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Ezekiel

The prophet Ezekiel lived during the time that King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon invaded Judah and destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem. Ezekiel was probably among the first people taken as captives to Babylon. Ezekiel's world was falling apart. During his time, the Temple, God's special place in the world, was destroyed. The king in Judah, God's special representative in the world, was taken away. And the homeland God had promised his people was being taken from them. Ezekiel lived through many of the worst events in the history of ancient Israel. And now his people wondered what all these terrible events meant. Had God broken his promises to his people?

Ezekiel was a priest. So it is not surprising that his prophecy is about things that would be important to a priest. He speaks out against his own people because of their many sins. He is concerned about the worship of idols. His people were worshipping at the same places where other people worshipped false gods. He warns them that God will judge them for this. Ezekiel also criticizes God's people for not keeping their promise to rest on the Sabbath Day. God had commanded them to make the Sabbath a special day. But they considered it like any other day of work. Ezekiel also told the men of Israel that their sexual behaviour made the whole nation unclean. Instead of being faithful to their wives, they had other sexual partners, including prostitutes.

Much of what Ezekiel has to say is in the form of strange symbols and word pictures. This is because the messages he received from God were in the form of symbolic visions. With these messages he warns his people that God will punish them. He does not see that there is anything he or they can do to please God. It is too late to stop the coming judgement. Jerusalem will be destroyed, and its people will all be taken to Babylon. There is nothing they can do on their own. Their only hope is to turn to God. So this is what Ezekiel told them to do. But they did not do what Ezekiel advised before they were punished by being taken as captives to Babylon.

Ezekiel also promises that better times will come. This will happen, he says, because God is faithful to keep his promises. He reminds his people of God's promise to give them "a new heart and a new spirit". When this happens, they will be able to understand what they have done wrong and feel sorry for it. With this "new heart," that is, this new way of thinking and living, God's people will enjoy his blessing. They will live in a city with a new Temple, where God himself will again live among them.

The book of Ezekiel is God's message...

Against Israel (1:1 – 24:27)

Against other nations (25:1 – 32:32)

About hope for the future (33:1 – 48:35)

Introduction

1¹⁻³I am Ezekiel the priest, son of Buzi. I was in Babylon by the Kebar River with the other people of Judah who had been taken there as cap-

tives. It was in the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity. On the fifth day of the fourth month of my thirtieth year,* the skies opened up, and I saw visions of God. A message from the LORD came to me, and I felt the power of the LORD come over me there.

The Chariot of the Lord—God's Throne

⁴I was watching a big storm come in from the north. It was a big cloud with a strong wind, and there was fire flashing from it. Light was shining out all around it. It looked like hot metal[†] glowing in a fire. ⁵Inside the cloud, there were four living beings that looked like people. ⁶But each one of them had four faces and four wings. ⁷Their legs were straight. Their feet looked like calves' hooves, and they sparkled like polished brass. ⁸Each of the four living beings had four faces and four wings, and they had human arms under their wings. ⁹They brushed against each other with the tips of their wings. And each one moved straight ahead without changing direction.

¹⁰Each living being had four faces. In the front they each had a man's face. There was a lion's face on the right side and a bull's face on the left side. An eagle's face was on the back. ¹¹Their wings were spread out over them. With two of the wings each living being

reached out to touch the one near it, and with the other two wings it covered its body. ¹²Each living being moved straight ahead. They went wherever the spirit[‡] caused them to go, and they did not change direction.

¹³In the area between[¶] the living beings, there was something that looked like burning coals of fire. This fire was like small torches that kept moving around among the living beings. The fire glowed brightly and lightning flashed from it. ¹⁴The living beings ran back and forth, as fast as lightning.[§]

^{15–16}I was looking at the living beings when I noticed four wheels that touched the ground. There was one wheel by each living being. All the wheels were made to look the same. They sparkled like precious jewels. Each wheel seemed to have another wheel sitting sideways inside it. ¹⁷They could turn to move in any direction. But they did not turn when they moved.** ¹⁸The rims of the wheels were tall and frightening, and they were covered with eyes.

¹⁹The wheels always moved with the living beings. If the living beings went up into the air, the wheels went with them. ²⁰The living beings went wherever the spirit wanted them to go. And the wheels went with them, because the spirit that was in the living beings was also in the wheels. ²¹So if the living beings moved, the wheels moved. If the liv-

***1:3 fifth day ... year** If the year refers to Ezekiel's age, this is the same as the fifth year of captivity, that is, July 31, 593 BC.

[†]**1:4 hot metal** The Hebrew word might mean "melted copper", "an alloy of gold and silver" or "amber". Also in verse 27.

[‡]**1:12 spirit** Or "wind". Also in verse 20.

[¶]**1:13 In the area between** This is from the ancient Greek version. The traditional Hebrew text has "And the form of".

[§]**1:14** Or "And there was something like lightning shooting back and forth among the living beings."

****1:17 They could turn ... when they moved** Or "The wheels could move in any four directions, but they did not turn when they moved."

ing beings stopped, the wheels stopped. If the wheels went into the air, the living beings went with them, because the spirit was in the wheels.

²² An amazing thing was spread out over the heads of the living beings. It was like a clear, crystal dome.^{††} ²³ Under this dome, each living being had two of its wings reaching out to touch the wings of the living beings on each side of it. And each living being had its other two wings turned down to cover its body.

²⁴ Then I heard the wings. Every time the living beings moved, their wings made a very loud noise like a lot of water rushing by. They were loud like God All-Powerful. They were as loud as an army or a crowd of people. When the living beings stopped moving, they put their wings down by their side.

²⁵ The living beings stopped moving and lowered their wings. Then there was another loud sound that came from above the dome over their heads.

²⁶ Above the dome was something that looked like a throne made from a blue gem. There was also a figure that looked like a man sitting on the throne. ²⁷ From his waist up, the figure was glowing like hot metal in the middle of a fire. From his waist down, it looked like fire with a glow that was shining all around him.

²⁸ The light shining around him was like a rainbow in a cloud. It was the glory of the LORD. As soon as I saw it, I bowed down with my face to the ground, and I heard a voice speaking to me.

The Lord Speaks to Ezekiel

2 The voice said to me: “Son of man,^{‡‡} stand up and I will speak with you.”

² Then the Spirit came into me^{¶¶} and lifted me up on my feet, and I listened to the one who spoke to me. ³ He said to me: “Son of man, I am sending you to speak to the people of Israel. Those people and their ancestors turned against me many times. They have sinned against me many times—and they are still sinning against me today. ⁴ I am sending you to speak to them, but they are very stubborn. They are very hard-headed, but you must speak to them. You must say: This is what the Lord GOD says. ⁵ They are people who refuse to obey, so they may not listen to you. But even if they don’t stop sinning, at least they will know that there is a prophet living among them.

⁶ “Son of man, don’t be afraid of the people or what they say. It is true that they will turn against you and try to hurt you. Their words will be sharp like thorns and will sting like scorpions. But don’t be afraid of what they say. They are people who refuse to obey, but don’t be afraid of them. ⁷ You must tell them what I say, whether they listen or not. They are people who usually refuse to listen!

⁸ “Son of man, listen to what I am telling you. Don’t turn against me like those people who refuse to obey. Now open your mouth to receive the words I will give you to speak.”

⁹ Then I saw a hand reach out towards me. It was holding a scroll with words

^{††}1:22 *dome* This Hebrew word is the same word used in Gen. 1:6-7 to describe the dome of the sky.

^{‡‡}2:1 *Son of man* This was usually just a way of saying “a person” or “a human being”. Here, it is a way of addressing Ezekiel, as one the Lord chose to be his prophet. It is used in this sense throughout this book.

^{¶¶}2:2 *the Spirit came into me* Or “a wind came”.

written on it. ¹⁰The hand unrolled the scroll in front of me. Words were on the front and on the back of the scroll. There were all kinds of sad songs, sad stories and warnings.

3 Then God said to me: “Son of man, eat what you see. Eat this scroll, and then go and tell these things to the people of Israel.” ²So I opened my mouth, and he put the scroll into my mouth. ³Then God said: “Son of man, I am giving you this scroll. Swallow it! Let that scroll fill your body.” So I ate the scroll. It was as sweet as honey in my mouth.

⁴Then God said to me: “Son of man, go to the people of Israel. Speak my words to them. ⁵I am not sending you to people whose language you cannot understand and is difficult to learn. I am sending you to the people of Israel. ⁶There are many places in the world I could send you where people speak languages that are strange and difficult to learn. But I am sure that even if I sent you there, they would listen to you. ⁷But I am sending you to the people of Israel who are too stubborn and hard-headed to listen. They will not listen to me, so they will not listen to you. ⁸But I will make you just as stubborn and hard-headed as they are. ⁹They have turned against me, but you have no reason to be afraid of them. No matter what they do, you will continue to speak without fear. You will be like a diamond that is harder than flint stone.”

¹⁰Then God said to me: “Son of man, listen to every word I say to you and remember them. ¹¹Then go to all your people in captivity and tell them: ‘This is what the Lord GOD says.’ Even if they will not listen and will not stop sinning, you still must tell them my message.”

¹²Then the Spirit^{§§} lifted me up, and I heard a voice behind me. It was very loud, like thunder. It said, “Blessed is the glory of the LORD!” ¹³Then the wings of the living beings began moving. The wings made a very loud noise as they touched each other, and the wheels in front of them began making a noise as loud as thunder. ¹⁴The Spirit lifted me and took me away. I was angry and upset as I went, but I was under the LORD’s control. ¹⁵I went to the people of Israel who were forced to live in Tel Abib* by the Kebar River. I sat there among them for seven days, shocked and silent.

The Watchman of Israel

¹⁶After seven days, the LORD spoke to me and said: ¹⁷“Son of man, I am making you a watchman for Israel. I will tell you about bad things that will happen to them, and you must warn Israel. ¹⁸If I say, ‘These evil people will die!’ Then you must warn them. You must tell them to change their lives and stop doing evil. If you don’t warn them, they will die because they sinned. But I will also make you responsible for their death, because you did not go to them and save their lives.

¹⁹“If you warn them to change their lives, but they refuse to stop doing evil, they will die because of their sins. But you will save your own life by doing what I told you to do.

²⁰“If good people change and start doing evil, I will finally do something that makes them stumble and fall. If you do not warn them before that happens, they will die because of their sin. I will not remember any of the good they did, and I will hold you responsible for their death.

§§3:12 *Spirit* Or “wind”. Also in verse 24.

*3:15 *Tel Abib* This was a place in Babylonia. The name means “mound of the flood”.

²¹ “You must warn good people not to sin. If they listen to your warning and do not sin, they will live. And by warning them, you will save your own life.”

²² The LORD’s power came to me. He said to me, “Get up and go to the valley.[†] I will speak to you in that place.”

²³ So I got up and went out to the valley. The glory of the LORD was there—as I had seen it by the Kebar River. So I bowed down with my face to the ground. ²⁴ But the Spirit came into me and lifted me onto my feet. He said to me, “Go home and lock yourself in your house. ²⁵ Son of man, people will come with ropes and tie you up. They will not let you go out among the people. ²⁶ I will make your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth. You will not be able to speak. So you will not be able to warn those who have turned against me. ²⁷ But when I have a message for you, I will make you able to speak. Then you must say to them, ‘This is what the Lord GOD says.’ Those who want to hear my message will listen. But those who have turned against me will refuse to listen.

Warnings About the Attack of Jerusalem

4 “Son of man, take a brick and scratch a picture on it. Draw a picture of a city—the city of Jerusalem. ² Pretend that the brick is the city and show how an army would attack it. Build a wall around it for the attacking army. Build a ramp up against it, pretending that it is the city wall. And prepare battering

rams[‡] for the attack. Set up army camps around the brick—the city. ³ And then take an iron pan and put it between you and the city. It will be like an iron wall separating you and the city. In this way, you will show that you are against the city of Jerusalem and are attacking it. Do this as a warning for the people of Israel.

⁴ “Then you must lie down on your left side as a sign that you are taking the sins of the people of Israel on yourself. You will carry the guilt for as many days as you lie on your left side. ⁵ You must suffer for the guilt of Israel for 390 days.[¶] This shows how long Israel will be punished—one year for each day.

⁶ “After that time, you will lie on your right side and suffer for the guilt of Judah for 40 days. Again, this shows how long Judah will be punished—one year for each day.

⁷ “Now, roll up your sleeve and raise your arm over the brick. Act as if you are attacking the city of Jerusalem. Do this to show that you are speaking as my messenger to the people. ⁸ Now look, I am tying ropes on you. You will not be able to roll over from one side to another until your attack against the city[§] is finished.

⁹ “You must get some grain to make bread. Get some wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet and spelt. Mix all these things together in one bowl and grind them to make flour. You will use this flour to make bread. You will eat only this bread during the 390 days that you lie on your side. ¹⁰ You will be allowed

[†]3:22 *the valley* Possibly, Jezreel Valley, a fertile area where many battles were fought. It is often called simply “The Valley”.

[‡]4:2 *battering rams* Heavy logs that soldiers used to break down gates or break holes in the walls of a city.

[¶]4:5 *390 days* The ancient Greek version has “190 days”.

[§]4:8 *your attack against the city* This is a wordplay. The Hebrew word can mean “famine”, “time of trouble” or “attack against a city”.

to use only 230 grammes** of that flour each day to make bread. You will eat that bread from time to time throughout the day.¹¹ You can drink half a litre†† of water each day. You can drink it from time to time throughout the day.¹² You must make your bread each day. You must get dry human dung and burn it. Then you must cook the bread over this burning dung. You must eat this bread in front of the people.”¹³ Then the LORD said, “This will show that the people of Israel will eat unclean bread in foreign countries and that I am the one who forced them to leave Israel and go there!”

¹⁴ Then I said, “Oh, but Lord GOD, I have never eaten any unclean food. I have never eaten meat from an animal that died from a disease or from an animal that was killed by a wild animal. I have never eaten unclean meat—not from the time that I was a little baby until now. None of that meat ever entered my mouth.”

¹⁵ Then God said to me, “Very well, I will let you use dry cow dung to cook your bread. You don’t have to use dry human dung.”

¹⁶ Then he said to me, “Son of man, I am destroying Jerusalem’s supply of bread. People will have only a little bread to eat. They will be very worried about their food supply. They will have only a little water to drink, and every time they take a drink, they will feel more afraid.¹⁷ That is because there will not be enough food and water for everyone. They will be terrified as they watch each other wasting away because of their sins.

People of Jerusalem Scattered

5¹⁻² “Son of man, after your attack, take a sharp sword and use it like a barber’s razor. Shave off your hair and beard. Put the hair on a scale and weigh it. Separate it into three equal parts. Put a third of your hair on the brick that has the picture of the city on it. Burn that hair in that ‘city’. Then use the sword and cut a third of your hair into small pieces all around the outside of the ‘city’. Next, throw a third of your hair into the air and let the wind blow it away. This will show that I will pull out my sword and chase some of the people into far-away countries.³ But then you must get a few of those hairs and wrap them up in your robe.⁴ Take some of those hairs and throw them into the fire. This will show that a fire will start there and burn throughout the whole nation of Israel.”^{††}

⁵ Then the Lord GOD said to me, “The brick is a picture of Jerusalem. I put Jerusalem in the middle of other nations with countries all around her.⁶ The people refused to obey my commands. They were worse than any of the other nations! They broke more of my laws than any of the people in the countries around them. They refused to listen to my commands. They did not obey my laws.

⁷ “So the Lord GOD says: I will do this because you did not obey my laws and commands. You broke more of my laws than the people who lived around you, and you did what even they know is wrong!⁸ So the Lord GOD says: So now, even I am against you! I will punish you while those other people watch.⁹ Because of the disgusting things you do, I

** 4:10 230 grammes Literally, “20 shekels”.

†† 4:11 half a litre Literally, “1/6 hin”.

†† 5:4 nation of Israel Literally, “house of Israel”. This probably means the people of the northern ten tribes of Israel.

will do things to you that I have never done before or will ever do again.¹⁰ People in Jerusalem will be so hungry that parents will eat their own children, and children will eat their own parents. I will punish you in many ways, and those who are left alive, I will scatter to the winds.

¹¹“So the Lord GOD says: Jerusalem, as surely as I live, I will punish you because of the disgusting things you did to my Holy Place. The disgraceful idols you brought in to worship there have made it filthy. So I will not show you any mercy or feel sorry for you.¹² A third of your people will die inside the city from diseases and hunger. Another third will die in battle outside the city. And then I will pull out my sword and chase the last third of your people into faraway countries.¹³ You will suffer the full force of my terrible anger against you until I feel that you have been punished enough. And when I have finished showing my anger, you will know why I, the LORD, have spoken against you. You will see how deeply I was hurt because you were unfaithful to me.

¹⁴“Jerusalem, I will destroy you—you will be nothing but a pile of rocks. The people around you will make fun of you. Everyone who walks by will make fun of you.¹⁵ People around you will make fun of you, but you will also be a lesson for them. They will see that I was angry and punished you. I was very angry, and I warned you. I, the LORD, told you what I would do.¹⁶ I told you that I would send you terrible times of hunger to destroy you. I told you that I would take away your supply of food and that those times of hunger would come again and again.¹⁷ I told you that I would send famine and wild animals against you that would kill your children. I told you that disease and death would be everywhere in the city. I told you that I would bring

enemy soldiers to fight against you. I, the LORD, told you that all these things would happen!”

Prophecies Against Israel

6 Then a message from the LORD came to me again:²“Son of man, turn towards the mountains of Israel and speak against them for me.³ Tell them to listen to this message from the Lord GOD against the mountains of Israel. This is what the Lord GOD says to the hills and mountains and to the ravines and valleys: Look! I am bringing the enemy to fight against you. I will destroy your places of worship.⁴ Your altars will be broken to pieces. Your incense altars will be smashed, and I will kill your people in front of your idols.⁵ I will lay the dead bodies of the people of Israel in front of the idols they worship. And I will scatter your bones around your altars.⁶ Wherever your people live, the cities will be destroyed, and the places of worship will be ruined. Your altars will be torn down and made useless, your idols smashed to pieces. Your incense altars will be broken down. Everything you have made will be gone.⁷ Your people will be killed, and then you will know that I am the LORD!

⁸“But I will let a few of your people escape. I will scatter them and force them to live in other countries.⁹ And when they are taken as captives to those countries, they will remember me. They will remember how it broke my heart to see what they did. They turned away from me and chased after their filthy idols. They were unfaithful, like a woman who leaves her husband for another man. But the time will come when they will hate themselves for all the evil and disgusting things they have done.¹⁰ Then they will know that I am the LORD. Then they will know that if I say that I will do some-

thing, I will do it! They will know that I caused all the troubles that happened to them.

¹¹“Then the Lord GOD said to me: Clap your hands and stamp your feet. Speak against all the evil and disgusting things that the people of Israel have done. Warn them that they will be killed by disease and hunger. Tell them they will be killed in war. ¹²People far away will die from disease. People near this place will be killed with swords, and those who are left in the city will starve to death. They will feel the full force of my anger. ¹³They will see dead bodies in all the places they used to offer sweet-smelling sacrifices to their idols. Bodies will be scattered among the idols around their altars, in all their places of worship, on every high hill and mountain, and under every green tree and shady oak tree. When they see all these bodies, then they will know that I am the LORD. ¹⁴I will raise my arm over you and punish you and your people, wherever they live! I will destroy your country! It will be completely empty from the desert in the south to Riblah^f in the north. Then they will know that I am the LORD!”

Disaster Is Coming to Jerusalem

7 Then a message from the LORD came to me: ²“Now, son of man, here is a message from the Lord GOD. This message is for the land of Israel:

“The end!

The end is coming.

The whole country will be destroyed.

³Your end is coming now!

I will show how angry I am with you.

I will punish you for the evil things you have done.

I will make you pay for all the disgusting things you have done.

⁴I will not show you any mercy or feel sorry for you.

I will punish you for the way you have lived,

for the disgusting things you have done. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

⁵“This is what the Lord GOD says: There will be one disaster after another!

⁶The end is coming, and it will come quickly! ⁷You people living in Israel, disaster is coming. It is time for punishment. Those are not shouts of joy in the mountains. Those are cries of panic.

⁸Very soon now, I will show you how angry I am. You will suffer the full force of my anger. I will judge you for what you have done. I will make you pay for all your disgusting sins. ⁹I will not show you any mercy or feel sorry for you. You must pay for what you have done, so I will punish you for your disgusting sins. Then you will know that I, the LORD, am the one who is punishing you.

¹⁰“That time of punishment has come like a plant sprouting, budding and flowering. God has given the signal, the enemy is prepared, and their proud king is ready. ¹¹This violent man is ready to punish the evil people. There are many people in Israel—but he is not one of them. He is not a person in that crowd. He is not some important leader from them.

¹²“The time of punishment has come. The day is here. Those who buy things will no longer be interested in bargains, and those who sell will have no interest in making a profit. Nothing will matter except the terrible punishment that is happening to everyone. ¹³People who

^f6:14 *Riblah* Most Hebrew copies have “Diblah”.

have sold their property^{§§} will not live long enough to get their property back. God's message of warning is for everyone, and it will not be changed. Because of their sins, none of those evil people will escape with their lives.

¹⁴“They will blow the trumpet to warn the people. The people will get ready for battle, but they will not go out to fight because I will show the whole crowd how angry I am. ¹⁵The enemy with his sword is outside the city. Disease and hunger is inside the city. If some people go out into the fields, enemy soldiers will kill them. If they stay in the city, hunger and disease will destroy them.

¹⁶“But some people will escape. The survivors will run to the mountains, but they will not be happy. They will be sad for all their sins. They will cry and make sad noises like doves. ¹⁷They will be too tired and sad to raise their arms. Their legs will be like water. ¹⁸They will wear rags and be covered with fear. You will see the shame on every face. They will shave their heads to show their sorrow. ¹⁹They will throw their silver idols into the streets. They will treat their gold statues like dirty rags, because those idols will not be able to save them when the LORD shows his anger. Those things were nothing but a trap that caused the people to fall. They will not give food to the people or put food in their bellies.

²⁰“They used the beautiful jewellery that they were so proud of to make filthy idols—disgusting statues of their gods. So I will make all those things filthy to them. ²¹I will let foreigners come and take those things. The evil people of the world will come and steal all that wealth

and make it unclean. ²²And as these robbers invade the place where my treasure is and make it unclean, I will look the other way. I will not stop them.

²³“Get the chains ready for the captives! My people must be punished for all the murder and violence that has filled the land. ²⁴I will bring evil people from other nations, and they will take all the houses of the people of Israel. I will stop all you powerful people from being so proud. Those people from other nations will make all your places of worship unclean.

²⁵“You will shake with fear. You will look for peace, but there will be none. ²⁶You will hear one sad story after another—nothing but bad news. You will look for a prophet and ask him for a vision. The priests will have nothing to teach you, and the leaders will not have any good advice to give you. ²⁷Your king will be crying for the people who died. The leaders will wear rags. The people will be frightened, because I will pay them back for what they did. I will decide their punishment, and I will punish them. Then they will know that I am the LORD.”

Sinful Things Done at the Temple

8 One day I, Ezekiel, was sitting in my house, and the leaders of Judah were sitting there in front of me. This was on the fifth day of the sixth month of the sixth year of captivity.* Suddenly, the power of the Lord GOD took control of me. ²I saw something that looked like fire, like a man's body. From the waist down, he was like fire. From the waist up, he was bright and shining like

§§7:13 *sold their property* In ancient Israel property did not belong to a person, it belonged to a family. People might sell their property, but at the time of Jubilee their family would get the land back. Here, Ezekiel says the people will never get their property again.

*8:1 *sixth year of captivity* This is the autumn of 592 BC.

hot metal[†] in a fire. ³Then I saw something that looked like an arm. The arm reached out and grabbed me by the hair on my head. Then the Spirit[‡] lifted me into the air, and in a vision from God, he took me to Jerusalem. He took me to the inner gate, the gate on the north side. The statue that has made God jealous is by that gate. ⁴But the glory of the God of Israel was there. The glory looked just like the vision I saw in the valley by the Kebar River.

⁵God said to me: “Son of man, look towards the north.” So I looked, and there, north of the Altar Gate by the entrance, was that statue that has made God jealous.

⁶Then he said to me: “Son of man, do you see what disgusting things the people of Israel are doing? Their worship of those filthy idols is forcing me to leave my holy place! And if you come with me, you will see things that are even more disgusting than this!”

⁷He took me to the entrance of the Temple courtyard, and I saw a hole in the wall. ⁸God said to me: “Son of man, make that hole in the wall bigger.” So I dug out more of the wall, and soon I saw that it was a doorway. ⁹Then he said to me: Go in and look at the evil, disgusting things that the people are doing here. ¹⁰So I went in and looked. I saw statues of all kinds of reptiles[§] and animals that you hate to think about. The statues were the filthy idols that the people of Israel worshipped. There were pictures of

those animals carved all around on every wall!

¹¹Then I noticed that Jaazaniah son of Shaphan and the 70 leaders of Israel were there with the people worshipping in that place. There they were, right at the front of the people, and each leader had his own incense dish in his hand. The smoke from the burning incense was rising into the air. ¹²Then God said to me: “Son of man, do you see what the leaders of Israel do in the dark? Each man has a special room for his own false god. They say to themselves, ‘The LORD cannot see us. The LORD left this country.’” ¹³Then he said to me: “If you come with me, you will see these men doing things that are even more disgusting!”

¹⁴Then God led me to the entrance of the LORD’s Temple. This gate was on the north side. I saw women sitting and crying. They were sad about the false god Tammuz![§]

¹⁵God said to me: “Son of man, do you see what these women are doing? Come with me and you will see things that are even more disgusting than this!”

¹⁶Then he led me to the inner courtyard of the LORD’s Temple area. There I saw 25 men bowing down and worshipping. They were at the entrance to the LORD’s Temple between the porch and the altar, but they were facing the wrong way. Their backs were to the Holy Place. They were bowing down to worship the sun!

¹⁷Then God said to me: “Son of man, do you see this? The people of Judah

[†]8:2 *hot metal* The Hebrew word might mean “melted copper”, “an alloy of gold and silver” or “amber”.

[‡]8:3 *Spirit* Or “wind”.

[§]8:10 *reptiles* The Hebrew word can mean “lizards,” “snakes” and “all kinds of bugs and insects”.

[§]8:14 *Tammuz* People thought this false god died and his wife Ishtar asked everyone to be sad and cry with her. Ishtar hoped this would bring him back to life. This ceremony was on the second day of the fourth month (June/July). This month was named Tammuz because of this ceremony.

think my Temple is so unimportant that they will do these disgusting things here in my Temple! This country is filled with violence, and they constantly do things to make me angry. Look, they are wearing rings in their noses to honour the moon as a false god!** 18 I will show them my anger! I will not show them any mercy or feel sorry for them! They will shout to me, but I will refuse to listen to them!”

God’s Messengers Punish Jerusalem

9 Then I heard God shout, “Come here, you men in charge of punishing the city! And bring your weapons with you.”² Then I saw six men walking on the road from the upper gate. This gate is on the north side. Each man had his own deadly weapon in his hand. One of the men wore linen clothes.^{††} He wore a scribe’s pen and ink set^{‡‡} at his waist. Those men went to the bronze altar in the Temple and stood there.³ Then the glory of the God of Israel rose from above the winged creatures where he had been. The glory went to the door of the Temple and stopped when it was over the entrance. Then the LORD called to the man wearing the linen clothes and the scribe’s pen and ink set.

⁴ The LORD said to him: “Go through the city of Jerusalem. Put a mark on the forehead of everyone who feels sad and upset about all the disgusting things people are doing in this city.”

⁵⁻⁶ Then I heard God say to the other men: “I want you to follow the first man. You must kill all those who do not have the mark on their foreheads. It doesn’t

matter if they are old men, young men or young women, children or mothers—you must use your weapon and kill everyone who does not have the mark on their forehead. Don’t show any mercy. Don’t feel sorry for anyone. Start here at my Temple.” So they started with the leaders in front of the Temple.

⁷ He said to them: “Make this Temple unclean—fill this courtyard with dead bodies! Now go!” So they went and killed the people in the city.⁸ I stayed there while the men went to kill the people. I bowed down with my face to the ground and said, “Oh, Lord GOD, in showing your anger against Jerusalem, are you killing all the survivors in Israel?”

⁹ Then he said to me: “The people of Israel and Judah has committed many terrible sins! People are being murdered everywhere in this country, and the city is filled with crime. That is because the people say to themselves, ‘The LORD has left this country. The LORD cannot see what we are doing.’¹⁰ So I will not show any mercy or feel sorry for them. They have brought it on themselves. I am only giving them the punishment they deserve!”

¹¹ Then the man wearing linen clothes and a scribe’s pen and ink set spoke up: “I have done what you commanded.”

The Glory of the Lord Leaves the Temple

10 Then I looked up at the dome over the heads of the winged creatures. Above the dome I saw something that looked like a throne made

**8:17 *Look ... god* Or “Look at them putting that cut branch in their noses.”

††9:2 *linen clothes* Priests usually wore these clothes.

‡‡9:2 *scribe’s pen and ink set* A scribe was a person who copied official documents and counted supplies and other things. Scribes often carried a small board with dry ink in it and a pen. They could put water on the ink and then write with it. Also in verse 11.

from a blue gem. ²Then the one sitting on the throne said to the man dressed in linen clothes:^{¶¶} “Step into the area between the wheels^{§§} under the winged creatures. Take a handful of the burning coals from between the winged creatures and scatter them over the city of Jerusalem.”

The man walked past me. ³The winged creatures were standing in the area south* of the Temple as the man walked to them. The cloud filled the inner courtyard. ⁴Then the glory of the LORD rose up off the winged creatures and went over to the entrance of the Temple. The cloud filled the Temple, and the bright light from the glory of the LORD filled the whole courtyard. ⁵The noise from the wings of the creatures could be heard all the way out into the outer courtyard. The sound was very loud—like the thundering voice when God All-Powerful speaks.

⁶God had given the man dressed in linen clothes a command. He had told him to go into the area between the wheels among the winged creatures and get some hot coals. So the man went there and stood by the wheel. ⁷One of the winged creatures reached out his hand and took some of the hot coals from the area between the creatures. He poured the coals into the man’s hands, and the man left. ⁸(The winged creatures had what looked like human arms under their wings.)

⁹Then I noticed that there were four wheels, one by each winged creature. The wheels sparkled like precious jew-

els. ¹⁰All four wheels looked the same. Each wheel seemed to have another wheel sitting sideways inside it. ¹¹When the wheels moved, they went in whatever direction the creatures faced. They could go in any direction without turning. And the creatures went straight in the direction they were facing. ¹²The bodies of the creatures were covered with eyes—on their backs, arms and wings, and all over the wheels. ¹³I heard someone describe these wheels as “the wheels that spin”.

^{14–15}Each winged creature had four faces. The first was the face of a bull,[†] the second was the face of a man, the third was a lion’s face and the fourth was an eagle’s face. (These winged creatures were the living beings I saw in the vision by the Kebar River.[‡])

Then the winged creatures rose into the air, ¹⁶and the wheels rose with them. When they raised their wings and flew into the air, the wheels stayed beside them. ¹⁷When the winged creatures stood still, the wheels stood still. When they flew into the air, the wheels went with them because the spirit of the living beings was in them.

¹⁸Then the glory of the LORD rose from the entrance of the Temple, moved to the place over the winged beings and stopped there. ¹⁹Then the winged creatures raised their wings and flew into the air. I saw them leave, and the wheels went with them. They stopped at the East Gate of the LORD’s Temple. The glory of the God of Israel was in the air above them.

^{¶¶}**10:2 linen clothes** Priests usually wore these clothes.

^{§§}**10:2 area between the wheels** The Hebrew word can mean “chariot wheel”, “whirling (spinning) wheel” or “tumbling weed.” See chapter 1 for Ezekiel’s full description. Also in verse 6.

^{*}**10:3 south** Literally, “right”.

[†]**10:14-15 face of a bull** See Ezek. 1:10.

[‡]**10:14-15 vision by the Kebar River** See Ezek. 1.

²⁰These were the living beings under the glory of the God of Israel in the vision at the Kebar River. And now I realized that they were the winged creatures. ²¹Each living being had four faces, four wings and something that looked like human arms under their wings. ²²The faces of the winged creatures were the same as the four faces on the living beings in the vision by the Kebar River. They all looked straight ahead in the direction they were going.

Prophecies Against the Leaders

11 Then the Spirit^f carried me to the east gate of the LORD's Temple. This gate faces the east, and I saw 25 men there at the entrance of this gate. Some of the leaders were among them, including Jaazaniah son of Azzur and Pelatiah son of Benaiah.

²God said to me: "Son of man, these are the men who make evil plans for this city. They always tell the people to do evil things. ³They say, 'There is no need for us to build houses now. We are as safe in this city as meat in a pot!' ⁴So you must speak to the people for me. Son of man, prophesy against these evil men."

⁵Then the Spirit of the LORD took control of me. He said to me: "Tell them that this is what the LORD said: People of Israel, you are planning big things. But I know what you are thinking. ⁶You have caused many people in this city to be killed. You have filled the streets with dead bodies. ⁷Now, the Lord GOD says this: The dead bodies are the meat, and the city is the pot. But I[§] will come and take you out of this pot. ⁸You are afraid of the sword, but I am bringing the sword against you! This is what the Lord GOD says.

⁹"I will take you out of this city and give you to foreigners. I will punish you. ¹⁰You will die by the sword. I will punish you within the borders of Israel so that you will know that I am the LORD. ¹¹You thought you would be protected in this city, like meat in a pot. But you will not be safe here. I will punish you within the borders of Israel. ¹²Then you will know that I am the LORD. It was my law that you broke. You did not obey my commands. You decided to live like the nations around you."

¹³As soon as I finished speaking for God, Pelatiah son of Benaiah died! I bowed down with my face to the ground and said, "Oh, Lord GOD, you are going to completely destroy all the survivors of Israel!"

God Will Bring His People Back

¹⁴But then the LORD spoke to me and said: ¹⁵"Son of man, the people still living in Jerusalem are saying bad things about your family, your relatives and all the people of Israel who have been taken away as captives. They say, 'Those people are far away from the LORD. This land has now been given to us—it is ours!'

¹⁶"So tell them that this is what the Lord GOD says: It is true that I forced my people to go far away to other nations. I scattered them among other countries. But I will be their temple for a short time while they are in those other countries. ¹⁷But you must tell those people that the Lord GOD will bring them back. I have scattered you among many nations, but I will gather you and bring you back from those nations. I will give the land of Israel back to you. ¹⁸When my people come back, they will destroy all the dis-

^f11:1 *Spirit* Or "wind".

[§]11:7 *I* This is found in some Hebrew copies. Other copies have "he" or "someone".

gusting, filthy idols that are here now. ¹⁹I will bring them together and make them like one person. I will put a new Spirit** in them. I will take away that heart of stone, and I will put a real heart in its place. ²⁰Then they will obey my laws and my commands. They will do the things I tell them. They will be my people, and I will be their God. ²¹But now, their hearts belong to those disgusting, filthy idols, and I must punish them for what they have done. This is what the Lord GOD says.”

The Glory of God Leaves Jerusalem

²²Then the winged creatures raised their wings and flew into the air. The wheels went with them. The glory of the God of Israel was above them. ²³The glory of the LORD rose into the air and left the city and stopped on the hill east of Jerusalem.†† ²⁴Then the Spirit lifted me into the air and brought me back to Babylonia. It brought me back to the people who were forced to leave Israel. I saw all this in the vision from God. Then the one I saw in the vision rose into the air and left me. ²⁵Then I spoke to the people in captivity. I told them about everything the LORD had shown me.

A Picture of Israel's Captivity

12 Then the LORD spoke to me: ²“Son of man, you live among people who refuse to obey me. They have eyes to see what I have done for them, but they don't see those things. They have ears to hear what I told them to do, but they will not listen. They are people who refuse to obey. ³So, son of man, pack some things as if you are leaving on a journey. Pretend you are a captive being taken far away. Do this dur-

ing the day so that everyone can see you. Even though these people refuse to listen to me, maybe when they see you going away, they will understand what I have been trying to tell them.

⁴“During the day, take your bags outside so that the people can see you. Then in the evening, pretend you are going away. Act as if you are a captive going to a faraway country. ⁵While the people are watching, make a hole in the wall and go out through that hole. ⁶At night, put your bag on your shoulder and leave. Cover your face so that you cannot see where you are going. You must do these things so that the people can see you, because I am using you as a warning sign for the people of Israel.”

⁷So I did as I was commanded. During the day, I took my bags and acted as if I were going to a faraway country. That evening, I used my hands and made a hole in the wall. During the night, I put my bag on my shoulder and left. I did this so that all the people could see me.

⁸The next morning, the LORD spoke to me: ⁹“Son of man, did the people of Israel—those people who always refuse to obey—ask you what you were doing? ¹⁰Tell them that this is what the Lord GOD says: This sad message is about the leader of Jerusalem and all the people of Israel who live there. ¹¹Tell them: ‘I am a warning sign for all of you. What I have done will happen to you.’ You will be forced to go to a faraway country as captives. ¹²And your leader will make a hole in the wall and sneak out at night. He will cover his face so that people will not recognize him. His eyes will not be able to see where he is going. ¹³He will try to escape, but I will catch him! He will be caught in my trap. Then I will

** 11:19 *Spirit* Or “wind”. Also in verse 24.

†† 11:23 *hill east of Jerusalem* This is the Mount of Olives.

bring him to Babylonia, the land of the Babylonians. But he will not be able to see where he is going.^{‡‡} ¹⁴I will force the king's people to live in the foreign countries around Israel, and I will scatter his army to the winds. The enemy soldiers will chase after them. ¹⁵Then they will know that I am the LORD. They will know that I scattered them among the nations. They will know that I forced them to go to other countries.

¹⁶"But I will let a few of the people live. They will not die from disease, hunger or war. I will let them live so that they can tell the foreigners who take them away what disgusting things they did against me. Then they will know that I am the LORD."

Shake With Fear

¹⁷Then the LORD spoke to me: ¹⁸"Son of man, you must act as if you are very frightened. You must shake when you eat your food. You must act worried and afraid when you drink your water. ¹⁹You must say this to the common people: "This is what the Lord GOD says to the people living in Jerusalem and in the other parts of Israel. You will be very worried while you eat your food. You will be terrified while you drink your water, because everything in your country will be destroyed! This will happen because the people living there are so violent. ²⁰Many people live in your cities now, but those cities will be ruined. Your whole country will be destroyed! Then you will know that I am the LORD."

Disaster Will Come

²¹Then the LORD spoke to me: ²²"Son of man, why do people quote this saying about the land of Israel: "Trouble will not

come soon; what is seen in visions will not come?"

²³"Tell the people that the Lord GOD will end that saying. They will not say that about Israel any more. Now they will quote this saying: "Trouble will come soon; what is seen in visions will happen."

²⁴"There will not be any more false visions in Israel. There will not be any more magicians telling things that don't come true. ²⁵That's because I am the LORD, and if I say something will happen, it will happen! I will not wait any longer. Those troubles are coming soon—in your own lifetime. Hear me, you people who always refuse to obey! When I say something, I make it happen. This is what the Lord GOD says."

²⁶Then the LORD spoke to me: ²⁷"Son of man, the people of Israel think that the visions I give you are for a time far in the future. They think you are talking about things that will happen many years from now. ²⁸So you must tell them this, "The Lord GOD says: I will not delay any longer. If I say something will happen, it will happen! This is what the Lord GOD says."

Warnings Against False Prophets

13 Then the LORD spoke to me: ²"Son of man, you must speak to the prophets of Israel for me. They are only saying what they want to say. You must speak to them. Tell them to listen to this message from the LORD! ³This is what the Lord GOD says: Bad things will happen to you foolish prophets. You are following your own spirits. You are not telling people what you really see in visions. ⁴Israel, your prophets are false prophets. They are like jackals hunting for food among the ruins of a city.

^{‡‡}12:13 *But he ... is going* The enemy will poke out his eyes and make him blind.

⁵ You have not put guards where the city walls are broken. And you have not repaired the walls of the city. You have done nothing to help the people of Israel stand strong in the battle on the LORD's day of judgement! ⁶ The visions your prophets say they have seen are false. Their fortune-telling is all a lie. They say they speak for the LORD, but I did not send them. And they still expect me to make their prophecies happen. ⁷ If you prophets saw visions, they were not true. And all you got from your fortune-telling was lies! So how can you say that the LORD told you those things? I did not speak to you!

⁸ "So now, this is what the Lord GOD says: You told lies. You saw visions that were not true. So now I am against you! ⁹ I will punish those prophets who tell their false visions and lie about the future. I will remove them from my people. Their names will not be in the list of the people of Israel. They will never again come to the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the Lord GOD!

¹⁰ "Again and again those false prophets lied to my people. They said there would be peace, but there is no peace. The people need to repair the walls and prepare for war. But they only slap a thin coat of plaster[¶] over the broken walls. ¹¹ Tell them that I will send hail and a strong rain. A stormy wind will cause the wall to fall down. ¹² When the wall falls down, the people will ask the prophets, 'What happened to the plaster you put on the wall?'

¹³ "So this is what the Lord GOD says: I am angry, and I will send a storm against you. I am angry, and I will send a strong rain and make hail fall from the sky and completely destroy you! ¹⁴ You

put plaster on the wall, but I will destroy the whole wall. I will pull it to the ground. The wall will fall on you, and then you will know that I am the LORD. ¹⁵ I will finish showing my anger against the wall and those who put plaster on it. Then I will say, 'There is no wall, and there are no workers to put plaster on it.' ¹⁶ All these things will happen to the false prophets of Israel. They speak to the people of Jerusalem and say there will be peace, but there is no peace. This is what the Lord GOD says.

¹⁷ "Son of man, look at the women prophets in Israel. They say the things they want to say, so you must speak against them for me. ¹⁸ This is what the Lord GOD says: Bad things will happen to you women. You sew cloth bracelets for people to wear on their arms. You make special scarves for people to wear on their heads to control people's lives. You trap the people only to keep yourselves alive! ¹⁹ You make them think I am not important. You turn them against me for a few handfuls of barley and a few scraps of bread. You tell lies to my people who love to listen to lies. You kill those who should live, and you let people live who should die. ²⁰ So this is what the Lord GOD says to you: You make those cloth bracelets to trap people, but I will set them free. I will tear those bracelets off your arms, and the people will be free from you. They will be like birds flying from a trap. ²¹ And I will tear up those scarves and save my people from your power. They will escape from your trap, and you will know that I am the LORD.

²² "You prophets tell lies. Your lies hurt good people—I did not want them to be hurt! You support the wicked and

[¶]**13:10 plaster** A type of mud or cement that people used to cover a wall and make it smooth. This is also a wordplay. The Hebrew word is like the word meaning "It will fall." Also in verse 14.

encourage them. You don't tell them to change their lives. You don't try to save their lives! ²³ So you will not see any more useless visions or do any more magic. I will save my people from your power, and you will know that I am the LORD."

Warnings Against Idol Worship

14 Some of the leaders of Israel came to me. They sat down to talk with me. ² The LORD spoke to me: ³ "Son of man, these men came to talk to you. But they still have their filthy idols that made them sin. They still worship those statues, so why do they come to me for advice? Should I answer their questions? ⁴ But I will give them an answer. You must tell them this: 'This is what the Lord GOD says: If any Israelites come to a prophet and ask me for advice, I myself will answer their questions. I, the LORD, will answer them even if they still have their filthy idols, even if they kept the things that made them sin, and even if they still worship those statues. I will speak to them in spite of all their filthy idols. ⁵ I will do this because I want to win back the loyalty of the people of Israel, who have left me to worship their filthy idols.'

⁶ "So tell the people of Israel, 'This is what the Lord GOD says: Come back to me and leave your filthy idols. Turn away from those disgusting false gods. ⁷ If any Israelites or immigrants who live in Israel come to me for advice, I will give them an answer. I, the LORD, will answer them even if they still have their filthy idols, even if they have kept the things that made them sin, and even if they still worship those statues. This is the answer I will give them: ⁸ I will turn

against them and destroy them. They will be an example to others. People will laugh at them. I will remove them from my people. Then you will know that I am the LORD! ⁹ And if a prophet is foolish enough to give his own answer, I, the LORD, will show him how foolish he is! I will use my power against him. I will destroy him and remove him from among my people Israel. ¹⁰ So both the one who came for advice and the prophet who gave an answer will get the same punishment. ¹¹ I will do this so that the people of Israel will turn back to me and stop making themselves filthy with sin. Then they will be my people, and I will be their God. This is what the Lord GOD says."

Jerusalem Will Be Punished

¹² Then the LORD spoke to me: ¹³ "Son of man, imagine what I would do to any country whose people sin against me. I would punish them by destroying their food supply. I would cause a famine and let its people and animals starve to death. ¹⁴ Now, imagine that these three men lived in that country—Noah, Daniel and Job.^{§§} They could save their own lives by their goodness, but they could not save anyone else. This is what the Lord GOD says.

¹⁵ "Or what if I sent wild animals through that country to kill all the people? It would make that land such an empty and dangerous place that no one would go there. ¹⁶ Again, if Noah, Daniel and Job lived there, they could save only their own lives. As surely as I live, says the Lord GOD, those men could not save anyone else, not even their own sons or daughters! That evil country would be destroyed.

§§**14:14 Noah, Daniel and Job** Three men from ancient times. They were famous for being very good and wise men. Here, Daniel might be the Danel in the writings from Ras Shamra. Also in verses 16,18,20.

¹⁷“Or what if I sent an enemy army to fight against that country and destroy it? All the people and animals there would be killed. ¹⁸But what if Noah, Daniel and Job lived there? As surely as I live, says the Lord GOD, they would not be able to save even their own sons or daughters! They alone would be spared.

¹⁹“Or what if I poured out my anger on that country by sending a terrible disease to kill all its people and animals? ²⁰Again, what if Noah, Daniel and Job lived there? As surely as I live, says the Lord GOD, they could not save even their own sons or daughters! They could save their own lives by their goodness, but they could not save anyone else.

²¹“Yes, this is what the Lord GOD says: Think how bad it will be for Jerusalem. I will send all four of those punishments against that city! I will send enemy soldiers, famine, disease and wild animals against that city. I will remove all the people and animals. ²²Some of the people will escape. They will bring their sons and daughters and come to you for help. Then you will see how bad those people really are, and you will feel better about all the troubles that I am bringing to Jerusalem. ²³You will see how they live and all the bad things they do. Then you will know that I had a good reason for punishing them. This is what the Lord GOD says.”

Jerusalem, the Vine, Will Be Burned

15 Then the LORD spoke to me: ²“Son of man, are the pieces of wood from a grapevine* any better than the little branches cut from trees in the forest? ³You can’t use its wood to make anything, can you? It’s not even good for pegs to hang dishes on! ⁴It can be

used to make a fire. But after the ends burn and the middle is scorched, what then? ⁵If you can’t make anything from that wood before it is burned, you surely can’t make anything after it has been burned! ⁶The people of Jerusalem are as useless as the wood from the grapevines growing among the trees of the forest. So I will throw them into the fire to burn like that wood! This is what the Lord GOD says. ⁷I will punish those people. But some of them will be like the sticks that don’t burn completely. They will be punished, but they will not be destroyed completely. You will see that I punished them, and you will know that I am the LORD! ⁸I will destroy that country because the people left me to worship false gods. This is what the Lord GOD says.”

God’s Love for Jerusalem

16 Then the LORD spoke to me: ²“Son of man, warn the people of Jerusalem about the disgusting things they have done. ³Give them this message from the Lord GOD: Look at your history. You were born in Canaan. Your father was an Amorite. Your mother was a Hittite. ⁴Jerusalem, on the day you were born, there was no one to cut your navel cord. No one put salt on you and washed you to make you clean. No one wrapped you in cloth. ⁵No one felt sorry for you or took care of you. On the day you were born, your parents threw you out into the field, because no one wanted you.

⁶“Then I passed by. I saw you lying there, kicking in the blood. You were covered with blood, but I said, ‘Please live!’ Yes, you were covered with blood, but I said, ‘Please live!’ ⁷I helped you grow like a plant in the field. You grew

***15:2 grapevine** The prophets often compared Israel to a vineyard or grapevine. See verse 6.

and grew. You became a young woman: your periods began, your breasts grew, and your hair began to grow. But you were still bare and naked. ⁸I looked you over. I saw you were ready for love, so I spread my clothes over you[†] and covered your nakedness. I promised to marry you. I made the agreement[‡] with you, and you became mine. This is what the Lord GOD says.

⁹“I washed you in water. I poured water over you to wash away the blood that was on you, and then I put oil on your skin. ¹⁰I gave you a nice dress and soft leather sandals, a linen headband and a silk scarf. ¹¹I also gave you some jewellery. I put bracelets on your arms and a necklace around your neck. ¹²I gave you a nose ring, earrings and a beautiful crown to wear. ¹³You were beautiful in your gold and silver jewellery, and your linen, silk and embroidered material.[†] You ate the best foods. You were very, very beautiful, and you became the queen! ¹⁴You became famous for your beauty, all because I made you so lovely! This is what the Lord GOD says.

Jerusalem, the Unfaithful Bride

¹⁵“But you began to trust in your beauty. And as you became popular, you gave yourself as a prostitute to every man who passed by. Your beauty became his to enjoy! ¹⁶You took your beautiful clothes and used them to decorate the places where you worshipped idols. And that’s where you offered yourself as a prostitute. Nothing this bad

should ever happen! ¹⁷Then you took your beautiful jewellery that I gave you, and you used the gold and silver to make statues of men, and you had sex with them too! ¹⁸Then you took the beautiful cloth and made clothes for those statues. You took the perfume and incense I gave you and put it in front of those idols. ¹⁹I gave you bread, honey and oil, but you gave that food to your idols. You offered them as a sweet smell to please your false gods. This actually happened! This is what the Lord GOD says.

²⁰“You and I had children together, but you took our children. You killed them and gave them to those false gods! But that is only some of the evil things you did when you were unfaithful to me and went to those false gods. ²¹You slaughtered[§] my children and offered them as sacrifices to those false gods. ²²You left me and did all those disgusting things. You never remembered what happened when you were young. You did not remember that you were naked and kicking in blood when I found you.

²³“After all these evil things, it will be very bad for you! This is what the Lord GOD says. ²⁴After all those things, you made a mound for worshipping that false god. You built places for worshipping those gods on every street corner. ²⁵There you made your beauty a disgrace. You used it to catch every man who walked by. You raised your skirt so that they could see your legs, and you offered yourself as a prostitute to them. ²⁶Then you went to Egypt, your neigh-

[†]**16:8 spread my clothes over you** This showed that he was agreeing to protect her and care for her. See Ruth 3:1-15.

[‡]**16:8 agreement** Here, this means the marriage agreement. But it also refers to the agreement God made with the people of Israel. See agreement in the Word List.

[†]**16:13** All the materials in this list are the things used in building the Holy Tent. See Exod. 25 – 40.

[§]**16:21 slaughtered** This usually means to kill an animal and cut it into pieces for meat, but it often means to kill people as if they were animals.

bour that is always ready for sex. With more and more sexual sin, you made me angry. ²⁷ So I punished you! I took away part of your land. I let your enemies, the daughters of the Philistines, do what they wanted to you. Even they were shocked at the evil things you did. ²⁸ Then you went to have sex with Assyria. You could not get enough. You were never satisfied. ²⁹ So you turned to Babylonia, a land of merchants, and still you were not satisfied. ³⁰ You are so weak. You let all those men cause you to sin. You acted just like a prostitute who wants to be the one in control. This is what the Lord GOD says.

³¹ “But you were not exactly like a prostitute. You built your mounds at the head of every road, and you built your places for worship at every street corner. You had sex with all those men, but you did not ask them to pay you the way a prostitute does. ³² You are a woman guilty of adultery. You would rather have sex with strangers than with your own husband. ³³ Most prostitutes force men to pay them for sex, but you gave money to your many lovers. You paid all the men around to come in to have sex with you. ³⁴ You are just the opposite of most prostitutes who force men to pay them, because you pay the men to have sex with you.

³⁵ “Prostitute, listen to the message from the LORD. ³⁶ This is what the Lord GOD says: You have spent your wealth** and let your lovers see your naked body and have sex with you. You have worshipped those disgusting idols. And you have killed your children as offerings to those false gods. ³⁷ So I am bringing all of your lovers together. I will bring

all the men you loved and all the men you hated. I will bring them all together and let them see you naked.†† They will see you completely naked. ³⁸ Then I will punish you. I will punish you as a murderer and a woman who committed the sin of adultery. You will be punished as if by an angry and jealous husband. ³⁹ I will let those lovers have you. They will destroy your mounds. They will burn your places for worship. They will tear off your clothes and take your beautiful jewellery. They will leave you bare and naked. ⁴⁰ They will bring a crowd of people against you and throw rocks at you to kill you. Then they will cut you into pieces with their swords. ⁴¹ They will burn your house. They will punish you so that all the other women can see. I will stop you from living like a prostitute. I will stop you from paying money to your lovers. ⁴² Then I will stop being angry and jealous. I will calm down and not be angry any more. ⁴³ Why will all these things happen? Because you did not remember what I did for you when you were young. And you made me angry with all the evil things you did. So I had to punish you for those things. And now you have added sexual sin to all the other disgusting things you have done. This is what the Lord GOD says.

⁴⁴ “All the people who talk about you will now have one more thing to say. They will say, ‘Like mother, like daughter.’ ⁴⁵ You are your mother’s daughter. You don’t care about your husband or your children. You are like your sister. Both of you hated your husband and your children. Your mother was a Hittite and your father was an Amorite. ⁴⁶ Your older sister was Samaria. She lived to the

**16:36 *You have ... wealth* This might also mean “You have shown how very sinful you are.”

††16:37 *let them see you naked* The Hebrew words are like the words meaning “to be carried away as a prisoner to a foreign country”.

north of you with her daughters. Your younger sister was Sodom.^{‡‡} She lived to the south of you with her daughters.⁴⁷ You did all the disgusting things they did, but you also did much worse!⁴⁸ As surely as I live, says the Lord GOD, your sister Sodom and her daughters never did as many bad things as you and your daughters.

⁴⁹“Your sister Sodom and her daughters were proud. They had too much to eat and too much time on their hands, but they did not help poor, helpless people.⁵⁰ Sodom and her daughters became too proud and began to do things that were disgusting to me. So I punished them!

⁵¹“Even Samaria did not commit half the sins you did. You have done more disgusting things than they did! You have done so many more disgusting things than any of those people have done. In fact, Sodom and Samaria seem innocent compared to you.⁵² So you must accept your disgrace. You have made those people look good because your sins are more disgusting than theirs. So you should be ashamed and accept your disgrace, because you have made them seem innocent.

⁵³“I destroyed Sodom and the towns around it, and I destroyed Samaria and the towns around it. And I will destroy you too, Jerusalem. But I will again let the people of Sodom and Samaria enjoy great success. And I will make you successful as well.⁵⁴ I will comfort you. Then you will remember the disgusting things you have done, and you will be ashamed.⁵⁵ So you and your sisters will be rebuilt. Sodom and the towns around her, Samaria and the towns around her,

and you and the towns around you will all be rebuilt.

⁵⁶“In the past you were proud and made fun of your sister Sodom. But you will not do that again.⁵⁷ You did that before you were punished, before your neighbours started making fun of you. The daughters of Edom^{¶¶} and Philistia are making fun of you now.⁵⁸ Now you must suffer for the disgusting things you have done. This message is from the LORD.

God Remains Faithful

⁵⁹“This is what the Lord GOD says: I will treat you like you treated me! You broke your marriage promise. You did not respect our agreement.⁶⁰ But I will remember the agreement we made when you were young. I made an agreement with you that will continue forever!⁶¹ I will bring your sisters to you, and I will make them your daughters. That was not in our agreement, but I will do that for you. Then you will remember the disgusting things you have done, and you will be ashamed.⁶² So I will make my agreement with you, and you will know that I am the LORD.⁶³ You will remember me, and you will be so ashamed of the evil things you did that you will not be able to say anything. But I will make you pure, and you will never be ashamed again! This is what the Lord GOD says.”

The Eagle and the Vine

17 Then the LORD spoke to me:² “Son of man, I have a story with a hidden meaning for you to tell the people of Israel.³ Tell them that this is what the Lord GOD says:

^{‡‡}16:46 *Samaria ... Sodom* Ezekiel is saying the people in Judah are just as evil as the people who lived in Samaria and Sodom—and those people were so evil that God completely destroyed those cities.

^{¶¶}16:57 *Edom* Or “Aram”.

“A large eagle with big wings came to Lebanon.

He had feathers covered with spots.

⁴He broke the top off a big cedar tree and brought it to Canaan.

He set the branch down in a city of merchants.

⁵Then the eagle took some of the seeds from Canaan.

He planted them in good soil by a good river.

⁶The seeds grew and became a grapevine.

It was a good vine.

The vine was not tall, but it spread to cover a large area.

The vine grew stems, and smaller vines grew very long.

⁷Then another eagle with big wings saw the grapevine.

The eagle had many feathers.

The grapevine wanted this new eagle to care for it.

So it stretched its roots and branches towards the eagle.

Its branches stretched towards this eagle,

and the branches grew away from the field where it was planted.

The grapevine wanted the new eagle to water it.

⁸The grapevine was planted in a good field

near plenty of water.

It could have grown branches and fruit.

It could have become a very good grapevine.

⁹“This is what the Lord GOD says:

Do you think that plant will succeed?

No, the new eagle will pull the plant from the ground,

and the bird will break the plant’s roots. It will eat up all the grapes.

Then the new leaves will wilt.

That plant will be very weak.

It will not take strong arms

or a powerful nation to pull that plant up by the roots.

¹⁰Will the plant grow where it is planted?

No, the hot east wind will blow, and the plant will become dry and die.

It will die where it was planted.”

King Zedekiah Punished

¹¹The LORD spoke to me: ¹²“Explain this story to the people of Israel who always turn against me. Tell them that the first eagle is the king of Babylon. He came to Jerusalem and took away the king and other leaders. He brought them to Babylon. ¹³Then Nebuchadnezzar made an agreement with a man from the king’s family. Nebuchadnezzar forced that man to make a promise. So this man promised to be loyal to Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar made this man the new king of Judah. Then he took all the powerful men away from Judah. ¹⁴So Judah became a weak kingdom that could not turn against King Nebuchadnezzar. The people were forced to keep the agreement Nebuchadnezzar made with the new king of Judah. ¹⁵But this new king tried to rebel against Nebuchadnezzar anyway! He sent messengers to Egypt to ask for help. The new king asked for many horses and soldiers. Now, do you think the new king of Judah will succeed? Do you think the new king will have enough power to break the agreement and escape punishment?

¹⁶“As surely as I live, says the Lord GOD, this new king will die in Babylon! Nebuchadnezzar made this man the new king of Judah, but he broke his promise with Nebuchadnezzar. This new king ignored that agreement. ¹⁷The king of Egypt will not be able to save the king of Judah. He might send many soldiers, but Egypt’s great power will not

save Judah. Nebuchadnezzar's army will build walls around the city and ramps up against its walls to attack the city. Many people will die. ¹⁸But the king of Judah will not escape, because he ignored his agreement. He broke his promise to Nebuchadnezzar.

¹⁹"The Lord GOD makes this promise: As surely as I live, I will punish the king of Judah, because he ignored my warnings and broke our agreement. ²⁰I will set my trap, and he will be caught in it. Then I will bring him to Babylon, and I will punish him there. I will punish him because he turned against me, ²¹and I will destroy his army. I will destroy his best soldiers and scatter them to the wind. Then you will know that I am the LORD and that I told you these things.

²²"This is what the Lord GOD says: "I will take a branch from a tall cedar tree. I will take a small branch from the top of the tree, and I myself will plant it on a very high mountain.

²³I myself will plant it on a high mountain in Israel.

That branch will grow into a tree. It will grow branches and make fruit and become a beautiful cedar tree. Many birds will sit on its branches and live in the shadows under its branches.

²⁴"Then the other trees will know that I, the LORD, make tall trees fall to the ground, and I make small trees grow tall. I make green trees become dry, and I make dry trees become green. I am the LORD.

If I say that I will do something, I will do it!"

True Justice

18 The LORD spoke to me: ²"Why do you people say this proverb: 'The parents ate the sour grapes, but the children got the sour taste'?"^{§§}

³"But the Lord GOD says this: As surely as I live, people in Israel will not think this proverb is true any more! ⁴I will treat everyone, child and parent, just the same. The one who sins is the one who will die!

⁵"A person who is good will live! He is fair and does what is right. ⁶He doesn't go to the mountains to share food offered to idols. He doesn't pray to those filthy idols in Israel. He doesn't commit adultery with his neighbour's wife or with a woman during her period. ⁷He doesn't take advantage of others. When someone pays him back for a loan,* he does not keep what that person gave him to hold until the loan was paid. He gives food to the hungry and clothes to people who need them. ⁸If someone wants to borrow money from him, he lends the money and doesn't charge interest on the loan. He refuses to be crooked. He is always fair with everyone. People can trust him. ⁹He obeys my laws and studies my rules so that he can learn to be fair and dependable. He is good, so he will live. This is what the Lord GOD says.

¹⁰"But someone like that might have a son who does not do any of these good things. The son steals things and kills people. ¹¹He does things his father never did. He goes to the mountains and eats foods offered to false gods. He commits the sin of adultery with his neighbour's

^{§§}**18:2** *The parents ... sour taste* This means the children were suffering for things their parents did.

***18:7** *When ... a loan* See Deut. 24:12-13 for the rules about making loans to the poor.

wife. ¹²He mistreats poor, helpless people. He takes advantage of them. When someone pays him back for a loan, he does not give back what he took from them to hold until the loan was paid. He prays to idols and does other disgusting things. ¹³He lends money to people who need it, but he forces them to pay interest on the loan. The evil son will not be allowed to live. He will be put to death because he did such disgusting things, and he will be responsible for his own death.

¹⁴“Now, that evil son might also have a son. But this son sees the bad things his father has done, and he refuses to live as his father did. He treats people fairly.

¹⁵He does not go to the mountains and eat foods offered to false gods. He does not pray to filthy idols in Israel. He does not commit the sin of adultery with his neighbour’s wife. ¹⁶He does not take advantage of people. If someone borrows money from him, the good son does not make that person give him something of value to hold until the loan is paid. The good son gives food to hungry people, and he gives clothes to those who need them. ¹⁷He helps the poor. If someone wants to borrow money, the good son lends them the money without charging interest on the loan. He obeys my laws and follows them. He will not be put to death for his father’s sins. The good son will live. ¹⁸The father hurts people and steals things. He never does anything good for my people! He will die because of his own sins.

¹⁹“You might ask, ‘Why will the son not be punished for his father’s sins?’ The reason is that the son was fair and did good things. He very carefully obeyed my laws, so he will live. ²⁰The one who sins is the one who will be put to death. A son will not be punished for his father’s sins, and a father will not be

punished for his son’s sins. A good man’s goodness belongs to him alone, and a bad man’s evil belongs to him alone.

²¹“Now, if evil people change their lives, they will live and not die. They might stop doing all the bad things they did and begin to carefully obey all my laws. They might become fair and good. ²²God will not remember all the bad things they did. He will remember only their goodness, so they will live! ²³I don’t want evil people to die, says the Lord GOD. I want them to change their lives so that they can live!

²⁴“Now, maybe good people might stop being good. They might change their lives and begin to do all the disgusting things that evil people have done in the past. (The evil people changed, so they can live.) So if those good people change and become bad, God will not remember all the good things they did. He will remember that they turned against him and began to sin. So they will die because of their sin.

²⁵“You people might say, ‘The Lord isn’t fair!’ But listen, people of Israel. I am fair. You are the ones who are not fair! ²⁶If good people change and become evil, they must die for the bad things they do. ²⁷And if evil people change and become good and fair, they will save their lives. They will live! ²⁸They saw how wicked they were and came back to me. They stopped doing the evil things they did in the past. So they will live! They will not die! ²⁹The people of Israel said, ‘That’s not fair! The Lord isn’t fair!’

“I am fair! You are the ones who are not fair! ³⁰Why? Because, people of Israel, I will judge each of you only for what you do! This is what the Lord GOD says. So come back to me! Stop committing those crimes and do away with those things that cause you to sin!

³¹ Throw away all the idols you use to commit your crimes! Change your heart and spirit. People of Israel, why should you do things that will cost you your life? ³² I don't want to kill you! Please come back and live! This is what the Lord GOD says.

A Sad Song About Israel

19 “You must sing this sad song about the leaders of Israel:

² “Your mother is like a female lion, lying there with the male lions.

She went to lie down with the young male lions and had many babies.

³ One of her cubs gets up. He has grown to be a strong young lion. He has learned to catch his food. He killed and ate a man.

⁴ The people heard him roar, and they caught him in their trap. They put hooks on him and carried the young lion to Egypt.

⁵ “The mother lion had hoped that cub would become the leader, but now she has lost all hope. So she took another of her cubs and trained him to be a lion.

⁶ He hunted with the adult lions and became a strong young lion. He learned to catch his food. He killed and ate a man.

⁷ He attacked the palaces and destroyed the cities. Everyone in that country was too afraid to speak

when they heard his growl.

⁸ Then the people who lived around him set a trap for him, and they caught him in their trap.

⁹ They put hooks on him and locked him up. They had him in their trap,

so they took him to the king of Babylon. And now, you cannot hear his roar on the mountains of Israel.

¹⁰ “Your mother is like a grapevine planted near the water.

She had plenty of water, so she grew many strong vines.

¹¹ Then she grew large branches.

They were like a strong walking stick.

They were like a king's sceptre.

The vine grew taller and taller.

It had many branches and reached to the clouds.

¹² But the vine was pulled up by the roots and thrown down to the ground.

The hot east wind blew and dried its fruit.

The strong branches broke, and they were thrown into the fire.

¹³ “Now that grapevine is planted in the desert.

It is a very dry and thirsty land.

¹⁴ A fire started in the large branch and spread to destroy all its vines and fruit.

So there was no strong walking stick.

There was no king's sceptre.

This was a sad song about death, and it was sung as a sad song about death.”

Israel Turned Away From God

20 One day, some of the leaders of Israel came to me to ask the LORD for advice. This was on the tenth day of the fifth month of the seventh year of captivity.[†] The leaders sat down in front of me.

² Then the LORD spoke to me: ³ “Son of man, speak to the leaders of Israel. Tell them that this is what the Lord GOD says: ‘Have you come to ask me what you should do? I, the Lord GOD, tell you that, as surely as I live, I will not listen to you.’

[†]20:1 *seventh year of captivity* This was the summer of 591 BC.

⁴“Should you judge them? Will you judge them, son of man? You must tell them about the disgusting things their fathers have done. ⁵Give them this message from the Lord GOD: ‘On the day I chose Israel, I made a promise with an oath to Jacob’s family in Egypt. When I let them know who I was, I took an oath and said: “I am the LORD your God.”

⁶On that day, I promised with an oath to take you out of Egypt and lead you to the land I was giving to you. That was a good land filled with many good things.[‡] It was the most beautiful of all countries!

⁷I told the people of Israel to throw away their disgusting idols. I told them not to become filthy with those idols from Egypt, because I am the LORD your God.

⁸“But they turned against me and refused to listen to me. They did not throw away their disgusting idols. They did not leave their filthy statues in Egypt. So I decided to destroy them in Egypt—to let them feel the full force of my anger. ⁹But I did not destroy them, because I had already told the Egyptians that I would bring my people out of Egypt. I did not want to ruin my good name, so I did not destroy Israel in front of those other people. ¹⁰I brought the people of Israel out of Egypt. I led them into the desert.

¹¹Then I gave them my laws and told them all my rules. All those who obey them will live. ¹²I also told them about all the special days of rest, which were a sign between us. They showed that I am the LORD and that I was making them special to me.

¹³“But the people of Israel turned against me in the desert. They did not follow my laws. They refused to obey my rules—even though people who obey my laws live because of them. They treated

my special days of rest as if they were not important. They worked on those days many times. I decided to destroy them in the desert—to let them feel the full force of my anger. ¹⁴But I did not destroy them, because the other nations saw me bring Israel out of Egypt. I did not want to ruin my good name, so I did not destroy Israel in front of those other people. ¹⁵I made another promise to them in the desert. I promised that I would not bring them into the land I was giving them. That was a good land filled with many good things. It was the most beautiful of all countries!

¹⁶“The people of Israel refused to obey my rules or to follow my laws. They treated my days of rest as if they were not important. They did all these things because their hearts belonged to their filthy idols. ¹⁷But I felt sorry for them, so I did not destroy them. I did not completely destroy them in the desert. ¹⁸I spoke to their children and told them, “Don’t be like your parents. Don’t make yourselves filthy with their filthy idols. Don’t follow their laws or obey their commands. ¹⁹I am the LORD. I am your God. Obey my laws and keep my commands. Do the things I tell you. ²⁰Show that my days of rest are important to you. Remember, they are a special sign between us. I am the LORD, and these days show you that I am your God.”

²¹“But the children turned against me and did not obey my laws. They did not keep my commands—even though people who obey my laws live because of them. They treated my special days of rest as though they were not important. So I decided to destroy them completely in the desert—to let them feel the full force of my anger. ²²But I stopped

[‡]20:6 *land ... things* Literally, “land flowing with milk and honey”. Also in verse 15.

myself, because the other nations saw me bring Israel out of Egypt. I did not want to ruin my good name, so I did not destroy Israel in front of those other people. ²³ So I made a promise with an oath against those people in the desert. I promised to scatter them among the nations, to send them to many different countries.

²⁴ “The people of Israel did not obey my commands. They refused to obey my laws. They treated my special days of rest as though they were not important, and they worshipped the filthy idols of their fathers. ²⁵ So I gave them laws that were not good. I gave them commands that would not bring life. ²⁶ I let them make themselves filthy with their gifts. They even began to sacrifice their own firstborn children. In this way I would destroy them. Then they would know that I am the LORD.’

²⁷ “So now, son of man, speak to the people of Israel. Give them this message from the Lord GOD: ‘The people of Israel said bad things about me and made evil plans against me. ²⁸ But I still brought them to the land I promised to give them. They saw all the hills and green trees, so they went to all those places to worship. They took their sacrifices and anger offerings¹ to all those places. They offered their sacrifices that made a sweet smell, and they offered their drink offerings at those places. ²⁹ I asked the people, ‘What is this high place where you are going?’” (And so this kind of place for worship has been called a “high place”[§] ever since.)

³⁰ “Since Israel did those things, give the people this message from the Lord GOD: ‘You people are polluting your-

selves by doing the things your ancestors did. By offering yourselves as prostitutes to their disgusting idols, you make yourselves unfaithful to me. Is that what you want? ³¹ You offer to those idols the same gifts your ancestors did. You are giving your children to be burned as offerings to your false gods. You are still polluting yourselves with these filthy idols today! Do you really think that I should let you come to me and ask me for advice? I am the Lord GOD. As surely as I live, I will not answer your questions or give you advice! ³² You keep saying you want to be like the other nations. You live like the people in other nations. You serve pieces of wood and stone idols!

³³ “As surely as I live, says the Lord GOD, I will rule over you as king. But I will raise my powerful arm and punish you. I will show my anger against you! ³⁴ I will bring you out of these other nations. I scattered you among these nations, but I will gather you from these countries. But I will raise my powerful arm and punish you. I will show my anger against you! ³⁵ I will lead you into a desert as I did before, but this will be a place where other nations live. We will stand face to face, and I will judge you. ³⁶ I will judge you as I judged your ancestors in the desert near Egypt. This is what the Lord GOD says.

³⁷ “I will judge you guilty and punish you according to the agreement. ³⁸ I will remove all those who turned against me and sinned against me. I will remove them from their homeland. They will never again come to the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

¹**20:28 anger offerings** The people called these meals “fellowship offerings”, but Ezekiel is making fun of them and saying that those meals only made God angry.

[§]**20:29 high place** The Hebrew word for “high place” is *bamah*.

³⁹“Now, people of Israel, this is what the Lord GOD says: Any of you who do not want to listen to me, go ahead and worship your idols for now. Later, your only choice will be to obey me. I will not let you continue to dishonour my name with gifts to your idols! ⁴⁰This is what the Lord GOD says: Someday, all the people of Israel will gather in their own land to worship me on my holy mountain, the high mountain of Israel.**

I will accept you there, and you must bring me your offerings. You must bring me the best part of your crops and all your holy gifts. ⁴¹Then I will be pleased with the sweet smell of your sacrifices. This will happen when I bring you back from the nations and gather you from the countries where you were scattered. Through you I will show the nations that I am the holy Lord GOD. ⁴²And you will know that I am the LORD. You will know this when I bring you back to the land of Israel, the land I promised to give to your ancestors. ⁴³In that country you will remember all the evil things you did that made you filthy, and you will be ashamed. ⁴⁴People of Israel, you did many evil things, and you should be destroyed because of them. But to protect my good name, I will not give you the punishment you really deserve. Then you will know that I am the LORD. This is what the Lord GOD says.”

⁴⁵Then the LORD spoke to me: ⁴⁶“Son of man, look towards the south. Speak against the southern part of Judah. Tell them what will happen to the Negev Forest.†† ⁴⁷Tell that forest in the south to listen to this message from the LORD: ‘This is what the Lord GOD says: Look, I am ready to start a fire in your for-

est. The fire will destroy every green tree and every dry tree. The flame that burns will not be put out. The fire will burn all the land from south to north. ⁴⁸Then all people will see that I, the LORD, have started the fire. The fire will not be put out!’”

⁴⁹Then I said, “Oh, Lord GOD! If I say this, the people will say that I am only telling them stories.”

Babylon, the Sword

21 So a message from the LORD came to me again: ²“Son of man, look towards Jerusalem and speak against their holy places. Speak against the land of Israel for me. ³Say to the land of Israel, ‘This is what the LORD said: I am against you! I will pull my sword from its sheath. I will remove all people from you—the good and the evil. ⁴I will cut off both good people and evil people from you. I will pull my sword from its sheath and use it against all people from south to north. ⁵Then everyone will know that I am the LORD. They will know that I have pulled my sword from its sheath. My sword will not go back into its sheath again until it is finished.’

⁶“Son of man, make sad sounds like a sad person with a broken heart. Make these sad sounds in front of the people. ⁷Then they will ask you, ‘Why are you making these sad sounds?’ Then you must say, ‘Because of the sad news that is coming. Every heart will melt with fear. All hands will become weak. Every spirit will become weak. All knees will be like water.’ Look, that bad news is coming. These things will happen! This is what the Lord GOD says.”

**20:40 *my holy mountain ... of Israel* That is, Jerusalem. The high area of the city where the Temple was located was known as Mount Zion.

††20:46 *Negev Forest* God is probably making fun of the people. The Negev is a desert area. There are no forests in the Negev.

The Sword Is Ready

⁸The LORD spoke to me: ⁹“Son of man, tell the people this message from the Lord:

“Look, a sword! A sword is sharpened, and it is polished.

¹⁰It has been sharpened for killing. It has been polished to flash like lightning.

My people, this is no time for laughter. You refused to change when I punished you.

¹¹So the sword has been made ready. Now it can be used.

The sword is sharpened and polished, ready for the hand of the killer.

¹²“Son of man, shout and scream, beat your chest to show your sorrow, because that sword will be used against my people

and against all the rulers of Israel.

When the enemy comes, the rulers will be killed with the rest of my people.

¹³I will put them all to the test, because my punishment did not make them change.

This is what the Lord GOD says.

¹⁴“Son of man, speak to the people for me.

Clap your hands together!

Let the sword come down twice, no, three times!

This is a sword for killing.

It is a sword for killing many, many people.

It will cut into them from every side.

¹⁵Their hearts will melt with fear, and many people will fall.

The sword is ready at their city gates.

It has been polished for killing

and will flash like lightning.

¹⁶Sword, be sharp!

Cut on the right side.

Cut straight ahead.

Cut on the left side.

Go wherever your edge was chosen to go.

¹⁷“Then I, too, will clap my hands and stop showing my anger.

I, the LORD, have spoken!”

Jerusalem Punished

¹⁸The LORD spoke to me: ¹⁹“Son of man, draw a map showing two roads that the king of Babylon can follow with his sword in hand. Both roads will begin at the same place, but then they will separate and go in different directions. At that place you should put up a sign. ²⁰The sign should show where each road goes. One road leads to the Ammonite city of Rabbah. The other road leads to Judah, to the protected city, Jerusalem. ²¹The king of Babylon will come to where the two roads separate. He will decide which way to go by using different kinds of magic—shaking his arrows, asking his family idols, and looking at the liver^{‡‡} from an animal he has killed.

²²“These things will point to the road on his right, the road leading to Jerusalem. They will tell him to attack it with battering rams^{¶¶} and command his soldiers to begin the killing. They will shout the battle cry and set the battering rams against the gates. They will build a dirt ramp up against the city walls. They will build towers for the archers. ²³But the people in Jerusalem will think this is all a big mistake. They will not believe that this could happen, because they had

‡‡21:21 *arrows, idols, liver* People who believed in false gods used these ways of trying to know the future.

¶¶21:22 *battering rams* Heavy logs that soldiers used to break down gates or break holes in the walls of a city.

made a peace agreement with Babylon's king. But the king will remind them that they are guilty of breaking that agreement, and he will take them captive.

²⁴“This is what the Lord GOD says: ‘You have done many evil things. Your sins are very clear. You forced me to remember that you are guilty, so the enemy will catch you in his hand. ²⁵And you, evil leader of Israel, you will be killed. Your time of punishment has come! The end is here!’

²⁶“This is what the Lord GOD says: Take off the turban! Take off the crown! The time has come to change. The important leaders will be brought low, and those who are not important now will become important leaders. ²⁷I will completely destroy that city! But this will not happen until the right man becomes the new king. Then I will let him have this city.

The Ammonites Punished

²⁸“Son of man, speak to the people for me. Tell them that this is what the Lord GOD says to the people of Ammon and their shameful god:

“Look, a sword, a sword raised for killing!

It has been polished,

ready to destroy

and to flash like lightning!

²⁹“Your visions are useless.

Your magic will not help you.

It is only a bunch of lies.

The sword is now at the throats of evil men.

They will soon be only dead bodies.

Their time has come.

The time has come for their evil to end.

Prophecy Against Babylon

³⁰“Put the sword back in its sheath.

Babylon, I will judge you in the place where you were created,

in the land where you were born.

³¹I will pour out my anger against you.

My anger will burn you like a hot wind.

I will hand you over to cruel men.^{§§}

Those men are skilled at killing people.

³²You will be like fuel for the fire.

Your blood will flow deep into the earth, and people will not remember you.

I, the LORD, have spoken!”

Ezekiel Speaks Against Jerusalem

22 The LORD spoke to me: ²“Son of man, will you judge the city of murderers? Will you tell her about all the disgusting things she has done? ³You must give her this message from the Lord GOD: The city is full of murderers, so her time of punishment will come. She made filthy idols for herself, and those idols made her filthy!

⁴“People of Jerusalem, you killed many people. You made filthy idols. You are guilty, and the time has come to punish you. Your end has come. Other nations will make fun of you and laugh at you. ⁵People far and near will make fun of you. You have ruined your name. You are filled with confusion.

⁶“Look, all the leaders in Israel are using their strength just to kill other people. ⁷And the people in Jerusalem don't respect their parents. There in the city, they mistreat the immigrants. They cheat orphans and widows in that place.

⁸You hate all that I consider holy. You treat my special days of rest as if they are not important. ⁹In Jerusalem, people tell lies in order to kill innocent people

§§21:31 *cruel men* This is a wordplay. The Hebrew word is like the word meaning “to burn”.

ple. They go to the mountains to worship false gods and then come back to Jerusalem to eat their fellowship meals.

“In Jerusalem, people commit many sexual sins. ¹⁰There men commit sexual sins with their father’s wife. There the men rape women—even during their monthly period of bleeding. ¹¹One man commits a disgusting sin against his own neighbour’s wife. Another man has sex with his daughter-in-law and makes her unclean. Another man rapes his father’s daughter—his very own sister. ¹²There men accept bribes to kill people. You lend money and charge interest on the loans. You cheat your neighbours just to make a little money. You have even forgotten me. This is what the Lord GOD says.

¹³“Now look! I will slam my hand down and stop you! I will punish you for cheating and killing people. ¹⁴Will you be brave then? Will you be strong at the time I come to punish you? I am the LORD. I have spoken, and I will do what I said! ¹⁵I will scatter you among the nations. I will force you to go to many countries. I will completely destroy the filthy things in this city. ¹⁶But Jerusalem, you will become unclean. And the other nations will see all these things happen. Then you will know that I am the LORD.”

Israel Is Like Worthless Waste

¹⁷The LORD spoke to me: ¹⁸“Son of man, bronze, iron, lead and tin are important metals, but when a worker melts silver to make it pure, those metals are poured off as waste. Israel has become like that waste to me. ¹⁹So this is what the Lord GOD says: ‘All of you have become like worthless waste. So I will gather you into Jerusalem. ²⁰Workers

put silver, bronze, iron, lead and tin into a fire. They blow on the fire to make it hotter. Then the metals begin to melt. In the same way, I will put you in my fire and melt you. That fire is my hot anger. ²¹I will put you in my fire of anger and blow on it, and you will begin to melt. ²²In that city, you will be like silver melting in a fire. Then you will know that I am the LORD, and that I poured out my anger on you.”

Ezekiel Speaks Against Jerusalem

²³The LORD spoke to me: ²⁴“Son of man, speak to Israel. Tell her that she is not pure.* She has not received rain because of my anger. ²⁵The prophets in Jerusalem are making evil plans. They are like a lion—it roars when it begins to eat the animal it has caught. They have destroyed many lives. They have taken many valuable things and made widows of many of the women in Jerusalem.

²⁶“The priests have broken my law. They don’t respect my holy things. They treat holy things the same as things that are not holy. They have not taught people the difference between things that are clean and things that are unclean. They refuse to respect my special days of rest, so the people do not honour me.

²⁷“The leaders in Jerusalem are like a wolf eating the animal it has caught. They attack people and kill them just to get rich.

²⁸“And the prophets cover up these evil things like workers painting over cracks in a wall with whitewash. They do this by telling about visions that are not true and telling lies about the future. They say, ‘This is what the Lord GOD says,’ but the LORD has not spoken to them!

*22:24 *not pure* This is a wordplay. The Hebrew word also means “not rained on”.

²⁹“The common people take advantage of each other. They cheat and steal from each other. They mistreat the poor and cheat immigrants without any thought of justice!

³⁰“I looked for someone who could turn my people away from evil so that I would not have to destroy their land. I needed someone who could make things right again, like a worker who repairs a wall or a soldier who defends the gaps in it. But I could not find anyone! ³¹So I will pour out my fierce anger on them. Like a raging fire, I will completely destroy them. I will punish them as they deserve for the evil things they have done. This is what the Lord GOD says.”

23 The LORD spoke to me: ²“Son of man, listen to this story about Samaria and Jerusalem. There were two sisters, daughters of the same mother. ³They became prostitutes in Egypt while they were still young girls. That’s where they first let men touch and handle their young breasts. ⁴The older daughter was named Oholah, and her sister was named Oholibah. They became my wives, and we had children. I am using the name Oholah to mean Samaria and the name Oholibah to mean Jerusalem.

⁵“Then Oholah became unfaithful to me—she began to live like a prostitute. She began to want her lovers. She saw the Assyrian soldiers ⁶in their blue uniforms. They were all handsome young men riding horses. They were leaders and officers, ⁷and Oholah gave herself to them. They were handpicked soldiers in the Assyrian army, and she wanted them all! She polluted herself with their filthy idols. ⁸She continued the prostitution she began in Egypt. There men made love to her when she was a young

girl. They touched her young breasts and used her as a prostitute. ⁹So I let her lovers have her. She wanted Assyria, so I gave her to them! ¹⁰They raped[†] her. They took her children and killed her. They punished her, and women still talk about her.

¹¹“Her younger sister Oholibah saw all these things happen. But Oholibah sinned more than her sister did! She was more unfaithful than Oholah. ¹²She wanted the Assyrian leaders and officers. She wanted those soldiers in blue uniforms riding their horses. They were all handsome young men. ¹³I saw that both women were going to ruin their lives with the same mistakes.

¹⁴“Oholibah did worse things than her sister. She saw some pictures of Babylonian men carved on a wall. They were wearing red uniforms, ¹⁵with belts around their waists and large turbans on their heads. They looked like Babylonian chariot officers. ¹⁶When she saw them, she wanted to have sex with them. She sent messengers to Babylonia, inviting them to come. ¹⁷So they came and had sex with her. They used her to satisfy themselves until she was sick of them and told them to go away.

¹⁸“Oholibah let everyone see that she was unfaithful. She let so many men enjoy her naked body that I turned away from her in the same way I had rejected her sister. ¹⁹But Oholibah thought about her time as a prostitute in Egypt when she was young, and she turned to even more prostitution. ²⁰She remembered the lovers who excited her there, who were like animals in their sexual desires and abilities.

²¹“Oholibah, you dreamed of those times when you were young, when your

[†]23:10 *raped* Literally, “revealed her nakedness”. The Hebrew word meaning “revealed” is like the word meaning “carried away as a prisoner to a faraway country”.

lovers touched and handled your young breasts. ²²So, Oholibah,[‡] this is what the Lord GOD says: You grew tired of your lovers, but I will bring them here to attack you from all sides. ²³I will bring all the men from Babylon, especially the Chaldeans from Pekod, Shoa and Koa, and all the men from Assyria. I will bring all the leaders and officers, all those handsome young men, chariot officers and handpicked soldiers riding their horses. ²⁴They will come against you with a huge army, riding on their horses and in their chariots. They will have their spears, shields and helmets. They will gather around you, and I will tell them what you have done to me. Then they will punish you their own way. ²⁵I will show you how jealous I am. They will become angry and hurt you. They will cut off your nose and ears. They will kill you with a sword. Then they will take your children and burn whatever is left of you. ²⁶They will take your nice clothes and jewellery. ²⁷This is how I will stop your shameful acts and your love affair with Egypt. You will stop wishing you could go back there. You will never remember Egypt again!

²⁸“This is what the Lord GOD says: I am giving you to those you hate, to those you thought were disgusting. ²⁹And they will show how much they hate you! They will take everything you worked for, and they will leave you bare and naked! Everyone will see that you are nothing but a prostitute. Your own shameful sins ³⁰are the reason I am punishing you. You acted like a prostitute with other nations, polluting yourself by worshipping their idols. ³¹You followed the example of your sister Oholah.[¶] So I

will punish you the same way. I will give you the same cup I gave her to drink.

³²“This is what the Lord GOD says: “You will drink from your sister’s cup, a big cup, tall and wide. It holds so much that after you drink it all, everyone will laugh and make fun of you.

³³You will be drunk and miserable, because that cup is full of fear and ruin. It is the same cup your sister Samaria drank.

³⁴You will drink until the cup is empty. Then you will break it to pieces and use them to tear at your breasts. This will happen because I, the Lord GOD, have said so.

³⁵“So this is what the Lord GOD says: Jerusalem, you forgot me. You threw me away and left me behind. So now you must suffer for leaving me and living like a prostitute. You must suffer for your wicked dreams.”

Judgement Against Oholah and Oholibah

³⁶The LORD said to me: “Son of man, you will judge Oholah and Oholibah. Tell them about the disgusting things they have done. ³⁷They committed the sin of adultery and are guilty of murder. They acted like prostitutes—they left me to be with their filthy idols. They had my children, but they forced them to pass through fire as food for their filthy idols. ³⁸They also treated my special days of rest and my holy place as though they were not important. ³⁹They killed their children for their idols, and then they went into my holy place and made it filthy too! They did this inside my Temple!

[‡]23:22 *Oholibah* That is, the city of Jerusalem. See verse 4.

[¶]23:31 *Oholah* That is, Samaria. See 23:4.

⁴⁰“They even sent messengers to invite men to come from faraway places. And when the men came, the two sisters bathed themselves, painted their eyes and put on jewellery. ⁴¹They sat on a fine bed with a table set before it, where they had put my incense[§] and my oil.**

⁴²“The noise coming from the room sounded like a crowd of people having a party. A lot of noisy drunks had come in from the desert. They put bracelets and beautiful crowns on both sisters. ⁴³One of the sisters was worn out from her sexual sins. And I wondered, ‘Do they really want to have more sex with her?’ ⁴⁴But they kept going to her as they would go to a prostitute. Yes, they went again and again to those sinful women, Oholah and Oholibah.

⁴⁵“But honest judges will find them guilty of adultery and murder, because they have been unfaithful, and their hands are covered with blood!

⁴⁶“This is what the Lord GOD says: Bring an army against them to attack them and fill them with terror.

⁴⁷ The soldiers will throw stones on these women and cut them to pieces with their swords. They will kill their children and burn their houses.

⁴⁸“To Oholah and Oholibah I say: This is how I will remove such disgraceful behaviour from this land. And this will be a warning to all the other women not to do the shameful things you have done. ⁴⁹You will get what you deserve for your

disgraceful acts. You will be punished for your sinful worship of idols. Then you will know that I am the Lord GOD.”

The Pot and the Meat

24 On the tenth day of the tenth month in the ninth year of captivity,^{††} a message from the LORD came to me: ²“Son of man, write down today’s date and this note: ‘On this day the army of the king of Babylon surrounded Jerusalem.’ ³The people there refuse to obey me. I have a story with a message for them. Give them this message from the Lord GOD:

“Put the pot on the fire.

Put on the pot and pour in the water.

⁴ Put in the pieces of meat.

Put in every good piece, the thighs and the shoulders.

Fill the pot with the best bones.

⁵ Use the best animals in the flock.

Pile the wood under the pot, and boil the pieces of meat.

Boil the soup until even the bones are cooked.

⁶“So this is what the Lord GOD says:

It will be bad for Jerusalem!

She is a city of murderers.

Jerusalem is unclean, like a rusty pot!

So the meat must be thrown out

and not divided among the priests.

⁷ Jerusalem’s people are guilty of murder,

and the blood from those murders is still on her stones!

[§]**23:41 my incense** A special blend of spices that were burned as a gift to God. It was to be used only in the Temple. See Exod. 30:34-38.

****23:41 my oil** The special oil that was used for anointing priests and things in the Temple to make them holy. See Exod. 30:22-33.

††**24:1 ninth year of captivity** This was 15 January 588 BC.

She did not even try to cover it with dirt.^{‡‡}

⁸ I left her blood on the bare rock so that it would not be covered.

I did this so that people would become angry and punish her for killing innocent people.

⁹ “So this is what the Lord GOD says: It will be bad for that city of murderers! I will pile up plenty of wood for the fire.

¹⁰ Put plenty of wood under the pot. Light the fire.

Cook the meat until it is well done.

Mix in the spices,^{¶¶} and let the bones be burned up.

¹¹ Then let the pot stand empty on the coals.

Let it become so hot that its stains^{§§} begin to glow.

Those stains will be melted away. The rust will be destroyed.

¹² “Jerusalem might work hard to scrub away her stains. But that ‘rust’ will not go away!

Only the fire of punishment will remove it.

¹³ “You sinned against me and became stained with sin.

I wanted to wash you and make you clean,

but the stains would not come out.

I will not try washing you again until my hot anger is finished with you!

¹⁴ “I am the LORD. I said your punishment would come, and I will make it happen. I will not hold back the punishment or feel sorry for you. I will punish

you for the evil things you did. This is what the Lord GOD says.”

The Death of Ezekiel’s Wife

¹⁵ Then the LORD spoke to me: ¹⁶ “Son of man, you love your wife very much, but I am going to take her away from you. Your wife will die suddenly, but you must not show your sorrow. You must not cry loudly. You will cry and your tears will fall, ¹⁷ but you must mourn quietly. Dress as you normally do; wear your turban and sandals; don’t cover your moustache, and don’t eat the food people normally eat when someone dies.”

¹⁸ The next morning I told the people what God had said. That evening, my wife died. The next morning I did what God commanded. ¹⁹ Then the people said to me, “Why are you doing this? What does it mean?”

²⁰ Then I told them that the LORD had spoken to me, ²¹ telling me to give a message to the people of Israel. This is what the Lord GOD says: “Look, I am ready to destroy my holy place that makes you feel so proud and safe. You love to see it, and you enjoy it so much. But I am going to ruin it. And your sons and daughters who are left behind in the city will be killed in battle. ²² But you will do the same things that Ezekiel has done. You will not cover your moustache or eat the food people normally eat when someone dies. ²³ You will wear your turbans and your sandals. You will not cry or show your sorrow in public, but you will waste away with guilt and talk to each other

^{‡‡}**24:7 blood ... dirt** The Law of Moses teaches that whoever killed an animal for food must pour the blood on the ground and cover it with dirt. This showed that they were giving the life of that animal back to God. See Lev. 17:1-16 and Deut. 12:1-25. If the blood was not covered with dirt, it was a witness against the killer. See Gen. 4:10, Job 15:18 and Isa. 26:21.

^{¶¶}**24:10 Mix in the spices** The meaning of this sentence is uncertain.

^{§§}**24:11 stains** Or “bronze”.

quietly about your sorrow. ²⁴ So Ezekiel is an example for you. You will do all the same things he has done. That time of punishment will come, and then you will know that I am the Lord GOD.

²⁵⁻²⁶ “Son of man, I will take away the place that makes the people feel safe, the Temple that fills them with joy and pride. They love to see it, and they enjoy it so much. But I will take it away from them, and I will also take their sons and daughters. On that same day, one of the survivors will come to you with the bad news about Jerusalem. ²⁷ That same day, you will get your voice back.* You will be able to speak to the messenger. You will not be silent any more. This will be a sign to the people, and they will know that I am the LORD.”

Prophecy Against Ammon

25 The LORD spoke to me: ² “Son of man, look towards the people of Ammon and speak against them for me. ³ Give them this message from the Lord GOD: You people shouted for joy when my holy place was destroyed. You were against the land of Israel when it was polluted. You were against the people of Judah when the people were carried away as captives. ⁴ So I will give you to the people from the east. They will get your land. Their armies will set up their camps in your country and will live among you. They will eat your fruit and drink your milk.

⁵ “I will make the city of Rabbah a pasture for camels and the country of Ammon a sheep pen. Then you will know that I am the LORD. ⁶ This is what I, the Lord GOD, say to you. You were

happy that Jerusalem was destroyed. You clapped your hands and stamped your feet. You had fun insulting the land of Israel, ⁷ so I will punish you. You will be like the valuable things soldiers take in war. You will lose your inheritance and die in faraway lands. I will destroy your country! Then you will know that I am the LORD.

Prophecy Against Moab

⁸ “This is what the Lord GOD says: Moab† says that the people of Judah are like all other nations. ⁹ So I will destroy the cities that protect Moab’s border, including its greatest cities, Beth Jeshimoth, Baal Meon and Kiriathaim. ¹⁰ Then I will give Moab to the people of the east. I will also let those people from the east destroy the Ammonites, and people will forget they were ever a nation. ¹¹ So I will punish Moab, and then they will know that I am the LORD.

Prophecy Against Edom

¹² “This is what the Lord GOD says: The people of Edom turned against the people of Judah and tried to get even. The people of Edom are guilty. ¹³ So the Lord GOD says: I will punish Edom. I will destroy the people and the animals there. I will destroy the whole country, all the way from Teman to Dedan. The Edomites will be killed in battle. ¹⁴ I will use my people Israel and get even with Edom. In this way the people of Israel will show my anger against Edom. Then the people of Edom will know that I punished them. This is what the Lord GOD says.

***24:27** *you will get your voice back* See Ezk. 3:26,27; 33:22.

†**25:8** *Moab* The traditional Hebrew text adds “and Seir”, which is missing from the ancient Greek and Latin versions.

Prophecy Against the Philistines

¹⁵“This is what the Lord GOD says: The Philistines tried to get even. They were very cruel. They let their anger burn inside them too long. ¹⁶So this is what the Lord GOD says: I will punish the Philistines. Yes, I will destroy those people from Crete. I will completely destroy those people who live on the sea-coast. ¹⁷I will punish them—I will get even. I will let my anger teach them a lesson. Then they will know that I am the LORD!”

The Sad Message About Tyre

26 In the eleventh year of captivity,[‡] on the first day of the month, the LORD spoke to me: ²“Son of man, Tyre said bad things about Jerusalem: ‘Hurray! The city gate protecting the people is destroyed! The city gate is open for me. The city of Jerusalem is ruined, so I can get plenty of valuable things out of it!’

³“So the Lord GOD says: I am against you, Tyre! I will bring many nations to fight against you. They will come again and again, like waves on the beach. ⁴The enemy soldiers will destroy the walls of Tyre and pull down her towers. I will also scrape the topsoil from her land. I will make Tyre a bare rock. ⁵Tyre will become a place by the sea for spreading fishing nets. I have spoken! The Lord GOD says: Tyre will be like the valuable things soldiers take in war. ⁶Her daughters on the mainland will be killed in battle. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

Nebuchadnezzar Will Attack Tyre

⁷“This is what the Lord GOD says: I will bring an enemy from the north against Tyre. That enemy is Nebuchadnezzar, the great king of Babylon! He will bring a very large army. There will be horses, chariots, horsemen and many other soldiers. They will be from many different nations. ⁸Nebuchadnezzar will kill your daughters on the mainland. He will build a wall around your city to protect his troops. They will build a ramp up against your walls, and their shields will be like a roof protecting their heads. ⁹They will pound your walls with battering rams[¶] and use axes to break down your towers. ¹⁰There will be so many of his horses that the dust from them will cover you. Your walls will shake at the noise of horsemen, wagons and chariots when the king of Babylon enters the city through your city gates. Yes, they will come into your city because its walls will be pulled down. ¹¹The king of Babylon will come riding through your city. His horses’ hooves will come pounding over your streets. He will kill your people with swords. The strong pillars in your city will fall to the ground. ¹²Nebuchadnezzar’s men will take away your riches. They will take the things you wanted to sell. They will break down your walls and destroy your pleasant houses. They will throw the wood and stones into the sea like rubbish. ¹³So I will stop the sound of your happy songs. People will not hear your harps any more. ¹⁴I will make you a bare rock. You will be a place by the sea for spreading fishing nets! You will not be rebuilt, because I,

[‡]**26:1** *eleventh year of captivity* This was probably the summer of 587 BC. See 2 Kgs 25:3.

[¶]**26:9** *battering rams* Heavy logs that soldiers used to break down gates or break holes in the walls of a city.

the LORD, have spoken! This is what the Lord GOD says.

Other Nations Will Cry for Tyre

¹⁵“This is what the Lord GOD says to Tyre: The people who live along the coast will tremble at the sound of your fall, when they hear the groans of your people being wounded and killed.

¹⁶Then all the leaders of the countries by the sea will step down from their thrones and show their sorrow. They will take off their special robes and their beautiful clothes. They will sit on the ground, shaking with fear. They will be shocked at how quickly you were destroyed. ¹⁷They will mourn for you and sing this funeral song:

“Tyre, you were a famous city,
but now you are gone!
You were once powerful on the sea,
you and all your people.
You sailed from coast to coast,
making all who lived near the sea afraid.
¹⁸Now the people there are shaken by
your fall.

Those living on the coast are shocked
that you are gone!

¹⁹“This is what the Lord GOD says: Tyre, you will become an old, empty city. No one will live there. I will cause the sea to flow over you. The Great Sea will cover you. ²⁰I will send you down into that deep pit—to the place of death. You will join those who died long ago. I will send you to the world below, like all the other old, empty cities. You will be with all the others who go down to the grave. No one will live in you then. You will never again be in the land of the living! ²¹Other people will be afraid about

what happened to you. You will be finished. People will look for you, but they will never find you again. That is what the Lord GOD says.”

Tyre, the Door to the Seas

27 A message from the LORD came to me again: ²“Son of man, sing this sad song about Tyre, ³that city by the sea, the merchant for many nations. Its ships sail to many countries along the coast. This is what the Lord GOD says: “Tyre, you think that you are so beautiful.

You think you are perfectly beautiful!

⁴The seas are your home.

Your builders made you perfectly beautiful,
like the ships that sail from you.

⁵Your builders used cypress trees from the mountains of Senir to make your planks.

They used cedar trees from Lebanon to make your mast.

⁶They used oak trees from Bashan to make your oars.

They used pine trees from Cyprus to make the cabin on your deck.[§]

They decorated that shelter with ivory.

⁷For your sail they used colourful linen made in Egypt.

That sail was your flag.

The coverings over your cabin were blue and purple.

They came from the island of Cyprus.

⁸Men from Sidon and Arvad rowed your boats for you.

Tyre, your wise men were the captains on your ships.

⁹Skilled workers from Byblos** were there

§**27:6 deck** The floor of a ship.

****27:9 Byblos** Literally, “Gebal”.

putting caulk^{††} between the boards on your ship.

All the ships of the sea and their sailors came to trade and do business with you.

¹⁰“Men from Persia, Lud and Put were in your army. They were your men of war who hung their shields and helmets on your walls. They brought honour and glory to your city. ¹¹Men from Arvad and Cilicia were guards standing on the wall around your city. Men from Gammad were in your towers. They hung their shields on the walls around your city and made your beauty complete.

¹²“Tarshish was one of your best traders. They traded silver, iron, tin and lead for all the wonderful things you sold. ¹³People in Greece, Turkey and the area around the Black Sea traded with you. They traded slaves and bronze for the things you sold. ¹⁴People from the nation^{‡‡} of Togarmah traded work horses, war horses and mules for the things you sold. ¹⁵The people of Rhodes^{¶¶} traded with you. You sold your things in many places. People brought ivory tusks and ebony wood to pay you.

¹⁶Aram traded with you because you had so many good things. They traded emeralds, purple cloth, fine needlework, fine linen, coral and rubies for the things you sold.

¹⁷“The people in Judah and Israel traded with you. They paid for the things you sold with wheat, olives, early figs, honey, oil and balm.^{§§} ¹⁸The people of Damascus were good traders. They traded with you for the many wonderful things you had. They traded wine from

Helbon and white wool for those things.

¹⁹Damascus traded wine from Uzal for the things you sold. They paid with iron, cassia and sugar cane. ²⁰Dedan provided good business and traded with you for saddle blankets and riding horses.

²¹Arabia and all the leaders of Kedar traded lambs, rams and goats for your goods. ²²The merchants of Sheba and Raamah traded with you. They traded all the best spices and every kind of precious stone and gold for your goods.

²³Haran, Canneh, Eden, the merchants of Sheba, Asshur and Kilmad traded with you. ²⁴They paid with the finest clothing, blue cloth, cloth with fine needlework, rugs of many colours and the strongest ropes. These were the things they traded with you. ²⁵The ships from Tarshish carried the things you sold.

“Tyre, you are like one of those ships out on the sea,

loaded with heavy cargo.

²⁶Your oarsmen rowed you far out to sea,

but a powerful east wind will destroy your ship at sea.

²⁷Your wealth will sink into the sea.

All the things you buy and sell will sink into the sea.

Your sailors, captains and workers will sink into the sea.

The merchants and soldiers in your city will sink into the sea.

All this will happen on the day you are destroyed!

²⁸“You send your merchants to faraway places.

Those places will shake with fear

^{††}27:9 *caulk* Often a mixture of tar and rope that was put between the boards to make a ship watertight so that it would not leak. Also in verse 27.

^{‡‡}27:14 *nation* Literally, “house”. This might mean the royal family of that country.

^{¶¶}27:15 *Rhodes* This is from the ancient Greek version. The traditional Hebrew text has “Dedan”.

^{§§}27:17 *balm* An ointment from some kinds of trees and plants. It is used as medicine.

when they hear your captains' cry!
²⁹Your whole crew will jump off the ship.
 The sailors and captains will jump off the ship
 and swim to the shore.
³⁰They will be very sad about you.
 They will cry, throw dirt on their heads
 and roll in ashes.
³¹They will shave their heads for you.
 They will put on rags.
 They will cry loudly for you
 like someone in pain over the death of a friend.
³²"And in their loud crying they will sing this sad song about you:
 "There was never a city like Tyre!
 But Tyre is now silent, lost in the sea!
³³Your merchants sailed across the seas,
 and your goods satisfied many nations.
 You made kings rich all over the world
 with your great wealth and the things
 you sold.
³⁴But now you are broken by the seas
 and by the deep waters.
 All the things you sell
 and all your people have fallen.
³⁵All the people living on the coast
 are shocked to hear about you.
 Their kings are terrified.
 Their faces show their shock.
³⁶The merchants in other nations
 show their surprise at the news.
 You have come to a terrible end.
 You are gone forever."

The King of Tyre Thinks He Is a God

28 The LORD spoke to me: ²"Son of man, say to the king of Tyre that this is what the Lord GOD says:
 "You are very proud!

And you say, 'I am a god!
 I sit on the throne of a god
 surrounded by the seas.'
 "But you are a man and not God!
 You only think you are a god.
³You think you are wiser than Daniel,*
 and you think no secret is hidden from
 you.
⁴Through your wisdom and
 understanding
 you have gained riches for yourself.
 And you have put gold and silver
 in your treasuries.
⁵Through your great wisdom and trade,
 you have made your riches grow.
 And now, because of those riches
 you have become proud.
⁶"So this is what the Lord GOD says:
 "Tyre, you thought you were like a god.
⁷I will bring foreigners to fight against
 you.
 They are the most terrible among the
 nations!
 They will pull out their swords and use
 them
 against the beautiful things your wisdom
 brought you.
 They will ruin your glory.
⁸They will bring you down to the grave.
 You will be like a sailor who died at sea.
⁹That person will kill you.
 Will you still say, "I am a god"?
 No, he will have you in his power.
 You will see that you are a man, not God!
¹⁰Strangers will treat you like a foreigner[†] and kill you,
 because I gave the command!
 This is what the Lord GOD says."
¹¹The LORD spoke to me: ¹²"Son of man, sing this sad song about the king of

***28:3 Daniel** A wise man from ancient times. This might be Daniel from the Bible, or the Danel mentioned in the writings from Ras Shamra.

[†]**28:10 foreigner** Literally, "uncircumcised". This means a person who did not share in the agreement God made with Israel. See circumcise, circumcision in the Word List.

Tyre. Tell him that this is what the Lord GOD says:

“You were the perfect man—
so full of wisdom and perfectly
handsome.

¹³ You were in Eden,
the garden of God.

You had every precious stone—
rubies, topaz and diamonds,
beryls, onyx and jasper,
lapis lazuli, turquoise and emeralds.

And each of these stones was set in gold.
You were given this beauty on the day
you were created.

God made you strong.

¹⁴ You were one of the chosen winged
creatures

who spread your wings over my throne.
I put you on the holy mountain of God.
You walked among the jewels that
sparkled like fire.

¹⁵ You were good and honest when I cre-
ated you,
but then you became evil.

¹⁶ Your business brought you many
riches,
but they also put cruelty inside you, and
you sinned.

So I treated you like something unclean
and threw you off the mountain of God.
You were one of the chosen winged
creatures

who spread your wings over my throne.
But I forced you to leave the jewels
that sparkled like fire.

¹⁷ Your beauty made you proud.
Your glory ruined your wisdom.
So I threw you down to the ground,
and now other kings stare at you.

¹⁸ With your many sins and dishonest
trade
you made your places of worship
unclean.

So I set a fire that spread from inside
your city
and completely destroyed you!

You became a pile of ashes on the
ground

for everyone around you to see.

¹⁹ “The nations who knew you before
were shocked to see what happened to
you.

You suffered a terrible punishment,
and now you are gone forever!”

The Message Against Sidon

²⁰ The LORD spoke to me: ²¹ “Son of
man, look towards Sidon and speak for
me against that place. ²² Tell the peo-
ple there that this is what the Lord GOD
says:

“I am against you, Sidon!

I will show my divine greatness.

I will punish you

and show you that I am the holy Lord
GOD.

And everyone who sees what I do
will know that I am the LORD.

²³ I will send disease and death to Sidon,
and many people inside the city will die.
Soldiers outside the city will kill many
people.

Then people will know that I am the
LORD!

The Nations Will Stop Laughing at Israel

²⁴ “Then the surrounding nations that
hate Israel will no longer be like sting-
ing nettles[‡] and painful thorns. And they
will know that I am the Lord GOD.

²⁵ “This is what the Lord GOD says:
I will gather the people of Israel from
the nations where they were scattered.
And all the nations will see my power
and know that I am the holy Lord GOD.
The people of Israel will once again live

[‡]28:24 *nettles* Plants covered with stinging hairs.

in their own land, the land I gave to my servant Jacob. ²⁶They will live safely in the land. They will build houses and plant vineyards. I will punish the nations around them that showed their hate for them. Then the people of Israel will live in safety, and they will know that I am the LORD their God.”

The Message Against Egypt

29 On the twelfth day of the tenth month of the tenth year of captivity,¹ the LORD spoke to me: ²“Son of man, look towards Egypt and speak for me against Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and all his people. ³Give them this message from the Lord GOD:

“I am against you, Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

You are the great monster[§] lying beside the Nile River.

You say, ‘This is my river!

I made this river!’

⁴⁻⁵“But I will put a hook in your jaw and pull you up out of the Nile River.

And the fish in the river will stick to you as I pull you out onto dry land.

You will fall on the ground,

and no one will pick you up or bury you.

I will give you to the wild animals and birds.

You will be their food.

⁶Then all the people living in Egypt

will know that I am the LORD!

“Why will I do these things?

Because the people of Israel leaned on Egypt for support,

but Egypt was only a weak blade of grass.

⁷The people of Israel leaned on Egypt for support,

but Egypt only pierced their hands and shoulder.

They leaned on you for support, but you broke and twisted their back.

⁸“So this is what the Lord GOD says:

I will bring a sword against you.

I will destroy all your people and animals.

⁹Egypt will be empty and destroyed.

Then they will know that I am the LORD.

“Why will I do these things? Because you said, ‘This is my river. I made this river.’ ¹⁰So I am against you. I am

against the many branches of your Nile River. I will destroy Egypt completely.

The cities will be empty from Migdol to Aswan and as far as the border of Ethiopia. ¹¹No person or animal will

pass through Egypt. Nothing will pass through or settle there for 40 years. ¹²I

will destroy Egypt. The cities will be in ruins for 40 years! I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations. I will send them

away to foreign lands.

¹³“But the Lord GOD also says this: After 40 years, I will gather the people of Egypt from those nations where I

sent them. ¹⁴I will bring back the Egyptian captives. I will bring them back to southern Egypt, where they were born.

But their kingdom will not be important. ¹⁵It will be the least important kingdom.

It will never again lift itself above the other nations. I will make them so small that they will not rule over the nations.

¹⁶And the people of Israel will never again depend on Egypt. The Israelites will remember their sin—they will remember that they turned to Egypt for

help and not to God, and they will know that I am the Lord GOD.”

¹29:1 *tenth year of captivity* This was the winter of 587 BC.

[§]29:3 *great monster* There were ancient stories about a sea monster that fought against God. The prophets called Egypt that sea monster many times. But here, this might mean the crocodiles that rest on the banks of the Nile River.

Babylon Will Get Egypt

¹⁷ On the first day of the first month in the twenty-seventh year of captivity, ** the LORD spoke to me: ¹⁸ “Son of man, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon made his army fight hard against Tyre. He forced his soldiers to carry such heavy loads that their heads were rubbed bald and their shoulders rubbed raw. But the king and his army got nothing for all their effort. ¹⁹ So this is what the Lord GOD says: I will give Egypt to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, and he will carry away the people. He will take the many valuable things in Egypt to pay his army. ²⁰ I will give Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar as a reward for the hard work he did for me. This is what the Lord GOD says!

²¹ “On that day I will make the people of Israel strong. So Ezekiel, I will let you speak to them. Then they will know that I am the LORD.”

The Army of Babylon Will Attack Egypt

30 A message from the LORD came to me again: ² “Son of man, speak for me. Give the people this message from the Lord GOD:

“Cry and say,

‘A terrible day is coming.’

³ That day is near!

Yes, the LORD’s day for judging is near.

It will be a cloudy day,

a time for judging the nations.

⁴ The enemy will come against Egypt, and Ethiopia will shake with fear.

The Egyptians will be killed; their wealth will be taken away and their buildings torn down.

⁵ “All who made peace with Egypt will be destroyed! This includes Ethiopia,

Put, Lud, Arabia, Libya and even some of my own people.

⁶ “This is what the LORD says:

Those who support Egypt will fall!

The pride in her power will end.

The people in Egypt will be killed in battle,

all the way from Migdol to Aswan.

This is what the Lord GOD says!

⁷ Egypt will join the other countries that were destroyed.

Its cities will be among those that are in ruins.

⁸ I will start a fire in Egypt, and all her helpers will be destroyed.

Then they will know

that I am the LORD!

⁹ “At that time I will send out messengers. They will go in ships to carry the bad news to Ethiopia. Ethiopia feels safe now. But when Egypt is punished, the people of Ethiopia will shake with fear. That time is coming!

¹⁰ “This is what the Lord GOD says:

I will use the king of Babylon.

I will use Nebuchadnezzar to destroy the people of Egypt.

¹¹ Nebuchadnezzar and his people are the most terrible of the nations,

and I will bring them to destroy Egypt.

They will pull out their swords against Egypt.

They will fill the land with dead bodies.

¹² I will make the Nile River become dry land.

Then I will sell the dry land to evil people.

I will use foreigners to make that land empty.

I, the LORD, have spoken!

The Idols of Egypt Will Be Destroyed

¹³ “This is what the Lord GOD says:

I will also destroy the idols in Egypt.

**29:17 *twenty-seventh year of captivity* This was in the spring of 571 BC.

I will take the statues away from Memphis.

There will no longer be a leader in the land of Egypt.

I will put fear there instead.

¹⁴I will make southern Egypt an empty place.

I will start a fire in Zoan.

I will punish Thebes.

¹⁵I will pour out my anger against Pelusium, the fortress of Egypt!

I will destroy the people of Thebes.

¹⁶I will start a fire in Egypt;

the city of Pelusium will ache with fear. The soldiers will break into the city of Thebes,

and Memphis will have new troubles every day.

¹⁷The young men of Heliopolis and Bubastis^{††} will die in battle, and the women will be taken away as captives.

¹⁸It will be a dark day in Tahpanhes when I break Egypt's control.^{‡‡}

Her proud power will be finished!

A cloud will cover Egypt, and her daughters will be taken away as captives.

¹⁹So I will punish Egypt.

Then they will know that I am the LORD!"

Egypt Will Become Weak Forever

²⁰On the seventh day of the first month of the eleventh year of captivity,^{¶¶} the LORD spoke to me: ²¹"Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. No one will wrap his arm with a bandage. It will not heal, so his arm will not be strong enough to hold a sword.

²²"This is what the Lord GOD says: I am against Pharaoh, king of Egypt. I will break both his arms, the strong arm and the arm that is already broken. I will make the sword fall from his hand. ²³I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations. ²⁴I will make the arms of the king of Babylon strong. I will put my sword in his hand, but I will break the arms of Pharaoh. Then Pharaoh will cry out in pain, the kind of cry that a dying man makes. ²⁵So I will make the arms of the king of Babylon strong, but the arms of Pharaoh will fall. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

"I will put my sword in the hand of the king of Babylon. Then he will stretch the sword out against the land of Egypt. ²⁶I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD!"

Egypt, Like Assyria, Will Be Destroyed

31 On the first day of the third month in the eleventh year of captivity, the LORD spoke to me: ²"Son of man, give this message to Pharaoh, king of Egypt and to his people:

"You are so great!

What can I compare you to?

³You are like Assyria, a nation that once grew strong.

It was like a cedar tree in Lebanon.

It had beautiful branches that gave the forest shade.

It grew so tall, its top reached the clouds!

⁴It got all the water it needed from deep springs that made it grow tall. Water flowed all around it like a river that sent its streams to the other trees there.

⁵So this cedar grew very tall,

^{††}30:17 *Heliopolis and Bubastis* Hebrew, "On and Pi Beseth", cities in Egypt.

^{‡‡}30:18 *control* Literally, "yoke".

^{¶¶}30:20 *eleventh year of captivity* This was the summer of 587 BC. Also in 31:1.

taller than all those other trees.

And its branches were long and thick because it had plenty of water.

⁶The birds made their nests in its branches, and it was a shelter for animals giving birth.

It provided shelter for many nations that were like trees in its shade.

⁷Yes, Assyria was like a great and beautiful tree

with branches that spread far and wide. Its roots went down deep

where there was plenty of water.

⁸Not even the cedar trees in God's garden

were as big as this tree.

No cypress tree or plane tree had branches so large.

None of the trees in God's garden were as beautiful as this tree.

⁹I, the LORD, gave it so many branches and made it so beautiful that all the trees in Eden, God's garden, wished they could be like it!

¹⁰“So, king of Egypt, this is what the Lord GOD says: That tree grew tall. Its top reached up to the clouds. It grew so big that it became proud! ¹¹So I let a powerful nation take that tree and punish it as it deserved for all its evil. I have discarded it. ¹²A foreign army, the most violent in the world, cut it down and scattered its branches on the mountains and in the valleys. Its broken limbs drifted down the rivers flowing through that land. And all the other nations that were like smaller trees in its shade have left it. ¹³Now birds live in that fallen tree. Wild animals walk over its fallen branches. ¹⁴Now, none of the trees by that water will be proud. They will not try to reach the clouds. None of the

strong trees that drink that water will boast about being tall, because they all must die. They will all go down into the world below, to Sheol, the place of death. They will join the other people who died and went down into that pit.

¹⁵“King of Egypt, this is what the Lord GOD says: On the day when Assyria, that big tree, fell and went down to the grave, I covered it with the deep springs to mourn its death. I blocked the rivers, and all the streams that fed it stopped flowing. I made Lebanon mourn for it. All the trees of the field became sick with sorrow for that big tree. ¹⁶I made that tree fall, and the nations shook with fear at the sound of its falling. I sent it down to the place of death to join the others who had gone down into that pit. All the trees of Eden and the best trees of Lebanon that had enjoyed plenty of water were pleased to see that big tree fall. They were glad for it to join them in the world below. ¹⁷Yes, those other nations that had joined with Assyria and had lived in the shade of that big tree also went down with it to the place of death. They joined all the others who had been killed in battle.

¹⁸“King of Egypt, there were many big and powerful trees in Eden. Which of those trees should I compare you to? They all went down into the world below! And you, Pharaoh, and all your people will join those foreign nations^{§§} in that place of death. You will lie there among those killed in battle. This is what the Lord GOD says.”

Pharaoh: a Lion or a Dragon?

32 On the first day of the twelfth month in the twelfth year of cap-

§§31:18 *foreign nations* Literally, “uncircumcised”. This means people who did not share in the agreement God made with Israel. See circumcise, circumcision in the Word List.

tivity,* the LORD spoke to me: ²“Son of man, sing this funeral song for Pharaoh, king of Egypt:

“You think you are a lion among the nations,
but you are more like a sea monster.
You splash around in your rivers
and make the water muddy with your feet.

³“This is what the Lord GOD says:
I have gathered many people together.
Now I will throw my net over you.
Then those people will pull you in.

⁴Then I will drop you on the dry ground.
I will throw you down in the field.
I will let all the birds come and eat you
and all the wild animals fill themselves
with your flesh.

⁵I will scatter your body on the mountains.
I will fill the valleys with your dead body.

⁶I will pour your blood on the mountains,
and it will soak down into the ground.
The rivers will be full of you.

⁷I will make you disappear.
I will cover the sky and make the stars dark.

I will cover the sun with a cloud,
and the moon will not shine.

⁸I will darken the lights in the sky over you.

I will make your whole country dark.
This is what the Lord GOD says.

⁹“Many nations will be troubled when I bring an enemy to destroy you. Nations you don’t even know will be upset. ¹⁰I will shock many lands, and their kings will tremble with fear when they see that I have attacked you. They will be terri-

fied on the day you fall. Each king will be afraid for his own life.

¹¹“That will happen because of what the Lord GOD says: The sword of the king of Babylon will come to fight against you. ¹²I will use those soldiers to kill your people in battle. They come from the most terrible of the nations. They will destroy the things Egypt is proud of and all its people. ¹³I will also destroy all the animals by the rivers in Egypt. People’s feet and the hooves of cattle will not make the water muddy any more. ¹⁴So I will make the water in Egypt calm. I will cause their rivers to run slowly—they will be slick like oil. This is what the Lord GOD says. ¹⁵I will make the land of Egypt empty. That land will lose everything. I will punish all the people living in Egypt. Then they will know that I am the LORD!

¹⁶“This is a sad song that people will sing for Egypt. The daughters in other nations will sing this sad song. They will sing it as a sad song about Egypt and all its people. This is what the Lord GOD says.”

Egypt to Be Destroyed

¹⁷On the fifteenth day of that month in the twelfth year of captivity, the LORD spoke to me: ¹⁸“Son of man, cry for the people of Egypt. Lead Egypt and the daughters from powerful nations to the grave. Lead them to the world below where they will be with the other people who went down into that deep pit.

¹⁹“Egypt, you are no better than anyone else! Go down to the place of death. Go and lie down with those foreigners.†

²⁰“The Egyptians will go to be with all those who were killed in battle. The en-

***32:1 twelfth year of captivity** This was early spring, 585 BC. Also in verse 17.

†**32:19 foreigners** Literally, “uncircumcised”. This means people who did not share in the agreement God made with Israel. See circumcise, circumcision in the Word List.

emy has pulled her and all her people away.²¹ Strong and powerful men were killed in battle. Those foreigners went down to the place of death. And from that place, those who were killed will speak to Egypt and its partners.

²²⁻²³“Assyria is there in the place of death. Around it are the graves of all its soldiers who were killed in battle. Their graves are down in the deepest part of that pit. When they were alive, they terrified people everywhere they went. But now they have been killed with swords.

²⁴“Elam is there, and all its soldiers lie around its grave. All of them were killed in battle. When they were alive, they terrified people everywhere they went. But now they have gone down to the world below as enemies of God’s people. They share the shame of all who go down into that deep pit.²⁵ They have made a bed for Elam and all its soldiers who were killed in battle. Elam’s army is all around its grave. All those foreigners were killed in battle. When they were alive, they terrified people. But they carried their shame with them down into that deep pit. They were put with all the other people who were killed.

²⁶“Meshech, Tubal and all their armies are there. Their graves are all around them. All those foreigners were killed in battle. When they were alive, they terrified people.²⁷ But now they are lying down by the powerful men who died long, long ago! They were buried with their weapons of war. Their swords will be laid under their heads. But their sins are on their bones, because when they were alive, they terrified people.

²⁸“Egypt, you also will be destroyed, and you will lie down by those foreigners. You will lie with the other soldiers who were killed in battle.

²⁹“Edom is there also. His kings and other leaders are there with him. They were powerful soldiers, but now they lie with the other men who were killed in battle. They are lying there with those foreigners and with the other people who went down into that deep pit.

³⁰“All the rulers from the north are there, and the soldiers from Sidon are there too. Their strength terrified people, but now they are embarrassed. Those foreigners lie there with the other men who were killed in battle. They carried their shame with them down into that deep pit.

³¹“Yes, Pharaoh and all his army will be killed in battle. Pharaoh will be comforted when he sees his many men and all the others who went down into the place of death. This is what the Lord GOD says.

³²“People were afraid of Pharaoh when he was alive, but he will lie down next to those foreigners. Pharaoh and his army will lie down with all the other soldiers who were killed in battle. This is what the Lord GOD says.”

God Chooses Ezekiel to Be a Watchman

33 The LORD spoke to me:² “Son of man, give this message to your people: ‘Whenever I bring enemy soldiers to fight against a country, the people choose someone to be a watchman.³ If this guard sees enemy soldiers coming, he blows the trumpet and warns the people.⁴ If people hear the warning but pay no attention to it, it is their own fault if the enemy comes and kills them.⁵ It is their fault because they heard the alarm but didn’t pay attention to it. If they had paid attention to the warning, they could have saved their lives.⁶ But what if the guard sees the enemy soldiers coming and does not blow the trumpet? Since

he doesn't warn the people, the enemy will capture them and take them away as captives. They will be taken away because they sinned, but the guard will also be responsible for their deaths.'

⁷"Now, son of man, I am choosing you to be a watchman for the people of Israel. If you hear a message from my mouth, you must warn the people for me. ⁸I might say to you, 'These evil people will die.' Then you must go and warn them for me. If you don't warn them and tell them to change their lives, those evil people will die because they sinned. And I will make you responsible for their deaths. ⁹But if you do warn the evil people to change their lives and stop sinning, and if they refuse to stop, they will die because they sinned. But you have saved your life.

God Does Not Want to Destroy People

¹⁰"So, son of man, speak to the people of Israel for me. They are saying, 'We have sinned and broken the law. The guilt of our sins is too much to endure. They are killing us. What can we do to live?' ¹¹You must say to them, 'As surely as I live, says the Lord GOD, I don't want any wicked person to die! I want them to stop doing evil and live. So, people of Israel, change the way you are living! Turn away from evil! You don't have to die!'

¹²"Son of man, tell your people this: 'The good things people did in the past will not save them from punishment or give them life if they start sinning. And the bad things people did in the past will not destroy them if they turn from their evil.'

¹³"What if I will tell good people that they will live, but then they change and start sinning? They may think that the

good things they did in the past will save them. But I will not remember the good things they did! No, they will die because of their sins.

¹⁴"Or what if I warn some evil people that they will die, but then they stop sinning and begin to do what is just and right? ¹⁵What if they give back someone's property that they had no right to keep? What if they return what they have stolen? What if they begin to follow the laws that give life and stop doing evil? Then they will certainly live. They will not die. ¹⁶I will not remember the bad things they did in the past. They will live because they have done what is just and right.

¹⁷"Ezekiel, your people say, 'The Lord is not being fair!' But they are the ones who are not fair! They are the ones who must change! ¹⁸If good people stop doing good and start doing evil, they will die because of their sin. ¹⁹And if evil people stop doing wrong and start doing what is just and right, they will live. ²⁰People of Israel, you say that I am not being fair. But I will judge everyone by what they have done!"

Jerusalem Has Been Taken

²¹On the fifth day of the tenth month in the twelfth year of captivity,[‡] a person who had escaped from the battle in Jerusalem came to me and said, "The city has been taken!" ²²The evening before that person came to me, the power of the LORD took control of me. He gave me back my voice.[¶] So when that person came, I was able to speak again.

²³Then the LORD spoke to me: ²⁴"Son of man, there are Israelites who live in the ruined cities in Israel. They are saying, 'Abraham was only one man, and

[‡]33:21 *twelfth year of captivity* This was the winter of 586 BC.

[¶]33:22 *He gave me back my voice* See Ezk. 3:26,27; 24:27.

God gave him all this land. Now, we are many people, so surely this land belongs to us! It is our land!

²⁵“You must tell them that this is what the Lord GOD says: ‘You eat meat with the blood still in it. You look to your idols for help. You murder people, so why should I give you this land?’ ²⁶You depend on your own sword. Each of you does disgusting things. Each of you commits sexual sins with his neighbour’s wife, so you cannot have the land!’

²⁷“You must tell them that this is what the Lord GOD says: ‘As surely as I live, the people living in the ruined cities will be killed with a sword! If any people are out in the country, I will let animals kill and eat them. If people are hiding in the fortresses and the caves, they will die from disease. ²⁸I will make that place an empty wasteland. That country will lose all the things it was proud of. The mountains of Israel will become empty. No one will pass through that place. ²⁹The people have done many disgusting things, so I will make that place an empty wasteland. Then they will know that I am the LORD.’

³⁰“And now about you, son of man. Your people lean against the walls and stand in their doorways talking about you. They tell each other, ‘Come on, let’s go and hear what the LORD says.’ ³¹So they come to you and sit in front of you as if they were my people. They hear your words, but they will not do the things you say. They only want to do what feels good. They only want to cheat people and make more money.

³²“You are nothing to these people but a singer who sings love songs with a beautiful voice. You play your instrument well. They listen to your words, but

they will not do what you say. ³³But the things you sing about really will happen, and then the people will know that there was a prophet living among them.”

Israel Is Like a Flock of Sheep

34 The LORD spoke to me: ²“Son of man, speak against the shepherds of Israel for me. Give them this message from the Lord GOD: You shepherds of Israel have only been feeding yourselves. It will be very bad for you! Why don’t you shepherds feed the flock? ³You eat the fat sheep and use their wool to make clothes for yourselves. You kill the fat sheep, but you don’t feed the flock. ⁴You have not helped the weak. You have not cared for the sick sheep. You have not put bandages on the sheep that were hurt. Some of the sheep wandered away and were lost, and you did not go and bring them back. You did not go to look for them. And you have also ruled the strong sheep^s with violence!

⁵“And now the sheep are scattered because there was no shepherd, and they became food for every wild animal. ⁶My flock wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. My flock was scattered over all the face of the earth. There was no one to search or to look for them.

⁷“So, you shepherds, listen to this message from the LORD: ⁸As surely as I live, says the Lord GOD, I will punish my shepherds for leaving my sheep to be attacked by wild animals. My flock has become food for all those animals because they did not have any real shepherds. My shepherds did not look out for my flock. They did not feed my flock. No, they only killed the sheep and fed themselves!

§34:4 *the strong sheep* This is from the ancient Greek version. The traditional Hebrew text has “with strength”.

⁹“So, you shepherds, listen to this message from the LORD! ¹⁰This is what the Lord GOD says: I am against the shepherds. I will take my sheep away from them. They will not be my shepherds any more. They will never again be able to use my sheep to help themselves. I will save my flock from being eaten by their own shepherds.

¹¹“This is what the Lord GOD says: I myself will be their Shepherd. I will search for my sheep and take care of them. ¹²If a shepherd is with his sheep when they begin to wander away, he will go searching for them. In the same way, I will search for my sheep. I will save them and bring them back from all the places where they were scattered on that dark and cloudy day. ¹³I will bring them back from those nations. I will gather them from those countries and bring them back to their own land. I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the streams and in all the places where people live. ¹⁴I will lead them to grassy fields. They will go to the place high on the mountains of Israel and lie down on good ground and eat the grass. They will eat in rich grassland on the mountains of Israel. ¹⁵Yes, I will feed my flock, and I will lead them to a place of rest. This is what the Lord GOD says.

¹⁶“I will search for the lost sheep. I will bring back the sheep that were scattered and put bandages on the sheep that were hurt. I will make the weak sheep strong, but I will watch over** the fat and strong sheep. As their shepherd, I will treat them with justice and feed them the punishment they deserve.

¹⁷“This is what the Lord GOD says: And you, my flock, I will judge between one sheep and another. I will judge be-

tween rams and male goats. ¹⁸You can eat the grass growing on the good land. So why do you also crush the grass that other sheep want to eat? You can drink plenty of clear water. So why do you also make the water muddy that other sheep want to drink? ¹⁹My flock must eat the grass you have trampled, and they must drink the water you made muddy with your feet!

²⁰“So the Lord GOD says to them: I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the thin sheep! ²¹You push with your side and shoulder, and you knock down all the weak sheep with your horns. You push until you have forced them away, ²²so I will save my flock. They will not be caught by wild animals any more. I will judge between one sheep and another. ²³Then I will put one shepherd over them, my servant David. He will feed them and be their shepherd. ²⁴Then I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David will be the ruler living among them. I, the LORD, have spoken.

²⁵“And I will make a peace agreement with my sheep. I will take harmful animals away from the land. Then the sheep can be safe in the desert and sleep in the woods. ²⁶I will bless the sheep and the places around my hill. I will cause the rains to fall at the right time and will shower them with blessings. ²⁷And the trees growing in the field will produce their fruit. The earth will give its harvest, so the sheep will be safe on their land. I will break the yokes on them and save them from the power of the people who made them slaves. Then they will know that I am the LORD. ²⁸They will no longer be attacked by the nations. Wild animals will not eat them

****34:16 watch over** This follows the ancient Greek, Latin and Syriac versions. The traditional Hebrew text has “destroy”.

any more. No, they will live safely. No one will make them afraid. ²⁹I will give them some land that will make a good garden. Then they will not suffer from hunger in that land or suffer the insults from the nations any more. ³⁰Then they will know that I am the LORD their God. The people of Israel will know that I am with them and that they are my people. This is what the Lord GOD says!

³¹“You are my sheep, the sheep of my pasture. You are only human beings, and I am your God. This is what the Lord GOD says.”

The Message Against Edom

35 The LORD spoke to me: ²“Son of man, look towards Mount Seir and speak against its people for me. ³Give them this message from the Lord GOD:

“I am against you, Mount Seir! I will punish you and make you an empty wasteland.

⁴I will destroy your cities, and you will become empty. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

⁵“Why? Because you have always been against my people. You used your sword against Israel at the time of their trouble, at the time of their final punishment. ⁶So the Lord GOD says, as surely as I live, I will let death have you. Death will chase you. You did not hate killing people, so death will chase you. ⁷I will make Mount Seir an empty ruin. I will kill everyone who enters or leaves that place. ⁸I will cover its mountains with those who are killed. There will be dead bodies all over your hills, in your valleys and in all your ravines. ⁹I will make you empty forever. No one will live in your cities. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

¹⁰“You said, ‘These two nations and countries, Israel and Judah, will be ours.

We will take them for our own.’ But the LORD is there! ¹¹And the Lord GOD says: You were jealous of my people. You were angry and hateful to them. So as surely as I live, I will punish you the same way you hurt them! I will punish you and let my people know that I am with them. ¹²And then you, too, will know that I am the LORD.

“I have heard you making fun of Israel’s hill country. You said, ‘It is in ruins, just waiting for us to swallow it up.’ ¹³Your proud boasting is really against me. Time after time you have insulted me, and I have heard every word.

¹⁴“This is what the Lord GOD says: All the earth will be happy when I destroy you. ¹⁵You were happy when the land of Israel was destroyed. I will treat you the same way. Mount Seir and the whole country of Edom will be destroyed. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

The Land of Israel Will Be Rebuilt

36 “Son of man, speak to the mountains of Israel for me. Tell them to listen to this message from the LORD! ²This is what the Lord GOD says: The enemy spoke against you and said: ‘Hurrah! Now these ancient mountains will be ours!’ ³So speak to the mountains of Israel for me. Tell them that this is what the Lord GOD says: The enemy attacked you from every direction. They tore you down and made you so weak that other nations were able to capture you. That made people say bad things about you and make fun of you.

⁴“So, mountains of Israel, listen to this message from the Lord GOD! This is what the Lord GOD says to the mountains, hills, streams, valleys, empty ruins and abandoned cities that have been looted and laughed at by the other nations around them. ⁵This is what the Lord GOD says: In my fierce

anger, I have already spoken out against these other nations and against all the Edomites! They were thrilled to show their hate for me by taking my land as their own and using its pastures like a prize they won in battle. ⁶So say these things about the land of Israel. Speak to the mountains and to the hills, to the streams and to the valleys. Tell them that this is what the Lord GOD says: I will let my fierce anger speak for me, because you had to suffer the insults from those nations. ⁷So this is what the Lord GOD says: I have made a promise with an oath that the nations around you will have to suffer for those insults.

⁸“But mountains of Israel, you will grow new trees and produce fruit for my people Israel. My people will soon come back. ⁹I am with you, and I will help you. People will plough your soil and plant seeds in you. ¹⁰There will be many people living on you. All the people of Israel will live there. The cities will have people living in them. The destroyed places will be rebuilt. ¹¹I will give you many people and animals, and they will grow and have many children. I will bring people to live on you as in the past. I will make it better for you than before. Then you will know that I am the LORD. ¹²Yes, I will lead many people—my people Israel—to your land. You will belong to them, and you will not take away their children again.

¹³“This is what the Lord GOD says: Land of Israel, people say bad things to you. They say you destroyed your people. They say you took the children away from your people. ¹⁴But you will not destroy people any more or take away their children again. This is what the Lord GOD says. ¹⁵I will not let those other nations insult you any more. You will not be hurt by them any more. You will not

take the children away from your people again. This is what the Lord GOD says.”

The Lord Will Protect His Name

¹⁶Then the LORD spoke to me: ¹⁷“Son of man, the people of Israel lived in their own country, but they made that land filthy by the bad things they did. To me, they were like a woman who becomes unclean because of her monthly period of bleeding. ¹⁸They spilled blood on the ground when they murdered people in the land. They made the land filthy with their idols, so I showed them how angry I was. ¹⁹I scattered them among the nations and spread them through many lands. I gave them the punishment they deserved for the bad things they did. ²⁰But wherever they went, they brought shame to my holy name. This happened because the people of those nations said, ‘These are the LORD’s people, but they had to leave his land.’

²¹“This was a problem for me because I care about my holy name, and my people were bringing shame on my name among the nations. ²²So tell the people of Israel that this is what the Lord GOD says: ‘People of Israel, you brought shame to my holy name in the places where you went. I am going to do something to stop this, but not because of you, Israel. I will do it for my holy name. ²³I will show the nations how holy my great name really is. You brought shame to my good name in those nations! But I will show you that I am holy. I will make you respect my name, and then those nations will know that I am the LORD. This is what the Lord GOD says.

²⁴“I will not leave you scattered among those nations. I will gather you from those countries and bring you back to your own land. ²⁵I will sprinkle you with pure water and make you clean. I will wash away the filth that is on you

from the idols you worshipped and make you pure. ²⁶ I will give you a new mind and put a new spirit in you. I will change your stubborn self into someone willing to listen.^{††} ²⁷ I will put my Spirit inside you^{‡‡} and change you so that you will obey my laws. You will be careful to obey my commands. ²⁸ Then you will live in the land that I gave to your ancestors. You will be my people, and I will be your God. ²⁹ Also, I will save you and keep you from becoming unclean. I will command the grain to grow. I will not bring a famine against you. ³⁰ I will give you large crops of fruit from your trees and good harvests from your fields. So you will never again suffer shame from other nations because you don't have enough food. ³¹ Then you will remember how evil you were and all the wrong things you did. And you will hate yourselves for all the evil, disgusting things you have done. ³² The Lord GOD says this: People of Israel, I want you to know that I am not doing these things for your good. You should be ashamed and embarrassed about the way you have lived!

³³ “This is what the Lord GOD says: On the day that I wash away your sins, I will bring people back to your cities. The ruined cities will be rebuilt. ³⁴ People will begin to work the land again so when other people pass by they will not see ruins any more. ³⁵ They will say, “In the past this land was ruined, but now it is like the Garden of Eden. The cities were destroyed. They were ruined and empty, but now they are protected, and there are people living in them.” ³⁶ Then

the nations that are still around you will know I am the LORD and that I rebuilt those places. I planted things in this land that was empty. I am the LORD. I said this, and I will make it happen!

³⁷ “This is what the Lord GOD says: I will also let the people of Israel come to me and ask me to do these things for them. I will make them grow and become many people. They will be like flocks of sheep. ³⁸ During the special festivals, Jerusalem was filled with flocks of sheep and goats that had been made holy. In the same way, the cities and ruined places will be filled with flocks of people. Then they will know that I am the LORD.”

The Vision of the Dry Bones

37 The LORD's power took control of me. The Spirit^{¶¶} of the LORD carried me out of the city and put me down in the middle of the valley.^{§§} The valley was full of dead men's bones. ² There were many bones lying on the ground in the valley. The Lord made me walk all around among the bones. I saw the bones were very dry.

³ Then the Lord said to me, “Son of man, can these bones come to life?”

I answered, “Lord GOD, only you know the answer to that question.”

⁴ Then he said to me, “Speak to these bones for me. Tell them, Dry bones, listen to this message from the LORD! ⁵ This is what the Lord GOD says to you: I will cause breath* to come into you, and you will come to life! ⁶ I will put sinew and muscles on you, and I will cover you

^{††}36:26 *I will ... listen* Literally, “I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.”

^{‡‡}36:27 *I will put my Spirit inside you* Or “I will make my Spirit live among you.”

^{¶¶}37:1 *Spirit* Or “spirit” or “wind”. Also in verse 14.

^{§§}37:1 *the valley* Possibly, Jezreel Valley, a fertile area where many battles were fought. It is often called simply “The Valley”.

*37:5 *breath* Or “wind” or “a spirit”.

with skin. Then I will put breath in you, and you will come back to life! Then you will know that I am the LORD.”

⁷ So I spoke to the bones for the LORD, as I was told. I was still speaking, when I heard the loud noise. The bones began to rattle, and bone joined together with bone! ⁸ There before my eyes, I saw sinew and muscles begin to cover the bones. Skin began to cover them, but there was no breath in them.

⁹ Then the Lord said to me, “Speak to the wind[†] for me. Son of man, tell the wind that this is what the Lord GOD says: Wind, come from every direction and breathe into these dead bodies! Breathe into them, and they will come to life again!”

¹⁰ So I spoke to the wind for the LORD as I was told, and the breath came into the dead bodies. They came to life and stood up. There were many of them—a large army!

¹¹ Then he said to me, “Son of man, these bones are like the people of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones have dried up;[‡] our hope has gone. We have been completely destroyed!’ ¹² So speak to them for me. Tell them that this is what the Lord GOD says: My people, I will open your graves and bring you up out of them! Then I will bring you to the land of Israel. ¹³ My people, I will open your graves and bring you up out of them. Then you will know that I am the LORD. ¹⁴ I will put my Spirit in you, and you will come to life again. Then I will lead you back to your own land. Then you will know that I am the LORD. You will know that I said this and that I made it happen. This message is from the LORD.”

Judah and Israel to Become One Again

¹⁵ Another message from the LORD came to me: ¹⁶ “Son of man, get one stick and write this message on it: ‘This stick belongs to Judah and his friends,[†] the people of Israel.’ Then take another stick and write on it: ‘This stick of Ephraim belongs to Joseph and his friends, the people of Israel.’ ¹⁷ Then join the two sticks together. In your hand, they will become one stick.

¹⁸ “Your people will ask you to explain what this means. ¹⁹ Tell them that this is what the Lord GOD says: I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim and his friends, the people of Israel. Then I will put that stick with the stick of Judah and make them one stick. In my hand, they will become one stick!

²⁰ “Take the sticks that you wrote on and hold them in front of you. ²¹ Tell the people that this is what the Lord GOD says: ‘I will gather the people of Israel from among the nations. I will gather them from all around and bring them back to their own land. ²² I will make them one nation in their land among the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over them all. They will no longer be two nations or be split into two kingdoms. ²³ And they will no longer continue to make themselves filthy with their idols and disgusting statues or with any of their other crimes. Instead, I will save them from all the places where they have sinned, and I will wash them and make them pure. They will be my people, and I will be their God.’

[†]37:9 *wind* Or “breath” or “spirit”. Also in verse 10.

[‡]37:11 *bones ... dried up* This is a way of saying, “We have lost our strength.”

[†]37:16 *friends* This is a wordplay. The Hebrew word is like the word meaning “joined together”.

²⁴“And my servant David will be the king over them. There will be only one shepherd over all of them. They will live by my rules and obey my laws. They will do the things I tell them. ²⁵They will live on the land that I gave to my servant Jacob. Your ancestors lived in that place, and my people will live there. They and their children and their grandchildren will live there forever. My servant David will be their leader forever. ²⁶And I will make a peace agreement with them. This agreement will continue forever. I will give them their land, and I will cause them to grow in number. And I will put my Temple among them forever. ²⁷I will live among them. Yes, I will be their God, and they will be my people. ²⁸The other nations will know that I am the LORD, and they will know that I make Israel my special people by putting my holy place there among them forever.”

The Message Against Gog

38 The LORD spoke to me: ²“Son of man, look towards Gog in the land of Magog. He is the most important leader of the nations of Meshech and Tubal. Speak for me against Gog. ³Give him this message from the Lord GOD: ‘Gog, you are the most important leader of the nations of Meshech and Tubal, but I am against you. ⁴I will capture you and bring you back. I will bring back all the men in your army, all the horses and horsemen. I will put hooks in your mouths, and I will bring all of you back. All the soldiers will be wearing their uniforms with all their shields and swords. ⁵Soldiers from Persia, Ethiopia and Put will be with you. They will all be wearing their shields and helmets. ⁶Also joining you will be the troops from the lands of Gomer and Beth Togarmah from the

far north. And many others will be with you.

⁷“Be prepared. Yes, prepare yourself and the armies that have joined with you. You must watch and be ready. ⁸After a long time you will be called for duty. In the future you will march into Israel, a land that has been healed from war. The people there were gathered from many nations and brought back to the mountains of Israel, their homeland that had long been in ruins. They have come back from those nations, and now they live in peace in their own land. ⁹But you will come to attack them. You will come like a storm. You will come like a thundercloud covering the land. You and all your soldiers from many nations will come to attack them.

¹⁰“This is what the Lord GOD says: At that time an idea will come into your mind. You will begin to make an evil plan. ¹¹You will say, “I will go and attack the country that has towns without walls. The people there live in peace and think they are safe. There are no walls around the cities to protect them. They don’t have any locks on their gates—they don’t even have gates! ¹²I will defeat them and take all their valuable things away from them. I will fight against the places that were destroyed but now have people living in them. I will fight against the people who were gathered from the nations. Now they have cattle and property in the best location on earth.” ¹³Sheba, Dedan, and merchants of Tarshish, and all the cities they trade with will ask you, “Did you come to steal their treasures? Did you gather your soldiers to come and take away silver, gold, cattle and property? Did you think that you would be able to take all those valuable things?”

¹⁴“Son of man, speak to Gog for me. Tell him that this is what the Lord GOD

says: 'You will come to attack my people while they are living in peace and safety. ¹⁵You will come from your place out of the far north, and you will bring many people with you. All of them will ride on horses. You will be a large and a powerful army. ¹⁶You will come like a thundercloud covering the land and fight against my people Israel. That's when I will show the nations my power by bringing you against my land! They will see what I do to you, Gog, and they will know that I am the holy Lord GOD!

¹⁷"This is what the Lord GOD says: At that time people will remember that I spoke about you in the past through my servants the prophets of Israel. They will remember that the prophets of Israel spoke for me in the past and said that I would bring you to fight against them. ¹⁸At that time Gog will come to fight against the land of Israel. I will show my anger. This is what the Lord GOD says. ¹⁹In my jealousy and fierce anger, I make this promise: There will be a strong earthquake in the land of Israel. ²⁰At that time all living things will shake with fear. The fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the wild animals in the fields and all the little creatures crawling on the ground will shake with fear. The mountains will fall down, and the cliffs will break apart. Every wall will fall to the ground!

²¹"On the mountains of Israel, says the Lord GOD, I will call for every kind of terror against [§]Gog. His soldiers will be so afraid that they will attack each other and kill each other with their swords. ²²I will punish Gog with diseases and death. I will cause hailstones, fire and sulphur to rain down on him and his armies from many nations. ²³Then I will

show how great I am. I will prove that I am holy. Many nations will see me do these things. Then they will know that I am the LORD.'

The Death of Gog and His Army

39 "Son of man, speak against Gog for me. Tell him that this is what the Lord GOD says: 'Gog, you are the most important leader of the countries Meshech and Tubal, but I am against you. ²I will capture you and bring you back from the far north. I will bring you to fight against the mountains of Israel. ³But I will knock your bow from your left hand and your arrows from your right hand. ⁴You will be killed on the mountains of Israel. You, your army and all the other nations with you will be killed in the battle. I will give you as food to every kind of bird that eats meat and to all the wild animals. ⁵You will not enter the city. You will be killed out in the open fields. I have spoken! This is what the Lord GOD says.

⁶"I will send fire against Magog and those people living along the coast. They think they are safe, but they will know that I am the LORD. ⁷And I will make my holy name known among my people Israel. I will not let people ruin my holy name any more. The nations will know that I am the LORD. They will know that I am the Holy One in Israel. ⁸That time is coming! It will happen! This is what the Lord GOD says. That is the day I am talking about.

⁹"At that time people living in the cities of Israel will go out to the fields. They will collect the enemy's weapons and burn them. They will burn all the shields, bows and arrows, clubs and spears and use them as firewood for

§38:21 every kind of terror against This is from the ancient Greek version. The traditional Hebrew text has "a sword against".

seven years. ¹⁰They will not have to gather wood from the fields or chop firewood from the forests because they will use the weapons as firewood. They will take the valuable things from the soldiers who wanted to steal from them. They will take the good things from the soldiers who took good things from them. This is what the Lord GOD says.

¹¹“At that time I will choose a place in Israel to bury Gog. He will be buried in the Valley of the Travellers, east of the Dead Sea. It will block the road for travellers, because Gog and all his army will be buried in that place. So people will then call it “The Valley of Gog’s Army”.

¹²It will take seven months for the people of Israel to bury them. They must do this to make the land pure. ¹³The common people will bury the enemy soldiers, and the people will become famous on the day that I bring honour to myself. This is what the Lord GOD says.

¹⁴“Workers will be given a full-time job burying the dead soldiers to make the land pure. The workers will work for seven months, and then they will go around looking for more dead bodies.

¹⁵They will go around looking, and if anyone sees a bone, a marker will be put up by it. The marker will stay there until the gravediggers come and bury the bone in the Valley of Gog’s Army, ¹⁶near a city named “Army”.** In this way they will make the land pure.’

¹⁷“This is what the Lord GOD says: Son of man, speak to all the birds and wild animals for me. Tell them, ‘Come here! Come here! Gather around. Come eat this sacrifice I am preparing for you. There will be a very big sacrifice on the mountains of Israel. Come, eat the meat and drink the blood. ¹⁸You will eat the meat from the bodies of powerful sol-

diers and drink the blood from world leaders. They will be like rams, lambs, goats and fat bulls from Bashan. ¹⁹You can eat all the fat you want and drink blood until you are full. You will eat and drink from my sacrifice, which I will kill for you. ²⁰You will have plenty of meat to eat at my table. There will be horses and chariot drivers, powerful soldiers and all the other fighting men.’ This is what the Lord GOD says.

²¹“I will let the other nations see what I have done, and they will begin to respect me! They will see my power that I used against the enemy. ²²Then from that day on, the people of Israel will know that I am the LORD their God. ²³And the nations will know why the people of Israel were taken away as captives. They will know that it was because my people turned against me. And that’s why I turned away from them. I gave them to their enemies to defeat them and kill them all in battle. ²⁴They sinned and made themselves filthy, so I punished them for the things they did. I turned away from them and refused to help them.

²⁵“So this is what the Lord GOD says: Now I will bring the descendants of Jacob back from captivity. I will have mercy on all the people of Israel. I will do all I can to protect my holy name. ²⁶The people will forget their shame and all the times they turned against me. They will live in safety on their own land. No one will make them afraid. ²⁷I will bring my people back from other countries. I will gather them from the lands of their enemies. Then many nations will see how holy I am. ²⁸They will know that I am the LORD their God. That is because I made them leave their homes and go as captives to other coun-

39:16 **Army That is, “Hamonah”, a Hebrew word that means “horde” or “crowd”.

tries. But then I gathered them again and brought them back to their own land. ²⁹I will pour out my Spirit on the people of Israel, and I will never turn away from my people again. This is what the Lord GOD says.”

The New Temple

40 In the twenty-fifth year after we were taken away into captivity, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth day of the month,^{††} the LORD’s power took control of me. This was 14 years after the Babylonians captured Jerusalem. On that day, the Lord took me there in a vision.

²In the vision, God carried me to the land of Israel. He put me down near a very high mountain. On the mountain in front of me was a building that looked like a city.^{‡‡} ³When he took me to that place, a man was there who looked like polished bronze. In his hand he had a linen cord and a stick for measuring. He was standing by the gate. ⁴The man said to me, “Son of man, use your eyes and ears. Look at these things and listen to me. Pay attention to everything that I show you, because you have been brought here so that I can show you

these things. You must tell the people of Israel all that you see.”

⁵I saw a wall that went all the way around the outside of the Temple. In the man’s hand there was a stick for measuring things. It was 3 metres^{¶¶} long, so the man measured the thickness of the wall. It was 3 metres thick. He measured the height of the wall. It was 3 metres tall.

⁶Then the man went to the east gate. He walked up its steps and measured the opening for the gate. It was 3 metres wide. ⁷The guardrooms were 3 metres long and 3 metres wide. The walls between the rooms were 2.5 metres^{§§} thick. The opening by the porch at the end of the gateway that faced the Temple was also 3 metres wide. ⁸Then he measured the porch. ^{*}⁹It was 4 metres[†] long. He measured the walls on each side of the gate. Each side wall was 1 metre[‡] wide. The porch was at the end of the gateway that faced the Temple. ¹⁰There were three little guardrooms on each side of the gateway. All these rooms and their side walls measured the same. ¹¹The man measured the entrance to the gateway. It was 5 metres[¶] wide and 6.5 metres[§] long. ¹²There was a low wall in front of each room. That wall was

^{††}**40:1 tenth day of the month** This was the Day of Purification, 573 BC. See Lev. 23:26; 25:9.

^{‡‡}**40:2 On the mountain ... city** Or “On the mountain, there was a building that looked like a city with a city south of it.”

^{¶¶}**40:5 3 metres** Literally, “6 cubits, each a cubit and a handbreadth”. Also in verse 12.

^{§§}**40:7 2.5 metres** Literally, “5 cubits”. Also in verses 30,48.

^{*}**40:8** This verse is from the ancient Greek, Latin and Syriac versions and some Hebrew copies. The traditional Hebrew text in many copies is longer: “Then he measured the porch of the gate on the inside; it was one rod. ⁹Next he measured the porch of the gate.”

[†]**40:9 4 metres** Literally, “8 cubits”.

[‡]**40:9 1 metre** Literally, “2 cubits”.

[¶]**40:11 5 metres** Literally, “10 cubits”.

[§]**40:11 6.5 metres** Literally, “13 cubits”.

50 centimetres** tall and 50 centimetres thick. The rooms were square. Each wall was 3 metres long.

¹³The man measured the gateway from the outside edge of the roof of one room to the outside edge of the roof of the opposite room. It was 12.5 metres.^{††} Each door was directly opposite the other door. ¹⁴^{‡‡}He measured the faces of all the side walls, including the side walls on each side of the porch at the courtyard. The total was 30 metres.^{¶¶} ¹⁵From the inside edge of the outer gate to the far end of the porch was 25 metres.^{§§} ¹⁶There were narrow openings* above all the guardrooms, the side walls and the porch. The openings were smaller on the outside than on the inside. There were carvings of palm trees on the walls that were on each side of the gateway.

The Outer Courtyard

¹⁷Then the man led me into the outer courtyard. I saw thirty rooms and stone pavement that went all the way around the courtyard. The rooms were along the wall and faced in towards the pavement. ¹⁸The pavement was as wide as the gates were long, and it reached to the inside of the gateway. This was the lower pavement. ¹⁹The man measured the distance from the inside of the lower gateway to the outside of the inner courtyard. It was 50 metres[†] on the east side as well as on the north side.

²⁰Then the man measured the length and width of the north gate that was in the wall surrounding the outer courtyard. ²¹This gateway, its three rooms on each side and its porch all measured the same as the first gate. The gateway was 25 metres long and 12.5 metres wide. ²²The openings in the walls, its porch and its carvings of palm trees measured the same as the east gate. On the outside, there were seven steps leading up to the gate and the porch inside the gate. ²³Across the courtyard from the north gate, there was a gate to the inner courtyard. It was like the gate on the east. The man measured from the gate on the inner wall to the gate on the outer wall. It was 50 metres from gate to gate.

²⁴Then the man led me to the south wall. I saw a gate in the south wall. He measured its side walls and its porch. They measured the same as the other gates. ²⁵The rooms of the gateway and its porch had narrow openings all around like the rooms of the other gates. The gateway was 25 metres long and 12.5 metres wide. ²⁶There were seven steps leading up to this gate and the porch inside the gate. It had carvings of palm trees on the walls that were on both sides of the gateway. ²⁷A gate was on the south side of the inner courtyard. The man measured from the gate on the inner wall to the gate on the outer wall. It was 50 metres from gate to gate.

**40:12 *50 centimetres* Literally, “1 cubit”. Also in verse 42.

††40:13 *12.5 metres* Literally, “25 cubits”. Also in verses 21,25,29,30,33,36.

‡‡40:14 The meaning of this verse in the Hebrew text is uncertain.

¶¶40:14 *30 metres* Literally, “60 cubits”.

§§40:15 *25 metres* Literally, “50 cubits”. Also in verses 21,25,29,33,36.

*40:16 *narrow openings* These let the soldiers defending the city shoot arrows out at the enemy. The narrow part of the opening was on the enemy’s side of the wall to give the smallest target.

†40:19 *50 metres* Literally, “100 cubits”. Also in verse 23,27,47.

The Inner Courtyard

²⁸ Then the man led me through the south gate into the inner courtyard. He measured this gate. This gateway measured the same as the gateways in the outer wall. ²⁹ Its rooms, side walls and porch also measured the same as the other gates. There were narrow openings in the walls around the gateway and its porch. The gateway was 25 metres long and 12.5 metres wide. ³⁰ The porch was 12.5 metres long and 2.5 metres wide.[‡] ³¹ And its porch was at the end of the gateway next to the outer courtyard. Carvings of palm trees were on the walls on each side of the gateway. There were eight steps leading up to the gate.

³² Then the man led me into the inner courtyard on the east side. He measured the gate. It measured the same as the other gates. ³³ Its rooms, side walls and porch also measured the same as the other gates. There were narrow openings in the walls around the gateway and its porch. The gateway was 25 metres long and 12.5 metres wide. ³⁴ And its porch was at the end of the gateway next to the outer courtyard. Carvings of palm trees were on the walls on each side of the gateway. There were eight steps leading up to the gate.

³⁵ Then the man led me to the north gate. He measured it, and it measured the same as the other gates. ³⁶ Its rooms, side walls and porch also measured the same as the other gates. There were narrow openings in the walls around the gateway and its porch. The gateway was

25 metres long and 12.5 metres wide. ³⁷ And its porch[¶] was at the end of the gateway next to the outer courtyard. Carvings of palm trees were on the walls on each side of the gateway. There were eight steps leading up to the gate.

The Rooms for Preparing Sacrifices

³⁸ There was also a doorway in the side walls of the gates. That doorway led into a room where the priests washed the sacrifices. ³⁹ There were two tables on each side of the door of this porch. The animals for the burnt offerings, the sin offerings and the guilt offerings were killed on these tables. ⁴⁰ There were also two tables on each side of the door on the outside wall of this porch. ⁴¹ So there were four tables on the inside wall and four tables on the outside wall—eight tables that the priests used when they killed the animals for sacrifices. ⁴² There were also four tables made from cut stone for the burnt offerings. These tables were 75 centimetres[§] long, 75 centimetres wide and 50 centimetres high. On these tables, the priests put their tools that they used to kill the animals for the burnt offerings and other sacrifices. ⁴³ There were meat hooks 75 millimetres long^{**} on all the walls in this area. The meat of the offerings was put on the tables.

Rooms for the Priests on Duty

⁴⁴ There were two rooms^{††} in the inner courtyard. One was by the north gate facing south. The other room was by

[‡]40:30 This sentence is not found in the ancient Greek version and some Hebrew copies.

[¶]40:37 *porch* The Hebrew text has “side walls”.

[§]40:42 *75 centimetres* Literally, “1 1/2 cubits”.

^{**}40:43 *meat hooks ... long* Or “double shelves 75 millimetres wide ...”.

^{††}40:44 *two rooms* This is from the ancient Greek version. The Hebrew text has “rooms for the singers”.

the south^{‡‡} gate facing north. ⁴⁵The man said to me, “The room that faces south is for the priests who have guard duty for the Temple area. ⁴⁶And the room that faces north is for the priests who have guard duty for the altar. These men are all from the tribe of Levi. They are descendants of Zadok and have the right to serve in the presence of the LORD.”

⁴⁷The man measured the inner courtyard. The courtyard was a perfect square. It was 50 metres long and 50 metres wide. The altar was in front of the Temple.

The Porch of the Temple

⁴⁸Then the man led me to the porch of the Temple and measured the walls on each side of the porch. Each side wall was 2.5 metres thick and 1.5 metres^{¶¶} wide. The opening between them was 7 metres.^{§§} ⁴⁹The porch was 10 metres^{*} wide and 6 metres[†] long. Ten steps went up to the porch. There were two pillars for the walls on each side of the porch—one at each wall.

The Holy Place of the Temple

41 Then the man led me into the Holy Place. He measured the walls on each side of the room. The side walls were 3 metres[‡] thick on each side.

²The door was 5 metres[¶] wide. The sides of the doorway were 2.5 metres[§] on each side. He measured that room. It was 20 metres^{**} long and 10 metres wide.

The Most Holy Place in the Temple

³Then the man went into the last room. He measured the walls on each side of the doorway. Each side wall was 1 metre^{††} thick and 3.5 metres^{‡‡} wide. The doorway was 3 metres wide. ⁴Then he measured the length of the room. It was 10 metres^{¶¶} long and 10 metres wide. He said to me, “This is the Most Holy Place.”

Other Rooms Around the Temple

⁵Then the man measured the wall of the Temple. It was 3 metres thick. There were side rooms all around the Temple. They were 2 metres^{§§} wide. ⁶The side rooms were on three different floors, one above the other. There were 30 rooms on each floor. The wood beams that held up these side rooms rested on ledges built out from the Temple wall, so they were not fastened to the Temple wall itself. ⁷Each floor of the side rooms around the Temple was wider than the floor below. The walls of the rooms around the Temple became narrower the higher they went so that the rooms on the top floors

^{‡‡}40:44 *south* This is from the ancient Greek version. The Hebrew text has “east”.

^{¶¶}40:48 *1.5 metres* Literally, “3 cubits”.

^{§§}40:48 *7 metres* Literally, “14 cubits”.

^{*}40:49 *10 metres* Literally, “20 cubits”. Also in 41:2,4.

[†]40:49 *6 metres* Literally, “12 cubits”.

[‡]41:1 *3 metres* Literally, “6 cubits”. Also in verses 3,5.

[¶]41:2 *5 metres* Literally, “10 cubits”.

[§]41:2 *2.5 metres* Literally, “5 cubits”. Also in verses 9,12.

^{**}41:2 *20 metres* Literally, “40 cubits”.

^{††}41:3 *1 metre* Literally, “2 cubits”. Also in verse 22.

^{‡‡}41:3 *3.5 metres* Literally, “7 cubits”.

^{¶¶}41:4 *10 metres* Literally, “20 cubits”.

^{§§}41:5 *2 metres* Literally, “4 cubits”.

were wider. A stairway went up from the lowest floor to the highest floor through the middle floor.

⁸I also saw that the Temple had a raised base all the way around it. It was the foundation for the side rooms, and it was 3 metres high. ⁹The outer wall of the side rooms was 2.5 metres thick. There was an open area between the side rooms of the Temple ¹⁰ and the priests' rooms. It was 10 metres wide and went all the way around the Temple. ¹¹The doors of the side rooms opened onto the raised base. There was one entrance on the north side and one entrance on the south side. The raised base was 2.5 metres wide all around.

¹²There was a building in this area west of the Temple. The building was 35 metres* wide and 45 metres† long. The wall of the building was 2.5 metres thick all around. ¹³Then the man measured the Temple. The Temple was 50 metres‡ long, and the other building and its walls was also 50 metres long. ¹⁴The courtyard on the east side, in front of the Temple, was 50 metres long.

¹⁵The man measured the length of the building at the rear of the Temple. It was 50 metres from one wall to the other wall.

The Most Holy Place, the Holy Place and the porch by the courtyard ¹⁶ had wood panelling on all the walls. All the openings in the walls and the doorways had wood trim around them. By the doorway, the Temple had wood panelling from the floor up to the openings in the walls and up to the part of the wall ¹⁷ over the doorway.

On all the walls in the inner room and the outer room of the Temple were carvings ¹⁸ of winged creatures and palm trees. A palm tree was between each winged creature, and each one had two faces. ¹⁹One face was a man's face looking towards the palm tree on one side. The other face was a lion's face looking towards the palm tree on the other side. They were carved all around on the Temple walls. ²⁰From the floor to the area above the door, winged creatures and palm trees were carved on all walls of the Holy Place.

²¹The doorposts on each side of the Holy Place were square. In front of the Most Holy Place, there was something that looked like ²² an altar made from wood. It was 1.5 metres[§] high and 1 metre long. Its corners, its base and its sides were wood. The man said to me, "This is the table that is before the LORD."

²³Both the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place had a double door. ²⁴Each of the doors was made from two smaller doors. Each door was really two swinging doors. ²⁵Also, winged creatures and palm trees were carved on the doors of the Holy Place. They were like those carved on the walls. There was a wooden roof over the front of the porch. ²⁶There were openings in the walls with frames around them and palm trees on the walls on both sides of the porch, on the roof over the porch and on the rooms around the Temple.

Rooms for the Priests

42 Then the man led me through the north gate out into the outer courtyard. He led me to a building with

*41:12 35 metres Literally, "70 cubits".

†41:12 45 metres Literally, "90 cubits".

‡41:13 50 metres Literally, "100 cubits". Also in verses 14,15.

§41:22 1.5 metres Literally, "3 cubits".

many rooms that was west of the building on the north side. ²This building was 50 metres[§] long and 25 metres^{**} wide. People entered it from the courtyard on the north side. ³The building was three storeys tall and had balconies. The 10 metre^{††} inner courtyard was between the building and the Temple. On the other side, the rooms faced the stone pavement of the outer courtyard. ⁴There was a path 5 metres^{‡‡} wide and 50 metres long running along the south side of the building, even though the entrance was on the north side. ⁵⁻⁶Since this building was three storeys tall and did not have pillars like those pillars of the outer courtyards, the top rooms were farther back than the rooms on the middle and bottom floors. The top floor was narrower than the middle floor, which was narrower than the bottom floor because the balconies used this space. ⁷There was a wall outside that was parallel to the rooms and ran along the outer courtyard. It ran in front of the rooms for 25 metres. ⁸The row of rooms that ran along the outer courtyard was 25 metres long, although the total length of the building, as on the Temple side, was 50 metres long. ⁹The entrance was below these rooms at the east end of the building so that people could enter from the outer courtyard. ¹⁰The entrance was at the start of the wall beside the courtyard.

There were rooms on the south side, by the other building. These rooms had ¹¹a path in front of them. They were like the rooms on the north side. They had the same length and width and the same kind of doors. ¹²The entrance to

the lower rooms was at the east end of the building so that people could enter from the open end of the path by the wall.

¹³The man said to me, “The north rooms and south rooms across from the courtyard are holy. These rooms are for the priests who offer the sacrifices to the LORD. That is where the priests will put the most holy offerings and will eat them. That is because that place is holy. The most holy offerings are the grain offerings, the sin offerings and the guilt offerings. ¹⁴The priests who enter the holy area must leave their serving clothes there before they go out into the outer courtyard, because these clothes are holy. If a priest wants to go to the part of the Temple where the other people are, he must put on other clothes first.”

The Outer Courtyard

¹⁵The man had finished measuring inside the Temple area. Then he brought me out through the east gate and measured all around that area. ¹⁶He measured the east side with the measuring stick. It was 250 metres^{¶¶} long. ¹⁷He measured the north side. It was 250 metres long. ¹⁸He measured the south side. It was 250 metres long. ¹⁹He went around to the west side and measured it. It was 250 metres long. ²⁰He measured the four sides of the walls that went all the way around the Temple. The wall was 250 metres long and 250 metres wide. It separated the holy area from the area that is not holy.

§42:2 50 metres Literally, “100 cubits”.

**42:2 25 metres Literally, “50 cubits”.

††42:3 10 metre Literally, “20 cubits”.

‡‡42:4 5 metres Literally, “10 cubits”.

¶¶42:16 250 metres Literally, “500 cubits”.

The Lord Will Live Among His People

43 The man led me to the east gate. ²There the glory of the God of Israel came from the east. God's voice was loud like the sound of the sea. The ground was bright with the light from the glory of God. ³The vision I saw was like the vision I had seen when God^{§§} came to destroy the city. It was also like the vision I had seen by the Kebar River. I bowed down with my face to the ground. ⁴The glory of the LORD came into the Temple through the east gate.

⁵Then the Spirit* picked me up and brought me into the inner courtyard. The glory of the LORD filled the Temple. ⁶I heard someone speaking to me from inside the Temple. The man was still standing beside me. ⁷The voice from the Temple said to me, "Son of man, this is the place with my throne and footstool. I will live in this place among the people of Israel forever. The people of Israel will not ruin my holy name again. The kings and their people will not bring shame to my name by committing sexual sins† or by burying the dead bodies of their kings in this place. ⁸They will not bring shame to my name by building their doorways right next to mine. In the past only a wall separated them from me. So they brought shame to my name every time they sinned and did those disgusting things. That is why I became an-

gry and destroyed them. ⁹Now let them take their sexual sins and the dead bodies of their kings far away from me. Then I will live among them forever.

¹⁰"Now, son of man, tell the people of Israel about the Temple. Then, when they learn about the plans for the Temple, they will be ashamed of their sins. ¹¹And they will be ashamed of all the bad things they have done. Let them know the design of the Temple. Let them know how it should be built, where the entrances and exits are and all the designs on it. Teach them about all its rules and all its laws. Write down these things for everyone to see so that they can obey all the laws and rules for the Temple. ¹²This is the law of the Temple: the whole area surrounding it on the top of the mountain is most holy. This is the law of the Temple.

The Altar

¹³"These are the measurements of the altar‡ using the long measurements: there was a gutter all the way around the base of the altar. It was 50 centimetres[¶] deep and 50 centimetres wide. There was a rim 25 centimetres[§] high around the edge of the gutter. This is how tall the altar was: ¹⁴from the bottom of the gutter to the top of the lower ledge, the base measured 1 metre.** The lower ledge was 50 centimetres wide. From the lower ledge to the upper ledge was 2

§§43:3 *God* Literally, "I" in most copies of the Hebrew text and "he" in some copies of the Hebrew text and in the ancient Greek version.

*43:5 *Spirit* Or "spirit" or "wind".

†43:7 *sexual sins* This might also mean "turning away from God and being unfaithful to him".

‡43:13 *These are ... altar* Literally, "These are the measurements of the altar in cubits, each a cubit and a handbreadth".

¶43:13 *50 centimetres* Literally, "1 cubit".

§43:13 *25 centimetres* Literally, "1 span". The distance from the tip of the thumb to the tip of the little finger.

**43:14 *1 metre* Literally, "2 cubits".

metres.^{††} The upper ledge was 50 centimetres wide.¹⁵ The place for the fire on the altar was 2 metres high. The four corners were shaped like horns.¹⁶ The place for the fire on the altar was 6 metres^{‡‡} long by 6 metres wide. It was perfectly square.¹⁷ The upper ledge was also a square, 7 metres^{¶¶} long by 7 metres wide. The rim around it was 25 centimetres^{§§} high. The rim together with its gutter was 50 centimetres wide all the way around the top edge of the altar. The steps going up to the altar were on the east side.”

¹⁸ Then the man said to me, “Son of man, this is what the Lord GOD says: These are the rules for the altar: at the time you build the altar, use these rules to offer burnt offerings and to sprinkle blood on it.¹⁹ You will give a young bull as a sin offering to the priests, the Levites from Zadok’s family. They are the men who serve me by bringing the offerings to me. This is what the Lord GOD says.²⁰ You will take some of the bull’s blood and put it on the four horns of the altar, on the four corners of the ledge and on the rim around it. This will make the altar pure.²¹ Then take the bull for the sin offering and burn it in the proper place in the Temple area, outside the Temple building.

²² “On the second day you must offer a male goat that has nothing wrong with it. It will be for a sin offering. The priests will make the altar pure the same way they made it pure with the bull.²³ When you have finished making the altar pure, you must offer a young bull and a ram from the flock that have nothing wrong with them.²⁴ Then you must offer them

before the LORD. The priests will sprinkle salt on them. Then they will offer the bull and ram up as a burnt offering to the LORD.²⁵ You will prepare a goat every day for seven days for a sin offering. Also, you will prepare a young bull and a ram from the flock that have nothing wrong with them.²⁶ For seven days the priests will make the altar pure and ready for use in worshipping God.²⁷ On the eighth day, and every day after that, the priests must offer your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings on the altar. Then I will accept you. This is what the Lord GOD says.”

The Outer Gate

44 Then the man brought me back to the east gate of the Temple area. We were outside the gate and the gate was shut.² The LORD said to me: “This gate will stay shut. It will not be opened. No one will enter through it, because the LORD of Israel has entered through it. So it must stay shut.³ Only the ruler of the people may sit at this gate when he eats a meal with the LORD. He must enter through the porch of the gateway and go out the same way.”

The Holiness of the Temple

⁴ Then the man led me through the north gate to the front of the Temple. I looked and saw the glory of the LORD filling the LORD’s Temple. I bowed down with my face to the ground.⁵ The LORD said to me: “Son of man, look very carefully! Use your eyes and ears. Look at these things, and listen very carefully to everything that I tell you about all the rules and laws about the LORD’s Tem-

^{††}43:14 **2 metres** Literally, “4 cubits”.

^{‡‡}43:16 **6 metres** Literally, “12 cubits”.

^{¶¶}43:17 **7 metres** Literally, “14 cubits”.

^{§§}43:17 **25 centimetres** Literally, “1/2 cubit”.

ple. Look carefully at the entrances to the Temple and at all the exits from the holy place. ⁶Then give this message to all the people of Israel who refused to obey me. Tell them that this is what the Lord GOD says: ‘People of Israel, I have had enough of the disgusting things you have done!’ ⁷You brought foreigners into my Temple who are not circumcised and have not given themselves to me.* So you made my Temple unclean. You have broken my agreement with all the disgusting things you have done. And then you brought me the offerings of bread, the fat and the blood. But this only made my Temple unclean. ⁸You did not take care of my holy things. No, you put foreigners in charge of my holy place!

⁹“This is what the Lord GOD says: A foreigner who is not truly circumcised must not come into my Temple—not even a foreigner living permanently among the people of Israel. He must be circumcised, and he must give himself completely to me before he can come into my Temple. ¹⁰In the past the Levites left me when Israel turned away from me. Israel left me to follow their idols. The Levites will be punished for their sin. ¹¹The Levites were chosen to serve in my holy place. They guarded the gates of the Temple, and they served in it. They killed the animals for the sacrifices and the burnt offerings for the people. They were chosen to help the people and to serve them. ¹²But the Levites helped the people sin against me! They helped the people worship their idols! So I am making this promise against them: They will be punished for their sin. This is what the Lord GOD says.

¹³“So the Levites will not bring offerings to me like the priests. They will not come near any of my holy things or the things that are most holy. They must carry their shame because of the disgusting things they did. ¹⁴But I will let them take care of the Temple. They will work in the Temple and do the things that must be done in it.

¹⁵“But the priests, the Levites from Zadok’s family, are to stand before me. They took care of my holy place when the people of Israel turned away from me. So they are the ones who will bring the offerings to me. They will offer me the fat and the blood from the animals they sacrifice. This is what the Lord GOD says! ¹⁶They will enter my holy place and come near my table to serve me. They will take care of the things I gave them. ¹⁷When they enter the gates of the inner courtyard, they will wear linen clothes. They will not wear wool while they serve at the gates of the inner courtyard and in the Temple. ¹⁸They will wear linen turbans on their heads, and they will wear linen underwear. They will not wear anything that makes them sweat. ¹⁹Before they go out to join the people in the outer courtyard, they must change clothes. They must take off the clothes they wore while serving me and put on other clothes. They must leave the linen clothes in the holy rooms so that none of the people will be harmed by touching the holy clothes.

²⁰“These priests will not shave their heads or let their hair grow long.† The priests may only trim the hair of their heads. ²¹None of the priests may drink wine when they go into the inner courtyard. ²²The priests must not marry a

* **44:7 not circumcised ... to me** Literally, “not circumcised in their heart or in their body”. See circumcise, circumcision in the Word List. Also in verse 9.

† **44:20 These priests ... grow long** This would show that they are sad, and the priests must be happy about serving the Lord.

widow or a divorced woman. No, they must only marry a virgin from the people of Israel or a woman whose dead husband was a priest.

²³“Also, the priests must teach my people the difference between things that are holy and things that are not holy. They must help my people know what is clean and what is unclean. ²⁴The priests will be the judges in court. They will follow my laws when they judge people. They will obey my laws and my rules at all my special feasts. They will respect my special days of rest and keep them holy. ²⁵They must not make themselves unclean by going near a dead person. But they may make themselves unclean if the dead person is their father, mother, son, daughter, brother or a sister who is not married. ²⁶After the priest has been made clean, he must wait seven days. ²⁷Then he can go back into the holy place. But on the day he goes into the inner courtyard to serve in the holy place, he must offer a sin offering for himself. This is what the Lord GOD says.

²⁸“The priests will not receive a share of property to own in Israel. I am their property. I will take care of their needs. ²⁹They will have the right to eat the grain offerings, the sin offerings and the guilt offerings. Also, anything in Israel that is a special gift to God[‡] will belong to them. ³⁰And the first part of the harvest from every kind of crop will be for the priests. You will also give the priests the first part of your flour. This

will bring blessings to your house. ³¹The priests must not eat any bird or animal that has died a natural death or has been torn to pieces by a wild animal.

The Division of the Land for Holy Use

45 “You will divide the land for the Israelite tribes by throwing lots. At that time you will separate out a part of the land to be a holy part for the LORD. The land will be 12.5 kilometres[¶] long and 10 kilometres[§] wide. All this land will be holy. ²A square area that is 250 metres^{**} long on each side will be for the Temple. There will be an open space around the Temple that is 25 metres^{††} wide. ³In the holy area you will measure 12.5 kilometres long and 5 kilometres^{‡‡} wide. The Temple will be in this area. The Most Holy Place will be in this area.

⁴“This holy part of the land will be for the priests, the servants of the Temple. This is where they approach the LORD to serve him. It will be a place for the priests’ houses and a place for the Temple. ⁵Another area, 12.5 kilometres long and 5 kilometres wide, will be for the Levites who serve in the Temple. This land will also become cities for the Levites.

⁶“And you will give the city an area that is 2.5 kilometres^{¶¶} wide and 12.5 kilometres long. It will be along the side of the holy area. It will be for any Israelite. ⁷The ruler will have land on both sides of the holy area and the land be-

[‡]44:29 *special gift to God* Anything offered to God that could not be bought back. See Lev. 27:28-29.

[¶]45:1 *12.5 kilometres* Literally, “25,000 cubits”. Also in verses 4,6.

[§]45:1 *10 kilometres* Literally, “20,000 cubits”. This is from the ancient Greek version. The traditional Hebrew text has “10,000 cubits”.

^{**}45:2 *250 metres* Literally, “500 cubits”.

^{††}45:2 *25 metres* Literally, “50 cubits”.

^{‡‡}45:3 *5 kilometres* Literally, “10,000 cubits”. Also in verse 5.

^{¶¶}45:6 *2.5 kilometres* Literally, “5000 cubits”.

longing to the city. It will be the same width as the land that belongs to a tribe. It will go all the way from the west border to the east border. ⁸This land will be the ruler's property in Israel. So he will not need to make life hard for my people any more. But they will give the land to the Israelites for their tribes.

⁹“This is what the Lord GOD says: Enough, you rulers of Israel! Stop being cruel and stealing things from people! Be fair and do what is right! Stop forcing my people out from their homes! This is what the Lord GOD says.

¹⁰“Stop cheating people. Use accurate scales and measure everything honestly! ¹¹Measure dry things using the *ephah* and liquids using the *bath*. Each must equal 1/10 *homer*.^{§§} ¹²A *shekel** must equal 20 *gerahs*. A *mina* must equal 60 *shekels*. It must be equal to 20 *shekels* plus 25 *shekels* plus 15 *shekels*.

¹³“This is a special offering that you must give:

1/6 *ephah*[†] of wheat for every *homer* of wheat;

1/6 *ephah* of barley for every *homer* of barley;

¹⁴ 1/10 *bath*[‡] of olive oil for every *cor*[¶] of olive oil;

(Remember: 10 *baths* make a *homer*, and 10 *baths* make a *cor*.)

¹⁵ and one sheep for every 200 sheep from every watering hole in Israel.

“Those special offerings are for the grain offerings, for the burnt offerings and for the fellowship offerings. These offerings are to remove the sins of the people. This is what the Lord GOD says.

¹⁶“Everyone in the country will give to this offering for the ruler of Israel.

¹⁷But the ruler must give the things needed for the special holy days. The ruler must provide the burnt offerings, the grain offerings and the drink offerings for the feast days, for the New Moon, for the Sabbaths and for all the other special meeting days of the people of Israel. He must give all the sin offerings, grain offerings, burnt offerings and fellowship offerings that are used to make the people of Israel pure.

¹⁸“This is what the Lord GOD says: In the first month, on the first day of the month, you will take a young bull that has nothing wrong with it. You must use that bull to make the Temple pure.

¹⁹The priest will take some of the blood from the sin offering and put it on the doorposts of the Temple and on the four corners of the ledge of the altar and on the posts of the gate to the inner courtyard. ²⁰You will do the same thing on the seventh day of that month for anyone who has sinned by mistake or without knowing it. This is how you will make the Temple pure.

Offerings During the Passover Festival

²¹“On the fourteenth day of the first month, you must celebrate Passover. The Passover festival will last seven days. The bread you eat during that time must be made without yeast. ²²At that time the ruler will offer a bull for himself and for all the people of Israel. The bull will be for a sin offering. ²³During the seven days of the festival, the ruler will

§§45:11 *homer* A measure equal to about 220 litres. Also in verse 13.

*45:12 *shekel* 11.5 grammes.

†45:13 1/6 *ephah* 3.67 litres.

‡45:14 1/10 *bath* 2.2 litres.

¶45:14 *cor* 220 litres.

offer seven bulls and seven rams that have nothing wrong with them. They will be burnt offerings to the LORD. The ruler will offer one bull on every day of the seven days of the festival, and he will offer a male goat every day for a sin offering. ²⁴The ruler will give 10 kilogrammes[§] of barley as a grain offering with each bull, and 10 kilogrammes of barley with each ram. He must give 4 litres^{**} of oil for each 10 kilogrammes of grain. ²⁵He must do the same thing for the seven days of the Festival of Shelters. This festival begins on the fifteenth day of the seventh month. These offerings will be the sin offering, the burnt offering, the grain offering and the oil offering.

The Ruler and the Festivals

46 ¹“This is what the Lord GOD says: The east gate of the inner courtyard will be closed on the six working days. But it will be opened on the Sabbath day and on the day of the New Moon. ²The ruler will go into the porch of that gate and stand by the gatepost. Then the priests will offer the ruler’s burnt offering and fellowship offerings. The ruler will worship at the opening of that gate and then go out. But the gate will not be shut until evening. ³On the Sabbath day and on the day of the New Moon, the common people will also worship the LORD at that gate.

⁴“The ruler will offer burnt offerings to the LORD on the Sabbath. He must provide six lambs that have nothing wrong with them and a ram that has nothing wrong with it. ⁵He must give 10 kilogrammes of grain offering with the ram. As for the grain offering with the lambs, the ruler can give as much as he

wants. But he must give 4 litres of olive oil for every 10 kilogrammes of grain.

⁶“On the day of the New Moon he must offer a young bull that has nothing wrong with it. He will also offer six lambs and a ram that have nothing wrong with them. ⁷The ruler must give 10 kilogrammes of grain as an offering with the bull and 10 kilogrammes of grain as an offering with the ram. As for the grain offering with the lambs, he can give as much as he wants. But he must give 4 litres of olive oil for each offering of grain.

⁸“When the ruler goes in, he must enter at the porch of the east gate—and he must leave that same way.

⁹“When the common people come to meet with the LORD at the special festivals, whoever enters through the north gate to worship will go out through the south gate, and whoever enters through the south gate will go out through the north gate. They must not leave by the same gate they entered but must continue straight to the other gate. ¹⁰The ruler should be there among the people. When the people go in, the ruler will go in with them, and when they go out, the ruler will too.

¹¹“At the festivals and other special meetings, 10 kilogrammes of grain must be offered with each young bull, and 10 kilogrammes of grain must be offered with each ram. As for the grain offering with the lambs, the ruler can give as much as he wants. But he must give 4 litres of olive oil for each offering of grain.

¹²“When the ruler gives a freewill offering to the LORD—it might be a burnt offering, a fellowship offering or a freewill offering—the east gate will be

§45:24 **10 kilogrammes** Literally, “1 *ephah*”. Also in 46:5,7,11.

45:24 **4 litres Literally, “1 *hin*”.

opened for him. Then he will offer his burnt offering and his fellowship offerings as he does on the Sabbath day. After he leaves, the gate will be shut.

The Daily Offering

¹³“Every day you will provide a year-old lamb that has nothing wrong with it. It will be for a burnt offering to the LORD. You will provide it every morning. ¹⁴And every morning you must offer a grain offering with the lamb. You will give 2 kilogrammes^{††} of flour and 1 litre^{‡‡} of oil to make the fine flour moist. It will be the daily grain offering to the LORD. ¹⁵So they will give the lamb, the grain offering and the oil every morning for a burnt offering forever.

Laws of Inheritance for the Ruler

¹⁶“This is what the Lord GOD says: If the ruler gives a gift from part of his land to any of his sons, it will belong to his sons. It is their property. ¹⁷But if the ruler gives a gift from part of his land to one of his slaves, the gift will belong to the slave only until the Year of Freedom.^{¶¶} Then the gift will go back to the ruler. Only the ruler’s sons will keep a gift of land from the ruler. ¹⁸And the ruler must not take any of the people’s land or force them to leave their land. He must give some of his own land to his sons. In that way my people will not be forced to lose their land.”

The Special Kitchens

¹⁹The man led me through the entrance at the side of the gate. He led me

to the holy rooms for the priests on the north side. There I saw a place at the west end of the path. ²⁰The man said to me, “This is where the priests will boil the meat from the guilt offering and the sin offering and will bake the grain offering. This will keep them from bringing these offerings through the outer courtyard where people might be harmed by touching these holy things.”

²¹Then the man led me out to the outer courtyard. He led me to the four corners of the courtyard. I saw smaller courtyards in each corner of the large courtyard. ²²There was a small, enclosed area in each of the four corners of the courtyard. Each small courtyard was 20 metres^{§§} long and 15 metres* wide. The four areas measured the same. ²³There was a brick wall around each of the four small courtyards, and there were places built into the brick walls for cooking. ²⁴The man said to me, “These are the kitchens where those who serve at the Temple cook the sacrifices for the people.”

The Water Flowing From the Temple

47 The man led me back to the entrance of the Temple. I saw water coming out from under the east gate of the Temple. (The front of the Temple is on the east side.) The water flowed down from under the south end of the Temple and ran south of the altar. ²The man led me out through the north gate and then around the outside to the outer gate on the east side. The water was flowing out on the south side of the gate.

^{††}46:14 2 kilogrammes Literally, “1/6 ephah”.

^{‡‡}46:14 1 litre Literally, “1/3 hin”.

^{¶¶}46:17 *Year of Freedom* That is, the year for cancelling debts. See Jubilee in the Word List.

^{§§}46:22 20 metres Literally, “40 cubits”.

*46:22 15 metres Literally, “30 cubits”.

³The man walked east with a measuring cord in his hand. He measured 500 metres.[†] Then he told me to walk through the water at that place. The water was only ankle deep. ⁴He measured another 500 metres. Then he told me to walk through the water at that place. There the water came up to my knees. Then he measured another 500 metres and told me to walk through the water at that place. There the water was waist deep. ⁵He measured another 500 metres, but there the water was too deep to walk across. It had become a river. The water was deep enough to swim in. It was a river that was too deep to walk across. ⁶Then the man said to me, “Son of man, did you pay close attention to the things you saw?”

Then the man led me back along the side of the river. ⁷As I walked back along the side of the river, I saw many trees on both sides of the water. ⁸He said to me, “This water flows east, down into the valley of the Jordan River. When it flows into the Dead Sea, the salt water there will become fresh water. ⁹There will be all kinds of living things where this river flows. Even the Dead Sea will be full of fish because this river will make the water fresh. Wherever this river flows, there will be life. ¹⁰You will see fishermen standing by the Dead Sea all the way from En Gedi to En Eglaim. You will see them throwing their fishing nets and catching all kinds of fish, as many kinds as are in the Great Sea. ¹¹But the swamps and small marshes will not become fresh. They will be left for salt. ¹²All kinds of fruit trees will grow on both sides of the river. Their leaves will never become dry and fall. The fruit will never stop growing on those trees. The

trees will produce fruit every month, because the water for the trees comes from the Temple. The fruit from the trees will be for food, and their leaves will be for healing.”

Division of the Land for the Tribes

¹³This is what the Lord GOD says: “These are the borders for dividing the land among the twelve tribes of Israel. Joseph will have two parts. ¹⁴You will divide the land equally. I promised to give this land to your ancestors, so I am giving this land to you.

¹⁵“Here are the borders of the land: on the north side, it goes from the Great Sea by way of Hethlon where the road turns towards Hamath and on to Zedad, ¹⁶Berothah, Sibraim (which is on the border between Damascus and Hamath) and Hazer Hatticon, which is on the border of Hauran. ¹⁷So the border will go from the Great Sea to Hazar Enan on the northern border of Damascus and Hamath. This will be on the north side.

¹⁸“On the east side, the border will go from Hazar Enan between Hauran and Damascus and continue along the Jordan River between Gilead and the land of Israel, to the Dead Sea[‡] and all the way to Tamar. This will be the eastern border.

¹⁹“On the south side, the border will go from Tamar all the way to the oasis at Meribah-kadesh. Then it will follow the Brook of Egypt to the Great Sea. This will be the southern border.

²⁰“On the west side, the Great Sea will be the border all the way to the area in front of Lebo Hamath. This will be the western border.

²¹“So you will divide this land among you for the tribes of Israel. ²²You will

[†]47:3 *500 metres* Literally, “1000 cubits”.

[‡]47:18 *Dead Sea* Literally, “eastern sea”.

divide it as a property for yourselves and for the immigrants who live among you and who have had children among you. You must treat these immigrants the same as people born in Israel. They will get a share of the land given to the tribes of Israel. ²³The tribe where the immigrant lives must give him some land. This is what the Lord GOD says!

The Land for the Tribes of Israel

48¹⁻⁷“The northern border goes east from the coast to Hethlon to Hamath Pass and then all the way to Hazar Enan. This is on the border between Damascus and Hamath. The land for the tribes in this group will go from the east of these borders to the west. From north to south, the tribes in this area are Dan, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, Reuben and Judah.

The Special Section of Land

⁸“The next area of land will be for a special use. This land is south of Judah’s land. This area is 12.5 kilometres^f long from north to south. From east to west, it will be as wide as the land that belongs to the other tribes. The Temple will be in the middle of this section of land. ⁹You will dedicate this land to the LORD. It will be 12.5 kilometres long and 10 kilometres^g wide. ¹⁰This special area of land will be divided among the priests and Levites.

“The priests will get one part of this area. The land will be 12.5 kilometres long on the north side, five kilometres^{**}

wide on the west side, five kilometres wide on the east side and 12.5 kilometres long on the south side. The LORD’s Temple will be in the middle of this area of land. ¹¹This land is for the priests who are chosen from the descendants of Zadok. They are the only ones who continued to serve me when the people of Israel, including the other Levites, turned away from me. ¹²This share from this holy part of the land will be especially for these priests. It will be next to the land of the Levites.

¹³“Next to the land for the priests, the Levites will have a share of the land. It will also be 12.5 kilometres long and five kilometres wide. Together, these two sections of land will be 12.5 kilometres long and 10 kilometres wide. ¹⁴The priests and Levites must never sell or trade any of this land. It is the best land and belongs to the LORD. It must be used only for him.

The Shares for the City Property

¹⁵“There will be an area of land 2.5 kilometres^{††} wide by 12.5 kilometres long that is left over from the land given to the priests and Levites. This land can be for the city, for grasslands for animals and for building houses. The common people may use this land. The city will be in the middle of it. ¹⁶These are the city’s measurements: the north side will be 2250 metres.^{‡‡} The south side will be 2250 metres. The east side will be 2250 metres. The west side will be 2250 metres. ¹⁷The city will have grass-

^f48:8 **12.5 kilometres** Literally, “25,000 cubits”. Also in verses 9,10,13,15,20,21-22.

^g48:9 **10 kilometres** Literally, “20,000 cubits”, following one Greek copy. Most Greek copies have 25,000 cubits, and the traditional Hebrew text has 10,000 cubits. But see Ezek. 45:1, which also has 20,000 cubits. Also in verse 13.

^{**}48:10 **five kilometres** Literally, “10,000 cubits”. Also in verses 13,18.

^{††}48:15 **2.5 kilometres** Literally, “5000 cubits”.

^{‡‡}48:16 **2250 metres** Literally, “4500 cubits”. Also in verses 30,32-34.

lands, and they will be 125 metres[¶] on the north and 125 metres on the south. They will be 125 metres on the east and 125 metres on the west. ¹⁸What is left of the length along the side of the holy area will be 5 kilometres on the east and 5 kilometres on the west. This land will be along the side of the holy area. This land will grow food for the city workers. ¹⁹The city workers from all the tribes of Israel will farm this land.

²⁰“This special area of land will be square. It will be 12.5 kilometres long by 12.5 kilometres wide. You must set apart this area for its special purposes. One part is for the priests, one part is for the Levites and one part is for the city.

²¹⁻²²“Part of that special land will be for the ruler of the country. That special area of land is square. It is 12.5 kilometres long by 12.5 kilometres wide. Part of this special land is for the priests, part of it is for the Levites and part of it is for the Temple. The Temple is in the middle of this area of land. The rest of the land belongs to the ruler of the country. The ruler will get the area between the land of Benjamin and the land of Judah.

²³⁻²⁷“South of this special area will be the land for the tribes that lived east of the Jordan River. Each tribe will get a section of land that goes from the eastern border to the western coast. From north to south, these tribes are Benjamin, Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun and Gad.

²⁸“The southern border of Gad’s land will go from Tamar to the Oasis at Meribah-kadesh, then follow the Brook of Egypt to the Great Sea. ²⁹This is the land that you will divide among the tribes of Israel. This is what each group will get.” This is what the Lord GOD says!

The Gates of the City

³⁰“These are the gates of the city. The gates will be named for the tribes of Israel.

“The north side of the city will be 2250 metres long. ³¹There will be three gates: Reuben’s Gate, Judah’s Gate and Levi’s Gate.

³²“The east side of the city will be 2250 metres long. There will be three gates: Joseph’s Gate, Benjamin’s Gate and Dan’s Gate.

³³“The south side of the city will be 2250 metres long. There will be three gates: Simeon’s Gate, Issachar’s Gate and Zebulun’s Gate.

³⁴“The west side of the city will be 2250 metres long. There will be three gates: Gad’s Gate, Asher’s Gate and Naphtali’s Gate.

³⁵“The distance around the city will be 9 kilometres.^{§§} From now on, the name of the city will be the lord is there.”*

[¶]48:17 *125 metres* Literally, “250 cubits”.

^{§§}48:35 *9 kilometres* Literally, “18,000 cubits”.

*48:35 *THE LORD IS THERE* In Hebrew this name sounds like Jerusalem.