream means."

¹⁷The king said to Daniel, "Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream, and interpret it?"

¹⁸Daniel replied, "*No wise man can explain to the king his dream, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries.* ¹⁹*The dream has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than other living men, but that you O king may know what is to take place in days to come.*"

The king's dream – a huge dazzling statue

²⁰"*This is your dream. You saw before you O king an enormous, dazzling bright statue, awesome in appearance.*"

A head of gold, chest of silver, thighs of bronze, legs of iron and feet of iron and clay

²¹"*The head of the statue was of pure gold. Its chest and arms were of silver. Its waist and thighs of bronze, and its feet partly of iron, partly of clay.*"

The statue smashed by a rock cut out of a mountain

²²"*Then as you watched, a rock was cut out of a mountain, not by human hands. It rolled down and struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay, breaking them. Then the whole statue broke up into fine particles like chaff and a wind swept them away without a trace.*"

The rock grows and fills the whole earth

²³"*The rock then grew to become a huge mountain and filled the whole earth.*"

Daniel interprets the dream

²⁴"*That was your dream. Now we^{F*} will interpret it to the king.*"

Nebuchadnezzar the head of gold

²⁵"*You O king are a king of kings. God has given you great power and glory and has made you to rule over all the earth. You are the head of gold.*"

Three more empires to arise

²⁶"*After you a second empire shall arise inferior to yours,^{F*} and then a third empire, one of bronze will rule over the earth.*"^{F*}

A strong fourth empire to arise and break all the others

²⁷"*Then will come a fourth empire, strong as iron, for iron breaks everything and so it will crush and break all the others.*"^{F*}

The fourth empire shall become divided

²⁸"*As you saw, the feet and toes were partly of iron, partly of potter's clay, so this will be a divided empire. It will have some of the strength of iron in it, but the people will be a mixture and will not be united, just as iron does not mix with clay.*"

The kingdom of God to be established on earth during the fourth empire

²⁹"*During the days of this empire, the God of heaven will establish another kingdom that will endure for all time^{F*} and never be destroyed. It will eventually crush all kingdoms.*"

Kingdom of God the rock that will fill the world

³⁰"*This kingdom is the rock that was cut out of a mountain, not by human hands. The rock that broke the gold, silver, bronze, iron and clay to pieces.*"

³¹"*The great God has shown the king what is to take place in the future. The dream is true and the interpretation is correct.*"

King Nebuchadnezzar bows down to Daniel

³²At these words Nebuchadnezzar bowed face down before Daniel and paid him honour, and ordered that a grain offering and incense be offered to him. ³³He said to Daniel, "Surely your God is the God of gods, and a revealer of mysteries."

Daniel placed as head over all the wise men

³⁴Then the king lavished many gifts on Daniel and made him governor over the province of Babylon and placed him at the head of all the wise men.

Daniel's companions made administrators

³⁵Furthermore, at Daniel's request the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego administrators over the affairs of the province.

Daniel a counsellor to the kings of Babylon for 66 years

³⁶Daniel (himself however remained at the royal court. (He was a counsellor to the kings of Babylon for 66 years.)

*26 The Persian empire.

*26 The Greek (or Hellenistic) empire.

*27 The Roman empire.

*29 The Kingdom of God established by Jesus Christ.

*24 'we' probably meaning Daniel and his friends. With characteristic humility Daniel did not take all the credit for the interpretation.

3

King Nebuchadnezzar makes a huge idol

¹In time, Nebuchadnezzar made a huge idol, overlaid with gold. It stood 60 cubits high and 6 cubits wide^{F*} and he set it up on a plain near Babylon.

All the Babylonian officials invited to the dedication

²Then the king summoned all the officials, judges and governors of the provinces of Babylonia to the dedication of the idol. On the appointed day a great crowd assembled on the plain.

All present ordered to bow and worship the idol

³Then a herald loudly proclaimed, "O peoples of every nation and language, as soon as you hear the sound of the music you are to bow down and worship the idol of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. ⁴Whoever does not bow down to the idol and worship will be thrown into a blazing furnace."

⁵Therefore when all the people heard the sound of the music, they bowed down and worshipped the idol of gold.

The king informed that Daniel's three companions refuse to worship the idol

⁶However some of the Babylonians came to Nebuchadnezzar and said to him, "O king, live forever. There are three Jews whom you have set over the affairs of Babylon who pay no heed to you. ⁷Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego do not serve your gods, and now they refuse to worship the golden idol you have set up." ^{F*}

The three men to be thrown into a blazing furnace if they do not worship

⁸Nebuchadnezzar angrily summoned the three men and said to them, "Is it true Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego that you refuse to worship the idol of gold I have set up? ⁹If you do not worship when the music begins again, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace."

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refuse to worship the idol

¹⁰But they answered the king, "If we are thrown into a blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us O king. ¹¹But even if he does not, we will not serve your gods and we will not worship the idol of gold."

The enraged king orders the furnace heated seven times hotter than normal

¹²At these words the king became so enraged his face became contorted. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than normal. ¹³Then he commanded his guards to tie up the three men and throw them into the blazing furnace.

*1 28m high by 3m wide.

*7 It would appear that Daniel wisely avoided attending the dedication.

The heat kills the guards who carry the three men into the furnace

¹⁴The king's command was so urgent and the furnace so hot, that the heat of the fire killed the guards who carried the three men into the furnace.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego fall tied into the furnace

¹⁵Nevertheless Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego fell firmly tied into the blazing furnace.

An angel protects Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego

¹⁶As he watched, Nebuchadnezzar leapt to his feet in amazement and cried out, "Were there not three men thrown into the furnace? I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like an angel of the gods."

The amazed king calls the men out

¹⁷The king approached the door of the blazing furnace and shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out!" So they came out of the furnace.

No sign or smell of burning on the three men

¹⁸The king and his officials crowded around them and saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies. Not a hair was singed and their clothes were not scorched, nor was there even the smell of fire upon them.

Nebuchadnezzar issues a decree honouring the God of Israel

¹⁹Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and were willing to give up their lives rather than worship any other god."

²⁰"Therefore I decree, that the people of any nation who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb and their houses turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way."

²¹Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

4

Nebuchadnezzar's letter to his empire explaining his insanity

¹Some years later, Nebuchadnezzar sent this letter throughout his empire.

²"To the peoples of every nation and language in the world, may you prosper greatly. I thought it good to tell you of the miraculous wonders that the Most High God has performed for me."

Nebuchadnezzar's second alarming dream

³"I Nebuchadnezzar was at home in my palace, lying in my bed contented and prosperous, when I had a dream that alarmed me. ⁴I told the wise men of Babylon the dream but they could not interpret it for me."

Daniel asked to interpret the dream

⁵“At last Daniel who is called Belteshazzar came into my presence and I said to him, ‘Daniel, chief of the wise men, I know that the spirit of the Holy God is in you and no mystery is too difficult for you. This is my dream. Interpret it for me.”

Nebuchadnezzar’s dream – an enormous tree

⁶“I looked and saw before me a tree standing in the midst of the land. Its height was enormous and the top touched the sky. It could be seen from the ends of the earth.”

⁷“Its leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant. Under it the animals of the field found shelter and the birds of the air lived in the branches. And from the tree all living creatures took their food.”

The tree to be cut down and its mind changed to that of an animal

⁸“Then I saw an angel, a Holy One coming down from heaven. He cried out in a loud voice, ‘Cut down the tree! Chop off his branches and scatter his fruit. Let the animals flee from beneath him and the birds from his branches.”

⁹“But let his roots and stump remain in the ground among the grass of the field.”

¹⁰“Let his mind be changed from that of a man to a beast and cause him to live with the animals of the field and be wet with the dews of the heavens until seven times have passed over him.”

¹¹“This decision is given by order of the Holy Ones, that the living may know that the Most High rules over the kingdoms of men and gives them to whomsoever he will, even to the lowliest of men.”

Daniel distressed at the meaning of the dream

¹²“Daniel became distressed, so I said to him, “Do not let the dream or its meaning alarm you.”

¹³“Daniel replied, ‘*O that the dream and its meaning applied to your enemies my lord. You O king are that great tree. You have become mighty and strong, and your dominion extends to the ends of the earth.*”

The king to become insane and eat grass like an animal of the field

¹⁴“*This is the decree that the Most High God has issued against my lord the king, ‘You will be driven away from people and will eat grass with the animals of the field and be wet with the dews of the heavens.*”

The king’s insanity to last seven times until he acknowledges that the Most High God is Lord

¹⁵“*Seven times^{F*} will pass over you until you acknowledge that the Most High God is Lord over the kingdoms of men and gives them to whoever he wishes.*”

Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom to be eventually restored

¹⁶“*The command to leave the stump of the tree in the ground means that your kingdom will be restored to you when you learn that Heaven rules.*”

Daniel advice to the king – repent and be kind to the poor

¹⁷“*Now O king, condescend to accept my advice. Repent of your sins by being kind to the poor and the oppressed. It may be that your prosperity will be prolonged.*”

Nebuchadnezzar’s moment of pride

¹⁸“Twelve months later as I walked upon the roof of the royal palace of Babylon I said to myself, “Is not this the great Babylon I have built by my mighty power, for the glory of my own majesty?”^{F*}

¹⁹“The words were still on my lips when I heard a voice from heaven say, ‘King Nebuchadnezzar your royal authority has been taken from you.”

Nebuchadnezzar’s insanity

²⁰(At this point, what had been prophesied regarding Nebuchadnezzar the king was fulfilled. He was driven away from people and ate grass like an ox.^{F*} ²¹His body became wet with the dews of the heavens, and his hair grew long like the feathers of an eagle, and his nails became like the claws of a bird.)

The king’s sanity is restored

²²“At the end of the appointed time I Nebuchadnezzar lifted my eyes to heaven and my sanity was restored.”

Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges the power of God

²³“I praised the Most High God. I honoured and glorified him who lives for ever for his kingdom is eternal. He does as he chooses with the hosts of heaven and the inhabitants of earth.”

Nebuchadnezzar restored as king and becomes even greater than before

²⁴“At the same time my honour and

*15 Times, literally, ‘a set time’, which can mean a lunar month, a season, a year, or even a divinely set period. Most often it means one year, and for Nebuchadnezzar this was evidently the case. His favourite wife appears to have ruled as queen during the seven years.

*18 Babylon was indeed a great city, about 350 square km in area, and with walls 103 metres high and 42 metres thick. The city straddled the Euphrates river with impressive walls, gates, canals, buildings, temples, gardens, and parks.

*20 This mental disorder is known as Lycanthropy. The sufferer believes he is an animal. It has been reported from ancient times.

splendour were restored to me. My advisers and nobles sought me out. I was restored to my throne and became even greater than before.”

²⁵“Now I Nebuchadnezzar glorify the King of heaven, for all that he does is just and true, and he is able to humble the proud.”

5

Daniel sees a vision of four great beasts

¹“In the first year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon,^{F*} I Daniel saw a vision as I lay on my bed at night. Before me the winds of the heavens were churning up the Great Sea,^{F*} then four great beasts in turn, each different from the other came up out of the sea.”

The winged lion

²“The first was like a lion and it had the wings of an eagle. Then its wings were torn off and it stood on two feet and the mind of a man was given to it.”^{F*}

The bear

³“The second beast looked like a bear. It was raised up on one side and had three ribs between its teeth.^{F*} It was told, ‘**Arise and eat your fill of flesh!**’”

The four-headed, winged leopard

⁴“The third beast looked like a leopard and had four wings on its back like those of a bird. This beast had four heads and was given authority to rule.”^{F*}

The powerful iron toothed beast

⁵“The fourth beast was different from all the other beasts and was terrifying and very strong. It had great iron teeth and claws of bronze and had ten horns on its head.”^{F*}

⁶It crushed and devoured its victims and stamped underfoot whatever was left.”^{F*}

A new boastful horn arises

⁸“As I pondered the meaning of the horns there came up another horn and three of the first horns were uprooted before it.”

*1 Belshazzar was the last king of Babylonia. He co-reigned over the empire with his father Nabonidus. Nebuchadnezzar had died after reigning 42 years and was succeeded in rapid succession by three kings in six years, and then by Nabonidus who left his son Belshazzar to rule over Babylonia, and went to reside in Arabia presumably to consolidate the weakening empire.

*1 The Mediterranean.

*2 As subsequent verses make clear, this beast represents the Babylonian empire. The imagery of the wings being torn off may refer to the humbling effect of Nebuchadnezzar’s temporary insanity or perhaps to the less powerful rule of his successors.

*3 This second beast represents the soon to arise Persian empire which was partly shared with the Medes, which accounts for its lop-sidedness. The three ribs probably represent the three principle conquests, Babylon, Egypt and Asia Minor.

*4 This third beast represents the Greek empire of Alexander the Great which eventually split into four, each headed by one of his generals. The wings may symbolise the power and speed at which Alexander acquired the empire. See also Daniel 6:4-6, 15-16 for a further vision of this empire.

*5 The ten horns signify the many nations that were to arise after the decline of the empire and correspond with the toes of the statue in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream.

*6 The fourth beast represents the large and powerful Roman empire.

⁹“This horn had eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth that spoke boastfully.”^{F*}

A court of judgement of millions by the Ancient of Days

¹⁰“Then I saw thrones being set in place, and one that was Ancient of Days^{F*} took his seat.”



Artist’s view of the beasts seen by Daniel in vision.

*9 This new small horn seems to be the Beast or Antichrist who is to arise in the last days. It appears that he will conquer three nations formerly ruled by Rome (see Revelation chapters 9 and 13).

*10 The identity of the ‘Ancient of Days’ has given rise to much speculation. Many assume him to be God the Father or Jesus Christ. However this is improbable for the name ‘Ancient of Days’ does not symbolise greatness, glory or Godhood as does a name such as ‘Most High’ which is commonly used throughout the book of Daniel. And although the ‘Ancient of Days’ is seen on a glorious throne, sitting on a glorious throne is not restricted to God the Father alone, for Jesus told his twelve apostles that both he and they would sit on thrones and judge Israel (Matt-Mark-Luke 24:53) when he returns in the last days, and John in his Revelation visions saw twenty-four elders seated on thrones (Revelation 3:3). Also the vision appears to be located within the spirit realms here on earth rather than in heaven, for in the same vision Daniel also sees, in verse 13 the horn ‘waging war against the saints.’ Most significantly however, verses 16-17 depict the ‘Ancient of Days’ yielding his authority to a ‘Son of Man’ who perfectly fits the description of Jesus Christ at his glorious second coming to earth. The ‘Ancient of Days’ would therefore appear to be a glorified being who has lived a very long time and who currently stands at the head of the human spirits in the righteous realms of the spirit world of the dead (sometimes called Paradise).



Artist's view of the beasts seen by Daniel in vision.

11“His clothing and hair were pure white like snow, and the throne on which he sat flamed with fire and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire flowed out from before him.”

12“Thousands upon thousands attended him, and ten thousand times 10,000 stood before him. The court was seated and the books were opened.”

13“As I watched, the horn was waging war against the saints^{F*} and defeating them until the Ancient of Days pronounced judgement^{F*} in favour of the saints of the Most High to possess the kingdom.”

The boastful horn destroyed

14“The horn continued to speak great boastful words until the Beast was slain and its body destroyed and given to be burned with fire.”

15“‘The other three beasts had been stripped of their authority but were allowed to live for a period of time.’”

*13 The term ‘saints’ as used in the Bible refers to any group of people who are living God’s laws.

*13 This preliminary judgement by the ‘Ancient of Days’ may be to judge who is worthy to be resurrected and lifted up to meet Jesus Christ at his second coming, see following verses and also James 3:18. However the final day of judgement, under the personal direction of Jesus Christ will not take place until the end of Christ’s thousand year Millennial reign on earth, when all the wicked will have been resurrected at the final resurrection (Revelation 16:7, 14-15).

A Son of Man comes in the clouds of the heavens

16“‘And I saw one like a Son of Man,^{F*} coming in the clouds of the heavens. He came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.’”

The Son of Man given authority over all peoples

17“‘To him was delivered authority, glory and kingship, that all peoples and nations of every language should serve him. His kingdom is an everlasting one and will never be destroyed.’”

Daniel asks the meaning of the visions

18“‘I Daniel was troubled in spirit for the visions disturbed me. So I approached one of those standing there and asked him the meaning of the visions and he gave me this interpretation.’”

Four beasts are four emperors of the earth
19“‘The four great beasts are four emperors of the earth but the saints of the Most High will eventually obtain the whole kingdom and possess it forever.’”

Ten kings to arise from the fourth beast

20“‘Then I asked him the meaning of the fourth beast which was different from the others and most terrifying.’”

21“‘I also asked about the ten horns on its head and the other more imposing horn that came up that seemed greater than the others, and had eyes and a mouth that spoke boastfully and before which three of the other horns fell.’”

22“‘He said, ‘The fourth beast is a fourth empire that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other empires and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it. 23The ten horns are ten kings^{F*} that will arise from this empire.’”

A blasphemous oppressive ruler to arise in the last days

24“‘And after these, another king will arise, different from the kings of the earlier kingdoms, and he will subdue three kings.’”

25“‘He will blaspheme the Most High God and oppress the saints of the Most High, and try to change their calendar and their laws.’” ^{F*}

God’s people to suffer much at his hands for three and a half years

26“‘They will suffer much at his hands for three and a half years.^{F*} But then the court^{F*} will sit and his power will be destroyed.’”

*16 Jesus Christ often used the term ‘Son of Man’ to refer to himself, perhaps with this scripture in mind.

*23 No convincing identification of these ten kings has ever been made, however ten is used as an approximate large number earlier in the book (see Daniel 1:14) and in this particular case the ten kings and their kingdoms are probably meant to correspond with the number of toes on the statue in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream and may not be meant to be taken too literally. Also it is unlikely that the number of kingdoms would remain constant for long.

*25 The Beast or Antichrist of the last days, see note on verse 9 of this chapter.

*26 Literally ‘three and a half times,’ in this instance the book of Revelation confirms that years are meant (Revelation 9:7).

*26 See note on the judgement by the ‘Ancient of Days’ verse 13 of this chapter.

God's people to eventually rule all the kingdoms of the whole earth

²⁷“Then the rulership of the kingdoms of the whole earth will be handed over to the people of the Most High. Their kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom and all rulers will obey them.”

Daniel deeply troubled by his thoughts

²⁸“I was deeply troubled by my thoughts and my face turned pale, but I kept the matter to myself.”

6

Daniel has another vision

¹“In the third year of Belshazzar’s reign, I Daniel had another vision.”

The two-horned ram

²“I saw myself in Susa the capital, by the Ulai canal. On the bank before me appeared a ram with two long horns, one longer than the other.”

³“He charged toward the west and the north and the south. No animal could stand against him. He did as he pleased and became very great.”^{F*}

The single-horned goat

⁴“Suddenly a male goat with a large horn between his eyes appeared from the west, crossing the whole earth without touching the ground. ⁵He charged at the ram with great savagery, striking him and shattering his two horns and trampling him into the ground.”

The goat’s power is divided four ways

⁶“Then the goat magnified himself greatly. But at the height of his power the large horn was broken off, and in its place four horns grew, pointing toward the four corners of the earth.”^{F*}

The Holy Land to be oppressed and the Temple defiled

⁷“Then out of one of the four horns came a fifth horn, which grew southward to the holy land and as high as the heavens, and threw some of the stars down to the earth and trampled on them.”

⁸“The horn even defied the King of the heavens, and did away with the daily sacrifice and defiled his holy Temple. And because they rebelled, the people of the Holy Land were trampled underfoot. ⁹The horn prospered in everything it did and truth was trampled upon the ground.”^{F*}

The Temple in Jerusalem to be reconsecrated 1150 days after being defiled

¹⁰“Then I heard the voice of an angel saying,

*3 The ram was the Persian-Mede empire, the longer horn symbolising the dominance of Persia (Daniel 6:14).

*6 The goat who overthrew the ram was the Greek (Macedonian) empire and the large horn Alexander the Great. The four horns represent the breaking up of the empire into four divisions, each headed by one of Alexander’s generals after his death at age 32.

*9 The fifth horn is Antiochus IV, a Greek king who ruled over the land of Israel from Antioch in Syria 175 BC to 163 BC. In an attempt to force Greek culture on the Jews (see footnote on Daniel 10:44).

‘How long will it be before the Temple is reconsecrated after this vision is fulfilled?’”

¹¹“A second voice replied, ‘After 1150 days.’”^{F*}



Antiochus IV (the fifth horn in Daniel’s vision) a forceful Greek ruler (175 -163 BC) who defiled the Temple and tried to force the Jews to obey Greek customs.

Gabriel helps Daniel understand the vision

¹²“While I was trying to understand the vision, an angel stood before me and I heard a voice say to him, ‘Gabriel, help this man understand the meaning of the vision.’”

¹³“The angel approached me and I feared greatly and fainted with my face to the ground. He touched me and raised me to my feet, then he said, ‘Son of man, understand that the vision concerns an appointed time of wrath.’”

The ram is the Persian empire

¹⁴“The two-horned ram that you saw represents the empire of Persia.”

The goat is the Greek empire

¹⁵“The goat is the empire of Greece, and the large horn between his eyes is the first king.^{F*} ¹⁶The four horns that replaced the one that was broken off represent four kingdoms that will emerge from his empire, but will not have the same power.”

A bold faced king to arise

¹⁷“At the latter end of their reign, when wickedness has reached full measure, a bold faced king, a master of deceit will arise.”^{F*}

He will cause great devastation and destroy the Jews

¹⁸“He will grow strong and cause great devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. ¹⁹He will destroy the mighty, and also the holy people and will cause wickedness to prosper.”

*11 This prophecy was fulfilled.

*15 Alexander the Great.

*17 Antiochus IV, see note on verse 9 of this chapter.

DANIEL 7

He will prosper by deceit

²⁰“**He will consider himself superior and by his deceitfulness he shall prosper. Without warning he shall destroy many, and rise up against the King of kings. Yet he will be broken, but not by human hand.**”

²¹“**This vision is true, but seal it up for it refers to many years from now.**”

Daniel is exhausted by his vision

²²“¹ Daniel was exhausted by what I had seen and lay recovering for several days. Then I arose and went about the king’s business. ²“I was appalled by the vision and did not understand it.”

7

King Belshazzar gives a great banquet

¹In time, Belshazzar the king gave a great banquet in the royal palace for a thousand of his nobles and drank wine with them.

Goblets from the Lord’s Temple used to drink wine

²While under the influence of wine he gave orders to bring in the gold goblets that his forefather Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Temple in Jerusalem. He did this so that he and his nobles, and his wives and concubines might drink from them.

³So they brought in the gold goblets and drank wine from them, praising their gods as they did so.

Fingers appear and begin to write on the wall

⁴Suddenly the fingers of a man’s hand appeared, and began writing on the plaster of the wall of the banquet room, next to the lampstand.

⁵The king’s face turned pale as he watched the hand write. He became so fearful that his legs lost their strength and his knees knocked together.

The wise men cannot read the writing

⁶The king cried out for the enchanters, astrologers and diviners to be brought in. He said to them, “Whoever interprets this writing will be made the third highest ruler in the empire.” ^{F*}

⁷But none of the wise men could read the writing. ⁸King Belshazzar became even more fearful and his face grew paler.

The queen mother tells the king to call in Daniel

⁹Then the queen mother entered the banquet hall and said, “O king, live forever. Do not look so pale. There is a man in your kingdom who has the spirit of the Holy God in him. Call for Daniel. He will tell you what the writing means.”

Daniel is brought in

¹⁰So Daniel was brought in and the king said to him, “If you can read this writing and interpret it for me you will be made the third

*6 King Belshazzar was only the second highest ruler of the Babylonian empire. He co-ruled with his father Nabonidus (see note on Daniel 5:1).

highest ruler in the empire.”

¹¹Daniel answered the king saying, “You may give that honour to another, nevertheless I will read the writing.”

Daniel rebukes Belshazzar for his arrogance

¹²“**But first O king, the Most High God gave your forefather Nebuchadnezzar greatness, glory, and splendour. All the nations dreaded and feared him. ¹³But when his heart became arrogant with pride he was given the mind of an animal. He ate grass like an ox until he acknowledged that the Most High God is Lord over all the kingdoms of men.**”

¹⁴“**But you O Belshazzar, have not humbled yourself, though you knew of this. Instead you have set yourself against the Lord of Heaven and have drunk wine from the goblets of his Temple.**”

¹⁵“**You praised gods that cannot see, hear, nor understand but you did not honour the God who holds your life in his hand. Therefore he sent the hand that wrote this inscription.**”

Daniel interprets the writing – the

Babylonian empire given over to the Persians

¹⁶“**The writing says, ‘Mene, Mene, Tekel, Parsin,’ and the words mean, ‘God has brought your reign to an end. You have been weighed in the scales and found wanting. Your kingdom has been given over to the Persians.’**”

Babylon overthrown that very night

¹⁷That very night Belshazzar king of the Babylonians was slain and Darius the Mede took over his kingdom. Darius was sixty-two years of age. ^{F*}

8

King Darius appoints Daniel one of three administrators over Babylonia

¹Darius appointed 120 governors to rule his kingdom with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel. ^{F*}

Jealousy when Daniel is to be made sole administrator

²But Daniel so distinguished himself that Darius the king decided to set him over the whole kingdom. On hearing this the other administrators and some of the governors tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel, but they were unable to do so as he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent.

*17 Darius of Media who was appointed the new king of Babylon was an officer in the conquering army of King Cyrus the Great. This Persian king took the city of Babylon that very day, the 29th of October, 539 BC as a liberator and met no resistance. Evidently the plan of Cyrus was to divert a portion of the Euphrates river which flowed through Babylon, into a disused canal, thereby lowering the level of the river sufficiently to enable his men to wade under the massive 103 metre high walls of the city. However, due to his benevolent reputation and the dissatisfaction of the Babylonian armed forces with the present king, the city surrendered and the gates were opened to King Cyrus and his army.

*1 Daniel would now have been about 80 years of age.

A plan is devised to destroy Daniel

³Finally they said, “We will never find a charge against this man Daniel unless it has to do with the law of his God.”

King Darius is beguiled into issuing a decree forbidding prayer for 30 days

⁴So the two administrators and some of the governors went as a group to Darius and said, “O King Darius, live forever. We have all agreed that you should issue this decree; that anyone who makes a petition to any god or man during the next thirty days, except to you O king, shall be thrown into the lions’ den.”

⁵So Darius put the decree in writing.

Daniel’s daily prayer habits

⁶Now Daniel knew that the decree had been issued, nevertheless he went home as usual to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem, and got down on his knees and prayed giving thanks to his God. Daniel did this three times every day.

Daniel is reported to the king for praying

⁷The men went and found Daniel praying so they returned to the king and said to him, “Daniel pays no attention to your decree O king. He still prays three times a day.”

The king tries in vain to save Daniel

⁸When he heard this, the king was distressed and made every effort to save Daniel. However at sundown the men came to Darius and said to him, “Remember O king that the law of the Persians does not allow a decree of the king to be changed.”

Daniel thrown into the lions’ den

⁹So the king gave the order and Daniel was cast into the lions’ den. The king said to Daniel, “May your God deliver you.”

¹⁰A great stone was placed over the mouth of the den and Darius sealed it with his own signet ring.



Site of the lion’s den in the ruins of Babylon.

Darius fasts for Daniel

¹¹The king returned to his palace and spent

the night fasting and without entertainment.

¹²He could not sleep, and at the first light of dawn he arose from his bed and hurried out to the lions’ den.

¹³When he came near he called out to Daniel in an anguished voice, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God been able to save you from the lions?”

An angel sent to protect Daniel from the lions

¹⁴From within the den Daniel answered, “O king, live forever. My God sent his angel to shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me for I am innocent in his eyes.”

¹⁵The king was overjoyed at this, and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. When he was lifted up, no wound was found upon him.

Daniel’s accusers and their families thrown to the lions

¹⁶Then at the king’s command, the men who had accused Daniel were cast into the lions’ den, along with their wives and children. The lions immediately overpowered them and crushed their bones.

Darius issues a decree supporting the God of Daniel

¹⁷Afterward Darius sent this letter to all the people throughout his kingdom.

¹⁸“May you prosper greatly. I hereby issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom all must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. ¹⁹For he is the Living God and endures forever. He saves and rescues and performs wonders in the heavens and on the earth, and he rescued Daniel from the power of the lions.”

Daniel prospers during the reign of Darius

²⁰So Daniel prospered during the reign of King Darius, under the dominion of Cyrus the Persian.

9

Daniel fasts and prays for the restoration of Jerusalem and the Temple

¹“In the first year of Darius who was made king over Babylonia, I read in the book of Jeremiah the prophet that the desolation of Jerusalem should last seventy years.” ^{F*}

Daniel’s prayer

²“So I prayed and made confession unto the Lord my God with fasting and in sackcloth and ashes saying these words.”

³“O Jehovah, the great and awesome God who keeps his covenant of love with all who honour him and obey his commandments, we have sinned and done wrong. We have turned away from your laws and have not listened to the prophets who spoke in your name.”

⁴“We are covered with shame in all the lands

*1 About 67 years had now passed since Daniel was exiled from Jerusalem, and about 48 years since the destruction of Jerusalem.

DANIEL 9

where you have driven us and the curses written in the law of Moses have been poured out upon us. Under the whole heavens nothing has ever been done as was done to Jerusalem."

⁵"Now O Jehovah our God, in keeping with all your righteous acts, turn away your anger from Jerusalem your city and holy hill which our sins and those of our fathers have made an object of scorn. Hear the prayer of your servant and look with favour upon your ruined *Temple*."

⁶"We do not ask because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy O Lord. Listen and forgive, and for your own honour O Jehovah do not delay, for your city and we your people bear your name."

The angel Gabriel comes to answer Daniel's prayer

⁷"While I was still praying and confessing my sins and the sins of my people, Gabriel the angel whom I had seen in my vision came to me in swift flight. It was about the time of the evening sacrifice."

⁸"He said to me, 'Daniel, I have come to give you knowledge and understanding. As soon as you began to pray an answer was given out, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed.'

A Most Holy One (The Messiah) to come after 490 years

⁹"Seven times seventy years of tribulation are decreed for your people and for your holy city. To put an end to sin and to atone for wickedness and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to fulfil prophecy and anoint a Most Holy One." F*

A high priest in Jerusalem 49 years after word to rebuild the city

¹⁰"Understand therefore that from the issuing of the word to rebuild Jerusalem until the time of an anointed one there shall be 49 years." F*

Jerusalem to be rebuilt for 434 years

¹¹"Then for 434 years the city will be rebuilt with streets and a wall, but in troubled times,"

The Messiah to be put to death and disowned by the people

¹²"After the 434 years, Messiah^{F*} shall be put to death and be disowned by the people."

Jerusalem and the Temple to be destroyed soon after

¹³"Then the army of a king who shall arise

in those days will come and destroy Jerusalem and the Temple.^{F*} Its end shall come like a flood."



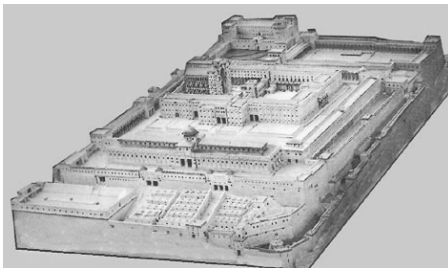
Titus, the Roman general and future emperor who would destroy Jerusalem and the Temple in 600 years time as prophesied by the angel Gabriel (Daniel 9:13).

Jews to suffer war until end of age

¹⁴"And then, until the end of the age there shall be war."

A Desolator to arise during last seven years

¹⁵"And it is decreed that a Desolator shall arise. He shall make a firm agreement with many for seven years. ¹⁶But half way through the seven years he will put an end to sacrifice and offerings."



Herod's magnificent Temple complex completed 26 AD and destroyed in 70 AD as prophesied through Daniel.

An abomination that causes defilement again to be set up in Jerusalem

¹⁷"Then shall come one who will set up in

*9 The Messiah. See verse 12 following.

*10 A decree to rebuild the temple was issued by Cyrus in 537 BC. After much difficulty the temple was completed 21 years later in 516 BC. However permission was not given to rebuild Jerusalem's walls until Ezra, an influential priest, arrived in 458 BC with a letter from Artaxerxes, who was at that time the emperor of Persia (Ezra 1:14-27). The city was finally enclosed by walls in 444 BC. The 'anointed one' in this instance probably refers to Ezra the priest.

*12 Literally 'The Anointed One' - Jesus Christ who was put to death 31 AD. This prophecy has been calculated by scholars to have been fulfilled on the exact day when Jesus rode a donkey into Jerusalem, just prior to his death.

*13 The army of Roman emperor Tiberius Caesar under the command of Titus. The temple and Jerusalem were destroyed in 70 AD.

Jerusalem an abomination that causes defilement, until the decreed end is poured out upon the Desolator.” F*

10

Daniel humbles himself for three weeks

14“In the beginning of the third year of Cyrus, I Daniel humbled myself before God for three weeks. I ate no rich food, no meat or wine entered my mouth, and I did not anoint myself F* until the three weeks were over.”

A glorious being appears to Daniel

24“Then on the twenty-fourth day, as I stood on the bank of the Tigris river, I looked up and saw before me a man, clothed in white, with a belt of finest gold around his waist.”

34“His body glowed like a golden gem and his face shone bright as lightning. His eyes blazed like fire and his arms and legs had the appearance of polished bronze. His voice was like the roar of a great multitude.” F*



The Tigris river where Daniel was visited by a glorious being.

Those with Daniel flee trembling

44“I Daniel was the only one who saw the vision. The men with me did not see it, but a great trembling fell upon them and they fled and hid themselves.”

Daniel is overcome by the presence of the being and faints

54“As I was left alone gazing at this great

*17 Verses 15 to 17 are obscure but seem to pertain to a seven year rule by a ‘Desolator’ in the last days (*end of the age*) and his eventual destruction. The second 3½ year period of the rule of this Desolator, after he breaks an agreement, appears to be similar to that of the Antichrist, the Beast, or Gog who is to invade Jerusalem as part of the battle of Armageddon just prior to the second coming of Jesus Christ (Daniel chapter 11 and Revelation chapter 9). It would also appear that the two previous invasions of Jerusalem, first by Antiochus IV in 168 BC, and Rome in 70 AD were a type for what is to come in the last days. However this time Messiah will intervene. See the introduction to Joel for an overview of this eventful period.

*1 Anointing is the common eastern custom of lightly oiling the skin, hair and beard with a scented oil.

*3 Although Daniel does not identify him, the description of this glorious being closely matches that of the pre-mortal Jesus Christ (or his Spirit see note on Revelation 1:12) who ‘comes in the name of Jehovah’ (see note on John 1:8). He also appeared to Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel and others (Exodus 10:16, Ezekiel 1:17).

vision my strength left me and my face turned pale. When the being spoke I fainted with my face to the ground.”

Daniel is awakened and stands trembling

64“A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees.”

74“‘The being said to me, ‘Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, arise and listen carefully to the words I am about to speak to you.’ So I stood up trembling.”

The glorious being delayed by the opposing angel of Persia

84“‘He said, ‘Fear not Daniel. Since the first day you humbled yourself before God to gain understanding, your words were heard and I have come in response to them.”

94“‘But the angel of the Persian kingdom opposed me twenty-one days. Then Michael one of the chief angels came to assist me.”

The being to reveal Israel’s future

104“‘Now I will reveal to you what will happen to your people in the latter days, for there is a further vision for those times.”

Daniel unable to speak but is strengthened by an angel

114“‘While he was speaking I was staring at the ground, unable to speak. Then an angel in appearance like a man touched my lips and I was able to speak.”

124“‘I said, ‘I am overcome my lord, my strength is gone, I tremble and can hardly speak.”

134“‘The angel touched me again and said, ‘Fear not O man highly esteemed. Peace, be strong now, be strong.”

144“‘When he spoke to me I was strengthened and said, “Speak on my lord.”

Michael the protecting angel of Israel

154“‘Then he continued, “Soon I will return to oppose the angel of Persia, and when I am through with him, the angel of Greece will come.”

164“‘No one supports me against them except Michael, the angel of your people Israel. Yet it was I who supported and protected Darius in the first year of his reign.”

A warrior king to arise in Greece

174“‘But now I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth.F* Three more kings shall arise in Persia, and then a fourth who will be far richer than all the others.” F*

184“‘When he has gained power by his wealth, he will stir up all against the kingdom of Greece. 194“‘And there, a warrior king shall arise who will rule with great dominion and act as he pleases.” F*

His empire to be divided four ways

204“‘But while he is still rising in power, his

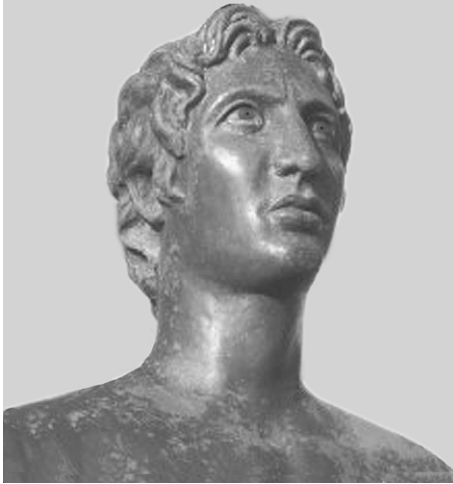
*17 Believed to be a divine record of the decreed destiny of the earth.

*17 Xerxes I who ruled 486-465 BC.

*18 Alexander the Great who ruled 336-323 BC.

DANIEL 10

empire shall be broken up and divided four ways; north, south, east, and west, but it will not be given to his descendants.” F*



Alexander the Great, the young Greek warrior who rapidly built a world empire before dying at age 32.

The king of the north (Syria) will become stronger than the king of the south (Egypt)

21“**The king of the south^{F*} shall become strong, but the king of the north^{F*} will become stronger and rule his kingdom with great power, but after some years they will reconcile.**”

Egypt and Syria will make a short lived alliance

22“**Then the daughter of the king of the south^{F*} shall be given to the king of the north to make an alliance, but she will not retain her influence.^{F*} Nor will her father live long.**”

Egypt to victoriously attack Syria in vengeance

23“**Then her brother will become king of the south and shall attack the king of the north^{F*} and be victorious. He will seize their idols and other treasures of silver and gold and carry them back to Egypt.**”

Later Syria to retaliate, but unsuccessfully

24“**Some years later a new king of the north shall invade the south, but he will be unsuccessful and will retreat to his own land. ²⁵Then one of his sons^{F*} will prepare for war, and assemble a great army which**

will sweep southward like a flood, but they shall be defeated.”



Alexander the Great's divided empire.

26“**The king of the south will slaughter many thousands and shall be filled with pride.**”

Syria more successful a second time

27“**Yet the king of the south will not remain triumphant, for after several years the king of the north will muster another army larger than the first and fully equipped.**”

28“**And in those days many will rebel against the king of the south. Violent men from among your own people will also join them, but without success.**”

Syria to capture the city of Sidon

29“**Then the king of the north will march south and capture a fortified city.^{F*} The forces of the south shall be powerless to resist him. ³⁰He shall establish himself in the Holy Land and will have power over it.**”

A marriage plan to overthrow Egypt's king will fail

31“**He will determine to conquer the entire kingdom of the south and shall give his daughter^{F*} in marriage to the king of the south in order to overthrow the kingdom, but his plan will fail.” ^{F*}**

Syria will invade Asia Minor but be rebuffed by a Roman commander

32“**Then he will turn his attention to the coastal nations,^{F*} and shall take many of them, but a Roman commander^{F*} will put an end to his insolence. After this he will retreat toward the security of his own lands, but shall die.”**

A new Syrian king will tax Israel

33“**His successor will tax the Holy Land to maintain the royal splendour, but he will soon be destroyed, but not in battle.” ^{F*}**

*20 Alexander died suddenly of fever in Babylon at age 32, and four of his generals became kings over his new empire which was divided four ways.

*21 Ptolemy II who ruled from Egypt.

*21 Antiochus II, who ruled over Syria, which included the land of Israel and her eastern neighbours. He was based in Antioch.

*22 Berenice.

*22 Berenice was murdered by Laodice, the former wife of her husband Antiochus II.

*23 Berenice's brother was Ptolemy III. He attacked the king of Syrian to avenge the murder of his sister.

*25 Antiochus III the Great.

*29 The Phoenician port city of Sidon.

*31 The famous Cleopatra, daughter of Antiochus the Great, whom he gave in marriage to Ptolemy V the king of Egypt in 194 BC hoping to gain control over Egypt.

*31 Cleopatra gave her loyalty to her husband Ptolemy rather than to her father Antiochus.

*32 Asia Minor (the nations of the Turkish peninsula) and Greece.

*32 Lucius Scipio who defeated Antiochus the Great at Magnesia in Asia Minor in 190 BC.

*33 Seleucus IV who died as the result of a conspiracy.

A contemptible, deceitful Syrian king to arise

³⁴“In his place shall arise a contemptible person on whom the honour of royalty will not be conferred.”^{F*}

³⁵“He shall seize the kingdom by deceit when the people feel secure, and will sweep away armies and the prince of the covenant^{F*} also.”

³⁶“By lies he will act deceitfully and with only a few supporters he shall rise in power.”

³⁷“When the richest parts of the provinces feel secure, he shall suddenly invade them and distribute the spoil among his followers.”

The deceitful Syrian king to attack Egypt

³⁸“Then he will stir up his courage and with a large army march against the king of the south.”

Deceitful plots bring down the Egyptian king

³⁹“The king of south shall wage war with a powerful army, but shall not succeed because of deceitful plots devised against him. For his own officers will try to destroy him. His army will desert him and many will fall slain.”



Ptolemy I, one of Alexander's four generals who ruled over the south from Egypt.

Both kings will sit and lie to each other

⁴⁰“Then these two kings, their minds bent upon evil will sit at the same table and lie to each other, but to no avail. Neither will get what he wants for the appointed time is not yet.”

⁴¹“Then the king of the north will return to his own land with great wealth.”

^{*34} Antiochus IV who seized power when the rightful heir to the throne Demetrius I was still very young. The prophecy that follows is a more detailed version of Daniel 6:17-21.

^{*35} Onias the high priest of Jerusalem who was deposed by Antiochus IV.

A second invasion of Egypt will be foiled by Roman ships

⁴²“At the appointed time he will again invade the south, but this time Roman ships will oppose him and he will lose heart and withdraw.”

The Syrian king to vent his fury on the Jews

⁴³“He shall turn back and vent his fury against the covenant people and will listen to those who have forsaken their holy covenant.”^{F*}

He will send an army to occupy Jerusalem and desecrate the Temple

⁴⁴“He will send an army to occupy and desecrate the Temple and abolish the daily sacrifice. Then he will set up an abomination that causes defilement.”^{F*}

Those who know God will firmly resist

⁴⁵“With flattery he will corrupt those who break their covenant, but the people who know their God will firmly resist him.”

⁴⁶“Those who are wise will instruct many, though for a time they will be imprisoned or fall by the sword, or be burned. ⁴⁸But when they fall, many who had not been sincere will join them.”

The righteous who die at that time will become spotless before God

⁴⁷“Some of the wise shall die, that they may be refined and become spotless, even until the end of the age, which will come at the appointed time.”

11

The mighty king of the last days

¹“And in those days there shall arise a mighty king who will act as he pleases.^{F*} He will not regard the god of his ancestors nor any god, nor the desire of women, but shall exalt himself above every god and will blaspheme the God of gods.”

He will be successful until the decreed wrath is completed

²“He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been determined must take place.”

^{*43} Religiously corrupt Jews who sought political power.

^{*44} Because Antiochus IV wanted to force the Jews to adopt Greek forms of worship, he sent an army to plunder the temple and establish a garrison in Jerusalem. They destroyed the Scriptures, forbade circumcision, forced the Jews to eat pork and finally built a pagan altar dedicated to the Greek god Zeus over the top of the Lord's altar and sacrificed a pig on it. This outrage eventually led to a Jewish revolt in 168 BC led by the skilled guerrilla Judas Maccabeus and his brothers. Under their leadership the Jews eventually regained control of Jerusalem four years later and reconsecrated the temple (Daniel 6:10). They eventually freed Israel from Syrian rule entirely, 22 years later in 142 BC.

^{*1} This chapter of Daniel appears in parts to again prophesy the difficulties associated with the evil Antiochus IV as did the previous chapter with unerring accuracy. However the details in this chapter do not match known history at all, but they do match future prophecy found elsewhere in the Bible regarding Gog (or the Antichrist, or Beast) a world leader who is to arise in the latter days a few years prior to the second coming of Jesus Christ (see Ezekiel chapter 13 and Revelation chapters 9, 10, and 13).

DANIEL 11

Power and wealth will be his god

³“He shall honour power as his god, and will honour gold and silver, precious stones and costly gifts, and will overcome the strongest fortresses with the help of this god.”

⁴“He shall greatly honour and make wealthy those who acknowledge him and shall make them rulers over many peoples and will distribute land for a reward.”

He will storm against Egypt from the north

⁵“At the time of the end, a king of the south shall challenge him in battle, and he with his armies will storm down against him with chariots and cavalry and a great fleet of ships.”

He will invade many lands en route like a flood

⁶“He shall invade many lands and sweep through them like a flood. He will also invade the Holy Land, but Edom, Moab and Ammon will be delivered from his hand.”

Egypt will not escape

⁷“However Egypt shall not escape. He will gain control of all the riches of Egypt, and the Libyans and Ethiopians shall be with him.” ^{F*}

Reports from the east and the north will bring him back for destruction

⁸“But while in Egypt, reports from the east and the north will trouble him and bring him back, ready for destruction.”

He and his armies will be destroyed as they camp near Jerusalem

⁹“He will pitch his palatial tents between the sea and the holy mountain at Jerusalem. There he shall come to an end with no one to help him.”

A time of great tribulation for Israel and all nations

¹⁰“In those days Michael the angel who protects your people shall arise. It will be a time of great tribulation such as has never occurred since the beginning of nations. ¹¹“But every one of your people whose name is found written in the Book^{F*} shall be delivered.”

The first resurrection at the second coming of Christ

¹²“Many who sleep in the dust of the earth will awaken to Eternal Life, but the others shall awaken to Eternal Shame.” ^{F*}

¹³“Those who were wise, and led many to righteousness, shall shine like the splendour of the sun for all eternity.”

Rest of the truth sealed until the latter days

¹⁴“Now Daniel, the rest of the truth is sealed up until the latter days when many shall fall away and evil will increase.”

The great tribulation to last three and a half years

¹⁵“Then I saw two angels, one on either side of the river. One of them said to the being who had been speaking and who was now standing above the water of the river, ‘How long will the time of great tribulation last?’”

¹⁶“The being lifted his hands toward heaven and said, ‘For three and a half years, until the pride of the holy people has been finally broken.’”

Only the wise will understand the prophecy

¹⁷“I heard but did not understand. So I asked the being clothed in white, ‘My lord, what will be the outcome of all this?’”

¹⁸“He replied, ‘Go your way Daniel, the book of Truth will remain sealed until the latter days. Until then, many will be purified and made spotless, but the wicked will continue to be wicked.’”

¹⁹“None of the wicked will understand but those who are wise will understand.”

Three and half years of tribulation to commence when daily sacrifice abolished in Jerusalem

²⁰“From the time that the daily sacrifice is again abolished^{F*} and an abomination that causes defilement is set up, there shall be three and half years of tribulation. ²¹“Blessed are they who endure the further forty five days until the end.”

Daniel to be resurrected at the end of the age

²²“As for you Daniel, go your way and await the end. You will rest with your fathers and then at the end of the age you shall arise to receive your reward.”

*7 Ezekiel 13:5 prophesies that the Libyans and Ethiopians will ally themselves with Gog in the last days.

*11 The Book of Life. See note on Revelation 2:36.

*12 The first resurrection will take place at the second coming of Jesus Christ, but the second awakening, or resurrection of the unrighteous, known as the second resurrection will not take place until more than a thousand years later, following the Millennium (Revelation 16:7).

*20 It would appear from this verse that daily animal sacrifice will again be established in Jerusalem (and abolished) prior to the second coming of Jesus Christ.

HAGGAI

The decreed 70 year exile of the Jews has at last drawn to an end. Cyrus the new Persian emperor is divinely moved upon to permit the exiled Jews and their descendants, those who wish to do so, to return to Judah from Babylonia. He appoints Zerubbabel a descendant of David as their governor.

Of the 100,000 plus Jews who return immediately, most were of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi. However remnants from other tribes of Israel also joined them as prophesied by Jeremiah (Jeremiah 12:21-22). The journey from Babylon to Judah would have taken about four months.

It had been approx 67 years since the first exile from Judah, in 605 BC, so few of the exiles who returned would have remembered the Temple in Jerusalem, but many of the elderly did and they wept when the foundation for a modest new Temple was laid. Nevertheless most of the people shouted for joy.

The idolatrous Samaritans who had settled in the former northern Israel (themselves exiles from other lands) wanted to help the Jews rebuild the Temple but they were firmly rejected by the Israelite leaders. The Jews had learned their lesson about associating with idolatrous peoples and never did lapse back into idolatry.

However because of this rebuff, the Samaritans became their enemies and work on the Temple stopped for about 14 years. It took a long drought and a stern rebuke from the Lord through the prophet Haggai to stir the people back into activity again. The Temple was eventually finished and dedicated in 516 BC, 22 years after the exiles had returned to Judah.

Little is known about the prophet Haggai except that he and his companion prophet Zechariah were among the returning exiles.

AUTHOR Ezra up until chapter 2, verse 9, then Haggai the prophet.

“You expected much when you returned home, but see, it has turned out to be little. Why? Because my house has remained a ruin while each one of you have been busy with your own house.” Haggai 2:14.

CONTENTS

Chapter

Cyrus allows the exiles of Judah to return	1	The Samaritans want to help the Jews	2
Those returning assisted with gifts	1	Israelite leaders refuse outright	2
Cyrus returns the Temple articles	1	Samaritans become enemies	2
A large company return to Judah	1	Work on Temple comes to a standstill	2
They settle in their own towns	1	Lord displeased with slothfulness of his people	2
Some of the priests unable to prove their genealogy ..	1	Poor crops as a result of failing to build the Temple ..	2
People assemble at Jerusalem in seventh month	1	The people again commence work on the Temple ...	2
The altar rebuilt and daily sacrifice again offered	1	The Lord renews his covenant	2
Sacred feast and freewill offerings reinstated	1	Temple to be filled with glory in days to come	2
People prepare to build a new Temple	1	A defiled person defiles all they touch	2
Work on the Temple begins	2	Lord to begin blessing the crops of the people	2
Foundation is laid	2	Zerubbabel the governor chosen of the Lord	2
The people shout praise to the Lord	2	Zerubbabel will be raised up on the last day	2
But many of the elderly weep	2		

Bold The Lord speaking.

Bold italics A prophet speaking under inspiration.

1

Cyrus allows the exiles of Judah to return

¹In the first year of his reign, Cyrus king of Persia issued this proclamation throughout his vast empire.

²“Jehovah the God of heaven has

given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build a Temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Therefore, any of his surviving people

HAGGAI 2

who live among you may now return to Jerusalem.”

³“Let the neighbours living around each survivor, assist with silver, gold, goods and livestock, and also with offerings for the Temple of God.”

Those returning assisted with gifts

⁴At this the family heads of Judah, Benjamin, and the Levites, all whose hearts God stirred, prepared to return and rebuild the house of the Lord in Jerusalem.

⁵Their neighbours assisted them with articles of silver and gold, goods and livestock, and with valuable gifts.

Cyrus returns the Temple articles

⁶Furthermore Cyrus the king returned the articles belonging to the Temple which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and placed in the temple of his own god.

⁷The king’s treasurer counted the articles in the presence of Zerubbabel who had been appointed governor of Judah.

⁸There were 30 gold dishes, 1,000 silver dishes, 29 silver pans, 30 gold bowls, 410 matching silver bowls, and 1,000 other articles.

⁹Zerubbabel and the returning exiles took all these with them when they went from Babylonia to Jerusalem.

A large company return to Judah and settle in their own towns

¹⁰The company numbered 42,360 men^{F*} of which 4,630 were priests and Levites.

¹¹They also took with them 7,337 male and female servants, 736 horses, 245 mules, 435 camels, and 6,720 donkeys.

¹²They returned to Judah^{F*} and settled in their own towns.

Some of the priests unable to prove their genealogy

¹³However some of the Levite priests could not find their family genealogical records, so the governor forbade them to eat any of the sacred food^{F*} until there was a priest ministering with the Urim and Thummim.^{F*}

The people assemble in Jerusalem in the seventh month

¹⁴After the people had established their homes, they all assembled in Jerusalem at the beginning of the seventh month.^{F*}

*10 Their wives and children would swell the total number much higher, probably well in excess of 100,000.

*12 Judah was about 1150 kms distant, a journey of about four months duration for a large company with livestock. They would also rest on the Sabbaths.

*13 The sacred food was the priest’s portion of the food offerings made to the Lord by the people.

*13 ie Until the high priest was able to verify their claim by revelation from the Lord through the Urim and Thummim (Lights and Perfections). This priestly item was kept in the chest pocket of the high priest’s robe (Exodus 17:14) and was used to receive revelations from the Lord. It appears to have disappeared at some stage during the troublesome times leading up to the destruction of the temple and has not been heard of since. It may have been hidden with the Ark, see note on Jeremiah 3:8. The exact nature of the Urim and Thummim has long mystified scholars but it is generally understood to consist of a pair of transparent crystals.

*14 About three months after their arrival. The festive seventh month which falls in late summer (Sept-Oct) begins with the

The altar is rebuilt and the daily sacrifice again offered

¹⁵Joshua the high priest and his fellow priests, and Zerubbabel the governor and his officials began to rebuild the altar of the Lord to sacrifice burnt offerings upon it.

¹⁶Despite their fear of the peoples around about them^{F*} they built the altar on its former foundation and sacrificed burnt offerings on it to the Lord. They did so as prescribed in the Law of Moses, both the morning and evening sacrifices.

Sacred feast and freewill offerings reinstated

¹⁷Later that month in accordance with what was written in the Law, they offered the appointed sacrifices for the Feast of Tabernacles.

¹⁸From that time forward they continued to offer the appointed sacrifices on the other sacred feasts. They also offered freewill offerings to the Lord.

The people prepare to build a new Temple

¹⁹However the foundation of the Lord’s Temple had not yet been laid. So the people gave money to pay for masons and carpenters.

²⁰They also sent food and drink and olive oil to the people of Sidon and Tyre, requesting that they send cedar logs by sea from Lebanon to Joppa.



The beach at Joppa where the Israelites took delivery of cedar logs from Lebanon.

2

Work on the Temple begins

¹In the second month of the second year, Zerubbabel the governor, Joshua the high priest and the rest of the people began work on the Temple of the Lord. They appointed Levites to supervise the builders.

The people shout praise to the Lord at the laying of the foundation

²When the builders had laid the foundation of the Temple, the priests in their garments with

Feast of Trumpets on the first day, the Day of Atonement on the 10th day, and the week long Feast of Tabernacles commencing on the 15th day.

*16 These would be mostly Samaritans, exiles from Assyrian-conquered lands in the north-east who had been deported to repopulate the exiled northern kingdom of Israel (Amos 3:23).

their trumpets, and the Levites with cymbals took their places to praise the Lord as prescribed by King David of old.

³With thanksgiving they sang to the Lord: “He is good. His love endures forever,” and all the people gave a great shout of praise to the Lord.

Many of the elderly weep

⁴Many of the elderly among them who had seen the former Temple, wept aloud, but others shouted for joy.

⁵No one could distinguish the shouts of joy from the weeping, for the people made so much noise and the sound was heard a long way off.

The Samaritans want to help the Jews build the Temple

⁶When the other people living in the land around about heard that the returned exiles were building a Temple for the Lord, they came to Zerubbabel and the leading men of Judah and Benjamin and said to them, “Let us help you build the Temple, for we also seek your God and have been sacrificing to him since the king of Assyria exiled us here.”

The Israelite leaders refuse outright

⁷But Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the rest of the heads of Israel answered, “You can have no part with us in building the Temple. We alone must build it as Cyrus the king of Persia commanded us.” ^F*



A Samaritan, formerly exiles from Assyrian-conquered lands in the north-east who had been deported to repopulate the exiled northern kingdom of Israel.

The Samaritans become enemies and work on the Temple comes to a standstill

⁸At this refusal the people in the land around about became their enemies and began to

^{*}7 The real reason for the refusal would be that these people (the Samaritans) also worshipped their own gods. The Israelites had learned their lesson regarding idolatry.

harass the men of Judah, to the extent that all work on the Temple came to a standstill.

⁹This continued throughout the reign of Cyrus, even until the reign of his successor Darius. ^F*

The Lord is displeased with the slothfulness of his people

¹⁰In the sixth month of the second year of Darius this word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest in Judah.

¹¹“*Jehovah Almighty says, ‘The people have been saying, ‘It is not yet time for the Lord’s house to be built.’ Is it then time for them to be living in panelled houses while my house remains a ruin?’*”

Poor crops as a result of failing to build the Temple

¹²“*Consider whether you have prospered. You plant much but harvest little. You eat and drink but have not enough. You are clothed but not warm. You earn wages but find your purses have holes in them.*”

¹³“*Go now up into the hills. Bring down timber and build my house that I may take pleasure in it and be honoured.*”

¹⁴“*You expected much when you returned home, but see, it has turned out to be little. Why? Because my house has remained a ruin while each one of you has been busy with your own house.*”

¹⁵“*Therefore I called for a drought on the grain and on the wine and on the oil, and on all that the soil produces. And on the animals and the people and all their labour. And the heavens have withheld their rain.*”

The people again commence work on the Temple

¹⁶Then Zerubbabel, Joshua and all the people obeyed the word of the prophet Haggai.

¹⁷Then came this second message from the Lord to the people. “*Jehovah declares, ‘I am with you.’*”

¹⁸So the Lord stirred up the spirits of the people and in that same month they again began work on the Temple.

The Lord renews his covenant

¹⁹The following month this word of the Lord came to the prophet Haggai.

²⁰“*Jehovah says to the people, ‘Who is left that saw this Temple in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Does it not look as nothing?’*”

²¹“*But now be strong O Zerubbabel. Be strong O Joshua. Be strong all you people of the land, and work.* ²²*For I am with you according to the covenant I made with you when I brought you out of Egypt.* ²³*Fear not for my Spirit abides among you.*”

The Lord’s Temple to be filled with glory and treasure in days to come

²⁴“*And in days to come I will shake the*

^{*}9 Cyrus reigned as emperor of Persia for 18 years, his successor was not the same Darius he had appointed king over Babylonia.

HAGGAI 2

heavens and the earth and the sea. I will shake all nations and the treasures of all peoples will flow to my people. I will fill my house with glory, for the silver and gold of the earth is mine.”

²⁵“The glory of my Temple in those days will be greater than the glory of the former Temple, and in this place I will give you peace.”

A defiled person defiles all they touch

²⁶In the ninth month this word of the Lord came to the prophet Haggai.

²⁷“*Jehovah* says, ‘Ask the priests what the Law says. If a priest carries consecrated food in the fold of his garment and that fold touches some other food, does the other food become consecrated?’”

The priests answered, “No.”

²⁸The Lord said, “If a person defiled by a dead body touches consecrated food, does that food become defiled?”

The priests replied, “Yes, it becomes defiled.”

²⁹The Lord said, “So it is with this people. If they are defiled, whatever work they do with their hands or whatever they offer me will be defiled. So consider this from now on.”

The Lord to begin blessing the crops of the people

³⁰“Remember how things were before you again recommenced to build my Temple.

When you came to a store of twenty measures of grain you found only ten. When you went to a wine vat to draw fifty measures, there were only twenty.”

³¹“I struck all the work of your hands with blight, mildew and hail, yet you did not turn to me.”

³²“Even now there is no seed left in your barns. The vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate and the olive tree have not borne fruit. But from this day forward I will bless you.”

Zerubbabel the governor chosen of the Lord and will be raised up in the last days

³³This word of the Lord also came to Haggai that same day.

³⁴“*Jehovah Almighty* says, ‘Speak to Zerubbabel governor of Judah. Say to him, “The day is coming when I will shake the heavens and the earth and will overturn thrones and shatter the power of all foreign kingdoms. I will overthrow chariots and their drivers, horses and riders, and each man will fall by the sword of his brother.”’

³⁵“On that great day I will raise you up my servant Zerubbabel, and will make you like my signet ring, for I have chosen you.”

ZECHARIAH

The returned exiles have again commenced to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. The foundation was laid about 14 years ago but work came to a halt because of hindrance from Samaritans, until a revelation was received from the Lord through the prophet Haggai rebuking the people for their slothfulness.

However this time opposition again arises in the form of a hostile Samaritan provincial governor named Tattenai. He writes to the Persian emperor-King Darius hoping to put a stop to the work. To Tattenai's dismay, Darius writes back not only encouraging the work of rebuilding the Temple but ordering the governor to pay the cost out of royal revenues. Furthermore he also orders him to provide animals for sacrifice that the Jewish priests "*...pray for the well-being of the king and his sons*" (Zechariah 1:19).

Zechariah the prophet was a Levite priest and a returned exile who had been born in Babylonia. He prophesied throughout the rebuilding of the Temple, which took four years. His prophecies of the Messiah (Jesus Christ) both regarding his first coming and future second coming are particularly clear and vivid.

One of his prophecies (Zechariah 4:6) tells how the Messiah will ride into Jerusalem on the foal of a donkey. Matt-Mark-Luke 25:15-19 tells of its fulfilment. Another tells of a poignant scene to take place following the second coming of Jesus Christ when the Jews will weep bitterly when they see the pierce marks in their Messiah's body (Zechariah 5:10).

We also learn through Zechariah that the Mount of Olives at Jerusalem is to split in two when the feet of the returning Christ touch it. He also confirms Ezekiel's prophecy that a river of fresh water will flow from Jerusalem into the Dead Sea during the Millennium.

AUTHOR Zechariah the prophet, except for chapters one and six which are by Ezra.

"Weapons of war shall be abolished, and I will command peace to the nations. My dominion shall extend to the ends of the earth." Zechariah 4:7.

CONTENTS

Chapter

Returned exiles again begin to rebuild the Temple ... 1	A conditional promise to Joshua 2
Provincial governor challenges their authority 1	Vision of golden lampstand and olive branches 2
Sends a letter to king Darius 1	Power comes from the Spirit of the Lord 2
Work permitted to continue in meantime 1	Not by man's might or power 2
Copy of the letter 1	Zerubbabel to complete the Temple 2
King Darius locates the decree of Cyrus 1	Vision of a flying scroll 2
His reply to the governor 1	Vision of a woman in a container 2
Jews permitted to build Temple 1	Vision of four horses and chariots 2
Expenses to be paid from royal revenues 1	A crown to be made for Zerubbabel 2
Animals for offerings also to be provided 1	Zerubbabel is the Branch 2
Priests to pray for well being of king and his sons 1	Zerubbabel and Joshua to rule people in harmony ... 2
Punishment if king's decree not obeyed 1	But only if they obey Lord 2
Governor obeys the king's decree 1	Men of Bethel come to enquire of the Lord 3
Warning from the Lord through Zechariah 2	Should they still fast and mourn in fifth month? 3
Zechariah's vision of the four horsemen 2	Lord asks if their fasting was sincere 3
Four horsemen sent to patrol the earth 2	Judah scattered for not listening to earlier prophets . 3
Jerusalem to be rebuilt 2	The Lord still loves Jerusalem 3
Vision of four horns – four kings 2	He will once again fill the city with people 3
Vision of four workmen with hammers 2	People to be blessed as they rebuild Temple 3
Vision of young man with a measuring line 2	The people must speak truth and act with justice 3
Jerusalem to outgrow its walls 2	The fasts to continue but as joyful times 3
Jehovah sent by the Lord God Almighty 2	Strong nations will seek Lord in Jerusalem 3
Jehovah coming to live among his people in future ... 2	Tyre to be destroyed 4
Other nations also to become his people in that day 2	Pride of Philistines to end 4
Joshua the high priest saved from Satan 2	Judah to be protected during next invasion 4
Joshua symbolically clad in filthy clothes 2	Messiah to enter Jerusalem riding a donkey 4
Joshua dressed in clean clothes 2	Messiah-King to command peace 4

ZECHARIAH 1

Messiah to eventually rule whole earth	4	Jews to see pierce marks in Messiah's body	5
Messiah to set free prisoners in the spirit world	4	Jews will weep bitterly	5
Lord's people to be helped in battle on last day	4	Sin of the Jews to be forgiven	5
People of Israel to shine like jewels in Millennium	4	No more false prophets	5
Uncaring shepherds have led Israel astray	4	Zechariah's vision of the coming of the Lord	5
Great leaders to come from Judah	4	Mount of Olives to split in two	5
House of Joseph also to be saved	4	The day to be dark and cold yet light at evening	5
House of Joseph to be made mighty	4	Fresh water to flow from Jerusalem to Dead Sea	5
Nile to dry up to assist gathering	4	And also half to the Mediterranean	5
The sea also to be subdued	4	Jehovah to be king over the whole earth	5
Zechariah commanded to become a shepherd	4	The land around Jerusalem to become like a plain	5
A shepherd of sheep marked for slaughter	4	Jerusalem to be raised up	5
Two staffs named Favour and Union	4	Flesh of the invaders to rot as they stand	5
Zechariah resigns as shepherd	4	The armies to slay one another	5
Breaks the staff called Favour	4	Great amounts of spoil to be collected by Judah	5
Zechariah paid thirty pieces of silver	4	Survivors of the nations to worship at Jerusalem	5
The silver thrown into the Temple to the potter	4	Nations who refuse shall have no rain	5
Zechariah breaks the second staff called Union	4	'Holy to Jehovah' to be inscribed on bells	5
An uncaring shepherd about to be raised up	4	Sacrifices to be offered in the Millennial Temple	5
Nations to besiege Jerusalem in latter days	5	The Jews finish rebuilding the Temple	6
Those nations will suffer grievous hurt	5	The Temple is dedicated with joy	6
Cities of Judah to gain victory ahead of Jerusalem	5	Passover is celebrated	6
Two thirds of Israel to perish during that time	5		

Bold The Lord or an angel speaking.
Bold italics A prophet speaking under inspiration.

1

The returned exiles again begin to rebuild the Temple

¹During the second year of Darius king of Persia, the returned exiles in Judah again began to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem.

Tattenai the provincial governor challenges their authority

²However Tattenai, governor of the Trans-Euphrates province of the Persian empire^{F*} came to Zerubbabel in Jerusalem, along with his officials, and said to him, "Who authorised you to rebuild this Temple?"

Work permitted to continue while Tattenai sends a letter to King Darius

³But the Lord was watching over the Jews and they were permitted to continue building the Temple until a letter could be sent from Tattenai to Darius the king and his written reply be received.

A copy of the letter

⁴This is a copy of the letter that was sent to Darius.

⁵"To King Darius from Tattenai governor of Trans-Euphrates. Greeting."

⁶"The king should know that we visited the district of Judah and found the people there rebuilding the Temple of the great God."

⁷"We questioned the leaders and wrote down their names for your information."

⁸"They claim that in his first year, King

Cyrus issued a decree to rebuild this Temple and that he also returned the gold and silver articles which King Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Temple and gave them to a man named Zerubbabel, whom he also appointed as governor of Judah."

⁹"So this Zerubbabel came and laid the foundations of the Temple in Jerusalem and from that day to the present it has been under construction, but is not yet finished."

¹⁰"Now if it pleases the king, let a search be made in the royal archives to see if King Cyrus did in fact issue a decree to rebuild this Temple, and then let the king send us his decision in this matter."

King Darius locates the decree of Cyrus

¹¹When Darius received the letter he ordered a search of the archives and the decree was found. So he wrote back this reply to Tattenai.

The king's reply to the governor

¹²"To Tattenai, governor of Trans-Euphrates, from King Darius."

¹³"In his first year King Cyrus issued this decree concerning the Temple of God in Jerusalem:"

¹⁴"Let the Temple be rebuilt as a place to present sacrifices. It is to be 60 cubits high and 60 cubits wide,^{F*} with three

^{*14} About 30 metres high by 30 metres wide. No length is mentioned. If these were the actual building dimensions it would have been much larger than Solomon's temple which was only about 13.5 metres high, 9 metres wide, and 28 metres long.

^{*2} The province of Trans-Euphrates included Judah.

courses of hewn stones and one of timber. The costs are to be paid from the royal treasury.”

¹⁵“Also the gold and silver articles which King Nebuchadnezzar took from the Temple are to be returned to their places in the house of God.”

Jews permitted to build Temple and expenses to be paid from royal revenues

¹⁶“Now then Tattenai, stay away from there. Do not interfere with the work on this Temple of God. Let the governor of the Jews and the Jewish elders rebuild this Temple on its site.”

¹⁷“Moreover, the expenses of these men are to be fully paid without delay from the royal revenues of Trans-Euphrates, so that the work will not stop.”

Animals for offerings to be provided

¹⁸“And whatever is needed for burnt offerings to the God of heaven; young bulls, rams, male lambs, wheat, salt, wine and oil, as requested by the priests in Jerusalem must be given them daily without fail.”

The priests to pray for the well being of the king and his sons

¹⁹“That they may offer sacrifices pleasing to the God of heaven and pray for the well-being of the king and his sons.”

Punishment if the king’s decree not obeyed

²⁰“Furthermore I decree that whoever changes this decree shall have a beam pulled from his house and he be impaled upon it, and his house turned into a pile of rubble.”

²¹“Also, may God overthrow any king or people who seek to change this decree or to destroy the Temple in Jerusalem.”

²²“I Darius have made this decree. Let it be carried out with diligence.”

Tattenai the governor obeys the king’s decree

²³So Tattenai governor of Trans-Euphrates did with all diligence what Darius had ordered.

2

A warning word to the Jews from the Lord through Zechariah the prophet

¹During the second year of Darius this word of the Lord came to the prophet Zechariah in Judah.

²“*Jehovah Almighty says, ‘Return to me and I will return to you. Be not like your forefathers who were commanded to turn from their evil ways but did not listen to me.’*”

³“*Did not my words which I spoke to the prophets overtake your forefathers? Then they repented and said, ‘Jehovah has done to us what our ways deserve, just as he said he would.’*”

Zechariah’s vision of the four horsemen sent to patrol the earth

⁴During the eleventh month of the same year, visions of the Lord came to the prophet Zechariah.

⁵“During the night I had a vision. I saw before me the Lord standing among the myrtle trees down in the valley. ⁶Behind him were a red, a brown, a white and a black horse, each with a rider.^{F*} I said to the angel of the Lord who stood by me, ‘Who are they my lord?’”

“He replied, ‘**It will be revealed to you who they are.**’”

⁷“Then the Lord who stood among the myrtle trees spoke saying, ‘**These are they whom Jehovah has sent to patrol the earth.**’”

⁸“At this the riders reported to the Lord saying, ‘**We have patrolled the earth and found the world at peace.**’”

Jerusalem to be rebuilt

⁹“Then the angel of the Lord who stood with me said, ‘**O Jehovah Almighty, how long will you withhold mercy from Jerusalem and the towns of Judah with whom you have been angry these seventy years?**’”

¹⁰“The Lord spoke comforting words to the angel who stood with me, then the angel said to me, ‘**Say to the people, ‘Jehovah says, I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and Zion,^{F*} and I am very angry with the nations who are at ease, for I was only a little angry with my people but the nations added to their afflictions.**’”

¹¹“**Therefore I have returned to comfort Jerusalem. My Temple shall be rebuilt and the city also. Jerusalem and my other cities will again overflow with prosperity.**”

The vision of four horns – four kings

¹²“Then I saw before me four horns, and I said to the angel of the Lord, ‘What are these?’”

¹³“He answered me, ‘**These are the kings that scattered Judah and Jerusalem.**’”

The vision of four workmen with hammers

¹⁴“Then the Lord showed me four workmen with hammers. I asked, ‘What have they come to do?’”

¹⁵“He answered, ‘**They have come to terrify and strike down the nations that scattered Judah.**’”

The vision of the young man with a measuring line

¹⁶“Then I saw before me a young man with a measuring line in his hand. I said to him, ‘Where are you going?’”

¹⁷“He answered me, ‘**To measure the walls of Jerusalem.**’”

Jerusalem to outgrow its walls

¹⁸“Then the angel of the Lord left me and went to meet another angel who said to him,

*6 These four horsemen again appear in a later vision of Zechariah. Horsemen also feature in the apostle John’s vision in the book of Revelation (Zechariah 2:50, Revelation 4:1-6).

*10 Zion is the hill in Jerusalem where the Temple and king’s palace were located.

ZECHARIAH 2

'Run after that young man and say to him, "Jehovah says, Jerusalem will outgrow its walls because of the great number of people and livestock in it. ¹⁹And I myself will become a wall of fire around it and will be its glory within."

²⁰"Therefore come my people, return from the lands of the north where I have scattered you to the four winds. Come to Zion you who live among the daughters of Babylon."

Jehovah the Messiah sent by the Lord God Almighty

²¹"After the Lord God Almighty has glorified me, and sent me against the nations that have plundered you, for whoever afflicts you afflicts the apple of his eye, then you will know that he has sent me."

Jehovah coming to live among his people in future

²²"Shout and be glad O Jerusalem, for I Jehovah am coming and will live among you."

Many nations to also become Lord's people in that day

²³"Many nations will turn to me in that day and will also become my people. ²⁴I will live among you and then you shall know that the Lord God Almighty has sent me to you."^{F*}

Joshua the high priest saved from Satan

²⁵"Then the angel of the Lord showed me a vision of Joshua the high priest and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him."

²⁶"The angel of the Lord said to Satan, 'Jehovah rebuke you O Satan. Is not this man a brand plucked from the fire?'

Joshua symbolically clad in filthy clothes

²⁷"Now Joshua was clad in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel of the Lord. The angel said to those who were standing before him, 'Remove his filthy clothes.'

Joshua dressed in clean clothes

²⁸"Then he said to Joshua, 'See, I have taken away your sin and will put clean clothes upon you.'

²⁹"I said to the angel, 'Let them also put a clean turban^{F*} on his head.' So they clothed him in new clothes while the angel of the Lord stood by."

A conditional promise to Joshua

³⁰"Then the angel gave this promise to Joshua, 'Jehovah Almighty says, If you will walk in my ways you shall govern my Temple, and I will give you a place among those who stand in my presence.'

³¹"Hear O high priest Joshua, you and the

priests associated with you, who are symbols of good things to come, I am going to utilise my servant the Branch."

³²"See the rock I have set in front of Joshua. There are seven facets on that rock, and I will also engrave an inscription on it, and remove the guilt of the land of Israel in a single day."

³³"In that day, each of you will enjoy peace with your neighbour, sitting amid your vines and fig trees."



"...each of you will enjoy peace... sitting amid your vines and fig trees," Zechariah 2:33.

The vision of a golden lampstand and olive branches

³⁴"Again that night, the angel of the Lord returned and awakened me and asked, 'What do you see?'

³⁵"I answered, 'I see a golden lampstand supporting seven oil lamps, with a bowl at the top feeding the lamps through seven pipes.'

³⁶"I also see two olive branches, one on either side of the lampstand, each feeding oil to the bowl on the top of the lamp-stand. What are these my Lord?'

³⁷"He said to me, 'The seven lamps are the eyes of the Lord which range throughout the earth.'^{F*} ³⁸The two olive branches either side of the lampstand are the two men who are anointed to serve the Lord.'^{F*}

Power comes by the Spirit of the Lord not by man's might or power

³⁹"Therefore hear the word of Jehovah to Zerubbabel, 'Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit.'

⁴⁰"Even if a great mountain be placed in your way, before you it will become a plain."

Zerubbabel to complete the Temple

⁴¹"The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this Temple, and his hands shall complete it. The people will rejoice when they see the plumb line in his hand."

⁴²"He shall place the capstone of the Temple to shouts of rejoicing. Then you will know that Jehovah has sent him to you."

*24 This verse and verse 22 above, are two of the clearest references in the Old Testament to Jehovah the God of the Old Testament, being the pre-mortal Jesus Christ, who was sent by the Lord God Almighty (God the Father) and who is to eventually return again in glory to rule the earth from Jerusalem. See also the note on John 1:8 regarding the Father and son both sharing the name/title Jehovah.

*29 A turban was a worn by the high priest during temple duty (Exodus 17:18).

*37 The apostle John speaks of the seven Spirits of God (Revelation 3:4).

*38 Zerubbabel and Joshua.



An artist's view of the olive branches and the lampstand vision .

The vision of a flying scroll

43⁴⁴Then he said, **‘What do you see now?’**

“I answered, ‘I see a large flying scroll.’”

44⁴⁴He said to me, **‘This is a curse to go out over the whole land. On one side is written, ‘All who steal shall be cut off’ and on the other, ‘All who swear falsely shall be cut off.’**”

45⁴⁴**‘Jehovah says, I have sent it out and it shall enter the house of the thief and the house of him who swears falsely and will remain in their house and destroy it.’**”

The vision of a woman in a measuring container

46⁴⁴Next I saw a box and said, ‘What is it?’”

“The angel replied, **‘It is a measuring container holding the guilt of this people.’**”

47⁴⁴“The heavy leaden cover was raised and there in the container sat a woman. The angel said **‘This is Wickedness’** and he pushed her back into the box and closed the heavy lid.”

48⁴⁴“Then I saw two women coming with wings like those of a stork and they flew off with the container. I asked, ‘Where are they taking it?’”

49⁴⁴“The angel replied, **‘To the land of Babylon to build a house for it. When the house is completed the basket will be set there.’**”



An artist's view of two visions of Zechariah – a flying scroll and two winged women bearing off a box to Babylon containing a woman, representing the wickedness of Jerusalem.

The vision of four horses and chariots

50⁴⁴“I looked again and saw four chariots coming from between two bronze mountains. The first chariot had red horses, the second black, the third white, and the fourth brown, all of them powerful. I said to the angel, ‘What are these my Lord?’”

51⁴⁴“He answered, **‘These are the four spirits of heaven from the presence of Jehovah. The one with black horses is going to patrol the north, the one with white horses the west, and the one with brown horses the south.’** F*

52⁴⁴“The powerful horses were straining to go so he commanded, **‘Go patrol the earth!’** and they departed.”

53⁴⁴“Then the voice of the Lord called to me saying, **‘Those patrolling the north country have given my Spirit rest in that land.’** F*

A crown to be made for Zerubbabel

54⁴⁴The word of the Lord came to me. **‘Take silver and gold from the exiles who have arrived from Babylon and make a crown.’**

*51 The area patrolled by the red horses is not mentioned.

*53 Israel is included in the north country. The south refers to Egypt and the nations surrounding her (Daniel 10:20-43).

ZECHARIAH 3

Set it upon the head of Zerubbabel in the presence of Joshua the high priest."

Zerubbabel is the Branch

55"Then say to Joshua, 'Jehovah says, "Here is the man who is the Branch. He will branch forth and build the Temple of the Lord and those who are afar off will come to help. Then you will know that Jehovah has sent him to you."

If Zerubbabel and Joshua obedient they will rule the people in harmony

56"He shall be clothed with honour and will sit and rule on his throne and you shall be a priest at his right hand, and there shall be harmony between you."

57"Thus will happen if you diligently obey Jehovah your God."

3

Men of Bethel enquire of the Lord – should they still fast and mourn in the fifth month

1In the fourth year of Darius, the people living in Bethel^{F*} sent men to Jerusalem to make this inquiry of the Lord, "Should we continue to mourn and fast in the fifth month as we have done for so many years?"^{F*}

The Lord asks if the fasting was sincere

2Then this word of the Lord came to Zechariah the prophet. "Say to the people, When you fasted and mourned for these past seventy years, was it really for me that you fasted?"

Judah scattered for not listening to earlier prophets

3"Did I not proclaim these words through earlier prophets when Judah was at rest and prosperous: 'Administer true justice. Show mercy to one another. Oppress not the widow and the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor. And in your hearts think not evil of one another.'"

4"But my people did not heed the words I sent by my Spirit through the earlier prophets. So I Jehovah was angry and when they called on me I would not listen."

5"Then I scattered them among nations they knew not and the pleasant land was left deserted behind them."

The Lord still loves Jerusalem and will once again fill the city with people

6"Yet I still burn with jealousy for Zion and will return to Jerusalem. She shall be called the 'City of Truth' and the mountain of the Lord shall be called the 'Holy Mountain.'"

7"Once again men and women of ripe old age will sit in the squares of Jerusalem, and the city streets shall be filled with children playing."

*1 A town about 10 km north of Jerusalem.

*1 This had been done throughout the exile years to commemorate the first exile from Jerusalem.

8"For I will gather my people from the lands of the east and the west and bring them back to live in Jerusalem, and they shall be my people and I shall be their faithful God."

The people to be blessed now as they rebuild the Temple

9"Now you who hear these words as the house of the Lord is being built, let your hands be strong so that the Temple may be completed."

10"In past years there have been no wages, nor could you go about your business safely because of your enemies, for I had turned every man against his neighbour."

11"But now your crops will grow well and your vine will yield its fruit and the heavens will drop their rain."

The people must however speak truth and act with justice

12"But these things you must do: Speak truthfully to one another, administer honest judgement in your gates,^{F*} and do not plot evil against your neighbour or swear falsely, for these things I hate. Therefore love peace and truth."

The fasts to continue but as joyful times

13"The fasts of the fourth, fifth, seventh and tenth months shall be joyful times and happy festivals for Judah."

One day people from strong nations will seek the Lord in Jerusalem

14"For the days shall yet come when people from strong nations shall say to each other, 'Come, let us go and seek Jehovah in Jerusalem and entreat him.'"

15"In those days ten men will take hold of one Jew by his clothing and say, 'Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.'"

4

Tyre to be destroyed

1A prophecy of the prophet Zechariah. "Jehovah says, My word is against Damascus and Hamath and also against Tyre and Sidon, though they are very skilful."

2"Tyre has built herself a great stronghold and has heaped up silver and gold, but I will take away her possessions and destroy her power on the sea. She will be burnt by fire."

The pride of the Philistines to end

3"The cities of the Philistines shall see it and fear. Gaza shall lose her king and Ashkelon will be deserted. Foreigners shall occupy Ashdod."

4"I will end the pride of the Philistines. But some shall survive and belong to me and will become like the clans of Judah."

*12 Court hearings were held in the gateways of the city.

Judah to be protected during the next invasion

⁵“When the invasion comes I will protect my Temple against the marauding force. This time the oppressor shall not overrun my people.” F*

The Messiah-King to enter**Jerusalem riding the foal of a donkey**

⁶“Rejoice greatly O Jerusalem. Your King is coming to you, righteous and having salvation, humble and riding on the foal of a donkey.” F*

The Messiah-King to command peace and eventually have dominion over the whole earth

⁷“Weapons of war shall be abolished, and I will command peace to the nations. My dominion shall extend to the ends of the earth.”

The Messiah to set free prisoners in the spirit world

⁸“And because of the blood of my covenant I shall set free the prisoners from Sheol. F* Wait in your stronghold O prisoners of hope, for I will restore you double.” F*

The Lord's people to be helped in battle on the last day

⁹“In that day I shall bend Judah as my bow and make Ephraim my arrow, for I will arouse your sons O Jerusalem and will make you like a warrior's sword against the sons of Greece.” F*

¹⁰“Jehovah shall appear over them and his arrow shall flash forth like lightning. He shall sound the trumpet and go forth like a whirlwind of the south.”

¹¹“He will shield his people and they shall prevail and tread down their enemies. Their weapons shall drink blood as wine and shall be full, like the bowl of blood that is poured out upon the altar.”

The people of Israel to shine like jewels during Millennium

¹²“Jehovah their God shall save his people on that day. Then they will shine in his land like jewels in a crown.”

¹³“How beautiful they will be, and grain shall make the young men thrive, and new wine the young women.”

Uncaring shepherds have led Israel astray

¹⁴The word of the Lord came to Zechariah. “Jehovah says, Ask me for the showers of rain in the springtime. It is I Jehovah who

give rain for the plants of the field. ¹⁵For idols speak nonsense and diviners see false dreams. This is why my people have wandered like sheep, for they lack a caring shepherd.”

Great leaders to come from house of Judah

¹⁶“My anger burns against the shepherds of my people and I shall punish them. For I care for my flock who are of the house of Judah and I will make them like a proud war horse in battle.”

¹⁷“From out of Judah will come the cornerstone and the tent stakes, and the warrior's bow and every commander. They shall be like mighty men in battle for I Jehovah am with them.”

The house of Joseph also to be saved and to be made mighty

¹⁸“I will also save the house of Joseph F* and restore them, for I love them.”

¹⁹“They will be as though I had not rejected them, for I am Jehovah their God and will make them mighty warriors.”

²⁰“Their hearts and their children's hearts will exult in the Lord. Surely I will redeem them and they shall be numerous as before.”

The Nile to dry up and the sea to be subdued to assist the gathering

²¹“Though I have scattered them in distant lands, yet they will return. I will gather them in from Egypt and from Assyria.”

²²“The waves of the sea will be subdued and the Nile will dry up.”

²³“I shall bring them to Gilead and to Lebanon, until there is no more room for them.”

Zechariah commanded to become a shepherd of sheep marked for slaughter

²⁴“The Lord my God said to me, ‘Zechariah, become a shepherd to a flock of sheep marked for slaughter.’ F*

²⁵“Those who buy them will slaughter them freely, and those who sell them shall say, ‘Praise the Lord, I am rich.’ Their own shepherds shall not spare them.”

²⁶“For I too shall no longer have pity on the people of this land. I will cause them to fall into the hands of their shepherds, and into the hands of a king who shall crush the earth, F* and I will rescue none from their hands.”

²⁷“So I Zechariah became a shepherd for the sheep merchants and pastured a flock of sheep marked for slaughter.”

Two staffs named Favour and Union

²⁸“I took two staffs and called one Favour and

*5 The oppressor in view is Alexander the Great (356-323 BC). He destroyed Tyre and soundly defeated Damascus, Hamath, Sidon and the coastal cities of the Philistines, but did not trouble Judah in his conquests.

*6 See Matt-Mark-Luke 25:15-22 for the literal fulfillment of this prophecy.

*8 Sheol is the spirit world of the dead.

*8 The pre-mortal Jesus Christ who is speaking (see note on Zechariah 2:24) fulfilled this prophecy when he visited and preached to the spirits of the dead in Sheol (aptly called a prison) immediately after his death on the cross (1 Peter 2:15).

*9 The use of the term ‘sons of Greece’ (the aggressive empire on the rise at the time) is probably symbolic of the combined enemy nations who will oppress Israel in the last days, for the prophecy that follows appears to clearly pertain to the time of the second coming of Christ.

*18 The tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh from Joseph's two sons, normally symbolic of all the lost northern tribes.

*24 It appears that Zechariah as a shepherd was to symbolise the Messiah Jesus Christ, and the flock doomed for slaughter the Jews of Christ's day, most of whom perished in the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

*26 This prophecy appears to tie in with Daniel's vision of the mighty Roman empire founded by Julius Caesar (Daniel 5:5-6).

ZECHARIAH 5

the other Union. ²⁹In one month I got rid of three under-shepherds for they detested me and I grew weary of them.”

Zechariah resigns as shepherd and breaks the staff called Favour

³⁰“Then I said to the merchants, *“I will no longer be your shepherd. Let the dying sheep die, and those who are left can eat one another’s flesh.”* F*

³¹“I took my staff called Favour and broke it, revoking the covenant I had made with the merchants. ³²The sheep merchants who were watching knew it was the word of the Lord.”

Zechariah paid thirty pieces of silver

³³“Then I said to them, ‘Pay me what you consider I am worth.’ So they paid me thirty pieces of silver.” F*

The silver is thrown into the Temple to the potter

³⁴“The Lord said to me, ‘Throw this handsome price at which they valued me to the potter.’ So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the Temple to the potter.”

Zechariah breaks the second staff called Union

³⁵“Then I broke my second staff called Union, symbolising the broken unity between Judah and Israel.”

An uncaring shepherd about to be raised up over the land

³⁶“The Lord said to me, ‘Take up again the implements of a shepherd, an uncaring one, for I am about to raise up a shepherd over the land who will care not for the lost nor heal the injured, but will eat the meat of the choice sheep.’ F*

³⁷“Woe to the uncaring shepherd who deserts his flock. May the sword strike his arm and his right eye.”

5

Nations who besiege Jerusalem in latter days to suffer grievous hurt

¹The word of the Lord came to me. “The day is coming when I will make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding nations reeling.”

²“On that day, when the nations of the earth gather to invade Judah and Jerusalem, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock. All who try to move her will suffer grievous hurt. ³On that day I will strike every war horse with panic and its rider with madness.”

⁴“On that day I shall make the leaders of Judah as a flaming torch among dry sheaves. They shall consume right and left.

*30 Cannibalism was reported among the Jews during the Roman siege of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

*33 This verse and the one that follows, prophesy the betrayal of Jesus by Judas Iscariot who was also paid 30 pieces of silver. He too eventually cast the money onto the floor of the temple (see verse 34). It was used to buy a plot of ground known as Potter’s Field, a burial place for the poor (Matt-Mark-Luke 30:24-25 and 32:21-26).

*36 Probably the infamous Antiochus IV. See Daniel 6:7-9 and note.

I will destroy all the nations that attack Jerusalem.”



The sheep market of Jerusalem.

Cities of Judah to gain victory ahead of Jerusalem

⁵“I will give victory first to the cities of Judah, that the glory of the people of Jerusalem shall not be exalted over that of Judah.

⁶After those days the feeblest in Jerusalem shall be like David. ⁷And those of the house of David shall be like God.”

Two thirds of Israel to perish during that time of distress

⁸“But before that day, in the whole land, two-thirds shall perish. Yet one-third I will bring through the fire to refine them as silver and gold.”

⁹“They will call upon my name and I shall answer them saying, ‘You are my people’ and they shall say, ‘Jehovah is our God.’”

The Jews shall weep when they see the pierce marks in their Messiah’s body

¹⁰“Then I shall pour out my Spirit upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and they shall look upon me, the one they pierced, and will mourn bitterly as one mourns for an only child.”

¹¹“On that day the weeping in Jerusalem will be very great.”

The sin of the Jews to be forgiven

¹²“Then a fountain shall be opened up to cleanse the inhabitants of Jerusalem from their sin.” F*

No more false prophets

¹³“On that day I shall cut off the names of idols from the land and remove all prophets who prophesy by unclean spirits.”

¹⁴“And if any false prophet should arise again his father and mother will say to him,

*12 See verse 21.

'You must die, for you have spoken lies in the name of Jehovah and they shall put him to death.'

Zechariah's vision of the coming of the Lord in the latter days

¹⁵"See, the day of the Lord is coming, when plunder will be taken from you and be divided up in your midst. For Jehovah will gather the nations to Jerusalem to fight against her."

¹⁶"The city shall be taken, the houses ransacked and the women raped. Half of the city shall be taken captive, but the rest of the people will be left."

¹⁷"Then Jehovah will appear, to fight against the nations."

The Mount of Olives to split in two

¹⁸"On that day his feet shall touch the Mount of Olives which will split in two, half of the mountain moving north and half moving south, forming a great valley from east to west, and the remnant in Jerusalem will flee by way of the mountain valley."

¹⁹"When Jehovah your God comes all the Holy Ones will be with him."

The day to be dark and cold yet light at evening

²⁰"On that day there shall be darkness, cold and frost. It will be a unique day, without daylight, but when evening comes there will be light."^{F*}

Fresh water to flow from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean

²¹"On that day fresh water shall begin to flow from Jerusalem, half to the Dead Sea^{F*} and half to the Great Sea^{F*} all year round."

Jehovah to be king over the whole earth

²²"In that day Jehovah will be King over the whole earth. There shall be only one Lord and his name the only name."

The land around Jerusalem to become like a plain but Jerusalem to be raised up

²³"The land around Jerusalem shall become like a plain, but Jerusalem will be raised up in its place. It shall be inhabited and secure and never again be destroyed."

The flesh of the invaders shall rot as they stand

²⁴"The Lord will strike the nations that gather to fight against Jerusalem with this plague: Their eyes shall rot in their sockets and their tongues rot away in their mouths while they are still standing on their feet.²⁵ And the plague shall also strike the animals in their camps."

The invading armies to slay one another

²⁶"On that day men shall be stricken by the

Lord with great panic, and will slay one another."^{F*}

Judah to collect great amounts of spoil

²⁷"Judah too will fight for Jerusalem, and the wealth of the surrounding nations shall be amassed. Great quantities of gold, silver and clothing."

Survivors of the nations to worship at Jerusalem each year

²⁸"Then it will come to pass that all the survivors from the nations that came against Jerusalem, will go up to Jerusalem year after year to worship the King Jehovah Almighty and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles."

Nations who refuse to worship at Jerusalem shall have no rain

²⁹"If any of the peoples of the earth do not go up to worship, they shall have no rain. And if the Egyptians do not go up they too shall have no rain."^{F*}

'Holy to Jehovah' to be inscribed on bells

³⁰"In those days 'Holy to Jehovah' will be inscribed on the bells of the horses. Even the cooking pots in the house of the Lord shall be as the sacred bowls in front of the altar."

Sacrifices again to be offered in the Millennial Temple

³¹"Every pot in Judah will be holy to the Lord, and all who come to sacrifice will boil the flesh of their sacrifice in them."^{F*}

³²"And no longer shall merchants be found trading in the house of the Lord."

6

The Jews finish rebuilding the Temple

¹The Jews continued to rebuild the Temple and prospered under the teaching of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah. ²The house of God was completed in the sixth year of the reign of Darius.

The Temple is dedicated with joy

³The returned exiles celebrated the dedication of the Temple with joy. They offered 100 bulls, 200 rams and 400 male lambs. Also 12 male goats as a sin offering for each of the tribes of Israel.

⁴Then they organised the priests and the Levites as written in the Law of Moses.

The Passover is celebrated

⁵On the fourteenth day of the first month the exiles celebrated the Passover. All of the Jews who had returned from the exile ate it, together with all who had separated themselves from the unclean practices of the Gentiles^{F*} to seek

*²⁶ This prophecy is also found in Ezekiel 13:13.

*²⁹ Egypt will evidently challenge the armies of Gog in the latter days and not join the nations who gather against Jerusalem (Daniel 11:5).

*³¹ See note on Ezekiel 14:17 about animal sacrifices being reinstated at the Jerusalem temple during the millennium.

*⁵ A Gentile is any person born to a non-Jewish mother.

*²⁰ Jerusalem is to be lit up at night by the glory of the Lord during the Millennium (Isaiah 15:19).

*²¹ This prophecy is covered in greater detail by the prophet Ezekiel (Ezekiel chapter 17).

*²¹ The Mediterranean. The way is blocked by the Mount of Olives at present but see verse 18 of this chapter.

ZECHARIAH 6

Jehovah the God of Israel.

⁶For seven days they celebrated with joy, because the Lord had softened the heart of Darius king of Persia so that he assisted them in the work on the house of God.



Rolling plains near Nazareth. When the Lord returns, mountainous southern Israel will also become like a plain except for the city of Jerusalem which shall remain elevated on a mountain (Zechariah 5:23). The present day height of Jerusalem is 800 m (2550 ft).

ESTHER

This unique true story, much loved by the Jews, is set in the royal courts of the Persian emperor-king, Xerxes. This emperor came to power in 485 BC, about fifty years after the first wave of Jewish exiles had returned to Judah.

The purpose of the book is to explain the origin of the feast of Purim, which is still celebrated by Jews today. The story is dramatic, well told, and provides fascinating details of Persian court life.

A beautiful young Jewish virgin Esther, is chosen by the emperor-King Xerxes to be his new queen, replacing the former Queen Vashti whom he deposed for disobedience.

All goes well until Mordecai, a Jew and older male cousin of Esther who had raised her from a child, incurs the wrath of Haman, the Grand Vizier by refusing to bow to him. Haman in his anger plots to kill Mordecai and furthermore to annihilate every Jew throughout the vast 175 nation Persian empire.

The story is in some ways similar to that of Joseph in Egypt, and reads like a Shakespearian play. It is so amazing in fact that some skeptical Bible scholars in the past regarded it as fiction. However Mordecai's name has since been found in Persian historical records.

The eventual actions of the Jews in the story might seem harsh to modern readers, but it should be remembered that the Christian gospel message of love and forgiveness of enemies had not yet been taught by Jesus Christ.

The book of Esther is unusual in that, although it is part of the Jewish Bible it does not once mention the Lord. Nor does it mention Jerusalem, or prayer. The reason for this was probably to enable the book to circulate freely throughout the Persian empire without upsetting other peoples. A later Greek version of the book inserts traditional Jewish religious commentary.

“If you remain silent at this time, deliverance for the Jews will arise from another source, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this.” Esther 4:10.

AUTHOR Unknown.

CONTENTS

Chapter

Darius dies and Xerxes becomes king of Persia	1	Haman casts a lot to select a date	3
King Xerxes gives two great feasts	1	Xerxes asked to issue a decree to destroy all Jews .	3
Palace garden described	1	Xerxes gives Haman authority to issue the decree ...	3
Unlimited wine served	1	Decree is sent out in Xerxes' name	3
Xerxes commands Vashti to display her beauty	1	Mordecai and the Jews mourn	3
Queen Vashti disobeys the king	1	Esther inquires why Mordecai is in mourning	4
The king consults his advisers	1	Mordecai sends a copy of the decree to Esther	4
Memucan advises that Vashti be replaced as queen ..	1	Mordecai urges Esther to plead with the king	4
Then all women will respect their husbands	1	Esther reminds Mordecai that her life is in danger	4
This advice pleases the king and he issues a decree .	1	Death if king approached unsummoned	4
The king searches his empire for beautiful virgins	2	Mordecai insists that Esther approach the king	4
Esther a beautiful Jew among those selected	2	Esther calls for a three day fast	4
Esther pleases Hegai the harem eunuch	2	Esther approaches the king	4
Esther does not reveal her nationality	2	The king receives Esther favourably	4
Esther given twelve months of beauty treatment	2	Esther invites the king and Haman to drink wine	4
Esther's time comes to go into the king	2	She invites them to come again tomorrow	4
Esther wins the king's favour and is made queen	2	Haman again angered by Mordecai	4
Esther continues to follow Mordecai's instructions ...	2	Haman erects a gallows to hang Mordecai	4
Mordecai appointed a royal official	2	King Xerxes learns how Mordecai had saved him	4
Mordecai reveals a plot to assassinate the king	3	Haman ordered to honour Mordecai	4
Haman, a royal official made Grand Vizier	3	Esther reveals her nationality to the king	4
Mordecai refuses to bow to Haman	3	Esther accuses Haman in his presence	4
Haman angry with Mordecai the Jew	3	King orders Haman hanged on his own gallows	4
Haman plans to exterminate all Jews	3	Esther given Haman's estate	5

ESTHER 1

Mordecai made Grand Vizier in Haman's place5
Esther pleads with king to overrule the decree5
Mordecai permitted to issue an overruling decree5
Jews permitted to counter-attack their enemies5
The Jews celebrate5
Other nationalities also join with the Jews5
Appointed day arrives5

Fear of Mordecai protects the Jews5
Jews strike down their enemies5
Decree extended an extra day in Susa5
75,000 enemies of the Jews killed5
Day to be called Purim5
Purim to be celebrated for ever more5
Mordecai second in rank only to the king5

1

King Darius dies and his son Xerxes becomes king of the Persian empire

¹Darius, king of Persia reigned 35 years and died. His son Xerxes then became king and reigned from his royal throne in the city of Susa^{F*} in Babylonia. ²He ruled over 127 nations stretching from India to Ethiopia.

King Xerxes gives two great feasts

³In the third year of his reign, Xerxes gave a great feast for all of his nobles and officials and displayed the vast wealth of his kingdom for 180 days.

⁴When these days were completed he gave a second feast, lasting seven days, for all the men who lived in the city of Susa. This was held in the enclosed garden of the king's palace.

The palace garden described

⁵This garden had hangings of white and blue linen, attached with white and purple cords to silver rings on marble pillars.

⁶There were couches of gold and silver on a mosaic pavement of marble, porphyry,^{F*} mother-pearl and other costly stone.

Unlimited wine served

⁷Abundant wine was served in goblets of gold in keeping with the king's liberality. By the command of the king each guest was permitted to drink as much as he desired, for the king instructed the wine servers to serve each man whatever he wished.

⁸Queen Vashti also gave a banquet for all the women, inside the royal palace.

Xerxes commands Queen Vashti to come and display her beauty

⁹On the seventh day of the feast, when Xerxes the king was merry with wine, he commanded that Queen Vashti be brought before him wearing her royal crown. He wished to display her beauty to his guests, for she was lovely to behold.

Queen Vashti disobeys the king

¹⁰But Queen Vashti refused to come. At this the king burned with anger.

In anger the king consults his advisers regarding the queen

¹¹As was customary in matters of law, the king consulted with his wise men.

¹²He said to them, "According to law, what is to

be done to Queen Vashti? For she has not obeyed the command of the king."

¹³Memucan replied, "Queen Vashti has not only wronged the king, she has wronged all the peoples of King Xerxes. For the queen's conduct will become known to all women and they will look with contempt upon the authority of their husbands. There will be no end of disrespect and discord."

Memucan advises Vashti be replaced as queen so that all women will respect their husbands

¹⁴"Therefore if it pleases the king, let him issue a royal decree which cannot be repealed, to the effect that Vashti is never again to enter the presence of the king, and that the king is to give her royal position to another woman who is better than she. ¹⁵When the king's decree is proclaimed throughout his vast empire, all the women will respect their husbands from the least to the greatest."

This advice pleases the king and he issues a decree

¹⁶The king and his nobles were pleased with this advice, so the king did as Memucan advised. He sent a decree to all parts of the empire, to every nation in their own language, and also proclaimed that every man was to be ruler over his own household.



The Persian empire (striped regions).

2

The king searches his realm for beautiful virgins

¹In time, when the anger of the king had abated, his attendants advised him saying, "Let the king appoint men to search throughout his realm for beautiful virgins and bring them here to Susa."

*1 Susa was a fertile city with a pleasant climate about 350 kms east of Babylon.

*6 Porphyry is a red stone with a white speckle.

²“Let them be placed under the care of the king’s eunuch Hegai who is in charge of the harem, and let beauty treatments be given. ³Then let the girl who most pleases the king be made queen in place of Vashti.” This advice appealed to the king so he followed it.

Esther, a beautiful Jewish virgin among those selected

⁴Now there was in Susa an exiled Jew named Mordecai, of the tribe of Benjamin.

⁵Mordecai had a cousin named Esther whom he had raised as his own daughter when her father and mother died. This girl was beautiful in form and face.

⁶Therefore Esther along with many other virgins was taken to the king’s palace and placed under the care of Hegai the eunuch.

Esther pleases Hegai the harem eunuch

⁷Esther pleased Hegai, so he provided her with beauty treatments, special food, and assigned her seven maids. Then he moved her and her maids into the best place in the harem.

Esther does not reveal her nationality

⁸Esther did not reveal her Jewish nationality for Mordecai had forbidden her to do so.

⁹Each day Mordecai would walk in the courtyard of the harem to find out how Esther was faring.

Esther given twelve months of beauty treatments

¹⁰Before a virgin’s turn came to be a bride to King Xerxes, she had to complete twelve months of beauty treatments with perfumes and cosmetics.

¹¹Then dressed in finery of her own choosing, she would leave the harem and spend the night in the king’s bed-chamber. In the morning she would return to a second harem, to the care of Shaashgaz the king’s eunuch in charge of the concubines.^{F*}

¹²She would not return again to the king unless he was pleased with her and summoned her by name.

Esther’s time comes to go into the king

¹³In the tenth month of the seventh year of Xerxes, it came Esther’s time to go into the king. She wore what Hegai the eunuch advised.

Esther wins the king’s favour and is made queen

¹⁴Now Esther won the king’s favour more than any of the other virgins. So Xerxes set a royal crown upon her head and made her queen in place of Vashti.

¹⁵Then he gave a great feast and proclaimed a holiday throughout the empire and distributed gifts.

Esther continues to follow Mordecai’s instructions

¹⁶Esther still kept secret her nationality and continued to follow Mordecai’s instructions as she had done when he was raising her.

Mordecai appointed a royal official

¹⁷Mordecai was also appointed one of the king’s officials and sat at the king’s gate.



Typical Persian city.

3

Mordecai reveals a plot to assassinate the king

¹During the time Mordecai sat at the king’s gate, two of the king’s officers who guarded the doorway became angry and plotted to assassinate the King Xerxes.

²Mordecai heard of the plot and told Esther, who reported it to the king, giving credit to Mordecai and the two men were hanged on a gallows.

Haman, a royal official made Grand Vizier

³After these events, Xerxes honoured a royal official named Haman, and set his seat higher than that of all the other officials. ^{F*}

Mordecai refuses to bow to Haman

⁴The royal officials who sat in the king’s gate would bow and pay honour to Haman for so the king had commanded. But Mordecai would not bow down or pay him honour.

⁵The other royal officials in the king’s gate said to Mordecai, “Why do you disobey the king’s command?” Day after day they spoke to Mordecai but he refused to comply.

Haman is angry with Mordecai the Jew

⁶When Haman saw that Mordecai refused to bow down or pay him honour, his anger burned toward him.

Haman plans to exterminate all Jews

⁷When he learned that Mordecai was a Jew, Haman scorned the idea of killing only Mordecai, instead he plotted to destroy all the Jews throughout the whole empire of Xerxes.

Haman casts a lot to select a date

⁸So in the first month of the twelfth year of Xerxes, Haman cast a lot to select a time to carry out his plan. The lot fell for the thirteenth day of the twelfth month.

Haman asks Xerxes to issue a decree to destroy all Jews

⁹Haman then said to the king, “There are a

*11 A concubine was a wife of secondary social status.

*3 Haman held the powerful position in the Persian court known as Grand Vizier.

certain people scattered among the nations of your empire whose customs are different from those of all other people, and who do not obey the king's laws. It is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them."

¹⁰"If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them. I will put 10,000 talents of silver^{F*} into the royal treasury to pay the men who carry out this decree."

Xerxes gives Haman authority to issue the decree in his name

¹¹The king took his signet ring from his finger and gave it to Haman and said, "Keep your silver. Do with this people as you please."

¹²Haman then summoned the royal secretaries and commanded them to write out a decree in the language of each nation. It was written in the name of King Xerxes and sealed with his signet ring.

The decree is sent out

¹³The decree was sent out by couriers to all of the king's governors throughout the empire. It contained orders to kill and annihilate all Jews, young and old, women and children on a single day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month^{F*} and to plunder their goods.

¹⁴Then the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Susa was bewildered.

Mordecai and the Jews mourn

¹⁵When Mordecai learned what had been done, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes and went out into the city wailing loudly and bitterly. But he went only as far as the king's gate, for no one clothed in sackcloth was permitted to enter.

¹⁶Also in every land to which the decree of the king was sent, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, and weeping and wailing. Many lay in sackcloth and ashes.



Persian street scene.

*10 A huge sum of money, about 340 tonnes of silver, enough to pay two years wages for about 5000 men.

*13 The decree would not come into force until about 11 months time.

Queen Esther sends an eunuch to find out why Mordecai is in mourning

¹When Queen Esther was told that Mordecai was in mourning she was greatly troubled and sent clothes for him to wear instead of sackcloth, but he would not accept them.

²Then Esther asked one of the eunuchs assigned to her to go and find out what was troubling Mordecai. So the eunuch went out to Mordecai in the entrance of the king's gate.

Mordecai sends a copy of the decree to Esther

³Mordecai told the eunuch all that had happened, including the amount of silver Haman had offered to pay into the royal treasury for the destruction of the Jews. ⁴He also gave the eunuch a copy of the decree that had been issued for the annihilation of the Jews, to show Queen Esther.

Mordecai urges Esther to plead with the king for her people

⁵Mordecai told him to urge Esther to go into the king's presence and plead for her people.

Esther reminds Mordecai that the penalty for approaching the king unsummoned is death

⁶The eunuch reported back to the queen all that Mordecai had said.

⁷Then Esther sent this message to Mordecai, "Everybody knows it is the law of the Persians that any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned is put to death."

⁸"The only exception is when the king extends his gold sceptre and thus spares that person's life. Thirty days have passed since I was last summoned by the king."

Mordecai insists that Esther approach the king

⁹Mordecai sent back this answer: "Do not think because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will survive. ¹⁰If you remain silent at this time, deliverance for the Jews will arise from another source, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this."

Esther calls for a three day fast

¹¹Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: "Gather together all the Jews who are in Susa and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days and nights. I and my maids will fast as you do."

¹²"When this is done I will approach the king, and if I die, I die."

Esther approaches the king

¹³So on the third day, Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the palace, in front of the king's hall.

The king receives Esther favourably

¹⁴The king was sitting on his throne inside the hall. When he saw Queen Esther standing out in the court he was pleased with her, and held out the gold sceptre that was in his hand. So

Esther came into him and touched the tip of the sceptre.

¹⁵The king said, "What is your request Queen Esther? Ask what you will, even up to half the kingdom and it shall be given you."

Esther invites the king and Haman to drink wine

¹⁶Esther replied, "If it pleases the king, let the king together with Haman come now and drink wine that I have prepared for you."

¹⁷The king at once gave orders saying, "Bring Haman now that we may do as Esther desires."

¹⁸So the king and Haman went to the wine that Esther had prepared. ¹⁴As they were drinking, the king again said to Esther, "What is your request of me?"

Esther invites the king and Haman again tomorrow

¹⁹Esther replied, "If the king regards me with favour, let the king and Haman come again tomorrow to drink wine that I will prepare for you. Then I will answer the king's question."



Persian city wall.

Haman again angered by Mordecai

²⁰That day Haman went out in high spirits, but when he saw Mordecai at the king's gate and observed that he neither rose nor showed fear in his presence, his anger burned again toward him.

²¹However he composed himself and went home and called together his friends and his wife.

Haman erects a gallows to hang Mordecai

²²Then Haman spoke to them of his vast wealth, his many sons, and how the king had honoured him above all the other officials, and he added, "I am the only person Queen Esther has invited to drink with the king, and she has invited me again tomorrow. ²³But all this gives me no satisfaction as long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate."

²⁴His wife Zeresh and his friends advised him saying, "Why not erect a gallows, fifty cubits high and ask the king in the morning to have Mordecai hanged on it. Then you can drink with the king and be happy."

²⁵This suggestion pleased Haman and he went out and had the gallows erected.

King Xerxes learns how Mordecai saved him from assassination

²⁶Late that night Xerxes could not sleep, so he ordered the record of his reign to be brought in by his attendants and read to him.

²⁷It was found written how Mordecai had exposed the two officials who had plotted to assassinate the king.

²⁸The king asked, "What honour and recognition has Mordecai received for this?"

²⁹His attendants answered, "Nothing has been done for him."

Haman ordered to honour Mordecai

³⁰Now it was early morning and Haman had just entered the outer court of the palace to speak to the king about hanging Mordecai on the gallows he had erected for him.

³¹The king said, "Who is out in the court?"

His attendants answered, "It is Haman."

"Bring him in," the king ordered.

³²When Haman entered, the king said to him, "What should be done for a man the king delights to honour?"

³³Haman thought to himself, "Who is there that the king would rather honour than me?"

³⁴So he answered the king, "Clothe him in a royal robe that the king has worn. Have him sit on a horse that the king has ridden, one with a royal crest on its head, and then lead him through the city streets proclaiming before him, 'This man the king delights to honour!'"

³⁵The king commanded Haman, "Go at once and do just as you have suggested for Mordecai the Jew."

³⁶So Haman obtained a robe and a horse and did as the king commanded him, but afterward he hurried home in distress and told his wife and friends all that had happened.

³⁷His friends and wife said to him, "As Mordecai is a Jew you will surely come to ruin because of this."

Esther reveals her nationality to the king and accuses Haman in his presence

³⁸While they were still talking, the king's eunuchs arrived to escort Haman to the wine that Esther had prepared.

³⁹When they were drinking the wine the king again asked, "Queen Esther, what is your request?"

⁴⁰Esther answered, "If it pleases the king, grant me my life. That is my request, and the lives of my people. For I and all my people are to be killed and annihilated. ⁴¹If we were to be merely sold as slaves I would have remained silent, for no such distress would justify disturbing the king."

⁴²The king said to Queen Esther, "Who is the man who would dare do such a thing?"

⁴³Esther replied, "The enemy is this wicked Haman." Then Haman became terrified before the king.

**The king orders Haman hanged
on his own gallows**

⁴⁴The king arose in anger and went out to walk among the trees of the palace garden to collect his thoughts. But Haman remained behind to beg Queen Esther for his life.

⁴⁵As the king came back in from the palace garden he saw Haman fallen on the couch where Esther was reclining.

⁴⁶The king cried out, "Will he even molest the queen in my presence?" And immediately the eunuchs gagged and blindfolded Haman.

⁴⁷One of the eunuchs said, "A gallows stands by Haman's house. He had it erected to hang Mordecai who spoke up to save the king."

The king ordered, "Hang him on it!"

⁴⁸So they hanged Haman on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai, then the anger of the king subsided.

5

**Esther given Haman's estate and Mordecai
made Grand Vizier in Haman's place**

¹That same day the king gave Esther the estate of Haman, and Mordecai entered into the presence of the king, and the king gave him his signet ring.^{F*} ²Esther appointed Mordecai over Haman's estate.

**Esther pleads with the king to
overrule Haman's decree**

³Later Queen Esther again appeared before the king. She fell at his feet weeping and begged him to put an end to the evil plan Haman had devised against the Jews.

⁴The king again extended the gold sceptre to Esther and she arose and said, "If it pleases the king and if you are pleased with me, let a decree be written overruling the order that Haman wrote to destroy the Jews in all the king's empire. ⁵How can I bear to see the destruction of my family and my people?"

**The king permits Mordecai to issue
an overruling decree**

⁶The king turned to Mordecai the Jew and said, "Write another decree in the king's name on behalf of the Jews, as seems best to you and seal it with my signet ring. But remember that no decree written in the king's name and sealed with his ring can be revoked."

⁷At once the royal secretaries were summoned and a decree was written in the language of each nation, and also in the language of the Jews and sealed with the king's signet ring.

⁸The decrees were then sent by mounted couriers who rode fast horses especially bred for the king. It was now the third month.

**The second decree allows
the Jews to counter-attack their enemies**

⁹This decree allowed the Jews in every city throughout the empire, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the same time as the former

decree, the right of assembly to protect themselves. ¹⁰And to destroy any armed force that might attack them and also to plunder the property of their enemies.

The Jews celebrate

¹¹That day Mordecai left the king's presence wearing royal garments of blue and white, a large crown of gold upon his head and a purple robe of fine linen.

¹²Throughout the city of Susa there was celebration. It was a time of joy, gladness and honour for the Jews. ¹³And in every city throughout the world, wherever the decree of the king came, there was joy and gladness among the Jews with feasting and celebrating.

Other nationalities also join with the Jews

¹⁴Moreover many people of other nationalities also joined with the Jews, for fear of the Jews had come upon them.

**The appointed day arrives but fear of
Mordecai protects the Jews**

¹⁵The appointed day of the twelfth month arrived and the Jews assembled in their cities throughout the Persian empire to attack those seeking their destruction.

¹⁶But no one could make a stand against them for fear of Mordecai. For Mordecai was now great in the palace and his reputation had spread throughout the empire. He had become more and more powerful and the nobles and governors were now helping the Jews.

The Jews strike down their enemies

¹⁷So that day the Jews struck down all their enemies with the sword, and did whatever they pleased to those who hated them. In the city of Susa the Jews killed 500 men including the ten sons of Haman, but they did not take any plunder.

¹⁸The number of those slain in Susa was reported to the king that same day. The king said to Queen Esther, "If the Jews have killed 500 men and the ten sons of Haman here in Susa, what have they done in the rest of the provinces? What is your request in this matter? It shall be granted."

The decree extended an extra day in Susa

¹⁹Esther answered, "If it pleases the king, allow the Jews here in Susa permission to carry out today's decree tomorrow also, and have the bodies of Haman's ten sons hung on gallows."

²⁰So the king commanded that this be done, and the next day the Jews in Susa put to death a further 300 men.

75,000 enemies of the Jews killed

²¹Meanwhile throughout the empire of Persia the Jews who had assembled to protect themselves, killed 75,000 of their enemies but did not take any plunder.

**This day to be called Purim and
celebrated for ever more**

²²This happened on the thirteenth day of the

*1 ie Mordecai took over Haman's position as Grand Vizier.

twelfth month, and on the fourteenth day the Jews rested and made it a day of feasting and joy.

²³Moreover Mordecai proclaimed that this day be observed for ever more. That is why the Jews observe the fourteenth day of the month of Adar as a day of feasting and for giving gifts to each other. They call the day Purim.^{F*}

Mordecai second in rank only to the king

²⁴King Xerxes imposed tribute upon the 127 nations of his empire, to its most distant shores, and Mordecai the Jew was second in rank only to the king.

²⁵Mordecai was held in high esteem by his fellow Jews for he worked for the good of his people and spoke up for the welfare and peace of all Jews.



Jewish girl dressed for Purim.

*23 Purim means 'lots' recalling that Haman cast lots to determine the day for the destruction of the Jews.

EZRA

Approx 70 years have passed since the first Jewish exiles returned from Babylonia to Judah. The Temple in Jerusalem has been rebuilt, but the city itself still lies in ruins. Now the Jews commence to rebuild the city walls.

But again, just as when they first began to rebuild the Temple, opposition arises from Samaritan officials. The Samaritans write to the new Persian emperor-king, Artaxerxes (son of Xerxes of the previous book of Esther) and obtain an injunction against the Jews, putting an immediate stop to the work.

However over the next few years the Lord causes Ezra, a strong-minded scholarly priest living in Babylonia, to influence the new king and persuade him of the benefits of supporting the Jewish cause. For by so doing he would avoid “*wrath against the empire of the king and his sons*” (Ezra 1:24).

The king is persuaded and sends Ezra the priest to Jerusalem at the head of a second group of returning exiles (about 1700 men and their families). He gives Ezra silver and gold to buy animals for sacrifices and instructs him to collect other gifts for the Temple and to ensure that all the Jews obey the word of God.

Soon after his arrival in Jerusalem, Ezra is appalled to learn that many of the Jewish leaders have disobeyed the Law of Moses and married non-Israelite women. Ezra takes bold and drastic action which atones for the sin of the Jews and prepares the way for Nehemiah (see next book) to rebuild the city walls.

AUTHOR Ezra the priest.

“You have been unfaithful and have married non-Israelite women, thereby increasing Israel’s guilt. Now confess to the Lord and separate yourselves from the peoples around you, and from your foreign wives.” Ezra 3:20.

CONTENTS

Chapter

Artaxerxes becomes king of Persia	1	Sacrifice offered at the Temple	2
The exiles begin to repair walls of Jerusalem	1	King’s letter delivered to the governor	2
Samaritans oppose the work	1	Some exiles married to foreign women	3
Samaritans write to king Artaxerxes	1	Ezra appalled and mourns bitterly	3
Artaxerxes’ reply – the work must stop	1	Ezra’s humble prayer to the Lord	3
The Jews made to stop work on the walls	1	The people around Ezra weep bitterly	3
Ezra the priest wins the support of Artaxerxes	1	Proposal that all foreign wives be sent away	3
Artaxerxes’ letter of support to Ezra	1	All the men summoned to Jerusalem	3
Ezra gathers 1496 men to go with him to Jerusalem ...	2	They gather in the Temple square in pouring rain ...	3
40 Levites and 220 Temple servants also join them ..	2	Men asked to separate from their foreign wives	3
Ezra calls a fast for protection on their journey	2	All the men agree to do so	3
Ezra sets apart twelve priests	2	The cases to be dealt with one by one at set times ..	3
Donated silver and gold weighed out	2	Judges appointed to investigate the cases	3
Exiles depart for Jerusalem	2	111 men send away their foreign wives and children ..	3
Exiles arrive at Jerusalem four months later	2		

Bold The Lord or an angel speaking.

1

Artaxerxes becomes king of Persia

¹King Xerxes reigned 21 years and died,^{F*} and his son Artaxerxes became king of Persia.

The exiles begin to repair the walls of Jerusalem

²About this time, the returned exiles who had finished rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem^{F*}

began to rebuild the city wall, which was mostly rubble.

The Samaritans oppose the work and write to the king

³But the men of Samaria^{F*} opposed the work, and wrote this letter to King Artaxerxes:

*1 Xerxes was murdered in his bedroom by one of his officials.

*2 The temple had now been completed 50 years.

*3 The Samaritans were non-Israelite peoples that had been transplanted into the old northern kingdom of Israel (Samaria) by the Assyrians.

4“To King Artaxerxes, from your servants Rehum the commanding officer, Shimshai the secretary, and the men of Trans-Euphrates.” F*

5“⁵The king should know that the Jews who returned here from you are planning to rebuild that rebellious and wicked city Jerusalem. They are now beginning to restore the walls.”

6“⁶Furthermore the king should know that if this city is rebuilt and its walls are restored, no more taxes, tribute, or duty will be paid, and the royal revenues will suffer.”

7“⁷Now since it is not proper for us to see the king dishonoured, we are sending this message to inform the king so that a search may be made in the archives of your predecessors. In these records you will find that Jerusalem has been a rebellious city, troublesome to kings from ancient times. That is why it was destroyed.”

King Artaxerxes' reply – the work must stop

⁸The king sent this reply:

“To Rehum the commanding officer, and Shimshai the secretary living in Samaria in Trans-Euphrates, from King Artaxerxes. Greeting.”

9“⁹The letter you sent me has been translated and read in my presence.”

10“¹⁰I issued an order and a search was made and it was found that this city does indeed have a long history of revolt against kings, and has been a place of rebellion.”

11“¹¹Jerusalem once had strong kings ruling over the whole of Trans-Euphrates and taxes, tribute, and duty were paid to them.”

12“¹²Now issue an order to these men to stop work. This city is not to be rebuilt until I so order.”

The Jews made to stop work on the wall

¹³As soon as the letter from the king was received, Rehum, Shimshai and their associates went immediately to the Jews in Jerusalem and made them stop work.

Ezra the priest wins the support of Artaxerxes

¹⁴However during the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, the hand of the Lord moved upon Ezra the priest, an exile living in Persia and he came to Jerusalem.

¹⁵Ezra was a descendant of Aaron and a teacher well versed in the Law of Moses. King Artaxerxes granted him everything he asked.

Artaxerxes' letter of support to Ezra

¹⁶This is a copy of the letter Artaxerxes gave to him:

17“¹⁷Artaxerxes king of kings, to Ezra the priest, a teacher of the law of the God of heaven.”

18“¹⁸I hereby decree that any of the Israelites in my kingdom who wish to return to Jerusalem with you, may do so.”

19“¹⁹You are sent by the king and his seven counsellors to inquire as to whether Judah and Jerusalem are observing the Law of your God. ²⁰Also to deliver the silver and gold and articles that the king and his advisers and your fellow Jews have freely given to the God of Israel, whose Temple is in Jerusalem.”

21“²¹With the silver and gold be sure to buy bulls, rams, and male lambs to sacrifice on the altar of the Temple of your God. ²²Anything further required for the Temple of your God will be provided from the royal treasury.”

23“²³Therefore I hereby order the treasurers of Trans-Euphrates to provide whatever Ezra the priest may ask of you, up to 100 talents of silver, 100 homers of wheat, 100 baths of wine, 100 baths of olive oil and salt without limit.” F*

24“²⁴Whatever the God of heaven has prescribed for the Temple, let it be provided with diligence. Why should there be wrath against the empire of the king and his sons?”

25“²⁵Also it shall not be lawful to impose taxes upon any of the priests, Levites or other servants of this house of God.”

26“²⁶And you Ezra, in accordance with the wisdom of your God which you possess, are to appoint judges to administer justice to all the people of Trans-Euphrates who follow the laws of your God. And you are to teach any who do not understand them.”

27“²⁷Whoever does not obey the law of your God and the law of the king must be punished by death, exile, confiscation of property, or imprisonment.”

2

Ezra gathers 1496 men to go with him to Jerusalem

¹“Praise be to Jehovah the God of our fathers who put it into the king's heart to honour the house of the Lord in Jerusalem in this way. ²So I Ezra took courage and gathered 1496 leading men of Israel to return to Jerusalem with me.”

40 Levites and 220 Temple servants also join them

³“I assembled them at the Ahava canal and we camped there for three days. However

*4 Trans-Euphrates was the Persian name for the province covering the general area south of the Euphrates river which included Syria and Judah.

*23 A talent was about 34kg, a homer about 220 litres and a bath about 22 litres.

when I checked among the people I found there were no Levites.”

4“So I summoned men of learning and sent them to Casiphia, and they returned with 40 Levites, all registered by name, along with 220 Temple servants.” F*

Ezra calls a fast for the Lord's protection on their journey

5“Then I called a fast, that we might deny ourselves before our God for a safe journey.”

6“I was ashamed to ask the king for soldiers to protect us from enemies and ambushes along the way, for I had told the king, ‘The protection of our God is upon all who trust him.’”

Ezra sets apart twelve priests and weighs out the donated silver and gold

7“Before we departed I set apart twelve of the leading priests and in their presence weighed out the offerings of silver and gold and articles that had been donated for the house of our God.”

8“There were 650 talents^{F*} of silver, 100 talents^{F*} of silver articles, 100 talents of gold, 20 bowls of gold valued at 1,000 darics,^{F*} and two fine articles of polished bronze as precious as gold.”

9“I said to the priests, ‘You and these articles are consecrated to the Lord. Guard them carefully until you weigh them out in the Temple at Jerusalem.’”

The exiles depart for Jerusalem

10“On the twelfth day of the first month we set out from the Ahava Canal for Jerusalem. The protection of our God was with us all the way.”

The exiles arrive at Jerusalem four months later

11“‘We arrived at Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month and rested three days.’”

12“On the fourth day, in the Temple of our God we weighed out the silver and gold and the sacred articles. Everything was accounted for.”

Sacrifice offered at the Temple

13“Then we sacrificed burnt offerings to the God of Israel. 12 bulls, 96 rams, 77 male lambs, and 12 male goats as a sin offering.”

The king's letter delivered to the governor

14“‘The king's letter was delivered to the governor of Trans-Euphrates who then gave assistance to the people and to the Temple.’”

3

Ezra informed that some of the exiles are married to foreign women

1“‘In the ninth month, some of the leaders of

the people came to me and said, ‘The returned exiles, including the priests and Levites have not kept themselves separate from neighbouring peoples with their abominable practices. They have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and have mingled the holy race with them.’”

2“‘The leaders and officials have led the way in this unfaithfulness.’”

Ezra is appalled and mourns bitterly

3“‘When I heard this I tore my clothes and pulled hair from my head and beard and sat down appalled. Those who revered the words of God gathered around me.’”

Ezra's humble prayer to the Lord

4“‘At the time of the evening sacrifice I arose, then knelt and with my hands spread out to the Lord my God I prayed these words: ‘O my God, I am too ashamed to lift my face to you, for our sins are heaped higher than the heavens. 5From the days of our forefathers until now, our guilt has been great, and because of our sins we have suffered the sword, captivity and humiliation by foreign kings, even as it is today.’”

6“‘But now for a brief moment you have been gracious in allowing a remnant of us to gather to your Temple and gain a little relief from our bondage. For although we are still slaves, you have shown us kindness in the sight of the kings of Persia, and they have allowed us to rebuild the Temple of our God.’”

7“‘But now O God what can we say after this? We have disregarded the commandment you gave to Moses when you said, **‘The land you are entering to possess is polluted by the corruption of its peoples. 8Therefore do not give your daughters in marriage to their sons, nor take their daughters for your sons. Do not seek a treaty of friendship with them at any time.’**”

9“‘Shall we again break your commandment and intermarry with peoples who commit abominable practices? Would you not be angry enough to destroy us completely?’”

10“‘Here we are before you in our guilt O Lord. Not one of us can stand in your presence.’”

The people around Ezra weep bitterly

11“While Ezra was praying and weeping, a large crowd of men, women and children gathered around him. They also wept bitterly.

Shecaniah proposes that all the foreign wives be sent away

12“Then Shecaniah said to Ezra, “‘We have been unfaithful to our God by marrying with the peoples around us, but in spite of this there is still hope for Israel. Let us make a covenant before our God to send away all these women and their children. 13This matter is in your hands. Take courage and do it. We will support you.’”

14“So Ezra arose and placed those present under a covenant to do as had been said

15“Then Ezra withdrew, but he ate no food and

*4 The temple servants were descendants of King David's slaves, whom Solomon had appointed to assist the Levites.

*8 About 21 tonnes.

*8 About 3½ tonnes.

*8 A daric was a Persian gold coin.

drank no water for he continued to mourn over the unfaithfulness of the exiles.

All the men summoned to Jerusalem

¹⁶A message was then sent throughout Judah, for all the exiles to assemble in Jerusalem.

¹⁷Any man who failed to appear within three days would have all his property taken from him and be expelled from the assembly of the people.

All the men gather in the Temple square, in pouring rain

¹⁸Within the three days, on the twentieth day of the ninth month all the men of Judah and Benjamin had gathered in Jerusalem and were sitting in the courtyard of the Temple.

¹⁹They were distressed by the reason for their gathering, and also because of the heavy rain that was falling.

The men are asked to separate from their foreign wives

²⁰Then Ezra arose and said to them, "You have been unfaithful and have married non-Israelite women, thereby increasing Israel's guilt. ²¹Now confess to the Lord and separate yourselves from the peoples around about you, and from your foreign wives."

All the men agree to do so

²²The assembly responded firmly, "We will do as you say."

A proposal to deal with the cases one by one at set times is accepted

²³Then some said, "There are many people here and it is raining, so we cannot long remain outside. Besides this matter cannot be dealt with quickly. Therefore let our leaders act for the whole people. ²⁴Whoever has married a foreign woman, let him come to Jerusalem at a set time along with the elders and judges of his town, until the anger of our God is turned away from us."

²⁵Only four men opposed this, so they did as was proposed.

Judges appointed to investigate the cases

²⁶So Ezra the priest chose family heads to act as judges and on the first day of the tenth month they sat down to investigate the cases.

111 men send away their foreign wives and children

²⁷By the first day of the first month they had finished dealing with all the 111 men who had married non-Israelite women. ²⁸These men all pledged to put away their wives and each provided a ram as a guilt offering.

²⁹Some of these wives had borne children to these men. They were also sent away with them.

NEHEMIAH

Nehemiah, the author and chief character of this book, is a singular personality, a forceful uncompromising man and a great organiser. He was a Jew and a cup-bearer to the emperor-king, Artaxerxes in Persia (formally Babylonia) but his heart was in Jerusalem. When he learned from his brother who had recently returned from Judah that Jerusalem still lay in ruins, he was distressed and fasted and prayed. Eventually he obtained permission from the king to return to Judah for a period as governor and to rebuild the city walls and gates.

Nehemiah was evidently just the man for the job. The lethargic returned exiles were galvanised into action, and despite increasing opposition from the Samaritans, they rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem in an impressive 52 days.

Years later, on a return trip to Jerusalem, Nehemiah discovered that the Jewish leaders had again become lackadaisical. Again he stirs them up in his usual formidable manner, even cursing and beating and pulling the hair out of some of them.

AUTHOR

Nehemiah, but with some third person commentary added by an unnamed author, probably Ezra.

“We worked on the wall and soon it was half completed, for the people worked with all their heart.” Nehemiah 2:12.

CONTENTS

Chapter

Nehemiah in Persia inquirers about the exiles	1	Nehemiah prays for strength	4
Told the walls of Jerusalem still broken down	1	Nehemiah's enemies bribe a priest	4
Nehemiah weeps, fasts and prays	1	Priest tries to lure Nehemiah unlawfully into Temple	4
Nehemiah a cupbearer to King Artaxerxes	1	Some Jewish nobles corresponding with enemy	4
Asks the king for permission to rebuild Jerusalem	1	Other prophets tried to intimidate Nehemiah	4
King appoints Nehemiah governor of Judah	1	Also a prophetess	4
Nehemiah departs for Jerusalem	1	Wall is completed in 52 days	4
Sanballat the governor in Samaria is displeased	1	Gate keepers appointed	4
Nehemiah inspects walls of Jerusalem by night	1	Gates not to be opened until sun up	4
Nehemiah inspires the Jews to rebuild the wall	1	Watchmen appointed	4
Samaritan officials mock the Jews	2	Wall is dedicated with sacrifices joy and songs	4
Task of rebuilding divided among the people	2	Few people living in Jerusalem	4
Gates of Jerusalem rebuilt	2	Feast of Trumpets celebrated	5
Samaritan officials ridicule their efforts	2	Ezra the priest reads the Law to the people	5
Nehemiah curses the Samaritan officials	2	The Levites also instruct the people	5
The people work with all their heart	2	Nehemiah dismisses the people to eat and drink	5
Their enemies plot to kill them	2	Instructs them to be joyful	5
Guards posted	2	The people learn of the Feast of Tabernacles	5
Some of the Jews begin to murmur	2	The Jews live in booths for a week	5
Nehemiah inspires the people	2	Prescribed burnt offerings offered each day	5
Half of the work force guard the other half	2	The people repent and enter a new covenant	5
Nehemiah sets up a warning system	2	Eight covenant promises of the people	5
All men to remain nights in Jerusalem for guard duty ..	2	Ammonites and Moabites excluded from assembly ..	5
Work continues from dawn until dark	2	Leaders and every tenth family to live in Jerusalem ..	5
Outcry by poor Jews	3	Nehemiah returns to King Artaxerxes	6
Oppression by Jewish nobles and officials	3	Nehemiah again visits Jerusalem	6
Charging interest and taking security forbidden	3	He finds an Ammonite given a room in the Temple ..	6
Nehemiah's kindness to poor an example	3	Food tithes had not been given to the Levites ..	6
Nobles ordered to return property of the poor	3	Nehemiah asks God to remember his faithfulness ..	6
The interest also to be returned	3	Sabbath breaking in Jerusalem	6
The people not taxed while Nehemiah governor	3	Nehemiah enforces Sabbath restrictions	6
Nehemiah feeds 150 people daily	3	Nehemiah threatens the merchants	6
Sanballat tries to lure Nehemiah away to harm him ..	4	Non-Israelite wives found among men of Judah	6
Sanballat invents a falsehood about Nehemiah	4	These men cursed and some beaten by Nehemiah ..	6

Bold The Lord or an angel speaking.

1

Nehemiah in Babylonia enquires about the exiles in Jerusalem

¹The words of Nehemiah: “In the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, while I dwelt in the city of Susa in Persia, one of my brothers Hanani returned from Judah. I questioned him about the Jewish exiles who had returned and also about Jerusalem.”

The walls of Jerusalem still broken down

²“He said to me, ‘The exiles back in Judah are having great difficulties and are ashamed, for the walls of Jerusalem are still broken down and its gates have been destroyed by fire.’”

Nehemiah weeps, fasts and prays

³“When I heard these words I sat down and wept, and for some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.”

⁴“Then I prayed, ‘O Jehovah, great and awesome God who keeps his covenant of love with those who obey his commandments, hear the prayer of your servant.’”

⁵“We have acted wickedly toward you in the past and have not obeyed the commandments you gave your servant Moses. ⁶Yet you have said, ‘**If you return to me and obey my commandments, then even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there I will gather you and bring you back.**’”

⁷“Therefore O Lord, give your servant success by granting him favour in the presence of King Artaxerxes.”

Nehemiah a cupbearer to King Artaxerxes

⁸“Now I was cupbearer to the king, and some weeks later I took wine into him. I had not been sad in his presence before, so he said to me, ‘Why does your face look so sad? This can only be sorrow of heart.’”

Nehemiah asks the king for permission to rebuild Jerusalem

⁹“I was very much afraid, but I said to the king, ‘O king, live forever, why should my face not look sad when the city where my fathers lie buried is in ruins and its gates have been destroyed by fire?’”

¹⁰“The king said to me, ‘What is it you want?’”

¹¹“I prayed in my heart to God and answered, ‘If it pleases the king, let him send me to the city in Judah where my fathers lie buried that I may rebuild it.’”

¹²“The king enquired of me, and the queen was sitting beside him, ‘How long will this take?’”

The king appoints Nehemiah governor of Judah

¹³“So I gave the king a time for my return^{F*} and it pleased him to send me.”

¹⁴“I also said to him, ‘If it pleases the king, may I have a letter to the governor of Trans-Euphrates^{F*} to ensure a safe passage, and to the keeper of the king’s forests in Judah that I may obtain timber for the gates and for the city wall and for the house I will occupy.’”

¹⁵“The king granted my requests and appointed me governor of Judah.”

¹⁶“He also provided army officers and cavalry for protection on my journey.”



Nehemiah would have served in the palace such as this one of King Sennacherib.

Nehemiah departs for Jerusalem

¹⁷“So we journeyed to Jerusalem, but I went first to Sanballat the governor of Trans-Euphrates in Samaria and gave him the king’s letter.”

Sanballat the governor in Samaria is displeased with Nehemiah

¹⁸“Sanballat and Tobiah the Ammonite, one of his officials, were greatly displeased that someone had come to assist the Jews rebuild Jerusalem.”

Nehemiah inspects the walls of Jerusalem by night

¹⁹“I continued my journey and arrived at Jerusalem. After resting for three days I set out with a few men by night to inspect the walls of the city which had been broken down, and the gates which had been destroyed by fire. ²⁰There were no mounts with us except the one I was riding. I went out through the Valley Gate.”

²¹“I had not yet told anyone what my God had put into my heart to do for Jerusalem.”

²²“I rode toward the Fountain Gate but there was not enough room for my mount to pass through, so I rode up the outside valley instead,

*13 Nehemiah returned in twelve years time (Nehemiah 3:12).

*14 Trans-Euphrates was the Persian name for the general area south of the Euphrates river which included Judah.

NEHEMIAH 2

examining the wall as I went. ²³Finally I turned back and again re-entered the city through the Valley Gate.”

Nehemiah inspires the Jews to rebuild the wall

²⁴“Then I said to the leaders of the people and to the priests, ‘Let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem so that we will no longer be ashamed.’”

²⁵“I also told them of the gracious hand of God upon me and what the king had agreed to do.”

²⁶“They replied, ‘Let us start rebuilding.’ So we began the good work.”

2

Samaritan officials mock the Jews

¹“When Sanballat the governor, Tobiah the Ammonite and Geshem the Arab heard of it, they mocked us and said, ‘What is this you are doing? Are you planning to rebel against the king?’”

²“I answered them saying, ‘The God of heaven will give us success for we are his servants, but you have no share in Jerusalem.’”

The task of rebuilding is divided among the people of Judah

³Nehemiah divided up the work and assigned each gate, and sections of the wall to the families living in Jerusalem. He included Eliashib the high priest and his fellow priests, and also all the families who came to Jerusalem from the districts of Judah to help with the work.

The gates of Jerusalem rebuilt

⁴The exiles rebuilt all the gates of Jerusalem and the Temple fortress area in the City of David.^{F*} ⁵They repaired the Sheep Gate, the Fish Gate, the Old Gate, the Valley Gate, the Dung Gate, the Fountain Gate, the Horse Gate and the East Gate, putting in place all the doors, bolts, bars and roofs.

⁶They also began rebuilding the wall of the city, and the wall of the Pool of Siloam by the King’s Garden, as far as the steps going down from the City of David.

The Samaritan officials ridicule their efforts

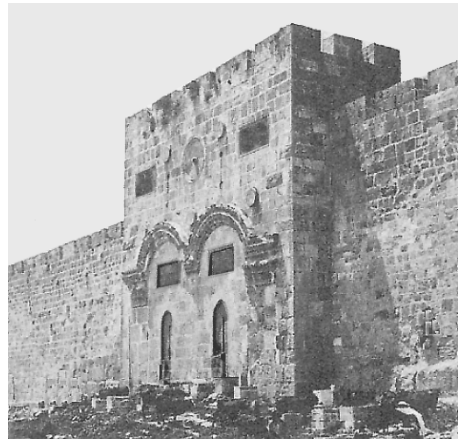
⁷“When Sanballat the governor of Trans-Euphrates heard we had begun rebuilding the wall he was enraged, and ridiculed us to his officials and the army of Samaria. ⁸He said to them, ‘What are those feeble Jews doing? Do they really think they can restore their wall? ⁹How can they recover enough stones from those heaps of burned rubble?’”

¹⁰“Tobiah who was at his side said, ‘This wall they are rebuilding, if a fox climbed up on it he would break it down.’”

Nehemiah curses the Samaritan officials

¹¹“Hear us O God, for we are despised. Turn

their insults back upon their own heads. Send them into captivity and exile.”



The disused Golden Gate in the walls of Jerusalem.

The people work with all their heart

¹²“We worked on the wall and soon it was half completed, for the people worked with all their heart.”

Their enemies plot to kill them

¹³“When Sanballat and our other enemies heard that the repairs were proceeding well and that the gaps were closing, they plotted together to kill us. They said, ‘Before they see us we shall be among them and will kill them. We will put a stop to this work.’”

Guards posted

¹⁴“But we prayed to our God and posted guards day and night to meet this threat. I also stationed men at the exposed places to protect their families with swords, spears and bows.”

Some of the Jews begin to murmur

¹⁵“During this time some of our own people began to murmur saying ‘The strength of the stone bearers is giving out’ and ‘Too much of the stone is only rubble, how can we complete the wall?’”

Nehemiah inspires the people

¹⁶“But I said to the people, ‘Fear not. Remember Jehovah who is great and awesome. Fight for your families and your homes.’”

Half the work force guard the other half

¹⁷“From that day on, half of my men did the work while the other half stood guard. And each of the workers wore his sword at his side as he worked, and those who carried stone held a weapon in one hand.”

Nehemiah sets up a warning system

¹⁸“Then I said to the people, ‘The work is extensive and spread out, and we are widely separated from each other along the wall. Therefore if you hear the sound of the trumpet, gather to it and our God will fight for us.’”

*4 The City of David was the high part of Jerusalem where the king’s palace and the temple were located. It was also known as Zion.

19“The man who sounded the trumpet stayed with me.”

All the men to remain at night in Jerusalem for guard duty

20“I also said to the people, ‘Have every man remain in Jerusalem at night and take turns to guard the city.’”

Work continues from dawn until dark

21“So we continued the work from first light of dawn until the stars came out in the evening. 22Neither I nor my men removed our clothing except for washing.”

3

Outcry by the poor Jews over oppression by the Jewish nobles and officials

1“Now about this time there arose an outcry among the poorer people against their Jewish brothers saying, “We are having to mortgage our fields, our vineyards and our homes to borrow money at interest from our countrymen to buy grain during this famine, and to pay the king’s tax. 2Already some of us have had to sell our daughters into slavery. 3We are becoming powerless because our property belongs to others.”

Nehemiah forbids the charging of interest and taking security

4“When I heard this outcry and these charges, I was angry and pondered them in my mind. Then I called an assembly to deal with the matter.”

5“I accused the nobles and officials and said to them, ‘Why are you charging interest and taking property as security from your own countrymen? You are selling your own brothers.’”

6“They were silent for they could find nothing to say.”

Nehemiah uses his own kindness to the poor as an example

7“So I continued and said, ‘What you are doing is not right. I and my brothers and my men are also lending money and grain to the poor, but we are not charging interest nor taking their property.’”

The nobles ordered to return the property of the poor and the interest

8“Now return to them their fields, vineyards, olive groves and houses immediately, and also the interest you are charging them, the hundredth part of the money, grain, new wine and oil each month.” F*

9“‘The nobles and officials replied, ‘We will do as you say.’”

10“Then in the presence of the priests I made them swear an oath to do as they had promised.”

11“I then shook out the folds of my robe and said, ‘In this way may God shake every man out of his house and possessions who does not keep his oath.’”

The people not taxed while Nehemiah governor

12“From the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes when I was appointed governor of Judah, until his thirty-second year, neither I nor my brothers ate the food allotted to the governor and his officials. 13But the governors who had preceded me had placed a tax burden on the people and paid themselves 40 shekels of silver daily^{F*} in addition to their food and wine.”

14“‘The officials also lorded it over the people, but out of reverence for God I did not act like that, instead I devoted myself to the rebuilding of the wall and did not acquire any land.’”

Nehemiah feeds 150 people daily

15“Furthermore, 150 people ate at my table daily, as well as those who came to visit us from the surrounding nations. 16Each day I provided one ox and six choice sheep and poultry, and every ten days an abundant supply of wine.”

17“‘In spite of all this, I never demanded the food allotted to the governor, for the demands were heavy on these people.’”

18“Remember me with favour O my God for all that I have done for these people.”

4

Sanballat tries to lure Nehemiah away to harm him

1“‘When word came to Sanballat and the rest of our enemies that there were no more gaps in the wall, although I had not yet set all the doors in the gates, Sanballat sent me this message. ‘Let us meet together down in one of the villages on the west plains near the sea.’ But I knew they were plotting to harm me.”

2“‘So I sent this reply: ‘I am carrying on a great work and cannot come down.’”

3“‘Four times they sent me the same message and each time I gave the same answer.’”

Sanballat invents a falsehood about Nehemiah becoming king

4“Then a fifth time, Sanballat sent me the same message, but this time his aide also brought me a letter which said:”

5“‘It is reported among the nations that you and the Jews are plotting to rebel against the king and this is why you are rebuilding the wall.’”

6“‘According to these reports you are also about to become king of the Jews and have appointed prophets to make this proclamation in Jerusalem.’”

7“‘Now this report will get back to the king, so let us confer together.’”

8“‘I sent him this reply:

“‘What you say is completely untrue. You are merely inventing it out of your own mind.’”

*8 Equivalent to 12% interest per annum.

*13 A shekel of silver was about a days wage for a labourer.

NEHEMIAH 5

Nehemiah prays for strength

⁹“They were trying to intimidate us and were thinking, ‘Their resolve will become too weak for the work and it will not be completed.’ So I prayed, ‘Strengthen my hands O God.’”

Nehemiah’s enemies bribe a priest to lure him unlawfully into the Temple

¹⁰“One day I went into the house of Shemaiah the priest and he prophesied to me saying, ‘Let us meet together inside the Temple and close the Temple doors, for men are coming by night to kill you.’”

¹¹“But I replied, ‘Should a man like me who is not a priest enter into the Temple to save his life? I will not do it.’” F*

¹²“I discerned that God had not spoken to him and that he had prophesied falsely, for Sanballat and Tobiah had bribed him. ¹³They wanted me to commit a sin by entering the Temple so they could discredit me.”

Some Jewish nobles corresponding with enemy

¹⁴“Also in those days, some of the nobles of Judah were writing to Tobiah the Ammonite, and replies were coming back from him to them, for Tobiah’s son had married the daughter of a Jewish noble.”

¹⁵“Moreover they kept reporting to me his good deeds, and then repeating back to him what I said. Tobiah himself also sent letters to intimidate me.”

Other prophets and a prophetess have also tried to intimidate Nehemiah

¹⁶“Remember them O my God because of what they have done. Also the prophetess Noadiah and the other prophets who have been trying to intimidate me.”

The wall is completed in 52 days

¹⁷“The wall was completed during the sixth month, after 52 days.”

¹⁸“When our enemies heard this, they and all the surrounding nations feared, for they realised that this work had been done with the help of our God.”

Gate keepers appointed

¹⁹“I put my brother Hanani in charge of the gates of Jerusalem and Hananiah in charge of the gates of the Temple, for he was a man of integrity and revered God more than most men.”

The gates not to be opened until sun up

²⁰“I said to them, ‘The gates of Jerusalem are not to be opened until sunrise, and the gatekeepers are to shut the doors and bar them before nightfall.’”

Watchmen appointed

²¹“Also appoint residents of Jerusalem as watchmen. Some on the watchtowers and some near their own houses.”

The wall is dedicated with sacrifices and much joy and song

²²“On the day of the dedication of the wall of

*11 Only ordained priests were permitted to enter the temple proper or the inner courtyard of the temple.

Jerusalem, the leaders and the people offered great sacrifices and rejoiced with music and song in processions along the top of the wall, for God had given them great joy.”

²³“The women and children also rejoiced. The sound of rejoicing in Jerusalem could be heard far away.”



Section of Jerusalem city wall.

Few people living in Jerusalem

²⁴“Now the city of Jerusalem was large and spacious, but there were few people living in it and the houses had not yet been rebuilt.”

²⁵“It was in my heart to assemble the people for a census but I found the genealogical record of those who had been the first to return.”

5

The Feast of Trumpets celebrated

¹When the seventh month^{F*} came, the whole people gathered as one for the Feast Of Trumpets, in the square near the Water Gate.

Ezra the priest reads the Law of Moses to the people

²Ezra the priest stood on a high wooden platform built for the occasion. Beside him stood the leaders of the people and the priests and the Levites.

³When he opened the book of the Law of God given through Moses, all the people stood up. Ezra praised the Lord and the people lifted their hands and responded, “Amen!” and then they bowed and worshipped with their faces to the ground.

⁴From daybreak until noon Ezra read aloud from the book of the Law of God and the people listened attentively.

The Levites also instruct the people

⁵The Levites also instructed the people by

*1 The seventh month Tishri (Sept-Oct) was the beginning of the Jewish civil year, and also the month of several important festivals. The Jewish sacred year commenced in the first month (Mar-April).

reading from the book of the Law of God and making it clear so that the people would understand.

Nehemiah dismisses the people to eat and drink instructing them to be joyful

⁶Then Nehemiah the governor spoke to the people saying, “This day is sacred to Jehovah our God, do not weep. (For the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law.) ⁷Go now and enjoy choice food and sweet wine, and share with those who have nothing prepared. For the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

⁸So the people went away to eat and drink and to celebrate with great joy, for they now understood the Law.

The people learn of the Feast of Tabernacles

⁹The next day the heads of the families along with the priests and the Levites gathered around Ezra to give more attention to the words of the Law.

¹⁰They found written in the Law that the Israelites were to live in booths during the Feast of Tabernacles.^{F*}

The Jews live in booths for a week

¹¹So when the people returned home they went out into the hill country and brought back branches from trees and built themselves booths and lived in them during the week of the Feast of Tabernacles. ¹²Some built them on their own roofs, some in their own courtyards, some in the courtyards of the Temple and others in the squares at the Water Gate and the Gate of Ephraim.

¹³From the days of Joshua, the Israelites had not celebrated the feast like this and their joy was very great.

Prescribed burnt offerings offered each day

¹⁴They celebrated the feast for the seven days, and in accordance with what is written the priests in Jerusalem offered the required number of burnt offerings each day.

¹⁵Every day Ezra the priest read from the book of the Law of God.

The people repent and enter a new covenant to keep the Law of God

¹⁶On the twenty-fourth day of the same month, the Israelites again gathered in Jerusalem. This time they fasted and wore sackcloth and had dust on their heads.

¹⁷Those who had separated themselves from their foreign wives for the sake of the Law of God came together and confessed their sins and the wickedness of their fathers. ¹⁸They read from the book of the Law of God for a quarter of the day and spent another quarter in confession and in worshipping Jehovah their God.

¹⁹Then the rest of the people joined them and bound themselves by covenant to follow the

*10 The Feast of Tabernacles was due to be held during the third week of that same seventh month.

Law of God given through Moses, and to carefully obey all the commandments of the Lord. This is what they promised:

Eight covenant promises of the people

²⁰“We promise not to intermarry with the peoples around us.”

²¹“We promise not to buy merchandise or grain from neighbouring peoples on the Sabbath or any holy day.”

²²“We promise that every seventh year we will let the land lie fallow and will cancel all debts.”

²³“We promise to give a third of a shekel each year for the upkeep of the house of our God.”

²⁴“We promise to bring to the Temple, wood to burn on the altar of the Lord our God, at set times each year according to lot.”

²⁵“We promise to bring the first fruits of our crops and fruit trees each year to provide for the priests at the Temple.”

²⁶“We promise to bring the firstborn of our sons and of our cattle and our flocks, to the priests ministering at the Temple.”

²⁷“We promise to give a tithe of our crops to support the Levites.”

Ammonites and Moabites excluded from the assembly

²⁸It was found written in the book of the Law of God that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever be admitted into the assembly of God. For they had not met the Israelites with food and water but had hired Balaam to call down a curse on them.

²⁹When the people heard this law, they excluded from the assembly all who were of this foreign descent.

The leaders and every tenth family assigned to live in Jerusalem

³⁰Now the leaders of the people agreed to settle and live in Jerusalem. ³¹The rest of the people cast lots to assign one of every ten families to also live in Jerusalem. The others were to remain in their own towns.

³²The people blessed all those who willingly offered to live in Jerusalem.

6

Nehemiah returns to Artaxerxes after 12 years as promised

¹“While all this was going on, I Nehemiah was not in Jerusalem for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes I had returned to the king.”

Nehemiah returns again to Jerusalem and finds an Ammonite given a room in the Temple

²“However some time later I asked his permission and returned again to Jerusalem.

³When I arrived I learned of an evil thing Eliashib the high priest had done. He had provided Tobiah the Ammonite with a storage room in the courtyard of the Temple.”

⁴“I was greatly displeased at this and threw all of Tobiah’s household goods out of the room.”

NEHEMIAH 6

⁵“I also gave orders to clear out and reconsecrate all the other rooms. Then I put back into them the things of the house of God, with the grain offerings and the incense.”

Food tithes had not been given to the Levites

⁶“I also learned that the food tithes assigned to the Levites had not been given to them. And that the Levites and singers responsible for serving at the Temple had returned to their fields.”

⁷“I rebuked the leaders and said to them, ‘Why is the house of God neglected?’”

⁸“I called the Levites back and stationed them at their posts. Then all Judah brought their tithes of grain, wine, and oil into the storerooms.”

Nehemiah asks God to remember his faithfulness

⁹“Remember me for this O my God, and do not blot out what I have faithfully done for the house of my God and its services.”

Sabbath breaking in Jerusalem

¹⁰“Also in those days, I saw men in Judah treading winepresses on the Sabbath, and others loading grain, wine, grapes, figs and other loads upon donkeys and bringing them into Jerusalem to sell on the Sabbath.”

¹¹“Men from Tyre were also bringing in fish and all other kinds of merchandise and selling them on the Sabbath to the people of Judah.”

Nehemiah enforces Sabbath restrictions

¹²“I rebuked the leaders of Judah and said to them, ‘Why are you allowing this wicked thing and desecrating the Sabbath day? ¹³Did not your forefathers do the same thing? Was that not why our God brought calamity upon us and upon this city? You are again stirring up wrath against Israel.’”

¹⁴“So on the eve of the next Sabbath, when the evening shadows fell upon the gates of Jerusalem, I ordered them shut and not to be opened until the Sabbath was over.”

¹⁵“I stationed some of my own men at the gates to make sure that no load would be brought in on the Sabbath day.”

Nehemiah threatens the merchants

¹⁶“Once or twice the merchants with their goods spent the night outside Jerusalem, but I warned them and said, ‘If you do this again I will lay hands upon you.’”

¹⁷“From that time onward they no longer came on the Sabbath. Then I commanded the Levites to guard the gates in order to keep the Sabbath holy.”

Non-Israelite wives found among men of Judah

¹⁸“Also in those days I found men of Judah who had married non-Israelite women. Women from Ashdod, Ammon and Moab. ¹⁹Half of their children did not even know how to speak the language of Judah.”

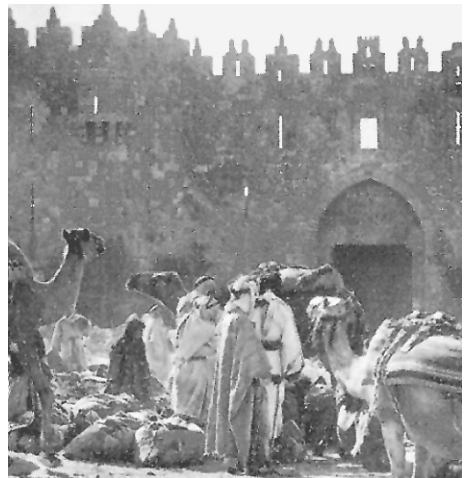
Those who intermarried cursed and beaten by Nehemiah and made to repent

²⁰“I rebuked them and called down curses upon them. I even beat some of the men and pulled out their hair.”

²¹“I made them take an oath to repent in God’s name and said to them, ‘Was it not because of marriages like these that Solomon king of Israel sinned? ²²Among the many nations there was no king like him, but even he was led into sin by foreign women.’”

²³“Even one of the grandsons of Eliashib the high priest had married the daughter of Sanballat, the governor of Trans-Euphrates. I drove him away from me. ²⁴Remember him O God for he has defiled the covenant of the priesthood.”

²⁵“So I purified the priests and the Levites of everything foreign and assigned them their duties.”



Merchants at the gates of Jerusalem selling wheat.

MALACHI

In this book of Malachi, who was the last of the Old Testament prophets, the re-established Jews are severely rebuked by the Lord for many sins, particularly the men.

These sins were – taking advantage of one another, marrying foreign women, adultery, divorce, offering blemished animals in sacrifice, corruption in the priesthood, neglect of giving tithes, calling evil good, and murmuring at the apparent lack of justice of God.

Idolatry is however not mentioned. There is no evidence that this serious sin has ever troubled the Jews again since their return from Babylonian exile.

Morale among the Jews was low at this time. It appears that they had expected the Messiah to appear soon after their return from exile and to immediately usher in the golden age of the millennium as prophesied by Isaiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah and other prophets. They did not realise that this glorious period still lay many years into the future, and that before that day a more humble appearance of the Messiah would take place.

Nevertheless, through Malachi, the Lord reaffirms by prophecy that the great day of his glorious appearance would surely arrive, but first a messenger was to come and prepare the way for his first appearance (Malachi 3:1). Jesus quoted this prophecy and identified John the Baptist as this messenger (Matt-Mark-Luke 12:7).

No personal details are known about Malachi the prophet.

AUTHOR Malachi the prophet.

“Bring your full tithe into the storehouse that there be food in my house. Prove me, and see if I will not open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing so great there will not be room enough to receive it.” Malachi 3:12-13.

CONTENTS

Chapter

The Lord has blessed Israel but cursed Esau	1	And those who doubt his justice	2
Curse to remain on Edom	1	A messenger to prepare the way before the Lord	3
Judah's priests dishonour the Lord	1	Malachi prophesies of the second coming	3
Blemished animals offered	1	The Levites to be purified when the Lord comes	3
Try offering blemished animals to your governor	1	A day of judgement for sinners	3
Lord has no pleasure in Israel's offerings	1	Lord pleads with his people to return to him	3
All nations will one day offer pure offerings to Lord ..	1	Withholding tithes is robbing God	3
Sacrifices to Lord a burden to Israel	1	Withholding tithes has brought a curse on Israel	3
Cursed be the man who offers a blemished animal ..	1	Test the blessings of the Lord by giving a full tithe ...	3
Priests will also be cursed	1	You have said it is futile to serve God	3
Levi the forefather of the Levites a righteous man	1	Look how evildoers prosper	3
A priest ought to speak with knowledge and wisdom ..	1	Names of those who continue to pray recorded	3
Priests despised because of their false teachings	1	Names written in Lord's book of remembrance	3
The Jews have broken God's covenant	2	Reward of the righteous seen at second coming	3
Those who marry foreign women to be cut off	2	Second coming a day of burning for the wicked	3
Unfaithful husbands condemned	2	The righteous to leap joyously	3
The Lord hates divorce	2	Like calves released from the stall	3
Lord wearied by evil being called good	2	Elijah the prophet to be sent before second coming .	3

Bold The Lord or an angel speaking.

Bold italics A prophet speaking under inspiration.

1

The Lord has blessed Israel but cursed Esau

¹The word of the Lord to Israel through Malachi the prophet. ²**Jehovah says, I have blessed Israel. But you say, 'How have I**

blessed you?"

³**“Was not Esau the brother of Israel? I have blessed Israel, but Esau I have cursed.**

MALACHI 2

I have laid waste his mountains of Edom. His inheritance has become a home for the jackals of the desert.”

The curse to remain on Edom

⁴“Though Edom may say, ‘We will rebuild.’ I shall again lay them waste. They will be called the Cursed Land, a people always under the wrath of Jehovah.”

Judah’s priests dishonour the Lord by offering blemished animals

⁵“A son honours his father. I am your Father. Where is the honour due to me?”

⁶“Hear O priests, you dishonour my name. Yet you say, ‘How have we dishonoured your name?’”

⁷“By offering defiled food on my altar when you bring blind, crippled or diseased animals for sacrifice. Is that not wrong?”

Try offering blemished animals to your governor

⁸“If you offered them to your governor, would he be pleased with you?”

Lord has no pleasure in Israel’s offerings

⁹“You implore me to be gracious to you, but with offerings such as these how can I accept you?”

¹⁰“O that you would close the Temple doors and no longer light meaningless fires on my altar. I have no pleasure in you and will not accept your offerings.”

All nations will one day honour and offer pure offerings to Lord

¹¹“I am a great King, and my name is to be great among all nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun. In every place, pure offerings will be made to my name.”

Sacrifices to Lord a burden to Israel

¹²“But you profane my name and treat my altar with disdain. You say ‘These sacrifices are a burden’ and sniff contemptuously.”

¹³“Then you bring injured, crippled or diseased animals and offer them as sacrifices. Shall I accept them from your hand?”

Cursed be the man who offers a blemished animal

¹⁴“Cursed be he who vows to me an acceptable animal from his flock and then sacrifices a blemished animal.”

Priests will also be cursed

¹⁵“If you do not listen O priests and set your heart to honour my name, I will curse you blessings. Indeed I have already begun to curse them.”

¹⁶“I will cut off your sons and daughters and will spread on your faces the dung from your blemished animals, and you will be carried off with it.”

Levi the forefather of the Levites revered the Lord

¹⁷“My covenant of life and peace was made with your forefather Levi. He revered

me, and stood in awe of my name.”

¹⁸“No falsehood was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and righteousness and turned many from their sins.”

A priest ought to speak with knowledge and wisdom

¹⁹“For the lips of a priest ought to speak knowledge and wisdom and give guidance to men who seek it. For a priest is a messenger of the Lord.”

Priests despised and humiliated because of their false teachings

²⁰“But you have turned away from me and your false teachings cause men to stumble.”

²¹“You have broken my covenant with Levi, therefore I have caused you to be despised and humiliated before the people.”

2

Malachi accuses the Jews of breaking God’s covenant

¹“Do we not all have one forefather? Did not one God create us all? Why then have we broken God’s covenant with our forefathers by dealing treacherously with one another?”

Those who marry foreign women to be cut off from Israel

²“And why have men of Judah broken the covenant by marrying women who serve a foreign god? ³May Jehovah cut off from Israel any man who does this, even though he bring offerings to the Lord.”

Unfaithful husbands condemned

⁴“Another thing you do, you weep and wail and flood the Lord’s altar with tears because he no longer pays attention to your offerings, and you ask ‘Why?’”

⁵“It is because the Lord was witness to the marriage covenant between you and the wife of your youth, and you have been unfaithful to her. Even though she is your companion and your wife by covenant.”

The Lord hates divorce

⁶“Did he not make you both one in flesh and spirit? For he was seeking godly offspring. So safeguard the offspring that belongs to him. Let no man be unfaithful to the wife of his youth.”

⁷“For the Lord says, ‘I hate divorce, and I hate the man who defiles his garment with injustice toward his wife. ⁸Safeguard the offspring that is not your own and do not be unfaithful to your wife.’”

The Lord wearied by evil being called good and those who doubt his justice

⁹“You have also wearied the Lord with your words. You say, ‘How have we wearied him?’”

¹⁰“By saying, ‘All who do evil are good in the eyes of the Lord’ or ‘Where is the God of justice?’”

3

**A messenger to prepare the way
before the Lord comes to his Temple**

¹"Jehovah says, 'I will send my messenger who shall prepare the way before me.'" ^{F*}

²"Then the Lord whom you seek will come suddenly to his Temple."

**Malachi prophesies of the
second coming of the Lord**

³"*But who will endure the great day when he comes? Who can stand when he appears?* ⁴*For he will be like a refiner's fire, or a launderer's soap. He shall sit as a refiner and purifier.*"

**The Levites to be purified
when the Lord comes**

⁵"*He will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then shall they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness.*

⁶"*Then shall the offerings of Judah be acceptable to him, as in days gone by.*"

A day of judgement for sinners

⁷"*For Jehovah says, 'I am coming in judgement and will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers, and perjurers, and against those who defraud labourers of their wages, who exploit widows and the fatherless and turn away foreigners, and revere me not.'*"

**The Lord pleads with his people
to return to him**

⁸"I Jehovah do not change, but ever since the time of your forefathers you have turned away from me and have not kept my commandments. ⁹Therefore return to me and I will return to you. But you say, 'How shall we return?'"

**Withholding tithes is robbing God
has brought whole nation under a curse**

¹⁰"Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you say, 'How do we rob you?'"

¹¹"In tithes and offerings. This whole nation is under a curse because you are robbing me."

**Test the great blessings of the Lord
by giving a full tithe**

¹²"Bring your full tithe into the storehouse that there be food in my house. ¹³Prove me, and see if I will not open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing so great there will not be room enough to receive it."

¹⁴"And I will stay the devourer from destroying your crops, and your vines shall

not cast their fruit before their time."

¹⁵"Then all nations shall call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land."

**You have said it is futile to serve God
– look how evildoers prosper**

¹⁶"You have said harsh things against me. Yet you say, 'What have we said against you?'"

¹⁷"You have said, 'It is futile to serve God. What have we gained by keeping his laws and humbling ourselves before him?' ¹⁸See how the arrogant are blessed and evildoers prosper. Even those who mock God escape."

**Names of those who continue to pray are
written in Lord's book of remembrance**

¹⁹"I the Lord hear the prayers of those who revere me, and continue to pray. And a book of remembrance is written in my presence with the names of all those who honour my name."

²⁰"They will be mine on that great day when I come to take possession of my jewels. I will spare them as a loving father spares a son who serves him faithfully."

**The reward of the righteous will be clearly
seen at the second coming of the Lord**

²¹"In that day you will see clearly the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not."

**The second coming to be
a day of burning for the wicked**

²²"That great day is surely coming. It will blaze as a furnace and all the arrogant and every evildoer will burn like dry straw. Neither root nor branch will be left them."

**The righteous to leap joyously like
calves released from the stall**

²³"But for you who reverence my name, it shall come as a glorious sunrise, with healing in its wings. You shall go forth leaping joyously, like a calf released from the stall, and the wicked shall be ashes under your feet."

²⁴"Therefore obey the Law of my servant Moses."

**Elijah the prophet to be sent
before the second coming**

²⁵"I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day. ²⁶He will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers lest the whole earth be destroyed when I come."

*1 Jesus quoted this passage in reference to John the Baptist (Matt-Mark-Luke 12:7).

JOB

This book is a poetical account of man named Job, who was very upright and also very wealthy. He was a man in whom God (Jehovah) took great delight, and one day God shared his delight with Satan.

Satan argued with God however that Job was only righteous because he had blessed him with great wealth. He then challenged God to, *“Stretch out your hand and strike everything he has and he will curse you to your face.”*

God therefore permits Satan to afflict Job to test his integrity. Satan begins by taking away all Job’s wealth and also the lives of his ten children. When this fails to achieve the desired result Satan is further permitted to afflict Job with a severe disease, believed to be a type of leprosy, and if that were not enough, Job’s wife and his brothers are turned against him.

To make matters worse, Job’s three friends who come to comfort him take the view that Job must have sinned in order to deserve such severe punishment.

AUTHOR Unknown.

“The Lord has given and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.” Job 1:16.

CONTENTS

Chapter

Job a blameless and upright man	1	Job again proclaims his innocence	4
The family and wealth of Job	1	Job declares he will eventually be justified by God	4
Job would offer sacrifices on behalf of his children	1	Bildad also accuses Job of wickedness	4
The Lord expresses pride in Job to Satan	1	Job rebukes his friends for tormenting him	4
Satan says Job is only righteous because of wealth	1	Job pleads for pity	4
Satan permitted to destroy Job’s possessions	1	Job loathsome to his brothers and household	4
Job loses his family and his wealth	1	Job affirms his belief in the resurrection	4
Job mourns but continues to worship God	1	Job affirms his belief in the day of judgement	4
Satan given permission to destroy Job’s health	1	Zophar: The wicked never prosper for long	4
Satan afflicts Job with festering sores	1	Job: The wicked often prosper all their life	4
Job’s wife turns against him	1	The wicked say to God, leave us alone	4
Job’s three friends come to comfort him	1	Worms devour both the rich and poor	4
They are appalled at his appearance	1	Evil men are honoured even in death	4
Job tells his friends he yearns for death	2	Eliphaz: If Job blameless why does God punish him?	5
Eliphaz: Trouble comes to those who sow trouble	2	Job: If only I could state my case to God	5
Eliphaz shares a revelation from a spirit	2	Job: God does not punish all the wicked on earth	5
Man cannot be blameless before God	2	Job will not deny his integrity	5
Eliphaz: Foolish men lose their families and wealth	2	Job longs for the happy days of past	5
Eliphaz: Trouble is discipline from God	2	Job: I helped the poor and widows	5
Job: I want sympathy not condemnation	2	Job now mocked by young men	5
Job denies he has done wrong	2	Job’s pain and suffering	5
Job describes his suffering	2	Job’s vow of chastity	5
Job pleads with God to leave him alone	2	Job’s just treatment of his servants and tenants	5
Job asks God why he is being afflicted	2	Job’s generosity to the poor	5
Bildad accuses Job’s children of sin	3	Job: I did not trust in my wealth	5
Job maintains his innocence	3	Elihu a bystander angry with Job and his friends	6
How can he contend with God	3	Elihu: God punishes a man to turn him from wrong	6
Job: God afflicts both the innocent and the wicked	3	Elihu: God’s eyes upon all men	6
Job wishes for a mediator between God and himself	3	Elihu accuses Job of rebellion against God	6
Job accuses God of unfairness	3	Elihu: God slow to answer prayers of the proud	6
Zophar also accuses Job of sin	3	Elihu: God hears the prayer of a repentant man	6
Job rebukes his friends	3	Jehovah suddenly appears to Job	7
Job reaffirms his trust in God	3	Jehovah questions Job on the creation	7
Job prays for God to stop punishing him	3	Job is questioned on the dawn and the oceans	7
Job asks God to show him what wrong he has done	3	Questions on Sheol and the expanse of the earth	7
Eliphaz accuses Job of lack of wisdom	3	Questions on light, darkness, snow, hail	7
Eliphaz: Only the wicked suffer torment	3	Questions on frost, ice, lightning, winds, rain, dew	7
Job tells his friends they are miserable comforters	4	Questions on the stars, man’s mind	7
Job describes his gaunt appearance	4	Questions on lions, birds, goats, deer, oxen, horses	7

Job cannot answer the Lord 8
 Lord questions Job further 8
 Job challenged to speak in a voice of thunder 8
 Job challenged to glorify himself 8
 Job challenged to crush the wicked 8
 Hippopotamus first animal created by God 8

Job challenged to capture a crocodile 8
 Who then is able to stand against Jehovah 8
 Job humbles himself before the Lord 8
 Lord rebukes Job's friends 8
 Job's prosperity restored double 8
 Job fathers ten more children and lives 140 years ... 8
 departed from the presence of the Lord.

Bold The Lord or an angel speaking.

1

Job a blameless and upright man

¹In the land of Uz^{F*} there lived a man whose name was Job.^{F*} He revered God, shunned evil, and was blameless and upright.

The family and wealth of Job

²Job had seven sons and three daughters. He also owned 7000 sheep, 3000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 donkeys and a large number of servants. He was the greatest man among all the people of the east.

Job would offer sacrifices on behalf of his children

³Job's sons would hold feasts in each others homes, and would also invite their sisters to eat and drink with them.

⁴When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would send for them and early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering on behalf of each of them. For he thought, "Perhaps my children have sinned." This was Job's regular custom.

The Lord expresses his delight in Job to Satan

⁵Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before Jehovah,^{F*} and Satan came with them. The Lord said to Satan, "**Where have you come from?**"

⁶Satan replied, "From roaming to and fro throughout the earth."

⁷The Lord said to Satan, "**You will have seen my righteous servant Job. There is no one on earth like him.**"

Satan claims that Job is only righteous because of his great wealth

⁸Satan answered, "Does Job revere God for nothing? Have you not protected him and his household and everything he has? Have you not blessed the work of his hands so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land? ⁹Stretch out your hand and strike everything he has and he will curse you to your face."

Satan permitted to destroy Job's possessions

¹⁰The Lord said to Satan, "**Very well, all that Job has is in your power. But on the man himself lay not a finger.**" Then Satan

Job loses his family and his wealth

¹¹Now Job's sons and daughters were feasting at the elder brother's house when a servant came running to Job and said, "Arabians have attacked and carried off all your oxen and donkeys and have put your servants who were with them to the sword. I am the only one who survived!"

¹²While he was still speaking, one of Job's shepherds came running and said, "Fire of God fell from the sky and burned up the sheep and the shepherds. I am the only one who escaped to tell you!"

¹³Then came another servant who said, "Three Babylonian raiding parties swept down on your camels and carried them off. They killed all the other servants but me!"

¹⁴While he was still speaking, yet another servant came to Job and said, "As your sons and daughters were feasting at the eldest brother's house a mighty wind swept in from the desert and collapsed the house upon them. They are all dead!"

Job mourns but continues to worship God

¹⁵At this Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground and worshipped God saying, "Naked I came from my mother's womb and naked I will depart. ¹⁶The Lord has given and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

Satan given permission to destroy Job's health

¹⁷Again the sons of God came to present themselves before Jehovah, and again Satan came with them.

¹⁸The Lord said to Satan, "**What do you think now of my servant Job? He still maintains his integrity, even though you provoked me to allow you to ruin him without reason.**"

¹⁹Satan replied, "Flesh must suffer first. All that a man has he will give for his health. Strike his flesh and bones and he shall surely curse you."

²⁰The Lord said, "**Very well then, he is in your power, but spare his life.**"

Satan afflicts Job with festering sores

²¹So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and afflicted Job greatly from head to toe with festering sores. Job would take a piece of broken pottery and scrape himself as he sat among the ashes.

*1 Believed to be the region east of the river Jordan, later known as Gilead.

*1 Normally pronounced 'Jobe.'

*5 Traditional Israelite belief is that the spirits of all mankind had an existence prior to this mortal life as the offspring of God. These 'sons of God' (see also Job 7:4) therefore may represent the spirits of men yet to be born. See also Deuteronomy 9:16, Jeremiah 1:3, Ezekiel 17:367, Ecclesiastes 5:31, Psalms 77:4, John 9:1 and 19:16.

Job's wife turns against him

²²Then Job's wife said to him, "Are you still maintaining your innocence? God has done this to you. Curse him and die."

²³Job replied, "You speak as a foolish woman would speak. Should we accept only the good from God and not the trouble?"

²⁴In all his suffering Job did not sin with his lips.

Job's three friends are appalled at his appearance when they come to comfort him

²⁵When Job's three friends Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar heard of his troubles, they met together and came to sympathise with Job and to comfort him.

²⁶When they saw him from a distance they did not recognise him. They wept aloud and tore their robes, and sprinkled dust on their heads.

²⁷Then they sat with Job for seven days and said not a word, for they saw that his suffering was great.



Job's three friends would probably have been clothed in a similar fashion to these three men.

2

Job tells his friends he yearns for death to release him from his suffering

¹Then Job spoke and said, "Why did I not die at birth, for now I would be at peace. In death the weary are at rest. Even captives enjoy ease, they no longer hear the slave driver's shout."

²"Why is life given to those in misery? Why does death not come to those who long for it? Why does God give life to a man he has afflicted? ³Groans pour out of me like water. What I dreaded has happened. I have no peace, only troubles."

Eliphaz: Trouble comes only to those who sow trouble

⁴Eliphaz said to Job, "If I venture a word with you, will you hear me? But who can keep from speaking? You have instructed many in your days. Your words have strengthened the faltering. But now trouble comes to you and you are dismayed. Should not your righteousness be your hope?"

⁵"Consider now, when was a righteous man ever destroyed by God? As I have observed, only those who sow trouble, reap trouble."

Eliphaz shares a night revelation from a spirit – man cannot be blameless before God

⁶"A word once came secretly to me during disquieting dreams in the night. Fear seized me and the hair on my body bristled as a spirit glided past my face."

⁷"Then a form stood before me and I heard a voice whisper, 'Can a man be more righteous than God? If God charges the angels with error, how much more men who live in bodies of clay and who are crushed as easily as a moth.'"

Eliphaz: Foolish men eventually lose their families and wealth

⁸"Resentment and envy slay fools. I myself have seen a fool taking root, but suddenly his household was cursed and his children were crushed in court without a defender. ⁹Hungry men consumed his harvest and schemers devoured his wealth."

Eliphaz: Trouble is discipline from God

¹⁰"Trouble does not grow unsown from the ground, yet man is born to trouble as surely as sparks fly upward."

¹¹"If I were you, I would trust in God for blessed is the man whom God corrects. So despise not the discipline of the Almighty, for he wounds, but he also binds up the wound."

Job: I want sympathy from my friends not condemnation

¹²Job replied, "If only my sorrow could be weighed in the scales, it would surely outweigh all the sands of the sea. It is no wonder my words are rash. The arrows of the Almighty are in me and my spirit drinks in their poison."

¹³"Does a donkey Bray when it has grass to eat?"

¹⁴"O that God would crush me, I would at least have the consolation that I had not denied the words of the Holy One."

¹⁵"What future have I that I should still hope? Success has been driven from me and I have no power to help myself."

¹⁶"A despairing man like me should at least have the sympathy of his family and friends, even though I am forsaken by the Almighty. ¹⁷But even my own brothers are like streams that cease to flow in the dry season, like those the travelling merchants of Sheba look forward to in hope of finding water, but arrive and find them dry. Now you too are proving to be the same."

Job denies that he has done wrong

¹⁸"Show me my wrong and I will be silent. Would I lie to your face? Reconsider your words for my integrity is at stake. Is my tongue speaking wrong?"

Job describes his suffering

¹⁹"I have been condemned to months of

emptiness and nights of misery. When I lie down I think, 'How long before I arise?' The nights drag and I toss until dawn."

²⁰"My body is clothed with maggots and scabs. My skin is broken and festering. My days are swiftly flowing to an end. My eyes shall never see happy times again. You will look for me but see me no more."

Job pleads with God to leave him alone

²¹"O my God, a man who goes down to Sheol^{F*} is like a vanishing cloud. He never returns to his house again. Therefore I speak out in the anguish of my spirit."

²²"When I think my bed will comfort me, you terrify me with dreams and visions. O I despise my life. I prefer death rather than this body of mine. Leave me alone. My days have no meaning."

Job asks God why he is being afflicted

²³"Who am I that you give me so much attention, that you afflict me continually? If I have sinned, what have I done? Why have you made me your target? Why have I become a burden to you?"

3

Bildad accuses Job's children of sin

¹Then Bildad spoke, "How long will you speak such things? Your words are like blustering wind. ²Does the Almighty pervert that which is right? Your children must have sinned against him and have paid the penalty of their sin."

³"If you are pure and upright, plead with God. Even now he will restore you to your rightful place. Your beginning may seem humble, but your future shall be prosperous."

⁴"Look to past generations. Learn what our fathers learned."

⁵"Can reeds grow tall where there is no water? Such is the destiny of all who forget God. But he does not reject a blameless man, he will yet fill your mouth with laughter."

Job maintains his innocence but how can he contend with God

⁶Job replied, "I know this to be so. But how can a man contend with God? A man could not answer him one time out of a thousand. God's power and wisdom is profound. Who has resisted him and come forth unscathed?"

⁷"He moves mountains in his anger. He shakes the earth and makes its pillars tremble. He commands the sun and it ceases to shine. He made the constellations of the heavens. ⁸If he takes away, who can stop him? Who can say to him, 'What are you doing?'"

⁹"How then can I dispute with him? Though I am innocent I could not answer him, I could only plead for mercy."

Job: God afflicts both the innocent and the wicked

¹⁰"Even if I summoned him and he came, I do

not believe he would give me a hearing, though I am blameless."

¹¹"That is why I say, 'He destroys both the innocent and the wicked.' For when a scourge brings sudden death he is heedless to the despair of the innocent. ¹²When land falls into the hands of wicked men, he blindfolds the judges. If not him, then who?"

Job wishes for a mediator between God and himself

¹³"If I should say, 'I shall forget my complaint and will smile instead,' I still dread my sufferings for I know my friends will hold me guilty."

¹⁴"If only there were someone to mediate between God and myself and to remove God's rod from me that his terrors frighten me no more. Then I would speak up without fear, but I cannot."

Job accuses God of unfairness

¹⁵"I loathe my life, therefore I give free rein to the bitterness of my soul. I say to God, 'State the charges you have against me! Does it please you to oppress me, while you smile on the schemes of the wicked? ¹⁶You know I am not guilty, yet there is no one who can rescue me from your hand."

¹⁷"Are not my few days almost over? Turn away from me that I may have a little season of comfort before I go to the place of no return, to the land of the darkness of death."^{F*}

Zophar also accuses Job of sin

¹⁸Then Zophar spoke, "Are these words to go unchallenged? Will no one rebuke you when you mock the Almighty, when you say to God, 'I am pure in your sight?'"

¹⁹"O how I wish that God would speak to you and disclose his wisdom, then you would know he has even forgotten some of your sins."

²⁰"The sins of deceitful men are not hidden from God. Yet, if you redevote your heart to him and put away your sins, you shall lift up your face without fear. You will surely forget your trouble, recalling it only as waters gone by. ²¹Life will be brighter than noonday. You shall sleep peacefully and many will court your favour."

Job rebukes his friends

²²Job replied, "Doubtless you know all things and wisdom will die with you. But I also have a mind, and am not inferior to you. What you know I also know. ²³But I desire to argue my case with God. You however smear me with lies."

²⁴"You are worthless physicians, all of you. If only you would be silent, that would be wisdom."

²⁵Would it turn out well if God examined you? Could you deceive him as you might deceive men?

*¹⁷ Sheol the spirit world of the dead, was anciently believed to be located under the earth, and therefore dark because it was hidden from the sun. The Hebrew conception of the afterlife was that of a restful but shadowy existence, awaiting the time of the resurrection and judgement when their spirits would again reunite with their physical body and live again on earth under the reign of the Messiah.

*²¹ Sheol is the Hebrew name for the spirit world of the dead.

JOB 4

²⁶Your proverbs are ashes. Your defences are clay. Remain silent and let me speak then let come upon me what will."

Job reaffirms his trust in God

²⁷"For though God slay me, yet will I hope in him for then I shall be able to defend myself to his face. This will bring about my deliverance, for a godless man would not dare go before God."

²⁸"I have prepared my case and know I will be vindicated. Can any man bring charges against me? If so, I will be silent and die."

Job prays for God to stop punishing him and show him what wrong he has done

²⁹"Grant me these two things O God: Cease to frighten me with your terrors, and let me speak and you reply."

³⁰"How many wrongs have I committed? Show me my sin. Why hide your face and treat me as an enemy, and make me reap the sins of my youth?"

Eliphaz accuses Job of lack of wisdom

³¹Then Eliphaz said, "Would a wise man speak with such empty knowledge? You undermine righteousness and devotion to God."

³²"Your sin prompts your mouth and you speak with the tongue of the deceitful. Your own words condemn you."

³³"Were you the first man ever born? Do you listen in on God's councils? Do you limit wisdom to yourself? What insights have you that we have not?"

³⁴"The grey-haired and elderly are on our side. Men even older than your father."

³⁵"Are God's gentle consolations not enough for you? Why does your heart carry you away so that your eyes flash and you vent your rage against God?"

Eliphaz: Only the wicked suffer torment

³⁶"What is man that he can be pure and righteous? If even the holy ones in heaven are impure in God's eyes, how much less man who is corrupt and drinks up evil like water?"

³⁷"Let me tell you what wise men have declared: 'All his days the wicked man suffers torment. When all seems well, raiders attack him. He is marked for the sword. Distress and anguish fill him with terror for he shakes his fist at God.'"

³⁸"Though his waist bulge with fat, he shall inhabit a ruined town and a crumbling house. His wealth will not endure. The breath of God's mouth shall carry him away. He will be like a vine stripped of its unripe grapes."

4

Job tells his friends they are miserable comforters

¹Job replied, "I have heard many words like these. You are miserable comforters, all of you. Will your long-winded speeches never end?"

²"I also could make fine speeches against

you, and shake my head, if I were in your place. But instead I would comfort you and encourage you to bring you relief. Yet my pain is not relieved, it will not go away."

Job describes his gaunt appearance to God and again proclaims his innocence

³"O God, you have worn me out. My gauntness testifies against me. I wear sackcloth over my skin and bury my brow in the dust. ⁴My face is red with weeping. Dark shadows ring my eyes. Yet my hands have been free of violence and my prayer is pure."

⁵"O earth, cover not my blood. May my cry of innocence ever be heard."

Although wicked men jeer him Job declares he will eventually be justified by God

⁶"Wicked men jeer and gather against me, their minds closed to understanding. O God, let them not triumph."

⁷"But my witness is in heaven and he will vouch for me. ⁸Only a few years will pass before I go on my journey of no return."

Bildad also accuses Job of wickedness

⁹Bildad said, "When will you end such speeches? Why do you regard us as fools, you who tear yourself to pieces in your anger? Is the whole earth to be abandoned for your sake?"

¹⁰"The lamp of the wicked man is always snuffed out. The vigour of his step is weakened. A snare holds him fast. Terrors meet him on every side."

¹¹"He is torn from the security of his home and marched off to the king of terrors. Then the memory of him fades from the earth."

Job rebukes his friends for tormenting him

¹²Job replied, "How long will you torment me, and crush me with such words? Ten times now you have shamelessly wronged me."

¹³"Even if I had sinned, my error would be mine alone. Why exalt yourselves above me and use my humiliation against me?"

Job pleads for pity

¹⁴"I am nothing but skin and bones. Have pity on me my friends. Have pity, for the hand of God has struck me. ¹⁵Why do you pursue me as God does? Will you never get enough of my flesh?"

Job is loathsome to his brothers and all his household

¹⁶"Though I cry out to God saying, 'I have been wronged!' I get no response. Though I call for help, there is no justice. He has stripped me of my honour and removed the crown from my head. His anger burns against me."

¹⁷"He has turned my brothers from me. I am loathsome to them. My guests and my maidservants look upon me as a foreigner. I summon my servant and he will not come."

¹⁸"My breath is offensive to my wife. Even young boys ridicule me. And now, you my friends turn against me."

**Job's affirms his belief in the resurrection
and the day of judgement**

¹⁹"O that my words were recorded on a scroll, or engraven in rock."

²⁰"For I know that my Redeemer lives, and in the latter days he shall stand upon the earth.

²¹And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh will I see God with my own eyes."

²²"But you say, 'We will persecute him for the root of the trouble lies within him.'"

²³"You should fear for yourselves. You know there is a day of judgement."

Zophar: The wicked never prosper for long

²⁴Zophar spoke, "I am greatly disturbed. I hear a rebuke that dishonours me."

²⁵"Surely you know how it has been ever since man was placed upon the earth, that the joy of the godless man lasts but a moment.

²⁶Though his pride reaches to the heavens, he shall perish forever like his own dung."

²⁷"He will not enjoy the streams and the meadows flowing with honey and cream. He will not enjoy the profit from his trading."

²⁸"Like a dream he vanishes, no more to be found. In the midst of his plenty distress overtakes him, and the full force of misery comes upon him."

²⁹"His children must make restitution and return his wealth to the poor whom he oppressed and left destitute. For he seized houses he did not build. Such is the fate God allots the wicked."

**Job: On the contrary the wicked
often prosper all their life**

³⁰Job said, "Bear with me while I speak and after I have spoken, mock on."

³¹"My complaint is not directed to mortals. Why should I not be impatient with God? ³²Look at me and be appalled. Trembling seizes my body. Yet the wicked live on, growing old and increasing in power."

³³"They see their children established around them. Their homes are safe and free from fear. The rod of God is not upon them. ³⁴Their little ones dance about and sing to the music of the tambourine, and harp, and flute. ³⁵Their bulls fail not to breed, their cows calve and do not miscarry. They spend their years in prosperity and then go down to Sheol in peace."

The wicked say to God, leave us alone

³⁶"Yet on earth they say to God, 'Leave us alone. We have no desire to know your ways. Who is the Almighty that we should serve him? What would we gain by praying to him?'"

³⁷"How rarely is the lamp of the wicked snuffed out? How rarely does calamity come upon them?"

³⁸"It is said, 'God stores up a man's punishment for his sons.' But why does God not repay the man himself? ³⁹Let his own eyes see the wrath of the Almighty. What does he care about those he leaves behind when his allotted span of months comes to an end?"

Worms devour both the rich and poor

⁴⁰"One man dies in full vigour, secure and at ease, his body well nourished, his bones rich with marrow. Another man dies in poverty, having never enjoyed anything good. ⁴¹Side by side their bodies lie in the dust and worms devour them both."

Evil men are honoured even in death

⁴²"I know you are thinking of arguments to prove me wrong. You will say, 'Show us a house in which a wicked man once lived?' ⁴³Have you not questioned those who travel widely? Have you not listened to their accounts of how evil men are spared from calamity?"

⁴⁴"Who dares denounce a wicked man's conduct to his face? Who repays him for what he has done? ⁴⁵Rather he is carried to the grave and a watch kept over his tomb. Other wicked men follow after and a countless throng have gone before."

⁴⁶"So how can you console me with your nonsense? Your answers are nothing but falsehood."

5

**Eliphaz: What would God gain by
punishing Job if he was blameless**

¹Eliphaz spoke, "Can a man benefit God? Even a wise man? What pleasure would it give the Almighty if you were righteous, and what would he gain by rebuking you? ²Surely it is not for your righteousness that he is punishing you? Must it not then be for your great wickedness?"

³"Must not your sins be endless? Did you demand security from your fellow men for no reason, depriving them of their clothing? Have you withheld water from the weary, or food from the hungry?"

⁴"Though you were a rich man, owning land, did you send widows away empty-handed? This must be why sudden peril has come upon you."

⁵"Will you walk the godless path that men of old walked when they were carried off by the flood. They who said to God, 'Leave us alone. What can the Almighty do for us?' Yet it was he who filled their houses with good things."

⁶"Therefore submit to God and be at peace with him. Then prosperity will return to you. Accept his words in your heart."

⁷"If you return to the Almighty you will be restored. If you remove wickedness far from your house, when you pray to him he will hear you."

Job: If only I could state my case to God

⁸Job replied, "God's hand is heavy on me, in spite of my groaning. If only I knew where to find him, I would state my case before him and hear what he had to say."

⁹"Would he oppose me with great power? No! To God an upright man could present his case and be delivered forever."

¹⁰"But if I go to the east he is not there. If I go

JOB 5

to the west I find him not. Nor do I find him to the north or to the south.”

11“But he knows where I am, and when he has tested me I will come forth as refined gold. For my feet have followed his steps. I have kept his commandments and treasured them, more than my daily bread.”

12“But who can oppose him? He does whatever he pleases. He is carrying out his decree against me. 13When I think of all this I fear him, yet I am not silenced by my fear.”

14“Why does the Almighty not reveal the time of judgement? Why do we look in vain for that day?”

Job: God does not punish all the wicked on earth

15“Men move boundary stones. They pasture stolen flocks. They drive away the orphan’s donkey and take the widow’s ox in pledge. 16They cause the poor to hide and to forage in the fields and glean in the vineyards for food for their children. 17And spend the nights cold and lightly clad, drenched by rain as they crouch amid the rocks for shelter. Their children are seized for debt.”

18“The groans of the dying and wounded rise from the city, crying out for help, but God charges no one with wrongdoing.”

19“After dark the murderer arises to kill the poor. The adulterer goes forth thinking, ‘Now no eye will see me.’ Thieves break into houses.”

20“But you claim, ‘God drags away the wicked by his power. They have no assurance of life. They are cut off like heads of grain.’ But this is not so. Who can prove me wrong?”

Job will not deny his integrity

21“As surely as God lives, who has denied me a hearing, and as long as I have life within me, my lips shall not speak wickedness, nor utter deceit.”

22“²¹I will not deny my integrity. I shall maintain my righteousness. My conscience will not reproach me as long as I live. I will never admit you are right. 23For what hope has the evil man when God takes away his life?”

24“²⁴To revere the Lord brings wisdom and to shun evil brings understanding.”

Job longs for the happy days of the past

25“²⁵How I long for the days when God watched over me, when his friendship blessed my home and my children were around me. When my fields gave abundant cream and my ground poured forth streams of olive oil.”

26“²⁶When I went to the gate of the city to take my seat in the square, the young men would withdraw and the elders would rise to their feet. 27The chief men would refrain from speaking and all would listen expectantly for my counsel.”

28“²⁸After I had spoken they would speak no more, for my words fell gently on their ears. They drank them in like the spring rain. 29When I smiled at them they scarcely believed it, for the light of my face was precious to them.”

Job: I helped the poor and widows

30“³⁰I made decisions for them and sat as their chief, like a king among his troops. I was like one who comforts mourners.”

31“³¹Whoever heard me spoke well of me, for I rescued the poor who cried for help, and the fatherless who had none to assist them. 32The dying man blessed me and I made the widow’s heart to sing again.”

33“³³I wore righteousness and justice as my clothing. I was as eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. I was a father to the needy and I took up the case of the stranger.”

34“³⁴I thought, ‘I will die in my own house and my days will be as numerous as the grains of sand.’”

Job now mocked by young men

35“³⁵But now men younger than I whose fathers I would have disdained to put with my sheep dogs, mock me in song. They spit in my face.

36“³⁶Now that God has unstrung my bow and afflicted me, they throw off all restraint in my presence.”

Job’s pain and suffering

37“³⁷My life ebbs away and days of suffering grip me. Night racks my bones and my gnawing pains never cease.”

38“³⁸I cry out to you O God but you refuse to answer. Instead you turn on me ruthlessly. You toss me about in the storm. 39Surely no one lays a hand on a broken man when he cries for help in his distress.”

40“⁴⁰Have I not wept for the troubled? Has not my soul grieved for the poor? Yet when I hoped for good, evil came. When I looked for light there came darkness.”

41“⁴¹The churning inside me never ceases. Days of suffering confront me. I go about darkened, but not by the sun. My skin grows black and peels and my body burns with fever.”^{F*}

Job’s vow of chastity

42“⁴²I made a vow never to look lustfully at a woman. For what is a man’s portion from God above? Is it not ruin for those who sin?”

43“⁴³Let God weigh me in honest scales. He will know that I am blameless.”

44“⁴⁴If my heart has been enticed by a woman, or I have lurked at my neighbour’s door, then may my wife grind another man’s grain. May other men lie with her, for that would be a sin to be judged. I would have uprooted my harvest.”

Job’s just treatment of his servants and tenants

45“⁴⁵I have not denied justice to my servants, for he who made me in the womb made them also.”

46“⁴⁶If my land has cried out against me because I have consumed its yield without paying wages or broken the spirit of its tenants, then let briars and weeds come up instead of wheat and barley.”

^{*41} Job’s affliction has some of the symptoms of a type of leprosy known as elephantiasis but there appears to be no agreement among the medical profession as to its exact nature.

Job's generosity to the poor

47¹"I have not ignored the needs of the poor, nor the widows. Nor have I kept my bread to myself and failed to share it with the fatherless. From my youth I have reared orphans as would a father."

48¹"I have not seen a man suffering for lack of clothing and his heart did not bless me for warming him with a fleece from my flocks."

49¹"No man of my household ever lacked his fill of Job's meat and no stranger has had to spend the night in the street, for my door was always open to the traveller."

50¹"I have not rejoiced at my enemy's misfortune, or sinned by invoking a curse against him."

Job: I did not trust in my wealth

51¹"I have not put my trust in gold saying, 'You are my security.' For had I rejoiced over my great wealth that would have been a sin to be judged. I would have been unfaithful to God on high."

52¹"O that I had someone to hear me. Let the Almighty answer me. Let my accuser put his charges in writing. I would give him an account of my every step. I would confront him with the boldness of a prince."

6

Elihu, a bystander, is angry with Job and his friends

1¹The three men stopped answering Job. But Elihu, a bystander was angry with Job for justifying himself rather than God. 2¹He was also angry with Job's three friends for they had found no way to prove Job wrong.

3¹Elihu had waited before speaking for the other men were older than him, but when he saw that the three men had nothing more to say he could no longer hold himself back.

4¹He said to them, "I am young in years and you are old, that is why I held back, not daring to tell you what I know, for I thought, 'Advanced years should teach wisdom.'"

5¹"But it is the spirit in a man, the spirit from the Almighty that gives him understanding. It is not only the elderly who are wise. Therefore hear me and I will tell you what I know."

6¹"I listened to your reasoning. I gave you my full attention, but not one of you has proved Job wrong. None of you have answered his arguments, so I too will have my say."

7¹"The spirit within compels me. My words are like bottled-up wine ready to burst. I must speak and find relief."

Elihu: God punishes a man only to turn him from wrong

8¹Now Job, hear my words. Answer me if you can. My words come from an upright heart and I am just like you, I too have been made from clay."

9¹"You have said, 'I am pure and without sin, yet God treats me as his enemy. And you

complain that he answers none of man's words."

10¹"But God does speak to man, he speaks in dreams, terrifying a man with warnings, to turn him from wrongdoing and to keep him from pride."

11¹"Or he may chasten a man on a bed of sickness so that he finds food repulsive and his flesh wastes away."

12¹"Yet if an angel is at his side to whisper what is right for him, he may pray to God and find favour with him and be restored to his righteous state. Then his flesh will be renewed as in the days of his youth."

13¹"God does all these things to a man, twice, even three times to turn back his soul from Sheol."

14¹"Hear my words you men of learning, for the ear tests words as the tongue tastes food. Let us learn wisdom together."

15¹"Job says, 'I am innocent but God denies me justice. His arrow inflicts an incurable wound. It profits a man nothing when he tries to please God.'"

Elihu: God's eyes are upon all men

16¹"Listen to me you men of understanding, far be it from God to do wrong. He brings upon a man what his conduct deserves. It is unthinkable that God would pervert justice."

17¹"He rules over the whole world. If he withdrew his Spirit all mankind would perish together and man would return again to clay."

18¹"Can he who hates justice govern? Is God not the one who says to kings 'You are unjust!' 19¹He does not favour the rich over the poor for they are all the work of his hands."

20¹"His eyes are upon all men. He sees their every step. There is no dark place where evildoers can hide. He punishes them where all can see."

Elihu accuses Job of rebellion against God

21¹"Job speaks without knowledge. His words lack insight. Job should be tried to the limit for speaking as a wicked man."

22¹"To his sins he adds rebellion against God, for he says, 'I will be vindicated by God.' Yet he also says, 'How am I better off here on earth by not sinning?'"

23¹"Gaze up to the heavens. If you sin, how does that affect God? If you are righteous what do you give him? Your wickedness or your righteousness affects only men like yourself."

Elihu: God slow to answer prayers of the proud

24¹"Proud men cry out to God when troubles come. But when all goes well none say, 'Thanks be to my God who gives us songs in the night, who teaches us more than the beasts of the earth, and makes us wiser than the birds of the air.'"

25¹"Therefore God is slow to answer when they cry out in trouble, because of their pride. He hears not their empty plea. 26¹How much

JOB 7

less then will he listen when you say that his anger never punishes and he takes no notice of wickedness?"

Elihu: God hears the prayer of a repentant man

27"Bear with me a little longer. I will show you that there is more to be said on God's behalf. My words are not false. One perfect in knowledge is with you."

28"God is mighty but he does not despise men. He destroys the wicked and exalts the righteous."

29"When men are held fast by cords of affliction he makes known to them what they have done wrong and commands them to repent of their sin. 30If they obey and serve him, they spend the rest of their days in prosperity and their years in contentment."

31"But if they listen not, for the godless harbour resentment, they shall perish and die without knowledge."

7

Jehovah suddenly appears to Job in the midst of a whirlwind

1Then suddenly, Jehovah appeared to the men in the midst of a whirlwind.

2He rebuked Job saying, "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man. I will question you and you shall answer me."

Jehovah questions Job on the creation

3"Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me if you have understanding. Surely you know."

4"Who stretched the measuring line across it? Who laid the cornerstone, while the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God^F* shouted for joy?"

5"Who set the boundaries of the sea when it burst forth from the womb. Who made thick darkness its garment and uttered, 'Thus far your proud waves may come, but no further?'"

Job questioned on the dawn, the oceans, Sheol and the vast expanse of the earth

6"Since your days began have you commanded the dawn to remove the earth's covering of darkness, and clothe the sky in red to drive away the wicked?"

7"Have you journeyed to the springs of the sea or walked in the recesses of the great deep?"

8"Have you seen the gates of Sheol?"

9"Have you comprehended the vast expanse of the earth? Declare it if you know all this."

Job questioned on light, darkness, snow, hail, frost, ice, lightning, winds, rain and dew

10"Where is the way to the source of light? Where does darkness reside? Surely you know for you have lived so many years."

11"Have you entered the store house of the snows, or seen where hail is made?"

12"From whose womb comes the ice? Who gives birth to the frost from the heavens?"

13"Where is the way to the place where lightning is dispersed, or where the wind is sent forth over the earth?"

14"Who sends torrents of rain to satisfy a thirsty desert and make it spring forth with grass? Who fathers the drops of dew?"

15"Do you know the laws of the heavens? Can you raise your voice to the clouds and call down rain?"

16"Can you send lightning bolts forth. Do they return to you and await your direction?"

Job questioned on the stars and mind of man

17"Can you bind the beautiful Pleiades, or loose the cords of Orion? Can you bring forth the constellations of stars in their seasons?"

18"Who endowed man's heart with wisdom? Who gave his mind understanding?"



The Pleiades star group. "Can you bind the beautiful Pleiades?" Job 7:17

Job is questioned on lions, birds, mountain goats, deer, wild oxen and horses

19"Can you hunt prey like the lioness, to satisfy the hunger of her cubs?"

20"Can you provide food for the ravens when their young cry out in hunger?"

21"Do you know how the mountain goat gives birth? Do you watch when the doe bears her fawn? Do you know the hour they will give birth?"

22"Will the wild ox consent to serve you? Can you harness his great strength? Can you hold him to plough a furrow? Will he stay by your feeding manger at night?"

23"Did you give the horse his strength or

*4 See note on Job 1:5.

clothe his neck with a flowing mane? Did you make him leap like the locust, striking terror with his proud snorting? ²⁴In frenzied excitement he eats up the ground. He cannot stand still when the war trumpet sounds."

²⁵"Does the hawk spread his wings and take flight by your wisdom? Does the eagle soar and build his nest on a rocky crag at your command? His eyes detecting food from afar."

²⁶"Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer now."

8

Job cannot answer the Lord

¹Job replied to the Lord, "How can I answer you? I put my hand over my mouth. I will say no more."

The Lord questions Job further

²The Lord spoke again to Job: "Brace yourself like a man. I shall question you further and you will answer me. ³You who would discredit my justice and condemn me, to justify yourself."

Job is challenged to speak in a voice of thunder, and to glorify himself and crush the wicked

⁴"Have you an arm like God? Can your voice thunder like his?"

⁵"Clothe yourself now with glory and splendour."

⁶Unleash the fury of your wrath and bring every proud man low. Crush the wicked where they stand and bury them in the ground together. ⁷Then I will admit to you that your own hand can save you."

**The mighty hippopotamus
– the first animal created by God**

⁸"Behold the hippopotamus which I have made, along with you, and which feeds on grass like an ox. What strength he has in his loins. What power in the muscles of his belly. ⁹His tail is stiff as cedar wood. The sinews of his thighs are close-knit. His bones are tubes of bronze and his limbs like rods of iron."

¹⁰"He was the first among the creations of God. Under the lotus plants he lies, hidden among the reeds in the marsh and the poplars by the stream. ¹¹When the river rages he is unconcerned. He is secure, though the Jordan surge against his mouth. ¹²Can you capture him by hooks, or pierce his nose?"

Job challenged to capture a crocodile

¹³"Or can you pull in the crocodile with a fishhook, or tie his mouth with a rope? Will he be gentle with you?"

¹⁴"Will he agree to be your slave for life? Can you make a pet of him like a bird, and put him on a leash for your daughters?"

¹⁵"If you lay a hand on him you will remember the struggle and not do it again. Any hope of subduing him is vain."

¹⁶"The mere sight of him is overpowering. No one is fierce enough to rouse him."

¹⁷"Who can strip off his outer coat? Who would approach him with a bride? Who dares open his mouth, ringed about with fearsome teeth?"

¹⁸"His back has rows of shields that cling close together."

¹⁹"His sneezing sparkles the water and his eyes are like the red of dawn."

²⁰"Flashing sparks appear from his mouth and steam comes from his nostrils like from a boiling pot."

²¹"Strength resides in his neck and his heart is hard as rock. When he rears up the mighty are terrified. They retreat before his thrashing."

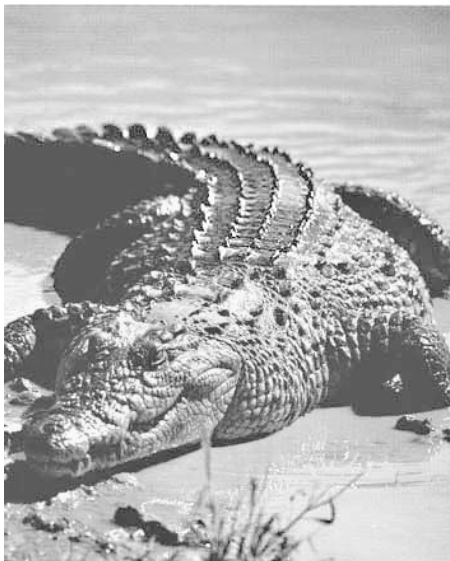
²²"The sword that reaches him has no effect. He does not flee from arrows. Slingstones are like chaff to him. A club but a piece of straw."

²³"His undersides are jagged potsherds, leaving a trail in the mud like a threshing sledge. ²⁴He makes the depths churn like a boiling cauldron and stirs up the water, leaving behind him a glistening wake."

²⁵"Nothing on earth is his equal. A creature without fear."

Who then is able to stand against Jehovah?

²⁶"Who then is able to stand against me? Who has a claim that I must pay? All that is under heaven belongs to me."



The Nile crocodile, "Nothing on earth his equal" (Job 8:23).

JOB 8

Job humbles himself before the Lord

²⁷Job replied to the Lord, "I know you can do all things. No plan of God can be thwarted. ²⁸Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. My ears had heard of you, but now my eyes have beheld."

²⁹"Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes."

The Lord rebukes Job's friends

³⁰Jehovah then rebuked Eliphaz. He said to him, "**My anger is aroused with you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of me that which is right, as has my servant Job.**"

³¹"**So now, take seven bulls and seven rams and sacrifice a burnt offering for yourselves. ³²My servant Job shall pray for you and I will accept his prayer and not deal with you according to your folly.**"

³³So Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar did as the Lord commanded and the Lord accepted Job's prayer.

Job's prosperity restored double

³⁴When Job had prayed for his friends, the Lord restored his prosperity. He gave him twice as much as before.

³⁵His brothers and sisters and all who had known him before, came and ate with him in his house. ³⁶They comforted and consoled him over all the trouble the Lord had brought upon him, and each one gave Job a piece of silver and a gold ring.

³⁷So the Lord blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the first. He had 14,000 sheep, 6000 camels, 1000 yoke of oxen and 1000 donkeys.

Job fathers ten more children and lives 140 years

³⁸Job also fathered seven more sons and three more daughters. Nowhere in the land were there found women as beautiful as Job's daughters.

³⁹After this Job lived to the age of 140 years and saw his sons, and their sons, to the fourth generation.

PSALMS

The book of Psalms has been loved by Jews and Christians alike for thousands of years. It is widely regarded as the most inspiring and uplifting book in the entire Bible, and for good reason, the language is passionate and rich in imagery and the subject matter ranges from the depths of life's sorrows to the heights of joy and exultation in praising God. In the Jewish Bible the book is called Praises (*Tehillim*).

The psalms have the ability like no other literature, to touch and comfort the human soul, especially when humbled by sorrow or tragedy.

Some of the psalms are prayers. Some contain revelations from the Lord. Mostly they are laments of sorrow or songs of praise, originally intended to be sung to musical accompaniment.

The majority of psalms were composed by the spiritually inspired and musically gifted David, who like other great men achieved his finest inspiration during the emotional highs and lows of life. Other psalms were later composed by Asaph (there may have been two psalmists by this name) and other devout men, mostly Levites.

For centuries the Psalms have inspired musical composers. The 23rd psalm (15th in this Condensed Bible) is now the well loved hymn '*The Lord is my Shepherd.*' The chorus of the song '*By the Rivers of Babylon*' is also taken from a psalm (81st in this Bible).

NOTE As with other books in this Condensed Bible, the Psalms have been arranged in chronological order as best can be determined by content and original headings. Duplicate and obscure psalms which are already well represented have been omitted to save space.

AUTHOR

Psalm 1 is by Moses, psalms 2 to 60 are attributed to David, 61 to 71 are anonymous, 72 to 80 are by Asaph, 81 to 99 are anonymous or attributed to the sons of Korah (a later term for the Levites). Psalm 84 is by Ethan who was also believed to have been a Levite.

Day after day, night after night, the heavens proclaim the glory of God. Their voice pours out to all the earth. There is no land where their praise is not heard.

Psalm 36:1.

CONTENTS

Psalm

Many of these headings are provided by the Psalms themselves

Swiftly flow our lives – a psalm of Moses	1	David's unshaken trust in the Lord	22
The all-knowingness of the Lord – a psalm of David	2	Psalm of David after his sin with Bathsheba	23
I will shun evil – a psalm of David	3	David's plea to Lord for forgiveness	24
David's integrity	4	David's prayer to be healed from his illness	25
Prayer of David when Saul sent men to kill him	5	David's ill health because of guilt	26
David's prayer when surrounded by Saul's army	6	Show me the number of my days O Lord	27
Psalm against Doeg when he betrayed David	7	The need to confess sin	28
Psalm of David following recovery from sickness	8	David's inability to refrain from speaking good	29
Save me from evil – a prayer of David	9	Trust in the Lord at all times	30
Psalm of David when he was pursued by Saul	10	Love of Lord like that of a father for his children	31
Psalm of David when he was made king	11	Psalm of David when he fled from Absalom	32
Protect the helpless against the wicked O Lord	12	Psalm of David when fleeing in the desert	33
Lord to arise and protect the needy	13	The honour bestowed on man by God	34
David the Lord's chosen king	14	Righteous suffer when the wicked rule	35
The Lord is my shepherd	15	The heavens proclaim the glory of God	36
Jehovah Almighty the King of glory	16	Keeping the commandments brings joy to the heart	37
David's faith in Eternal Life	17	Who may dwell in the presence of the Lord?	38
How pleasant when brothers live together in unity	18	Sing joyfully to the Lord and praise him	39
The miraculous creations of the Lord	19	If you desire to see good days trust in the Lord	40
Plea for help when David fought against Syria	20	No reverence of God in the heart of a wicked man	41
May the Lord answer all your prayers	21	The greatness of the Lord's love	42
		The ingratitude of David's enemies	43
		Prayer for relief from persecution	44

PSALMS 1

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?	45
Blessed of the Lord is the land around Jerusalem ..	46
Jerusalem	47
Lord has refined us like silver	48
The promised land	49
David's desire of the Lord	50
Mount Zion	51
Lord hears the afflicted who cry out to him	52
David's psalm of the soon to be built Temple	53
Second coming of the Messiah (the Christ)	54
The righteous have no fear of bad news	55
Humility of David	56
A psalm of David in his later years	57
The righteous and the wicked	58
David's blessing upon his son Solomon	59
Royal wedding song	60
Shout for joy all you nations	61
Sheol awaits all men	62
Blessed is he who reveres the Lord	63
Song sung by Levites on pilgrimages to Temple ...	64
Clean hands and a pure heart	65
Psalm for those who minister in the Temple	66
Our eyes look up to our Lord	67
The great day of the Lord	68
Lord requires thanksgiving as an offering	69
Plea to the Lord from the Levites	70
Warning to the wicked	71
Psalm of Asaph who envied the wicked	72

The vine of Israel	73
Asaph's history of the unfaithfulness of Israel	74
Those who trust in the Lord cannot be shaken	75
Revelation from the Lord to Israel through Asaph ...	76
Revelation from the Lord through Asaph	77
Prayer of Asaph at destruction of the Temple	78
Second prayer at the destruction of Jerusalem	79
Asaph's time of distress	80
By the rivers of Babylon	81
Prayer of an afflicted man in exile	82
History of Lord's covenant with Abraham	83
Plea of Ethan for the restoring of David's throne ...	84
Let those whom the Lord rescues give thanks	85
Returned Babylonian exiles filled with songs of joy	86
Let us bow in worship and humble our hearts	87
Blessed is he who delights in Law of the Lord	88
Serve the Lord with gladness and joyful songs	89
They who take refuge in the Lord are protected	90
The Lord forgives sins	91
I will trust only in the Lord not man	92
Take refuge in the Lord and live	93
Other nation's gods are idols made by men	94
Stone the builders rejected	95
This is the day that the Lord has made	96
Praise the Lord	97
Praise God with music	98
Burst into jubilant song	99

Bold The Lord speaking.

Bold italics A psalmist speaking under inspiration.

1

Swiftly flow our lives – a psalm of Moses

- ¹Before the mountains were O Lord, before you brought forth the earth, from everlasting to everlasting you were God.
²A thousand years in your sight is but one day.
³Swiftly you bear our lives away saying, **“Return to dust O sons of men.”** Like the new grass of the morning that springs up and by evening is withered.
⁴The length of our days is but seventy years or eighty with strength,^{F*} and they are mostly toil and trouble.
⁵Teach us to know the shortness of our days O Lord, that we may gain a heart of wisdom. ⁶Have compassion on your servants and satisfy us with your love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.

2

The all-knowingness of the Lord – a psalm of David

- ¹O Lord you have searched me and you know me.
²You know when I sit and when I arise. You

know when I go out and when I lay down to sleep. You know all my ways. ³Before a word is on my tongue you know it. O Lord you know my every thought.

- ⁴Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. ⁵Where can I go from your Spirit? If I rise to the heavens you are there. If I descend to Sheol^{F*} you are there. If I sail on the wings of dawn to a distant shore, your hand will guide me.
⁶I praise you Lord, for I am wonderfully made. You did form my inward parts and knit me together in my mother's womb. ⁷Nor was I hidden from you when I was made in secret, in Sheol for your eyes beheld my spirit. ⁸And all my days were written in your book before I was born.
⁹How vast are your thoughts O God. Were I to count them they would outnumber the grains of sand.
¹⁰Search me O Lord. Know my heart. Test me and see if there is anything offensive in me. Lead me in the way of eternity .

3

I will shun evil - a psalm of David

- ¹To you O Lord I sing praise. I sing of your love and justice.

*4 There are several instances in the Bible since the days of Moses of humans living past 80 but these are exceptions such as we have today. The death age of a mature man has not varied much from the 70 year average throughout the past 5000 years. Life expectancy at birth tables are heavily influenced by infant and child death rates. Under the law of Moses the redeeming price for a male reduced after 60 years of age (Leviticus 8:8).

*5 Sheol is the Hebrew name for the spirit world where the dead reside.

- ²I will be careful to lead a blameless life. I shall set before my eyes no vile thing. I will shun evil.
- ³The deeds of faithless men shall be far from me. Whoever slanders his neighbour I will silence. He who has a proud heart I will not tolerate.
- ⁴I shall search out the faithful in the land to dwell among them. He who practices deceit or speaks falsehood will not stand in my presence.

4

David's integrity

- ¹Vindicate me O Lord, for I am living a blameless life. I trust in you without wavering. Examine my heart for I walk continually in your truth.
- ²I refuse to sit with wicked and deceitful men. I wash my hands in innocence and go before your altar with songs of thanksgiving.
- ³I love the Tabernacle where your glory dwells. O Lord I give praise unto you.

5

A prayer of David when Saul sent men to kill him

- ¹O Lord, protect me from those who have risen up against me. Save me from blood-thirsty men.
- ²See how they lie in wait for me. They return at evening, snarling like dogs and prowling about. I have done no wrong yet they are ready to kill me.
- ³Arise and help me O God, for you are my fortress, and a loving God who will go before me and cause me to triumph over those who slander me.
- ⁴But do not slay them yet O Lord, lest my people forget. First scatter them and bring them low for the curses and lies they utter. Then consume them until they are no more.
- ⁵Then shall it be known to the ends of the earth that God rules over Israel.

6

David's prayer when he was surrounded by Saul's army

- ¹Hear my prayer O Lord, for it arises not from deceitful lips. Though you probe my heart you will find no wrong, for I have resolved that my lips will not sin. And I have kept myself from the ways of the wicked. My steps have stayed in your path.
- ²I call on you O God for you will answer me. Show me your great love. Keep me as the apple of your eye.
- ³Hide me from the violent men who have surrounded me, for they have tracked me down to throw me to the ground. They are

like a lion hungry for its prey, and their mouths speak with arrogance.

- ⁴O Lord save me from such men. From men who belong to this world and whose reward is in this life.
- ⁵But as for me, when I am resurrected in righteousness I will see your face and have joy in your presence.

7

A psalm against Doeg when he betrayed David to Saul

- ¹Why do you boast, you man mighty in evil? You who are a disgrace in the eyes of God. Your tongue is like a sharpened razor, it plots destruction. You love falsehood rather than good.
- ²Surely God will bring you down to everlasting ruin. He will uproot you from the land of the living.
- ³Then will the righteous say, "Here is a man who did not make God his stronghold but trusted in his wealth. He grew strong by destroying others."
- ⁴But I am like an olive tree, flourishing in the house of God. I trust in his unfailing love and shall praise him forever.

8

A psalm of David following his recovery from sickness

- ¹I exalt you O Lord, for you lifted me out of the depths and did not allow my enemies to gloat over me.
- ²O Lord my God, I called for your help and you healed me. You spared me from going down to Sheol.
- ³Sing you saints of the Lord. Praise his holy name. For his anger lasts but a moment yet his favour lasts forever.
- ⁴When I felt secure I said, "I will never be shaken." Then you hid your face from me and I was dismayed. So I cried out for mercy for what gain was there in my destruction.
- ⁵Then O Lord you turned my wailing to gladness. You removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, so that my heart could sing to you again and not be silent. O Lord, I give thanks unto you forever.

9

Save me from evil – a prayer of David

- ¹O Lord I call unto you. Come to me quickly. Set a guard over my mouth. Let my heart not be drawn to evil.
- ²Let a righteous man rebuke me for it is kindness. I will not refuse it.
- ³Yet my prayer is ever against the wicked. Keep me from the snares they have laid for me. Let them fall into their own nets while I pass by in safety.

10

A psalm of David when he was pursued by Saul

- ¹O Lord my God, save and deliver me from all who pursue me, or they will tear me like a lion.
- ²Yet O Lord, if there is guilt on my hands, if I have done evil to one at peace with me, then let my enemy overtake me and trample my life to the ground.
- ³Arise O Lord in your anger. Bring to an end the violence of the wicked, and keep safe the righteous.

11

A psalm David sang when the Lord delivered him from Saul and made him king

- ¹I love you O Jehovah my strength. You are my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer. In you I take refuge.
- ²The cords of death entangled me. Destruction overwhelmed me. In my distress I cried out to my God for help, and he heard me.
- ³The earth trembled and shook for he was angry. He parted the heavens and descended, a dark cloud his covering. He mounted the cherubim^{F*} and flew, soaring on the wings of the wind.
- ⁴He thundered from heaven and cast hailstones and great bolts of lightning and rescued me from my enemy who was too strong for me.
- ⁵The Lord dealt with me according to my righteousness, for I have kept his ways and not turned from his commandments.
- ⁶O Lord, you save the humble and bring low the proud. For who is the Rock but our God. It is you who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect. ⁷You make my feet agile, like those of a deer and my arms strong to bend a bow of bronze.
- ⁸I pursued my enemies and overtook them. I turned not back until they were all destroyed. They cried for help but there was no one to save them. You did not answer them.
- ⁹You have made me the head of nations. People I did not know are subject to me. As soon as I speak they obey. Foreigners cringe before me. They come trembling from their strongholds.
- ¹⁰The Lord lives! Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be my Saviour! He gives his anointed king great victories. He shows unfailing kindness to his anointed, to David and his descendants forever.

12

Protect the helpless against the wicked O Lord

- ¹O Lord, why do you stand far off in our time of trouble?

- ²In arrogance the wicked man hunts down the weak. He boasts of the greed in his heart and reviles your holy name.
- ³In his proud thoughts there is no room for God. He prospers in his ways and sneers at his enemies. He says to himself, "Nothing will harm me. I will glut myself and never be called to judgement."
- ⁴His tongue utters curses, lies, and threats. He lies in wait near villages, watching from his hiding place to murder the innocent. He says to himself, "God is not concerned. He does not see."
- ⁵Arise O Lord! Forget not the helpless. Why should a wicked man revile you and say to himself, "He will not call me to judgement." For you O God are the helper of the fatherless.
- ⁶Hear their cry O Lord. Call the wicked man to account that he may terrify no more.

13

The Lord to arise and protect the needy

- ¹Help us O Lord, for the godly are vanishing from among men. Every man speaks lies to his neighbour.
- ²The wicked strut about freely and that which is vile is honoured among men. Cut off all flattering lips and boastful tongues O Lord. Protect us from such men.
- ³Jehovah says, "**Because of the oppression of the weak and the groaning of the needy, I will now arise and protect them from their oppressors.**"

14

David the Lord's chosen king

- ¹Why do the nations conspire and plot in vain? Kings of the earth rise up against the Lord and against his anointed king.
- ²They say, "Let us break our bondage and throw off our chains." But he who is enthroned in heaven laughs at their threats.
- ³Then he rebukes them in his anger saying, "**I have installed my king on my holy mountain Zion.**"^{F*}
- ⁴I will proclaim a decree of Jehovah. He said to me, "**You are my son. Today I have become your Father. Ask of me and I will make all nations your inheritance, and you will break them with a rod of iron.**"
- ⁵Therefore you kings be warned. Serve Jehovah with reverence and trembling. Honour his son the king, lest he be angry and you be destroyed. ⁶But blessed are all who take refuge in him.

*3 Cherubim are winged, heavenly creatures. For a fuller description see Ezekiel 1:4-15.

*3 Zion is the hill in Jerusalem where the temple and king's palace were located.

15

The Lord is my shepherd

- 1The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want. I lie down in green pastures, by still waters he leads me.
- 2He restores my soul, in paths of righteousness he leads me.
- 3Though I walk the dark valley, no evil I fear. For you are with me and your rod^{F*} and staff do comfort me.
- 4You spread my table in the midst of my enemies, you anoint my head and my cup overflows.
- 5Goodness and mercy shall follow me all my days, then shall I dwell forever in the house of the Lord.



“By still waters he leads me.” Psalm 15 (23 in traditional Bibles) “The Lord is my Shepherd” is the best loved of all the Psalms.

16

Jehovah Almighty the King of glory

- 1Lift up your heads O gates, be lifted up you ancient doors that the King may enter in.
- 2Who is he this King, strong and majestic? He is Jehovah Almighty the King of glory.

17

David’s faith in Eternal Life

- 1Keep me safe O Lord, for in you is my refuge, in you is all my hope.
- 2As for the saints^{F*} in the land, they are my delight, but of men who run after other gods I will not have their name on my lips. Their sorrows will increase.
- 3O Lord, you have made my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places. Surely I have a delightful inheritance.
- 4Therefore I praise you O Lord, you who enlighten my understanding at night. My heart is glad and my tongue rejoices. I will not be shaken.
- 5And my body shall rest secure, for you will

*3 A shepherd’s protective stick or club.

*2 The saints in Biblical times were the faithful believers.

not leave my soul in Sheol, you will not let your faithful one be destroyed.

- 6You have shown me the pathway to Eternal Life and will fill me with eternal joy at your right hand.

18

How pleasant when brothers live together in unity

- 1How good and pleasant when brothers live together in harmony.
- 2Like precious oil poured on the head until it runs down on the beard, even the beard of Aaron, even to the hem of his robe.
- 3Like the dew of Mount Hermon descending upon Mount Zion.



Mount Hermon (Psalm 18:3).

19

The miraculous creations of the Lord

- 1O Lord my God, you who radiate great glory and are clothed with light as a garment.
- 2You stretched out the heavens like the canopy of a tent and set the earth upon its foundations.
- 3You covered it with great waters, high as the mountains, but at your command the waters fled to the lowlands, to the places assigned for them. 4Never again will they cover the whole earth.
- 5You caused springs to well up in the valleys and streams to flow in the mountains, to give water to the beasts of the field and the birds of the air who nest and sing among the branches.
- 6You sent rain upon the hills to bring forth grass for the cattle and plants for man to cultivate for food, wine to gladden his heart. 7Oil to make his face shine and bread to sustain his strength.
- 8The moon marks off the seasons and the sun goes down to bring darkness. Night falls and the beasts of the forest prowl, lions roar for their prey. 9The sun arises and they steal away to sleep in their dens. Then man goes out to his work to labour until evening.

PSALMS 20

- ¹⁰How great are your works O Lord. In wisdom you made them all. The earth is full of your creatures and the vast and spacious sea teems with fish beyond number, both large and small.
- ¹¹All creation look to you for their food at the proper time, and when you give it to them they are satisfied.
- ¹²When you take away their spirit they die and return to the dust. But when you send forth your spirit, life is again created and you renew the face of the earth.
- ¹³May the glory of the Lord endure forever. I will sing to the Lord all my days. I shall sing praise as long as I live. Praise the Lord O my soul. Praise the Lord.

20

A plea for help when David fought against Syria

- ¹You have been angry with us O God. You have shaken the land and torn it open. You have shown your people desperate times. You have given us wine that makes us stagger.
- ²Save us and help us with your right hand that the people you love may be delivered. For you have said from your Tabernacle, "**Gilead is mine, Manasseh is mine. Ephraim is my helmet and Judah my sceptre.**"
- ³O God why have you rejected us and no longer go out with our armies? Give us help against our enemies, for the aid of man is worthless.
- ⁴With our God we will gain victory. He will trample down our enemies.

21

May the Lord answer all your prayers

- ¹May the Lord answer your prayer of distress. May he send you help from his holy place.
- ²May he remember all your sacrifices and accept your offerings.
- ³May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed.

22

David's unshaken trust in the Lord

- ¹Now we know that the Lord saves his anointed king. He answers him from his holy heaven with the power of his right hand.
- ²Some men trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of Jehovah our God.
- ³O Lord, the king rejoices in your strength. You have granted him the desire of his heart. He asked for life and you gave it to him, for ever and ever.
- ⁴You have bestowed upon him splendour and majesty. Surely you have granted him

eternal blessings. ⁵For the king trusts in you and will not be shaken.

23

A psalm of David after his sin against Uriah and his wife Bathsheba

- ¹Have mercy on me O God, according to your great compassion. Blot out my transgression. Wash away my guilt and cleanse me from my sin.
- ²My wrong is ever before me. I have sinned and done what is evil in your sight. You are justified when you judge me.
- ³Surely I was sinful at birth, from the time my mother conceived me. I know you desire a pure heart, for you teach me truth.
- ⁴Cleanse me now and I will be clean. Wash me and I will be whiter than snow.
- ⁵Create in me a pure heart O God. Renew a faithful spirit in me.
- ⁶Cast me not from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of my salvation and grant in me a steadfast spirit to sustain me.
- ⁷Then will I teach transgressors your ways, and sinners shall turn back to you.
- ⁸Save me from blood guilt O Lord, and my tongue will sing your praises. Open my lips and my mouth will honour you.
- ⁹You do not want sacrifice or I would bring it. You would not take pleasure in my burnt offering.
- ¹⁰The sacrifice you want from me is a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

24

David's plea to the Lord for forgiveness

- ¹In you I trust O my God, therefore I will not be put to shame.
- ²No one whose hope is in you is ever put to shame O Lord, only they who transgress your laws.
- ³Show me your ways O Jehovah, guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are my God and my hope is in you.
- ⁴Remember not the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways.
- ⁵Good and upright is Jehovah, therefore he instructs sinners in his ways. He guides the humble in what is right.
- ⁶Therefore forgive my sin O Lord, though it is great. Turn to me and be gracious, for I am lonely and afflicted.
- ⁷The ways of the Lord are faithful for those who obey his laws. They will spend their days in prosperity and their children will inherit the land.

25

David's prayer to be healed from his illness

- ¹Blessed is he who has regard for the weak, the Lord will deliver him in times of

trouble. He will bless him on his sickbed and restore him to health.

²Therefore I prayed, "O Lord have mercy on me and heal me, for I have sinned against you."

³My enemies say of me, "When will he die and his name perish?" They whisper together and imagine the worst for me saying, "A vile disease has afflicted him. He will never arise from the place where he lies."

⁴Even my friend in whom I trusted has lifted his heel against me.

⁵O Lord have mercy on me. Raise me up that I may avenge my enemies. Then will I know that you are pleased with me.

26

David's ill health because of guilt

¹O Lord, rebuke me not in your anger. Be merciful for I am weak. My bones are in agony. My soul is in anguish. How long O Lord, how long?

²Because of your wrath there is no health in my body. My bones have no soundness because of my sin. My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear.

³My wounds fester and are loathsome because of my sins. I am bowed down and brought low.

⁴All day long I go about mourning. My back is filled with searing pain. There is no health in my body.

⁵All night long I flood my bed with tears. My eyes grow weak with sorrow.

⁶I am feeble and utterly crushed. I groan in anguish of spirit. My heart pounds, my strength fails me. The light has gone from my eyes.

⁷My friends and companions avoid me. Those who seek my life set their traps and plot deception.

⁸Turn O Lord and deliver me. Save me through your unfailing love.

⁹Away from me all you who do evil, for the Lord has heard my weeping. He has heard my cry for mercy. He has accepted my prayer.

¹⁰Now all my enemies shall be ashamed. They will turn back in sudden disgrace.

27

Show me the number of my days O Lord

¹Show me O Lord my life's end. Show me the number of my days. Let me know how fleeting is my life.

²You have made my days a mere handbreadth. My span of years is nothing before you.

³Every man's life is but a breath. He is a mere shadow as he goes to and fro, bustling

about, but all in vain. He heaps up wealth not knowing who will inherit it.

28

The need to confess sin

¹Blessed is he whose wrongs are forgiven. Blessed is he whose sins the Lord does not hold against him and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

²When I hid my sin my bones wasted away and I groaned all day long. Day and night your hand was heavy upon me. My strength was sapped, as in the heat of summer.

³Then I confessed my sin to you. I no longer hid my transgression, and you forgave my guilt.

⁴Many are the pangs of the wicked, but the Lord's unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him.

29

David's inability to refrain from speaking good

¹I said to myself, "To keep my tongue from evil I will put a muzzle on my mouth when the wicked are in my presence."

²But when I was silent, not saying anything good, my anguish increased. My heart grew hot within me, so I no longer remained silent.

30

Trust in the Lord at all times

¹My soul finds rest only in God. In him is my salvation. ²He is my rock, my refuge, my fortress. I shall not be moved.

³My hope comes from him. My honour comes from him. I will not be shaken.

⁴Trust in the Lord at all times O people. Pour out your hearts to him, for he is our refuge.

⁵Both the low and the high born are but a breath. When weighed in the balance they are nothing.

⁶O Lord you are strong and you are loving. Surely you will reward each person according to what they have done.

31

The love of the Lord like that of a father for his children

¹Praise the Lord O my soul. Praise the Lord my innermost being.

²Praise him who forgives your sins and restores your health.

³Praise him who preserves your life and crowns you with love and compassion.

⁴Praise him who satisfies your desires with good things, that your youth be renewed like the eagles.

⁵For the Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in love. He

PSALMS 32

will not rebuke forever. He does not punish us as our sins deserve.

⁶As high as the heavens is his great love for those who honour him.

⁷As a father's love for his children is the Lord's love for those who revere him.

⁸As for man, his days are like grass. He flourishes briefly then is gone.

⁹But from everlasting to everlasting is the Lord's love for those who revere him and for their children's children who obey his laws.

¹⁰Praise the Lord you angels who do his bidding. Praise the Lord all his works everywhere.

32

A psalm of David when he fled from his son Absalom

¹O Lord, how many are my foes. How many have risen up against me. They are saying, "God will not deliver him."

²But you are a shield around me O Lord. You glorify me and lift up my head. I cry out aloud, and you answer me from your holy hill.

³Therefore I will fear not the tens of thousands risen up against me. Arise and deliver me O my God. Strike all my enemies.

33

A psalm of David when he was fleeing in the desert

¹O my God I earnestly seek you. My soul thirsts for you. My body longs for you in this dry and weary land.

²I have seen you in the sanctuary of the Tabernacle. I have beheld your power and glory.

³Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I shall praise you as long as I live.

⁴In your name I shall lift up my hands. In you my soul will be satisfied.

⁵On my bed through all the watches of the night I think of you. My soul clings to you.

⁶They who seek the life of the king will be destroyed, but I will rejoice in my God.

34

The honour bestowed on man by God

¹O Jehovah our Lord, how majestic is your name in the earth. Your glory is above all the heavens. ²The mouths of infants and little children praise you.

³When I behold the heavens, the work of your hands, the moon and the stars, what is man that you are mindful of him, that you care for him? ⁴You have made him little lower than God and crowned him with glory and honour, subjecting all things under his feet.

⁵You have given him dominion over the works of your hands, the flocks, herds, and beasts of the field, the birds of the air and the fish of the sea.

35

The righteous suffer when the wicked rule

¹In the Lord I take refuge, why then say to me "Flee like a bird to the hills."

²When the foundations are being destroyed what can the righteous do? The wicked bend their bows and shoot at the upright from the shadows.

³But the Lord is in his sanctuary. His eyes examine all men. On the wicked he will rain fiery coals.

⁴Jehovah is righteous and loves justice. Therefore righteous men will see his face.

36

The heavens proclaim the glory of God

¹Day after day, night after night, the heavens proclaim the glory of God. Their voice pours out to all the earth. There is no land where their praise is not heard.

²The sun comes forth each morning, like a groom from his bridal chamber. He exults and runs his course like a champion. Nothing is hidden from his light.

37

Keeping the commandments of the Lord brings joy to the heart

¹The commandments of the Lord are perfect. They revive the soul and bring joy to the heart.

²They give light to the eyes and are more precious than pure gold.

³They are sweeter than honey from the comb. In keeping them there is great reward.

38

Who may dwell in the presence of the Lord?

¹Who may dwell in your presence O Lord?

He who does what is right.

²He who speaks truth from his heart.

He who does his neighbour no wrong.

³He who honours those who revere the Lord.

He who lends his money without usury.*

⁴He who does not accept a bribe.

He who keeps his word even when it hurts.

39

Sing joyfully to the Lord and praise him

¹Sing joyfully to the Lord you righteous, for it is fitting for the upright to praise him.

²Praise him with the harp. Make music upon the ten-stringed lyre. Play skilfully and shout for joy, for the Lord is faithful in all he does.

*3 Excessive interest.

- ³Let all the earth revere him. Blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah.
- ⁴From on high he beholds all mankind. He who made the hearts of all sees everything they do.
- ⁵His eyes are upon those who revere him and whose hope is in his love. He delivers them from death and keeps them alive in famine.
- ⁶In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust on his holy name.
- ⁷May your everlasting love rest upon us O Lord.

40

If you desire to see many good days trust in the Lord

- ¹I will praise the Lord all day long. My soul will honour him forever .
- ²Let the troubled hear and rejoice. Glorify the Lord with me, let us exalt his name together.
- ³For this poor man sought the Lord and he answered him. He saved him from all his troubles. He delivered him from all his fears.
- ⁴Those who look to the Lord are radiant. Their faces never blush with shame. The angel of the Lord encamps around them and delivers them.
- ⁵Taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.
- ⁶Revere the Lord you his saints, for those who honour him lack for nothing. Lions may grow hungry and weak, but they who seek the Lord lack no good thing.
- ⁷Come my children and hear me. If you love life and desire to see many good days, keep your tongue from untruths, turn from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it.
- ⁸For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayers. They cry out and the Lord hears them. He delivers them from their troubles.
- ⁹A righteous man may have many afflictions, but the Lord delivers him from them all.
- ¹⁰The Lord is close to him who is broken hearted and crushed in spirit. He protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken.
- ¹¹No one who takes refuge in the Lord will be condemned.

41

No reverence of God in the heart of a wicked man

- ¹There is no reverence of God in the heart of a wicked man. In his own eyes he flatters himself too much to see his sin.
- ²The words of his mouth are deceitful. He has ceased to be wise and no longer does good. On his bed he plans evil and plots a sinful course.

42

The greatness of the Lord's love

- ¹O Lord, your love reaches the skies. Like mighty mountains is your righteousness and like the great ocean is your justice.
- ²Both the high and low among men find refuge in your wings.
- ³They feast on the abundance of your house and drink from your river of delights. For you are the fountain of life and the source of light.
- ⁴Continue your love to those who know you, to the upright in heart.

43

The ingratitude of David's enemies

- ¹O Lord arise and come to my aid. Put to shame those who seek my life. May they be like chaff before the wind with the angel of the Lord driving them. May their paths be dark and slippery.



The ten-stringed lyre or Kinnor. Most of the Psalms were intended to be sung to musical accompaniment.

- ²They repay me evil for good and leave my heart forlorn. When they were ill I clothed myself in sackcloth, and humbled myself with fasting. ³I poured forth my prayers and went about mourning, as though weeping for my mother.
- ⁴But when I stumbled they gathered in glee. Now they slander me without ceasing.

PSALMS 44

⁵O Lord how long will you look on? Rescue my life from their ravages and I will praise you with thanksgiving amid throngs of people.

44

A prayer for relief from persecution

¹Save me O Lord, for waters have come up to my neck. I am sinking in the quicksand and my throat is parched from calling for help.

²Those who hate me without reason outnumber the hairs of my head. But you know my folly O God. My guilt is not hidden from you.

³I endure scorn for your sake. I am a stranger to my brothers.

⁴Zeal for your house consumes me, and the insults of those who insult you fall on me.

⁵When I weep and fast I must endure shame. People mock me and I am the song of drunkards.

⁶You know how I am scorned and disgraced. It has broken my heart and left me helpless.

⁷I looked for sympathy but there was none. They put gall^{F*} in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst.

⁸But I pray to you O Lord. Answer me with your sure salvation. Rescue me, do not let me sink. Deliver me from those who hate me.

⁹May they be blotted out of the Book of Life^{F*} and not be listed with the righteous.

¹⁰O God protect me and I will praise your name in song and glorify you with thanksgiving. This will please you more than an ox, more than a bull with its horns and hooves.

¹¹The Lord hears the needy and will save Jerusalem and rebuild the cities of Judah. Those who love his name will dwell there and inherit it.

45

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

¹My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? I cry out day and night but you do not answer me.

²Our fathers cried out to you and were saved. They were not disappointed.

³But I am a worm, not a man. I am despised by the people.

⁴All who see me mock and shake their heads. They say, "He trusts in the Lord. Let the Lord rescue him."

⁵From my mother's womb you have been my God. Do not forsake me now when trouble is near.

⁶Many bulls surround me, like roaring lions ready to tear their prey.

⁷I am poured out like water and all my bones are racked. My heart has melted within me.

⁸My strength is dried up and my tongue cleaves to the roof of my mouth.

⁹Dogs have surrounded me, a company of evildoers. Like a lion they have torn my hands and feet. I can count all my bones.

¹⁰People stare and gloat over me. They divide my spoils among them and cast lots for my clothing.

¹¹O my Lord, be not far off, O my Strength, come quickly to help me. Deliver my life from the sword. Save me from the horns of the bulls. Rescue me from the mouths of the lions.

46

Blessed of the Lord is the land around Jerusalem

¹We praise you in Jerusalem O Lord, you who hear our prayers. For when we were overwhelmed by our sins you forgave us.

²Blessed are we whom you have chosen to live near your holy Tabernacle.

³You care for the land and water it. You enrich it abundantly and soften it with showers and bless our crops. Our carts overflow with abundance.

⁴The streams are filled with water. The grasslands of the desert overflow. The hills are clothed with gladness.

⁵The meadows are full of sheep and the valleys are mantled with grain. All shout and sing together for joy.

47

Jerusalem

¹I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go up to the house of the Lord."

²Jerusalem is a city closely compacted together, where all Israel go to praise the name of Jehovah.

³There the throne of the house of David stands.

⁴Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

48

The Lord has refined us like silver

¹All the earth, shout with joy to the Lord! Sing to the glory of his name! Make his praise glorious!

²O God, how awesome are your deeds. How great is your power. All the earth bows to you. They sing praise to your holy name.

³Come and see what God has done! How awesome are his works!

⁴O Lord you tested us, you refined us like silver. You brought us into captivity and laid burdens on our backs.

⁵You let men ride over our heads and we went through fire and water.

⁶But you turned the sea into dry land and we passed through on foot. You brought us to this place of abundance. Come, let us rejoice in him.

*7 Gall is a sour-tasting herbal extract.

*9 The Book of Life is spoken of throughout the Bible. See note on Revelation 2:36.

49

The promised land

- ¹Sing to God, sing praise to his name. Extol him who rides upon the clouds. His name is Jehovah.
- ²Rejoice before him. He is father to the fatherless, the defender of widows.
- ³He went before his people when they marched through the desert.
- ⁴The mountain shook and the heavens poured down rain when the God of Israel descended on Sinai.
- ⁵You gave abundant rain also O God to refresh this land of our inheritance, to provide for the poor.
- ⁶Great was the company of Israel who marched in your name. You commanded and kings and their armies fled before them.
- ⁷Israel divided the spoil. See the women who remained among the sheepfolds, clothed with silver like the feathers of doves with talons of shining gold.

50

David's desire of the Lord

- ¹The Lord is my light and my salvation, so whom shall I fear? He is my strength and my refuge.
- ²This is what I desire of the Lord; that I may dwell in his Tabernacle all the days of my life to gaze upon his beauty.
- ³There I will sacrifice with shouts of joy. There I will sing and make music to the Lord.
- ⁴Though my father and mother forsake me the Lord will never forsake me.
- ⁵I know that I will yet see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

51

Mount Zion

- ¹O mountains of Bashan, rugged and majestic, gaze in envy at Zion. For is not Mount Zion from where Jehovah himself has chosen to reign?

52

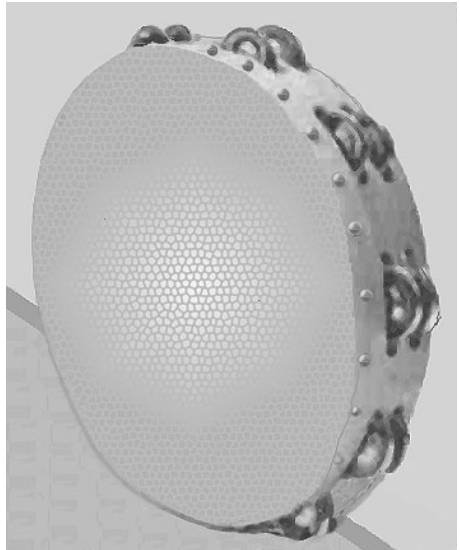
The Lord hears the afflicted who cry out to him

- ¹I give thanks to you O Lord with all my heart. I will tell of your wonders. I will be glad and rejoice in you and sing praise to your holy name O Most High.
- ²My enemies stumble, for you upheld my cause, judging righteously as you sat on your throne.
- ³For all who know your name trust in you, for you O Lord have never forsaken those who seek you.
- ⁴Sing praises to Jehovah enthroned in Zion. Proclaim among the nations what he has done for he does not ignore the cry of the afflicted.

53

David's psalm of the soon to be built Temple

- ¹Your procession to the Tabernacle has come into view O God. In front are the singers and behind them the musicians, then the maidens playing tambourines.
- ²See the little tribe of Benjamin leading them, next the great throng of Judah's princes. Then come the princes of Zebulun, and of Naphtali.
- ³O God, show us your strength as you have done before. When your Temple stands at Jerusalem kings will bring you gifts.
- ⁴Rebuke Egypt, the beast among the reeds, the herd of bulls among the calves of the nations. Humble her that she too may bring you gifts of silver.
- ⁵Sing to the Lord O kingdoms of the earth, sing praise to Jehovah, to him who rides the ancient skies, who thunders with a mighty voice.
- ⁶Proclaim the power of God whose majesty is over Israel.



Israelite tambourine (Psalms 53:1).

54

The coming of the Messiah (The Christ)

- ¹Jehovah said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." F*
- ²"I will extend your mighty throne from Jerusalem and you will rule in the midst of your enemies."

*5 The words of Psalm 54 are those of God the Father, to the Messiah (his son Jesus Christ). Jesus quoted the first verse of this psalm and stated that these words pertained to him and were given to David by the Holy Spirit (Matt-Mark-Luke 27:22-25). The name/Title Jehovah meaning 'Eternal' can apply to both the Father and the Son (see 1 Corinthians 4:13 and note, also John 5:29, 12:12, 15:22).

PSALMS 55

³“Your followers will be willing on your day of power, arrayed in holy splendour and descending with you from the direction of the rising sun, like dew from the heavens.”

⁴“I have sworn and will not change my mind. You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.”^{F*}

⁵“God is at your side and he will crush kings on the day of his wrath.”

⁶“He will judge the nations, heaping up the dead and destroying the rulers of the whole earth.”

55

The righteous have no fear of bad news

¹Blessed are they who revere the Lord, who delight in keeping his commandments.

²Their descendants shall be mighty in the land and will possess wealth and riches. Their righteousness will endure forever.

³Even in darkness, light dawns for the gracious and the compassionate. Good comes to them who are generous and lend freely, who conduct their affairs with justice.

⁴For the righteous shall be remembered forever. They have no fear of bad news. Their hearts trust in the Lord.

⁵In the end they will look in triumph upon their foes and be lifted high in honour.

⁶But the wicked will grind their teeth and waste away, for the desires of the wicked come to nothing.

56

The humility of David

¹My heart is not proud O Lord. I do not concern myself with matters too wonderful for me.

²I have stilled and quieted my soul, like a little child with his mother.

57

A psalm of David in his later years

¹Deliver me O my God from the grasp of evil and cruel men.

²You have been my hope O Lord since my youth. From my mother's womb I have trusted in you. Every day my mouth has been filled with your praise.

³Cast me not away when I am old. Forsake me not when my strength is gone. For my enemies conspire together to take my life.

⁴They say, “God has forsaken him. Let us seize him now. No one will rescue him.”

⁵Be not far from me O God. May scorn and disgrace be heaped on those who would harm me.

⁶But as for me I shall always have hope, and praise you more and more.

⁷Forsake me not when I am old and grey. Let

me declare your power to the next generation.

⁸Though you have made me see many bitter troubles, you will restore my life again.

⁹From the depths of the earth you shall raise me up. You will increase my honour and comfort me once again.

¹⁰Then I will praise you with the harp O Holy One of Israel. Then shall I sing praise to you with the lyre.

¹¹My lips will shout for joy, for those who would harm me will have been put to shame and confusion.

58

The righteous and the wicked

¹Be not envious of evil men, for like grass they soon wither and die away.

²Trust in the Lord and do good and you will dwell in the land and enjoy safety.

³Take delight in the Lord and he will grant you the desires of your heart. Your righteousness shall shine as the noon day sun.

⁴Be still before the Lord. Wait patiently for him. Be not envious when men succeed in wickedness.

⁵Refrain from anger for it leads only to evil. Better the little that the righteous have than the wealth of the wicked.

⁶A little while and the wicked shall be no more, but the humble will inherit the earth. They shall enjoy peace and their inheritance will endure in the age to come.

⁷The wicked borrow and repay not, but the righteous are generous and lend freely. Therefore their children will be blessed.

⁸The mouth of a righteous man speaks wisdom and justice for the law of God is in his heart.

⁹I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread.

¹⁰So turn from evil and do good, then you will live in the land for all time.

¹¹For the Lord loves the just and will not forsake them, but the offspring of the wicked shall be cut off.

¹²I have seen a wicked and ruthless man flourishing like a green tree in fertile soil, but soon he passed away and was no more.

¹³Observe the upright. There is a future for the man of peace but all sinners will be destroyed.

59

David's blessing upon his son Solomon

¹Confer upon the royal son your righteousness O God. May he judge your people with justice.

²May he endure as long as the sun and the

*4 Melchizedek was a high priest to whom Abraham paid tithes.

moon.

- ³May he be like the rain that falls and waters the earth.
- ⁴May the righteous flourish and prosperity abound in his days.
- ⁵May he rule from sea to sea, and from the Euphrates to the ends of the earth.
- ⁶May the desert tribes bow low before him and his enemies lick the dust.
- ⁷May the kings of Tarshish and other distant shores bring tribute to him.
- ⁸May the kings of Sheba and Seba bring him gifts, and all kings bow down to him and serve him.
- ⁹May gold from Sheba be given him.
- ¹⁰May he deliver the weak and needy who cry out and the afflicted who have no one to help them.
- ¹¹May he live long and the people ever pray for him and bless him.
- ¹²May grain abound throughout the land.
- ¹³May his name be honoured forever and all nations be blessed through him.

60

The royal wedding song

- ¹You are the most excellent of men O king. Your lips have been anointed with grace, therefore God has blessed you for ever.
- ²Gird on your sword O mighty one. Clothe yourself with splendour and majesty.
- ³Ride forth victoriously on behalf of truth, humility and righteousness.
- ⁴Let your right hand do awesome deeds and nations fall beneath your feet.
- ⁵Your throne is a throne of God and shall endure forever.
- ⁶The royal sceptre of your kingdom will be justice, for you love righteousness and hate wickedness.
- ⁷Therefore God has set you above your fellow men and anointed you with oil of gladness.
- ⁸Your robes are fragrant with myrrh, aloes and cassia.
- ⁹The music of strings will make you glad in your palace adorned with ivory.
- ¹⁰Daughters of kings are among your maids of honour and at your right hand is the royal bride, her gown interwoven with gold of Ophir.
- ¹¹Hear O bride, the king is enthralled by your beauty. Honour him for he is your lord.
- ¹²Tyre shall bring you gifts. Men of wealth will seek your favour.
- ¹²Your sons will become princes throughout the land.

61

Shout for joy all you nations

- ¹Clap your hands all you nations! Shout to the Lord with cries of joy! How awesome is Jehovah the Most High God, the great

King over all the earth.

- ²He subdued nations under our feet and chose our inheritance for us, the pride of Israel whom he loved.
- ³Sing praises to the Lord! Sing a psalm of praise to our King! Sing praises! For God is the King of all the earth.

62

Sheol awaits all men

- ¹Hear this, all you who live in the world, both rich and poor, I will speak to you words of wisdom:
- ²Why should you fear when evil days arrive and wicked men surround you, men who trust in their wealth and boast of their riches?
- ³No man can prolong his life forever and not see Sheol. All know that the wise man and the foolish man both perish alike, and leave their wealth to others.
- ⁴Their innermost thoughts will be their dwelling place for endless generations, though they named lands their own.
- ⁵For men do not endure, despite their riches. Like sheep they perish and are appointed for Sheol.
- ⁶Death is their shepherd. Down to Sheol they descend while their bodies decay in the grave, far from their mansions.
- ⁷But God will ransom my soul from Sheol. He will surely take me to himself.
- ⁸Therefore be not overawed when a man grows rich, when the splendour of his house increases. For he will carry nothing with him when he dies.
- ⁹His splendour will not descend with him. He will join his fathers who never see the sun.^{F*}

63

Blessed is he who reveres the Lord

- ¹Blessed are you who revere the Lord and walk in his ways. You will eat the fruit of your labour. Blessings and prosperity shall be yours.
- ²Your wife will be like a fruitful tree within your house and your sons like olive shoots around your table.

64

A song sung by the Levites on pilgrimages to the Temple

- ¹O Lord, how beloved is your Temple. How my soul yearns for the courts of your holy house. My heart cries out for the living God.
- ²Even the sparrow has found a nest for herself near your altar O Lord, a place where she

^{*}9 Sheol, the spirit world of the dead was believed by the Israelites to be located under the earth, and therefore dark as it was hidden from the sun. Their concept of the afterlife was that of a restful but shadowy existence, awaiting the time of the resurrection and judgement when the righteous spirits would again reunite with their physical body and live again on earth under the reign of the Messiah.

PSALMS 65

may raise her young.

³Happy are they who dwell in your house, ever singing your praise.

⁴Happy are they who have set their hearts on pilgrimage. As they pass through the Valley of Baca among pools from the autumn rains.

⁵They go from strength to strength until each appears before the Lord in Zion.

⁶Better one day in your courts O Lord than a thousand days elsewhere.

⁷I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than live among the tents of the wicked.

⁸For Jehovah is a sun and a shield. He bestows favour and honour, and withholds no good thing from those who walk uprightly before him.

65

Clean hands and a pure heart required to stand in the Temple

¹Who are worthy to ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place?

²They who have clean hands and a pure heart, who set their minds to truth.

³These will receive a blessing from the Lord.

66

A psalm for those who minister in the Temple

¹Praise the Lord all you servants of Jehovah who minister by night in the house of the Lord.

²Lift up your hands in the Sanctuary and praise him. May the maker of the heavens and earth bless you.

67

Our eyes look up to our Lord

¹We lift up our eyes to him whose throne is in heaven.

²The eyes of a slave look to his master. The eyes of a maid to her mistress. But our eyes look to Jehovah our God, until he shows us mercy.

³Have mercy on us O Lord for we have endured much contempt. We have suffered much ridicule from the proud.

68

The great day of the Lord

¹**God is our refuge and our strength, our help in time of trouble.**

²**We will fear not, even though the earth fall, even though the mountains fall into the sea and its waters roar and foam.**

³**The Lord Almighty is with us. The God of Jacob is our fortress.**

⁴**See the works of the Lord, and the desolation he will bring on the earth.**

⁵**He will make war to cease on the earth. He will break the bow and shatter the**

spear and burn the shields with fire.

⁶**“Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among all nations on earth.”**

69

The Lord requires thanksgiving as an offering

¹**“The Mighty One, Jehovah the Lord, speaks and summons the earth, from the rising of the sun in the east to its setting in the west.”**

²**“He is coming and will not be silent. A fire burns before him and around him a raging storm. He calls to the heavens and the earth that he may judge his people.”**

³**Jehovah says, “Gather to me my faithful ones who made a covenant with me by sacrifice.”**

⁴**“Now hear O Israel, for I am your God and testify against you. Not for your sacrifices which are ever before me; for every animal of the forest is mine and the cattle on a thousand hills, and I know every bird for all the earth is mine. ⁵Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats?”**

⁶**“Rather I require an offering of thanksgiving as your sacrifice, and that you fulfil your vows to the Most High God.**

⁷**Then when you call upon me in your day of trouble I will deliver you.”**

⁸**To the wicked Jehovah says, “What right have you to take my laws upon your lips, you who despise my commandments?”**

⁹**“When you see a thief you join with him. You mix with adulterers. You use your tongue for evil and deceit and even slander your own brother.”**

¹⁰**“These things you have done and I have remained silent, but now I rebuke you to your face.”**

¹¹**“Now hear this, you who forget God, or I will tear you to pieces with none to rescue you. He who offers thanksgiving honours me, and prepares the way for me to show him my salvation.”**

70

A plea to the Lord from the Levites

¹O God, our forebears have told us what you did in days long ago, how you drove out the nations and planted our fathers. It was not their sword that won the land it was your right arm, for you loved them.

²And you are still our King and God who decrees victories for Israel, for we have pushed back enemies and trampled foes.

³But now O God you have rejected and humbled us. You no longer go out with our armies. You have made us retreat before the enemy and they have plundered us.

- ⁴The nations around us scorn and deride Israel.
Our disgrace is before us all day long.
⁵Yet we have not forgotten you or been false
to your covenant. We have not raised our
hands to a foreign god.

71

A warning to the wicked

- ¹Rise up O Judge of the earth. Give the proud
what they deserve.
²How long will the wicked be jubilant O Lord?
They pour out arrogant words and are full
of boasting.
³They slay the widow and foreigner. They
murder the fatherless and say “Jehovah
does not see.”
⁴O fools, when will you become wise? Does
he who formed the ear not hear? Does he
who made the eye not see?
⁵Does he who chastises nations not punish?
Does he who teaches man wisdom lack
knowledge?
⁶Blessed are those whom you discipline O
Lord, for you grant them relief from days
of trouble.

72

A psalm of Asaph^{F*} who envied the wicked

- ¹God is good to those who are pure in heart.
But as for me my feet almost slipped. For
I envied the wicked when I saw them
prosper.
²They have no pain. Their bodies are healthy
and strong. They are free from the
burdens common to man.
³Pride is their necklace, and they clothe
themselves with injustice.
⁴Their eyes bulge with fatness and their
callous hearts conceive sin.
⁵They scoff and speak with malice. Their
mouths utter words against heaven and
they gain possessions by falsehood.
⁶The people turn to them and praise them and
give to them in abundance.
⁷This is what the wicked are like. Carefree
they increase in wealth.
⁸I thought to myself, “Surely I have kept my
heart pure in vain, for day after day I
suffer afflictions.”
⁹When I tried to understand all this it was
difficult for me, until I entered the
Sanctuary of God. Then I understood the
final destiny of the wicked.
¹⁰God casts them down to ruin. Suddenly they
are destroyed, completely swept away by
terrors.
¹¹O Lord, when my spirit was embittered I was
senseless and ignorant, like a beast
before you.
¹²Now I am always with you, and you lead me

by my right hand.

- ¹³You guide me with your counsel, and
afterward you will take me into your glory.
¹⁴Earth has nothing I desire. I have made the
Lord Jehovah my refuge.

73

The vine of Israel

- ¹Hear us O Shepherd of Israel. Awaken your
might and save us. Restore us O God
and let your face shine upon us again.
²O Lord how long will your anger smoulder
and you not heed the prayers of your
people? You have fed us with the bread
of sorrow. You have made us drink tears
by the bowlful. Our enemies mock us.
³You brought a vine out of Egypt and drove
out the nations and planted it. The vine
took root and filled the land. The
mountains were covered with its shade. It
sent out boughs to the sea and branches
as far as the Euphrates.
⁴But now you have broken down your wall so
that all who pass by pick its grapes.
Boars from the forest ravage it and the
creatures of the field feed upon it.
⁵Return to us O God Almighty. Watch over
your vine.

74

Asaph's history of the unfaithfulness of Israel

- ¹O my people, hear the words of my mouth. I
will speak of things from long ago, the
wonders our fathers spoke about.
²Let us not hide from our children the powerful
deeds of Jehovah.
³He established the Law in Israel and
commanded our forefathers to teach it to
their children, that they in turn would
teach it to their children. ⁴So they would
remember his deeds and keep his
commandments and not be like their
forefathers, a stubborn and rebellious
generation whose hearts were disloyal to
God.
⁵For our forefathers forgot the wonders he
showed them in Egypt, where he guided
them with a cloud by day and a pillar of
fire by night. Where he divided the sea
and led them through.
⁶He split rocks in the desert and made water
flow like a river, but they continued to
rebel against him. ⁷Yet he commanded
the skies above and rained down manna
for the people to eat, grain from heaven.
Men ate the bread of angels, all they
could eat.
⁸Then they put the Most High to the test by
demanding food they craved. So he
rained down meat upon them, quail like
the sands on the seashore. ⁹They ate
until they had more than enough, but
God's anger rose against them and he
put to death the sturdiest among them,

*HEADER PSALM 72. Little is known of the psalmist Asaph. He is believed to have been a devout Levite who lived in Jerusalem before the exile to Babylon and apparently witnessed the destruction of the city (see Psalms 78 and 79).

PSALMS 75

cutting down the young men of Israel.

¹⁰Despite this they kept on sinning, so he ended their days in futility.

¹¹Whenever God slew them, they quickly turned back to him again, but their hearts were not loyal, they were unfaithful to his covenant.

¹²Yet he was merciful. Time after time he restrained his anger. He remembered they were only flesh. ¹³But again and again they put God to the test, not remembering his power and how he displayed his miraculous signs in Egypt.

¹⁴How he turned their rivers to blood so they could not drink from their streams. How he sent swarms of flies that tormented them, and frogs that devastated them. ¹⁵How he gave their crops to the locust, and destroyed their vines and cattle with hail and bolts of lightning.

¹⁶Nor did he spare the people from death but sent a plague to strike down the firstborn of Egypt, the first fruits of manhood of the descendants of Ham.

¹⁷But his own people he led out through the desert like sheep, and the sea engulfed their enemies.

¹⁸This way he brought them to his holy land and drove out the nations before them. He allotted the tribes of Israel lands for an inheritance.

¹⁹But again they rebelled against the Most High. They kept not his commandments. Like their fathers they were as faithless and unreliable as a faulty bow. They aroused his jealousy with idols.

²⁰So he rejected Israel completely. He abandoned the Tabernacle and sent the Ark into captivity and gave his people over to the sword. Then he relented and beat back their enemies, putting them to shame.

²¹But he rejected the tribes of Joseph and chose the tribe of Judah, whom he loved, and built his sanctuary on the height of Mount Zion in Jerusalem.

²²He took David from tending sheep to be the shepherd of Israel, and David shepherded them with integrity of heart and skilful hands.

75

Those who trust in the Lord cannot be shaken

¹Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion which cannot be shaken.

²As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds his people, both now and forever.

76

A revelation from the Lord to Israel through Asaph

¹Sing joyfully to the Lord who is our strength!

Shout aloud to the God of Israel!

²Begin the music! Strike the tambourine! Play the melodious harp and the lyre! Sound the ram's horn at New Moon, on the day of our Feast!

³For we have received a revelation from Jehovah.

⁴Jehovah says, "In your distress in Egypt you called to me, and I rescued you. Unseen, I answered you out of a thundercloud. Then I tested you, at the waters of Meribah."

⁵"I said, 'Hear O my people and I will warn you if you will but listen to me. You shall have no foreign gods among you.'"

⁶"But my people did not listen, so I gave them up to their stubborn hearts."

⁷"If my people would but listen to me, how quickly would I subdue their enemies."

⁸"You would be fed with honey and the finest of wheat."



A ram's horn trumpet which was often blown before important announcements.

77

A revelation from the Lord through Asaph to the rulers of Israel

¹God presides in the Heavenly Council and gives this judgement to his rulers from on high:

²"How long will you defend the unjust and show partiality to the wicked? Rather, defend the cause of the helpless and the fatherless. Maintain the rights of the poor and the oppressed. Rescue the weak and the needy from the hands of the wicked."

³"But my rulers understand nothing. They walk around blindly, while the foundations of the nation crumble."

⁴"Yet you are gods, all of you. You are sons of the Most High God. Nevertheless you will die like men, like every other ruler."

78

A prayer of Asaph at the destruction of the Temple

- ¹Why have you rejected us O God? Why does your anger smoulder against the sheep of your pasture?
- ²Remember us, the people you purchased of old, the tribe of your inheritance whom you redeemed, and Jerusalem where you dwelt.
- ³Turn again toward these ruins. See this destruction the enemy has wrought upon the Temple.
- ⁴Your foes roared in the holy place where you met with us. They smashed all the carved panelling with their axes, like axemen cutting down trees. ⁵They set your sanctuary on fire, defiling the Temple of your name, and burned every place where you were worshipped in the land.
- ⁶The prophets are no more. We are given no miraculous signs. None of us knows how long this will last. ⁷How long will the enemy mock you O God? Will they mock your name forever?
- ⁸Why do you withhold your hand? Raise it and destroy them! Remember how they have mocked you O Lord. Do not forget the lives of your afflicted people forever.

79

A second prayer of Asaph at the destruction of Jerusalem

- ¹O God, the nations have defiled your holy Temple and reduced Jerusalem to rubble. ²The dead bodies of your saints are left as food for the birds of the air and beasts of the earth.
- ³The enemy have shed blood like water all around Jerusalem and there is no one to bury our dead. We are objects of scorn to our neighbours.
- ⁴O Lord will you be angry forever? How long will your jealousy burn? Pour out your wrath upon the nation which has destroyed Israel.
- ⁵Hold not against us the sins of our fathers for we are in desperate need. Forgive our sins for your name's sake and deliver us. Why should the nations say, "Where is their God?"
- ⁶Hear the groans of the prisoners and save those condemned to die. Then we your people will ever praise you, from generation to generation.

80

Asaph's time of distress

- ¹When I was in distress I sought the Lord. I cried out for him to hear me.
- ²At night I stretched out untiring hands but my soul would not be comforted. Sleep fled

my eyes and I was too troubled to speak.

- ³I thought of the years of long ago, I remembered my psalms. Would the Lord reject us forever? ⁴Had his unfailing love vanished? Had God forgotten to be merciful?
- ⁵Then I thought, "I will remember the mighty deeds of the Lord. Yes, I will think on all his miracles of long ago. For what god is as great as our God?"

81

By the rivers of Babylon

- ¹By the rivers of Babylon, we sat down and wept when we remembered Zion.
- ²On the willows we hung our harps for our captors wanted songs of joy. They said, "Sing us the songs of Zion."
- ³But how can we sing songs of the Lord while in a foreign land?
- ⁴O Babylon doomed to destruction, blessed is he who repays you for what you have done to us.
- ⁵Remember also O Lord what the Edomites cried out on the day Jerusalem fell, "Tear it down to its foundations," they said.

82

The prayer of an afflicted man in exile

- ¹Hear my prayer O Lord. Let my cry for help come before you.
- ²I am in distress for my days vanish like smoke. My bones burn like glowing embers and my heart is withered like grass.
- ³I forget to eat my food and am reduced to skin and bone.
- ⁴I lie awake at night and have become like a bird alone on a roof, like an owl among ruins.
- ⁵All day long my enemies taunt me and use my name as a curse.
- ⁶I eat ashes with my food and mingle my drink with tears. I wither away O Lord.
- ⁷But you O Jehovah, your renown endures forever. You will have compassion on Jerusalem for the appointed time has come to show favour to Zion.
- ⁸Her stones are dear to us your people, even her dust we honour.
- ⁹All nations will revere the name of Jehovah, for the Lord will rebuild Jerusalem and appear in his glory.
- ¹⁰Let these words be written for a future generation, that a people not yet born may praise the Lord: "**The name of Jehovah shall be declared in Jerusalem when the kingdoms of the world assemble to worship the Lord.**"

83

History of Lord's covenant with Abraham

- ¹Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his name. Recall the wonders he has done O

PSALMS 84

- you descendants of Abraham.
- ²He has not forgotten the covenant he made with Abraham when he said, **“To you I will give the land of Canaan as an inheritance.”**
- ³When our people were few in number they wandered from nation to nation, but he allowed no one to oppress them. He rebuked kings for their sake.
- ⁴He called down famine upon the land, but sent Joseph ahead of his people, sold as a slave.
- ⁵Joseph suffered prison shackles until what he foretold by the word of the Lord came to pass. Then the ruler of Egypt set him free and made him master over all he possessed.
- ⁶Israel entered Egypt a foreigner but the Lord made his people too numerous for the Egyptians. He turned their hearts against his people.
- ⁷He sent Moses and Aaron whom he had chosen to perform miraculous signs. He turned their waters to blood causing the fish to die.
- ⁸The land teemed with frogs which entered the bedrooms of the rulers. Swarms of flies and lice infested the land.
- ⁹The Lord sent hail, and lightning flashed throughout Egypt, striking down their vines and trees.
- ¹⁰The locusts came and ate up every green thing, and the Lord sent darkness over the land, for the Egyptians had rebelled against his words.
- ¹¹Then he struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, the first fruits of their manhood, and brought out his people laden with silver and gold.
- ¹²Egypt was glad when they went, for the dread of Israel had fallen upon them.
- ¹³The Lord spread a cloud as a covering by day and a fire to give light by night.
- ¹⁴He commanded the sea and it dried up. He led them through the depths as if on dry land. The waters returned and covered their enemies. Not one of them survived.
- ¹⁵The people asked for food and he fed them with manna from heaven. He opened the rock and water gushed out, a river flowing in the desert.
- ¹⁶Jehovah remembered his promise given to Abraham and brought out his people with rejoicing. He wanted to give them the land he had promised that they might keep his commandments.
- ¹⁷But they soon forgot what he had done. They did not heed his counsel.
- ¹⁸At Sinai they made a calf. They worshipped an idol cast from metal, exchanging the glory of the Lord for an image of a bull which eats grass.
- ¹⁹He would have destroyed them all had not Moses pleaded before him.

- ²⁰In the desert they craved for meat and put God to the test. So he gave them what they wanted, he brought them quail, but sent a wasting disease upon them.
- ²¹Then they rejected the promised land, having no faith in his promise. They murmured in their tents. So God swore he would make them fall in the desert.
- ²²Then men grew envious of Moses and Aaron and the earth swallowed the households of Dathan and Abiram. Fire also blazed among others and consumed them.
- ²³By the waters of Meribah they again angered the Lord, and trouble came to Moses because of them. Rash words escaped Moses' lips.
- ²⁴After this Israel joined themselves to Baal and ate sacrifices offered to lifeless gods, provoking the Lord to anger by their wicked deeds. ²⁵Therefore a plague broke out among them, but Phinehas intervened and the plague was stopped.
- ²⁶Then they failed to destroy the peoples as the Lord had commanded them but mingled with the wicked nations and adopted their customs.
- ²⁷They worshipped the idols of Canaan and sacrificed their children to demons, defiling themselves and the land with innocent blood.
- ²⁸Therefore the Lord was angry with his people and handed them over to their enemies to rule over them.
- ²⁹Many times he delivered them, but they were bent on rebellion. Yet whenever he heard their cry he took note of their distress and caused them to be pitied by those who held them captive.
- ³⁰Save us O Lord. Gather us from the nations that we may praise your holy name. Let all the people say Amen!

84

A prayer of Ethan^F* pleading for the restoration of David's throne

- ¹I will sing of the Lord's great love. I will make his faithfulness known forever. For who is like you O Lord, among the heavenly beings?
- ²O Lord once you spoke in a vision to your people saying, **“I have bestowed strength on a young warrior. I have found David my servant and with my sacred oil I have anointed him.”**
- ³**“My hand will sustain him and I will crush his foes before him. No enemy shall subject him to tribute.”**
- ⁴**“My love will be with him, and through my name he shall be exalted. He will say of me, ‘You are my Father, my God, my Rock and my Redeemer.’”**

*Heading. Ethan was a Levite renowned for his wisdom.

⁵"I will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth. I will covenant with him to establish his throne for all time, even as the days of heaven."

⁶"If any of his sons fail to keep my commandments I will punish their sin with the rod, but I shall not withdraw my love from him or renounce my covenant."

⁷But O Lord you have been very angry with your anointed one. You have renounced your covenant with David and have defiled his crown in the dust. You have reduced his strongholds to ruins.

⁸His throne has become the scorn of his neighbours. You have made his enemies rejoice and have put an end to his splendour.

⁹How long O Lord will your wrath burn like a fire? Where is your former great love? Remember O Lord how your servant has been mocked.

¹⁰Praise be to the Lord forever. Amen and Amen.

85

**Let those whom he rescues
give thanks to the Lord**

¹Let those whom the Lord has redeemed from the hand of trouble give thanks with these words: "Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love endures forever."

²Some wandered in the wilderness, finding nowhere they could settle. They were hungry and thirsty and their lives ebbed away. ³Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble and he led them by a straight path to a town where they could settle. ⁴Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love.

⁵Some sat in gloom, prisoners suffering in iron chains for they had rebelled against the word of God. Their hearts had become afflicted with bitter sorrow. ⁶Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble and he saved them from their distress. ⁷He brought them out of the deepest gloom and broke their chains. ⁸Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love.

⁹Some became ill through their rebellious ways. They loathed all food and drew near the gates of death. ¹⁰Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble and he healed them, he rescued them from the grave. ¹¹Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love.

¹²Others went out on the sea in ships, merchants on the mighty waters. Then a storm lifted high the waves. They reeled and staggered like drunken men. In peril their courage melted away. ¹³Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and he stilled the storm to a whisper. ¹⁴Let

them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love.

86

**Returning Babylonian exiles filled
with songs of joy**

¹When the Lord brought the exiles back to Jerusalem we were like men who dreamed. We were filled with laughter and songs of joy, for the Lord had done great things.

²Now restore our fortunes O Lord, like rain in the desert. May they who sow seed in tears, reap with songs of joy.

87

Let us bow in worship and humble our hearts

¹Come, let us bow down in worship. Let us kneel before the Lord our maker, for he is our God and we are the flock under his care.

²O that we would heed the voice of the Lord for he has said, "**Harden not your hearts as you did at Meribah in the desert where your fathers tested me, though they had seen what I did.**"

³"**For forty years I was angry with that generation. I declared in my anger, 'They shall not enter my rest.'**"

88

**Blessed is the man who delights
in the Law of the Lord**

¹Blessed is the man who walks not in the way of the wicked, nor sits in the seat of mockers, but delights in the Law of the Lord and thinks upon it day and night.

²He is like a tree planted by a running stream, yielding its fruit in season and whose leaf withers not.

³In whatever he does he prospers, for the Lord watches over the way of the righteous.

⁴Not so the wicked. They are like chaff, blown away by the wind.

89

Serve the Lord with gladness and joyful songs

¹Make a joyful noise to the Lord of the earth. Serve him with gladness. Come to him with songs of joy, for we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

²Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise. Give unto him thanks. Praise his holy name. For the Lord is good. His love endures forever.

90

**They who take refuge in the Lord
are protected by him**

¹When you dwell in the shelter of the Lord you will say, "He is my refuge, my fortress, my God in whom I trust."

PSALMS 91

²Under his wings you will find sanctuary. You shall fear not the terror of the night nor the plague that destroys by day. ³A thousand may fall at your side but you will be kept safe.

⁴See with your own eyes the punishment of the wicked. Yet no harm will befall you when you make the Lord your refuge.

⁵He will command his angels to guard you lest you so much as strike your foot against a stone. You will safely tread on the cobra and trample the lion underfoot.

⁶For the Lord will say of you, **“Because he loves me I will rescue him and protect him, for he calls upon my name. I will honour him and satisfy him with long life and show him my salvation.”**

91

The Lord forgives sins

¹O Lord hear my cry for mercy. If you kept a record of all our sins who could stand? But with you O Lord there is forgiveness. In your word I put my hope.

²My soul awaits the Lord more than watchmen await the dawn.

³Put your hope in the Lord O Israel. He will redeem you from all your sins.

92

I will trust only in the Lord not man

¹I shall sing praise to my God as long as I live. I will not put my trust in mortal man who cannot save.

²For when their spirit departs from them they return to the dust. On that day their plans come to nothing.

³Blessed is he whose hope is in the Lord.

⁴For the Lord gives food to the hungry.

⁵He sets prisoners free.

⁶He gives sight to the blind.

⁷He lifts those who are bowed down.

⁸He loves the righteous.

⁹He sustains the fatherless and the widow.

¹⁰He watches over the foreigner.

¹¹He frustrates the way of the wicked.

¹²The Lord reigns forever.

¹³Praise the Lord.

93

Take refuge in the Lord and live

¹In my anguish I cried out to the Lord. He answered and set me free.

²The Lord is with me therefore I fear not, for what can man do?

³It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man.

⁴I will not die, but live, and will proclaim what the Lord has done.

⁵The Lord has chastened me severely but has not given me over to death.

⁶Open the gates of righteousness. I will enter and give thanks to the Lord.

94

Other nation's gods are idols made by men

¹Why do the nations say of us, “Where is their God?” Our God is in heaven and does as he pleases. But their gods are idols of silver and gold.

²They have mouths that cannot speak, eyes that cannot see, ears that cannot hear, noses that cannot smell, hands that cannot feel and feet that cannot walk.

³Those who make them are like them, and so are all who trust in them.

95

The stone the builders rejected

¹*The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone.*

²*Jehovah has done this and it is marvellous in our eyes.*

³*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Jehovah.*

96

This is the day that the Lord has made

¹This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

97

Praise the Lord

¹Praise the Lord.

²Praise him you highest heavens.

³Praise him all his angels.

⁴Praise him sun and moon.

⁵Praise him all you shining stars.

⁶Praise him you earth.

⁷Praise him you great sea creatures.

⁸Praise him you ocean depths.

⁹Praise him lightning and hail.

¹⁰Praise him snow and clouds.

¹¹Praise him stormy winds.

¹²Praise him you mountains and hills.

¹³Praise him fruit trees and all cedars.

¹⁴Praise him wild animals and all cattle.

¹⁵Praise him small creatures and flying birds.

¹⁶Praise him kings and rulers of the earth.

¹⁷Praise him all nations.

¹⁸Praise him young men and maidens.

¹⁹Praise him old men and children.

²⁰Praise the name of the Lord for his splendour is above all the earth and the heavens.

98

Praise God with music

¹Praise God in his mighty heavens. Praise him for his acts of power and for his greatness.

²Praise him with the trumpet.

³Praise him with the harp and lyre.

⁴Praise him with tambourine and dancing.

⁵Praise him with strings and flute.

⁶Praise him with the clash of cymbals.

⁷Let everything alive praise the Lord.

99

Burst into jubilant song

- ¹Sing to the Lord a new song. Shout for joy to Jehovah! All the earth burst forth into jubilant song!
- ²Make joyful music to the Lord with harp and the sound of singing, with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn!
- ³Shout for joy before Jehovah the King!
- ⁴Let the sea resound and everything in it, the earth and all who live in it!
- ⁵Let the rivers clap their hands! Let the mountains sing together for joy!
- ⁶Sing before the Lord, for he is coming to judge the whole earth!

PROVERBS

This book of Proverbs, like the book of Ecclesiastes is classed by the Jews as wisdom literature rather than sacred inspired writing. Nevertheless the book is highly interesting, full of practical and wise advice, and has been quoted widely from for centuries. It is made up mostly of pithy sayings relative to living a happy prosperous and upright life.

The term fool which is often used in the book generally refers to a person who is lacking in sense rather than one who is deficient in intellect.

NOTE Much of the original book of Proverbs follows the ancient Hebrew tradition of coupling together two contrasting proverbs, however in this Condensed Bible to enhance the usefulness of the book most coupled proverbs have been separated into two single proverbs and the proverbs grouped under subject headings such as sexual immorality, women and marriage, wealth and riches, the tongue, health and healing, etc.

AUTHOR

Chapters 1 to 20 are attributed to King Solomon, chapter 21 to King Lemuel's mother and chapter 22 to Agur.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not to your own understanding."
Proverbs 11:2.

CONTENTS

	Chapter
Introduction to the proverbs of Solomon	1
Solomon counsels his son	1
Proverbs on sexual immorality	2
Proverbs on women and marriage	3
A noble wife – her worth is far above rubies	3
Proverbs on wealth, riches and poverty	4
Proverbs on wisdom, knowledge and discernment ...	5
Proverbs on foolishness	6
Proverbs on sinners	7
Proverbs on righteousness and upright living	8
Proverbs on the tongue	9
Proverbs on pride	10
Proverbs on humility and patience	11
Proverbs on kingship and ruling	12
Proverbs on planning	13
Proverbs on love, kindness and giving	14
Proverbs on care of the poor	15
Proverbs on friendship and relationships	16
Proverbs on family and children	17
Proverbs on neighbours	18
Proverbs on work and labour	19
Proverbs on health and healing	20
The wisdom of king Lemuel's mother	21
The sayings of Agur	22

1

Introduction to the proverbs of Solomon

¹These are the proverbs of Solomon king of Israel.

²They are useful for acquiring wisdom and in conducting a just and disciplined life, and for giving knowledge and discretion to the young.

³Let the wise also listen and add to their learning, for to revere the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

Solomon counsels his son

⁴"My son, do not forsake your father's commands and your mother's teaching, for they are a light that will guide you for ever and lead you to Eternal Life."

⁵"Hold these teachings in your heart. They will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity."

2

On sexual immorality

¹"My son, stay away from the harlot, and from the smooth tongue of an adulterous wife. Lust not in your heart after her beauty or let her captivate you with her eyes. ²For an adulteress preys upon your very life, and a harlot reduces you to poverty."

³"Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned? ⁴Whoever lies with another man's wife will not go unpunished."

⁵"At twilight, as night was falling, I was at the window of my house. I looked out through the lattice and saw a simple young man who lacked judgement."

⁶"He passed down the street toward the house of the adulteress on the corner. She came out to meet him dressed like a harlot and with evil intent."

On women and marriage

7“*She is a loud and wayward woman, her feet never stay at home. Now in the street, now in the square, at every corner she lurks.*”

8“*She embraces him and kisses him and with a bold face says, ‘I have food from peace offerings inside, for today I fulfilled my vows, now I have come out to meet you.’*”

9“*I have perfumed my bed and spread it with coloured linen. Come, let us take our fill of love until morning. Let us delight ourselves for my husband is away on a long journey.*”

10“*And so she seduces him with her smooth talk. He follows her like a stag stepping into a noose, little knowing it will cost him his life.*”

11“*Many are the victims she has brought down. Her house is a highway to Sheol,^{F*} leading down to the place of death.*”

12“*A starving thief who steals to satisfy his hunger is not despised, yet if he is caught he must pay back sevenfold.*”

13“*But a man who lies with his neighbour’s wife lacks judgement, and destroys himself. His shame is never wiped away. ¹⁴Jealousy arouses a husband’s fury and he will show no mercy when he takes revenge. He will refuse a bribe, however great it is.*”

15A harlot and an adulterous wife are deep pits. They multiply the faithless among men.

16He who keeps company with harlots squanders his wealth.

17A wicked woman is loud and undisciplined. She is without wisdom. She sits at the door of her house and calls to those who pass by, to those who lack judgement, saying, “Come inside! Stolen food eaten in secret is sweet.”

18But little do they know that her former guests are in the depths of Sheol.

19“*My son, the lips of an adulteress drip honey and her speech is smoother than oil. But in the end she is as bitter as gall,^{F*} as sharp as a two-edged sword. ²⁰Her steps lead straight down to Sheol. Her paths are crooked but she knows it not.*”

21“*My son, do not go near her door, lest strangers feast on your wealth and your toil enrich another man. ²²And your life end with groans as disease consumes your body.*”

23“*Drink water from your own well. Why should your offspring belong to the streets and the public squares? Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers.*”

24“*May your children be blessed. May you rejoice with the wife of your youth, a loving doe, a graceful deer. ²⁵May her breasts satisfy you always. May you ever be captivated by her love.*”

26“*Why be snared in sin by an adulteress? Why embrace the bosom of another man’s wife?*”

1A wife of noble character is the crown of her husband.

2A prudent wife is a gift from the Lord.

3A kind hearted woman gains respect.

4A quarrelsome wife is like a leaking roof on a rainy day.

5Better to live on the corner of a roof top than to share the house with an argumentative wife.

6Better to live in a desert than with an ill-tempered woman.

7Restraining a quarrelsome woman is like trying to restrain the wind, or grasping oil with the hand.

8A wife who shames her husband is like decay to his bones.

9Like a ring of pure gold in a pig’s snout is a beautiful woman without discretion.

10A foolish woman tears down her house with her own hands.

A noble wife – her worth is far above rubies

11Who can find a noble wife? Her worth is far above rubies.

12The heart of her husband trusts in her. She brings him good all the days of her life.

13She rises before dawn, while it is still dark to provide for her household. She brings food from afar. She seeks wool and flax and works with willing hands.

14She appraises a field and buys it, and with the fruit of her hands she plants it. She sets about her work vigorously. Her arms are strong for the task.

15Her trading is profitable. She burns her lamp into the night, weaving and sewing. Linen garments she makes and sells to the merchants.

16She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.

17She fears not the snow, for her household are warmly clad.

18She herself is clothed in fine linen, and makes decorative coverings for her bed.

19Her husband is respected at the city gate. He takes his seat among the elders.

20She has strength and dignity and looks forward cheerfully to the days ahead.

21She speaks with wisdom. Kindly teaching is ever on her tongue.

22She watches over all the affairs of her household and is never idle.

23Her children rise up and call her blessed, her husband also, and he praises her saying, “Many women have done noble things, but you excel them all.”

24Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting,

*11 The spirit world of the dead.

*19 Gall is a sour-tasting herbal extract.

PROVERBS 4

but a woman who reveres the Lord is to be praised. Give her the reward she deserves.

4

On wealth, riches and poverty

¹“My son, if you have put up security for your neighbour you have been trapped by the words of your mouth. You have fallen into his power.

²Be wise and do this to free yourself: Go humble yourself before your neighbour. Allow your eyes no sleep until you free yourself from your pledge, like a bird freed from the hand of a hunter.”

³He who puts up security for another will surely suffer.

⁴The long term planning of the diligent leads to wealth, but all who are hasty come to poverty.

⁵The diligent man will obtain many possessions.

⁶Diligent hands bring wealth, but lazy hands bring poverty.

⁷Money quickly obtained dwindles away, but he who gathers money little by little retains it.

⁸A generous man will prosper.

⁹Give careful attention to your flocks, for riches do not endure for all generations.

¹⁰From the strength of an ox comes an abundant harvest.

¹¹When the Lord blesses a man with wealth, he adds no sorrow with it.

¹²The crown of the wise is their wealth.

¹³He who cherishes wisdom prospers.

¹⁴He who pursues righteousness and love will find prosperity and honour.

¹⁵Prosperity is the reward of the righteous.

¹⁶The rich rule over the poor.

¹⁷The borrower is servant to the lender.

¹⁸Honour the Lord with your wealth, and with the first fruits of all your crops. Then your barns will be filled and your vats will brim over with new wine.

¹⁹A good name is more desirable than silver or gold.

²⁰Wealth will be worthless in the day of the Lord's wrath.

²¹Whoever trusts in riches will fall.

²²Do not wear yourself out to get rich. Cast but a glance at riches and they are gone. They sprout wings and fly off like a bird.

²³One man pretends to be rich and yet has nothing, another pretends to be poor yet has great wealth.

²⁴Wealth brings a man many friends, but when he becomes poor they desert him.

²⁵A man eager to get rich will not go unpunished.

²⁶Ill-gotten wealth will not be retained.

²⁷A fortune made by a lying tongue is a fleeting bubble.

²⁸He who increases his wealth by excessive interest amasses it for another man.

²⁹A sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous.

³⁰Of what use is wealth in the hand of a miserly man?

³¹It is not fitting for a fool to live in luxury.

³²Better a little gain with righteousness than much gain with injustice.

³³Better a little with reverence of the Lord, than great wealth with sorrow and trouble.

³⁴Rich and poor have this in common, the Lord made them both.

³⁵A man's riches may ransom his life, but a poor man hears no threat.

³⁶Better to be a labourer and support yourself than to pretend to be a rich man and have no food.

³⁷One man gives freely and gains even more. Another withholds unduly and becomes even poorer.

³⁸Poverty awaits a miserly man eager to get rich.

³⁹He who oppresses the poor and he who only gives gifts to the rich will both come to poverty.

⁴⁰He who will not discipline himself will come to poverty and shame.

⁴¹He who loves wine and rich food will never be wealthy.

⁴²He who loves pleasure will become poor.

⁴³The sluggard craves wealth and gets nothing.

⁴⁴How long will you lie there you sluggard? When will you rise from your bed? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty comes upon you like a robber.

⁴⁵Join not those who drink much wine or gorge themselves on food, for drowsiness will clothe them in rags.

⁴⁶The poor man pleads for mercy, but the rich man answers harshly.

⁴⁷The rich have many friends, but the poor are shunned, even by their neighbours.

5

Proverbs on wisdom, knowledge and discernment

- 1“My son, blessed is the man who finds wisdom, for wisdom is better than gold, more precious than rubies. Nothing can compare with her. ²Long life is in her right hand, riches and honour in her left. ³Wisdom’s ways are pleasant and her paths peaceful. He who embraces her will be blessed.”
- 4“I wisdom, live together with prudence. I possess knowledge and discretion. I hate pride and arrogance, evil deeds and perverse speech.”
- 5“Sound judgement and power is mine. By me kings reign and make laws that are just.”
- 6“I love those who love me. On them I bestow riches and honour, lasting wealth and prosperity.”
- 7“Those who seek me find me. My fruit is better than fine gold.”
- 8“I walk in the paths of righteousness and justice, bestowing wealth on those who love me.”
- 9“Jehovah brought me forth as the first of his works. Before his creations of old, I was appointed, from before the world began.”
- 10“I was there when he set the heavens in place and when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep.”
- 11“I was the craftsman at his side, filled with delight day after day, rejoicing in his presence and delighting in mankind.”
- 12“Blessed are those who listen to me, waiting at my doorway. For whoever finds me finds Eternal Life and receives favour from the Lord.”
- 13“My son, wisdom will also save you from the adulteress with her seductive words. She who has left the husband of her youth and broken the marriage covenant she made before God.”
- 14“Her house leads down to death, to the spirits of the dead. None who go to her regain the path of Eternal Life.”
- 15How much better to get wisdom than gold.
- 16He who gets wisdom loves his own soul.
- 17To revere the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. And knowledge of the Holy One brings understanding.
- 18Knowledge comes easily to the discerning.
- 19A rich man may be wise in his own eyes but a poor man of discernment will see through him.
- 20Rebuke a discerning man and he will gain wisdom.
- 21The advice of the wicked is deceitful, but the mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom.
- 22A rebuke goes deeper into a man of discernment than a hundred lashes into a fool.
- 23The wise in heart accept commands.
- 24A wise son heeds his father’s instruction.
- 25He who scorns instruction will suffer.
- 26Apply your heart to instruction and your ears to words of knowledge.
- 27He who walks with the wise grows wise.
- 28Listen to advice and accept instruction and you will soon become wise.
- 29Wisdom is found in those who take advice.
- 30Punish a mocker and others will gain wisdom.
- 31Whoever corrects a wicked man will incur abuse, but rebuke a wise man and he will be wiser still and will love you.
- 32He who heeds correction will be honoured.
- 33Wise is he who trusts in the Lord.
- 34A wise man reveres the Lord and shuns evil.
- 35The Lord works out all things for his own purpose.
- 36The wisdom of the prudent is in giving thought to their ways.
- 37The thoughts of a man’s heart are deep, but a man of wisdom can draw them out.
- 38In the house of the wise are stores of food and oil, but the foolish man eats all he has.
- 39Like one who seizes a dog by the ears is a passer-by who meddles in a quarrel not his own.
- 40A man of understanding maintains a straight course.
- 41A wise man considers carefully what he hears, but a fool believes anything.
- 42A wise man sees danger and takes refuge, but a foolish man keeps going and suffers.
- 43Speak not wisdom to a fool, he will scorn you.
- 44Wisdom is too high for a fool, when men assemble at the city gate he has nothing to say.
- 45Like cutting off one’s feet is the sending of a message by the hand of a foolish man.
- 46A man of understanding delights in wisdom, but a wicked man delights in evil.
- 47A prudent man overlooks an insult, but a fool shows his anger at once.
- 48A wise man keeps his temper under control, but a fool gives full vent to his anger.

PROVERBS 6

- 49A man of understanding is even-tempered.
50A man is praised according to his wisdom.
51If you are wise your wisdom will reward you.
52The path of life leads ever upward for the wise.
53A wise man has great power.
54Wisdom is a fountain of life to those who possess it.
55A man of wisdom and knowledge increases in strength.
56A wise man will bring down the strongholds of the mighty in strength.
57By wisdom a house is built and by wisdom its rooms are filled with pleasing possessions.
58Wisdom is sweet to the soul, like honey from a honeycomb.
59Wisdom will save you from the ways of the wicked, who delight in doing wrong and whose paths are dark and crooked.
60A prudent man acts out of knowledge.
61He who welcomes correction loves knowledge.
62It is not good to have zeal without knowledge.
63Wise men store up knowledge.
64“My son, if your heart is wise I will be glad and my spirit will rejoice.”

6

Proverbs on foolishness

- 1A companion of fools will become a fool himself.
2Leave the presence of a foolish man for you will not find wisdom on his lips.
3The foolish man will be servant to the wise.
4A whip for the horse and a rod for the backs of fools.
5He who follows idle pursuits lacks judgement.
6He who trusts in himself alone is a fool.
7He who hates correction is a fool.
8Fools mock at making amends for sin.
9When a wise man goes to court with a fool, the fool scoffs and rages.
10Better to meet a bear robbed of her cubs than a fool in his folly.
11He who answers before hearing is foolish.
12A hot-headed and reckless man is a fool.
13A hot-tempered man must suffer the consequences. If you rescue him from his folly you will only have to do it again.

- 14A hot-tempered man commits many sins.
15As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his foolishness.
16The way of a foolish man seems right to him.
17The foolish man is wiser in his own eyes than seven men of good sense.

7

Proverbs on sinners

- 1“My son, if sinners entice you, do not give in to them. If they say, ‘Come with us and lie in wait. We will ambush an innocent passerby and gain wealth. 2We will fill our houses with treasure. Join with us and share the spoils.’
3“My son, do not go along with them. For their feet rush into sin and they are swift to shed blood. These men waylay only themselves.
4Such is the fate of all who go after ill-gotten gain. It takes away the lives of those who acquire it.”
5There are seven things the Lord hates: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that plans wickedness, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who lies, and a man who stirs up discord.
6Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaints? Who has wounds? Who has bloodshot eyes? Those who linger over wine. 7Look not with desire at wine as it sparkles red in the cup. In the end it will bite like a poisonous viper.
8A scoundrel goes about with a corrupt mouth. He winks his eye, signals with his feet and motions with his fingers. His heart is deceitful and he stirs up dissension. 9Disaster will overtake him and he will suddenly be destroyed.
10The wicked flee though none pursue.
11Evil comes to him who searches for it.
12He who winks maliciously causes trouble.
13He who winks is plotting perversity.
14He who compresses his lips is bent on evil.
15A wicked man will accept a bribe to pervert the course of justice.
16A wicked man listens to evil lips.
17The wicked put up a bold front.
18Those who have abandoned the Law of God praise the wicked.
19The upright detest the wicked and the wicked detest the upright.
20An evil man has no understanding of justice.
21The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern.

- 22He whose ways are devious despises the Lord.
- 23The heart of the wicked is of little value.
- 24Whoever ignores correction leads others astray.
- 25The rod of discipline drives away evil and purges the spirit.
- 26A man who remains wicked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed.
- 27The eyes of the Lord are everywhere, keeping watch on both the wicked and the good.
- 28The hearts of all men lie open before the Lord.
- 29The Lord detests the sacrifice of the wicked.
- 30The Lord abhors dishonest scales but accurate weights are his delight.
- 31There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to Death.
- 32A man's ways seem right to him, but his motives are weighed by the Lord.
- 33He who digs a pit for another will fall into it.
- 34What the wicked dread will overtake them.
- 35If the righteous receive chastisement on earth, how much more the ungodly.
- 36A curse of the Lord is on the house of the wicked.
- 37The wicked are trapped by their evil desires.
- 38If a man returns evil for good, evil will never depart his house.
- 39Misfortune dogs the sinner.
- 40Stern discipline awaits him who leaves the straight path.
- 41An evil man is snared by his own sins.
- 42The way of the wicked is deep darkness, they cannot see what makes them stumble.
- 43When a wicked man dies, his hope perishes.
- 44Wicked men are eventually overthrown.
- 45When calamity comes, the wicked are struck down.
- 46The Lord brings the house of the wicked to ruin.
- 47The wicked are brought to shame but the wise inherit honour.
- 48The hopes of the wicked come to nothing.
- 49Be sure of this, the wicked will not go unpunished.
- 50The name of the wicked will rot.
- 51The ungodly man will be fully repaid for his ways, and the godly man rewarded for his righteousness.
- 52When the wicked perish there are shouts of joy.
- 53Evil men will bow down in the presence of the good.
- 54He who hides his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.
- 55The wicked are brought down by their own wrong doing.
- 56Food obtained by deceit at first tastes sweet but soon turns to gravel in the mouth.
- 57A man tormented by the guilt of murder is a fugitive until death.
- 58Envy not the wicked for they have no hope for the future.
- 59The Lord is far from the wicked, but hears the prayer of the righteous.
- 60Bloodthirsty men seek to kill the upright.
- 61The Lord detests a violent man. Do not envy him or choose any of his ways.

8

Proverbs on righteousness and upright living

- 1The way of the righteous is like the first hint of dawn, growing ever brighter until the full glory of sunrise.
- 2He who reveres the Lord can rest content, unconcerned by trouble.
- 3The Lord blesses the household of a righteous man.
- 4The righteous give and spare not.
- 5A righteous man cares for his animals.
- 6Though a righteous man fall seven times, he will rise again.
- 7The righteous flourish like green branches.
- 8The upright hate what is false.
- 9The man of integrity walks securely.
- 10He whose walk is upright reveres the Lord.
- 11The righteous can sing and rejoice.
- 12When the righteous prosper the city rejoices.
- 13Through the blessing of the upright a city is exalted.
- 14What the righteous desire will be granted.
- 15The desires of the righteous end only in good.
- 16The path is straight for the righteous.
- 17Blessings crown the head of a righteous man.
- 18The house of the righteous stands firm.
- 19A righteous man is bold as a lion.

PROVERBS 9

- ²⁰The future of the righteous is joy.
- ²¹When the storm sweeps by, the wicked are taken, but the righteous stand firm forever.
- ²²The memory of a righteous man is a blessing.
- ²³The righteous will never be uprooted.
- ²⁴The lamp of the righteous shines brightly but that of the wicked is soon snuffed out.
- ²⁵Like a fouled spring is a righteous man who gives in to the wicked.
- ²⁶The righteous are rescued from trouble, it comes upon the wicked instead.
- ²⁷No great ill befalls the righteous, but the wicked have their fill of trouble.
- ²⁸The Lord does not let the righteous go hungry.
- ²⁹He who sows seeds of righteousness reaps a sure reward.
- ³⁰The Lord delights in those whose ways are blameless.
- ³¹A good man obtains favour from the Lord.
- ³²A good man leaves an inheritance for his children's children.
- ³³The name of the Lord is a strong tower. The righteous run to it and are safe.
- ³⁴To do what is just is more pleasing to the Lord than to offer sacrifices.
- ³⁵The prayer of the upright pleases the Lord.
- ³⁶When the ways of a man are pleasing to the Lord he makes his enemies to be at peace with him.
- ³⁷Silver hair is a crown of glory if attained in a righteous life.
- ³⁸The truly righteous man attains Eternal Life.
- ¹¹A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver.
- ¹²A man finds pleasure in giving an apt reply.
- ¹³Drive out the mocker and out goes strife.
- ¹⁴The words of a gossip are like tasty morsels of food. They go down into the innermost parts.
- ¹⁵For lack of wood a fire goes out, and without gossip quarrelling ceases.
- ¹⁶A gossip separates close friends.
- ¹⁷A gossip keeps no secrets.
- ¹⁸A liar listens to a malicious tongue.
- ¹⁹A babbling fool comes to ruin.
- ²⁰A fool delights in airing his opinions.
- ²¹"No good. No good." says the buyer, then goes off and boasts about his purchase.
- ²²See a man who speaks in haste, there is more hope for a fool than for him.
- ²³A fool is quick to quarrel.
- ²⁴The lips of a foolish man blurt out his foolishness.
- ²⁵An evil man is trapped by his talk.
- ²⁶By the mouths of the wicked a city is destroyed.
- ²⁷The Lord frustrates the words of a sinner.
- ²⁸As the north wind brings rain, so a backbiting tongue brings frowns.
- ²⁹Men detest a mocker.
- ³⁰Harsh words stir up anger.
- ³¹Rash words pierce like a sword.
- ³²A hot-tempered man stirs up contention.
- ³³Starting a quarrel is like breaking a dam.
- ³⁴He who loves to quarrel loves sin.
- ³⁵Avoid the man who talks too much.
- ³⁶When words are many, sin is not absent.
- ³⁷Like clouds without rain is he who fails to keep promises.
- ³⁸A malicious man disguises his intent with his lips. Though his speech charms, evil fills his heart.
- ³⁹Like a coating of fine glaze over a clay pot, are eloquent lips with an evil heart.
- ⁴⁰The mouths of the wicked know only what is perverse.
- ⁴¹He who conceals his malice has lying lips.
- ⁴²The Lord detests lying lips.
- ⁴³The Lord delights in a man whose lips speak truth.
- ⁴⁴A false witness will not go unpunished.

9

Proverbs on the tongue

- ¹A soft answer turns away wrath.
- ²By patience a ruler can be persuaded for a gentle tongue can break a bone.
- ³A patient man calms a quarrel.
- ⁴Even a fool is thought wise if he remains silent.
- ⁵The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life.
- ⁶He who guards his tongue keeps himself from trouble.
- ⁷He who holds his tongue is wise.
- ⁸He who guards his lips guards his life.
- ⁹The tongue has power over life and death.
- ¹⁰Gold and precious stones are found in abundance, but lips that speak wisdom are a rare jewel.

- 45It is a trap for a man to make a rash vow to the Lord.
- 46Better an open rebuke than hidden love.
- 47He who rebukes a man will in the end gain more favour than he who flatters him.
- 48The heart of a righteous man weighs carefully his answers.
- 49The lips of the wise spread knowledge.
- 50The mouth of a wise man is guided by his mind.
- 51The tongue of the righteous is choice silver.
- 52The lips of the righteous nourish many.
- 53The lips of the righteous know fitting words to speak.
- 54The teaching of the righteous is a fountain of life.
- 55There is joy in the heart of those who promote peace.
- 56A prudent man does not reveal all that he knows.
- 57A man of knowledge uses words with restraint.
- 58The tongue of a wise man brings healing.
- 59From the fruit of his lips a man receives good things as surely as from the work of his hands.
- 60He who has a pure heart and whose speech is gracious, will have the king as his friend.
- 61Truthful lips endure forever.
- 62An honest answer is like a kiss on the lips.
- 63The lamp of him who curses his father or mother will soon be snuffed out.
- 64Like a fluttering sparrow an undeserved curse does not come to rest.
- 65He who speaks rashly will come to ruin.
- 66A perverse tongue crushes the spirit.
- 67Let another praise you, not your own lips.

10

Proverbs on pride

- 1Pride goes before a fall.
- 2Do not sit in an honoured place in the king's presence. Far better for him to say to you, "Come up higher," than for him to humiliate you before nobles.
- 3It is not good to eat too much honey, nor is it good to seek one's own honour.
- 4After pride comes disgrace.
- 5Pride breeds quarrels.
- 6The Lord tears down the proud man's house, but he protects the widow's boundaries.

- 7Gloat not when your enemy falls or the Lord will be displeased and turn his wrath away from him.
- 8See a man who is wise in his own eyes, there is more hope for a fool than for him.
- 9Boast not of tomorrow for you know not what each day will bring.
- 10A man is tested by the praise he receives.

11

Proverbs on humility and patience

- 1"My son, despise not the Lord's chastisement for the Lord disciplines those he loves."
- 2"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not to your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will direct your paths for good."
- 3Humility comes before honour.
- 4With humility comes wisdom.
- 5Say not, "I will repay you for this wrong." Wait patiently on the Lord. He will avenge you.
- 6Better to be lowly and poor than to share ill-gotten gain with the proud.
- 7A man's wisdom gives him patience.
- 8Better a patient man than a warrior.
- 9It is to a man's glory to overlook an offence.
- 10Humility and reverence of the Lord bring wealth and honour.

12

Proverbs on kingship and ruling

- 1Righteousness exalts a nation.
- 2Where there is no vision the people perish.
- 3For lack of guidance a nation perishes, but in an abundance of advisers there is safety.
- 4The lips of a king speak as if from God, therefore his mouth should uphold justice.
- 5A large population is a king's glory.
- 6The first to present his case seems right until another comes forward and questions him.
- 7Casting a lot settles disputes and keeps strong opponents apart.
- 8When justice is done it brings joy to the righteous, but terror to evildoers.
- 9To show partiality in judging is not right. Whoever says to the guilty, "You are innocent," will be cursed.
- 10By justice a king gives a nation stability.
- 11When a king sits upon his throne to judge he detects evil with his eyes.
- 12A king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, he directs it wherever he pleases.

PROVERBS 13

- ¹³A wise king winnows out the wicked.
- ¹⁴Remove the dross from the silver and there is fine material for the silversmith. Remove the wicked from the king's presence and his reign will be righteous.
- ¹⁵A crown is not secure for all generations.
- ¹⁶Better is he who controls his temper than he who captures a city.
- ¹⁷When a king judges the poor with fairness his throne will ever be secure.
- ¹⁸A king's favour is like rain in the spring.
- ¹⁹A king's rage is like the roar of a lion.
- ²⁰A king's wrath brings death. A wise man will appease it.
- ²¹Many seek the favour of a ruler.
- ²²Unless the Lord protects the city the watchmen watch in vain.
- ²³A ruler greedy for bribes tears down his nation.
- ²⁴Kings of a rebellious nation have short reigns.
- ²⁵A ruler who oppresses the poor is like driving rain that destroys crops.
- ²⁶When a king listens to lies his officials become corrupt.
- ²⁷When the wicked rule, the people mourn.
- ²⁸Better a poor but wise youth, than an old but foolish king who no longer takes advice.
- ²⁹Pampering a servant from his youth breeds disrespect.
- ³⁰A wise servant will rule over a dishonourable son.
- ³¹A king delights in a wise servant.
- ³²Servants cannot be disciplined by words alone. Though they understand they will not give heed.
- ³³It is not fitting for a servant to rule over princes.

13

Proverbs on planning

- ¹Plans fail for lack of good advice, but with many advisers they succeed.
- ²For victory when waging war you need many advisers.
- ³Commit to the Lord whatever you do and your plans will succeed.
- ⁴The lot is cast but the decision is from the Lord.
- ⁵Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the will of the Lord that prevails.
- ⁶No plan can succeed against the will of the Lord.

14

Proverbs on love, kindness and giving

- ¹Through love and faithfulness a king's throne is made secure.
- ²He who seeks the good of others receives goodwill in return.
- ³Love atones for all offences.
- ⁴Love and faithfulness atone for sin.
- ⁵A true friend loves at all times.
- ⁶He who forgives an offence promotes love.
- ⁷If your enemy hungers give him food to eat. If he thirsts, give him water to drink. The Lord will reward you for this, and you will heap burning coals upon the head of your enemy.
- ⁸Like cool water to a weary soul is good news from a distance.
- ⁹An anxious heart weighs a man down but a kind word cheers his soul.
- ¹⁰A man who is kind to others also benefits himself.
- ¹¹A friend can be closer than a brother.
- ¹²He who refreshes others will at the same time be refreshed himself.
- ¹³A gift is a charm to the one who gives it. Wherever he turns he succeeds.
- ¹⁴Everybody is the friend of a man who gives gifts.
- ¹⁵A gift opens the way for the giver into the presence of the great.

15

Proverbs on care of the poor

- ¹Blessed is he who is kind to the needy.
- ²Whoever is kind to the needy honours God.
- ³He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and the Lord will reward him for what he has done.
- ⁴He who gives to the poor shall not want.
- ⁵If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, the day will come when he too will cry out and not be heard.
- ⁶He who closes his eyes to the poor receives many curses.
- ⁷He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for the Lord their maker.
- ⁸Do not move a boundary stone on the fields of the fatherless, for Jehovah their defender is strong.

16

Proverbs on friendship and relationships

- ¹As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.
- ²Forsake not your friend nor the friend of your father.
- ³What is desirable in a man is unfailing loyalty.
- ⁴Anger is cruel, but who is able to withstand jealousy?
- ⁵Ruthless men gain only wealth.
- ⁶An unfriendly man pursues selfishness.
- ⁷Whoever gloats over disaster will not go unpunished.
- ⁸Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.
- ⁹Many men claim to be loyal, but who can find a truly faithful man.
- ¹⁰A crafty man is despised.
- ¹¹Even a child is known by his actions.
- ¹²The people curse the man who withholds grain.

17

Proverbs on family and children

- ¹Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it.
- ²He who spares the rod cares not for his son.
- ³Discipline your son, for in that there is hope.
- ⁴Foolishness is in the heart of a young man, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him.
- ⁵Do not withhold discipline from your son. You will save his soul from Death.
- ⁶A child left to himself without correction disgraces his mother.
- ⁷He who loves his son is careful to discipline him.
- ⁸Discipline your son and he will give you peace and delight.
- ⁹A foolish son brings grief to his mother.
- ¹⁰A son who brings trouble on his family will inherit only wind.
- ¹¹The father of a righteous son has great joy.
- ¹²He who reveres the Lord has a secure fortress. It will be a refuge for his children.
- ¹³Blessed are the children of a man who has led a blameless life.
- ¹⁴A greedy man brings trouble upon his family.
- ¹⁵Grandchildren are a crown to the aged.

- ¹⁶A brother is born to help in adversity.
- ¹⁷An offended brother is more unyielding than a fortified city.
- ¹⁸Sons are a gift from the Lord, like arrows in the hands of a warrior. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them.
- ¹⁹“Be wise my son and bring joy to my heart. Then I can answer anyone who treats me with contempt.”

18

Proverbs on neighbours

- ¹Go not hastily to court to testify what you have seen with your eyes. You may be mistaken and be shamed by your neighbour. ²First speak with your neighbour before dishonouring him, or you may lose your own good name forever.
- ³Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act. And do not say to your neighbour, “Come back tomorrow,” when you have what he wants there with you.
- ⁴Set not foot in your neighbour’s house too often, lest he become weary of you.
- ⁵A righteous man cares for his neighbour.
- ⁶Like a madman shooting arrows, is he who deceives his neighbour and then says, “I was only joking.”
- ⁷If a man loudly blesses his neighbour early in the morning, it will be taken for a curse.
- ⁸Better a neighbour close by, than a brother far away.
- ⁹A man who lacks judgement belittles his neighbour.

19

Proverbs on work and labour

- ¹A man skilled in his work will serve before kings.
- ²Sow your fields first, then build your house.
- ³The desires of the diligent will be fully satisfied.
- ⁴He who tends a fig tree will eat its fruit.
- ⁵He who works his land will have abundant food.
- ⁶Hard work brings a profit, but talk brings only poverty.
- ⁷I passed by the field of the sluggard and saw the ground covered with weeds and the wall broken down.
- ⁸Go to the ant you sluggard. Consider her ways and be wise. She has no ruler yet she stores up provisions in summer for a time of need.

PROVERBS 20

- ⁹Like a door turns on its hinges, so a sluggard turns on his bed.
- ¹⁰He who loves sleep will grow poor.
- ¹¹Laziness ends in servitude.
- ¹²One who is slack in his work is brother to one who destroys.
- ¹³Like an archer who wounds at random is he who hires a drunkard.
- ¹⁴The labourer's hunger drives him on.
- ¹⁵He who is sated spurns honey, but to a hungry man even what is bitter tastes sweet.
- ¹⁶It is not needful to arise early and stay up late at night toiling anxiously for your needs. The Lord allows time to sleep for those he loves.

20

Proverbs on health and healing

- ¹"My son, be not wise in your own eyes, but revere the Lord and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and marrow to your bones.
- ²You will walk in safety and not stumble, and when you lie down you will not be anxious and your sleep will be sweet.
- ³You will have no fear of the sudden disaster that overtakes the wicked."
- ⁴Reverence of the Lord is the fountain of life.
- ⁵To revere the Lord adds length to life, but the years of the wicked are cut short.
- ⁶A heart at peace gives health to the body.
- ⁷A cheerful heart is good medicine.
- ⁸A cheerful smile brings joy to the heart.
- ⁹A man's spirit sustains him in sickness.
- ¹⁰An anxious heart weighs a man down.
- ¹¹Hope deferred makes the heart sick.
- ¹²A longing fulfilled is satisfying to the soul.
- ¹³An envious heart wastes the bones.
- ¹⁴A gentle tongue is a tree of life.
- ¹⁵Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.
- ¹⁶A glad heart makes a cheerful countenance.
- ¹⁷Good news gives health to the bones.

¹⁸Better a dish of vegetables with love, than a fattened calf with hatred.

¹⁹Better a dry crust with peace and quiet, than a house full of feasting with strife.

21

Wisdom that the mother of king Lemuel^F * taught him

- ¹"O son of my womb, spend not your strength on women."
- ²"Nor is it for kings, O my son vowed to God, to drink wine or strong drink lest they forget the Law of God and deny the poor their rights."
- ³"Give strong drink to those who are dying, and wine to those who sorrow. Let them drink and forget their misery.
- ⁴But you my son, speak up and judge fairly. Defend the rights of the poor and the needy."

22

The sayings of Agur

- ¹"I am the most ignorant of men. I have not learned wisdom nor have I knowledge of the Holy One. For who has gone up to heaven and come down again? ²What is the name of God and the name of his son? Tell me if you know."
- ³"Nevertheless, every word of God is true and he is a shield to those who take refuge in him."
- ⁴"Two things I ask of you O Lord before I die. Keep falsehood far from me, and give me neither poverty nor riches. ⁵Otherwise I may have too much and disown you, or I may become poor and steal and dishonour your name."
- ⁶"There are four things that are never satisfied. The grave, the barren womb, thirsty dry land, and fire."
- ⁷"Under four things the earth trembles. A servant who becomes a king, a fool who is full of food, an unloved married woman, and a maidservant who displaces her mistress."
- ⁸"There are four things that move with a stately bearing. A lion, a strutting rooster, a he-goat, and a king with his army."
- ⁹"The eye that mocks a father and disobeys a mother will be pecked out by ravens of the valley."
- ¹⁰"This is the way of an adulteress. She afterward cleanses herself and says, 'I have done no wrong.'"

*Heading. The identity of King Lemuel is not known. Some Bible scholars believe it to be a poetic name for King Solomon.