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2 Kings

A Message for Ahaziah

1 After Ahab died, Moab broke away from Israel's rule.

²One day, Ahaziah was on the roof* of his house in Samaria. Ahaziah fell down through the wooden bars on top of his house. He was hurt very badly. Ahaziah called messengers and told them, "Go to [the priests of] Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron. Ask them if I will get well from my injuries."

³But the Lord's angel said to Elijah the Tishbite, "King Ahaziah has sent some messengers from Samaria. Go meet those men. Say to them, 'There is a God in Israel! So why are you men going to ask questions from Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron?' ⁴Tell King Ahaziah these things: You sent messengers to ask questions from Baal Zebub.] Since you did this thing, the Lord says: You will not get up from your bed. You will die!'" Then Elijah left [and told these words to Ahaziah's servants].

⁵The messengers came back to Ahaziah. Ahaziah said to the messengers, "Why did you come back [so soon]?"

⁶The messengers said to Ahaziah, "A man came up to meet us. He told us to go back to the king who sent us, and tell him what the Lord says. The Lord says, 'There is a God in Israel! So why did you send messengers to ask questions from Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Since you did this thing, you will not get up from your bed. You will die!'"

⁷Ahaziah said to the messengers, "What did the man look like who met you and told you these things?"

⁸The messengers answered Ahaziah, "This man was wearing a hairy coat* with a leather belt around his waist."

Then Ahaziah said, "That was Elijah the Tishbite!"

Fire Destroys the Men Sent From Ahaziah

⁹[Ahaziah] sent a captain and 50 men to Elijah. The captain went to Elijah. At that time, Elijah was sitting on top of a hill. The captain said to Elijah, "Man of God,* the king says, 'Come down.'"

¹⁰Elijah answered the captain of 50, "If I am a man of God,* let fire come down from heaven and destroy you and your 50 men!"

So fire came down from heaven and destroyed the captain and his 50 men.

¹¹Ahaziah sent another captain with 50 men to Elijah. The captain said to Elijah, "Man of God,* the king says, 'Come down quickly!'"

¹²Elijah told the captain and his 50 men, "If I am a man of God,* let fire come down from heaven and destroy you and your 50 men!"

Then God's fire came down from heaven and destroyed the captain and his 50 men.

¹³Ahaziah sent a third captain with 50 men. The third captain came to Elijah. The captain fell down on his knees. The captain begged Elijah, saying to him, "Man of God,* I ask you, please let my life and the lives of your 50 servants be valuable to you! ¹⁴Fire came down from heaven and destroyed the first two captains and their 50 men. But now, have mercy and let us live!"

¹⁵The Lord's angel said to Elijah, "Go with the captain. Don't be afraid of him."

roof In ancient Israel, houses had flat roofs that were used like an extra room.

This man ... hairy coat Or, "This man was a hairy man."
man of God Another name for a prophet.

So Elijah went with the captain to see King Ahaziah.

¹⁶Elijah told Ahaziah, “There is a God in Israel. So why did you send messengers to ask questions from Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron. Since you did this thing, you will not get up from your bed. You will die!”

Joram Takes Ahaziah's Place

¹⁷Ahaziah died, just like the Lord said through Elijah. Ahaziah did not have a son. So Joram became the new king after Ahaziah. Joram began to rule during the second year that Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat was the king of Judah.

¹⁸The other things that Ahaziah did are written in the book *The History of the Kings of Israel*.

The Lord Makes Plans to Take Elijah

2 It was near the time for the Lord to take Elijah by a whirlwind up into heaven. Elijah went with Elisha to Gilgal.

²Elijah said to Elisha, “Please stay here, because the Lord told me to go to Bethel.”

But Elisha said, “I promise, as the Lord lives and as you live, I won’t leave you.” So the two men went down to Bethel.

³The group of prophets* at Bethel came to Elisha and said to him, “Do you know that the Lord will take your master away from you today?”

Elisha said, “Yes, I know it. Don’t talk about it.”

⁴Elijah said to Elisha, “Please stay here, because the Lord told me to go to Jericho.”

But Elisha said, “I promise, as the Lord lives and as you live, I won’t leave you!” So the two men went to Jericho.

⁵The group of prophets* at Jericho came to Elisha and said to him, “Do you know that the Lord will take your master away from you today?”

Elisha answered, “Yes, I know it. Don’t talk about it.”

⁶Elijah said to Elisha, “Please stay here, because the Lord told me to go to the Jordan River.”

Elisha answered, “I promise, as the Lord lives and as you live, I won’t leave you!” So the two men went on.

⁷There were 50 men from the group of prophets* that followed them. Elijah and Elisha stopped at the Jordan River. The 50 men stood far away from Elijah and Elisha. ⁸Elijah took off his coat, folded it, and hit the water with it. The water separated to the right and to the left. Then Elijah and Elisha crossed the river on dry ground.

⁹After they crossed the river, Elijah said to Elisha, “What do you want me to do for you before God takes me away from you?”

Elisha said, “I ask you for a double share of your spirit on me.”

¹⁰Elijah said, “You have asked a hard thing. If you see me when I am taken from you, then that will happen. But if you don’t see me when I am taken from you, then it won’t happen.”

God Takes Elijah into Heaven

¹¹Elijah and Elisha were walking and talking together. Suddenly, some horses and a chariot* came and separated Elijah from Elisha. The horses and the chariot were like fire! Then Elijah was carried up into heaven in a whirlwind.

¹²Elisha saw it, and shouted, “My father! My father! The Chariot of Israel and his horse soldiers!”

Elisha never saw Elijah again. Elisha grabbed his own clothes and tore them to show his sadness. ¹³Elijah’s coat had fallen to the ground, so Elisha picked it up. Elisha hit the water and said, “Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?”

¹⁴Just as Elisha hit the water, the water separated to the right and to the left! And Elisha crossed the river.

group of prophets Literally, “sons of the prophets.” These people were prophets and people studying to become prophets.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

Chariot of Israel and his horse soldiers This probably means, “God and his heavenly army (angels).”

The Prophets Ask for Elijah

¹⁵When the group of prophets* at Jericho saw Elisha, they said, “Elijah’s spirit is now on Elisha!” They came to meet Elisha. They bowed very low to the ground before Elisha. ¹⁶They said to him, “Look, we have 50 good men. Please let them go and look for your master. Maybe the Lord’s Spirit has taken Elijah up and dropped him on some mountain or in some valley.”

But Elisha answered, “No, don’t send men to look for Elijah!”

¹⁷The group of prophets* begged Elisha until he was embarrassed. Then Elisha said, “Fine, send the men to look for Elijah.”

The group of prophets* sent the 50 men to look for Elijah. They looked three days, but they could not find Elijah. ¹⁸So the men went to Jericho where Elisha was staying. They told him that they could not find Elijah. Elisha said to them, “I told you not to go.”

Elisha Makes the Water Good

¹⁹The men of the city said to Elisha, “Sir, you can see this city is in a nice place. But the water is bad. That is why the land cannot grow crops.”

²⁰Elisha said, “Bring me a new bowl and put salt in it.”

The people brought the bowl to Elisha. ²¹Then Elisha went out to the place where the water began flowing from the ground. Elisha threw the salt into the water. He said, “The Lord said, ‘I am making this water pure! From now on this water will not cause any more death or keep the land from growing crops.’”

²²The water became pure. And the water is still good today. It happened just like Elisha said.

Some Boys Make Fun of Elisha

²³Elisha went from that city to Bethel. Elisha was walking up the hill to the city, and some boys were coming down out of the city. They began making fun of Elisha. They said to him, “Go up, you bald headed man! Go up, you bald headed man!”

group of prophets Literally, “sons of the prophets.” These people were prophets and people studying to become prophets.

²⁴Elisha looked back and saw them. He asked the Lord to cause bad things to happen to them. Then two bears came out of the forest and attacked the boys. There were 42 boys ripped apart by the bears.

²⁵Elisha left Bethel and went to Mount Carmel. And from there, Elisha went back to Samaria.

Jehoram Becomes King of Israel

3 Jehoram son of Ahab became king over Israel at Samaria. He began to rule during Jehoshaphat’s 18th year as king of Judah. Jehoram ruled 12 years. ²Jehoram did the things that the Lord said were wrong. But Jehoram was not like his father and mother, because he removed the pillar that his father had made for worshiping Baal.* ³But he continued to do the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat. Jeroboam caused the Israelites to sin. Jehoram did not stop the sins of Jeroboam.

Moab Breaks Away from Israel

⁴Mesha was the king of Moab. Mesha owned many sheep. Mesha gave the wool of 100,000 lambs and 100,000 rams* to the king of Israel. ⁵But when Ahab died, the king of Moab broke away from the rule of the king of Israel.

⁶Then King Jehoram went out of Samaria and gathered together all the men of Israel. ⁷Jehoram sent messengers to Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah. Jehoram said, “The king of Moab has broken away from my rule. Will you go with me to fight against Moab?”

Jehoshaphat said, “Yes, I will go with you. We will join together as one army. My people will be like your people. And my horses will be like your horses.”

The Three Kings Ask Elisha for Advice

⁸Jehoshaphat asked Jehoram, “Which way should we go?”

Jehoram answered, “We should go through the Desert of Edom.”

Baal The Canaanite people believed that this false god brought the rain and storms. They also thought that he made the land produce good crops.

rams Male sheep.

⁹So the king of Israel went with the king of Judah and the king of Edom. They traveled around for seven days. There was not enough water for the army or for their animals. ¹⁰Finally, the king of Israel (*Jehoram*) said, "Oh, I think the Lord really brought us three kings together only to let the Moabites defeat us!"

¹¹But Jehoshaphat said, "Surely one of the Lord's prophets is here. Let's ask the prophet what the Lord says we should do."

One of the servants of the king of Israel said, "Elisha son of Shaphat is here. Elisha was Elijah's servant."*

¹²Jehoshaphat said, "The Lord's word is with Elisha!"

So the king of Israel (*Jehoram*), Jehoshaphat, and the king of Edom went down to see Elisha.

¹³Elisha said to the king of Israel (*Jehoram*), "What do you want from me? Go to the prophets of your father and mother!"

The king of Israel said to Elisha, "No, ¹⁴we have come to see you, because the Lord called us three kings together to let the Moabites defeat us. ¹⁵We need your help."

¹⁴Elisha said, "I respect Jehoshaphat the king of Judah and I serve the Lord All-Powerful. And as sure as he lives, I came here only because of Jehoshaphat. I tell you the truth, if Jehoshaphat was not here, I would not pay any attention to you. I would ignore you completely! ¹⁵But now bring me a person who plays the harp."

When the person played the harp, the Lord's power* came on Elisha. ¹⁶Then Elisha said, "This is what the Lord says: Dig holes in the valley. ¹⁷This is what the Lord says: You won't see wind, you won't see rain. But that valley will be filled with water. Then you and your cows and other animals will have water to drink. ¹⁸It is easy for the Lord to do. He will also let you defeat the Moabites. ¹⁹You will attack every strong city and every good city. You will cut down every good tree. You will stop up all the springs of water. You will

ruin every good field with the stones ²⁰[that you throw at it]."

²⁰In the morning, at the time for the morning sacrifice, water began flowing from the direction of Edom and filled the valley.

²¹The people in Moab heard that the kings had come up to fight against them. So the people in Moab gathered together all the men old enough to wear armor.* They waited at the border, ²²[ready for the battle]. ²²The people of Moab got up early that morning. The rising sun was shining on the water in the valley, and it looked like blood to the people of Moab. ²³The people of Moab said, "Look at the blood! The kings must have fought against each other. They must have destroyed each other. Let's go take the valuable things from the dead bodies!"

²⁴The Moabite people came to the Israelite camp. But the Israelites came out and attacked the Moabite army. The Moabite people ran away from the Israelites. The Israelites followed them into Moab to fight the Moabites. ²⁵The Israelites destroyed the cities. They threw their stones* at every good field in Moab. They stopped up all the springs of water. And they cut down all the good trees. The Israelites fought all the way to Kir Hareseth. The soldiers surrounded Kir Hareseth and attacked it, too!

²⁶The king of Moab saw that the battle was too strong for him. So he took 700 men with swords to break through ²⁷[the army and kill] the king of Edom. But they could not break through to the king of Edom. ²⁷Then the king of Moab took his oldest son. This was the son who would become the next king after him. On the wall around the city, the king of Moab offered his son as a burnt offering. This upset the people of Israel very much. So the people of Israel left the king of Moab and went back to their own land.

Elisha was Elijah's servant Literally, "Elisha poured water over Elijah's hands."

power Literally, "hand."

armor The special clothes soldiers wore to protect themselves in war.

threw their stones These were probably the stones soldiers threw with slings in war.

A Prophet's Widow Asks Elisha for Help

4 A man from the group of prophets* had a wife. ¹This man died. His wife cried out to Elisha, “My husband was like a servant to you. Now my husband is dead! You know he honored the Lord. But he owed money to a man. And now that man is coming to take my two boys and make them his slaves!”

²Elisha answered, “How can I help you? Tell me, what do you have in your house?”

The woman said, “I don’t have anything in the house. I have only a jar of olive oil.”

³Then Elisha said, “Go and borrow bowls from all your neighbors. They must be empty. Borrow plenty of bowls. ⁴Then go to your house and close the doors. Only you and your sons will be in the house. Then pour the oil into all those bowls. Fill those bowls, and put them in a separate place.”

⁵So the woman left Elisha, ¹went into her house, and shut the door. Only she and her sons were in the house. Her sons brought the bowls to her and she poured oil. ⁶She filled many bowls. Finally, she said to her son, “Bring me another bowl.”

But all of the bowls were full. One of the sons said to the woman, “There aren’t any more bowls.” At that time, the oil in the jar was finished!

⁷Then the woman told the man of God* (*Elisha*) what happened. Elisha told her, “Go, sell the oil and pay your debt. After you sell the oil ¹and pay your debt, you and your sons can live on the money that is left.”

A Woman in Shunem Gives Elisha a Room

⁸One day Elisha went to Shunem. An important woman lived in Shunem. This woman asked Elisha ¹to stop and ²eat at her house. So every time Elisha went through that place, he stopped there to eat.

⁹The woman said to her husband, “Look, I can see that Elisha is a holy man of God. He passes by our house all the time. ¹⁰Please,

let’s make a little room on the roof* for Elisha. Let’s put a bed in this room. Let’s put a table, a chair, and a lampstand in there. Then when he comes to our house, he can have this room for himself.”

¹¹One day Elisha came to the woman’s house. He went to this room and rested there. ¹²Elisha said to his servant Gehazi, “Call this Shunammite woman.”

The servant called the Shunammite woman, and she stood in front of Elisha. ¹³Elisha told his servant, “Now say to this woman, ‘Look, you have done your best to take care of us. What can we do for you? Do you want us to speak to the king for you, or to the captain of the army?’”

The woman answered, “I am fine living here among my own people.”

¹⁴Elisha said ¹to Gehazi, “What can we do for her?”

Gehazi answered, “I know! She doesn’t have a son, and her husband is old.”

¹⁵Then Elisha said, “Call her.”

So Gehazi called the woman. She came and stood at his door. ¹⁶Elisha said ¹to the woman, “About this time next spring, you will be hugging your own baby boy.”

The woman said, “No sir! Man of God,* don’t lie to me!”

The Woman in Shunem Has a Son

¹⁷But the woman did become pregnant. She gave birth to a son that next spring, just like Elisha said.

¹⁸The boy grew. One day, the boy went out into the fields to see his father and the men cutting the grain. ¹⁹The boy said to his father, “Oh, my head! My head hurts!”

The father said to his servant, “Carry him to his mother!”

²⁰The servant took the boy to his mother. The boy sat on his mother’s lap until noon. Then he died.

The Woman Goes to See Elisha

²¹The woman laid the boy on the bed of the man of God* (*Elisha*). She shut the door to that

group of prophets Literally, “sons of the prophets.” These people were prophets and people studying to become prophets.
man of God Another name for a prophet.

room on the roof In ancient Israel, houses had flat roofs that were used like an extra room.

room and went outside. ²²She called to her husband and said, “Please send me one of the servants and a donkey. Then I will go quickly to get the man of God (*Elisha*) and come back.”

²³The woman’s husband said, “Why do you want to go to the man of God (*Elisha*) today? It isn’t the New Moon* or Sabbath day*”

She said, “[Don’t worry.] Everything will be all right.”

²⁴Then she put a saddle on a donkey and said to her servant, “Let’s go, and hurry! Go slow only when I tell you!”

²⁵The woman went to Mount Carmel to get the man of God* (*Elisha*).

The man of God* (*Elisha*) saw the Shunammite woman coming from far away. Elisha said to his servant Gehazi, “Look, there’s the Shunammite woman! ²⁶Please run now to meet her! Say to her, ‘What’s wrong?’ Are you all right? Is your husband all right? Is the child all right?”

[Gehazi asked the Shunammite woman these things.] She answered, “Everything is fine.”

²⁷But the Shunammite woman went up the hill to the man of God* (*Elisha*). She [bowed down and] touched Elisha’s feet. Gehazi came near to pull the Shunammite woman away. But the man of God (*Elisha*) said to Gehazi, “Let her alone! She’s very upset, and the Lord didn’t tell me about it. The Lord hid this news from me.”

²⁸Then the Shunammite woman said, “Sir, I never asked for a son. I told you, ‘Don’t trick me!’”

²⁹Then Elisha said to Gehazi, “Get ready to go. Take my walking stick and go! [Don’t stop to talk to anyone!] If you meet any person, don’t even say hello to him. If any person says hello to you, don’t answer him. Put my walking stick on the child’s face.”

³⁰But the child’s mother said, “I promise, as the Lord lives and as you live, I won’t leave without you!”

So Elisha got up and followed the Shunammite woman.

³¹Gehazi arrived [at the Shunammite woman’s house] before Elisha and the Shunammite woman. Gehazi laid the walking stick on the child’s face. But the child did not talk or show any sign that he heard anything. Then Gehazi came back to meet Elisha. Gehazi told Elisha, “The child won’t wake up!”

The Shunammite Woman’s Son Lives Again

³²Elisha went into the house. And there was the child, lying dead on his bed. ³³Elisha went into the room and shut the door. Elisha and the child were alone in the room now. Then Elisha prayed to the Lord. ³⁴Elisha went [to the bed] and lay on the child. Elisha put his mouth on the child’s mouth. Elisha put his eyes on the child’s eyes. Elisha put his hands on the child’s hands. Elisha lay there on top of the child until the child’s body became warm.

³⁵Then Elisha turned away and walked around the room. He went back and lay on the child until the child sneezed seven times and opened his eyes.

³⁶Elisha called Gehazi and said, “Call the Shunammite woman!”

Gehazi called the Shunammite woman, and she came to Elisha. Elisha said, “Pick up your son.”

³⁷Then the Shunammite woman went into [the room] and bowed down at Elisha’s feet. Then she picked up her son and went out.

Elisha and the Poisoned Soup

³⁸Elisha went to Gilgal again. There was a time of hunger in the land. The group of prophets* was sitting in front of Elisha. Elisha said to his servant, “Put the large pot on the fire, and make some soup for the group of prophets.”

³⁹One man went out into the field to gather herbs. He found a wild vine and picked the fruit from it. He put that fruit in his robe and brought it back. He cut up the wild fruit and put it into the pot. But the group of prophets* did not know what kind of fruit it was.

New Moon The first day of the Hebrew month. There were special meetings on these days to worship God.

Sabbath day Saturday. A special day of rest and worship for the Jews.

man of God Another name for a prophet.

group of prophets Literally, “sons of the prophets.” These people were prophets and people studying to become prophets.

⁴⁰Then they poured some of the soup for the men to eat. But when they began to eat the soup, they shouted out to Elisha, “Man of God*! There’s poison in the pot!” The food tasted like poison, so they could not eat that food.

⁴¹But Elisha said, “Bring some flour.” They brought flour to Elisha, and he threw it into the pot. Then Elisha said, “Pour the soup for the people so they can eat.”

And there was nothing wrong with the soup!

Elisha Feeds the Group of Prophets

⁴²A man from Baal Shalishah came and brought bread from the first harvest to the man of God* (*Elisha*). This man brought 20 loaves of barley bread and fresh grain in his sack. Then Elisha said, “Give this food to the people, so that they can eat.”

⁴³Elisha’s servant said, “What? There are 100 men here. How can I give this food to all those men?”

But Elisha said, “Give the food to the people to eat. The Lord says, ‘They will eat and there will still be food left over.’”

⁴⁴Then Elisha’s servant put the food in front of the group of prophets.* The group of prophets had enough to eat, and they even had food left over! This happened just like the Lord said.

Naaman’s Problem

5 Naaman was the captain of the army of the king of Aram. Naaman was very important to his king.* Naaman was very important because the Lord used him to lead Aram to victory. Naaman was a great and powerful man, but he was also sick with leprosy.*

²The Aramean army sent many groups of soldiers to fight in Israel. The soldiers took people to be their slaves. One time they took a little girl from the land of Israel. This little girl became a servant of Naaman’s wife. ³This girl said to Naaman’s wife, “I wish that my master (*Naaman*) would meet the prophet (*Elisha*) who lives in Samaria. That prophet could heal Naaman of his leprosy.*”

⁴Naaman went to his master (*the king of Aram*). Naaman told the king of Aram the things that the Israelite girl said.

⁵Then the king of Aram said, “Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel.”

So Naaman went to Israel. Naaman took some gifts with him. Naaman took 750 pounds* of silver, 6,000 pieces of gold and ten changes of clothes. ⁶Naaman took the letter from the king of Aram to the king of Israel. The letter said: “... Now, this letter is to show that I am sending my servant Naaman to you. Cure his leprosy.*”

⁷When the king of Israel had read the letter, he tore his clothes to show he was sad and upset. The king of Israel said, “Am I God? No! I don’t have the power over life and death. So why did the king of Aram send a man sick with leprosy* for me to heal? Think about it, and you will see that it is a trick. The king of Aram is trying to start a fight!”

⁸Elisha, the man of God,* heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes to show that he was upset. So Elisha sent this message to the king: “Why did you tear your clothes? Let Naaman come to me. Then he will know there is a prophet in Israel!”

⁹So Naaman came with his horses and chariots* to Elisha’s house and stood outside the door. ¹⁰Elisha sent a messenger to Naaman. The messenger said, “Go, and wash in the Jordan River seven times. Then your skin will be healed, and you will be pure and clean.”

¹¹Naaman became angry and left. He said, “I thought Elisha would at least come out and stand in front of me and call on the name of the Lord his God. I thought he would wave his hand over my body and heal the leprosy*! ¹²Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, are better than all the water in Israel! Why can’t I wash in those rivers in Damascus and become clean?” Naaman was very angry and turned to leave.

man of God Another name for a prophet.

king Literally, “master.”

leprosy A very bad skin disease.

750 pounds Or, 340kg. Literally, “10 talents (kikars).”

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

¹³But Naaman's servants went to him and talked to him. They said, "Father,* if the prophet told you to do some great thing, you would do it! Right? [So you should obey him even if he tells you something easy.] And he said, 'Wash, and you will be pure and clean.'"

¹⁴So Naaman did what the man of God* (*Elisha*) said. Naaman went down and dipped himself in the Jordan River seven times. And Naaman became pure and clean! Naaman's skin became soft like the skin of a baby.

¹⁵Naaman and all his group came back to the man of God* (*Elisha*). He stood before Elisha and said, "Look, I now know there is no God in all the earth except in Israel! Now please accept a gift from me!"

¹⁶But Elisha said, "I serve the Lord. And I promise, as the Lord lives, I will not accept any gift."

Naaman tried hard to make Elisha take the gift, but Elisha refused. ¹⁷Then Naaman said, "If you won't accept this gift, then at least do this for me. Let me have enough dirt from Israel to fill the baskets on two of my mules.* Why? Because I will never again offer any burnt offering or sacrifice to any other gods. I will offer sacrifices only to the Lord! ¹⁸And I now pray the Lord will forgive me for this thing: In the future, my master (*the king of Aram*) will go into the temple of Rimmon to worship [that false god]. The king will want to lean on me for support, so I must bow down in the temple of Rimmon. I now ask the Lord to forgive me when that happens."

¹⁹Then Elisha said to Naaman, "Go in peace."

So Naaman left Elisha and went a short way. ²⁰But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God,* said, "Look, my master (*Elisha*) has let Naaman the Aramean go without accepting the gift that he brought! As the Lord lives, I will

run after Naaman and get something from him!" ²¹So Gehazi ran to Naaman.

Naaman saw someone running after him. He stepped down from the chariot* to meet Gehazi. Naaman said, "Is everything all right?"

²²Gehazi said, "Yes, everything is all right. My master (*Elisha*) has sent me. He said, 'Look, two young men came to me. They were from the group of prophets* in the hill country of Ephraim. Please give them 75 pounds* of silver and two changes of clothes!'"

²³Naaman said, "Please, take 150 pounds*!" Naaman persuaded Gehazi [to take the silver]. Naaman put 150 pounds of silver in two bags and took two changes of clothes. Then Naaman gave these things to two of his servants. The servants carried these things for Gehazi. ²⁴When Gehazi came to the hill, he took these things from the servants. Gehazi sent the servants away, and they left. Then Gehazi hid those things in the house.

²⁵Gehazi came in and stood before his master [Elisha]. Elisha said to Gehazi, "Where have you been Gehazi?"

Gehazi said, "I didn't go anywhere."

²⁶Elisha said to Gehazi, "That is not true! My heart was with you when the man [Naaman] turned from his chariot* to meet you. This is not the time to take money, clothes, olives, grapes, sheep, cows, or men and women servants. ²⁷Now, you and your children will catch Naaman's disease. You will have leprosy* forever!"

When Gehazi left Elisha, Gehazi's skin was as white as snow! Gehazi was sick with leprosy.*

Elisha and the Axhead

6 The group of prophets* said to Elisha, "We are staying in that place over there. But it is too small for us. ²Let's go to the Jordan River

Father Slaves often called their masters "father," and the masters often called their slaves "children."

man of God Another name for a prophet.

Let me have ... my mules Naaman probably thought that the ground in Israel was holy, so he wanted take some with him to help him to worship the Lord in his own country.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

group of prophets Literally, "sons of the prophets." These people were prophets and people studying to become prophets.

75 pounds Or, 34kg. Literally, "1 talent (kikar)."

150 pounds Or, 68kg. Literally, "2 talents (kikars)."

leprosy A very bad skin disease.

and cut some wood. Each of us will get a log and we will build us a place to live there.”

Elisha answered, “Fine, go and do it.”

³One person said, “Please go with us.”

Elisha said, “Fine, I will go with you.”

⁴So Elisha went with the group of prophets.* When they arrived at the Jordan River, they began to cut down some trees.

⁵But when one man was cutting down a tree, the iron axhead slipped from the handle and fell into the water. The man shouted, “Oh, master! I borrowed that axe!”

⁶The man of God* (*Elisha*) said, “Where did it fall?”

The man showed Elisha the place where the axhead fell. Then Elisha cut a stick and threw the stick into the water. The stick made the iron axhead float. ⁷Elisha said, “Pick up the axhead.” Then the man reached out and took the axhead.

Aram Tries to Trap Israel

⁸The king of Aram was making war against Israel. He had a council meeting with his army officers. He said, “Hide in this place and attack the Israelites when they come by.”

⁹But the man of God* (*Elisha*) sent a message to the king of Israel. Elisha said, “Be careful! Don’t go by that place! The Aramean soldiers are hiding there!”

¹⁰The king of Israel sent a message to his men at the place that the man of God* (*Elisha*) warned him about. And the king of Israel saved quite a few men.*

¹¹The king of Aram was very upset about this. The king of Aram called his army officers and said to them, “Tell me who is spying for the king of Israel.”

¹²One of the officers of the king of Aram said, “My lord and king, not one of us is a spy! Elisha, the prophet from Israel, can tell the king of Israel many secret things—even the words that you speak in your bedroom!”

¹³The king of Aram said, “Find Elisha and I will send men to catch him!”

The servants told the king of Aram, “Elisha is in Dothan!”

¹⁴Then the king of Aram sent horses, chariots,* and a large army to Dothan. They arrived at night and surrounded the city. ¹⁵Elisha’s servant got up early that morning. The servant went outside, and he saw an army with horses and chariots all around the city!

Elisha’s servant said to Elisha, “Oh, my master, what can we do?”

¹⁶Elisha said, “Don’t be afraid! The army that fights for us is larger than the army that fights for Aram!”

¹⁷Then Elisha prayed and said, “Lord, I ask you, open my servant’s eyes so he can see.”

The Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and the servant saw the mountain was full of horses and chariots* of fire. They were all around Elisha!

¹⁸These horses and chariots* of fire came down to Elisha. Elisha prayed to the Lord and said, “I pray that you will cause these people to become blind.”

Then the Lord did what Elisha asked. The Lord caused the Aramean army to become blind. ¹⁹Elisha said to the Aramean army, “This is not the right way. This is not the right city. Follow me. I will lead you to the man you are looking for.” Then Elisha led the Aramean army to Samaria.*

²⁰When they arrived at Samaria,* Elisha said, “Lord, open the eyes of these men so they can see.”

Then the Lord opened their eyes, and the Aramean army saw they were in the city of Samaria! ²¹The king of Israel saw the Aramean army. The king of Israel said to Elisha, “My father, should I kill them? Should I kill them?”

²²Elisha answered, “No, don’t kill them. You would not kill people that you captured in war with your sword and with your bow and arrows. Give the Aramean army some bread and water. Let them eat and drink. Then let them go home to their master.”

group of prophets Literally, “sons of the prophets.” These people were prophets and people studying to become prophets.

man of God Another name for a prophet.

quite a few men Literally, “not one or two.”

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

Samaria This was the capital city of Israel—the enemy of Aram.

²³The king of Israel prepared much food for the Aramean army. The Aramean army ate and drank. Then the king of Israel sent the Aramean army back home. The Aramean army went home to their master. The Arameans did not send any more soldiers into the land of Israel to make raids.

A Terrible Time of Hunger Hits Samaria

²⁴After this happened, Ben Hadad king of Aram gathered all his army and went to surround and attack the city Samaria. ²⁵[The soldiers would not let people bring food into the city.] So there was a time of terrible hunger in Samaria. It was so bad in Samaria that a donkey's head was sold for 80 pieces of silver. And one pint* of dove's dung sold for five pieces of silver.

²⁶The king of Israel was walking on the wall around the city. A woman shouted out to him. The woman said, "My lord and king, please help me!"

²⁷The king of Israel said, "If the Lord does not help you, how can I help you? [I have nothing to give to you—there is no grain] from the threshing floor* or [wine] from the winepress." ²⁸Then the king of Israel said to the woman, "What is your trouble?"

The woman answered, "This woman said to me, 'Give me your son so that we can [kill him and] eat him today. Then we will eat my son tomorrow.' ²⁹So we boiled my son and ate him. Then the next day, I said to this woman, 'Give me your son so we can [kill him and] eat him.' But she has hidden her son!"

³⁰When the king heard the woman's words, he tore his clothes [to show he was upset]. As the king passed by on the wall, the people saw the king was wearing under his clothes the rough cloth [that showed he was sad and upset].

³¹The king said, "May God punish me if the head of Elisha son of Shaphat is still on his body at the end of this day!"

³²The king sent a messenger to Elisha. Elisha was sitting in his house, and the elders (*leaders*) were sitting with him. Before the messenger

arrived, Elisha said to the elders, "Look, that son of a murderer (*the king of Israel*) is sending men to cut off my head! When the messenger arrives, shut the door! Hold the door and don't let him in! I hear the sound of his master's feet coming behind him!"

³³While Elisha was still talking with the elders (*leaders*), the messenger* came to him. This was the message: "This trouble has come from the Lord! Why should I wait for the Lord any longer?"

7 Elisha said, "Listen to the message from the Lord! The Lord says: 'About this time tomorrow, [there will be plenty of food, and it will be cheap again]. A person will be able to buy a basket* of fine flour or two baskets* of barley for only one shekel* in the market place by the city gates of Samaria.'"

²Then the officer that was close to the king* answered the man of God* (*Elisha*). The officer said, "Even if the Lord made windows in heaven, this could not happen!"

Elisha said, "You will see it with your own eyes. But you will not eat any of that food."

Lepers Find the Aramean Camp Empty

³There were four men sick with leprosy* near the city gate. They said to each other, "Why are we sitting here waiting to die?"

⁴There is no food in the Samaria. If we go into the city, we will die there. If we stay here, we will also die. So let's go to the Aramean camp. If they let us live, then we will live. If they kill us, then we will just die.

⁵So that evening the four lepers* went to the Aramean camp. They came to the edge of the Aramean camp. No people were there!

⁶The Lord had caused the Aramean army to hear the sound of chariots,* horses, and a large army. So the Aramean soldiers said to each other, "The king of Israel has hired the

messenger Or possibly, "king."

basket(s) Literally, "seah(s)."

shekel Or, "2/5 of an ounce."

that was close to the king Literally, "on whose arm the king leaned."

man of God Another name for a prophet.

leprosy A very bad skin disease.

lepers People sick with leprosy.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

one pint About 0.3 l. Literally, "1/4 cab."

threshing floor A place where grain is beaten or walked on to remove the hulls from the grain.

kings of the Hittites and Egyptians to come against us!”

⁷The Arameans ran away early that evening. They left everything behind. They left their tents, horses, and donkeys, and they ran for their lives.

The Lepers in the Enemy Camp

⁸When these lepers* came to where the camp began, they went into one tent. They ate and drank. Then the four lepers carried silver, gold, and clothes out of the camp. They hid the silver, gold, and clothes. Then they came back and entered another tent. They carried things out from this tent. They went out and hid these things. ⁹Then these lepers said to each other, “We are doing wrong! Today we have good news. But we are silent. If we wait until the sun comes up, we will be punished. Now let’s go and tell the people who live in the king’s house.”

The Lepers Tell the Good News

¹⁰So these lepers* came and called to the gatekeepers of the city. The lepers told the gatekeepers, “We went to the Aramean camp. But we did not hear any people. No people were there. The horses and donkeys were still tied up, and the tents were still standing. [But the people were all gone!]”

¹¹Then the gatekeepers of the city shouted out and told the people in the king’s house. ¹²It was night, but the king got up from bed. The king said to his officers, “I will tell you what the Aramean soldiers are doing to us. They know we are hungry. They left the camp to hide in the field. They are thinking, ‘When the Israelites come out of the city, we will capture them alive. And then we will enter the city.’”

¹³One of the king’s officers said, “Let some men take five of the horses that are still left in the city. The horses will soon die anyway, just like all the people of Israel that are still left in the city.* Let’s send these men to see what happened.”

¹⁴So the men took two chariots* with horses. The king sent these men after the Aramean army. The king told them, “Go and see what happened.”

¹⁵The men went after the Aramean army as far as the Jordan River. All along the road there were clothes and weapons. The Arameans had thrown these things down when they hurried away. The messengers went back to Samaria and told the king.

¹⁶Then the people ran out to the Aramean camp and took valuable things from there. [There was plenty of things for everyone.] So it happened just like the Lord said. A person could buy a basket* of fine flour or two baskets* of barley for only one shekel.*

¹⁷The king chose his officer that was close to him to guard the gate. [But the people ran to get food from the enemy camp.] The people knocked the officer down and walked on him, and he died. So all those things happened just like the man of God* (*Elisha*) said when the king came to Elisha’s house. ¹⁸Elisha had said, “A person will be able to buy a basket* of fine flour or two baskets* of barley for only one shekel* in the market place by the city gates of Samaria.” ¹⁹But that officer had answered the man of God, “Even if the Lord made windows in heaven, this could not happen!” And Elisha had told [the officer,] “You will see it with your own eyes. But you will not eat any of that food.” ²⁰It happened to the officer just that way. The people knocked him down at the gate and walked on him, and he died.

The King and the Shunammite Woman

8 Elisha talked to the woman whose son he had brought back to life. Elisha said, “You and your family should move to another country. Why? Because the Lord has decided that there will be a time of hunger here. This time of hunger will be in this country for seven years.”

²So the woman did what the man of God* said. She went with her family to stay in the

lepers People sick with leprosy.

The horses ... city The Hebrew is hard to understand here.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

basket(s) Literally, “seah(s).”

shekel Or, “2/5 of an ounce.”

man of God Another name for a prophet.

land of the Philistines for seven years. ³After the seven years were finished, the woman came back from the land of the Philistines.

The woman went to speak with the king. She wanted to ask him to help her get back her house and land.

⁴The king was talking with Gehazi, the servant of the man of God* (*Elisha*). The king said to Gehazi, "Please tell me all the great things Elisha has done."

⁵Gehazi was telling the king about Elisha bringing a dead person back to life. At that time, the woman whose son Elisha brought back to life went to the king. She wanted to ask him to help her get back her house and land. Gehazi said, "My lord and king, this is the woman! And this is the son that Elisha brought back to life!"

⁶The king asked the woman what she wanted. And the woman told him.

Then the king chose an officer to help the woman. The king said, "Give to the woman all that belongs to her. And give her all the harvest of her land from the day she left the country until now."

Ben Hadad Sends Hazael to Elisha

⁷Elisha went to Damascus. Ben Hadad king of Aram was sick. A person told Ben Hadad, "The man of God* has come here."

⁸Then the King Ben Hadad said to Hazael, "Take a gift, and go to meet the man of God.* Ask him to ask the Lord if I will get well from my sickness."

⁹So Hazael went to meet Elisha. Hazael brought a gift with him. He brought all kinds of good things from Damascus. It took 40 camels to carry everything. Hazael went to Elisha. Hazael said, "Your follower,* Ben Hadad king of Aram, sent me to you. He asks if he will get well from his sickness."

¹⁰Then Elisha said to Hazael, "Go and tell Ben Hadad, 'You will live.'* But really the Lord told me, 'He will die.'"

Elisha Makes a Prophecy About Hazael

¹¹Elisha began to stare. He stared until [Hazael] felt embarrassed. Then the man of God* began to cry. ¹²Hazael said, "Sir, why are you crying?"

Elisha answered, "I am crying because I know the bad things you will do to the Israelites. You will burn their strong cities. You will kill their young men with swords. You will kill their babies. You will split open their pregnant women."

¹³Hazael said, I am not a powerful man!* I can't do these great things!"

Elisha answered, "The Lord showed me that you will be king over Aram."

¹⁴Then Hazael left Elisha, and went to his king.* Ben Hadad said to Hazael, "What did Elisha say to you?"

Hazael answered, "Elisha told me that you will live."

Hazael Murders Ben Hadad

¹⁵But the next day, Hazael took a thick cloth and dipped it in water. Then he put the cover on Ben Hadad's face [and smothered him]. Ben Hadad died and Hazael became the new king.

Jehoram Begins His Rule

¹⁶Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat was the king of Judah. Jehoram began to rule in the fifth year that Joram son of Ahab was king of Israel. ¹⁷Jehoram was 32 years old when he began to rule. He ruled eight years in Jerusalem. ¹⁸But Jehoram lived like the kings of Israel and did the things that the Lord said were wrong. Jehoram lived like the people from Ahab's family. Jehoram lived like this because his wife was Ahab's daughter. ¹⁹But the Lord would not destroy Judah because of [the promise to] his servant David. The Lord had promised David that someone from his family would always be king.

²⁰In Jehoram's time Edom broke away from Judah's rule. The people of Edom chose a king for themselves.

man of God Another name for a prophet.

follower Literally, "son."

You will live Or possibly, "You will not live."

I ... powerful man Literally, "Your servant is only a dog!"

king Literally, "master."

²¹Then Jehoram and all his chariots* went to Zair. The Edomite army surrounded them. Jehoram and his officers attacked them and escaped. Jehoram's soldiers all ran away and went home. ²²So the Edomites broke away from the rule of Judah. And they have been free from the rule of Judah until today.

At the same time, Libnah also broke away from Judah's rule.

²³All the things Jehoram did are written in the book, *The History of the Kings of Judah*.

²⁴Jehoram [died and] was buried with his ancestors* in the City of David.* Jehoram's son Ahaziah became the new king.

Ahaziah Begins His Rule

²⁵Ahaziah son of Jehoram became the king of Judah in the 12th year that Joram son of Ahab was king of Israel. ²⁶Ahaziah was 22 years old when he began to rule. He ruled one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Athaliah. She was the daughter of Omri, the king of Israel. ²⁷Ahaziah did the things the Lord said were wrong. Ahaziah did many bad things like the people from Ahab's family. Ahaziah lived like this because his wife was from Ahab's family.

Joram Is Hurt in the War Against Hazael

²⁸Joram was from Ahab's family. Ahaziah went with Joram to fight against Hazael king of Aram at Ramoth Gilead. The Arameans wounded Joram. King Joram went back to Israel so he could get well from those wounds. Joram went to the area of Jezreel. Ahaziah son of Jehoram was the king of Judah. Ahaziah went to Jezreel to see Joram.

Elisha Tells a Prophet to Anoint Jehu

9 Elisha the prophet called one of the group of prophets.* Elisha said to this man, "Get ready and take this small bottle of oil in your hand. Go to Ramoth Gilead. ²When you arrive

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

ancestors Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

City of David A part of the city of Jerusalem.

group of prophets Literally, "sons of the prophets." These people were prophets and people studying to become prophets.

there, find Jehu son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi. Then go in and make him get up from among his brothers. Take him to an inner room. ³Take the small bottle of oil and pour the oil on Jehu's head. Say, 'This is what the Lord says: I have anointed* you to be the new king over Israel.' Then open the door and run away. Don't wait!"

⁴So this young man, the prophet, went to Ramoth Gilead. ⁵When the young man arrived, [he saw] the captains of the army sitting. The young man said, "Captain, I have a message for you."

Jehu said, "We all [are here.] Which one of us is the message for?"

The young man said, "[The message is for] you, captain."

⁶Jehu got up and went into the house. Then the young prophet poured the oil on Jehu's head. The young prophet said to Jehu, "The Lord God of Israel says, 'I am anointing* you to be the new king over the Lord's people, Israel. ⁷You must destroy the family of Ahab your king. In this way I will punish Jezebel for the deaths of my servants, the prophets, and the deaths of all the Lord's servants that were murdered. ⁸So all Ahab's family will die. I will not let any male child in Ahab's family live. It doesn't matter if that male child is a slave or a free person in Israel. ⁹I will make Ahab's family like the family of Jeroboam son of Nebat, and like the family of Baasha son of Ahijah. ¹⁰The dogs will eat Jezebel in the area of Jezreel. Jezebel will not be buried."

Then the young prophet opened the door and ran away.

The Servants Announce Jehu as King

¹¹Jehu went back to his king's officers. One of the officers said to Jehu, "Is everything all right? Why did this crazy man come to you?"

Jehu answered the servants, "You know the man and the crazy things he says."

¹²The officers said, "No! Tell us the truth. What did he say?" Jehu told the officers the things that the young prophet said. Jehu said,

anoint(ed) To pour olive oil on a person's head to show he was chosen by God to be a king, priest, or prophet.

"He said, 'This is what the Lord says: I have anointed you to be the new king over Israel.'"

¹³Then each officer quickly took his robe off and put it on the steps in front of Jehu. Then they blew the trumpet and made the announcement, "Jehu is king!"

Jehu Goes to Jezreel

¹⁴So Jehu son of Jehoshaphat, son of Nimshi, made plans against Joram.

At that time, Joram and the Israelites had been trying to defend Ramoth Gilead from Hazael king of Aram. ¹⁵King Joram had fought against Hazael, king of Aram. But the Arameans wounded King Joram, and he went to Jezreel to get well from those injuries.

So Jehu told the officers, "If you agree that I am the new king, then don't let any person escape from the city to tell the news in Jezreel."

¹⁶Joram was resting in Jezreel. So Jehu got in his chariot* and drove to Jezreel. Ahaziah king of Judah had also come to Jezreel to see Joram.

¹⁷A guard was standing on the tower in Jezreel. He saw Jehu's large group coming. He said, "I see a large group of people!"

Joram said, "Send someone on a horse to meet them. Tell this messenger to ask if those people come in peace."

¹⁸So the messenger rode on a horse to meet Jehu. The messenger said, "King Joram says, 'Do you come in peace?'"

Jehu said, "You have nothing to do with peace! Come and follow me."

The guard told Joram, "The messenger went to the group, but he has not come back yet."

¹⁹Then Joram sent out a second messenger on a horse. This man came to Jehu's group and said, "King Joram says, 'Peace.*'"

Jehu answered, "You have nothing to do with peace! Come and follow me."

²⁰The guard told Joram, "The second messenger went to the group, but he has not come back yet. There is a man driving his chariot* like a mad man. He is driving like Jehu son of Nimshi."

²¹Joram said, "Get me my chariot!"*

So the servant got Joram's chariot. Both Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah got their chariots* and drove out to meet Jehu. They met Jehu at the property of Naboth from Jezreel.

²²Joram saw Jehu and asked, "Do you come in peace, Jehu?"

Jehu answered, "There is no peace as long as your mother Jezebel does many acts of prostitution and witchcraft.*"

²³Joram turned the horses to run away. Joram said to Ahaziah, "It is a trick, Ahaziah!"

²⁴But Jehu pulled his bow with all his strength and shot Joram in his back.* The arrow went through Joram's heart. Joram fell dead in his chariot.*

²⁵Jehu said to his chariot driver Bidkar, "Take Joram's body up and throw it into the field of Naboth from Jezreel. Remember when you and I rode together with Joram's father Ahab, the Lord said this would happen to him. ²⁶The Lord said, 'Yesterday I saw the blood of Naboth and his sons. So I will punish Ahab in this field.' The Lord said that. So take Joram's body and throw it into the field, just like the Lord said!"

²⁷Ahaziah king of Judah saw this, and ran away. He tried to escape through the garden house, but Jehu followed him. Jehu had said, "Shoot Ahaziah, too!"

Ahaziah was wounded when he was in his chariot on the road to Gur near Ibleam. Ahaziah got as far as Megiddo, but he died there.

²⁸Ahaziah's servants carried his body in the chariot to Jerusalem. They buried Ahaziah in his tomb with his ancestors* in the City of David.*

²⁹Ahaziah became king over Judah during Joram's* eleventh year as king of Israel.

The Terrible Death of Jezebel

³⁰Jehu went to Jezreel, and Jezebel heard the news. She put her makeup on and fixed her hair. Then she stood by the window and

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

Peace A way of saying "hello."

witchcraft Using magic or the power of Satan to do things.

in his back Literally, "between his arms."

ancestors Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

City of David A part of the city of Jerusalem.

Joram's Literally, "Joram son of Ahab."

looked out. ³¹Jehu entered the city. Jezebel said, “Hello, you Zimri*! Just like him, you killed your master!”

³²Jehu looked up at the window. He said, “Who is on my side? Who?”

Two or three eunuchs* looked out from the window at Jehu. ³³Jehu said to them, “Throw Jezebel down!”

Then the eunuchs* threw Jezebel down. Some of Jezebel’s blood splashed on the wall and on the horses. The horses walked on Jezebel’s body. ³⁴Jehu went into the house and ate and drank. Then he said, “Now see about this cursed woman. Bury her, because she is a king’s daughter.”

³⁵The men went to bury Jezebel. But they could not find her body. They could only find her skull, her feet, and the palms of her hands. ³⁶So the men came back and told Jehu. Then Jehu said, “The Lord told his servant Elijah the Tishbite to give this message. Elijah said: ‘Dogs will eat the body of Jezebel in the area of Jezreel. ³⁷Jezebel’s body will be like dung on the field in the area of Jezreel. People won’t be able to recognize Jezebel’s body!’”

Jehu Writes the Leaders of Samaria

10 Ahab had 70 sons in Samaria. Jehu wrote letters and sent them to Samaria to the rulers and leaders of Jezreel. He also sent the letters to the people that raised Ahab’s sons. In the letters Jehu said, ^{2–3}“As soon as you get this letter, choose the person that is the best and most worthy among your father’s sons. You have chariots* and horses. And you are living in a strong city. You also have weapons. Put the son you choose on his father’s throne. Then fight for your father’s family.”

⁴But the rulers and leaders of Jezreel were very much afraid. They said, “The two kings (*Joram and Ahaziah*) could not stop Jehu. So we can’t stop him either!”

⁵The man that took care of Ahab’s house, the man that controlled the city, the elders, and

the people who raised Ahab’s children sent a message to Jehu. “We are your servants. We will do anything you tell us. We will not make any man king. Do what you think is good.”

Leaders of Samaria Kill Ahab’s Children

⁶Then Jehu wrote a second letter to these leaders. Jehu said, “If you support me and obey me, then cut off the heads of Ahab’s sons. And bring them to me at Jezreel about this time tomorrow.

Ahab had 70 sons. They were with the leaders of the city that raised them. ⁷When the leaders of the city received the letter, they took the king’s sons and killed all 70 of them. Then the leaders put the heads of the king’s sons in baskets. They sent the baskets to Jehu at Jezreel. ⁸The messenger came to Jehu and told him, “They have brought the heads of the king’s sons!”

Then Jehu said, “Lay the heads in two piles at the city gate until morning.”

⁹In the morning, Jehu went out and stood before the people. He said to the people, “You are innocent. Look, I made plans against my master. I killed him. But who killed all these sons of Ahab? You killed them! ¹⁰You should know that everything the Lord says will happen. And the Lord used Elijah to say these things about Ahab’s family. Now the Lord has done the things he said he would do.”

¹¹So Jehu killed all the people in Ahab’s family living in Jezreel. Jehu killed all the important men, close friends, and priests. None of Ahab’s people were left alive.

Jehu Kills Ahaziah’s Relatives

¹²Jehu left Jezreel and went to Samaria. On the way, Jehu stopped at a place called Shepherd’s Camp, where the shepherds cut wool from their sheep. ¹³Jehu met with the relatives of Ahaziah king of Judah. Jehu said to them, “Who are you?”

They answered, “We are the relatives of Ahaziah, king of Judah. We have come down to visit the king’s children and the queen mother’s* children.

Zimri Zimri was the man that killed Elah and the family of Baasha in Israel many years before. Read 1 Kings 16:8–12.

eunuchs Men that had their sexual organs removed. Often important officials of the king were eunuchs.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

queen mother The mother of the king.

¹⁴Then Jehu said to his men, "Take them alive!"

Jehu's men captured Ahaziah's relatives alive. There were 42 people. Jehu killed them at the well near Beth Eked. Jehu did not leave any person alive.

Jehu Meets Jehonadab

¹⁵After Jehu left there, he met Jehonadab son of Recab. Jehonadab was on his way to meet Jehu. Jehu greeted Jehonadab and said to him, "Are you a faithful friend to me, as I am to you?"

Jehonadab answered, "Yes, I am a faithful friend to you."

Jehu said, "If you are, then give me your hand."

Then Jehu reached out and pulled Jehonadab up into the chariot.*

¹⁶Jehu said, "Come with me. You can see how strong my feelings are for the Lord."

So Jehonadab rode in Jehu's chariot.* ¹⁷Jehu came to Samaria and killed all Ahab's family that were still alive in Samaria. Jehu killed them all. Jehu did the things that the Lord had told Elijah.

Jehu Calls the Worshipers of Baal

¹⁸Then Jehu gathered all the people together. Jehu said to them, "Ahab served Baal a little. But Jehu will serve Baal much! ¹⁹Now call together all the priests and prophets of Baal. And call together all the people that worship Baal. Don't let any person miss this meeting. I have a great sacrifice to give to Baal. I will kill any person that doesn't come to this meeting!"

But Jehu was tricking them. Jehu wanted to destroy the worshipers of Baal. ²⁰Jehu said, "Prepare a holy meeting for Baal." And the priests announced the meeting. ²¹Then Jehu sent a message through all the land of Israel. All the worshipers of Baal came. There was not a person that stayed home. The Baal

worshippers came into the temple* of Baal. The temple was filled with people.

²²Jehu said to the man that kept the robes, "Bring out the robes for all the worshipers of Baal." So that man brought out the robes for the Baal worshipers.

²³Then Jehu and Jehonadab son of Recab went into the temple* of Baal. Jehu said to the worshipers of Baal, "Look around and be sure that there are no servants of the Lord with you. Be sure there are only people that worship Baal." ²⁴The worshipers of Baal went into the temple of Baal to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings.

But outside, Jehu had 80 men waiting. Jehu told them, "Don't let any of the people escape. If any man lets one person escape, then that man must pay with his own life."

²⁵Quickly after Jehu had finished offering the burnt offering, he said to the guards and to the captains, "Go in and kill the worshipers of Baal! Don't let any person come out of the temple alive!"

So the captains used thin swords and killed the worshipers of Baal. The guards and the captains threw the bodies of the worshipers of Baal out. Then the guards and the captains went to the inner room* of the temple* of Baal. ²⁶They brought out the memorial stones* that were in the temple of Baal and burned the temple. ²⁷Then they smashed the memorial stones of Baal. They also smashed the temple of Baal. They made the temple of Baal into a restroom. People still use that place as a toilet.

²⁸So Jehu destroyed Baal worship in Israel. ²⁹But Jehu did not completely turn away from the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat that caused Israel to sin. Jehu did not destroy the golden calves in Bethel and in Dan.

temple Here this means the building where people went to worship Baal.

inner room Literally, "The city of the temple of Baal."

memorial stones Stones that were set up to help people remember something special. In ancient Israel, people often set up stones as special places to worship false gods.

Are you a faithful friend ... you Literally, "Is your heart true to me? My heart is true to your heart."

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

Jehu's Rule Over Israel

³⁰The Lord said to Jehu, “You have done well. You have done the things that I say are good. You destroyed Ahab’s family the way I wanted you to. So your descendants* will rule Israel for four generations.”

³¹But Jehu was not careful to live in the law of the Lord with all his heart. Jehu did not stop doing the sins of Jeroboam that caused Israel to sin.

Hazael Defeats Israel

³²At that time, the Lord began to cut parts from Israel. Hazael king of Aram defeated the Israelites on every border of Israel. ³³Hazael won the land east of the Jordan River—all the land of Gilead, including the land that belonged to the family groups of Gad, Reuben, and Manasseh. Hazael won all the land from Aroer by the Arnon Valley to Gilead and Bashan.

The Death of Jehu

³⁴All the other great things that Jehu did are written in the book *The History of the Kings of Israel*. ³⁵Jehu died and was buried with his ancestors.* The people buried Jehu in Samaria. Jehu’s son Jehoahaz became the new king of Israel after him. ³⁶Jehu ruled over Israel in Samaria for 28 years.

Athaliah Kills the King's Sons in Judah

11 Athaliah was Ahaziah’s mother. She saw that her son was dead, so she got up and killed all the king’s family.

²Jehosheba was King Joram’s daughter and Ahaziah’s sister. Joash was one of the king’s sons. Jehosheba took Joash while the other children were being killed. Jehosheba hid Joash. She put Joash and his nurse in her bedroom. So Jehosheba and the nurse hid Joash from Athaliah. That way Joash was not killed.

descendants A person’s children and all of their future families.

ancestors Literally, “fathers.” This means a person’s parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

³Then Joash and Jehosheba hid in the Lord’s temple.* Joash hid there for six years. And Athaliah ruled over the land of Judah.

⁴In the seventh year, Jehoiada [the high priest] sent and got the captains of the Carites* and guards.* Jehoiada brought them together in the Lord’s temple.* Then Jehoiada made an agreement with them. In the temple Jehoiada forced them to make a promise. Then he showed the king’s son (*Joash*) to them.

⁵Then Jehoiada gave them a command. He said, “This is the thing you must do. One-third of you must come in at the start of each Sabbath day. You men will protect the king at his house. ⁶Another third of you will be at the Sur Gate. And another third will be at the gate behind the guard. This way you will be like a wall protecting Joash. ⁷At the end of each Sabbath day, two-thirds of you will guard the Lord’s temple and protect King Joash. ⁸You must stay with King Joash any time he goes any place. The whole group must surround the king. Each guard must have his weapon in his hand. And you must kill any person that comes too close to you.”

⁹The captains obeyed all the things that Jehoiada the priest commanded. Each captain took his men. One group was to guard the king on Saturday. And the other groups were to guard the king during the rest of the week. All those men went to Jehoiada the priest. ¹⁰And the priest gave spears and shields to the captains. These were the spears and shields David put in the Lord’s temple.*

¹¹These guards stood with their weapons in their hands from the right corner of the temple to the left corner of the temple. They stood around the altar* and the temple and around the king when he went to the temple. ¹²These men brought out Joash. They put the crown on Joash and gave him the agreement

temple A special building for worshiping God. God commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in Jerusalem.

Carites Or, “Kerethites,” special soldiers hired to serve the king.

guards Literally, “runners” or “messengers.”

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered as gifts to God.

between the king and God.* Then they anointed* him and made him the new king. They clapped their hands and shouted, “Long live the king!”

¹³Queen Athaliah heard the noise from the guards and the people. So she went to the people at the Lord’s temple. ¹⁴Athaliah saw the king by the column where the king usually stood. She also saw the leaders and men playing the trumpets for the king. She saw that all the people were very happy. She heard the trumpets, and she tore her clothes to show she was upset. Then Athaliah shouted, “Treason! Treason!”

¹⁵Jehoiada the priest gave a command to the captains that were in charge of the soldiers. Jehoiada told them, “Take Athaliah outside of the temple area. Kill any of her followers. But don’t kill them in the Lord’s temple.”

¹⁶So the soldiers grabbed Athaliah. They killed her as soon as she went through the horse’s entrance to the palace.

¹⁷Then Jehoiada made the agreement between the Lord and the king and the people. This agreement showed that the king and the people belonged to the Lord. Jehoiada also made the agreement between the king and the people. This agreement showed what the king would do for the people. And it showed that the people would obey and follow the king.

¹⁸Then all the people went to the temple of the false god Baal. The people destroyed the statue of Baal, and they destroyed his altars.* They broke them into many, many pieces. The people also killed Baal’s priest, Mattan, in front of the altars.

So Jehoiada the priest put men in charge of maintaining the Lord’s temple. ¹⁹The priest led all the people. They went from the Lord’s temple to the king’s house. The king’s special guards and the captains went with the king. And all the other people followed them. They went to the entrance to the king’s house. Then

King Joash sat on the throne. ²⁰All the people were happy. The city was peaceful. And Queen Athaliah was killed with a sword near the king’s house.

²¹Joash was seven years old when he became the king.

Joash Begins His Rule

12 Joash began to rule during Jehu’s seventh year as king of Israel. Joash ruled 40 years in Jerusalem. Joash’s mother was named Zibiah of Beersheba. ²Joash did the things that the Lord said were right. Joash obeyed the Lord all his life. He did the things that Jehoiada the priest taught him. ³But he did not destroy the high places.* The people still made sacrifices and burned incense at those places of worship.

Joash Orders the Temple Repaired

⁴⁻⁵Joash said to the priests, “There is much money in the Lord’s temple. People have given things to the temple. People have paid the temple tax when they were counted. And people have given money simply because they wanted to. You priests should take that money and repair the Lord’s temple. Each priest should use the money he gets from the people he serves. He should use that money to repair the damages to the Lord’s temple.”

⁶But the priests did not do the repairs. In the 23rd year that Joash was king, the priests still had not repaired the temple. ⁷So king Joash called for Jehoiada the priest and the other priests. Joash said to Jehoiada and the other priests, “Why haven’t you repaired the temple? Stop taking money from the people you serve. Stop using that money. That money must be used to repair the temple.”

⁸The priests agreed to stop taking money from the people. But they also decided not to repair the temple. ⁹So Jehoiada the priest took a box and made a hole in the top of it. Then Jehoiada put the box on the south side of the altar. This box was by the door where people came into the Lord’s temple. Some of the

agreement between the king and God This was probably the promise the king made to serve God. See verse 17 and 1 Sam. 10:25.

anoint(ed) To pour olive oil on a person’s head to show he was chosen by God to be a king, priest, or prophet.

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered as gifts to God.

high places Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

priests guarded the doorway* of the temple. Those priests took the money people had given to the Lord, and they put that money into that box.

¹⁰Then the people began putting money into that box when they went to the temple. Whenever the king's secretary and the high priest saw there was a lot of money in the box, they came and took the money from the box. They put the money in bags and counted it. ¹¹Then they paid the workers that worked on the Lord's temple. They paid the carpenters and other builders that worked on the Lord's temple. ¹²They used that money to pay the stoneworkers and stonecutters. And they used that money to buy timber, cut stone, and everything else to repair the Lord's temple.

^{13–14}People gave money for the Lord's temple. But the priests could not use that money to make silver cups, snuffers,* basins, trumpets, or any gold and silver dishes. That money was used to pay the workers. And those workers repaired the Lord's temple. ¹⁵No one counted all the money or forced the workers to tell what happened to the money. Why? Because those workers could be trusted!

¹⁶People gave money at the times they offered guilt offerings and sin offerings. But that money was not used to pay the workers. That money belonged to the priests.

Joash Saves Jerusalem from Hazael

¹⁷Hazael was the king of Aram. Hazael went to fight against the city of Gath. Hazael defeated Gath. Then he made plans to go fight against Jerusalem.

¹⁸Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, and Ahaziah had been kings of Judah. They were Joash's* ancestors.* They had given many things to the Lord. Those things were kept in the temple. Joash also had given many things to the Lord. Joash took all those and all the gold that was in the temple and in his house. Then Joash

sent all those expensive things to Hazael king of Aram.

The Death of Joash

¹⁹All the great things that Joash did are written in the book *The History of the Kings of Judah*.

²⁰Joash's officers made plans against him. They killed Joash at the house of Millo on the road that goes down to Silla. ²¹Jozabad son of Shimeath and Jehozabad son of Shomer were Joash's officers. Those men killed Joash.

The people buried Joash with his ancestors* in the City of David.* Joash's son Amaziah became the new king after him.

Jehoahaz Begins His Rule

13 Jehoahaz son of Jehu became king over Israel in Samaria. This was during the 23rd year that Joash son of Ahaziah was king in Judah. Jehoahaz ruled 17 years.

²Jehoahaz did those things the Lord said were wrong. Jehoahaz followed the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat that caused Israel to sin. Jehoahaz did not stop doing those things. ³Then the Lord was angry against Israel. The Lord gave Israel into the power of Hazael king of Aram and Hazael's son Ben Hadad.

The Lord Has Mercy on the People of Israel

⁴Then Jehoahaz begged the Lord to help them. And the Lord listened to him. The Lord had seen the troubles of Israel and how the king of Aram troubled the Israelites.

⁵So the Lord sent a man to save Israel. The Israelites were free from the Arameans. So the Israelites went to their own homes, like they did before.

⁶But the Israelites still did not stop doing the sins of the family of Jeroboam that caused Israel to sin. The Israelites continued doing the sins of Jeroboam. They also kept the Asherah poles* in Samaria.

⁷The king of Aram defeated Jehoahaz's army. The king of Aram destroyed most of the men in the army. He left only 50 horse

doorway Literally, "threshold."

snuffers They were like small cups used to put out lamps.

Joash Or, "Jehoash," the long form of the name "Joash."

ancestors Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

City of David A part of the city of Jerusalem.

Asherah poles These poles were used to honor the female god Asherah that the Canaanite people worshiped.

soldiers, 10 chariots,* and 10,000 foot soldiers. Jehoahaz's soldiers were like chaff* blown away by the wind at the time of threshing.*

⁸All the great things that Jehoahaz did are written in the book *The History of the Kings of Israel*. ⁹Jehoahaz [died] and was buried with his ancestors.* The people buried Jehoahaz in Samaria. Jehoahaz's son Jehoash became the new king after him.

Jehoash's Rule Over Israel

¹⁰Jehoash son of Jehoahaz became king over Israel in Samaria. This was during the 37th year that Joash was king of Judah. Jehoash ruled Israel for 16 years. ¹¹Jehoash king of Israel did the things the Lord said were wrong. He did not stop doing the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat that caused Israel to sin. Jehoash continued to do those sins. ¹²All the great things that Jehoash did and his wars against Amaziah king of Judah are written in the book *The History of the Kings of Israel*. ¹³Jehoash [died and] was buried with his ancestors.* Jeroboam [became the new king and] sat on Jehoash's throne. Jehoash was buried at Samaria with the kings of Israel.

Jehoash Visits Elisha

¹⁴Elisha became sick. Later, Elisha died from this sickness. Jehoash, king of Israel, went to visit Elisha. Jehoash cried for Elisha. Jehoash said, "My father, my father! Is it time for the chariot of Israel and its horses*?"

¹⁵Elisha said to Jehoash, "Take a bow and some arrows."

Jehoash took a bow and some arrows. ¹⁶Then Elisha said to the king of Israel, "Put your hand on the bow." Jehoash put his hand on the bow. Then Elisha put his hands on the king's hands. ¹⁷Elisha said, "Open the east

window." Jehoash opened the window. Then Elisha said, "Shoot."

Jehoash shot. Then Elisha said, "That is the Lord's arrow of victory! The arrow of victory over Aram! You will defeat the Arameans at Aphek. And you will destroy them."

¹⁸Elisha said, "Take the arrows." Jehoash took the arrows. Then Elisha said to the king of Israel, "Hit on the ground."

Jehoash hit the ground three times. Then he stopped. ¹⁹The man of God* (*Elisha*) was angry at Jehoash. Elisha said, "You should have hit five or six times! Then you would have defeated Aram until you destroyed it! But now, you will defeat Aram only three times!"

An Amazing Thing at Elisha's Grave

²⁰Elisha died, and the people buried him.

One time in the spring, a group of Moabite soldiers came to Israel. [They came to take things in war.] ²¹Some Israelites were burying a dead man, and they saw that group of soldiers. The Israelites quickly threw the dead man into Elisha's grave [and ran away]. As soon as the dead man touched the bones of Elisha, the dead man came back to life and stood up on his feet!

Jehoash Wins Back Cities of Israel

²²During all the days that Jehoahaz ruled, Hazael king of Aram caused trouble to Israel. ²³But the Lord was kind to the Israelites. The Lord had mercy and turned to the Israelites. Why? Because of his Agreement with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Lord would not destroy the Israelites or throw them away yet.

²⁴Hazael king of Aram died, and Ben Hadad became the new king after him. ²⁵[Before he died,] Hazael had taken some cities in war from Jehoahaz, Jehoash's father. But now Jehoash took back these cities from Hazael's son Ben Hadad. Jehoash defeated Ben Hadad three times and took back the cities of Israel.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

chaff The seed coverings and stems separated from the seeds of plants like wheat or barley. Farmers saved the seeds but let the wind blow the useless chaff away.

threshing Beating or walking on grain to remove the hulls from the grain.

ancestors Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Is it time ... horses This means, "Is it time for God to come and take you?" See 1 Kings 2:12.

man of God Another name for a prophet.

Amaziah Begins His Rule in Judah

14 Amaziah son of Joash king of Judah became king in the second year that Joash son of Jehoahaz was king of Israel. ²Amaziah was 25 years old when he began to rule. Amaziah ruled 29 years in Jerusalem. Amaziah's mother was Jehoaddin from Jerusalem. ³Amaziah did the things the Lord said were right. But he did not follow God completely like David his ancestor.* Amaziah did all the things that Joash his father had done. ⁴He did not destroy the high places.* The people still sacrificed and burned incense* in those places of worship.

⁵At the time that Amaziah had strong control of the kingdom, he killed the officers that had killed his father. ⁶But he did not kill the children of the murderers because of the rules written in the book *The Law of Moses*. The Lord gave this command in the Law of Moses: "Parents must not be put to death for something their children did. And children must not be put to death for something their parents did. A person should be put to death only for a bad thing that he himself did."*

⁷Amaziah killed 10,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt. In war Amaziah took Sela and called it "Joktheel." That place is still called "Joktheel" today.

Amaziah Wants War Against Jehoash

⁸Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash son of Jehoahaz, son of Jehu king of Israel. Amaziah's message said, "Come on, let's meet together face to face and fight."

⁹Jehoash king of Israel sent an answer to Amaziah king of Judah. Jehoash said, "The thorn bush in Lebanon sent a message to the cedar tree in Lebanon. It said, 'Give your daughter for my son to marry.' But a wild animal from Lebanon passed by and walked on the thorn bush. ¹⁰True, you have defeated

Edom. But you have become proud because of your victory over Edom. But stay at home and brag! Don't make trouble for yourself. If you do this, you will fall, and Judah will fall with you!"

¹¹But Amaziah would not listen to Jehoash's warning. So Jehoash king of Israel went to fight against Amaziah king of Judah at Beth Shemesh in Judah.* ¹²Israel defeated Judah. Every man of Judah ran home. ¹³At Beth Shemesh, Jehoash king of Israel captured Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Joash, the son of Ahaziah. Jehoash took Amaziah to Jerusalem. Jehoash broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the Gate of Ephraim to the corner gate, about 600 feet.* ¹⁴Then Jehoash took all the gold and silver and all the dishes in the Lord's temple and in the treasures of the king's house. Jehoash also took people to be his prisoners. Then he went back to Samaria.

¹⁵All the great things that Jehoash did, including how he fought against Amaziah king of Judah, are written in the book *The History of the Kings of Israel*. ¹⁶Jehoash died and was buried with his ancestors.* Jehoash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel. Jehoash's son Jeroboam became the new king after him.

The Death of Amaziah

¹⁷Amaziah son of Joash king of Judah lived 15 years after the death of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel. ¹⁸All the great things that Amaziah did are written in the book *The History of the Kings of Judah*. ¹⁹The people made a plan against Amaziah in Jerusalem. Amaziah ran away to Lachish. But the people sent men after Amaziah to Lachish. And those men killed Amaziah in Lachish. ²⁰The people brought Amaziah's body back on horses. Amaziah was buried at Jerusalem with his ancestors* in the City of David.*

ancestor(s) Literally, "father(s)." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

high places Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

incense A kind of spice that smells good when it is burned. It was burned as a gift to God.

Parents ... did See Deut. 24:16.

Jehoash ... Judah Literally, "He and Amaziah king of Judah looked at each other in the face at Beth Shemesh in Judah."

about 600 feet Literally, "400 cubits."

City of David A part of the city of Jerusalem.

Azariah Begins His Rule Over Judah

²¹Then all the people of Judah made Azariah the new king. Azariah was 16 years old. ²²So King Amaziah died and was buried with his ancestors.* Then Azariah built Elath again and got it back for Judah.

Jeroboam II Begins His Rule Over Israel

²³Jeroboam son of Jehoash king of Israel began to rule in Samaria during the 15th year that Amaziah son of Joash was king of Judah. Jeroboam ruled 41 years. ²⁴Jeroboam did the things the Lord said were wrong. Jeroboam did not stop doing the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat that caused Israel to sin. ²⁵Jeroboam took back Israel's land which ran from the Lebo Hamath to the Arabah Sea.* This happened like the Lord of Israel had told his servant Jonah son of Amittai, the prophet from Gath Hepher. ²⁶The Lord saw that all the Israelites had many troubles, slaves and free men. No person was left that could help Israel. ²⁷The Lord did not say that he would take away the name of Israel from the world. So the Lord used Jeroboam son of Jehoash to save the people of Israel.

²⁸All the great things that Jeroboam did are written in the book *The History of the Kings of Israel*. This includes the story about Jeroboam winning back Damascus and Hamath for Israel. (*These cities had belonged to Judah.*) ²⁹Jeroboam [died and] was buried with his ancestors*, the kings of Israel. Jeroboam's son Zechariah became the new king after him.

Azariah's Rule Over Judah

15 Azariah son of Amaziah king of Judah became king in the 27th year of Jeroboam king of Israel. ²Azariah was 16 years old when he began to rule. He ruled 52 years in Jerusalem. Azariah's mother was named Jecoliah of Jerusalem. ³Azariah did the things that the Lord said were right, just like his father Amaziah. Azariah followed all the things his father Amaziah did. ⁴But he did not

destroy the high places.* People still made sacrifices and burned incense* in these places of worship.

⁵The Lord caused King Azariah to become sick with leprosy.* He was a leper until the day he died. Azariah lived in a separate house. Jotham, the king's son, took care of the king's house and judged the people.

⁶All the great things that Azariah did are written in the book *The History of the Kings of Judah*. ⁷Azariah [died and] was buried with his ancestors* in the City of David.* Azariah's son Jotham became the new king after him.

Zechariah's Short Rule Over Israel

⁸Zechariah son of Jeroboam ruled over Samaria in Israel for six months. This was during the 38th year that Azariah was king of Judah. ⁹Zechariah did the things the Lord said were wrong. He did the same things his ancestors* did. He did not stop doing the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat that caused Israel to sin.

¹⁰Shallum son of Jabesh made plans against Zechariah. Shallum killed Zechariah in Ibleam. Shallum became the new king after him. ¹¹All the other things that Zechariah did are written in the book *The History of the Kings of Israel*. ¹²In this way the Lord's word came true. The Lord had told Jehu that four generations of his descendants* would be kings of Israel.

Shallum's Short Rule Over Israel

¹³Shallum son of Jabesh became king [of Israel] during the 39th year that Uzziah was king of Judah. Shallum ruled for one month in Samaria.

¹⁴Menahem son of Gadi came up from Tirzah to Samaria. Menahem killed Shallum son of Jabesh. Then Menahem became the new king after him.

high places Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

incense A kind of spice that smells good when it is burned. It was burned as a gift to God.

leprosy A very bad skin disease.

City of David A part of the city of Jerusalem.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

ancestors Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Arabah Sea The Dead Sea.

¹⁵All the things Shallum did, including his plans against Zechariah, are written in the book *The History of the Kings of Israel*.

Menahem's Rule Over Israel

¹⁶After Shallum died, Menahem defeated Tiphshah and the area around it. The people refused to open the city gate for him. So Menahem defeated them and ripped open all the pregnant women in that city.

¹⁷Menahem son of Gadi became king over Israel during the 39th year that Azariah was king of Judah. Menahem ruled ten years in Samaria. ¹⁸Menahem did the things the Lord said were wrong. Menahem did not stop doing the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat that caused Israel to sin.

¹⁹Pul king of Assyria came to fight against Israel. Menahem gave Pul 75,000 pounds* of silver. He did this so Pul would support Menahem and make Menahem's kingdom stronger. ²⁰Menahem raised the money by making all the rich and powerful men pay taxes. Menahem taxed each man 20 ounces* of silver. Then Menahem gave the money to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria left, and did not stay there in Israel.

²¹All the great things that Menahem did are written in the book *The History of the Kings of Israel*. ²²Menahem died and was buried with his ancestors.* Menahem's son Pekahiah became the new king after him.

Pekahiah's Rule Over Israel

²³Pekahiah son of Menahem became king over Israel in Samaria during the 50th year that Azariah was king of Judah. Pekahiah ruled two years. ²⁴Pekahiah did the things that the Lord said were wrong. Pekahiah did not stop doing the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat that caused Israel to sin.

²⁵The commander of Pekahiah's army was Pekah son of Remaliah. Pekah killed Pekahiah. He killed him in Samaria at the

king's palace.* Pekah had 50 men from Gilead with him when he killed Pekahiah. Then Pekah became the new king after him.

²⁶All the great things Pekahiah did are written in the book *The History of the Kings of Israel*.

Pekah's Rule Over Israel

²⁷Pekah son of Remaliah began to rule over Israel in Samaria during the 52nd year that Azariah was king of Judah. Pekah ruled 20 years. ²⁸Pekah did the things that the Lord said were wrong. Pekah did not stop doing the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat that caused Israel to sin.

²⁹Tiglath Pileser king of Assyria came to fight against Israel. This was during the time that Pekah was king of Israel. Tiglath Pileser captured Ijon, Abel Bethmaacah, Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead, Galilee, and all the area of Naphtali. Tiglath Pileser took the people from these places as prisoners to Assyria.

³⁰Hoshea son of Elah made plans against Pekah son of Remaliah. Hoshea killed Pekah. Then Hoshea became the new king after Pekah. This was during the 20th year that Jotham son of Uzziah was king of Judah.

³¹All the great things that Pekah did are written in the book *The History of the Kings of Israel*.

Jotham Rules Over Judah

³²Jotham son of Uzziah became king of Judah. This was during the second year that Pekah son of Remaliah was king of Israel.

³³Jotham was 25 years old when he became king. Jotham ruled 16 years in Jerusalem. Jotham's mother was named Jerusha, the daughter of Zadok. ³⁴Jotham did the things the Lord said were right, just like his father Uzziah. ³⁵But he did not destroy the high places.* The people still made sacrifices and burned incense* at those places of worship. Jotham built the

75,000 pounds Or, 34,000kg. Literally, "1,000 talents."

20 ounces Or, 575g. Literally, "50 shekels."

ancestors Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

palace A large house for the king and his family.

high places Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

incense A kind of spice that smells good when it is burned. It was burned as a gift to God.

upper gate of the Lord's temple.* ³⁶All the great things that Jotham did are written in the book *The History of the Kings of Judah*.

³⁷At that time, the Lord sent Rezin king of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah to fight against Judah.

³⁸Jotham died and was buried with his ancestors.* Jotham was buried in the City of David* his ancestor.* Jotham's son Ahaz became the new king after him.

Ahaz Becomes King Over Judah

16 Ahaz son of Jotham became king of Judah during the 17th year that Pekah son of Remaliah was king of Israel. ²Ahaz was 20 years old when he became king. Ahaz ruled 16 years in Jerusalem. Ahaz was not like his ancestor* David—Ahaz did not do the things the Lord said were right. ³Ahaz lived like the kings of Israel. He even sacrificed his son in fire.* He copied the terrible sins of the nations that the Lord forced to leave the country at the time the Israelites came. ⁴Ahaz made sacrifices and burned incense* at the high places* and on the hills and under every green tree.

⁵Rezin, king of Aram, and Pekah son of Remaliah, king of Israel, came to fight against Jerusalem. Rezin and Pekah surrounded Ahaz, but could not defeat him. ⁶At that time, Rezin king of Aram took back Elath for Aram. Rezin took all the people of Judah that were living in Elath. The Arameans settled in Elath, and they still live there today.

⁷Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath Pileser, the king of Assyria. The message was: "I am your servant. I am like a son to you. Come and save me from the king of Aram and the king

of Israel. They have come to fight me!" ⁸Ahaz also took the silver and gold that was in the temple* of the Lord and in the treasuries of the king's house. Then Ahaz sent a gift to the king of Assyria. ⁹The king of Assyria listened to Ahaz. The king of Assyria went to fight against Damascus. The king captured that city and took the people from Damascus as prisoners to Kir. He also killed Rezin.

¹⁰King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath Pileser king of Assyria. Ahaz saw the altar* at Damascus. King Ahaz sent a model and pattern of this altar to Uriah the priest. ¹¹Then Uriah the priest built an altar just like the model King Ahaz had sent him from Damascus. Uriah the priest built the altar this way before King Ahaz came back from Damascus.

¹²When the king arrived from Damascus, he saw the altar.* He offered sacrifices on the altar. ¹³On the altar, Ahaz burned his burnt offerings and grain offerings. He poured his drink offering and sprinkled the blood of his fellowship offerings on this altar.

¹⁴Ahaz took the bronze altar that was before the Lord from the front of the temple.* This bronze altar was between Ahaz's altar* and the temple of the Lord. Ahaz put the bronze altar on the north side of his own altar. ¹⁵Ahaz gave a command to Uriah the priest. He said, "Use the large altar to burn the morning burnt offerings, the evening grain offerings, and the drink offerings from all the people of this country. Sprinkle all the blood from the burnt offering and other sacrifices on the large altar. But I will use the bronze altar to ask questions from God." ¹⁶Uriah the priest did everything that King Ahaz commanded him to do.

¹⁷There were carts with bronze panels and basins for the priests to wash their hands. King Ahaz removed the panels and basins and cut up the carts. He also took the large tank off the bronze bulls that stood under it. He put the large tank on a stone pavement. ¹⁸Workers had built a covered place inside the temple

temple A special building for worshiping God. God commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in Jerusalem.

ancestor(s) Literally, "father(s)." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

City of David A part of the city of Jerusalem.

sacrificed his son in fire Literally, "made his son to pass through the fire."

incense A kind of spice that smells good when it is burned. It was burned as a gift to God.

high places Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered as gifts to God.

area for the Sabbath* [meetings]. But Ahaz took away that covered place. Ahaz also took away the outside entrance for the king. Ahaz took all of these from the Lord's temple. Ahaz did this because of the king of Assyria.

¹⁹All the great things that Ahaz did are written in the book *The History of the Kings of Judah*. ²⁰Ahaz [died and] was buried with his ancestors* in the City of David.* Ahaz's son Hezekiah became the new king after him.

Hoshea Begins His Rule Over Israel

17 Hoshea son of Elah began to rule in Samaria over Israel. This was during the 12th year that Ahaz was king of Judah. Hoshea ruled nine years. ²Hoshea did the things the Lord said were wrong. But Hoshea was not as bad as the kings of Israel that ruled before him.

³Shalmaneser king of Assyria came to fight against Hoshea. [Shalmaneser defeated Hoshea] and Hoshea became his servant. So Hoshea paid tribute* to Shalmaneser.

⁴Later, Hoshea sent messengers to the king of Egypt [to ask for help]. That king's name was So. That year, Hoshea did not pay tribute* to the king of Assyria like he did every other year. The king of Assyria learned that Hoshea had made plans against him. So the king of Assyria arrested Hoshea and put him in jail.

⁵The king of Assyria attacked many places in Israel. Then he came to Samaria. He fought against Samaria for three years. ⁶The king of Assyria took Samaria during the ninth year that Hoshea was king of Israel. The king of Assyria captured many Israelites and took them as prisoners to Assyria. He made them live in Halah by the Habor River at Gozan and in other cities of the Medes.

⁷These things happened because the Israelites had sinned against the Lord their God. And it was the Lord that brought the Israelites out of the land of Egypt! The Lord

saved them from the power of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. But the Israelites began worshiping other gods. ⁸They began doing the same things that other people did. And the Lord had forced those people to leave their land when the Israelites came. The Israelites also chose to be ruled by kings, [not by God]. ⁹The Israelites secretly did things against the Lord their God. And those things were wrong!

The Israelites built high places* in all their cities—from the smallest town to the largest city. ¹⁰The Israelites put up memorial stones* and Asherah poles* on every high hill and under every green tree. ¹¹The Israelites burned incense* there in all those places of worship. They did these things like the nations that the Lord forced out of the land before them. The Israelites did evil things that made the Lord angry. ¹²They served idols.* And the Lord had said to the Israelites, “You must not do this thing.”

¹³The Lord used every prophet and every seer* to warn Israel and Judah. The Lord said, “Turn away from the evil things you do! Obey my commands and laws. Follow all the Law that I gave to your ancestors.* I used my servants the prophets to give this law to you.”

¹⁴But the people would not listen. They were very stubborn like their ancestors.* Their ancestors did not believe the Lord their God. ¹⁵The people refused the Lord's laws and his Agreement that he made with their ancestors. They refused to listen to the Lord's warnings. They worshiped idols* that were worth nothing and they themselves became worth nothing. They lived like the people in the nations around them. They did those bad things. And the Lord had warned the people

high places Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

memorial stones Stones that were set up to help people remember something special. In ancient Israel, people often set up stones as special places to worship false gods.

Asherah poles These poles were used to honor the female god Asherah that the Canaanite people worshiped.

incense A kind of spice that smells good when it is burned. It was burned as a gift to God.

idols Statues of false gods that people worshiped.

seer A kind of prophet, a person that spoke for God. This word shows the prophet saw things in visions.

Sabbath Saturday, a special day of worship for Jews.

ancestors Literally, “fathers.” This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

City of David A part of the city of Jerusalem.

tribute Money paid to a foreign king or nation to pay for being protected.

of Israel. The Lord told them not to do those bad things.

¹⁶The people stopped following the commands of the Lord their God. They made two gold statues of calves. They made Asherah poles.* They worshiped all the stars of heaven and served Baal.* ¹⁷They sacrificed their sons and daughters in the fire. They used magic and witchcraft* to try to learn the future. They sold themselves to do what the Lord said was evil. They did this to make the Lord angry. ¹⁸So the Lord became very angry at Israel and took them out of his sight. There were no Israelites left, except the family group of Judah!

The People of Judah Are Also Guilty

¹⁹But even the people of Judah did not obey the commands of the Lord their God. The people of Judah lived just like the people of Israel.

²⁰The Lord rejected all the people of Israel. He brought them many troubles. He let people destroy them. And, finally, he threw them away and put them out of his sight. ²¹The Lord tore Israel from the family of David, and the Israelites made Jeroboam son of Nebat their king. Jeroboam pulled the Israelites away from following the Lord. Jeroboam caused the Israelites to do a great sin. ²²So the Israelites followed all the sins that Jeroboam did. They did not stop doing these sins ²³until the Lord took Israel away from his sight. And the Lord said this would happen! He sent his prophets to tell the people this would happen. So the Israelites were taken out of their country into Assyria. And they have been there to this day.

The Beginning of the Samaritan People

²⁴The king of Assyria took the Israelites out of Samaria. Then the king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim. He put those people

in Samaria. Those people took over Samaria and lived in the cities around it. ²⁵When these people began to live in Samaria, they did not honor the Lord. So the Lord sent lions to attack them. These lions killed some of those people. ²⁶Some people said to the king of Assyria, “Those people that you took away and put in the cities of Samaria do not know the law of the god of that country. So that god sent lions to attack those people. The lions killed those people because those people don’t know the law of the god of that country.”

²⁷So the king of Assyria gave this command: “You took some priests from Samaria. Send one of those priests that I captured back to Samaria. Let that priest go and live there. Then that priest can teach the people the law of the god of that country.”

²⁸So one of the priests that the Assyrians had carried away from Samaria came to live in Bethel. This priest taught the people how they should honor the Lord.

²⁹But all those people made gods of their own and put them in the temples at the high places* the Samaritans had made. Those people did this wherever they lived. ³⁰The people of Babylon made [the false god] Succoth Benoth. The people of Cuthah made [the false god] Nergal. The people of Hamath made [the false god] Ashima. ³¹The people of Avva made [the false gods] Nibhaz and Tartak. And the people from Sepharvaim burned their children in the fire to honor their false gods, Adrammelech and Anammelech.

³²But those people also worshiped the Lord. They chose priests for the high places* from among the people. These priests made sacrifices for the people in the temples at those places of worship. ³³They respected the Lord, but they also served their own gods. Those people served their gods the same as they did in the countries they were taken from.

³⁴Even today those people live like they did in the past. They do not honor the Lord. They do not obey the rules and commands of the Israelites. They do not obey the Law or the commands that the Lord gave to the children

Asherah poles These poles were used to honor the goddess Asherah that the Canaanite people worshiped.

Baal The Canaanite people believed that this false god brought the rain and storms. They also thought that he made the land produce good crops.

witchcraft Using magic or the power of Satan to do things.

high places Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

of Jacob (*Israel*). ³⁵The Lord made an Agreement with the people of Israel. The Lord commanded them, “You must not honor other gods. You must not worship them, or serve them, or offer sacrifices to them. ³⁶But you must follow the Lord. The Lord is the God that brought you out of Egypt. The Lord used his great power to save you. You must worship the Lord and make sacrifices to him. ³⁷You must obey the rules, laws, teachings, and commands that he wrote for you. You must obey these things all the time. You must not respect other gods. ³⁸You must not forget the Agreement that I made with you. You must not respect other gods. ³⁹No! You respect only the Lord your God! Then he will save you from all your enemies.”

⁴⁰But the Israelites did not listen. They kept on doing the same things they did before. ⁴¹So now those other nations respect the Lord, but they also serve their own idols. Their children and grandchildren do the same thing their ancestors* did. They still do those things to this day.

Hezekiah Begins His Rule Over Judah

18 Hezekiah son of Ahaz was king of Judah. Hezekiah began to rule during the third year that Hoshea son of Elah was king of Israel. ²Hezekiah was 25 years old when he began to rule. Hezekiah ruled 29 years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Abi,* the daughter of Zechariah.

³Hezekiah did the things the Lord said were right, just like David his ancestor.*

⁴Hezekiah destroyed the high places.* He broke the memorial stones* and cut down the Asherah poles.* At that time, the people of Israel burned incense* to the bronze snake

made by Moses. This bronze snake was called “Nehushtan.”* Hezekiah broke this bronze snake into pieces because the people were worshiping that snake.

⁵Hezekiah trusted in the Lord God of Israel. There was no person like Hezekiah among all the kings of Judah before him or after him. ⁶Hezekiah was very faithful to the Lord. He did not stop following the Lord. He obeyed the commands that the Lord had given to Moses. ⁷The Lord was with Hezekiah. Hezekiah was successful in everything he did.

Hezekiah broke away from the king of Assyria. Hezekiah stopped serving the king of Assyria. ⁸Hezekiah defeated the Philistines all the way to Gaza and the area around it. He defeated all the Philistine cities—from the smallest town to the largest city.

The Assyrians Capture Samaria

⁹Shalmaneser king of Assyria went to fight against Samaria. His army surrounded the city. This happened during the fourth year that Hezekiah was king of Judah. (This was also the seventh year that Hoshea son of Elah was king of Israel.) ¹⁰At the end of the third year, Shalmaneser captured Samaria. He took Samaria during the sixth year that Hezekiah was king of Judah. (This was also the ninth year that Hoshea was king of Israel.) ¹¹The king of Assyria took the Israelites as prisoners to Assyria. He made them live in Halah, on the Habor (the river of Gozan), and in the cities of the Medes. ¹²This happened because the Israelites did not obey the Lord their God. They broke the Lord’s Agreement. They did not obey all the things that Moses the Lord’s servant commanded. The people of Israel would not listen to the Lord’s Agreement, or do the things it taught them to do.

Assyria Gets Ready to Take Judah

¹³During the 14th year that Hezekiah was king, Sennacherib king of Assyria went to fight against all the strong cities of Judah. Sennacherib defeated all those cities. ¹⁴Then Hezekiah king of Judah sent a message to the

ancestor(s) Literally, “father(s).” This means a person’s parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Abi Or “Abijah.”

high places Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

memorial stones Stones that were set up to help people remember something special. In ancient Israel, people often set up stones as special places to worship false gods.

Asherah poles These poles were used to honor the female god Asherah that the Canaanite people worshiped.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

Nehushtan This Hebrew name is like the words meaning “bronze” and “snake.”

king of Assyria at Lachish. Hezekiah said, “I have done wrong. Leave me [alone]. Then I will pay anything you want.

Then the king of Assyria told Hezekiah king of Judah to pay over 11 tons* of silver and over 1 ton* of gold. ¹⁵Hezekiah gave all the silver that was in the Lord’s temple* and in the king’s treasuries. ¹⁶At this time, Hezekiah cut off the gold that covered the doors of the Lord’s temple and the doorposts. King Hezekiah had put gold on these doors and doorposts. Hezekiah gave this gold to the king of Assyria.

King of Assyria Sends Men to Jerusalem

¹⁷The king of Assyria sent his three most important commanders with a large army to King Hezekiah in Jerusalem. Those men left Lachish and went to Jerusalem. They stood near the aqueduct* by the Upper Pool. (The Upper Pool is on the road to the Washers’ Field.) ¹⁸These men called for the king. Eliakim son of Hilkiah (Eliakim was in charge of the king’s house), Shebna (the secretary), and Joah son of Asaph (the record keeper) came out to meet them.

¹⁹One of the commanders said to them, “Tell Hezekiah this is what the great king, the king of Assyria says:

What do you trust in? ²⁰Your words are worth nothing.* You say, “I have enough advice and power to help me in war.” But who do you trust since you have broken away from my rule? ²¹You are leaning on a walking stick made of broken reed! This walking stick is Egypt. If a man leans on this walking stick, it will break and go through his hand and hurt him! The king of Egypt is like that to all people that trust in him. ²²Maybe you will say, “We trust the Lord our God.” But I know that Hezekiah took

away the high places* and altars* where people worshiped the Lord. And Hezekiah told the people of Judah and Jerusalem, “You must worship only in front of the altar here in Jerusalem.”

²³Now make this agreement with my master, the king of Assyria. I promise that I will give you 2,000 horses if you can find men to ride them. ²⁴You can’t defeat one officer of the lowest of my master’s officers! You depend on Egypt to give you chariots* and horse soldiers! ²⁵I have not come against Jerusalem to destroy it without the Lord! The Lord said to me, “Go up against this country and destroy it!”

²⁶Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah, Shebna, and Joah said to the commander, “Please speak to us in Aramaic. We understand that language. Do not speak with us in the language of Judah because the people on the wall can hear us!*

²⁷But Rabshakeh said to them, “My lord did not send me to speak only to you and your king.* I also speak to the other people that sit on the wall! They will eat their own dung and drink their own urine with you!*

²⁸Then the commander shouted loudly in the Jewish language, “Hear this message from the great king, the king of Assyria! ²⁹The king says, ‘Don’t let Hezekiah fool you! He can’t save you from my power!’ ³⁰Don’t let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord! Hezekiah says, ‘The Lord will save us! The king of Assyria will not defeat this city!’ ³¹But don’t listen to Hezekiah!

high places Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered as gifts to God.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

because the people ... hear us They did not want the people of Jerusalem that sat on the city wall to understand the terrible things that the commander was saying.

king Literally, “master.”

eat ... with you The Assyrian army planned to surround Jerusalem and not let people bring any food or water into the city. He thought the people would become hungry enough to eat their own waste.

11 tons 10,200kg. Literally, “300 talents.”

1 ton 1,020kg. Literally, “30 talents.”

temple A special building for worshiping God. God commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in Jerusalem.

aqueduct A ditch or pipe that carries water from one place to another.

Your words ... nothing Literally, “a word of the lips.”

“The king of Assyria says this: ‘Make peace with me and come out to me. Then each of you can eat from his own grapes, his own fig tree, and drink water from his own well. ³²You can do this until I come and take you away to a land like your own land. It is a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and fields full of grapes, a land of olives and honey. Then you can live, and not die. But don’t listen to Hezekiah! He is trying to change your mind. He is saying, ‘The Lord will save us.’ ³³Did any of the gods of the other nations save his land from the king of Assyria? No! ³⁴Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah? Did they save Samaria from me? No! ³⁵Did any of the gods in the other countries save their land from me? No! Can the Lord save Jerusalem from me? No!’”

³⁶But the people were silent. They did not say a word to the commander because King Hezekiah had given them a command. He said, “Don’t say anything to him.”

³⁷Eliakim son of Hilkiah (Eliakim was in charge of the king’s house), Shebna (the secretary), and Joah son of Asaph (the record keeper) came to Hezekiah. Their clothes were torn _{to show they were upset}. They told Hezekiah the things that the Assyrian commander had said.

Hezekiah Talks with Isaiah the Prophet

19 King Hezekiah heard those things, and he tore his clothes and put on the rough cloth _{that showed he was sad and upset}. Then he went into the Lord’s temple.*

²Hezekiah sent Eliakim (Eliakim was in charge of the king’s house), Shebna (the secretary), and the elders of the priests to the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. They wore the rough cloth _{that showed they were sad and upset}. ³They said to Isaiah, “Hezekiah says, ‘This is a day of trouble, a day to show we are wrong. It is like the time for babies to be born, but there is no strength to give birth to them. ⁴The commander’s master, the king of

Assyria, has sent him to say bad things about the living God. Maybe the Lord your God will hear all those things. Maybe the Lord will punish the enemy! So pray for the people that are still left alive.’”

⁵King Hezekiah’s officers went to Isaiah. ⁶Isaiah said to them, “Give your master Hezekiah this message: ‘The Lord says: Don’t be afraid of the things that the officers of the king of Assyria have said to make fun of me. ⁷I am putting a spirit in him. He will hear a rumor. Then he will run back to his own country. And I will cause him to be killed by a sword in his own country.’”

The King of Assyria Warns Hezekiah Again

⁸The commander heard that the king of Assyria had left Lachish. So the commander found his king fighting against Libnah.*

⁹The king of Assyria heard a rumor about Tirhakah king of Ethiopia. The rumor said, “Tirhakah has come to fight against you!”

So the king of Assyria sent messengers to Hezekiah again. The king of Assyria gave a message to these messengers. He said these things:

¹⁰To Hezekiah, king of Judah

Don’t let the God that you trust fool you. He says, “The king of Assyria will not defeat Jerusalem!” ¹¹You have heard the things the kings of Assyria have done to all the other countries. We destroyed them completely! Will you be saved? No! ¹²The gods of those nations did not save their people. My ancestors* destroyed them all. They destroyed Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the people of Eden in Tel Assar! ¹³Where is the king of Hamath? The king of Arpad? The king of the city of Sepharvaim? The kings of Hena and Ivvah? _{They are all finished!}

Hezekiah Prays to the Lord

¹⁴Hezekiah received the letters from the messengers and read them. Then Hezekiah went

temple A special building for worshiping God. God commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in Jerusalem.

Libnah A town in Judah.

ancestors Literally, “fathers.” This means a person’s parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

up to the Lord's temple* and laid the letters out in front of the Lord. ¹⁵Hezekiah prayed before the Lord and said, "Lord, the God of Israel who sits as King between the Cherub angels.* You are the God—you alone—of all the kingdoms of the earth. You made the heavens and the earth! ¹⁶Lord, please listen to me. Lord, open your eyes, and see [this letter]. Hear the words that Sennacherib sent to insult the living God! ¹⁷It is true, Lord. The kings of Assyria did destroy all those nations! ¹⁸They did throw the gods of the nations into the fire. But those were not real gods. They were only wood and stone—statues that men made. That is why the kings of Assyria could destroy them. ¹⁹So now, Lord our God, save us from the king of Assyria. Then all the kingdoms on earth will know that you, Lord, are the only God."

²⁰Isaiah son of Amoz sent this message to Hezekiah. He said, "The Lord God of Israel says this, 'You have prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria. I have heard you.'

²¹"This is the Lord's message about Sennacherib:

The virgin daughter of Zion (*Jerusalem*)
doesn't think you are important.

She makes fun of you!

The Daughter Jerusalem shakes her head
at you behind your back.

²² But who did you insult and make fun of?
Who did you speak against?

You were against the Holy One of Israel!
You acted like you were better than him!

²³ You sent your messengers
to insult the Lord.

You said,

"I came with my many chariots*
to the high mountains.

I came deep inside Lebanon.

I cut down the tallest cedar trees
and the best fir trees of Lebanon.

I went up to the highest part of Lebanon,
up to its lush forest.

²⁴ I dug wells, and drank water
from new places.

I dried up the rivers of Egypt
and walked on that country."

²⁵ [That is what you said.]
But haven't you heard [what God said]?
"I (*God*) planned it long ago,

from ancient times I planned it.

And now, I have made it happen.

I let you tear down the strong cities
and change them into piles of rocks.

²⁶ The people in the cities had no power.
They people were scared and confused.

They were about to be cut down
like grass and plants in the field.

They were like grass growing
on the housetops,
dying before it grows tall.

²⁷ I know when you sit down.

I know when you go to war.

and when you come home.

And I know when you get upset at me.

²⁸ Yes, you were upset at me.

I heard your proud insults.

So I will put my hook in your nose.

And I will put my bit* in your mouth.

Then I will turn you around
and lead you back the way you came."

The Lord's Message for Hezekiah

²⁹"This will be the sign to prove I will help you: This year you will eat [the grain] that grows by itself. Next year you will eat the grain that comes up from that seed. But in the third year you will gather the grain from the seeds that you planted. You will plant fields of grapes and eat the grapes from them. ³⁰The people that have escaped and are left in the family of Judah will again begin to grow. ³¹Why? Because a few people will remain alive. They will go out from Jerusalem. People that have escaped will go out from Mount Zion. The Lord's strong feelings* will do this.

³²"So the Lord says this about the king of Assyria:

temple A special building for worshiping God. God commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in Jerusalem.

Cherub angels Special angels from God. Statues of these angels were on top of the Box of the Agreement.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

bit A piece of metal people put in a horse's mouth to control the horse.

strong feelings Or, "zeal." The Hebrew word means strong feelings like zeal, jealousy, and love.

- He will not come into this city.
 He will not shoot an arrow in this city.
 He will not bring his shields to this city.
 He will not build up a hill of dirt
 to attack the walls of this city.
³³ He will go back the same way he came.
 He will not come into this city.
 The Lord says this!
³⁴ I will protect this city and save it.
 I will do this for myself
 and for my servant David.”

The Assyrian Army Is Destroyed

³⁵That night, the angel of the Lord went out and killed 185,000 people in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up in the morning, they saw all the dead bodies.

³⁶So Sennacherib king of Assyria left and went back to Nineveh where he stayed. ³⁷One day Sennacherib was worshiping in the temple* of Nisroch, his god. His sons Adrammelech and Sharezer killed him with a sword. Then Adrammelech and Sharezer escaped into the land of Ararat.* And Sennacherib’s son Esarhaddon became the new king after him.

Hezekiah Is Sick and Near Death

20 At that time, Hezekiah became sick and almost died. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to Hezekiah. Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “The Lord says, ‘Put your house in order, because you will die. You will not live!’”

²Hezekiah turned his face to the wall.* He prayed to the Lord and said, ³“Lord, remember that I have truly served you with all my heart. I have done the things that you say are good.” Then Hezekiah cried very hard.

⁴Before Isaiah had left the middle courtyard, the word of the Lord came to him. The Lord said, ⁵“Go back and speak to Hezekiah, the leader of my people. Tell him,

‘The Lord, the God of your ancestor* David says: I have heard your prayer and I have seen your tears. So I will heal you. On the third day, you will go up to the temple of the Lord. ⁶And I will add 15 years to your life. I will save you and this city from the power of the king of Assyria. I will protect this city. I will do this for myself and because of the promise I made to my servant David.’”

⁷Then Isaiah said, “Make a mixture of figs* and put it on the sore place.”

So they took the mixture of figs and put it on Hezekiah’s sore place. Then Hezekiah got well.

A Sign for Hezekiah

⁸Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “What will be the sign that the Lord will heal me, and that I will go up to the temple of the Lord on the third day?”

⁹Isaiah said, “Which do you want? Should the shadow go forward ten steps, or go back ten steps?* This is the sign for you from the Lord to show that the Lord will do the thing he said he would do.”

¹⁰Hezekiah answered, “It is an easy thing for the shadow to go down ten steps. No, make the shadow go back ten steps.”

¹¹Then Isaiah prayed to the Lord, and the Lord made the shadow move back ten steps. It went back on the steps that it had already been on.

Hezekiah and the Men from Babylon

¹²At that time, Merodach Baladan son of Baladan was king of Babylon. He sent letters and a gift to Hezekiah. Merodach Baladan did this because he heard Hezekiah had been sick. ¹³Hezekiah welcomed the men from Babylon, and showed them all the valuable things in his house. He showed him the silver, the gold, the spices, the expensive perfume, the weapons, and everything in his treasuries. There was

ancestor Literally, “father.” This means a person that people are descended from.

mixture of figs This was used like medicine.

the shadow ... steps This may mean the steps of a special building outside that Hezekiah used like a clock. When the sun shone on the steps, the shadows showed what time of the day it was.

temple A special building for worshiping God. God commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in Jerusalem.

Ararat The ancient country of Urartu, an area in Eastern Turkey.

face to the wall This wall probably faced the temple.

nothing in all Hezekiah's house and kingdom that he did not show them.

¹⁴Then Isaiah the prophet came to king Hezekiah and asked him, "What did these men say? Where did they come from?"

Hezekiah said, "They came from a faraway country, from Babylon."

¹⁵Isaiah said, "What have they seen in your house?"

Hezekiah answered, "They have seen everything in my house. There is nothing in all my treasuries that I did not show them."

¹⁶Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Listen to this message from the Lord. ¹⁷The time is coming when all the things in your house and all the things your ancestors* have saved until today will be carried away to Babylon. Nothing will be left! The Lord says this. ¹⁸The Babylonians will take your sons. And your sons will become eunuchs* in the palace of the king of Babylon."

¹⁹Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "This message from the Lord is good."

Hezekiah also said, "That is fine if there will be real peace during my lifetime."

²⁰All the great things that Hezekiah did, including his work on the pool and the aqueduct* to bring water into the city, are written in the book *The History of the Kings of Judah*. ²¹Hezekiah died and was buried with his ancestors.* And Hezekiah's son Manasseh became the new king after him.

Manasseh Begins His Evil Rule Over Judah

21 Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to rule. He ruled 55 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hephzibah.

²Manasseh did the things that the Lord said were wrong. Manasseh did the terrible things the other nations did. (And the Lord forced those nations to leave their country when the Israelites came.) ³Manasseh built again the

high places* that his father Hezekiah had destroyed. Manasseh also built altars* for Baal* and made an Asherah pole,* just like Ahab king of Israel. Manasseh worshiped and served the stars of heaven. ⁴Manasseh built altars [to honor false gods] in the Lord's temple. (This is the place the Lord was talking about when he said, "I will put my name in Jerusalem.") ⁵Manasseh built altars for the stars of heaven in the two courtyards of the Lord's temple. ⁶Manasseh sacrificed his own son and burned him on the altar.* Manasseh used different ways of trying to know the future. He visited mediums* and wizards.*

Manasseh did more and more things that the Lord said were wrong. This caused the Lord to be angry. ⁷Manasseh made a carved statue of Asherah.* He put this statue in the temple. The Lord had said to David and to David's son Solomon about this temple: "I have chosen Jerusalem from all the cities in Israel. I will put my name in the temple in Jerusalem forever. ⁸I will not cause the people of Israel to leave the land that I gave to their ancestors.* I will let the people stay in their land if they obey all the things I commanded them and all the teachings that my servant Moses gave them." ⁹But the people did not listen to God. Manasseh did more evil things than all the nations [that lived in Canaan before Israel came]. And the Lord destroyed those nations when the people of Israel [came to take their land].

¹⁰The Lord used his servants the prophets to say these things: ¹¹"Manasseh king of

high places Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered as gifts to God.

Baal The Canaanite people believed that this false god brought the rain and storms. They also thought that he made the land produce good crops.

Asherah pole These poles were used to honor the female god Asherah that the Canaanite people worshiped.

sacrificed his son and burned him on the altar Literally, "Made his son pass through the fire."

medium(s) A person that tries to communicate with the spirits of dead people.

wizard(s) A person that tries to use evil spirits to do magic.

Asherah An important Canaanite goddess. At this time, the people thought she was the wife of Baal.

ancestors Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

eunuchs Men who have had their sexual organs removed. Often important officials of the king were eunuchs.

aqueduct A ditch or pipe that carries water from one place to another.

Judah has done these hated things and has done more evil than the Amorites before him. Manasseh also has caused Judah to sin because of his idols.* ¹²So the Lord of Israel says, ‘Look! I will bring so much trouble against Jerusalem and Judah that any person who hears about it will be shocked.* ¹³I will stretch the measuring line of Samaria* and the plumb bob* of Ahab’s family over Jerusalem. A man wipes a dish, and then he turns it upside down. I will do that to Jerusalem. ¹⁴There will still be a few of my people left. But I will leave those people. I will give them to their enemies. Their enemies will take them prisoners—they will be like the valuable things soldiers take in war. ¹⁵Why? Because my people did the things that I said were wrong. They have made me angry with them since the day their ancestors* came up out of Egypt. ¹⁶And Manasseh killed many innocent people. He filled Jerusalem from one end to another with blood. And all those sins are in addition to the sins that caused Judah to sin. Manasseh caused Judah to do the things that the Lord said were wrong.’”

¹⁷All the things that Manasseh did, including the sins that he did, are written in the book *The History of the Kings of Judah*. ¹⁸Manasseh died and was buried with his ancestors.* Manasseh was buried in the garden at his house. It was called, “the Garden of Uzza.” Manasseh’s son Amon became the new king after him.

Amon’s Short Rule

¹⁹Amon was 22 years old when he began to rule. He ruled two years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Meshullemeth daughter of Haruz from Jotbah.

idols Statues of false gods that people worshiped.

will be shocked Literally, “both his ears will tingle.”

measuring line of Samaria Workers used a string with a weight to mark a straight line at the end of a stone wall. The pieces of stone that were outside the line were chipped off and thrown away. This shows that God was “throwing away” Samaria and Ahab’s family of kings.

plumb bob A weight tied to a string and used to prove that something was straight up and down (vertical).

ancestor(s) Literally, “father(s).” This means a person’s parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

²⁰Amon did the things the Lord said were wrong, just like his father Manasseh. ²¹Amon lived just like his father. Amon worshiped and served the same idols* his father did. ²²Amon left the Lord, the God of his ancestors*, and did not live the way the Lord wanted.

²³Amon’s servants made plans against him and killed him in his own house. ²⁴The common people killed all the officers that made plans against King Amon. Then the people made Amon’s son Josiah the new king after him.

²⁵The other things that Amon did are written in the book *The History of the Kings of Judah*. ²⁶Amon was buried in his grave at the Garden of Uzza. Amon’s son Josiah became the new king.

Josiah Begins His Rule Over Judah

22 Josiah was eight years old when he began to rule. He ruled 31 years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Jedidah the daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath. ²Josiah did the things that the Lord said were right. Josiah followed God like his ancestor* David. Josiah obeyed God’s teachings—he did exactly what God wanted.

Josiah Orders the Temple Repaired

³During the 18th year that Josiah was king, he sent Shaphan son of Azaliah son of Meshullam, the secretary, to the Lord’s temple.* Josiah said, ⁴“Go up to Hilkiah the high priest. Tell him that he must get the money that people brought to the Lord’s temple. The gatekeepers collected that money from the people. ⁵The priests must use that money to pay the workers to repair the Lord’s temple. The priests must give that money to the men that supervise the work on the Lord’s temple. ⁶Use that money for the carpenters, stonemasons, and stonecutters. And use that money to buy the timber and cut stones that are needed to fix the temple. ⁷Don’t count the money that you give to the workers. Those workers can be trusted.”

temple A special building for worshiping God. God commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in Jerusalem.

Book of the Law Found in the Temple

⁸Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the secretary, “Look, I found the *Book of the Law** in the Lord’s temple!” Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and Shaphan read it.

⁹Shaphan the secretary went to King Josiah and told him what happened. Shaphan said, “Your servants have gathered all the money that was in the temple. They gave it to the men that supervise the work on the Lord’s temple.” ¹⁰Then Shaphan the secretary told the king, “And Hilkiah the priest also gave this book to me.” Then Shaphan read the book to the king.

¹¹When the king heard the words of the *Book of the Law*, he tore his clothes [to show he was sad and upset]. ¹²Then the king gave a command to Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Acbor son of Micaiah, Shaphan the secretary, and Asaiah the king’s servant. ¹³King Josiah said, “Go and ask the Lord what we should do. Ask the Lord for me, for the people, and for all Judah. Ask about the words of this book that was found. The Lord is angry at us. Why? Because our ancestors* did not listen to the words of this book. They did not obey all the commands that were written for us!”

Josiah and Huldah the Prophetess

¹⁴So Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Acbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to Huldah the woman prophet.* Huldah was the wife of Shallum son of Tikvah, son of Harhas. He took care of the [priests’] clothes. Huldah was living in the second quarter in Jerusalem. They went and talked with Huldah.

¹⁵Then Huldah said to them, “The Lord God of Israel says: Tell the man that sent you to me: ¹⁶‘The Lord says this: I am bringing trouble on this place and on the people that live here.

These are the troubles that are mentioned in the book that the king of Judah read. ¹⁷The people of Judah left me and have burned incense* to other gods. They made me very angry. They made many idols.* That is why I will show my anger against this place. My anger will be like a fire that can’t be stopped!’

^{18–19}“Josiah the king of Judah sent you to ask advice from the Lord. Tell Josiah these things: ‘The Lord God of Israel said the words that you heard. You heard the things I said about this place and the people that live here. Your heart was soft, and you felt sorry when you heard those things. I said that terrible things would happen to this place (*Jerusalem*). You tore your clothes [to show your sadness] and you began to cry. That is why I heard you.’ The Lord says this. ²⁰‘I will bring you to be with your ancestors.* You will die and go to your grave in peace. So your eyes will not see all the trouble that I am bringing on this place (*Jerusalem*).’”

Then Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Acbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah told that message to the king.

The People Hear the Law

23 King Josiah told all the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem to come and meet with him. ²Then the king went up to the Lord’s temple. All the people of Judah and the people that lived in Jerusalem went with him. The priests, the prophets, and all the people—from the least important to the most important—went with him. Then he read the book of the Agreement. This was the *Book of the Law* that was found in the Lord’s temple. Josiah read the book so all the people could hear it.

³The king stood by the column and made an agreement with the Lord. He agreed to follow the Lord and to obey his commands, the Agreement, and his rules. He agreed to do this with all his heart and soul. He agreed to obey the Agreement written in this book. All the people stood to [show they supported] the [king’s] agreement.

Book of the Law This is probably the book of Deuteronomy.

temple A special building for worshiping God. God commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in Jerusalem.

ancestors Literally, “fathers.” This means a person’s parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

prophet A person called by God to be a special servant. God used dreams and visions to show them things to teach to the people.

incense A kind of spice that smells good when it is burned. It was burned as a gift to God.

idols Statues of false gods that people worshiped.

⁴Then the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, the other priests, and the gatekeepers, to bring out of the Lord's temple* all the dishes and things that were made to honor Baal,* Asherah,* and the stars of heaven. Then Josiah burned those things outside Jerusalem in the fields in Kidron Valley. Then they carried the ashes to Bethel.

⁵The kings of Judah had chosen some ordinary men to serve as priests. [These men were not from the family of Aaron!] Those false priests were burning incense* at the high places* in every city of Judah and all the towns around Jerusalem. They burned incense to honor Baal,* the sun, the moon, the constellations (*groups of stars*), and all the stars in the sky. But Josiah stopped those false priests.

⁶Josiah removed the Asherah Pole* from the Lord's temple.* He took the Asherah pole outside the city to the Kidron Valley and burned it there. Then he beat the burnt pieces into dust and scattered the dust over the graves of the common people.*

⁷Then King Josiah broke down the houses of the male prostitutes* that were in the Lord's temple. Women also used those houses and made little tent covers to honor the false goddess Asherah.

⁸⁻⁹At that time, the priests did not bring the sacrifices to Jerusalem and offer them on the altar in the temple. The priests lived in cities all over Judah. And they burned incense* and offered sacrifices at the high places* in those cities. Those high places were everywhere,

from Geba to Beersheba. And the priests ate their unleavened bread in those towns with the ordinary people—[not at the special place for priests in the temple in Jerusalem]. But King Josiah defiled (*ruined*) those high places and brought the priests to Jerusalem. Josiah also destroyed the high places that were on the left, by Joshua Gate. (*Josiah was the ruler of the city.*)

¹⁰Topheth was a place in the Valley of Hinnom's Son where people killed their children and burned them on an altar to honor the false god Molech.* Josiah defiled (*ruined*) that place so people could not use that place again. ¹¹In the past, the kings of Judah had put some horses and a chariot* near the entrance to the Lord's temple. This was near the room of an important official named Nathan Melech. The horses and chariot were to honor the sun god.* Josiah removed the horses and burned the chariot.

¹²In the past, the kings of Judah had built altars on the roof of Ahab's building. King Manasseh had also built altars in the two courtyards of the Lord's temple. Josiah destroyed all those altars and threw the broken pieces into Kidron Valley.

¹³In the past, King Solomon built some high places* on Destroyer Hill near Jerusalem. The high places were on the south side of that hill. King Solomon built one of those places of worship to honor Ashtoreth, that horrible thing the people of Sidon worship. King Solomon also built one to honor Chemosh, that horrible thing the people of Moab worship. And King Solomon built one high place to honor Milcom, that horrible thing the Ammonite people worship. But King Josiah defiled (*ruined*) all those places of worship. ¹⁴King Josiah broke all the memorial stones* and

temple A special building for worshiping God. God commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in Jerusalem.

Baal The Canaanite people believed that this false god brought the rain and storms. They also thought that he made the land produce good crops.

Asherah An important Canaanite goddess. At this time, the people thought she was the wife of Baal.

incense A kind of spice that smells good when it is burned. It was burned as a gift to God.

high place(s) Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

Asherah Pole These poles were used to honor the female god Asherah that the Canaanite people worshiped.

scattered ... common people This was a strong way of showing that the Asherah pole could never be used again.

male prostitutes Men who used their bodies for sexual sin.

people ... Molech Literally, "people made their son or daughter pass through fire to Molech."

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

horses ... sun god The people thought the sun was a god that drove his chariot (*the sun*) across the sky each day.

memorial stones Stones that were set up to help people remember something special. In ancient Israel, people often set up stones as special places to worship false gods.

Asherah poles.* Then he scattered dead men's bones over that place.*

¹⁵Josiah also broke down the altar and high place* at Bethel. Jeroboam son of Nebat had made this altar. Jeroboam caused Israel to sin.* Josiah broke down both that altar and the high place. Josiah broke the stones of the altar to pieces. Then he beat it into dust. And he burned the Asherah pole. ¹⁶Josiah looked around and saw graves on the mountain. He sent men, and they took the bones from those graves. Then he burned the bones on the altar. In this way, Josiah defiled (*ruined*) the altar. This happened according to the message from the Lord that the man of God* announced.* The man of God announced these things when Jeroboam stood beside the altar.

Then Josiah looked around and saw the grave of the man of God.*

¹⁷Josiah said, "What is that monument I see?"

The people of the city told him, "It is the grave of the man of God* that came from Judah. This man of God told about the things you have done to the altar at Bethel. He said those things a long time ago."

¹⁸Josiah said, "Leave the man of God* alone. Don't move his bones." So they left his bones and the bones of the man of God from Samaria.

¹⁹Josiah also destroyed all the temples at the high places* in the cities of Samaria. The kings of Israel had built those temples. And that made the Lord very angry. Josiah destroyed those temples, just like he destroyed the place of worship at Bethel.

²⁰Josiah killed all the priests of the high places that were in Samaria. He killed the priests on those altars. He burned men's bones on the altars. [In this way he ruined those places of worship.] Then he went back to Jerusalem.

Asherah poles These poles were used to honor the female god Asherah that the Canaanite people worshiped.

scattered ... place This was the way he defiled (*ruined*) those places so they could not be used for places of worship.

high place(s) Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

Jeroboam ... sin See 1 Kings 12:26–30.

man of God Another name for a prophet.

announced See 1 Kings 13:1–3.

The People of Judah Celebrate Passover

²¹Then King Josiah gave a command to all the people. He said, "Celebrate Passover for the Lord your God. Do this just like it is written in the book of the Agreement."

²²The people had not celebrated a Passover like this since the days that the judges ruled Israel. None of the kings of Israel or the Kings of Judah ever had such a big celebration for Passover. ²³They celebrated this Passover for the Lord in Jerusalem during Josiah's 18th year as king.

²⁴Josiah destroyed the mediums,* wizards,* the house gods, the idols,* and all the horrible things people worshiped in Judah and Jerusalem. Josiah did this to obey the Law written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the Lord's temple.*

²⁵There had never been a king like Josiah before. Josiah turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his strength.* No king had followed all the Law of Moses like Josiah. And there has never been another king like Josiah since that time.

²⁶But the Lord did not stop being angry at the people of Judah. The Lord was still angry at them for all the things that Manasseh had done. ²⁷The Lord said, "I forced the people of Israel to leave their land. I will do the same to Judah. I will take Judah out of my sight. I will not accept Jerusalem. Yes, I chose that city. I was talking about Jerusalem when I said, 'My name will be there.' But I will destroy the temple* that is in that place."

²⁸All the other things that Josiah did are written in the book *The History of the Kings of Judah*.

The Death of Josiah

²⁹During Josiah's time, Pharaoh Neco, the king of Egypt went to fight against the king of Assyria at the Euphrates River. Josiah went

medium(s) A person that tries to communicate with the spirits of dead people.

wizard(s) A person that tries to use evil spirits to do magic.

idols Statues of false gods that people worshiped.

temple A special building for worshiping God. God commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in Jerusalem.

with all his heart ... strength See Deut. 6:4,5.

out to meet Neco at Megiddo. Pharaoh saw Josiah and killed him. ³⁰Josiah's officers put his body in a chariot* and carried him from Megiddo to Jerusalem. They buried Josiah in his own grave.

Then the common people took Josiah's son Jehoahaz and anointed* him. They made Jehoahaz the new king.

Jehoahaz Becomes King of Judah

³¹Jehoahaz was 23 years old when he became king. He ruled three months in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah from Libnah. ³²Jehoahaz did the things that the Lord said were wrong. Jehoahaz did all the same things that his ancestors* had done.

³³Pharaoh Neco put Jehoahaz in prison at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Jehoahaz could not rule in Jerusalem. Pharaoh Neco forced Judah to pay 7,500 pounds* of silver and 75 pounds* of gold.

³⁴Pharaoh Neco made Josiah's son Eliakim the new king. Eliakim took the place of Josiah his father. Pharaoh Neco changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim. And Pharaoh Neco took Jehoahaz away to Egypt. Jehoahaz died in Egypt. ³⁵Jehoiakim gave the silver and the gold to Pharaoh. But Jehoiakim made the common people pay taxes and used that money to give to Pharaoh Neco. So each person paid his share of silver and gold. And King Jehoiakim gave the money to Pharaoh Neco.

³⁶Jehoiakim was 25 years old when he became king. He ruled eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zebidah daughter of Pedaiah from Rumah. ³⁷Jehoiakim did the things that the Lord said were wrong. Jehoiakim did all the same things his ancestors* had done.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

anoint(ed) To pour olive oil on a person's head to show he was chosen by God to be a king, priest, or prophet.

ancestors Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

7,500 pounds Or, 3,400kg. Literally, "100 talents (kikars)."

75 pounds Or, 34kg. Literally, "1 talent (kikar)."

King Nebuchadnezzar Comes to Judah

24 In the time of Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to the country of Judah. Jehoiakim served Nebuchadnezzar for three years. Then Jehoiakim turned against Nebuchadnezzar and broke away from his rule. ²The Lord sent groups of Babylonians, Arameans, Moabites, and Ammonites to fight against Jehoiakim. The Lord sent those groups to destroy Judah. This happened just like the Lord said. The Lord used his servants the prophets to say those things.

³The Lord commanded those things to happen to Judah. In this way, he would take them out of his sight. He did this because of all the sins that Manasseh did. ⁴The Lord did this because Manasseh killed many innocent people. Manasseh had filled Jerusalem with their blood. And the Lord would not forgive [those sins].

⁵The other things that Jehoiakim did are written in the book *The History of the Kings of Judah*. ⁶Jehoiakim [died and] was buried with his ancestors.* Jehoiakim's son Jehoiachin became the new king after him.

⁷The king of Babylon captured all the land between the Brook of Egypt and the Euphrates River. This land was previously controlled by Egypt. So the king of Egypt did not leave Egypt any more.

Nebuchadnezzar Captures Jerusalem

⁸Jehoiachin was 18 years old when he began to rule. He ruled three months in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Nehushta daughter of Elnathan from Jerusalem. ⁹Jehoiachin did the things that the Lord said were wrong. He did all the same things that his father had done.

¹⁰At that time, the officers of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and surrounded it. ¹¹Then Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to the city. ¹²Jehoiachin king of Judah went out to meet the king of Babylon. Jehoiachin's mother, his officers, leaders, and officials also went with him. Then the king of Babylon captured Jehoiachin. This was during the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar's rule.

¹³Nebuchadnezzar took from Jerusalem all the treasures in the Lord's temple* and all the treasures in the king's house. Nebuchadnezzar cut up all the golden dishes that Solomon king of Israel had put in the Lord's temple. This happened just like the Lord said.

¹⁴Nebuchadnezzar captured all the people of Jerusalem. He captured all the leaders and other wealthy people. He took 10,000 people and made them prisoners. Nebuchadnezzar took all the skilled workers and craftsmen. No person was left, except the poorest of the common people. ¹⁵Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin to Babylon as a prisoner. Nebuchadnezzar also took the king's mother, his wives, officers, and the leading men of the land. Nebuchadnezzar took them from Jerusalem to Babylon as prisoners. ¹⁶There were 7,000 soldiers. Nebuchadnezzar took all of the soldiers and 1,000 of the skilled workers and craftsmen. All of these men were trained soldiers, ready for war. The king of Babylon took them to Babylon as prisoners.

King Zedekiah

¹⁷The king of Babylon made Mattaniah the new king. Mattaniah was Jehoiachin's uncle. He changed his name to Zedekiah. ¹⁸Zedekiah was 21 years old when he began to rule. He ruled 11 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah from Libnah. ¹⁹Zedekiah did the things the Lord said were wrong. Zedekiah did all the same things that Jehoiachin did. ²⁰The Lord became so angry at Jerusalem and Judah that he threw them away.

Nebuchadnezzar Ends Zedekiah's Rule

Zedekiah rebelled and refused to obey the king of Babylon.

25 So Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, and all his army came to fight against Jerusalem. This happened on the 10th day of the tenth month of Zedekiah's ninth year as king. Nebuchadnezzar put his army around Jerusalem [to stop people from going

in and out of the city]. Then he built a wall of dirt around the city. ²Nebuchadnezzar's army stayed around Jerusalem until Zedekiah's eleventh year as king of Judah. ³The famine was getting worse and worse in the city. By the 9th day of the fourth month there was no more food for the common people in the city.

⁴Nebuchadnezzar's army finally broke through the city wall. That night King Zedekiah and all his soldiers ran away. They used the [secret] gate that went through the double walls. It was by the king's garden. The enemy soldiers were all around the city, but Zedekiah and his men escaped on the road to the desert. ⁵The Babylonian army chased King Zedekiah and caught him near Jericho. All of Zedekiah's soldiers left him and ran away.

⁶The Babylonians took King Zedekiah to the king of Babylon at Riblah. The Babylonians decided to punish Zedekiah. ⁷They killed Zedekiah's sons in front of him. Then they put out Zedekiah's eyes. They put chains on him and took him to Babylon.

Jerusalem Is Destroyed

⁸Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem on the 7th day of the fifth month of his nineteenth year as king of Babylon. The captain of Nebuchadnezzar's best soldiers was Nebuzaradan. ⁹Nebuzaradan burned the Lord's temple,* the king's house, and all the houses in Jerusalem. He destroyed even the largest houses.

¹⁰Then the Babylonian army that was with Nebuzaradan pulled down the walls around Jerusalem. ¹¹Nebuzaradan captured all the people that were still left in the city. Nebuzaradan took all the people as prisoners, even the people who had tried to surrender. ¹²Nebuzaradan let only the poorest of the common people stay there. He let them stay so they could take care of the grapes and other crops.

¹³The Babylonian soldiers broke to pieces all the bronze things in the Lord's temple. They broke the bronze columns, the bronze carts, and the large bronze tank. Then they took all of that bronze to Babylon. ¹⁴The Babylonians also took the pots, the shovels, the tools for trimming the lamps, the spoons,

temple A special building for worshiping God. God commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in Jerusalem.

and all the bronze dishes that were used in the Lord's temple. ¹⁵Nebuzaradan took all the firepans and bowls. He took all the things made of gold for the gold. And he took all the things made of silver for the silver. ¹⁶⁻¹⁷So, Nebuzaradan took:

- the 2 bronze columns (Each column was about 27 feet* tall. The capitals* on the columns were 4 1/2 feet* tall. They were made from bronze and had a design like a net and pomegranates. Both columns had the same kind of design.);
- the large bronze tank*;
- the carts that Solomon made for the Lord's temple.

The bronze from these things was too heavy to be weighed.

The People of Judah Taken as Prisoners

¹⁸From the temple, Nebuzaradan took
Seraiah the high priest,
Zephaniah the second priest,
the three men who guarded
the entrance.

¹⁹And from the city, Nebuzaradan took
1 official who was in charge of the army
5 of the king's advisers* who were still
in the city,
1 secretary of the commander of the
army. He was in charge of counting
the common people and choosing
some of them to be soldiers.
60 people who just happened to be
in the city.

²⁰⁻²¹Then Nebuzaradan took all these people to the king of Babylon at Riblah in the area of Hamath. The king of Babylon killed them there at Riblah. And the people of Judah were led away as prisoners from their land.

Gedaliah Governor of Judah

²²Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon left some people in the land of Judah. There was a man named Gedaliah son of Ahikam son of Shaphan. Nebuchadnezzar made Gedaliah governor over those people in Judah.

²³The army captains were Ishmael son of Nethaniah, Johanan son of Kareah, Seraiah son of Tanhumeth from Netophah, and Jaazaniah son of the Maachathite. These army captains and their men heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor. So they went to Mizpah to meet with Gedaliah. ²⁴Gedaliah made promises to these officers and their men. Gedaliah said to them, "Don't be afraid of the Babylonian officers. Stay here and serve the king of Babylon. Then everything will be all right with you."

²⁵Ishmael son of Nethaniah son of Elishama was from the king's family. In the seventh month Ishmael and ten of his men attacked Gedaliah and killed all the Jews and Babylonians that were with Gedaliah at Mizpah. ²⁶Then the army officers and all the people ran away to Egypt. Everyone, from the least important to the most important, ran away because they were afraid of the Babylonians.

²⁷Later, Evil Merodach became the king of Babylon. He let Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison. This happened in the 37th year after Jehoiachin was captured. This was on the 27th day of the twelfth month from the time that Evil Merodach began to rule. ²⁸Evil Merodach was kind to Jehoiachin. He gave Jehoiachin a more important place to sit than the other kings that were with him in Babylon. ²⁹Evil Merodach let Jehoiachin stop wearing prison clothes. And Jehoiachin ate at the same table with Evil Merodach, every day for the rest of his life. ³⁰So King Evil Merodach gave Jehoiachin every meal, every day, for the rest of his life.

27 feet Literally, "18 cubits."

capital(s) Decorated caps of stone or wood on top of columns.

4 1/2 feet Literally, "3 cubits."

tank A very large basin for water.

king's advisers Literally, "men that saw the king's face."