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# 2 Chronicles

## Solomon Asks for Wisdom

**1** Solomon became a very strong king because the Lord his God was with him. The Lord made Solomon very great.

<sup>2</sup>Solomon spoke to the people of Israel. He spoke to the captains, generals, judges, to every leader in all Israel, and to the leaders of the families. <sup>3</sup>Then Solomon and all the people gathered together with him went to the high place\* at Gibeon. God's Meeting Tent\* was there. The Lord's servant Moses made that tent when he and the people of Israel were in the desert. <sup>4</sup>David had carried God's Box of the Agreement\* from Kiriath Jearim to Jerusalem. David had made a place to put it in Jerusalem. David had set up a tent for God's Box of the Agreement in Jerusalem. <sup>5</sup>Bezalel son of Uri had made a bronze altar. That bronze altar was in Gibeon in front of the Holy Tent. So Solomon and the people went to Gibeon to ask the Lord for advice. <sup>6</sup>Solomon went up to the bronze altar in front of the Lord at the Meeting Tent. Solomon offered 1,000 burnt offerings\* on the altar.

<sup>7</sup>That night God came to Solomon. God said, "Solomon, ask me what you want me to give you."

<sup>8</sup>Solomon said to God, "You were very kind to my father David. You chose me to be

the new king in my father's place. <sup>9</sup>Now, Lord God, keep your promise to my father David. You have chosen me to be king of a very large nation. There are so many people—they are like the dust of the earth! <sup>10</sup>Now give me wisdom and knowledge so I can lead these people in the right way. No one can rule these people without your help!"

<sup>11</sup>God said to Solomon, "You have the right attitude. You didn't ask for wealth, riches or honor. You didn't ask for your enemies to be killed. And you didn't ask for a long life. No, you did not ask for those things. You asked for wisdom and knowledge so you could make wise decisions for my people—the people I chose you to rule over. <sup>12</sup>So I will give you wisdom and knowledge. But I will also give you wealth, riches, and honor. No king who lived before you has ever had so much wealth and honor. And no king in the future will have as much wealth and honor."

<sup>13</sup>So, Solomon went to the place of worship at Gibeon. Then Solomon left the Meeting Tent\* and went back to Jerusalem to rule as king of Israel.

## Solomon Builds His Army and Wealth

<sup>14</sup>Solomon started gathering horses and chariots for his army. Solomon got 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horse soldiers. Solomon put them in the chariot cities.\* Solomon also put some of them in Jerusalem where the king's home was. <sup>15</sup>In Jerusalem, Solomon gathered a lot of gold and silver. There was so much gold and silver that it was as common as rocks. Solomon gathered a lot of cedar

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

**Meeting Tent** The Holy Tent (Tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

**Box of the Agreement** The box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert. Also called "The Ark of the Covenant."

**burnt offerings** Gifts to God. Usually these were animals that were killed and completely burned on the altar.

**chariot cities** Cities with special places to keep the horses and chariots.

wood. There was so much cedar that it was as common as sycamore trees in the western hill country. <sup>16</sup>Solomon brought in horses from Egypt and Kue.\* The king's businessmen bought the horses in Kue. <sup>17</sup>Solomon's businessmen bought a chariot from Egypt for 600 shekels\* of silver, and a horse for 150 shekels\* of silver. The businessmen then sold the horses and chariots to all the kings of the Hittite people and to the kings of Aram.

### Solomon Plans for Temple and Palace

**2** Solomon planned to build a temple\* to give honor to the Lord's name. Solomon also planned to build a king's house for himself. <sup>2</sup>Solomon got 70,000 laborers and 80,000 stonemasons to cut stones in the mountains. Solomon chose 3,600 foremen to supervise the workers.

<sup>3</sup>Then Solomon sent a message to Hiram. Hiram was the king of the city of Tyre. Solomon said, "Help me like you helped my father David. You sent wood to him from cedar trees so he could build a house for himself to live in. <sup>4</sup>I will build a temple\* to honor the name of the Lord my God. At the temple we will burn incense\* in front of the Lord, and we will always put the holy bread\* on the special table. We will offer burnt offerings every morning and evening, every Sabbath day, every New Moon,\* and on the other feast days that the Lord our God has commanded us to celebrate. This is a rule for the people of Israel to obey forever.

<sup>5</sup>"Our God is greater than all the other gods. So I will build a great temple\* for him. <sup>6</sup>No person can really build a house to put our God in. Not even heaven can hold God—not even the universe can hold our God! So I

cannot build a temple for God. I can only build a place to burn incense\* to honor him.

<sup>7</sup>"Now, I would like you to send me a man who is skilled in working with gold, silver, bronze, and iron. That man must know how to work with purple, red, and blue cloth. That man will work here in Judah and Jerusalem with the craftsmen my father chose. <sup>8</sup>Also send me wood from cedar trees, pine trees, and algum trees from the country of Lebanon. I know your servants are experienced at cutting down trees from Lebanon. My servants will help your servants. <sup>9</sup>I will need lots of wood because the temple I am building will be very large and beautiful. <sup>10</sup>This is what I will pay for your servants to cut down the trees for wood. I will give them 125,000 bushels\* of wheat for food, 125,000 bushels of barley, 115,000 gallons\* of wine, and 115,000 gallons of oil."

<sup>11</sup>Then Hiram answered Solomon. Hiram sent a message to Solomon. This is what that message said: "Solomon, the Lord loves his people. That is why he chose you to be their king." <sup>12</sup>Hiram also said, "Praise the Lord God of Israel! He made heaven and earth. He gave a wise son to King David. Solomon, you have wisdom and understanding. You are building a temple\* for the Lord. You are also building a king's house for yourself. <sup>13</sup>I will send you a skilled craftsman named Hiram Abi.\* <sup>14</sup>His mother was from the family group of Dan. And his father was from the city of Tyre. Hiram Abi has skill in working with gold, silver, bronze, iron, stone, and wood. Hiram Abi also has skill in working with purple, blue, and red cloth and expensive linen.\* Hiram Abi can design and build anything you tell him. He will work with your craftsmen and with the craftsmen of your father King David.

<sup>15</sup>"Now, Sir, you offered to give us wheat, barley, oil, and wine. Give those things to my servants. <sup>16</sup>And we will cut wood from the

**Kue** Or Cilicia, a country in what is now southern Turkey.

**600 shekels** 15 pounds or 6.9kg.

**150 shekels** 3 3/4 pounds or 1.725kg.

**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

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

**holy bread** This was the special bread that was put in the Holy Tent. It is also called, "shewbread" or "the bread of the Presence." See Lev. 24:5–9.

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

**125,000 bushels** Or, "4,400,000 l." Literally, "20,000 cors."

**115,000 gallons** Literally, "20,000 baths."

**I will send ... Hiram Abi** Or, "I will send one of the craftsmen of my father Hiram."

**linen** A type of cloth.

country of Lebanon. We will cut as much wood as you need. We will tie the logs together and float them by sea to the town of Joppa. Then you can carry the wood to Jerusalem.”

<sup>17</sup>Then Solomon counted all the strangers living in the country of Israel. This was after the time when David counted the people. David was Solomon’s father. They found 153,600 strangers in the country. <sup>18</sup>Solomon chose 70,000 strangers to carry things. Solomon chose 80,000 strangers to be cutters of stone in the mountains. And Solomon chose 3,600 strangers to be the supervisors to keep the people working.

### Solomon Builds the Temple

**3** Solomon began building the Lord’s temple\* at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah. Mount Moriah is the place where the Lord came to David, Solomon’s father. Solomon built the temple on the place that David had made ready. This place was at the threshing floor\* that had belonged to Araunah\* the Jebusite. <sup>2</sup>Solomon started the work in the second month of his fourth year as king of Israel.

<sup>3</sup>These are the measurements Solomon used for building the foundation of God’s temple.\* The foundation was 60 cubits\* long and 20 cubits\* wide. Solomon used the old cubit measure when he measured the temple. <sup>4</sup>The porch in front of the temple was 20 cubits\* long and 20 cubits high.\* Solomon covered the inside of the porch with pure gold. <sup>5</sup>Solomon put panels made of cypress wood on the walls of the larger room. Then he put pure gold over the cypress panels. And he put pictures of palm trees and chains on the pure gold. <sup>6</sup>Solomon put valuable stones in the temple for beauty. The gold Solomon used

was gold from Parvaim.\* <sup>7</sup>Solomon covered the inside of the temple with the gold. Solomon put the gold on the ceiling beams, doorposts, walls, and doors. Solomon carved Cherub angels on the walls.

<sup>8</sup>Then Solomon made the Most Holy Place.\* The Most Holy Place was 20 cubits\* long and 20 cubits\* wide. It was as wide as the temple\* was. Solomon put pure gold on the walls of the Most Holy Place. The gold weighed about 23 tons.\* <sup>9</sup>The gold nails weighed 1 1/4 pounds.\* Solomon covered the upper rooms with gold. <sup>10</sup>Solomon made two Cherub angels\* to put in the Most Holy Place. The workers covered the Cherub angels with gold. <sup>11</sup>Each wing of the Cherub angels was 5 cubits\* long. The total length of the wings was 20 cubits.\* One wing of the first Cherub angel touched the wall on one side of the room. The other wing touched one wing of the second Cherub angel. <sup>12</sup>And the other wing of the second Cherub angel touched the other wall on the other side of the room. <sup>13</sup>The Cherub angels’ wings covered a total of 20 cubits.\* The Cherub angels stood looking inside toward the Holy Place.\*

<sup>14</sup>Solomon made the curtain\* by using blue, purple, and red materials and expensive linen.\* Solomon made Cherub angels on the curtain.

<sup>15</sup>Solomon put two columns in front of the temple.\* The columns were 35 cubits\* tall. The top part of the two columns was 5 cubits\* long. <sup>16</sup>Solomon made chains in a necklace. He put the chains on the tops of the columns.

**Most Holy Place** The inside room where the Box of the Lord’s Agreement sat. It is also named the “Holy of Holies.” It is the spiritual place where God lives and is worshiped.

**23 tons** Or, “20,400kg.” Literally, “600 talents.”

**1 1/4 pounds** Or, “575g.” Literally, “50 shekels.”

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

**5 cubits** 8’ 7 5/16” or 2.625m.

**Holy Place** The room in the Holy Tent and in the temple that was used by the priests to do their daily service to God.

**curtain** This curtain was a large piece of cloth that hung between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place so that no one could see the Lord’s Box of the Agreement and cherub angels that were in there.

**linen** A type of cloth.

**35 cubits** 60’ 3 7/16” or 18.375m.

**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

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

**Araunah** Or, “Ornan.”

**60 cubits** 103’ 4 3/16” or 31.5m.

**20 cubits** 34’ 5 3/8” or 10.5m.

**20 cubits high** 34’ 5 3/8” or 10.5m. Some of the Hebrew texts have “120 cubits high.”

**Parvaim** This was a place where there was much gold. It was probably in the country of Ophir.

Solomon made 100 pomegranates\* and put them on the chains. <sup>17</sup>Then Solomon put the columns up in front of the temple. One column stood on the right side. The other column stood on the left side. Solomon named the column on the right side “Jakin.”\* And Solomon named the column on the left side “Boaz.”\*

### Furniture for the Temple

**4** Solomon used bronze to make an altar.\* That bronze altar was 20 cubits\* long, 20 cubits wide, and 10 cubits\* tall. <sup>2</sup>Then Solomon used melted bronze to make a large tank.\* The large tank was round and it measured 10 cubits\* across from edge to edge. And it measured 5 cubits\* tall and 30 cubits\* around. <sup>3</sup>There were images of bulls under the lip of of the large bronze tank.\* They were in two rows that went 10 cubits around the tank. The bulls were molded in place when the tank was shaped. <sup>4</sup>The large bronze tank was on top of twelve large statues of bulls. Three bulls looked toward the north. Three bulls looked toward the west. Three bulls looked toward the south. Three bulls looked toward the east. The large bronze tank was on top of these bulls. All the bulls stood with their rear ends to each other and to the center. <sup>5</sup>The large bronze tank was 3 inches\* thick. The edge of the large tank was like the edge of a cup. The edge looked like a lily blossom. It could hold about 17,500 gallons.\*

<sup>6</sup>Solomon made ten basins. He put five basins on the right side of the large bronze

tank. And Solomon put five basins on the left side of the large bronze tank. These ten basins were to be used to wash the things offered for the burnt offerings.\* But the large bronze tank was to be used by the priests for washing before they offered sacrifices.\*

<sup>7</sup>Solomon made ten lampstands of gold. He followed the plans made for these lampstands. He put the lampstands in the temple.\* There were five lampstands on the right side and five lampstands on the left side. <sup>8</sup>Solomon made ten tables and put them in the temple.\* Five tables were on the right side and five tables were put on the left side in the temple. And Solomon used gold to make 100 basins. <sup>9</sup>Solomon also made the Priests’ yard,\* the Great yard, and the doors for the yards. He used bronze to cover the doors that opened to the yard. <sup>10</sup>Then he put the large bronze tank\* on the right side of the temple on the southeast side.

<sup>11</sup>Huram made the pots, shovels, and basins. Then Hiram finished his work for King Solomon on God’s temple.\* <sup>12</sup>Huram had made the two columns and the large bowls on the top parts of the two columns. Hiram also made the two net decorations to cover the two large bowls on the top parts of the two columns. <sup>13</sup>Huram made 400 pomegranates\* for the two net decorations. There were two rows of pomegranates for each net. The nets covered the large bowls on the top parts on the two columns. <sup>14</sup>Huram also made the stands and the bowls on the stands. <sup>15</sup>Huram made the one large bronze tank\* and twelve bulls under the tank. <sup>16</sup>Huram made the pots, shovels, forks, and all the things for King Solomon for the Lord’s temple. These things were made of polished bronze. <sup>17</sup>King Solomon first poured these things in clay molds. The molds were made in the Jordan Valley between the towns of Succoth and Zeredah. <sup>18</sup>Solomon made so

**pomegranates** A fruit that looks like an apple but filled with many seeds. These were not real pomegranates, but were shaped like pomegranates.

**Jakin** In Hebrew, Jakin seems to mean “He establishes.”

**Boaz** In Hebrew, Boaz seems to mean “In him is strength.”

**altar(s)** A stone table or a stand for offering sacrifices.

**20 cubits** 34’ 5 3/8” (10.5m).

**10 cubits** 17’ 2 11/16” (5.25m).

**large tank** Literally, “Sea.”

**5 cubits** 8’ 7 5/16” (2.625m).

**30 cubits** 51’ 8 1/16” (15.75m).

**large bronze tank** Literally, “Sea.”

**3 inches** Or, “8cm.” Literally, “1 handbreadth.”

**17,500 gallons** Or, “66,000 l.” Literally, “3,000 baths.”

**burnt offerings** Gifts to God. Usually these were animals that were killed and completely burned on the altar.

**sacrifice(s)** A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

**yard** A special area outside the temple.

many of these things that no person tried to weigh the bronze used.

<sup>19</sup>Solomon also made the things for God's temple.\* Solomon made the golden altar.\* He made the tables where the bread of the Presence was put. <sup>20</sup>Solomon made the lampstands and their lamps of pure gold. The lamps were to burn in the way planned for them in front of the Holy Place\* inside. <sup>21</sup>Solomon used pure gold to make the flowers, lamps, and tongs.\* <sup>22</sup>Solomon used pure gold to make the trimmers, bowls, pans, and the censers.\* Solomon used pure gold to make the doors for the temple, the inside doors for the Most Holy Place\* and the doors for the main hall.

**5** Then all the work Solomon had done for the Lord's temple\* was finished. Solomon brought in all the things that his father David had given for the temple. Solomon brought all the things in that were made of silver and gold and all the furniture. Solomon put all those things in the treasury rooms of God's temple.

### The Holy Box Carried Into the Temple

<sup>2</sup>Solomon commanded the elders of Israel and all the leaders of the family groups to meet together in Jerusalem. (These men were the leaders of the heads of the families of Israel.) Solomon did this so [the Levites] could bring the Box of the Lord's Agreement\* up [to the temple] from the City of David, that is, Zion. <sup>3</sup>All the men of Israel met together before King Solomon at the time of the Feast [of Shelters]. This feast was held in the seventh month (*September*).

**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

**altar(s)** A stone table or a stand for offering sacrifices.

**Holy Place** The room in the Holy Tent and in the temple that was used by the priests to do their daily service to God.

**tongs** Something looking like scissors, used to hold hot coals.

**censers** Bowls used to carry fire.

**Most Holy Place** The inside room where the Box of the Lord's Agreement sat. It is also named the "Holy of Holies." It is the spiritual place where God lives and is worshiped.

**Box of the Agreement** The box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert. Also called "The Ark of the Covenant."

<sup>4</sup>When all the elders of Israel arrived, the Levites picked up the Box of the Agreement.\*

<sup>5</sup>Then the priests and the Levites\* carried the Box of the Agreement to Jerusalem. They also brought the Meeting Tent\* and all the holy things that were in it to Jerusalem. <sup>6</sup>King Solomon and all the people of Israel met in front of the Box of the Agreement. King Solomon and all the people of Israel sacrificed\* sheep and bulls. There were so many sheep and bulls no person could count them. <sup>7</sup>Then the priests brought the Box of the Lord's Agreement to the place that was made ready for it. That place was the Most Holy Place\* inside the temple.\* The Box of the Agreement was put under the wings of the Cherub angels.\* <sup>8</sup>The Cherub angels spread their wings over the place where the Box of the Agreement was. The Cherub angels stood over the Box of the Agreement and the poles used to carry the Box. <sup>9</sup>The poles were long enough that their ends could be seen from the front of the Most Holy Place. But no person could see the poles from the outside of the temple. The poles are still there even today. <sup>10</sup>There was nothing in the Box of the Agreement except the two tablets.\* Moses had put those two tablets in the Box of the Agreement at Mount Horeb. Horeb was the place where the Lord made an Agreement with the people of Israel. That happened after the people of Israel came out of Egypt.

<sup>11</sup>All the priests that were there did the ceremony to make themselves holy. Then, as the priests came out of the Holy Place,\* they stood together, but not in their special groups.

<sup>12</sup>The Levite singers stood at the east side of the altar.\* All of the singing groups of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun were there. And their sons and relatives were there also. Those

**the priests and the Levites** Or, "the priests, that is, the Levites."

**Meeting Tent** The Holy Tent (Tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

**sacrifice(d)** To kill a special animal and burn it on an altar as a gift to God.

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

**two tablets** They were the two tablets on which God wrote the Ten Commandments.

Levite singers were dressed in white linen.\* They had cymbals,\* lyres,\* and harps. There were 120 priests there with those Levite singers. Those 120 priests blew trumpets. <sup>13</sup>The people who blew the trumpets and the people who sang were like one person. They made one sound when they praised and thanked the Lord. They made a loud noise with the trumpets, cymbals,\* and instruments of music. They sang the song,\* *Praise the Lord Because He is Good. His True Love Continues Forever.*

Then the Lord's temple\* was filled with a cloud. <sup>14</sup>The priests could not continue to serve because of the cloud. This was because the Glory of the Lord\* filled God's temple.

**6** Then Solomon said, "The Lord said he would live in the dark cloud. <sup>2</sup>I have built a house for you to live in, Lord. It is a high house, a place for you to live in forever!"

### Solomon's Speech

<sup>3</sup>King Solomon turned around and blessed all the people of Israel gathered in front of him. <sup>4</sup>Solomon said, "Give praise to the Lord God of Israel! The Lord has done what he promised to do when he talked to David my father. This is what the Lord God said: <sup>5</sup>I led Israel out of Egypt long ago. And in all that time, I have not chosen a city from any family group of Israel for a place to build a house for my name. I have not chosen a man to lead my people, the people of Israel. <sup>6</sup>But now I have chosen Jerusalem as a place for my name. And I have chosen David to lead my people Israel."

<sup>7</sup>"My father David wanted to build a temple\* for the name of the Lord God of Israel. <sup>8</sup>But the Lord said to my father, 'David, when you wanted to build a temple

for my name, you did well. <sup>9</sup>But, you cannot build the temple. But your own son will build the temple for my name.' <sup>10</sup>Now, the Lord has done what he said he would do. I am the new king in my father's place. David was my father. Now I am Israel's king. That is what the Lord promised. And I have built the temple for the name of the Lord God of Israel. <sup>11</sup>I have put the Box of the Agreement\* in the temple. The Box of the Agreement is where the Lord's Agreement is kept. The Lord made this Agreement with the people of Israel."

### Solomon's Prayer

<sup>12</sup>Solomon stood in front of the Lord's altar.\* He was standing in front of all the people of Israel who were gathered together. Then Solomon spread his hands and arms out. <sup>13</sup>Solomon had made a bronze platform\* 5 cubits\* long, 5 cubits\* wide and 3 cubits\* and placed it in the middle of the outside yard.\* Then he stood on the platform and kneeled in front of all the people of Israel who were gathered together. Solomon spread his hands out toward the sky. <sup>14</sup>Solomon said:

"Lord God of Israel, there is no god like you in heaven or on earth. You keep your agreement of love and kindness. You keep your agreement with your servants if they live right with all their hearts and obey you. <sup>15</sup>You kept your promise to your servant David. David was my father. You made a promise with your mouth. And today you have made that promise come true with your hands. <sup>16</sup>Now, Lord God of Israel, keep your promise to your servant David. This is what you promised: You said, 'David, you will not fail to have a man from your family sit on Israel's throne in front of me. This will

**linen** A type of cloth.

**cymbals** A pair of metal platters that are hit against each other to make a loud sound.

**lyre(s)** An instrument with several strings, like a harp.

**They sang ... song** Or, "They sang the Hallel and ..." This would be Psalms 111–118 and Psalm 136.

**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

**Glory of the Lord** One of the forms God used when he appeared to people. It was like a bright shining light.

**Box of the Agreement** The box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert. Also called "The Ark of the Covenant."

**altar(s)** A stone table or a stand for offering sacrifices.

**platform** Something like a table where a person stood so all the people could see the person speaking.

**5 cubits** 8' 7 5/16" (2.625m).

**3 cubits** 5' 2" or (1.575m).

**yard** A special area outside the temple.

happen only if your sons are careful in what they do. They must obey my law the same as you have obeyed my law.’<sup>17</sup> Now, Lord God of Israel, let your promise come true. You gave this promise to your servant David.

<sup>18</sup>“But we know that you, God, will not really live on the earth with people. Heaven and the highest of heavens cannot hold you! And we know that this temple\* I built cannot hold you!<sup>19</sup> But pay attention to my prayer and the times I beg for mercy. Lord my God, listen to me calling out to you! Listen to the prayer that I am praying to you. I am your servant.<sup>20</sup> I pray that your eyes will be open to look at this temple day and night. You said you would put your name in this place. May you hear my prayers when I pray while I look at this temple.<sup>21</sup> Hear my prayers, and the prayers your people Israel pray. Hear our prayers while we pray looking at this temple. Hear from where you live in heaven. And when you hear our prayers, forgive us.

<sup>22</sup>“A person might be accused of doing something wrong against another person. When that happens, the accused person will have to use your name to promise [that he is innocent]. When he comes to make the promise in front of your altar\* in the temple,<sup>23</sup> then hear from heaven. Act, and judge your servants. Punish the bad person and make him suffer the same things he made other people suffer. Prove that the person that has done right is innocent.

<sup>24</sup>“An enemy might defeat your people Israel because your people have sinned against you. And then if the people of Israel come back to you and confess your name and pray and beg to you in this temple,\*<sup>25</sup> then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel. Bring them back into the land you gave to them and to their ancestors.\*

<sup>26</sup>“The sky might close up so that there is no rain. This will happen if the people of Israel sin against you. And if the people of Israel are sorry and pray as they look at this

temple,\* and confess your name, and stop doing their sin because you are punishing them,<sup>27</sup> then hear from heaven. Hear and forgive their sins. The people of Israel are your servants. Then teach them the right way that they should live. And send rain on your land. That is the land you gave to your people.

<sup>28</sup>“There might be a famine\* in the land, or terrible sicknesses, or disease in the crops, or mildew, or locusts, or grasshoppers. Or if enemies attack the people of Israel in their cities, or if there is any kind of sickness in Israel,<sup>29</sup> and then a prayer or begging is made by any of your people of Israel—each person knowing his own trouble and pain—and if that person spreads his hands and arms out while looking at this temple,\*<sup>30</sup> then hear from heaven. Heaven is where you live. Hear and forgive. Give to each person what he should get, because you know what is in each person’s heart. Only you know what is in a person’s heart.<sup>31</sup> Then the people will fear and obey you as long as they live in the land you gave our ancestors.\*

<sup>32</sup>“There might be a stranger who is not one of your people of Israel, but who comes here from a country far away. That stranger might come here because he heard of your great name, your great power and your ability to punish people. When that person comes and prays while looking at this temple,\*<sup>33</sup> then in heaven where you live, listen to the stranger and answer his prayer. Then all the people of the earth will know your name and respect you, the same as your people Israel respects you. And all the people of the earth will know that this temple I built is called by your name.

<sup>34</sup>“You will send your people to some place to fight against their enemies. They will pray to you as they look toward this city you chose and toward the temple\* I built for your name.<sup>35</sup> Please hear their prayer in heaven. Hear them when they beg for help. And help them.

<sup>36</sup>“People will sin against you—there is not a person that does not sin—and you will become angry with them. You will let an

**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

**altar(s)** A stone table or a stand for offering sacrifices.

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

**famine** A time when there is not enough rain for crops to grow. People and animals die without enough food or water.

enemy defeat them, and be captured and forced to go to a land far away or near. <sup>37</sup>But then they will change their minds and beg you while they are in the land where they are prisoners. They will say, ‘We have sinned, we have done wrong and we have acted wickedly.’ <sup>38</sup>And then they will come back to you with all their heart and all their soul in the land where they are prisoners. And they will pray as they look toward their land, the land you gave their ancestors,\* and toward the city that you chose. And they will pray as they look toward the temple\* I built for your name. <sup>39</sup>When this happens, hear in heaven. Heaven is your home. Accept their prayers when they beg for help. And help them. Forgive your people who have sinned against you. <sup>40</sup>Now, my God, I ask you, open your eyes and your ears. Listen and pay attention to the prayers we are praying in this place.

<sup>41</sup> “Now, Lord God, get up,  
and come to your special place,  
the Box of the Agreement\*  
that shows your strength.  
May your priests be dressed  
with salvation.  
May your true followers be happy  
about these good things.

<sup>42</sup> Lord God, accept your anointed\* king.  
Remember your loyal servant David!”

### The Temple Dedicated to the Lord

**7** When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from the sky and burned up the burnt offering\* and the sacrifices.\* The Glory

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

**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

**Box of the Agreement** The box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert. Also called “The Ark of the Covenant.”

**anoint(ed)** To pour olive oil on things or people to show that they were chosen by God for a special work or purpose.

**burnt offering(s)** Gifts to God. Usually these were animals that were killed and completely burned on the altar.

**sacrifice(s)** A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

of the Lord\* filled the temple.\* <sup>2</sup>The priests could not enter the Lord’s temple because the Glory of the Lord filled it. <sup>3</sup>All the people of Israel saw the fire come down from heaven. The people of Israel also saw the Glory of the Lord on the temple. They bowed their faces down low to the ground on the pavement. They worshiped and thanked the Lord. They sang the song, *The Lord is good. His kindness continues forever.\**

<sup>4</sup>Then King Solomon and all the people of Israel offered sacrifices\* in front of the Lord. <sup>5</sup>King Solomon offered 22,000 bulls and 120,000 sheep. The king and all the people made the temple\* of God holy. It was to be used only for worshiping God. <sup>6</sup>The priests stood ready to do their work. The Levites also stood with the instruments of the Lord’s music. These instruments were made by King David to give thanks to the Lord. The priests and Levites were singing, *Praise the Lord because his love continues forever.\** The priests blew their trumpets as they stood across from the Levites. And all the people of Israel were standing.

<sup>7</sup>Solomon made the middle part of the yard holy. That yard is in front of the Lord’s temple.\* That is the place where Solomon offered burnt offerings\* and the fat of the fellowship offerings. Solomon used the middle of the yard because the bronze altar\* he made could not hold all the burnt offerings, grain offerings, and fat. There were many of those offerings.

<sup>8</sup>Solomon and all the people of Israel celebrated the feast for seven days. There was a very large group of people with Solomon. Those people came from the entrance of the town of Hamath and all the way to the Brook of Egypt. <sup>9</sup>On the eighth day they had a holy meeting because they had celebrated for seven days. They made the altar\* holy and it was to be used only for

**Glory of the Lord** One of the forms God used when he appeared to people. It was like a bright shining light.

**The Lord ... forever** See Psalms 118 and 136.

**Praise the Lord ... forever** See 1 Chron 16:41, Ps. 118 and 136.

**altar(s)** A stone table or a stand for offering sacrifices.

worshiping the Lord. And they celebrated the feast for seven days. <sup>10</sup>On the 23rd day of the seventh month Solomon sent the people back to their homes. The people were very happy and their hearts were full of joy, because the Lord was so good to David, to Solomon, and to his people Israel.

### The Lord Comes to Solomon

<sup>11</sup>Solomon finished the Lord's temple\* and the king's house. Solomon had success in finishing all the things he planned in the Lord's temple and in his own house. <sup>12</sup>Then the Lord came to Solomon at night. The Lord said to him, "Solomon, I have heard your prayer, and I have chosen this place for myself to be a house for sacrifices.\* <sup>13</sup>When I close the sky so there is no rain, or I command the locusts to destroy the land, or I send sicknesses to my people, <sup>14</sup>and if my people who are called by my name become humble and pray, and look for me, and turn away from their evil ways, then I will hear them from heaven. And I will forgive their sin and I will heal their land. <sup>15</sup>Now, my eyes are open, and my ears will pay attention to the prayers prayed in this place. <sup>16</sup>I have chosen this temple, and I have made it holy so that my name will be here forever. Yes, my eyes and heart will always be here in this temple.

<sup>17</sup>"Now you, Solomon, if you live in front of me the same way your father David lived, and if you obey all I have commanded, and if you obey my laws and rules, <sup>18</sup>then I will make you a strong king and your kingdom will be great. That is the agreement I made with David your father. I told him, 'David, you will always have a man in your family that will be a king in Israel.'

<sup>19</sup>"But if you do not obey my laws and commands that I gave you, and if you worship other gods and serve them, <sup>20</sup>then I will take the people of Israel out from my land that I gave them. And I will leave this temple\* that I have made holy for my name. I will make this temple something that all the nations will

speaking evil about. <sup>21</sup>Every person who passes by this temple that was so highly honored will be surprised. They will say, 'Why has the Lord done this terrible thing to the land and to this temple?' <sup>22</sup>Then people will answer, 'Because the people of Israel refused to obey the Lord, the God their ancestors\* obeyed. He is the God that led them out of the country of Egypt. But the people of Israel accepted other gods. They worshiped and served idol gods. That is the reason the Lord made all these terrible things happen to the people of Israel.'

### The Cities Solomon Built

**8** The time it took Solomon to build the Lord's temple\* and his own house was 20 years. <sup>2</sup>Then Solomon built again the towns that Hiram gave him. And Solomon allowed some of the people of Israel to live in those towns. <sup>3</sup>After this Solomon went to Hamath of Zobah and captured it. <sup>4</sup>Solomon also built the town of Tadmor in the desert. He built all the towns in Hamath to store things in. <sup>5</sup>Solomon built again the towns of Upper Beth Horon and Lower Beth Horon. He made those towns into strong forts. Those towns had strong walls, gates, and bars in the gates. <sup>6</sup>Solomon also built again the town of Baalath and all the other towns where he stored things. He built all the cities where the chariots\* were kept and all the cities where the horse riders lived. Solomon built all he wanted in Jerusalem, Lebanon, and in all the country where he was king.

<sup>7-8</sup>There were many strangers left in the country where the people of Israel were living. There were the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. Solomon forced all those foreigners to be slave workers. Those people were not from the people of Israel. Those people were the descendants\* of the people that were left in the land and not yet destroyed by the people of Israel. This still continues today. <sup>9</sup>Solomon did not force any of the people of Israel to be

**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

**sacrifice(s)** A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

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

**chariot(s)** A small wagon used in war.

**descendants** A person's children and their future families.

slave workers. The people of Israel were Solomon's fighting men. They were the commanders of Solomon's army officers. They were commanders of Solomon's chariots\* and commanders of Solomon's chariot drivers. <sup>10</sup>And some of the men of Israel were leaders of Solomon's important officials. There were 250 of those leaders to supervise the people.

<sup>11</sup>Solomon brought Pharaoh's daughter up from the City of David to the house he built for her. Solomon said, "My wife must not live in King David's house because the places where the Box of the Agreement\* has been are holy places."

<sup>12</sup>Then Solomon offered burnt offerings\* to the Lord on the Lord's altar.\* Solomon built that altar in front of the temple\* porch. <sup>13</sup>Solomon offered sacrifices\* every day the way Moses commanded. Sacrifices were to be offered on Sabbath days,\* on the New Moon\* celebrations, and on the three yearly holidays. The three yearly holidays were the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the Festival of Weeks, and the Festival of Shelters. <sup>14</sup>Solomon followed his father David's instructions. Solomon chose the groups of priests for their service. Solomon also chose the Levites for their duties. The Levites were to lead the praise and help the priests from day to day to do the things that needed to be done in the temple service. And Solomon chose the gatekeepers by their groups to serve at each gate. This is the way David, the man of God, instructed. <sup>15</sup>The people of Israel did not change or

disobey any of Solomon's instructions to the priests and Levites. They did not change any of the instructions, even in the way they should keep the valuable things.

<sup>16</sup>All Solomon's work was done. It was well planned from the day the Lord's temple\* was begun until the day it was finished. So the Lord's temple was finished.

<sup>17</sup>Then Solomon went to the towns of Ezion Geber and Elath. Those towns were near the Red Sea in the country of Edom. <sup>18</sup>Hiram sent ships to Solomon. Hiram's own men sailed the ships. Hiram's men were skilled at sailing on the sea. Hiram's men went with Solomon's servants to Ophir\* and brought back 17 tons of gold\* to King Solomon.

### The Queen of Sheba Visits Solomon

**9**The Queen of Sheba heard about Solomon's fame. She came to Jerusalem to test Solomon with hard questions. The Queen of Sheba had a very large group with her. She had camels that carried spices, much gold, and valuable stones. She came to Solomon and talked with him. She had many questions to ask Solomon. <sup>2</sup>Solomon gave answers to all her questions. There was nothing too hard for Solomon to explain or answer. <sup>3</sup>The Queen of Sheba saw Solomon's wisdom, and the house he built. <sup>4</sup>She saw the food on Solomon's table, and his many important officials. She saw the way his servants worked and the clothes they wore. She saw Solomon's wine servers and the clothes they wore. She saw the burnt offerings\* Solomon made in the temple\* of the Lord. When the Queen of Sheba saw all these things she was amazed! <sup>5</sup>Then she said to King Solomon, "The stories I heard in my country about your great works and your wisdom are true. <sup>6</sup>I didn't believe those stories until I came here and saw with my own eyes. Oh, not even half of your great wisdom has been told me! You are greater than the stories I heard! <sup>7</sup>Your wives\* and officers are very fortunate! They

**chariot(s)** A small wagon used in war.

**Box of the Agreement** The box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert. Also called "The Ark of the Covenant."

**burnt offerings** Gifts to God. Usually these were animals that were killed and completely burned on the altar.

**altar(s)** A stone table or a stand for offering sacrifices.

**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

**sacrifice(s)** A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

**Sabbath day(s)** Saturday. A special day of rest and worship for the Jews.

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

**Ophir** A place where there was much gold. Today no person knows where Ophir really was.

**17 tons of gold** Or "15,300kg." Literally, "450 talents." In today's money that would be more than \$13,000,000.

**wives** Or, "men." See 1 Kings 10:8.

can hear your wisdom while they are serving you! <sup>8</sup>Praise be to the Lord your God! He is happy with you and has put you on his throne to be king for the Lord your God. Your God loves Israel, and supports Israel forever. This is why the Lord has made you king of Israel to do what is fair and what is right.”

<sup>9</sup>Then the Queen of Sheba gave King Solomon 4 1/2 tons\* of gold, a great many spices, and valuable stones. No person gave such fine spices to King Solomon as the Queen of Sheba did.

<sup>10</sup>Hiram’s servants and Solomon’s servants brought in gold from Ophir.\* They also brought in algum wood and valuable stones. <sup>11</sup>King Solomon used the algum wood to make steps for the Lord’s temple,\* and for the king’s house. Solomon also used the algum wood to make lyres\* and harps for the singers. No person ever saw such beautiful things like those things made from the algum wood in the country of Judah.

<sup>12</sup>King Solomon gave the Queen of Sheba everything she wanted and asked for. He gave her more than she brought to give him. Then the Queen of Sheba and her servants left and went back to their own country.

### Solomon’s Great Wealth

<sup>13</sup>The amount of gold that Solomon got in one year weighed 25 tons.\* <sup>14</sup>The traveling merchants\* and traders brought more gold to Solomon. All the kings of Arabia and the rulers of the land also brought gold and silver to Solomon. <sup>15</sup>King Solomon made 200 large shields from hammered gold. About 7 1/2 pounds\* of hammered gold was used to make each shield. <sup>16</sup>Solomon also made 300 small shields of hammered gold. About 3 3/4 pounds\* of gold was used to make each

shield. King Solomon put the gold shields in the Forest Palace of Lebanon.

<sup>17</sup>King Solomon used ivory to make a large throne. He covered the throne with pure gold. <sup>18</sup>The throne had six steps on it. And it had a footstool\* that was made of gold. There were armrests on both sides of the throne’s seat. A statue of a lion stood next to each armrest. <sup>19</sup>There were statues of 12 lions that stood by the six steps. One lion on each side of each step. There was no throne like this made in any other kingdom. <sup>20</sup>All King Solomon’s drinking cups were made of gold. All the household things in the House of the Forest of Lebanon were made of pure gold. [There was so much wealth] in Solomon’s time that silver was not thought valuable [enough]. <sup>21</sup>Why? Because King Solomon had ships that Hiram’s men sailed to Tarshish.\* And every three years the ships would return from Tarshish loaded with gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks.

<sup>22</sup>King Solomon became greater in riches and wisdom than any other king on earth. <sup>23</sup>All the kings of the earth came to visit Solomon to hear his wise decisions. They came to hear the wisdom that God gave to Solomon. <sup>24</sup>Every year those kings brought gifts to Solomon. They brought things made of silver and gold, clothing, weapons, spices, horses, and mules.

<sup>25</sup>Solomon had 4,000 stalls to keep horses and chariots. He had 12,000 chariot drivers. Solomon kept them in the special cities for the chariots and in Jerusalem with him. <sup>26</sup>Solomon was the king over all the kings from the Euphrates River all the way to the land of the Philistine people, and to the border of Egypt. <sup>27</sup>King Solomon had so much silver that it was as common as rocks in Jerusalem. And he had so much cedar wood that it was as common as sycamore trees in the hill country. <sup>28</sup>The people brought horses to Solomon from Egypt and from all the other countries.

**4 1/2 tons** Or, “4,080kg.” Literally, “120 talents.”

**Ophir** A place where there was much gold. Today no person knows where Ophir really was.

**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

**lyre(s)** An instrument with several strings, like a harp.

**25 tons** Or, “22,644kg.” Literally, “666 talents.”

**traveling merchants** A person who earns his living by buying and selling things.

**7 1/2 pounds** Or, “3.3kg.” Literally, “600 bekas.”

**3 3/4 pounds** Or, “1.65kg.” Literally, “300 bekas.”

**footstool** A little stool that a king could use to rest his feet when sitting on his throne.

**Tarshish** A city far away from Israel, probably in Spain. Tarshish was famous for its large ships that sailed the Mediterranean Sea.

**Solomon's Death**

<sup>29</sup>The other things Solomon did, from the beginning to the end, are written in the writings of Nathan the Prophet, in The Prophecy of Ahijah from Shiloh and in The Visions of Iddo the Seer. Iddo was a seer\* who wrote about Jeroboam son of Nebat. <sup>30</sup>Solomon was king in Jerusalem over all Israel for 40 years. <sup>31</sup>Then Solomon rested with his ancestors.\* The people buried him in the City of David his father. Solomon's son Rehoboam became the new king in Solomon's place.

**Rehoboam Acts Foolishly**

**10** Rehoboam went to the town of Shechem because all the people of Israel went there to make him king. <sup>2</sup>Jeroboam was in Egypt because he ran away from King Solomon. Jeroboam was Nebat's son. Jeroboam heard that Rehoboam was going to be the new king. So Jeroboam came back from Egypt. <sup>3</sup>The people of Israel called Jeroboam to come with them. Then Jeroboam and all the people of Israel went to Rehoboam. They said to him, "Rehoboam, <sup>4</sup>your father made life hard for us. It was like carrying a heavy weight. Make that weight lighter, then we will serve you."

<sup>5</sup>Rehoboam said to them, "Come back to me after three days." So the people went away.

<sup>6</sup>Then King Rehoboam talked with the older men who had served his father Solomon in the past. Rehoboam said to them, "What do you advise me to say to those people?"

<sup>7</sup>The older men said to Rehoboam, "If you are kind to those people and please them and say good words to them, then they will serve you forever."

<sup>8</sup>But Rehoboam did not accept the advice the older men gave him. Rehoboam talked with the young men that had grown up with him and were serving him. <sup>9</sup>Rehoboam said to them, "What advice do you give me? How should we answer those people? They asked me to make their work easier. And they want

me to make the weight lighter that my father put on them."

<sup>10</sup>Then the young men that grew up with Rehoboam said to him, "This is what you should say to the people who talked with you. The people said to you, 'Your father made life hard for us. It was like carrying a heavy weight. But we want you to make that weight lighter.' But Rehoboam, this is what you should say to those people: Say to them, 'My little finger will be thicker than my father's waist! <sup>11</sup>My father loaded you with a heavy burden. But I will make that burden heavier. My father punished you with whips. But I will punish you with whips that have sharp metal tips.'"

<sup>12</sup>Three days later, Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam. That is what King Rehoboam told them to do when he said, "Come back to me in three days." <sup>13</sup>Then King Rehoboam talked to them in a mean way. King Rehoboam did not accept the advice of the older men. <sup>14</sup>King Rehoboam talked to the people the way the young men advised him. He said, "My father made your burden heavy, but I will make it heavier. My father punished you with whips, but I will punish you with whips that have sharp metal tips." <sup>15</sup>So King Rehoboam did not listen to the people. He did not listen to the people because this change of things came from God. God caused this to happen. This happened so that the Lord could make his word come true that he spoke through Ahijah to Jeroboam. Ahijah was from the Shilonite people, and Jeroboam was Nebat's son.

<sup>16</sup>The people of Israel saw that King Rehoboam did not listen to them. Then they said to the king, "Are we part of David's family? No! Do we get any of Jesse's land? No! So Israel, let's go to our own homes. Let David's son rule his own people!" Then all the people of Israel went to their homes. <sup>17</sup>But there were some of the people of Israel who were living in the towns of Judah. And Rehoboam was king over those people.

<sup>18</sup>Adoniram was in charge of the people who were forced to work. Rehoboam sent him to the people of Israel. But the people of Israel threw rocks at Adoniram and killed him. Then Rehoboam ran and jumped into his

**seer** This is another name for a prophet. See 1 Sam. 9:9–11.

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

chariot\* and escaped. He ran away to Jerusalem. <sup>19</sup>Since that time and up until now Israel has turned against David's family.\*

**11** When Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he gathered 180,000 of the best soldiers. He gathered these soldiers from the family groups of Judah and Benjamin. He gathered them to fight against Israel so he could bring the kingdom back to Rehoboam. <sup>2</sup>But the message from the Lord came to Shemaiah. Shemaiah was a man of God. The Lord said, <sup>3</sup>"Shemaiah, talk to Rehoboam, Solomon's son, and the king of Judah. And talk to all the people of Israel living in Judah and Benjamin. Tell them: <sup>4</sup>This is what the Lord says: 'You must not fight against your brothers! Let every man go back home. I have caused this thing to happen.'" So King Rehoboam and his army obeyed the Lord's message and turned back. They did not attack Jeroboam.

#### Rehoboam Makes Judah Strong

<sup>5</sup>Rehoboam lived in Jerusalem. He built strong cities in Judah to defend against attacks. <sup>6</sup>He repaired the cities of Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, <sup>7</sup>Beth Zur, Soco, Adullam, <sup>8</sup>Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, <sup>9</sup>Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, <sup>10</sup>Zorah, Aijalon, and Hebron. These cities in Judah and Benjamin were made strong. <sup>11</sup>When Rehoboam made those cities strong, he put commanders in them. He also put supplies of food, oil, and wine in those cities. <sup>12</sup>Also, Rehoboam put shields and spears in every city and made the cities very strong. Rehoboam kept the peoples and cities of Judah and Benjamin under his control.

<sup>13</sup>The priests and the Levites from all over Israel agreed with Rehoboam and joined him. <sup>14</sup>The Levites left their grasslands and their own fields and came to Judah and Jerusalem. The Levites did this because Jeroboam and his sons refused to let them serve as priests to the Lord. <sup>15</sup>Jeroboam chose his own priests to serve in the high places,\* where he set up the goat and calf idols he had made. <sup>16</sup>When the

Levites left Israel, those people in all the family groups of Israel who were faithful to the Lord God of Israel came to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the Lord God of their fathers. <sup>17</sup>Those people made the kingdom of Judah strong. And they supported Solomon's son Rehoboam for three years. They did this because during that time they lived the way David and Solomon had lived.

#### Rehoboam's Family

<sup>18</sup>Rehoboam married Mahalath. Her father was Jerimoth. Her mother was Abihail. Jerimoth was David's son. Abihail was Eliab's daughter, and Eliab was Jesse's son. <sup>19</sup>Mahalath gave Rehoboam these sons: Jeush, Shemariah and Zaham. <sup>20</sup>Then Rehoboam married Maacah. Maacah was Absalom's granddaughter.\* And Maacah gave Rehoboam these children: Abijah, Attai, Ziza, and Shelomith. <sup>21</sup>Rehoboam loved Maacah more than he loved all his other wives and women servants.\* Maacah was Absalom's granddaughter. Rehoboam had 18 wives and 60 woman servants. Rehoboam was the father of 28 sons and 60 daughters.

<sup>22</sup>Rehoboam chose Abijah to be the leader among his own brothers. Rehoboam did this because he planned to make Abijah king. <sup>23</sup>Rehoboam acted wisely and spread all his sons through all the areas of Judah and Benjamin to every strong city. And Rehoboam gave plenty of supplies to his sons. He also looked for wives for his sons.

#### Shishak King of Egypt Attacks Jerusalem

**12** Rehoboam became a strong king. He also made his kingdom strong. Then Rehoboam and the family group of Judah\* refused to obey the law of the Lord. <sup>2</sup>Shishak attacked the city of Jerusalem in the fifth year that Rehoboam was king. Shishak was the king of Egypt. This happened because Rehoboam and the people of Judah were not faithful to the Lord. <sup>3</sup>Shishak had 12,000 chariots, 60,000 horse riders, and an army that

**chariot(s)** A small wagon used in war.

**David's family** This probably means the family group of Judah. David's family was in the family group of Judah.

**high places** Places of worship.

**granddaughter** Literally, "daughter."

**women servants** Or, "concubines," slave women who were like wives to a man.

**Judah** Literally, "Israel."

no person could count. In Shishak's large army there were Libyan soldiers, Sukkite soldiers, and Ethiopian soldiers. <sup>4</sup>Shishak defeated the strong cities of Judah. Then Shishak brought his army to Jerusalem.

<sup>5</sup>Then Shemaiah the prophet came to Rehoboam and the leaders of Judah. Those leaders of Judah had gathered together in Jerusalem because they all were afraid of Shishak. Shemaiah said to Rehoboam and the leaders of Judah, "This is what the Lord says: 'Rehoboam, you and the people of Judah have left me and refused to obey my law. So now I will leave you to face Shishak without my help.'"

<sup>6</sup>Then the leaders of Judah and King Rehoboam were sorry and humbled themselves. They said, "The Lord is right."

<sup>7</sup>The Lord saw that the king and the leaders of Judah had humbled themselves. Then the message from the Lord came to Shemaiah. The Lord said to Shemaiah, "The king and the leaders humbled themselves. So I will not destroy them, but I will save them soon. I will not use Shishak to pour out my anger on Jerusalem. <sup>8</sup>But the people of Jerusalem will become Shishak's servants. This will happen so that they may learn that serving me is different from serving the kings of other nations."

<sup>9</sup>Shishak attacked Jerusalem and took the treasures that were in the Lord's temple.\* Shishak was the king of Egypt. And he also took the treasures that were in the king's house. Shishak took everything and carried those treasures away. He also took the gold shields that Solomon had made. <sup>10</sup>King Rehoboam made bronze shields to take the place of the gold shields. Rehoboam gave the bronze shields to the commanders who were responsible for guarding the entrance to the king's house. <sup>11</sup>When the king entered the Lord's temple, the guards would bring the bronze shields out. Later they would put the bronze shields back into the guard room.

<sup>12</sup>When Rehoboam humbled himself, the Lord turned his anger away from Rehoboam.

So the Lord did not fully destroy Rehoboam. There was some good in Judah.

<sup>13</sup>King Rehoboam made himself a strong king in Jerusalem. He was 41 years old when he became king. Rehoboam was king in Jerusalem for 17 years. Jerusalem is the city that the Lord chose from all the family groups of Israel. The Lord chose to put his name there in Jerusalem. Rehoboam's mother was Naamah. Naamah was from the country of Ammon. <sup>14</sup>Rehoboam did evil things because he didn't decide in his heart to obey the Lord.

<sup>15</sup>The things Rehoboam did when he was king, from the beginning to the end of his rule, are written in the writings of Shemaiah the prophet and in the writings of Iddo the seer.\* Those men wrote family histories. And there were wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the time both kings ruled. <sup>16</sup>Rehoboam rested with his ancestors.\* Rehoboam was buried in David's city. Then Rehoboam's son Abijah became the new king.

#### Abijah King of Judah

**13** When King Jeroboam was in his 18th year as king of Israel,\* Abijah became the new king of Judah. <sup>2</sup>Abijah was king in Jerusalem for three years. Abijah's mother was Maacah. Maacah was Uriel's daughter. Uriel was from the town of Gibeah. And there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam. <sup>3</sup>Abijah's army had 400,000 brave soldiers. Abijah led that army into battle. Jeroboam's army had 800,000 brave soldiers. Jeroboam got ready to have a war with Abijah.

<sup>4</sup>Then Abijah stood on Mount Zemaraim in the hill country of Ephraim. Abijah said, "Jeroboam and all Israel, listen to me! <sup>5</sup>You should know that the Lord God of Israel gave David and his sons the right to be king over Israel forever. God gave this right to David

**seer** This is another name for a prophet. See 1 Sam. 9:9–11.

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

**King Jeroboam ... Israel** This was about the year 923 B.C. King Jeroboam was the man who turned against King Rehoboam and began his own kingdom with ten of the family groups of Israel. See 1 Kings 12:20.

**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

with an agreement of salt.\* <sup>6</sup>But Jeroboam turned against his Master! Jeroboam son of Nebat was one of the servants of David's son Solomon. <sup>7</sup>Then worthless, evil men became friends with Jeroboam. Then Jeroboam and those bad men turned against Rehoboam, Solomon's son. Rehoboam was young and did not have experience. So Rehoboam could not stop Jeroboam and his bad friends.

<sup>8</sup>“Now, you people have decided to defeat the Lord's kingdom—the kingdom that is ruled by David's sons. You have very many people with you and you have those golden calves—those ‘gods’ that Jeroboam made for you! <sup>9</sup>You threw out the Lord's priests, the descendants of Aaron. And you threw out the Levites. Then you chose your own priests, just like every other nation on earth. And now, any person that will bring a young bull and seven rams can become a priest! A priest to serve those ‘No-gods’.

<sup>10</sup>“But as for us, the Lord is our God. We people of Judah have not refused to obey God! We have not left him! The priests who serve the Lord are Aaron's sons. And the Levites help the priests serve the Lord. <sup>11</sup>They offer burnt offerings\* and burn incense\* of spices to the Lord every morning and every evening. They put the bread in rows on the special table in the temple.\* And they take care of the lamps on the golden lampstand so it shines bright each and every evening. We very carefully serve the Lord our God. But you people have abandoned him! <sup>12</sup>God himself is with us. He is our ruler, and his priests are with us. God's priests blow his trumpets to wake you up and make you excited about coming to him! Men of Israel, don't fight against the Lord God of your ancestors!\* You will not succeed!”

**agreement of salt** When people ate salt together, it meant that their agreement of friendship would never be broken. Abijah was saying here that God had made an agreement with David that would never be broken.

**burnt offering(s)** Gifts to God. Usually these were animals that were killed and completely burned on the altar.

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

**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

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

<sup>13</sup>But Jeroboam sent a group of soldiers to sneak behind Abijah's army. Jeroboam's army was in front of Abijah's army. The hidden soldiers from Jeroboam's army were behind Abijah's army. <sup>14</sup>When the soldiers in Abijah's army from Judah looked around, they saw Jeroboam's army attacking both in front and in back.\* The men of Judah shouted out to the Lord and the priests blew the trumpets. <sup>15</sup>Then the men in Abijah's army shouted. When the men of Judah shouted, God defeated Jeroboam's army. All of Jeroboam's army from Israel were defeated by Abijah's army from Judah. <sup>16</sup>The men of Israel ran away from the men of Judah. God let the army from Judah defeat the army from Israel. <sup>17</sup>Abijah's army greatly defeated the army of Israel, and 500,000 of the best men of Israel were killed. <sup>18</sup>So at that time the people of Israel were defeated, and the people of Judah won. The army from Judah won because they depended on the Lord the God of their ancestors.\*

<sup>19</sup>Abijah's army chased Jeroboam's army. Abijah's army captured the towns of Bethel, Jeshanah, and Ephron from Jeroboam. They captured those towns and the small villages near those towns.

<sup>20</sup>Jeroboam never became strong again while Abijah lived. The Lord killed Jeroboam. <sup>21</sup>But Abijah became strong. He married 14 women and was the father of 22 sons and 16 daughters. <sup>22</sup>All the other things that Abijah did are written in the books of the prophet Iddo.

**14** Abijah rested with his ancestors.\* The people buried him in David's City. Then Abijah's son, Asa, was the new king in Abijah's place. There was peace in the country for ten years in Asa's time.

### Asa King of Judah

<sup>2</sup>Asa did good and right things before the Lord his God. <sup>3</sup>Asa took away the strange altars that were used to worship idols. Asa took away the high places,\* and smashed the

**When the soldiers ... in back** The Hebrew reads, “The battle was in front and in the back.”

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

memorial stones.\* And Asa broke down the Asherah poles.\* <sup>4</sup>Asa commanded the people of Judah to follow the Lord God. He is the God their ancestors\* followed. And Asa commanded them to obey the Lord's laws and commandments. <sup>5</sup>Asa also took away the high places and the incense\* altars from all the towns in Judah. So the kingdom had peace when Asa was king. <sup>6</sup>Asa built strong cities in Judah during the time when there was peace in Judah. Asa had no war in these years because the Lord gave him peace.

<sup>7</sup>Asa said to the people of Judah, "Let's build these towns and make walls around them. Let's make towers, gates, and bars in the gates. Let's do this while we still live in this country. This country is ours because we have followed the Lord our God. He has given us peace all around us." So they built and had success.

<sup>8</sup>Asa had an army of 300,000 men from the family group of Judah and 280,000 men from the family group of Benjamin. The men from Judah carried large shields and spears. The men from Benjamin carried small shields and shot arrows from bows. All those men were strong and brave soldiers.

<sup>9</sup>Then Zerah came out against Asa's army. Zerah was from Ethiopia. Zerah had 1,000,000 men and 300 chariots\* in his army. Zerah's army went as far as the town of Mareshah. <sup>10</sup>Asa went out to fight against Zerah. Asa's army got ready for battle in the Valley of Zephathah at Mareshah.

<sup>11</sup>Asa called out to the Lord his God and said, "Lord, only you can help weak people against strong people! Help us, Lord our God! We depend on you. We fight against this large

army in your name. Lord, you are our God! Don't let anyone win against you!"

<sup>12</sup>Then the Lord used Asa's army from Judah to defeat the Ethiopian army. And the Ethiopian army ran away. <sup>13</sup>Asa's army chased the Ethiopian army all the way to the town of Gerar. So many Ethiopians were killed that they could not get together as an army to fight again. They were crushed by the Lord and his army. Asa and his army carried many valuable things away from the enemy. <sup>14</sup>Asa and his army defeated all the towns near Gerar. The people living in those towns were afraid of the Lord. Those towns had very many valuable things. Asa's army took those valuable things away from those towns. <sup>15</sup>Asa's army also attacked the camps where the shepherds lived. They took many sheep and camels. Then Asa's army went back to Jerusalem.

#### Asa's Changes

**15** The Spirit of God came on Azariah. Azariah was Obed's son. <sup>2</sup>Azariah went to meet Asa. Azariah said, "Listen to me Asa, and all you people of Judah and Benjamin! The Lord is with you when you are with him. If you look for the Lord, you will find him. But if you leave him, he will leave you. <sup>3</sup>For a long time Israel was without the true God. And they were without a teaching priest, and without the law. <sup>4</sup>But when the people of Israel had trouble, they turned to the Lord God again. He is the God of Israel. They looked for the Lord and they found him. <sup>5</sup>In those times of trouble, no person could travel safely. There was much trouble in all the nations. <sup>6</sup>One nation would destroy another nation and one city would destroy another city. This was happening because God troubled them with all kinds of trouble. <sup>7</sup>But Asa, you and the people of Judah and Benjamin, be strong. Don't be weak, don't give up because you will get a reward for your good work!"

<sup>8</sup>Asa felt encouraged when he heard these words and the message from Obed the prophet. Then he removed the hated idols from the whole area of Judah and Benjamin. Asa also removed those hated idols from the towns he had captured in the hill country of Ephraim.

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

**Asherah poles** Poles used to honor the goddess Asherah. People thought she could help them have many children.

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

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

**chariot(s)** A small wagon used in war.

And he repaired the Lord's altar\* that was in front of the porch of the Lord's temple.\*

<sup>9</sup>Then Asa gathered all the people from Judah and Benjamin. He also gathered the people from the family groups of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon who had moved from the country of Israel to live in the country of Judah. A great many of those people came to Judah because they saw that the Lord, Asa's God, was with Asa.

<sup>10</sup>Asa and those people gathered together in Jerusalem on the third month in the 15th year of Asa's rule. <sup>11</sup>At that time they sacrificed\* 700 bulls and 7,000 sheep and goats to the Lord. Asa's army had taken those animals and other valuable things from their enemies. <sup>12</sup>Then they made an agreement to serve the Lord God with all their heart and with all their soul. He is the God their ancestors\* served. <sup>13</sup>Any person that refused to serve the Lord God was to be killed. It did not matter if that person was important or not important or if that person was a man or woman. <sup>14</sup>Then Asa and the people made an oath\* to the Lord. They shouted out with a loud voice. They also blew on trumpets and rams' horns. <sup>15</sup>All the people of Judah were happy about the oath, because they had promised with all their heart. They followed God with all their heart. They looked for God and found him. So the Lord gave them peace in all the country.

<sup>16</sup>King Asa also removed Maacah, his mother, from being queen mother. Asa did this because she had set up one of those awful poles to honor the goddess Asherah. Asa cut down that Asherah pole\* and smashed it into small pieces. Then he burned the pieces in the Kidron Valley. <sup>17</sup>The high places\* were not

removed from Judah, but Asa's heart was faithful to the Lord all of Asa's life.

<sup>18</sup>And Asa put the holy gifts that he and his father had given into the temple\* of God. Those things were made of silver and gold. <sup>19</sup>There was no more war until the 35th year of Asa's rule.\*

### Asa's Last Years

**16**In Asa's 36th year as king,\* Baasha attacked the country of Judah. Baasha was the king of Israel. He went to the town of Ramah and made it into a fortress.\* Baasha used the town of Ramah as a place to stop people from going in or coming out to King Asa of Judah.

<sup>2</sup>Asa took silver and gold out of the storehouses in the Lord's temple.\* And he took silver and gold out of the king's house. Then Asa sent messengers to Ben Hadad. Ben Hadad was the king of Aram and he was living in the town of Damascus. Asa's message said: <sup>3</sup>"Ben Hadad let there be an agreement between you and me. Let's make it like the agreement your father and my father had. See, I am sending you silver and gold. Now, break your agreement with Baasha, king of Israel, so he will leave me alone and stop bothering me."

<sup>4</sup>Ben Hadad agreed with King Asa. Ben Hadad sent the commanders of his armies to attack the towns of Israel. Those commanders attacked the towns of Ijon, Dan, and Abel Maim. They also attacked all the towns in the area of Naphtali where treasures were stored. <sup>5</sup>Baasha heard about the attacks on the towns of Israel. So he stopped building the town of Ramah into a fortress,\* and he left his work. <sup>6</sup>Then King Asa called all the men of Judah together. They went to the town of Ramah and took away the rocks and wood that Baasha used to make the fortress. Asa and the men of Judah used the rocks and wood to make the towns of Geba and Mizpah stronger.

**altar(s)** A stone table or a stand for offering sacrifices.

**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

**sacrifice(d)** To kill a special animal and offer it on an altar as a gift to God.

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

**oath** A very strong promise.

**Asherah pole(s)** Poles used to honor the goddess Asherah. People thought she could help them have many children.

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

**35th year of Asa's rule** About the year 880 B.C.

**36th year as king** About the year 879 B.C.

**fortress** A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.

<sup>7</sup>At that time Hanani the seer\* came to Asa, king of Judah. Hanani said to him, “Asa, you depended on the king of Aram to help you and not the Lord your God. You should have depended on the Lord. But, because you did not depend on the Lord for help, the king of Aram’s army escaped from you. <sup>8</sup>The Ethiopians and the Libyans had a very large and powerful army. They had many chariots\* and chariot drivers. But Asa, you depended on the Lord to help you defeat that large powerful army, and the Lord let you defeat them. <sup>9</sup>The eyes of the Lord go around looking in all the earth for people who are faithful to him so he can make those people strong. Asa, you did a foolish thing. So from now on you will have wars.”

<sup>10</sup>Asa was angry with Hanani because of what he said. Asa was so mad that he put Hanani in prison. Asa was very mean and rough with some of the people at that same time.

<sup>11</sup>The things that Asa did, from the beginning to the end, are written in the book, *The History of the Kings of Judah and Israel*. <sup>12</sup>Asa’s feet became diseased in his 39th year as king.\* His disease was very bad, but he did not look for help from the Lord. Asa looked for help from the doctors. <sup>13</sup>Asa died in the 41st year as king.\* And so Asa rested with his ancestors.\* <sup>14</sup>The people buried Asa in his own tomb that he made for himself in David’s City. The people laid him in a bed that was filled with spices and different kinds of mixed perfumes. The people made a large fire to honor Asa.\*

### Jehoshaphat King of Judah

**17** Jehoshaphat was the new king of Judah in Asa’s place. Jehoshaphat was Asa’s son. Jehoshaphat made Judah strong so they

could fight against Israel. <sup>2</sup>He put groups of soldiers in all the towns of Judah that were made into fortresses.\* Jehoshaphat built fortresses in Judah and in the towns of Ephraim that his father Asa captured.

<sup>3</sup>The Lord was with Jehoshaphat because in Jehoshaphat’s young life he did the good things his ancestor\* David did. Jehoshaphat did not follow the Baal idols. <sup>4</sup>Jehoshaphat looked for the God his ancestors followed. He followed God’s commands. He did not live the same way the people of Israel lived. <sup>5</sup>The Lord made Jehoshaphat a strong king over Judah. All the people of Judah brought gifts to Jehoshaphat. So Jehoshaphat had much wealth and honor. <sup>6</sup>Jehoshaphat’s heart found pleasure in the ways of the Lord. He took away the high places,\* and the Asherah poles\* out of the country of Judah.

<sup>7</sup>Jehoshaphat sent his leaders to teach in the towns of Judah. That happened in the third year of Jehoshaphat’s rule.\* Those leaders were Ben Hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Micaiah. <sup>8</sup>Jehoshaphat also sent Levites with these leaders. These Levites were Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, and Tobijah. Jehoshaphat also sent the priests Elishama and Jehoram. <sup>9</sup>Those leaders and Levites and priests taught the people in Judah. They had the *Book of the Law of the Lord* with them. They went through all the towns of Judah and taught the people.

<sup>10</sup>The nations near Judah were afraid of the Lord. That is why they did not start a war against Jehoshaphat. <sup>11</sup>Some of the Philistine people brought gifts to Jehoshaphat. They also brought silver to Jehoshaphat because they knew he was a very powerful king. Some Arabian people brought flocks to Jehoshaphat. They brought 7,700 rams and 7,700 goats to him.

**seer** This is another name for a prophet. See 1 Sam. 9:9–11.

**chariot(s)** A small wagon used in war.

**39th year as king** About the year 875 B.C.

**41st year as king** About the year 873 B.C.

**ancestor** Literally, “father,” meaning a person’s parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

**The people ... Asa** This probably means the people burned spices in honor of Asa, but it could also mean they burned his body.

**fortress(es)** A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.

**high places** Places of worship.

**Asherah poles** Poles used to honor the goddess Asherah. People thought she could help them have many children.

**third year of Jehoshaphat’s rule** About the year 871 B.C.

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<sup>12</sup>Jehoshaphat became more and more powerful. He built fortresses\* and storage towns in the country of Judah. <sup>13</sup>He kept many supplies in the storage towns. And Jehoshaphat kept trained soldiers in Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup>Those soldiers were listed in their family groups. This is the list of those soldiers in Jerusalem:

From the family group of Judah, these were the generals: Adnah was the general of 300,000 soldiers. <sup>15</sup>Jehohanan was the general of 280,000 soldiers. <sup>16</sup>Amasiah was the general of 200,000 soldiers. Amasiah was Zicri's son. Amasiah was happy to give himself to serve the Lord.

<sup>17</sup>From the family group of Benjamin these were the generals: Eliada had 200,000 soldiers who used bows, arrows, and shields. Eliada was a very brave soldier. <sup>18</sup>Jehozabad had 180,000 men ready for war. <sup>19</sup>All those soldiers served King Jehoshaphat. The king also had other men in the fortresses\* in all the country of Judah.

### Micaiah Warns King Ahab

**18**Jehoshaphat had much wealth and honor. He made an agreement with King Ahab through marriage.\* <sup>2</sup>A few years later, Jehoshaphat visited Ahab in the town of Samaria. Ahab sacrificed\* many sheep and cows for Jehoshaphat and the people with him. Ahab encouraged Jehoshaphat to attack the town of Ramoth Gilead. <sup>3</sup>Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "Will you go with me to attack Ramoth Gilead?" Ahab was the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat was the king of Judah. Jehoshaphat answered Ahab, "I am like you, and my people are like your people. We will join you in the battle." <sup>4</sup>Jehoshaphat also said to Ahab, "But first, let's look for a message from the Lord."

<sup>5</sup>So King Ahab gathered the prophets together, 400 men. Ahab said to them, "Should

we go to war against the town of Ramoth Gilead, or not?" The prophets answered Ahab, "Go, because God will let you defeat Ramoth Gilead."

<sup>6</sup>But Jehoshaphat said, "Is one of the Lord's prophets here? We need to ask the Lord through one of his prophets."

<sup>7</sup>Then King Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "There is still one man here. We can ask the Lord through him. But I hate this man, because he never has a good message from the Lord about me. He always has bad messages for me. That man's name is Micaiah. He is Imlah's son." But Jehoshaphat said, "Ahab, you should not say that!"

<sup>8</sup>Then King Ahab called one of his officials and said, "Hurry, bring Micaiah the son of Imlah here!"

<sup>9</sup>Ahab the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah had their kings' robes on. They were sitting on their thrones at the threshing floor\* near the front gate of the city of Samaria. Those 400 prophets were speaking their messages in front of the two kings. <sup>10</sup>Zedekiah was the son of a man named Kenaanah. Zedekiah made some horns from iron. Zedekiah said, "This is what the Lord says: 'You will use these iron horns to stab the Aramean people until they are destroyed.'"

<sup>11</sup>All the prophets said the same thing. They said, "Go to the town of Ramoth Gilead. You will have success and win. The Lord will let the king defeat the Aramean people."

<sup>12</sup>The messenger that went to get Micaiah said to him, "Micaiah, listen, all the prophets say the same thing. They are saying the king will have success. So say the same things they are saying. You also say good things."

<sup>13</sup>But Micaiah answered, "As sure as the Lord lives, I can only say what my God says."

<sup>14</sup>Then Micaiah came to King Ahab. The king said to him, "Micaiah, should we go to the town of Ramoth Gilead to fight or not?" Micaiah answered, "Go and attack. God will let you defeat those people."

**fortress(es)** A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.

**Jehoshaphat ... marriage** Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram married Athaliah, Ahab's daughter. See 2 Chron. 21:6.

**sacrifice(d)** To kill a special animal and offer it on an altar as a gift to God.

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

<sup>15</sup>King Ahab said to Micaiah, “Many times I made you promise to tell me only the truth in the name of the Lord!”

<sup>16</sup>Then Micaiah said, “I saw all the people of Israel scattered on the mountains. They were like sheep without a shepherd. The Lord said, ‘They have no leader. Let each person go home safely.’”

<sup>17</sup>Ahab, King of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “I told you that Micaiah would not have a good message from the Lord about me! He only has bad messages about me!”

<sup>18</sup>Micaiah said, “Hear the message from the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne. All of heaven’s army was standing around him, some on his left side and some on his right side. <sup>19</sup>The Lord said, ‘Who will trick Ahab, king of Israel, to attack the town of Ramoth Gilead so he may be killed there?’ Different ones who stood around the Lord said different things. <sup>20</sup>Then a spirit came and stood before the Lord. That spirit said, ‘I will trick Ahab.’ The Lord asked that spirit, ‘How?’ <sup>21</sup>That spirit answered, ‘I will go out and become a lying spirit in Ahab’s prophets’ mouths.’ And the Lord said, ‘You will succeed in tricking Ahab. So go out and do it.’

<sup>22</sup>“Now look Ahab, the Lord has put a lying spirit in your prophets’ mouths. The Lord has said bad things will happen to you.”

<sup>23</sup>Then Zedekiah went over to Micaiah and hit him in the face. Zedekiah’s father’s name was Kenaanah. Zedekiah said, “Micaiah, which way did the spirit from the Lord go when he went from me to speak to you?” <sup>24</sup>Micaiah answered, “Zedekiah, you will find out on the day you go to hide in an inside room!”

<sup>25</sup>Then King Ahab said, “Take Micaiah and send him to Amon the governor of the city and to Joash the king’s son. <sup>26</sup>Say to Amon and Joash, ‘This is what the king says: Put Micaiah in prison. Don’t give him anything to eat except bread and water until I come back from the battle.’”

<sup>27</sup>Micaiah answered, “Ahab, if you come back from battle safely, then the Lord has not spoken through me. Hear and remember my words, all you people!”

### Ahab Is Killed at Ramoth Gilead

<sup>28</sup>So Ahab king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah attacked the town of Ramoth Gilead. <sup>29</sup>King Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, “I will change my appearance before I go into battle. But you wear your own robes.” So Ahab, king of Israel changed his appearance, and the two kings went into battle.

<sup>30</sup>The king of Aram gave an order to his chariot\* commanders. He told them, “Don’t fight with any person, no matter how great or how humble. But fight only with Ahab, the king of Israel.” <sup>31</sup>When the chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat, they thought, “There is Ahab, the king of Israel!” They turned toward Jehoshaphat to attack him. But Jehoshaphat shouted out, and the Lord helped him. God made the chariot commanders turn away from Jehoshaphat. <sup>32</sup>When they saw that Jehoshaphat was not the king of Israel, they stopped chasing him.

<sup>33</sup>But a soldier happened to shoot an arrow from his bow without aiming at anything. That arrow hit Ahab king of Israel. It hit Ahab in an open part of his armor. Ahab said to the man driving his chariot,\* “Turn around and take me out of the battle. I am hurt!” <sup>34</sup>The battle became worse that day. Ahab propped himself up in his chariot facing the Arameans until the evening. Then Ahab died at sunset.

**19** Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came back safely to his house in Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup>Jehu the seer\* went out to meet Jehoshaphat. Jehu’s father’s name was Hanani. Jehu said to King Jehoshaphat, “Why did you help evil people? Why do you love those people that hate the Lord? That is the reason the Lord is angry with you. <sup>3</sup>But there are some good things in your life. You removed the Asherah poles\* from this country, and you decided in your heart to follow God.”

### Jehoshaphat Chooses Judges

<sup>4</sup>Jehoshaphat lived in Jerusalem. He went out again to be with the people from the town of Beersheba to the hill country of Ephraim.

**chariot(s)** A small wagon used in war.

**seer** This is another name for a prophet. See 1 Sam. 9:9–11.

**Asherah poles** Poles used to honor the goddess Asherah.

People thought she could help them have many children.

Jehoshaphat brought those people back to the Lord God their ancestors\* followed. <sup>5</sup>Jehoshaphat chose judges in Judah. He chose judges to be in each of the fortresses\* of Judah. <sup>6</sup>Jehoshaphat said to those judges, “Be careful in what you are doing, because you are not judging for people, but for the Lord. The Lord will be with you when you make a decision. <sup>7</sup>Now each one of you must fear the Lord. Be careful in what you do because the Lord our God is fair. The Lord doesn’t treat some people more important than others. And he doesn’t accept money to change his judgments.”

<sup>8</sup>And in Jerusalem, Jehoshaphat chose some of the Levites, priests, and leaders of Israelite families to be judges. Those people were to use the law of the Lord to settle problems for the people living in Jerusalem. <sup>9</sup>Jehoshaphat gave them commands. Jehoshaphat said, “You must serve faithfully with all your heart. You must fear the Lord. <sup>10</sup>You will have cases about killing, about a law, command, rule, or some other law. All these cases will come to you from your brothers living in the cities. In all of these cases you must warn the people not to sin against the Lord. If you don’t serve faithfully you will cause the Lord’s anger to come against you and your brothers. Do this, then you won’t be guilty. <sup>11</sup>Amariah is the leading priest. He will be over you in all things about the Lord. And Zebadiah will be over you in all things about the king. Zebadiah’s father’s name is Ishmael. Zebadiah is a leader in the family group of Judah. Also, the Levites will serve as scribes\* for you. Have courage in all you do. May the Lord be with those people who do what is right.”

**Jehoshaphat Faces War**

**20** Later the Moabite people, the Ammonite people, and some Meunite\* people came to start a war with Jehoshaphat. <sup>2</sup>Some men came and told Jehoshaphat, “There is a large army coming against you from Edom. They are coming from the other side of the [Dead] Sea. They are already in Hazazon Tamar!” (Hazazon Tamar is also called En Gedi.) <sup>3</sup>Jehoshaphat became afraid, and he decided to ask the Lord what to do. He announced a time of fasting\* for everyone in Judah. <sup>4</sup>The people of Judah came together to ask for help from the Lord. They came from out of all the towns of Judah to ask for the Lord’s help.

<sup>5</sup>Jehoshaphat was in the Lord’s temple\* in front of the new yard. He stood up in the meeting of the people from Judah and Jerusalem. <sup>6</sup>He said,

“Lord God of our ancestors,\* you are the God in heaven! You rule over all the kingdoms in all the nations! You have power and strength! No person can stand against you! <sup>7</sup>You are our God! You forced the people living in this land to leave. You did this in front of your people Israel. You gave this land to the descendants\* of Abraham forever. Abraham was your friend. <sup>8</sup>Abraham’s descendants lived in this land, and built a temple\* for your name. <sup>9</sup>They said, ‘If trouble comes to us—the sword, punishment, sicknesses, or famine, we will stand in front of this temple and in front of you. Your name is on this temple. We will shout to you when we are in trouble. Then you will hear and save us.’

<sup>10</sup>“But now, here are men from Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir! You would not let the people of Israel enter their lands when the people of Israel came out of Egypt.\* So the people of Israel turned away and didn’t destroy those people. <sup>11</sup>But see the kind of reward those people give us for not destroying

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

**fortress(es)** A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.

**scribes** Men that wrote down and copied books and letters. They often became experts at knowing the meaning of those writings (*scriptures*).

**Meunite** Some ancient Greek translations have “Meunite.” The Hebrew has “Ammonite.”

**a time of fasting** A time when no food was eaten.

**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

**descendants** A person’s children and their future families.

**You would not let ... Egypt** See Deut. 2:4–9, 19.

them. They have come to force us out of your land. You gave this land to us. <sup>12</sup>Our God, punish those people! We have no power against this large army that is coming against us! We don't know what to do! That is why we look to you for help!"\*

<sup>13</sup>All the men of Judah stood before the Lord with their babies, wives, and children. <sup>14</sup>Then the Lord's Spirit came on Jahaziel. Jahaziel was Zechariah's son. Zechariah was Benaiah's son. Benaiah was Jeiel's son. And Jeiel was Mattaniah's son. Jahaziel was a Levite and a descendant\* of Asaph. In the middle of the meeting, <sup>15</sup>Jahaziel said, "Listen to me King Jehoshaphat, all you people living in Judah and Jerusalem! The Lord says this to you: 'Don't be afraid or worry about this large army, because the battle is not your battle. It is God's battle! <sup>16</sup>Tomorrow, go down there and fight those people. They will come up through the Pass of Ziz. You will find them at the end of the valley on the other side of the Desert of Jeruel. <sup>17</sup>You won't need to fight in this battle. Stand strong in your places. You will see the Lord save you. Judah and Jerusalem, don't be afraid! Don't worry! The Lord is with you, so go out against those people tomorrow.'"

<sup>18</sup>Jehoshaphat bowed down low. His face touched the ground. And all the people of Judah and the people living in Jerusalem fell down in front of the Lord. And they all worshiped the Lord. <sup>19</sup>The Levites from the Kohath family groups and the Korah family stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel. Their voices were very loud as they gave praise to the Lord.

<sup>20</sup>Jehoshaphat's army went out into the Desert of Tekoa early in the morning. As they were starting out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Listen to me people of Judah and you people from Jerusalem. Have faith in the Lord your God, and then you will stand strong. Have faith in the Lord's prophets. You will succeed!"

<sup>21</sup>Jehoshaphat encouraged and instructed the people. Then he chose men to be singers to the Lord. Those singers were chosen to

give praise to the Lord because he is holy and wonderful. They marched in front of the army and praised the Lord. They sang the song, *Praise the Lord, because his love continues forever!*"\* <sup>22</sup>As those men began to sing and to praise God, the Lord set an ambush\* for the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir. Those were the people that came to attack Judah. Those people were beaten. <sup>23</sup>The Ammonites and the Moabites started to fight against the men from Mount Seir. The Ammonites and the Moabites killed and destroyed the men from Mount Seir. After they had killed the men from Seir, they killed each other.

<sup>24</sup>The men from Judah arrived at the lookout point in the desert. They looked for the enemy's large army. But they only saw dead bodies lying on the ground. No person had survived. <sup>25</sup>Jehoshaphat and his army came to take valuable things from the bodies. They found many animals, riches, clothes, and valuable things. Jehoshaphat and his army took those things for themselves. The things were more than Jehoshaphat and his people could carry away. They spent three days taking away the valuable things from the dead bodies, because there was so much. <sup>26</sup>On the fourth day Jehoshaphat and his army met in the Valley of Beracah.\* They gave praise to (*blessed*) the Lord in that place. That is why people still call that place, "The Valley of Beracah."

<sup>27</sup>Then Jehoshaphat led all the men from Judah and Jerusalem back home to Jerusalem. The Lord made them very happy because their enemies were defeated. <sup>28</sup>They came to Jerusalem with lyres,\* harps, and trumpets and went to the Lord's temple.\*

<sup>29</sup>All the kingdoms in all the countries feared the Lord because they heard that the Lord fought against Israel's enemies. <sup>30</sup>That is why Jehoshaphat's kingdom had peace.

**Praise ... forever** See Psalms 118 and 136.

**ambush** A surprise attack by hidden enemies.

**Beracah** This word means "blessing" or "praise."

**lyres** An instrument with several strings, like a harp.

**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

**That is why ... help** Literally, "But our eyes are on you!"

**descendant(s)** A person's children and their future families.

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Jehoshaphat's God gave him peace all around him.

### The End of Jehoshaphat's Rule

<sup>31</sup>Jehoshaphat ruled over the country of Judah. Jehoshaphat was 35 years old when he began to rule. He ruled 25 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Azubah. Azubah was Shilhi's daughter. <sup>32</sup>Jehoshaphat lived the right way like Asa his father lived. Jehoshaphat didn't turn from following Asa's way. Jehoshaphat did right in the Lord's sight. <sup>33</sup>But the high places\* were not taken away. And the people didn't turn their hearts to follow the God their ancestors\* followed.

<sup>34</sup>The other things Jehoshaphat did, from beginning to end, are written in *The Official Records of Jehu son of Hanoni*. These things were copied and included in the book, *The History of the Kings of Israel*.

<sup>35</sup>Later on, Jehoshaphat king of Judah made an agreement with Ahaziah, king of Israel. Ahaziah did evil. <sup>36</sup>Jehoshaphat joined with Ahaziah to make ships to go to the town of Tarshish.\* They made the ships in the town of Ezion Geber. <sup>37</sup>Then Eliezer spoke against Jehoshaphat. Eliezer's father's name was Dodavahu. Eliezer was from the town of Mareshah. He said, "Jehoshaphat, you joined with Ahaziah, that is why the Lord will destroy your works." The ships were wrecked, so Jehoshaphat and Ahaziah were not able to send them to Tarshish.\*

**21** Then Jehoshaphat died and was buried with his ancestors.\* He was buried in David's City. Jehoram was the new king in Jehoshaphat's place. Jehoram was Jehoshaphat's son. <sup>2</sup>Jehoram's brothers were Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azariah, Michael, and Shephatiah. Those men were Jehoshaphat's sons. Jehoshaphat was the king of Judah.\*

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

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

**Tarshish** A city far away from Israel, probably in Spain. Tarshish was famous for its large ships that sailed the Mediterranean Sea.

**Judah** Literally, "Israel."

<sup>3</sup>Jehoshaphat gave his sons many gifts of silver, gold, and precious things. He also gave them strong fortresses\* in Judah. But Jehoshaphat gave the kingdom to Jehoram because Jehoram was his oldest son.

### Jehoram King of Judah

<sup>4</sup>Jehoram took over his father's kingdom and made himself strong. Then he used a sword to kill all his brothers. He also killed some of the leaders of Israel. <sup>5</sup>Jehoram was 32 years old when he began to rule. He ruled eight years in Jerusalem. <sup>6</sup>He lived the same way the kings of Israel lived. He lived the same way Ahab's family lived. This was because Jehoram married Ahab's daughter. And Jehoram did evil in the Lord's sight. <sup>7</sup>But the Lord would not destroy David's family because of the agreement the Lord made with David. The Lord had promised to keep a lamp burning for David and his children forever.\*

<sup>8</sup>In Jehoram's time, Edom broke away from under Judah's authority. The people of Edom chose their own king. <sup>9</sup>So Jehoram went to Edom with all his commanders and chariots.\* The Edomite army surrounded Jehoram and his chariot\* commanders. But Jehoram fought his way out at night. <sup>10</sup>Since that time and until now the country of Edom has been rebellious against Judah. The people from the town of Libnah also turned against Jehoram. This happened because Jehoram left the Lord God. He is the God Jehoram's ancestors\* followed. <sup>11</sup>Jehoram also built high places\* on the hills in Judah. Jehoram caused the people of Jerusalem to stop doing what God wanted. He led the people of Judah away from the Lord.

<sup>12</sup>Jehoram got a message from Elijah the prophet. This is what the message said: "This is what the Lord God says. He is the God your father David followed. The Lord says, 'Jehoram, you have not lived the way your father Jehoshaphat lived. You have not lived

**fortress(es)** A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.

**The Lord ... his children forever** Here the writer means that one of David's descendants would always rule.

**chariot(s)** A small wagon used in war.

the way Asa king of Judah lived. <sup>13</sup>But you have lived the way the kings of Israel lived. You have caused the people of Judah and Jerusalem to stop doing what God wants. That is what Ahab and his family did. They were unfaithful to God. You have killed your brothers. Your brothers were better than you. <sup>14</sup>So now, the Lord will soon punish your people with much punishment. The Lord will punish your children, wives, and all your property. <sup>15</sup>You will have a terrible sickness in your bowels. It will become worse every day. Then your bowels will come out because of your terrible sickness.”

<sup>16</sup>The Lord caused the Philistine people and the Arab people living near the Ethiopian people to be angry at Jehoram. <sup>17</sup>Those people attacked the country of Judah. They took away all the wealth that belonged to the king’s house and took away Jehoram’s sons and wives. Only Jehoram’s youngest son was left. Jehoram’s youngest son was named Jehoahaz.\*

<sup>18</sup>After those things happened, the Lord made Jehoram sick in his bowels with a sickness that could not be cured. <sup>19</sup>Then Jehoram’s bowels fell out two years later because of his sickness. He died in very bad pain. The people did not make a large fire to honor Jehoram like they did for his father. <sup>20</sup>Jehoram was 32 years old when he became king. He ruled eight years in Jerusalem. No person was sad when Jehoram died. The people buried Jehoram in David’s city, but not in the graves where the kings are buried.

### Ahaziah King of Judah

**22** The people of Jerusalem chose Ahaziah\* to be the new king in Jehoram’s place. Ahaziah was Jehoram’s youngest son. The people that came with the Arab people to attack Jehoram’s camp killed all of Jehoram’s older sons. So Ahaziah began to rule in Judah. <sup>2</sup>Ahaziah was 22 years old when he began to

**Jehoahaz** Also spelled “Ahaziah”.

**Ahaziah** Also spelled “Jehoahaz”.

**Ahaziah was ... rule** Some old copies say “42 years old.”

<sup>2</sup> Kings 8:26 says Ahaziah was 22 years old when he began to rule.

rule.\* Ahaziah ruled one year in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Athaliah. Athaliah’s father’s name was Omri. <sup>3</sup>Ahaziah also lived the way Ahab’s family lived. He lived that way because his mother encouraged him to do wrong things. <sup>4</sup>Ahaziah did evil things in the Lord’s sight. That is what Ahab’s family did. Ahab’s family gave advice to Ahaziah after Ahaziah’s father died. They gave Ahaziah bad advice. That bad advice led to his death. <sup>5</sup>Ahaziah followed the advice Ahab’s family gave him. Ahaziah went with King Joram to fight against King Hazael from Aram at the town of Ramoth Gilead. Joram’s father’s name was Ahab, the king of Israel. But the Arameans wounded Joram in the battle. <sup>6</sup>Joram went back to the town of Jezreel to get well. He was wounded at Ramoth when he fought against Hazael, king of Aram.

Then Ahaziah\* went to the town of Jezreel to visit Joram. Ahaziah’s father’s name was Jehoram, the king of Judah. Joram’s father’s name was Ahab. Joram was in the town of Jezreel because he was wounded.

<sup>7</sup>God caused Ahaziah’s\* death when he went to visit Joram. Ahaziah arrived and went out with Joram to meet Jehu. Jehu’s father’s name was Nimshi. The Lord chose Jehu to destroy Ahab’s family. <sup>8</sup>Jehu was punishing Ahab’s family. Jehu found the leaders of Judah and Ahaziah’s relatives that served Ahaziah. Jehu killed those leaders of Judah and Ahaziah’s relatives. <sup>9</sup>Then Jehu looked for Ahaziah. Jehu’s men caught him when he tried to hide in the town of Samaria. They brought Ahaziah to Jehu. They killed Ahaziah and buried him. They said, “Ahaziah is the descendant\* of Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat followed the Lord with all his heart.” Ahaziah’s family had no power to hold the kingdom of Judah together.

### Queen Athaliah

<sup>10</sup>Athaliah was Ahaziah’s\* mother. When she saw that her son was dead, she killed all the king’s children in Judah. <sup>11</sup>But Jehosheba took Ahaziah’s son Joash and hid him.

**descendant(s)** A person’s children and their future families.

Jehosheba put Joash and his nurse in the inside bedroom. Jehosheba was King Jehoram's daughter. She was also Jehoiada's wife. Jehoiada was a priest. And Jehosheba was Ahaziah's sister. Athaliah did not kill Joash, because Jehosheba hid him. <sup>12</sup>Joash was hidden with the priests in God's temple\* for six years. During that time, Athaliah ruled over the land as queen.

### Priest Jehoiada and King Joash

**23** After six years, Jehoiada showed his strength. He made an agreement with the captains. Those captains were: Azariah son of Jeroham, Ishmael son of Jehohanan, Azariah son of Obed, Maaseiah son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat son of Zicri. <sup>2</sup>They went around in Judah and gathered the Levites from all the towns of Judah. They also gathered the leaders of the families of Israel. Then they went to Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup>All the people meeting together made an agreement with the king in God's temple.\*

Jehoiada said to those people, "The king's son will rule. That is what the Lord promised about David's descendants.\* <sup>4</sup>Now, this is what you must do: One-third of you priests and Levites who go on duty on the Sabbath will guard the doors. <sup>5</sup>And one-third of you will be at the king's house. And one-third of you will be at the Foundation Gate. But all the other people will stay in the yards of the Lord's temple.\* <sup>6</sup>Don't let any person come into the Lord's temple. Only the priest and Levites who serve are permitted to come into the Lord's temple because they are holy. But all the other men must do the job the Lord has given them. <sup>7</sup>The Levites must stay near the king. Every man must have his sword with him. If any person tries to enter the temple, kill that person. You must stay with the king everywhere he goes."

<sup>8</sup>The Levites and all the people of Judah obeyed all that Jehoiada the priest commanded. Jehoiada the priest did not excuse any person from the groups of the priests. So each captain and all his men came in on the Sabbath with

those who went out on the Sabbath. <sup>9</sup>Jehoiada the priest gave the spears and the large and small shields that belonged to King David to the officers. Those weapons were kept in God's temple.\* <sup>10</sup>Then Jehoiada told the men where to stand. Every man had his weapon in his hand. The men stood all the way from the right side of the temple to the left side of the temple. They stood near the altar\* and the temple, and near the king. <sup>11</sup>They brought the king's son out and put the crown on him. They gave him a copy of the Law.\* Then they made Joash king. Jehoiada and his sons anointed\* Joash. They said, "Let the king live a long time!"

<sup>12</sup>Athaliah heard the noise of the people running to the temple\* and praising the king. She came into the Lord's temple to the people. <sup>13</sup>She looked and saw the king. The king was standing by the king's column at the front entrance. The officers and the men who blew trumpets were near the king. The people of the land were happy and blowing trumpets. The singers were playing on instruments of music. The singers led the people in singing praises. Then Athaliah tore her clothes\* and said, "Treason! Treason!"\*

<sup>14</sup>Jehoiada the priest brought out the army captains. He said to them, "Take Athaliah outside among the army. Use your swords to kill any person that follows her." Then the priest warned the soldiers, "Don't kill Athaliah in the Lord's temple.\*" <sup>15</sup>Then those men grabbed Athaliah when she came to the entrance of the Horse Gate at the king's house. Then they killed her there at that place.

<sup>16</sup>Then Jehoiada made an agreement with all the people, and the king. They all agreed that they all would be the Lord's people. <sup>17</sup>All the people went into the temple of the idol Baal and tore it down. They also broke the altars and idols that were in Baal's temple.

**altar(s)** A stone table or a stand for offering sacrifices.

**They gave him ... Law** The Hebrew reads, "They gave him testimony." Here the word means a copy of the Law that the king had to obey. See Deut. 17:18.

**anoint(ed)** To pour olive oil on things or people to show that they were chosen by God for a special work or purpose.

**tore her clothes** A way to show she was very upset.

**Treason** Turning against the government. Here Athaliah was blaming the people for turning against her government.

**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

**descendants** A person's children and their future families.

They killed Mattan the priest of Baal in front of the altars of Baal.

<sup>18</sup>Then Jehoiada chose the priests to be responsible for the Lord's temple.\* Those priests were Levites, and David had given them the job of being responsible for the Lord's temple. Those priests were to offer the burnt offerings\* to the Lord the way the Law of Moses commanded. They offered the sacrifices\* with much joy and singing the way David commanded. <sup>19</sup>Jehoiada put guards at the gates of the Lord's temple so that a person who was not clean in anything could not enter the temple.

<sup>20</sup>Jehoiada took the army captains, the leaders, the rulers of the people, and all the people of the land with him. Then Jehoiada took the king out of the Lord's temple,\* and they went through the Upper Gate to the king's house. In that place they put the king on the throne. <sup>21</sup>All the people of Judah were very happy and the city Jerusalem had peace because Athaliah was killed with a sword.

### Joash Builds Again the Temple

**24** Joash was seven years old when he became king. He ruled 40 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zibiah. Zibiah was from the town of Beersheba. <sup>2</sup>Joash did right in front of the Lord as long as Jehoiada the priest was living. <sup>3</sup>Jehoiada chose two wives for Joash. Joash had sons and daughters.

<sup>4</sup>Then later on, Joash decided to build again the Lord's temple.\* <sup>5</sup>Joash called the priests and the Levites together. He said to them, "Go out to the towns of Judah and gather the money all the people of Israel pay every year. Use that money to build again your God's temple. Hurry and do this." But the Levites didn't hurry.

<sup>6</sup>So King Joash called Jehoiada the leading priest. The king said, "Jehoiada, why haven't you made the Levites bring in the tax money

from Judah and Jerusalem? Moses the Lord's servant and the people of Israel used that tax money for the Holy Tent.\*"

<sup>7</sup>In the past, Athaliah's sons broke into God's temple.\* They used the holy things in the Lord's temple for their worship of the Baal gods. Athaliah was a very wicked woman.

<sup>8</sup>King Joash gave a command for a box to be made and put outside the gate at the Lord's temple.\* <sup>9</sup>Then the Levites made an announcement in Judah and Jerusalem. They told the people to bring in the tax money for the Lord. That tax money is what Moses the servant of God had required the people of Israel to give while they were in the desert.

<sup>10</sup>All the leaders and the people were happy. They brought their money and put it in the box. They continued giving until the box was full. <sup>11</sup>Then the Levites would take the box to the king's officials. They saw that the box was full of money. The king's secretary and the leading priest's officer came and took the money out of the box. Then they took the box back to its place again. They did this often and gathered much money. <sup>12</sup>Then King Joash and Jehoiada gave the money to the people that worked on the Lord's temple. And the people that worked on the Lord's temple hired skilled woodcarvers and carpenters to build again the Lord's temple. They also hired workers that knew how to work with iron and bronze to build again the Lord's temple.

<sup>13</sup>The men that supervised the work were very faithful. The work to build again the Lord's temple\* was successful. They built God's temple the way it was before and they made it stronger. <sup>14</sup>When the workers finished, they brought the money that was left to King Joash and Jehoiada. They used that money to make things for the Lord's temple. Those things were used for the service in the temple and for offering burnt offerings.\* They also made bowls and other things from gold and silver. The priests offered burnt offerings in the Lord's temple every day while Jehoiada was alive.

<sup>15</sup>Jehoiada became old. He had a very long life, then he died. Jehoiada was 130 years old

**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

**burnt offering(s)** Gifts to God. Usually these were animals that were killed and completely burned on the altar.

**sacrifice(s)** A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

**Holy Tent** Or, "tabernacle." Also called the "meeting tent." The people would go to this tent to meet with God.

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when he died. <sup>16</sup>The people buried Jehoiada in David's City where the kings are buried. The people buried Jehoiada there because in his life he did much good in Israel for God and for God's temple.\*

<sup>17</sup>After Jehoiada died, the leaders of Judah came and bowed to King Joash. The king listened to those leaders. <sup>18</sup>The king and those leaders rejected the temple\* of the Lord God. Their ancestors\* followed the Lord God. They worshiped the Asherah poles\* and other idols. God was angry with the people of Judah and Jerusalem because the king and those leaders were guilty. <sup>19</sup>God sent prophets to the people to bring them back to the Lord. The prophets warned the people. But the people refused to listen.

<sup>20</sup>God's Spirit came on Zechariah. Zechariah's father was Jehoiada the priest. Zechariah stood in front of the people and said, "This is what God says: 'Why do you people refuse to obey the Lord's commands? You will not be successful. You have left the Lord. So the Lord has also left you!'"

<sup>21</sup>But the people made plans against Zechariah. The king commanded the people to kill Zechariah, so they threw rocks at him until he died. The people did this in the temple\* yard. <sup>22</sup>Joash the king didn't remember Jehoiada's kindness to him. Jehoiada was Zechariah's father. But Joash killed Zechariah, Jehoiada's son. Before Zechariah died, he said, "May the Lord see what you are doing and punish you!"

<sup>23</sup>At the end of the year, the Aramean army came against Joash. They attacked Judah and Jerusalem and killed all the leaders of the people. They sent all the valuable things to the king of Damascus. <sup>24</sup>The Aramean army came with a small group of men, but the Lord let them defeat a very large army from Judah. The Lord did this because the people of Judah left the Lord God their ancestors\* followed. So Joash was punished. <sup>25</sup>When the Arameans

left Joash, he was badly wounded. Joash's own servants made plans against him. They did this because Joash killed Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest. The servants killed Joash on his own bed. After Joash died, the people buried him in David's City. But they didn't bury him in the place where the kings are buried.

<sup>26</sup>These are the servants that made plans against Joash: Zabad and Jehozabad. Zabad's mother's name was Shimeath. Shimeath was from Ammon. And Jehozabad's mother's name was Shimrith. Shimrith was from Moab. <sup>27</sup>The story about Joash's sons, the great prophecies against him, and how he built again God's temple\* are written in the book, *Commentary on the Kings*. Amaziah became the new king after him. Amaziah was Joash's son.

### Amaziah King of Judah

**25** Amaziah was 25 years old when he became king. He ruled for 29 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jehoaddin. Jehoaddin was from Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup>Amaziah did the things the Lord wanted him to do. But he didn't do them with all his heart. <sup>3</sup>Amaziah became a strong king. Then he killed the officials that killed his father the king. <sup>4</sup>But Amaziah didn't kill those officials' children. Why? He obeyed the law written in the book of Moses. The Lord commanded, "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."\*

<sup>5</sup>Amaziah gathered the people of Judah together. He grouped them by families and he put generals and captains in charge of those groups. Those leaders were in charge of all the soldiers from Judah and Benjamin. All the men that were chosen to be soldiers were 20 years old and older. In all there were 300,000 skilled soldiers ready to fight with spears and shields. <sup>6</sup>Amaziah also hired 100,000 soldiers from Israel. He paid 3 3/4 tons\* of silver to hire

**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

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

**Asherah poles** Poles used to honor the goddess Asherah. People thought she could help them have many children.

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

**3 3/4 tons** Or, "3,400kg." Literally, "100 talents."

those soldiers. <sup>7</sup>But a man of God\* came to Amaziah. The man of God said, “King, don’t let the army of Israel go with you. The Lord is not with Israel. The Lord is not with the people of Ephraim.\* <sup>8</sup>Maybe you will make yourself strong and ready for war, but God can help you win or help you lose.” <sup>9</sup>Amaziah said to the man of God, “But what about the money I already paid to the Israelite army?” The man of God answered, “The Lord has plenty. He can give you much more than that!”

<sup>10</sup>So Amaziah sent the Israelite army back home to Ephraim.\* Those men were very angry against the king and the people of Judah. They went back home very angry.

<sup>11</sup>Then Amaziah became very brave and led his army to the Salt Valley in the country of Edom. In that place, Amaziah’s army killed 10,000 men from Seir.\* <sup>12</sup>The army of Judah also captured 10,000 men from Seir. They took those men from Seir to the top of a cliff. Those men were still alive. Then the army of Judah threw down those men from the top of the cliff and their bodies were broken on the rocks below.

<sup>13</sup>But at the same time, the Israelite army was attacking some towns in Judah. They attacked the towns from Beth Horon all the way to Samaria. They killed 3,000 people and took many valuable things. [The people of that army were angry because,] Amaziah didn’t let them join him in the war.

<sup>14</sup>Amaziah came home after he defeated the Edomite\* people. He brought the idol gods the people of Seir\* worshiped. Amaziah started to worship those idol gods. He bowed down in front of those gods, and he burned incense\* to them. <sup>15</sup>The Lord was very angry with Amaziah. The Lord sent a prophet to Amaziah. The prophet said, “Amaziah, why have you worshiped the gods those people

worship? Those gods could not even save their own people from you!”

<sup>16</sup>When the prophet spoke, Amaziah said to the prophet, “We never made you an adviser to the king! Be quiet! If you don’t be quiet, you will be killed.” The prophet became quiet, but then said, “God really has decided to destroy you. Why? Because you did those bad things and didn’t listen to my advice.”

<sup>17</sup>Amaziah king of Judah, talked with his advisers. Then he sent a message to Jehoash, the king of Israel. Amaziah said to Jehoash, “Let’s meet face to face.” Jehoash was Jehoahaz’s son. Jehoahaz was Jehu’s son.

<sup>18</sup>Then Jehoash sent his answer to Amaziah. Jehoash was the king of Israel and Amaziah was the king of Judah. Jehoash told this story: “A little thorn bush of Lebanon sent a message to a big cedar tree of Lebanon. The little thorn bush said, ‘Let your daughter marry my son.’ But a wild animal came and walked over the thorn bush and destroyed it. <sup>19</sup>You say to yourself, ‘I have defeated Edom!’ You are proud and you brag. But you should stay at home. There is no need for you to get into trouble. If you fight me, you and Judah will be destroyed.”

<sup>20</sup>But Amaziah refused to listen. This came from God. God planned to let Israel defeat Judah, because the people of Judah followed the gods the people of Edom followed. <sup>21</sup>So Jehoash king of Israel met Amaziah king of Judah face to face at the town of Beth Shemesh. Beth Shemesh is in Judah. <sup>22</sup>Israel defeated Judah. Every man of Judah ran away to his home. <sup>23</sup>Jehoash captured Amaziah at Beth Shemesh and took him to Jerusalem. Amaziah’s father’s name was Joash. Joash’s father’s name was Jehoahaz. Jehoash tore down a 600-foot section\* of the wall of Jerusalem from the Ephraim Gate to the Corner Gate. <sup>24</sup>There was gold and silver and many other things in God’s temple. Obed Edom was responsible for those things. But Jehoash took all of those things. Jehoash also took the treasures from the king’s palace.

**man of God** This is another name for a prophet.

**Ephraim** Ephraim was Joseph’s youngest son. Ephraim’s family group joined Israel. Ephraim was another name for Israel.

**Seir** Or, “Edom,” a country east of Judah.

**Edomite** The people of Edom (Seir).

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

**600-foot section** Literally, “400-cubit section” (210m).

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Then Jehoash took some people as prisoners and went back to Samaria.

<sup>25</sup>Amaziah lived 15 years after Jehoash died. Amaziah's father was Joash, the king of Judah. <sup>26</sup>The other things Amaziah did, from beginning to end, are written in the book, *The History of the Kings of Judah and Israel*. <sup>27</sup>When Amaziah stopped obeying the Lord, the people in Jerusalem made plans against Amaziah. He ran away to the town of Lachish. But the people sent men to Lachish and they killed Amaziah there. <sup>28</sup>Then they carried Amaziah's body on horses and buried him with his ancestors\* in the City of Judah.

### Uzziah King of Judah

**26** Then the people of Judah chose Uzziah to be the new king in place of Amaziah. Amaziah was Uzziah's father. Uzziah was 16 years old when this happened. <sup>2</sup>Uzziah built again the town of Elath and gave it back to Judah. Uzziah did this after Amaziah died and was buried with his ancestors.\*

<sup>3</sup>Uzziah was 16 years old when he became king. He ruled 52 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jecoliah. Jecoliah was from Jerusalem. <sup>4</sup>Uzziah did the things the Lord wanted him to do. He obeyed God the same as his father Amaziah had done. <sup>5</sup>Uzziah followed God in the time of Zechariah's life. Zechariah taught Uzziah how to respect and obey God. When Uzziah was obeying the Lord, God gave him success.

<sup>6</sup>Uzziah fought a war against the Philistine people. He tore down the walls around the towns of Gath, Jabneh, and Ashdod. Uzziah built towns near the town of Ashdod and in other places among the Philistine people. <sup>7</sup>God helped Uzziah fight the Philistines, the Arabs living in the town of Gur Baal, and the Meunites. <sup>8</sup>The Ammonites paid tribute\* to Uzziah. Uzziah's name became famous all the way to the border of Egypt. He was famous because he was very powerful.

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

**tribute** Money paid to a more powerful king by a weaker king to have peace.

<sup>9</sup>Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate, at the Valley Gate, and at the place where the wall turned. Uzziah made those towers strong. <sup>10</sup>Uzziah built towers in the desert. He also dug many wells. He had much cattle in the hill country and in the flat lands. Uzziah had farmers in the mountains and in the lands where growth was good. He also had men that took care of fields where grapes grew. He loved farming.

<sup>11</sup>Uzziah had an army of trained soldiers. Those soldiers were put in groups by Jeiel the secretary and Maaseiah the officer. Hananiah was their leader. Jeiel and Maaseiah counted those soldiers and put them into groups. Hananiah was one of the king's officers. <sup>12</sup>There were 2,600 leaders over the soldiers. <sup>13</sup>Those family leaders were in charge of an army of 307,500 men that fought with great power. Those soldiers helped the king against the enemy. <sup>14</sup>Uzziah gave the army shields, spears, helmets, armor, bows, and stones for the slings.\* <sup>15</sup>In Jerusalem Uzziah made machines that were invented by clever men. Those machines were put on the towers and corner walls. These machines shot arrows and large rocks. Uzziah became famous. People knew his name in far away places. He had much help and became a powerful king.

<sup>16</sup>But when Uzziah became strong, his pride caused him to be destroyed. He was not faithful to the Lord his God. He went into the Lord's temple\* to burn incense\* on the altar\* for burning incense. <sup>17</sup>Azariah the priest and 80 brave priests that served the Lord followed Uzziah into the temple. <sup>18</sup>They told Uzziah he was wrong. They said to him, "Uzziah, it is not your job to burn incense to the Lord. It is not good for you to do this. The priests and Aaron's descendants\* are the ones that burn incense to the Lord. These priests were trained for holy service to burn incense. Go out of the

**slings** Something to throw rocks in, like David used against Goliath.

**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

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

**altar(s)** A stone table or a stand for offering sacrifices.

**descendants** A person's children and their future families.

Most Holy Place.\* You have not been faithful. The Lord God will not honor you for this!”

<sup>19</sup>But Uzziah was angry. He had a bowl in his hand for burning incense.\* While Uzziah was very angry at the priests, leprosy\* came up on his forehead. This happened in front of the priests in the Lord’s temple\* by the altar\* for burning incense. <sup>20</sup>Azariah the leading priest and all the priests looked at Uzziah. They could see the leprosy on his forehead. The priests quickly forced Uzziah out from the temple. Uzziah himself hurried out because the Lord had punished him. <sup>21</sup>Uzziah the king was a leper.\* He could not enter the Lord’s temple. Uzziah’s son Jotham controlled the king’s house and became governor for the people.

<sup>22</sup>The other things that Uzziah did, from beginning to the end, were written by the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. <sup>23</sup>Uzziah died and was buried near his ancestors.\* Uzziah was buried in the field near the king’s burial places. Why? Because the people said, “Uzziah has leprosy.\*” And Jotham became the new king in Uzziah’s place. Jotham was Uzziah’s son.

#### Jotham King of Judah

**27** Jotham was 25 years old when he became king. He ruled 16 years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Jerusha. Jerusha was Zadok’s daughter. <sup>2</sup>Jotham did the things the Lord wanted him to do. He obeyed God just like his father Uzziah had done. But Jotham did not enter the Lord’s temple\* to burn incense\* like his father did. But the people continued doing wrong. <sup>3</sup>Jotham built again the Upper Gate of the Lord’s temple. He did much building on the wall at the place named Ophel. <sup>4</sup>Jotham also built towns in the

**Most Holy Place** The inside room where the Box of the Lord’s Agreement sat. It is also named the “Holy of Holies.” It is the spiritual place where God lives and is worshiped.

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

**leprosy** A very bad skin disease. The Hebrew word means any of several diseases that cause rashes or sores on the skin.

**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

**altar(s)** A stone table or a stand for offering sacrifices.

**leper** A person who was sick with leprosy.

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

hill country of Judah. Jotham built fortresses\* and towers in the forests. <sup>5</sup>Jotham also fought against the king of the Ammonite people and his army and defeated them. So each year for three years the Ammonites gave Jotham 3 3/4 tons\* of silver, 62,000 bushels\* of wheat, and 62,000 bushels of barley.

<sup>6</sup>Jotham became powerful because he faithfully obeyed the Lord his God. <sup>7</sup>The other things Jotham did and all his wars are written in the book, *The History of the Kings of Israel and Judah*. <sup>8</sup>Jotham was 25 years old when he became king. He ruled 16 years in Jerusalem. <sup>9</sup>Then Jotham died and was buried with his ancestors.\* The people buried him in David’s City.\* Ahaz became the king in Jotham’s place. Ahaz was Jotham’s son.

#### Ahaz King of Judah

**28** Ahaz was 20 years old when he became king. He ruled 16 years in Jerusalem. Ahaz didn’t live right like David his ancestor.\* Ahaz didn’t do the things the Lord wanted him to do. <sup>2</sup>Ahaz followed the bad example of the kings of Israel. He used molds to make idols to worship the Baal gods. <sup>3</sup>Ahaz burned incense\* in the Valley of Ben Hinnom.\* He sacrificed\* his own sons by burning them in the fire. He did the same terrible sins that the peoples living in that land did. The Lord had forced those people out when the people of Israel entered that land. <sup>4</sup>Ahaz offered sacrifices\* and burned incense in the high places,\* on the hills, and under every green tree.

**fortress(es)** A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.

**3 3/4 tons** Or, “3,400kg.” Literally, “100 talents.”

**62,000 bushels** Or, “2,200,000 l.” Literally, “10,000 cors.”

**David’s City** Another name for Jerusalem.

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

**Valley of Ben Hinnom** The Valley of Hinnom was south and west of Jerusalem. Many babies and young children were sacrificed to false gods in this valley.

**sacrifice(d)** To kill a special animal and offer it on an altar as a gift to God.

**sacrifice(s)** A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

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

<sup>5-6</sup>Ahaz sinned, so the Lord his God let the king of Aram defeat Ahaz. The king of Aram and his army defeated Ahaz and made many people of Judah prisoners. The king of Aram took those prisoners to the city of Damascus. The Lord also let Pekah the king of Israel defeat Ahaz. Pekah's father's name was Remaliah. Pekah and his army killed 120,000 brave soldiers from Judah in one day. Pekah defeated those men from Judah because they stopped obeying the Lord God their ancestors obeyed. <sup>7</sup>Zicri was a brave soldier from Ephraim.\* Zicri killed Maaseiah, King Ahaz's son, Azrikam the officer in charge of the king's house, and Elkanah. Elkanah was second in command to the king.

<sup>8</sup>The Israelite army captured 200,000 of their own relatives living in Judah. They took women, children, and many valuable things from Judah. The Israelites brought those captives and those things to the city of Samaria. <sup>9</sup>But one of the Lord's prophets was there. This prophet was named Oded. Oded met the Israelite army that came back to Samaria. Oded said to the Israelite army, "The Lord God your ancestors\* obeyed let you defeat the people of Judah because he was angry at them. You killed and punished the people of Judah in a very mean way. Now God is angry at you. <sup>10</sup>You plan to keep the people of Judah and Jerusalem as slaves. You also have sinned against the Lord your God. <sup>11</sup>Now listen to me. Send back your brothers and sisters that you captured. Do this because the Lord's terrible anger is against you."

<sup>12</sup>Then some of the leaders in Ephraim\* saw the Israelite soldiers coming home from war. Those leaders met the Israelite soldiers and warned them. Those leaders were Azariah son of Jehohanan, Berekiah son of Meshillemoth, Jehizkiah son of Shallum, and Amasa son of Hadlai. <sup>13</sup>Those leaders said to the Israelite soldiers, "Don't bring the prisoners from Judah here. If you do that, it

will make us sin worse against the Lord. That will make our sin and guilt worse and the Lord will be very angry against Israel!"

<sup>14</sup>So the soldiers gave the prisoners and valuable things to those leaders and to the people of Israel. <sup>15</sup>The leaders (Azariah, Berekiah, Jehizkiah, and Amasa) stood up and helped the prisoners. These four men got the clothes that the Israelite army took and gave them to those people that were naked. Those leaders also gave shoes to those people. They gave the prisoners from Judah something to eat and drink. They rubbed oil on those people [to soften and heal their wounds]. Then those leaders from Ephraim put the weak prisoners on donkeys and took them back home to their families in Jericho, the city of palm trees. Then those four leaders went back home to Samaria.

<sup>16-17</sup>At that same time, the people from Edom came again and defeated the people of Judah. The Edomites captured people and took them away as prisoners. So King Ahaz asked the king of Assyria to help him. <sup>18</sup>The Philistine people also attacked the towns in the hills and in south Judah. The Philistines captured the towns of Beth Shemesh, Aijalon, Gederoth, Soco, Timnah, and Gimzo. They also captured the villages near those towns. Then the Philistines lived in those towns. <sup>19</sup>The Lord gave troubles to Judah because King Ahaz of Judah encouraged the people of Judah to sin. He was very unfaithful to the Lord. <sup>20</sup>Tiglath Pileser king of Assyria came and gave Ahaz trouble instead of helping him. <sup>21</sup>Ahaz took some valuable things from the Lord's temple\* and from the king's house and from the prince's house. Ahaz gave those things to the king of Assyria. But that didn't help Ahaz.

<sup>22</sup>In Ahaz's troubles, he sinned worse and became more unfaithful to the Lord. <sup>23</sup>He offered sacrifices\* to the gods the people of Damascus worshiped. The people of Damascus had defeated Ahaz. So he thought to himself, "The gods the people of Aram worship helped

**Ephraim** Ephraim was Joseph's youngest son. Ephraim's family group joined Israel. Ephraim was another name for Israel.

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

**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

**sacrifice(s)** A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

them. So if I offer sacrifices to those gods, maybe they will help me also.” Ahaz worshiped those gods. In this way he sinned, and he made the people of Israel sin.

<sup>24</sup>Ahaz gathered the things from God’s temple\* and broke them to pieces. Then he closed the doors of the Lord’s temple. He made altars\* and put them on every street corner in Jerusalem. <sup>25</sup>In every town in Judah Ahaz made high places\* for burning incense\* to worship other gods. Ahaz made the Lord God that his ancestors\* obeyed very angry.

<sup>26</sup>The other things that Ahaz did, from the beginning to the end, are written in the book, *The History of the Kings of Judah and Israel*. <sup>27</sup>Ahaz died and was buried with his ancestors.\* The people buried Ahaz in the city of Jerusalem. But they didn’t bury Ahaz in the same burial place where the kings of Israel were buried. Hezekiah became the new king in Ahaz’s place. Hezekiah was Ahaz’s son.

### Hezekiah King of Judah

**29** Hezekiah became king when he was 25 years old. He ruled 29 years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Abijah. Abijah was Zechariah’s daughter. <sup>2</sup>Hezekiah did the things the Lord wanted him to do. He did what was right just like David his ancestor\* had done.

<sup>3</sup>Hezekiah fixed the doors of the Lord’s temple\* and made them strong. Hezekiah opened the temple again. He did this in the first month of the first year after he became king. <sup>4-5</sup>Hezekiah got the priests and Levites together in one assembly. He had a meeting with them in the open yard on the east side of the temple. Hezekiah said to them, “Listen to me, Levites! Make yourselves ready for holy service. Make the temple of the Lord God

ready for holy service. He is the God your ancestors obeyed. Take away the things from the temple that do not belong in there. Those things make the temple not pure. <sup>6</sup>Our ancestors left the Lord and turned their faces away from the Lord’s house.\* <sup>7</sup>They shut the doors of the porch of the temple and let the fire go out in the lamps. They stopped burning incense\* and offering burnt offerings\* in the Holy Place\* to the God of Israel. <sup>8</sup>So, the Lord became very angry at the people of Judah and Jerusalem. The Lord punished them. Other peoples became afraid and were shocked when they saw what the Lord did to the people of Judah and Jerusalem. Those other people shook their heads with hate and shame for the people of Judah. You know these things are true. You can see with your own eyes. <sup>9</sup>And that is why our ancestors were killed in battle. Our sons and daughters and wives were made prisoners. <sup>10</sup>So now I, Hezekiah, have decided to make an agreement with the Lord God of Israel. Then he will not be angry at us any more. <sup>11</sup>So my sons,\* don’t be lazy or waste any more time. The Lord chose you to serve him. **He chose you** to serve him **in the temple** and to burn incense.”

<sup>12-14</sup>This is a list of the Levites that were there that started to work: From the Kohath family there was Mahath son of Amasai and Joel son of Azariah. From the Merari family there was Kish son of Abdi and Azariah son of Jehallelel. From the Gershon family there was Joah son of Zimmah and Eden son of Joab. From Elizaphan’s descendants\* there was Shimri and Jeiel. From Asaph’s descendants there was Zechariah and Mattaniah. From Heman’s descendants there was Jehiel and Shimei. From Jeduthun’s descendants there was Shemaiah and Uzziel. <sup>15</sup>Then these Levites gathered their brothers together and made themselves ready for holy

**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.  
**altar(s)** A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered as gifts to God.  
**high places** Places of worship.  
**incense** Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.  
**ancestor(s)** Literally, “father(s),” meaning a person’s parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

**Lord’s house** Another name for the temple in Jerusalem.  
**burnt offering(s)** Gifts to God. Usually these were animals that were killed and completely burned on the altar.  
**Holy Place** The room in the Holy Tent and in the temple that was used by the priests to do their daily service to God.  
**my sons** Here Hezekiah is speaking to the priests like a father to his sons. They are not really his children.  
**descendants** A person’s children and their future families.

service in the temple.\* They obeyed the king's command that came from the Lord. They went into the Lord's temple to clean it. <sup>16</sup>The priests went into the inside part of the Lord's temple to clean it. They took out all the unclean\* things they found in the Lord's temple. They brought the unclean things to the yard of the Lord's temple. Then the Levites took the unclean things out to the Kidron Valley. <sup>17</sup>On the first day of the first month, the Levites began to make themselves ready for holy service. On the eighth day of the month, the Levites came to the porch of the Lord's temple. For eight more days they cleaned the Lord's temple to make it ready for holy use. They finished on the 16th day of the first month.

<sup>18</sup>Then they went to King Hezekiah. They said to him, "King Hezekiah, we cleaned all the Lord's temple\* and the altar\* for burning offerings and all the things in the temple. We cleaned the table for the rows of bread with all the things used for that table. <sup>19</sup>During the time that Ahaz was king, he rebelled against God. He threw away many of the things that were in the temple. But we fixed all of those things and made them ready for their special use. They are now in front of the Lord's altar."

<sup>20</sup>King Hezekiah gathered the city officials and went up to the temple\* of the Lord early the next morning. <sup>21</sup>They brought seven bulls, seven rams, seven lambs, and seven young male goats. These animals were for a sin offering for the kingdom of Judah, for the Holy Place\* to make it clean, and for the people of Judah. King Hezekiah commanded the priests that were descendants\* of Aaron to offer those animals on the Lord's altar.\* <sup>22</sup>So the priests killed the bulls and kept the blood. Then they sprinkled the bulls' blood on the altar. Then the priests killed the rams and sprinkled the rams' blood on the altar. Then

the priests killed the lambs and sprinkled the lambs' blood on the altar. <sup>23–24</sup>Then the priests brought the male goats in front of the king and the people assembled together. The goats were the sin offering. The priests put their hands on the goats and killed the goats. The priests made a sin offering with the goats' blood on the altar. They did this so God would forgive the sins of the people of Israel. The king said that the burnt offering\* and the sin offering should be made for all the people of Israel.

<sup>25</sup>King Hezekiah put the Levites in the Lord's temple\* with cymbals,\* harps, and lyres\* the way David, Gad the king's seer,\* and Nathan the prophet had commanded. This command came from the Lord through his prophets. <sup>26</sup>So the Levites stood ready with David's instruments of music, and the priests stood ready with their trumpets. <sup>27</sup>Then Hezekiah gave the order to sacrifice\* the burnt offering\* on the altar.\* When the burnt offering began, singing to the Lord began also. The trumpets were blown and the instruments of David king of Israel played. <sup>28</sup>All the assembly bowed down, the musicians sang, and the trumpet players blew their trumpets until the burnt offering was finished.

<sup>29</sup>After the sacrifices\* were finished, King Hezekiah and all the people with him bowed down and worshiped. <sup>30</sup>King Hezekiah and his officials ordered the Levites to give praise to the Lord. They sang songs that David and Asaph the seer\* had written. They praised God and became happy. They all bowed and worshiped God. <sup>31</sup>Hezekiah said, "Now you people of Judah have given yourselves to the Lord. Come near and bring sacrifices and thank offerings to the Lord's temple.\*" Then the people brought sacrifices and thank offerings. Any person who wanted to, also brought burnt offerings. <sup>32</sup>This is how many

**unclean** Or, "unacceptable." Not pure or not able to be used in worshiping God. See Lev. 11–15 for the Old Testament rules about clean and unclean things.

**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

**altar(s)** A stone table or a stand for offering sacrifices.

**Holy Place** The room in the Holy Tent and in the temple that was used by the priests to do their daily service to God.

**descendants** A person's children and their future families.

**burnt offering(s)** Gifts to God. Usually these were animals that were killed and completely burned on the altar.

**cymbals** A pair of metal platters that are hit against each other to make a loud sound.

**lyres** An instrument with several strings, like a harp.

**seer** This is another name for a prophet. See 1 Sam. 9:9–11.

**sacrifice(s)** A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

burnt offerings the assembly brought to the temple: 70 bulls, 100 rams, and 200 lambs. All these animals were sacrificed as burnt offerings to the Lord. <sup>33</sup>The holy offerings for the Lord were 600 bulls and 3,000 sheep and goats. <sup>34</sup>But there were not enough priests to skin and cut up all the animals for the burnt offerings. So their relatives, the Levites, helped them until the work was finished and until other priests could make themselves ready for holy service. The Levites were more serious about making themselves ready to serve the Lord. They were more serious than the priests. <sup>35</sup>There were many burnt offerings, and the fat of fellowship offerings, and drink offerings. So the service in the Lord's temple began again. <sup>36</sup>Hezekiah and the people were very happy about the things God prepared for his people. And they were happy he did it so quickly!

#### Hezekiah Celebrates the Passover

**30** King Hezekiah sent messages to all the people of Israel and Judah. He wrote letters to the people of Ephraim and Manasseh\* also. Hezekiah invited all those people to come to the Lord's temple\* in Jerusalem so they all could celebrate the Passover\* for the Lord God of Israel. <sup>2</sup>King Hezekiah agreed with all his officials and all the assembly in Jerusalem to have the Passover in the second month. <sup>3</sup>They could not celebrate the Passover Festival at the regular time. Why? Because not enough priests had made themselves ready for holy service. And another reason is the people had not gathered in Jerusalem. <sup>4</sup>The agreement satisfied King Hezekiah and all the assembly. <sup>5</sup>So they made an announcement everywhere in Israel, from the town of Beersheba all the way to the town of Dan. They told the people to come to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover for the Lord God of Israel. A large

**Ephraim and Manasseh** Joseph's sons. Since these were the largest family groups, Ephraim and Manasseh sometimes means the whole northern kingdom of Israel.

**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

**Passover** An important holiday for Jews. They eat a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in the time of Moses.

group of the people of Israel had not celebrated the Passover since a long time ago the way the law of Moses said to celebrate it. <sup>6</sup>So the messengers took the king's letters all through Israel and Judah. This is what those letters said:

Children of Israel, turn back to the Lord God that Abraham, Isaac, and Israel (Jacob) obeyed. Then God will come back to you people that are still alive and have escaped from the kings of Assyria. <sup>7</sup>Don't be like your fathers or your brothers. The Lord was their God, but they turned against him. So the Lord made people hate them and speak evil about them. You can see with your own eyes that this is true. <sup>8</sup>Don't be stubborn like your ancestors\* were. But obey the Lord with a willing heart. Come to the Most Holy Place.\* The Lord has made the Most Holy Place to be holy forever. Serve the Lord your God. Then the Lord's fearful anger will turn away from you. <sup>9</sup>If you come back and obey the Lord, then your relatives and your children will find mercy from the people that captured them. And your relatives and your children will come back to this land. The Lord your God is kind and merciful. He will not turn away from you if you come back to him.

<sup>10</sup>The messengers went to every town in the area of Ephraim and Manasseh. They went all the way to the area of Zebulun. But the people laughed at the messengers and made fun of them. <sup>11</sup>But, some men from the areas of Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun humbled themselves and went to Jerusalem. <sup>12</sup>Also, in Judah God's power united the people so that they would obey the king and his officials. In this way they obeyed the word of the Lord.

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

**Most Holy Place** The inside room where the Box of the Lord's Agreement sat. It was also named the "Holy of Holies." It was the spiritual place where God lived and was worshiped.

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<sup>13</sup>Many people came together at Jerusalem to celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread\* in the second month. It was a very large crowd. <sup>14</sup>Those people took away the altars in Jerusalem that were for false gods. They also took away all the incense altars that were for false gods. They threw those altars into the Kidron Valley. <sup>15</sup>Then they killed the Passover lamb on the 14th day of the second month. The priests and the Levites felt ashamed. They made themselves ready for holy service. The priests and the Levites brought burnt offerings\* into the Lord's temple.\* <sup>16</sup>They took their regular places in the temple the way the law of Moses, the man of God,\* said. The Levites gave the blood to the priests. Then the priests sprinkled the blood on the altar.\* <sup>17</sup>There were many people in the group that had not made themselves ready for holy service, so they were not permitted to kill the Passover lambs. That is why the Levites were responsible for killing the Passover lambs for every person who was not clean. The Levites made each lamb holy for the Lord.

<sup>18–19</sup>Many people from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun had not prepared themselves in the right way for the Passover\* Festival. They did not celebrate the Passover the right way, like the law of Moses says. But Hezekiah prayed for those people. So Hezekiah said this prayer, "Lord God, you are good. These people truly wanted to worship you in the right way, but they did not make themselves clean like the law says. Please forgive those people. You are the God that our

ancestors\* obeyed. Forgive, even if someone did not make himself clean like the rules of the Most Holy Place\* say." <sup>20</sup>The Lord listened to King Hezekiah's prayer. The Lord forgave the people. <sup>21</sup>The children of Israel at Jerusalem celebrated the Festival of Unleavened Bread\* for seven days. They were very happy. The Levites and the priests gave praise to the Lord every day with all their strength. <sup>22</sup>King Hezekiah encouraged all the Levites that understood very well how to do the service of the Lord. The people celebrated the Festival for seven days and offered fellowship offerings. They gave thanks and praise to the Lord God of their ancestors.\*

<sup>23</sup>All the people agreed to stay seven more days. They were joyful as they celebrated the Passover\* for seven more days. <sup>24</sup>Hezekiah king of Judah gave 1,000 bulls and 7,000 sheep to the assembly to kill and eat. The leaders gave 1,000 bulls and 10,000 sheep to the assembly. Many priests prepared themselves for holy service. <sup>25</sup>All the assembly of Judah, the priests, the Levites, all the assembly that came from Israel, and the travelers that came from Israel and moved to Judah—all those people were very happy. <sup>26</sup>So there was much joy in Jerusalem. There was not anything like this celebration since the time of Solomon son of David king of Israel. <sup>27</sup>The priests and the Levites stood up and asked the Lord to bless the people. God heard them. Their prayer came up to the Lord's holy home in heaven.

### King Hezekiah Makes Improvements

**31** The Passover\* celebration was finished. The people of Israel that were in Jerusalem for Passover went out to the towns of Judah. Then they smashed the stone idols that were in those towns. Those stone idols were used to worship false gods. Those

**Festival of Unleavened Bread** Passover and the week following it. The people ate unleavened bread (bread made without yeast) to help them remember the time that God led the Israelites out of Egypt. The people did not have time to wait for the bread to rise because they were in such a hurry.

**burnt offering(s)** Gifts to God. Usually these were animals that were killed and completely burned on the altar.

**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

**man of God** Another name for a prophet.

**altar(s)** A stone table or a stand for offering sacrifices.

**Passover** An important holiday for Jews. They eat a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in the time of Moses.

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

**Most Holy Place** The inside room where the Box of the Lord's Agreement sat. It is also named the "Holy of Holies." It is the spiritual place where God lives and is worshiped.

**Asherah Poles** Poles used to honor the goddess Asherah. People thought she could help them have many children.

people also cut down the Asherah Poles.\* And they destroyed the high places\* and the altars\* all through the areas of Judah and Benjamin. The people did the same things in the area of Ephraim and Manasseh. The people did these things until they destroyed all the things used for worshiping the false gods. Then all the Israelites went back home to their own towns.

<sup>2</sup>The priests and Levites had been divided into groups and each group had its own special job to do. So King Hezekiah told these groups to begin doing their jobs again. So the priests and Levites again had the job of offering the burnt offerings\* and the fellowship offerings. And they had the job of serving in the temple and singing and praising God by the doors to the Lord's house.\* <sup>3</sup>Hezekiah gave some of his own animals to be offered as the burnt offerings. These animals were used for the daily burnt offerings that were given each morning and each evening. These animals were offered on the Sabbath days,\* during the New Moon\* Festivals and the other Special Meetings.\* This was done as it is written in the Lord's law. <sup>4</sup>The people were supposed to give a part of their crops and things to the priests and Levites. So Hezekiah commanded the people living in Jerusalem to give them their share. In that way, the priests and Levites could spend all of their time doing what the Law told them to do. <sup>5</sup>People all around the country heard about this command. So the people of Israel gave the first part of their harvest of grain, grapes, oil, honey, and all the things they grew in their fields. They brought one tenth of

all these many things. <sup>6</sup>The men of Israel and Judah living in the towns of Judah also brought one tenth of their cattle and sheep. They also brought one tenth of the things that were put in a special place that was only for the Lord. All these things they brought to the Lord their God. They put all these things in piles.

<sup>7</sup>The people began to bring those things in the third month (*May/June*) and they finished bringing the collection in the seventh month (*September/October*) <sup>8</sup>When Hezekiah and the leaders came, they saw the piles of things that were collected. They praised the Lord and his people, the people of Israel.

<sup>9</sup>Then Hezekiah asked the priests and the Levites about the piles of things. <sup>10</sup>Azariah the high priest from Zadok's family said to Hezekiah, "From the time that the people started bringing the offerings into the Lord's house, we have had plenty to eat. We have eaten until we are full and there is still plenty left over! The Lord has really blessed his people. That is why we have so much left over."

<sup>11</sup>Then Hezekiah commanded the priests to make storerooms ready in the Lord's temple.\* So this was done. <sup>12</sup>Then the priests brought the offerings, tithes,\* and other things that were to be given only to the Lord. All those things collected were put in the storerooms in the temple. Conaniah the Levite was in charge of all those things that were collected. Shimei was second in charge of those things. Shimei was Conaniah's brother. <sup>13</sup>Conaniah and his brother Shimei were supervisors of these men: Jehiel, Azaziah, Nahath, Asahel, Jerimoth, Jozabad, Eliel, Ismakiah, Mahath, and Benaiah. Hezekiah the king and Azariah the official in charge of God's temple chose those men. <sup>14</sup>Kore was in charge of the offerings that the people freely gave to God. He was responsible for giving out the collections that were given to the Lord. And he was responsible for giving out the gifts that were made holy for the Lord. Kore was the gatekeeper at the East Gate. His father's name was Innah the Levite. <sup>15</sup>Eden, Miniamin, Jeshua, Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shecaniah

**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.

**burnt offering(s)** Gifts to God. Usually these were animals that were killed and completely burned on the altar.

**Lord's house** Or "Lord's Camp," that is, the courtyard of the temple in Jerusalem.

**Sabbath days** Special days of rest and worship for the Jews. Usually this means Saturday.

**New Moon** The first day of the Hebrew month. There were special meetings on these days when the people shared fellowship offerings as part of their worship to God.

**Special Meetings** Holidays such as Passover. Many of these holidays were at the time of the full moon.

**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

**tithes** One tenth of a person's crops or animals.

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helped Kore. Those men served faithfully in the towns where the priests were living. They gave the collection of things to their relatives in each group of priests. They gave the same things to the more important people and to the less important. <sup>16</sup>These men also gave the collection of things to the males three years old and older that had their names in the Levite family histories. All these males were to enter the Lord's temple for daily service to do the things they were responsible to do. Each group of Levites had their own responsibility. <sup>17</sup>The priests were given their part of the collection. This was done by families, in the way they were listed in the family histories. The Levites 20 years old and older were given their part of the collection. This was done by their responsibilities and by their groups. <sup>18</sup>The Levites' babies, wives, sons and daughters also got part of the collection. This was done for all the Levites who were listed in the family histories. This was because the Levites were faithful to always keep themselves holy and ready for service. <sup>19</sup>Some of Aaron's descendants,\* the priests, had some farm fields near the towns where the Levites were living. And some of Aaron's descendants were also living in the towns. Men were chosen by name in each of those towns to give part of the collection to these descendants of Aaron. Males and all those named in the family histories of the Levites got part of the collection.

<sup>20</sup>So King Hezekiah did those good things in all Judah. He did what was good and right and faithful before the Lord his God. <sup>21</sup>He had success in every work he began—the service of God's temple\* and in obeying the law and commands, and in following his God. Hezekiah did all these things with all his heart.

### The King of Assyria Troubles Hezekiah

**32** After all these things that Hezekiah had faithfully done happened, Sennacherib king of Assyria came to attack the country of Judah. Sennacherib and his army camped

outside the fortresses.\* He did this so he could make plans to defeat those towns. Sennacherib wanted to win those towns for himself. <sup>2</sup>Hezekiah knew that Sennacherib came to Jerusalem to attack it. <sup>3</sup>Then Hezekiah talked to his officials and army officers. They all agreed to stop the waters of the water springs outside the city. Those officials and army officers helped Hezekiah. <sup>4</sup>Many people came together and stopped all the springs and the stream that flowed through the middle of the country. They said, "The king of Assyria will not find much water when he comes here!" <sup>5</sup>Hezekiah made Jerusalem stronger. This is how he did it: He built again all the parts of the wall that were broken down. He built towers on the wall. He also built another wall outside the first wall. He built again the strong places on the east side of the old part of Jerusalem. He made many weapons and shields. <sup>6–7</sup>Hezekiah chose officers of war to be in charge of the people. He met with these officers at the open place near the city gate. Hezekiah talked to those officers and encouraged them. He said, "Be strong and brave. Don't be afraid or worry about the king of Assyria or the large army with him. There is a greater power with us than the king of Assyria has with him!" <sup>8</sup>The king of Assyria only has men. But we have the Lord our God with us! Our God will help us. He will fight our battles!" So Hezekiah king of Judah encouraged the people and made them feel stronger.

<sup>9</sup>Sennacherib king of Assyria and all his army were camped near the town of Lachish so they could defeat it. Then Sennacherib sent his officers to Hezekiah king of Judah and to all the people of Judah in Jerusalem. Sennacherib's officers had a message for Hezekiah and all the people in Jerusalem. <sup>10</sup>They said, "Sennacherib king of Assyria says this: 'What do you trust in that makes you stay under attack in Jerusalem?' <sup>11</sup>Hezekiah is fooling you. You are being tricked into staying in Jerusalem so you will die from hunger and thirst. Hezekiah says to you, "The Lord our

**descendants** A person's children and their future families.  
**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

**fortress(es)** A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.

God will save us from the king of Assyria.”  
<sup>12</sup>Hezekiah himself took away the Lord’s high places\* and altars.\* He told you people of Judah and Jerusalem that you must worship and burn incense\* on only one altar. <sup>13</sup>Of course, you know what my ancestors\* and I have done to all the peoples in other countries. The gods of the other countries could not save their people. Those gods could not stop me from destroying their people. <sup>14</sup>My ancestors destroyed those countries. There is no god that can stop me from destroying his people. So you think your god can save you from me? <sup>15</sup>Do not let Hezekiah fool you or trick you. Don’t believe him because no god of any nation or kingdom has ever been able to keep his people safe from me or my ancestors. So don’t think your god can stop me from destroying you.”

<sup>16</sup>The officers of the king of Assyria said worse things against the Lord God and against Hezekiah, God’s servant. <sup>17</sup>The king of Assyria also wrote letters that insulted the Lord God of Israel. This is what the king of Assyria said in those letters: “The gods of the other nations could not stop me from destroying their people. In the same way Hezekiah’s god won’t be able to stop me from destroying his people.” <sup>18</sup>Then the king of Assyria’s officers shouted loudly to the people of Jerusalem that were on the city wall. Those officers used the Hebrew language when they shouted to the people on the wall. Those officers of the king of Assyria did this to make the people of Jerusalem afraid. They said those things so they could capture the city of Jerusalem. <sup>19</sup>Those officers said bad things against the gods the people of the world worshiped. Those gods are only things people made with their hands. In the same way, those officers said the same bad things against the God of Jerusalem.

**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.

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

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

<sup>20</sup>Hezekiah the king and the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz prayed about this problem. They prayed very loudly to heaven. <sup>21</sup>Then the Lord sent an angel to the king of Assyria’s camp. That angel killed all the soldiers and the leaders and the officers in the Assyrian army. So the king of Assyria went back home to his own country, and his people were ashamed of him. He went into the temple of his god and some of his own sons killed him there with a sword. <sup>22</sup>So the Lord saved Hezekiah and the people in Jerusalem from Sennacherib the king of Assyria and from all other people. The Lord cared for Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem. <sup>23</sup>Many people brought gifts for the Lord to Jerusalem. They brought valuable things to Hezekiah king of Judah. From that time on, all the nations respected Hezekiah.

<sup>24</sup>It was in those days that Hezekiah became very sick and near death. He prayed to the Lord. The Lord spoke to Hezekiah and gave him a sign.\* <sup>25</sup>But Hezekiah’s heart was proud, so he did not give God thanks for God’s kindness. This is why God was angry at Hezekiah and at the people of Judah and Jerusalem. <sup>26</sup>But Hezekiah and those people living in Jerusalem changed their hearts and lives. They became humble and stopped being proud. So the Lord’s anger didn’t come on them while Hezekiah was alive.

<sup>27</sup>Hezekiah had very much riches and honor. He made places to keep silver, gold, valuable jewels, spices, shields, and all kinds of things. <sup>28</sup>Hezekiah had storage buildings for the grain, new wine, and oil that people sent to him. He had stalls for all the cattle and stalls for the sheep. <sup>29</sup>Hezekiah also built many towns, and he got many flocks of sheep and cattle. God gave Hezekiah very much wealth. <sup>30</sup>It was Hezekiah that stopped up the upper source of the waters of the Gihon spring in Jerusalem and made those waters flow straight down on the west side of David’s city. And Hezekiah was successful in everything he did.

**The Lord spoke ... sign** See Isaiah 38:1–8 for the story about Hezekiah and how the Lord gave Hezekiah 15 more years to live.

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<sup>31</sup>One time the leaders of Babylon sent messengers to Hezekiah. Those messengers asked about a strange sign that had happened in the nations.\* When they came, God left Hezekiah alone to test him and to know everything that was in Hezekiah's heart.\*

<sup>32</sup>The other things that Hezekiah did and how he loved the Lord are written in the book, *The Vision of the Isaiah Son of Amoz* and in the book, *The History of the Kings of Judah and Israel*. <sup>33</sup>Hezekiah died and was buried with his ancestors.\* The people buried Hezekiah on the hill where the graves of David's ancestors are. All the people of Judah and those living in Jerusalem gave honor to Hezekiah when he died. Manasseh became the new king in Hezekiah's place. Manasseh was Hezekiah's son.

### Manasseh King of Judah

**33** Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king of Judah. He was king for 55 years in Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup>Manasseh did the things that the Lord said were wrong. He followed the terrible and sinful ways of the nations that the Lord had forced out of the land before the people of Israel. <sup>3</sup>Manasseh built again the high places\* that Hezekiah his father had broken down. Manasseh built altars for the Baal gods and made Asherah Poles.\* He bowed down to the constellations\* and worshiped those groups of stars. <sup>4</sup>Manasseh built altars for false gods in the Lord's temple.\* The Lord said about the temple, "My name will be in Jerusalem forever." <sup>5</sup>Manasseh built altars for all the groups of stars in the two yards of the Lord's temple. <sup>6</sup>Manasseh also burned his own children for a

**a strange sign ... nations** See Isaiah 38:1–8.

**in Hezekiah's heart** See 2 Kings 20:12–19.

**ancestors** Literally, "fathers," meaning 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.

**Asherah Poles** Poles used to honor the goddess Asherah. People thought she could help them have many children.

**constellations** Groups of stars. These are probably the twelve "signs of the Zodiac." Some people thought the stars, not God, control their life.

**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

sacrifice\* in the Valley of Ben Hinnom.\* Manasseh also used magic by doing soothsaying, divination, and sorcery.\* He talked with mediums\* and wizards.\* Manasseh did many things that the Lord said was wrong, and this made the Lord angry. <sup>7</sup>Manasseh also made a statue of an idol and put it in God's temple—the very same temple that God had talked about to David and his son Solomon. God had said, "I will put my name in this house and in Jerusalem—the city that I chose from [all the cities in] all the family groups—and my name will be there, forever!" <sup>8</sup>I will not continue to keep the Israelites off the land that I chose to give to their ancestors.\* But they must obey all the things I commanded them. The people of Israel must obey all the laws, rules, and commands that I gave Moses to give to them."

<sup>9</sup>Manasseh encouraged the people of Judah and the people living in Jerusalem to do wrong. They were worse than the nations that were in the land before the Israelites—and the Lord destroyed those people!

<sup>10</sup>The Lord spoke to Manasseh and to his people, but they refused to listen. <sup>11</sup>So the Lord brought commanders from the king of Assyria's army to attack Judah. Those commanders captured Manasseh and made him their prisoner. They put hooks in him and brass chains on his hands and took him to the country of Babylon.

<sup>12</sup>When these troubles came to him, Manasseh begged for help from the Lord his God. Manasseh humbled himself before the God of his ancestors.\* <sup>13</sup>Manasseh prayed to God and begged God to help him. The Lord heard Manasseh's begging and felt sorry for him. The Lord let him return to Jerusalem and

**sacrifice(s)** A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

**Valley of Ben Hinnom** Later called "Gehenna." This valley was west and south of Jerusalem. Many babies and young children were sacrificed to false gods in this valley.

**soothsaying, divination, sorcery** Different ways people try to do magic or tell what will happen in the future.

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

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

to his throne. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord was the true God.

<sup>14</sup>After that happened, Manasseh built an outer wall for the City of David.\* This wall went to the west of Gihon Spring in [Kidron] Valley, to the entrance of the Fish Gate, and around the hill of Ophel.\* He made the wall very tall. Then he put officers in all the fortresses\* in Judah. <sup>15</sup>Manasseh took away the strange idol gods. He took the idol out from the Lord's temple. He took away all the altars he had built on the temple hill, and in Jerusalem. Manasseh threw all those altars out of the city of Jerusalem. <sup>16</sup>Then he set up the Lord's altar and offered fellowship offerings and thank offerings on it. Manasseh gave a command for all the people of Judah to serve the Lord God of Israel. <sup>17</sup>The people continued to offer sacrifices\* at the high places,\* but their sacrifices were only to the Lord their God.

<sup>18</sup>The other things Manasseh did, and his prayer to his God, and the words of the seers\* that spoke to him in the name of the Lord God of Israel, are all written in the book, *The Official Records of the Kings of Israel*. <sup>19</sup>Manasseh's prayer and how God listened and felt sorry for him is written in *The Book of the Seers*. Also all of Manasseh's sins and wrongs before he humbled himself, and the places where he built high places\* and set up the Asherah Poles\* are written in *The Book of the Seers*. <sup>20</sup>So Manasseh died and was buried with his ancestors.\* The people buried Manasseh in his own king's house. Amon

became the new king in Manasseh's place. Amon was Manasseh's son.

#### Amon King of Judah

<sup>21</sup>Amon was 22 years old when he became king of Judah. He was king for two years in Jerusalem. <sup>22</sup>Amon did evil things before the Lord. He did not do the things the Lord wanted him to do just like Manasseh his father. Amon offered sacrifices\* for all the carved idols and statues that Manasseh his father made. Amon worshiped those idols. <sup>23</sup>Amon did not humble himself in front of the Lord like Manasseh his father humbled himself. But Amon sinned more and more. <sup>24</sup>Amon's servants made plans against him. They killed Amon in his own house. <sup>25</sup>But the people of Judah killed all those servants that planned against King Amon. Then the people chose Josiah to be the new king. Josiah was Amon's son.

#### Josiah King of Judah

**34** Josiah was eight years old when he became king. He was king for 31 years in Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup>Josiah did what was right. He did the things the Lord wanted him to do. He did good things like David his ancestor.\* Josiah did not turn from doing right things. <sup>3</sup>When Josiah was in his eighth year as king, he began to follow the God that David his ancestor followed. Josiah was still young when he began to obey God. When Josiah was in his twelfth year as king he began to destroy the high places\*, the Asherah Poles,\* and idols that were carved and idols that were made from molds from Judah and Jerusalem. <sup>4</sup>The people broke down the altars for the Baal gods. They did this in front of Josiah. Then Josiah cut down the incense\* altars that stood high above the people. He broke the idols that were carved and the idols that were made from molds. He beat those idols into powder. Then Josiah sprinkled the powder on the graves of the people that had offered sacrifices\* to the Baal gods. <sup>5</sup>Josiah even burned the bones of the priests that had served

**City of David** The southeastern and oldest part of the city of Jerusalem.

**Ophel** The upper part of the City of David, just south of the temple area.

**fortress(es)** A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.

**sacrifice(s)** A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

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

**seer(s)** This is another name for a prophet. See 1 Sam. 9:9–11.

**Asherah Poles** Poles used to honor the goddess Asherah. People thought she could help them have many children.

**ancestor(s)** Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

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

the Baal gods on their own altars. This is how Josiah destroyed idols and idol worship from Judah and Jerusalem. <sup>6</sup>Josiah did the same for the towns in the areas of Manasseh, Ephraim, Simeon, and all the way to Naphtali. He did the same for the ruins near all those towns.\* <sup>7</sup>Josiah broke down the altars and the Asherah Poles. He beat the idols into powder. He cut down all the incense altars used for Baal worship in all the country of Israel. Then Josiah went back to Jerusalem.

<sup>8</sup>When Josiah was in his 18th year as king of Judah he sent Shaphan, Maaseiah, and Joah to build again and fix the temple\* of the Lord his God. Shaphan's father's name was Azaliah. Maaseiah was the city leader, and Joah's father's name was Jehoahaz. Joah was the man that wrote about the things that happened.

So Josiah commanded the temple to be fixed so he could make Judah and the temple clean. <sup>9</sup>Those men came to Hilkiah the High Priest. They gave him the money that people gave for God's temple. The Levite doorkeepers had collected this money from the people of Manasseh, Ephraim, and from all the Israelites that were left. They also collected this money from all Judah, Benjamin, and all the people living in Jerusalem. <sup>10</sup>Then the Levites paid the men that supervised the work on the Lord's temple. And the supervisors paid the workers that fixed the Lord's temple. <sup>11</sup>They gave the money to carpenters and builders to buy large rocks that were already cut, and to buy wood. The wood was used to build again the buildings and to make beams for the buildings. In the past, the kings of Judah did not take care of the temple buildings. Those buildings had become old and ruined. <sup>12-13</sup>The men worked faithfully. Their supervisors were Jahath and Obadiah. Jahath and Obadiah were Levites, and they were descendants of Merari. Other supervisors were Zechariah and Meshullam. They were descendants of Kohath. The Levites that were skilled in playing instruments of music also supervised the laborers and all the other workers. Some Levites worked as secretaries, officials, and doorkeepers.

**ruins near all those towns** The Hebrew is not clear hear.  
**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

### The Book of the Law Found

<sup>14</sup>The Levites brought out the money that was in the Lord's temple.\* At that time Hilkiah the priest found the *Book of The Law of the Lord* that was given through Moses. <sup>15</sup>Hilkiah said to Shaphan the secretary, "I found the *Book of the Law* in the Lord's house\*!" Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan. <sup>16</sup>Shaphan brought the book to King Josiah. Shaphan reported to the king, "Your servants are doing everything you told them to do. <sup>17</sup>They got the money that was in the Lord's temple and are paying the supervisors and the workers." <sup>18</sup>Then Shaphan said to King Josiah, "Hilkiah the priest gave a book to me." Then Shaphan read from the book. He was in front of the king as he was reading. <sup>19</sup>When King Josiah heard the words of the law being read, he tore his clothes.\* <sup>20</sup>Then the king gave a command to Hilkiah, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Abdon son of Micah, Shaphan the secretary, and Asaiah the servant. <sup>21</sup>The king said, "Go, ask the Lord for me, and for the people that are left in Israel and in Judah. Ask about the words in the book that was found. The Lord is very angry with us because our ancestors\* did not obey the Lord's word. They did not do all the things this book says to do!"

<sup>22</sup>Hilkiah and the king's servants\* went to Huldah the prophetess.\* Huldah was Shallum's wife. Shallum was Tokhath's son, Tokhath was Hasrah's son. Hasrah took care of the king's clothes. Huldah lived in the newer part of Jerusalem. Hilkiah and the king's servants told Huldah what had happened. <sup>23</sup>Huldah said to them, "This is what the Lord God of Israel says: Tell King Josiah: <sup>24</sup>This is what the Lord says, 'I will bring trouble to this place and to the people

**Lord's house** Another name for the temple in Jerusalem.

**tore ... clothes** In Josiah's time, tearing clothes showed that a person was very upset. Josiah was upset because his people had not obeyed the Lord's laws.

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

**king's servants** "The king's servants" is missing in the Hebrew.

**prophetess** A woman prophet, someone who spoke messages from God to his people.

living here! I will bring all the terrible things that are written in the book that was read in front of the king of Judah. <sup>25</sup>I will do this because the people left me and burned incense\* to other gods. Those people made me angry because of all the bad things they have done. So I will pour out my anger on this place. Like a hot burning fire, my anger will not be put out!

<sup>26</sup>“But tell this to King Josiah of Judah. He sent you to ask the Lord: This is what the Lord God of Israel says about the words you heard a little while ago: <sup>27</sup>‘Josiah, you repented and you humbled yourself, and tore your clothes.\* You cried before me. So, because your heart was tender, <sup>28</sup>I will take you to be with your ancestors.\*\* You will go to your grave in peace. You won’t have to see any of the trouble that I will bring on this place and on the people living here.’” Hilkiah and the king’s servants brought back this message to King Josiah.

<sup>29</sup>Then King Josiah called for all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem to come and meet with him. <sup>30</sup>The king went up to the Lord’s temple.\* All the people from Judah, the people living in Jerusalem, the priests, the Levites, and all the people, both important and not important, were with Josiah. Josiah read to them all the words in the *Book of the Agreement*.\* That book was found in the Lord’s temple. <sup>31</sup>Then the king stood up in his place. He made an agreement with the Lord. He agreed to follow the Lord, and to obey the Lord’s commands, laws, and rules. Josiah agreed to obey with all his heart and soul. He agreed to obey the words of the Agreement

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

**to ... clothes** In Josiah’s time, tearing clothes showed that a person was very upset. Josiah was upset because his people had not obeyed the Lord’s laws.

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

**take you to be with your ancestors** This means that Josiah would die.

**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

**Agreement** Literally, “Proof.” The flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them were proof of the Agreement between God and Israel.

written in this book. <sup>32</sup>Then Josiah made all the people in Jerusalem and Benjamin promise to accept the Agreement. The people of Jerusalem obeyed the Agreement of God, the God their ancestors\* obeyed. <sup>33</sup>The people of Israel had idols from many different countries. But Josiah destroyed all of those terrible idols. Josiah made all the people in Israel serve the Lord their God. And as long as Josiah was alive, the people continued to serve the Lord, the God of their ancestors.

### Josiah Celebrates Passover

**35** King Josiah celebrated the Passover\* to the Lord in Jerusalem. The Passover lamb was killed on the 14th day of the first month. <sup>2</sup>Josiah chose the priests to do their duties. He encouraged the priests while they were serving in the Lord’s temple.\* <sup>3</sup>Josiah spoke to the Levites who taught the people of Israel and who were made holy for service to the Lord. He said to those Levites: “Put the Holy Box\* in the temple that Solomon built. Solomon was David’s son. David was king of Israel. Do not carry the Holy Box from place to place on your shoulders again. Now serve the Lord your God. Serve God’s people, the people of Israel. <sup>4</sup>Make yourselves ready for service in the temple by your family groups. Do the jobs that King David and his son King Solomon gave you to do. <sup>5</sup>Stand in the Holy Place\* with a group of Levites. Do this for each different family group of the people so you can help them. <sup>6</sup>Kill the Passover lambs, make yourselves holy to the Lord. Make the lambs ready for your brothers, the people of Israel. Do all the things the Lord commanded us to do. The Lord gave us all those commands through Moses.”

**Passover** An important holiday for Jews. They eat a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in the time of Moses.

**Holy Box** The Box of the Agreement. The box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert. Also called “The Ark of the Covenant.”

**Holy Place** The room in the Holy Tent and in the temple that was used by the priests to do their daily service to God.

<sup>7</sup>Josiah gave the people of Israel 30,000 sheep and goats to kill for the Passover\* sacrifices. He also gave 3,000 cattle to the people. All these animals were from King Josiah's own animals. <sup>8</sup>Josiah's officials also freely gave animals and things to the people, to the priests, and Levites to use for the Passover. Hilkiah the high priest, Zechariah, and Jehiel were the officials in charge of the temple. They gave the priests 2,600 lambs and goats and 300 bulls for Passover sacrifices. <sup>9</sup>Also Conaniah with Shemaiah and Nethanel, his brothers, and Hashabiah, Jeiel and Jozabad gave 500 sheep and goats and 500 bulls for Passover sacrifices to the Levites. Those men were leaders of the Levites.

<sup>10</sup>When everything was ready for the Passover\* service to begin, the priests and Levites went to their places. This is what the king commanded. <sup>11</sup>The Passover lambs were killed. Then the Levites skinned the animals and gave the blood to the priests. The priests sprinkled the blood on the altar. <sup>12</sup>Then they gave the animals to be used for burnt offerings to the different family groups. This was done so the burnt offerings could be offered the way the Law of Moses taught. <sup>13</sup>The Levites roasted the Passover sacrifices over the fire in the way they were commanded. And they boiled the holy offerings in pots, kettles, and pans. Then they quickly gave the meat to the people. <sup>14</sup>After this was finished, the Levites got meat for themselves and for the priests that were descendants of Aaron. Those priests were kept very busy, working until it got dark. They worked hard burning the burnt offerings and the fat of the sacrifices. <sup>15</sup>The Levite singers from Asaph's family got in the places that King David had chosen for them to stand. They were: Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun the king's prophet. The gatekeepers at each gate did not have to leave their places because their brother Levites made everything ready for them for the Passover.

<sup>16</sup>So everything was done that day for the worship of the Lord as King Josiah

**Passover** An important holiday for Jews. They eat a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in the time of Moses.

commanded. The Passover\* was celebrated and the burnt offerings\* were offered on the Lord's altar.\* <sup>17</sup>The people of Israel that were there celebrated Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread\* for seven days. <sup>18</sup>Passover hadn't been celebrated like this since the time of Samuel the prophet! None of the kings of Israel had ever celebrated a Passover like this. King Josiah, the priests, the Levites, and the people of Judah and Israel that were there with all the people in Jerusalem celebrated the Passover in a very special way. <sup>19</sup>They celebrated this Passover in Josiah's 18th year as king.

### The Death of Josiah

<sup>20</sup>Josiah did all those good things for the temple. Later, Neco, the king of Egypt, led an army to fight against the town of Carchemish on the Euphrates River. King Josiah went out to fight against Neco. <sup>21</sup>But Neco sent messengers to Josiah. They said, "King Josiah, this war is not your problem. I didn't come to fight against you. I came to fight my enemies. God told me to hurry. God is on my side, so don't bother me. If you fight against me, God will destroy you!" <sup>22</sup>But Josiah didn't go away. He decided to fight Neco, so he changed his appearance and went to fight the battle. Josiah refused to listen to what Neco said about God's command. Josiah went to fight on the plain of Megiddo. <sup>23</sup>Then King Josiah was shot by arrows while he was in the battle. He told his servants, "Take me away, I am wounded badly!"

<sup>24</sup>So the servants took Josiah out of his chariot and put him in another chariot he had brought with him to the battle. Then they took Josiah to Jerusalem. King Josiah died in Jerusalem. Josiah was buried in the cemetery where his ancestors were buried. All the people of Judah and Jerusalem were very sad

**burnt offering(s)** Gifts to God. Usually these were animals that were killed and completely burned on the altar.

**altar(s)** A stone table or a stand for offering sacrifices.

**Festival of Unleavened Bread** The week after Passover. At Passover, Jewish people throw out all the yeast and eat only bread without yeast for seven days. This helps them remember the time they were leaving Egypt in a hurry and did not have time to make leavened bread.

because Josiah was dead. <sup>25</sup>Jeremiah wrote and sang some funeral songs for Josiah. And the men and women singers still sing those sad songs today. It became something the people of Israel always do—they sing a sad song for Josiah. Those songs are written in the book, *Funeral Songs*.

<sup>26–27</sup>All the other things that Josiah did while he was king, from beginning to the end of his rule, are written in the book, *The History of the Kings of Israel and Judah*. That book tells about his loyalty to the Lord and how he obeyed the Lord's law.

#### Jehoahaz King of Judah

**36** The people of Judah chose Jehoahaz to be the new king in Jerusalem. Jehoahaz was Josiah's son. <sup>2</sup>Jehoahaz was 23 years old when he became king of Judah. He was king in Jerusalem for three months. <sup>3</sup>Then King Neco from Egypt made Jehoahaz a prisoner. Neco made the people of Judah pay 3 3/4 tons\* of silver and 75 pounds\* of gold for a fine. <sup>4</sup>Neco chose Jehoahaz's brother to be the new king of Judah and Jerusalem. Jehoahaz's brother's name was Eliakim. Then Neco gave Eliakim a new name. He named him Jehoiakim. But Neco took Jehoahaz to Egypt.

#### Jehoiakim King of Judah

<sup>5</sup>Jehoiakim was 25 years old when he became the new king of Judah. He was king in Jerusalem for eleven years. Jehoiakim didn't do the things the Lord wanted him to do. He sinned against the Lord his God.

<sup>6</sup>King Nebuchadnezzar from Babylon attacked Judah. He made Jehoiakim a prisoner and put bronze chains on him. Then Nebuchadnezzar took King Jehoiakim to Babylon. <sup>7</sup>Nebuchadnezzar took some of the things from the Lord's temple. He carried those things to Babylon and put them in his own house. <sup>8</sup>The other things that Jehoiakim did, the terrible sins he did and everything he was guilty of doing, are written in the book, *The History of the Kings of Israel and Judah*. Jehoiachin

became the new king in Jehoiakim's place. Jehoiachin was Jehoiakim's son.

#### Jehoiachin King of Judah

<sup>9</sup>Jehoiachin was 18 years old when he became king of Judah. He was king in Jerusalem for three months and ten days. He didn't do the things the Lord wanted him to do. Jehoiachin sinned against the Lord. <sup>10</sup>In the spring, King Nebuchadnezzar sent some servants to get Jehoiachin. They brought Jehoiachin and some valuable treasures from the Lord's temple\* to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar chose Zedekiah to be the new king of Judah and Jerusalem. Zedekiah was one of Jehoiachin's relatives.

#### Zedekiah King of Judah

<sup>11</sup>Zedekiah was 21 years old when he became king of Judah. He was king in Jerusalem for eleven years. <sup>12</sup>Zedekiah didn't do the things the Lord wanted him to do. Zedekiah sinned against the Lord. Jeremiah the prophet spoke messages from the Lord. But Zedekiah didn't humble himself and obey the things Jeremiah said.

#### Jerusalem Is Destroyed

<sup>13</sup>Zedekiah turned against King Nebuchadnezzar. In the past Nebuchadnezzar forced Zedekiah to make a promise to be faithful to Nebuchadnezzar. Zedekiah used God's name and promised to be faithful to Nebuchadnezzar. But Zedekiah was very stubborn and refused to change his life and come back and obey the Lord God of Israel. <sup>14</sup>Also, all the leaders of the priests and the leaders of the people of Judah sinned worse and became more unfaithful to the Lord. They followed the evil example of the other nations. Those leaders ruined the Lord's temple.\* The Lord had made the temple holy in Jerusalem. <sup>15</sup>The Lord, the God of their ancestors,\* sent prophets again and again to warn his people. The Lord did this because he felt sorry for them and for his temple. The Lord didn't want to

**3 3/4 tons** Or, "3,400kg." Literally, "100 talents."

**75 pounds** Or, "34kg." Literally, "1 talent."

**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

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

destroy them or his temple. <sup>16</sup>But God's people made fun of God's prophets. They refused to listen to God's prophets. They hated God's messages. Finally God could not hold his anger any longer. God became angry at his people and there was nothing that could be done to stop it. <sup>17</sup>So God brought the King of Babylon to attack the people of Judah and Jerusalem.\* The king of Babylon killed the young men even when they were in the temple. He didn't have mercy on the people of Judah and Jerusalem. The king of Babylon killed young and old people. He killed men and women. He killed sick and healthy people. God permitted Nebuchadnezzar to punish the people of Judah and Jerusalem. <sup>18</sup>Nebuchadnezzar carried all the things in God's temple away to Babylon. He took all the valuable things from the temple, from the king, and from the king's officials. <sup>19</sup>Nebuchadnezzar and his army burned the temple. They broke down Jerusalem's wall and burned all the houses that belonged to the king and his officials. They took or destroyed every valuable thing in Jerusalem. <sup>20</sup>Nebuchadnezzar took the people that were still alive back to Babylon and

forced them to be slaves. Those people stayed in Babylon as slaves until the Persian kingdom defeated the kingdom of Babylon. <sup>21</sup>And so the things the Lord told the people of Israel through the prophet Jeremiah really happened. The Lord had said through Jeremiah: "This place will be an empty wasteland for 70 years.\* This will happen to make up for the Sabbath rests\* that the people didn't do."

<sup>22</sup>During the first year that Cyrus\* was king of Persia, the Lord caused Cyrus to make a special announcement. He did this so that the things the Lord promised through Jeremiah the prophet would really happen. Cyrus sent messengers to every place in his kingdom. They carried this message:

<sup>23</sup>Cyrus, King of Persia says: The Lord, the God of heaven, made me king over the whole earth. He gave me the responsibility of building a temple\* for him in Jerusalem. Now, all of you who are God's people are free to go to Jerusalem. And may the Lord your God be with you.

**brought the King of Babylon ... Jerusalem** This happened in the year 586 B.C., when Jerusalem was finally destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar from Babylon.

**This place ... for 70 years** See Jer. 25:11; 29:10.

**Sabbath rests** The Law said that every seventh year the land was not to be farmed, see Lev. 25:1–7.

**first year ... Cyrus** That is, 539–538 B.C.

**temple** The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.