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2 Kings

When they were first written, 1 and 2 Kings were one book called Kings. It is now divided into two parts, which tell an important part of the story of the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The book of 2 Kings begins where 1 Kings ends, with the prophet Elijah's last days on earth. And it continues with the beginning of Elisha's work as a prophet leader. This was after Elijah was taken to heaven.

Elisha follows a long line of prophets that began in 1 Samuel. During the time covered by 2 Kings, the people of God are still divided into northern Israel and southern Judah. This division took place during the time of King Solomon, as described in 1 Kings. Before this division, prophets like Samuel and Nathan supported the king. In fact, it was Samuel who found David and appointed him as king.

But in 2 Kings, we see the prophets most often taking a firm stand against the kings in Israel and Judah. In fact, Elisha helped an enemy king in Aram come to power. This Aramean king, named Hazael, soon destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel. Then Assyria attacked and defeated both Aram and northern Israel. So it was really Elisha who caused Israel to be defeated and its people taken away as captives to Assyria. In 1 Samuel, God's prophets were helping to keep the Israelite kingdom together. But in 2 Kings, they are helping to tear it apart.

The book of 2 Kings tells the tragic stories of twelve kings in northern Israel and sixteen kings in

southern Judah. Most of these kings mixed their worship of God with the worship of false gods. The reason was often because of pressure from other nations. But 2 Kings also tells about two kings in Judah who did what was right. Each of these kings, Hezekiah and Josiah, began to rule at a time when the people of God were not following his teachings. But they made sure that the people were taught the laws that God had given them through Moses. They did all they could to heal the broken relationship between God and his people. Hezekiah, for example, destroyed idols and the places where people worshipped false gods.

After King Hezekiah, his son Manasseh led the people back into worshipping other gods. But the LORD God gave the people of Judah another king named Josiah. And Josiah did all he could to rescue the people from idol worship. He found a scroll that had part of the Law of Moses written on it. And once again, the people heard God's teachings read aloud in Judah. But these great changes for good ended with the tragic death of King Josiah. Before long, the army of Babylon invaded Judah. And just as the people in the northern kingdom of Israel had been taken away as captives to Assyria, so now King Nebuchadnezzar took the people of Judah away to Babylon. Again the Hebrews faced slavery in a faraway land.

The book of 2 Kings tells...

How the prophets spoke God's messages in the divided kingdom (1:1 – 8:15)

Stories about kings in Judah and Israel (8:16 – 16:20)

How Assyria defeats Israel and takes away captives (17:1-41)

Stories about the final kings of Judah (18:1 – 24:20)

How Babylon defeats Judah and takes away captives (25:1-30)

A Message for Ahaziah

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

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

³But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, "King Ahaziah has sent some messengers from Samaria. Go and meet those men and ask them, 'There is a God in Israel, so why are you men going to ask questions of Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron?' ⁴Since you did this, the LORD says, You will not get up from your bed. You will die!" Then Elijah left.

⁵When the messengers returned to Ahaziah, he asked them, "Why did you return so soon?"

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

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

⁸They answered Ahaziah, "He was wearing a hairy coat* with a leather belt around his waist."

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

Ahaziah Calls for Elijah

⁹Ahaziah sent a captain and 50 men to Elijah. The captain went to Elijah, who was sitting on top of a hill. The captain said to Elijah, "Man of God, the king says, 'Come down!'"

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

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

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

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

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

¹³Ahaziah sent a third captain with 50 men. The third captain came to Elijah. He dropped down on his knees and begged Elijah, "Man of God, please spare my life and the lives of these 50 servants of yours! ¹⁴See, fire came down from heaven and destroyed the first two captains and their 50 men. But now, have mercy on me!"

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

So Elijah went with the captain to see King Ahaziah.

¹⁶Elijah told Ahaziah, "This is what the LORD says: 'There is a God in Israel, so why did you send messengers to ask questions of Baal Zebub, the god of

*1:8 *He was ... coat* Or "This man was a hairy man."

Ekron? Since you did this, you will not get up from your bed. You will die!”

Joram Takes Ahaziah's Place

¹⁷ Ahaziah died, just as the LORD said through Elijah. Ahaziah did not have a son, so his brother Joram became the new king. He began to rule during the second year that Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat was the king of Judah.

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

The Lord Makes Plans to Take Elijah

2 It was near the time for the LORD to take Elijah by a whirlwind up into heaven. Elijah and Elisha started to leave Gilgal.

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

But Elisha said, “I promise, as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you!” So the two men went down to Bethel.

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

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

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

But Elisha said, “I promise, as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you!” So the two men went to Jericho.

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

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

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

Elisha answered, “I promise, as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you!” So the two men went on.

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

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

Elisha said, “Let me receive a double share of your power as a prophet.”[‡]

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

The Lord Takes Elijah Into Heaven

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

[†]**2:3 group of prophets** Literally, “sons of the prophets”. These were prophets and people studying to become prophets. Also in verses 5,7,15,17; 4:1,38,39,44; 5:22; 6:1,24; 9:1.

[‡]**2:9 your power as a prophet** Literally, “your spirit”. Elisha seems to be asking for a special blessing, like the oldest son who received a double share of his father’s possessions and would then take his father’s place as family leader.

¹²Elisha saw it and shouted, “My father! My father! The chariots of Israel and their horses!”^f

Elisha never saw Elijah again. Elisha grabbed his own clothes and tore them in two to show his sorrow. ¹³Elijah’s coat had fallen to the ground, so Elisha picked it up. He went back and stood at the edge of the Jordan River. ¹⁴He struck the water and said, “Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?” Just as Elisha struck the water, the water separated to the right and to the left! Then Elisha crossed the river.

The Prophets Ask for Elijah

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

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

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

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

Elisha Makes the Water Pure

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

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

They brought the bowl to Elisha. ²¹Then he went out to the place where the water began flowing from the ground. Elisha threw the salt into the water and said, “This is what the LORD said: I am making this water pure! From now on this water will not cause any more death or keep the land from growing crops.”

²²The water became pure and is still good today. It happened just as Elisha had said.

Some Boys Make Fun of Elisha

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

²⁴Elisha looked back and saw them. He asked the LORD to cause something bad to happen to them. Then two bears came out of the forest and attacked the boys. The bears ripped apart 42 boys.

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

Joram Becomes King of Israel

3 Joram son of Ahab became king over Israel at Samaria. He began to rule during Jehoshaphat’s eighteenth year as king of Judah. Joram ruled for 12 years. ²He did what the LORD says is evil. But he was not like his father and mother, because he removed the stone idol that his father had made for worshipping Baal. ³But like Jeroboam son of Nebat, he continued to sin and caused the Is-

^f2:12 *chariots ... horses* Or “the Chariot of Israel and his horsemen”. This may mean “God and his heavenly army”.

raelites to sin too. He refused to stop sinning.

Moab Breaks Away From Israel

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

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

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

The Three Kings Ask Elisha for Advice

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

Joram answered, “We should go through the desert of Edom.”

⁹So the king of Israel went with the king of Judah and the king of Edom. They marched to Moab by a long southern route through the wilderness, which took seven days. There was not enough water for the army or for their animals. ¹⁰Finally the king of Israel said, “Oh no! I think the LORD really brought us together only to let the Moabites defeat us!”

¹¹But Jehoshaphat said, “Surely one of the LORD’s prophets is here. Let’s ask the prophet what the LORD says we should do.”

One of the servants of the king of Israel said, “Elisha son of Shaphat is here. Elisha was Elijah’s servant.”[§]

¹²Jehoshaphat said, “The LORD’s word is with Elisha.”

So the king of Israel, Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to see Elisha.

¹³Elisha said to the king of Israel, “What do you want from me? Go to the prophets of your father and mother.”

The king of Israel said to Elisha, “No, we have come to see you because the LORD called the three of us together to let the Moabites defeat us.”

¹⁴Elisha said, “I respect King Jehoshaphat of Judah, and I serve the LORD All-Powerful. As surely as he lives, I came here only because of Jehoshaphat. I tell you the truth, if he were not here, I would not pay any attention to you. I would ignore you completely. ¹⁵But now bring me someone who plays the harp.”

When the person played the harp, the LORD’s power** came on Elisha. ¹⁶Then Elisha said, “This is what the LORD says: ‘Dig holes in the valley.’ ¹⁷Yes, this is what the LORD says: ‘You will not see wind or rain, but that valley will be filled with water. Then you and your cattle and other animals will have water to drink.’ ¹⁸This is an easy thing for the LORD to do. He will also help you defeat the Moabites. ¹⁹You will attack every strong city and every good city. You will cut down every good tree. You will stop up all the springs of water. You will ruin every good field with stones.”

²⁰In the morning, at the time for the morning sacrifice, water began flowing

§3:11 *Elisha was Elijah’s servant* Literally, “Elisha poured water over Elijah’s hands.”

**3:15 *power* Literally, “hand”.

from the direction of Edom and filled the valley.

²¹The Moabites heard that the kings had come up to fight against them. So they gathered all the men old enough to wear armour and waited at the border. ²²The Moabites got up early that morning. The rising sun was shining on the water in the valley, and it looked like blood to the Moabites. ²³They said, “Look at the blood! The kings must have fought and killed each other. Let’s go and take the valuable things from the dead bodies!”

²⁴When the Moabites came to the Israelite camp, the Israelites came out and attacked them. The Moabites ran away from the Israelites, but the Israelites followed them into Moab to fight them. ²⁵The Israelites destroyed the cities. They threw their stones^{††} at every good field in Moab. They stopped up all the springs of water and cut down all the good trees. The Israelites fought all the way to Kir Hareseth. The soldiers surrounded Kir Hareseth and attacked it too.

²⁶The king of Moab saw that the battle was too strong for him, so he took 700 men with swords to break through to attack the king of Edom. But they were not able to do it. ²⁷Then the king of Moab took his oldest son, who would become the next king after him. He offered his son as a burnt offering on the wall around the city. This upset the Israelites very much. So the Israelites left the king of Moab and went back to their own land.

A Prophet’s Widow Asks Elisha for Help

4 A man from the group of prophets^{‡‡} had a wife. This man died, and his wife cried out to Elisha, “My husband was like a servant to you. Now he is dead! You know he honoured the LORD. But he owed money to a man. Now that man is coming to take my two boys and make them his slaves!”

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

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

³Then Elisha said, “Go to all your neighbours and borrow as many empty jars as you can. ⁴Then go into your house and close the door. Only you and your sons will be in the house. Then pour the oil into all the jars. Fill them, and put them in a separate place.”

⁵So the woman left Elisha, went into her house and shut the door. Only she and her sons were in the house. As her sons brought the jars to her, she filled each one with oil. ⁶She filled all the jars they brought. When the last one was full, she said to her son, “Bring me another jar.”

But he said, “There aren’t any more jars.” And the oil stopped coming out.

⁷When she told the man of God what had happened, Elisha said to her, “Go and sell the oil and pay your debt. You and your sons can live on the money that is left.”

^{††}**3:25** *threw their stones* These were probably the stones soldiers threw with slings in war.

^{‡‡}**4:1** *group of prophets* Literally, “sons of the prophets”. These were prophets and those studying to become prophets. Also in verses 38,39,44; 5:22; 6:1,4; 9:1.

A Woman in Shunem Gives Elisha a Room

⁸One day Elisha went to Shunem, where an important woman lived. She asked Elisha to stop and eat at her house. So every time Elisha went through that place, he stopped there to eat.

⁹The woman said to her husband, "Look, I can see that Elisha is a holy man of God. He passes by our house all the time. ¹⁰So please, let's make a little room on the roof^f for him. Let's put a bed in this room and a table, a chair and a lampstand. Then when he comes to our house, he can have this room for himself."

¹¹One day Elisha came to the woman's house. He went to his room and rested.

¹²Elisha said to his servant Gehazi, "Call this Shunammite woman."

The servant called the Shunammite woman, and she stood in front of Elisha.

¹³Elisha told his servant, "Now say to her, 'Look, you have done your best to take care of us. What can we do for you? Do you want us to speak to the king for you or to the captain of the army?'"

She answered, "I am fine living here among my own people."

¹⁴Elisha said to Gehazi, "What can we do for her?"

He answered, "I know! She does not have a son, and her husband is old."

¹⁵Then Elisha said, "Call her."

So Gehazi called the woman. She came and stood at his door. ¹⁶Elisha said, "About this time next spring, you will be holding your own baby boy in your arms."

The woman said, "No, sir! Man of God, don't lie to me!"

The Woman in Shunem Has a Son

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

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

The father said to his servant, "Carry him to his mother!"

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

The Woman Goes to See Elisha

²¹The woman laid the boy on the bed of Elisha, the man of God. Then she shut the door to that room and went outside.

²²She called to her husband and said, "Please send me one of the servants and a donkey. Then I will go quickly to get the man of God and come back."

²³The woman's husband said, "Why would you want to go to the man of God today? It isn't the New Moon or Sabbath day."

She said, "Goodbye!"^{§§}

²⁴Then she put a saddle on a donkey and said to her servant, "Let's go, and hurry! Don't slow down for me unless I tell you to."

²⁵The woman went to Mount Carmel to get the man of God.

The man of God saw the Shunammite woman coming from far away and said to his servant Gehazi, "Look, there's the Shunammite woman! ²⁶Please run now to meet her! Say to her, 'Are you all right? Is your husband all right? Is the child all right?'"

^f4:10 *room on the roof* In ancient Israel, houses had flat roofs that were used as an extra room.

^{§§}4:23 *Goodbye* Or "Everything is all right." Literally, "Peace".

She answered, "Everything is all right."^{*}

²⁷ But the Shunammite woman went up the hill to the man of God. She bowed down and held Elisha's feet. Gehazi came near to pull her away. But the man of God said to Gehazi, "Leave her alone! She's very upset, and the LORD didn't tell me about it. He hid this news from me."

²⁸ Then she said, "Sir, I never asked for a son. I told you, 'Don't trick me!'"

²⁹ Then Elisha said to Gehazi, "Get ready to go. Take my walking stick and go! If you meet anyone along the way, don't even stop to say 'hello'. If anyone says 'hello' to you, don't answer. Put my walking stick on the child's face."

³⁰ But the child's mother said, "I promise, as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave without you!"

So Elisha got up and followed her.

³¹ Gehazi arrived at the house before Elisha and the Shunammite woman. Gehazi laid the walking stick on the child's face, but the child did not talk or show any sign that he heard anything. Then Gehazi came back to meet Elisha and said, "The child will not wake up!"

The Woman's Son Comes Back to Life

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

³⁵ Then Elisha turned away and walked around the room. He went back

and lay on the child until the child sneezed seven times and opened his eyes.

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

Gehazi called her, and she came to Elisha. Elisha said, "Pick up your son."

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

Elisha and the Poisoned Soup

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

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

⁴⁰ Then they poured some of the soup for the men to eat. But when they began to eat the soup, they shouted, "Man of God! This tastes like poison!" And they would not eat it.

⁴¹ But Elisha said, "Bring some flour." He threw the flour into the pot. Then he said, "Now pour the soup for the men so that they can eat."

And there was nothing wrong with the soup.

Elisha Feeds the Group of Prophets

⁴² A man from Baal Shalishah came and brought bread from the first harvest to the man of God. This man brought 20 loaves of barley bread and fresh grain

^{*}4:26 *Everything is all right* Or "Hello". Literally, "Peace".

in his sack. Then Elisha said, “Give this food to the people so they can eat.”

⁴³ Elisha’s servant said, “What? This is not enough for 100 people!”

But Elisha said again, “Give the food to them so they can eat. This is what the LORD says: ‘They will eat, and there will still be food left over.’”

⁴⁴ Then Elisha’s servant put the food in front of them. They all ate, and they even had food left over, just as the LORD had said.

Naaman’s Problem

5 Naaman was the captain of the army of the king of Aram. He was very important to his king[†] because the LORD used him to lead Aram to victory. Naaman was a great and powerful man, but he had a dreaded skin disease.

² The Arameans had sent troops to fight in Israel. One time they took a young girl captive. She became a servant of Naaman’s wife. ³ She said to his wife, “I wish that my master would meet the prophet who lives in Samaria. He could heal Naaman of his disease.”

⁴ Naaman went to the king and told him what the Israelite girl had said.

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

So Naaman went to Israel. He took 30,000 pieces[‡] of silver, 6000 pieces[¶] of gold and ten changes of clothes as gifts. ⁶ Naaman took the letter from the king of Aram to the king of Israel. The letter said: “Now this letter is to show that I am sending my servant Naaman to you. Cure his skin disease.”

⁷ When the king of Israel had read the letter, he tore his clothes to show he was sad and upset. He said, “Am I God? I don’t have the power over life and death. So why did the king of Aram send a man with skin disease for me to heal? Think about it, and you will see that it is a trick. The king of Aram is trying to start a fight.”

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

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

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

¹³ But Naaman’s servants went to him and talked to him. They said, “Father,[§] if the prophet told you to do some great thing, you would do it, wouldn’t you? But he said, ‘Wash, and you will be pure and clean.’”

[†]5:1 *king* Literally, “master”.

[‡]5:5 *30,000 pieces* Literally, “10 talents”.

[¶]5:5 *6000 pieces* Literally, “2 talents”. Also in verse 23.

[§]5:13 *Father* Slaves often called their masters “father” and the masters often called their slaves “children”.

¹⁴ So Naaman did what the man of God said. He went down and dipped himself in the Jordan River seven times, and he became pure and clean. His skin became soft like the skin of a baby.

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

¹⁶ But Elisha said, "The LORD is the one I serve, and as surely as he lives, I will not accept any gift."

Naaman tried hard to make Elisha take the gift, but he refused. ¹⁷ Then Naaman said, "If you will not accept this gift, at least do this for me. Let me have enough dirt from Israel to fill the baskets on two of my mules.** I ask this because I will never again offer any burnt offering or sacrifice to any other gods. I will offer sacrifices only to the LORD! ¹⁸ And I pray that the LORD will forgive me for this: when my master goes to the temple of Rimmon to worship that false god, he will want to lean on me for support. So I must bow down in the temple of Rimmon. I ask the LORD now to forgive me when that happens."

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

So Naaman left Elisha and went a short way. ²⁰ But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, thought, "Look, my master has let Naaman the Aramean go without accepting the gift that he brought. As the LORD lives, I will run after Naaman and get something from him." ²¹ So Gehazi ran to Naaman.

Naaman saw someone running after him. He stepped down from the chariot

to meet Gehazi. Naaman said, "Is everything all right?"

²² Gehazi said, "Yes, everything is all right. My master has sent me. He said, 'Look, two young men came to me from the group of prophets in the hill country of Ephraim. Please give them 3000 pieces^{††} of silver and two changes of clothes.'"

²³ Naaman said, "Please, take 6000 pieces." He persuaded Gehazi to take the silver. Naaman put the silver in two bags with two changes of clothes. Then he gave these things to two of his servants. The servants carried them for Gehazi. ²⁴ When Gehazi came to the hill, he took these things from the servants. He sent the servants away, and they left. Then he hid those things in the house.

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

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

²⁶ Elisha said to him, "That is not true! My heart was with you when the man turned from his chariot to meet you. This is not the time to take money, clothes, olives, grapes, sheep, oxen, or men and women servants. ²⁷ Now you and your children will catch Naaman's disease and never be free of it!"

When Gehazi left Elisha, his skin was as white as snow from the disease.

Elisha and the Axe Head

6 One day, the group of prophets said to Elisha, "You can see that the place you have provided for us here is too small. ² Let's go to the Jordan River and cut some wood. Each of us will get a log,

****5:17 Let me have ... my mules** Naaman probably thought the ground in Israel was holy, so he wanted to take some with him to help him worship the Lord in his own country.

††**5:22 3000 pieces** Literally, "1 talent".

and we will build a place there that will hold us all.”

Elisha answered, “Go and do it.”

³ One of them said, “Please go with us.”

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

⁴ So Elisha went with the group of prophets. When they arrived at the Jordan River, they began to cut down some trees. ⁵ But when one man was cutting down a tree, the iron axe head slipped from the handle and fell into the water. He shouted, “Oh, master! I borrowed that axe!”

⁶ The man of God said, “Where did it fall?”

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

Aram Tries to Trap Israel

⁸ The king of Aram was at war against Israel. He had a council meeting with his army officers. He said, “Go to such and such a place and prepare to attack the Israelites when they come past.”

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

¹⁰ So the king of Israel would send a message to the place that the man of God had warned him about. Then the people there could be on guard. This happened several times.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹⁸ As the Aramean army came closer, Elisha prayed to the LORD. He said, “Please make them all blind!”

So God did what Elisha asked. He caused the Aramean army to become blind. ¹⁹ Elisha said to the Aramean army, “This is not the right way. This is not the right city. Follow me. I will lead you to the man you are looking for.” Then Elisha led them to Samaria.^{‡‡}

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

Then the LORD opened their eyes, and the Aramean army saw they were in the

^{‡‡}6:19 *Samaria* This was the capital city of Israel—the enemy of Aram.

city of Samaria! ²¹ The king of Israel saw the Aramean army and said to Elisha, “My father, should I kill them? Should I kill them?”

²² Elisha answered, “No, don’t kill them. They are not soldiers you captured in battle. Give them some bread and water. Let them eat and drink. Then let them go home to their leader.”

²³ So the king prepared a big meal for the Aramean army. After they had finished eating and drinking, he sent them back home to their leader. The Arameans did not send any more soldiers into the land of Israel to make raids.

A Time of Terrible Hunger Hits Samaria

²⁴ After this happened, King Ben-Hadad of Aram gathered all his army and went to surround and attack the city of Samaria. ²⁵ The soldiers would not let people bring food into the city, so there was a time of terrible hunger in Samaria. It was so bad in Samaria that a donkey’s head sold for 80 pieces of silver and 200 grammes[¶] of dove’s dung sold for five pieces of silver.

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

²⁷ The king of Israel said, “If the LORD does not help you, how can I help you? I cannot give you grain from the threshing floor or wine from the winepress.” ²⁸ Then he said to her, “What is your trouble?”

She answered, “This woman said to me, ‘Give me your son so that we can

eat him today. Then we will eat my son tomorrow.’ ²⁹ So we boiled my son and ate him. Then the next day, I said to this woman, ‘Give me your son so that we can eat him.’ But she has hidden her son!”

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

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

³² The king sent a messenger to Elisha. Elisha was sitting in his house, and the leaders were sitting with him. Before the messenger arrived, Elisha said to the leaders, “Look, that son of a murderer is sending men to cut off my head. When the messenger arrives, shut the door. Hold the door and don’t let him in. I hear the sound of his master’s feet coming behind him.”

³³ While Elisha was still talking with the leaders, the messenger^{§§} came to him. This was the message: “This trouble has come from the LORD. Why should I wait for the LORD any longer?”

7 Elisha said, “Listen to the message from the LORD! This is what the LORD says: ‘About this time tomorrow, there will be plenty of food in the marketplace here in Samaria. A person will be able to buy three kilogrammes* of fine flour or six kilogrammes of barley for only one piece[†] of silver.’”

[¶]6:25 *200 grammes* Literally, “1/4 *cab*”.

^{§§}6:33 *messenger* Or possibly, “king”.

*7:1 *three kilogrammes* Literally, “*seah*”. Also in verses 16,18.

†7:1 *one piece* Literally, “1 *shekel*”. Also in verses 16,18.

²Then the officer who served as the king's assistant[‡] answered the man of God, "Even if the LORD made windows in heaven, this could not happen!"

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

The Aramean Camp Is Found Empty

³There were four men with a dreaded skin disease near the city gate. They said to each other, "Why are we sitting here waiting to die? ⁴There is no food in Samaria. If we go into the city, we will die there. If we stay here, we will also die. So let's go to the Aramean camp. If they let us live, we will live. If they kill us, we will just die."

⁵So that evening the four men went to the Aramean camp. When they came to the edge of the camp, no one was there!

⁶The Lord had caused the Aramean army to hear the sound of chariots, horses and a large army. This had caused the soldiers to say to each other, "The king of Israel has hired the kings of the Hittites and Egyptians to come against us."

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

⁸When the four men came to the edge of the camp, they went into one of the tents. They ate and drank. Then they carried silver, gold and clothes out of the camp and hid them. Then they came back and entered another tent. They carried things out from this tent and went out and hid them. ⁹Then they said to each other, "We are doing wrong! Today we have good news, but we have not shared it with anyone. If we wait until the sun comes up, we will be punished.

Now let's go and tell the people who live in the king's palace."

¹⁰So the men went back to Samaria and called to the gatekeepers of the city. They told them, "We went to the Aramean camp, but we did not hear anyone. No one was there, but the horses and donkeys were still tied up, and the tents were still standing."

Israel Takes Over the Aramean Camp

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

¹³One of the king's officers said, "Let's send some men there to find out what has happened. They can take five of the horses that we still have. They will soon die here anyway, just like the rest of us Israelites who are still left in the city."

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

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

¹⁶Then the people ran out to the Aramean camp and took the valuable things from there. So it happened just as the LORD had said. A person could buy three kilogrammes of fine flour or

[‡]7:2 *who ... assistant* Literally, "on whose arm the king leaned".

six kilogrammes of barley for only one piece of silver.

¹⁷The king had sent the officer who served as his assistant to control the crowds at the city gate. But as the people rushed out, he was knocked down and trampled to death. So everything happened just as the man of God had said earlier when the king came to Elisha's house. ¹⁸Elisha had said, "A person will be able to buy a basket of fine flour or two baskets of barley for only one piece of silver in the marketplace of Samaria."

¹⁹But that officer had answered the man of God, "Even if the LORD made windows in heaven, this could not happen!" And Elisha had told him, "You will see it with your own eyes, but you will not eat any of that food."²⁰ And that's what happened. The people knocked him down at the gate and trampled him, and he died.

The King and the Shunammite Woman

8 Elisha had talked to the woman whose son he had brought back to life. He had said, "You and your family should move to another country, because the LORD has decided that there will be a famine here. It will last for seven years."

²So the woman did what the man of God said. She went with her family to stay in the land of the Philistines for seven years. ³After seven years she returned from the land of the Philistines.

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

⁴The king was talking with Gehazi, the servant of the man of God. The king had asked Gehazi to tell him about all the great things Elisha had done. ⁵And Gehazi was telling the king about Elisha

bringing a boy back to life. As he was speaking, the woman whose son Elisha brought back to life came in to see the king. She wanted to ask him to help her get back her house and land.

Gehazi said, "My lord and king, this is the woman I was telling you about, and this is her son! He is the one Elisha brought back to life!"

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

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

Ben-Hadad Sends Hazael to Elisha

⁷Elisha went to Damascus. King Ben-Hadad of Aram was sick. Someone told Ben-Hadad, "The man of God has come here."

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

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

¹⁰Then Elisha said to Hazael, "Go and tell Ben-Hadad, 'You will surely get well.' But really the LORD told me, 'He will die.'"

Elisha Makes a Prophecy About Hazael

¹¹Elisha began to stare at Hazael. He stared at him so long that Hazael began to feel nervous. Then the man of God be-

[¶]8:9 *follower* Literally, "son".

gan to cry. ¹²Hazael said, “Sir, why are you crying?”

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

¹³Hazael said, “I am not a powerful man![§] How can I do these great things?”

Elisha answered, “The LORD showed me that you will be king over Aram.”

¹⁴Then Hazael left Elisha and went to his king.^{**} Ben-Hadad said to Hazael, “What did Elisha say to you?”

He answered, “Elisha told me that you will live.”

Hazael Murders Ben-Hadad

¹⁵But the next day Hazael took a thick cloth and dipped it in water. Then he held it on Ben-Hadad’s face until he died. Then Hazael became the new king.

Jehoram Begins His Rule

¹⁶Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat was the king of Judah. He began to rule in the fifth year that Joram son of Ahab was king of Israel.^{††} ¹⁷Jehoram was 32 years old when he began to rule. He ruled for eight years in Jerusalem. ¹⁸He was a wicked king and did the same evil things that the other kings of Israel had done. He was as wicked as King Ahab and his family. In fact, Jehoram married one of Ahab’s daughters. He did what the LORD says is evil. ¹⁹But because of his promise to David, the LORD would not destroy

Judah. He had promised that someone from David’s family would always rule as king.^{‡‡}

²⁰In Jehoram’s time, Edom broke away from Judah’s rule. The people of Edom chose a king for themselves. ²¹So Jehoram went with all his chariots to attack Zair. The Edomite army surrounded them. But during the night, Jehoram and his chariot commanders attacked the Edomites and were able to escape. But all of Jehoram’s soldiers ran away to their homes. ²²Since that time, the Edomites have been free from Judah’s rule. At about that same time, Libnah also broke away from Judah.

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

²⁴When Jehoram died, he was buried among his ancestors in the City of David. Jehoram’s son Ahaziah became the new king after him.

Ahaziah Begins His Rule

²⁵Ahaziah son of Jehoram became the king of Judah in the twelfth year that Joram son of Ahab was king of Israel. ²⁶Ahaziah was 22 years old when he began to rule. He ruled for one year in Jerusalem. His mother was Athaliah, the daughter of King Omri of Israel. ²⁷Ahaziah did what the LORD says is evil. He did many bad things, just as the people from Ahab’s family had done. He lived like this because his wife was from Ahab’s family.

[§]8:13 *I ... powerful man* Literally, “Your servant is only a dog!”

^{**}8:14 *king* Literally, “master”.

^{††}8:16 The traditional Hebrew text adds “while Jehoshaphat was still king of Judah”. That is, according to the Hebrew, father and son ruled Judah together for a time.

^{‡‡}8:19 *that someone ... as king* Literally, “to give a lamp to him and his sons forever”.

Joram Is Hurt in the War Against Hazael

²⁸ Joram was from Ahab's family. Ahaziah went with Joram to fight against King Hazael of Aram at Ramoth Gilead. The Arameans wounded Joram. ²⁹ King Joram went back to Israel so that he could get well from those wounds. He went to the area of Jezreel. Ahaziah son of Jehoram was the king of Judah. Ahaziah went to Jezreel to see Joram.

Elisha Tells a Prophet to Anoint Jehu

9 Elisha the prophet called one of the men from the group of prophets and said to him, "Get ready and take this small jar of oil in your hand. Go to Ramoth Gilead. ²When you arrive, find Jehu son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi. Take him to a private room, away from the others there. ³Take the jar and pour the oil on Jehu's head. Say, 'This is what the LORD says: I have anointed you to be the new king over Israel.' Then open the door and run away as fast as you can!"

⁴ So this young man, the prophet, went to Ramoth Gilead. ⁵When the young man arrived, he saw the army officers sitting together. He said, "Officer, I have a message for you."

Jehu asked, "Which one of us is the message for?"

The young man said, "For you, sir."

⁶ Jehu got up and went into the house. Then the young prophet poured the oil on Jehu's head and said to him, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I am anointing you to be the new king over the LORD's people Israel. ⁷You must destroy the family of Ahab your king. In this way I will punish Jezebel for the deaths of my servants the prophets and for the deaths of all the LORD's servants who were murdered. ⁸So all

of Ahab's family will die. I will not let any male child in Ahab's family live. It doesn't matter if that male child is a slave or a free person in Israel. ⁹I will make Ahab's family like the family of Jeroboam son of Nebat and like the family of Baasha son of Ahijah. ¹⁰The dogs will eat Jezebel in the field at Jezreel, and she will not be buried."

Then the young prophet opened the door and ran away.

The Servants Announce Jehu as King

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

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

¹² The officers said, "No, we don't. Tell us the truth. What did he say?" Jehu finally told them that the prophet had said, "This is what the LORD says: 'I have anointed you to be the new king over Israel.'"

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

Jehu Goes to Jezreel

¹⁴⁻¹⁵ So Jehu son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, made plans to kill King Joram, who was now in Jezreel. Joram had gone to Jezreel to heal from injuries he had suffered in a battle at Ramoth Gilead. He had gone there with the Israelite army to defend the city against King Hazael of Aram.

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

¹⁶ So Jehu got in his chariot and went to Jezreel to find Joram while he was

still there resting. King Ahaziah of Judah had also come to Jezreel to see Joram.

¹⁷ A watchman was standing on the tower in Jezreel. He saw Jehu and his troops coming. He shouted to Joram, "I see some troops coming!"

Joram said, "Send someone on a horse to meet them and ask if they come in peace."

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

Jehu said, "Peace is not for you to worry about. Follow behind me."

The watchman called out to Joram, "The messenger has reached them, but he is not coming back."

¹⁹ Then Joram sent out a second messenger on a horse. This man came to Jehu and said, "King Joram says, 'Do you come in peace?'"

Jehu answered, "Peace is not for you to worry about. Follow behind me."

²⁰ Again the watchman called out to Joram, "The second messenger has reached them, but he is not coming back either. But there is a man driving his chariot like a madman! It must be Jehu son of Nimshi."

²¹ Joram said, "Get me my chariot!"

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

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

Jehu answered, "There is no peace as long as all the idolatry and witchcraft of your mother Jezebel continue."

²³ Joram turned the horses to run away and shouted, "It's a trick, Ahaziah!"

²⁴ But Jehu grabbed his bow and shot Joram in the back. The arrow went through Joram's heart, and he fell down dead in his chariot.

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

²⁷ King Ahaziah of Judah saw what was happening and tried to escape on the road to Beth Haggan. But Jehu followed him, shouting, "Kill him too!" So his troops shot Ahaziah in his chariot on the road to Gur near Ibleam. He got as far as Megiddo, but he died there. ²⁸ Ahaziah's servants carried his body in a chariot to Jerusalem. They buried him in the tomb of his ancestors in the City of David.

²⁹ Ahaziah had become king over Judah during Joram's[¶] eleventh year as king of Israel.

The Terrible Death of Jezebel

³⁰ When Jehu came to Jezreel, Jezebel heard the news. She put her makeup on and fixed her hair. Then she stood by the window and looked out. ³¹ Jehu entered the city. Jezebel said, "Hello, you Zimri.^{§§} You killed your master just as he did."

[¶]9:29 *Joram's* Literally, "Joram son of Ahab".

^{§§}9:31 *Zimri* Zimri killed Elah and the family of Baasha in Israel many years before. Read 1 Kgs 16:8-12.

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

Two or three eunuchs looked out at Jehu. ³³ Jehu said, “Throw Jezebel down!”

So the eunuchs threw her down. Some of her blood splashed on the wall and on the horses that trampled her body.

³⁴ Jehu went into the house and ate and drank. Then he said, “Now see about this cursed woman. Bury her, because she is a king’s daughter.”

³⁵ The men went to bury Jezebel, but they could not find her body. They could only find her skull, her feet and the palms of her hands. ³⁶ When the men came back and told Jehu, he said, “This is what the LORD said would happen when he spoke to his servant Elijah the Tishbite: ‘Dogs will eat the body of Jezebel in the field at Jezreel. ³⁷ All that is left of her body will be scattered like manure on the field at Jezreel. No one will be able to tell that it was her!’”

Jehu Writes to the Leaders of Samaria

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

⁴ But the rulers and leaders of Jezreel were very afraid. They said, “Two kings of Israel could not stop Jehu. If they could not stop him, neither can we!”

⁵ The palace manager, the official in charge of the city, the leaders and the people who raised the king’s children sent a message to Jehu. “We are your servants, and we will do whatever you tell us. We will not make anyone king; you may do whatever you think is best.”

Leaders of Samaria Kill Ahab’s Children

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

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

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

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

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

***10:1 leaders of Jezreel** The ancient Greek and Latin versions have “leaders of the city”.

Jehu Kills Ahaziah's Relatives

¹² Jehu left Jezreel and went to Samaria. On the way he stopped at a place called Shepherds' Camp. ¹³ There he met with the relatives of King Ahaziah of Judah. Jehu asked, "Who are you?"

They answered, "We are the relatives of King Ahaziah of Judah. We have come down to visit the king's children and the queen mother's[†] children."

¹⁴ Then Jehu said, "Take them alive!"

Jehu's men captured Ahaziah's relatives alive. There were 42 of them, and Jehu killed them at the well near Beth Eked. He did not leave anyone alive.

Jehu Meets Jehonadab

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

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

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

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

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

So Jehonadab rode in Jehu's chariot. ¹⁷ When Jehu came to Samaria, he killed all of Ahab's family who were still alive in Samaria. He killed them all. He did what the LORD had told Elijah.

Jehu Calls the Worshipers of Baal

¹⁸ Then Jehu called all the people together and said to them, "Ahab served

Baal a little, but I will serve Baal much more. ¹⁹ Now call together all the priests and prophets of Baal. And call together everyone who worships Baal. Don't let anyone miss this meeting. I have a great sacrifice to give to Baal. I will kill anyone who does not come to this meeting."

But Jehu was tricking them. He wanted to destroy the worshippers of Baal. ²⁰ Jehu said, "Prepare a special meeting to honour Baal." So the priests announced the meeting. ²¹ Then Jehu sent a message through all the land of Israel. All the worshippers of Baal came. Not one stayed home. The Baal worshippers came into the temple of Baal. The temple was filled with people.

²² Jehu said to the man who kept the robes, "Bring out the robes for all the worshippers of Baal." So he brought out the robes for the Baal worshippers.

²³ Then Jehu and Jehonadab son of Recab went into the temple of Baal. Jehu said to the worshippers of Baal, "Look around and be sure that there are no servants of the LORD with you. Be sure there are only people who worship Baal." ²⁴ So all the worshippers of Baal were inside the temple to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings. But outside, Jehu had 80 men waiting. He told them, "Don't let anyone escape. If you let one person escape, you will pay for it with your own life."

²⁵ As soon as Jehu had finished sacrificing the burnt offering, he said to the guards and to the officers, "Go in and kill the worshippers of Baal! Don't let anyone come out of the temple alive!" So the officers drew their swords and killed the worshippers of Baal and threw their bodies outside. Then the guards and the offi-

[†]10:13 *queen mother* The mother of the king.

[‡]10:15 *Are you a faithful friend ... you* Literally, "Is your heart true to me? My heart is true to your heart."

cers went to the inner room of the temple of Baal. ²⁶ They brought out the sacred pillars from the temple of Baal and threw them into a fire. ²⁷ Then they smashed the sacred stone image of Baal. They also smashed the temple of Baal. They made the temple of Baal into a public toilet, which is still used today.

²⁸ So Jehu destroyed Baal worship in Israel, ²⁹ but he did not completely turn away from the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat who caused Israel to sin. Jehu did not destroy the gold calves in Bethel and in Dan.

Jehu's Rule Over Israel

³⁰ The LORD said to Jehu, "You have done well. You have done what I say is right. You destroyed Ahab's family the way I wanted you to, so your descendants will rule Israel for four generations."

³¹ But Jehu was not careful to follow the Law of the LORD, the God of Israel, with all his heart. Jehu did not stop committing the sins of Jeroboam who caused Israel to sin.

Hazael Defeats Israel

³² At that time the LORD began to cut away sections of Israel and give them to other nations. King Hazael of Aram defeated the Israelites on every border of Israel. ³³ He won the land east of the Jordan River—all the land of Gilead, including the land that belonged to the tribes of Gad, Reuben and Manasseh. He won all the land from Aroer by the Arnon Valley to Gilead and Bashan.

The Death of Jehu

³⁴ All the other great things that Jehu did are recorded in the book, *The History of the Kings of Israel*. ³⁵ Jehu died and was buried in Samaria. His son Jehoahaz became the new king of Israel after him. ³⁶ Jehu ruled over Israel in Samaria for 28 years.

Athaliah Kills the King's Sons in Judah

11 When Athaliah, the mother of King Ahaziah, heard that her son had been killed, she made plans to kill anyone in his family who might become the next king.

² But one of Ahaziah's baby sons named Joash was kept alive by his aunt Jehosheba, who was Ahaziah's sister. Their father was King Jehoram. When Ahaziah's children were about to be killed, Jehosheba took Joash and hid him in a bedroom^f with his nurse. Athaliah never knew that he was there, so Joash was not killed.

³ Joash stayed hidden with Jehosheba at the LORD's Temple for six years. During that time Athaliah ruled as queen over the land of Judah.

Jehoiada Makes Joash King

⁴ But in the seventh year, Jehoiada the high priest sent for the captains of the army and of the Carites^g and the palace guards. He brought them together at the Temple of the LORD and made an agreement with them. He made them promise their loyalty with an oath. Then he showed them the king's son.

^f**11:2 bedroom** Verse 3 shows that this room was in the Temple area, where only priests and their families could go. As the wife of a priest (see 2 Chr. 22:11), Jehosheba could use this room to hide Joash.

^g**11:4 Carites** Or "Kerethites", special soldiers hired to protect the king. Also in verse 19.

⁵ Jehoiada told them, “This is what you must do: one-third of you who are on duty on the Sabbath day must guard the king’s palace. ⁶ Another third will be at the Sur Gate, and the other third will be at the gate behind the guard. This way you will stand guard over the palace on all sides. ⁷ Your two divisions who go off duty on the Sabbath day will stand guard at the LORD’s Temple and protect King Joash. ⁸ You must surround the king and stay with him wherever he goes. Keep your swords ready to kill anyone who comes too close.”

⁹ The captains obeyed everything that Jehoiada the priest commanded. Each captain had all his men together. As the men in each group came off duty, they stayed to join those who were coming on duty. They brought all these men to Jehoiada the priest. ¹⁰ And he gave the captains the spears and shields that had belonged to King David and were kept in the LORD’s Temple. ¹¹ The guards stood in a line around the Temple and the altar from the right side to the left side. Every man had his weapon in his hand, ready to protect the king. ¹² Then Jehoiada brought out the king’s son Joash and put the crown on his head. He gave him authority to rule** and announced that he was the new king. They anointed him, and everyone clapped their hands and said, “Long live the king!”

¹³ Queen Athaliah heard the noise from the guards and the people, so she went to the LORD’s Temple to see them. ¹⁴ There she saw the king standing by the pillar where new kings usually stood. The captains and trumpeters were standing beside the king. And all the people were shouting for joy and blowing trum-

pets. When Athaliah saw all this, she tore her clothes to show how upset she was. Then she shouted, “Treason! Treason!”††

¹⁵ Jehoiada the priest gave an order to the army captains. He said, “Take Athaliah away and kill her. Surround her with soldiers and kill anyone who follows her.” He had already said that she must not be killed in the LORD’s Temple. ¹⁶ So the soldiers grabbed Athaliah and killed her as soon as she went through the gate where the horses enter the palace area.

¹⁷ Then Jehoiada had the king and the people make an agreement promising that they would be the LORD’s people. Jehoiada also made an agreement between the king and the people.

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

Jehoiada placed guards at the LORD’s Temple. ¹⁹ Then he called together the army captains, the Carites and the palace guards. They led the king from the LORD’s Temple to the king’s palace. They entered the palace through the guards’ gate, and King Joash took his seat on the royal throne. ²⁰ All the people of Judah were happy. And Jerusalem was at peace because Queen Athaliah was now dead. She had been killed at the king’s palace.

²¹ Joash was seven years old when he became king.

Joash Begins His Rule

12 Joash began to rule during Jehu’s seventh year as king of Israel. Joash ruled 40 years in Jerusalem. His

** **11:12 authority to rule** Literally, “testimony”. This could be a copy of the Law of Moses (see Deut 17:18) or another symbol of authority.

†† **11:14 Treason** Turning against the government. Here, Athaliah was blaming the people for turning against her government.

mother Zibiah was from the town of Beersheba. ²For as long as he lived, Joash did what the LORD says is right. He lived as Jehoiada the priest taught him. ³But he did not destroy the places where people went to worship false gods. So the people continued offering sacrifices and burning incense in those places.

Joash Orders the Temple Repaired

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

⁶In the twenty-third year that Joash was king, the priests still had not repaired the Temple, ⁷so King Joash called for Jehoiada and the other priests. Joash said to them, “Why haven’t you repaired the Temple? Stop taking money from the people you serve. That money must be used to repair the Temple.”

⁸The priests agreed to stop taking money from the people, but they also decided not to repair the Temple themselves. ⁹So Jehoiada the priest took a box and made a hole in the top of it. Then he put the box on the south side of the altar. This box was by the door where people came into the LORD’s Temple. Some of the priests were there to guard this doorway. They took the money that people brought for the LORD’s temple and put it into this box.

¹⁰Whenever the box was full, the king’s secretary and the high priest

counted all the money that had been given for the LORD’s Temple and put it in bags. ¹¹Then they paid the men who were in charge of the work on the LORD’s Temple. They paid the carpenters, the builders, ¹²the stoneworkers and stonecutters. And they used the money to buy timber, cut stone and everything else to repair the LORD’s Temple.

¹³⁻¹⁴ People gave money for the LORD’s Temple, but the priests could not use this money to make silver cups, lamp snuffers, basins, trumpets or any of the gold and silver dishes that were to be used inside the LORD’s Temple. This money was used only to pay the workers who repaired the LORD’s Temple. ¹⁵Those who were in charge of paying the workers did not have to give a report of how they spent the money, because they could be trusted.

¹⁶People gave money when they offered guilt offerings and sin offerings, but that money was not used for the LORD’s Temple. It belonged to the priests.

Joash Saves Jerusalem From Hazael

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

¹⁸Joash[‡] and his ancestors—Jehoshaphat, Jehoram and Ahaziah—had all been kings of Judah. They had given many things to the LORD that were kept in his Temple. Joash gathered all these things and all the gold that was stored in the Temple and in his palace. He sent all this treasure to King Hazael of Aram, who then commanded his army to leave Jerusalem.

[‡]12:18 *Joash* Or “Jehoash”, the long form of the name “Joash”.

The Death of Joash

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

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

Joash was buried among his ancestors in the City of David. His son Amaziah became the new king after him.

Jehoahaz Begins His Rule

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

² Jehoahaz did what the LORD says is evil. Like Jeroboam son of Nebat, he committed sins that also caused the people of Israel to sin. And he never stopped doing those things. ³ Then the LORD was angry with Israel. He let King Hazael of Aram and Hazael's son Ben-Hadad gain control of Israel.

The Lord Has Mercy on Israel

⁴ Then Jehoahaz begged the LORD to help them. The LORD listened to him because he had seen the terrible troubles that the king of Aram was causing the Israelites.

⁵ So the LORD sent a man to save the Israelites, and they were freed from the Arameans. So the Israelites went to their own homes, as they had done before.

⁶ But the Israelites still did not stop committing the sins of the family of Jeroboam who caused the Israelites to sin. They continued committing the sins of Jeroboam. They also kept the Asherah poles in Samaria.

⁷ The king of Aram defeated Jehoahaz's army and destroyed most of the men in the army. He left only 50 horsemen, 10 chariots and 10,000 foot soldiers. Jehoahaz's soldiers were like chaff blown away by the wind at the time of threshing.

⁸ All the great things that Jehoahaz did are recorded in the book, *The History of the Kings of Israel*. ⁹ When Jehoahaz died, he was buried in Samaria. His son Jehoash became the new king after him.

Jehoash's Rule Over Israel

¹⁰ Jehoash son of Jehoahaz became king over Israel in Samaria. This was during the thirty-seventh year that Joash was king of Judah. Jehoash ruled Israel for 16 years. ¹¹ He did what the LORD says is evil. He did not stop committing the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat who caused Israel to sin. Jehoash continued to commit those sins. ¹² All the great things that Jehoash did and his wars against King Amaziah of Judah are recorded in the book, *The History of the Kings of Israel*. ¹³ Jehoash died and was buried in Samaria in the tombs of the kings of Israel. Jeroboam became the king after Jehoash.

Jehoash Visits Elisha

¹⁴ Elisha became sick, and later he died from this sickness. King Jehoash of Israel went to visit Elisha. Jehoash cried for him and said, "My father, my father! The chariots of Israel and their horses!"

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

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

hoash opened the window, and then Elisha said, "Shoot."

Jehoash shot. Then Elisha said, "This is the LORD's arrow of victory over Aram! You will defeat the Arameans at Aphek until you destroy them."

¹⁸ Elisha said, "Pick up the other arrows." Jehoash picked up the arrows. Then Elisha said to him, "Strike the ground with them."

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

An Amazing Thing at Elisha's Grave

²⁰ Elisha died, and the people buried him.

Every year in the spring, Moabite troops came to attack Israelite towns. ²¹ One time, some Israelites were burying a dead man when they saw the Moabite troops. The Israelites quickly threw the dead man into Elisha's grave. As soon as the dead man touched the bones of Elisha, he came back to life and stood up on his feet.

Jehoash Wins Back Cities of Israel

²² During all the days that Jehoahaz ruled, Israel was under the control of King Hazael of Aram. ²³ But the LORD was kind to the Israelites. He had mercy on them and showed his care for them because of his agreement with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He did not want them to be destroyed. He has never completely rejected them.

²⁴ King Hazael of Aram died, and Ben-Hadad became the new king after him. ²⁵ Before he died, Hazael had

taken some cities in war from Jehoahaz, the father of Jehoash. But now Jehoash took back these cities from Hazael's son Ben-Hadad. Jehoash defeated Ben-Hadad three times and took back the cities of Israel.

Amaziah Begins His Rule in Judah

14 Amaziah son of King Joash of Judah became king in the second year that Jehoash son of Jehoahaz was king of Israel. ² Amaziah was 25 years old when he began to rule. He ruled for 29 years in Jerusalem. His mother was Jehoaddin from Jerusalem. ³ Amaziah did what the LORD says is right, but he did not follow God completely like David his ancestor. Amaziah did everything that Joash his father had done. ⁴ He did not destroy the places where people went to worship false gods. So the people continued offering sacrifices and burning incense in those places.

⁵ As soon as Amaziah had strong control of the kingdom, he killed the officers who had killed his father. ⁶ But Amaziah obeyed the law written in the *Book of Moses* and did not kill the officers' children. 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. People should only be punished for what they themselves did."^f

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

Amaziah Wants War Against Jehoash

⁸ Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash son of Jehoahaz, son of King Jehu of Israel. Amaziah's message said, "Come

^f14:6 *Parents must ... did* Quote from Deut 24:16.

on, let's meet together face to face and fight."

⁹ King Jehoash of Israel sent an answer to King Amaziah of Judah. Jehoash said, "One time, in the mountains of Lebanon, a little thorn bush sent a message to a big cedar tree. It said, 'Give your daughter for my son to marry.' But a wild animal of Lebanon passed by and trampled down the thorn bush. ¹⁰ True, you have defeated Edom. But you have become proud because of your victory over Edom. But stay at home and boast! Don't make trouble for yourself. If you do this, you will fall, and Judah will fall with you!"

¹¹ But Amaziah refused to listen to Jehoash's warning. So King Jehoash of Israel went to war against King Amaziah of Judah. They faced each other in battle at the town of Beth Shemesh in Judah. ¹² Israel defeated Judah. Every man of Judah ran home. ¹³ At Beth Shemesh, King Jehoash of Israel captured King Amaziah of Judah. He took Amaziah son of Joash, the son of Ahaziah, to Jerusalem. Jehoash broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the Ephraim Gate to the Corner Gate, a section about 200 metres^{§§} long. ¹⁴ Then Jehoash took all the gold and silver and all the dishes in the LORD's Temple and in the treasuries of the king's palace. He also took people as captives. Then he went back to Samaria.

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

The Death of Amaziah

¹⁷ King Amaziah son of Joash of Judah lived for 15 years after the death of King Jehoash son of Jehoahaz of Israel. ¹⁸ Everything else Amaziah did is recorded in the book, *The History of the Kings of Judah*. ¹⁹ Some people in Jerusalem had made plans to kill Amaziah. So he ran away to the town of Lachish. But his enemies sent men to Lachish, and they killed him there. ²⁰ His body was brought back to Jerusalem on a horse. And he was buried among his ancestors in the City of David.

Azariah Begins His Rule Over Judah

²¹ Then all the people of Judah made Azariah the new king. Azariah was 16 years old. ²² After Amaziah died, Azariah rebuilt Elath and got it back for Judah.

Jeroboam II Begins His Rule Over Israel

²³ King Jeroboam son of King Jehoash of Israel began to rule in Samaria during the fifteenth year that Amaziah son of Joash was king of Judah. Jeroboam ruled for 41 years. ²⁴ Jeroboam did what the LORD says is evil. He did not stop committing the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat who caused Israel to sin. ²⁵ Jeroboam took back Israel's land between Lebo Hamath and the Dead Sea. This happened as the LORD of Israel had told his servant Jonah son of Amittai, the prophet from Gath Hopher. ²⁶ The LORD had seen that all the Israelites, both slaves and free men, had many troubles. No one was left who could help Israel. ²⁷ The LORD had not said that he would take away the name of Israel from the world. So he used Jeroboam son of Jehoash to save the Israelites.

§§14:13 200 metres Literally, "400 cubits".

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

Azariah's Rule Over Judah

15 King Azariah son of Amaziah of Judah became king in the twenty-seventh year that Jeroboam was king of Israel. ²Azariah was 16 years old when he began to rule. He ruled for 52 years in Jerusalem. His mother was Jecoliah of Jerusalem. ³Azariah did what the LORD said was right, just as his father Amaziah had done. ⁴But he did not destroy the places where people went to worship false gods. So the people continued offering sacrifices and burning incense in those places.

⁵The LORD caused King Azariah to suffer from a dreaded skin disease, which he had the rest of his life. So Azariah lived in a separate house. His son Jotham was in charge of the king's palace, and he judged the people.

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

Zechariah's Short Rule Over Israel

⁸Zechariah son of Jeroboam ruled over Samaria in Israel for six months. This was during the thirty-eighth

year that Azariah was king of Judah. ⁹Zechariah did what the LORD says is evil. He did the same things his ancestors did. He did not stop committing the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat who caused Israel to sin.

¹⁰Shallum son of Jabesh made plans against Zechariah. He killed Zechariah in Ibleam* and became the new king. ¹¹Everything else Zechariah did is recorded in the book, *The History of the Kings of Israel*. ¹²So the LORD's word came true. He had told Jehu that four generations of his descendants would be kings of Israel.

Shallum's Short Rule Over Israel

¹³Shallum son of Jabesh became king of Israel during the thirty-ninth year that Uzziah† was king of Judah. Shallum ruled for one month in Samaria.

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

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

Menahem's Rule Over Israel

¹⁶Menahem destroyed Tiphshah and the area around it because the people refused to open the city gate for him. So Menahem killed them and ripped open all the pregnant women in that city.

¹⁷Menahem son of Gadi became king over Israel during the thirty-ninth year that Azariah was king of Judah. Menahem ruled ten years in Samaria. ¹⁸Menahem did what the LORD says is evil. He did not stop committing the sins of Jer-

***15:10 in Ibleam** This is found in some copies of the ancient Greek version. The traditional Hebrew text has "in public".

†**15:13 Uzziah** Another name for Azariah.

oboam son of Nebat who caused Israel to sin.

¹⁹ King Pul of Assyria came to fight against Israel. Menahem gave Pul 34,000 kilogrammes[‡] of silver so that Pul would support him and help him gain complete control of the kingdom.

²⁰ Menahem raised the money by making all the rich and powerful men pay taxes. He taxed each man 50 pieces[¶] of silver and gave the money to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria left and did not stay there in Israel.

²¹ All the great things that Menahem did are recorded in the book, *The History of the Kings of Israel*. ²² When Menahem died, his son Pekahiah became the new king after him.

Pekahiah's Rule Over Israel

²³ Pekahiah son of Menahem became king over Israel in Samaria during the fiftieth year that Azariah was king of Judah. Pekahiah ruled for two years. ²⁴ He did what the LORD says is evil. He did not stop committing the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat who caused Israel to sin.

²⁵ The commander of Pekahiah's army was Pekah son of Remaliah. Pekah took 50 men from Gilead with him and killed Pekahiah, along with Argob and Arieih,[§] at the king's palace in Samaria. Then Pekah became the new king.

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

Pekah's Rule Over Israel

²⁷ Pekah son of Remaliah began to rule over Israel in Samaria during the fifty-

second year that Azariah was king of Judah. Pekah ruled for 20 years. ²⁸ Pekah did what the LORD says is evil. He did not stop committing the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat who caused Israel to sin.

²⁹ King Tiglath Pileser of Assyria came to fight against Israel while Pekah was king of Israel. Tiglath Pileser captured Ijon, Abel Beth Maacah, Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead, Galilee and all the area of Naphtali. He took the people from these places as captives to Assyria.

³⁰ Hoshea son of Elah made plans against Pekah son of Remaliah. He killed him and became the new king. This was during the twentieth year that Jotham son of Uzziah was king of Judah.

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

Jotham's Rule Over Judah

³² Jotham son of Uzziah became king of Judah. This was during the second year that Pekah son of Remaliah was king of Israel. ³³ Jotham was 25 years old when he became king. He ruled for 16 years in Jerusalem. His mother was Jerusha, the daughter of Zadok. ³⁴ Jotham did what the LORD said was right, just as his father Uzziah had done. ³⁵ But he did not destroy the places where people went to worship false gods. So the people continued offering sacrifices and burning incense in those places. Jotham built the upper gate of the LORD's Temple. ³⁶ All the great things that Jotham did are recorded in the book, *The History of the Kings of Judah*.

[‡]15:19 **34,000 kilogrammes** Literally, "1000 talents".

[¶]15:20 **50 pieces** Literally, "50 shekels".

[§]15:25 **Argob and Arieih** Some scholars think these two names were not part of the original Hebrew text.

³⁷ At that time the LORD sent King Rezin of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah to fight against Judah.

³⁸ Jotham died and was buried in the tombs of his family in Jerusalem, the city of his ancestor David. Jotham's son Ahaz became the new king after him.

Ahaz Becomes King Over Judah

16 Ahaz son of Jotham became king of Judah during the seventeenth year that Pekah son of Remaliah was king of Israel. ² Ahaz was 20 years old when he became king. He ruled for 16 years in Jerusalem. Unlike his ancestor David, Ahaz did not do what the LORD his God said was right. ³ He did the same bad things the kings of Israel had done. He even burned his son as a sacrifice. ^{**} He copied the terrible sins of the nations that the LORD had forced to leave the country when the Israelites came. ⁴ Ahaz made sacrifices and burned offerings at the places of worship and on the hills and under every green tree.

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

⁷ Ahaz sent messengers to King Tiglath Pileser of Assyria with this message: "I am your servant. I am like a son to you. Come and save me from the king of Aram and the king of Israel. They have come to fight me." ⁸ Ahaz took the silver and gold that was in the Temple of the LORD and in the treasuries of the king's palace. Then he sent them as a gift to the king of Assyria. ⁹ The king of Assyria listened

to Ahaz and went to fight against Damascus. The king captured that city and took the people from Damascus as captives to Kir. He also killed Rezin.

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

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

¹⁴ This new altar was in front of the Temple. But between it and the Temple was the old bronze altar that had always been there before the LORD. So Ahaz moved the bronze altar to the north side of his new altar. ¹⁵ He commanded Uriah the priest, "Use the large altar to burn the morning burnt offerings, the evening grain offerings and the drink offerings from all the people of this country. Sprinkle all the blood from the burnt offering and other sacrifices on the large altar. But I will use the bronze altar to get answers from God." ¹⁶ Uriah the priest did everything that King Ahaz commanded him to do.

¹⁷ There were carts with bronze panels and bowls for the priests to wash their hands. King Ahaz took apart the panels and removed the bowls from the carts. He also took the large basin off the bronze bulls that stood under it. He put the basin on the stone pavement. ¹⁸ Workers had built a covered place in-

^{**} **16:3 burned his son as a sacrifice** Literally, "made his son pass through the fire".

side the Temple area for the Sabbath meetings. But Ahaz removed the covered place and the outside entrance for the king. He removed all these from the LORD's Temple. Ahaz did this because of the king of Assyria.

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

Hoshea Begins His Rule Over Israel

17 Hoshea son of Elah began to rule in Samaria over Israel. This was during the twelfth year that Ahaz was king of Judah. Hoshea ruled for nine years. ²He did what the LORD says is evil, but he was not as bad as the kings of Israel who had ruled before him.

³King Shalmaneser of Assyria came to fight against Hoshea, and he defeated him. So Hoshea paid taxes to Shalmaneser.

⁴Later, Hoshea sent messengers to King So of Egypt to ask for help. That year Hoshea did not pay taxes to the king of Assyria as he had done every other year. The king of Assyria found out that Hoshea had made plans against him. So he arrested Hoshea and put him in jail.

⁵The king of Assyria attacked many places in Israel. Then he came to Samaria and fought against it for three years. ⁶The king of Assyria captured Samaria during the ninth year that Hoshea was king of Israel. He took the Israelites as captives to Assyria. He settled some of them in the city of Halah, some along the Habor River in the territory of Gozan and some in other cities of the Medes.

⁷These things happened because the Israelites had sinned against the LORD their God. And it was the Lord who

brought the Israelites out of the land of Egypt! He saved them from the power of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. But the Israelites began worshipping other gods. ⁸They began doing the same things that other people did. And the LORD had forced those people to leave their land when the Israelites came. The Israelites also chose to be ruled by kings. ⁹The Israelites secretly did things against the LORD their God, and those things were wrong!

The Israelites built places of worship in all their cities—from the smallest town to the largest city. ¹⁰They put up sacred stones and Asherah poles on every high hill and under every green tree. ¹¹They burned incense in all those places for worship, just like the nations that the LORD forced out of the land before them. The Israelites made the LORD angry with all the evil things they did. ¹²They worshipped idols, which the LORD had told them not to do.

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

¹⁴But the people would not listen. They were very stubborn like their ancestors. Their ancestors did not believe the LORD their God. ¹⁵They refused to follow his laws and the agreement he made with their ancestors. They would not listen to his warnings. They worshipped idols that were worth nothing, and they themselves became worth nothing. The LORD had warned them not to do the evil things that the people in the nations around them did. But they lived the same way those people lived.

¹⁶They stopped following the commands of the LORD their God. They

made two gold statues of calves. They made Asherah poles. They worshipped all the stars of heaven and served Baal. ¹⁷ They sacrificed their sons and daughters in the fire. They used witchcraft and fortune-tellers and other evil ways of trying to know the future. They gave themselves completely to what the LORD says is evil, trying to make him angry. ¹⁸ So the LORD became very angry with Israel and sent them away. Only the people of Judah were left in the land.

¹⁹ But even the people of Judah did not obey the commands of the LORD their God. They lived the same way the Israelites had lived. ²⁰ So the LORD rejected all the descendants of Israel. He caused them many troubles. He let their enemies defeat them. Finally, he sent them all away from him.

²¹ This all began when the LORD separated the Israelites from David's family. That's when they made Jeroboam son of Nebat their king. Jeroboam led the Israelites away from following the LORD. He caused them to commit great sins. ²² So the Israelites sinned in all the ways Jeroboam did. And they did not stop committing these sins. ²³ Finally, the LORD sent them away from his land. Through his prophets he had warned the people that this would happen. So the Israelites were taken out of their country into Assyria. And they are still there today.

Foreigners Settle in Israel

²⁴ The king of Assyria took the Israelites out of Samaria and brought in other people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath and Sepharvaim. They took over Samaria and lived in the cities around it. ²⁵ When these people began to live in Samaria, they did not honour the LORD, so the LORD sent lions to attack them. The lions killed some of them.

²⁶ So the king of Assyria received a report that said, "The people you moved to the cities of Samaria don't know the law of the god of that country. So that god has sent lions to attack them. The lions are killing them because they don't know what the god of that country wants them to do."

²⁷ So the king of Assyria gave this command: "Get one of the priests who was brought here and send him back to Samaria to live. Then he can teach the people the law of the god of that country."

²⁸ So they sent back one of the priests they had taken from Samaria. He settled in Bethel, where he taught the people how they should honour the LORD.

²⁹ But all those people made gods of their own. They put them in the temples at the places of worship that the people of Samaria had made. They did this wherever they lived. ³⁰ The people of Babylon made the false god Succoth Benoth. The people of Cuthah made the false god Nergal. The people of Hamath made the false god Ashima. ³¹ The people of Avva made the false gods Nibhaz and Tartak. The people from Sepharvaim also burned their children in the fire to honour their false gods, Adrammelech and Anammelech.

³² These people honoured the LORD, but they chose some of their own people to serve as priests in their own places of worship. These priests made sacrifices for the people in the same places where they had worshipped their own gods. ³³ They honoured the LORD, but they also served their own gods, just as they had done in their own countries.

³⁴ Even today they live the same way they did in the past. So they don't really honour the LORD. That is, they don't follow the rules and instructions or the laws and commands that the LORD

gave to the descendants of Jacob, whose name he changed to Israel. ³⁵The LORD made an agreement with the Israelites. He commanded them, “You must not honour other gods. You must not worship them or serve them or offer sacrifices to them. ³⁶But you must follow the LORD, who brought you out of Egypt. He used his great power to save you. You must worship him and offer sacrifices to him. ³⁷You must obey the rules, instructions, laws and commands that he wrote for you. You must obey these things all the time. You must not respect other gods. ³⁸You must not forget the agreement that I made with you. You must not respect other gods. ³⁹No, you must respect only the LORD your God. Then he will save you from all your enemies.”

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

Hezekiah Begins His Rule Over Judah

18 Hezekiah son of Ahaz was king of Judah. Hezekiah began to rule during the third year that Hoshea son of Elah was king of Israel. ²Hezekiah was 25 years old when he began to rule. He ruled for 29 years in Jerusalem. His mother was Abi,^{††} the daughter of Zechariah.

³Hezekiah did what the LORD says is right, just as David his ancestor had done.

⁴Hezekiah destroyed the places of worship. He broke the sacred stones and

cut down the Asherah poles. At that time the Israelites burned incense to the bronze snake made by Moses. This bronze snake was called “Nehushtan”.^{‡‡} Hezekiah broke this bronze snake into pieces.

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

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

The Assyrians Capture Samaria

⁹King Shalmaneser of Assyria went to fight against Samaria. His army surrounded the city. This happened during the fourth year that Hezekiah was king of Judah. (This was also the seventh year that Hoshea son of Elah was king of Israel.) ¹⁰At the end of the third year, Shalmaneser captured Samaria. He took Samaria during the sixth year that Hezekiah was king of Judah. (This was also the ninth year that Hoshea was king of Israel.) ¹¹The king of Assyria took the Israelites as captives to Assyria. He settled some of them in the city of Halah, some along the Habor River in the territory of Gozan and some in other cities of the Medes. ¹²This happened because the Israelites did not obey the LORD their

^{††}18:2 *Abi* Or “Abijah”.

^{‡‡}18:4 *Nehushtan* This Hebrew name is like the words meaning “bronze” and “snake”.

God. They broke his agreement and did not obey everything that the LORD's servant Moses had commanded. They did not listen to the Lord's commands or do what he said.

Assyria Gets Ready to Take Judah

¹³ During Hezekiah's fourteenth year as king, King Sennacherib of Assyria went to fight against all the strong cities of Judah. Sennacherib defeated them all. ¹⁴ Then King Hezekiah of Judah sent a message to the king of Assyria at Lachish. Hezekiah said, "I have done wrong. Leave me alone, and I will pay whatever you want."

Then the king of Assyria told King Hezekiah of Judah to pay him more than 10,000 kilogrammes^{¶¶} of silver and 1000 kilogrammes^{§§} of gold. ¹⁵ Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was in the LORD's Temple and in the king's treasuries. ¹⁶ That is when Hezekiah cut off the gold that he had put on the doors and doorposts of the LORD's Temple and gave it to the king of Assyria.

The King of Assyria Sends Men to Jerusalem

¹⁷ The king of Assyria sent his three most important officers from Lachish with a large army to King Hezekiah in Jerusalem. When they came near Jerusalem, they stopped by the channel that brings water from the upper pool, on the road that leads to Laundryman's Field. ¹⁸ These officers called for King Hezekiah, but the king sent three men out to talk to them. These men were Eliakim son of Hilkiah, Joah son of Asaph, and Shebna. Eliakim was the palace manager, Joah was the record keeper, and Shebna was the secretary.

¹⁹ One of the officers, the Assyrian king's commander, told them to give this message to Hezekiah:

"The great king, the king of Assyria, wants to know what makes you so sure of yourself. What are you trusting in to help you? ²⁰ If you say, 'I trust in power and great battle plans,' those are useless words. Now I ask you, who do you trust so much that you are willing to rebel against me? ²¹ Are you depending on Egypt to help you? Egypt is like a broken walking stick. If you lean on it for support, it will only hurt you and make a hole in your hand. Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, cannot be trusted by anyone who depends on him for help. ²² Maybe you will say, 'We trust the LORD our God to help us.' But I know that Hezekiah destroyed the altars and places of worship where people honoured the Lord. Hezekiah told the people of Judah and Jerusalem, 'You must worship only at this one altar here in Jerusalem.'

²³ "If you still want to fight my master, the king of Assyria, I will make this agreement with you. I promise that I will give you 2000 horses if you can find enough men to ride them into battle. ²⁴ But even then you couldn't beat one of my master's lowest ranking officers. So why do you still depend on Egypt's chariots and horsemen?

²⁵ "Now, do you think I came to this country to destroy it without the LORD's help? No, the LORD said to me, 'Go up against this country and destroy it!'"

¶¶18:14 10,000 kilogrammes Literally, "300 talents".

§§18:14 1000 kilogrammes Literally, "30 talents".

²⁶ Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah, Shebna and Joah said to the commander, “Please speak to us in Aramaic, not Hebrew.* We will understand you, but we don’t want the people sitting there on the wall to understand what you say.”

²⁷ But the commander said, “My master sent me to speak to everyone, not only to you and your king. I must also speak to those people sitting there on the wall. When we surround your city, they will suffer too. Like you, they will become so hungry they will eat their own waste and drink their own urine!”

²⁸ Then the commander, shouting loudly in Hebrew, gave this warning to them all:

“Hear this message from the great king, the king of Assyria! ²⁹ This is what the king says: Don’t let Hezekiah fool you! He cannot save you from my power. ³⁰ Don’t listen to him when he tells you to trust in the LORD. Don’t believe him when he says, ‘The LORD will save us. He will not let the king of Assyria defeat the city.’

³¹ “Don’t listen to Hezekiah! This is what the king of Assyria says: Come out here and show me that you want peace. Then you will all be free to have grapes from your own vines, figs from your own trees and water from your own well. ³² After some time, I will come and take you to a land like your own. In that new land, you will have plenty of grain for making bread and vineyards for producing wine. I am offering you a choice between living and dying.

“Don’t believe Hezekiah when he tells you, ‘The LORD will save us.’ He is wrong. ³³ Did any of the gods of other nations save their land from

the king of Assyria? ³⁴ When I destroyed the cities of Hamath and Arpad, where were their gods? What about the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivvah? Were any gods able to save Samaria from my power?

³⁵ None of the gods of these other places were able to save their land from me! So why do you think the LORD can save Jerusalem from me?”

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

³⁷ Then Eliakim the palace manager, Joah the record keeper and Shebna the secretary went to Hezekiah. Their clothes were torn to show they were upset. They told Hezekiah everything the Assyrian commander had said.

Hezekiah Talks With Isaiah the Prophet

19 When King Hezekiah heard this, he tore his clothes to show he was upset. Then he put on rags and went to the LORD’s Temple.

² Hezekiah sent Eliakim the palace manager, Shebna the secretary and the leading priests to the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. They wore the special clothes that showed they were sad and upset.

³ They said to Isaiah, “King Hezekiah has commanded that today will be a special day for sorrow and sadness. It will be like the day a child is ready to be born, but the mother is not strong enough to give birth. ⁴ The commander’s master, the king of Assyria, has sent him to say bad things about the living God. Maybe the LORD your God will hear all those things and answer them. Maybe the LORD your God will show

*18:26 *Hebrew* Literally, “Judean”, the language of Judah and Israel.

how wrong the enemy is! So pray for the people who are still left alive.”

⁵ King Hezekiah’s officers went to Isaiah. ⁶ Isaiah said to them, “Give this message to your master Hezekiah: The LORD says, ‘Don’t be afraid of what you heard from the commanders. Don’t believe what those “boys” from the king of Assyria said to make fun of me. ⁷ Look, I will send a spirit against the king of Assyria. He will get a report warning him about a danger, so he will return to his own country. And I will cut him down with a sword in his own country.’”

The Assyrian Army Leaves Jerusalem

⁸ The commander heard that the king of Assyria had left Lachish. He found him at Libnah, fighting against that city. ⁹ Then the king of Assyria heard a report that said, “Tirhakah,[†] the king of Ethiopia, has come to fight against you.”

So the king of Assyria sent messengers to Hezekiah again. ¹⁰ He told them to tell King Hezekiah of Judah these things:

“Don’t be fooled by the god you trust when he says Jerusalem will not be defeated by the king of Assyria. ¹¹ You have heard what the kings of Assyria did to all the other countries. We completely destroyed them! Will you be saved? No! ¹² Did the gods of those nations save their people? No, my ancestors destroyed them all. They destroyed Gozan, Haran, Rezech and the people of Eden living in Tel Assar. ¹³ Where is the king of Hamath or the king of Arpad? They are gone, as are the kings of Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivvah!”

Hezekiah Prays to the Lord

¹⁴ Hezekiah received the letters from the messengers and read them. Then he went up to the LORD’s Temple and laid the letters out in front of the LORD. ¹⁵ Hezekiah prayed before the LORD and said, “LORD, God of Israel, you sit as King above the winged creatures. You alone are the God who rules all the kingdoms on earth. You made heaven and earth. ¹⁶ LORD, please listen to me. LORD, open your eyes and look at this message. Hear the words that Sennacherib sent to insult the living God. ¹⁷ It is true, LORD. The kings of Assyria did destroy all those nations. ¹⁸ They did throw the gods of those nations into the fire. But they were not real gods. They were only wood and stone—statues that people made. That is why the kings of Assyria could destroy them. ¹⁹ But you are the LORD our God, so please save us from the king of Assyria. Then all the other nations will know that you, LORD, are the only God.”

The Lord Answers Hezekiah

²⁰ Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent this message to Hezekiah. Isaiah said, “The LORD, the God of Israel, says this: You prayed to me about the message that came from King Sennacherib of Assyria. I have heard you. ²¹ This is the LORD’s message against Sennacherib:

“The people of Jerusalem[‡] hate you, and they make fun of you. Jerusalem shakes her head at you and laughs behind your back.

²² But you have insulted and made fun of me.

I am the one you have been shouting at

[†]19:9 *Tirhakah* This is probably Taharqa, the Pharaoh of Egypt about 690-664 BC.

[‡]19:21 *The people of Jerusalem* Literally, “The virgin daughter of Zion”. See Zion in the Word List.

with such a proud look on your face!
 You have acted against me, the Holy One
 of Israel!
²³I am the Lord, but your messengers
 have insulted me.
 They told me your boastful words:
 ‘I climbed the highest mountains with all
 my chariots;
 I reached the most difficult peaks in
 Lebanon.
 There I cut down the tallest cedar trees
 and the best pines.
 I went deep inside the country
 and saw its thickest forests.
²⁴I have dug wells in faraway lands,
 finding water everywhere to drink.
 I have dried up the rivers of Egypt
 and walked on the land where they
 flowed.’
²⁵“Sennacherib, how can you say such
 things?
 You should know that I planned all this
 long ago.
 Long ago I decided what you would do,
 and now I am making it happen.
 I let you tear down those strong cities
 and turn them into piles of rocks.
²⁶The people there were powerless to
 stop you;
 they were afraid and confused.
 They were about to be cut down
 like grass and plants in the field.
 They were like grass growing on the
 housetops,
 dying before it grows tall.
²⁷I know all about your battles;
 I know when you rested,
 when you went out to war,
 and when you came home.
 I also know when you got upset at me.
²⁸Yes, you were upset at me.
 I heard your proud insults.
 So I will put my hook in your nose
 and my bit in your mouth.
 Then I will turn you around
 and lead you back the way you came.”

The Lord’s Message for Hezekiah

²⁹Then the Lord said, “I will give you
 a sign to show that these words are true.
 You could not plant seeds this year, so
 next year you will eat grain that grows
 wild from the previous year’s crop. But
 in the third year, you will eat grain from
 seeds that you planted. You will harvest
 your crops and have plenty to eat. You
 will plant grapevines and eat their fruit.
 You will plant vineyards and eat the
 grapes from them. ³⁰The people from
 the family of Judah who are left alive
 will be like plants that take root and
 grow strong. Like trees that bear fruit,
 they will have many children. ³¹Yes, a
 few people will come out of Jerusalem
 alive. A few from Mount Zion will con-
 tinue to live. The LORD All-Powerful is
 determined to do this.

³²“So the LORD says this about the
 king of Assyria:
 “He will not come into this city
 or shoot an arrow at it.
 No warriors carrying shields will come
 near it
 or build a ramp to attack its walls.
³³He will go back the way he came,
 and he will not come into this city.
 The LORD says this.
³⁴I will protect this city and save it.
 I will do this for myself and for my ser-
 vant David.”

The Assyrian Army Is Destroyed

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

³⁶So King Sennacherib of Assyria left
 and went back to Nineveh and stayed
 there. ³⁷One day Sennacherib was in
 the temple of his god Nisroch, worship-
 ping him. His sons Adrammelech and

Sharezer killed him with a sword and ran away to Ararat. So his son Esarhaddon became the new king of Assyria.

Hezekiah's Illness

20 At that time Hezekiah became sick and almost died. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to see him and told him, "This is what the LORD says: You will die soon, so you should tell your family what they should do when you die. You will not get well."

²Hezekiah turned his face to the wall^f and began praying to the LORD.

³"LORD, remember that I have sincerely served you with all my heart. I have done what you say is good." Then Hezekiah cried and cried.

⁴Before Isaiah had left the middle courtyard, he received this message from the LORD: ⁵"Go back and speak to Hezekiah, the leader of my people. This is what the LORD, the God of your ancestor David, says: I heard your prayer and I saw your tears, so I will heal you. On the third day, you will go up to the Temple of the LORD. ⁶I will add 15 years to your life. I will save you and this city from the king of Assyria. I will protect this city. I will do this for myself and because of the promise I made to my servant David."

⁷Then Isaiah said, "Crush figs together and put them on your boil; you will get well."

So they took the mixture of figs and put it on Hezekiah's boil, and he got well.

⁸Hezekiah asked Isaiah, "What will be the sign that the LORD will heal me and that I will go up to the Temple of the LORD on the third day?"

⁹Isaiah said, "Which do you want? Should the shadow go forward ten steps or go back ten steps?[§] This is the sign for you from the LORD to show that the LORD will do what he said."

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

¹¹Then Isaiah prayed, and the LORD made the shadow move back ten steps. It went back up the steps that it had already gone down.

Messengers From Babylon

¹²At that time Merodach Baladan son of Baladan was king of Babylon. He sent letters and a gift to Hezekiah when he heard that Hezekiah had been sick.

¹³Hezekiah listened to the messengers and then showed them all the valuable things he owned. He showed them the silver, the gold, the spices, the expensive perfume and the building where he stored the weapons. He showed them everything in his treasuries, in his palace and in his kingdom.

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

Hezekiah said, "These men came from a faraway country, from Babylon."

¹⁵Isaiah said, "What did they see in your palace?"

Hezekiah answered, "They saw everything I own. I showed them all my wealth."

¹⁶Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Listen to this message from the LORD: ¹⁷the time is coming when everything in your palace and everything your ances-

^f20:2 *face to the wall* The wall that faced the Temple.

[§]20:9 *the shadow ... steps* This may mean the steps of a special building that Hezekiah used like a clock. When the sun shone on the steps, the shadows showed what time of the day it was.

tors have saved until today will be carried away to Babylon. Nothing will be left! The LORD said this. ¹⁸The Babylonians will take your sons, and your sons will become officers** in the palace of the king of Babylon.”

¹⁹Then Hezekiah told Isaiah, “This message from the LORD is good.” (Hezekiah said this because he thought, “There will be real peace and security during my lifetime.”)

²⁰All the great things that Hezekiah did, including his work on the pool and the channel to bring water into the city, are recorded in the book, *The History of the Kings of Judah*. ²¹When Hezekiah died, his son Manasseh became the new king after him.

Manasseh Begins His Evil Rule Over Judah

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

²Manasseh did what the LORD says is evil. He committed the same disgusting sins as the nations that the LORD had forced to leave the land when the Israelites came in. ³Manasseh rebuilt the places for worshipping false gods that his father Hezekiah had destroyed. He also built altars for Baal and put up an Asherah pole, just as King Ahab of Israel had done. Manasseh worshipped and served the stars in the sky as gods. ⁴Manasseh built altars to honour false gods in the LORD’s Temple, the place in Jerusalem where the LORD said he would be honoured forever. ⁵There in both courtyards of the LORD’s Temple,

he built altars to honour all the stars in the sky as gods. ⁶He burned his own son as a sacrifice. He used witchcraft and fortune-tellers and other evil ways of trying to know the future. He even tried to contact ghosts and spirits of the dead for advice and secret knowledge. He made the LORD angry by doing many things the LORD says are evil.

⁷He made a carved statue of the goddess Asherah and put this idol in the Temple. The LORD was talking about this same place when he told David and his son Solomon, “I have chosen Jerusalem from all the cities in Israel. And I will make the Temple here in Jerusalem the place where I will be honoured forever. ⁸I will not cause the Israelites to leave the land that I gave to their ancestors. I will let the people stay in their land if they obey everything I commanded them and all the teachings that my servant Moses gave them.” ⁹But the people did not listen to God. And Manasseh led them to do more evil than the nations the LORD had destroyed when the Israelites came in to take their land.

¹⁰The LORD used his servants the prophets to say this: ¹¹“King Manasseh of Judah has done these disgusting things and has done more evil than the Amorites before him. He also has caused Judah to sin because of his idols. ¹²So the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘Look! I will bring so much trouble against Jerusalem and Judah that anyone who hears about it will be shocked.†† ¹³I will punish Jerusalem the same way I did Samaria and Ahab’s family.‡‡ I will empty Jerusalem of its people like some-

**20:18 *officers* Or “eunuchs”. See eunuch in the Word List.

††21:12 *will be shocked* Literally, “both his ears will tingle”.

‡‡21:13 *I will ... Ahab’s family* Literally, “I will stretch over Jerusalem the measuring line of Samaria and the plumb line of the house of Ahab.”

one empties a dish and turns it upside down to show that they don't want it filled again. ¹⁴There will still be a few of my people left, but I will leave them. I will give them to their enemies. Their enemies will take them as captives—they will be like the valuable things soldiers take in war. ¹⁵This is because my people did what I say is evil. They have made me angry with them since the day their ancestors came up out of Egypt. ¹⁶Also, Manasseh killed many innocent people. He filled Jerusalem from one end to another with blood. And all these sins are in addition to the sins that caused Judah to sin. Manasseh caused Judah to do what the LORD says is evil.”

¹⁷Everything else Manasseh did, including the sins that he committed, is recorded in the book, *The History of the Kings of Judah*. ¹⁸When Manasseh died, he was buried in his palace garden. It was called the “Garden of Uzza”. His son Amon became the new king after him.

Amon's Short Rule

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

²⁰Amon did what the LORD says is evil, just as his father Manasseh had done. ²¹Amon lived just as his father had lived. He worshipped and served the same idols his father had worshipped. ²²Amon left the LORD, the God of his ancestors, and did not live the way the LORD wanted.

²³Amon's servants made plans against him and killed him in his palace. ²⁴The people of Judah killed all the officers who had made plans against King

Amon. Then the people made Amon's son Josiah the new king after him.

²⁵The other things that Amon did are recorded in the book, *The History of the Kings of Judah*. ²⁶Amon was buried in his grave at the Garden of Uzza. His son Josiah became the new king after him.

Josiah Begins His Rule Over Judah

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

Josiah Orders the Temple Repaired

³During the eighteenth year that Josiah was king, he sent Shaphan son of Azaliah son of Meshullam, the secretary, to the LORD's Temple. Josiah said, ⁴“Go up to Hilkiyah the high priest. Tell him that he must gather all the money that the people brought to the LORD's Temple. This is the money that the Levite doorkeepers collected from the people. ⁵The priests must use that money to pay the workers to repair the LORD's Temple. They must give it to the men who supervise the work on the LORD's Temple. ⁶Use that money for the carpenters, stonemasons and stonecutters. Also use that money to buy the timber and cut stones that are needed to repair the Temple. ⁷Don't count the money that you give to the workers. They can be trusted.”

Book of the Law Found in the Temple

⁸Hilkiyah the high priest said to Shaphan the secretary, “Look, I found the *Book of the Law*[¶] in the LORD's Tem-

[¶]22:8 *Book of the Law* This is probably the book of Deuteronomy. Also in 23:2.

ple!” Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it.

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

¹¹When the king heard the words of the *Book of the Law*, he showed how upset he was by tearing his clothes. ¹²Then he gave a command to Hilkiyah the priest, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Acbor son of Micaiah, Shaphan the secretary and Asaiah the king’s servant. ¹³King Josiah said, “Go and ask the LORD what we should do. Ask for me, for the people and for all Judah. Ask about the words of this book that was found. The LORD is very angry with us because our ancestors did not obey the words of this book. They did not do everything this book tells us to do.”

Josiah and the Prophet Huldah

¹⁴So Hilkiyah the priest, Ahikam, Acbor, Shaphan and Asaiah went to the newer part of Jerusalem to talk about what had happened with a woman named Huldah, who was a prophet. She was the wife of Shallum son of Tikvah, son of Harhas. Shallum was in charge of the Temple robes.

¹⁵Huldah said to them, “This is what the LORD God of Israel says: Tell the man who sent you that ¹⁶this message is from the LORD: ‘I will bring disaster on this place and the people living here. I will bring all the terrible troubles that are described in the book that the king of Judah read. ¹⁷I will do this because the

people have left me and burned incense to other gods. They made me angry because of all the idols they have made. So my anger will light a fire under this place. It will be a fire that cannot be put out!’

¹⁸“Go back to King Josiah of Judah, who sent you to ask what the LORD wants. Tell him, ‘This is what the LORD God of Israel says about the words you heard being read: ¹⁹you heard my words that apply to this place and those who live here. And when you heard those things, your heart was soft, and you showed your sorrow before the LORD. You understood what those words meant—that terrible things should happen to this place. So you tore your clothes to show your sorrow, and you began to cry. That is why I heard you. This is what the LORD says. ²⁰I will bring you to be with your ancestors. You will die and go to your grave in peace. So your eyes will not see all the trouble that I am bringing on this place.’”

Then Hilkiyah the priest, Ahikam, Acbor, Shaphan and Asaiah gave that message to the king.

The People Hear the Law

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

§§23:2 *Book of the Agreement* In other places this is called the *Book of the Law*.

³The king stood by the royal pillar and made an agreement with the LORD. He agreed to follow the LORD and to obey his commands, the agreement and his rules. He agreed to do this with all his heart and soul, and he agreed to obey the agreement written in this book. All the people stood to show that they agreed to follow the agreement.

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

⁵The kings of Judah had chosen some ordinary men to serve as priests. These false priests were burning incense at the places of worship in every city of Judah and all the towns around Jerusalem. They burned incense to honour Baal, the sun, the moon, the constellations* and all the stars in the sky. But Josiah stopped those false priests.

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

⁷Then King Josiah broke down the houses of the male prostitutes who were in the LORD's Temple. Women also used

these houses and made little tent covers to honour the false goddess Asherah.

⁸At that time, priests were living in towns all over Judah. They had been offering sacrifices at places where people worshipped false gods. So King Josiah brought these priests to Jerusalem. He also ruined the places of worship where they had been making offerings, from Geba to Beersheba. And he destroyed the places of worship that were to the left of the main city gate. These were by the gate built by Joshua, the governor of the city. ⁹The priests who had made the offerings to false gods were not allowed to serve at the LORD's altar in Jerusalem. But they were allowed to eat the bread without yeast with the other priests.

¹⁰Topheth was a place in the Valley of Hinnom's Son where people killed their children and burned them on an altar to honour the false god Molech.‡ Josiah ruined that place so that no one could use it again. ¹¹Once the kings of Judah had put some horses and a chariot near the entrance to the LORD's Temple. This was near the room of an important official named Nathan Melech. The horses and chariot were to honour the sun god.¶ Josiah removed the horses and burned the chariot.

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

***23:5 constellations** Groups of stars. These are probably the twelve signs of the Zodiac. Some people thought the stars, not God, controlled their life.

†**23:6 scattered ... common people** This was a strong way of showing that the Asherah pole could never be used again.

‡**23:10 people ... Molech** Literally, "people made their son or daughter pass through fire to Molech".

¶**23:11 horses ... sun god** The people thought the sun was a god who drove his chariot (the sun) across the sky each day.

¹³ King Solomon had built some places of worship on the south side of Destroyer Hill east of Jerusalem. One of these honoured Ashtoreth, that disgusting goddess the people of Sidon worship. He also built one to honour Chemosh, that disgusting god the Moabites worship. And he built another to honour Milcom, that disgusting god the Ammonites worship. But King Josiah ruined all these places of worship. ¹⁴ He smashed all the stones that were set up to honour false gods, and he cut down the Asherah poles. Then he scattered dead people's bones over those places.[§]

¹⁵ Josiah also broke down the altar at Bethel. This was the place of worship that Jeroboam son of Nebat set up, which caused Israel to sin.^{**} Josiah destroyed the altar, smashed the stones to pieces and burned everything else, including the Asherah pole. ¹⁶ Josiah looked around and saw graves on the mountain. He sent men to take the bones from the graves. Then he burned them on the altar so that it could not be used for worship. This happened just as the man of God had announced when Jeroboam stood beside the altar during a festival.^{††}

Then Josiah looked around and saw the grave of the man of God who had said these things would happen.^{‡‡}

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

The people of the city told him, "It is the grave of the man of God who came from Judah. A long time ago he told about the things you have done to the altar at Bethel."

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

¹⁹ Josiah also destroyed all the temples at the places of worship in the cities of Samaria. The kings of Israel had built those temples, which had made the LORD very angry. Josiah destroyed them, just as he had destroyed the place of worship at Bethel.

²⁰ Then Josiah killed all the priests of the places of worship that were in Samaria. He killed the priests on those altars and burned men's bones on them so that they could never be used again. Then he went back to Jerusalem.

The People of Judah Celebrate Passover

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

²² The people had not celebrated a Passover like this since the days when the judges ruled Israel, not even during the time of the kings who ruled Israel and Judah. ²³ They celebrated this Passover for the LORD in Jerusalem during Josiah's eighteenth year as king.

²⁴ Josiah also made a law against anyone trying to contact ghosts or spirits of the dead. He destroyed the people's household gods, their idols and all the disgusting things people worshipped in Judah and Jerusalem. He did this to follow the teaching written in the book that

§23:14 *scattered ... places* This would make these places "unclean", that is, not to be used as places of worship.

**23:15 *Jeroboam ... sin* See 1 Kgs 12:26-30.

††23:16 *announced ... festival* See 1 Kgs 13:1-3.

‡‡23:16 *when Jeroboam ... would happen* This is from the ancient Greek version.

Hilkiah the priest found in the LORD's Temple.

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

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

²⁸ Everything else Josiah did is recorded in the book, *The History of the Kings of Judah*.

The Death of Josiah

²⁹ While Josiah was king, Pharaoh Neco, the king of Egypt, went to fight against the king of Assyria at the Euphrates River. Josiah went out to meet Neco at Megiddo. Pharaoh saw Josiah and killed him. ³⁰ Josiah's officers put his body in a chariot and carried him from Megiddo to Jerusalem. They buried Josiah in his own tomb.

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

Jehoahaz Becomes King of Judah

³¹ Jehoahaz was 23 years old when he became king. He ruled for three months in Jerusalem. His mother was Hamutal

daughter of Jeremiah from Libnah. ³² Jehoahaz did what the LORD says is evil. He did all the same things that his ancestors had done.

³³ Pharaoh Neco put Jehoahaz in prison at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Jehoahaz could not rule in Jerusalem. Pharaoh Neco forced Judah to pay 3400 kilogrammes^{§§} of silver and 34 kilogrammes* of gold.

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

³⁶ Jehoiakim was 25 years old when he became king. He ruled for eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother was Zebidah daughter of Pedaiah from Rumah. ³⁷ Jehoiakim did what the LORD says is evil. He did all the same things his ancestors had done.

King Nebuchadnezzar Comes to Judah

24 In the time of Jehoiakim, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to the country of Judah. Jehoiakim served Nebuchadnezzar for three years. Then Jehoiakim turned against Nebuchadnezzar and broke away from his rule. ² The LORD sent groups of Babylonians, Arameans, Moabites and Ammonites to fight

[¶]23:25 *with all his heart ... strength* See Deut. 6:4,5.

^{§§}23:33 *3400 kilogrammes* Literally, "100 talents".

*23:33 *34 kilogrammes* Literally, "1 talent".

against Jehoiakim. He sent them to destroy Judah. This happened just as the LORD had said through his servants the prophets.

³This happened to Judah because the LORD commanded it. He wanted to send them all away from the land because of the many sins Manasseh had committed. ⁴He did this because Manasseh killed many innocent people and filled Jerusalem with their blood. The LORD would not forgive these sins.

⁵The other things that Jehoiakim did are recorded in the book, *The History of the Kings of Judah*. ⁶Jehoiakim died and his son Jehoiachin became the new king after him.

⁷The king of Babylon captured all the land between the Brook of Egypt and the Euphrates River, land that had been controlled by Egypt. So the king of Egypt did not leave Egypt any more.

Nebuchadnezzar Captures Jerusalem

⁸Jehoiachin was 18 years old when he began to rule. He ruled for three months in Jerusalem. His mother was Nehushta daughter of Elnathan from Jerusalem. ⁹Jehoiachin did what the LORD says is evil. He did all the same things that his father had done.

¹⁰At that time the officers of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to Jerusalem and surrounded it. ¹¹Then King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to the city. ¹²King Jehoiachin of Judah went out with his mother, his officers, his leaders and his officials and surrendered to the Babylonians. So in the eighth year of his rule as king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin prisoner.

¹³Nebuchadnezzar took from Jerusalem all the treasures in the LORD's Temple and all the treasures in the king's palace. He cut up all the

gold dishes that King Solomon of Israel had put in the LORD's Temple. This happened just as the LORD had said.

¹⁴Nebuchadnezzar captured all the people of Jerusalem, including the leaders and other wealthy people. He took away 10,000 people as captives. He took all the skilled workers and craftsmen. No one was left, except the poorest of the common people. ¹⁵Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin to Babylon as a prisoner. He also took the king's mother, his wives, his officers and the leading men of the land. He took them from Jerusalem to Babylon as captives. ¹⁶There were also 7000 soldiers. Nebuchadnezzar took away all the soldiers and 1000 of the skilled workers and craftsmen. All these men were trained soldiers, ready for battle. He took them to Babylon as captives. ¹⁷Then the king of Babylon made Mattaniah the new king. Mattaniah was Jehoiachin's uncle. He changed his name to Zedekiah.

King Zedekiah

¹⁸Zedekiah was 21 years old when he began to rule. He ruled for eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah from Libnah. ¹⁹Zedekiah did what the LORD says is evil. He did all the same things that Jehoiakim had done. ²⁰The LORD became so angry with Jerusalem and Judah that he completely rejected them and sent them all away.

Nebuchadnezzar Ends Zedekiah's Rule

Zedekiah rebelled and refused to obey the king of Babylon.

25 So King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and all his army came to fight against Jerusalem. This happened on the tenth day of the tenth month of Zedekiah's ninth year as king.

Nebuchadnezzar put his army around Jerusalem to stop people from going in and out of the city. Then he built ramps against the walls for an attack. ²His army stayed around Jerusalem until Zedekiah's eleventh year as king of Judah. ³The famine was getting worse and worse in the city. By the ninth day of the fourth month, there was no more food for the people in the city.

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

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

Jerusalem Is Destroyed

⁸Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem on the seventh day of the fifth month of his nineteenth year as king of Babylon. The captain of Nebuchadnezzar's best soldiers was Nebuzaradan. ⁹Nebuzaradan burned the LORD's Temple, the king's palace and all the houses in Jerusalem. He destroyed all the important buildings in the city.

¹⁰Then the Babylonian army that was with Nebuzaradan pulled down the

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

¹³The Babylonian soldiers broke into pieces the bronze pillars in the LORD's Temple. They also broke the bronze stands and the large bronze basin called "the sea" that were in the LORD's Temple. They took all the bronze to Babylon. ¹⁴They also took the pots, the shovels, the tools for trimming the lamps, the spoons and all the bronze dishes that were used in the Temple. ¹⁵Nebuzaradan took all the firepans and bowls and all the things made of gold or silver. ¹⁶⁻¹⁷Nebuzaradan took the large bronze basin and the 2 bronze pillars. Each pillar was about 8 metres[†] tall. The capitals on the pillars were almost 1.5 metres[‡] tall. They were made from bronze and had a design like a net decorated with pomegranates. Both pillars had the same kind of design. He also took the stands that Solomon made for the LORD's Temple. The bronze from these things was too heavy to be weighed.

The People of Judah Taken as Captives

¹⁸Also from the Temple, Nebuzaradan took Seraiah the high priest, Zephaniah the second priest and the three doorkeepers.

¹⁹From the city, Nebuzaradan took one official who was in charge of the army and five of the king's advisers[¶] who were still in the city. He took one secre-

[†]25:16-17 *8 metres* Literally, "18 cubits".

[‡]25:16-17 *1.5 metres* Literally, "3 cubits".

[¶]25:19 *king's advisers* Literally, "men who saw the king's face".

tary of the commander of the army who was in charge of counting the common people and choosing some of them to be soldiers. He also took 60 people who just happened to be in the city.

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

Gedaliah, Governor of Judah

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

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

²⁵ Ishmael son of Nethaniah son of Elishama was from the king's family. In the seventh month, Ishmael and ten of his men attacked Gedaliah and killed all the men of Judah and the Babylonians who were with Gedaliah at Mizpah.

²⁶ Then the army officers and all the people ran away to Egypt. Everyone, from the least important to the most important, ran away because they were afraid of the Babylonians.

²⁷ King Jehoiachin of Judah was in prison in Babylon for thirty-seven years. In the thirty-seventh year of his time in prison, Evil Merodach became king of Babylon. Before the year ended, on the twenty-fifth day of the twelfth month, the king was very kind to Jehoiachin and let him out of prison. ²⁸ Evil Merodach was friendly to Jehoiachin. He gave Jehoiachin a place of honour higher than the other kings who had also been taken as captives to Babylon. ²⁹ So Jehoiachin was allowed to stop wearing prison clothes. And for the rest of his life, he ate regularly at the king's table.

³⁰ The king gave Jehoiachin enough to take care of his needs every day until the end of his life.