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Isaiah

Isaiah was a prophet. Prophets in the Bible spoke messages from God. God chose these prophets to receive his messages because of their close relationship with him. He often spoke directly to them in dreams or visions. And the prophets spoke these messages to the people as the Holy Spirit led them (2 Pet. 1:21).

Prophets also paid close attention to God's teachings. They knew what to say to God's people because they knew God. And they could say what God wanted the people to do. But often the people did not like what they heard from the prophets. And this made the prophets unpopular.

The first part of Isaiah (chapters 1 – 39) is mostly about God's call of Isaiah and the message God gave him for Judah. Judah was the southern Israelite kingdom. Its main city was Jerusalem, where God's Temple was. Isaiah's message to God's people was a mixture of warning and promise. He called them to change their evil ways, start living right and treat others fairly. If they didn't change, God would destroy their nation. For this, God planned to use the Assyrians and other nations. God not only planned to use these nations but to punish them as well.

None of Judah's kings was able to lead the nation to change. Not even the good king Hezekiah was able to do this. So God's punishment began. First, the Assyrian army invaded the northern kingdom of Israel. They captured many of Israel's people and led them away. Then the Assyrians destroyed most of the kingdom of Judah. They took away

over 200,000 of its people. Finally, the Babylonian army invaded Judah and took many more of its people to Babylon. So the kingdom of Judah came to a bitter end. But Isaiah also spoke of better times to come. He described the rule of a future king, a descendant of David. This king would establish an eternal kingdom of everlasting peace.

The second section of Isaiah (chapters 40 – 55) describes events that happened after Judah was destroyed. Many of its people were taken to Babylon and suffered there as slaves. Then, after about a hundred years, the Persian king Cyrus defeated Babylon and freed the Jewish captives. So this part of the book tells about God's plan to rebuild Judah. It includes bringing the captives home and rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem. But God's plan reached far beyond Jerusalem to the whole world. He wanted his people to be a light for all the nations. God would make this happen through his special servant. One of the most famous passages in the Bible (52:13 – 53:12) describes this "suffering servant".

The final chapters of Isaiah tell God's plans for his people in the future. These chapters also tell his people how he wants them to live now. There are warnings about doing what is right. But much of this final section records God's promises that he will save his people. In this section are famous words that Jesus quoted to describe his own ministry (61:1-2).

Like many Bible books of prophecy, Isaiah is not a single story from start to finish. Rather, it is a collection of different messages

that were spoken or written at different times. Parts of the book are told as stories, but most of the book is poetry. This poetry often contains the voices of different characters, such as Isaiah, God or a chorus of angels.

The book of Isaiah delivers God's message about...

Destruction and rescue for Judah and Jerusalem (1:1 – 12:6)

Destruction for other nations (13:1 – 23:18)

Judah's punishment and return to a new life (24:1 – 27:13)

Assyrian and Babylonian invasions (28:1 – 39:8)

Rescue from Babylon (40:1 – 55:13)

Rebuilding Judah (56:1 – 66:24)

1 This is the vision Isaiah son of Amoz saw about what would happen to Judah and Jerusalem. Isaiah saw this during the time when Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah were kings of Judah.

God's Case Against Israel

²Heaven and earth, listen!

This is what the LORD says:

"I raised my children and helped them grow up,

but they have turned against me.

³A bull knows its master, and a donkey knows where its owner feeds it.

But Israel does not know me; my people do not understand."

⁴You are hopeless, you sinful nation!

Your guilt is like a heavy weight that you must carry.

You are evil, destructive children* who left the LORD and insulted the Holy One of Israel.

You turned away and treated him like a stranger.

⁵What good will it do to keep punishing you?

You will continue to rebel.

Your whole head and heart are already sick and aching.†

⁶From the bottom of your feet to the top of your head, every part of your body has wounds, cuts and open sores.

You have not taken care of them.

Your wounds have not been cleaned and bandaged.

⁷Your land is in ruins,

and your cities are in flames.

Your enemies have taken your land, and foreigners are taking what it produces.

It looks like some foreigners destroyed it.

⁸The city of Jerusalem‡ is now left all alone,

like a shelter out in a vineyard

or like an old hut in a field of melons.

It is a city under attack.

⁹"If the LORD All-Powerful

had not allowed a few people to live, we would have been destroyed completely

like the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah."[¶]

¹⁰You officers of Sodom, listen to the LORD.

You people of Gomorrah,[§] listen to God's message.

*1:4 *You ... children* Or "You are destructive children of evil parents."

†1:5 *Your whole ... aching* Or "Every head and heart is already sick and aching."

‡1:8 *city of Jerusalem* Literally, "Daughter Zion". See Zion in the Word List.

¶1:9 These words are probably what the people of Jerusalem said.

§1:10 *officers of Sodom ... Gomorrah* Here, this refers to leaders and people from Judah.

¹¹ The LORD says:
 “Why do you offer me all these sacrifices?”

I have had enough of your offerings of rams and the fat from well-fed cattle.

The blood of the bulls, sheep and goats you bring gives me no pleasure at all.

¹² When you people come to meet with me, you trample everything in my courtyard. Who told you to do this?

¹³ Stop bringing me these worthless sacrifices.

The incense you offer is disgusting to me.

I cannot stand your festivals for the New Moon, the Sabbath and other special meeting days.

I hate the evil you do during these holy times together.

¹⁴ I hate your monthly meetings and councils.

They have become like heavy weights to me, and I am tired of carrying them.

¹⁵ When you raise your arms to pray to me,

I will refuse to look at you. You will say more and more prayers, but I will refuse to listen because your hands are covered with blood.

¹⁶ Wash yourselves and make yourselves clean.

Get rid of the evil I see you doing. Stop doing wrong,

¹⁷ and learn to do good.

Work for justice.

Help those who suffer under the control of others.

Speak up for the widows and orphans.

Argue for their rights.

¹⁸ I, the LORD, am the one speaking to you.

Come, let's discuss this.

Even if your sins are as dark as red dye, that stain can be removed, and you will be as pure as wool that is as white as snow.

¹⁹ If you listen to what I say, you will get the good things from this land.

²⁰ But if you refuse to listen and rebel against me, your enemies will destroy you.”

The LORD himself said this.

Unfaithful Jerusalem

²¹ Look at Jerusalem.

She was a faithful city.

What made her become like a prostitute? In the past Jerusalem was filled with justice,

and goodness should live there now.

Instead, there are murderers.

²² You were once like pure silver, but now you are like the useless part left behind.

You are like good wine that has been made weak with water.

²³ Your rulers are rebels

and friends of thieves.

They demand bribes

and accept money for doing wrong.

They take money to cheat people,

and they don't speak up for widows and orphans.

They will not even listen to their cries for help.

²⁴ Because of this, the Lord GOD All-Powerful,

the Mighty One of Israel, says:

“Look, I will get relief from my enemies.

You will not cause me any more trouble.

²⁵ In the same way, people use lye to clean silver,

I will clean away all your wrongs.

I will remove all the impurities from you.

²⁶ I will bring back the kind of judges you had in the beginning.

Your counsellors will be like those you had long ago.

Then you will be called

‘The Good and Faithful City’.”

²⁷ God is good and does what is right,

so he will rescue Zion

and the people who come back to him.

²⁸ But all the criminals and sinners will be destroyed.

Those who stop following the LORD will be removed.

²⁹ In the future you will be ashamed of the oak trees

and special gardens** you chose to worship.

³⁰ You will be like an oak tree whose leaves are dying,

like a garden dying without water.

³¹ Powerful people will be like small, dry pieces of wood,

and what they did will be like the sparks that start a fire.

These people and their works will both burn up,

and no one will be able to put out that fire.

God’s Message to Judah and Jerusalem

2 Isaiah son of Amoz saw this message about Judah and Jerusalem:

² In the future, the mountain of the LORD’s Temple

will be the highest of all mountains.

It will be raised higher than the hills.

There will be a steady stream of people from all nations going there.

³ People from many places will go there and say,

“Come, let’s go up to the mountain of the LORD,

to the Temple of the God of Jacob.

Then God will teach us his way of living, and we will follow him.”

His teaching will begin in Jerusalem.

It will go out from Mount Zion to all the world.

⁴ Then God will settle arguments between nations.

He will decide what is right for people of many lands.

They will stop using their weapons for war.

They will hammer their swords into ploughs

and make their spears into tools for harvesting.

All fighting between nations will end.

They will never again train for war.

⁵ Come, descendants of Jacob, let us follow the way the LORD has shown us.

The Lord Has Left His Sinful People

⁶ O LORD, you have left your people, the descendants of Jacob,

because they are following evil ideas they learned from people in the East.

They try to tell the future like the Philistines.

They have accepted the wrong ideas of foreigners.

⁷ Your people’s land is filled with silver and gold,

with all kinds of treasures.

Their land is filled with horses

and too many chariots to count.

⁸ Their land is full of idols.

The people worship things they made with their own hands.

⁹ They are bowing down on the ground.

They are as low as their idols.

God, do not forgive them!

A Time of Judgement Is Coming

¹⁰ Find a place behind the rocks

**1:29 *special gardens* Gardens where people worshipped false gods.

to hide from the LORD's anger!
 Or dig a hole in the ground
 to hide from his glorious power!
¹¹ Proud people will stop being proud.
 They will bow down to the ground with
 shame,
 and only the LORD will still stand high.
¹² The LORD All-Powerful has set a day
 to punish the proud and boastful people.
 He will bring them down.
¹³ They may be as tall as the cedar trees
 of Lebanon
 or the great oak trees of Bashan,
 but the LORD will cut them down.
¹⁴ They may be as tall as the mountains
 or as high as the hills,
 but he will bring them down.
¹⁵ They may be as tall as the city's towers
 or as strong as its high walls,
 but he will pull them down.
¹⁶ They may be as fast as the ships from
 Tarshish
 and carry as much treasure,
 but he will destroy them all.
¹⁷ On that day the proud people will fall.
 They will bow low to the ground,
 and only the LORD will stand high.
¹⁸ The idols will all be gone.
¹⁹ When the LORD rises up to terrify the
 earth,
 people will crawl into holes in the
 ground
 or find caves in the rocks to hide in.
 The LORD's coming will terrify them.
 They will run from his great glory.
²⁰ At that time people will throw away
 the idols
 they made from silver and gold.
 They will take those statues they made
 to worship
 and throw them away into caves
 where the rats and bats live.
²¹ They will go down into cracks in the
 rocks and boulders.
 The LORD's coming will terrify them,
 and they will run from his great glory,

when he rises up to terrify the earth.
²² Stop trusting other people to save you.
 Do not think too highly of them;
 they are only humans who have not
 stopped breathing yet.

3 The Lord GOD All-Powerful will
 take away everything Judah and
 Jerusalem depend on.
 He will take away all their food and
 water.
² He will take away all their heroes and
 soldiers,
 all their judges, prophets,
 fortune-tellers, leaders,
³ army officers and important officials,
 counsellors, magicians
 and those who claim they can control the
 future.
⁴ The LORD says:
 "I will put young boys in charge of you.
 They will be your leaders.
⁵ The people will turn against each other.
 Young people will not respect those who
 are older.
 The common people will not respect the
 leaders."
⁶ Looking for someone to be in charge,
 a man will say to his own brother:
 "You still have a coat, so you will be our
 leader.
 You will be in charge of all these ruins!"
⁷ But the brother will refuse and say,
 "I cannot help you.
 I don't have enough food or clothes for
 my own family.
 I cannot be your leader!"
⁸ This will happen because Jerusalem
 has stumbled,
 and Judah has fallen.
 They turned against the LORD.
 They said and did things against him,
 right in front of his glorious eyes.
⁹ The look on their faces shows they are
 guilty.
 They are like the people of Sodom;
 they don't care who sees their sin.

But it will be very bad for them.

They will get what they deserve.

¹⁰ Tell those who do what is right that all will go well for them.

They will receive a reward for what they have done.

¹¹ But it will be very bad for wicked people,

because they, too, will get what they deserve.

¹² Even children will defeat my people, and women will rule over them.

My people, your guides lead you the wrong way,

and they destroy the path you should follow.

God's Decision About His People

¹³ Look, the LORD is standing to judge his people. ¹⁴ Here is the case the LORD will bring against the officials who lead his people:

“You have burned the vineyard, and what you stole from the poor is still in your houses.

¹⁵ What gives you the right to hurt my people?

Why do you rub the faces of the poor in the dirt?”

The Lord GOD All-Powerful said this.

Warning to the Women of Jerusalem

¹⁶ The LORD says:

“The women in Zion are so proud!

They walk around with their heads held high,

flirting with their eyes.

They take quick steps to get attention

by making noise with their ankle bracelets.”

¹⁷ So the Lord will cause sores all over their heads

and make their hair fall out.

¹⁸ The time will come when the Lord will take away everything they are proud of: the beautiful ankle bracelets, the necklaces that look like the sun and the moon, ¹⁹ the earrings, bracelets and veils, ²⁰ the scarves, the ankle chains, the cloth belts worn around their waists, the bottles of perfume, the charms, ^{††} ²¹ the signet rings and the nose rings, ²² the fine dresses, robes, cloaks and purses, ²³ the mirrors, linen dresses, turbans and long shawls.

²⁴ Those women now have sweet-smelling perfume,

but it will get moldy and stink.

Now they wear belts,

but then they will have only ropes to wear.

Now they have their hair fixed in fancy ways,

but then their heads will be shaved—they will have no hair. ^{‡‡}

Now they have party dresses,

but then they will have only mourning clothes.

They have beauty marks on their faces now,

but then they will have another mark.

It will be a mark burned into their skin to show that they are slaves.

²⁵ Your men will be killed with swords.

Your heroes will die in war.

²⁶ There will be crying and sadness in the meeting places by the city gates.

Jerusalem will sit there empty,

like a woman who has lost everything to thieves and robbers

and now just sits on the ground and cries.

4 At that time seven women will grab one man and say, “Please marry us!

^{††}3:20 *charms* Things people wore on bracelets and necklaces. People thought these things would protect them from evil or danger.

^{‡‡}3:24 *they will have no hair* This means that they will become slaves.

We will supply our own food and make our own clothes. You won't have to do anything else if you let us wear your name and take away our shame."

The Lord Will Bless His People

²At that time the LORD's plant[¶] will be very beautiful and glorious. The people in Israel who survived will be very proud of what the land grows. ³And all those who are left in Zion and Jerusalem will be called holy. Their names were on the list of people in Jerusalem who were allowed to live.

⁴The Lord will wash away the filth^{§§} from the daughters of Zion.* He will wash away the blood from Jerusalem. With a spirit of judgement that burns like fire, he will make everything pure.

⁵Then the LORD will create a cloud of smoke in the day and a bright flame of fire[†] at night over every building and over every meeting of the people on the mountain of Zion. And there will be a covering over everyone for protection.

⁶It will be a shelter to protect the people from the heat of the sun and from all kinds of storms and rain.

My Friend and His Vineyard

5 Now I will sing a song for my friend, my love song about his vineyard.

My friend had a vineyard on a very fertile hill.

²He dug and cleared the field and planted the best grapevines there.

He built a tower in the middle and cut a winepress into the stone.

He expected good grapes to grow there,

but there were only rotten ones.

³My friend said, "You people living in Jerusalem and you people of Judah, think about me and my vineyard.

⁴What more could I do for my vineyard? I did everything I could.

I thought it would produce good grapes, but all the grapes it gave me were bitter.

⁵So now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard:

I will pull up the thorn bushes that protect it

and let the wild animals graze there.

I will break down the wall around it and let the animals trample it down.

⁶I will turn my vineyard into useless land.

No one will care for the plants or work in the field.

Weeds and thorns will grow there.

I will command the clouds not to rain on it."

⁷The vineyard that belongs to the LORD All-Powerful is the nation of Israel. The grapevine, the plant he loves, is the people of Judah.

The Lord looked for justice, but there was only killing.

He hoped to see fairness,

but there were only people crying out for help.

God's Judgement Is Coming

⁸Look at you people!

You buy more and more houses and fields

until there is no room for anyone else.

You will be the only people in the whole land.

[¶]4:2 *the LORD's plant* This might refer to the country of Judah or to the future king or Messiah. See Isa. 5:7.

^{§§}4:4 *wash away the filth* This is like a special ceremony for washing away the blood after a menstrual period. After this a man and wife could have sex.

*4:4 *daughters of Zion* This can refer either to the small towns around Jerusalem or to the women living there.

[†]4:5 *cloud of smoke ... fire* The signs God used to show that he was with his people.

⁹I heard the LORD All-Powerful make this oath:

“I swear, all these houses will be destroyed.

These big, fancy houses will be empty.

¹⁰A four-hectare vineyard will make only a little wine,[‡] and many sacks of seed will grow only a little grain.”[¶]

¹¹How terrible it will be for you people who rise early in the morning and go looking for beer to drink. You stay awake late at night, getting drunk on wine.

¹²At your parties you drink your wine and enjoy the music of harps, drums and flutes.

But you don't care what the LORD has done.

You don't notice what his hands have made.

¹³My people don't really know God, so they will be captured and taken away. Everyone, the respected leaders and the common people as well, will be hungry and thirsty.

¹⁴They will die, and the place of death will open its mouth wide and swallow many of them.

Then the noisy crowds and all the beautiful, happy people who are now so comfortable will go down into the grave.

¹⁵Everyone, common people and leaders alike, will be humbled.

Those who are now so proud will bow their heads in shame.

¹⁶The LORD All-Powerful will judge fairly,

and people will honour him.

They will respect the holy God when he brings justice.

¹⁷Their cities will become fields where lambs can graze.

Young goats will eat grass where rich people once lived.

¹⁸Look at those people!

They pull their guilt and sins behind them

like people pulling carts with ropes.[§]

¹⁹They say, “We wish God would hurry and do what he plans to do so that we can see it.

Let the plan of the Holy One of Israel happen soon so that we can know what it is.”

²⁰Look at those people!

They say good is bad and bad is good.

They think light is dark and dark is light.

They think sour is sweet and sweet is sour.

²¹They think they are so smart; they think they are very intelligent.

²²They are famous for drinking wine and are heroes known for mixing drinks.

²³And if you pay them enough money, they will forgive a criminal, but they will not let good people be judged fairly.

²⁴So their descendants will be destroyed completely,

just as fire burns straw and leaves.

Their descendants will be like plants with rotten roots,

whose flowers have blown away like dust in the wind.

[‡]5:10 *only a little wine* Literally, “1 *bath*”, a measure that equals about 22 litres.

[¶]5:10 *only a little grain* Literally, “A *homer* of seed will grow only an *ephah* of grain.” A *homer* equals about 220 litres. An *ephah* equals about 22 litres.

[§]5:18 *ropes* Literally, “useless ropes”. The Hebrew words here are like those meaning “useless things”, that is, idols.

Those people refused to obey the teachings** of the LORD All-Powerful.

They hated the message from the Holy One of Israel.

²⁵ So the LORD became angry with his people,

and he raised his hand to punish them. Even the mountains shook with fear.

Dead bodies were left in the streets like rubbish.

And he is not finished yet; he is still angry,

and his arm is raised to continue punishing his people.

God Will Bring Armies to Punish Israel

²⁶ Look! God is giving a sign to the nations far away.

He is whistling for them to come from lands far away.

Here they come, racing as fast as they can!

²⁷ The enemy soldiers never get tired or stumble.

They never get drowsy or fall asleep.

Their weapon belts are always ready; their sandal straps never break.

²⁸ Their arrows are sharp, and their bows are strung and ready to shoot.

The horses' hooves are as hard as flint, and clouds of dust rise from behind their chariots.

²⁹ The shouts of the enemy sound like the roar of lions.

Like strong, young lions, they growl and grab their prey.

The captives will struggle and try to escape,

but there will be no one to save them.

³⁰ On the day the enemy attacks, their roar will sound like the ocean waves.

And if you look across the land, you will see only troubling darkness, as the light fades away into black clouds.

God Calls Isaiah to Be a Prophet

6 In the year that King Uzziah died,^{††} I saw the Lord sitting on a very high and wonderful throne. His long robe filled the Temple. ² Seraph angels stood around him. Each had six wings. They used two wings to cover their faces, two wings to cover their bodies and two wings to fly. ³ They were calling to each other:

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD All-Powerful.

His glory fills the whole earth.”

⁴ The sound was so loud that it caused the frame around the door to shake, and the Temple was filled with smoke.^{‡‡}

⁵ I was frightened and said, “Oh, no! I will be destroyed. I am not pure enough to speak to God, and I live among people who are not pure enough to speak to him.”^{¶¶} But I have seen the King, the LORD All-Powerful.”

⁶ There was a fire on the altar. One of the Seraph angels used a pair of tongs to take a hot coal from the fire. Then the angel flew to me with it in his hand.

⁷ Then he touched my mouth with the hot coal and said, “When this hot coal

**5:24 *teachings* This can also mean “laws”. Sometimes this means the laws God gave Moses to teach to the people of Israel.

††6:1 *year ... died* This was probably 740 BC.

‡‡6:4 *smoke* This showed that God was in the Temple. See Exod. 40:34-35.

¶¶6:5 *I am not pure ... him* Literally, “I am a man of unclean lips and live among people of unclean lips.”

touched your lips, your guilt was taken away, and your sins were erased.”^{§§}

⁸Then I heard the Lord’s voice, saying, “Who can I send? Who will go for us?”

So I said, “Here I am. Send me!”

⁹Then the Lord said, “Go and tell the people:

‘Listen closely, but don’t understand.

Look closely, but don’t learn.’

¹⁰Make the people unable to understand.

Close their ears and their eyes.

Then they will not see with their eyes

or hear with their ears

or understand with their minds.

If they understood, they might turn to me,

and I would heal them!”

¹¹Then I asked, “Lord, how long should I do this?” He answered:

“Do this until the cities are destroyed and all the people are gone.

Do this until there is no one left living in the houses

and the land is destroyed and empty.”

¹²The LORD will make the people go far away,

and their whole land will be left empty.

¹³Maybe a tenth of the people will still be there in the land,

but it will be destroyed again.

They will be like the stump of an oak tree that has been cut down.

Like the stump of the tree, my chosen people will grow again.

Trouble With Aram

7 Ahaz was the son of Jotham, who was the son of Uzziah. Rezin was

the king of Aram, and Pekah son of Remaliah* was the king of Israel. When Ahaz was king of Judah, Rezin and Pekah went up to Jerusalem to attack it, but they were not able to defeat the city.[†]

²The family of David received a message that said, “The armies of Aram and Ephraim have joined together in one camp.” When King Ahaz heard this message, he and the people became frightened. They shook with fear like trees of the forest blowing in the wind.

³Then the LORD told Isaiah, “You and your son Shear Jashub[‡] should go out and talk to Ahaz. He will be at the end of the channel that brings water from the upper pool, on the road that leads up to Laundryman’s Field. ⁴Tell Ahaz to be careful but calm. Tell him not to be afraid of King Rezin of Aram and Remaliah’s son![¶] They are like two burning sticks. They might be hot now, but soon they will be nothing but smoke. ⁵Yes, these kings of Syria and Israel have made plans to destroy him. They said, ⁶‘Let’s go and fight against Judah and divide it among ourselves. Then we will make Tabeel’s son the new king of Judah.’”

⁷But the Lord GOD says:

“Their plan will not succeed.

It will not happen

⁸because Aram depends on its capital Damascus,

and Damascus is led by its weak king Rezin.

And don’t worry about Ephraim.

Within 65 years it will be crushed,

no longer a nation.

^{§§}6:7 *erased* Or “atoned” or “covered over”.

^{*}7:1 *Pekah son of Remaliah* A king of northern Israel. He ruled about 740-731 BC.

[†]7:1 *Rezin and Pekah ... the city* Or “Rezin and Pekah went up to attack Jerusalem, but they were not able to fight.”

[‡]7:3 *Shear Jashub* This is a name that means “a few people will come back”.

[¶]7:4 *Remaliah’s son* Pekah, the king of northern Israel. He ruled about 740-731 BC.

⁹Ephraim depends on its capital Samaria, and Samaria is led by Remaliah's son. So you have no reason to fear. Believe this, or you will not survive."

Immanuel—God Is With Us

¹⁰Then the LORD spoke to Ahaz again:

¹¹"Ask for a sign from the LORD your God to prove to yourself that this is true. You can ask for any sign you want. The sign can come from a place as deep as Sheol[§] or as high as the skies."^{**}

¹²But Ahaz said, "I will not ask for a sign as proof. I will not test the LORD."

¹³Then Isaiah said, "Family of David, listen very carefully! Is it not enough that you would test the patience of humans? Will you now test the patience of my God? ¹⁴But the Lord will still show you this sign:

"The young woman is pregnant^{††} and will give birth to a son. She will name him Immanuel.^{‡‡}

¹⁵He will eat milk curds and honey^{¶¶} as he learns to choose good and refuse evil.

¹⁶But before he is old enough to make that choice, the land of the two kings you fear will be empty.

¹⁷"But the LORD will bring troubled times to you. These troubles will be worse than anything that has happened

since the time Israel separated from Judah. This will happen to your people and to your father's family when God brings the king of Assyria to fight against you.

¹⁸"At that time the LORD will whistle for the Egyptian army to come like a cloud of flies from their rivers. And he will call for the Assyrians to come like a swarm of bees from their land. ¹⁹They will settle in the deep valleys and in the caves, by the thorn bushes and watering holes. ²⁰The Lord will use Assyria to punish Judah. Assyria will be hired and used like a razor to shave off Judah's beard and to remove the hair from his head and body.^{§§}

²¹"At that time someone might keep only one young cow and two sheep alive. ²²But there will be enough milk for them to eat milk curds. In fact, everyone left in the country will eat milk curds and honey. ²³There are now fields that have 1000 grapevines, and each grapevine is worth 1000 pieces of silver. But those fields will be covered with weeds and thorns. ²⁴That land will be wild and used only as a hunting ground where people go with bows and arrows. ²⁵People once worked the soil and grew food on these hills, but at that time they will not go there, because the fields will be covered with weeds and thorns. It will be a place where cattle graze and sheep wander."

[§]7:11 *The sign ... Sheol* Or "Make your request deep." The Hebrew word for "request" is like the word for Sheol.

^{**}7:11 *The sign ... skies* Literally, "Make your request very high."

^{††}7:14 *The young woman is pregnant* Or "Look at this young woman. She is pregnant." The ancient Greek version (quoted in Matt. 1:23) translates "young woman" in this passage with a word meaning "virgin" and has "Look! The virgin will become pregnant."

^{‡‡}7:14 *Immanuel* This name means "God is with us".

^{¶¶}7:15 *milk curds and honey* This refers to some of the first solid foods, something like yogurt, that were fed to a baby. This is also the food that even the poor can find to eat. Also in verse 22.

^{§§}7:20 *shave ... body* This means that the people of Judah would be humiliated and treated like slaves.

Assyria Is Coming Soon

8 The LORD told me, “Get a large scroll,* and use an ordinary pen† to write these words: “This is for Maher Shalal Hash Baz.””‡

²I found some men who could be trusted to serve as witnesses: Uriah the priest and Zechariah son of Jeberekiah. They watched me write those words. ³Then, when I had sex with my wife, she became pregnant and had a son. The LORD told me, “Name the boy Maher Shalal Hash Baz.” ⁴He said that because before the boy learns to say “Mummy” and “Daddy”, God will take all the wealth and riches from Damascus¶ and Samaria and give them to the king of Assyria.

⁵The LORD spoke to me again: ⁶“These people§ refuse to accept the slow-moving waters of Shiloah.** They prefer Rezin and Remaliah’s son.” ⁷But the Lord will bring the king of Assyria and all his power against them. The Assyrians will come like their swift moving river, like water that rises and spills over its banks. ⁸This water will be like a flash flood as it passes through Judah.

But God will spread his wings over the whole land. Yes, God is with us!††

⁹All you nations, prepare for war. You will be defeated.

Listen, all you faraway countries! Prepare for battle.

You will be defeated.

¹⁰Make your plans for the fight.

Your plans will be defeated.

Give orders to your armies, but your orders will be useless,

because God is with us!‡‡

Warnings to Isaiah

¹¹The LORD spoke to me with his great power and warned¶¶ me not to be like these people: ¹²“Don’t worry about the ‘evil plans’ these people talk about. Don’t be afraid of what they fear. Don’t let them frighten you.”

¹³The LORD All-Powerful is the one you should fear. He is the one you should respect.§§ He is the one who should frighten you. ¹⁴If you people would respect him, he would be a safe place* for you. But you don’t respect him, so he is like a stone that you stumble over. He is a rock that makes both families of Israel fall. He has become a trap that all the people of Jerusalem will fall into.

***8:1 scroll** This Hebrew word might also mean a clay or stone tablet.

†**8:1 ordinary pen** Literally, “stylus of a man”. This might be a pen for writing on clay.

‡**8:1 Maher Shalal Hash Baz** This means “There will soon be looting and stealing.”

¶**8:4 Damascus** A city in the country of Aram (Syria).

§**8:6 These people** Probably Judeans who wanted to join Rezin and Pekah. Also in verse 11.

****8:6 Shiloah** A channel that carried water from Gihon Spring to a pool at the south end of the City of David (Jerusalem). Men from David’s family were anointed to be kings there.

††**8:8 God is with us** In Hebrew this phrase is like the name Immanuel. Also in verse 10.

‡‡**8:10 God is with us** In Hebrew this is like the name Immanuel.

¶¶**8:11 warned** Or “prevented”.

§§**8:13 respect** Literally, “consider holy”.

***8:14 safe place** Or “holy place”.

¹⁵ (Many people will trip over this rock. They will fall and be broken. They will be caught in the trap.)

¹⁶ Write this agreement.[†] Tie it up and seal it so that it cannot be changed. Give these teachings to my followers for safekeeping.

¹⁷ The LORD has turned away from the descendants of Jacob,

but I will wait for him.

I trust that he will come to save us.

¹⁸ Here I am with the children the LORD has given me. We are here as signs from the LORD All-Powerful, who lives on Mount Zion. He is using us to show his plans for the people of Israel.

¹⁹ People will say to you, “Go to those who know how to get advice from ghosts and spirits of the dead and who mumble and chirp like birds. Ask them what to do. Shouldn’t people go to their gods, the spirits of their ancestors, for help? By contacting the dead, those still living ²⁰ can get advice or some message to help them know what to do.” But I tell you for sure, there is no future for those who say these things.

²¹ They will go down to the world below, tired and hungry. Their growing hunger will make them angry. And looking up, they will curse their king and their gods. ²² And looking down into the world below, they will see only trouble, depressing darkness and misery. Then they will be thrown down into the deepest darkness.

A New Day Is Coming

9 But there will be an end to the gloom those people suffered. In the past people thought the land of Zebulun and

Naphtali was not important. But later, that land will be honoured—the land along the sea, the land east of the Jordan River and Galilee where the people from other nations live.

² The people who live in spiritual darkness

have seen a great light.

Salvation has come like the dawn[‡]

for those who live in a land as dark as death.

³ Lord, you have given your nation great joy;

you have made your people happy.

They rejoice before you

as they rejoice at harvest time.

They are like soldiers celebrating over what they have won in battle.

⁴ Yes, you have lifted the heavy yoke off their shoulders

and have taken away their heavy burden.

You have taken away the rod that the enemy used to punish your people, as you did when you defeated Midian.[¶]

⁵ Yes, every boot that marched in battle and every uniform stained with blood will be destroyed

and thrown into the fire.

⁶ This will happen when a special child is born.

God will give us a son.

He will be responsible for leading the people,

and his name will be

Wonderful Counsellor, Powerful God,

Father Who Lives Forever, Prince of Peace.

⁷ His power will continue to grow,

and there will be peace without end.

[†]8:16 *Write this agreement* Or “Take a document.” This could refer to the large scroll in verse 1 or to the promise that follows in verse 17.

[‡]9:2 *Salvation ... dawn* Literally, “Light has shined.”

[¶]9:4 *as you ... Midian* See Judg. 7:15-25.

He will sit as king on the throne David had and rule over his kingdom. He will rule with honesty and justice and build a strong kingdom that will go on forever. It is the deep desire of the LORD All-Powerful to make this happen!

God Will Punish Israel

⁸The Lord gave a command against Jacob

and someone in Israel fell.[§]

⁹So all the people in Ephraim, including the ruler in Samaria, learned their lesson.

Those people are very proud and boastful now. They say,

¹⁰“Yes, those bricks fell, but we will rebuild with strong stone. Yes, those little trees were chopped down,

but we will plant new trees, and they will be large, strong trees.”

¹¹The LORD found people to go up and fight against Rezin.

He stirred up Rezin’s enemies.

¹²As for Israel, the Arameans are in front of him

and the Philistines are behind him.

And they are both eating away at him.

But the Lord is not finished yet.

He is still angry, and his arm is raised to continue punishing Israel.

¹³The people did not stop sinning. They did not come to the LORD All-Powerful for help.

¹⁴So the LORD cut off Israel’s head and tail.

He took away the branch and the stalk in one day.

¹⁵Israel’s leaders and those in power are the “head”.

And their lying prophets are the “tail”.

¹⁶Their guides are leading them the wrong way, so those who follow them are headed for ruin.

¹⁷They are all evil and have no respect for God.

Everything they say is wrong.

So the Lord is not happy with their young men,

and he will not have pity even on their widows and orphans.

The Lord has punished them, but he is not finished yet.

He is still angry, and his arm is raised to continue punishing his people.

¹⁸That evil was like a small fire that started among the weeds and thorns and then spread to the larger bushes in the forest.

Finally, it became a giant fire, and everything went up in smoke.

¹⁹The LORD All-Powerful was angry, so the land was burned.

The people were fuel for the fire.

No one showed any compassion to anyone else.

²⁰People looked to the right and grabbed whatever they could,

but they were still hungry.

They grabbed whatever was on their left, but still they were not satisfied.

So they turned on themselves and began to eat the bodies of their own children.

²¹Manasseh fought against Ephraim, and Ephraim fought against Manasseh.

Then both of them turned on Judah.

But the Lord is not finished

punishing his people.

He is still angry,

[§]9:8 Or “The Lord sent a command to Jacob and it happened to Israel.”

and his arm is raised to continue punishing them.

10 Just look at those lawmakers who write evil laws and make life hard for the people.

²They are not fair to the poor. They take away the rights of the poor and allow people to steal from widows and orphans.

³Lawmakers, you will have to explain what you have done.

What will you do then?

Your destruction is coming from a far-away country.

Where will you run for help?

Your money and your riches will not help you.

⁴You will have to bow down like a prisoner.

You will fall down like a dead man, but that will not help you.

God will still be angry and ready to punish you.

God Will Punish Assyria's Pride

⁵God says: "I will use Assyria like a stick. In my anger I will use Assyria to punish Israel.

⁶I will send Assyria to fight against the people who do evil.

I am angry with them, and I will command Assyria to fight against them.

Assyria will defeat them and take their wealth.

Israel will be like dirt for Assyria to trample in the streets.

⁷But Assyria's king does not understand that I will use him.

He does not think of himself as my tool. He only wants to destroy other people; he only plans to destroy many nations.

⁸The king of Assyria says to himself, 'All my officers are like kings!

⁹They defeated the city of Calno as easily as Carchemish.

Arpad was defeated like Hamath and Samaria like Damascus.

¹⁰I took control of those evil kingdoms whose gods were greater than those of Jerusalem and Samaria.

¹¹Just as I defeated Samaria and her gods, so I will also defeat Jerusalem and its idols."

¹²When the Lord finishes doing what he planned to Jerusalem and Mount Zion, he will punish Assyria. The king of Assyria is very proud. His pride made him do many bad things, so God will punish him. ¹³The king of Assyria said: "By my own power I have done many great things;

by my wisdom I have defeated many nations.

I have taken their wealth and their people as slaves.

I am a very powerful man.

¹⁴With my own hands I have taken the riches of all these people, like someone taking eggs from a bird's nest.

A bird often leaves its nest and eggs, and there is nothing to protect the nest. There is no bird to chirp and fight with its wings and beak,

so anyone can come and take the eggs.

And there is no one to stop me from taking all the people on earth."

¹⁵But an axe is not better than the one who cuts with it.

A saw is not better than the one who uses it.

Is a stick stronger than the one who picks it up?

It can't do anything to the person who is using it to punish someone!

¹⁶So Assyria will be helpless before the Lord GOD All-Powerful.

The Lord will send a terrible disease against Assyria's strong army.

Its glory will be destroyed,

like a fire that burns until everything is gone.

¹⁷The Light of Israel will be like a fire. The Holy One will be like a flame.

He will be like a fire that first begins to burn the weeds and thorns

¹⁸and then spreads to burn up the tall trees and vineyards.

Finally, everything will be destroyed—even the people.

Assyria will be like a rotting log.

¹⁹There will be a few trees left standing in the forest,

so few that even a child could count them.

²⁰Then the people from Jacob's family who are left living in Israel will stop depending on the one who beat them. They will learn to depend on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel. ²¹Those who are left in Jacob's family will again follow the Powerful God.**

²²Israel, your people are as many as the grains of sand by the sea, but only a few of them will be left to come back to God. But before that happens, your country will be destroyed. God has announced that he will destroy the land. And then justice will come into the land like a river flowing full. ²³The Lord GOD All-Powerful really will destroy this land.

²⁴The Lord GOD All-Powerful says: My people living in Zion, don't be afraid of the Assyrians! Yes, for a while they will beat you with sticks and clubs, just as the Egyptians did. ²⁵But before long, my anger will turn from you to them. And I will begin to destroy them.

²⁶Then the LORD All-Powerful will beat the Assyrians with a whip, just as they defeated Midian at Raven Rock.†† He will punish his enemies, as he did when he raised his stick over the sea‡‡ and led his people from Egypt.

²⁷He will take away the troubles Assyria brought you,

troubles that are like heavy weights carried with a yoke on your neck.

But that yoke will be taken off your neck.

The burden will be lifted from your shoulders.

The Army of Assyria Invades Israel

²⁸The army of Assyria will enter near Aiath.¶¶

They will walk through Migron.

They will keep their food in Micmash.

²⁹The army will cross over the mountains

and sleep at Geba.

Ramah will be afraid,

and the people at Gibeah of Saul will run away.

³⁰Cry out, Bath Gallim!

Laishah, listen!

Anathoth, answer me!

³¹The people of Madmenah are running away.

The people of Gebim are hiding.

³²This day the army will stop at Nob and prepare to fight against Mount Zion, the hill of Jerusalem.

³³Look, the Lord GOD All-Powerful will use his great power

and chop down that great tree of Assyria. Their highest officials will be brought down.

**10:21 *Powerful God* See Isa. 9:6.

††10:26 *Midian at Raven Rock* Or "Midian at the Rock of Oreb". See Judg. 7:25.

‡‡10:26 *he raised ... sea* See Exod. 14:1 – 15:21.

¶¶10:28 *Aiath* The first of many towns listed, which are probably along the route that an invading army from the north would take in attacking Jerusalem.

Their most important leaders will be humbled.

³⁴ God will cut down his enemies.

Like the tall trees of Lebanon he will cut them down with an axe.

The King of Peace Is Coming

11 A small tree^{§§} will begin to grow from the stump of Jesse.*

That branch will grow from Jesse's roots.

² The LORD's Spirit will always be with that new king to give him wisdom, understanding, guidance and power.

The Spirit will help him know and respect the LORD.

³ This king will find joy in obeying the LORD.

He will not judge people by the way things look

or make a decision by listening to rumours.

⁴⁻⁵ He will judge the poor fairly and honestly.

He will be fair when he decides what to do for the poor of the land.

If he decides people should be beaten, he will give the command,

and they will be beaten.

If he decides people must die,

he will give the command,

and those evil people will be killed.

Goodness and fairness will be like a belt he wears around his waist.

⁶ Then wolves will live at peace with lambs,

and leopards will lie down with young goats.

An ox and a lion will eat together,

and a little child will be able to lead them.

⁷ Bears and cattle will graze in the same field,

and their young will lie down together in peace.

Lions will eat hay like cattle.

⁸ Even snakes will not harm people.

Babies will be able to play near a cobra's[†] hole

and reach into the nest of a poisonous snake.

⁹ People will stop hurting each other.

People on my holy mountain will not want to destroy things

because they will know the LORD.

The world will be full of knowledge about him,

like the sea is full of water.

¹⁰ At that time there will be someone special from Jesse's family. He will be like a flag that all the nations gather around. The nations will come to him and ask him what they should do. And the place where he is will be filled with glory.

¹¹ At that time the Lord will again reach out and gather his people who are left in countries like Assyria, North Egypt, South Egypt, Ethiopia, Elam, Babylonia, Hamath and other faraway countries around the world.

¹² He will gather the people of Israel and Judah

who were forced to leave their country.

They were scattered to all the faraway places on earth,

but he will raise a flag as a sign to the other nations

that he is gathering his people together again.

¹³ Then Ephraim will not be jealous of Judah,

and Judah will have no enemies left.

§§11:1 *small tree* That is, a new king will come from the family of David.

*11:1 *Jesse* King David's father.

†11:8 *cobra* A very poisonous snake.

And Judah will not cause trouble for Ephraim.

¹⁴ But Ephraim and Judah will attack the Philistines.

These two nations will be like birds flying down to catch a small animal.

Together, they will take the riches from the people in the East.[‡]

Ephraim and Judah will control Edom, Moab and the people in Ammon.[¶]

¹⁵ Just as the LORD divided the Red Sea near Egypt,[§]

he will raise his arm in anger over the Euphrates River and strike it.

He will turn it into seven dried-up streams

so that people can walk on dry land without taking off their sandals.

¹⁶ Then God's people who are left in Assyria will have a way to leave, just like the time the people of Israel came out of Egypt.

A Song of Praise to God

12 At that time you will say:

"I praise you, LORD!
You have been angry with me,
but you are not angry with me now.
You showed your love to me.

² God is the one who saves me.
I trust him and will not be afraid.

The LORD GOD^{**} is my strength,
the reason I sing for joy!^{††}

He is the one who saved me."

³ You people will get your water from the spring of salvation.

Then you will be happy.

⁴ At that time you will say: "Praise the LORD

and call out his name!

Tell everyone what he has done and how wonderful he is.

⁵ Sing songs of praise about the LORD, because he has done great things.

Spread this news about God throughout the whole world.

Let all people know these things.

⁶ People of Zion, shout about these things!

The Holy One of Israel is with you in a powerful way.

So sing for joy!"

God's Message to Babylon

13 God gave Isaiah son of Amoz this message^{‡‡} about Babylon:

² Raise a flag on that mountain^{¶¶} where nothing grows.

Call out to the men.

Wave your arms to let them know they should enter through the gates for important leaders.

³ I have separated these men from the people, and I myself will command them.

I have gathered these proud, happy soldiers of mine to show how angry I am.

⁴ Listen to that loud noise in the mountains.

It sounds like crowds of people.

People from many kingdoms are gathering together.

[‡]11:14 *East* This usually refers to the area around Babylon.

[¶]11:14 *Edom, Moab ... Ammon* Three countries east of Israel. They were Israel's enemies for many years.

[§]11:15 *the LORD ... Egypt* Or "the LORD will dry up the tongue of the Sea of Egypt".

^{**}12:2 *The LORD GOD* Literally, "YAH YAWEH", two forms of a Hebrew name for God. See YAHWEH in the Word List.

^{††}12:2 *the reason ... joy* Literally, "my song" or possibly, "my power".

^{‡‡}13:1 *message* Or "burden".

^{¶¶}13:2 *mountain* This probably means Babylon.

The LORD All-Powerful is calling his army together.

⁵They are coming from a faraway land. They are coming from beyond the horizon.

The LORD will use this army as a weapon to show his anger.

They will destroy the whole country.

⁶The LORD's day of judgement is near.

So cry and be sad for yourselves.

It is time for God All-Powerful to destroy.

⁷People will lose their courage.

Fear will make them weak.

⁸Everyone will be afraid.

They will stare at each other with shock on their faces.

Fear will grip them

like the pains of a woman in childbirth.

God's Judgement Against Babylon

⁹Look, the LORD's special day is coming!

It will be a terrible day.

God will be very angry.

He will destroy the country

and wipe out the sinful people who live there.

¹⁰The skies will be dark.

The sun, the moon and the stars will not shine.

¹¹The LORD says:

"I will cause bad things to happen to the world.

I will punish the evil people for their sin.

I will make proud people lose their pride.

I will stop the boasting of cruel people.

¹²There will be only a few people left.

They will be as rare as pure gold.

¹³In my anger I will shake the sky,

and the earth will be moved from its place."

That will happen on the day the LORD All-Powerful shows his anger.

¹⁴Then the people from Babylon will run away

like wounded deer or sheep that have no shepherd.

Everyone will turn

and run back to their own country and people.

¹⁵Anyone caught by the enemy will be killed with a sword.

¹⁶Their little children will be beaten to death while they watch.

Everything in their houses will be stolen, and their wives will be raped.

¹⁷"Look, I will cause the armies of Media to attack Babylon.

No one can stop them even with offers of gold and silver.

¹⁸With their bows and arrows they will kill the young men.

They will not show any kindness or mercy

even to the babies and young children.

¹⁹Babylon is the most beautiful of all kingdoms,

and the Babylonians^{§§} are very proud of it.

But I, the Lord, will destroy Babylon like Sodom and Gomorrah.

²⁰No one will ever live in Babylon again.

People will stay away from there.

Not even those who move from place to place will ever set up their tents there,

and shepherds will not let their sheep rest there.

²¹The only animals living there will be wild animals from the desert.

People will not be living in their houses in Babylon.

The houses will be full of owls and large birds.

^{§§}13:19 *Babylonians* Literally, "Chaldeans". Also in 23:13; 43:14.

Wild goats* will play in the houses.
 22 Wild dogs and wolves will howl
 in the great and beautiful buildings.
 Babylon will be finished.
 The end is near,
 and it will not be delayed.”

Israel Will Return Home

14 The LORD will again show his love to Jacob. He will again choose the people of Israel. He will give them their land. Then the non-Israelites† will join the Israelites, and both will become one family—Jacob’s family. 2 Those nations will bring the Israelites back to their land. The men and women from the other nations will become slaves to Israel. In the past those people forced the Israelites to become their slaves. But in the future the Israelites will defeat those nations, and Israel will rule over them in the LORD’s land. 3 In the past you were slaves. People forced you to work hard. But the LORD will take away the hard work you were forced to do.

A Song About the King of Babylon

4 At that time you will begin to sing this song about the king of Babylon:
 The king was cruel when he ruled us,
 but now his rule is finished.
 5 The LORD breaks the sceptre of evil rulers;
 he takes away their power.
 6 In anger, the king of Babylon beat the people.
 He never stopped beating them.
 He was an evil ruler who ruled in anger.
 He never stopped hurting people.

7 But now, the whole country rests and is quiet.

Now the people begin to celebrate.

8 You were an evil king,
 and now you are finished.

Even the pine trees are happy.

The cedar trees of Lebanon rejoice.

They say, “The king chopped us down,
 but now the king has fallen,
 and he will never stand again.”

9 The place of death is excited
 that you are coming.

Sheol is waking the spirits
 of all the leaders of the earth for you.

Sheol is making the kings stand up
 from their thrones to meet you.

10 They will make fun of you, saying,
 “Now you are as dead as we are.

Now you are just like us.”

11 Your pride has been sent down to
 Sheol.

The music from your harps announces
 the coming of your proud spirit.

Maggots will be the bed you lie on,
 and other worms will cover your body
 like a blanket.

12 You were like the morning star,
 but you have fallen from the sky.

In the past all the nations on earth
 bowed down before you,

but now you have been cut down.

13 You always told yourself,
 “I will go to the skies above.

I will put my throne above God’s stars.

I will sit on Zaphon,‡ the holy mountain
 where the gods meet.

14 I will go up above the tops of the
 clouds.

I will be like God Most High.”

15 But that did not happen.

*13:21 *Wild goats* The Hebrew word means “hairy”, “goat” or “goat-demon”.

†14:1 *non-Israelites* This usually means those who live in a country but are not yet citizens of that country. Here, it is the non-Israelites who decided to follow God.

‡14:13 *Zaphon* This Hebrew word means “north”, “hidden”.

You were brought down to the deep pit—Sheol, the place of death.

¹⁶ People will come to look at your dead body.

They will think about you and say,

“Is this the same man who caused great fear in all the kingdoms on earth,

¹⁷ who destroyed cities and turned the land into a desert, who captured people in war and would not let them go home?”

¹⁸ The kings of other nations lie buried with honour, each king with his own grave.

¹⁹ But you were thrown out, far from your grave,

like a rotting branch cut from a tree.

You are like a dead man who fell in battle,

trampled under the feet of other soldiers. Now you look like any other dead man wrapped in burial clothes.

²⁰ Other kings have their own graves, but you will not join them, because you ruined your own country and killed your own people.

So your wicked descendants will be stopped.

²¹ Prepare to kill his children, because their father is guilty.

His children will never take control of the land.

They will never fill the world with their cities.

²² The LORD All-Powerful said:

“I will stand and fight against those people.

I will destroy the famous city, Babylon.

I will destroy all the people there.

I will destroy their children, their grandchildren and their great-grandchildren.”

The LORD himself said this.

²³ “I will change Babylon.

It will be a place for animals,[¶] not people.

It will be a swamp.

I will use the ‘broom of destruction’ to sweep Babylon away.”

The LORD All-Powerful said this.

God Will Also Punish Assyria

²⁴ The LORD All-Powerful made this promise:

“This will happen exactly as I meant for it to happen.

It will happen just the way I planned.

²⁵ I will destroy the king of Assyria in my country.

I will trample him on my mountains.

He forced my people to be his slaves; he put a yoke on their necks.

But that pole will be taken off Judah’s neck,

and that burden will be removed.

²⁶ This is what I plan to do for this land.

I will use my power to punish all those nations.”

²⁷ When the LORD All-Powerful makes a plan,

no one can change it.

When he raises his arm to punish,

no one can stop him.

God’s Message to Philistia

²⁸ This message[§] was given to me the year King Ahaz died:^{**}

²⁹ Country of Philistia, don’t be happy that the king who beat you is now dead. It is true that his rule has ended, but his son will come and rule.

[¶]14:23 *animals* Literally, “porcupines”.

[§]14:28 *message* Or “burden”. Also in 15:1.

^{**}14:28 *year King Ahaz died* About 727 BC.

It will be like one snake giving birth to a more dangerous one.

The new king will be like a quick and dangerous snake to you.

³⁰ But even the poorest of my people will be able to eat safely, and their children will be able to lie down and feel safe.

But I will make your family die from hunger, and your enemy will kill anyone who survives.

³¹ People near the city gates, cry!

People in the city, cry out!

Everyone in Philistia, your courage will melt like hot wax.

Look to the north!

There is a cloud of dust.

An army is coming,

and everyone in that army is strong.^{††}

³² But what will the messengers

from that nation report about us?

They will say, “The LORD made Zion strong,

and his poor people went there for safety.”

God’s Message to Moab

15

This is a message about Moab:

One night armies took the wealth from Ar in Moab,

and the city was destroyed.

One night armies took the wealth from Kir in Moab,

and the city was destroyed.

² The king’s family and the people of Dibon

go to their places of worship to cry.

The people of Moab are crying for Nebo^{‡‡} and Medeba.^{¶¶}

They have shaved their heads and beards to show their sorrow.

³ Everywhere in Moab, on the housetops and in the streets,

people are wearing rags.

Everyone is crying.

⁴ In Heshbon and Elealeh they are crying loudly.

You can hear their voices as far away as Jahaz.

Even the soldiers are frightened.

They are shaking with fear.

⁵ My heart cries, full of sorrow for Moab.

Its people run away to Zoar for safety.

They run to Eglath Shelishiyah.

The people are crying

as they go up the road to Luhith.

You can hear their cries of sorrow

as they follow the road to Horonaim.

⁶ But Nimrim Brook is as dry as a desert.

The grass has dried up,

and the plants are all dead.

Nothing is green.

⁷ So the people gather up everything they own

and carry it across the Valley of Willows.

⁸ You can hear crying everywhere in Moab—

as far away as Eglaim and Beer Elim.

⁹ The water of Dimon^{§§} is full of blood, and I will bring even more troubles to Dimon.

A few people living in Moab have escaped the enemy,

but I will send lions to eat them.

16

You people should send a gift to the king of the land. You should

send a lamb from Sela, through the

^{††}14:31 *everyone ... strong* Or “there are no stragglers in that group”.

^{‡‡}15:2 *Nebo* A city in the country of Moab and the name of a false god.

^{¶¶}15:2 *Dibon, Medeba* Cities in the country of Moab.

^{§§}15:9 *Dimon* This is probably the city of Dibon. Dimon is like the Hebrew word meaning “blood”.

desert, to the mountain in the city of Jerusalem.*

²The women of Moab try to cross the River Arnon.

They run around looking for help, like little birds that have fallen from their nest.

³They say, “Help us!

Tell us what to do.

Protect us from our enemies as shade protects us from the noon sun.

We are running from our enemies.

Hide us!

Don’t give us to our enemies.

⁴People from Moab were forced to leave their homes.

So let them live in your land.

Hide them from their enemies.”

The robbing will stop.

The enemy will be defeated.

The men who hurt the people will be gone from the land.

⁵Then a new king will come.

He will be from David’s family.†

He will be loyal, loving and kind.

He will be a king who judges fairly.

He will do what is right and good.

⁶We have heard that the people of Moab are proud and conceited.

They are hot-tempered boasters, but their boasts are only empty words.

⁷Because of their pride,

everyone in Moab will mourn.

They will wish for the way things used to be.

They will wish for the raisin cakes from Kir Hareseth.‡

⁸The fields of Heshbon and the vines of Sibmah no longer grow grapes.

Foreign rulers have destroyed the vines. The enemy has reached Jazer

and has spread into the desert and down to the sea.¶

⁹I will cry with the people of Jazer and Sibmah

because the grapes have been destroyed. I will cry with the people of Heshbon and Elealeh

because there will be no harvest.

There will be no summer fruit,

and there will be no shouts of joy for the harvest.

¹⁰There will be no joy and happiness in the orchard.

I will end the happy singing and shouting in the vineyard.

The grapes are ready to make wine, but they will all be ruined.

¹¹So I will hum a sad song for Moab and Kir Heres,§

like a harp playing a funeral song.

¹²The people of Moab will go to their places of worship

and make a great effort to worship.

They will go to their temple to pray, but it will not help them.

¹³The LORD said these things about Moab many times. ¹⁴And now the LORD says, “In three years (counting as exactly as a hired helper would) all those people and the things they are proud of will be gone. Only a few of their weakest people will be left.”

*16:1 *city of Jerusalem* Literally, “Daughter Zion”. See Zion in the Word List.

†16:5 *David’s family* The royal family of Judah. God promised that men from David’s family would be kings in Judah.

‡16:7 *Kir Hareseth* A city in the country of Moab.

¶16:8 *Foreign rulers ... the sea* Or “These grapes made many foreign rulers drunk. The vines spread far to the city of Jazer, then into the desert and down to the sea.”

§16:11 *Kir Heres* Kir Hareseth, a city in the country of Moab. Kir Heres means “a city chosen to be destroyed”.

God's Message to Aram

17 This is a message** about Damascus:††

“Damascus is now a city, but it will be destroyed.

Only ruined buildings will be left there.

² People will leave the cities of Aroer.‡‡

Flocks of sheep will wander freely in those empty towns;

there will be no one to bother them.

³ The fortress cities of Ephraim will be destroyed.

The government in Damascus will be finished.

Those left in Aram will lose everything, just like the people of Israel,” says the LORD All-Powerful.

⁴ “At that time Jacob’s wealth will all be gone.

Yes, Israel will be like a sick man who has become weak and thin.

⁵ “That time will be like the grain harvest in Rephaim Valley.¶¶ The workers gather the plants that grow in the field. Then they cut the heads of grain from the plants and collect the grain.

⁶ “That time will also be like the olive harvest. People knock olives from the trees, but a few olives are usually left at the top of each tree. Four or five olives are left on some of the top branches. It will be the same for those cities,” says the LORD All-Powerful.

⁷ Then the people will look up to the one who made them. Their eyes will see the Holy One of Israel. ⁸ They will not

trust the great things they have made. They will not go to the special gardens^{§§} and altars* they made for false gods. ⁹ At that time all the walled cities will be empty. They will be like the mountains and the forests† in the land before the Israelites came. In the past all the people ran away because the Israelites were coming. In the future the country will be empty again.

¹⁰ This will happen because you have forgotten the God who saves you.

You have not remembered that God is your place of safety.

You brought some very good grapevines from faraway places.

You might plant those grapevines, but they will not grow.

¹¹ You will plant your grapevines one day and try to make them grow, and the next day they will blossom.

But at harvest time, you will go to gather the fruit from the plants, and you will see that everything is dead. A sickness will kill all the plants.

¹² Listen to the many nations!

Their loud roaring sounds are like the noise from the sea.

Listen, it is like the crashing of waves in the sea.

¹³ And like the waves, they will rush away when God speaks harshly to them.

They will be like chaff blown away by the wind.

They will be like weeds chased by a storm.

**17:1 *message* Or “burden”.

††17:1 *Damascus* A city in the country of Aram (Syria).

‡‡17:2 *Aroer* A place in the country of Aram (Syria).

¶¶17:5 *Rephaim Valley* A valley south-west of Jerusalem.

§§17:8 *special gardens* Gardens where people worshipped false gods.

*17:8 *altars* These might be altars for burning incense, or they might be altars for worshipping a special false god.

†17:9 *mountains and the forests* With a minor change in the Hebrew, this could be “the Horites and Amorites”.

¹⁴That evening, our people will be frightened by the enemy.
By morning, the enemy will be gone.
That is what will happen to those who try to attack us!
That is the end for those who try to destroy us.

God's Message to Ethiopia

18 Look at the land along the rivers of Ethiopia where you can hear the buzzing of insect wings. ²That land sends people down the Nile River in reed boats.[‡]

Fast messengers, go to the people who are tall and smooth, who are feared far and wide.
Their powerful nation defeats all its enemies.

It is the land divided by rivers.

Go and warn them!

³Like a flag on a hill, everyone on earth will see what happens.

Like a trumpet call, everyone in the country will hear it.

⁴The LORD said to me:

"I will be in the place prepared for me."[¶]
I will quietly watch these things happen.
On a beautiful summer day, at noon, people will be resting.

It will be during the hot harvest time when there is no rain, but only early morning dew.

⁵Then something terrible will happen.
Earlier in the year, the flowers bloomed and the new grapes formed buds and began to grow.

But before the crop is harvested, the enemy will come and cut the plants. They will break the vines and throw them away.

⁶The vines will be left for the birds from the mountains and the wild animals to eat.

The birds will feed on them throughout the summer,

and that winter the wild animals will eat the vines."

⁷At that time a special offering will be brought to the LORD All-Powerful from the people who are tall and smooth, from those who are feared far and wide, from that powerful nation that defeats other countries and whose land is divided by rivers.[§] This offering will be brought to the LORD's place on Mount Zion.

God's Message to Egypt

19 A message^{**} about Egypt:
Look, the LORD is coming on a fast cloud.

He will enter Egypt, and all the false gods of Egypt will shake with fear.

Egypt's courage will melt away like hot wax.

²The LORD says:

"I will cause the Egyptians to fight against themselves.

Men will fight their brothers.

Neighbours will be against neighbours.

Cities will be against cities.

[‡]**18:2 reed boats** These boats were made by tying many reeds (a type of water plant) together.

[¶]**18:4 the place prepared for me** Probably the Temple in Jerusalem.

[§]**18:7** Or "At that time the people who are tall and smooth, who are feared far and wide, that powerful nation who defeats other countries and whose land is divided by rivers, those people will be brought to the LORD All-Powerful as a special gift."

^{**}**19:1 message** Or "burden".

Kingdoms will be against kingdoms.^{††}

³The Egyptians will be afraid and confused.

They will ask their false gods and spirits of the dead what they should do.

They will seek advice from ghosts and spirits of their dead ancestors, but I will ruin their plans.”

⁴The Lord GOD All-Powerful says:

“I will give Egypt to a hard master.

A powerful king will rule over the people.”

⁵The water in the Nile River will dry up and disappear.

⁶All the rivers will smell bad.

Egypt’s canals will dry up, and the water plants will die.

⁷All the plants along the riverbanks, even the crops beside the Nile, will dry up and blow away.

⁸The fishermen, all who fish in the Nile, will be so sad they will cry.

They depend on the Nile for their food, but it will be dry.

⁹Those who make cloth from flax, who weave it into linen, will all be sad.

¹⁰Those who weave cloth will be broken,

and those who work for money will be depressed.

¹¹The leaders of the city of Zoan^{‡‡} are fools.

Pharaoh’s “wise advisers” give bad advice.

They say they are wise.

They say they are from the old family of the kings,

but they are not as smart as they think.

¹²Egypt, where are your wise men?

They should learn what the LORD All-Powerful has planned for Egypt.

They should be the ones to tell you what will happen.

¹³The leaders of Zoan have been fooled. The leaders of Memphis^{¶¶} have believed lies,

so they lead Egypt the wrong way.

¹⁴The LORD confused them, so they wander around and lead Egypt the wrong way.

Everything they do is wrong.

They are like drunks rolling in their vomit.

¹⁵There is nothing the leaders can do.

They are “the heads and the tails”.

They are “the tops and the stalks of plants”.^{§§}

¹⁶At that time the Egyptians will be like frightened women. They will be afraid of the LORD All-Powerful, because he will raise his arm to punish the people. ¹⁷The land of Judah brings fear to everyone in Egypt. Anyone in Egypt who hears the name Judah will be afraid. This will happen because the LORD All-Powerful has planned terrible things to happen to Egypt. ¹⁸At that time there will be five cities in Egypt where people speak Hebrew.* One of these cities will be named “Destruction City”.[†]

The people in these cities will promise to follow the LORD All-Powerful.

¹⁹At that time there will be an altar for the LORD in the middle of Egypt.

At the border of Egypt there will be a monument to show honour to the LORD.

^{††}19:2 *Kingdoms will be against kingdoms* Or “States will be against states.” This means Egyptians will fight other Egyptians.

^{‡‡}19:11 *Zoan* A city in Egypt. Also in verse 13.

^{¶¶}19:13 *Memphis* Literally, “Noph”, a city in Egypt.

^{§§}19:15 *the heads and ... stalks of plants* See Isa. 9:14-15.

*19:18 *Hebrew* Literally, “the language of Canaan”.

[†]19:18 *Destruction City* This is a wordplay on the name meaning “Sun City”, which is also called On or Heliopolis.

²⁰This will be a sign to show that the LORD All-Powerful does amazing things. Any time the people cry for help from the LORD, he will send help. He will send someone to save and defend the people—to rescue the people from those who hurt them.

²¹At that time the LORD will make himself known to the Egyptians, and they really will know the LORD. They will serve him and give him many sacrifices. They will make promises[‡] to the LORD, and they will do what they promise. ²²The LORD will punish the Egyptians, but then he will heal them, and they will come back to him. The LORD will listen to their prayers and heal them.

²³At that time there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria. Then the Assyrians will go to Egypt, and the Egyptians will go to Assyria. Egypt will work with Assyria. [¶]²⁴Then Israel, Assyria and Egypt will join together and control the land. This will be a blessing for the land. ²⁵The LORD All-Powerful will give a blessing to these countries: Egypt, you are my people. Assyria, I made you. Israel, I own you. You are all blessed!

Assyria Will Defeat Egypt and Ethiopia

20 Sargon[§] was the king of Assyria. He sent his military commander to fight against Ashdod. The commander went there and captured the city. ²At that time the LORD spoke to Isaiah son of Amoz. He said, “Take off the rags you are wearing and remove your

sandals.” So Isaiah obeyed the Lord and went without clothes or sandals.

³Then the LORD said, “My servant Isaiah has gone without clothes or sandals for three years. This is a sign for Egypt and Ethiopia. ⁴The king of Assyria will take away captives from Egypt and Ethiopia and lead them away from their countries. The people, young and old, will be led away without clothes or sandals. They will be completely naked. ⁵Those who looked to Ethiopia for help will be shattered. Those who were amazed by Egypt’s glory will be ashamed. ⁶People living along the coast will say, ‘We trusted those countries to help us. We ran to them so that they would rescue us from the king of Assyria. But look at them. They have been captured, so how can we escape?’”

God’s Message About Babylon

21 This is a message^{**} about “the desert by the sea”:^{††}

It is coming like a storm blowing through the Negev.

It is coming in from the desert, from a frightening nation.

²I was given a vision of the hard times to come.

I see traitors turning against you.

I see people taking your wealth.

Elam, go against them!

Media, surround the city!

I will put an end to all their moaning.

³I saw those terrible things,

and now I am afraid.

My fear makes my stomach hurt

like the pain of giving birth.

What I hear frightens me.

[‡]19:21 *promises* A special kind of promise to God. See Lev. 22:18-24.

[¶]19:23 *Egypt will work with Assyria* Or “Egypt will serve Assyria.”

[§]20:1 *Sargon* A king of Assyria. He was king about 721-705 BC.

^{**}21:1 *message* Or “burden”. Also in verses 11,13.

^{††}21:1 *the desert by the sea* Probably Babylon.

What I see makes me shake with fear.

⁴I am worried and shaking with fear.
My pleasant evening has become a
nightmare.

⁵They set the table.

They post the guard.

They get something to eat and drink.

“Officers, get up!

Polish your shields!”

⁶The Lord said to me:

“Go and find someone to guard this city.

He must report whatever he sees.

⁷If he sees chariots and teams of horses
or men riding donkeys or camels,
he must watch them carefully.”

⁸Then one day the watchman^{‡‡} called
out:

“My master, every day I have been in the
watchtower^{¶¶} watching.

Every night I have been standing on
duty.

⁹Look! I see a man in a chariot
with a team of horses.”

The messenger said:

“Babylon has been defeated!

It has fallen to the ground!

All the statues of her false gods
were thrown to the ground and broken
to pieces.”

¹⁰My people, you will be like the grain
crushed on my threshing floor.

I have told you everything I heard
from the LORD All-Powerful, the God of
Israel.

God’s Message About Dumah

¹¹This is a message about Dumah:^{§§}
There is someone calling to me from
Seir,*

“Guard, how much of the night is left?
How much longer will it be night?”

¹²The guard answered,

“Morning is coming,

but then night will come again.

If you have something else to ask,
come back[†] later and ask.”

God’s Message About Arabia

¹³This is a message about Arabia:
A caravan from Dedan spent the night
among some bushes in the desert of
Arabia.

¹⁴They gave water to some thirsty
travellers.

The people of Tema gave them food.

¹⁵They were running from swords
that were ready to kill.

They were running from bows
that were ready to shoot.

They were running from a hard battle.

¹⁶This is what the Lord said to me: “In
one year, the way a hired helper counts
time, all of Kedar’s glory will be gone.

¹⁷Only a few of the archers, the great
soldiers of Kedar, will be left alive.” The
LORD, the God of Israel, told me this.

^{‡‡}21:8 *the watchman* Or “the seer”, an ancient title for a prophet. The traditional Hebrew text has “a lion”. “Watchman” is from a Hebrew Qumran scroll.

^{¶¶}21:8 *watchtower* A tall building where guards stood and watched to see if anyone was coming near their city.

^{§§}21:11 *Dumah* This Hebrew word means “silence”. It may refer to Edom or to a city in Arabia.

*21:11 *Seir* A mountain in Edom or a city in Arabia.

[†]21:12 *come back* This can also mean “change your heart” or “repent”.

God's Message About Jerusalem

22 This is a message[‡] about the Valley of Vision:[¶]

Jerusalem, what is wrong with you people?

Why is everyone celebrating on their roofs[§]?

² Why all the shouting?

Why all the noise and excitement?

There are bodies lying everywhere, but they were not killed with swords.

The people died,

but not while fighting.

³ All your leaders ran away together, but they have all been captured without a fight.

All of you who ran away were found and captured.

⁴ So I say, "Don't look at me!

Let me cry!

Don't rush to comfort me about the destruction of my people."

⁵ The Lord GOD All-Powerful planned this day,

a day for riots, confusion and panic in the Valley of Vision.

The city walls were broken down.

People cried out to the mountains for help.

⁶ Soldiers from Elam came in horse-drawn chariots

with their bows and arrows.

Men from Kir got their shields ready.

⁷ Your beautiful valleys were filled with chariots.

Soldiers on horses guarded the city gates.

⁸ Judah was left with no way to defend itself,

and the people ran for the weapons kept in the Forest Palace.^{**}

⁹ When you saw cracks in the walls of the city,

you began collecting water from the lower pool.

¹⁰ You counted the houses in Jerusalem and used stones from some to repair the walls.

¹¹ You built a pool between the two walls to store water from the Old Pool.

You did all this without asking God to help you,

and he is the one who made these things happen.

You did not remember the one who planned this long ago.

¹² So the Lord GOD All-Powerful told you to weep and mourn,

to show your sorrow by shaving your heads and wearing rags.

¹³ But instead, everyone is happy and celebrating,

preparing a feast of beef and lamb.

Eating meat and drinking wine, you say, "Let's eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."

¹⁴ The LORD All-Powerful said this to me and I heard it with my own ears:

"You are guilty of doing wrong,

and I promise that you will die before this guilt is forgiven."

The Lord GOD All-Powerful said these things.

[‡]22:1 *message* Or "burden".

[¶]22:1 *Valley of Vision* This probably means one of the valleys near Jerusalem. Also in verse 5.

[§]22:1 *roofs* In Bible times, houses had flat roofs, which were used like an extra room or outdoor patio.

^{**}22:8 *Forest Palace* A part of Solomon's palace where his weapons and wealth were stored.

God's Message to Shebna

¹⁵This is what the Lord GOD All-Powerful says:

“Go to Shebna the palace manager and say this:

¹⁶‘What are you doing here?

None of your relatives are buried here, are they?

Then what right do you have to prepare a tomb for yourself in this important place?

Why are you cutting a tomb out of this rock?

¹⁷⁻¹⁸What a big man you are!

But the LORD will crush you.

He will roll you into a small ball

and throw you far away

into the open arms of another country, and there you will die.

You are very proud of your chariots,

but in that faraway land, your new ruler will have better chariots.

And your chariots will not look important in his palace.

¹⁹I will force you out of your position here.

Your new leader will take you away from your important job.’

²⁰“At that time I will call for my servant Eliakim son of Hilkiah. ²¹I will take your robe and put it on him. I will give him your sceptre. I will give him the important job you have, and he will be like a father to the people of Jerusalem and Judah’s family.^{††} ²²I will put the key to David’s house around his neck. If he opens a door, no one will be able to close it. If he closes a door, no one will be able to open it. ²³He will be like a favourite chair in his father’s house. I will make

him like a strong peg in a solid board. ²⁴All his father’s family and their children will depend on him for honour and support. They will hang on him like cups and jars of all sizes hanging from a peg.

²⁵“And the time will come when the peg that is now in the solid board will get weak and break. It will fall to the ground, and everything hanging on it will be destroyed. Then everything I said in this message will happen.” The LORD All-Powerful said this.

God's Message About Tyre

23 This is a message^{‡‡} about Tyre: Cry, you ships travelling from Cyprus!

Cry, you ships from Tarshish!

Your harbour has been destroyed.

²You people living near the sea, mourn in silence.

The merchants of Sidon sent traders across the sea

and filled the city with riches.

³They travelled the seas looking for grain.

The men from Tyre bought grain that grows near the Nile River and sold it to other nations.

⁴Sidon, you should be very sad, because now the Sea and the Fortress of the Sea^{¶¶} say,

“I have no children.

I have never felt the pain of birth;

I have never given birth to children.

I have never raised young men and women.”

⁵When Egypt hears the news about Tyre, it will feel the pain of sorrow.

⁶You ships, try to escape to Tarshish!

Cry out, you people living near the sea!

^{††}22:21 *people of Jerusalem and Judah’s family* Or “The king sitting on the throne in Jerusalem, the royal family of Judah”.

^{‡‡}23:1 *message* Or “burden”.

^{¶¶}23:4 *Fortress of the Sea* Another name for the city of Tyre.

⁷ Can this be that happy city that had such a long history?

Is it that same city whose people travelled far to settle other lands?

⁸ Who made these plans against Tyre?

This city produced so many leaders.

Its merchants were like princes.

Its traders had the whole world's respect.

⁹ It was the LORD All-Powerful.

He decided to destroy the great things they were so proud of.

He wanted to disgrace those who were so highly respected.

¹⁰ Ships from Tarshish, go back home.

Cross the sea as if it were a river.

No one will stop you now.

¹¹ The LORD raised his arm over the sea to make the kingdoms angry enough to fight against Tyre.

He commanded Canaan

to destroy her place of safety.^{§§}

¹² He said, "City of Sidon,^{*} you have been hurt badly,

so you will no longer rejoice like a bride.

Go ahead, go to Cyprus for help,

but you will not find a place to rest there either."

¹³ Look at the land of the Babylonians!

It is not even a country now.

Assyria built war towers to attack it.

The soldiers took everything from the beautiful houses.

Assyria destroyed Babylon.

They turned it into a pile of ruins

and made it a place for wild animals.

¹⁴ So be sad, you ships from Tarshish.

Your place of safety has been destroyed.

¹⁵ People will forget about Tyre for 70 years—that is, about the length of a king's rule. After 70 years, Tyre will be like the prostitute in this song:

¹⁶ Oh, woman who men forgot, take your harp and walk through the city.

Play your song well and sing it often.

Maybe someone will remember you.

¹⁷ After 70 years, the LORD will review Tyre's case, and he will give her a decision. Tyre will again have trade. She will be like a prostitute for all the nations on earth. ¹⁸ But Tyre will not keep the money she earns. The profit from her trade will be saved for the LORD. Tyre will give that money to the people who serve the LORD to buy good food and nice clothes.

God Will Punish Israel

24 Look, the LORD is destroying this land.[†]

He will clean out the land completely and force all the people to go far away.

² At that time whatever happens to the common people

will also happen to the priests.

Slaves and masters will be the same.

Women slaves and their women masters will be the same.

Those who buy and those who sell will be the same.

Those who borrow and those who lend will be the same.

Bankers and those who owe the bank will be the same.

³ Everyone will be forced out of the land. All the wealth will be taken.

This will happen because the LORD commanded it.

⁴ The country will be empty and sad.

The world will be empty and weak.

The great leaders of the people in this land will become weak.

^{§§}23:11 Or "He raised his arm over the sea and shook nations. He gave a command about Canaan to destroy its fortresses."

^{*}23:12 *City of Sidon* Literally, "Daughter Sidon".

[†]24:1 *land* Or "earth".

⁵The people have ruined the land.
They did what God said is wrong.
They did not obey God's laws.
They made an agreement with God a
long time ago,
but they broke their agreement with
God.

⁶The people living in this land are guilty
of doing wrong,

so God has vowed to destroy the land.
The people will be punished,
and only a few of them will survive.

⁷The grapevines are dying, and the new
wine is bad.

People who were happy are now sad.

⁸They have stopped showing their joy.
The happy music from the drums and
harps has ended.

⁹They no longer sing as they drink their
wine.

The beer now tastes bitter to those who
drink it.

¹⁰"Total Confusion" is a good name for
this city.

The city has been destroyed.

People cannot enter the houses.

The doors are blocked.

¹¹People still ask for wine in the
marketplaces,

but all the joy is gone.

It was carried off with everything else.

¹²All that is left is destruction.

Even the gates are crushed.

¹³All over the earth, in every nation,

only a few people will be left alive,

like the few olives left in a tree

or the grapes left on a vine after harvest.

¹⁴Those still living will shout and sing
for joy.

In the west they praise the LORD's
greatness.

¹⁵So, people in the east should praise the
LORD!

People in the lands beyond the sea
should honour the name of the
LORD, the God of Israel.

¹⁶We hear songs from everywhere on
earth

praising God, who does what is right.

But I say, "Enough!

I have had enough.

What I see is terrible.

Traitors are turning against people and
hurting them."

¹⁷I see troubles for all you people on
earth.

I see fear, death traps and pits waiting
for everyone.

¹⁸People will hear about the danger,

and they will be afraid.

Some of them will run away,

but they will fall into a pit and be
trapped.

And those who climb out of the pit

will be caught in another trap.

The floodgates in the sky above will
open,

and the floods will begin.

The foundations of the earth will shake.

¹⁹There will be earthquakes,

and the earth will split open.

²⁰The sins of the world are very heavy,

so the earth will fall under the weight.

It will shake like an old house.

It will fall like a drunk.

It will not be able to stand.

²¹At that time the LORD will judge

the heavenly armies in heaven

and the earthly kings on earth.

²²Many people will be gathered
together.

They have been locked in the Pit.

They have been in prison.[‡]

But finally, after a long time, they will
be judged.

²³The LORD will rule as king on Mount
Zion in Jerusalem.

[‡]24:22 *Pit ... prison* This is probably "Sheol", the grave.

His glory will be shown to the city leaders with such brightness that the moon will be embarrassed and the sun will be ashamed.

A Song of Praise to God

25 LORD, you are my God.
I honour you and praise your name,

because you have done amazing things. The words you said long ago are completely true; everything happened exactly as you said it would.

²And you destroyed the city that was protected by strong walls.

Now it is only a pile of rocks. The foreign palace has been destroyed. It will never be rebuilt.

³That is why powerful nations will honour you.

Powerful people from strong cities will fear you.

⁴You have been a safe place for poor people in trouble.

You are like a shelter from floods and shade from the heat when powerful men attack.

They are like rain streaming down the walls, protecting us from the storm.

⁵Like the heat of summer in a dry land, the angry shouts of those foreigners brought us to our knees.

But like a thick cloud that blocks the summer heat, you answered their challenge.

God's Banquet for His Servants

⁶The LORD All-Powerful will give a feast for all the people on this mountain.

At the feast, there will be the best foods and wines.

The meat will be good and tender, the wine pure and clear.

⁷But now there is a veil covering all nations and people. This veil is called "death".

⁸But death will be destroyed forever.[¶] The Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from every face.

He will take away the shame his people have suffered all over the world.

The LORD has said this will happen.

⁹At that time people will say, "Here is our God!

He is the one we have been waiting for. He has come to save us.

We have been waiting for our LORD. So we will rejoice and be happy when he saves us."

¹⁰The LORD's power is on this mountain, and Moab[§] will be defeated.

The Lord will trample the enemy like someone walking on straw in a pile of waste.

¹¹They will reach out their arms to escape

like someone trying to swim. But their pride will sink with each stroke they take.

¹²He will destroy their high walls and safe places.

He will throw them down into the dust on the ground.

A Song of Praise to God

26 At that time people will sing this song in Judah:

We have a strong city with strong walls and defences,

[¶]25:8 *But death ... forever* Some Greek versions have "But death will be swallowed in victory."

[§]25:10 *Moab* Or "the enemy". This name is like a Hebrew word meaning "enemy".

but God gives us our salvation. **

²Open the gates for those who do what is right.

They are the God's faithful followers.

³God, you give true peace to people who depend on you, to those who trust in you.

⁴So trust the LORD always, because in the LORD GOD^{††} you have a place of safety forever.

⁵But he will destroy the proud city and punish those who live there. He will throw that high city down to the ground.

It will fall into the dust.

⁶And those who were hurt by that city will walk all over its ruins.

Those who lost everything will trample it under their feet.

⁷Honesty is the path good people follow. They follow the path that is straight and true.

And God, you make that way smooth and easy to follow.

⁸But, LORD, we are waiting for your way of justice.

We want to honour you and your name.

⁹At night I long to be with you.

And in the morning I want to be where you are.

When your way of justice comes to the world,

people will learn the right way of living.

¹⁰Evil people will not learn to do good, even if you show them only kindness.

They will still do wrong, even if they live in a good world.

They never see the LORD's greatness.

¹¹LORD, your arm is raised to punish them,

but they don't see it.

Show them how strong your love^{‡‡} is for your people.

Then those who are evil will be ashamed.

Yes, your fire will destroy your enemies.

¹²LORD, you are the one who will bring us peace.

All our success has come from you.

God Will Give New Life to His People

¹³LORD, you are our God, but in the past, we followed other lords. We belonged to other masters,^{¶¶} but now we want people to remember only one name—yours.

¹⁴Those dead lords will not come to life. Those ghosts will not rise from death. You decided to destroy them, and you destroyed everything that makes us think about them.

¹⁵LORD, you have helped the nation you love.

You made our nation grow and brought honour to yourself.^{§§}

¹⁶LORD, people remember you when they are in trouble. So because of your punishment, we called out to you.

**26:1 Or "We have a strong city that provides us with salvation. It has strong walls and defences."

††26:4 *the LORD GOD* Literally, "YAH YAWEH", two forms of a Hebrew name for God. See YAHWEH in the Word List.

‡‡26:11 *strong ... love* The Hebrew word means strong feelings like love, hate, anger, zeal or jealousy.

¶¶26:13 *we followed ... masters* This is a wordplay. It could also be translated, "Husbands other than you married us." One word sounds like "Baal", the other like a title for God.

§§26:15 Or "You gathered together the nation you love, the nation you drove into faraway lands."

¹⁷ LORD, because of you we were in pain,
like a woman giving birth,
who struggles and cries out when it is time.

¹⁸ But we struggled in pain for nothing.
We gave birth only to wind.
We did nothing to save the land.
No one was born to live in the world.

¹⁹ Your people have died,
but they will live again.
The bodies of my people
will rise from death.
Dead people in the ground,
stand and be happy!
The dew covering you is like
the dew sparkling in the light of a new day.

It shows that a new time is coming,
when the earth will give birth to the
dead who are in it.

Judgement: Reward or Punishment

²⁰ My people, go into your rooms
and lock your doors.

Hide in there for a short time
until God's anger is finished.

²¹ Look! The LORD is coming out from
his place*
to judge the people of the world for the
bad things they have done.

The earth will reveal the blood that has
been spilled on it.

It will no longer hide the proof of those
murders.

27 At that time the LORD will judge
Leviathan,[†]
that fast-moving giant snake.

With his great sword, his sharp and powerful sword,

he will punish Leviathan, that twisting,
giant snake.

He will kill the monster of the sea.

² The LORD says, "At that time
you will sing about a pleasing vineyard.[‡]

³ I, the LORD, will care for the vineyard.
I will water it at the right time.
I will guard it day and night.

No one will harm it.

⁴ I am no longer angry at my vineyard.

But if it produces thorn bushes,
then I will go to battle against them
and burn them up completely.

⁵ But if my people depend on me for
protection

and want to make peace with me,
then let them make peace.

⁶ In the future, the descendants of Jacob
will take root like a vine.

Yes, the people of Israel will sprout and
bloom

and fill the world with their fruit."

God Will Send Israel Away

⁷ Israel was not hurt as badly
as the enemy who tried to hurt it.

Many of its people were killed,
but not as many as those who tried to
kill them.

⁸ The Lord will settle his argument with
Israel

by sending the people far away.

He will speak harshly to Israel.

His words will burn like the hot desert
wind.

⁹ How will Jacob's guilt be forgiven?

What will happen so his sins can be
taken away?

The rocks of the altar will be crushed to
dust;

***26:21 his place** Probably the Temple in Jerusalem.

†**27:1 Leviathan** A dragon, giant snake or sea monster. Some ancient stories say the Dragon was an enemy of God.

‡**27:2 pleasing vineyard** The vineyard here refers to Israel, God's people. In an earlier song about this same vineyard, God was not pleased with it. See 5:1-7.

the statues[¶] and altars for worshipping false gods will all be destroyed.

¹⁰The great city will be empty; it will be like a desert.

All the people will be gone—they will run away.

The city will be like an open pasture.

Young cattle will eat grass there.

The cattle will eat leaves from the branches of the vines.

¹¹The vines will become dry, and the branches will break off.

Women will use them for firewood.

The people refuse to understand.

So God, their Maker, will not comfort them

or be kind to them.

¹²At that time the LORD will begin separating his people from others. He will begin at the Euphrates River and will gather his people from there[§] to the Brook of Egypt.** You people of Israel will be gathered together one by one.

¹³Many of my people are now lost in Assyria. Some of my people have run away to Egypt. But at that time a great trumpet will be blown, and all those people will come back to Jerusalem. They will bow down before the LORD on that holy mountain.

Warnings to Northern Israel

28 Look at Samaria! The drunks of Ephraim are proud of that city.

It sits on a hill with a rich valley around it.

The Samaritans think their city is a beautiful crown of flowers.

But they are drunk with wine,

and this “beautiful crown” is just a dying plant.

²Look, the Lord has someone who is strong and brave.

He will come into the country like a storm of hail and rain.

Like a powerful river of water flooding the country,

he will throw that crown^{††} down to the ground.

³The drunks of Ephraim are proud of their beautiful crown,

but that city will be trampled down.

⁴That city sits on a hill with a rich valley around it,

but that beautiful crown of flowers is just a dying plant.

It will be like the first figs of summer.

As soon as someone sees a ripe one, they pick it and eat it.

⁵At that time the LORD All-Powerful will become the “Beautiful Crown”.

He will be the “Wonderful Crown of Flowers”

for his people who are left.

⁶Then he will give wisdom to the judges who rule his people.

He will give strength to the people who defend the city gates.

⁷But now the leaders are drunks.

They are dizzy from wine and beer.

Even the priests and prophets stumble and fall

from drinking too much.

They are too drunk to know if their visions are from God.

They are too dizzy to stand up to give their decisions.

⁸Every table is covered with vomit.

There is not a clean spot anywhere.

[¶]27:9 *statues* Or “idols”. See idol in the Word List.

[§]27:12 *He will begin ... from there* Literally, “He will begin threshing at the stream of the river.” This Hebrew word for stream is like the word meaning “head of grain”.

^{**}27:12 *Euphrates River ... Brook of Egypt* These are the borders of the land God promised to give Israel.

^{††}28:2 *that crown* That is, Samaria.

⁹ And they say, “Who is this prophet trying to teach?

Does he think we need his message?

Does he think we are babies

taken from their mother’s breast just yesterday?

¹⁰ It sounds like babble:

‘Saw lasaw saw lasaw

Qaw laqaw qaw laqaw

Ze’er sham ze’er sham.††”

¹¹ So, you will have to hear it from God!

And he will use foreigners who sound just as strange

to teach you a lesson.

¹² In the past he spoke to you and said:

“Here is a resting place.

Let those who are tired come and rest.

This is the place of peace.”

But you would not listen to him.

¹³ So the LORD’s words will also be senseless sounds†† to you:

“Saw lasaw saw lasaw.

Qaw laqaw qaw laqaw.

Ze’er sham ze’er sham.”

When you people try to walk, you will fall backwards.

You will be defeated, trapped and captured.

No One Escapes God’s Judgement

¹⁴ So you should listen to the LORD’s message,

you boasting leaders in Jerusalem.

¹⁵ You say, “We have an agreement with death,

a signed promise to keep us from the grave.

So when the time for terrible punishment comes,

it will pass us by.

Our lies will keep us safe from harm.

We can use our tricks to hide.”

¹⁶ Because of these things, this is what the Lord GOD says:

“Look, I am putting a foundation stone on the ground in Zion,

a stone that has been tested.

It is a cornerstone of great value that will make a strong foundation.

It will never shift for the one who trusts in it.‡‡

¹⁷ If what you build on that foundation is not right, I will know it.

I will use justice and goodness like measuring tools to test it.

You cannot hide behind a wall built on lies.

It will be destroyed by hailstorms and washed away by floods.

¹⁸ Your agreement with death will be erased.

Your contract with Sheol will not help you.

Disaster will come to you,

and it will beat you down to the ground.

¹⁹ It will come against you day after day.

Your punishment will be terrible.

It will come early in the morning,

and it will continue day and night.”

Then you will understand what God is telling you.

You will be filled with fear, as helpless

²⁰ as a man trying to sleep on a bed that is too short,

with a blanket that is too small.

²¹ The LORD will fight as he did at Mount Perazim.

He will be angry as he was in Gibeon Valley.*

He will do what he must do.

††28:10 *Saw lasaw ... ze’er sham* This may be a Hebrew song to teach little children how to write. It sounds like baby talk or a foreign language. Also in verse 13.

††28:13 *senseless sounds* Or “gibberish” or “baby talk”.

‡‡28:16 *It will ... trusts in it* Or “The one who trusts will not panic.” The ancient Greek version has “The one who trusts in it will not be sorry.”

*28:21 *Mount Perazim ... Gibeon Valley* See 1 Chr. 14:8-17.

It will be what some stranger should do,
but he will finish his work.

Yes, this is a stranger's job.

²² Now don't complain about these things.

If you fight against them, you will only tighten the ropes around you.

The words I heard will not change.

They came from the Lord GOD All-Powerful, the ruler of all the earth, and these things will be done.

The Lord Punishes Fairly

²³ Listen closely to the message that I am telling you.

²⁴ Does a farmer plough his field all the time?

No, he does more than work the soil.

²⁵ He prepares the ground, and then he plants the seed.

He plants different kinds of seeds in different ways.

He scatters dill seeds, he throws cumin seeds on the ground and he plants wheat in rows.

A farmer plants barley in its special place, and he plants spelt seeds at the edge of his field.

²⁶ Our God is using this to teach you a lesson.

This example shows us that God is fair when he punishes his people.

²⁷ Does a farmer use large boards with sharp teeth to crush dill seeds?

No, and he doesn't use a cart to crush cumin seeds.

He uses a small stick to break the husks from these seeds of grain.

²⁸ People grind grain to make flour, but they don't grind it forever.

A worker drives his cart over the grain to remove the husks,

but he does not allow the horses to crush it.

²⁹ This lesson comes from the LORD All-Powerful,

who gives wonderful advice and is very wise.

God Punishes Jerusalem

29 "Look at Ariel,[†] the city where David settled.

You continue to have your festivals, year after year.

² But I will punish you, Jerusalem.

The city will be filled with sadness and crying.

I will use it like an altar.

³ I will put armies all around you, and I will raise war towers against you.

⁴ You will find yourself speaking from the ground.

Your voice will come from deep in the earth

like the voice of a ghost from under the ground,

rising like a whisper from the dust.

⁵ "But then your enemies will be blown away like dust.

Those cruel men will be like chaff blowing in the wind.

It will happen suddenly, in the blink of an eye.

⁶ I, the LORD All-Powerful, will come to your rescue

with earthquakes, thunder and loud noises,

with storms, winds and fire that destroys.

⁷ And all those nations fighting against Jerusalem

will fade away like a nightmare.

The armies that surround and attack the city

[†]29:1 *Ariel* A name used here for Jerusalem. It may mean "altar hearth" or "Lion of God". Also in verses 2 and 7, translated "Jerusalem".

will vanish like a dream at the end of the night.

⁸ They will be disappointed like a hungry man dreaming about food.

When he wakes up, he is still hungry.

They will be like a thirsty man dreaming about water.

When he wakes up, he is still thirsty.

So it is for those nations fighting against Zion.

The victory they dream of will never happen.”

⁹ People of Jerusalem, you will be surprised and amazed!

You are completely blind to the truth.

So now you are drunk, but not from wine.

Now you stumble, but not from beer.

¹⁰ The LORD has put you to sleep.

He has closed your eyes to the truth, and he has blindfolded your prophets and leaders.

¹¹ To you my words are like the words in a book that is closed and sealed.[‡] You can give the book to someone who can read and tell that person to read it. But that person will say, “I cannot read the book. It is closed and I cannot open it.”

¹² Or you can give the book to someone who cannot read and tell that person to read it. That person will say, “I cannot read the book because I don’t know how to read.” ¹³ The Lord says:

“These people come to honour me with words,

but I am not really important to them.

The worship they give me is nothing but human rules they have memorized.

¹⁴ So I will continue to amaze them by doing powerful and amazing things. Their wise men will lose their wisdom. Even the most intelligent among them will not be able to understand.”

¹⁵ Look at them!

They try to hide things from the LORD.

They think he will not understand.

They do their evil things in darkness.

They tell themselves: “No one can see us.

No one will know who we are.”

¹⁶ You turn things upside down.

You think the clay is equal to the potter.

You think that something that is made can tell the one who made it,

“You did not make me!”

This is like a pot telling its maker,

“You know nothing.”

A Better Time Is Coming

¹⁷ After a very short time, Lebanon will become rich farmland,

and the farmland will be like thick forests.

¹⁸ The deaf will hear the words read from a book,

and the blind will see through the darkness and fog.

¹⁹ The LORD will make the poor people happy;

they will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

²⁰ The people who are cruel will come to an end.

Those who show no respect for God will disappear,

and those who enjoy doing evil will be gone.

²¹ They lie about good people.

They try to trap people in court

and destroy innocent people.

²² So the LORD, who made Abraham free,

speaks to Jacob’s people:

“Now the people of Jacob will not feel ashamed.

Their faces will no longer look embarrassed.

[‡]29:11 *sealed* A piece of clay or wax was put on the closed book to show that the book should not be opened.

²³ Yes, when they see all their children,
the children I myself have made for
them,
they will honour my name as holy.
They will honour[¶] the Holy One of
Jacob,
and they will respect the God of Israel.
²⁴ Many of these people did not
understand,
so they did what was wrong.
They complained,
but now they will learn their lesson.”

Israel Should Trust in God, Not Egypt

30 The LORD said:
“Look at these children.
They don’t obey me.
They make plans,
but they don’t ask me to help them.
They make agreements with other
nations,
but my Spirit does not want those
agreements.
These people are adding more and more
sins
to the ones they have already done.
² They are going down to Egypt for help,
but they did not ask me if that was the
right thing to do.
They hope they will be saved by
Pharaoh.
They want Egypt to protect them.
³ But I tell you, hiding in Egypt will not
help you.
Pharaoh will not be able to protect you.

⁴ Your leaders have gone to Zoan,
and your representatives have gone to
Hanes.[§]
⁵ But they will be disappointed.
They are depending on a nation that can-
not help them.
Egypt is useless—it will not help.
Egypt will bring nothing but shame and
embarrassment.”

God’s Message to Judah

⁶ This is a message^{**} about the Negev
animals:^{††}
This desert is a dangerous place full of
trouble.
There are lions, adders,^{‡‡} and deadly
snakes.^{¶¶}
People travel through there with their
wealth loaded onto donkeys.
They carry treasures on the backs of
camels to pay a nation that cannot
help them.
⁷ Yes, Egypt’s help is worth nothing!
So I call Egypt the “Do-Nothing
Dragon”.^{§§}
⁸ Now write this on a sign so that every-
one can see it,
and write this in a book.
Write these things for a future time.
This will be far, far in the future.*
⁹ These people are like children who
refuse to obey.
They lie and refuse to listen to the
LORD’s teachings.

[¶]29:23 *honour* Or “treat as holy”.

[§]30:4 *Zoan, Hanes* Cities in Egypt.

^{**}30:6 *message* Or “burden”.

^{††}30:6 *Negev animals* Or “Creatures of the South”, a phrase that can refer to Egypt.

^{‡‡}30:6 *adders* Very poisonous snakes.

^{¶¶}30:6 *deadly snakes* Literally, “flying snakes”.

^{§§}30:7 *Do-Nothing Dragon* Or “Resting Rahab”, the great sea monster. Some ancient stories tell about Rahab fighting with God.

^{*}30:8 *Write ... future* Or “Write this for the future as a witness forever.”

¹⁰They tell the prophets, “Don’t see dreams[†] about things we should do. Don’t tell us the truth.

Say nice things to us and make us feel good.

See only good things for us.

¹¹Stop telling us what God has told you. Get out of our way.

We are tired of hearing about the Holy One of Israel.”

Judah’s Help Comes Only From God

¹²So the Holy One of Israel says:

“You people have refused to accept my message.

You depend on fighting and lies to help you.

¹³You are guilty of these things.

So you are like a tall wall with cracks in it.

That wall will fall and break into small pieces.

¹⁴You will be like a large clay jar that breaks

into many small, useless pieces.

You cannot use them to get a hot coal from the fire

or to get water from a pool in the ground.”

¹⁵The Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel, says:

“If you come back to me you will be saved.

Only by remaining calm and trusting in me can you be strong.

But you don’t want to do that.

¹⁶You say, ‘No, we need fast horses for battle.’

That is true—you will need fast horses, but only to run away

because your enemy will be faster than your horses.

¹⁷One enemy soldier will make threats, and a thousand of your men will run away.

And when five of them make threats, all of you will run away.

The only thing that will be left of your army will be a flagpole on a hill.”

God Will Help His People

¹⁸So the LORD is waiting to show his mercy to you. He wants to rise and comfort you. The LORD is the God who does the right thing, so he will bless everyone who waits for his help.

¹⁹You people who live in Jerusalem on Mount Zion will not continue crying. The Lord will hear your crying, and he will comfort you. When he hears you, he will help you.

²⁰The Lord might give you sorrow and pain like the bread and water you eat and drink every day. But God is your teacher, and he will not continue to hide from you. You will see your teacher with your own eyes. ²¹If you wander from the right path, either to the right or to the left, you will hear a voice behind you saying, “You should go this way. Here is the right way.”

²²Then you will take your idols covered with gold and silver and make them unfit to be used again. You will throw them away like filthy rags[‡] and say, “Go away!”

²³At that time the Lord will send you rain. You will plant seeds, and the ground will grow food for you. You will have a very large harvest. You will have plenty of food in the fields for your animals. There will be large fields for your sheep. ²⁴Even the oxen and donkeys you

[†]30:10 *dreams* Or “visions”. Special kinds of dreams God used to speak to his prophets.

[‡]30:22 *You ... rags* Or “You will throw those gods away like menstrual cloths.”

use to plough your fields will eat the very best food,^f not just straw. ²⁵ Every mountain and hill will have streams filled with water. These things will happen after many people are killed and the enemy's towers are pulled down.

²⁶ The light from the moon will be as bright as the sun. And the light from the sun will be seven times brighter—the light of seven days all in one day! This will happen when the LORD mends the broken bones of his people and heals the wounds he has given them.

²⁷ Look! The LORD is coming from far away.

His anger is like a fire with thick clouds of smoke.

His mouth is filled with anger, and his tongue is like a burning fire.

²⁸ His breath is like a great river that rises until it reaches the throat.

He will judge the nations as if putting them through a strainer that separates the ones fit for destruction.

He will put a bit in their mouths to lead them to the place they don't want to go.

²⁹ You will sing happy songs, like the nights when you begin a festival. You will be very happy walking to the LORD's mountain and listening to the flute on the way to worship the Rock of Israel.

³⁰ The LORD will cause all people to hear his great voice and to see his powerful arm come down in anger.

That arm will be like a great fire that burns everything.

His power will be like a great storm with much rain and hail.

³¹ Assyria will be frightened by the LORD's voice and the stick that will beat him.

³² And as the LORD beats Assyria, his people will keep the rhythm with their drums and harps.

³³ Topheth[§] has been made ready for a long time.

It is ready for the king.

It was made very deep and wide.

There is a very big pile of wood and fire there, and the LORD's breath will come like a stream of burning sulphur to start the fire.

Israel Should Depend on God's Power

31 Look at the people going down to Egypt for help.

They think the horses they get will save them.

They hope the many chariots and powerful soldiers will protect them. But the people don't trust the Holy One of Israel.

They didn't ask the LORD for help.

² But he is the wise one who is bringing the disaster, and he does what he says he will do.

The Lord will attack those who are evil and all who try to help them.

³ The Egyptians are only human, not God.

The horses from Egypt are only animals, not spirit.

The LORD will stretch out his arm, and the helper will be defeated.

And those who wanted help will fall. They will all be destroyed together.

^f**30:24 best food** This may mean grain that has been separated from the husks, or it may mean fodder—a mixture of grain, straw and leaves that has been allowed to ferment.

[§]**30:33 Topheth** Gehenna, the Valley of Hinnom. In this valley people killed their children to honour the false god Molech.

⁴The LORD said to me:

“When a lion or its cub catches an animal to eat, the lion stands over the dead animal and roars,

and nothing can frighten it away. If men come and yell at the lion, the lion will not be afraid.

They might make a lot of noise, but the lion will not run away.”

In the same way, the LORD All-Powerful will come down to Mount Zion.

He will fight on that hill.

⁵Just as birds fly over their nest to protect it,

so the LORD All-Powerful will defend^{**} Jerusalem.

He will save her.

He will protect and save Jerusalem.

⁶People of Israel, you should come back to the God you turned away from.

⁷That is because when those things happen, people will reject the gold and silver idols you made when you sinned against me.

⁸“It is true that Assyria will be defeated with a sword,

but it will not be a human sword that defeats him.

Assyria will be destroyed,

but that destruction will not come from a man’s sword.

Assyria will run away from God’s sword, but the young men will be caught and made slaves.

⁹Their place of safety will be destroyed.

Their leaders will be defeated, and they will abandon their flag.”

The LORD, whose fireplace is on Zion and whose oven^{††} is in Jerusalem, is the one who says this.

Leaders Should Be Good and Fair

32 Listen to what I say!
A king should rule in a way that brings justice.

Leaders should make fair decisions when they lead the people.

²Then the king^{‡‡} would be like a shelter to hide from the wind and rain, like streams of water in a dry land and like the cool shadow of a large rock in a hot land.

³Then people would actually see what they look at.

They would actually listen to what they hear.

⁴People who are now confused would be able to understand.

Those who cannot speak clearly now would be able to speak clearly and quickly.

⁵Fools^{¶¶} would not be called great men. People would not respect men who make secret plans.

⁶Fools say foolish things, and in their minds they plan evil things to do.

They want to do what is wrong.

They say bad things about the LORD.

They don’t let hungry people eat their food.

They don’t let thirsty people drink the water.

⁷They use evil like a tool and plan ways to steal from the poor.

They tell lies about the poor and keep them from being judged fairly.

⁸But a good leader plans good things to do,

and that will make him a leader over other leaders.

^{**}31:5 *defend* Literally, “fight on” or “fight against”.

^{††}31:9 *fireplace ... oven* That is, the altar in the Temple.

^{‡‡}32:2 *king* Literally, “man”.

^{¶¶}32:5 *Fools* Here, this means people who don’t follow God and his wise teachings.

Hard Times Are Coming

⁹ Some of you women are calm now; you feel safe.

But you should stand and listen to the words I say.

¹⁰ You feel safe now, but after one year you will be troubled. That is because you will not gather grapes next year—there will be no grapes to gather.

¹¹ Women, you are calm now, but you should be afraid. You feel safe now, but you should be worried. Take off your nice clothes and put on rags;

wrap them around your waist.

¹² Beat your breasts in sorrow. Cry because your fields are empty. Your vineyards once gave grapes, but now they are empty.

¹³ Cry for the land of my people. Cry because only thorns and weeds will grow there.

Cry for the city and for all the houses that were once filled with joy.

¹⁴ People will leave the capital city. The palace and towers will be left empty. People will not live in houses; they will live in caves.

Wild donkeys and sheep will live in the city;

animals will go there to eat grass.

¹⁵ But God will again send us his Spirit from above.

Then the desert will become rich farmland, and the farmland will be as green as a forest.

¹⁶ The whole land will be filled with justice and fairness— from the desert to the farmland.

¹⁷ That justice will bring peace

and safety forever.

¹⁸ My people will be safe in their homes and in their calm, peaceful fields.

¹⁹ The forest may be gone and the city destroyed,

²⁰ but God's blessings will be yours. The seed you plant beside the streams will grow, and your cattle and donkeys will roam free.

The Lord Will Show His Power

33 Look at you. You attack others when you have not been attacked.

You turn against others when no one has turned against you.

So when you stop your attacks, you will be attacked.

When you stop turning against others, they will turn against you.

² LORD, be kind to us.

We have waited for your help.

Give us strength every morning.

Save us when we are in trouble.

³ Your powerful voice makes people run away in fear.

Your greatness causes the nations to run away.

⁴ You people stole things in war.

Those things will be taken from you.

Many will come and take your wealth.

It will be like the times when locusts come and eat all your crops.

⁵ The LORD is very great.

He lives in the high heavens.

He fills Zion with justice and goodness.

⁶ Jerusalem, you are rich with wisdom and knowledge of God.

You are rich with salvation.

You respect the LORD,

and that makes you rich.

⁷ But listen! The messengers are crying outside.

The messengers^{§§} who bring peace are crying very hard.

⁸The roads are empty; there is no one walking along the paths. People don't respect each other.

They have broken the agreements they made, and they refuse to believe what witnesses* tell them.

⁹The land is sick and dying.

Lebanon is dying

and Sharon Valley is dry and empty.

Bashan and Carmel once grew beautiful plants,

but now those plants have stopped growing.

¹⁰The LORD says:

“Now, I will stand

and show people how great and powerful I am.

¹¹You people have done useless things.

These things are like hay and straw.

They are worth nothing!

Your breath is like a fire that will burn you.

¹²People will be burned until their bones become lime.†

They will burn quickly like thorns and dry bushes.”

¹³You people in faraway lands,

listen to what I have done.

You people who are near me,

learn about my power.

¹⁴The sinners in Zion are afraid.

Those who do wrong shake with fear.

They say, “Can any of us live through this fire that destroys?

Who can live near this fire that burns forever?”‡

¹⁵Good, honest people who refuse to hurt others for money, who refuse to take bribes or listen to plans to murder other people, and who do not look at plans for doing bad things—

¹⁶they will live safely in high places.

They will be protected in high rock fortresses.

They will always have food and water.

¹⁷Your eyes will see the King in his beauty.

You will see the great land.

¹⁸⁻¹⁹When you think about the troubles you had in the past, you will wonder,

“Where are those foreigners who spoke languages we could not understand?

Where are the officials and tax collectors from other lands?

Where are the spies who counted our defence towers?”

God Will Protect Jerusalem

²⁰Look at Zion, the city of our religious festivals.

Look at Jerusalem—that beautiful place of rest.

Jerusalem is like a tent that will never be moved.

The pegs that hold her in place will never be pulled up.

Her ropes will never be broken,

²¹⁻²³because the LORD is our powerful leader there.

That land is a place with streams and wide rivers,

but there will be no enemy boats or powerful ships on those rivers.

§§33:7 *messengers ... messengers* The Hebrew text has two different words that can also mean “angels”.

*33:8 *witnesses* Literally, “cities”.

†33:12 *lime* A white powder that is often used to make mortar or cement. It can be made by burning bones, shells or limestone.

‡33:14 *fire that ... burns forever* This might mean God, the Fire (Light) of Israel.

You men who work on such boats can
stop your work with the ropes.

You cannot make the mast strong
enough.

You will not be able to open your sails,
because the LORD is our judge.

He makes our laws.

He is our king.

He saves us.

The LORD will give us our wealth.

Even the lame will get their share.

²⁴No one living there will say, "I am
sick,"

because everyone living there has had
their guilt removed.

God Will Punish His Enemies

34 All you nations, come near and
listen!

Listen, all you people.

The earth and everyone on it should lis-
ten to these things.

Everything in this world should hear
this.

²The LORD is angry with all the nations
and their armies.

He will destroy them completely.

He will put them all to death.

³Those who are killed will be thrown
outside.

The smell will rise from their bodies.

Their blood will flow down the
mountains.

⁴Every star in the sky will disappear,
and the skies will be rolled shut like a
scroll.^f

Everything in the sky will wither and fall
like dead leaves from the vine,
like figs dried up on the tree.

⁵God says:

"When my sword is finished with every-
thing in the sky,

it will come down on Edom.

I have judged them guilty,

and they must die."

⁶The LORD has decided on a time for
sacrifice in Bozrah,

a time for killing in all of Edom.

So the sword of the LORD is covered
with blood and fat—

blood from the "goats"

and fat from the kidneys of the "rams".[§]

⁷So the rams, the cattle and even the
strong bulls will be killed.

The land will be wet with their blood.

The soil will be soaked with their fat.

⁸Yes, the LORD has chosen a time for
punishment.

He has chosen a year when people must
pay for the wrong they did to Zion.

⁹Edom's rivers will be like hot tar,
and the ground will be like burning
sulphur.

¹⁰The fires will burn day and night,
and the smoke will rise forever.

Year after year Edom will lie empty.

No one will ever travel through that land
again.

¹¹Birds and small animals will own the
land.

It will be a home for desert owls and
ravens.

God will look carefully at Edom

and decide to make it empty and use-
less.^{**}

¹²People will call Edom the Kingdom of
Nothing.

The leaders there will have nothing left
to rule.

¹³Thorns and wild bushes will cover

^f**34:4 rolled shut like a scroll** This is like someone closing a book when they have finished reading it.

[§]**34:6 goats ... rams** This probably refers to the people and leaders of Edom.

^{**}**34:11 God ... useless** Literally, "He will stretch over it the measuring string of 'emptiness' and the plumb line of 'uselessness'." These two words described the empty earth in Gen. 1:2.

the palaces and walls that protected the cities.

It will be a place where jackals roam,
a place for owls to live.

¹⁴Wildcats and wild dogs will gather there.

Wild goats^{††} will call out to each other.
Night creatures^{‡‡} will spend some time there

and find a place to rest.

¹⁵Snakes will make their homes there
and lay their eggs.

The eggs will open,

and small snakes will crawl from the dark places.

Birds that eat dead things will gather there

like women visiting their friends.

¹⁶Look in the LORD's scroll and read what it says:

Not one of these will be missing.

Not one will be without its mate.

God said he would make this happen,
so his Spirit will bring them together.

¹⁷God decided what he should do with them,

and then he chose a place for them.

He drew a line and showed them their land.

So they will own that land forever.

They will live there year after year.

God Will Comfort His People

35 The dry desert will rejoice.
The desert will be glad and blossom.

²It will be covered with flowers and dance with joy.

It will be as beautiful as the forest of Lebanon,

the hill of Carmel and the Sharon Valley.

This will happen because all people will see the glory of the LORD.

They will see the beauty of our God.

³Make the weak arms strong again,
and strengthen the weak knees.

⁴Say to those who are afraid and confused,

“Be strong! Don't be afraid!

Look, your God will come,

and he will punish your enemies.

He will pay them back for what they have done.

He will come and save you.”

⁵Then the eyes of the blind will be opened

so that they can see;

the ears of the deaf will be opened

so that they can hear.

⁶Those who are lame will dance like deer,

and those who cannot speak now

will use their voices to sing happy songs.

This will happen when springs of water begin to flow in the dry desert.

⁷Now people see mirages^{¶¶} that look like water,

but then there will be real pools of water.

There will be wells in the dry land

and water will flow from the ground.

Tall water plants will grow

where wild animals once ruled.

⁸There will be a great road there,

a highway called “The Holy Road”.

Evil people will not be allowed to use that road.

It will be only for those who follow the right way,

never for those who live foolishly.

⁹There will be no dangers on that road—no lions or other animals that attack people.

^{††}34:14 *Wild goats* The Hebrew word means “hairy”, “goat” or “goat-demon”.

^{‡‡}34:14 *Night creatures* Or “Lilith, the night demon”.

^{¶¶}35:7 *mirages* In the desert, heat rising from the ground looks like water from far away. This is a mirage.

The only people to travel that road
 will be the people God saves.
¹⁰The LORD will make his people free,
 and they will come back to him.
 They will come into Zion rejoicing.
 They will be happy forever.
 Their happiness will be like a crown on
 their heads.
 Gladness and joy will fill them
 completely.
 Sorrow and sadness will be far, far away.

The Assyrians Invade Judah

36 During Hezekiah's fourteenth
 year as king, Sennacherib king
 of Assyria went to fight against the
 strong cities of Judah, and he captured
 them. ²Then the king of Assyria sent his
 commander from Lachish with a large
 army to King Hezekiah in Jerusalem.
 When they came near Jerusalem, they
 stopped by the channel that brings
 water from the upper pool, on the road
 that leads to Laundryman's Field.

³Three officials from Jerusalem went
 out to talk with the commander. They
 were Eliakim son of Hilkiah, Joah son
 of Asaph and Shebna. Eliakim was the
 palace manager, Joah was the record
 keeper and Shebna was the secretary.

⁴The commander told them, "Tell
 Hezekiah this is what the great king, the
 king of Assyria says:

"What are you trusting in to help
 you? ⁵I tell you, if you trust in
 power and great battle plans, that
 is useless. Those are nothing but
 empty words. Now I ask you, who
 do you trust so much that you are
 willing to rebel against me? ⁶Are
 you depending on Egypt to help
 you? Egypt is like a broken walking
 stick. If you lean on it for support,
 it will only stab you and hurt you.

Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, cannot
 be trusted by anyone who depends
 on him for help.

⁷"Maybe you will say, 'We trust
 the LORD our God to help us.'
 But I know that Hezekiah destroyed
 the altars and places of worship
 where people honoured the Lord.
 Hezekiah told the people of Ju-
 dah and Jerusalem, 'You must wor-
 ship only at this one altar here in
 Jerusalem.'

⁸"If you still want to fight, my
 master, the king of Assyria, will
 make this agreement with you. I
 promise that I will give you 2000
 horses if you can find enough men
 to ride them into battle. ⁹But even
 then, you couldn't defeat even one
 of my master's lowest ranking offi-
 cers. So why do you still depend on
 Egypt's chariots and horsemen?

¹⁰"Now, do you think I came to
 this country to destroy it without the
 LORD's help. No, it was the LORD
 who said to me, 'Go up against this
 country and destroy it!'"

¹¹Then Eliakim, Shebna and Joah said
 to the commander, "Please, speak to us
 in Aramaic, not Hebrew.^{§§} We will un-
 derstand you, but we don't want the peo-
 ple there on the wall to understand what
 you say."

¹²But the commander said, "My mas-
 ter sent me to speak to everyone, not
 only to you and your king. I must also
 speak to those people sitting there on the
 wall. When we surround your city, they
 will suffer too. Like you, they will be-
 come so hungry they will eat their own
 waste and drink their own urine!"

¹³Then the commander, shouting
 loudly in Hebrew, gave this warning to
 them all:

^{§§}**36:11 Hebrew** Literally, "Judean", the language of Judah and Israel.

“Hear this message from the great king, the king of Assyria! ¹⁴This is what the king says: Don’t let Hezekiah fool you! He cannot save you from my power. ¹⁵Don’t listen to him when he tells you to trust in the LORD. Don’t believe him when he says, ‘The LORD will save us. He will not let the king of Assyria defeat the city.’

¹⁶“Don’t listen to Hezekiah! This is what the king of Assyria says: Come out here and show me that you want peace. Then you will all be free to have grapes from your own vines, figs from your own trees and water from your own well. ¹⁷After some time, I will come and take you to a land like your own. In that new land, you will have plenty of grain for making bread and vineyards for producing wine.

¹⁸“Don’t believe Hezekiah when he tells you, ‘The LORD will save us.’ He is wrong. Did any of the gods of other nations save their land from the king of Assyria? ¹⁹When I destroyed the cities of Hamath and Arpad, where were their gods? What about the gods of Sepharvaim? Were any gods able to save Samaria from my power? ²⁰None of the gods of these other places were able to save their land from me! So why do you think the LORD can save Jerusalem from me?”

²¹But the people were silent. They did not say a word to the commander, because King Hezekiah had commanded them, “Don’t say anything to him.”

²²Then the palace manager Eliakim son of Hilkiyah, the secretary Shebna and the record keeper Joah son of Asaph went to Hezekiah. Their clothes were

torn to show they were upset. They told Hezekiah everything the Assyrian commander had said.

Hezekiah Asks God to Help

37 When King Hezekiah listened to their message, he tore his clothes to show he was upset. Then he put on rags and went to the LORD’s Temple.

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

³They said to Isaiah, “King Hezekiah has commanded that today will be a day for sorrow and sadness. It will be a very sad day—as sad as when a baby should be born, but there is not enough strength for the birth. ⁴The commander’s master, the king of Assyria, has sent him to say bad things about the living God. Maybe the LORD your God will hear it and prove the enemy is wrong. So pray for those who are still left alive.”

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

The Assyrian Army Leaves Jerusalem

⁸The commander heard that the king of Assyria had left Lachish. He found him at Libnah, fighting against that city. ⁹Then the king of Assyria received

a report that said, “King Tirhakah* of Ethiopia is coming to fight you.”

So the king of Assyria sent messengers to Hezekiah again.¹⁰ He told them to say this to King Hezekiah of Judah:

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

Hezekiah Prays to the Lord

¹⁴Hezekiah received the letters from the messengers and read them. Then he went up to the LORD’s Temple and laid the letters out in front of the LORD.¹⁵ He prayed to the LORD: ¹⁶“LORD All-Powerful, God of Israel, you sit as King above the winged creatures. You alone are the God who rules all the kingdoms on earth. You made heaven and earth.¹⁷ LORD, please pay attention and hear this. Open your eyes, LORD, and see what is happening. Listen to all the insults against the living God in the message Sennacherib sent!¹⁸ It is true, LORD. The kings of Assyria did destroy all those nations.¹⁹ They did throw the gods of those nations into the fire,

but they were not real gods. They were only wood and stone—statues that people made. That is why the kings of Assyria could destroy them.²⁰ But you are the LORD our God, so please save us from the king of Assyria. Then all the other nations will know that you are the LORD, the only God.”

God Answers Hezekiah

²¹Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent this message to Hezekiah: The LORD, the God of Israel, says this: “You prayed to me about the message that came from King Sennacherib of Assyria. I have heard you.[†]²² So this is the LORD’s message against Sennacherib:

“The virgin Daughter Zion‡ does not think you are important. She makes fun of you. Daughter Jerusalem shakes her head at you and laughs behind your back.

²³But who is the one you have insulted and made fun of?

Who is the one you have been shouting at with such a proud look on your face? All this you have done against the Holy One of Israel!

²⁴You sent your officers to insult the Lord.

This is what you said:

‘I took my many chariots up the high mountains

deep inside Lebanon.

I cut down its tallest cedars

and its best fir trees.

I went to the top of its highest mountains and deep inside its forests.

*37:9 *Tirhakah* This is probably Taharqa, the Pharaoh of Egypt about 690-664 BC.

†37:21 *I have heard you* This is from the ancient Greek version and 2 Kgs 19:20.

‡37:22 *The virgin Daughter Zion* The city of Jerusalem, which is in danger of attack by the Assyrians. See Zion in the Word List.

²⁵ I dug wells and drank water from foreign places.[¶]

I dried up the rivers of Egypt and walked where the water was.[¶]

²⁶ “How could you say this, Sennacherib?

Did no one ever tell you that I, the Lord, planned these things long ago?

From ancient times I decided what would happen,

and now I have made it happen.

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

²⁷ The people living there had no power.

They were afraid and confused.

They were about to be cut down

like grass and plants in the field.

They were like grass growing on the housetops,

dried up by the east wind.[§]

²⁸ I know all about you—where you stay and when you come and go.

I also know that you rage against me.

²⁹ Yes, I have heard your raging and your proud insults.

So I will put my hook in your nose

and my bit in your mouth.

Then I will turn you around

and lead you back the way you came.”

The Lord’s Message for Hezekiah

³⁰ Then the Lord said this: “You will know that what I say is true when this happens: This year and next year, the only grain you will eat is that which grows wild. But in the third year, you will eat grain from seeds you have planted. Then you will harvest your crops, and you will have plenty to eat. You will plant vineyards and eat grapes from them.

³¹ “The people from the family of Judah who are left alive will do well. They will be like plants that send their roots deep into the ground, then grow and produce plenty of fruit. ³² Yes, there will be people who will come out of Jerusalem alive. Survivors will come from Mount Zion.” It is the deep desire of the LORD All-Powerful to make this happen!

³³ So the LORD says this about the king of Assyria:

“His army will not come into this city

or shoot an arrow at it.

None of his troops carrying shields will come near it

or build a ramp to attack its walls.

³⁴ He will go back the way he came.

He will not come into this city.”

The LORD says this:

³⁵ “I will protect this city and save it.

I will do this for myself and for my servant David.”

The Assyrian Army Is Destroyed

³⁶ That night the angel of the LORD went out and killed 185,000 men in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up in the morning, they saw all the dead bodies. ³⁷ So King Sennacherib of Assyria went back to Nineveh and stayed there.

³⁸ One day Sennacherib was in the temple of his god Nisroch, worshipping him. His sons Adrammelech and Sharezer killed him with a sword and ran away to Ararat. So Sennacherib’s son Esarhaddon became the new king of Assyria.

[¶]**37:25 from foreign places** These words are from a Hebrew scroll from Qumran and from 2 Kgs 19:24. They are missing from the traditional Hebrew text.

[§]**37:27 dried ... wind** These words are from a Hebrew scroll from Qumran. The traditional Hebrew text seems to mean “dying before it grows tall”.

Hezekiah's Illness

38 At that time Hezekiah became sick and almost died. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to see him and told him, "The LORD told me to tell you this: 'You will die soon. So you should tell your family what they should do when you die. You will not get well.'"

²Hezekiah turned towards the wall and began praying to the LORD.

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

⁴Then Isaiah received this message from the LORD: ⁵"Go to Hezekiah and tell him that the LORD, the God of your ancestor David, says this: I heard your prayer, and I saw your tears. I will add 15 years to your life. ⁶I will save you and this city from the king of Assyria. I will protect this city."

⁷This is the sign from the LORD to show you that he will do what he says:

⁸"Look, I am causing the shadow that is on the steps of Ahaz** to move back ten steps. The sun's shadow will go back up the ten steps that it has already been on."

Hezekiah's Song

⁹This is the letter from Hezekiah when he became well:

¹⁰I thought I would live a full life.

But now, in the middle of my life, the time has come for me to die.

¹¹So I said, "I will not see the LORD GOD†† in the land of the living again.

I will not see the people living on earth.

¹²My life has been taken away,

like a shepherd's tent that he pulls up and moves.

I am like a cloth that a weaver finishes, then cuts and removes from the loom.

You ended my life in such a short time.

¹³All night I cried as loud as a lion, but my hopes were crushed like a lion eating bones.

You finished my life in such a short time.

¹⁴I cried like a bird

and moaned like a dove.

My eyes became tired,

but I continued looking to the heavens.

Lord, I am so depressed.

Promise to help me."

¹⁵What can I say?

He told me what would happen,

and he has done it.

The pain I feel in my heart

has taken all my pride away.

¹⁶Lord, people find new life in your promises.

And these are all that give me courage to live.

Help me become well!

Help me live again!

¹⁷Look, my troubles are gone!

I now have peace.

You love me very much.

You did not let me rot in the grave.

You took my sins

and threw them away.

¹⁸The dead cannot praise you.

People in Sheol cannot sing praises to you.

Those who have died and gone below are not trusting in your faithfulness.

¹⁹People who are alive, people like me, are the ones who will praise you.

Fathers should tell their children about how faithful you are.

²⁰The LORD saved me,

****38:8 steps of Ahaz** The steps of a special building that Hezekiah used like a clock. When the sun shone on the steps, the shadows showed what time of the day it was.

††**38:11 the LORD GOD** Literally, "YAH YAWEH", two forms of a Hebrew name for God. See YAHWEH in the Word List.

so we will sing and play songs in the LORD's Temple all our lives.

²¹ Then Isaiah told Hezekiah, "Crush figs together and put them on your sore. Then you will get well."

²² Hezekiah asked Isaiah, "What is the sign that proves I will get well and go to the LORD's Temple?"

Messengers From Babylon

39 At that time Merodach Baladan son of Baladan was king of Babylon. He sent some men with letters and a gift to Hezekiah when he heard that Hezekiah had been sick. ²This made Hezekiah very happy, so he showed them all the valuable things in his storehouses. He showed them the silver, the gold, the spices and the expensive perfumes. He showed them the building where he stored the weapons. He showed them everything in his treasures and everything in his house and throughout his kingdom.

³ Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah and asked him, "What did these men say? Where did they come from?"

Hezekiah said, "These men came all the way from Babylon just to see me."

⁴ So Isaiah asked him, "What did they see in your house?"

Hezekiah said, "They saw everything in my palace. I showed them all my wealth."

⁵ Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Listen to this message from the LORD All-Powerful: ⁶"The time is coming when everything in your house and everything your ancestors have saved until today will be carried away to Babylon. Nothing will be left!" The LORD All-Powerful said this. ⁷The Babylonians will take your

own sons and disgrace them by making them eunuchs to serve in the palace of the king of Babylon."

⁸ Then Hezekiah told Isaiah, "This message from the LORD is good." (Hezekiah said this because he thought, "There will be real peace and security during my lifetime.")

Israel's Punishment Will End

40 Your God says:

² Speak kindly to the people of Jerusalem and tell them that their time of service is finished. They have paid the price for their sins. I, the LORD, have punished you twice for every sin you committed."

³ Listen, there is someone shouting: "Prepare a way in the desert for the LORD.

Make a straight road there for our God.

⁴ Every valley must be filled. Every mountain and hill should be made flat.

The crooked roads should be made straight, and the rough ground made smooth.

⁵ Then the glory of the LORD will be shown to everyone.

Together, all people will see it. Yes, this is what the LORD himself said!"

⁶ A voice said, "Speak!"

So I said,^{‡‡} "What should I say?"

The voice said, "People are like grass. They last no longer than the wild flowers.

⁷ When a wind from the LORD blows on them,

the grass dies and the flowers dry up. Yes, all people are like grass.

⁸ Grass dies and flowers fall, but the word of our God lasts forever."

^{‡‡}40:6 This is from a Hebrew copy from Qumran and ancient Greek and Latin versions. The traditional Hebrew text has "he said".

Salvation: God's Good News

⁹ Zion, you have good news to tell.
Go up on a high mountain and shout the good news.

Jerusalem, you have good news to tell.
Don't be afraid; speak loudly.

Tell this news to all the cities of Judah:
"Look, here is your God!"

¹⁰ The Lord GOD is coming with power.
He will use his power to rule all the people.

He will bring rewards for his people.
He will have their payment with him.

¹¹ Like a good shepherd, he takes care of his people.

He gathers them like lambs in his arms.
He holds them close,
while their mothers walk beside him.

God Made the World; He Rules It

¹² Who measured the oceans in the palm of his hand?

Who used his hand to measure the sky?
Who used a bowl to measure all the dust of the earth?

Who used scales to measure the mountains and hills?

¹³ Who could know the LORD's mind?
Who could be his teacher or give him advice?

¹⁴ Did the Lord ask for anyone's help?
Did anyone teach him to be fair?
Did anyone teach him knowledge?
Did anyone teach him to be wise?

¹⁵ Look, all the nations in the world are like one small drop in the bucket.
If the Lord took all the faraway nations and put them on his scales,
they would be like small pieces of dust.

¹⁶ All the trees in Lebanon are not enough
to burn on the altar for the Lord.
And all the animals in Lebanon
are not enough to kill for a sacrifice.

¹⁷ Compared to God, all the nations of the world are nothing.
Compared to him, they are worth nothing at all.

People Cannot Imagine What God Is Like

¹⁸ Can you compare God to anything?
Can you make a picture of God?

¹⁹ No, but some people make statues from rock or wood,
and they call them gods.
One worker makes a statue.

Then another worker covers it with gold and makes silver chains for it.

²⁰ For the base he chooses special wood, a kind of wood that will not rot.
Then he finds a good woodworker,
and the worker makes a "god" that will not fall over.

²¹ Surely you know the truth, don't you?
Surely you have heard.
Surely someone told you long ago.
Surely you understand who made the earth.

²² It is the Lord who sits above the circle of the earth,
and compared to him, people are like grasshoppers.

He rolled open the skies like a piece of cloth
and stretched out the skies like a tent to sit under.

²³ He takes away the power of rulers and makes the world's leaders completely worthless.

²⁴ They are like plants that are planted in the ground,
but before they can send their roots into the ground,
God blows on the "plants";
they become dead and dry,
and the wind blows them away like straw.

²⁵ The Holy One says, "Can you compare me to anyone?"

No one is equal to me.”

²⁶Look up to the skies.

Who created all those stars?

Who created all those “armies” in the sky?

Who knows every star by name?

He is very strong and powerful, so not one of these stars is lost.

²⁷ People of Jacob, this is true.

Israel, you should believe it.

So why do you say, “The LORD cannot see the way I live;

he will not find me and punish me?”[¶]

²⁸ Surely you know the truth.

Surely you have heard.

The LORD is the God who lives forever!

He created all the faraway places on earth.

He does not get tired and weary.

You cannot learn all he knows.

²⁹ He helps tired people be strong.

He gives power to those without it.

³⁰ Young men get tired and need to rest.

Even young boys stumble and fall.

³¹ But those who trust in the LORD will gain new strength.

They will be like eagles rising up on new wings.^{§§}

They will run and not get weak.

They will walk and not get tired.

The Lord Is the Eternal Creator

41 “Faraway countries, be quiet and listen to me!

Nations be brave.*

Come to me and speak.

We will meet together and decide who is right.

² Who woke up the man who is coming from the east?

He called Justice to march with him.

He uses his sword to crush nations.

He uses his bow and conquers kings—they run away like straw blown by the wind.

³ He chases armies and is never hurt.

He goes places he has never been before.

⁴ Who was able to make all this happen?

Who controlled the lives of everyone from the beginning?

I, the LORD, am the one.

I was here at the beginning, and I will be here when all things are finished.

⁵ “People along the coast saw this, and they were frightened.

Nations at the ends of the earth shook with fear.

They have come near.

They have arrived.

⁶ Workers help each other; they encourage each other to be strong.

⁷ One worker cuts wood to make a statue.

He encourages the man who works with gold.

Another worker uses a hammer and makes the metal smooth.

Then he encourages the man at the anvil.[†]

This last worker says, “This work is good; the metal will not come off.”

Then he nails the statue to a base so that it will not fall over.

And it never moves!

[¶]40:27 *The LORD ... punish me* Or “My way is hidden from the LORD; he ignores my case.”

^{§§}40:31 *like ... wings* This may refer to the ancient belief that eagles regain their youth when they moult (lose and grow back their feathers). See Ps. 103:5.

*41:1 *be brave* Or “be strong again”, as in Isa. 40:31.

†41:7 *anvil* A heavy metal block. A worker puts hot metal on an anvil and beats the hot metal to change its shape.

Only the Lord Can Save Us

⁸“You, Israel, are my servant.
Jacob, I chose you.
You are from the family of my friend,
Abraham.

⁹You were in a faraway country,
but I reached out to you.
I called you from that faraway place.
I said, ‘You are my servant.’

I chose you,
and I have not rejected you.

¹⁰Don’t worry—I am with you.
Don’t be afraid—I am your God.
I will make you strong and help you.
I will support you with my right hand
that brings victory.

¹¹Look, some people are angry with you,
but they will be ashamed and disgraced.
Your enemies will be completely
destroyed.

¹²You will look for the people who were
against you,
but you will not be able to find them.
Those who fought against you
will disappear completely.

¹³I am the LORD your God,
who holds your right hand.
And I tell you, ‘Don’t be afraid!
I will help you.’

¹⁴People of Israel, descendants of Jacob,
you may be weak and worthless,[‡]
but do not be afraid.

I myself will help you.”
This is what the LORD himself says.

“I am the Holy One of Israel,
the one who saves you.

¹⁵Look, I have made you like a new
threshing board
with many sharp teeth.
You will trample mountains and crush
them.

You will make the hills[¶] like chaff.

¹⁶You will throw them into the air,
and the wind will blow them away and
scatter them.

Then you will be happy in the LORD.
You will be proud of the Holy One of
Israel.

¹⁷“The poor and needy look for water,
but they cannot find any.
Their tongues are dry with thirst.

I, the LORD, will answer their prayers.
I, the God of Israel, will not leave them
to die.

¹⁸I will make rivers flow on dry hills.
I will make springs of water flow
through the valleys.

I will change the desert into a lake filled
with water.

There will be springs of water in that dry
land.

¹⁹I will make trees grow in the desert.
There will be cedar, acacia, olive, cy-
press, fir and pine trees.

²⁰Then people will see what I did and
know who did it.

They will think about what happened.
Then they will understand that I, the
LORD, made this happen,
that the Holy One of Israel created it all.”

The Lord Challenges the False Gods

²¹The LORD, the king of Jacob, says:

“Come, present your arguments.
Show me your proof.

²²Let your idols come in and tell us what
will happen.

Idols, tell us what happened in the
beginning.

We will listen closely so that we can
make a decision.

Tell us what will happen in the future.

²³What signs did you give in the past
to prove that you really are gods?

Do something!

[‡]41:14 *Jacob ... worthless* Literally, “Worm of Jacob, men of Israel”.

[¶]41:15 *mountains ... hills* Symbols of the power of Israel’s enemies.

Do anything, good or bad,
so that we can see that you are alive.
Then we might fear and respect you.
²⁴No, you false gods are worthless.
You can't do anything.
Anyone who worships you is as disgust-
ing as you are.
²⁵"I called someone in the north^s to
come.
He is coming from the east where the sun
rises.

I have called him by name.
He tramples kings
the way a potter softens clay with his
feet.

²⁶Who told us about this before it
happened
so that we could say he was right?
None of your idols told us anything.
They didn't say a word,
and they cannot hear anything you say.
²⁷I was the first one to tell Zion about
these things.

I sent a messenger to Jerusalem to say:
'Look, your people are coming back!'

²⁸I looked at those false gods.
Not one of them said anything.
They had no advice to offer.
I asked them questions,
but they didn't say a word.
²⁹Those gods are all less than nothing.
They cannot do anything.
They are worthless.

The Lord's Special Servant

42 "Here is my servant,
the one I support.
He is the one I have chosen,
and I am very pleased with him.
I have filled him with my Spirit,
and he will bring justice to the nations.
²He will not cry out or shout

or try to make himself heard in the
streets.

³He will not break even a crushed
reed.**

He will not put out even the weakest
flame.

He will bring true justice.

⁴He will not grow weak or give up
until he has brought justice to the world.
Even people in faraway places will hope
to receive his teachings."

The Lord Is Ruler and Creator of the World

⁵The LORD, the true God, said these
things.

He is the one who created the sky and
spread it out over the earth.

He formed the earth and everything it
produced.

He breathes life into all the people on
earth.

He gives a spirit to everyone who walks
on the earth.

⁶"I, the LORD, was right to call you.

I will hold your hand and protect you.

You will be the sign of my agreement
with the people.

You will be a light for the other nations.

⁷You will make the blind able to see.

You will free those who are held as
captives.

You will lead those who live in darkness
out of their prison.

⁸"I am the LORD;

that is my name.

I will not give my glory to another.

I will not let statues take the praise that
should be mine.

⁹In the past I told you what would
happen,

and it happened!

^s41:25 *someone in the north* This probably means Cyrus, a king of Persia. He ruled about 550-530 BC.

**42:3 *reed* A plant that grows near water.

Now I am telling you something new,
and I am telling you now, before it
happens.”

A Song of Praise to the Lord

¹⁰ Sing a new song^{††} to the LORD;
praise him everywhere on earth—
all you who sail on the seas,
everything in the sea,
and all you people in faraway places!

¹¹ Deserts and cities, villages of Kedar,
praise the Lord!

People living in Sela, sing for joy!

Sing from the top of your mountain.

¹² Give glory to the LORD.

Praise him, all you people in faraway
lands!

¹³ The LORD will go out like a strong
soldier.

Like a man going into battle, he will be
full of excitement.

He will shout with a loud cry,
and he will defeat his enemies.

God Is Very Patient

¹⁴ The LORD says:

“For a long time I have said nothing.
I have controlled myself and kept quiet.
But now I will cry out like a woman giving
birth.

My breathing is getting faster and
louder.

¹⁵ I will destroy the hills and mountains.
I will dry up all the plants that grow
there.

I will change rivers to dry land
and dry up pools of water.

¹⁶ Then I will lead the blind along a path
they never knew
to places where they have never been
before.

I will change darkness into light for
them.

I will make the rough ground smooth.

I will do these things for them;

I will not abandon my people.

¹⁷ But some of them have left me.

They say to their gold statues, ‘You are
my gods.’

They trust their false gods,

but they will be disappointed and
shamed.

Israel Refused to Listen to God

¹⁸ “Deaf people, listen to me!

Blind people, look and see!

¹⁹ In all the world, no one is more blind
than my servant.^{‡‡}

No one is more deaf than my messenger.
No one is more blind than my chosen
people,

the servant of the LORD.

²⁰ My people see what they should do,
but they do not obey me.

They can hear with their ears,
but they refuse to listen to me.”

²¹ The LORD wants them to do what is
right.

He wants them to honour his wonderful
teachings.^{¶¶}

²² But look at his people.

Others have defeated them and have
stolen from them.

They have been trapped in pits.

They are locked in prisons.

People have taken advantage of them,
and there is no one to protect them.

Others take their money,
and there is no one to say, “Give it back!”

²³ Will any of you pay attention to this
warning?

Will you ever learn to listen?

^{††}42:10 *new song* Whenever God did a new and wonderful thing for his people, they would write a new song about it.

^{‡‡}42:19 *my servant* Here, this probably means the people of Israel.

^{¶¶}42:21 Or “The LORD will make his teachings very wonderful. He will do this because he is good.”

24 Who let Jacob be defeated?
 Who let others take what belonged to
 Israel?
 The LORD allowed them to do this.
 We sinned against him, so he let others
 take away our wealth.
 The people did not want to live the way
 he wanted.
 They refused to listen to his teaching.
 25 So he poured out his anger on them
 and brought wars against them.
 It was as if there were fires all around
 them,
 but they didn't know what was
 happening.
 It was as if they were burning,
 but they didn't try to understand.

God Is Always With His People

43 Now, listen to what the LORD
 says.
 Descendants of Jacob, he is the one who
 created you.
 People of Israel, he who made you says,
 "Don't be afraid. I have saved you.
 I have named you; you are mine."
 2 When you have troubles, I am with
 you.
 When you cross rivers, you will not
 drown.
 When you walk through fire, you will
 not be burned;
 the flames will not hurt you.
 3 That's because I, the LORD, am your
 God.
 I, the Holy One of Israel, am your
 Saviour.
 I gave Egypt to pay for your freedom.
 I gave Ethiopia and Seba as a trade for
 you.
 4 You are precious to me,
 and I have given you a special place of
 honour.

I love you.
 That's why I am willing to trade others,
 to give up whole nations, to save your
 life.
 5 So don't be afraid, because I am with
 you.
 I will gather your children and bring
 them to you.
 I will gather them from the east and from
 the west.
 6 I will tell the north: give my people to
 me.
 I will tell the south: don't keep my peo-
 ple in prison.
 Bring my sons and daughters to me
 from the faraway places.
 7 Bring to me all the people who are
 mine,
 the people who have my name.
 I made them for myself.
 I made them, and they are mine."
 8 Bring out the people who have eyes but
 are blind.
 Bring out the people who have ears but
 are deaf.^{§§}
 9 Let all the nations come together.
 Let their people tell us about their gods.
 Which of their gods has ever told the
 future?
 Did any of them warn us about some-
 thing before it happened?
 Are there witnesses to prove they were
 right?
 And can anyone know they are telling
 the truth?
 10 The LORD says:
 "You people are my witnesses
 and the servant I chose.
 I chose you so that you would help peo-
 ple believe me.
 I chose you so that you would under-
 stand that 'I Am He'—I am the true
 God.

§§43:8 *blind ... deaf* This probably means the Israelites who would not believe God.
 See Isa. 6:9-10.

There was no God before me,
and there will be no God after me.

¹¹ I myself am the LORD,
and there is no other Saviour.

¹² I am the one who spoke to you, saved
you and told you those things.

It was not some stranger who was with
you.

You are my witnesses, and I am God.”

This is what the LORD himself said.

¹³ “I am and always will be God.

When I do something, no one can change
what I have done.

No one can save people from my power.”

¹⁴ This is what the LORD,
the Holy One of Israel, who saves you
says:

“I will send armies to Babylon for you.

Many people will be captured.

Those Babylonians will be taken away in
their own boats.

They are so proud of those boats.*

¹⁵ I am the LORD your Holy One.

I made Israel. I am your King.”

God Will Save His People Again

¹⁶ The Lord is making roads through the
sea.

He is making a path for his people, even
through rough waters.

This is what the LORD says:

¹⁷ “Those who fight against me with
their chariots, horses
and armies will be defeated.

They will never rise again;

they will be destroyed.

They will be put out like the flame in a
lamp.

¹⁸ So forget what happened in earlier
times.

Don't think about those days so long ago,

¹⁹ because I am doing something new.

It is already happening.

Surely you can see it!

I am making a road through the desert,
and rivers will flow in that dry land.

²⁰ The wild animals there will honour
me.

The wild dogs and owls will thank me
when I make rivers flow in the desert.

I will provide water for my chosen peo-
ple to drink.

²¹ They are the people I made for myself,
to sing my praise to the world.

²² “Jacob, you did not pray to me;

Israel, you became tired of me.

²³ You have not brought your sheep as
sacrifices to me.

You have not honoured me with your
sacrifices.

I did not force you to give gifts to me like
slaves.

I did not force you to burn incense until
you became tired.

²⁴ So you did not use your money to buy
things to honour me,

but you did force me to be like your
slave.

You sinned until the bad things you did
made me very tired.

²⁵ “I, yes, I am the one who wipes away
all your sins.

I do this to please myself.

I will not remember your sins.

²⁶ But you should remember me.

Let's meet together and decide what is
right.

Tell your story and prove that you are
innocent.

²⁷ Your first father sinned,

and your lawyers[†] committed crimes
against me.

***43:14** *I will send ... boats* Or with minor changes to the Hebrew, “I will send someone against Babylon to break open the gates, and the shouts of victory from the Chaldeans will be changed to crying.”

[†]**43:27** *lawyers* Or “speakers”, people who argue a person's case in court. This might refer to priests or prophets.

²⁸I will make your Temple leaders unfit to serve there.

I will destroy Jacob;[‡]
bad things will happen to Israel.”

The Lord Is the Only God

44 “Jacob, you are my servant.
Israel, I chose you. Listen to me!

²I am the LORD, and I made you.

I am the one who formed you in your
mother’s womb,

and I will help you.

Jacob, my servant, don’t be afraid.

Jeshurun,[¶] I chose you.

³I will pour water for thirsty people,
and streams will flow through the desert.

I will pour my Spirit on your children,
and I will bless[§] your family.

⁴They will sprout like grass in the spring
and grow like trees by streams of water.

⁵One man will call himself, ‘I am the
LORD’s.’

Another will use the name, ‘Jacob’.

Another man will sign his name as ‘The
LORD’s Hand’.

And another will use the name, ‘Israel’.”

⁶The LORD, the king of Israel, is the
LORD All-Powerful who will free Israel.

And this is what he says:

“I am the only God.

There are no other gods.

I am the Beginning and the End.

⁷There is no other God like me.

If there is, that god should speak now.

Let him lay out everything he has done
since the time I made these ancient
people.

Let him show me the signs he gave long
ago

that prove he knew what would happen
in the future.

⁸Don’t be afraid! Don’t worry.

I am the one who always told you what
would happen.

You are my proof.^{**}

There is no other God; I am the only one.

There is no other Rock; I know I am the
only one.”

False Gods Are Useless

⁹Some people make idols, but they are
worthless.

They love their statues, which are
useless.

Those who serve as witnesses for these
statues cannot even see.

They don’t know enough to be ashamed.

¹⁰Who made these false gods?

Who covered these useless statues?

¹¹Workers made them,

and the workers are only human.

They must all gather together before me
to be put on trial.

Then they will all be ashamed and
afraid.

¹²A metalworker uses his tools to heat
iron over hot coals.

He uses his hammer to beat the metal to
shape it into a statue.

He uses his own powerful arms.

But when he gets hungry, he loses his
strength.

If he does not drink water, he becomes
weak.

¹³A woodworker uses his measuring and
cutting tools

to mark a pattern on a block of wood.

He uses a plane and chisel^{††} to carve it,

[‡]43:28 *destroy Jacob* Or “I will make Jacob completely mine.”

[¶]44:2 *Jeshurun* Another name for Israel. It means “good” or “honest”.

[§]44:3 *bless* This is a wordplay. This Hebrew word sounds like the word meaning “pool”.

^{**}44:8 *proof* Or “witnesses”.

^{††}44:13 *plane and chisel* Sharp tools used to carve wood or stone.

making it into the form of a statue.
 He shapes the wood until it looks almost
 human
 and puts it in a special place in his house.
¹⁴ He cuts down the cedar trees;
 he chooses oak or cypress trees.
 To make sure he had plenty of wood, he
 planted some pines,
 but it was the rain that made them grow.
¹⁵ When the man wanted a fire,
 he took some of the wood to keep him
 warm.
 He also used some of it to bake his bread.
 But then he used that same wood to
 make a statue to worship as a god!
 That god is only a statue that he made,
 but he bows down to it!
¹⁶ He burns half of the wood in the fire.
 He uses the fire to cook his meat,
 and he eats the meat until he is full.
 He burns the wood to keep himself
 warm.
 He says, "Good! Now I am warm,
 and I can see by the light of the fire."
¹⁷ There is a little of the wood left,
 so he makes a statue and calls it his god.
 He bows down before it and worships it.
 He prays to it and says,
 "You are my god, save me!"
¹⁸ People like that don't know what they
 are doing!
 They don't understand.
 Their eyes are shut, so they cannot see.
 Their minds are closed, so they cannot
 understand.
¹⁹ They don't realize what they are
 doing.
 They aren't smart enough to think,
 "I burned half of the wood in the fire.
 I used the hot coals to bake my bread
 and cook the meat I ate.
 And I used the wood that was left to
 make this disgusting thing.
 I am worshipping a block of wood!"

²⁰ They don't know what they are do-
 ing.^{‡‡}
 They have believed a lie.
 They cannot save themselves, and they
 will not admit,
 "This statue I am holding is a fake!"

The Lord, the True God, Helps Israel

²¹ "Jacob, remember these things!
 Israel, remember, you are my servant.
 I made you, and you are my servant.
 So, Israel, I will never forget you.
²² Your sins were like a big cloud,
 but I wiped them all away.
 Your sins are gone,
 like a cloud that disappeared into thin
 air.
 I rescued and protected you,
 so come back to me."
²³ Skies, rejoice for what the LORD has
 done.
 Earth, shout for joy down to your deep-
 est parts!
 Start singing, you mountains
 and all you trees in the forest!
 Yes, the LORD has saved Jacob.
 He has shown his glory by rescuing
 Israel.
²⁴ The one who rescued you is the LORD,
 the one who formed you in your
 mother's womb.
 He says: "I, the LORD, made everything.
 I put the skies there myself.
 I spread out the earth before me."
²⁵ False prophets tell lies,
 but the Lord shows that their lies are
 false.
 He makes fools of those who do magic.
 He confuses even the wise.
 They think they know a lot,
 but he makes them look foolish.
²⁶ The Lord sends his servants to tell his
 messages to the people,
 and he makes those messages come true.

^{‡‡}44:20 *They ... doing* Literally, "They eat ashes."

He sends messengers to tell the people
what they should do,
and he proves that the advice is good.

God Chooses Cyrus to Rebuild Judah

The Lord says to Jerusalem:

“People will live in you again.”

He says to the cities of Judah, “You will
be rebuilt.”

He says to them, “I will repair your
ruins.”

²⁷ He tells the deep waters, “Become dry!
I will make your streams dry too.”

²⁸ He says to Cyrus: “You are my
shepherd,

and you will do what I want.

You will say to Jerusalem, ‘You will be
rebuilt!’

You will tell the Temple, ‘Your founda-
tions will be put in place!’”

God Chooses Cyrus to Make Israel Free

45 This is what the LORD said to
Cyrus, his chosen king:[¶]

“I took you by your right hand to help
you defeat nations,

to strip other kings of their power,
and to open city gates that will not be
closed again.

² I will go in front of you
and make the mountains flat.

I will break the city gates of bronze
and cut the iron bars on the gates.

³ I will give you the wealth that is stored
in secret places.

I will give you those hidden treasures.
Then you will know that I am the LORD,
the God of Israel, who calls you by name.

⁴ I do this for my servant, Jacob.

I do it for my chosen people, Israel.

Cyrus, I am calling you by name.

You don’t know me, but I will give you
a title of honour.

⁵ I am the LORD, the only God.

There is no other God except me.

I put your clothes on you,^{§§}
but still you don’t know me.

⁶ I am doing this so that everyone will
know

that I am the only God.

From the east to the west, people will
know that I am the LORD

and that there is no other God.

⁷ I made the light and the darkness.

I bring peace, and I cause trouble.

I, the LORD, do all these things.

⁸ “May the clouds in the skies above
pour goodness on the earth like rain.

May the earth open up
to let salvation grow.

And may goodness grow with that
salvation,

which I, the LORD, created.

God Controls His Creation

⁹ “How dare you argue with the one who
made you!

You are like a clay pot arguing with the
one who formed it.

Clay does not say to the one moulding it,
‘Man, what are you doing?’

or ‘You left off my handles!’

¹⁰ How rude to ask a new father,

‘Why are you having this child?’

No one would ask a mother,

‘Are you sure you want this baby?’”

¹¹ This is what the LORD, the Holy One
of Israel

and the one who created Israel, says:

“My children, you asked me to show you
a sign.

[¶]45:1 *chosen king* Literally, “the anointed one”.

^{§§}45:5 *I put ... you* This also means “I made you strong.”

You told me to show you what I have done.*

¹²I made the earth,
and I created the people on it.
I used my own hands to make the skies,
and I command all the armies in the sky.[†]

¹³I was right to give power to Cyrus,[‡]
and I will make his work easy.
He will rebuild my city,
and he will set my people free without
bribes or payment.”

The LORD All-Powerful says this.

¹⁴This is what the LORD says:
“Egypt and Ethiopia are rich,
but, Israel, you will get those riches.
The tall people from Seba will be yours.
They will walk behind you with chains
around their necks.

They will bow down before you
and ask you to pray for them and say,
“The true God really is with you,
and there is no other God.”

¹⁵You are the God people cannot see.
You are the God who saves Israel.

¹⁶Many people make false gods,
but they will be disappointed.
All of them will go away ashamed.

¹⁷But Israel will be saved by the LORD.
That salvation will continue forever.
Never again will Israel be shamed.

¹⁸The LORD is God.
He made the skies and the earth.
He put the earth in its place.
He did not want the earth to be empty
when he made it.

He created it to be lived on.
This is what the LORD says:

“I am the LORD.
There is no other God.

¹⁹I have spoken openly, not in secret.

I did not hide my words in a dark and
secret place.

I did not tell the people of Jacob
to look for me in empty places.
I am the LORD, and I speak the truth.
I say only what is right.

The Lord Proves He Is the Only God

²⁰“You people who escaped from other
nations,
gather together before me.
These people carry statues of false gods.
They pray to useless gods,
but they don’t know what they are
doing.

²¹Tell them to come to me.
Let them present their case and discuss
these things.

“Who told you about this before it
happened?

Who told you this so long ago?
I, the LORD, am the one who said these
things.

I am the only God, the one who does
what is right.

I am the one who saves,
and there is no other!

²²“So all you people in faraway places,
turn to me and be saved,
because I am God,
and there is no other.

²³When I make a promise, that promise
is true.

It will happen.
And I swear by my own power that ev-
eryone will bow before me
and will take an oath to obey me.

²⁴They will say, ‘Goodness and strength
come only from the LORD.’”

And all who show their anger against
him

* 45:11 *My children ... done* Or “Those who are coming asked for my children. They commanded me to give them the people I made with my own hands.”

† 45:12 *armies in the sky* Sometimes this means the angels, and sometimes it means the stars.

‡ 45:13 *I was right ... Cyrus* Or “I gave Cyrus power to do something good.”

will be humiliated.

²⁵The LORD will help the people of Israel do what is right[†] and praise their God.

False Gods Are Useless

46 Bel bows low to the ground; Nebo[§] kneels down.

Their idols have to be moved around by animals.

They are no more than heavy weights that must be carried.

They are only burdens that make the animals tired.

²And now they are all down on their knees.

No one can save the heavy idols.

The people and their gods are all carried away as captives.

³“Listen to me, descendants of Jacob, all who are left from the people of Israel! I have carried you since you left your mother’s womb.

I carried you when you were born,

⁴and I will still be carrying you when you are old.

Your hair will turn grey, and I will still carry you.

I made you,

and I will carry you to safety.

⁵“Can you compare me to anyone?

No one is equal to me.

You cannot understand everything about me.

There is nothing like me.

⁶Some people are rich with gold and silver.

Gold falls from their purses,

and they weigh their silver on scales.

They pay an artist to make a false god from wood.

Then they bow down and worship that false god.

⁷They put their false god on their shoulders and carry it.

That false god is useless; people have to carry it!

People set the statue on the ground, and it cannot move.

That false god never walks away from its place.

People can yell at it, but it will not answer.

That false god is only a statue; it cannot save people from their troubles.

⁸“Sinners, change your heart and mind. Think about this again.

Remember it and be strong.

⁹Remember what happened long ago.

Remember, I am God and there is no other God.

There is no other like me.

¹⁰From the beginning, I told you what would happen in the end.

A long time ago, I told you things that have not happened yet.

I said, ‘When I plan something, it will happen.

I will do whatever I want to do.’

¹¹I am calling a man from the east to do what I want.

He will come like an eagle from a far-away country.

I will do all that I have planned.

Everything I said will happen just as I said it would.

¹²Listen to me, you stubborn** people!

You are far from doing what is right.

¹³But I am close to making things right. Salvation will not be delayed much longer.

I will bring salvation to Zion

[†]45:25 *do what is right* Or “find justice”.

[§]46:1 *Bel, Nebo* False gods of Babylon.

**46:12 *stubborn* Literally, “mighty of heart”.

and to my wonderful Israel.”

God’s Message to Babylon

47 The LORD says:
“Fall down and sit in the dirt, city
of Babylon.

You have no throne, so sit on the ground,
people of Babylon.††

You are not the ruler now.

You are no longer the beautiful young
princess that people said you were.

²Get the millstones ready

and grind the grain into flour.

Take off your veil and fancy clothes.

Lift your skirt and get ready to cross the
rivers.‡‡

³Men will see your naked body
and use you for sex.

I will make you pay for the bad things
you did,

and I will not let anyone help you.

⁴“My people say, ‘God saves us.

His name is the LORD All-Powerful, the
Holy One of Israel.’

⁵“So Babylon, sit down and shut up.

Daughter of the Babylonians, go into the
dark prison.

You will no longer be ‘The Queen of the
Kingdoms’.

⁶I was angry with my people.

They were mine, but I turned against
them.

I let you punish them,
but you showed them no mercy.

Even for those who were old
you made the work hard.

⁷You said, ‘I will live forever.

I will always be the queen.’

You didn’t care what you did to my
people.

You didn’t think about what might hap-
pen later.

⁸So now listen, you who love only
pleasure!

Feeling so safe, you tell yourself,

‘I alone am important, and no one else
matters.

I will never be a widow or lose my
children.’

⁹These two things will happen to you:

First, you will lose your children and
then your husband,

and none of your magical powers will
help you.

¹⁰You do bad things but still feel safe.¶¶
You say to yourself, ‘No one sees the

wrong I do.’

You thought your wisdom and knowl-
edge would save you.

You tell yourself, ‘I alone am important,
and no one else matters.’

¹¹“But trouble is coming your way,
and no magic will make it disappear.

Disaster will strike you,

and there is no one you can pay to stop
it.

Sudden ruin is in your future,

and you will not see it coming.

¹²You worked hard all your life learning
magic and curses.

So start using that magic.

Maybe those powers will help you.

Maybe you will be able to frighten
someone.

¹³You have many advisers.

Are you tired of the advice they give?

Then send out your men who read the
stars.

They can tell when the month starts,

so maybe they can tell you when your
troubles will come.

††47:1 *city of Babylon, people of Babylon* Literally, “virgin daughter of Babylon”, “daughter of the Chaldeans”.

‡‡47:2 *rivers* The Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Babylon was between these two rivers.

¶¶47:10 *You ... safe* Or “You put your trust in your evil.”

¹⁴ But they cannot even save themselves.
 They will burn like straw.
 They will burn so fast that there will be
 no coals left to cook bread.
 There will be no fire left to sit by.
¹⁵ That's what will happen to those you
 have worked with,
 the people you have done business with
 all your life.
 They will all go their own way.
 There will be no one left to save you."

God's Message to Israel

48 The LORD says:
 "Descendants of Jacob, listen to
 me!
 You are known as 'Israel',
 and you are from the tribe of Judah.
 You take oaths using the name of the
 LORD,
 and you pray to the God of Israel,
 but you are not honest and sincere.
² Yes, you call yourselves citizens of the
 holy city,^{§§}
 those who depend on the God of Israel.
 The LORD All-Powerful is his name.
³ Long ago I told you what would
 happen.
 I told you about these things,
 and suddenly I made them happen.
⁴ I did that because I knew you were
 stubborn.
 You were like iron that will not bend,
 with heads as hard as bronze.
⁵ So long ago I told you what would
 happen.
 I told you about those things long before
 they happened.
 I did this so that you could not say,
 'The gods we made did this.
 Our idols, our statues, made this
 happen.'
⁶ "You heard what I said would happen,
 and you can see it has all been done.

Shouldn't you tell this to others?
 Now I will tell you about new things,
 secrets you have not known before.
⁷ This is something that is happening
 now, not long ago.
 You have not heard about it before
 today.
 So you cannot say, 'We already knew
 that.'
⁸ But even in the past you didn't listen.
 You didn't learn anything.
 You never listen to what I say.
 I have always known that you would
 turn against me.
 You have rebelled against me from the
 time you were born.
⁹ But I will be patient.
 I will do this for myself.
 People will praise me for not becoming
 angry and destroying you.
 You will praise me for waiting.
¹⁰ Look, I will make you pure,
 but not in the way you make silver pure.
 I will make you pure by giving you
 troubles.
¹¹ I will do this for myself—for me!
 I will not let you treat me as if I am not
 important.
 I will not let some false god take my
 glory and praise.
¹² "Jacob, listen to me!
 Israel, I called you to be my people.
 So listen to me!
 I am the Beginning,
 and I am the End.
¹³ I made the earth with my own hands.
 My right hand made the sky.
 And if I call them,
 they will come to stand before me.
¹⁴ "All of you, come here and listen to
 me.
 Did any of the false gods say these things
 would happen?"

§§48:2 *holy city* That is, Jerusalem.

The LORD will use his chosen one* to do
what he wants against Babylon;
he will overpower the Babylonians.

¹⁵ “I told you that I would call him.

I will lead him and make him succeed.

¹⁶ Come here and listen to me!

I was there when Babylon began as a
nation.

And from the beginning, I spoke clearly
so that people could know what I said.”

Now, the Lord GOD sends me and his
Spirit to tell you these things. ¹⁷ The
LORD, the Saviour, the Holy One of Is-
rael, says:

“I am the LORD your God.

I teach you for your own good.

I lead you in the way you should go.

¹⁸ If you had obeyed me,

peace would have come to you
like a full flowing river.

Good things would have come to you
again and again,

like the waves of the sea.

¹⁹ If you had obeyed me,

you would have had as many children as
there are grains of sand.

And they would always have been mine
and would never have been destroyed.”

²⁰ My people, leave Babylon!

My people, run from the Babylonians!

Tell the news with joy.

Spread the news around the world.

Tell them,

“The LORD rescued his servant Jacob.”

²¹ They never got thirsty as he led them
through the desert,

because he made water flow from a rock.

He split the rock,

and water flowed out.

²² “But there is no peace for evil people,”
says the LORD.

God Calls His Special Servant

49 Hear me, people by the sea.
Listen to me, you faraway
nations.

The LORD called me before I was born.

He called my name while I was still in
my mother’s womb.

² He used me to speak for him.

He used me like a sharp sword,

but he also held me in his hand to protect
me.

He used me like a sharp arrow,

but he also kept me safe in his arrow bag.

³ He told me, “Israel, you are my servant.

I will do wonderful things with you.”

⁴ I said, “I worked hard for nothing.

I wore myself out, but I did nothing
useful.

I used all my power,

but I did not really do anything.

So the LORD must decide what to do
with me.

He must decide my reward.”

⁵ The LORD is the one who made me in
my mother’s womb,

so that I could be his servant.

He wanted me to lead Jacob and Israel
back to him.

The LORD gives me honour.

I get my strength from my God.

⁶ And now he says, “You are a very im-
portant servant to me.

You must do more than bring back my
own people to me—

the tribes of Jacob and the people of Is-
rael who are still alive.

I will also make you a light for the other
nations.

You will show people all over the world
the way to be saved.”

⁷ The LORD, the Saviour and Holy One
of Israel,

speaks to his servant who is hated,

* **48:14** *chosen one* This refers to Cyrus.

who is rejected by the nations.
 He is now a slave to rulers.
 The Lord says to him,
 "Kings will see you and stand to honour
 you.
 Great leaders will bow down to you."
 This will happen for the LORD.
 The Holy One of Israel is the one who
 chose you,
 and he can be trusted.

The Day of Salvation

⁸ This is what the LORD says:
 "There will be a special time when I
 show my kindness.
 Then I will answer your prayers.
 There will be a special day when I will
 save you.
 Then I will help you and protect you,
 and you will be the proof of my agree-
 ment with the people.
 The country is destroyed now,
 but you will give the land back to the
 people who own it.
⁹ You will tell the prisoners,
 'Come out of your prison!'
 You will tell those who are in darkness,
 'Come out of the dark!'
 The people will eat along the road,
 and they will have food even on empty
 hills.
¹⁰ They will not be hungry or thirsty.
 The hot sun and wind will not hurt them.
 Their Comforter will lead them.
 He will lead them by springs of water.
¹¹ I will make a road for my people.
 The mountains will be made flat,
 and the low roads will be raised.
¹² "Look! People are coming to me from
 faraway places.
 They are coming to me from the north
 and from the west.
 They are coming to me from Aswan in
 Egypt."
¹³ Heavens and earth, be happy!
 Mountains, shout with joy!

The LORD comforts his people.
 He is good to his poor people.
¹⁴ But now Zion says:
 "The LORD has left me;
 the Lord has forgotten me."
¹⁵ But the LORD answers:
 "Can a woman forget her baby?
 Can she forget the child who came from
 her body?
 Even if she can forget her children,
 I cannot forget you.
¹⁶ I have drawn pictures of you on my
 hands.
 Your broken walls are always on my
 mind.
¹⁷ Your children will come back to you,
 and those who destroyed you will leave.
¹⁸ Look up! Look all around you!
 All your children are gathering together
 and coming to you."
 The LORD says:
 "On my life, I promise you this:
 Your children will be like jewels that you
 tie around your neck.
 Your children will be like the necklace
 that a bride wears.
¹⁹ "You are destroyed and defeated now;
 your land is useless.
 But after a short time, you will have
 many people in your land,
 and those who destroyed you will be far,
 far away.
²⁰ You were sad for the children you lost,
 but they will tell you:
 'This place is too small!
 Give us a bigger place to live!'
²¹ Then you will say to yourself,
 'Who gave me all these children?
 I was sad and lonely.
 My children were taken away.
 They were gone.
 So who gave me these children?
 Look, I was the only one left.
 Where did all these children come
 from?'"
²² This is what the Lord GOD says:

“Look, I will wave my hand to the nations.

I will raise my flag for everyone to see. Then they will bring your children to you.

They will carry your children on their shoulders, and they will hold them in their arms.

²³ Kings will be their teachers.

The daughters of kings will care for them.

The kings and their daughters will bow down to you.

They will kiss the dirt at your feet.

Then you will know that I am the LORD, and anyone who trusts in me will not be disappointed.”

²⁴ If a strong soldier takes a prisoner, can you set him free?

If a powerful soldier guards someone, can the prisoner escape?

²⁵ Here is the LORD’s answer:

“The prisoners will escape.

Those captured by the strong soldier will be set free.

That’s because I will fight your battles, and I will save your children.

²⁶ Those people hurt you, but I will force them to eat their own bodies.

Their own blood will be the wine that makes them drunk.

Then everyone will know that the LORD saved you.

Everyone will know that the Powerful One of Jacob saved you.”

Israel Punished Because of Their Sin

50 This is what the LORD says: “People of Israel, do you think I divorced your mother?

Then where is the paper that proves it?

My children, do you think I sold you to pay a debt?

Did I owe money to someone?

No, you were sold because of the bad things you did.

Your mother was sent away because of your sins.

² I came home and found no one there.

I called and called, but no one answered. Do you think I cannot get you back?

Do you think I cannot save you?

Look, if I gave the command, the ocean would dry up!

I can turn rivers into a desert.

The fish would die without water, and their bodies would rot.

³ I can make the skies dark like someone dressed in funeral clothes.”

God’s Servant Depends on God

⁴ The Lord GOD gave me the ability to teach,

so now I teach these sad people.

Every morning he wakes me and teaches me like a student.

⁵ The Lord GOD helps me learn, and I have not turned against him.

I will not stop following him.

⁶ I will let those people beat me and pull the hair from my beard.

I will not hide my face when they say bad things to me and spit at me.

⁷ The Lord GOD will help me, so the bad things they say will not hurt me.

I will be strong.

I know I will not be disappointed.

⁸ God is with me, and he is the one who shows that I am innocent.

So no one can say I am guilty.

If anyone wants to try to prove me wrong, they should come here, and we will have a trial.

⁹ But look, the Lord GOD helps me, so no one can prove me guilty.

As for them, they will all be like worthless old clothes,

eaten by moths.

¹⁰ People who honour the LORD also listen to his servant.

That servant lives completely trusting in God

without knowing what will happen.

He really trusts in the LORD's name and depends on his God.

¹¹ "Look, you people who oppose my servant

and light your own fires and torches.

This will be your punishment:

you will fall into your fires and torches and be burned.

I will make that happen."

Israel Should Be Like Abraham

51 Some of you people try hard to live good lives.

You go to the LORD for help.

Listen to me.

You should look at Abraham your father.

He is the rock you were cut from.

² Abraham is your father, so look at him.

Look at Sarah, who gave birth to you.

Abraham was alone when I called him.

Then I blessed him, and he began a great family with many descendants.

³ In the same way, the LORD will bless Zion.

He will feel sorry for her and her people,

and he will do something great for her.

He will turn the desert into a garden.

It will be like the Garden of Eden.

The land was empty,

but it will become like the garden of the LORD.

People there will be very happy.

They will sing victory songs to thank God for what he did.

⁴ My people, listen to me!

My decisions will be like lights showing people how to live.

⁵ I will soon save you and show that I am fair.

I will use my power and judge all nations.

All the faraway places are waiting for me.

They wait for my power to help them.

⁶ Look up to the heavens!

Look around you at the earth below!

The skies will disappear like clouds of smoke.

The earth will become like worthless old clothes.

The people on earth will die, but my salvation will continue forever.

My goodness will never end.

⁷ You people who understand goodness should listen to me.

You people who follow my teachings should hear the things I say.

Don't be afraid of evil people;

don't let their insults upset you.

⁸ They will be like old clothes eaten by moths.

They will be like wool eaten by worms.

But my goodness will last forever.

My salvation will continue for ever and ever.

God's Own Power Will Save His People

⁹ Wake up! Wake up!

Arm of the LORD, clothe yourself with strength.

Show your power the way you did long ago,

as you have from ancient times.

You are the one who destroyed Rahab.

You defeated the Dragon.[†]

¹⁰ You dried up the water that was in the deep sea.

You made a road through the deepest parts of the sea.

[†]51:9 *Rahab ... Dragon* This is Rahab the great sea monster. Some ancient stories tell about Rahab fighting with God.

Your people crossed over and were saved.

¹¹ The LORD will save his people.

They will return to Zion with joy.

They will be very happy.

Their happiness will be like a crown on their heads forever.

They will be singing with joy.

All sadness will be gone far away.

¹² “I am the one who comforts you.

So why should you be afraid of people?

They are only humans who live and die like the grass.

¹³ I, the LORD, am the one who made you.

With my power I made the earth and spread the sky over the earth.

But you have forgotten me,

so you are always afraid that angry men will hurt you.

Those men planned to destroy you, but where are they now?

¹⁴ People in prison will soon be made free.

They will not die and rot in prison.

They will have plenty of food.

¹⁵ I am the LORD your God, the one who stirs up the sea and makes the waves roar.

My name is the LORD All-Powerful.

¹⁶ My servant, I gave you the words I want you to say, and I covered you with my hands to protect you.

I did this to make a new heaven and earth

and so that you would say to Israel, ‘You are my people.’”

God Punished Israel

¹⁷ Wake up! Wake up!

Jerusalem, get up!

The LORD punished you,

forcing you to drink a cup full of his anger.

And you drank every drop of it,

until you fell down drunk.

¹⁸ Jerusalem had many people, but none of them became leaders for her. None of the children she raised became guides to lead her.

¹⁹ Troubles came to you, Jerusalem, in pairs:

Your land was destroyed and lies in ruins,

and your people suffered from famine and war.

But no one felt sorry for you or showed you mercy.

²⁰ Your people became weak.

They fell on the ground and lay there.

They were lying on every street corner, like animals caught in a net.

They were punished by the LORD’s anger

until they could not accept any more punishment.

When God said he would give them more punishment, they became very weak.

²¹ Listen to me, poor Jerusalem.

You are weak like a drunk, but you are not drunk from wine.

²² Your God is the one who fights for his people.

This is what the LORD your God says to you:

“Look, I am taking this cup of poison away from you.

It is full of my anger,

and I am taking it out of your hand.

You will not be punished by my anger again.

²³ I will now use my anger to punish the people who hurt you.

They tried to kill you.

They told you, ‘Bow down before us, and we will walk all over you.’

Your back became like the ground under their feet.

You were like a dirt road for them to walk on.”

Israel Will Be Saved

52 Wake up! Wake up!
Zion, clothe yourself with strength.

Holy city of Jerusalem, stand up and put on your beautiful clothes! Those filthy foreigners[‡] will not enter you again.

² Jerusalem, get up and shake off the dust!

City of Zion,[†] you were a prisoner, but take the chains off your neck.

³ This is what the LORD says:

“You were not sold for money, so I will not use money to set you free.”

⁴ This is what the Lord GOD says:

“First, my people went down to Egypt and became slaves.

Then Assyria made them slaves.

⁵ Now look what has happened,” says the LORD.

“Another nation has taken my people.

That country did not pay to take my people.

But they rule over them and laugh at them,

and they say bad things about me all the time.”

The LORD is the one saying these things.

⁶ “This happened so that my people will learn about me.

My people will know who I am.

My people will know my name,

and they will know that I Am He[§] is speaking to them.”

⁷ How wonderful it is to see

someone coming over the hills to tell good news.

How wonderful to hear him announce,

“There is peace! We have been saved!”

and to hear him say to Zion,

“Your God is the king!”

⁸ The city guards^{**} are shouting.

They are all rejoicing together.

They can all see the LORD returning to Zion.

⁹ Ruins of Jerusalem, be happy again!

Rejoice because the LORD comforted his people

and set Jerusalem free.

¹⁰ The LORD showed his holy strength to all the nations.

All the faraway countries saw how God saved his people.

¹¹ So leave Babylon!

Leave that place!

Priests, you carry the things that belong to the LORD,

so make yourselves pure.

Don't touch anything that is not pure.

¹² You will leave Babylon,

but they will not force you to leave in a hurry.

You will not be forced to run away.

The LORD will be in front of you.

The God of Israel will be behind you.^{††}

God's Suffering Servant

¹³ The Lord says:

“Look, my servant will succeed in what he has to do,

and he will be raised to a position of high honour.

[‡]52:1 *filthy foreigners* Or “unclean men that have not been circumcised”.

[†]52:2 *City of Zion* Literally, “Daughter Zion”. See Zion in the Word List.

[§]52:6 *I Am He* This is like YAHWEH, the Hebrew name for God. It shows that God lives forever, and that he is always with his people. See Exod. 3:13-17.

^{**}52:8 *guards* Men who stand on the city walls and watch for messengers or trouble coming to the city. Here, this probably means the prophets.

^{††}52:12 *The LORD ... behind you* This shows that God will protect his people. Compare Exod. 14:19,20.

¹⁴ But many people were shocked when they saw him.^{‡‡}

He was beaten so badly that they could hardly recognize him as a man.

¹⁵ It is also true that many nations will be amazed at him.

Kings will look at him and be unable to speak.

They will not hear the story about my servant;

they will see it happen!

They will not hear the story,

but they will understand!”

53 Who really believed what we heard?

Who saw in it the LORD’s great power?^{¶¶}

² He was always close to the Lord.

He grew up like a young plant,

like a root growing in dry ground.

There was nothing special or impressive about the way he looked,

nothing we could see that would cause us to like him.

³ People made fun of him, and even his friends left him.

He was a man who suffered a lot of pain and sickness.

We treated him like someone of no importance,

like someone people will not even look at or show respect to.

⁴ The fact is, it was our troubles he took on himself;

he suffered our pain.

But we thought that God was punishing him,

that God was beating him for something he did.

⁵ But he was being punished for what we did.

He was crushed because of our guilt.

He took the punishment we deserved, and this brought us peace.

We were healed because of his pain.

⁶ We had all wandered away like sheep.

We had gone our own way.

And yet the LORD put all our guilt on him.

⁷ He was terribly abused,

but he never protested.

He said nothing,

like a lamb being led away to be killed.

He was like a sheep that makes no sound as its wool is being cut off.

He never opened his mouth to defend himself.

⁸ He was taken away by force and judged unfairly,

and no one even noticed that he was killed.^{§§}

But he was put to death*

for the sins of his[†] people.

⁹ He had done no wrong to anyone.

He had never even told a lie.

But he was buried among the wicked.

His tomb was with the rich.

¹⁰ But the LORD was pleased with this humble servant

who suffered such pain.[‡]

^{‡‡}52:14 *him* This follows the ancient Syriac and Aramaic versions. The traditional Hebrew text has “you”.

^{¶¶}53:1 *Who ... power* Or “Upon whom was the arm of the Lord revealed?” This could mean “Who received the punishment from the Lord?”

^{§§}53:8 *He was taken ... killed* Or “There is no story about his descendants, because he was taken from the land of the living.”

^{*}53:8 *put to death* Or “punished”.

[†]53:8 *his* This is the reading in a Hebrew copy among the Dead Sea Scrolls. The traditional Hebrew text has “my”.

[‡]53:10 *But the LORD ... such pain* Or “The LORD decided to crush him. He decided that he must suffer.”

Even after giving himself as an offering
for sin,
he will see his descendants and enjoy a
long life.

He will succeed in doing what the LORD
wanted.

¹¹ After his suffering he will see the
light,[†]

and he will be satisfied with what he
experienced.

The Lord says:

“My servant, who does what is right,[§]
will take the punishment for the sins of
many

so that they will not be judged guilty.

¹² You can be sure that all those I accept
will belong to him.

They will be the reward for his victory.

I will do this because he laid down his
life for them

and was considered a criminal
for taking on the guilt of many.

Now he stands before me
and defends those who rebelled against
me.”

God Brings His People Home

54 This is what the LORD says:
¹ “Woman without children, be
happy!

You never gave birth to a child,
but you should sing and shout for joy.

Yes, the woman who is alone^{**}
will have more children than the woman
with a husband.

² Make your tent bigger.

Open your doors wide.

Don't think small!

Make your tent large and strong,
³ because you will grow in all directions.

Your children will take over many
nations

and live in the cities that were destroyed.

⁴ Don't be afraid!

You will not be disappointed.

People will not say bad things against
you.

You will not be embarrassed.

When you were young, you felt shame,
but you will forget that shame now.

You will not remember the shame you
felt

when you lost your husband.^{††}

⁵ Your real husband is the one who made
you.

His name is the LORD All-Powerful.

The Holy One of Israel is your Saviour,^{‡‡}
and he is the God of all the earth!

⁶ “Like a woman whose husband has left
her,

you were very sad,
like a young wife left all alone.

But the LORD has called you back to
him.”

This is what your God says.

⁷ “For a short time I turned away from
you,

but with all my love I will welcome you
again.

⁸ I was so angry that for a while I did not
want to see you,

[†]53:11 *the light* This is found in some Hebrew scrolls from Qumran and the ancient Greek version. Light is often used as a symbol for life.

[§]53:11 *My servant ... is right* Or “My righteous servant”.

^{**}54:1 *the woman ... alone* This Hebrew word is like the word “destroyed”. This probably means “Jerusalem, the city that is destroyed.”

^{††}54:4 *husband* In Hebrew this word is like the name Baal. This means that the LORD is Jerusalem's true God, not the false god Baal.

^{‡‡}54:5 *Saviour* Or “protector”, someone who cared for and protected the family of a dead relative. Often this person bought back (redeemed) the poor relatives from slavery, making them free again.

but now I want to comfort you with kindness forever.”

The LORD your Saviour said this.

⁹“Remember, in Noah’s time

I punished the world with the flood,

but I made a promise to Noah

that I would never again destroy the world with water.

In the same way, I promise

that I will never again be angry with you and say bad things to you.

¹⁰The mountains may disappear,

and the hills may become dust,

but my faithful love will never leave you.

My agreement of friendship with you

will never be broken.”

The LORD who loves you said this.

¹¹“You poor city!

Enemies came against you like storms, and no one comforted you.

But I will rebuild you with beautiful mortar to lay the stones of your walls.

I will use blue gems when I lay the foundation.

¹²The stones on top of the wall will be made from rubies.

I will use shiny jewels for the gates.

I will use precious stones to build the walls around you.

¹³I, the LORD, will teach your children, and they will have real peace.

¹⁴You will be built on goodness.

You will be safe from cruelty and fear.

So you will have nothing to fear.

Nothing will come to hurt you.

¹⁵I will never send anyone to attack you, and if any army tries to attack you, you will defeat them.

¹⁶“Look, I made the blacksmith.

He blows on the fire to make it hotter.

Then he takes the hot iron

and makes the kind of tool he wants to make.

In the same way, I made the ‘destroyer’ to destroy things.

¹⁷People will make weapons to fight against you,

but their weapons will not defeat you.

Some people will say things against you, but anyone who speaks against you will be proved wrong.

This is how I will defend my servants!

They have this blessing^f from me, their LORD.”

The LORD himself said this.

God Gives “Food” That Really Satisfies

55 The LORD says:

“All you people who are thirsty, come!

Here is water for you to drink.

Don’t worry if you have no money.

Come, eat and drink until you are full!

You don’t need money.

The milk and wine are free.

²Why waste your money on something that is not real food?

Why should you work for something that does not really satisfy you?

Listen closely to me and you will eat what is good.

You will enjoy the finest food.

³Listen closely to what I say.

Listen to me so that you will live.

I will make an agreement with you that will last forever.

It will be an agreement you can trust, like the one I made with David:

a promise to love him and be loyal to him forever.

⁴I made David a witness of my power for all nations.

I promised him that he would become a ruler and commander of many nations.”

^f54:17 *blessing* Or “victory”.

⁵ There are nations in places you don't know,
but you will call for them to come.
They don't know you,
but they will run to you.
This will happen because the LORD,
your God, wants it.
It will happen because the Holy One of
Israel honours you.

⁶ So you should look for the LORD
before it is too late.
You should call to him now,
while he is near.

⁷ Evil people should stop living evil lives.
They should stop thinking bad thoughts.
They should come to the LORD again,
and he will comfort them.
They should come to our God
because he will freely forgive them.

People Cannot Understand God

⁸ The LORD says:

“My thoughts are not like yours.
Your ways are not like mine.

⁹ Just as the heavens are higher than the
earth,
so my ways are higher than your ways,
and my thoughts are higher than your
thoughts.

¹⁰ Rain and snow fall from the sky
and don't return until they have watered
the ground.

Then the ground causes the plants to
sprout and grow,
and they produce seeds for the farmer
and food for people to eat.

¹¹ In the same way, my words leave my
mouth,
and they don't come back without
results.

My words make the things happen that I
want to happen.

They succeed in doing what I send them
to do.

¹² “So you will go out from there with
joy.

You will be led out in peace.
When you come to the mountains and
hills, they will begin singing.
All the trees in the fields will clap their
hands.

¹³ Large cypress trees will grow where
there were thorn bushes.

Myrtle trees will grow where there were
weeds.

All this will happen to make the LORD
known,
to be a permanent reminder of his good-
ness and power.”

All Nations Will Follow the Lord

56 This is what the LORD says:
“I am coming soon to save you.
My goodness will be shown to the whole
world.

So be fair to everyone,
and always do what is right.

² Great blessings belong to those who do
this,

who are careful to follow this teaching.
And I will bless those who honour the
Sabbath by not breaking its rules
and those who refuse to do what is
wrong.”

³ Foreigners who follow the LORD
should not say,

“The LORD will not accept me like the
rest of his people.”

A eunuch should not say,

“Without children I am like a dead tree.”

⁴ To these people the LORD says:

“Some eunuchs choose to do what I
want.

They obey the laws about the Sabbath,
and they follow my agreement.

⁵ So I will put a monument in my Temple
with their names on it

so that they will be remembered in my
city!

Yes, I will give them something better
than sons and daughters.

I will give them a name that will last forever!

They will not be cut off^{§§} from my people.

⁶“And some foreigners choose to follow me, the LORD.

They love me and want to serve me.

They keep the Sabbath as a special day, and they follow my agreement carefully.

⁷So I will bring them to my holy mountain

and make them happy in my house of prayer.

The offerings and sacrifices they give me will please me,

and my Temple will be called a house of prayer for all nations.

⁸I am the Lord GOD

who brought my people Israel back home

after they were taken away.

And there are others I will gather to join with my people!”

⁹Wild animals in the forest, come and eat.

¹⁰The watchmen* are all blind.

They don't know what they are doing.

They are like dogs that will not bark.

They lie on the ground and sleep.

Oh, they love to sleep.

¹¹They are like hungry dogs.

They are never satisfied.

The shepherds don't know what they are doing.

Like their sheep, they have all wandered away.

They are greedy.

All they want is to satisfy themselves.

¹²They say, “I will drink some wine. I will drink some beer.

I will do the same thing tomorrow, but I will drink even more.”

Israel Does Not Follow God

57 All the good people are gone, and no one even noticed.

The loyal followers were gathered up, but no one knows why.

The reason they were gathered up is that trouble is coming.

²But peace will come too,

and those who trust him will get to rest in their own beds.

³Come here, you children of witches.

Your father committed adultery, and your mother was unfaithful.

⁴You are children out of control, full of lies.

You make fun of me.

You make faces

and stick out your tongue at me.[†]

⁵All you want is to worship false gods under every green tree.

You kill children by every stream

and sacrifice them in the rocky places.

⁶You have chosen the smooth rocks in the rivers to be your gods.

You offer them wine and grain to worship them.

And those rocks are all you will ever have.

You give me no choice but to punish you!

⁷You make your bed on every hill and high mountain.[‡]

^{§§}**56:5 cut off** To be removed from the list of the people of Israel. This included anyone being forced to leave family, land and the people of Israel.

***56:10 The watchmen** Literally, “The seers”, an ancient title for prophets.

[†]**57:4 make faces ... at me** This probably refers to the god Bel, which is usually shown making a face and sticking out his tongue.

[‡]**57:7 every hill and high mountain** The people worshipped false gods in these places. The people thought these false gods would give them good crops and more children.

You go up to those places and offer sacrifices.

⁸ You hide the things that help you remember me

behind the doors and doorframes.[†]

You were with me,

but you got up to go to them.

You spread out your bed and gave yourself to them.[§]

You love their beds and enjoy looking at their naked bodies.^{**}

⁹ You took sweet-smelling oil as a gift to Molech

and covered yourselves with perfume.

You sent your messengers to faraway lands,

and this will bring you down to the place of death.^{††}

¹⁰ All of them made you tired, but you never gave up.

You found new strength, because you enjoyed them.

¹¹ You did not remember me.

You did not even notice me!

So who were you worrying about?

Who were you afraid of?

Why did you lie?

Look, I have been quiet for a long time.

Is that why you didn't honour me?

¹² I could tell about your good works and all the religious things you do,

but that will not help you.

¹³ When you need help,

you cry to those false gods that you have gathered around you.

Let them help you!

But I tell you, the wind will blow them all away.

A puff of wind will blow them all away. But the one who depends on me will get the land I promised and enjoy my holy mountain.^{‡‡}

The Lord Will Save His People

¹⁴ Someone says:

“Clear the road! Clear the road! Make the way clear for my people!”

¹⁵ God is high and lifted up;

he lives forever, and his name is holy.

He says:

“I live in a high and holy place, but I also live with people who are humble and sorry for their sins.

I will give new life to those who are humble in spirit.

I will give new life to those who are sorry for their sins.

¹⁶ I will not accuse my people forever.

I will not always be angry.

If I continued to show my anger, then the human spirit, the life I gave them, would die before me.

¹⁷ Israel's evil greed made me angry, so I punished them.

I turned away from them

because I was angry.

But they continued to do wrong.

They did whatever they wanted.

¹⁸ I have seen their way of life, but I will heal them.

I will guide and comfort them

and those who mourn for them.

¹⁹ I will teach them a new word: peace.

I will give peace to those who are near

and to those who are far away.

I will heal them.”

[†]57:8 *doorframes* The Israelites were supposed to put special things on their doorframes to help them remember God. See Deut. 6:9.

[§]57:8 *gave yourself to them* Or “and made agreements with them”.

^{**}57:8 *naked bodies* This is a wordplay. The Hebrew word also means “memorial”, as in Isa. 56:5.

^{††}57:9 *this will ... death* Or “You even send them down to Sheol.”

^{‡‡}57:13 *holy mountain* Mount Zion, one of the mountains Jerusalem was built on.

The LORD himself said this.

²⁰ But evil people are like the angry ocean.

They cannot be quiet and peaceful.

They are angry, and like the ocean, they stir up mud.

²¹ My God says:

“There is no peace for evil people.”

True and False Worship

58 Shout as loud as you can and don't stop.

Shout like a trumpet!

Tell the people what they did wrong.

Tell the descendants of Jacob about their sins.

² They still come every day to worship me,

acting as if they want to learn my ways. They pretend to be a nation that lives

right

and obeys the commands of their God.

They ask me to judge them fairly.

They want their God to be near them.

³ They say:

“We fast to show honour to you.

Why don't you see us?

We starve our bodies to show honour to you.

Why don't you notice us?”

But the Lord says:

“You do things to please yourselves on those special days of fasting,

and you punish your servants, not your own bodies.

⁴ Your fasting leads to arguing and fighting.

You get hungry and start hitting each other with angry fists.

This is not the way to fast

if you want your prayers heard in heaven!

⁵ Do you think I want to see people punish their bodies on those days of fasting?

Do you think I want people to look sad and bow their heads like dead plants?

Do you think I want people to wear mourning clothes

and sit in dirt to show their sorrow?

That is what you do on your days of fasting.

Do you think that is what the LORD wants?

⁶ “I will tell you the kind of day I want: a day to set people free.

I want a day when you take the burdens from others.

I want a day when you set troubled people free

and take the burdens from their shoulders.

⁷ I want you to share your food with the hungry.

I want you to find the poor who don't have homes

and bring them into your own homes.

When you see people who have no clothes, give them your clothes!

Don't hide from your relatives when they need help.”

⁸ If you do these things, your light will begin to shine like the light of dawn.

Then your wounds will heal.

Your “Goodness” will walk in front of you,

and the glory of the LORD will come following behind you.

⁹ Then you will call to the LORD,

and he will answer you.

You will cry out to him,

and he will say, “Here I am.”

Stop putting burdens on people.

Don't say things to hurt them,

and don't falsely accuse them of doing wrong.

¹⁰ Do all you can to help people who are hungry.

Take care of those who are in need.

Then your light will shine in the darkness.

You will be like the bright sunshine at noon.

¹¹ The LORD will always lead you and satisfy your needs in dry lands.

He will give strength to your bones.

You will be like a garden that has plenty of water,

like a spring that never goes dry.

¹² You will rebuild the cities that have been in ruins for so long.

You will build on their ancient foundations.

You will be famous for repairing the walls,

for furnishing the empty streets with houses.

¹³ “But you must stop breaking God’s law about the Sabbath.

Stop doing things to please yourself on that special day.

It should be a day you honour as special to the LORD,

a day that you enjoy.

You can honour it by not making business trips,

by not doing whatever you please,

and by not discussing business deals.

¹⁴ Then you will find joy in knowing your LORD.

I will give you the highest honour

and let you enjoy the land I promised your ancestor Jacob.

I, the LORD, am the one telling you this.”

Evil People Should Change Their Lives

59 Look, the LORD’s power is enough to save you.

He can hear you when you ask him for help.

² It is your sins that separate you from your God.

He turns away from you when he sees them.

³ That’s because your hands are covered with blood from the people you murdered.

You tell lies and say evil things.

⁴ You can’t be trusted, even in court.

You lie about each other and depend on false arguments to win your cases.

You create pain and produce wickedness.

⁵ You hatch evil, like eggs from a poisonous snake.

Anyone who eats the eggs will die.

And if you break one of them open, a poisonous snake will come out.

Your lies are like spider webs.

⁶ They cannot be used for clothes, and you cannot cover yourself with them.

Your hands are always busy sinning and hurting others.

⁷ Your feet run towards evil.

You are always ready to kill innocent people.

You think of nothing but evil.

Everywhere you go you cause trouble and ruin.

⁸ You don’t know how to live in peace.

You don’t do what is right and fair.

You are crooked,

and anyone who lives like that will never know true peace.

Israel’s Sin Brings Trouble

⁹ That is why God’s justice is far away, and he has not come to save us.

There is only darkness around us, so we must wait for the light.

We hope for a bright light, but all we have is darkness.

¹⁰ We are like people without eyes.

We walk into walls like blind people.

We stumble and fall as if it was night.

Even in the daylight, we cannot see.

At noontime, we fall like dead men.

¹¹ We are always complaining;

we growl like bears and moan like doves.
We are waiting for justice,
but there is none.

We are waiting to be saved,
but salvation is still far away.

¹²That's because we committed crimes
against our God.

Our own sins speak out against us.
We know we are guilty.

We know we have sinned.

¹³We rebelled against the LORD
and lied to him.

We turned away from our God
and left him.

We planned to hurt others
and to rebel against God.
From hearts filled with lies,
we talked about it and made our plans.

¹⁴We pushed Justice away.
Fairness stands off in the distance.

Truth has fallen in the streets.
Goodness is not allowed in the city.

¹⁵Loyalty has gone,
and people who try to do good are
robbed.

The LORD looked and saw there was no
justice.

He did not like what he saw.

¹⁶He did not see anyone speak up for the
people.

He was shocked to see that no one stood
up for them.

So with his own power he saved them.
His desire to do what is right gave him
strength.

¹⁷Justice was the armour he wore,
and his desire to save was his helmet.
His clothing was his wish to punish evil,
and his coat was his deep desire to help
his people.

¹⁸He will give his enemies the punish-
ment they deserve.

They will feel his anger.

He will punish all his enemies.

People along the coast will get the pun-
ishment they deserve.

¹⁹People from the west to the east will
fear the LORD
and respect his glory.

He will come quickly, like a fast-flowing
river

driven by a wind from the LORD.

²⁰This is what the LORD says:

“A saviour[¶] will come to Zion
to save the descendants of Jacob who
have turned away from sin.”

²¹The LORD says, “This is the agree-
ment that I myself am making with you:
my Spirit that is with you and my words
that I gave you to speak will never leave
you. My words will be yours to speak
from now on. And your children and
their children will always have them to
tell others.”

God Is Coming

60 Jerusalem, get up and shine!^{§§}
Your Light is coming!

The glory of the LORD will shine on you.

²Darkness now covers the earth,
and the people are in darkness.

But the LORD will shine on you,
and his glory will appear over you.

³Then the nations will come to your
light.

Kings will come to your bright sunrise.

⁴Look around you!

See all the people gathering around.

Those are your sons coming from far
away,

and your daughters are there beside
them.

⁵At that time you will see your people,
and your faces will shine with happiness.

[¶]59:20 *saviour* Literally, “redeemer”, someone who frees prisoners or slaves by paying the price for their freedom.

^{§§}60:1 *Jerusalem ... shine* Or “Jerusalem, my light, get up!”

First, you will be afraid,
but then you will be excited.
All the riches from across the seas will
be set before you.

The riches of the nations will come to
you.

⁶ Herds of camels from Midian and
Ephah
will cross your land.

Long lines of camels will come from
Sheba.

They will bring gold and incense.
People will sing praises to the LORD.

⁷ People will collect all the sheep from
Kedar and give them to you.

They will bring you rams from Nebaioth.
The LORD says,

“You must offer those animals on my
altar,
and I will accept them.

I will make my wonderful Temple
even more beautiful.

⁸ “Look at the people.

They are rushing towards you like clouds
quickly crossing the sky.

They are like doves flying to their nests.

⁹ The faraway lands are waiting for me.
The great cargo ships are ready to sail.

They are ready to bring your children
from faraway lands.

They will bring silver and gold with
them

to honour the LORD your God, the Holy
One of Israel.

He has done wonderful things for you.

¹⁰ “Children from other lands will re-
build your walls.

Their kings will serve you.

When I was angry, I hurt you,
but now I want to be kind to you.

So I will comfort you.

¹¹ Your gates will always be open.

They will not be closed, day or night.

They will welcome the nations bringing
their wealth,
with their kings being led in a victory
parade.

¹² Any nation or kingdom that does not
serve you will die.

It will be completely destroyed.

¹³ “All the great things of Lebanon will
be given to you.

People will bring pine, fir and cypress
trees to you.

These trees will be used for timber
to make my Holy Place* more beautiful.

This place is like a stool in front of my
throne,

and I will honour it.[†]

¹⁴ In the past people hurt you,
but they will bow down before you.

In the past people hated you,
but they will bow down at your feet.

They will call you ‘The City of the
LORD’,

‘Zion of the Holy One of Israel’.

¹⁵ “People hated you.

You were left all alone with no one pass-
ing through.

But I will make you great from now on.
You will be happy for ever and ever.

¹⁶ Nations will give you what you need,
like a child drinking milk from its
mother.

But you will ‘drink’ riches from kings.

Then you will know that I, the LORD, am
the one who saves you.

I, the Mighty God of Israel, am the one
who protects you.

¹⁷ “I will replace your copper with gold
and your iron with silver.

I will replace your wood with copper
and your rocks with iron.

Your new ruler will be peace.

Your new leader will be justice.

* **60:13 my Holy Place** This probably means the Temple in Jerusalem.

† **60:13 I will honour it** Or “I will give it glory.”

¹⁸There will be no more news of violence in your country.

People will never again attack your country and steal from you.

You will name your walls, 'Salvation' and your gates, 'Praise'.

¹⁹"The sun will no longer be your light during the day.

The light from the moon will no longer be your light at night.

The LORD will be your light forever.

Your God will be your glory.

²⁰Your sun will never go down again.

Your moon will never again be dark.

That's because the LORD will be your light forever,

and the dark days of mourning will end.

²¹All your people will be good.

They will get the land forever.

They are the young plant in my garden[‡] that will grow to be a wonderful tree.

I made them with my own hands.[¶]

²²The smallest family will become a large family group.

The smallest tribe will become a powerful nation.

When the time is right,

I, the LORD, will come quickly.

I will make these things happen."

The Lord's Message of Freedom

61 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is on me.

The LORD has chosen me to tell good news to the poor

and to comfort those who are sad.

He sent me to tell the captives

and prisoners that they have been set free.

²He sent me to announce

that the time has come for the LORD to show his kindness,

when our God will also punish evil people.

He has sent me to comfort those who are sad,

³those in Zion who mourn.

I will take away the dirt on their head, and I will give them a crown.

I will take away their sadness,

and I will give them the oil of happiness.

I will take away their sorrow,

and I will give them celebration clothes.

He sent me to name them "Good Trees"

and "The LORD's Wonderful Plant".

⁴Then the old cities that were destroyed will be rebuilt.

Those ancient ruins will be made new, as they were in the beginning.

⁵Then your enemies will come to care for your sheep,

and their children will work in your fields and in your gardens.

⁶You will be called, "The LORD's Priests",

"The Servants of our God".

You will be proud of all the riches that have come to you

from all the nations on earth.

⁷In the past other people shamed you and said bad things to you.

You were shamed much more than any other people.

So in your land you will get twice as much as other people.

You will get the joy that continues forever.

⁸"That's because I am the LORD and I love justice.

I hate stealing and everything that is wrong.

So I will give the people what they deserve.

[‡]60:21 *young plant ... garden* See Isa. 4:1 and 5:7.

[¶]60:21 *They are ... hands* Or "They are the plant I planted, which I made with my own hands, to show how wonderful I am."

I will make an agreement with my people forever.

⁹Their descendants will be known throughout the earth, and everyone will know their children. Whoever sees them will know that the LORD has blessed them.”

God’s Servant Brings Salvation

¹⁰The LORD makes me very happy. I am completely happy with my God. He dressed me in the clothes of salvation.

He put the victory coat on me. I look like a man dressed for his wedding, like a bride covered with jewels.

¹¹The earth causes plants to grow, and a garden makes the seeds planted there rise up.

In the same way, the Lord GOD will make goodness and praise grow throughout the nations.

New Jerusalem: A City Full of Goodness

62 I love Zion, so I will continue to speak for her. I love Jerusalem, so I will not stop praying for her until everyone sees her victory[§] shining brightly, until she is saved and shines like a blazing fire.

²Then all nations will see your goodness. All kings will see your glory. Then you will have a new name that the LORD himself will give you.

³You will be like a beautiful crown that the LORD holds up,

like a king’s crown in the hand of your God.

⁴You will never again be called “The People God Left”.

Your land will never again be called “The Land God Destroyed”.

You will be called “The People God Loves”.

Your land will be called “God’s Bride”, because the LORD loves you, and your land will be his.**

⁵As a young man takes a bride and she belongs to him,

so your land will belong to your children.††

As a man is happy with his new wife, so your God will be happy with you.

⁶Jerusalem, I put guards on your walls. They will not be silent.

They will keep praying day and night.

Guards, keep praying to the LORD.

Remind him of his promise.

Don’t ever stop praying.

⁷Don’t give him any rest until he rebuilds Jerusalem

and makes it a place that everyone on earth will praise.

⁸The LORD made a promise and guaranteed it by his own power.

And he will use that power to keep his promise.

The Lord said, “I promise that I will never again give your food to your enemies.

I promise that they will never again take the wine you make.

⁹Whoever gathers the food will eat it and praise the LORD.

Whoever gathers the grape will drink the wine in the courtyards of my Temple.”

§62:1 *victory* Or “goodness”.

**62:4 *your land ... his* Or “He will marry your land.” This is a wordplay. The Hebrew word also means “He will be the lord of the land.”

††62:5 *your land ... children* Or “Your builders will marry you.”

¹⁰ Come through the gates!
 Clear the way for the people!
 Prepare the road!
 Move all the stones off the road!
 Raise a flag as a sign for the nations!
¹¹ Listen, the LORD is speaking
 to all the faraway lands:
 "Tell the people of Zion,
 'Look, your Saviour is coming.
 He is bringing his reward with him,
 the people he has freed.'"
¹² His people will be called "The Holy
 People",
 "The Saved People of the LORD".
 And you, Jerusalem, will be called "The
 City God Wants",
 "The City God Is With".

The Lord Punishes the Nations

63 Who is this coming from Edom,
 from the city of Bozrah?
 His clothes are stained bright red.
 He is glorious in his clothes.
 He is walking tall with his great power.
 He says:
 "I have the power to save you,
 and I speak the truth."
² Someone asks:
 "Why are your clothes bright red?
 They are like the clothes of someone
 who tramples grapes to make wine."
³ The Lord answers:
 "I walked in the winepress by myself.
 No one helped me.
 I was angry, and I trampled the grapes.
 The juice splashed on my clothes, so now
 they are stained."
⁴ I chose a time to punish the other
 wicked nations.
 Now the time has come for me to save
 and protect my people.
⁵ I looked around, but I saw no one to
 help me.
 I was surprised that no one supported
 me.

So I used my own power to save my
 people.
 My own anger supported me.
⁶ Because I was angry, I trampled down
 the nations.
 In my anger I punished them
 and spilled their blood on the ground."

The Lord Has Been Kind to His People

⁷ I will remember the kind things the
 LORD has done,
 and I will remember to praise him.
 The LORD has given many good things
 to the family of Israel.
 He has been very kind to us.
 He has shown us mercy.
⁸ He said, "These are my people.
 They are my faithful children."
 So he saved them
⁹ from all their troubles.
 It was no messenger, no angel,
 but the Lord himself who saved them.
 He saved them because of his love and
 mercy.
 He picked them up and carried them
 through those days long ago.
¹⁰ But they turned against him
 and made his Holy Spirit very sad.
 So the Lord became their enemy
 and fought against them.
¹¹ Then they remembered what hap-
 pened long ago.
 They remembered Moses and those with
 him.
 So where is the one who brought them
 through the sea
 along with the shepherds who led his
 flock?
 Where is the one
 who sent his Holy Spirit to live among
 them?
¹² He was by Moses' side
 and led him with his wonderful hand.
 He divided the water,
 so that the people could walk through
 the sea.

He made his name famous
by doing those great things.
¹³ He led the people through the deep
sea.

Like a horse running through the desert,
they walked without falling.

¹⁴ Like cattle going down to the valley,
The Spirit of the LORD led them.
This is how you led your people
and made your name wonderful.

A Prayer for God to Help His People

¹⁵ Look down from heaven and see what
is happening.

Look at us from your great and holy
home in heaven.

Where is the anger and power you once
showed in defending us?

We miss your tender love and care for
us!

¹⁶ Yes, you are our father!

Even if Abraham and Jacob rejected us,
LORD, you would still be our father!

You are the one who has always saved
us!

¹⁷ LORD, why are you pushing us away
from you?

Why are you making it hard for us to fol-
low you?

Come back to us!

We are your servants.

Come to us and help us!

Our tribes belong to you.

¹⁸ Your holy people had their land only
a short time.

Then our enemies trampled down your
holy Temple.

¹⁹ It seems as if you don't remember ever
being our ruler,

as if you never called us your people!

64 If you would tear open the skies
and come down to earth, then ev-
erything would change.

Mountains would melt before you.

² The mountains would burst into flames
like burning bushes
and boil like water on the fire.

Then your enemies would learn about
you,

and all nations would shake with fear
when they see you.

³ But you have done awesome things that
we did not expect.

You came down, and mountains shook
in fear before you.

⁴ No one has ever heard of such a God.

No one has ever heard such a story.

No one has ever seen any God except
you,

who does such great things for those
who trust him.

⁵ You welcome people who enjoy doing
good

and who remember you by living the
way you want them to.

When you were angry with us,
we sinned against you even more.^{‡‡}

We have always sinned.

So how can we ever be saved?

⁶ We are all dirty with sin.

Even our good works are not pure.

They are like blood-stained rags.

We are all like dead leaves.

Our sins have carried us away like wind.

⁷ We don't call to you for help.

We aren't excited about following you,
so you have turned away from us.

We are helpless before you,
because we are full of sin.

⁸ But, LORD, you are our father.

We are like clay, and you are the potter.

Your hands made us all.

⁹ LORD, don't continue to be angry with
us!

Don't remember our sins forever!

Please, look at us!

We are all your people.

^{‡‡}64:5 *we sinned ... even more* Or "But you became angry with us, and we sinned."

¹⁰Your holy cities are as empty as the desert.

Zion has become a desert.

Jerusalem is destroyed.

¹¹Our ancestors worshipped you in our holy Temple.

That wonderful Temple has now been burned.

All our precious possessions have been destroyed.

¹²LORD, will these things always keep you from helping?

Will you continue to say nothing?

Will you punish us forever?

God's Judgement Is Just

65 The LORD says:

“The people who found me were not looking for me.

I made myself known to people who were not asking for me.

I spoke to a nation that does not use my name.

I said, ‘Here I am! Here I am!’

²All day long I stood ready to accept those who turned against me,

but they kept doing whatever they wanted to do,

and all they did was wrong.

³They keep doing things, right in front of me, that make me angry.

They offer sacrifices and burn incense in their special gardens.[¶]

⁴They sit among the graves, waiting to get messages from the dead.

They eat the meat of pigs, and their pots are full of soup made from unclean meat.

⁵But they tell others, ‘Don’t come near me!’

Don’t touch me because I am holy!’

They are like smoke in my eyes, and their fire burns all the time.

⁶“Look, here is a letter that lists all your sins.

I will not be quiet until I pay you back for these sins.

I will do it by punishing you.

⁷I, the LORD, am doing this because of your sins and the sins of your ancestors.

They did these sins when they burned incense in the mountains.

They shamed me on those hills, and I punished them first.”

⁸This is what the LORD says:

“When there is new wine in the grapes, people squeeze out the wine.

But they don’t completely destroy the grapes

because the grapes can still be used.

I will do the same thing to my servants.

I will not destroy them completely.

⁹I will keep some of the people of Jacob. Some of the people of Judah will get my mountains.

I will choose the people who will get the land.

My servants will live there.

¹⁰Then Sharon Valley will be a field for sheep.

The Valley of Achor^{§§} will be a place for cattle to rest.

All this will be for my people, for the people who come to me for help.

¹¹“But you people left the LORD, so you will be punished.

You forgot about my holy mountain.*

You began to worship the false god Luck.

You held feasts for the false god Fate.[†]

[¶]65:3 *special gardens* Gardens where people worshipped false gods.

^{§§}65:10 *Valley of Achor* A valley about 16 kilometres north of Jerusalem.

* 65:11 *my holy mountain* Mount Zion, one of the mountains Jerusalem was built on.

[†]65:11 *Luck ... Fate* Two false gods. The people thought these gods controlled their futures.

¹² But I decided what would happen to you:

you will be killed with a sword.

You will all be killed because I called to you,

but you refused to answer me.

I spoke to you,

but you would not listen.

You did what I said is evil

and chose to do what I did not like.”

¹³ So this is what the Lord GOD says:

“My servants will eat,

but you evil people will be hungry.

My servants will drink,

but you will be thirsty.

My servants will be happy,

but you will suffer shame.

¹⁴ My servants will shout for joy,

but you will cry out in pain.[‡]

Your spirits will be broken,

and you will be very sad.

¹⁵ My chosen servants will use your name when they curse others.

The Lord GOD will kill you,

and then he will call his servants by a new name.

¹⁶ People now ask blessings from the earth,

but in the future they will ask blessings from the faithful God.

People now trust in the power of the earth when they make a promise,

but in the future they will trust in the God who is faithful,

because the troubles in the past will all be forgotten.

They will be hidden from my sight.

A New Time Is Coming

¹⁷ “I am creating a new heaven and a new earth.

The troubles of the past will be forgotten.

No one will remember them.

¹⁸ My people will be happy and rejoice for ever and ever

because of what I will make.

I will make a Jerusalem that is full of joy, and I will make her people happy.

¹⁹ “Then I will rejoice with Jerusalem.

I will be happy with my people.

There will never again be crying

and sadness in that city.

²⁰ In that city there will never be a baby who lives only a few days,

and every older person will live for a long, long time.

A person who lives for 100 years will be called young.

And whoever doesn't live that long will be considered cursed.

²¹ “In that city whoever builds a house will live there;

whoever plants a vineyard will eat the grapes from that garden.

²² Never again will one person build a house

and another person live there.

Never again will one person plant a garden

and another eat the fruit from it.

My people will live as long as the trees.

My chosen people will get full use of whatever they make.

²³ The work they do will not be wasted, and they will not have children whose

lives end in disaster.

I, the LORD, will bless them as my own, and I will bless their descendants as well.

²⁴ I will answer them before they call for help.

I will help them before they finish asking.

²⁵ Wolves and little lambs will eat together.

Lions will eat hay like cattle,

[‡]65:14 *My servants ... pain* Literally, “My servants will rejoice with good hearts, and you will scream with painful hearts.”

and snakes will eat only dust.
They will not hurt or destroy each other
on my holy mountain.”
This is what the LORD says.

The Worship God Wants

66 This is what the LORD says:
“Heaven is my throne,
and the earth is where I rest my feet.
So do you think you can build a house
for me?

Do I need a place to rest?

²I am the one who made all things.
They are all here because I made them,”
says the LORD.

“These are the people I care for:
the poor, humble people who obey my
commands.

³Some people kill bulls as a sacrifice,
but they also beat people.
They kill sheep as a sacrifice,
but they also break the necks of dogs.
They offer up grain offerings,
but they also offer the blood of pigs.⁴

They burn incense,
but they also love their disgusting idols.
They choose their own ways,
and they love their terrible idols.

⁴So I decided to use their own tricks.
I will punish them using what they are
most afraid of.

I will do this because I called to them,
but they did not answer.

I spoke to them,
but they did not listen.

They did what I said is evil.
They chose to do what I did not like.”

⁵You who obey the LORD’s commands,
listen to what he says:

“Your brothers hated you.
They turned against you because you fol-
lowed me.

Your brothers said, ‘When the LORD
shows his glory,

then we will rejoice with you.’
But they will be punished.”

Punishment and a New Nation

⁶Listen! There is a loud noise
coming from the city and from the
Temple.

It is the LORD punishing his enemies.
He is giving them the punishment they
deserve.

⁷“Does a woman give birth
before she feels the pain?
Can she deliver a son
before she goes into labour?

⁸Who has ever heard of such a thing?
No one has ever seen anything like that.
And no one ever saw a country born in
a day.

No nation ever began in a moment of
time.

But as soon as Zion feels the pain,
she will give birth to her children.

⁹I will not cause pain,” says the LORD,
“without allowing something new to be
born.

I promise that if I cause you the pain of
birth,

I will not stop you from having your new
nation.”

Your God said this.

¹⁰Jerusalem and all her friends, be
happy!

All of you who were sad for her,
be happy and rejoice with her!

¹¹Be happy that you will receive mercy
like milk coming from her breast.

Jerusalem’s “milk” will satisfy you!
You will drink it and enjoy her glory.

¹²This is what the LORD says:
“Look, I will give Jerusalem peace that
will flow in like a river.

Wealth from all the nations will come
pouring into her like a flood.

⁴66:3 *dogs ... pigs* God did not want his people to offer dogs and pigs as sacrifices.

And like little babies, you will drink that 'milk'.

I will hold you in my arms
and bounce you on my knees.

¹³ I will comfort you like a mother comforting her child.

You will be comforted in Jerusalem."

¹⁴ When you see these things, you will be happy.

You will be free and grow like grass.
The LORD's servants will see his power,
but his enemies will see his anger.

¹⁵ Look, the LORD is coming with fire.
His armies are coming with clouds of dust.

He is angry,
and he will punish his enemies with flames.

¹⁶ The LORD will judge the people
and will punish them with fire and his sword.

There will be many people killed by the LORD.

God Will Judge His Enemies at Jerusalem

¹⁷ The LORD says, "These are the people who wash themselves and make themselves pure so that they can go into their special gardens[§] to worship their idols. They follow each other into the gardens to eat meat from pigs, rats and other disgusting things. But they will all be destroyed together.

¹⁸ "They have evil thoughts and do evil things, so I am coming to punish them. I

will gather all nations and all people. Everyone will be gathered together to see my glory."^{**} ¹⁹ I will put a mark on some of the people. I will send some of these saved people to Tarshish, Libya,^{††} Lud^{‡‡} (the land of archers), Tubal,^{¶¶} Greece and all the faraway lands. Those people have never heard my teachings. They have never seen my glory. So the saved people will tell the nations about my glory. ²⁰ And they will bring all your brothers and sisters from those other nations to my holy mountain^{§§} Jerusalem as an offering to the LORD. Your brothers and sisters will ride on horses, mules and camels, and in chariots and wagons. They will be like the gifts that the Israelites bring on clean plates to the Temple of the LORD. ²¹ I will also choose some of these people to be priests and Levites." The LORD himself said this.

²² The LORD says, "I will make a new world—new heavens and a new earth—that will last forever. In the same way, your names and your children will always be with me. ²³ Everyone will come to worship me on every worship day; they will come every Sabbath and every first day of the month.* This is what I, the LORD, have said.

²⁴ "Whoever goes out of the city will see the dead bodies of those who sinned against me. The worms eating those bodies will never die, and the fires burning them will never go out. It will be horrible to anyone who sees it."

[§]66:17 *special gardens* Gardens where people worshipped false gods.

^{**}66:18 *my glory* See glory in the Word List.

^{††}66:19 *Libya* A country in North Africa, west of Egypt.

^{‡‡}66:19 *Lud* This country was probably in the country that is now western Turkey.

^{¶¶}66:19 *Tubal* This country was probably in what is now eastern Turkey.

^{§§}66:20 *my holy mountain* Mount Zion, one of the mountains Jerusalem was built on.

^{*}66:23 *first day of the month* Literally, "new moon". See new moon in the Word List.